

Japan and IOC agree to postpone Tokyo Olympics for one year



Tokyo, March 24 (RHC)-- Japan and the International Olympic Committee agreed on Tuesday to postpone the Tokyo Olympics for one year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Talks took place between Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, and the International Olympic Committee president, Thomas Bach. Abe said they had established that cancelling the Games was out of the question, and that Bach had agreed "100%" that a postponement was the most appropriate response to the global disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

"We agreed that a postponement would be the best way to ensure that the athletes are in peak condition when they compete and to guarantee the safety of the spectators," Abe told reporters shortly after his conference call with Bach, adding that the Games would be held by the summer of 2021.

The Games "must be rescheduled to a date beyond 2020 but not later than summer 2021, to safeguard the health of the athletes, everybody involved in the Olympic Games and the international community", the IOC and the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee said later in a joint statement.

The decision came as Spain reported 6,600 new coronavirus cases, raising its total to 39,673, while its fatalities leapt to 2,696 from 2,182 the previous day.

Earlier in the day, China said it will relax many travel restrictions to and from Hubei, the original epicentre of the pandemic, on Wednesday.

More than 17,100 people have died from COVID-19 worldwide, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University. Nearly 103,000 of the 392,000 people who have been diagnosed with the disease have recovered.

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