

Same as Olympics: Tokyo Paralympic ticket demand tops supply

UN calls for truce around next year's Tokyo Summer Olympics

UNITED NATIONS, Dec 10, (AP): The UN General Assembly unanimously approved a resolution Monday urging all nations to observe a truce during the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan, saying sports can play a role in promoting peace and tolerance and preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Diplomats burst into applause as the assembly president announced the adoption of the resolution by the 193-member world body.

The resolution recalls the ancient Greek tradition of "ekecheiria", which called for a cessation of hostilities to encourage a peaceful environment, en-

OLYMPICS

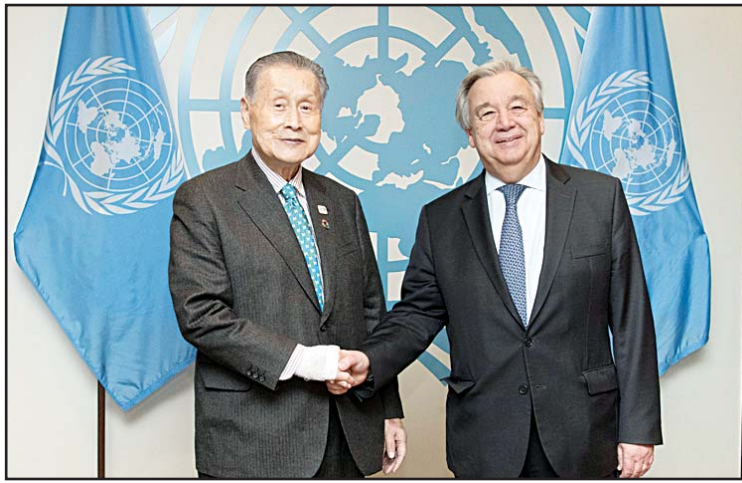
sure safe passage and participation of athletes in the ancient Olympics.

The General Assembly revived the tradition in 1993 and has adopted resolutions before all Olympics since then calling for a cessation of hostilities for seven days before and after the games. But member states involved in conflicts have often ignored the call for a truce.

Yoshiro Mori, head of the Tokyo organizing committee for the 2020 games, introduced the resolution calling on UN members states to observe the truce around next year's Summer Olympics, being held July 24-Aug 9, and the Paralympics, following on Aug 25-Sept 6.

The resolution also urges nations to help "use sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation in areas of conflict during and beyond" the games.

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee, told the



In this photo provided by the United Nations, Yoshiro Mori (left), President of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games meets United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Dec 9 at UN headquarters. (AP)

General Assembly that as the United Nations approaches its 75th anniversary next year, an Olympic year, there is no better time to celebrate the shared values of both organizations to promote peace among all countries and people of the world.

But he warned that "in sport, we can see an increasing erosion of the respect for the global rule of law."

Bach said the IOC's political neutrality "is undermined whenever organizations or individuals attempt to use the Olympic Games as a stage for their own agendas - as legitimate as they might be. The Olympics "are a sports celebration of our shared humanity ... and must never be a platform to advance political or any other potentially divisive ends,"

he said.

Looking ahead, Bach announced that "we will achieve gender balance at the Olympic Games for the first time in Tokyo, with the highest-ever number of female athletes in history at about 49%."

He said Tokyo 2020 also aims "for carbon-neutral games," saying medals will be made from recycled electronics and renewable energy and zero-emission vehicles will be used.

The resolution notes that the Tokyo event will be the second of three Olympics in Asia, following the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, and ahead of the 2022 winter games in Beijing.

It also notes that the Summer Olympics will give Japan the opportunity to



In this July 22, 2018 file photo, Tokyo 2020 Paralympic mascot 'Someity' stands on stage during their debut event in Tokyo. Ticket demand for the Tokyo Paralympics is at record levels. (AP)

express gratitude to countries and people around the world for their "solidarity and support" after the 2011 earthquake and "to deliver a powerful message to the world on how it has been recovering."

Meanwhile, when it comes to tickets, next year's Tokyo Paralympics will be just like the Olympics: There's more demand than there are tickets.

"The interest is there and we are absolutely delighted," International Paralympic President Andrew Parsons told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday. "It shows clearly that the appetite for the Paralympic Games is there - in Tokyo and in Japan."

Parsons said there were 3.1 million tickets requested earlier this year in the first lottery phase. This exceeds the 2.3

million available. About 600,000 tickets were awarded in the first lottery, and another lottery is set for early next year.

Tokyo organizers allowed Parsons to release the demand figure on Tuesday. Organizers have yet to specify the level of demand for Olympic tickets, which is at least 10 times over supply and maybe more. The scarcity has angered some fans and the general public, and is a sensitive topic for organizers who also face pressure for tickets from sponsors, international federations, national Olympic committees, and authorized ticket resellers.

"The Paralympic athletes will be competing in packed stadiums, which is absolutely fantastic for the message we want to send to the world," Parsons said. London is the benchmark for the

Paralympics with 2.7 million tickets sold. Tokyo would far surpass that if there were greater stadium capacity. Parsons said there were no plans for this.

Tokyo organizers on Thursday are widely expected to announce that the Paralympic marathons will stay in Tokyo. Olympic marathons were moved out of Tokyo to the cooler northern city of Sapporo. The Paralympics will probably avoid the heat, opening 2-1/2 weeks after the Olympics close.

All Paralympic marathons are set for the closing day - Sept 6, 2020 - which will mark the end of Tokyo's seven years of preparations.

The Tokyo Olympics run July 24-Aug 9, followed by the Paralympics opening on Aug 25.

"The marathon is a moment when we'd like to see a big celebration for people who didn't get a ticket but can come and be part of the last event of this journey," Parsons said.

The marathons are a non-ticket event and should draw large crowds to the streets.

The Paralympics issued a blanket ban on Russian athletes in the 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, but allowed selected Russians to compete in the 2018 Winter Paralympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Parsons said he still believes the blanket ban was the "right decision."

On Monday, the World Anti-Doping Agency slapped Russia with a four-year ban that includes next year's Olympics and Paralympics. Parsons declined to comment, saying he'd wait until after an expected appeal by Russia to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"Then we will be able to react accordingly to that decision," Parsons said.

Despite 'doping ban', Russian athletes prepare for Olympics



In this file photo dated Feb 25, 2018, Olympic athletes from Russia celebrate after winning the men's gold medal hockey game against Germany, 4-3, in overtime at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Gangneung, South Korea. (AP)

US to 'reap' golden benefit from Russia Oly ban - study

TORONTO, Dec 10, (RTRS): The biggest beneficiaries of Russia's ban at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games ought to be the United States, China and Japan, who should annex 10 of the banned nation's projected gold medals between them, according to data analysts Gracenate.

Russia was slapped with a four-year blanket ban from all major sporting events on Monday by the World Anti-Doping Agency for tampering with doping tests that could have otherwise helped identify drug cheats.

Gracenate's "Virtual Medal Table" had originally projected that Russia, a powerhouse in many sports, would leave the July 24-Aug 9 Tokyo Olympics with 68 medals, including 24 gold.

But without Russia in the mix, Gracenate said the United States should win four more gold medals while China and Japan are each projected to win an ad-

ditional three gold medals.

The United States, who were already expected to dominate the medal table, should win two more gold medals each in men's swimming and men's freestyle wrestling, according to Gracenate. China's additional golds could feature two in men's artistic gymnastics and one in men's shooting while Japan should see additional gold in artistic swimming, rhythmic gymnastics and men's swim-

OLYMPICS

ming. Another 14 nations are projected to earn one additional gold medal each in Russia's absence.

Gracenate's table without Russia now shows the United States leading the way with 53 gold medals, followed by China (44) and hosts Japan (33).

Kuwait nat'l team all set for U-20 Water Polo World Cup

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 10: Kuwait National Under-20 Team for Water Polo is currently preparing to participate in the World Cup to be held in Kuwait on Dec 12-20 under the patronage of National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanim at the Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Swimming Pools Complex.

Assistant Coach of the team Khalid Al-Shawaf said the players started their preparations as early as last July when they attended a one-month training camp in Hungary.

He affirmed that the competition represents a good chance for the players to acquire experience especially since they are 16-17 years of age, adding that the players are keen to provide their best performance in the competition.

Captain of the team Abdullah Murad stressed that the readiness began early before the ban imposed on Kuwaiti sport was lifted, adding that the players are very enthusiastic and eager to provide distinguished performance especially since the competition is being held on Kuwaiti land.

He disclosed that "the Blues" Water



Khalid Al-Shawaf, assistant coach of the Kuwait National Team.

Polo team are keen to provide a wonderful start by facing Iran's National Team, who are classified as one of the best teams in Asia.

One of the members of the Kuwait National Team Abdullah Al-Hamad affirmed that all the players are exerting their best efforts in the preparations and are constantly training as well as participating in friendly games under the leadership of the Greek coach Marcus and his Kuwaiti assistant Khalid Al-Shawaf.



Photo during the Under-20 Water Polo World Cup press conference



The players of the Kuwait National Team for water polo Abdullah Murad and Abdullah Al-Hamad.

Russian athletics champion blasts own sports authorities over Oly suspension

MOSCOW, Dec 10, (RTRS): Despite another doping ban, many Russian athletes will still be competing at the next Olympics.

The sanctions handed down by the World Anti-Doping Agency on Monday mean there won't be a Russian flag or national anthem at a string of major sports competitions, including next year's Tokyo Olympics. But there are enough loopholes for Russia to continue sending neutral teams to the events.

And that's before the inevitable legal challenges, which could further water down the sanctions.

Similar restrictions have been imposed before. At the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, there was no "Rus-

OLYMPICS

sia" but there were 168 "Olympic Athletes from Russia", two of whom later failed doping tests.

When the men's hockey team won the gold medal in uniforms echoing the old Soviet "Red Machine", players belted out the Russian national anthem, even without any music. Russian President Vladimir Putin called the coach on the bench to congratulate him. One of Russia's top athletes said she is still aiming to compete at the Tokyo Olympics.

"I didn't believe the stories that everything will be fine. What has happened today is a disgrace," three-time world high jump champion Mariya Lasitskene wrote on Instagram. "I've never had any plans to change my citizenship and I don't plan to do it now.



In this Feb 23, 2014 file photo, Veleriya Obarevich (right), and Yan Shamilov carry a Russian flag with the message 'Thank you, Putin!' written across it in Russian through Olympic Park ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympics closing ceremony in Sochi, Russia. (AP)

"I'm going to prove in my jumping that Russian athletes are alive, even in neutral status."

Lasitskene has been a vocal critic of how Russian sports officials have handled the doping issues. She missed the 2016 Olympics because of a blanket ban on the Russian track team. Competing in 2020 as a neutral athlete would be nothing new for her, because similar restrictions have been in place for Russians in track since 2016.

"I've been doing that for all of the last few years. The only thing that disturbs me is that athletes are fighting alone and our sports authorities have all this time been paying lip-service to our

defense," Lasitskene said.

Much remains unclear about how Russians will compete.

At the Pyeongchang Games, the International Olympic Committee was criticized for letting Russian athletes have uniforms in national, not neutral, colors. The IOC also came under fire for allowing Russian officials to attend and for approving the "Olympic Athletes from Russia" name instead of "Independent Olympic Athletes", as those from suspended countries were known at earlier games.

"A team that goes there is not a representative of Russia," Jonathan Taylor, the head of WADA's compliance review committee, said when asked about the Tokyo Olympics. "It is to send the message that Russia has forfeited its place at those games."

Playing at the soccer World Cup in 2022 would mean FIFA would have to change its rules to allow for a neutral team. "I don't know if they are going to



Lasitskene