

With society shutting down will Tokyo 2020 go ahead

On March 12, the day the Olympic torch was lit in ancient **Olympia** without spectators because of ongoing concerns over COVID-19, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said it was "fully committed" to holding the Games, set to run from July 24 to August 9, in Tokyo.

Olympia 奥林匹亚

countenance 支持; 赞同

If the Games were being held now, it would be difficult to imagine how organizers could go ahead as planned. Thousands of people converging in Tokyo during a pandemic would surely not be **countenanced**.

The situation remains fluid and talk of holding the Games elsewhere has been widely **quashed**. It is widely regarded that the options available are: to hope the outbreak eases and go ahead as planned, to hold the Games without spectators, to postpone or cancel completely.

quash 撤销; 镇压

The cost of hosting, organizers said in December, was some 1.35 **trillion** yen (\$12.35 billion). Professor Victor Matheson, a sports economist, believes the **truer** sum is likely to be \$25 billion, a vast majority of which has already been spent on large-scale infrastructure projects such as transportation networks, hotels and new venues.

trillion 万亿

truer 真实的

If the Games were to be canceled, so too would an athlete's shot at glory. Gone would be the opportunity to become an Olympic champion and the sponsorship opportunities that come with that. There is an economic cost, and a human one too.

The handover of the flame to Tokyo 2020 Games organizers is still set to take place as scheduled at the Panathenaic Stadium in **Athens** on March 19 without spectators. But whether Tokyo's Olympic cauldron will be lit in July remains, much like the virus, unknown.

Athens 雅典