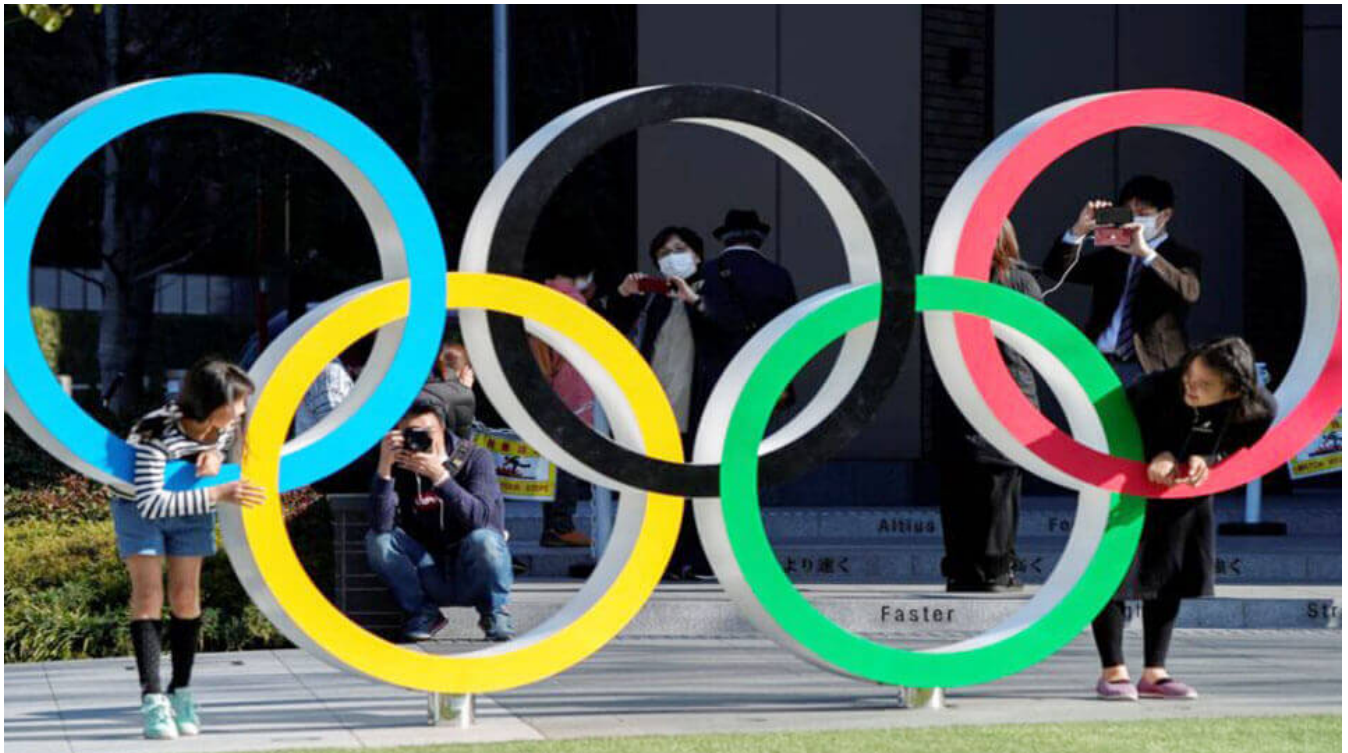


No booze at the Games: Tokyo Olympics goes alcohol-free

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Tokyo: Tokyo Olympics officials apparently reversed an earlier plan to allow alcoholic beverage sales to spectators at competition venues.

Tokyo Olympic Games organizers initially planned to permit the sales of alcoholic beverages at the Olympic sites.

A guideline on spectators for the Tokyo Olympics, due to commence on July 23, will be unveiled later this week.

Sales of alcoholic beverages could be banned at the Olympic venues.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games organizers initially planned to permit the sales of alcoholic beverages at the Olympic sites, with some restrictions, as the Japanese capital prepares for the start of the games in about a month.

But as voices grew louder against apparent consideration for sponsors such as Asahi Breweries, the Games' officials apparently reversed an earlier plan to allow alcoholic beverage sales to spectators at competition venues.

“Given the characteristics of the event, the organizing committee will take into consideration the fact that there are stakeholders,” Olympic minister Tamayo Marukawa said earlier today at a news conference.

A guideline on spectators for the [Tokyo Olympics](#), due to commence on July 23, will be unveiled later this week. In its draft, organizers ask spectators to refrain from eating and drinking in groups in passageways at the venues and to travel to and from venues directly without stopping anywhere, as part of measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.

Seiko Hashimoto, the president of the games organizing committee, said yesterday that the sale of alcoholic beverages to spectators is “being considered” but is dependent on whether people can be deterred from speaking loudly or shouting and whether they can observe safety protocols when moving inside the venues.

Rules, currently in place for the general public in Japan, will also be a factor in considering whether such beverages can be sold, she said.

But some lawmakers and medical experts voiced concerns about selling alcohol at venues as the country struggles to speed up the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, and businesses in Tokyo grapple with curbs on serving alcohol.

The head of the Tokyo Medical Association said in a news conference that he wants the organizers to “rethink” the plan under consideration to allow spectators to drink alcohol, and the sales of alcoholic beverages should not be allowed at the Olympic venues.

On Monday, the organizers decided venues can be filled to 50 percent of capacity, up to a maximum of 10,000 spectators, following months of discussions on an attendance cap for local fans. Spectators from overseas had already been barred.

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