

With Olympics nearing, Japan reimposes emergency shutdowns in Tokyo and Osaka

With coronavirus infections rising sharply again, the governor of Tokyo said [April 20] that she planned to ask the central government to bring back a state of emergency for a third time in the capital. The governor of Osaka, where the British variant of the virus has been quickly spreading, formally made the same request on [April 20].

“We should not fall behind the speed at which variants of the virus are spreading infection,” said Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga hinted he would grant the requests, saying he planned to make a judgment swiftly.

Asked whether a renewed state of emergency [would affect the Olympics](#), which are scheduled to begin July 23, Mr. Suga said it wouldn't.

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Some 70% to 80% of recent confirmed cases in Osaka are linked to a highly transmissible variant first identified in the U.K., known as B.1.1.7. Hospitals in the region have a shortage of beds for seriously ill patients.

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In light of the rising infections and public opposition to the Olympics in Japan, a top official in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party said last week that canceling the Games was an option. Seiko Hashimoto, head of the Tokyo Olympics organizing body, said [April 16] that there were no plans to call off the Games.

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