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STORY HEADLINE: IOC President Bach visits Fukushima with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as tsunami-hit region prepares to host events in Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

DATE: 24 November, 2018
LOCATION: Fukushima, Japan.
LANGUAGE: Japanese & English

Broadcast quality footage available at the IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

STORY SCRIPT:

International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach visited Fukushima on Saturday, as preparations continue for the tsunami-hit city to host the baseball and softball events at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

President Bach met the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and talked to young athletes, including a number of players from a badminton competition that was played that morning, to discuss their hopes for the future and how sport had been able to help them.

Later he met three young baseball players who all had been badly affected when the tsunami hit in March 2011. More than 15,000 people were killed and 500,000 were displaced from their homes.

One of the athletes lost his home and had to be evacuated, spending more than a month in an emergency centre. He told the President how much sport had given him and his family through this period and helped with their recovery.

President Bach told the young athletes: "Sport and baseball have given hope to you and your families. And sport has helped you to overcome many challenges as well as giving you the opportunities to meet teammates and friends. In the end, this is what sport is all about."

As well as the baseball and softball competitions being played at Fukushima's Azuma stadium, the football will take place at the nearby Miyagi stadium, also in the stricken region. The decision taken by the IOC in consultation with the Japanese government was aimed at supporting the recovery in the region.
Prime Minister Abe told President Bach "Japan was determined to showcase progress in the recovery of the region". He also praised the IOC for its "courage in deciding to have softball and baseball in Fukushima Stadium during the Olympic Games."

President Bach said that it was symbolic that their meeting was taking place in Fukushima. He said, "I am very much impressed in the great progress in reconstruction and the mental recovery the people have made here in Fukushima. I am happy that sport has played such an important role in the psychological recovery of the people."

In another symbolic gesture, Fukushima will also stage the first leg of the Olympic Torch relay in the run up to the Tokyo Games in 2020.

SHOTLIST:

00:02 IOC President Thomas Bach arrives at Fukushima Gymnasium with Governor of Fukushima Prefecture, Masao Uchibori
00:09 President Bach addresses press
00:14 Tokyo 2020 Host Venue banner
00:18 IOC President Thomas Bach enters the Fukushima Gymnasium
00:25 IOC President Thomas Bach talks to badminton players
00:37 Wide of badminton hall
00:44 IOC President Thomas Bach enters hall
00:52 Action from badminton match
00:59 Close up IOC President Thomas Bach watching
01:03 IOC President Thomas Bach meets baseball players

01:08 SOUNDBITE: Ryoma Ouchi, Baseball Player for Fukushima Commercial High School (Japanese language)
"I have played baseball since first year of Elementary School, and the great disaster (March 2011 Tohoku Earthquake) happened when I was in my third year. And for following one year, because of the radiation and evacuation issues, I wasn't able to play baseball in my fifth year."

01:27 Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe entering room and shaking hands with President Bach
01:40 Cutaway photographers
01:45 IOC President Thomas Bach and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe talking
01:55 Pan of baseball field
02:04 Cutaway photographers on field
02:09 Children and parents waiting and holding banner
02:14 Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and IOC President Thomas Bach enter baseball field
02:26 IOC President Thomas Bach and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe presented with flowers
02:33 IOC President Thomas Bach and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands with young baseball players
02:38 IOC President Thomas Bach presents pins to young baseball players
02:48 IOC President Thomas Bach and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pose for photo with young baseball players and dignitaries
02:54 Wide of photoshoot
03:05 Governor of Fukushima Prefecture Masao Uchibori presenting infrastructure

03:08 SOUNDBITE Masao Uchibori, Governor of Fukushima Prefecture (Japanese Language)
“The 2020 Olympics and Paralympics is a wonderful chance for people around the world to get a sense of how much we have recovered in the last ten years. And for us, in anticipation of 2020, we want to keep progressing with our recovery and convey our heartfelt ‘Thank you, we are doing our best!’ to everyone around the world.”

03:35 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English language)
“This is a day where you could of experience the power of sport. The power of sport to give hope to people. The power of sport to give confidence in the future for people and their meeting athletes having been affected by the Fukushima natural disaster and learning about their stories and how their sport, our sport was giving them and all their families, giving them courage, giving them the optimism to survive even in parts during their evacuation and afterwards. Giving them opportunities through sport. They’re joining teams and making friends, this was really very touching.”

04:26 Pan from Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to IOC President Thomas Bach at photocall

04:32 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English language)
“We took this decision at the time because we wanted to show our solidarity with the people of Fukushima, we also wanted to demonstrate to them that we have confidence in their determination to overcome these problems and we wanted to give them the opportunity then to make the world know how hard they have been working and how much they have been achieving since this disaster. It was great to see the stadium almost ready and then looking forward to the Games just in 18 months time was very encouraging.”

05:20 IOC President Thomas Bach shakes hands and with young baseball players

05:25 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English language)
“Prime Minister Abe gave us the honour to come to the stadium and also to show us his solidarity and to express his thanks for the IOC’s decision to organise these Games there and I think it will be even more symbolic that the first leg of the Japanese torch relay then will start in Fukushima and from there the Olympic flag will travel around the whole of Japan. So a lot of symbolism but also a lot of partnership and co-operation to help, to assist and to show solidarity.”

06:22 IOC President Bach’s car driving away

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