

**HOW OLYMPIC CITIES ARE SELECTED**

**The Hindu**

Paper - II (Governance)

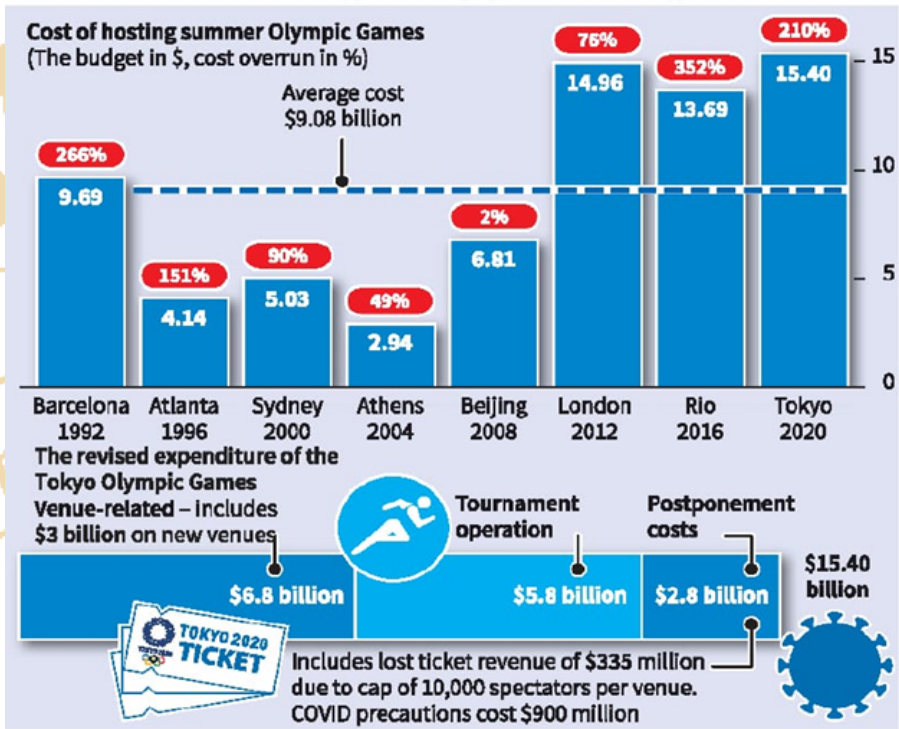
Prime Minister Narendra Modi publicly declared India’s intention to host the Olympic Games, preferably in 2036, during the opening ceremony of the 141st International Olympic Committee (IOC) session in Mumbai on October 14. He also mentioned India’s ambition to host the Youth Olympics in 2029 although the quadrennial event is currently scheduled for 2030. Only three Asian countries have ever hosted the Olympics — China, South Korea and Japan, with Japan hosting the games twice in 1964 and 2020. With India throwing its hat into the ring, there are at least five confirmed countries interested in hosting the 2036 Games and nine others reportedly in various stages of preparations and discussions internally and with the IOC. If India does manage to outbid the competition, it will be the first big-ticket multi-discipline sporting event in the country since the controversy-marred Commonwealth Games (CWG) in 2010.

**How was a host country initially selected?**

In the older system of electing an Olympic host, cities, through their respective national Olympic committees, would submit a letter of interest to the IOC to start a

**The price of the Olympics**

With India openly declaring its willingness to host the 2036 edition of the Olympic Games, a look at the cost of the Games as they become bigger and better each year



Source: Regression to the tail: Why the Olympics blow up, University of Oxford © GRAPHIC NEWS

multi-year, multi-step evaluation process. The bidding cities would complete a series of questionnaires, evaluated by the IOC. The second step of the process involved scrutiny from the IOC Evaluation Commission and a series of inspections of all venues before the final bids are put to vote at an IOC session, ending in a host being decided seven years in advance as per the Olympic Charter. It often led to excessive spending among the bidders, to secure rights, often ending in huge debts, corruptions and scandals.

However, after Thomas Bach took over as the IOC president in 2013, he put in place the Olympic Agenda 2020, as a roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement, approved by the 2014 IOC session. One part of the agenda dealt with a new process for host city selection, called the ‘new norm’, that was officially adopted during the 2019 IOC session in Lausanne.

### **What was the new approach?**

The new process placed emphasis on three main aspects—flexibility, sustainability and cost-effectiveness— with the motto being ‘The Games adapt to the region, the region does not adapt to the Games’.

### **How has the process become more flexible?**

With respect to flexibility, the seven-year rule was done away with and there has been greater flexibility in deciding the hosts — the IOC has said that the 2036 edition could be decided even as late as after 2030. In contrast, Paris and Los Angeles were selected through a tripartite agreement in 2017 that assured both countries hosting rights in 2024 and 2028 respectively, giving Los Angeles 11 years to prepare. Brisbane too was named host for the 2032 edition in 2021, 11 years ahead. There is now a two-stage process — a continuous dialogue and a targeted dialogue — without any fixed deadlines, to assess, discuss and guide potential hosts.

The continuous dialogue is a non-committal stage not specific to any particular edition. It is basically a discussion between the IOC’s Future Hosts Commission (FHC) and interested parties about the hosts’ vision for the Games, its purpose and long-term legacy. This is followed by putting together a master plan and working out logistical details, with every potential host free to work out their own template. Also, unlike the past, the Games can be planned to be held across cities or even in conjunction with another country. The FHC includes athletes, international federations, national Olympic committees and the international paralympic committee. Once there is seriousness in a bid to progress to the next level, it will enter the ‘targeted dialogue’ phase with the interested parties termed ‘preferred host’. However, unlike in the past when a party, once rejected, would be discouraged from bidding again, now the other interested parties can continue continuous dialogue for future events.

In a targeted dialogue, the bids become more determined. While there is again no time-frame for a targeted dialogue, it is anticipated to not exceed 12 months. It explores the proposals to host a specific edition of the Olympic Games and brings the IOC's executive board into the picture for detailed discussions. This is where each of the 'preferred hosts' answer the FHC's questions and provides guarantees on infrastructure, accommodation, security and public services among others and makes the final submission. The FHC then prepares an advisory report for the executive board which has the power to either recommend a single host or shortlist more than one for elections by the IOC members.

### **What about sustainability and cost-effectiveness?**

In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure and to avoid any public backlash, hosts are encouraged as far as possible to use existing and temporary venues. Any new venues built must be in line with existing developmental plans and have a long-term justification irrespective of the Games. All editions of the summer/winter/youth Olympic Games from 2030 onwards must also adhere to the IOC's climate positive commitment.

As per the IOC's claims, the focus on using existing and temporary venues has led to an 80% decrease in the bid budgets for the 2026 Winter Games compared to the 2018 and 2022 editions. Los Angeles has claimed to not build any new infrastructure for the 2028 Games while Paris has declared using 95% existing or temporary venues for 2024. The IOC also provides technical support and expertise to 'preferred host(s)' on marketing, venue development and sustainability to reduce costs.

### **Who are the other potential bidders apart from India for the 2036 Games?**

Besides India, the other confirmed nations interested are Mexico (spread across the four cities of Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey and Tijuana), Indonesia (at the new capital of Nusantara which is still under construction), Turkey (Istanbul) and Poland (Warsaw). India is yet to decide the city/cities where the Games will be organised.

Of these, Mexico is the only one to have previously hosted the Games in 1968. Other potential bidders include Egypt, Seoul, China, Qatar, Hungary, Italy, Denmark, Canada and Germany. While Qatar has been on a hosting spree for large-scale events in recent times, with the football World Cup in 2022, and is scheduled to host the 2030 Asian Games, Egypt will become the first African nation to host if it wins, as will Indonesia in South-East Asia. Although India has hosted several single-sport competitions including World Cups and World Championships over the years, the regional South Asian Games in 2016 was the last multi-discipline international event held here. Before the 2010 CWG, India had hosted the 2003 Afro-Asian Games, the Asian Games (1951 and 1982) and the 2007 World Military Games. However, the largest gathering of athletes here has been around the 5,000 mark while the recent Asian Games in Hangzhou saw 11,970 athletes participating and the Tokyo Olympics also had 11,420 athletes.

### Expected Question

**Que.** Consider the following statements with reference to the Olympic Games:

1. The Olympic Games of the year 2024 will be organized in Paris.
2. India, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and Poland will bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Answer : c**

### Mains Expected Question & Format

**Que.:** 'Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India will bid for the 2036 Olympic Games.' In the context of this statement, explain the process of selecting the Olympic host city and the implications of hosting these Games for India.

**Answer Format :**

- ❖ In the first part of the answer, discuss factually the recently held Olympic Council meeting in India and its planning in India.
- ❖ In the second part, explain the process of selecting the Olympic host city and the implications of hosting these games for India.
- ❖ Finally give a conclusion showing the way forward.

**Note:** - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.