

Japan falls into recession, and worse lies ahead

Japan fell into a recession for the first time since 2015, as its already weakened economy was dragged down by the coronavirus' effect on businesses at home and abroad.

The world's third-largest economy after the United States and China shrank by an annualized rate of 3.4% in the first three months of the year, the country's government said Monday.

That makes it the largest economy to officially enter a recession, often defined as two **consecutive** quarters of negative growth. Other major economies around the world are set to follow, joining Japan as well as Germany and France in recession, as efforts to contain the outbreak **ripple** around the globe.

consecutive 连续的; 连贯的

ripple 波纹; 涟漪

"The economy entered the coronavirus shock in a very weak position, " said Izumi Devalier, chief Japan economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, but "the real big ugly stuff is going to happen in the April, June print. It's going to be three quarters of very negative growth."

Devalier added, "It's not a very encouraging picture."

The virus outbreak crushed Japan's exports, forced it to postpone the Olympics and then put the country on a soft lockdown as it joined other nations scrambling to stop the coronavirus.

The efforts seem to have paid off. Cases rose briefly before receding. The country's health system never became overwhelmed.

On Friday, Abe announced he was lifting the state of emergency on all but eight of the country's **prefectures** earlier than initially expected — a move that could give the economy a boost. The government will decide on next steps for the remaining areas, which include the economic powerhouses Tokyo and Osaka, within the month.

prefecture 县; 辖区