

# The Effect of Coronavirus on Sports: The Ball Is in COVID-19's Court

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## ABSTRACT:

The ripple effect caused by coronavirus is unprecedented and, at times, feels downright apocalyptic. One day, subways are packed and bands are touring. The next, entire office buildings are abandoned and the streets eerily in quiet. The overall effects of the virus are still well ahead of us. In short, things will get worse before they get better. Elderly people and the global economy are especially vulnerable, but we'll have to wait and see how things shake out. In the meantime, it's fascinating to examine what COVID-19 has done to the sporting world. A virus grew into a pandemic and along the way managed to pull the plug on just about every competitive event out there. For more information about COVID-19, please visit the websites of the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and the [World Health Organization](#). **The Build-Up**

Prior to March 12, 2020, when every major league in the states and beyond [decided to call it](#), less drastic measures were at play. In Europe, soccer matches unfolded [before empty stadiums](#). Beyond the 22 players and a few officials on the pitch, there wasn't another soul on the grounds. It's a sobering sight in soccer especially, where [fans are extremely animated](#), waving flags and engaging in songs from kickoff to the final whistle.

Key words: sports, covid19, national, control, online, ripple.

## INTRODUCTION

It wasn't an entirely unfamiliar picture. Regrettably, some of Europe's largest clubs had already been forced to play in empty arenas due to [racist chants by their supporters](#). But when the virus started to take a firm grip on Italy, it quickly became the protocol. From a fan's perspective, the timing was far from great. Many of Europe's top leagues, like [La Liga in Spain and Serie A in Italy](#), were in the middle of heated final stretches that would determine who would be champion and which teams would be relegated. On an even bigger scale, the [Champions League](#) was entering the quarterfinals stage and people are already chatting about the European championships, scheduled for the summer.

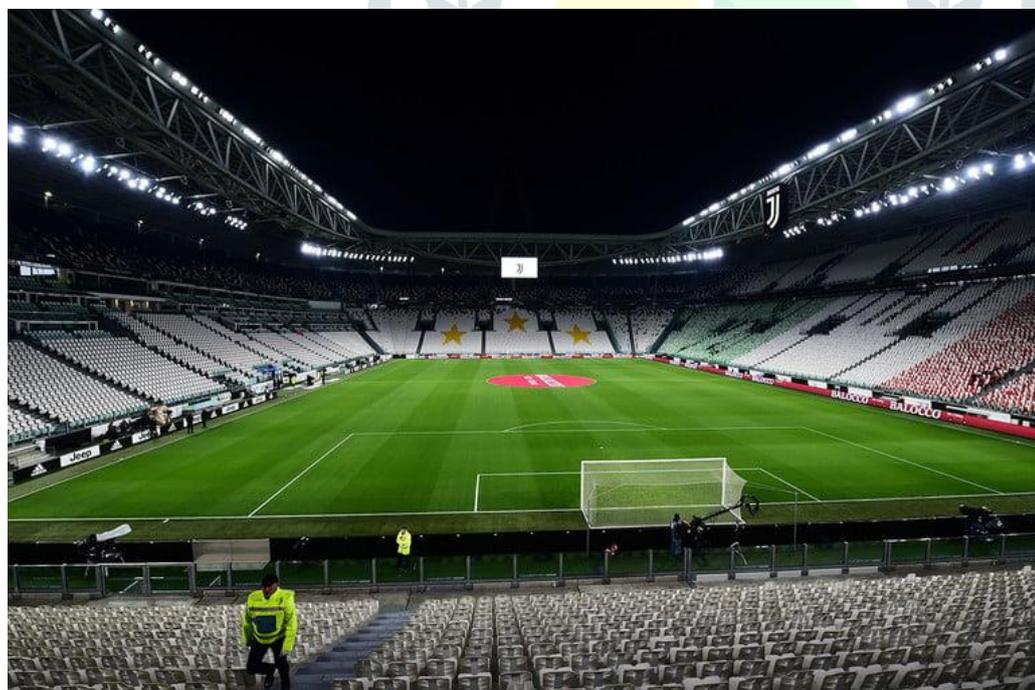
To be frank, there was something incredibly intriguing about watching some of these fan-less games. Juventus vs. Inter Milan was one of the matches of the year thus far, with real Scudetto (the Italian league trophy) implications. Just seeing and hearing the players felt weirdly intimate, like a private performance just for you, the viewer self-quarantined at home.

Forgive me as I go out on a sappy limb here: Just as crises like COVID-19 have a bizarre way of bringing people together (in spirit, anyway), they also have a way of whittling sport down to its bare purpose and simplest joys. Sure, there were goals, masterful passes and perfectly-timed tackles in that Series A match. But I was drawn to the instructive shouts from the goalkeepers, the wisdom offered by managers, and a level of play that had every right to be lesser given the bizarre climate but was just as entertaining and focused as ever. They were playing, it seemed, for the sake of playing.

## Game Over

It wasn't long until cases grew, absurd travel bans were put into place, and world sport threw in the towel. March 12 was supposed to be a wild day that would help shape March Madness, the NBA playoff picture, and the early momentum of the MLS season. Instead, ESPN's homepage was an exhibition of cancellations, postponements, and shut-downs. By the end of the day, every major tournament and league vanished.

These weren't just precautionary measures, it was far too late for that. Major organizations were reacting to actual cases, from [members of the Utah Jazz](#) to [Arsenal managers](#). One of the last to call it quits was the NCAA and its beloved college basketball tournaments. You could imagine the uncomfortable meeting rooms where executives tried to twist common sense into allowing the show to go on (and flood the reserves with advertising dough and ticket revenues).



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March feels much quieter this year, for a slew of reasons: LeBron James may have to wait until summer to battle for his first title with the Lakers, if at all. Juventus may or may not win its ninth consecutive domestic title. And there are no brackets or cinderella upset stories. Losing March Madness feels like an especially

large loss given the tournament's inviting nature. Its entertaining mix of no-name schools, [weird mascots](#), inevitable upsets, and high-energy crowds appeal to more than just sports fans.

So many questions linger: How will teams bounce back from such extended breaks? Will the Olympics occur? Will we lose any prominent athletes, coaches, or owners to the virus? How much is world sport at fault, given its tendency to bring tens of thousands of people together for matches, games, and tournaments?

### It's Just Sports

Sports have stalled because health is more important, there's no debating that. It's just interesting that the whole thing can turn off so quickly, with the flip of a switch. Diehard fans all over the planet are learning the hard way not to take their favorite sports and players for granted. That sports are not a necessity, but a likable privilege often thrown at you several games or leagues at once, screened simultaneously at your favorite bar.

Athletes always want to play but it's hard to imagine that playing before zero fans is ever preferred. While the soccer games in empty stadiums had a certain appeal, they also came across as dystopian. Imagine playing in a bowl of 50,000 empty seats knowing in the back of your head that millions are still watching from home. It's a weird juxtaposition that feels almost like gladiator matches of ancient Rome, turned inside-out. The psychology at play must be distracting.

If you're able, be active while the sporting world is not. Take solace in the fact that it's not permanent. While you're reduced to watching [vintage hoops games](#) or [Leo Messi's best goals thus far](#) on Youtube, take the occasional break and go play yourself. Even if you're avoiding group activities and indoor environments, as you wisely should for a while, there's plenty of solo enjoyment to be had just knocking a tennis ball against a wall, shooting free-throws in your driveway, or [jogging](#) along a trail.

### Editors' Recommendations

- [The Rise of eSports and Online Competitive Gaming](#)
- [Get Lost on the Best Virtual Tours Around Google Earth](#)
- [How to Limit Waste While Social Distancing](#)
- [What Are Musicians Up to Right Now?](#)
- [How to Enjoy Watching Soccer When You're Not a Diehard Fan](#)

A pandemic that has already killed 108 people in the United States, Covid-19, also known as the Coronavirus, has shaken up the world of sports across the globe. Recently in the United States, we have seen a postponement

of major sports leagues such as the MLB, NBA, and NHL. We have seen numerous professional athletes come down with the nasty virus, some of the top names being Kevin Durant, Rudy Gobert, and Donovan Mitchell, all being some of the best players in the NBA. But, this has also had a major effect on collegiate sports as well. One of the most highly-anticipated sporting events every year is March Madness, the tournament where the best Division-I collegiate basketball teams across the United States battle it out to be national champions.

The York College men's basketball team recently won the Capital Athletic Conference with a championship game win over Christopher Newport. Sadly, they were knocked out of the Division-III tournament in the second round by Mount Union. After a stellar season from York College star Jared Wagner, I reached out to star guard Wagner to get his thoughts on the effect of Covid-19 on collegiate basketball.

I discussed with him whether he thought the tournament should be canceled or continue to play with no fans present, he replied, "As soon as the NBA put a hold on its season, it was kind of the time where everyone else kinda realized how serious it actually was. I'm sure it was almost impossible to ensure the overall safety of the student-athletes if they were to have the tournament. So in my opinion, I think it was best to cancel it. However, it was a tough situation and I feel for all those teams and especially seniors that played their last game without even knowing it."

My next question was more aimed toward Division-I athletes, asking how he felt this would affect players draft-stock who were hoping to enter this year's NBA Draft. "I don't think it affects the draft-stock of players too much. I believe that the NCAA tournament can only help a player's stock by playing well, and does not negatively affect a player's stock if a player doesn't play well."

With a lot of big-time collegiate players, specifically, Division-I, playing only one season in college before entering the NBA Draft, I asked if Wagner thinks the cancellation of the tournament will push more players to come back for another season of collegiate basketball in hopes of getting to play in March Madness. He responded with, "I don't think it'll have too much of an effect on if players stay or leave. At the end of the day, it's about if players think they are ready to move onto the next level and it also comes down to the money so I think it would continue to be looked at on a case to case basis depending on the NBA potential of a college basketball player."

As you can see by Wagner's responses, he believes the NCAA made the right move by canceling March Madness and all other collegiate sports activities. It is hard to say exactly how this will affect collegiate athletes. We will have to see what happens with Covid-19 in the coming weeks and see how it will continue to affect the sports world or if things will start to go back to normal.

Some of them cause the [common cold](#) in people. Others infect animals, including bats, camels, and cattle. But how did SARS-CoV-2, [the new coronavirus](#) that causes COVID-19, come into being? Here's what we know about the virus that was first detected in Wuhan, China, in late 2019 and has set off a global pandemic.

### What Is the Coronavirus? History of Concerning Outbreaks

While the news is making it sound like a new thing, the coronavirus is common. The latest version coming out of China is a more dangerous form of something that has been around for a while. The biggest thing filling news headlines right now is arguably the Coronavirus outbreak in China. The outbreak is causing a lot of concern over how far the virus will travel, and how deadly it will prove to be. Historically, this virus is related to the SARS and MERS outbreaks. Many are wondering whether this breakout will be worse.

### What Is the Coronavirus?

While it may seem as if the coronavirus is a brand new thing, it's actually a [common strain](#) of viruses. There are several types of the virus, and some of those are very serious. For the most part, the majority of these types of viruses are usually not deadly.

This new strain, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus, or 2019-nCoV, sometimes called the "Wuhan Coronavirus," is one of the nastier ones. According to the CDC, [symptoms](#) of the virus include fevers, coughs, shortness of breath, aches, sore throat, and vomiting. A respiratory illness, the severity for patients has ranged from a mild cold to very severe symptoms that can lead to death. These symptoms can occur between 2 to 14 days after being exposed to someone infected with the coronavirus.

### How Much Damage Has It Caused?

Seemingly originating out of Wuhan China, the coronavirus can cause pneumonia and can be deadly for some. Perhaps the most frightening thing about the situation is the lack of information. There still isn't a lot of information on how this virus is different from other coronaviruses. As of January 29, the caseload for the virus has [passed 6,000](#) in China; officially becoming a larger outbreak than the SARS incident a few years ago. Estimates for total infections are 6,150 globally, with [132 deaths](#). Thus far, the average American should be more concerned about getting the flu. In comparison to the statistics listed above, there have been around 15 million cases of the flu this season, and [8,200 deaths](#), according to the CDC. There have been a few [confirmed cases](#) in the U.S., but no deaths, and the families of those infected are being closely monitored.

### Economic Implications

In terms of markets, names that tie into the consumer base of China could likely take a hit in sales. **Starbucks** ([SBUX](#)) - [Get Report](#) has closed over 2,000 stores in China as a direct result of fears of the spreading of the virus, and CEO Kevin Johnson has stated that the company will close more if need be. Transportation stocks that have business in China all face the possibility of short term pain given fears of

how far the virus might spread. One might even argue that the *fear* of the situation will have more of an impact, as consumers will be far less enthusiastic about going out in public places unless they have to. **General Motors (GM)** - [Get Report](#) is in the midst of a shutdown of its Chinese factories through February 9. The original shutdown for a holiday [was extended as a precaution](#) against spreading the virus. It's unclear how much of an effect this will really have, but it is a demonstration of the manufacturing headaches that may ensue if this escalates. **Apple (AAPL)** - [Get Report](#) also has major manufacturing exposure in Asia.

**History of Large-Scale Virus Outbreaks** This is not an unprecedented event. Even in the last decade, we've seen a [few events similar](#) in nature to the current outbreak. The Middle East respiratory syndrome, also known as MERS, is a type of the virus that began in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Severe acute respiratory syndrome, known as SARS, was another coronavirus outbreak that came from China. It was believed that the SARS strain came from bats before [spreading to other wild animals](#) that were consumed by humans. By comparison, these viruses haven't been nearly as damaging to humanity as major outbreaks of the past. The [pandemic of 1918](#), known as the Spanish Flu, infected around 500 million people across the globe. At least 50 million are estimated to have died worldwide.

### Global Health Security

An international panel of experts undertook [a comprehensive assessment and benchmarking](#) of health security and response capabilities across 195 countries.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the project was to address risks from infectious disease outbreaks that could lead to international epidemics and pandemics and measure response capabilities for each nation. The hope was that the GHS Index would lead to quantifiable changes in national health security and improve international preparedness.

The GHS Index measured indicators across six broad categories:

1. **Prevention:** Prevention of the emergence or release of pathogens.
2. **Detection and Reporting:** Early detection and reporting for epidemics of potential international concern.
3. **Rapid Response:** Rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic.
4. **Health System:** Sufficient and robust health system to treat the sick and protect health workers.
5. **Compliance with International Norms:** Commitments to improving national capacity, financing plans to address gaps, and adhering to global norms.
6. **Risk Environment:** Overall risk environment and country vulnerability to biological threats.

The major GHS Index summary findings were:

1. Although the United States scored an 83 out of 100 points, health security around the world is very weak and no country is adequately prepared for epidemics or pandemics. The average score was only 40.2 out of 100.

2. Preparedness is very weak, and capacities have not been tested.
3. Funding and budgets are inadequate.
4. Training and coordination are lacking along with foundational health systems' capacities for epidemic and pandemic response.

Unfortunately, the veracity of the GHS Index study is being borne out in real time with the COVID-19 outbreak the world is experiencing now. But there is no time to point fingers and say “I told you so.” We need to act, fast and furious.

At this writing, we are about three months into the COVID-19 outbreak. The WHO officially declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Countries experiencing the greatest number of cases include China, Iran, Italy, and the Republic of Korea. Although the United States ranks eighth, currently, with under 2,000 confirmed cases, insufficient testing does not provide a clear and complete picture. Therefore, we need to take immediate and serious actions to: first, protect ourselves, family, loved ones, and others in our communities; and second, act to contain the spread by preparing our homes, workplaces, and businesses.

*This article is the first of a two-part article series detailing the COVID-19 pandemic. To continue reading the second part of this series discussing the recommended cleaning protocols and transmission prevention, .*

- To learn more about the numerous pandemics that have occurred throughout history, up to the most recent pandemic, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), access our

All three points are true for all currently available international data sources on COVID-19 deaths.

- the actual total death toll from COVID-19 is likely to be higher than the number of confirmed deaths – this is due to limited testing and problems in the attribution of the cause of death; the difference between reported confirmed deaths and total deaths varies by country
- how COVID-19 deaths are recorded may differ between countries (e.g. some countries may only count hospital deaths, whilst others have started to include deaths in homes)
- the reported death figures on a given date does not necessarily show the number of new deaths on that day: this is due to delays in reporting.
  - Charts which simply show the change in confirmed deaths over time are not very useful to answer the question of how the *speed* of the outbreak compares between different countries. This is because the outbreak of COVID-19 did not begin at the same time in all countries.
  - This chart here is designed to allow such comparisons.
  - The trajectory for each country begins on the day when that country had 5 confirmed deaths.
  - This allows you to compare how rapidly the number of confirmed deaths increased after the outbreak reached a similar stage in each country.

- The grey lines in the background help you to see how rapidly the number of confirmed deaths is increasing
- These lines show the trajectories for doubling times of 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10 days. If the slope that a country is on is steeper than a particular grey line, then the doubling time of confirmed cases in that country is faster than that. For example, there are several countries for which the slope was steeper than the ‘...every 2 days’ line – this means their death count doubled faster than every two days

I don't think it's too soon to say that the COVID-19 global pandemic will likely be one of the defining events of 2020, and that it will have implications that last well into the decade. The situation is rapidly changing. The amount of people deemed safe to gather in a single place has dwindled from thousands, to hundreds, to ten. Restaurants, bars, movie theatres, and gyms in many major cities are shutting down. Meanwhile many office workers are facing new challenges of working remotely full time. Essentially, people are coming to terms with the realities of our interconnected world and how difficult it is to temporarily separate those connections to others. To say that we are living in unprecedented times feels like an understatement.

One of the responses we've seen to how people are approaching this period of isolation and uncertainty is in huge overnight changes to their shopping behaviors. From [bulk-buying](#) to [online shopping](#), people are changing what they're buying, when, and how.

As more [cities are going under lockdowns](#), nonessential businesses are being ordered to close, and customers are generally avoiding public places. Limiting shopping for all but necessary essentials is becoming a new normal. Brands are having to adapt and be flexible to meet changing needs.

This resource is intended to provide information so that you can make the best decisions for your brand during uncertain times. We've gathered some facts and numbers around how behaviors are changing, what products people are buying, and what industries are feeling the strain to help you determine what choices you can make for your business.

With COVID-19 coming into the picture, the Indian economy is going through a major slowdown, which was evident over the recent quarters even before the crisis struck. In the third quarter of the current financial year, the economy grew at a six-year low rate of 4.7%. With all these problems hitting the world of work from multiple directions, companies are finding it difficult to sustain in this environment. They are forced to take tough decisions such as cutting down the salaries, giving pink slips to employees and opting for other cost-cutting measures. The outbreak has presented new roadblocks for the Indian workforce and especially for the daily wage and contractual workers.

Coronavirus has disrupted the demand and supply chain across the country and with this disruption, it can be seen that the tourism, hospitality, and aviation sectors are among the worst affected sectors that are facing the maximum impact of the current crisis. Closing of cinema theatres and declining footfall in shopping complexes has affected the retail sector by impacting the consumption of both essential and discretionary

items. As the consumption of any product or services goes down, it leads to an impact on the workforce. In the current scenario, with all the retailers closing down their services, the jobs of the employees are at a huge risk.

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The financial market has experienced uncertainty about the future course and repercussions of COVID-19. An estimated Rs 10 lakh crore of market cap was reportedly wiped off due to the fall of sensex in the second week of March 2020. The fall has continued till date as investors resorted to relentless selling amid rising cases of coronavirus. The supply-side impact of shutting down of factories resulted in a delay in supply of goods from China which has affected a huge number of manufacturing sectors which source their intermediate and final product requirements from China. Some sectors like automobiles, pharmaceuticals, electronics, chemical products etc were impacted big time.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), has suggested that India's trade impact due to the COVID-19 outbreak could be around US\$ 348 million. India is among the top 15 countries that have been affected most as a result of manufacturing slowdown in China that is disrupting world trade. For India, the overall trade impact is estimated to be the most for the chemicals sector at 129 million dollars, textiles and apparel at 64 million dollars, the automotive sector at 34 million dollars, electrical machinery at 12 million dollars, leather products at 13 million dollars, metals and metal products at 27 million dollars and wood products and furniture at 15 million dollars. As per UNCTAD estimates, exports across global value chains could decrease by US\$ 50 billion during the year in case there is a 2% reduction in China's exports of intermediate inputs.

According to a survey by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), the immediate impact of COVID-19 reveals that besides the direct impact on demand and supply of goods and services, businesses are also facing reduced cash flows due to slowing economic activity which in turn is having an impact on all payments including to those for employees, interest, loan repayments and taxes.

#### Major survey results

- A significant 53 per cent of Indian businesses indicate the marked impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on business operations even at early stages.

- The pandemic has significantly impacted the cash flow at organizations with almost 80 percent reporting a decrease in cash flow.
- The pandemic has had a major impact on the supply chains as more than 60 per cent respondents indicate that their supply chains were affected. The companies also highlighted that they are closely monitoring the situation and expect the impact of the pandemic on the supply chain to worsen further.
- Organizations have brought in a renewed focus on hygiene aspects concerning the pandemic. Almost 40 per cent have put in place stringent checks on people entering their offices and disinfection. Nearly 30 per cent organizations have already put in place Work-from-Home policies for their employees.
- Nearly 42 per cent of the respondents feel that it could take upto 3 months for normalcy to return.

For some of the sectors, the work-from-home proposition is posing implementation challenges as it has a direct bearing on the business operations. This is particularly true for manufacturing units where workers are required to be physically present at the production sites, and services sectors like banking and IT where a lot of confidential data is used and remote working can enhance security threats. Hence, companies operating in these sectors are finding it difficult to implement work-from-home facilities without compromising on their day to day operations.

The industry members have also shared suggestions on possible actions that the government and RBI can take to contain the spread of coronavirus in India and mitigate the immediate concerns of the Indian companies.

#### Implications on the workforce

Job losses and salary cuts are likely in the high-risk services sector, including airlines, hotels, malls, multiplexes, restaurants, and retailers, which have seen a sharp fall in demand due to lockdowns across the country. If the current global and domestic economic slowdown persists, it will impact demand and realization.

Undoubtedly, with this crisis impacting the business around the country, it will create very challenging situations for the workforce. Companies are not meeting the revenue targets hence, forcing employers to cut down their workforce. The World Travel & Tourism Council has predicted 50 million tourism jobs getting eliminated because of the pandemic. Not only the employees of multinational companies, but daily wage workers have been impacted the most during this crisis.

The International Labor Organization has called for urgent, large-scale and coordinated measures across three pillars - protecting workers in the workplace, stimulating the economy and employment, and supporting jobs and incomes.

According to a preliminary assessment report, nearly 25 million jobs could be lost worldwide due to the coronavirus pandemic, but an internationally coordinated policy response can help lower the impact on global unemployment.

While on one hand, Indian employees are losing their jobs and receiving a salary cut, there is also an assumption that the majority of expats have gone back from India and they will take time to return. Different sectors such as automobile, banking and manufacturing employ a large number of expats. Indian companies need expats for several industry verticals and job functions such as after-sales services, business development and market audits.

### Need for policy intervention

There is an urgent need to take instant steps to not only contain the spread of the virus, but also to address the key pain areas of the industry which can help in minimising the impact of the outbreak on the Indian economy and businesses. The Indian Government & RBI need to support the Indian industry and economy at this juncture in different ways:

- Maintain liquidity at surplus levels and provide special liquidity support for any companies / NBFCs / banks that come under strain due to intensifying risk aversion in financial markets or due to large demand shock.
- Increase credit limits for all regular banking accounts by 25 percent across the board. Also, Increase overdraft facility to state governments from the RBI. Pay the pending GST compensation immediately.
- IBC to be suspended for a short period for the aviation and hospitality sectors as they are the worst affected.

### Conclusion:

Since a large number of people will stand to lose their jobs especially in the retail, hospitality, travel, construction sector, the government can consider giving incentives for employers to keep the workers, while the coronavirus problem tides over.

On March 24th, 2020 the Finance Minister extended the filing dates of ITR, GST, linking of PAN and Aadhar and other reliefs for the big and small enterprises. The finance ministry is already working on an economic package to mitigate the impact of coronavirus on the Indian economy.

The government is taking necessary steps that will not damage the economy further but the damage that has been done in the previous few months will definitely last for a longer period of time. As the country is locked down for the coming three weeks, India Inc has to stretch themselves to sustain the situation and face the challenge. The Indian government has also urged employers to not cut jobs and salaries. Many CEOs and management teams are taking pay cuts to ensure their workforce does not have to bear the brunt.

Due to logistical problems following the lockdown tea estates were unable to harvest the [first flush](#). The impact of this on the second flush is not known. The entire Darjeeling tea based tea industry will see significant fall in revenue.<sup>[95]</sup> Tea exports could drop up to 8% as a result.<sup>[96]</sup>

From 20 April, under the new lockdown guidelines to reopen the economy and relax the lockdown, agricultural businesses such as dairy, tea, coffee and rubber plantations, as well as associated shops and industries, will reopen.<sup>[68]</sup>

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