

Rooney says handling of PL pay row 'a disgrace'

Wayne Rooney has criticised the government and the Premier League for placing footballers in a "no-win situation" over proposed pay cuts after players were urged to make sacrifices during the coronavirus crisis. **P12**

Europe struggles to pass the virus test

THE DAILY tribune

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'We will overcome'

HRH the Prime Minister and HRH the Crown Prince laud national efforts to prevent spread of COVID-19 in Kingdom

Bahraini, 81, amongst 431 recovered COVID-19 cases

TD | Manama

An 81-year-old Bahraini is among those who have recovered from the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease and been discharged from the treatment and quarantine facilities.

According to the Ministry of Health website, the elderly man had tested positive upon his arrival at Bahrain International Airport in late February, after travelling back to the Kingdom from Iran.

He is one of a total of 431 individuals who already fought the virus and recovered. This is following an additional four treated cases announced yesterday by the Health Ministry.

The total number of active cases as of last night was 265, of which three were indicated as critical.

There is another 81-year-old Bahraini still amongst the active cases. The woman tested positive as a contact of another positive case. She had reported this after being present at one of the locations of the other active case.

The oldest active case in Bahrain is one of an 87-year-old Bahraini man, who had arrived from Germany last month and was also in contact with another active case.

The number of total tested so far is 44,386.

● Government is resolved to spare no effort to attain tangible results, improve quality of performance and meet citizens' needs

● Bahrain's ability to overcome current phase relies on the full awareness and constructive cooperation of everyone

TD | Manama

Bahrain will overcome the current crisis caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, no matter how heavy the challenges are.

This was declared yesterday by His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier.

HRH the Prime Minister received HRH the Crown Prince at his palace in Riffa.



HRH the Prime Minister and HRH the Crown Prince during their meeting yesterday

HRH the Premier lauded the national efforts exerted to contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the Kingdom through a set of precautionary measures. These have allowed Bahrain to be among the leading countries with the capability to combat the coronavirus and significantly control its spread, which has earned it the acclaim of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

HRH the Premier and HRH the Crown Prince stressed that no

matter how heavy the challenges are, the determination of Bahrain is greater, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and with the solidarity of the Bahraini people.

They stressed the government's resolve to spare no effort in order to attain tangible results, improve the quality of performance, and meet the citizens' needs.

They affirmed that the current situation Bahrain and the world are facing requires doubled and

concerted efforts, through commitment to the national responsibility to overcome the current phase and its impacts in various fields.

HRH the Premier and HRH the Crown Prince valued the dedicated national efforts aimed at ensuring the safety of the nation and its citizens, noting that such endeavours have showcased the strength, solidity and cooperation of all in Bahrain as well as their solidarity in facing various dangers and challenges.

They expressed optimism that Bahrain is capable of overcoming the current phase thanks to the full awareness and constructive cooperation of everyone in the Kingdom in meeting the national aspirations for safety, stability and progress.

Also during their meeting, HRH the Prime Minister and HRH the Crown Prince reviewed a number of local economic and social topics, as well as the progress of a number of development projects in the Kingdom.

Indian PM Modi lights 'Diya' to commemorate COVID-19 fight



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday lit an earthen lamp or 'Diya' after turning off all lights at his residence for nine minutes. He did this as per his earlier appeal to all Indians to switch off the lights at 9pm local time at their residences and just light a candle, 'Diya', or their cellphone's flashlight to mark the nation's fight against the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease that is spreading across India like wildfire. Photos of the Prime Minister lighting the lamp and leading the nation's fight against COVID-19 were shared from his official account on social networking platform Twitter. Modi himself posted the photos with a Sanskrit 'shloka' as the caption, which when translated to English, roughly means, "Salutations to the light of the Lamp which brings auspiciousness, health, and prosperity and destroys inimical feelings; salutations to the light of the Lamp."

UN marks maiden International Day of Conscience

TD | Manama

The United Nations (UN) marked yesterday the first-ever International Day of Conscience (IDC), following an initiative launched by His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa.

International human rights organisations hailed the unique initiative which, they said, represents a further achievement in Bahrain's record and reflects HRH the Premier's standing and efforts to promote global peace.

See Page 2 for related story

WORDS OF COMFORT

Queen Elizabeth addresses British people on COVID-19 outbreak

London

Britain's Queen Elizabeth rallied her people yesterday saying that that they would overcome the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak if they stayed resolute in the face of lockdown and self-isolation.

Queen Elizabeth was speaking in an extremely rare broad-

cast to the nation - only the fifth televised address in her 68-year reign.

She called upon Britons to show their resolve and demonstrate they were as strong as generations of the past.

"We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return; we will be with our friends



Better days will return; we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.

BRITAIN'S QUEEN ELIZABETH

again, we will be with our families again, we will meet again," she said.

"Together we are tackling this disease, and I want to reassure you that if we remain united and resolute, then we will overcome it," added the 93-year-old monarch, who made her address from her Windsor Castle home where she is staying with her

husband Prince Philip.

"While we have faced challenges before, this one is different. This time we join with all nations across the globe in a common endeavour, using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal. We will succeed, and that success will belong to every one of us."



02 Success hailed in COVID-19 battle

03 Shura Council approves salaries legislation

04 Saudi delays May crude prices until April 10

210 fills (includes VAT)



HRH the Prime Minister praised on IDC initiative

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa received yesterday a number of congratulatory messages from all over the world on the occasion of the International Day of Conscience (IDC), which was adopted by the United Nations (UN) following an initiative by HRH the Premier.

World Health Organisation (WHO) director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus lauded HRH the Premier for designating April 5 as the IDC, noting that the initiative carries noble goals that consolidate diversity, inclusiveness and collective action to keep the world safe.

The WHO chief stressed that, amidst the current situation the world is facing because of the coronavirus, it is "more pressing than ever to promote a culture of peace with love and conscience."

He expressed hope that everyone will seek to "champion diversity, inclusiveness and solidarity!"

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) marked the first edition of the IDC, considering it as a means to regularly mobilise the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity, in order to build a sustainable world of solidarity, harmony and peace.



Meanwhile, Assistant Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Faisal bin Jabur Al Doseri noted that celebrating the IDC is another achievement to be added to the Kingdom's record in the fields of serving humanity and achieving international peace and secu-

urity through the promotion of religious, ethnic and cultural coexistence and diversity.

The Shura Council praised Bahrain's great success and accomplishments in the areas of tolerance, peace and coexistence. In a statement marking the IDC, the Shura Council said the initiative reflects the great interest of HRH the Premier in bringing together international efforts in the service of all societies.

Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh extended his sincere congratulations to HRH the Prime Minister on the celebration of the IDC, which he said is a global appreciation of the Premier's tremendous efforts aimed at consolidating humanitarian efforts and promoting

Amidst the current situation the world is facing because of the coronavirus, it is more pressing than ever to promote a culture of peace with love and conscience.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION DIRECTOR-GENERAL TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS

global peace.

Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia bint Abdulla Zainal pointed out that the UN's designation of April 5 as the IDC consolidates Bahrain's international status, and highlights the

tremendous efforts it is exerting to support global endeavours to promote peace, tolerance and co-existence, as well as the rejection of fanaticism, terrorism and extremism.

The Arab League also welcomed the initiative, which its secretary general says reflects an accurate understanding of today's world and the values that should be promoted to develop the mechanisms that regulate government and international action.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) secretary general Dr. Nayef Falah Mubarak Al Hajraf underlined the humanitarian aspects of the IDC, which he described as a new international achievement for GCC member states.

Success hailed in COVID-19 battle

HRH the Prime Minister lauds efforts of ministries in tackling repercussions of coronavirus pandemic

TDT | Manama

His Royal Highness the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa yesterday hailed the success of the Kingdom of Bahrain in tackling the repercussions of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

HRH the Premier stressed that this is thanks to the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the follow-up of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier.

HRH the Prime Minister was speaking at his palace in Riffa during a work meeting with the Education Minister, the Labour and Social Development Minister, the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

HRH the Premier commended the efforts of all ministries in dealing with the current situation by taking the necessary precautionary measures that were highly appreciated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and relevant international parties.

He thanked medical and nursing professionals for their distinguished national role on the



HRH the Prime Minister and other officials during their meeting yesterday

frontline in combating COVID-19. He stressed that they deserve every support and praise for their noble efforts, which have earned Bahrain an elevated status in handling the pandemic.

HRH the Premier affirmed that the Kingdom's success is owed to the solid and sound basis laid in the medical, educational and labour sectors, which helped contain the impact of the crisis.

HRH the Prime Minister listened to a briefing by Foreign Minister Abdellatif bin Rashid Al Zayani on what has been accomplished in carrying out his directives concerning the return of Bahraini nationals abroad and the efforts made in this respect, in accordance with

the government's keenness on citizens' safety wherever they are.

He was also informed by Education Minister Dr. Majid bin Ali Al Nuaimi about the educational situation and the ministry's plan to facilitate the students' academic acquisition and provide them with the best services.

HRH the Premier listened to a briefing on the Education Ministry's efforts, in coordination with the Foreign Ministry, to implement his directives regarding the evacuation of Bahraini students stranded abroad and ensure their return home. He was also informed about the Education Ministry's plan concerning the educational process

The Kingdom's success is owed to the solid and sound basis laid in the medical, educational and labour sectors, which helped contain the impact of the crisis.

HRH THE PRIME MINISTER PRINCE KHALIFA BIN SALMAN AL KHALIFA

in public and private schools, stressing the need to ensure that students' educational march is not affected.

Regarding his directives to intensify inspection and mon-

itoring campaigns to control prices and fight monopoly, HRH the Prime Minister listened to a briefing by Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism Zayed R. Al Zayani on what has been done in this respect. He was also informed about plans put in place to monitor prices of mainly basic commodities and ensure availability of those commodities on the market.

As for provision of social assistance, HRH the Premier listened to a briefing by Minister of Labour and Social Development Jamil bin Mohammed Humaidan on the services provided by the ministry to help people who have been affected by the outbreak of the coronavi-

rus. He was also informed about the steps taken to follow on the situation of expatriate workers, in coordination with the Ministry of Health and ensure their commitment to preemptive measures.

HRH the Prime Minister was also informed about the Health Ministry's plan to combat COVID-19 and follow up on the implementation of health regulations adopted according to the WHO's standards.

The ministers expressed their sincerest congratulations to HRH the Premier on his safe return to the Kingdom of Bahrain after his full recovery, lauding his efforts to boost development in Bahrain and serve the Bahraini people.

Capital Governorate launches survey

TDT | Manama

A survey is being conducted by the Capital Governorate in an effort to gather information on the current business status and needs of entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises, in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Capital Governorate said that the information collected can help in better supporting local businesses.

"In light of the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are all concerned about the current business status and needs of entrepreneurs," said the Capital Governorate in a message prior to taking the survey. "We trust that through research and accurate information we can better advocate for our local businesses."

Hussaini Processions gives full support to COVID-19 battle

TDT | Manama

The General Authority of Hussaini Processions yesterday lauded the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to all state institutions within the framework of the National Taskforce for Combating Coronavirus (COVID-19), to provide all means of support to medical facilities and public agencies for the safety and welfare of citizens and residents.

The authority commended the close follow-up of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, and the care and diligence of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister, as well as his continuous support of the efforts of the national taskforce.

Such support, along with proactive measures, have placed Bahrain among the most advanced countries globally on the health, economic and social levels, the authority said.

It also expressed its pride in the medical

and nursing teams working in the health sector, who proved their great merit and ability in managing the repercussions of the virus on the health of Bahrain's citizens and residents.

The authority attributed the success to the one-team spirit and the sense of shared responsibility, resulting from advanced levels of awareness and mindsets in Bahrain, a country that embraces all people without prejudice or bias.

In its statement, the authority affirmed its support for all the measures taken by the various agencies in the Kingdom to limit the spread of the coronavirus and stressed that joint responsibility will result in health and wellness in Bahrain and the rest of the world.

The authority added that it deeply values the unlimited cooperation by all officials of community centers through full compliance with the official instructions and working in accordance with the requirements of the true Islamic religion.

"It gives us great pride to stand and cooperate closely with the state against this virus," the authority said.

Marine Control inspectors seize illegal shrimping nets

TDT | Manama

Inspectors from the Marine Control Department at the Agriculture and Marine Resources Affairs seized yesterday a number of illegal shrimping nets.

This came during an inspection tour of the west coast of Bahrain.

The department indicated that the nets and other fishing equipment violated certain regulations that have been put into place to help protect the Kingdom's marine life.

The department calls on all fishermen to adhere to the Kingdom's fishing laws to ensure the sustainability of important resources, in terms of achieving food security in Bahrain.



An inspector checking on one some fishing equipment

Shura Council approves salaries legislation

● Move will see BD215million withdrawn from the unemployment fund to pay the salaries of Bahraini citizens working in the private sector from April to June

TDT | Manama

The Shura Council yesterday approved an urgent legislation to pay the salaries of Bahraini citizens working in the private sector for the next three months.

This came in the Shura Council's weekly session, during which the bill received plenty of support.

The move will see BD215million withdrawn from the unemployment fund to pay the Bahrainis' salaries from April to June.

It is a part of measures accompanying the BD4.3billion stimulus package to unify national



The Shura Council's weekly session taking place

efforts in combating the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The legislation follows constitutional procedures in line with the Social Insurance Law.

A draft-law was approved last week by the House of Representatives and it will now be fast-tracked by the Cabinet to be ratified and issued by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

It is in line with the directives of His Majesty the King, HRH

the Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, and HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier during these challenging times in light of the COVID-19 disease.

The economic stimulus package aims to maintain the continuity of national programmes, provide the necessary liquidity for the private sector to address

the effects of the current situation, combat COVID-19, and maintain sustainable development.

The package also includes a waiver on electricity, water and municipality bills for both private homes and businesses of all in Bahrain for the next three months, and the deferred payment of bank loans for Bahrainis for six months, among other things.

Arsonists lose appeal

● Details of the case showed that the men gathered along Avenue 1 in Sitra and placed five tyres on the road before setting them ablaze. The defendants and other unknown accomplices also hurled Molotov cocktails at Public Security forces.

TDT | Manama

The Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal recently upheld the prison sentences issued against two Bahraini men who were previously convicted of arson and taking part in an illegal gathering in the Capital Governorate.

The case involves six defendants, including the appellants, who were all sentenced to three years' imprisonment, with two of them being sentenced in absentia.

The crime dates back to December 17, 2018, when the six defendants agreed to gather at one of the main roads in Sitra and burn tyres to halt traffic, simultaneously with the Kingdom's celebrations of National Day and the anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to

the throne.

As a result of the investigations launched by the Public Prosecution then, the six defendants were charged with possession of Molotov cocktails, participating in an illegal gathering, and disturbing public security.

It was shown in the details of the case that the men gathered along Avenue 1 in Sitra on the aforementioned date and placed five tyres on the road before setting them ablaze.

Police reports also showed that the defendants, along with other unknown accomplices, hurled Molotov cocktails at Public Security forces, who reached the scene to douse the fire and handle the situation.

Police investigations led to the arrest of a couple of the defendants, who confessed to their crimes in the interrogation and led the police to their accomplices. Police succeeded in arresting two more defendants, while two more remained at large.

The court sentenced all of the involved individuals to three years' imprisonment; four in presentia and two in absentia.

The two appellants pleaded against the verdict, but the Supreme Court of Appeal rejected their plea, considering the peremptory evidence against them.

The court also rejected the appeals of the two other defendants involved in the crime last month.

Teacher convicted of assaulting student loses appeal

TDT | Manama

The First Supreme Criminal Court of Appeal recently rejected a plea submitted by a teacher who was previously convicted by the Criminal Court of assaulting a student and "unintentionally" causing him permanent disability.

According to court files, the teacher was sentenced last year to six months' imprisonment. His appeal against the verdict was filed after exceeding the allowed period to file petitions against verdicts, hence it was rejected by the court.

The details of the case show that the incident occurred in February of 2019. The teacher apparently shoved the student inside the classroom, causing him to fall face-first on one of the studying desks.

The fall broke some of the boy's front teeth and injured his upper jaw. The school informed the student's mother, who immediately lodged a complaint against the teacher to the police.

After reviewing the medical reports, the Public Prosecution charged the teacher of unintentionally causing a permanent disability of one per cent to the victim before referring the case to the court.

At the court, the teacher was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. However, the court suspended the execution of the sentence for three years.

"Smile" initiative supports children with cancer to tackle COVID-19

TDT | Manama

A new initiative hopes to provide psycho-social support to children with cancer and their families, along with coronavirus-protection kits that include masks, gloves and sterilisers.

The "Smile" Initiative has been created by the Bahrain Future Society for Youth.

Volunteers have been busy delivering these kits to the homes of sick children affiliated with the initiative in different areas across Bahrain.

The volunteers followed all precautionary and preventive measures suggested in the coronavirus fight, such as working in small teams, sterilising the kits during packaging and distributing, and also advising parents on how to use them correctly.

Future Society for Youth chairman Sabah Abdul Rahman Al



A volunteer gives one of the children a protection kit

Zayani said that the provision of this in-kind assistance to families of children with cancer comes within the framework of the "Smile" initiative to extend a helping hand in these difficult circumstances.

"We work as part of the national efforts aimed at tackling COVID-19 and provide all possible support to the most vulnerable or affected groups, especially children with cancer who suffer mainly from a weak immune system, who need special and permanent care," Al Zayani said.

According to an emergency plan that was activated by the society's Board of Directors for the current stage, the initiative has suspended all group activities, fearing for the well-being of the sick children, and its backers have begun to work from home with a hotline for parents to communicate and obtain psychological and social support.

Trial of mugger begins today

TDT | Manama

The trial of an Arab national who is accused of attacking an Asian man and stealing more than BD2,000 is scheduled to be held today at the First High Criminal Court.

The case was recently adjourned by the same court to summon the prosecution witnesses, while the judges ordered to release the accused mugger from detention under guarantee of his place of residence to attend today's hearing.

The defendant was charged by the Public Prosecution on January 11 this year of assault and robbery.

This came as police investigations stated that the accused attacked the victim by splashing a liquid substance on his face before stealing BD2,419 from him.

According to the victim's testimony, the unknown liquid temporarily impaired his vision, making it easy for the accused to steal the money and flee the spot.

He added that the defendant also hit him on the head with the container that contained the liquid, causing him several injuries.

The victim told investigators that the incident occurred in Juffair while returning from a bank after he apparently cashed a cheque for the BD2,419 amount.

Police reached the scene shortly, rushed the victim to the hospital and launched a probe, which eventually led to the identification and arrest of the accused.

Capital Governorate delivers 1,100 meals to expat workers

Charity campaign will continue until the end of COVID-19 pandemic; coordination with donors is underway to provide support.

CAPITAL GOVERNOR SHAIKH HESHAM BIN ABDULRAHMAN AL KHALIFA

TDT | Manama

A total of 1,100 meals were distributed yesterday to expatriate workers in the Capital Governorate.

The initiative is part of a charity campaign amid precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Capital Governor Shaikh Hesham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa announced the move as he visited yesterday the location where the meals were prepared



Officials look on as the meals are prepared by volunteers.

before their distribution.

Council of Representatives member MP Ammar Al Bannai was also present as volunteers

rallied to take part in the charity campaign on its first day.

The Capital Governor said that it would continue until

the end of COVID-19 pandemic, adding that coordination with donors is underway to provide support.

business

Saudi delays May crude prices until April 10

● Saudi Aramco typically issues its OSPs by the 5th of each month

Reuters | Dubai

Saudi Aramco will delay the release of its crude official selling prices (OSP) for May until April 10 to wait for the outcome of a meeting between OPEC and its allies regarding possible output cuts, a senior Saudi source familiar with the matter said yesterday.

"It is an unprecedented measure that has not been taken by Aramco before. May OSPs will depend on how the OPEC+ meeting concludes. We are doing what we can to make it successful, including taking this extraordinary step to delay the OSPs," the Saudi source said.

Saudi Aramco typically is-

Aramco appoints Mark Weinberger to board

Reuters | Dubai

Saudi Aramco has appointed Mark Weinberger to its board of directors as an independent board member, replacing Andrew Gould, the company said in a statement yesterday.

Weinberger was the global Chairman and CEO of EY (previously known as Ernst & Young) from 2013 to 2019.

He currently serves as a director on the boards of Johnson & Johnson and MetLife as well as being a member on several boards of trustees, including the United States Council for International Business (USCIB).



Mark Weinberger, Global Chairman and CEO, EY, speaks at the 2019 Milken Institute Global Conference in Beverly Hills, California, U.S.

sues its OSPs by the 5th of each month, setting the trend for Iranian, Kuwaiti and Iraqi prices and affecting more than 12 million barrels of oil per day bound for Asia.

OPEC and allies led by Russia, a group known as OPEC+, are due to meet on Thursday to discuss a possible new global crude supply cut to end a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia which has prompted U.S. President Donald Trump to intervene.

The Saudi source said that Riyadh wants to avoid a repeat of the outcome of a March meeting where oil talks collapsed due to Russia's refusal to cut output.

Coordinated cuts between OPEC+ members expired on March 31, having helped support crude prices since they began in January 2017.

The OPEC+ meeting was initially due to take place on Monday, but was postponed to April 9

"to allow for more time to reach out to all producers including OPEC+ and others", the Saudi source said.

Oil prices hit an 18-year low on March 30 due to a slump in demand caused by lockdowns to contain the coronavirus outbreak, and the failure of OPEC and other producers to extend coordinated output cuts.

The OPEC+ group is debating a global oil production pact to cut 10 million bpd or about 10 per cent of global oil supply, an OPEC source said on Friday. Any agreement should include producers from outside of the OPEC+ alliance, OPEC sources said.

Asian refiners have called on Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, to slash OSPs for a third straight month after Middle East benchmarks and refining margins fell amid ample supplies and lower demand due to the coronavirus, a Reuters survey showed.

UAE doubles stimulus to counter coronavirus impact

● Last month, UAE announced stimulus worth \$35 billion

● The central bank reduced by half to 7.0 per cent the reserves banks are required to keep

AFP | Abu Dhabi



A deserted street in the Emirate city of Dubai amid the coronavirus outbreak

The Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates said Sunday it has doubled to \$70 billion a stimulus package to support the Gulf state's economy amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"The aggregate value of all capital and liquidity measures adopted by the CBUAE since 14 March 2020 has reached 256 billion dirhams (\$70 billion)," the central bank said in a statement.

Last month, oil-rich UAE announced stimulus worth \$35 billion that included aid to the banking system, facilities for loans and injecting funds into the bourses.

Most of the new measures focused on easing financial and liquidity requirements for banks

to free up cash for lending.

In the new measures, the central bank reduced by half to 7.0 per cent the reserves banks are required to keep for demand deposits, which can be withdrawn by clients anytime.

This will allow for some \$16.6 billion in liquidity to be used in

new bank lending, the central bank said.

The regulator's new measures also allow banks to defer payment of loans for companies and clients until the end of 2020.

"The additional measures announced today will effectively relieve the pressure on financial institutions ... offering the required relief and continued access to funding for businesses and households," newly-appointed governor Abdulhamid Saeed said.

The UAE, where 1,505 coronavirus cases and 10 deaths have been reported, has introduced strict measures including halting travel and closing shopping malls and entertainment venues.

On Saturday night, Dubai, one of the seven emirates making up the UAE, announced a two-week lockdown in which it will carry out tests in densely populated areas.

Starbucks competitor Luckin apologises for fraud scandal



Luckin Coffee has apologised for a senior executive faking sales figures

AFP | Beijing

Luckin Coffee, China's biggest rival to Starbucks, apologised yesterday after it revealed a top executive may have faked 2.2 billion yuan (US\$310 million) worth of sales in 2019.

The company's former chief operating officer, Liu Jian, and several of his staff have been suspended pending an internal investigation, it said in a US Securities and Exchange Commission filing last week.

"The company retains the right to take legal measures against those suspected to be involved, it will not shield them or be lenient," Luckin Coffee said in a statement on Weibo Sunday.

Luckin Coffee added that its stores would remain open as usual, and acknowledged that it relied on the support of its customers.

The company said in its filing that fabricated sales extended from the second to fourth quarter last year, making up almost half of its estimated 2019 revenue of US\$732 million.

Luckin Coffee has not yet released its fourth-quarter results.

After the bombshell was revealed Thursday, shares in the NASDAQ-listed firm plunged more than 70 per cent.

The coffee start-up had



Launched in 2017, the Chinese coffee chain made a remarkable debut on Wall Street in May 2019, raising US\$561 million during its IPO. Shares soared by more than 50 per cent during initial trading.

aimed to dethrone Starbucks in China by pursuing an aggressive growth strategy, enticing customers with an app-based purchasing model which prioritised takeaway and delivery options, and generous mobile coupons.

By the end of 2019, the Xiamen-headquartered chain's 4,500 outlets in mainland China had already surpassed Starbucks' 4,300 stores, and investors touted the company's potential to go global.

Short-selling firm Muddy Waters Research raised doubts over the accuracy of Luckin Coffee's third-quarter financial transactions in a report earlier this year.

Dubai Islamic Bank, subsidiary Noor have \$541 million exposure to NMC Health

● NMC has seen its stock more than halve in value since December

Reuters | Dubai



DIB said it is now in discussions with NMC and its advisors to ascertain the group's financial position

Dubai Islamic Bank said yesterday it has \$425 million exposure to troubled hospital operator NMC Health and its subsidiary Noor Bank has a further \$116 million exposure to the London-listed company.

NMC, which recently revised its debt position to \$6.6 billion, much above earlier estimates, has seen its stock more than halve in value since December after short-seller Muddy Waters

questioned its financial statements.

On Saturday NMC's major lender, Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, said it applied to Britain's High Court on April 2 to appoint joint administrators for the hospital operator.

NMC Health's new executive

chairman on Saturday called on the company's creditors for a debt standstill and said he would work with authorities in Britain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to recover misused funds.

DIB said it is now in discussions with NMC and its advi-

sors to ascertain the group's financial position and identify potential measures to address its governance and financial issues.

The aggregate exposure to NMC constitutes as of March 31 is approximately 0.7 per cent of DIB's total assets, DIB said.

India reassures banks of capital infusion: sources



Reuters | New Delhi/Mumbai

India has assured state banks it is ready to provide capital support as the coronavirus pandemic may lead to a surge in bad loans when economic growth is slowing, three government and banking sources told Reuters.

New Delhi may need to make a provision of at least 200-250 billion rupees (\$5.90 billion) for capital infusion in state-run banks. However, this number can increase significantly as the situation evolves, the officials said.

"The NPAs (non-performing assets) could remain an issue and the government may need to make a provision for some capital infusion in the public sector banks," said a senior government official with direct knowledge of the issue.

None of the sources wanted to be named as the plan is not yet public. The government has already pumped in 3.5 trillion rupees (\$45.91 billion) in the last five years to rescue the beleaguered banks. In this financial year's budget

In August last year, India had announced a series of mergers involving 10 state-owned banks to ensure stronger balance sheets to boost lending and revive economic growth.

announcement in February, it had not allocated any funds for capital infusion. Instead, the banks had been encouraged to tap capital markets for funds.

"Given the pressure on their credit profiles, we expect public sector banks' access to equity capital market will remain challenging, at least over the next few quarters," Alka Anbarasu, vice president and senior credit officer, financial institutions at Moody's Investors Service said.

Indian banks are burdened with a bad loan pile of nearly \$140 billion and the lion's share of it rests with the state-owned banks.

"We expect public sector banks will require further capital support from the government as rising asset risk will lead to a deterioration in their profitability and internal capital generation," Anbarasu added.

Most lenders are likely to require capital in the second or the third quarter of this financial year and that is when they will formally approach the government if required as they already have the reassurance, bankers said.

"On top of the list right now are the mergers and to ensure how one can tackle the COVID-19 related problems. Currently, most banks are in a position to meet their capital requirement for the first half of this financial year," said the CEO of a public sector bank who declined to be named as the matter is not public yet.

China says it has sold nearly four billion masks abroad

● China has exported 3.86 billion masks, 37.5 million pieces of protective clothing, 16,000 ventilators and 2.84 million COVID-19 testing kits since March 1

AFP | Beijing

China has sold nearly four billion masks to foreign countries since March, officials said yesterday, as they tried to stem widespread fears over the quality of medical exports.

Despite Chinese cases dwindling, Beijing has encouraged factories to increase production of medical supplies as the pandemic kills over 60,000 globally and parts of the world face a protective equipment shortage.

China has exported 3.86 billion masks, 37.5 million pieces of protective clothing, 16,000 ventilators and 2.84 million COVID-19 testing kits since March 1, customs official Jin Hai said,



China exported 3.86 billion masks and almost 40 million pieces of protective clothing since March 1

with orders to more than 50 countries.

She added the country's medical supply exports were valued at 10.2 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion).

However numerous nations -- including the Netherlands, the Philippines, Croatia, Turkey and Spain -- have complained about substandard or faulty medical products shipped from China.

Last week, the Dutch govern-

ment recalled 600,000 masks out of a Chinese shipment of 1.3 million that did not meet quality standards.

China said the manufacturer "stated clearly that (the masks) are non-surgical."

Spain also rejected thousands of rapid test kits sent by an unauthorised Chinese company after it found that they were unreliable last week.

Chinese officials hit back on Sunday at media reports over defective medical supplies, saying that they "did not reflect the full facts".

"In reality there are various factors, such as China having different standards and different usage habits to other countries. Even improper use can lead to doubts over quality," said Jiang Fan, an official with the Ministry of Commerce.

The comments echoed remarks from Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying, who over the past week has repeatedly urged Western media not to "politicise" or "hype up" the issue.

Earlier this week, Beijing tightened regulations for exported coronavirus medical equipment, requiring products to fulfil both domestic licensing standards and that of their destination countries.

China has also increased its production capacity of COVID-19 testing kits to over 4 million a day, said Zhang Qi, an official with the National Medical Products Administration.

Planned \$1 billion US aid cut would hit Afghan security force funds

● Most of the fund pays for salaries, food, fuel, equipment and infrastructure to support Afghan troops and national police

Reuters | Washington

A planned \$1 billion cut in US aid to Afghanistan would come from funds for Afghan security forces, according to three US sources, a step experts said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the reduction on March 23 and threatened to slash the same amount next year to try to force Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his political rival Abdullah Abdullah to end

a feud that has helped stall U.S.-led peace-making efforts in Afghanistan.

After nearly 20 years of fighting the Taliban, the United States is looking for a way to extricate itself and to achieve peace between the US-backed government and the militant group, which controls more than 40 per cent of Afghan territory. Pompeo and other US officials have declined to pub-

licly detail how the cut would be made. The State Department declined to comment on its plans.

Two US congressional aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, said State Department officials told Congress the \$1 billion would come from a \$4.2 billion Pentagon fund that underwrites about three quarters of the Afghan security forces' annual budget.

Quibi launching Hollywood 'on the go' streaming amid lockdown

● Subscriptions will cost \$5 monthly with ads, or \$8 without

AFP | Los Angeles

Quibi, the multi-billion-dollar streaming platform launching Monday, is betting it can transform entertainment with short, Hollywood-quality clips to watch "on the go" -- even as much of the world is trapped at home.

Industry legends and stars from Steven Spielberg and Guillermo del Toro to Jennifer Lopez and Reese Witherspoon have lined up to make movies and shows for the youth-focused, smartphone-only service.

Tapping into the boom in mobile video viewing, all content will be delivered in clips of no more than 10 minutes -- or "quick bites." Every show must be made in both horizontal and vertical formats, automatically flipping between the two as viewers rotate their phones.

But Quibi's plans were set long before the coronavirus pandemic prompted stay-at-home orders for billions of people around the globe -- meaning nobody is quite sure how to measure success in



CEO Meg Whitman says short-form video streaming service for mobile Quibi is launching in "unprecedented" times

Industry legends and stars from Steven Spielberg and Guillermo del Toro to Jennifer Lopez and Reese Witherspoon have lined up to make movies and shows for the youth-focused, smartphone-only service

the months ahead, its CEO said.

"Honestly, we don't know, because we are launching in unprecedented times," said Meg Whitman, who previously led eBay. "I don't think any of us have ever seen anything quite

like this."

While presumably fewer people will now watch during commutes or coffee breaks, self-isolation could prompt its own need for quick distractions, Quibi executives say.

"People still have in-between moments -- it's just different," said Whitman. One such a moment, she suggested, could come when an exhausted parent takes a pause from homeschooling children.

"I live on Zoom calls all day," she said, referring to the popular remote conferencing software. "But occasionally I'll have 10 or 15 minutes between Zoom calls (and) I'll watch a Quibi."

'A little crazy'

A formidable lineup -- 50 shows at launch, with 175 originals in its first year -- helped make Quibi's decision to stick with its long-established April 6 launch a lot easier, said Whitman.

Big Hollywood names have committed to work with Quibi thanks to its founder, Jeffrey Katzenberg, a towering figure in Tinseltown who ran Disney Studios for a decade and co-founded DreamWorks.

"We had enough content in the bank," Whitman said.

Launch movies such as psychological thriller "Survive" -- starring "Game of Thrones" alumna Sophie Turner -- and Liam Hemsworth's dystopian "Most Dangerous Game" are expected to draw early subscribers.

After an initial batch at launch, one "chapter" will be released per day, with the aim to rekindle the "water-cooler moments" of traditional television.

New scripted content is already scheduled through late fall. But amid the deep uncertainty facing Hollywood, what comes next is anyone's guess.

"We certainly hope the production will be back online soon," said Whitman. "We just don't know... You have to tolerate

ambiguity well."

Quibi also aims to keep users coming back with daily news, sports and entertainment shows -- a genre far harder to produce at a time when studios are closed across the US.

"It's been a little crazy," admitted Whitman, who said many shows will broadcast from hosts' homes rather than specially constructed studios.

"Two weeks ago, we thought maybe four or five of these 'Daily Essentials' would actually not be able to get into production for us," she said. "But they've all come on."



Quibi's eye-watering budgets are more comparable to longer-form streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+ and Apple TV+, with HBO Max and Peacock set to join the fray shortly.

'\$100,000 a minute'

Subscriptions will cost \$5 monthly with ads, or \$8 without. But with cash short for many as unemployment surges, Quibi last month extended its two-week trial period to a 90-day offer.

Quibi must also compete for younger viewers' time with millions of free -- often user-generated -- videos hosted by YouTube, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram.

The assumption is that, just as HBO transformed television with its premium subscription content, Quibi can get people to spend if the quality is high enough. "We pay up to \$100,000 a minute for our premium long-form movies and chapters," said Whitman.

"What we will produce for the money that we are spending is very different to the incredible creativity of people who are producing shows for \$500 a minute," she added.

But Whitman insists Quibi -- aiming to create "the next big wave of story-telling" -- does not view those as direct rivals.

"There were movies, there was television, there was streaming," said Whitman. "And now maybe there is this new way to tell stories for mobile, in Hollywood-quality ways."

Europe struggles to pass the virus test

CORNELIA MEYER

The European Union has long been hailed as the guarantor of stability and peace in Europe; even its fiercest critics admit that the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact would not have been so smooth, had it not been for the EU's support and largesse.

Over the past decade the organization has had to contend with several adversities that shook it to its core. The eurozone crisis of 2012 left deep rifts between the economically weaker southern states and the more affluent north; the departure of the UK caused deep wounds and put into question the EU's very modus operandi, particularly its unyielding bureaucracy; Angela Merkel's decision in 2015 to admit about a million refugees flew in the face of previous agreements, and backfired not only in parts of Germany but in the Balkans too; and there are deep ideological divisions over tolerance and human rights between the more liberal original member states and later arrivals with a Warsaw Pact legacy such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

COVID-19 has magnified these cracks in the EU's cohesion. The question now is whether it emerges from the pandemic stronger or weaker — or whether it will even implode.

The Schengen zone was built on the free movement of people across borders, but as the virus spread, the barriers went up. Many workers in border regions are employed in neighboring countries, some in medical and care professions, which heightens the care crisis. Confining hundreds of thousands of Eastern European agricultural laborers to their homes endangers the harvest of early vegetable crops, which may have ramifications for overall food security. Giant trucks carrying es-



Officers putting the flag of the European Union and the Italian flag at half-mast on the balcony above the main entrance to the

essential goods are still allowed to cross borders, but their drivers' access to food and hygiene is precarious; without them, supermarket shelves would remain empty and Europeans would go hungry.

EU member states also showed

a woeful lack of solidarity when it came to protective equipment such as masks, gloves and gowns; Germany and other countries have banned their export. Pictures of Chinese and Russian aircraft delivering desperately needed

medical equipment to Italy be ingrained in this generation's collective memory. They will themselves, where was European solidarity when we needed most?

So what should be done next

Economic Policies for the COVID

BY GIOVANNI DELL'ARICCIA, PAOLO MAURO, ANTONIO SPILIMBERGO, AND JEROMIN ZETTELMEYER

The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis like no other. It feels like a war, and in many ways it is. People are dying. Medical professionals are on the front lines. Those in essential services, food distribution, delivery, and public utilities work overtime to support the effort. And then there are the hidden soldiers: those who fight the epidemic confined in their homes, unable to fully contribute to production.

In a war, massive spending on armaments stimulates economic activity and special provisions ensure essential services. In this crisis, things are more complicated, but a common feature is an increased role for the public sector.

At the risk of oversimplifying, policy needs to distinguish two phases:

Phase 1: the war. The epidemic is in full swing. To save people's lives, mitigation measures are severely curtailing economic activity. This may be expected to last at least one or two quarters.

Phase 2: the post-war recov-

ery. The epidemic will be under control with vaccines/drugs, partial herd immunity, and continued but less disruptive containment measures. As restrictions are lifted, the economy returns—perhaps haltingly—to normal functioning.

The success of the pace of recovery will depend crucially on policies undertaken during the crisis. If policies ensure that workers do not lose their jobs, renters and homeowners are not evicted, companies avoid bankruptcy, and business and trade networks are preserved, the recovery will occur sooner and more smoothly.

This is a major challenge for advanced economies whose governments can easily finance an extraordinary increase in expenditures even as their revenues are dropping. The challenge is even greater for low-income and emerging economies that face capital flight; they will require grants and financing from the global community (a focus for a subsequent blog).

WARTIME POLICY MEASURES

Unlike other economic downturns, the fall of output in this crisis is not driven by demand: it is an unavoidable consequence of measures to limit the

spread of the disease. The role of economic policy is hence not to stimulate aggregate demand, at least not right away. Rather, policy has three objectives:

Guarantee the functioning of essential sectors. Resources for COVID-19 testing and treatment must be boosted. Regular health care, food production and distribution, essential infrastructure, and utilities must be maintained. It may even involve intrusive actions by the government to provide key supplies through recourse to wartime powers with prioritization of public contracts for critical inputs and final goods, conversion of industries, or selective nationalizations. France's early seizing of medical masks and the activation of the Defense Production Act in the United States to ensure the production of medical equipment illustrate this. Rationing, price controls, and rules against hoarding may also be warranted in situations of extreme shortages.

Provide enough resources for people hit by the crisis. Households that lose their income directly or indirectly because of containment measures will need government support. Support should help people stay at home while keeping their jobs (government-funded sick leave

reduces movement of people, hence the risk of contagion). Unemployment benefits should be expanded and extended. Cash transfers are needed to reach the self-employed and those without jobs.

Prevent excessive economic disruption. Policies need to safeguard the web of relations among workers and employers, producers and consumers, lenders and borrowers, so that business can resume in earnest when the medical emergency abates. Company closures would cause loss of organizational know-how and termination of productive long-term projects. Disruptions in the financial sector would also amplify economic distress. Governments need to provide exceptional support to private firms, including wage subsidies, with appropriate conditions. Large programs of loans and guarantees have already been put in place (with the risks ultimately borne by taxpayers), and the EU has facilitated direct capital injections into companies by relaxing its state-aid rules. If the crisis worsens, one could imagine the establishment or expansion of large state holding companies to take over distressed private firms, as in the United States and Europe

Policy options

Policies in support of households, businesses, and the financial sector involve a mix of liquidity and solvency measures.

	LIQUIDITY	SOLVENCY
HOUSEHOLDS	Suspension of mortgage payments, student loans	Cash transfers
	Tax and social security contribution deferrals	Unemployment insurance
		Meal vouchers for students who are away from school
BUSINESSES	Extension of loan maturities	Equity injections
	Tax and social security contribution deferrals	Subsidies for maintaining employment
	Purchase of commercial paper and bonds	Direct subsidies based on past sales (tax based)
	Direct credit provisions by central bank	
	Credit guarantees	
FINANCIAL SECTOR	Liquidity provision for financial intermediaries	Equity injections
	Actions to preserve market liquidity	Government guarantees

Note: Liquidity measures include loans or payment deferrals. Solvency measures include transfers, payment waivers, and non-refundable goods or services.

1814

Nominal beginning of the **Bourbon Restoration**; anniversary date that Napoleon abdicates and is exiled to Elba.

1830

Church of Christ, the original church of the Latter Day Saint movement, is organized by Joseph Smith and others at either Fayette or Manchester, New York.

1841

U.S. President **John Tyler** is sworn in, two days after having become President upon William Henry Harrison's death.



1860

The Reorganized **Church of Jesus Christ** of Latter Day Saints, later renamed Community of Christ, is organized by Joseph Smith III and others at Amboy, Illinois.



at the Quirinale palace in Rome to mark those lost to coronavirus.

Some advocate "corona bonds," guaranteed jointly and severally by all European countries. This would be particularly important for Italy, which has been ravaged by COVID-19. The country is already highly indebted, and some economists expect its debt-to-GDP ratio to reach 150 percent.

Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Finland are opposed, because they fear they would be on the hook indefinitely for other countries' debt. The northern

COVID-19 War

These domestic policies need to be supported by maintaining international trade and cooperation, which are essential to defeating the pandemic and maximizing the chances of a quick recovery.

during the Great Depression.

Greater intervention by the public sector is justified by the emergency for as long as exceptional circumstances persist, but must be provided in a transparent manner and with clear sunset clauses.

Policies in support of households, businesses, and the financial sector will involve a mix of liquidity measures (provision of credit, postponement of financial obligations) and solvency measures (transfers of real resources; see table).

Several tradeoffs will need to be managed. If transfers or subsidized loans are given to a large corporation, they should be conditional on pre-

serving jobs and limiting CEO compensation, dividends, and stock repurchases. Bankruptcy would ensure that equity holders share some of the costs, but would also cause significant economic dislocation. An intermediate option is for the government to take an equity stake in the firm. When liquidity is the problem, credit by the central bank (through asset purchase programs) or other government controlled financial intermediaries (through loans and guarantees) has proven effective in previous crises. Many practical questions arise also in identifying and supporting hard-hit small- and medium-sized enterprises or self-employed individuals. For these, direct transfers based on past tax payments should be considered.

These domestic policies need to be supported by maintaining international trade and cooperation, which are essential to defeating the pandemic and maximizing the chances of a quick recovery. Limiting the movement of people is necessary for containment. But countries must resist the instinct of shutting down trade, especially for health-care items and the free exchange of scientific information.

This pandemic may be the making or unmaking of the EU. If the 27 member states cannot stand together in the face of such adversity, they risk becoming no more than a fair-weather union.

states prefer the European Stability Mechanism, which has a debt capacity of 410 billion euros and allows countries to borrow on their books. Germany and the Netherlands have proposed an aid package of up to 20 billion euros, which would be a drop in the ocean. French finance minister Bruno Le Maire suggested a rescue bond of limited duration, 5 to 10 years, and wants urgent action: "We should not be obsessed by the word 'corona bonds' or eurobonds. We should be obsessed by the necessity of having a very strong instrument to provide us with economic recovery after the crisis."

This pandemic may be the making or unmaking of the EU. If the 27 member states cannot stand together in the face of such adversity, they risk becoming no more than a fair-weather union. As Portugal's finance minister Mario Centeno put it: "The way Europe deals with the financial strains left behind by the virus will determine the shape and the extent of the recovery, and, ultimately, the cohesion of the euro area."

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen hit the German TV stations on Friday night vouching for European solidarity. Some may struggle to take her fine words at face value.

FROM SHELTER-IN-PLACE TO RECOVERY

Promoting the recovery will have its own challenges, including higher levels of public debt and possibly new swaths of the economy under government control. But relative success in Phase 1 will ensure that economic policy can go back to its normal operation. Fiscal measures to boost demand will become increasingly effective as more people are allowed to leave their homes and go back to work.

Interest rates and inflation were projected to be low-for-long prior to the pandemic in most advanced economies. Preventing major disruptions in supply chains should avoid inflation during the emergency and recovery phases. If the measures to contain the spread of the virus are successful, the necessary increase in the public debt ratio will have been sizable, but interest rates and aggregate demand are likely to remain low in the recovery phase. Under those circumstances, fiscal stimulus will be appropriate and highly effective in most advanced economies. And this will facilitate exit from the exceptional measures introduced during the crisis.



TOP
4
TWEETS

01



Defense Secretary Esper says firing the Navy captain who raised alarms about coronavirus on his aircraft carrier was "a tough decision" but he supports it. Citing an ongoing investigation, Esper won't say if he agrees w/ Trump it was "terrible" Captain Crozier wrote a letter.

@kaitlancollins

02



In the UK another 621 people have died of #coronavirus the total death toll is now 4,934. This morning the government warned that people could be stopped from leaving their homes for exercise if too many flout existing rules that some still seem to be ignoring.

@aliarouzi

03



The U.S. had a program - PREDICT - that identified lethal viruses abroad to prevent their spread to the U.S. It had found 1,200 viruses (and 160 coronaviruses) in 10 years. It was actively working in China. 6 months before the Wuhan outbreak, Trump shut the program down.

@ChrisMurphyCT

04



The media, "experts," and Democrats are trying to make it impossible for the president to even consider rational options for opening parts of the economy. And, of course, some of these governors won't reconsider their decisions in some areas, either.

@marklevinshow

Disclaimer: (Views expressed by columnists are personal and need not necessarily reflect our editorial stances)

Joining forces to save civil aviation



CAPT. MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

Desolate airports around the world bear testimony to the cruel impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on civil aviation - both passenger and cargo services. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced global passenger traffic data for February 2020 showing that demand (measured in total revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) fell 14.1% compared to February 2019. This was the steepest decline in traffic since 9.11 and reflected collapsing domestic travel in China and sharply falling international demand to/from and within the Asia-Pacific region, owing to the spreading COVID-19 virus and government-imposed travel restrictions.

The aviation industry is the thread that stitches the globe together. Without the global connectivity provided by aviation, sustaining global supply chains, as well as developing country industries such as perishable horticulture and tourism would be impossible. It is therefore imperative that governments start examining action plans to create rescue packages for their national carriers in particular and for the aviation industry in general.

Around the world, the busiest airports are seeing hundreds of aircraft parked idly in hangars and runways with no where to go.



Otherwise, we risk causing irreparable damage to international connectivity. By value, 35 % of international trade flown by air, 57 % of international tourists travel by air and each airline job contributes to 24 more in the wider economy.

Around the world, the busiest airports are seeing hundreds of aircraft parked idly in hangars and runways with nowhere to go. Even as passengers protest that issuing travel vouchers in lieu of refunds for unused tickets is unfair, an IATA analysis shows that airlines may burn through \$61 billion of their cash reserves during the second quarter ending 30 June 2020.

In Bahrain, the COVID-19 crisis is sure to impact the timeline and progress of our local aviation industry, whether in the form of delay in opening the new airport or in the bottom line of our national carrier, Gulf Air. As passengers, we are, of course, very patriotic and I am sure many of us will try to fly Gulf Air for our travels, once the pandemic ebbs.

But I appeal to the other stakeholders, be it Bahrain International Airport or Gulf Air to also make an immense effort to woo passengers with the four things that travellers value the most: punctuality, a widespread network, a welcoming service on ground and in the air as well as good fares that make economic sense. All of these will help us join hands and overcome aviation's darkest hour when the sun shines again.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

world

Donald Trump warns 'toughest week' ahead

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump warned Americans to brace for a "very horrendous" number of coronavirus deaths in the coming days. Global deaths from the COVID-19 pandemic have soared past 60,000, with Europe continuing to bear the brunt of the virus which has left roughly half the planet confined at home.

There are now more than 1.2 million confirmed cases across the globe, and around 65,000 people have died since the virus first emerged in China late last year, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.



US President Donald Trump warned Americans to expect a "tough week" ahead

Trump said the United States was entering "a time that's going to be very horrendous" with "some really bad numbers."

"This will probably be the toughest week," he said at the White House. "There will be a lot of death."

At the same time, the president stressed the US -- where infections have surpassed 300,000 -- cannot remain shut down forever.

"Mitigation does work but again, we're not going to destroy our country," he said. "I've said it from the beginning -- the cure cannot be worse than the problem."

Over 45,000 global deaths have been in Europe, with Britain reporting a new daily high in fatalities, taking the overall toll to 4,300 out of nearly 42,000 cases.

Tide turning in Italy?

Worst-hit Italy cheered after seeing its number of intensive

care virus cases drop for the first time -- from 4,068 on Friday to 3,994 on Saturday.

Even some of the most cautious Italian health officials seized on the figures as evidence that the tide may be turning in the deadliest disaster the country has faced since World War II.

"This is a very important data point," said civil protection service chief Angelo Borrelli, adding that it "allows our hospitals to breathe."

The daily rise in new infections across Italy has also slowed. It reported 681 new deaths on Saturday, down from a peak of almost 1,000 just over

a week ago.

Spain, which is under a near-total lockdown, saw a second successive daily fall in coronavirus-related deaths with 809 fatalities.

The total number of deaths in Spain now stands at 11,947, second only to Italy.

Although the number of new cases also slowed, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced an extension of the country's lockdown until April 25.

At a field hospital in Madrid set up at a conference centre, staff applauded whenever a patient was healthy enough to be discharged.

Drive-by blessings in virus-hit Philippines

Manila

Priests delivered blessings from the back of trucks and motorised tricycles in the Philippine Sunday, adapting the deeply Catholic nation's traditions to the battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

Locals lined up in front of their homes in a district of Manila, which is entering its fourth week of a lockdown that has brought the frenetic metropolis nearly to a halt.

The priests made signs of the cross as they rolled past waving residents marking Palm Sunday, the start of the week that culminates with the observance of Easter.

"This celebration will continue despite the spread of the virus," said Bong Sosa, who attended



Roman Catholic priest Pepe Quitorio delivers blessing from a motorised tricycle in Borongan in the central Philippines

wearing a mask crafted from a water cooler bottle.

The blessings come as the Philippines recorded a total of 144 deaths and 3,094 confirmed virus cases, numbers that are expected to keep rising as the nation ramps up testing.

The quarantine has shuttered schools and businesses and halted all

social and religious events across most of the nation will likely be extended beyond mid-April, authorities have said.

Easter is a major holiday in the Philippines when millions typically return to their family homes outside the capital, but heavy restrictions on movement will disrupt those trips this



A Roman Catholic priest blesses the faithful from the back of a pick-up truck in Manila



People lined up with palm fronds as the priests drive by

year.

Bans on large public events will also mean that typically thronged churches will be empty save for priests performing mass that will be live-streamed into tens of millions of homes.

Pope livestreams Palm Sunday mass due to virus 'tragedy'

Vatican City

Pope Francis called for courage in the face of the coronavirus pandemic as he delivered Palm Sunday mass by livestream instead of before Saint Peter's Square crowds.

The Vatican is abandoning centuries of tradition and refraining from public celebrations of the official start of the Catholic world's Holy Week.

Pope Francis called the pandemic a tragedy on Sunday that must be faced with courage and hope.

"Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic, in the face of the many false securities that have now crumbled, in the face of so many hopes betrayed, in the sense of abandonment that weighs upon our hearts, Jesus says to each one of us: 'Courage, open your heart to my love'," the pope said.



Pope Francis celebrated Palm Sunday mass behind closed doors at St Peter's on Sunday

Palm Sunday marks the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem before his crucifixion. Easter Sunday on April 12 celebrates his resurrection from the dead.

But many of the world's 1.3 billion Catholics are observing the sacred days under home confinement -- just like the 83-year-old pontiff.

Pope Francis has been communicating with the outside world by video so that crowds do not gather to see and hear him in one of the world's most famous squares.

Vatican City itself has been closed to tourists for nearly a month as part of global efforts to stop the spread of a disease that has

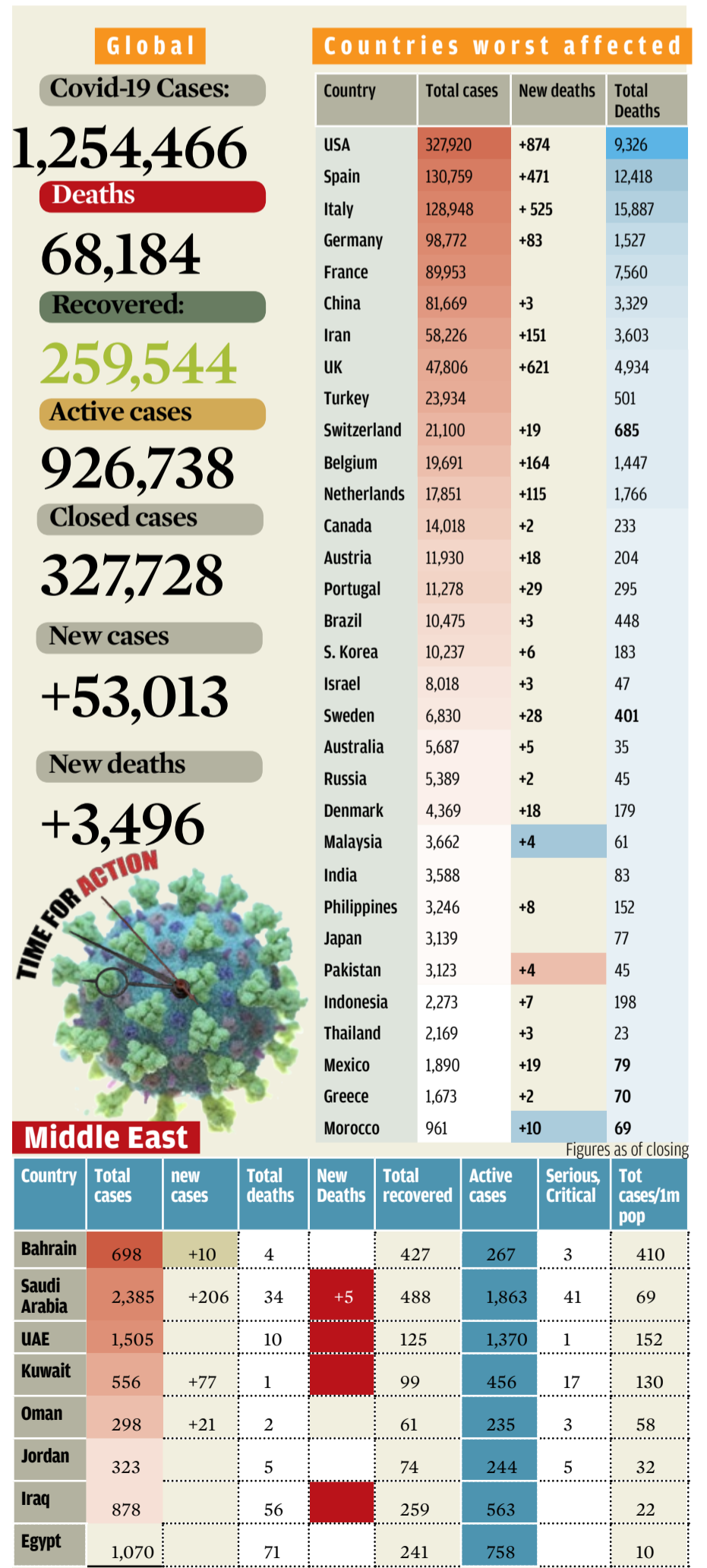
officially killed more than 65,000 people worldwide.

The Argentine-born pontiff went on to call on the faithful to overcome their fears and remember that they are not alone.

"When we have our back to the wall, when we find ourselves at a dead end, with no light and no way of escape, when it seems that God himself is not responding, we should remember that we are not alone," the pope said in his prayer.

Pope Francis himself went down with a cold in late February and was reportedly tested for COVID-19 twice as a precaution because seven people in the Vatican have caught the virus.

The Vatican says the pope is now in good health. Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter a week later on April 19.



Morocco to free over 5,000 prisoners to slow virus spread



A Moroccan health ministry worker disinfects a street in the capital Rabat to combat the spread of coronavirus

Rabat

Morocco's King Mohammed VI yesterday pardoned more than 5,600 prisoners and ordered their release in stages to avoid contagion in the country's overcrowded jails.

The justice ministry said the 5,654 detainees that would be freed were selected based in their age, health, good conduct and length of detention.

They would be released in stages due to "exceptional circumstances linked to the emergency health situation and necessary precautions" against the virus, it said in a statement.

The decision came as the COVID-19 illness has officially killed 66 people and infected 960 in the North African country.

Trump says he had 'absolute right' to fire intelligence official

Reuters | Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday he had every right to fire the inspector general of the U.S. intelligence community who was involved in triggering an impeachment probe of the president last year.

In a daily briefing with reporters, Trump said the official, Michael Atkinson, did a "terrible" job.

"That man is a disgrace ..., he's a total disgrace," Trump said during a daily briefing with reporters.

Olive branches handed out on Palm Sunday in near-deserted Jerusalem



Reuters | Jerusalem

Franciscan friars wearing surgical masks and gloves made house calls in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, delivering olive branches to Christians who are self-isolating as a precaution against the coronavirus.

One of the friars used a loud-hailer in the streets of the walled Old City to summon people to their front doors and windows, where they received branches and blessings.

US police bust Pink Floyd 'corona party'

New York

Partygoers at a Pink Floyd tribute night have been scolded for shouting abuse at New Jersey police after defying social distancing rules brought in to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Around 30 people gathered to watch an acoustic rendition of the British rock band's greatest hits on the front lawn of a home in Rumson, a seaside community south of New York City, that was also broadcast live over social media.

Police were called to end the revelry, but met a hostile crowd on arrival.

"When we informed everyone that they must leave... we were met with well wishes of 'F-the police' and 'Welcome to Nazi Germany,'" said the town's police department on Facebook late Saturday.

Officers then instructed the band to cut the night short as they were halfway through a performance of Pink Floyd's 1975 anthem "Wish You Were Here" -- fittingly, a song often



A man wearing gloves and a face mask walks by a mural reading "Cancel Plans Not Humanity" in Los Angeles, California

played as an anthem for absent friends.

"The Rumson Police Department takes no enjoyment in ruining anyone's fun," the police statement said. "However we ALL have a responsibility to take this pandemic SERIOUSLY and adhere to the social distancing requirement."

New Jersey governor Phil Murphy ordered residents to stay home and

non-essential businesses to shutter indefinitely last month.

He has since taken to social media to rebuke residents for ignoring the lockdown rules after several news reports of social gatherings.

Can't believe I have to say this at all," he tweeted last week. "But here we are. NO CORONA PARTIES. They're illegal, dangerous, and stupid."

Fishing boat takes 202 Rohingya migrants to Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur



Some 202 Rohingya were aboard a fishing boat intercepted by Malaysian authorities off Langkawi island

Malaysia yesterday detained 202 suspected Rohingya Muslims who arrived illegally by boat, a top official said, raising fears that people smugglers are back in action despite the coronavirus pandemic.

Zulinda Ramly, deputy director with the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, said a large fishing boat ferried the suspected Rohingya migrants to the northern resort island of Langkawi.

"Authorities are investigating complaints by the migrants that three individuals -- a boat

captain and two crew members -- were operatives of a human smuggling ring," Ramly said in a statement.

Italian mayor fights for mass virus blood testing

Robbio | Italy

The mayor of a pandemic-hit Italian town is trying to get everyone's blood tested in a controversial attempt to end weeks of confinement and finally get people back to work.

Most Italian authorities wish he would stop.

The story of Robbio mayor Roberto Francese has generated a fair bit of interest in a Mediterranean country where people's primary mission is to not catch COVID-19.

No one is sure how the old way of life can resume without setting off a second pandemic wave.

Into this debate stepped Francese -- a self-confident mayor of a town of 6,000 in Italy's northwest that primarily grows rice.

"We can never improve the situation without separating the healthy from the sick," Francese said. "That is what the blood test is for."

Antibodies

Separating the healthy from the sick in a 21st century Western democracy might strike some as a mad idea from a bad science fiction film.

The Robbio mayor has no such qualms and wants everyone immediately tested for antibodies.



People in the small north Italian town of Robbio are having their blood tested to see if they have developed immunity to the coronavirus which has ravaged the region. If they have, it could be key to ending crippling restrictions on daily life

The idea is that people who get infected with the new disease and survive develop at least some immunity against it.

These are the antibodies that show up in blood tests -- akin to a tell-tale scar from a wound.

But COVID-19 is a new disease and the science is not there yet to confirm whether coronavirus antibodies will actually make us safe.

The private blood tests are also fairly expensive -- around 45 euros (\$50) each -- and are still undergoing certification in most countries to make sure they actually work.

Italy's ISS public health institute clearly states that "there are currently no commercial

kits to confirm the diagnosis" of the novel coronavirus through blood tests.

Francese is not deterred by any of this.

"I will pay for all those who cannot afford it," he said at a town gym where the blood tests were being given by nurses in green coveralls.

"My citizens know it, they come here and say, 'The mayor is paying for it.'"

Francese also brushes off the regional authorities' decision to ban laboratories from accepting the town's tests for processing.

He is getting a private company to process the 1,000 blood samples taken in the past three days.

Latest developments

Some 143 more cases of the novel coronavirus have been reported in Tokyo, the city's governor said yesterday, with the highest daily jump bringing the number of cases in the Japanese capital to more than 1,000.

UK will tighten coronavirus restrictions if people flout rules: health minister. "I don't want to have to take away exercise as a reason to leave home... if too many people are not following the rules," he told the BBC's Andrew Marr programme. "At the moment the vast majority of people are. But people should not break the rules because that would mean that the virus spreads more and we then might have to take further action."



British Health Secretary Matt Hancock on Sunday denied there was any disagreement with Finance Minister Rishi Sunak about when lockdown restrictions to fight the coronavirus could be lifted.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Saturday postponed moving civil servants to a planned new administrative capital city to 2021 from 2020 due to the coronavirus epidemic, a blow to a flagship project for Sisi that has already faced delays. Sisi also postponed the launch of some other big projects including the Grand Egyptian Museum and the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization to next year, the presidency said in a statement.

Iran yesterday started repatriating nationals stranded abroad in its first flight in weeks since it closed its international airport to stem the novel coronavirus. The first of four planes touched down at the Beirut international airport late Sunday morning bringing in 78 passengers from Riyadh, local television reported.

A gang battle in Mexico has left at least 19 people dead in the northern state of Chihuahua, officials said Saturday. At least five armed clashes have occurred in the Madera community so far this year, local authorities have said.



A woman carries a disabled man wearing a protective face mask in the Sabra refugee camp in Lebanon where vulnerable Syrian and Palestinian refugees are bracing for the coronavirus

A Sudanese refugee went on a knife rampage in a town in southeastern France on Saturday, killing two people in what is being treated as a terrorist attack. The attack in broad daylight, which President Emmanuel Macron called "an odious act", took place with the country on lockdown in a bid to stem the spread of the deadly coronavirus. Counter-terrorism prosecutors have launched an investigation into "murder linked to a terrorist enterprise" after the rampage in a string of shops in Romans-sur-Isere, a riverside town with a population of about 35,000. The assailant, identified only as Abdallah A.-O., a refugee in his 30s from Sudan who lives in the town, was arrested without a fight by police.

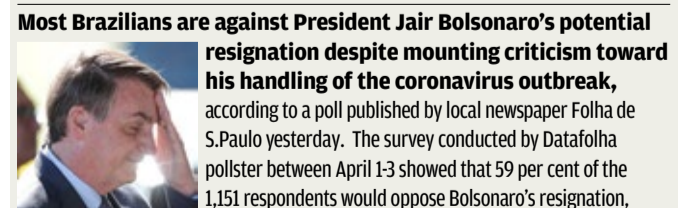
Ecuador's vice president Otto Sonnenholzner has apologized after scores of bodies were left on the streets of Guayaquil as the coronavirus ravages the horror-struck port city. Residents had published videos on social media showing abandoned bodies in the streets in the Latin American city worst hit by the pandemic. Authorities collected at least 150 corpses from streets and homes earlier this week, but did not confirm how many of the dead were victims of the outbreak.



Australian police yesterday launched a criminal investigation after thousands of passengers were allowed to disembark a coronavirus-stricken cruise ship in Sydney and 10 later died of the illness. The government last month allowed 2,700 passengers to walk off the Carnival Australia-owned Ruby Princess and travel to their homes around the country -- despite a ban on cruise ships docking in Australia being announced just days earlier.

Singapore reported 120 new coronavirus cases yesterday, by far its highest daily rise, and quarantined nearly 20,000 migrant workers in their dormitories.

Most Brazilians are against President Jair Bolsonaro's potential resignation despite mounting criticism toward his handling of the coronavirus outbreak, according to a poll published by local newspaper Folha de S.Paulo yesterday. The survey conducted by Datafolha pollster between April 1-3 showed that 59 per cent of the 1,151 respondents would oppose Bolsonaro's resignation, while 37pc would approve such move and 4pc could not give an opinion. The margin of error was three percentage points, the newspaper said. On Friday, the same pollster said Bolsonaro's coronavirus performance has been "bad" or "awful" for 39% of respondents surveyed, up from 33pc last month. Those who consider his response to the health crisis "good" or "great" slipped to 33pc from 35pc.





Hailey Bieber

Hailey Bieber learnt to appreciate little things amid COVID-19

Los Angeles

Model Hailey Bieber is spending quality time with her husband, singer Justin Bieber amidst the coronavirus lockdown.

During an Instagram Live Q&A, Hailey spoke about how she's recently learned to appreciate the "simple and small things in life that really do make me happy", reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "I thought I was going to have a lot of anxiety through this process and there

has been some.

"But it's also really shown me that the simplicity in life and kind of dialling everything back has made me so happy."

"I've been happier than I felt in months just from being able to be low-key and just hang, and not have things on a schedule. I feel really reconnected with myself and that's unexpectedly made me really happy," Hailey added.

Hailey and Justin are currently based at their 9,000 square-foot estate in Ontario.



Kylie Jenner

Kylie Jenner wants to have 'seven kids'

Los Angeles

Reality TV star and make-up czarina Kylie Jenner has admitted that she wants to have "seven kids", but she is "not ready" at this point in time.

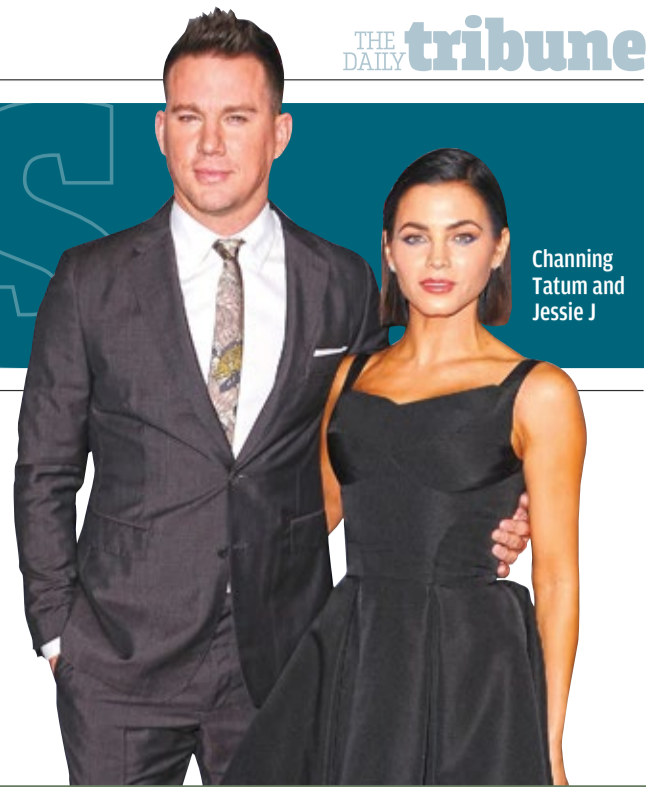
Currently, Kylie is a single mother-of-one, following her split from Travis Scott.

She opened up about having more children during an appearance on her close friend Stassie Karanikolaou's #DoYourPart Instagram Live series, reports dailymail.co.uk.

"I want seven kids down the line, but not right now," the 22-year-old said.

Kylie shares two-year-old daughter Stormi Webster with former boyfriend Travis Scott.

She went on to explain: "Pregnancy is just not a joke, it's a serious thing and it's hard, I am not ready for that just yet."



Channing Tatum and Jessie J

Channing Tatum and Jessie J call it quits, again

Los Angeles

Months after getting back together, Hollywood star Channing Tatum and singer Jessie J have broken up for the second time.

The duo, who reunited in January following a month-long split, have parted ways again.

A source told People magazine that the break-up was "totally amicable".

"They cared enough about each other to try again but re-

alised it was better to move on," the insider added.

The "Domino" singer, 32, and the "Magic Mike" star, 39, got back together in January after splitting in December 2019 after over a year of dating.

Tatum started dating Jessie after his split from Jenna Dewan, his wife of 11 years. The former couple have a six-year-old daughter, Everly.

Jessie was previously in a relationship with singer Luke James.

Big B, Rajinikanth, Priyanka come up with short film on coronavirus



Big B and Rajinikanth

Mumbai

As the world is facing a severe health crisis due to the outbreak of coronavirus, a slew of celebrities, including Amitabh Bachchan, Rajinikanth, Chiranjeevi, Priyanka Chopra, Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt among many others, have come together to create awareness about COVID-19 through a short film, titled "Family".

Conceptualized and virtually directed by Praseon Pandey in collaboration with Big B, the film will show that staying at home, staying safe, maintaining hygiene, working from home and maintaining social distancing can be productive and should be taken in one's stride.

"Family" will be premiered across Sony Network on Monday at 9 p.m.

Adam Levine denies pregnancy rumours

Los Angeles

Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine shut down the pregnancy rumours, saying his wife Behati Prinsloo would "punch" him in the face if he asked for a third baby.

During an interaction with Howard Stern on his "SiriusXM" show, the Maroon 5 frontman denied recent rumours that Prinsloo is expecting her third child, reports dailymail.co.uk.

Levine said his model-wife is vehemently against having more children, and she is happy with their two daughters - Dusty Rose,

three, and Gio Grace, two.

"No, she's not currently pregnant. I think if I asked her to have another baby right now she'd punch me in the face," Levine said.



Adam Levine and Behati Prinsloo

Priyanka Chopra thanks PM Modi after he lauds her contribution to combat COVID-19

Los Angeles

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas on Sunday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for lauding her for contributions to the PM CARES Fund.

Priyanka replied to Prime Minister's tweet in which he had lauded her for her contribution and tweeted, "Thank you shri @narendramodi. We are strongest together."

She also took the moment to thank everyone who has contributed as her tweet further read, "Thank you to everyone who also contributed and helped impact this important cause."

This comes two days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded her and tweeted, "Be it individuals or institutions, diligent professionals or eminent personalities, everyone is coming together for the healthier future of India. Thank you @icsi_cs @priyankachopra @anilkumble1074 for contributing to PM-CARES."

Priyanka Chopra



Elton John donates \$1 million to HIV/Aids charity

London

Legendary singer Elton John has pledged \$1 million to his Aids Foundation in the hope that it isn't forgotten amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The iconic singer, 73, admitted that he was concerned HIV/Aids sufferers would be hit with a "double whammy" due to the strain on the health service, during a Bright Minded Live-stream with Miley Cyrus, reports dailymail.co.uk

Elton John

John said he is working with his Aids Foundation and the new funds would be available in the "next few months".

He said: "I'm going to stick to my guns with the Aids Foundation and make sure because of this global pandemic that's happening that the people who are suffering from another global pandemic don't get forgotten."

"That's what my founda-

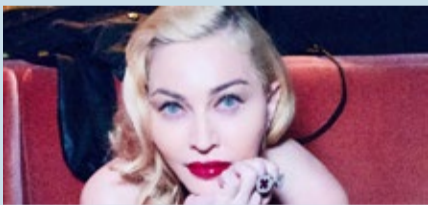


Madonna Joins Forces With Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Help Create COVID-19 Vaccine

Los Angeles

In order to help create a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, pop diva Madonna has pledged to support the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The 61-year-old singer released a statement on her official website on Friday, saying she was "impressed" by the foundation, owned by the business magnate-philanthropist, which is working towards funding seven different research labs to find a cure for COVID-19.



"I'm joining the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation effort to find a drug that will prevent or treat COVID-19. We need this to protect our health workers, the most vulnerable, and all of our friends and families."

"I'm talking about this: I am so impressed by the work of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator's urgent efforts to find new or existing drugs that could effectively prevent or treat the disease," Madonna said.

SUDOKU

		1	8	2				9
		4		3				
					7		1	
8	7						6	1
	4							2
9	6							5
		8		6				
				1			2	
		2			9	8	7	

Yesterday's solution

9	2	7	4	1	5	6	3	8
3	8	4	6	7	9	5	2	1
6	1	5	3	8	2	7	9	4
8	3	2	5	6	4	9	1	7
1	5	9	8	2	7	3	4	6
4	7	6	9	3	1	2	8	5
5	6	8	2	4	3	1	7	9
7	4	3	1	9	6	8	5	2
2	9	1	7	5	8	4	6	3

How to play
Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52
53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65
66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104

Across
1- Headland; 5- The Younger and The Elder; 10- Household; 14- Western writer Wister; 15- Papal garment; 16- Wading bird; 17- Stimulate; 18- Female horses; 19- It smells; 20- Actress Singer; 21- Cuts off; 23- Portable bed; 25- ... culpa; 26- Rulers; 31- Bronze medalist's place; 35- Armed conflict; 36- Light ...; 38- Scoff; 40- "The Time Machine" race; 42- Computer key; 44- Blind as ...; 45- Halts; 47- Borge's countrymen; 49- Malt beverage; 50- In conflict with, with "of"; 52- Defensive mounds; 54- Floor covering; 56- Grab a bite; 57- Directly; 62- Some DVD players; 66- Trigonometric function; 67- Capital on the Red River; 68- The life of Riley; 69- Wrinkle remover; 70- ... Gay; 71- Parody; 72- Architect Saarinen; 73- Kidney-related; 74- Dick Tracy's love;

Down
1- Monk's hood; 2- Horton Hears ...; 3- Jury member; 4- Tempt; 5- Torpid; 6- Composer Khachaturian; 7- Diamond cover; 8- Fuming sulphuric acid; 9- Stanza of six lines; 10- Trace; 11- Clarinet cousin; 12- Fail to hit; 13- Linguistic suffix; 22- Contented sighs; 24- ... mouse?; 26- More than one female sheep; 27- Mediterranean island; 28- Validation; 29- Monetary unit of South Africa; 30- Lute of India; 32- One ... million; 33- Rod used to reinforce concrete; 34- Distributed cards; 37- Actress Sofer; 39- Hwy's; 41- Wall St. debut; 43- Kind of measures; 46- Bottom-line numbers; 48- Pampering place; 51- Suds; 53- Still; 55- Macbeth, for one; 57- Send packing; 58- Are you ... out?; 59- City in Western Nevada; 60- Presently; 61- Vincent Lopez's theme song; 63- Birthday treat; 64- Garage sale sign; 65- Hardens; 66- Sprechen ... Deutsch?;

Yesterday's solution

L	A	T	E	R	A	T	A	C	O	U	P		
A	S	E	A	E	R	E	C	T	A	W	R	Y	
W	H	A	T	V	E	R	S	E	T	E	A	R	
S	C	A	B	I	A	N	N	E	E	D	L	E	
C	U	R	L	E	W	C	A	P	E	T	O	W	N
A	R	M	E	D	A	E	R	O	H	I	O		
L	A	P	S	L	A	N	T	A	D	D			
A	T	I	P	H	I	S	S	T	E	A	R	E	
R	E	T	R	I	E	V	E	A	L	B	A	N	Y
I	R	A	E	T	E	N	Y	A					
C	R	A	V	A	T	O	R	O	N	D	R	I	S
I	A	M	A	H	E	N	R	I	D	R	I	P	
N	Y	E	T	E	L	T	O	N	O	N	C	E	
E	S	S	E	S	O	R	T	N	E	A	R		

SPORTS

sports

Man City will not seek virus furlough offer

AFP | London

Manchester City say they will not be furloughing employees at the taxpayer's expense after a number of Premier League clubs took advantage of the British government's scheme to fund non-playing staff during the coronavirus epidemic.

On Saturday, table-topping Liverpool became the fifth Premier League club to announce a furlough, accessing the government's job retention scheme, which means the public purse will cover 80 percent of wages.

There has been considerable criticism from former players, who believe the safety net is not being used as intended.

Liverpool announced a £42 million (\$51 million) pre-tax profit in February.

Liverpool's opponents in

last year's Champions League final, Tottenham, have also used the furlough option, along with Newcastle, Norwich and Bournemouth.

Britain's Press Association said City's stance was approved and staff informed before Liverpool's position became public.

"We can confirm, following a decision by the chairman and board last week, that Manchester City will not be utilising the UK government's coronavirus job retention scheme," the club said in a statement.

"We remain determined to protect our people, their jobs and our business whilst at the same time doing what we can to support our wider community at this most challenging time for everybody."

Liverpool, who are topping up the remaining 20 percent



Manchester City fans wave flags during a match (file photo)

of salaries, were criticised by former players Jamie Carragher, Dietmar Hamann and Stan Collymore.

Gary Lineker, speaking to the BBC on Sunday, also appeared to question the clubs' actions.

"The big clubs, you'd have thought, would have been savvy enough to perhaps try to help more of their workers when players are earning so much money," he said.

But Liverpool fan group Spirit of Shankly supported the club's move.

"The use of the furlough scheme maintains that commitment (to treat staff fairly) and it ensures that all lower-paid staff who run a variety of contracts will continue to receive 100 per cent of their wage. That's got to be seen as a positive," the group said in a statement.

World T20 organisers hopeful despite potential clash with other sports

Reuters | Melbourne

Organisers expect this year's Twenty20 World Cup to be a success even if it has to vie with Australian rules football and rugby league for viewers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the head of the organising committee said on Sunday.

The Oct. 18-Nov. 15 tournament was slotted into Australia's sports calendar between the end of the football season and the beginning of summer cricket to draw maximum attention.

With both the Australian Football League (AFL) and National Rugby League (AFL) seasons suspended due to the pandemic, they may now clash with the Twenty20 World Cup when they resume.

"In the event they have extended seasons...we still think the World Cup is a really strong proposition that might not come here again for 10 or 20 years," Nick Hockley, CEO of the organising committee, told Australian Associated Press (AAP).

"People love a World Cup. Cricket is Australia's national



A general view of Sydney Cricket Ground (file photo)

sport ... and T20 is the format that appeals to the broadest possible demographic," he said.

"We're very encouraged already by the take up in terms of ticket sales."

The women's tournament proved a big success, with hosts Australia beating India in the March 8 final to defend their title.

The organisers expect the men's tournament to replicate that success despite uncertainty around it.

The governing International Cricket Council (ICC) has maintained there is no change in its plans, and Hockley hoped they would not require any either.

"We're wanting to give ourselves the best possible chance of going ahead as planned, so there's no imminent or quick decision," he said.

"Hopefully it's all resolved and we go ahead. In the event that it isn't completely resolved, we are looking at all the different scenarios. Which is only prudent," he added.

Sri Lanka T20 team need fine-tuning, says coach Arthur

Reuters | Colombo

Sri Lanka's Twenty20 squad needs some adjustments, said coach Mickey Arthur, who will be overseeing the team's bid for a second 20-overs World Cup title later this year.

In home fixtures last month, Sri Lanka swept a three-match one-day series against West Indies but lost two Twenty20 Internationals.

"Our T20 side is still going to take some fine-tuning and this was amplified against a very strong West Indies team that simply had too much power for us," Arthur said in a chat with Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) media unit.

"I think the most important thing is building a method to win games based on the resources that you have at your disposal and then making sure that the players are under no illusion as to what that method is based on our strengths," he said.

Pressure grows for shortened IPL behind closed doors



Indian cricket fans wave national tricolour flags during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 final
AFP | Mumbai

months.

"Let's say July-August is the earliest," said Kevin Pietersen, the former England batsman.

"I do truly believe the IPL should happen. I think every single player around the world is desperate to play the IPL," he said on Indian broadcaster Star Sports.

Pietersen suggested the eight-team tournament be shortened from its normal eight-week duration and played behind closed doors.

"There could be a way in which to get some money into the franchises, into the economy by having a situation where you use maybe three venues which are completely closed to fans," said Pietersen.

Players are putting pressure on cricket authorities to plan a shortened Twenty20 Indian Premier League later in the year to "kickstart" the sports economy after the coronavirus lockdown.

The world's richest cricket tournament has been postponed until April 15, which coincides with the end of India's 21 day nationwide shutdown to halt the spread of the pandemic.

But with the number of cases and deaths rising and India isolated from international travel, few believe any sport will be possible in the sub-continent for at least three

Ex-Honduras president disgraced by FIFAGate dies aged 76

AFP | Tegucigalpa

Honduran ex-president Rafael Callejas, who pleaded guilty in the United States for his part in the sweeping FIFAGate football corruption scandal, died Saturday aged 76, his family said.

Callejas passed away of a heart attack in a hospital in Atlanta, Georgia, his family said.

"We are deeply saddened to announce that our beloved husband, father and grandfather has flown into the arms of the Lord," his wife Norma Gaborit de Callejas said in a statement.



FIFA president Sepp Blatter (R), gives a medal to the President of the National Football Federation of Honduras, Rafael Callejas (L) (file photo)

Callejas was born on November 14, 1943 in Tegucigalpa.

A former student of the University of Mississippi in the United States, he served as president of Honduras from 1990 to 1994.

As president, he implemented a neo-liberal economic policy, privatizing many public services.

He was also head of the country's football federation from 2002 to 2015, and is also a former member of FIFA's Television and Marketing Committee.

As such he became one of the

40 officials implicated in the vast corruption scandal known as FIFAGate which came to shake the football world.

Callejas was accused of receiving bribes in exchange for awarding Florida-based Media World the television broadcasting and commercial rights to Honduras' qualifying matches for the 2014, 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

He pleaded guilty in a US court. But Callejas also suffered from leukemia and his sentencing was postponed many times due to his health problems.

RCB burdened by title pressure - Kohli

Reuters | New Delhi

Royal Challengers Bangalore need to rediscover the joy of cricket if they are to end their Indian Premier League (IPL) title drought, captain Virat Kohli has said.

Star-studded Bangalore have reached three finals of the Twenty20 league but are one of only three existing franchises -- along with Delhi and Punjab -- not to have won the title.

Shaikh Khalid assures protection of sportspeople during pandemic

TDT | Manama

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa affirmed that efforts would be maintained to implement the directives of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor, President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports to bolster the measures taken to protect the society in general and sportspeople in particular from COVID-19 pandemic.

The First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and Bahrain Olympic Committee President's remarks came during chairing the weekly meeting with directors and officials in Bahrain's sport and youth field which was held through a video call in implementation of HH Shaikh Nasser's instructions and the Coor-



HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa during a meeting with Sports Directors and Officials over the internet

minating Committee's decisions to deny the spread of the virus in the Bahraini society.

Among the attendees in the meeting were many leading figures in the sports and youth area

in Bahrain, including Shaikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Aymen bin Tawfiq Al Moayed, Minister of Youth and Sports, HE Dr Abdulrahman Sadiq Askar, Assistant Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Mohammed Hassan Al Nusf, Secretary-General of Bahrain Olympic Committee and Mohammed Hamad Al Ajmy, Advisor to the President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.

At the beginning of the meeting, HH Shaikh Khalid welcomed the officials, thanking them for the efforts being exerted to maintain the precautionary measures against the virus. Thereafter, he discussed with them executing HH Shaikh Nasser's directives in an effort to shield the sports society in Bahrain from contracting the virus.

KHK Heroes calls for a national challenge

TDT | Manama

With the devastating impact the Coronavirus Pandemic is having on the global community, KHK Heroes called on the nation for a united cause; helping those who need it now more than ever.

HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa directed KHK Heroes Boards of Directors to initiate campaigns to support the vision HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier and HH Shaikh Nasser bin

Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.

KHK Heroes called on Bahrain to make food donations, contribute financially, volunteer time to the KHK Heroes or create and post a video online and nominate someone else to pay it forward.

The initiative is targeted to help anyone who is struggling during the Coronavirus Pandemic; the gesture could be big or small, anything helps!

Ecclestone says 2020 Formula One championship should be cancelled



Sebastian Vettel shakes hands with Bernie Ecclestone before the 2017 Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix (file photo)

AFP | London

Bernie Ecclestone says this season's Formula One championship should be cancelled because it appears unlikely that enough races can be completed for it to be valid due to the coronavirus crisis.

The opening eight rounds of the 2020 season have been either cancelled or postponed, with doubts over a number of the other 14 races as the pandemic continues to overshadow the sporting calendar.

A minimum of eight races are required for the championship to be valid, but former F1 chief executive Ecclestone believes that will not be possible.

"We should stop the championship this year and start again

next year, hopefully, because I can't see it's going to be possible to get the right amount of races in that count for a championship," the 89-year-old told BBC Radio.

"There's got to be eight from memory, and I can't see them getting that in. It's a difficult situation."

Lewis Hamilton was this year aiming to match Michael Schumacher's record of seven drivers' titles, though there have been suggestions a truncated season would diminish the achievement.

But Ecclestone, set to become a father for the fourth time, said: "I don't think it will make a lot of difference to Lewis. He would win whatever the race number, whether it be eight, 16 or 20."

Australia coach says empty stadiums an option on resumption

Reuters | Sydney

Australia coach Justin Langer says playing cricket without fans in the stadiums is an option worth considering if it helped get the game going again after the worst of the coronavirus crisis has passed.

As with most sports, efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have forced the shutdown of cricket around the world and Langer thinks teams would be keen to play in empty stadiums upon resumption if the alternative was a longer furlough.

"When you started off playing underage cricket, there's no crowds there," the Western Australian told BBC radio.

"Maybe your mum and dad came and watched, or your brother and sister were bored and playing on the swings somewhere else.

"You played it because you



Australia coach Justin Langer looks on during nets (file photo)

loved playing the game, you loved playing with your mates and you loved playing the game."

The Australian team had the experience of playing behind closed doors in the opening match of their most recent ODI series against New Zealand at the Sydney Cricket Ground on March 13. The final two matches in Sydney and Hobart were scratched as measures to control the spread of the coronavirus took hold, while a return series in New Zealand was also cancelled.

Rooney says handling of PL pay row 'a disgrace'

AFP | London

Wayne Rooney has criticised the government and the Premier League for placing footballers in a "no-win situation" over proposed pay cuts after players were urged to make sacrifices during the coronavirus crisis.

The former England captain, now playing with Championship side Derby, penned an impassioned column in the Sunday Times saying his fellow professionals were "easy targets" in the wider response to the pandemic.

It came after the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) said a proposed 30 percent pay cut could hurt the National Health Service because it would hit tax receipts.

Rooney said he had both the means and the will to make financial contributions, either in the form of salary reductions or direct donations to the NHS, but felt the public pressure being exerted on players was unhelpful. The Premier League's suggested strategy involving a combination of pay cuts and deferrals amounting to 30 percent of wages, was discussed in a conference call with players' and managers' representatives on Saturday.

Initial talks were already taking place before key political figures, including Health Secretary Matt Hancock, called for action.

"If the government approached me to help support nurses financially or buy ventilators I'd be proud to do so -- as long as I knew where the money was going," wrote Rooney.

The 34-year-old added: "I'm in a place where I could give something up. Not every footballer is in the same position. Yet suddenly the whole profession has been put on the spot



Derby County's English striker Wayne Rooney reacts during a match (file photo)

"I'm in a place where I could give something up. Not every footballer is in the same position. Yet suddenly the whole profession has been put on the spot with a demand for 30 percent pay cuts across the board. Why are footballers suddenly the scapegoats?"

WAYNE ROONEY

with a demand for 30 percent pay cuts across the board. Why are footballers suddenly the scapegoats?

"How the past few days have played out is a disgrace."

The Premier League has been seen as lagging behind other European leagues in its response to coronavirus and was accused by one British lawmaker of operating in a "moral vacuum".

But Rooney questioned the wisdom of the Premier League in preempting behind-the-scenes talks involving players with its own proposals for sweeping reductions.

"In my opinion it is now a no-win situation," he said. "Whatever way you look at it, we're easy targets."

He said the Premier League's contribution of £20 million to the NHS was "a drop in the ocean" compared with the amount clubs would save with wage cuts.

And he questioned why stars from other sports were not the focus of similar attention.

Former England striker Gary

Lineker echoed Rooney's sentiments, telling the BBC that footballers he had spoken to were "desperately keen" to offer help but were an easy target.

"Why not call on all the wealthy to try and help if they possibly can rather than just pick on footballers?" he said.

"Nobody seems to talk about the bankers, the CEOs, huge millionaires. Are they standing up? Are they being asked to stand up? We don't know."

PFA warning

The PFA said its members wanted to play their part but warned that a proposed 30 percent salary reduction would cost the country 200 million pounds (\$245 million) in lost tax receipts.

England manager Gareth Southgate has reportedly taken a 30 percent pay cut, although the Football Association is yet to confirm the move.

A handful of top-flight clubs, including last year's Champions League finalists Liverpool and Tottenham, have opted to furlough non-playing staff using the safety net of the government's job retention scheme.

But former Liverpool players Jamie Carragher and Stan Collymore strongly criticised the move by the European champions, who in February announced pre-tax profits of 42 million pounds (\$51 million) for 2018/19.

Rooney's former England and Manchester United teammate Gary Neville, now a leading broadcaster, was highly critical of the Premier League.

"The PL are handling the CV (coronavirus) crisis terribly," he wrote on Twitter, before outlining a checklist of perceived missteps including their slowness in imposing a lockdown and the "PR disaster" of furloughing.