CITY A.M.

BUSINESS WITH PERSONALITY

TAKE A PUNT HEAD TO CAMBRIDGE FOR A MUCH NEEDED GETAWAY P25

THE NEW AVON LADY WE TALK TO THE BOSS OF THE DOORSTEP BEAUTY GIANT P16

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BUSINESS ON THE BRINK

AIRLINES, HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AND TRAIN OPERATORS IN CALLS FOR STATE SUPPORT

JESS CLARK AND EDWARD THICKNESSE

@jclarkjourno @edthicknesse

THE EXISTENTIAL threat to business posed by the Covid-19 pandemic became crystal clear this weekend as a host of industries warned of a potentially fatal cash crunch in the coming weeks.

The aviation industry led calls for targeted government support, with train operators struggling with lower passenger numbers and the hospitality industry not far behind.

Carrier trade body Airlines UK said "who knows what will be left" if the government were to fail to step in to support giants including Virgin Atlantic and British Airways.

That call was echoed by one London hospitality bigwig, who said small bars and restaurants would begin making redundancies as soon as this week.

With the global economy essentially paralysed by a combination of travel restrictions and uncertainty, PM Boris Johnson will seek to find an international consensus on packages to support businesses through a host of phone calls with other world leaders this week. Over the weekend he spoke with US President Donald Trump and Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, noting economic disruption in both calls.

Last week markets across the world tumbled amid fears of lengthy disruption to supply chains, an ongoing oil price war and virus fears.

The airline sector is set to be top of the list for support. Yesterday, Stockholm-based SAS said it was temporarily laying off 10,000 staff — 90 per cent of its workforce — and suspending most of its operations as demand becomes "essentially non-existent".

Today Virgin Atlantic will deliver a letter to Johnson calling for a £7.5bn package to support the UK's airlines.

Virgin's demands, first reported by Sky News, include a credit facility for the duration of the pandemic.

Unite the union has also called on the government to support jobs in the industry by making contributions to cover workers' pay and to consider taking a stake in airlines and airports to help ensure their survival.

While airlines hit turbulence, there is also trouble on the railways, with passenger numbers significantly down across the UK.

One industry source told the BBC that ridership has fallen by a fifth on certain lines.

It is understood that train companies too are in negotiations with the government about how they can survive the coming weeks.

On the capital's streets it is a similar story for pubs, bars and restaurants, as punters stay at home.

Some could have just four to six weeks left before they run out of cash, Jonathan Downey, the founder and chief executive of street food market owners London Union, told *City A.M.*

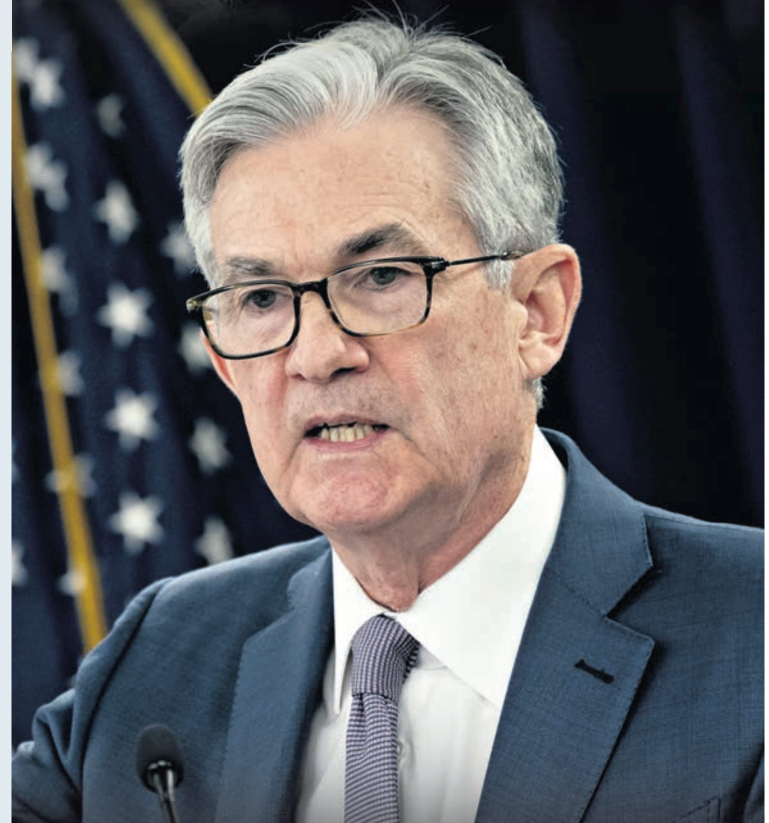
Visitors to London's restaurants and bars fell 39 per cent last Saturday compared to 2019, according to analysis by Wireless Social.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced a package of measures in last week's Budget designed to help small operators, including discounts on business rates, but Downey said "it is just meaningless now because things are moving so quickly."

Many of the emergency measures will not apply to bars and restaurants in the centre of London as their so-called rateable value is above the threshold for support.

CONTINUES ON P3

CUT TO THE CHASE Fed slashes rates to near zero in stimulus bid



EDWARD THICKNESSE

@edthicknesse

THE US Federal Reserve late last night cut interest rates to near zero and revealed a huge stimulus programme, in a fresh attempt to shore up the economy amid the devastation caused by the coronavirus epidemic.

The move, which slashed rates to zero to 0.25 per cent, came just days after an initial emergency cut of 50 basis points, which had lowered the Fed's rate to one to 1.25 per cent.

In a statement, the Fed said it would maintain the basement rate until "it is confident that the economy has weathered recent events". Policy makers will then do what they can to "support a swift return to normal once they have passed," chair Jerome Powell added.

The Fed said it had also undertaken coordinated action with central banks such as the Bank of England and the European Central Bank to enhance global dollar liquidity through existing dollar swap arrangements.

This was in addition to a $700bn (£564.4bn) quantitative easing plan in a bid to protect the economy, which has been battered by the outbreak over the last fortnight.

CONTINUES ON P6

There is *some* good news: The boom continues for new UK distilleries

JESS CLARK

@jclarkjourno

THE NEXT few weeks may leave many of us needing a stiff drink but the good news is there is more homegrown choice than ever, as the number of distilleries in the UK surges due to the continued popularity of craft gin.

Distilleries jumped 20 per cent to 246 over the last year, up from 205 the previous year, as the UK gin industry toasted a nine per cent increase in export sales to £672m in 2019. Whisky has also proved to be popular, as Scotch exports grew 4.4 per cent to £4.9bn last year.

Consumers are willing to pay premium prices for craft gin, prompting the number of new entrants to the market to jump in recent years.

Some entrepreneurs have recognised that big drinks firms are eyeing smaller "authentic brands". Deal activity in the sector has been strong, including Glasgow blender Douglas Laing & Co's purchase of Strathearn Distillery in October last year.

The British Honey Company, which recently bought the assets of the London Distillery Company including the Dodds brand, today announced it has raised £4.25m through a listing on NEX.

UHY Hacker Young partner James Simmonds said: "The growth in British craft distilling has not stopped yet.

"Growth won't continue forever, but for now, domestic and overseas consumers' demand for UK craft spirits hasn't yet been met."

New craft gins including Holborn are driving growth

FTSE 100 ▲ 5,266.11 +128.63 FTSE 250 ▼ 15,562.00 -155.42 DOW ▲ 23,185.62 +1,985.00 NASDAQ ▲ 7,874.88 +673.07 £/$ ▼ 1.235 -0.023 £/€ ▼ 1.116 -0.014 €/$ ▼ 1.106 -0.007

CITY A.M.

THE CITY VIEW

Our ability to overcome should never be in doubt

WE ARE being told to prepare for significant changes to our way of life. Within weeks, perhaps sooner, the government will require anyone over the age of 70 to stay in their homes. The health secretary Matt Hancock says that when the order comes it will last "for a very long time", while Public Health England yesterday said the epidemic in the UK could last until next spring, and may cause 7.9m people to be hospitalised. The implications are profound, and the social response required to meet such conditions will have to be of a scale unprecedented in peacetime. As the government ramps up its coronavirus strategy, we will hear and witness things not spoken about or seen within the memories of most of us: emergency laws, civil contingencies, requisitions. The government will grant itself the authority to seize property for conversion into hospitals, close ports and detain vehicles. Factories are being asked to stop producing engine parts and consumer goods and repurpose for the manufacturing of ventilators and medical equipment. All of this looms even before a state of emergency is declared, which would grant the government sweeping executive authority. Ministers and their advisers are haunted by the question of how we, the public, will cope with such disruption. Over the weekend, Mohamed El-Erian, chief economic adviser at Allianz, said that all businesses, politicians, policymakers and members of the public must prepare for "a huge paradigm shift for economies, institutions and social norms" that will result in "unprecedented sudden economic stops". He suggested that the coming economic disruption will be comparable to crises normally endured by developing countries and failed states. Families will have been visited by tragedy and businesses with us today may not be with us tomorrow. Support for corporate Britain will have to be made available, on a scale far larger than the measures announced in the Budget. Small firms in particular will need immediate relief. El-Erian demanded, with an eye on both the economic and social hardship confronting us, that the moment is met with unambiguous, honest and transparent communication from all leaders — prime ministers and chief executives alike. It is wise advice, made salient by the irresponsible and reckless decision by an anonymous source to brief much of the government's planned next steps to a single journalist ahead of any formal announcement. Assuming the government regains the ability to speak with one voice, it will find a public willing and able to absorb the shocks. The social fabric will hold. In fact, it will likely strengthen. Our ability to adapt and overcome a national emergency should not be in doubt. And so, as the news twists and turns — and even darkens — we must not lose sight of the temporary nature of this disaster, even if its consequences stretch beyond the immediate impact. Nor should we recoil from considering life beyond the crisis. This newspaper has always exhibited an optimist's instinct; a sense that, even against apparent evidence to the contrary, life is getting better and the trend will continue. That it may be hard to see the value of such a claim at times like these is exactly why it should be stated.

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PUTIN THE BOOT IN Ukrainians take to the streets to pay tribute to volunteers fighting against Russians in Crimea

UKRAINIANS marched through the streets of Kiev over the weekend in the March of the Volunteers, supporting those who signed up to fight against the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and to counter land grabs in the east of the country led by Russian paramilitaries. Thousands died in clashes that continue, on and off, to this day.

Analysts warn virus to spark global recession

HARRY ROBERTSON
@harrygrobertson

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund says a global recession comes when annual international growth slips below 2.5 per cent. More charitable economists say it has to fall below two per cent.

Either way, economists have warned in recent days the coronavirus outbreak means the world is heading for one.

Covid-19 last week spread rapidly in Europe and the US. The jump in cases combined with an oil price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia and a ban on Europeans travelling to the US to send stock markets crashing on their worst day since 1987.

Actions by central banks in the last week — the US Federal Reserve pumped money into short-term lending markets, the Bank of England slashed rates and the European Central Bank (ECB) ramped up quantitative easing — did little to ease the selloff.

Nor could government firepower such as the £12bn package from UK chancellor Rishi Sunak and a spending promise from the naturally thrifty German government ease investors' fears.

"A global recession is now likely," said Christian Keller, head of economics research at Barclays.

There have now been more than 155,000 confirmed cases around the world, with more than 5,800 deaths.

"The significant restrictions to public life, including quarantines, school and university closures, reduced travel... imply large negative effects on activity in the second quarter," said Keller.

Barclays predicted global growth will be just 1.8 per cent this year. The US economy — the world's biggest, which chalked up a 2.3 per cent expansion in 2019 — will grow by just 0.8 per cent, the lender said.

Analysts at BMO Capital Markets said the global economy will grow 1.6 per cent this year, with US GDP expanding just 0.5 per cent.

How deep and long the downturn will be depends on the course of the virus outbreak, the effects of the current chaos in stock and bond markets, and whether companies start sacking workers because they fear they will not survive, said Sal Gauteri, senior economist at BMO.

The Bank of England may follow the US Federal Reserve's lead and lower interest rates further to 0.1 per cent.

WHAT THE OTHER PAPERS SAY THIS MORNING

FINANCIAL TIMES

VANGUARD, BLACKROCK AND STATE STREET SLIM ASSETS

The world's three biggest fund managers have seen their assets shrink by an estimated $2.8 trillion (£6.45 trillion) this year as a global sell-off in financial markets heralds a decisive end to the industry's golden era of growth. Blackrock, Vanguard and State Street Global Advisors have all seen their assets under management fall sharply as a result of the recent market chaos.

AMERICA'S TOP BANKS PAUSE SHARE BUYBACKS

Eight of America's biggest banks — Bank of America, Bank of New York Mellon, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley, State Street, and Wells Fargo — decided to suspend their share buybacks until at least July, they said in a joint statement yesterday, citing the "unprecedented challenge" from the coronavirus pandemic.

THE TIMES

£10M ARTWORKS STOLEN FROM OXFORD COLLEGE

A major burglary has taken place at an Oxford college embroiled in a bitter staff row. Art thieves stole three high value Old Master paintings dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries in a raid on Christ Church Picture Gallery at 11pm on Saturday night. Among the works stolen was Van Dyck's famous A Soldier on Horseback painting from 1616.

FERRARI CLOSE FACTORY AS F1 TEAMS SELF-ISOLATE

Ferrari have shut down their factory for two weeks, while many of the other Formula One teams have told all personnel returning from Australia to stay at home for the next 14 days.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

POLICE TO ISSUE £1,000 FINE FOR NOT QUARANTINING

People aged over 70 face up to four months in self-isolation and the public risk being taken into jail or a £1,000 fine if they refuse to be tested or quarantined for suspected coronavirus. The emergency powers are expected to be announced this week.

GCSEs AND A LEVELS COULD BE POSTPONED TO AUTUMN

School exams could be pushed as far back as autumn because of the coronavirus outbreak, the Daily Telegraph understands, as the education secretary today holds talks with teachers from across the sector as part of contingency plans.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

US BOX OFFICE HAS WORST WEEKEND IN 20 YEARS

The US domestic box office suffered its worst weekend in nearly two decades yesterday, with grosses totalling just $55.3m (£44.6m), the worst showing since September 2000, when the box office generated just $54.5m in ticket sales. It was the worst March weekend since at least 1998, the first year for which Comscore has data.

TIKTOK TO STOP USING CHINA-BASED MODERATORS

Popular short-video app Tiktok yesterday said it would halt using China-based moderators to monitor overseas content and shift that work to those outside of China.

Saudi Aramco to cut spending as oil prices slump

JAMES WARRINGTON
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SAUDI Aramco yesterday said it will cut capital spending this year as the oil giant braces for a slump in oil prices caused by the coronavirus outbreak and a price war with Russia.

The state-run company broke the record for the largest ever initial public offering (IPO) in December after it raised $25.6bn (£21bn), securing a valuation of $1.7 trillion.

But Saudi Aramco, whose shares last week dropped below its IPO price of 32 riyals for the first time, has outlined plans to cut expenditure in the coming years.

Aramco said it expected capital spending of between $25bn and $30bn in 2020, down from $32.8bn last year. It said expenditure for 2021 and beyond is under review.

It comes after oil prices last week crashed following the collapse of a deal between Opec and non-Opec members to reduce production, which prompted Saudi Arabia to launch a price war with Russia.

Benchmark indexes Brent crude and West Texas Intermediate both dropped more than 20 per cent last week — their biggest fall since the 2008 financial crisis.

Saudi Aramco, which supplies roughly 10 per cent of the world's oil, reported net profit of $88.1bn last year, down 21 per cent from 2018 and below analysts' expectations.

Total revenue was 1.106 trillion riyals (£240bn) in 2019, down from 1.194 trillion riyals the year before.

Aramco said the fall in profit was mainly due to lower crude oil prices and production volumes, coupled with declining refining and chemical margins and a $1.6bn impairment relating to Sadara Chemical Company.

The company produced 13.2m barrels per day (bpd) last year, compared to 13.6bn bpd in 2018.

In September Aramco suffered a drone attack that initially halved production, though output levels were restored in 11 days, it said.

Aramco said it will pay out $75bn in dividends in 2020, up from $73.2bn in 2019 and in line with its IPO pledge.

Mayor to hold emergency economic summit with firms fearing the worst

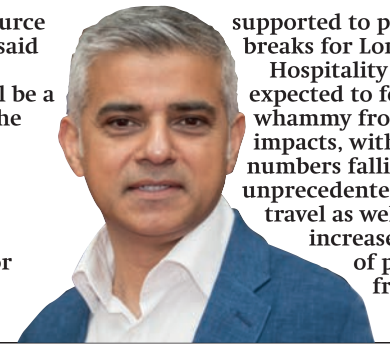
CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

City A.M. understands that London mayor Sadiq Khan has convened an emergency meeting of business leaders, being held later today, to listen to the concerns of the capital's firms.

"The moves in the Budget were welcome but there's an understanding that some of them won't go far enough for businesses in the capital," a source close to the mayor said last night.

"The meeting will be a prelude to asking the government for support where it's needed."

Downey, whose properties include Dinerama, called for landlords to be



supported to provide rent breaks for Londoners.

Hospitality in the capital is expected to feel a double whammy from the virus impacts, with tourist numbers falling due to unprecedented restrictions on travel as well as a large increase in the number of people working from home.

LAST ORDERS Ireland closes all pubs and bars ahead of St Patrick's Day to stem virus

THE IRISH government called for all pubs and bars in the country to be shut yesterday in a bid to tackle coronavirus, after 40 new cases were confirmed over the weekend. It comes ahead of planned St Patrick's Day celebrations tomorrow.

UK government set to issue daily coronavirus briefing to the public

EDWARD THICKNESSE
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THE GOVERNMENT will now hold a daily press conference to brief the public on the coronavirus outbreak, Downing Street said late last night.

Number 10 had come in for criticism over the weekend over its perceived lack of transparency regarding sharing information about the disease. Experts also condemned government's insistence on its "herd immunity" strategy of tackling the virus' spread.

As of today, however, Prime Minister Boris Johnson — or another cabinet minister — will update the public as to the steps that they should be taking to protect themselves. A spokesman for Downing Street said that the government is "committed" to keeping the public informed about its measures to tackle the virus.

Today's press conference will follow an emergency Cobra meeting this afternoon which will discuss the "next steps" in the government's plans to shield elderly and vulnerable people from the virus.

Germany becomes latest country to close borders as virus fears ramp up

JAMES WARRINGTON

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GERMANY will temporarily close its borders with Luxembourg, Austria, France, Denmark and Switzerland to contain the coronavirus outbreak, its government said yesterday.

Interior minister Horst Seehofer said the borders will be shut down from 8am local time this morning.

He added the virus was progressing "rapidly and aggressively" and that "we must assume that the peak of this development has not yet been reached".

Goods will continue to flow between the countries and commuters can also still cross the borders. In addition to halting the spread of the virus, the measures are reportedly intended to stop panic buying by people from neighbouring countries, which has led to some supply problems.

Other European countries have adopted similar actions as governments ramp up their efforts to limit the impact of the virus, also known as Covid-19.

All schools, cafes and restaurants in the Netherlands have been shut, while similar measures have been rolled out in Spain and France. Austria has banned all gatherings of more than five people.

STRONG AND STABLE Mark Strong set to feature in UK ad blitz in bid to curb spread

THE UK is set to roll out a large-scale public information campaign to combat the spread of coronavirus. The blitz will feature advice stipulated by chief medical officer Chris Whitty and voiced by British actor Mark Strong, who has starred in films such as Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy and Kingsman. The advert series will tell people to self-isolate for a week if they develop a high temperature and continuous cough. It will also target newspapers, social media and radio.

Coronavirus set to last 12 months as deaths mount

EDWARD THICKNESSE AND HARRY ROBERTSON

@edthicknesse @harrygrobertson

THE UK's coronavirus epidemic could last until next spring and see 7.9m people hospitalised, a leaked Public Health England (PHE) document for NHS officials has revealed.

The briefing said as many as 80 per cent of the UK population could contract coronavirus in the next 12 months and up to 15 per cent could require hospitalisation, according to media reports.

It was drawn up in recent days by PHE's emergency preparedness and response team and approved as accurate by Dr Susan Hopkins, PHE's lead official dealing with the outbreak, the Guardian reported.

Meanwhile the UK death toll yesterday rose to 35, the government said, up from 21 on Saturday.

PHE also said the number of confirmed cases rose 20 per cent to 1,391 last night.

Coronavirus, which emerged in China in December, has now infected more than 156,000 people around the world, killing more than 5,800.

The true number of infections is likely to be considerably higher, experts have said.

The rise in the death toll came as the government prepares to tell over-70s to isolate for up to four months as it ramps up its efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Health secretary Matt Hancock told Sky News that the government does not "want to do that too soon because clearly it is not an easy thing to do", but that it will likely be put in place within the next few weeks.

Mass gatherings are also expected to be banned this week and people told to work from home where possible.

Hancock said the government will move this week to pass laws that can force people into quarantine if they contract coronavirus.

"We are going to take the powers to make sure that we can quarantine people if they are a risk to public health," Hancock said.

"I doubt we will need to use it much because people are being very responsible and people need to be responsible."

Washington and Berlin in battle over Covid-19 vaccine company

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesdbooth1

BERLIN is trying to prevent Washington from persuading a German firm working on a vaccine for coronavirus to move to the US.

German government sources told news agency Reuters that the US was looking into how it could gain access to a potential coronavirus vaccine being developed by German pharmaceuticals company Curevac.

German newspaper Welt am Sonntag reported that US President Donald Trump had offered money to lure Curevac to the US and the German government was making counter-offers to persuade it to stay.

"The German government is very interested in ensuring that vaccines and active substances against the new coronavirus are also developed in Germany and Europe," a German health ministry spokespersons said.

"In this regard, the government is in intensive exchange with the company Curevac," they added.

Curevac yesterday said it "rejects current rumours of an acquisition".

Supermarkets urge public to shop sensibly

JESS CLARK

@jclarkjourno

UK SUPERMARKETS have called on the UK public to stop stockpiling in response to coronavirus as fears mount that some people could be left without essential products.

In an open letter to customers, the country's biggest food retailers, including Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda and Morrisons, called on consumers to "be considerate in the way they shop" to avoid creating shortages.

"We understand your concerns but buying more than is needed can sometimes mean that others will be left without," the grocers warned yesterday.


The virus has caused a spike in stockpiling with many shops imposing rationing

Stockpiling boosts UK retail footfall but February storms dampen total

JESS CLARK

@jclarkjourno

RETAIL footfall spiked at the end of last month as consumers rushed to the shops to stock up due to the spread of coronavirus in the UK.

Retail footfall in February was down two per cent year on year due to several storms during the month.

However, the final week of the month saw a "slight boost" in the number of shoppers visiting high streets, retail parks and shopping centres.

Some supermarkets have been forced to restrict sales of essential food and household items such as hand sanitiser and dried pasta after customers rushed to stockpile goods due to fears over being quarantined with coronavirus.

British Retail Consortium chief executive Helen Dickinson said: "Multiple storms took their toll on footfall this February, particularly for shopping centres and high streets."

She added that the decline was less marked for retail parks, which provide easy parking and offered some salvation from the rain.

"There was a slight boost in footfall in the final week, where concerns around coronavirus may have contributed to an increase in store visits" Dickinson added.

Despite the increase in footfall at the end of February, the number of shoppers is expected to decline in coming months as more restrictions are imposed by the government to try and control the spread of coronavirus across the UK.

Footfall on high streets declined 2.5 per cent year on year, below both the three-month and 12-month average growth of 1.1 and 0.2 per cent respectively.

Retail park footfall fell 1.5 per cent, and shopping centre footfall plummeted seven per cent.

Shoppertrak retail consultant Andy Sumpter said: "While January saw shopper levels on the high street boosted by the Boris bounce, February was a different story."

He added: "Named the wettest February on record, we also had three named storms, which all arrived over weekend trading, and certainly dampened shopper traffic levels."

Belfast, Leeds and London all reported footfall growth during the year, however all the other cities in BRC and Shoppertrak monitor suffered declines, with Portsmouth reporting the worst drop at 9.8 per cent.

Fed brings 'hydrogen bomb to a knife fight'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The first of the two cuts was the first time that the Fed had cut rates outside of a regularly scheduled policy meeting since 2008's financial crisis.

The stimulus will take the form of \$500bn in Treasury securities and \$200bn in agency-backed mortgage securities.

Neil Wilson, chief analyst at Markets.com, said the Fed had "brought a hydrogen bomb to a knife fight".

The Fed added in its statement that it "is prepared to use its full range of tools to support the flow of credit to households and businesses and thereby promote its maximum employment and price stability goals."

Meanwhile CMC Markets' Michael Hewson said the Fed, along with other central banks, had "[thrown] the kitchen sink at the markets as events over the weekend took further turns for the worst".

"While these moves may [ease] any potential blockages in the plumbing of the financial markets, they won't adequately compensate for the upcoming economic shocks that are about to come our way," he added.

"Central banks have played their part in the past few weeks, it is now up to global policymakers, the G7, and the G20 to... complement these measures."

Last Thursday US stocks had their worst day since 1987's Black Monday crash before the New York Federal Reserve stepped in with a \$1.5 trillion cash injection for spending markets.

Trump hailed last night's Fed decision to cut rates as "good news" that "makes me very happy".

"It's really good news. It's great for the country," he said.

He had publicly pressed the Fed to slash rates to boost the economy during the coronavirus outbreak.

Virus heaps uncertainty on London house market

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THE UK's coronavirus outbreak has heaped uncertainty on London's housing market, which had started to rally following the Conservative General Election victory last December.

The price of property coming to market in the capital surged 5.1 per cent year on year last month to an average of £638,826, the highest annual rate of growth since May 2016.

Meanwhile, the number of sales agreed has soared 34.4 per cent to the highest level in four years.

However, experts have warned that it is "hard to predict" how the rapid spread of coronavirus across the UK will affect the market over the next few months.

Miles Shipside, Rightmove director and housing market analyst, said: "The market has been waiting several years for a London recovery.

"With a window of post-election political uncertainty, 2020 seemed set to be the year when many would look to make a move and satisfy their pent-up housing needs. However, the current fast pace of the housing market could now be affected by the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus."

The number of property sales in London rose 34 per cent in the last year

Shipside added that there has not been any signs of a drop in buyer activity or interest in the housing market so far.

Across the UK house prices grew 3.5 per cent to £312,625. The number of sales agreed jumped 17.8 per cent, according to Rightmove research.

The online property platform recorded its five busiest days ever in February, as sellers rushed to close on deals.

LVMH to make hand sanitiser to aid in French coronavirus fight

SARAH WHITE

LOUIS Vuitton owner LVMH said yesterday that its cosmetics unit would manufacture large quantities of hand disinfectant gel to help stave off a nationwide shortage across France as the coronavirus rapidly spreads.

"LVMH will use the production lines of its perfume and cosmetic brands... to produce large quantities of hydroalcoholic gels from [today]," the firm said in a statement.

"These gels will be delivered free of charge to the health authorities," LVMH added.

It came after France on Saturday ordered the closure of restaurants and any non-essential commerce to stem the spread of the virus.

Exceptions to the ban included grocery stores, pharmacies and petrol stations.

France's health minister said yesterday that 127 people had now died from coronavirus in the country, up from 91 on Saturday, while the number of confirmed cases had risen to around 5,423.

Yesterday, the country asked airlines to help bring back thousands of French citizens stuck in Morocco after the north African country halted flights because of the coronavirus. The French consul in Morocco, Philipe Casenave, said that France would not carry out its own repatriation as long as there was an option to fly on commercial airlines.

French voters headed to the polls yesterday for local elections after the government decided to press ahead with the vote despite a rapid acceleration of the coronavirus across the country.

Reuters

ECB board member: Bank ready to close bond spreads amid virus

HARRY ROBERTSON
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THE EUROPEAN Central Bank (ECB) stands ready to reduce bond spreads between Eurozone countries and could even further increase its purchases amid the coronavirus outbreak, a board member said yesterday as the Bank continues to row back on comments from its president.

Christine Lagarde, who took over as president from Mario Draghi last November, upset markets last week when she said the ECB is "not here to close [bond] spreads" – the difference in price between Eurozone members' bonds, which is an indication of the stress countries are under.

Lagarde apologised for those comments to other members of the ECB's governing council in a call last Friday, two participants on the call told the Financial Times.

Markets read the comments as a sign the Bank might not do "whatever it takes" to support the Eurozone economy as it did eight years ago. But many defended Lagarde's comments, saying they were meant to encourage Eurozone governments to do more.


Lagarde enraged markets last week

ECB board member Fabio Panetta yesterday told Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera that the Bank will tackle "strong, unjustified increases in the spreads on the back of the health emergency".

Italian bond yields last week jumped as Covid-19 containment efforts ravaged its economy.

Yields move inversely to prices, with a fall indicating Italian government debt does not look attractive to investors.

"The turbulence that struck the Italian sovereign bond market in the last few days is an undesired event that must be reabsorbed," Panetta said.

The ECB last week said it would increase its bond-buying stimulus programme in response to the outbreak.

Panetta said it could yet buy more bonds, and may lend to institutions other than banks.

A business capital is silenced

James Booth speaks to executives in Milan about the impact of quarantines

MILAN is the engine of the Italian economy, home to the stock exchange, companies and banks such as Unicredit, Versace and Pirelli, and outposts of global financial institutions and multinationals.

The city is also at the epicentre of Europe's virulent coronavirus outbreak which has infected almost 25,000 people in Italy and killed nearly 2,000. The wider region of Lombardy was locked down by the Italian government on 8 March, before the drastic measures were extended to the rest of the country last week.

City A.M. spoke to business leaders in Milan to understand how they were navigating the challenges of coronavirus and lockdown and to ask what they thought the economic impact could be.

CAR CRASH

Claudia Parzani, western Europe head of law firm Linklaters, says it is too early to gauge the full impact of the pandemic.

"It's like when you crash your car, it takes a while to understand what happened, how it happened and what the effects are going to be," she says.

"Everyone is facing the first crisis, the health crisis. Everyone is trying to secure their own people, their families and the people they love," she says.

Giuseppe Latorre, KPMG Italy's head of corporate finance, says the impact on Milan has been dramatic.

"Milan is like London or Paris; it's vibrant, it's chaotic, it's full of people running fast because they have meetings. Yesterday, coming back from the office took 10 minutes instead of the usual 40 and I was seeing police cars in the street stopping people and asking where they were going.

"It's like being in a B-movie, it's really, really sad," he says.

ECONOMIC HIT

The second stage of business response has been to assess the financial damage of the pandemic.

"We are still in the first phase," Parzani says. "We have just crashed into the wall and we are still understanding how to deal with it. But everyone is aware we are starting to face another crisis, which is the economic one."

Milan's Piazza del Duomo is now eerily empty as the Italian government imposes drastic lockdown measures to fight the spread of the coronavirus outbreak

Latorre says mergers and acquisitions have ground to a halt.

"Most of the processes in the country have been frozen, literally frozen. We hope to be able to restart the engine and the machine as soon as the peak ends. When that happens is the real question mark," he says.

REACTION OF COMPANIES

Businesses are now trying to work out how they can survive the crisis financially.

"Our key target is to protect our people, to keep them home, safe and most importantly, to be able as KPMG in Italy to fulfil our financial duty vis-a-vis our employees. This is our goal and mission," Latorre says.

"It's really like being in a war, believe me, and you are with your comrades, it doesn't matter if they are officers or soldiers, you are fighting the same battle," he says.

Federico Sutti, Italy managing partner of law firm Dentons, says he expects a wave of restructurings in three to six months' time as companies struggle with liquidity and debt.

"After summer we will see some companies facing problems because of a lack of liquidity and this might open up another round of restructuring or distressed debt," he says.

Latorre says KPMG is working with its clients on cash management to help them ride out the liquidity crunch.

"For every firm in the country it's key to protect cash in order to be able to survive," he says.

For the UK, the terrible human and economic cost that the virus has wreaked in Italy offers a sobering glimpse of a possible future.

"Take it seriously in the UK, this is not a joke," Latorre warns.

Investors brace for virus impact on Next's profit

JESS CLARK
@jclarkjourno

INVESTORS will be on edge this week as they wait to see how much retail bellwether Next expects the impact of coronavirus to dent earnings.

In January the high street chain said its full-year estimate for group profit before tax to January 2021 is £734m. However the recent outbreak of coronavirus in the UK could have a significant impact on sales and profit.

The UK is yet to impose store closures on non-essential shops, but the government has not ruled out the measures which have been put in place across other European countries.

High street footfall is also likely to continue to drop over the next few months as consumers self-isolate to avoid infecting other people or contracting the virus.

The pandemic could cause the retailer to cut its profit forecasts for the year when it publishes its full-year results on Thursday, with analysts estimating estimates could fall nine per cent, or £66m.

Analysts at Royal Bank of Canada said it could fall by as much as 15 per cent in a worst scenario, the Sunday Telegraph reported.

RBC retail analyst Richard Chamberlain reportedly said: "We expect Next to give a more cautious assessment of the outlook now the virus has become more embedded."

In a note to investors The Share Centre said: "It seems almost inevitable that high street store sales will continue to drop away, as they are for many retailers.

"However, investors will be more focused on whether Next expects the steady growth in online sales to continue in the current year despite issues such as the ongoing Brexit negotiations and disruption caused by the coronavirus outbreak."

Chamberlain added that it was too early for Next to weight the cost of the outbreak but said "any comments on shareholder returns and special dividends will certainly be of interest."

In January the company said total full-price sales for the fourth quarter were up 5.2 per cent, with sales for the full year up 3.9 per cent.

Nike is one of many retail giants to announce store closures across the globe

Nike shutters US and European stores as coronavirus escalates

HARRY ROBERTSON
@harrygrobertson

US SPORTS giant Nike yesterday announced it will close all its shops in the US, western Europe, and several other countries to protect staff and customers from coronavirus.

Shops will be closed from today until at least 27 March, Nike said, including in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Nike said its shops in South Korea, Japan and most of China would continue to operate as normal, while people can still shop online.

The sportswear company said it is taking other measures to protect staff, including "the option to work from home, staggered work schedules, social distancing and additional safety and cleaning steps".

Nike is the latest big company to cut back on its normal operations in the face of coronavirus, with Apple and Urban Outfitters announced closures over the weekend.

Economists have said containment efforts could spark a global recession.

Ex-Debenhams boss Sir Ian Cheshire eyed as BT non-executive director

EDWARD THICKNESSE
@edthicknesse

FORMER head of department store Debenhams Sir Ian Cheshire is on the brink of being named as a non-executive director at telecoms giant BT.

Sky News reported that Cheshire's appointment could be announced as early as this week, in a boardroom coup for Britain's largest telecoms firm. Cheshire, who currently chairs Barclays' UK retail bank, could be in line to replace Nick Rose as BT's senior independent director, as Rose is due to leave the board soon.

With spells at Sears and Kingfisher before a three-year stint at Debenhams, Cheshire is a veteran of the UK's retail sector, and also has extensive experience of working with government.

As the government's senior independent director, he also sits on the board of the Cabinet Office.

It comes as the telecoms giant enters talks with the government about a multi-billion-pound programme to build full-fibre broadband networks across the country. He will be the latest fresh face to join the firm, which has undergone a revamp since new chief executive Philip Jansen took charge last February.

UK helps Beijing to find activists wearing masks

JAMES WARRINGTON

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THE UK government has partnered with Beijing to back a project aimed at developing facial recognition technology that can identify people wearing masks.

The Home Office and the Metropolitan Police are both involved in a programme jointly funded by the Chinese state — despite the country's reported use of the technology to identify and imprison minorities.

If successful, the research would enable authorities to identify people whose faces were obscured by masks, such as pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong.

The links to China have sparked fears that the joint project could lead to the UK participating in Beijing's authoritarian crackdowns.

"We are learning what Beijing's culture of control really costs," Tom Tugendhat, chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, told *City A.M.*

"The UK should not be helping the communist party to monitor even more people, especially now the global costs are becoming clear."

The five-year programme, dubbed FaceR2VM, involves academics at the University of Surrey, Imperial College London and the University of Sterling.

In 2015 it was handed £6.1m in government grants, while the Home Office is named as an official partner.

The Home Office confirmed it was "one of several partners" in the project, which was first reported by the Sunday Times.

"It is for universities to decide who they conduct research with, and how, within existing domestic and international legal frameworks," it said.

China uses facial recognition for its so-called social credit system, which ranks citizens based on their behaviour. The technology has reportedly also been used by authorities as part of a crackdown on Uighur Muslims.

The consultation will look into new, cleaner forms of transport

Government launches review on transport laws amid green bid

EDWARD THICKNESSE

@edthicknesse

THE GOVERNMENT has today launched a consultation on the UK's transport laws in an attempt to make the country's journeys "greener, easier and smarter" through new technology.

The review will be accompanied by £90m in funding for three new Future Transport Zones across the UK where new modes of transport such as e-scooters will be trialled.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said: "We are on the cusp of a transport revolution. Emerging technologies are ripping up the rulebook and changing the way people and goods move forever."

New Zealand's central bank in major rate cut

PRAVEEN MENON

THE RESERVE Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) slashed its official cash rate (OCR) by 75 basis points last night, in response to growing concerns over the coronavirus outbreak.

The unexpected move came ahead of its scheduled policy decision meeting on 25 March.

The bank cut the official cash rate to 0.25 per cent. The monetary policy committee agreed unanimously to keep the OCR at this level for at least 12 months, the bank said in its statement.

The New Zealand dollar fell 1.4 per cent after the announcement.

"The negative economic implications of the Covid-19 virus continue to rise warranting further monetary stimulus," the bank said.

The negative impact from the virus on New Zealand's economy is, and will continue to be, significant, it said.

The committee also agreed that should further stimulus be required, it prefers to undertake large-scale asset purchases of government bonds rather than cut the OCR further. The bank however said New Zealand's financial system remains sound. *Reuters*

Transport department defends top civil servant over transparency row

STEFAN BOSCIA

@Stefan_Boscia

THE DEPARTMENT for Transport (DfT) has denied its top civil servant broke the civil service code of conduct as she faces accusations she withheld information on HS2's cost blowouts.

City A.M. reported this month that DfT permanent secretary Bernadette Kelly admitted she did not tell parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) she knew HS2 was likely to go over budget. The top mandarin found out in March 2019 that the project would likely go over its £55.7bn budget, but did not tell the committee at a May 2019 session.

When confronted with this information by the committee, Kelly said she had been "quite careful" with her words at the previous appearance and that she wasn't obliged to tell the committee about any internal cost estimates. PAC chair Meg Hillier told the Sunday Telegraph that Kelly had "sailed close to the wind" and almost broke the civil service code of conduct.

A DfT spokesperson told *City A.M.* yesterday that Kelly had "acted fully in accordance with the civil service code" and that the department was developing strategies during the period in question to stick to the official budget.

The airport expansion plan was ruled "unlawful" by the High Court last month

Heathrow plans in 'deep freeze' after court rule

STEFAN BOSCIA

@Stefan_Boscia

HEATHROW airport's planned expansion is now in a "deep freeze", with the aviation industry expecting the project to fall off the agenda during the coronavirus pandemic.

Airlines have been told an impending coronavirus recession will likely delay the third runway a further two years to 2030 at the earliest and could require job cuts, according to the Sunday Telegraph.

The government needs to revise its policy document on the project, after the UK's High Court ruled last month it was "unlawful" as it didn't take into account the country's commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement.

The Board of Airline Representatives in the UK (BAR UK), an aviation trade body, is now expecting the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic will likely delay the government's actions on rewriting the statement.

In an email to its members, BAR UK said: "Heathrow expansion is now in the deep freeze until the government comes forward with when, how, or if it intends to revise the [policy documents] required for Heathrow.

"Given the date for a third runway had already been pushed back to late 2028 or early 2029, then we are now looking at 2030 and beyond, should the government proceed."

Heathrow airport said it believes the court ruling will not stop the project going ahead and that it was an "eminently fixable" situation.

However, contractors working on the early stages of the expansion have been told to stop working for the time being.

A spokesperson for the airport said the High Court ruling would mean there is a "delay in realising the benefits of Heathrow's expansion" until the "government remedies an eminently fixable issue".

They said: "Failure to fix it rules out airport growth anywhere in the country and casts doubt on other infrastructure projects, including roads and housing pledges made by the government."

"Heathrow has already taken a lead in getting the UK aviation sector to commit to a plan to get to net zero emissions by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement and we are ready to work with the government to help deliver their agenda to level up the country and deliver a global Britain," the spokesperson added.

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CITY A.M.

Turkey and Russia ceasefire in Syria hits a wall amid rebel provocations

ANDREY OSTROUKH

RUSSIA and Turkey were forced to cut short their first joint patrol under a ceasefire deal along an east-west highway in north-west Syria yesterday due to rebel provocations.

The patrol on the M4 highway in Idlib province was the result of a 5 March ceasefire accord between Moscow and Ankara, which back opposing sides in Syria's nine-year war. The ceasefire has largely held since then.

Under the deal, which halted hostilities after an escalation of violence that displaced nearly 1m people, Turkish and Russian forces are to establish a security corridor on either side of the M4, as well as carry out joint patrols along it.

"To carry out provocations, terrorists were trying to use civilians as a human shield," the Russian Defense Ministry was quoted as saying.

Ankara had been given more time to neutralise the rebels who orchestrated the provocation, the ministry said. While Russia supports Syrian government forces, Turkey supports the Syrian rebel groups fighting against them.

Russian military police plan to conduct more patrols with Turkey on a regular basis.

Reuters

Immigration not 'top of the mind' issue for Britons

STEFAN BOSCIA

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IMMIGRATION is no longer a "top of the mind" issue for Britons, according to new research.

A report from think tank British Future found immigration ranked as the ninth most important issues for voters, with 41 per cent saying they rated the issue as "very important".

The pro-immigration think tank said this was in contrast to 2016 when "research consistently found immigration to be the public's number one issue of concern".

The same report also found that 59 per cent of respondents rated Brexit as a "very important issue". British Future director Sunder Katwala said the findings meant that Boris Johnson had a chance to "bring more light and less heat" to the immigration debate.

"Without the millstone of the net migration target around his neck, the Prime Minister can make his case that taking back control should mean Britain welcoming the migration we decide to keep," Katwala said.

The government unveiled its post-Brexit immigration plans last month.

The new points-based system will require EU immigration applicants to speak English, have a job offer in the UK and to have never been given a custodial sentence of 12 months or more. The minimum salary for job offers needs to be £25,600.

UK advertising exports tower to record £7.9bn

JAMES WARRINGTON

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INTERNATIONAL trade in British advertising services jumped 15 per cent year on year to hit a record £7.9bn in 2018, new figures have revealed.

The figure was significantly ahead of overall UK service exports, which rose by roughly two per cent, while the UK's balance of payments surplus for advertising was Europe's largest.

The sharp rise means advertising has overtaken telecoms and engineering services to become the second largest services sector export behind computer sciences.

It marks the latest year of growth for the country's vibrant advertising industry, with exports rising more than threefold over the last decade, according to industry body the Advertising Association (AA).

Analysis by think tank Credos revealed £3.7bn of the total sum was exported to EU nations, accounting for 53 per cent.

But the US is the largest individual country for exports, with American companies purchasing £1.1bn worth of UK advertising services in 2018.

UK international trade minister Graham Stuart said the figures highlighted the "strength of the UK's booming advertising sector and the global demand for our leading services industry".

"My department is committed to securing free trade agreements that benefit exporters in every industry, nation and region of the UK," he added.

Earlier this month the government launched a new campaign aimed at promoting the UK's advertising industry after Brexit.

The UK Advertising Export Group, set up with the AA and other industry bodies, is tasked with boosting the profile of the ad sector and winning business in territories such as China, Japan, South Korea and the US.

The Jeremy Kyle Show was discontinued last year after a spate of complaints

Ofcom draws up a new rulebook to protect British reality TV stars

JAMES WARRINGTON

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OFCOM yesterday laid out a revised set of rules aimed at protecting participants in TV and radio programmes.

The regulator's intervention comes after the deaths of two former Love Island contestants and host Caroline Flack, as well as a former guest on the now-cancelled Jeremy Kyle Show.

Ofcom said it had also seen a "steady rise" in complaints from viewers who expressed concern about the welfare and wellbeing of people who take part in programmes.

The watchdog said it would extend broadcasters' responsibility to obtain informed consent from participants.

Israel president set to put Gantz in government

ARI RABINOVITCH

ISRAEL's president said yesterday he will tap Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rival Benny Gantz to try to form new government after a repeat election in March, according to an official statement.

Gantz, a former general, had earlier in the day won support from two key parties in his bid to oust right-wing Netanyahu, who is Israel's longest-serving leader.

"Tomorrow, around midday, the president will assign the task of forming the government to head of [centrist Blue and White party], Benny Gantz," president Reuven Rivlin's office said in a statement.

Gantz secured the mandate after Israel's Arab coalition yesterday recommended him to Rivlin in a historic move by the Arab Israeli party that many view as a sign that the Arab minority, which turned out to vote in high numbers in the last elections, wants to further integrate into society and have a stake in the government.

An election in March failed to break the political deadlock that has seen four closely fought elections in the last year. *Reuters*

Jess Clark invites the new boss of cosmetics icon Avon inside for a chat about brand reinvention

PUTTING A FRESH FACE ON AVON

Cretu joined Avon 20 years ago as a sales manager

GREG SIGSTON/CITY AM

ANGELA Cretu first heard about direct-to-consumer beauty giant Avon when a colleague in Romania showed her a job advert in a newspaper.

The phrase "empowering women" in the role's description threw her off initially. "That was the very first time I heard of the concept, me coming from an ex-communist country at that time," she says.

Cretu secured the role of area sales manager and 20 years later, when we meet at a women's private membership club in Mayfair, she is the newly appointed chief executive of one of the biggest beauty brands in the world.

But Cretu has taken the reins at Avon at a critical point in its 134-year history. Brazillian beauty conglomerate Natura & Co, which also owns the Body Shop and Aesop, bought the brand last year for £1.6bn.

When Avon was founded in New York in 1886 with the idea that women could be sales representatives in their own communities, it was truly one of a kind.

However, the company has been slow to move with the times, and it is now trying to shake off its "old fashioned" label and ties to door-to-door selling.

Meanwhile, a new wave of direct-to-consumer brands has blossomed online while Avon had taken its eye off the ball. E-commerce brands such as Glossier and Beauty Pop appeal to millenials with their competitive prices and Instagram-friendly marketing campaigns.

To compete, Cretu says Avon will invest in its tech, infrastructure and product innovation. She adds she wants to tap into the modern requirements for "instant gratification, personalisation, meaningful connection".

Cretu says: "You can see how many brands right now are disrupting the beauty industry, and they're not big, they don't go for the conventional TV advertising, but they disrupt because they have a meaningful story to share and they capture this authentic movement of products endorsed by real people.

"You could say looking at the size of our company that 'this is too big a ship to turn'... But I believe right now we are at the cusp of a new frontier."

> "You could say this is too big a ship to turn... But I believe we are at the cusp of a new frontier

Avon will "harness the power of research and development (R&D) to accelerate innovation and then make it affordable," Cretu says.

"That is another purpose of ours, to make it affordable to a large spectrum of women, from those who want to spend a little, to those who want to pamper themselves by spending a lot," she adds.

Cretu is well aware of the term female empowerment now, and Avon is in a unique position to help both customers and its sellers.

"The most gratifying moments are those that go beyond the business figures," Cretu says.

"I remember the professional satisfaction... but the most meaningful, the proudest moments... are when you see the tangible impact that you've made with the little you've contributed in somebody's life. Either [someone] recovering from an aggressive breast cancer, or helping a woman change her identity, or helping her rebuild a new life after a very abusive situation."

Time will tell whether a renewed focus on innovation and investment can produce the results that will allow Avon to make the social impact that drives its new chief executive.

Litigation war chest gets asset boost to £1.9bn

JAMES BOOTH

@Jamesdbooth1

UK LITIGATION funders increased assets to £1.9bn in 2019, an increase of 46 per cent on the previous year.

Analysis of the balance sheets of the UK's top 15 litigation funders by law firm RPC today found a jump in asset value from £1.3bn in 2017/18 to £1.9bn last year.

Assets held by litigation funders have increased 400 per cent over five years, up from £378m in 2014/15.

Litigation funders pay the costs of legal claims in exchange for a share of any damages awarded.

Growth in litigation funding comes as private equity, hedge funds and family offices have invested more heavily in the asset class. A key attraction is that returns from litigation funding are uncorrelated with mainstream assets, such as equities or bonds, which helps to diversify portfolios.

Geraldine Elliott, partner at RPC, said: "There is growing recognition amongst businesses of the benefits of partnering with a litigation funder."

"But the growing amount of capital litigation funders now have to deploy means they are running out of more obvious cases to fund... This can involve funders looking for a potential group action that they get off the ground, using heavy publicising of that case in order to gather more claimants."

Last year London litigation funder Augusta Ventures set up a team to focus on consumer class actions.

Funders are also focusing heavily on follow on damages claims after companies have breached competition law or data protection rules.

Elliott added: "In order to satisfy that demand for cases, litigation funders and law firms are now looking at areas where large financial damages can be shown to have been caused by the wrongful actions of deep-pocketed corporates."

The NEA said Biden had committed to increasing funding for support staff

Biden nabs backing from largest US teachers union before ballots

DOINA CHIACU

US DEMOCRATIC presidential front-runner Joe Biden has won the backing of the National Education Association (NEA), the largest US teachers union with 3m members.

The endorsement comes days before Biden competes against US senator Bernie Sanders in Democratic presidential primary contests tomorrow in Florida, Illinois, Ohio and Arizona.

The former US vice president, whose wife is a teacher and NEA member, said he was honored to get the endorsement of a "powerful voice for public school educators and students across the country". *Reuters*

Fintech startup Lifetise begins crowdfunding

EDWARD THICKNESSE

@edthicknesse

AWARD-WINNING startup Lifetise has launched a crowdfunding campaign on the Seedrs platform, just weeks after its chief executive was named one of Innovative Finance's rising stars of fintech.

The platform, which helps people decide how to afford big life decisions like buying a house, was recently listed as one of 2020's most influential fintech companies by the Financial Technologist.

The decision to begin fundraising follows in the footsteps of fellow start-ups Bud and Cytora, which raised £20m and £25m respectively last year.

Like Lifetise, both companies were a part of Accenture's Fintech Innovation Lab accelerator before raising the funds.

Chief executive Caroline Hughes said: "I have ambition to grow Lifetise so it can help many millions of people. Crowdfunding is a key part of this.

"We're really invested in helping people work out what to do with their money at every stage of their lives, so we're with them for the long haul," she added.

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LONDON REPORT

FTSE rebounds at end of crisis week for traders

LONDON stocks rose last Friday as moves by politicians to limit the economic hit from the coronavirus pandemic fuelled a rebound, a day after the worst selloff of the blue chip index since the 1987 Black Monday crash.

The blue-chip FTSE 100 rose 1.7 per cent, but posted its worst week since the global financial crisis in 2008.

Helping the slight move upwards on Friday were miners and supermarket chains.

“Having suffered its worst day of trading in more than 30 years the FTSE 100 at least started Friday 13th in positive territory,” said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

Global equities were hammered last Thursday after US President Donald Trump shocked investors with a move to restrict travel from Europe, and an ECB decision to hold off on interest rate cuts added to panic about a liquidity crunch.

Emergency actions including the Bank of England’s 50 basis point interest rate cut and the government’s £30bn stimulus plan have failed to reassure investors about economic growth.

Cineworld shed 32.4 per cent as the virus outbreak hurt sales

Travel stocks continued to be the worst hit, with **Carnival** tumbling almost 10 per cent to its lowest level since 2009 after its unit, Princess Cruises, said it would suspend the voyages of all its 18 ships for two months. Carnival ended the session at the bottom of London’s blue chip index, followed by travel firm **Tui**.

“The day was definitely still unlucky for some, cruise operator Carnival was one of the few large cap fallers as investors reacted to the government advice for over-70s and people with underlying health conditions not to take cruises,” Mould said.

Online supermarket **Ocado** ended the week 5.4 per cent higher, the only weekly gainer among FTSE blue chips. The domestically focused FTSE mid-cap index was down just 1.2 per cent, capping its worst week since 1987’s Black Monday.

Cinema operator **Cineworld** sank 32.4 per cent to the bottom of the mid-cap index amid concerns over the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on its business.

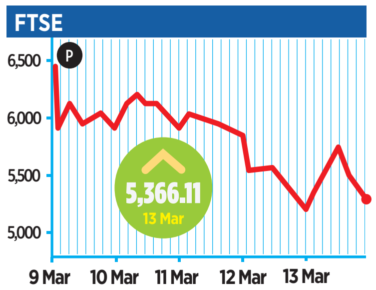
TOP RISERS

1. **Evraz** Up 12.49 per cent
2. **BHP** Up 12.15 per cent
3. **Rio Tinto** Up 10.31 per cent

TOP FALLERS

1. **Carnival** Down 9.93 per cent
2. **Tui** Down 6.54 per cent
3. **Taylor Wimpey** Down 5.17 per cent

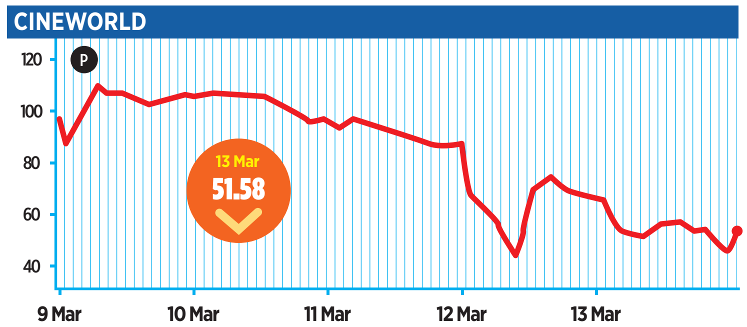
FTSE



BEST OF THE BROKERS

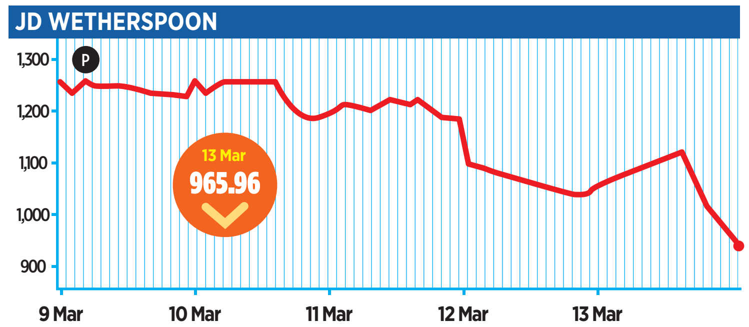
To appear in Best of the Brokers, email your research to notes@cityam.com

CINEWORLD



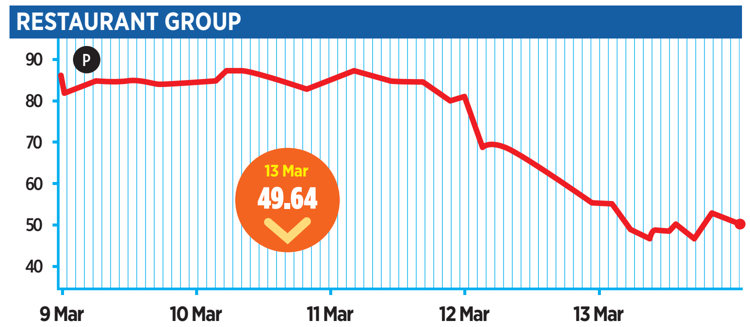
Film studios have started to postpone film releases, with the latest James Bond installment now set to hit cinemas in November instead of April, as the outbreak of coronavirus has put film fans off gathering in big groups. Cineworld has said it will be able to trade through the health crisis without requiring additional financing, however brokers at Peel Hunt questioned the level of detail provided by the chain and raised doubts over its Cineplex acquisition. Brokers at Peel Hunt issued a "hold" recommendation and a target price of 140p.

JD WETHERSPOON



Pub chain JD Wetherspoon said its sales have been more adversely impacted by recent poor weather than the developing global health scare. The operator reported like-for-like sales growth of 3.2 per cent in the six weeks to 8 March. Loyal customer behaviour and portfolio diversification is likely to help the chain over the next few months, although Liberum analysts said it is “unlikely... that the business will remain uninterrupted”. The broker issued a “hold” recommendation and a target price of 1,550p.

RESTAURANT GROUP



The Restaurant Group, the owner of Wagamama and Frankie & Benny’s, is likely to be hit particularly hard by the Covid-19 pandemic as consumers opt to eat at home. Canaccord Genuity has cut the casual dining chain’s forecasts accordingly, slashing its expectations for earnings per share by 22 per cent and predicting an 80 per cent plunge in second-quarter concessions turnover. However analysts said the firm can handle a “short, savage shock to trading” and issued a “buy” rating and a reduced price target of 100p, down from 185p.

NEW YORK REPORT

US stocks rally as emergency status declared

WALL Street staged a furious rally in the waning moments of the session last Friday after US President Donald Trump declared a national emergency to combat the rapidly spreading coronavirus, although major averages still suffered sharp losses for the week.

In a volatile session, all three main indexes jumped more than six per cent in early trading before paring to a gain of as little as 0.55 per cent on the S&P 500 before rallying towards the close as Trump made the announcement with industry leaders of about $50bn (£40.8bn) in federal aid to fight the disease.

“The initial take, he started talking about $50bn, the market asked ‘where is that going?’” said Peter Jankovskis, co-chief investment officer at Oakbrook Investments.

The indexes were still about 20 per cent below record highs hit in mid-February, and each saw declines of at least eight per cent for the week. Since hitting the highs, markets have been besieged with big swings in the market, nearly matching as many days with declines of at least one per cent as all of 2019. Friday’s surge was the biggest one-day percentage gain for the S&P 500 since 2008.

Travel stocks, hammered in the rout, were trading higher, with the S&P 1500 airlines index up 11.58 per cent.

Oil also looked set to end the week with a silver lining, as both Brent and WTI crude settled higher after a near-collapse in prices last Monday due to a price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia.

The S&P 500 energy index added 8.84 per cent.

Hotel operators **Marriott International**, **Hilton** and **Hyatt** all gained at least one per cent.

Boeing jumped 9.92 per cent but suffered its biggest weekly drop in its history on rising concerns about the company’s growing cash burn.

Apple rose 11.98 per cent and was among the top boosts to the benchmark S&P 500 and the blue-chip Dow, as the iPhone maker said it would reopen all 42 of its branded stores in China.

CITY MOVES WHO’S SWITCHING JOBS

CORETECH SOLUTIONS

UK technology specialist Coretech Solutions has announced the appointment of Michael Green as non-executive director. He joins the business following 40 years’ experience in leadership roles across the retail and property sectors. Most recently, he was the first appointed chief executive of the UK Apartment Association (UKAA), a membership organisation championing the UK’s build to rent residential housing market. Phil Cox, managing director of Coretech Solutions commented: “We’re delighted to welcome Michael aboard. Michael’s wealth of experience and knowledge of the property and retail sectors will play a core part in the future development of the company as we pursue further growth.” Michael added: “I am relishing this new challenge to contribute to the evolution and growth of Coretech Solutions, focusing on opening doors to new areas of the market and building visibility and understanding of the brand in the wider property sector.”

LIONTRUST

Liontrust has appointed Chris Foster as fund manager for three of its sustainable future (SF) equity funds. Having become part of the sustainable investment team in 2013, Chris was an investment analyst with responsibility for financial themes and stocks before being named manager of the three funds. Commenting on the appointment, Simon Clements, lead manager of Liontrust SF funds, said: “Chris deserves the move to fund manager because of the impact of his work on the financial sector. This has positively benefited our funds and therefore investors.”

F&C INVESTMENT TRUST

The Board of F&C Investment Trust PLC has announced the appointment of Quintin Price as an independent non-executive director. Quintin is a senior adviser at Actis, a privately-owned private equity, real estate and energy and infrastructure company. He is also a non-executive director of Aperture Investors, a New York-based fund manager and is on the Investment Committee of the Leverhulme Trust which is a large national grant-making organisation that supports scholarships for the purposes of research and education. From 2005 to 2015 he was at Blackrock, where he was global head of alpha strategies and a member of the global executive committee. Commenting on the appointment, Beatrice Hollond, chairman of F&C, said: “Quintin brings investment banking and investment management knowledge and expertise to the board from a 30 year career working at a senior level for a number of leading companies and we are delighted that he is joining the board of F&C Investment Trust.”

To appear in CITYMOVES please email your career updates and pictures to citymoves@cityam.com

FTSE 100	FTSE 250	FTSE ALL SHARE	DOW JONES	NASDAQ	S&P 500
5366.11	15562.00	2994.40	23185.62	7874.88	2711.02
128.63	155.42	52.19	1985.00	673.07	230.38

£/€	1.1162	0.0141	€/$	1.1062	0.0070
£/$	1.2349	0.0231	€/£	0.8959	0.0109
£/¥	133.06	0.8650	€/¥	119.23	2.2050

GILTS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Tsy 8.000 21	109.59	0.00	116.2	109.5
Tsy 2.500 24	360.53	0.00	377.9	358.8
Tsy 5.000 25	123.74	0.00	126.0	122.1
Tsy 4.250 27	131.10	0.00	132.8	125.8
Tsy 6.000 28	150.20	0.00	152.1	143.6
Tsy 4.125 30	384.62	0.00	404.2	367.4
Tsy 4.250 32	146.09	0.00	148.1	133.6
Tsy 4.250 36	157.15	0.00	160.4	139.2
Tsy 4.750 38	173.18	0.00	178.4	152.0
Tsy 4.250 46	187.06	0.00	193.1	1.0

AEROSPACE & DEFENCE
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Avon Rubber	2125.0	-55.0	2780.0	1230.0
BAE Systems	522.8	19.4	669.0	443.9
Meggitt	410.0	10.5	697.4	399.5
QinetiQ	301.4	-3.6	387.8	267.0
Rolls-Royce	480.0	28.8	941.2	451.2
Senior	117.1	-1.9	235.0	117.1
Ultra Electronics	1822.0	-94.0	2292.0	1525.0

AUTOMOBILES & PARTS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Aston Martin	206.0	-8.3	1115.0	197.7
TI Fluid Systems	150.4	2.0	273.0	148.4

BANKS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Bank of Georgia	1513.0	0.0	1755.0	1252.0
Barclays	102.4	4.9	192.5	97.5
BGEO Group	1230.0	-4.0	1818.0	1230.0
HSBC Hldgs	465.9	21.2	680.6	444.6
Lloyds Banking	37.9	0.9	67.2	37.0
Royal Bank of Scot	130.7	5.0	270.4	125.7
Standard Chartered	436.9	18.7	738.6	418.2
TBC Bank Group	1106.0	-34.0	1706.0	1106.0
Virgin Money UK	105.8	7.0	220.1	98.9

BEVERAGES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Barr (AG)	474.5	2.0	975.0	472.5
Britvic	742.0	52.0	1068.0	690.0
Coca-Cola HBC AG	1851.5	135.5	3074.0	1716.0
Diageo	2442.0	66.0	3625.5	2376.0

CHEMICALS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Croda International	4146.0	72.0	5375.0	4074.0
Elementis	53.1	-10.8	184.5	53.1
Johnson Matt	2057.0	52.0	3454.0	2005.0
Synthomer	238.2	6.2	420.8	232.0
Victrex	1838.0	52.0	2540.0	1786.0

CONSTRUCTION & MATERIALS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Balfour Beatty	238.8	1.8	293.4	194.2
CRH	2083.0	64.0	3100.0	2019.0
Galliford Try	122.7	7.1	190.4	102.4
Grafton Group	685.0	40.0	990.0	645.0
Ibstock	188.6	6.4	322.2	182.2
Marshalls	674.5	9.0	876.0	591.5
Polypipe Group	476.4	31.8	619.0	372.8

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Smith (DS)	275.9	8.0	394.8	267.9
Smiths Gp	1037.0	21.0	1769.5	1016.0
Smurfit Kappa Gp	2232.0	122.0	3010.0	2096.0
Vesuvius	372.8	10.4	642.0	341.0

ELECTRICITY
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Contour Global	156.6	9.6	222.5	147.0
Drax Gp	187.2	-2.1	386.8	187.2
SSE	1298.0	54.5	1686.5	1008.0

ELECTRONIC & ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Halma	1847.0	36.0	2244.0	1655.0
Morgan Advanced	236.0	-6.2	324.8	232.4
Oxford Instruments	1000.0	-72.0	1654.0	963.0
Renishaw	3052.0	130.0	4638.0	2922.0
Spectris	2364.0	103.0	3005.0	2234.0

EQUITY INVESTMENT INSTRUMENTS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
3i Infrastructure	276.5	0.0	317.5	274.0
Aberforth Smlr Cos	980.0	-20.0	1546.0	980.0
Alliance Trust	638.0	3.0	876.0	635.0
AVI Global Trust	583.0	-12.0	802.0	583.0
Baillie Gifford Japan	580.0	0.0	848.0	580.0
Bankers InvTst	817.0	11.0	1032.0	806.0
BlackRock Smaller	1228.0	-18.0	1794.0	1228.0
BMO Global Smaller	105.2	-1.5	150.0	105.2
Caledonia Inv	2605.0	-65.0	3180.0	2605.0
City of London IT	319.0	3.0	448.5	316.0
Edin Inv Trust	434.5	-7.0	652.0	434.5
European Opp	657.0	-2.0	926.0	657.0
F&C Investment	578.0	1.0	786.0	577.0
Fidelity China SPE	215.0	7.0	253.0	205.5
Fidelity Euro Values	207.5	5.5	272.0	202.0
Fidelity Spec Val	192.0	1.0	280.5	191.0
Finsbury G&I Tst	702.0	7.0	958.0	695.0
GCP Infra Inv	115.8	-2.2	134.0	115.8
Genesis Emerging	635.0	14.0	818.0	621.0
Greencoat UK	132.2	0.2	152.8	132.0
Harbourvest Glb	1450.0	-20.0	1868.0	1406.0
Herald Inv Trust	1160.0	4.0	1530.0	1156.0
HICL Infr	160.0	-3.8	183.0	156.6
JPM American	384.0	-8.5	524.0	384.0
JPM Emerg Mkt	877.0	59.0	1088.0	818.0
JPM Indian IT	605.0	45.0	790.0	560.0
JPM Japan IT	353.0	8.0	477.5	345.0
Jupiter Fund Mngt	237.4	2.1	432.0	211.6
Law Debenture	534.0	0.0	654.0	534.0
Mercantile IT	188.2	-6.6	278.5	188.0
Monks Inv Tst	796.0	11.0	1026.0	785.0
Murray Intl Tst	948.0	7.0	1286.0	941.0
Next Energy Solar	109.0	-3.0	126.5	109.0
Pantheon Intl Partn	1916.0	-14.0	2620.0	1916.0
Perpetual Inc & Grth	221.0	-1.5	342.0	221.0
Pershing Square	1330.0	26.0	1578.0	1218.0
Personal Assets Tst	39900	-200	44050	39900
Polar Cap Tech Tst	1350.0	28.0	1746.0	1228.0
Pollen Street	732.0	-24.0	884.0	732.0
Renewables Infra Gp	123.6	1.6	139.2	115.4
RIT Cap Partners	1818.0	22.0	2180.0	1796.0
Schroder Asia	401.0	17.5	485.5	383.5
Scottish Inv Tst	626.0	-12.0	843.0	626.0
Scottish Mortgage	537.0	24.0	659.0	472.0
Sequoia Econ Infra	105.0	3.0	118.6	102.0
Smithson Inv	1104.0	26.0	1388.0	1078.0
Syncona	212.5	0.0	267.0	203.0
Temple Bar IT	842.0	-62.0	1486.0	842.0
Templeton Em Mkts	664.0	20.0	876.0	644.0
Vietnam Enterprise	356.0	6.5	509.0	349.5
VinaCapital Vietna	251.0	4.0	357.5	247.0
Witan Invest	165.4	-0.2	235.0	165.4
Wwide Healthcare	2665.0	-65.0	3330.0	2495.0

FIXED LINE TELECOMMUNICATIONS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
BT Gp	112.3	5.0	230.7	107.3
Talktalk Telecom	85.0	-3.0	126.5	85.0
Telecom Plus	1118.0	8.0	1552.0	1110.0

FOOD & DRUG RETAILERS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Greggs	1660.0	-120.0	2476.0	1660.0
Morrison (WM)	171.0	6.2	230.0	164.8
Ocado Gp	1183.0	106.0	1435.0	1064.0
Sainsbury(J)	179.1	4.2	240.6	174.9
SSP Group	331.0	-8.0	721.0	331.0
Tesco	220.1	8.9	258.9	211.2

FOOD PRODUCERS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Assoc British Foods	1834.5	-18.0	2708.0	1834.5
Bakkavor	77.8	-3.2	149.6	77.8
Cranswick	3172.0	44.0	3852.0	2488.0
Greencore Gp	140.5	-11.6	281.8	140.5
Hilton Food Gp	906.0	-92.0	1118.0	905.0
Tate & Lyle	608.0	-1.2	801.4	608.0
Unilever	3854.5	3.0	5324.0	3851.5

FORESTRY & PAPER
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Mondi	1354.5	54.5	1846.0	1300.0

GENERAL FINANCIAL
	Price	Chg	High	Low
3i Group	730.6	17.2	1184.5	713.4
Ashmore Gp	337.4	1.2	570.0	336.2
Brewin Dolphin	217.6	-13.4	375.2	217.6
Close Brothers	1064.0	33.0	1663.0	1031.0
Coats Group	55.3	0.1	86.8	55.1
Finablr	11.6	7.1	215.0	4.5
Hargreaves Lans	1320.5	109.5	2433.0	1211.0
IG Gp	595.0	1.0	725.2	474.8
Integrafin Holdings	395.0	-4.5	529.0	337.0
Intermediate Capital	1050.0	-9.0	1877.0	1040.0
Intl Public Prtnshps	155.4	-1.6	171.2	146.8
Investec	303.7	5.9	518.6	297.8
IP Group	56.7	2.6	100.4	54.1
John Laing Gp	330.6	11.4	402.0	319.2
London Stock Exch	6794.0	438.0	8542.0	4538.0
Man Group	100.8	-1.2	175.2	100.8
Onesavings	311.0	34.0	452.0	277.0
Paragon	363.2	1.4	553.5	361.8
Plus500	775.0	-25.2	957.0	495.0
Provident Fin	266.8	-12.3	571.2	266.8
Quilter	121.1	0.5	174.7	120.7
Rathbone Brothers	1360.0	52.0	2540.0	1308.0
Schroders	2227.0	129.0	3443.0	2098.0
TP ICAP	298.5	-18.7	417.5	270.0

GENERAL RETAILERS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
B&M	280.4	-18.7	420.9	280.4
Dixons Carphone	69.8	-7.0	152.4	69.8
Dunelm Gp	930.0	65.0	1404.0	730.5
Frasers Group	250.6	-8.4	518.0	214.0
Howden Joinery Gp	523.8	4.4	732.6	478.8
Inchcape	536.0	18.5	720.0	517.5
JD Sports Fashion	512.6	-26.0	881.4	479.8
Kingfisher	136.5	-3.2	266.2	136.5
Marks & Spencer	97.4	-11.0	290.1	97.4
Next	4481.0	94.0	7340.0	4387.0
Pets at Home Gp	223.0	2.2	314.6	140.0
Vivo Energy	89.2	-4.2	139.0	89.2
Watches of Switz	233.2	-37.6	392.8	233.2
WH Smith	1119.0	-134.0	2654.0	1119.0

HEALTH CARE EQUIPMENT & SERVICES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Convatec	160.7	-2.6	220.4	132.6
Mediclinic Intl	304.8	6.7	415.3	293.4
NMC Health	1000.0	0.0	2942.0	700.0
Smith & Neph	1308.5	-10.5	1990.0	1308.5
UDG Hlthcare	578.5	-9.0	832.5	551.0

HOUSEHOLD GOODS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Barratt Devel	526.6	-28.0	878.4	526.6
Bellway	2709.0	-189.0	4310.0	2698.0
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	3619.0	-22.0	5474.0	3437.0
Countryside Prop	387.8	-15.0	540.5	277.6
Crest Nicholson	333.8	-18.2	519.0	332.0
McCarthy & Stone	108.0	-1.8	158.8	108.0
Persimmon	2042.0	-101.0	3298.0	1836.0
Reckitt Benckiser	5374.0	224.0	6688.0	5150.0
Redrow	526.0	-20.0	848.0	526.0
Taylor Wimpey	148.6	-8.1	236.2	142.9
Vistry Group	912.0	-47.0	1478.0	912.0

MAIN CHANGES UK 350
Risers		%	Fallers		%
Finablr	11.63	158.4	Cineworld Group	44.20	-34.0
Premier Oil	16.00	26.8	Elementis	53.15	-17.0
Cairn Energy	69.05	12.6	Marstons	51.85	-15.3
Evraz	228.80	12.5	Watches of Switz	233.20	-13.9
Onesavings	311.00	12.3	Centamin	98.16	-13.1
BHP Group	1054.00	12.2	Capita	35.62	-13.1
Kaz Minerals	299.80	11.4	Wetherspoon (JD)	921.00	-12.9
Helios Towers	107.70	10.5	SIG	30.90	-12.9
Rio Tinto	3274.00	10.3	National Express	241.00	-12.7
Ocado Gp	1183.00	9.8	Tullow Oil	10.91	-12.4

INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Bodycote	530.0	-7.5	971.0	530.0
Hill & Smith	1315.0	-5.0	1510.0	1049.0
IMI	802.6	32.2	1206.0	770.4
Melrose Ind	140.0	-1.1	248.5	140.0
RHI Magnesita	2100.0	-106.0	5000.0	2100.0
Rotork	227.8	0.5	341.2	227.3
Spirax-Sarco	8225.0	450.0	9415.0	6990.0
Weir Gp	889.8	-8.8	1814.0	889.8

INDUSTRIAL METALS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Evraz	228.8	25.4	709.4	203.4
Ferrexpo	107.0	5.4	301.3	101.7

INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Clarkson	2390.0	25.0	3110.0	2200.0
Fisher (James)	1594.0	-48.0	2260.0	1594.0
Royal Mail	134.7	-2.7	268.5	134.7
Signature Avi	291.2	0.0	406.0	291.2

LEISURE GOODS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Games Workshop	5280.0	90.0	7350.0	2800.0

LIFE INSURANCE
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Aviva	271.6	-0.4	438.4	271.6
Legal & General	193.0	10.2	318.4	182.8
Phoenix Gp	586.3	21.1	803.0	565.2
Prudential	866.8	-18.0	1790.0	866.8
St James Place	785.0	27.6	1199.5	757.4
Std Life Aberdeen	210.4	5.7	336.9	204.7

MEDIA
	Price	Chg	High	Low
4imprint	2330.0	-260.0	3500.0	2300.0
Ascential	280.0	12.2	421.2	264.2
Auto Trader Gp	447.6	13.0	607.6	434.6
Euromny Inst Inv	772.0	-97.0	1498.0	772.0
Future	930.0	16.0	1572.0	736.0
Informa	506.8	-9.8	892.0	506.8
ITV	84.5	0.6	156.5	83.8
Moneysupermkt.com	278.1	2.2	417.7	275.9
Pearson	528.0	16.8	927.0	511.4
RELX	1523.5	20.5	2099.0	1503.0
Rightmove Group	537.4	21.0	701.2	497.6
WPP	557.6	1.6	1077.5	556.0

MINING
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Anglo American	1335.6	101.2	2266.0	1234.4
Antofagasta	647.6	35.6	1022.5	612.0
BHP Group	1054.0	114.2	2049.0	939.8
Centamin	98.2	-14.8	153.2	79.8
Fresnillo	543.8	-12.4	921.2	539.6
Glencore	135.7	8.6	340.3	127.1
Hochschild Mining	125.3	-9.7	227.0	125.3
Kaz Minerals	299.8	30.7	738.4	269.1
Polymet Int	1222.5	32.5	1345.0	772.6
Rio Tinto	3274.0	306.0	4976.5	2968.0

MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Vodafone Gp	105.1	1.1	165.2	103.9

NONLIFE INSURANCE
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Admiral Gp	2011.0	124.0	2330.0	1887.0
Beazley	414.4	-27.6	628.0	414.4
Direct Line Ins	276.7	3.9	366.5	270.5
Hastings Gp Hldgs	148.9	-1.1	231.6	148.9
Hiscox	1083.0	37.0	1777.0	1046.0
Lancashire Hldgs	644.5	-8.0	807.0	640.5
RSA Ins Gp	432.5	6.7	597.0	425.8

OIL & GAS PRODUCERS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
BP	276.3	1.3	582.5	275.0
Cairn Energy	69.0	7.8	207.8	61.3
Energean Oil & Gas	359.5	7.5	1082.0	352.0
Premier Oil	16.0	3.4	118.7	12.6
Royal Dutch Shell A	1130.6	3.6	2612.0	1127.0
Royal Dutch Shell B	1083.0	-16.2	2622.0	1083.8
Tullow Oil	10.9	-1.5	250.0	10.9

OIL EQUIPMENT & SERVICES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Hunting	179.0	-9.8	657.0	179.0
Petrofac	183.2	-1.6	527.2	183.2
Wood Gp(J)	230.2	-11.1	598.6	230.2

PERSONAL GOODS
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Burberry Gp	1386.5	81.0	2345.0	1305.5
PZ Cussons	164.0	3.0	227.0	161.0

PHARMACEUTICALS & BIOTECHNOLOGY
	Price	Chg	High	Low
AstraZeneca	6316.0	2.0	7878.0	5644.0
Dechra Pharma	2232.0	-88.0	3068.0	2232.0
Genus	2956.0	-338.0	3644.0	2178.0
GlaxoSmithKline	1402.8	-1.8	1846.0	1402.8
Hikma Pharma	1728.0	-9.0	2200.0	1580.0

REAL ESTATE
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Assura	70.0	3.0	83.5	56.7
Big Yellow Gp	984.5	15.0	1240.0	955.5
BMO Comm Prop	83.0	3.0	124.2	80.0
British Land	389.9	6.0	638.8	383.9
Captl & Count Prop	177.3	5.0	270.5	172.3
CLS Hldgs	221.0	-12.0	312.5	212.0
Daejan Hldgs	7970.0	20.0	8040.0	4715.0
Derwent London	3292.0	-22.0	4282.0	2884.0
Grainger	259.6	4.6	338.0	217.4
Grt Portland Est	710.6	-1.6	966.0	649.4
Hammerson	151.6	-3.0	380.0	151.6
Land Securities	693.8	0.6	1001.5	693.2
LondonMetric Prop	173.8	-0.2	241.2	173.8
NewRiver Retail	125.4	2.0	246.0	123.4
Primary Hlth Prop	142.0	1.6	162.8	126.6
Safestore Hldgs	702.5	10.0	867.0	586.0
Savills	811.0	-71.0	1258.0	811.0
SEGRO	748.0	14.0	935.0	660.8
Shaftesbury	719.0	7.0	979.5	712.0
St Modwen Props	412.0	-4.5	530.0	373.0
TR Property IT	371.5	1.0	497.5	370.5
Tritax Big Box	111.0	-2.4	159.7	111.0
UK Commercial Prop	70.0	0.6	92.7	69.4
Unite Group	940.0	-10.0	1339.0	902.5
Workspace Gp	834.0	-48.5	1307.0	806.0

SOFTWARE & COMPUTER SERVICES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Avast	325.8	0.4	551.0	282.0
Aveva Gp	3082.0	200.0	5315.0	2882.0
Computacenter	1397.0	9.0	1920.0	1049.0
FDM Group	788.0	-15.0	1100.0	612.0
Kainos Gp	574.0	-52.0	880.0	430.0
Micro Focus Intl	423.9	-41.4	2160.0	423.9
Playtech	176.4	-0.2	457.7	176.4
Sage Group	582.0	22.0	820.4	560.0
Softcat	978.0	41.0	1260.0	804.0
Sophos	580.4	0.0	580.4	298.2

SUPPORT SERVICES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Aggreko	449.5	-21.6	869.2	449.5
Ashtead Gp	1831.5	130.0	2774.0	1701.5
Babcock Intl Grp	333.5	-10.9	646.6	333.5
Bunzl	1682.5	16.0	2551.0	1666.5
Capita	35.6	-5.4	183.0	35.6
DCC	4239.0	-101.0	7496.0	4239.0
Diploma	1454.0	-37.0	2134.0	1342.0
Electrocomp	474.3	12.8	729.8	461.5
Equiniti	172.0	0.0	236.2	167.0
Essentra	303.8	-12.2	449.0	303.8
Experian	2145.0	56.0	2898.0	2003.0
Ferguson	5494.0	112.0	7602.0	4800.0
G4S	92.9	-1.7	234.3	92.9
Hays	115.3	4.8	183.5	110.5
Homeserve	948.5	-36.5	1340.0	948.5
Intertek Gp	4536.0	149.0	6170.0	4387.0
IWG	222.7	-10.3	469.0	222.7
Network Int	433.0	12.0	650.0	421.0
Pagegroup	337.8	5.4	539.0	332.4
Paypoint	647.0	-36.0	1118.0	647.0
Rentokil Initial	433.8	11.5	525.4	345.2
Sanne Group	478.5	-15.5	752.0	478.5
Serco	117.4	-4.0	167.7	117.4
SIG	30.9	-4.6	153.0	30.9
Travis Perkins	1049.5	-6.0	1720.0	1049.5

TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE & EQUIPMENT
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Spirent Comms	203.5	-2.0	256.0	140.4

TOBACCO
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Br Am Tob	2678.5	93.5	3507.0	2585.0
Imperial Brands	1378.6	27.6	2648.5	1351.0

TRAVEL & LEISURE
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Carnival	1161.0	-128.0	4237.0	1161.0
Cineworld Group	44.2	-22.8	321.0	44.2
Compass Gp	1189.5	-51.5	2138.0	1189.5
Dominos Pizza	291.7	-13.3	326.4	221.2
easyJet	786.8	-12.4	1552.0	786.8
FirstGroup	76.7	-8.2	137.5	76.7
Flutter Ent	6476.0	-224.0	9456.0	5592.0
Go-Ahead Gp	1016.0	-136.0	2278.0	1016.0
GVC Hldgs	472.3	-47.1	939.0	472.3
Intercontl Htls	3351.0	19.5	5738.0	3331.5
Intl Cons Airl	350.3	16.2	671.0	334.1
Just Eat Takeaway.com	5900.0	395.0	8255.0	5505.0
Marstons	51.9	-9.3	131.4	51.9
Mitchells & Butlers	226.5	-21.5	470.5	226.5
National Express	241.0	-35.0	476.0	241.0
PPHE Hotel Gp	1100.0	70.0	2140.0	1030.0
Rank Gp	170.4	-16.2	326.0	144.0
Restaurant Grp	49.6	-5.9	166.4	49.6
Stagecoach Gp	88.7	-6.5	165.2	88.7
Wetherspoon (JD)	921.0	-136.0	1734.0	921.0
Whitbread	2579.0	-1.0	5152.0	2579.0
William Hill	88.6	-3.9	205.2	88.6
Wizz Air Holdings	2735.0	78.0	4496.0	2657.0

AIM 50
	Price	Chg	High	Low
Abcam	1079.0	23.0	1500.0	1056.0
Advanced Medical	240.0	4.0	354.5	225.0
Alliance Pharma	69.6	-0.5	87.5	63.4
ASOS	1935.5	-41.5	4066.0	1935.5
Blue Prism	1214.0	129.0	1841.0	788.0
Camellia	7525.0	75.0	11050.0	7450.0
Caretech Holdings	386.0	-9.0	502.0	325.0
Central Asia Metals	144.0	5.8	266.5	138.2
Clinigen Group	581.5	-24.0	1069.0	581.5
CVS Group	910.0	-40.0	1250.0	503.0
Dart Group	871.0	-16.5	1943.0	709.5
Diversified Gas & Oil	63.2	3.2	116.5	60.0
Draper Esprit	439.0	16.0	602.0	410.0
EMIS Group	940.0	-27.0	1242.0	940.0
Fevertree Drinks	1119.5	69.5	2475.0	1050.0
First Derivatives	1976.0	-84.0	3555.0	1976.0
Frontier Devs	1086.0	-32.0	1444.0	866.0
Gamma Comms	1125.0	25.0	1446.0	965.0
GB Group	593.0	-22.0	800.0	470.0
Gooch & Housego	1060.0	5.0	1527.5	954.0
Hurricane Energy	9.4	0.9	53.6	8.5
Impax Asset Mgmt	295.0	16.0	405.0	216.0
Iomart Group	320.0	13.5	405.0	306.5
IQE	33.2	0.6	94.2	32.6
James Halstead	480.0	0.0	570.0	440.0
Johnson Service Gp	140.0	-6.2	223.0	133.8
Keywords Studios	1339.0	-14.0	1838.0	1068.0
Learning Tech Gp	134.8	8.0	172.2	63.7
M&C Saatchi	60.0	-2.0	392.0	60.0
M.P. Evans	576.0	64.0	750.0	512.0
Majestic Wine	213.0	2.0	318.0	208.0
Midwich Group	490.0	24.0	633.0	460.0
Mortgage Advice B	560.0	27.0	800.0	533.0
Next Fifteen Comm	345.0	-78.0	658.0	345.0
Nichols	1300.0	-50.0	1880.0	1230.0
Numis Corporation	206.0	-9.0	306.0	206.0
Polar Capital Hdgs	410.0	59.0	604.0	351.0
Purplebricks Gp	51.7	-1.8	132.0	51.7
Renew Holdings	452.0	2.0	568.0	360.0
RWS Holdings	506.0	23.0	670.0	479.4
Scapa Group	107.6	-2.6	403.0	107.6
Secure Income REIT	378.0	28.0	473.0	350.0
Serica Energy	74.5	-1.5	143.4	74.5
Smart Metering Sys	571.5	30.5	627.0	310.0
Telford Homes	349.5	0.0	358.0	267.0
Thorpe (F.W.)	272.0	-2.0	359.0	267.0
Watkin Jones	210.0	2.5	286.0	199.6
Young's Brew NV	1045.0	-25.0	1310.0	1030.0
Young's Brew-A	1225.0	-90.0	1885.0	1225.0

EU SHARES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
ADIDAS	172.60	-4.68	316.05	177.28
AIR LIQUIDE	105.35	5.05	140.30	100.30
ALLIANZ AG	149.90	-1.60	232.20	151.50
AMADEUS IT GROUP	47.75	4.76	78.60	42.30
ANHEUSER BUSCH INBEV	38.91	1.98	92.71	36.93
ASML HOLDING NV	216.10	-2.30	292.95	163.28
AXA	15.33	0.34	25.50	14.99
BANCO SANTANDER	2.26	-0.02	4.10	2.28
BASF	42.40	0.40	74.49	42.01
BAYER AG	49.17	-0.37	78.06	49.55
BBVA	3.04	0.04	5.69	3.01
BMW	47.00	1.19	77.75	45.81
BNP PARIBAS	31.73	0.73	54.18	31.00
CRH	23.03	-0.08	36.50	23.11
DAIMLER	26.40	0.10	59.31	26.30
DANONE	53.76	0.86	82.00	52.90
DEUTSCHE POST AG	22.24	0.66	34.91	21.58
DEUTSCHE TELEKOM	11.71	-0.15	16.61	11.86
ENEL	5.62	0.39	8.57	5.23
ENGIE	10.48	-0.06	16.64	10.54
ENI	6.91	0.32	15.94	6.59
ESSILORLUXOTTICA	128.75	0.00	128.75	128.75
FRESENIUS MEDICAL CARE	58.88	-0.30	77.66	57.92
IBERDROLA	8.56	0.41	11.22	6.02
INDITEX	21.30	0.23	32.37	2.55
ING GROEP NV	5.16	0.00	12.05	5.16
INTESA SANPAOLO	1.55	0.09	2.60	1.46
KERING	405.00	20.50	610.20	384.50
KON KPN NV	1.85	0.00	2.96	1.85
L'OREAL	216.00	3.00	275.30	213.00
LVMH MOET HENNESSY	314.90	13.40	439.05	301.50
MUENCHENER RUECKVE	173.10	-3.90	282.50	177.00
NOKIA	21.88	0.00	21.88	21.88
ORANGE	9.61	0.00	15.01	9.61
ROYAL PHILIPS	30.30	-0.35	45.61	30.65
SAFRAN	84.28	-1.28	150.25	85.56
SANOFI	73.41	-0.03	94.00	72.24
SAP SE	93.17	0.37	129.36	92.80
SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC	71.96	1.30	102.90	67.14
SIEMENS AG	70.90	-0.71	119.90	71.61
SOCIETE GENERALE	17.15	1.60	31.93	15.55
TELEFONICA SA	3.88	0.08	9.18	3.80
TOTAL	26.02	-0.35	52.27	26.38
UNILEVER NV	42.22	-0.53	57.56	42.75
VINCI	67.38	3.66	106.75	63.72
VIVENDI	18.94	0.79	26.42	18.15
VOLKSWAGEN AG	113.40	-2.58	185.52	115.98

CRYPTO A.M. DAILY POWERED BY BEQUANT

CRYPTOCURRENCIES
Name	Price (USDT)	(24h)
Bitcoin (BTC)	$ 5207.95	6.43%
Ethereum (ETH)	$ 123.64	7.25%
Ripple (XRP)	$ 0.15	7.45%
Bitcoin Cash (BCH)	$ 167.21	6.01%
Litecoin (LTC)	$ 34.43	7.36%
EOS.IO (EOS)	$ 1.96	6.48%
Bitcoin SV (BSV)	$ 117.09	3.05%
TRON (TRON)	$ 0.01	5.23%
NEO (NEO)	$ 5.75	7.23%
Cardano (ADA)	$ 0.03	8.52%
CryptoCompare Large Cap Index		3.8%
CryptoCompare Small Cap Index		4.7%

Market	$149,356,062,743
Bitcoin Volatility	5%
Bitcoin Volume on BEQUANT Exchange (USDT)	465,356,649

Sources: Bequant.io, CryptoCompare.com
Prices and data are correct as of 13:00, 15.03.2020
Crypto AM features in City AM every Tuesday.
Previous Editions:www.cityam.com/crypto-insider
Read more at: https://bequant.pro/cityam

CRYPTO & COFFEE

The crypto market failed to maintain the upward momentum from Friday and traded choppy over the weekend, with the futures curve also failing to move back into pre-crash structure and instead traded in backwardation. Theunderlying liquidity conditions have improved and the bid/offer spread hasnarrowed significantly off the worst levels observed last week. However, the cost of liquidity remained elevated and with Bitcoin 1-month realised vol at almost 200%, it will take some time for the market to return to normality.

Heading into the final stages of the week, only Tezos and BitcoinSV remained in the green on year-to-date (YTD) basis, the rest of the top-10 complex was downanything from 5-30% YTD. It is not just retail market participants that likely suffered significant losses and portfolio liquidation, but given the unpredictable behaviour by some of the exchanges, it is also possible that even funds that weresuppose to be delta hedged, found themselves exposed. On the one hand, the sell-off shows how volatile the market can get but at the same time, the fact that the hashrate remained near record highs and the current estimate for mining difficulty is to adjust higher, highlights the potential opportunity to re-establish longs.

US SHARES
	Price	Chg	High	Low
3M	141.68	8.10	219.50	133.58
ABBOTT LABORATORIES	81.65	6.91	91.86	72.88
ADOBE INC.	335.50	50.50	383.28	257.76
ALPHABET INC VTG-C	1219.73	104.82	1526.69	1036.23
ALPHABET-A	1214.27	102.72	1524.87	1111.55
AMAZON.COM	1785.00	108.39	2170.22	1676.61
AMERICAN EXPRESS	99.60	16.07	136.93	83.53
APPLE INC.	277.97	29.74	327.20	173.30
AT&T	34.47	3.14	39.63	30.30
BANK OF AMERICA	24.16	3.65	35.64	20.51
BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY	196.40	20.43	230.20	175.97
BOEING CO.	170.20	15.36	395.86	154.84
CATERPILLAR INC.	99.64	7.38	150.53	92.26
CHEVRON	83.42	7.16	126.54	76.26
CISCO SYSTEMS	37.64	4.44	58.05	33.20
CITIGROUP	51.04	7.78	81.91	43.26
COCA-COLA CO	48.47	1.31	60.13	45.41
COMCAST	39.33	4.39	47.50	34.94
DOW	25.69	2.02	66.65	23.67
EBAY INC	33.99	0.96	41.57	33.03
EXXON MOBIL	38.12	0.94	83.38	37.18
FACEBOOK	170.28	15.81	223.23	154.47
GOLDMAN SACHS GROUP	177.17	26.49	249.72	150.68
HOME DEPOT INC	205.67	15.08	247.02	183.42
HONEYWELL INTERNATIONAL	149.41	14.56	183.23	134.85
IBM	107.95	5.14	156.76	102.81
INTEL	54.43	8.89	68.47	43.46
JOHNSON & JOHNSON	134.29	8.88	153.99	125.41
JPMORGAN CHASE & CO	103.91	15.86	141.09	88.05
MASTERCARD INC	270.01	28.51	344.56	229.89
MCDONALD'S	177.13	7.00	221.15	170.13
MEDTRONIC	88.82	4.42	121.30	84.15
MERCK & CO.	76.75	2.30	92.04	73.19
MICROSOFT	158.83	19.77	188.70	116.77
NETFLIX	336.30	21.05	387.78	254.59
NIKE INC.	75.58	1.38	104.58	74.20
ORACLE	47.93	8.13	60.15	39.80
PAYPAL HOLDINGS	110.15	13.19	123.91	96.64
PEPSICO	127.45	12.11	146.99	115.34
PFIZER INC	32.71	2.69	44.40	30.02
PROCTER & GAMBLE	114.07	12.23	127.14	101.51
TRAVELERS COMPANIES	107.45	5.27	154.83	102.18
TWITTER	29.29	2.51	45.42	26.78
UNITED HEALTH GROUP	272.04	21.63	305.31	215.26
UNITED TECHNOLOGIES	105.40	2.90	156.83	102.50
VERIZON COMMUNICATIONS	54.17	2.97	62.07	51.20
VISA	175.83	15.75	213.31	160.08
WALGREENS BOOTS ALLIANCE	46.19	5.17	76.05	41.02
WALMART	114.10	10.05	121.28	96.94
WALT DISNEY CO	102.52	10.71	151.64	91.81
WELLS FARGO & CO	30.89	3.69	54.46	27.20

COMMODITIES
Gold	1563.27	-23.92	Copper Cash Official	5386.25	-165.25
Silver (Pence)	1652.50	-49.50	Aluminium Cash Official	1642.50	-25.75
Silver (Cents)	1298.00	-20.00	Nickel Cash Official	11852.50	-580.00
Krugerrand	1578.01	-75.88	Aluminium Alloy Cash Official	1350.00	u/c
Brent Crude	33.20	-2.59	Natural Gas	24.03	-0.15
Platinum	809.00	-71.00	Tin Cash Official	16232.50	-467.50
British Sovereign	368.31	-17.36	Zinc Cash Official	1926.50	-51.75
Lead Cash Official	1748.50	-64.25	White Sugar	354.10	-5.10

TOURIST RATES
Canada	1.655	New Zealand	1.9074
Croatia	7.7109	Norway	12.00
Czech Republic	26.92	Poland	4.3151
Denmark	7.9857	Singapore	1.6488
Hong Kong	9.26	Sweden	11.64
Iceland	148.47	Switzerland	1.1301
India	81.91	Turkey	7.5005
Israel	4.1397	United States	1.1995

WORLD INDICIES
	Price	Chg	%Chg
FTSE 100	5366.11	+128.63	+2.46
FTSE 250	15562.00	-155.42	-0.99
FTSE All-Share	2994.40	+52.19	+1.77
FTSE AIM All-Share	741.28	+6.19	+0.84
S&P 500	2711.02	+230.38	+9.29
Dow Jones I.A	23185.62	+1985.00	+9.36
Nasdaq Composite	7874.88	+673.07	+9.35
Xetra DAX	9232.08	+470.95	+4.07
CAC 40	4118.36	+74.10	+1.83
Swiss Market Index	8367.56	+97.12	+1.17
ISEQ Overall Index	5148.43	+22.49	+0.44
FTSEurofirst 300	1167.94	+17.04	+1.48
Hang Seng	24032.91	-276.16	-1.14
Nikkei	17431.05	-1128.58	-6.08
STI Index	2634.00	-44.64	-1.67
ASX All Ordinaries	5590.70	+219.80	+4.09

SPECIAL FEATURE

FOOTBALL MEETS ITS MATCH

As coronavirus holds up the beautiful game, **Alex Daniel** looks at how clubs will cope financially

AS LIVERPOOL'S footballers emerged from the dugout at Anfield on Wednesday evening, fans stretched their hands down towards them from the flanking stands in search of a high five. Most players ignored them. Sadio Mane, Liverpool's second highest goalscorer of the season and African player of the year, reached up to grant one supporter his wish. Manager Jurgen Klopp was not so obliging. "Put your hands away, you f***ing idiots," he snapped.

The German's reaction to his own fans clearly came from a fear of spreading coronavirus to his players. It reflected an increasingly febrile atmosphere in English football — and the multi-billion-pound industry it supports — in the run-up to authorities eventually suspending the season on Friday.

After Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta and Chelsea striker Callum Hudson-Odoi contracted the virus, this was perhaps the only sensible option. The worst-case scenario — cancelling the football season — is not unrealistic.

From a business perspective, everything is now up in the air. If the season restarts on 3 April, the earliest date possible, it will almost certainly be behind closed doors, to slow the potential spread of the virus through tens of thousands of spectators. Before Arteta and Hudson-Odoi, several games had already been played in those conditions across Europe, and the Premier League was coming under huge pressure to enforce the rule across all of its matches.

A two-and-a-half week delay to the season would unlikely have a significant impact on the top flight, because their main source of income — broadcast money — has already been paid. But what about playing to empty stadiums?

The main difference between a closed-door match and a normal game of football is gate receipts. Across the 20 teams in the Premier League, a little under £1 in every £7 of revenue comes from matchday.

For the well-insulated clubs in the top division, this is unlikely to be too damaging, but it would still be enough to make a dent in their balance sheets.

"It is a significant financial impact whichever way you cut it," says Dr Dan Plumbey, a senior lecturer in sports finance at Sheffield Hallam University. "But in the Premier League the majority of revenue comes from broadcasting. In the short term at least, they're okay."

The real pain from closed-door matches will be felt in the lower leagues, where gate receipts are more integral to clubs' income. In Leagues One and Two, the average proportion of annual revenue that comes from matchdays is more like a third, rising to as much as three quarters for some clubs when season ticket sales and walk-in trade are factored in.

Moreover, cash is tighter in the lower leagues. Already, many clubs operate on an annual loss, betting that their outlay will eventually be dwarfed by the massive cash injection that comes with getting promoted at the end of the season. In February, Southend and Macclesfield's financial difficulties meant they were unable to pay their players' wages on time.

"It is difficult to see how those issues can be turned round," says Kieran Maguire, author of The Price of Football and lecturer at the University of Liverpool. "My concern would be for those clubs."

Looking further into the future, any delay to matches beyond the planned restart in April will cause serious complications for English football's richest as well as its poorest. Players' contracts usually run until 30 June, meaning that pushing matches back until the summer could leave clubs in the lurch.

Maguire asks: "Will they be offered short-term contracts? Or will the football authorities come up with some sort of compromise where all EFL clubs agree to extend the period of contract to the 31 July? Whatever they do, they will have to be innovative."

> It is a significant financial impact whichever way you cut it

Plus, the footballing calendar is crowded. Euro 2020, the international tournament, is scheduled to run from 12 June to 12 July, effectively giving clubs a deadline by when the domestic season must be completed. But with that tournament spread over some of the continent's worst-affected cities, that is also in doubt. European managing body Uefa meets tomorrow to decide whether to push that back by a year.

All of this throws up an unprecedented number of legal issues. Jake Calvert, an associate at law firm Cooke, Young and Keidan, who acts on high-profile sports litigation cases, tells me that most clubs would not be able to sue managing bodies for their losses because a pandemic would likely be covered under a force majeure clause in their contracts — a rule which provides for an exception to contractual obligations in unforeseen circumstances.

"But I would imagine given the hefty sums involved, everyone is going to have a go [legally]," he says. "The sponsors will have a go at the clubs, and it will be for the clubs to raise these arguments in their defence."

Maguire disagrees. He tells me: "Many sponsors are looking at long-term relationships with clubs. To have your product across the front of Liverpool's shirt, for example, is quite coveted. I don't think it would be in the sponsor's interest to take a confrontational approach, because next time the contract comes up for renegotiation the club is going to take a pretty dim view in itself."

> These clubs all have bills to pay — it's a house of cards that can fall apart very quickly

Nevertheless, with matchday income on hold, belated transfer fees to pay, and footballers' famously high wages to account for, leniency from sponsors may not be enough for some clubs.

"You can theoretically be right but still run out of money," says Fausto Zanetton, chief executive of sports advisory firm, Tifosy. "At the end of the day you need to have cash in the bank. These clubs all have bills to pay to other clubs.

"It's a house of cards that can fall apart very quickly."

If the situation becomes worse, "it would be necessary to have a more centralised approach to how you deal with the risk of some of these clubs going into financial distress," he continues, citing Germany as an example. "The Bundesliga has made noises that they might use some of the broadcasting money as a bridge for this year for the potential loss of revenues."

Maguire adds that if the Premier League were to support cash-strapped clubs through the period, "it would show that football has a conscience".

As for the worst-case scenario, cancelling the season altogether would mean heartbreak for Klopp and his team. Until the virus reached Britain, they were almost certain to win their first league title in 30 years, and the £150m prize that comes with it.

However, fans must keep things in perspective. Liverpool's legendary manager from the 1970s, Bill Shankly, once said: "Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I don't like that attitude. I can assure them it is much more serious than that."

In this case, he is mistaken.

FORUM

EDITED BY RACHEL CUNLIFFE

Total muppets like Lagarde and Trump are escalating this crisis

"IT IS hard to soar with Eagles when you work with turkeys." — Sam the American Eagle, Muppet. As everyone remotely connected with business and government knows, there is a great danger in advancing obviously overmatched people not up to the job.

Promoting "muppets" (which, with apologies to Kermit the Frog, is the nickname we used in Washington for such a despised species) is dangerous for any organisation.

It is like leaving an unexploded bomb in your midst. The muppet's lack of ability almost always comes back to haunt, usually at the worst possible time.

At this most pressing moment of the twenty-first century so far, two such muppets have made a terrible situation even worse. Both President Donald Trump and European Central Bank (ECB) chief Christine Lagarde have lived down to their expectations.

The President, the most thin-skinned leader on the planet, his obvious emotional neediness cocooned in a smug know-it-all-ism that precludes listening to anyone else outside his sycophantic orbit, became yet again his own worst enemy.

Trump was musing aloud two weeks ago that talk of the spread of coronavirus amounted to little more than a Democratic party conspiracy to tear down his great accomplishment of a sound economy.

Just 14 days later he wildly swung the other way, outlawing all European travel to the US for the next month, in an effort to somehow shield the US from the virus.

John Hulsman

Undaunted, and confusingly, the President followed this panicked reaction the same day by insouciantly noting the virus will "just go away".

Confused? Not half so much as the markets. Already heading for the door in the face of the growing global pandemic, they were desperately looking for reassurance from the most powerful man in the world.

To put it mildly, this wasn't it.

But what should we really expect? Even when the President does the right thing, his motivations almost always have to do with his own colossal ego and self-regard, rather than the wellbeing of America as a country.

Such a failing mattered little during the first three years of his term in office, blessed as it was to be relatively crisis-free.

> Their painful over-promotion could prove as harmful to the global economy as the virus itself

However, now that the coronavirus pandemic, a true global tsunami of epic proportions, looms dead ahead, this seemingly extraneous character trait becomes of incredible importance. Trump's selfishness has had the very practical policy consequence of making an awful situation infinitely worse.

Sadly for the world, Trump was not the only muppet to be wielding a knife during the last fateful week. As I predicted last year, Europe's obvious over-promotion of Christine Lagarde as the new ECB president has come back to bite it.

The long-term policy danger signs have been clear enough throughout Lagarde's chequered career, yet somehow her many disasters have allowed her to perpetually fail upwards.

Lagarde was duly found guilty of criminal negligence and misuse of public funds while French finance minister in December 2016. But she continued on her merry, unaccountable way, and was quickly promoted to head the International Monetary Fund.

There, Lagarde's fingerprints are all over both the Greek bailout debacle as well as the even more ruinous failed "stabilisation" of Argentina. Having made a hash of all this, only in a Kafka novel should she have been further rewarded by being made ECB chief — but of course she was.

Following on from her fellow muppet's disastrous intervention into the coronavirus crisis, Lagarde predictably made everything even worse. At last week's press conference, she seemed to airily dismiss ECB responsibility for the bond yield spread between Germany and Italy, even as Rome has been decimated by Covid-19 to the point of being forced to quarantine the whole country.

At this most fragile of moments, the new ECB president seemed determined to undo in one moment her skilled predecessor Mario Draghi's vague but determined legacy of assuring markets he would do "whatever it takes" to stabilise the Eurozone.

In the cases of both Trump and Lagarde, the record of the two protagonists and their painful over-promotion could prove as harmful to the global economy as the virus itself. Make no mistake, this is the most serious crisis in terms of political risk in the twenty-first century so far, a pandemic of global complexity with wrenching human and economic consequences, almost all of them bad.

The real policy question is whether, when the crisis is over, things settle as a new serious global recession, or as something even worse. That result depends on policy leadership.

Last week's muppets with knives provide a terrifying answer as to where everything is headed. It's going to be a very bumpy ride.

Dr John C. Hulsman is a senior columnist at City A.M., a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and president of John C. Hulsman Enterprises. He can be reached for corporate speaking and private briefings at www.chartwellspeakers.com.

A levelling up agenda cannot afford to overlook the UK's beating financial heart

WITH the strong and unpredictable economic headwinds of 2020, last week's Budget came at a critical juncture. All eyes were on the new chancellor, in particular on what the Budget might propose to alleviate some of the short-term Covid-19 shocks to the economy.

Efforts to support households and businesses, particularly SMEs, through the Covid-19 outbreak were both well-received and necessary. After strong early measures from the Bank of England and the wider banking industry, it is clear that we need a coherent and coordinated response that will reinforce the economy at this difficult time.

Beyond these much-needed short-term measures to combat a crisis, there were also several steps taken to boost the long-term competitiveness of the UK. One clear win for financial services was the strategic review of the UK fintech sector.

Catherine McGuinness

London has firmly established itself as fintech capital of the world, with clusters of expertise spread around the country. That is something that we want to hold onto, and the strategic review is a positive step in this regard.

As secretariat for it, we look forward to working to ensure that fintech continues to drive forward innovation in financial services and enhance its role as a key growth engine for the UK economy.

There was also the UK funds regime review announcement. The UK is already a leading centre for the investment management industry, but protecting its position in the coming years will be critical to the City's future success.

And though we are yet to see the detail, the review on the future of VAT and financial services will be of interest to the sector. The much-anticipated Financial Services Bill was referenced, and will hopefully do what it says on the tin: ensure that the UK maintains its world-leading regulatory standards and remains open to international markets.

While there wasn't much else for the sector per se, there was lots in the Budget that indicated the direction of travel for the government over the coming months.

We know that financial services hubs up and down the country play a crucial role in driving prosperity nationwide. With two thirds of financial services jobs outside of London, these centres are already making significant contributions to their local economies.

We have long said that filling the skills gap and improving connectivity will not only strengthen the UK's position as a world-leading business hub, but also help create greater shared prosperity across the country. The Budget's commitment to ramp up skills and infrastructure spending, particularly on green transport and gigabit broadband, is a positive first step to achieving this.

But this is not a zero-sum game. London is key to supporting prosperity right across the country and will play a critical role in fuelling our economic success, especially now that we have left the EU.

So although the direction of travel is a positive one, we are clear that "levelling up" should not mean "leaving out". The capital is the beating heart of the UK economy and it is important that investment is made right across the country, including London.

Catherine McGuinness is policy chair at the City of London Corporation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Passive aggressive

[Re: FTSE 100 crashes 10.9 per cent in worst one-day fall since 1987]

With the FTSE 100 down well below its pre-crisis high of 6930.2, reached on the 31 December 1999, anyone who has invested their money into a passive index tracker will probably be kicking themselves.

As the FTSE heads towards bear market territory, this should provide the industry — and the investing public — with a reminder that passive investment options aren't all they're cracked up to be.

While there are cost benefits with index trackers, there's a reason why fund managers charge higher fees. The position of fund manager requires care and attention in applying knowledge to achieve balance in the construction of their portfolios while not overexposing themselves to certain sectors.

A good and risk-appropriate investment needs to be balanced and thought-out, which is not necessarily achieved with a blunt index tracker.

With coronavirus flashing recession warnings to the markets, we could see a pause in the surge of passive investment popularity. Beyond this, though, the next few weeks and months could provide an opportune moment for active managers to reinforce their worth and the value behind their craft.

Paul Mumford, Cavendish Asset Management

BEST OF TWITTER

Labour are calling on the government to publish their scientific advice so that public can have confidence in the UK's approach, as Britain increasingly becomes an outlier in terms of not cancelling events etc
@PaulBrandITV

Presumably so more people with humanities degrees can form expert opinions on epidemiology, more expert than, say, a group of senior professors of epidemiology
@JenWilliamsMEN

Seems to me that a number of people who despaired at politicians overruling experts a wee while ago are now urging politicians to overrule experts. We are all frightened, many of us not for ourselves but for those we love. The challenge is to not let that fear override logic.
@dhothersall

One thing I find interesting is how humans always have to make bad things MEAN something. Silliness like the virus is "the planet punishing us". I wonder if rabbits fret in their burrow wondering if myxomatosis is nature punishing them for all the holes they dig in fields.
@matthaig1

A thing: people who normally work at home having to cope suddenly with someone else working at home too. All your rituals, talking to the cat, eating lunch at 11am, brushing your teeth at 6pm, watching Bargain Hunt in your pants, THROWN. The home has basically become the office.
@Sathnam

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS › E: theforum@cityam.com COMMENT AT: cityam.com/forum : @cityam

We should hasten the shift from cash, not try to delay it

Ben Ramanauskas

TUCKED away far down in the text of the Budget was a commitment that the government would protect access to cash and "ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable".

The fact that the UK could become cashless within a decade has caused alarm among some politicians and pressure groups, who have pointed out that cash is relied upon by people living in rural communities, the elderly, and those on low incomes. They want legislation similar to that in Sweden, where banks face fines if they do not make cash available.

Although well-intentioned, such a move would be a mistake. There are many benefits of going cashless.

The biggest winners are likely to be bank customers. Banks pay an "interchange fee" to cash machine providers for every withdrawal, but as these machines become less economically viable, fees have risen, and often this has been passed on to customers.

It is also incredibly costly to maintain bank branches in order to handle cash transfers over the counter. Going cashless would enable banks to focus their resources on meeting the actual needs of their customers.

Going cashless would be good news for businesses too. Handling cash transactions is time-consuming, especially when it comes to dealing with 1p and 2p coins. It increases burdens on workers and causes delays for consumers. Getting rid of cash would mean that workers can serve customers more quickly and that you won't have to wait as long for your morning coffee or evening pint.

It could also have other less obvious benefits, like helping to reduce violent crime such as robberies. Why? Because if nobody carries cash, the incentives for criminals to mug someone decrease. Obviously, financial crime will still occur, but at least fewer people will be held up at knife point and told to hand over their wallet.

And with the global economy looking jittery, reducing the use of cash could even help to avert a recession. In financial crises, the correct response from central banks is to adopt a looser monetary policy by lowering interest rates, as the Bank of England did last week. But with rates at historically low levels, there is very little room for manoeuvre. Interest rates may well need to go below zero. This cut would transmit to bank deposits, loans, and bonds.

At present, people could avoid a negative interest rate (which is essentially a charge on their deposits) by withdrawing their money and stashing their cash under their mattress. But without cash, depositors would have to pay to keep their money with the bank, making consumption and investment more attractive in comparison. Going cashless would therefore increase consumption, lending, and investment at a critical time.

> "At a jittery time, going cashless could even help to avert a recession

But what about the vulnerable groups who rely on cash?

Rural communities will be better served by the government delivering on its commitment to ensure that they have access to high-speed broadband like the rest of the UK, so cashless transactions can take place effectively.

Elderly people are often reluctant to go cashless as they can feel uneasy about new technology. As such, banks should be encouraged to give free demonstrations to their less tech-savvy customers, showing how to use debit cards and online banking so they can fully participate in a cashless society.

As for those on low incomes, going cashless could actually help them with some issues such as budgeting and saving, especially as Open Banking enables innovative fintechs to offer new financial solutions to previously underserved customers. Of course, this is a more complex issue which will require government reform, but the challenges are surmountable.

The benefits of going cashless are widely underplayed, while the fears are overblown. Rather than trying to slow down the shift, the government should be speeding it up.

Ben Ramanauskas is a research economist at Oxford University.

DEBATE

Is the EU's approach to regulating artificial intelligence misguided?

YES

JAMES LAWSON

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming society for the better. We're using it to improve services and save lives. Applications range from fighting fraud to preventing forest fires and creating new medicines.

The EU's desire to be the world leader in AI and to protect citizens is laudable, but its regulatory stance risks having the opposite effect.

The rules seek to restrict all "high risk" applications, but this is poorly defined. A precautionary approach is in tension with EU leadership ambitions, and could fail to consider the costs of inaction.

Too much caution could also drive entrepreneurs and talent abroad. By comparison, the US says that regulators must not "needlessly hamper" AI, considering benefits and costs simultaneously. This is a more even-handed approach, providing fertile ground for innovation.

Today, none of the top 10 global tech companies are European. It's a safe bet that, with misguided regulation, this trend will continue into the AI era.

James Lawson is chief AI evangelist at DataRobot.

NO

ROCH GLOWACKI

Developing AI regulation is a complex task with high stakes, given the technology's potential to fundamentally affect all aspects of our lives. While many have attacked the EU's approach, much of this is unfair, misguided, and fails to appreciate the very delicate line that policymakers must tread here.

Simply put, the EU wants to inspire public trust and ensure that data flowing through the economy (including, for example, our financial services and healthcare industries) is legitimate, high quality, and accessible where appropriate.

In a similar way that foods must disclose GMOs or allergens, AI-based services could be required to label that an algorithm, instead of a human, took certain high-stakes decisions or actions.

The EU does not want to stifle innovation or prohibit the use of "high risk" AI. Instead, the aim is to avoid internal market fragmentation, to promote open data initiatives, to establish a risk-based approach to AI governance, and to develop a framework for "trustworthy" AI, so that it becomes an asset that may be exported across the world.

Roch Glowacki is an associate at international law firm Reed Smith.

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MARKETING

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME

Nicholas Mazzei dissects how the aggressive trademark tactics of Hugo Boss ended up backfiring

ONE OF the most critical assets of every company is its brand. In fact, it is so important that the brand value of a company can be greater than its stock market valuation.

Since the late nineties, an increasing number of successful companies have been "brand-led" — the concept that the character of the company is more important to its success than its financial plan. Control of the brand is therefore seen as vital to their success.

Recently however, the brand police have become extraordinarily aggressive, to the point where they can lose the support of the general public. Brand professionals are becoming more akin to followers of a religious faith than to a corporate entity.

Instead of applying the brand's rules with balance and pragmatic thought, corporate zealots have been using their legal muscle to take out small companies and even charities which dare to encroach on their carefully crafted brand.

The latest brand monster is Hugo Boss, which has been sending threatening legal letters to other organisations using the word "Boss".

Boss Brewing was challenged over the naming of two of its beers, and told it must change them immediately. A charity called Dark Girl Boss also received letters over its name.

A company with annual revenues of nearly €3bn never looks good when it is getting its high-priced lawyers to send intimidating letters to startups and charities over the use of a word.

And it didn't go unnoticed. To protest against such behaviour from a luxury brand, Joe Lycett, in a mocking move only a comedian can get away with, changed his name by deed poll to Hugo Boss. (Ironically, the move by Lycett is very much in line with his personal brand and could net him an additional £1.5m in content deals.)

In response to Lycett's name change, Hugo Boss tried to demonstrate that it is not the bully that its legal letters make it seem. It failed: the company released a clumsy statement trying to explain its actions, referring to various types of trademarks.

"We welcome the comedian formerly known as Joe Lycett as a member of the Hugo Boss family," the company said. "As an open-minded company, we would like to clarify that we do not oppose the free use of language in any way and we accept the generic term 'boss' and its various and frequent uses in different languages."

The attempt to demonstrate a lighthearted attitude to Lycett's name change by welcoming him to the Boss family was cringeworthy and too late. Despite their claims of being an "open-minded" company, the aggressive attempts to restrict the word "Boss" as a commercial trademark for its own use only suggests otherwise.

> "Corporate zealots have been using their legal muscle to take out small companies and even charities

How much reputational damage this will cost the fashion company is not yet clear, but it is obvious the battle of the brands has not done it any favours.

Comedian Joe Lycett changed his name to Hugo Boss to mock the brand

This is not the first time this issue has arisen. The Olympics, which has one of the most highly protected brands in the world, has extraordinarily strict rules on its brand use.

In 2012, the Olympics came under fire for targeting small businesses who wanted to celebrate the event, forcing a florist in Stoke-on-Trent to take down a logo in its window.

And Lord Coe, the event organiser, even warned that spectators would not be able to wear a Pepsi logo into the event as Coca-Cola had paid for the sponsorship — a decision that was described as overzealous and unnecessary by former International Olympic Committee members.

Frankly, is this corporate brand policing really in the spirit of the games?

There is a thin line between brand benefit and brand damage. Organisations need to keep their brand attack dogs on a tight leash and be a bit more sensible when it comes to the use of similar names and logos. People love to kick a big company, and few customers remain loyal to the big bullies.

Nicholas Mazzei is a communications and strategy adviser.

Disney's streaming push is not just about subscribers

WITH Disney Plus launching in the UK — and in other European markets — debate rages as to whether we will see the rise of a "Netflix killer", and which brand will emerge as the ultimate winner.

Streaming services have been enjoying their moment in the sun. In the leading US market, subscriber rates for all services have been rising (though figures are somewhat distorted via subscriptions given free with phone or internet plans and, for example, Amazon Prime membership).

Received wisdom is that the streaming battle is fought over content, which is why we see brands spending vast sums to create original shows and hire top talent. Investment in production continues to generate headlines — and awards. Netflix's supposed spending on content in 2019 was $15bn, with Apple TV Plus spending $7bn, and Amazon Prime $6bn.

So what does the picture look like for Disney?

While some brands — including Netflix — must create content (and drive awareness and interest) from scratch, Disney Plus's advantage is that it owns and is known for its flagship content brands. It launches with an enviable stable: Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, and National Geographic.

This content will be a major draw. These brands have huge fan bases who are already impatient to access new and exclusive content, such as Star Wars' The Mandalorian. Initial subscriber numbers in Europe will no doubt be impressive — especially among family and youth demographics.

But the race is on. While it's possible that households will subscribe to multiple streaming services, all brands will need to continue to produce fresh, exciting content to keep viewers interested and to hook new subscribers.

And the content battle is only a part of the story. The tenets of brand building hold just as true for the streaming space. Disney Plus starts from a good place: a parent company that's relevant and distinctive in terms of what it stands for, and one that commands love and respect from its audiences.

And like Netflix, Disney Plus will offer a premium, ad-free experience. This, coupled with a strong parent company and stable of desirable content brands, should mean Disney Plus has a fair chance of success.

However, for Disney, the foray into streaming is about far more than subscription numbers. While Netflix is a pure play, Disney is thinking big. It understands that brand is a driver of business performance, and that successful brands meet their audiences wherever they are, to provide a 360-degree experience.

The company has so many more avenues through which it can monetise Disney Plus subscriber information, across any and all relevant touch points: toys, books, merchandise, music, theme parks, retail, hospitality, cruise ships — the list goes on. The House of Mouse clearly has its eyes on the total ecosystem — not just on streaming.

So the real story when it comes to streaming services may not be about picking the winner — it may be about picking the battle itself.

Helen Firth is executive strategy director at Landor.

OFFICE POLITICS

The UK's other health crisis: Poor sleep

Covid-19 isn't the only epidemic sapping our wellbeing and productivity at work

Steve Peralta

THE UK population is facing a new sort of crisis — and no, this is not Covid-19, but the sleep conundrum. With two thirds of the UK working population struggling with poor sleep, research from Rand reveals that UK employers are losing up to £40bn and over 200,000 working days per year.

While this is no contagious virus, it is problematic — and often ignored.

Over the years, a skewed narrative around leadership success has emerged, where thriving leaders are defined by the number of hours they put in. Elon Musk, Tim Cook and Michelle Obama have all been outspoken about their sleeping habits (or the lack thereof), perpetuating the idea that little sleep leads to success.

Such biased understanding undermines the reality of the problem, and the solution is often misunderstood. While getting more hours will of course help, the focus should be on the quality of sleep. It is poor sleep that compromises success.

According to the Royal Society of Sleep, restless sleep can lead to a decrease in cognitive capabilities: short-term memory loss, a lack of creative and divergent thinking, and lethargic feelings. With three out of four UK employees saying that they feel lethargic at work following a night of poor sleep, and 68 per cent believing that it affects their ability to complete tasks, the effects are countless, and the health consequences can be dire for wellbeing and productivity.

As a wellbeing coach who struggled with and overcame 10 years of insomnia, I know first-hand the impact that poor sleep can have on productivity. And I know it's something that companies can act on to help their employees. But for that, we need a systemic overhaul of how organisations and employees speak of sleep.

According to Jason Ellis, Unmind's resident sleep expert and professor of sleep science at Northumbria University, organisations "need to create a culture shift away from seeing sleep as a tradable commodity". We should no longer be congratulating the people who slept two hours to get their work done, but encouraging employees to have a healthy attitude towards sleep.

We should no longer be congratulating the people who slept two hours to get their work done

Companies can incorporate practical measures, including offering flexible working hours to suit employee's chronotype (the internal clock that tells your optimum sleep time and dictates whether you are a morning or a night person) and redesigning shift-work rotations.

We should also encourage setting a "curfew" time for emails, to ensure that staff can switch off after working hours. Organisations that have created sleep wellness packages and offered bespoke support to employees with sleeping difficulties have seen an increase in productivity.

Educating employees on sleep is critical. Organisations can raise awareness on the importance of being well-rested, and how good sleep is the foundation for wellbeing and productivity.

Technology can play an important role in making this kind of education and support easily accessible. The rise of digital platforms is helping us learn, track and proactively improve the quality of our sleep, which we know benefits both our physical and mental health. Sleep tools and programmes have become two of the most popular resources on our platform, helping employees understand and take measures to improve their sleeping habits.

Undoubtedly, better sleep leads to an engaged workforce. Companies which understand that poor sleep equates to poor performance and address it will see tremendous results in terms of staff retention, work performance, and productivity output.

While there's more that organisations can do to raise awareness on the issue, business leaders must find new measures to ensure that the problem with sleeping — or the lack thereof — doesn't turn into an epidemic.

Steve Peralta is co-founder and chief content officer of Unmind.

GET SOME REST

Sleep Cycle
Free

If you're trying to improve your sleep hygiene, there are plenty of apps that can help. Sleep Cycle aims to coach you towards better rest. Its smart alarm is designed to wake you when you're in light sleep for a more natural start to the day. You can track your sleeping data and even find out how much you snore.

COFFEE BREAK

SUDOKU

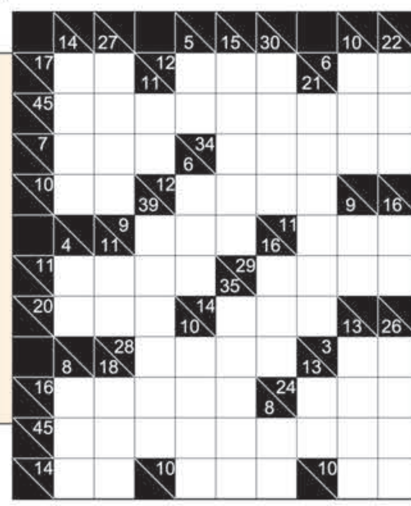
Place the numbers from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each row, each column and each 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9 to solve this tricky Sudoku puzzle.

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

KAKURO

Fill the grid so that each block adds up to the total in the box above or to the left of it.

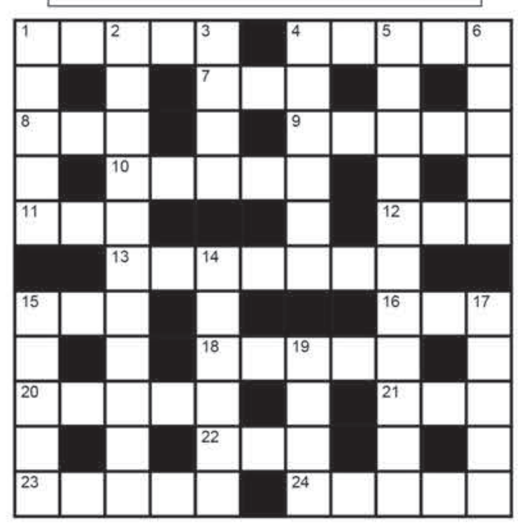
You can only use the digits 1-9 and you must not use the same digit twice in a block. The same digit may occur more than once in a row or column, but it must be in a separate block.



WORDWHEEL

Using only the letters in the Wordwheel, you have ten minutes to find as many words as possible, none of which may be plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. Each word must be of three letters or more, all must contain the central letter and letters can only be used once in every word. There is at least one nine-letter word in the wheel.

QUICK CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Tropical fruit with pink pulp (5)
4 Secretion of bodily membranes (5)
7 To and ___ (3)
8 Diving bird of northern seas (3)
9 German submarine in World War II (1-4)
10 Functions (5)
11 Small vegetable (3)
12 Sense organ (3)
13 Disease caused by a deficiency of vitamin D (7)
15 As well as (3)
16 Upper part (3)
18 Select group (5)
20 Freshwater diving bird (5)
21 Fish eggs (3)
22 Of wine, dry (3)
23 Result from (5)
24 Split fifty-fifty (5)

DOWN

1 Grip (5)
2 Unskilfulness resulting from a lack of training (11)
3 Distant (4)
4 Creamy dish (6)
5 Compound thought to increase the risk of heart attacks (11)
6 Forest god (5)
14 Brie, for example (6)
15 Fish with a hook and line (5)
17 Part (5)
19 Hankering, desire (4)

LAST ISSUE'S SOLUTIONS

QUICK CROSSWORD

KAKURO

SUDOKU

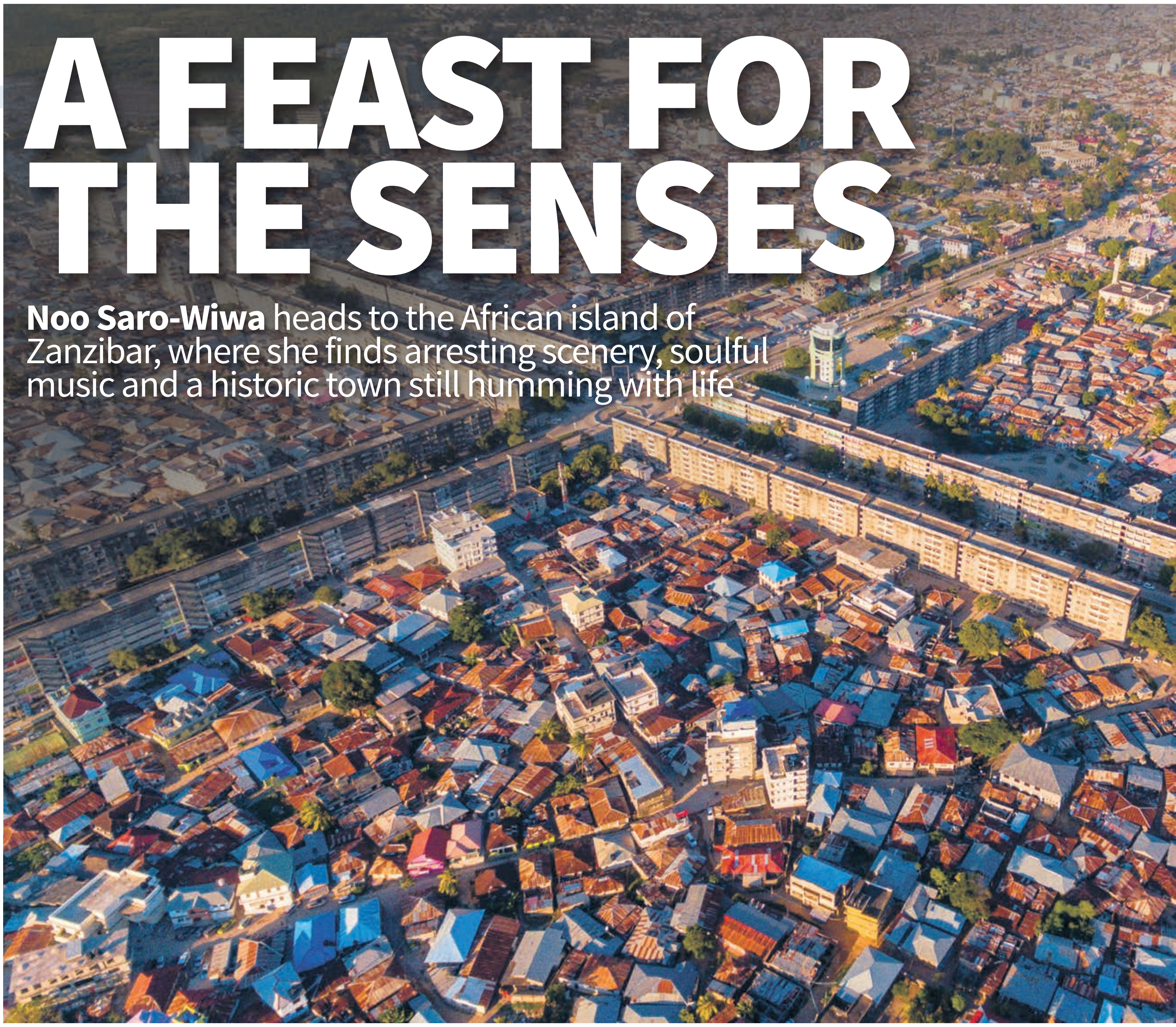
4	8	5	6	2	1	3	7	9
3	9	7	8	4	5	6	2	1
2	6	1	3	9	7	8	4	5
1	5	2	7	6	4	9	8	3
8	7	6	9	5	3	2	1	4
9	3	4	1	8	2	5	6	7
6	4	3	5	7	8	1	9	2
5	2	9	4	1	6	7	3	8
7	1	8	2	3	9	4	5	6

WORDWHEEL

The nine-letter word was MISGOVERN

TRAVEL

A FEAST FOR THE SENSES



Noo Saro-Wiwa heads to the African island of Zanzibar, where she finds arresting scenery, soulful music and a historic town still humming with life

Visiting tropical islands usually involves sacrificing the richness and depth of continental culture for the simplicity of ravishing sun, sea and sand. Zanzibar, however, is almost unique in letting you combine the three S's with classic architecture and history – all in a space of less than 2,500 sq km.

This island off the coast of Tanzania in the Indian Ocean still evokes breathy clichés of 'spices and eastern promise' – and for good reason. At a time when a sense of the truly exotic is hard to come by, Zanzibar still plunges you into an exuberantly alien universe.

The main town, Stone Town, is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a place where you can happily lose yourself in its labyrinthine alleyways. Narrow streets are flanked by crumbling coral stone buildings with latticed rosewood balconies.

The architecture – a composite of styles from Africa, Arabia, India and Europe – is a history lesson in itself. The renowned carved wooden doors are a legacy of the Omani empire that once ruled Zanzibar in the late 17th century and made it its capital in 1840.

Other doors are in Gujarati style, made by craftsmen from India who settled here when Zanzibar came under British rule. These teak doors are distinguishable from the Omani ones by their rounded tops. They are studded with large brass knobs – which were once used as defences against charging war elephants back in India, but have been kept for decorative effect. Gujarati Indians, along with ethnic Parsees from Bombay, formed a middle stratum between the colonial authorities and the African slaves.

Slavery laid the foundation of Zanzibar's economy, which grew hugely between the 17th and 19th centuries. From Stone Town's slave market, humans were shipped to Arabia and beyond by men like Tippu Tip, a 19th-century merchant who trafficked up to 10,000 people and became very wealthy as a result. His mansion – the beautiful legacy of an ugly business – still stands and will be re-opened to visitors when current refurbishments are completed.

Not all buildings enjoy such a makeover – 80 per cent of Zanzibar's edifices are dilapidated as a result of nonchalance or lack of funds. Such elegant dereliction only adds to Stone Town's authenticity. This is no tourist theme park: the town hums with bona fide life, from khat-chewing men in kufi hats, to the young boys jumping off the sea walls at sunset as the muezzin prayer call sounds. Tables at the Darajani market are piled with vanilla, nutmeg, ginger, saffron and rambutan fruits – reminders of the days when Zanzibar was an entrepôt for Indian Ocean trade in spices, fruits, precious metals and jewels.

The Islam practised here is relatively relaxed. You can see it in the way young men and women interact quite freely. I particularly enjoyed watching a clueless, European tourist in a mini dress, pleading with a man to let her enter a mosque and watch the all-male prayer. He gently implored her to stay away.

The liberalism only goes so far, however: Zanzibar's most famous son, Farrokh Bulsara – otherwise known as gay icon Freddie Mercury – isn't celebrated too loudly around here. But the house in which Queen's lead singer grew up is open to visitors who can view photographic memorabilia of the star.

Before heading to the east coast beaches I visit the Anglican Cathedral and pay tribute to the slaves who helped build Zanzibar. The cathedral's altar is pointedly constructed on the exact spot where the slave market's main whipping post once stood. Outside there is a museum dedicated to the slave trade, along with a stone monument to the slaves – four human effigies inset in the ground. You can also step inside the tiny-windowed chambers where captives were held in claustrophobic and insanitary conditions.

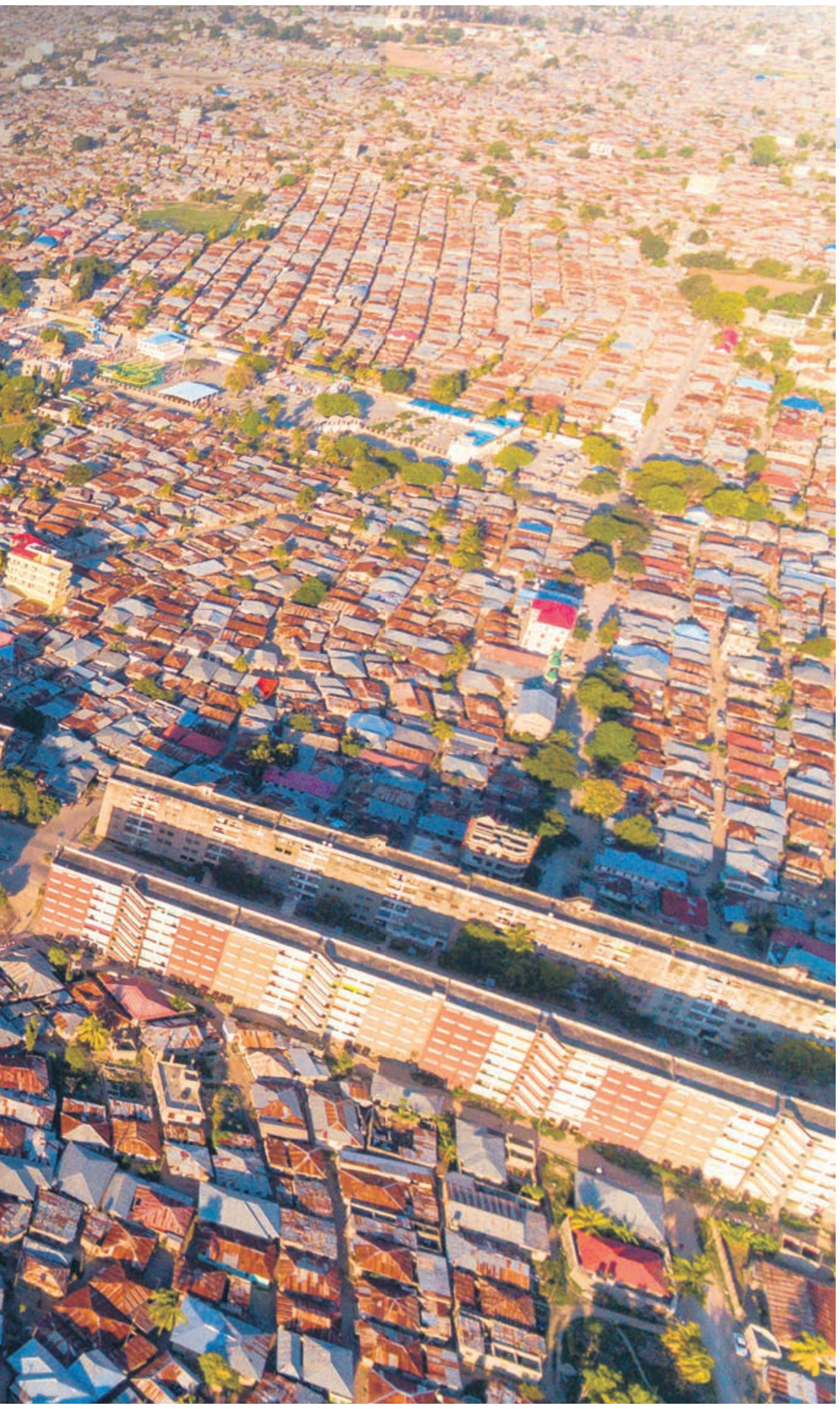
BARAZA RESORT

After a one-hour drive I arrive at Baraza Resort. One of the most beautiful 5-star all-inclusive hotels on the east coast, recent guests at this family-friendly establishment include Queen's guitarist Brian May. A path winding through a coconut grove delivers you at reception where a series of Omani arches provide an arresting sightline from the lobby to the ocean. The hotel's architecture and décor reflects Zanzibar's African, Omani and Indian heritage. Curved corridors are lined with intricate brass lanterns, hand-carved wooden furniture, antiques and Swahili arches. Even the golden umbrella stands look like objets d'art.

I'm shown to one of the dozen luxury villas arranged among fuschia flower bushes and palm trees. Each villa is decorated in an elegant palette of creams, yellows and gold, and it includes a verandah, private garden and plunge pool. The four-poster bed is so wide I'm crawling on all fours to get from one bedside table to the other. It's a battle to leave the villa and enjoy some of the many activities the resort has to offer, but I get there eventually.

First I go on a reef safari. A qualified guide walks us out towards the Indian Ocean reef at low tide. As we trundle more than 100 metres from the shore, the ebbing waters reveal the coral and marine life that teems here. Our guide points out the salt eels, spider starfish, sea cucumbers, zebra-striped sea snakes and moray eels wriggling by our feet. Equally beautiful is the sight of Zanzibari women bent over the water nearby. Each day they head out into the low tide to catch octopi hiding in the rocks. The ladies' colourful, ankle-length dresses kiss the ocean's shallow surface, creating the illusion that they're walking on water, like goddesses of the sea.

Baraza Resort also organises walks in



the nearby Jozani Forest, a leafy antidote to the big skies and oceans. Jozani is a remnant of the wilderness that once covered much of Zanzibar. Fifty species of butterfly bounce around a canopy perfumed with eucalyptus trees and carpeted in parts by a tangle of mangroves. Swinging among the tree branches are Zanzibar Sykes' monkeys and the red colobus monkeys – the latter being the most endangered primates in Africa. Weirdly, the colobus has four fingers and no thumbs, yet it still has five toes on each foot.

Back at Baraza Resort I head to the Frangipani Spa for an intense Balinese massage. The masseuse steamrollers the knots out of my back before sending me to a recovery lounge. There, sprawled on a daybed in contented delirium, I squint at the golden lamps as they sparkle in the sunlight streaming through the windows.

Dinner is held in the exquisitely decorated Sultan's Dining Room, one of Baraza's four restaurants. The menu is extensive, the chef specialising in Indian cuisine. I stuff my gut with chicken tikka, pilau rice and a chicken wrap.

In the cool evening air, a Taarab band plays. Taarab music draws its influence from the African Great Lakes region, Middle East and India. The band – comprising a violin, accordion, double bass and vocalist – produces an Arabic melody with African percussion and call and-response singing. The sound of it, along with my food and surroundings, combine to hit my sweet spot on all sensory fronts.

It's a relaxing end to a beautiful stay.

NEED TO KNOW

The Zanzibar Collection: www.thezanzibarcollection.com (Breezes Beach Club & Spa, Zanzibar; The Palms, Zanzibar; Baraza Resort & Spa, Zanzibar; Zawadi Hotel, Zanzibar)

The Palacina Collection: www.thepalacinacollection.com (Palacina, Nairobi; Palacina Interiors, Nairobi; Palacina, Berlin; 506 On The River, Vermont; Mountain Meadows Lodge, Vermont – coming soon)

THE LONG WEEKEND

UNIVERSITY ARMS HOTEL

CAMBRIDGE

Rachel Cunliffe lingers longer than the usual day trip and is rewarded with blissful walks and heaps of historical charm

THE WEEKEND: From Isaac Newton to Lord Byron, the discovery of DNA to the development of football, Britain owes so many of its cultural and scientific triumphs to the city of Cambridge and its world-famous university. While six million people visit every year, only one million stay the night – a travesty, as there is far more to the city than can be seen in a day trip.

THE STAY: Old meets new at the historic University Arms Hotel. What was once a nineteenth century coaching inn has seen many different looks over the years, and in 2018 was luxuriously recreated by the leading classical architect John Simpson and influential interior designer Martin Brudnizki, most well-known for his work on The Ivy. Dark wood panelling and imposing art deco chandeliers (one constructed of horse-riding paraphernalia in honour of the nearby Newmarket racecourse) are offset by distinctive "Cambridge blue" hues and sketches of rowers coursing down the river. The 192 rooms are appointed in the classic English style, with many overlooking Parker's Piece, one of Cambridge's largest commons. While traditional opulence is the theme, there are some quirky modern touches – a recording of Alan Bennett reciting The Wind In The Willows plays in the washrooms, and the bar boasts an impressive list of gins, including Cambridge Anty Gin, which is made from actual ants.

THE FOOD: Parker's Tavern, the hotel's restaurant, is found the other side of the bar. The restaurant sticks to by-now-established form: neo-classic British cuisine with an emphasis on seasonality and locality. Norfolk seafood sits alongside local game and meats, with the occasional whimsical touch like the tandoori roasted quail – which was spiced to perfection and proved a worthwhile gamble.

The cooking was beautifully pitched – duck roasted just the right side of rare, local fish spanking fresh, unfussy and set off with brown butter. Even the puddings, where menus usually retreat to safe mode, showed touches of humour – a Newton-inspired "Apple Epiphany" of red apple mousse, served on slate, was a featherlight flavour bomb to finish. The cellar is as varied as one would hope. Diners need not wince at the bill, three courses for two with wines came in at around £150.

WHAT TO SEE: If this is your first time in Cambridge, your priority will be the colleges. But with over 30 to choose from, be selective. Obvious highlights include King's College with its landmark chapel, St John's which hosts the historic Bridge of Sighs over the River Cam, and the unique clock outside Corpus Christi featuring a giant grasshopper eating the seconds as they go by. But some of the colleges just a few short paces off the beaten tourist track, such as Pembroke and Emmanuel, offer exquisite gardens that are pockets of tranquility just an archway away from the bustling centre.

Aside from the colleges, the Fitzwilliam Museum is a treasure trove of antiquities, and is also free. In the evening, why not catch a show at the student-run ADC Theatre? Amateur drama may not be your thing, but remember that the Footlights comedy troupe was the starting point for many of today's best-known comics and actors. You could end up watching a future star.

AND AFTER THAT? The village of Grantchester, immortalised in the poem by Rupert Brooke, is a blissful walk along the river through meadows and woodland. Following the Cam from the city centre takes just 45 minutes. The Green Man pub is a perfect spot for lunch, while the nearby Orchard Tea Garden will serve you the quintessential scones and cream. The poem ends: "Stands the Church clock at ten to three? / And is there honey still for tea?" Yes, yes there is.

NEED TO KNOW

The University Arms hotel offers rooms from £143 per room per night and suites start from £419. To find out more and to book visit universityarms.com. Direct trains from Kings Cross London take approximately 50 minutes.

TOP TIP

Punting may be touristy, but it is part of the Cambridge experience, and if the weather is favourable there is no better way to see the river colleges than by floating sedately past them. Students work as tour guides outside term time, and will be full of fascinating tidbits – although not everything they tell you will be entirely accurate. Prince William did not propose to Kate Middleton in Cambridge, and Jesus College is not named after its most famous student!

SPORT

The Saracens star explains his future plans and new coffee venture to **Michael Searles**

Jackson Wray is launching his new coffee business Eighty20 Cold Brew

GREG SIGSTON/CITY AM

WRAY: WHY I'LL STAY AT SARRIES

WHILE a number of players will use Saracens' relegation for breaching the salary cap as an opportunity to move on, many of the team's core are determined to stay and continue building the club's legacy.

One such player is Jackson Wray, who graduated from the Sarries academy's class of 2008 alongside England stars Owen Farrell, Jamie George and George Kruis, and now regularly captains the side in the absence of Brad Barritt.

The 29-year-old has made more than 200 appearances for Saracens, winning five Premiership titles and three European Champions Cups, but the fallout from the club's salary cap saga is the biggest test yet of the team's resolve.

"I'm definitely staying," Wray tells *City A.M.* "I've only ever been at the club since I was 14. I don't need or want to leave. I don't envisage playing for anyone else in England and it's not the right time to be going anywhere. My family are happy, I'm happy, the coaches are staying, a good number of my closest mates are staying.

"It's going to be a good chapter to our story when it's all done. Not many people can say they went through this as well. If we can come through the other side and go and win it again, then that will be an even bigger achievement than the first time around. There's opportunity there when all the dust settles."

Saracens' initial 35-point deduction and £5.4m fine following Premiership Rugby's ruling that they were guilty of breaching the salary cap over several seasons was doubled to 70 points and relegation after they failed to prove they were in line with this season's cap.

The issue stemmed from certain players enjoying investment from former chairman Nigel Wray – no relation to Jackson – in their off-field business ventures. Saracens argued that this did not constitute a salary top-up; Premiership Rugby disagreed.

"They were all done under the impression there wasn't anything wrong with them. And the guys involved, not being funny, but they are England's best players. So to say anyone's annoyed or upset that they got X, Y and Z, is probably not right," the back-rower says.

"Most people hate us anyway and this is just more of a reason to not like us. In many ways it's brought us closer because you know people are coming at you from all angles."

Before the season's completion was plunged into doubt by the coronavirus outbreak, Saracens' guaranteed relegation did not completely stop them from interfering in the play-off race, however. Wins over Sale, Northampton and Gloucester turned Saracens into "a momentum ruiner", Wray says.

BREWING UP A STORM

A strong finish to the campaign – whenever it resumes – is not the only thing that Wray has been preparing for. Later this month, his company, Eighty20 Cold Brew, will have their first full product run. Wray's premium cold brew coffee business is just the latest example of the entrepreneurial environment that Saracens has encouraged – although he makes clear there has been no investment from Saracens chiefs.

"Everyone asks if anyone's invested, but no one has," he laughs. "It's just myself and partner, Matt, a friend from school. We're self-funding and it will be that way for the foreseeable future until we basically run out of money. Or until we need a bit more expertise. We want to hold on to as much equity as we can."

Wray has made over 200 appearances and won five Premiership titles with Sarries

One team-mate to have also started their own business is Kruis, with cannabidiol oil company Fourfive CBD.

Kruis and ex-Sarries forward Dom Day have not only provided Wray with advice but also their product, which is used in one of the three current Eighty20 Cold Brew product lines available.

"Saracens have always been pushing people to develop off the field because it does help on the field. It keeps you grounded in many ways," says Wray, who also has a degree in psychology.

The use of CBD oil as an aid for pain and injury recovery is becoming increasingly prominent in rugby, and with a water-soluble version of Kruis's product in one Eighty20 cold brew edition, sport is just one market Wray is targeting.

The Sunderland-born forward believes this variation on coffee, also available in original and "nitro" guises, can be used in cafes, cocktail bars and offices, as well as gyms.

He has already teamed up with independent coffee shops in St Albans, where he lives, and is working on a cocktail menu with a pub chain – the nitro edition of cold brew is an ideal replacement for the espresso in an espresso martini, Wray says.

Just as when he talks about Saracens, Wray's passion for coffee is unwavering as he explains the process of producing organic cold brew.

It has taken 15 months to reach this point, and while he admits it has been tough juggling a new business with rugby and family commitments – he and wife Leanne have four children – Wray says he is "someone who needs and wants to have something going on".

Fortunately – and when sport resumes – there will be plenty to do over the coming years as he fights to restore Saracens to the top of English and European rugby while also establishing Eighty20 in the cold brew coffee market.

> "Most people hate us anyway and this is just more of a reason to not like us"

TIGERS ROAR Castleford beat St Helens in rare sporting fixture

CASTLEFORD Tigers beat St Helens 28-14 to move joint top of the Super League table yesterday. The hosts dominated proceedings in what was the only fully-professional top-level league fixture in UK sport to go ahead on Sunday. Castleford led 14-4 at half-time through Derrell Olpherts' double and Peter Mata'utia's try. Cheyse Blair and Jake Trueman added further scores after the break, with Saints' three tries mere consolation. "Everything we'd talked about from a plan perspective, the boys delivered," Castleford head coach Daryl Powell told the BBC.

FURY BRIBERY ALLEGATION IS RUBBISH, SAYS WARREN

Promoter Frank Warren has denied allegations that Tyson Fury's team bribed a farmer to lie about a failed drugs test in 2015. Fury and his cousin Hughie tested positive for a banned steroid in February 2015 and blamed the result on eating uncastrated wild boar. Farmer Martin Carefoot told the Mail on Sunday he was offered £25,000 in return for a signed testimony that he sold the tainted meat to Fury – claims UK-Anti Doping will now investigate. "How anybody can take this man seriously is beyond belief," Warren said. "Tyson has never met this man in his life. What a load of rubbish."

ITALY WILL ASK FOR EURO 2020 POSTPONEMENT

Italy's football federation has called for Euro 2020 to be postponed over the coronavirus outbreak so they can complete the Serie A season. Italian Football Federation president Gabriele Gravina will appeal to Uefa at an emergency meeting tomorrow. Serie A, in Europe's worst-hit country, was shut down indefinitely last week. "We will propose that Uefa postpone the European Championship," Gravina said on Italian television. "We will try to get to the end of this championship [Serie A] because it is fairer and more correct after the many investments and sacrifices of our clubs."

PREMIERSHIP SET TO SHUT DOWN OVER CORONAVIRUS

The Premiership is expected to follow the lead of other leagues this week and announce a postponement of fixtures due to coronavirus. Clubs will meet today to discuss the next steps, which could range from a four to 12-week suspension, after the Pro 14 and Top 14 leagues imposed the measures for the foreseeable future. European Cup competitions are also expected to shut down. "The welfare of fans, players and staff is our first concern and it's crucial to get these important decisions right," said a Premiership Rugby spokesperson.

SPORT DIGEST

GRAND NATIONAL IN DOUBT AS RACING SHUTS OUT FANS

Horse racing in Britain will move behind closed doors in a bid to continue amid the coronavirus outbreak. Today's meeting at Kelso will take place in front of no spectators because of the Scottish government's guidance against gatherings of more than 500 people. The British Horseracing Authority, who will meet today to discuss the issue, said the decision would stand "initially until the end of March". The move throws the staging of the Grand National on 4 April into doubt, with a decision set to be announced "as soon as possible".

NEWCASTLE EAGLES CLAIM SEVENTH BBL TROPHY WIN

Newcastle Eagles beat Solent Kestrels 96-94 in overtime to claim their seventh BBL Trophy in Glasgow yesterday. Newcastle, who were without Mike Morsell, Nick Schlitzer and Sade Hussein after the Americans opted to return to home because of coronavirus, edged out Solent, who are the first second-tier team to reach a BBL final. "My guys had nothing left in the tank so I'm really, really happy," said Eagles coach Ian MacLeod.

Clock ticking for England rugby chiefs as uncertainty lingers over Jones deal

RFU's decision to let contract saga rumble on could be a mistake, says **Michael Searles**

EDDIE Jones's contract with the Rugby Football Union expires in less than 18 months' time and there is yet to be any indication on whether he will be the man to lead England through to the 2023 World Cup in France.

The 60-year-old was due to sit down with RFU chief executive Bill Sweeney for dinner at some point this week to discuss his future following the completion of the Six Nations.

But whether that will still happen given that the coronavirus outbreak has caused the championship to be suspended with no winner yet decided remains to be seen.

England had looked on course to win the Six Nations following France's defeat to Scotland last week, although both France and Ireland still had a fair chance of winning the tournament. They had been due to play each other on Saturday, while England were to face Italy. When – or indeed if – the remaining matches take place, the tournament could feasibly be decided on a margin as small as points difference.

While England have resolved to put themselves in pole position to be crowned champions, the lack of certainty makes assessing Jones's position this week challenging.

England coach Jones's £750,000-a-year contract expires in 2021

It does, of course, depend on how much emphasis both parties had placed on the Six Nations, which England have not won since 2017.

Following their run to the World Cup final last year, Sweeney, who was only appointed to the top job in May, said it made sense for the Australian to stay.

However, a month later, he backtracked following discussions with the head coach, saying there was no rush to agree a new deal.

So far the RFU has appeared more than happy to stick with Jones: scrapping a succession plan, appointing new backroom staff with regularity and publicly suggesting he would stay – before hitting rewind.

RUFFLING FEATHERS

The question appears to have been whether Jones wants to continue. This is already his longest stint in one job, having previously never stayed anywhere longer than four years.

Earlier in his tenure Jones suggested he would retire following last year's World Cup and recent remarks that he "never enjoys coaching" have cast further doubt.

RFU chiefs may have thought they had hit the jackpot when extending his deal by a further two years to 2021, but it could yet threaten to come back to bite.

When asked if he still enjoys leading England a couple of weeks ago, he said: "I never enjoy coaching. Winning is a relief. Anyone who tells you they enjoy coaching is lying. All you do is coach hard; if you win, you feel good for 24 hours and then you're back into it. That's all it is."

Jones, whose £750,000 salary makes him rugby's highest-paid coach, is known for his quick wit and sparky personality more than for fostering amicable relationships.

That much was evident when, in the aftermath of England's win over Wales last week, he quipped that it had been "13 against 16" – an insinuation of refereeing bias for which the RFU later felt moved to apologise.

While Jones has delivered some great results on the pitch, such antogonism does little for the reputation of the RFU or Sweeney.

Whether he has yet to ruffle enough feathers that they decide to look elsewhere for the man to lead England into 2023 remains to be seen.

Either way, there must be clarity before a planned tour of Japan in July and autumn's internationals, or there is a risk that England leave themselves several steps behind Six Nations rivals France, Wales and Ireland in the coming years.

NET LOSS
WHAT CORONAVIRUS CHAOS WILL MEAN FOR THE FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

PAGE 19

82/1 WIN
ALL THREE OF THE PUNTER'S SATURDAY RACING TIPS LANDED FOR A HUGE TREBLE

POINTERS	TOMORROW	
On The Slopes	1.30pm	Kempton
McFabulous	2.05pm	Kempton
Truckers Lodge e/w	3.35pm	Uttoxeter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