

Taiwan's baseball season bucks cancellation trend

First professional league to start playing during pandemic

Agence France-Presse

Taipei, Taiwan

Taiwan swung into a new baseball season on Sunday, with one team planning to place robot mannequins in their crowdless stands, as the island bucked the global trend for scrapping sports events during the coronavirus.

Despite its proximity and trade links with China, Taiwan has so far managed to keep a lid on the pandemic now sweeping the globe.

It enacted travel bans soon after the virus emerged publicly and rolled out comprehensive testing, contact tracing and quarantining.

Some 100 hundred days into the crisis it has fewer than 400 confirmed COVID-19 cases and just six deaths with schools, offices, restaurants and bars largely open.

Large gatherings like religious festivals have been scrapped.

But on Sunday the island's 31st baseball season got underway with Chinatrust Brothers taking

on the Uni-President 7-Eleven Lions in Taichung.

The games are being played to empty stadiums with fans being told to stay away.

But players are still traveling across the island for fixtures that are broadcast live.

On Saturday, Rakuten Monkeys unveiled robotic mannequins and cardboard cut-outs of fans dressed in home colors and caps at their stadium in northern Taoyuan county.

Some of the robots even banged on drums from the empty stands.

The mechanical stand ins were ready to cheer Rakuten against Chinatrust Brothers for what would have been the first game of the season on Saturday, but heavy rain led to its cancellation.

Baseball is the most popular sport in Taiwan with some 240 games scheduled for the coming season.

"We are the first pro-baseball league to start playing in the world during the pandemic," the league said in a statement.

"We welcome everyone to follow the new 2020 season and to relax from their tense lives because of the outbreak."

Unlike so many other places, Taiwan's national basketball and soccer leagues have also continued to play, albeit behind closed doors.

Some fans have expressed concerns about the safety of those on the field.

"How can the players keep social distancing? What can we do in the event of cluster infections? Please stop this farce," read one post on the baseball league's Facebook page.

"Why are they still holding the games without audiences? The US Major League Baseball and even the Olympics have been postponed," read another.

Others were happy the games can go on even in closed stadiums.

"It's great we have baseball games to watch," read one social media comment.

"We can probably set a precedent for professional baseball leagues abroad," said another.



AFP/Steven Lee

Private event: A broadcaster (center) operates a camera during the opening match between Uni-President Lions and Chinatrust Brothers at the Taichung International Baseball Stadium on Sunday.

Soccer's sponsors worry they are paying for nothing

Yassine Khiri

Agence France-Presse/Paris

With stadiums dark, match shirts folded in closets and most players confined at home, soccer's sponsors have lost all visibility and are growing restless.

European clubs are struggling to offer their 'partners' a return on their investments as sport grapples with the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're trying to do activities with our players for our sponsors, who are even more demanding since the lockdown. But it's very complicated because of the health crisis," one club marketing manager told AFP.

The stars, the surest way for

sponsors to attract an audience, are at home, many back in their native countries.

Worse, there are no games for them to play. Matches on TV displays or around the pitch to millions of viewers.

At West Ham, one of the sponsors, high-risk finance company Basset & Gold, which the club stresses is not connected with owner David Gold, has just gone bankrupt, blaming the coronavirus crisis.

Many sponsors are in sectors hit especially hard, such as airlines and hotel and restaurant chains.

Some sponsors are beginning to cancel payments.

"It's quite obvious that having no more events, everything has to be suspended, it seems so logical to me. It's a case of force major," Marc Vanhove, the boss of the Bistro Regent restaurant chain, which sponsors the Bordeaux club, said.

The Bordeaux-based chain suspended its contract, which runs until 2023, he said, "until we have the dates for the resumption".

French hotel group Accor, Paris Saint-Germain's (PSG) main sponsor, left open the question of whether it would pay the full amount provided for in its contract (about 50 million euro, US\$54.7 million, a year), before saying two days later that it had honored its commitments.

"When you're a sponsor, you want visibility," Accor chief executive officer Sebastien Bazin told French radio.

"But at the same time, it's in bad times that you recognize your friends and those who are there for you."

Sponsors can say overnight "we're stopping everything because we're in an emergency situation where we have to eliminate all the superfluous expenditure", sports economist Jean-Pascal Gayant told AFP.

"In the event of a crisis, the first budget item they cut is often the communications."

With matches canceled and some broadcasters, notably in France, beginning to withhold

payments, club finances are already strained.

"Sponsorship is particularly important for Europe's biggest clubs," said Deloitte, the accountancy and services firm, in the 2020 edition of its "Football Money League" which ranks clubs by income.

It said the primary source of revenue for its top five clubs (Barcelona, Real Madrid, Manchester United, Bayern Munich and PSG) is commercial and averages 49 percent of total revenue — although that number is inflated by PSG, which reports 57 percent of revenue from sponsorship.

Lower down the Deloitte table, the proportions change. For the clubs placed 16 to 20 (Roma, Lyon, West Ham, Everton and Napoli), 65 percent of revenue comes from broadcasting.

One market expert, who did not wish to be named, said that the risks of deserting can outweigh the financial costs, especially for companies "who are do-

ing well" in sectors that are seen to be less affected, such as technology or the food industry.

"You can go to them and say: 'You can play the white knight by investing in sport in these difficult times,'" the market expert said.

The value of being seen to remain loyal is reflected in the attitude of the Iberdrola Group, the main sponsor of the Spanish women's first division.

"It is now, in this dramatic situation, that the support of sponsors is needed more than ever. You don't pull out at times like these," a spokesman for the Spanish electricity supply group told AFP.

Even so, players in the sector estimate a 60 to 70 percent drop in investment and the prospect of several lean years.

"There is of course a risk that some companies that wanted to invest will no longer do so, but will do so later," said Bruno Bianzina, director of the Sport Marzeta agency, a French company.

POTPOURRI

Make sure nobody dies from hunger

Veeramalla Anjaiah
The Jakarta Post/Jakarta

I never imagined that I would witness the same severe situation 55 years later. At that time, I was living in India, which was badly hit by severe twin droughts in 1965 and 1966.

My family, like millions of other families, was living in acute poverty. We did not have rice or money.

As a 5-year-old, I was lucky to have some kind of food daily but not rice every day. My mother used to cook rice and chicken only during festivals. Mostly, we used to eat corn, cassava and other available non-rice items daily. Many times in a month, my parents had to starve themselves.

Eating rice was a luxury. Thanks to the food aid from the United States, every day we used to get cornmeal and wheat bread at school.

Can you imagine? In those days, every school in villages and towns used to have kitchens to cook food, which came from the US.

Now we are facing a different situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not have a drought and we can produce enough food for everybody. But the situation is going to be very similar in the coming weeks as millions of people will not have money to buy food soon.

But due to lockdowns, closure of offices, shops, factories malls, cafes, restaurants, cancellation of flights, trains and buses, physical distancing and staying at home, millions of people across Indonesia have been badly affected. Thousands of people have lost their jobs and incomes. Most of them did not receive compensation from the government or the companies they worked for during this crisis.

"I used to work as a massage therapist in West Jakarta. I do not have a monthly salary. I get commission from the fee paid by each customer. For the last 16 days, I have not had an income as my workplace has been closed," Jameela, not her real name, told *The Jakarta Post* on Thursday.

"I have two kids and live in a rented house in Tangerang. Neither did my employer nor the government give me any money. How can I survive without an income?"

But this is not the first time Jameela has faced financial difficulties.

"I used to work in a factory in Tangerang. Because of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the factory was closed and I lost my job. I was forced to become a massage therapist. Now I've lost this too. I don't know what to do," she says.

Adding fuel to the fire, the daily income of Jameela's husband Suprianto, who is a ride-hailing app motorcycle taxi driver, has decreased drastically after Jakarta imposed severe restrictions on the movement of people and gatherings last week.

"Frankly speaking, I sold my gold chain last week to pay rent and buy food. If this continues further, what should I sell to eat next week?"

There are numerous stories like Jameela's in Jakarta.

"Every day, I sell cold drinks at Slipi crossroads in West Jakarta. Since not many people are on road due to COVID-19, I've lost more than 70 percent of my daily



JP/Arief Suhardiman

No work: Ride-hailing motorcycle taxi drivers wait for passengers on Jl. Dharmawangsa 6, South Jakarta, recently. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many informal workers have lost their jobs and incomes. Many of them are finding it hard to afford basic necessities.

income. I cannot survive with that income," M. Rizki told the *Post*.

He said he will go back to his hometown Bandar Lampung, Lampung, next week.

Taxi drivers are also desperately looking for passengers, sometimes waiting five to six hours to get a passenger.

Starting next week, many people who work in the informal sector will not have an income. The problem of hunger will begin.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were some 24 million poor people in the country, or 9.22 percent of the country's 270 million people, according to Statistics Indonesia (BPS).

In Indonesia, around 125 million people are categorized as living below the middle-income bracket, while there is an estimated 120 million people considered middle-income. Around 56 percent of the people live in urban areas.

Unfortunately, because of COVID-19 and its impact, the number of poor people may double this year if the health crisis continues until the end of the year.

Now people are worried about survival from both COVID-19 and hunger.

There is a potential danger that more people will die from hunger than COVID-19. So it is very important to remember the precious words of great humanist Mother Theresa.

"When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her. It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed," she said.

So it is everybody's duty to make sure that no Indonesian dies of hunger.

Given the daily rapid increases in number of infections and number fatalities in Indonesia, there is an urgent need to put aside our differences and gather our energy to wage a fierce collective war against COVID-19.

As per government data on Monday, Indonesia now has 4,557 COVID-19 infections and 399 people have lost their lives.

Our war should be on two fronts: one is against COVID-19 and the other is food security.

By ensuring free or subsidized food supplies, we can save millions of lives. For this, the government needs support from all walks of life, including from our conglomerates.

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CIMB NIAGA

ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHAREHOLDERS ON DIVIDEND DISTRIBUTION PT BANK CIMB NIAGA Tbk ("COMPANY")

Referring to the resolutions of the Annual General Meeting of Shareholders of the Company dated 9 April 2020, it is hereby announced that the Company will distribute Final Cash Dividend for the financial year of 2019 ("Dividend") to the Company's shareholders at the maximum of IDR1,392,161,339,032 (gross) or maximum 40% of Net Income of the Company for the financial year of 2019. The Dividend will be distributed to all Company's shareholders, both the shareholders of Class A and Class B shares ("Shares") in the total of 25,131,606,843 shares (before the deducted with the treasury stock), therefore each owner/holder of 1 (one) share will get Dividend at the minimum of IDR65.39 (gross).

Schedule and procedures of Dividend distribution are as follows:

- Schedule:
 - Cum Dividend - Regular and Negotiation Market 17 April 2020
 - Ex Dividend - Regular and Negotiation Market 20 April 2020
 - Cum Dividend - Cash Market 22 April 2020
 - Recording date for eligible shareholders 22 April 2020
 - Ex Dividend in Cash Market 23 April 2020
 - Dividend Payment for Financial Year of 2019 8 May 2020
- Procedures and mechanism of the Dividend Distribution:
 - This announcement is an official announcement from the Company, hence the Company does not issue a special announcement letters to the Company's shareholders;
 - Dividend will be distributed on 8 May 2020 (30 days after approval from the shareholders in the Annual General Meeting of Shareholders of the Company) to shareholders whose name are recorded in the Company's Shareholders Register (*Daftar Pemegang Saham - "DPS"*) on 22 April 2020 at 16:00 Western Indonesian Time, or in accordance with the securities account balance in the Collective Custody of PT Kustodian Sentral Efek Indonesia ("KSEI") at the closing date of 22 April 2020;
 - Shareholders whose shares are recorded in the Collective Custody of KSEI:
 - Dividends will be paid into the account of the Securities and/or the Custodian Bank at one of the KSEI Payment Bank.
 - Written confirmation regarding the result of Dividend distribution will be submitted by KSEI to the Securities Company and/or Custodian Bank.
 - Shareholders will receive information on their securities account balance from Securities Company and/or Custodian Bank where Shareholders open their account.
 - Shareholders whose shares are recorded in the form of script at Share Administration Bureau PT Bima Registra ("BAE"), the following procedures apply:
 - Shareholders are requested to contact BAE at working hour from 09:00 to 15:00 Western Indonesian Time with the following address: Satrio Tower, 9th Floor 2A, Jalan Prof. Dr. Satrio Blok C4, Kuningan Setiabudi - Jakarta Selatan 12950 - Indonesia, Phone: (+6221) 25984818, Fax: (+6221) 25984819, Email: dividen@bimaregistra.co.id by submitting:
 - Photocopy of valid personal identity proof (ID Card/Driving License/Passport) and to show the original (for individual Shareholder);
 - Power of Attorney with sufficient stamp duty (*metera*), if a Shareholder is represented by other parties, accompanied by a photocopy of valid personal identity proof of both the grantor and the applicant of the Power of Attorney;
 - Photocopy of the Articles of Association and the amendments thereto, the latest Deeds of Restatement of the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Directors or the Authorized Personnel representing the legal entity and the applicable copies of the identity of the Board of Directors/proxies or authorized officers to act on behalf of such legal entity (for shareholder who is a legal entity).
 - Notify the Bank account number (shareholder's account).
 - BAE will issue Notice of Dividend Payment (*Surat Pemberitahuan Pembayaran Dividen - "SPPD"*) to the shareholders who claimed as a proof that their Dividends have been claimed.
 - The Company will pay dividend to Shareholders through bank transfer after obtaining confirmation and validation from BAE.
- Dividend to be distributed shall be subject to tax according to applicable tax regulations.
- For shareholders who are the Foreign Taxpayers (*Wajib Pajak Luar Negeri* or abbreviated as WPLN) and whose country has Double Tax Treaty Agreement (Tax Treaty) and intend to request the tax deduction to be adjusted at the rate of the tax treaty is required to send/submit Certificate of Domicile (COD) in the form of Directorate General of Taxation ("DGT") authenticity that have been certified by a Competent Authority or authorized official in the related country no later than 22 April 2020 at 16:00 Western Indonesian Time to:
 - KSEI for shareholders whose shares are listed in the Collective Custody of KSEI (scriptless), through Account Holder (Securities Company/Custodian Bank) appointed by the shareholders;
 - BAE of the Company for shareholders whose shares are still in the form of script. In the event of original DGT has not been received on the above date, then the withholding tax shall be calculated at 20%.
- For shareholders who are the Domestic Taxpayers (*Wajib Pajak Dalam Negeri* or abbreviated as WPDN) and do not provide the Taxpayer Identification Number ("NPWP") no later than 22 April 2020 at 16:00 Western Indonesian Time to:
 - KSEI for shareholders whose shares are listed in the Collective Custody of KSEI (scriptless), through Account Holder (Securities Company/Custodian Bank) appointed by the shareholders;
 - BAE of the Company for shareholders whose shares are still in the form of script. In the event of NPWP has not been received on the above date, then to those shareholders can not be provided the Proof of Withholding Tax.

This announcement is also available at the Company's website (www.cimbniaga.co.id).

Jakarta, 14 April 2020

Board of Directors

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