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# EasyJet fleet of 344 planes all grounded

EASYJET has grounded its entire fleet of 344 aircraft due to the coronavirus crisis sweeping the world.

The Luton-based carrier said parking its planes 'removes significant cost' as the aviation industry struggles to cope with a collapse in demand.

EasyJet insisted it 'maintains a strong balance sheet' and is in 'ongoing discussions with liquidity providers'.

It has also reached an agreement with the Unite union that will see cabin crew given a two-month furlough and paid 80 per cent of their wages through the government job-retention scheme.

EasyJet boss Johan Lundgren said it was 'well positioned to overcome the challenges of coronavirus'.

He added: 'I am extremely proud of the way in which people across easyJet have given their absolute best at such a challenging time, including so many crew who have volunteered to operate rescue flights to bring our customers home.'

However, Sir Stelios Haji-ioannou (pictured), the founder and biggest shareholder, is



by NEIL LANCEFIELD

threatening to seek the removal of board members unless the company withdraws from a contract to buy 107 new planes from Airbus. It will cost £4.5billion and 'destroy value', he said.

EasyJet faced criticism for paying £174million to investors while asking for government support. But Sir Stelios said the payment was 'legally at the point of no return' in February.

Meanwhile, Scottish regional airline Loganair said it expects to ask the government for a bailout. Boss Jonathan Hinkles said the pandemic has 'had an enormous effect on all UK airlines'.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has said he is prepared to talk with firms once they have 'exhausted other options'.

Virgin Atlantic had urged the government to offer carriers up to £7.5billion in emergency credit. British Airways' owner International Airlines Group has extended £1.1billion in credit with its lenders that was scheduled to run out in June.

**Americans to restrict food**



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**Turbulent time:** Easyjet planes parked at Luton airport yesterday PICTURE: PA