

UK MARKET DECLINE OFFSET BY BETTER US AND CANADIAN ARRIVALS

Story on Page 2



*The Federal government of Nigeria, through the Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace, has given its commitment to support the Nigerian airline, Air Peace. **Story on page 4.***

UK market decline offset by better US and Canadian arrivals

One major hotel on the island is reporting that despite the challenges it has experienced with occupancy rates this summer, its overall outlook remains satisfactory.

Reduced airlifts from both the UK and European markets have resulted in a decline in arrivals from those two important source markets. However, improvements in arrivals from the US and Canadian markets have offset those declines.

Regional Commercial Director, Blue Diamond Resorts, Craig Marshall, of which Royalton Antigua is a member, said they have ex-



perienced a decline in guests from the European market. But despite that challenge, they have witnessed further

growth in the North American market, which augured well for the just concluded carnival season.

“Virgin Atlantic has not been flying this summer and this has obviously put some pressure on the UK and European markets. The UK market in particular has suffered from that as British Airways, which has been carrying heavy load factors has kept its prices up compared to last year when Virgin operated on the route. We have therefore seen a decline in the UK market. However, we have also seen gains from North America, the US, and Canadian markets.

We also had a good Carnival season where the hotel was full. This was a good thing and ought to be promoted more. Overall, we tracked slightly back in terms of the European market but we were up for the US and Canadian markets,” he disclosed.

Looking back, Marshall, who is also Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Antigua and Barbuda Hotels and Tourism Association said, Royalton Antigua was able to navigate the COVID-19 Pandemic, despite the spread of the virus and the lockdowns.

As the hotel sector emerges from the COVID period, Craig Marshall noted, that now Royalton is ahead of pre-pandemic levels.

“Royalton Antigua is the best-performing hotel within our group of hotels from Mexico and Jamaica to here. Antigua is definitely holding its own.

The hotel itself is unique and especially these over-water bungalows then to sell itself in that respect, but I think Antigua sees itself as a high-end destination and that helps us as it attracts a better room rate versus the rest of the competition,” Marshall declared.



National Solid Waste Management Authority
Sir George Walter Highway
Tel: (268) 562-1347/8
Email: nswma@solidwaste.gov.ag

August 16th, 2023

PRESS RELEASE

The Authority wishes to inform the general public that the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA) is the agency mandated by law to collect, transport, and dispose of solid waste in Antigua and Barbuda.

In an effort to improve our services and reliability we are updating the residents in the communities below of the delayed waste collection and we are working to resolve the issue promptly.

- Seaview Farm
- New Field
- Lightfoot East
- Hatton
- Seatons
- Glanvilles
- Bethesda

We thank the residents in those communities for their patience.

The National Solid Waste Management Authority wishes to advise private citizens that if there is a delay or missed collection of their residential waste services, to contact the Authority via the hotline number 562-1347.

“Working In Partnership for a Cleaner Antigua And Barbuda”

 **The National Solid Waste Management Authority**

Festivals minister says attracting international sponsors for Carnival is a challenge

Minister of Creative Industries Daryll Matthew says attracting international companies as sponsors for carnival would be difficult to achieve based on what these potential sponsors want to achieve.

Matthew was asked during a recent interview about the likelihood of the festival securing international sponsors, to relieve the government of the huge expense it is saddled with annually.

While it appeared to be a great idea, realistically, the minister said it was impractical.

“It is something we have looked at in the past but it’s easier said than done. If you look at the international companies, we don’t have a lot of international companies domiciled here in Antigua and Barbuda who will have the sort of marketing budget to support the carnival. So the companies that partner with us are local companies

who do not have the marketing muscle or budget as some international companies. So when you speak to an international company the first thing they ask is, what is the size of your population? For it to make business sense to them they have to demonstrate that the size of your population can generate the type of revenue to justify the sponsorship. Our population is too small so it is always going to be an uphill battle,” he stated.

In addition to the sponsorship the annual summer festival garnered this year, a working budget of approximately five million dollars was made available by the government for the planning and execution of carnival.

“If I’m not mistaken, we got about \$800,000.00 in sponsorship and the government foots the bill for the rest of it. I must thank the Prime Minister and the Cabinet for ensuring that there was sufficient funds to ‘keep the



Minister of Creative Industries Daryll Matthew

wheels greased.’ This has allowed us to pay a lot of our service providers, not necessarily in full, but a portion of what is owed,” he remarked.

A review of Carnival 2023 is to be undertaken before planning commences for the summer festival next year.

While the figures are unknown at this stage, Minister Matthew is certain that the economy has benefitted significantly.



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Nigeria's federal government greenlights Air Peace's move into the Caribbean

The Federal government of Nigeria, through the Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace, has given its commitment to support the Nigerian airline, Air Peace.

The Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Dr. Emmanuel Meribole, who was represented by the Director of Air Transport Management of the Ministry, Hassan Ejibunu, disclosed this at a reception organized by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to celebrate the commencement of direct flights between Nigeria and the Caribbean country, by Air Peace Airline recently.

A statement signed by the ministry's Head Press, Public Relations Official, Oluseyi Odutayo, disclosed that the



Federal Government continued to initiate and implement policies that ensured Nigeria's airlines benefit from the Bilateral Air Services Agreement signed by Nigeria with other countries.

It added, "Meribole commended Air Peace for the historic feat and yet another milestone recorded for both countries which were known

to be bound by common ancestries."

He added that "the journey would further strengthen the relationship of both countries in the areas of commerce, trade, and tourism while acknowledging the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Antiguan and Barbudan authorities for approving the designation of Air Peace by the Nigerian Aeronautical Authorities to fly the Nigerian-Antiguan route."

The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne in his remarks said, it was a new dawn for the relationship between Nigeria and Antigua.

He emphasized the ancestral linkage between the Caribbean nations and Africa, which he referred to as the Motherland.

He said Antigua and Barbuda was home to every African and his government was desirous of promoting economic and bilateral ties with African nations within the context of the South-South cooperation.

He urged members of the business community from Nigeria and potential investors, to take advantage of the favourable economic policy of his government to invest in Antigua and Barbuda.

"The airline on commencement of operations would operate within the entire Caribbean thus making air connectivity between Africa, the entire Caribbean countries, and America stress-free," he added.

Speaking earlier, a representative of the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director of Economics, Trade, and Investment - Bolaji Akinremi said, the development had signposted the beginning of a newfound relationship between Antigua and Barbuda as well as the entire Caribbean countries.

He added that the air connectivity was in sync with the foreign policy of President Bola Tinubu to integrate the economy of African nations. Akinremi further said, "Caribbean countries were considered as an integral part of Africa as the fifth bloc."

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
A.D. 2023

AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Instructed by the **ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA DEVELOPMENT BANK** of 27 St. Mary's Street, in the City of Saint John, in the State of Antigua and Barbuda, I will sell by public auction on Tuesday 31 August 2023 at 11:00 a.m. on site, the under mentioned property.

The property is located at Dyett Street in Villa, St. John's, Antigua and consists of a parcel of land of an area of approximately 2,178 sq. ft./ 0.05 acre, with a 514 sq. ft. single storey, two (2) bedroom, one (1) bathroom wooden dwelling thereon.

The service lines for potable water, electricity and telephone which are provided by A.P.U.A are accessible to the property.

The land is registered under the Registered Land Act, 1975 as follows:-

REGISTRATION SECTION: Villa
BLOCK: 62 1693F
PARCEL: 37

Parcel No. 37 of Block No. 62 1693F is bounded by the following:

- On the North by: Parcel 35;
- On the South by: Parcel 39;
- On the East by: Public Road;
- On the West by: Parcel 36

Particulars of the sale can be obtained from:

Mr. Trevor 'Teddy' Santos
Licensed Auctioneer
Office: (268) 562-7653
Cell & WhatsApp: (268) 464-7653
Email: info@go-going-gone.com
Instagram: [tts_auction_antigua](https://www.instagram.com/tts_auction_antigua)
Facebook: Auction Antigua

CBU Caribbean Media Awards 2022 honour excellence in journalism

The Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) has wrapped up its 54th General Assembly in Antigua and Barbuda, where among other things, it presented its annual Media Awards to deserving individuals and entities.

This year’s CBU Caribbean Media Awards (CMA) demonstrated its continued appeal as the region’s premier competition for media professionals creating content for television, radio, digital, and print platforms.

The event was held at Government House, under the auspices of Antigua & Barbuda’s Governor General, His Excellency Sir Rodney Williams and Lady Sandra Williams.

They presided over a glittering event, celebrating media output from 2022 at which, thirty-five award winners were acknowledged with the presentation of plaques. There were also fourteen (14) entrants whose submissions were given special mention by the panel of judges.

RECORD NUMBER OF ENTRIES: Three hundred and fifty-five (355) entries were received overall, a more than forty percent (40%) increase over last year’s, two hundred and forty-eight (248) entries.

STRONG PARTICIPATION BY NON-MEMBERS: Along with the many CBU members who participated, this round of awards saw a marked increase in the

number of non-member organizations who submitted entries. The number of organizations that are not currently part of CBU, but participated in the competition went up by thirty-five percent (35%) to fourteen (14) from nine (9) last year. The fourteen (14) non-member organizations represented Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and the Turks & Caicos.

NEW CATEGORIES: This year’s competition featured three (3) new themed categories in Media and Information Literacy, Healthy Food Nutrition Policy, and Climate Change. The category sponsors were the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and Sagicor.

JUDGING PANEL: The hundreds of entries were judged by a four-member panel comprising Dr. Sharon Marshall, Mr. Andrew Millington, and Mr. Steve Maxamay. The late Chief Judge, Ms. Beverly Sinclair was recognized during the In Memoriam segment of the Opening Ceremony of the Assembly.

NEW AWARDS SPONSORS: During the Awards event new sponsors for the coming round of the competition were announced, including the Caribbean Division of

The Nature Conservancy as well as SAEDI Consulting. They, along with returning sponsors, will be presenting prizes at the Gala to be hosted in Belize on August 13, 2024, during the 55th Annual General Assembly.

The full list of Award and Special Mention winners for the 2022 edition of the CMA is presented below.

PRODUCTION AWARDS

PEOPLE’S CHOICE AWARD:

Winner – Antigua Observer Newsco Limited

“The Headkerchief” Produced by Joanne C. Hillhouse

BEST DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMME TELEVISION:

Winner – Guardian Media (CNC3, Trinidad & Tobago)

“Concordat” Produced by Ryan Bachoo

Special Mention – RJR-GLEANER Communications Group (Television Jamaica) “Girl from Wood Hall: The Story of Portia Simpson-Miller” Produced by Giovanni Dennis, Dionne Jackson Miller, Shernette Johnson, Ivan Shaw, Kemar Harris, Milton Reid, Uton West & Wendy Rudd

BEST MAGAZINE PROGRAMME TELEVISION:

Winner – TTT (Trinidad & Tobago)

“Penny on Point: The Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe” Produced by Penny Gomez & Colin Greaves; Presenter Penny Gomez; Editor NH Productions TT

Special Mention – WESN Content Capital


cont’d on pg 6

TELECOMS OUTAGE NOTICE

The APUA Telecoms Business Unit will be conducting preventative maintenance on Thursday, 17 August, 2023 between 9:30am – 3:00pm. As a result, inet fibre services in the Glanvilles area will experience a temporary interruption of service.

We regret any inconvenience caused and thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Customers who experience any issues beyond this period may call 611 for assistance.



Annual prostate screening clinic on Saturday

The annual prostate cancer screening clinic, organized by the Antigua Lion's Club in collaboration with urologist, Dr. Dwayne Thwaites and Associates, takes place on Saturday at the Lion's Den in St. John's.

Health and Social Services Chairperson of the Lion's Club, Katrina Edwards said the event is helpful, as it is the Club's contribution in dealing with the issue of prostate cancer. Studies have shown that early detection often leads to early medical intervention and better outcomes.

She noted that the clinic is open to men 40 years old and older, as that is the recommended age the medical fraternity has advised that screening



Dr. Dwayne Thwaites

should begin. Last year, approximately 884 men were examined as part of the screening. Edwards said the expectation is that this figure could surpass the one-thousand mark this year.

She added that those participating in the clinic this year will be asked to contribute \$30.00 to help cover the expenses associated with the event. The gates at the Lion's Den will open at 6:00 am with registration which will run from 7:00 am to 11:00 am.

The screenings begin at 8:00 am.

The annual prostate screening started in 2007 as the brainchild of Dr. Thwaites who felt that early detection would, over time, reduce the number of deaths due to prostate cancer.

The disease affects black men at a rate higher than men of other races, and the Caribbean has one of the world's highest incidences of prostate cancer.

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(Trinidad & Tobago)

“Nicole Larsen Show Broadcast Feb 12, 2022” Produced by WESN Content Capital

BEST NEWS ITEM TELEVISION:

Winner – CCN TV6 (Trinidad & Tobago)

“Manzanilla Marooned” Produced by Urvashi Tiwari-Roopnarine and Immanuel Nunez

Special Mention – RJRGLEANER Communications Group (Television Jamaica)

“Transportation Crisis” Produced by Anthony Lugg, Glenford Campbell, and Uton West

BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORT TELEVISION:

Winner – Great Belize Productions Ltd. (Channel 5)

“Tracing Illegal Firearms in Belize – Origins and the Interventions” Produced by

Duane Moody; Rick Romero Videographer/Editor

Special Mention – RJRGLEANER Communications Group (Television Jamaica)

“All Angles Investigates: Work & Travel Misfortune” Produced by Giovanni Dennis, Ivan Shaw, Jelani Campbell, Paul Davis, Marvin Moodie, Dionne Jackson Miller & Jevaughn Gordon

Special Mention – CCN TV6 (Trinidad & Tobago)

“Five and Under vs. Under Five” Produced by Cindy Raghobar-Teekersingh

BEST COMEDY ITEM TELEVISION: NO AWARD WINNER

Special Mention – TTT (Trinidad & Tobago)

“Penny on Point: Ian Alleyne” Produced by Penny Gomez and Colin Greaves; Presenter Penny Gomez; Editor NH Productions TT

BEST ENTERTAINMENT ITEM TELEVISION:

WINNER:

Winner – WESN Content Capital (Trinidad & Tobago)

“We Christmas: Diva-ali Mastani” Produced by WESN Content Capital

BEST DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMME RADIO:

Winner – Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television

“By an Iron Way” Produced by Elizabeth Alvarez Hernandez

Special Mention – IRIE FM (Jamaica)

“Children’s Cry” Produced by Myesha Broadie

BEST NEWS ITEM RADIO:

Winner – RJRGLEANER Communications Group (RJR)

“Cost of Living Crisis in Jamaica” Produced by Giovanni Dennis

SPECIAL (ADVERTISING) AWARDS

BEST COMMERCIAL SPOT TELEVISION

Winner – Great Belize Productions Ltd. (Channel 5)

“Christmas Card 2022” Produced by Great Belize Productions Ltd; Rick Romero Videographer / Joel Wesley Editor

BEST PUBLIC SERVICE SPOT TELEVISION:

Winner – Teleislas Channel (San Andres Island, Colombia)

“Responsible Tourism” Produced by Yessica Cifuentes, Julius Bent

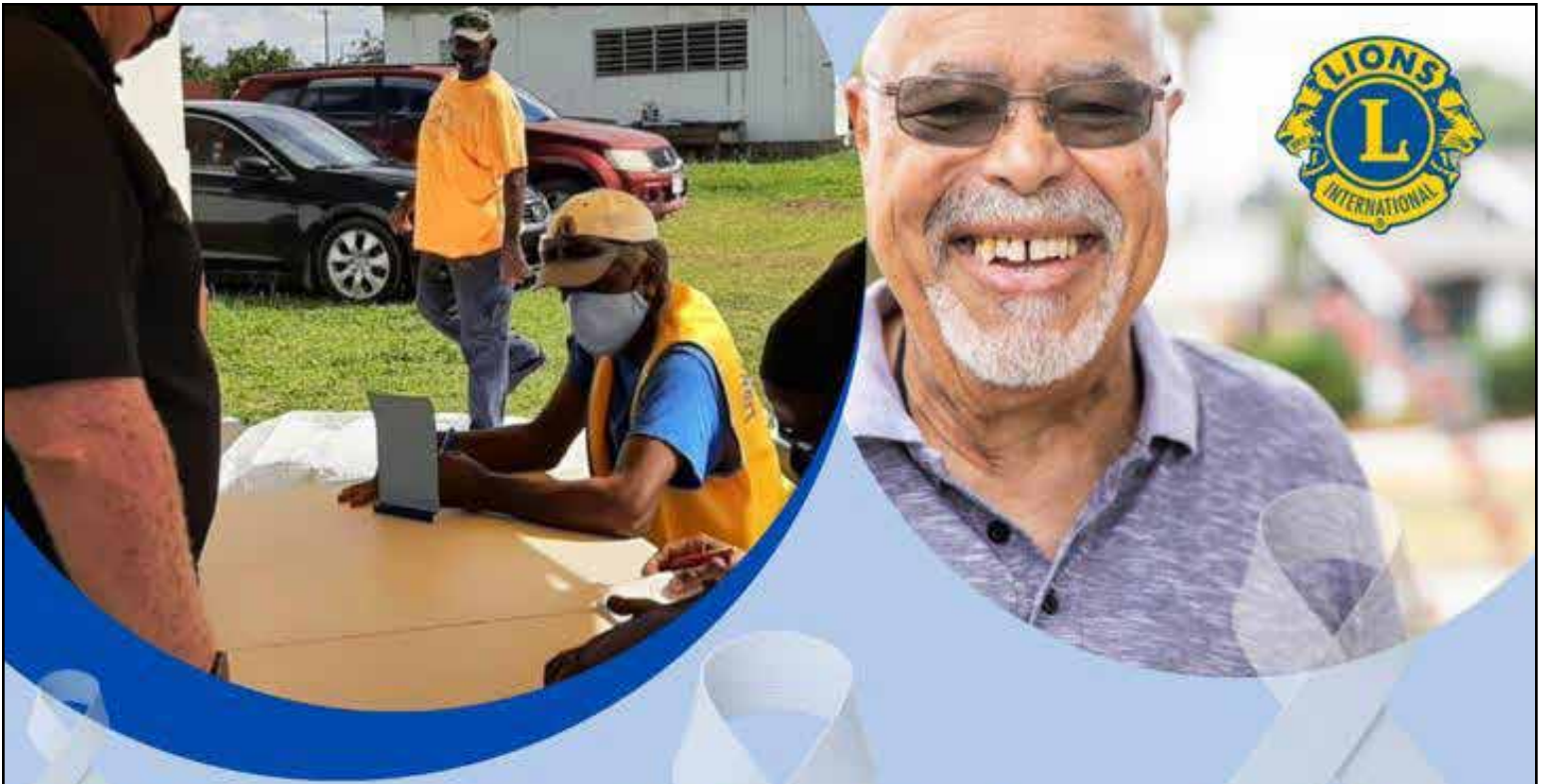
Special Mention – Barbados Government Information Service

“UNDP Human Trafficking Video 3” Produced by Paula Harper-Grant

BEST PUBLIC SERVICE SPOT RADIO:

Winner – Instituto Cubano de Radio y Television (Radio Encyclopedia)

“Drugs Silence You” Produced by Alfredo Zamora Mustelier



Lions Club of Antigua and Dr. Dwayne Thwaites with assistance from
Dr. Danny Caruso, Dr. Christopher Gomez, Dr. Obi Ekiwenna, Dr. Brian Cohen and Dr. Regene Johnson

present

PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING

SATURDAY AUGUST 19TH, 2023

Venue: The Lions Den

Registration begins at 7:00am and ends at 11:00am

Examination: Begins at 8:00am

Registration contribution: \$30.00 ECD

Breakfast will be on sale

SPONSORS:

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Local News



Zamoni to bring the vibrance of Antiguan music and culture to Bali and beyond

In a groundbreaking move, Zamoni, the sensational Antiguan artiste, is embarking on a global tour named the “Beg Who Tour,” following the exhilarating Carnival festivities.

Spanning across key

cities like London, New York, Switzerland, Miami, and Bali, this tour is set to mark history, as Zamoni becomes the first Antiguan artiste to grace the stages of Bali and partake in their carnival celebrations. Anticipation is soaring as

Zamoni prepares to captivate audiences worldwide, not only by showcasing his musical prowess but also by sharing the rich cultural tapestry of Antigua.

An exciting highlight of this journey will be Zamoni’s participation in London’s illustrious Notting Hill Carnival, an event known for its grandeur and global acclaim, solidifying his presence on the international music scene.

With a resolute aim to promote his distinctive musical style and the vibrant Antiguan culture, the “Beg Who Tour” will serve as a conduit for Zamoni to forge deeper connections with his dedicated fan base scattered across the globe.

Through this whirlwind tour, Zamoni’s melodious rhythms and energetic per-



formances will transcend borders, creating a harmonious bridge between cultures and celebrating unity through music.



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Jakarta: Living with asthma in the world's most polluted city

Multiple doctors have advised Farah Nurfirman to leave her hometown Jakarta for her health's sake.

The 22-year-old asthmatic often wears a mask and carries an inhaler, but the air quality in the city is not helping.

The Indonesian capital, which has long wrestled with air pollution, was ranked the most polluted city on global charts nearly every day last week.

President Joko Widodo on Monday even mandated that all civil servants work from home amid worsening air quality.

Last week, Jakarta saw its airborne concentration of the pollution particles known as PM2.5 outpace other heavily polluted cities such as Riyadh, Doha and Lahore, according to live data from Swiss air quality technology company IQAir. The company ranks pollution in major cities in real time every day.

Jakarta has also been consistently ranked among the 10 most polluted cities globally since May. The capital city and its surrounding region are home to about 30 million people.

These days, Farah also carries an oximeter - a device usually placed on a fingertip to measure oxygen levels in someone's blood - to better monitor her condition.



Multiple doctors have advised Farah Noorfirman to move out of Jakarta for the sake of her health.

"For people with asthma, even if your oxygen levels fall just a little, you can really feel it. And it's not just tightness, my chest really hurts. So it's hard to breathe," said Farah, who works as an intern at a marketing agency.

"My asthma is severe and also hereditary. Every doctor told me to move out of Jakarta. 'Get out of Jakarta if you want to get better, or you will continue to be like this,' they'll say."

"I am quite tired because I can't do anything. But this is where I live. Apart from wearing a mask, there is not much I can do," Farah said.

Local authorities blame the pollution spike on the dry season and vehicle emissions, and will soon carry out random checks on vehicles and force drivers to undergo emission tests.

President Widodo urged weather modification to produce artificial rain in Greater Jakarta, and advised companies to impose hybrid

working.

The city government is also considering an order for half of its civil servants to work from home.

But Jakarta residents like Juan Emmanuel Dhar-madjaya find themselves in a dilemma. "I really want to stay in Indonesia because this is where I was born and my family is here. But the air pollution is a silent killer."

The 22-year-old previously suffered from tuberculosis and now has sinus issues. The deteriorating air quality is taking a toll on his health, he said.

"I cannot focus on my daily life because my nose gets runny and very itchy all the time," said Juan, who works in the IT industry.

Alluding to his time as a student in Germany, he said: "In Europe, I've never had a runny nose or cough even during the winter when the temperature goes below freezing. But when I returned to Jakarta, my nose

immediately ran. It's so bad and clogged."

Sigit Reliantoro, a senior official at Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and Forestry, told reporters at a press conference last Friday that dry air in June, July, and August has "invariably" led to an escalation of air pollution in Jakarta.

Dry air typically means pollutants remain suspended in the air for extended periods. Wildfires are also more common during dry seasons.

Government research shows that vehicle emissions account for 44% of air pollution, Sigit noted.

But activists like Muhammad Aminullah believe factories and coal-fired power plants are the primary contributors to Jakarta's toxic smog.

Although Indonesia has big ambitions to cut carbon emissions - such as by phasing out coal for electricity by 2056 - it is currently the world's biggest exporter of thermal coal. Phasing out coal is costly because of the large numbers of people employed in related industries in Indonesia.

The government has not come down hard enough on these industries because of "economic and political interests," said Aminullah, who leads The Indonesian Forum for the Environment,

cont'd on pg 11

Algeria bans 'Barbie' almost a month after movie's local release

The "Barbie" movie was pulled from theatres in Algeria this week almost one month after its release in the North African country.

Online news outlet 24H Algeria said Algeria's Ministry of Culture and Arts notified cinemas in Algiers, Oran and Constantine to "immediately" pull the movie.

Neither the ministry nor the Algerian Audiovisual Regulatory Authority commented on the reported directive or provided a rationale for it.

"Barbie" opened in some Algerian cinemas last month. The film's distributors removed the Hollywood blockbuster from their screening schedules starting this week.

The move comes after authorities in Kuwait and Lebanon banned the live action movie based on the American fashion dolls for allegedly threatening conservative values.

Some people in Algeria protested the cancellation on social media, posting their complaints along with the hashtag "#IAmBarbie." Others denounced it as



Ryan Gosling, left, and Margot Robbie pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film 'Barbie' on July 12, 2023, in London. (Scott Garfitt/Invision/AP, File)

"censorship" and "bigotry." "The 'Barbie' film 'is a threat to morality,' they say," writer Leila Belkacem posted on her Facebook page.

"What morality are they talking about when the censors gorge on porn films at home? Aren't you tired of dragging the country into your dark delusions?"

Fatima Ait Kaci, a retired teacher, told The Associated Press she had promised to take her two

granddaughters, who were visiting from Canada, to see the movie. Ait Kaci said she heard what had happened to "Barbie" only when they arrived at the Riadh El Feth cinema in Algiers and discovered another film showing in the 3 p.m.-5 p.m. time slot.

Algerian authorities "don't have the courage to take responsibility for this shameful act of censorship," she said.

Last week, the Audio-

visual Regulatory Authority announced its decision to "temporarily" suspend all programming by private TV channel Es Salam for allegedly broadcasting "in an irresponsible and unprofessional manner, a program containing scenes contrary to the precepts of Islam and the way of life of Algerian society."

"Barbie" contains no overt sexuality or references to LGBTQ+ rights. But it seems to have drawn fire because of its sheer flamboyance and broad message of inclusion and gender equality in a region where homosexuality is widely seen as taboo.

The Warner Bros film has grossed over \$1 billion worldwide since its release.

cont'd from pg 10

also known as Walhi. He claims that the ashes from burning coal are not properly managed even if the plant is located near a community settlement.

Amrin (not his real name), who lives near a coal-fired power plant, is among those affected.

He told the BBC his family used to store rainwater for bathing and consumption. But that was no longer feasible after the plant started operating in 2009.

"We don't dare to do that anymore because the water collected is black and contaminated by a lot of thick black dust on the roof," he said.

Target sales suffer after Pride month backlash

US retail giant Target saw sales fall in-store and online for the first time in years after a backlash over its Pride Month offering.

Sales dropped 5% in the April to June period compared with the same time last year - its first fall in six years.

The decline followed controversy over some of the firm's LGBTQ Pride merchandise.

It later removed items from some stores over concerns about staff safety.

Target's chief executive Brian Cornell said the decline in sales also reflected the fact shoppers' budgets are being squeezed as the cost of living remains high.

The firm said the impact of those forces was difficult to separate from other issues, such as the calls for a boycott over its Pride month range.

It saw damage to in-store displays and the clothing merchandise, which included a wide selection of items, including t-shirts decorated with rainbows, "gender fluid" mugs and children's books titled "Pride 1,2,3" and "I'm not a girl".

It ultimately removed certain items from the 2,000-piece collection. A number were from a collaboration with transgender designer Erik Carnell's Ab-rallen label, which faced criticism for items, sold



People protest the collection offered by Target for Pride Month, which it has done for the past 10 years.

elsewhere, featuring images of pentagrams and horned skulls.

The firm's decision to remove the items, which it made citing employee safety, prompted further outcry from Target customers who celebrate Pride.

Speaking as the firm provided investors with a quarterly update, Mr Cornell said the firm planned to approach future partnerships with caution, while still celebrating "heritage moments".

"As we navigate an ever-changing operating and social environment, we are applying what we learned," Mr Cornell said.

Mr Cornell said Target had seen sales start to pick up again in July, after the sharp drop in June.

But executives forecast

weaker performance than previously anticipated for the rest of the year, in part because of concerns about the impact on buyers as a pandemic-era halt to student loan payments finally expires.

Target is the latest US company to face costs as LGBTQ issues increasingly become a political flashpoint. Disney and Bud Light are among the other brands who have faced similar customer boycotts and backlash.

Its report also offered a somewhat gloomy perspective on the health of the American consumer, whose robust spending until now has been credited with helping the world's largest economy defy predictions of a downturn.

Target said buyers were

cutting back on items such as clothing and home decor, as rising prices force people to direct more of their monthly budgets to staples such as groceries.

The report's weaker than expected sales contrasted with other recent indicators which showed resilient consumer spending.

A day earlier, the Commerce Department reported that retail sales rose 0.7% from June to July, greater than expected.

Those figures were boosted by a jump in online sales, which coincided with Amazon's annual Prime Day sales event.

Despite the sales fall, Target shares rose more than 6% in early trade, reflecting stronger profits than investors had expected.

The Bahamas: Former Deputy PM recommended for head of state post

CMC - Prime Minister Phillip Davis Tuesday said he had recommended The Bahamas' first female deputy prime minister and minister of national security to become the country's new Governor General.

In a statement, Davis said that he hopes the recommendation of Cynthia Alexandria Pratt, who is affectionately known as "Mother," will "be widely accepted as a representation of Bahamians everywhere".

She will replace Sir Cornelius A Smith, who was appointed Governor General on 29 June 2018 and has indicated his intention to demit office on August 31 this year.

He said in accordance with the provisions of Article 32 of the Constitution, he requested on August 11 that Britain's King Charles, appoint Mrs Cynthia Pratt as head of state with effect from September 1, 2023.

Prime Minister Davis said the life of Pratt, 78, "is endowed with service, including contributions to nursing, education, politics, sports, and religion".

She served as a member of parliament for 15 years, serving also as the deputy to the Governor General on several occasions.

Since leaving active,

Pratt has dedicated herself to roles as an ordained minister and Co-Chair of the Urban Renewal Commission.

"I am confident that the appointment of Cynthia Pratt will be widely accepted as a representation of Bahamians everywhere due to the character and contributions which distinguish her as a nationalist of the highest order," Davis said.



Cynthia Alexandria Pratt.

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Death toll in Dominican Republic explosion rises to 11

The death toll from a powerful explosion near the Dominican Republic's capital rose to 11 on Tuesday, with dozens injured. Firefighters were searching through smouldering rubble as people gathered outside hospitals, looking for missing loved ones.

President Luis Abinader visited San Cristobal, located just west of Santo Domingo, to meet with those affected. Officials said an additional 10 people were missing and that authorities were still trying to extinguish the fire amid collapsed buildings and charred vehicles.

"The search for survivors has been very difficult," Abinader said.

The explosion occurred Monday afternoon at a bakery, with authorities investigating what might have caused the blast as they vowed to take action if a business was not operating to proper standards.

Juan Manuel Méndez, director of the Emergency Operations Center, said at a press conference Tuesday night that responders had found the remains of unidentified people inside one building but were waiting on forensics to determine the number of bodies.

Monday's explosion also left more than 50 people injured as the blast tore through a bustling commercial centre in San Cristobal, authorities said. At least 36 of the injured remained hospitalized, said Joel Santos, minister of the presidency.

Estefani Alcántara said her family was shopping when the explosion occurred. Her uncle, 42, is hospitalized with serious injuries and her aunt is still missing.

"We don't know if she's dead or alive," she said with tearful eyes as she waited outside a local hospital, feeling



Firefighters put out a fire after a powerful explosion in San Cristobal, Dominican Republic, Monday, Aug 14, 2023. (Jolivel Brito/Diario Libre via AP)

full of "frustration, pain and distress."

Meanwhile, Jeni Benzan de los Santos said her sister and baby niece died in the explosion, and that her father remains missing. "They won't let me into the morgue to see if I can identify my father," she said.

The country's emergency telephone system said the explosion occurred at a bakery in the city's centre, a bustling area known as "Old Marketplace," where people buy goods ranging from vegetables to clothes. The fire then spread to a hardware store next door and a nearby furniture store.

More than 500 first responders and officials responded to the explosion, which destroyed four buildings and damaged nine others, Méndez told reporters.

Among the victims was a 4-month-old baby who died from head trauma and a woman who worked at a bank, officials said.

José Ramón Ramírez Rivera, the owner of a local veterinary clinic, told

reporters that one of his 15 employees is still missing.

"An office wall fell on top of me," he recalled. "I couldn't breathe."

Juan Jiménez, a farmer who lives several miles away, said he thought it was thunder at first, given the usual storms that occur in August. He is now waiting for information on his female cousin, a 31-year-old professor who remains missing.

Smoke still engulfed the city centre on Tuesday, and Health Minister Daniel Rivera urged everyone to wear face masks. "This smoke is mixed with chemicals," he warned.

Rivera and other officials went door to door to ensure that people had masks and determine whether they had any respiratory or skin problems. He also visited patients at a local hospital, where people were still searching for loved ones.

"The first 24 hours are very important," he said, adding that injuries

cont'd on pg 15

St Kitts sends food and medical supplies to students in Cuba

The St Kitts and Nevis Government is sending a 20-foot container filled with personal items for its students in Cuba.

St Kitts and Nevis Prime Minister Dr Terrance Drew presented the packed container to Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to St Kitts and Nevis, David Rivero Pérez yesterday.

The container was filled with the help of the government, the Solid Waste Management Corporation (SWMC), the CARE Foundation, the private sector, as well as parents of the students.

“We know that there have been some challenges for our students in Cuba, therefore, we have decided to step up as a government to make sure that our students are as comfortable as possible,” said Drew. “The Cuban Government is indeed doing its utmost best to make our students comfortable and have a good stay in Cuba and so we are doing our part as well... and have committed to make sure that we fulfil this.”



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Drew, who is a Cuban-trained physician, said he understands the “needs that are there in Cuba” from experience and it was important for the government to assist the students.

“They are our future professionals, and they will come back to serve their country and I think that their country should make sure that they are well, in a country that is doing their best to take care of them,” Dr Drew added.

Drew thanked the Cuban

Government, parents and all stakeholders who played a part in ensuring that the needs of the students were met. The Cuban Ambassador applauded the efforts of St Kitts and Nevis to answer the call of the students.

“It is important to me to know and see the concern of the government supporting the parents of the students who are in Cuba with some challenges that affect not only the Cuban people but also the students who are there studying,” said Pérez.

“It is good also to know that we have a donation from the Ministry of Health of medical supplies for the Ministry of Health of Cuba and we thank the Government and people of St. Kitts and Nevis for their solidarity with us. We want to express the commitment to continue collaborating in order to strengthen our ties.”

The care packages include water, personal hygiene products, dry food, medical supplies and batteries.

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included burns, fractures and respiratory problems.

Abinader said the government would set up two mobile hospitals to provide further treatment, including psychological services to those affected.

Meanwhile, Santos said the government is launching an investigation

to determine whether the business where the explosion occurred was operating under proper regulations.

It wasn't clear what caused the explosion, and authorities have not provided a preliminary estimate of damages.

“These catastrophes have an order of priority: save lives, save assets, ensure that the incident is extinguished

and then assess damage,” Santos said at a news conference.

San Cristobal, the birthplace of dictator Rafael Trujillo, was the site of another explosion nearly 23 years ago. An arms depot exploded in October 2000, killing at least two people and injured more than two dozen others, forcing authorities to evacuate thousands.

Canada excluded as China loosens group travel bans

By Nadine Yousif

Canada has been left out as China lifted a restrictions on group tours to multiple countries, including the US and the UK.

It suggests a deterioration of relations following Canada's recent accusations that Beijing meddled in its politics.

Chinese officials said Canada was excluded over the foreign interference claims.

It could have a significant impact on Canada's tourism industry.

Chinese tourists were estimated to have injected over C\$1bn (£580m; \$740m) into the Canadian economy annually in years prior to the Covid pandemic.

China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism regulates which countries Chinese tour operators can visit, saying it's done to safeguard citizens travelling abroad.

But it has also been viewed as a political tool to advance China's political agenda overseas.

Last week, China added 78 countries to its list of approved destinations for group tours, excluding Canada while adding other major G20 countries like the US, Germany, Australia, and South Korea.

There are currently 138 countries on the list.

In a statement, China's



Canada is not on a list of 138 countries approved by China for tours abroad.

embassy in Ottawa said it was concerned that "the Canadian side has repeatedly hyped up the so-called 'Chinese interference'".

Beijing is focused on "protecting the safety and legitimate rights of overseas Chinese citizens and wishes they can travel in a safe and friendly environment", the statement said.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries deteriorated rapidly earlier this year. It happened amid a series of leaks to Canadian media of reports from domestic intelligence agencies that laid out accusations that China meddled in recent federal elections.

Canada has also accused Beijing of trying to intim-

idate Conservative member of parliament Michael Chong and waging a disinformation campaign against him on the popular Chinese messaging app WeChat.

Chinese diplomat Zhao Wei was expelled from Canada in May over some of the allegations. In a tit-for-tat move, China expelled Jennifer Lynn Lalonde, Canada's diplomat in its Shanghai consulate.

The BBC has reached out to Global Affairs Canada for comment on the tourism snub.

Destination Canada, which promotes tourism in the country, told broadcaster CBC that China accounts for the largest source of tourist arrivals from the

Asia-Pacific region. It is also its second-largest long-haul market after the UK.

More than 700,000 Chinese tourists travelled to Canada in 2018, according to a 2021 report by the Canada China Business Council, with each visitor spending an average of C\$2,600.

At the time, the business group warned that bilateral tensions made the future of Chinese tourism to Canada "uncertain", noting that "comments made by Chinese officials alluded to the contingency of Chinese tourism on positive relations".

Group tours from China to Canada were first approved in 2010, and it

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The group were said to have been in a boat similar to this one, involved in an incident in July in which 15 migrants drowned

More than 60 migrants feared dead at sea off Cape Verde coast

By Suzanne Leigh

More than 60 people are feared dead after a boat carrying migrants was found off Cape Verde in West Africa.

Thirty-eight people were rescued, including children aged 12 to 16, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said.

An estimated 100 people, mostly from Senegal and Sierra Leone, were said to have been on board the boat and had been at sea for

a month.

It is not immediately clear when the incident occurred.

The vessel was first spotted on Monday, police told the AFP news agency. Initial reports suggested the boat sank, but it was later clarified that the boat was found drifting.

The wooden pirogue style boat was seen almost 320km (200 miles) off the island of Sal by a Spanish fishing boat, which alerted

authorities, police said.

Senegal's foreign ministry said in a statement issued late on Tuesday that the boat had left Senegal on 10 July with 101 passengers on board.

The ministry said it was liaising with authorities in Cape Verde for the repatriation of survivors, one of whom was from Guinea-Bissau.

Cape Verde is around 600km off the coast of West Africa on a maritime migra-

tion route to the Spanish Canary Islands, often used as a gateway to the European Union.

IOM spokeswoman Safa Msehli said: "Safe and regular pathways to migration are sorely lacking, which is what gives room to smugglers and traffickers to put people on these deadly journeys."

At least 559 people died trying to reach the Canary Islands in 2022, according to figures from the IOM, while 126 people died or went missing on the same route in the first six months of this year with 15 shipwrecks recorded.

At least 15 people drowned when a boat carrying migrants capsized off the coast of the Senegalese capital Dakar in late July.

cont'd from pg 16

boosted air travel and tourism between the two countries. In 2018, bilateral relations suffered a set back when Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou was detained in Canada at the request of the US.

Two Canadians were arrested in China not long after, in a move viewed by Canada and its allies as "hostage diplomacy".

The number of tourists to Canada from China fell in 2019, according to the Canada China Business Council.

Ms Meng and both men were released in 2021, after the Huawei executive came to a deal with US prosecutors.

China began easing pandemic travel restrictions for both visitors and its citizens early this year.

British Museum worker sacked over missing treasures

The British Museum in London has sacked a member of staff and police are investigating after treasures were reported “missing, stolen or damaged”.

Items including gold, jewellery and gems of semi-precious stones were among those missing from the museum, one of the UK’s largest tourist attractions.

The majority of the items were kept in a store-room, the museum said.

British Museum director Hartwig Fischer said the museum would “throw our efforts into the recovery of objects”.

He added: “This is a highly unusual incident. I know I speak for all colleagues when I say that we take the safeguarding of all the items in our care extremely seriously.

“We have already tightened our security arrangements and we are working alongside outside experts to complete a definitive account of what is missing, damaged and stolen.”

Legal action would be taken against the staff member who was fired, the museum added.

The Economic Crime Command of the Metropolitan Police is investigating but no arrests have been made.

The British Museum



A number of the museum’s items are “missing, stolen or damaged”, it said.

has also started an independent review of security.

None of the items, which dated from the 15th Century BC to the 19th Century AD, had recently been on display and were kept primarily for academic and research purposes, the museum said.

The PA news agency said it understood the items were taken before 2023 and over a “significant” period of time.

George Osborne, chair of the British Museum, said: “The trustees of the British Museum were extremely concerned when we learnt earlier this year that items of the collection had been stolen.”

He added: “We called

in the police, imposed emergency measures to increase security, set up an independent review into what happened and lessons to learn, and used all the disciplinary powers available to us to deal with the individual we believe to be responsible.”

Mr Fischer added the organisation had “brought an end to this”, and was “determined to put things right”.

The museum’s independent review will be led by former trustee Sir Nigel Boardman and Chief Constable Lucy D’Orsi, of British Transport Police.

They will provide recommendations regarding future security arrange-

ments and start “a vigorous programme to recover the missing items”, according to the museum.

Sir Nigel said: “It will be a painstaking job, involving internal and external experts, but this is an absolute priority, however long it takes, and we are grateful for the help we have already received.”

The Bloomsbury-based attraction sees more than six million people visit it each year.

Its collection spans six continents and two million years of history, including the Parthenon sculptures, also known as the Elgin Marbles - the fate of which is the subject of much discussion.






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Wahab Riaz retires from international cricket

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) - Pakistan fast bowler Wahab Riaz retired from international cricket on Wednesday but will continue to play franchise cricket.

“Stepping off the international pitch,” the 38-year-old wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, adding, “After an incredible journey, I’ve decided to retire from international cricket. Big thank you to PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board), my family, coaches, mentors, teammates, fans, and everyone who supported me.”

Riaz, a left-arm fast bowler, made his international debut in a one-day



Pakistan fast bowler Wahab Riaz smiles during a press conference, in Lahore, Pakistan, Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2023. Riaz retired from international cricket on Wednesday but will continue to play franchise cricket. (AP)

international against Zimbabwe in 2008 but had to wait for more than two years before making his test debut against England at the Oval in 2010 in which he took

five for 63 and became the ninth Pakistan bowler to take five wickets in a debut test.

He took 83 wickets in 27 tests, 120 wickets in 91

ODIs and also took 34 wickets in 36 T20s but wasn’t considered for international games since playing a T20 international against New Zealand at Hamilton in 2020. Riaz said that he would continue to be part of T20 franchise cricket. Riaz is serving as sports minister in the present provincial caretaker government of Punjab province.

He said in a statement that he had targeted 2023 as the year of his retirement from international cricket and “I feel comfortable now more than ever that I have served my country and national team to the best I could have.”

Windies players make jump in ICC rankings

Several West Indies players have been further rewarded for their brilliant series victory over India by making giant strides on the latest MRF Tyres International Cricket Council (ICC) Men’s T20 International (T20I) Player Rankings.

Under the leadership of Rovman Powell West Indies defeated India 3-2 in their home T20I series on Sunday, having received some outstanding performances from a number of their players during the five-game rubber.

Opener Brandon King scored an unbeaten 85 in the series decider in Florida and that helped the 28-year-old rise five places to 13th overall and a new career-high rating on the list for T20I batters.

King scored 173 runs in total for the series and his amount was only



West Indies batsman Brandon King. (AP)

bettered by teammate and Player of the Series Nicholas Pooran with 176 runs.

West Indies left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein jumps three places to 11th

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ABTTA welcomes Stuti Kashyap as national player

The Antigua and Barbuda Table Tennis Association (ABTTA) has announced the addition of a dynamic talent, Stuti Kashyap, to the country's national team.

Born in Bangalore, Karnataka, India, and currently residing in Fremont, California, USA, Stuti is set to represent Antigua and Barbuda in international table tennis competitions.

Stuti Kashyap, who is now a citizen of Antigua and Barbuda, began her journey into the world of table tennis at the age of nine at Table Tennis America, under the keen guidance of Coach Hailong Shen.

Within a year, she showcased her prodigious talent by achieving a United States of America Table Tennis (USATT) rating of 1000, a feat that is a testament to her talent and dedication.

Despite facing challenges such as injuries that required her to switch her playing style temporarily, her resilience and determination have always shone

through.

Stuti Kashyap consistently surprised her opponents throughout her junior career, winning numerous titles and accolades, including the WTT Feeder Fremont, the ICC Joola Summer Open, and the 2023 888 Silicon Valley Championship. Among her many accolades, her performance at the US Open in 2019, where she clinched five medals out of six events, stands out.

She was ranked 90th in the Under-13 Girls World Ranking as of May 25, 2022. By January 2023, Stuti Kashyap had made it to the top third among Under-15 Girls in the US, a testament to her grit and hard work. She is being sponsored by Butterfly for 2023-2024.

President of the Antigua and Barbuda Table Tennis Association Charles Belot said, "Stuti is not just a fantastic player but an embodiment of dedication, resilience, and passion. We are excited and honoured to have her wear our national



Table tennis player Stuti Kashyap (ABTTA)

colours.

"The Association welcomes Stuti Kashyap and anticipates many victorious moments ahead."

According to the ABTTA's Mission Statement, "The Antigua and Barbuda Table Tennis Association is dedicated to promoting and developing the sport of table tennis in Antigua and Barbuda.

"With its commitment to nurturing young talent and representing the nation on the global stage, the ABTTA continues its quest to be a pillar of sports excellence in Antigua and Barbuda."

cont'd from pg 20

overall on the T20I bowler rankings following his five wickets for the series, while India tweaker Kuldeep Yadav improves 23 rungs to 28th after his six scalps across the five matches.

There is also some joy for West Indies pacer Romario Shepherd, with the right-armer making significant ground on the list for T20I bowlers and all-rounders

following his Player of the Match performance in the decisive fifth and final match of the series against India.

Shepherd claimed career-best four for 31 in the eight-wicket triumph at Central Broward Stadium on Sunday and was duly rewarded with a 20-place jump to 63rd on the list for bowlers and a four-spot improvement to 19th on the T20I rankings for all-rounders.



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England reach first World Cup final

SYDNEY (Reuters) - England reached their first Women's World Cup final after beating Australia 3-1 on Wednesday despite a wonder goal from Matildas striker Sam Kerr as the co-hosts' fairytale run came to an end.

After falling at the semi-final stage in the previous two World Cups, England will face Spain on Sunday looking to add a world title to last year's European Championship triumph.

Attacking midfielder Ella Toone gave England a first-half lead to silence the crowd of 75,784 but a stunning strike from Kerr, making her first start of the tournament, squared things up after halftime as Stadium Australia erupted in euphoria.

However, Lauren Hemp restored England's lead before Alessia Russo put the result beyond doubt shortly before the end.

"This is the one thing I've always wanted, to make finals at a World Cup and after two times of getting huge disappointment, honestly I can't believe it," England full back Lucy Bronze said.

Sarina Wiegman's side clearly had a game plan to impose themselves physically on Australia, committing nine fouls in the first half as they nullified their opponents' attacking options.

England opened the



England players celebrate after England's Alessia Russo scored her side's third goal during the Women's World Cup semifinal soccer match between Australia and England at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Australia, Wednesday, Aug. 16, 2023. (AP)

scoring in the 36th minute when Russo worked her way to the byline before cutting the ball back and Toone smashed it into the top right corner for her first goal of the tournament.

Australia started the second half much brighter and began pressing England higher up the pitch, looking to create a historic moment that would match Cathy Freeman's incredible 400 metres victory in the same venue at the 2000 Olympics.

And they got it in the 63rd minute when Kerr received the ball in her own half, ran toward goal and fired an unstoppable rocket into the top left corner from 25 yards out beyond the diving Mary Earps.

The stadium erupted as

Australia fans finally got to see their star striker score at this tournament, reigniting hope that Tony Gustavsson's side could yet play for the title.

But the hosts found themselves behind again less than 10 minutes later.

Matildas defender Ellie Carpenter failed to deal with a long ball over the top from Millie Bright, allowing Hemp an easy finish into the bottom corner to restore England's lead.

The 23-year-old was involved once more as the game entered the final stages.

Shortly after Kerr had missed a golden chance to equalise again, Hemp turned brilliantly on the halfway line before releasing Russo,

who fired a low shot into the far corner to seal England's place in the final.

Australia will play Sweden in the third-place play-off on Saturday and Kerr said they were proud of what they had achieved despite falling at the penultimate hurdle.

"We can't thank the fans enough, they've been amazing," she said. "We've felt the love all over the country. Just to see the support has really pushed us on. So hopefully, this stays around because this has been amazing for us."

After leading her native Netherlands to a runners-up finish in 2019, Wiegman becomes the first coach to take two different teams to a World Cup final.

CFU Under-14 Girls Challenge Series to kick-off this weekend

A total of 20 teams from across the region are expected to converge in Antigua and Barbuda this week to participate in the 2023 Caribbean Football Union (CFU) Under-14 Girls Challenge Series.

The teams are divided into Tier I and Tier II and are grouped according to their ranking for the tournament, which will be played across three venues in Antigua and Barbuda from August 18th to 27th.

The Tier I category will feature six teams, divided into two groups. Contesting Group A will be Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, while Aruba, the Turks & Caicos Islands, and the Cayman Islands will compete in Group B.

Fourteen national teams from across the Caribbean will compete in Tier II, which is divided into three zones.

Contesting Group A will be teams from Anguilla, Dominica, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, the United States (US) Virgin Islands, and Grenada.

Group B will comprise the national teams of Antigua and Barbuda, Bermuda, Barbados, and Bonaire.



Members of the Antigua and Barbuda Under-14 Girls team participate in a training session at the ABFA's Technical Center in July, 2023. (Photo by Elwin Francis)

In Group C, there will be teams from Curacao, Guadeloupe, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and Martinique.

The matches will be played at the St. Johnston Village Sports Complex, the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, as well as fields 1 and 2 at the ABFA's Technical Center at Paynters.

The competition will kick off with five matches tomorrow (Friday). Anguilla will face Dominica in the first match of a double header at the St. Johnston Village Sports Complex at 2 pm.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines will clash with the US

Virgin Islands in the second encounter at 4:30 pm.

Curacao will meet Guadeloupe at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium at 2 pm. Barbados will tackle Bonaire at Field 2 at the Technical Center at 4 pm, and host Antigua and Barbuda will challenge Bermuda at Field 1 at the Technical Center at 5 pm.

The CFU Challenge Series is a developmental competition held alternately for girls and boys. The series is an introduction to international competition and exposure for players.

It is also a pivotal component of the CFU's Next

Generation Referee Course. It affords regional match officials who possess the abilities to advance to the FIFA International Refereeing List technical and practical training. The series is also a breeding ground for match and venue coordinators.

Haiti's girls swept to victory in Tier I during the last edition in 2021. Aruba were undefeated in winning Tier II.

The CFU launched the Challenge Series in 2018, starting with a boys' competition. Girls born on or after January 1, 2009, are eligible to participate in the 2023 edition.