

WEEKLY BRIEFING

14 July 2023



ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL UPDATE

BBC faces scandal as presenter accused of inappropriate behaviour

Huw Edwards has been named as the BBC employee accused of inappropriate behaviour. The news presenter was reported as having paid a teenager £35,000 for sexually explicit photos. The initial story broke as the child's parents approached The Sun newspaper following nothing being done by the BBC after they submitted the claim in May. Speculation about the TV personality's identity was put to rest following Edwards' wife coming forward to name him as the perpetrator. The presenter will face no criminal convictions as per the decision of the MET Police department, however, the BBC has resumed an internal investigation into the potential allegations of workplace misconduct

Bank of England finds new optimism as US inflation falls to its lowest level in two years

The Bank of England hopes it will be able to replicate the success of the Federal Reserve as the US rate of inflation falls to its lowest level in more than two years. Previously showing a 40 year high of 9.1% in June of 2022, year over year consumer price index inflation has now consecutively fallen for 12 months. As the cost of living crisis continues to heavily impact the British public, the news of US inflation fall is putting additional pressure on Governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey to halt rapidly increasing prices in Britain.

Longest strike in NHS history starts as Junior Doctors demand higher pay

Junior Doctors in England planned to take strike action for five days from 13-18 July, resulting in significant disruption to thousands of NHS appointments. Senior doctors will step in to provide emergency care before striking themselves 20-21 July. The government refused to meet with the British Medical Association prior to the strike as Health Secretary, Steve Barclay claims the 35% pay increase demand is "unreasonable" and a risk to patient safety. During a press conference on 13 July, Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, announced that millions of public sector workers including teachers, police and junior doctors will receive pay increases between 5-7%. He also stated that this would be the final offer which no amount of further strike action would change.

TRADE UPDATE

Gatwick Airport workers to strike for eight days this summer

Nearly 1,000 workers at Gatwick airport are set to participate in eight days of strike action later this month in a dispute over pay, with the walkouts set to continue into August. The workers - including baggage handlers and ground staff - will strike for an initial four days from 28 July to 1 August, and then for a further four days from 4 August until 8 August. Airlines that will be affected include British Airways, EasyJet, Ryanair, Tui, Westjet and Wizz. According to Unite, the scale of the action will "inevitably" result in disruption, delays and cancellations across the airport.

Cruise industry set to achieve new highs in medium to long-term

The cruise industry is set to be "propelled" to new heights with medium to long-term demand trends unaffected by the pandemic. Cruise port operator, Global Ports Holding, revealed this week that appetite for leisure travel has increased, with passenger capacity expected to go up 45% to 40 million by 2027. "We expect this growth will be a key driver of positive organic growth at GPH over the medium to long-term as passenger volumes rise across our port network," said chairman and chief executive, Mehmet Kutman. This follows a year of recovery, when industry booking patterns have been rebuilt over the past 12 months and all major lines have reported a surge in reservations, exceeding 2019 levels.

Aviation minister meets EasyJet boss after flight cuts warning

Aviation minister, Baroness Vere, was due to meet with EasyJet CEO Johan Lundgren this week after the carrier announced 1,700 summer flight cancellations. The disclosure came as the issue was raised during questions by MPs on transport matters in the House of Commons on Thursday. Conservative chair of the transport committee, Iain Stewart, called on transport secretary, Mark Harper, to provide assurances to families poised to fly off on summer holidays. Commenting that he was sure the question was prompted by one airline making "some modest changes" to its flight schedule during the summer, Harper added that "no other airline has indicated to the department that it will be cancelling flights ahead of the summer". "We have already worked with the aviation industry to make sure that, this year, it is prepared for the busy summer period so that we avoid the problems that we had last year", the transport secretary assured.

AIRLINE UPDATE

American Airlines - American Airlines has reaffirmed its focus on key sustainability issues as it strives to reach net zero emissions by 2050, with "meaningful steps forward" across its strategy detailed in the airline's newly-published 2022 sustainability report. The carrier's strategy to abolish greenhouse gas emissions is focused on running a more fuel-efficient operation, with aircraft increasingly powered by low-carbon fuel.

Delta - Delta Air Lines has reported the highest quarterly profit and revenue in its history, underlining the recovery in the US travel sector. Delta made an adjusted pre-tax profit of \$2.2 billion in the June quarter - a margin of 15.2%, far ahead of the industry average of around 5%. Operating revenue was also a record at \$14.6 billion, up 19% year on year.

Ryanair - Ryanair has resigned from the UK Aviation Council and slammed the government-industry body as a "a waste of time" following its latest meeting this week. Michael O'Leary, Ryanair group CEO told aviation minister Baroness Vere - who chairs the council - in his resignation letter: "You have delivered zero action and no practical measures."

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENCIES, OTA UPDATE

Hotels.com - Hotels.com has been featured in the top 10 companies ranked by their customer satisfaction scores, according to the Institute of Customer Service (ICS). The hotel booking website was fourth-equal, with a UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI) score of 84.7. This score is based on how customers rate organisations, with 25 metrics rating experience, complaint handling, customer ethos, emotional connection and ethics.

Travel Counsellors - Travel Counsellors has reported a total of 17 consecutive months of "unparalleled" sales. Group sales for June hit £76.6 million, up 14.5% year-on-year, with leisure sales for the month reaching £54.9 million, an increase of 15.1%. The result was attributed to more customers making late bookings for summer holidays.

Tui - Tui Group has launched a new accommodation-only platform in the UK, allowing consumers to tailor-make trips and choose from more than 12,000 hotels. Tui said the service would act as an "important driver for dynamic packaging" allowing customers to book hotel stays without flights, and enabling more cross-selling of other Tui holiday elements, such as cruises and tours.

SOCIAL UPDATE

Threads reaches over 100 million users in record time

As some expected, Meta's new Threads app has now become the fastest-growing app of all time. The much anticipated Twitter alternative launched last week and quickly rushed to 30 million sign ups within 24 hours of release. It then rose to over 70 million in less than two days and up to 100 million within a week. This rapid growth beats out ChatGPT to take the fastest-growing app title, with the ChatGPT app reaching 100 million users in two months earlier this year.

TikTok is testing an option to enable users to download clips without a watermark

Users will soon be able to download their TikTok video clips without the branding. Since Instagram restricts a video's reach when it detects watermarks or logos from other apps, this new option would be useful for reusing and repurposing clips. With creators cross-posting and using their unpolished clips as the base to edit in each app anyway, TikTok may feel that allowing users to use their videos how they want, reduces the manual work for them and may showcase more of its editing features.

Instagram will now let you add up to three collaborators on posts and reels

Instagram is now adding the capacity for users to include up to three collaborators on any feed post or Reel. Instagram first launched collaborative posts back in 2021, giving users the ability to credit one collaborative account. Now you'll be able to include more partners with all able to see the post insights. While paid partnerships will still need to use the paid partnership label, regular users can use collaborative tagging to expose new accounts to their audience boosting community networks in the app.

MICE UPDATE**Glasgow to publish accessibility data to avoid 'disappointing trips'**

Glasgow Convention Bureau has partnered with AccessAble and the Royal College of Nursing to produce an online accessibility guide for disabled delegates who are planning to travel to the city. Glasgow's AccessAble gives delegates with access requirements detailed information on more than 30 venues and services across the city. The venue audit will allow delegates to search the facilities and services available at each site; such as whether hearing loops are available, the standard light levels, counter heights, ramps and clarity of written information available on signs and menus. The guide comes after new research from disabled access charity Euan's Guide showed that 72% of disabled people have found accessibility information on a venue's website to be misleading, confusing or inaccurate. When responding to the 2022 Euan's Guide Access Survey, 74% of participants reported having experienced a disappointing trip or having had to change plans due to poor accessibility. The latest ICCA (International Conference & Convention Association) research published in spring 2023, saw international associations asking for Diversity, Inclusion and Equity to be included in the requirements of a conference host city.

LIGHTER NOTE

The UK capital is transformed into a Barbie world as major London landmarks are lit up pink. See their transformations [here](#).