

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghan women protest against Taliban rulers on International Women's Day

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Ihr lestet die Global News Podcast aus der BBC World Service.

Hallo, ich bin Oliver Conway. Wir haben uns auf Wednesday, 8. März auf 14 Stunden auf dem Gnt.

Die EU betrifft Sanktionen gegen die Taliban-Goverein in Afghanistan über ihre Betriebe von Frauen.

Russland und Mörsenröhe behalten Kontrolle über die europa-Ukrainische Stadt of Bakhmut.

Und Tausende betrachten in Georgien über ein Bill, das sie sagen, das freie Spiegel wird.

Auch in der Podcast ein Insight into how Gangs in Southeast Asia

are forcing migrants to carry out online scams.

Und...

...it's having a devastating impact on the ecology of Australia,

where our wildlife hasn't evolved with a predator like a cat.

...the curbs on cats in Australia.

But first, the 8. März International Women's Day is generally seen as an occasion to celebrate the achievements of women around the world.

But in Afghanistan women are using the day to highlight their lack of rights and freedom.

The UN says it is the most repressive country in the world for women,

who since the Taliban takeover in 2021 are effectively trapped in their homes.

Today a small group of women held a rare demonstration in the Afghan capital Kabul, calling on the international community to protect them.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Joseph Burrell,

said the EU had approved a package of sanctions targeting, among others, two Taliban ministers.

We have approved a package of sanctions,

covering a wide range of circumstances where it has been abuses and violations of human rights, especially women's rights.

And we sanction a set of personalities coming from the Taliban,

two Taliban ministers, the education minister,

and the minister in charge of protecting the virtue and fighting against the vice.

Well, before the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan,

22-year-old Atifah Hussaini had big aspirations,

studying business at Kabul University.

Now she's been told she can't go back to class,

as she explained to my colleague James Menendez.

Before this, before the Taliban came in,

I was a free girl in Afghanistan,

and I was a student in university and also activist woman in the society.

I was so free and I went to school to study and to teach

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because I was manager and one of the teachers in private school.
And after that, every night I went to university to study BBA,
Bachelor in Business Administration.
And how have things changed since the Taliban took over?
Everything is really not good,
because I cannot go out without my brother,
because the Taliban says that you shouldn't go out without your brother or father.
And unfortunately, we can go to Basar.
And so, you know, we are not free in Basar, on the street.
And now our university called the boys to come to university after 20 March.
And unfortunately, they didn't allow us to go there.
So, are you effectively now trapped in your home,
unless, as you say, you go out with a male family member?
Yes, yes.
And you know that Afghan people are so hard worker
and my father is one of them,
that he has track and just sell the fruits and vegetables
and we are not so rich to go out of Afghanistan.
Because of that, we stay here.
And unfortunately, day by day,
there is nothing good that everything is going worse.
Because one of the things that the United Nations is saying,
is that this is all bad for Afghanistan.
I mean, not just in terms of people's rights and freedoms,
but actually it's just terrible for the economy,
because women and girls can't contribute to the economy,
either now or in the future, when they finished school.
Yes, this is my question that after school,
what they will do.
And now, I don't know how can I manage my life,
or how can I study,
because you know that online study is not very good
and we don't have any good internet to study online in universities.
But this is the bad day and the badness
that we don't have any way to go out from here.
That if a Hussaini in Afghanistan.
Before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine,
the small eastern city of Bakhmut was home to around 80,000 people.
Most have now fled following months of fierce fighting
that's been compared to the trench warfare of World War I.
The Russians have lost huge numbers of men
after sending waves of lightly armed conscripts
against Ukrainian positions.

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But they are gaining ground.
And the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says the city may fall in the coming days.
The Wagner mercenary group with its ranks of ex-convicts has been leading the Russian assault.
Now its leader, Yevgeny Prugoshin, says his forces have finally captured the east of the city.
Wagner PMC units have occupied the entire eastern part of Bakhmut.
Everything east of the Bakhmutka River is completely under the control of the Wagner PMC.
It hasn't been possible to verify that claim, but the Institute for the Study of War, an American research organization that's been accurate in the past, says it is likely that Russian forces have taken eastern Bakhmut after a controlled Ukrainian withdrawal on Tuesday.
Our diplomatic correspondent Paul Adams gave us his assessment. I think it is fairly clear that the Wagner group is in control in the east of the city.
That video that you were just playing a clip from was recorded by a tank memorial just east of the river. And you could hear gunfire in the background at certain moments. So I think it is very likely that Wagner controls the east of the city.
But if you look at the map, you can see about a third of Bakhmut. The rest of the city is west of the river.
Now, Russian forces are very much present, both north and south of the city. Bakhmut is almost encircled.
So it does suggest that the fall of Bakhmut may only be a matter of time.
But Western officials continue to suggest that it could still take some time.
I mean, perhaps even as much as a month. It is still not guaranteed, not least because so far the Ukrainian military seems determined to defend it.
But in doing that, they are losing men. And there had been some discussion that they might pull out to fight another battle.
But President Zelensky said, no, we're going to try and hold it. Why are they staying on when the city isn't said to be that important?

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Well, it is an interesting question.

There certainly are signs of some kind of control withdrawal over the last few days.

But you're right, President Zelensky has said that the complete fall of Bakhmut could, in his words, open the road to other nearby towns.

But the Institute for the Study of War that you were just quoting

is of the feeling that Russia, frankly, lacks suitable forces for any further advance.

That we may be at what military folk call the culmination point, where an advancing military simply has to stop and relax the capability, the equipment, the manpower to press any further.

And that may well be the Ukrainian calculation to bleed Russian forces so much that taking the town, which, as you say, isn't much of a major military or logistics hub, could be something of a Pyrrhic victory.

Western officials believe that Russia may have lost 20,000 to 30,000 killed and wounded in this six or seven month battle for Bakhmut.

This is an astonishing level of casualties.

Ukraine has certainly lost a lot of men, too, though we don't know how many.

And it's likely to be far fewer

because of the very different ways the two militaries operate.

So I think that is probably the calculation.

And in the words of one Western official we were talking to yesterday,

Bakhmut has been a really good opportunity for the Ukrainians to kill an awful lot of Russians.

A diplomatic correspondent, Paul Adams.

To the eastern end of the Black Sea lies another former Soviet Republic, Georgia, that has itself faced a Russian invasion back in 2008.

Distrust of Russia lingers among many in Georgia.

And the past day saw huge anti-Russian and pro-EU demonstrations.

Protesters are currently gathering outside Parliament in the capital Tbilisi for a second day

to voice their opposition to a controversial law

that Georgia's President says is dictated by Moscow.

The bill, defining many non-governmental organisations

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and independent media as foreign agents,
is backed by the Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili.
The campaign that is going on right now is absolutely baseless.
I do understand that it is painful for them,
as they have been receiving millions upon tens of millions of dollars in grants.
There was no transparency, information or accountability to the public.
One of those who was at the protest was Helen Kostaria,
founder of the political party, Droa.
The whole night the police was attacking people and chasing people
across the centre of the city. More than 100 people were arrested.
One of the leaders of the opposition was kidnapped from the rally
and the government has gone totally unconstitutional.
Both in adopting the law that is against Georgian interests,
that is against basic human rights.
But the key is that the overwhelming majority of Georgian people
are pro-European, they are pro-Ukrainian.
And the small minority of Georgian government,
which is ruled by Russian oligarch,
is just capturing the state, capturing the institutions
and trying to impose on us a Russian future.
That's very much the same law that Russia has adopted several years ago,
which has enabled Russia to squeeze all the NGO in media.
Now we are in a situation where government is attacking media
over years.
The leader of Georgian opposition media is put in jail
and it's totally politically motivated.
It's made it by an MNIST International,
a defender's office.
The previous president of Georgia, the third president of Georgia,
is under political persecution in prison.
Activists are prosecuted politically.
So in this picture the Georgian government has decided to take a further step
and to take the law that will basically squeeze all the free media
and NGOs in Georgia.
And it has become a red line for European-minded people
and freedom fighters of Georgia.
It's a red line which will kill our European and democratic future.
That's why all the forces, different political parties,
civil society in Georgia and Georgian citizens
have united in protesting the law.
Helen Kostaria, founder of the Political Party,
droher on protests in Georgia.
And romance scams can be big business

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with some victims losing thousands, even millions of dollars.

One very lucrative scam is being run by criminal gangs across Southeast Asia.

The BBC has been speaking to people caught up in it, with insiders revealing the sophisticated techniques they used and brutal conditions that unwilling scammers were forced to work under.

A warning that this report by Jaoin Fung details of violence you may find disturbing.

A whisper of plea for help.

A Chinese man trapped in a scam compound in Cambodia.

Didi, not his real name, left China for the promise of a well-paid job.

Instead, he was trafficked to Cambodia, locked up in a compound and forced by criminal gangs to carry out an online romance scam known as pig butchering.

I'm recording this video secretly from inside the bathroom.

In the scam, victims are known as pigs.

Scammers use fake online profiles to groom them before tricking them to invest in fake financial exchanges.

Didi worked 12-hour days targeting people in America and Europe under the constant threat of violence.

Someone in my team made a mistake today.

He was beaten up in front of everyone, then dragged out of the office.

Videos shared with the BBC by activist networks showed the type of violence Didi witnessed is common in scam compounds.

This is Xiao Zui, not his real name.

He's a former scam boss.

He's wearing a mask to avoid reprisals from criminal gangs.

He makes hundreds of thousands of dollars running a scam operation, even writing a guide for other scammers to follow, but that he now regrets his actions.

The pig butchering scam is all about using emotion.

That's how you win their trust.

The profiles we make up are always very handsome, rich, responsible and caring.

It was a profile just like this, that Cindy felt for.

The scammers stole the identity of an innocent social media influencer from South Korea to target her with.

Jimmy came at a time when I was the most vulnerable in my entire life.

Cindy Tai is a successful businesswoman based in Boston in the US.

At the time she was going through a divorce and had just found out she had terminal cancer.

Jimmy messaged me every day.

If I was sad in my interactions with my husband, he was always there.

When my husband and I had decided that we were going to divorce,

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that's when it switched to much more of a romantic relationship.

After seducing Cindy,

Jimmy tricked her into investing more than \$2 million on a fake cryptocurrency platform.

Ich glaube, dass ich mehr Glück habe als ich.

Ich habe die Scammers genug Zeit gegeben,

ich habe noch nicht genug Geld gegeben

und ich will nicht, wer ich eigentlich bin.

Nach vier Monaten in Kaptivität,

D.D. managed to escape

and make it back home to China.

We approached the owner of the compound where D.D. was being held for common, but he did not respond.

Hundreds of gangs continue to carry out the pick butchering scam from compounds across Southeast Asia, targeting people all over the world.

That report by Jaoin Feng.

Still to come on the Global News Podcast.

It's the biggest 3D-printed object ever

and it's about 85% 3D-printed,

which is really exciting and sort of a new, quick and easy way to make a rocket.

I hope, says the first 3D-printed rocket is about to launch into space.

Around 90,000 people in northern Syria have been displaced by the earthquakes that hit there and Turkey a month ago.

Many are now in overcrowded camps and reception centres where they may not have access to safe water.

That means they are at greater risk of contracting cholera, the water-borne disease that's been spreading since last year.

In order to try to curb the current outbreak, the World Health Organisation and UN Children's Fund have kicked off a new vaccination campaign.

Our global health correspondent Nemi Grimley told us how big the threat is from cholera.

It's very big because, remember, even before the earthquake, we've had years of conflict,

which has weakened hygiene infrastructure and sanitation projects.

And so already cholera had actually been present last year in, there was a big outbreak in September.

And so that's why they're so worried now.

They've identified around 2 million Syrians,

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they think, living in the northwest of the country, of course, many are in displaced persons camps. And they're going to try and get 1.7 million doses of the vaccine out in the next two weeks. Yeah, and how hard will that be? Of course, a lot of this area has been devastated by the earthquake. Yes, of course, huge logistical problems, still roads that can't be used. They're going to use a massive team of nearly 2,000 health workers who are going to go door to door. Of course, going to be in those camps that we mentioned and also in schools and marketplaces. The big logistical problem is they need to get the vaccine out to many adults before the holy month of Ramadan starts. And of course, fasting will be a problem then. And the issue there is because cholera is a drinkable vaccine. It's not a vaccine that you get in your arm, like the COVID vaccines, you actually drink it. And that's why they want to get it out, to get it rolled out before fasting starts. So you wouldn't be able to have it if you are fasting during Ramadan. Well, that's certainly one of the issues, obviously for adults rather than children. This vaccination campaign is going to be targeted at both. But time is really of the essence anyway, because they're worried about cholera taking off, particularly as temperatures rise with spring weather. Our global health correspondent Naomi Grimley. Printers have long since moved beyond the device to the desk used to print out online tickets or children's homework. More advanced printers can now make almost anything from homes to pizzas to prosthetic body parts. But get this, the first ever 3D printed space rocket is due to launch from Cape Canaveral in Florida in the next few hours. Lea Crane is a space reporter for The New Scientist magazine and she's been talking to Reddy Khlabi about the significance of this rocket. It has been mostly 3D printed. It's the biggest 3D printed object ever. And it's about 85% 3D printed, which is really exciting and sort of a new and sort of quick and easy way to make a rocket.

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Okay, now tell us what makes this rocket special.
What is it made of?
So, it's made of steel, like many rockets,
but instead of sort of hammering that steel into shape
or shaping it with big equipment,
they have a 3D printer that prints it in layers
in sort of thin filaments
and builds it up from the ground.
And it's about 85% 3D printed, so not the whole thing.
Some are shaped the regular traditional way.
But this is also just the first flight
and they've said their goal is to have it be 95% 3D printed,
which I think will be really exciting.
You sound very excited.
Hold on, they are skipping planned tests
and heading straight for orbit today.
Yes, so there was one more planned test,
which was hot firing,
which is generally they sort of clamp the rocket
down to the ground and fire all the engines
to make sure everything works.
But they have decided to skip that.
It's not like it's the only test.
They've done a whole bunch of tests.
So, with this one test,
they're skipping it mostly because
it's really no different from a launch
except that the rocket is clamped down
and it has the potential to add a lot of wear and tear.
So now there's a higher chance
that the rocket doesn't actually launch
than there would be if they had done that test.
But it also gives them this chance
to actually launch on the first try.
Is it likely to succeed?
I mean, what is the mood like?
How are they feeling as far as optimism is concerned?
Well, they're fairly optimistic, the company,
and I think it has basically the same chance
as any other rocket,
which I always put around 60-40
because there could always be weather.
But I think it has a pretty good chance of launching

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and if it does, making it to orbit on the first try is a really big deal.
It's not generally that easy.
So it would be really exciting if it does actually launch and make it all the way to orbit.
Das ist der Crane from the New Scientist magazine.
Japan was once called a democracy without women.
The World Economic Forum recently ranked it 139th out of 146 for women's participation in politics.
And women within governments say they are more likely to face gender bias and sexual harassment than male colleagues.
Our correspondent Shima Helil spoke to the first female mayor in Tokyo's biggest districts.
Satoko Kishimoto is not your average Japanese mayor.
It's early morning here outside the Sugunami District City Hall building, and I'm looking on as she makes her way through the busy traffic on her bicycle.
It's pretty unusual for a Japanese politician.
As a woman, and especially fairly young, and I am not from bureaucracy, I'm not a politician.
So then automatically it's difficult.
She's been on the job now for over six months.
And Ms. Kishimoto, a former environmental activist and democracy advocate, tells me it's been a steep learning curve, not just in local politics, but in the male-dominated working environment.
Unfortunately, it's quite terrible.
I have to say so.
Issues like climate change, diversity, the gender equality has been challenged by all the politics, or like boys' club politics.
After living in Belgium for the last decade, Satoko Kishimoto became one of only three female mayors in Tokyo's 23 main districts, and the first in the history of the Sugunami area.
She beat the conservative incumbent by a narrow margin back in June.
In her own district, most of the senior political posts below that of mayor are occupied by men, with women making up just over 2% of Japan's local leaders.

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Being a female mayor is a lonely job.
The women's representation has stayed almost the same
from 75 years.
This is quite insane, you know, as a society.
Society has to do something.
Of course, the system has to change,
and the election culture has to change.
There are a lot of things that has to change.
And also in Japan,
what is the most difficult for women
to challenge the political life
because they have to do a lot of care work.
Walking around the Shibuya area
with its world-famous dizzying crossing
and its huge billboards,
it's hard to square Japan's contradictions.
This is the world's third-largest economy.
The current G7 chair is the worst performing G7 country
on women's issues.
It's not even in the top 100
of the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index,
and ranks even lower at the bottom 10
of 146 countries with women in politics.
And yes, traditionally women here
are still expected to do the bulk of care and housework,
and that makes it very difficult for them
to pursue a career in politics.
But those who do brave the political terrain
tell me they often have to deal with harassment and misogyny.
The government has been regularly criticized
for not doing enough to encourage more women
to get into politics,
with some arguing that the male-dominated cabinet
and ruling party are part of the problem.
There are some rare success stories, of course,
but it will take generations for women to get equal seats
at Japan's top decision-making table.
Schau mal, Helil in Tokyo.
Keep your cat contained at home,
or if you insist on letting them out,
make sure they are on a lead.
Cats are killers.
That's not my view, I like cats,

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but that is the message coming from a growing number of councils in Australia, as Rebecca Wood reports. Australia is thought to be home to almost 5 million pet cats. Oft cuddly and cute, they can be a great source of companionship to many people. But they're also predators, and that, for many Australian councils, is causing a problem. Aidan Lang is a counsellor in the port city of Fremantle, near Perth. Distasteful domestic cats kill up to 390 million animals a year in Australia, so the data is certainly there to prove they are mass killers, and it's having a devastating impact on the ecology of Australia, where our wildlife hasn't evolved with a predator like a cat. Campaigners suggest that since being brought to the country by European settlers in the early 1800s, the animal has helped wipe out 27 native species, from the pig-footed bandicoot to the desert rat kangaroo. So now, many councils have banned them from roaming free. They also have the power to introduce curfews or full-cat lockdowns, and the states, where there are no such provisions, are now under growing pressure to fall into line. But cats are known for being independent and roaming far and wide. So how does this work logistically? Well, one suggestion is to take your feline friend for a walk, but on a lead, or Aidan has an alternative idea. In Australia, we've got a term, a porch or a patio. We're looking to people now to build a catio, where you keep your cat in your backyard. It's got a net over it. There's a little area where it can run around. It's got a scratching pole. People in Australia are now building these beautiful spaces for their cats, where they can exercise and where they're safe as well. Locked doors, catios and leads. There'll be people who say this is cruel and goes against a cat's nature. But campaigners suggest the opposite. Saying a cat is safest kept at home, away from the risks of cars, dogs and disease. Die Preise gehen nur noch rauf, rauf, rauf! Oh, ich glaube, ich muss erst mal wieder runterkommen. Mit Conxstar. Hier steigen nicht die Preise, nur das Datenvolumen jedes Jahr, ganz von allein, ganz ohne Aufpreis. Zum Beispiel bei der Conxstar Allnetz.WM.

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