

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service with reports and analysis from across the world, the latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by

advertising. Ever wondered what the world's wealthiest people did to get so ridiculously rich? Our podcast, Good Bad Billionaire, takes one billionaire at a time and explains exactly how they made their money. And then we decide if they are actually good, bad or just plain wealthy. So if you want to know if Rihanna is as much of a bad gal as she claims, or what Jeff Bezos really did to become the first person in history to pocket a hundred billion dollars, listen to Good Bad Billionaire with me, Simon Jack and me, Zing Zing, available now wherever you get your podcasts.

This is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service.

I'm Robin Brandt and at 14 hours GMT on Tuesday the 5th of September, these are our main stories. Afghanistan's problems keep mounting. The World Food Program is cutting rations to another two million people there because it's running out of money. A row about school uniforms and what some Muslim pupils are wearing goes to court in France. And two people have been arrested after digging a

shortcut through the Great Wall of China. Also in this podcast. You're a fake and a phony and I wish I'd never laid eyes on you. Pop culture tells us opposites attracts when it comes to love but a new study says think again when you're looking for that partner.

We start in Afghanistan where the people living under the Taliban regime are facing yet another challenge to daily life. Food insecurity. The World Food Program says it is cutting the amount it provides to two million people across the country because of funding problems and a lack of international

support. Xiaowei Li, the WFP director in the country said that 15 million people needed food assistance in Afghanistan. 13 million people was kind of our winter planning period. And then in May we had to reduce eight million people from assistance. And this month we're having to reduce another two million. That means 10 million people that we had served previously and who need assistance

are going to bed hungry without any food assistance that WFP is able to provide.

Well of those millions Baba Karam in Kabul is one who's been helped by the World Food Program. They have just helped us twice. Both times they gave me 3,500 Afghani in cash. The amount wasn't sufficient but anyway it was fair enough. After the two times they told me that I don't have rations anymore. I'm so worried about what will happen next now that the assistance has ended too. I stay awake all night and worry about the future of my children. Well I got more on the scale of the growing crisis from our South Asia regional editor Ambran Sanityarajan.

After the takeover of the Taliban in 2021 as you know many of the businesses and job opportunities for ordinary Afghans have operated. And many women were forced to leave the job for example in most

of the government departments as well as those working for non-governmental organizations. And also most of the schools had to be reopened for teenage children so people are very desperate. As you heard from one of the Afghans there people are doing you know daily labor work to get some money to provide food for their families. For example the World Food Program it compliments by giving about \$38 a month for a family of seven. It's not like every month they will get depending on situation because in far flung areas and remote districts people can be cut off for months because

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

of winter. So they had to be provided food ration or the equivalent amount of money. Now Afghanistan needs about \$4.5 billion of foreign aid every year to survive because the economy is shrinking there is not money coming in because of international sanctions. Now the aid agencies say they've got only about 10% of the amount earlier this year so they're desperately trying to get more money so that the starving Afghans can be provided help. You know given the Taliban administration has not been recognized by the international community there are many sanctions in place so food aid especially by the UN agencies and other NGOs was provide a key role in providing help for ordinary Afghans. Yet you said the agencies say they have only about 10% of the budget that they say they need. Why has the food program had to be cut so drastically by the WFP? They say that they need about \$1 billion at least by the end of October. Winter is going to be very harsh in Afghanistan that is where they need more money more help for people. Now that is why they're using this opportunity to give an appeal to the international community as the UN General Assembly is going to start in a couple of weeks so and also the G20 summit is going to happen in the Indian capital Delhi. They're reminding the responsibility of the international community to provide more money to Afghanistan as you know attention has been shifted you know because of the ongoing war in Ukraine the world's attention has moved to different places that's why they are asking the international community reminding them about the situation the Afghans are facing. The United States says the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un is expected to make a rare visit overseas for talks with President Vladimir Putin. Officials in the Biden administration say Russia is hoping to acquire arms for its ongoing war in Ukraine. The US State Department said sanctions against Russia had forced it to turn to what it described as rogue regimes for help and that any arms deal would violate UN Security Council resolutions. The New York Times diplomatic correspondent Edward Wong is one of the journalists who worked on the story he told the BBC that the information they received points towards a meeting of the two leaders. Our sources have told us that one of the strong signs that emerged at this meeting would take place was that there was an advanced team of North Korean officials who traveled to Vladivostok and then Moscow in late August and those included security officers who deal with the protocol of the surrounding travel of the leadership so that was a strong sign for officials looking at this. Mr Wong also explained why Pyongyang might want to supply Russia with munitions. Our sources tell us that North Korea might be seeking advanced technology from Russia to help it with its satellite program and a nuclear powered submarine program. Also North Korea is one of the poorest countries in the world. It often goes through bouts of mass hunger and it is seeking food aid from Russia too. Well that's Edward Wong from the New York Times. The BBC's Russia editor Steve Rosenberg has more details about the current relationship between Russia and North Korea and Russia's weapons shortages. Yesterday Russia's defence minister Sergei Shoigu told Russian media his country was discussing the possibility of joint military exercises though with North Korea and we know that back in July the same official Sergei Shoigu paid a visit to North Korea and he took part in celebrations for the the 70th anniversary of the Korean War armistice and while he was there he was given a guided tour. Not of the sights of Pyongyang but of an exhibition of weaponry and military equipment including missiles. The

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

Americans

have said that that visit was followed up by another visit by a Russian delegation to Pyongyang and last month we know that President Putin and Kim Jong-un exchanged letters according to the North Korean state media. President Putin himself has admitted in recent months that Russia has been running low on certain weapons. Back in June I think he said that Russia was short of high precision ammunition, communications equipment, aircraft and drones and that's despite the fact

that weapons production here in Russia has been increased over the last year or so. But you know the official line from the Kremlin continues to be that despite any shortages Russia is still doing better on the battlefield than Ukraine and only yesterday in Sochi President Putin repeated his claim that Ukraine's counter-offensive hadn't simply stalled he said it had failed and that is the line repeated in the state media here although one Russian newspaper this morning Kommersant admitted that for several days now Ukraine has been celebrating breaching Russia's first line of defence. Steve Rosenberg in Moscow. It's taken more than 10 years for the case to come to court and 80,000 documents have been assembled but today in the Swedish capital

Stockholm the trial started of two oil executives accused of complicity in war crimes. Ian London and Swiss national Alex Schneider were chairman and vice president respectively of the family firm London Oil back in the 1990s and 2000s and in that time so the prosecution says they operated in Sudan in a way which they knew would lead to major human rights abuses including murder a small group

of protesters gathered outside the court building in Stockholm. We are here today to show our support

for the people in South Sudan who have suffered the consequences of the drilling but for me it is important as a swede to take stand. Well Pormos our Europe regional editor told me more. London Oil

was operating in Sudan during a time of great conflict there's conflict now but this was different the southern part of the country had a separatist movement in fact it was successful and is now the independent nation south Sudan but back then there was a bitter war and one reason that this conflict was so bitter is that the contested area had lots of oil fields. Now London Oil was operating in Sudan at the time and they were interested in an area known as the block 5a field the problem was

this field was out of the government's control. What the prosecution says is that Ian London and his vice chair Alex Schneider went to the Sudanese government and specifically asked them to seize control of the area so they could get the oil out and no problem said the government allegedly they bombed the area they sent in ground troops and militias to burn people out of their homes and some of the people were shot as they escaped from helicopters and the case of the prosecution is that this makes London and Schneider complicit in war crimes and if convicted these two people could get life sentences. Also the prosecution wants to find the company and I think this is important because it gives you an idea of the kind of money involved London they say made two hundred and twenty million dollars from its operations in Sudan and that money they want to be confiscated. The accusations of grave behavior the trial starts today up to this point what do the two defendants say? Well Alex Schneider tried to avoid the trial altogether said he was a

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

Swiss citizen but in fact that was rejected instead he and London are insisting there's just not enough evidence to prove the case they argue Sudan has conflicts anyway they didn't start it and in fact Ian London has said that in fact his company was a force for good in Sudan. And just quickly I mean a massive endeavor as I said is this a one-off case though? Not at all I mean what's being alleged here is the kind of thing that has been alleged in conflicts all around the world and I think that's why protesters showed up it's there's a lot of interest now without commenting on the guilt or innocence of the two particular defendants here what we see are plenty of countries where there's an allegation that companies from the west come in they want to get their hands on some kind of natural resource oil gas minerals perhaps the kind of metals you and I use in our mobile phones and laptops and they pay a group of armed people to seize control of that area and to maybe commit human rights abuses so they can get their hands on it they've really really struggled ever to connect connect companies with this and that's why there's so much interest around the world and what happens at a courthouse in Sweden. Paul Moss reporting now let's go quickly to China where two people have been arrested after using machinery to dig a hole through the Great Wall officials say they did it for a simple reason to create a shortcut from Beijing here's our China correspondent Stephen MacDonald. The machinery's tracks were the giveaway police saw a large section of the Great Wall of China had been destroyed and simply followed the trail according to state media a man and a woman were questioned and admitted they'd used an excavator to smash through China's most famous historical structure they reportedly said they did it to create a shortcut to reduce travel time for them in the future officials said the pair had caused irreversible damage to a section of the wall which are being constructed in the Ming dynasty between the 14th and 17th centuries. Stephen MacDonald reporting and if you want to see for yourself what that hole looks like and it really is quite something you can go to BBC News online. In France a ban on girls going to school wearing their traditional abeyer dress was tested as it came into force dozens of girls were sent home for refusing to change out of them the government there introduced the rule last week arguing that the long robes which are worn by some Muslims are contrary to France's secular rules our Paris correspondent Hugh Scofield has the details the figures show that 298 teenagers turned up wearing an abeyer and in most cases they were offered a dialogue with the staff and eventually complied and changed into what was allowed but in 67 cases the girls refused and they were sent home and there'll be another period of dialogue now and the hope is that at the end of that they will come in today's another test day because in fact yesterday not everyone went back to school the last two years of leasing in other words sort of 17 18 year olds going back today it's quite possible that there'll be another tranche of tests today when they go back globally then you know there is resistance but it's not huge and the government is clearly taking some comfort from the fact that you know overall we were talking about several million people who went back to school yesterday and the number of cases is you know as I say 200 300 and of them most people ended up complying so a small number but I mean France has very strict secular laws doesn't it separating church or mosque and state a muslim group is going to go to court later today I think to challenge this ruling do you think there's any prospect of forcing a change to the law personally I think it's most unlikely but you know it is a legal process and they've at this group has marshaled arguments saying for example

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

that it's very difficult to define what an abaya is what kind of a loose garment is it and also saying what this unfairly targets a certain portion of the school body and those on muslims and that that is unfair these are serious arguments and they'll be taken into account by the consulate of now which is the highest administrative court which will rule in the next 48 hours personally I don't think it's likely to succeed because you know all the comment you're getting here is that this does fall under the 2004 law which banned conspicuous signs of religious affiliation and most people that I've seen quoted seem to be saying that this does form a conspicuous sign of muslim affiliation but just briefly do you expect that even though there's a large number of people complying there is a small number of resisters who intend to continue in that if the headscarf debate doesn't need to go by there will be resistance for a while but it will peter out and this will end up being just part of the mores of french society but I think that we'll in for a bit of a tense period of the next few weeks she's go filled in paris now here in london all this week musicians and singers are being honored with stones on the music walk of fame in the city's camden district an area renowned for its vibrant arts scene david bowie the who madness and amy winehouse already have stones but now a few more national and international stars are joining this elite bunch as wendy urquhart reports she's one of the most iconic singers ever and her music is revered by top stars all over the world now janice joblin is being honored with a stone on the music walk of fame in london her sister laura and brother michael were at the unveiling and michael says he

knows exactly how she would feel she would just be cackling and laughing and proud as hell laura said her sister's lasting influence was inspiring women to be themselves janice joblin was born in port arthur texas in 1943 and showed her talent as a singer at a young age she sang with several bands throughout high school but at the age of 20 she left home and hitchhiked her way to san francisco

her performance with big brother and the holding company at the monterey pop festival in 1967 brought

her national attention and after a couple of albums she left the band and launched her solo career oh lord won't you buy me a mercedes bands my friends all drive porches i must make amens wood stock in 1969 and the festival express train tour followed and by now five of her singles were in the us billboard hot 100 including her original song mercedes bands janice joblin was a heavy drinker a speed freak for her use of methamphetamines and later became addicted to heroin on october 4th 1970 she was found dead in a hotel room in hollywood with a bunch

of change in one hand and a pack of cigarettes in the other she was only 27 her solo album pearl was released in 1971 just a few months after she died

the british reggae band ub 40 were also given a stone on the music walk of fame and former lead singer ali cambell is absolutely over the moon we're pretty honored by this and what's good is we've come full circle you know when we started our adventure out of bermingham and

into london the first place we came to was camden i love it i love it janice joblin ub 40 the kinks and the buscocks will join a host of big names on the music walk of fame before the camden music festival kicks off in london on saturday it promises to be a music extravaganza with live performances by the buscocks jazzy b from soul to soul shallomar and many more it's on from noon

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

until eight p.m. and it's free when the urquhart reporting still to come in this podcast

it's not terrible more music well as ali bongo is removed as the leader of gabon we look back at another career of his that also ended badly selling your car to carvana is as easy as as easy as pie sure all you have to do is enter your license plate or vin as easy as a stroll in the park okay then just answer a few questions and you'll get a real offer in seconds as easy as singing why not schedule a pickup or drop off and carvana will pay you that amount right on the spot as easy as playing guitar actually i find that kind of difficult but selling your car to carvana is as easy as can be visit carvana.com or download the app to get an instant offer today ever wondered what the world's wealthiest people did to get so ridiculously rich our podcast good bad billionaire takes one billionaire at a time and explains exactly how they made their money and then we decide if they are actually good bad or just plain wealthy so if you want to know if riana is as much of a bad gal as she claims or what jeff bezos really did to become the first person in history to pocket a hundred billion dollars listen to good bad billionaire with me simon jack and me zing zing available now wherever you get your podcasts

for more than five decades colombia has dealt with conflict between the government and leftist guerrillas right-wing paramilitaries and drug and criminal cartels now at least nine people have died in fighting between two rebel groups in the border area with venezuela the area is a hub for cocaine trafficking and illegal mining and violent confrontations there are common this time they were between the eln colombia's last active guerrilla group and a dissident faction of the pharg which refused to acknowledge a 2016 peace deal we heard from our america's editor leonardo russia we have classes like that happening very frequently every now and again but this seems to be bigger and come also at the wrong time let's put it that way because both of those groups are negotiating peace with the government what happened was a clash in a jungle area rural area in in the province of arauca near the border with venezuela and you have on one side the eln the national liberation army which is the main the only big active rebel group in in colombia and on the other side a dissident group from the from the pharg rebel the pharg in 2016 signed a peace deal with the government but uh there there is a significant number more than 3000 fighters who refuse to accept those terms and continue to fight i mean they're involved in drug trafficking and extortion and illegal gold mining including in indigenous areas it strikes me we've had decades of violence we've had years of negotiations we have a president

himself as a former guerrilla fighter and yet we still have incidents like this why do we have so much talk but not enough action it's very difficult for one thing many of these people they were born into this life others have some involvement in that for example they are indigenous people or when you say indigenous there are people who who farm or who live locally who have or either they're forced to to work with some rebel groups even for protection or they provide food or they are forced to work with them all those are fighters who if they were in in a big city they would be probably in a gang uh they wouldn't have much choice or they choose that sort of life what we have here is the government trying to engage with the leaders that's all well and good giving the leaders hope and choice and alternatives but at the end of the day there are people at the bottom of that criminal food chain how do you help those people well it's interesting you say that because uh just when those attacks uh were happening the news were breaking the fourth

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

round of talks between the ELN this main rebel group and the government it had come to an end and both sides went and they had the statement and saying everything was going fine and well and they were talking exactly about that some of the people the people who live indigenous people rural people were being affected really badly affected by this infighting and by violence or poverty in some areas and they announced just as that all that violence was happening they announced some measures which were not specified but basically delivering food or delivering aid or trying to protect God some communities who are really under threat Leonardo Rosha now let's come back to Europe where it's nearly three months since the fishing boat carrying as many as 750 men women and children sank off the coast of Greece causing an international outcry only 104 of the people on board were pulled to safety making it the worst loss of life in the Mediterranean sea for nearly a decade there remain many unanswered questions notably about the actions of the Greek coast guard in dealing with the migrant boat our europe correspondent nick beak has traveled back to Greece for a world service documentary his report begins with the story of one of the survivors there were 180 of us kept in the warehouse it was so bad we were humiliated sworn at and beaten we weren't able to go out we were served one meal per day just some bread with a triangle of cheese this is the miserable experience in Libya that confronted after he paid a smuggler four thousand four hundred dollars he's now in the system but still far from european soil there's no internet in the warehouse and only occasionally there's a flicker of phone coverage to send a text message home once you are in the warehouse you cannot leave only if your smuggler gives the order you are able to leave a vast warehouse of customers all at the mercy of their specific smuggler a corrupted version of a travel operator who is now looking for a boat waiting for the right weather bribing the right port officials it can take months there was one group of Egyptians who had been in the warehouse for a whole year they belonged to a smuggler named Kadura most likely Kadura had already spent the money they gave him he kept ignoring them poor people they have been imprisoned for more than one year they looked severely weak when our group left they were still being kept there Atef realizes the whole business is not a secret operation in the shadows but a highly lucrative operation for the military men in power my smuggler is an officer in the Libyan navy he's a government official but he's managing human trafficking operations they play both sides they keep receiving funds from Italy to manage the migration crisis and at the same time there are the ones behind smuggling people to Europe there are many smuggling trips that leave Libya in broad daylight from commercial ports smuggling is run by the state the Libyan navy denies these claims and says it is helping the EU to stop crossings to Europe finally on the 9th of June Atef smuggler comes to the warehouse to collect him and the 35 others in his particular group they don't know where they're going we arrived in a deserted place and were taken to an abandoned house there we found other groups of people only then did we realize we were about to get on a boat it was night time we were asked to turn off our phones we didn't even have a chance to tell our families we were leaving they're put in small boats and taken out to a rusting fishing trawler on the cusp of international waters Atef describes the first 24 hours at sea people were piled on top of each other you had to fight for a spot many people were seasick and vomiting it was disgusting see we were exposed to the burning sun in the day and the freezing cold at night still we were quite optimistic the captain told us we would reach Italy in three days on the second day the engine starts to fail

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

passengers begin to ask questions of the crew and the captain who's only 22 it wasn't supposed to be like this we were going in zigzags the captain said he was taking different routes to evade the Libyan coast guard we realized later that for all those days we were lost at sea

Nick Beek reporting from Greece the leader of a coup that ousted Gabon's president Ali Bongo was sworn in as interim president on Monday General Bryce Oligui Enguema and other members of Gabon's presidential guard took power in a coup on August the 30th ousting long-time president Ali Bongo just hours after he was declared the winner of presidential elections which the army subsequently said were fraudulent coup leaders have come under international pressure to restore civilian government but said on Friday that they would not rush to hold elections a reporter in Gabon spoke with residents in the capital Libreville for their comments on the new leader i'm very happy

to the new government because the people of Gabon everybody's happy today is good day today is good day Gabon is liberty freedom is today Gabon is Libre okay for us it is an answered prayer it is not all about military men all we have been praying is for changes he said he's going to conduct elections and we hope by God's grace if he has the fear of God he will conduct a neat elections and our prayer is to have leaders that will that has fear of God that is our prayer we believe in new president we believe in oligay because oligay is different because oligay is a nationalist you know oligay is a Gabonist you recognize that the last government does very very bad things you know and you remember in 2016 the last government killed Gabonist people well let's stay in Gabon and look back at the deposed leader Ali Bongo who is said to have been drawn to music much more than politics before succeeding his father Omar Bongo in 2009

the family dynasty was famous for amassing a wealth of luxury mansions abroad as well as luxury cars

but they also spent big on music and their association with western artists in particular before he became Ali Bongo his name was Alain Bongo and in 1977 he released a funk record called a brand new man produced by James Brown's friend and manager Charles Bobbit well the author

RJ Smith wrote a book about James Brown and he's been telling us a bit more about that time it's kind of uh half disco half funk album it's uh kind of a love boat disco 70s soundtrack kind of schlock and Bongo's croons over the top of it so Ali Bongo's a brand new man um it it's not terrible it uh there's great musicianship uh that he hired uh that came from Charles Bobbit and James Brown's band so it sounds good sometimes except for the voice on the top which kind of wobbles

in and out of the beat so Ali Bongo wanted to be a disco star he wanted to be the James Brown Barry White the teddy pender grass of the world and uh he did not achieve those goals no it took years to find the city i was fooling me happiness i've known being past and grown thought that it was cool breaking all the rules i looked into your eyes and was

RJ Smith on the music of Ali or is it Alain Bongo now change your pace as the war in Ukraine shows no signs of ending the emotional toll on its population is huge which is why Elena Zelenska the wife of the president there will on wednesday host a summit of first ladies and gentlemen which she says will focus on mental health the bbc zyada hakim spoke with her and asked her first how she was coping it's a difficult question i'm holding on really for a year and a half now

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Afghanistan: Millions face 'catastrophic winter' as food aid slashed

we cannot be sure about tomorrow we don't have confidence in our future in a month or two we have

a huge hope for victory but we don't know when it comes and this long wait constant stress it has its toll so everyone finds their own way here or stimuli to deal with it for me such stimuli are work including our interview because when you have the reason to wake up and go to work it doesn't

give you a chance to stop and think why this is happening to us and i'm very much supported by inspiring stories of Ukrainians every day because in every tragedy there is a story of saving help heroism and it inspires me a lot i'm holding on due to that and so i think most of my colleagues and friends how do you deal with other strains on your family for example your husband being compared to winston Churchill how do you respond to that well it depends on the way you'd like to look at winston Churchill of course he's a historical figure i did not dream about my husband becoming a historic person maybe it's selfish but i need a husband not a historical figure beside me but on the other hand if it's about a leader who led his country through the difficulties of war if that kind of comparison would be accurate i'd love it he really does have the energy the willpower inspiration and stubbornness to go through this war so we finally see our long awaited victory i believe in him and i support him i know that he has enough strength for any other person i know i think it would be much harder to handle this situation he really is a very strong and resilient person and this resilience is what we all need right now that was ukraine's first lady speaking to my colleague yelda hakeem let's end this podcast on opposites and love you've probably heard the phrase opposites attract turns out though that new research suggests you may actually be drawn to someone more like you the newsroom's jacob evans explains maybe it's the good girl i'm the

bad boy you're a fake and a phony and i wish i'd never laid eyes on you or differences in social standing i don't understand i love you most obviously or maybe even a princess and an ogre you're an ogre oh you're expecting prince charming well the old adage that when looking for love opposites attract may not be so true a new study has analyzed 133 traits in almost 80 000 heterosexual couples and found in the majority of cases there were massive similarities the research also looked at around 200 previous studies analyzing things like religious and political views educational attainment and iq through to drug habits number of sexual partners your height weight and whether or not you're a night owl it was conducted by the university of colorado in bolder and found that between 82 and 89 percent of traits examined were similar among partners with just three percent of traits among couples being classified as substantially different some scientists say the results could be an insight into worrying future trends

if tall people keep pairing with tall people or short people with short people

then future generations may be at genetic extremes others fear social economic divides could also widen if people partner with those of similar backgrounds jacob evans reporting

and that's all from us for now but there will be a new edition of the global news podcast later if you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it you can send us an email the address

is globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk you can also find us on x formerly known as twitter at global news pod now this edition was mixed by charlotte atoskowska and the producer was stephanie prentice the editor is caron martin i'm robin brand thanks for listening until next time goodbye