

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Azerbaijan launches military action in disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region

The documentary from the BBC World Service brings the globe to your ears through original documentary storytelling. Search for The Documentary wherever you get your BBC podcasts. This is the Global News Podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Janet Jalil and 13 hours GMT on Tuesday the 19th of September. These are our main stories. Azerbaijan launches a military operation in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. India and Canada each expel a diplomat in an escalating row over the murder of a Sikh separatist leader. Ukraine attempts to send a ship loaded with grain across the Black Sea despite the collapse of a safe passage deal with Russia. Also in this podcast how much longer will Ex the rebranded version of Twitter remain free for those who don't want to pay?

The single most important reason that we're moving to having a small monthly payment for use of the ex-system, it's the only way I can think of to combat vast armies of bots.

We'll get reaction from users.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have already fought two wars over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh

in the three decades since the end of the Soviet Union. Now with reports of large-scale shelling and continuous shooting, there are fears of a possible third conflict. Azerbaijan announced it was launching what it calls an anti-terror operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. It said it was in response to landmine explosions that killed six people, which is blaming on Armenia. In footage posted online by a journalist in the territory's regional capital Stepanakert, the sound of gunfire can be heard.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, but most of the people who live in the region are ethnically Armenian. Our correspondent in the region, Rehan Dimitri, told us more about the military operation.

The shelling started after Baku accused Armenia of what it called an Armenian sabotage group for the two separate explosions that killed six Azerbaijani people earlier today.

Shortly after that, a statement appeared on Azerbaijan Defense Ministry's website saying that it was launching what it described as local anti-terrorist operation in order to disarm the Armenian armed forces and to demand the complete withdrawal of Armenian forces from its territory. Armenian Defense Ministry also issued a statement and they have been saying this for some time, that they have no forces in Nagorno-Karabakh, that these are self-defense units of the ethnic Armenian population that lives in Nagorno-Karabakh.

So it's also kind of the situation is developing quite intensely. The latest what I saw on the Azerbaijan Defense Ministry website was footage showing what they said as targeting legitimate military targets and destroying them.

So you've got these conflicting claims with Azerbaijan saying that there are Armenian military units which is attacking, but Armenia denying this.

That's correct. What we're seeing now is really the culmination of months of tensions and escalation. Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan is populated by ethnic Armenians.

They have been living under a blockade for nearly nine months because the only route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with the Republic of Armenia has been blocked by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan said that

it was its sovereign right that finally it restored, fully restored its territorial integrity.

However, this decision by Azerbaijan to block this only road went against the agreement that

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was signed three years ago that ended a six-week war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

And as part of that agreement, Russian peacekeepers were deployed to this region.

Well, we also heard today just recently a statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Russia said that it was worried by the escalation and called for the two sides to stop the bloodshed.

Also, they said that it's possible that the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, who are currently in New York for the UN General Assembly, might hold a meeting today.

Rehan Dimitri. An explosive allegation has caused a diplomatic rail between Canada and India and led to tit-for-tat expulsions. As you may have heard in our previous edition, Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, told Parliament there were credible allegations linking the Indian government to the murder of a Canadian citizen from the country's large Sikh community,

Hadeep Singh Nijjar, who supported the creation of a Sikh homeland in India. He was shot outside a temple in British Columbia in June. Both countries have each expelled a diplomat with Delhi calling Mr Trudeau's allegations absurd and politically motivated.

Just Karan Sandhu from the World Sikh Organization of Canada gave his reaction to this stunning development.

The assassination of a Canadian on Canadian soil is just a total affront to Canada's sovereignty, to international law, to the norms in which we assume countries, especially countries that build themselves as democracy, should behave. Mr Trudeau said that he had raised this issue with the Indian leader Narendra Modi at the recent G20 summit in Delhi. A former Premier of British

Columbia and Canadian Minister of Health, Ujjal Desanj, said the Prime Minister should have given more information in his statement to Parliament. He should have made public the evidence that they have, to the extent they could. Now, I'm assuming that they couldn't make any evidence public without garnishing the rest of the evidence. It puts a damper on an international relationship, which is already in cold storage for some time. The US, Britain and Australia have all said they're deeply concerned by the Canadian allegations. Our South Asia correspondent, Yugit Lamaye, told us more. That was a pretty explosive allegation made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his Parliament. And what he said, he's hedged that sentence a fair bit.

But what he said is that Canadian intelligence are investigating credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Indian government and the death of Mr Nijjan. And following that, he said that he wants India's full cooperation to investigate this incident fully. And if it poses a really serious allegation that India would have done something on foreign territory, committed an act of violence on foreign territory, following that we also had Canada expel a senior Indian diplomat. Just at the core of these allegations is Mr Nijjan, who was shot dead by two unidentified gunmen on the 18th of June. Mr Nijjan was a prominent Sikh leader. He publicly campaigned for a separate homeland for Sikhs in the Punjab region of India. And India has had big problems with anyone saying that and has been taking it up with Canada as well and the relations. But being these two countries have been strained, we saw that during the G20 summit ties extremely

frosty. Justin Trudeau didn't attend the president's dinner for all of the diplomats and all of the delegates. But this, you know, it's taken another severe turn today. And India is strongly refuting these allegations. Yes, I mean, as you said, they've called them absurd and motivated. They've also

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said that this is Canada's attempt to shift focus from long standing concerns that India has been raising that people who live within the territory of Canada are talking about separatism and campaigning

for a separate state within the territory of India. And this challenges the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India and also reacting to the expulsion of the Indian diplomat from Canada. India then summoned the Canadian High Commissioner and a senior Canadian diplomat has also been

expelled. He's had he has five days to leave the country. And in that statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in India has said they've got growing concerns about the interference of Canadian diplomats in what they describe as anti India activities. And this all comes at a time when Western nations have been wooing India as a counterweight to China. What are the repercussions of this likely to be for Delhi? So well, we've had a statement from the National Security Council of the White House saying that they're extremely concerned about these allegations. Justin Trudeau mentioned that he has shared this with allies without stating exactly who. India has also been discussing these matters with the UK because you know, there've also been instances in the UK of public campaigns for a separate Sikh homeland. At the moment it's unclear, as you said, because

of India's growing prominence on the global stage. Yugita Limaye. A ship carrying grain has left Ukrainian port on the Black Sea for the first time since the collapse of a UN-backed deal with Russia.

Grain from both countries is crucial to global food supplies and the deal had helped to slow rising food prices. Kyiv says it's created a humanitarian corridor to allow the movement of ships. But Russia says any vessels travelling out of Ukraine could be treated as military targets. Our Ukraine correspondent James Waterhouse sent this report. It's clear that both Kyiv and the shipping companies and the shipping insurers are keen to take risks still. The site of resilient Africa making her way out with 3,000 tons of Ukrainian grain is quite a site given the environment that surrounds this vessel. We have mine infested seas, we have the Russian navy which still exerts dominance. But it's also important to reiterate that this isn't the grain deal of the year-long agreement which allowed Ukraine to export two-thirds of what it once did, 30 million tons of grain or so. We're talking about two vessels making this route out of Ukraine in as many months. So it really is a fraction of what Ukraine is able to do. But it's interesting that I think Kyiv wants to make a bit of a statement here. It's announced this corridor without any buy-in from Russia, without any ability to enforce this corridor or police it themselves because of the dominance that Russia currently enjoys. And yet it's willing to test those boundaries. We saw a cargo vessel that was trapped on the coast make its way out last month. That was intercepted by Russian forces. They boarded it via helicopter and carried out an inspection. But that vessel ultimately made its way through. And what we've learned with this grain corridor is that it's about confidence. And I think what Ukraine is hoping is if enough vessels make it out without a hitch then more will follow and it will both help its faltering economy and also address the lingering threat of a global food crisis with Ukraine being one of the world's major suppliers of the stuff. So this is a statement but it's incredibly early days and I think any hopes of Russia either coming back to the table or trying to resurrect this deal remain slim because of what is happening in this war where we have Russia getting bogged down on the

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battlefield

and where the Kremlin is continuing to hammer Ukrainian ports and infrastructure with missile strikes. So it's a very strange juxtaposition to see this vessel make its way out but it's made its way out nevertheless. James Waterhouse. Astronaut Frank Rubio has broken the US record for the longest

space mission. This time next week the US Army veteran will have been on board the International Space Station for a year. His stay was extended because of a technical problem. Rubio himself has described the experience as psychologically a little bit of a challenge. The retired NASA astronaut Nikol Stott told my colleague Rob Young how it feels to live and work in space.

I imagine there's probably a range of feelings and I don't know the experience up there is wonderful. I mean in the end I think when he reflects on it there will be gratitude for having that amount of time in that place where everything we're doing up there and this international partnership like none we've ever seen before is ultimately about improving life on Earth. I just wonder the longer you spend up there does that no doubt initially spectacular view of Earth just become something every day and humdrum? I don't think so and you know I worried about that before I flew was like wow am I just going to fly by the window and think eh you know there's Earth but it did not. It surprises you every time you look at the window. I think you are drawn to it in a way that maybe is just part of us being human and knowing that that's our planetary home and you want to be in a window just sucking it in and I can tell you I found myself there and I'm I'm betting Frank is even more and more now looking at it like you know just wow having to set the alarm to remind myself to go back to work because how it is just such a transcendent feeling. And when you're up there in that weightlessness for a very long period of time what happens to your muscles did you have to work out to maintain your strength?

Absolutely we work out two hours a day a maybe two hours a day you know I came back in better shape than I was before I left because two hours a day to work out but it's absolutely necessary for us to do that and it's why the scientists love us up there as kind of the human subject is we're essentially in an accelerated aging process and so every system in our body is impacted in some way certainly muscles and bone are one of the most obvious things that that we can measure very quickly and see and it's pretty impressive how fast we can lose bone and muscle like almost right off the bat because your brain and your body figures out hey I don't need bones and muscle to be a floaty person you know moving around in three dimensions without any load on my body. And what's the food like after a time does it get a bit boring? You know there's it's very different to how we eat down here it's all packaged well I don't know some of us might eat that way but it's all it's just flavored you know it's not it's it's food that comes back to life when you add water to it and what I loved about the way we eat on the station is that there's food from all of the international partners on board and I don't know I love the Japanese curries and even there's a local chocolate shop that my husband had some delicious chocolate covered ginger sent to us so nice variety. Retired NASA astronaut Nikol Stott giving us an insight into life in space. Still to come on the global news podcast. People lying back on mattresses reading books I've heard people at these competitions saying that they have parties but they dance lying down. Why people in Montenegro are competing for the title of the laziest citizen.

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I had just come out of one of my bare knuckle boxing matches I don't know why but the first thing that came to my brain was what if I do a drag show. Remarkable personal stories told by the people that lived them. I could easily have pulled that trigger but that was not my brief I was not an assassin I was not told to do that I was not told to murder him. Lives less ordinary from the BBC World Service. Find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts. Welcome back to the global news podcast

since taking over the social media platform X formerly known as Twitter last year Elon Musk has tried to incentivize users to pay for an enhanced service that's failed to take off as Mr Musk had hoped with the company losing some of the advertising revenue it relies on amid accusations that he's presided over a surge in anti-semitic content. In a meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the billionaire has now suggested that all users of X may have to pay to

use the service saying that this was the only way to get rid of fake accounts. I say the single most important reason that we're moving to having a small monthly payment for use of the X system is it's the only way I can think of to combat vast armies of bots. But some on X have joked that after having paid too much for the platform Mr Musk now wants to make users do the same. So how seriously should we take his remarks about a possible paywall? I've been speaking to our business reporter Monica Miller. It's questionable whether this was a comment that was made off the

cuff or maybe this is something that is part of his bigger plan. One thing that he has had a very hard time doing since taking it over is making any money off of it. When you look at what social media platforms like Alphabet make or Meta in YouTube you know they have seen their ad revenue start to skyrocket. But really X formerly known as Twitter has really had a hard time to make a go of it. So one option he has is to monetize it. There is a premium plan which is worth about eight US dollars and you get a couple extra things but a lot of people scoffed at the idea of having to pay for something that was already free and Mr Musk is a big proponent of free speech. So there's a lot of risk that would come with this if it happens. Absolutely because it could drive users away and he could lose even more advertising revenue. Indeed in fact a lot of advertising firms are already on the fence about this because you would lose a bunch of free eyeballs essentially and users who have this. But many people have been turned off by some of Mr Musk's political statements and find that this has become in some people's words a very toxic place for discussion and have been looking elsewhere. So really advertisers especially people who say sell bread and butter goods aren't really this isn't is in a place that they want to do business. And it's interesting that he chose to speak out in a forum with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu because there's been a lot of controversy over soaring anti-semitism on X and in fact Mr Musk has threatened to sue a group that raised this issue.

Indeed the platform that has been accused by the prominent anti-defamation league which is Jewish organization they have said that Mr Musk has not done enough to stop anti-semitic content and Mr Musk has said that he is against anti-semitism which he said in front of President Netanyahu during their live stream. But Mr Musk has also been criticized for all kinds of things including saying some rather derogatory things against George Soros. Now Mr. Not Netanyahu had said that he accepted that Mr Musk basically has a hard thing to balance here between free speech and content moderation and that really it's a challenge that he urged Mr Musk to strike right.

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And a lot of critics say that the simple problem is that Mr Musk overpaid he paid more than \$40 billion to buy Twitter as it was then X as it is now. What do we know about the state of X's finances right now? I do remember when our colleague James Clayton did sit down with Elon Musk and had asked

him about that and one of the things that Mr Musk had pointed out was that you know when you went into this he had absolutely no idea how saddled and dead it was and that there were some real structural issues and one of the things he did was he had massive layoffs you know as he tried to write the ship. Where it stands now you know we haven't heard very much lately they did bring on a new chief to kind of deal with the day to day because Mr Musk had been you know seen by

many people as being distracted from some of his other his enterprises and they have tried many different things and maybe this is the new thing that will actually make them make some money. Yeah do you think it could work? I was just having a discussion with someone that said you know look

it sounds crazy that you would have to have someone pay for something they've had free for all this time but yet again if X does it well does that mean that Facebook will do it or other free social media platforms will do it. You just never know it might be crazy enough I did a work. Monica Miller some of Spain's female footballers are still insisting that they're boycotting the national team despite the appointment of its first female manager. 15 members of the World Cup winning team were

included in the squad but not Jenny Amoso who was kissed by the then Spanish FA boss Luis Rubiales.

Following weeks of controversy he finally resigned but despite this several players say they do not yet feel in a safe place. This comes as the England captain and Arsenal player Leah Williamson is due to address the UN in New York to appeal for a level playing field for women and girls to take part in sport around the world. She told my colleague Nick Robinson how the invitation came about. Recently I went to visit a program that Arsenal run with sabre children called coaching for life at my Syrian refugee camp in Jordan in Zattery and yeah I've come to talk about it talk about what I saw and who I met and how I think we need to help them and what I think our responsibility is to them. You believe I think that football has a power to liberate girls to liberate women to improve their lives. I do I think it's one of the easiest things to get involved in it only has benefits for the person involved and I think naturally it's it is one of those things that we've been previously banned and told that we shouldn't be involved in so I think every time a woman steps out to do that she's demonstrating bravery and determination to change what she's always sort of been dealt. So what did you see what did you hear in that Syrian refugee camp that convinced you it made a difference? When the program started five years ago they were in singular figures of the amount of girls involved and now we have an equal number of boys and girls in the program which I think in a social environment such as that is incredible may have self-confidence they have the bravery to express what they believe in and encourage themselves and each other to think on their own and make their own future instead of being dictated by the men in society and amongst all the despair whilst we try and figure out how to help people I think football gives us hope and I think it's about looking after the human being whilst we try and change the circumstances of which they live. That image overshadowed the

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women's world cup sadly for many the image of that kiss by the Spanish FA president for you was it a reminder of how far we have to go? It's the exact kind of thing that drives me to be here today and protect but also to facilitate and figure out how we create a future a safe future for women and young girls to be whoever they want to be and if they want to use sport to do that then yeah they need an environment that welcomes them and is safe for them to do that. And have you ever encountered

maybe years ago attitudes like that? It would be rare to find somebody of my generation that hasn't and they're still about today so the fight is long from over but I think where we've maybe confused resilience with conditioned and conditioned behavior I choose now to be resilient

I will not continue to accept the behavior that we've been conditioned to believe we're only right to. There is no real reason for any young girl to not be involved in football that's what it stems from and that's what we all face to get where we are today so whilst I'm on the platform that I'm on I will try and make it an easier future for anyone coming after me. England and Arsenal footballer Leah Williamson. Now imagine being able to win a thousand dollars just by staying in bed as the prize on offer at Montenegro's laziest citizen competition where contestants have now broken the previous record of 24 days. Our Balkans correspondent Guy Deloni told us more.

This has now been running for 12 years this competition and it's an effort to mock regional stereotypes by embracing them if you will and it's been set up by the owner of a small holiday camp in the village of Donia Brezna. This is a woman called Rodoina Blagojevic. She was tired of this particular stereotype that gets repeated around the western Balkans that of all the different countries and peoples in the former Yugoslavia that Montenegrins are the laziest of the lot.

How did this stereotype come about? It's pervasive let's put it that way. When I spoke to my son about this who is not in any way of this region but lives here and he just laughed and he said well everyone knows that Montenegrins are lazy so you don't have to be from this region to have heard the

stereotype and when the prime minister of Montenegro Dritana Bazovic was at the Bled Strategic Forum here in Slovenia last month he described Montenegro as a country of sun and fun to much laughter from the audience and the other regional leaders on the panel. You know this is the kind of stereotype that's been going around for ages and used to have this in Yugoslavia. If Montenegrins were lazy Bosnians were idiots and Slovenians were cheap that was the kind of stereotype that was put around. There's even the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek says this was evidence of a healthy society that people were self-deprecating about their regional characteristics. These days it feels rather less like that. Well there's certainly being humorous about it so tell us how this contest works. So you've just got to lie back and think of Montenegro and that's it all you've got to do and I'm sure you can find the images online people lying back on mattresses reading books some of them doing

very subtle little exercises while they're lying down just to make sure that limbs don't fall off or anything like that but basically you're not allowed to sit or stand up you're only allowed to go for a toilet break once every eight hours. I've heard people at these competitions saying that they have parties but they dance lying down and I have to tell you it's not as onerous as it used to be. When this first started 12 years ago the rule was there was no getting up no going to the toilet so it was really about who had the strongest bladder rather than who was the laziest. It's not just Montenegro's taking part in this I think it could catch on in quite a lot of countries

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couldn't it? As the fame of the competition has spread internationally it's attracted international competitors from countries like Russia and Ukraine but I have to tell you that the favourite for this year's competition I've heard on the grapevine is a 21 year old man from Serbia and he's one of five contestants now remaining as it goes into its second month. Guide alorning now one woman who certainly wouldn't win the laziest citizen title is Katy Perry. The singer may have set a new record for this year after selling a bundle of her back catalog for a reported \$225 million. Stephanie Prentice has the details. The cherry chapstick celebrating anthem I kissed a girl that put Katy Perry on the map as a global pop star back in 2008 and is now part of the bundle sold to the highest bidder and the highest bidder is said to have deep pockets with multiple sources saying the sale topped \$225 million. The deal included her hugely popular second single from the one of the boys album as well as the four other albums she released with capital records.

Yes that means the multi-platinum firework is in there

and her much celebrated ode to young love along with 14 other multi-platinum hits.

It's reportedly the biggest catalog deal for a single artist this year and means the buyer litmus music on the master recordings and publishings and can collect any future royalties.

The deal means Katy trumps Justin Bieber. He sold his back catalog in January for a smaller amount a mere \$200 million. Selling music rights has become big business in recent years with artists like Bob Dylan, Neil Young and Shakira swapping their royalties for nine figure payouts.

All in a day's work for the ultimate California girl.

The address is globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk. You can also find us on X, formally known as Twitter, at Global NewsPod. This edition was mixed by Vladimir Muzechka, the producer with Shantel Hartle, the editor is Karen Martin. Until next time, goodbye.