

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / BBC ends stand-off with Gary Lineker after impartiality row

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by advertising. Hi, Namulanta Combo here and I'm excited to tell you that my award-winning podcast,

Dear Daughter, is back for a second season and it's available now. Find out more at the end of this podcast. This is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Janet Jaleel and at 14 hours GMT on Monday the 13th of March, these are our main stories. The BBC ends a standoff with

its star presenter, Gary Lineker, that plunged the organization's sports coverage into chaos, but denies that it's a climb down. President Biden tries to reassure Americans that the banking system will hold up despite last week's collapse of Silicon Valley Bank. A Japanese man thought to be the world's longest-serving death row inmate is granted a retrial. Also in this podcast, the wacky sci-fi comedy Everything Everywhere All At Once wins seven Oscars, including best actress

for Michelle Yeoh. For all the little boys and girls who look like me watching tonight, dream big and dreams do come true. We start this podcast with a crisis that erupted here at the BBC over the weekend, but now seems to have been resolved. The corporation's highest paid presenter, Gary Lineker, has reached a deal to return to his job. Three days after the BBC announced, it was suspending him for criticising the British government's asylum policy. That plunged the BBC's sports coverage here in the UK into chaos for 48 hours as other presenters, commentators and pundits

walked out in solidarity, some calling it an I am Sportacus moment. That led to the BBC's director-general Tim Davy rushing back from the US for talks to resolve the crisis. Our correspondent,

David Tolito, asked Mr Davy if the deal he'd struck with Gary Lineker was a climb down.

I don't think so. I think I've always said we need to take proportionate action. There's never been an easy solution, but asking Gary to step back off air was, I think, a significant thing.

And now we look forward with this agreement moving forward.

Sounds like kicking the can down the road. Has Gary Lineker agreed to stop tweeting about politics, which is what you asked on Friday? What we've agreed is that between now and when the review reports, Gary will abide by the editorial guidelines. You said this was your foundational issue, impartiality. This was a line in the sand. It just seems to have been a bit of disruption to match the day and you just abandoned it. I think it was a very big moment in terms of us saying we have to take stock here. We have to take action. We did take action, which we thought was proportionate. Having said that, I think you have to look at the balance here and act fairly. I think people across the BBC are all very passionate about our standing as an impartial broadcaster. I want to fight for a BBC where we can have proper, calm debate, facilitate free speech. There are many people and all they see here is a Conservative Director-General and a Conservative Chairman bowing to pressure from Conservative MPs and the Conservative press. Anyone who knows me knows that, yes, 30 years ago, some political involvement, but absolutely not affected by pressure from one party or the other. That is not how we work editorially in the BBC. The impartiality guidelines would be equally applied in terms of

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being people critical of the left or the right. The issue is getting involved in party political matters and we apply that independently. The BBC Director-General, Tim Davy. Our reporter, Charlotte Gallagher, is following the story. Mr Davy said there that it's not a climb down by the BBC, but for many people that's exactly what it looks like. A lot of people will say that. A lot of people are already saying that on social media and I'm sure many of the newspapers in the UK will be saying that. Tim Davy made a really big point by suspending the BBC's biggest star, the BBC's highest paid star, just a few days ago and then complete disarray followed in terms of the schedules. Football programmes were either cancelled like they were on World Service, some of them, or they were significantly shortened. So now we're in this situation where Gary Lineker will be back on the BBC after just a few days. Tim Davy is saying it's not a climb down, but to many people that will be what it looks like. Gary Lineker is still tweeting as well. He's basically not going to tweet anything party political, that's what we've understand at this point, but he has already tweeted about refugees and the plight that many of them face. So I think this isn't a row that's going to go away immediately. I think it's going to be something that's talked about and of course there's going to be this review now into what particularly freelancers at the BBC who work in sport and entertainment can say on social media because the Gary Lineker case has highlighted other presenters, former politicians in fact, who present on the BBC very vocal in their opinions but haven't been suspended or censured for what they say. It's also raised questions about how independent the BBC is from government pressure. It has and in fact in the interview our colleague David Silatou did with Tim Davy. He put to him that allegation that Tim Davy was close to the Conservative Party. Himself and Tim Davy said no, that's not the case. We've not bowed to any pressure from the government or right wing newspapers in this country, right wing commentators, but to a lot of people it looks like Gary Lineker was suspended for criticising the government, but we do have this separate situation here at the BBC with the BBC Chairman. His relationship with Boris Johnson, scrutiny over his role in the facilitation of a loan agreement for up to a million dollars, he is still in his role. The BBC says we do not appoint Richard Sharp, we have no power to do anything about that. He is appointed by the government and that is a situation at the moment there's an inquiry about, but the perception outside the BBC is so important because of course people in the United Kingdom, they pay a licence fee, they pay our wages, don't they? So what they think is hugely important and if people do think that some people are being treated differently to others, fairness and trust is what people start to question. Charlotte Gallagher, as we record this podcast, the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank last week is continuing to cause turmoil on the financial markets. Bank stocks have continued to fall despite frantic efforts at the weekend to shore up the banking system and assurances from US regulators that customers at SVB will get back all the money they deposited there. Just before we recorded this podcast, the US President Joe Biden gave a statement to underline this message. Every American should feel confident that their deposits will be there if and when they need them. Second, the management of these banks will be fired. If the bank is taken over by FDIC, the people running the bank should not work there anymore. Third, investors in the banks will not be protected. They knowingly took a risk and when the risk didn't pay off, investors lose their money. That's how capitalism works. And fourth, there are important questions of how these banks got into the circumstance in the first place. We must get the full accounting of what

happened and why those responsible can be held accountable. Here in the UK, a rescue deal has been agreed for the HSBC bank to buy the UK arm of SVB for just over a dollar. Our business correspondent, Nick Marsh, told us more. An awful lot has happened over the past few days. Basically, it started around Thursday or Friday last week when Silicon Valley Bank basically saw a run on its deposits. The bank was trying to scramble to fill a multi-billion-dollar hole in its finances, kind of triggered by the tightening up of interest rates that we've seen from the US Fed recently. And its customers tried to withdraw a total of \$42 billion. Now, these customers are startups, tech startups in the US. And there was a real fear that this bank was going to collapse and we'd see a horrible kind of contagion like we saw back in 2008. In the end, regulators stepped in. They took control of the assets of Silicon Valley Bank. And the big question then was, well, are customers going to be able to get their hands on their money? What happens if they don't? We now know that the US Treasury has assured customers that they will be able to get their money. And crucially, it won't be the taxpayer, the US taxpayer that's going to be funding this. There's not going to be the kind of bailout that we saw back in 2008 that made people so angry that ordinary taxpayers were having to make up for what they saw as the mistakes or misjudgments of big wealthy banks. This money is going to come out of an insurance deposit fund. All big banks, they pay into it for this exact eventuality. There's about \$100 billion in this fund and the total amount that customers have been trying to withdraw recently is \$42 billion. So there is enough there. And there's also been a rescue deal agreed in the UK with the big bank HSBC stepping in. Is this enough, do you think? Yeah. So this is the UK arm of SVB. They've got kind of subsidiaries all around the world over in China, UK as well. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, the Finance Minister for Britain has basically said, look, don't panic. It's okay. HSBC have stepped in. They've bought SVB's UK arm for a pound. And that means that the money is safe.

So similar to what we saw on the other side of the Atlantic, we have the authorities, officials in the UK saying, you will be able to get your money if you're a customer of SVB and it won't be a bailout. So now it's HSBC who are going to be administering this kind of dispersal of funds from SVB. Nick Marsh. India's Supreme Court has referred petitions on legalising same sex marriages to a constitutional bench consisting of five judges. The court observed that it was an issue of seminal importance and the judgment would have a huge bearing on society. The proceedings

starting from the 18th of April will be live-streamed on the court's website and YouTube. Barbara Plattuscher reports. The Supreme Court decriminalised gay sex five years ago. Now it's hearing petitions from same sex couples who want their unions to be legally recognised. The court will also consider the position of the government which opposes such a move. In a filing on Sunday, the administration said same sex marriage was incompatible with the Indian family unit which consisted of a husband and wife and their children. So the petitioners could not claim it as a fundamental right. Homosexuality has long carried a stigma in India's traditional society, although acceptance of gay couples has been growing in recent years. If India legalises same sex marriage, it would become only the second country in Asia to do so after Taiwan. Barbara Plattuscher. He was sentenced to hang for the murders of a couple and their children more than 50 years ago. Now an 87-year-old Japanese man, thought to be the world's longest-serving

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / BBC ends stand-off with Gary Lineker after impartiality row

death row inmate, has been granted a retrial. Iwao Hakamada's conviction was based on a confession

he gave after 20 days of interrogation and which she later retracted. His sister, Haidiko, who's 90 years old, has long campaigned for justice for her brother. She spoke of her joy that this day had come. Thank you everyone. The retrial has been ordered. I'm so happy. I've been waiting for this day for 57 years and it has finally come. Finally a weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I really thank you. Our correspondent in Tokyo, Shai Mikhail, told us how this man came to be incarcerated for so long. Iwao Hakamada was originally granted a retrial in 2014. A district court back then had accepted that the DNA tests indicated that the blood on items of clothing believed to had been worn by the killer was not that of Mr. Hakamada's. At the time he was freed from jail, but then that decision for retrial was overturned. In 2020, the Supreme Court here in Japan then ordered a Tokyo High Court to

reconsider that decision, mainly citing the unreliability of the evidence. And today the High Court has finally granted him that retrial. His lawyers and family had always maintained his innocence and that the evidence they claim was fabricated. Today they could be seen holding banners saying retrials and supporters outside the court said free Hakamada. Now his sister, whose his only caretaker, his older sister at 90 years old, said I've been working hard for this day for about 57 years and it had finally come. He is out of jail, although we do know that his mental health has deteriorated quite significantly after these decades in jail. And as you say he had originally confessed after 20 days of interrogation, but retracted that confession claiming that he'd been beaten to give that confession. So it's taken all this time to get this retrial. A lot of people will be asking how has this been allowed to happen? Tell us more about Japan's justice system and how this could have happened. Well this has been a big point of contention really for rights groups, especially Amnesty International, who've been following that case. But Japan's justice system relies largely on confessions from suspects and the main complaint, if you will, or the main point of contention for rights groups have been the conditions under which these confessions are obtained. They cite long hours of interrogation, lack of access to lawyers, physical mistreatment as reasons why suspects end up confessing to these crimes that they haven't committed, but then some of them like Hakamada then retract. And it's also important to note that Japan is the only major democracy industrialised democracy other than the United States that still uses capital punishment.

Shima Khalil in Tokyo. To the Oscars now, Michelle Yeoh has become the first Asian to win Best Actress. She was recognised for her role in the multiverse adventure Everything Everywhere All At Once, which dominated Sunday night's awards in Los Angeles.

From Hollywood, Sophie Long said this report.

Welcome to the 95th Oscars.

Presenter Jimmy Kimmel parachuted in, literally, to start the show and made much of the fact he was one of the few still brave enough to host the Academy Awards, with a warning.

And if any of you get mad at a joke and decide you want to come up here and get jiggy with it, it's not going to be easy. There are a few of my friends who are going to have to get through first. Mrs. Wang, are you with us? I am paying attention.

The night belonged to Everything Everywhere All At Once, which took home seven Oscars,

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / BBC ends stand-off with Gary Lineker after impartiality row

including Best Picture and three of the four main acting awards.

And the Oscar goes to Michelle Yeoh.

Michelle Yeoh beat two-time Oscar winner Kate Blanchett to Best Actress for her role as a middle-aged woman with a struggling business in marriage, becoming the first Asian woman to win the award. For all the little boys and girls who look like me watching tonight.

Dream big and dreams do come true. And ladies, don't let anybody tell you you are ever past your prime.

The best supporting actor Oscar went to Ki Hui Kwan, who played Yeoh's husband in the film.

My journey started on a boat. I spent a year in a refugee camp. I cannot believe it's happening to me. This is the American dream. And Jamie Lee Curtis, who played their tax-inspecting nemesis in the film, won Best Supporting Actress, her first Oscar at the age of 64 in a career that spanned many genres and decades. To all of the people who have supported the genre movies that I have made for all these years, the thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, we just won an Oscar together. Everything everywhere all at once also took Best Director, or Directors, for the duo known as the Daniels, Daniel Kwan and Daniel Shineout.

Thank you. Oh, God, guys. My imposter syndrome is at an all-time high.

All quite on the Western Front, lost out to everything everywhere for Best Picture, but it won four Oscars, including Best International Film and Best Cinematography for James Friend, who brought some British self-deprecation to his speech.

Thank you for everything, my entire crew who made this happen for me and made me look better than

I am. And the Oscar goes to Navalny. It was in large part the non-political feel-good show the organisers had hoped for, but Julia Navalny made a brief speech after the Oscar for Best Documentary was awarded to the makers of the film about her husband, the incarcerated Russian opposition leader. My husband is in prison just for telling the truth. My husband is in prison just for defending democracy. Stay strong, my love. Thank you.

It was a disappointing night for the Irish film *The Banshees of Inner Sharon*.

Despite nine nominations, none of them had cause to take to the stage.

Elvis also ultimately left the building empty-handed.

That report by Sophie Long.

Coming up in this podcast. I didn't choose the story of handicapped son to write about it. My son chose me. The Japanese author Kenzaburo Oe, who's moving writing about his disabled son won him a Nobel Prize, has died at the age of 88.

The Taliban have begun a nationwide polio vaccination campaign for children under the age of five. The goal is to inoculate nearly 10 million Afghan children from the disease.

The four-day campaign will be supported by international aid agencies, despite the Taliban's past attempts to stop them employing women.

Our South Asia editor, Ambrasa Netirajan, has been speaking to the Taliban about the campaign and told us more about what they're planning. This is the second time since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021. There has been a nationwide such a huge campaign is being organized against polio and the vaccinators will go door to door in administering this vaccine to millions of children. The numbers are quite huge. We're talking about nearly 10 million children.

And why Afghanistan is important? Because Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only two

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / BBC ends stand-off with Gary Lineker after impartiality row

remaining countries in the world where the wild polio virus is still endemic.

And that's why the international agencies like the UNICEF and the World Health Organization, they've all been supporting the Taliban administration in providing this vaccination and help. It's not only about providing material, it is also about sending these vaccinators to different parts of the country. I was in touch with the Taliban Health Ministry spokesman Spokesperson a short while ago, and he said more than half the vaccinators were women. So it is a confirmation that they allowed some of these women to go and work for various NGOs who are now administering these vaccines.

I was going to ask you about that because of the ban that the Taliban had imposed on women working

and obviously they need women in order to access women in remote rural areas.

But there's also suspicion in the region isn't there about polio vaccines given the way that Osama bin Laden was killed more than a decade ago?

In fact, even when the Taliban, they were fighting against the previous Afghan government.

They had banned these polio vaccination campaign in areas under the control because some Muslim clerics, they feel that it is a conspiracy to sterilize Muslims. On the other hand,

some of these slimmest groups were of the opinion that it was a Western ploy, a CIA-backed ploy to spy on many of these slimmest groups. And that is why the suspicion lingered. In fact, there have been a number of attacks on these polio vaccination teams over the years. Last year in Afghanistan itself, eight polio vaccination workers were killed by some insurgent groups even though it was in the during the Taliban administration. So there is suspicion lingers among

some of the areas in Pakistan and in Afghanistan.

I'm Brasan Etirajan. Now to the war in Ukraine. Russia and Ukraine both say intense fighting is continuing as Moscow's forces attempt to seize the centre of the devastated Ukrainian city of Bakhmut. The commander of Ukraine's ground forces says his troops are inflicting significant losses on attacking Russian forces. Meanwhile, people in the southern city of Mariupol are remembering those killed by Russian missiles targeting a maternity hospital there one year ago. You may remember the city on the shores of the Black Sea that was almost entirely destroyed in the following months, with thousands of its residents killed and many more displaced by relentless shelling. Well, a year on, the BBC has found that Russian authorities have begun to rebuild infrastructure and services in Mariupol. This is what one pensioner there said.

They're rebuilding schools. There's one right next to my house. It's so beautiful. It's covered in multi-coloured squares. They've put a per fence around it so that the area can be guarded. It's all just how it's supposed to be. Children go to school in two shifts because there's a shortage of classrooms. But the construction is ongoing. That's what I can see. And they pay pensions too. Other residents of Mariupol, though, told the BBC that the reconstruction effort will not erase memories of what happened last year.

If they destroy 10 hospitals and then rebuild one, this isn't reconstruction.

It's not something they can be thanked for. It's a war crime. When Russia surrounded Mariupol, prohibited the civilian population from living and bombed residential areas, it's not a matter of gratitude. It's a destruction of people in the city itself.

You can be happy as much as you like about a school being rebuilt. But what do you do with the thousands of people Russia has killed? You can't rebuild them. You can't bring them back.

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / BBC ends stand-off with Gary Lineker after impartiality row

Vitaliy Shevchenko is the Russia editor at BBC Monitoring and the presenter of our sister podcast Ukrainecast. He told us what the Russians are doing to rebuild Mariupol.

Well, they're spending huge amounts of money. I've been able to speak to three people who are still in Mariupol. The picture they've painted is that of a massive reconstruction campaign. The buildings that were damaged beyond repair are being pulled down. The buildings that are repairable are being repaired. One told me that radiators and windows are being replaced in those buildings. Schools, hospitals are operating. The ones that have not been destroyed. Electricity is back, running water is back, heating is back, buses are back, but not trolleybuses or trams. This is a kind of normality that residents of Mariupol are seeing. They told me that they've come to really treasure it because if you think about the fact that up to 90% of residential buildings were damaged in Mariupol, that's according to the UN, it's a vastly devastated city. The last

thing they want to see is war to break out again. How much of the original population of Mariupol is still there? And of people who had lived in the city previously gone back?

Well, it's hard to say. Again, the UN says that 350,000 people were forced to leave the city because of the fighting. And we're talking about a city of almost half a million people.

Now, the Russian-installed authorities are now saying that about 200,000 people are there, so less than half of the population that used to live there. And also, and this is significant, they say 70,000 people who are in Mariupol now are construction workers that have come from Russia and Central Asia and also members of the Russian military. So this gives us an idea of how important it is for Russia to rebuild Mariupol and to show that we can rebuild as well as destroy. And also, there seems to be a massive effort to assimilate Mariupol and make it more difficult for Ukraine to take it back. And how they're doing it, locals are under pressure to receive Russian passports, without which it's almost impossible to find formal employment to get a job.

And also to travel. If you don't have a Russian passport, you are subjected to invasive and pretty humiliating checks. You get a Russian one, you can travel. And also, the Ukrainian currency, the Hryvnia, is out. It's not accepted in the shops. You can only buy stuff using Russian rubles. So the bottom line is that Russia is really keen to make Mariupol its own.

Vitaly Shevchenko. The Nobel Prize-winning Japanese writer Kenzaburo Oe has died at the age of 88.

He was a major figure in contemporary Japanese literature, but remained relatively little known outside Japan until he won the Nobel in 1994. Our arts correspondent, Vincent Doud, looks back on his career. At university in post-war Tokyo, Kenzaburo Oe studied French literature. France and the US would remain lifelong influencers on his own writing. The first novel came when he was 23, but it wouldn't be translated into English until the 1990s. And for many years, Oe's international reputation was slow to build. In 1963, his son Hikari was born with brain damage and disability recurred as a theme in his work. Kenzaburo Oe said the job of a writer was to respond to the world about him.

We must respond to our time. I didn't choose the story of handicapped son or we didn't choose the same of handicapped boy's family to write about it. My son chose me.

When in 1994 he won the Nobel Prize, his name was not familiar outside Japan. The citation said his work created a world where life and myth condensed to form a disconcerting picture

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / BBC ends stand-off with Gary Lineker after impartiality row

of the human predicament today. Oe turned down Japan's order of culture because it was in the gift of the emperor. I do not recognize any authority higher than democracy, he said.

Kenzaburo Oe's work was shaped by political events in Japan, but in books such as *A Personal Matter*

and *30 Years Later, A Healing Family*, he also wrote movingly of his love for his disabled son.

Vincent Dowd looking back on the life of Kenzaburo Oe who's died at the age of 88.

Today is Commonwealth Day and it will be marked by a special ceremony here in London at Westminster

Abbey. The service will be attended by many senior members of the Royal Family including of course King Charles who heads the Commonwealth, an association of 54 countries including the UK.

The ceremony is certain to include some magnificent music including from the all-female

choir from Cyprus, the Amalgamation Choir, who've been invited to attend. It was first established in 2014 by musician Osiliki Anastasio who now conducts the choir. They visited our

studios with 14 other members to sing and speak about their music with my colleague Lis De Set. We sing mostly songs from Cyprus but we also like to explore and sing songs from the

Mediterranean

area. So you sang us a beautiful song, tell me about it. What is the meaning or the message of this song? The song is about a famous fountain in the village of Bella in Paphos and it talks about how although the water the fountain might be dirty the women that drink from that fountain are very beautiful. It says whoever has pain in their heart can go and drink from that fountain and heal. So it's a hopeful song. It's a very hopeful song, yes.

You've traveled to London, 15 of you, 15 singers plus you, the conductor, and you're going to perform at Westminster Abbey. King Charles will be there to mark Commonwealth Day.

You're smiling. This is quite exciting. Yes, it's very exciting. It's the first time we will be singing in such a big prestigious event so we're all really excited to be here.

Are you nervous? I am very nervous. So what do you say to your sisters, your singing sisters, to make them relax before this really important occasion? We had a talk last night and we've discussed how this music, the song that we're singing is the vehicle for us to give a little taste of our culture and of the sound colours that we've been raised and we have in Cyprus.

That was the Almald Gay Mation Choir there and their founder and conductor, Vasiliki Anastasio, talking to Lis du Sette.

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, you can send us an email.

The address is globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk. You can also find us on Twitter at Global NewsPod.

This edition was mixed by Stuart Willey, the producer was Tracy Gordon, the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Jeanette Jaleel. Until next time, goodbye.

And more letters of advice for daughters everywhere.

We're touching upon more of the universal themes that made the first season such a success. From dealing with loss.

To making peace with turning into your mother.

It's the second chapter in a handbook for life for daughters around the world.

And it's available now. That's dear daughter from the BBC World Service.

Dear daughter.

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