

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.

If you're listening to this podcast, you must recognize the value of asking questions.

At Aramco, our questions help us engineer a better future. How can today's resources fuel are shared tomorrow? How can we deliver energy to a world that can't stop? How can we deliver one of the fuels of the future? How can we sow curiosity to harvest ingenuity?

To learn more about how innovation drives us forward, visit [aramco.com slash powered by how](https://aramco.com/slash-powered-by-how).

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

I'm Alex Ritzen and at 14 hours GMT on Thursday the 16th of March, these are our main stories.

China reacts angrily to US officials demand that TikTok is sold by its Chinese owners as Britain becomes the latest country to ban it from government-issued mobiles.

United Nations investigators condemn Russia for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

Shares in the troubled Credit Swiss bank have rebounded on European markets after Switzerland agreed to provide it with more than \$50 billion in loans.

Also in this podcast. Cricket provides the pretext for the last big social event of the London season and the evening harrow match opens in glorious weather amid elegant fashions.

In London, an attempt to modernise the game of cricket has been overturned.

Britain has banned the use of the video-sharing app TikTok from government employees' mobile devices citing concerns for the security of government data. Oliver Dowden, the minister responsible for cyber security, gave this statement in parliament.

We are also going to ban the use of TikTok on government devices. We will do so with immediate effect. Mr Speaker, this is a precautionary move. We know that there is already limited use of TikTok across government, but it is also good cyber hygiene.

The move follows similar actions taken by the US, Canada and the European Union.

Several governments have expressed concern that the app collects information that could be accessed

by Beijing. TikTok says it's disappointed with the decision. In the United States, TikTok has confirmed to the BBC that its Chinese parent company Byte Dance has been told by the US authorities to sell off its shares in the app or risk a nationwide ban. Wang Wenbin, a spokesman for the foreign ministry in Beijing, accused the United States of being heavy-handed. We have always maintained that the issue of data security shouldn't become a tool for certain countries to abuse national power and unreasonably suppress enterprises in other countries. The United States has so far failed to produce any evidence that TikTok threatens American national security. Around one billion people use TikTok, often youngsters who enjoy sharing videos which are rarely more than a minute long. The company has strongly denied that it hands data to the Chinese government. I spoke to our Asia-Pacific editor Celia Hatton.

Byte Dance has really been fighting the idea that it should divest itself of TikTok. It's been arguing for quite some time now, really, that such a sale wouldn't really solve security concerns around the app. It says really what the United States needs to do is make a national data security protection law. It just doesn't have one in comparison to the United States. Even China has a very strong data security protection law. It says it's really resisting plans to do that.

There are also concerns in the United States, really, about freedom of speech. There are many.

There are some bills waiting in Congress. Several American politicians are hoping to ban TikTok, citing security concerns. There are also many groups who cite freedom of speech, who say an app that's used by more than 100 million people in the United States should not just be swept away just like that. What are they afraid of? Well, there's a few concerns about TikTok. First, of course, TikTok's use of user data. Byte Dance, the Chinese company that owns TikTok, collects more user data than many other social media apps. That data, really, the concern is that because it's a Chinese company, Chinese law demands that any Chinese company must provide data to Beijing to the Chinese authorities, regardless of where that data is stored.

But what is the data there? I mean, it says you like football videos, so what?

Well, it's more than that, actually. In fact, the data is so specific that you can tell whether certain TikTok users are in the same room together at the same time. We know that back in 2022, four Byte Dance employees were fired after they accessed individual user data of US journalists. They were trying to track down the Byte Dance employee that was leaking information to US journalists, and so Byte Dance employees actually tried to access user data. The other issue is there's worries that the Chinese government could, through Byte Dance, manipulate TikTok algorithms

to promote certain videos, to promote certain points of view, and to potentially spread disinformation.

Celia Hatton. The United States has released declassified footage that it says shows the moment a Russian military jet damaged the propeller of one of its surveillance drones, causing it to crash into the Black Sea. The short video shows two extremely close fly pasts by Russian military jets as they dump what the Pentagon says is fuel on the drone.

Here's our Europe regional editor, Danny Aberhardt. The footage filmed from a camera on the drone and lasting just over 40 seconds shows two extremely close fly pasts by Russian fighter jets.

The Pentagon says it's been edited for length, but is sequential. The Russian planes dump what the Pentagon says is fuel on the drone. After the second fly past, the video transmission is disrupted. Subsequent images briefly show that one of the drone's propeller blades appears to have been bent. The footage seems to back up US claims of unsafe, even reckless, actions by the Russian pilots. Russia disputes the US account.

Danny Aberhardt. Soon after President Putin's invasion of Ukraine a year ago, we started receiving horrifying reports of war crimes committed by Russian soldiers. The United Nations Commission of Inquiry has been cataloging these as well as crimes against humanity. It's now published its first report in Geneva from where our correspondent Imogen Folks spoke to me.

Imogen Folks spoke to me. If you wanted to define war crimes under the Geneva Conventions or an international law, Crimes Against Humanity, they're very sadly all documented in this report from indiscriminate attacks on civilians, on basic life-supporting infrastructure like hospitals and power stations, the executing of prisoners of war, torturing, raping, detaining, killing civilians. And the investigators did look at both sides in this conflict, but the crimes were principally concluded to be those of Russia.

Yes, the vast majority of them. Though we should say that the report does identify two specific violations which it suggests Ukrainian forces or some among them have committed. The first is the abuse of prisoners of war. And the second is laying anti-personnel landmines in civilian areas as they retreat from places that the Russians came into occupy. And that this perhaps could be categorized under the indiscriminate use of force,

which could endanger civilians, which of course under the Geneva Conventions all armed forces are to operate with the utmost caution when it comes to putting civilians in harm's way. This UN commission doesn't have the power to prosecute. So what's going to happen to the findings? Well that's the thing. UN commissions of inquiry are basically investigative and for publicity to shine a light on what is going on. And this is the first report. It will be the first of many. It gathers information, including names of people it believes are responsible, and this information can then be shared with bodies which do have the power to prosecute. Imogen folks. Shares in Credit Swiss have bounced back after it announced a rescue plan, which involved borrowing up to 54 billion dollars from Switzerland's central bank to shore up its finances. That relief was evident elsewhere in the markets with London, Frankfurt and Paris all trading higher as banking stocks rebounded after earlier falls in Asia. Today's bounce followed Credit Swiss's shares falling 24% on Wednesday. Our business correspondent Mark Aschdown puts the latest events in perspective. To give you a bit of context how this all came about, Credit Swiss of course, Switzerland's second largest bank. It's 170 years old, but it has been suffering a series of pretty big setbacks in recent years, losing hundreds of millions in the process. This week it said in its annual report it had identified material weaknesses in its internal controls. Now that then led to its largest shareholder, the Saudi National Bank, saying they would not be putting any more money in. Now it must be clear this was because of regulatory reasons. They've maxed out their investment. They didn't want to go over a certain threshold, and they said they still feel it's a very strong bank, but that spooked investors. They're wondering if these troubles can carry on. Where would the money come to help? So it causes a bit of a domino effect really. Once confidence goes, money tends to follow. Investors want to take their money out of stocks and out of the bank. Yesterday the share price fell by about 20%. It was down 30% at one time, which is huge. So overnight the Swiss central bank has stepped in, as you say, injecting billions, billions, 44 billion pounds into help. The bank itself said this was decisive action, and they're also taking other measures to shore things up. The Bank of England here, incidentally, in London says he's monitoring the situation. The longer term fear, well, not even necessarily longer term because time seems to move quite quickly in these situations, but the fear is still that there is a wider issue and there are echoes of the 2008 financial crisis. Well, I think so, yes. I mean, firstly, it does seem to have calmed things today. The FTSE 100 index has recovered a bit. It was down 3.8% yesterday. I mean, that is the largest loss in a day since before the pandemic. So things are stabilizing a bit. And of course, this follows the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank in America as well. But yeah, as you say, the real underlying fear is, are we in the foothills of another banking crisis here from 2008? Again, it's very, very different. A lot of people saying back then, every bank was pretty much exposed to these hidden horrors of bad debts from mortgages. The whole thing collapsed like a house of cards here. Both Silicon Valley Bank and Credit Swiss have their own particular issue. So I think most economists think these are isolated cases that may be just a bit of bad timing. The interesting thing will be to see what the impact is on the rate setters, the big banks like the Federal Reserve in America, the Bank of England and the European Central Bank across Europe. All due, we think, to put interest rates up over the next month. The question will be, do they pause? Do they put it up less than anticipated? And what commentary comes with that? How will they try and calm the markets, calm nerves? I do think the next few days, they will be hoping to, there aren't any more surprises

lurking in other banks. Mark Ashton. Gianni Infantino has been elected for a new term as FIFA president at the organisation's annual congress in the Rwandan capital, Kigali. Mr. Infantino's third term will last until 2027. The Swiss lawyer, who's led football's global governing body since 2016, took over an organisation in turmoil following years of corruption scandals. He's been trying to raise FIFA's profile on the world stage, making it stronger and richer. Alex Kapstik reports. There were a small number of silent dissenters inside the hall in Kigali, but not enough to put a dent in Gianni Infantino's overwhelming popularity among FIFA's members. His election for a second term until 2027 confirmed with a standing ovation. The 52-year-old said he loved his many fans and also the few who hated him. He promised to deliver new and bigger competitions, along with a huge increase in revenues. FIFA is already richer than ever. Infantino suggested that the financial results would guarantee an industry's CEO a job for life. His ambitions for more international football have been met with resistance from Europe, but buoyed by his re-election, it's a battle the widely supported president seems even more willing to take on. Alex Kapstik. Covid vaccines are known to be less effective in older people, but a new study has revealed that the amount of sleep you get around the time of your jab can also have a significant impact on protection levels. The research is published in the journal Current Biology. Our health and science correspondent, James Gallagher, has been taking a look. This is before and after it, so it's in the time around, the time of the injection, and this was a big review of lots of different scientific studies looking at what happens after people have been immunised for flu or for different types of hepatitis, and they were comparing what happens in people with about seven to nine hours sleep a night, so roughly recommended amount of sleep and people were getting less than six, so what we think is too little. And they saw that the amount of antibodies being produced by the immune system and present in the blood was much, much, much lower in people that were getting less than six hours. They noticed the pattern clearly in men, they think it is more confusing to do the analysis in women because monthly hormonal cycles can also affect immune responses, and therefore teasing that apart from the sleep data was too challenging in this study, but they are convinced that it is genuinely happening, and they compared the scale of the decline. So you know, like when we have our COVID jabs, antibodies shoot up inside the bloodstream and then they start to wane over time. It was like having two months worth of waning already baked in it. James Gallagher. Scientists have criticised plans to build the world's first industrial scale octopus farm on the Spanish island of Gran Canaria. The BBC has seen confidential documents that indicate the farm would produce about a million octopuses annually for food. Campaigners have described proposals to slaughter them in icy water as cruel. Spanish multinational behind the plans denies the octopuses will suffer. Claire Marshall has this report. Octopuses are highly complex and until recently it's not been possible to breed them in captivity. Now the Spanish fishing giant Nueva Pescanova says it plans to open the first intensive farm to help supply the growing demand for their meat. Confidential planning proposal documents given to the BBC by the campaign group Eurogroup for Animals show that the octopuses would be kept in communal tanks at times under constant light despite in the wild being solitary and used to the dark. They would be slaughtered by dropping them in tanks of water kept at

minus three degrees. Professor Peter Say from Dartmouth University who opposes the plans says that octopuses are as intelligent as cats and to kill them with ice would be very cruel.

Nueva Pescanova told the BBC that they had high welfare standards and the animals would not suffer.

Claire Marshall. Still to come in the global news podcast. The astronauts will be more comfortable, have an easier time walking, performing tasks, getting down to like to pick up a rock or something like that or use a geology tool. NASA's unveiled its new flexible spacesuits ahead of its next mission to the moon. The leaders of South Korea and Japan have promised to reset years of animosity

in the first visit by a South Korean president to Tokyo in more than a decade. The Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said they'd agreed to open a new chapter in relations. Shortly before South Korea's President Yoon Suk-yeol arrived in Tokyo, North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan. Our sole correspondent Jean McKenzie says security cooperation will be a major priority for Mr Yoon. North Korea has now launched four missiles in a week each more aggressive than the last. The missile we saw today was an intercontinental ballistic missile so these are the missiles that are capable of reaching all the way to the US mainland and really North Korea is showing the US and South Korea and Japan that it is becoming more of a threat and South Korea and Japan are seeing the benefits that they can have if they start to share their intelligence and their militaries work together on this and we've just heard from the press conference that the two sides have agreed to restart security talks shortly. Jean McKenzie to Israel now where further protests have been taking place against the government's controversial plans to overhaul the judiciary from Tel Aviv, Tom Bateman.

This is part of the demonstration in Tel Aviv. Hundreds of women are dressed as handmaids from the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. This is their expression of what they fear a patriarchal, totalitarian, and theocratic society. This is all a warning as these protests now enter their 11th week and what the organisers saying or the organisers of some of the events are saying is that this is their intensification of resistance. We've seen a series of events this being one of them but also protests taking place outside foreign embassies including the US, German and the UK embassy today. That is as Benjamin Netanyahu continues visits abroad the protesters are urging foreign governments to try and put pressure on the Israeli government over this issue of judicial reform which has created these weeks and weeks of protests. What is the issue all about? Well the government, the most nationalistic right-wing government in Israel's history is attempting to make a series of changes to the judicial system. It would see the government have full control over appointing judges and it would see crucially the Supreme Court stripped of its ability to strike down what it sees as law that are effectively unconstitutional. That's why most legal analysts say that these measures would end the independence of the judiciary in Israel. Now there was a significant moment on Wednesday night when Israel's president Isaac Herzog came up with a plan. He said

a plan for compromise, a new form of judicial reform and he put it to both the government and the opposition. The opposition have accepted it, Mr Netanyahu has immediately rejected it and said it wouldn't solve the ultimate issue for him and for these parties of the right in Israel because they say that there is an imbalance of forces between the judiciary and the government, the executive in Israel. So that's been immediately dismissed out of hand and we then saw the Israeli president go on to warn of blood in the streets over this issue, over these escalating protests,



over the increasing division and the fault lines within Israeli society and he had a warning. He said people thought that civil war was a red line that couldn't be crossed. He told those people they were wrong and he said that Israel was in touching distance in his words of the abyss. Tom Bateman. An investigation by BBC News Arabic has found doctors around the world offering bogus

treatments to millions of people with an incurable condition that can lead to blindness. BBC reporter Ramadan Yunus who has the condition went undercover to expose them for this exclusive report. After two weeks you will see the full benefit of the treatment. Around the world, doctors are making big promises they can't keep. Everyone sees improvements and will also keep their

vision. That is Muhammad Awad, one of the doctors selling a treatment for an incurable genetic eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa or RP affecting me and an estimated 3 million people worldwide. There is one treatment called loxatena which has been shown to be effective but it's only suitable for a tiny percentage of patients. This hasn't stopped the clinic's selling bogus treatments to desperate patients. The doctors told me I needed injections and I needed to take them for 9 to 10 days. Muhammad Abdul-Moneyaim lives in Khartoum. He traveled to a state-backed medical

institute in Russia called the theater of eye institute for vitamin injections every year for 4 years but it didn't work. I pretty much lost most of my sight. Now I can only see light and shapes. In Sudan I found a small office linked to the Russian hospital. I went undercover posing as a patient and spoke to a doctor in Moscow. Everyone sees improvements and will also keep their vision.

The vitamin treatment it worries me on two levels. Robert McLaren, a professor of ophthalmology at Oxford University is a globally recognized expert on RP. Why not just have a pill? You don't need to have an injection. The second thing that worries me a little bit is that there's no real evidence that vitamins will be of any benefit. It does surprise me that a highly regarded institute like the Fyodorov in Moscow is offering this treatment. The institute did not respond to the BBC. Dr Awad

accused the BBC of making up stories to tarnish the hospital's reputation. But the most disturbing case I found was in the United States. I am treating the untreatable. I am treating people who have never had ophthalmology. This is Jeffrey Weiss, one of the doctors running a clinical trial in Florida that takes bone marrow stem cells and injects them around your eye. Ahmed Faroukhi took

port and unusually had to pay \$20,000. He says after the treatment his eyesight got worse. When I opened my eyes I found that I could no longer see with my left eye.

All the patients that I spoke to found the treatment through a government website called clinicaltrials.gov. It's used widely globally and with over 400,000 trials on the site, it's so hard to tell which ones have been evaluated.

Hello, Dr Levy. Yeah, how are you? I just like to understand, you know, more about the treatment. Posing as a patient, I contacted one of the doctors running the trial called Stephen Levy. This treatment is completely safe. We have zero adverse events. We have had no complications. What should I expect after receiving the treatment? We would say the vast majority of patients experience benefit either improvement in vision or stabilization.

I showed my call with Dr Levy to several experts including Professor Robert McLaren.

This is not a valid clinical trial. This is a very worrying treatment that's potentially damaging for the patients and it needs to stop. The doctors running the trial did not respond to our questions. The only way for me to describe the stem cell world is like the Wild Wild West.

Andrew Yaffa is a lawyer specializing in medical malpractice claims.

He says the US regulator isn't doing enough to tackle bogus treatments.

These clinics are allowed, unfortunately, to continue. The only body that can go in and shut them down would be the FDA. The Food and Drug Administration didn't respond to our questions about the trial but said improving stem cell therapies can be dangerous.

Ramadan Yunus from BBC Arabic. In 2025, NASA is hoping to go back to the moon for the first time in five decades. When it gets there, it's astronauts, both men and women, will be wearing a new state-of-the-art spacesuit, the first complete redesign since 1981.

The new outfit has been unveiled at Space Center Houston in Texas and Peter Goffin told Oliver Conway

what it's like. Think back to that footage from 1969 of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the moon in big bulky spacesuits. Those Apollo-era suits were made to be sturdy, to protect astronauts from extreme temperatures and moon dust and jagged rocks, but they weren't especially flexible. On YouTube, you can actually see moon landing bloopers of astronauts falling over and then helplessly struggling to get back up. So now NASA's preparing to send humans back to the moon in 2025 and it's invested a billion dollars in lighter, streamlined suits that are robust enough for the lunar surface but don't sacrifice on movement. And on Wednesday, we got to see the result. We even got to see an engineer put on the suit and do some crouching and kneeling

to show off just how flexible it is. And Russell Ralston from Axiom, the private company that designed the suit, explained just why it is they are more mobile. There's a variety of joints that we've put as well into the lower torso assembly and this is going to be a huge improvement over the Apollo suits. The Apollo suits didn't have many of these types of joints that we've put in this suit, so the astronauts would be more comfortable, have an easier time walking, performing tasks,

getting down to like to pick up a rock or something like that or use a geology tool.

Russell Ralston, so a new suit, will it have an impact on the new Artemis mission?

Yeah, these new suits are purpose built for the Artemis program, which is going to be quite different from the Apollo missions. NASA has said the ultimate goal is for astronauts to spend longer periods of time on the moon to mine it for resources and develop infrastructure and maybe one day live sustainably on the moon or use it as a launching pad for a mission to Mars. And having a lighter suit that's more comfortable and easier to work in would be an important part of that, but here's a more immediate advantage. Artemis is going to land women on the moon for the first time

and in the past we've seen at least one entire mission cancel because they couldn't find a space suit to properly fit female astronauts, but these suits are specifically designed for men and women of almost all shapes and sizes, which is a reflection NASA says of its new generation of space travel. Peter Goffin, Lord's cricket ground in London is one of the oldest in the world and known as the home of cricket. The MCC, or Marilabone Cricket Club, which owns the ground,

has often been seen as old-fashioned and out of touch. In an effort to modernise its image,

the club's executive decided to drop two of its oldest fixtures, the Eaton versus Harrow school match and the university fixture between Cambridge and Oxford. But in a dramatic U-turn, members of the club said they wanted to retain the games. Richard Hamilton's report begins in 1932.

Cricket provides the pretext for the last big social event of the London season

and the Eaton and Harrow match opens in glorious weather amid elegant fashions.

A movie-tone news report of the Eaton against Harrow fixture, which dates back to 1805.

For this great function you must have coaches, beautiful frocks, small buys and top hats,

strawberries and cream and cricket. The varsity match between Oxford and Cambridge

is much more recent. It started in 1827. The hosting of these games has been a divisive

issue at the MCC. Last year its president, the actor, writer and broadcaster Stephen Fry,

said dropping the fixtures would help challenge a turgid image of snobbery and elitism.

But a group of members protested, leading to an apology and a wider consultation.

A survey of the club's 24,000 or so members indicated that both matches should be retained,

perhaps not a surprise given the demographics of the members who are mainly rich and old.

A further survey will take place in five years' time. The club's chief executive admitted they

had misjudged the mood of the membership. Amid wider moves to modernise cricket and attract

bigger crowds, it's thought the MCC may have felt under pressure from the England and Wales

cricket board to focus more on diversity and inclusivity, although the ECB denied this was

the case. Among the prominent public figures who opposed these changes were David Gower,

the former England captain, Henry Blofeld, the retired commentator who played in both

matches in the 1950s and threatened to resign his membership over the issue, and Aussie Wheatley,

a former test selector who accused the club's committee of being full of Russians.

Richard Hamilton with that report. And that's all from us for now, but there'll 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 Twitter at GlobalNewsPod. This edition was produced by Alice Adderley

and was mixed by Lewis Alsop. The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Alex Ritzen. Until next time, goodbye.