

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Drone attack hits Moscow skyscraper

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. This is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Janet Jalil and at 13 Hours GMT on Tuesday 1st August, these are our main stories. Drone attacks in Moscow and the Black Sea. A skyscraper in the Russian capital is hit for the second time in days. Myanmar's military rulers give a partial pardon to the deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. We assess what lies behind the surprise move. Also in this podcast. Hi Barbie! Hi Barbie! Hi Barbie! Hi Barbie! They won't fear it until they understand it. Why some Japanese cinema goers are saying no barbenheimer. 18 months after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia is itself being attacked on several fronts. It's seen frequent cross-border strikes. A key bridge linking occupied Crimea to Russia was hit last month and now the Russian capital itself has been attacked again. Overnight, a skyscraper in Moscow housing several government ministries was struck by a drone. The second time it's been hit in just a few days. Akhadi Metler lives in the building which is partly residential. Everything was normal and then we heard a loud bang. There wasn't much panic, just everyone went outside. There is no fear. What's there to be afraid of? The emergency services came straight away. All we can do now is stick together and everything will be fine. Meanwhile, Russia's defense ministry said it had thwarted attacks by Ukrainian sea drones on two of its ships in the Black Sea. A Ukrainian presidential advisor calls the claims fictitious, saying Kyiv would not attack any civilian vessels. Our Russia editor for BBC monitoring Vitaly Shevchenko told us more about these latest attacks. The Russian capital's business quarter, the so-called Moskva city, has come under an apparent drone attack. This is the second such attack in three days. Even though damage is minimal and in military terms, it's not going to make Russia change its strategy in pursuing this war on Ukraine. There are very good reasons for Ukraine to carry out such attacks. Now, I have to say that Ukraine has consistently denied or was tight-lipped on its involvement in such attacks before. We can't definitely say it was Ukraine, but if it was Ukraine, the reasons for carrying out such attacks would be, first, to demonstrate its ability to strike right at the heart of the Russian capital, secondly, to cause instability, so chaos and confusion. This is a very important reason. Such attacks, they undermine a key stated objective presented by Vladimir Putin last year when he was launching his so-called special military operation in Ukraine. He said he wanted to make Russia safer. Has it happened? Well, it's not, obviously, and to many residents of the Russian capital, it is obvious that they have become less secure because of this special military operation. Yes, so this is very difficult for the Russian authorities to explain, but at the same time, they're saying that they have thwarted attacks elsewhere in the Black Sea by Ukrainian sea drones. Yes, earlier today, the Russian Defence Ministry issued a statement saying that two Ukrainian on-crued surface vessels, i.e. naval drones, try to attack Russian navy ships southwest of Crimea. You will remember that this is the area which has everything to do with the grain deal, the collapsed grain deal after Russia pulled out of it. There's a lot of tension in the area and whether or not the details given by Russia are true. The fact remains that the focus very much is on that area and Ukraine is trying to unblock the attempted Russian blockade and make any future shipments of Ukraine grain more secure.

Myanmar's military rulers have given a partial pardon to the ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The 78-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner had been sentenced to decades in jail on a range of charges following a military coup in February 2021. Since then, the country has faced chaos and widespread violence as the military has tried to crack down on a resistance movement.

I asked our Southeast Asia correspondent Jonathan Head whether this partial pardon had come as a surprise. It is a bit of a surprise. Aung San Suu Kyi has always been excluded from previous amnesties and there have been quite a number of them. On auspicious dates, the military likes to release criminals but even political prisoners are either pardoned or have their sentences cut.

This is a sort of way of showing leniency. You have to mark that against the 24,000 people who've been detained for opposing the military since their coup and nearly 20,000 of those remain inside. So mercy is limited. Giving leniency like this to Aung San Suu Kyi sends a very different signal. She's been totally isolated since she was arrested after the coup. She's hardly been seen.

Almost no one's been allowed to speak to her. It's almost as though the military wanted her to vanish but if they are giving her leniency now, making it public, they're also moving her or have moved her, I should say, from prison where they put her last year after the last of her convictions back to house arrest, softer conditions. That coincides with quite a bit of diplomacy. Some of it controversial, some of it criticized but there are attempts by countries in this region to talk to the military and see if they can find an end to this terrible civil war.

And if the military is publicly showing leniency to Aung San Suu Kyi, it's likely that they're considering her as part of some kind of compromise. If they are to cut any kind of deal with a now very bitter and angry opposition after all the death and destruction, they will need Aung San Suu Kyi to help deliver that deal but of course what we don't know is what she thinks and she can be pretty stubborn and tough when it comes to dealing with the military she has been in the past.

So are we likely to see her released or will she remain in detention?

My assumption is the 33 years of prison they gave her with just a number and it didn't really matter. The cases were pretty ludicrous anyway. She's always been a political pawn. The military will always calculate their fear of her electoral popularity because they have promised they have to hold an election at some point against the fact that she's internationally so renowned that giving leniency to her is an essential way in which they can show the outside world they're willing to compromise. We all think at some point she will be part of a grand deal to end the conflict. The problem for the military though is that she may not play ball but even if she does the opposition movement now has sort of left her behind. It's driven by a lot of young people. There's been a terrible loss of life, an enormous destruction opposing the military and most of these opposition people, monithomed taking up arms, believe that the goal must be to defeat the military altogether not just to do a deal with them and that could be where a problem lies.

Jonathan Head to Northern China now

where military helicopters have been involved in aid and rescue efforts for flood victims.

The number of dead has risen to 20 after days of torrential rain in the wake of typhoon Dok Suri. Tens of thousands have been forced to leave their homes and searches are continuing for the missing.

President Xi Jinping has called for every effort to be made to rescue those lost or trapped.

Our China correspondent Stephen McDonnell is in Beijing and started by telling us that there had been some good news. The rain here has stopped and it may be that it's going to ease off now for

a few days. Also the second typhoon due to hit in the next 24 hours in Zhejiang province may not in fact strike there and there seems to be indication that the weather pattern from there may not reach Beijing. That would be good news for the rescue teams trying to deal with this very difficult situation. I mean the other good news for their purposes is that they've managed to find 14 of the 27 missing people so of course the hopes are that there are others out there to be found and that the death toll won't go up. However in the western suburbs of Beijing there are communities still cut off without electricity without water where roads have collapsed and where the army has been flying in with helicopters to drop off emergency supplies in neighbouring Hebei province. There's a small city big town called Georgia. Now that place looks to have been hit pretty hard by the flooding and we're yet to see the devastation there. What seems to have happened is that in an attempt to take the pressure off Beijing to divert the flooding waters elsewhere the water has been driven down in that direction and as a result has flooded that town as I say which does look like the streets in the heart of the place up to the first floor of buildings engulfed by water so tough for them but again like now the army is having to be sent in to drop medical supplies to try to rescue people and either way in the coming days there's going to be a very big cleanup here and briefly Stephen Beijing is simply not used to flooding like this yeah in the south of china they get typhoons like this all the time they're sort of geared up for it the rescue teams are used to it every year. Beijing has had sort of storms and floodings like this but rarely and so when it comes it can be deadly and this is what happened when you know in those flash floods

came along washing dozens of cars into gushing brown rivers and it has been very deadly for a population not used to it. Stephen MacDonald in Beijing it was one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the Mediterranean in recent years an overcrowded ship carrying hundreds of people trying to reach Europe sank off the coast of Greece in June many of those who died were from Pakistan people so desperate to escape poverty in their homeland they were willing to risk their lives and despite this tragedy thousands of Pakistanis are still taking the same route to Europe as those who perished traveling via Libya in North Africa. Our Pakistan correspondent Caroline

Davies was given rare access to one of the suspects allegedly involved in the capsizing.

16 men are being held in this police station part of Pakistan's crackdown on illegal migration the majority here are alleged to have been involved in filling the migrant boat that left Libya and sank off the coast of Greece including Husnan Shah he admits to being a human smuggler for more than

10 years but denies that he was involved in this incident. We started this because there was no other business because of greed and the difficult situation everyone is ready to take this journey.

The government is not doing anything for the young generation here I do not have a main role it's the people who are sitting in Libya who are very big and rich. Do you feel guilty for the sort of things that have happened to people on these routes? I felt very sorry and we are really ashamed over this but what can we do if I don't do this someone else will do it.

Hundreds of Pakistanis are thought to have drowned when the packed boat sank in June including Fareed and Najma's teenage sons the family may never have a body to bury.

Instead they have voice messages Najma plays them to me.

They message their father early morning from somebody's mobile saying we are leaving tell mother this is our last message. Now she tells me she listens to them then cries for hours.

The BBC has been told that the route from Pakistan via Egypt and Libya is increasingly popular officials have told us that nearly 13,000 Pakistanis travel to the two countries in the first six months of this year. Compare that to the whole of 2022 where only 7,000 took the route and of those 13,000 around 10,000 have not returned. Mohammed al-amshinwari is in charge of Pakistan's investigation into what happened into the Greek shipwreck. They have gone to Libya and we don't know whether they're still in Libya or they have gone to any of the European countries.

The situation is made more complicated the police say because the flights out of the country are legal.

Fareed let his teenage sons go with the same smuggler that had taken him to Germany illegally eight years before.

I thought we are poor people even if they get educated they won't find a job.

So I thought they will go there get educated and work. It doesn't matter how much anyone convinces you you shouldn't go. This village may remember those that died in Greece's waters but many we spoke to hold little faith in what Pakistan can offer and the pull to go can outweigh the fear.

That report by Caroline Davies. Parts of India's northern state of Haryana remain tense after three people including a Muslim cleric and two policemen were killed in violence triggered by religious tensions during a procession by Hindu nationalist groups. Arunade Mukherjee has more details. Schools are shut and internet suspended in new after the violence which began in the city spread to other parts bordering India's capital city of Delhi. At the centre of the violence is Monu Manisar a member of the right-wing Hindu outfit Bajrang Dal who is wanted by the police in connection with the murder of two Muslim cattle traders in February and has been absconding since.

He posted a video openly saying he would participate in the Hindu march which angered local Muslims who've been demanding his arrest. Violence broke out on Monday afternoon during the Hindu procession and footage from new showed stone pelting by a mob as cars were set on fire and shops vandalized. A mosque was burnt down in the city of Gurugram on the outskirts of Delhi. Authorities have imposed a curfew in New and the state government has appealed for peace. Additional forces have been sent by the federal government to help maintain law and order. Arunade Mukherjee

Still to come on this podcast the US avoids a shock exit from the women's world cup football but only just. A little scary honestly I think we could have played a lot better it was a little messy and Portugal gave us a run for our money.

Hi I'm Hannah I am the host of a new daily podcast what in the world from the BBC World Service where we try to help you make sense of the world around you explaining the big events and some of the smaller events so that you might feel a little bit better when you pick up your phone and scroll through your news feed. Just search for what in the world wherever you get your BBC podcasts and hit subscribe. Welcome back to the global news podcast now to a heartwarming story in southern India a group of sanitation workers in Kerala have just won the lottery the women who are basically refuse collectors usually earn about 250 rupees a day which is about three dollars now they've hit the jackpot and won the equivalent of 1.2 million dollars so how is this going to transform their lives my colleague Rebecca Kesby has been speaking to the BBC's reporter in the

state Ashraf Padana. There were a group of 11 women they are garbage collected basically they are collecting biodegradable garbage and separate them and deposit it in a local collection center where the local authorities sell them to factories for recycling or reuse and they will get a part of the proceeds. So they're quite poor really these women aren't they and I understand they're older women too I think the youngest one was 49 yeah that's right the oldest is 72 they work as a group and they go to homes and households and local institutions and schools and like that and collect garbage every day and beneficiaries will pay them 50 rupees per unit and they will divide them equally. So they're quite a tight friendship group then aren't they I mean I understand that they're so poor some of them had to borrow the money from each other to be able to buy this this one ticket they bought together yeah one of them that eldest one Kutty Malu she is 70 years old and she was not having 25 rupees to spare they decided to buy this ticket which is which cost 250 rupees and decided to divide themselves so while others get 6.3 million rupees they will get half of them. So they're going to share it out equally that's that's a good story what about their jobs are they going to keep working or does this mean they can all retire? They're not skilled people they're semi-educated semi-literate people so they don't have regular work so they take up these kind of jobs or jobs and this is a local collective called Green Army who collects garbage from households and institutions and send them for recycling. How do you think this is going to affect their lives? It will have a huge impact on many of them they don't have their own homes and they need to marry off their daughters some need to find money to get medical treatment and all. Yes I think one of the women actually lost her home in one of the recent floods so this will be very welcome maybe she can build another one now

yeah that's right she lost her home was washed away in the 28th and it was diluted in Kerala the family doesn't have a home now. Playing the lottery is banned in some Indian states isn't it not Kerala though how does it work and and what I think it's run by the government isn't it? Kerala is communist to read out you know and there are no major industries in Kerala so this state heavily depends on lottery sales and alcohol so India's total 90% of India's total revenue sales comes from Kerala and it contributes 15 more than 15% of the state's revenue collections and every day there is a lottery and the state government is it's a state government monopoly private players are not allowed in Kerala and other states cannot sell their lotteries in Kerala so this is a major revenue source for the state. So it's a good way for the state government to get money then to try to provide services and things what have these women told you because I know you've been speaking to them are they going to keep playing the lottery? Yeah they will keep working with the Green Army because it was their collective that brought them the lick and and they will keep working with the group most of them have launched payoff and houses to build get their children and grandchildren educated and like that.

Ashraf Padana. Film vans around the world have been enjoying the simultaneous release of two completely different movies Barbie and Oppenheimer.

Hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie, hi Barbie, they won't fear it until they understand it.

Some memes have combined the pink plastic Barbie world with images of atomic bomb explosions and that has upset and angered people in one of the world's biggest cinema markets, Japan. This month it will be marking the 78th anniversary of the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

with solemn ceremonies. Our reporter Mariko Oi told us more about the controversy. The two movies came out over the same weekend in the United States and other parts of the world prompting I guess you know barb and hymer phenomenon or meme and a lot of social media users you know took to what is it called now X formally known as Twitter with some images and you know a lot of fan jokes and stuff but then some of them were rather distasteful in the eyes of especially the Japanese public. So for example in one of them the actress who played Barbie her hair was in a mushroom cloud hairstyle and what got people angry wasn't the actual meme itself but the fact that the official Twitter or X account of this Barbie movie started responding to some of them in a pretty positive manner because this person who posted this picture said you know it was my father's idea so the Barbie movie's official Twitter account said you know he's you know this Ken is such a stylist and other comments you know just talking about how this is the summer to remember with you know kisses in heart and so on when the actual poster that they created really was seen to be making fun of atomic bombs and of course hundreds of thousands of people died in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan at the end of the Second World War and as a result as you can imagine a lot of people have been angry and yesterday Warner Brothers Japan which distributes the Barbie movie in Japan when it opens in about 10 days they had to issue an apology they also said that they have requested the US headquarters to respond and I've just been emailing them back and forth trying to get a statement but it appears that those what's been described as distasteful responses have now been deleted. And what are people on Japanese social media saying because the the two movies are due to come out in Japan and people there must feel that the history of their country has been kind of ignored with all these memes coming out to making jokes about the atomic bomb. Yeah to be fair Openheimer still hasn't got a release date because as you can imagine it is a lot more sensitive topic for the Japanese distributor to decide on a date. Now whether or not this you know this all these memes and people getting angry about it whether or not that would have an impact on its release date that remains to be seen but as you said you know some of the comments were very emotional you know one person said you know my father was in Hiroshima just a few days before the atomic bomb was dropped and you know he talked about how so many of his friends died and you know a lot of people who died because of the atomic bomb were children who were the age group who were playing with Barbie dolls and you know for them not to even have the imagination to think of that so when they reply to those memes you know some people are very very angry and upset. Mariko Oi. When she isn't in court presiding over bankruptcy cases US judge Stacy Jernigan is writing legal thrillers but this has led to her being accused of bias by one of the defendants in her court James Dondaro who's facing charges of fraud. He claims the Texan judge's novels are jeopardizing her impartiality. Camilla Mills told us more about this intriguing tale of fact versus fiction. So James Dondaro he has been accused essentially of fraud of siphoning funds from a capital management company so the judge presiding over this case she is a judge who works in bankruptcy but she is also a self-published novelist she's written two books that centre around hedge fund managers. In her books she describes quote bro culture and outrageous amounts of hubris and in her latest book she talks about a hedonistic

narcissistic playboy. Now Mr Dondaro has claimed that he immediately recognized this character to be him so he has asked that she be removed from his case because it's showing bias. And what has the judge said in response to this? Well she has denied this she has dismissed it he has filed a number of motions to have her removed which have haven't been successful they've been on the same case for over two years now she's said that Agatha Christie and Hemingway that they all used real life events as inspiration but she claims that the character is not based on Mr Dondaro. Camilla Mills now to a brand new event which is kicked off in Nairobi taking place at the Macmillan Memorial Library throughout the week the African Book Fair will showcase more than 10,000 works representing all 54 African countries including Anglophone, Francophone and Lucophone writing and it's been described as Kenya's largest selection of continental literature. Ahead of the festival my colleague Beverly Ochieng went to meet Wendy Nurokohe one of the events organizers and co-founder of Pan African Book Store Somanami Books. The inaugural African Book Fair is a culmination of a journey that we started I think as soon as we opened and was always an inspiration behind what we're doing which is to represent and explore and champion African writing and when we started the bookstore we realized that there was a huge dominance of certain countries for instance Nigeria, writers, Ghanaian writers and we thought to ourselves what happens in all these other spaces and so we've been on this journey which we dubbed the Road to 54 which is an attempt to host all the 54 states of Africa in the store or as some form of representation and when we started that journey I think in 2021 we thought it was going to be easy but it's been a long time coming we're almost there and so for us the fair is also like a celebration of that journey. I mean I think that's really true I always feel that I lose out on reading stories and experiences from other languages it's often Nigeria of course Anglophone countries are dominant and even living in Kenya means that we're reading a lot of English Swahili literature so for you what are the things that you think you want people to experience with this festival and with some of the events that you've been hosting to give prominence to African literature from various parts of the continent. What is key for us is to first of all say that these stories exist right that just because that you have not had exposure to what happens in Cameroon or what happens in Chad it doesn't mean that there are no stories coming out of there so it's that showcase and I think for anyone coming to the fair they'll see in the curation you will get to travel the continents. And getting 10,000 books is it feels like a logistical nightmare taxes tend to be high on imports in Kenya and publication companies are not as robust or vibrant how are you coordinating with publishers and authors to make sure that those who attend the festival get access to all of these books. It's not been easy we've had to establish connections and relations with a lot of indie publishers just this week we're expecting a couple of books coming all the way from SA on road so but we do what we must just because we believe it's very important. There are always these general statements made that Kenyans don't read and those even one famous author who apparently said that East Africa is a bit of a desert when it comes to literary production what do you have to say to that? Obviously they are wrong right just by the mere fact that bookstores exist and have been existing for decades right and that even people like us or Manami can start

and have a viable business going so therefore just from that perspective Kenyans are reading we could have a more robust reading culture but I also see that as an issue of supply and not demand what kind of books are readily available what kind of books are in your regular bookstore stocking people are very hungry for the kinds of stories that mirror their experiences that explains their circumstances their dreams their aspirations if you give people books that they can relate to then they'll read more. Wendy Enda Roque of Nairobi's Pan-African bookstore speaking to my colleague Beverly Ochiang. The US has managed to avoid crashing out of the women's

world cup but only by the skin of their teeth and the width of a goalpost the defending champions drew nil nil against Portugal to scrape through to the final 16. These football fans expressed their disappointment at the performance of the one-time favorites. Oh man it was a clencher I was really hoping that they were gonna you know get it at the end but it wasn't quite there. I don't think the US played their like potential. It was a little scary honestly I think we could have played a lot better it was a little messy and Portugal gave us a run for our money. Pretty lackluster uh yeah I was a little disconnected what do you think yeah um but uh hopefully we can come back together be better next time. As Shai McClell reports from Auckland the US face a difficult road ahead. Do you want the good news or the bad news first Jeanette? Good news. I'll tell you I'll tell you the good news the good news is they're through to the knockout stages. The good news is they are now they've been undefeated for their last 18 matches in the World Cup which is their longest streak of being undefeated. That's just about it in terms of good news because the bad news is it was almost like watching a different team when the US were playing

Portugal. It just did not feel that we were watching the defending champions playing a crucial game that was going to determine whether or not they stay in this tournament. If you're a US fan this is an almost unbelievable scenario. They have dominated this game for the last decade. They've won the last two women's World Cups. They are hot favourites to win out record third consecutive one

and they're the top of the rankings. They are the world number one this women's team and yet if you watched them today they just they were incoherent they didn't gel they lost chances they felt a bit scattered and all over the place. Megan Rapinoe came towards the end of the game and replaced Sophia

Smith who's a debutante who's a rising star and she did make a bit of a difference her experience made a bit of a difference but not enough difference to find the back of the net and towards the end of that match it just looked like they might be knocked out. I was preparing for the most dramatic story of the World Cup because Portugal kicked a ball they hit a ball that actually got into the post it hit the post and you could just hear the collective intake of breaths around you really because it was this moment where everyone was looking at each other thinking is this going to change everything and again you just wouldn't think that the United States would be in that position. Does anyone have any explanation for what's going on here? Yes I've been chatting to fans I've been chatting to sports journalists I've actually been chatting to a sports journalist Jeff Kasouf who specializes in women's football and who's been following the team's stratosphere cries and he was telling me look this is a team that's used to being on top of the world but this is a team that's wobbling at the moment and I think the two main reasons are they have you know they've been suffering with injuries they've had key players not taking part in the tournament

not taking part in games but also there is a generational difference so you've got experienced superstars household names like Alex Morgan and Megan Rapinoe but you've also got the new comers like Sophia Smith, Gellisa Thompson, Trinity Rodman they're excellent players but they're much much younger and very inexperienced and what's happening right now is that you're getting those two different kinds of players almost playing playing with each other for almost the first time I actually think that the first game that they played some of these players had never played with each other before and you can just translate on the pitch that they're just they're not gelling they're not playing as a coherent unit and of course Portugal who are very disciplined who pressed very very hard who are very persistent have created so many chances in the USA box there

were actually tweets about spectators US spectators booing in the stands because they were so frustrated

so I think all in all yes they've gone through but if you look at the table right now and you look at the Netherlands game that was happening at the same time the Netherlands were dominant and

yes they were playing an inexperienced team like Vietnam but they dominated.

Shima Khalil 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 come into this podcast the topics covered you can send us an email the address is globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk this edition was mixed by Alison Purcell Davis producer was Lippa Capellum the editor is Karen Martin I'm Jenna Jalil until next time goodbye you