

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Earthquake hits Afghanistan as tremors felt in Pakistan and India

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

I'm Charlotte Gallagher and in the early hours of Wednesday, the 22nd of March, these are our main stories. A large earthquake has hit Afghanistan and has been felt as far away as the Indian capital, Delhi.

President Putin has condemned the British government's decision to provide Ukraine with armor-piercing ammunition that contains depleted uranium.

Swiss investigators have concluded that a family obsessed with conspiracy theories had planned their collective suicide before jumping from a seventh-floor balcony.

Also in this podcast, Google launches an AI chatbot. But what are the pitfalls?

One of the big things is that these systems have a propensity to what people say is a tendency to hallucinate. Occasionally, the answers are simply factually wrong, but they sound very convincing.

A strong earthquake has struck northeast in Afghanistan, with tremors felt across a wide region, including Pakistan and parts of India.

As we record this podcast, two people are reported to have been killed in the Afghan province of Lagman. The quake, with a magnitude of 6.5, was centred in the Hindu Kush Mountains. Our South Asia regional editor, Ambarasin Atarajan, told me what we know so far.

It has affected a wide area, like from Afghanistan to Pakistan as far as India.

The officials are saying that they are still verifying information from the remote areas of northwest Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan. The tremors were felt very strongly in many Pakistani cities and as well as in India. So people got panicky and they rushed to the streets and they were waiting there for more than an hour, thinking there might be further tremors.

But in Afghanistan, again, some of the remote areas, what Taliban spokesperson just messaged me,

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Dr. Sharif Al-Samar Ammar, he said, we have casualties and damages, but up to now, according to information, it's limited. They are now assisting the situation because some of these areas are very remote. Many villages do not even have telephone facility or internet facility. So the next few hours, the situation may emerge. And somewhere like Afghanistan, because of the situation with the Taliban, they won't have the aid that perhaps India and Pakistan have access to, especially in these really remote parts of Afghanistan.

They did struggle when a similar earthquake hit the region last year, last June. More than a thousand people were killed in eastern Afghanistan. At that time, the Taliban were initially struggling

to send aid and other materials to some of this remote southeastern part of Afghanistan. But then international aid agencies and the UN, they jumped in and they also provided aid.

Again, they have to set up this disaster management units in different parts of the country, even though the UN and other agencies are helping, but there is no organized setup.

They are still setting up in various districts. The previous Afghan administration collapsed and now the Taliban are trying to rebuild. And that is why the officials are saying that they're waiting for more information from the faraway areas of the country.

And Barassan Atarajan. President Putin has warned that Russia will react if the UK gives Ukraine ammunition containing depleted uranium. He made the threat at a joint news conference with the Chinese President Xi Jinping, who's in Moscow. In response, Britain's Ministry of Defense said it had used armour-piercing rounds for decades. Our Russia editor Steve Rosenberg has more on Mr Putin's comments. He condemned what he said were UK plans to send Ukraine ammunition containing

depleted uranium. If this happens, Mr Putin said Russia will be forced to react since the collective west was starting to use weapons with a nuclear component. Depleted uranium is not a nuclear weapon. This week, Baroness Goldie, a UK Minister of State for Defense, said in a written answer to a parliamentary question that Britain would be sending ammunition including armour-piercing

rounds which contain depleted uranium to Ukraine. In separate comments, Russia's Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov said he had no doubt this would end badly for Britain.

Steve Rosenberg. As we heard in the earlier podcast, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has made an unannounced visit to Kiev to express his country's support for Ukraine

against Russia's invasion. Mr Kishida's visit coincided with that of the Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russia. David Bamford reports. Mr Kishida is the last of the G7 leaders to head to Kiev while the conflict in Ukraine continues. Japan is hosting the next G7 summit in May.

He was taken to the nearby town of Butcher where hundreds of civilians were killed last year by Russian forces. Mr Kishida laid a wreath, saying he felt great anger over the atrocity that had taken place there. Tokyo has continually voiced support for Ukraine and has imposed sanctions against Moscow. That was David Bamford. Israel's parliament has voted to allow Israeli citizens back into four settlements in the occupied West Bank, which were evacuated in 2005.

The vote risks further inflaming tensions with Palestinians ahead of Ramadan. Violent clashes between the two sides have grown more frequent, as Israeli settlers have become increasingly emboldened by the new nationalist coalition government. Tim Franks reports from the north

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of the West Bank. At root, this conflict is incredibly simple. It's about land.

And Abu Khalid's farm is right at the front line. Through his olive groves here, you can see a ring of hill ridges. And one after another, there are Jewish settlements on them. And from some of them, Abu Khalid says he's close enough to have had repeated visits in recent years, months, even weeks, from settlers. And it's been terrifying.

One month ago, 15 to 20 settlers came to here. They are very violent. They want to destroy everything. Every night, I don't sleep from 7 p.m. till 7 a.m. In this way, I protect myself.

We've heard from Abu Khalid. Now, from a young man, he's asked we don't use his name or his voice.

You'll hear instead just his words in translation. He works in Tumasaya. He's a 27-year-old former prisoner. He says the recent raids by the Israeli army, recent attacks by settlers, point to one thing, a massed, violent confrontation. An inter-fader is coming. The Jewish is not our enemy inside. They're not attacking me. But the settlers, the Jews can't protect us from the settlers. So our enemy is the settlers. If it came to it, do you think that you would fight?

Definitely, for sure. I will be part of it. I want to protect my land and my home. And we want to protect ourselves. Time to head to the other side. Next to Tumasaya is the Jewish settlement of Shiloh. About 5,000 people live here, including veterans spokesman and campaigner for the settlers, Yisrael Meidad. We have a problem with the sociological term as hilltop youth, who are not able to understand that not only what they're doing is wrong in an ethical, moral sense, but just doesn't help anybody and even hurts our cause. But there is no such thing as Jewish violence by itself. It's always in reaction. If there was no Arab terror, if there was no Arab incursions of land, there wouldn't be the irresponsible, illegal response from the Jews. But in retrospect, I'd have to say that if the world is willing to give the Palestinians a state or recognize their right or champion them as some charities across Europe do, and on the background of all their terror, I think they can at least tolerate and understand acts of violence by a small number of Jewish youth. Shiloh is the major settlement here, but they're also a string of smaller settlements. They're called outposts, which are officially not authorized, even under Israeli law. They're strung across this land, and we're heading up to one of them now. It's called Esh Kodesh. Generally, the smaller the place, the harder line it is. The guy I want to meet, he's called Meir Ayash. He runs security here.

People here are decent and moral, and after the Palestinians are coming, burning and doing some bad things here, people at the end lose their patience and go back and revenge. Do you think with this new government in that case that things at last are going to change? Yeah, and it will be also better for the Palestinians when they will see who is governing this place and they will understand what are the boundaries.

Things will be much easier and much clearer for both sides.

That report from Tim Franks to Switzerland now, where police say they've closed their investigation into the apparent suicide of a family last March. A father, mother, her twin sister, and two children jumped from the balcony of their apartment in the city of Montreux.

One of the children, a 15-year-old boy, survived, but was badly injured.

Swiss investigators have ruled out any outside intervention and say the family, originally from France, held beliefs which led to the tragedy. Our correspondent in Geneva is Imogen Folks and has the details. Almost exactly a year ago, the family of five, among them an eight-year-old

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girl and a 15-year-old boy, jumped one after the other from their seventh floor apartment in Montreux.

All except the teenage boy died instantly. The case shocked Switzerland and there were questions about how it could have happened, especially with children involved. Today Swiss investigators ruled out any third party. They say there was no sign of a struggle. Autopsies revealed no trace of drugs. But analysis of the family apartment and electronic devices showed the mother of the family and her twin sister, who lived with them, were deeply involved in survivalist and conspiracy theories. After the tragedy, the apartment was found full of emergency supplies of food. The family rarely went out and the children were homeschooled. The investigation concludes this was a collective suicide planned in advance. It seems the two women really believed and persuaded the children, too, that the world was a hostile place and they were waiting for the right moment to leave for somewhere

better. Tragically, what seems to have triggered that moment was a welfare visit from Montreux police. They stopped by that morning with a reminder about a meeting with local authorities to discuss the children's homeschooling. The family didn't let the police in and jumped off the balcony minutes later. Today this was authorities appealed for privacy for the surviving son, who was in a coma but has now recovered. Investigators say he has no memory of that day. Ever since ChatGPT was released last November, we've witnessed the astounding capability of artificial intelligence. With relatively simple prompts, users have asked the app to write college essays and job applications and mock-up detailed photograph-like images based on text. Now Google has joined in, launching its very own long-awaited AI Chatbot to a limited number of users. And Google Bard is designed to do what Google does best, search the internet for answers. Our tech reporter is Chris Valance. I think the key thing about Bard is it's a conversational AI and it's very good at answering questions using natural language. So, you know, it really does the kind of things that a search engine would do, but it allows you to do it in a conversational way. You know, in an announcement, Google has a few examples. You ask the question, what's an easy indoor plant to care for? And Google Bard actually writes you a little essay with some suggestions or another example from their announcement. How do I get my daughter interested in fly fishing? And again, there are various suggestions, a range of suggestions, written in regular prose of the kind a human being might write with answers to those questions. There are errors in some of those answers, which is interesting. Google is very clean to stress that this is an experiment. But you know, the answers are kind of convincing and people clearly are enjoying interacting with these chatbots, which is why everybody's asking the question, is this really the future of search? Is this how people are going to want to look for information? I asking a question, getting a response in in sort of regular English, if you like, rather than the list. And it sounds really impressive. I love the idea about plant care, because I'm terrible at killing plants. Are there any drawbacks to it? One of the big things is that these systems have a propensity to what they people say is a tendency to hallucinate. Occasionally, the answers are simply factually wrong, but they sound very convincing. You know, it's like one of your friends who knows everything and can talk very plausibly about all sorts of things. And to be honest, Google has always sort of held back on releasing its AI technology. I mean, BARD is based on Lambda, which was a conversational AI that Google hadn't developed for a long time.

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It was so impressive that rather famously, one Google employee thought it was sentient. I mean, it wasn't, but it was convincing enough that even one of their own employees thought it might have feelings. So they've been they've been sort of working on AI technology for quite some time, doing some impressive things, but they never released it because they were concerned about various things such as bias in the system. I mean, these these systems are trained on, you know, all the stuff that's out there on the internet, which obviously includes lots of things that are sort of offensive, racist, etc. And that, you know, despite their best efforts, those sorts of things can get incorporated into the models. So in a sense, the models reflect the flaws in humanity. That was Chris Valance. Still to come, we'll look at the new evidence on the link between the contraceptive pill and cancer. These increases in risk for breast cancer have to, of course, be viewed in the context of what we know about the many benefits of taking hormonal contraceptives. That's all to come after this. Dear Daughter is a podcast from the BBC World Service full of personal insight and thoughtful letters of advice. Things that can inform you, can guide you, can support you. It's a handbook to life for daughters everywhere. And we're back for season two. Search for Dear Daughter wherever you get your BBC podcast. Dear Daughter. Welcome back to the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. An American trucker who spied on a dissident Irish Republican group has told the BBC that the British security service MI5 did not want its leader to be arrested. David Rupert infiltrated the real IRA on behalf of the security service as well as the FBI. He's been speaking about his experiences for the first time as Jennifer O'Leary reports from Belfast. David Rupert, a six-foot-seven tall trucker from upstate New York, went from being a tourist enthralled to Irish history to working for the FBI and the security service MI5, infiltrating Irish Republican groups militantly opposed to Northern Ireland's fragile peace. He struck gold when Michael McKeivitt, the leader of the group that admitted responsibility for the 1998 OMA bomb, the deadliest atrocity in Northern Ireland's troubles, put him on the top table of the real IRA, its ruling army council. But David Rupert's spy masters seemingly had competing priorities. The FBI wanted to build a prosecution case with the Irish police against McKeivitt. Yet according to David Rupert, MI5 wanted to keep him inside the real IRA. MI5 wanted to keep it going forever and the FBI won. It was more important to MI5 to have a thumb on the pulse than it is to go arrest a couple people and prosecute them. The MI5 didn't want him arrested. The BBC put that to MI5 but they did not respond. David Rupert went on to give evidence in a Dublin court against Michael McKeivitt, leading to his conviction in 2003 for directing terrorism. In all of the years of the troubles and peace thereafter, Rupert did what few spies have ever done. He faced down an Irish Republican godfather in court. That was Jennifer O'Leary in Northern Ireland. Next to Indonesia and parents whose children died or were injured by contaminated cough syrup have been allowed to take the government and pharmaceutical companies to court. They're seeking millions of dollars in damages. More than 200 Indonesian children have died of acute kidney injury since last year. About 100 deaths have also been reported in the Gambia and Uzbekistan. Rebecca Kesby spoke to Valje Baraputri, a reporter for BBC Indonesia. This lawsuit is a class action brought up by a group of 25 parents whose child either died or injured because of the cough syrup contamination that led to acute kidney injuries in their children. So they asked for compensation from the Indonesian governments

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and companies and pharmaceutical suppliers of almost \$200,000 for every child killed and about \$130,000 for every child injured. What they're actually wanting here in the class action is accountability from those parties. So the court has ruled that this can be heard and various agents are up for potential legal action against them in Indonesia as you say. But this does have an international element because we know that there've been similar cases in the Gambia and also in Uzbekistan where children have been affected. Where does this all come from? Why was the cough mixture so lethal in some cases? I spoke to the Indonesian police who led an investigation on this. They found that the cause of this whole tragedy is global, which was the scarcity of the solvent material used in syrupy drugs called propylene glycol. But the crime is local. So basically suppliers in Indonesia relabeled the industrial grade solvent material as pharmaceutical grade solvent material. And then they supply that to pharmaceutical companies or other suppliers that produce these drugs. That is the main cause of the situation in Indonesia, but they haven't found the evidence of transnational crime and whether this has links with other cases in other countries. The cause is global, but the crime is local. That's what they said. Okay, but for the parents, I mean the thought that you yourself gave your child something you thought would make them feel better. And actually it's what led to terrible illness or even death. I mean, that's why this must be so emotive for the parents involved. That's true. They always come to the court wearing t-shirt that says I thought it was medicine, but it was poison. The parents who talk to me, they all get their medicine for their children from health institutions, and they're all sick with the same cause. The Indonesian government, including the Health Ministry and Food and Drug Agency of Indonesia, have maintained their position as responsible parties in this situation. But the parents who came forward with this class action lawsuit want their accountability of why this could happen. That was Valje Baraputri from BBC Indonesia. Scientists have found that any type of hormonal contraceptive may increase the risk of breast cancer. Millions of women across the world take some kind of birth control pill, but data about the mini progesterone only pill had been fairly limited until now. Our health correspondent, Michelle Roberts, reports. Experts have known for some time that the combined oral contraceptive pill, which contains two hormones, estrogen and progesterone, carries a small increased risk of breast cancer for users. It wasn't clear if the same might be true for another type of hormonal contraceptive, the progesterone only mini pill, because there hadn't been enough data. Now researchers from Oxford University have done a big analysis to help advise women. They say the risk posed is roughly the same based on the findings from nearly 30,000 patient records. That risk equates to between 8 and 265 extra cancers occurring in every 100,000 users. One of the researchers, Professor Gillian Reeves, said women shouldn't stop taking their pill. These increases in risk for breast cancer have to, of course, be viewed in the context of what we know about the many benefits of taking hormonal contraceptives, not just in terms of birth control, but also because we know that oral contraceptives actually provide quite substantial and long-term protection from other female cancers such as ovarian cancer and endometrial cancer. The tiny breast cancer risk, skewed towards older users, goes away within a few years of stopping the medication. Experts say anyone worried about breast cancer and contraception or unsure of what type they're using should talk to their doctor or family planning clinic. Michelle Roberts. The actress Gwyneth Paltrow has appeared in court in the United States as a civil trial begins over claims she seriously injured a man in a

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hit and run skiing accident in 2016. Rachel Wright is following the case. Gwyneth Paltrow appeared in court on Tuesday alongside her lawyer for the opening arguments in the civil trial. She's being sued by Terry Sanderson, a retired optometrist who alleges that the actress was skiing out of control when she hit him at the Deer Valley Resort in Park City, Utah.

In his opening statement, Sanderson's lawyer told the jury that Paltrow's behavior was reckless. Distracted skiers caused crashes. Defendant Gwyneth Paltrow knew that looking up the mountain and to the side while skiing down the mountain was dangerous. And she knew that skiing that way, that it was not a matter of if, but when, she would crash into somebody below her and someone would get seriously and permanently hurt. Terry Sanderson, who is 76, claims the accident caused him a brain injury, four broken ribs and other serious injuries and is seeking damages of \$300,000. He also alleges both Paltrow and her instructor skied away after the accident.

Gwyneth Paltrow, who won an Oscar in 1998 for *Shakespeare in Love*, is countersuing, claiming Sanderson hit her with a full body blow. Her lawyer told the court that the charges against her were offensive. Both Paltrow and Sanderson are due to testify at the trial, which is set to last for eight days. Rachel Wright

About 300 million people around the world have been celebrating Noru's, the Persian New Year. It's been observed for 3,000 years in different regions, including the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East. The day marks the end of the old year and the first day of spring. And this year it took on a special significance in Iran, as Kazara Najee from BBC Persian explains. Yes, it's a big day in Noru's for the Persian world and the Iranians particularly. It's like Christmas Day in the Christian world and it's the time when families get together, they sit around the table, they eat together, they spend time together. It's the spring equinox when actually change happens and we go into the spring. But this year, because of the problems that the country has had over the last six months, sweeping unrest, clamped on by the Iranian authorities, shooting at the demonstrators, we have had at least 570 people dead, many more injured, thousands arrested, many people went into hiding, some people had to leave the country. So this year it seems the celebrations are pretty low-key and we in the BBC Persian have been getting

videos from viewers, particularly those families of people who lost their loved ones in the last five months and their friends spending the time by the graveside of their loved ones.

And how are the Iranian officials dealing with this? Are they trying to make out that it's business as usual and people are still celebrating? Absolutely. We had the Iranian leader speaking today one hour, 20 minutes in it. He speaks 13 times of either the enemy or the enemies, his favorite words, and everything is normal. Iran is in a good place. It's only the enemies who are making trouble. We're making a lot of progress in science, in technology, in irrigation, in dam building, in defence industries, in nuclear science. We're making all this progress and it's only the enemies who are causing problems for us, but we are very strong. Who, he asked, which country could

have withstood so much pressure from the international community as we have done?

That was Kazra Najee from BBC Persian. Finally, in a career spanning more than 50 years, he's notched up a string of hits, including *Father and Son* and *Peace Train*. Along the way, Kat Stevens converted to Islam, changing his name to Yusuf Islam, now known as Yusuf Kat Stevens. He's releasing his 17th album in June, when he'll also be playing at the Glastonbury Festival

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in Southern England for the first time in the so-called Legends slot. The singer-songwriter talked to our culture editor, Katie Razzle, about his music, his faith and performing at Glastonbury. I met Yusuf Kat Stevens at a gallery in central London with real significance to him. Well, I lived up there above the shop and this is where, you know, business took place. That business was his parents' restaurant, where he often worked. My imagination began in this place, you know, that's where I started to look beyond the sink and the mop. At the height of his fame in the 1970s, after a long bout of tuberculosis and then a near-death experience, he walked away from pop stardom, changing his name and embracing Islam. He's promoting his latest album of 12 songs called King of a Land. And your faith leaps out of almost every song. Do you feel that now, all these years on from when you did decide to embrace Islam, Britain certainly is a much more secular country than it was even back then. It is, but nobody loses a spirit. Nobody's lost that in Britain. Problem is, it's covered with other slush and mush and whatever. And politics, quite honestly, I've got the answer for that anyway in this album. What's the answer? Lock up all the leaders in London Zoo, it's obvious. So you're blaming the politicians for the ills of the world. Well, a lot of them, yeah. Oh, baby, baby, it's a wild world. Very recently you've been announced in the legends slot at Glastonbury. What does that mean to you, do you think? Well, it's probably on a lot of people's bucket lists. It's probably on mine too. Do you see yourself as a legend? I ain't gone yet, you know, but so I mean, legends are supposed to be things that after they're gone, you know, but I reckon so. Will you be playing the old songs? Will you be playing some of the new album as well? Have you decided? My catalogue, you know, is enormous. I mean, having to choose is the problem, but I've got a lot of advisors, you know, and my brother the other day said, don't forget hard-headed woman. Yeah, you're right. That's a good one. And of course, wild world and things like that, father and son. First guys are deepest. Some people still don't know that I wrote it. It wasn't watched yet. And in one of your songs on the album, How Good It Feels, you say, I know what it's like to be misunderstood. And I know that you said you were misunderstood over your comments around Sir Salman Rushdie and the fatwa. But I wondered, you know, he has been recently attacked. What you thought when you heard about that attack? Yeah, I was horrified because misunderstood is exactly what I was. I never supported the fatwa and I went to as much length as I could go to explain myself. But nobody wanted to print that side of the story. And, you know, and I had to, you know, live with that. And I think a lot of it was basically political. And I'm not a political animal. I'm not. That was the singer Youssef Kat Stevens talking to our culture editor, Katie Razzle. And that's all from us for now. But there will be a new edition of the Global News podcast later. If you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it, you can send us an email. The address is globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk. You can also find us on Twitter at Global News Pod. This edition was mixed by Chris Kazaris. The producer was Liam McCheffrey. The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Charlotte Gallagher. Until next time, goodbye. On Spark and Fire, creators share their stories to fuel your creativity.

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