

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / European leaders meet in Spain

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

I'm Nick Mars and at 13 hours GMT on Thursday, the 5th of October, these are our main stories.

European leaders have met in Spain with concerns about US support for Ukraine

at the top of the agenda. A glacier lake overflows in the Indian Himalayas,

flooding several towns. We get the latest on the many people missing.

Also in this podcast, we hear about Ukraine's entry for the Oscars,

a documentary called 20 Days in Mariupol.

And this year's winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

When European heads of state get together these days, there is one issue that always

tends to be near the top of the agenda. The war in Ukraine.

At the weekend, the US Congress was forced to drop plans for new financial aid to the

country to avert a government shutdown. The ousting of the Republican leader

out the House of Representatives has added to the uncertainty over aid.

And that's really concerning the 48 European leaders who've gathered in Grenada in Spain.

On his way into the summit, the European Union's most senior diplomat, Joseph Borrell,

issued a warning that EU countries would not be able to make up the loss in US support.

Certainly Europe cannot replace the US. Europe is increasing its support.

In the table that are proposed for 50 billion euros for the civilian and economic side,

and 20 billion for the military side. And we did that before waiting for the US to take decisions.

Just before we recorded this podcast, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

addressed the summit. He told European leaders that his country was defending itself against

Russia to ensure European security. Thanks to Ukraine,

your soldiers are not fighting against Russia right now. And we do not doubt NATO's strengths.

And but I'm sure none of you wants to find out what it will be like if, God forbid,

NATO has to stand up for one of you. We have to win in Ukraine so that Putin cannot scale this

aggression to someone, someone else. And it is realistic. I've been speaking to our diplomatic

correspondent James Landau, who's in Grenada. Well, I think there is a concern diplomats and

policymakers across Europe are now trying to work out what they can do if that is to happen.

They know it's not going to happen immediately. But certainly if you talk to any any leaders here,

they have been all falling over themselves to reassure Ukraine and each other that support

will continue. But as you had heard in that clip from Joseph Borrell, if the US pulls out all of

its support, then Europe simply does not have the capacity to fill what the United States has

been providing, especially in terms of military support. So it's a concern at the moment. But

I think that there is still a sense of trying to plan for it rather than expect it. So a sense of unity over that to a certain extent. What about on another key issue that's being discussed there, migration? That has been overtaken a little bit by Ukraine in the last few hours. But that's an issue that there does need to be some kind of unanimity on, doesn't it?

Most of the discussions about immigration across Europe tend to be about sharing the burden of migration. If one country has a large number of migrants, how does that burden share with other European countries? It's quite often discussions about policies to return migrants from other two other countries. In the UK specifically, there's a debate and policy about how to try to stop people crossing the channel in small boats. I think what the British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and the Italian Prime Minister, George Maloney, want to do is to try and say, look, we need to think about preventing this migration happening in the first place, to think of its root causes, in other words, tackling people smugglers and tightening up borders. And I think that's the discussion that will be had at least by some of the leaders here. But this is an unofficial, informal meeting. It's not a summit where big decisions are made and pieces of paper with large plans are signed up to. And, James, there was one other issue. The Azeris and the Armenians were supposed to get together at this summit. That has not happened. A degree of disappointment there. Yeah, I think there's disappointment there, not least because this is a new kind of summit. This is only the third of its kind. It was set up by President Macron of France after Russia's invasion of Ukraine to be sort of a venue, a forum for countries that are not just those in the EU, but also those outside the EU within Europe, to discuss issues like this. And as you say, there was an expectation that the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan would meet. That's not now happening because the Azerbaijan is pulled out in a dispute over the Turkish role in any discussions that were going to take place. So I think that there is a sense that this summit has sort of missed a trick. This could have been a moment where, as a sort of new diplomatic organisation, it could have shown its full colours. It hasn't got that opportunity now.

James Landau. Let's head to India now, where rescue workers are searching for more than 100 missing people after flash floods swamped several towns in the northeast state of Sikkim. 14 people are known to have died so far. Video footage shows the muddy water surging into built-up areas, causing houses to collapse. I got more from the BBC's Mayoresh Konur, who's monitoring events from

Mumbai. The situation is still serious and rescue operation is going on the north part of the Sikkim. This is a very hilly area in the northeastern part of India. So not so easy to carry out any rescue operation. But what we have been told is the National Disaster Management Force has been heavily deployed, along with there's much help from the Indian Army as well. As we can confirm, over 22,000 people are still been directly affected and 21 relief camps have been operated so far. Yesterday, there was a serious news story about 23 Army personnel also being missing in these floods.

And what we can confirm that one Army Javan has been rescued, but still they search for 22. And among over 100 people are still missing. Another cause of concern is this is tourist destination for many Indians and over 3,000 tourists are currently in this hilly state of Sikkim. So most of them are stranded in various locations. And so their safety is also one of the most important tasks in front of state government and also the respective governments of other states from which the students have gone to Sikkim. And Mayoresh, briefly, what were the sequences of events that led to this? Was it just a serious amount of rain? Yes, actually, this situation

started getting serious yesterday afternoon. And what the media has been informed that is it is possibly the extreme condition because of cloudburst. And this is not the entire Sikkim state, only the northern part of Sikkim. There is a glacial lake there that caused a kind of a heavy rain pouring in this part. And also, there's a lake down the south of Lonav because it was overflowing the dam lake. And so the extra water was released from the dam that really caused the floods and people were out of there. Mayoresh Connor in Mumbai. Pakistan's government has ordered all unauthorized Afghan asylum seekers to leave the country within a month. Currently, there are more than four million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, of whom just under half are unregistered.

The crackdown applies to all nationalities, but the vast majority of migrants are Afghans. I correspondent Anna Foster spoke to two Afghan women in Islamabad, Nargis Karima, who's 37, and her sister Sara, who's 14. Nargis worked as a journalist and left Kabul with her family after the Taliban takeover in 2021. She had a visa and could stay in Pakistan, but her father and her sister came illegally. She told us what daily life is like in Pakistan. Day by day, it's a very difficult living in Pakistan. The government of Pakistan and the security system is getting harder and for mostly for peoples who don't have valid visas and they captured them and take them to their place and they arrest them and they tortured them. And my small sister's visa's also finished. So I really scared that maybe they harm my family, my father and my small sisters. As you know, we don't trust them. My sister is as she's very small. She's 14 year we scared about her and for her educations. Yeah, please, Sara, tell me about about how things are for you at the moment, especially now that you're faced with the possibility of not being able to stay. It's really hard in this situation because we are allowed to do and we couldn't get out of our houses because of the situation. I'm really scared and I cannot continue my education and here I don't even feel safe being here inside my house because every single time I look at the window and police's cars arrive and goes and we feel scared that they're going to come and capture us and all the other people they did. This isn't the first time that this has happened to you because you went through this in Afghanistan as well, didn't you? Yes, yes, this isn't the first time but it hasn't been this worse and I don't feel safe here inside my home either.

And you said, Sara, about your education, which obviously would have been difficult in Afghanistan as well, but you can't even study in Pakistan now because of the fear that you'll be taken.

I cannot even study here because if I go to school they'll capture me like the other people they did and they don't allow allowance and admissions in here because they don't have valid visas and stuff and because of that I cannot even continue my education. I cannot even get out of my house. That's really terrifying. I couldn't even go to my rooftop to look out because I'm too scared to face the situation we're going through. Is this something that's coming only from the authorities? How do the ordinary Pakistanis treat you? They don't treat us that well either. Yeah, like they treat us like we're something like different. They treat us because of different culture and stuff.

That report was by Anna Foster. The brutal siege of Mariupol saw the deaths of more than 20,000 Ukrainians between February and May of last year and defined the brutality of the war. The Southern

Port city remains under Russian occupation and during the siege almost all reporters fled Mariupol except one team of local journalists working for the Associated Press who stayed there for three weeks. For most of that time, theirs was the only news footage shot and broadcast bringing to the world's attention some of the most harrowing images of the conflict so far such as the bombing of

the city's maternity hospital. Their daily dispatches have been turned into a film 20 days in Mariupol. It's been released in the UK tomorrow and is Ukraine's entry for the Oscars.

Nikola Stambbridge spoke to the filmmaker.

The hospital is surrounded. Ukrainian Associated Press reporter, Mr Slav Chernov. Dozens of doctors, hundreds of patients and us.

Russian tanks turn their cannons towards the hospital where he's trapped with his cameraman and producer. I have no illusions about what will happen to us if we are caught.

Carrying 30 hours of film capturing the siege of Mariupol. Having only been able to file 30 minutes of footage during their time in the city they turn the rest into the harrowing ward winning documentary 20 days in Mariupol. We agreed we will take this risk. It's very important personally and for history of Ukraine as well. Devastating every day as more and more people died in front of us. More and more bombs were falling on the city. Air strikes on the southern city of Mariupol destroyed a children's and maternity hospital. For once the aftermath of the bombing here at the city's maternity hospital was filmed for the world to see.

We worked as long as we could and then we used an opportunity to leave. We were saved by a local policeman. We meet Vladimir the police officer who helps you at great cost to himself and his family because he hopes your footage will change the course of the war. Our people needs help from international society. Please help Mariupol. Unfortunately I'm a long time already disillusioned hoping that journalism can change a lot except informing people. My hope is that if the footage was used to negotiate the green corridor and it was if the footage and photos helped for families to find their loved ones that's already a lot. Do you know what is happening in Mariupol now? We are in contact with some people inside Mariupol but they are afraid to talk to anyone. Too many examples of what happens to people who are pro-Ukrainian and occupied territories. All the evidences of potential war crimes are being erased right now as longer Mariupol is under occupation less chance there is for investigations.

The Russians say they aren't targeting civilians. This is 18 month old Krill.

Medics try to save the boy. They cannot.

Why do you use music in the film which can heighten tension even further than perhaps is necessary with this subject? The main idea was how to transfer a viewer into into this state of mind how is it to be trapped people who who were buried on the rubble who were just burned in their houses. That's what we tried to bring in with the music those voices of lives that are lost. As we drive away I keep thinking about all the people who stretch this will remain unknown. I will see my daughters and I can only hope that these people survive and will be with their families too. In the film you say that you have no illusions about what would happen to you if you're caught. Do you sometimes have to justify what you

do with your family and your young children? Is it fair on them? No I definitely don't need to justify anything. We just have to get through this in a way that when we look back we can say we didn't just survive but we also did something good to people that are around us. And you're still there now? Very very very close to the front line. However we try how big the work is it's still not enough to show the scale of suffering and destruction and the struggle and hope at the same time. So it's only by continuing this work we can only try not to succeed but try to show as much as possible. Yesterday I told one of the officers who extracted us from the hospital thank you for saving us. He said thank you for telling the story of this city.

Nicola Stambidge reporting.

Coming up in a couple of minutes what has Uganda's opposition leader Bobby Wine been detained at the

airport and this surface is the actual surface that people would have been walking on 600 years ago.

A Shakespearean discovery have they found a stage where the bard once acted?

That world has eaten up and spit out a lot of young and attractive guys. This is the story of one of fashion's dark secrets. I was overwhelmed like I had never seen anything like this. At the height of Abercrombie and Fitch's success. This was me being carefully manipulated. Being lied too tricked and traded like a commodity. Investigating allegations that would take me into a world of money, sex and power. This is World of Secrets season one the Abercrombie guys. Listen wherever you

get your podcasts. Now you don't read my books for the plots. The words of the Norwegian writer Ewan Fossler who has in the past few hours been named the winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature. The 64 year old's works have been translated into more than 40 languages.

The chairman of the Nobel committee Anders Olsen said Fossler's first plate, someone is going to come. His international breakthrough in 1998 reflected the writer's distinctiveness. Even in this early piece with its themes and fearful anticipation and crippling jealousy Fossler's singularity is fully evident. In his radical reduction of language and dramatic action he exposes human anxiety and ambivalence at its core. I got more details from the arts journalist Vincent Doud. Well as he said Norwegian writer age 64 lives now partly in Norway and partly

in Austria. He's definitely a man of letters in the European tradition. Novels, poetry, children's books actually essays. I would say he's best known just about as a playwright especially in Scandinavia

and in German speaking countries. He's less well known in the UK than in the USA. That's definitely true. For instance here in the UK he's published by this small although excellent imprint Fitzcarraldo. So he's not part of the mass market thus far. But Fossler is best known, he's probably the best known literary talent Norway has produced in recent years but that's terribly snobbishly to omit Jonasbo. His counterpart much further up the best seller internationally. There is a very very long list of Fossler publications at least 30 plays and that's without all the prose and poetry. And we heard from Anders Olsen there roughly wide being chosen, reducing human emotions. Why do you think he was chosen? Well the Nobel Prize people as I'm sure you know try to come up each year with an epithet to say why the winner gets the roughly million dollar prize, 11 million Swedish krona. He's been tipped to get this prize for quite some time.

They said his innovative plays and poems give voice to the unsayable. Now make of that what you will. And Vincent which books and works of his should we read? Well we should say he's won a very large number of literary prizes such as the Ibsen Prize in 2010 and the European Prize for Literature. So for serious readers he's known for novels such as Boathouse and his mysterious Times menacing plays which have been seen pretty widely in Europe. He is often compared almost inevitably to be absolutely honest with Harold Pinter and Samuel Beckett. So by some reckoning he's the most performed playwright in Europe. He writes about our failure to communicate about the inadequacy of human relationships. So he's never going to be it's true adapted for a Broadway musical or a big West End show but that's a good thing. He says the universe of his play is created from zero. I prefer not to know anything before I start. I don't know exactly what I'm

listening for but I try to listen anyway. A very literary playwright, very literary author of novels but someone who will be read more around the world because of today's prize. Vincent Dowd. In Uganda the main opposition party says its leader Bobby Wine was picked up by police on returning to the country from a trip abroad. The National Unity Party says the sing-a-turn politician was seized just moments after landing at Intéby International Airport on Thursday morning. The video is being widely shared on social media. Where are you taking him? Well it appears to show a group of non-uniform security guards grabbing the form of President Contender as soon as he disembarks before shoving him into a waiting van which then sped off into the distance. Bobby Wine's supporters had planned to hold a rally and accompany him to his home north of the capital Kampala but police had said such gatherings were illegal. Will Ross is our Africa regional editor. Well it seems that the authorities in Uganda were worried that there was going to be a huge gathering of Bobby Wine supporters from the airport in Intéby into Kampala. There have been occasions in the past when opposition politicians have returned from abroad and that's prompted huge crowds to gather. It clearly suits the government and the authorities in Uganda for there not to be a big opposition gathering. So he was whisked away and the police have denied that there was an arrest as alleged by the opposition and say he was merely successfully escorted to his home. That's the language that the police use. But the as you say the opposition party calls it an arrest and clearly he was taken against his will. Ahead of the landing back in the country there was a plan for this sort of procession and we understand there will be opposition rallies but this is probably a sign yet again of the authorities in Uganda not wanting there to be any kind of headwind and gathering of the opposition to have big rallies. And Bobby Wine says that he's been arrested and persecuted on spurious charges many times at the bar. He alleges physical assault during some of those detentions. The background to this is that he represents a serious threat to the ruling party. Well that's right. He is roughly half the age of President Museveni who's not far off 80 now and people are looking towards the next election in 2026 and certainly with a very youthful population in Uganda Bobby Wine has a considerable support especially in urban areas and that is somewhat of a threat to President Ueri Museveni who's been in power now since 1986 but it's not just Bobby Wine. You go back and look at former opposition leaders like Kesar Besejei who many people would say was you know fairly brave throughout all the assaults and arrests he went through and Bobby Wine's kind of taken on that role now of being the main opposition person and that means you get arrested often. He's been charged with all kinds of crimes including treason and there have been in the past very violent clashes between opposition supporters and the security forces. There are people in Uganda though who say that you know these planned rallies and processions that block the traffic it does kind of disrupt the normal everyday life and some people do get a bit tired of these clashes between the opposition and the police that sort of disrupt normal life. Will Ross. India is the host of this year's cricket world cup which has just gone underway. The love of the sport of course runs deep in India from big cities to small towns and in one rural village an enthusiastic girls cricket team is breaking traditions and dreaming big. South Asia correspondent Samira Hussein reports from Punjab. The pure joy of cricket. These players are part of the Gulab Cricket Academy all girls all from neighboring villages all heart. In rural communities girls don't usually get these kinds of opportunities. They are the lucky ones playing on a cricket pitch in the heart of harm country. Her similar board has been on the team since it started four years ago. She plays with passion

and dreams of making it big. When we are playing a match I feel like I am wearing a jersey for team India. When I play I feel only one thing that I am not playing for India now but I will play for India's cricket team someday. There's a lot more happening here than just girls playing cricket. They're also breaking with tradition. They're building confidence both on and off the pitch and they're also changing people's mindsets in terms of what girls can do. Gulab Singh Shergil wanted to be a professional cricketer but lacked opportunity and resources so he started this plucky little team free of cost to encourage these girls to dream beyond the boundaries of their rural communities. Mostly in Indian villages girls are not permitted to go outside their homes. Now we are also able to have matches between girls and boys. That makes them proud of themselves. Now they are able to tell their parents that I can do it. For a few hours a day they are free from societal pressures and able to just be kids.

Samira Hussain. Now you can be pretty sure that right now there is someone somewhere performing a Shakespeare play on stage but how about acting on the very stage where the Bard himself once acted. Quite a prospect and experts believe they found the only such place that still exists. Colin Patterson went to St George's Guildhall Theatre in eastern England to take a look. Essentially we can see the top of the massive floorboards. Historical buildings expert Dr Jonathan Green looking through an improvised trapdoor in the Guildhall's auditorium at what the theatre believes is a stage on which Shakespeare acted. This surface is the actual surface that people would have been walking on 600 years ago and what's really interesting is this floor was here in 1592 when we think Shakespeare is performing in Kings Lynn. Using tree ring dating he worked out these floorboards were made between 1417 and 1430 and a borough account book shows that Shakespeare's acting company came to town when theatres in London were shut due to the plague. Shakespeare famously wrote all the world's a stage. Experts say it's very likely he did appear on this one.

Our entertainment correspondent Colin Patterson.

And that's all from us for now but there will be a new edition of the Global News Podcast later on. 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 X formerly known as Twitter at Global News Pod. This edition was produced by Harry Bly. It was mixed by Joe McCartney.

The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Nick Miles and until next time goodbye.

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