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Hi, I'm Hannah and I'm very excited to be hosting What in the World? a new daily podcast from the BBC World Service, where we try to help you make sense of the world around you, of the big things that are happening, the small things that are happening and everything in between. Search for What in the World wherever you get your BBC podcasts and hit subscribe.

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

I'm Robin Brandt and in the early hours of Friday the 11th of August, these are our main stories.

Five US citizens have been freed from prison in Iran and moved to house arrest.

Wildfires in Hawaii have been declared to be a disaster, allowing federal aid for the recovery effort. The president of Ivory Coast says he will deploy soldiers to potentially intervene in Niger, where the military seized power last month.

Also in this podcast, Virgin Galactic has completed its first flight for paying customers.

I watched the three of them go up for 90 minutes and return safely back down to earth.

We start with news from Iran about four Americans imprisoned there.

They have left prison and have been moved to house arrest. A fifth man is said to have already been moved to conditions with fewer restrictions on his liberty.

Talks have been taking place for years to secure their release. The US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, has just described their house's detention as a positive step that he hoped would lead to their eventual return to the US.

I asked our chief international correspondent at least to set how significant this development is, given that there are no formal diplomatic relations between Tehran and Washington DC.

It is a huge moment. President Biden and indeed President Obama before him, but certainly during President Biden's administration, he has made it a priority to bring home Americans who are, in legal terms, said to be wrongfully detained. And when it comes to the United States and indeed other countries, including Russia, North Korea, it's seen that they are hostages to be used as bargaining chips. So there have been difficult negotiations for some time. There have been moments where we've had reports that they are close to a deal or that a deal was all but done and then fell apart. It's involved the state of Qatar, sometimes the Gulf state of Oman, sometimes Switzerland. But this announcement by the lawyer for one of the detained, Namazi, is the first sign that a deal is all but done. This is a rare, bright spot, but it could still be weeks before they are free.

Well, that was going to be my next question. I mean, it clearly is a very gradual incremental process, negotiations, possible move to house arrest. What's the expectation on if and when they will actually be allowed to leave Iran?

So what we understand so far, and it has to be confirmed officially, but we have known that these elements have been in play for a very long time, is that in exchange for the freedom for these dual Iranian American citizens, the US will transfer some \$6 billion of Iran's frozen assets in South Korea.

Those funds we put into account in the central bank in Qatar, because there will be criticism in the United States at why is Iran being given money? It is Iran's own money frozen as part of sanctions. But to ensure that it is only used for humanitarian reasons, the account will be controlled by the government of Qatar, so that they can only use it to pay

for humanitarian purchases, such as medicine and food. And we understand that this will be a difficult process given the amount of money and given all the web of sanctions, that could take several weeks before that money is deposited. And once it is deposited, then you'll see the movement possibly if all goes according to plan of those American hostages or prisoners in Iran. And then you will see also freedom for some Iranians in American jail. So it is complicated, as you can see. At least to set. Now, President Biden has declared a major disaster in Hawaii, where wildfires on the island of Maui have killed at least 36 people. The declaration allows the release of emergency federal support to help recovery efforts in areas affected by wildfires. Mr. Biden spoke to reporters. We're working as quickly as possible to fight these fires and evacuate residents and tourists. In the meantime, our prayers were for the people of Hawaii, but not just our prayers. Every asset we have will be available to them. And we've seen they've seen their homes, their business destroyed, and some of lost loved ones. And it's not over yet. The President has also ordered the U.S. Coast Guard, Army, and Navy to join the relief effort. 2,000 residents of Western Maui remain in emergency shelters. Thousands of visitors have been evacuated from the island. Helicopters have dropped more than half a million litres of water to try to suppress the fires. Its thought-fallen power cables may have started the blaze. Reports say the historic town of Lahaina has been mostly destroyed. Kikoa Lansford lives there. He said help didn't arrive fast enough. It's going to take years for fix, years. This is not even the worst of it. Still get dead bodies in the water, floating, and on the seawall. They've been sitting there since last night. We've been pulling people out since last night, trying to save people's lives. And I feel like we're not getting the help we need. On Wednesday, we spoke to Malika Dudley, a meteorologist in Maui who was evacuated from her home. A day later, we contacted her again to see how she's coping. I woke up to just harrowing stories from some of my Instagram followers. I'll tell you one. There is a woman who said that she had seconds. She had to run for her life, jumped over the seawall into the ocean, and spent seven hours in the ocean waiting to be rescued. She and her apartment mates were experiencing hypothermic type of issues, medical issues, and so they would approach things that were on fire in the water to try to stay warm. Yet then they would experience burn conditions. So these are the types of stories that we're hearing coming out of that area. These are the types of people that have been rescued over the last several hours. This is a national emergency. There are mass casualties. And though we had a red flag warning predicting a fire, nobody could have predicted this. This is a catastrophe. We're so thankful for all of the officials, for the firefighters, our first responders. We're so thankful for the work that they're doing. With something of this magnitude, it's difficult to to get it right, you know, quote unquote, but I think they're doing their best. It's just when it's life and death, your best is not good enough. Malika Dudley in Maui. Now the president of Ivory Coast says about a thousand troops from his country will join an international force that's been put on standby to intervene in Niger. Alasani Uhtara was speaking after an emergency meeting of the West African Regional Block, ECOWAS, which has put the troops on alert. He said the group was determined to restore Niger's elected president, Mohammed Bazoum, who was ousted in a coup last month. ECOWAS had previously warned those behind the takeover to reinstate Mohammed Bazoum by last Sunday or risk the potential use of force. But now they say engaging in dialogue is the priority, as our Africa correspondent Andrew Harding explains. Niger's neighbors are looking for ways to push the country

back to democracy. After a meeting of regional leaders, it was announced that a relatively small joint military force would be put on alert, most likely to secure Niger's borders at this stage. At the same meeting, Nigeria's president, Bola Tinubu, said diplomacy needed to be given more of a chance. Some will find that reassuring. There's a chance that economic sanctions and political pressure on impoverished landlocked Niger will persuade the generals there to agree to a timetable for a return to democracy. But the coup plotters may equally feel emboldened. They've just named a new cabinet, and they're still holding Niger's legitimate president in custody, with growing international concern about his safety. There are certainly good reasons for concern, even alarm. In recent years, coups and conflicts have spread right across a swathe of Africa, just below the Sahara Desert. From Mali to Sudan, and now Niger, instability is growing, democracy is in retreat, Russian mercenaries and Islamist militants are gaining influence, and millions of civilians are struggling. Andrew Harding reporting. Next, here in the UK, members of militant groups in Northern Ireland say they've acquired private details of police officers, including some who work with the British security service MI5. The information was accidentally placed online this week as a result of what the police service in Northern Ireland, or the PSNI, says was human error. Peace Accord signed in 1998 largely brought an end to decades of sectarian violence in the region, but some groups there have never accepted the peace process. Their claim to have accessed private information hasn't been verified. But the head of Northern Ireland's police, the chief constable Simon Byrne, says they're providing advice to those potentially at risk. He added he won't be resigning. From Belfast, Charlotte Gallagher has more. This has been a disastrous few days for the police service of Northern Ireland, with morale among officers at rock bottom. All of their names were accidentally published online when the force was responding to a freedom of information request. Then details of a second data breach emerged just 24 hours later. A police laptop, radio and another list of names were stolen from a car in July. An emergency policing board meeting was called so senior politicians could question the chief constable. Simon Byrne cut short his holiday to return to Belfast to deal with the crisis. Admitting the data breach was on an industrial scale, Mr Byrne said he was deeply sorry. But played down fears the list of 10,000 names, including those working with MI5 here, was in the hands of dissident Republicans. We are now aware that dissident Republicans claim to be in possession of some of this information circulating on WhatsApp. And as we speak, we are advising officers and staff about how to do with that and any further risk that they face. We haven't yet been able to verify what the substance is behind that claim or see any of the information that dissident Republicans assert that they have. It's that suggestion that has been most worrying to officers. Dissident Republicans were behind the attempted murder of a well-known detective in Ome in February. The security situation in Northern Ireland means some officers don't even tell family and friends what they do for work. No staff have been rehoused yet and it's not known if any are asking to be moved. The immediate concerns for the PSNI are the safety of officers and ensuring a data breach like this can never happen again. But the financial implications of this error may be huge. Lawyers are already making it known that they will represent officers and other employees who have had their identities revealed. With more than 10,000 people affected, the potential compensation bill could run to tens of millions of pounds.

Charlotte Gallagher in Belfast. Now let's go to Ukraine where a temporary humanitarian corridor is reportedly going to open in the Black Sea on Friday so that stranded ships carrying grain and other products can get out. The Ukrainian Navy announced the move, although it admitted there's still a threat from sea mines and the Russian Navy. Moscow has not confirmed whether it has agreed to the plan. Archive correspondent James Waterhouse said international shipping companies and crucially insurers are yet to be convinced. I'm going to stick my neck out here Robin and say no it is not going to happen. I'm struggling to see an armada of Ukrainian vessels making their way out into the Black Sea. Waters that are still dominated by the Russian Navy which seems to have resume its blockade of the Ukrainian ports that it doesn't occupy and not just that since it's withdrawn from a landmark agreement which allowed Ukraine to export grain. It has pummeled those

ports with relentless missile strikes. So I still don't know what the tactic here is from Kyiv where we have Ukraine's Navy announcing this humanitarian corridor. They say it's for commercial vessels so passenger ships as well as cargo vessels to make their way out that have been trapped there since February last year with the full-scale invasion. They even goes far to say that cameras would be installed on these vessels that would live stream content proving that it's a humanitarian endeavour and not military focused but we don't know whether they're going to be escorted and what's crucially missing from all of the all of these proposals are any kind of acknowledgement or confirmation from Russia's end and I think until you have that I think these are just words at this moment in time. Even if there was some kind of reassurance from Moscow and it was practically able to happen what about the insurers I mean crucially in the shipping industry what would their view be on it? Well it's interesting it reminds me of I was in Odessa in July last year when this grain deal was getting hashed together and even with the political declarations from Russia and Ukraine with with the UN and Turkey being the main brokers here even with those declarations what the process lacked was confidence what it was waiting for were insurers for those major shipping companies so what's the first few voyages go out for them to see that ships weren't being targeted and it gained momentum and frankly it works you know Ukraine is able to export two-thirds of what it could do before the full-scale invasion but what's lacking here is that confidence once more because would you fancy getting on a vessel and traveling out into mine infested waters and crucially it's in the detail of what Ukraine is proposing it's saying there is still a threat posed by sea mines as well as Russia itself I think that is the giveaway here I think this is Ukraine either trying to highlight Russia's continued blockade or at least trying to pressure Moscow into trying to restore the grain deal but as we've seen in the past that hasn't brought much success James Waterhouse in Kiev let's go to something a little lighter now Virgin Galactic has completed its first space tourism flight from a site in the United States for the first time Imam and her daughter Kisha Shahaf and Anna Meyers headed to the edge of space they won their ticket

in a sweepstake also on board with them was 80 year old John Goodwin he bought his ticket for \$250,000 back in 2005 he had feared that a later diagnosis of Parkinson's disease might have stopped

him our correspondent Sophie Long sent this report from the deserts in New Mexico as the passengers of galactic two made their way out of the hangar they were greeted with huge cheers

from the friends and family who had gathered at spaceport america to wish them well on their

journey

this day has been a long time coming for 80 year old John Goodwin

who bought his ticket nearly 20 years ago his wife Pauline said she never doubted it would come even after he was diagnosed with Parkinson's when you say that is on his way it makes me emotional again but I keep going in waves actually but it's been an incredibly emotional week with all the activities and but I'm feeling absolutely fine I'm very happy that he's doing it it's something that he's wanted to do from the word go carried by the virgin mothership Eve the spaceship

unity lifted off in perfect conditions from the New Mexico desert as the craft reached Apogee its highest point crowds on the ground watched on a big screen and cheered as the crew experienced

zero gravity and views of earth that only a select few have ever seen others watched at parties and Antigua with the billionaire founder of virgin galactic Sir Richard Branson and in John Goodwin's hometown of Newcastle underline he's a main part of Parkinson's he comes in talks to everybody he never sits on his own anything that he puts his mind to he does I had a hug and a kiss off him before he went I was really pleased about that as the spaceship unity touched down there was

jubilation and relief the flight was a major milestone for space tourism at least for those who can afford it tickets are currently selling for more than 350 000 pounds and there's a queue of around 800 people who already have them well once she was safely back on earth 18 year old Anna Mayers

said it was an unbelievable experience I was shocked at the things that you feel you are so much more connected to everything than you would expect to be you felt like a part of the team a part of the ship a part of the universe a part of earth that was incredible and I'm still starting Anna Mayers the new astronaut Anna Mayers

still to come humans are very bad at even repairing cartilage but lizards spontaneously regrow large amounts of cartilage when they regrow their tails so does that mean lizards could help scientists find a treatment for osteoarthritis which is currently incurable world football at the women's world cup is the podcast telling the global story of the tournament

I'm so proud of our team of our guests we're speaking to the fans who have traveled down under as they share all the excitement of this incredible competition I think we're still in the running they go all the way I'm really really proud of Vietnam is this is probably the biggest moment in their careers and Australia's right behind them world football at the women's world cup from the BBC World Service find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts welcome back to the global news podcast let's go to Ecuador in Latin America and security has been reinforced outside a detention facility in the country's capital Quito where six people suspected of killing a presidential candidate are being held Fernando Villavicencio was shot in the head at the end of a rally on Wednesday evening one of the gunman was killed in a shootout that followed it's believed that a local gang linked to a Mexican drug cartel carried out the attack and as our South America correspondent Katie Watson reports a state of emergency is now in place

videos on social media show Fernando Villavicencio leaving a campaign event surrounded by personal security and walking towards a pickup truck

when the shooting starts the person filming clearly drops down behind the vehicle to protect themselves the killing comes less than two weeks before the presidential elections Mr Villavicencio's

popularity was rising and recent polls put him in second place the current president Guillermo has declared a state of emergency that said the elections wouldn't be called off faced with the loss of a democrat and a fighter the elections aren't suspended on the contrary they have to be held and democracy has to be strengthened this is a political crime that has a terrorist character and we don't doubt that this assassination is an attempt to sabotage the electoral process Mr Villavicencio has been very outspoken about crime and corruption and was one of the few candidates to allege links between the government and organized crime in Ecuador this attack though is clear evidence of just how much power the gangs have the group which claims to have carried out the murder los lobos or the wolves is the second biggest in the country with as many as 8 000 members it's also been involved in deadly prison fights that have left many inmates dead uh South America correspondent Katie Watson reporting there's been an explosive outbreak of the mpox virus in china with infection numbers jumping almost fivefold in just a month almost 500 cases were diagnosed in july will the inardo has more a year after mpox tore through gay communities in the west the disease is now surging in china health officials say 80 percent of the new infections can't be traced cases have centered in the southern guangdong region and the capital beijing mpox renamed for monkeypox causes a fever and rash and has largely spread among gay men through sexual contact no one has yet died in this outbreak but officials are concerned they say they'll counter the disease with information campaigns although there are doubts this will be enough in the west transmission has been contained through coordinated public health action including gay men coming forward for vaccinations going to france next where it's harvest season in europe's biggest farming country fields of asparagus lettuce and radishes have been left to rot though because of a shortage of people to pick them this report from john dorrenson starts on a farm southeast of paris a woman armed with pruning shears in a jungle of tomato vines snips off bunches of ripe red fruit and tosses them into a sack as the radio plays in the background we're in one of the greenhouses of les saveurs de chaïs a large tomato cucumber and strawberry farm near fontain bleu southeast of paris farmer benjamin simonot devos says it has become more and more difficult to hire and retain workers over the past 20 years now each season begins with the fear they won't have enough hands to get the harvest in we have had to abandon some of our production because we can't harvest quickly enough due to lack of workers the worst is when there is an odd spell and big volumes of strawberries need to be harvested at the same time then it's a catastrophe food what's in the fields we are thinking of painting less in the future because harvesting in all has become so uncertain you seasonal worker lydia perera has been coming from portugal every year since 2015 to pick tomatoes at another farm called tom daki near bordeaux she works long seasons march to october she likes his work she says but she only picks cherry tomatoes she says she's too short to pick the big ones it's more complicated farmer benjamin simonot devos says this sort of work is much less grueling than it used to be thanks to technical innovations but still few french people are willing to do it people think it's too tough they are just not as hardworking as they used to be and there is not enough difference between what they earn when

they work and the end outs they get when they don't so people prefer to stay at home seasonal worker recruitment film aimed at the french posted by farmers on social media but farmers are also casting their net wider celine comme grand villa is a vegetable grower in charge of employment issues at the vegetables of france growers association it's much more difficult to find workers from other EU countries as well we used to have a lot of romanians a lot of burglarians but not anymore so we're looking further afield for example we're setting up a partnership with the french immigration office in morocco in order to offer our members seasonal workers from rural parts of morocco will come and work in france for up to six months before returning home to their country and there are others from even further away but who are already here

corine de luc is in charge of human resources at tom ducky the cooperative which employs lydia perrera we work with the necessities that enables political refugees to integrate through seasonal jobs we work with afghans in particular we have 12 afghans working here at the moment along with workers of other nationalities ukrainian from latin america as well most of them are from rural areas and i used to hard work on the family arm and the debauteurs back at his farm in the man valley i ask farmer seminal divorce what he thinks of migrant labor as a solution to france's seasonal workers shortage after a while they'll just turn into the french he says and prefer to do something easier or live off benefits in some the wrong sort of integration in the meantime though the afghans are helping get the harvest in john lawrence reporting from france scientists from the university of southern california have identified key cells involved in cartilage regeneration in lizards so you might ask why that's important well the discovery could offer insights into the treatment of osteoarthritis which is currently incurable gario donahue spoke to the author of the study thomas losito and asked him how they identified these cells we use a technique called single cell sequencing that allows us to break down a complex process into individual cells and we were able to identify both the cells that were turning into the cartilage and then the cells that were regulating that differentiation and so is there a kind of similarity between these cells and and what goes on in the human body yes all of these cells are found in the human body the cells that become the cartilage are called fibroblasts and they're one of the most common cell types found in any organism and then the cells doing the cartilage regulation are called septiclasts these are special immune cells so humans have immune cells just like these lizards but lizards are able to tweak them in a way that favors cartilage regeneration over scar formation so just to be clear humans can't grow their own cartilage but lizards can is that right correct humans are very bad at even repairing cartilage but lizards spontaneously regrow large amounts of cartilage when they regrow their tails so they are a very applicable model when you're trying to study cartilage formation and regeneration and what's the possibility of doing this to scale the interesting thing about this is that basically lizards are able to spin straw into gold they're able to take those common fibroblasts and turn them into cartilage if we can do something similar in humans that would be a source of regenerated cartilage that could be formed pretty much in any joint or skeletal source in the human body you say the important word there if how big is that if so right now we're looking at how exactly the lizards are remodeling their DNA something that we know that happens during this cartilage differentiation process if we're able to tack down those DNA changes we should be able to recreate them in human cells and what sort of timescale would you be looking at for that sort of research one of the interesting things about this study is that we applied what we learned and formed new

cartilage in a lizard limb a situation that doesn't normally form cartilage at all so the next step here would be transferring process into something like a mouse and then be on our way to trying it in other mammals such as humans thomas losita from the university of southern california now we heard earlier about virgin galactic space tourist mission but as we record this podcast a launch has taken place of lunar 25 a far more ambitious space flight russia is going to the moon for the first time in nearly half a century and it's hoping to land on the south pole before an indian craft also on the way gets there first our europe regional editor pool moss told me more it's often forgotten that russia once had its own moon exploration program in fact the first human object to land on the moon was a russian probe which crashed into the surface in 1959 that's 10 years before neil armstrong did his famous one giant step now russia carried on sending missions there right through to the 1970s in fact they sent space ships there which then came back to earth with samples but that all stopped in 1976 and they haven't been back until now they're going

to send a rocket up from the vostok cosmodrome in russia's far east and the aim is to reach the moon's south pole and unlike that probe i mentioned which crashed into the lunar surface this one they want to land softly so it can do some experiments why the south pole well a very simple reason scientists think that the south pole of the moon probably has water there and if they were ever going to build a permanent lunar base that water would be useful perhaps essential so that's what this russian spacecraft is supposed to be looking for okay so we know where they want to go what they want to do but but why now why in 2023 an awful sense of deja vu here back in the cold war days competition between the old soviet union and the us was fought down on earth with sort of sabre rattling and proxy wars but it was also famously fought up in the heavens with the so-called space race and then for a long time there was cooperation in space with the united states and the russia working together on for example the international space station along with other nationalities then that all began to fall apart when russia occupied primia and eastern ukraine and then it fell apart completely when russian troops invaded ukraine last year and you know pretty awfully when we hear about russian rockets these days it's usually the the military kind that are being fired at cities so here we are again with mosco once again at odds with the west and once again the man in the kremlin wants to show whose top dog and russia is launching this attempt to be the first at something in space in this case a soft landing at the south pole and i should say that conflict in ukraine has caused problems for this space mission all sorts of pieces of kit russia needs they can't get hold of because of sanctions they had to work around that and that's led some people to say they don't think this mission

is very likely to succeed or at least 50 50 chance poor moss on russia and the new space race 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 as always the address is globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk you can also find us on twitter at global news pod this edition was mixed by holly palm and the producer was leon mcchefrey the editor is caron martin i'm robin brandt until next time that's it goodbye thank you for listening