

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Israel passes key judicial reform

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I'm Nick Miles, and at 14 hours GMT on Monday the 24th of July, these are our main stories.

Tensions run high in Israel as politicians vote on judicial reforms. More than 80 wildfires are now raging across Greece as evacuations from resort islands continue. And...

I was expecting the governing bodies of football to stand with these women when Taliban say they women of Afghanistan belong to the kitchen. These women sacrificed a lot to change that mindset. So why is the Afghan women's football team not allowed to play in the World Cup?

As we record this podcast, the Israeli Parliament has ratified part of the package of controversial new judicial reforms put forward by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Fresh from surgery, having had a pacemaker fitted, Mr Netanyahu discharged himself from hospital earlier to make sure he was there to cast his vote. The reforms have provoked massive demonstrations over the past few months. Among the biggest the country has ever seen. And this morning, more drama. Police deployed water cannon to disperse protesters, blocking routes leading to the parliament building. Many chanted democracy as they sat in the roads.

Our Middle East correspondent, Tom Bateman, gave the latest to Rebecca Kesby.

What we had were the second and final readings of this bill, part of a series of measures to limit the powers of Israel's judiciary, and particularly the Supreme Court, the Benjamin Netanyahu's religious

nationalist coalition has been pushing for and which have divided this country in unprecedented ways. So what we've had is that final vote in the Chamber of the Knesset. Now, the entire opposition walked out, leaving only the 64 MPs of the governing coalition to vote, so past 64 to 0.

And that puts through one of the first planks of the major elements of these judicial reform measures. That is now law. And what this particular element of it will do is mean that the judges don't have the ability anymore to strike down government decisions on the basis that they say they're effectively unethical or unreasonable. That's something the coalition pushed for. We've seen demonstrators in their many thousands outside the Knesset, and I've just come down for one of the biggest parts of the protest. And I expect things to significantly escalate now as a result of that vote. Tom, it sounds certainly very lively where you are. Just so, just to be clear then, the opposition parties refused to actually cast a vote on these reforms.

What's the explanation of the tactic on that? Well, they wanted to boycott it completely because they see this as basically illegitimate. I mean, what they're saying and what the opposition has been saying is that the government has not given enough time to compromise on this, to come up with a solution that everyone can work with. And yet we've seen increasing pressure on Mr Netanyahu, not least from the U.S. President Joe Biden, to slow the thing down and to get some form of consensus over this, over this. And that's why the opposition decided they simply didn't want to be part of the vote. I think they knew they were going to lose it anyway. There was no way they could defeat the coalition because of the numbers in parliament. So they've boycotted the vote completely. And that, I think, reflects the sense that we're getting from protesters that they see this as a move into ending democracy in Israel because in their view, it removes one of the only checks on government power in terms of the ability of the Supreme Court to act independently. The government, for its part, says that this was all about sort of reining in what they saw as an activist and overly politicized judiciary. And that's why this arriving coalition has been pushing it.

Yeah, because there's no upper house is there in the Israeli parliament. So the Supreme Court does have a particular function within the democracy. So what happens next then, Tom? I mean, I guess those demonstrators aren't going anywhere. But could this still be challenged in the parliament? Yeah, it's possible that the opposition parties will try to appeal now for a judicial review to Israel's High Court. Now that in itself, of course, creates a constitutional clash because you have the judges themselves that have been quite outspoken, many of them, about this package of measures, having to rule on a piece of law that has restricted their own powers. So they may try to overturn it. That's one possibility. It would then bounce it back to the Knesset. And you may have a constitutional crisis in effect, where each of those major planks of the Israeli state are saying that the findings or the rules of the other are illegitimate. Tom Bateman, the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has been found guilty of criminal activity.

It's because of her part in a protest at Malmo Harbour last month. The 20 year old had pleaded not guilty in court. She gave the BBC's Bethany Bell her reaction to the verdict.

I don't feel surprised that all it was as expected. Similar cases have had similar outcomes. And we knew that what or I knew that what I was doing could lead to these kinds of consequences. So nothing new. We know that our laws right now are not designed to protect people long term, but rather it seems more like to protect economic interests and destructive industries and companies.

I spoke to Bethany Bell, who was outside the court, about the case.

Back in June, she joined a group of protesters at the oil terminal here in Malmo, and they were blocking the entrance to the port. It was an anti-oil protest aimed at stopping the use of fossil fuels. And during the court proceedings, we saw the prosecutor showing videos of Greta Thunberg sitting on the road, blocking access to the Malmo oil terminal.

The police gave her the order to move, and that was an order which she admitted she disobeyed. And because of that, she is now facing a fine. We understand of about 300 dollars. But as she told me immediately after the verdict, this wouldn't stop her from protesting in future. Now Bethany, she defended herself and she was rather outspoken during the course of that. Yes, she said that the current laws weren't designed to protect people.

They desperately needed, she said, a response from the world that this climate crisis was an existential emergency and that people needed to act immediately. She said it was absurd that those who act in line with science should pay the price for it. What we heard from prosecutors was that the right to demonstrate, the freedom to demonstrate, does not include the right to cause a disturbance to others. Bethany Bell in Sweden. The Afghan women football team once had big dreams of playing in the World Cup, but those came crashing down when the Taliban took power and banned women from sport and much of public life. Many of the players were airlifted to Australia and have since settled in Melbourne. They're still playing football, though at a much smaller scale than the World Cup being hosted in the country at the moment. Our correspondent Sharma Khalil went to watch the Afghan women's first international friendly game

since fleeing their country. This changing room is filled with football kits and chatter. Some players are doing last-minute boots checks, others are putting on their shingards. One is adjusting her hair, which is half orange, half black, and the goalie is fixing her gloves. The coach is here for pre-game pep talk. This is not prep for a World Cup game,

but these women have already come a long way. Looking around me, everything about these women, the red jerseys they're wearing, their hairstyles, even the laughter, would be enough to get them severely punished or even killed had they stayed in Afghanistan.

I catch up with Mirsal Saadat just before she heads out to the football pitch.

She tells me it's not lost on her or her teammates that millions of their country women haven't been as lucky. I have an obligation to represent those ladies back in my home country, those who cannot study, those who cannot work, and those who cannot play soccer or do anything they like. I feel I must play for them and hopefully one day we can represent our country again, even as refugees. I don't know how would I feel when I hear the national anthem after two years, but probably I will cry because I really miss my home.

Mirsal was in tears when the national anthem played. Then it was game mode.

This match, though not officially part of the World Cup, is hugely symbolic in its own right.

It's between Afghanistan's national team and the football empowerment team, which represents Melbourne's refugee and migrant community.

Along with banning adolescent girls and women from schools and universities, the Taliban have prohibited all women's sports in Afghanistan, which means this team is not officially recognized by their country or by FIFA.

I'm very sad. I was expecting a lot from the governing bodies of football.

To stand with these women when Taliban say they women of Afghanistan belong to the kitchen, these women sacrifice a lot to change that mindset that women don't belong to the kitchen.

Khaledha Popal is the former Afghan team captain who now lives in Denmark.

When Kabul fell and the Taliban took over, she'd worked tirelessly to evacuate the team and staff. Women belong to everywhere in the society and that's what we want, the leadership. We want a strong voice to stand with us and just don't keep silent.

We've asked FIFA for a response and they sent us this statement, saying that the selection of players and teams representing a member association is an internal affair, adding that FIFA does not have the right to officially recognize any team unless it is first recognized by its own association.

They also said that they'll continue to closely monitor the situation of the Afghan team.

But Khaledha and other supporters say that this is playing into the Taliban government's hands.

The game ended one all. You could see how much the Afghan women enjoyed being on the pitch. These players have given up a lot for football. Now they're hoping that football doesn't give up on them.

Shyma Khalil. Brian May is not only a world-renowned rock guitarist, primarily with the group Queen. He's also an astrophysicist and now he's come out with what's being described as the first full and 3D, no less, atlas of an asteroid named Bennu.

Terry Egan has this report.

NASA says Bennu is one of the most dangerous asteroids we know about, with the potential to smash into Earth in the late 22nd century.

It makes sense then that the more we find out about it, the better. It's with that in mind, perhaps, that working with the University of Arizona, NASA launched a mission in 2016 to gather samples from the asteroid. That mission, Osiris Rex, will return to Earth in September this year and the information it brings back, says NASA, will be critical.

The dust and rocks collected from Bennu's surface will tell us much more about what was

going on 4.5 billion years ago when both the Sun and our planets were being formed. To compliment that work, Brian May, as well as the planetary science expert Dante Loretta, have produced *Bennu 3.2, Anatomy of an Asteroid*. Before he founded the group Queen with Freddie Mercury and Roger Taylor, May had studied physics and he went back to university in 2006. The book,

meanwhile, is what the authors say is the first full atlas of an asteroid anywhere. It'll feature images and data from the mission and will include stereoscopic 3D pictures of Bennu.

It was Loretta's original images of the asteroid that helped researchers find a suitable landing site to collect the samples. But if he's obviously a big asteroid fan, he may also have been a little starstruck. In the preface of the book, Loretta describes his relationship with Brian May. The fact that I was corresponding with one of my childhood heroes, he said, was beyond cool.

Don't Stop Me Now by Queen, ending that report by Terry Eager.

Still to come on this podcast, the cinema box office bonanza.

Barbie and Oppenheimer go head to head and light up the cinema world.

Greece is at war. We have another three difficult days ahead. That is the assessment from the Prime Minister, Kiriakos Mitsotakis, of fires that are raging across several Greek islands and the mainland. The authorities on the islands of Corfu and Evia have followed the example of roads and told thousands of people to leave their homes and hotels. Rachel Windsor is a British tourist

visiting Corfu. We could see on the next hill over just some flames at the top.

At that point, it looked quite far away, but just to be safe, we thought we'll pack a few things and get out. At the time, it took us to pack a few things. When we left the house, we turned around the corner and there was just a wall of fire. And then we got to Cassiopeia and it was really, really surreal. It was like normal summer evening in a holiday resort. People were in bars, laughing, chatting. Even though by then you could see the flames from Cassiopeia up in the hills.

On roads in particular, there are real concerns that airports and harbours are having difficulty coping with a number of tourists trying to leave the islands. Maria Fegu is a volunteer with the Hellenic Red Cross on roads. A weekend was a nightmare because almost half of the island is burning. So me and my colleagues, we are prepared for challenging times. This is what if we are prepared to do except the first stage, we are also rescuers. So the Greek government tries to help. There are fires all over Greece, so we can understand that they cannot provide as much help as we would like to have because they have to be everywhere. We wish it was better.

I heard more on the situation in roads from our correspondent Azadeh Mosheery, who is at the island's very busy Daegaras International Airport. You have some conflicting information from different

officials. They're trying to get a handle of what's going on because when I spoke to the fire service this morning, they insisted things were under control other than in the area of Laerna. But they did say that this is not, these are the scenes we saw over the weekend. And yet when you listen to the deputy mayor, he said that some blazes remain out of control, that he hasn't seen this before. And we do know that it's forced 19,000 people to leave their homes. So I think this is a situation that they're trying to understand simply because it's so fast moving. It's about the winds, it's about the weather. The fire service kept saying that these fires will keep moving and that they're just trying to stay one step ahead. It's clear though they're having a lot of

difficulty doing that. And Azadeh, what can you tell about the ease with which people, the authorities there, are getting people off the islands? Are they able to get people off quickly enough, the tourists and other people? Ease is not a word that comes to mind. When you're at the airport as I am now, you probably can hear some of the noise behind me. People are extremely frustrated. They feel completely let down by airlines. Airlines, of course, we are all saying that they understand it's a very difficult situation here, that they care about the health and wellbeing of their customers, that staff is here, that they should find the staff, they should speak to customer services. But when you speak to the actual tourists, a lot of the Brits going home, as well as many people from Scandinavian countries, they feel like the staff is hard to find. They feel like everything is disordered here. They keep saying the words, where are they? And they've of course been through very traumatic events. I spoke to one family that were sent to the beach fighting with thousands of others to get onto a boat and then slept on sunbeds at another hotel, come here and feel like they have to just lie on the floor waiting to understand what's happening. Getting most of their information from friends and family back home, they're extremely frustrated. That was Azadeh Mashiri. The world food program has warned there's a real danger of worsening global food shortages and hunger because of Russia pulling out of the deal it struck, which had allowed Ukrainian grain to be exported through the Black Sea, where the warning came just as Russia launched a drone attack on Ukrainian ports, including for the first time one on the river Danube. I heard more from our Europe regional editor Paul Moss. Ukraine's often been described as the world's breadbasket. Countries all around the world depend on its crops, particularly wheat. And when Russia invaded Ukraine, obviously, where Ukraine suddenly couldn't export its crops, world food prices shot up. Now, Russia does still care about its international image, particularly with poorer countries, many of them in Africa. So it reached a deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey. And Russia basically promised not to attack cargo ships that were taking food out of Ukrainian ports, as long as it could inspect the ships, check they weren't carrying military equipment into Ukraine. And that ran very successfully for a year. But last week, Russia decided not to renew the deal, saying effectively that it was having trouble exporting its own grain because of sanctions, and it wasn't going to help Ukraine export their produce. So it pulled out early days yet, but what's the impact that we can see so far? Well, early days, but the impact's already being felt. According to the World Food Programme, that's the United Nations agency, the global price of wheat has already gone up 10% since that announcement that Russia was pulling out. Now, that may not sound a lot, but many countries were already struggling with rising food prices. Michael Dunford's the World Food Programme director in East Africa, and he says that the overall effect of what Russia's done will be devastating. People have been pushed to the brink, the effects of conflicts, climate. We're still suffering the effects of COVID, and now we're seeing these spike in costs, and this is just making it more and more difficult for people to feed themselves and their families. Paul, I mentioned there had been a drone attack on the Danube. What's the significance of that? Well, at the timing, it couldn't be worse really. Ukraine had said that if it couldn't export grain through the usual main route of the Black Sea, it could try instead to send more of it up the Danube River, which runs into Eastern and Central Europe. And from there, hopefully, it could find its way to world markets. Well, Russia had a simple response to that. In the early hours of Monday morning, Russia launched a major drone attack on the Danube port city of Rennie. And if

you look at the footage, it makes it look like this was a successful attack, with three grain warehouses destroyed. I should say we're rather bold attack as well, because the River Danube, at some points, marks the border between Ukraine and Romania, Romania being a NATO member. If those

Russian drones had gone even a little astray, they could have ended up hitting a NATO country, which would have had huge consequences. Paul, what's Russia said about all this?

Well, like I said, Russia does seem to care what poorer countries in the global south. Think of it, it's attempted to portray itself sometimes as a sort of champion of those who oppose Western political and economic domination. And it's worried because the African Union did issue a statement saying that it regretted the end of the grain deal. So Vladimir Putin has now said that Russia's own grain exports could replace Ukraine's. He says he expects Russia to have a bumper harvest this year. He'll have plenty to export. And he says we will export it at a commercial and free of charge basis. Now, I've got to admit, I'm not sure what that actually means. Will all this materialise? Is this just an idle boast? We'll have to see. That was Paul Moss.

The horrors of Nazi concentration camps have been well documented with films, books and news programs dedicated to them. But little is known about the camps that were on British soil, with many in the UK unaware they even existed. But now an official government investigation will finally be carried out into what happened on the Channel Island of Alderney, his Charlotte Gallagher. World War II, which began in 1939, brought death and destruction, with Nazi forces invading more than 20 countries. But despite prolonged air attacks, the Nazis failed in one of their key aims, occupying the United Kingdom. But they did manage to seize the Channel Islands, which are British crown dependencies. And it was on one of those islands, Alderney, where the SS ran two concentration camps. It's a tiny place, just under five kilometres long. Its residents were evacuated when it became clear the Nazis would invade. Thousands of prisoners were then taken to Alderney, including Jews, Russian, Polish and Ukrainian prisoners of war, and German political prisoners. But the scale of what happened there is largely unknown. Even the number of people who died is disputed. Some academics put the figure at 700. Others believe it's more than a thousand. Even how the people died isn't fully known. But it's believed some were essentially worked to death, while others were shot. But after more than 80 years, the British government has announced an investigation into what happened

on Alderney. Eric Pickles is the UK's Holocaust envoy. There's a degree of controversy around the numbers, and the numbers are so far apart. And there's a fair amount of bad temper about this that I thought it would be a sensible thing to get a panel of experts to review. It'll be an international panel. And the numbers in Alderney, I think, are important.

The review may finally bring answers on a dark period in British history.

Charlotte Gallagher reporting. Barbenheimer, an internet phenomenon that began circulating on social media prior to the simultaneous release of two films, Barbie and Oppenheimer, resulted in a bumper weekend for cinemas around the world. The two films, released on Friday, have very different storylines, with Greta Gerwig's comedy about the eponymous doll and Christopher

Nolan's biographical thriller chronicling physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer's role in developing the first atomic bomb. As fans rush to experience the Barbenheimer phenomenon, the film's jointly drew in total an estimated \$465 million in ticket sales in the first three

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days. Here's the newsroom's Gareth Barlow. It's been a box office weekend, unlike any we've seen in recent years. On Friday, Barbie and Oppenheimer both hit the big screen, becoming a cultural smash hit, or Barbenheimer, as it's now known.

For view, Europe's largest privately-owned cinema chain has been the second busiest weekend in the film's history, as fans flock to see a vision in pink and a vision of a deadly dunk past.

Many moviegoers have done the double watching Barbie and Oppenheimer back-to-back, racking up four hours and 54 minutes of screen time. So how important is the hype?

Beth Webb is an editor at Empire magazine. It's a sentiment that rings true for both filmmakers and filmgoers grateful for a big weekend on the big screen. Thankfully, it seems the only thing that might be destroyed are more records. Gareth Barlow. 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, all the topics covered in it, you can send us an email. The address is GlobalPodcast at bbc.co.uk.

You can also find us on Twitter at Global News Pod. This edition was mixed by George Baines and the producer was Vanessa Heaney. The editor is Karen Martin. I'm Nick Miles and until next time,

goodbye.

The Women's World Cup has kicked off in Australia and New Zealand.

This World Cup is going to be the biggest, the best and most competitive.

Join me, Manny Jasmy, Katie Smith and Maz Farouk for all the latest from the tournament on World Football at the Women's World Cup. Just to be in front of that type of crowd,

I'm so excited for, you know, like fans always make the experience like 10 times better.

That's World Football at the Women's World Cup from the BBC World Service. Find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts.