

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Most ethnic Armenians have fled Nagorno-Karabakh

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

I'm Rachel Wright and in the early hours of Sunday the 1st of October these are our main stories.

The vast majority of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh have fled across the border.

A last-minute stopgap measure to avoid another U.S. government shutdown and...

Pies and humans begin their annual turf war in Australia.

Also in this podcast what the election result in the Maldives means for China and India and the unusually super-friendly animal barred from a U.S. baseball stadium.

He is my emotional support alligator. I wake up, he'd be laying on my head.

Makes me feel loved.

The pictures show an endless stream of cars full of people and their possessions.

Armenian officials say over 100,000 Armenian residents have left Nagorno-Karabakh and enclaves surrounded almost entirely by Azerbaijan except for the one road out.

Many are still stuck in the endless traffic jam on that one road through the mountains.

Journalist Sirenish Sakishyan is one of those waiting to cross the border into Armenia.

This exodus is unbearable not only psychologically as many people here are becoming refugees already third time in their life but this exodus is also unbearable physically

because we already 60 hours spent in this road. It seems like we can reach border.

But once that border is reached crossing it can be a daunting prospect.

Gev Iskasyan and his family were among the lucky ones to have completed the journey from Nagorno-Karabakh's largest city to the Armenian capital Yerevan.

Approaching that border there's a real sense of fear. There have been multiple arrests there.

That fear of persecution is always there. We're actually very thankful for the fact that as soon as we got to the other side there was a score of volunteers many of them used that were there to greet the people of Nagorno-Karabakh with food, water, supplies, even fuel.

Our correspondent Raham Dimitri has just arrived in the southern Armenian town of Goris and described the scene there. Well I'm outside one of the reception points where people have been registering for nearly a week now. There's less people now compared to what we've seen at the beginning of these exodus but still dozens of people kind of wandering around. There are lots of minibuses and people are still registering there and then they're being allocated to go to a certain minivan and be taken to different parts in Armenia. I was talking to one man. His name is Vitaly Safaryan. He wanted to tell me his story and he said that a week ago he was on the front line. He's a contractor and a military man and he said that he was actually surrounded by a lot of Azerbaijanis but there was no violence or insults and there were Russian peacekeepers that helped him to get out of that situation. He said there were about 100 of them and just me alone and he said yes that it was really scary but nothing happened and he said you know the clothes that I'm wearing someone just gave it to me I've got nothing I didn't even have time to go and get my passport. So I think there's still a lot of this uncertainty for people they're still in a state of shock I would say. And do we know what's going to happen to these refugees? Are they going to camps or are they going to stay with relatives? So at the moment some are going to temporary accommodation that was set up by the Armenian government. A vast majority are going to stay with their relatives but it's all kind of temporary measures and at these stage since we're so close to these crises it just happened you know within the last few days the long-term solution is really not clear but we know that aid is coming to Armenia we know that the UK government pledged £1 million today and on top of that more aid from the western countries

to help Armenia deal with this crisis. Rehan Dimitri in the Armenian town of Goris. The US House of Representatives may have just bought themselves more time to prevent a government shutdown a temporary bill has been passed to keep the government running for a further 45 days it's a last-ditch measure that is now in the hands of the Senate before they can avoid disruption to hundreds of thousands of bin collectors, air traffic controllers and the military. The Republican speaker Kevin McCarthy is the architect of the bill and has been under intense pressure from members of Congress from his own side. Winston Churchill once said this about America you can always count on Americans to do what's right after they exhausted every other option it is very clear that I tried every possible way listening to every single person in the conference when we went to vote on a probes bill you didn't think we could pass we passed them would I have wanted the bill we put on the floor yesterday that would secure our border cut waste full spending yes I did but I had some members in our own conference it wouldn't vote for that. But the plan does not include money for the war in Ukraine a source of contention for Democrats shortly before recording this podcast I got an update from Sean Dilleary our North America correspondent in Washington. Oh my goodness it's difficult to even follow it my head is spinning it didn't look like a deal was going to be possible at lunchtime it looked like there was so much division so the Democratic and Republican members of the House of Representatives were not going to reach a deal it was a slight surprise they did because they tried to pass their own separate deal yesterday that cut much deeper about 30 percent for example off of social security funding and they wanted to introduce very strong border controls that simply wouldn't have been acceptable to Democratic senators hardliners around nine of them in the Republican party had made it clear that if Kevin McCarthy their own speaker attempted to lean on Democratic support to get through a deal that the upper chamber the Senate had already agreed that would be something that would force them to remove Kevin McCarthy from office now I don't know if you've seen the Netflix House of Cards the British one or the American one this is right out of one of those plot lines at the moment I mean you can never quite tell but it looks like the Senate will rubber stamp this it will look like the 45 days of funding continues but then it begins an almighty arguments about funding for Ukraine and the message that sends to Kiev and then even leaving that to one side it's sort of kicking it down the road again we might see all this again come thanksgiving Sean Dilleary in Washington today Robert Fico stood to become the Slovak prime minister for the third time and his left-wing populist SMER party was leading in the polls in advance of the general election but he faced a strong challenge from the progressive party Slovakia was one of the issues of contention with Mr Fico saying he would end military aid to Ukraine while his opponent publicly supports Kiev the first exit polls were released shortly before we started recording this podcast a correspondent Rob Cameron who's in the region told me more that original exit poll really produced a shock result that progressive Slovakia the liberal pro-western party which had began nipping at the heels of Robert Fico and his populist SMER party in recent weeks and days it appears that they have won the election it was just an exit poll but another exit poll has now been released confirming this we have two exit polls suggesting that progressive Slovakia and not Robert Fico's SMER party has won this election but it's going to be

a long night ahead ballots but obviously had just been counted now and we're just getting the first results in but certainly a surprise and one I think that will be welcomed in some quarters in the west in NATO and in the EU indeed what were the main issues for voters in this election well Ukraine obviously was one of them it wasn't the only issue but of course it was and that was because it was brought to the fore by Mr Fizzo of thundering that he wouldn't send a single round of ammunition to Ukraine if he were elected but there were lots of other issues to the cost of living crisis pensions and the state of the health service and the poor quality of university education 17% of Slovak high school graduates leave the country every year and study abroad and half of them never come back and that produces a real brain drain for this country of five and a half million people and that's one of the things that this liberal party progressive Slovakia and wants to stop to woo those people to come back saying that there is a future for young Slovaks who believe in their country's membership of the EU and NATO and wants an inclusive liberal

tolerant progressive society they seem to have won the upper hand in this election but of course the real hard work of coalition building creating a new government that's just beginning Rob Cameron the cost of storm Daniel which devastated the center of Greece in early September is continuing to be counted the resulting floods killed more than 200,000 animals and destroyed around a fifth of the country's cotton crop as well as damaging the season's corn and fruit trees it's believed the short-term effect alone could cost the Greek economy up to five billion dollars one of the worst hit areas is the Thessaly plain one of the country's main agricultural regions raising fears about the impact on food production Bethany Bell reports from Carditsa region in Thessaly this is my house all all water all all all and Thula shows me around the wreck of her home the house like many others in this village of Lochos was almost totally submerged in water here is my my bedroom here oh my goodness mud thick on the ground smells horrible

on the roof of the house next door you can see the rotting carcass of a dead sheep must have been swept there by the floodwaters and Thula's daughter Maria says they've been abandoned by the authorities nothing from the government nothing from the mayor nothing nothing at all it's terrible this is Greece not the island not the blue sea not the blue sky this is Greece Greece's prime minister Kiriakos Mitsotakis promising speedy aid for the victims of the flooding but many people here say it's simply not enough

in the village of Lefki Thanasis Thodos shows me what's left of his walnut tree orchard he had about a thousand trees here and he's lost half of them the ground is scattered with dead and decaying trees brown leaves dusty and dead the question is how much a state will be able to help us with the compensation because our equipment has also been damaged all I can think about is my

toil my sweat and my suffering for the last 10 years that's all I can see right now I try to do something good but my dreams have been shattered director of Greece's agricultural university Spiros Kinceos says that while it is possible to replant crops like cereals and cotton within the next few months restoring orchards and herds of sheep and goats will take longer he says supporting

local communities is crucial we have now damages in housing infrastructure and also municipality services roads schools primary health units and so on if we don't manage to restore them as soon as possible then we'll have the problem that the people will have to go somewhere else big cities

if the population the local population cannot stay there then we cannot relaunch the agricultural production in the village of Koskinos famous apostolakis and his father apostolis try to kick start their tractor they say they've lost this year's cotton and corn crops famous says the future looks grim our lives have changed dramatically and the only thing that we could save is ourselves do you think you have a future building again with agriculture here no the water is now polluted by the oil I don't know what we can what we can rebuild again I don't know I don't know Bethany Bell with that report don't run and think about donning a hard hat this is some of the sobering advice given to Aussies each spring to protect themselves from swooping Australian magpies the birds are known to attack humans on the ground as they protect their nests during breeding season which is August to October this is the sound of one unfortunate boy being repeatedly pecked and harangued by a swooping magpie while riding his scooter in New South Wales

his dad was recording

ornithologists insist not all Australian magpies attack humans and they are in fact a clever species the BBC's Tiffany Turnbull is in Sydney and spoke to Valerie Sanderson about some people's experiences with magpies in Australia just last week a cyclist was in the news after he came out and told his story and he was left partially blinded by a magpie attack he says that the magpie flew down out of nowhere pecked him in the eye did a backflip and then pecked him in the eye again and so he was left needing major surgery to insert a prosthetic islands but it's not just him we do tend to see cases like this every year or two and people have actually also been known to have died while trying to escape magpie attacks there've been three deaths

in about the last decade including a really shocking case in 2021 where a mother who was trying to run away from the birds fell and her daughter died her newborn daughter they say that magpies only attack when provoked and it's important to note that only a few of the male magpies do swoop and only ever during breeding season when they're protecting their nests some estimates say as little as about 10 percent of magpies swoop and they only ever do it if provoked but the problem is that really simple things like running through their territory or riding a bike through their territory can trigger them to swoop and what actions are being taken to try to avoid people being hurt and indeed magpies attacking authorities each year are now putting up signs wherever they see an ass warning people it's advice like don't run carry an umbrella traveling groups but basically just avoid the area if you can some Australian states have even set up apps where people can now report whether there's an ass or a problem magpie so that you can check if there are any swooping magpies on your route so really the advice is try to avoid them but if that's just not possible experts say you can actually make friends with them so they suggest giving them a little bit of food like a tiny piece of bread or a little bit of meat it's kind of a piece offering I see they're also suggesting that you wear protective gear and even something called a magpie hat what is that magpie hats are an Australian tradition growing up often your parents will sit down and you'll have a bit of fun making a magpie hat they used to be plastic ice cream containers and you draw eyes on them or you'd stick some eyes on them but these days people are getting really creative I've seen some ones where people have rigged up party poppers to their hats and so they blow those when the magpie gets close and we've even seen some people gluing

fake magpies to their hats to ward off any real ones Tiffany Turnbull still to come on the global

news podcast this video shot in an Indian city after dark shows a man and a woman being forced from their motorbike by a mob she's Muslim he's Hindu a special report into harassment of interfaith couples in India it's one year since Russia's illegal annexation of four Ukrainian territories a decision that sparked almost universal condemnation president Putin defended the move

and claimed that Russia had become stronger for it but Russia is not even in full control of the four regions it claims to have annexed Donetsk Luhansk Zaporizhia and Hassan and more than a year and a half after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine Russia appears no closer to winning the war there from Moscow our Russia editor Steve Rosenberg reports one year ago the Kremlin leader proclaimed the annexation of Ukrainian land four regions of the country under partial Russian occupation today Vladimir Putin claimed that Russia had become stronger because of it together he said we can meet any challenge but only two countries have recognized the annexation Syria and North Korea perhaps that's why the anniversary celebrations here have been slightly muted there was a large-scale highly choreographed patriotic concert on Red Square but the president stayed away pensioner Yelena went along though we have restored part of our historic motherland Yelena tells me but these territories are Ukraine I reply no they're Russia only Russia she retorts our sons have been fighting to get their land back that is exactly how the Kremlin wants Russians to feel that somehow the war in Ukraine is just and right that Russia is succeeding and expanding Steve Rosenberg it may have a population of just half a million people but its strategic position in the Indian Ocean makes the Maldives strategically important for two superpowers India and China that's why the presidential election there matters so much and on Saturday it was confirmed that the pro-China opposition candidate has been victorious he emerged as the surprise frontrunner during the first round of voting in September I asked our South Asia regional editors Lipika Pelham what this might mean the current government has actively

sought to strengthen ties with India for a very long time and the opposition force actually pressed the government to weaken such ties or even end India's military presence altogether so the main issue dominating the India-China debate is actually India's controversial military presence in the Maldives and Moses party amplified an India out campaign the opposition party expanded the appeal the India out appeal beyond the capital Malay to outer islands and the opposition addressed India's relationship with the Maldives with a range of emotions it used nationalistic far far against the India's power India's control India's cloud both political and economic and calling this like crimes of the government that might reduce the Maldives to being a slave to India and ethnically are the people of the Maldives Indian the Maldives has been connected to India in cultural ethnic and economic times for centuries some Maldivians come from southern India and the origins of the language the vehi goes back all the way to Sanskrit and Pali and Maldivians have long traded with India historically and they love Hindi music and many study in India but now this is going to be a big change then there's going to be more of a relationship

with China what does that mean when they were in power during 2013 to 2018 during those five years

they built substantially strong relationship with China and borrowed quite heavily under the belt and road initiative program infrastructure program both Beijing and Delhi we know are vying to kind of influence the region and Beijing is so obviously celebrating because the old

connection between 2013 and 2018 can be renewed now you know is it likely that the Indian military presence in the Maldives will end well despite China's influence being re-established in the region I do not think that India's influence is going to go away it has been the dominant regional power and also because until recently India's neighborhood first policy was completely applied to Maldivian foreign policy and this was the main component as we know of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy.

This video shot in an Indian city after dark she was a man and a woman being forced from their motorbike by a mob she is Muslim he is Hindu the mob which seems to be made up of

Muslim men are heckling her and beating him the exact circumstances are unclear but it's one of many

others that follow a similar pattern going viral online the accounts pushing them bear the same phrase Bhagwa love trap Bhagwa is being used as shorthand for extreme right-wing Hindu supremacists

Hindus are trying to seduce Muslim women the theory goes and lure them away from their communities

who believes it mostly Muslim men they are behind the social media accounts spreading the rumor I spoke to one of them who wanted to remain anonymous this is an actor's voice this has been going on for years Hindu boys befriend Muslim girls and entrap them in love when they've had enough

the Muslim girls are forced to suffer it's a conspiracy whatever you make of the theory that point will resonate with anyone who's been watching Indian politics for the last decade he pointed me to this video as evidence

this is Yogi Adityanath a mid-ranking politician speaking 16 years ago you can hear him shouting if they take one Hindu girl we'll take at least a hundred Muslim girls

today he's risen to become the chief minister for the state of Uttar Pradesh and a senior member of prime minister Narendra Modi's party the BJP

we asked him if he still stood by the statement he did not reply

I asked a right-wing Hindu leader Alok Kumar what he thought of the theory and that clip with all that is in my knowledge there is absolutely no evidence of such a trap being run by Hindus Alok Kumar says he hasn't seen the Yogi Adityanath

speech but that either way statements like these don't represent the views of most Hindus he's more concerned about another theory much older and much better known

Muslim men being threatened harassed and beaten they've been accused of love jihad seducing Hindu women with the aim of converting them to Islam it's a conspiracy theory that's everywhere in India love jihad the idea that Muslim men are trying to seduce Hindu women

essentially the reverse of the Bhagwa love trap it's an idea that has gained a lot of currency in recent years we've looked through some of the evidence on offer for both theories

investigations into allegations of love jihad in Uttar Pradesh carried out by two prominent Indian news outlets did not provide convincing evidence for the theory while reliable evidence is scant or at least inconclusive one thing seems clear this is very much a story of

India's divisions in 2023 a heady mix of religious tension and gender politics to boot

it's proving fertile ground for theories like these to flourish online and spill over into real world harm the BBC's Shruti Menon reporting and you can hear the full story on BBC trending this

weekend on the world service or listen online just search for BBC trending imagine a united states in which large parts of the country remain majority Native American that's what the writer Francis Spoorford author of the award-winning Golden Hill has done for his latest novel Cahokia Jazz Cahokia is a real place outside St Louis Missouri and this is a murder mystery which

also takes in music hence the jazz in the title and the spread of disease Michelle Hussein asked him why he decided to set the book in this particular setting because it was extraordinarily a thriving medieval city in North America and is therefore a kind of image for what was lost in the Colombian catastrophe when the conquistador de soto went up the Mississippi he found it densely populated with people with sort of big towns on both banks and then all of that had gone ravaged by European diseases in the next couple of hundred years and I wanted to ask what it would have been like if there'd been so many Native Americans that the United States had to reckon with them and couldn't push them onto reservations and couldn't push them to the margins of the national story and in my book the city of Cahokia still has an ancient core but it's 1922 and it's surrounded by canneries and factory chimneys and there's jazz echoing in its streets it's this successful hybrid

how does disease come into it because the changing point is that it was the less drastic form of small pox that arrived in the new world first which confers immunity against reinfection and kills about one percent of its victims rather than 30 percent Native American populations are the estimates

very wildly but tens of millions on up crashed often before they laid eyes on a single white person just because the germs had got there first that's the pretext for the book it's the excuse for writing something that is basically a kind of remix of American history or a sort of jazz improvisation on it I'd read about medieval Cahokia and I'd never heard of it and I was astonished by its scale and sophistication and thought what if it had continued the way that Mexico City has continued for example what if instead of being this bare and rather melancholy archaeological site which I've visited in the depths of winter what if it was the center of the kind of energetic optimistic early 20th century American city optimistic is interesting because as we were talking about alternative histories and maybe think about that man in the high castle that book and then TV series where the Nazis win the war and are in power in the States but you imagine a better society than America in the 1920s where Native Americans had developed a good relationship with white settlers well I think on tougher terms than that the great thing about alternative history is it's very good for exploring what the stakes were in big historical changes so you can do moral disasters like the Nazis winning but you can also look at ways in which it could have been better which has the sly effect of making history seem less inevitable and Cahokia jazz is an ambiguous

and rather gory utopia in which even righteous power turns out to be served by some very unrighteous

means but still a better place than the one we had and it's supposed to be a sly ironic reminder that the tragic things in American history and all our history are perhaps not quite as inevitable as all that Francis Spoorford speaking to Michelle Hussain about his latest book Cahokia Jazz and we end on the story of Wally an alligator rescued from Disney World in Florida seven years ago who was turned around the life of his owner Joe Henney they go everywhere together even Major

League baseball games Joe needs Wally for his support but the Philadelphia Phillies weren't

quite so keen as the newsrooms Daniel Mann reports think of emotional support animals and dogs cats

and rabbits inevitably spring to mind think of a one and a half meter alligator and panic sets in but not if its name is Wally whose owner is Joe Henney he is my emotional support alligator I'll get lonely and stuff they got there and he seems to sense that stuff and he'll come up and give me a hug and I bleed on the couch and I wake up he'd be laying on my head makes me feel loved Joe speaking to CBS News last year at his home in Pennsylvania was filmed putting his hand into Wally's mouth even rubbing its tongue Wally didn't bite its owner who doesn't keep the alligator in a cage and takes him everywhere on a leash so Joe decided to take Wally to the ball game in Philadelphia a fan of the Philadelphia Phillies he wanted Wally to lend them his support in their match against the Pittsburgh Pirates security refused though if Joe's emotional support animal had been a cat a parrot or a pig they would have still been denied entry as citizens bank park stadium only allow service dogs for guests with special needs Wally is according to Joe famous for his hugs and outside the stadium one super Phillies fan who calls himself the Philly Captain on X found Wally making a new friend well you're brave brave or insane I don't know what the proper term is no one's insanity security won't let the alligator in so will the Phillies have a change of heart and let Wally in he could even be their new mascot their current one is the Phillie fanatic a furry flightless bird who also happens to be large and green with an extendable tongue Daniel Mann reporting and that's all from us for now but there will be a new edition of the global news podcast at this time tomorrow if you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it you can send us an email the address is globalpodcast.bbc.co.uk you can also find us on X formerly known as Twitter at Global News Pod this edition was mixed by Ethan Connolly Forster

and the producer was Emma Joseph the editor is Karen Martin I'm Rachael Wright until next time goodbye