

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

I am Andrew Peach and at 13 Hours GMT on Tuesday the 12th of September these are our main stories.

North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un is in Russia for talks with Vladimir Putin.

Reports from Libya say large parts of the city of Derna have been destroyed by flooding.

In Jerusalem there is an unprecedented hearing of Israel's Supreme Court to determine the future powers of its judges.

Also in this podcast the possible ocean on a giant exoplanet lights years away.

It was phenomenal to know that we can detect these carbon-based molecules in a habitable zone planet.

This is the kind of discourse that we want to be making.

But could it be a sign of life?

The North Korean leader doesn't leave his country all that often.

In the last few hours though he's been travelling in a heavily armoured train northeast from Pyongyang and into Russia.

Let's hear from our correspondent in South Korea, Jean McKenzie.

Kim Jong-un does not leave North Korea often or likely.

The last time he left the country was back in April 2019 when he actually went to visit Vladimir Putin and Vlad Vostok for the very first time that pair met.

So North Korea since that time has become increasingly isolated.

You had talks with the United States with President Donald Trump break down and ever since it's been an international pariah years of border closures and heavy sanctions on the country have left it desperately short of food and fuel and money just to keep the country running but also money that it needs to fund its nuclear weapons program.

So it is suspected that one of the things that Mr Kim might ask of Mr Putin when he's there is for sensitive pieces of weapons technology that could actually allow Mr Kim to make progress

with some of his weapons.

The details of this meeting are veiled in secrecy but what do we know?

I asked our Russia editor Steve Rosenberg.

The word secrecy mystery under wraps come to mind here.

I mean for days we were asking the question will he won't he?

Will Kim Jong-un actually go to Russia?

There'd been all kinds of rumours.

Then we found out that he'd actually got on the train and he'd gone to Russia.

Now we're wondering where exactly is he going?

It's not clear what the final destination is.

There were all kinds of rumours to begin with that he was going to head to Vladivostok because that is where Vladimir Putin is now for the Eastern Economic Forum and it's where Kim actually came to in 2019 but it quickly emerged that no, the train wasn't heading to Vladivostok it was going in a different direction.

All kinds of reports now suggest he may be going, may be, to the Russian Cosmodrome, to the Russian Space Centre Vostochnyi and possibly the meeting with Vladimir Putin could take place there but there's no confirmation of that and we still don't have location

time or what they're going to be talking about really.

Now as I understand it what we think President Putin wants to get out of this is arms. Arms to continue to wage the war in Ukraine because so many arms are produced in North Korea.

Yeah absolutely.

I mean North Korea has a huge defence industry right with large scale production capabilities and because Russia's war in Ukraine is grinding on and we're only 19 months in.

In theory Pyongyang could prove to be an invaluable source of munitions for Moscow.

Certainly Washington suspects that that's what the Kremlin's game is here.

The United States has claimed that arms talks between Russia and North Korea have been quote actively advancing with Russia reportedly seeking supplies of ammunition, artillery shells, possibly anti-tank shells too.

So again no confirmation from Russian officials however plenty of unsubtle hints dropped by Russian officials that Russia and North Korea intend to boost military cooperation and back in July so a couple of months ago the Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu became the first Russian Defence Minister to visit North Korea since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

He went to attend events marking the 70th anniversary of the Korean armistice and in Pyongyang King John Un, quite remarkable pictures, he played tour guide as he got us showed Mr Shoigu around a big weapons exhibition and also Mr Shoigu has hinted that joint military exercises could be in the pipeline North Korea.

And Steve these are two leaders who many countries don't want much to do with.

Is that why they're drawn together?

Yeah I think so to an extent I mean they have a lot in common right both their countries are under international sanctions under international pressure both their countries have been accused

of becoming rogue states and they have a common enemy in the West particularly the United States and when you have a common enemy that often brings world leaders closer together.

Our Russia editor Steve Rosenberg now even before that meeting happens Vladimir Putin has caused something of a surprise at an international conference he's hosting in the city of Vladivostok.

The Eastern Economic Forum is held every year it has the aim of attracting foreign investment to Russia's Far East and Mr Putin did talk about the level of the ruble inflation and taxation but then talked about something entirely unrelated to economic matters saying the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary in 1956 and of Czechoslovakia in 1968 were both mistakes specifically he said countries should not have foreign policies which involved acting against the interests of other peoples.

I spoke to our Europe regional editor Paul Moss.

It's hard to overstate how huge these events were in the 20th century particularly when we talk about the history of the Cold War.

Czechoslovakia was now split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia but back then it was one country.

Czechoslovakia and Hungary both fell under Soviet Union's domination after World War II both were communist dictatorships.

In 1956 reformers in Hungary tried to loosen the grip of communism.

Czechoslovakia did the same in 1968 with what became known as the Prague Spring and there was real hope in the world that the tensions of the Cold War might be eased.

All of those hopes vanished when the Soviet Union in both cases sent in the tanks and crushed these nascent reform movements.

Thousands were killed in fighting the USSR then installed compliant governments and basically normal service was resumed both countries remained communist dictatorships under Moscow's control right up until 1989 when the Soviet bloc collapsed.

You could say the good news is Vladimir Putin has said it's wrong for his country to invade another the bad news he wasn't talking about Ukraine.

I mean it goes on doesn't it that quote you mentioned about not doing anything in foreign policy that contradicts the interests of other peoples.

You can almost hear the cries of outrage from Ukrainians wondering whether their people might be included in this so what's going on well you know as often with Kremlinology we're speculating one possibility Vladimir Putin has experienced some kind of damacy in conversion he realizes it's not very nice to go around trying to conquer your neighbors from now on it's going to be president nice guy Andrew I'm going to stick my neck out here and I'm going to say I don't think that's what's happening here's a guess and Slovakia has an election at the end of this month Slovakia being as I said the successor country or one of the successor countries to Czechoslovakia until now Slovakia has been very supportive of Ukraine by some measure per capita the most generous donor of military aid the election may well see another party smear winning now smear and its leader Robert Fico a very pro Russia if they win there will be a U turn in Slovakia's policy a real breach in the NATO alliance but when people in Slovakia think about voting for a pro Russian party they may well still have the memory of that invasion in their minds it's not so easy to put an X on the ballot paper unless of course Vladimir Putin tries to say look we're a different people now I'm nothing to do with that awful invasion terribly sorry about it and also remember Hungary has a pro Russian leader in the shape of Viktor Orban so again by Vladimir Putin distancing himself from the invasion of Hungary he makes pro Russian rulers have an easier time in their countries we're led to believe through this speech that he's terribly sorry that was the Soviet Union and of course Vladimir Putin was a lifelong KGB member we know that but now he's saying nothing to do with me I your regional editor Paul Moss it was Morocco's deadliest earthquake in more than six decades the 6.8 magnitude disaster struck southwest of Marrakech late on Friday now rescue workers reaching remote villages are talking about finding communities who feel forgotten and survivors who've heard calls from under the rubble that then fell silent our correspondent Tom Bateman sent us this report from the Atlas Mountains south of Marrakech a single pickaxe is slogged against the ground that swallowed up the heart of this village in Mule Brahim nearly everyone is homeless but few have lost as much as LaSanne his wife and four children was sleeping when their home fell I came back from work around 11 and they told me my house had collapsed I knew because that's the time my kids are asleep LaSanne tells me so how do you feel now looking at the destruction here what was your home I need to be patient because there's nothing here I can do God gave them and God takes them away he says LaSanne is brought back to the remains of his home by his nephew Hassan he comforts his uncle his wife and children have died but nobody knows when

help in the form of heavy machines will make their way up this hillside and start to clear all the wreckage a community waits for answers that don't come well we've come to the center of this village and suddenly things have burst into life there's dozens of people surrounding the mosque which is serving as a hub to hand out food when we've come to now is to be a morning tent there are women inside one woman in black looking extremely distraught and there's a line of neighbors and relatives who've come to greet her bending over embracing her we drive the roads further into the mountains some are still blocked leaving villages inaccessible but then we come to oregon at least the diggers are here and a helicopter hovers Khadija sits and waits her brother Rashid was killed when the quake struck and now his home is smashed and tilted over it's opened carcass straining against electricity lines my sister-in-law and her 15 year old daughter are still missing inside says Khadija what did you think when you saw your house here I mean it's half collapsed the houses are a sense of belonging to this place I lost all my neighbors here 16 people have been lost on this street says Khadija rescuers are on the rubble as the diggers giant arm heaves and claws at Rashid's home and then there is silence as we wait the men bring 15 year old Khadija from the ruins her body wrapped in a blanket before she will soon be taken and buried the residents fall quiet and the land claims another child of their village

Tom Bateman one of our BBC team in Morocco a first truck load of humanitarian aid has crossed into

the blockaded territory of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan a Russian Red Cross truck was allowed

through a checkpoint controlled by Russian peacekeepers here's Rey and Dmitry Russian peacekeepers

controlling a checkpoint allowed a single truck loaded with food aid from Azerbaijan to enter the ethnic Armenian populated city of Stepanikert in Nagorno-Karabakh Azerbaijani media provided live coverage describing it as a historic first step towards reintegration of Karabakh Armenians into Azerbaijan the remote mountainous enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh which is home to 120,000 ethnic

Armenians has been cut off from the outside world for over nine months after Azerbaijan blocked the only road connecting the enclave with the Republic of Armenia astronomers have hailed a fundamental

breakthrough in the search for alien life after detecting signs on a distant planet of a gas that here on earth is produced only by living organisms if confirmed this will propel the planet to the top of the list alongside Mars and the moons of Jupiter and Saturn of the best places to search for life professor Niky Malik Sudan from the University of Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy made the discovery in this particular case the chemical composition of the atmosphere is telling us that it has the potential to have a surface ocean in it like planet wide ocean underneath a thin hydrogen rich atmosphere now these are the kinds of planets which we have previously labeled as Haitian words and these are some of the best places in search for life elsewhere how exciting a discovery is this here's our science correspondent Palav Ghosh this has been an incredible discovery this is a planet where the Hubble space telescope which is incredibly powerful has sampled what's in the atmosphere of planets so far away and for the first time what the astronomers have been able to find out is that that atmosphere contains some of the ingredients necessary for life so carbon dioxide and methane it's the first time that those chemicals have been discovered in the atmosphere of a far away world around another star they're

in
the proportions that suggest that there might be a water ocean down on the surface and then this chemical called dms dimethyl sulfide is they haven't confirmed its existence but if they do then that they think could only have been produced by living organisms which would be huge if confirmed of course but confirming anything is presumably almost impossible and it's so far away well no nothing possible they've confirmed effectively there's methane and carbon dioxide there and next year they will know one way or another whether there's there's this chemical called dms in the atmosphere and if they do confirm it it'll be one of the biggest stories

I've reported in my entire life our science correspondent palette gauche coming up on this podcast a study of female surgeons in the uk finds they're being sexually harassed and assaulted I was assisting a consultant on a case turned round and just buried his head right into my breasts and I realized he was wiping his brow on me

he waves floods droughts wildfires catastrophic consequences from climate change what's going on is this real the climate question is the podcast exploring our planet's changing environment and what we're doing across the world to adapt and respond to it the future is ahead of us a very sensitive to the choices that we make today if we don't start fixing it we're going to be victims of it get engaged the climate question from the bbc world service find it wherever you get your bbc podcasts as you may have heard in our last podcast reports from libya suggest the flooding in the east of the country has been severe with many lives lost it's difficult to know exactly what is happening as very few journalists are able to operate in libya and since the 2011 uprising that toppled the country's longtime ruler colonel gadafi libya has lacked a proper government our correspondent anna foster is just back from the middle east well what we're seeing at the moment on social media in particular is a huge volume of pictures and videos purporting to show this huge flooding so example is the town of dorna where it looks like a dam has burst or several dams have burst and washed away a huge number of buildings um which we believe could have resulted

in potentially many thousands of deaths now you'll notice i keep saying we believe it looks like because it's so hard to know for sure and what you were saying there about the political situation is particularly important when it comes to a story like this because in most of the countries where we quote numbers and figures from the authorities there tends to just be one set of authorities who we take as a trusted source but obviously in libya there are two rival governments in the east and west of the country so what we have to do with this story in particular is a lot more of our own verification speaking to people on the ground and not just taking on face value some of the figures that were being shown but what it is looking like at the moment is that there could have been a catastrophic loss of life in libya because of this storm there seems to be little doubt from all of the sources that we have that we're talking about a lot of people having lost their lives well that that's at the heart of all of this i mean everybody that i've been speaking to this morning has been talking about thousands now i've heard numbers from different sources ranging from 2000 to to 10 000 in some cases but that is you know could well be conjecture that the 2000 figure came from the leader of the eastern based authority now that is the one that is not recognized by the international community the one that was put in place by the house of representatives in the east he said 2000 and those numbers are rising again because of the implications it's hard to know for sure but as you say it looks like this could have been a catastrophic event involving many thousands of people in those coastal areas of eastern libya

that correspondent anna foster for the first time in its history all 15 justices have convened at israel's supreme court for a hearing that will determine their own fate and future there have been months of protests against the israeli government's proposals to overhaul the judicial system they would restrict judges power to block government actions critics say the change would weaken judicial independence our correspondent yola nel is in jerusalem she described the scene outside the court only a small number of those people in support of the hardline government's judicial overhaul outside the supreme court today the bigger demonstration actually many thousands of people um when i was outside the court last night they unfurled this huge banner that said the court is supreme they were waving their blue and white flags to show their support of the court and one man told me our message is don't let it be intimidated by extremists now the drama has really switched to the unprecedented showdown that is going on pitching the most religious and nationalist government in israel's history against its top judges inside the court this crucial hearing i'm just looking at the the tv pictures from inside the hearing as the justices well it looks like i've been caught a heated conversation with the lawyers as they sit there in front of a number of israeli flags tell me a bit about the arguments that are being made today yeah so you've got the petitioners against the legal changes that were made by the government putting in their case and you've also got the government itself putting its case just to remind people this case specifically goes back to a legal change that was made by the government in july and it basically cancelled the ability of courts in israel to block government actions using a legal standard that they were unreasonable and those who against these dramatic changes to

the justice system um that being made by the government the critics say that this is weakening the independence of the courts it weakens democracy but then you have the supporters of the overhaul

who argue that actually democracy is being strengthened by all of this and they argue that in recent years the court has become too interventionist as they term it saying that it overturns too easily decisions that are being made by an elected government so that's the background to all of this yes inside the court it has been pretty heated at times we have heard the supreme court justice saying to members of the government that the justice minister who's there that you know who is going to be deciding now that ministers are acting reasonably do you agree that there is law but no judge um which is what the attorney general who is disliked by many members of the government

has said at the same time that the law and justice committee chairman was saying you know the people are sovereign don't try to take democracy away from the israeli people

our middle east correspondent yola knell with me from jerusalem

in the uk the national health service offers free health care to everyone it's seen as one of the pillars of the british state but the news today suggests it might be about to have its own me too moment two reports have come out alleging serious problems with the treatment of female surgeons by male colleagues often the senior person on whose training they depend our health correspondent is james gallagher this is a sensitive subject that is rarely discussed openly but this behavior it's worth remembering is happening now in nhs hospitals and we're talking about female surgeons being groped inside their scrubs being offered career opportunities for sex and in rare cases even being raped now this analysis is the first real attempt to attempt to look at the scale of the problem was conducted by the university of x to the university of surrey and the working party on

sexual misconduct in surgery so registered surgeons were invited to share their experiences across just the past five years 700 women and 700 men chose to respond and the report concludes that men and women surgeons are living a different reality because nearly two thirds of women said they've been the target of sexual harassment and a third have been sexually assaulted by their colleagues now i spoke to judith who's now a consultant but she was sexually assaulted when she was just a junior surgeon and this took place in an operating theater full of other staff while a patient was anesthetized on the table i was assisting a consultant on a case i guess he'd got a bit sweaty but turned around and just buried his head right into my breasts and i realized he was wiping his brow on me and you just freeze right why is his face in my cleavage you know and then you know a little while later he turns around he does exactly the same thing all over again so i said excuse me do you want me to get you a towel and he said no this is much more fun and it and it was the smirk and that you know just everything about it i felt dirty i felt humiliated the reports highlight a lack of faith in the NHS in other major organizations to tackle the problem it says the most common scenario here is for female trainees to be abused by senior male surgeons who are often their supervisor and i've spoken to women who say the expectation on them is that you just put up with whatever is done to you and that creates a real culture of silence in the profession where people are left in real fear of their careers if they do speak up and report it so the reports authors say that's what needs to change and there needs to be a major change in how such incidents are investigated so that outside the sphere of influence of senior surgeons and to make the process completely external and independent so those who are on the receiving end of sexual abuse and harassment can trust that they will be investigated properly and i will say that there's already been a powerful reaction to these reports this morning NHS England saying they make for incredibly difficult reading and were a clear evidence that more action needed to be taken the general medical council saying that such serious misconduct was incompatible with staying on the UK's medical register our health correspondent James Gallagher reporting finally to a small hilly town in the centre of Portugal where there's been a surprise flash flood Rachel Wright has the story that is the sound of a video taken by a portuguese man on his mobile phone of a river of red wine flowing down a steep street in his small town in the centre of the country the streets were impossible replaced by a raging river after two tanks burst in the local distillery spewing 2.2 million litres of red wine into the hilly town of Sao Lorenzo de Barro enough to fill an olympic size swimming pool local officials set off an environmental alert and firefighters rushed to help divert the tsunami of wine to prevent it from contaminating a nearby river the centima which feeds into portugal's largest freshwater lake and supports a network of wetland habitats reed beds and marshlands luckily much of the wine ended up in local fields there were no reports of any red wine related injuries the leaked alcohol reportedly flooded a basement at a home near the distillery from which it came which apologized for the incident and said it would handle cleanup repair and damage and investigate the cause the distillery specializes in transforming wine into a slew of products including gin cleaning supplies and food oils the distillery says the wine was essentially going to be destroyed or distilled into raw alcohol as part of the portuguese government's attempts to address a brewing wine crisis portugal has the world's highest wine consumption per capita and is among the european country's grappling with a massive surplus of wine this year the combination of rising production costs and an ever-increasing range of alcoholic drinks has resulted in plummeting demand for wine in europe videos of the wine river have

circulated

widely on social media with many people arguing that the worst thing about the spill was the amount of wine that no one drank rachel rite reporting that's all from us for now before we go though you know we love hearing about what you do while you're listening to the global news podcast i've been talking to roger in calgary in canada my wife darlene and i have an exercise program that we do listening to the global news podcast we are bouncing up and down on the rebound

the lifting weights and doing that sort of thing just to keep ourselves generally fit well i'm telling you the international news in the background exactly you'll hear more from roger in this weekend's happy pod but we'd love you to let us know what you do while you're listening to the global news podcast email global podcast at bbc.co.uk global podcast at bbc.co.uk or you'll find us on x where we are at global news pod this edition was mixed by pat sissons the producer was tracy gordon the editor is caron martin my name is andrew peach thanks for listening and until next time goodbye