

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Oceans hit hottest recorded temperature

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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. Just 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 Janet Jaleel and at 14 hours GMT on Friday the 4th of August, these are our main stories. A European study has found that the temperature of the world's oceans has reached its highest recorded level. India's top court suspends the conviction of the opposition leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case, allowing him to contest national elections next year.

Also in this podcast, the Commonwealth Games suffers another blow as a Canadian province cancels a bid to host it weeks after Australia pulled out and

the would-be rapper who's pleaded guilty to laundering billions of dollars of Bitcoin.

The oceans have reached their hottest ever recorded temperature, another sign of the accelerating effects of climate change. The average daily global sea surface temperature was a whisker under 21 degrees Celsius this week, according to the EU's climate change service Copernicus. That's far above the average for this time of year, which is about 16 degrees Celsius. Temperatures have been slowly increasing for decades. Dr Samantha Burgess from Copernicus

says it's a dangerous long-term trend. It's quite worrying. Sea temperature is hugely important in regulating biological processes. It helps species grow and develop, especially a lot of marine creatures

can't regulate their own temperature, so they rely on the water temperature around them.

And we're seeing changes already in terms of species distributions, prevalence of harmful algal blooms popping up maybe where we wouldn't necessarily expect them, and species shifting from warmer southern locations up into the colder regions as well.

Professor Helen Findlay is a UK-based biological oceanographer.

This is yet another alarm bell showing that the climate crisis isn't a future problem.

It's a problem that's here with us right now. For me, we have the commitments on paper that governments have agreed to for the Paris Agreement. We really need to see much more ambitious action

to get to net zero as quickly as possible. The sooner we stabilize the emissions going into our atmosphere, the sooner our planet's temperature will stabilize both on land, in the air, in the atmosphere, and in the ocean. Our environment editor, Justin Roelat, told us more.

We've had the hottest month there, so it's not surprising, I suppose, that the sea is heating up as well. The sea takes up extra heat in the earth's atmosphere as a result of climate change. The seas take up about 90% of that heat. The seas are slowly warming up, and if you think about this huge body of water, you know when you have a hot drink, a cup of tea or something, how long that stays warm. It's the same with the sea. It takes a long time to heat up, but then radiates heat back into the atmosphere. It's like an indicator of the ever-increasing temperatures on earth. Something that we really should be quite concerned about.

And direct consequences, obviously, for sea life. Tell us a bit more about them.

Well, there are two big issues. One is sea life, and the other is the ocean currents and weather. Let's talk about sea life first. That's something that the Marine Biological Association has been looking at for years. It's been looking at the population of plankton in the sea for more than 90 years. It's been trawling the seas, collecting plankton and looking at the distribution of population. And plankton is plants as well as animals. In fact, 50% of all the oxygen in the atmosphere, every other breath you take is from oxygen produced by plant plankton. So these are really important for the global ecosystem. Different species are sensitive to heat. There are some indications that smaller plant species are doing better than the larger ones. So that's kind of a worry. And also, there's been a migration of species north. So there are kind of dramatic effects. That's the kind of foundation of the marine food chain, because most animals either eat plankton or eat animals that eat plankton, if you see what I mean. So it's absolutely a really important part of the systems that help us survive on Earth.

Our climate editor, Justin Rolat. It was a disqualification that threatened to neuter one of the few opposition figures that has the kind of name recognition to challenge India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. Earlier this year, Rahul Gandhi, from a powerful political family that has given India three Prime Ministers in the past, was sentenced to two years in jail after being found guilty in a defamation case. That led to him being turfed out of Parliament. Now India's Supreme Court has suspended his conviction, paving the way for him to return to Parliament and contest general elections next year. At a time of rising violence against minorities, particularly Muslims, Mr. Gandhi said he remained committed to protecting the idea of India. This was his reaction

after the court judgment. My path is clear. I am clear in my mind what I have to do and what is my work. I thank the people who helped us. I also thank the people for their love and support. So Rahul Gandhi belongs to India's most influential political dynasty, and during an election speech in 2019, he was mentioning the surname of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. He was talking about how come some of the thieves have the surname of Modi. He was referring to some people accused of similar surnames of financial crimes. Then a member of the governing Hindu nationalist BJP went to court and then said he had defamed the entire community. We are talking about millions of people. That was his argument that he should be punished, and Mr. Gandhi refused to apologize. In March this year, a local court in the state of Gujarat, from where Mr. Modi comes from, and the court found him guilty. Then he gave him two-year sentencing. By Indian Parliament law, if you are punished for two years, if you get a sentencing, then you are automatically disqualified as an MP. This triggered a huge political storm in India at that time. Later on, the case went up to the high court. Again, Mr. Gandhi's appeal was rejected. Now, the Supreme Court has suspended that conviction. First, that means it is a huge relief for Mr. Gandhi. Now, does this enable him to go back to Parliament if the Parliament reverses the order of disqualifying him? Second, that also allows him to run in the next year's election because this is one of the keenly anticipated elections. Mr. Gandhi is a possible Prime Minister contender. It is also important for Mr. Gandhi to go back to the election scene and also to Parliament to raise key issues. This all comes as critics of Mr. Modi's Hindu nationalist government say that it is using the judicial system to silence opposition figures, to try to muzzle institutions that criticise it. There have been criticism about the way that some of the judgments were given in recent years. Many critics say that the judgments went in favour of the government, especially with regard to many of the opposition claims.

With regard to this judgment, the Supreme Court judge very clearly stated that the lower court did not give valid reasons for this particular judgment and they should have been more elaborate. But at the same time, the court also said Mr. Gandhi should have been very careful about talking. It was in bad taste while talking about some community. But then this whole issue of how this is what Mr. Gandhi's argument that India's institutions like the Supreme Court have been captured by the right-wing Hindu fundamentalists and that is why you see that, how this kind of impact in various institutions, for example, India's investigative agencies are being used against opposition parties in investigation and they are being targeted. Of course, the government rejects its arguments. The government also maintains that India is a very robust and independent judiciary.

I write this as a hostage. The words of the President of Niger at the start of an article written in Friday's Washington Post in which he warns that the recent military coup could have devastating consequences not just for his country but for the world. President Mohammed Bazoum, who has been held by the military in Niger since July the 26th, also calls on the U.S. and the international community to help restore his country's constitutional order. My colleague, Andrew Peach, spoke to Niger's ambassador to Washington, Kiari Liman Tinguiri, about his President's article in the Washington Post. It's very powerful, really. I think it makes history. He makes really the case on what is actually at stake in Niger. He made it very clear that if Niger falls, yes, it will be a disaster for the Nigerian people, but definitely it would also mean that Wagner will take over the whole Sahel and the Jihadists will have room to establish a sanctuary for themselves. So they will have an access to the sea. And to the north, don't forget that we have a border with Libya, and Libya is on the Mediterranean Sea. You open a route that nobody is controlling. That will be a threat, a global threat, not anymore a regional or national issue. So I think he made it very clear that what is at stake is at three levels, for us, for the region, and for the world. Do you think it's remotely realistic that the call for help from the United States, particularly from President Bazoum, will be heeded in some way? What do you think the U.S. could do? The U.S. has already done a lot. The President Biden issued a statement, a public statement, calling for immediate release of President Bazoum and the restoration of democracy. The U.S. has been consistent in keeping saying that nothing is acceptable less than stopping these attempts and restoring immediately the legally established institution President Bazoum. Do you think the U.S. will go beyond warm words?

I don't think they have said such a tough word of condemnation and such a tough word of calling to restore situation for a while in a situation like this in Africa. This situation is unique. And if Mohammed Bazoum's government is effectively restored by the West with the support of the West, would that be accepted by people in Niger? Of course. The people of Niger have elected President

Bazoum. He didn't come by a coup. He has been elected. Niger's ambassador to Washington, Kiari Liman Tinguiri, speaking to the BBC. And since that interview was recorded, a West African delegation which was supposed to be mediating in Niger has left after just a few hours without any sign of progress. The negotiators appointed by the regional body, Ekawas, didn't meet the coup leader or the deposed president. Ekawas has imposed sanctions on Niger and has threatened to use force if Mohammed Bazoum is not reinstated. The Islamic State militant group has announced a new leader, apparently providing his nom de guerre rather than his true identity. It made the announcement in an audio message as it confirmed the killing of its former leader in

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northern Syria earlier this year. Here's our Middle East correspondent Yolanda Nel. Islamic State is now a shadow of the militant organisation that once ruled a third of Iraq and Syria. But its latest announcement on social media is a reminder that it continues to regroup and poses a lingering threat. No details were given by IS about its new leader, named as Abu Hafez al-Hashmi al-Korashi. But he's said to have replaced Abu Husayn al-Husayni al-Korashi, who's not thought to have been related. Back in April, Turkey claimed that its intelligence forces had killed the former head of IS. However, in its new audio message, IS disputes that account. Instead, it appears to suggest that its leader was killed following fighting with its militant rivals Hayat Tahrir Hashem during fighting in Idlib in northern Syria, with his body then handed over to the Turks. Yolanda Nel. Andrew Tate is a controversial social media influencer who gained notoriety for videos aimed at young men which were hugely misogynistic. They were viewed millions of times. Now an appeals court in Romania has lifted the house arrest imposed on him. He and his brother face rape and human trafficking charges. They're accused of sexually exploiting women after luring them with false promises of love and marriage, allegations which they deny. This is what Andrew Tate had to say after his house arrest was lifted. In January when I was thrown in a jail cell, the media reported and told the world I was a terrible person. They said that I hurt people and that I make a lot of money from criminal enterprise and here we stand seven or eight months later and I've not seen a single victim on the news. I don't know if you have. I've done nothing wrong. God knows I've done nothing wrong in my heart. I know I've done nothing wrong. I think the people at home who are the functioning brain understand we've done nothing wrong. Once again, absolute respect to the judge, respect to Romania, respect to the Romanian judicial system. I look forward to being completely exonerated in due time. Thank you. Our Euripetitian Paul Moss told us more about the charges against Andrew Tate. Very serious offenses indeed. He's accused of. It's alleged first of all rape was one of the accusations. He's charged along with his brother and two other women with forming a criminal gang and also with human trafficking and the specific details of the the allegations are that women were lured to this residence in Romania. Romantically lured, promised a relationship with him. He does in his videos, recommends seduction as a technique and how to go about it. But what they allege is that after this the women were held captive and forced to appear in pornographic videos, which were then shown on the internet. Mr. Tate, as we've seen denies all those allegations. What changes today is that he is under what they call in Romania as we heard judicial control. That means he's no longer under house arrest. He can come and go as he pleases, but he's not allowed to leave Romania. In fact, he's not allowed to leave Bucharest, the city he's in at all. Very importantly, he's not allowed to contact any of the victims or ledge victims in this case who've made the allegations against him. Still to come in his podcast, thousands of items that belonged to Queen's lead singer, Freddie Mercury, go on display before being auctioned in London. From the passion of the fans. Yeah, so what did you think of the match there?

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The match was amazing. It was so nice to see so many Nigerians coming up to the atmosphere of the competition. The game, the crowd, the atmosphere is absolutely amazing. I am now a converted New Zealand

fan. World Football at the Women's World Cup is the podcast from the BBC World Service capturing all the excitement of the tournament here in Australia and New Zealand. Listen now by searching for world football wherever you get your BBC podcasts.

Welcome back to the Global News Podcast. In the latest blow to the Commonwealth games, the government of the Canadian province of Alberta has pulled out of a bid to host the 2030 games. It said the estimated bill of two billion dollars was too high. Last month, the Australian state of Victoria abruptly withdrew as hosts for the next games due to be held in 2026 because of mounting costs. Our sports news correspondent Alex Capstick told us more. As we heard a few weeks

ago when Victoria pulled out of hosting the next Commonwealth games in 2026 because it was too expensive. There was speculation then about the viability of the future of the Commonwealth games and it's happened. Alberta, the Canadian province was looking at a potential bid for 2030. There was a feasibility study and after this they announced just like in Australia that they could not justify the cost. It was too expensive. So at the moment there's no bid in for 2030 therefore no host and there's no host or bid in for 2026. So you could say with some justification that the Commonwealth Games Federation is in a bit of a crisis. But why are these games turning out to be so expensive? Are they more expensive than they have been in previous years? You know the global economy isn't as strong as it has been. People are looking at costs and certainly it's not just the Commonwealth games. The Olympics has had similar problems in encouraging host cities

to bid because it had become such an expensive enterprise. Sochi in 2014, the Russian Olympics cost you know northwards of 50 billion dollars and that frightened just about everybody and even Paris which was comparatively cheap for the Olympics next year, Paris 2024, costs have risen there to more than eight billion dollars when it was supposed to be a bit much cheaper than that. So yeah the Commonwealth Games, it's a major global event but it's not one that certainly athletes consider to be the pinnacle of their career. So what often happens is that some of the elite athletes don't actually bother taking part in the Commonwealth Games. They save themselves for

world championships and they're really getting ready for the Olympics. Their focus is the Olympic cycle. So there is a bit of that involved and I think you know cities have looked at it and decided it's not for them. Why should they be spending five, ten billion dollars wherever it costs to stage a multi-sports event that a lot of people aren't really too bothered about?

But a big blow for those athletes that have spent years preparing for events like the Commonwealth Games. It's a blow to athletes I think from certainly from the smaller nations and territories that don't normally get an opportunity, a chance to appear in such a big multi-sports event. I've been to a few hours in Birmingham last year which was a big, big success and a lot of the attention was on those athletes from Vanuatu, from the Guernsey Isles, you know from the Falkland Isles, places like that, the Isle of Man, where they don't get an opportunity. This is a life chance opportunity for them to appear on the global stage. So yes a big blow for them. For the elite athletes their focus is always the world championships and ultimately the Olympics.

The Commonwealth Games is a nice to have if you like. If they were forced to choose,

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they would choose the worlds in their sport or the Olympics.

Alex Kapstik, a husband and wife who've been described as the Bonnie and Clyde of the crypto age have pleaded guilty to trying to launder four and a half billion dollars of bitcoin.

The cryptocurrency was stolen in a hack more than seven years ago. Ilya Lichtenstein, a Russian-born

entrepreneur and Heather Morgan, an aspiring rapper known by the alias Razelkahn, had flaunted their wealth online before being arrested last year. This report from our cyber correspondent Joe Tidy. Most criminals like to keep a low profile, not Heather Morgan, aka Razelkahn. When she wasn't

laundering a stash of billions in stolen bitcoin, Morgan was on a mission to become famous for rapping.

She posted dozens of expletive-filled, often psychedelic music videos on YouTube and TikTok and even after her arrest last year kept them online for the world to see. She also wrote columns pretending to be a successful tech entrepreneur and investor. Her husband Ilya Lichtenstein was less keen on the limelight. The softly-spoken computer programmer would appear in her videos seemingly reluctantly. Court documents suggest he was the mastermind behind the couple's operation.

When police raided their Manhattan apartment, they found hollowed-out books in his office to conceal phones, dozens of handsets, USBs and wads of cash. They also discovered his spreadsheet, meticulously detailing their methods for laundering the stash. Lisa Monaco from the Department of Justice celebrated the recovery of the funds in a statement when it was announced.

This is the largest seizure of cryptocurrency ever by U.S. law enforcement. It is also the department's largest single financial seizure in its history. The message to criminals is clear. Cryptocurrency is not a safe haven. The case dates back to 2016 when an unknown hacker, who we now know was Lichtenstein, moved nearly 120,000 bitcoins out of the Bitfinex crypto exchange

to their own digital wallet. Nearly a year later, Lichtenstein and Morgan began trying to launder the Bitcoin into traditional money. They used all the tricks in the book to try and hide their tracks, including sending small sums of Bitcoin to thousands of different crypto wallets owned by fake identities. They mixed it through criminal darknet marketplaces and set up shell companies to make the funds look legitimate. Police followed years of transactions on Bitcoin's public ledger as the couple cashed out millions of dollars. One of their key mistakes was buying supermarket vouchers with the stolen funds. Here's Jonathan Levin from Crypto Investigator's chain analysis. Heather had actually used a Walmart gift card that they could link back to some of the proceeds of the Bitfinex hack, which then opened up the search warrant and the further investigation. And so really gift cards moving between different exchanges, moving across different cryptocurrency assets, that never actually created the sort of break in provenance that was intended to happen when you are trying to launder that amount of money. The case is the latest in a string of high profile successes for police around the world, who've become adept at following trails left by criminals using Bitcoin.

Police say Morgan and Liechtenstein were planning to flee the US to Russia, Liechtenstein's country of birth. If successful, they would have likely lived a billionaire lifestyle, safe from arrest by the US. What's up, Razzle Con here, Razzle Dazzle. Instead, they now face prison. That report by Joe Tidy. Donald Trump's mounting legal troubles, he's been indicted three times in the past four

months, have not dented his status as a clear front runner for the Republican presidential nomination. Latest polls suggest he has a lead of 37 points over his nearest rival, Florida Governor, Ron DeSantis. On Thursday in a Washington court, he faced charges that he'd conspired to overturn the results of the 2020 election. He pleaded not guilty. John Frederick's is a radio talk show host with a nationwide show who was also chairman of the Trump campaign in the state of Virginia in 2016 and 2020. You know, I have been deluged with calls for two days. This is like Christmas for MAGA. The unbelievable response of people supporting Donald J. Trump in this clown show of an arraignment is like nothing I've ever seen. President Trump came on my show on Friday, and I asked him a simple question. If you're arraigned, convicted, and sentenced to jail, will you run for president? And he said unequivocally, yes, I'll run and I'll win. And here's why Trump's poll numbers keep going up in the face of these vacuous, insane, asinine indictments and arraignments. You cannot indict a movement. This is the greatest populist political movement in the history of the American Republic as we know it. But what about across the nation? Polls show that Donald Trump is pretty much on level pegging with his main rival, the Democratic President Joe Biden. So is Mr. Trump's confidence well placed? Rina Shah doesn't think so. She's a political strategist and former senior staffer to two Republican congressmen. I don't think Donald Trump can make a passage on her election. Though he may win the Republican nomination, I just don't think the American electorate wants a president that lost in 2020. You know, we Americans are interesting when it comes to our politics and how we see people who can't, you know, essentially lose one time and try to stand for yet another. This is the kind of feat in which you don't get another bite at the apple. And I think in general, when you look at these indictments that have rained down on President Trump this year, you see a great many moderates sent her right, independently minded folks, say this is just not good leadership. If he's got all these legal problems, how's he at all going to be freed up to lead the country? We are living with great problems right now within the United States. Of course, we talk about the economy, crime, public safety, and let's not forget the extreme weather we've been experiencing this summer coast to coast. But none of this gets talked about every day. It seems as if the highest level Republicans have to essentially fend off another attack against their former president, Donald Trump. And it makes it very hard to do the work of the American people when you're inundated with legal woes. Rina Shah and before her, John Fredericks. In the past, when Ukraine has carried out attacks on Russian targets, it's been coy about claiming responsibility. But is that changing? Ukrainian sources say an unmanned sea drone loaded with explosives was rammed into a Russian navy ship causing substantial damage. They published a video supposedly showing a direct hit on the ship's hull, but that has not been verified. The reported assault is near the Russian port of Novorossiysk. Russian officials say that they've successfully repelled a drone attack there. I asked our correspondent, James Waterhouse in Kiev, what was known about this attack? I think it's fair to say that there was an attack. As you say, the Russian officials in Novorossiysk made the claim earlier this morning that they had successfully repelled it. The telegram app was awash with unverified footage of Russian ships opening fire on drones. But then sources at the Ukraine Security Service have told the BBC that they were successful in that they successfully damaged a major landing vessel. And we've seen footage of it appearing to be tilting, listing to one side in the port itself. I think there is a partial coyness from Ukraine to admit

to attacks like these. I think certainly with these apparent use of sea drones, we're told around 450 kilos of TNT were used in this apparent attack. When we're talking about marine attacks like this and the seavisors of the Black Sea or around Crimea, Ukraine is keen to at least informally acknowledge some kind of responsibility. The same can't be said for the increased in drone attacks we're seeing deep inside Russia. Novorossiysk is a major terminal for Russia. 1.8 million tons of oil make it out there every day. It's an important naval base. I think the reasons for Kiev targeting it are obvious, not least in a fortnight where its own ports have been pummeled by Russian drones. How are the Russians responding to this? On a local official level, you will just hear that everything is fine and it was successfully repelled. That is par for the course. But I think it's hard to make the attribution from attacks like this between what response may happen because we see strikes from the air routinely. We see drone and missile attacks and you can make whatever link you will. Russia is unrelenting in that tactic. But it's interesting. Kiev clearly wants to relay this message. It's repeating this mantra that the war is coming to Russia. It's looking to turn on the pressure. Attacks like this help with that endeavour. But President Zelensky is also saying he could see a peace summit taking place as soon as the autumn. But it looks like neither side is exactly preparing the conditions, shall we say. James Waterhouse. Thousands of personal items that belong to the former lead singer of Queen, Freddie Mercury, have gone on public display at Sotheby's in London. Among them are hand-written song lyrics, his flamboyant costumes, and the baby grand piano he used to compose some of the band's greatest hits. The entire collection will go under the hammer on September the 5th. Our arts correspondent, David Salitto, has been to see them.

The famous graffitied green door that led to Freddie's garden, Freddie's record collection, Freddie's kitchen, Freddie's costumes, as even Freddie's moustache comb.

There are 30,000 objects and for a man who is very private really, this is more than just a collection of stuff. It tells a story. The life of Freddie Mercury.

And for fans of classics like Bohemian Rhapsody, there are on display little clues to how he created his songs. What am I looking at here? Well, we're looking at here, this is the earliest surviving draft for Bohemian Rhapsody. Yes, it's the lyric sheet of Bohemian Rhapsody, which began with, it appears, another name. There's the title. Yes, yes, but then if you look underneath, there is a cancelled earlier title where he had written Mongolian Rhapsody. So Bohemian Rhapsody was originally Mongolian Rhapsody. So it seems, yeah. And if you love the Bohemian Rhapsody video,

that snake bracelet and the outfits are both up for sale.

And what about those parties? He invited one regular visitor to Garden Lodge, songwriter Tim Rice, to have a final look at the Freddie Dining one. I'm hearing you dined here a few times then. Certainly went to a few parties. You did dine here once or twice. Do you know what you were doing on the 14th of June 1987? No. Maybe going, I've got something here for you.

Freddie, you see, was very organized and there is a book with a record of every dinner party.

Oh, wow. Good heaven. So you were having cold tomato soup, lamb in puff pastry, new potatoes, carrots, salad, as they're rather nice white, shat in a stir-fry. And a red vulné. Wow. Just four of us round that magnificent table. Wow. I mean, I remember the evening, he was very civilized and if you didn't know, he was a mega rock star. You might not know that.

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I mean, he was the opposite a lot of the time from the image he had on stage.

So there it is, a free exhibition of a lifetime of memories that will, in a few weeks, be sold off in six Freddie sales. This is a once only moment. They are expecting quite a few visitors.

Sure, they are. That was David's little reporting on the Freddie Mercury exhibition, a world of his own at Sotheby's here in London.

And that's all from us for now, or nearly all because before we go, here's Jackie with news of this week's happy pod. Yes, in this edition, smashing the record for climbing the world's 14 highest super peaks in just 92 days, we've got an interview with Felix Cleaser, the remarkable musician who plays the French horn with his toes and who has just made his BBC prom's debut. We've got more music from Siobhan Brady, the Irish harpist who performed a concert on top of Mount

Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, the new plastic that decomposes like fruit, an eight year old chess prodigy from Nigeria, sharing her passion for the game. And on a similar theme, what is it about sport that moves us all in the happy pod available from Saturday, August the fifth.

And if you want to comment on that pod or this pod, you can send us an email. The address is globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk. This edition was mixed by Chesney Forks Porter, the producer was Marion

Strawn, the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Janette Jalil. Until next time, goodbye.