

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service, with reports and analysis from across the world. The latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. You're listening to the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. Hello, I'm Oliver Conway. We are recording this at 13 hours GMT on Monday, the 31st of July. A day after a suicide bombing on a rally in northeast Pakistan, we ask who might have carried it out. Our defence correspondent goes on patrol with the Ukrainian snipers near Bakhmut, and we hear from a member of China's Uighur community who says he was pressured into being a spy for the communist authorities. Also in the podcast, he considers himself a real boxer and is himself very disdainful of fights like this against YouTubers. Why professional fighter Tommy Fury is taking on another social media star. The suicide bombing at a political rally in northwest Pakistan on Sunday was just the latest in a series of attacks in the former tribal lands bordering Afghanistan. Analysts say militants there have become increasingly bold since the Afghan Taliban regained power in Kabul two years ago. However, the Pakistani Taliban have tended to target security forces and not political events like Sunday's rally, which was held by an Islamist party in the governing coalition. Officials are blaming local fighters linked to IS who have attacked the party before. Shandana Gulzar Khan is an opposition politician in Kaiba Pakhtunkhwa province. This is nearly the 10th or 12th perhaps attack in my province. I come from KPK and whoever these terrorists are and whoever is funding them or wherever they come from, the ideology seems to be attacking officers of the state whose job it is to protect our lives. Yesterday it was in a political gathering that sends a very similar message to those that came above that we will do anything to disrupt the life of normal Pakistanis in one particular province. The bomb, which is now known to have contained approximately 10 kilograms of explosives, killed at least 45 people with 60 more in hospital. I heard more about the attack from our correspondent in Islamabad, Carrie Davis. Oli, we've been speaking to people who were there when the explosion happened and were then closely came very soon afterwards to the scene. We spoke to one of the rallies organizers who was on stage when this happened. He describes the moment that they were talking amongst themselves while the political speeches were going on, trying to work out what they were going to move to next when suddenly the explosion happened. He said initially he hadn't realized what it was. He thought maybe the generators were malfunctioned, that the sound system was malfunctioning and then very quickly realized it was something far more violent. He said that in the aftermath there was chaos, people running around. He described it as being like doomsday with bodies and that then when the ambulances did arrive to take people to hospital that there weren't enough. Of course over the last few hours we've continued to hear new death tolls and we also do know that the police are still trying to identify some of those dead. They're doing that through trying to identify them through their clothes, through their shoes. This is obviously a very severe blast and the fact that this is a political rally that was targeted in the build up to a much anticipated general election expected to happen later this year. That is of course concerning people because we are not yet even in the sort of main campaigning period. We don't have a set date for the general election and yet even as people are starting to ramp up and prepare for this we've seen this attack. We have seen an increase in violence in

parts of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan since the Taliban returned to power in Kabul but the Pakistani Taliban seem to be distancing themselves from this attack. Can we tell from the target who might have carried it out? Yes so a large amount of the increase in attacks that we've seen across the country yes that they have been linked to the Pakistani Taliban and as you say factions of the Pakistani Taliban have distanced themselves from this attack. Some have even condoned it as well. We are getting some other official reports coming through now. Officials have refuted the report that so-called Islamic State is responsible for yesterday's attack but in the wording that we've been given they've said that there are some indications of the involvement of a local chapter with links to so-called Islamic State. Now that might sound contradictory but of course bear in mind that these are not necessarily whole bodies all of the time with someone at the top giving directions further down. Quite often these can be much smaller factions, much smaller groups that might operate independently and so that is why it's quite complicated to try to work out exactly who is involved and at this point still no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Carrie Davis in Pakistan. Well the return of the Taliban to power over in Afghanistan has created a dilemma for western countries. On the one hand they don't want to make life any harder for the millions of Afghans struggling with poverty but they also don't want to support a government which imposes ever tighter restrictions on women. U.S. officials are currently meeting representatives of the Afghan Taliban in Qatar discussing humanitarian support, women's rights and the Taliban's demands to end sanctions. Our correspondent Sameer Hashmi is following the negotiations. These are rare talks between the United States and Taliban. They haven't had many since the United States pulled out from Afghanistan in 2021. Now some of the issues that will dominate the agenda would be the economic stabilization, the treatment of dignified treatment of Afghans, specifically women and girls who have suffered the most since the Taliban took over. Other issues that are expected to be discussed during the meeting would include clamping down on narcotic production and also security issues related to the country. If you look at the United States delegation that's gone to hold these talks it also includes Reena Amiri who is the U.S. special envoy for Afghan women and girls. So clearly the U.S. wants to discuss this in detail whether they'll be able to push the Taliban to reverse some of the decisions including banning women from attending university or secondary school and also banning women from working at most places. In fact just last week they also shut down beauty parlours across the country, one of the few spaces where women could congregate. Even in terms of traveling Afghan women cannot travel a significant distance without the presence of a male relative. So clearly there have been a lot of challenges they've been facing so the United States is hoping that they will be able to use this platform to engage with Taliban to make some concessions on that front. Whether they will or not we still don't know but that's expected to dominate the agenda. So Mayor Hashmi in Dubai. In the past 24 hours Ukrainian military sources have said they've been making some progress on the southern flank of Bakhmut, the eastern city captured by Russia in May after nearly a year of fighting. Over the weekend Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky visited troops on the front line and praised them for their heroic tasks. The BBC has been given

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Pakistan suicide bombing sparks emergency

exclusive access to a team of elite snipers who've been operating in the area for six months. Our defence correspondent Jonathan Beal sent this report.

At a secret location close to the city of Bakhmut a team of Ukrainian snipers are preparing for another mission close to enemy lines. Their commander is simply known as Ghost. Ghost used to be my call sign but when we started working in this sector the boys had good results.

We brought terror to Bakhmut so we're called the ghosts of Bakhmut.

Their base is already well within range of Russian artillery but soon they'll be going even closer to enemy lines. Artillery always makes people worry. You can hide from artillery but not from snipers. Do you know how many Russians your team have killed?

The confirmed number is 524. 76 of those are mine.

Kuzia will be the marksman for tonight's mission. Before the war he worked in a factory.

When I was a civilian I didn't like weapons but now I've had to take up arms to defend my country.

Of course I'm scared. Only a fool wouldn't be. How many Russians have you killed?

I can't tell you. It's not right. It's nothing to be proud of.

We leave at dusk climbing into an armoured humby. In unison the two-man team and driver do the sign

of the cross. They turn on music to lift the mood. This is now the main road to Bakhmut where they're going to drop the sniper team off. They're just going at speed because they don't want to be hit by artillery shells but they're clearly destroying their vehicle just on the side of the road there. Just cocked his weapon. We must be approaching a drop-off point. I must say my heart's racing.

I don't know what it is like. The guys are going to have to get out of this vehicle any second now.

Kutsch says God be with you but then there's another lab blast

and that's a big explosion. A piece of shrapnel has torn through the back tire.

Where you drop the snipers off you just told us they've got a flat tire. It's not a great place.

It's a long nerve-wracking trip home.

Back at base they anxiously wait for news. Goose says he handpicked the team because of their patriotism. Seven hours later the two-man team are extracted just before the shelling resumes.

The relief is palpable. Kuzia the sniper says the mission was a success. The target this time a Russian machine gunner. Just one shot. One shot. One target. The commander ghost calls it dangerous

but noble work. They came here to our land and we are liberating our land so that we can be free

The ghosts of Bakhmut will soon have to focus on their next mission. They're not just lethal marksmen but also part of Ukraine's psychological war firing at the enemy from a place they cannot see

and with a sound they cannot hear. Jonathan Bale reporting from eastern Ukraine. China has long been accused of persecuting the Muslim Uyghur people in the far western province of Xinjiang.

Now researchers say that the Chinese communist authorities are pressuring Uyghurs living abroad to spy on human rights campaigners. They intimidate people by threatening their families back home a tactic that is tearing communities apart. A refugee living in the UK told our reporter

Sam Judah about his experience. Aline faces a terrible choice to spy on London's Uyghur community or risk reprisals against his family in China. He's a Uyghur refugee living in Britain, having fled China where his family live under intense government surveillance.

But now he says he's been called by a police officer in Xinjiang and has been offered a

video call with his mother, contact that's almost impossible for Uyghurs living overseas. Calls in Xinjiang are tightly monitored and he doesn't know if his mother has been taken to an internment camp. Aline, whose name we've changed to hide his identity, recorded the calls detailing that offer. We recreated them using actors and omitted some details to protect his anonymity. We paid a visit to your family in Xinjiang. My colleague collected their details. If you want to see them, I can set up a video call. Yes, please arrange that. I just want to talk to them and find out how they are. I won't ask about anything else. The video call with his mother went ahead, Aline says, monitored by Chinese police. It was their first contact in six years and was so overwhelming he spent most of it in tears. But there was a price to pay. The officer wanted him to gather intelligence about political campaigners based in London and send it back to China. We've heard that Uyghur activists are planning to meet next month. We want you to attend and find out what they say, especially the leaders. We know who they are. If you need, we can send money. This is a really good opportunity for you to get close to them. Aline says the implication was clear. If he refused to help, his family in Xinjiang might be harmed. They took my family hostage, putting me through this ordeal, even though I may appear fine on the outside. On the inside, I'm suffering. Aline's story is one of many. Uyghur refugees living in Britain, Turkey and Norway told us about experiences that follow an identical pattern. The tactic, offering family access over video call and exchange for compliance among its diaspora, is commonly used by Chinese police. According to Dr David Tobin, an academic at Sheffield University in the UK, he's conducted some of the most comprehensive research on the topic to date. This is about the way the Chinese government harasses and threatens Uyghur people abroad and tries to control their daily activities and their friendships. Most face threats and harassment from police and government officials, but all experience family separation. They cannot return home to see their families. And the impact of that repression is that Uyghurs struggle to settle into new societies and they worry that other members of the community could be spies. Dr Tobin's research suggests two-thirds of the UK's Uyghur population, numbering around 400 people, have been directly approached by Chinese police and pressured to spy, refrain from advocacy work or stop speaking to the media. A pattern he says is repeated in other countries around the world. Aleem, the Uyghur refugee who shared details of his offer with the BBC, says he wants the world to know about what's happening to him and others in his community. As he told us, he rejected China's offer. They still refuse to betray my nation and my conscience. This is my life now. The Chinese government denies the allegations, calling all charges of transnational repression totally groundless and saying it protects Uyghurs and their communication with overseas relatives in accordance with the law. Sam, Judah, and you can watch the full report on YouTube by searching for BBC News. Still to come on the Global News podcast? It looks absolutely huge, even though it's just an optical illusion. So when you see the clouds clearing in the next few days, please head out and have a look at this gorgeous full moon. We hear about not one but two supermoons in August. The governor of the central bank of Lebanon, Riyad Salamay, is leaving his post today after 30 years. But he's not departing with any fanfare. Instead, he is facing corruption charges at home and abroad. He denies any wrongdoing. Our Arab Affairs editor, Sebastian Usher looks back at a man once celebrated as a financial wizard, but who is now reviled by many as the agent of

Lebanon's financial collapse. In a country where family dynasties still hold sway, many tainted by their involvement in the Civil War, Riyadh Salamay was for many years seen as a refreshing counterpoint

with the calm and competent stewardship of Lebanon's economy. Many Lebanese enjoyed a standard of

living that seemed at odds with the never-ending turmoil of their political system. But the whole edifice came crashing down in 2019. Since then, a financial meltdown has left many almost penniless and even frozen out of their own bank accounts. Riyadh Salamay was accused of essentially having run a Ponzi scheme and then a flood of investigations were launched against him in Europe on accusations

of embezzling a fortune with public money, all of which he's denied. But his legacy appears irredeemably tarnished. Sebastian Usher. Over the next few days, a full moon will be visible, but unusually it will reappear later in the month of August, making it a blue moon. And on top of that, they'll both be super moons. The BBC's Justin Webb spoke to Professor Catherine Heyman's Astronomer Royal for Scotland. The moon is orbiting the Earth every 27 days and it's not orbiting in a circle. So sometimes it's closer to the Earth and sometimes it's further away. And when it's at its closest point, we call it a super moon. And these happen roughly three to four times a year. Now, the lunar cycle, the difference between when we see a new moon and a full moon back to new moon again, and that cycle is 29 and a half days. And that's slightly different from how long it takes the moon to go around the Earth, because the reason why we see a full moon or a new moon is to do with how the moon and the Earth and the Sun are all lined up with each other.

Usually, you have a full moon once every calendar month. Sometimes you get two moons in a calendar

month. Now, the actual astronomical definition of a blue moon is slightly more complicated than that. Basically, it's roughly when there are two moons in a calendar month, and which is happening in August. So the blue moon isn't a particular, it's not one event, it's the fact of the two of them being in the same month. Exactly. It's a special time where you've got two in this moon. Right. So when we say once in a blue moon, how frequent is a blue moon?

So a blue moon is every two and a half years, roughly. What's happening now is this combination of the super moons and this blue moon event. And both of the moons, the full moons in August, are going to be super moons. So that's when the moon is closest to the Earth. Now, when we say super moon, it sounds like it's going to be really, really, really big and bright. It's actually only about six percent bigger and brighter than your average moon. When the moons can be rising above the horizon, it will really look like a super moon then, because when you've got something to compare the size of the moon to on the horizon, some sort of perspective, it looks absolutely huge, even though it's just an optical illusion. So when you see the clouds clearing in the next few days, please, please head out and have a look at this gorgeous full moon.

Tell your binoculars or even your smartphone. Some of these smartphones at the moment have amazing cameras on them. And just zoom in on those craters. Look at the shadows that the sunlight is casting in the depths of those craters. It's absolutely gorgeous and well worth a trip out to look up at our gorgeous night skies. Astronomer Royal Catherine Heymans.

It is crunch time in the women's world. Carpers teams start to be eliminated. Co-hosts New Zealand are already out, as are the Olympic champions Canada. Many of the favourites are still on

course to reach the latter stages of the competition, but the top ranked side, the USA, have been less than convincing. They're still hoping to become the first team to win a third title in a row, what the North Americans call a three-peat. Boasting global superstars like Alex Morgan and Megan Rapinoe, they should have a good chance. But as they prepare to face Portugal

on Tuesday in New Zealand, our correspondent there, Shyme Khalil, has been investigating whether it may be a step too far. The USA have everything going for them. They've won two World Cups in a row and are hot favourites to win a record third. But they haven't had a very convincing start. Yes, they're at the top of the group table, but their first two games, especially that one all draw against the Netherlands, have made fans feel very uneasy. Anne Mostrota and her daughter Katie have travelled from Washington D.C. to watch their heroes up close. They tell me it's been quite a nerve-wracking ride for the stars and stripes so far. You know, I think the first game was easy, but we didn't make it seem easy enough. I think that made us very concerned. The second game, I was worried about that game. I don't think it's always bad to have a trip up. If you're going to have a trip up, maybe now's a good time to have a trip up. I hope they get momentum. I hope they get scared and hungry. Michelle Trapeno travelled from New Jersey and she's hoping the team will up their game. Just hope we can kind of get things done and be more like we were in that second half news of the Netherlands game. You can see obviously the rest of the world

is catching up and I think this World Cup in general is just going to be a lot more competitive than past years. We've already had a lot of upsets. I think there will probably still be more to come, hopefully not with us. In an earlier news conference, the US superstar Megan Rapino said that she and the team are aware of the pressure and the expectations. I think of course there's a little bit of anxiousness anytime there's a result that needs to be had that has a little bit of feeling to it. But I think that's exciting. I think everybody knows that too. Everybody's like okay like we we have to perform better and we have to get this result. I mean I think that that is something that just always gets passed down through the generations of this team is like no we go into these moments like hell yeah this is exactly where we want to be. Sports journalist Jeff Kasoof has followed the team's stratospheric rise through the years. He says the challenges off the pitch have reflected in their performance. They're a team that's used to being on top of the world. They're a team that is wobbling a bit and it's coming at a time. World cups are about timing. The timing for them is consistent injuries, unsure lineup situations and it's made them very beatable. I don't think anybody's scared of them right now and the floor of this tournament has come up so much that there is not really a team in this tournament certainly in the knockout round that you look at and say that's an easy victory for anybody. You look at Columbia beating Germany. So is this a team that's ready for a really tough challenge like that? The fact that the US is no longer dominant what does that say about women's soccer, women's football? Well certainly there's been investment. You see that monetarily. You see that in terms of the infrastructure around countries like Morocco who built a whole training center for their team. So there is a progression in countries that maybe we previously have written off whether that is a Columbia. You look at Philippines picking up their first victory. This is a testament to the globalization of the game. A USA victory against Portugal is not only necessary for them to secure their position in the knockout stages, but also to reassure their fans and themselves that the world number one women's football team is worthy of its formidable status.

Chima Khalil in New Zealand. Staying with sport and the popular YouTuber KSI is entering the boxing ring again. This time he'll fight Tommy Fury, a professional boxer and reality TV star. Fury beat another YouTuber Jake Paul in the ring in February. So what can we expect from this latest

contest due in October? Our reporter Yusuf Anani spoke to Charlotte Gallagher. This is what they call a crossover fight, but it's also what boxing purists would call a bit of a circus fight or a joke shop fight. But there would be a huge interest in it that there's no doubt and it will generate a lot of money. And KSI has a huge following on YouTube. They'll all be tuning in. He hasn't been on lately because I think he said something unfortunate has taken a break. So this will help revitalize his career. Tommy Fury calls himself a pure boxer. He's very well schooled. He's from the Fury family, half brother of Tyson Fury, the heavyweight champion. So he considers himself a real boxer

and is himself very disdainful of fights like this against YouTubers. But here he is for the second time, signing up to have one. And he just can't resist the money. He calls it easy money, but we'll see. How much money are we talking about here? Well, I don't know. But for the last one, he picked up about about three million dollars in Saudi Arabia. I think the Saudis cannot normally offer a bit more money. So this one's in Manchester who'll probably be getting a bit less, but still a lot of money for something that he considers very easy. And what do boxing fans make of this trend of influencers, YouTubers, social media stars becoming boxers? Well, the hardcore don't like it. They think it's denigrating the sport. They think that boxers should face boxers and not part time boxers or YouTubers. I mean, the skill levels aren't the same. KSI is a very fit man. He's physically quite gifted. But you know, he boxes with his hands down by his waist. He doesn't really have a defense to speak of. So boxing theorists will condemn it. But you know, it could well turn into a bit of a brawl. So some of them might actually secretly end up tuning in and enjoying it. And does it get other people involved in boxing as well? Like people that perhaps wouldn't be attracted to the sport, but they watch these YouTubers, and they especially younger people get involved in boxing, which I guess is a good thing. Exactly. It's a gateway drug. So people don't know the real sport of boxing, but they'll catch this. They'll watch their favorite YouTuber against someone who is a well-schooled professional boxer, and they might see some real boxers, two real boxers facing off on the undercard, and they might go and check those out. So, you know, one thing could lead to another and draw them into the real sport itself.

Youssef Anani

And that is all from us for now, but the Global News podcast will be back very soon.

This edition was mixed by Chris Lovelock and produced by Olivia Otaiba.

Our editors, Karen Martin, I'm Oliver Conway. Until next time, goodbye.