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I'm Janet Jalil and at 13 hours GMT on Wednesday the 2nd of August, these are our main stories.

Pope Francis is attending a huge gathering of young Catholics in Portugal as he tries to reach out to future generations. Russia strikes Ukraine's main inland port, sending global food prices higher. The US singer, Lizzo, is accused of sexual harassment and weight-shaming by former backup dancers. Also in this podcast, Russians took my best life, best years of life. They took the childhood of my baby. That's why they are targeted now. We hear from a female Ukrainian sniper.

It's an opportunity for young Catholics from all over the world to come together to celebrate their religion. A million people are expected in the Portuguese capital Lisbon this week to mark World Youth Day. And it's also an opportunity for Pope Francis to reach out to the next generations. The 86-year-old Pontiff arrived in a wheelchair to be greeted by a military band. But the shadow of the church's child sex abuse scandals hangs over this jamboree, including one in Portugal which led to a scathing report six months ago. And there are also questions about the Pope's health after he had surgery in June. Alison Roberts in Lisbon told us more. Last night's opening mass without the Pope, there were an estimated 200,000 youngsters and others gathered in central Lisbon. He's got a relatively quiet day-to-day, mainly diplomatic meetings and a number of clerics. It's at the end of the day tomorrow that he's going to preside over the big welcome ceremony downtown in Lisbon. And then at the weekend, on Saturday and Sunday, he's going to preside over what will be huge gatherings outside of Lisbon in what is actually the longest trip by any Pope to Portugal at any time. And this trip comes at a sensitive time for the Catholic Church. As in so many other countries, in Portugal there has been a sex abuse scandal and a recent damning report. That's right. At the beginning of this year, an independent commission set up by the Portuguese Catholic Church under some pressure from inside and outside, it has to be said, was a really devastating document that it produced, estimating just on the basis of the witnesses and alleged victims who came forward that there were something like 4,800 victims, cases of abuse over the decades since 1950. And the Church didn't

handle that particularly well, so that's also damaged its image somewhat among the wider public. But still here, 80% of people in Portugal say that they're Catholics, although a much, much smaller proportion, perhaps only one quarter of that, are actually practicing Catholics. Meanwhile, there are ongoing concerns about the Pope's health. This trip comes what, two months after he had that surgery? That's right. There were some doubts as to whether he would make it. It was announced some months ago that he would be coming. There were doubts before that. You can see from the program that it's quite carefully arranged. There are many quite small scale events, as I say, but it will be quite wearing, I would imagine, on Saturday night and then again on Sunday morning, very early, presiding over these massive events in what is likely to be quite a hot weather environment. Alison Roberts in Lisbon. Global grain prices have risen even higher after Russia attacked Ukraine's main inland port on the Danube River, close to Romania, which is a NATO member. The port has become an increasingly important export route since Russia reintroduced its blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports last month. Archive correspondent James Waterhouse told us more about the attack and its impact.

The damage is extensive. We've seen images of a massive burning warehouse. We're told that crane has been damaged as well as a passenger terminal. It's in the Ismail area of southern Ukraine, right on the southern tip on the mouth of the Danube. We're only talking about it being a few kilometers from Romania, which is on the other bank of the river, which is a NATO member. So these drone strikes, which happened overnight, have been condemned by Romania and it would have

put the NATO alliance in quite a difficult position if one of those drones, which are not always accurate, had made its way across the river. But this is Russia continuing to target port infrastructure along the part of the Ukrainian coast, which it doesn't occupy. It's a sort of continuation of that tactic since pulling out of a major initiative a couple of weeks ago, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through an agreed route through the Black Sea. So the next best thing for cargo vessels is seen as the Danube River, but it is problematic. It's seen as logistically more expensive. It's feared Ukrainian exports will shrink by a further half. And now you have Russia targeting these kind of buildings. And I think what Moscow is trying to do is damage confidence with the international companies that export grain. Yes, and we've already seen grain prices jumping in reaction to this attack. We know that millions of people worldwide rely on this grain. What is Russia's ultimate aim in carrying out such attacks given the hardship and suffering it's likely to cause? Its invasion is faltering. It's stuttering. There is no clear aim to it. It's taken a fifth of Ukraine. It's not going to want to let it go. And so I think this is the Kremlin trying to hurt Ukraine in just about every way possible. But also, I think it's the Kremlin sees this as an opportunity to leverage the West over the issue of sanctions because on the writing of this agreement, it is allowed to export its own agricultural produce like fertilizer. But Western sanctions have made that extremely difficult for Russia where, yes, they might be able to load a cargo vessel, but they can't get insurance for it. And some Western ports won't accept these ships. And secondly, when it comes to spare parts for farming equipment, there are limitations on how Russia can import those kind of things. So these are the demands that Russia is making. And it'll be interesting to see whether any of them can be met by through either Turkey or the United Nations because if any of those demands are met, that would amount to a relaxation of sanctions by Western allies in the hope that it would throttle Russia's invasion. It will be quite a move. But here we are in this standoff where at the heart of it are people at risk of starvation. James Waterhouse and staying with the war in Ukraine. While Moscow has used disinformation to try to win hearts and minds in occupied parts of the country since its annexation of Crimea in 2014, such propaganda has become increasingly targeted, honing in on Ukrainian frontline female soldiers in particular. Olga Malkhevska has travelled to Ukraine to investigate. In the corner of a gym, a small, dark-haired woman works out. But this is no ordinary gym, and she is no ordinary woman. My name is Andriana. I am Ukrainian. I am a service woman. Andriana is a female soldier in the special unit of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. And according to Russian media, Andriana is dead. This Russian television report is just one of hundreds accusing Andriana of being a Ukrainian Nazi. Others claim she was killed by Russians, describing her death in graphic detail. We've travelled to Ukraine and found Andriana in a place we can't name for her safety. She is not surprised by the Russian news. They are professionals in propaganda. Everything that they are touching is about propaganda. I'm alive and I will protect my country.

Andriana, like many other Ukrainians, joined the volunteer battalion when Russia invaded Ukraine back in 2014. Although not militarily trained, Andriana showed strong combat skills, including shooting. When you are on the front line and when you see a target, how do you feel about it? Is it a target or a person? It depends on the situation. Sometimes it's a person because they are people. But if it will not be for me a target, I will be a target for them.

Andriana pauses and looks down. The toll of her work evident on her face.

It's very hard for me to understand that I'm such a person that can see people when I'm saw a target. But everything during these nine years is about war.

We're here in the rehab room where Andriana is doing exercises with her hand.

At the moment, she is not able to flex her fingers and her wrist, but she's trying hard.

Andriana sustained multiple injuries when the vehicle she was in drove on a land mine last December. But for Andriana, it's the impact of war on her family life that is taking the biggest toll. She hasn't held her son for seven months.

Two days ago, I was talking with him and he said to me, that mom remember when we were in family

and when we love each other. And I tried to explain to him that we know our family and we love each other. But the period is such. Back in the gym, Andriana is preparing to return to the front line.

The price she's already paid is too high to give up. Russians took my best life, best years of life.

They took the childhood of my baby. We are losing our best people. They are losing not

best Russians. That's why they are a target now. If I see Ukrainian flag in Crimea,

in Donetsk, in Luhansk, then maybe I will try to think about them like people, but not a target.

Ukrainian soldier Andriana ending that report by Olga Malchevska.

Thousands of women in Africa will die in pregnancy and childbirth as a result of cuts to the UK's overseas aid budget. That's a stark warning in a report by officials at Britain's foreign office, which also says hundreds of thousands more women and children will also be put at risk.

The analysis shows that just under \$5 billion is being diverted to provide housing for refugees in Britain, leaving less money for health programs in many countries. Here's our diplomatic correspondent James Landell. At the moment, about a quarter of the foreign aid budget is being spent

housing refugees in Britain. That means there's a lot less for the government's priorities overseas.

The foreign office paper sets out some of the £1.5 billion of savings

it's had to find this year. A 76% cut in aid to Afghanistan, it says,

will leave some of the world's most vulnerable women and girls without critical services.

Cuts to sexual health programs mean thousands more women in Africa will die in childbirth,

a further 200,000 will have unsafe abortions, and in Yemen half a million women and children

will not receive health care. We know all this because the development minister,

Andrew Mitchell, wants to be more transparent. He's also found another £160 million to soften

the blow, but aid charities and the International Development Committee said the cuts would have a terrible impact. James Landell, you've probably heard this song.

That's Juice by Lizzo. In the past few years, a singer has taken the music industry by storm.

She's had multiple chart-topping hits and won four Grammys. Many of her songs celebrate her curvy figure and she's become known for promoting body positivity. She's repeatedly spoken out against bullying. So it's come as somewhat of a surprise then that three of Lizzo's

former dancers have filed a lawsuit accusing her of sexual and racial harassment, disability

discrimination, false imprisonment, and creating a hostile work environment. Tom Murray is a senior culture reporter for The Independent and he told my colleague Noella McGovern about the accusations.

We have three of Lizzo's former backing dancers who have filed this long 44-page lawsuit against Lizzo, her dance captain, and against her touring company. So among those accusations, Lizzo herself has been accused of sexual harassment and fostering a hostile work environment. And there are nine complaints in total, which comprise the other two defendants, the dance captain and the touring company. And among those complaints and in that kind of long document are a number of pretty kind of alarming anecdotes. For example? So I think the one that stood out to me with the most was a story about a trip to an Amsterdam strip club earlier this year. The lawsuit alleges that Lizzo kind of hounded her employees to engage with these nude performers against their wishes. There's some pretty shocking stuff in that.

So the three people that have brought this lawsuit, who are they exactly?

They're former dancers who have performed with Lizzo at her various live concerts around the world. And two of them were actually discovered on Lizzo's reality show. And another of them was hired after performing in one of Lizzo's music videos.

Because her reality show was all about bringing on board new dancers. It's watch out for the big girls and it very much and Lizzo has advocated for body positivity, particularly for black women. How significant do you think this lawsuit is? Well, I think that's why it's been so shocking for the people reacting to it today is that Lizzo has built up this kind of big reputation as someone who's very empowering, someone who promotes body positivity, who is very pro women's rights, pro LGBT rights, anti-bullying. And these accusations just kind of fly in the face of that. Now, we've not heard from her yet, of course, and that is kind of the next big thing will be to see how she responds to this. And these are accusations, these are allegations.

I want to very much underline that. And there is no evidence of guilt yet.

And with that, Tom, if in fact there is no evidence of guilt, if they go forward, does that still damage her brand? It's something she's worked so hard on, particularly over the past few years. Her star is high. And some would say she's on top of her game.

Yeah, I think it would be hard not to. It's one of those stories at the moment that's very prevalent in Hollywood about how these accusations can damage stars' reputations.

And when you have three plaintiffs like this who have worked with a former for a significant amount of time bringing forward multiple allegations in quite a long lawsuit, then it's quite difficult for the fans to kind of measure that against the performer that they know. And certainly, I've seen on social media already a couple of other people who have worked with Lizzo in the past have come forward applauding these three plaintiffs for their bravery in coming forward their allegations and saying that they had similar experiences with Lizzo.

She has millions of followers online. She's very much a social media star.

Is there any way to gauge the reaction?

The majority of people reacting to this are just kind of shocked that all the performers of all the singers of all the celebrities out there, you know, why Lizzo. And I think people are really gutted about that because she was seen in such positive light and was such a kind of bastion for really important messages like body positivity. And among the claims is that she has fat-shamed one of her performers. And I think for the fans of her, that will be really gutting to see that she is alleged to have been hypocritical in this manner.

The independence culture reporter, Tom Murray.

Still to come in the podcast, Reunited.

As you can see, we have not talked her sense of humor center in the brain at all.

A remarkable story of music meeting medicine.

Welcome back to the Global News Podcast. The Prime Minister of Singapore, Li Xianlong, is attempting to settle a corruption scandal involving his government's transport minister, which on the surface is nothing out of the ordinary. But there's a unique problem. The Prime Minister has indicated that there are no rules on how to deal with such misconduct because he says it's so rare. Our Asia Pacific editor, Michael Bristo, told us more about the case. This is a case involving, as you said there, the transport minister, Subramanian Ishwaran. He was last month arrested by the corruption investigators in Singapore, suspended from his post and that investigation is taking place. Today, what happened is the Prime Minister of Singapore, Li Xianlong, went to Parliament and gave an update on the case. Very little about the details because he didn't want to prejudice that investigation. But as you indicated there in the introduction, he did say something quite extraordinary, that simply these cases hardly ever happen in Singapore and so there's no protocols dealing with them and this is what he had to say.

Such incidents involving ministers are rare and there's no rule or precedent on how to effect an interdiction on a political office holder. Hence, I use the current civil service practice as a reference point. The specific details in Minister Ishwaran's case follow generally how the civil service would deal with a senior officer in a similar situation. So there we heard he had to use rules from another set of protocols in order to deal with this case. What the Prime Minister did tell us is that it actually reduced the pay of the ministering question, slashed it by about 80% to just over US\$6,000. So still quite a considerable amount of money but that's another detail he gave us. The slashed pay is still quite a considerable amount of money because government ministers are among the highest paid in the world in Singapore

because this is an argument for combating corruption. What's gone wrong here?

This is another fascinating aspect of this case is that suddenly we realise or we're told once again that Singapore ministers get paid so much money. If you look at what they do get paid, they get an extraordinary \$800,000 a year and that's just a benchmark figure, a standard figure. Just to give you a comparison, I just had a look up at the US President, how much he gets and that's half the amount, \$400,000. So the reason they do this, Singapore pays so much money, is in order to try and deter ministers from getting involved in corruption, which is why this case is so extraordinary. But as you say there, we can see an extraordinary amount of money. Michael Bristow, Canada is facing its worst wildfire season on record. Climate change has led to a sharp increase in such fires. This year, they've burned 12 million hectares of land. Just to put that into context, that's an area larger than the size of a country such as Cuba or South Korea. Right now, nearly a thousand fires are raging across Canada and about a third of them are in the western province of British Columbia. One fire crept up to the edge of the town of Osuyus near the US border. The wind eventually changed directions, so some residents are now returning from evacuation centers. I was actually more relieved that I finally got to go home and I didn't stay in a trailer anymore. I've lived in my house for 12, 13 years now, never had one type of wildfire over here. It's definitely very new and scary for us. Our reporter, Neda Torfik,

is in the city of Kalauna in British Columbia. The Eagle Bluff wildfire is still raging, extremely close to the edge of the town of Osuyus. Now, things have eased considerably since Saturday when that initial scare, when the blaze came through from the United States and spread incredibly quickly. But nevertheless, authorities are still classifying this fire as out of control. They've had water bomber planes, helicopters in the sky going back and forth all day to the lake of Osuyus to try to bring this under control. They've also had over 50 firefighters fighting the blazes. But still, this is opposing a threat here. They say, officials, that it is still something that is evolving, a situation that is evolving. They're keeping a very close eye on the wind direction here, on the dry, hot temperatures, seeing how that could affect the course of this fire. Now, Canada has had a record year of wildfires with more than 30 million acres of land burnt so far. This, of course, is extremely concerning here because of its proximity to the town. There are dozens of properties still under evacuation orders, and hundreds of others have been told to be ready to evacuate immediately if they need to. Residents described on Saturday how they were told with very little notice that they didn't have time to pack, that they had to get out of town. And so that is really the concern here about what this fire will do in the coming days. It is still very much an early portion of this. It's only been a few days in, but for people here, they say it's already felt like weeks.

In Germany, it's not just eggs that some rooks have been hatching. They've also come up with a cunning plan that ensures they're well-fed, but which is costing German farmers thousands of euros or dollars, with more details here's Harry Bly. Farmers across Germany have reported problems with birds destroying their produce. In the state of Baden-Württemberg, it's mostly corn being eaten. In Rhineland, Palatinate, farmers are losing fruits like cherries and strawberries. The culprit rooks, large black-feathered birds with a wingspan of up to a metre that live in large flocks, known collectively as a parliament. And in the state of Bavaria, it's believed the birds have developed their own method of getting grain from the crop. According to the Bavarian Farmers Federation,

these rooks have been observed walking into fields, pushing over the stalks of cereal crops, and then comfortably eating the grains from the ground. And this ability isn't surprising. Rooks are part of the Corvid bird family, alongside crows, ravens and magpies, and these birds have been studied for their intelligence. Research in the UK in 2009 saw how rooks, when provided with the choice of tools, could solve puzzles like releasing trap doors to receive a little snack.

In Bavaria, the rook population has increased five-fold in the past 15 years, up to an estimated 16,000. For farmers, there's not a simple solution to scare away these invaders.

Rooks aren't phased by scarecrows. Some farmers have used trained falcons to scare them away, but many others want a more drastic fix. They're calling on the government to lift Germany's ban on hunting rooks, which are currently a protected species.

In the meantime, one Bavarian farmer has hired a pensioner to drive around his cornfield every hour to scare off any feathery thieves.

Harry Bly. A woman who played the violin during her brain surgery has been reunited with a surgeon

who removed her tumour. Dagmar Turner's operation in 2020 was planned in that way in the hope it might prevent her musical ability being impaired as a result of the surgery. She said she was eternally grateful to Professor Kiyomar's Ashkan. The pair have been speaking to our reporter, Wendy Hurrell. It was a musician's need to play violin after removal of a brain tumour

and a surgeon's understanding of the intrinsic value of music that led to this moment in medical history.

My oncologist was very, very good. He said to me, Dagmar, we need a plan. Only that plan didn't involve my music. So in the end I said to them, do you think I should play my violin during operation? And looked at me and said, well, we need to discuss this with a professor, but what an interesting idea. I said, yes, we can try that and the rest is pretty much history. Music was so important to Dagmar's quality of life and everything that she was. She was kind of hesitant to have this conversation with somebody who potentially was a great surgeon, but didn't understand the musical side. Whereas because of my musical background, Dagmar felt that okay. It did sort of take off around the world. I mean, that picture.

Yeah, somebody asked me for violin lessons from South Africa. And I said to someone, I said, look, what do you expect? I'm a woman. I'm blonde. And they just take most of my brain out and then put it back in. And you expect an answer from me. And the guy just looked at me and said, I'm so sorry. And as you can see, you have not touched her sense of humor center in the brain at all. Left that in. Works perfectly well. Yeah, but I'm German. I never had any.

She's originally from Germany and she arrived in the UK and the team was discovered, was born in Iran, traveled and lived in the UK and some other faith brought us together to deliver this one operation. And that is interesting, isn't it? And that report was by Wendy Harrell.

And that's all from us for now, but there will be a new edition of the Global News podcast later.

If you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered, you can send us an email. The address is globalpodcast@bbc.co.uk. This edition was mixed by Chris Ablaquah, the producer was Iona Hampson. The editor, as always, is Karen Martin. I'm Janette Jalil. Until next time, goodbye.