

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Russian rouble hits symbolic low

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Hello, I'm Oliver Conway and this edition is published in the early hours of Tuesday, the 15th of August. Russia's central bank says it will hold an emergency meeting after the rouble fell to a 17-month low against the dollar. There's been international condemnation of threats by the co-leaders in Niger to charge the deposed president with treason, and a fake document sparks a flurry of speculation about new criminal charges against Donald Trump.

Also in the podcast, a U.S. court rules in favour of 16 young people who accused the authorities in Montana of violating their rights by approving fossil fuel projects and...

It's like a spirit in that room that just feels very comforting and a little bit overwhelming.

From Beyonce to The Beatles, saving the recording studios that hosted generations of pop stars.

When Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, it became the most sanctioned nation on earth. There was plenty of speculation that the Russian economy would be brought to its knees, but the Kremlin found ways around the embargoes, and Russian GDP fell by just 2.1 per cent last year. However, the pain couldn't be avoided forever, and on Monday, the ruble fell to its lowest level for nearly 17 months at more than 100 to a dollar, compared to an average of 74 rubles per dollar the year before the war. These people in Moscow gave their reaction. Of course, this isn't happy news because everything becomes more and more expensive. I wish our salaries grew the same as the dollar exchange rate does. Then we wouldn't have any problems, but as a whole, rising prices affect everything. It's not the first time this has happened. Today is Monday, so I think by the end of the week there will be a dollar fall again.

I asked our correspondent in Moscow, Will Vernon, what this all means for people living in Russia. The fall in the ruble will hurt people here. It's likely that inflation will increase, foreign travel will become more expensive for ordinary Russians. But if you watch state TV, you get a completely different picture. The presenter on the Russia 24 channel that I was watching earlier did indeed say that the ruble had gone to 101 rubles, and quite an eye-watering rate.

But he then went on to say that the Russian economy is doing pretty well, that Russian GDP is up, and that oil and gas revenues are growing, and I was reading Komsomolskaya Pravda, the main tabloid in Russia, and they declared on their third page that the Russian economy had taken a sharp upward turn. But actually, a little earlier, I was also speaking to a travel agent who owns a big travel agency in Moscow. He thinks that this will lead to more people going on holiday inside Russia instead of traveling abroad. But actually, overseas travel was already very difficult for Russians. There has been a slight correction today in the ruble rate this afternoon, and now it has gone down below 100 rubles to the dollar again. But we'll have to see what happens in the coming days. Yeah, the ruble strengthened, it seems, after the central bank said it was going to meet tomorrow to discuss interest rates. Might we see a hike in interest rates, and is that something that will worry people in Russia? I think that's possible. I think the central bank will be keen to try and keep inflation under control. But it's quite interesting. I've been talking to a lot of people in Moscow over the last few days, asking them, are they worried about the economy? Do they feel nervous about the drone attacks on Moscow? Are they concerned that Yevgeny Prigozhin and his Wagner mercenaries could stage another mutiny? And the most common response

is a sort of shrug. People don't seem that worried if you ask them about specific events.

But if you ask them more generally, are they fearful about the future and about the conflict in Ukraine? And almost everyone, even if they seem to support the war or support the Kremlin, that they say yes, they are very concerned. Will Vernon in Moscow?

There's been widespread condemnation of threats by the coup leaders in Niger to put the deposed president on trial for high treason. The military say they have enough evidence to prosecute the democratically elected leader, Mohamed Bazoum. The US said it was incredibly dismayed by the announcement, while the West African regional bloc, Ekoos, said it contradicted the junta's reported willingness to find a peaceful solution. And here's UN spokesman Stefan Dujarik.

It's obviously a very worrying declaration. We remain extremely concerned about the state of being, the health and safety of the president and his family. And again, we call for his immediate and unconditional release. Professor Kwesi Anning from the Kofi and Anne International Peacekeeping Training Center in Ghana said it looked like the coup leaders in Niger were trying to vindicate their actions. The shift from the argument around corruption to one of high treason suddenly elevates the narrative from the coup makers to one of protecting the sanctity of the state. But this is all part of the game in seeking to justify why the coup took place. The deputy director at Human Rights Watch Africa, Kareen Kanesa Nantulia, said it wasn't clear what kind of trial President Bazoum might face. In terms of the potential charge that has been talked about, we're also concerned that this might be a politically motivated charge, given the length and the nature of President Bazoum's detention and the other court detainees. We are also concerned about the independence of the court. And we're also calling for respect of the due process rights of President Bazoum and his court detainees.

Kareen Kanesa Nantulia talking to the BBC. The junta accuses President Bazoum of undermining security there. However, his campaign against jihadist groups in Niger has actually been the most successful in the entire Sahel region. Disinformation in Niger has been rife following the coup on the 26th of July, with a surge in fake news from places like Russia and China, according to American intelligence firm, Logically. Our Africa regional editor, Richard Hamilton, takes up the story. This is a video that's been circulated on Twitter, or X as it's now known. It shows men in military fatigues marching in a crowded football stadium. It's been viewed nearly 170,000 times and been reposted more than a thousand times, to show just how much public support the military junta has in Niger.

Except that the film doesn't come from Niger, but Burkina Faso, where a coup was staged in 2022. Kyle Walter is the head of research at Logically. His company works with governments and social media companies to weed out harmful online content. This video from Burkina Faso is showing people walking around a stadium to a large crowd that's showing widespread public support, essentially, for the coup. But what we can see from the video is that it's very clearly the leaders of the Burkina Faso coup from the year prior, based upon the uniforms that they're wearing, based upon the hats that they have on, and based upon the prominent figures from that coup. We can tell that this is actually from that conflict, rather than from the coup in Niger.

Logically found that the number of posts mentioning Niger spiked on social media in the days after the coup on the 26th of July. From then until the 9th of August, the word Niger was mentioned more than five million times, and was shared by nearly 800,000 individual users. Other fake material that the company has analysed include a video purporting to show Niger's finance minister crying after the coup. Images recorded in Nigeria passed off

as footage of military training in Niger, and a film clip from Sudan that makes it look as if Wagner mercenaries are actually in Niger. Kyle Walter explains the verifying process. You're going to be looking for key indicators to try to be able to identify where the video was filmed. Geolocating is the act of using unique identifiers from a video and cross-referencing them with other publicly available information that we have. So if you see a video filmed and it's got a gas station located in the distance, and you can see cross streets and other landmarks, and you can cross-reference that to publicly available images of the alleged location that they're claiming it was filmed at, then you can confirm or deny whether or not the film is actually from that location. Apart from visual images, the company has also uncovered a wealth of text-based narratives, such as claims that the junta was going to arrest all European nationals in the country, and that the French embassy had been completely destroyed. Niger may be a landlocked country, but it's currently swimming in a sea of disinformation, propaganda and lies.

Africa Regional Editor Richard Hamilton

There is huge speculation that Donald Trump is about to be charged in a fourth criminal case, so when a document popped up online claiming the state of Georgia was indicting him for racketeering, it seemed plausible. The case, which is being looked at by a grand jury in the state at the moment, relates to claims that the former president committed election fraud by trying to quote, find nearly 12,000 votes he needed to beat Joe Biden. However, the court later said the document referring to the charges was fictitious. The BBC's North America editor Sarah Smith is in Georgia with the latest. All the signs are that there will be fresh charges laid against Donald Trump very soon now, and that will of course be the fourth criminal indictment against the former president. There was briefly a great flurry of excitement here a few hours ago, when it looked like the charges had appeared on the court's website, but it turned out that that really was fake news. So we don't know exactly what he's likely to be accused of, but it will relate to election fraud and attempts to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election here in the state of Georgia. Because this is where Mr Trump and his allies concentrated a huge amount of their efforts after the election, claiming falsely that hundreds of thousands of fake ballots had been counted in Joe Biden's favour. And this is where Donald Trump phoned the senior election official and asked him to find just enough votes to tip the state in his favour. And you'll remember it was actually less than a fortnight ago that Donald Trump appeared in court in Washington on totally separate charges of election fraud. And he is of course still facing prosecution in Florida over retention of classified documents and in New York over hush money payments. So there are a lot of court cases stacking up for him, but he is as defiant as ever. And he said on social media today that he didn't tamper with the election results here in Georgia, the people who tampered with them were the ones who rigged the election. That's what he's claiming.

Our North America editor, Sarah Smith. In what's being called a game changer for climate activism in the US, a judge has ruled in favour of a group of young people who sued the state of Montana for violating their right to a clean and helpful environment. The details from Wiradavis. The case was brought by a group of 16 young Montana residents and was reportedly the first of its kind in the United States. They argue that the state must do more to consider how emissions are contributing to droughts, wildfires and other growing environmental threats. In her ruling, the district court judge, Kathy Sealy, found that Montana's emissions were proven to be a substantial factor in adversely affecting the climate. She also ruled that laws

limiting the ability of regulators to consider climate effects were unconstitutional because its citizens had a right under the Constitution to a clean and helpful environment. A spokesperson for the group that brought the case said it was a huge win for Montana, its youth and the climate. And while the ruling won't prevent mining or burning fossil fuels in the state, commentators said it would require the consideration of planet warming pollutants when considering fossil fuel projects in the future. The state is expected to appeal the ruling.

Wiradavis. The English Premier League began at the weekend, but some very big football transfer business is still going on. A 21-year-old Ecuadorian who started playing on scrub land outside his hometown has just become the most expensive player ever in Britain. Moises Caicedo, who's been with Brighton for two seasons, is going to Chelsea for almost \$146 million. Brighton bought him for just over \$5 million. Our sports correspondent Joe Linsky has the details. Moises Caicedo was born in Santo Domingo, Ecuador. He was the youngest of ten siblings and learned his trade on scrub pitches. But from a young age, he was set to be a star. He's not a regular scorer, but he changes teams from midfield. At his first senior club, Independiente, his teammates nicknamed him the Octopus. It is that combative style that Chelsea feel they're missing. When Brighton brought him to England in 2021, he was already an Ecuador international. He made his Premier League breakthrough last season, where he was key to his team finishing sixth and qualifying for Europe. Chelsea's owner is the American Todd Bowling, and this deal will take spending on transfers since he took over beyond £800 million. Premier League clubs now have to operate within UEFA's financial fair play rules, aimed at making sure they operate on a similar playing field, and if they don't, they risk a fine. But that's not stopped clubs breaking transfer records this summer. Declan Rice signed for Arsenal for £105 million, and in January, Chelsea spend £106 million on Enzo Fernandez. Those fees are a reflection of more clubs with big aspirations, and in some cases, rich owners, all competing for the world's best. Joe Linsky reporting.

Meanwhile, the player who was once the most expensive in the world is also on the move. The Brazilian Neymar is being sold by the French side Paris Saint-Germain to the Saudi Arabian team Al-Hilaou for almost \$100 million. The 31-year-old set a world record when PSG bought him six years ago for about \$254 million. And still to come on the Global News Podcast.

The hand-picked group retracing the extraordinary journey of Charles Darwin.

The Shah Chirag Morsoleum in southern Iran is considered one of the most important in Shia Islam. Last year, a mass shooting there claimed by the Sunni jihadist group Islamic State killed 13 people. Iran recently publicly hanged two men over that attack. On Sunday, a gunman attacked the shrine again, killing two people. On Monday, the Iranian security forces said they had arrested eight foreigners. Kazra Najee from the BBC Persian Service told me more about the main suspect. The attacker who was arrested yesterday, today the Iranian authorities say that he is from Tajikistan, from Badakhshan. Earlier on, they said he was Afghan, but then they corrected themselves saying that he was a national of Tajikistan in Central Asia. We know now that two people have been killed and six people injured. One attacker we see on CCTV or although there were reports that there were two attackers, they arrested him. The CCTV, the pictures are quite shocking in the sense that he moves in with a clash of golf and he starts shooting at everything

in front of him and it's a miracle that not many more people than two were killed and the six injured. Of course, last year we saw a worse attack there. Why is this shrine in particular targeted? Is this an attempt to foment trouble between the Shia majority in Iran and the Sunni minority perhaps? It's not quite clear why they are targeting this particular shrine. There was an attack on the shrine last year in October, 13 people were killed then, 25 injured. The responsibility was taken by ISIS. At this time, no group, no person has taken responsibility so far, which is strange, but all in all it seems that Iran does have an ISIS problem because it just keeps happening. As I said last year, this thing happened four years ago. ISIS militants attacked a military parade killing 24 people. A year before that, they attacked the building of Iran's parliament

in Tehran. They killed 17 people so it just keeps happening and it's clear that it's a problem and it looks as if a lot of this is being imported from Afghanistan and in Central Asia, where ISIS is still pretty much active. Kazranaji of the BBC Persian Service. The governor of the US State of Hawaii has warned that it could take up to 10 more days to learn the full human cost of the devastating wildfires that all but destroyed the historic town of Lahaina. Josh Green said recovery crews scouring the remains of burnt-out buildings and vehicles are likely to find around 10 to 20 more victims every day, meaning the current figure of 96 killed could easily double. The island's chief of police has appealed to those with missing relatives to submit DNA samples to speed up identification. From the island of Maui, here's our correspondent, John Sudworth. Slowly, the signs of US government assistance are becoming more visible. The National Guard on checkpoints, the buying up of hotel rooms to rehouse the homeless, and the arrival of more experts to help with the daunting task of combing through the scorched remains, including dentists needed to help identify the victims. Les Mun, who lived in Lahaina and who barely escaped with his own life, is now wondering about the fate of a neighbor. And I saw her door open. I'm like, come on out of there. I said, you know, there's fire back. But she wouldn't come out. And I'm rattling her door like, come out. But she has it locked. So I'm coughing at that point. I can't talk. And now I can't see. So I just stumbled my way out. So I'm like, if she's in there, you know, what are her chances to survive that? Hundreds of people are still listed as missing. Hawaii's Governor Josh Green says it may be some time before the final cost in human life is known. They will find 10 to 20 people per day, probably until they finish. And it's probably going to take 10 days. It's impossible to guess really. And an interesting thing and a tragic thing in here is we're not treating more first, second, third degree burns because the fire was so perilous that it took lives. Tourists are being urged not to visit the island of Maui so that accommodation can be provided for the emergency response.

John Sudworth in Hawaii will scorching wildfires have already wreaked havoc in parts of Canada, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Algeria this summer. So are they becoming more frequent and intense? And the Elliot is a wildfire expert at the University of Exeter. It is probably generally accepted that yes, there are more wildfires, but really the key difference is that the fires we're seeing are much more intense and therefore much more difficult to suppress and control. We can continue to fight these fires as much as we like, but the current state of them with the current intensity, we really not going to win that fight. So we need to learn to manage the fires long before the ignition actually happens. And that's about identifying areas and communities such as Lahaina that are at risk of wildfires and putting some mitigation measures in place around those towns and those vulnerable areas. Fuel management is the key one. So simply by

looking at satellite data, Lahaina as an example appears to be abandoned agricultural land. This is land that was probably used to grow crops in the past would have been irrigated. Those crops would have been lush and green. That has been abandoned potentially because it became unviable, possibly because the communities have moved to tourism, which may be more lucrative. The net result though is that those areas are no longer irrigated. So they're dry and the fine fuels, the grasses and small shrubs that grow in their place are very flammable. And when you have drought conditions, such as the ones that they've experienced recently, those fuels quickly dry out. And if there is an ignition source, whether that's natural or manmade, then those fires will be extremely intense and very difficult to suppress. So it's about learning to identify and manage the risk.

Wildfire expert Andrew Elliott. An Australian woman who cooked a beef wellington using poisonous mushrooms, which killed three relatives and left one critically ill, has again said it was an accident. In a five page statement to police, 48 year old Erin Patterson said she loved her family and wouldn't hurt them. From Sydney, here's Shai Michael Hill.

Australia has been gripped by the mystery of the fatal lunch, which Erin Patterson held at her home in the small town of Leongatha in Victoria last month. She'd invited her estranged husband's parents, Gail and Dawn Patterson, along with Mrs Patterson's sister and her husband.

Hours after the meal, all four of her guests were taken to hospital, three died within a week, and the fourth is in critical condition waiting for a liver transplant. In her police statement, Erin Patterson, who's not facing charges, said that she'd used some dried mushrooms, but did not know they were poisonous.

She added that she was distraught that they may have contributed to the illness and suffering of her loved ones. Police believe the victims had eaten death cap mushrooms, which are lethal if ingested. Her statement to the Victoria police had not been publicly released, but was reported by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and nine newspapers. The authorities are still waiting for a toxicology report. While she maintains her innocence, police say Mrs Patterson is still a suspect, and that the deaths remain unexplained.

We're taking this beautiful historic tour ship, following Charles Darwin's journey around the world. We're selecting the very best young conservationists from across the world. We're selecting 200 of them and bringing them to the ship in the ports to do a really intense programme of training, to give them new skills and new experience, to go back to their home countries to work for the next 50 years to change the world. That's a big objective.

Just give us a bit more on how you're choosing the people and what you'll be trying to teach them, what skills you'll be trying to impart. These young people, we call them Darwin leaders, are very special. They're people that are born with the burning flame inside of them to change the world. Many of them have already done incredible things by their own initiative, planting thousands of trees or setting up conservation projects. Honestly, you wouldn't believe some of the achievements these young people have done. Often as teenagers, we bring them to the ports basically in a nutshell. They've got to select an animal or plant that Charles Darwin studied and do three things. Firstly, work out what's happened in its habitat over the last 200 years since Darwin saw it and visited, what's changed the population, how it's been impacted and the reasons why. They've then got to look at the current conservation work, is it working and if not, why? Lastly, they've got to look to the future and work out new ways

to help save that animal or plant and develop new ideas.

What's the importance of Charles Darwin here? I get that it's his route,

but I suspect that the shadow he casts over this whole project is much bigger than that.

Many people remember Darwin as an old guy with a beard that wrote a book on evolution,

but the reality is that he was 22 years old when he stepped aboard the Beagle and started

journeying around the world. He didn't just discover and study evolution. He studied a rainbow

of other subjects, from mountain formations to the formations of atolls to the role of

earthworms forming soil in so many other subjects. This man changed the world with his mind and in

a similar way, we want to help create a better world by creating new minds and making new people

think about the future. What we're trying to do is create the drivers of change to have a ripple

effect. These young people, they're between 18 and 25, they've already dedicated their lives to

conservation. What we're trying to do is enhance them, give them new skills, new experience, new

knowledge that they'll then take away. Can you imagine the impact of 200 of these incredible

people in different parts of the world? I think 200 Jane Goodall's, 200 Sylvia Earls.

But one of the key things is to meet each other. This is the one advantage that I'll have over

even someone as amazing as Charles Darwin. They'll be able to have a network of people

involved in similar work in different parts of the globe.

That's absolutely right. It's when people come together. It's when organisations collaborate

and work. That's when you get the synergy and that's when you get a multiplier effect of what

can be achieved. Broadly where does the route take the tour ship before it finishes?

We set out from Plymouth just like Charles Darwin did nearly two centuries ago. We go down the

Atlantic

visiting Canary Islands Cape Verde, down the coast of South America, up the west coast of South

America, across the Pacific to Australia, and then back again via Cape Horn and the Cape of

Goodhope

to Falmouth where Darwin stepped ashore. Stuart McPherson talking to Andrew Peach.

Finally, a former Edwardian era roller skating rink bought by the BBC in the 1930s,

the made-of-ail studios have seen performances by everyone from The Beatles and David Bowie

to Beyonce and Adele. But now the west London venue has been sold for more than \$13 million.

The new owners include film composer Hans Zimmer, as our arts correspondent,

Liso Mazimba reports. We're ready to pop in the pop go the Beatles spot.

Over the years, the studios have played host to performances from some of music's biggest names.

From The Beatles to David Bowie. I've never ever performed this in my life until this minute.

And the story goes, they wore the clothes, they said the piece can make it seem incredible.

I'm from Blur to Beyonce. I love performing with with my band and it's like a spirit

in that room that just feels very comforting and and a little bit overwhelming.

Bink, Crosby's final recordings were made up made-of-ail. Would you like to introduce the

songs you have for us? We're gonna open up, I suppose, that feels good, feels right.

Three days before he died of a heart attack. It's been a while since I had a night out, feels good.

It's been the home of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. It was where the famous John Peele sessions

were

recorded. Hello there boys and girls and this program comes to you live from our made-of-ail studio.

And was the place where the BBC Radio Phonic Workshop created the original Doctor Who theme.

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The studio's future had been in doubt. After the BBC announced it was moving its music operations from made-of-ail to a new site in East London. The group buying the studio includes the film producers Tim Bevan and Eric Felner. Their company working title has produced successful British films such as Four Weddings in a Funeral and Bridget Jones' Diary along with Hank Zimmer, the Oscar-winning composer behind the music scores of The Dark Knight Trilogy, the Pirates of the Caribbean series and Gladiator. Zimmer, who first worked at the studio 45 years ago, described it as the place that kept a struggling musician like himself from giving up and said that he wanted to ensure that the next generation had the same opportunities that he was given. Liso Mazimba reporting. And that's all from us for now but the Global News podcast will be back very soon. This edition was mixed by Caroline Driscoll and produced by Emma Joseph, our editors Karen Martin. I'm Oliver Conway. Until next time, goodbye.