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

I'm Valerie Sanderson and at 14 GMT on Tuesday the 21st of March, these are our main stories.

President Xi Jinping describes Russia and China as strategic partners

and great neighbouring powers as he continues his visit to Moscow.

Fumio Kishida visits Ukraine, the first Japanese prime minister to go to a war zone since the Second World War.

Israel's parliament has voted to allow Israelis back into four West Bank settlements, evacuated years ago.

Also in this podcast, how would beer-loving Germans take to beer made from a powder?

The special thing is that we have actually managed to turn this beer powder into a currently alcohol-free normal monetary beer.

It tastes like pilsner.

And the songs of the sea or why fish sing.

On Monday the mood music was everything, smiles, handshakes and public professions of friendship.

Today, the second day of President Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow, senior officials were getting down to the nuts and bolts of future relations between Russia and China.

Mr Xi invited his host, Vladimir Putin, to visit Beijing this year and said he was committed to prioritising relations with Russia.

For his part, Mr Putin has already said he's open to discussing China's 12-point plan to end the conflict in Ukraine, despite US scepticism about his motives. Our Russia editor Steve Rosenberg told me what else may have been on today's agenda. More talks today with the Russian and Chinese delegations.

So ministers, various officials, there'll be agreements probably about expanding cooperation in all kinds of areas, from space to energy.

But I suspect actually that the main part of this visit, the most important part of this summit, is over and that was the Putin-Xi conversation yesterday, a conversation which lasted more than four and a half hours.

Now what decisions were taken during those four and a half hours?

What agreements may have been made by the two leaders?

And what implications there may be, for example, for the war in Ukraine?

We simply do not know.

You know, there was no press statement that followed those talks.

And we may never find out, but I suspect that that was the big thing.

What we'll see today is a very public show of agreement and the desire to deepen the strategic partnership between Russia and China, but it's those two men, those two leaders, who will have decided the main points, I think, of this summit.

And Steve, how is this visit being viewed in Moscow?

Well, I was looking through the front pages of this morning's Russian papers.

They all feature the image of Putin and Xi shaking hands

and the one word that stands out in many of the headlines

is drug friend, because Putin and Xi addressed each other as dear friend,

giving this air of sort of Moscow-baiting bromance, if you like.

You know, there was mutual praise at those talks.

Xi called Putin a strong leader and apparently even backed him for reelection in 2024.

But I think the word bromance is possibly too strong a word here.

Xi Jinping is here because he considers it in China's interests, China's national interest, to be here to deepen the relationship with Russia.

And Steve, on the war itself, what are the Russians saying about that explosion in Crimea that the Ukrainians say was an attack on a train carrying cruise missiles?

There's not a great deal of information.

What we do know is that Russia's investigative committee says it is investigating the incident.

Russian media have reported that one person was injured in that drone attack.

But that's all that's been said about at the moment.

I mean, the news here has been dominated, of course, by Xi Jinping's visit.

Steve Rosenberg in Moscow.

Meanwhile, the Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has travelled to Kiev,

the latest foreign leader to make the journey to express their support for Ukraine.

He entered the country by train from Poland.

Asked our correspondent in Tokyo, Shyma Khalil, what the Japanese leader wants out of this visit.

Well, he's been undermounting pressure really from his own party here, the ruling party, the LDP, to make that visit.

Until today, Fumio Kishida had been the only G7 leader not to have visited Ukraine.

He is the first Japanese leader to visit a foreign country as war continued.

And there have been numerous security concerns.

This is why this visit was unannounced until he arrived. It was a secret visit.

And it's not normal really that a Japanese leader makes a foreign visit without announcing it first.

But it shows you how crucial it is, because of course he is presiding over the G7 summit in May in Hiroshima.

And it would have been geopolitically extremely awkward for him to stand in front of world leaders not having visited, not having been on the ground and spoken to Vladimir Zelensky.

And how do the Japanese view Ukraine and what's happening there?

I think that if you look at the way politically it's been handled, there is no doubt where Japan stands.

Of course, Japan has a very delicate and deteriorating, one must say, relationship with Moscow.

There is that dispute over what's known here as the Northern Territories.

And of course, Japan had imposed sanctions on Moscow after its invasion of Ukraine.

There has always been support. Japan has always been vocal about its support for Ukraine.

But I think today has been an official and a visual expression of that support with that visit.

Yes, and a visit just as China's President Xi is in Moscow.

Yes, and I think this is really interesting. If you want a demonstration, a real life demonstration of where those two leaders, where those two countries stand in that conflict, today Japan's leader is in Ukraine and China's leader is in Russia. And it's very telling where each leader chose to be on the same day.

Shima Khalil in Tokyo. In existence since 1829, the Metropolitan Police in London, often referred to by the name of its headquarters, Scotland Yard, is known around the world.

But it's also, according to a new report, riddled with racism, misogyny and homophobia.

Findings include degrading initiation ceremonies and rampant sexism.

For example, a Sikh officer's beard was cut because it was funny and bacon was placed in the boots of a Muslim officer.

Well, a government official, Louise Casey, was appointed to review the force's culture and standards after the abduction, rape and murder of 33-year-old Sarah Everard by a serving police officer in 2021. And Baroness Casey told the BBC the problems were baked in.

The culture, sadly, in the Met is all pervasive and that the institutional racism, misogyny and homophobia is largely led by what their officers have said and what our own research has shown, which is if you're a woman in the Met and an officer, you're 33 per cent experienced sexism on a daily basis. If you're one in ten of those same women, experience sexual harassment and sexual assault. I mean, it is off the barometer.

I could say the same about homophobia and certainly I'm there on racism.

The Met police commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, said he accepted the findings of the report and work needed to be done to get rid of officers whose behaviour is unacceptable.

I saw some cultural challenges. I made some changes in the protection world, but clearly they weren't

enough. I mean, the level of toxicity that Louise calls out didn't see it.

And one of the things we have to do is absolutely root out the problematic individuals.

I asked our political reporter, Rob Watson, about the findings of the report.

It's difficult to know where to start, Val. It's sort of so shocking. It's so root and branch.

It's so systemic. But I guess if you had to pick out three things, it would be this allegation that the police in London are institutionally racist, misogynist and homophobic. I think it would be what Louise Casey has pointed out about a sort of, as she would say, a collapse in the investigation of crimes against women and the sort of breakdown, the more general breakdown in trust

between the frontline policing and the rather large population of London, particularly population of black minority ethnic. The Met, of course, is a huge institution in British life,

isn't it? And it's not the first time it's been sharply criticised.

It's not the first time. I mean, it happened. One thinks about this. It's nearly 25 years ago, in 1999, after the murder of a black teenager in London, there was a report that again suggested the police were fairly hopeless in London where it came to matters involving race and investigating allegations of violence against people who were black minority ethnic. And I guess the other thing that's sort of shocking about this, to put it into a broader context, is that there's always been that sort of joke that if you wanted to make an amalgam country in Europe, you'd want the cooking done by the French, et cetera, et cetera. And the policing done by the

Brits and the Metropolitan Police prided itself a bomb being one of the sort of greatest police forces not just in London and in Europe. But I mean, I think this report and the report before in 1999 suggests that really things have not been going well at all. And that as the report suggests, root and branch reform is needed. And what is that root and branch reform being suggested?

Well, it's things like greater independent oversight of the police. It's bringing in outside experts and it's rebuilding frontline services. So putting more money into how you relate to just people you meet on the street, how you conduct a stop and search operation. So a whole load of measures. And the police accept this. You heard a minute ago from Mr. Rowley, who's the commissioner,

who's the Mac commissioner. But what he's saying is that, you know, you can't expect overnight change. What he's talking about is step by step reforms that hopefully people in London who live here or who come visiting here, we get plenty of visitors to London, will notice the changes in about two years. But I mean, it's obviously a huge mountain to climb. In fact, talking of mountains, Louise Casey had that rather startling image that, yes, the Metropolitan Police understood that it wasn't in denial. But at the moment, it was like trying to climb a mountain and flip flops. And what the police needed to do was to get that to climb Everest and flip flops, but they needed to get their boots on, Val. Rob Watson. Australia is expected to hold a referendum later this year on a proposal to give First Nations Australians more of a say in parliament. The so-called indigenous voice would give independent advice to the government about policies affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Critics of the plan say it's an elitist project that will do little to address chronic disadvantage in those communities.

The Mercer reports from Sydney. This is an opportunity to unite our nation. This is just un-Australian. This just doesn't stand up. Yes, to a better future for this country. No one should feel any shame in voting no to this. For my voice, stand up and be counted. Vote yes. Australians will be asked in a referendum whether to set up a powerful First Nations committee that would help to shape government policy. The Prime Minister is Anthony Albanese. They'll be voting for two simple things. One is to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our Constitution and to do it in a way which gives them a voice so they're able to provide advice to the parliament on matters that directly affect them. We gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention coming from all points of the southern sky make this statement from the heart. The so-called voice to parliament was recommended after indigenous leaders met in central Australia six years ago. They signed what they termed the Uluru statement from the heart. It spoke of their despair at the chronic problems in their communities. Proportionately, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them.

Professor Megan Davis was a co-author of the document and believes the voice will make a difference. It gets us a seat at the table. It's not about our mob wanting to be politicians. It's not about being ideological. They live in communities but they do want to have input into laws and policies because currently that doesn't happen and that's why we see the situation that we see in indigenous affairs across the nation. Australia's Aboriginal history dates back up to 65,000 years. There is rich cultural diversity. There are more than 500 indigenous nations across the continent. But the debate about a voice to parliament has exposed deep divisions within Aboriginal Australia. Some critics want to treaty with the government instead that would give First Nations people who make up 3% of the population greater self-determination. Lydia Thorpe, an independent indigenous senator, believes the referendum is a project of elite politically progressive white Australians. We are only 3%. So it's the progressives in this country that will make the decision for us, ultimately. And that's a sad state of affairs in this country that white progressives think they know best for us. And they think that this is a good thing for us. But they haven't dug deep enough and allowed those grassroots black activists to have a say. One of those campaigners is Gwenda Stanley. She also opposes the voice to parliament and believes that much of Australia's indigenous leadership isn't in touch with the needs of the people. Unfortunately, we're still not being heard by our land councils. We're not being heard by our Aboriginal affairs departments and the rest of these leaders that are out there discussing our affairs without us. We don't benefit from the millions and millions of dollars that are put into our communities. I've got a story to tell you. It's a good one. It's about how these people, the first people, got a voice. Opinion polls show Australians want more specific details about how the Indigenous advisory panel would actually work before they vote. Of the 44 proposals for a change to the constitution put to Australians since 1901, only eight have been approved by the voters. Dear Daughter is a podcast from the BBC World Service full of personal insight and thoughtful letters of advice. Things that can inform you, can guide you, can support you. It's a handbook to life for daughters everywhere and we're back for season two. Search for Dear Daughter wherever you get your BBC podcast. Dear Daughter. Welcome back to the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. Israel's parliament, the Knesset, has cleared the way for Israeli citizens to return to four settlements in the occupied West Bank from which they've been banned for 18 years. It risks further inflaming tensions just in advance of the Muslim month of Ramadan. Our Middle East correspondent Anna Foster is in Jerusalem and I asked her what it means. Well in practice this still needs to be signed off by the Israeli military commander in the West Bank before things change. But risk is a really interesting and potentially controversial development because the High Court had previously ruled that these settlements had been built on private Palestinian land and they were evacuated at the time of the disengagement from Gaza all the way back in 2005. Now Israel's current coalition government, which is the most far right in the country's history, has been focusing on one of these settlements in particular, Homesh, which has an outpost that the coalition government wants to legalize. It also has a Jewish Yeshiva school there where it's trying to do the same thing. And in fact the very existence of those two places means that in fact despite the fact that Israelis have been banned there as you rightly say for 18 years they still have been coming in and out in some small ways. So when you ask what this means in practice that's an

excellent question because it will really be in the next few days and weeks that we see if the Israelis who want to go to those particular settlements and Homesh in particular wait for this to be signed off by the Israeli military commander or whether they see this as backing for their cause and decide to unilaterally go there anyway now that this legislation's been repealed. The timing is controversial isn't it Anna coming just days after the Israeli government reaffirmed its promise to pause settlement expansion and that happened at talks in Egypt. So why this now? You're right it is very controversial timing and you mentioned that the Muslim holy month of Ramadan which is scheduled to start later this week and which in this region often can be a flash point for violence because you have those religious sites that are contested in certain places and when you have these big religious occasions where different people want to go and pray that can often be a flash point for violence and that's one of the reasons why we saw these talks in Egypt at the weekend between Israel and the Palestinians but also Egypt, Jordan and the US really designed to deescalate tensions ahead of Ramadan ahead of Passover and Easter which will follow in the next few weeks and in fact Israel reaffirmed its commitment to pause settlement expansion as part of those talks and then when you also consider what Bezal El Smotrich the Israeli finance minister had to say at the weekend where he was talking at a conference in Paris and made a speech saying that there's no such thing as Palestinians that too has created condemnation a huge amount of criticism at a time when really deescalation is something that all parties are supposed to be focusing on.

Anna Foster in Jerusalem now to the much trailed possible arrest of the former president Donald Trump it comes over claims that in the run-up to the election in 2016 and in violation of campaign finance laws he paid a porn star Stormy Daniels to keep quiet over an alleged affair if he's detained it would make Donald Trump the first former president in history to face criminal charges but as our North America correspondent David Willis says any arrest is much more likely to happen next week. Donald Trump had raised the possibility of being criminally charged today and indeed law enforcement officials have been placed on high alert both in Washington DC here and in New York but it seems that they may all have got ahead of themselves somewhat because even though the grand jury which has been looking into allegations against Donald Trump has completed

its inquiries cable news networks here are reporting that if there is to be a court appearance it won't be until next week at the earliest and CBS News our partner network here in the United States is saying that there will be no indictment today Tuesday as for what form that would take well of course Donald Trump will be the first former president in American history to face criminal charges but the procedure will probably be very similar to that of any normal defendant as for what the Manhattan District Attorney is possibly going to charge Donald Trump with well we don't know what we do know is that he has been investigating claims related to so-called hush money payments to the porn star Stormy Daniels allegedly to buy her silence. Mr Trump is under investigation in other jurisdictions for other alleged crimes all of which are potentially more serious than this one but he and his allies in the Republican Party have taken aim on social media with the Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg calling him a politically motivated prosecutor and Mr Trump has called on his supporters to protest hence the New York Police Department will have officers fanned out around the courthouse in Manhattan later today just in case there is any sign of trouble but it does appear that Mr Trump himself will not be present. David Willis. Los Angeles is home to the second largest school district in the

United States but it also has some of the highest rent and home prices. About half a million pupils in Los Angeles are likely to miss out on school this week as workers go on strike demanding better conditions and pay to survive in the city. It's the latest strike in what many in the US see as a union boom our reporter Regan Morris is in Los Angeles where the strike was set to begin at school bus stops a few hours ago. They're chanting to shut down the schools they're the lowest paid workers in LA schools bus drivers cooks and cleaners and classroom assistants. Their union says their average salary is \$25,000 a year that's the same as the average yearly cost of renting a one bedroom apartment in Los Angeles. The union representing the 30,000 school employees say one in 10 of their members have been homeless while working in the Los Angeles Unified School District. It is sad too that we got to do this to get our voice heard. Mike Wilhuss is a janitor at a junior high school in Los Angeles. He makes almost \$34,000 a year and he pays \$24,000 in rent for a one bedroom apartment in East LA. You're barely covering your essentials which is maybe transportation uh gas which I mean gas has just been going crazy up. You got to stretch the dollars whatever you can so if you don't if there's something that I don't really need I mean I got to cut that off so there's no way for like oh I want to have fun with my friends there's no way not at all. Like many people who work in schools Rojas juggles several jobs. His second job is as a bass player in a mariachi band but with the cost of living so high in LA his gigs are drying up because people aren't hosting many big weddings and parties and hiring musicians to entertain their guests. Now some mariachi bands are playing for free at protests against the school district.

The workers want a 30% pay rise. The district has countered offering a 10% increase now and 20% over time. The main teachers union has joined the strike in solidarity and thousands of teachers have showed up at rallies and picket lines to support their colleagues.

Katie has been an art teacher in LA for 33 years. We also think about the young teachers and like the next generation of teachers that's going to get such a raw deal.

We're fighting for their rights too you know because no one's going to want to go into the profession if they can't make a living. California funds public schools based on how many students attend and enrollment in LA has been steadily declining for 20 years a rate that increased since the pandemic. Schools chief Alberto Carvalho apologized to parents for the shutdown and urged workers to keep negotiating. And my promise is no matter what the outcome is it will be far better than anything this district has ever arrived at or anything that most districts if any district whatsoever would be able to reach in the near future. Strikes especially in education have become increasingly common in the U.S. in the last five years with many Americans frustrated by low wages and growing income inequality. While many worry about children missing out on more school after lengthy COVID lockdowns a poll by Loyola Marymount University said 79 percent of LA parents support the strike. You know of course we don't want our kids missing instruction and seeing their friends and coming to school but we really want them to get a living wage. You know they're basically the backbone of our school. We entrust these teachers and the school staff, bus drivers and the custodians with our children's well-being and safety and to underpay them feels like a terrible crime. One of the affected parents ending that report by Regan Morris. The days of lugging crates of beer to a barbecue or a party could soon be over. A German brewery has come up with a new product that could change the entire alcohol market. That is if the beer-loving Germans accept it. Wendy Ocott has the story. Imagine if you fancied a glass of beer instead of opening the fridge or going to the pub you could just open a packet,

sprinkle powder into a glass of water, stir it up and chill with a glass of lager.

Closter brewery note Zellag, general manager Stefan Fritsche says he's invented an alcohol-free beer

powder that tastes just like the real thing and he has big plans for the future.

The special thing is that we have actually managed to turn this beer powder into a currently alcohol-free normal monetary beer. It tastes like pilsner. We want to add the carbon dioxide in powder form, we want to add the alcohol in powder form and we can all do that with powder and of course it is absolutely fascinating that we have succeeded for the first time worldwide.

Stefan says it will be very easy for breweries to add the powder beer to water at bottle plants and points out that not only will it make huge savings on beer export transport costs, it will massively reduce the industry's carbon footprint.

We have calculated that we can save about 3 to 5 percent of the CO2 emissions for Germany alone and if you look at it globally there would be about half a percent of the CO2 emissions that could be reduced. Of course that is not much at first but worldwide it is a gigantic sum.

Stefan's been researching powder beer for the last two years and he's confident that the product will be market ready by the end of this year and who knows perhaps we'll see powder versions

of other drinks like vodka, gin and whiskey in the future too. What can I say but

crossed to that, when do you cut reporting? And finally can you guess what this sound is?

Well it is in fact the sound of a fish singing in this case a solitary toadfish and when fish are together they collectively vocalise in choruses. Recording what's called fish chorusing is a vital element in helping biologists preserve fish populations. Now a new method has been developed to analyse recordings made under the sea using artificial intelligence to listen for specific fish sounds. One of the developers of the technique is Ella Kim, a doctoral student at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego in California and our reporter Rob Young asked her why do fish sing? They sing for a number of reasons it's thought that they sing sometimes aggressively if they're fighting each other but more commonly it's thought that fish sing in order to find a mate and reproduce so they'll kind of how birds show off their feathers fish will sing many fish if you can imagine kind of sitting at the ocean floor and having hundreds of fish all sing at the same time for hours through the night they sing together. Which is just the most incredible thought and sometimes we can even hear this from land.

A hundred percent yeah so a lot of toadfish you can hear from land sometimes people who live in nearby apartments will complain about the fish singing so loudly. And it's being recorded?

Yes and so our lab puts instruments in the bottom of the ocean kind of like microphones they're called hydrophones and so these instruments will sit on the bottom of the ocean for six months at a time just recording underwater sound and so through that we can study fish. Right so other than being able to listen to their singing how are you able to study what does it teach you? Great question so why fish chorusing is so important is because as I said before they are singing in order to find a mate and reproduce and so through studying chorusing we can better understand where and when fish are reproducing and different fish species produce different sounds so through that we can have a better understanding of where and when fish are mating which is really important when we're studying endangered species so that we can better inform fisheries and better protect fish. So how widespread then do you think this acoustic recording is going to become underwater? Oh it's already really widespread in terms of

the field of bioacoustics so traditionally lots of scientists have studied whales and dolphins in order to better understand how marine mammals communicate. Fish on the other hand although they've been studied for a while haven't been as much of like a popular research topic and you know in this day and age fish are really important to study not just because they provide more than one billion people with their primary protein but they also help to control the global climate and so better understanding fish behavior how they're reproducing when they're reproducing and where they're reproducing is really really important. Ella Kim I bet the scales fell from your eyes with that story. Time to go 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 in it send us an email the address is globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk you can also find us on twitter at globalnewspod. This edition was mixed by Lewis Olsopp the producer was Oliver Berlar the editor as ever is Karen Martin I'm Valerie Sanderson until next time bye bye

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