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I'm Janet Jalil and at 14 Hours GMT on Thursday the 3rd of August, these are our main stories.

Supporters of last week's coup in Niger have gathered in the capital

to denounce international sanctions. North Korea has for the first time confirmed

it's holding a US soldier who dashed across the border from South Korea last month.

Germany, who were among the favourites who win the Women's Football World Cup,

have been knocked out. Also in this podcast, heavier than a blue whale,

scientists find the remains of a marine animal which lived 40 million years ago.

Well, there's only 18 of these bones, but just take the vertebra that they have.

Each one of those big backbones is over 100 kilos.

That's all coming up, but first let's go to Niger.

Hundreds of people turned out in a central square in the capital,

Niamey, to demonstrate in support of the recent military coup. Many of them carried Russian flags

and chanted slogans calling for France to leave. Niger, a former French colony, is a vast country

with lucrative uranium reserves, but its people consistently rank as having the lowest standards

of living of anywhere in the world. Western countries have been evacuating hundreds of

their nationals after the French embassy was attacked by protesters on Sunday.

We got more from our Africa regional editor, Will Ross.

A large crowd gathered at Independence Square. This was a rally really called by a coalition

of civil society groups that have for quite some months now been calling for protests against

the presence of French troops in the country and against the fact that Niger has become this

pretty close ally of Western nations who are trying to fight the jihadist insurgency across

the region. But a large crowd and amongst the crowd, quite a lot of chants against France,

but also against the sanctions that have been imposed by the regional bloc,

and some chants and flags supporting Russia. But I ought to stress, you know,

in Niger, the country's pretty split on whether they're in support of this coup or not. There are

many people who believe that the coup leaders themselves were really in danger of being replaced

and losing their jobs, and so they move for their own protection, really, and that's what this is

all about. I was going to ask you about that because it's very difficult to assess how much

popular support there really is for the coup, but also this waving of the Russian flags that

started right from the beginning, didn't it? It did, and it's exactly the same script as we've

seen in Mali and Burkina Faso when the military took over there, a sort of rather suspicious

presence of Russian flags just at the moment when the military men have taken power, and of course

the military leaders are looking to try and justify their actions, so as soon as they'd seize power

the anti-French sentiment was whipped up, and then the presence of these Russian flags, I mean,

not many of them, but I mean, in Niger there are, you mentioned the poverty, there are huge

challenges in terms of the insecurity and the poverty, and many people do say, look, France and

other countries, including the UN in the Sahel region, have been trying to fight the jihadists,

but have failed to make any real inroads. And briefly, what's the latest on the evacuations?

We're not talking about huge numbers, this is very different from, you know, the kind of

evacuations in a place like Khartoum when the conflict broke out there, but most of the European

countries say that the people they had offered flights to have now left and a small number

remain behind, but it is at the moment a tense situation, but there's no fighting going on. Will Ross, since last month we've been reporting on the bizarre story of the US soldier who crossed one of the most heavily guarded borders in the world from south to north Korea. The 23-year-old soldier, Travis King, had been on a guided tour of the border when he dashed across. Why did he do it? Well, we know he'd just been released from custody in south Korea, where he'd been held on assault charges and was being escorted back to the US when he managed to escape and then joined this tour. Washington has been trying to work out what has happened to him, and it has been receiving radio silence from Pyongyang, at least that is until now. Our correspondent in Seoul, Jin McKenzie, told us more.

The last two weeks, obviously, as you say, the US have been trying to make contact with the North Koreans to find out where Travis King is and what's happening. Now, the way that they have to do this is through what's called the UN command. Now, this is the body that operates the demilitarized zone, so that strip of land between north and south Korea, and this is the strip of land that Travis King was on this tour of when he decided to dash over the border. So the UN command has this direct phone line to the North Korean military, which they use pretty much every day to check in with the North Korean military as part of their remit to keep the peace. So they've used this phone line over the last couple of weeks to send messages to the North Koreans to basically ask about Travis King and ask for information. And what they've had is just the North Koreans picking up the phone, because that's part of this channel, that's how this works, and just simply receiving the message. So they haven't actually had a response, they've just had an acknowledgement that the North Koreans are hearing their message. But we know now that at some point over the last 48 hours, the North Koreans have sent their first proper response. So they've acknowledged that Travis King is in their custody, and they have, you know, replied to the UN command. But the UN command today, they're being very cautious with what they say, they don't want to reveal the details about what's in this response, because they say they don't want to interfere with their efforts that they're currently doing to try and get Travis King home. It's a very sensitive time now that it seems the North Koreans want to engage. So we're thinking that this is the North Koreans taking the first step in negotiations, which could lead to the release of Travis King? Well, certainly, yes, it's the first time that they're saying, right, okay, we're ready to talk in some way, it could be that they're ready to negotiate, or maybe it's that they're getting ready to show us what their next move is. They still haven't publicly acknowledged that they have Travis King in the country or that any of this has happened. I think there is concern now about how the North Koreans are going to approach this. There are many different avenues they could take. They could use Private Travis King as propaganda, as domestic propaganda, and to highlight a US soldier who was so dissatisfied with life at home or life in the US Army that he's chosen to come and live in North Korea. That's one way. The other way, of course, is that they use him to make an example out of, and they say, you know, this is a soldier who crossed into our country illegally without permission. And they put him on trial, for example, you know, and the consequences of that could be extremely severe, which is why this is such a delicate time. And I think that this UN command with the US alongside them will be doing everything they can to just try and negotiate his return. Jean McKenzie in Seoul. For the past 18 months, many Ukrainian families have been separated,

torn apart as fathers and husbands stayed behind to fight the Russians, while wives and children fled. Our special correspondent, Fergal Keane, reports on one family story of separation and brief reunion.

That is the sound of a family planning something they've looked forward to for the last year and a half, a return to Ukraine. It's July now, and the family are preparing for the trip of a lifetime, not one they'd ever have dreamed of making in the past.

This is hard to credit to believe in the Europe of 2022. People are just crushing all around me trying to get onto these trains. A woman, a young mother with a baby, they're screaming

because everyone's getting crushed. Oksana Onichuk, her 13-year-old son Ilya and nine-year-old daughter

Anna were among the thousands fleeing west from the railway station here in Lviv.

Husband Genya was a man of fighting age and so not allowed to go with him. He pressed his palm to the window of the train. He, Oksana and the children all were weeping.

Genya, a slender, gentle man, went back to Harkiv. Back to Russian shelling, burned out buildings, food shortages and memories of a vanished life.

This February, he showed us around the playground next to the family flat.

I used to play basketball with my son there. All sorts of things were flying here from different directions. Half of the playground is missing.

On the other side of Europe, 1500 miles away, Oksana and the children found refuge in Britain.

An English speaker, she got a job teaching Ukrainian refugee children at a local school in Surrey.

Yeah, it's difficult. I must be a mother, a father, a teacher. They need

my support because Genya is far away from us.

Most nights, as long as there's power in Harkiv, the family has a Zoom call.

The talk is of schoolwork, news of the family cat stranded like Genya in Ukraine.

But Oksana has been saving and with Genya she's come up with a plan.

She and the children are going to meet him in one of the safer cities in Ukraine for a holiday.

After 18 months, they'll be reunited.

Every hour we are closer and closer to him.

I've never had such strong emotions like now I have.

Ukrainian flag, just across the field. Look.

You're home. Finally. Yeah, finally we are here and can't wait to see Genya.

Anna is first off the train and into her father's arms.

Ilya grasps his hand, then Oksana

into the embrace of the man she's loved since they were both 15.

I can't believe it, Genya says.

In a month they'll have to say goodbye again.

But Genya's words from Lviv station at the beginning of the war come back.

Everything will be fine. They are more than just words to this family.

They are an enduring act of faith that war has not destroyed.

That report by Fergal Keane.

Many museums around the world contain art and artifacts that were stolen from their countries of origin.

And recently there's been a real push to repatriate items to their original owners.

The latest case is Australia's National Gallery.

It's just announced that it will return three 9th and 10th century bronze sculptures to Cambodia.

Our Asia Pacific editor Michael Bristow told us more about the sculptures

and why Australia had agreed to return them.

Well as you indicated there, these sculptures, very beautiful, very delicate,

are over a thousand years old from the Champa Kingdom which occupied much of central Vietnam and Cambodia. They apparently were dug up in a field in 1994

and it appears that they were then trafficked across the border to Thailand

and ended up in the collection of a British art dealer and collector called Douglas Latchford.

He then sold them in 2011 to the National Gallery of Australia for 1.5 million US dollars.

Mr Latchford died in 2020 but subsequently his reputation has been damaged.

He not only was an art dealer and collector, he actually trafficked stolen goods and

after an investigation by the gallery in Australia they decided that these were in fact stolen

artifacts. Interestingly that investigation into these statues was conducted with Mr Latchford's

daughter with the help of her so they've decided to send these back to Cambodia and there was a

ceremony in which they handed them over. Actually they won't be handed over for three years

because

the Cambodians are just building a museum to hold them but then they'll be sent back to where they

came from. Michael Bristow. Still to come on this podcast? I'm very angry and feel like burning the

entire country. Don't I have the right to live here? The authorities didn't stand by me.

They didn't even come to inquire my well-being. We hear from the victims of the latest round of

Hindu Muslim violence in India.

Welcome back to the Global News Podcast. A ceasefire between Colombia's government and the left-wing

guerrilla group National Liberation Army or ELN comes into force today and will last for six months.

It's an important step for Colombia, a country that's faced domestic insurgencies since the 1960s.

In 2016, Colombia's government signed a peace deal with the larger FARC rebel group,

ending a conflict that saw more than 200,000 people killed. Here's our South America

correspondent,

Katie Watson. Colombia's President Gustavo Petro came to power last year, promising to bring

peace to a country long troubled by civil war. If the ceasefire holds, it'll be the longest time

the ELN has agreed to halt the conflict that started in 1964, and it'll be a major victory for

Mr. Petro, who himself is a former member of the now defunct M19 rebel group. The ceasefire will

last 180 days, after which it may be extended. There are, however, many who doubt the ability of

the rebel group to comply with the ceasefire. Talks between the two sides have collapsed several

times already, and there's concern that more extreme elements within the ELN could violate the

deal. All this comes at a difficult time for Mr. Petro, who's losing popularity amid growing

corruption scandals. Katie Watson. Since the Hindu nationalist BJP came to power in India

nearly a decade ago, there's been an alarming rise in communal violence and hate crimes,

many of them against Muslims. The northern state of Haryana is the latest to be rocked by such

violence. It began on Monday when a Hindu right-wing group led a religious procession

in a predominantly Muslim district of the city of New. At least six people were killed and dozens

more injured. The state authorities have beefed up security measures amid concerns the violence

could spread to Delhi. Arunade Mukherjee reports. The city of New bears a deserted look. The only

cars that we are seeing on the roads are those of officials, government vehicles. There is heavy police and paramilitary presence. In fact, additional troops have been sent by the federal government to help the state government in containing law and order. While no further clashes have been reported in this area, the situation still remains tense. We don't see anyone on the roads. All the shops are shut. Internet is down as well in this area as well as in the neighboring areas. The heavy police deployment trying to douse the flames after violence broke out between Hindus and Muslims. Rioting mobs went on a rampage, burning cars, breaking in and looting shops. Violence began in these parts when a Hindu religious procession was passing through a Muslim majority area. The man at the center of the conflict, Monu Manisar from a right-wing Hindu group, wanted in the murder of two Muslim men in February this year, but still on the run. He posted a video on social media, brazening it out and announcing his participation at the Hindu march. His defiant call angered local Muslims, igniting several hours of violence. Satya Prakash Garg sits outside his confectionery shop which was destroyed in the violence. He opens the shutters to reveal the extent of damage.

All we can see are pieces of glass. All the glasses have been broken. This was a confectionery shop selling bread, cake and daily essentials. The food items which have been rotting for the last two days are on the floor and the stench is very strong. A business that took three years to build destroyed within minutes, torn apart bit by bit. I'm very angry and feel like burning the entire country. Don't I have the right to live here? I feel helpless. The authorities didn't stand by me. They didn't even come to inquire my well-being. What do I do? The violence which started in New spread to other parts of the state. Evidence of arson and destruction visible in neighboring cities. In Gurugram on the outskirts of Delhi, a mosque was set on fire and its cleric, 22-year-old Saad Amin, woken up and killed by a mob. Riazuddin, an official at the mosque, meets us a few kilometers away. He says he is terrified of going back. Why target him? What had he done? If you had a problem with the mosque, you target the mosque. But why take an innocent life?

The cleanup in New has begun. We see charred cars being towed away by officials and workers sweeping away remnants of the destruction left behind by the violence.

But the mistrust will linger for a while. These clashes on the outskirts of the capital city of Delhi at the start of an election season could have political ramifications.

US and Canadian fire crews are still battling to contain the Eagle Bluff wildfire that nearly engulfed the town of Osuyus in British Columbia over the weekend, forcing hundreds of people to evacuate to safer ground. Teams on both sides of the border have been carrying out controlled burns to create a firebreak over 1,800 hectares of steep and rocky terrain, which poses safety risks to crews. Our North America correspondent, Netatorfik, is on the Canadian side of the border. Tasha and Dean Maynard are just relieved to be back home. The Eagle Bluff wildfire initially spread so quickly from the US border that it wasn't long before fire crews came to their neighborhood in the Osuyus golf course to tell them to evacuate immediately.

There was a big dark black plume of smoke that happened just as I came outside, so I turned around and told the girls go start packing. I'm pretty sure we're going to be leaving. Within the 5-10 minutes of packing up and going out, the engulfment, you could see it in the back side just coming over. And from there to the time we went to our friend's house and sitting on their deck and watching it, it was already at the point of our place within minutes. For hours, the Maynards and residents watched the Inferno building in front of them. The wildfire is still growing days later, but at least for now,

it's expanding away from town to the west. I'm on the highway overlooking the mountains where the Eagle Bluff fire is still very much raging, a smoke pillowing into the sky, and currently there are two water bomber planes that have been carrying water from the lake Osuyus into the mountains to try to contain this. In fact, they've been doing that for the last several days relentlessly working hard. But despite that, officials say this fire is still very much out of control. It's definitely like we had an early start to the season and we're still into the heat of our summer here. Shaley Stearns with the Wildfire Service in British Columbia says teams on the US and Canadian sides have been carrying out controlled burns to create a firebreak over 1,800 hectares of steep and rocky terrain which pose safety risks to crews. We've seen some significant growth on that west side of the fire. The fire is estimated at 3,044 hectares in size and we're working with the incident management team on the US portion of the fires and looking at objectives that we can identify and assess along that west flank. The Eagle Bluff Wildfire is one out of more than 1,000 burning across Canada right now, believed to be fuelled by higher than usual temperatures and drought.

Nedotrophic in British Columbia. There's been a rather huge discovery in Peru, literally. Massive bones, the size and weight of boulders, have been identified as a fossilized remains of an early mammal. It's thought to have lived nearly 40 million years ago and may possibly have been the heaviest animal ever, weighing even more than the Blue Whale. Our science correspondent Jonathan Amos told us more about how the remains of this prehistoric creature were found.

Well it was quite a long road to this discovery. The bones themselves were first found 13 years ago but they were so big and locked away in rock that it took three years to come out of the rock face and then transport them to Lima, the capital of Peru, where they could study them and they've just published a paper now of that description in the journal Nature. Well there's only 18 of these bones but just take the vertebra that they have. Each one of those big backbones is over 100 kilos and they're really dense as well so when they try to drill into them the drill bit actually broke and that speaks to the nature of the skeleton. So this skeleton is not only made up of very dense bone but the bones themselves are kind of oversized. That's to say they've got extra growth on their exterior surfaces and so that makes for a very very heavy skeleton and when you add in then you know the organs, the blubber and the muscle that would have made up this animal you get to a creature that is approaching about 200 tons. And what did this creature look like and how did it sustain itself given all this weight? Well it's quite interesting actually because it's it's not that I say not that long still long it's about 20 meters long but you know you find blue whales that are longer than that but just the nature of its skeleton and what that would have supported in terms of its bulk means that it was it was in the region of two to three times as heavy as an average blue whale. This creature we think probably occupied shallow waters in coastal zones and it was feeding on the bottom but also it would have had to have found a lot of food or certainly would have had to have eaten for most of the day you know we we look at say the you know the big dinosaurs the big sauropods you know from a hundred million years ago they would have been

eating you know 20 21 hours a day and this creature too would have had to consume food on a vast scale. It's interesting isn't it that in this day and age we're still making such I've got to say gigantic discoveries could there be more to come? Well there's always more to come what's interesting

about the stations the whales that their fossil record actually is pretty complete and we have a very good picture of how whales first emerged about 55 million years ago and then evolved through to now. What's fascinating I find fascinating is that when you look at the skeletons of the history of whales gigantism i.e. you know the large baleen whales the blue whales the humpbacks so those kinds of animals we think they got big only in the last five million years we've got some ideas for why that might have been but here is a creature 39 million years ago that was just as big and that is the surprise that's the fascination here is that today's great whales had just as colossal a cousin way back in time. Jonathan Amos and finally let's go to the Women's Football World Cup at Saking Place in Australia and New Zealand. There have already been plenty of surprises in the tournament

and there's been another shock result. One of the favourites Germany are out of the competition after they drew one all with South Korea. In the same group Morocco who are playing in their first World Cup are through to the knockout stages after a 1-0 victory over Colombia who also qualified. Our reporter in Australia Manny Jasmy said the Germany result is a massive setback for the two-time former world champions. The biggest shock in the history of this Women's World Cup and probably in the history of the World Cup overall. Germany who are ranked second in the world who won their first game 6-0 who are many people's favourites to win it have been knocked out at the end of the group stage. They drew 1-1 with South Korea but because Morocco beat Colombia 1-0 Germany finished third. Right so a stunning result there and now we've got some big matches in store. Yes although who knows what's going to happen. I mean what we've seen we've seen Germany last year's European Championship finalists go out before the last 16 but the knockout games start on Saturday and on Sunday Netherlands are playing South Africa who are in the knockout stages for the first time. That game is actually a midday local time because FIFA the organisers expected the USA

to have won their group and to play at that slot. Manny Jasmy in Sydney 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 globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk. This edition was mixed by Chris Cousaris the producer was Oliver Burlau the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Janet Jalil until next time goodbye.