

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service, with reports and analysis from across the world. The latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising.

Ryan Reynolds here from Mint Mobile. With the price of just about everything going up during inflation, we thought we'd bring our prices down. So to help us, we brought in a reverse auctioneer, which is apparently a thing.

Mint Mobile unlimited premium wireless.

How do they get 30, 30, 30, 30, 20, 20, 20, 20, 20, 15, 15, 15, 15, just 15 bucks a month?

So, give it a try at mintmobile.com slash switch.

New activation and upfront payment for three month plan required. Taxes and fees extra.

Additional restrictions apply. See mintmobile.com for full terms.

Oh boy, sounds like hashtag big bank bull is back.

Knowing about keeping its hoof on the pulse of business, but fulfilling customers' needs

at a snail's pace isn't exactly trendy. That's why you should bank with Mid Florida,

so you can buy into the next Insta trend before it's Insta gone. Walk into any branch and walk

out with an instant issue debit card in hand. No hashtag waiting five to ten business days.

No big bank ball. Mid Florida. Florida's Community Credit Union. Checking account required.

Ensured by NCUA.

Live's Less Ordinary is the podcast from the BBC World Service, bringing you extraordinary personal stories from around the globe.

Search for Live's Less Ordinary wherever you get your BBC podcasts.

Hi, I'm Michael. I'm from New Zealand, and this is the happy pod.

Hi, I'm Emma in Los Whithill, and this is the happy pod.

Hi, this is Michael.

Hi, this is Theresa.

We're in Hong Kong.

And this is the happy pod.

This is the happy pod from the BBC World Service.

I'm Jackie Leonard, and in this edition, uploaded on Saturday, the 7th of October,

celebrating Simone, the extraordinary comeback of US gymnast Simone Biles,

athlete, mental health campaigner, and champion. Tackling one of the world's deadliest diseases, an affordable malaria vaccine gets WHO approval.

In enormous relief, we've had time to think about it.

Yeah, no, it was worth pursuing.

It was technically very difficult.

It's going to take a while to eradicate malaria,

so we're going to need this vaccine for a while.

Some advice for would-be scientists from a Nobel Prize winner.

I had so much fun in the laboratory, performing the experiments and improving things, and so I have to emphasise them that it is fun.

It is a lot of work, but it is fun.

A man inspired by a question from his grandchildren.

They asked me, do you mean it's a story of two-pot-pot?

And I couldn't.

So he learnt to read and has written a book of his own.
We'll meet him.
Also in the podcast, The Science Behind This.
There are comebacks, and then there's Simone Biles.
All eyes are on Simone Biles.
The first opportunity for a golden moment of this comeback.
We're all with you, Simone.
So composed, so refined, so confident.
She has owned this competition, owned this piece of apparatus,
owned this piece of apparatus, double let out for the final tumble.
As high as you like.
Well, that proves it. Biles is back.
No question about it.
A standing ovation from the world of gymnastics.
And do you know what that routine was?
It was full of smiles.
Look at that face there.
That, to me, says it all.
Absolute smiles of joy.
She is back and back with an absolute bang.
Now, you might remember that in 2021 at the delayed Tokyo Olympics,
the American gymnast pulled out of a number of events.
She said she needed some time away to work on her mental health,
after suffering what gymnasts call the twisties.
That's a mental block that throws off spatial awareness,
causing them to lose control and do extra twists or flips that they hadn't intended.
In the worst cases, they can find themselves unable to land safely.
Well, in her time away, there was even speculation
that she would retire from the sport for good.
But such talk was very premature.
She has powered back, winning medals,
breaking records and thrilling audiences.
Natalie Perks from BBC Sport spoke to us from Antwerp,
where the world championships are taking place,
about Simone's return to the world stage.
Well, this is the thing, isn't it?
How do you come back from a mental block so bad
that you can't twist in the air anymore?
How can you come back here in Antwerp
with a huge smile on your face
and wow the crowds in the way that she's doing it?
It's absolutely unfathomable,
because the thing about Simone is, you know,
this is a really tough sport.

She makes it look simple.
She does things that no one else can do.
Well, as you say, gymnastics is incredibly tough.
The human body, trained as well as it can be,
can only do so much.
And I speak as a woman who can barely get off the sofa
without going oof.
But Simone Biles actually has five skills named after her,
which is astonishing, isn't it?
Yes, so in gymnastics, if you land a skill
that no one else has done before in a major world competition,
it gets named after you.
So to just have one huge achievement,
she's got five at the ripe old age of 26.
The fifth actually came here in qualifying
when she became the first woman in history
to land this incredibly dangerous and difficult vault.
It's now called the Biles II.
It has the highest difficulty value in the women's vault.
So we may never see her kind again.
We're going to see women in the future
who pull off certain skills
and perhaps have skills named after them.
But to have five, she is the greatest
to ever do this sport we've ever seen.
What she's doing is so dangerous
and just incredible.
I mean, I'm very, very lucky to do my job
when I get to see up close the kind of things she can do.
And watching it live is something else, let me tell you.
As you say, she is the ripe old age of 26.
That's 26 in human years.
That's like 97 in gymnast years.
What is next for her?
I think, look, she's an absolute rock star of gymnastics,
but she now transcends her sport.
She's a really important figure,
speaking up for both mental health and abuse survivors.
She's now the oldest American woman
to ever win a world championship medal at just 26.
But what's next?
We've got the Paris Olympics next year,
and I think for her, that's definitely her aim.
You know, she's already a full-time Olympic champion,

given that she starts as the favourite in five of six events.
You could definitely see her increasing her medal tally,
you know, on what would be essentially
a triumphant chapter in her fairytale.
That was Natalie Perks of BBC Sport.
There were two big celebrations
in the world of vaccines this week.
We'll talk about this year's Nobel Prize for Medicine
in a minute, but first, the World Health Organization
has recommended a cheap malaria vaccine
that can be produced on a massive scale.
Malaria kills around 600,000 people a year,
mainly children under five.
This vaccine is only the second one to be developed,
and costs less per dose than the first.
Professor Sir Adrian Hill, who developed it,
told us about the moment the WHO Director-General
made the announcement.
In enormous relief, we didn't know what he was going to say
as we all sat down and watched the whole team in many countries
for amazing clinical teams in countries in Africa,
the manufacturers in India,
the adjuvant providers in the United States.
Yes, it's been quite an experience putting this together.
You have got there. It's your life's work.
We've had time to think about it.
Yeah, no, look, it was worth pursuing.
It was technically very difficult,
but we've learned things that will be applicable
to other vaccines, comparing technologies.
We've compared a lot, and this one really stands out
in terms of the person magnitude
and the durability of the antibodies that we can generate.
With a previous vaccine, around about 50% of malaria cases
were being prevented, which is very valuable and impactful,
but we seem to be closer to the 75% mark,
reducing cases by three quarters.
Some people would argue that two other facets
are even more important.
You've already mentioned the price,
which should be a few dollars, not eight or \$10 a dose,
and really importantly, the supply.
So we've been working with the Ceremon Institute of India,
who were our industrial partner during the COVID response.

Here, they're looking at \$100 million next year,
maybe \$200 million doses the year after,
and that's the sort of number that you need
to prevent a lot of children dying.
It's going to take a while to eradicate malaria,
so we're going to need this vaccine for a while.
And then there was the Nobel Prize for Medicine,
awarded to a pair of scientists
who developed the technology
that led to the mRNA COVID vaccines.
Professors Catalin Carrico and Drew Weisman
originally met at the photocopying machine
when they were young researchers
and went on to spend decades working together.
Neither quite believed it when they received the call.
I thought maybe it was just a joke.
Of course, later I get more information
and I started to believe,
but I still had to wait for the announcement
to make sure that it's real.
I had the exact same feeling.
I was sort of overjoyed and disbelief
and a little bit suspecting
that it was some anti-vaxxer playing a prank on us.
I talked to Katie and we had the same feeling,
but when we saw the announcement,
we knew it was real and it was just a fantastic feeling.
I did produce the RNA and Drew,
he did cultured cells and so kind of shoulder to shoulder.
We worked on these projects.
I would go to meetings and present what I was working on
and people would look at me and say,
oh, that's very nice,
but why don't you do something worthwhile with your time?
But Katie and I kept pushing.
I think we have to start talking to high school kids
to get them excited about science,
to see that it's a rewarding, fulfilling career
that if they're interested in solving problems
and asking questions,
it's a great field to go into.
And that's something that Katie and I
spend a lot of time working on.
Exactly, from outside it seems like,

oh, you must be sad, you struggle.
I have to say that I had so much fun in the laboratory,
performing the experiments and improving science,
and so I have to emphasize them that it is fun.
It is a lot of work, but it is fun.
At the end, if you result,
have somebody to have a better life
or cure some disease, that's even an extra reward.
You have to have fun and enjoy it.
Professors Catalin Carrico and Drew Weisman,
winners of the Nobel Prize for Medicine.
Now, we do like it when listeners email us
with their stories and ideas,
and this one comes from Hong Kong,
where medical students have been making use
of a novel, generative AI chatbot
as part of learning clinical bedside skills.
And it's going so well that they're getting together
with the National University of Singapore
in hopes of broadening the scope of students
from both universities.
So can a good bedside manner be taught this way?
We caught up with Michael Koh
of the University of Hong Kong Department of Surgery
and student, Teresa Tsir, to find out.
The technology is really evolving very quickly.
Bedside teaching has been there for centuries
because it's an integral part of the medical education.
It hasn't changed much over the last century or so,
but with this kind of chatbot,
so students are now able to practice anywhere they want.
And also for us tutors, we can design our own patients.
We can design the complex patients
to challenge our students' thinking and learning,
and even design their personalities.
So I've decided some patients who are verticative
and some patients might be a bit timid
and some patients might be a bit aggressive and impolite.
So I think it's really a bit of imagination
and it's very interesting.
And Teresa, how is it to use?
Have you tried different methods of learning
which actually involved real people?
How is it for you as a student to use this new system?

I think virtual bedside teaching can be superior
in terms of its flexibility,
and we can easily do it at our own convenience.
But you can never really replicate, can you, using AI,
the relationship between a doctor and a patient
who is ill, frightened, maybe confused.
One of the missing elements, I would say,
would be direct physical content
as well as physical interaction with the patient.
I would say in-person interactions allow us to observe
and interpret some kinds of nonverbal clues from our patients.
Which is quite essential in our medical training.
So Michael, this is a really exciting time for medicine, isn't it?
All these new tools at your disposal.
Yeah, because another big thing is that we are hosting,
I think the world's first conjoined virtual bedside teaching
with another university in Asia,
the National University of Singapore.
So I'm designing my own Hong Kong patients
for the Singaporean students.
And then the Singaporean professors
are designing their patients
for our Hong Kong students to see.
So it broadens the vision of our students.
And also, this kind of a knowledge exchange
internationally would be a big trend.
And I think the AI has revolutionized
the whole medical education.
Michael Koh of the University of Hong Kong
Department of Surgery and student, Theresa Tser.
Thank you both.
Now, you might remember the words of hope and joy
we heard from Susie Dent in the last edition.
Daniel Robus in South Africa was moved to get in touch.
Thanks for an awesome show.
Living in South Africa, it's always wonderful to hear
happy news from around the world.
My name's Daniel, and I'm in Johannesburg,
and we're about to have a lacquer brie.
That's a word from our lexicon,
which its direct translation means sweet,
but it is so much more.
It encapsulates everything good in a moment or experience.
That was a lacquer drink, or here's such a lacquer guy,

or wow, the springbox scored a wonderful lacquer try.
Anyway, I hope you have a lacquer week ahead,
and thank you for the good news podcast.
You are most welcome, Daniel.
And a brie, for those of you who don't know,
is like a South African barbecue,
a very social feast cooked over real flame.
And Pablo Castaneda tells us he likes the Italian word
frutivendola.
He says it's simple, fruit seller,
but the word sounds wonderful and has all five vowels.
We like it too, Pablo.
Thank you both, and keep them coming.
Still to come in this podcast?
It was really exciting.
It had millions and millions of clicks.
The town that went viral in its search for a new doctor.
That world has eaten up and spit out a lot of young and attractive guys.
This is the story of one of fashion's dark secrets.
I was overwhelmed.
Like, I had never seen anything like this.
At the height of Abercrombie and Fitch's success.
This was me being carefully manipulated.
Being lied too tricked and traded like a commodity.
Investigating allegations that would take me into a world
of money, sex, and power.
This is World of Secrets.
Season one, The Abercrombie Guys.
Listen, wherever you get your podcasts.
Now, some of the other things that caught our attention this week.
The great good fortune of Pratik Kumar who survived after falling under a moving train
in West Champaran in India.
He lay very still indeed between the two tracks.
There's even video showing horrified officials waiting for the train to pass.
One of our occasional series that I'm thinking of calling not extinct after all.
This time it's a small species of holly tree in Brazil
known as the Pernambuco Holly.
It hasn't been seen in almost 200 years.
And finally, I urge you to look for the finalists in this year's comedy
wildlife photo awards.
Bears, birds, kangaroos, and even apparently a levitating seal.
It's in the in pictures page of our website and I will share the link on social media
with the hashtag the happy pod.
The winner will be announced in November.

Now, two New Zealand to meet Michael Kingi Potiki
who left school illiterate at 14 and who in his 50s
realized he wanted to be able to read to his grandchildren.
So he got help from a retired teacher, started learning,
and he's now written his own book A Journey Towards Literacy
proving it's never too late.
Michael told us about his inspiration.
Watch my wife reading to my grandchildren
and they asked me, are you ready to study to pop pop?
And I couldn't.
That took me back and I thought to myself I gotta do something about it.
So I reached out and I found the help I needed.
So just to go back, what was school like for you?
Oh that was terrible.
I was born with a short tongue and nobody could understand me.
I started and you could say I was put in the back of the class every room I went to.
I was watching some kids in the classroom read and I thought I want to do that too.
So I've asked this particular teacher, could you teach me to read?
He said, it's too late Michael, you're too old.
So from that moment on I go for my rest of my life out reading and writing
until I found my person who helped me to read.
And her name is Linda Davis, tell us about her.
Wow, what can I not say about her?
The patient of a teacher I never met before my whole life.
I wanted somebody who treated me like an adult, not a child.
I didn't want to start on baby books and she was that person I wanted to learn by.
And what she liked?
Box and roses and she's got patience.
So much patience with me is not funny.
How did you get by all of those decades when you hadn't yet acquired this skill?
The little white lies, I've left my glasses behind.
Can I take that home and I read it later?
And it worked for a long, long time.
The biggest thing I wanted to do was display to my grandchildren that their grandfather,
or they call me pop pop, that my life wasn't easy.
I've coped and given hope that you can do anything you want to by trying a wee bit harder.
My granddaughter, she's 12 years old.
She read my book for the first time last night.
And she said to my wife, I love pop pop spot.
Now I understand.
It takes in the family story what I grew up like.
Part of when we were kids, we had a penguin.
My father found it.
He was a fisherman and he found it floating in the middle of the ocean.

And his name is Percy the penguin.
So we used to go swimming in the sea with him.
And here we have a lot of joyful times with that penguin.
So Percy the penguin is the beginning of a whole series of children's books,
I would think.
That sounds amazing.
Yeah, we probably later on in my life might do that.
But writing a book, the process, it wasn't easy, was it?
It took a long time to get page one away and page two.
And now the book's finished.
I'm proud of seeing the words I've written down come to life.
And if it can help somebody out there who can't read and write at my age,
if I can do it, they can do it.
And before you start that journey, you've got to look at yourself
because your pride takes over your first step.
Once you get over that, tell somebody I need help.
You're in your way.
It's not always easy to find the best person for the job.
And sometimes you need to do something more eye-catching than just a regular ad.
When the town of Los Withil in Cornwall in the southwest of England needed a doctor,
they went the viral social media video route.
The video's creator was Emma Mansfield.
Let's hear a bit of it.
Our videos are kind of joyous celebration of our community
in a musical plea for a doctor to come and work in our town of Los Withil.
And serve our many communities from children right the way up to older members of the
community.
Good to see all the different groups that live here participated.
We had children the age of eight months old right the way up to some of our singers and
musicians who were in their late 70s and early 80s.
Yes, this video involves children, the fish and chip shop, pharmacist, firefighters,
there's a yoga class.
Was it difficult to persuade them to participate
and then to knock them into shape and get them to do all the moves?
So it was a bit like sort of going around the town and just picking up little shots.
And obviously we contacted everybody and said that would you be up for it?
One of my favorites was the butchers.
I mean, that was hilarious because they have absolutely no rhythm whatsoever,
which they would have to keep repeating.
And then they just made it their own, which was great.
So I think people enjoyed the novelty of it.
Now, most people, if they were looking for someone to fill a job, would write a job ad.
And if you were writing a job ad for a doctor, you'd probably put it in sensible medical journals.
What was wrong with that approach?

Our advert would have been lost in a sea of advertisements from other surgeries all over the UK. But when Dr Hendricks approached us, he said, you know, we need to do something different. We need to do a call for something and a pop video is a great way to do it because we knew it could have got on to TikTok and perfect for social media and quite quick for us to get together. And it was really exciting. It had millions and millions of clicks. And then the next day it was in the paper. You couldn't buy any newspapers in the local paper shop. People were getting up extra early to get their copy. We had some really great coverage. Now, we did actually try to get hold of the doctor who answered the call. She was busy actually looking after sick people astonishingly. So between us, how's she settling in? Do you know, I actually saw her the other day and I think she's really enjoying it. She's now much near her family and she is raising her family here. And she's really young and positive. So actually it was a perfect fit. Emma Mansfield in Cornwall. There are few things that we like more than a happy human here on the happy pod. But one thing that does bring to mind, a happy cat. Bear with me. Cats, of course, are thought to express their happiness via these sorts of sounds. A cat's purr is one of the more distinctive sounds it makes. And it can even be felt as a vibration. But as common and delightful as purring is, scientists have long been confused about how it's possible to make that sound until now. Stephanie Prentice has this report. I'm at a cat cafe in central London. It's a space where cats from shelters come to live and they get a chance to meet a potential new owner. Curled up on my lap is Gerdy. He lives here in this space. It's like a normal cafe but full of cat toys, platforms, water fountains and scratch poles as well as plenty of cat lovers. Yep, you could say there's plenty here to purr about. Purring is a sound we often associate with comfort, contentment and a human feline bond. Has he been purring? We're trying to get the purring. Oh, it makes me feel so happy. I feel so loved. I'm like, oh my god, you love me. They're so cute and I just feel like so warm inside.

But as simple as a purr may seem to cat lovers,
for scientists it's proved much more puzzling.
What they call the classic meow,
as well as noises like yowling and mewing
all make sense from a biological perspective.
But the purr, that's a little different.
Christian Herbst from the University of Vienna
took the mystery on as part of dedicated research into purring.
A cat, when it purrs, it purrs at a frequency of 30 hertz.
So that's 30 times a second.
You would expect that from an animal
that has the size of a little bit less than an elephant.
So it's a really, really low frequency sound.
So normally large animals create low sounds
and small animals create high pitch sounds.
Meaning, while the cat is small,
its vocal ability is mighty.
What we found basically came as a surprise
because it sheds a completely new light
on the sound production mechanism of cats.
Christians findings build on prior understanding
that cats contract and relax their laryngeal structure to purr,
opening and closing their vocal folds.
The findings suggest that actually a special pad
in the vocal box allows that to happen.
What we found, if we looked a little bit closer,
is a special anatomical structure in the vocal fold of the cat.
And this structure allows the frequency to be so low.
What Christian couldn't tell us is exactly why cats purr.
I have to draw a blank.
But back in the cafe, visitors had some ideas.
What do you think it is that makes cats purr?
I just think when they're happy,
they're just a nice little response so they feel safe, isn't it?
Oh yeah, you like the pets.
Well, I think if it's my cat, I just feel really special.
I'm like, oh, you're comfortable with me.
I love it.
That report by Stephanie Prentice, our resident cat lady,
and there is some competition for that.
And our thanks to the staff at Java Whiskers Cat Cafe
for having us and its residents are available for adoption to good homes.
And that's it from us for now.
Remember, if you would like to be part of the happy pod, just email us.

Sounds that bring you joy, delicious words from your country or region for good things, you get the idea.

As ever, the address is GlobalPodcast at bbc.co.uk.

This edition was mixed by Charlotte of Tozhimska.

The producer was Anna Murphy.

Our editor is Karen Martin.

I'm Jackie Leonard.

And until next time, goodbye.

The story of one of fashion's dark secrets.

I was overwhelmed.

Like, I had never seen anything like this.

At the height of Abercrombie and Fitch's success.

This was me being carefully manipulated.

Being lied too tricked and traded like a commodity.

Investigating allegations that would take me into a world of money, sex, and power.

This is World of Secrets.

Season one, The Abercrombie Guys.

Listen, wherever you get your podcasts.