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by advertising. From global current affairs to art, science and culture, the documentary from the BBC World Service tells the world's stories. Search for the documentary wherever you get your BBC podcasts. This is Andrew Peach in London with the HappyPod, including fast runners,

giant pumpkins, fat bears and a man who thinks just like we do, Bill Gates. The human condition over the last 700 years has improved a lot and so that kind of progress that's going to continue. So strap in for half an hour of positive news. Hi, I'm Travis in California and you're listening to the HappyPod. Hello, I'm Cristina from Barcelona and this is HappyPod. Hi, everyone. My name is Janela Bracho from the beautiful islands of Antigua, Barbuda and Redonda and you're listening to the HappyPod.

On the way, women win big at the Nobel Prize Awards. I was in a class when I heard the news. I was getting lots of congratulation messages and I was really, really proud that my mom had won the Nobel Prize. A Caribbean island brought back to life. The redonda of yesterday was one that was dying. Scientists in Spain on a new way of testing for breast cancer. Perhaps this could help your future wife or your future child. So we love to work in this kind of project. And world records all over the place. This record's been held overseas I will say for 10 years. So to get it back in the States is super huge. All on the way in the HappyPod. First, it's challenging to stay positive about many things going on in the world, particularly the climate crisis. But the tech giant and billionaire Bill Gates has been telling us about how he stays optimistic in the face of the tough predictions. Greg Jackson went to meet him for a BBC podcast called The Climate Question.

He is surprisingly optimistic, right? I think a lot of people when they hear the word climate change, they think of all the doom and gloom and the sometimes quite negative outlook of where we're heading. And what's even more surprising is that he's been on the ground in Africa for decades with the Foundation, working on healthcare. But that's also meant that he's seen the very real effects of climate change firsthand for those people. And that's been a real motivator for him. You know, when I go to Africa and I see the tough conditions there, and I definitely heard from farmers that the climate is getting worse for them. And you can just look at their malnourished children and see how unjust that is. So that definitely makes me angry. It makes me think, okay, can we fix this? Fortunately, you know, humans are very innovative. And that makes you feel positive. Yes, I think the human condition over the last 700 years has improved a lot. We start the century with over 10 million children dying under the age of five every year. Now we have that below 5 million. And so that kind of progress, where it's better now than it was back in the year 2000, that's going to continue.

And he sees this sort of progress in health as analogous to what's happening in the world of climate tech and climate solutions. Now, I was going to say Bill Gates is a guy who's revolutionized the world's technology. So you'd think if he were looking to anything for solutions, it would be to tech. What's he excited about in that sphere?

I mean, a whole range of things that you wouldn't necessarily think of technology. So for instance, drought resistant seeds, he's helping to develop, particularly ones that work well in Africa, where they're really feeling the effects of climate change. But also things like green cement, you may not realize, but cement contributes something like 8% of the world's planet

warming

gases. So it's a huge contributor. So he's helping to develop greener versions that would slash those emissions down. And then there's the more what you might think of as sort of typical interventions like artificial intelligence that helps warn people if climate fueled extreme weather is approaching. I'm putting billions into climate to try and speed up the progress. It is a lot, but I do see that people are coming together and committing to this. And so we won't go anywhere near those really big temperature increases.

Greg, we can hear your full conversation with Bill Gates on a podcast called

The Climate Question, which listeners can find on BBC Sounds and wherever else they get their BBC podcasts from. But not many of us get to meet Bill Gates. What's he like? What was your encounter with him like? Yeah, he's a very reserved character. But as soon as you get him talking about things he feels that are important, he becomes really animated, this really passionate person. And I was surprised that he even let me take a selfie with him at the very end of the interview. I wasn't sure I was going to get one, but he's a nice guy. And thanks to my BBC colleague Greya Jackson. It's been a record year for women winning the Nobel Prizes in economics. It was the first time a woman had won the honor solo. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to

award Sweden's Riksbank's Prize in economic sciences in memory of Alfred Nobel 2023 to Professor Claudia Goldin, Harvard University, USA for having advanced our understanding of women's

labor market outcomes. Claudia Goldin is a professor at Harvard University. She spent her career studying the gender pay gap and how it's changed over time. I am delighted that an area that includes the history of women, what women do, what they have done, what they do in various countries, and also the area of gender that both of these are being recognized because they are done and many of the people who do them don't feel that they're completely recognized.

Professor Goldin has also published studies on the impact of contraception on women's careers and why women now make up the majority of undergraduates. Ingrid Werner is a member of the Nobel Prize committee and said Goldin's work had helped to emphasize the importance of the female labor force. I think it's important to re-emphasize that understanding women's participation in the labor force and her earnings potential is incredibly important for the society because if women are in some way hindered from participating or participate in unequal terms, we lose out in terms of skills, labor supply, and resources that could promote growth and prosperity. So it is super important. The achievement followed on from the jailed Iranian activist Nagesh Muhammadi becoming the first Muslim woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She won the award

for campaigning against the oppression of women in Iran where she's currently serving a 10-year prison sentence. Her daughter Kiara told us how proud she was when she heard the news.

I was in my secondary school in a class when I heard the news. At first I was getting lots of congratulation messages. I didn't know why. Then I remembered that my dad talked about it and I was really really proud that my mom had won the Nobel Prize. I didn't tell everyone, I just told friends and I told them just as we were going to go outside to eat

and they were even happier than I was and they were really proud for my mom and for me. The Nobel Prize is for all the Iranians and especially for the women activists and I hope things are going to change in Iran now for the better. Now to the first of our world records there was big

excitement in our house about Kelvin Kiptum smashing the marathon record. My 17 year old son is a long-distance runner. He is gripped by the battle with fellow Kenyan Elliot Kiptchogi to be the greatest of all time in the marathon. The biggest surprise wasn't so much that Kiptum managed it, more that he managed it in Chicago, which isn't known as one of the world's fastest marathon courses. Jacob Evans has more.

12 months ago he'd never run a marathon before, but now 23 year old Kelvin Kiptum is the new world record holder. He dominated last week's Chicago marathon, finishing the race in an astonishing time of 2 hours and 35 seconds. This beat the previous record set by fellow Kenyan Elliot Kiptchogi by more than 30 seconds and after the race he spoke about his achievement. I feel so happy. I was well prepared. I knew I was coming for a course record, but unfortunately a world record. Yeah, I'm very so much happy. In the men's marathon running under two hours is an elusive feat. It's been done once before, four years ago by Kiptchogi, but that race didn't count as he had runners setting the pace in front of him. So could Kiptum be the first to break that barrier too? Ed Caesar wrote a book called Two Hours, The Quest for the Impossible, all about the world's best long distance runners and he found Kiptum's run very impressive.

It's a pretty astonishing feat of athleticism. I have been privileged to watch a lot of very, very fast marathons in the last few years and he smashed the world record. It's worth thinking about at home how fast it is. Most treadmills at local gyms don't go as fast as he ran. It is really unimaginable for most people just how quickly this guy is going and when you see him finishing the race, he's finishing at a sprint, you know, the knees are pumping, you know, he looks like he's flying. I mean, it's just incredible. Kiptum grew up in Cepcorio, a village in Kenya's Rift Valley and trained without a coach until he was an adult and it's that pace Ed mentions, which is truly mind boggling. Imagine this, you run five kilometres in 14 minutes and 17 seconds and then repeat that eight and a half times. Calvin Kiptum's ascendancy in the sport has been incredible and he may only just be getting started. Now to an incredible eco restoration story. Redonda, a tiny Caribbean island that's part of Antigua and Barbuda, has been transformed from a desolate rock to a thriving wildlife haven. And in just a few years, Janela Bradshaw is the Redonda ecosystem reserve coordinator. She told Jackie the first step to restore Redonda's biodiversity

was to get rid of the black rats and feral goats. I like to call it the superhero restoration team and they came together with both local government agencies and it also entailed members of the international bodies. It required a lot of innovation. It required a lot of partnership.

One of the main themes of Redonda is the power of partnership. When you have a group of people coming together saying, hey, we want to restore Redonda, it shows that we can almost achieve anything once we're together. So we had a team over there camping on Redonda for two months. So there's nothing on Redonda, there's no source of water, there's no Wi-Fi, there's no light, literally with just rats and goats. Then every day they would administer bait to ensure that we could remove them from the island. And the goats, they got the A-class treatment. The goats had to be airlifted out of Redonda via helicopter. But the goats, they were very smart. It took a long time for the team to capture them. They knew what was going on. The goats were like, no, you're not going to get me. So they kind of had to lure the young in and you know, the mother would come and then the father would be like, but why is my entire family over there? And then the father would come and that's the method that we had to use. When you started telling the story of laying the bait for the rats, it sounded a lot like we were starting a horror movie. I'm very glad there

was a happy ending for the goats because we all quite like goats on the happy pod. So which sorts of creatures came back to Redonda? So we have our Redonda ground dragon. So this is a beautiful black lizard. I love them because they're so friendly. And you would think that if you're living on the island and you have never interacted with people, you would kind of like stay away. You'd be more cautious. But no, they are the opposite. They would come up to you. One of them even stole my earring. Don't ask me how it achieved that, but it stole my earring. And all I saw it was just running away with this little pearl in its mouth. And I was just so astonished. I was lost for words. Also, let's talk about the birds because Redonda is known for all its birds. Cool fact. There were so many birds on Redonda in the past that people said that you couldn't walk on the island without stepping on a bird egg. And for me, it's literally mind blowing. It just brings the beauty and the value of Redonda to image. And you can see why we had to restore this island. It's like a scene in a movie that you never thought that you would have been able to experience. How important is this scientifically and ecologically? I mean, it's obviously extraordinary to have seen this transformation. But scientifically, how important is it? Islands are biodiversity hotspots. But also, most of the extinctions of species in this world, they happen on islands. Once we have a healthy functioning environment, it increases the resilience for us to battle extreme temperatures, pollution. It increases our ability to fight back and to withstand that. So that's why it's so important to preserve our biodiversity because it protects us. When you look at what has been achieved, what are your personal reflections? When I was growing up, nobody was ever preaching or saying, hey, become an environmentalist. And to know that, we can set an example for the upcoming generations. We can do conservation work

in the Caribbean, and we can make a big difference.

Jenona Bradshaw, the Redonda Ecosystem Reserve Coordinator. With Halloween fast approaching in many countries, it's harvest time for pumpkins. Now, most of them will end up on a doorstep with a candle inside with their innards in a pie if they're lucky. Where there are pumpkin growers, there are giant pumpkin growers who make it their mission to tend their fruit with gallons of water every day to see just how big they can grow. There's then the tricky business of transporting the giant pumpkin, the size and weight of a small car to the weighing scales to see whether, indeed, it is a record breaker. Step forward, Travis Ginga from Minnesota in the US, who's pumpkin weighed in at 2,749 pounds or 1,247 kilograms, thus breaking the world record for the biggest gourd. So what's his secret? I don't really have one. I do a lot of different things to this pumpkin that just involve time and good products and good techniques of pruning and weeding and managing the pumpkin throughout. I might start three or four plants, but I'm quickly down to two plants and then from those two plants we'll get two pumpkins and when they start growing

sometimes I'll lose one so I'm down to one pretty quick. It's kind of an all-in or nothing type of a mentality. Do you talk to it? Sometimes I go up to it and hit it like a jockey would a horse and say, hey, come on, we gotta start going. And I'm told that's big enough for 687 pies. Will you be baking 687 pies, Travis? No, we'll be carving this thing for the Guinness Book of World Records for surely for the largest circumference and then maybe another one as well, but it's gonna be cool when it's carved. You'll have to see the pictures. We most certainly will. It is coming up to Halloween,

it's October, and one of the key elements of it is carved pumpkins, jack-o-lanterns. Are you

yourself any good at carving Halloween pumpkins? Terrible. What sort of sense of achievement do you have having broken this record? In this record's been held by overseas I will say for 10 years, so to get it back in the States is super huge, but it was 30 years of growing and hard work coming down to one minute there, and it could have went either way. We could have went home second place or set a world record just as easy, so it was a lot of excitement and emotion there. Travis Ginga with the world's biggest pumpkin.

Still to come? We're talking about Fat Bear Week. The annual competition celebrates some of the largest brown bears on earth. And how do you celebrate being named the laziest person in Montenegro? You know, the laziest champion doesn't need to do anything. First a few other stories I wanted to mention. Do you remember the excitement over the capsule containing samples from the asteroid Bennu a couple of weeks ago? Now NASA has revealed the first images of what was brought back. It says a quarter of the 250 grams of the rock and dust contained carbon and water, crucial elements in the evolution of the earth, fundamental to life itself. You might have heard about the archaeology student in Scotland whose first ever deke turned up a historically important treasure trove. It's thought the coins Lucy Ankers found buried deep beneath a fireplace may have been

hidden before the infamous Glencoe massacre in 1692. And the safe recovery has been reported of Fred the pig who's been detained by Aurora Animal Services in Colorado. After reported been causing mayhem, tearing up gardens, wandering around in the traffic and hanging around a shopping mall. It took eight people five hours to catch him. He weighs over 180 kilos and now needs a forever home. He's been described as social, always hungry and a nice boy.

Now a discovery in Spain that could have implications for the early detection of breast cancer. Liquid biopsies are already carried out on blood looking for circulating tumor DNA. But researchers in Barcelona detected tumor DNA in breast milk and they think the development of a liquid biopsy of a mother's milk could be at all for spotting breast cancer early. Christina Sauer is a senior oncologist and she told us the study began when a mother who was pregnant again was diagnosed with cancer. She decided to provide us with a breast milk sample that was collected 18 months before the breast cancer diagnosis of this patient. The interesting thing is that we were able to find in that breast milk sample the same mutations that were present in the breast tumor. So what does it mean? What does it told you that we didn't know already? So liquid biopsies are collected from blood to detect mutations that are present in different tumors and in this case the liquid biopsy from blood is not yet enough sensitive to detect the small amount of CTDNA that is present in the blood for early breast cancer detection. And in this project we were able to collect the samples of breast milk and blood samples from patients diagnosed of breast cancer during pregnancy and in 13 out of 15 patients we were able to detect in the breast milk CTDNA and only one patient had the blood positive. So the breast milk definitely has more quantity of CTDNA of the tumor present than the blood. So we are looking for funding to start a prospective trial with the aim to include 5,000 healthy women that are pregnant and a follow-up of the patients during at least two years. We will be able to answer definitely if the test that we designed it's enough sensitive and specific to be used as a new tool for early breast cancer detection. Tell us about your reaction, your team's reaction. When it became clear that you seem to be

onto something? It's not one single day, the first time that we analyzed the breast milk sample the results were negative but Miriam Sanson, a post-doc in the lab, she came back to the same

sample with a more sensitive technique and then she was able to detect the mutations. So the research

it's kind of a story of a lot of actors involved, the patient that came to us, the people in the lab, the people in the clinic and the results are there due to the effort of all of them.

It must be very rewarding for you when you find something that could be of use and could help generations of women and their families. It is and it's very clear to me when I explain to my second child he's 12 years old and asked me, mum you work a lot for this grant, if you receive the money of these 15 millions of euros how many money will be for you and I said nothing this will be just only for research but perhaps this could help your future wife or your future child. So we love to work in these kind of projects and it's very rewarding when you really find something that may help to give the humanity a best care for the future. Christina Sauer in Barcelona.

You may remember last month we heard about the hunt for Montenegro's laziest citizen. The competition

was intense but we do now have a winner or actually two winners as 23-year-olds Lidia Markovich and Filip Knezovich shared the lazy crown. Boris Kronich is one of the organizers.

This competition had two winners this year, Lidia and Filip. They shared the prize and Filip like a gentleman gave Lidia the media attention. She appears in media and on the televisions. The competition has become more and more popular not only in the region but also in the in all world. Last year record was five days. This year is 50 days. And from the search for Montenegro's laziest person to Alaska's perfect bear ahead of hibernation perfect tends to mean fat. Grazer was the winner and as the local park service said she has beauty she has grace stuffing so much salmon in her face. Harry Bly has more. Fat bear week. Fat bear week. It's in full swing right now. I kid you not. Fat bear week. Fat bear week is here it's back. We're talking about fat bear week. The annual competition celebrates some of the largest brown bears on earth. Fat bear week 2023 has come to an end. Running from the 4th to the 10th of October the contest invites fans from all over the world to vote on their favorite of 12 brown bears living around the Brook River in Alaska's Katmai National Park all of which have been eating extraordinary amounts of salmon. This year's winner is bear 128 called Grazer known by fans for having a long muzzle conspicuously blonde ears and a bodacious body. She's a mother of two cubs or grazettes and received more than 108,000 votes beating a much larger bear number 32 named Chunk. Despite the name it's not all about size as Mike Fitz former ranger and founder of the competition explains. We ask people to vote based on not only like body size and who they think got the fattest we also ask people to consider the stories because each bear at Brooks River is an individual and faces its own challenges to survive and thrive in this habitat and of course it's brought to us by the salmon and the rich salmon runs that arrive at Brooks River every summer. The National Park Service credited Grazer for having a combination of skill and toughness making her one of the park's most formidable successful and adaptable bears. Grazer was seen to work overtime being spotted on the park's infrared cameras hunting for fish through the night. She's also known by the park service to regularly confront larger male bears to protect her cubs. The competition started in 2014 and since then has become an internet sensation with users taking part from all over the world watching their favorite bears on the park's webcams. This year's contests have passed previous records with more than a million votes counted. Harry Bly on Fat Bear Week and that's all from us for now if you've got some happy news from where you live though or a world record you think we should know about do drop us an email we love hearing from you it's global

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / The Happy Pod: Bill Gates: Looking on the bright side

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