

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / UN says new report on climate change is 'a survival guide for humanity'

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from the BBC World Service. I'm Jackie Leonard and at 14 hours GMT on Monday the 20th of March. These are our main stories. The United Nations Secretary General has called a new climate change report a survival guide for humanity as the world faces dangerous rises in temperature.

Russia is playing host to the Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Moscow on his first visit to the country since President Putin invaded Ukraine last year and there's been volatility on European stock markets

after Switzerland's biggest bank UBS agreed a takeover of its failing rival Credit Suisse.

Also in this podcast 20 years on we'll hear from our correspondent who was there at the start of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Shock and awe. They claimed wrongly that this was the way to make the Middle East safer for everyone. A major new report has said clean energy and technology can be exploited

to avoid the growing climate disaster but at a meeting in Switzerland to agree their findings climate scientists from the intergovernmental panel on climate change warned that a key global temperature goal will probably be missed. They say the world is expected to warm above 1.5 degrees

Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the early 2030s. Our environment correspondent Matt McGrath

reports. I've just stepped out of the conference centre here in Interlaken in the heart of the Swiss Alps where the scientists have been meeting with government officials all week to prepare this synthesis report which they've just released. It's a slim volume less than 40 pages summing up some thousands of pages of research that have been released over the last number of years

and I think it's kind of the most comprehensive reports that we've had so far clear on the implications for the planet going forward but also perhaps on the solutions. I think there's quite a bit of hope in this as well as some concerning news about the rate of warming that we're experiencing at the moment. And the word solutions there any any idea of what those might be? They say that we don't have to reinvent the wheel here all the solutions are pretty much readily available what's lacking is the political will to put them into practice so they point to the drop in the price of solar and wind energy over the last 10 years dropped about 80 to 90 percent the cheapening prices of electric cars and their greater availability electric batteries things like that so they say look all this technology is there they point to the things that ordinary people can do that you know you can change your diet or you can decide to travel less on airplanes so there's a range of you know relatively low tech solutions there but they also point to the fact that look if we're going to contain temperatures under 1.5 degrees a century if we're going to keep under that threshold of danger we are going to need machines to take carbon from the sky now

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a lot of people consider that a bit worrying because those machines or those technologies relatively new we don't know how well they will work in the future and how much they will cost but that is what the scientists are saying here essentially there's a lot of things we can do off the shelf but we're also going to need technology in a big way to help us to stay safe.

Our environment correspondent Matt McGraw three days after an international arrest warrant was issued for the Russian president Vladimir Putin he has welcomed the Chinese leader Xi Jinping to Moscow.

One of the topics during the meetings of the two leaders will be the war in Ukraine as the Russian spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed. Of course Ukraine will appear on the agenda. President Putin will provide comprehensive clarification so that President Xi can get a first hand view of the current situation from the Russian side. So what can Moscow expect from Xi Jinping's visit here's our Russia editor Steve Rosenberg. Well I think this is all about symbolism and substance as far as Vladimir Putin is concerned he's very pleased I think that the Chinese leader has come to Moscow for this state visit hence all the pomp we saw at the airport when Xi Jinping arrived because then Vladimir Putin can turn around to his domestic audience to the Russian people and say look we're not isolated we have one of the world's most powerful leaders Xi Jinping on our side coming coming to Russia and that sends a very strong message I think to the Russian people. The second thing is though of course Vladimir Putin wants something from this visit. The events of the last year have accelerated Russia's dependency on China on Chinese markets so expect to see cooperation agreements more trade but also the Russians would quite like more military assistance I think from China. So far Beijing has been reluctant to provide lethal aid to Russia to help Moscow win on the battlefield in Ukraine. A very simple reason why not. China fears that if it does that that will be crossing a huge red line as far as the west is concerned America and Europe and that could trigger secondary sanctions against Chinese companies and you know Beijing doesn't want to do that when its main trading partners are the United States and the European Union. And for domestic audiences in Russia this visit says look we do have friends but realistically how isolated is Russia really right now. Well if Vladimir Putin was standing here and you asked him that question he would say what are you talking about Jackie we have lots of friends he would say we have China we have Iran we have Syria the reality is that it's a struggle I think for the Kremlin now to put together as someone I spoke to recently described a coalition against the west but you know when you listen to him making his speeches and he made another speech today to delegates from Africa he considers that he's on a crusade against the west and he believes he can rally support from parts of the world against America and against Europe. Well Vladimir Putin needs allies of course and the arrival of the plane from Beijing as well as the possibility of material support will prove a boost for him. But what's China getting out of the visit and how are Chinese media reporting this. A question for our China media analyst Carrie Allen. Just before I came to the studio I was watching the welcome ceremony for Xi Jinping and the message that's very much coming out in state media is that this is going to be a friendly visit that the word friendly keeps on coming up again and again. Some of the rhetoric that I've heard in state media a journey of friendship cooperation and peace that's how it's being described and there's really a message that the two countries China and Russia are friendly neighbors linked by mountains and rivers and this message of beginning a new chapter in relations is

coming up. So very much emphasis that this is going to be a happy visit for both countries and the start of something new. And have the Chinese media had anything to say about the international criminal courts arrest warrant that was issued against Mr Putin on Friday. They haven't and what's interesting is on Friday I spoke to Val on the newsroom program and said that there was nothing in the media about this but there were social media discussions about what about the U.S. what about the U.S. and involvements in countries like Syria Afghanistan Iraq. And so what's very notable today is 20 years since the Iraq war state media are giving a lot of prominence to this and saying that there's still devastation there's still the impact in Iraq of the U.S. involvement and they're really drawing parallels between the U.S. and its involvement in Ukraine. So there's really a feeling in China that if there's a country to be investigated for war crimes it's the U.S. and this is the message that a lot of people in China very much feel is the message. And Mr Xi's visit is largely going to be about trade. There is going to be a social aspect too isn't there. There could be yes. So the two leaders Xi Jinping has visited Russia this will be his ninth time and they're always known in China as being very friendly meetings and that's got people talking about what they might do. Obviously Russia's Putin has this huge table and he's known for keeping a lot of leaders at arms length. It's very much thought that Xi Jinping and Putin will be very very close to one another. There are discussions about whether Xi Jinping might visit Moscow Zoo. I mean one thing that's very notable today is there's a lot of media on two giant pandas at Moscow Zoo known as Rui and Ding Ding. Lots of media on how they're spoiled rotten. And this is a form of soft diplomacy in China that you get pandas to very much convey the relations between China and other countries. And so there is this message that's coming through for people that Russia is a caring country and this is this is a message that will obviously reach children in the country. So again very much a feeling this is going to be a positive friendly meeting between the two leaders. That was Kerry Allen and before her we heard from Steve Rosenberg in Moscow. Today March the 20th marks 20 years since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. The war toppled the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein but the instability that followed has had catastrophic consequences for the people of Iraq and led to the rise of the group calling itself Islamic State. The fallout of the invasion of Iraq continues to resonate throughout the Middle East and beyond. Our international editor Jeremy Bowen is in Iraq and looks at how the country is still shaped by the decision to invade in 2003. A lot of the old city of Mosul hasn't been rebuilt yet. It was destroyed in 2017 during the war to eradicate the jihadists of the caliphate of Islamic State. It was really nasty. House to house fighting. And it went on for months. I was here at the time and a lot of civilians as well as fighters were killed. The rise and fall of Islamic State also known as ISIS was part of an unfolding catastrophe that engulfed Iraq and was felt right across the Middle East. Now a lot of it goes back to March 2003. That was when the Americans and the British and their allies invaded Iraq. The Americans called the massive air raids with which they opened the war shock and all. They claimed wrongly that this was the way to make the Middle East safer for everyone. Within weeks they'd removed the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Another false claim was that he had weapons of mass destruction. The US Navy flew President George W. Bush out to an aircraft carrier where he declared victory. The tyrant has fallen and Iraq is free. He could not have been more wrong. The Americans hadn't worked out how they were going to

replace

Saddam Hussein's regime. In the end they imposed a system that turned sectarian and ethnic groups against each other. In the years of chaos and violence that followed, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were killed. No one knows how many exactly as armed groups fought each other, fought the Americans and killed each other's civilians. Much of Mosul and other cities has been rebuilt. There are bright spots. As for the West, the Americans and the British, the invaders, a lot of the world just laughs when they talk about peace or international law because of what happened here. But what matters most is the effect on the lives of millions of people, not just in Iraq but across the wider Middle East, who suffered and died because of the invasion and its consequences. That was our international editor Jeremy Bowen in Iraq and a little later in the podcast we'll hear from the wife of one of the U.S. Marines involved in that invasion 20 years ago. Now it was a volatile morning on European markets. Banking shares fell sharply in early trading but have since recovered some of their losses. Investors have been reacting to a frantic few days. As we heard in the last podcast, over the weekend an emergency deal was rushed through and Switzerland's second biggest bank of credit, Swiss, was taken over by its rival UBS. Meanwhile, and amid concerns about panic and instability, six of the world's biggest central banks announced coordinated action to calm investors. Just before we came in to record this edition, our economics correspondent Andy Verity explained the picture on bank shares now. Well, it bounced back most of the way. Some such as UBS itself, the purchaser of credits, is down about 3% but it was down by about 14%. But it's interesting what's going on here. This is still really the same volatility we've been experiencing for the last 10 days, not just this morning, ever since we had the failure of Silicon Valley Bank in California. That triggered speculation that other banks around the world may have exposure to similar problems and specifically they may have lost a lot of money on government bonds. There's been a very volatile market in U.S. government bonds as well as other government bonds. That's not normally the case. Normally, they're very slow and steady. That's meant that a lot of people will be looking at paper losses. The question is whether they have to crystallize those losses when they hit a crisis. That's what happened with SVB. But also with Credit Swiss, the takeover by UBS is now viewed by the market as relatively sound because it's backed by the Swiss Central Bank, which is offering to absorb any losses. Generally speaking, would you say then looking at what's going on right now, Central Banks have done enough to reassure? Judging by the equity markets this morning, yes. But at the same time as that reassurance, you also have what's called a flight to safety, very similar in a way to what we saw after Brexit or at the start of the pandemic and also in the global financial crisis, where investors worried about the risks involved in investing in things like bank shares shift their money into what are traditionally regarded as safer assets like U.S. treasuries, U.S. government bonds, short-dated ones, or gold. The price of gold, for example, this morning got up above \$2,000 an ounce. It hasn't been there since the start of the pandemic. So there's a bit of a flight to safety going on. I don't think this crisis is over in the sense that people are still going to be looking around for other vulnerabilities, other institutions that are vulnerable. I'll give you one example. Shares in Prudential, the big global insurer based in London, were down by 4% and remained down this morning because they haven't said anything about whether or not they have any exposure to the bonds that were written off,

bonds issued by Credit Suisse as it borrowed money, and therefore people still don't know how much money they may have lost or not. That was Andy Verity. The former U.S. President Donald Trump is facing the real prospect of being charged in a criminal case this week over allegations that he paid a woman's Stormy Daniels to keep quiet about an affair. He's called on his supporters to protest, drawing comparisons to statements he made before the storming of the Capitol building two years ago. From New York, our correspondent Gary O'Donohue reports. While no official word has come from prosecutors in New York, there are a number of indications that they're limbering up to charge the former president shortly. There are also reports that the New York Police Department is preparing for protests following Donald Trump's call to his supporters. Mr. Trump has launched a blistering attack on Manhattan's District Attorney Alvin Bragg and the Democratic Party in general. An issue is whether Mr. Trump broke the law when he repaid one of his fixers who'd handed over \$130,000 to the former porn star Stormy Daniels a week before the 2016 general election to stop her allegations of an affair with Mr. Trump from coming out. He's always denied the affair. If indicted, Mr. Trump would be the first former president ever to be charged with a crime. Gary O'Donohue in New York.

Still to come in this podcast, how do you charge an electric car in polar regions? There will be a wind turbine and a full double solar on this device and harnessing the renewable energy sources, the wind and the sun to power the car. It's never been done before. The couple trying a world-first journey to highlight climate change.

Police in the Kenyan capital Nairobi have fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of people protesting about the high cost of living and claims of cheating in last year's election. Raila Odinga, who lost to William Ruto in August's poll, has urged nationwide protests, as he attempts to harness signs of rising disaffection with the president. Our reporter in Nairobi, Ferdinand O'Mondi, told us what was going on. It's absolutely chaotic where I am. This is Kibera, which is an informal settlement here in Nairobi and considered to be the headquarters, if you like, of Raila Odinga's most hardcore supporters, Raila being the opposition leader who is leading the protest today. And police have been actively trying to prevent hundreds of them from getting out of the settlements and pouring into the central business district. Now, since morning, they have been hauling stones of the police. Police have also been hauling tear gas back at them. The road is now littered with stones, boulders and burning tires. And there's lots of people trying to get out. And lots of police are trying to prevent them. And as far as I've seen, already one person has been shot not far from here in what is starting out to be a pretty chaotic day for Nairobi residents. And to just take a step back, explain to us why people are angry. What's at the root of this? So in the run up to this day, the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, had said he was going to organize a huge nationwide protest, which was what he called a date with destiny. It was supposed to happen today. And Raila Odinga has three grievances. One, he says there's a high cost of living in the country where normal people or ordinary people

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cannot afford the cost of essential commodities like fuel and maize flour. And he wants the government to reintroduce subsidies, which the president William Ruto removed as soon as he was sworn in last September. He's also against the president unilaterally, as he says, appointing the next electoral commission that will preside over the elections in 2027. The seven commissioners who presented over last year's election, which Raila Odinga lost, have all left under different circumstances. And the third one, perhaps, which is also the most controversial, is that he says he does not recognize the legitimacy of the current president and the government from the elections, which he says were stolen from him. Well, this, in fact, was disputed in court. He did send a petition, and the courts validated the election of William Ruto, and that is why he was sworn in to begin with.

Perdinando Mondini in Nairobi.

Hundreds of people are still missing in Malawi more than a week after the passage of the devastating tropical storm, Freddie.

Felix Washen, the Malawi Red Cross spokesman, has been distributing food to those hit by the storm in the south of the country. And he told us what's changed in the last seven days.

We are still doing search and rescue, and also giving life-saving humanitarian needs to the people that have been evacuated.

As we speak now, the death toll has risen to 476 as of yesterday. However, the search and rescue continues.

I wish to point out that now the search and rescue operation is going on smoothly because we have received support from the British government, but also we have received some two helicopters from Tanzania.

So this coupled with the Malawi Defence Force efforts, the search and rescue operation is going on very well.

We still have 282 people that are still missing.

The mood is not good because we still have a lot of people that are traumatized.

As we speak, we have some districts in the southern part of Malawi,

Toko of Usanje, Mulanje, Palombe, and other districts that have not yet been reached, and the people are still in need.

Now we are happy because the MDF, with support from other governments, air lifting is now operational and that we are able to access some of those areas.

There is need for maybe winter cropping after the water has receded.

Maybe there is need to do some kind of winter farming

because the districts that have been affected,

all the crops have been washed away,

and it's a great worry to the country that we might have hunger due to this cyclone, Freddie.

Felix Washen of the Malawi Red Cross.

The right-wing Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu has said it's prepared to soften its plan to overhaul the judiciary.

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But opposition activists have dismissed the proposed amendments. They say they'll file a Supreme Court challenge against Mr Netanyahu's plans to change the system for selecting judges. It follows more than two months of nationwide protests. From Jerusalem, here's Tom Bateman. Benjamin Netanyahu's Nationalist Coalition said overnight it would delay part of its plans to limit the powers of Israel's Supreme Court. But crucially, the legislation that would effectively give the government the power to appoint judges will still be pushed through within a fortnight, albeit with some modifications the coalition sees as a gesture to soften the reforms. But the opposition has immediately rejected this, while protest leaders have said the announcement is not a compromise but a declaration of war against Israeli democracy and its citizens. Demonstrations are likely to intensify in the two weeks until the deadline when Israel's parliament breaks for the Jewish Passover holiday. Tom Bateman, now let's return to Iraq in the last edition of the podcast, Carol Cassidy from Baghdad, Kentucky, told us she still supported the US invasion of Iraq, even though it's ultimately led to the death of her marine son, Sean. Oliver Conway first met her in 2003, while reporting on US attitudes to the war which began 20 years ago today. On that trip, Olly also went to the marine base at 29 Palms, which lies next to Baghdad, California. Many of the marine's base there have been deployed to the Gulf and were sending letters home ahead of the invasion. Dear cadence, how are you doing, sweetheart? I am in a country called Kuwait. Of course she's three, she doesn't understand the magnitude, but she knows daddy's in Kuwait on his tank. Tony Becerra, who back in 2003 was convinced the US was doing the right thing, even though it meant her husband was going to war. I know there are a lot of protesters and I respect that. At the same time, they need to realize that if there weren't people like my husband, who are so selfless to do the job that they do, they wouldn't have that ability because people in Iraq don't have the ability to do that. They get their tongues cut out if they speak out. However, today she has a very different view. Oh, I'm no longer that person from 20 years ago that thought it was justified and right. My opinions have changed drastically since that time and I wish it never happened. I think that it contributed to the demise of my family. My husband and I are no longer married and I don't know, let's look at what's going on over there right now. Is it worth it? I say it wasn't worth it. It wasn't worth it.

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And of course, in a way, the invasion was the easy part for US troops because it was afterwards when they tried to maintain the peace in Iraq that the situation for them got pretty bad.

I think the mission got muddled.

I don't think that it became clear anymore what we were doing and why we were doing it and how we were going to sustain it.

And ultimately, we couldn't sustain it.

And I think we went in without thinking any of those things.

We just were thirsty for revenge, thirsty for war,

thirsty for maybe justice, I don't know.

Because of course, the Iraq invasion followed a number of years after 9-11

so there was quite a lot of patriotism in the US at the time.

Yeah, and I was one of those people.

I mean, I celebrated every homecoming and warned every deployment

and nothing ever got better. It got worse.

Globally, I think it got worse.

But also, in my small world, it just became worse and worse and worse.

So the person who came back from Iraq was different from the one who we spoke about back in 2003?

Oh my God, each deployment, he came back more damaged and he was unable to deal with the smallest of things.

And all he wanted to do, along with his fellow Marines, they all wanted to go back.

That's all they wanted to do, was go back.

And then when they went back, all they did was want to come home and that cycle continued the entire length of the war.

Why did they want to go back to Iraq when it was such a dangerous place for them?

I can't tell you for sure. You'd have to ask them, but I think it was that filled some sort of void in them.

And maybe they were looking for answers over there that, you know, there was so much loss and so much destruction.

I think they thought going back would give them some sort of resolution, but it didn't give them resolution.

They just became worse versions of themselves.

Now, if you knew then what you know now about the invasion of Iraq,

what would you have said to us if we asked you back then, do you think it is a good idea to invade?

Oh God, my answer would be so different. It would be, no, no, don't go. Don't do this. It is not right. It's just not right.

Tony Becerra was talking to Oliver Conway.

Now, how far would you go to highlight the issues of climate change?

Perhaps not the length of one couple from Aberdeen in Scotland who are preparing to drive from the north to south pole.

Chris and Julie Ramsey's epic journey in an electric vehicle will see them travel across 14 countries in the space of 10 challenging months.

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Our reporter, Ben Phillip, has been speaking to them.

A first of its kind adventure, driving an electric car from pole to pole.

One of the most common questions we get asked is how we're going to be charging in the polar regions where there's no electricity source.

There will be a wind turbine and a full double solar on this device that will be torn along in the Arctic

and harnessing the renewable energy sources, the wind and the sun to power the car.

It's never been done before. It's a world's first.

Starting at the magnetic north pole, the couple will navigate across sea ice into Canada

and then south through the US and Mexico and into warmer temperatures in South America.

17,000 miles and 14 countries later, they'll cross the finish line at the south pole in 10 months time.

Modifications have been kept to a minimum, but bigger tyres have been added to help cope with harsh terrain.

There are also some modcons, a coffee machine in the boot and a drone launcher so the couple can film their journey.

I've got every confidence that we can do it, but yes, there will be challenges.

It's not going to be an easy ride. We know that, but what's an adventure without a challenge?

Yeah, we just have to embrace what comes in front of us.

And I guess if you don't try something, if you don't push boundaries, then you'll never know what we're capable of.

That's the point really, isn't it? It's pushing boundaries, learning what is the capabilities of yourself, learning what the capabilities of technology and then we innovate and we make things better.

Chris and Julie are no stranger to defying the odds.

In 2017, they were the first team to complete the Mongol rally in an electric car, a 10,000 mile journey from London to Mongolia.

Their aim is to demonstrate that electric vehicles can be adopted anywhere in the world.

Ben Philipp was talking to Julie and Chris Ramsey.

And that's it from us for now, but there will be a new edition of the Global News podcast later.

If you'd like to comment on this edition or the topics covered in it, do please send us an email.

The address is GlobalPodcast at bbc.co.uk.

You can also find us on Twitter at Global NewsPod.

This edition was mixed by Russell Newlove and the producer was Tracy Gordon.

Our editor is Karen Martin. I'm Jackie Leonard and until next time, goodbye.

And she said, if you really loved me, you'd do what I asked you to do.