

## [Transcript] Global News Podcast / US: Kim Jong Un to meet Putin for weapons talks in Russia

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I'm Nick Miles and in the early hours of Tuesday the 5th of September,

these are our main stories. The White House says Kim Jong-un is planning to make a rare trip outside North Korea to hold talks in Russia with President Putin about military cooperation.

The Kremlin has dismissed Turkish plans to revive a deal allowing Ukraine to export grain via the Black Sea. A major report has found that invasive species are spreading around the world faster than ever, damaging crops and transmitting diseases.

Also in this podcast, there's a lot of information on the internet and at Google,

it's our mission to organize it all and connect you with the information that you actually find useful. A happy birthday to the world's biggest search engine. We look back at a quarter of a century of Googling. Every day, Russia is using huge amounts of artillery shells in its bombardment of Ukraine. It is not a limitless supply however and in recent months Moscow has forged closer relations with North Korea in the hope of buying more of them. Now Washington says the North Korean

leader Kim Jong-un will travel to Russia to discuss military cooperation. I spoke to our correspondent in the US Capitol, Gary O'Donoghue. Well they're saying that arrangements including possible arms exports are actively advancing and they're talking about a meeting at some point later this month and Kim Jong-un is expected to travel to Russia for that meeting possibly to Vladivostok where they last met back in 2019 and this isn't really coming as a particular surprise because we know that the Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, he was in Pyongyang back in July examining

military equipment, seeing the parades and all that kind of normal thing and of course previously the Russian state has not actually imported any North Korean munitions but the Wagner group

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under

Yevgeny Prokoshin did last year and so this is an escalation if you like and of course Russia has been international shopping for arms elsewhere, it's been importing drones from Iran for example for use on the battlefield and I think some will see this perhaps as a sign that Russia may be running short of some of its supplies of those sort of key artillery shells in that battle in eastern Ukraine which is a you know entrenched armies firing large amounts of iron at one another. Now would there be anything that the US or the UN could do to prevent any of this happening? Well there's a whole raft of sanctions and security council resolutions already in place aimed at preventing North Korea from exporting all this kind of stuff and other things too, bear in mind that it has very little impact on the way Pyongyang behaves, it's continued to develop, it's ballistic missile technology, it's continued to develop its nuclear capabilities and test those in various ways in the the seas off the coast and between there and Japan. So you know that kind of action I'm sure will be pursued by the US but it's not clear how much impact it will have and of course if they can do these deals with Vladimir Putin's Russia it will bring in some very important foreign currency and while banking sanctions and financial sanctions are part of the whole sort of panoply of things in place that people find ways around these things and if they have more money to spend then they won't be able to flex their muscles even more as a regional power. Gario Donahue in Washington. It was the first meeting of the Russian and Turkish leaders in nearly a year and the talks between Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan dealt with amongst other things the safe passage of commercial shipping through the Black Sea. Ukraine has increasingly used the Danube as an alternative export route but in the last few days Russia has attacked Ukrainian port facilities on that river and President Putin insisted that Western restrictions on Russian agricultural exports had to be lifted before a deal could be done but he did offer some help to six importing countries in Africa. We are close to completing an agreement with six African states to which we intend to supply food for free and even carry out delivery and logistics for free to deliver this cargo. Negotiations are almost close to completion delivery will begin in the next two to three weeks. So just how important is it to those countries who rely on Ukrainian grain that a deal is struck. I heard more from our international business correspondent Theo Leger. You have to break this down in global terms the deal is no longer as important as it might once have been. If we look at what happened to grain prices in the immediate aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine they spiked and spiked dramatically so for example we saw the price of wheat spiked to about \$12 a bushel. When the Black Sea grain initiative was first brought in we then saw prices fall to about \$8 a bushel. Well now despite the fact that over the summer the grain initiative was suspended prices are even lower than that. Grain is currently trading on global markets at about \$5.70 a bushel. But there is plenty of grain out there so we're not seeing anything like the kind of spikes we used to see. Where this is a problem is in the countries that were particularly dependent on imports of grain from both Ukraine and Russia. So we're talking countries like Egypt and Somalia and we know that the febrile nature of those imports over the past year the the disruption to them has already had a big effect. So in Egypt for example inflation of over 35 percent well a great deal of that is due to the cost of food imports. Somalia there are severe problems there as well and in Ethiopia we're seeing food price inflation and it's in those regions where if the initiative is not restored it will contribute to the current situation where food prices and food availability

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have been under pressure. And Theo it is very hard to find new supplies quickly at a good price. So what are some of these countries you've been talking about doing to cope with the shortfall? Well those countries in Africa which are growers of grain have been increasing their output so is in Barbway for example. Otherwise it's a question of finding alternative supplies. Now as you mentioned Russia has said that it's prepared to send free supplies of grain to a number of African countries but that does seem to depend on progress being made on the Black Sea initiative in itself. So the question is if you don't get supplies from these regions you have to get them from elsewhere. Now in terms of where Ukraine is sending its grain Ukraine is still exporting grain just not through the Black Sea it's exporting it through Poland and Romania. The question then becomes can those supplies find an alternative route into markets in north and east Africa and all of this stuff it makes it more difficult and it pushes up costs and that feeds into the situation we're seeing where in lower income countries that are dependent on imports or that have a high level of import prices are spiking the cost of basic life basic food has been going up. Theo Leggett. There have been more anti-government protests in southern Syria. A variety of unverified videos from the province of Suweda show chanting demonstrators calling on President Bashar al-Assad to step down. Here's Mike Thompson. Anti-government protests outside of opposition controlled areas have been very rare in Syria but these demonstrations in the Druze majority Suweda province are now entering their third week. Unverified videos show demonstrators calling on President Bashar al-Assad to go. Others feature demonstrators clapping and dancing to protest songs and carrying banners mocking the country's leader. State media have so far ignored the protests but with others breaking out elsewhere in Syria that could soon change. So-called invasive alien species are living things transported around the globe by humans into places they wouldn't naturally be and that is proving to be a huge problem both ecologically and financially. A couple of prominent examples for you. The Florida Everglades are now overrun by five meter long Burmese pythons devastating local animals and the wildfires that hit Hawaii last month were partly fueled by invasive grasses which had spread across the island of Maui. According to a new report invasive species are the only cause or one of a number of causes of 60% of extinctions of animals or plants so far reported and the problem is expected to get even worse. The economic costs are rising too quadrupling every decade reaching \$423 billion in 2019. Helen Briggs is our science correspondent. If you think about what's happening we're moving animals and plants around the world and then if you take them out of a place where they've naturally evolved to be in a particular ecosystem along with other plants and animals and there's a fragile balance if you put them somewhere else then they're going to be a risk to other species that are living there already. So one example the Asian Hornet that's spreading around the world if you put that into a different ecosystem with other insects which aren't used to that predator then it can do a lot of damage so some quite stark figures and in fact is even higher on some islands where you've got species that have evolved in isolation for years and years and years and then if you accidentally bring in a plant or an animal then it can do incredible damage and they are saying that if we just carry on the way we are business as usual then it's going to get even worse and added to that costs have been quadrupling every decade since 1970 in terms of dealing with global plant and animal invasions if you like more than \$400

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billion a year so that really again underlines the importance of dealing with the problem but there are things you can do this again this report is highlighting prevention so it's things like having border controls in place but this can be done at an individual level as well according to one of the authors of the report Professor Helen Roy. We need everyone to be more joined up around the world in tackling this huge huge problem but we also know that individuals can also make a huge

difference they can be responsible gardeners responsible pet owners and so that they can themselves play a part in preventing the movement of invasive alien species around the world or within their locality. One of the things again highlighted in this major global report into invasive species is the fact that nearly 200 countries have signed up to new targets on stopping biodiversity loss and there's some very stringent targets by 2030 one of them is around alien species and it perhaps hasn't got as much attention as some of the others but that is to reduce introduction and establishment of alien species by at least 50% by 2030 so that underscores the urgency of action to combat invasive alien species. Helen Briggs, staying with the issue of invasive alien species in 14 states in the US people are being asked to stomp it in other words this refers to the spotted lanternfly. James Reynolds spoke to Julie Urban,

an evolutionary biologist at Penn State University who's currently in upstate New York so how did the spotted lanternflies become an invasive species? In the case of the spotted lanternfly its native range is Asia biggest area there is China and it got uprooted and transported here by accident. What does it look like when the lanternfly gets stuck in and how worried are you? I'm very worried lanternfly is a sap feeding insect and so the closest relative that people are familiar with are cicadas but this is an unusual insect it feeds on over 100 different species of plants and so that feeding on sap can be problematic but that feeding when it's prolonged can cause damage and mortality to grapevines but also because it feeds on so many different things it doesn't just stay in vineyards it moves around to different habitats so people are finding it feeding on their trees in New York City. Gosh and when you say a little earlier it arrives accidentally is that in what? Accidentally in people's backpacks if they've been around the world traveling how does it get in? It can come in a lot of different ways but hence the stomp it campaign but we're pretty sure from where it was first detected it was transported as an egg mass on a shipment of stone either on the pallet or the stone itself that arrived at a landscaping company in eastern Pennsylvania in 2014. Wow that's incredibly accurate to know that and then you've

mentioned the stomp campaign is that literally stomping I would the sole of your foot getting rid of lanternflies that way? Your foot your hand whatever will do it but that's that's not the only control effort I mean we have government agencies USDA APHIS and state Department of Agriculture

who are applying insecticides at transportation hubs you know areas around airports around rail lines you know where this thing can get into cargo and so there's actually control efforts that way but it's such a good hitchhiker that we want people to be aware of it and so if you don't kill it you'll carry it is is the idea behind the stomping campaign. Do you actually take part in the stomping campaign yourself if you see lanternflies? I do a lot of dissection of the insects so I'm more likely to put them in a vial and in my freezer and make trouble for my husband yes. I see and some people don't mind bugs other people do mind I'm in two minds I was at a bug museum over the

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weekend on holiday which was strangely absorbing much more absorbing and looking at cockroaches

than I thought it would ever be can you explain why for some people bugs invasive species like lanternflies people want to run a hundred miles before they might want to deal with them or even stomp them out and help you? Yes well this insect is really problematic as adults they're about an inch long and they can feed by the hundreds or even thousands on a single tree and so that kind of freaks people out right there to have such high numbers of a large insect but also because they feed on plant sap they excrete sugary excrement we call honeydew and bees and wasps and stinging insects are attracted to it so if they're in your backyard or you know on the street near you there are nuisance factor for those other reasons as well. Julie Urban an evolutionary biologist at Penn State University at the start of the 1990s if you'd looked in a dictionary you'd have found the word google which means 10 to the power of 100 or a very large number indeed

the word google with its change of spelling did not exist now you'd find the word by googling it of course as the search engine celebrates its 25th birthday and on the sly looks back at its life. 25 years ago and the world looked a little different the web had only been around since the start of the decade and if you wanted to look something up you may well have reached for a dictionary or an encyclopedia rather than search for it on the internet. 1998 was the year that France won the world cup Bill Clinton was president of the United States Cher topped the charts with

her single believe and on the 4th of September at Stanford University in California Google was born. There's a lot of information on the internet and at Google it's our mission to organize it all and connect you with the information that you actually find useful. Ever wish everyone could navigate this place a little better? It's easy just tell them to search before they share with Google.

Google it and you'll find that the search engine was initially known as Backrub before the name Google was chosen by its founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin. The pair met at Stanford University both PhD students in computer science. Search engines such as Yahoo and Ask Jeeves did already exist but Google's approach was slightly different. Wendy Hall is a professor of computer science at the University of Southampton. Every time you click on a link with Google you are effectively recommending that that's the link you're following and Google uses that to prioritize the link so every time we use Google we help it refine its searches and partly because they were the first to really develop the business model which it all runs on these days which is advertising so they effectively sell words so there's auctions for the keywords and companies pay to be the top word on tennis or whatever and that's their business model and the network effect means that once you've got billions of people using it which they have it's very difficult for another company to come along and shift those billions to using their search engine. As well as dominating the search engine market Google has other products such as phones and Google Maps it also owns YouTube.

In the 12 months to June the revenue of its parent company Alphabet was \$290 billion. The development of AI and competitors such as Chat GPT could have posed a threat but happily for Google

when Chat GPT was released in November 2022 it was already developing its own alternative. Meet Bard an early experiment by Google that lets you collaborate with Generative AI.

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Bard Google's conversational Generative Artificial Intelligence Chatbot available in 46 languages in 238 countries and maybe one day integrated into its search engine.

Eleanor Sly and today Alphabet the parent company of Google has a market value of \$1.7 trillion. Still to come. The moon's dark half of a month so we can't rely on solar energy.

So what's the alternative and the possible answer to living on the moon?

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or what Jeff Bezos really did to become the first person in history to pocket a hundred billion dollars listen to Good Bad Billionaire with me Simon Jack and me Zing Zing available now wherever you get your podcasts. Unexpected Elements is the podcast that sifts through the week's news to unearth surprising nuggets of science. I really wanted to look at an animal that as far as we can tell at least doesn't seem to age. Okay you have my attention tell me more and uncover the unexpected connections between them. I think now is the good time to talk about worms.

Really worms. Absolutely. Unexpected Elements from the BBC World Service. Amazing stuff.

Find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts. Welcome back to the Global News podcast.

The University of Amsterdam Student Association has suspended one of its fraternities indefinitely as it investigates allegations that a group of first year students engaged in serious abuse. The activities known as hazing were part of an initiation ritual that took place during a trip to Romania by the University's Arras student branch. The BBC's Anna Holigan in the Netherlands told James Reynolds more. Well this story should come with a bit of a health warning I think because there are some details that some people might find triggering so there was a list of 80 tasks in this assignment this hazing assignment so it's an initiation if people wanted to join this fraternity arras they had to earn points by completing these tasks and some of them were hugely degrading so for example one of them was have sex with an inverted comma a bucket

in an alleyway bucket referring to a woman have a date have sex with a refugee visit a strip club and steal something and all of these activities should be filmed by the students these are freshers we're talking about so people 18 19 years old on this trip to Romania possibly away from home for the first time being asked to complete these tasks in order to join the student association one of the most prestigious 1100 members so the second largest in Amsterdam and they were told they weren't allowed to go on social media during that time and it all came out because the the letter the list was leaked to the Hon Amsterdamer which is a weekly publication in Amsterdam is it's caused some ructions which have gone right the way up to the top today they've been suspended by the Dutch student unions I'm wondering if the authorities in Romania themselves have been investigating exactly what happened in case any of those activities broke the law in Romania

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I mean that's a really interesting question actually I mean I suppose having sex with someone in an alleyway may or may not break Romanian law the politicians here have had plenty to say so the mayor of Amsterdam Femke Halsma said the details were shocking the minister for education said that

something needed to change but you know James the worrying thing is that this is not the first time there have been cases in the past where serious abuses have occurred abuses of power because these organizations are extremely influential students want to join they're seen as I don't know what you were doing in your student days but you want to have a strong group of friends you're

out there by yourself and these fraternities are meant to offer that kind of family away from home and in this case they've used that power to manipulate vulnerable students and it's not actually known whether any of the students completed any of these tasks but the organizations the universities and other educational institutions have asked that anyone who was affected to come forward for help and support and probably to help with the investigation which is now underway and we should say our as the fraternity have apologized and they said in this case we crossed the line and all again in the Netherlands police in Pakistan say a Christian priest has been shot and wounded in the same town in the eastern Punjab province two weeks ago vigilantes attacked churches and burnt down Christian homes paramilitary troops have been deployed in German while I since last month's violence to restore calm. Lipika Pelham has more details. The 35 year old Protestant priest Eliezer Sandhu had been stopped by a gunman on his way home after

conducting the Sunday service. He'd been asked to recite the Islamic proclamation of faith but when he replied with a Christian prayer he was shot. Social media footage appears to show the priest

with a large wound on his shoulder being treated in hospital. Muslim vigilantes attacked and set fire to around two dozen churches and scores of Christian homes last month in the eastern district over blasphemy allegations. Christians make up about 1.3 percent of Pakistan's population of 200 million. Lipika Pelham. The British foreign office has formally apologized to an academic who was imprisoned and tortured in the United Arab Emirates after he was wrongly accused of being a spy. Matthew Hedges was carrying out research in the Gulf state in 2018 when he was arrested and held for six months. Last month a parliamentary watchdog ruled that the government had failed to follow its own guidance on detecting potential torture and mistreatment of British nationals abroad.

Caroline Hawley reports. Matthew Hedges says he was interrogated for between 8 and 15 hours a day,

kept in solitary confinement and forcibly medicated. The UAE is a British ally and a consulate official was able to visit him, though Mr Hedges says his guards were always present at those meetings, making it impossible for him to talk openly about his mistreatment.

Last month the parliamentary ombudsman said he'd endured a nightmare and found that the government

had failed to notice signs of torture and failed to intervene. The foreign office has now apologized and agreed to pay nominal compensation of £1,500 as recommended by the ombudsman.

It's also promised to review its internal guidance on cases of torture and mistreatment.

Mr Hedges, who's now 35, welcomed the apology but said that achieving it had been a long battle.

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Caroline Hawley. A major issue for space scientists is how to provide energy for astronauts wanting to stay for long periods on the moon or other planets. Well, the problem may have been resolved according to researchers at Bangor University here in the UK. John Donison has the details.

The moon continues to mystify. India, the latest country to launch a lunar mission earlier this summer. But while it successfully landed an unmanned module, NASA has said it wants to set up a permanent manned base on the moon by 2030. But to do that, you need power.

We need the 10 gram samples. Now scientists at the University of Bangor say they've developed small nuclear fuel cells, stable enough to be transported into space.

The moon's dark half of a month, so we can't rely on solar energy, we can't rely on solar PV and things like that, although I imagine they'll be part of the mix. But we also need to have that thing for when it's dark, to have electricity and energy generation there when it's dark.

So that's when nuclear comes in. More tests are needed, but the hope is Bangor's fuel cells could power micro nuclear generators currently being developed by Rolls-Royce. And the real prize is Mars, with some believing that establishing a manned base on the moon could provide a gateway to the red planet. John Donison. Many children around the world will be returning to school this week after the holiday season. Amongst those is seven-year-old Caitlyn Hudson. As she returns this term in Britain, she will be equipped with a bionic arm, the youngest person to be fitted with such a device in the UK. Caitlyn was born with only one fully formed hand because of a rare congenital condition, but after a GoFundMe money-raising campaign, she's been fitted with a life-changing device. Evan Davis spoke to Caitlyn and her mum Maria.

Caitlyn was born with a condition called simbracodacty, which basically means she is missing part of her left forearm and part of her hand. She does have something that's called nubbins, which are tiny little fingers, but they don't have any bones in them. She doesn't really have any bones in her hand. She does have flexion in her wrist, which is quite unusual, but very useful for a hero arm. But it does mean that she doesn't have a pinsogrip or anything like that. So having a hero arm is giving her the ability to have that pinsogrip hold things to open and close her hand, which she can't do at the moment. And there is not really any other prosthetics that can replicate those sort of movements. Right. So Caitlyn, when did you get this bionic arm, this hero arm?

Two weeks ago today. Two weeks ago today. And how is it? How is it working?

Good. Yeah, makes a difference. What sort of things are you doing with it now, Caitlyn?

I've been doing with it, holding and eating my other hand.

Yeah. So we're not making a mess like sometimes you do. You can hold cutlery with it.

What other things are you doing with it? Brush my hair.

Brush your hair a bit more easily. Brush your hair.

And we're going to try, we're going to try brushing your hair and drying it soon.

And we're going to have a go at holding paper with it and cutting with your right hand, because we've had a few interns while we've had clothes that have been cut.

So Caitlyn, is it difficult to use? I can't imagine how easy it is to use this hero arm.

Do you find it easy or hard to use, Caitlyn?

Yeah. What do you have to do with your little hand to get it to work?

You move your wrist side to side, don't you? And then your hand opens or closes and does other bits and pieces, doesn't it? Because you've got the wrist, it makes it quite easy



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for you to use. It just gets a bit tiring sometimes, doesn't it?

Do you get tired, Caitlyn? Is it heavy? Yes, very heavy.

Yeah, but the more you use it, the easier it becomes, isn't it?

Yeah. Maria, tell us about how you got it, because this wasn't handed to you by the NHS, was it? You had to make a bit of an effort. In fact, normally you'd be a little bit older before open bionics would give you one of these arms.

So generally, they've said eight years old for one of these hero arms, partly because of the size of it. Children need to be fairly well developed, both mentally and physically, to be able to use this. But as I mentioned, Caitlyn's got this slightly longer arm with the wrist, which makes that she can use it fairly well, to be honest. But last November time, when she was about six and a half, I contacted Open Bionics and put her name down, because I wasn't sure how long the process

was going to take. Within about a week or so, we were having an online meeting with Open Bionics, and they said, yes, she looks like she could be a prospective candidate for this. And she'd had some assessments and they said, yep, she's perfect for one of these arms. She needs to do a little bit more growing. And obviously, we also had to raise the funds for the arm. So the arm cost, the actual arm cost 13 and a half thousand pounds. And we've been incredibly lucky. We've been able

to raise this through our GoFundMe page, which we are going to carry on running because there are ongoing maintenance costs and such like for it. So we've done it through donations, some grants, people have raised money through cake sales, Caitlyn's school have been incredibly supportive. They've had a superhero day, wouldn't be able to do if it wasn't for the support of so many people, people that we know, but also a lot of people we don't know. So we're really, really grateful for the support we've had. And we just want to say a huge thank you that you've done something that's totally going to change Caitlyn's life. We raised the 13 and a half thousand pounds for the arm. And we've so I've got an additional five thousand pounds, which has meant that we can put an extended

warranty on this arm so that she's got, as it stands at the moment, five years worth of growing, so to speak. So we can pay for that for five years. And we've also got some money for things like covers and things. At some point, obviously, Caitlyn's still growing at some point, presumably she does have to change arm. Yeah. So we're not quite sure how quickly that will come. That's one of the downsides of being one of the youngest children to have one she's got more growing to do. I think initially we can have it just tweaked, but at some point in the next few years, she will have to have a full recast and a full arm redone. And obviously that's going to come at a price. Maria, the mother of Caitlyn Hudson.

And that's all from us for now, but there will be a new edition of the Global News podcast later. Just before we go, though, the happy pod this week is asking for your little win. That's the thing that's happened in your life or where you live that's made your week, no matter how small it is. We've already had emails from listeners in Arizona, Florida and Australia, amongst others. And we'd love to hear your story so we can include it in the podcast this weekend.

Drop us an email with your little win to [globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk](mailto:globalpodcastatbbc.co.uk) and you'll hear more in the happy pod in this feed on Saturday. If you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it, you can send us an email using the same address. You can also find us on X,

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formerly known as Twitter, at Global News Pod. This edition was mixed by Caroline Driscoll. The producer was Lear McChefey and the editor is Karen Martin. I'm Nick Mars and until next time, goodbye.