

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / Wildfires still raging on Greek Islands

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. This is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service. I'm Valerie Sanderson and at 1400 hours GMT on Tuesday the 25th of July, these are our main stories. The largest Greek island of Crete is on a high alert because of the risk of fire as thousands flee roads. Meanwhile scientists warn that climate change is driving heat waves across the world. The price paid by children in the world's forgotten war in Yemen. He remembers every moment from the shelling to the hospital. He talks about the smoke and the blood. It's always on his mind. Also in this podcast, Saudi Arabia's big football ambitions and a lovely surprise for a zoo in the United States as the gorilla thought to be male gives birth. We start in Greece where wildfires continue to rage on several of its islands. Many regions including tourist hotspots are in red alert meaning there's an extreme risk of fire. The islands of Cretan roads are in the highest risk category. Fires have been raging for more than seven days forcing the evacuation of thousands of people including holidaymakers and residents. On roads more than 260 firefighters supported by aircraft are on the scene fighting blazes. I spoke to our correspondent Azadeh Mashiri who's on roads. Many tourists are still at the airport waiting for the next repatriation flights to take them back home to the UK and other European countries because roads is such a popular tourist destination and many airlines have been sending empty planes to take people back home as well as some airlines have stopped selling tickets to people on roads to make sure that they're free for people who arrive at the airport and need to go home because they've been through so much. It's been such a difficult ordeal on the island the last few days and the fact is that the fires are still burning here on the island. It is so hot here. It is so humid. I'm in an area in a village on the island that was evacuated yesterday and there's still smoke and the smell of ashes around here because the conditions the weather conditions are just so difficult. But are tourists still flying into roads? They are. It's important to say that the fires are localized in the south and so if holiday makers are for example going in the north there is no reason really according to officials in the fire service to feel like they can't come. Some are also coming to the south because they feel like it's relatively under control but the fact is that it is still a high risk of fires. Fire service still say they're on high alert but that's not just for roads that's for all of Greece because there are also fires on other islands as well as the mainland. They fight about 65 to 75 fires a day. In fact I spoke to the fire service this morning and they said that we still continue to hunt fires every single day. What's it like being there and seeing for yourself as a day the devastation of the buildings of the surroundings and indeed of the wildlife? It's been difficult in the sense that you've seen people lose their livelihoods. I met a man who had inherited a facility for deer that he kept up for the local children in his village on the mainland near Athens and it had completely burnt to shreds. All the deer had jumped over fences to safety and he didn't know how he could rebuild. He felt completely let down by the emergency services even though the emergency services do say they're doing their best and so of course it's very difficult to see that but of course there's so much kindness here. There's so much generosity to see the way that the people of roads have helped tourists as their own homes, their own island, their own mainland is burning is incredible and that's something that so many tourists have been telling me. In fact one man did grab my shoulder yesterday and he said please tell them they're heroes. Tell them they are heroes here because

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people are extremely grateful for the people from Greece and for the generosity shown from the people of roads in particular. Azadeh Mashiri who's on roads. Well the fires in Greece are a reflection of a wider problem facing southern Europe, northern Africa and north America where fires continue to burn across Canada. A new report says these powerful heat waves would be virtually

impossible without climate change. Scientists have warned that future heat waves will be even hotter if greenhouse gas emissions are not rapidly cut. Our climate reporter Georgina Rallard has been reading the study. This group of scientists wanted to identify exactly what role climate change played in these recent heat waves in southern Europe, in the US and China. We've known for years that the planet is warming generally because of greenhouse gas emissions but not each extreme weather event can be automatically linked to climate change. So this study, these scientists study the evidence and their conclusion is that the powerfully high temperatures in southern Europe and the US would have been virtually impossible in a world without human induced climate change and the heat we saw in China, some of it was record breaking, that was made 50 times more likely by climate change. But what they say is this isn't an example or a case of climate collapse or runaway global warming. This is exactly what they expected. They actually say we can't consider these events to be unusual anymore but they say there is still time to implement

all these solutions we know we have. Governments need to radically cut fossil fuels and cut greenhouse

gas emissions, which they have promised to do but the pace is quite slow.

And what happens if change doesn't happen quickly?

Well, there's a lot of different scenarios. The IPCC, this group of scientists who advise and write reports of governments, they say that under 1.5 warming, which we're at 1.1 now, we will see higher sea level rises, more extreme heat waves like those we're seeing now, and at each kind of degree of warming and each level of warming we see worse and worse impacts. At the moment scientists and experts are worried that we're heading for around 2.5 or even 3 and that becomes really quite catastrophic. You see an example where a lot of people around the world cannot continue to live where they live now. We see impacts on food security and what they're saying is that we need to really quite quickly cut those emissions and try to avert those extreme conditions and there is a reason that you know the UN call this catastrophic and existential and I think when you see those very serious impacts at 2.5 or 3 that really becomes quite clear. So how much time do we have left? I think that's it's sort of an open question. We're not really sure really what scientists say is that every year matters, every degree of warming really matters and it's a case of they say trying to radically cut emissions now.

Climate reporter Georgina Ranaut. Protests in Israel continue following parliament's approval of the first of several deeply controversial laws curbing the powers of the judiciary in the country. Now Israeli doctors have announced a one-day general strike marking their opposition to the legal reform which critics fear is allowing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to erode the rule of law to serve the interests of his right-wing religious coalition.

On the streets among those protesting are thousands of military reservists who say they'll no longer report for duty in the Israeli Defence Forces, the IDF. Opposition parties say they plan to challenge the law paused on Monday in the Supreme Court, the very body whose powers Mr Netanyahu is seeking to limit. Our correspondent Paul Adams has been following

events in Jerusalem. This protest movement one of the biggest this country has ever seen has managed for several months now to prevent Benjamin Netanyahu from carrying out his threatened

reforms of the judicial system in particular his effort to reduce the power of the Supreme Court until now. Now everyone here knows they've had a setback. So we're just passing the Supreme Court heading up to the junction where the protesters have been gathered all day and they're still here late into the night. The air is thick with the smell of what I can only assume is the notorious skunk water that the police used to try and disperse the protesters.

It's a heavy police presence. It's a pretty tense atmosphere I have to say. All of this begs a question. Of course the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has scored a victory but where does this battle go next?

My name is Adam. Adam Shacham. We have so far managed to postpone much of the legislation and delay much of it. So far the protests have been effective and this is our first real defeat. They have passed a law which I believe hurts my rights as a citizen and that is a big defeat but as you can see people here are not about to give up and we will keep fighting for what we believe are our basic human rights and the way we think the country should be run properly and democratically. How are you going to carry on that fight? I do reserve duty and I signed a petition that I will no longer go on reserve duty. So we want to make the country hurt for a while for our protests to be heard and eventually to stop this legislation. All of my friends who said that they will not do reserve duty if these laws are passed. If push comes to shove and the country will be really threatened we will all show up and the moment we are safe again we will keep quarreling

and fighting with each other for our what we believe is our democracy. Hi my name is Batel Valentine Bly Sultanic. I've yet to postpone my duty as a reservist but I think it's important to give a bit context here and to understand that Israel democracy is very very fragile and the country the government this extremist government has put us in this impossible decision of staying loyal to the IDF the IDF that we signed up for an unwritten contract of a democratic and Jewish state or serving a dictatorship. But are you not endangering Israel's security in making this political stand? The government and the Ministry of Defense need to own this and take responsibility and they need to stop the legislation and this is how they will regain and retain Israel's security. So the police have started firing the evil smelling skunk water but from what I can make out the crowd is not giving way some people are sitting down others are still on their feet with their flags held aloft these people have been protesting for months now and they're not about to give up after one vote has gone against them there's a real sense of defiance and a real sense that even after this setback the fight goes on. Paul Adams with water quality in our rivers becoming a major issue around the world in France they're celebrating the regeneration of the Seine in Paris once it was a polluted and lifeless waterway now it's once again fit for swimming the transformation comes ahead of next year's Olympic Games in the French capital which will see swimming and diving events take place in the actual river from Paris here's Hughes Coffield. Here's a foretaste of what's to come earlier this summer they staged a diving competition in the Seine right by the Eiffel Tower world-renowned divers are leaping from the high board and into

the no longer murky waters below. Until very recently such a scene would have been unthinkable and illegal the waters of the beloved river Seine were just too dirty exactly a hundred years ago

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swimming in the river was banned an annual Christmas race continued for a while but after the Second

World War that too came to an end. The problem of course was pollution industrial and human but now when officials from City Hall take their weekly samples the news is only good in the last 10 or 20 years bacteria levels have fallen dramatically. The get to this point has required time commitment and a lot of money. If you want to get an idea of the sheer scale of the effort that the French are putting into cleaning up the river Seine then you have to come here the most impressive buildings that you're ever likely to see just behind Austerlitz station it's like a massive underground cathedral really around cathedral underground with pillars of concrete 30 meters deep. The big recurrent problem was the runoff after heavy rain because stormwater ends up in Paris sewers and risks backing up into people's toilets the cities had to use the river Seine as a safety outlet too much rain and some human waste ended up in the river but with this new reservoir that ends the vast underground cylinder will store the excess water till level subside it all means that swimming will soon be returning to the river not just in events at next year's Olympics but beyond that for the general public Pierre Rabadeau is deputy mayor of Paris in charge of the Olympics. They see the guys the athletes coming in the river and and swimming without any healthy problem they will be confident to go themselves in the river Seine that's our massive bunch of legacy of the games.

One event that's not taking place in the Seine in fact not at all is Angling which is a shame because at the first Paris Olympics in 1900 there was a fishing event and for fisherfolk today the river's never been in better shape from a grand total of three fish species in the 1960s there are now 35 including the giant catfish. Bill Fauxsois is from the Paris anglers union. We do a lot of efforts to reintroduce fish that have disappeared back in the days so now we have a lot of fish but not only the fish also aquatic insects jellyfish shrimps crabs sponges a lot of life crowfish a lot of life in the Seine river it's been cleaner and cleaner. From the piscine i.e fishy point of view then the Seine is once again thriving which is apt because piscine is the same word as the french piscine which means swimming pool.

Hugh Scofield in Paris

still to come the new cryptocurrency plan that includes scanning your eyeballs.

Whether you call it football or soccer in your part of the world Match of the Day Africa top 10 is the podcast from the BBC World Service ranking the best african players this guy's recognized as the best in the world teams will come in turn boom and the biggest moments in african football the whole world remembers that it's not just african fans. Match of the day Africa top 10 find it wherever you get your BBC podcasts. Welcome back while global attention has been focused on the war in ukraine Yemen's long-running conflict is grinding on with children in the firing line the UN says more than 11,000 of them have been killed or maimed in the nine years of war in the Arab world's poorest country there's been less violence since a temporary truce last year between Iranian backed Houthi rebels and a Saudi-led coalition backed by the US and Britain but the young can't escape the dangers. Our senior international correspondent Ola Garen reports an hour from the city of Taze in southwest Yemen which is virtually surrounded by Houthi forces. I've just come through a checkpoint flying the Yemeni flag and I've been allowed to come through to a frontline neighborhood I'm with a family called the Al-Harbi family they tell me the nearest Houthi positions are about 10 or 15 houses in front of theirs and I've come here to meet two of the sons of the family Bader and Hashim. Bader sits on

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breeze blocks in the backyard he has a mop of dark hair his right leg is missing above the knee Hashim has a mangled foot and hand. Their father Al-Harbi Nasser tells me they were hit by Houthi shelling last October on their way home from school they haven't been to classes since then I want to go back Bader tells me but my leg has been cut off how can I go out of the house Bader do you hear a lot of sounds from the war what kind of things do you hear I hear explosions he says and snipers they shoot everything we've come to the house next door to meet another child named on the very same day Amir is three years old he's asleep in his father's arms he's wearing a yellow t-shirt and his right leg is missing he has a prosthetic leg Amir was injured by shelling which killed his cousin and his uncle Amir's father Sharif has been telling me what happened he remembers every moment from the shelling to the hospital he says this happened to my uncle this happened to my cousin he talks about the smoke and the blood it's always on his mind outside on Al-Rashid street Sharif tries to distract Amir with a bike ride holding him in place in the saddle don't be scared my love he says you're a man he asks Amir what he wants in the future by me a gun he says I will put a bullet in my gun and fire at those who took my leg it will go right to them on this street alone three young boys have been maimed and a fourth has been killed and it's just one small corner of Yemen if peace comes and many here have their doubts a generation will carry this war with them forever

Orla Garan in Yemen well one unexpected outcome of the extreme heat waves in Europe is the potential triggering of mines and bombs left mainly hidden in the ground from previous conflicts otherwise known as unexploded ordinance Eric Tollison head of weapon contamination at the international committee of the Red Cross in Geneva has been speaking to Beverly Ochien the concern we have is that in many of the former battle areas you might have unexploded ordinance relying there lurking in the in the ground and they are very sensitive to heat and they might explode and therefore pose another additional risk to those responding to the forest fires such as firefighters and others first responders and where is this happening at the moment what has been the impact in places where there's recent examples of this well we've seen in Slovenia last year there was a hell of a battlefield that was in this forest area where there was this this wildfire and more than 500 items of unexploded ordinance detonated as a result of this this fire and of course that means that the firefighters stay they would have to withdraw and particularly and therefore the the destruction of the forest fires is much bigger and greater than it would have been otherwise and climate interventions have been very difficult but in place and now you have this additional danger but what can be done to limit the kind of threat that unexploded ordinances cause or or pose first of all there are three main assets we mentioned that the explosive remnants from from walls but it's also unexploded ordinance from active or decommissioned firing ranges and then you have ammunition stores either abandoned or active ones that are located into forest areas so it's controlling this and getting an overview but also then engaging with agencies slightly to be involved such as firefighters and then of course prioritize clearance of unexploded ordinance and obsolete ammunition stores in areas where you could see a forest fire and just briefly what kind of ordinance are we generally talking about we're talking about everything from Napoleon up to today's

ongoing conflict the early ones they had in the primary explosive site called picric acid which crystallizes and becomes very sensitive to stab and friction and then heat and then more modern ones

have a component called leather seed which is also very sensitive to heat so we see this and also countries like poland for instance which saw the polin wars the first world war the second one war and so on more than 30 000 items of unexploded ordinances is cleared every year actually for for belgium it's it's the same the numbers out there is mind boggling eric tolfson from the icrc we've become used to footballers earning megabucks playing in some of europe's biggest leagues but saudi arabia are looking to take it to the next level the saudi pro league side al-halal have offered an eye watering 330 million dollars for french superstar killing mbappi and more millions in wages that package would make the 24 year old the most expensive

footballer in the world our middle east analysts have asked in usher told me more about the saudi offer saudi europe is certainly serious in its ambitions about sport i mean that is the thing i mean they're not going to a place that isn't trying to be at the forefront of world sport not just in football but in in boxing basketball golf of course now wrestling has always been a big thing there formula one so i mean saudi arabia both individually through sports clubs but also as a state and particularly through the crown prince mohammed bin salman and his private fund the pif is trying to attract the best to saudi arabia to make saudi arabia the biggest player this is this is their idea in the next decade or so in world sport from you know next to nothing through the power of money and also through the power of change to some extent i mean that that's that's the other kind of selling point that they're trying to put across that saudi arabia is becoming a very different country and part of the way that it's doing that is through sport through entertainment through transforming the way that it presents itself to the world so i mean there are all sorts of things at play here which would make it not an unattractive proposition even for the best football players in the world and why would mbappe take it would it be for say at a year and obviously he'd get an awful lot of publicity from it again i mean it's you know i i can't speak for his position and where he is at the moment i mean the saudi's are saying that they want to make their league amongst the top 10 in the world within the next 10 years that would seem unlikely but i mean it's not beyond the realms of possibility football i mean to call it a religion obviously in the birthplace of islam is is probably not quite the right way to put it but i mean it is an unbelievable passion there and it was years and years ago when i first was living there i mean sport i you could see then that sport might be the thing which would crack saudi arabia open to some extent a very austere places it was then and it felt to me that the way people were going to stadiums the way that they were idolizing local players was very different from the way that saudi arabia presented itself both domestically and internationally at that time and i think the crown prince marmot bin salman is very much using it that way not just to transform the image of saudi arabia across the world but also inside the country sport and entertainment are the two main factors really that they'll have to try and achieve that sebastian usher a cryptocurrency scheme has been launched where people receive digital coins in return for a scan of their eyeballs it's the idea of the artificial intelligence entrepreneur behind the chatbot chat gbt and is designed to distinguish between human and robot so far more than two million people have volunteered for the project our cyber correspondent joe tidie

has visited a scanning site in london to see how it works in the foyer of an east london co-working space a silver orb is causing a stir one by one people arrive to gaze into its lens and have their irises scanned the reward 25 coins in the freshly launched cryptocurrency world coin currently worth about \$50 world coin is co-founded by open ai's sam altman the man behind viral artificial intelligence chatbot chat gpt but altman claims that world coin is actually an antidote to a world full of ai bots scanning irises then deleting the data is key to proving that someone is a real human on the internet the orbs have been busy for two years now scanning over two million eyeballs and now the crypto coin has been launched the hope is that more people will flock to the orbs eventually mr. altman says it could lead to a tech utopia where everyone is given a universal basic income salary funded by artificial intelligence but he's not said how the launch has been met with excitement criticism and cynicism the cryptocurrency mogul vitalik buterin said it had dystopian vibes whilst twitter found a jack dorsy joked visit an orb or an orb will visit you joe tidy and we're going to end this podcast on some happy baby news for the past five years keepers at the columbus zoo in the state of ohio in the u.s had believed that one of their western lowland gorillas was a happy healthy male last week that changed rather dramatically after the gorilla known as sully was found holding a newborn baby sully is a she and not a he odomenalt curator for the congo expedition region at the columbus zoo told bevelie ocheng why it would start easy establishing the sex of a gorilla it is actually very difficult to tell when they are young up to about eight years of age because they do not have prominent sex organs so you just really don't have strong identifying features to tell the difference and you'd expect that if a gorilla is pregnant just like with us human beings they would get a baby bump so gorillas actually have pretty large abdominal areas because of the way that their gut system works so they are hindgut fermenters so they actually get large abdomens in general which would hide any kind of a baby bump that you would expect to see as you would see in humans and i mean the photos of sully and the newborn are really adorable how is she doing and how's the baby and they're both doing fantastic she is a wonderful mother which is you know a great relief to all of us being that we didn't know and expect her to have a baby um infant is strong and healthy and she is protective and very nurturing and do you know the gender of the newborn we do actually it is a female um we have had uh confirmation of that through myself and also through other gorilla experts here in the united states the license photographs too ah and sully is a western lowland gorilla and these are critically endangered so it's not just a fun story but also a very important development what are the kinds of pressures that they face in their natural habitats so they face pressures from habitat lost deforestation and bushmeat and those things have really reduced their numbers to about a hundred thousand uh and is sully about to get a new name or will it just remain sully what about the baby so actually sully's name was sullaman and we always refer to her as sully so we have decided just to permanently change the name because it is a little more appropriate to this new that identified gender ah but she probably has been responding to sully for so long she has yes so this really is um not a full name change but just a just a shortening back to what we had always referred to her as odra menult from columbus zoo and if you want to see pictures of sully and her baby go to the columbus zoo website scroll down to the blog at the bottom and you'll see the story about sully with lots of photos so www.columbuszoo.org forward slash blog forward slash gorilla and that's it from us for now but there'll be a new edition of the global news podcast later if you want to comment on this podcast or the topics covered in it send us an email the

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address is globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk you can also find us on twitter at globalnewspod this edition was mixed by chris ablakwa and the producer was venessa heaney the editor as ever is caron martin i'm valerys anderson until next time bye bye

love janessa is the true crime podcast from the bbc world service and cbc podcasts investigating the murky world of online romance camps she was trying to get me to send her money catch up with the whole series now search for love janessa wherever you found this podcast you win their arts you win their wallet