On August 20th 2020, a politician called Alexei Navalny fell ill on a flight from Tomsk to Moscow. On September 2nd, he was moved to a German hospital where doctors confirmed Mr Navalny had been poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok - a rare and highly toxic chemical weapon. Days later doctors cautiously brought him out of his coma.

Mr Navalny is the biggest political rival of the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, and often criticises the Russian government. President Putin seems to want to remain in power as long as possible but Mr Navalny has spoken out against this, calling President Putin and his party "crooks and thieves". He has also led nationwide protests against corruption in the Russian government.

In Russia, challenging the government can be dangerous. Several of President Putin's critics have died in suspicious circumstances and it is common for protesters to be arrested. As a result, many people think that the Kremlin is responsible for Mr Navalny’s poisoning.

Russia has a supply of Novichok that only the most powerful people in the country can access. Angela Merkel, Germany’s chancellor, said that the presence of Novichok "raises very difficult questions that only the Russian government can answer, and has to answer." One of Mr Navalny’s supporters made stronger accusations, saying that it was the same as President Putin "leaving an autograph at the scene of the crime".

Other governments, including those of Britain and America, have promised to investigate. They say if the Russian government is involved, it will be held to account. In the face of strong suspicions against it, Russia is denying any involvement.

Want to know more about this? Look here! [bbc.co.uk/newsround/44922487](http://bbc.co.uk/newsround/44922487)
CHALLENGE: how is this issue developing in the news?

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
- Who is involved? (people, countries, groups etc)
- Where did this happen? Is it still happening?
- What has happened? How long has this been going on for?

NEWS SCALE
Is this a big issue in your life? Mark your opinion on the scale below with a X.
What about President Putin. Where would he place his X? What about a Russian citizen?

SMALL ISSUE
BIG ISSUE

LINKS
- How does this issue link to...?
- A school subject?
- A different news story?

NEWS CONCEPT: power?
NEWS CONCEPT: democracy?

PERSPECTIVE FLIP
What would Group A think about this issue? How are they affected by the issue? Now flip to B and think about the same questions. Are there any perspectives missing?

A
Supporters of Alexei Navalny
B
Leaders of other countries
C

CHALLENGE: how is this issue developing in the news?