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 Sarderson and in the early hours of Tuesday the 14th of March, these are our main stories. The leaders of the United States, Britain and Australia announce a new defence pact that will provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines. It's been a nervous time on US markets, despite a reassurance from President Biden that the financial system is secure after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank. Malawi has declared a state of disaster after being hit by a tropical storm that's now known to have killed nearly 100 people.
Also in this podcast we mark the achievements of a pioneering US high-jumper and we have upwards of 110 cameras deployed 24-7. We drag our tracks three times a week lately to see what animals are crossing the roadways and that's how we know we have a fox remaining. The tale of Rambo the Fox.
The leaders of the United States, Australia and Britain have unveiled details of a plan to provide Australia with nuclear-powered attack submarines in what's being seen as a major step to counter China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific. The Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese, described it as the biggest defence deal in his country's history. Standing in a naval base in San Diego, President Biden said the three countries' partnership, known as AUKUS, would boost international security. AUKUS has one overriding objective to enhance the stability of Indo-Pacific amid rapidly shifting global dynamics. This first project is only beginning. More partnerships, more potential, more peace and security in the region lies ahead. Simply stated, we're putting ourselves in the strongest possible position to navigate the challenges of today and tomorrow together. Our correspondent, Will Grant, is in San Diego and told us the key details of this deal.
Well, the most significant part to come out of it is undoubtedly this agreement over the nuclear propelled submarines going to Australia, three from the US, as well as a major new development in terms of the building, something called SSN AUKUS, a new submarine, a new class of submarine, nuclear propelled submarine, to be built in barren finesse in the United Kingdom. It brings with it a whole series of other elements, the training of submariners and so on for Australia with the US and the UK and also a rotational force of submarines working off Western Australia. All of it very interesting, very kind of significant really in terms of a post-Cold War multilateral defence agreement. I think it was being built as really the biggest of its kind in generations as it was put by Prime Minister Sunag. But I think as well it was clear that all of the leaders were at pains to underline that these are nuclear powered submarines but they will not be carrying nuclear weapons, they will not be nuclear armed and that was clearly a message for Beijing.
And what about China's response? Well, as I say that element I think being directed to Beijing because already we know that they are furious in a sense about the very existence of this pact, they called it extremely irresponsible when the alliance was first announced,
saying it demonstrates a Cold War mentality among the three member states and accused them of undermining nuclear non-proliferation agreements to which of course Australia is a signatory.
But certainly the Australian Prime Minister was also at pains to underline that they have no intention of changing their position on its nuclear armament, that they are a member of the non-proliferation pact. It is not a nuclear nation but that these nuclear powered submarines are going to be an important part of its naval fleet. Will Grant in San Diego. It was the largest

failure of a bank since the financial crisis of 2008 and President Biden has moved swiftly to calm fears after the collapse of Silicon Valley Bank last week. On Sunday, a New York-based bank signature
also closed. In a televised address from the White House, the US leader said anyone who had deposits in either bank would have their money protected and that he would do whatever is needed to maintain financial stability. But his words didn't seem to prevent some unease on the US stock markets. A North America business correspondent Michelle Flurry in New York is following the situation. It's fascinating to watch, you know, the main three indexes here are all trading in positive territory or pretty much flat right now, but it has been a very choppy day. And if you are looking specifically at bank stocks and even more specifically at regional banking shares,
they have been struggling and under a great amount of pressure. One name keeps cropping up again and
again, first republic it shares down more than 60 percent, but it certainly has not been the only one. And I think one of the things worth remembering here is that what the government did over the weekend here in America is they bailed out customers, they did not bail out the bank,
and so investors are still nervously looking at banks where there are huge amounts of uninsured deposits, wondering who might be vulnerable next and where they might lose money. Well, what is the worst case scenario is that banks go down like dominoes?
I mean, I think you've already seen three banks in the space of a week. They are smaller, so it's very different from what we saw and experienced in 2008 in the global financial crisis. I think worst case scenario is that you start to, as you say, see more dominoes fall. That is less likely
this time around though, in part because the bigger banks are much more diversified, they don't face the same kind of challenges. You know, and again, what we've seen is not just the government guaranteeing those deposits, but also the Federal Reserve, America's central bank,
acting as the lender of last resort. So in this case, they've set up an emergency lending fund
to try and address the real problem here, which was assets that have lost money as a result of rising interest rates that were sitting on these bank's balance sheets. And when they had to sell them because customers were withdrawing their money and they needed to raise more cash,
they suffered a loss. This lending service should address that problem. And so that should help try and kind of stem the contagion and restore financial stability, but we're not there yet.
Michelle Flurry. So why is the failure of Silicon Valley Bank, the 16th largest in America, affecting stock markets in countries like the UK, France and Germany? I asked our international business correspondent Theo Leggett. The general picture is that if there are fears about the health of the banking sector, then those fears are almost by definition international because the banking
sector is international. Now, when it comes to the UK, here in the UK, we did have a subsidiary of SV Bank that fed money to British startup technology companies. And although that was a separate subsidiary, there were deep concerns that it would be unable to cope with demand for deposits to be returned. So the British government did actually have to engineer a takeover by HSBC Bank, which happened today. That company was sold for the token price of a pound in order to safeguard deposits that were kept there. But the big picture is there is anxiety at the moment about the health of the banking sector, those anxieties cross borders. So how dangerous is this? Do you think for global financial stability? Well, you have to look at the psychological aspect here. What happens with banks is quite often there's an area of concern. What we saw with SV Bank was that it had

been caught out by investing too much money in bonds, which lost value just at the time when a lot of depositors were asking for their money back and it couldn't cope. Now, it was making losses, it was trying to raise money, and people saw that there were problems at the bank and rushed to withdraw their deposits. And it's that rush to withdraw deposits called a bank run, which can take a bank out of business. So if people think there is a problem at a bank, they can very rapidly create one. And the issue that the banking sector as a whole is facing at the moment is anxiety. Nobody's quite sure where the next problem is going to come from. The issues at Silicon Valley Bank appeared almost out of the blue and they blew up into something big very, very quickly. So now people are asking themselves, well, what about other banks? What assets are other banks holding that could cause a problem in an environment of rising interest rates? Are banks the areas we
want to invest in at the moment? And a lot of people are clearly thinking probably not because we've seen the share prices of banks around the world fall sharply. I mean, just to give you some examples, Santander down 7%, Deutsche Bank down more than 5%. So the results of that climate
of anxiety we're seeing on the markets today. Theo Leggett, a state of disaster has been declared in Malawi as Tropical Storm Freddy, which made landfall over the weekend, continues to cause havoc.
That's the sound of rivers of water which have flooded communities and swept homes away. At this stage, police say approximately 100 people are dead, but the full extent of the damage isn't known as communication has been cut off in many areas. A correspondent, Peter Jaguar, reports now from the capital, Llongwe. You see everywhere in social media images of destruction, rivers that have swollen, flattened crop fields, houses that have been demolished, and also continuous reports of bodies being found, bodies of people whose houses have been destroyed.
So there's destruction all over the place, particularly in the south of Malawi. I am speaking to you from Llongwe. In my house, I don't have electricity. I've not had electricity for the past six hours. I don't know when power returns. It's because the power plant has also collapsed, meaning that the effects is being felt not just in the southern region, in the districts where initially thought to be affected, but the rest of the country, including in Llongwe, I'm speaking to you from. Peter Jaguar, an agreement between Russia and Ukraine that allows grain to be shipped from ports in the Black Sea, was set to expire on Saturday. Now Moscow has signaled that it's ready to extend the deal, but only for 60 days. The UN has affirmed its commitment to the deal which aims to ease a global food crisis. A correspondent image in folks told us more about the agreement. The United Nations is relieved that the grain deal, seen as crucial to averting hunger in Yemen or the Horn of Africa, can be extended if only for 60 days. But Russia's agreement comes with conditions. Alongside the original grain deal is a parallel deal, allowing Russia to export its own food and fertilizers, which are supposed to be exempt from sanctions. Moscow claims this is not happening. Over the next 60 days, it wants to see its agricultural products moving freely. This will involve, it says, an unfreezing of financial activities. That, given the current sanctions on Russian banks, could be tricky. And in two months time, the grain deal could be at risk again. Image in folks. Still to come in this podcast.
And I think I was probably the first to say to the Prime Minister whether you like it or not,

get your ducks in a row, because it looks as though they're building up to an invasion of Iraq.
As the 20th anniversary of the Iraq War approaches, we find out what was happening behind the scenes
ahead of the invasion. In the US, the Biden administration has approved a major oil and gas drilling project in Alaska, the largest of its kind in the area for decades. The company Behind the Willow project says it will create thousands of jobs, but more than a million letters have already been sent to the White House by environmental activists who oppose the project. A North America correspondent in Washington, Nome Iqbal, told us more about the plan. This project would take place on Alaska's North Slope, and it's one of the last unspoiled wilderness areas in America, a really beautiful part of Alaska. And the North Slope is in the National Petroleum Reserve, so it's owned by the federal government. And basically, the area where the project is planned holds up to 600 million barrels of oil. Now, that oil would actually take years to reach the market because the project has, of course, yet to be constructed, but it's thought it will produce that much over the course of 30 years. And so this is what the project was. The Biden administration hasn't approved all of it. They've just approved half of it because there's so much controversy around it. So what are environmental activists saying? Well, they're saying that this is basically catastrophic. They say it undermines present Biden's pledge to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. There are also lots of local groups as well, native Alaskans who are concerned about the project's local environmental impacts, including disturbance to local wildlife, disruption to traditional hunting practices.
That's not the only thing present Biden probably should be worried about. In the last few weeks, the hashtag stop willow campaign has gone viral on social media amongst young people. And bear in mind, he will likely run for the White House again in 2024. And so he could risk alienating young voters. But as I said, the administration is only proving half of the project, which will slightly reduce the emissions footprint. So the company hasn't got everything it wants.
And in a further attempt to offset criticism, President Biden declared the Arctic Ocean off limits to oil and gas leasing. Nomia Iqbal. We're approaching the 20th anniversary of the toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, an invasion justified at the time by allegations that the country had weapons of mass destruction. Now, a major new series from our security correspondent, Gordon Carrera, looks in detail at why the U.S. and U.K. made the decision to go to war and considers the legacy of the conflict. The first episode of the new BBC podcast, Shock and War, Iraq 20 Years, looks at how the U.K. learned about America's plans.
At the first mention, we're going to do this. You could see their eyes opening up and the wheels turning and thinking, you're all mad. Sort of saying, this is not going to end well.
That's Luis Rueda, head of the CIA's Iraq Operations Group, talking about late 2001, when he told British counterparts about America's plans for Iraq.
Meanwhile, the then head of MI6, Sir Richard Dearlove, was also reporting back the news.
And I think I was probably the first to say to the prime minister whether you like it or not, get your ducks in the room because it looks as though they're building up to an invasion of Iraq.
By September 2002, Tony Blair is visiting President Bush's retreat at Camp David in the Wooded Hills of Maryland. The two of them went off by themselves for a period of an hour or so.
Stephen Hadley, deputy national security advisor, was waiting for the president to return.
And I just recall the look of relief on his face and in his voice. He said,

Blair says, told me that if at the end of the day diplomacy does not work and we have to go to war with Saddam, he's with me.
One, two, three.
Andrews Air Force Base just outside Washington, DC, January 31st, 2003.
Right. We're recording now. Prime Minister, the president says that this has to be settled in weeks. A small room. I was producing James Noctity as he interviewed Tony Blair.
There is a moral case for dealing with this issue. And if the only way of dealing with it is conflict, that's what it's got to be.
Blair was about to fly home, having just met President Bush again.
He sounded confident, though I remember at the time thinking he looked uneasy.
Two decades later, I get the chance to ask what was really going on.
President Bush is saying, time's running out. I'm going to go in March.
You're right in saying I was anxious to find a way out.
I mean, I tried right until the last moment to avoid military action.
And then I was trying all the way through to find a route out.
And you're right in the sense that I did feel I was uncomfortable because I could feel all the options were closing.
But just before the war, Blair was offered a way out.
Realizing the prime minister might lose a vote in parliament,
over a video conference called President Bush offered him the chance to be involved in the aftermath, but not the invasion itself. Stephen Hadley.
And Bush basically said, look, Tony, it's more important to me and to our, the United States, for you to stay in power than to have you at my side in an operation in Iraq, as much as I would value that.
Some of Tony Blair's closest advisors had also raised this possibility.
Why didn't he take it?
There was a video conference with President Bush where he said,
I want regime change in Baghdad, not London.
You don't have to do this. And he offered you that way out.
Yes, but I was sure that our alliance depended on us doing this together.
But don't be under any doubt at all.
Britain had left the alliance at that point and said, OK, you guys go do this.
No, it would have had a significant impact on the relationship.
Tony Blair did believe, said Amherst saying, was a threat.
But he also believed and still believes that Britain's security depends on staying close to America.
When I was Prime Minister, there was no doubt either under President Clinton or President Bush who the American president picked up the phone to first.
It was the British Prime Minister.
Today, we're out of Europe.
And would Joe Biden pick up the phone to Rishi Sunat first?
I'm not sure.
Tony Blair.
And you can search for the podcast, Shock and War, Iraq 20 years,

wherever you get BBC podcasts.
The legendary American high jumper Dick Fosbury,
whose technique revolutionised the sport, has died at the age of 76.
The method he pioneered throwing himself backwards over the bar
is now used by almost all serious high jumpers, as Steve Jackson reports.
Dick Fosbury was still at high school when he began experimenting with a new technique
for the high jump.
He found that taking a diagonal run-up, twisting in the air and gliding over the bar backwards
worked much better than the traditional straddle method or diving over face down.
Reflecting on it years later, he explained what he'd been thinking.
When I developed this technique, it was not that I was trying to win,
but I was trying to not lose.
I was the worst high jumper on our team.
My body changed its position going from sitting up over the bar
to laying flat on my back by the end of the day.
I improved by half a foot.
I knew then that I may have something.
Four years after his youthful experiment when he'd perfected the system,
Dick Fosbury launched it on an unsuspecting world at the 1968 Mexico Olympics,
to the astonishment of the crowds and many of his rivals.
The Fosbury flop as it became known won him a gold medal and an Olympic record.
By the next games four years later, the majority of competitors had adopted his method.
As one high jump coach put it, he literally turned his sport upside down.
Steve Jackson, would you swim topless at your public pool?
Well, that's what women in Berlin will soon be allowed to do after a ruling by the city's authorities.
It comes after a woman who was thrown out of an open-air pool for sunbathing topless
took legal action.
A second woman said she was told to cover up while at an indoor pool in December.
Nilema Govind found out more about the story from our Berlin correspondent, Jenny Hill.
The first woman that you mentioned there, she was thrown out of an open-air swimming pool
for sunbathing topless.
She actually tried to take legal action against the city and lodged a complaint.
Then the second woman who was thrown out of an indoor swimming pool for swimming without a top-on
also lodged a complaint.
There was a big inquiry and the city authorities found that they had both been the victims of
discrimination because actually if you looked at the rules, the rules said you just have to
cover the genitals.
But the rules were not clear that that applied to anybody regardless of gender.
So the assumption, of course, had been amongst, I guess, the authorities at the pools, but
also perhaps many of the people using the pools, that they only apply to men.
And so, yeah, the pool authorities in Berlin have clarified the point.
So, well, I haven't actually had a chance to go to the swimming pool over the weekend,

so I can't tell you whether women are now swimming topless indoors.
We'll have to wait and see, but those are the rules now.
I won't try and attempt the German word that I saw over the weekend,
but I think it was the concept of free body culture.
It's like herpe culture, yes.
I've been practicing.
Yeah, it's very popular here.
The notion that being naked in the right setting, in certain public settings, maybe at the lake,
in a sauna, for example, is not only appropriate, but actually that it's healthy for you.
If you go into a sauna here and you attempt to wear a bathing costume, you'll be told off.
It's considered very unhygienic.
Woe betide you if you forget a towel to sit on.
That's a very different thing altogether.
But I can't tell you how much naked flesh I've seen in the near decade I've been here in Germany.
It's considered just a very natural state to be in, and it can be very pleasant.
You go to the lake on a hot day.
You don't have to worry about not having a bathing costume with you.
You can just jump straight in.
And in many ways, I think it leads to quite a healthy attitude towards bodies.
I'm not saying that Germany is particularly sort of further advanced in this respect
than perhaps the UK.
But when you do go to changing rooms, when you are out and about at the side of a lake,
you become very aware very quickly that bodies come in all sorts of shapes and sizes,
and that time has its way with us all eventually.
Sure does.
Was there a debate over this or pushback since it's been decided?
There is a bit of a debate around whether this might stoke some tensions.
Germany is a country which has seen a huge amount of immigration in recent years.
A lot of people come from cultures where it is preferred that one covers up.
So there have been some concerns raised that this might lead to flare-ups
in particular in indoor swimming pools.
Nothing's happened so far.
And I think overwhelmingly most people think this is the right way forward.
But yeah, there is a little bit of a concern around that.
Yes, I'm just remembering.
Do you remember that huge row in France over the Burkini, of course?
So it does seem if an issue like this comes up, it's usually not without debate.
It's in Berlin, but it's not the only place.
Do you think it'll go country-wide?
I'm hard to say.
I mean, if you are particularly keen to swim topless in a municipal pool,
you can head to Göttingen in Lower Saxony and Segen in North Rhine-Westphalia.
They both made it possible last summer in response, I think, to similar complaints.

Jenny Hill talking there to Nula McGavin.
And finally to the tale of Rambo the Fox,
who for five years evaded capture in the Australian outback.
Drones, traps and trackers failed to catch the wily predator,
whose existence was preventing the authorities from reintroducing native species
into a fenced off area in New South Wales.
On the hunt for the story, our reporter Rachel Wright.
The Australian Wildlife Conservancy was very proud of its 32 kilometres of fencing,
with its 200 tonnes of wire and fence posts for a new protected area in New South Wales.
It was designed to keep out predators, such as foxes.
Red foxes were introduced into Australia in the mid-1800s for recreational hunting,
but have killed many native animals.
Conservationists wanted to use the protected area to reintroduce species such as the greater bilby
and the brush-tailed bitong, which had become regionally extinct.
But they had one big problem.
They couldn't catch Rambo the Fox.
Rambo was named after the unkillable action hero played by Sylvester Stallone,
and he was born in 2018 before the fence was constructed.
Wayne Sparrow, who manages the area, thinks Rambo grew up knowing he had been targeted for removal,
so was very shy.
Wayne Sparrow spoke in 2020 about his attempts to trap the fox.
We have upwards of 110 cameras deployed 24-7.
We drag our tracks three times a week lately to see what animals were crossing the roadways,
and that's how we know we have a fox remaining.
We've used the traditional 1080-baiting, soft jaw trapping, cage trapping,
thermal rifle shooting, traditional spotlight rifle shooting.
We've even invested in some unique thermal drone,
and we actually have a team of dogs on site at the moment.
We're hopeful to find him hiding in a hollow log where we might be able to remove him.
But all the specialist trackers, infrared cameras and dogs couldn't find the red fox named Rambo.
However, there has been no camera footage of him since October last year,
and conservationists have finally declared the fenced-off area feral-free,
and have at last begun introducing bilbies and bridal nail-tailed wallabies.
They think Rambo probably drowned in last year's unprecedented floods.
Mother Nature appears to have done what a long line of hunters, scientists and rangers couldn't,
an outfoxed Rambo at last.
Rachel Wright
And that's it from us for now, but there'll be a new edition of the Global News podcast later.
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This edition was mixed by Caroline Driscoll and the producer was Iona Hampson.

The editor as ever is Karen Martin.
I'm Valerie Saunderson, and until next time, bye-bye.