

## **Warships in the Tasman; an Arctic vault deposit; Girls Scout Cookie caution; and a dog's favourite colour.**

Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what's happening in the world around you.

I'm Christie Kijurina -

It's Thursday, February 27

In Squiz Kids Today ... Warships in the Tasman; an Arctic vault deposit; Girls Scout Cookie caution; and a dog's favourite colour.

That's what's making news, kid's style ...

### ***THE LOWDOWN***

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If the adults in your life have had the news on this week—whether on TV, radio, or The Squiz Today podcast (the grown-up version of Squiz Kids)—you might have heard about three Chinese Navy warships cruising through the Tasman Sea, the ocean between Australia and New Zealand.

But what really made headlines was what happened last Friday. A Virgin Airlines pilot flying over the Tasman received an emergency broadcast warning that he was in the middle of live-fire drills—meaning the Chinese Navy was testing weapons below him. Not exactly the in-flight announcement you want to hear!

Let's unpack this.

The Chinese ships were in international waters—parts of the ocean not owned by any country—so they weren't breaking any laws. And Australian and New Zealand Defence forces had been tracking them since mid-February. The issue? Australia says China didn't give enough warning about their exercises, which could have put flights at risk.

China insists they followed the rules. It's a bit like bringing your whole footy team home without telling your mum—not against the rules, but not exactly polite either.

The Virgin pilot relayed the message to air traffic control, and about 30 flights were rerouted to stay safe.

So, why was China holding drills so far from home? Well, it's not unheard of—Australia, the US, Japan, and the Philippines held similar exercises in the South China Sea last October. China has also been strengthening ties with Pacific nations like the Solomon Islands and Cook Islands. Maybe it's a bit of military flexing too.

Whatever the reason, officials suggest clearer 'rules of the sea' might be needed—because when big ships and big weapons are involved, it's best to avoid misunderstandings.

## ***SPIN THE GLOBE***

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Each day, we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops, and today, we've landed way up north in the Arctic Circle on a remote Norwegian island called Svalbard, where a very special deposit is about to be made into a bank.

Now, this is not the kind of bank where you stash your pocket money—this is the Global Seed Vault, home to more than 1.3 million seed varieties from almost every country in the world.

These seeds, many from essential food crops like rice, wheat, and corn, are stored in case of disasters. And next Tuesday, another 14,000 varieties will be added.

So, why bury seeds in freezing caves beneath the Arctic permafrost? To protect plant biodiversity. If a fungus or virus wiped out one type of corn, another variety might be resistant to that disease and could help replace it—or even provide genes to save it.

Since opening in 2008, the vault has already helped re-plant crops lost during war in Syria. So while Svalbard may be famous for reindeer and auroras, it's also protecting the future of food!

## **WEIRD SCIENCE**

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Time for a Weird Science and Animal Kingdom mashup—because this story is all about dogs and their surprising love for... yellow!

Researchers in India found that street dogs overwhelmingly preferred yellow objects. In an experiment with nearly 460 free-ranging dogs in Kolkata, scientists placed three bowls—one yellow, one blue, and one grey—in front of each dog. Whether the bowls were empty or filled with food, the dogs chose yellow more than 50% of the time.

And when there was just a grey and a yellow bowl, even when the grey one was filled with raw chicken (delicious), the dogs still bee-lined for the yellow one about 77% of the time!

Why? Well, scientists think it could be a learned behaviour because Indian food scraps often contain turmeric, a spice that turns food yellow. Or maybe, it's because dogs see reds and pinks as shades of yellow, that they associate with meat.

Now researchers want to test dogs in other countries—including Australia. Sounds like the perfect experiment for a school science fair!

## **NEWSHOUNDS**

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Every Thursday, Squiz-E the Newshound sticks his snout into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet ... and today, his nose is going crazy because he's caught the scent of fresh-baked cookies - but something smells off!

You might have seen on TV or on YouTube that in the USA, Girl Scouts sell cookies to raise money—kind of like school fundraisers here. But lately, some social media influencers have been claiming these cookies are toxic!

So, what gives? Well, labs did test the cookies and did find tiny traces of chemicals and metals that could be toxic... if an average 10-year-old were to eat 9,000 of them in a single day... honestly, I think they'd have bigger problems...

So why are influencers spreading this claim? Well, some of them are using these sensational posts to push their own homemade cookie recipes. Sneaky!

Parents, if you'd like your young person to learn more about identifying mis- and disinformation, I've stuck a link to a letter you can send to your school's Principal telling them all about Newshounds.

Thanks, Squiz-E, you've done it again!

## **THE S'QUIZ**

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This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. In which sea were the Chinese navy were conducting live-firing exercises last week?
2. How many new varieties of seeds will be added to the Global Seed Vault next week?
3. Name the spice used in many Indian foods that turns them yellow.

## **SHOUT OUTS**

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It's Thursday, February 27 ... Today marks 29 years since the launch of the first Pokémon video games, Pokémon Red and Pokémon Green, in Japan, in 1996. These games kicked off a global phenomenon, turning Pokémon into one of the most popular and successful entertainment franchises in history!

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Joshua from Mount Waverley, Taylor from Langwarrin, Zac from Ferntree Gully, Jayden from the Gold Coast, Archie from Newcastle, Jaylen from West Albury, Rory from Leichhardt, Sammy from Boronia, Evie from Lugarno, Lenny from Palm Beach and Natasha from Sheidow Park.

Belated shoutouts go to...

Classroom shoutouts go to ... class 6BA with Mr Baker at Yarrabilba State school, class 5D with Mrs Flaherty at Cannonvale State School, class 5KG with Mrs Gallagher at Proserpine State School, class 5/6B with Mr Blain at Belmont Primary School and class LA9 with Miss Carey at Atwell Primary School.

**The S'Quiz Answers:**

1. The Tasman Sea
2. 14,000
3. Turmeric

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after a classroom shout out- drop us a line at [squizkids@thesquiz.com.au](mailto:squizkids@thesquiz.com.au) or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - We'll be back again tomorrow with the Kids vs Adults Weekly News S'Quiz.

In the meantime, get out there and have a most excellent day. Over and out.