

**A hopeful step towards peace ; El Niño's on the way; 500-year-old potatoes unearthed; and the White House hosts a cage fight.**

Just before we start the podcast today...If you're a parent or teacher listening along, this one's for you. We've just released a special three-part series on AI over on our show for grown-ups, Squiz Today - and it's exactly the kind of thing that'll help you keep up with a topic your kids are probably already asking you about. the series talks to independent experts about how AI is changing our world - and what the right guardrails might look like. No hype, no doom - just smart, clear conversation.

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***INTRO***

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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 Wednesday, June 17 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... A hopeful step towards peace ; El Niño's on the way; 500-year-old potatoes unearthed; and the White House hosts a cage fight.

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

***THE LOWDOWN***

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We have some hopeful news out of the Middle East to start the podcast this morning. The United States and Iran appear to have taken a big step towards ending more than 100 days of fighting.

US President Donald Trump says a first-step agreement to stop fighting has been reached, while Pakistan's Prime Minister, who helped mediate the talks alongside Qatar, says the deal is due to be officially signed in Switzerland this Friday.

For now, the two sides have agreed to something called a memorandum of understanding, or MOU. That's a bit like writing down the big promises before the final paperwork is signed. Not quite the full deal, but much more serious than just a handshake.

According to early reports, the agreement would stop military operations, including fighting linked to Lebanon, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and begin lifting a US naval blockade on Iranian ports.

Now, if you've been listening pretty regularly, you'll know that the Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's busiest oil shipping lanes. When it was closed during the conflict, hundreds of ships became caught in what was essentially the world's biggest maritime traffic jam, with tankers, container ships and gas carriers forced to wait for safe passage. This is one of the reasons why fuel prices have shot up in recent months.

Even with a deal now on the table, experts say it could take several weeks to months before that traffic jam clears and shipping returns to normal.

So this is not peace wrapped in a ribbon just yet. But after months of war, it is a very important step in the right direction.

## ***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 off the coast of Peru in South America, where scientists are watching a giant patch of unusually warm ocean water.

Weather experts at America's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, have announced that a major El Niño event is now developing in the Pacific Ocean.

What's El Niño? Well it begins when powerful winds that normally push warm water towards Australia start to weaken. The warm water then sloshes back towards South America, like bathwater shifting from one end of the tub to the other, as the warm water

moves east, so do many of the rain clouds that normally form near Australia and Indonesia, changing weather patterns around the world as it goes.

According to scientists it's part of a natural climate cycle that has been happening for thousands of years. Every few years, the Pacific Ocean flips between El Niño, which often brings hotter and drier conditions to Australia, and its cooler cousin, La Niña, which can bring wetter weather and floods.

Now, before anyone starts panicking, El Niño doesn't guarantee droughts or heatwaves. But it can increase the chances of hotter and drier weather in Australia over the year ahead.

Scientists say there are already several signs that an El Niño is taking shape, but weather forecasting is a tricky business, so they'll be watching closely to see what happens next.

## ***ANCIENT EARTH***

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Quick question: what's the oldest thing in your pantry? A can of baked beans that's been sitting there since last summer? A packet of noodles that expired during the reign of dinosaurs? Well, archaeologists working at an ancient site in Peru have uncovered two incredibly rare freeze-dried potatoes that are believed to be around 500 years old.

The potatoes were found inside a ceramic storage jar at a place called Tambo Viejo, once an important centre of the mighty Inca Empire. Now, you might be wondering how a potato could survive for half a millennium without turning into a puddle of mush.

The answer lies in a brilliant piece of ancient food science. The Inca people created a special food called chuño. High in the Andes Mountains, they would leave potatoes outside to freeze during bitterly cold nights. Then the strong mountain sunshine would thaw them during the day.

Freeze. Thaw. Freeze. Thaw. After repeating the process and drying the potatoes, they became light, tough and incredibly long-lasting.

The potatoes themselves aren't exactly beautiful. Researchers describe them as brownish-white and shrivelled, with bits of peel still hanging on. In other words, they look less like something you'd order with a burger and more like something you'd find in your school bag at the end of the Christmas holidays...Still, these wrinkly old spuds have survived wars, storms, earthquakes and five centuries of history.

Not bad for a vegetable.

## ***BELIEVE IT OR NOT***

The White House is best known as the home of the US President and the place where some of the world's biggest political decisions are made. But this week, it became something else entirely.

Thousands of spectators travelled to Washington, D.C. to attend a mixed martial arts event held on the White House South Lawn as part of celebrations for President Donald Trump's 80th birthday. The event featured professional UFC fighters competing inside a cage erected on the famous lawn.

While it was the first event of its kind at the White House, the grounds have a surprisingly long history of hosting sports and entertainment. Presidents have welcomed musicians for outdoor concerts, hosted sporting activities on the lawns, and even turned parts of the grounds into places for games and recreation.

And some White House events have been even more unusual. Back in 1837, President Andrew Jackson invited members of the public to help eat a giant wheel of cheddar cheese that had been gifted to him by a dairy farmer. The cheese weighed more than 600 kilograms, and thousands of people reportedly turned up for a taste.

And if you wonder what America's Founding Fathers might have thought, you might be surprised to learn that Abraham Lincoln might have enjoyed this week's event. Before becoming president, he was known as a talented wrestler and reportedly lost only one match out of 300 in his youth.

So yes, a cage fight on the White House lawn is unusual, but until you've thrown a giant cheese party for thousands of strangers, you're probably not taking home the trophy for weirdest White House event.

## ***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. What is the name of the climate pattern that scientists say is taking shape in the warm waters off South America?
2. Which ancient civilisation developed the special potato-based food called chuño?
3. Which early US President was a talented wrestler?

## **SHOUTOUTS**

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It's Wednesday June 17 – Two pretty big celebs, ooth from California, share a birthday today. Rapper Kendrick Lamar turns 39. Kendrick holds the record for most Grammy wins by any rapper in history (27!) And tennis icon Venus Williams turns 46. She's a seven-time Grand Slam champion and five-time Wimbledon winner. There must be something special about June 17!

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Xanthe from Gladstone, Harper from Salisbury, Milani from Shoalhaven Heads, Fred from Dee Why, Rudy from Marcoola, Sybilla and Olivia from the Sunshine Coast, Kiara from Point Cook, Phoebe from Gungahlin and Matthew from Holland Park.

Belated shoutout go to...Kane from Tannunda and Callan listening over in Hamilton, New Zealand

Classroom shoutouts go to... Class 3/4B with Mrs Spiteri at Malabar Public School, class 4F with Mrs Frost at St Brendan's Catholic Primary School in Mackay, class 2/3MK with Mrs Moore and Mrs Kavanagh at Hamilton North Public School in Newcastle and lastly class 5W at Holy Spirit Primary School in Kurri Kurri and a happy birthday to their teacher Mrs K today!

### **The S'Quiz Answers:**

1. El Niño
2. The Inca
3. Abe Lincoln

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you'd like a shoutout, or if you want a classroom shoutout... 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

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

