Climate talks heat up; first prize for a golden beetle; quite a saga for Erling Haaland; and Nepal's dogs have their day!

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

I'm

It's Wednesday, November 11

In Squiz Kids Today …. Climate talks heat up; first prize for a golden beetle; quite a saga for Erling Haaland; and Nepal's dogs have their day!

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

THE LOWDOWN

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And we begin the podcast today in Antalya, a city in Türkiye, where representatives from almost every country are meeting to tackle one enormous challenge: climate change.

The meeting is called COP31: and it's the 31st Conference of the Parties. Those "parties" are countries signed up to a United Nations climate agreement. Their job is to work together to slow global warming and help people cope with its effects.

Türkiye is hosting, while Australia's climate minister, Chris Bowen, is leading the talks, helping the countries work out what they can agree to do.

And there are some difficult discussions to have, you see, the United Nations now expects the world to pass the one-and-a-half-degrees of warming that countries have been trying to avoid. That's measured against Earth's average temperature before the industrial age, when humans began burning huge amounts of fossil fuels, like coal.

But hang on … one-and-a-half degrees? You'd think you'd barely notice that change… but when the whole planet warms, it can change when flowers bloom, how early snow melts, and how often we get extreme heat, floods and storms. Those changes affect plants, animals and people.

And that doesn't mean every day gets hotter. Weather is what's happening outside today. Climate is the pattern over many years. We'll still have chilly days, even as the planet's average temperature rises.

But it's not all doom and gloom. The hopeful part is that we have technology to cut those gases, including cleaner energy from renewable sources like sunshine and wind. And every bit of warming we prevent makes a difference.

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 in Nepal, where some hardworking dogs have been getting a very special thank-you.

On Sunday, police dogs in the capital, Kathmandu, were draped in flower garlands, given red ceremonial marks called tika, and treated to special food.

It was Kukur Tihar, the day devoted to dogs during Nepal's Hindu festival of lights. And these clever canines had plenty to celebrate: their work includes finding missing people and helping keep communities safe. And it's not just police dogs; pets and street dogs are honoured too, recognising their loyalty, companionship and place in Hindu beliefs.

That's part of what makes Tihar special: the connections it celebrates. Crows are recognised as messengers of a Hindu god. Cows are linked to the goddess of wealth. And oxen are honoured for their work on farms. The special connection between brothers and sisters is also honoured.

It's a celebration of the many ways lives are connected… through family, faith and our animal companions. And for Nepal's dogs, a chance to receive some pats and treats… good boys and girls!

ANIMAL KINGDOM

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Christmas has come early this year for one shiny little Australian … the gold Christmas beetle! The northern Queensland native was yesterday crowned the ABC's Australian Insect of the Year, collecting almost four in every ten votes.

And it certainly looks dressed for an awards ceremony, with its gleaming golden body.

Like other adult insects, it has six legs, two antennae and three main body sections: a head, thorax and abdomen. But behind the celebrations is a mystery. People are reporting fewer Christmas beetles than they remember seeing years ago. So entomologists, the scientists who study insects, want to find out which species are struggling and how to protect them.

And you can help! There's a Christmas Beetle Count on people and it asks people to photograph beetles and, with a grown-up's help, upload their sightings to the iNaturalist website. That's citizen science: everyday people contributing to scientific research. Those photos help researchers work out where beetles live and which might need protection. People have even recorded species that hadn't been seen for decades!

I'll pop a link in the episode notes. There's no lab coat required … just sharp eyes and lots of curiosity.

POP CULTURE CORNER

Football boots, a fancy car, a fabulous holiday … nope. Erling Haaland and his dad went shopping for a 432-year-old book! And we're not talking about a ratty old paperback from the school book fair. The Manchester City and Norway superstar teamed up with his dad to buy a rare book for about two hundred thousand Australian dollars… then gave it to his hometown library so everyone could enjoy it.

Printed in 1594, its pages tell the stories of Norway's kings, queens and warriors, in sagas, long stories, collected by an Icelandic writer called Snorri. He also wrote another book preserving myths about Thor, Loki and Odin. Yep … those Marvel characters have some seriously old, actual real-life history roots!

Erling has been fascinated by Vikings since he was little. Remember Norway's famous Viking Row at this year's football World Cup? Players and fans sat down, grabbed imaginary oars and pretended to row a Viking longboat together.

Well, when the book was unveiled in the Bryne library in Norway on Monday, Haaland's dad got the schoolchildren rowing too… complete with a drum and all. Not your usual quiet morning at the library! There's also a reading competition with the chance to watch Norway play in Oslo. The librarian says some children are staying for hours, only getting up for another book or a toilet break.

Nicely played, Erling!

THE S'QUIZ

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

1. Which country is hosting the COP31 climate talks?
2. Which shiny creature won the ABC's Australian Insect of the Year?
3. Which seafaring people from history inspired Norway's famous rowing celebration at the football World Cup?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, November 11 – Today is Remembrance Day. On this day in 1918, after more than four years of the First World War, fighting stopped on the Western Front... that was the area across France and Belgium where opposing armies had fought the war from long lines of muddy, freezing trenches. Today, many Australians... perhaps you included, will wear red poppies and pause at 11 am for a minute's silence to remember those who died or suffered in wars and armed conflicts. It's a quiet moment to remember, and to reflect on how precious peace is.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today...

Maryam from Forest Lake, Houssainatou from Oran Park, Phoebe from Kurri Kurri, Axel from Bullarah and Harvey from Mount Mee.

Belated shoutouts go to...Jacoby from Worcester, Massachusetts, USA.

Classroom shoutouts go to... class 5A with Mr Guy from Mansfield Primary School, class 4/5/6 A Magpies with Mrs Murphy at Albury North Public School and lastly a special shoutout to all the year 6 graduates with Ms Sitters at Greenock Primary School.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Türkiye

2. The Gold Christmas Beetle
3. Vikings

Don’t forget .. if you’ve got a birthday coming up and you’d like a shoutout, or if you want a classroom shoutout, or parents, if you’d like to shout out a class or a wonderful teacher... drop us a line at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au or fill out the form on our website.

And finally: if you love Squiz Kids, we’d love you do us a favour and hit follow on Apple Podcasts or Spotify or wherever you’re listening to us. And while you’re there, why not share this episode with someone you think would enjoy it too? The only way we can continue to do what we do is by growing and in order to grow, we need your support -

Well - that’s all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - we’ll be back again tomorrow with

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