

Hey Smart Scoopers

Hope your week's been wonderful!

We have lined up some very interesting stories for you this week. This week's five scoops hop across borders, dive under your skin, zoom into the invisible world of germs, and end with a brain-teasing puzzle that will make your neurons do jumping jacks.

Here are the 5 fresh picks for this week:

Scoop 1: The US and Venezuela Story: Politics, Oil and Power At Play

Scoop 2: Why Don't Tattoo's Fade: The Science Behind The Ink

Scoop 3: AMR Explained: When Germs Learn To Beat Medicines (I)

Scoop 4: AMR Explained: When Germs Learn To Beat Medicines (II)

Scoop 5: Puzzle For The Week: The Two Tribes

We can't wait for you to dig-in! Happy scooping!

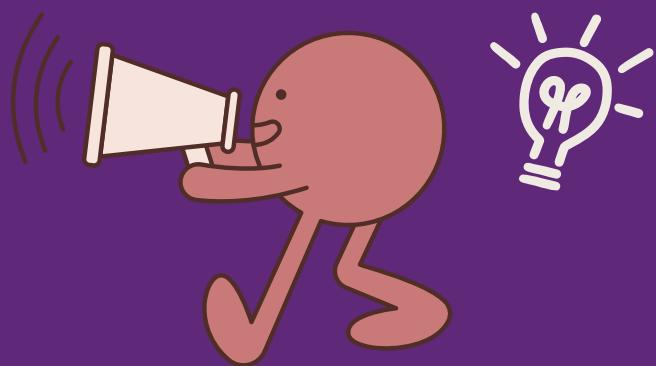
Happy Reading,
The SmartScoop Team

Our mascot, Blurt
will follow us
along the way.

Blurt /blurt/

noun:

A loud, round, super-curious character who just can't keep a fact in.



The US and Venezuela Story

POLITICS, OIL AND POWER AT PLAY



In early January 2026, under the orders of President Donald Trump, US soldiers attacked Venezuela. The soldiers captured Venezuela president, Nicolás Maduro and his wife in a surprise operation and brought them to New York to face criminal charges. This event shocked the world as it is highly unusual for one country to invade another country and remove its president.



Why did US take this action?

Trump alleges that Mr. Maduro has been trafficking drugs to the U.S., which he cites as one of the justifications for his removal. Currently, Mr. Maduro and his wife are in a New York jail.



Image of Mr. Maduro being held in New York.

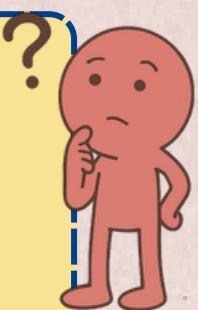
However, this action also revolves around **oil**. In a speech, Mr. Trump emphasized that granting U.S. companies access to Venezuela's oil was a significant motive behind his actions. While Venezuela possesses substantial oil reserves, the country has faced sanctions that restrict how its oil can be sold. Nevertheless, Venezuela has been covertly supplying oil to nations like Cuba, Russia, and China. United States launched military strikes on Venezuela's capital, Caracas, in an operation named "Absolute Resolve" to capture Mr. Maduro.

The Background: Troubled Venezuela

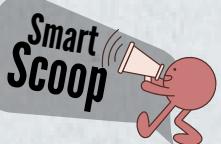
In July 2024, Venezuela held a presidential election where Nicolás Maduro ran for another term against Edmundo González Urrutia, who replaced opposition leader María Corina Machado (who won the Nobel peace prize last year), barred from running. The government-controlled election council declared Maduro the winner but did not release detailed vote results. The election did not meet international standards, and many countries, including the United States, refused to recognize the result. Maduro was still sworn in for a new term in January 2025. Despite huge oil reserves, oil production fell sharply, hurting the economy. Many people struggled with shortages of food, medicine, electricity, and healthcare. The government was accused of repressing political opponents and limiting free speech. As a result, millions of Venezuelans left the country to find better living conditions.

What's Happening Now and What Next?

- After Maduro's capture, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as Venezuela's interim president. Venezuela's acting leader and the U.S. are talking about restoring diplomatic ties and reopening embassies.
- The U.S. continues to seize oil tankers linked to Venezuela under sanctions.
- Some Americans detained in Venezuela have been released and returned home.
- There are still concerns about security and armed groups in Venezuela, and the U.S. has issued warnings for its citizens in Venezuela to be vigilant.
- Machado met Trump and gave him her Nobel medal to win his support, but he still favors the interim leaders.
- The coming months will determine whether Venezuela moves toward free elections and democracy, or whether the situation becomes more complicated. Whatever happens, it will have significant impacts on the Venezuelan people.

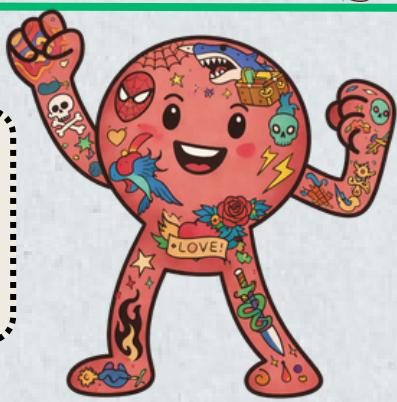


Why Don't Tattoo's Fade?



THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE INK

Have you ever wondered why tattoos stick around forever? If you've drawn on your hand with a pen, you know it washes off pretty quickly. But tattoos? They're basically permanent. The reason has everything to do with where the ink goes in your skin.



The Science Behind Permanent Ink

Our skin has two main layers: the **epidermis** on top and the **dermis** underneath. The epidermis is constantly shedding and replacing itself. That's why pen marks disappear and also why you don't keep the same skin cells your whole life. But when a tattoo artist uses that buzzing needle, they're pushing ink about 1.5 to 2 millimeters deep into your dermis, the layer that doesn't shed.

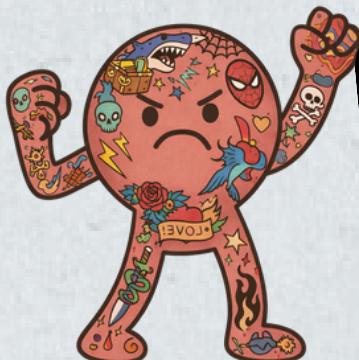
Your body treats tattoo ink like an intruder. Immune cells (called macrophages) rush in to attack the ink, but the particles are too big to remove. So they end up sitting there grabbing on to them. When these cells die, new ones take their place and grab the ink again. This endless cycle keeps the tattoo in place.

Tattoos are not a modern trend!



Tattooed lines on Ötzi the Iceman's left wrist

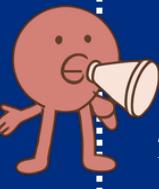
Long before modern cities and smartphones, ancient people used tattoos to show bravery, family ties, or belonging to a tribe. The oldest tattooed human skin we've ever found belongs to **Ötzi the Iceman**, a naturally mummified man discovered in the Italian Alps in 1991. When scientists examined his 5,300-year-old body, they found 61 tattoos, mostly simple lines and dots. The word "tattoo" comes from the Polynesian word "tatau," which means "to strike" or "to mark".



Oops! I wasn't ready for
this long term
commitment..
Is there any way I can
undo :(

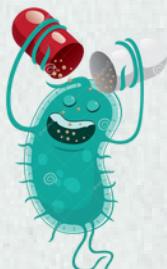
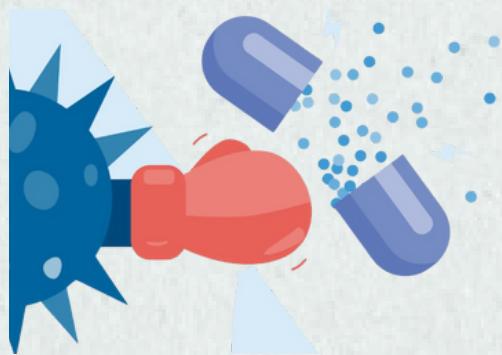
WHEN GERMS LEARN TO BEAT MEDICINES

Have you ever wondered why your doctor sometimes refuses to give you antibiotics for a cold, even when you're feeling really sick? Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently discussed this important issue in his "Mann Ki Baat" radio program on December 28, 2025, warning Indians about a growing medical crisis called **Antimicrobial Resistance**, or **AMR** for short.



What Exactly is AMR?

AMR happens when bacteria that cause infections like pneumonia, urinary tract infections, or other illnesses stop responding to the antibiotics we use to treat them. It's like the bacteria have learned to defend themselves against antibiotics. Imagine you're playing a video game where you keep using the same weapon against enemies. Eventually, those enemies learn your moves and become immune to your attacks. That's basically what's happening with bacteria in our bodies.



Why Should You Care?

Studies show that over 80 percent of Indian patients carry bacteria that resist multiple drugs – the highest rate in the world. This means India is at the center of what experts call a "**superbug explosion**". The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) found that common infections are becoming harder to treat because the medicines that used to work are now losing their power.

**A superbug explosion refers to the rapid rise in drug-resistant bacteria, known as superbugs, that no longer respond to common antibiotics, causing infections to spread uncontrollably.*

The Main Culprit: Here's what people are doing wrong:

Taking antibiotics without a doctor's prescription:

Many people in India buy antibiotics directly from pharmacies without seeing a doctor. This is like trying to fix a computer by randomly pressing buttons – it might work sometimes, but it usually makes things worse.

Using antibiotics for colds and flu:

Here's something important to understand – antibiotics only work against bacteria, not viruses. Most colds, coughs, and flu are caused by viruses, so antibiotics won't help at all. Taking them anyway just helps bacteria become resistant.

Not finishing the full course:

Some people stop taking antibiotics once they feel better, but the bacteria might still be alive in their body, just weakened. These surviving bacteria learn to resist the medicine and become stronger.

Using antibiotics in farming:

Farmers sometimes give antibiotics to healthy animals to make them grow faster. When we eat these animals or their products, we might consume those resistant bacteria.

AMR Explained

WHEN GERMS LEARN TO BEAT MEDICINES

BLURT VS. AMR

ACHOO! I might as well take antibiotics... because sneezes are illegal, right?



Hey Germ! Time for antibiotics. Say goodbye!



Hmm... I feel better. I'm stopping my medicine.

Best. Decision. Ever.

Why aren't you disappearing?

Because I'm **AMR** now.
Your antibiotics just tickle!

AMR

WAIT—Doctor said **ONE** full course?!

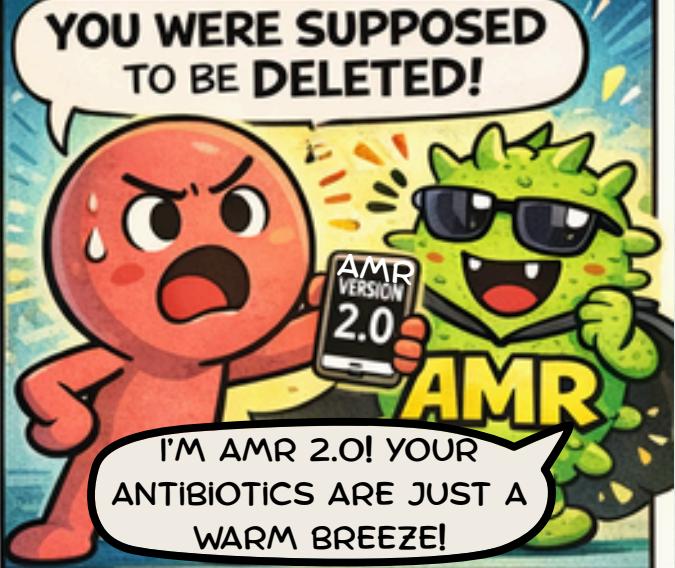


YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DELETED!

I'M AMR 2.0! YOUR ANTIBIOTICS ARE JUST A WARM BREEZE!

AMR VERSION 2.0

AMR



Puzzle For The Week



THE TWO TRIBES



An island is inhabited by two tribes. Members of one tribe always tell the truth, members of the other always lie. A missionary met two of these natives, one tall, the other short. "Are you a truth-teller?" he asked the taller one. "Oopf," the tall native answered. The missionary recognized this as a native word meaning either yes or no, but he couldn't recall which. The short native spoke English, so the missionary asked him what his companion had said. "He say 'yes,'" replied the short native, "but him big liar!"

What tribe did each native belong to?

SOLUTION

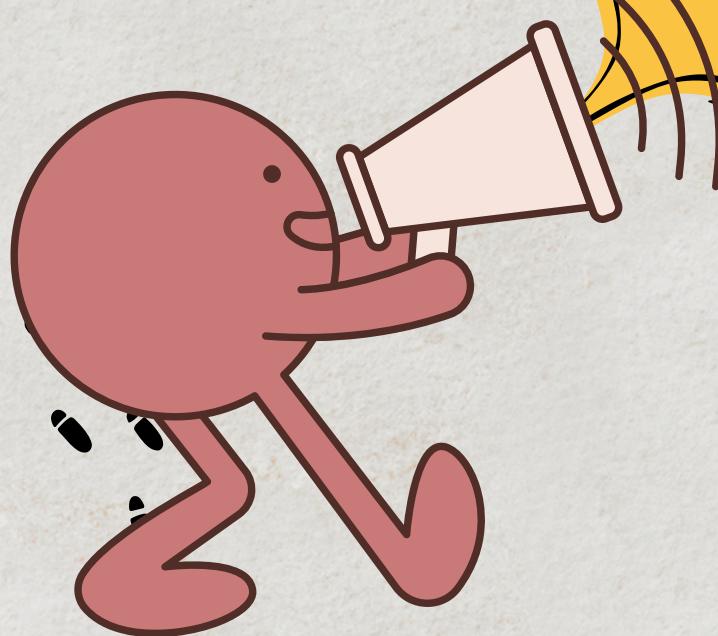
When the missionary asked the tall native if he was a truth-teller, the answer "Oopf" has to mean "yes." If the native is a truth-teller, he would tell the truth and answer yes; if he is a liar, he would lie and still answer yes!

So when the short native told the missionary that his companion said "yes," the short native was telling the truth. Therefore he must also have told the truth when he said his friend was a liar.

Conclusion: the tall man is a liar, the short one a truth-teller.

Interesting fact for the week

Ancient Egyptians used moldy bread on infected wounds 3,000 years ago! They were using antibiotics without even knowing it! The mold on old bread contains natural antibiotic compounds.



That's it for this week! Until next time, keep your brain gears turning!



Got some feedback or want to share something with us?
Write to us here:

smartscoopteam@gmail.com

We'd love to hear from you! Mostly Blurt tbh..



The freshest finds for clever minds!!!

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