

Hey Smart Scoopers

We're back with another burst of SmartScoop! Your weekly mix of weird wonders, cool science, and stories that make you go "wait... WHAT?!"

This time, we're peeking into the glowing eyes of cats, walking alongside a legendary tree-planter, celebrating 25 years of life in space, decoding the much-hyped AI bubble, and unraveling the surprising fashion history of the pointy witch hat.

So grab your curiosity, settle in, and dive into this week's scoops!

Scoop 1: Why do cat eyes glow in the dark?: And how they inspired road safety.

Scoop 2: Life of Saalumarada Thimmakka: The amazing green warrior.

Scoop 3: Happy 25th ISS: Earth's coolest space home hits a milestone.

Scoop 4: The AI bubble explained: Real or Hype?!?

Scoop 5: The pointy witch hat: The strange fashion history.

Can't wait for you to dig-in!

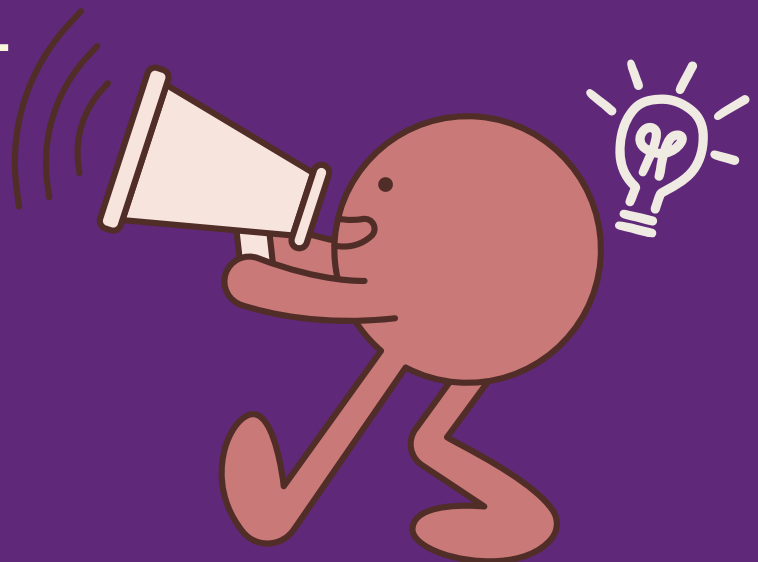
Happy scooping!

The SmartScoop Team

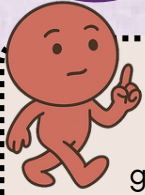
Our mascot, Blurt
will follow us
along the way.

Blurt /blurt/
noun:

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



AND HOW THEY INSPIRED ROAD SAFETY



If you've ever seen a cat at night, you know the look, those glowing, spooky eyes shining like tiny flashlights! It might seem spooky, but there's a real science behind it. And believe it or not, this natural glow helped inspire one of the most important road safety inventions in history:

Cat-Eye Reflectors! This keeps millions of people safe on the roads.



Hello, humans! My glowy eyes in the dark scared you, huh! Please.... Turns out my fabulous night-vision inspired road safety. So next time instead of screaming, maybe you can say thank you!



Why do cat eyes glow in the dark ?

Cats don't actually have built-in lights. Their eyes glow because of a special mirror-like layer called the **Tapetum Lucidum** (pronounced: ta-PEE-tum loo-SI-dum), which is Latin for "bright carpet."

Here's how it works: When light enters a cat's eye, some of it hits the retina (the part that senses light). Whatever the retina doesn't absorb bounces onto this shiny layer. The tapetum reflects the leftover light back through the retina, giving cats a second chance to "see". It's estimated that this reflective layer can improve their vision by up to 50% in low light. The reflection is what makes their eyes look like they're glowing when light hits them like from a light source. It's nature's night-vision technology!

The Story: How Cat Eyes Inspired Road Safety

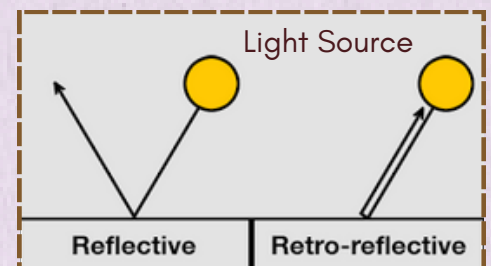


Cat Eye Reflectors on Road

One foggy night in the 1930s, inventor **Percy Shaw** while driving spotted two bright lights ahead. They weren't a car headlight, instead a cat's eyes bouncing back his headlights, showing the road's edge. That moment inspired a safer fix for drivers everywhere.

He used glass, mirrors, and rubber to experiment. After many tries, he invented the first cat-eye road reflector: a device that bounces car headlights back to drivers like a cat's eyes. Patented in 1934, it soon appeared on roads worldwide!

Cat eye reflectors enhance driver's visibility by reflecting the car's headlight for lane guidance, traffic control and to reduce risk of accidents. This phenomena is called **Retro Reflection** where light is reflected back toward its source, ensuring high visibility and minimal light scattering.



A cat helped make roads safer with just its glowing eyes. But humans don't have a tapetum lucidum, so let's just keep our eyes on the road and off our mobiles while driving!

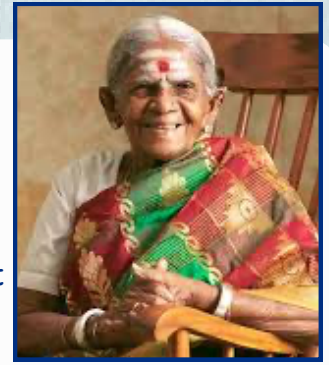


THE AMAZING GREEN WARRIOR



Saalummarada Thimmakka, fondly known as **"The Mother of Trees,"** passed away on 14 November 2025 at age 114 in Bengaluru. Honoured with a state funeral, she was celebrated nationwide for planting thousands of trees over her lifetime.

To carry her legacy forward, the Karnataka government will fulfill her last wish by establishing a museum in her memory and planting 114 saplings across 114 locations, one for each year of her remarkable life.



Saalummarada Thimmakka

Who was Thimmakka?

Thimmakka was born in 1910 and grew up in a small village in Karnataka. She never had the chance to attend school.

She and her husband were poor labourers, who did not have children, so they decided to pour their love into growing trees.

They started planting banyan saplings along a dry 4.5 kilometre stretch of road between Hulikal and Kudur. Over the years, she nurtured 385 banyan trees, watering them, protecting them, and caring for them as if they were her own children.



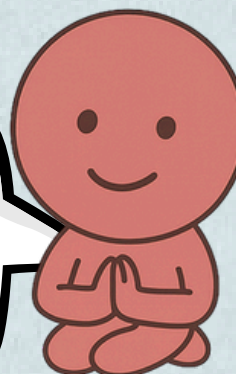
Because of these long rows of trees, she earned the name "Saalummarada," which means "rows of trees" in Kannada, a title she truly lived up to.



In 2019, she received the Padma Shri, one of India's highest civilian honours. She was also featured on the BBC's list of the world's most influential women, an incredible recognition for someone who started with nothing but determination, compassion, and a watering pot.

Wow! Thimakka was so cool!

While most of us struggle to keep one houseplant alive, she went ahead and grew an entire forest! A superhero who wore sari and carried watering pots!



While the rest of us debate about climate change, Thimmakka just quietly fixed a part of the planet!!!

Thimakka, you are an inspiration for all of us...

EARTH'S COOLEST SPACE HOME HITS A MILESTONE

25 years of people living and working in space non-stop!

On 2 November, the International Space Station (ISS) officially turned 25. That's 25 years of humans living, working, and floating in space non-stop! It's the longest-running space home ever built. And even after a quarter century, the ISS is still teaching us new things about science, space, and our own planet.

The International Space Station (ISS) is a shared lab in low earth orbit* run by five space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe), JAXA (Japan), and CSA (Canada). It serves as a platform for conducting scientific experiments in microgravity and studying the space environment.

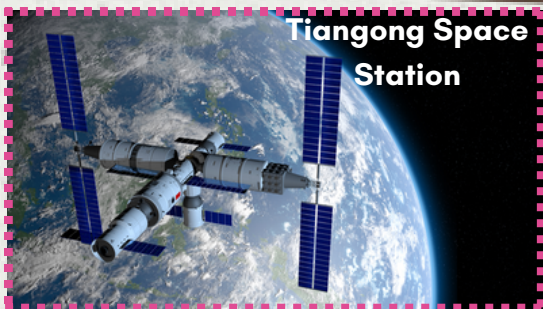
**The International Space Station (ISS)**

*Low Earth Orbit (LEO) is the space close to Earth, roughly 160–2,000 km up. It's home to most satellites, the ISS, and many telescopes because it's easier to reach and keeps signals fast.

It took about 16 years to design and build the first ISS. When the first three astronauts arrived, it was tiny with just three basic rooms. Over the years, new modules and labs were added, and today the ISS is as big as a football field.

After 25 years, space living might seem routine, but it's still risky. The ISS has been hit by space debris, faced cracks and leaks, and even had an astronaut nearly drown during a spacewalk. Once, a docking mishap even sent the whole station spinning.

Over the last 25 years, the ISS has been home to 290 people from 26 different countries. Currently, there are seven astronauts from Japan, Russia, and the US working on the ISS.

**Tiangong Space Station**

Despite these scares, the ISS has lasted far longer than its original 15-year plan. But its journey is nearing the end. It's expected to operate for only about five more years before retirement. NASA hopes private companies will build the next generation of space stations, and China already has its own, called Tiangong Space Station.

The ISS is set to retire in 2031. NASA and SpaceX plan to guide it back into Earth's atmosphere, where most of it will safely burn up during re-entry.

But its legacy will live on as a home for astronauts, a floating science lab, and one of the greatest examples of countries working together in space.

The ISS may retire soon, but come on... 25 years in space? That's definitely a big deal!

The AI Bubble Explained

REAL OR HYPE?!?

You see it everywhere! AI tools writing essays, generating images, and powering the apps you use every day. This rapid change is called the **AI Boom**, and it's fueling massive excitement in the business world. But lately, grown-ups in the business world have been nervously asking:

Are we in an AI bubble?



Wait a second! I'm barely catching up with AI, and now we're talking about AI Bubble?



What Is an AI Bubble? And what does that even mean?

Think of a "bubble" like a soap bubble: it gets bigger and bigger, fueled by air (hype), until it gets too big and bursts, causing a splash! Let me explain what it means in a tech world...

In the tech world, a bubble is when:

Everyone gets super hyped about something



Companies pour in tons of money



Expectations go sky-high



And sometimes... the excitement pops when things don't go as expected

AI Hype Is Everywhere:

Companies talk like AI will fix everything be it homework, traffic, climate change, world peace, you name it. When hype grows faster than reality, bubbles form.

Massive Money Pouring:

Tech companies are spending billions to build AI systems. Everyone wants to be "the next big thing." But not all of them will succeed.

Unrealistic Expectations:

Some people think AI will instantly replace all jobs or become smarter than humans. Spoiler: No. AI is powerful, but it comes at a very high cost.

The Speculation:

The "AI bubble" is the worry that companies connected to AI are becoming way too valuable, even though they aren't making that much profit yet.

If AI Bubble pops, does it mean AI is useless?

Not at all! It doesn't mean the technology is bad just that expectations got too wild.

The AI bubble isn't the first time people got super excited about a new technology. History is basically full of

Hype → Boom → Crash → Actual progress.

For Example:

The Internet Bubble (or Dot-Com Bubble): In the late 1990s, Internet companies were wildly overhyped. Even startups with no real product were worth millions. When investors* realised the profits weren't there, the dot-com bubble burst and many companies collapsed. But the Internet itself didn't fail. Strong companies like Google and Amazon survived, and the Internet eventually became the backbone of modern life. The bubble killed the hype, not the technology. So even if the AI bubble pops, AI isn't disappearing! The hype will fade, but the real, useful technology will keep evolving.

*Investors are people or companies who put their money into a business, project, or idea hoping it will grow and earn them more money in the future.

AI is here to stay but the money and hype may be racing ahead of results. Bubble or just early growing pains, only time will tell?





THE STRANGE FASHION HISTORY

"Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble..."

William Shakespeare wrote this famous line, which appears in his play Macbeth.

Shakespeare's words instantly make us picture a classic witch with pointy hat, bubbling cauldron, mysterious potion. But why do we imagine witches this way? Surprisingly, the history is messy. There's no real evidence that women accused of witchcraft ever wore those tall, conical hats. Instead, the witch hat image grew over time from different cultural influences, many tied to people and groups seen as "others."

Disclaimer: These explanations are based on historical interpretations, and remain as unvalidated hypothesis.

No one knows for certain, but the pointy witch hat likely evolved from a blend of real historical hats, social prejudices, and later pop-culture imagination. Some of the leading theories include:

The Alewife Theory (The Practical Hat)

In medieval England, many women, known as alewives or brewsters, brewed and sold ale (beer). Some sources claim they wore tall hats so customers could spot them in a crowded market, and that when male brewers pushed them out of business, these independent women were smeared as "witchy,"



An Alewife from
Mid 17 Century

Tall hats for selling beer became 'witch vibes' because people saw a woman working and went, hmm... That's upsetting!

The Prejudice Theory (The Stigma Hat)

Man wearing
Judenhut

The Judenhut (Jewish Hat) Theory: In 13th-century Europe, Jewish men were forced to wear a pointed, conical hat called the Judenhut to mark them as different. Because of widespread antisemitic beliefs linking Jews with "dark" practices, this hat eventually became connected to negative magical imagery, including witches.

This one hurts. It's sad how a symbol was used to single out Jewish people. Not cool, history. Not cool!

The Fashion Theory (The Traditional Hat)

Seventeenth-century portraits like Esther Inglis and Mrs Salesbury show no witchcraft, just the tall, cone-shaped hats that were in fashion. That stylish shape likely stuck in our minds and became today's witch hat.



Portrait of Mrs Salesbury

Pop Culture Locked The Look!

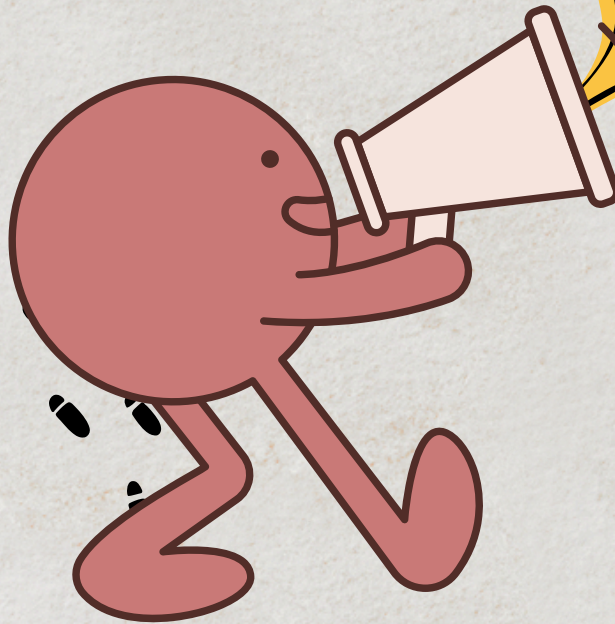
By the 1800s, children's books, prints, and later movies started to standardise the witch "uniform": broomstick, black dress, and tall pointy hat. A huge moment was The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (1900) and especially the 1939 film, where the Wicked Witch of the West wears the classic tall black cone. Once that image spread through posters, Halloween costumes, and cartoons, it became the default witch look.



After learning all this, I'm keeping my pointy hat on and heading straight to watch Wicked for good! A witch's gotta stay updated, you see!

Smart
Scoop

You can't hum while
holding your nose
(go on, try it!).



Transmission complete! Blurt out!

Stay awesome, Stay kind and
keep that brain buzzing happily!

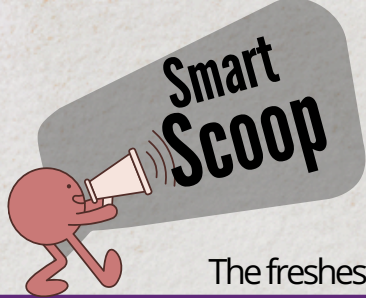
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Write to us here:

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



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