



Hey Smart Scoopers

We're back with your weekly scoop of stories, facts, and fun, all designed to spark your curiosity and keep your thinking caps extra shiny.

This week, we've got five fresh and exciting scoops lined up just for you, covering everything from science and world affairs to smelly shoes and sneaky marketing.

So dive in, scroll on, and enjoy your SmartScoop fix for the week!

Scoop 1: H1B Visa Shock: How Passport Rank Rules Global Mobility

Scoop 2: The Ig Nobel Prize: Smelly Shoes Bag Ig Nobel for Indian Duo

Scoop 3: Global Recognition For Palestine: The Biggest Diplomatic Shift In Decades

Scoop 4: Global Recognition For Palestine: The Biggest Diplomatic Shift In Decades

Scoop 5: Sensory Marketing That Tingles: How Brands Hack Your Brains

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



Note: Next week, there will be no SmartScoop as we take a short break for the Dussehra holidays. Until then, stay curious, stay kind !

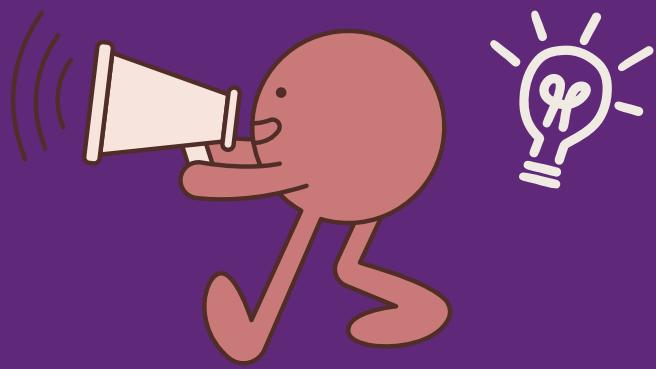
The SmartScoop Team

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 H1B Visa Shock

HOW PASSPORT RANK RULES GLOBAL MOBILITY

US President Trump has hiked H-1B visa fees from about \$4,500 to a staggering **\$100,000**, a major blow for India, whose citizens hold 71% of these visas. This fee is paid by employers to hire foreign workers. The steep fee may discourage companies from recruiting global talent, narrowing career opportunities for skilled professionals abroad.

The **H1B visa** is a special permission that lets people from other countries work legally in the United States. Many young Indians and other global talents look to this as a pathway to great careers in the US.



What Is a Visa, Anyway?

Think of a visa as a country's permission slip. It's an official document stamped in your passport that decides if you can enter a country, why you're there (tourism, study, work), and for how long.

Tourist visas = short vacations | **Student visas** = study abroad | **Work visas** (like the H-1B) = employment in another country | **Special visas** = for unique purposes, like diplomacy

The visa system exists because countries want to control who enters their borders, ensure security, and manage their job markets. But with a powerful passport moving across border can be easy. Let's understand this better.

Not all passports are created equal!

The "power" of a passport is measured by how many countries you can visit **without needing to apply for a visa beforehand**.



Top Rank: Passport Champions With Access to 190+ countries

- 1. Singapore:** Visa-free access to 195 destinations
- 2. Japan:** Visa-free access to 193 destinations
- 3. Finland, France, Germany (tied):** Visa-free access to 192 destinations

Where Does India Rank?

India's passport ranks around **81st-85th** in 2025 ranking, allowing visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to approximately **59 countries**. India's growing economy and diplomatic ties have helped improve its ranking recently, but there's room to grow.

How a Passport gets powerful?

Diplomatic relationships:

Countries with good international relations typically have stronger passports

Economic stability:

Wealthy, stable nations often enjoy visa-free travel agreements

Security concerns:

Countries with low crime rates and strong institutions face fewer travel restrictions

Reciprocity:

Nations often offer visa-free access in exchange for similar treatment

Why all this matters

The \$100K H-1B fee shows how vulnerable Indian workers are to changing visa rules. Passport power reflects a country's global relationships and can make travel (and opportunities) far smoother.

\$100K for a visa?
Forget Silicon Valley, Let's start 'Silicon Gully' right here in India!



The Ig Nobel Prize

SMELLY SHOES BAG IG NOBEL FOR INDIAN DUO

On September 18, 2025, the **35th annual Ig Nobel Prize** ceremony lit up Boston with its trademark silliness such as paper airplanes, mini-operas, and confetti showers. Among the winners, Indian engineers **Vikash Kumar** and **Sarthak Mittal** stood out for creating a UV-lit shoe rack that kills bacteria and bad odour. The Ig Nobel Prizes celebrate science that makes you **laugh first** and **think later**!)



What is Ig Nobel Prize?

The Ig Nobel Prize celebrates the weird, comical, and mind-boggling side of science. The Ig Nobel Prizes get their quirky name from the word "**ignoble**" (meaning silly or absurd) mixed with "Nobel", the famous award. They were created in 1991 by Marc Abrahams, editor of the Annals of Improbable Research. Every year, real Nobel laureates hand out prizes to research that first makes people giggle and then leaves them genuinely curious. Ten Ig Nobel Prizes were awarded for work that makes people laugh first, then think. 😊🤔

Quirky Winners of 2025

Engineering Design Prize: Smelly Shoes

Two Indian researchers, Vikash Kumar and Sarthak Mittal, won for inventing a UV-lit shoe rack that neutralizes smelly shoe odor by killing bacteria.



Tomoki Kojima (in striped shirt) and his team accept the award



Finally someone asked the sole-ful question, if a shoe rack can smell better?



Sarthak Mittal & Vikash Kumar

Biology Prize: Cow-zebra Makeover

Scientists from Japan painted cows with zebra-like stripes and proved this reduces the number of biting flies on the animals! Turns out, looking like a zebra might be a cow's best defense in the summer.



No more tail whipping! Just slap on some stripes and no need to moo-ve an inch...



Prize for nutrition is accepted by Daniele Dendi and his team



Guess who's ordering extra cheese next time?
The lizards!



Nutrition Prize: Pizza for Lizards

Interestingly, researchers found that rainbow lizards in Togo resorts showed a strong liking for "four-cheese pizza" when given a choice.



The Ig Nobel Prizes while seemingly silly on the surface, reminds us that curiosity can lead to discoveries in the most unexpected places. From shoe rack design to cow painting, these studies prove that science is everywhere, even in the most mundane aspects of daily life.

Global Recognition Of Palestine

THE BIGGEST DIPLOMATIC SHIFT IN DECADES

Double Scoop



Alright folks, fluff your brain cells, we're diving into the Israel-Palestine conflict! Bring your focus, 'cause I'm serving a double scoop of geopolitics.



The Israel-Palestine Conflict

It all started over 100 years ago...



For centuries, the land that now includes Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza was part of the **Ottoman Empire**. Mostly Arab Palestinians lived here.

Before 1917



But in 1917, during World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed, **Britain** took control of Palestine and issued the **Balfour Declaration**, supporting a Jewish "national home", without consulting the Arab population already living there.



In the following decades, Jewish migration surged, especially after the Holocaust and World War II, while Palestinian Arabs resisted, fearing displacement. Rising violence led **Britain to withdraw in 1948**, handing the issue to the **United Nations(UN)**.

1917

1947-48

1947-48

1948

1967



On May 14, **1948, Israel declared independence**, a moment of hope for Jews but a catastrophe for Palestinians, as around 750,000 were displaced in what they call the Nakba(Arabic for "catastrophe").



The UN suggested dividing the land into two separate states: one Jewish and one Arab. Jews agreed. But most Arab leaders rejected it, feeling it was unfair.



In 1967, Israel won the Six-Day War and captured the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. These territories are still disputed and considered "occupied" by most of the world.



In the 2000s, the Second Intifada(Arabic for "uprising") sparked heavy violence. By 2007, Hamas took control of Gaza, prompting Israel and Egypt to impose a blockade.



2023

In October 2023, Hamas attacked Israel with rockets and raids, killing over 1,000 and taking hostages. Israel launched a massive offensive in Gaza, sparking a devastating war.

----- → Fast forward to 2025

What's Happening in Gaza Right Now?

Israel has been conducting an intense military operation in Gaza following Hamas's attack on October 7, 2023. The Gaza war has resulted in tens of thousands of Palestinian casualties, with the humanitarian crisis drawing international condemnation. Many human rights organizations and UN* experts have accused Israel of repeatedly violating humanitarian norms especially in Gaza, where military actions have led to mass civilian casualties, displacement, and the destruction of basic infrastructure.

*The United Nations (UN) is an international organization founded in 1945 to promote peace, security, and cooperation among countries worldwide. As of 2025, there are 193 member states.

The Global Recognition Picture



For a territory to be a "state" under international law, it needs recognition from other countries. It's kind of like being accepted into a club, you need other members to vote you in.

Before September 2025, around 147 countries recognized Palestine. But recent recognitions from nations like France, the UK, Canada, Australia, and others raised that number to 157-159 out of 193 UN members.

Why is this a big dramatic shift?

The countries that recently recognized Palestine are breaking away from the U.S. stance and are peeling away as Israel's closest traditional allies.

Major Allies Turn:

The UK, Canada, and Australia have historically been strong supporters of Israel, making their recognition particularly significant.

Security Council Impact:

Palestine is now recognized by 4 of the 5 UN Security Council permanent members: China, France, Russia, and the UK, with the U.S. as the only holdout.

Growing Pressure:

The coordinated announcements appear to be an attempt to pile pressure on Israel as it presses on with its campaign in Gaza despite international outrage.

With the UN General Assembly underway this week, all eyes are on how world leaders will address these developments — and whether this growing momentum will bring real change for Palestine, Israel, and the path to lasting peace.

Side note: India officially recognized Palestine as a state in 1988 and has supported its right to statehood. Despite growing ties with Israel, India continues to back a two-state solution.



Whew! That was one heavy topic to unpack. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to wander into a sunflower field and pretend borders don't exist...

Sensory Marketing That Tingles

HOW BRANDS HACK YOUR SENSES

Ever walked into a store thinking "Let me just take a look" and somehow walked out with bags full of stuff you didn't even plan to buy?

Don't worry, you're not weak.

You've just been played by one of the oldest tricks:

Sensory Marketing (influencing your five senses to sell)

Brands know exactly how to target your eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and even touch to get you to pull out your wallet.

Here's how they do it (and how you can catch them in action).



The Science Behind Your Senses

Your brain processes sensory information incredibly fast, much faster than logical thinking.

When you smell fresh bread, your brain doesn't stop to analyse if you are hungry instead it immediately triggers memories, emotions, and desires.

Smart marketers have figured out how to hack this system! That's why sensory marketing is so powerful.

1

Sight: The Visual Trap

About 83% of the information your brain processes comes through your eyes, making sight the top marketing tool like snacks placed at eye level as prime "buy me" real estate.

Colour psychology in action!



Red: Creates excitement, makes you feel hungry

Green: Suggests natural, healthy, and eco-friendly



Blue: Builds Trust, calm and security



Black: Projects Luxury, elegance, sophistication

2

Sound: The Invisible Influencer

Music and sounds shape your shopping behavior. Retail stores play music 72 beats per minute (matching your resting heart rate) to keep you relaxed and browsing longer.



When Netflix goes tu-dum, my brain goes binge mode activated! looks like not my fault...



3

Smell: The Memory Trigger

Smells are powerful memory triggers. That's why bakeries pump out the scent of fresh bread even if they're not baking. Some clothing stores even have their own signature scents so every time you catch a whiff, you think of their jeans.



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4

Touch: The Trust Builder

Touch makes things real. That's why makeup counters let you test lipsticks, or why phone shops encourage you to pick up the latest gadget. If you hold it, chances are higher you'll want to own it. Your brain literally starts imagining it as yours.

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Understanding sensory marketing doesn't mean you have to avoid it. It just means you can make more conscious choices.

Recognize the tricks

Shop with a list

Sleep on big purchases



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Black: Projects Luxury and sophistication

My Brain: We're here to buy fruits and eggs!



My Senses: Buys lavender scented socks, vanilla bean detergent and shampoo that whispered 'confidence' into my nose.

4 Touch: The Trust Builder

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5 Taste: The Ultimate Convincer

"Want to try a free sample?" That tiny bite of a cookie or sip of soda isn't charity, it's strategy. Once you've tasted it, your brain feels like eating more. Suddenly buying a whole box doesn't seem like a big deal.

Understanding sensory marketing doesn't mean you have to avoid it. It just means you can make more conscious choices.

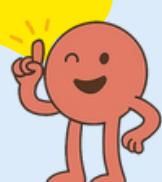
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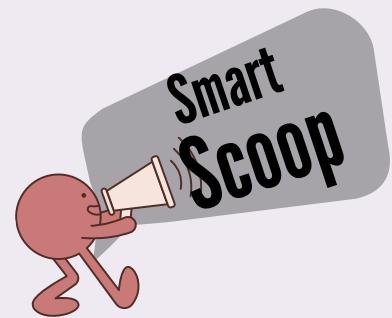
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Recognize the tricks

Sleep on big purchases

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That's it for this week folks!

***Here is your
weekly wrap up Quizzzzz***

Which country currently holds one of the world's most powerful passports, offering visa-free access to the most destinations?

India

Singapore

Germany

South Africa

Submit

Incorrect

What is the purpose of the Ig Nobel Prize?

To reward real Nobel winners with extra money

To honor unusual research that first makes you laugh, then think

To recognize student science fairs

To award prank inventions

Submit

Incorrect

Who are the five permanent members of the UN Security Council?

India, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Canada

United States, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom

Israel, Egypt, Germany, Russia, United States

China, Australia, France, UK, Japan

Submit

Incorrect

Which of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council still has not recognized Palestine as a state?

Russia

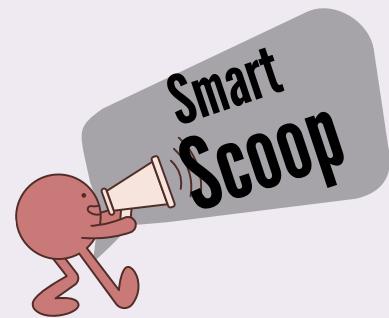
United States

United Kingdom

China

Submit

Incorrect



Why do cereals like Froot Loops and m&m's use bright colors and sweet fruity smells?

To match the colors of natural fruits

To increase the shelf life of the product

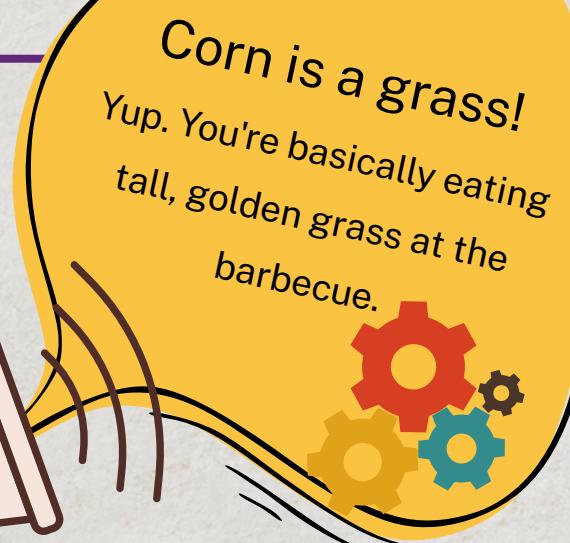
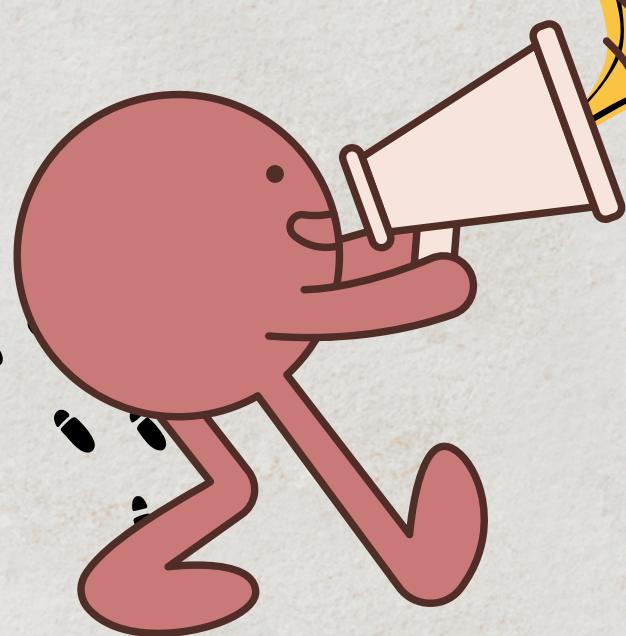
To reduce the cost of the product

To make the product visually and smell-wise exciting for kids

Submit

Incorrect

Smart
Scoop



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Write to us here:

smartscoopteam@gmail.com

<https://www.smartscoop.in>

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



The freshest finds for clever minds!!!

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