

## Hey Smart Scoopers

Hope your week has been wonderful!

This time, we've gathered five stories that take you from protests in Iran to icy penguin colonies, an ancient river, and a fun puzzle to wrap it all up. Get ready for a mix of world events, climate change updates, and a little brain stretch.

Here are your fresh picks for the week:

Scoop 1: What's happening in Iran: Protest on the streets

Scoop 2: Penguins rewrite their calendar: Adapting, At a cost (I)

Scoop 3: Penguins rewrite their calendar: Adapting, At a cost (II)

Scoop 4: Australia's Finke river: A river older than dinosaurs

Scoop 5: Puzzle For The Week: The turbaned boy and cat

Dig in and enjoy!

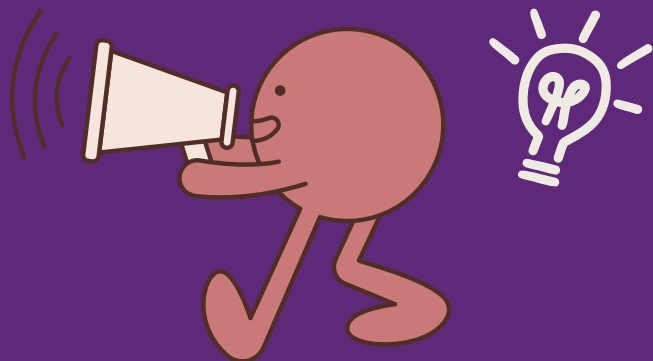
Happy Reading,  
The SmartScoop Team

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.





# What's Happening in Iran?

## PROTESTS ON THE STREETS

Iran has seen nationwide protests since late December 2025, first sparked by economic troubles and quickly growing into widespread anger at the government. Thousands of people, including many young protesters, have been killed or injured as security forces used heavy crackdowns. Authorities cut almost all internet access to limit communication and control news about what's happening. The exact numbers of deaths and arrests are unclear because of the blackout, but estimates range from several thousand to much higher figures. World leaders are watching closely and urging peaceful solutions.

### Before we dive in, let's understand the background

Iran is a large country in the Middle East with about 89 million people. It has a unique government system called an "Islamic Republic." This means religious leaders have a lot of power alongside elected officials. The Supreme Leader, currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (a powerful cleric who is chosen by other clerics), has the final say on most important decisions, even over the president. Iran is struggling on multiple fronts.



### Domestically

**Internal protests:** Inside Iran, many citizens, especially young people and women, have been protesting for more freedom and better economic conditions. Sanctions have made life very difficult for ordinary Iranians. Their currency has lost value, prices have skyrocketed, and many people struggle to afford basic necessities. The government has responded with strict crackdowns, limiting internet access and arresting thousands of protesters.



People gather at Enqelab Square in Tehran after a government call to rally against recent protests across the country. Photograph: Anadolu/Getty Images

### Regionally

**Regional conflicts:** Iran has been involved in conflicts across the Middle East, supporting groups in Lebanon, Yemen, Syria, and Gaza. After the conflict between Israel and Hamas that started in October 2023, tensions have increased significantly. Last June, Israel and Iran fought a 12-day war that left Iran's government even weaker.

### Internationally


**The nuclear program dispute:** Iran has been expanding its nuclear activities, enriching uranium to very high levels. This worries many countries because highly enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear weapons. The United States and European countries have been trying to negotiate with Iran, but talks have been difficult.

In 2015, world powers made a deal with Iran (called the JCPOA) where Iran agreed to limits on its nuclear program in exchange for relief from economic sanctions (penalties that hurt Iran's economy). In 2018, the United States pulled out of this deal and imposed harsh sanctions again. Since then, Iran has been breaking the limits of the agreement.

The situation in Iran continues to evolve, and the choices made by leaders on all sides will affect millions of lives. By understanding what's happening and why, helps you to be a better equipped and informed global citizen.

# Penguins Rewrite Their Calendar

## ADAPTING, BUT AT A COST



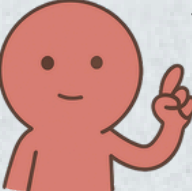
In a study published this January in the *Journal of Animal Ecology*, shows penguins are breeding earlier than ever in the Antarctic Peninsula. Between 2012 and 2022, temperatures in breeding grounds increased by 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit, triggering dramatic behavioral changes in three brush-tailed penguin species: the Adelie, chinstrap, and gentoo.



Using 77 time lapse network cameras positioned at 37 colonies across Antarctica and sub-Antarctic islands between 2011 and 2021, researchers captured this extraordinary transformation in real time. The cameras takes hourly images all year-around.

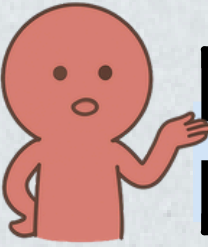
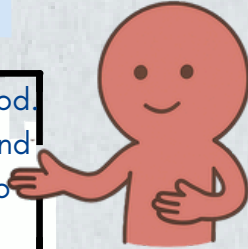
**Timelapse monitoring camera trap overlooking a mixed Chinstrap and Gentoo penguin colony at Booth Island, Antarctica.**

### Why Earlier Breeding Isn't All Good News




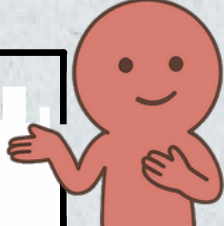
This change isn't happening because penguins are suddenly early risers. It's because the places where they nest are warming far faster than the Antarctic average, with local temperatures rising about 4 times quicker than expected.

You might think adapting by breeding earlier sounds smart, but it's not all good. Penguins time their breeding so that their chicks hatch when food (like krill and fish) is most plentiful. Moving the calendar earlier could mean parents rush to find food at the wrong time, making it harder to feed hungry chicks.




Gentoos handle warmer conditions better because they eat many foods. Adélie and chinstrap penguins depend on specific diets, so they're declining as gentoos spread into their territory.

Scientists say these shifts may spark fiercer competition for food and nesting spots, reshaping penguin groups. Breeding earlier shows they're trying to adjust, but it's unclear if this change will help them survive as warming continues.

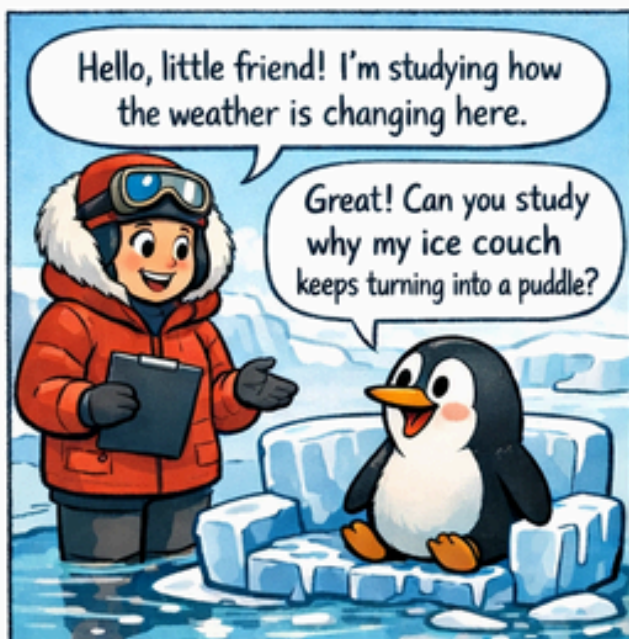


Because penguins are so sensitive to environmental cues, scientists call them "**Bellwethers**", species that show early signs of broader change in ecosystems. What's happening to penguins now could suggest how climate change can impact other animals and even human life!





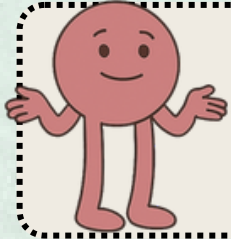
## ADAPTING, BUT AT A COST





# Australia's Finke River

## A RIVER OLDER THAN DINOSAURS



If someone asks which is the oldest river on Earth, you might think of the mighty Nile or the winding Indus or the long Amazon river. But the surprising answer lies far from these famous waterways, in the dry heart of Australia, where the ancient **Finke River** has been flowing for millions of years.



Finke River, Australia

The "Finke River", known to the Arrernte\* people as Larapinta, is believed to have begun flowing between 300 and 400 million years ago, long before the age of dinosaurs. The river stretches for over 640 kilometres across the Northern Territory and South Australia, cutting through some of the continent's most ancient landscapes.

\*Arrernte refers to an Indigenous Australian people of Central Australia

### An Unusual River in a Desert Landscape



Unlike most major rivers, the Finke does not flow continuously throughout the year. For long periods, it appears as a series of isolated waterholes scattered across a desert environment. Only after heavy rainfall does it briefly become a connected river. Despite this intermittent nature, scientists confirm that these channels and pools form part of the same ancient river system that originated hundreds of millions of years ago.

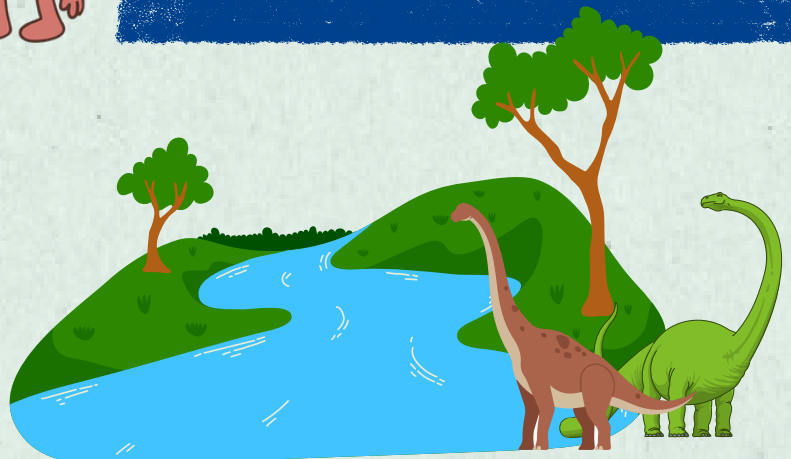
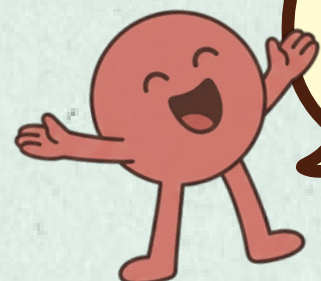
### But how did scientists date this river system?

One of the strongest indicators of the river's antiquity is its path through the "MacDonnell Ranges". Rather than flowing around these hard rock mountains, the Finke cuts directly through them.



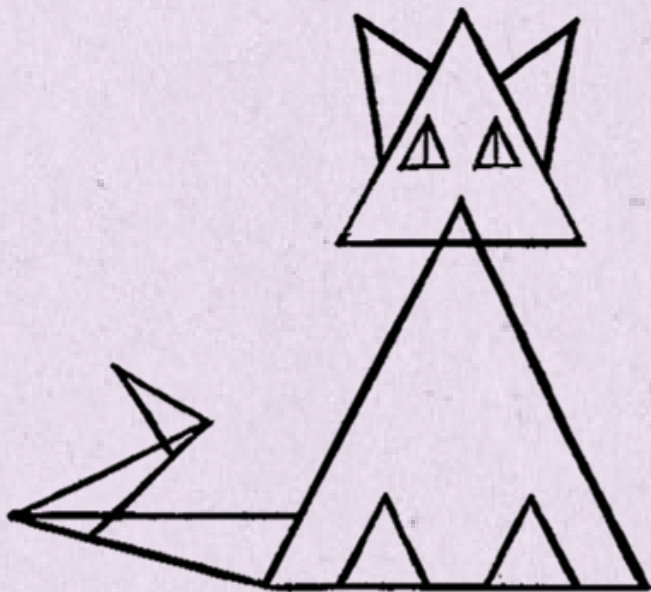
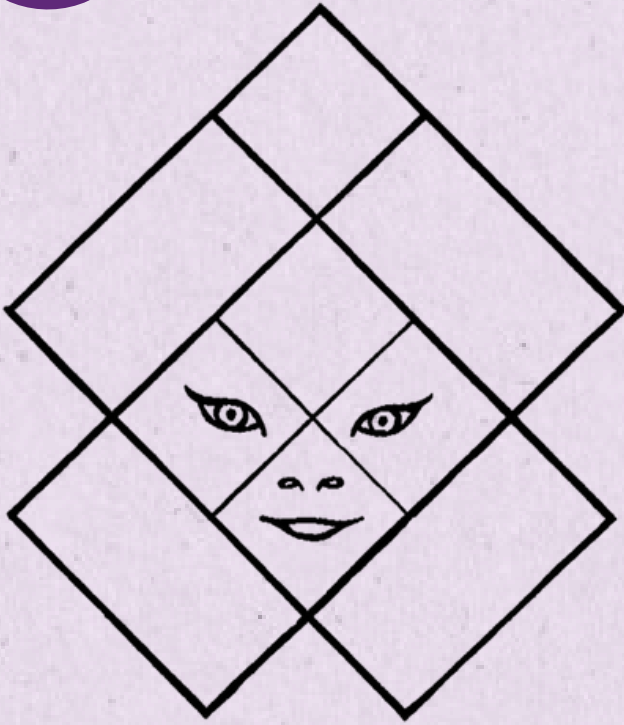
This shows the river was there before the mountains rose. As the land slowly lifted up, the river kept cutting down into the rock to stay on its path. Scientists call this process antecedence.

This river is so old,  
even the dinosaurs  
would've said,  
"Wow, that's  
ancient!"





## THE TURBANED BOY AND CAT



How many different **squares** can you count in the picture of the turbaned boy?

How many different **triangles** can you count in the picture of the cat?

Look carefully, it is not as easy as you might think!

**SOLUTION**

The Turbaned Boy : 11 Squares

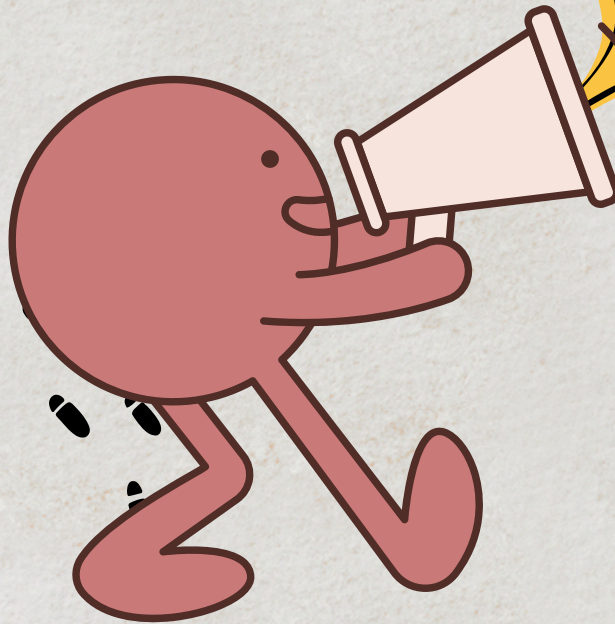
The Cat: 20 Triangles



Blurt's

Interesting fact for the week

In the last century, the planet has warmed by about 1-1.5 °C. This may sound small but has big effects on ice, weather, and oceans.



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



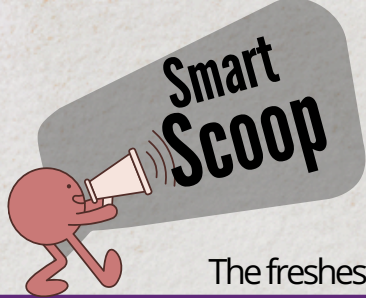
Got some feedback or want to share something with us?

Write to us here:

[smartscoopteam@gmail.com](mailto:smartscoopteam@gmail.com)

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





The freshest finds for clever minds!!!

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