



## KIRAN Scheme

### Why in News

The **Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN) Scheme** is one of the several pioneering initiatives started by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** for promoting women in science.

### Key Points

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) is implementing 'Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)' Scheme to provide various career opportunities to women scientists and technologists.
- It is primarily aimed to **bring gender parity in the Science & Technology sector** by inducting more women talent in the research & development domain through various programmes.
- It also provides **fellowship support ranging from Rs 25000 to 55000 to women ranging in the age group 27 to 57 years** for continuing higher education in Science and Technology **after a break in career.**

[Source: PIB](#)

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## Unutilised Budgetary Funds in Education

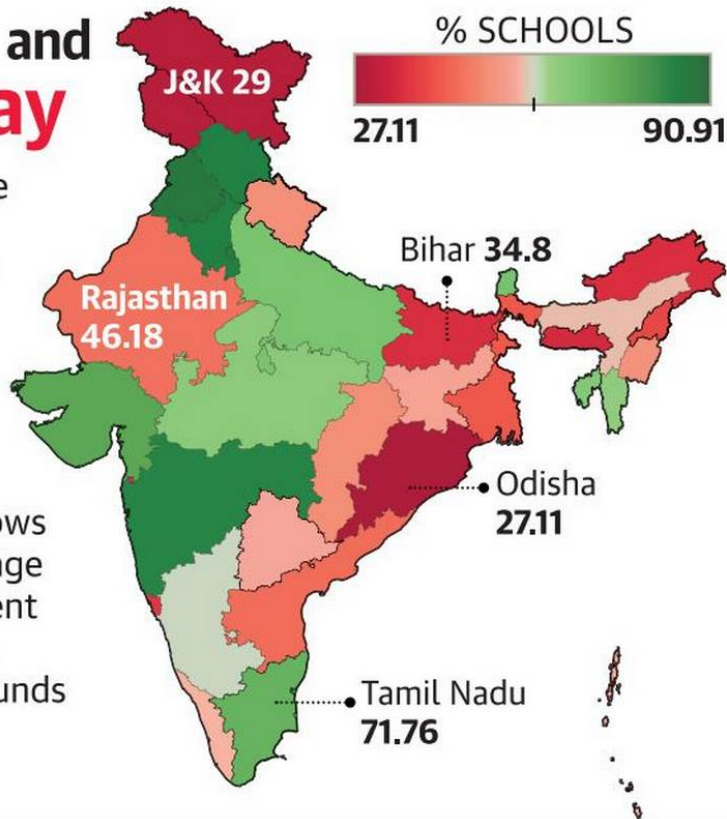
### Why in News

Recently, the [Parliamentary Standing Committee](#) on Human Resource Development (HRD) has presented a report on the **2020-2021 demand for grants for school education** in the Rajya Sabha.

- The report identifies **shortfalls in budgetary funding and utilisation**, resulting in **critical infrastructure gaps** in the government schools in India.

## All work and no play

Almost three out of four government schools in Odisha did not have a playground as of 2018. The map shows the percentage of government schools that had playgrounds as of 2018



### Key Points //

#### ▪ Reduction in Finance:

- The budgetary allocations experienced a **27% cut from proposals** made by the School Education department.
- Similarly, **27% of reductions** have been observed in the fund needed for the **implementation of Central and Centrally Sponsored Schemes**.
- Also, the government has spent only 71% of allotted funds for the core [Samagra Shiksha Scheme](#) until December 31, 2019.

#### ▪ Access to Electricity and Playground:

- Almost **half of the government schools** in the country **do not have any electricity or playgrounds**.
- **Only 56% of schools have electricity**, with the lowest rates in Manipur and Madhya Pradesh, where less than 20% have access to power.
- **Less than 57% of schools have playgrounds**, including less than 30% of schools in Odisha and Jammu and Kashmir.

#### ▪ Overall Infrastructure:

- A **dismal rate of progress has been observed in building classrooms, labs and libraries** to strengthen government higher secondary schools.
- **Almost 40% of schools did not have a boundary wall**, endangering the safety of students and school property.
- The **higher secondary schools experienced greater infrastructural gaps** compared to secondary schools and primary schools.
- Also, **less than 5% of proposed infrastructure** facilities such as ramps and special toilets **for differently-abled students** have been completed in the government schools.

### Recommendations

- **Additional funds for implementation of the core schemes** such as Samgra Shiksha Abhiyan.
- **Collaboration of HRD Ministry with the [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment](#)**

[Guarantee Scheme \(MGNREGS\)](#) to construct boundary walls and other infrastructure facilities.

- **Collaboration with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** to provide solar energy and other renewable energy sources so that schools have access to power.

[Source: TH](#)

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## Commercial Cord Blood Banking

### Why in News

- Recently there has been growing concern regarding the aggressively promoted concept of cord blood banking.

### Key Points

- Over the past decade, stem cell banking has been aggressively marketed even as its use is still in experimental stages.
- The stem cell banking companies get access to data of to-be parents and start approaching their prospective customers much before the delivery and offer competitive packages.
- Companies convince parents to bank the cells for several years promising future therapeutic use.
- Enormous fees are charged from parents to preserve cells merely by emotional marketing.
- However, according to **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**, there is **no scientific basis** for preservation of cord blood for future self use and this practice therefore raises ethical and social concerns.
- The ICMR does **not recommend commercial stem cell banking**.
- Private storage of the cord blood is advisable when there is an elder child in the family with a condition treatable with these cells and the mother is expecting the next baby.
- In other situations, parents should be educated about the limitations of banking at this point of time.

### Cord Blood Banking

- Cord blood is the blood from the baby that is left in the umbilical cord and placenta after birth. Cord blood banking involves taking the **umbilical cord blood**, which is a rich source of stem cells, and preserving it for future use.
- It contains special cells called hematopoietic stem cells that can be used to treat some types of diseases.
- **Hematopoietic stem cells** can mature into different types of blood cells in the body.
- Globally, cord blood banking is recommended as a source of **hematopoietic stem cell (derived from bone marrow, peripheral blood, or umbilical cord blood)** transplantation for haematological cancers and disorders where its use is recommended.
- For all other conditions, the use of cord blood as a source of stem cells is not yet established.

### Stem Cells

- Stem cells are special human cells that have the ability to develop into **many different cell types**, from muscle cells to brain cells.
- Stem cells are divided into **two main forms- Embryonic stem cells** and **Adult Stem Cells**.
- **Embryonic stem cells** come from **unused embryos** resulting from an **in vitro fertilization** procedure and that are donated to science.
  - These embryonic stem cells are **pluripotent**, meaning that they can turn into more than one type of cell.

- **Adult Stem Cells:** There are **two types** of adult stem cells.
  - One type comes from fully **developed tissues**, like the brain, skin, and bone marrow.
    - There are only **small numbers** of stem cells in these tissues, and they are more likely to generate only certain types of cells.
    - For example, a stem cell derived from the liver will only generate more liver cells.
  - The second type is induced **pluripotent stem** cells.
    - These are adult stem cells that have been **manipulated in a laboratory** to take on the pluripotent characteristics of embryonic stem cells.

### Indian Council of Medical Research

- ICMR is the **apex body** in India for **formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research**.
- Its mandate is to conduct, coordinate and implement medical research for the benefit of the Society; translating medical innovations into products/processes and introducing them into the public health system.
- it is funded by the Government of India through the **Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**.

[Source: TH](#)

## National Conference on Women in Police and CAPFs

### Why in News

- **Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)** organised the **National Conference on Women in Police and [Central Armed Police Forces \(CAPFs\)](#) in New Delhi**.
- It was inaugurated by the **Union Minister for Women And Child Development**.

### Key Points

- The main objective of the National Conference was to discuss and deliberate on the following **two themes**:
  - **Cyber Stalking and Bullying of Women:** Steps for Protection
  - Challenges faced by **CAPF Women in Operational Areas**
- Few important issues related to women in Police which were highlighted during the conference are:
  - Workplace harassment besides cyber crime.
  - Society should not look at the working **women with bias** and hold the performance of men to be the only benchmark for success.
  - Training of members of the **Child Welfare Committees (CWC)**.
  - The need to **train more female forensic investigators and cyber crime experts**.
  - BPR&D was also advised to make an SoP for **“One Stop Centre for Women”**.
- **To commemorate this event, a hand-out - “BPR&D Mirror - Gender Benders” was released**, which stated the recent initiatives taken by BPR&D **to promote Woman Safety**.

## Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

- The Government of India established the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), under the Ministry of Home Affairs in the 1970s.
- It replaced the Police Research and Advisory Council (1966), with the primary objective of **modernization of police force**.
- In 1995 Government of India decided to entrust issues relating to **Correctional Administration Work** to the BPR&D.
  - Thereby BPR&D has to ensure the implementation of [prison reforms](#) as well.
- The Government of India further decided to create a National Police Mission under the administrative control of BPR&D to transform the police forces in the country.
- Recently, [BPR&D observed its 50<sup>th</sup> foundation day](#).

## Child Welfare Committees (CWC)

- The **Child Welfare Committee (CWC)** is constituted under the [Juvenile Justice \(Care and Protection of Children\) Act, 2015](#). It is the sole authority to deal with matters concerning children in need of care and protection.
- The Committee is constituted for each district or group of districts.

[Source: PIB](#)

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## Illegal Trade of Red Panda

### Why in News

The [trade monitoring network TRAFFIC](#) has released a report titled **“Assessment of illegal trade-related threats to Red Panda in India and selected neighbouring range countries”** recently.

- The report has analysed poaching and illegal trade of the species **for the ten-year period from July 2010 to June 2019**.

### Key Findings

- The red panda survival is **crucial for the eastern and north-eastern Himalayan subalpine conifer forests and the eastern Himalayan broadleaf forests**.
- The animal has been **hunted for meat and fur, besides illegal capture for the pet trade**.
  - An estimated **14,500 animals are left** in the wild across Nepal, Bhutan, India, China and Myanmar.
- The report has indicated that the **traditional demand for red panda meat and related products** has **reduced** over time.
- Also, the reduction in poaching and illegal trade of red panda is indicative of the **success of awareness campaigns** about the conservation of the species.

### Recommendations

- **Community-based conservation** and protection for the species as its habitat stretches across remote areas.

- **Trans-boundary law enforcement co-operation** through the use of multi-government platforms like **SAWEN (South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network)**.
  - SAWEN was formally established at an inter-governmental meeting hosted in Paro (a town in Bhutan) by the Royal Government of Bhutan, in January **2011**.
  - It aims to establish **multilateral collaboration to fight wildlife crime** in the region.

## Red Panda



- The red panda is a **small reddish-brown arboreal mammal**.
- The only living member of the **genus Ailurus**.
- It is also the state animal of **Sikkim**.
- It is listed as **Endangered in the IUCN** red list of Threatened Species and under **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- It is found in the forests of **India, Nepal, Bhutan and the northern mountains of Myanmar and southern China**.
- It thrives best at 2,200-4,800m, in **mixed deciduous and conifer forests** with dense understories of bamboo.
- In India, About 5,000-6,000 red pandas are estimated to be present in **Sikkim, western Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling district of West Bengal and parts of Meghalaya**.
  - This is the second-largest population after China (6,000-7,000).
  - Red pandas have been reported from 11 districts of **Arunachal Pradesh**, which is **presumed to hold the largest red panda population in the country**.

## TRAFFIC - The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network

- TRAFFIC is a leading **non-governmental organisation** working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- It is a joint program of **WWF and IUCN** - the International Union for Conservation of Nature created in 1976.
- TRAFFIC focuses on leveraging resources, expertise and awareness of the latest globally urgent species trade issues such as tiger parts, elephant ivory and rhino horn.

[Source: TH](#)

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## Super Seven

### Why in News

Prime Minister of India on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020 marked [International Women's Day](#) by handing over control of his social media accounts to seven women achievers.

# Super seven

PM Narendra Modi's social media accounts were handled by seven women from different fields on International Women's Day. A look at the achievements of these women:

**Malvika Iyer:** An award winning disability rights activist, social worker and model, Malvika Iyer lost both arms in a bomb blast at Bikaner when she was 13



Disability Rights

**Sneha Mohandoss:** Inspired by her mother, Chennai-based Sneha Mohandoss started an initiative called Foodbank India, aimed at eradicating hunger through food donation campaigns



Sustainability

**Kalpna Ramesh:** The Hyderabad-based architect is focused on water conservation projects, especially rainwater harvesting, and spreads awareness on the responsible use of water



Water Conservation

**Veena Devi:** An organic farmer from Munger, Bihar, she has been cultivating mushrooms at home since 2013, setting an example in self-sufficiency. She gained recognition for cultivating 1 kg mushrooms under her bed



Self-sufficiency

**Arifa Jaan:** Kashmir-based Arifa Jaan is passionate about reviving Namda, the traditional craft of the region



Tradition

**Kalavati Devi:** A mason from Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, she collected funds from the public and built toilets for better hygiene in her locality



Sanitation

**Vijaya Pawar:** She promotes handicrafts from the Banjara community of rural Maharashtra



Handicraft

## Key Points



### ▪ Namda Traditional Art

- Namda is a local term used for **traditional felted wool floor coverings**, made out of a coarse variety of wool.
  - Namda comes from the root word **Namata (Sanskrit for woollen stuff)**.
- Namda making is **practised as a craft** in several cultures, especially in the countries throughout Asia, viz. **Iran, Afghanistan and India**.
  - **Srinagar in Kashmir and Tonk in Rajasthan** are the two major namda making centres in India.
- In India, it is known to have come from Iran and was actively promoted in the state under the patronage of the Mughal monarchs and the Rajput royals.
- **Rich hues and exquisite designing** are the hallmarks of the handcrafted Namda.
- Unique themes and **floral patterns** provide the themes for these masterpieces and **flowers and leaves, buds and fruits** are the essence of the designs.

### ▪ Banjara Community

- The word '**banjara**' is derived from **Vanaj** meaning **to trade**, and **Jara** meaning to **travel**.
- Banjara (sometimes called **Gypsies**) is a **nomadic tribe of India** and were the vital



supply chain for villages.

- They were **commercial nomads**, that is, hundreds of years ago they distributed salt and other essential items to interior villages, but they did have a connection with the land.
- The Banjaras were among many tribes that resisted the British attempt to seize their lands for plantations and enrol them as labour.
  - Their constant revolt frustrated the British, and in 1871, the Banjaras and several other tribes were brought under the **Criminal Tribes Act**.



- The community was denotified in the 1950s but were listed under the **Habitual Offenders Act, 1952**.
  - With **roots in Rajasthan**, Banjaras now live in several states and are known by different names like **Lambada or Lambadi in Andhra Pradesh, Lambani in Karnataka; Gwar or Gwaraiya in Rajasthan** etc.
  - They are listed in various States as Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC) and as Vimukta Jati/denotified tribes.
  - The language of Banjara is known as **“Gorboli” “Gor mati Boli” or “Brinjari” an independent dialect**.
  - The dialect falls in the category of **Indo-Aryan language**.
- **Foodbank India**
- The **India Food Banking Network (IFBN)** is evolving an ecosystem for **food security interventions** to support thousands of feeding programmes in India by bringing the government, private sector and NGOs together to fight hunger and malnutrition in India.
  - **Vision:** To have a **hunger and malnutrition free India** which falls in line with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2- Zero Hunger by 2030)**.
  - It aims to achieve the vision by establishing a strong and efficient network of FoodBanks throughout the country so that **every district has access to at least one FoodBank by 2030**.
  - It is a **multi-stakeholder partnership** of global, domestic and local community partners who contribute voluntarily to support the humanitarian and development projects.

[Source: TH](#)

## Conference on Empowering Women Entrepreneurs 2020

### Why in News

The **Conference on Empowering Women Entrepreneurs 2020** has been inaugurated on the occasion of the International Women’s Day (8th March) in New Delhi.

### Key Points

- The three-day conference has been **organised by the Ministry of MSME** in collaboration with various industry associations like FICCI-flo, CII and India SME Forum.
- Also, a discussion on **‘Creating a conducive business Eco System for Empowering Women Entrepreneurs’** has been arranged for more than 300 women entrepreneurs from all parts of the country.
- The conference mentioned **MSME Sambandh** and **Udyam Sakhi portal** which has helped to generate a pool of successful women entrepreneurs in the country.
  - **MSME Sambandh** aims to monitor the implementation of public procurement from MSMEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises.
  - **Udyam Sakhi portal** intends to provide the right information for **women entrepreneurs** about self-employment on one single portal.

[Source: PIB](#)

## Warli Adivasi Revolt

- In **1945**, it began in **Zari village, Talasari taluka (Maharashtra)**.
- Affected from the exploitation from the landlords and money-lenders, nearly 5,000 indentured tribals gathered and refused to work on landlords' fields until they received 12 annas a day in wages.
  - Their resistance sowed the first seeds of **rights-based movements** among the region's indigenous communities.
- **Women played an important role** in the revolt and helped the men in all possible aspects.
  - The involvement of the women was supported by the **Kisan Sabha leader, Godaveri Parulekar**, also known as **Godutai** (elder sister) by the Adivasis.
  - Women followed her and spoke at meetings about the oppression they faced and encouraged other women to join the struggle.



### Warli Tribe

- They are spread across Thane, Nashik and Dhule districts of **Maharashtra**, Valsad district of **Gujarat**, **Karnataka**, **Goa** and the Union Territories of **Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu**.
- They are **small-scale cultivators** and cultivate **rice, pulses and vegetables**. They also sell **toddy, mahua** and **fuelwood** to their tribesmen and neighbouring communities for a living.
- Warli are **nature worshippers**.
- **Warli art** stems from their belief system shaped by their centuries-old subsistence on forest land.
- They **did not have a written word** until recent times and their art was a way of transmitting their belief systems from one generation to the next.
- Their drawings revolve around **community traditions**, the tools they use and their association with nature.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Kyasanur Forest Disease

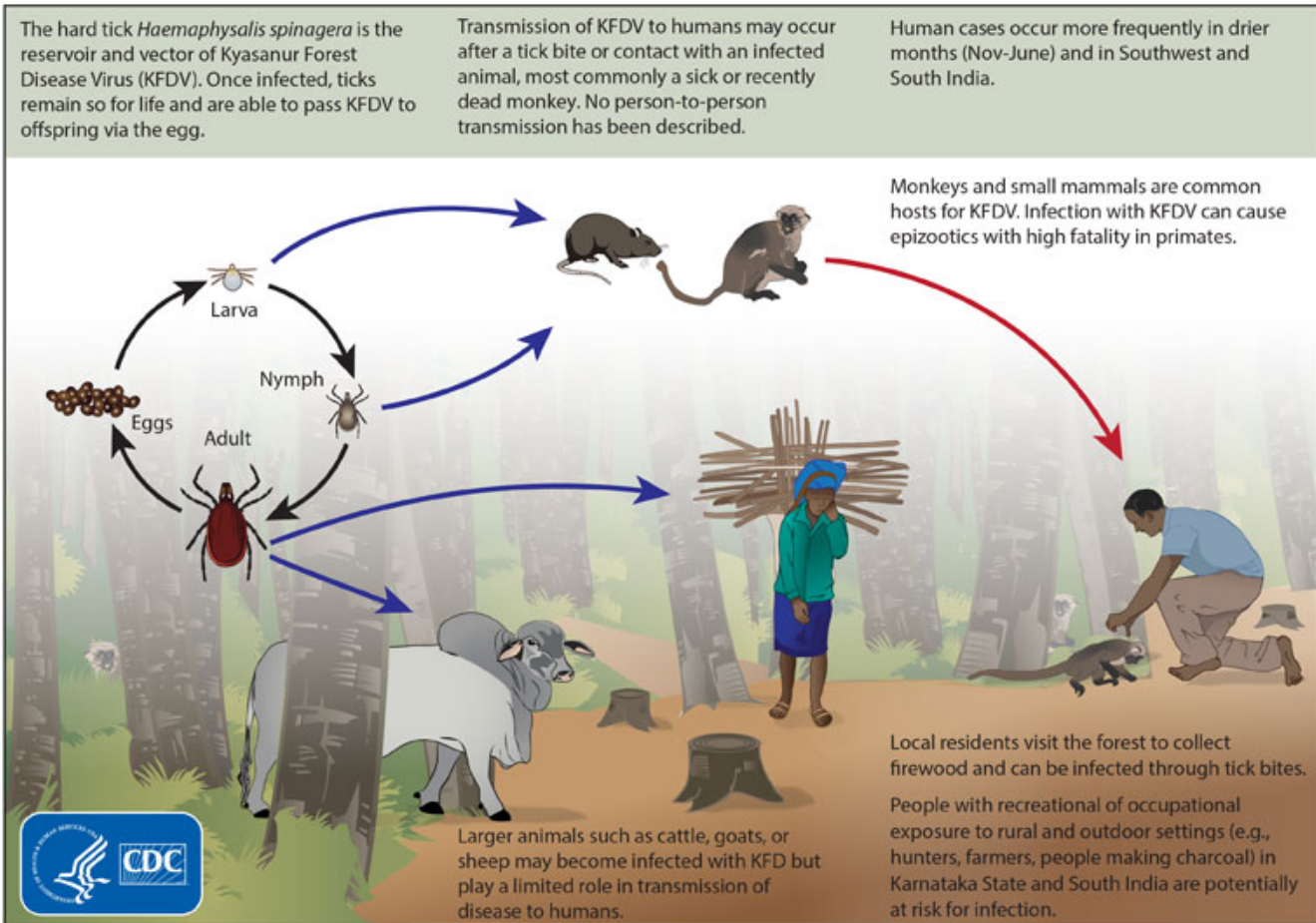
### Why in News

- There is a proposal to set up a research centre on **Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) in Sagar**,

## Karnataka.

- The State government has already allocated **₹15 crore** for establishing the centre, which will take up study and research on tackling KFD.

## Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD) Virus Ecology



## Key Points

- It is caused by **Kyasanur Forest disease Virus (KFDV)**, a member of the virus family **Flaviviridae**.
- It was first identified in 1957 in a sick monkey from the **Kyasanur Forest in Karnataka**. Since then, between **400-500 human cases per year** have been reported.
- KFD is endemic to the Indian state of Karnataka. It is also referred to as **monkey fever** by locals.
- Rodents, shrews, and monkeys are common hosts for KFDV after being bitten by infected Hard ticks (*Haemaphysalis Spinigera*). KFDV can cause epizootics (outbreak of disease in animals) with high fatality in primates.
- **Transmission:** To humans, it may occur after a tick bite or contact with an infected animal (a sick or recently dead monkey).
- **Signs and Symptoms:** After an incubation period of 3-8 days, the symptoms like chills, fever, headache, severe muscle pain, vomiting, gastrointestinal symptoms and bleeding may occur. Patients may experience abnormally low blood pressure, and low platelet, red blood cell, and white blood cell counts.
- **Diagnosis:** It can be diagnosed in the early stage of illness by molecular detection by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) or virus isolation from blood. Later, serologic testing using enzyme-linked immunosorbent serologic assay (ELISA) can be performed.
- **Treatment and Prevention:** There is no specific treatment for KFD although vaccine is available.

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