

# Chicken culling

**FROM PAGE 1** death while the district livestock administration formed 11 teams to investigate the cause.

The farm has been kept under strict observation. The authorities also stopped movement of people near the poultry farm.

The government has also formed monitoring cells and put red alert against the outbreak of bird flu in different poultry farms in Khulna and Chittagong.

Sales of chickens and eggs in the market decreased yesterday significantly.

Agriculture and Livestock Adviser Dr CS Karim yesterday said, "Containment of the situation is our prime task right at this moment."

At a press briefing, Karim said the authorities will immediately cull the infected birds wherever the reports come from while "the compensation process will follow automatically".

The agriculture, livestock and health ministries have already opened round-the-clock control rooms to monitor the developments as the government yesterday took a series of steps including examining people's health at the inflicted farms.

Both the health and agriculture advisers urged the people not to get panicked as no human infliction of avian influenza has been reported yet from anywhere in South Asia.

Health Adviser ASM Matiur Rahman said three separate wards have been opened at the Asthma Centre of the National Chest Diseases Institute and Hospital for possible patients of bird flu.

Avian influenza is a disease of the birds first identified in Italy in the early 1900s and is now known to exist worldwide. In the latest outbreak of bird flu, around 60 people died in Asia.

## UNAWARENESS OF SAFETY MEASURES

Officials and staffs at a poultry farm run by the staffs of the government's Bibi Ayesha (R) Women Training and Production Programme at Jirani were seen culling chickens yesterday without taking any preventive measures.

Visiting the farm yesterday The Daily Star correspondent found that the government and farm staffs were catching chickens, gathering those at a place and killing those without wearing any gloves, masks or aprons needed for staying safe from such deadly virus.

They later buried the chickens and eggs in a hole near the poultry shed before a magistrate and army personnel.

Gazipur DLO Kafiluddin sent a requisition to the civil surgeon for 2,000 preventive capsules for protecting the officials involved in the process of detecting bird flu and treating chickens, but only 100 capsules were supplied.

Meanwhile, an orientation programme has been taken up to check the spread of bird flu virus among the human population.

A two-member team comprising Director of Health Directorate (Disease Control) Dr Abdul Mannan Sarker and Chief Scientific Officer of ICDDR,B Dr Saleh M Rafiq visited Jirani area yesterday. They gave

poultry farm officials suggestions on checking the spread of the disease.

Our staff correspondent in Khulna adds: All 55,000 poultry farms in Khulna city and nine upazilas of the district have been put on red alert following the detection of bird flu.

Khulna DLO office opened a control room to monitor the situation round-the-clock.

Considering the current situation, all officials and staff in the district and upazila headquarters have been asked not to take any leave until further notice.

Sources said Benapole check post has also been put on high alert so that no poultry product from India can enter the country.

UNB adds: A monitoring cell has been formed yesterday for detecting bird flu in the district following the detection of bird flu at Savar in Dhaka.

The cell, headed by District Livestock Officer Dr Fazlul Haque Khan, has asked the upazila livestock officers to submit a report by today after visiting poultry farms and hatcheries in their respective upazilas.

If bird flu virus is detected in any farm or hatchery, the official concerned has been asked to seal it off.

## Dhaka to ratify

**FROM PAGE 1** indigenous knowledge, in sustainable development.

The weekly meeting also discussed a proposal by the social welfare ministry to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights and Dignity of Persons With Disability.

The council asked the social welfare ministry to prepare a report within four to five weeks after examining the convention and also with a detailed account of how the handicapped are treated in Bangladesh.

Currently the government budget for providing assistance to the handicapped is Tk 50 crore, Fahim said.

The Family Planning Directorate also made a presentation to the council, outlining the current government policy, projects and their implementation on family planning and health, and population control.

The council asked the directorate to come up with more specific proposals to mitigate the outstanding problems, which would then be mulled in inter-ministerial meetings.

The council stressed Bangladesh's achievement in meeting the population control challenges that stemmed from decreasing land and an increasing population, Fahim said.

The council also asked the ministry to look into how greater cooperation and coordination with NGOs' family planning services could improve population control.

## SMGs

**FROM PAGE 1** along with them and raided a garden of village Shmullachhara in Ataikula upazila at noon. They dug a place in the garden and recovered eight China made SMGs (sub machine guns), 1,498 SMG bullets and 25 SMG magazines.

Kamrul Master, the gang's former chief who died in an encounter with Rab last year, used to maintain the arms store, Rab officials said.

After his death, Faruk became the political chief and Mantu alias Mukul became the commanding chief of the outfit in Pabna region and they started to look after the firearms and ammunition.

Hailing from Baraichora village in Ishwardi upazila of Pabna, Faruq did his masters from the Pabna Edward College in 1997 and joined the outlawed faction in 2000, sources said.

Our staff correspondent reports: A Rab team of intelligence wing raided several JMB dens at Charaildar village under Melandah upazila in Jamalpur on Friday night and recovered the explosives cache.

The seized cache includes – 13.5 kg power gel, 75 pieces of iron-made improvised grenade body, 80 grenade heads, 117 Islamic books on jihad and four compact disks (CDs), top Rab officials told a press briefing at its headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

They also captured two JMB Ehsar members Mohammad Sohel and Mohammad Sultan during the raid.

The raid was carried out following the confessions of JMB Ehsar members Habibur Rahman Yusuf and Kamrul Hasan who were arrested on March 21 with three grenades. They were fleeing after hurling a grenade at two on-duty policemen at Bhatara Bazar in Sarishabari upazila of Jamalpur. However, there were no casualties as the grenade did not explode.

At the press briefing the detained JMB members told the journalists that one Abu Zafar Abdullah is now leading them across the country, but they never met him.

## 88 patients

**FROM PAGE 16** Detection of MDR cases in the country will be possible after the completion of the government project to develop the laboratory of National TB Hospital in Mohakhali with the technical supervision of University of Endrop, Belgium.

Dr Vikarunnessa expressed hope that the laboratory will start its operation sometime in the next month and those extreme stage patients will be given treatment under Directly Observed Treatment Short Course (DOTS) Plus programme.

"MDR happens when a TB patient does not complete the six-month DOTTS treatment," said Dr Vikarunnessa.

There is a close relationship between TB and HIV/AIDS, and considering the threatening fact this year's World TB Day has been observed with the theme, 'TB Anywhere is TB Everywhere' reinforcing the message that TB can spread easily due to the ways it is transmitted.

Brac as a major implementing partner of NTP along with the government and other partner organisations jointly organised a seminar titled 'Tuberculosis Control and Social Participation' at Brac Centre Inn.

Presenting a paper on the occasion, Dr Vikarunnessa said TB patients are 60% more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than others. She urged social movement through media campaign in combating TB.

"Publicity is essential to make people aware that TB is curable and its treatment is free," she said adding that the disease is not transmitted through the things used by the patients.

Addressing as a special guest, Dr Mahbub Kamal Siddique, emphasised community participation in combating TB.

"Social participation is directly related with TB control," she said, adding that at present 99 per cent area of the country is under NTP that has been possible for adequate financial support as well as community mobilisation.

Although the government is claiming success in TB control programme, the real situation is a bit different as WHO puts Bangladesh in the 6th position among the 22 TB-prone countries, said Associated Press bureau chief Farid Hossain, who addressed as a special guest.

Mass media should play due role to raise public awareness for removing social stigma and taboos about TB.

## Foreign drugs

**FROM PAGE 16** our presence, they left the suitcases and handbags in the luggage-belt area," he said.

A departmental case was filed in connection with the seizure of the contrabands.

## Rice meets

**FROM PAGE 16** "active diplomacy" to the initiative.

She also suggested Arab governments take steps toward conciliation with Israel before an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is complete. Their peace plan offers normal relations with Israel after Israel and the Palestinians make peace.

The secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, said on Saturday that Arab states have no intention of modifying their initiative to make it more palatable.

After talks with the four Arab foreign ministers, known as the Arab Quartet, Rice will meet the intelligence chiefs of the four Arab countries, a State Department official said.

# Remembering

**FROM PAGE 1** unarned Bangalees by the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971.

On this night in 1971, the Pakistani military rulers launched "Operation Search Light" killing some 7,000 Bangalees.

Dhaka University, being a bastion of protracted struggle of the repressed of the country, faced severe wrath of the Pakistani army and students, teachers and employees were exterminated in the hundreds.

The occupation army also launched special crackdowns on the Bangalee police personnel and EPR members to prevent them from joining the armed struggle for freedom.

Even common people fell victim to the arbitrary operations of the 'death squads' let loose by the Pakistani military junta.

It was a case of an army killing its own citizens simply because they belonged to a different ethnic stock and culture.

On March 26, the nation waged an armed struggle against the Pakistani occupation forces following the declaration of independence by father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Pakistani forces arrested Bangabandhu as he, through a wireless message, called upon the people to resist the occupation forces with whatever they had.

Later, Awami League leader MA Hannan and Major Ziaur Rahman (later president of Bangladesh) read out the proclamation of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu, which was broadcast from Kalurghat radio station in Chittagong.

The nine-month long Liberation War culminated in the surrender of the 93,000-strong occupation force on December 16, 1971 and emergence of Bangladesh as an independent, sovereign state.

Different socio-cultural and educational organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe 25th March.

The Ekattorer Ghatok Dalai Nirmul Committee will take out a torch procession and pay homage placing candles at the graveyard of the martyred freedom fighters at Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University.

The Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Development Alternative has organised a street painting on Manik Mia avenue titled "Amra Ki Bhoilite Pari". The function would be inaugurated by artist Qaiyum Chowdhury.

Muktijoddha Ganaparishad will also pay tribute to the glorious sons of the soil by arranging a commemorative meeting on the premises of Rajarbagh Police Lines.

Newspapers will bring out special supplements.

## New UN official

**FROM PAGE 15** "We can't leave here because we're scared of the Janjaweed and we have no work to go back to," she said.

U.N. Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes is on his first mission to Darfur to seek better cooperation from the Sudanese government, which has been accused of creating bureaucratic obstacles for aid groups.

Khartoum has come under fresh pressure from Western powers to ease the suffering in Darfur, where experts estimate 200,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million driven from their homes after rebels rose up against the government in 2003 charging the central government neglected the remote region.

# Bapex to repair

**FROM PAGE 16** 10. So the authorities are going to carry out repairs at well No 10 first, and if that does not solve the problem then they will move on to well No 8 and 9 to repair those.

The authorities have yet to determine how long it will take to stop the leaks. They are also thinking of hiring foreign consultants if necessary.

Meanwhile, the pressure, with which gas is leaking out, is increasing by the day. Some new holes are also being formed on the beds of the Titos river and a vast swamp Loiska Beel, leaking out gas.

The district administration and Bangladesh Gas Field Company Ltd (BGFCL) authorities have jointly taken up a special programme to make the 6000 villagers of Shampur and Anandapur villages aware of possible dangers in the area.

Red flags have already been hoisted at dangerous spots to keep the people alert, discouraging them to ignite fire near the spots. Several guards have been engaged to

maintain vigilance so people do not throw match sticks or burning cigarettes at the leaks.

Several billboards have been set up displaying information about what not to do around the leaks. Announcements have been made through loudspeakers in the area alerting the people about the precarious situation in the area.

The district administration has forbidden villagers to light kerosene lamps and matches even at night.

The holes through which gas is leaking out are gradually becoming larger and there is an acrid smell of gas permeating the air.

Sometimes the volume of flammable gas in the air increases to a dangerous level and turns into fireballs coming in contact with sparks.

Md Shahidul Abedin, managing director of BGFCL who is also an engineer, said they will finance Bapex for repairing the leaking wells.

# Diesel, kerosene

**FROM PAGE 1** BPC chief and members from stakeholders to review the prices of petroleum products each month. If the monthly review indicates a variation in the fixed price by more than five percent from that of the previous month, the tariff will be adjusted at that time without waiting for the date fixed for quarterly adjustment.

Back in 2003, the government had decided to introduce a pricing formula. But the decision was not implemented.

Meanwhile, the finance ministry has already agreed to provide the BPC Tk 600 crore as an interim arrangement till the new prices are determined as per the approved formula. The energy ministry had asked for Tk 1,500 crore.

The finance ministry has already released Tk 300 crore for the BPC and decided to give another 300 crore in three monthly instalments from later this month till May.

The BPC's estimated loan from Islamic Development Bank (IDB) amounting to \$234.64 million during the period March to June this year may be repaid by the government.

The World Bank (WB) has been hammering on petroleum price adjustment to reduce the BPC's losses over the last few years. Now, a WB team will visit Bangladesh for three weeks from tomorrow to ensure implementation of various conditions tagged with disbursement of the fourth instalment of its Development Support Credit.

One of the conditions on taking measures for macro-economic stability implies fuel price adjustment.

### BPC'S GRIM PICTURE

The BPC imports 38 lakh tonnes of petroleum oil at a price that is progressively higher than the sale price beginning from 1997-98. And previously it was making profit by hundreds of crores of taka a year besides giving the national exchequer huge import duties.

Coupled with the annual losses, the BPC is now hard-hit with huge non-payment for fuel purchase by Bangladesh Biman. The loss incurring Biman's arrears with the BPC stood at Tk 1,567 crore in December

last year.

Currently, sale of diesel is forcing the BPC to incur loss by Tk 9.94 per litre. The country consumes 24.55 lakh tonnes (or 291 crore litres) of diesel, which imposes a total of Tk 2,894 crore loss on the BPC. Sale price of diesel is now Tk 33 per litre.

Kerosene also imposes a loss of Tk 12.27 per litre. The country consumes 5.25 lakh tonnes (or 66.57 crore litres) of kerosene annually, imposing a total loss of Tk 816 crore.

The country also consumes 1.3 lakh tonnes of octane and 2.65 lakh tonnes of jet fuel, which earn the BPC a profit of Tk 14.38 and Tk 8.55 per litre.

"The problem is that we cannot just increase diesel or kerosene prices because it will affect the poor. This is why we are tilted to increase octane price," noted a top energy ministry official.

"But now we have to do something about it so that the poor is not affected by it. That is where the direct subsidy comes in," he added.

The government would have increased kerosene and diesel prices immediately but considering the present boro cultivation season, it is planning to hike the prices in late April.

"The price adjustment of diesel will slightly affect transport fares. But our estimates show that the impact of this would be negligible on inter-district transport costs," he pointed out.

To keep the poor unaffected, the finance ministry is considering introduction of card system for kerosene for the poor in line with the existing Vulnerable Group Feeding or Vulnerable Group Development programmes.

To offset the likely impact of price adjustment on the poor, cash transfers through social safety net programmes under the budget may be expanded to enable the poor to pay for natural gas, electricity and diesel.

## History

**FROM PAGE 1** against the ICC associate member country will start at 7:30pm Bangladesh time with state-run BTv beaming live coverage from Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain.

It would be a great achievement in Bangladesh's cricket history if Dav Whatmore's charges can keep their cool against the World Cup debutants, who had earlier suffered two heavy defeats against Sri Lanka and India.

Bangladesh earlier defeated Bermuda by eight wickets in a triangular one-day series in their build-up to the World Cup in Antigua where left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees, who is yet to deliver in the tournament proper, hit a brilliant unbeaten 104.

But a win today, which is always on the cards given the strength of the two sides, will mean a lot for the Tigers. It will not only confirm their maiden second round berth but also erase the bitter memories of the 2003 event in South Africa where they failed to win a single match.

Bangladesh boosted their chances of entering the Super Eights after their great five-wicket victory against mighty India but suddenly lost the momentum after suffering a humiliating defeat in the second game. But the odds now look to be stacked in their favour to make history possible.

The only thing that can distract Bangladesh from achieving the target is self-inflicted pressure. Skipper Bashar however said that they were very much aware of the fact that the game would be more of a mental test than a skill related one.

What is now required is a committed and spirited display like their first game against India to make the dream come true.

### TEAMS

**BANGLADESH** (from): Habibul Bashar (captain), Shahriar Nafees, Tamim Iqbal, Aftab Ahmed, Saqibul Hasan, Mohammad Ashraf, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Rafique, Abdur Razzak, Mashrafe Mortaza, Shahadat Hossain, Tapash Baisya, Syed Rasel, Rajin Saleh, Javed Omar.

**BERMUDA** (from): Irvine Romaine (captain), Dean Minors, Delyone Borden, Lionel Cann, David Hemp, Kevin Hurdle, Malachi Jones, Stefan Kelly, Dwayne Leverock, Saleem Mukkuddem, Stephen Outerbridge, Oliver Pitcher, Clay Smith, Janeiro Tucker, Kwame Tucker.

Umpires: Steve Davis and Ian Howell.

## Illegal rock

**FROM PAGE 16** is collected every day during the dry season in the area. Each cft of rocks is sold at Tk 130 to Tk 150.

This illegal business is going on under the very nose of responsible departments of the government, said sources.

A magistrate in the Khagrachhari district administration requesting anonymity said, "We only authorised collection of natural rocks from Chhara natural water bodies. It is illegal to collect hill rocks and if that is the case, Forest Department can take proper action."

Divisional Forest Officer Shah-e-Alam said according to the law, the Forest Department gives transit passes and collects revenue. "I'm not aware of hill rock collection in the district. I will collect detailed information about it and I will take necessary actions [if the allegation is proven true]."

Primary buyers of the illegal hill rocks are contractors of various government projects under the municipality, LGED (Local Government and Engineering Department), Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board and Roads and Highways Department. To legitimise the illegal construction material, the contractors pay a hefty amount of bribe to the high officials of these departments, alleged sources.

If the government were to receive revenue from rocks collected from hills, it would receive over Tk 1 crore annually from two lakh cft rocks at a rate of Tk 62 per cft (set for rocks collected from water beds), said sources at the divisional forest office.

This correspondent came across huge stockpiles of hill rocks at Nunchhari, Champaghat, Gugrachhari and Mohalchhara under sadar upazila, Akhbari, Dharmopur and Ramsira under Matiranga upazila, Baradam, Babuchhara and Araithal under Dighinala, Kongchairipara and Simanapura under Panchhari, Sindukchhara and Karbaripara under Mohalchhari upazila, Jouthakhmar and Headmanpara under Ramgar upazila, and various other places in Laxmichhari and Manikchhari.

Mongshinu Marma, a hill rock collector from Gugrachhari, told this correspondent that he was not aware of any adverse effect of collecting rocks from hills, nor did he know if he had to pay anything to the government.

Mohammad Selim, a first class contractor in Khagrachhari, denied buying hill rocks for construction work. He however said hill rocks are sometimes used to prevent erosion of riverbanks.

# 20 more fake students

**FROM PAGE 1** 30 fake students in public administration, economics and international relations departments in 2004-2005 session.

Suspecting that there might be more fake students in other departments and institutes of the DU, the committee recommended that all department chairmen and institute directors be advised to check if their students were genuine ones. The syndicate approved the recommendations.

The DU authorities have already suspended three officials of the three departments concerned.

Meanwhile, apprehension is growing about the total number of fake students at the university.

"Thirty fake students in only three departments and in only one session! It is amazing. And who knows what would be the number of such students in the 52 departments and nine institutes of the university. I am afraid it could be several hundred or even more than a thousand," said the chairman of one of the three departments.

The probe committee said an organised and powerful nexus comprising university officials at different levels, a section of teachers, student leaders and others outside the university is involved in the mischief.

Seeking anonymity, the chairman said 200-300 fake students might get admitted in the DU each session, and this might involve payment of crores of taka.

A probe committee source said, "If these fake students are not caught, they would complete their studies and get genuine certificates. But none would know about their acts of forgery." These students either did not take part in the university's admission test or they were not on the merit list for admission. So, they resorted to forgery, he added.

A strong network involved in admission forgery is active at the offices of deans of faculties, departments, institutes, administrative building and residential halls. They are trusted by all concerned. Their job is to find loopholes in the admission process and carry out their mischief in cunning ways escaping the authorities' notice, said a source linked to the network.

Admission forgery at the DU has been continuing since the Awami League (AL) rule. A central leader of AL's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League led the racket.

During the rule of BNP-Jamaat coalition, a central leader of BNP's student front Jatayatbadi Chhatra Dal, led the nexus.

Negligence of chairmen and directors of departments and institutes to perform their duties properly greatly contributed to admission of fake students. So, they cannot avoid responsibility for this, sources pointed out.

Teachers may or may not be involved in the illegal process. And it should be looked into if they were aware of it," one source noted.

An official of public administration department has gone on leave hearing that the probe committee is going to ask them about admission forgery.

Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, chairman of economics department, said they had checked admission papers but they did not find any inconsistencies or forged signatures of students. So, they thought there were no fake students. But now fake

students are being found, he wondered.

The probe committee found that most fake students rushed for certain departments or institutes. These include the Institute of Education and Research (IER) and social welfare, sociology, law and anthropology department.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former president of DU Teachers' Association, said, a powerful racket operates in the admission process. Whoever is involved in the racket should be exposed. If necessary, intelligence agencies should be entrusted with doing this. And credibility of the university's admission process must be upheld.

## Hayden

**FROM PAGE 1** Africa captain Graeme Smith for a straight six in the 22nd over of the day. Hayden beat the previous best mark of 67 balls also set by an Australian, albeit playing for Canada when John Davison sent the West Indies bowlers on a leather chase at Centurion in the 2003 World Cup.

The left-handed opener fell soon after but not before his 101 had provided the launching pad for what looks set to be another gigantic score for the men from down under.

Hayden departed soon after reaching his century trying for one big shot too many and only managing to find Herschelle Gibbs, falling prey to the deceptive pace of Jacques Kallis after a brutal onslaught which included 14 fours and four huge sixes.

Ponting became only the seventh batsman and the first Australian to score 10,000 runs in ODI cricket as he continued his rich vein of form in the World Cup, following up his century in their opening match with a well paced half-century.

He and youngster Michael Clarke struck a good partnership and although the boundaries dried up at the start they soon returned as Clarke got stuck in and the pair saw Australia pass the 200-mark in 30 overs.

Clarke took full advantage of a few half chances offered to him as he too bought up his half-century in quick time.

It was hardly what South Africa expected after they had put Australia in after winning the toss. Hayden and Adam Gilchrist got the innings off to a rollicking start bringing up the 50 inside five overs. Their partnership brought up 106 runs before Gilchrist fell just short off a half-century falling prey to Langeveldt for 42.

Away at St Lucia, Kenya were reduced to 53-2 in 13 overs with captain Steve Tikolo (14) and Tony Sujji (7) at the crease. Kenya batted first after winning the toss but were hit by a double blow from swing bowler James Anderson.

England recalled Andrew Flintoff into the team after the all-rounder had been left out of the previous match on disciplinary grounds.

# More sanctions

**FROM PAGE 16** underscore the severity with which the council views rejection of its resolutions." He warned that if Iran continues to defy Security Council demands "we will continue to up the pressure."

Ahmadinejad said earlier this month that he wanted to take his case for pursuing nuclear power to the Security Council himself.

But Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammed Ali Hosseini told Iranian state television Friday that the trip had been scrapped because of "America's obstruction in issuing visas" to the Iranian delegation that was to travel to New York.

Hosseini said that instead of Ahmadinejad, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki will attend the Security Council meeting and "explain Iran's position regarding its nuclear activities."

Mohammad Mir Ali Mohammadi, press secretary for Iran's mission to the UN, told The Associated Press that the United States did not deliver a visa to the US Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, in time for Ahmadinejad to pick it up before flying to New York for the Saturday session.

In Washington, however, the State Department insisted it had approved and issued 75 visas for Ahmadinejad and his delegation, including air crew and support staff.

Deputy spokesman Tom Casey also denied the US or its visa processing system were responsible for the cancellation of the president's trip to the United Nations.

"Any suggestion that visa issues are the cause of President Ahmadinejad's decision not to travel to New York is false," he said. "Rather, it would appear that he is unwilling to stand before the Council and take the heat for his continued defiance of the international community."

The draft resolution was agreed upon last week by the five veto-wielding council members the US, Russia, China, Britain and France and Germany. But it met with resistance from several elected members of the Security Council, particularly South Africa, which criticised the five powers for not giving enough consideration to the views of the other countries.

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