

Qadir retreats on fixing comments

ANI, Lahore

Former Pakistan chief selector, Abdul Qadir has retracted from his earlier statement where he had alleged that some Pakistani players had contacts with Indian bookies.

Qadir said he was only worried of a possible match-fixing deal.

"I never took any names. I only voiced my suspicions like others were doing that the cricket board needed to hold a thorough inquiry into the reports that players might have had contacts with Indian bookmakers in Colombo," the Nation quoted Qadir, assaying.

Qadir's comment comes after he drew flak from the PCB chairman Ijaz Butt and coach Intikhab Alam for making unsubstantiated allegations.

Qadir said: "They can take me to the supreme court or high court. I am not scared. I said what everyone else was saying and I did not take any names."

Jimmy diffuses Justin jibes

AFP, London

England pace bowler James Anderson insists he isn't bothered by former Australia star Justin Langer's controversial comments.

In a dossier leaked to The Sunday Telegraph which was allegedly meant only for the eyes of Aussie coach Tim Nielsen, Langer described Anderson as "a bit of a pussy if he is worn down", adding that the England player and his international team-mates can be "flat and lazy" at times.

But Anderson believes Langer, who retired after the 2006-7 Ashes and now captains Somerset, is way off the mark with his remarks.

"I dare say people will wonder whether Langer's comments will spur me on a bit more, but I can say without any hesitation that I don't need anything more to give me up for the last Test," Anderson told The Daily Telegraph.

"The bottom line is that he doesn't even know me as a person and he last played Test cricket against me more than two-and-a-half years ago."

"A lot has happened to me since the last Ashes series and I'm now a completely different cricketer to the one he faced in Australia."

"The only comments about me as a person and as a cricketer that I take to heart are those that come from people who know me, and I'm not bothered by what Langer supposedly had to say."

Marcus not

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of days," he said. "If it looks as though he can be selected in the squad then we will probably do that because the England side with Freddie playing in it at his best is a quality side, but we'll have to monitor it day by day and see how he performs in the nets, because he's got to do the workload required by the captain to justify his selection."

However, barring a dramatic volte face from the West Country, one player who will not enter into the selectors' discussions, is Trescothick, who this week confirmed to a local newspaper he did not intend to come out of his international retirement, despite being the leading run-scorer in first-class cricket this summer. With a hint of regret, Millers said he would not attempt to change the player's mind.

"Marcus has many times said he's retired from international cricket, and until I hear contrary to that, he will not be a part of the selection process. He knows where he is, he's really comfortable and playing really, really well, but he's retired from Test cricket so he's not a part of our thoughts at this moment in time."

Shakib

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match the cricketers took this opportunity to get over their tiredness.

"There was swimming, recovery and massage today. The boys stayed at the hotel and rested. They have been playing non-stop so this was a welcome break. Some of the boys have slight niggles and they had treatment," informed team operations manager Shafiqul Haque Hira.

The Tigers will return to practice today afternoon to prepare for the game on Friday which could very well be the series clinching one.

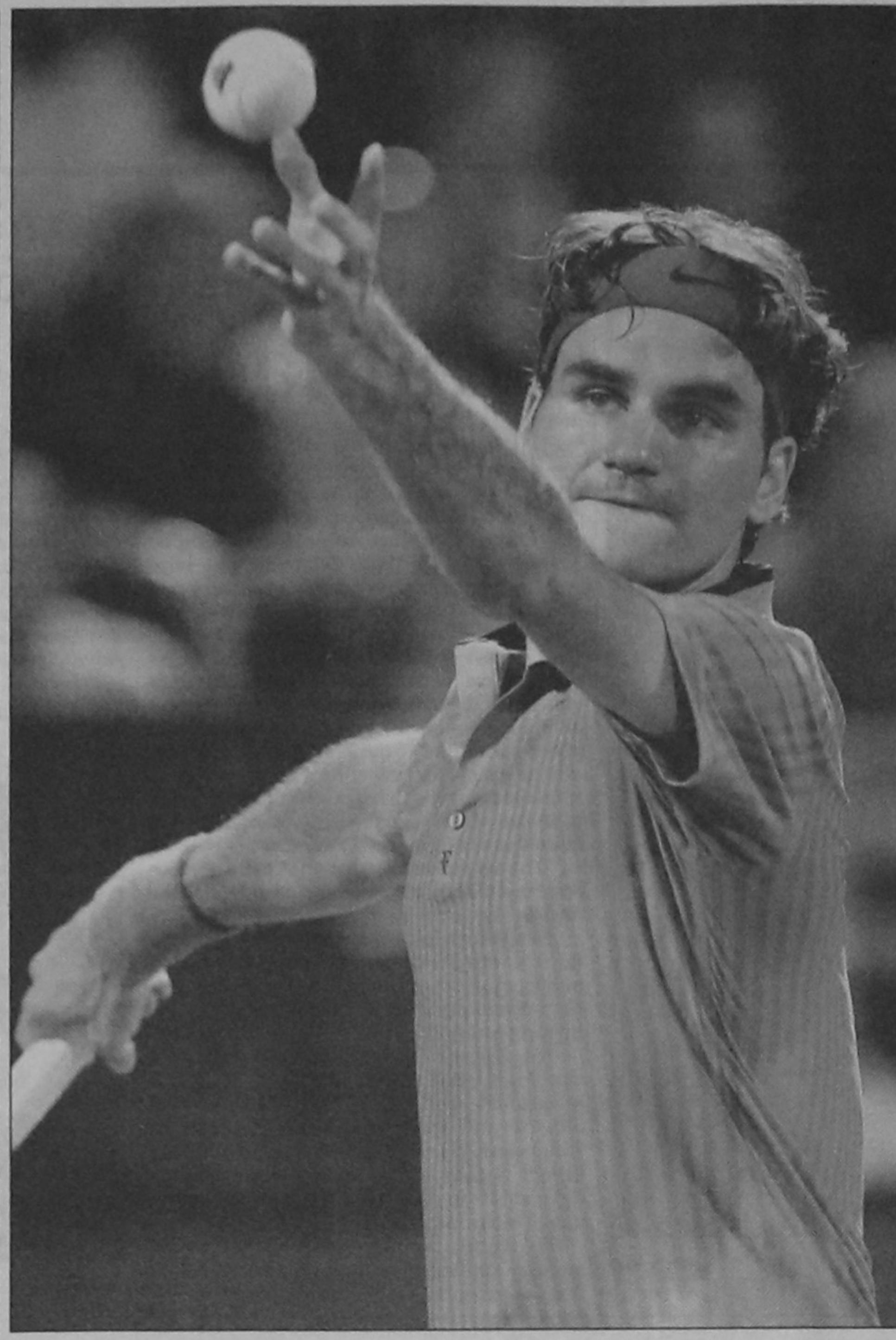


PHOTO: AFP

World No. 1 Roger Federer of Switzerland serves to Frederic Niemeyer of Canada during their Montreal Masters match in Montreal on Tuesday.

Federer progresses

Tennis

AFP, Montreal

World number one Roger Federer fought off a surprise showing from Canadian outsider Frederic Niemeyer to advance 7-6, 6-4 Tuesday at the ATP Montreal Masters.

In his first match since winning his record 15th Grand Slam title last month at Wimbledon, Federer outlasted the 487th-ranked Niemeyer, who is retiring at the end of the season.

"But I managed to get my things together towards the end of the first set."

Murray is keen to bypass injury returnee Rafael Nadal this week if he can surpass the Spaniard in Montreal.

ATP calculations show that the Scot could over the second spot from the Spaniard, whose tendinitis-plagued knees are now a constant worry.

"It is impossible not to think about it a little bit," confessed Murray. "But when I'm playing my match, it's the furthest thing from my mind. The only thing I was thinking was winning and nothing to do with rankings."

Eighth-seeded Russian Nikolay Davydenko, playing his first match on cement this summer, put out Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu 7-6, 7-6 to join Murray in the last 16.

In the first round, veteran Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero beat injured Lleyton Hewitt 6-1, 6-4 in the first round as the Australian was hampered by a muscle tear he suffered last week in Washington against Juan Del Potro.

"In the back of my mind, I didn't want to do any more damage to my leg, either, obviously before going into another Masters Series next week but more the US Open in a couple weeks' time," said Hewitt, like Ferrero a former number one.

Tommy Haas rallied past the huge serve of Ivo Karlovic, overcoming 19 aces in a 4-6, 7-6, 6-4 victory.

"I shanked a few returns," admitted Murray.

Bolt plans to strike again

Athletics

AFP, Berlin

It's hard to imagine bettering three Olympic gold medals and three world records but Jamaican Usain Bolt will be endeavouring to repeat the trick at the World Athletics Championships here.

The 22-year-old goes into the event night on invincible, though, with the caveat that he has not faced major rival Tyson Gay this year.

While Bolt enjoyed the Beijing Games Gay - who goes into the championships as the defending champion in the 100 metres, 200m and also the 4x100m relay - endured a miserable time failing even to make the 100m final.

Despite the American setting the fastest times this year in the 100m and 200m the Jamaican is confident he can see off his challenge.

"It's sad for the sport because the sport was getting on so well, I was trying to bring it back. This is probably a step backwards because people start questioning everybody, especially from Jamaica."

"For me it doesn't matter because I will be going out there, day after day, doing my best. I get tested all the time. It shows that people get tested

and they get caught if they are on drugs."

Jamaica will be looking to Bolt to lift the shadows of doubt hanging over their athletes and confirm that he really is the master of the sprinting world - not just a bolt out of the blue.

Bolt and his fellow Jamaican sprinters, who dominated the Olympics climaxing with a world record in the men's 4x100m relay, have come under a cloud with the recent revelations that five of their team-mates had tested positive for drugs, though, they were later cleared to run at the championships.

However, Bolt is adamant that it won't distract him from his target at the championships who has Z-category security.

The board is also trying to find out whether any governmental agency can force them to include the "whereabouts" clause in the contracts the players sign with the board. To that end it has asked if that would constitute an "unreasonable" or "bad" contract if such a clause was "part of a contract between two contracting parties in India," a source revealed.

At the moment, the board's contract with players does not include any specifics on out-of-competition testing or similar protocols.

does accept that at some point he will be beaten.

"I am ready for anything that comes my way. I am not invincible, I am not unbeatable. Other people will have a good day when I don't, but until then I'll keep winning," he said.

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Gladiators emerge champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bengal Gladiators recently emerged joint-champions in the 40th International 6's tournament in Malaysia after rain ruined the final against Pakistan Awan Club.

Bengal Gladiators, a section of Heritage Cricketers who also played the tournament and became plate champions after being ousted from the quarterfinals, reached the final winning all group matches.

Heritage Cricketers had earlier won a one-day match against Kuala Lumpur state cricket team before going down against Royal Malaysian Air Force Team.

"It was just a day when everything was going all over the place, except for the tennis court," said Safina, who met with her coach, Zeljko Kraljan, after losing the first three games of the second set.

"He's like, 'You realise you can put the ball inside (the lines).' I said, 'Yes, that's what I'm realising.' He said, 'Don't do anything. Just go deep through the court and let her do something.' I guess she was not ready to beat me."

Third-seeded Venus Williams, making her Cincinnati debut, won 11 of the last 13 games and rolled past qualifier Olga Govortsova 6-2, 6-2 to move into the third round in the evening's only single match, which started 90 minutes late because of earlier rain delays.

Sixth-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova had an even more difficult time, surviving two tiebreaks.

National TT

SPORTS REPORTER

Mostafa and Soma clinched the men's and women's singles titles respectively in the National Lub 2nd Open Table Tennis Tournament that concluded at Engineers Institute on Tuesday. Mostafa defeated Manos while Soma defeated Rumi.

Abahani clinched the women's team title beating Biman while Biman emerged champions in the men's team event. Zubair became champion in the U-16 Boy's singles while Wari Club clinched the U-16 Boy's team event title thrashing Lalbagh Table Tennis Academy. Ahmedul Hasan became champion in the engineer singles routing Arifur Rahman. Labour and employment, expatriates' welfare and overseas employment minister Khandker Musharraf Hossain distributed prizes among the winners.

Murali returns against Kiwis

AFP, Colombo

World bowling record holder Muttiah Muralidaran will reinforce Sri Lanka for next week's first Test against New Zealand after missing the Pakistan series due to injury.

Muralidaran, who has a record 770 Test wickets, recovered from the knee injury and was included in a 15-man squad for the first Test at Galle from August 18, Sri Lanka Cricket said in a media release.

Wicket-keeper Prasanna Jayawardene, who also missed the three Tests against Pakistan because of a finger injury, was back in the squad for the first of two Tests against the Black Caps.

Tillakaratne Dilshan, who kept wickets against Pakistan in place of Jayawardene and suffered injuries in the hand and face during the third Test, was also named in the squad.

SQUAD

Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Malinda Warnapura, Tharanga Paranavitana, Maheela Jayawardene, Thilan Samaraweera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Angelo Mathews, Chamara Kapugedera, Muttiah Muralidaran, Ajantha Mendis, Thilan Thushara, Nuwan Kulasekara, Dhammika Prasad, Prasanna Jayawardene, Rangana Herath.

Clark's place

Safina rallies past Vinci

Tennis

AP, Mason

Dinara Safina got her game under control just in time. The top-ranked Safina scattered shots all over the court early in the match before rallying past unseeded Roberta Vinci 2-6, 7-5, 6-4 Tuesday to advance to the third round of the Cincinnati Open.

The tournament's top seed, who's in her 17th consecutive week at No. 1, came up with a service break with Vinci serving for the match in the second set. She had another break in the third to close out the match.

Safina, who suffered a cut on her left hand while trying to slice open a coconut last week in Los Angeles, had 48 unforced errors to Vinci's 28, many while Vinci was winning nine straight games.

"It was just a day when everything was going all over the place, except for the tennis court," said Safina, who met with her coach, Zeljko Kraljan, after losing the first three games of the second set.

"He's like, 'You realise you can put the ball inside (the lines).' I said, 'Yes, that's what I'm realising.' He said, 'Don't do anything. Just go deep through the court and let her do something.' I guess she was not ready to beat me."

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ers and two rain delays to outlast Lucia Safarova 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 and move into the third round.

Agnieszka Radwanska, the 13th seed, had an easier time, advancing with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Ai Sugiyama while 14th-seeded Flavia Pennetta moved on with a 6-2, 6-3 win over qualifier Ayumi Morita.

Earlier, qualifier Yanina Wickmayer upset Francesca Schiavone 6-3, 6-4.

The 56th-ranked Wickmayer became the third qualifier to reach the second round with her upset of the 26th-ranked Schiavone. Wickmayer believed playing the qualifier gave her an advantage.

"I think my advantage today was I had a few matches in my legs already," said the 19-year-old Wickmayer, who plays doubles with Kim Clijsters.

Also Tuesday, unseeded Alona Bondarenko upset 10th-seeded Nadia Petrova 6-2, 6-3, and 15th-seeded Dominika Cibulkova fell to unseeded Shuai Peng 6-2, 6-1. Flavia Pennetta defeated qualifier Ayumi Morita 6-2, 6-3.

Agnes Szavay edged qualifier Urszula Radwanska 7-5, 7-5, and Sorana Cirstea eliminated wild-card Meghan Shaughnessy by the same score.

Daniela Hantuchova outlasted Sara Errani 3-6, 6-3, 6-1. Maria Jose Martina Sanchez also needed three sets to get past Vera Dushevina 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, while Alisa Kleybanova topped Aravane Rezai 6-3, 6-3, Sybille Bammer beat Lie Zheng 6-2, 4-6, 6-2, and wild-card Maria Kirilenko defeated qualifier Yaroslava Shvedova 6-4, 6-1.

The 2-million-dollar Western and Southern Financial Group Women's Open was elevated this year from a Tier III event to a Premier Level tournament.

Rugby knocking on Olympic door

AFP, Berlin

Rugby Union International Rugby Board (IRB) supremo Bernard Lapasset can see a dream come true here on Thursday if his sport is chosen by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive board as one of the two sports to be included in the 2016 Olympics.

Lapasset, who is seen as one of the strongest parts of the bid with his easy charm and clear message, told AFP back in June that it was globalising the sport that had really driven him.

The Executive Board will make a recommendation that will be voted on by the entire IOC membership in Copenhagen in October.

Rugby -- which will be in the sevens format -- is contesting the places with golf, squash, softball, baseball, rollersports and karate.

Rugby is seen as the clear favourite out of the seven

candidates to secure one of the spots with golf emerging as a likely contender and softball as the dark horses to regain their place after being dropped for the 2012 Games in London.

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