

Pathaan (film)

Pathaan (pronounced [pəˈtʰaːn]) is a 2023 Indian Hindi-language action thriller film co-written and directed by Siddharth Anand and produced by Aditya Chopra under Yash Raj Films. The fourth installment in the YRF Spy Universe, it stars Shah Rukh Khan in the title role, alongside Deepika Padukone and John Abraham, with Dimple Kapadia and Ashutosh Rana in supporting roles. Pathaan, an exiled RAW agent, works with ISI agent Rubina Mohsin to take down Jim, a former RAW agent, who plans to attack India with a deadly lab-generated virus.

Principal photography commenced in November 2020 in Mumbai. The film was shot in various locations in India, Afghanistan, Spain, UAE, Turkey, Russia, Italy and France. The songs in the film were composed by Vishal–Shekhar, while Sanchit Balhara and Ankit Balhara provided the score. The film was made on an estimated production budget of ₹225 crore (US\$28 million) with a further ₹15 crore (US\$1.9 million) spent on print and advertising.[4] Against the norm, pre-release publicity was limited with no media interaction or public events.

Pathaan was theatrically released in India on 25 January 2023, coinciding with the Republic Day weekend. The film received positive reviews from critics.[6][7] The film set several box office records for a Hindi film, including the highest opening day, highest single day, highest opening weekend and highest opening week for a Hindi film in India.[8][9][10][11][12][13][14] It eventually emerged as the highest-grossing Hindi film of all time in India to that point and set records in all major overseas markets.[15][16][17] Pathaan grossed ₹1,050.30 crore (US\$130 million)[18] worldwide, becoming the second highest-grossing Indian film of 2023, the third-highest-grossing Hindi film of all time, and the sixth-highest-grossing Indian film of all time.[19][20] At the 69th Filmfare Awards, the film received 16 nominations, including Best Film, Best Director and Best Actress (Padukone).[21]

Plot

In 2019, the Indian Government revokes Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which grants special status for Jammu and Kashmir. The news impacts a cancer-ridden Pakistani army general Qadir, who decides to exact vengeance against India and signs a contract with Jim, who leads a private terrorist organization called Outfit X.

Table with 2 columns: Field, Value. Rows include: Pathaan (Theatrical release poster), Directed by (Siddharth Anand), Screenplay by (Shridhar Raghavan), Dialogues by (Abbas Tyrewala), Story by (Siddharth Anand), Produced by (Aditya Chopra), Starring (Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone, John Abraham, Dimple Kapadia, Ashutosh Rana), Cinematography (Satchith Paulose), Edited by (Aarif Sheikh), Music by (Score: Sanchit Balhara, Ankit Balhara; Songs: Vishal–Shekhar), Production company (Yash Raj Films).

Pathaan, a RAW agent, with his senior officer Nandini Grewal form a unit known as "Joint Operations and Covert Research" (J.O.C.R.) to recruit ex-agents and soldiers who were forced to retire due to past trauma or injury, but want to continue serving their country. With Colonel Sunil Luthra's permission, Pathaan and his team head to Dubai to stop Outfit X's suspected plans of attacking the President of India at a scientific conference. However, they realize that their actual plan was to kidnap two scientists Dr. Farooqui and Dr. Sahani and that the original information they received was fake.

Jim attacks the scientists' convoy and Pathaan tries to stop him. A fight ensues where Jim manages to escape with Dr. Sahani. Luthra reveals that Jim was a former agent, who was awarded the Vir Puraskar for his bravery after the army could not find his body. He had been kidnapped by Somalian terrorists, who killed his pregnant wife after the government refused to pay out the ransom the terrorists demanded. He faked his death in order to seek vengeance against the country for not saving his family.

Meanwhile, Pathaan learns about the codeword "Raktbeej" and also that the dead people in Dubai were ex-agents and their money was transferred from the account of Rubina Mohsin (Rubai), a Pakistani doctor in Spain. Pathaan travels to Spain and is captured by Jim's men, where he also learns that Rubai is an ex-ISI agent. When Jim leaves his hideout, Rubai attacks Jim's men and escapes with Pathaan. Rubai reveals that Raktbeej is in Moscow, and they travel to steal it before Jim does. However, Rubai betrays Pathaan and has him captured by the Russian police. It is revealed that Jim used Rubai to make Pathaan steal the Raktbeej for himself. Pathaan is captured, tortured and taken to prison by a train, but is saved by Tiger.

Pathaan travels to Africa and captures Jim's henchman Raafe. He meets Nandini and reveals about Jim purchasing two Saber missiles, while Nandini reveals Rubai's location in Paris. Pathaan meets Rubai, who reveals that the Raktbeej is a mutated smallpox virus, which was forcibly developed by a captive Dr Sahani under Jim's orders. She also expresses guilt about betraying Pathaan without knowing that her country would plan such a heinous attack. They travel to Jim's lab in Siberia and manage to recover one orb containing the virus, while Jim escapes with the other orb. Luthra and Nandini reach Jim's lab to take the orb back to India in order to develop a vaccine.

At the Indian Institute of Contagious Diseases (IICD), Dr. Farooqui opens up the orb to Nandini without apparently finding anything. Jim calls them and reveals that the orb has already spread the virus in the facility. The infected scientists and Nandini succumb in the facility by shooting themselves to curb the spread of the virus. Later, the facility is destroyed in a controlled blast. Jim provides an ultimatum to evacuate Indian soldiers out of Kashmir within 24 hours. Pathaan interrogates Raafe about the location of the missile and learns that the missile is situated in Afghanistan. After rescuing Rubai, they lure Jim's associates into a trap and attack Jim's base. Qadir is killed by Rubai after he activates the missile. Pathaan chases after Jim with a jetpack and they both crash land into a cabin.

Meanwhile, Rubai deactivates the missile, but finds that Raktbeej is not in the missile, but instead in a passenger-bound airplane, which is about to land in Delhi. Rubai informs Pathaan, who finds that Jim has the detonator. Luthra calls the air traffic control to prevent the plane from landing in Delhi. In the cabin,

Distributed by	Yash Raj Films
Release date	25 January 2023
Running time	146 minutes (Theatrical release) ^[a] 148 minutes (Extended version)
Country	India
Language	Hindi ^[3]
Budget	₹240 crore ^[4]
Box office	est. ₹1,050.3 crore ^[5]

Pathaan and Jim fight brutally. Despite getting stabbed by Jim, Pathaan steals the detonator, and deactivates Raktbeej and kills Jim. Afterwards, Pathaan is reinstated and made the head of J.O.C.R, while Nandini is posthumously awarded with the *Vir Puraskar* for her bravery.

In a post-credits scene, Pathaan and Tiger are seen pondering about retiring and suggesting young agents who can replace them, but eventually decide to keep fighting the threats themselves.^[b]

Cast

- Shah Rukh Khan as Pathaan, a RAW agent
- Deepika Padukone as Dr. Rubina "Rubai" Mohsin, an ISI agent
- John Abraham as Jim, leader of "Outfit X" and a former RAW Agent
- Dimple Kapadia as Dr. Nandini Grewal, head of the Joint Operations and Covert Research (JOCR)
- Ashutosh Rana as Colonel Sunil Luthra
- Prakash Belawadi as Dr. Sahani
- Prem Jhangiani as Dr. Farooqui
- Shaji Choudhary as Raza, member of JOCR
- Ekta Kaul as Shweta Bajaj, hacker and member of JOCR
- Diganta Hazarika as Joseph Mathews, sniper and member of JOCR
- Viraf Patel as Rishi Arya, intelligence analyst and member of JOCR
- Aakash Bhatija as Amol, member of JOCR
- Rajat Kaul as Raafe, Jim's henchman and a former GID agent
- Manish Wadhwa as General Qadir
- Rumi Khan as Jim's henchman
- Mansi Taxak as Jim's wife
- Grace Girdhar as young Rubai
- Ashutosh Singh as Rubai's father
- Amanpreet Hundal as Rubai's mother
- Keith Sequeira as Captain Mehra
- Rakesh Khatri as ATC Supervisor
- Mustafa Aksari as Fayyed, an African arms dealer
- Jeffrey Adams Goldberg as Anton
- Rachel Ann Mullins as Alice
- Nikhat Khan as Sabba, Pathaan's foster mother
- Salman Khan as Avinash "Tiger" Singh Rathore (cameo appearance)

Production

Development

Yash Raj Films, Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone and John Abraham officially announced *Pathaan* on 2 March 2022 on their social media accounts, revealing the release date with a first look teaser.^[22] It was previously teased by other cast members, including Salman Khan and Vishal Dadlani, on various occasions

before. Dadlani announced the film on Twitter, stating, "No number from the past matters, no number in the future is too big. The whole world is waiting for Shah Rukh, more importantly, we're all working on a kickass film with great songs."^[23] This film is YRF's first Dolby Cinema.^[24]

Casting

Shanoo Sharma was the casting director. Khan was cast in the film in September 2020.^[25] Padukone joined production that November,^{[26][27][28]} while Abraham rounded out the main cast in June, joining filming in Mumbai.^{[29][30]} Dimple Kapadia was cast in December 2020.^{[31][32]} Salman Khan was confirmed to make a cameo appearance in November 2020, reprising his role as Avinash Singh Rathore from the Tiger franchise.^{[33][34]}

Filming

Principal photography of the film began on 17 November 2020 in Mumbai.^{[35][36]} In January 2021, filming moved to Dubai. Some of the major action sequences including a long chase sequence were shot in the same schedule.^{[37][38]} On 12 April 2021,^[39] the crew took a two-day break. However, following the reports of some crew members of the film tested positive for COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown in Maharashtra, further schedules of the film were postponed.^{[40][41]} The filming resumed on 25 June at Yash Raj Studios in Mumbai.^{[42][43][44]} Later in July, another schedule of the film began.^[45] Padukone began filming in this schedule.^[46] A song was scheduled to be shot from 7 October in Mallorca and Cádiz,^{[47][48]} but the schedule was postponed.^[49]

In February 2022, production moved to Spain to shoot action sequences including Khan, Padukone, and Abraham.^[50] Filming then took place in Mallorca and Cádiz.^[51] The Spain schedule was completed in March 2022, with the Mumbai schedule completed in Yash Raj Studios as the film wrapped. In October 2022, reshoots and additional scenes were completed. The film was shot in multiple locations across India, Afghanistan, Spain, UAE, Turkey, Russia, Italy and France.^{[52][53]} It was the first Indian film to be shot in Siberia's Lake Baikal.^[54]

Music

The soundtrack album for Pathaan featured four tracks: two songs, "Besharam Rang" and "Jhoom Jo Pathaan", composed by Vishal–Shekhar and written by Kumaar and two instrumental themes from the original score written and composed by Sanchit and Ankit Balhara: "Jim's Theme" and "Pathaan's Theme". Apart from its original, the soundtrack album was released in Tamil and Telugu.^[55]

Controversy

Right-wing Hindutva groups alleged that the song "Besharam Rang" promotes obscenity and that it disrespects the saffron colour as Padukone features in a saffron bikini in the song.^[56] Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra called the song objectionable and warned that his government may consider banning the film if costumes in the song are not corrected.^[57] Khan's effigies and posters were burnt in various cities of Madhya Pradesh as a symbol of protest against the film.^[58] TV actor Mukesh Khanna questioned the Censor Board for passing the song despite obscenity.^[59] *The News Minute* termed the entire controversy as "shameless misreading for jingoism" and stated that there were five different

costumes worn by Padukone in the song and the boycotters are criticizing this particular scene which features merely for 20 seconds as it suits their agenda.^[60] A Muslim organization also objected to the song.^[61]

On 29 December 2022, the Central Board of Film Certification asked the filmmakers to make some changes in the film, including in its songs citing culture and faith.^[62] The film went through some minor changes though the saffron dress scene in the song "Besharam Rang" was reportedly retained.^[63] *Pathaan* was later granted a U/A certificate by the Board.^[64]

On 4 January 2023, members of Bajrang Dal tore down the posters of the film at an Ahmedabad mall. They also warned them to not release the film in theatres.^[65] Gujarat Multiplex Association wrote a letter to Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Home Minister Harsh Sanghavi on the threats received by the theater owners in Gujarat from various groups. Sanghavi assured protection to multiplexes on the release of the film and instructed police chiefs of cities and districts to provide protection to the theatres.^[66]

On 17 January 2023, during the BJP national executive meeting in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told his party workers and leaders to refrain from making unnecessary remarks on films.^{[67][68]} Despite this, Bajrang Dal activists tore down posters of the film and set them on fire at a cinema hall which was about to screen the movie in Guwahati. Assam's CM Himanta Biswa Sarma assured Shah Rukh Khan that his government would maintain the law and order in the state.^[69]

Marketing

The release date of *Pathaan* was revealed on 2 March 2022 through an announcement teaser.^[70] A first look motion poster was revealed on 25 June 2022.^[71] The teaser of the film was released on 2 November 2022, coinciding with Shah Rukh Khan's 57th birthday.^[72] The official trailer was released on 10 January 2023.^[73] The film's trailer was also showcased on Burj Khalifa on 14 January 2023.^[74] Against norm, pre-release publicity was limited with no media interactions or public events.^[75]

Release

Theatrical

Pathaan was theatrically released, in standard, IMAX and 4DX versions, in India on 25 January 2023, coinciding with Indian Republic Day weekend along with dubbed versions in Tamil and Telugu.^{[76][7]} *Pathaan* was the first Indian film to release in the novel ICE theatre format.^[77] The film was released in 8000 screens worldwide, which included 5000 screens in Hindi and 450 screens in Tamil and Telugu versions within India.^[78]

The film was theatrically released in Bangladesh on 12 May 2023 and thus became the first Hindi film to release in the country.^[79] The film was released in Russia on 13 July 2023.^[80] The film was also released in Japan on 1 September 2023.^[81]

Home media

The digital streaming rights of *Pathaan* were sold to Amazon Prime Video for ₹100 crore. On the platform, the film's extended version was premiered on 22 March 2023 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.^{[82][83]} The satellite rights of the film have been acquired by Star Gold, where it was telecasted on 18 June 2023.^{[84][85]} and Star Vijay (Tamil), Star Maa (Telugu).

Reception

Critical response

Pathaan received positive reviews from critics.^[86] On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, the film has an approval rating of 84%, with an average score of 6.8/10, based on reviews from 31 critics. The site's critical consensus reads, "A slightly slapdash but still intoxicating blend of occasionally disparate ingredients, *Pathaan* offers over-the-top action thrills with Bollywood bells and whistles".^[87]

India

Taran Adarsh of *Bollywood Hungama* rated the film 4.5 out of 5 stars and termed the film a "complete entertainer replete with action, emotions, patriotism, humour, thrill, and of course, the star power of Shah Rukh Khan".^[88] Sukanya Verma of *Rediff* gave the film a rating of 4 out of 5 stars and wrote, "Shah Rukh Khan's weathered intensity, grizzly charisma and trademark wit lends *Pathaan*'s all-out, devil-may-care antics a sense of purpose that evades mindless acts of mayhem".^[89] Devesh Sharma of *Filmfare* rated the film 4 out of 5 stars and called it a "visual spectacle" while also opining that the action choreography was "truly out of this world".^[90] Saibal Chatterjee of *NDTV* rated the film 3.5 out of 5 and said, "*Pathaan* swings and strikes with all the style and aplomb in the world. It will be a hard act to follow".^[91] Renuka Vyavahare of *The Times of India* rated the film 3.5 out of 5 stars and wrote, "*Pathaan* has all the ingredients of a masala potboiler — slowmo entries, iconic battle of good versus bad and most importantly a sexy-smouldering Shah Rukh Khan, who can fight the good fight on and off the screen".^[92] Tanisha Bagchi of *The Quint* gave the film a rating of 3.5 out of 5 and wrote, "If Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff's showdown in *War* kept you on the edge of your seats, Shah Rukh and John's fistfights and blows are nothing short of whistle-worthy".^[93] Abhimanyu Mathur of *DNA India* rated the film 3.5 out of 5 stars and praised the performances and score but termed some of the action scenes as "over-the-top and unbelievable".^[94]



Abraham, Padukone and Khan (l-r) at an event celebrating *Pathaan*'s box-office success

Ritika Handoo of *Zee News* rated the film 3.5 out of 5 stars and mentioned, "There is not even a single dull moment in this YRF actioner. The action sequences between SRK and John are over-the-top yet mind-numbing".^[95] Tushar Joshi of *India Today* rated the film 3.5 out of 5 and stated, "Shah Rukh is the heart of *Pathaan*".^[96] Pooja Biraia Jaiswal of *The Week* rated the film 3.5 out of 5 stars and wrote, "*Pathaan* is a dishoom-dishoom joy ride between Khan and his perfectly beefed-up antagonist Abraham. The intention is not to let the narrative drive the story forward, but to let the larger-than-life magic of its lead superstars cast its spell".^[97] Shubhra Gupta of *The Indian Express* rated the film 3 out of 5 stars and opined that it has "finally cracked the requirements of an action movie — non-stop action, leavened by glamorous leads,

topped by the guy who can save the world, a high-octane set piece and an emo line at a time".^[98] Anna M. Vetticad of *Firstpost* rated the film 2.5 out of 5 and wrote, "*Pathaan* is so much fun when it's being fun especially with a smashing Salman Khan cameo – that it is tempting to overlook its play-it-safe politics".^[99]

Sajesh Mohan of *Onmanorama* stated that "Siddharth Anand's *Pathaan* lays out a perfect red-carpet entry for Shah Rukh Khan into the YRF Spy Universe with its right formula of high-octane death and logic-defying action sequences seasoned with desh bhakti (patriotism) and qurbani (sacrifice)".^[100] Monika Rawal Kukreja of *Hindustan Times* stated, "*Pathaan* is your true-blue commercial, masala entertainer that's not trying to send across any message or be a social commentary on the current state of affairs in the country. It's fun, non-fussy and fantastic at the same time".^[101] Nandini Ramnath of *Scroll.in* wrote, "The film's greatest blaster is its hero itself, parleying his well-oiled impishness, time-tested charm and mesmeric screen presence for a cheesy but also entertaining save-the-nation exercise".^[102]

International

Cath Clarke of *The Guardian* rated the film 3 out of 5 stars and wrote, "This enjoyable high-octane action spy movie from India is possibly the most fun you can currently have at the cinema. Still, the cheers kept coming; the loudest whoop of all when Salman Khan made an entrance as Tiger, a hero from an earlier movie in the series".^[103] Conversely, Simon Abrams of *TheWrap* dismissed it as "an amateurish Indian super-spy thriller that's never as well-executed as it is conceptually goofy and politically dubious".^[104] Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* was similarly not impressed, terming the film a "a sprawling, mountainous tangle of pulp that stacks one genre on top of the next with an arbitrary verve", but picked up the "iconic quality of its stars" Khan and Abraham for praise.^[105] Timon Singh of *Empire* summarised, "*Pathaan* delivers everything that an Indian blockbuster should: a guaranteed box office draw with Khan, exotic locales, crowd-pleasing cameos, stunning dance numbers and gravity-defying stunts that make the *Fast and Furious* franchise look restrained".^[106]

Box office

Pathaan broke several box-office opening records for a Hindi film.^{[13][12]} Globally, it became the first Hindi film to gross ₹100 crore (US\$13 million) on its first day.^[107] It earned ₹106 crore (US\$13 million) worldwide on its opening day, including ₹36.69 crore (US\$4.6 million) overseas.^[108] Worldwide, the film crossed the ₹200 crore (US\$25 million) mark, in the first two days, the ₹300 crore (US\$38 million) mark in the first three days, and the ₹400 crore (US\$50 million) mark in its first four days, becoming the fastest Hindi film to do all.^{[109][110][111][112]} In India too, it became the fastest Hindi film to collect ₹200 crore (US\$25 million) and ₹300 crore (US\$38 million), which it did within four and seven days, respectively.^[113] It broke these records previously held by the Hindi version of the Kannada film *K.G.F: Chapter 2* (2022).^[114] By the second weekend, it became the first original Hindi film to net over ₹400 crore (US\$50 million) domestically, overtaking *Dangal* (2016).^[115]

Outside India, *Pathaan*'s opening-weekend overseas gross totalled US\$25.5 million in its five-day extended weekend.^{[13][116]} IMAX grosses accounted for US\$2.5 million, the highest for an Indian film.^[116] In North America and Canada, it earned US\$6.88 million in its opening weekend from 695 theatres, finishing third, for a total of US\$9.48 million; a record for a Hindi film.^{[13][117][118]} In the United Kingdom and Ireland box office, it recorded the highest single-day gross for an Indian film with £319,348.^[119] Over the weekend, it earned £1.4 million, finishing second after *Avatar: The Way of Water*, for a total of £2 million.^[120] It set further Hindi-film opening weekend records in UAE, Malaysia,

Singapore, and Saudi Arabia, and Indian-film opening weekend records in Australia, New Zealand, and Germany.^[13] With a US\$582,000 gross in Germany, it became the highest-grossing Hindi film in the market in its opening weekend itself.^[13] *Box Office India* reported that by grossing around US\$31 million in its first eight days, it became the highest-grossing Hindi film in overseas, excluding China (where it did not release).^{[121][122]}

By the second weekend, *Pathaan* emerged as the highest-grossing Hindi film in the US, earning over \$13.4 million, overtaking *Dangal*, and in the UK, it became the first Indian film to earn over £3 million, grossing \$4.15 million.^{[115][123]} It also became the highest-grossing Indian film in UAE, Australia, and New Zealand.^[123] *Pathaan* emerged as the first Hindi film to gross over \$100 million without a China release.^[123]

On its fourth Wednesday, *Pathaan* became the first Hindi film to earn ₹500 crore (US\$63 million) net in India.^[124] On the twenty seventh day of its release, *Pathaan* became the fifth Indian film to gross ₹1000 crore worldwide and only the second Hindi film to do so.^[18] On the 37th day of its release, it crossed *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* to become the highest grossing Hindi film in India.^[125] *Box Office India* declared the film as the 25th "All-Time Blockbuster" from the Hindi film industry.^[126]

As of 6 April 2023, the film has grossed ₹654.28 crore (US\$82 million) in India and ₹396.02 crore (US\$50 million) overseas for a worldwide gross collection of ₹1,050.30 crore (US\$130 million).^[18] This made it the second-highest-grossing Hindi film, fifth-highest-grossing Indian film, the fourth-highest-grossing film in the domestic market and the highest-grossing of Khan's career.^[14]

Accolades

Award	Ceremony date	Category	Recipients	Result	Ref.
Filmfare Awards	28 January 2024	<u>Best Film</u>	<u>Yash Raj Films</u>	Nominated	[127][128]
		<u>Best Director</u>	<u>Siddharth Anand</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Actress</u>	<u>Deepika Padukone</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Story</u>	<u>Siddharth Anand</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Screenplay</u>	<u>Shridhar Raghavan</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Dialogue</u>	<u>Abbas Tyrewala</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Music Director</u>	<u>Vishal–Shekhar</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Female Playback Singer</u>	<u>Shilpa Rao</u> – "Besharam Rang"	Won	
		<u>Best Editing</u>	<u>Aarif Shaikh</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Choreography</u>	<u>Bosco–Caesar</u> – "Jhoome Jo Pathaan"	Nominated	
		<u>Best Cinematography</u>	<u>Satchith Paulose</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Sound Design</u>	<u>Manas Choudhury</u> and <u>Ganesh Gangadharan</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Background Score</u>	<u>Sanchit Balhara</u> and <u>Ankit Balhara</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Costume Design</u>	<u>Shaleena Nathani</u> , <u>Mamta Anand</u> and <u>Niharika Jolly</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Action</u>	<u>Casey O'Neill</u> , <u>Craig Macrae</u> and <u>Sunil Rodrigues</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Special Effects</u>	<u>YFX</u>	Nominated	

Notes

- a. The theatrical runtime of the film was 146 minutes.^[1] However, on Amazon Prime Video, it was released with an extension of +2 minutes (148 minutes).^[2]
- b. A metareference to the actors' careers as well, them forming part of the Khans of Bollywood.

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