

December, 2022

HARIT KHABAR

Monthly Newsletter featuring Environment Action by HCL Foundation



5

years of SORKHA



Animal Warriors are here!



A pigeon entangled in manjha

Thanks to the nylon manjha, this organisation receives more than a thousand bird rescue calls a year. **Animal Warriors Conservation Society (AWCS)** helps birds that are entrapped in nylon manjha and is dedicated to the conservation and protection of nature and wildlife. The AWCS team specialises in tactical rescue and disaster relief and works around rescue, conservation, and awareness.

With support from **HCL Foundation**, AWCS has set up a facility where birds entrapped in manjha are treated and rehabilitated. Once recovered, these birds are released back into their natural habitat. The facility also helps in educating communities, school children, youths and adults about the importance of avian conservation and the impacts of nylon manjha on birds.



A domestic cat entangled in manjha

Concern for Animal Care is Must

Sanjeev Kumar from the Animal Warriors Conservation Society participated in the grassroots comics workshop, conducted by World Comics India in collaboration with the HCL Foundation in Hyderabad last month and tackled a critical issue – animal rescue. In this interview, he talks about his comics and how it can be useful for environmental education.

Q1) What are the different areas that you and your organisation are involved in?

It is a common sight in Hyderabad to see people fly kites with nylon 'manjha' made of non-biodegradable materials. Birds often get entangled in this 'manjha' made of very tough material that can even slit human throats for hours and sometimes days. To tackle this, we have undertaken a responsible kite flying program with the HCL Foundation.

Under this initiative, we conduct awareness programs apart from rescue missions and cleanup drives. Apart from this, we have collected data over the last five years based on which we have identified manjha hotspots -- areas where 'manjha' is being used extensively and where it has impacted birds the most. We are conducting awareness sessions for school children and the next generation in these areas.

Q2) What was your comics about and why did you choose this issue?

My comic story was based on a personal experience. On the eve of the new year, a puppy got stuck between rocks in a tough and rocky terrain. It took us 48 hours to rescue the puppy. This issue is really important because we live in a human-centric world. Humans have logical brains and advanced technologies but only a handful of people care about animals and nature. Animals can survive in the wild on their own but we have created an unsustainable world by using plastics and digging holes, etc. This is what we are trying to highlight.

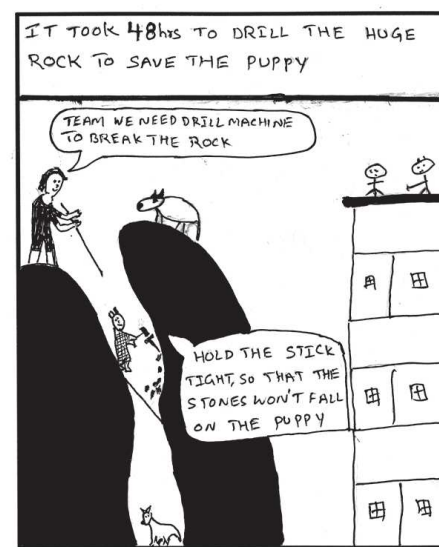
Q3) During the workshop, you inspired other participants to make comics on other critical environmental issues. Could you elaborate on other issues as well?

The first one was about a butterfly park, where we can build a small ecosystem within our household premises. It requires very less space and can be easily set up in our backyard. If we have nectar plants then bees and insects will come and slowly birds will follow them. Another issue is how plastic is affecting the oceans. Most people think we get oxygen from trees, but 70 to 80 per cent of oxygen comes from the oceans. And we are polluting it in different ways, whether it's household or industrial pollution.

Other than that I also discussed rainwater harvesting with a participant. These days, cities are experiencing rapid development and everywhere cement and tar are being used. As a result, we see very less soil and hence there is no absorption of water due to which groundwater levels are declining. Rainwater harvesting can prevent us from facing a critical drought crisis.

Q4) Did you share the comics that you created at the workshop with others?

Yes, I shared my comic story with a kid. He was curious to know about the rescue mission and asked questions like how did you break those huge rocks to save the puppy. Whatever was represented in the comics he could feel because of the visual narration. He told that the story was great and later thanked us.



Above: comics by Sanjeev Kumar



Sanjeev Kumar- An Animal Warrior in true sense

The highly anticipated COP27 concluded with a historic upshot – The constitution of a loss and damage Fund. The fund finally sees the light of day after years of debates and discussions and can prove to be a game changer in tackling the climate crisis. This fund is of extreme significance because global greenhouse gas emissions, a pertinent factor of climate change, are continuously rising. But what is the loss and damage fund and how can it be a game-changer? Let us find out more.

What is Loss and Damage Fund?

The loss and Damage fund is a fund specially designed to provide financial assistance to nations that are most susceptible and most affected by climate change. According to a report from the World Meteorological Organisation, the number of disasters has increased more than five-fold over the 50-year period.

The Loss and Damage Fund aspires to rehabilitate and help nations to combat climate change, especially those nations that are contributing least to global greenhouse gas emissions which ultimately lead to climate change. According to reports by 55 vulnerable countries, their combined climate-linked loss and damages over the last two decades were estimated at a total of a whopping US\$ 525 billion, which is 20 per cent of their collective GDP. As climate uncertainty rises, some research also suggests that by 2030, such losses could reach US\$ 580 billion per year.



Photo: iStock

Who pays and to whom?

The answer to this question is very straightforward. The rationale behind it is that rich countries with a history of high carbon emissions should pay to countries that can't avoid or adapt to climate change. This is because there is a high gap between emissions of what can be classified as 'developed' and 'developing' countries. According to the Emission Gap Report 2022 by UNEP, G20 members are responsible for 75 per cent of global GHG emissions.



Photo: iStock

Highlighting Nature-based solutions for Climate Resilience

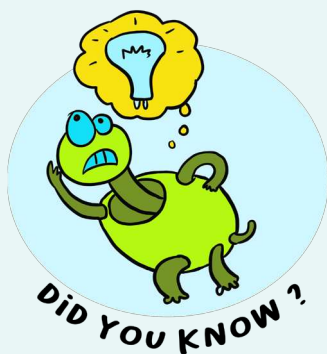
Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG), participated in COP-27 at Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt organised between 6th to 18th November 2022 and co-hosted various events on climate change, disaster risk reduction, nature-based solutions for climate resilience and so on. The experiences of project activities related to the strengthening of natural ecosystem services, supported by the HCL Foundation in GB Nagar, Noida were also shared in various sessions.



The session in collaboration with Earth Day Network International on 'Farmers for Earth: Deploying Nature-based Solutions in Agriculture for Climate and Disaster Resilience' highlighted the contribution of waterbodies in dealing with climate change stresses particularly to the poor and marginalized communities. In the session, GEAG emphasized the examples from India on locally-led climate actions and the need for making developmental interventions climate resilient – which also ensures resource optimization for resilience building. Climate resilience integration in Gram Panchayat Development Plans was narrated to be one example of having high scalability.

The following countries have pledged funds for Loss and Damage -

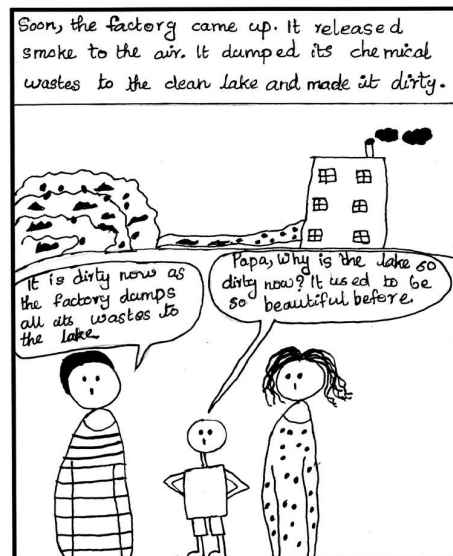
- Belgium - US\$2.5 million
- Austria - US\$52million over four years
- New Zealand - US\$12 million to 2025
- Germany - US\$177 million
- Canada - US\$6.2 million
- Ireland - US\$10.4 million
- Scotland - US\$2.2 million
- Denmark - US\$13.7 million



Source: thecommonwealth.org

ACT OR PERISH

- AFIYA P RAFEEL



CEE takes Climate Change Education forward

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) led by Sh. Kartikeya Sarabhai, Director, CEE India participated in COP27 and contributed to diverse talks and discussions relating to climate change.



Besides, CEE also attended the ACE Policy Dialogue on Unlocking Potential of Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) through Civil Society Engagement in Climate Adaptation.

With a focus on climate change education as the key enabler for sustainable development and positive climate actions, CEE used this opportunity to discuss and take forward this message among policymakers and practitioners alike. CEE followed the ACE negotiations, adaptation negotiations and India's mitigation ambition closely during this COP.



Across these five years, Give Me Trees Trust has –

- planted two lakh saplings mixed of plants, shrubs, and climber species
- created and developed sustainable wetlands with a plant-based filtering system to treat sewage water
- developed ten water harvesting stations
- developed ten composting stations that are filled with green waste to yield compost.

Doodling in the Forest

World Comics India organized a comics workshop at Harit Upvan Sorkha, Noida on 25 November 2022 to celebrate the completion of five years of the urban forest. This workshop was organised in partnership with the HCL Foundation and one of their partner organisation Give Me Trees Trust. The workshop was attended by around 50 participants which included children and women from the community and nearby villages and students and teachers from Shiv Nadar School, Noida.



Women and children from the community and nearby villages shared their experiences and gave everyone a glimpse of how the development of an urban forest has positively impacted them and the area.

Such discussions led us to the first exercise which was to draw that transformation. Participants were given A4 sheets and were asked to split the sheet into two parts. In the first part, they were asked to draw what came to



their minds when they think of the word environment before visiting the urban forest and in the second part, they were asked to show Harit Upvan and also write some captions that would communicate how the creation of an urban forest is beneficial for all.

Participants drew enthusiastically and also shared their observations, some participants focused on the benefits it had on humans such as fresh oxygen, and reduced temperatures inside the forest, while others mentioned how it helps to revive biodiversity and how so many animals find a safe place to stay. Meanwhile, participants also read comics related to environmental issues that were displayed and explained what they understood to all. All these exercises made an informational session enjoyable.

Celebrating Transformation

A barren land turns lush green with efforts from the Give Me Trees Trust (GMTT) and the HCL Foundation.

In this world where humans are bent on destroying ecosystems and cutting down forests in the name of 'development', seldom do we see any positive updates. However, Harit Upvan Sorkha, Noida has set an example of how can we bring about a positive change with our relentless efforts.

The challenge was simple, to turn 12.5 acres of barren land into a lush green forest. The Give Me Trees Trust's team worked day and night to bring this to reality and today, the forest completes its five years.

As a result of all of their hard work, the forest has now become a biodiversity spot and over a hundred species of mammals, birds, butterflies, amphibians, and reptiles have been spotted so far. This was achieved just because of a dedicated team especially Ram Prakash, Rama Shankar, Dinesh Bahadur, Jasveer and Veerwati from GMTT who are working tirelessly and hundreds of volunteers and HCL staff and nearby communities.

In Conversation with the Man Himself!

Better not to plant trees if you are not going to take care - Peepal Baba

Five years ago, it was all but a barren land. Now, it is a teeming ecosystem with birds, insects, butterflies and other associated biodiversity which reflects the love and care of its guardians led by Parivartan of Give Me Trees Trust, fondly known as Peepal Baba to his circle of friends and admirers.

Sorkha as this urban forest is known has completed five years recently and in partnership with the HCL Foundation, this green space amid a jungle of concrete, stands as a perfect example of what can be achieved if we are committed to protecting and preserving nature. In this interview, Peepal Baba looks back at the journey of Sorkha.



Peepal Baba (3rd from the left)- and his team

Q1. Please talk about your early beginnings that became a precursor to Sorkha?

I have been planting trees since the age of 11. I was basically inspired by my grandmother who told me to become a tree-planter. Since my father was in the army, I moved around the country planting trees along roadsides, besides water-bodies and wherever we could make the area green. I was very fond of peepal and neem and in fact in my later years at the Narayani Ashram in Allahabad, my guru told me that "trees have chosen you to be their builder and nourisher".

Q2. When did you first partner with the HCL Foundation?

Our partnership with the HCL Foundation dates back to 2014 when we first planted trees in a barren land in Sector-50, NOIDA. Later, they invited me for a discussion and collaboration and I told them that the only thing I know is planting trees. If you can make available some land to me, I will help create a thriving ecosystem there. That is how "Sorkha" came along.

Q3. Briefly describe the development of Sorkha?

Sorkha was like a green canvas when it came to us. We first removed the rocks and the plastic to make the land conducive to growing trees. Sorkha was developed in three phases, in the first phase; we planted trees following a 4X4 method. We also ran a campaign called "mitti ki khushboo" where we encouraged all and sundry to bring their kitchen waste so that it can be used as organic manure. In the second phase, we took care of the trees as our own babies and then in the final phase, we had the ecosystem thrive as the birds, butterflies and other insects came thronging!

Q4. How did you manage to continue the work at Sorkha during COVID-19?

Covid-19 was a blessing for us as not very many people came to the site Also; the air became purer as the lockdown ensured people stayed indoors. In fact, we redoubled our efforts during COVID-19 and it actually speeded up the process. We are also grateful to the HCL Foundation that they continued to repose faith in us and did not cut our budgets during this time.

Q5. What have been your learnings from Sorkha and the HCL partnership?

The HCL partnership helped us to upgrade our systems, to pick up the afforestation lingo and to systematically label, categorise and document what we were doing. Also, another big learning for us has been getting the community involved. Sorkha is the result of community engagement on a big scale – we had people from all over the country coming in just to plant trees.

Q6. In the final analysis, can you sum up the journey of Sorkha in a few words?

I think it is important for all us to realize that it is not just enough if you plant trees, you have to nurture and protect them as your own baby. My grandmother used to say that If you plant trees but do not take care of them, it is like infanticide. Better not to plant trees if you are not going to take care!

A Calender Full of Activities

To celebrate the fifth anniversary of Harit Upvan, Give Me Trees Trust and the HCL Foundation conducted month long community engagement activities from 12th to 27th November to share the success story of Sorkha.

The activities included –

- Nature Walk
- Butterfly Gardening Workshop
- Insect Hotel Workshop
- Comics Workshop
- Natural Colour Painting Workshop
- Clay Art Green Workshop
- Green Workshop
- Composting Workshop
- Nest-making Workshop
- Seed Ball Workshop
- Workshop on Field Technique
- Herbal Gardening Workshop
- Nursery Management Workshop

CLAY POT MAKING



SEED-PAPER MAKING



NEST-MAKING WORKSHOP

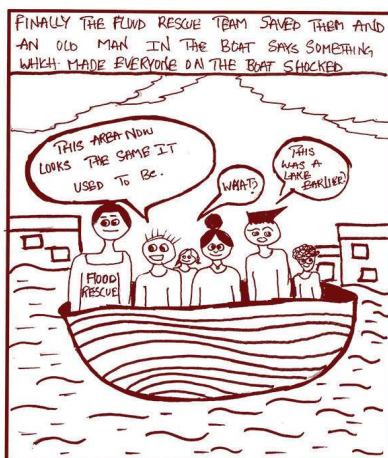
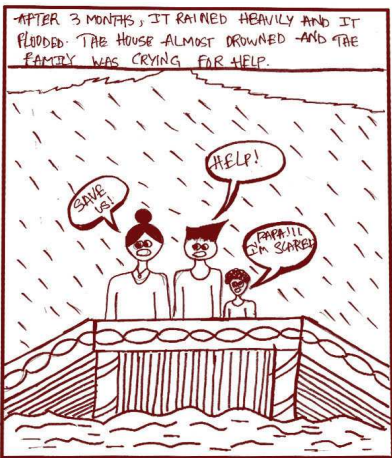
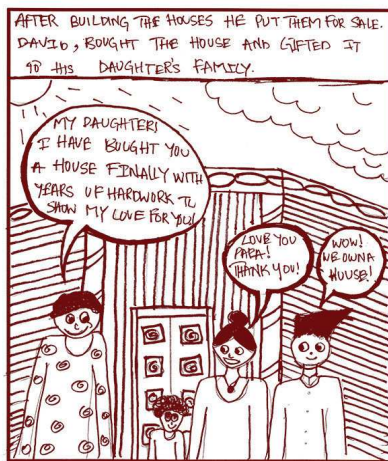


BUTTERFLY WALK



RECLAIM

- Dr. Ravshitha Rachel.



Wildlife Biologist bags UN honour



Wildlife biologist Dr Purnima Devi Barman, Photo: India Today NE

Indian wildlife biologist Dr Purnima Devi Barman received the United Nations (UN) highest environmental honour – Champions of the Earth in the Entrepreneurial Vision category. Dr Purnima leads the 'Hargila Army' which is

an all-female grassroots conservation movement committed to guarding the Greater Adjutant Stork against extinction. Today, this army consists of over 10000 women who work to protect nesting sites and rehabilitate injured storks. According to UNEP, since Dr Barman started her conservation programme, the number of nests in the villages of Dadara, Pachariya, and Singimari in Kamrup District has risen from 28 to more than 250, making this the largest breeding colony of greater adjutant storks in the world. Impressed by her work, the UN honoured the award to Dr Barman for her transformative action to prevent, halt and reverse ecosystem degradation.

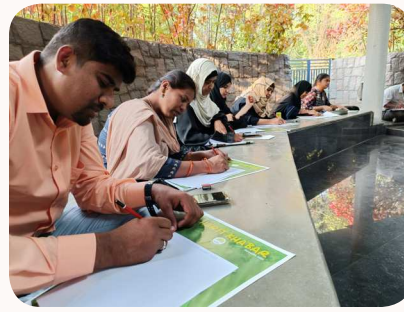
EVERY LIFE MATTERS



Vijaya Lakshmi Kanugula

Comics Workshop @ Hyderabad

Local issues emerged in four frames in the city of Charminar



Travelling across the country to propagate an effective communication tool that can be used for environmental education, the next stopover for the World Comics India team was Hyderabad. Under their initiative – Environmental Education through Grassroots Comics, World Comics India, in collaboration with the HCL Foundation conducted

their next workshop at the Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad from 15 to 17 November 2022.

The workshop was attended by staff members of various NGOs that are partnering with the HCL Foundation in and around Hyderabad. The workshop was a package of knowledge sharing and communicating that knowledge through a creative medium. Participants discussed critical environmental issues such as animal welfare and animal rescue, encroaching waterbodies resulting in unsustainable urban development, responsible consumption and reusing several products, etc.

The workshop provided an atmosphere where critical debates on environmental issues could be raised. At the end of the workshop and after three days of hard work, participants were able to convert all of these pertinent issues and stories into comics.

The workshop was also followed by a grassroots comics exhibition the next day wherein the proud creators showed their comic stories to school children and HCL Tech senior members at Government Girls High School, First Lancer.



Young Green Warrior from Tamil Nadu

Ten-year-old Prasiddhi Singh is a social entrepreneur and environmental activist, hailing from the Chengalpattu district of Tamil Nadu.

She is well noted for having led the plantation programme of thousands of trees and fourteen forests all across India, with a specific focus on the derogated Tamil region, through the 'Prasiddhi Forest Foundation' she has established.



Photo: Prasiddhi Forest Foundation

In Puducherry, Prasiddhi had regularly been carrying out environmental activities. She started with environmental activism in 2016 after Cyclone Vardah uprooted trees in her neighbourhood and destroyed villages and farmlands.

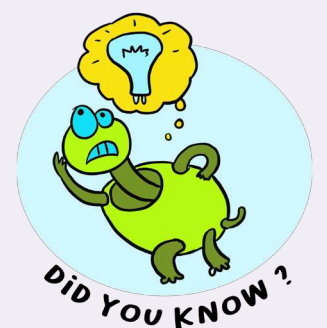
For her contributions in the field of social welfare, Singh was presented with the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar in 2021.

Wildlife Protection Bill to Stiffen Penalties

Wildlife Protection Bill 2022 was approved by the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, on December 8, 2022.

The legislation aims to stiffen penalties for unlawful wildlife trade as well as boost protections for endangered species.

Environment Minister Shri Bhupender Yadav who proposed the bill in the Rajya Sabha said that it is advantageous for local tribal groups as it inserts an explanation for certain approved activities like grazing, movement of livestock, etc.



DID YOU KNOW?

OZONE LAYER

PLANTATION AS SHEILD AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE



A simple plantation is the solution to many problems.
Countering Ozone layer depletion, Countering Greenhouse effect,
Preventing Soil erosion, Bring biodiversity back, Controlling Floods

Spreading Awareness through Wall Paintings



In partnership with the HCL Foundation, the ofERR team organized a series of wall painting events in different schools in Chennai from 15th to 20th November 2022. The wall paintings covered several themes such as environment, child labour, agriculture, etc. The wall paintings raised awareness among students and will help in building a conducive learning environment for students in the school.

Harit buddy quiz competition

Eco Roots Foundation under the project Green Window supported by HCL Foundation conducted the "Harit Buddy" Quiz & Art Competition at Rasta learning centres in Sarafabad, Noida. Little Harit Buddies are now our "change makers" and they will be further continuously sensitised to take Eco-friendly initiatives.



Environment Education through Nutrition Gardens

Aroha with the support of HCL Foundation is imparting Environment Education through nutrition gardens in 11 schools in Nagpur. Under this initiative, students of Vivekananda Nagar school learnt to separate earthworms from vermicompost. The school's terrace garden has also been equipped with bins for vermicompost. Leaf litter and green waste are being used to make vermicompost and the same has been provided to the school's garden.



Youth Engagement through Grove Walk

Centre for Urban Water Resources in collaboration with the HCL Foundation organised a Grove Walk session as part of the Youth Engagement Program-Thinaiodi. For the session, students were taken to Kundrangkadu- The Urban Sacred Grove in Madurai. Students were amazed to know that it was previously a dumping yard and were curious to know about the transformation. Students talked to the local community and understood their experience regarding the grove.



Know Your Soil



On the occasion of World Soil Day on 5 December, the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG) in partnership with the HCL Foundation conducted an awareness session on the importance of soil in Noida. Children from schools in GB Nagar and Police Line came together and learnt about the properties of soil, the importance of healthy soil, soil pollution, composting for healthy soils and so on. Using soil testing kits, children also tested the soil to understand the nutrient composition and were further trained on methods like composting to improve soil fertility.

Manjha cleanup and awareness drive

Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Trust (ARRT) with support from the HCL Foundation are taking their fight against the killer 'manjha' menace to the next level by conducting 'manjha' cleanup and awareness drives in school premises that are identified as 'manjha' hotspots.

On November 30th, ARRT conducted a session at the BBMP High School at Pulkeshi Nagar, Bengaluru.



Two interactive awareness sessions were conducted for a total of 180 children on the school premises. ARRT also distributed badminton rackets, skipping ropes and frisbee discs to promote alternate activities instead of kite flying.

Students internalized the issue and appealed to their fellow students to not use the 'manjha' thread and some of them also narrated incidents of personal injury that their family members suffered due to 'manjha'. At the end of the event, almost one kilogram of discarded 'manjha' thread was recovered, making the school environment safe for the birds to fly freely and safely in the skies.

International Mountain Day Celebrated

On the occasion of International Mountain Day, 11 December, Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group celebrated the importance of mountain ecosystems which are under the threat of over-exploitation and climate change. Students in Yakubpur Composite School, Noida gathered to learn about the importance of mountains for their ecological services like water, biodiversity, food, nutrition and carbon sequestration.



About the publication

HCL Foundation and World Comics India's collaborative initiative 'Harit Khabar' is a monthly newspaper that aims to educate people on environmental issues and challenges and raise community participation towards the cause of the environment. This publication has been launched to provide a platform to various partner organizations working in collaboration with the HCL Foundation's distinct flagship programme HCL Harit - The Green Initiative to showcase their work and accomplishments and also to create a network between them. Through Harit Khabar we aim to stir meaningful debates on critical issues concerning our environment and ecosystem, accessibility to environmental education and public participation in decision-making processes in the country.

About HCL Foundation

HCL Technologies implements its Corporate Social Responsibility agenda through its CSR arm, the HCL Foundation. Various flagship programs and special initiatives of the Foundation endeavor to contribute toward national and international development goals, bringing about lasting positive impact on people and the planet through long-term sustainable programs.

About World Comics India

Advancing Grassroots Comics as an alternate tool of communication to local communities, World Comics India has been continuously working for the past 20 years. Many successful mass campaigns have also been organized using this medium of communication.

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