

## Suriname

### **Political**

India enjoys close, warm and friendly relations with Suriname, reinforced by cultural and people to people contacts bridged by Indian Diaspora's arrival dating back to 146 years. Several high level visits have been exchanged since establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Suriname in 1976 with Indian Embassy opened in Paramaribo in 1977 and Surinamese Embassy in New Delhi in 2000.

The Vice President of Suriname H.E Ashwin Adhin, during his private visit to India in March 2016, called on the Hon'ble Prime Minister on March 11, 2016 and discussed bilateral issues including issues of mutual interest. In January 2017, VP Adhin was invited as the special guest in the Youth Pravasi Bharitya Divas, held in Bengaluru during January 06-09, 2017. During his visit he met Prime Minister on January 08 2017 on the side-lines of PBD Conference and held meetings with the Ministers of AYUSH and the Road Transport and Shipping. Besides those high profile meetings, he also met business entities to explore business opportunities and collaboration in the areas of Ayurveda, medicinal plants and contract farming. Minister of State, Gen (Retd) V.K.Singh visited Paramaribo on April 28, 2017 in connection with sixth Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) and Suriname and held bilateral meetings with the President, Vice President and Foreign Minister of Suriname.

President of India paid a state visit to Suriname from June 19-21, 2018 at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Suriname with a high level delegation comprising Mr. Vishnu Deo Sai, Minister of State for Steel. Five MOUs were signed in the areas of Centre of Excellence in ICT, Cooperation between the Electoral authorities, National Archives, Cooperation between diplomatic Institutes and Remunerative employment of dependents of the diplomatic personnel of the two countries. The two LOC agreements on EBS transmission line for US\$ 27.5mn and maintenance of Chetak helicopters for US\$ 3.5 mn were signed during the visit. An LOC of US\$ 20 mn for ISA project towards rural electrification of 50 villages of Suriname was also announced. India had earlier provided four Credit lines worth US\$ 57 million to Suriname to set up water pumps, power transmission lines, Crash Fire Tenders and coastal equipment.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu met with Vice President of Suriname Mr. Ashwin Adhin on September 09, 2018 on the margins of World Hindu Congress in Chicago and discussed bilateral relations including trade, investment, developmental cooperation and people to people contacts between the two countries. EAM held a bilateral meeting with MsYldiz Pollack Beigle, Foreign Minister of Suriname on the sidelines of 73<sup>rd</sup> UNGA in New York on September 26, 2018. Nine PIOs Members of Parliament from Suriname across the party lines participated in the first PIO Parliamentarian Conference held in New Delhi on January 09, 2018.

Two small grants projects for Community development and women entrepreneurship were announced during the visit of the President of India namely Craft Market place in Paramaribo for US\$ 175602 and every student a computer for US\$ 109800. The first lady of India donated US\$ 10,00 to Mytyl School as charity. Govt of India provided a cash assistance of US \$ 50000/- to the Government of Suriname for flood victims of the interiors in 2018. Earlier in 2017, General (Dr) V.K. Singh handed over a cheque of

US\$150,000 to the Government of Suriname as humanitarian assistance for the rehabilitation of the victims of flooding in Suriname. A grant of US\$ 29,988/- has been provided to the Surinamese government for school going children community development project in August, 2017. In 2015, Under Grant in Aid for LAC, the Ministry of External Affairs sanctioned a grant of US\$ 3,11,567.21 for upgrading of the Lands Hospital morgue in Paramaribo. Also a sum of US\$ 1, 69,400/- was made available as an assistance to the Institute for Natural Resources and Engineering Studies (NATIN) of Suriname.

## **Economy**

Trade and economic links between India and Suriname are modest. Indian export to Suriname consists of boilers, machinery, iron & steel, electrical machinery & equipment, sound recorders, pharmaceutical products, textiles, vehicles, coffee, tea and spices, rubber, paper, tobacco, organic chemicals, furniture, carpets, ceramic products, footwear and printed books; Indian import consists of wood, aluminium, textiles, herbal products, garments, spices, and electrical machinery :

### **Exports to India**

2016-17	US\$ 45.92 million
2017-18	US\$ 92.76 million
2018-19	US\$ 111.94 million

### **Imports from India**

2016-17	US\$ 10.59 million
2017-18	US\$ 17.38 million
2018-19	US\$ 1.34 million

Finance Minister of Suriname Gillmore Hoefdraad visited Mumbai from September 19-21, 2017 on a working visit; Agriculture Minister of Suriname Mr. Lekhram Soredjan held a bilateral meeting with his counterpart Shri Radha Mohan Singh on October 04, 2018 in New Delhi on the sidelines of ISA Conference and a high level delegation from Suriname led by Minister Regilio Dodson of Natural Resources (NH) participated in the Petrotech 2019 from February 10-12 organized by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

An Agreement to set up a Joint Commission was signed in September 1992 and six JCMs have been held so far. During 6<sup>th</sup> JCM held in Paramaribo in April, 2017, India announced US\$ 30 million as line of Credit to Suriname; signed three MoUs and the revised draft work plan in Agriculture for the years 2017-2021.

There is potential for Indian companies to trade and invest in MSME in Agriculture & Food processing sector, Gold, Oil, Bauxite, Kaolin, Solar Energy, Hydro, Pharmaceuticals, Ayush/traditional medicine, Innovative technology, Tourism and IT. There are a few Indian companies doing mostly trading in Suriname.

## **Culture**

Indian Cultural Centre in Suriname was opened in 1978 and pursues soft-power diplomacy initiatives including Hindi language, Kathak, Yoga and classical music. India provides yearly grant worth US 29500/- for promotion of Hindi in Suriname through Suriname Hindi Parishad.

A 12- member ICCR-sponsored Bhangra Group performed on November 26& 27, 2017 on the occasion of Deepavali and Independence Day of Suriname and a four member musical group led by Radhika Chopra sponsored by ICCR during the period May 27-June 07, 2018 participated in the 145<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indian arrival in Suriname. A Ramlila group from Ayodhya Research Institute visited Paramaribo in July-August 2018 and held several performances across Suriname;

During 2019 so far, an ICCR sponsored six member Rajasthani folk group led by Gazi Khan visited Suriname from February 16-20; an eight-member Qawwali group led by Mohammad Ahmad Warsi visited Suriname from March 17-22, 2019 on the occasion of Holi/Phagwa festival and held several performances; a Ramlila Group from Suriname participated in the “KumbhMela 2019 sponsored by the Ayodhya Research Institute.

Suriname celebrated National Ayurveda Day on October 16, 2017, a Congress on “Traditional systems of Medicine’ was organised in Paramaribo with the collaboration of Government of India. Dr. B.R.Patel, AYUSH expert from India was the keynote speaker in the Congress. Dr. A. Raghu, Joint Advisor visited Paramaribo from December 02-04, 2018 to take part in the National Ayurveda Day in Suriname and conducted various workshops and meetings along with Ambassador to promote Ayurveda and AYUSH cooperation with Suriname. An MoU on Traditional Systems of Medicine is in progress. IDY 2019 was celebrated in three districts of Suriname.

### **Indian community**

We are proud of the fact that in spite of the vast geographical distance, different time zones and cultural differences between their adopted countries and their country of origin, the Indian diaspora, which currently constitutes 27% of Suriname’s population of about 5.68 lakhs (and some 50 Sindhi families), arrived in Suriname 146 years ago never disconnected themselves with their roots. While fully assimilating with the local culture, they continued to cherish, uphold and pass down from one generation to another their traditions, rites and rituals, cuisine, language, folklore etc. and have made significant contribution in all spheres to the sustainable development of Suriname. It is gratifying to note that Suriname has also the distinction of the most prominent foreign country in the world in the field of promotion of Hindi language. There are currently 14 sitting PIO Members of Parliament, five PIO Ministers, Vice President of Suriname and Governor of Central Bank are also PIOs. The electronic travel authorisation system (eTVA) for Suriname has been implemented and vice versa. Both India and Suriname have implemented the MoU on waiver of visa for official and diplomatic passport holders. Under ITEC programme, over 400 Surinamese have benefited and over 100 under Know India Programme so far.

**Reference Books:** Suriname Discovered by Toon Fey; the History of Suriname by Hans Buddingh, Suriname in the long 20th century by Hoefte, Take me back Suriname by Astried Roemer, ‘Hoe duur was de siker ?’ (The Cost of Sugar), ‘It happened at Marienburg, Suriname’, by Cynthia McLoed, ‘Sarnami Hai or “Suriname I am” by Beatrice Sylvia Vianen.

## Barbados

### Political

India and Barbados enjoy friendly bilateral relations. This relationship is reinforced by our commonwealth membership, the English language and our love for cricket. Both are members of a large number of international and multilateral bodies including the 42-member developing countries platform of the L.69 Group and actively pushing for reforms of the UNSC through an expansion in both categories of membership. Both countries interact actively in the UN, Commonwealth and NAM. Barbados has supported India's candidature for Non-Permanent seat at UNSC and has also committed support for India's bid for Permanent Membership of UNSC. Barbados has also supported India's successful candidacies in the elections to International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Tribunal of the Laws of the Seas (ITLOS) and Executive Board of UNESCO and International Maritime Organizations (IMO) in 2018 and continued its support to India's candidature for WCO and WHO in 2019. Both countries work closely with each other in the multilateral fora.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Digvijay Singh paid a bilateral visit to Barbados from 15-17 June 2003. Finance Minister of India, Shri P. Chidambaram, visited Barbados to attend the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in September, 2005.

Mr. R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary visited Barbados from April 28-May 01, 2015 to hold the first ever Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). Late Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister met Senator Hon'ble Ms. Maxine McClean, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados on the sidelines of 3<sup>rd</sup> India-CARICOM meeting held in New York on September 19, 2017. Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry with Mr. Donville Inniss, Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development of Barbados on October 30, 2017 in Havana. Shri P.P. Chaudhary Minister of State Law & Justice and Corporate Affairs visited Barbados from April 25-28, 2018 under MEA's innovative outreach programme and met the then Prime Minister Freundel Stuart during a community reception on April 26, 2018.

### Economy

Trade and Commercial relations between the two countries are modest.

#### Exports to Barbados

2015-16	US \$ 10.50 million
2016-17	US\$ 12.39 million
2017-18	US \$ 12.74 million

Indian exports include vehicles, pharmaceuticals, textiles, iron & steel, organic chemicals, etc.

#### Imports from Barbados

2015-16 :	US \$ 0.17 million
2016-17	US \$ 0.18 million
2017-18	US \$ 0.20 million

Indian imports include electrical machinery, optical photography cinematographic equipment.

Indian company Larsen and Toubro has built a \$30 mn stadium in Barbados. Barbadian government has expressed interest in pursuing cooperation with India in the fields of information technology, cotton cultivation and textile industry, film industry, academic exchanges, cultural cooperation etc. Given the size of the country, Barbados enjoys relatively high prosperity owing to its flourishing tourism industry.

An MOU between Federation of Indian Export Organization (FIEO) and Barbados Chamber of Commerce was signed on trade cooperation in 2017. India and Barbados have signed Air Services Agreement on October 6, 2015, for facilitation of travel arrangements for the citizens and the possibility of direct air connectivity and chartered flight operations between the two countries. The agreement allows, inter alia, full fifth freedom rights including weekly operations of seven air services to each country. M/s Jet Airways from India has been designated to operate between India and Barbados on agreed services.

There are opportunities for Indian companies to import salt & sulphur, organic chemicals and wood pulp from Barbados, exports food items, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment & coffee/tea from India and investment in health care, agriculture, tourism, port development, road, renovation of stadium, running of international airport, digitization project, construction of hotel, wellness centres, convention centre, housing and international businesses and financial services, setting up BPOs, niche manufacturers (as raw material is not available such as eye lens) etc. The Barbadian side would also like to collaborate with India in Heritage Management, tele-medicine, training technicians, film sector, education, sports and culture. The education system of Barbados is sound. Barbados provides a sound platform for R&D centre, ICT etc.. They would very much like Indian IT and financial services professionals to work in Barbados.

## **Culture**

A 5-member devotional/light classical group led by Ms Indira Naik, visited Barbados on October 22-23, 2014. The event was attended by the Minister of Culture and members of the Diplomatic corps. Barbados is keen to attract the Indian Film Industry to shoot in their country, hold Film Festivals and award ceremonies. In order to promote technical cooperation between the two countries, India provides scholarships under ITEC to Barbados. The Indian Honorary Consulate in association with the Embassy in Paramaribo organizes cultural events from time to time. IDY 2019 was celebrated in Barbados.

## **Indian Community**

Approximately 2500 people of Indian origin have settled in Barbados and most of them have since acquired local nationality. Over 2000 of them are from Surat district of Gujarat known as "Suratis". There are also about 50 Sindhi families (150 members) mainly engaged in Business and 450 NRIs as medical students, professionals engaged in the fields of Education and Medicine, Financial Services & IT. Most of these PIOs have got assimilated in the mainstream local society. Barbados has been included in the list of eTV for 113 countries, whose nationals can avail visa on arrival in India. The Government of Barbados has included India in the list of countries whose nationals do not require visa with effect from June, 2019.

Reference books : Sugar in the Blood: A Family's Story of Slavery and Empire by Andrea Stuart, Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack (Paperback) by Austin Clarke; The Chosen Place, The Timeless People by Paule Marshall.

## **St. Lucia**

### **Political**

St. Lucia and India enjoy cordial relations and interact actively in the U.N., Commonwealth and NAM. St. Lucia is an active Commonwealth member and is also a member state of regional groupings such as CARICOM, Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

St Lucian Prime Minister Allen Chastanet held a bilateral meeting with PM Modi on April 19, 2018 on the sidelines of CHOGM summit and discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries and areas of mutual interests. Dr Kenny Anthony, the then Prime Minister of St Lucia met Indian Prime Minister on September 25, 2015 in New York on the sidelines of UNGA meeting. The two leaders held talks on developing bilateral relations between the two countries.

Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship(IC), Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy visited St Lucia from October 03-06, 2016 as part of the outreach initiatives of the Government of India where Ministerial level visits have not taken place in recent years. The visit of the Hon'ble Minister was historical from the bilateral relations perspective of the two nations. It generated huge interest among local business sectors, Indian diaspora, NRIs and various social organizations. Agriculture Minister of St. Lucia participated in the UN CCD Conference held in New Delhi in September, 2019.

St Lucia supported India's successful candidacies in the elections to International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Tribunal of the Laws of the Seas (ITLOS) and Executive Board of UNESCO and International Maritime Organizations (IMO) in 2018 and continued its support to India's candidacies for WCO, WHO and ICAO in 2019. Under India-UNDP, a Project amounting to US\$ 992723.88 for the 'Skills training for St. Lucia's marginalized youth' is in progress. St. Lucia has also benefited under IBSA Fund wherein a project concerning Poverty Reduction through Livestock Development for a sum of US\$ 1,291,100/- was completed in September, 2018 (duration of the project was June 2015 to September 2018). India has also joined CariCom Development Fund (CDF) as its International Development Partner in January, 2019 with contribution of US\$ one million and St. Lucia is also a member of CDF.

During the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria to Dominica in 2017, NRIs/PIOs, including students were evacuated to St. Lucia. The St. Lucian Ministry of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation extended full cooperation to the evacuees. India has handed over a cash donation of US\$500,000/- towards assistance in recovery and rehabilitation following flash floods in December, 2013. Earlier, in 2010, India had extended financial assistance of US\$ 250,000/- and medical equipment valued at over two hundred thousand US\$ towards reconstruction and rehabilitation of St. Jude hospital, which caught fire. Speaking on the occasion, then External Affairs Minister Hon'ble Rufus Bousquet said "Saint Lucia will never forget its diplomatic allies like India that came forward to assist in time of need".

Negotiations are underway with the Government of Saint Lucia on signing of MoUs on Extradition Treaty, visa waiver for official and diplomatic passport holders, Assistance in collection of taxes and International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement.

## **Economy**

There has been very limited bilateral trade between the two countries because of the very small size of the country with the total population of about 1,86,000.

### **Exports to Saint Lucia**

2015-16 US\$ 2.67 million

2016-17 US \$ 4.33 million

2017-18 US\$ 4.06 million

Indian exports include Iron & steel, vehicles, pharmaceuticals and textiles.

### **Imports from Saint Lucia**

2015-16 US\$ 0.45 million

2016-17 US \$ 0.24 million

2017-18 US\$ 0.32 million

Indian imports include iron & steel and aluminium scrap & organic chemicals.

## **Culture**

The Embassy participated in the 'Namaste St Lucia' annual event to celebrate Indian culture on 15th October, 2017. Ms Fortuna Belrose, Minister, Culture attended the event. International Day of Yoga and other cultural Events were celebrated during 2019 by the Embassy in association with Indian Cultural Foundation. There is also Indian Heritage Foundation in St. Lucia. In order to promote technical cooperation between the two countries, India is providing 10 scholarships slots to St. Lucia under ITEC during 2019-20 which are likely to be utilized. India has provided 10 ITEC slots to St Lucia during the year 2019-20.

## **Indian Community**

There are about 18600 persons of Indian origin including 5% are those who married to other communities. The PIOs came to St. Lucia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as indentured labour. However, most of these PIOs have assimilated into the local population and few of them maintain their identity. Most of them have changed their religion and names and are not in touch with India or Indian culture. There is one Cabinet Minister of Indian origin in the present Cabinet. There are a few rich businessmen also from the PIO community. There are about 550 NRIs consisting of Sindhis, Doctors, professionals, teachers and medical students.

St. Lucia has three Medical Universities viz Spartan Health Sciences University (SHSU), American International Medical University (AIMU) and International American University (IAU) where about 330 Indian students are pursuing medicine.

Reference Books : Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life by Bruce Alvin King; Voices From A Drumby Earl G. Long; Indigenous Peoples of Saint Lucia - Nouse Kalinagoby Sylvester H. Clauzel; History of St. Lucia, Caribbean Island, History of an Era: People, Economy,

Government (Kindle Edition) by Uzo Marvin; The Struggle for Survival: An Historical, Political, and Socioeconomic Perspective of St. Lucia (Hardcover) by Anderson Reynolds.

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## St. Vincent and the Grenadines

### **Political**

Since establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, SVG and India enjoy cordial and friendly relations and interact actively in the U.N., Commonwealth and NAM and various other international fora. It became independent on 27 October 1979. SVG supported India's candidature for Non-Permanent seat at UNSC and has also committed support for India's bid for Permanent Membership of UNSC as part of the L69 group. India has also supported SVG's non-permanent membership of UNSC. SVG has supported India's successful candidacies in the elections to International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Tribunal of the Laws of the Seas (ITLOS), Executive Board of UNESCO and International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2018 and continued its support to India's candidature for WCO, WHO and ICAO in 2019.

Dr Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines met Indian Prime Minister on September 24, 2015 in New York on the sidelines of UNGA meeting and extended an invitation to Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves to visit India, which he accepted. Shri P.P. Chaudhary Minister of State for Law & Justice and Corporate Affairs visited St. Vincent and the Grenadines from April 22-24, 2018 under MEA's innovative outreach programme and held bilateral talks with PM Dr Ralph Gonsalves. On 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2007, Mr. Vayalar Ravi, the then Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, attended the first ever celebrations of Indian Arrival Day organized by SVG Indian Heritage Foundation. During his one day visit to St. Vincent & the Grenadines, MOIA also had a meeting with Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent & the Grenadines.

India has handed over a cash donation of US\$500,000/- towards assistance in recovery and rehabilitation following flash floods in December, 2013. India had made a cash donation of US\$100,000/- towards recovery and rehabilitation following Hurricane Tomas in October 2010 and April 2011 flash floods and landslides. India provided an assistance of US 1.03 million to SVG in 2017 under UNIDO for modernization of Arrowroot Industry for climate change resilience and sustainable rural livelihoods for indigenous communities.

Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves had a highly successful official visit to India on 8-12 September, 2019. During his stay in India, Dr. Gonsalves met Prime Minister Shri Modi and External Affairs Minister. Three MoUs were signed and four MoUs will be signed soon between the two countries. Prime Minister Dr. Gonsalves also co-chaired the Session in the COP 14 Conference on Land, Climate and Renewable Energy held in New Delhi on 9-10 September, 2019.

### **Economic**

The trade volume between the two countries are miniscule due to the huge geographical distance.

Bilateral exports and imports during fiscal years April-March are as follows:

2016-17	US\$ 0.78 million
2017-18	US\$ 0.69 million &
2018-19	US\$ 0.75 million ((Import: US\$ 0.029 & Export: US\$ 0.73 million)

Top Export items from India to SVG are : pharmaceutical projects, plastic and articles thereof, articles of iron or steel, paper and paperboard, articles of paper pulp, of paper or of paperboard, misc manufactured articles. Details of import items are not available in the system of either India or SVG

## **Culture**

A cultural troupe from ICCR had visited the Island and performed at Indian Arrival Day of St. Vincent in 2011. The Queens Baton for Commonwealth Games also toured the Island in March, 2010. An ICCR-sponsored six member Rajasthani folk group led by Gazi Khan visited SVG on 22nd February, 2019 and held performance in Kingstown. The event was attended by PM Ralph Gonsalves and several other dignitaries. 5<sup>th</sup> edition of International Day of Yoga was celebrated at Kingstown Cruise Terminal, Kingstown, SVG on June 23, 2019 in association with SVG Indian Heritage Foundation. Minister of Transport, Works, Urban Development, and Local Government Hon'ble Julian Francis was the Guest of Honour. Mission sent a cultural troupe from Suriname to participate in SVG Indian arrival day on June 1, 2019.

India has provided 5 ITEC slots to St. Vincent and the Grenadines for the year 2019-20. Two Foreign Service officials Affairs participated in the PCFD/CARICOM special diplomatic training programme at Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi in 2017, one in PCFD, 2019 and three under special training programme for CariCom Diplomats in June, 2019. Two senior-level customs officials participated in the India-Caricom special training programme in customs and taxes held in India on 10-14 June, 2019 under ITEC.

## **Indian Community**

There are about 7700 persons of Indian origin residing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and 50 NRIs including Doctors, professionals, medical students. The PIOs had come to SVG in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as indentured labourers. Most of these PIOs have got completely assimilated in the mainstream local society and know very little about India, their forefathers and culture. Between 1861 and 1880, 8 ships arrived from India bringing a total of 2474 Indians, living on 23 estates.

PIOs in the Island established the St. Vincent & the Grenadines Indian Heritage Foundation in October, 2006 with an aim to revive and promote cultural and social links with India. SVG Indian Heritage Foundation has since been quite active and doing a good job to promote Indian soft power. 1<sup>st</sup> June has been declared as Indian Arrival Day in St. Vincent whereas 7<sup>th</sup> October has been declared as Indian Heritage Day. There are a few PIOs & Sindhi businessmen doing trading with India.

**Reference books:** St. Vincent and the Grenadines by Lesley Suttly; Islands of Eden: St. Vincent and the Grenadines by Ferenc Máté; Mr. Landsown Guilding best known for his works on the flora and fauna of St Vincent in particular; People on the Move: The Effects of Some Important Historical Events on the People of St. Vincent and the

Grenadines by Dr. Edgar Adams; Diary of a Prime Minister: Ten days among Benedictine Monks by Dr. Ralph Gonsalves and The Making of 'the Comrade': The Political Journey of Ralph Gonsalves.

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