



NEWS ROUNDUP

10 JULY 2025 [08:00 am]

- Rotten insects, viral videos and climate change: S.Korea battles 'lovebug' invasion
- European heatwave caused 2,300 deaths in 10 days, study finds
- Pope prays for world to recognize urgency of climate crisis as he celebrates Mass' using new rite
- Pope prays for world to recognize urgency of climate crisis
- Lamitan City: Building a future of progress, unity, resilience
- New Pagudpud seawall protects residents from storm surges, flooding
- [Opinion] New reporting standards boost meaningful climate action

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC highlights role of women, youth in climate resilience

ABS CBN

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

Rotten insects, viral videos and climate change: S.Korea battles 'lovebug' invasion

K-pop's BTS are grossed out by them. A YouTuber ate them. Hikers plough through them: South Korea is dealing with a "lovebug" invasion that experts say highlights worsening climate change.

First identified in South Korea a decade ago, Seoul is now annually hit by a weeks-long infestation of the *Plecia nearctica* insect, a type of March fly nicknamed "lovebug" for their distinctive mating behaviour, which sees them fly around in coupled pairs.

Huge clouds of the insects, which are harmless to humans, blanket apartment walls and mountain trails and, after they quickly die, leave behind piles of rotting black remains and a foul stench.

Complaints about the bugs, which scientists believe came from southern China and have surged with rising temperatures linked to climate change, have risen sharply, Seoul city data showed.

Even K-pop BTS idol RM is seen seemingly cursing upon spotting the insects in a viral video, with fellow bandmember Jin separately seen casually blowing a lovebug out of his way mid-performance.

"In general, many insects tend to grow more rapidly in warmer temperatures," Ju Jung-won, a deputy researcher at the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, told AFP.

"As for the lovebugs, it looks like the temperature and environment found in foreign regions where they are active are now taking hold in South Korea as well, allowing them to survive here."

At the peak of Gyeyangsan Mountain in Incheon, west of Seoul, public servants wearing makeshift protective gear struggled to clear piles of dead insects, as vast swarms of the bugs circled in the air, making it hard for people in the area to keep their eyes open.

At their worst, the piles of dead lovebugs in parts of the mountain were "stacked more than 10 centimetres (four inches) high," said Jung Yong-sun, 59, who was tasked with pest-control duties.

Walking through them, he added, "felt like stepping on something soft and cushiony."

The unpleasant odour took many by surprise.

"At first, I thought it was food waste... Turns out, it was the stench of dead bugs," said Ahn So-young, a 29-year-old hiker.

"I cried when I came up here. I was so scared."

'REALLY DELICIOUS'

Park Sun-jae, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Biological Resources, told AFP that the bugs were first reported in South Korea in Incheon in 2015.

"Since 2022, the population has begun to surge," Park said, adding that they were now "found throughout the greater Seoul metropolitan area".

This year, the infestation has been widely documented online, with content creators flocking to the worst-affected areas to cash in on the inundation.

One YouTuber collected a massive pile of the bugs and turned them into a "burger patty", mixing them into batter before frying and eating them on camera.

"It's not bad. It's really delicious," he said in the video, which has garnered more than 648,000 views.

On Gyeyangsan Mountain, content creators Kim Ji-young and Sam Jung intentionally dressed in white — a colour known to attract the bugs — and filmed themselves being swarmed.

"This is probably something I'll never experience again in my lifetime," Jung said, as his hat and clothes were crawling with the bugs.

BENEFICIAL INSECTS?

But for many Seoul residents, the bugs aren't just a viral moment. They are disrupting daily routines.

In Daejo Market in Seoul's Eunpyeong district, restaurant owners had to constantly blow the bugs away to protect their ingredients.

Dead insects kept piling up on the floor -- putting severe pressure to the cleaners' workload.

"I want to be able to eat lunch without worrying about lovebugs landing on my face or getting into my food," business owner Chang Seo-young, 48, told AFP.

Lovebugs — seen by South Korean officials as "beneficial insects" for breaking down plant matter — typically disappear naturally by early July.

But scientists warn that given the unpredictability of the climate crisis, the possibility of insect species -- including ones more harmful than lovebugs -- invading the country cannot be ruled out.

"I worry that future generations will have to suffer so much," said Jeon In-hyeop, a 29-year-old visitor to Gyeyangsan Mountain, after surveying parts of the summit covered in bugs.

"I feel like our children might end up living in a much more unfortunate world."

AL JAZEERA

[European heatwave caused 2,300 deaths in 10 days, study finds](#)

Some 2,300 people are likely to have died of heat-related causes across 12 European cities during a severe heatwave that ended last week, with two-thirds of the deaths directly linked to climate change, according to a new study.

The analysis, published on Wednesday, focused on the 10-day period between June 23 and July 2, during which large parts of Western Europe were hit by extreme heat, with temperatures breaching 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in Spain and wildfires breaking out in France.

It covered 12 cities with a combined population of more than 30 million, including Barcelona, Madrid, London and Milan, where the study said climate change had increased heatwave temperatures by up to 4C (39.2F).

Of the 2,300 people estimated to have died during this period, 1,500 deaths were linked to climate change, which made the heatwave more severe, said the study conducted by more than a dozen researchers from five European institutions in the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland.

“Climate change has made it significantly hotter than it would have been, which in turn makes it a lot more dangerous,” said Ben Clarke, a researcher at Imperial College London, one of the institutions involved in the study.

‘Silent killers’

The researchers used established epidemiological models and historical mortality data to estimate the death toll, which reflects deaths where heat was the underlying reason for mortality, including whether exposure exacerbated existing health conditions.

To assess what role climate change played, scientists compared how intense a heatwave would have been in a world that had not warmed due to burning masses of fossil fuels.

They concluded the heatwave “would have been 2-4C (35.6-39.2F) cooler” without human-induced climate change in all but one of the 12 cities studied, noting that the added degrees greatly elevated the risk in these cities.

“What that does [the increased temperatures] is it brings certain groups of people into more dangerous territory,” said Clarke. “For some people, it’s still warm, fine weather. But for now, a huge sector of the population, it’s more dangerous,” he told reporters.

Heatwaves are particularly dangerous for the elderly, the sick, young children, outdoor workers and anyone exposed to high temperatures for prolonged periods without relief.

The effect on health is compounded in cities, where heat is absorbed by paved surfaces and buildings, making urban areas much hotter than their surroundings.

The scientists said they used peer-reviewed methods to quickly produce the estimated death toll, because most heat-related deaths are not officially reported and some governments do not release this data. A more definitive death toll from the recent heatwave could take weeks to produce.

“An increase in heatwave temperature of just two or four degrees can mean the difference between life and death for thousands of people,” said Garyfallos Konstantinoudis, a lecturer at Imperial College London.

“This is why heatwaves are known as silent killers. Most heat-related deaths occur in homes and hospitals out of public view and are rarely reported,” he told reporters.

‘Difference between life and death’

Meanwhile, the European Union’s Copernicus Climate Change Service said in a monthly bulletin on Wednesday that last month was the planet’s third-hottest June on record, behind the same month in 2024 and 2023.

Western Europe experienced its warmest June on record, with much of the region experiencing “very strong heat stress” during the first heatwave of the summer – defined by conditions that feel like a temperature of 38C (100.4F) or more, Copernicus said.

“In a warming world, heatwaves are likely to become more frequent, more intense and impact more people across Europe,” said Samantha Burgess, Copernicus’s strategic lead for climate.

Researchers from European health institutes reported in 2023 that as many as 61,000 people may have died in Europe’s sweltering heatwaves the previous year, according to new research, suggesting countries’ heat preparedness efforts are falling fatally short.

The build-up of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere – which mostly come from the burning of fossil fuels – means the planet’s average temperature has increased over time. This increase in baseline temperatures means that when a heatwave comes, temperatures can surge to higher peaks.

Copernicus said large parts of southern Europe experienced so-called “tropical nights” during the heatwave, when overnight temperatures don’t fall low enough to let the body recover.

MANILA BULLETIN

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Pope Leo XIV prayed Wednesday for the world to recognize the urgency of the climate crisis and “hear the cry of the poor,” as he celebrated the first papal Mass using a new set of prayers and readings inspired by Pope Francis' environmental legacy.

The Mass, in the gardens of the Vatican's new ecological educational center at the papal summer estate in Castel Gandolfo, indicated a strong line of ecological continuity with Francis, who made environmental protection a hallmark of his pontificate.

Wearing flowing green vestments, Leo presided at the liturgy in front of a statue of the Madonna and at the foot of a reflecting pool, immersed in the lush green gardens on an unusually cool summer day. He said the world needed to change its mindset about the planet and what is causing “the world to burn.”

“We must pray for the conversion of so many people, inside and out of the church, who still don't recognize the urgency of caring for our common home,” he said. “We see so many natural disasters in the world, nearly every day and in so many countries, that are in part caused by the excesses of being human, with our lifestyle.”

An encyclical inspires a movement

The private Mass was celebrated for about 50 staffers of the Laudato Si center, named for Francis' 2015 environmental encyclical Praised Be (Laudato Si in Latin), in which the first pope from the Global South blasted the way wealthy countries and multinational corporations had exploited the Earth and its most vulnerable people for profit.

Leo approved the new Mass formula “for the care of creation,” directing it to be added to the list of 49 Masses that have been developed over centuries for a specific need or occasion. Officials said it was crafted in response to requests stemming from Francis' encyclical, which in its 10 years has inspired a whole church movement and foundation to educate, advocate and sensitize the world to the biblically mandated call to care for nature.

Leo, history's first American pope, has indicated he intends to further Francis' ecological legacy.

A longtime missionary in Peru, Leo experienced firsthand the effects of climate change on vulnerable communities and has already spoken out about the need for climate justice for Indigenous peoples, in particular. In a message for the church's annual day of prayer for creation, Leo blasted the “injustice, violations of international law and the rights of peoples, grave inequalities and the greed that fuels them are spawning deforestation, pollution and the loss of biodiversity.”

He made no equivocations about what or who was to blame, identifying “climate change provoked by human activity.”

A Mass in nature's cathedral

Leo celebrated the Mass during the first days of his vacation at Castel Gandolfo, a hilltop town overlooking Lake Alban in the cool hills south of Rome. He arrived on Sunday and will spend an initial two weeks there before returning to the Vatican and then heading back in August.

He told those gathered that they were celebrating Mass in “what we might call a natural cathedral,” surrounded by plants, flowers and nature. He said humanity’s mission is the same as Christ’s: to protect creation and bring peace and reconciliation in the world.

“We hear the cry of the earth, we hear the cry of the poor, because this cry has reached the heart of God,” he said. “Our indignation is his, our work is his.”

Archbishop Vittorio Viola, a Vatican official who helped craft the new liturgy formula, said the celebration Wednesday in the gardens was “ideal” given both its natural and symbolic significance.

“The intuition that Pope Francis had was to think about this place as a sort of Laudato Si laboratory, a place that isn’t about a superficial ecology, but provides a theological understanding of creation that then becomes action,” he said.

A carbon-neutral Vatican

In another sign of his environmental commitment, Leo has indicated he plans to execute one of Francis’ most important ecological legacies: The development of a 430-hectare (1063-acre) field in northern Rome into a solar farm that would generate enough electricity to meet the Vatican’s needs and thus make Vatican City the world’s first carbon-neutral state.

The development would require an investment of just under 100 million euros (about \$117 million), officials say, and needs the approval of the Italian parliament since the territory enjoys extraterritorial status that needs to be extended.

Last year, Francis tasked a commission of Vatican officials with developing the Santa Maria di Galeria site, which was long the source of controversy because of electromagnetic waves emitted by Vatican Radio towers there.

Leo visited the site in June and called it a “wonderful opportunity.” He told RAI state television that the creation of such a farm would set “a very important example: we are all aware of the effects of climate change, and we really need to take care of the whole of creation, as Pope Francis has taught so clearly.”

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Pope Leo XIV leads the Mass for the Care of Creation, in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, Wednesday, July 9, 2025. (Yara Nardi/Pool Via AP)

Pope Leo XIV leads the Mass for the Care of Creation, in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, Wednesday, July 9, 2025. — Photo via Associated Press

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PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Lamitan City: Building a future of progress, unity, resilience

By: Nilda Delos Reyes

Lamitan City is forging ahead into a new era of growth and development, driven by a visionary commitment to building a resilient and inclusive community.

Recent developments signal a bright future, with transformative infrastructure projects and initiatives aimed at uplifting lives, boosting the economy, and strengthening regional connectivity.

In his recent State of the City Address (SOCA), Mayor Roderick Furigay highlighted the city's ambitious plans, emphasizing that 2026 will be a pivotal year in Lamitan's development.

"2026 will mark a historic turning point in the development of Lamitan City. With the support of BARMM, national agencies and our local partners, we launched a lineup of midterm infrastructure," he said.

Among significant initiatives is the construction of a P110 million farm-to-market road spanning 4.3 kilometers in Barangay Ubit. This vital infrastructure will link remote farming communities to local markets, making it easier for farmers to transport their produce and expand their economic prospects. By improving access to markets, the project aims to uplift rural livelihoods and stimulate local economic activity.

One of the most anticipated developments is the Basilan Airport – a long-awaited development that will serve as a gateway for the province to connect with the rest of the country and beyond. Once completed, the airport will open new opportunities in tourism, trade and investment, positioning not only Lamitan City but the whole province as a key player in regional development.

"After years of planning and coordination, we are finally starting preparations for the Basilan Airport," Furigay stressed.

Recognizing the importance of nurturing talent and fostering community spirit, Lamitan City is also developing a state-of-the-art Basilan Sports Complex. This facility will host regional sports events, serve as a training ground for local athletes, and become a hub for youth engagement.

Complementing this, is the establishment of the Lamitan City Science High School in Little Cebu, a flagship educational institution designed to cultivate local scholars and innovators, keeping bright minds in the city.

Furthermore, Lamitan City in partnership with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU), is also set to launch a P32.5 million

housing project, providing families with access to safe, affordable homes—because development is meaningful only when everyone feels secure.

Additionally, a P98 million Water System Project will bring safe drinking water to Barangays Arco, Tumakid, and Tandung Ahas, addressing a vital need for health and sanitation.

In an era of climate change, Mayor Furigay said that Lamitan City is taking proactive steps to safeguard its communities.

“To protect our environment and public health, we are also developing a 510M Sanitary Landfill and a Septage Treatment Facility – long-overdue solutions that will manage waste responsibly and sustainably,” he underlined.

“And to protect our people from the growing threat of climate change, we are preparing the implementation of a 2.1B Comprehensive Flood Control System—a strategic project designed to prevent flash floods, safeguard livelihoods, and build resilience across low-lying barangays,” he added.

Mayor Furigay also highlighted the city’s ambitious vision that is more connected, more competitive, more caring, and more prepared for the challenges of tomorrow.

“Together, we are not just building structures, we are building confidence, we are building dignity. We are building Lamitan.”

Lamiteños look forward to seeing that as these projects come to life, Lamitan City is transformed into a model city—an inspiring example of resilience and inclusive development. With a strong foundation and a clear vision, Lamitan City is confidently paving the way for a brighter future for all its residents.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

New Pagudpud seawall protects residents from storm surges, flooding

By: Leilanie Adriano

A recently completed seawall is now serving its purpose of protecting lives, property and environment in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said on Wednesday.

In a statement, District Engineer Glenn Miguel said the flood control project is worth more than PHP18 million, with the fund sourced from the General Appropriations Act of 2025.

"The project involves key components such as the driving of steel sheet piles, embankment works, rubble concrete, hand-laid rock embankment, and structural concrete," Miguel said.

He said the 100-meter seawall, located in Barangay Pancian, was constructed to address the growing threat of coastal flooding and erosion in the area.

"The seawall is part of our proactive efforts to strengthen the coastal resilience of vulnerable communities," Miguel said. "It is a vital structure that ensures both environmental protection and public safety."

For residents, the seawall also serves as an added site for recreational activities as the structure is ideal for jogging and walking.

"Jogging and walking at the seawall is fun and relaxing. At the same time, it plays a vital role in protecting our shoreline from the damaging effects of waves," Leizel Jane Agtang, a resident of Pancian, said.

As coastal areas continue to feel the impact of climate change, the DPWH said projects such as the seawall reflect the government's commitment to both sustainability and community development.

It said that by reducing the risks of natural hazards while creating shared public spaces, the seawall offers lasting value to both residents and visitors alike.

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[\[Opinion\] New reporting standards boost meaningful climate action](#)

In a press conference in Amsterdam on June 26, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) introduced a new set of climate change and energy reporting standards intended “to drive corporate accountability and deliver accessible, decision-useful disclosure” of emissions reduction and climate mitigation actions. This is welcome news, as the new standards are a marked improvement over their previous versions, and should make climate reporting easier and more accurate for organizations.

The GRI is an independent, nonprofit organization that describes itself as “the architect of the common global language to assess and report on environmental, social and economic impacts.” It works in conjunction with the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB), a multi-stakeholder body with responsibility for setting the GRI Standards. GRI and GSSB have existed for more than 25 years, and have become the acknowledged authority on corporate environmental and sustainability reporting.

Use of the GRI Standards as the basis for corporate disclosures is compulsory in some countries. It is not yet in the Philippines, though both the Philippine Stock Exchange and the Securities and Exchange Commission encourage the use of globally recognized standards, including GRI. As of now, the government does plan to make sustainability reporting mandatory beginning next year, and the GRI Standards are likely to be the chosen format; currently, the GRI is working with the Department of Trade and Industry to train businesses, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises, in sustainability best practices and reporting.

Thus, the update to the GRI Standards comes at an opportune time for enterprises here, which may have found existing reporting standards a bit complex and difficult to manage. There were essentially two changes adopted, which created new standards called GRI 102 and GRI 103.

GRI 102 addresses the climate change aspect of sustainability and emphasizes that achieving substantial reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is the primary mitigation step organizations can take. It establishes reporting expectations according to science-based targets and global climate goals, but also incorporates “just transition metrics” to account for impacts on workers and local communities. What this means in practice is that organizations will likely be held to a “comply or explain” standard, wherein they either report that they have met the standards, or explain what specific circumstances have been obstacles to their being able to do so. This has come under some criticism as it might allow companies to avoid taking significant action, but actual results will have to wait until the standard is put into practice.

GRI 103 addresses energy-related impacts and activities. It establishes standards for disclosures on decarbonization efforts, renewable and nonrenewable energy use, as

well as where and how energy reductions occur, and positions responsible energy use as a central component of a company's approach to climate change mitigation.

Perhaps most importantly, the new standards, in particular GRI 102, are designed to be complementary to the IFRS 2 climate-related disclosures standards set by the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB), which are followed by some companies. GRI 102 and IFRS 2 can be used interchangeably or together. The GSSB and ISSB confirmed this with a joint statement that explains how organizations can use equivalent disclosures in IFRS S2 on Scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions to meet corresponding requirements in GRI 102, providing they measure their GHG emissions in accordance with the GHG Protocol and reference the location of the disclosure in their GRI content index. This should allay any concerns of Philippine businesses currently using ISSB standards that a switch to a mandatory GRI-based reporting framework, if that is the eventual choice of the government, will force them to change the way they presently manage their sustainability reporting.

Accurate and consistent sustainability reporting is not only important for an organization's reputation as a good corporate citizen, it supplies critical information for the development of national and global climate mitigation and adaptation policies. Making the standards clearer and compatible with existing reporting frameworks is imperative to ensuring complete and accurate data is consistently available to guide those policies.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

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[CCC highlights role of women, youth in climate resilience](#)

By: John Lester Naguna

Small everyday actions by women and youth can lead to significant solutions in the fight against the climate crisis, according to Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera of the Climate Change Commission.

In an interview on “Impormasyon at Aksyon” radio program of PIA and Radyo Pilipinas, Commissioner Herrera emphasized that the Philippine Resilience Awards (PRA) not only seeks large-scale programs but also celebrates individual contributions that foster a more resilient Philippines.

“Ang kabataan at kababaihan ay may malaking pwedeng gampanan sa paghanap ng mga solusyon laban sa krisis sa klima,” Commissioner Herrera said. “Hindi lang malaking programa, yan ang hinahanap natin dito sa PRA, pero sa lahat ng ating mga tagapakinig kahit ang ating pang-araw-araw na buhay, doon natin pwedeng gawin ng mga kahit maliliit na bagay na pwede tayong mag-contribute sa solusyon sa pangangalaga sa ating planeta, kalikasan, and to look for solutions para mas resilient ang ating sariling pamilya, ating komunidad, at pati na ang ating bansa.”

(The youth and women have a big role to play in finding solutions to the climate crisis. What we are looking for here at PRA is not just large-scale programs, but we are encouraging everyone, including our listeners, to take action even in our daily lives. Through small things, we can contribute to protecting our planet, ensuring safety, and finding solutions to make our families, our communities, and even our country more resilient.)

With the theme “Kabataan at Kababaihan: Katuwang sa Paghahabi ng Isang Matatag na Bayan (Youth and Women: Partners in weaving a resilient nation),” this year’s PRA highlights the vital role of youth and women in strengthening community resilience and driving sustainable development. It underscores how their leadership, innovation, and advocacy contribute to a more climate-smart and disaster-prepared Philippines.

The Philippine Resilience Awards is a nationwide search recognizing exceptional contributions to climate change adaptation and environmental protection. Commissioner Herrera explained that the PRA is about identifying “transformative leaders” who have found ways to strengthen environmental protection and community resilience against the impacts of climate change.

The PRA is a collaborative initiative spearheaded by the Office of Senator Loren Legarda, in partnership with the Climate Change Commission, the Philippine Commission on Women, the National Resilience Council, SM Prime, ARISE Philippines,

and the Women's International Network on Disaster Risk Reduction – Philippines. The awards feature two main categories: one for women leaders and another for youth.

As an example of the innovative leadership recognized by the PRA, Commissioner Herrera shared the story of an employee of the Manila City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO), an awardee in the 2024 PRA.

“Siya po ay actually kawani po ng Manila pero may innovation na talagang binuhat niya po yung project na of course sinuportahan po yun ng ating mga taga-Manila na mapamodernize yung early warning para sa mga sakuna o pagbaha, pagulan. Gumamit po sila ng technology na mga GIS, so using satellite information.”

(She is actually an employee of Manila, but she personally carried the innovation behind the project, which was, of course, supported by the people of Manila, to modernize the early warning system for disasters such as floods and heavy rains. They used technology like GIS, utilizing satellite information.)

She further emphasized the unique nature of this achievement: “Nakitaan po natin siya ng different kind of leadership because hindi po lahat ng office na may ganoon klaseng gamit o tools na isulong sa kanilang lugar. So binigyan po natin siya ng pagkilala for their innovation and leadership na nakapag-benefit ang lungsod ng Maynila at constituents nila doon.”

(We saw in her a different kind of leadership because not all offices have the kind of equipment or tools that they were able to advance in their area. So we gave her recognition for their innovation and leadership, which have benefited the City of Manila and its constituents.)

This recognition underscores the Manila DRRMO's proactive adoption of advanced technology, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and satellite information, to enhance the city's preparedness against natural calamities.

The Philippine Resilience Awards continues to seek out individuals making a significant difference in their communities. Nominations for both the Youth category and Women category are open through the PRA portal.

Youth category: <https://www.jotform.com/form/251401390797459>

Women category: <https://form.jotform.com/251391412471451>

The deadline for submissions is June 30, 2025.

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