BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Private Investigation & Detective Agency

Background verification, due diligence, claim investigation and brand protection, conducted lawfully

SECURITY

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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This document is confidential and prepared for planning purposes. All financial figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian MSME context and must be validated against live quotes, local rates and professional advice before any investment or borrowing decision.

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Private Investigation & Detective Agency** in India — providing **employment background verification, corporate due diligence and integrity checks, insurance claim investigation, matrimonial and personal verification, and brand-protection and market surveillance** , delivered through in-house analysts and an empanelled field network across cities.

Demand is real and growing: employers verify candidates at scale, insurers investigate claims, companies check counterparties before transacting, and brands pursue counterfeiters. These are legitimate commercial needs served by a professional investigation industry in every developed market.

> **This plan opens with the point that determines whether such a business is viable or criminal — because a great deal of what clients ask a detective agency in India to do cannot lawfully be done.** Requests for **call detail records, bank statements, phone location tracking, Aadhaar-linked data, medical records or intercepted communications** are commonplace, and none of them can be lawfully obtained by a private agency. **Interception of communications is reserved to authorised government agencies** under the Telegraph Act and IT Act framework; unauthorised access to a computer resource, and impersonation to obtain data, are offences under the IT Act; and personal data processing now carries obligations under the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023**. Private procurement of call records has led to actual criminal prosecutions in India, of investigators and of the people who commissioned them. **A legitimate agency is therefore built on what can be done lawfully, and declining the rest is a core professional competence rather than a lost sale.**

> **Two related facts a promoter must hold clearly.** First, **a private investigator has no special powers whatsoever** — precisely the rights of any other citizen, with no authority to detain, search, compel disclosure or access restricted records. Second, **India has no central licensing regime for private detectives**; a regulation bill has been proposed but not enacted. **That absence of regulation is not permission.** Ordinary criminal law and data-protection law apply in full, and the lack of a licensing authority means there is no regulator to grant an exemption — only courts to assign liability afterwards. Built correctly on lawful methods, this is a genuine and profitable business: this plan models an agency requiring **₹75 lakh** (₹35 lakh promoter + ₹12 lakh term loan + ₹28 lakh working-capital finance), moving from **₹3.5 crore revenue and a ₹6 lakh loss** in Year 1 to **₹8.25 crore revenue and ₹96 lakh profit** by Year 3. *(Investigation services; cases × fee, lawful-method- & network-driven, asset-light — figures illustrative.)*

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: A private investigation agency - employment verification, corporate due diligence, insurance claim investigation, personal verification and brand protection, delivered lawfully through analysts, public-record research and a field network.

Vision: To be the agency whose findings stand up - because of how they were obtained, not merely what they say.

Mission: Investigate within the law, document the method as carefully as the finding, and tell clients honestly what cannot be done.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited** — recommended: corporate and BFSI empanelment, data-processing agreements, professional-indemnity insurance and client due diligence all assess the entity.
- **LLP / Proprietorship** — workable at small scale, but corporate clients handling personal data increasingly require a company with demonstrable governance.

> **Regulatory anchor — the boundaries, stated as they actually are.** There is no detective-agency licence in India, so compliance rests on general law. **The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** governs processing of personal data: an agency conducting background checks is a data processor acting for a client, requiring lawful basis — in employment verification, ordinarily the **candidate's informed consent** — purpose limitation, security safeguards and retention limits. The **IT Act** makes unauthorised access to computer systems and identity impersonation to obtain data offences. **Telecom interception and call-detail-record access are restricted to authorised agencies**; procuring them privately is unlawful for both supplier and client. Trespass, coercion and impersonation of public officials are ordinary criminal offences with no professional exemption. What *is* lawful is substantial: verification with consent, research of genuinely public records including court records, physical observation in public places, interviews with willing participants, and open-source research. **Add professional-indemnity insurance, written client engagement terms defining scope and lawful limits, and documented conflict checks.**

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with investigation, law-enforcement, risk-consulting or corporate-security background. The competences that matter are *method discipline* — obtaining findings by means that will withstand scrutiny — and *volume operations*, since employment verification is a high-throughput, turnaround-driven business quite unlike case investigation. The team combines verification analysts, field investigators, case specialists, technology, and a legal and compliance function. Method integrity, turnaround, network coverage & discretion are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any partner are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

Demand is driven by corporate hiring volumes and screening norms, insurance penetration and claim volumes, transaction due diligence, counterfeit and brand-abuse growth, and increasing corporate governance expectations. Demand is employment-, claim- & transaction-driven. The market rewards turnaround, accuracy, coverage & defensible method; it is **volume-competitive in verification and reputation-driven in case work** .

Demand drivers

- **Corporate hiring & screening norms** — background verification is now standard practice in IT, BFSI, healthcare and organised sectors.
- **Gig and contract workforce growth** — platform and staffing companies verifying large volumes of workers.
- **Insurance claim volumes** — insurers investigating health, motor and life claims where indicators warrant.
- **Transaction & counterparty due diligence** — companies checking vendors, partners, distributors and investment targets.
- **Counterfeiting & brand abuse** — brand owners requiring market surveillance and evidence for enforcement.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Indian background verification & investigation services	Large, growing
SAM	Addressable corporate, insurer & brand clients	Serviceable
SOM (Yr 1–3)	Cases & checks completed; network coverage	Scaling with capacity

Target segments

- Corporates and staffing firms for employment verification (the volume engine).
- Insurers and TPAs for claim investigation.
- Companies, funds and lenders for due diligence and integrity checks.
- Brand owners and law firms for infringement evidence and market surveillance.
- Individuals for matrimonial and personal verification, conducted within consent and public-record limits.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: large specialist background-verification companies operating at scale and price, global risk-consulting firms at the premium end, numerous small detective agencies, and an informal segment that competes precisely by doing what cannot lawfully be done. **That last group is the defining competitive problem**: a client who wants call records can find someone willing to supply them, and a lawful agency will lose that enquiry. It should.

The business's edge

- **Defensible method** — findings obtained lawfully and documented as to source, which matters enormously when a report supports a dismissal, a claim repudiation or litigation.
- **Turnaround at volume** — verification is bought on speed and consistency; a check delivered in three days beats one delivered in ten at the same price.
- **Field network coverage** — verified agents across cities and districts enabling address and record checks that centralised competitors cannot perform.
- **Data governance** — DPDP-aligned handling, consent capture and secure storage, which corporate clients increasingly audit.
- **Honest scoping** — telling a client at the outset what can and cannot be established, which builds durable relationships even when it loses an engagement.

6. Services & Revenue Model

Service	Model	Basis
Employment background verification	Per check / per candidate, volume rates	**Volume engine (~45%)**
Corporate due diligence & integrity checks	Per engagement	Higher realisation
Insurance claim investigation	Per case, panel rates	Recurring panel work
Matrimonial & personal verification	Per case	Consumer, discretion-led
Brand protection, IP & market surveillance	Project / retainer	Specialised

> Revenue is **checks and cases × fee**, and the two halves of the business behave very differently. **Employment verification is a volume operation** — per-check pricing, high throughput, measured on turnaround and accuracy, and won on empanelment with corporates and staffing firms. **Case investigation is a craft business** — priced per engagement, dependent on judgment and network, and won on reputation. Running both is sensible because the verification volume carries the fixed cost of the field network that case work also uses. *Note that employment verification is treated in depth as a standalone model in the HRtech vertical's background-verification plan; here it features as the volume line within a broader investigation practice.*

7. Go-to-Market — Clients & Network

- **Corporate and staffing empanelment** for verification volume, usually via rate contract and SLA on turnaround.
- **Insurer panel empanelment** for claim investigation, typically after a pilot batch.
- **Law firm and corporate-counsel relationships** for due diligence and evidence work.
- **Brand owner and IP counsel** relationships for infringement surveillance.
- **Field network expansion** city by city, since coverage is what allows a client to consolidate volume with one agency.

Sales approach

Win verification volume first, because it builds the network and covers fixed cost → layer higher-value due diligence and claim investigation onto the same infrastructure → build coverage deliberately, since national reach is what wins large corporate contracts → compete on turnaround and defensibility rather than on price, which the large verification companies will always win. **The commercial discipline that defines this business is scoping honestly at the enquiry stage**: explaining what can be established lawfully, what cannot, and what a report will therefore contain. Clients who want the impossible go elsewhere, and that is the correct outcome — the alternative is an engagement that cannot be delivered without breaking the law.

8. Operations Plan (verification, investigation & evidence)

- **Intake & scoping:** engagement terms, lawful-basis confirmation, consent capture for verification work, conflict check, defined deliverable.
- **Verification operations:** education and employment confirmation with institutions and employers, address verification through field visits, criminal-record checks through court searches, reference interviews — a throughput operation measured in turnaround.
- **Field network:** empanelled verifiers across cities and districts, trained and identity-verified, allocated cases through the case-management system.
- **Case investigation:** research planning, public-record and open-source work, lawful physical observation, interviews with willing participants, evidence collation.
- **Evidence & documentation: method and source recorded alongside every finding**, chain of custody for material, photographs and statements retained appropriately.
- **Data security:** access-controlled case systems, encryption, retention limits, secure disposal, DPDP-aligned processing records.

Case cycle

Stage	Activity	Metric
Scope	Terms, lawful basis, conflict check	Engagements declined on legality
Plan	Method selection & allocation	Lawful-method confirmation
Execute	Field verification / research	**Turnaround time**
Verify	Cross-checking & quality review	Accuracy / rework rate
Report	Findings with method & source stated	**Report defensibility**
Retain	Secure storage & scheduled deletion	Retention compliance

> **How a finding was obtained matters as much as the finding itself, and often more.** An investigation report is rarely an end in itself — it supports a hiring decision, a dismissal, a claim repudiation, a contract termination or litigation. If the method cannot be stated openly, **the finding is worthless to the client at exactly the moment it is needed**: an employer who dismisses on evidence obtained unlawfully faces a stronger claim than the one they were trying to avoid, and an insurer repudiating on such evidence will lose. **This is why "we obtained it, don't ask how" is not a service but a liability transfer** — and why every report in a professional practice states its sources and methods plainly enough for a client's lawyer to rely on them.

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **No detective-agency licensing regime exists** — a regulation bill has been proposed but not enacted. **The absence of a licence is not permission**; general criminal and data-protection law applies in full, and there is no authority empowered to grant exemptions.
- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023:** lawful basis for processing personal data — ordinarily **the individual's informed consent** in employment verification — purpose limitation, security safeguards, retention limits, and processor obligations under the client's instructions.
- **IT Act:** unauthorised access to computer resources and impersonation to obtain data are offences; hacking, credential misuse and social engineering for data are unlawful regardless of client instruction.
- **Communications: interception and call-detail-record access are restricted to authorised government agencies**; private procurement is unlawful for supplier and client alike, and has been prosecuted.
- **Restricted records:** banking, medical, tax and Aadhaar-linked records cannot lawfully be obtained by a private agency; requests for them should be declined in writing.
- **Ordinary criminal law:** trespass, coercion, impersonation of public officials and stalking carry no professional exemption.
- **Engagement governance:** written terms defining scope and lawful limits, conflict checks, professional-indemnity insurance, and confidentiality undertakings from all personnel and field agents.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / managing director	1	1	2
Verification analysts & case processors	**14**	**23**	**32**
Field investigators (on roll)	8	13	18
Investigation managers & case specialists	5	8	11
Client servicing & operations	4	7	9
Business development	3	5	7
Technology & data	3	5	6
Admin, accounts & credit	3	5	6
Legal & compliance	**2**	**3**	**4**
Total (on roll)	**43**	**70**	**95**

Empanelled field verifiers (per-case, in field cost line)	*~250*	*~400*	*~550*

The **legal and compliance function exists from day one**. In a business where the difference between a service and an offence lies in method, a compliance capability that can refuse an engagement is a commercial asset rather than an overhead.

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0–4	Entity, case-management system, DPDP framework, initial field network, empanelments
Ramp	Month 4–12	Verification volume & first case clients; ₹3.5cr revenue, ₹6L loss
Grow	Year 2	Insurer panels & due-diligence work; ₹5.75cr, ₹44L profit
Scale	Year 3	₹8.25cr revenue, ₹96L profit; national field coverage

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results. Revenue is gross fee income. Check volume, turnaround, case mix, network cost & analyst productivity are the levers.

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Working capital (field network payments & receivables)	32,00,000
Case-management system, secure data infrastructure & IT	15,00,000
Office fit-out, secure records & interview facility	12,00,000
Field network development, training & verification	8,00,000
Surveillance & documentation equipment	5,00,000
Legal, compliance setup, insurance & launch	3,00,000
Total project cost	**75,00,000**
Promoter contribution	35,00,000
Working-capital finance	28,00,000
Term loan	12,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Employment background verification	**1,60,00,000**	**2,60,00,000**	**3,70,00,000**
Corporate due diligence & integrity checks	70,00,000	1,20,00,000	1,75,00,000

Insurance claim investigation	55,00,000	90,00,000	1,30,00,000
Matrimonial & personal verification	35,00,000	55,00,000	75,00,000
Brand protection, IP & market surveillance	30,00,000	50,00,000	75,00,000
Total revenue	**3,50,00,000**	**5,75,00,000**	**8,25,00,000**
Field network, verification agents & case costs	1,54,00,000	2,47,00,000	3,47,00,000
Salaries (analysts, investigators, ops, admin)	98,00,000	1,40,00,000	1,90,00,000
Office, overheads, insurance & selling	30,00,000	42,00,000	56,00,000
Technology, data subscriptions & case systems	26,00,000	36,00,000	48,00,000
Travel, record access & court-search fees	22,00,000	32,00,000	44,00,000
Bad debts & credit losses	14,00,000	20,00,000	28,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	12,00,000	14,00,000	16,00,000
Total expenses	**3,56,00,000**	**5,31,00,000**	**7,29,00,000**
Net profit / (loss) before tax	**(6,00,000)**	**44,00,000**	**96,00,000**
Net margin	(1.7%)	7.7%	11.6%
Field network cost as % of revenue	44.0%	43.0%	42.0%
Verification share of revenue	45.7%	45.2%	44.8%

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Verification is a throughput business:** per-check pricing is competitive and falling, so profitability comes from analyst productivity, automation of routine confirmations and field-network cost per check — not from rate. Volume also builds the coverage that case work depends on.
- **Case work carries the margin:** due diligence, claim investigation and brand protection are priced per engagement on judgment and scarcity rather than per unit, and they use the same field network the verification volume already pays for. **The two lines are complementary rather than merely adjacent.**
- **Field network cost is the largest line at 42–44%:** managing it means balancing empanelled per-case agents, who are variable and scalable, against on-roll investigators who provide quality control and handle sensitive work.
- **Asset-light with strong operating leverage:** once analyst capacity and network coverage exist, incremental volume drops through well — which is what carries margin from negative to 11.6%.
- **Break-even:** essentially reached in Year 1 and cleared comfortably in Year 2, given the modest capital base and rapid overhead absorption.

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	32,00,000	22,00,000	16,00,000	12,00,000
Collections	72,00,000	82,00,000	88,00,000	96,00,000
Field network, salaries, technology, overheads & loan servicing	82,00,000	88,00,000	92,00,000	92,00,000
Closing balance	**22,00,000**	**16,00,000**	**12,00,000**	**16,00,000**

> **The working-capital pattern mirrors other people-based service businesses, with a specific twist. Field verifiers are paid per case and expect settlement quickly** — often monthly and sometimes faster — because they work for several agencies and allocate their effort to whoever pays reliably. Corporate verification clients, by contrast, settle on 45–75 day terms, and insurers can be slower still. **The agency funds that gap on its largest cost line.** Two mitigations matter: bill verification volume monthly rather than at project milestones, since the work is continuous, and hold credit limits on insurers and staffing firms, whose payment cycles are the longest in this client base. The business is otherwise cash-efficient — there is no inventory and negligible capital equipment.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Throughput:** checks completed; **turnaround time by check type**; analyst productivity; field-network cost per check.
- **Quality:** accuracy and rework rate; discrepancy findings validated on review; client disputes; **reports withstanding challenge**.
- **Compliance: consent captured before processing**; engagements declined on legality; DPDP retention and deletion adherence; data-access audit exceptions.
- **Commercial:** case-work share of revenue; client concentration; collection days by client type; network coverage by city.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹28 lakh working-capital finance plus ₹12 lakh term loan** against ₹35 lakh promoter contribution. This is a light-capital, people-and-systems business with essentially no hypothecable assets, so a lender should read the *empanelment base, contracted verification volume and client quality* as the substance; MSME and CGTMSE routes suit the ticket. Three points. **The working-capital need is a payment-timing gap** — field verifiers paid within weeks against clients paying in months — so a revolving facility against book debts is the appropriate instrument. **Break-even arrives in Year 1** and operating leverage is strong thereafter, since incremental volume uses existing analyst and network capacity. And a lender should understand that **the principal risk in this business is method rather than market**: an agency that obtains information unlawfully faces criminal exposure, client loss and uninsurable liability regardless of how healthy its order book looks, which is why the compliance function and documented engagement terms belong in the credit assessment rather than being treated as internal housekeeping.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Working capital (field network payments & receivables)	32,00,000	42.6%
Case-management system, secure data infrastructure & IT	15,00,000	20.0%
Office fit-out, secure records & interview facility	12,00,000	16.0%
Field network development, training & verification	8,00,000	10.7%
Surveillance & documentation equipment	5,00,000	6.7%
Legal, compliance setup, insurance & launch	3,00,000	4.0%
Total	**75,00,000**	**100%**

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Obtaining information unlawfully — criminal exposure	Documented lawful-method policy; compliance sign-off on engagement scope; decline requests for call records, bank, medical or Aadhaar-linked data in writing; train and contractually bind field agents; audit case files for method
Client pressure to exceed lawful limits	Scope the engagement honestly at enquiry; state in the terms what will and will not be attempted; accept losing the work — **the alternative is an engagement that cannot be delivered without an offence**
Data breach or misuse of personal data	DPDP-aligned processing, consent capture, access controls, encryption, retention limits and secure deletion, confidentiality undertakings, breach-response plan
Field agent acting improperly in the agency's name	Identity verification and training before empanelment, written conduct terms, case-level method reporting, removal for breach, professional-indemnity cover
Inaccurate finding causing client detriment	Cross-verification before adverse findings, quality review of every negative report, source documentation, right of reply where appropriate, professional indemnity
Price competition in verification	Compete on turnaround, coverage and accuracy; automate routine confirmations; use verification volume to support higher-margin case work
Collection delays from insurers and staffing firms	Credit limits by client type; monthly billing on continuous work; stop-service protocol on prolonged overdue
Client concentration in verification contracts	Diversify across corporates, insurers, brands and law firms; cap single-client share
Regulatory change introducing licensing	Operate to a standard that would satisfy a licensing regime in advance; documented methods and governance position the business favourably if regulation arrives
Reputational damage from an unlawful-method allegation	Method documentation as standard; cooperate transparently; the record of declined engagements is itself evidence of practice

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Asset-light with strong operating leverage and Year-1 break-even; verification volume funds the network that case work uses; defensible method is a real differentiator with corporate and insurer clients; DPDP-aligned governance is increasingly audited; diverse client base across sectors; no licensing barrier to entry for a compliant operator.	Competes against operators willing to break the law; verification pricing is competitive and falling; field-network cost is the largest line and quality is hard to control at distance; payment-timing gap on the biggest cost; reputation is fragile; no hypothecable assets.

Opportunities	Threats
Hiring-volume and gig-workforce verification growth; insurer claim-investigation panels; transaction and vendor due diligence; brand protection as counterfeiting grows; DPDP compliance raising client preference for governed processors; technology and automation improving verification margins; prospective licensing regime favouring established compliant firms.	Large verification companies competing on scale and price; informal operators offering unlawful capabilities; regulatory action against the industry following a scandal; data-protection enforcement; client insourcing of verification; wage and network cost inflation.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This investigation agency would use AiSevak's Security vertical tools in operations:

- **Case operations:** case-management & allocation, **turnaround tracking by check type**, field-network cost-per-check analysis.
- **Compliance: consent capture & lawful-basis records**, declined-engagement register, DPDP retention/deletion scheduling, method-documentation templates (with Legal vertical).
- **Quality:** accuracy & rework tracking, adverse-finding review workflow, source-documentation checks.
- **Finance:** collection-days by client type, field-agent payment timeliness, client-concentration monitoring (with Finance vertical).
- **Practice:** Business Plan, break-even and case-economics tools to model the agency.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Private investigation agency: employment background verification (volume engine ~45%), corporate due diligence, insurance claim investigation, matrimonial/personal verification, brand protection & market surveillance; delivered via in-house analysts + an empanelled field network; revenue = checks/cases × fee.
- **THE PLAN OPENS WITH THE POINT THAT DETERMINES WHETHER THIS BUSINESS IS VIABLE OR CRIMINAL: a great deal of what clients ASK a detective agency in India to do CANNOT LAWFULLY BE DONE.** Call detail records, bank statements, phone location tracking, Aadhaar-linked data, medical records, intercepted communications — all commonly requested, none lawfully obtainable by a private agency. **Interception is reserved to authorised government agencies**; unauthorised computer access and impersonation to obtain data are IT Act offences; personal data carries DPDP Act 2023 obligations. **Private procurement of call records has been criminally prosecuted in India — of investigators AND of those who commissioned them.** A legitimate agency is built on what CAN be done lawfully, and **declining the rest is a core professional competence, not a lost sale.**
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- **What IS lawful is substantial:** verification with CONSENT, research of genuinely public records including court records, physical observation in PUBLIC places, interviews with WILLING participants, open-source research. The competitive problem is the informal segment that competes precisely by doing what cannot lawfully be done — **a client who wants call records will find someone willing, and a lawful agency will lose that enquiry. It should.**
- **Two halves behaving very differently:** employment verification is a THROUGHPUT business (per-check pricing, competitive and falling, won on turnaround/accuracy/coverage — profitability from analyst productivity and network cost-per-check, not rate) while case investigation is a CRAFT business (per-engagement, judgment- and reputation-priced). Running both is sensible because **verification volume carries the fixed cost of the field network that case work also uses — complementary, not merely adjacent.** *Note: employment BGV is treated as a standalone model in the HRtech vertical's background-verification plan; here it is the volume line within a broader investigation practice.*
- Field network cost is the largest line (42-44%); balance variable per-case empanelled agents against on-roll investigators for quality control and sensitive work. **Cash twist: field verifiers are paid per case and expect settlement in weeks** (they work for several agencies and go to whoever pays reliably) **while corporates settle at 45-75 days and insurers slower** — the agency funds that gap on its LARGEST cost line. Asset-light, Y1 break-even, strong operating leverage. **The principal risk is METHOD, not market** — unlawful information-gathering brings criminal exposure, client loss and UNINSURABLE liability regardless of order book, so compliance belongs in a lender's credit assessment. ₹75L, rev 3.5→8.25cr. Figures illustrative, exclude GST.

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