

# NEWS TODAY

Curated Insights from "The Hindu" newspaper

Staying updated with current affairs is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the world around us, especially for competitive exams like UPSC and BPSC.

- 1. Relevance Across Exam Stages:** Current affairs are integral to all stages of the exam—Prelims, Mains, and the Interview. Familiarity with recent developments aids in answering questions effectively at each stage and demonstrates your up-to-date knowledge.
- 2. Informed Decision-Making:** Knowledge of current events enhances your ability to make informed decisions, develop well-rounded opinions, and understand the implications of various policies and issues.
- 3. Holistic Preparation:** A thorough grasp of current affairs ensures a more integrated approach to exam preparation, blending real-world context with theoretical knowledge.
- 4. Analytical Skills:** Engaging with current affairs sharpens your analytical abilities by encouraging you to evaluate and interpret complex information and its impacts from multiple perspectives.
- 5. Dynamic Knowledge Base:** The ever-changing landscape of current events helps maintain a dynamic and relevant knowledge base, crucial for adapting to evolving exam questions.
- 6. Interview Readiness:** In the interview stage, being well-versed in current affairs showcases not only your academic knowledge but also your awareness of recent developments and your ability to discuss them critically.

At **BPSC POINT**, we emphasize the importance of current affairs in all stages of the exam. We provide concise, accurate, and insightful summaries to help you stay ahead in your preparation journey and excel in every stage of the exam.

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Dedicated to your exam success.

**Disclaimer:** While we strive to provide accurate and relevant summaries of the major news from 'The Hindu', we encourage readers to verify important details independently. If you notice any discrepancies, please notify us.

## CDSCO Suspends ENTOD Pharmaceuticals' Eye Drops Over Misleading Claims

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has suspended the permission granted to ENTOD Pharmaceuticals, a Mumbai-based firm, to manufacture and market eye drops (**PresVu**) aimed at *reducing the need for reading glasses* in people with **presbyopia**.

The suspension follows concerns over misleading public claims that **violated** the **New Drugs and Clinical Trial Rules, 2019** and **Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisement) Act, 1954**. ENTOD Pharmaceuticals plans to challenge this in court, claiming they have not made false statements and citing a successful clinical trial in 234 patients.

## Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016

### News?

The Income Tax Department will confiscate a ₹12-crore land asset of deceased gangster-politician Mukhtar Ansari in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, after confirming it as a benami property under the **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016**.

### About

Feature	Details
<b>Definition of Benami Transactions</b>	Property transactions where the property is held in someone else's name, but the benefits are enjoyed by the actual owner. Exceptions include property held by HUFs and fiduciaries.
<b>Authorities</b>	Establishes adjudicating authorities and an Appellate Tribunal to investigate and adjudicate benami transactions.
<b>Confiscation of Benami Properties</b>	Properties declared benami can be confiscated by the government, and the right to recover property is denied to the beneficial owner.
<b>Penalties</b>	- <b>Imprisonment:</b> Up to 7 years of rigorous imprisonment. - <b>Fine:</b> Up to 25% of the fair market value of the benami property.
<b>Scope and Retrospective Application</b>	Expands the scope of the original 1988 Act to cover more complex benami arrangements. It is retrospective in nature, applying to transactions done before the amendment but with penalties applied prospectively.
<b>Exemptions</b>	Transactions in the name of spouse, children, or held for family members or trustees, provided they are legally traceable.
<b>Objectives</b>	- <b>Curb Black Money:</b> Tackle black money and money laundering. - <b>Enhance Transparency:</b> Improve accountability and transparency in real estate. - <b>Deterrence:</b> Discourage illegal transactions through stringent penalties.
<b>Impact</b>	Used to attach and confiscate benami properties, aiding in the fight against corruption and unaccounted wealth.

## PM Vishwakarma Scheme

**News?** => Tamil Nadu yet to notify Vishwakarma Scheme: Nirmala

### PM Vishwakarma Scheme

Feature	Details
<b>Skill Development</b>	Enhances the skills of traditional artisans to upgrade techniques and improve product quality.
<b>Financial Support</b>	Provides financial assistance for procuring modern tools, equipment, and raw materials.
<b>Recognition of Traditional Trades</b>	Acknowledges and supports traditional occupations, preserving cultural heritage.
<b>Credit and Financial Inclusion</b>	Helps artisans access credit and other financial benefits to expand their businesses.
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Traditional artisans and craftspeople across India, with over 2 crore applications and around 13.5 lakh beneficiaries as of 2023.
<b>Objective</b>	Revives traditional crafts, promotes self-reliance, and improves economic conditions of artisans.

## Vibrant Village Programme (VVP)

**News?**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized the government's goal to transform remote villages along India's northern borders.

Aspect	Details
Approval Date	February 15, 2023
Financial Outlay	₹4,800 crore
Timeframe	FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26
<b>Objective</b>	Development of border villages with better connectivity and infrastructure
States and UTs Covered	Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Ladakh
Bordering Countries	China, Nepal
Key Benefits	Enhanced economic and tourist activity, military deployment support, social integration
Major Infrastructure Projects	Atal Tunnel, Sela Tunnel, Shikun-La Tunnel (world's highest tunnel)
Executing Agency	Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

## NCPCR Declares Madrasas "Unfit" for Providing Proper Education to Children, Cites Constitutional Violations and Educational Deficiencies

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) informed the Supreme Court that **madrasas** are unfit to provide proper education to children, citing issues like lack of quality education, unsuitable curriculum, and unqualified teachers. The NCPCR argued that madrasas focus heavily on religious texts, often neglecting holistic learning, extracurricular activities, and proper educational standards. The commission also raised concerns about **opaque funding** and violations of land laws.

The NCPCR noted that non-Muslim children are studying in madrasas in various states, which it claimed violates **Article 28(3)** of the Indian Constitution, protecting individuals from forced participation in religious instruction. The commission emphasized the role of certain madrasas, like **Darul Uloom Deoband**, in influencing religious extremism, citing its connection to the **Taliban**.

### Madrasas 'unfit' for proper education, NCPCR tells SC

Including a few NCERT books in the curriculum is a mere guise in the name of imparting education and does not ensure that children are receiving formal and quality education, it says



**Richhita Bisht**  
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## Union Cabinet Approves Health Coverage for All Senior Citizens Aged 70 and Above Under AB PM-JAY

The **Union Cabinet**, chaired by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, approved the extension of health coverage under the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)** to all senior citizens aged **70 and above**, regardless of income. This move will benefit approximately **4.5 crore families** and **six crore senior citizens**, providing a **₹5 lakh** annual health insurance cover on a family basis.

### Key points:

- **New card** will be issued for eligible senior citizens.
- Those already covered under **AB PM-JAY** will get an **additional top-up of ₹5 lakh** for their healthcare needs.
- Senior citizens under other public health insurance schemes may choose between their existing scheme or **AB PM-JAY**.
- **Private insurance** holders will also be eligible under this scheme.

This expansion aims to ensure better healthcare access for elderly citizens across India.

## India's Renewable Energy Push: Financing the 500 GW Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity Goal

To achieve India's ambitious target of installing **500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030**, the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** is engaging with financial institutions and banks to secure funding for renewable energy projects.

During the upcoming **Re-Invest summit** in Gandhinagar, major banks, developers, and investors are expected to provide "**shapath patra**" (promissory notes) detailing their funding commitments.

## India's Push for Organ-on-Chip Technology: Revolutionising Drug Development and Precision Medicine

India's recently announced '**BioE3**' policy aims to drive innovation in biotechnology by establishing **biomanufacturing facilities, bio-AI hubs, and bio-foundries**. A key focus is on **precision therapeutics**, targeting personalized medicine and biologics like gene therapy and cell therapy.

Recent advancements in **organ-on-chip technology**—lab devices mimicking human organs—are revolutionizing drug testing, offering an alternative to animal models. These **new approach methods (NAMs)**, such as **3D culture models**, provide more accurate drug testing, reduce development time, and lower costs. Global interest in this technology is surging, with significant investments and increasing industry adoption.

India has amended regulations to include NAMs in preclinical drug testing, but challenges remain in scaling up. **Dedicated centers** for collaboration between industry and academia, along with regulatory support, are essential to harness the full potential of **organ-on-chip technology** and enhance India's **healthcare and biopharma sectors**.

## Churchill: Adapting to Climate Change with Innovative Tourism and Infrastructure Solutions

Churchill, a remote town in **Canada**, is adapting to climate change by diversifying its tourism and infrastructure. Once a bustling town with military and research facilities, Churchill saw a decline but is now leveraging its **polar bear population** to attract tourists, despite shrinking sea ice affecting bear populations. The town is preparing for potential future changes by promoting tourism related to beluga whales, the northern lights, bird-watching, and dogsledding. Churchill has also made infrastructural improvements, such as restoring the port and train service and designing buildings that can adjust to shifting ground due to climate impacts.



This proactive approach has been recognized as a model for other cities to adapt to climate change and preserve local environments.

**Note:** Churchill, located in Canada, is known as the "**Polar Bear Capital of the World.**"

## Renewed Parliamentary Oversight: The Public Accounts Committee's Proactive Role

The Central government has historically avoided rigorous parliamentary scrutiny due to its strong majority. However, with the BJP now leading a coalition and facing a more robust Opposition, there is an opportunity for increased parliamentary oversight.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), now led by Congress MP K.C. Venugopal, has taken a proactive approach by selecting 161 subjects for review, many based on CAG reports. These include **reforms in banking and insurance, welfare scheme implementation, energy sector transitions, and public utility regulations.**

The PAC aims to go beyond mere expenditure reviews to address **broader public interest issues**, though its political implications are noted. Despite the PAC's assertiveness, challenges remain due to the ruling coalition's majority, which may affect the committee's effectiveness in holding the executive accountable.

The role of PAC and other parliamentary committees is crucial for ensuring executive accountability and enforcing parliamentary authority.

**Public accounts**  
The PAC must assert its role as an instrument of parliamentary oversight.  
Over the last decade, the Central government, with a comfortable majority in Parliament, has evaded meaningful parliamentary oversight. However, the BJP's position in coalition has changed the situation. The changed situation is an opportunity for the renewed parliamentary oversight over the executive's functioning. The process begins with the newly constituted Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in a case in point. On September 2, it issued 161 subjects for audit for deliberation during its term, most of them based on CAG reports. The panel has picked five subjects so far - reforms in the banking and insurance sectors, review of the implementation of centrally sponsored welfare schemes, policy measures under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, performance review of public utilities, and the levy and regulation of fees, tariffs, and charges on public infrastructure and other public utilities. The PAC, headed by Congress Member of Parliament K.C. Venugopal, has made use of the role which clearly states that its functions can go beyond only merely and to make a political point. Through the subjects picked by the PAC, some political undertones, the overarching public interest involved is unmistakable. The constitutional scheme envisages that Parliament controls the finances of the country. Any law may be imposed only by passing legislation. All expenditure of the government needs prior sanction from Parliament through appropriate Bills. The CAG is a constitutional office that examines and audits the financial accounts of all government departments. All its reports are sent to the PAC, and the PAC is empowered to make parliamentary queries. Government ministers should take the measures that the PAC has recommended. The PAC has also approved any PAC investigation into any expenditure. The PAC has 13 members from the BJP-led NDA and nine Opposition MPs, including four from the Congress. The committee's assertive posture could be undermined by the ruling coalition's majority. However, the PAC's role in holding the executive accountable is crucial for ensuring executive accountability and enforcing parliamentary authority.

## Political Unrest and Implications in Bangladesh: A Shift in Dynamics

On August 5, 2024, the political landscape in Bangladesh saw a dramatic shift when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign and flee to India amid intense protests over a controversial quota system for government jobs. The interim government led by economist Muhammad Yunus, supported by the Army and students, has taken charge, leading to the resignation of key officials. The unrest has drawn international attention, with the U.S. and China potentially influencing the situation.

The crisis in Bangladesh mirrors historical uprisings like the **Prague Spring**, but the current scenario is influenced by global powers with vested interests in the region. The departure of Sheikh Hasina, accused of authoritarianism and suppressing dissent, has **raised concerns** about the **future of democracy in Bangladesh** and the **potential rise of Islamist radicalism.**

**Instability and uncertainty stalk Bangladesh**

Sheikh Hasina's resignation has opened a new chapter in Bangladesh's political history. The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus is facing a complex situation. The political landscape is highly volatile, with various factions vying for power. The international community is closely watching the developments, with the U.S. and China playing significant roles. The future of Bangladesh's democracy and political stability remains uncertain.



India faces new challenges as Bangladesh, once a stable neighbour, might shift from being a friendly state to a problematic one. The ongoing unrest could impact regional stability, including issues related to Rohingya refugees and militant activities. With increasing Chinese influence and potential geopolitical shifts, India must navigate these complexities while addressing internal and external security concerns. The evolving situation in Bangladesh underscores the need for India to develop new strategies for managing its geopolitical and security landscape in South Asia.

Prague Spring	
Aspect	Details
Period	1968
Leader	Alexander Dubček
Key Reforms	- Increased freedom of speech - Reduced censorship - Decentralized economic control
Soviet Reaction	Alarmed by the reforms; feared inspiration for similar movements in other communist states
Military Intervention	On August 20-21, 1968, Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact allies invaded Czechoslovakia to suppress reforms
Outcome	- Ended the Prague Spring - Reestablished a repressive regime under "normalization"
Significance	Highlighted the limits of Soviet tolerance for dissent and the struggle for democratic reforms

## National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission: Opportunities and Challenges

- In August 2023, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission** to eliminate sickle cell disease as a public health problem by 2047, starting from Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh.
- The mission aims to address the high burden of sickle cell disease in India, which primarily affects the tribal regions of **Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.**

**India's sickle cell challenge**

Among other efforts, a large-scale screening programme is underway nationwide to identify and counsel patients for genetic sickle cell disease. It has been found that the prevalence of sickle cell disease has increased across India. While the disease is most prevalent in tribal areas, it is also found in urban areas. The National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCEEM) was launched in August 2023 to address this public health challenge. The mission aims to reduce the burden of sickle cell disease in India and improve the quality of life for affected individuals. The mission is a multi-pronged approach, focusing on screening, diagnosis, treatment, and awareness. The mission is led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The mission is a landmark initiative, marking the first time that the government has launched a national mission to eliminate a specific genetic disease. The mission is a testament to the government's commitment to improving the health and well-being of its citizens. The mission is a source of pride for the Indian people, as it demonstrates the government's dedication to addressing the most pressing health challenges of the nation. The mission is a beacon of hope for millions of people who suffer from sickle cell disease. The mission is a call to action for all of us, as we work together to eliminate this disease and create a healthier, more equitable future for all.

### Challenges

- Prevalence:** India has the **second-largest** number of sickle cell disease cases globally, with over a million people affected.
- Disease Impact:** Sickle cell disease causes significant health complications, including **anaemia, recurrent infections, pain, and organ damage.** It also leads to social stigma and reduced quality of life.
- Healthcare Gaps:** Only 18% of affected individuals receive consistent treatment due to challenges at various stages, including diagnosis and treatment adherence. Stigma, misdiagnosis by traditional healers, and mistrust of public health systems contribute to these issues.
- Access to Medicine:** Although **hydroxyurea** is included in the essential medicines list, access remains problematic due to supply issues and the need for long-distance travel to healthcare facilities. Vaccination coverage is also inadequate.

### Way Ahead

- Reduce Stigma:** Launch media campaigns to address myths and build trust in public health institutions, drawing from past successes in polio and HIV campaigns.
- Increase Screening:** Implement widespread newborn screening, particularly in endemic areas, to catch cases early.
- Improve Access:** Ensure availability of medications and adherence support at local health centres and establish interdisciplinary centres of excellence at district levels.
- Vaccination:** Ensure all patients receive necessary vaccinations, possibly through catch-up programs.
- Strengthen Tribal Health:** Address unique challenges in tribal areas with adequate funding and operational support.
- Research and Collaboration:** Conduct research to understand the disease better and develop new treatments, with support from philanthropists, civil society, and government bodies.

## PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-Drive) Scheme

**Approval and Budget:** The Union Cabinet approved a scheme with an allocation of ₹10,900 crore for the procurement of e-buses and the establishment of over 72,000 EV charging stations.

**Scheme Duration:** The PM E-Drive scheme will be in effect for two years.

### Key Features:

- **Subsidies and Incentives:** The scheme includes subsidies totalling ₹3,679 crore for e-two wheelers (e-2Ws), e-three wheelers (e-3Ws), e-ambulances, and e-trucks.
- **Targeted Support:** It aims to support the purchase of 24.79 lakh e-2Ws, 3.16 lakh e-3Ws, and 14,028 e-buses.
- **E-Bus Procurement:** ₹4,391 crore is allocated for procuring e-buses, focusing on 9 major cities with populations over 40 lakh, including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and others.

**Charging Infrastructure:** ₹2,000 crore will be used to set up charging stations in cities with high EV usage and on specific highways to alleviate range anxiety among electric vehicle owners.

### Cabinet approves ₹10,900 cr. scheme for e-mobility push

PM E-Drive scheme aims to enable procurement of e-buses, setting up 72,000 charging stations; plan offers subsidies or demand incentives worth ₹3,679 crore, says Ministry of Heavy Industries

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

**Charge booster**  
PM E-Drive scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet, aims to address range anxiety among EV buyers


- Scheme, valid for two years, will support 24.79 lakh e-2Ws, 3.16 lakh e-3Ws, 14,028 e-buses
- ₹4,391 cr. for procurement of 14,028 e-buses by State transport undertakings of 9 cities
- ₹2,000 cr. to set up charging stations in cities with high EV penetration and on some select highways

The scheme, named PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-Drive), will be valid for two years.

According to a press statement from the Ministry of Heavy Industries, the scheme also offers subsidies or demand incentives worth ₹3,679 crore for e-two wheelers (e-2Ws), e-three wheelers (e-3Ws), e-ambulances, and e-trucks to buyers. The scheme will

support 24.79 lakh e-2Ws, 3.16 lakh e-3Ws, and 14,028 e-buses, the Ministry added. A total of ₹4,391 crore will be set aside under the scheme for procurement of 14,028 e-buses by state transport undertakings for 9 cities with a population of more than 40 lakh, namely Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Surat, Bangalore, Pune and Hyderabad.

The scheme also provides for ₹2,000 crore to set up charging stations in select cities with high EV penetration and on some specific highways.



## African Group and Allies Push for Permanent Solution on Public Stockholding at WTO

The African Group, supported by India and the G-33 group, is advocating at the WTO for a permanent solution to **public stock holding (PSH)** issues, crucial for food security and allowing developing nations to exceed WTO-set minimum support price (MSP) limits without stringent conditions.

### What is the G-33 Group?

The G-33 group, officially known as the "G-33 Coalition on Agriculture", is a coalition of developing countries within the World Trade Organization (WTO). Established in 2003, its main objectives are:

- **Public Stockholding (PSH):** Advocating for a permanent solution that allows developing countries to support food security through public stockholding without violating WTO rules.
- **Special Products and Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM):** Seeking flexibility in trade rules to protect sensitive agricultural products and safeguard small-scale farmers from price volatility and market fluctuations.

Key member countries include India, China, and Indonesia. The G-33 aims to ensure that trade policies support agricultural development and food security in developing countries.

This stance aligns with the broader push for supporting small-scale farmers, who face challenges due to global price volatility and uncertain markets. Small-scale farming, which comprises **84% of global agriculture**, is recognized for its higher yields and biodiversity, despite receiving low wages and minimal support.

### African Group seeks solution for PSH issue



Food for thought: A permanent solution would allow developing nations to exceed WTO MSP limits, say experts.

**Small-Scale Farmers**  
The African Group considers public stock holding (PSH) as a crucial food security tool for ensuring production and consumption support to meet critical food security objectives and to seeking a permanent solution for the problem at the WTO, separate from the agriculture negotiations, a spokesman from Nigeria said. This is in line with what India and other developing country members, including the G-33 group, have been demanding at the WTO and reflects continued alignment of the African Group with the stated position.

A permanent solution would allow developing nations to exceed WTO prescribed MSP limits without adhering to excessive conditions.

Small-scale farmers from developing and developed countries need price support and market policy initiatives to deal with global price volatility and uncertain global market, various trade experts at a session on trade rules supporting small-scale farming as contributors to green trade in agriculture at the WTO Public Forum here.

"With less than 2 hectares, small-scale farming is the backbone of agriculture and the one that receives the lowest wages although they offer higher yields and greater biodiversity outcomes than large-scale agriculture," said John Jacard, policy officer, International Labour-based civil society organization.

(The Hindu Businessline reporter is in Geneva for the WTO Summit.)

## India Seeks to Revive Manufacturing Ambitions by Easing Restrictions on Chinese Investments

India's ambitions to become a major manufacturing hub are facing challenges due to strained relations with China, which have slowed the exchange of capital, technology, and talent. The Modi government's restrictions on Chinese investments, introduced after a 2020 border clash, have hindered growth, despite high demand for technology like electric vehicles and semiconductors. However, recognizing the necessity of integrating with Chinese supply chains for high-tech sectors, India plans to ease some restrictions. The proposed changes include relaxing rules on Chinese shareholding in investments and enhancing visa approvals for Chinese professionals. These measures aim to revitalise India's manufacturing sector and attract essential investments, even as India's trade deficit with China continues to grow.

### "News Highlights: Key Updates in Brief"

#### National

- The Union Cabinet approved '**Mission Mausam**', allocating ₹2,000 crore over two years. Led by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, the mission aims to enhance **research and development**, improve **weather surveillance**, and boost capacity in **atmospheric sciences**. Key aspects include **next-generation radars** and **satellite systems** for better **modelling, forecasting, and weather management**.
- The **Sikkim** government announced a **100% concession on bus fares** for persons with over **40% disability** and **women** in the **BPL category**.

#### International

- **Brazil's** Supreme Court suspended X's operations on August 30, 2023, after it failed to appoint a legal representative. The decision is linked to an investigation into far-right groups using X to spread disinformation following the 2022 elections. Elon Musk, X's owner, defied court orders, leading to the suspension. The case highlights issues of regulatory control, free speech, and the political use of social media.
- **Mexico** becomes the **first country** to **allow voters to elect judges at all levels**, a reform pushed by outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to address judicial elitism.
- **Afghanistan** has announced the start of work on the \$10-billion TAPI pipeline, which will transport natural gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, aiming to boost regional energy cooperation despite past delays and ongoing security concerns.



## End of Summary

This marks the end of today's summary from *The Hindu*. We trust this has added value to your exam preparation. Keep engaging with current affairs to sharpen your insights and strengthen your knowledge. We'll be back tomorrow with more updates to guide you on your path to success.

*Thank you for reading. Stay focused and dedicated!*

**Understanding current affairs** is crucial for **UPSC/State PSC preparation**, as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, ensuring that candidates are well-informed, relevant, and capable of making insightful analyses on contemporary issues.

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