

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

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Daily Current Affairs for UPSC Prelims & Mains

Monday, 15 June 2026

MORNING EDITION · THEIAS AKADEMIA

"From News to Questions, From Questions to Selection"

SECTION INDEX — PART II

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← Part I: Headlines · Polity · IR · Defence · S&T · Economy

India's 100th Ramsar Site — Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Taal), Ballia, Uttar Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

On World Environment Day (June 5, 2026), PM Modi announced the designation of Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Taal) in Ballia, UP, as India's 100th Ramsar Site — a landmark in India's wetland conservation journey.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Surha Taal: freshwater lake in Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh; middle Ganga basin
- India: 100 Ramsar Sites — highest in Asia; 3rd globally (UK: 176, Mexico: 144)
- Surha Taal is UP's 13th Ramsar Site; also designated Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary
- Ramsar Convention signed: 1971, Ramsar, Iran; India acceded: 1982

UPSC SYLLABUS MAPPING

GS3 — Environment, Biodiversity, Wetland Conservation, International Environmental Conventions

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Which of the following is CORRECT regarding Surha Taal?

- (A) It is located in Bihar's Bhojpur district
- (B) It is India's 100th Ramsar Site, located in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh
- (C) It is a brackish water lagoon
- (D) It was designated on World Wetlands Day (February 2, 2026)

Answer: (B)

Surha Taal is a freshwater lake in Ballia, UP; designated on World Environment Day, June 5, 2026 — not World Wetlands Day.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

India reaching 100 Ramsar Sites is a milestone, but quantity must not overshadow quality. Critically examine India's wetland conservation approach. (250 words)

GS3 PYQ 2019 Ramsar Wetlands Surha Taal Biodiversity

 **Akademia Teaching Hook:** For any Ramsar question: remember India = highest in Asia, 3rd globally. The Central Asian Flyway angle connects wetlands to migratory birds — a Prelims favourite. In Mains, use the "quality vs. quantity" argument to appear analytical rather than merely factual.

BACKGROUND

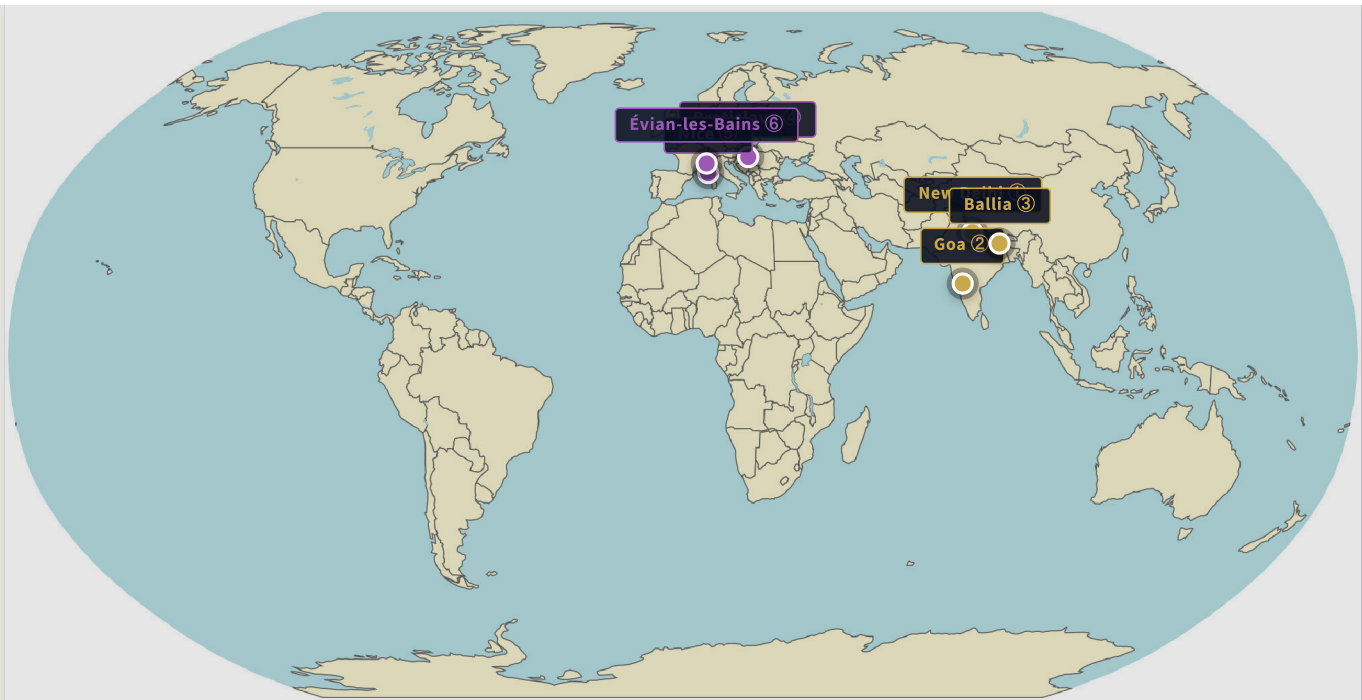
India acceded to the Ramsar Convention in 1982. The Ramsar Convention (1971, Iran) is the global treaty on wetland conservation. India has accelerated site additions since 2014, adding 70+ sites in a decade.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- India's wetland addition pace (70+ in a decade) signals policy shift but raises quality vs. quantity debate
- Wetlands as carbon sinks + biodiversity hotspots + flood regulators — triple ecological value
- Ganga basin wetlands: critical for migratory bird corridor (Central Asian Flyway)

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2019: Ramsar Sites — significance and conservation challenges in India



- ① New Delhi (COAS appointment, AI Regulations) ● ② Goa (Global Wind Day Conference) ● ③ Ballia, UP (100th Ramsar Site)
- ④ Bratislava, Slovakia (PM Modi visit) ● ⑤ Nice, France (India-France Roadmap) ● ⑥ Évian-les-Bains, France (G7 Summit)

① New Delhi, India

WHY IN NEWS

Supreme Court released Draft AI Regulations 2026 for Indian courts; Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth named next COAS (from June 30, 2026).

PRELIMS ANGLE

National Capital Territory; Lat ~28.6°N, 77.2°E; seat of Supreme Court of India (Article 124).

MAINS ANGLE

AI governance in judiciary + civilian oversight of armed forces — dual GS2/GS3 relevance.

② Goa, India

WHY IN NEWS

MNRE hosted Global Wind Day 2026 National Conference on June 15; theme: "Wind Energy: From Ambition to Acceleration."

PRELIMS ANGLE

36th state; capital: Panaji; smallest state by area; coastal location relevant to offshore wind potential.

MAINS ANGLE

India's renewable energy transition — 100 GW wind by 2030 as part of 500 GW non-fossil target (NDC commitment).

③ Ballia, Uttar Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary (Surha Taal) designated India's 100th Ramsar Site on June 5, 2026.

PRELIMS ANGLE

District in eastern UP on the Ganga-Ghaghra confluence; UP has 13 Ramsar sites; part of Central Asian Flyway.

MAINS ANGLE

Wetland conservation as ecosystem service + India's global Ramsar leadership (highest sites in Asia).

④ Bratislava, Slovakia

WHY IN NEWS

PM Modi's historic first Indian PM visit to Slovakia since 1993; meetings with President Pellegrini and PM Fico.

PRELIMS ANGLE

Capital of Slovakia; on the Danube River; population ~500,000; EU + NATO + Schengen member.

MAINS ANGLE

India's Central Europe engagement — Slovakia as gateway for defence co-production and EU market access.

⑤ Nice, France

WHY IN NEWS

PM Modi met French President Macron in Nice; India–France Innovation Roadmap 2030 signed; Economic Security Dialogue established.

PRELIMS ANGLE

City in Alpes-Maritimes department, Côte d'Azur; on the Mediterranean coast; Lat ~43.7°N.

MAINS ANGLE

⑥ Évian-les-Bains, France

WHY IN NEWS

52nd G7 Summit hosted here June 15–17, 2026; India invited for 8th consecutive time as outreach partner.

PRELIMS ANGLE

Town in Haute-Savoie, on Lake Geneva's southern shore; famous for Évian mineral water brand.

MAINS ANGLE

India's G7 role: platform for Global South advocacy on climate finance, debt restructuring, digital governance.

§3 Ethics & Integrity Cases

Case 1: AI-Based Bail Risk Scoring — Algorithmic Justice vs. Presumption of Innocence

A state judiciary proposes AI risk-scoring for bail decisions to reduce pendency, assigning 'flight risk' scores to undertrial prisoners. The Supreme Court's draft AI Regulations 2026 expressly prohibit this practice.

Ethical Issue: Algorithmic tools trained on biased historical data risk perpetuating socioeconomic discrimination against marginalized groups in bail decisions, violating Articles 14 and 21.

VALUES: HUMAN DIGNITY · FAIRNESS · RULE OF LAW · NON-DISCRIMINATION · ACCOUNTABILITY | **GS4 MAPPING:** ETHICS IN GOVERNANCE, AI ETHICS, PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES

Case 2: Defence Industry Kickbacks — Probity in Defence Procurement

An IAS officer in the Defence Ministry is offered consultancy fees by a foreign OEM seeking to fast-track equipment approval, framed as legitimate "advisory work" for a private think tank post-retirement.

Ethical Issue: Post-retirement lobbying exploiting official information constitutes conflict of interest and breach of probity. The officer must disclose and recuse, following the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules.

VALUES: PROBITY · INTEGRITY · PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS · CONFLICT OF INTEREST | **GS4 MAPPING:** ETHICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, FOUNDATIONAL VALUES OF CIVIL SERVICES

Case 3: Reporting Environmental Violations by Politically Connected Industry

A junior forest officer discovers illegal forest diversion by a politically connected mining company. Local officials pressure him to file a "no objection" report. He faces threats to his career if he reports upward.

Ethical Issue: Whistleblowing in the face of institutional pressure tests moral courage. The officer's duty under the Environment Protection Act overrides political pressure; silence constitutes complicity.

VALUES: MORAL COURAGE · INTEGRITY · PUBLIC INTEREST · ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP | **GS4 MAPPING:** FOUNDATIONAL VALUES, ATTITUDE, ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Case 4: Women's Political Representation — Token vs. Substantive Participation

A District Magistrate receives instructions to field proxy candidates (husbands/family members) for seats reserved for women under the new reservation framework, as has occurred in panchayat elections historically.

Ethical Issue: Proxy candidacy defeats the constitutional intent of the 131st Amendment. The DM must enforce the spirit (not just letter) of the law, ensuring women candidates exercise genuine autonomy.

VALUES: CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY · GENDER JUSTICE · ACCOUNTABILITY · COMPASSIONATE GOVERNANCE | **GS4 MAPPING:** ETHICS IN GOVERNANCE, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE

§4 Prelims MCQs — 15 Questions

Q1. The 52nd G7 Summit (2026) is being held at which location?

(A) Paris, France (B) Évian-les-Bains, France (C) Nice, France (D) Geneva, Switzerland

Answer: (B) Évian-les-Bains, France

The 52nd G7 Summit is held June 15–17, 2026 at Évian-les-Bains in Haute-Savoie. [Source: Tribune India]

Easy

Q2. Consider these statements on India's Ramsar Sites:

1. India has the highest number of Ramsar Sites in Asia.
2. Surha Taal (Ballia, UP) is India's 100th Ramsar Site.
3. The Ramsar Convention was signed in 1971 in Iran.

Which is/are correct?

(A) 1 and 2 only (B) 1, 2 and 3 (C) 2 and 3 only (D) 3 only

Answer: (B) 1, 2 and 3

All three statements are correct — Ramsar (1971, Iran), India leads Asia in sites, and Surha Taal is the 100th. [Source: DD News]

Moderate

Q3. The Delimitation Bill, 2026 proposes to increase Lok Sabha seats to:

(A) 650 (B) 750 (C) 850 (D) 945

Answer: (C) 850

815 seats from states + 35 from UTs = 850 total; up from current 543. [Source: PRS India]

Easy

Q4. Which constitutional article mandates delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies after each census?

(A) Article 80 (B) Article 81 (C) Article 82 (D) Article 83

Answer: (C) Article 82

Article 82 mandates readjustment of Lok Sabha seats and territorial constituencies after each census. Article 81 governs composition of Lok Sabha.

Moderate

Q5. India's Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system's exo-atmospheric interceptor missile is:

(A) AAD (Advanced Air Defence) (B) PAD (Prithvi Air Defence) (C) Prithvi-II (D) Akash-NG

Answer: (B) PAD (Prithvi Air Defence)

PAD intercepts missiles above 40 km (exo-atmospheric); AAD handles endo-atmospheric threats (15–40 km). [Source: DRDO]

Moderate

Q6. Slovakia is a member of which of the following international groupings?

1. European Union
2. NATO
3. G7
4. Schengen Area

(A) 1, 2 and 4 only (B) 1 and 2 only (C) 1, 2, 3 and 4 (D) 2 and 4 only

Answer: (A) 1, 2 and 4 only

Slovakia is EU, NATO, and Schengen member. G7 members are: USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan + EU (Slovakia is not G7). [Source: MEA]

Hard

Q7. The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has how many members, and who has the casting vote?

(A) 5 members; Deputy Governor (B) 6 members; RBI Governor (C) 7 members; RBI Governor (D) 6 members; Finance Minister

Answer: (B) 6 members; RBI Governor

MPC has 6 members (3 RBI + 3 external); decisions by majority, Governor has casting vote in case of tie. Constituted under RBI Act 1934 (2016 amendment).

Moderate

Q8. In the context of the Supreme Court's Draft AI Regulations 2026, which use of AI is PERMITTED in Indian courts?

- (A) Predicting flight risk of accused for bail
- (B) Assessing recidivism probability of offenders
- (C) Legal research assistance and case scheduling
- (D) Automated verdict generation in minor cases

Answer: (C) Legal research assistance and case scheduling

The regulations permit AI for research, scheduling, translation, transcription, and accessibility. Bail risk scoring and recidivism prediction are expressly prohibited. [Source: Mondaq]

Moderate

Q9. Consider these statements on India's wind energy:

1. India's installed wind capacity target is 100 GW by 2030.
2. India added 6.1 GW of wind power in 2025–26, its highest ever annual addition.
3. India is the world's third-largest wind power market.

Which is/are correct?

(A) 1 and 2 only (B) 1 only (C) 1, 2 and 3 (D) 2 and 3 only

Answer: (A) 1 and 2 only

India is the world's FOURTH-largest wind power market (Statement 3 is incorrect). The 100 GW by 2030 target and 6.1 GW addition record are correct. [Source: PIB / Energetica India]

Hard

Q10. The 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) reserves what fraction of seats for women?

(A) One-fourth (B) One-third (C) Half (D) One-fifth

Answer: (B) One-third

The 106th Amendment reserves one-third of total seats for women in Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and Delhi assembly, triggered after post-census delimitation. [Source: PRS India]

Easy

Q11. India's foreign exchange reserves as of May 29, 2026, stood at approximately:

(A) \$582 billion (B) \$620 billion (C) \$682 billion (D) \$720 billion

Answer: (C) \$682 billion

India's forex reserves were \$682.3 billion as of May 29, 2026 — equal to ~11 months of import cover. [Source: RBI June 2026 MPC statement]

Hard

Q12. Which of the following correctly describes the Ramsar Convention's primary focus?

- (A) Protection of migratory birds under international law
- (B) Conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources
- (C) Prevention of marine pollution in international waters
- (D) Sustainable management of tropical rainforests

Answer: (B) Conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources

The Ramsar Convention (1971) is specifically about wetlands conservation and wise use, not exclusively birds (though wetlands support bird habitats). [Source: Drishti IAS]

Easy

Q13. The "Velvet Divorce" of 1993 resulted in the creation of which two nations?

(A) Czech Republic and Slovakia (B) Serbia and Montenegro (C) Bosnia and Herzegovina (D) Estonia and Latvia

Answer: (A) Czech Republic and Slovakia

The peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia on January 1, 1993 into Czech Republic and Slovakia is called the "Velvet Divorce." Slovakia's capital is Bratislava. [Source: MEA / India TV News]

Moderate

Q14. Consider these statements on DRDO's BMD programme:

1. The PAD missile intercepts targets in the endo-atmospheric layer.
2. India joined an elite group of nations with successful BMD tests in June 2026.
3. DRDO was established in 1958.

Which is/are correct?

(A) 2 and 3 only (B) 1 and 2 only (C) All three (D) 1 only

Answer: (A) 2 and 3 only

Statement 1 is INCORRECT — PAD is EXO-atmospheric (>40km); AAD is endo-atmospheric. DRDO was indeed established in 1958. [Source: DRDO / IBTimes]

Hard

Q15. G7 outreach sessions in 2026 focused on India's role in voicing concerns of the Global South. Which of the following issues is India likely to champion at the G7?

1. Climate finance for developing nations 2. Debt restructuring for low-income countries 3. Digital governance frameworks 4.

Expanding G7 membership

(A) 1, 2 and 3 only (B) 1 and 2 only (C) 1, 2, 3 and 4 (D) 2 and 4 only

Answer: (A) 1, 2 and 3 only

India consistently advocates climate finance, debt relief, and digital governance at G7 outreach. Expanding G7 membership is not India's stated diplomatic priority. [Source: PIB / Tribune India]

Moderate

§5 Mains Questions

GS2 — Polity

The Delimitation Bill, 2026 and the Constitution (131st Amendment) are linked but distinct instruments. Critically examine their implications for federal balance and gender representation. (250 words)

- Discuss the constitutional mandate for delimitation (Art. 82) and the 1976 freeze
- Analyse how Southern states fear reduced representation despite higher development
- Evaluate the one-third women's reservation trigger mechanism
- Suggest safeguards to address federal concerns while implementing delimitation

Keywords: Article 82, Delimitation Commission, 106th Amendment, Federal Balance, Cooperative Federalism, Women's Political Participation

GS2 — IR

India's engagement with Central and Eastern Europe has gained momentum in 2026. Examine the strategic interests driving this shift and its implications for India–EU relations. (250 words)

- Slovakia visit — first Indian PM visit since 1993; defence co-production potential
- Contrast with traditional EU partners: France, Germany, Italy
- India–EU FTA negotiations and role of smaller EU members
- Evaluate India's "diversified Europe" strategy

Keywords: India–Slovakia, Central Europe, Diversified diplomacy, India–EU FTA, Strategic Partnership, Defence co-production

GS2 — IR

India's consistent presence at G7 outreach sessions reflects its growing role as a bridge between the Global North and Global South. Substantiate with recent examples and limitations. (250 words)

- India's 8 consecutive G7 invitations — signal of strategic value
- Climate finance advocacy at COP, G20, and G7 outreach
- India–France Innovation Roadmap 2030 as bilateral outcome
- Limitations: India has no formal seat; influence remains advisory

Keywords: G7 Outreach, Global South, India–France, Climate Finance, Strategic Autonomy, VivaTech 2026

GS3 — Defence

India's successful Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) trials in June 2026 mark a strategic inflection point. Assess the impact of a credible BMD capability on India's deterrence posture. (250 words)

- BMD layers: PAD (exo-atmospheric) + AAD (endo-atmospheric) + Phase II
- Impact on Pakistan's first-strike calculations and China's ballistic threat
- Atmanirbhar Bharat dimension — 100% indigenous development
- International reactions and strategic stability concerns

Keywords: BMD, Strategic Deterrence, Atmanirbhar Bharat, DRDO, PAD, AAD, Nuclear Triad

GS3 — Environment

India reaching 100 Ramsar Sites signals conservation ambition, but experts warn that quantity without quality protection is insufficient. Critically evaluate India's wetland governance framework. (250 words)

- Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 as primary framework
- METT (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) gaps at many sites
- Central Asian Flyway and migratory bird conservation linkage
- Recommendations: Strengthen state wetland authorities, improve monitoring

Keywords: Ramsar Convention, Surha Taal, Wetland Rules 2017, METT, Biodiversity, Central Asian Flyway

GS4 — Ethics

The Supreme Court's prohibition on AI-based bail risk scoring reflects a deeper ethical principle about algorithmic decision-making in justice. Discuss the ethical concerns and suggest a governance framework. (250 words)

- Algorithmic bias: training data reflects historical inequities (class, caste, geography)
- Article 14 (Equality), Article 21 (Personal Liberty) as constitutional anchors
- Human primacy principle — judicial decisions require human wisdom, not computation
- Governance: transparency, auditability, human oversight, periodic bias audits

Keywords: AI Ethics, Algorithmic Bias, Judicial AI, Human Primacy, Article 14 & 21, DPDP Act 2023, Digital Justice

§6 Answer Writing Value Addition

Quote Bank

Quote	By	Best Used In
"The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth."	Chief Seattle (attributed)	GS3 — Environment, Wetlands, Climate
"Justice delayed is justice denied."	William Gladstone (attributed)	GS2 — Judiciary, AI in courts, Pendency
"Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."	Ronald Reagan	GS2 — IR, Deterrence, India's foreign policy
"The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home."	Confucius	GS4 — Ethics, Integrity in civil services

Key Data Points

Topic	Data	Source
India's Forex Reserves	\$682.3 billion (May 29, 2026); ~11 months import cover	RBI June 2026
Ramsar Sites — India	100 sites; highest in Asia; 3rd globally	Ramsar Secretariat 2026
Lok Sabha Seats (proposed)	850 (up from 543); 815 states + 35 UTs	Delimitation Bill 2026
India Wind Energy Target	100 GW by 2030; 155 GW by 2035; 4th globally	MNRE / PIB June 2026
India Court Pendency	~50 million cases pending across all courts	SC Annual Report
Women in Lok Sabha (reserved)	1/3 under 106th Amendment; India ranked 143rd globally (IPU 2025)	IPU

Acts, Committees & Reports

Name	Relevance
Delimitation Bill, 2026	Lok Sabha 543→850 seats; linked to 2027 census

Constitution 131st Amendment Bill, 2026	Enables women's reservation (106th Act) via delimitation
Supreme Court Draft AI Regulations, 2026	Governs AI in Indian courts; prohibits bail risk-scoring
DPDP Act, 2023	Data protection foundation for AI in courts; Digital Personal Data Protection
Wetland (Conservation & Management) Rules, 2017	Framework for protecting Ramsar and other wetlands in India
RBI Act, 1934 (amended 2016)	Constitutes MPC; inflation targeting framework

§7 AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

2 Polity & Governance Stories	2 International Relations Stories	1 Defence & Security Story	1 Science & Technology Story
1 Economy Story	1 Environment Story	6 Places in News	15 Prelims MCQs
6 Mains Questions	4 Ethics Cases	4 Value Addition Quotes	6 Data Points for Mains

GS Coverage: GS1 (Geography — Places in News) · GS2 (Polity, IR, Judiciary) · GS3 (Defence, Environment, Economy, S&T) · GS4 (Ethics)

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QUESTIONS FROM
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7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
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