



MINISTÈRE  
DE L'ÉCONOMIE,  
DES FINANCES  
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## REVUE DE PRESSE SECTORIELLE NUMÉRIQUE

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### En bref

#### NUMÉRIQUE :

- L'Inde lance les Account Aggregators permettant aux citoyens d'aggréger et de partager leurs données financières facilement et avec leur consentement.
- La *Competition Commission of India* se penche sur le système de paiement imposé par Apple aux applications.
- Le CERT-In rend passible de poursuites judiciaires les chercheurs et les « hackers éthiques » signalant des vulnérabilités logicielles.
- La société israélienne Tower Semiconductor écrit au PM Modi pour accélérer la mise en œuvre du projet gouvernemental de fabrication de puces électroniques.
- NATGRID (National Intelligence Grid), la base de données indienne visant à lutter contre le terrorisme et les menaces contre la sécurité nationale, sera bientôt lancée.
- L'Inde et Singapour vont relier leurs systèmes nationaux de paiements numériques, permettant des transferts d'argent transnationaux instantanés et à bas-coût.

#### TÉLÉCOMMUNICATIONS:

- Le *Department of Telecommunications* publie une liste de 25 équipements éligibles pour les marchés publics même s'ils utilisent des composants importés.
- L'Inde annonce un ensemble de mesures d'aide au secteur des télécommunications, dont l'ouverture aux IDE à 100 %.

# Revue de presse

## 1. NUMÉRIQUE

### India launches Account Aggregator to extend financial services to millions

Techcrunch, 02/09/2021

India's top banks five years ago built the interoperable UPI rails and enabled over 150 million people in the South Asian market to pay digitally. Scores of firms — including local firms Paytm, PhonePe, CRED and international giants Google and Facebook — in India today support the UPI infrastructure, which is now reporting 3 billion transactions each month.

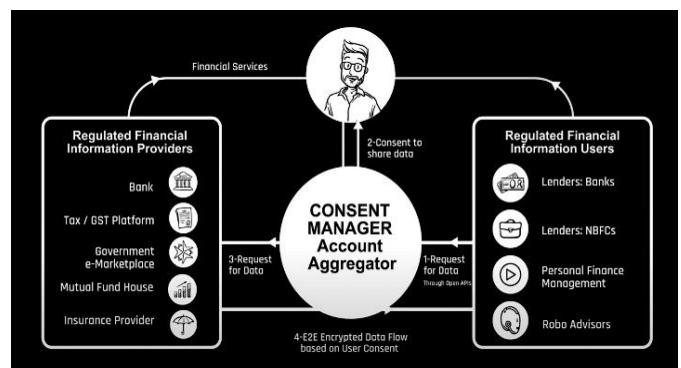
Banks are now ready for their second act.

On Thursday, **eight Indian banks announced** that they are rolling out — or about to roll out — a **system called Account Aggregator to enable consumers to consolidate all their financial data in one place.** (Participant banks are HDFC, Kotak, ICICI, Axis, SBI, IndusInd, IDFC and Federal. Four of them are rolling out the system on Thursday; others say they will roll out the new system soon.)

The objective of Account Aggregator (AA) is to aggregate all financial information of an individual, said M Rajeshwar Rao, deputy governor of India's central bank — Reserve Bank of India — at a virtual event Thursday.

The new system makes it possible for banks, tax authorities, insurers and other finance firms to aggregate data of customers — who have provided their consent — to get better understanding about their potential customers, make informed decisions and ensure smoother transactions.

Users who provide consent — and it only takes a few taps to do so — will be able to share their financial information from one Account Aggregator participant to another through a centralized API-based repository. Users get to decide for how long they wish their data to be shared with a particular Account Aggregator participant.



*An illustration of how the AA system works. Image Credits: Account Aggregator*

Most countries globally already have privacy laws that recognize the rights of individuals. But even as individuals and businesses have the right to exercise their control over their data, the current system has made it difficult for consumers to operationalize how they provide consent.

"They face this difficulty for two reasons," explained Siddharth Tiwari, head of the Bank for International Settlements in Asia and Pacific. "Firstly, a service provider usually seeks consent to use and transfer data at time when consumers [are] agreeing to participate in an activity with the service provider. Since this consent is granted for a wide variety of possibilities, it is broad and sweeping in nature," he said.

"Secondly, newly created data are often gathered and retained in proprietary silos and stored in various institutions in incompatible

formats. Consumers can find it difficult to share their data as they have only limited options. [...] Thus, service providers who are custodians of data effectively act as defacto owner of the data," he said, adding that Account Aggregator is designed to potentially address these challenges. "A robust consent-based data sharing system has the potential for consumers derive value from their data while maintaining control."

Account Aggregator is built in part to also help consumers and businesses access financial services, such as loans. Existing credit bureaus in India have data of only a fraction of the nation's 1.4 billion population, which makes it very difficult for most in the country to access working capital, explained Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani, who's been an adviser to the initiative, at the event Thursday.

Most of these individuals have made enough digital financial transactions and businesses have enough cashflow to show that would make them eligible for financial services, he said. "Digital footprints, when properly used, empowered by consumers using their own data, enables a huge amount of credit to small businesses. It can lead to the democratisation of credit."

"Talks are on to onboard telecom operators as well," he said, adding that the system has already achieved the sophistication that it could be extended to other industries.

"It's an architecture that can now be applied to several additional industries," he said, pointing to healthcare, fitness and testing labs as examples. "We can confidently say that there is no other country in the world that has built a robust infrastructure at this scale where its people can leverage their data. This approach is now getting global recognition."

"For retail loan underwriting ('eligibility check'), rather than submitting previous three years bank statements, I can simply authenticate a data

transfer via AA (and revoke the data transfer AFTER the loan is approved or sanctioned). For self-employed or freelance professionals, getting Term Insurance has always been difficult since they cannot prove their income — AA lets you provide an audit trail of past income to underwrite the Term Insurance application," Rahul Mathur, founder and chief executive of insurance aggregator startup BimaPe, told TechCrunch.

The Account Aggregator system is also positioned to dramatically increase the addressable market for online insurers, lenders and players in several other industries.

"This is a big step towards a connected financial ecosystem, and will be very significant in Fi's journey to help working millennials get better with their money. With the successful demonstration of the framework today we are excited to have all our users experience the power and convenience of the AA integration once it's rolled out to all users," said Sumit Gwalani, co-founder of Fi.

## Apple hit with antitrust case in India over in-app payments issues

Reuters, 02/09/2021

Apple Inc is facing an antitrust challenge in India for allegedly abusing its dominant position in the apps market by forcing developers to use its proprietary in-app purchase system, according to a source and documents seen by Reuters.

The allegations are similar to a case Apple faces in the European Union, where regulators last year started an investigation into Apple's imposition of an in-app fee of 30% for distribution of paid digital content and other restrictions.

The Indian case was filed by a little-known, non-profit group which argues Apple's fee of up to 30% hurts competition by raising costs for app

developers and customers, while also acting as a barrier to market entry.

"The existence of the 30% commission means that some app developers will never make it to the market ... This could also result in consumer harm," said the filing, which has been seen by Reuters.

Unlike Indian court cases, filings and details of cases reviewed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) are not made public. Apple and the CCI did not respond to a request for comment.

In the coming weeks, the CCI will review the case and could order its investigations arm to conduct a wider probe, or dismiss it altogether if it finds no merit in it, said a source familiar with the matter.

"There are high chances that an investigation can be ordered, also because the EU has been probing this," said the person, who declined to be identified as the case details are not public.

The complainant, **non-profit "Together We Fight Society"** which is based in India's western state of Rajasthan, told Reuters in a statement it filed the case in the interest of protecting Indian consumers and startups.

In India, though Apple's iOS powered just about 2% of 520 million smartphones by end-2020 - with the rest using Android - Counterpoint Research says the U.S. firm's smartphone base in the country has more than doubled in the last five years.

The Apple case in India comes just as South Korea's parliament this week approved a bill that bans major app store operators like Alphabet Inc's Google and Apple from forcing software developers to use their payment systems.

#### "MIDDLEMAN IN TRANSACTIONS"

Companies like Apple and Google say their fee covers the security and marketing benefits their

app stores provide, but many companies disagree.

Last year, after Indian startups publicly voiced concern over a similar in-app payments fee charged by Google, the CCI ordered an investigation into it as part of a broader antitrust probe into the company. That investigation is ongoing.

The India antitrust case against Apple also alleges that its restrictions how developers communicate with users to offer payment solutions are anti-competitive, and also hurt the country's payment processors who offer services at lower charges in the range of 1-5%.

Apple has hurt competitors by restricting developers from informing users of alternative purchasing possibilities, thereby harming "app developers' relationship with their customers by inserting itself as middleman in every in-app transaction," the filing added.

In recent weeks, Apple has loosened some of the restrictions for developers globally, like allowing them to use communications - such as email - to share information about payment alternatives outside of their iOS app.

And on Wednesday, it said it would allow some apps to provide customers an in-app link to bypass Apple's purchase system, though the U.S. firm retained a ban on allowing other forms of payment options inside apps.

Gautam Shahi, a competition law partner at Indian law firm Dua Associates, said that even if companies change their behaviour after an antitrust case is filed, the CCI still looks at past conduct.

"The CCI will look at recent years to see if the law was violated and if consumers and competition were harmed," said Shahi.

The CCI has plans to speed up all cases involving big technology firms such as Amazon and Google



by deploying additional officers and working to more stringent internal deadlines, Reuters reported.

## **CERT-In Has A New Vulnerability Disclosure Policy That Doesn't Spare The Messenger**

*Medianama, 07/09/2021*

"Reporting a vulnerability to CERT-In does not imply being exempt from compliance. Discloser shall be responsible for any action performed by her/him discovering the vulnerability whatsoever," the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) said in its new Responsible Vulnerability Disclosure and Coordination Policy.

This essentially means that **cyber researchers and ethical hackers who report vulnerabilities of websites or systems may be liable to prosecution and must comply with the relevant laws such as the IT Act 2000 and 2008 (amendment).**

Until now, there was a shortcoming in the availability of information in regards to current vulnerability disclosure programmes and processes of Indian government entities. As a Centre for Internet and Society research study stated, there are "several sections and provisions within the IT Act 2000 which have the potential to disincentivise legitimate security research, even if the same has been carried out in good faith".

Thus, it was imperative for the Indian government to come out with a vulnerability disclosure policy that encourages such research, rather than the current policy, which many feel, is detrimental to the effort. For instance, many netizens termed this move as "shooting the messenger".

**Talk about shooting the messenger.**

It has never really made sense to me that otherwise sensible people actually make attempts to "improve" the noose they're being hung from.

Meanwhile, in an amazing show of capability, CERT has disabled copying text on their website. Way to go.

— Bharat Varma (@BharatVarma3) September 3, 2021

CERT-IN has a new vulnerability disclosure policy and it says disclosing a vulnerability doesn't mean you get a cover for your actions that lead to you discovering the vulnerability. <https://t.co/Fbikgq4mqe>

— Srinivas Kodali (@digitaldutta) September 3, 2021

### **Other details of the vulnerability policy**

Details expected for CERT-IN to look into claims of vulnerability

- The product(s) affected
- The exact software version or model affected
- Vendor details
- Description of the vulnerability along with concise steps to reproduce the reported vulnerability along with supporting evidence such as:
  - Proof of concept (PoC)
  - Code sample
  - Crash reports
  - Screenshots and Video recording etc.
- The impact of exploiting the vulnerability
- Other products or software versions likely to be affected
- How the vulnerability was discovered
- The tools used for discovering the vulnerability
- Information on any known exploit
- Time constraints with respect to going public about the issue (e.g. article, blog or conference, etc.)

- Whether the vulnerability has already been reported to the vendor/other agency or any plan to do so
- Whether reporting party wants to remain anonymous during the coordination process
- Whether reporting party wants mention in the vulnerability note/advisory

Actually it is much more than that. They have created massive incentives for \*not reporting\* and selling it to other operators.

In general dark vulnerability markets develop b/c there are less incentives for ethical reporting. @IndianCERT has super powered the dark market.

— V. Anand "Screeching Minority" | வெ. ஆனந்த் (@iam\_anandv) September 7, 2021

### Coordination for resolution

CERT-In, in the policy, said it will examine and validate the vulnerability report. "Upon successful validation, CERT-In will initiate coordination with the relevant product vendor(s), discloser and other stakeholders (if required) for the remediation and closure of the issue," the policy said.

CERT-In shall make all possible efforts to limit the disclosure to a bare minimum. However situations may arise where assistance from trusted third parties may be required in which case CERT-In will be sharing a subset or all the vulnerability information, as the case may be, with the trusted third parties — Responsible Vulnerability Disclosure and Coordination Policy

### Timeline for resolving the issue

CERT-In said that it will try to get the issue resolved within 120 days from the initial vendor contact date. However, it added, that the timeframe could change if the vulnerability is:

- Being actively exploited
- Reported by multiple sources to CERT-In or the affected vendor/ developer
- Considered to be exceptionally serious (such as threatening public safety)
- On agreement between the discloser, CERT-In, and the affected vendor/developer.

It may be noted that situations may arise where the issue is not resolved within 120 days, e.g. due to disagreement between vendor and discloser, non-response from vendor etc. CERT-In may consider to close the issue in such cases with intimation to the discloser or make the vulnerability public and stop the coordination effort with the vendor — Responsible Vulnerability Disclosure and Coordination Policy

### Difficulties faced in reporting vulnerabilities: CIS

The Centre for Internet and Society which interviewed hackers for its report "Improving the Processes for Disclosing Security Vulnerabilities to Government Entities in India" in 2019, noted the following problems that they face while reporting vulnerabilities

**Process:** Hackers said that it was difficult to identify whom to report a particular security vulnerability as Government websites in India do not often include contact information for the submission of security vulnerabilities.

**Communication:** The report mentioned that there is a lack of clarity on what happens to a vulnerability report after it is submitted. "This results in a situation where security researchers invest a significant amount of time and effort to first report a vulnerability and then repeatedly attempt to follow up on whether it has been fixed," it added.

**Accessibility:** The process of submitting details regarding security flaws can sometimes itself pose a challenge.

In general, people stay from govt websites. Now they are adding liability. So the only ones who would come are the ones whom you don't want.

Lack of policy implications at every level.

— V. Anand "Screeching Minority" | வெ. ஆனந்த் (@iam\_anandv) September 7, 2021

## Fast track chip-making plan: Upset Israeli company writes to PM

ET Bureau, 09/09/2021

Tower Semiconductor, an Israel-based semiconductor foundry, has shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking his intervention in fast-tracking a government proposal for chip manufacturing, nine months after it floated an Expression of Interest (EoI) for the same. The company said any delay from the government's side will mean it will be unable to "stay active in the project in the near future."

Tower Semiconductor is the technology partner of a consortium floated by Abu Dhabi-based Next Orbit Ventures, which pitched for a \$3 billion analogue 65 nanometre semiconductor fabrication unit in Dholera, an industrial hub in Gujarat.

ET has seen a copy of the letter, which was also marked to finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, electronics and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal.

Goyal also heads a government panel on high tech manufacturing.

Sources said Vaishnaw, who took over as IT minister nearly two months ago, held a call with the consortium last week to understand various issues and assure support.

"We are disappointed and demoralised that in spite of the highest G2G level discussion for the proposed semiconductor fab... there is no clue

where we are heading," the letter said. There have been no clear timelines, nor commitment or transparency from the government, it added.

"We would request you to kindly explicitly articulate and convey the limitations of GoI (Government of India) and its stakeholder without further delay, else we express our inability to stay active in the project in near future," it said. Tower Semiconductor did not respond to ET's queries. The consortium also held a meeting with Goyal earlier this year.

The Ministry of Electronics and IT reportedly received applications from 20 top companies after it floated the EoI to gauge the interest of companies willing to set up semiconductor plants in the country.

The industry has been arguing that in the wake of a global chip supply shortage and countries like the US doling out huge subsidies to attract semiconductor manufacturers, the government should act fast on its plans. The government is currently in the process of rolling out requests for detailed proposals, after which it will decide quantum of the subsidy.

"Israel, as an India strategic partner in many areas, would wish to participate in the project to enable India its Digital Safe India dream considering the latest development in its neighbourhood...," the letter said.

Ajay Jalan, cofounder of Next Orbit Ventures, said the company cannot comment on behalf of its technology partners. "But yes, we as Next Orbit Ventures along with state government partner Gujarat have been consistently requesting all the key Indian ministries including Hon'ble Prime Minister since 2017 and now after EoI to speed up the decision on semiconductor incentives to start our project execution," Jalan said in an email.

Each year of delay is not only adding to the cost of the project but also to the country's vulnerabilities as far as national security and competitiveness are concerned, he said. It also



impacts the confidence of its global technology and investment partners in India's decision-making timelines, Jalan said. "Next Orbit team is again in Delhi this week to make similar requests to the decision makers of the country, as the current EoI has taken nine months and if RFP is called another 9 months will delay the process," he said.

## NATGRID: Government's Controversial Surveillance Project In Final Stages

*Medianama, 13/09/2021*

The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) is **expected to be launched soon**, according to a PTI report on September 12. Citing sources, the report said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to launch NATGRID and the final "synchronisation and testing" of the **Rs 3,400 crore surveillance database was underway**.

Intended to tackle terrorism and other national security issues, NATGRID collates data from multiple financial, travel, telecommunications, and other databases under multiple central government agencies. Since it is exempt from public scrutiny for being a part of defence and intelligence infrastructure, the database raises concerns about privacy violations in the absence of nearly any accountability measures on such surveillance.

### What is the NATGRID?

What will be collated:

The **NATGRID will collate information from 21 providing organisations like the Income Tax department, National Crime Records Bureau, Civil Aviation Ministry, and more, according to the government's first phase plan.**

The **types of information will include banking and financial transactions, databases of FIRs and stolen vehicles, air and rail travel records, immigration, property records, driving license, and telecommunications data.** In 2019, it was reported that the Ministry of Home Affairs

(MHA) was also planning to link data related to social media users to the database.

### Who will have access:

The **MHA's plan says that 10 agencies** will be granted access to NATGRID at first, but this will be **expanded to over 1000 organisations**, in a staggered manner, over the years.

The 10 agencies to be given access include:

1. Central Bureau of Investigation
2. Directorate of Revenue Intelligence
3. Enforcement Directorate
4. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs
5. Central Board of Direct Taxes (for the Income Tax Department)
6. Cabinet Secretariat, the Intelligence Bureau
7. Directorate General of GST Intelligence
8. Narcotics Control Bureau
9. Financial Intelligence Unit
10. National Investigation Agency

### Origins of the NATGRID

The database was first given authorisation by then Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram in 2010 after the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai.

However, according to reports, the project gathered steam after a change in leadership took place in 2016 when IB officer Ashok Patnaik became NATGRID's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

On September 4, during an event of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), Home Minister Amit Shah reportedly said that, "Had corona [COVID-19] not been there, the Prime Minister would have dedicated NATGRID to the country. I am hopeful that the Prime Minister will dedicate NATGRID to the country in some time." According to a response in Parliament, the database was earlier scheduled to go live by December 2020.



## State-sanctioned surveillance in India

In 2014, another surveillance program of the government, NETRA which detects suspicious words like 'attack', 'bomb', 'blast' or 'kill' in real time on social media was launched.

In 2016, the government launched the **Central Monitoring System (CMS)** which would "automate the process of lawful interception and monitoring of mobile phones, landlines and the internet in the country" in New Delhi and Mumbai.

In 2020, the Indian Express reported that local units of the Department of Telecommunications had been seeking call data records (CDRs) of all mobile subscribers across several parts of the country.

In July, news broke that the Indian government may have deployed Israeli spyware Pegasus against various Indian politicians, activists, journalists, businessmen, etc.

## India and Singapore to link their payments systems to enable 'instant and low-cost' cross-border transactions

*Techcrunch, 14/09/2021*

India and Singapore are working to **link their digital payments systems to enable "instant, low-cost fund transfers,"** in a major push to disrupt the cross-border transactions between the two nations that amounts to over \$1 billion each year.

The project to **link India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Singapore's PayNow is targeted for operationalization by July 2022,** both nation's central banks said on Tuesday. Users on either of the systems will be able to make transactions to one another without having to sign up to the second platform, the banks added.

"When implemented, fund transfers can be made from India to Singapore using mobile phone numbers, and from Singapore to India using UPI virtual payment addresses (VPA). The experience of making a PayNow transfer to a UPI VPA will be similar to that of a domestic transfer to a PayNow VPA," said Monetary Authority of Singapore in a press statement.

UPI, a five-year-old payments infrastructure developed by a coalition of retail banks, has become the most popular way users in India transfer money to one another and to businesses.

The system, adopted by scores of local and global firms including Google and Facebook, is now processing over 3 billion transactions each month. Like UPI, Singapore's PayNow also brings interoperability between banks and payments apps, allowing users from one payment app to make transactions to those on other apps.

Nearly 250 million people across the world send over \$500 billion in cross-border remittances annually, a report by Citi said earlier this year. But the space is ripe for disruption. "The fees are extremely high. It is embarrassing that we have not solved this issue so far," Citi analysts wrote. Global average cost for sending money is around 6.5%. The RBI and the MAS didn't reveal the cross-border fees that they would charge their users.

India's central bank described the project as a "significant milestone in the development of infrastructure for cross-border payments" between India and Singapore, and said the linkage "closely aligns with the G20's financial inclusion priorities of driving faster, cheaper and more transparent cross-border payments."

"The linkage builds upon the earlier efforts of NPCI International Private Limited (NIPL) and Network for Electronic Transfers (NETS) to foster cross-border interoperability of payments

using cards and QR codes, between India and Singapore and will further anchor trade, travel and remittance flows between the two countries."

## 2. Télécommunications

### Use of imported components in 25 telecom products eligible for public procurement: DoT

PTI, 02/09/2021

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has issued a list of 25 telecom product segments, including satellite phones, broadband equipment, optical fibre cable etc, which will qualify as local products even if they use imported components for domestic manufacturing. The notification enables companies making telecom products to import components in public procurement projects of Bharatnet, BSNL, Railways etc in compliance with Public Procurement (preference to Make in India) order, 2017.

"...it is hereby clarified that if printed circuit board assembly (PCBA) and testing from imported/domestically manufactured parts and components using surface mount technology process is done in India then imported/domestically manufactured parts and components will be qualified for the purpose of local content," the notification dated August 31 said.

Foreign vendors Nokia, Ericsson, Cisco etc in the past have demanded that they should be treated at par with domestic telecom gear makers.

"This shall be reviewed when the semiconductor fab (electronic chip plant) in India is operational," the notification said.

As on date, all electronic and telecom device makers import electronic chips that are used in their product.

Tata Group has shown interest in setting up a semiconductor plant.

The list of 25 telecom products include broadband modem, routers, core network routers, broadband equipment, mobile antennas etc.

### Government announces major telecom reforms package

ETOnline, 15/09/2021

The government has finally answered the distress call from the telecom sector with a set of reforms that address some of the major grievances of the sector.

The contentious definition of the Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) has also been revamped with non-telecom revenue excluded from its purview. The telecom companies have contested the AGR definition and have been burdened with pending AGR dues.

FDI reforms have also been announced and will boost investments in this capital-intensive sector.

The move will help in bringing robustness in the sector and bring fresh investment to the sector.

Auctions will mostly be held in the last quarter of the financial year, telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

Here are the major reforms that have been announced:

1. AGR: AGR definition rationalised and non-telecom revenue will be excluded.

2. Moratorium on dues: A much needed moratorium has been announced on statutory dues of the telecom sector for four years. This will improve the cash flow which can be used in more productive areas.

3. Spectrum user charges will be rationalized and there will be now an annual compounding of rates rather than a monthly one.

4. There will be a calendar for spectrum auction and it will usually take place in the last quarter of the financial year.

5. Spectrum sharing has been allowed; telecom operator can share where they deem beneficial

6. FDI: The government has increased the FDI in the sector under automatic route from 49% to 100%.

7. Licence Raj scrapped: Customs notification of 1953 have been done away with. It will allow telecom operators to easily import equipments.

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