BUY

Star Cement

Cement

Result Update

7 February 2018

Robust unitary EBITDA of Rs2280/MT; Maintain BUY

Star Cement delivered 4th consecutive quarter of robust profit, as its EBITDA/PAT shot up 60%/173% YoY. This is led by stability of robust pricing and Star's sales recovery in NE region, lower sales outside NE region and stable fuel costs. Thus, Star reported its best ever and industry's best unitary EBITDA of Rs2280/MT. We estimate good demand to sustain Star's unitary EBITDA at 2x industry average, bolstering cashflows (despite expiry of freight subsidy Q4FY18 onwards). Faster subsidy backlog clearance is another tailwind. We reiterate BUY with a revised TP of Rs175.

- O Q3FY18 Another strong quarter: Star Cement's stellar show continued in Q3FY18 as strong pricing (+19% YoY and +3% QoQ) drove 60% YoY EBITDA growth, even though external sales volumes declined 5% YoY (+31% QoQ). Sales in NE region rebound (+4% YoY against decline seen in preceding four quarters). Sales outside NE region fell 38% YoY (4th consecutive qtr of fall) on sales market rationalisation. Higher utilisation QoQ amid stable fuel cost drove 12% QoQ fall in unitary opex. On YoY basis, opex remained flattish on over-head reduction and on fall in low margin sales (outside NE region). Thus, bolstered by strong pricing, Star delivered historic high (and best in industry) EBITDA of Rs2280/MT (+70% YoY, +40% QoQ). Robust operating profits, coupled with lower interest expense (on debt reduction), buoyed PAT up by 173% YoY. We note that YoY earning growth should cool off Q4FY18 onwards, owing to high base effect coming in play. However, qualitatively, Star should continue to deliver industry leading unitary EBITDA.
- O Expected demand rebound to keep earnings buoyant: Management guided that volume growth recovering will accelerate Q4FY18, on good demand traction in the NE region. Thus, it expects FY18 volume to decline ~5% YoY (vs 11% decline in 9MFY18) and grow at 10-15% CAGR thereafter. Strong project demand has firmed up pricing in the non-trade segment. We have cut our FY18/19 volume estimates by 9%/10% on lower offtake in 9MFY18. However, owing to strong pricing and stable opex, the impact on profits is mitigated. Thus, we maintain our FY18E/19E EBITDA estimates (ahead of consensus). We also introduce FY20 estimates. We thus expect Star to deliver 6.5%/5.5%/16.5% volume/NSR/EBITDA CAGR during FY17-20.
- O Robust cash-flow to bolster free cashflow despite on-going capex: Star is increasing its clinker capacity by 15% (to 3 mn MT) by FY19E through debottlenecking. It has also got go ahead to start its Siliguri split grinding project. Star has planned a 2 mn MT grinding capacity at capex of Rs3.5bn-4n by end of FY20. Thereafter, it would also explore brown-field expansion of clinker capacity in Meghalaya (doubling possible). Robust op cash generation (led by unitary EBITDA at 2x industry average), along with pick-up subsidy back-log clearance (it received Rs3.6bn in 9MFY18 and similar amount expected by FY19E), should lead to surge in free cash flow. These should bolster Star's balance sheet and aid future expansion capability (we estimate net cash balance of ~Rs7bn at end of FY20E).
- O Maintain BUY with a TP of Rs175: We remain bullish on Star Cement, as it has re-aligned its regional sales mix towards strong demand/pricing market with stable fuel costs locally. Faster clearance of long due subsidy backlog is another cash-flow booster. We re-iterate BUY with a revised TP of Rs175, as we roll forward valuations to FY20 (10.5x FY20 EBITDA). It is currently trading at 9.2x/7.4x FY19/20E EBITDA. On cash-flow basis, the stock currently trades at attractive valuations 7%/10% yield (5-year adj-OCF/EV yield) on FY19/20E. In our view, Star's almost double of industry average unitary EBIDTA (despite expiration of freight subsidy) should justify its premium valuation on replacement cost basis.

Y/E Mar (Rsmn)	Q3FY18	Q3FY17	YoY (%)	Q2FY18	QoQ (%)	Q3FY18E	Variance %
Net Sales	3,774	3,427	10.1	2,810	34.3	3,765	0.3
Op. cost	2,361	2,546	(7.3)	2,040	15.7	2,589	(8.8)
EBITDA	1,413	881	60.4	770	83.7	1,175	20.3
EBITDA margin (%)	37.4	25.7	1,173	27.4	1,006	31.2	623
Depreciation	337	356	(5.5)	326	3.2	326	3.2
Interest	137	186	(26.3)	141	(3.1)	140	(2.1)
PBT	942	340	177.0	311	202.9	714	31.9
Taxes Paid	28	0	30,531	49	(41.7)	107	(73.5)
Minority Interest	18	13	46.0	5	270.7	20	(8.0)
Adjusted PAT	896	328	173.4	257	247.8	587	52.5

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates; Consolidated financials

Target Pr	rice	R	s175	Key Data					
CMP	CMP Rs129		Bloomberg Code	SFCL IN					
Upside	Upside 35.5%		Curr Shares O/S (mn)	419.2					
Previous 1	Previous Target Rs152		Diluted Shares O/S(mn)	419.2					
Previous F	Previous Rating Buy		Mkt Cap (Rsbn/USDmn)	54/825.4					
Price Peri	formanc	e (%)*		52 Wk H / L (Rs)	151.9/102				
	1M	6M	1Yr	5 Year H / L (Rs)	151.9/102				
SFCL IN	(10.6)	(1.2)	-	Daily Vol. (3M NSE Avg.)	743634				
NIFTY	(0.8)	4.2	19.5						

*as on 7 February 2018; Source: Bloomberg, Centrum Research

Shareholding pattern (%)*

Dec-17	Sep-17	Jun-17
73.3	74.6	74.9
1.1	0.4	0.1
2.6	1.6	1.2
23.1	23.4	23.8
	73.3 1.1 2.6	73.3 74.6 1.1 0.4 2.6 1.6

Source: BSE, *as on 7 February 2018

Operational performance trends

	Q3F118	Q3F117	101 (%)	Q2F118	Q0Q (%)
Net Sales Vol (Cement +Clinker)	0.62	0.66	(5.4)	0.47	31.0
Net sales (mn MT)	0.65	0.70	(7.7)	0.50	30.8
Gross sales (mn MT)					
NSR (Rs/MT) ^^	5,829	4,883	19.4	5,677	2.7
RM & Traded Goods	779	1,318	(40.9)	1,371	(43.1)
Power & Fuel	885	428	106.9	612	44.4
Employee	424	410	3.5	542	(21.8)
Freight	902	882	2.4	912	(1.1)
Other expenses	656	590	11.1	684	(4.2)
Opex (Rs/MT) ^^	3,646	3,627	0.5	4,122	(11.5)
EBITDA (Rs/MT) **	2,280	1,344	69.6	1,626	40.2

Source: Company, Centrum Research

Gross sales imply total cement and clinker sales including clinker sold to onlease GUs in West Bengal and includes cement purchased from these units. Net sales is excluding clinker sales to on-lease GUs.

^^ NSR and Op costs items calculated on gross sales volume. ** EBITDA per MT calculation on net sales volume

Earning Revisions

Particulars		FY18E		FY19E				
(Rs bn)	New	Old	Chg (%)	New	Old	Chg (%)		
Sales	15.9	17.6	(9.5)	18.2	20.1	(9.8)		
EBITDA	5.5	5.5	0.1	5.6	5.6	(0.5)		
Ebitda margin (%)	34.3	31.0		30.7	27.8			
Adj PAT	3.3	3.2	0.7	3.7	3.7	0.5		

Source: Centrum Research Estimates

Centrum vs. Bloomberg Consensus*

Particulars		FY18E		FY19E				
(Rs bn)	Centrum	BBG	Var (%)	Centrum	B B G	Var (%)		
Net Sales	15.9	17.8	(10.5)	18.2	20.35	(10.7)		
EBITDA	5.5	5.007	9.1	5.6	4.92	13.2		
PAT	3.3	2.589	26.2	3.7	2.372	57.5		

Bloombe	rg Consei	Centrum Target	Variance (%)		
BUY	SELL	HOLD	Target Price (Rs)	Price (Rs)	(70)
6	0	1	161	1,75	8.8

*as on 7 February 2018; Source: Bloomberg, Centrum Research Estimates

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Y/E Mar (Rs mn)	Revenue	YoY (%)	EBITDA	EBITDA (%)	APAT	YoY (%)	DEPS Rs.	RoE (%)	RoCE (%)	P/E (x)	EV/EBITDA (x)
FY16	15,794	10.4	3,994	25.3	1,346	61.3	3.2	13.2	11.1	22.9	10.1
FY17	15,125	(4.2)	4,088	27.0	1,716	27.5	4.1	14.8	12.0	18.2	9.7
FY18E	15,928	5.3	5,465	34.3	3,266	90.3	7.8	23.0	18.3	16.6	10.2
FY19E	18,167	14.1	5,570	30.7	3,736	14.4	8.9	21.4	18.7	14.5	9.2
FY20E	20,919	15.2	6,295	30.1	4,299	15.1	10.3	20.5	19.4	12.6	7.4

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates, Consolidated Financials.

Con-call highlights

- O Grey Cement Sales: Star's grey cement sales (from owned and on-leased units) dipped 11% YoY (up 29% QoQ) to 0.56mn MT. Sales recovered QoQ on pick up in construction activities post monsoon. Star's cement sales in NE region rose 4% YoY (after registering decline in the preceding four quarters). However, sales outside NE region continued to decline (it fell 38% YoY in Q3) for fourth quarter, as Star has deliberately cut its sales exposure in these markets owing to stiff competition witnessed there (there are low margin sales for Star Cement).
- O NE region accounted for 74% of total cement sales in Q3 vs 63% YoY and 76% QoQ.
- O For 9MFY18, total cement sales fell 17% YoY to 1.66mn MT. NE region accounted for 72% of cement sales vs 62% YoY. During this period, while sales in NE region fell 3% YoY, sales outside NE region fell 40% YoY.
- O **Total sales volume** including clinker sales fell 5% YoY and rose 31% QoQ to 0.62mn MT. For 9MFY18, total external sales volume fell 11% YoY to 1.8mn MT.
- O Management expects volume growth to rebound going forward: Management expects strong demand in the NE region should boost volume offtake Q4FY18 onwards. It expects to close FY18 with ~5% total external volume decline vs 11% fall in 9MFY18. It also expects to deliver 10-15% volume CAGR going ahead, capitalising on demand and as there are no new expansions by other players in NE region.
- Operating cost trends: Star reported unitary opex rose 1% YoY but fell 12% QoQ to Rs3646/MT. Higher utilisation QoQ drove increase in plant efficiency and star also registered lower fly-ash cost. Even unitary employee cost cooled off on strong volume uptick. On YoY basis, overall opex also remained flat, as reduction in sales outside NE region drove lower overheads. This offset the impact of higher diesel prices. Freight incentive has expired in Jan 2018 and this will also lead to Rs350/MT opex increase. However, Star indicated that actual impact from the freight subsidy exhaustion should be around Rs250/MT, as it is rationalisation its logistics and on account of some other credits it can claim.
- O **Subsidy receipt**: During Q3FY18, Star received Rs1.6bn towards the outstanding Rs2.1bn capital subsidy. It also received Rs0.6bn in Q1FY18 towards freight subsidy. Thus, at end of Q3FY18, total subsidy backlog (freight + capital) stands at ~Rs7.2bn. Management expect to receive Rs1.5bn during Q4FY18 and large chunk of the rest outstanding in FY19. We model in Rs3bn/Rs2bn/Rs2.2bn receipts during FY18/19/20E.
- O Capex guidance: Star is currently de-bottlenecking its clinker capacity in Meghalaya which will increase its clinker capacity by 0.4mn MT by mid-FY19. Star has also received go-ahead from West Bengal government to execute its green-field split grinding capacity. Star plans to add 2mn MT capacity there at a capex of Rs3.5-4bn. This is expected to be completed by end of FY20.

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Comparative valuations and key assumptions

Exhibit 1: Comparative Valuations

Campany	Mkt Cap CAGR FY17-19E		E (%)	EBITDA margin (%)		RoCE (%)		RoE (%)		EV/EBITDA (x)		EV/MT(USD)							
Company	(Rs bn)	Rev.	EBITDA	PAT	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY17	FY18E	FY19E
Star Cement	54.2	9.6	16.7	47.5	27.0	34.3	30.7	12.0	18.3	18.7	14.8	23.0	21.4	9.5	10.2	9.2	177	232	213
UltraTech Cement	1,120.4	20.3	26.9	15.4	20.8	20.7	23.1	9.0	8.4	9.3	11.6	10.5	12.6	19.3	20.2	15.0	218	224	201
Shree Cement	592.1	18.7	15.0	2.8	28.1	26.2	26.4	17.4	18.3	13.6	18.4	19.8	14.4	21.3	21.2	17.9	266	292	222
JK Lakshmi	47.8	14.1	20.5	47.6	12.6	12.4	14.0	5.5	6.3	8.2	6.1	6.3	11.5	17.5	14.7	11.8	90	90	89
JK Cement	71.2	15.5	16.0	44.0	18.9	17.5	19.0	8.9	10.1	12.5	14.7	18.0	22.5	10.5	11.3	9.3	87	103	100
Orient Cement	31.2	31.0	61.2	NM	9.5	14.7	14.4	1.4	6.9	6.0	(3.2)	6.2	4.6	25.1	13.4	13.1	86	66	91

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates

Exhibit 2: Key Operational Assumptions

Particulars	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY20E
Total Cement Capacity (mn MT)	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.7	5.7
Total Sales Volume (mn MT)	2.4	2.8	2.8	2.6	3.0	3.4
YoY change (%)	34.5	17.0	2.1	(6.2)	12.4	14.6
Utilisation (%)	76.3	89.3	83.1	71.5	80.4	59.8
(Rs/ MT trend)						
NSR	5,845	5,345	5,041	5,750	5,865	5,924
YoY change (%)	(0.2)	(8.6)	(5.7)	14.1	2.0	1.0
RM & Traded goods	944	1,169	1,201	1,120	1,242	1,280
Power & Fuel	730	729	638	745	775	806
Freight costs	998	1,002	899	925	1,105	1,127
Employee cost	375	365	394	408	390	394
Other expense	740	728	546	579	554	535
Total Opex	4,093	3,993	3,678	3,777	4,067	4,141
EBITDA per MT	1,846	1,448	1,452	2,070	1,877	1,851

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates

Exhibit 3: Quarterly financials trend - Consolidated

Y/E Mar (Rs mn)	Q4FY16	Q1FY17	Q2FY17	Q3FY17	Q4FY17	Q1FY18	Q2FY18	Q3FY18
Net Sales	5,631	3,936	3,120	3,427	4,642	4,287	2,810	3,774
Total Expenditure	4,363	3,019	2,530	2,546	2,941	2,700	2,040	2,361
Raw Materials	1,485	817	759	925	1,101	800	678	505
Employee	270	292	318	288	285	285	268	275
Others	950	457	489	414	277	381	339	425
EBITDA	1,267	916	590	881	1,700	1,586	770	1,413
Depreciation	440	342	358	356	355	303	326	337
EBIT	828	574	231	525	1,345	1,283	444	1,077
Interest	216	210	199	186	186	157	141	137
Other Income	4	4	5	1	15	4	9	3
PBT	615	367	37	340	1,174	1,129	311	942
Taxes	30	0	13	0	124	33	49	28
Adjusted PAT (before minority)	585	367	24	340	1,050	1,097	262	914
Exceptional expense/ (income)	(2)	(1)	3	(1)	3	1	-	-
Minority Interest	16	18	11	13	17	22	5	18
Reported PAT	567	348	17	327	1,036	1,075	257	896
Adjusted PAT	569	349	14	328	1,033	1,075	257	896
Adj EPS (Rs)	1.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	2.5	2.6	0.6	2.1
YoY Growth (%)								
Revenue	11.1	(3.7)	0.2	(20.1)	(17.6)	8.9	(9.9)	10.1
EBITDA	(18.1)	(24.5)	6.8	(3.9)	34.2	73.1	30.5	60.4
PBT	(16.6)	(39.8)	n/m	13.1	90.8	207.3	738.9	177.0
Adj PAT	3.9	(15.9)	n/m	72.1	81.7	207.8	1,767.8	173.4
Margins (%)								
EBITDA	22.5	23.3	18.9	25.7	36.6	37.0	27.4	37.4
EBIT	14.7	14.6	7.4	15.3	29.0	29.9	15.8	28.5
PBT	10.9	9.3	1.2	9.9	25.3	26.3	11.1	25.0
Adj PAT	10.4	9.3	0.8	9.9	22.6	25.6	9.3	24.2
Operational Trend								
Cement & clinker Sales Vol								
Gross sales volume (mn MT)	0.99	0.80	0.66	0.70	0.84	0.76	0.50	0.65
YoY growth (%)	14.0	15.6	24.2	(5.2)	(15.4)	(4.8)	(25.2)	(7.7)
Net sales volume (mn MT)	0.93	0.76	0.61	0.66	0.79	0.71	0.47	0.62
YoY growth (%)	15.3	16.1	23.3	(2.7)	(15.5)	(6.3)	(22.9)	(5.4)
NSR (Rs/ MT) ^^	5,687	4,929	4,714	4,883	5,539	5,640	5,677	5,829
Opex (Rs/MT) ^^	4,407	3,781	3,823	3,627	3,510	3,553	4,122	3,646
EBITDA (Rs per MT) **	1,358	1,209	960	1,344	2,158	2,234	1,626	2,280

Source: Company, Centrum Research

^{^^} NSR and Op costs items calculated on gross sales which include clinker sales to the on-lease GUs in West Bengal for conversion to cement for sale

 $^{** \}textit{EBITDA per MT calculation on total external cement and clinker sales (excluding clinker sales to on-lease \textit{GUs})}$

Financials - Consolidated

Exhibit 4: Income Statement

Y/E March (Rsmn)	FY16	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY20E
Revenues	15,794	15,125	15,928	18,167	20,919
Materials cost	3,455	3,603	3,102	3,848	4,519
% of revenues	21.9	23.8	19.5	21.2	21.6
Employee Cost	1,078	1,183	1,130	1,209	1,390
% of revenues	6.8	7.8	7.1	6.7	6.6
Others	7,267	6,252	6,230	7,540	8,715
% of revenues	46.0	41.3	39.1	41.5	41.7
EBITDA	3,994	4,088	5,465	5,570	6,295
EBIDTA Margins (%)	25.3	27.0	34.3	30.7	30.1
Depreciation & Amortisation	1,715	1,412	1,308	1,230	1,350
EBIT	2,279	2,676	4,156	4,340	4,946
Interest expenses	834	780	565	300	170
PBT from operations	1,445	1,896	3,591	4,040	4,776
Other Income	13	22	35	200	400
Exceptional loss/(gain)	(5)	-	-	-	-
PBT	1,453	1,918	3,626	4,240	5,176
Taxes	60	143	290	424	776
Effective tax rate (%)	4.1	7.4	8.0	10.0	15.0
Net Profit	1,393	1,775	3,336	3,816	4,399
Minority + Associates	(53)	(59)	(70)	(80)	(100)
Reported Net Profit	1,340	1,716	3,266	3,736	4,299
Adj Net Profit	1,346	1,716	3,266	3,736	4,299

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates

Exhibit 5: Key Ratios

Y/E March	FY16	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY20E
Growth ratios (%)					
Revenues	10.4	(4.2)	5.3	14.1	15.2
EBIDTA	(8.2)	2.4	33.7	1.9	13.0
Adj Net Profit	61.3	27.5	90.3	14.4	15.1
Margin ratios (%)					
EBITDA Margin	25.3	27.0	34.3	30.7	30.1
PBT from operations Margin	9.2	12.5	22.5	22.2	22.8
Adj PAT Margin	8.5	11.3	20.5	20.6	20.6
Return Ratios (%)					
RoE	13.2	14.8	23.0	21.4	20.5
RoCE	11.1	12.0	18.3	18.7	19.4
RoIC	11.2	12.0	19.8	22.8	25.7
Turnover Ratios (days)					
Gross block turnover (x)	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0
Debtors	104	96	83	78	62
Inventory	48	39	35	33	37
Creditors	32	23	27	26	24
Cash conversion cycle	120	113	91	85	75
Solvency Ratio					
Net debt-equity	0.8	0.6	0.1	(0.2)	(0.3)
Debt-equity	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0
Interest coverage ratio	2.7	3.4	7.4	14.5	29.1
Gross debt/EBITDA	2.4	1.9	0.9	0.5	0.1
Current Ratio	3.7	4.1	4.8	4.2	4.3
Per Share (Rs)					
Adjusted EPS	3.2	4.1	7.8	8.9	10.3
BVPS	25.2	29.3	36.8	45.1	53.6
CEPS	7.3	7.5	10.9	11.8	13.5
DPS	-	-	0.3	0.5	1.5
Dividend payout %	-	-	3.8	6.6	17.2
Valuations (x)(Avg Mkt Cap)					
P/E (adjusted)	22.9	18.2	16.6	14.5	12.6
P/BV	2.9	2.5	3.5	2.9	2.4
EV/EBITDA	10.1	9.7	10.2	9.2	7.4
EV/ton (1 USD \$=Rs 65)	202	179	232	213	154
Dividend yield %	-	-	0.2	0.4	1.2
5 Yr Avg AOCF/EV yield %	-	1.5	4.3	7.4	10.1

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates

Exhibit 6: Balance Sheet

Y/E March (Rsmn)	FY16	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY20E
Equity Share Capital	419	419	419	419	419
Reserves & surplus	10,134	11,861	15,004	18,493	22,052
Total Shareholders' Fund	10,553	12,280	15,423	18,912	22,471
Total Debt	9,398	7,949	4,905	2,676	941
Def tax liab. (net)	117	163	163	163	163
Minority Interest	530	589	659	739	839
Total Liabilities	20,599	20,981	21,151	22,491	24,415
Gross Block	16,738	17,571	18,271	19,571	23,271
Less:- Accumulated Depreciation	7,547	8,939	10,247	11,477	12,826
Net Block	9,191	8,632	8,024	8,094	10,445
Capital WIP	490	549	649	2,149	449
Net Fixed assets	9,681	9,181	8,673	10,243	10,893
Investments	15	17	17	17	17
Inventories	2,092	1,612	1,513	1,635	2,092
Sundry Debtors	4,488	3,995	3,624	3,865	3,549
Cash & bank balances	238	201	3,401	5,910	8,319
Loans & Advances	8,140	9,735	7,159	4,695	3,587
Other Assets	5	3	2	2	2
Total current assets	14,963	15,546	15,699	16,106	17,548
Trade payables	1,404	938	1,163	1,272	1,360
Other current liabilities	2,615	2,775	2,023	2,543	2,615
Provisions	42	49	52	59	68
Net current assets	10,902	11,783	12,461	12,231	13,505
Total Assets	20,599	20,981	21,151	22,491	24,415

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates

Exhibit 7: Cash Flow

Y/E March (Rsmn)	FY16	FY17	FY18E	FY19E	FY20E
Op profit before WC changes	3,697	3,727	4,739	4,722	5,260
Working capital changes	(2,726)	(657)	2,957	3,163	1,394
Cash from Operations	970	3,070	7,697	7,885	6,654
Adj. OCF (OCF-Interest)	137	2,290	7,132	7,585	6,484
Net capex	(808)	(890)	(800)	(2,800)	(2,000)
Adj. FCF (AOCF-Capex)	(671)	1,400	6,332	4,785	4,484
Cash from investing	(792)	(903)	(765)	(2,600)	(1,600)
Cash from financing	(140)	(2,247)	(3,732)	(2,776)	(2,645)
Net change in cash	38	(80)	3,200	2,509	2,409

Source: Company, Centrum Research Estimates

Appendix A

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Star price chart (SFCL till Mar 2017)



Source: Bloomberg, Centrum Research



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