

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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PENDENCY IN SUPREME COURT REACHES ALL-TIME HIGH

Context

 The number of pending cases in the Supreme Court of India has surged to an all-time high, raising serious concerns about the efficiency, accessibility, and credibility of the judicial system.

Current Caseload

- According to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), the Supreme Court of India is witnessing an unprecedented rise in case pendency, with 88,492 matters currently awaiting disposal, that includes 69,605 civil cases and 18,887 criminal cases.
- It has **grown by over 35% in the past five years,** despite digitization efforts and structural reforms.



Causes of Pendency of Cases

- Low Disposal of Cases: In August 2025 alone, the court registered 7,080 new cases, while managing to dispose of 5,667 cases, reflecting a disposal rate of 80.04%.
 - From January to August 2025, the Supreme Court saw 52,630 cases filed, with 46,309 disposed of, marking an annual disposal rate of nearly 88%.
- Limited Working Days: With court holidays and restricted working hours, the number of sittings remains insufficient to tackle the growing docket.
- Procedural Complexity: Lengthy procedures, adjournments, and appeals slow down the pace of justice.
- Low Judge-to-Population Ratio: India has one
 of the lowest judge-to-population ratios globally

 about 21 judges per million people, far below
 the recommended 50.
- Overuse of Special Leave Petitions (SLPs):
 Article 136 allows the Supreme Court to hear appeals in exceptional cases.
 - However, SLPs are filed indiscriminately, clogging the docket with matters that could be resolved in lower courts.

- Government Litigation Overload: The government is the largest litigant, responsible for nearly 50% of pending cases, many of which are deemed frivolous or repetitive.
- Inadequate Infrastructure and Technology Adoption: Many courts lack robust case management systems, despite digitization efforts.
 - Limited use of AI and e-courts hampers scheduling, tracking, and efficient disposal.
- Legacy Cases and Long-Term Backlog: Thousands of cases have been pending for over a decade, some even dating back 30+ years.
 - Lack of prioritization and bundling of similar cases contributes to stagnation.
- Lack of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):
 Mediation and arbitration are underutilized, even
 though they could reduce the burden on courts
 significantly.

Implications for Justice and Governance

- Erosion of Public Trust: Citizens lose faith in the judiciary when justice is delayed, especially in cases involving human rights, corruption, and constitutional interpretation.
- Economic Impact: Commercial disputes stuck in litigation deter investment and slow economic growth.
- Social Injustice: Vulnerable groups suffer disproportionately, as delays in criminal trials and civil disputes prolong uncertainty and hardship.
- Prison Overcrowding: According to the Indian Justice Report, 2025, over half of Indian jails are overcrowded and around 76% of prison inmates are under trials.

Reform Measures

- Differentiated Case Management (DCM): It was adopted by the Supreme Court under Unclogging the Docket Initiative, focused on identifying and fast-tracking short, infructuous, and old cases those that had become irrelevant or remained unlisted for years.
 - It resulted in a disposal rate of 104%, setting a new benchmark for judicial efficiency.
- Arrears Committees and Monitoring Mechanisms: The Supreme Court has constituted Arrears Committees to formulate strategies for reducing backlog.
 - These committees monitor compliance with guidelines from the Malimath Committee Report, which recommends stricter timelines and procedural discipline.



- Increasing Judicial Capacity and Workdays: Recommendations from the Malimath Committee and Law Commission Reports include:
 - Increasing the number of working days for the Supreme Court;
 - Reducing vacation periods by 10–21 days;
 - Filling judicial vacancies promptly to ease workload.
- Legislative and Procedural Reforms:
 - Arbitration and Conciliation Act (2015 & 2019): Introduced timelines for dispute resolution;
 - Commercial Courts Act (2018): Mandated pre-institution mediation;
 - Negotiable Instruments Act (2018): Allowed summary trials for cheque bounce cases;
- Proposal to Split the Supreme Court: The Tenth and Eleventh Law Commissions proposed dividing the Supreme Court into:
 - A Constitutional Division for fundamental rights and constitutional matters;
 - A **Legal Division** for routine appeals.
- E-Courts and Digital Tools: The Supreme Court has expanded e-filing, virtual hearings, and Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMTs).
 - These platforms help judges and lawyers track case status, access documents, and reduce procedural delays.
- National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG): It offers transparency and analytics but needs stronger integration with case management systems.
- Government's Prompt Action: Recent months have seen the government approve Collegium recommendations swiftly, often within 48 hours.
- Summer Recess Turned into Working Days: Chief Justice BR Gavai converted the traditional summer vacation into 'partial working days'.

Source: TH

PM INAUGURATES DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN MANIPUR

Context

 The Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for multiple development projects in Imphal, Manipur.

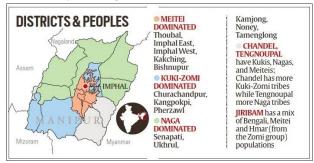
Key Highlights of Development Projects

- Infrastructure and Connectivity:
 - Launch of the Manipur Urban Roads Project with an investment of over 3,600 crore to boost road connectivity and improve urban infrastructure in Imphal.
 - The Jiribam-Imphal railway line, worth 22,000 crore, will soon connect Imphal to the national rail network.
 - Imphal Airport has been expanded with 400 crore investment, and helicopter services inaugurated to enhance air connectivity.
 - Civil Secretariat building (worth ID538 crore) and Police Headquarters (101 crore) inaugurated to improve governance.
- Digital and IT Initiatives:
 - Manipur Infotech Development Project aiming to boost IT and startup ecosystem in the state.
- Women Empowerment:
 - Inauguration of four new Ima Markets (women-only markets) reinforcing Manipur's women-led economy tradition.
 - Construction of working women's hostels
 at nine locations to empower women and
 support education and employment.
- Sports and Culture:
 - Support for National Sports University and Khelo India initiatives.
 - Promotion of polo through the Marjing Polo Complex, which includes the world's tallest polo statue.

Background

- An ethnic conflict broke out in May 2023, between the Meitei people who dominate the Imphal valley and the Kuki-Zo people who dominate the surrounding hills.
 - The violence has claimed above **250 lives** and displaced over **60,000 people**.
- The conflict originated from the Meitei demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status, which the Kukis opposed. By getting ST status, the Meiteis wants to;
 - Access to constitutional safeguards such as reservations in jobs, education, and political representation.
 - Rights to purchase land in the hill areas, which are currently reserved for tribal communities (mainly Kuki-Zo and Naga groups).

 A political crisis erupted in the State after the resignation of the Chief Minister and the subsequent imposition of President's Rule.



What are the Key Unresolved Issues in Manipur?

- Rehabilitation of Displaced Families: There
 are more than 280 relief camps in Manipur,
 sheltering about 57,000 people, many displaced
 for over two years.
- Restrictions on Movement: During the conflict, "buffer zones" were set up as militarised boundaries separating the valley and hill districts.
 - These zones restricted free movement, with Meiteis in the valley cut off from certain services and Kuki-Zo groups unable to access Imphal and other valley-based facilities.
- Border Concerns: The porous international border with Myanmar is an issue. Meitei leaders allege that unchecked migration of Chin people (ethnically related to Kuki-Zo) is worsening tensions.
 - The Government scrapped the Free Movement Regime, which allowed border tribes to travel up to 16 km into either country without visa, and plans to fence the border.
 - These measures have met opposition from Kuki-Zo and Naga communities, who have cultural, economic ties across the border.
- Political Vacuum: There is a need to ensure good governance and justice in Manipur, creating conditions for stability and development in the State.
- Dialogue Still Missing: Though large-scale violence has reduced since late 2024, there is no sustained dialogue between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities.

Demand for Separate Administration

• The Kuki-Zo Council has demanded for their hill areas of Manipur to be carved out administratively from the rest of the state, specifically, as a Union Territory (UT) with a legislature under Article 239A of the Indian Constitution.

- Article 239A of the Indian Constitution grants the Parliament the power to create a local legislature or a Council of Ministers, or both, for certain Union Territories.
- This provision was inserted into the constitution by the 14th Amendment Act of 1962.
- However, Meitei organisations like COCOMI strongly oppose the proposal, viewing it as a threat to Manipur's territorial integrity and a step toward "ethnic partition."

Need for Development

- Infrastructure and connectivity improvements are critical for trade, mobility, and access to healthcare and education.
- Digital and IT sector growth can provide employment, entrepreneurship opportunities, and integration with the broader economy.
- Women-centric initiatives like Ima Markets help preserve cultural identity while boosting local economies.
- Peace-building efforts and targeted relief for displaced groups are crucial for social cohesion and long-term stability.
- Regional integration through infrastructure aligns with the Act East Policy and fosters economic collaboration with Southeast Asia.

Way Ahead

- A sustainable peace in Manipur requires inclusive dialogue between Meitei and Kuki-Zo groups, backed by neutral mediation.
- The government must prioritise rehabilitation of displaced families with dignity and livelihood support. At the same time, balanced border management and strengthening of local governance institutions can reduce alienation.
- In the long run, a political settlement that safeguards tribal rights while preserving Manipur's territorial integrity is essential.

Source: TH

THE SC ISSUED GUIDELINES FOR CASES WHERE DNA EVIDENCE IS INVOLVED

Context

The Supreme Court, in Kattavellai @ Devakar v.
 State of Tamil Nadu, recently issued guidelines to maintain the integrity of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) samples in criminal cases.



Significance of DNA Evidence in Criminal Cases

- DNA is a molecule that encodes the genetic information in all living organisms.
 - It can be obtained from biological materials, such as bone, blood, semen, saliva, hair, or skin.
- Generally, when the DNA profile of a sample found at a crime scene matches the DNA profile of a suspect, it can be concluded that both samples have the same biological origin. However, it is not substantive evidence in criminal cases.
- In the Devakar case, the Supreme Court said that DNA evidence is only an expert's opinion (under Section 45 of the Evidence Act / Section 39 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023).
 - Like any opinion, its value changes from case to case.
 - So, DNA evidence cannot be accepted blindly; it must be properly proved **both** scientifically and legally before a court relies on it.

Need for the SC Direction

- Procedural Delays: The court found significant unexplained delays in sending samples to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for DNA analysis.
 - Also, the chain of custody of the sample could not be established so, under such circumstances the possibility of sample contamination could not be ruled out.
- Lack of Uniformity: Although some guidelines have been issued by various bodies, there is neither uniformity nor a common procedure required to be followed by all investigating authorities.

Guidelines of SC

- The Supreme Court issued four guidelines for cases where DNA evidence is involved.
 - Procedure for Collection: The document recording the collection must include the signatures and designations of the medical professional present, the investigating officer, and independent witnesses.
 - Transportation: The investigating officer shall be responsible for the transportation of the DNA evidence (sample) to the concerned police station or hospital.
 - Samples must reach the concerned FSL within 48 hours of collection.

- In the event of any delay, the reasons must be recorded, and all efforts should be made to preserve the samples.
- Handling of Sample: While samples are stored pending trial or appeal, no package shall be opened, altered, or resealed without express authorisation from the trial court.
- Chain of Custody Register: From the time of collection to the logical end, i.e., conviction or acquittal of the accused, a Chain of Custody Register must be maintained.
 - This register must be appended to the trial court record. The investigating officer is responsible for explaining any lapses in compliance.

Previous Judgements of SC

- In Anil v. State of Maharashtra (2014), the Supreme Court observed that a DNA profile is valid and reliable, but this depends on quality control and procedure in the laboratory.
- In Manoj and Ors. v. State of Madhya Pradesh (2022), the Supreme Court rejected a DNA report on the ground that recovery was made 'from an open area and the likelihood of its contamination cannot be ruled out'.
- In Rahul v. State of Delhi, Ministry of Home Affairs (2022), DNA evidence was 'rejected because it remained in the police Malkhana for two months and during such time, the possibility of tampering could not be ruled out'.

Conclusion

- Though 'Police' and 'Public Order' fall under the State List, the Supreme Court issued guidelines to ensure uniform procedures.
- It stressed that both sample collection by the investigating agency (free from contamination and delay) and quality control in the FSL are crucial for reliable results.

Source: TH

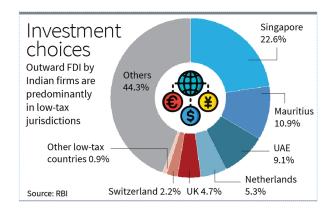
INDIA'S OUTWARD FDI GOES TO 'TAX HAVENS'

In News

 Indian companies are increasingly channeling their outward foreign direct investment (FDI) through low-tax jurisdictions—commonly referred to as tax havens—to expand their global footprint.

Present Scenario

- The companies are routing their foreign investments through low-tax jurisdictions (tax havens) such as Singapore, Mauritius, UAE, the Netherlands, UK, and Switzerland.
- According to data ,56% of India's outward FDI in 2023-24 (1,946 crore of 3,488.5 crore) went to these jurisdictions.
- In Q1 of 2024-25, this increased to 63%.



Reasons behind the Tax Haven Preference

- Indian companies prefer tax havens due to favorable legal frameworks, bilateral treaties (like the India-Mauritius DTAA) and low corporate tax rates
- FDI regulations and taxation in India are often restrictive.
- Experts also warn that high U.S. tariffs on Indian imports might encourage companies to set up subsidiaries abroad to avoid these tariffs in the future.
- Strategic locations such as Singapore and the UAE also serve as gateways to broader markets.
- Flexible financial regulations in tax havens allow smoother capital movement and investment structuring.
- Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in tax havens help attract international investors and facilitate stake dilution.

Impacts on India's Economy

- Routing profits through tax havens can reduce India's taxable income base.
- Tax havens are often associated with money laundering and base erosion.
- Increases the risk of round-tripping, where Indian money is sent abroad and reinvested in India under the guise of FDI.

- Overreliance on foreign structuring may reduce direct investment in Indian operations, impacting job creation and local growth.
- Difficult for Indian authorities to track ultimate investment destinations and enforce compliance.

Steps Taken

- India has initiated several reforms to address the challenges posed by tax haven-linked FDI and these includes:
 - Renegotiation of treaties with Mauritius and Singapore to include anti-abuse clauses.
 - India is part of the OECD's Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) initiative to curb profit shifting.
 - The government has streamlined FDI norms, enhanced sectoral caps, and introduced Jan Vishwas reforms to improve ease of doing business.

Conclusion and The Way Ahead

- Indian companies use tax havens not only for tax benefits but also for strategic and operational reasons.
- While this supports global expansion, it challenges India's tax system, regulations, and domestic investments.
- To balance this, India should improve ease of doing business, simplify regulations, and strengthen international tax cooperation to ensure outward FDI benefits the economy.
- Additionally, international cooperation is key to enforcing tax standards and curbing illicit flows.
 - A balanced, reform-driven approach is essential to support global ambitions without compromising fiscal integrity.

Source:TH

NEWS IN SHORT

HUANGYAN ISLAND (SCARBOROUGH SHOAL)

In News

 The Philippines opposed China's plan to establish a nature reserve at the disputed Huangyan Island (Scarborough Shoal) in the South China Sea.

About Huangyan Island (Scarborough Shoal)

 Huangyan Island, also known as Scarborough Shoal (English) and Panatag Shoal (Philippines), is a disputed coral atoll located in the South China Sea.



- It is strategically significant for its rich fisheries, potential hydrocarbon resources, and military importance.
- Located 220 km west of Luzon, Philippines, near the Manila Trench.
- It first appeared on the 1734 Velarde Map of the Philippines, claimed under Spanish rule and later named "Scarborough" after a British ship grounded there in 1748.
 - The Philippines' claim stems from the Treaty of Washington (1900).



South China Sea

 A marginal sea of the western Pacific Ocean, bounded by Taiwan (northeast), the Philippines (east), Borneo and the Gulf of Thailand (south), and the Asian mainland including Vietnam and China (west/north).

Source: IE

KOLHAN'S MANKI-MUNDA SYSTEM

In News

 Adivasis from the Ho tribe protested in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum accusing the Deputy Commissioner of interfering with their traditional Manki-Munda governance system.

Manki-Munda system

- The Ho tribe of Jharkhand's Kolhan region traditionally followed a decentralized, hereditary governance system led by village heads called Mundas and regional leaders called Mankis.
 - Mundas resolved local socio-political disputes, while unresolved cases were escalated to the Manki, who oversaw a group of villages (pir).
 - This system resolved social and political issues, not land or revenue matters.
 - This self-contained system operated independently, without external authority or taxation.

 The arrival of the East India Company disrupted this autonomy by introducing taxes and external control.

Impacts of Britishers

- The Manki-Munda system was disrupted by the British East India Company, which imposed taxes and land seizures under the **Permanent** Settlement Act (1793), leading to adivasi revolts.
- In response, the British codified the Manki-Munda system through Wilkinson's Rules in 1833, integrating Kolhan into British India while preserving tribal leadership.
- Post-independence, Wilkinson's Rules remained in effect, with Kolhan largely exempt from general civil laws.

Source: IE

FIRST BAMBOO-BASED BIO-REFINERY

Context

 Prime Minister Modi inaugurated India's first bamboo-based bio-refinery at Golaghat district in Assam.

<u>About</u>

- Five lakh tonnes of green bamboo would be sourced annually from four northeastern States, including Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to produce ethanol, acetic acid, furfural, and foodgrade liquid carbon dioxide.
- The bioethanol plant is expected to give a 200-crore boost to Assam's rural economy.

Biorefinery

- A biorefinery is an industrial facility that converts biomass (plant material, agricultural residues, forestry waste, algae, organic waste, etc.) into a wide range of value-added products such as:
 - Biofuels (ethanol, biodiesel, biogas, biohydrogen);
 - Biochemicals (organic acids, solvents, bioplastics, enzymes);
 - Biomaterials (fibers, biocomposites, biodegradable plastics);
 - Bioenergy (electricity, heat, syngas).
- A biorefinery is like a green alternative to an oil refinery, converting renewable biomass into fuels, energy, and chemicals in an efficient, sustainable, and eco-friendly way.

Source: AIR

AUSTRALIA APPROVES FIRST VACCINE TO SAVE KOALAS FROM CHLAMYDIA

Context

 Australia has approved the first vaccine to protect its shrinking koala population against chlamydia.

About

- The vaccine was found to have decreased mortality by at least 65%.
- Chlamydia: It is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium Chlamydia pecorum that can cause infertility and blindness. In koalas, chlamydia is a threat to survival and a key conservation issue.
 - It is also found in humans caused by Chlamydia trachomatis, in humans, chlamydia is a major sexually transmitted infection (STI) but treatable.

About Koala

- The koala (Phascolarctos cinereus) is a treedwelling marsupial native to Australia.
 - Often mistakenly called the "koala bear," it is not a bear but a marsupial (a mammal that carries its young in a pouch).
- Physical Characteristics: Thick, soft, grey or brown with lighter underside – provides insulation.
 - Large and black, with a strong sense of smell (helps detect eucalyptus leaves).



- Habitat & Distribution: Found mainly in eastern and southeastern Australia (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia).
- Diet: Herbivores almost entirely eat eucalyptus leaves.
- **Behavior:** Mostly nocturnal and sedentary.
- Threats: Along with habitat loss, climate change and bushfires, a major reason for koalas' vulnerability is chlamydia.

- Since 2022, they have been listed as endangered in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory under Australia's national environmental law.
- IUCN Status Vulnerable.

Source: TH

EUSTOMA FLOWER

Context

- Eustoma, a flower earlier available in Odisha only through imports, has bloomed locally for the first time.
 - This breakthrough was achieved by the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), a research arm of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

About the Eustoma (Eustoma grandiflorum)

• Common Name: Lisianthus

• Family: Gentianaceae

Native Region: Mexico and North America

Cultivation requirements:

- Grows in **rich, well-drained soil** with full sunlight.
- Needs regular moisture but sensitive to overwatering.

Key Characteristics:

 Because of its enormous rose-like blossoms, long stems, and extended vase life, its sales have increased dramatically in recent years, earning it the title of the "next rose".



Source: TH



PINK TAX

Context

 As per International Finance Students Association's (IFSA) research 'The Gender Tax: Assessing the Economic Toll on Women,' almost 67% of Indian individuals have never heard of the Pink Tax.

Pink Tax

- **Pink tax** is neither a real tax, nor is it a government-imposed fee.
- It's just a pricing phenomenon wherein women pay more for buying a product exclusively made for them or enjoying a service tailor-made for them.
 - Pink toys, haircuts, drycleaning, razors, shampoos, body lotions, deodorants, facial care, skincare items, beauty care, clothing, T-shirts, jeans, salon services etc. suffer the tax.
- **The term "Pink Tax"** is believed to have originated in the U.S. in California in 1994.

Regulation in India

- While there are no specific laws in India to address the issue of Pink Tax, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission ruled that companies must follow fair pricing policies and avoid gender-based price discrimination.
- In July 2018, the Union Government exempted sanitary napkins and tampons from the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Prior to this rule, these hygiene items were levied 12% GST.

Ways to Avoid Pink Tax

- Choose gender-neutral products or men's variants whenever possible.
- Compare the quality and if the men's variant is better, skip the pink packaging or choose unisex products.
- Instead of comparing prices of the entire package, check the price per unit.

Source: TH

KERALA APPROVES DRAFT WILDLIFE PROTECTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

In News

The Kerala Cabinet has approved the draft Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2025, a landmark proposal aimed at tackling growing human-wildlife conflict.

Key Provisions of the Draft Bill

- Empowerment for Immediate Action: The Chief Wildlife Warden (CWW) will be authorized to order the immediate killing of any wild animal that attacks or injures a person in residential areas, bypassing the lengthy procedures required by the central Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Decentralized Authority: District Collectors or Chief Conservators of Forests can report incidents directly to the CWW, who can act without waiting for central government approval.
- Population Control and Relocation: The amendment allows birth control and translocation measures for species listed in Schedule II of the Act (like wild boar and monkeys) when their numbers become excessive, again without needing prior sanction from the Centre.
- Power to Declare Vermin: The authority to declare Schedule II animals as "vermin" enabling their culling—is transferred from the Union Government to the State Government.
- Bonnet Macaque Reclassification: The bill proposes shifting the bonnet macaque (monkey) from Schedule I (highest protection) to Schedule II (lower degree of protection), making population management easier.
- Sandalwood Trade Reform: Allows sale of sandalwood trees grown on private land through Forest Department outlets, with farmers receiving the full timber price.

About Human-Animal conflict

- Human-wildlife conflict is when encounters between humans and wildlife lead to negative results, such as loss of property, livelihoods, and even life.
- Causes: Poaching & illegal trade, lack of protected areas, deforestation, agricultural expansion, climate change, and invasive species.

Source: TH

INDIAN COAST GUARD

In News

 The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has reaffirmed India's commitment to global maritime governance at the 4th Coast Guard Global Summit, held in Rome.

About Indian Coast Guard

- It was established in 1977 under the Coast Guard Act, and functions under the Ministry of Defence.
- Its primary role is maritime law enforcement, coastal security, protection of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), anti-smuggling, antipiracy, and prevention of illegal fishing.
- The ICG is headed by a Director General.

Division of India's Coastline

 For command and control, the Indian coastline is divided into five regions: North-West (Gandhinagar), West (Mumbai), East (Chennai), North-East (Kolkata), and Andaman & Nicobar (Port Blair)—each headed by an Inspector General.

Source: TH

2025 WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

In News

 Jaismine Lamboria and Minakshi Hooda have won gold at the World Boxing Championships 2025 held in Liverpool, UK.

About

- The event was hosted at M&S Bank Arena, Liverpool, UK, and brought over 550 boxers from more than 65 countries across all continents.
- The 2025 edition was historic, as it combined both men's and women's events under World Boxing, the new global boxing federation, for the first time at the elite level.
- Kazakhstan topped the medal table with 7 gold, ahead of Uzbekistan and India.

Source: TH

