

Vietnam Daily News Highlights

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Trade & Economics

1. *Trans-Pacific Partnership*

- The TPP and free trade agreements (FTAs) that Vietnam has signed and will join are meaningful in three ways: (i) helping Vietnamese exports, (ii) attracting inbound investment, and (iii) facilitating institutional reforms and creating a fair and transparent business environment in the long term, said economist Dr. Vo Tri Thanh, deputy director of the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM). Provided with that context, he believed Vietnam's at a decisive moment to change its development model so as to escape the middle-income trap. (Doanh Nghiep Viet Nam Jan 26)
- The Deposit Insurance of Vietnam, under the State Bank of Vietnam, is seeking to consolidate its 3. role as Vietnam integrates into the world economy. Once the TPP takes effect, Vietnamese consumers will have more options for banking services from foreign credit institutions, which means domestic banks will have to diversify products and improve services to compete. (Tin Nhanh Chung Khoan Jan 26)
- Why should Vietnam sign the TPP? A report by Hochiminh Securities Company highlighted a number of advantages such as faster economic growth, more jobs, and bigger foreign investments. The government is advised to boost investment in transport infrastructure to raise its competitive edge. (Cafef.vn Jan 27)

2. *Trade & Tourism*

- Vietnam is estimated to have attracted more than 805,100 foreign visitors in January, up 12.3% compared to the same period last year, according to the government-run General Statistics Office (GSO). Countries with rising numbers of tourists arrival in Vietnam in the month include South Korea with 149,300 (+28.2% on year), China 147,500 (+23.4%), Taiwan 33,700 (+15.8%), Spain with 3,200 (+14.3%), the U.S 57,400 (+20.1%), and Japan 63,800 (+10.8%). (GSO January Edition)

- Vietnam is likely to earn \$13.8 billion from exports in January, rising 0.47% from December 2015 and 2% from a year earlier, GSO data showed. The country is estimated to earn \$14 billion from exports, down 0.8% on year, resulting in the country's trade gap of \$200 million, down 64.48% from December 2015. In January, foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) obtained a trade surplus of \$1.59 billion while domestic companies incurred a gap of \$1.79 billion. (GSO January Edition)

3. *Economics*

- Vietnam has disbursed VND15.04 trillion (\$668 million) worth of state funds for its development projects in January, up 9.7% from a year earlier and meeting 6.1% of the year's target, GSO data showed. Of the sum, VND3.55 trillion was implemented by central-level agencies, up 12.6% on year, and VND11.47 trillion was disbursed by local authorities, up 8.8% on year. The top three government agencies for disbursing state fund were the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Ministry of Health. (GSO Jan 2016 Report)
- Vietnam's retail sales and service revenue is estimated to have risen 3.3% from and 11.7% from a year earlier to VND297.7 trillion (\$13.23 billion) in January, the GSO said.
 - If goods prices the fluctuations in are excluded, the Southeast Asian country's retail sales service revenue rose 11% during the year, versus last year's expansion of 11.9%.
 - Up to 76.1% of the country's revenue of VND226.58 trillion during the month is recorded by the trade sector, up 12% on year. (GSO Jan 2016 Report)
- Vietnam incurred a state budget deficit of VND11.4 trillion (\$506 million) in the first 15 days of 2016, according to the GSO.
 - The country's budget expenditures hit VND46.9 trillion in the period, of which VND7.5 trillion was spent on socio-economic development projects, VND6 trillion on repaying debts and aids, and VND33.3 trillion on national defense, security and the running of the administrative apparatus.
 - State budget revenues were estimated at VND35.5 trillion in the period or 3.5% of the year's target. (GSO Jan 2016 Report)
- Consumer credit in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's biggest economic hub, was estimated to have jumped five-fold from end-2010 to VND90 trillion by end-2015, a central bank official said. Consumer lending was VND16 trillion in 2010 and accounted for 2.3% of total outstanding loans in the city. The ratio of consumer credit to total lending by the end of 2015 was 6.8%. (Tuoi Tre Jan 27)
- Debt and Asset Trading Corporation (DATC), a debt settlement arm of the Vietnam Finance Ministry, said that it earned a profit of VND280 billion (\$12.4 million) on revenues of VND2.4 trillion in 2015, accounting for 165% and 160% of the yearly targets, respectively.
 - The company's revenues skyrocketed 2.3-fold compared to that in 2014. (vietstock.vn Jan 27, datc.vn Jan 22)

- The State bank of Vietnam (SBV), the country’s central bank, has asked local credit institutions to support farmer clients who have suffered from the cold spells in the northern region in the past five days. (Tuoi Tre Jan 27)

Good Governance

1. National Party Congress

- The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) yesterday afternoon [Jan 26] released the list of 200 members for the new 2016-2021 term. **What to know about the list:**
 - There were 100 members re-elected from the previous term, including seven current Politburo members, namely General Secretary **Nguyen Phu Trong**, Deputy PM **Nguyen Xuan Phuc**, National Assembly Vice Chairwomen **Tong Thi Phong** and **Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan**, Police Minister **Tran Dai Quang**, Propaganda Chief **Dinh The Huynh**, and Fatherland Front Head **Nguyen Thien Nhan**.
 - 4 deputy prime ministers, 9 ministers, 22 deputy ministers, 5 police officers, and 20 army officers.
 - PM Dung, Deputy PM Vu Van Ninh, and 14 incumbent ministers are no longer members of the Central Committee.
 - 19 out of the total are under 45 years old.
 - Delegates of the 12th National Congress made nominations but none of the candidates won sufficient votes.
- Today the National Congress will convene to elect the new Politburo and the GS. Mr. Trong is the only one getting nominated by the Politburo for the Party Chief seat as four other candidates, including incumbent PM Nguyen Tan Dung, have reportedly withdrawn from the race. Therefore, Mr. Trong, 72, is considered the special case to be re-elected as GS.
 - The 11th Politburo has 16 members, nine of whom will no re-run while seven (aforementioned) are re-elected in the 12th Central Committee. (Infonet.vn Jan 27, VnExpress.net Jan 27, Bizlive.vn Jan 27)
- **At 15:49 Wednesday: Mr. Trong has been re-elected as the GS for a second term in the 12th Congress.** (Daihoidang.vnanet.vn Jan 27, Cafef.vn Jan 27, Nguoi Lao Dong Jan 27, Phap Luat Thanh Pho HCM Jan 27)
- **The new Politburo includes:**

| | Name | Year of birth | Hometown | Current title |
|---|---------------------|---------------|-----------|---|
| 1 | Nguyen Phu Trong | 1944 | Hanoi | General Secretary |
| 2 | Tong Thi Phong | 1954 | Son La | NA Vice Chairwoman |
| 3 | Tran Dai Quang | 1956 | Ninh Binh | Minister of Public Security |
| 4 | Nguyen Xuan Phuc | 1954 | Quang Nam | Deputy Prime Minister |
| 5 | Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan | 1954 | Ben Tre | NA Vice Chairwoman |
| 6 | Dinh The Huynh | 1953 | Nam Dinh | Head of the Central Propaganda Commission |
| 7 | Nguyen Thien Nhan | 1953 | Tra Vinh | Chairman of Vietnam Fatherland Front |

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|----|-----------------|------|------------|--|
| 8 | Pham Minh Chinh | 1958 | Thanh Hoa | Deputy Head of the Central Organization Committee |
| 9 | Pham Binh Minh | 1959 | Nam Dinh | Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of Foreign Affairs |
| 10 | Nguyen Van Binh | 1961 | Phu Tho | Governor of State Bank of Vietnam |
| 11 | Ngo Xuan Lich | 1954 | Ha Nam | Head of the Political Commissar under the Ministry of National Defense |
| 12 | Truong Thi Mai | 1958 | Quang Binh | Head of the Social Affairs Committee under NA |
| 13 | Vuong Dinh Hue | 1957 | Nghe An | Head of the Central Economics Commission |
| 14 | Vo Van Thuong | 1970 | Vinh Long | Deputy Secretary of HCM Party Committee |
| 15 | Truong Hoa Binh | 1955 | Long An | Chief Justice of Vietnam People's Supreme Court |
| 16 | Hoang Trung Hai | 1959 | Thai Binh | Deputy Prime Minister |
| 17 | Dinh La Thang | 1960 | Nam Dinh | Minister of Transport |
| 18 | Tran Quoc Vuong | 1953 | Thai Binh | Head of the Central Inspection Commission |
| 19 | To Lam | 1957 | Hung Yen | Deputy Minister of Public Security |

- **On the blogosphere, the consensus is:**
 - Vietnamese people demand their basic rights
 - Rising anti-Sino sentiment and desire for a foreign policy that is no longer pro-China
 - The leadership, though divided and under serious pressure, won't change or make any changes
 - The rise and influence of social media and how candidates use this to shape public opinions

| Author | Summary of article | Links |
|---|--|---|
| Kính Hòa, RFA reporter, interviewing Dr. Vu Hong Lam, a researcher at the Asia- Pacific Center for Security Studies in Hawaii | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Lam considers the 12th Congress different from the previous congresses in two ways: (i) internal progress is being reported to the public faster than ever, even though factional fight has always been present and was even worse in the 9th Congress when incumbent GS Le Kha Phieu was overthrown; and (ii) the tensions continue to escalate till the very last minutes, with fewer compromises being made. • Social media overwhelmingly favor Mr. Dung, many of those people are dissidents and believe that Mr. Dung, though corrupted, could bring about changes, whether good or bad, to Vietnam. This group only want changes. • Delegates attending the Congress mostly only care about their political careers and do not want to risk that, so their ambitions are very different from those of the people. Party members prioritize stability, i.e. Mr. Trong leading, so as to maintain their benefits. • The rise of social media and the influence of public opinions in the political realm have fundamentally changed the internal fight of the party, and will affect the way it functions post-Congress. | http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/hope-of-people-not-of-vcp-members-kh-01252016121757.html |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam’s foreign policy is unlikely to be changed. Vietnam will likely favor closer ties with the U.S. while also maintaining relations with China. | |
| Bùi Tín , a former colonel in the North Vietnamese army and now dissident residing in France | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The whole National Congress ceremony is outdated and overly theatrical, from its Marx-Lenin and communist logos to the red decorations. • He named “six outdated and backward determinations” of the CPV: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Marxism-Leninism ○ Socialism ○ Communism ○ State-owned land ○ SOEs as dominant force ○ Communist Party as the sole ruling power • And electing the oldest person, 72, as the party leader for the next five years | http://www.voatiengviet.com/content/mot-dai-hoi-thich-choi-do-co/3163497.html |
| Song Chi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnamese just want changes • The party division is wider than ever • The party has completely failed in withholding information and convincing the people things are fine • The people know that nothing will change after the Congress • Certain party members now utilize non-traditional media channels to promulgate their ideas and attack opponents • People’s hopes for changes turn out to be delusions as none of the personnel selection is decided by the people. Public opinions, including those of prominent bloggers and activists, are shaped by social media, and thus, are lopsided and misguided. The people need to place more pressure on the system to bring about changes. | http://rfavietnam.com/node/3026 (Part 1) http://rfavietnam.com/node/3027 (Part 2) |
| Vietnamese VOA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rise of Vietnamese princelings in the new Central Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PM’s son Nguyen Thanh Nghi, 40, currently party secretary of the southern Kien Giang province ○ Nguyen Xuan Anh, 40, party secretary of the central Danang city. He is the son of Nguyen Van Chi, former head of the Central Examination Committee • The post gives no other names of princelings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Le Xuan Anh, son of former Politburo member Nguyen Van Chi ○ Tran Quoc To, younger brother of Minister of Public Security General Tran Dai Quang | http://www.voatiengviet.com/content/dai-hoi-muoi-hai-thai-tu-dang-thang-the/3162949.html |
| Blog Ngoai Buon Gio | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post alleges To Huy Rua and Nguyen Phu Trong as the masterminds behind the fall of PM Dung in this election. The method was to conduct several rounds of voting and to require a high number of ballots for a candidate to win the nomination. • Mr. Trong is expected to continue the new term for another two years before passing on the post to another person. The move aims to prevent Mr. Dung from winning the GS seat. Speculations abound | http://nguoibuongio1972.blogspot.com/2016/01/ket-thuc-buon-cho-ngoai-tan-dung.html |

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| | that Tran Dai Quang, who is nominated to be President, could be the next GS. | |
| Trần Quý Cao | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catalysts that could shake up the country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ China’s sovereignty violations: taking over more islands in the South China Sea and attacking Vietnamese fishing boats ○ Police torture and deaths of innocent people at police stations ○ Some internal fractions within the army or police force. | https://anhbasam.wordpress.com/2016/01/26/6755-buc-tranh-tuong-lai-cua-viet-nam-sau-dai-hoi-xii-dang-csvn/ |
| Trần Trung Đạo | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six reasons explaining why CPV persists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CPV has total control over the economy, politics, culture, society through its propaganda and terrorism. ○ Candidates fight internally but share the same goal and are controlled by the party’s disciplinary rules. ○ Party members seek to protect the inheritance spirit. ○ CPV uses so-called intellectuals, scholars, scientists, etc. who have made compromises to promote communist ideas ○ Socialist leaders only harm their own people, not another nation, and thus, international community doesn’t care as much. ○ Socialist leaders destroy any opponents and then utilize the images of fallen opponents for propaganda. | https://goo.gl/jgB5R7 |

2. Human rights

- An announcement from political organizations and independent civil societies in Vietnam: The letter, signed by 15 organizations, is addressed to the Vietnamese people at home and abroad, and governments worldwide as well as international human rights organizations. On the basis of unfair political monopoly by the CPV and the rights of the people for election, the letter raises worries over Chinese sovereignty encroachment, opposes the ruling party for violating basic political rights of the Vietnamese people, exposes the undemocratic election procedures, and declares actions to be taken by political and civil organizations to oppose the dictatorship. (Anh Ba Sam Blog Jan 27, RFA Jan 26)
- Vietnam’s Prime Minister has approved a plan to support migrants returning from Laos to settle in the home country between 2016 and 2018. The plan seeks to help migrants gain accommodation, vocational training, education and healthcare services so that they could integrate into the community in the long run. The beneficiaries include households with at least two members who emigrated from the 10 Vietnamese provinces sharing border with Laos prior to July 8, 2013, and those who were handed over by the Lao Government and accepted by their Vietnamese counterparts. (VTV Jan 27, Bao Chinh Phu Jan 26)
- Authorities of Hanoi will launch an action program for consumer rights in March in response to the World Consumer Rights Day [March 15]. The program, titled “Act for consumer rights,” will be held in the city throughout the month with a series of activities aimed at improving business’s responsibility and consumers’ awareness. High-quality goods will be sold at reasonable prices at more than 100 locations across the city. (VietnamPlus Jan 26, Dien Dan Doanh Nghiep Jan 26)

Environment – Science – Technology – Health

- Health Department of Ho Chi Minh City has announced that they will provide 12,550 Pentaxim or five-in-one vaccine shots for purchase for the second time this year on starting Jan 28 amid shortage of vaccines. The new vaccines will be distributed to 78 clinics. People can register by calling the 1080 hotline. Earlier, Ho Chi Minh City has finished the first vaccination period with 16,000 shots. (Cong An Nhan Dan Jan 27, Thanh Nien Jan 27, Bnews Jan 27)
- Vietnam's government has asked the Ministry of Industry and Trade to stop licensing coal-fired power projects as the country will need to import between 20 million and 30 million tons of coal for power generation annually from now until 2020. Vietnam is obliged to adopt international commitments to cut gas emissions by 8% by 2030. The original Master Power Plan (Plan VII) until 2020 sought to raise the share of coal in the energy agenda from 36% to 56% in 2030. Green groups, however, are cautious and wanted a concrete plan on moving away from coal. (Thoi Bao Kinh Te Sai Gon Jan 26, VietBao.vn Jan 27)
- Vietnam's e-commerce sector is expected to have reaped \$4 billion in 2015, a figure that would be even higher this year given the rise of mobile-based applications. The average growth of an e-commerce business is between 25%-30% a year while those with a long-term strategy would need to grow above 50% annually, said Ms. Hanh from the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The number of Internet users in Vietnam rose from 28 million in 2011 to 43 million in 2015. (The Saigon Times Jan 26)
- Vietnam and the EU have finished the fifth round of negotiations on the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) with a focus on environmental protection and biodiversity. All talks are expected to end in November 2016 to yield a management system that ensures the legality of timber produced in Vietnam, especially the legal origin of imported wood. Once effective, the agreement is expected to boost Vietnam's wood processing and export industry, which brings in about roughly \$7 billion per year. (VietnamPlus Jan 27, Doanh Nhan Sai Gon Jan 27)

Education

- Mary Beth Marklein of George Mason University and Dr. Mai Van Tinh of the Public Policy Research and Analysis Committee under the Associations of Vietnamese Universities and Colleges, wrote an op-ed to the online Giao Duc (Education) newspaper in which they outlined the "soft power" of the U.S. in Vietnam via its Fulbright program and joint cooperation among universities between the two countries. (Giao Duc Jan 27)

Regional Security

- Fourteen seafarers have been rescued after a ship of a Vietnamese company capsized off Myanmar coast earlier this week. The ship Dong Thien Phu Silver sank on Monday [Jan 25] afternoon before delivering an emergency message from the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) installed on the ship to the Vietnam Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination Center (Vietnam MRCC). All 14 crew members on board were rescued by the Myanmar MRCC in the evening. (Tuoi Tre Jan 26)

- Australia is considering conducting freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea. (Tuoi Tre Jan 27).
- U.S. State Secretary John Kerry met with Cambodian PM Hun Sen on Jan 26 during his one-day visit to Phnom Penh. Mr. Kerry failed to convince Cambodia to change its standing on the South China Sea issue as Foreign Affairs Minister Hor Namhong affirmed that the maritime disputes should be settled by involved parties and ASEAN should not interfere. (Thanh Nien Jan 27)
- Mr. Kerry visited Beijing on Jan 27 and met with his counterpart Wang Yi to discuss North Korea's nuclear development and escalations in the South China Sea. The U.S. diplomat raised concerns about China's illegal activities in the disputed sea and called on China to stop all construction and land reclamation in the contested waters. Beijing is his last stop in Asia after having passed by Laos and Cambodia. (Nguoi Lao Dong Jan 27, VOV Jan 27)
- China and Thailand have vowed to boost cooperation in defense and army training, according to the announcement following a meeting between Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan and Thai General Teerachai Nakwanich, Commander-in-Chief of Royal Thai Army. (VietnamPlus Jan 27)

Trending in Vietnam

- 12th National Party Congress
- Party personnel

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