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## Japan-U.S. target March TPP Agreement, ASEAN Single Market, TET Holidays

### FEATURES



#### Japan, U.S. target reaching TPP agreement in March

Japan and the United States have agreed that 12 countries discussing a Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade deal should hold a ministerial meeting in the first half of March to reach a broad agreement, informed sources said on Fri, Jan 16. Officials from Japan and the United States, which ended their latest bilateral TPP meeting in Tokyo on Fri, Jan 16, also confirmed how the two sides should proceed with bilateral talks which are crucial to the success of the broader negotiations.



#### Companies approach ASEAN as one market, with a single business strategy; Singapore the regional hub; Indonesia, Myanmar preferred for new factories

- \* 97% of companies believe the ASEAN Economic Community will be formed
- \* 76% have an ASEAN-orientated strategy and increasingly manage the region as one integrated economic bloc
- \* Singapore remains the favored ASEAN hub, where 80% of firms locate their regional head office
- \* Indonesia and Myanmar were cited as the most preferred destinations for new factories over the next five years, followed by the Philippines and Vietnam



#### U.S. Trade Representative pushes to conclude TPP

"The endgame is a long game," U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman said in a recent interview, "but we're in that endgame." Representative Sander Levin, the ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction on trade wants to work on the finest details of the TPP.



#### U.S. elections results in Nov 2014 improve TPP outlook

The Republican Party made sweeping gains in the Senate, House, and in numerous gubernatorial, state, and local races. Overall, the elections resulted in the largest Republican majority in the country in nearly a century, with 54 of 100 seats in the Senate, 247 of 435 (56.78%) in the House of Representatives, 31 of 50 governorships (62%), and 68 state legislative chambers. Moreover, Republicans gained their largest majority in the House since 1928, the largest majority in Congress overall since 1928, and the largest majority of state legislatures since 1928. Generally speaking, Republican lawmakers are more in favor of trade agreements than are Democratic.

Events, Meetings, Special Offers

[Healthy & Delicious Foods for Tét](#)



Dole - Fruit expert for over 100 years, has introduced healthy snacks & beverages for Tet 2015, including: Dried fruits (Dried Pineapple, Dried Tropical Fruit), Snackers Crunches (Almond, Cashew), and Juice with fruit bits (Mango with Peach bits, Apple with Nata De Coco bits, Orange with pulp). Founded in Hawaii in 1851, Dole is the world's leading producer and marketer of high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables. Dole launched Dole packaged foods business in Vietnam in 2014. Dole products are now available in supermarkets nationwide.



### **Korean Air - Daily flight between Seoul & Houston from May**

Korean Air, America's largest Asian airline, is launching daily flight between Seoul and Houston from May 2015. More on Korean Air's programs, routes, frequencies and partners is available at [www.koreanair.com](http://www.koreanair.com)



### **Jan 22 - Feb 24, InterContinental Nha Trang proudly presents Culin'Art Exhibition**

At InterContinental Nha Trang, the Culin'Art exhibition represents a desire to engage travellers with the beauty of Khanh Hoa Province - a land full of life. Our leadership has chosen photographer Thierry Beyne to be the stellar collaborator with IHG® Culinary Ambassadors Program. Together, they will marries colours, flavours and emotions to create a landmark exhibition of portrait and travel photos complemented by a menu of exclusive signature dishes designed by celebrity chef of the world and culinary talent of InterContinental Nha Trang.



### **Jan 28, AmCham Palooza Party at Movenpick Hotel Saigon**

AmCham will continue its series of monthly informal networking events at the coolest nightspots in Ho Chi Minh City. The monthly Palooza Party is a platform to develop new friendships, networking opportunities and information exchange. People from all age groups are welcome to attend - there's no age limit, you just have to be young at heart! Come and join us for a night of casual networking, meet other professionals, bring your business cards!



### **Jan 30, Arbitration in Asia Making the right choices**

As cross-border investment and trade continues to increase, so too does the possibility of cross-border disputes involving multinationals. Arbitration has become the preferred model for managing disputes due to the affordability, speed, privacy and ability to settle in a neutral location. Join arbitration experts from Allens and Linklaters, Hop Dang, Andrea Martignoni, Andrew Maher and Jelita Pandjaitan for an overview



### **Feb 15 ~ 23 TET Lunar New Year - Year of the Goat - Official Holidays**

Traditionally, there are five main days of celebration: Tết New Year's Eve (Feb 17), and The First (Feb 18), Second (Feb 19), Third (Feb 20), and Fourth (Feb 21) of Tết Nguyen Đán. Officially, the holidays are Feb 17 - 23, but the Government decided at its regular November meeting to make the government offices' holidays period nine days. Government officials will work on Sat, Feb 14 in order to have nine days of holidays from Sun, Feb 15, to Mon, Feb 23.



### **Mar 11-13, 2015 APCAC Business Summit, Singapore**

The Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers of Commerce (APCAC) and the American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore are pleased to host the 2015 APCAC Business Summit. The theme, "The United States and Asia - New Opportunities in the Pacific Century," builds on previous summits' themes about Asia's growth and global influence. Held at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre March 11-13, 2015, the conference offers a valuable opportunity to gather with peers and government officials and experience Singapore during its 50th anniversary celebration.

### **Mar 16-17, The Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP)**

The Higher Engineering Education Alliance Program (HEEAP) and its partners will host the 3rd annual Vietnam Engineering Education Conference (VEEC) in Da Nang, Vietnam. VEEC 2015 is a major event bringing together global industry, government and academic professionals to discuss transformative ideas and solutions to engineering and technical education programs in Vietnam. The theme this year is "Engineering Education as a catalyst for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Vietnam." The annual

conference includes interactive plenary sessions, panel discussions, technical sessions and seminars with emphasis on partnerships between education, industry and government to innovate and build capacity in engineering and technology innovation in teaching, research and discovery.



### AmCham Member Discounts Program

The AmCham Member Discounts Program is provided as one of our Membership Benefits. It serves as a mutually beneficial opportunity for both AmCham Members and AmCham Discount Partners. Members must present their AmCham Membership Card to receive special, privileged discounts offered by AmCham Discount Partners. A listing of discount offers is available in the annual Membership Discount Handbook (hardcopy) and on the AmCham website.



### Networking Opportunities with AmCham HCMC

AmCham HCMC offers many opportunities to market your company's products and services to AmCham members, the business community and the general public. Our services include:

- Event Sponsorship
- Event Management Support
- Network (Advertise) on AmCham's website: plus 7.8k twitter followers, 5.8k facebook fans
- Announcement in Weekly Email: 4,500+ AmCham company representatives and subscribers.
- AmCham Companies are offered 3 complimentary announcements in 2015.**
- Print advertising in AmCham Membership Directory
- Print advertising in AmCham Membership Discount Handbook
- Advertising on AmCham Discount Online

## News and Issues Updates



### Many trade groups urge end to West Coast port delays

A growing number of trade associations that have signed their names to a series of letters calling for a resolution to West Coast longshore talks points to the widening economic impact of port delays that have now lasted for months.



### Westinghouse Electric signs deal to train nuclear power technicians

Westinghouse Electric and Vietnam's Atomic Energy Institute (Vinatom) signed an agreement for Westinghouse to train Vietnamese personnel to manage and operate nuclear power facilities. Under the agreement, Westinghouse will invite Vietnam's nuclear experts to work at its technical departments and provide grants for them to study at the University of North Carolina. The first four experts received scholarships to begin studying this year.



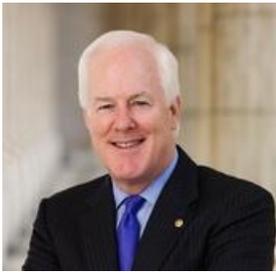
### Fulbright University Vietnam in Ho Chi Minh City

The Fulbright Economics Teaching Program (FETP) announced the "Fulbright University Vietnam" project as it celebrated its twentieth anniversary on Jan 17, 2015, an event concurrent with the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Vietnam - U.S. diplomatic relationship. FETP is a bridge in the U.S. - Vietnam relationship with the mission to promote Vietnam's renovation through research and training.



### New U.S. Congressional Leaders support TPA and TPP

New leaders of both the House and Senate have cited trade as a top bipartisan priority for the new year. In new U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) first official remarks, he noted the president has "already indicated a willingness to work with us on trade and infrastructure and comprehensive tax reform. Navigating the political pitfalls won't be easy. But passing these types of things would represent a win for the American people."



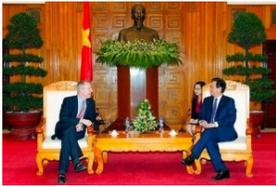
## No. 2 Republican senator says TPP is "on a two month trajectory"

The top U.S. trade official, Michael Froman, told lawmakers a major trade pact with Pacific Rim trading partners is "on a two-month trajectory," the No. 2 Republican in the U.S. Senate said on Tuesday, although the trade office said there was no set timeline for the deal. "On the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the U.S. Trade Representative has been calling a number of us and saying that he thinks we are sort of on a two-month trajectory to getting something he'd like us to take up in Congress," Senator John Cornyn told reporters.



## Top U.S. State Department official says TPP conclusion near

Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russell said a deal in the long-running TPP talks seemed to be in sight, requiring a big push in Congress to pass Trade Promotion Authority, which would ease passage of the agreement once it is wrapped. "Our negotiators have made a lot of progress on the talks in recent months, and we believe the end of the negotiations is coming into focus," he said. "This is important to longtime allies like Australia, with whom we've had an FTA for a decade now," he said. "It's important to Japan as [Prime Minister Shinzo] Abe works on structural reforms, the 'third arrow' of his domestic economic recovery program. And it's important to newer partners like Vietnam; 2015 marks 20 years of normalized relations, and TPP will take us to the next level."



## Prime Minister receives new U.S. Ambassador Osius

Amb Osius expressed hope that the TPP would be concluded in Mar 2015 and submitted to Congress for approval in May. The U.S. expects to become largest trade and investment partner with Vietnam; moreover, the US also supports Viet Nam's viewpoints on regional security issues and is making efforts for the full removal of arms sale ban on Viet Nam, he said. Prime Minister Dung said Viet Nam attaches importance to the Comprehensive Partnership relations with the U.S. and expects to promote the relationship more effectively to contribute to international and regional peace, stability, cooperation and development.



## Internet slow? ... yet another internet cable cut

In 2014, the AAG cable was cut three times, slowing down Internet speeds when Vietnamese users utilized services hosted overseas: first cut on July 16, again on September 15. On September 29, with the second rupture yet to be repaired, a third break was found on the same cable section. The long estimated repair time, up to one month, makes the rupture, on section S1H, which connects the Vietnamese coastal city of Vung Tau and Hong Kong, of the AAG (Asia Gateway Pacific) cable system, one of the most serious such incidents.



## AmCham & Association of Vietnam Retailers: Food Safety Seminar Presentations

AmCham's Food & Beverage Committee recently organized a Seminar on "Food Safety: Responsibilities of Manufacturers, Distributors, Retailers" together with the Association of Vietnam Retailers (AVR) to promote understanding of food safety in Vietnam's economic and social environment. The aim of the seminar was to connect members of supply chains, food safety regulators, manufacturers, distributors, retailers and consumers; sharing and discussing about issues and concerns regarding food safety. This was also an opportunity for participants to exchange information, to enhance mutual understanding, and to raise awareness and their responsibility regarding food safety.



## TPP Investment: Taiwan's United Textile builds textile industrial park in An Giang

Taiwan's United Textile Co. Ltd. broke ground for a \$100 million garment factory in the Mekong province of An Giang on Dec 23, 2014. The facility will be built in two phases. In the first phase, United Textile will build eight factories (workshops), eight warehouses and other facilities on 54.7ha and employ some 12,000 workers out of the 29,000 it is eventually expected to hire. The company said the total investment in the project would go up to \$500 million if things go smoothly.



## AmCham Vietnam - HCMC received Prime Minister's Certificates of Merit

At AmCham's 20th Anniversary Celebration Dinner on September 18, 2014, Vice Chairman of HCMC People's Committee Le Thanh Liem handed the Prime Minister's Certificates of Merit to AmCham Vietnam - HCM City and to Mr. Herb Cochran, Executive Director for their excellent performance in supporting and promoting trade and investment in Ho Chi Minh City.

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