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## Ho Chi Minh City unveils \$7 billion plan for international financial centre

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest economic hub, has announced an ambitious plan to attract \$7 billion in investment over the next five years to establish an International Financial Centre (IFC). The centre will be located in downtown District 1 and part of the Thu Thiem New Urban Area, covering a total of 783 hectares.

In the first phase, the city aims to secure \$560 million, including \$80 million from the state budget, to develop a 9.2-hectare core zone on the eastern bank of the Saigon River, directly opposite District 1. This area will host government agencies, regulatory authorities, and supporting infrastructure such as roads, power supply, and telecommunications. Currently, the area remains undeveloped.

Thu Thiem has been part of city planning since 1996, with 770 hectares allocated for urban development and 160 hectares for resettlement. The area is expected to house over 200,000 residents.

Nguyen Van Duoc, Chairman of the Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, emphasized the city's readiness for the IFC role, noting its 2024 gross regional domestic product (GRDP) of \$73.8 billion, representing 15.5% of the national GDP. The city also hosts more than half of Vietnam's fintech startups.

A 29-member steering committee, led by Party Secretary Nguyen Van Nen, has been formed to oversee the IFC's development. The centre is envisioned to include financial markets, banking, capital markets, and derivatives trading, with a strong emphasis on fintech aligned with global standards.

Vietnam is also planning another IFC in Da Nang. Experts stress the importance of international best practices, special incentives, and careful phased implementation to ensure success. VNS



## Vietnam to host FIATA World Congress 2025, positioning itself as emerging logistics Hub

The Vietnam Logistics Business Association (VLA) has officially announced that the FIATA World Congress 2025 (FWC 2025) will be held in Hanoi from October 6 to 10. This landmark event, organized by the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), is the most prominent gathering in the global logistics industry and is expected to attract over 1,200 delegates from more than 150 countries.

Vietnam's successful bid to host FWC 2025 reflects growing international recognition of the country's rising role in global logistics. The congress enjoys strong backing from the Vietnamese government. Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh has personally met twice with FIATA President Turgut Erkeskin and VLA leadership to support preparations and promote strategic cooperation.

Participants will include more than 1,000 leading enterprises across logistics, transport, trade, and supply chain sectors, alongside representatives from international organizations, policy makers, and top global experts.

Under the theme "Green Logistics and Rapid Adaptation", FWC 2025 will focus on key topics such as the restructuring of global trade, cross-border e-commerce logistics, cold chain development, and investment trends in Asian logistics.

Vietnam's National Action Plan on Green Growth 2021–2030 identifies logistics as one of 18 priority sectors. With major shipping lines and global ports committing to aggressive emission reduction goals, "green logistics" is evolving from a trend into a business imperative.

Green logistics involves more than low-emission vehicles—it encompasses the entire value chain, from sourcing and design to distribution and waste management. According to VLA, optimizing this ecosystem enables businesses to cut costs, increase resilience, and build competitive advantage.

Turgut Erkeskin emphasized that green logistics now sits at the intersection of sustainability, legal compliance, and competitiveness. FWC 2025 is expected to become a pivotal moment as the industry navigates environmental regulations, geopolitical shifts, and digital transformation. VNS

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## Vietnamese SMEs step up in global E-Commerce with strong government and platform support

Vietnam is making bold strides in global e-commerce, with 200 outstanding small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) selected to join the “Vietnam National Pavilion” on Alibaba.com in 2025 — double the number from last year. The program, backed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MoIT) and Alibaba, highlights Vietnamese firms excelling in digital transformation, branding, and international market reach.

Many SMEs are leveraging cross-border e-commerce to scale exports. For example, V. KAUS Co. Ltd., specializing in dried fruits and spices, reached \$3.6 million in revenue in 2024 after two years on international platforms, with \$2.5 million in exports. Similarly, Vietnamese brands like Newbam cashew and Vinut beverages are successfully combining online channels with traditional exports to expand globally.

Data from Amazon shows over 300% growth in Vietnamese product listings over five years, with strong demand in health care, kitchenware, apparel, and beauty. The number of Vietnamese brands registered on Amazon has increased 35-fold.

However, challenges remain. Many firms still face limited digital skills, weak branding, and lack of market knowledge. To tackle this, Amazon Global Selling and MoIT are developing a roadmap focusing on talent development, service ecosystems, local production links, and global branding.

Experts stress the importance of certifying and standardizing Vietnamese products for international platforms. They also call for investment in local e-commerce platforms to reduce dependency on foreign marketplaces and improve access to high-value markets like Europe, Japan, and South Korea.

Vietnam is well-positioned to thrive — but success will require coordinated public-private efforts. VNA



## Vietnam launches urban solar power pilot with balcony systems

On June 19, the German Development Agency (GIZ) and Phuc Khang Corporation, alongside a consortium of international and Vietnamese partners, officially launched the Balcony Solar Systems for Vietnam (BSS4VN) initiative in Ho Chi Minh City. This marks a strategic step in advancing urban renewable energy infrastructure in Vietnam.

The project introduces European-style balcony solar systems—compact, modular photovoltaic (PV) setups designed for easy installation on balconies, rooftops, and facades of residential and commercial buildings. These systems offer a decentralized solution, reducing pressure on national grids while empowering households with self-generated power.

Piloting at Diamond Lotus Riverside, a LEED- and LOTUS-certified green building by Phuc Khang Mitsubishi Holding, the initial systems will be fully funded by the BSS4VN program. Each system is expected to generate 52 kWh per month—covering around 17% of an average household's electricity needs in Ho Chi Minh City. With a six-year payback period, residents can enjoy long-term cost savings.

Beyond energy generation, the project promotes localised clean energy logistics, reducing the need for long-distance electricity transmission and improving energy resilience in urban areas. GIZ and its partners aim to replicate the model in other housing types such as villas and townhouses, contributing to Vietnam's broader green growth strategy and 2050 net-zero goals.

From both infrastructure and economic standpoints, balcony solar systems offer a scalable, cost-effective approach to integrating renewables into Vietnam's fast-growing urban landscape. VIR



## Central Retail to invest \$1.38 billion for Southeast Asia growth, eyes Vietnam as key market

Central Retail Corporation (CRC), Thailand's largest retail group, has unveiled a strategic investment plan worth over THB 45 billion (US\$1.38 billion) through 2027 to reinforce its position across Southeast Asia, with a strong focus on Vietnam.

Under its "New Heights, Next Growth" roadmap, CRC will prioritize three pillars: deepening customer engagement via its 26-million-member loyalty programme, fast-tracking new business ventures, and geographic expansion. A major part of the strategy includes strengthening omnichannel capabilities and scaling up AI-driven operations to support sustained double-digit growth in online sales.

Vietnam is CRC's most important international growth market, benefiting from a robust projected GDP growth of 5.2%, notably higher than Thailand's. The company plans to expand its food and shopping mall footprint in Vietnam, with tailored store formats that reflect regional consumer preferences.

As of now, CRC operates 330 stores in 26 provinces and cities in Vietnam under various brands, including Go! supermarkets. The company is confident in achieving 5% annual revenue and EBITDA growth despite global economic headwinds.

CEO Suthisarn Chirathivat noted that in today's volatile market, leveraging AI, enhancing workforce productivity, and gaining real-time customer insights are essential for long-term competitiveness.

This investment reaffirms CRC's commitment to becoming a regional retail leader and capitalizing on Southeast Asia's dynamic consumer landscape. VNS



## Vietnam's healthcare M&A scene heats up with strong foreign investor interest

Vietnam's healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors are witnessing a surge in mergers and acquisitions (M&A), driven by foreign strategic investors bringing in capital, advanced technology, and global networks. This trend is significantly enhancing the competitiveness of Vietnamese firms and opening new export opportunities.

According to PwC Vietnam, 2025 is expected to be a dynamic year for M&A, especially in healthcare, fueled by rising demand for quality medical services and a growing middle class. Pharmaceuticals, private hospitals, and specialty clinics in oncology and ophthalmology are becoming prime acquisition targets.

Global investor sentiment is optimistic. PwC's 2025 Global M&A Outlook reports that over 80% of experienced dealmakers plan to pursue new transactions. Vietnam is riding this wave, with domestic enterprises taking a more active role while foreign investors increasingly target high-potential sectors like healthcare and education.

In 2023, healthcare ranked among the top three M&A sectors in Vietnam, with 11 transactions totaling \$508 million. Key deals include Thomson Medical Group's acquisition of FV Hospital and Dongwha Pharm's majority stake in the Trung Sơn pharmacy chain.

Notably, TNH Hospital Group has drawn major foreign investment, with Singapore's Blooming Earth and Luxembourg's Asia Top Picks fund significantly increasing their stakes. Similarly, Swiss investor KWE Beteiligungen AG raised its shareholding in Bình Định Pharmaceutical, further highlighting strong international confidence.

Major players like Hau Giang Pharma and Traphaco have already attracted foreign partners, some holding controlling interests. As Vietnam's healthcare market continues to expand, the M&A momentum is set to accelerate, offering attractive opportunities for global investors. VNA

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