

READING PAPER
Time permitted: 50 minutes

PASSAGE 1 – QUESTIONS 1-10

Foreign press: Vietnam likely to reap biggest gains from TPP

Vietnam is expected to be one of the biggest winners of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, especially its garment and footwear sectors, thanks to the elimination of tariffs in the US and other major importing nations, the US Associated Press (AP) has analysed.

According to the press, TPP – an ambitious Pacific Rim trade deal – will boost the economies of its 12 participating countries by opening their markets to one another, but gains will not be portioned equally among parties. Apart from Vietnam, Japanese car and auto parts makers and Malaysia's electronics and semiconductor industry will also benefit from the trade pact, which was agreed upon in Atlanta, the US on October 5. Once ratified, the deal will become one of the world largest free trade agreements, accounting for 30 percent of global trade and about 40 percent of the world's economy. It will promote trade liberalization and tighten labour and environmental standards across member nations.

Many benefits of the deal will flow to Vietnam, where the economy has been growing at a decent clip as manufacturers expand their local presence, the agency noted. AP quoted Rajiv Biswas, Asia Pacific Chief Economist at IHS Global Insight, as saying the pact is really transformational for Vietnam as domestic garment firms will have a major advantage over other exporters into the US market, which currently imposes a 17 percent duty on clothing imports. Vietnam's footwear industry will benefit from competitive disadvantages in the US, Mexico and Canada, which will see benefits in other industries such as agriculture, machinery and electronics.

Vietnam's participation in the TPP combined with a recently signed European Union free trade agreement is expected to help the country attract foreign investment, the AP stressed, citing that leading manufacturers such as Samsung Electronics have been setting up its factories in Vietnam for several years. This demonstrates Vietnam's rising attractiveness over China, which has been considered a long-time global powerhouse, it added.

Economic experts say Vietnam's economy will see the biggest growth speed because of its relatively small per-capita GDP. By 2025, Vietnam's economy will grow 11 percent with a 28 percent increase in exports, according to a July report released by Eurasia Group, the leading global political risk research and consulting firm. "This percentage increase dwarfs the gains made by any other country," the report said. Vietnam will become the "preferred destination" for low-cost manufacturers looking to stay competitive with industries relying on cheap labour".

According to Eurasia Group, manufacturers, especially garment makers, are scrambling to move part of their production to Vietnam. It cited that Hong Kong-based garment maker Lever Style, whose clients include Hugo Boss and J. Crew, has been shifting its production from southern China to Vietnam in recent years. "The TPP trade pact will encourage us to migrate even more production," AP quoted Lever Style Chairman Stanley Szeto as saying.

The press concluded its analysis with a comment by economic analyst Marcel Theilant from Capital Economics – a London-based economic research consultancy, which affirmed that “most significantly, the wider economy should benefit as previously protected sectors are exposed to competition”.

1. The underlined phrase ‘elimination of tariff’ means ...

- A. removal of tax B. increase of tax C. decrease of tax D. change of tax

2. Which of the following sectors will benefit most in Malaysia?

- A. Footwear B. Auto parts C. Electronics and semiconductor D. Garment

3. The underlined pronoun ‘it’ refers to ...

- A. Malaysia B. the TPP agreement C. Atlanta D. the US

4. The underlined phrase ‘decent clip’ is closest in meaning to ‘...’

- A. slow speed. B. normal speed. C. amazing speed. D. fast speed.

5. What industries will the U.S, Mexico, and Canada benefit the most?

- A. Auto parts. B. Electronics and semiconductors.
C. Garment and footwear. D. Agriculture, machinery, and electronics.

6. It can be inferred that China has been considered as a country which ...

- A. produces most of the world electricity. B. is very powerful politically.
C. attracts a lot of foreign investment. D. has a long history.

7. It could be inferred that ...

- A. a rich country can have a bigger growth speed than a poor country.
B. a poor country can have a bigger growth speed than a rich country.
C. Japan has a bigger growth speed than Canada.
D. The U.S has a bigger growth speed than Mexico.

8. The underlined word ‘scrambling’ is closest in meaning to ‘...’

- A. crawling. B. fighting. C. competing. D. pushing.

9. The underlined phrase ‘The press’ refers to ...

- A.AP. B. Capital economics. C. Eurasia group. D. European Union.

10. The main idea of the whole passage is that ...

- A. TPP consists of 12 countries.
B. TPP economy takes 40% of the world economy.
C. Developed countries will be the biggest beneficiaries of TPP agreement.
D. Vietnam will be the biggest beneficiary of TPP agreement.

PASSAGE 2 – QUESTIONS 11-20

It was on one of the hottest August days - the found, and at twelve o'clock exactly, for a church clock was striking the hour - that a short, heavily-built woman of about fifty, carrying a shopping-bag, came out from the darkness of an old storehouse where she worked every morning as a checker, and set off along the narrow grey street to a bus-stop. Most of the factories and offices in the town were closed for two weeks but the storehouse, which held foodstuffs and other goods that did not keep, had remained open during the holidays. The heat, made worse by the heavy smell of petrol from the main street near by and undisturbed by the slightest current of cooler air, enveloped her. She was neither dressed nor built for energetic activity on a hot day, being very short indeed, and fat, so that she had to roll a little in order to get along. Her tight black dress was worn without a belt or any ornaments other than a large metal cross, well fingered but of no special value, which hung on a white ribbon around her neck. Her cracked shoes made loud footsteps in the silence of the empty street of closed buildings. The worn old bag she carried caused her to lean over slightly to her right as she walked, but it was clear that she was used to carrying such heavy weights.

Reaching her usual bus stop, she put down her bag and rested. Then, suddenly conscious of being watched, she turned quickly round and looked sharply upward at the tall man behind her.

He was the only other person waiting, and indeed, at that moment, the only other person in the street. She had never spoken to him, yet his face was already familiar to her: so big, so uncertain, so sweaty. She had seen it yesterday, and the day before, and for all she knew the day before that as well. For the last three or four days anyway, this great nervous lump of a man, waiting for a bus or hanging about on the footpath outside the storehouse, had become a figure of the street for her; and what was more, a figure of a certain definite type, though she had yet to put her finger on exactly which type it was. More than once, she had felt his interest in her and she had wondered whether he was a policeman.

11. The underlined word ‘heavy-built’ is used to describe the woman who is ...

- A. fat and big. B. thin and tall. C. thin and short. D. thin but heavy.

12. The underlined word ‘set off’ is closest in meaning to ‘...’

- A. went jogging. B. started going. C. ran slowly. D. walked quickly.

13. Why were there so few people about in this particular street at midday?

- A. It was too hot to be outside. B. Most workers were on holiday.
C. The lunch-time break had not yet started. D. Not many people lived in the area now.

14. The underlined word ‘enveloped’ means ...

- A. made an envelop B. heated C. covered D. cooled

15. What was the woman wearing?

- A. a dark dress with a lot of jewellery
B. a loose summer dress
C. a dress with a white collar
D. a plain and simple dress

16. The underlined word 'cracked' means ...

- A. broken.
B. worn-out.
C. flat-heel.
D. high-heeled.

17. The woman was hindered in walking by ...

- A. her tight dress.
B. her heavy necklace.
C. her round shape.
D. her worn-out shoes.

18. The woman turned round because ...

- A. she heard someone coming.
B. she thought the bus was due.
C. she remembered about her bag.
D. she felt someone looking at her.

19. The underlined word 'it' refers to ...

- A. the man's face.
B. the street.
C. her bag.
D. her dress.

20. Why did the woman recognise the man by the bus-stop?

- A. He was the local policeman
B. He travelled on the bus regularly
C. He had been near the storehouse before
D. He was like someone she knew well.

PASSAGE 3 – QUESTIONS 21-30

For the first time, ever, she had to move away from the sun. She had suffered it for an hour, only to annoy the young ones on the beach. They had made it clear, right from the start, that she was not welcome; that the beach was their playground. They reminded her of the mosquitoes that used to fly about above the river on summer evenings. She would put up with the mosquitoes, determined to finish her journey, although longing for the feel of ice-cold water on her face. She would have put up with these, too, if it hadn't been for the sun.

Now they would assume that it was they, and not the sun, that had made her leave the beach. As she sometimes ran for a bus, the rain splashing against her legs, or as she fought the wind, she was still young. Some people believed that it was the early seasons of the year that showed them at their best. She found it easier to be young in winter, when the little strength that remained within her was evident as an evergreen in an avenue of dying trees. The sun was a cruel thing, revealing one's age as it did the dust on furniture.

At the edge of the sea the middle-aged people sat in folding chairs. How pleasant it would be to set her chair among them, its cloth between her and the sun. They would accept her as one of them; would let her settle in their company. But she dragged herself past and made her way towards the benches.

There was room for one, right on the very edge. It was here that the old people sat, a long line of them, linked together like a chain. By her side sat an old woman, her dress hanging loose at her waist - an old woman, flat-chested, long and tough, like a man.

What were they looking for, she wondered, here in the middle of nowhere? Were old people greedier than they used to be? Her grandmother never went farther than the end of the road. How disappointed she would have been if grandmother had ever insisted on leaving her world. Old people should stay at home, being quietened before their own fires; guarding treasures that they had collected over the years.

She, too, should have stayed at home. But others had packed her case and pushed her on to a train.

21. She did not move off the beach earlier because ...

- A. she was enjoying herself there.
- B. she always stayed for at least an hour.
- C. she knew that the young people wanted her to leave.
- D. she wanted to watch the young people having fun.

22. The underlined word 'longing for' is closest in meaning to '...'

- A. looking for.
- B. wanting to have.
- C. searching for.
- D. hoping for.

23. She finally left the beach because ...

- A. it was too crowded.
- B. she had a journey to finish.
- C. the mosquitoes were annoying her.
- D. the sun was too hot.

24. How does she feel about the sun?

- A. It makes her feel old.
- B. It gives her strength.
- C. It is preferable to the wind and rain.
- D. It shows her at her best.

25. Which season makes her feel young?

- A. Summer
- B. Winter
- C. Autumn
- D. Spring

26. The underlined pronoun 'They' refers to ...

- A. young people.
- B. middle-aged people.
- C. old people.
- D. children.

27. She thinks that old people should stay at home because ...

- A. they find travelling too difficult.
- B. they have responsibilities.
- C. they might get cold.
- D. they don't need new experiences.

28. Which group of people does she feel comfortable with?

- A. the young people
- B. the middle-aged people
- C. the old people
- D. none of them

29. Which of the following statements is true?

- A. She thinks that old people should not go too far away from their home.
- B. Her grandmother is different from the old people described in the passage.
- C. Her grandmother always insisted on leaving her world.
- D. She thinks she should not have stayed at home.

30. In this passage, the woman seems to be ...

- A. worried.
- B. contented.
- C. annoyed.
- D. excited.

-----*This is the end of Reading progress test*-----