

# PART I GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VIET NAM



- ◆ **Official name:** The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
- ◆ **National Day:** September 2 (on September 2, 1945, at Ba Dinh square, President Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming the birth of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam).
- ◆ **Geographical location:** Located in Southeast Asia, bordering People's Republic of China to the North; Laos and Cambodia to the West; and Eastern Sea to the East.
- ◆ **Area:** 331 000 km<sup>2</sup>.
- ◆ **Length of coast line:** 3260 km.
- ◆ **Climate:** Tropical monsoon.
- ◆ **Capital:** Ha Noi.
- ◆ **Official language:** Vietnamese.
- ◆ **Population:** 90.73 million (in 2014).
- ◆ **Literacy rate:** 95% (in 2013).
- ◆ **Currency:** Viet Nam Dong (VND).
- ◆ **GDP (nominal):** US\$ 184 billion (in 2014).
- ◆ **GDP per capita (nominal):** US\$ 2,028 (in 2014).
- ◆ **Administrative units:** 63 provinces and cities.
- ◆ **International airports:** Cat Bi (Hai Phong), Noi Bai (Ha Noi), Phu Bai (Thua Thien Hue), Da Nang (Da Nang City), Chu Lai (Quang Nam), Cam Ranh (Khanh Hoa), Phu Quoc (Kien Giang), Tan Son Nhat (Ho Chi Minh City), and Can Tho (Can Tho).

# HISTORY



Ha Noi Flag Tower

Viet Nam has a history of over thousands of years of national construction and defense. Throughout history, Vietnamese people have been characterized by strong vitality, patriotism, love for peace, independence and freedom, indomitable tenacity in fighting against invaders and their dynamism, creativeness in building and developing the country.

The first period of Vietnamese history spanning from 2879 B.C., when the Hung Kings founded the country in 179 B.C., was characterized by three cultural centers, which are related to one another; namely the Dong Son Culture in the Northern region, the Sa Huynh Culture in the North Central region and the Dong Nai Culture in the Southern region. Throughout more than a millennium - under Chinese domination (from 179 B.C. to 938 A.D.), under the Ngo-Dinh-Early Le-Ly Dynasties (939-1225), Tran-Ho Dynasties (1226-1407), the Vietnamese people were united together in their struggle against invaders with a view to protecting national independence and unity as well as throwing off the yoke of foreign oppression culminating in the Lam Son uprising (1418-1427), in which Minh invaders were defeated and the country's sovereignty was regained. Under the Le So-Mac-Le Trinh and Nguyen Lords (1428-1788), it moved southwards, reclaiming land. In the period from 1771 to 1802, the Tay Son dynasty expelled invading foreign powers and unified the country. Under the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945), the resistance war against French colonialists spread far and wide. In 1945, under the leadership of President Ho Chi Minh, seizing historical opportunities, the Vietnamese people staged the August Revolution by successfully launching general uprisings to seize power. With the



Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee

Declaration of Independence proclaimed on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1945, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam came into being, ushering in a new era of independence, freedom and happiness for the nation. Although cherishing peace and reconciliation, the Vietnamese people stand ready to fight against invaders to defend the nation.

From 1945 to 1975, the Vietnamese people overcame numerous difficulties and endured innumerable hardships to win their heroic struggles against the French colonialists and the American imperialists to reclaim national independence, freedom and reunification. After the Great Spring Victory in 1975, the country embarked on the path of socialist construction and implemented Five-Year Plans for Socio-Economic Development (1976-1980, 1981-1985) and continued struggles to defend their nation at the Southwest border and the Northern border (1975-1979).

Since the adoption of Doi Moi (Renewal) policy in 1986, the country has recorded remarkable achievements in socio-economic, cultural and scientific-technological fields. Together with broader diplomatic relations, Viet Nam's position in the international arena has been enhanced. It is among the first countries to reach the United Nations Millennium Development Goal on Poverty Reduction. Viet Nam is a law-governed state "of the people, by the people and for the people" which always places the people at the center and considers them as the driving force of development, with a view to building an abundant and happy life for all the people. Thanks to its political stability, Viet Nam is now taking solid steps towards industrialization, modernization and international integration.

# POLITICAL SYSTEM

In recent decades, Viet Nam has won worldwide recognition as a politically stable country. The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is a law-governed state. The Constitution stipulates that the State of Viet Nam is “of the people, by the people and for the people”, ensuring citizens’ equal rights in political, civil, economic, cultural and social fields.

## Political system

The Communist Party of Viet Nam is the ruling and only legal political party in Viet Nam of which the Political Bureau and the Central Committee are the most important. The Communist Party of Viet Nam operates within the framework of the Constitution and the law.

## Legislative

The National Assembly (elected for a 5-year term) is the supreme representative body of the people, the highest body of state power of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. As the only body entrusted with the power to legislate, the National Assembly decides upon the country’s fundamental domestic and foreign policies, tasks for socio-economic development, national security and defense. It exercises the supreme power of supervision over all activities of the State.

## Executive

The State President, elected by the National Assembly, is the Head of State and represents the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam internally and externally.

The Government, composing of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers and other government members, is the highest organ of state administration of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

## Judiciary

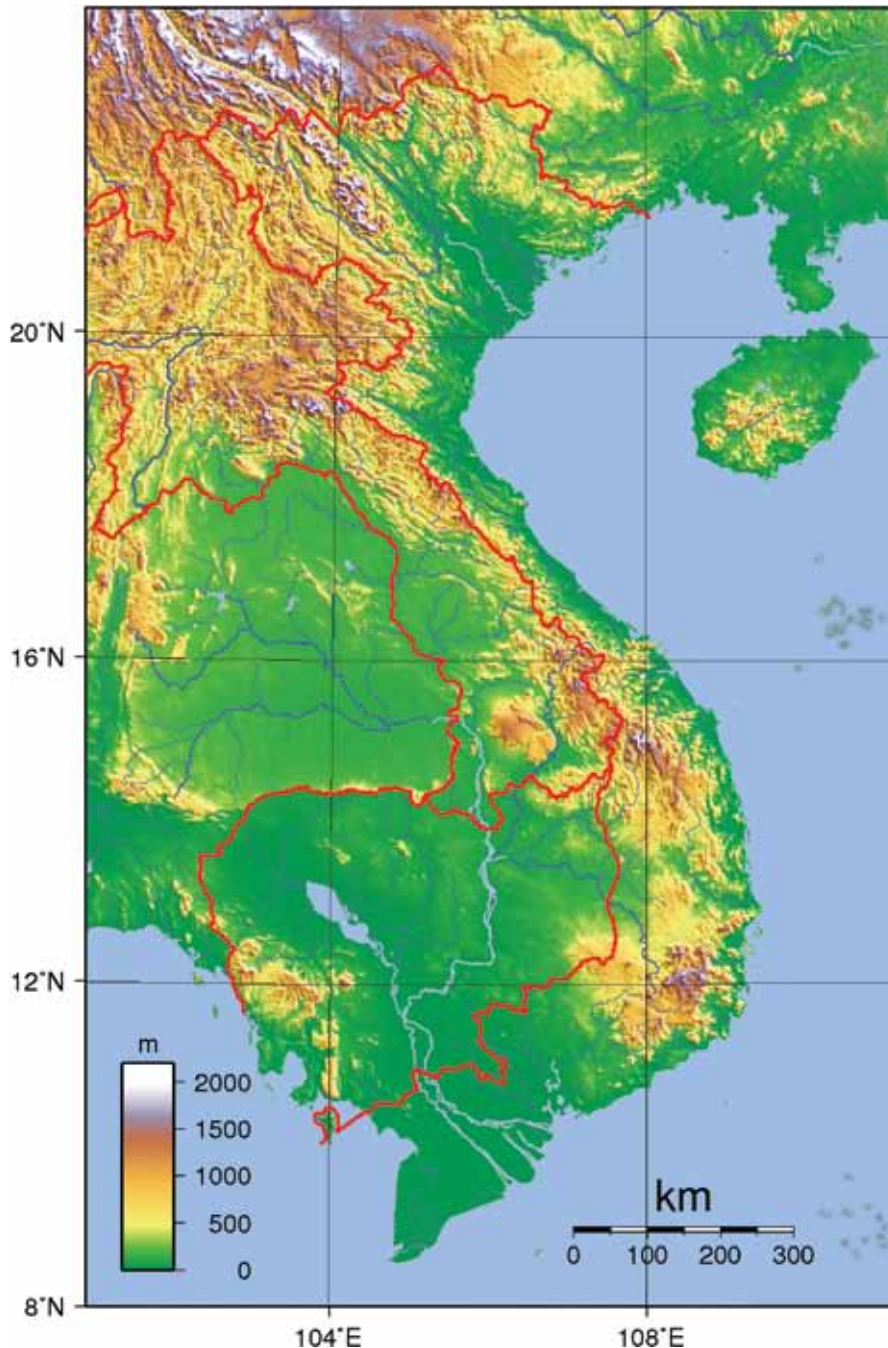
The Supreme People’s Court is the highest judicial body of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. The Supreme People’s Procuracy exercises the power to prosecute and supervise judicial activities, contributing to ensuring the strict and unified observance of the law.



Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum

# GEOGRAPHY

This S-shaped country is located on the eastern coast of the Indochina peninsula, bordering China to the North, Laos and Cambodia to the West, and Eastern Sea to the East. Three-fourths of its territory is covered by mountains and hills; the two major deltas are the Red River Delta (in the North) and the Mekong River Delta (in the South). Viet Nam faces the sea to the East, the South and the Southwest with a long coastline of 3,260 km, running from Mong Cai in the North to Ha Tien in the Southwest. The country's territorial waters in the Eastern Sea extend to the East and Southeast, including the continental shelf, islands and archipelagoes. There is a group of around 3,000 islets in the Tonkin Gulf, including Ha Long Bay, Bai Tu Long Bay, Cat Ba and Bach Long Vi islands. Farther in the Eastern Sea are Hoang Sa Archipelago (Paracel Islands) and Truong Sa Archipelago (Spratly Islands). To the West and the Southwest lie other groups of islands including Con Son, Phu Quoc and Tho Chu.



# DEMOGRAPHY, CULTURE AND BELIEFS



**B**y the end of 2013, Viet Nam's population reached approximately 90 million. Viet Nam ranks the 14<sup>th</sup> most populous country in the world. The country is endowed with a young population (nearly 60% of the population aged under 25), and its labor force increases by more than 1 million people a year. Its population growth rate is relatively stable at 1.2% a year. Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City are the most populous cities in Viet Nam.

Viet Nam is a multi-ethnic country with 54 ethnic groups, among which the Kinh (Viet) accounts for 86.2% of the population. Though inhabiting in all regions in the country, the Kinh people mainly live in the low land and deltas. The other 53 ethnic groups are scattered over mountainous areas and the midlands spreading from the North to the South. Most ethnic groups live in Northern and Central regions. The most populous groups are the Tay - accounting for 1.9% of total population, Thai 1.7%, Muong 1.5%, Khmer 1.4%, Hoa 1.1%, Nung 1.1% and Hmong 1.1%. With the existence of various ethnic groups, Viet Nam really enjoys a cultural diversity.

As the country in the East, the in-family philosophy of education exerts a great influence on religious and ethical life of the Vietnamese people. Under the impact of feudal ideology, more than 70% of the Vietnamese people follow "triple religion", a syncretic combination of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. In Viet Nam, there are also other religions such as Catholicism, Caodaism and Hoa Hao Buddhism.

