

## VN, Cambodian legislators hold talks in Hà Nội

National Assembly Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân discussed ties past and present with her counterpart Samdech Heng Samrin

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President of the Cambodian National Assembly Samdech Heng Samrin (left) met with Vietnamese National Assembly Chairwoman Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân yesterday as part of his official visit to Việt Nam. VNA/  
VNS Photo Trọng Đức



## PM Phúc meets with Swedish king, diplomats

The Prime Minister is on an official visit to Sweden during which the two countries have solidified their 50-year relationship

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## NATIONAL EDUCATION FUNDING

The Mekong Delta has been urged to invest more to improve the quality of education in the region

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## WORLD EUROPEAN SHAKE-UP

Leaders of the bloc are on the hunt for top brass following an election that shook the status quo

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## INSIGHT PARAGUAY DROWNING

Water levels on the Paraguay River have risen seven metres, forcing residents to flee

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## LIFE&STYLE CHILDREN'S DAY

Various cultural and entertainment events for children will be held in Hà Nội to mark the occasion (June 1)

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## MARKET MOVES

VN-Index  
972.00



HNX-Index  
105.03



## WEATHER FORECAST MAY 29

HÀ NỘI

Temperature:  
Min: 26°C Max: 29°C



HẢI PHÒNG

Temperature:  
Min: 23°C Max: 27°C



ĐÀ NẴNG

Temperature:  
Min: 26°C Max: 36°C



HCM CITY

Temperature:  
Min: 25°C Max: 34°C

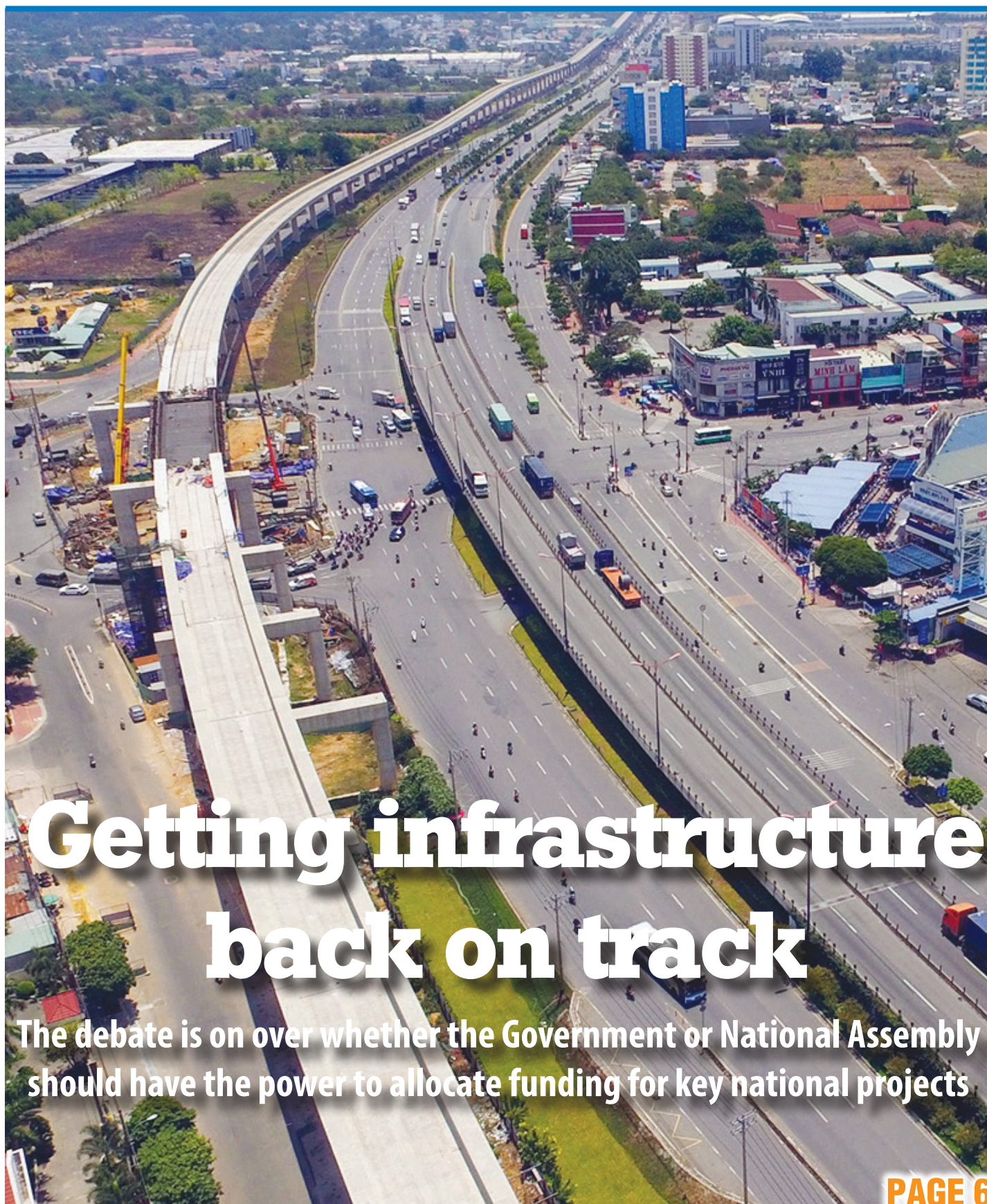


# Getting infrastructure back on track

The debate is on over whether the Government or National Assembly should have the power to allocate funding for key national projects

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A bird's-eye view of the Bến Thành-Suối Tiên metro line in HCM City. The 20km urban railway has faced several delays and cost overruns since construction started in 2012.  
VNA/VNS Photo Hoàng Hải





# Mekong Delta needs to increase education spending

HCM CITY Minister of Education and Training Phùng Xuân Nhạ has instructed authorities in 12 provinces and one city in the Mekong Delta region to increase expenditures from their local education budgets to pay for facilities and equipment.

The expenditures are 11.9 per cent lower than the country's average, Nhạ said at a conference on solutions for educational development in the region held last week in Cần Thơ City.

If the issue is not resolved, the gap between human resources and development would widen.

Phạm Hùng Anh, head of the Agency of Education Facilities under the Ministry of Education and Training, said that the total expenditures for kindergarten and high school levels were at the lowest level, accounting for 14.9 per cent and 15.3 per cent, respectively, of the region's total for the education sector between 2011 and 2016.

Secondary education accounted for 27 per cent, and primary education 42.8 per cent, Anh said.

Allocation from the central budget for the region via education programmes is low, he said.

To build schools in the 2014-2015 year, for example, only Tân Phú Đông District in Tiền Gi-



Students use machinery during a lesson at Cần Thơ University in the southern province of Cần Thơ. VNS Photo Gia Lộc

ang Province received a subsidy worth more than VNĐ7.5 billion (US\$320,780), accounting for 0.4 per cent of the country's total.

The programme in the 2017-2020 period provided VNĐ717 billion for the entire region.

The region has 6,874 schools from kindergarten to high school levels. It will need nearly 3,300 new classrooms to be built and

around 8,550 to be upgraded.

Nearly 2,200 sets of teaching equipment will be bought.

The region has 55.1 per cent of primary students dropping out for many different reasons including financial difficulties, moving to other southern provinces or HCM City or other cities in the region.

Nguyễn Thị Minh Giang, director of the Kiên Giang Province's

Department of Education and Training, said that the region's many canals lead to difficulties for students to go to school.

The rate of national standard schools at educational levels is low in the region, compared to others in the country.

Many delegates at other educational departments in provinces have complained about shortage of

teachers as the number of students increases.

Nguyễn Hùng Nhiên, deputy director of Hậu Giang Province's Department of Education and Training, said that more preferential policies about salaries for kindergarten teachers should be issued because the salary is low and they work 10 to 12 hours a day.

## Special policy

Nguyễn Thanh Bình, acting chairman of An Giang Province People's Committee, said that education in the region needs a special policy.

The region has only two or three provinces waiting to be given financial autonomy, Bình said, adding that it is difficult to allocate more to their education budget.

At the conference, the Ministry of Education and Training and local authorities said the land collection would be used for the education sector.

Funds for the prevention of natural calamities should be used for the sector.

The ministry will ask the National Assembly to approve more loans. The loans' value will increase by 5 per cent to 10 per cent compared to the existing ones. VNS

## Water management becoming crucially important

HÀ NỘI Improved water management can help Viet Nam tackle the threat of climate change, according to Belgium Ambassador Paul Jansen during a workshop held yesterday in Hà Nội.

At the workshop, entitled Water Management in Urban Areas in Viet Nam in the Context of Climate Change, policymakers, universities, research institutions, international development partners and private firms shared knowledge and expertise in the field.

"Urban resilience has always been a key issue in the developing areas of Viet Nam. And now, with the growing threat from climate change, improvements to the urban infrastructure are becoming increasingly more important," Jansen said.

Viet Nam is one of the countries most affected by climate change, which also influences the interplay between water and urban areas and intensifies the risks of both drought and flooding, according to experts.

In Viet Nam's rapidly expanding cities, increased development and increased rainfall due to climate change have created significant flood risks, impacting human lives and the economy and creating envi-

ronmental problems.

Analysis of climate change impact, consideration of increased risk and vulnerability as well as actions for capacity building, awareness raising and infrastructure works were discussed at the workshop.

Prof Phạm Quý Nhân, deputy head of the Natural Resources and Environment University, described the current reality of water usage in Viet Nam.

"At present, 60 per cent of the population rely on groundwater for their water supply while the groundwater resource has been heavily exploited in some areas", said Nhân.

"The high extraction rates are causing a rapid lowering of the water levels in key areas around Hà Nội, HCM City and in the Central Highlands. The sustainability of these water sources is under serious threat", he said.

"Groundwater is very vulnerable to pollution and has a very poor inventory and information system," he added.

"Climate change will increase evaporation, reducing rainfall in the dry season above all river basins, causing irrigation water demand to increase," Nhân said.

According to the professor, about 8.5 million urban citizens lack access to clean water while in rural areas, 41 million people do not have a supply that meets the Ministry of Health's clean water standards.

Along with insufficient access to clean water, millions of people suffer regular and massive losses from natural disasters.

Viet Nam is one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world, with about half of the population living on the coast and more than 80 per cent at risk of direct impacts from natural hazards.

From 1997 to 2006, natural disasters caused more than 5,000 deaths, and destroyed more than 6,000 fishing boats, nearly 300,000 houses and 4 million hectares of paddy rice, with total damage in excess of VNĐ50 trillion (US\$2.1 billion).

To prepare for and reduce impacts of climate changes, the country would need effective measures including national strategic plans, national policy framework, vulnerable community protection plans, sustainable water development and protection projects, and campaigns improving people's awareness on water use, the professor said. VNS

## HCM City plans to open more pedestrian streets

HCM CITY The HCM City Department of Planning and Architecture and Spain's Idom Ingenieria Consultoria S.A. plan to work together to open more pedestrian streets and shopping malls in District 1.

The department will open a pedestrian area on Lê Lợi Street (extending from the 23/9 Park to the HCM City Opera House), which will connect with Nguyễn Huệ pedestrian street.

This pedestrian area will be near the metro station now under construction.

Parts of Hàm Nghi and Tôn Đức Thắng streets are also expected to become pedestrian streets.

In the first phase of the project, landscape design will revolve around the Opera House Park and include functional areas and more greenery.

The department has suggested installing a water fountain and building a flower garden near one intersection, adding that it should be embellished with intricate architectural details.

Elements of light, sound and color

are also important, according to the department.

Phase two will see the completion of the design of the Lê Lợi Street section.

The department will continue to assess the public space downtown and the incorporation of underground and shopping spaces.

According to the department, the walking section of Nguyễn Huệ suffers from intense thermal radiation and lacks sufficient open spaces for additional commercial activities.

Visitors are also not as attracted to its greenery, public facilities and decorations, as was expected when it first opened.

To assist commuters and tourists affected by the project, parking spaces will be set up along the proposed area.

The department will also identify which cultural and entertainment activities should be held in the downtown area, and study the existing road infrastructure and other cultural and art works that will be put into use in the area by 2020. VNS



# PM Phúc welcomed by Swedish king, diplomats

STOCKHOLM Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc had a meeting with the King of Sweden Carl XVI Gustaf on Monday as part of the activities in his official visit to Sweden.

The Vietnamese Government leader thanked the Swedish Royal family and Government for their warm welcome for the Vietnamese delegation, while conveying the invitation of Party Secretary and President Nguyễn Phú Trọng to the King and Queen to visit Việt Nam again.

PM Phúc affirmed that the Vietnamese people always treasured the friendship, valuable support of Swedish people for Việt Nam in the past and at present, stressing that Việt Nam highly valued the relations and multi-faceted cooperation between the two countries.

King Carl XVI Gustaf applauded the Vietnamese leader's visit to Sweden, affirming that this and the official one to Việt Nam by Crown Princess of Sweden Victoria in early May had marked special milestones in the relationship between the

two countries on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic ties.

The King said he always kept a good impression of the Vietnamese country and people during his visit to Việt Nam in 2004, adding that he admired the will of the Vietnamese people and appreciated achievements that the Southeast Asian nation had achieved on its path of socio-economic development. He affirmed that the Swedish Royal Family would always support stronger and more effective development between the two nations through multifaceted cooperation, and the partnership for sustainable development and innovation that the two the country are heading.

## Swedish Speaker

Yesterday, the final day of his visit, PM Phúc held talks with Speaker of the Swedish Parliament Andreas Norlen.

The Swedish parliament leader hailed PM Phúc's visit, the first by a Vietnamese PM since 1999, in the context of the two

countries organising various activities to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relationship.

PM Phúc emphasised that the Vietnamese delegation's visit on the occasion of the important anniversary aimed to demonstrate Việt Nam's gratitude for the support of the Swedish people both past and present.

He praised the contributions made by the Swedish parliament to the development of bilateral relations, and urged the parliaments of both countries to continue working together on the implementation of new agreements and co-operation directions.

Phúc said he wanted the two parliaments to consider the establishment of friendship parliamentarians' groups to help boost cooperation. The Vietnamese government leader asked the Swedish parliament to continue creating favourable conditions for the Vietnamese community in the country to settle and integrate while preserving their cultural identity, thus contributing to friendship

and mutual understanding between the two countries.

Norlen said the Swedish parliament supported and would make efforts to push for the early signing and ratification of the EU-Việt Nam Free Trade Agreement and the EU-Việt Nam Investment Protection Agreement, which would benefit all sides. He said the signing of the FTA would create a strong impetus for economic and trade co-operation.

PM Phúc conveyed an invitation to visit Việt Nam from Chairwoman of the Vietnamese National Assembly Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân to Norlen

Previously, PM Phúc had a meeting with Swedish diplomats and experts who are considered great friends of Vietnamese people, including Birgitta Dahl, former Speaker of the Parliament, Anders Forsberg, former Secretary General of the Parliament, the present and former ambassadors of Sweden to Việt Nam, and two sons of late Prime Minister Olof Palme. VNS

## Việt Nam joins int'l efforts to end violence, harassment in workplace

HÀ NỘI A seminar on ending violence and harassment in the workplace was held yesterday in Hà Nội the International Labour Organisation, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and CARE International in Việt Nam.

Nguyễn Mạnh Cường, director general of the Department of International Cooperation at MOLISA, said Việt Nam would send a delegation of Government officials, employers and employees to the 108th annual session hosted by the ILO in Sweden's Geneva in June to join the final round of discussions on a draft convention to stop sexual harassment in the workplace.

Việt Nam's interest in the new convention showed Việt Nam's commitment to global labour and international integration, he said.

According to Vương Thái Nga from CARE International in Việt Nam, the main point of the new convention was the broadening of the terms "violence," "harassment," "at work," and "labourers." The term "violence and harassment" at work refers to a series of unacceptable behaviour that could cause physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm. "Labourer" in the draft is regulated to include all employees, trainees and apprentices, volunteers, job seekers and job applicants, both in the formal and informal economic sectors, and in urban and rural areas.

The draft also clarified the concept "at work" as any location or environment related to the work process, related to or arising from work, according to Nga.

Việt Nam has ratified the ILO Convention on Discrimination (Convention 111), which places an obligation on states to address gender inequality, encompassing gender discriminatory behaviour. Additionally, a joint report by the ILO and MOLISA noted that



**Việt Nam is joining this push, with a proposal for the definition of sexual harassment to be included for the first time in law."**

*Andrea Prince, ILO*

without a clear definition in the Labour Code or decrees, Vietnamese workers were vulnerable to sexual harassment, which clearly violated their fundamental rights.

Andrea Prince, and expert in labour laws at the ILO in Việt Nam, said in general, the attitude towards victims and perpetrators had started to change and national laws, policies and initiatives by leading employers had been adjusted in the right direction.

"In the draft revised Labour Code recently published, we see signs that Việt Nam is joining this push, with a proposal for the definition of sexual harassment to be included for the first time in law."

She said the definition may not yet fully capture all aspects of the problem.

"Providing a definition is a big step forward, laws need to also reflect the requirement for and right to equality across all provisions. The recent draft revised Labour Code includes some very positive steps in this direction, but there is still more work to do," she said.

Lê Đình Quảng, deputy head of the Labour Relations Department at the Việt Nam General Confederation of Labour, said it was still difficult to identify acts of sexual harassment, adding there should be specific regulations.

The concepts and definitions needed to be clear to help businesses and employees implement this regulation and find solutions to protect workers, he said. VNS

## Children first

**A volunteer helps a child patient with paper crafts at a charity event, which offered free meals, gifts and financial support packages yesterday at the Việt Nam National Children's Hospital in Hà Nội for 2,500 inpatients.** VNA/VNS Photo

*Dương Ngọc*



## Rain, waste cause fish deaths in Đồng Nai

ĐỒNG NAI Changes to the water environment on the La Ngà River in southern province of Đồng Nai have been blamed for the death of nearly 1,000 tonnes of fish this month, provincial officials have said.

Deputy chairman of Đồng Nai Province People's Committee Võ Văn Chánh said on Monday that as soon as the mass fish death on the river in the province's La Ngà and Phú Ngọc Communes was reported, water samples were collected. Test results showed the concentrations of ammonia, nitrite and the chemical oxygen demand (COD) in samples were in excess of levels allowed in aquaculture farming, Chánh said.

Director of the province's Agriculture and Rural Development Department Huỳnh Thành Vinh said rain lasting from May 15 to early morning of May 16 made waste flow into the river, lowering the dissolved oxygen content in the river's surface water, killing the fish.

The concentration of ammonia in water river samples was 4-7 times higher than permitted, the nitrite concentration 2-3 times higher than

permitted and the COD concentration 3-16 times higher than permitted. Moreover, testers found no signs of common diseases or infectious diseases that freshwater fish tend to contract.

According to the department, last June, more than 1,900 tonnes of fish from 132 local households were found dead along the 5km La Ngà River after heavy downpours.

The low oxygen level in the water and the high density of fish were reported as the main cause of the mass deaths at that time. Pollution from upstream areas swept down by the rains worsened the incident.

As of last December, the provincial People's Committee had spent more than VNĐ12 billion (US\$516,000) to support affected households in Phú Ngọc and La Ngà communes.

Nguyễn Văn Khoái, a fish farmer in Phú Ngọc Commune, said breed fish on the river was his family's livelihood for 14 years but in the last two years, he lost hundreds of millions of Vietnamese đồng and was in debt because of the mass fish death.

"After last year's mass fish death, I borrowed more than VNĐ100 million to buy breeding fish to resume farming. Now, I owe VNĐ300 million more for buying feed for the fish," Khoái said.

He said he had to sell all the fish cages that his family had to cover the debt but it was not enough.

"After handing the fish cages to the buyer, we'll go onshore, rent a house and seek a job," Khoái said.

Vinh said the department planned to help fish farming households who were affected by the recent mass fish death.

Deputy Prime Minister Trương Hoà Bình later yesterday asked for further investigation into the cause of the mass fish death and hand out appropriate punishments to those who violated the laws.

Bình also ordered Đồng Nai authorities to review the major sources of waste discharged into the La Ngà River, particularly giving focus to the cases that received complaints from the public. A thorough report is expected to be submitted to Prime Minister before June 30. VNS