

Committee calls for ODA cash to be handed out quickly

The disbursement rate of official development assistance capital has showed signs of slowing down in recent years

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NA Chairwoman meets with citizens in the Mekong Delta

The top legislator discussed education, infrastructure investment and electricity prices with residents of Cần Thơ

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Việt Nam needs a healthy social media landscape

One of the country's most senior politicians has called for efforts to ensure social networks are a force for good, not evil

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First port of call private

The private sector has called on the Government to build a better trade and investment climate to make Việt Nam one of the best places to do business in the region, with infrastructure key



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Equipment being loaded from a ship at Dung Quất port, financed by Gemadept Dung Quất International Port JSC, in Quảng Ngãi Province. Việt Nam needs to encourage private investment in ports and airports, building a self-reliant economy in the context of international integration. VNA/VNS Photo Huy Hùng

NATIONAL

GOLD RUSH

Illegal gold mining has become rife in the province of Điện Biên, and authorities are struggling to cope with gold fever

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INSIGHT

SAND MAFIAS

Construction firms have an insatiable appetite for sand in Morocco, leaving beautiful beaches ravaged

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LIFE&STYLE

FISHY DISHES

Fish are in abundance on the Đà River at this time of year, meaning there's no excuse not to try some fish-based delights

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MARKET MOVES

VN-Index
946.95



HNX-Index
103.5



WEATHER FORECAST

JUNE 18

HA NOI

Temperature:

Min: 29°C Max: 34°C



HAI PHONG

Temperature:

Min: 27°C Max: 31°C



ĐÀ NẴNG

Temperature:

Min: 28°C Max: 36°C



HCM CITY

Temperature:

Min: 24°C Max: 30°C



News DIGEST

PM calls for tighter trade ties with India

HÀ NỘI Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc suggested that Việt Nam and India step up their trade ties during his reception for outgoing Indian Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish in Hà Nội yesterday.

PM Phúc urged India to facilitate the penetration of Vietnamese fruits into the Indian market and expressed his wish that more Indian groups and investors would invest in Việt Nam.

The Vietnamese Government would create favourable conditions for foreign investors, including those from India, he pledged.

Besides, Việt Nam and India should beef up bilateral cooperation in national defence, the PM said.

He applauded Ambassador Parvathaneni's trips to 26 Vietnamese cities and provinces to seek cooperation opportunities between localities of the two countries, thus promoting the bilateral relationship and people-to-people exchanges.

PM Phúc hoped that the ambassador, in any position, would make more significant contributions to Việt Nam-India relations.

For his part, Parvathaneni expressed his delight at the growth of two-way trade, which exceeded US\$10 billion in 2018, doubling the turnover recorded in 2016.

The diplomat also hoped for stronger trade ties between Việt Nam and India, and the promotion of Vietnamese farm produce and fruits in the Indian market.

He affirmed India's support for Việt Nam as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2020-2021 term.

VN, Singapore hold 10th defence policy dialogue

HCM CITY Deputy Minister of National Defence, Senior Lieutenant General Nguyễn Chí Vịnh and Singaporean Permanent Secretary for Defence Chan Yeng Kit chaired the 10th Vietnam-Singapore Defence Policy Dialogue in HCM City yesterday.

At the dialogue, the two sides discuss security issues in Asia-Pacific, co-operative processes at the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM), the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM plus) and reviewed defence ties after the 9th Vietnam - Singapore Defence Policy Dialogue.

Both sides agreed that the bilateral defence partnership has made good progress in terms of exchanges, training, information exchange, navy and aviation co-operation and ties in multilateral forums. They also agreed to focus on enhancing training co-operation, especially language and international relations as well as military medicine ties.

The two sides expressed the desire to strengthen defence relations comprehensively.

They agreed to co-ordinate at multilateral forums, especially when Việt Nam becomes ASEAN Chair in 2020.

Later, General Vịnh and Chan Yeng Kit, signed a three-year plan (2019-2021) on ties between the two ministries. **VNS**



Nhật Tân Bridge in the capital city Hà Nội, one of many infrastructure projects in the country built with Japanese ODA. VNA/VNS Photo Lâm Khánh

ODA being handed out more slowly

HÀ NỘI The ODA National Steering Committee held a meeting with donors in Hà Nội yesterday to seek solutions to speed up the disbursement of ODA capital and preferential loans, which has showed signs of slowing down in recent years.

The meeting, chaired by the steering committee's chairman Deputy Prime Minister Phạm Bình Minh, was attended by representatives from six donors which are the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the KfW Development Bank.

As of 2018, Việt Nam had received US\$80 billion in ODA

and preferential loans, making it one of the largest recipients of this type of funding in the world. About 80 per cent of the amount was provided by the six above-mentioned donors.

Of the total amount, \$7 billion was in the form of non-refundable aid, more than \$70 billion was concessional loans with interest rates under 2 per cent, and \$1.62 billion was loans under less generous conditions but their interest rates were still lower than commercial ones.

This is proof of Việt Nam's efforts to mobilise external resources for national development. Donors shared the view that Việt Nam had effectively used loans, which was one of the reasons why they continued to commit ODA and con-

cessional loans for Việt Nam in the past.

Reports from JICA, ADB and WB said their projects in Việt Nam had been implemented better than those in other countries, with a high rate of projects completed and achieving set targets.

In 2018 alone, the six donors committed \$28.9 billion for Việt Nam.

However, the disbursement rate of ODA and loans in Việt Nam had slowed, dropping from a high 23.1 per cent in 2014 to just 11.2 per cent in 2018, which was lower than the average global rates recorded by the six donors.

Of the committed capital for Việt Nam in 2018, up to \$16.9 billion is yet to be disbursed.

The delay in disbursement

was attributable to complicated and overlapping procedures, low readiness for projects and cumbersome processes and requirements for disbursement.

The slow disbursement of capital resulted in projects not meeting implementation schedules and targets while pushing up costs, affecting investment effectiveness and GDP growth.

The situation requires stronger commitment and more drastic efforts from all related sides to remove obstacles. It was proposed at the meeting that the six donors need to co-ordinate with the Vietnamese Government in building the mid-term public investment plan using ODA and concessional loans for 2021-2025 as one of the solutions. **VNS**

Corruption committee acts after bribery exposed

HÀ NỘI The fight on corruption has been extended to those supposed to be rooting the practice out of society, after some anti-corruption officers were accused of seeking bribes.

The Central Steering Committee on Corruption Prevention and Control has sent a dispatch to Party units and authorities of centrally-run cities and provinces requesting they strictly deal with corruption in anti-corruption units.

They were told to replace or dismiss morally unqualified personnel and enhance inspections of anti-corruption units as directed by Party General Secretary and State President and head of the committee Nguyễn Phú Trọng.

Party affairs committees of the Government Inspectorate and State Audit Office of Việt Nam must review, supplement and re-

fine operation regulations of inspection and audit delegations.

The Central Committee of the Public Security's Party was assigned to investigate a case involving the construction ministry's inspectors allegedly soliciting bribes during a working trip in Vĩnh Tường District, Vĩnh Phúc Province.

The Party affairs committee of the Ministry of Construction (MoC) was told to review the appointment of Nguyễn Thị Kim Anh as deputy chief of the anti-corruption division of its inspection team and report to the Central Steering Committee on Corruption Prevention and Control before June 30.

The MoC established a five-person inspection team to probe the planning work, granting of construction permit and management at several projects in Vĩnh Phúc Province's

Vĩnh Tường District.

From the beginning of June, when the delegation was on working trip in Vĩnh Tường, provincial police received many complaints from businesses, commune's People's Committee and individuals who claimed the delegation had asked for bribes.

The Vĩnh Phúc Police Department set up a working group to investigate the case.

Then, on June 12, Anh and Đặng Hải Anh, also an inspector from the MoC, were caught red-handed receiving bribes worth VNĐ250 million (US\$10,700) by local police.

After being arrested, the two suspects admitted their crime.

Police raided their workplace and seized documents, VNĐ335 million in cash and other related items. Both of them are now in custody for investigation. **VNS**

VN needs healthy social media landscape

HÀ NỘI Creating a healthy and safe information environment, in which social media is an important source of news, will help maintain Việt Nam's political and social stability, a top official has said.

Võ Văn Thường, Politburo member, Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee and head of the CPV Central Committee's Commission for Communication and Education, made the claim in an article sent to local publications yesterday.

The article looks at the negative and positive sides of social media.

Thường wrote "Việt Nam, like other countries in the world, has exploited and promoted the preeminent characteristics of social communication and at the same time has to face negative impacts that are

difficult to control of this new type of media."

According to the article, after more than 20 years of internet integration, with more than 60 million users, Việt Nam ranks 18th in the world in terms of the percentage of internet users and is one of the 10 countries with the highest number of Facebook and YouTube users.

On social networks, some influencers have voiced positive opinions and shared information that have widespread online impacts, creating a healthy information environment, he wrote.

However, others use fake accounts of individuals and organisations to take advantage of technology for subversive activities, the article claimed.

For example, social networks were used to incite illegal protests

and riots after mass fish deaths were reported in central Hà Tĩnh Province in 2016, as well as protests against the draft law on special administrative-economic zones and the Law on Cyber Security, he wrote.

Thường noted that social media is challenging administrative and technical management measures of all countries, especially developing ones.

He also wrote that some social media users in Việt Nam like and share shocking and negative news without considering the consequences, thinking social media is only a virtual environment and they do not have to take responsibility for their actions.

"Negative impacts posed by social media might lead to both direct, immediate consequences and long-term ones that gradually erode cul-

tural and moral values," he wrote.

The "collapse" of values and psychological hurt will impact each individual's life and the nation's political and social stability, he wrote.

Thường proposed State management and raising public awareness on the negative impacts of social media and their legal rights and responsibilities when using it.

He underlined the need to enhance management of electronic press, social networks and other forms of communications, while fostering the leading role of the mainstream press in providing information.

He also proposed promoting the roles of individuals and organisations, especially websites, fan page administrators, bloggers, influencers and young people, in making social networks a healthy environment. VNS

BRIEFS

Tourists saved from burning hotel

HÀ NỘI Twenty-five tourists, mostly foreigners, were rescued from a blaze at a hotel in downtown Hà Nội earlier today.

A total of 36 guests were staying at the hotel on Lương Ngọc Quyến Street when flames were spotted in the hotel's basement before black smoke reached the upper floors.

During the initial chaos, 11 guests jumped from the second floor to escape the fire.

Seven fire trucks and a group of 60 firefighters rushed to the scene. The fire was brought under control in two hours with no major injuries reported from the guests.

Police are investigating the cause of the fire.

Dengue fever season in Hà Nội

HÀ NỘI Over 67,000 cases of dengue fever and three deaths were reported in the first five months of this year across the country, according to the latest report from the Ministry of Health.

Hà Nội has recorded 502 cases, but no deaths.

Hoàng Đức Hạnh, deputy director of the Hà Nội Health Department, said it was the peak season for the disease in Hà Nội and northern provinces due to the hot weather and heavy rain that create favourable conditions for mosquitoes to spread dengue fever.

Bắc Từ Liêm, Đống Đa, Thanh Trì and Hoàng Mai districts in Hà Nội have reported a heightened risk of the disease recently.

Bắc Từ Liêm District has recorded 72 cases of dengue fever.

In April, the city recorded about 10 cases of dengue fever per week, but this figure increased in May and the beginning of June, with about 70-80 cases per week.

According to Nguyễn Khắc Hiền, director of Hà Nội's Health Department, environmental pollution, high population density, an increasing number of construction sites and poor sanitation at temporary housing for labourers were also contributing factors

Three Lao drug traffickers arrested

ĐIỆN BIÊN Border guards in the northern province of Điện Biên in co-ordination with Lao security forces arrested three Lao drug traffickers on Sunday, seizing 20kg of opium.

Other exhibits included a car, a motorbike, four mobile phones and 17 million Lao kip (over US\$1,947).

The suspects confessed that they had bought the drugs in the Golden Triangle area and transported them to the border area between Điện Biên and Phongsaly to sell to a Vietnamese dealer.

The case is under further investigation. VNS

Drink driver gets 3.5 years in prison for fatal crash

HCM CITY The People's Court in Bình Thạnh District in HCM City yesterday sentenced Nguyễn Thị Nga to three and a half years in prison for "violating regulations on road safety" which resulted in a car crash that killed one woman and injured six men.

Nga, 47, of District 12, drove into several vehicles after running a red light last year.

Nga was charged with driving a car without a driver's licence and driving while under the influence of alcohol, leaving one woman dead and two men seriously injured.

She was indicted on charges under Clause 2, Article 260 of the Criminal Code in the first instance trial in Bình Thạnh District.

The woman told the court that the strap of her high heel got stuck on the gas pedal, causing her to panic and slam on the accelerator instead of the brake.

Police later initiated legal proceedings against Nga and arrested her on October 24.

She was released on bail this year and was required not to leave her place of residence.

The court last month issued an arrest warrant for the defendant as preparation for the first-instance trial.

On the night of October 21 last year, Nga was driving on Điện Biên Phủ Street towards the Sài Gòn Bridge.

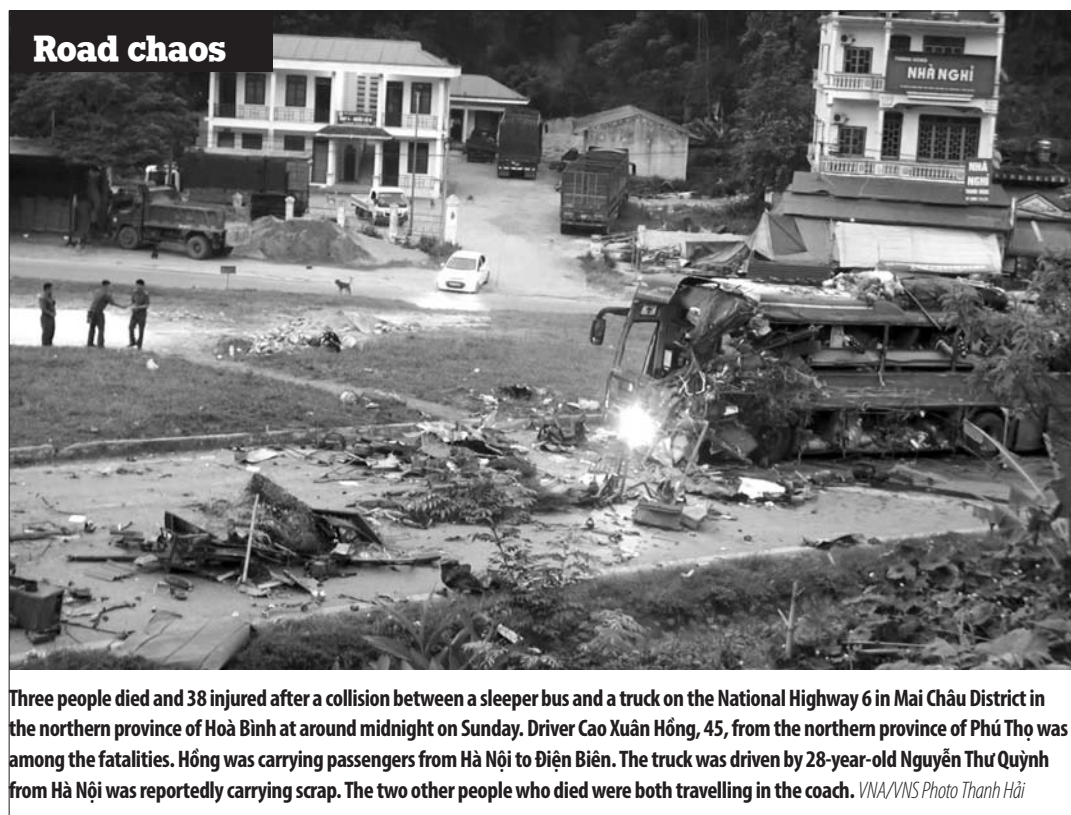
Approaching the Hàng Xanh roundabout at around 11:15pm, witnesses said the car sped up and hit five motorbikes which were waiting at a red light. She stopped only after the car crashed into a taxi.

A motorcyclist, 38-year-old Nguyễn Thị Kim Phụng, was struck by the luxury BMW vehicle and dragged dozens of metres along the road. She was killed instantly, police said.

Six men were also injured in the collision, two of whom suffered traumatic brain injuries.

A breathalyser test showed that Nga's blood alcohol level was 0.94mg per litre. Vietnamese law requires that car drivers must have a zero alcohol concentration.

Nga admitted to the police that she drank alcohol at a party at a restaurant on Pasteur Street in District 3. VNS



City students to help others during exams

HCM CITY More than 20,000 student volunteers at colleges and universities are taking part in HCM City's *Tiếp sức mùa thi* (Assistance during Exam Season) programme to offer help to candidates and their relatives.

The annual programme was launched on Sunday by the Hồ Chí Minh Communist Youth Union's HCM City chapter, in collaboration with Thanh Niên (Young People) newspaper and Thiên Long Group.

Lê Xuân Dũng, deputy director of the HCM City Student Assistance Centre and head of the programme's organising board in the city, said all volunteers had received training in knowledge and skills to offer assistance effectively.

Volunteer groups would closely work with authorised agencies in localities on the process of supporting candidates and their relatives, he said.

"The programme not only assists needy candidates during the

"The programme not only assists needy candidates during the exam but also helps volunteers develop their social skills."

Volunteer Lê Văn Phiên

exam but also helps volunteers develop their social skills," said a volunteer from HCM City University of Technology and Education, Lê Văn Phiên.

Phan Thị Mỹ Duyên, a volunteer from the University of Economics and Law, said that she faced many difficulties when she first came to HCM City.

"So I will try my best to help candidates coming from provinces on this occasion."

The programme consists of two phases with 17 groups of student volunteers.

In the first phase between June

16 and July 10, about 8,000 volunteers are helping candidates who are taking the national high school examination at 111 testing points in the city.

Volunteer groups will provide information related to the exam, resolve emergencies, ensure security, offer free essential items and exam information handbooks for needy candidates, and help regulate traffic nearby.

In the second phase, some 12,000 volunteers at coach stations and colleges and universities will assist candidates from provinces coming to apply to colleges and universities in the city from August 6 - 20.

This year, the national high school examination will take place from June 25 to 27.

Since 2015, university entrance exams in Việt Nam have been scrapped. Admissions are based on scores of the national high school examination. Some universities add general ability tests to select promising students. VNS