

Vietnam Daily Brief, 2010 May 06

Thursday, 06 May 2010

Party official calls for stronger aid from FES

Hanoi (VNA) --

Politburo member Truong Tan Sang has urged the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) of Germany to further boost cooperation and assistance to sustainable development in Vietnam .

Sang, who is also permanent member of the Party Central Committee Secretariat, made the call during a May 5 reception for FES President Anke Fuchs, who has been in Hanoi to attend the 20 th founding anniversary of the FES Office in Vietnam .

The Party official spoke highly of the contributions and successes of the FES Office over the past 20 years, and emphasised the Vietnamese State 's policy of facilitating operations of foreign non-governmental organisations.

He expressed his hope that the FES , with its role as a bridge between the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany, will contribute more to developing friendly and cooperative relations between the two parties and two nations as well.

For her part, Fuchs thanked the Party and State of Vietnam for their care and support for the institute's activities in Vietnam over the past two decades.

She praised the leadership of the CPV as well as the achievements the Vietnamese people have reaped during the renewal process which helped improve the country's position and prestige in both the region and the world.

The FES President also affirmed her wish to step up cooperative ties with Vietnamese partners in the fields of mutual concern.

Earlier, Fuchs was received by Hoang Binh Quan, Head of the CPV Central Committee's Commission for External Relations.-Enditem

Ponagar Festival opens in Khanh Hoa

Khanh Hoa (VNA) – The Goddess Ponagar Festival 2010 opened in Nha Trang city of the central province of

Khanh Hoa on May 5 or the 22 nd day of the third lunar month, attracting more than 5,000 pilgrims of 100 delegations from surrounding provinces.

According to the province's relic and landscape management centre, the Goddess Ponagar Festival is the biggest religious festival held from the 21 st to 25 th day of the third lunar month every year to commemorate the Goddess Thien Y A Na – Holy Mother of the Cham community in the central region.

At the opening ceremony, various traditional dances of Cham people were performed to honour the beauty of the Cham culture.

Earlier, the night of May 3, more than 7,000 flower garlands and coloured lanterns carried on 22 boats were released to the Cai river near the foot of the Ponagar Tower to pray for people and soldiers who laid down for the cause of national construction and defence.-Enditem

Top legislator vows to support RoK investors

Hanoi (VNA) - The National Assembly of Vietnam (NA) will join hand with the government to create better conditions for investors from the Republic of Korea (RoK), said NA Chairman Nguyen Phu Trong.

Trong made the statement while receiving Vice Speaker of the RoK National Assembly Moon Hee Sang in Hanoi on May 5.

The chairman applauded the RoK delegation's visit, expressing his hope that it will help further beef up cooperative relations between the two nations and the two legislatures as well.

Since Vietnam and the RoK established diplomatic ties in 1992, the bilateral relationship has developed comprehensively, especially in politics, economy culture and education, he said, adding that the RoK is now one of Vietnam 's leading economic, trade and investment partners.

The top lawmaker noted the two countries share time-honoured relations and various cultural similarities, and tens of thousands of Vietnamese women get married with RoK men and thousands of RoK families are living in Vietnam . This laid a firm foundation for long-term expansion of the bilateral relationship, Trong said.

Senior leaders of Vietnam and the RoK had previously agreed to elevate the multifaceted cooperation to the level of strategic cooperative partnership, he elaborated.

Trong thanked the NA and people of the RoK for effective assistance they have extended to Vietnam in recent years, as well as favourable conditions they created for Vietnamese citizens who are living and studying in the RoK.

Moon Hee Sang said the RoK wants to participate in a number of major infrastructure and energy projects in Vietnam .

He proposed the Vietnamese legislative body to support RoK investors and RoK people who are living and working in the Southeast Asian country.

The vice speaker said he hoped that the two parliaments will foster exchange and cooperation between the two countries for the sake of both peoples and for prosperity in the whole region.-Enditem

Boeing helps build school in Dien Bien

Dien Bien (VNA) – A primary school worth over 120,000 USD funded by Boeing Group was inaugurated in Muong Phang commune, Dien Bien district, Dien Bien province on May 5.

Leaders of the northern mountainous province of Dien Bien and a delegation of the US veterans headed by Skip Boyce, President of Boeing Southeast Asia attended the inaugural ceremony.

The school has been built after a survey conducted by the delegation of US veterans at suggestion of General Vo Nguyen Giap’s family.

On the occasion, the General’s family presented the school a computer room and Kim Dong Publishing House donated books and magazines while the Veterans Fund of the United States (VFUS) granted 50 scholarships worth 500,000 VND each to disadvantaged students.-Enditem

PM requests drastic measures to ensure macroeconomic stability

Hanoi (VNA) – Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has requested ministries, agencies and localities to continue with drastic measures to ensure the macroeconomic stability, prevent high inflation and attain a GDP growth rate of 6.5 percent.

At a regular Government meeting in Hanoi on May 5, the Prime Minister urged for a stricter control of prices, foreign exchange rates, deposit and lending interest rates as well as sources of revenues in order to reduce budget deficit.

He called for speeding up investment for development with priority given to key works and projects serving production and daily life while solving difficulties and boosting production activities.

Attention should also be paid to acceleration of administrative reforms, fight against corruption and waste as well as the settlement of citizens’ complaints, he added.

Regarding the socio-economic situation in April and in the first four months of the year, PM Dung highlighted positive developments with increasing industrial production and exports as well as reducing prices and lending and deposit interest rates.

In the four-month period, the total investment capital from the State budget was estimated at over 33 trillion VND (1.75 billion USD), equivalent to 26.7 percent of the yearly plan.

The country's total export turnover reached 20.16 billion USD, representing a year-on-year rise of 8.9 percent. The consumer price index (CPI) in April saw the lowest increase of 0.14 percent from the beginning of the year.

In the first four months, the country generated jobs for around 475,000 labourers, up 11.3 percent compared to the same period last year. Of the figure, 30,500 people were sent to work abroad, soaring 19.6 percent.-Enditem

Victory over fascism celebrated in HCM City

HCM City (VNA) – The Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam-Russia Friendship Association on May 5 hosted a ceremony to mark 65 th anniversary of victory over German fascist (May 9).

Addressing the event, Russian Consul General Nikolay Dmitrievich Ubushiev said the great victory of the Soviet people and Red Army not only helped preserve independence and freedom for the former Soviet Union but also stopped the fascism's conspiracy to rule the world, reflecting humankind's aspiration for peace.

He also expressed his hope that Vietnam and Russia will continue to close their ties and develop friendship between the two peoples.

At the ceremony, the association's vice president Tang Van Hong underlined that the victory over fascism and the Liberation of Southern Vietnam are significant landmarks in each country's history.

As part of the ceremony, a bilingual art performance took place, contributing to boosting close ties and comprehensive cooperation between the two nations.-Enditem

National conference reviews press operations

Hanoi (VNA) - A national conference was held in Hanoi on May 5 to review operations of press agencies over the past three years and deploy their major tasks in 2010.

Speaking at the conference, Politburo member Truong Tan Sang praised the practical activities and successes recorded by management bodies and press agencies over the past three years.

Most of the press agencies continue to pioneer in disseminating information about guidelines of the Party and policies and laws of the State, as well as the country's renewal achievements, major events, anniversary celebrations and the campaign “studying and following President Ho Chi Minh's moral example,” Sang said.

The press has played an important role in the fight against corruption, waste, distorted opinions and arguments, and "peaceful development"; schemes of hostile and reactionary forces, he said.

Sang, who is also permanent member of the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee, went on to say that the press operations have basically created positive effects to the society and driven the political thought and public opinion, helping consolidate public confidence in the Party's leadership, the State's management and the country's development trend.

While pointing out shortcomings and weaknesses of press agencies, he urged the press to make more contributions to creating unanimity and strengthening determination of the entire Party and people in implementing Party policies and government measures to stabilise macro-economy, foster investment, business and production activities, and well solve urgent social problems.

Press agencies should also step up the dissemination of information about the implementation of the 10 th National Party Congress's Resolution as well as resolutions of the Party Central Committee and Political Bureau, and the preparations for the 11 th National Party Congress, Sang said, describing them as the media's major tasks during 2010 and early 2011.

The Party official also asked press agencies to increase and improve the quality of information serving the Party and State's external relations so as to help the international community and overseas Vietnamese get a better insight into Vietnam 's situation and gain their support for the country's revolutionary cause.

According to the Ministry of Information and Communications, the country now has 706 print media organisations and 67 television and radio stations. A total of 17,000 journalists have been granted press cards.-Enditem

Indonesian finance minister named WB managing director

Washington (VNA) – World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick on May 5 announced the appointment of Indonesian finance minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati as managing director of the World Bank Group.

According to a release from the bank, Indrawati is to officially assume her new position on June 1. She will supervise the WB's operations in Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and East Asia and Pacific.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has approved her resignation to take on the new position.

As Indonesia's finance minister since 2005, Indrawati has been a policymaker who has successfully navigated the island country in the midst of the global economic crisis.

Prior to being finance minister, she served as coordinating minister of economic affairs, State Minister and Chair of the National Development Planning Agency and an executive director on the Board of the International Monetary Fund.-

Enditem

YKVN wins national law firm 2010 award

Hanoi (VNA) – YKVN has become the only Vietnamese company to win the title “National Law Firm 2010” offered by the International Finance Law Review (IFLR), a leading benchmark publication in Asia.

Along with other 13 law firms in Asian, YKVN has been recognized as the company with the best track record for the preceding year in giving local advice on the most innovative international finance deals from the country.

Earlier, YKVN picked up that distinction in 2004, 2005 and 2009.

Awards handed out by IFLR are reputable ones that recognize outstanding performance of law firms in important deals in the region.

Since its operation in 1999, YKVN, has worked on many landmark innovative transactions in Vietnam. It gave advice to Barclays, Citigroup and Deutsche and Credit Suisse in issuing and listing international bonds and to Vietnam Airlines in purchasing six ATR planes.-Enditem

OpenCourseWare global meeting opens in Vietnam

Hanoi (VNA) – The 2010 annual OpenCourseWare Consortium (OCWC) Global Meeting opened in Hanoi on May 5, drawing educators, administrators and policy makers to promote the application of OpenCourseWare (OCW) for large-scale educational improvement worldwide.

Under the theme “Educational Policy and OpenCourseWare”, participants focus their discussions on Building, Using and Sustaining OpenCourseWare.

They also discuss the effective and appropriate use of OCW in disadvantaged areas such as tapping open education resources to develop healthcare education system in Africa or removing gaps in India.

The OCWC, rallying more than 250 higher education institutions and organisations around the world commits to create broad and deep open educational resources through sharing to further advance education and empower people worldwide through OCW.

A Vietnam OpenCourseWare (VOCW) project has been developed in Vietnam since 2005 data involving 14 universities. People can have free access and refer to the OCW data.

Deputy Minister of Education and Training Pham Vu Luan said Vietnam praised the OCW and expects it will serve as an

invaluable resource for training and studying in the country.

The 2010 annual OCWC global meeting taking place in Vietnam is an opportunity for local universities' officials as well as international OCW experts around the world to meet, discuss and decide on development of OCW, meeting human resources demand of each country amidst international integration and cooperation.

During the three-day meeting, a debut ceremony and a workshop on Vietnam Creative Commons licence will be held on May 7.-Enditem

Lao NA delegation welcomed in Hanoi

Hanoi (VNA) – National Assembly Vice Chairwoman Tong Thi Phong received a visiting delegation from the Lao National Assembly Office led by its Deputy Chief, Khampheng Vilaphan, in Hanoi on May 5.

After being informed about the progress of the project to build the Lao National Assembly Office Headquarters with the assistance of the Vietnamese NA, Phong highlighted the significance of the work, saying it is a symbol of the special solidarity between the two parliaments in particular and the two countries in general.

She expressed her wish that the two countries' NA Offices would strengthen coordination and supervision in order to complete the project on schedule with safety and high quality.

In the coming time, the two offices should also increase visits of delegations as well as the exchange of information and experiences on administration and consultancy skills, she added.

For his part, Deputy Chief of the Lao NA Office Khampheng Vilaphan vowed to do his utmost to foster and promote the special solidarity and friendship as well as comprehensive cooperation between the two nations.

He expressed his wish to learn from experiences of the Vietnamese NA in legislation and supervision work as well as in deciding on important issues of the country.-Enditem

Gov't, veterans association strengthen coordination

Hanoi (VNA) – The Government and the Vietnam Veterans Association Central Committee (VVACC) will strengthen coordination to successfully implement the country's socio-economic development objectives.

To this effect, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and VVACC President Tran Hanh signed a joint resolution on regulations of coordination in Hanoi on May 5.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, PM Dung said that the signing of the resolution will make the coordination between

the Government and the VVACC closer and more effective.

The Government leader also spoke highly of the VVA's contributions to the country's common achievements over the past 20 years, stressing the role of the association as an important organisation in the political system.--Enditem

Int'l medicine expo to kick off soon

Hanoi (VNA) - An international medicinal and pharmaceutical exposition is to kick off in Hanoi on May 12-15 with the participation of 200 domestic and foreign businesses.

The Ministry of Health told reporters in Hanoi on May 5 that on show at around 350 pavilions at the annual event will be the latest scientific and technical advances in medicine of both Vietnam and the world. They cover lab equipment, pharmaceutical materials and chemicals, therapy equipment, waste treatment facilities, packing equipment and pharmaceutical packages.

The VIETNAM MEDI-PHARM 2010 is also to provide free medical check-ups and include several workshops covering hot topics such as effective investment in medical treatment, drug production and trading, and medical equipment in Vietnam , according to organisers.--Enditem

State President calls for more RoK investment

Hanoi (VNA) – Vietnam wants businesses from the Republic of Korea (RoK) to continue strong investment in Vietnam , maintaining its position as a leading foreign investor in the country, said the State President.

Vietnam has many areas calling for foreign investment, President Nguyen Minh Triet told new RoK Ambassador to Vietnam Park Suk-hwan, who presented his credentials in Hanoi on May 5.

The President urged Ambassador Park Suk-hwan to closely work with Vietnamese agencies to boost trade and socio-cultural cooperation between the two countries, especially in improving bilateral trade balance.

At the reception, President Triet expressed his pleasure at the bilateral ties' development in all areas within the framework of the 'Strategic cooperative partnership' reached during the Vietnam visit by President Lee Myung-bak last October.

He praised the Vietnam-RoK inter-governmental committee on economic and scientific-technological cooperation's plan to hold its session in July as well as efforts of relevant agencies in accelerating negotiations to reach a Vietnam-RoK free trade agreement.

Ambassador Park Suk-hwan pledged to spare no effort to serve as a bridge in bilateral ties, helping raise the two-way trade to 20 billion USD by 2015.

Many RoK firms are interested in investment in Vietnam . The RoK also pays attention to promoting Vietnam ’s image among its public, striving to become a top foreign investor in the southeast Asian country, according to the ambassador.

RoK authorities also care about living conditions of Vietnamese brides and workers in the RoK, he added.-Enditem

Domestic press praises Marxism

Hanoi (VNA) – Major newspapers in Vietnam have published commentaries praising Marxism as a great tool for transforming the world on the occasion of the 192 nd birthday of Karl Marx (May 5).

Nhan Dan (People’s) newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of Vietnam ran on May 5 an editorial entitled “Marxism is the universal truth”. It confirmed that since its birth, Marxism has become an ideological and theoretical foundation and a banner for the working class and oppressed peoples all over the world to rally around in their struggle to overthrow capitalism, imperialism and colonialism and build up socialism.

After mentioning the major developments in mankind’s history over the past 200 years, it stated that there were signals of a gradual recovery in the international Communist and workers’ movement in the first decade of the 21 st century while asserting the solid values of Marxism, especially in economics and politics.

Meanwhile, the army daily Quan Doi Nhan Dan (People’s Army) said that Marxism still exists and is developing as it look towards the noble ideologies of Communism and concludes that Marxism is an inevitable choice for people.

In a story with the title “A Time of Vision”, Ha Noi Moi (New Hanoi) newspaper honoured the principles of Karl Marx and F. Angel, who created the theories on revolutionary struggle, the role played by the Communist Party and the way forward to a free, equal, humane, peaceful and happy society.

While reviewing the application of Marxism in Vietnam , all the papers underlined that Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh’s thought are excellent guidelines for Vietnam ’s revolution and Nhan Dan newspaper.

The achievements the country has made in the past 20 years of renovation are a manifestation of the sound and everlasting values of this ideology. -Enditem

VietnamPlus launches mobile web to run on all platforms

Hanoi (VNA) - Vietnam Plus today launched its mobile web version, becoming the first news website in Vietnam that runs in all platforms – website, mobile web and mobile application.

Using new technology, the mobile web helps users to surf news very fast. It is also simple to jump from this category to the other.

“The mobile application that Vietnam Plus started using earlier this year was a technological breakthrough and is able to facilitate 80 percent of mobile phone users in the country to access news, but we decided to launch this service to prove that a state-run media organisation can be a leader in media technology,” said Le Quoc Minh, Editor-in-chief of Vietnam Plus .

With this mobile web service, the users now have all means to access news no matter where they are and what device they have, stated Mr Minh, adding that the mobile web will be upgraded in the future to add more functions.

Users just type the web address vietnamplus.vn on their browser of the mobile phones and they will be receive the mobile web at m.vietnamplus.vn, which has a simple but attractive and user-friendly design.

The mobile web is in four languages – Vietnamese, English, French and Spanish.

Vietnam Plus (Vietnam+) is the Vietnam News Agency’s news website that was officially launched in November 2008 in four languages.

Being a late arrival to the world wide web, Vietnam Plus quickly attracted a large number of readers as it has invested much in new technologies and made the most of VNA’s resources including over 1000 reporters at 63 domestic and 27 overseas bureaus.

On 11 th January this year, VietnamPlus officially launched Vietnam’s first ever multi-language telecoms service, enabling mobile users, including Vietnamese and foreigners living in Vietnam and in other countries around the world, to read newspapers in the language of their choice. After four months, the service has now attracted close to 25,000 subscribers.-Enditem.

Vietnamese, Cambodian provinces see potential

Tine Gang (VNA) – A number of senior local officials from provinces in Vietnam and Cambodia have discussed the necessary leadership skills needed to enable their localities to develop during the agricultural industrialisation and modernisation process.

At a meeting between officials from Vietnam’s southern province of Tien Giang and Cambodia’s western province of Pursat in Tien Giang on May 5, the local officials stressed on the potential for new opportunities by increasing the level of comprehensive cooperation between the two provinces, for a brighter future.

They agreed to focus on investments in processing agricultural and aquatic products, trade, services, tourism, transport infrastructure and other socio-cultural issues.

Tran Kim Cuc, Secretary of Tien Giang's provincial Party Committee, and Khoy Sokha, the Governor of Pursat, confirmed that Vietnam and Cambodia and the two provinces in particular, have many historic and cultural similarities. They have now set up a year-long cooperative relationship.

During the meeting, Governor Khoy Sokha, who is also an advisor to Prime Minister Hun Sen, praised the efforts made by the Tien Giang people to promote trade, expand investment cooperation, reduce poverty and ensure social welfare. This will help the province to become an economic and cultural leader in the southern region's key economic area.

Several officials from Pursat will learn how to apply what they have learnt from Tien Giang province to speed up growth in every sector in their province.-Enditem

Coral signifies archipelago's sovereignty

Quang Ninh (VNA) – The northern coastal province of Quang Ninh on May 5 held a ceremony to receive 21 pieces of coral from the Naval detachment and the people on the Truong Sa (Spratly) archipelago.

The coral, which symbolises the nation's sovereignty over its seas and islands, are engraved with the names of each island, as well as their longitudes and latitudes.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Deputy Political Commissar of the Navy, Admiral Nguyen Cong Hoa, confirmed that the coral's strength and durability reflect Vietnam's sacred sovereignty over the Truong Sa and Hoang Sa (Paracels) archipelagos.

The presentation of the coral aims to educate and raise the awareness of the Vietnamese people, especially young people, on the importance of protecting the sovereignty of Vietnam's continental shelf, its territorial waters and islands, he said.

The Secretary of Quang Ninh's Provincial Party Committee and Chairman of the Quang Ninh Provincial People's Committee, Vu Duc Dam, said that the 21 pieces will be kept on display at the province's museum.

He added that Quang Ninh's Armed Forces and its people will continue to strive harder to increase production levels to help build a prosperous nation.-Enditem

Overseas Vietnamese receives Belgian royal order

Brussels (VNA) – An overseas Vietnamese living in Belgium, Professor Nguyen Dang Hung will be awarded the Order of the Crown's Grand Officer by King Albert II of Belgium.

Prof. Hung is the only Asian among the 30 people to be honoured this time.

The Order of the Crown is an award to honour individuals who have made distinguished artistic, literary or scientific achievements, or for commercial or industrial services in Belgium or Africa .

This is the second time Prof. Hung has received the Belgian royal order. He was presented the order in 1999 by King Leopold II.

Prof. Hung, now retired, spent many years working as a coordinator of several cooperation programmes between European and Vietnamese universities, including the European Master in Mechanics of Constructions (EMMC) at Ho Chi Minh University of Technology and the Modélisation and Computation in Mechanics of Continuum, (MCMC) at Hanoi University of Technology.

He was a member of the Steering and Coordinating Committee for the Doctorate Degree Education in Technical Study in Europe Project funded by the Vietnamese government between 2003 and 2008.-Enditem

ASEAN backs efforts to abolish nuclear weapons

New York (VNA) - ASEAN supports stronger collective efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and abolish all types of weapons of mass destruction.

Vietnam ’s Deputy Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh stated this when representing ASEAN at the UN conference to review the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) in New York on May 4.

Minh said that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) supports and encourages measures for complete nuclear disarmament by states that possess nuclear weapons.

In the context that the US and Russia, who have the two largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons in the world, agreed on major cuts in their arsenals, ASEAN calls on all concerned parties to strictly adhere to their obligations prescribed in the treaty.

The group also called on all states with or without nuclear weapons to step up efforts to halt the proliferation of radioactive substances and support the IAEA’s mission to safeguard safety, security and the science and technologies involved while carrying out nuclear checks and inspections, said Minh.

He confirmed that every ASEAN member countries has already signed the regional nuclear weapons free treaty and believed that the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones is important for promoting the non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons.

Regarding Vietnam ’s stance on the issue, Deputy Foreign Minister Minh reiterated that Vietnam has supported a ban on the use or the threat of using nuclear weapons and completely abolishing them.

Vietnam has signed up to every important multilateral treaty on banning weapons of mass destruction and has always fulfilled its obligations under these treaties, said Minh.

Vietnam is clearly aware of the benefits as well as need for safety and security when using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and is ready to cooperate with others to organise an international conference on the issue, Minh added.-
Enditem

Tastebuds tingle as pho catches on in Vientiane

Hanoi (VNA) - Rice noodle soup (pho) is a favourite dish for Vietnamese. In the Lao capital of Vientiane , pho shops are meeting places for Vietnamese expatriates and locals alike.

Every weekend Nguyen Van Thuan drives to Pho Mai-Hanoi shop in Naxay Road in Vientiane , to have a bowl of pho with half-done beef (pho tai) and savours the taste.

The 45-year-old, from Nam Dinh Province , has worked as a civil engineer in Laos for a year. It's his favourite time, after a hard day's work, to enjoy his pho and chat with his countrymen.

"There's not much difference between pho in Laos and that which I was used to in Vietnam ," Thuan says. "It tastes just like home. Rice noodle, spring onion and parsley all are available here."

"I miss my family and pho so much. I'm lucky to have every thing here where pho stalls have mushroomed."

For 1km, Naxay Road is known as Vietnam Town . It is crowded with Vietnamese restaurants and cafes, but the majority are pho stalls.

Each shop has its own style, depending on where the Vietnamese owners come from: the north, central region or south. However the basic pho recipe consists of broth cooked from a mixture of boiled beef's bones, cardamon and cinamon. Noodles are made from starch and cooked rice.

There are full noodle soup varieties, including pho ga (with chicken), pho xao (stirfried beef and noodle) but pho tai (with half-done beef), pho chin (well done beef) or tai chin (mixed well-done and half-done beef) are often ordered.

Among the shops are Pho Sai Gon Cafe and Pho Mai- Hanoi (Mai's Hanoi), the latter being a hot favourite.

Owner of Pho Mai, Nguyen Thi Mai, said she used a recipe she picked up from leading cooks in Hanoi .

"Sorting out materials carefully is an important step to making the best soup," Mai, 50, said. "Bones must be scraped

clean of meat before boiling through the night with anise seeds, cardamon, ginger, grilled dried onion and cinamon."

"The broth must be clear and tasty, but not too fatty. We also make our own rice noodles to ensure the pho is the best."

A Vietnamese resident in Laos for 20 years, Tran Manh Chien, said he had pho almost every morning so he had managed to sort out the best to his taste.

"I like to eat Hanoian pho at Mai's stall because of the flavour. It makes my mouth water just thinking of it, even though I was not born in Hanoi ," Chien said.

The 56-year-old businessman, who owns a silverware shop at Talat Sao (morning market), says he has tried pho at many different shops.

"Pho at Thong's stall comes in a bigger bowl with more beef and noodles, but it is too salty and has too much monosodium glutamate, while pho at the Sai Gon restaurant has too much sugar, in the southern Vietnam style."

At the opposite end of Naxay Road , Lao people cook pho in their own style.

They don't use ginger, cinamon and dried onion as the Vietnamese do. Their soup is stewed bones with little spice, but the bowl is bigger and Lao people use it to eat with different vegetables.

Stall owner Xixangga Thonvilay said even Vietnamese go there to eat pho.

"There is a difference between Vietnamese and Lao pho. Lao eaters like it spicy. They have pho with vegetables: bean sprouts, cabbage, eggplant and Chinese pea, plus basil," Xixangga, 30, said.

"Sugar, fish sauce and soya sauce are the main flavours to Lao pho. For the Vietnamese customers, I don't add boiled beef blood, dried squid and mince."

She also added that pho had somewhat changed lunch diets for local public servants.

Xunthon Ratthavong, a patron of Xixangga's restaurant, said he loved to have pho for lunch.

"I eat pho at lunch time rather than sticky rice, papaya salad and grilled fish as is the Lao tradition. I have traditional foods with my family for dinner," Xunthon says.

Xixangga says Lao people enjoy the new taste of pho, but they still prefer traditional foods. -Enditem

Hanoi (VNA) – The Prime Minister has decided to allocate 4,768 tonnes of rice from the national reserve to help ease food shortage in the northern provinces of Bac Kan and Thai Binh, and the central province of Thanh Hoa .

Bac Kan will receive 600 tonnes, while Thai Binh, 991 tonnes, and Thanh Hoa, 3,177 tonnes.

The Prime Minister asked Chairmen of the People’s Committees of the three provinces to be in charge of channeling the relief to local people on time.-Enditem

(Source: MOFA)