

# REVUE DE PRESSE N°2

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Centre de Prospective  
et d'Études Urbaines



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## ARCHITECTURE

***Date With The Wrecking Ball: The Customs Directorate Building – 07 October 2015***

<http://saigoneer.com/saigon-buildings/5414-date-with-the-wrecking-ball-the-customs-directorate-building>

## ENVIRONNEMENT

***Ministry maps out new solutions to environment woes - VietNamNet Bridge , 05/10/2015***

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/environment/142809/ministry-maps-out-new-solutions-to-environment-woes.html>

*Viet Nam will face a range of environmental protection challenges over the coming years despite efforts made by the Government and environment sector over the past five year.*

The tough issues were discussed yesterday at the 4th National Environmental Conference's plenary session held by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment every five years to evaluate environmental progress and map out new goals.

Head of the Viet Nam Environment Administration Nguyen Van Tai said that challenges were made more complicated by the developing impact of climate change. He also spoke of the intractable pollution issues associated with trade villages, and the difficulty in balancing economic development and environmental needs.

He warned that in order to reach the goal of a green economy it would require hard-won compromise and improved human resources in environmental fields, especially at local-level agencies. On average, every commune in the country only has two environment staff, he said.

[...]

***Expert blames Saigon smog on Indonesia forest fires – Thanh Nien News, October 07, 2015***

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/expert-blames-saigon-smog-on-indonesia-forest-fires-52189.html>

The smog hanging over many streets in Ho Chi Minh City the past few mornings might be caused by forest fires in Indonesia, claimed a weather expert.

Drivers in the southern city have experienced poor visibility due to the thick haze this week.

Dang Van Dung, deputy director of the Southern Hydro-meteorology Forecasting Center, on Tuesday said the phenomenon was the accumulation of dust and smoke particles due to rising air pollution of the city. There's been no volcano eruption in the area but in Indonesia, there have been forest fires," Dung said. He said smoke can travel a long distance during strong winds.

## INONDATIONS

### ***Airport in southern Vietnam faces temporary closure as flooding risk looms – Tuoi tre news 10/18/2015***

<http://tuoitrenews.vn/society/31055/airport-in-southern-vietnam-faces-temporary-closure-as-flooding-risk-looms>

The management board of Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City has asked municipal officials to take action quickly to deal with possible inundation that may lead to a temporary closure of the airport.

Ho Chi Minh City authorities should jump in to clear the stagnation in a nearby drainage system, or else the airport will have to be closed temporarily as the power station supplying electricity to the air control tower has been shut down due to flooding, according to a document the airport operator has recently sent to the local government.

[...]

On October 9, 15, and 16, torrential rains caused water levels to top 20cm, endangering the station and forcing airport staff to use plywood, sandbags, and plastic tarpaulins to prevent the rainwater from entering the power station.

### ***When will the flooding end in HCM City? – VietNamNet Bridge October 12, 2015***

<http://english.vietnamnet.vn/fms/special-reports/143523/when-will-the-flooding-end-in-hcm-city-.html>

### ***Flooding in Vietnam as China discharges water down Red River – Thanh Nien News October 12, 2015***

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/flooding-in-vietnam-as-china-discharges-water-down-red-river-52342.html>

Hydrologists have warned about imminent flooding in the Red River in northern Vietnam due to huge discharge of water from upstream reservoirs in China. Luu Minh Hai, director of the Lao Cai Hydro-meteorological Forecasting Center, said Chinese authorities had informed Vietnam about the discharge of water in the river.

Many fishing boats in Lao Cai have been washed away while cargo boats from upstream in China have ended up in Lao Cai.

## PLANIFICATION

### ***Illegal houses on canals cause serious flooding in Ho Chi Minh City - Tuoi Tre News 10/08/2015***

<http://tuoitrenews.vn/society/30880/illegal-houses-on-canals-cause-serious-flooding-in-ho-chi-minh-city>

Hundreds of naturally formed canals in Ho Chi Minh City have been recently narrowed by housing projects, causing myriad areas to turn more susceptible to flooding as a result of rainwater not draining off.

Together with the city's continuing construction boom and poor urban planning, stagnant water has caused flooding to intensify with some streets and residential areas under 0.5-1 meter of floodwater after heavy rains.

A survey by the Ho Chi Minh City Urban Drainage Company showed that 54 out of 110 large canals under its management have been partly leveled or narrowed by the illegal encroachment by housing constructions.

This figure excludes countless small streams and canals in low areas like District 2, District 7, Nha Be District, and Binh Chanh District that have been transformed by machines into construction sites.

An official of the state-run company admitted his team has dredged nearly 81 kilometers of canals in recent years while the city has a total of 5,100km of canals and rivers that need to be dredged.

Ho Chi Minh City has an average elevation of just 19 meters above sea level, so water drainage is mainly undertaken by those canals.

Most people can understand the importance of the canals, especially when the construction of a drainage system is not completed.

Canals in an 'SOS situation' include Cau Cut in Go Vap District, Cau Bong in District 1, Van Thanh and Xuyen Tam in Binh Thanh District, Ba Buom in District 7, Ba Tieng and Ong Bup in Binh Tan District, and No in Nha Be District.

[...]

### ***Bitexco Group To Transform Thanh Da Island Into Urban Wasteland – Saigoneer, 08 October 2015***

<http://saigoneer.com/saigon-development/5425-photos-bitexco-group-to-transform-thanh-da-island-into-urban-wasteland>

If you've ever been to Thanh Da, you know that it's practically a rural village stuck smack-dab in the middle of Saigon. Rice paddies and fishing ponds take up most of the island, along with a few green spaces and countryside-themed restaurants here and there.

But all that will soon change, as Thanh Da makes way for another massive urban complex, reports REIC. As of this August, the Bitexco Group has received approval to build an urban center in the Thanh Da-Binh Quoi area.

The new project, which will include not only high-end developments but a network of infrastructure projects linking the sleepy island to the rest of the city, aims to give Thanh Da a complete makeover, incorporating modern architecture and updated roads and bridges while hopefully retaining some of the island's natural charm.

Once completed, the Thanh Da-Binh Quoi area will be able to serve 41,000 to 50,000 residents and is set to occupy over 426 hectares of the island. As an investor, the Bitexco Group will be required not only to construct an eco-friendly, modern space but also at least two of the bridges connecting the island to Thu Duc and District 2.

Beyond their involvement, the city also plans to add another three bridges and link up Thanh Da-Binh Quoi with the city's metro line and other public transportation projects.

The city People's Committee is now awaiting blueprints for the project, which are due by October 10.

## **POLLUTIONS**

### ***HCMC wants tough pollution laws, penalties on companies – VNS, October, 08 2015***

<http://vietnamnews.vn/environment/276784/hcmc-wants-tough-pollution-laws-penalties-on-companies.html>

HCM City authorities have proposed amending the country's environmental law to include stricter enforcement of polluting factories and companies.

The city said that it had submitted a draft legal document to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the fire police that includes proposals related to environmental protection, fire-fighting and prevention.

The proposed amendment to the environmental law addresses the management of companies that commit violations and pose a high risk of fire and explosions in residential areas.

The city targets removing 24 polluting companies in District 12 to the Le Minh Xuan 3 Industrial Park in Binh Chanh District next year.

HCM City began removing polluting companies in 2002, but has achieved limited results due to the pace of urbanisation.

Several new residential areas have already been built in areas where some of the polluting factories are located.

As of the end of July, nearly 700 polluting companies and six companies classified as serious polluters have yet to be removed to outlying areas, according to the city's Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

### **Smog begins to blanket Saigon as air pollution soars — Thanh Nien News, October 06, 2015**

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/smog-begins-to-blanket-saigon-as-air-pollution-soars-52148.html>

Smog has been spotted at many places across Ho Chi Minh City in recent mornings and a weather expert says worsening air pollution is to blame.

The thick blanket of smoke and fog was most noticeable in Districts 1, 2, 4, 9 and Binh Thanh, where drivers on several streets said they had difficulties seeing vehicles in front of them and had to keep honking.

#### Health risks

Dang Van Dung, deputy director of the Southern Hydro-meteorological Forecast Center, said that it was the accumulation of dust and smoke particles.

It does not only affect visibility but can be a serious respiratory health threat, Dung said, recommending drivers to wear face masks.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Why don't people enjoy taking the bus in Vietnam? — Tuoi Tre News October 13, 2015**

<http://tuoitrenews.vn/society/30963/why-dont-people-enjoy-taking-the-bus-in-vietnam>

*The majority of respondents in a small survey cite jostling among passengers on buses as the leading cause for them not to use the vehicles when traveling in Ho Chi Minh City.*

The survey has been conducted by *Tuoi Tre* (Youth) newspaper on 100 people in 19 districts in the city regarding the positives and negatives of taking the bus.

Of these people, 50 have been using buses as their daily means of transport while the remaining 50 have yet to use the vehicles.

The survey is aimed at identifying problems facing the development of bus operations as statistics reveal that the number of people using buses is falling.

### **VN's urban trains behind schedule — VNS October, 08 2015**

<http://vietnamnews.vn/society/276779/vns-urban-trains-behind-schedule.html>

[...]

HCM City's metro Line 1 Ben Thanh-Suoi Tien, which started in August 2012, is estimated to have fallen behind schedule about two years. The date of completion is currently set for 2020.

HCM City's metro Line 2 Ben Thanh-Tham Luong, which began earlier this year in January was already two years behind schedule and is now set to be completed in 2019 after several changes were made to accommodate junctions with other metro lines such as Line 1, 3b, 5 and 6.

Similar delays were also seen with the Ha Noi's Cat Linh-Ha Dong urban train project. The project, which was started in 2011, has been delayed a total of three times with the current date of completion pushed to the end of June 2016.

### ***Unauthorised fees plague Viet Nam's bus terminals October, 06 2015***

<http://vietnamnews.vn/society/276675/unauthorised-fees-plague-viet-nams-bus-terminals.html>

HA NOI (VNS) — Transport enterprises are concerned about fees that they have to pay for their operations at bus stations.

A driver of a transport enterprise operating on the Ha Noi-Thai Nguyen route, who decline to give his name, said besides fixed fees like entrance fee and parking fee, enterprises have to pay more fees such as VND10,000 (40 cents) for the stations' guards whenever they depart the stations and commissions that station officials take from every fare.

Despite the fact that they are not very expensive, these fees burden the enterprises' expenses, he said.

[...]

There are 6 main inter-province bus stations in the capital city, namely My Dinh, Giap Bat, Gia Lam, Luong Yen, Yen Nghia, Nuoc Ngam. However, passengers and buses often concentrate on My Dinh, Giap Bat and Gia Lam stations for their convenience. This creates favourable conditions for the existence of unauthorised fees at bus stations.

### ***HCM City metro delayed, cost overruns – Thanh Nien News, October 05, 2015***

<http://www.thanhniennews.com/society/hcm-city-metro-delayed-cost-overruns-52070.html>

Ho Chi Minh City's metro line No. 2 is falling behind schedule and expected to cost half more than the initial estimate, according to the city government.

The city said in a report submitted to the investment ministry said the Asian Development Bank, German government-owned development bank KfW and the European Investment Bank have "basically" agreed to provide more funds as the line is now expected to cost more than US\$2 billion compared with the initial number of nearly \$1.35 billion.

It said the cost has burgeoned after a recent estimate found the track and underground stations would cost \$1.17 billion instead of \$404 million as expected earlier.

The city will file a detailed report this month on the cost adjustments to seek approval from the government.

Work on the line, one of the eight planned for the country's first subway network, began in January with money from official development assistance and the city.

It will run more than 11.3 kilometers, including 9.3 kilometers underground, from near Ben Thanh market in District 1 to Tan Phu District on the outskirts.

Work on the first line connecting Ben Thanh and Suoi Tien in District 9 began in 2012 and is expected to finish by 2018.

### ***There Are No Traffic Jams In Saigon: Department of Transport Director – Saigoneer 05 October 2015***

<http://saigoneer.com/saigon-development/5393-there-are-no-traffic-jams-in-saigon-department-of-transport-director>

Despite numerous reports to the contrary, the director of Saigon's Department of Transport told the press last week that there are no traffic jams in the city.

"How could this be?" one may ask as they wipe the residue of rush hour grit from their brow. Well, it all comes down to the definition of "traffic."

Last month, officials from the Saigon's Traffic Safety Committee and Traffic Police highlighted worsening traffic in Saigon, attributing "traffic jams" to the influx of personal vehicles in the city, according to VietnamNet.

"...each day the city has an additional 1,000 new motorcycles and 100 cars, while the road surface increases insignificantly, and for a long time the transport infrastructure has not been able to serve a population of 10 million," an official from the former told the online newspaper.

[...]

***Traffic Jams Cost HCMC \$1.2 Billion Each Year: Expert — Saigoneer 22 September 2015***

<http://saigoneer.com/saigon-development/2748-traffic-jams-cost-hcmc-1-2-billion-each-year-expert>

We knew traffic was getting worse in HCMC, but we had no idea it was this expensive.

Speaking at the international conference, "Opportunities and challenges for sustainable urban development" in HCMC on September 15, Prof. Nguyen Minh Hoa, head of the Urban Studies Faculty of the HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanities said that the city loses \$1.2 billion each year due to traffic congestion, according to Vietnam Net.

[...]

While Saigon's new metro and BRT systems should go a long way to combating traffic, they won't be completed until at least 2018 and according to Robert Valkovic, the Asian Development Bank's transport specialist for Vietnam, traffic may be significantly worse then with 300 new cars added to Saigon's streets each day.