

exports have clocked in at over \$2 billion in the 2007-2008 period.

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**HÀ NỘI** — Heavy rains and floods have killed 49 people in northern and central Việt Nam since last Friday, reported the National Steering Committee for Storm and Flood Control.

Authorities reported 18 deaths in Hà Nội, which has been hit by the worst flooding in more than two decades. Among the dead were three children on the way to school.

Residents living along the Hồng (Red), Nhuệ and Cầu rivers in Hà Nội have been warned that they are in danger as water levels continue to rise.

The remaining deaths include 17 people in central Hà Tĩnh Province and three in northern Bắc Giang Province. The northern provinces of Hoà Bình, Thái Nguyên and Vĩnh Phúc and the central province of Nghệ An each reported two deaths, while northern Phú Thọ and Ninh Bình provinces and central..

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Heavy rains have left part of Láng-Hòa Lạc Highway submerged in one metre of water. — VNA/VNS Photo Huy Hùng

# Floods kill 49....

FROM PAGE 1

...Quảng Bình Province reported one death each.

Floods triggered by torrential rains have also submerged crops and roads and resulted in serious traffic jams.

Rains and floods have damaged nearly 55,000 houses and submerged almost 183,000ha of crops and more than 9,600ha of aquaculture ponds in northern and central areas.

In Hà Nội alone, rains and floods have inundated almost 13,000 houses, destroyed over 50,000ha of crops and threatened 9,000ha of aquaculture farms. Total damage for the capital city were estimated at VNĐ3 trillion (US\$176 million).

According to Nguyễn Văn Thuận, head of the city's Steering Board for Storm and Flood Control and Rescue, the water levels of rivers in the capital is continuing to rise, including water levels for the Hồng, Nhuệ and Cầu rivers.

Thuận said local people living

alongside these rivers were at high risk of being flooded as pumps were operating at full capacity.

About 140,000cu.m of dykes and embankments across localities have been damaged while almost 70km of rural roads were destroyed by the rain and floods.

In northern Hà Nam Province, which measured 270mm of rainfall, 15,000ha of winter crops were submerged while several streets in Phủ Lý City seriously flooded.

Floods inundated more than 9,250 houses, over 11,000ha of crops and 500ha of aquaculture ponds in seven communes in the mountainous district of Nho Quan in northern Ninh Bình Province.

## Rescue work

At a meeting held yesterday to seek measures to cope with the flooding, the National Steering Committee for Flood and Storm Control urged authorities of affected localities to promptly help evacuate local people

to safe places as well as provide food and safe water to flood victims.

Hà Nội's Chương Mỹ, Mê Linh, Long Biên and Ứng Hoà districts have evacuated more than 1,855 households to safe places.

Head of the committee Cao Đức Phát led a mission to supervise work to overcome the aftermath of the flooding in Hà Nội while other missions have been sent to localities to support authorities in taking drastic measures to help local citizens overcome the consequences.

"The municipal People's Committee gave the top priority to drainage," said the committee chairman, Nguyễn Thế Thảo.

Hà Nội authorities have decided to initially earmark VNĐ200 million (\$1,250) to help repair dyke and embankment systems and provide aid assistance worth VNĐ24 million for each hectare of destroyed aquaculture ponds, said Thảo.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will provide farmers in the capital with seeds to replant 10,000ha of damaged crops.

# Floods raise food prices in Hà Nội

HÀ NỘI — Heavy rains and floods have prevented many food suppliers from delivering produce to markets in inner Hà Nội, resulting in skyrocketing prices for many types of foods, particularly vegetables.

Prices for pork increased by VNĐ20,000 to 30,000 (\$1.2 to 1.8) per kg at a market in Hai Bà Trưng District while prices for a bundle of water morning glory rose to between VNĐ25,000 to 30,000 from VNĐ5,000 (\$0.3).

Although prices for meat and vegetables were by 500 to 600 per cent at many markets in Hà Nội, supplies could not meet the demand.

"I had no choice but to buy two kohlrabis at a price of VNĐ15,000, triple the normal price, as many markets must close due to the floods," said Nguyễn Phương Linh in Cầu Giấy District.

"Many customers had to go back home in the rain without being able to buy anything." Due to blackouts caused by the heavy rains, some retailers have sold petrol at a price of VNĐ20,000 to 30,000 per litre, nearly double the normal price.

Soldiers and health workers have been mobilised at localities to help strengthen security and orders as well as prevent the outbreak of diseases.

## Hà Nội forecast

According to the Hà Nội water drainage company, waters in rivers and lakes in the city are at high levels as the whole city depends on the Yên Sở pumping station, which has a capacity of 45cu.m per second. All 11 pumps at the sta-

tion are operating at full capacity.

By late Saturday, the water level at some canals rose to 5.6m.

It is estimated the floods and high water levels will have completely receded in Hà Nội during the next four to five days, due to the high volume of rains, said Nguyễn Anh Tú, an official from the drainage company.

The National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting forecast more rains for northern and central provinces during the next few days. — VNS

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