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DILI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2025
 25/09/ - 12/10/2025

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From local kids to visiting guests, everyone was welcome to be part of the magic at this year's Dili International Film Festival (DIFF25). (More details & photos inside)

Photo: DIFF25

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Dili Joins Global Viksit Bharat Run 2025

The Embassy of India in Dili hosted the *Viksit Bharat Run 2025* at the iconic Cristo Rei on Sunday, 29 September, joining over a hundred countries in a global celebration of progress, unity and service.

Part of the worldwide Viksit Bharat campaign, the run highlights India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047 while promoting health, wellness and community engagement. The event also forms part of *Seva Pakhwada*, a fortnight dedicated to the spirit of service.

In Dili, the run was flagged off by Ambassador of India to Timor-Leste Shri Madan Kumar Ghildiyal, Secretary of State for Art and Culture Jorge Soares Cristovão, and President of the Municipality of Dili Francisco da Costa. Around 100 participants, including children, students, women, and local Timorese residents, joined the 3km run along the scenic Cristo Rei coastline, proudly wearing white T-shirts in solidarity with the cause.

The Viksit Bharat Run 2025, under the theme “*Run to Serve the Nation*”, was simultaneously organised in cities around the world—from Bangkok, Brunei, and Beijing to Melbourne, Riyadh, Rome, and Tokyo—symbolising the shared commitment of the Indian diaspora and friends of India to nation-building and global cooperation.

Participants also took the Viksit Bharat Pledge and the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Pledge, reaffirming their dedication to India's development journey, and joined the “*Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam*” tree-planting initiative to promote environmental sustainability.

Through events like this, the Viksit Bharat Run continues to connect communities worldwide—reminding participants that every stride taken together strengthens not just India's vision of a developed future, but the shared values of unity, service and wellbeing across nations.



Credit: Embassy of India in Timor-Leste



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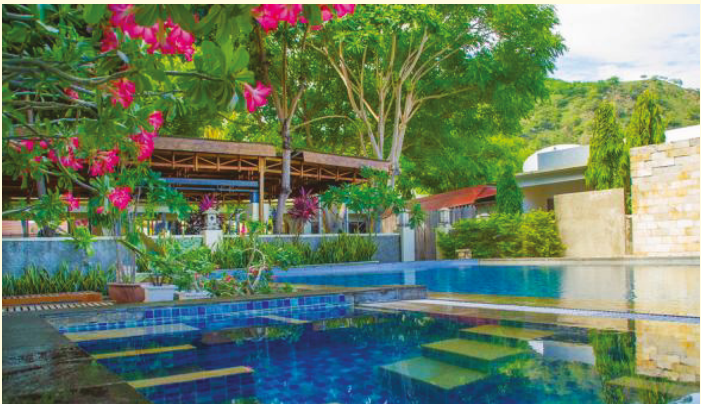


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Dili International Marathon 2025: Running for Palestine and Celebrating ASEAN Unity

The 2025 Dili International Marathon, held under the theme “Run for Palestine”, brought together thousands of national and international runners in a powerful display of solidarity with the people of Palestine. The event also marked Timor-Leste’s accession to ASEAN, symbolising peace, cooperation, and regional friendship.

An initiative of President and Nobel Peace Laureate José Ramos-Horta, the marathon was organised by the Presidency of the Republic, in collaboration with the IX Constitutional Government, through the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture, and the Athletics Federation of Timor-Leste. The race began at the Nicolau Lobato Presidential Palace, setting the stage for a memorable celebration of endurance, unity, and peace.

The Dili International Marathon remains a key commitment under President Ramos-Horta’s 2022–2027 mandate, designed to promote tourism, strengthen peace, and raise Timor-Leste’s international profile. As Patron of the event, the President addressed participants before raising the starting flag:

“Good luck to all who participate in this marathon. This is a marathon of sports, solidarity, brotherhood, and peace. I invite all of you to support the participants with kindness, education, and enthusiasm. That is what matters most.”

This year’s marathon featured several race categories: the full marathon (42.195 km), half marathon (21.098 km), para-athletics (10 km), and a 3 km fun run for families and communities. Participation was strong across all events, with 26 athletes in the full marathon, 221 in the half marathon, 42 in para-athletics, and thousands joining the fun run. All races started and finished at the Presidential Palace, symbolising national unity and democratic values.

President Ramos-Horta presided over the awards ceremony, honouring winners in both national and international divisions. (For the complete list of winners, visit www.dilimarathon.tl)

In his closing remarks, President Ramos-Horta reflected on the event’s broader significance:

“The 2025 Dili International Marathon is one of the greatest we have organised, with a fair displaying food from different ASEAN countries. It celebrates Timor-Leste’s ASEAN accession, as one of several national initiatives leading up to and beyond October 26th, building upon the Prime Minister’s extensive outreach. It also allows us to stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine.”

He extended his gratitude to those who made the event possible:

“My profound gratitude goes to the embassies who are always present with us in every initiative we make, the Presidency, our commercial partners, and the organisers. Especially the Minister of Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture, Vice Prime Minister Francisco Kalbuadi Lay, and the Athletics Federation of Timor-Leste, which achieves so much with limited resources. Thank you to the thousands of participants, and congratulations to all the winners. Your spirit is what truly makes this event a great success.”

Established in 2010, the Dili International Marathon continues to promote health, wellness, and tourism, while uniting local and international participants in a celebration of sport, resilience, and Timor-Leste’s growing global presence.



Credit: Presidência da República Democrática de Timor-Leste



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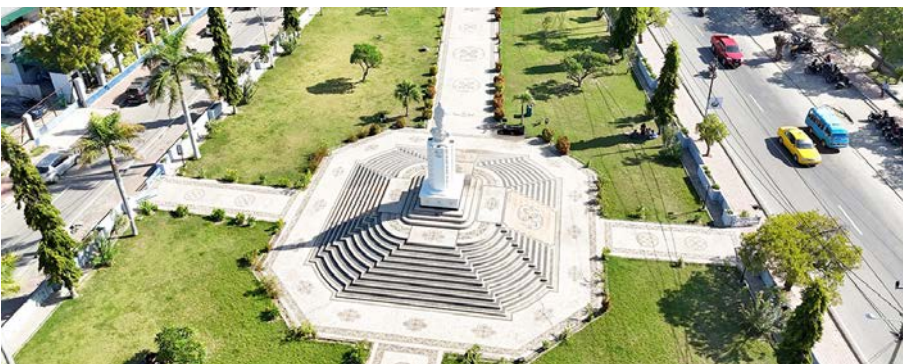
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Dili Sights of Interest by Jonty Crane

As you go about your daily routine in Dili, it's easy to overlook some of the city's most intriguing spots. Here are two more hidden gems worth a closer look.

Fundação Oriente

The Home of Timorese and Portuguese Arts, Fundação Oriente was established in Timor-Leste in 2000. It rehabilitated a beautiful old building in the Lecidere area, and since 2002 has held regular exhibitions of Portuguese and Timorese artists. The foundation has organised writing competitions, book fairs, supported schools and promoted the teaching of the Portuguese language. At the very rear of the property is a well, into which the bodies of 10 Timorese killed by Indonesian militia in 1999 were thrown. Accessible from Microlet #2.



Statue of Our Lady of Lecidere

Across from the Dili waterfront, this was built in 1954 and inaugurated in 1956. Every May and October, Catholics celebrate Our Lady's Day and the Feast of Corpus Christi. It also serves as a peaceful garden walking area. Accessible from Microlets #3, #10 and #12.

About the author:

Jonty has published a number of books on Timor-Leste, which can be bought in Dili or online from Amazon, has recorded an **Exploring Timor-Leste** podcast series, developed the website www.exploringtimor.com, and has many videos promoting Timor-Leste on YouTube (@ExploringTimorLeste), and TikTok (@exploringtimor).



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Oktoberfest 2025 at Timor Plaza



Oktoberfest 2025 at Timor Plaza was beer-illiant!. An unforgettable night of music, laughter, and good cheer! Thousands gathered at the Timor Plaza Night Market to celebrate the world's most famous beer festival, Dili style! With Bintang keeping the beer flowing and Timor Plaza Hotel & Apartments hosting, the atmosphere was pure festivity. The crowd enjoyed live performances from The Kraken ft. Nouraly, Dinizia, and DJ Lila, plus an energetic opening by the EP São Pedro Marching Band.

Food stalls served up irresistible flavours from expert chefs, perfectly paired with ice-cold Bintang beers. The night buzzed with games, prizes, and cheers, with a lucky winner scoring a Dili-Bali return ticket, courtesy of Aero Dili!

From traditional costumes to clinking mugs and endless smiles, Oktoberfest 2025 proved once again that Dili knows how to celebrate.



Credit: Timor Plaza & George Revuelta



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MAF pilots carry Timorese culture on their shoulders

By Lobitos Alves

Specially made tais epaulettes are more than just a part of the uniform worn by MAF pilots serving in Timor-Leste. They connect pilots with the rich culture of the Timorese people – embracing identity, heritage, and pride in the skies.



Photo: Lobitos Alves

The iconic Timorese *tais* is a traditional woven textile that represents Timor-Leste's rich culture and heritage.

Registered on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, *tais* is worn across all of Timor-Leste's regions, and is now also being worn in the sky above them.

"The epaulette shows your role, and the traditional design shows where you come from," said Mary Domtta, MAF's People Care Coordinator in Timor-Leste, and the spouse of MAF pilot Ping Domtta.



The MAF pilot wears tais-designed epaulettes on their shoulders. Photo: Lobitos Alves

"I would say it's like mixing your job with your roots. Through colours, patterns, or small symbols from local clothing or art, *tais* is a subtle way to show culture in a formal piece," Mary said, describing how traditional decoration is incorporated into the epaulette design.

"The designs usually tell stories about family, community, or even history," she said. "So, when they appear on an epaulette, they carry those stories forward. It's a simple way to show both sides of yourself: your role and heritage. People can see what you do and where you come from at the same time."



Aldo Falo, an MAF Base Maintenance Manager and Engineering Assistant, wore traditional tais in his pre-wedding family photoshoot. Photo: Lobitos Alves

MAF pilots in Timor-Leste began wearing the *tais* epaulettes a few months ago, whether flying the regular shuttle service that connects isolated communities, or flying lifesaving medevac flights.

Reactions from Timorese people have been positive.

Suzana Nunes, an MAF Booking Officer, spoke from the heart about the importance of preserving cultural identity.

"I'm proud to be Timorese because my country is rich in cultural identity, and values our ancestral heritage," she said. "I'm super excited to see MAF pilots wear an epaulette combined with tais, and I'm proud that they are not just flying to save the lives of the people of Timor-Leste but also promoting our cultural identity."



Suzana Nunes, an MAF booking officer, wears a shawl with a tais design. Photo: Lobitos Alves

Mary's husband, MAF pilot and Country Director Lungpinglak 'Ping' Domtta, comes from Nagaland in northeastern India. Serving in Timor-Leste since 2021, Ping found his 'better half' in a place that actively preserves cultural heritage, like his own home.



Captain Ping and Mary wear Timorese tais for their engagement ceremony. Photo: Ping Domtta

"When I moved to Timor-Leste, I noticed many similarities between my culture and that of the Timorese people," Ping said. "It's been such a blessing when community members affectionately call me '*mane-foun*', a son-in-law of Timor-Leste."

"My mother-in-law gifted me Timorese tais representing their community. I decided to make it a part of my daily life. I feel honoured wearing it on my shoulder alongside my MAF uniform. It represents Timor and creates a meaningful connection."



Source: <https://timorleste.mafint.org/news/2025-maf-pilots-carry-timorese-culture-their-shoulders>

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Write a short, amusing article about life in Timor-Leste.

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“Rainy Season Logic: Why Flip-Flops Are Still the Go-To Shoe”

As the skies darken and Dili's streets transform into fast-moving chocolate milk rivers, one thing stays constant: everyone is still wearing flip-flops.

You'd think, given the puddles the size of small lakes and footpaths turned slip-and-slides, people would switch to gumboots or at least something with tread. But no — in Timor-Leste, chinela remain undefeated. Wet season? Dry season? Flood season? Chinela mak diak.

There's logic behind the madness. First: drying time. Shoes get wet and stay wet. Flip-flops dry in 10 minutes (or you just keep wearing them wet — same same). Second: practicality. Need to cross ankle-deep water? No problem. Just roll up your trousers and keep flopping forward.

Third: they're built for escape. If a random dog chases you, you can kick off your flip-flops mid-run and be halfway up a mango tree in seconds. Try that in boots.

Sure, there are risks. Mud flicks up your back like a Jackson Pollock painting. Drain covers disappear. One wrong step and your chinela could float away forever, off on a solo adventure to Tibar.

Yet the loyalty remains. People even buy special rainy-season flip-flops — thicker soles, better grip, sometimes with a heel strap if you're feeling sporty.

Meanwhile, tourists in sneakers look around helplessly, soaked to the socks, wondering how the locals look so unfazed, so stylish — and so sure-footed on what is essentially wet soap disguised as a road.

The rainy season tests everything: your patience, your roof, and your balance. But your chinela? They pass every time..

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Funny Holidays in November

- *November 4th – Use Your Common Sense Day* - Unfortunately, not celebrated by everyone.
- *November 5th – Men Make Dinner Day (First Thursday)* - Rules include: no grilling and no ordering pizza. This is actual cooking. Brace yourself.
- *November 15th – National Odd Socks Day* - Forget matching. Embrace chaos. Walk proudly with SpongeBob on one foot and Darth Vader on the other.
- *November 16th – Have a Party With Your Bear Day* - Whether teddy or real...you decide how risky you want this to be.

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the November 2025 edition of Guide Post

This month's edition brings together a vibrant mix of stories, milestones, and useful information from across Timor-Leste.

Inside, you'll find coverage of the Dili International Film Festival (DIFF25), with photos and highlights from the memorable event.

We also celebrate local company the Caltech Group who proudly marked 25 years of operation — a remarkable achievement and a testament to long-term local success.

On the sporting front, readers can enjoy reports from two recent running events held last month: the Dili International Marathon and the Viksit Bharat Run 2025. Both events saw strong community participation and helped put Timor-Leste on the map for active, inclusive events.

One of our most-read articles also returns in this issue. Prepared by local HR specialists Konnekt, it clearly explains the rules around the 13th Month Salary payments, an important topic for employers and employees alike, especially those new to Timor-Leste.

And just after we go to press, Timor-Leste will officially join ASEAN on 26 October 2025, becoming the organisation's 11th member during the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. From all of us here at Guide Post, our congratulations on this historic step. We look forward to covering the events surrounding it in our next edition.

Finally, a sincere thank you to our advertisers. Their support helps us keep Guide Post free and widely available. When you visit these local businesses, do mention you saw their ad here. It truly makes a difference.

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Until next month. Cheers! Dan Conroy

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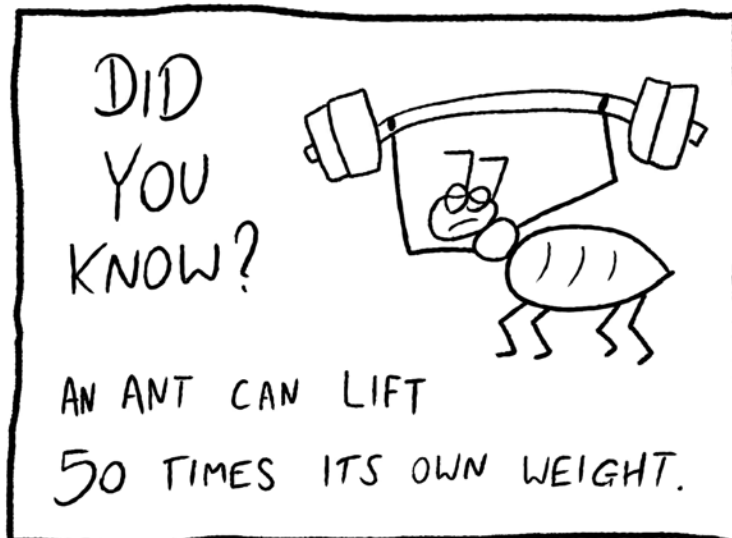
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Mozambique's role in championing the Timor-Leste independence movement

By Filip Noubel

An interview with scholar Marisa Ramos Gonçalves



Demonstrations at the University Eduardo Mondlane campus, in Maputo, Mozambique, on September 26, 1999, in Indonesia's *Tempo* magazine. Photo by Marisa Gonçalves.

The Southeast Asian nation of Timor-Leste and the East African state of Mozambique are about 10,000 kilometers apart, yet their history is unusually connected. The two former Portuguese colonies are linked through a shared history of colonialism and their solidarity in the fight for independence.

Global Voices talked to Marisa Ramos Gonçalves, a researcher and a lecturer at the Center for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, about the relationship between the two. Her current research on “Transnational histories of solidarity in the south — researching ‘other’ knowledges and struggles for rights across the Indian ocean” focuses on Timor-Leste and Mozambique. The interview took place over email after an in-person meeting in June in Dakar, Senegal, at the Africa-Asia A New Axis of Knowledge ConFest.



Marisa Ramos Gonçalves, Presentation at Centro Nacional Chegal, in Dili, Timor-Leste 2023. Photo by CNC.

Filip Noubel (FN): What factors motivated Mozambique to provide such extensive support to Timor-Leste during this independence struggle?

Marisa Ramos Gonçalves (MRG): The new Mozambican state, which gained its independence in 1975 and was led by the Frelimo movement and President Samora Machel, lived by the principle of solidarity with all peoples oppressed by colonialism and economic imperialism. Demonstrative of this was the sentence proclaimed often by Machel: “While Timor-Leste is not an independent country, the independence of Mozambique will not be fulfilled.”

Besides being the base of Timor-Leste's external resistance of Fretilin (Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente) between 1975 and the mid-1980s, Mozambique was then a “safe haven” to exiled left-wing political activists from Chile and Brazil and members of several liberation movements, in particular in Southern Africa: the ANC from South Africa, ZANU from Zimbabwe, SWAPO from Namibia.

During its liberation struggle, Mozambique had also received support from Tanzania and other African nations, including the former colonies from Portugal, through CONCP (Conferência das Organizações Nacionalistas das Colónias Portuguesas). Timor-Leste was a territory in Asia; however, it had been connected for centuries to the African colonies through Portuguese imperial networks, and in the 1970s, these connections extended to the exchange of information on liberation from colonialism.

FN: How did the support manifest, and how present — or not — is the memory of this solidarity, in both countries?

MRG: In my interviews, Mozambicans from several sectors of society shared memories of the solidarity with the independence cause in Timor-Leste. The support by the Mozambican government, led by the party Frelimo, extended also to civil society organizations and individuals (journalists, artists, academics), and is most manifest when seen through a web of personal relationships that was established then, in particular during the early period of Mozambican independence until the late 1980s. The Frelimo party provided support to the East Timorese Fretilin cadres who lived in Mozambique, particularly in university training, as well as in political and economic support. The Frelimo government encouraged all Mozambicans to donate a percentage of their salary, corresponding to one day of work, to the Solidarity Bank, to be given to independence movements and refugee groups, among them Fretilin. Also, there was significant coverage in the media.

The focus of Frelimo's support for liberation movements was on training cadres for future independent countries, and this determination was shared with Fretilin's leadership in the country. There was freedom for the students to choose their courses, and the government provided them with jobs in their areas of study. After obtaining their degrees, several East Timorese occupied positions in public institutions. The Mozambique government also provided land for the group to farm and raise cattle. This followed the socialist government principle of “fighting with our own means,” which aimed to instill the idea of self-sufficiency.

Moreover, in the first decade of occupation, the support by the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) to the resolution voting initiatives at the UN assembly was crucial to keeping the Timor-Leste issue on the UN agenda. The PALOP brought the Timor-Leste occupation to debates at the Non-Aligned Movement, facing Indonesian and Indian opposition. They supported the East Timorese who lobbied in the UN, when Portuguese diplomats were attempting to drop the case, and the US, Canada, Australia, Japan, the European countries, the ASEAN bloc, and the Arab countries abstained from condemning the actions of Indonesia in the General Assembly yearly votes.

FN: How do you see different decolonization processes meeting, or clashing in this case since Indonesia was separating from the Netherlands while Timor-Leste from Indonesia. Did Mozambique also attempt to counter Indonesian narratives or influence in the global arena?

MRG: The decolonization processes occurred in different periods: Indonesia in 1945, Timor-Leste in 1975. Under the leadership of President Sukarno (1945–1967), Indonesia was one of the founding countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), whose first summit was held in Bandung in 1955, inspiring various liberation movements in Asia and Africa. However, General Suharto (1967–1998), who benefited from the support of Western powers, pursued a colonial project in East Timor (1975–1999) during the dictatorial New Order period, a situation that has been described

as “third-world colonialism” or internal colonialism by some authors. The presence at the UN as well as the NAM summits were important fora where Mozambique, Angola, and the other Portuguese-speaking African nations exerted pressure on Indonesia. Their diplomatic action led to condemnatory resolutions against the Indonesian occupation of Timor-Leste.

However, it should be noted that the East Timorese resistance movement was close to the Indonesian Pro-democracy movement, particularly the clandestine student movement that operated in the Indonesian cities. They organized demonstrations and foreign embassies occupations in the 1990s, which were instrumental in gaining international attention to human rights violations. The fall of the Suharto regime in 1998 was decisive for the negotiations of an UN-sponsored referendum on the independence or autonomy within Indonesia.



Cover of Tempo Magazine on the demonstrations in Mozambique in support of Timor-Leste's independence, September 26, 1999. Photo by Marisa Gonçalves.

FN: What is the current state of Mozambique-Timor-Leste relations? And why is this long episode of African-Asian relations so little-known outside of the context of those two countries?

MRG: East Timorese continue to receive scholarships to study in Mozambique. The bilateral relationship is not as intense as in the past, but it continues to be important. In my view, the lack of studies and knowledge in the literature about this chapter of East Timorese history highlights two sets of explanations.

One which is connected with competitive narratives about the recent history of the independence struggle and that are mobilized to gain political legitimacy, causing inter-party rivalries that gave rise to a serious political crisis in 2006. This is because a significant group of East Timorese who lived in Mozambique returned to the country when the country became independent and were part of the first government, run by Fretilin in the initial years. Since then, there has been competition between Fretilin and CNRT, major political parties affiliated with several sectors of the resistance movement, and also other parties.

The other set of reasons could be related to a broader structural feature of global modes of knowledge production: a hierarchy that places knowledge from the global south in the periphery, leading to the undervaluing of histories set in African countries, which are labeled as undeveloped, dictatorial, and Marxist. There is a dismissal of these movements as radical and communist. As historians Katherine McGregor and Vannessa Hearman put it, these histories are studied through the “lens of Cold War politics,” which defines “Afro-Asian solidarity as a contest between the Soviet Union and China for control of Asia and Africa.” However, this history shows that South-South solidarities, between Africa and Asia, were key to championing the defence of human rights and independence struggles.

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Source: <https://globalvoices.org/2025/10/16/mozambiques-role-in-championing-timor-lestes-independence/>

Ken's Two Centavos

As an older American who prefers to call himself a world citizen, Ken Albertsen brings a lifetime of global experience and curiosity to his reflections. Born in Denmark over 70 years ago, Ken's journey has taken him from Europe to America and then to Thailand. He has now found his ideal retirement home on Atauro Island.

Each month, he'll share his musings on everyday life — insights, quirks, and moments that reveal Timor-Leste as both familiar and surprising. These are Ken's Two Centavos.

MICROLETS

Taking a taxi in Dili is ok, but to save money, some of us take the ubiquitous microlets.

Are they fabricated in Indonesia? Whatever, they're made for smaller people. A person approaching 6 feet tall will have to be bent over inside. Getting a seat next to the driver is better, though seat belts aren't a thing. Then there are the black shadings for the top half of all microlets' windshields. Add the row of stuffed baby toys on the dashboard, and a typical driver has a strip of glass, a few inches wide, to observe his entire world ahead.

In recent months, 'music' has been pumped into nearly every microlet. The word 'pumped' is used because the sounds feel like they're being jammed into each passenger's eardrums. Much of modern 'music' is designed to push the bass up high. For 46 years, I did studio recording work. I know something about 'mixing' and 'setting the balance' for a recorded song. None of that applies to modern popular music. Nowadays, it's 90% bass, and 10% everything else. Or at least that's what it sounds like in the enclosed captive chamber known as a Dili microlet. Earplugs are essentially worthless in that regard. Has a passenger ever been asked if he/she wants a loud, badly mixed bass solo jammed onto his/her eardrums? Doubtful.

Ken Albertsen
kenalberts214@gmail.com

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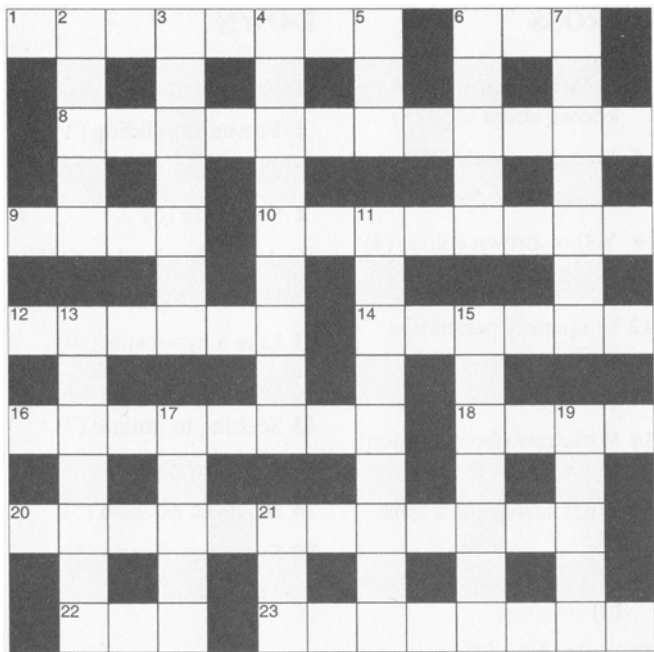
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QUICK CROSSWORD

Solution on page 20



Across:

1. Scottish instrument (8)
6. Young diner's protection (3)
8. Bunch of herbs for stew (7,5)
9. Sleeping places (4)
10. Separator in ship (8)
12. Eastern sultanate (6)
14. Dance form (6)
16. Butterfly bush (8)
18. Wait for (one's time) (4)
20. Pub game (3,9)
22. Small piece (3)
23. Single-storey home (8)

Down:

2. Edward —, US playwright (5)
3. French painter; chicken (7)
4. Verticality checker (5,4)
5. Group; harden (3)
6. Rudely confident (5)
7. Wound binding (7)
11. Book keeper (9)
13. Plant with edible stems (7)
15. West African country (7)
17. First appearance (5)
19. Dance club (5)
21. Room for experiments (3)

QUICK CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

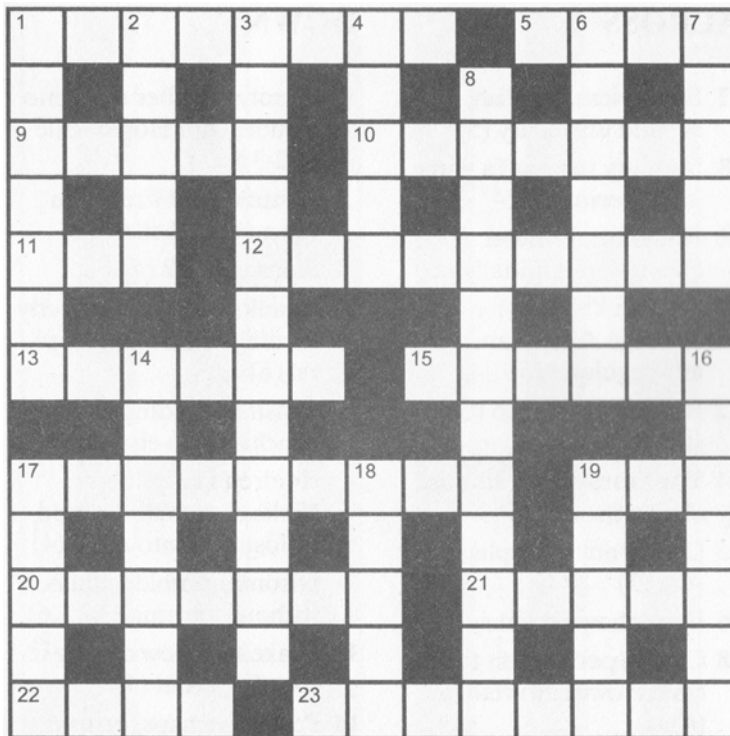
Solution on page 20

Across:

1. List of terms has boy admitting defeat (8)
5. Leg in which the favourites turned over (4)
9. OK to be Conservatives (5)
10. Bengali disguised as European (7)
11. Not opening, European pub (3)
12. Small state where Romanians dispersed (3,6)
13. Who had ordered seat on jumbo? (6)
15. Cry with pained expression, being cowardly (6)
17. Cigar that's brown put back in Spanish dish (9)
19. Bread for elderly relative? (3)
20. Substitute showing restraint (7)
21. Drug Jack fed to a horse the wrong way (5)
22. Kind to tidy up (4)
23. Label in bank showing deficit (8)

Down:

1. Decorate bottom of gown with ostentatious surrounding? (7)
2. Brain, perhaps: it's stopped (5)
3. Placed bottom, is mill passable? (12)
4. Illegally take in bird (5)
6. I have not finished in test that's unimportant (7)
7. Eternal youth, taking to children's entertainment (5)
8. Moving along, earner's becoming rich capitalist? (6,6)
14. Royal house turns on old king (7)
16. Pay to keep soldier in Oxfordshire town (7)
17. Expected score is capital! (5)
18. Fish hauled up caught with top of hook, as hanger-on (5)
19. Some assassin in Japan! (5)



Crossword Notes:

'THE TIMES' QUIZ

Solution on page 20

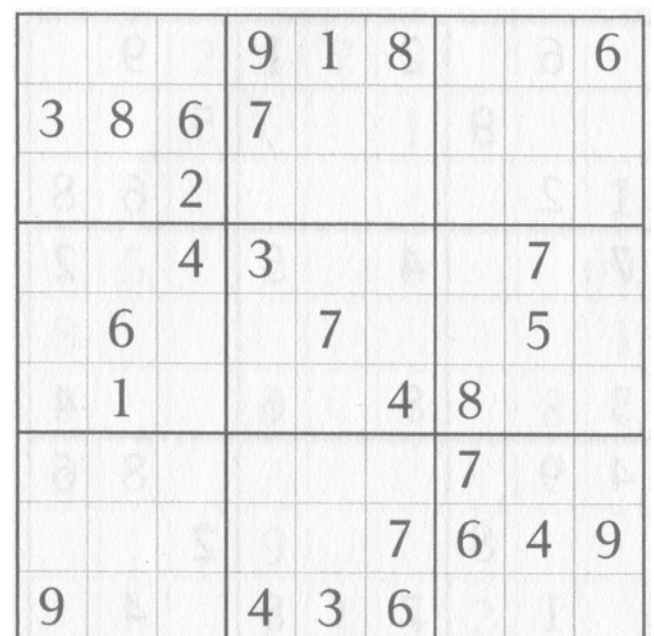
General Knowledge

1. Hans Riegel Sr. formed which German confectionery maker in 1920?
2. Who became the Berliner philharmoniker's chief conductor in 1954?
3. Which Chicago blues legend recorded *Smokestack Lightning* in 1956?
4. The Bottle Inn in Marshwood, Dorset, hosts which "world famous" world eating championship?
5. Possessed by the Norse god Odin, what is Draupnir?
6. Charlotte Amalie is the capital of which Caribbean island group?
7. In which 1981 film does a hike across the North York Moors end up in The Slaughtered Lamb pub?
8. Which St John restaurant founder and chef wrote the 1999 book *Nose to Tail Eating: A Kind of British Eating*?
9. The first director of the Royal College of Music is best remembered in the name of which reference work?
10. What is the oldest remaining British overseas territory?
11. The Hexamilion Wall is thought to be the largest archaeological structure in which country?
12. In 1905, which Liberal began the longest continuous term of any foreign secretary?
13. Who coined the term "gamma ray" in 1903 following early studies of the emissions of radioactive nuclei?
14. The highest in the world, Tanggula Railway Station is located where?
15. Psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe developed a scale for quantifying what?
16. Charles Napier never actually sent which punning dispatch when he conquered Sindh in 1843?
17. Which German-born fur trader (1763-1848) was America's first multimillionaire?
18. Which javelin thrower is the first Kenyan to win a world championship gold in a field event?
19. Which national rugby union team performs the Siva Tau war dance?
20. Which Chvrches lead vocalist is pictured?



THE TIMES SUDOKU

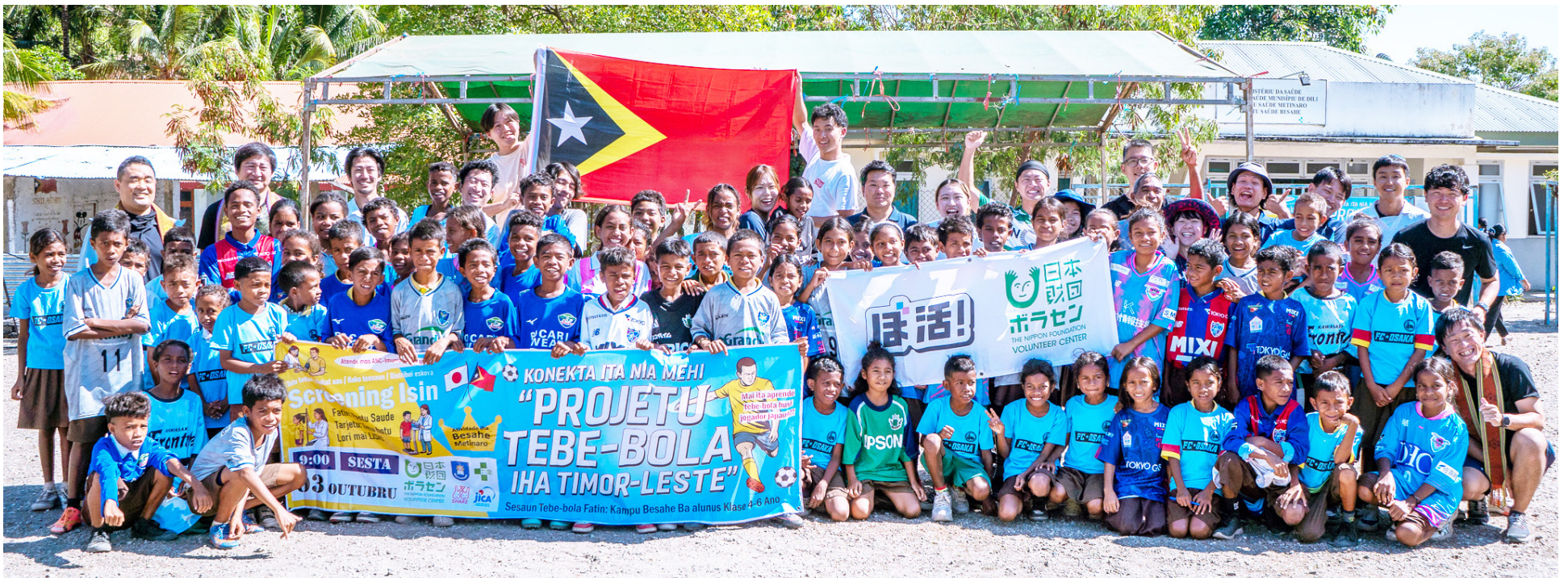
Solution on page 20



PAUL REGRETS GETTING THE SWIM TRUNKS WITH THE OPEN-BAG-OF-CHIPS PATTERN

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Connect Our Dream – Football & Education Project by Japanese Former Professional Soccer Players and University Student Volunteers



The Nippon Foundation Volunteer Center carried out its second volunteer mission in Timor-Leste this year, dispatching 12 Japanese student volunteers from September 28 to October 7. Together with a former professional player from Japan's pro football league, the J.League, they organized football training sessions for Timorese children and distributed a total of 762 football items—including balls, uniforms, and bibs—to schools and communities across the country.

The Nippon Foundation Volunteer Center, established in 2010 as a student volunteer organization in Japan, has supported student-led social contribution projects both domestically and internationally. Its activities include earthquake disaster relief in Japan, participation in events like the 2023 World Baseball Classic, and environmental conservation projects in Bali.

This "Connect Our Dream" project began after a 2024 meeting between the President of the Nippon Foundation and the President of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, who requested support for the development of children's football in Timor-Leste. Following that meeting, the annual volunteer program was launched, with this year marking its second edition.

During their 10-day stay, the students also engaged in educational activities such as art, crafts, science experiments, and cultural exchange lessons at local elementary schools.

At the free school located at the presidential palace, the volunteers had hands-on lessons—such as making observation tools from snack boxes to study the sun, teaching the traditional "Soran Bushi" dance, crafting musical instruments from everyday materials, and doing origami together.

The children's enthusiasm impressed the Japanese students, who commented: *"The kids welcomed us warmly and joined every activity with great energy. Their smiles gave us strength."*

In Besahe, the Japanese volunteers also interacted with nursing students from the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL), they stayed overnight at an elementary school and shared Japanese culture, cooked Japanese food together, and watched the documentary *"Life Goes On"* (produced by MONJO VIDEO WORKS), which depicts the lives of mountain coffee farmers in Timor-Leste. These experiences strengthened the friendship between the two nations.

One of the project's key goals was to provide Timorese children with opportunities to learn both "theory and practice."

A football training session was led by Masao Kiba, a former professional player, with support from the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV). About 200 children from Besahe Elementary School, YMCA Dili, and Manleu participated.

The children listened attentively to the coaches' instructions and focused intently on their training. The parts of the session where they could touch and play with the ball brought smiles to their faces. During matches between the Japanese volunteers and the children, the children's goals were met with loud cheers across the football field, creating a lively and exciting atmosphere.

Mr. Kiba said: *"I wanted to teach the basics, like passing and trapping, because all skills develop from there. The children were highly motivated and full of energy. Even within just two hours, I could see their progress. What matters most is to keep practicing every day."*

Octaviana Mendonça Soares, one of the participants, shared: *"We usually have to share one ball among everyone, so receiving so many balls made us really happy. I hope they come again next week!"*

Parents who observed the event commented: *"In my time, we couldn't play freely like this. I hope today's children can study and be active. The friendship between Japan and Timor-Leste is truly special."*

Meanwhile, in Besahe, the student volunteers also collaborated with NGO SHARE and the local health post to provide health screening services, combining sports activities with community health support.



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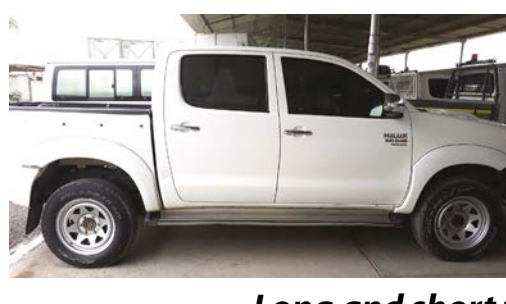


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EMPLOYMENT MATTERS!

Edition #61 - 13th Month Salary

These are **Employment Matters**, which matter to all of us!

From January to October, we have explored the GEDSI agenda, starting from laying strong foundations and fostering an inclusive workplace to promoting equity, fairness, and leading meaningful change. As the year winds down, many of us are now more familiar and comfortable with these principles in our daily work.

As the festive season approaches, it's time to focus on another important employment matter that affects everyone; the 13th Month Salary. Known locally as '*Gaji Tiga Belas*', this annual bonus recognizes employees' hard work and provides timely financial support for families during the holiday season.



Understanding the 13th Month Salary

Known locally as *Gaji Tiga Belas*, the 13th Month Salary is a mandatory annual bonus guaranteed under Timor-Leste's Labor Law (Law No. 04/2012). All employees, regardless of role, sector, or location are entitled to receive this payment no later than December 20th each year.

This bonus not only recognizes employees' contributions throughout the year but also provides timely financial support for families during a period of heightened expenses, including Christmas celebrations and school-related costs.

Why it matters

For employers, the 13th Month Salary is now a standard part of the payroll calendar. It ensures legal compliance while boosting employee morale, motivation, and trust, especially important in a year marked by economic pressures and rising living costs.

Timely and accurate payment of this bonus reflects a workplace culture rooted in fairness, appreciation, and shared prosperity.

Details for 13th Month Salary Payment

1. Payment Timeline

The bonus must be paid in a single lump sum by no later than December 20th. Employers are encouraged to plan payroll schedules early to ensure compliance and avoid year-end delays.

2. Calculation Method

The 13th month salary is equivalent to one month's base salary, prorated for employees who have worked less than a full calendar year. For example, an employee who has worked six months would receive half a month's pay as the bonus.

3. Taxation and Social Security

The payment is considered part of total December earnings, meaning it is subject to income tax and social security contributions under the same rules as regular monthly wages.

A brief Historical Perspective

The concept of the 13th month salary originated in Italy during the 1930s known then as "tredicesima mensilità." Over time, this practice spread globally and became embedded in labor frameworks across various countries.

In Timor-Leste, its formal recognition through Article 44 of the Labor Law underscores its continuing importance in supporting workers and their families during high-expense periods. The practice also aligns Timor-Leste with several ASEAN countries including Indonesia and the Philippines, where similar legal provisions exist to ensure fair and equitable employee compensation. It is also a common practice in Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

To conclude, paying the 13th Month Salary is more than just fulfilling a legal obligation. It's an expression of care, respect, and accountability. When managed proactively, it strengthens trust between employers and employees and reinforces the inclusive values we've championed throughout our GEDSI journey.

Let's continue the year with the same commitment to equity, inclusion, and shared success that has guided us so far.

For any questions, please email us at info@konnekto.com with any questions. Your inquiries inspire us to create fresh and informative content!



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Timor-Leste workers part of PALM scheme helping to fill NT workforce gaps

By David O'Shea

Darwin hospitality business owner Darren Lynch employs about 200 people at his various bars and restaurants, but he finds securing a reliable workforce a constant battle.

Backpackers on working holiday visas fill some gaps, but the amount of time and effort it takes to train them, before they move on, means it isn't ideal.

"You spend a fair bit of energy training people up in these roles and it might take a month to get them up to speed," Mr Lynch said.

"You get a good six to eight weeks' service out of them ... and then their mind is on their next destination."

He said that hadn't changed in his 30 years in the industry.



Darren Lynch says hiring workers through the PALM scheme has helped him address staff shortages. (ABC News)

But he has found workers from developing Timor-Leste, who make up a large proportion of workers coming to the NT with the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, have different motivations.

The PALM scheme brings workers from eight Pacific nations and Timor-Leste to work in Australia to fill staff shortages in certain industries, mostly on farms and in meatworks.

The scheme was recently expanded to more industries including hospitality, and there is currently a pilot program running in child care.

It has been controversial, including facing allegations of allowing modern slavery — however advocates say regulations have been tightened and the program has benefits for both employers and workers.

Chopping vegetables in the kitchen at Mr Lynch's bar on the Darwin Waterfront, PALM scheme worker Reynaldo Armando da Silva earns almost as much in a couple of shifts as a kitchen hand as he would in a month back home.

The Timor-Leste man said he was very happy to be working in Darwin.



Reynaldo Armando da Silva says he enjoys working in Darwin and hopes to open his own hospitality business one day. (ABC News)

"You can make a lot of money. When you go back, you can make your dream come true," he said.

"I hope one day I can open a mini coffee shop in my country."

Mr Lynch said it was virtually impossible to find locals to work entry-level jobs like this, but with his new Timor-Leste staff, his business finally had some consistency.

"They'll do it with a massive smile on their face, and they'll do it for four years ... so from an employer's perspective it's absolutely a no-brainer," he said.

The frustration of endless recruiting was the catalyst for Mr Lynch to recently start a labour hire company focused on the needs of the NT, in partnership with Queensland business CANEX.

It was the first company in the NT to bring in workers with the PALM scheme specifically for the hospitality industry.

CANEX manager Mark Cantoni said with "huge pain points in labour, especially for those lower-skilled or semi-skilled positions", the scheme presented a "fantastic solution" and "mutually beneficial arrangement".

Company recruit Madelena de Araujo Guterres was given an opportunity to work in housekeeping at Darwin's Bladin Point FIFO accommodation centre, which she said would help her secure a future back home.

"I can save for my retirement, help my family, help my brother and sister," she said.

Fellow recruit Luzia Obe, who works at the same facility preparing food for FIFO workers, said she was gaining skills she could take back home.

"My objective is whatever I learn here, I would like to apply in my country, and also to open my own business to give more jobs for my people," she said.

From Dili to Darwin

Ronan Mackey works at the NT Chamber of Commerce, where he was until recently tasked with growing the PALM scheme in the NT.

He said the program had huge potential for the territory.

"I don't see why we can't grow this to thousands and thousands of workers here in the NT," he said.

"Our closest neighbour Timor-Leste ... who have 51,000 workers have the supply and we definitely have the demand."

The chamber's work involves making sure NT-bound workers are not trapped in exploitative arrangements or abused by unscrupulous labour hire companies.

"There are ... labour hire companies out there that are not part of the program but saying that they are, and they are taking advantage of some of the workers here in the country," he said.



Marcelino Mendes Pereira, Luzia Obe, and Gonsalo Gregorio Martins Babo are some of the workers from Timor-Leste working at Bladin Village supporting workers at the Inpex site. (ABC News: Michael Franchi)

Late last year, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, Tomoya Obokata, visited Australia at the invitation of the Albanese government.

In a report about his visit, published in July, Professor Obokata said he held "serious concerns about the treatment of migrant workers in Australia", including the PALM scheme.

Mr Mackey said he was aware of such concerns around the scheme, but was confident there were checks and balances in place to guard against exploitation.

He said with the scheme's expansion, there was potential for it to help fill gaps in more industries in future, such as maintenance, trades and mining.

Mr Lynch said after the positive impact he'd seen on his businesses, he hoped the scheme would continue to grow.

"Whether it's onshore gas or other industries, it's going to need more and more people," he said.

"Right now we've got a massive undersupply of thousands of people.

"When the new industries come on board it's going to be even more people, so [we] need to start now."

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-11/palm-scheme-workers-timor-leste-nt-workforce-shortages/105876688>

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SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 12

QUICK CROSSWORD



QUICK CRYPTIC CROSSWORD



‘THE TIMES’ QUIZ

Answers:

1. Haribo
2. Herbert von Karajan
3. Howlin' Wolf aka Chester Arthur Burnett
4. World Stinging Nettle Eating Championship
5. A magic gold ring
6. US Virgin Islands
7. *An American Werewolf in London*
8. Fergus Henderson
9. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* — named after Sir George Grove
10. Bermuda
11. Greece
12. Edward Grey, 1st Viscount Grey of Fallodon — his tenure ended in 1916
13. Ernest Rutherford
14. Tibet
15. The amount of stress in your life — the Holmes and Rahe stress scale identifies 43 stressful life events, each one awarded a Life Change Unit
16. *Peccavi* — Latin for "I have sinned"
17. John Jacob Astor
18. Julius Yego — who won the 2015 world title
19. Samoa
20. Lauren Mayberry

THE TIMES SUDOKU

4	7	5	9	1	8	3	2	6
3	8	6	7	4	2	1	9	5
1	9	2	6	5	3	4	8	7
8	5	4	3	6	9	2	7	1
2	6	3	8	7	1	9	5	4
7	1	9	5	2	4	8	6	3
6	4	8	1	9	5	7	3	2
5	3	1	2	8	7	6	4	9
9	2	7	4	3	6	5	1	8

“It's a Fact”

Cleopatra lived closer in time to the invention of the iPhone than to the building of the Great Pyramid.

“Dad Joke”

I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes.

She gave me a hug.

“Dad Joke”

I asked the waiter if my burger would be long. He said, “No, it’ll be round like all the others.”

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Honouring Rural Women: Madalena Lay Leads the Way to Clean Water



In celebration of International Day of Rural Women, we recognise the women whose work creates lasting change in communities, like Madalena Lay, an engineer helping rural women access one of life's most essential needs: water.

Through her role as Operations and Maintenance Officer for Rural Water in Manatuto under Australia's #PARTISIPA program, Madalena works closely with SMASA and PNDS, promoting women's participation and decision-making in local Community Water Management Groups (GMF) to keep rural water systems running.

Her efforts make a real difference in women's daily lives. When clean water flows close to home, women and girls spend less time walking long distances to fetch it. They have more time for education, income-generating activities, and participation in community life.

"Clean water is essential for rural communities, especially for women and girls. Investing in clean water means investing in their health, dignity, and a better future."

Source: Australian Embassy, Timor-Leste

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DIFF25: A Celebration of Film, Creativity and Cultural Connection

For almost three weeks, from 25 September to 12 October 2025, Dili pulsed with stories, laughter and the all-embracing energy of cinema.

The seventh Dili International Film Festival (DIFF25) turned the city into a hub of creativity, where local and international filmmakers mingled over coconuts, exchanged ideas, narratives and tricks of the trade.

84 films filled screens across eight venues, from moving documentaries and bold short films to beautifully crafted features from around the world. In total, over 2,000 people attended screenings, panels, and workshops — including festival visitors from Australia, the region, and beyond — proving that storytelling has both a strong audience and a growing home in Timor-Leste.



Stars, Mentors, and Surprise Guests

This year, Dili welcomed an extraordinary group of visiting film professionals: from Thailand director Patiparn Boontarig and editor Max Tersh, from Singapore renowned actor Yaodong Zhang, director Derrick Lui and composer Alex Oh, from Australia Erin Lucas, festival manager of DIFF Darwin, from Japan producer Takahiro Yamashita and director Kosai Sekine, and finally filmmaker Kenny Hargrove from the U.S. Adding a touch of stardom, Prisia Nasution and Iedil Dzuhrrie Alaudin appeared as surprise guests and jury members, charming audiences. Their presence underscored DIFF25's rising international profile.



Films, Dialogue, and Community

The festival's heartbeat was its National Short Film Competition, supported by the European Union. In two challenges, young Timorese filmmakers presented deeply personal stories about environment, identity and dreams, wowing the jury with the ability to produce shorts in only one day. Throughout the festival, workshops and masterclasses offered hands-on learning. The visiting mentors worked side-by-side with local participants, sharing experience and creating an atmosphere that was both inspiring and practical.

The DIFF25 curated events, hosted with national and international partners, gave audiences diverse cinematic experiences, from social impact storytelling to Oscar-winning movies.



With Thanks to Our Partners and Supporters

DIFF25 would not have been possible without the generous support of its many partners, sponsors and friends. The festival was proudly supported by His Excellency President José Ramos-Horta and the Presidency of Timor-Leste, along with the European Union, UNDP, Australian Embassy, New Zealand Embassy, Royal Thai Embassy, Embassy of Singapore, Indonesian Embassy, Malaysian Embassy, Embassy of Korea, Brazilian Embassy, the EU Parliament in ASEAN, Japan Foundation, Embassy of Austria, Embassy of Sweden, French and German Embassy Jakarta, Heinrich Boell Stiftung, the Universitas Brunei Darussalam, and the Land and Maritime Boundary Office.

Screening partners included Fundação Oriente, Pusat Budaya Indonesia, Yayasan HAK, Dili International School, Beachside Cinema, Cinema Lorosa'e, and Platinum Cineplex. DIFF is organised by Pixelasia Productions Dili.

The private sector once again made DIFF a true community celebration, with support from East Timor Trading Group (ETTG), Palm Springs Hotel, Aero Dili, BNU, Timor Plaza, Timor Telekom, Stamford Medical, Streets of Timor, Island Explorer Holidays, Esplanada Hotel, Stamford, BNU, Heyday Coffee, Planet Printing, Sentinel Security, Guide Post, City Auto, The Spa, and Sun Theatre Melbourne.

A Festival to Remember

In total, popcorn sold out city-wide and nearly 3,000 coconuts were consumed by filmgoers, a statistic that perfectly captures the relaxed, tropical spirit that defines DIFF. Beyond discovering Timor-Leste's vibrant coffee culture, DIFF guests were treated to a once-in-a-lifetime experience, swimming with whales, a breathtaking encounter that highlights the nation's unique tourism potential.

Beyond the fun, DIFF25 represented a serious step forward: it showed that Timor-Leste's creative community is ready for the regional stage. As the country moves toward ASEAN membership, the festival is already becoming a bridge for artistic collaboration across Southeast Asia and Australia.



Looking Ahead to DIFF26 (end of September 2026)

After the final awards were announced and the last film rolled, one thing was clear: DIFF25 had grown not just in size, but in soul. For filmmakers, audiences and visitors alike, it was a celebration of stories that connect people across borders and a promise that the future of film in Timor-Leste is bright.

Credit: DIFF25 & Pixelasia

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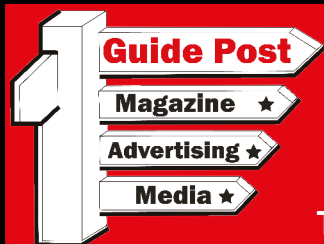
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The Caltech Group Celebrates 25 Years

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"Building a better Timor-Leste for 25 years"

"Building a better Timor-Leste for 25 years"

On Saturday, 27 September 2025, the Caltech Group proudly celebrated its 25th business anniversary.

Founded in 2000 by Timorese Owner Sheilla de Caldas and co-founder Jean Vezina, the Caltech Group is one of the first modern businesses established in Timor-Leste. From its early beginnings, the company has grown steadily over the past quarter of a century to become a multifaceted group with seven divisions: Construction, Environmental, Development, Services, Marine, Agriculture, and Hospitality.

In addition to its core business operations, the Caltech Group has also established and manages several businesses in Dili, including Venture Hotel, Aubergine Beachfront Bar & Bistro, and Circul-R.

Central to their success in operating in Timor-Leste over this period has been a set of guiding values that shape the company's culture and decisions:

- **Relationships** – delivering on promises and building trust.
- **Equality** – embracing diversity and inclusion.
- **Responsibility** – striving to leave the world a better place.
- **Evolve** – adapting and changing for the better.

These values not only define how the business operates but also how it has grown alongside Timor-Leste over the past 25 years.

To mark this milestone, the company hosted a celebration dedicated to the staff whose commitment and hard work have been integral to its success.

Honouring those who have been with Caltech for 10-25, years, long term staff were proudly presented certificates and gifts as a token of Caltech's gratitude for the loyalty and dedication over the years

"Because of our strong roots, we have held firm..... Each of you are the vital roots anchoring the Caltech Group So thank you very much."
- Jean Vezina's speech at the celebration.

The evening also featured heartfelt speeches, delicious food and drinks, and plenty of dancing, all creating an atmosphere of joy, gratitude, and camaraderie.

More than just a party, the event was a moment to reflect on 25 years of excellence, teamwork, and innovation a legacy built on values that continue to guide the Caltech Group as it looks to the future.



Credit: Caltech Group

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