

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