Ferry Project was awarded to Atlantic Eagle Shipbuilding Company, a Portuguese company, in 2013, with a total cost of US$13 million, Agostinho, said the Timorese Government needed to spend, at least, US$14 million, to finalize the ferry’s construction. The Haksolok Ferry case, but it is most importantly for KAK and the Public Prosecution Office to launch an investigation into it. We have spent US $3 million, no result yet,” he said.

Govt to distribute sorghum products for school meals

Secretary of State for Cooperative (SEKOP) is planning to distribute sorghum products to all schools throughout the country in order to be used as school meals for the Government’s school feeding program. Secretary of State for SEKOP. Arsenio da Silva Pereira made the comments Wednesday (8/1) after officially handing over sorghum rice milling machines to MOKATIL members. “We are in cooperation with MOKATIL, therefore the sorghum products will be distributed to all schools for school meals,” he said.

Fears of flooding as more heavy rain expected

More than 200 family homes built along Dili’s Komoro River are at risk of flooding this week, as Timor-Leste’s authorities warned residents of more heavy downpours in the coming days. The tail-end of a tropical low that has wreaked havoc across Indonesia causing widespread flooding in the capital Jakarta and its satellite cities and forced tens of thousands of temporary shelter has intensified this year’s summer rains resulting in the severe weather. “We are in the period of heavy rainfall and strong winds. Therefore, we continue to call for all the people in Timor-Leste to move away from places at risk of natural disasters,” said Alexandre Xavier de Araujo, the Secretary of State for Civil Protection. Araujo said authorities have repeatedly called for people in low-lying areas to move to higher ground, stressing that resident along Comoro River were most at risk of flooding. The typically-dry river can quickly flood in heavy rains, a situation that led to 11 homes being washed away in a flash flood in Manileuana on 28 December. Eurico Da Costa de Jesus, the Chief of Komoro Village, told Tatoli news that the families had been warned last year that their homes should be moved, or face the threat of inundation. “We have always advised them [to move] but they said there is no place for them [to go], so they have to build their houses in the river,” Costa said. Costa, meantime, said to void another disaster, the government must find families living on the Komoro river bank an alternative place to live.

KAK to open investigation into Haksolok ferry scandal

Timor-Leste’s Anti Corruption Commission (KAK) has declared its desire to conduct investigation into Haksolok ferry’s delay of delivery, following findings from the authority of Oecusse Special Administrative Region (RAEOA) that the ferry’s building company, Atlantic Eagle Shipbuilding, could not finalize the construction of the ferry as it has gone bankrupt. Addressing parliament on Wednesday, KAK Commissioner, Sergio Hornai said KAK would open an investigation into Haksolok ferry scandal since the construction of the ferry had cost a state of US$13 million, but the ferry yet arrive in Timor-Leste. “Until now we have not yet done a proper investigation into Haksolok ferry scandal to bring those who are responsible into justice. We respect the state bodies, but we are determined to assure legality of works done by the state bodies,” Commissioner Hornai said. Earlier this week, Deputy President of the National Parliament, Luis Roberto, had called on the government to allocate more money to finalize Haksolok ferry construction and bring the ferry to Timor-Leste. “If we do not want to allocate more money to finalize the ferry’s construction, then we will lose everything, so I think it is better for the government to find out how much money needed to finalize the ferry’s construction and disburse that money to bring the ferry to Timor-Leste,” Roberto said. Last year, Minister of Transport and Telecommunication, Jose Agostinho, said the Timorese Government needed to spend, at least, US$14 million, to finalize the ferry’s construction. The Haksolok Ferry Project was awarded to Atlantic Eagle Shipbuilding Company, a Portuguese company, in 2013, with a total cost of US$13 million and in 2017 the ferry had been inaugurated and set to sail to Timor-Leste, but until now it had not arrived.

CNRT laments members of government from PLP does not show in 2020 OJE hearings

The senior coalition party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), has declared its annoyance over the absence of several government members from its coalition partner, the People Liberation Party (PLP), in the hearing of 2020 State Budget Proposal with the National Parliament’s Commissions this week. The Independente noted that Minister of Public Work, Salvador Pires, State Coordinating Minister for Economic, Trade, Commerce, and Industry, Fidelis Magalahes, and also Minister of Justice, Manuel Carceres were absent during the hearings of 2020 OJE and delegated only the Ministries’ General Directors. “If these Ministers have intentionally avoided participating in the hearings with PN Commissions, it is lamentable because they have a moral responsibility to be present in the budget hearings to adjust their plans and programs,” Hugo Da Costa, from CNRT, told the Independente on Wednesday. He said the 2020 OJE hearings and discussion were categorized as urgent after parliament’s rejection of the government’s first budget proposal in December, therefore, it was important for all Ministers to participate in the hearings and discussion to accelerate its approval. The coalition government’s 2020 budget totaling US$1.668 billion is scheduled for hearings with all PN Commissions this...
Ruak orient relevant ministries to use contingency fund to support natural disaster victims

GMN Diario Nacional, January 9, 2020 Language source: Tetun

Timor-Leste’s Prime Minister, Taur Matan Ruak, has oriented his relevant Ministers to use contingency fund to support victims of natural disaster amid delay of 2020 General State Budget approval and Timor-Leste’s Met Office warns heavy downpours in the coming days. Last week, around 11 homes were washed away in a flash flood in Manuelana of Dili and more than 200 homes were damaged due to inundation across the capital city. Speaking to the media on Wednesday, after meeting with the Prime Minister, the State Secretary for Civil Protection, Alexanrinho de Araujo said the Prime Minister had ordered the Ministry of Public Work, the Ministry of Territorial Management (ESTATAL), and State Secretariat for Civil protection to work together and use contingency fund to support victims of natural disasters. “We are in the beginning of the year and with the delay of the 2020 state budget approval, we do not have enough money to respond to natural disasters, so the Prime Minister has ordered to use contingency fund to support victims of natural disasters,” De Araujo said. The coalition government’s 2020 General State Budget approval was delayed after parliament rejected its October proposal, totaling $1.950 billion, which parliament considered too big. The National Parliament is set to approve the revised General State Budget for 2020, totaling $1.668 billion, by the end of January.

PNTL Command encourages the public to report illegal fee charge

GMN Diario Nacional, January 9, 2020 Language source: Tetun

The Timorese National Police (PNTL) Command has encouraged the public to report any illegal fee charged by PNTL officers. “If anyone witness practice of unauthorized charge committed by PNTL officers against drivers and riders who breach the traffic law, they need to report it to the police,” Assistant Chief Department of PNTL’s National Road Traffic, Inspector Afonso da Silva said at PNTL Headquarters in Dili, on Wednesday. He said according to the legal orientation of the PNTL’s National Road Traffic Department it was illegal for any PNTL officer to charge the drivers and riders who violating the traffic rules in the scene. He said many times the students and communities always complained about illegal fee charged by PNTL officers when they were socializing about traffic laws, but until now no one had officially reported any case to police command.

TL-Australia strengthen Civil Protection ties

GMN Diario Nacional, January 9, 2020 Language source: Tetun

The Secretary of State for Civil Protection (SEPS), Alexandrino de Araujo had paid a visit to Darwin Australia to meet the Northern Territory Government to discuss about strengthening Timor-Leste and Australia’s cooperation on Civil Protection. He said the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service Department had visited Timor-Leste four times last year to share their experience and knowledge in the National Seminars on Civil Protection and also provide some equipment to Timor-Leste’s fire department, so his visit to Darwin was a courtesy visit. “Northern Territory Australia had supported equipment such as vehicles, uniforms and capacity building to our firefighters, so it is important to strengthen bilateral relations of the two countries,” Araujo said at the Ministry of Finance, in Dili, on Monday. He said with the visit, the Northern Territory had accepted to receive and provide more training to Timor-Leste’s firefighters in Darwin Australia in the future. Apart from Australia, Timor-Leste also had cooperation on Civil Protection with China and Indonesia.

January 08, 2020

Govt to take necessary actions to resolve martial art issues

Radio Timor-Leste, January 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

Minister for Defence, Filomeno Paixao, who is also the Interior acting minister said the Government would take necessary actions in order to resolve martial art clubs issue in the country. Mr. Paixao made the comments on Monday (6/1) regarding the martial art issues at the Palace of the President. He affirmed that the forbidden martial clubs had not exercised what so called martial arts, but they engaged in organized crime in the country. “It is not only about martial arts, but there is also the organized crime found in it. I heard that some martial art clubs members swore-in under the AL Quran and Merah Putih Flag, what is this, we a sovereign, not Indonesia’s 27th province,” he questioned.

Govt and NT’s govt to train Timorese fire fighters

Radio Timor-Leste, January 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

Secretary of State for Civil Protection will be in cooperation with Australia’s Northern Territory Government to provide special training for the country’s firefighters. The Secretary of State, Alexandrino Araujo said Australia was committed to supporting the Timorese fire fighters by providing them with special training. “The meeting is aimed at strengthening our bilateral cooperation where Australia through the Northern Territory has offered its cars and uniforms to our firefighters. They also agreed to receive our fire fighters to take part in future training,” he said.

Horta ready to join Govt for state building

GMN TV, January 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

The ex-President of the Republic, Jose Ramos Horta, who is also a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate said he was ready to join Government if he would be named for new government structure as it was for the sake of the state building. Horta made the comments on Monday (6/1) after taking part in GMN TV’s Grande Entrevista Talkshow program. “I am always ready formally or informally. I have collaborated with this 8th constitutional government through the prime minister and also Mr. Xanana Gusmao, as well as the president of the republic. Things about the State either national or international I am ready to help support,” he said.

Lobo to present contingency budget to cover first quarter state costs

Independent, January 8, 2020

Timor-Leste’s Acting Minister of Finance will present a contingency budget to cover state costs until April to the Council of Ministers today, amid the delay in approval of a General State Budget for 2020. Sara Lobo Brites claimed she had “not yet determined” the budget amount, as she addressed parliament on Monday, saying it would be finalized with input from the Council of Ministers. Lobo said the contingency funds would be disbursed to all State institutions to cover operational costs, including salaries. National Parliament is set to discuss a revised General State Budget for 2020 on January 15, that the Council of Ministers had approved on 19 December. With expenditure totaling $1.668, the revised budget is 14.5% lower than the October proposal – equal to the largest budget in Timor-Leste’s history (2016). On 23 December, Parliament Committee C approved an urgent agenda for considering the revised budget, which was accepted by the plenary.
New RAEOA President to recruit 15 advisors amid calls for reduction of government advisors

Independent, January 8, 2020 Language source: Tetun

New President of Oecusse Special Administrative Region (RAEOA) and Exclusive Economic Zone and Social Market (ZEESM), Jose Luis Guterres has planned to recruit around 15 advisors to help him run the mega pilot project in that region. Guterres said these advisors would be Timorese: he would not hire any foreign advisor. “We hire these advisors because we need their expertise in developing Oecusse’s mega project. It is a one-year contract, afterward, we will decide whether to continue to hire them or not based on their performance,” Guterres told the media outside the National Parliament on Tuesday. RAEOA’s President’s decision comes amid calls from the National Parliament to reduce numbers of advisors in all State institutions amid surge of government’s spending on national and international intellectuals in the last decade. Findings from Commission D of National Parliament reveal that the current government has around 1,014 advisors which composed of national and international advisors, with salaries ranging from “US$5,000-US$7,000 for national advisors” and “US$21,000-US$50,000” for international advisors.

Minister Paixao says lack of facilities cause immigration service prone to bribery

Timor Post, January 8, 2020 Language source: Tetun

Acting Minister of Interior, Filomeno Paixao said lack of facilities at the airport and land borders had caused immigration service prone to bribery. “We need CCTV and also digitalization in our immigration offices at the airport and also land borders to prevent immigration officers to engage in corruption,” Paixao said on Monday. He said he himself had led an investigation into alleged bribing of immigration officers during visa processing. He added currently there were five cases of alleged bribery that under investigation. Commenting on the alleged bribery that came to light last year, Faustino Da Costa, the Commissioner of Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL), said any officer found guilty of bribing would have to defend their actions in front of law. “I have repeatedly told my members not to make illegal bills to people because I will not tolerate it,” Costa said.

Frelitln says Govt's US$1.668 billion is still a big budget

Timor Post, January 8, 2020 Language source: Tetun

The Frelitln opposition party is still unhappy with the Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) coalition government’s decision to reduce its budget from US$1.950 billion to US$1.668 billion for 2020, saying the budget is still too big. Joaquim dos Santos, A Fretilin parliamentarian, said every year Timor-Leste experienced a deficit and it was even worse since the government failed to develop productive sectors to diversify the country’s revenue. “The government’s budget reduction is still unbalanced because the money that is taken from petroleum fund will not be spent on productive sectors such as agriculture and tourism to produce more money, but mostly on infrastructure,” dos Santos said on Tuesday. He said Fretilin would like to see the government’s explanation on its US$1.668 billion budget before making any decision. National Parliament is set to discuss the revised budget for 2020 on January 15.

Timor-Leste’s current divisive politics: Hortay says President of the Republic’s decision is the main cause of the problem

GMN Diario Nacional, January 8, 2020 Language source: Tetun

Timor-Leste’s former President of the Republic, Jose Ramos Horta, considered the pending inauguration of the nine ministers’ nominees of the coalition government is the main cause of the country’s current divisive politics. In June 2018, President Francisco “Lu Olo” Guterres rejected to swear in almost a dozen nominations from the Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) coalition parties because of their alleged involvement in corruption investigations. Since then, the AMP government has been nine ministers short. “The crisis began with the President’s rejection of 11 ministerial nominations from the AMP. So, in my opinion, the President needs to reconsider his decision and swear in the AMP’s ministers’ nominees to resolve the problem and let the Attorney General’s Office and court do their jobs of processing corruptors,” Horta told GMN TV on Monday. He said the National Parliament particularly the MPs of AMP had canceled a number of the President’s overseas trips because of his refusal to swear in the AMP ministerial nominees. Horta added completing the AMP coalition cabinet could bring a national consensus through a dialogue to solve the socioeconomic and political crisis in Timor-Leste. He said if the unresolved crisis and the paralyzed government continued to exist then it seemed impossible for Timor-Leste to join Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) in the near future.

JSMP: Government must provide proper medical care for prisoners

GMN Diario Nacional, January 8, 2020 Language source: Tetun

Interim Assistant Director of Judicial System Monitoring Program (JSMP), Ana Paula Marcal, said the government, especially the relevant ministries needed to provide attention and medical care assistance to prisoners in the country. Marcal comments came as an elderly inmate named Joao Batista (70) died on Monday in Becora Prison in Dili after suffering from complicated health problems. She said the prisoners should be given appropriate medical care because they have rights to medical treatments. “Hospitals need to provide good, fair and equal medical treatment to the prisoners since our law guarantees fair medical care for the inmates,” Marcal said on Tuesday.

January 07, 2020

MS to cooperate with Indonesia and Malaysia’s hospitals

Radio Timor-Leste, January 6, 2019 language source: Tetun

Ministry of Health (MS) is planning to be in cooperation with IHIL Hospital, Malaysia and Jantung Harapan Kita Hospital of Indonesia to set up a cardiology centre at the National Hospital of Guido Valadares (HNGV) for providing medical services for Timorese people. Acting Minister for Health, Elia dos Reis Amaral made the comments on Monday (6/1) at the House of Parliament. She affirmed that the installation of cardiology centre at the National Hospital would help reduce numbers of heart diseases in the country as many of Timorese receiving medical treatment in abroad. “It is about setting up cardiology at the National Hospital of Guido Valadares. We will begin to introduce it to the communities and see how can cooperate with IHIL and Jantung Harapan Hospitals,” she said.

Govt makes assessment on F-FDTL and PNTL’s work

Radio Timor-Leste, January 6, 2019 language source: Tetun

Minister for Defence, Filomeno Paixao, who is also the acting Interior Minister said the Government had made assessment on the Defence Force (F-FDTL) and National Police Force (PNTL)’s work in 2019. Great progress has been achieved, says Paixao. Mr. Paixao said the assessment was made to look at the weaknesses and strengths of these two security forces for future self-improvement. “All the officials are here, so that we can discuss together for what as it is about so called total assessment. Which way should we go through in 2020,” he said. He added that the police force had achieved great progress in providing security for the citizens as they quickly responded to acts of violence.
A leading expert says the high level of university graduates unemployed in Timor-Leste raises serious integrity issues about the quality of education students receive. Thousands of young Timorese graduated from university late last year, but many are concerned that despite their hard work gaining a qualification, there are no jobs for them. Lawyer Manuel Tilman, said this was leaving many families who had worked hard to financially support children study “frustrated” and concerned about the future of their children. “Entering higher education does not guarantee you will get a job,” he said. Tilman said the “alarming” unemployment issue reflected graduates not having right skills to compete in a very-limited employment market. Despite some positive development to create jobs in Timor-Leste, there remains a paucity of new jobs for Timor-Leste’s huge youth population to access. The 2015 census – the most recent conducted in Timor-Leste – showed that the 4.8 percent employment growth every year between 2010 and 2015 was primarily due to growth in self-employment and own-account employment. Guteriano Neves, an independent policy analyst, writing in the Diplomat, said even with the limited jobs available in the public and private sector, the issue of productivity and a mismatch between demand and supply was “having a big impact on the labor market”. “Some studies highlight a lack of basic quantitative skills and basic soft skills such as work ethic, communication skills and teamwork,” Neves said. Tilman, said the government must give prioritization to job creation schemes and fixing the gulf between university education and work-place skill need.

Govt to use duodecimo budget for the first quarter of 2020

The delay of 2020 General State Budget approval has made the government to turn to “duodecimo” budget to finance its activities during the first quarter of the year. In December, the National Parliament rejected the Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) coalition government’s proposed budget, totaling US$1.950 billion, saying the budget was too big and demanding the government to cut it back. As a result, the government had cut back the budget to US$1.668 billion and currently the budget bill sits in parliament for discussion. Speaking in the National Parliament, Acting Minister of Finance, Sara Lobo Brites, said currently her ministry was preparing government’s “duodecimo” budget and this week the Council of Ministers would discuss and approve the budget before presenting to the National Parliament for final approval. “We are not sure yet about the total amount of the duodecimo budget because it is upon the Council of Ministers to discuss and decide about the final amount that needed;” Brites said yesterday. She said usually the government needed “duodecimo” budget for salaries and wages, public transfers, goods and services, and also minor capital. She added the government would need the duodecimo budget for January until April because the discussion of 2020 State Budget in parliament usually took a month for approval and according to the law the President of the Republic also needed 30 days to enact the bill, so it needed the budget to finance the government’s activities while waiting for 2020 General State Budget approval.

PN refused to cut back its budget amid government’s budget reduction: FONGTIL says PN is being selfish

Timor-Leste’s Non Governmental Organizations Forum (FONGTIL) has condemned the National Parliament (PN) for refusing to cut back its budget for 2020, amid government’s 2020 massive budget reduction. In December, the National Parliament rejected the coalition government’s 2020 State Budget Proposal of US$1.950 billion, saying the budget was too big and needed to be reduced. As a result, the government decided to cut back all ministries’ budgets, except the budget for the National Parliament. The National Parliament refused to cut back its planned budget of US$16 million for 2020. “This is lamentable because Members of Parliament (MPs) asked the government to reduce budgets that should have been used to improve people’s lives, but they refused to cut back budget that benefits them,” Daniel Santos Do Carmo, Director of FONGTIL, said on Monday. He said this situation showed that MPs were selfish and only thought about themselves, not the people that had voted for them to sit in parliament. He said these MPs should be ashamed of themselves. The AMP government has presented a new budget totaling US$1.668 billion for 2020. The budget is currently under discussion in parliament.

PNL is weak in its crime prevention, Interim Minister of Interior says

The Interim Minister of Interior, Filomeno Paixao noted the Timorese National Police (PNL) Command was weak in its crime prevention activities, following a surge of violence in the capital city of Dili and other nearby municipalities such as Manatuto, Baucau, and Liquisa last year. Paixao made the comments after participating in the evaluation meeting of PNTL and the Timorese Defense Force (FFDTL) Command on Monday at the Ministry of Finance Office in Aitarak Laran, Dili. “They made a Mekak in its prevention activities, hope they improve it this year to prevent and reduce violence in the capital city and other places,” Paixao said. Last year, a confrontation between rival gangs in Leorema of Liquisa had left two young men dead and more than a dozen houses burnt to the ground. Meanwhile, in Manatuto a confrontation between youth left a young man dead.

PD to vote against 2020 OJE

The Democratic Party (PD) opposition has declared to vote against the coalition government’s 2020 General State Budget (OJE) Proposal if the ruling parties, the Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) isn’t solid enough to defend each other in the upcoming state budget debate. “As opposition party we will see, if the ruling parties do not support each other, then we will vote against the 2020 OJE bill,” Adriano do Nascimento said at the National Parliament, on Monday. Nascimento said the opposition party had competence to vote against the 2020 OJE bill if they saw the budget did not benefit the people. “PD will vote against the 2020 OJE bill if the government does not prioritize education, agriculture, health, clean water and sanitation areas in its 2020 annual budget,” said Nascimento. He said the country needed to develop agriculture and education sectors in order to benefit the children of the ordinary people.

Villages in Iliomar have no access to clean water and electricity

The people of Aliebere, Iliomar 1 and Iliomar 2 villages of Iliomar Administrative Post of Lautem Municipality have no access to clean water and electricity. The communities of the three villages have to walk about 10 kilometers to collect clean water. Helder Aguas, from Iliomar 2 village, said during the dry season, many of the spring water in the areas dried up and the community needs to walk about 10 km to collect clean water. “Our problem is the long drought making it hard to find clean water wells around the town and we have to walk a far distance to get the clean water,” said Aguas. The Chief of the Lihina Sub-village, Filomeno Batista said his people hadn’t accessed to clean water and electricity since Timor-Leste got independence. He said his parties have already raised the problem many times to the authorities of Lautem Municipality and the relevant ministries but there hadn’t been any response to resolve their problems.