Independente, December 9, 2019

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

Australia pledges to offer $100 million to TL

GMN TV, December 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

EU is committed to combating climate change: Ambassador

GMN TV, December 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

FONGTIL calls on Govt to invest much in productive sectors

GMN TV, December 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

MAHEIN criticizes police top commander for not keeping promises

GMN TV, December 7, 2019 language source: Tetun

Interim Minister for Economic Affairs, Fidelis Manuel Leite Magalhaes, has urged youth to be entrepreneurs and innovative to drive socio-economic growth by creating wealth and employment opportunities. He spoke Thursday in Dili during release of national economic growth by creating wealth and employment opportunities. He spoke Thursday in Dili during release of national employment figures that cited 10% of Timor-Leste’s working population under 35 years of age was unemployed. Magalhaes said the government was working to support youth transition into employment with skills and training opportunities, but encouraged young people to think smartly and look at the private sector for opportunity. He said the government was establishing a business landscape to support young people become entrepreneurs, but stressed the need for viable and economically sustainable business plans. “The government will talk to all banks in Timor-Leste so that they can give business loans,” he said. Magalhaes said there was a good “opportunity” in Timor-Leste for young people with innovative ideas to succeed. Timor-Leste has one of the youngest populations in the world with 74% of people aged under 35 years, according to government statistics. In Dili, nearly 40 percent of the population is aged 15-24 years. Magalhaes, has long been known for his advocacy for young people actively participating in the development and economic growth of the country. He is presently the youngest person to hold a ministerial level position in Timor-Leste, Kaituklua reported.

Ex-Minister Joao Cancio Freitas released from jail

Timor-Leste’s Dili District Court (TDD) ordered a release of former Minister of Education Joao Cancio Freitas after he spent more than two years behind bars for maladministration. The ex-Minister of Education Joao Cancio Freitas, sentenced in 2017 to four and a half years in prison for maladministration and a compensation of US$1,410,000.00, was released on parole on Friday after serving half of his sentence in prison. Freitas’ lawyer, Jose Guterres said his client had met criteria to be released on parole after completing half of his sentence in prison. He said his client was relieved and happy to go back home to his family and live a normal. He added his client would try to pay restitution after finding a new job, following his release from prison. The former Minister of Education was found guilty of committing maladministration when awarding a project of establishing a television of education in 2010 ad caused a state to lose more than US$1million. Freitas was Timor-Leste’s Minister of Education from 2007-2012.
**Clash between youth in Komoro leaves a man injured and five houses damaged**

GMN Diario Nacional, December 9, 2019 Language source: Tetun

A fight between youth of Madohi Village of Komoro, Dili, on Saturday, has left a young man seriously injured and five houses including a motorbike damaged. The young man named Flordino Dos Santos got cuts on his cheek and shoulder with machete in the clash that happened around 11pm and he was taken to the National Hospital of Guido Valadares where he remains in stable condition. Madohi Village Chief Bernardino Ferreira told the Independente that he knew four main suspects who had been the mastermind behind the incident. "There are four main suspects of the incident because they were the ones that brought the fight," Ferreira said on Sunday. Police arrested 17 suspects in relation to the clash and they are currently in police detention to wait for further process.

**Vatican prosecutor calls for Timorese to report sexual harassment by priests**

Suara Timor Lorosae, December 9, 2019 Language source: Tetun

Vatican Prosecutor has called on all the Timorese citizens to make report if certain catholic priests are suspected of engaging in sexual harassment against anyone or any children in the country. The Vatican prosecutor made call in connection with the US Priest living in Oecusse who is suspected of being engaged in sexual harassment against the children in the region. He affirmed that there were some reasons that had been a hindrance to the communities for raising the pedophile case in the country. "Therefore, I am calling on the communities to reveal such an act of crime engaging ordinary people and the priest for upholding justice," he said after meeting with First Lady, Cidalia Lopes Guterres.

**AMP remains strong and solid, Deputy PN says**

Suara Timor Lorosae, December 9, 2019 Language source: Tetun

As Timor-Leste is preparing to celebrate Christmas and New Year, the National Defense Force (F-FDTL) Commander, Major General Lere Anan Timur is calling on youth to contribute to peace and unity in the country. Timur said everyone had the right to celebrate Christmas and New Year with their family in peace and calm situation, so he called on youth to refrain from consuming too much alcohol and stay at home with friends and families instead of going out and creating problems. "Christmas and New Year, we can celebrate it with drinking, but at home, not in the streets and try to create problem afterward,"Lere told the media after participating in the inauguration of Indonesian Invasion Day on Saturday. He said military officers and police would have joint patrol during Christmas and New Year to ensure security to community, particularly in Dili, would not tolerate anyone who tried to create instability. Commander Timur comments come amid the rise of underground violence and youth clashes. Two weeks ago, a young man was cut with machete by unknown men near Maloa of Dili and this weekend a clash between youth in Madohi of Komoro, Dili, left a young man seriously injured and five houses damaged.

**Govt executes 68% of General State budget for 2019**

Radio Timor-Leste, December 4, 2019 language source: Tetun

The Government of Timor-Leste has almost executed 70% of the country’s general state budget for 2019. Acting Minister for Finance, Sarah Lobo Brites made the comments on Wednesday (4/12) at the Palace of the Government. After meeting with Prime Minister, Taur Matan Ruak (TMR) Ms. Brites said the execution of the state budget had reached 68% and said the Government was still making efforts to execute all the budgets in then end of the year. "Its cash and obligations are about 68%, however we still have time in December and the execution from day to day is to increase," she said.

**Telkomsel and Police hold workshop on drug issue**

Radio Timor-Leste, December 4, 2019 language source: Tetun

Telkomsel International and National Criminal Investigation (SIK) have realized a joint workshop on the prevention of illegal drug trafficking in the country. RTL (the public radio reported that the workshop was held on Wednesday (5/12) at Golgoata Hotel, Comoro-Dili. Manager of Telkomsel, Yogy Riski Bahar said the police’s presence in the workshop was important to share information on the issue of illegal drug prevention as the drug was dangerous. “We need to socialize it to our officers because the drug is very dangerous. Therefore, we contacted PNLT to explain the danger of the illegal drug and what element is in the drugs and how can we prevent it,” he said.

**TL should focus on agriculture as economic base: Diplomatic Institute coordinator**

GMN TV, December 4, 2019 language source: Tetun

Coordinator for Timor-Leste’s Diplomatic Institute, Aurelio Guterres said agriculture sector was the economic base for the country’s development; therefore it was necessary to focus on this sector. Guterres, who is also the ex-minister for foreign affairs and cooperation, said it was necessary to make a proper plan to better develop the country’s agricultural sector. "It is better to develop ourselves, particularly the development of agricultural sector. As what Indonesian professor said their economic base is agriculture and also the same with ours. Our economic base is agriculture," he said. Meanwhile, the Indonesian economist, Parhimpunan Simatupang said the Government needed to buy the farmers’ agricultural products, so that the money could circulate in the communities.

**Xanana Gusmao poised to become Prime Minister, say sources**

Independente, December 5, 2019

Timor-Leste’s independence hero and prominent political figure, Xanana Gusmao could be poised to become Timor-Leste’s eighth Prime Minister amid a major government restructuring, according to sources. Current Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak is expected to step down to Deputy Prime Minister, following rising opposition among voters and within the ruling coalition Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) government. The change is expected to emerge within days, and insiders believe National Parliament’s rejection of
the government’s proposed 2020 State Budget was planned to make way for the reshuffle. National Parliament rejected the Council of Ministers’ approved budget proposal of US$1.950 million – the largest budget in Timor-Leste’s history – on the grounds it was considered too big and exceeded the government’s capacity. Gusmão, the president of the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) – AMP’s biggest party – was Prime Minister from 2017 – 2015. The source, who did not want to be named, told the Independente that “senior international diplomats” had also requested Gusmão to become Prime Minister. The question of who will take up the vacant eight government remains unresolved, the source said. Duarte Nunes, Chairman of CNRT, said the rejected budget would be discussed in National Parliament on 13 December following a review by the Prime Minister.

**Govt starts revising 2020 General State Budget Proposal**
*Independente, December 5, 2019 Language source: Tetun*

Timor-Leste’s Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak and his government members had started to revise 2020 State Budget Proposal, totaling US$1.950 billion, following the withdrawal of the proposed budget from the National Parliament on Tuesday. The National Parliament rejected the government’s approved budget proposal of US$1.950 million – the largest budget in Timor-Leste’s history – saying it was too big and exceeded the government’s capacity. The Council of Ministers Meeting on Wednesday, the Head of the Government had ordered Minister of Finance, Sara Lobo Brites and Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Agio Pereira to work closely with other Ministers to reduce 2020 State Budget. After the Council of Ministers’ Meeting, Brites and Pereira met with Minister of Transport and Telecommunication and Minister of Education, Sport, and Youth to revise and reduce the budgets of the two ministries. “We will present a smaller budget on December 13, but I am not sure yet about the total budget, as we are still discussing with each Minister to reduce the budget,” Brites told the Independente. She said they were focusing on reducing foreign visit budget as well as other reserved fund. The National Parliament’s Committee C for public finance has recommended the government to reduce its budget to US$1.6 billion to US$1.3 billion.

**AMP is not consistent in its politics, observers says**
*Independente, December 5, 2019 Language source: Tetun*

Timor-Leste’s coalition government has been forced to withdraw its 2020 General State Budget Proposal from National Parliament on the second day of the budget discussion this week, following rising opposition within the ruling coalition Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP). The ruling coalition parties rejected the Council of Ministers’ approved budget proposal of US$1.950 billion, saying it was too big and exceeded the government’s capacity. Commenting on Timor-Leste’s first phenomenon of the coalition parties’ rejecting its government’s budget and programs, local political observer, Fernando Gusmão, said the current coalition government was weak as three parties that supported the government were inconsistent in their politics. “This situation is the first in Timor-Leste and it shows that AMP is not as solid as it claims since the ruling coalition parties in parliament do not support the government’s budget and programs,” Gusmão told the Independente on Wednesday. In addition, a senior political observer from the National University of Timor-Leste said that the current coalition government was weak and might bring down the government, “I don’t think that AMP is capable, but they are just inconsistent, so it affects the State Budget Discussion and might bring down the government,” Ximenes said. The AMP government is formed by the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), the People’s Liberation Party (PLP), and Khunto after their pre-election coalition party, AMP came out as an outright winner in 2018 General election.

**Government might need “duodecimo” budget, Noe says**
*Timor Post, December 5, 2019 Language source: Tetun*

President of National Parliament, Arao Noe said the coalition government might need “duodecimo” to finance its activities in January 2020, following delay in 2020 State Budget Discussion in parliament. “Duodecimo might be needed since the discussion of 2020 State Budget has been postponed to accommodate the government’s revision of the proposed budget,” Noe told reporters at the National Parliament on Tuesday. The Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) coalition government has withdrawn its budget proposal of US$1.950 billion from National Parliament for revision, after parliament refused to discuss the budget on Tuesday, saying the budget was too big. Noe said the government had promised to return to parliament on December 13 with a new budget proposal for discussion and it would take around 10 days for parliament to approve it, but the budget bill would be sent to the President of the Republic for promulgation and it usually takes 30 days. He said with all this process, the government might use the “duodecimo” budget in January while waiting for President of the Republic to approve its 2020 State Budget.

**It is difficult to end violence in Timor-Leste**
*GMN Diario Nacional, December 5, 2019 Language source: Tetun*

The Timorese Defense Force (F-FDTL) Commander, Major General Lere Anan Timur, recognizes it is very difficult to combat violence or crime in Timor-Leste as most of the crimes were suspected to be committed by organized groups such as Martial Arts Groups (GAM). “I can say that the crime in Timor-Leste can be reduced but it is difficult to just completely put an end to it. For instance, many husbands and wives still fight in a family, while many young Timorese always involve in street fighting every day,” Timur said after a meeting with the President of the Republic, at the Presidential Palace, on Wednesday. Timur said despite the rise of violence lately, it is important to try and raise the awareness and sensibility of the youth to know what is good and bad because the country needs stability for its national development. He added it was the government’s responsibility to organize the young people to contribute to peace and stability of the country. Timur called on the government to organize and control the illegal Martial Arts Groups (KORK, PSHT and Kera Sakti) like it controlled the legal combative sports such as Taekwondo, Boxing and etc to compete nationally and internationally. Timur also called on the public not to blame the Timorese National Police (PNTL) for the crimes that always took place in Dili and throughout the country because the police were not responsible for the security of every citizen.

**Ruling parties promise to continue oppose government’s budget bill if it violates the law**
*GMN Diario Nacional, December 5, 2019 Language source: Tetun*

Members of Parliament (MPs) from ruling coalition Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) have promised to not defend and back the government’s 2020 General State Budget (OJE) bill if it violates the existing law. According to the National Parliament Committee C for public finance, the government’s approved budget of US$1.950 billion was against the law; therefore, the ruling coalition parties had asked the government to revise it. “Even though the government had put efforts to present the 2020 budget bill to the National Parliament, but the MPs of AMP and Fretilin disagreed with the bill and forced the government to withdraw the bill for revision because it was considered unconstitutional,” said Patrocinio Fernandes, the Vice President of the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) bench, at the National Parliament, on Wednesday. Fernandes said normally the MPs of ruling parties have big responsibilities to support and defend the government programs and budget bill but unfortunately, this time the ruling parties had opposed the government’s budget as the opposition parties. Responding to the Prime Minister lamentation with the critics of ruling parties, Fernandes said it was just an expression of a feeling by the Prime Minister. As a democratic country, it was an exercise of democracy to criticize what was not good to fix it. The AMP government has withdrawn its proposed budget of US$1.950 billion on the second day of 2020 State Budget discussion this week, after the ruling coalition parties rejected the budget, saying it was too big and beyond government’s capacity. The government is scheduled to return to parliament on December 13 with new budget proposal for discussion.
President committed to increasing the quality of education in TL

Head of the President Office, Francisco Vasconcelhos has officially handed over more than 70 chairs and desks to Sao Cristovao Central School of Venilale, the eastern Municipality of Baucau. In his speech Mr. Vasconcelhos said the President of the Republic, Francisco “Lu Olo” Guterres had the commitment to improve the quality of education in the country. TVTL (the public television) reported that these school facilities were offered on the basis of the request addressed to the president of the republic. He affirmed that the Office of the President would continue being in cooperation with related ministries in order to ensure and improve quality of education in the country. “The president of the republic’s commitment is on how to ensure and improve good quality of education. The president of the republic will build cooperation with all state organs, especially the Government, so that it could improve the quality of education from year to year,” he said.

Timor Gap impeded from investing petroleum fund: House speaker

President of the National Parliament, Arao Noe Amaral said Timor Gap Company would not use the country’s petroleum fund to invest in the petroleum industry as the president of the republic had vetoed the amendment of the Petroleum Law. Mr. Amaral affirmed that it was necessary for the Timor Gap to have large amount of capital to invest when exploring the Greater Sunrise gas and oil fields. He added that the alteration of the law was the opportunity for the Timor Gap to invest in the Greater Sunrise, but unfortunately it was vetoed. “It impacts the Timor Gap Company because it needs large amount of capital to invest in the Greater Sunrise gas and oil fields,” she said. The President of the Republic, Francisco “Lu-Olo” has recently vetoed the amendment of the petroleum as it is considered to be unconstitutional.

Govt to implement school health guideline

Ministry of Education (ME) and Ministry of Health (MS) are in partnership to implement school health guideline for the schools in the country. Representative of MS said the school health guideline was pertinent as it could help facilitate teachers and children in the schools to run school health program. He affirmed that it was necessary to consult the draft of the guidelines before implementing it in schools throughout the country. “The program is being run, but we do not have a guideline to help facilitate us, so we want a proper policy that could guide us in implementing this program,” he said.

Political observer calls for overhaul of Timor-Leste’s underperforming ministerial cabinet

A senior political observer from the National University of Timor-Leste, Camilo Ximenes Almeida, has called on Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak to immediately evaluate the performance of his ministerial cabinet and replace underperforming members, objecting to the prevalence of unfulfilled government promises and poor service delivery. Speaking to the Independente on Wednesday as parliament this week discussed the 2020 State Budget, Almeida stressed repeatedly of the role of effective leadership in managing portfolio budgets, including the idea that increasing budgets should not be seen as the only way to improve service delivery. Almeida singled out the Minister of Defense and Security, Minister of Education and Sports, Minister of State Administration and Territory, Minister of Public Works, State Secretary of Labor, and the stand-in Minister of Public Health, as “underperforming.” “We must not retain people who do not show good performance,” Almeida said. “They must be evaluated by their work performance, and if found to have no capacity it is better they are replaced by someone else.” Ximenes said it has been “almost two years” since the cabinet was sworn-in, and service delivery results were “not to public satisfaction.” He pointed to unregulated building hampering development of the city, poor school facilities, lack of trained teachers, a strained health system that did not have capacity to provide care for all medical needs and poor leadership on response to surge in violent crime. He also said it was not good enough that people were still “screaming” about need for roads to access all parts of the country and that electricity blackout remained common place, 20 years after the country earned its independence. He said people had fought hard for the nation’s independence and deserved to “enjoy” their freedom and not be pulled down by “poor development.”

2020 OJE hangs in balance as CNRT threatened to vote against it

Timor-Leste’s coalition government’s budget proposal for next fiscal year hangs by the proverbial threat, amid row over the budget ceiling within the coalition parties. The Alliance of Change for Progress (AMP) government’s US$1.95 billion budget is scheduled for discussion in parliament this week. Normally, the budget votes are a cakewalk for the ruling coalition, as parties in the coalition vote unanimously for it, rolling right over the opposition. This year, however, is different, as the senior coalition partner, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT), has threatened to vote against the budget, saying the budget is “too big.” Addressing parliament when Minister of Finance presented the proposed budget to parliament in early November, Virginia Ana Belo, said she would vote against the budget, if the government did not cut back the budget. “I am calling on the government to make changes to the budget proposal, if not, I will vote against it because I really disagree, the total budget for next year ceils at US$1.95 billion,” Belo said. Echoing Belo’s words, her fellow CNRT MP, Antonio de Carvalho, said he had also made a decision to vote against the budget if the government did not reduce it. “The Government needs to reduce the budget, if not, I am sure 2020 OJE will not pass parliament,” Carvalho said.

Carvalho said the standard annual budget for government was US$1.3 billion to US$ 1.4 billion and the government should not propose exceeding the limits. A source close to CNRT Party also revealed that CNRT President, Xanana Gusmao, was also unhappy with the amount of budget that the government proposed and had suggested the government to reduce it. “Big brother also disagree with the amount of budget that the government proposed and had asked the government to reduce it,” the source told Independente recently. The junior coalition partner of AMP, Khunto, had also called for budget reduction, despite its high ceiling, Khunto also questioned the government’s capacity to execute the budget next year amid lack of government members. The AMP coalition government has been not making much headway short since President of the Republic Francisco “Lu Olo” Guterres rejected almost a dozen nominations in June 2018 because of their alleged involvement in corruption investigations. The rejection has left several key ministries without leadership such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Tourism.

PN to revise Petroleum Fund Law changes after presidential veto

Timor-Leste’s government suffered a unique political blow on Tuesday, when President of the Republic once again vetoed regulatory changes to the country’s Petroleum Fund Law that would have changed the conditions in which money from the nation’s Petroleum Fund can be used. The amendments to the country’s Petroleum Fund Law would have made it possible for Timor-Leste’s state-owned oil company, Timor Gap, to use the sovereign wealth fund to invest in onshore gas-processing industries, raising the cap. The veto has
Investing in the country’s small scale industries help reduce poverty, expert says

Timor-Leste economist, Estanislau de Sousa Saldanha has said investment on small scale industries played a crucial role in decreasing the number of poverty in the country. A figure from the Asian Development Bank shows 41.8% of Timorese people lives under the national poverty line. “Our small industries or home industries are potential, so it is highly recommended to invest in the area as it could create job opportunities as well as self employment,” said Saldanha. He said the government needed to develop and invest on the small industries in the country in order to improve the country’s economy, however, so far, the government hadn’t been seriously considered the importance of the small industries in the reduction of poverty. In addition, at the Independence Proclamation Day Celebration on November 28, the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Timor-Leste (CCI-TL), Oscar Lima, said to overcome the poverty issue in Timor-Leste, it was important for the government and the private sectors to work together. “Timor-Leste has very little to none industry, and we all know that at the moment all of the projects are coming from the public sector, therefore, it’s time to work together to improve and strengthen our economy,” said Lima. According to Julio Aparicio, an academic from the National University of Timor-Leste (UNTL), the government hasn’t created good conditions for investments in the country. He said lack of economic diversification made it difficult to develop the country forward and had been considered one of the most obstacles for sustainable development in the country.

Dili Archbishop call on Timorese to respect the rights of people with disabilities

The Archbishop of Dili, Virgilio do Carmo da Silva has called on all Timorese to respect and value the right of people with disabilities in Timor-Leste. “The celebration of the International Day of People with Disabilities this year is to tell everyone to value, respect and protect the rights of people with disabilities in our society,” Archbishop said in his preaching, during a mass in Comoro Church, in Dili, on Sunday. He said people with disabilities have the same rights as others to access development opportunities in the society. “I am calling on parents who have kids with special needs not to isolate them, but give them opportunities to access various opportunities available in the society, including good education, good health care, justice, job training program, clean water and sanitation and so on,” said Archbishop. He added the communities need to stop discriminating people with disabilities such as treating them as less than human. “The communities need to stop calling the people with disabilities with these discriminative local terms such as ‘matan aat (blind), mau beik (dumb), and others, because these terms are clearly discriminating them in our society. Therefore, instead of calling them with the discriminative terms as I have mentioned above, we need to use these acceptable terminologies such as, visual impairment, hard-of-hearing, person with a speech communication disability, physical disability, emotional disability, and mental disabilities,” said Archbishop. According to Timor-Leste’s Housing and Population Census 2015, there are 38,118 Timorese people with disabilities in the country.