Local Daily News

Timor-Leste is not able yet to have its own currency: Tilman

Lawyer, Manuel Tilman who is also the ex-member of the National Parliament said Timor-Leste was not able yet to create its own currency as it had not met set criteria, such as having a large number of deposit derived from the taxes, strengthening commerce and industrial development for supporting its currency. Tilman was referring to Member of Parliament, Maria Angelina Sarmento from PLP Party, suggesting the country to have its own currency. "The one who talks about the currency, he or she should know about finance. If you create currency in Timor you should have a guaranty, so that it could circulate in the country. "There two guaranties for creating currency, namely large number of taxes from the populations and also industrial development," he said.

Govt to continue to support FONGTIL for social audit program

The Government of Timor-Leste is planning to continue to help support the country’s forum of NGO (FONGTIL) to hold social audit into the state-funded project implementation throughout the national territory. TVTL reported that social audit findings were pertinent for the Government to make self-improvement in its project implementations. Coordinator for Prime Minister’s Office for Civil Society, Sonia Leite said the Government was committed to supporting FONGTIL to hold social audit into the projects, which the Government ran in the country. "So, this is the commitment of the Government, therefore this year (2019), the Government allocates the state budget to continue supporting civil society organizations to do social audit," she said.

Indonesia and TL to mitigate natural disaster at border zone

Republic of Indonesia’s Catastrophe Authority and Timorese Government will officially sign an agreement on capacity building concerning natural disaster management in order to respond to natural disasters at the border zone. This Memorandum of Understanding has been approved in the meeting of the Council of Ministers. RTL (the public radio) reports. Minister for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Agio Pereira said the Government had authorized Secretary of State for Social Protection, Alexandrino de Araujo to officially sign it on coming days. "The secretary of state is authorized to sign this agreement with the Indonesian Catastrophe Authority representing the interior minister," he said.

Manuel Carceres says Ministry of Justice does not have power to prosecute employees who commit crimes

Civil servants working in the Ministry of Justice suspected of committing crimes must be investigated through the civil service commission, Minister of Justice Manuel Carceres has said. In a speech at the Palace of Government on Wednesday, Carceres defended calls for the Ministry of Justice needing to take responsibility for investigating its staff, arguing it was the role of the public prosecutor to do so. “The Ministry of Justice does not have the authority to investigate civil servants who commit an irregularity error,” Carceres said “If a problem is found the case will be submitted to the civil service commission for trial in court,” he said. Carceres said if a civil servant is suspected of misconduct the allegation is submitted directly to the High Commissioner of Personnel to follow-up.

China offers US$20,000 to the Office of the First Lady

The Government of China through its embassy in Dili offered US$20,000 to the Office of the First Lady to support the Office of the First Lady’s social assistance programs. After receiving the financial aid from the Chinese Ambassador to Timor-Leste, Xiao Jianguo, on Thursday, First Lady Isabel Mouzinho Guterres, thanked the Chinese Government for supporting the First lady’s Office to continue helping people in need. She said the Embassy of China had been supporting the office of First lady’s programs since 2017. “We will continue our social assistance programs to those people who are really in need,” Guterres said. She added currently the Office of First Lady was working on increasing people’s awareness on breast cancer, providing scholarship to students in need, helping the poor, and other social activities to support marginalized groups. At the same place, Ambassador Xiao Jianguo, said the Chinese Government appreciated the assistance that the Office of the First Lady offered to vulnerable people and would continue supporting the Office of the First Lady when needed.

UPF arrest five people for illegal transactions

Timorese Border Police known as UPF has arrested five people at the border zone after caught-red-handed doing illegal transactions. These five people were caught during the joint operations by UPF and Customs service last weekend, RTL reports. UPF Commander, Joao Belo dos Reis said these people tried to illegally smuggled bags of rice and sugars and also kerosene into the Indonesian territory. “We did joint operations with the Customs Service in the coastal and mountainous areas. We seized kerosene, bags of rice and sugars during the operations. These people trying to smuggle these goods into the Indonesian territory,” he said.
Timor-Leste's National Parliament has taken the case of its Prado cars auction suspension to the Public Prosecutor Office amid former Parliament Members' refusal to return the Prado cars after the auction was called off in 2017, following fierce students protest over the auction decision. Prosecutor-General, Jose Ximenes said they were still learning the case to determine whether it was a civil case or criminal case. "Our team is still learning the case after it was brought in by the National Parliament to see whether it is a civil case or criminal case," Ximenes told media outside Presidential Palace on Tuesday. In July 2017, the National Parliament decided to auction off its old Prado fleet to its members for US$8000, following the termination of the fourth legislature mandate. Responding to the decision, in August 2017, hundreds of students from Universities of Timor-Leste took to the streets in protest over planned auction of parliament’s cars, alleging the cars were being deliberately marked down and would cause state losses. At the time, protestors clashed with police who retaliated with firing tear gas to disperse the protestors. Several protestors were detained and some police officers were injured. As a result, the auction was called off. However, in August 2018, the fifth legislature unanimously approved a US$2.79 million budget to buy new four wheel drive vehicles for its 65 members. As a response, the universities students under Timor-Leste’s University Students Movement (MULT) have returned to the streets several times, demanding parliament to recall all Prado cars to be used by active parliament members instead of buying new cars. MULT have promised to return to the streets this month, following the arrival of the first 35 new parliamentary vehicles. "After the celebration of the Day of the Dead, we will return to the street and demand parliament to hear our aspirations and hold them accountable for the previous suspension of the Prado fleet auction," MULT Spokesperson, Fidel Wailili told Independente on October 29.

Study reveals around 25,000 people with disabilities do not go to school, ADTL concerned

Timor-Leste’s Association for People with Disabilities (ADTL) expressed its concerns over difficult access to education experienced by people with disabilities in Timor-Leste. ADTL Director Cesario Da Silva expressed his concerns after meeting with the Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak at Government Palace on Tuesday. "According to the data from 2015 census, there are 38,118 people with disabilities in Timor-Leste and around 25, 000 of them do not go to school at all. This number is worrying, therefore, I am calling on the government to improve access to education for people with disabilities," Da Silva told media outside Government Palace on Tuesday. He said he had invited the Prime Minister to deliver a message during the celebration of International Day of People with Disabilities which fell on December 3 to encourage all entities to respect rights of people with disabilities including rights to education.

Timor-Leste has a total US$457.51 million borrowing

Suara Timor Leste, November 6, 2019 Language source: Tetun

Since its first contract to borrow money from foreign governments and institutions signed in 2012, Timor-Leste has accumulated around US$457,51 million of loan from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and also the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Finance reveals. "Since 2012 to 2018, the Government has taken out loans totaling US$398.51 million and this year, it plans to borrow US$59 million more, but it is still under negotiations," Director General of Ministry of Finance for Private-Public Partnership, Sitalina Maria Das Dores Amaral Tilman said in an audience with National Parliament regarding 2020 General State Budget Proposal on Monday. Responding to the Parliament Members’ query on the total loan that had been spent, she said from 2012 to 2019, the government had spent around US$218, 4 million of the borrowing money. She also added the government had paid back around US$4, 50 million to the lending institutions so far.

Govt completed payments to 97 state projects amongst 143 controversial projects

Timor Post, November 6, 2019 Language source: Tetun

The coalition government has completed payments to 97 state projects amongst 143 controversial projects that were distributed by the sixth constituent government in early 2017 when Timor-Leste was in preparation for the Presidential Election and Legislative Election. These projects, mostly infrastructure, have been found operating without formal contracts. Speaking to media outside Government Palace on Tuesday, Minister of Finance, Sara Lobo Brites said the government had paid around 97 state projects amongst 143 controversial projects that had been implemented. "From 143 projects, 97 projects have been paid off, the rest is still under process," Minister Brites said. Previously Minister of Public Works, Salvador Pires, said amongst 143 state projects that being awarded in 2017, only 31 projects that had no contracts at all, therefore, the government would pay it based on the results of the works that had been completed in the field.

Anticipating rice shortages: CLN coordinates with private sectors to prepare rice stock

GMN Diario Nacional, November 6, 2019 Language source: Tetun

Timor-Leste’s National Logistic Center (CLN) organized a meeting with private sectors to stock up rice to anticipate rice shortages for the upcoming months as Timor-Leste enters its first month of the wet season. The wet season is a time when Timor-Leste usually experiences food shortages until the crops reach their full maturity for harvest. "The objective of the meeting was to discuss with the private sectors on how to prepare rice stock as a solution to rice shortages facing communities in the coming months," said the President of the CLN, Augusto Junior Trindade, at Fomento in Dili, on Tuesday. He added the meeting was also intended to establish a cooperation with the private sectors regarding the stock rice preparation, so that the private sectors could sell the rice with the lowest price when community experience food shortages. Trindade said at the moment CLN had about 600 tons of local rice and 400 tons of rice hulks coming from municipalities. At the same place the owner of the Alfa Dili shop, Paulo Sarmento said he was ready and willing to cooperate with the government on preparing the rice stock. He said at the moment there was no problem with the rice stock as Alfa Shop has 5000 tons of rice, Perisos has 1500 and Lisun shop has 1000 tons.

2019 OJE execution reaches only 57%, Minister Brites says

GMN Diario Nacional, November 6, 2019 Language source: Tetun

The Minister for Finance, Sara Lobo Brites recognized the execution of 2019 General State Budget was not maximum since the execution had only reached 57 percent to date. "I was discussing with the Prime Minister to defend the government position at the
Air Timor resumes Dili-Singapore flights

Air Timor, through a charter arrangement with Bhutan’s Drukair, resumed Thursday bi-weekly flights between Singapore and Dili after the flight was terminated in March, 2019. The national airline will fly the popular route Thursdays and Sundays using wet-leased A319 equipment, according to a Drukair statement. The charter arrangement, initially valid for one year, marks Drukair’s first commercial operation into the Southern Hemisphere. Tandi Wangchuk, Drukair’s Chief Executive Officer, said: “Drukair has been exploring charter opportunities during our night halts for a long time and hope this venture ushers more such opportunities in the future.” “It gives immense pride that a small airline in the Himalayas is crossing the equator for the first time,” Wangchuk said. Air Timor’s flights between Dili and Singapore was grounded after an agreement with Silk Air was terminated 30 March 2019. Besides Singapore, Air Timor operates tri-weekly flights – in cooperation with TransNusa, an Indonesian airline – to the Indonesian city of Kupang. Commentators close to Dili say the resumption of the Singapore route means a significant improvement in Timor-Leste’s connectivity to the rest of the world. Aside from Kupang and Singapore, Timor-Leste’s only other international flights are to Darwin and Denpasar. In its marketing promotion, Air Timor Members have threatened to vote against the budget bill if government does not cut it back. On Monday, the leading party of the ruling coalition, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) party has threatened to vote against the 2020 General State Budget (OJE) proposal, saying the budget was too big. When have an audience, with the Minister for Finance, Sara Lobo Brites, on Monday, Member of Parliament from CNRT, Virginia Ana Belo, said if there was no change made to the US $1,950 billion budget ceiling, CNRT would vote against the budget bill. “The execution of the 2019 State Budget is very low and there will be a big amount of money that will go back to the state account at the end of the year, so the government should not propose such a large budget for 2020,” Belo said.

November 05, 2019

Australia invites TL to take part in conference on terrorism

Minister for Defence, Filomeno Paixao, who is also the acting interior minister of the country, said he would take part in an international conference in Australia, talking about the issue of terrorism. Mr. Paixao made the comments on Monday (4/11) after meeting with Prime Minister Taur Matan Ruak (TMR) at the Palace of the Government. He affirmed that his presence in the referred international conference was on the basis of the official invitation from the Government of Australia. “I am here to inform Mr. Prime Minister as I am going to depart for Australia to take part in an international conference on terrorism, therefore I am here to let the prime minister know about my departure for Australia,” he said.

Korea and China to set up sport training centre in Dili

South Korean Government through its International Development Agency (KOICA) and the Government of China will financially fund the establishment of sport training centre for Timor-Leste in Becora, Dili. Director for ADN (National Development Agency), Samuel Marcal made the comments last weekend during a short visit to the field with the country’s national leader Xanana Gusmao in Becora. “It is like a sport academy, so it will be prepared for our young people. There will be football, athletics and so forth. And also swimming pool, so everything will be there, we need about three hectares of land,” he said.

Women’s participation in development is important: MPS

Members of the Parliament, Abel Pires and Antonino Bianco have said Timorese women’s contribution to the country’s development was important; therefore capacity building for them was necessary. MPs Pires and Branco made the comments when congratulating Timorese women on the celebration of the national Women’s day, falling on November 3. “Congratulations to all women of Timor-Leste on celebrating the national women’s day,” MP Pires said. Meanwhile, MP Bianco recognized and appreciated the Timorese women’s participation in the country’s struggle for independence.

Air Timor resumes Dili-Singapore flights

Air Timor, through a charter arrangement with Bhutan’s Drukair, resumed Thursday bi-weekly flights between Singapore and Dili after the flight was terminated in March, 2019. The national airline will fly the popular route Thursdays and Sundays using wet-leased A319 equipment, according to a Drukair statement. The charter arrangement, initially valid for one year, marks Drukair’s first commercial operation into the Southern Hemisphere. Tandi Wangchuk, Drukair’s Chief Executive Officer, said: “Drukair has been exploring charter opportunities during our night halts for a long time and hope this venture ushers more such opportunities in the future.” “It gives immense pride that a small airline in the Himalayas is crossing the equator for the first time,” Wangchuk said. Air Timor’s flights between Dili and Singapore was grounded after an agreement with Silk Air was terminated 30 March 2019. Besides Singapore, Air Timor operates tri-weekly flights – in cooperation with TransNusa, an Indonesian airline – to the Indonesian city of Kupang. Commentators close to Dili say the resumption of the Singapore route means a significant improvement in Timor-Leste’s connectivity to the rest of the world. Aside from Kupang and Singapore, Timor-Leste’s only other international flights are to Darwin and Denpasar. In its marketing promotion, Air Timor said it hopes to build up Timor-Leste inbound tourism.

Gang feud in Balibo: seven houses and two motorbikes razed to the ground

A fight between martial arts groups in Leo Lima of Balibo, Bobonaro, on Saturday, has left seven houses and two motorbikes razed to the ground after being set on fire. The incident is suspected involving three martial art groups that have been shut down by the government: PSTH, KORK, and Kera Sakti. The Timorese National Police (PNTL) Commander, Faustino Da Costa said local police arrested a young man during the clash and he was currently in detention. “Police arrested a man in relation to the feud and he will appear in court after 72 hours of detention,” Da Costa told media at PNTL Headquarter in Kaikoli, Dili on Monday.

ME says there are only 800 schools at risk of natural disasters

Director General of Ministry of Education (ME) for Planning and Partnership, Antoninho Pires has denied information from Timor-Leste’s Coalition for Education (TLCE), saying around 1.800 schools across Timor-Leste were at risk of inundation and flooding during the rainy season. Pires said according to the Ministry of Education’s data, there were only 800 schools across the territory that were in potential risk of facing natural disasters. “ME has identified there are 800 schools that at risk of inundation and flooding during the wet season, so ME is going to coordinate with relevant parties to take safety precautions,” he told Independent on Monday at his office in Vila Verde, Dili. Earlier, Timor-Leste’s education watchdog, TLCE, has alerted the Ministry of Education to anticipate inundation and flooding in schools during the rainy season to prevent it from affecting teaching and learning process and also students and teachers’ safety. According to TLCE figures, there are 1.800 schools across the country that usually suffer from inundation and flooding during the rainy season. “Almost two thousands schools across the country usually experience inundations during the wet season and it disrupts the teaching and learning process in the schools,” TLCE Coordinator, Jose Monteiro told Independente recently. He said the Ministry of Education should have relocated the schools which were vulnerable to inundation and flooding and also had proper school disaster management plan to reduce risks and vulnerability in school environment during wet season.
A stray bullet hits Holarua man after a police shooting to break up a clash
Timor Post, November 5, 2019
A 19-year old man, Tomancio Lopes, was shot in the waist by a stray bullet after a police shooting to break up a clash in Holarua Village of Manufahi on Saturday night. The victim's uncle, Inocencio Araujo said they did not about the clash and heard the shooting, but when the victim came back from outside, he was found wounded in the waist. "The victim was not at home and when he came in his brother saw he was covered in blood and we rushed to take him to hospital, but suddenly a police team arrived and took him to the hospital," Araujo told Timor Post on Monday. Araujo said the police had handled the case and hoped the victim could recover soon to testify. Meanwhile, a bystander, Ludivina Da Costa said the victim was in her house when they heard stones hitting the roof and she told everyone in the house not to get out, but then they heard a shooting and the victim fell to the ground. "We were in the house eating dinner when we heard stones hitting the roof and I told everyone to stay in the house, but then we heard a shooting and the victim fell to the ground," Da Costa said. Meanwhile, Holarua Village Chief, Joao Corte Real said he knew about the incident after someone called him and said that a young man was shot by a police, so he was not sure if the police really targeted and shot the young man or he was just a victim of police stray bullet. When Timor Post tried to confirm the case to Manufahi County Police Commander before the news was published, he was not in place to answer the questions about the incident.

Timor-Leste attends Ministerial Conference and International Summit on Green Economy
Timor Post, November 5, 2019
The Government of Timor-Leste, through the Secretary of State for the Environment, Demetrio De Carvalho, attended the Ministerial Conference on Green Economy, a high-level global forum held on the sidelines of the World Summit on the Green Economy in Dubai, United Emirates Arab, on October 21 and 22. The Summit and ministerial conference were organized by the World Green Economy Organization (WGEO), an institution established in 2016 in Dubai, with the aim of promoting partnership between the public and private sectors, to foster international cooperation and knowledge sharing for the implementation of the green economy globally and to promote sustainable, inclusive and fair economic development in the creation of employment. Speaking in the conference, De Carvalho said Timor-Leste is committed to increasing the use of green energy and ensure that 50% of the energy supply in 2030 comes from renewable sources, with several solar panel installation projects since 2011. The Secretary of State for the Environment also said that “the current economic development has caused in our country a large increase in the production of plastic waste, such as the incentive in the public and private sectors to plastic replacement with biodegradable options and promotion of plastic reduction awareness campaigns and tree planting.” "Timor-Leste has planned the creation of a training center for the technical development of plastic recycling, this year a small gas production unit has been established from waste and we also hope to implement another project of plastic processing into oil," added the Secretary of State. Political leaders and representatives of the private sector of the environmental sector from several countries participated in the event. The Green Economy Summit was opened by the Prime Minister and Vice-President of the United Arab Emirates, Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and was attended by former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, former French President, Francois Hollande, former Mexican president, Felipe Calderon, and former President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, among others.

Paixão considers crimes occurring in Dili are organized
GMN Diario Nacional, November 5, 2019
Timor-Leste’s Minister for Defense, Filomeno Paixão considered the crimes that had been taking place in Dili and other municipalities were organized crimes. Paixão made the comments after a member of Timorese-National Defense Force (F-DTTL) had been stabbed in the eye by an unknown man this weekend. “Indeed there are lots of criminals nowadays and it indicates that there are organized crime groups exist in this country, and unfortunately some of these groups had been engaging in sophisticated ways of attacking and killing people by riding motorbikes,” Paixão said on Monday. He called for all parties’ collaboration and contribution to combat and prevent organized crime because the police alone could not handle the problem. Paixão said based on the police investigation, Martial Arts Groups had been suspected to be the roots of most of the crimes in Dili.

CNRT threatens to vote against 2020 OJE proposal
GMN Diario Nacional, November 5, 2019
The leading party of the ruling coalition, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) party has threatened to vote against the 2020 General State Budget (OJE) proposal, calling on the coalition government to cut the budget, saying the budget was too big. When having an audience with the Minister for Finance, Sara Lobo Brites, on Monday, Member of Parliament from CNRT, Virgina Ana Belo, said if there was no change made to the US$ 1,950 billion budget ceiling, CNRT would vote against the budget bill. “The execution of the 2019 State Budget is very low and there will be a big amount of money that will go back to the state account at the end of the year, so the government should not propose such a large budget for 2020,” Belo said at National Parliament, on Monday. Belo said she was afraid with the increasing of state budget every year, Timor-Leste was heading to bankruptcy since there was no fiscal sustainability as Timor-Leste depended on oil and gas revenue and the oil and gas reserves was about to run out in the near future, while there was no revenue from other sectors to keep finance the state programs. Responding to Belo’s concern, The Minister of Finance, Sara Lobo said there would be no reduction in the 2020 OJE as there were many priority programs had been set to be implemented by the Government in 2020.