



SPOKESPERSON
SIXTH CONSTITUTIONAL
GOVERNMENT



**MEDIA
RELEASE**

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Events to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence and 500 years of interaction with Portugal

Important activities are taking place over the next days to commemorate two very significant events in the history of the Timorese people.

On Saturday, the 28th of November, Timor-Leste commemorates the 40th Anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence, remembering the day in 1975 when the text of the Proclamation of the Independence of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste was first read by Francisco Xavier do Amaral, the first President of the Republic.

The 28th of November also marks the highpoint of commemorations of 500 years of the interaction of two civilizations: Timor-Leste and Portugal and the Affirmation of Timorese Identity, recalling the arrival of Portuguese navigators and missionaries at Lifau, in the municipality of Oe-Cusse Ambeno, in 1515. Events and activities exploring the dimensions of this relationship and its impact on the Timorese Identity have taken place throughout all of 2015 with the 28th of November being considered as the pinnacle of this year-long commemoration.

Activities for the coming days have been prepared by the Organizing Committee for the celebrations coordinated by the Ministry of State Administration led by H.E. Dionisio Babo Soares, Minister of State, Coordinator of State Administration Affairs and Justice and Minister of State Administration. Events are being undertaken in all of Timor-Leste's thirteen municipalities with major events in Oe-Cusse Ambeno and in Tasi-Tolu, Dili.

Today in Oe-Cusse Ambeno the Lifau Monument was inaugurated. At its centre is a 8.5 tonne, 13 metre long bronze casting of a caravel, the kind of vessel that brought the Portuguese in 1515. Eight bronze figures including a standard bearer, sailors, a priest and Timorese are part of this monument. Tonight an Official Dinner will be hosted by the President of the Republic H.E. Taur Matan Ruak.

Tomorrow on Proclamation Day in Oe-Cusse Ambeno the President of the Republic, the President of National Parliament H.E. Vicente Guterres, Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Rui Maria de Araújo and many other officials and dignitaries of Timor-Leste, Portugal and other nations will join with the local communities for the Raising of the National Flag, the observation of one minute of silence to honor the fallen heroes and a reading of the declaration of Independence Proclamation of 28th of November 1975. In Dili, the Minister of



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Planning and Strategic Investment, H.E. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, will be part of similar ceremonies to be conducted at Tasi-Tolu.

Before the National Flag is lowered in Timor-Leste at sunset on Saturday, many awards will be presented, sporting competitions conducted, cultural activities undertaken and festivities enjoyed.

The Spokesperson for the Sixth Constitutional Government, Minister of State Agio Pereira noted “these days mark two milestones in the history of our nation as we honour the proud proclamation of our independence in 1975 and recognize how our 500 years of interaction with Portugal has shaped us as a distinct nation in our region. As a part of that interaction we acknowledge the spiritual, human and material support offered by the Catholic faith and Church, particularly during the resistance times. During those dark decades, as we fought for our independence, we survived without external support - the world turned its back on us. Yet we fought on to ensure that the country that emerged from Portuguese-Timor did not fade away. Against all odds, we not only survived, but now strive for higher goals as a sovereign and independent nation. At this time pay our respects to those who have gone before and look to our future with determination and hope.”

ENDS



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