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Note: Items from the Jakarta Post in this edition are slightly edited versions of the originals and items from Indonesian language newspapers (Kompas and Pos Kupang) are synopses translated by the editor (Denis Fisher). The Kupang Post now has a new website which appears not to be subject to the virus problems which plagued the previous website in recent months. This should mean that more items of local NTT interest from the Kupang Post can be included in future editions. Any comments, suggestions or feedback on this clipping service are welcome and should be sent to the editor at dfisher@homemail.com.au.

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1 To Overcome Food Shortages Farmers Cultivate Sea Weed

Kupang Post 6/2/09

Lewoleba: The people of Lembata Kabupaten NTT have recently been actively planting edible seaweed to reduce their exposure to the threat of food shortages affecting them for several years now. Lembata Bupati Andreas Duli Manuk says that seaweed has now become a mainstay for local farmers, who descend upon the seashore during the dry season and return to their fields in the wet season to plant corn and other crops. After the harvest they return to the water's edge. Manuk sees great potential for seaweed production in the Lembata coastal area and says he is negotiating with investors to establish a seaweed processing plant in Lewoleba (which would obviate the need to transport harvested seaweed to Surabaya)...*(more)*...

2 Non-formal Education Must Look to the Sea

Kupang Post 4/2/09, Report by Tony Kleden

KUPANG: NTT Governor, Frans Lebu Raya, told a meeting on the Coordination and Synchronization of Non-Formal and Informal Education Programs in Kupang on 3/2/09 that the non-formal education sector must take greater cognizance of the sea and its riches, pointing out that NTT's maritime area was 4 times that of its land. Thus the potential of the sea had to be harvested for the welfare of the people. According to the governor, one reason why NTT had not yet exploited its maritime areas to the full was its being regarded as a "dry land province" (propinsi daratan), whereas it was an

“archipelagic province” (propinsi kepulauan). If NTT had the latter status, the attention it received from the Centre, particularly in the allocation of funds, would be different, given that archipelagic provinces needed many piers, airports and roads. Frans Lebu Raya said that NTT, along with 5 other similar provinces (Bangka Belitung, Riau, Maluku, North Maluku and North Sulawesi) were currently attempting to have the Centre accord them the legal status of “archipelagic provinces”....*(more)*..

3 11 children die of AIDS in NTT

The Jakarta Post, 3/2/09 by Yemris Fointuna and Yuli Tri Suwarni

Eleven children below the age of five in NTT are believed to have been infected with HIV/AIDS....The NTT AIDS Eradication Commission (KPAD) recorded 538 HIV/AIDS cases as of 2008, the majority of which involved people in their productive years, between 25 and 49 years old. Of this number, 345 were HIV positive and 184 AIDS positive, 11 of them toddlers. KPAD secretary Gusti Brewon said Monday that based on reports from 20 regencies and municipalities in the province, the number of HIV/AIDS cases had increased in 2008 compared to the previous year.

"The number of deaths recorded up to the end of 2008 was 112 people and most of those living with HIV/AIDS, numbering 446 people, are in their productive years," he said. He said many cases had not been identified due to the harsh topography of the province.

"Workers handling HIV/AIDS cases have done their best to identify cases, but many go undetected," he said, adding the 11 toddlers who had been diagnosed with the disease were born to parents living with HIV/AIDS...*(more about situation in Bandung)*.

4 Non-medical Sectors Should Be Prepared for Bird Flu Pandemic

The Jakarta Post, 28/1/09

Mataram: Preparations for a possible bird flu pandemic must involve sectors outside the health field, for sound cooperation to help mitigate the pandemic's impacts, a top official warned Tuesday. "All sectors have to possess plans on pandemic preparedness, including the private sector and community groups," said Bayu Krisnamurthi, executive director of the National Commission on Bird Flu Preparedness.

Bayu, who is also deputy for fisheries, maritime affairs and agriculture to the coordinating minister for the economy, was speaking at a regional workshop for Bali and East and West Nusa Tenggara provinces, at the Jayakarta Hotel in Mataram. Similar workshops will be held in nine other cities involving 14 provinces in Java, Papua and Sumatra islands. The workshop on simulated responses to a bird flu pandemic was supported by the national commission and UNICEF. West Nusa Tenggara Secretary Abdul Malik said in his address that Tuesday's workshop could be followed up by the drafting of a memorandum of understanding on a handling mechanism for a possible pandemic, "especially since the three provinces have signed an MOU on the acceleration of development in the region during East Nusa Tenggara's golden anniversary on Dec. 20."

5 “Sir, Come and Have a Look for Yourself..”

Kompas, 27/1/09

The small demonstration in front of the Department of Forestry last Thursday may have had little meaning for passers-by, given that the protestors could have been just seven men dressed in traditional NTT garb without the bare feet. But, in fact, they were representatives sent to Jakarta by the traditional custodians of the 400 hectare Besipae Forest in South Amanuban Kecamatan, South Central Timor Kabupaten, NTT, which at the end of 2008 had been totally cleared and burnt in the name of Gerhan (the Movement to Rehabilitate Forests and Agricultural Land). One of the protestors explained that the surrounding community, which depended on the forest for its livelihood, had reported the case to the police, the local government and the local legislative assembly. The result had been no solution, just buck passing.

As the protestors (accompanied by a member of the Indonesian Environmental Society (Walhi)) explained to the head of the Forestry Department's Forestry Information Centre (Masyhud) who met them, the only purpose of their protest was to get the Forestry Department to commit itself to resolving the issue. Masyhud said that unruly elements must surely have been responsible for the destruction of the forest, given that the very aim of Gerhan was to involve communities in the management of forests, not to destroy them. Masyhud promised to give the protestors a quick response.

According to the protestors, the regional government had been involved in the clearing and burning of two other forest areas in South Central Timor Kabupaten. In the case of two previous Gerhan projects (in 2003 and 2006) forest areas (along with the community's sources of income) had also been cleared and burnt before being cultivated and cropped. After two years of cultivation, some of the plants had died and been replaced by thorny scrub. Taking their cue from that experience, the traditional community had rejected the Gerhan project. According to Walhi, the government should take responsibility for the fate of these people who had an enormous struggle on their hands.

In their meeting with Masyhud the protestors invited the Minister to come to their area and see firsthand what the people had experienced...*(more)*...

6 Labuan Bajo Clinic Nurses Suspected Malnourished Infant

Kupang Post 26/1/09

LABUAN BAJO: For four days now the Community Health Centre in Labuan Bajo, West Manggarai Kabupaten, NTT has been giving intensive treatment to Firman Saputra (6 months old), suspected of suffering from malnutrition. He is the eighth child of Sudin and Maemuna, both poor, who are very worried because they lack financial means. They had brought Firman to the Centre on the advice of their village chief because he was coughing and had a fever. The head of the Health Centre, commenting on the symptoms of malnourishment, said the child was not suffering from that condition, but had lost weight because of his fever and the heat. The child was already receiving extra food and vitamins.

7 Our Starving Children

The Jakarta Post 21/1/09 Opinion piece by Jonatan Lassa (a PhD student at Bonn University and a member of the NTT Academia Forum)

Just recently, this newspaper reported 11 children died of acute malnutrition in Kupang, West Timor within just three weeks. Four of them were from an ex-East Timor refugee camp in Kupang district (*The Jakarta Post*, Jan. 15).

The story of the mortality of the 11 children was “fortunate” in being seized upon by the media both at the national and the provincial level. But this could be just the tip of the iceberg, because, while the rest of the toll is too unfortunate to experience the spotlight, “a silent emergency” is spreading throughout the nation. Again, this newspaper, reported that the 11 children were not alone. That there were more than 600 recorded infant deaths during 2007-2008 in Banyumas, Central Java, alone (*The Jakarta Post*, Jan. 9).

Let us make a short detour to ascertain the definition of malnutrition. Early understanding of malnutrition, for example by Taliaferro Clark, is “a condition of undernourishment or being underweight. It is seen in boys and girls at any period after infancy or in childhood”. Today, as the Encyclopedia of International Development suggests, malnutrition is “an anomalous physiological condition characterized by continuous imbalances in energy, protein, and micronutrients intake and/or absorption.” The definition changed simply because in the North, malnutrition can manifest as overweight and obesity. While in the developing countries like Indonesia, especially in rural and sub-urban setting, Clark’s definition holds in the vast majority of malnutrition cases.

The question is where the responsibility lies? Who is to blame? Can those responsible take on the critics and achieve zero cases of malnutrition in Indonesia? Or is poverty once again to be blamed?

Since poverty seems to be impersonal, high-ranking officials and the government may only be nodding, confirming poverty as the root cause, as the Institute of Ecosoc Rights, a Jakarta-based NGO, once blamed poverty in their research on famine in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province in 2006. However, as the title of this article suggests, malnutrition is actually a manifestation of poor development. Surely only irresponsible government can be unperturbed amid the death of the future generation.

In an informal discussion within the NTT Academia Forum (a group of academics from NTT), a colleague of mine strongly stressed that “we cannot be silent” on the subject of malnutrition. The problem is, malnutrition is still seen as an event, a killing agent, isolated, separate from development policy and practice, and is not seen as the product of development, or rather the daily accumulation of poor development practices.Thus “mal-development” or poor development practices can be seen as the failure of the state to develop, to progress towards human freedom, including the freedom of the innocent children – the future generation of the Republic. Officials and policy makers may reduce malnutrition to a socio-cultural problem alone and not have the courage to see it as a systemic failure of the development programs.

Often, the legal and formal products are out there to tackle the malnutrition problem. However, the persistent volatility of commitment from the elite means that the issue remains a long-standing problem. This may explain why “mal-development” takes places and thus malnutrition persists.

8 Kupang the Most Corrupt City

The Jakarta Post, 21/1/09

The Indonesian chapter of Transparency International has named Kupang as the most corrupt city in Indonesia in a list released Wednesday. Kupang scored lowest on the list, with 2.97 (out of 10), followed by Tegal, Central Java, (3.32), Manokwari, West Papua (3.39), Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi (3.43) and Purwokerto, Central Java (3.54).

"Kupang scores lowest because it has seen numerous corruption cases involving top administration official and lawmakers for years," a spokesman for the organization said in a press release. The list also ranked Yogyakarta, with a score of 6.43, as Indonesia's least corrupt city, followed by Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan (6.1), Banda Aceh, Aceh (5.87), Jambi City, Jambi (5.57) and Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara (5.41). The survey was conducted in 50 cities; 3,841 businesspeople and civil figures were used as respondents.

Feedback from a Jakarta Post Reader on the above report (published on 23/1/09)

It would not be a surprise that this article found prominence on the front page of the Jakarta Post while the local Pos Kupang printed the information tucked away in its edition of 22 January 2009. Is this because of shame or ignorance or is it trying to downplay the importance of the survey? Probably, as usual, the powers that be in Kupang will laugh the whole thing off as they do with everything that has to do with developing the capital city of NTT. Over many years, the only thing the various administrations have been able to come up with is calling the town "Kota Kasih" (“Loving City”). This is probably quite an apt expression for the politicians and their henchmen who profit from the entrenched corruption and mismanagement. The other, unlucky, inhabitants of Kupang have, for many, many years, to do without acceptable basic services and infrastructure, while many die of hunger and preventable diseases mainly caused by poor sanitation and lack of proper drinking water. It is also ironic that Kupang is one of the poorest cities in the country with a government that can spend hardly 50% of its annual budget to make improvements and develop the town to acceptable standards while corruption is the highest of all cities in Indonesia. Mayor Dan Adoe and his administration should be held accountable.

9 Kupang Mayor Rejects Survey on Graft

The Jakarta Post, 23/1/09

Kupang: Kupang Mayor Daniel Adoe refused on Thursday to accept the results of a recent survey conducted by Transparency International Indonesia (TII) which stated that the capital city of East Nusa Tenggara was the most corrupt city in the country. "Every institution has the right to conduct a survey, but TII is not a state auditor whose survey could be used as an official indicator. The validity of the survey result should be

examined," he said. He said he would only accept a survey conducted by a state institution. "But it's still positive if the city tries to improve." Daniel admitted that illegal levies, levied by his subordinates in the processing of permits, occurred in the city. "I have received many messages telling me about the illegal levies. But I still don't know who committed them."

10 A Glimpse of Adonara Mothers' Dreams

Kompas, 20/1/09 by Evy Rachmawati

For almost 14 years Mariam Bengkata (43) (from Adonara Island, East Flores Kabupaten NTT) waited for her husband to return from Malaysia, but she received no word or money from him. To sustain her family, she made copra and weaved around 4 sarongs per month @ Rp.100 000 (±A\$13.00) each.

This fate afflicts many other women in the area. Halimah (40), left alone for 10 years by her emigrant husband, also weaves to feed her two children. She says she feels like a widow, not knowing whether her husband is alive or dead. Rugayah Hamdan (40, also from Adonara) whose husband is paralysed from a stroke buys fish every morning to hawk them in the village and beyond, and also weaves. Her fish sales net her just Rp.10 000 (±A\$1.30) daily.

The absence of husbands to support poor families is an economic disaster for those involved. Some left-alone mothers do not even have homes of their own. Others have homes but they are uninhabitable. And the sad situation is passed on to the next generation. According to the Coordinator of the National Secretariat of the Program for Female Heads of Family (Pekka), Nani Zulminarni, the children of such households are often taken out of school because they need to work or their mothers cannot afford the school fees.

Official figures indicate that 13% of Indonesian households are headed by women. Nani points out that current social mores sideline these female heads of family and most development programs do not impinge upon them. These women are generally aged between 20 and 60, illiterate and lack even primary school education. They care for from 1 up to 6 children, work as farm labourers or in the informal sector, and earn an average Rp.7 000 (±A\$0.90) daily.

Pekka was established in 2000 with grants from Japan via the World Bank. With support from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the National Commission Against Violence toward Women, Pekka programs were started in four provinces in 2001 (Aceh, South East Sulawesi, West Java and NTT). The program now extends to 8 provinces. Pekka started in NTT in 2002. 70 groups comprising 1 682 women in 42 villages throughout East Flores Kabupaten now benefit from the program. Rp2 690 000 000 ((±A\$348m) have been spent between 2003 and 2008 on programs aimed at assisting the households and upgrading the educational standards and skills of the women concerned..

The benefits of Pekka have been felt, including in Adonara. Thus Mariam Bengkata, a member of Pekka since 2002, has managed to open a kiosk with finance provided by Pekka. That did well, which enabled her to pay off the first loan and then borrow more from Pekka to make her house more habitable. Her success angered her husband when he recently returned home after 14 years. “He hurled various accusations at me and hit me frequently”, she said. Unable to bear this treatment, Mariam and the children left and went to live with Mariam’s parents. Mariam is confident that she can rebuild her life from square one. Other women have had similar positive experiences with Pekka, including Rugayah, who has strengthened the economic footing of her family, sent her children to school and upgraded her house.

One notable case of a woman who benefitted from the Pekka program is a female farmer named Petronela Pene (39), who became head of the household when her husband was murdered. She stood for election and was voted in as Village Head of Nesa Nula, Adonara Kecamatan, East Flores Kabupaten ...*(much more)*.....

11 Pariti Receives Free Health Care

Kupang Post, 17/1/09

KUPANG: About 500 patients (women, men and children) in the village of Pariti, Kupang Kabupaten, received free medical treatment and advice on how to live healthily from the Women’s Empowerment Caucus (KPP) of NTT and the Lai Tao Association in an event held on 17/1 in a classroom attached to the Gethsemani Church in Pariti. The medical team in attendance, led by a doctor, received full support from the local government health services. A spokesman said that three similar programs had been held for marginalized people in other parts of NTT in 2008. The programs were made possible thanks to help in the form of medicines from provincial and Kupang governments and some NGOs.

12 East Sumba Prepares to Invest in Fighting Malnutrition

Kupang Post, 9/1/09

According to the Bupati of East Sumba, Gidion Mbilijora, his government is set to spend Rp.750m (\pm A\$97 050) to fight malnutrition (which as many as 161 people in East Sumba suffered from in 2008). The funds would be used to provide additional food via local health centres. Gidion told the *KP* that there were still infants suffering from malnourishment, though the number was less than in previous years. His government had distributed food to the needy each year via health centres. If people claimed they were not receiving the food, there was something amiss with the health centres and in that situation an evaluation would be made of the health centres’ performance.

Gidion commented that up to now the incidence of malnutrition was monitored by way of a program of weighing babies and children in health centres, which indicated how many children showed signs of malnourishment. This information was put together with other data from the Bureau of Statistics relating to agricultural production and household poverty. A special team, charged with monitoring food supplies and nourishment

standards (SKPG) considered all this data and submitted a report on the situation to the Bupati. That report was used as a reference point for the implementation of measures aimed at overcoming malnutrition in East Sumba..