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*Note: Of the following items, the reports from the Pos Kupang and Kompas are summary translations by the editor (Denis Fisher). Other items are unabridged. Any comments, suggestions or feedback on this clipping service are welcome and should be sent to the editor at [d-dfisher@homemail.com.au](mailto:d-dfisher@homemail.com.au).*

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## **1 European Commission Makes Contribution to West Timor**

*Kompas, 28/1/09*

On 27/1 the European Commission contributed US\$800 000 to the World Food Program for expenditure in West Timor to sure up food supplies for the poor. A WFP spokesperson said the money would go to 24 000 recipients, especially in the *Kabupatens* of Belu and North Central Timor. WFP was helping to address the problem of malnutrition in West Timor, where 60% of children were anemic..(more)..

## **2 \$100m Mega Jatropha Project**

*Jakarta Post, 4/3/09*

Business Mother Earth Plantations Pte (MEP) is investing in the first mega jatropha project in Indonesia, with US\$100 million over four years in West Timor. Singapore-based MEP president Roland A. Jansen said Tuesday the company had started this mega bio-fuel project -which includes the development of 1 million hectares of land and the construction of a processing plant - half a year ago and is aimed to start initial production of 30,000 tons by 2013.

"We will increase the capacity up to 100,000 tons in the following years," Jansen said. He said the company, through its local subsidiary PT Buana Ibunda would start construction of the processing plant by the end of 2009. In relation to the development of up to 1 million hectares of land, the company decided to do this in four stages over a period of four years, with the first phase to start with the development of 100,000 hectares, followed by the development of 300,000 hectares per year over the next three years.

Jansen said the output from the plant, which would be in the form of biodiesel, would be prioritized for the local market, with only a small portion of the output to be exported to countries such as China. Commenting on the renewable energy market in Indonesia, he said that jatropha had good prospects of becoming the main feedstock for the production of bio-fuel in Indonesia, despite the current trends with oil prices being fairly low.

International crude oil prices are currently hovering below \$40 a barrel, as against the historic high of \$147 per barrel in July last year before prices fell in line with the impact of the global financial crisis. Investing in jatropha needs relatively less investment than other bio-fuels and should not heighten the global food and energy debate as it is a non-edible plant, he said.

A number of foreign energy companies, including CNOOC of China and Britain's BP Plc, have expressed interest in investing to help develop the country's bio-fuel sector. Indonesia is regarded as having big potential in the bio-fuel sector due to its vast land area and rich natural resources, including palm oil as a popular feedstock for bio-fuel. BP has also set its sights on the development of jatropha in Indonesia, however their plans are yet to be developed.

In addition to the current low price of oil, unclear regulations and previous lack of government supports in terms of incentives and guidance are among the reasons for the slow pace in the development of bio-fuel projects. In an attempt to promote the use of bio-fuel, the government has decided to subsidize bio-fuel products with a maximum cap of Rp 1,000 (83 US cents) per liter. Biofuel producers have repeatedly complained they have been running at a loss when selling biodiesel to Pertamina, since prices are set in accordance with fossil fuel prices, currently too low to cover the cost of biodiesel production. Indonesia has the capacity to produce 2.9 million kiloliters of biodiesel per year and 215,000 kiloliters of bioethanol per year, with more than 200,000 kiloliters of bioethanol and biodiesel to be blended into subsidized fuels this year alone.

### **3 Swiss Businessman to Invest in Kupang**

*Kupang Post* 10/3/09

Kupang: A Swiss born businessman, Ronald Jansen, met to the Mayor of Kupang, Daniel Adoe, on 5/3 to discuss the establishment in Kupang of a factory to process jatropha curcas seeds into jatropha oil for use in biosolar, motor vehicle fuel and jet fuel. The plan was that PT Buana Ibunda Indonesia (BII), a subsidiary of the US-based Mother Earth, would develop the factory, which would require a considerable workforce. The Head of BII in Indonesia (Mr Shah) and the Director of Operations in the Kupang branch of BII, Lois Lily, accompanied Jansen. The seeds for processing would come from around Kupang and other areas in NTT. Shah explained that BII had last year planted 200 000 ha of jatropha (*jarak*) plants in the *Kabupatens* of Kupang and South Central Timor (TTS). It was planned that a further area of between 50 000 and 100 000 ha would be planted in Kupang *Kabupaten* this year.

The Mayor welcomed the plan, saying that the Municipality was prepared to make 25 ha of land available for the factory. He hoped the project would have positive effects locally

by involving local businesses and employing local labour...(more)..

#### **4 Sulawesi Company Prepares Maize Seedlings for NTT**

*Kupang Post*, 10/3/09 Marsel Ali reporting

Kupang: PT Jagung Hibrida Sulawesi (JHS), based in Jember, East Java, is preparing superior quality hybrid maize seedlings for NTT farmers as part of the effort to make NTT a maize granary. A spokesman for the company (Arturo Polinar) told the *KP* on 5/3/09 that JHS, a Philippines owned company, had long experience in Indonesia and had already supplied its hybrid seedlings to 11 *Kabupaten* in NTT, via the Kupang-based company CV Analika. According to the Director of CV Analika, Kalumban Mali, his company was the sole distributor of JHS seedlings in NTT and was happy to work with the government on increasing NTT's maize output...(more)...

#### **5 The State Bank of Indonesia (BNI) Provides Assistance to Ende Primary School**

*Kupang Post*, 10/3/09

Ende:----On 5/3/09 the Ende branch of BNI handed over Rp5 m (\$A645) to Islamic Primary School (SDI) Ende 10 to be used in upgrading the school's materials and infrastructure. Similar grants had been given to two other primary schools in Ende in 2008. A spokesman for the bank told *KP* that every year BNI provides assistance to various causes (disaster relief, the upgrading of education, health and religious worship facilities and environmental projects (e.g. tree planting).....(more)...

#### **6 Lembata Fishermen Lack Fishing Equipment**

*Kupang Post* 10/3/09

Lewoleba: The head of the Fisheries Service of Lembata *Kabupaten*, Paulus Kedang, said on 3/3/09 that of the 2 291 fishing families in Lembata only 26% had motorized fishing equipment. Most of the others relied on sampans, while many had less than that. Because of this situation the fishing families of Lembata *Kabupaten* (whose area was 72% sea/ocean) could catch only 2 448 tonnes of fish p.a., well short of possible catch of 10 587 tonnes p.a. Another problem was the lack of appropriately skilled government staff to provide training, extension services etc. Of the 31 Fisheries Service staff only 15 had appropriate technical skills and some areas were unstaffed. Despite these obstacles, Kedang said, the *Kabupaten* aimed to increase the fish yield by 13% to 2 769 tonnes by 2010. ....(more)..

#### **7 AIDS Sufferer Dies in Ruteng**

*Kupang Post* 10/3/09

Ruteng: A 45 year old farmer and father of 4 died of AIDS in Langke Rembong *Kecamatan* (Manggarai *Kabupaten*) on 5/3/09. His death brings the total of HIV/AIDS related deaths in Manggarai to 14 (out of approximately 50 AIDS sufferers)....(more)..

#### **8 863 Households Without Drinking Water**

*Kupang Post* 12/3/09

Tanah Merah: As many as 863 households in the village of Tanah Merah (central Kupang *Kabupaten*) rely on wells owned by other people for their daily water supply,

according to the village head Ferdinan Yusup Haning. The supply of water in these wells was not reliable and when water levels were low many could not reach it with a pail and rope. Some wells occasionally dried up completely. A water reticulation system from Tilong Dam had passed through this area since 2007, but up to now no connection had been made to service the people. Apart from water, Haning said there were 168 households in the area which were still not connected to electricity. They relied on oil lamps for lighting and, with oil shortages, were often in the dark. This impacted on children's ability to do school work. The people and village officials had reported these issues several times to the office of the Kupang *Kabupaten*, but so far nothing had happened...*(more)*.

## **9 Central Government Assists with Top Quality Seeds**

*Kupang Post* 12/3/09

Kupang: The central government's Direct Assistance with Superior Seed Program (BLBU) will provide superior maize seed for 15 000 ha of land in NTT in 2009, according to an official of the provincial Agricultural and Plantations Service, Yohanis Tay, who spoke to *KP* on 11/3/09. The provincial budget had made provision for seed sufficient for only 1 600 ha. It was hoped that the seeds would be sown between April and September 2009. The distribution of the BLBU seed would be made on the basis of information (on areas to be plated etc) to be submitted by each *kabupaten* (only 7 had made their submissions so far). Tay said that during 2008 the response of the people to the seed program had been quite good (with the hybrids N35, Jaya and Prima getting a very good reception) and the harvest had been satisfactory. What needed to be watched in future were the practices of farmers. Up to now the tendency had been to sow seeds such as maize and let them be, not fully nurturing them. Rice farmers also planted their rice and left the rest of their land unworked. Going forward, an effort needed to be made to get farmers to extract the maximum out of all their land. Farmers also had to learn to make the most of the dry season for growing maize. Some NTT farmers did, but not all – many doing so only in the rainy season....*(more)*...

## **10 Afuik Steam-Fired Power Station to Redress Timor's Electricity Problems**

*Kupang Post* 12/3/09

Atambua: A 4x6 MW steam-fired power station (PLTU) to be constructed in two sites (at Afuik, Belu *Kabupaten*, and Kupang) was scheduled to come on line in August 2010 and would be able to meet the electricity needs of Timor island, according to officials of the State Electricity Authority (PLN). The project was supposed to have started in October 2008 but was postponed because of the elections for heads of regions at that time. Work would start after the forthcoming general elections. When he met the developers on 3/3/09 the *Bupati* of Belu welcomed the project. He hoped that the management of PLN would take account of the culture of the local people to ensure that they had their support and that, when looking to employ people – whether skilled or unskilled – , the developers would, wherever possible, employ locals to work on the project. ..*(more)*...

## **11 Singapore's Mother Earth to invest \$100M in Jatropha**

*Coordinating Minister for the Economy News*, 10/3/09

Singapore-based Mother Earth Plantations Pte. Ltd., through its Indonesian subsidiary PT Buana Ibunda, will invest \$100 million to develop jatropha plantations and a refinery in

West Timor, East Nusa Tenggara, which it says will be able to produce up to 21 million barrels of biodiesel a year by 2013, *The Jakarta Globe* reported.

Speaking on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 5th World Islamic Economic Forum in Jakarta, Roland A. Jansen, Mother Earth's president, said the investment would take place over four years, and include the construction of a refinery with a processing capacity of 100,000 tons of jatropha seeds per annum by the end of this year. Jansen said the company would eventually be able to produce some three million tons of jatropha curcas seeds on marginal land in Kupang that is to be planted as part of the project.

## **12 Rain Easing in NTT**

*Kupang Post* 13/3/09

Kupang: Rain has begun to ease throughout NTT, with generally higher temperatures presaging the change to the dry season. According to a meteorology official, any rain now falling (e.g. in some parts of Flores and Timor) was due to special conditions in the areas concerned. Rainfall this wet season had been on the low side compared to previous years, but has not affected the planting of crops such as maize, nuts and edible tubers....(more).....

## **13 Livestock Service Considers Piggery Sector Development**

*Kupang Post* 13/3/09

Kupang: To avoid an over-dependence on cattle, NTT's Livestock Service is looking at the development of pig breeding, the head of NTT's Livestock Service, Martinus Jawa told an informal discussion group on the issue on 12/3/09. The general attachment of NTT's people to pigs and the province's already large pig population (around 1.4m) pointed to considerable potential for development of pig production. Jawa said many members of the provincial assembly supported the idea, but many groups were sceptical of the plan. According to the chairman of the NTT branch of the Association of Vets, although the demand for pig products was considerable, hog cholera remained a big problem. To contain that problem, clear rules would need to be in place relating to the movement of pigs from one island to another, especially within NTT. A researcher at Cendana University (Kupang) told the meeting that a big problem which would confront any plan would be the fact that for the people of NTT raising pigs was an activity on the side. They did not really care for their animals in terms of providing sties, feeding them properly or caring for their health. Thus for the pig sector to develop, the Livestock Service would have to provide intensive extension services to change people's attitudes – not to do so would doom any plan, however good. There was also a need for clear government regulations on pig development. Two pig farmers in the discussion commented that the selling price for pigs was low and made raising pigs not a profitable venture. One farmer said pig production was very much like poultry – the income of farmers producing the products was less than that of the middlemen trading in them.

## **14 13 percent of HIV/AIDS cases involving minors**

*Jakarta Post*, 14/3/09

Kupang: The provincial branch of the AIDS Eradication Commission (KPA) has recorded 70 HIV/AIDS cases involving 10 school-aged children below the ages of 15, or 2 percent of the 538 total cases in the province. Some 60 people between the ages of 15

and 24 were also infected, making up 11 percent of the total, while 4 percent of people above the age of 24 were infected with the HIV virus. Contacted in Kupang on Friday, KPA secretary Husein Pancratius said some of the infected school-aged children were registered as students in a number of schools. "The exact number of students with HIV/AIDS is still unclear, but some students in several regencies have been positively diagnosed as having HIV," Pancratius said. He added HIV-positive students were allowed to attend classes, but would be monitored so as not to spread the virus to other students. "In Lembata regency, one student tested positive for HIV, but his condition is improving due to routine medication, despite not yet being completely cured," he said.