



Indonesia News and Views

KERIS (DAGGER)

The most famous pusaka or heirloom for Javanese people is Keris (dagger) known since XI AD. In the ancient time, a man is not considered as a real man if he has no highly valued, treated special care. The keris is and respected with



Keris is divided to two blade (Wilah) and the to protect the blade. making of the blade in one year only for one is called an Empu could make a high spiritually. Empu has to do some like fasting, not sleeping for several

important parts, the scabbard (Warangka), The process of the the old days may last keris. The respectable keris maker quality keris, physically and spiritual deeds to prepare a keris, days and nights, meditation, etc.

Keris has been acknowledged as a World Heritage and received a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity award from UNESCO (2005).

source: www.joglosemar.co.id, jawatengah.go.id, kerisattosanaji.com

"Indonesia's support for the Indian Government to crack down on those responsible for the brutal attack." (page 1)

"Freedom House, an American think-tank, now rates Indonesia as the only completely free country in South-East Asia" (page 5)

"In general, they were certain that their investments in Indonesia were still okay and there were no serious problems. They also said the crisis happened somewhere out there" (page 8)

"Indonesia's forests had a double function, namely to conserve the environment, and serve as a repository of natural resources for the improvement of the local peoples' welfare." (page 20)

Useful Links:

- > Government (www.indonesia.go.id)
- > Department of Foreign Affairs (www.deplu.go.id)
- > Ministry of Cultural and Tourism (www.budpar.go.id)
- > National Agency for Export Development (www.nafed.go.id)
- > Investment Coordinating Board (www.bkpm.go.id)
- > Statistics Indonesia (www.bps.go.id)
- > The Jakarta Post (www.thejakartapost.com)

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DOMESTIC ISSUES

Political Issues

RI Strongly Condemns Terrorist Attacks in Mumbai

Jakarta - Indonesia has condemned Wednesday (26/11) night's terrorist attack in Mumbai, India, which left at least 100 people dead, including foreigners.

"We strongly condemn the heinous terrorist attacks. These cowardly acts have killed many innocent people, who should not be the target of terrorists," Foreign Ministry spokesman Teuku Faizasyah told ANTARA here Thursday (27/11).

He offered Indonesia's support for the Indian Government to crack down on those responsible for the brutal attack.

"And we hope the government will be able to restore security very soon," he said.

Maharashtra state police has hinted that the death toll could reach more than one hundred while reports said the attacks had injured more than 300 people after a series of explosions struck the Indian financial center of Mumbai and shootings rocked several areas across the city on Wednesday night.

The culprits were also reported to be holding foreign guests of different nationalities hostage in two five-star hotels, the Taj Mahal Palace and the Trident-Oberoi.

The Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman dismissed the possibility for Indonesia imposing a travel advisory on visits to India.

"We are not a country which would easily impose such advisory," he said.

"The most important thing is that we, through the Indonesian mission there,

have urged Indonesians living in Mumbai to avoid doing unnecessary activities and to stay alert in any situation," Faizasyah said.

There are about 130 Indonesians living in Mumbai, most of them diplomats and their families, and other foreigners.

Indonesia, the world's largest muslim-populated country, had also been attacked by terrorists, including the Bali Bombings in 2002, in which 202 people --mostly foreign tourists-- were killed.

Yet, Indonesia has been praised for its success in fighting terrorism, by capturing the culprits.

Recently in November the Indonesia has executed three Bali bombers, namely Amrozi, Ali Gufron and Imam Samudra.

The three executed by firing squad in Nusakambangan island, Central Java.(ANTARA)

President Calls for Speedy Realization of Independent Palestine State

Washington DC - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has called on the US administration to push for the speedy realization of an independent Palestine state.

As could be concluded from the recent US presidential election campaigns, Iraq and Afghanistan were two issues that would be of immediate priority to the US administration, President Yudhoyono said when speaking before 200 members of the US-Indonesia Society (USINDO) here on Friday (14/11).

"But I also would like to make an appeal that the present and next US administration push -- and push hard -- for the speedy realization of an independent Palestine state," the Indonesian head of state said.

Yudhyono on the occasion commended President George Bush for his important policy shift, advocating a two-state solution where Palestine and Israel can live side by side peacefully.

"That is also the position of Indonesia," he said.

However, despite the Annapolis Conference's recommendation for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in 2008, the President regretted that there was still no sign that it would happen in the remaining time in 2008.

"I therefore sincerely hope that the next US administration would pick up where President Bush left off, and make it a priority issue," he said.

The realization of the much awaited two-state solution would considerably reduce strategic and political tension in the Middle-East and also significantly enhance America's image in the Muslim world, he said.

"And it will be good for the 21st century world order," he added.

According to Yudhyono, President-elect Barack Obama is well equipped to deal with all this. He has a strong electorate mandate.

The life, personal experience and heritage of President-elect Barack Obama is such that he commands an appeal that on the international stage can cut across cultures, race and religion.

President-elect Obama can therefore capitalize on the high degree of expectation and goodwill that he is receiving from the international community.

"I am confident that the next US administration will be able to meet these global challenges with imagination, with resolve, and with great effect," the president said.

He also said that he had noted the US President-elect's positions on several international issues such as on UN reform, MDGs, climate progress,

Global Education Fund, and aid to developing countries.

"..and I have found his approach to be refreshing," he said.

He said that 20th century was the century of hard power marked by two World Wars, plus several other major and minor wars.

"The 21st century will be the century of soft power. It will be shaped not by wars, but by globalization, diplomacy, cultures, exchanges, connections, outreach, technology, integration," he said.

Yudhyono recalled President-elect Barack Obama, in a speech before the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, insisted that 'the American moment has not passed', and called for today's generation to 'seize that moment'.

"I am utterly convinced that such 'American moment' will depend on how much soft power America is able to effectively spread throughout all corners of the world. This would be the best transformation that American can make as a 21st century superpower," he stated. (ANTARA)

TNI Troops in Congo Increase Vigilance

Jakarta - Indonesian National Defense Forces (TNI) Chief Gen Djoko Santoso said Indonesian troops in the United Nations' Mission in Congo (Monuc) had heightened their vigilance following the outbreak of armed conflict in the eastern region of the African country.

"We continue to keep abreast of developments in the security situations in that country while increasing vigilance and coordination with the United Nations," the TNI chief said after leading a ceremony marking the departure an Indonesian military contingent to Lebanon here on Monday (17/11).

He said the TNI high command has also stepped up its coordinative

contacts with the Congolese government and security forces command to ensure that Indonesian servicemen in the peacekeeping mission in that country continued to carry out their tasks well. Santoso said the United Nations' peacekeeping force was still able to perform its duties well even though an armed conflict had broken out.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has asked for 3,000 additional troops to reinforce the UN peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MUNOC). At present, a total of 17,000 military troops from different countries are deployed in Congo, the biggest UN peacekeeping mission in the world.

Indonesia has been sending a 175-man contingent every year to Congo since 2003 to join the UN Peacekeeping Mission there.

The Indonesian contingent now serving in Congo is the sixth that has been sent there under the name of Garuda XX-F/Monuc contingent.

Congolese President Joseph Kabila recently criticized MONUC of being unable to do anything to stop armed revolts in his country. In a meeting in Nairobi about a year ago, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda agreed to maintain stability in east Congo. Under the agreement Kinshasa would disarm the Hutu rebels which were involved in genocide in Rwanda in 1994, and Kigali would cease supporting armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo. But the two countries failed to implement the agreement. (ANTARA)

TNI-ICRC Workshop on Military Power in Internal Security Operations

Jakarta - Indonesia's National Defense Forces (TNI) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Tuesday began a 3-day workshop here on guidelines for

the use of force in internal security (IS) and counter insurgency (COIN) operations.

"It is the very first workshop of its kind held in the Asia Pacific region," Commodore Marsetio, deputy assistant for operations to the TNI commander, said here on Tuesday.

He said the participants of the workshop were senior military and police officers from six ASEAN member countries, namely the Phillipines, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand plus Japan.

In many cases, he said, COIN and IS operations involved the use of military power in an effort to support civilian authorities. Therefore, the involvement of police officers as observers in the operations would make discussions on the special topic of training and cooperation possible.

In the workshop, the relations between the police and military in relation with IS and COIN would be explored. The activity would focus on efforts to define IS and COIN operations in accordance with international and national legal standards, and the best possible way of integrating them in military training and procedures.

The workshop participants would share their practical knowledge and experiences in IS and COIN operations. The workshop was intended to improve the participants' understanding of the practical difficulties being faced by military personnel in participating in law and order enforcement and counter insurgency operations. (ANTARA)

Vice President: RI Still View Defence As Important

Jakarta - Vice President Jusuf Kalla said defence in Indonesia remained an important issue amid lower budget

allocated by the government to this sector in this year.

"Nowadays we are currently facing global financial crisis-related unfavorable condition. Hence we are required to stay alert and vigilant in facing this situation including issues of defense and security," Kalla said when opening the Indonesian defence and aerospace expo here on Wednesday (19/11).

However, under these circumstances, vigilance, primary weaponry system and military facilities became crucial issues that should be taken into account, he said.

He further said that defence is inseparable from technological advancement which required users of defence facilities to always understand the developments of defence technology.

"Improving and understanding, mastery and development of defence technology could be done by cooperation with other countries. It could not be done alone, as cooperation is an important instrument to enable us to exchange information on development of defence technology," Kalla said. By doing so, stability of global security could be developed in addition to strengthening international cooperation.

The Indonesian defense and aircraft expo is participated in by 337 companies from 37 countries.

Ealier the Defense Ministry renewed calls to the House of Representatives to increase the defense budget to meet the minimum essential forces (MEF) for the Indonesian Military (TNI).

"With a defense budget of Rp 33 trillion (US\$3.6 billion), we will only be able to fulfill the MEF by 2029," Defense Ministry director for strategic policies Brig. Gen. Budiman said.

The Defense Ministry defines the MEF in military terms as 'the number, scale and nature of operational readiness and force structure of the country as a whole and set as a minimum.

Budiman said the Rp 33 trillion budget is only 0.9 percent of Indonesia's gross domestic product. It was estimated that with the country's economic growth of around 5.7 percent per year, the defense budget would be 1.95 percent of the country's GDP by 2029. "If the House is willing to double the budget, the MEF can be achieved within the next 10 years." he said.

As a comparison, Myanmar has the highest defense budget in terms of percentage of the GDP at 8.2 percent, followed by Brunei Darussalam at 5.8 percent and Vietnam at 5.5 percent.

Below Indonesia are the Philippines, at 0.7 percent of its GDP and Laos at 0.4 percent, the lowest in the Southeast Asian region.

In terms of sheer spending power, Singapore has the highest defense budget, at \$10 billion followed by Myanmar at \$6.2 billion while Indonesia sits at third place with \$3.5 billion,

Budiman said that the larger part of the defense budget goes on salaries, which account for 60 percent. Another 30 percent is allotted for operations and maintenance and 10 percent for weapons and military equipment.

He said that by 2029, Indonesia would only be able to provide \$87 billion for weapons and military equipment. "It is far lower than the U.S. budget of \$870 billion a year it uses to attack Iraq," he said.(ANTARA)

Indonesia, the Largest Muslim Country Will Stage A Remarkable Feat of Democracy

In 2009 Indonesia will mount an impressive spectacle of popular choice, in which around 174m voters across 14,000 tropical islands will choose a president and vice-president and 560 parliamentarians. The chances are good that, as in the previous national elections in 2004, polling will be mostly

peaceful and that the overwhelming majority of successful candidates will be committed to a pluralistic Indonesia with freedom of both speech and religion. Once again, the world's most populous Muslim country will demonstrate that there is nothing incompatible between practicing Islam and being democratic.

This achievement will be all the more remarkable considering where Indonesia was just ten years ago: in chaos. After three decades in power, the authoritarian regime of President Suharto had collapsed amid rioting and no one knew what might take its place. Could such a huge, diverse and impoverished archipelago, with hundreds of ethnic groups, possibly hold together, given the weakness and corruption of its national institutions?

Since then the country has consistently surprised on the upside, even if the pace of reform has been ploddingly slow. Indonesia's shattered finances have been repaired. It has developed a free press. The army's hands have been prised from the levers of power. And, above all, Indonesia has become a democracy in which the voters can chuck out their government. Freedom House, an American think-tank, now rates Indonesia as the only completely free country in South-East Asia—putting its richer neighbours, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, to shame.

Popular wisdom

The 2004 elections allowed Indonesians, for the first time, to choose their president directly. The man they selected, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a liberal ex-general, was deemed by international observers to have been the wisest choice from those on offer. Though the speculation about possible presidential candidates and governing coalitions has already begun, the parties

will wait and see how they do in the legislative elections in April before entering into serious talks about the presidential vote (whose first round will be in July with a run-off, if needed, a few months later).

Even so, it is quite likely that the two main presidential contenders will be the same as last time: Mr Yudhoyono and his immediate predecessor, Megawati Sukarnoputri. Mr Yudhoyono's popularity has been dented by decisions to cut fuel and electricity subsidies, so as to avert financial ruin and redirect state spending towards the poorest. Miss Megawati has been on a meet-the-people comeback tour since early 2008 and has benefited from discontent over rising living costs. Yet the election is Mr Yudhoyono's to lose.

A few other candidates will run, probably including Wiranto, a former army chief indicted by a UN-backed tribunal over the violence that accompanied the breakaway of the former East Timor in 1999. Mr Wiranto will argue that an old-fashioned strongman is what the country needs but it will be surprising if he does any better than the third place he got in 2004. Golkar, the party that used to support Suharto, is now led by Vice-President Jusuf Kalla but his opinion-poll ratings are probably too weak for him to win the presidency. Thus Golkar may, as in the second round in 2004, offer him for the vice-presidential slot on Mr Yudhoyono's ticket.

Whereas the presidential race will feature some very familiar personalities, the parliamentary contests will also introduce fresher faces. In recent elections for provincial governors, voters have spurned established figures. This has convinced the main parties that they will need an infusion of new blood to do well in the parliamentary races: Miss Megawati's Indonesian Democratic

Party of Struggle (PDI-P) says up to 70% of its candidates will be newcomers.

The country has consistently surprised on the upside

At first sight the parliamentary elections look like a recipe for confusion. There will be something like 12,000 candidates from 38 parties battling for the 560 seats. This is a big increase on the numbers in 2004 but the next parliament will in fact be less fragmented than the current one. This is mainly because a new rule requires parties to get at least 2.5% of the national vote to win any seats. Of the 17 parties that won seats in 2004 only eight would have met that test.

Furthermore, several mid-sized parties, such as the National Awakening Party of Abdurrahman Wahid (president in 1999-2001), are riven by splits. So the new parliament will be dominated by Golkar, the PDI-P and Mr Yudhoyono's Democrats—all of which are staunchly secularist—plus the mildly Islamist Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). The PKS, like the smaller Islamist parties, has found that moderating its calls for *sharia* and embracing pluralism is the only way to win new votes. It will be the cost of living that dominates the campaign, not theology. (*The Economist*)

News Analysis: Dream or Reality: RI's Role on the World Stage in 2025

How refreshing to hear someone else — someone other than Indonesia itself, that is analytically touting this country's potentially important international role in the coming decade. For once, the wherewithal that makes Indonesia an indolent giant is not being overlooked.

Indonesia was not the central subject in the U.S. National Intelligence Council's (NIC) report *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* released Friday (21/11). But it featured noticeably as a tier-two up-and-coming power.

The 99-page report identified key drivers likely to shape world events in the future. It concluded with a picture already taking shape: A multi-polar world highlighted by declining U.S. hegemony and Europe as a hobbled giant, while emerging powers China, India and Russia assume a more dominant role.

The report's significance for Indonesia was not only that it was referred to about half a dozen times, but also in the way it compared to other countries in this region that currently boast higher levels of economic development.

Singapore, for example, was fleetingly mentioned in reference to state capitalism, while Malaysia was touched upon as a country whose production of natural resources has flattened.

Indonesia, on the other hand, was described as an entity whose political and economic power is expected to increase.

"Although the rise of no other state can equal the impact of the rise of such populous states as China and India, other countries with potentially high-performing economies — Iran, Indonesia, and Turkey, for example — could play increasingly important roles on the world stage and especially for establishing new patterns in the Muslim world," the report said.

Ultimately, size does matter. And size, whether of population or resource wealth, is something that Indonesia has plenty of.

For a country to have a youthful population maturing into “worker bulges”, especially skilled workers, is an asset almost as advantageous as military might.

While the NIC report is primarily geared toward American policymakers, it provides valuable insight for Indonesia to position itself in this forecast environment.

The report acknowledges the rise of Asian regionalism as one of three competing quasi-blocs in the new economy along with North America and Europe. However, the report also notes that internal antagonism “could spur competition among China, India and Japan”.

Indonesia is, and should continue to be, a force in regional integration. Its focus and resources must be sustained for such efforts.

There is a clear role to be played as an anchor of stability amid the intra-regional rivalry — a role Indonesia is already playing through ASEAN. But Indonesia can only sustain such efforts as long as it truly “dominates” its own sub-regional setting.

This means preponderant leadership and agenda setting without capitulating to second-tier members of ASEAN.

Competition between the regional clusters further opens up the opportunity for Jakarta to serve as a mediator between them. As the third largest country in the region, Indonesia holds a respected place among its Asian peers. At the same time, as the world’s third largest democracy, it is also a strategic ambassador in the battle of values.

The report maintains that democratization will advance, although no new wave is expected.

Hence Indonesia’s presence as a stronghold of democracy in a sea of Asian authoritarian capitalist regime is magnified.

But potential is only as good as its eventual realization and the report also makes it clear that Indonesia’s performance will depend on whether it can replicate its success at political reform with measures to spur the economy.

“With abundant natural resources and a large population of potential consumers, Indonesia could rise economically if its elected leaders take steps to improve the investment climate, including strengthening the legal system, improving the regulatory framework, reforming the financial sector, reducing fuel and food subsidies, and generally lowering the cost of doing business.”

Failure would mean not only that Indonesia will become just one of many, but also that the potential dream could turn into a nightmare.

As President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono rightly observed over the weekend, the future population could also become a threat if left poor and disenchanted.(The Jakarta Post)

Economic Issues

RI Economic Conditions and Investment Climate Still Promising: Minister

Jakarta - The government should continue to show to the international community that Indonesia's economic

conditions and investment climate are still promising despite the global economic crisis, a minister said.

State Minister for State Enterprises Sofyan Djalil said here on Wednesday (19/11) Indonesia was still weak in promoting its economic potentials to the international community.

"We have to admit that Indonesia is still weak in promoting its economic potentials, so it is advisable for the government to do more promotions," Djalil said.

Earlier, on Tuesday (18/11), Djalil received a number of officials from JP Morgan (JPM), a US-based investment company, who visited him at his office on Merdeka Selatan street.

JP Morgan is a leading global financial services firm with assets of US\$2.3 trillion and operations in more than 60 countries.

The firm is a leader in investment banking, financial services for consumers, small business and commercial banking, financial transaction processing, asset management, and private equity.

Djalil said the JP Morgan officials met him because the firm had a lot of investment in many companies in Indonesia such as government banks, private banks, and a number of companies.

"They want to get an update on Indonesia's economic development, and check on the impact of the global financial crisis," he said.

He said the JPM officials visited the State Enterprises Ministry office to obtain first hand information about the impact of the global financial crisis on the Indonesian economy.

"In general, they were certain that their investments in Indonesia were still okay and there were no serious problems. They also said the crisis happened somewhere out there," Djalil said.

Therefore, he added, the government should make all possible efforts to

promote the country's economic and investment potentials abroad.(ANTARA)

Finance Minister: Government and BI Keep on Guarding Banking Situation

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said the government and Bank Indonesia (BI) were continuously monitoring and ensuring the safety of the situation in the banking sector, in an effort to ease the impact of the current global financial crisis.

"The global crisis will affect the banking industry, the public's psyche, the value of currencies and interest rates," Minister Sri Mulyani said here on Monday (24/11). The finance minister was in West Sumatra to inaugurate a number of new regional tax offices.

The global financial crisis could also have an impact on banks' capability to provide credits, collect funds and pay debts, she said.

"We will continue to watch, because banks, of course, have different levels of exposure to risks. BI (the central bank), in its monitoring of all banking systems, considers them as a whole to be still in sound and stable condition," the minister said.

Learning from the Bank Century case, the government and BI from now on would continuously monitor bank conditions in greater detail, such as in the composition of their capital, exposure to the business sector, exchange value, and interest rates, she said.

"I have reiterated several times, not only the banking sector, but all business sectors must stay alert to the current global crisis, because this condition is not like having rain one night, and a

clear sky again the next morning," she said.

The global crisis could trigger a world economic contraction and uncertainties, she said.

"This situation could continue over the next six months or even 12 months. It means that the situation we are facing, is challenging and relatively difficult," the finance minister said.

In dealing with the current global financial crisis, the business sector needed to take anticipatory steps and consolidate themselves to lessen risks, and make improvements to strengthen the composition of their assets, the finance minister said. (ANTARA)

RI Economy Grew 6.1 Pct in Third Quarter 2008

Jakarta - The Indonesian economy expanded by 6.1 percent in the third quarter of 2008, driven by high exports, investment and consumption albeit at a slow pace.

Compared to the previous quarter, the economy grew by 3.5 percent in the third quarter of 2008, Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) chief Rusman Heriawan said on Monday (17/11).

Cumulatively, the economy grew by 6.3 percent in the first nine months of 2008, he said.

"With the cumulative economic growth rate reaching 6.3 percent and the economic growth rate in the fourth quarter estimated at less than 6 percent, the full-year economic growth rate in 2008 will remain above 6.0 percent or at least the same (as last year)," he said.

Meanwhile, non-oil/non-gas-driven economic growth was recorded at 6.6 percent, he said.

The slowdown could be observed from the quarter-to-quarter economic growth of 3.5 percent in the third quarter

of 2008 compared to 3.9 percent a year earlier, and the year-on-year economic growth of 6.1 percent in the third quarter of 2008 compared to 6.5 percent a year earlier, he said.

"The gross domestic product (GDP) based on basic prices in the third quarter of 2008 reached Rp1,343.8 trillion, bringing to Rp3,705.3 trillion the cumulative GDP in the first nine months of 2008," he said.

Among the factors of the GDP growth, the government consumption sector took the lead, growing 16.9 percent. This was followed by the goods and service export sector (14.3 percent), the investment sector (12 percent), the import sector (11.9 percent) and the household consumption sector (5.3 percent).

"The government spending recorded a fairly high growth of 16.9 percent as the third and fourth quarters are the peak of government spending. The government spending also rose significantly to offset a decline in advanced countries' demand for export goods," he said.

The government has set the economic growth rate targets for 2008 and 2009 at 6 percent respectively.(ANTARA)

RI's Shrimp Production to Experience Growth Until 2010

Jakarta - The international fishery advocacy Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) has predicted that ASEAN and Indonesia's shrimp production will continue to grow well until 2010.

GAA President George Chamberlain said in Yogyakarta on Wednesday (19/11) that the world's shrimp production, which was dominated by Asian countries, would increase by an average of 6 percent in the 2007 - 2010 period.

In his remarks on the sidelines of Indonesia Aquaculture 2008,

Chamberlain said that ASEAN countries which would have good growth of shrimp production were Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Besides the three ASEAN states, China's shrimp production will also grow well while those of Bangladesh and Pakistan would be less favorable.

"Indonesia will still serve as the second largest shrimp exporter after Thailand with a volume of about 80 thousand and 100 thousand tons to the United States," he said.

He said that shrimp prices in the world market would however fall in the wake of the financial crisis due to declining demand.

Importer country such as the United States imports some 500 thousand tons shrimps per annum, Japan 220-330 thousand tons and France 100 thousand tons.

In the meantime, chairman of the Shrimp Club Indonesia (SCI) Iwan Sutanto said Indonesian fishery businessmen were still optimistic in the current global financial crisis.

However, according to Sutanto, the government needed to take several policies to anticipate the fall in the shrimp demand in the world market.

"The government should among others intensively launch shrimp promotions in the world. It should explain to the world that Indonesia's shrimp products are environment friendly and no longer contain antibiotics," he added.

After all, the world market at present no longer trusted shrimp products from China because world consumers were worried about their health if they consume them.

Thus, Indonesia should take the chance by promoting the quality of its products, he said.

Besides, Indonesia should also increase its competitive edge.

"In order to create competitive edge the government needs to lower the price of diesel oil or provide diesel subsidy for

shrimp farmers," he said.(ANTARA)

IFC Invests US\$ 20 Million to Increase Domestic Coffee Production

Jakarta - The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is to invest US\$ 20 million in setting up coffee farmer training centers over the next four years to enable the farmers to produce coffee of international standards, an IFC executive said.

The investment would be made through an IFC subsidiary, Indo Cafco Indonesia Ltd., a member of ECOM Agroindustrial Corporation Ltd. based in Switzerland which is engaged in commodity supplies, IFC Vice President Rachel Kyte said here Wednesday (19/11).

The company was planning to build four farmer training centres in Indonesia, namely in North Sumatra, Banda Aceh, Lampung and Bali.

"About 4,500 farmers will get training to improve the quality and increase the quantity of their coffee production. After the training, they will receive certificates that will enable them to get premium prices for the coffee they produce," Kyte said.

Speaking to reporters after signing a memorandum of understanding with ECOM, Kyte also said, the company had an internal system that would ensure the farmers' coffee cultivation activity would not happen at the expense of forests.

IFC would invest a total of US\$55 million in coffee cultivation through ECOM in six countries, namely Indonesia, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, she said.

Meanwhile, ECOM Managing Director Andrew Falconer said the targeted premium price of this program was 7-10 percent of the market price

which referred to international commodity stock in New York.

"One of the training materials for example is planting diversification, that if one kind of plant infected by pest, the other still can produce good harvest. This kind of method will give continuous income for the farmers," he explained.

He added that the company managed approximately 3,500 hectares of coffee plantations at present. However he did not mention the target in Indonesia through the program.

When asked about the impact of the world economy slowdown to global coffee commodities, Falconer explained that the world's demand seemed to show no decline but there was a difference in the quality of coffee which was consumed.

"Indonesia is still a large market with 150,000 tons of coffee demand per year, India with 80,000 tons and China 20,000 tons. These countries still indicate rising demands," he said.(ANTARA)

Belgian Crown Prince and Economic Mission Arrive in Indonesia

Jakarta - Crown Prince Phillippe of Belgium was scheduled to visit Indonesia leading a Belgian economic mission, and slated to arrive at Soekarno-Hatta Airport in Jakarta on November 22, 2008, noon.

"Prince Phillippe would be staying in Indonesia from November 22 to 26, 2008, among others exploring investment opportunities in Indonesia," foreign ministry spokesman Teuku Faizasyah said here Friday (21/11).

"An 81-strong Belgian economic mission will be accompanying the prince. The economic mission will be discussing agriculture, plantation, furniture, textile, food processing, building construction, machinery, energy, healthcare, retail, logistics, banking, satellite communications,

infrastructure, defense, shipping, research and technology, and jewelry (diamonds)," he said.

Prince Phillippe accompanied by his wife Princess Mathilde, was scheduled to meet Vice President M Jusuf Kalla and Jakarta Governor Fauzi Bowo to discuss transportation, clean water, and waste management at the City Hall.

"Prince Phillippe is also scheduled to visit the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) on November 25, 2008, to discuss technology development, and meet West Java Governor Ahmad Heryawan," Teuku Faizasyah said.

The prince will also officially dedicate an expansion project of Deslee Clamaa Indonesia in Purwakarta and PT Bekaert Indonesia in Kerawang, West Java. Then he would meet Transportation Minister Jusman Syafii Djamal at Jakarta's Tanjung Priok Port to discuss port management.

Meanwhile, Princess Mathilde was scheduled to visit micro credit projects in Bogor, West Java, and attend a Belgian promotion gala dinner. Belgium is one of Indonesia's important business partners. Until July 2008, the trade between the two countries reached US\$120 billion with Indonesian exports to Belgium valued at US\$828 million and imports US\$375.5 million.

Indonesia's export destinations include Belgium. Belgium is also one of the 30 top investors in Indonesia. (ANTARA)

President: RI not to Seek IMF Assistance

Washington DC - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Indonesia would not seek aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to overcome its problems in the current global financial crisis because in the past IMF assistance had proven ineffective.

"Our national position or attitude in the days ahead is that we will not choose a format like the one we had in the past -- cooperation with IMF -- when we had to sign a Letter of Intent and accept very tight conditions which were sometimes incompatible with our particular situation," he said here Sunday (16/11).

He said Indonesia had 10 years of experience cooperating with IMF which was later considered inappropriate, so in the face of the present global financial crisis it was better for the country not to have any relations with IMF again.

"In light of our experience with IMF, we have now to be more careful in entering into partnerships. To cooperate with international financial institutions, we should make sure that the measures, approaches, and the ways in which the problems are to be overcome will be right and suited to our national conditions," Yudhoyono said.

Asked what the government should do if the global monetary crisis jeopardized the national economy, President Yudhoyono said Indonesia would have a bilateral cooperation with the World Bank.

"It is difficult for us to choose a cooperation package with IMF again," the president said, adding that the current monetary crisis was the right moment for international monetary institutions such as IMF and the World Bank to revitalize their roles in the world economy.

According to Yudhoyono, IMF assistance with its strict requirements and conditions was considered ineffective in overcoming global economic problems.

"In my opinion, we should not use a single formula to overcome all problems," he said. (ANTARA)

APEC Agrees to Avoid Trade War

Jakarta - Trade Minister Mari Elka Pangestu said APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) member countries had agreed to avoid trade war (protectionism) which would worsen the ongoing global financial crisis.

"We agree not to increase the action which can obstruct trade," Pangestu said.

The government will not issue an import ban without clear-cut reasons, she said, but will always support the national interest if there is a dumping case of imported products.

"If we uncover dumping case, we can investigate it and impose the Anti-Dumping Import Duty. We will keep our action to save the market," said Pangestu.

The leaders of APEC member countries do not want the over protectionism like in the economic crisis in 1930, she said.

"At that time all the countries limited their imports by increasing the anti-dumping import duty to protect industries. When one country raised its anti-dumping import duty, the other countries would give a reaction. Trade will then to a halt and the recession will worsen," said Pangestu through a teleconference from Peru.

The policy to protect the market has to refer to the World Trade Organization's regulation to avoid a trade war.

"Trade has to be fair and legal," she added.

Pangestu also said the impact of the global financial crisis has to be minimized by reforming the world's financial infrastructure and the improvement of fiscal policy besides efforts to maintain consumption.

The government also will pay special attention to the needy, and those who suffered from the impact of the crisis.

Moreover, the governments of the APEC member countries have to keep

the market open by avoiding the implementation of new protectionist policies.

All the APEC ministers started their 20th APEC Ministerial Meeting in Lima, Peru on Wednesday (19/11) before proceeding with the APEC Summit on November 22 and 23.

The meeting discusses some important issues of global regional importance.

"The three main issues which turned up on the first day of the meeting were about APEC's support to the completion of the multilateral trade system discussions (Doha Round), the handling of the global financial crisis and the regional economic integration," Pangestu said.(ANTARA)

G20 Summit Declaration Reduces Indonesia's Budget Financing Fear

Jakarta - Indonesia's fear about financing of the 2009 budget deficit has been eased following the declaration made by leaders of Group of 20 countries at their meeting in Washington recently.

The head of the Indonesian finance ministry's fiscal policy affairs, Anggito Abimanyu, said here on Monday (17/11) that the G20 declaration would enable Indonesia to seek financing sources from non-market sources and therefore worries over difficulties it might face in seeking sources for financing the 2009 budget deficit were reduced.

He said around 90 percent of the budget deficit had so far been covered by proceeds from bonds the government had issued and sold to the market.

"The crisis in the US has caused international funds to return to the US causing a capital outflow. If they take a counter cyclical action by issuing state bonds, which will certainly be sold out, global liquidity could dry up," he said.

He said under the condition developing countries including

Indonesia would have difficulties financing their budget because all the funds would go to the US.

"If the bond market is really closed it must be replaced by bilateral or multilateral sources such as the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank," he said.

In the 2009 budget the Indonesian government has set the amount of deficit to be covered through bond issuance at Rp54.72 trillion, he said.

He said the G20 leaders had issued a declaration stating 50 steps to be taken jointly to save the world's economy. The measures include short-, medium- and long-term measures in the coordination of financial, fiscal and monetary policies and promotion of confidence, budget financing from multilateral sources to overcome countercyclical action and trade financing and financing of private sectors and infrastructures.

They had also agreed on general principles on future global financial and economic management with an improved standard of governance covering standards of accountancy, supervision of derivative credits, accountability, transparency and oversight on rating agencies that would be implemented based on each country's condition and capacity.

"From the 50 steps Indonesia benefits among others the opportunity they provide for financing the budget through non-market sources," he said.

The financing scheme is outside that for projects and programs that have been determined. It is also intended for countries that have a sound and solid fiscal policy.

If necessary, he said, Indonesia could also strengthen its foreign exchange reserves through bilateral, regional swap (Asean-3) or multilateral (IMF) sources without necessarily having to sign a letter of intent and they are flexible. "This only applies to countries that have good track records and sound economic policy," he said.(ANTARA)

President Yudhoyono Meets Mexican President

Mexico City - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on Monday morning local time paid a courtesy call on Mexican President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa at the Presidential Palace (Palacio Nacional) in Mexico City.

In a temperature of about 10 degrees centigrade, President Yudhoyono and entourage received a state welcome in the middle of the impressive and antique Palacio Nacional.

"President Yudhoyono's visit is a great honour for the people of Mexico and at the same time marks the 55th anniversary of the diplomatic ties between Indonesia and Mexico," President Calderon said in his welcoming address.

President Calderon also expressed deep sympathy to the recent Gorontalo earthquake victims, and is ready to extend help whenever needed.

In view of the rich culture of the people of the two countries, the Mexican government is ready to boost cooperation in culture, development and trade between the two countries which have reached 500 billion US dollars.

President Calderon also said that Mexico is also keenly interested in increasing political and economic cooperation with Indonesia to higher levels.

Increase in cooperation in reducing the impact on climate change is also wished by the two countries. In the future, Indonesia and Mexico are also facing the same problem of poverty eradication which has achieved good progress.

President Yudhoyono in his return speech said the relations between Mexico and Indonesia has reached a special stage because the ties have reached their 55th anniversary. "During those years, the relations between the two countries were very good, including their diplomatic relations and in

responding to international issues. Economic relations were also very promising because many potentials could be stepped up," President Yudhoyono said.

To deal with the financial crisis together, Indonesia and Mexico, President Yudhoyono said, cooperation needs to be increased, because no other country can avoid it.

After the playing of the national anthems of the two countries by the musical band of the Mexican military, the President inspected the rows of elementary school students waving both the Indonesian and Mexican colours.

The program was then followed by a bilateral meeting between the government delegations of the two countries.

President Yudhoyono will also witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two countries covering cooperation in education and diplomatic training, energy cooperation between PT Pertamina and Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex), and a collaboration deal between Promexico, a Mexican export promotion agency, and Indonesia's Agency for Export Development. (ANTARA)

RI to Apply Brazilian Agricultural Technology

Brasilia - Attracted by Brazilian agricultural technology, visiting Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Indonesia would apply it to increase its own agricultural production.

The president made the statement during a visit to the Brazilian government's agricultural research institute, Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria (Embrapa), here on Wednesday (19/11).

On the occasion, Embrapa executive director Tatiana de Sa briefed

Yudhoyono on the activities of the institute which was established in 1973 and being run under the coordination of the country's agricultural ministry.

At present the institute had 8,400 workers, 2,210 researchers and around 1,000 experts on agriculture who gave advice to farmers.

Tatiana said Embraga's work to increase agricultural production began to yield results in 1991. For instance, the country's production of sugar and its derivative ethanol had since then increased by 139.8 percent or at a rate of 15 percent per year.

Meanwhile, President Yudhoyono said that in a bilateral meeting with his Brazilian counterpart, Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, here on Wednesday (19/11), it was agreed the two countries would step up cooperation in the agricultural sector to increase Indonesia's national agricultural production, especially production of rice, soybean, and sugar.

"We want to study the Brazilian concept of technology, research, development and other innovations in order to increase Indonesia's agricultural production," Yudhoyono said.

He said Indonesia wanted to apply Brazilian agricultural technology to increase its own agricultural and energy production.

"We are convinced that to increase our agricultural production we need coordinated technology, and thus we want to learn from Brazil," Yudhoyono added.

In the bilateral meeting on Wednesday, Yudhoyono said Indonesia and Brazil as countries with big agricultural potentials could exchange their farm products and even strive to achieve agricultural complementariness.

The president said trade between the two countries in the last nine months reached US\$1.7 billion and needed to be further increased.

In the meantime, President Lula also hoped that the trade volume of the two nations would be increased in order to

improve the welfare of both nations.

President Lula said trade between the two states was recorded at a total value of IUS\$1.5 billion in 2007. This year it was expected to reach UA\$2 billion and next year US\$3 billion.(ANTARA)

Vice President Opens Indo Aerospace 2008

Jakarta - Vice President Jusuf Kalla officially opened a civilian and military air show dubbed Indo Defense and Indo Aerospace 2008 at the Halim Perdanakusuma airport here on Wednesday (19/11).

On the occasion, the vice president was accompanied by Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono, National Defense Forces (TNI) chief Gen. Djoko Santoso, and a number of United Indonesia Cabinet ministers.

Also present at the opening ceremony were a number of defense and military officials from Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, South Africa, France, The Philippines, Czech Republic, Italy, South Korea, Bulgaria, The Netherlands, Timor Leste, Turkey, and Thailand.

The Indo Defese and Indo Aerospace 2008 is participated in by at least 337 companies from 37 countries, including 11 pavilions of Singapore, Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Germany, Poland, South Korea, The Netherlands, The United States, Bulgaria, and Britain.

In this year's air show, a number of aircraft and helicopters such as CN-235 maritime reconnaissance (MPA) planes, Bell and NBO helicopters produced by PT Dirgantara Indonesia, would be displayed.

PT Pindad would also display some 150 armored vehicles which were ordered by the government.

The opening ceremony of the air show was also marked by a solo aerobatic exercise by an F-5E Tiger

from the Indonesian Air Force's Air Squadron 14 stationed at Iswahjudi military airbase.

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono said the biennial air show this time was a reflection of the national awakening era.

"This show is also intended to encourage the achievement of national self-reliance in the provision of defense equipment and facilities," the defense minister said. (ANTARA)

Indonesian Fishery and Seafood Exhibitions Being Held in Jakarta

Jakarta - The Marine and Fisheries Ministry (DKP) in cooperation with the Jakarta city administration is holding "Indonesian Fishery and Seafood Expo 2008", "Indonesian Ornamental Fish Show 2008", and "Jakarta Seafood Expo (Jasefo) 2008" at the Jakarta Convention Center (JCC), Senayan, central Jakarta.

The exhibitions were aimed at promoting the country's potential marine and fishery resources to the Indonesian people, businessmen as well as potential foreign buyers, Marine and Fisheries Minister Freddy Numberi said in his written address read out by the ministry's director general of fishery product marketing and management, Martani Huseini, at the opening ceremony of the exhibitions here on Thursday (20/11).

The fishery sector should be developed into a main food source for the Indonesian people because the country's sea products are abundant, relatively inexpensive and nutritious, according to the minister.

Indonesia is also rich of ornamental fish, he said. The country has around 3,500 species of ornamental fish which is mostly unexploited, according to the minister.

Meanwhile, the exhibitions' organizing committee chairman,

Muhammad Sukur, said that the Indonesian Fishery and Seafood Expo 2008 and the Indonesian Ornamental Fish Show 2008 were organized for the first time ever in this country.

The exhibitions are being participated in 54 aqua product and ornamental fish businessmen from various provinces. (ANTARA)

Socio - Cultural Issues

Government Optimistic Tourist Arrivals to Reach 10 Millions in 2009

The government said it is optimistic the number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia next year will reach 10 million with foreign exchange earnings estimated at US\$10 billion.

"We hope the condition will be getting more stable so that the tourism sector will contribute more to the country's foreign exchange earnings," Secretary General of the Culture and Tourism Ministry Wardiyatmo said here at the weekend.

To achieve the target of 10 million tourist arrivals the government must work hard because of tight competition among ASEAN member states amidst the current global financial crisis, he said. The ministry has earlier set the target of tourist arrivals for 2009 at 7.1 million, an increase of the targeted 6.4 million tourist arrivals for this year. (ANTARA)

Holland America Cruise to Bring Tourists to Lombok

Mataram - A Holland-America cruise ship is to make a stop in Lembar port in Lombok Barat district in February 2009 to let 900 of its passengers enjoy the region's tourist objects, a local tourism official said.

The "MS Rotteram" carrying 1,200 passengers would dock at Lembar port on February 24 next year, Lalu Gita Ariadi, head of West Nusatenggara (NTB)'s tourism office, said here Friday.

"About 900 of the ship's 1,200 passengers will visit a number of tourist objects in Lombok guided by personnel of Lombok Paradise Tours and Travel," Lalu Gita said.

Upon arrival at Lembar port, the tourists would be welcomed with various traditional art performances.

Among the objects to be visited were the traditional village of Sade in Lombok Tengah district and a handicraft industry center in Lombok Island.

Lalu Gita said the upcoming visit by the tourists on board MS Rotterdam showed that the situation in the province was conducive, including for tourism purposes.

Nusa Tenggara Barat province has set itself a foreign tourist arrival target of 200,000 for 2009.(ANTARA)

RI Wins International Math and Physics Olympiad 2008 Championship

Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara - Indonesia emerged as the champion of the International Mathematics and Science Olympiad 2008 (IMSO) having won eight gold medals, 10 silvers and 14 bronzes at the event held here Nov 9-13.

The runner up was Taiwan which had collected three gold medals, followed by Singapore with two golds, Thailand and the Philippines with one gold each.

The event was participated in by 250 students from 12 countries, including Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Hongkong, the Philippines, Nigeria, China and Indonesia.

"To support the event, the Mataram city administration contributed Rp 250 million to the organizing committee and

the West Nusatenggara governor Rp 50 million," Mataram Mayor H Moh Ruslan said here Friday (14/11).

The mayor said the city administration was pleased that students from Mataram in the event contributed one silver and three bronze medals to the Indonesian team's performance.

He said NTB Governor KH M Zainul Majdi would give bonuses to Mataram students who had won medals. "However, the Mataram city administration will give them some tokens of appreciation," he said.

The Mataram students who had won medals in IMSO would also be paraded through the city streets to introduce them to the local community, the mayor said.(ANTARA)

RI Wins Five Gold Medals in ASEAN Skills Competition

Kuala Lumpur - Indonesia has won five gold medals in the Seventh Asean Skills Competition (ASC) held in Kuala Lumpur from November 12 to 16, 2008.

The country's achievement was down from last year's ASC when it bagged seven gold medals in 15 skill categories.

"We apologize for not being able to meet the target of winning over 7 gold medals. We only won five gold medals in 19 skill categories," Abdul Wahab Bangkona, head of the Indonesian team, said here on Wednesday.

Indonesia got the gold medals in the following skill categories : ladies' dress making (won by I Nyoman Bayu), bricklaying (by Edi Suwiknyo), web design (by Krisna Rengga Buana), graphic design (by Heri Kurniawan, and cabinet making (by Mohamad Abidin).

The ASC winners have been offered post-graduate scholarships by the education ministry, or internship programs in Japan by the manpower

ministry.

In addition to the gold medals, the 38-member Indonesian team also won five silver medals in the categories of electronic industry, restaurant services, CADD (computer aided drawing & design), and cooking.

Several bronze medals were also won by the Indonesian team, namely for CADD, graphic design, software application, and automobile technology.

The 8th ASC will be held in Thailand in 2009.(ANTARA)

Foreign NGO Donates Mobile Library for North Aceh Children

Banda Aceh - Save the Children, a foreign non-governmental organization, through its Family-Based Care program, has presented a mobile library to the Muhammadiyah Children's Center, a local NGO, for operation in 18 villages in North Aceh district.

Husaini Ismail, Save the Children's manager for North Aceh, said here on Thursday (20/11) the mobile library was intended to help improve the quality of the care given to children in foster homes in North Aceh district.

"The management of Save the Children in North Aceh district hopes that all parties can support the activities of the mobile library in 18 villages in North Aceh," Husaini said.

Meanwhile, Family-Based Care program manager Nurgul Baiburaeva said the specific objective of the presentation of the mobile library was to help increase the awareness of foster home managements and the local public in general about the rights of children.

Nurgul said not only did the mobile library offer books but also video, TV, and LCD programs of educative value to local children and foster homes.

North Aceh district administration spokesman Azhari said on the occasion the activities of Save the Children in the district were fully supported by the local

authorities.

"We fully support the activities of Save the Children here and we hope that the mobile library will be operated at all villages in North Aceh district," Azhari said.

Save the Children is a leading international organization helping children in need around the world.

First established in the United Kingdom in 1919, separate national organizations have been set up in more than 28 countries, sharing the aim of improving the lives of children through education, health care and economic opportunities, as well as emergency aid in cases of natural disasters, war and conflict.

Today, 28 national Save the Children organizations participate in the International Save the Children Alliance -- a global network of nonprofit organizations working in over 120 countries around the world.

In addition to promoting greater public awareness of the needs and rights of children worldwide, Alliance members coordinate emergency relief efforts, help to protect children from the effects of disasters, both natural and man-made.(ANTARA)

UNICEF Completes Construction of 148 Schools in Aceh

Banda Aceh - The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has completed the construction of 148 elementary school buildings at 11 districts and municipalities in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) province.

"The Unicef has a commitment to construct a total of 346 school buildings -- 226 in Aceh province and 120 in Nias and South Nias districts in North Sumatra," Unicef spokesperson Ivy Susanti said here on Saturday (29/11).

She said the Unicef office in Banda Aceh had handed nine schools with their

facilities to Aceh Besar district administration.

"The schools were handed by the chief of Unicef's education section in Banda Aceh, Hoang van Sit, to Aceh Besar district head Bukhari Daud last Thursday," Ivy Susanti said.

Unicef also built 43 schools at several subdistricts in Aceh Besar, which bore the brunt of devastating tsunami on December 26, 2004.

Meanwhile, Hoang van Sit said Unicef would continue to build elementary school building in Aceh, although it faced many problems such as illegal levy, difficult access to the location, and the impact of global financial crisis on construction materials and service.

"We will continue with the construction of schools in Aceh in accordance with our commitment to the provincial administration," van Sit said.

Unicef was created by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1946 to provide emergency food and health-care to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II.

In 1953, UNICEF became a permanent part of the United Nations System and its name was shortened from the original United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund but it has continued to be known by the popular acronym based on this old name.

Headquartered in New York City, UNICEF provides long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries.(ANTARA)

Intellectuals from Five Countries Discuss Ecology

Around 30 intellectuals from Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines are organizing a series of workshops in Yogyakarta last Saturday (22/11), in order to raise the awareness

in the region by promoting each country's culture.

The Asian Public Intellectuals (API) consists of researchers, academics, journalists, and NGO activists, sponsored by the Nippon Foundation. Each participant must conduct a research in another country according to their focus of study.

API is concentrating on the projects of the Code River (Yogyakarta-Indonesia), Biwa-ko (Japan), Tasik Chini (Malaysia), Khiriwong (Thailand), and Batanes (The Philippines). In Yogyakarta, Japanese researchers will focus their study on the awareness of the local people living near the Code River.

The workshop will take place from November 22 - 26. At the end of the workshop, there will be a discussion between three researchers and keynote speaker, Professor Dr Amien Rais.(TEMPO *Interactive*)

ENVIRONMENT

President Calls for "One Man, One Tree" Greening Movement

Cibinong - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono here on Friday (28/11) borrowed the phrase "one man, one vote" from the political world in calling on the people to participate in the national greening drive under the motto "one man, one tree."

The head of state introduced the new motto in his address to declare November 28 as "National Tree Planting Day" and December as "National Tree Planting Month."

One man, one tree, he said, meant that if every individual in the country's population of 230 million planted one tree every year, Indonesia would have

230 million new trees per year.

If the one man, one vote phrase implied the right of every citizen to vote in general elections, the one man, one tree concept meant the obligation of every Indonesian to care for the environment, he said.

According to the president, the one man, one tree movement would make Indonesia greener and more prosperous.

He said Indonesia's forests had a double function, namely to conserve the environment, and serve as a repository of natural resources for the improvement of the local peoples' welfare.

The environmental conservation activity led by the president took place on the premises of the Limnological Research Center of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in Cibinong, Bogor, West Java.

The tree planting program, initiated by the Forestry Ministry, was intended to familiarize national tree planting and tree caring movement as part of national culture and life style.

On the occasion President Yudhoyono planted a nyamplung or bintanggur (*calphyllum inophyllum*) tree -- a coastal tree from which oil is extracted, while First Lady Ani Yudhoyono planted a sukun or breadfruit tree.

The First Lady Kristiani Herrawati Bambang Yudhoyono, to be accompanied by Mrs. Mufidah Jusuf Kalla was also scheduled to plant breadfruit and coconut trees to mark the launch of a tree planting movement among Indonesian women at the Ancol Ocean Park in Jakarta on December 1, 2008.

The theme of last year's movement was "Plant and Care 10 Million Trees" in an effort to help deal with the global warming. The theme of the 2008 tree planting movement is "The food resilience of family."

"Therefore, this year we will plant

fruit-bearing and edible trees. Besides planting trees, we will also provide fingerlings to the people," Erna Witoelar, coordinator of the tree planting movement, said here on Thursday (27/11).

The nation-wide movement will focus on planting and caring of edible trees, medicinal trees, and fingerling breeding for daily consumption of the people, according to Erna Witoelar, a former environmental affairs minister.

"This is to ease the impacts of the current global food and energy crises which have affected the Indonesian people, especially the women," she said.

First Lady has won a United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) award for her efforts in encouraging Indonesian women to plant 1 million trees simultaneously across the country last year.(ANTARA)

Some 86.7 Million Trees Planted in RI Since 2007

Jakarta - Indonesia has planted 86.9 million trees since 2007, exceeding the target set at 79 million as part of the Indonesian Simultaneous Planting Action Program organized throughout Indonesia, according to the forestry ministry.

Meanwhile, a tree planting movement initiated by the Solidarity of Indonesian United Cabinet Ministers' Wives had planted a total of 14.14 million trees of a 10 million target, Forestry Minister MS Kaban said in Cibinong, West Java, on Friday (28/11).

Speaking during a launching of the National Planting Day on November 28, at the Limnology center of LIPI (Indonesian Institute of Sciences), he said the government set a target of planting 100 million trees throughout Indonesia.

Some 200 hybrid seedlings would be planted in the complex area of the LIPI scientific research center.

The complex was located in the river basin area of Ciliwung River and tree planting movement was expected to help prevent flooding in Jakarta, the minister said.

Central Java Province has planned to plant 12 million trees and East Java 22 million this year, the minister said.

Meanwhile, West Java Governor Achmad Heryawan said that the provincial government had managed to rehabilitate around 376,000 hectares of arid land since 2003.

In 2003, West Java had a total of 580,000 hectares of arid area, and in 2007 it remained only 194,000 hectares. (ANTARA)

Ministry, WWF and Jakjazz Popularize Environmentally-Friendly Life Style

Jakarta - The Office of State Minister for the Environment, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Indonesia and Jakarta International Jazz Festival (JakJazz) 2008 are popularizing the message on the environmentally-friendly life style to the people.

JakJazz will appear from November 28 to 30 at Jakarta's Senayan sports stadium carrying an environment message with the participation of the office of the state minister dan WWF Indonesia in a 'Love the Earth' program to popularize the adoption of the environmentally-friendly life style, it was reported here Thursday (27/11).

Ireng Maulana, a senior jazz musician who is also a founder and chairman of the Jakarta International Jazz Festival said that the synergy among the fighters for the environment in Indonesia is important to the Jakjazz.

"We are sure that jazz musicians' inspiration in creating their works would be ever enriched if the nature is

conserved continuously. Therefore, we dedicate Jakjazz2008 carrying the theme 'Love the Earth' to popularize the environment message and nature conservation message to the Indonesian people," Ireng said.

With the cooperation, he said the JakJazz2008 was ready to be made a means by the Office of the State Minister for the Environment and WWF Indonesia to make the people especially jazz lovers in Indonesia aware of the environment.

"We also provide a huge space for WWF in the performance area, to be used for an awareness program and as a means to seek public supports in order that more people would be aware of the Indonesian nature and environment," He said.

Meanwhile, Director of WWF-Indonesia, Mubariq Ahmad, said that WWF was convinced that the cooperation would be very useful.

"When for the first time Jakjazz contacted us, we were sure that there would be a synergy which could be materialized through the cooperation. As an international jazz festival pioneer, Jakjazz has fanatic fans who greatly support efforts to salvage the environment," Mubariq said.

"The 2008 Jakjazz is expected to be an important event for WWF-Indonesia to gain public participation, especially in recruiting WWF-Indonesia's supporters, and calling on adult music lovers to take concrete actions to save the beautiful and eternal environment as an inspiration for various art works including jazz," he said.

The Office of the State Minister for the Environment hailed the synergy between JakJazz and a movement for the salvage of the Indonesian environment.

"Music as a universal language is a rich means to deliver the 'Love the Earth' message, environmental conservation and salvage," Deputy for the Environment Communications and

People Empowerment at the Office of the Minister for the Environment, Sudariyono said.

He said that this event constituted a real example in giving environmental knowledge to urge people to do something for the earth.

In the JakJazz2008, the government again applies the Zero-Waste event concept or 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle), a garbage management to prevent garbage going out from this festival, as an implementation of Law No. 18/2008 on waste management.(ANTARA)

Papua Spends Rp40 Million to Preserve Rare Species

Jayapura - Papua province's Environmental Impact Management Agency (Bapedalda) has spent Rp40 million of its 2008 budget on efforts to preserve the Cenderawasih bird (Bird of Paradise) and the star turtle, and to plant mangrove trees on Yapen island, an agency spokesman said.

The funds were handed to residents of Randawaya and Barawai hamlets in East Yapen district a week ago with each hamlet receiving Rp20 million, Melkianus Wamea, a Bapedalda field officer, said Friday (21/11).

He said Cenderawasih birds in Randawaya and Barawai were the most beautiful in Papua but their population was shrinking and therefore a special effort was needed to preserve them.

At Randawaya hamlet there were 370 Cendrawasih birds living in a habitat 300 hectares wide, while at Barawai hamlet 42 of the rare birds were living on an area of 100 hectares, he said.

Yapen island is located off the northwestern coast of mainland Papua. (ANTARA)

US Pledges US\$40M for Coral Triangle initiative

The United States government has pledged US\$40 million to support the countries of Coral Triangle Initiative to protect marine environment.

Director General Syamsul Maarif of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia, said that the pledge will be allocated through international and local non-governmental organizations not directed to the government.

The Coral Triangle Initiative will focus on marine conservation and management.

In addition Indonesia will implement national program based on the Ministry Decree and the Government Decree no.7 year 1999 as well as to promulgate the Planning Action National for Conservation and Turtle Management by protecting marine ecosystem, coral reefs, shark, turtle, *cetacean*, invertebrate and selected marine plants and identifying marine living organism.(unofficial translation – ANTARA)

REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

President Yudhoyono Addresses APEC CEO Summit

Lima - President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono delivered a speech at the second-day APEC CEO forum of business top executives and academicians of the Asia Pacific region at the Defence Ministry building in Lima Friday (21/11).

The President in his speech touched on Economic Growth and Poverty: Challenge to Developing Countries. The APEC CEO forum was opened at 9 a.m by Peruvian President Alan Garcia

Perez and the president of the APEC CEO meeting Jose Miguel Morales.

At 9.45 a.m local time Singaporean Foreign Minister George Yeo addressed the meeting touching on the implications of the financial crisis on the global economy. Later Indonesian's Minister of Trade Mari Pangestu chaired a session on contribution of APEC to the development of free trade.

The APEC CEO was held to give the opportunity to businesspeople from the Asia Pacific region to watch the presentation of business leaders, academicians and world leaders.

One-time Peruvian Prime Minister Pedro pablo Kuczynski made a presentation on Peru as a gateway to Latin America, then at 2.30 p.m the conference was presided over by Chinese President Hu Jintao and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. The address of President Yudhoyono was at 8 pm followed by an address by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet touching on the challenges of globalization.

Earlier, President Yudhoyono had a bilateral meeting with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key at Melia Hotel in Lima.(ANTARA)

DPR Hosting Asian Parliamentary Assembly Meeting

Jakarta - The Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) is preparing for an Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) meeting to be held on November 27-29, 2008. The organizing committee set up by the House's Secretariat General was busy on Wednesday (26/11) decorating and preparing the Pustaka Loka room which is to be used for the opening ceremony.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is scheduled to open the third APA. The business sessions of the assembly will be held at the Sultan Hotel in South Jakarta. The opening

ceremony will start at 9.30 AM with speeches by Speaker Agung Laksono and APA President Ali Larijani who is also Iran's house speaker.

The APA will be participated in by 250 delegates from 31 parliaments across Asia. The APA will also be attended by observers from international organizations such as the ASEAN Parliament, the Inter Parliamentary Union, the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

In the meeting this year APA will elect a new president. Agung Laksono is expected to assume the presidency for the next two-year term. In the meeting, APA Secretary General Nejad Hossenian will also present a report from former APA president Haddad Adel.

After the opening ceremony, the chiefs of the delegations will plant trees on the Parliament's premises as part of a one-billion tree planting program in Asia. Major topics on the APA assembly's agenda include ways to overcome the ongoing global financial crisis. Therefore, the APA meeting will feature Indonesia's Finance Minister Sri Mulyani as one of the speakers.

Agung Laksono as Indonesia's House Speaker said that APA meeting would formulate an alternative financial system. He explained that the current international financial system needed to be revised because it had proven vulnerable to crises.(ANTARA)

RI Wants Money for Countries Affected by Crisis

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has sought to hold accountable countries responsible for the financial crisis by calling for new funds for disbursement to less developed and developing nations adversely affected by the crisis.

Attending a summit of the world's 20 largest economies (G-20) here Saturday (15/11), Yudhoyono said it was only fair the global community gave countries such as Indonesia, which he said was an innocent victim of the crisis, money to help deal with the impact of the financial meltdown.

“That is why we need to form a kind of a ‘Global Expenditure Support Fund’ to support budget financing, on top of regular development assistance. This fund should be made available to countries that are most vulnerable and most in need,” he said.

“It should also be given to countries that have a strong track record in adopting sound policies and fiscal sustainability.”

The President's remarks followed those by the leaders of the United States, Brazil, China and India.

The proposal, Yudhoyono said, got a positive reception at the summit and was accommodated in the Declaration of the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy, issued after the meeting held at the National Building Museum.

He was referring to one of the immediate action plans in the declaration that read: “In cases where severe market disruptions have limited access to the necessary financing for counter-cyclical fiscal policies, multilateral development banks must ensure arrangements are in place to support, as needed, those countries with a good track record and sound policies.”

Yudhoyono said many developing and less developed countries, economically stable before the crisis, were now struggling to finance development projects, sustain their budgets, and meet

the ambitious Millennium Development Goals.

Indonesia's economy is bracing for a slowdown in the fourth quarter of the year, and beyond, with exports already suffering from canceled and slashed orders, while investment is expected to drop off as funds steer clear of emerging economies amid a global credit crunch.

The economy grew by a healthy 6.3 percent in the third quarter from a year earlier, according to the central bank, but is expected to slow down in the fourth quarter.

For next year, while the government expects the economy to grow by 6 percent, economists predict a much lower figure, with the prestigious Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) projecting growth at a mere 3.7 percent.

In his meeting with World Bank president Robert Zoelick, Yudhoyono said the proposal was welcomed. The bank, which Yudhoyono said specifically praised Indonesia's financial reform and stability at the summit, was already pooling fresh cash assistance from rich countries.

He stressed that the new proposal — whether in the form of grants, soft loans or debt swaps — should not be loaded with conditions. Otherwise, he warned, the money would end up not being disbursed.

“What's crucial now is for advanced economies to help developing and less developed ones sustain their expenditure capacity,” Yudhoyono said.

The next summit is scheduled for late April next year, with U.S. president-elect Barack Obama in attendance. (The Jakarta Post)

Aceh Hosting International Conference on Locals-Migrants Relations

Banda Aceh - Representatives of nine European and Asian countries grouped in the Asian-European Meeting (ASEM) hold a conference here on Wednesday (19/11) on relations and conflicts between local peoples and newcomers in former conflict regions in Asia and Europe.

"Usually, after a conflict has been resolved and the rival groups have reconciled, conflicts arise between migrants and the local natives because of something like a cultural clash," said Timo Kivimaki, head of the ASEM Education Hub Thematic Network on Peace and Conflict Studies, here on Tuesday (18/11).

The one-day conference is to be attended by nine European and Asian countries. It aims to develop knowledge and cooperation to support harmonious relations between local peoples and migrants.

Held for the second time, the conference would be participated in by scholars on conflict from Spain, Finland, China, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Philippines, Germany and Singapore.

Conflicts between local people and migrants, according to Kivimaki, often happen after peace had been achieved in former conflict areas in Asia and Europe.

"In some countries, relations between locals and migrants tend to be marked by political and social tensions, racism and stereotypes," he said.

Aceh as an ex-conflict area where reconciliation had been achieved, might well develop a problem of inharmonious relations between locals and outsiders. Moreover, Aceh had an Islam-based culture, according to Kivimaki. "The issue of relations between local people and newcomers is very important and needs to be discussed at a conference

to overcome tensions and learn from other countries' experiences," said the senior researcher from the Nordic Institute For Asian Studies (NIAS).

Meanwhile, Nanggroe Aceh Darussakam (NAD) Deputy Governor Muhammad Nazar said, after the signing of the peace accord by the Free Aceh Movement (GAN) and the Indonesian government in Helsinki in 2005, everyone in Aceh had agreed to keep the peace.

"Aceh has a long experience of conflict and had to tread a very difficult path toward peace. Therefore, peace in Aceh must be maintained at all cost," Nazar said.(ANTARA)

RI Needs to Prepare for ASCC's Formation in 2015

Bandung, W Java - Indonesia has to be ready to welcome the formation of an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) in 2015, a foreign ministry official said.

"Our people will invariably have to be ready to welcome the ASCC program," Ben Perkasa Drajat, director for ASEAN functional cooperation at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, said here on Thursday (20/11) after a function to familiarize the public about ASEAN governments' efforts to draw up a blueprint for the ASCC.

He said it was not impossible that under the ASCC program, a community of states would be formed that would have formidable strength in various areas of life. This was why, a blueprint for its formation was needed. The blueprint which was currently under discussion among the ASEAN member countries would serve a reference to each of them in preparing themselves for the ASCC's launching in 2015, he said.

It was expected to be adopted at the 14th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok next December.

"The aim of the ASCC is to contribute to the formation of a people-centered ASEAN Community and it will bear the social responsibility to create a cohesive and united ASEAN community," Drajat said.

The aim would be achieved through the formation of a common identity and the development of a mutually-caring and -sharing community that was inclusive in character and prioritized the improvement of the community's prosperity.

The ASCC's blueprint would consist of six main elements, namely human resources development, social justice and rights, ensuring environmental sustainability, building an ASEAN identity and narrowing development gaps.(ANTARA)

Diversities in Various Fields Biggest Challenge in Forming ASCC

Bandung, W Java - The cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversities existing in ASEAN member states will be the biggest challenge in the formation of an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) by 2015, an Indonesian official said.

"In all ASEAN member countries there is diversity in culture, religion, ethnicity and race. I think this fact can be an obstacle in the formation of the ASCC," Ben Perkasa Drajat, director for ASEAN functional cooperation at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, said here Thursday (20/11).

In the matter of democratization, for instance, Indonesia and the Philippines had the same understanding of the concept but countries like Myanmar and Laos had different ideas, he said.

Another area in which ASEAN member nations adhered to different ways was implementation of human rights. Malaysia and the Philippines would most likely not be able to have

the same understanding in this matter, he added.

"Indonesia is a pioneer in the ASEAN region as it highly respects human rights. This is reflected by the fact that it has formed a National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM)," said Drajat.

"In Indonesia, it is not easy to put someone in jail. There are certain procedures that must be followed," he added.

Meanwhile, in Singapore someone can be easily arrested and jailed through its Internal Security Act system.

Indonesia had a very strategic position in the ASCC, and therefore, it was planning to introduce its concept of inter-faith tolerance to the other ASEAN member countries.

"In fact, it is not impossible that our concept of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) can be implemented in the ASCC," said Drajat.(ANTARA)