

# Indonesia News & Views

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North Sumatra

There are five main ethnic groups and languages in the region: The coastal Malays, living along the Malaka Straits, the Bataks, consisting of the sub-tribes around Lake Toba and Samosir Island, are Karo, Toba, Dairi, Simalungun, the Angkola or Mandailing of the southern Tapanuli, and Nias Islanders off the western coast of the province. These groups each have their own dialects, religious beliefs, arts, custom and cultures. Several ethnic groups live in Medan and other towns of North Sumatra, the largest of these being Chinese and Indian.

source: [www.my-indonesia.info](http://www.my-indonesia.info), [www.sumateratourism.com](http://www.sumateratourism.com)

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## RI 'the Most Confident Country' in Facing Crisis

Indonesia boasts the highest consumer confidence index in the world, a survey by the Nielsen Company shows, effectively brushing off any threat to economic activities here from the global economic crisis.

The survey, revealed Thursday (23/4), showed Indonesia topped Nielsen's global consumer confidence index with 104 points, followed by Denmark (102 points) and India (99 points). The lowest score goes to Korea and

Portugal, with 31 and 48 index points, respectively. "Indonesia is the most confident country in facing the global crisis," the Nielsen executive director of customer research, Catherine Eddy.(continue to page 1)

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*May 2009*

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>>> *May 12 - 14, 2009*

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*Jakarta Fashion & Food Festival 2009 held in Jakarta, Indonesia. Further information, please visit [www.jfff.info](http://www.jfff.info)*

>>> *May 22 - 26, 2009*

*Majapahit Travel Fair 2009 held in Surabaya, Indonesia. Further information, please visit [www.majapahittravelfair.com](http://www.majapahittravelfair.com)*



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# INDONESIA

## *ULTIMATE IN DIVERSITY*



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**DOMESTIC ISSUES**

**Political Issues**

**Indonesia to Deploy More Military Personnel UN Troops in Beirut**

Beirut, - Indonesia will deploy more military personnel to join the UN peacekeeping force, the number of which will be increased to 2,000 troops in 2009.

International security director at the Foreign Ministry Fikry Cassid said here Monday (20/4) the number of Indonesian military personnel in the UN peacekeeping force was 1,526 assigned in four regions, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Speaking in a seminar on the participation of Indonesia in the peacekeeping force in Lebanon, he said that Indonesia was one of the countries having a big number of troops in the UN mission.

"In 2009, we plan to raise the number of military troops to 2,000," he said, adding that the plan will have to be reconsidered in view of the global economic crisis.

It was reported that Indonesia for the first time joined the UN mission in 1957.

According to Frikry, the participation of Indonesia in the UN peacekeeping mission was aimed at strengthening multilateral cooperation to settle conflicts.

The participation was based on the free-and-active foreign policy laid down in the 1945 constitution.

In addition, the participation of Indonesia is also aimed at enhancing the capability and professionalism of military and police personnel.

As to the UN mission in Lebanon, Indonesia joined not only the army, but also a maritime task force of UNIFIL with 1,400 troops.

This really indicated Indonesian commitment to keep world peace on the basis of free-and-active foreign policy, Fikry said.(ANTARA)

**Economic Issues**

**RI 'the Most Confident Country' in Facing Crisis**

Indonesia boasts the highest consumer confidence index in the world, a survey by the Nielsen Company shows, effectively brushing off any threat to economic activities here from the global economic crisis. The survey, revealed Thursday (23/4), showed Indonesia topped Nielsen's global consumer confidence index with 104 points, followed by Denmark (102 points) and India (99 points).

The lowest score goes to Korea and Portugal, with 31 and 48 index points, respectively. "Indonesia is the most confident country in facing the global crisis," the Nielsen executive director of customer research, Catherine Eddy, said during the announcement of the survey.

The latest biannual Nielsen Consumer Confidence survey, conducted between March 19 and April 2 and involving interviews with 25,140 regular Internet respondents from 50 countries, showed that global consumer confidence had plummeted to a new record low in the past six months.

The index fell 7 points, down from 84 to 77, according to the latest survey. "We interviewed Internet users, whom most of whom are well-educated and have middle- to upper-income jobs," Eddy said. "We found most Indonesian respondents were highly optimistic in facing the crisis." She added 86 percent of 533 Indonesian respondents were very optimistic with local job prospects within the next 12 months, while only 9 percent felt uncertain with their job security.

"Indonesians also perceive they can keep buying the things they want and need, even during the global crisis," Eddy said. "Indonesians are also confident with their personal finances in the years ahead."

The survey revealed 70 percent of Indonesians were optimistic with regard to financial stability.

Despite the optimism, the survey also showed that Indonesians tended to save their money rather than spend it during the crisis. "Our survey discovered 67 percent of Indonesian respondents put their cash into savings," Eddy pointed out. She added the respondents were not holding back entirely

from spending. They also still spent their money for good bargains. “They like to spend their money for certain materials, which would benefit some companies during the economic crisis,” she said.

The survey showed 29 percent of Indonesians liked to spend their money on new technology products, while 25 percent spent money on holidays. Twenty percent spent money on outdoor entertainment, 17 percent on house redecorating, and 44 percent on investment in shares or stocks. “Actually there was a significant drop in the investment sector,” Eddy said. “In the second half of 2008, 50 percent of the Indonesians interviewed invested their money in stock funds.”

She added the global crisis had already influenced Indonesians to be more careful in investing. “Surprisingly, the demand to purchase new clothes is still similar to that in the second half of 2008 and first half of 2009,” she said. “About 17 percent Indonesian respondents still like to buy clothes,” she added. (The Jakarta Post)

### **Investors See RI Market As 3rd Most Optimistic**

The Indonesian capital market has retained its position as the third most optimistic market in the Asia-Pacific region in the first quarter of this year. A survey released last week by the Dutch financial services giant ING, placed Indonesia after India and China, strengthening its position as one of the stronger capital markets in the region, amid the global economic crisis that has sent most bourses in the world into turmoil. Last year, Indonesia also ranked third after China and India.

“The ongoing optimism is likely because investors felt that Indonesia’s economy was cushioned to an extent by high commodity prices and fuel prices correction,” ING Securities Indonesia president director Robert Scholten said in a text message.

He added the government’s quick response to the global crisis by managing the country’s economy well had also made investors more confident in Indonesia. The survey measures and tracks investor sentiment and behavior every quarter from 13 Asia-Pacific markets, including China, Hong Kong, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Commenting on investor confidence in the Indonesia capital market, Mandiri Asset

Management head of equity Kenny Soejatman said Indonesia had become a safe haven for investors. “The political situation is relatively stable, even after the elections, and the economy is still growing, so there is no reason for investors not to invest here,” he said.

The relatively peaceful legislative elections, coupled with early poll results that indicate the incumbent President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono may likely be re-elected, have received positive responses from the market.

The Jakarta Composite Index jumped 11.8 percent in the last two weeks, while the rupiah gained 7.1 percent this month, making it Asia’s best-performing currency. Despite the global crisis, the Indonesia economy is expected to keep growing by between 4 and 4.5 percent this year, relatively better than neighboring countries, where the economies may contract.

The Finance Ministry estimates the economy grew by between 4.3 percent and 4.8 percent in the first quarter of this year. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) will announce the official figure in May.

However, stock market analyst Felix Sindhunata suggested a touch of caution, warning it was still not clear who would run the administration for the next five years. “We must wait at least until the presidential election in July.”

Despite the encouraging outlook on investor confidence in the Indonesian market, the ING survey also showed the investor sentiment index for Indonesia fell to 96 in the first quarter of this year from 109 in the fourth quarter last year, as investors were taking a conservative investment approach in the face of the worsening global economy. “It’s not surprising to see Indonesian investors remain conservative in their investment approach. This is after all not the first crisis to hit Indonesia, and most investors have learned their lesson,” Scholten said.

#### Some of investors’ views:

\* 56 percent of Indonesian investors take a balanced investment strategy and continue to look for medium- to long-term growth with stable return.

\* 51 percent do not know what investment decision to take and 32 percent claim they will invest less and reserve more cash.

\* 83 percent are worried about job security.

(The Jakarta Post)

## **State-Owned Companies' Performance in 2008 Good**

Jakarta, - State Enterprises Minister Sofyan Djalil said here on Monday (27/4) that the country's state-owned companies' financial performance remained encouraging despite the global economic crisis which hit the country since 2008.

In general, the companies' net profit in the past three years from 2006 to 2008 rose 149 percent from Rp71.12 trillion in 2007 to Rp79.27 trillion while their assets increased to 122 percent from Rp1,845.89 trillion to Rp2,040.26 trillion and dividends increased by 136 percent, he said.

"During the period the number of state-owned companies that booked increasing profits increased from 104 to 118 while the number of companies that incurred losses dropped from 35 to 23," he said after meeting with members of the House Commission VI.

According to his office, the ten state-owned companies that booked the biggest profit in 2008 include state oil and gas company Pertamina with Rp30.20 trillion, up from Rp24.46 trillion it gained in 2007 and state telecommunications company PT Telkom with Rp10.30 trillion, down from Rp12.86 trillion in 2006.

The others are PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia with Rp5.96 trillion or up from Rp4.94 trillion, and PT Bank Mandiri with Rp4.35 trillion to Rp5.32 trillion.

State cement producer PT Semen Gresik's profit meanwhile increased from Rp1.78 trillion to Rp4.35 trillion, state gas distributor PT PGN from Rp1.57 trillion to Rp2.14 trillion, and PT Batubara Bukit Asam from Rp1.76 trillion.

State mining company PT Aneka Tambang's profit dropped from Rp5.13 trillion to Rp1.37 trillion while state tin producer PT Timah's profit was also down from Rp1.78 trillion to Rp1.34 trillion and fertilizer producer PT Pupuk Sriwijaya from Rp1.7 trillion to Rp1.33 trillion.

Four state-owned companies that suffered a big loss in 2008 are electricity producer PT PLN with its loss reaching Rp13.21 trillion from merely Rp5.65 trillion before, PT Merpati Nusantara airline Rp556.73 billion from Rp114.8 billion before, plantation company PT Perkebunan Nusantara XIV Rp99.23 trillion from Rp56.54 billion and paper

company PT Kertas Leces Rp63.38 trillion from Rp40.91 trillion.

Sofyan Djalil said in 2009 his office would focus to continue restructuring the companies more effectively. "We are trying to reduce the number of losing companies by seeking the best solutions and alternatives through increasing their synergy to raise their leverage and value besides improving aspects of good corporate governance," he said.

He said on-going sectoral restructuring programs that would still be continued were those in the plantation, mining, pharmaceutical, construction, seaport, airport, banking and financial sectors.

To speed up the process the minister said the government had named state asset management company PT Perusahaan Pengelola Aset to handle the companies facing financial performance problems. (ANTARA)

## **RI Attracted \$2 Bln in Foreign Capital in Q1**

Jakarta - As much as US\$2 billion in foreign capital funds flowed into Indonesia during the first quarter of 2009, reflecting a recovery of investors' confidence in the country, a minister said.

"As we can all see, the rupiah is currently beginning to strengthen, and the stock price index has advanced. During the first quarter of 2009, the government has recorded the entry of more than US\$2 billion in foreign capital into Indonesia. Therefore, the government will continue to protect the favorable perceptions of the Indonesian economy," Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs/Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said here on Wednesday (22/4).

Minister Sri Mulyani made the statement when speaking at a seminar on the government's work plan 2010 themed "National Economic Recovery and Maintenance of the People's Welfare" here on Wednesday.

She said in the current global economic crisis, funds in developing countries had fled to the countries of origin so that the developing countries' funds had dried up.

"The flow of foreign capital into developing countries has dropped by almost US\$600 billion to US\$170 billion. Many countries are competing to attract the foreign

capital funds so it has become difficult to obtain capital," she said.

However, Indonesia's economy was at present still considered more stable compared to other countries in the world, because its economic growth projection in 2009 was still positive within a range of 4.3 to 4.8 percent, according to Sri Mulyani.

"Therefore, we are seen as positive by investors as our economy has passed the test amid the ongoing global economic crisis," the minister said.

Meanwhile, the chief economist of state-owned Bank Mandiri, Mirza Adityaswara, said here on Tuesday (21/4) the critical point in the economic downturn had been passed and therefore the country's economy had now started to improve.

He said the central bank's statement that the country's economy had grown 4.6 percent in the first quarter of 2009 was good news for the market because its earlier forecast was that the economy would grow below four percent or around three to four percent. "This means we are still strong," he said.(ANTARA)

### **Investment Approvals in Oil and Gas Sector Up \$2.2 Billion**

Medan, N. Sumatra, - Investment approvals in Indonesia's oil and gas exploitation in 2009 rose US\$2.2 billion to US\$13.73 billion from a year earlier, suggesting that the country's oil and gas investment climate was quite conducive, an official said.

"The increase is fueled by rising field activities including operating expenses," the chief of public relations, security, formality and representative division at the Upstream Oil and Gas Executive Agency (BP Migas), Amir Hamzah said here on Monday (27/4).

The field activities rose as the number of oil and gas cooperation contracts (KKKS) approved to engage in oil and gas exploration and exploitation was on the increase, he said.

He said the number of KKKS increased by an average of 20 a year.

In 2008 alone, the number of KKKS increased 41, he said.

"The investment will be more favorable if the KKKS contractors use local contents," he said.

BP Migas itself had used local contents by among others putting its environment

conservation funds in the national banking, he said.

"Because of the policy the KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) has given awards to seven oil and gas contractors which put their US\$70 million in funds in the national banking," he said.

BP Migas also had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Office of the State Research and Technology Minister to benefit from technology invented by domestic universities, such as hydro dynamic machine, he said. (ANTARA)

### **Investment in Oil and Gas to Increase by US\$189 Million**

Jakarta, - Investment in the oil and gas sector in Indonesia will increase by US\$189 million after the signing of work contracts on 11 oil and gas blocks on May 5.

The director general of oil and gas of the ministry of energy and mineral resources, Evita Legowo, said here on Wednesday (29/4) the government would also receive directly US\$21.65 million in contract signing bonuses on the projects.

"The amount of fixed exploration commitments from the winning bidders for the 11 blocks reach US\$189.1 million and the signing bonuses US\$21.65 million," she said.

She said the US\$189.1 million investment commitment would be made for exploration activities for the first three years consisting of geological and geophysical studies worth US\$12.9 million, drilling of 11 exploration wells worth US\$133.45 million, two-dimension seismic survey on a 5,892 square kilometer area US\$25.232 million and three-dimension seismic survey on a 1,750 square kilometer area US\$17.5 million.

The winning bidders for the 11 oil and gas blocks which are part of 15 blocks offered directly on the second round in 2008 are PT Realto Energi Nusantara and PT Prosys Oil & Gas International consortium (South Block A), PT Nana Yamano Teknik (Block East Pamai), Orchard Energy Pte Ltd and PT Bayu Energi Lestari consortium (Block West Belida), Australian Worldwide Exploration Lts (Block Terumbu) and PT Bama Bumi Sentosa and PT Toba Sejahtera consortium (Block South East Madura).

Others include PT Archipelago Resources (Block Pasir), Hess (Indonesia South Sesulu)

Ltd (Block South Sesulu), Niko Resources (overseas IX) Ltd and Biak Petroleum LLC consortium (Block Kofiau), Komod Energy LLC, Marathon Indonesia Ventures Ltd and Indonesia Kumawa Energy Ltd consortium (Block Kumawa), Esso Exploration Interantional Ltd and Biak Petroleum LLC consortium (Block Cenderawasih) and Sarmi Papua Asia Oil Ltd (Block Northern Papua).

Four blocks that are not yet won during the second round of bidding in 2008 are Block Penyu, Sokang, Senami Bahar and Sermata.(ANTARA)

### **Central Sulawesi Preparing Land for South Korean Seaweed Cultivation Project**

Palu - The Central Sulawesi provincial administration is to make one million hectares of land available for South Korean-funded seaweed cultivation projects, a provincial economic development official said.

"The one million hectares of land are to be located along the coastlines of the bays of Tomini and Tolo," Hasan Haris, head of the Central Sulawesi Development Planning Agency (Bapeda), said here on Monday (20/4).

South Korean investment in seaweed cultivation in Central Sulawesi was one of the activities agreed on in a Letter of Intent (LoI) signed in Palu last April to establish sister-province relations between Central Sulawesi and South Korea's Jeollanam-do province.

Jeollanam-do Governor Park Joon-yung told the press after signing the LoI, the South Korean companies interested in seaweed cultivation in Central Sulawesi would need one million hectares of land for their operations which would include the processing of seaweed into various finished products.

He said an investment of around Rp3 trillion would be needed to make bio-energy from seaweed.

Park also said the South Korean investors would provide prime seaweed seeds and all the technology needed for the seaweed processing industries.

Hasan Haris said Central Sulawesi Governor HB Paliudju had instructed district heads in coastal areas to speed up the collection of data on the land needed for the mega seaweed cultivation and processing project.

"The coastal regions bordering the bays of Tomini and Tolo are good for the development of sea weed commodities and therefore I think finding one million hectares of land for the project is not very difficult," Hasan Haris said.

He added that a lot of sea weed farmers in the districts of Banggai Kepulauan, Banggai, Morowali, Parigi-Moutong, Tolitoli and Kota Palu had been developing the commodity with good results.

Hasan Haris said that the farmers collected the sea weeds and sold them to traders from Makassar and Surabaya.

Parigi-Moutong district head Longki Djanggola said earlier that he was ready to prepare one million hectares of land around Tomini Bay for the South Korean investors.

"I am ready to prepare one million hectares of land for sea weed cultivation as required by the South Korean investors, so long as the cooperation can increase the income and welfare of our local farmers," Longki Djanggola said.(ANTARA)

### **BPS : Q1 Growth Estimated to Exceed 4 Pct**

Jakarta, - The Central Statistics Bureau (BPS) said the country's economic growth rate in the first quarter of 2009 is estimated to exceed 4 percent.

"It is almost certain that the growth rate will exceed 4 percent. But I don't know the exact figure yet," BPS Chief Rusman Heriawan said here on Tuesday (21/4).

The government has set the target for the first-quarter economic growth rate at 4.3-4.8 percent, while Bank Indonesia (the central bank/BI) put the figure at 4.6 percent.

"Our figure is likely to be within the same range. After all, BPS has to use empirical data to come to the figure," he said.

Asked why the first-quarter economic growth rate would exceed 4 percent, he said election-related spending was one of the contributing factors.

"The elections were also a stimulus for economic growth," he said.

The BPS chief further predicted that the monthly inflation rate in April would be the same as in the previous month.

"Indeed the figure was this month is quite good. The monthly inflation rate in April will be about the same as in March when the prices of essential commodities, including rice, beef and chicken meat went down. Only the prices

of cooking oil rose following an increase in the prices of the commodity in the global market," he said.

BPS said early this month the monthly inflation rate in March stood at 0.22 percent, bringing the calendar inflation rate to 0.36 percent and the year-on-year inflation rate to 7.92 percent.(ANTARA)

### **Draft 2010 State Budget to Emphasize Economic Recovery: Minister**

Jakarta, - The government will focus on restoring the economy and improving the people's living standards in drafting the 2010 state budget, a minister said.

"We made fiscal policies by putting an emphasis on restoring the economy and improving the people's living standards," Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said in her address to a coordination meeting of national development at the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) building here on Wednesday (22/4).

Sri Mulyani, who is also acting coordinating minister for economic affairs said the economy was projected to expand in the range of 5-6 percent and the inflation rate could be kept down to 4.5-5.5 percent next year.

Interest rate was projected at 6-7 percent, the rupiah's exchange rate at Rp9,500-10,500 per dollar, oil prices at US\$45-60 per barrel and oil production at 950-970 thousand barrels per day, she said.

Given the assumptions, the government hoped a deficit in the 2010 state budget to reach 1.3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) as the economic slowdown would lower state receipts, she said.

"When state revenues fall the economy also slows down. Therefore, we will maintain the fiscal stimuli although they will be provided more selectively and evaluated in the future," she said.

She said the government would continue to provide tax incentives by reducing the tariff of income tax on corporate taxpayers and granting government-borne tax privileges.(ANTARA)

### **President: "I Love Indonesia" Movement is Not Protectionism**

Jakarta - The campaign for the movement of "I Love Indonesia" and the launch of "Love

Indonesia 100 Percent" logo are by no means protectionist effort, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said here on Wednesday (22/4).

The president made the statement at a function to launch the Movement and the Logo of I Love Indonesian Products at the Jakarta Convention Center.

"The I Love Indonesia movement is not a protectionist effort," the head of state said.

According to the president, Indonesia as one of G-20 members committed to maintain the outcome of the G-20 summit in London in March to avoid protectionist tendencies.

"We want international trade to run well," the president said, adding that through the campaign of I Love Indonesia movement and the launch of logo on Love Indonesia 100 Percent, the government wanted the presence of good quality and competitive domestic products which all Indonesians can afford.

On the occasion the head of state also stressed the importance of encouraging the real sector to overcome the global economic crisis.

The president said as many as 2.2 million innovative industries in Indonesia were able to absorb 5.4 million workers, while 700,000 handicraft industries absorbed 1.8 workers.

He also said political stability and security in the country should also be maintained to ensure steady economic growth.

In the first quarter of 2009 Indonesia's economic growth reached 4.6-4.8 percent, third highest after China and India.

Meanwhile, Trade Minister Mari Elka Pangestu said the campaign for I Love Indonesia movement was intended to trigger pride about domestic products.

"The campaign should involve all national elements from government and private sectors, as well as intellectuals and the general people as the consumers," she said. (ANTARA)

### **Manufacturing Industries Start Recovering**

Jakarta, - Indonesian manufacturing industries are starting to recover, according to acting Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs concurrently Finance Minister Sri Mulyani.

"Electricity consumption increased very sharply in March, 2009, showing that manufacturing industrial activities are starting to recover," she said.

She said according to several indicators or information she had received from the field car purchases have already begun to be done by advance orders.

"It means stocks are already exhausted and the industry has started producing again," she said.

The minister predicted growth in the manufacturing sector in the second quarter of 2009 would be more encouraging than in the first quarter.

"The second quarter is expected to be better because the first quarter was a reaction to the fourth quarter of 2008 when demand dropped sharply to make producers stop production for fear stocks will rise," she said.

She said around March 2009 the growth of the manufacturing sector was improving, supported by high consumption.

"They (producers) start seeing that their stocks are decreasing so that they start producing again. So I think the second quarter will not be worse and even be better than the first quarter," she said.

Regarding the financial service industry, the minister said it had been corrected so that it was increasingly careful with regard to facing the crisis.

"Perhaps, they start to slow down their credit expansion program," she said. (ANTARA)

### Socio-Cultural Issues

#### **Indonesia Overall Champion of World Competition of Young Scientists**

Jakarta - Indonesian young scientists presented themselves brilliantly at world level securing the greatest number of old medals among their colleagues from Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, Russia, Hungary, and Poland.

"We are proud that Indonesia became overall champion at the 16th International Conference of Young Scientists (ICYS) in Pszczyna, Poland, April 24-28, 2009, head of the information, social and cultural affairs division of the Indonesian embassy in Warsaw Any Muryani said in a press release to Antara in Jakarta Thursday (30/4).

Head of the Indonesian delegation to the ICYS Monika Raharti said earlier that the Indonesian youngsters won all the 10 research

projects for which they received 10 medals, consisting of six gold, one silver, and three bronze medals.

According to the organizing committee, Indonesia won 6 gold, one silver and 3 bronze medals, Germany (3,4,2), the Netherlands (3,1,2), the United States (3,0,0), Russia (2,3,3), Hungary (2,2,2), and Poland (2,2,1). The others are Belarus (1,1,0), Georgia (0,3,2), Ukraine (0,1,2), Czech republic (0,0,2), and Croatia (0,0,1). (ANTARA)

#### **Government Issues Alert for Outbreak of Swine Flu**

A string of deaths caused by swine flu in the United States and Mexico has triggered the Health Ministry to warn that immediate preventive measures must be taken to avoid an outbreak here. "There are six initial preventive steps we should take to cope with the lethal influenza," the ministry's plague control director general Tjandra Yoga Aditama said Sunday (26/4) in a press release.

"The six steps we're taking are gathering all scientific-related data on the virus, coordinating with the World Health Organization [WHO], issuing early warning letters, coordinating with medical officers in all of the country's ports, coordinating with health research agencies, and cooperating with the Agriculture Ministry and the Foreign Ministry."

Swine flu is caused by influenza subtype A variant H1N1, commonly carried by animals, mostly pigs, with a possibility for human-to-human transmission. "Generally the symptoms are like those found in common influenza — high fever, coughing, tiredness and sore throat, followed by nausea, vomiting and diarrhea," he said.

"The variant infection can be airborne or through direct contact with infected individuals. The incubation period lasts between three and five days. It is advisable for the community to maintain a clean and healthy lifestyle as basic preventive measures." The press release also read, "As of now, the WHO is still discussing the possibility of human-to-human infection. Swine flu is still regarded as a 'public health emergency of international concern' and there is no need for a travel warning yet."

Tjandra said there were at least eight positive confirmed cases in the United States,

while in Mexico there were around 878 suspected patients and 81 fatalities. Of those killed, up to 20 cases have been positively confirmed for swine flu. The first announcement of the outbreak in Mexico was documented on April 13, and ever since then, there have been more than 1,000 cases of swine flu in humans detected in that country. The Mexican fatalities are said to be mainly young adults, a hallmark of pandemic flu.

The virus then moved into the US, with 11 laboratory-confirmed cases in the southwestern US and Kansas as of April 25. The virus then went on to infect individuals in larger cities such as New York. In the US, the H1N1 subtype was exclusively prevalent among pigs before 1998. However, since late August 1998, H3N2 subtypes have been isolated from pigs.

On April 26, the New Zealand health minister confirmed 22 students returning from a school trip from Mexico had flu-like symptoms. Thirteen of the students were tested, and 10 tested positive for influenza A, their cases strongly suspected to be the swine flu strain. The New Zealand government has suggested that its citizens exhibiting flu-like symptoms check on their health condition at related medical institutions immediately. (The Jakarta Post)

### **RI Raises Issue on Human Trafficking in Geneva**

London, - Multilateral Relations Director General at the Foreign Ministry Rezlan Ishaq Jenie said Indonesia has raised the issue of human trafficking and worker protection in the domestic sector at the World Conference of Racism and Racial Discrimination in Geneva.

The conference at Durban Review Conference held until April 24 is attended by the vast majority of UN member countries, regional and international organizations, as well as hundreds of civil society organizations, First Secretary of the Indonesian Permanent Representative in Geneva Benny Y.P Siahaan said in London Tuesday (21/4).

The presence of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Namibian Prime Minister Nahas Angula, and 33 ministers, 25 deputy ministers, and minister-level officials, as well as 250 non-governmental organizations, was to prove their strong commitment to the meeting.

In the conference, Indonesia played a constructive role in preparing the implementation of the Conference as one of the 20 member countries of the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference.

Indonesia was also elected as DRC Vice President among with 20 other countries to help the tasks of the DRC President in making a success of the conference. (ANTARA)

### **Indonesia Launches Self-Made Radar**

Bandung - The electronic and communications research center of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences held a seminar and launched a self-made radar here on Thursday (30/4).

Cooperating with the Bandung Institute of Technology and the International Research Center for Telecommunications and Radar of the Netherlands, Indonesia had the potential to build a radar called INDERA (Indonesian radar). INDERA was the first Indonesian-built radar.

At present, INDERA is still being developed to enable it to compete with similar products of other countries.

Indonesian radar has certain uniqueness compared to the existing ones. By using a technology like frequency modulated continuous wave (FM-CW), the consumptive power and size of Indonesian radar is smaller than existing ones.

In launching the self-made radar, two radar products were already developed by this country, namely a coastal supervision radar and ship navigational radar.

Considering the importance of the role of a radar, it is necessary to make an inventory of Indonesian needs and capability to build radars to meet its own needs. (ANTARA)

### **Bali to Host Congress on AIDS**

Bali is to host the 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP) on August 9-13 this year. "The congress on August will be attended by AIDS experts, observers, and victims from various countries," ICAAP organizing committee chairman Prof Dewa Nyoman Wirawan said here on Wednesday (29/4).

He said the congress, scheduled to be opened by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, would be held for the participants

to exchange views on matters related to HIV/AIDS epidemic happening in Asia-Pacific countries. At least 5,000 participants from at least ten countries in the congress would also exchange views on ways to cure such a kind of disease.

Nyoman Wirawan said the committee had appointed two locations, namely the area around Garuda Wisnu Kencana statue at Jimbaran hill, and Bali International Convention Center (BICC) in Nusa Dua, Badung district, as the venue of the congress. On a separate occasion, Badung district head AA Gde Agung said he would positively welcome and support the process of the congress on HIV/AIDS management effort.

To ensure security during the congress, the Badung district head said coordination and communication would be made between the organizing committee and security personnel from Bali police and Udayana Military Command. Gde Agung has asked that before the congress was conducted, it should be familiarized to the local people. The familiarization should be made carefully and accurately in order to avoid misunderstanding which is feared to influence the image of tourism in Bali, Gde Agung said.

Meanwhile, Badung deputy district head I Ketut Sudikerta who is also the chairman of Badung Regional AIDS Management Commission (KPAD) said he would support the congress. Through the congress, he said, the participants would exchange views on HIV/AIDS management in addition to supporting tourism in Bali.(ANTARA)

#### **Events: Jakarta Fashion & Food Festival 2009**



*Don't miss the excitement of JFFF 2009 "LOCA FORE", on May 13-23, 2009!*

Fueled by the vision to turn Jakarta into a retail tourism destination, Jakarta Fashion & Food Festival (JFFF), a grandiose annual event, has been held each month of May. JFFF was brought to life through the synergy of DKI Jakarta's District Government & Summarecon, supported by the Association of Indonesian Fashion Designers & Entrepreneurs (APPMI), Martha Tilaar Group, MRA Media Group, Metro TV and Esmod School of Fashion.

Ever since its first inception in 2004, JFFF has been an annual event. During its five years journey, this festival has gained popularity not only domestically, but also in the neighboring countries. Taking place in Summarecon Kelapa Gading, famous as The City of a Million Flavors, JFFF is a valued event among the Indonesian designers to promote their latest wonderful creations.

Fashion Extravaganza is one agenda that never fails to show up in JFFF, parading the beauty and richness of Indonesian designers' creation. Furthermore, the merry Food Festival is another program not to be missed, tempting the visitors to grab unique prizes while romancing their taste buds. An extravagant agenda is the Gading Carnival, presenting beautifully decorated street floats, entertaining street attractions and attractive lighting techniques. For further information, please visit [www.jfff.info](http://www.jfff.info).

#### **Indonesia by province: North Sumatra**

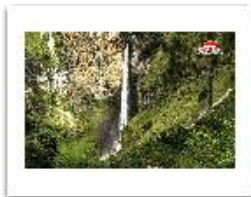
The people of the region can be divided into five main ethnic groups and Languages: The coastal Malays, living along the Malaka Straits, the Bataks, consisting of the sub-tribes around Lake Toba and Samosir Island, are Karo, Toba, Dairi, Simalungun, the Angkola or Mandailing of the southern Tapanuli, and Nias Islanders off the western coast of the province. These groups each have their own dialects, religious beliefs, arts, custom and cultures. Several ethnic groups live in Medan and other towns of North Sumatra, the largest of these being Chinese and Indian.



(Horja Bius Tomok, Traditional Ancient Ceremony)



(Lake Toba)



(Sipiso-piso waterfall)

Tourist Office:

Jl. Jend. A. Yani No.107, Medan. 20111  
Phone. (061) 4538101, 4520559, 4524908 Fax.  
(061) 4528436  
<http://www.sumutprov.go.id>

Getting there:

- Regular bus is available via Trans Sumatra. Bus station Jl. Sisingamangaraja Medan.
- Regular flight from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Amsterdam, Vienna, and Jakarta to Polonia Airport Medan, Sumatra.
- Belawan seaport is the sea link to Penang, Malaysia.
- PELNI Lines Jl. Krakatau 17A Phone. (061) 6622526  
Train station PERUMKA, Jl. Stasiun 1 Medan Phone. (061) 514114.

Best season to visit:

June to October every year

Tourism events:

Danau Toba Festival will be held in a week in Lake Toba and performs traditional sports, boat race, cultural attractions, horse race, water sports race and crafts fair.

Places of interest:

**Crocodile Farm at Asam Kumbang**

Crocodile Farm at Asam Kumbang is 10 km from the heart of the city, with nearly 2,000 crocodiles of different sizes and species. It is open from 9:00 am - 5:00 pm.

**Tangkahan's**

Tangkahan's combination of vegetation and topography makes it a marvelous tourist spot rarely found elsewhere. The Batang Serangan and Buluh rivers, converging exactly in this zone, are typical of rainforest streams, with diverse varieties of vegetation and colorful rocks and Sumatran elephants on their banks. The clear, bluish green river water against the panoramic view creates a mystical atmosphere. Fly to Medan the capital of North Sumatra Province and proceed with cars or public transport from Pinang Baris Bus Terminal in Medan to Tangkahan, located three hours from the province' capital. The Best Season to Visit is June to October every year.

**Brastagi**

Brastagi is a lovely tourist town in the Karo highlands, 70 Km on the way from Medan to Lake Toba. Brastagi is famous for its flowers, vegetables and fruit, most famous of which is the 'Marquisa' passion fruit. The local markets are swarming with activity and scenes from traditional Karo life. Days are extremely pleasant and nights can be quite cool. Gundaling Hills provides a clear view of Mt. Sibayak and Mt. Sinabung volcanoes, there is a pleasant colonial-style hotel with a golf course.

**Lake Toba-Parapat**

Lake Toba-Parapat is the largest lake in Southeast Asia with a surface area about 1,145 sq. kilometers, and the deepest lake in the world, over 450 meters deep. The town of Parapat is the main tourist resort and lies on the shores of the lake. The Batak Toba and Batak Simalungun peoples of Parapat are happy, easygoing people, known for their lively and sentimental love songs. In Parapat, there area facilities for swimming, water skiing, motor boating, canoeing, fishing and golf. The climate is cool and dry, and ideal place to relax. There is a plethora of Hotels, bungalows, villas and guesthouses. Parapat is 176 km from Medan and can be reached in 4 hours by bus.

### **Jangga Village**

Jangga Village is located on the edge of Simanuk-manuk Mountain, 24 Km from Parapat. It is famous of its weaving the beautiful 'ulos' cloth. There are monuments of King Tambun and King Manurung, rows of traditional houses.

### **Lingga Village**

Lingga Village is 15 km from Brastagi, a traditional Karo village and still preserved and inhabited today.

### **Samosir Island**

Samosir Island situated at the middle of Lake Toba, is accesible by regular ferries from Parapat. The original home of the fierce Toba Bataks, the island has many sites of stone tombs and traditional villas. The villages of Tomok, Tuk-tuk, Siallagan and Ambarita are noteworthy. Transportation can be arranged through your Hotel or rent a motorcycle for day's adventure on the island. Accomodation of various styles and standards are readily available.

### **Sipiso-piso Waterfall**

Sipiso-piso Waterfall is located on the north side of Lake Toba, 24 Km from Kabanjahe, the 120 m waterfall is visible from gazebo near the food and souvenir stands.

### **Bukit Lawang**

Bukit Lawang is about 3 hours by car from Medan. Its main attraction are the Orang Utan rehabilitation center, crossing the Bahorok river and climbing steep, jungle-clad hills it is located at the South of the Mount Leuser National Park.

### **Press Release: The Indonesian Cultural Product Week 2009**

The Government of the Republic of Indonesia will organize an Indonesian Cultural Product Week 2009 (ICPW 2009), which will be held on 24-28 June 2009 at Jakarta Convention Center.

For the third time, ICPW will exhibit Indonesian finest cultural products which are known for its finest, diverse, and distinct product characteristics, such as unique traditional handicrafts, batik, fashion, design,

advertising, art-goods, architecture and many more. The theme of the exhibition of ICPW is "*Utilizing Culture and Technology as Basis for Indonesian Economic Creativity Development*".

The ICPW 2009 will mainly focused on exhibiting Indonesia's four major cultural product industries, namely computer software industries, animation industries, printing and publishing industries, and music and film industries. Side-events, such as seminar and dialogues on the primacy and potentiality of Indonesian economic creativity development, as well as presentation from Indonesian Ambassadors and Consul Generals assigned in several major industrial countries on the lesson-learned in promoting economic creativity, are provided during the fair.(Indonesian Embassy)

## **ENVIRONMENT ISSUES**

### **Western Countries Urged to Drop Plan to Stop Timber Trading**

Denpasar, - World Growth, an American non governmental organization, reminded the United Nations of insisting western countries to stop a planned halt in the trade of timber and forestry products.

The remark was made by GATT and World Growth Chairman Alan Oxley in a meeting of the UN Forum on Forestry in New York, the USA.

"At present, US, European and Australian leaders are considering to continue a curtail in timber production, even there has been a commitment not to continue a curtail in trade by those leaders in the G-20 summit," he said in a press release made available to Antara in Denpasar on Monday (20/4) afternoon.

With the pretext of carrying out 'Green Policy', such a limitation in the trade of wooden commodity will however create a condition which may result in poverty in the world.

"In the context of the world economy, this policy will however curtail the export from Asia, Africa and Latin America. In our latest report, it seems that the limitation will create a contra-productive trade barrier environmentally and economically," he said.

"Furthermore, this study shows that in many ways, sustainable forest practices in developing countries are not merely aimed at improving the standard of life, but also protecting the environment," he said.

If the desired target was to lower the emission of green house effect by attempting the third world economy to grow well, those in the United States should work hard to make sustainable forest programs in the third world revive, he said. (ANTARA)

### **Some 10,000 Trees Planted in Aceh on Earth Day**

Banda Aceh - As many as 10,000 tree seedlings were planted around Keuliling Dam in Aceh Besar district to mark Earth Day on April 22, 2009.

"We have planted 10,000 trees of various kinds around the dam to mark this year's Earth Day on April 22," Earth Day commemoration committee chairman Husaini Syamaun said here on Wednesday (22/4).

In addition, 350,000 other trees had been planted by the students at the dam which was dedicated by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in February this year.

In 2007, various kinds of trees were also planted at the dam's side and now it looks green.

Aceh Vice Governor Muhammad Nazar said tree planting was part of Aceh Green Vision of reforestation in the province.

Muhammad Nazar said the commemoration of Earth Day this year in Aceh was good momentum to restore forest damage caused by illegal logging.

"Every year in every occasion the Aceh provincial administration plants trees and therefore we want the local people in Aceh to do the same thing as well," Muhammad Nazar said.

Besides planting the trees, the vice governor also spread 5,000 of spawn of fish into the dam.(ANTARA)

### **North Sulawesi Planted 15,000 Mangrove Trees Since Early 2009**

Manado, North Sulawesi Province, - The North Sulawesi environmental management office (BPLH) has planted 15,000 mangrove seedlings on a 1.5-hectare plot of land at Bailang beach, Manado, since early 2009.

The mangrove tree planting was part of the province's efforts to meet its responsibility for preservation of the environment, the province's BPLK Chief, FB Tamon, said here on Tuesday (28/4).

Mangrove forests in Manado's coastal areas had been degraded as local fishermen had cut them for construction of small piers, he said.

Mangroves along the coasts of Indonesia are vital to cope with global climate change and ensure continuity in fish stocks.(ANTARA)

### **RI Selected As CRBOM Hub in Asia-Pacific**

Solo, Central Java, - Indonesia has been selected to serve as a hub for the Center of River Basin Organization and Management (CRBOM) in Asia and the Pacific.

Indonesia was selected as the water management knowledge exchange center because the country had many rivers and experience in this field, Iwan Nusyirwan, the public works ministry's director general for water resources, said here on Tuesday (28/4) after officially opening a training on river area management.

Meanwhile, Water Resources Management Development Director Sugiyanto said Indonesia had 5,700 river basin areas (DAS) and 62 of them were damaged.(ANTARA)

### **Government to Support Private Enterprises' Reforestation Efforts**

Jakarta, - The government will continue to support reforestation efforts being made by local as well as foreign companies to reduce global warming, a spokesman said.

"Reforestation efforts being made by local and foreign companies will continue to be supported by the government," Forestry Minister MS Kaban said in his written statement read out by director general of Land and Forest Rehabilitation Indriastuti after the launch of Go Green to mark the planting of thousands of trees in Indonesia on Wednesday (22/4).

Indriastuti said the government had already declared "one-man-one-tree" program in an effort to plant 100 million trees across the country.

She said the "one man one tree" program was responded positively by the people who

have planted 109 million trees or more than the number which was declared by the government.

Therefore, she added that the effort to plant trees should continue in order to reduce global warming and water scarcity in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Chief Executive Officer of PT Standard Chartered Bank Simon Morris said there were two ways in standard effort to plant trees.

First, the bank would allocate Rp10,000 from each of its credit card customers to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Indonesia for tree planting effort, and the second was that the bank would offer its credit card customers to exchange every 4,000 point of their reward point with a tree planted on behalf of their name.

He said Go Green activity was part of the Standard Chartered Bank seriousness in running its business in Indonesia.

According to Simon Morris, the bank since 2007 had given its significant contribution to environment by providing US\$3.2 million to finance renewable energy projects and environmentally-friendly technology.

From 2006 to 2008, the Standard Chartered Bank was able to reduce 14 percent of carbon dioxide emission.

Meanwhile, head of Consumer Banking Lani Darmawan said she had involved 10,000 customers in the first year of Go Green program to finance the planting of 2,000 trees in the first stage.(ANTARA)

### **Indonesia Wishes to Be Seat of Coral Triangle Initiative Secretariate**

Jakarta, - Indonesia as initiator of the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) is hoping it could host its secretariate.

"As we are an initiator, we are seeking to make the secretariate to be set up in Indonesia," Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources Freddy Numberi said after reporting preparations for the upcoming World Ocean Conference and CTI summit to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono here on Wednesday (22/4).

He said President Yudhoyono supported that the CTI secretariate should be in the country, in this case in Manado, North Sulawesi.

"The President would visit North Sulawesi to see potential locations for the CTI secretariate," he said.

He said the establishment of the secretariate in the region was strategic and would benefit the future of the region.

Freddy said six heads of state grouped in the CTI had already expressed their readiness to attend the summit which was to be held in Manado.

The CTI is a regional initiative aimed at protecting coral reefs in a region covering Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Timor Leste, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

It was the initiative of President Yudhoyono, conveyed for the first time in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Australia in September 2007 and supported by APEC leaders.

The coral reef triangle that covers the six countries is 75,000 square kilometers wide and has 500 coral reef species and more than 3,000 fish species.

The coral reefs are known as the Amazon of the Seas because of their rich biodiversity.

The coral reefs in the area are also a source of livelihood for 120 population, and a place of tuna mating and a source of regional economy with money in circulation reaching US\$2.3 billion a year.

North Sulawesi meanwhile has been known by the world for its Bunaken marine park. The region's other ecotourism potential is its underwater volcano.

Around 4,900 participants from 121 countries are expected to attend the WOC and CTI Summit.(ANTARA)

### **Central Government Fulfills Commitment to WOC**

Jakarta, - The central government has fulfilled all its commitments to the World Ocean Conference (WOC) and the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) Summit to be held in Manado, North Sulawesi, on May 11-15 2009, Governor SH Sarundajang said.

"The central government has met all its commitments to securing infrastructure, roads, bridges, electricity, clean water, land and sea transport and increase flight frequencies," SH Sarundajang said here Wednesday (22/4) after meeting President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to report the preparations for the WOC and CTI Summit.

All the infrastructure can be used to raise economic growth especially in the eastern and northern parts of Indonesia, the governor said.

"North Sulawesi is the northern front gate. It (the country) does not only lie from Sabang to Merauke, but also from Miagas to Rote island," he said. Sabang is in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (NAD) province, Merauke in Papua, Miagas in North Sulawesi while Rote island is in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province.

At least 400 foreign participants representing 121 countries are expected to take part in the WOC, and 200 participants in the CTI Summit, he said, adding that the total number of participants will reach about 2,900.

All the participants will be staying at 18 star-rated hotels with 1,862 rooms, and in 24 non-star hotels with 719 rooms.

Previously, Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources Freddy Numberi said six CTI heads of state had expressed readiness to attend the summit.

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He said the establishment of the secretariate in the region was strategic and would benefit the future of the region.(ANTARA)

## REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

### ADB Meeting's Schedule Not Affected by Swine Flu Scare

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said there had been no change in the schedule or the number of expected participants of the upcoming Asian Development Bank (ADB) meeting in Nusa Dua, Bali, despite the current swine flu scare. "Until today, we have not received any information to change the number of participants despite the swine flu outbreaks," the minister said after attending a working meeting with the Parliament's Budget Committee here on Thursday. So far, none of the expected participant had cancelled his or her plan to attend the 43rd annual meeting of the ADB's board of governors to be held in Nusa Dua next May 2-5, she said. "We have prepared various things to anticipate such a problem including monitoring equipment needed to handle it (the swine flu)," the minister said.

About the ADB's plan to increase its capital, the minister said Indonesia would maintain its stake in ADB at 5.43 percent. "With the increase in capital contributions, Indonesia's share will remain at 5.43 percent making it the sixth largest shareholder in ADB," she said.

To maintain its present share in ADB's capital, Indonesia would contribute Rp2 trillion, which would be done within four years, or around Rp500 billion annually. "It's based on the current rate, and it will be provided for in the 2009 and 2010 state budgets," the minister said.

The 42nd Annual Meeting of ADB will be officially opened by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and participated in by around 3,500 representatives of 67 countries, including ADB members, government leaders, central bank governors, finance ministers, academicians, private businessmen, and NGO activists.

Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali Province, is now on a full alert to prevent swine flu from entering the world-famous resort island. And Gilimanuk harbor, an entry gate to Bali Island, is also tightly guarded by a

joint military and police security team in the run up to the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to be held at Nusa Dua, Bali, next May 2-5, 2009. (ANTARA)

### **Indonesia Submits Ratification Instrument on UNCTOC**

Jakarta - The Indonesian government submitted the ratification instrument on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes (UNCTOC) at a Special Treaty Event in Vienna, Austria, April 20, 2009, it was reported here Tuesday (21/4).

The Indonesian Permanent Mission to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Austria reported that on the occasion, the Indonesian government was represented by ad interim Chard d'Affaires at the Indonesian permanent representative office in Vienna, Rainer Luhanapessy.

At the event held on the sidelines of the 18th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Rainer Luhanapessy was accompanied by Director for International Security and Disarmament of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, Desra Percaya.

UNCTOC was approved by the Indonesian House of Representatives on January 12, 2009, under Law No.5 2009 on the approval of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Under Article 38 point (1) of UNCTOC, the stipulations in UNCTOC take into effect and bind Indonesia 90 days after the handing over of the ratification instrument.

The handing over of the UNTOC ratification instrument constitutes the manifestation of Indonesia's commitment to prevention and eradication of organized transnational crimes.

After submitting the instrument, Indonesia can take broader advantage of international cooperation in making efforts to investigate, examine and demand against money laundering, corruption and crimes against judicial process and serious transnational crimes involving an organized group of perpetrators.

With the effectiveness of UNCTOC, Indonesia can maximally take measures to eradicate corruption and return assets resulted from corruption.

This will be complementary to the use of international instruments in which Indonesia has become a party in UNCAC (United Nations Convention against Corruption, at international level), ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (at regional level) and bilateral agreements which had been made by the Indonesian government.(ANTARA)

### **RI Provides Training for African and Asian Farmers**

Jakarta - Indonesia is providing a training and apprentice program for 12 farmers from four Asian and African countries, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

"The training and apprentice program is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," Technical Cooperation Affairs director of the Foreign Ministry, Esti Andayani, said after attending the opening of the apprentice program here on Wednesday (22/4).

She said that the apprentice program was attended by six farmers from Senegal, one from Madagascar, two from Cambodia and three from Myanmar.

Andayani said that the Indonesian government had decided to provide an apprentice program in the form of capacity building training. Indonesia previously had also provided assistance in the form of simple agricultural tools for Cambodia, Myanmar and Madagascar.

"The assistance we provided at that time was hand tractors, water pumps and other form of simple equipment," she added.

Head of the Training Center of the Ministry of Agriculture Heri Sulyanto said meanwhile that the African and Asian farmers would be trained with materials based on the request of their countries.

"For this time, they ask for agricultural training on grain and horticulture," Sulyanto said.

The training will last from April 22 to June 20, 2009.(ANTARA)

### **RI Exploring Possibility of Joining WCPFC**

Jakarta, - Indonesia is exploring the possibility of joining the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to

expand the fishing ground of its fishermen, an official said.

"We are exploring the possibility of joining WCPFC to be able to expand our fishing ground in the Pacific," Head of the Capture Fishery Research Center Achmad Poernomo said here on Friday (24/4).

Indonesia is currently members of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT).

"By joining the two commissions, our capture area has expanded to the Indian Ocean," he said.

In addition, Indonesian fishermen were no longer considered illegal while catching tuna in the ocean, he said. (ANTARA)

### **ASEAN+3 FMs Agree on Action Plan to Foster Regional Economic Confidence**

Finance ministers from the ASEAN plus three countries agreed Sunday to speed up the process of operationalising the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), a regional foreign reserve pool in case of currency flow shortage. The agreement was reached at a special meeting on Sunday in Phuket in southern Thailand in a bid to ensure the regional market stability and to foster confidence in the markets. The agreement was to ensure the regional market stability and to foster confidence in the markets.

According to the Action Plan to Restore Economic and Financial Stability of the Asian Region agreed by the ministers, 120 billion U.S. dollars, instead of 80 billion U.S. dollars as initially proposed, will be injected into the reserve pool, or the CMIM, said Thai Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanij at a joint press conference after the one-day special meeting.

The ASEAN+3 group initiated the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), a bilateral currency swap arrangement in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis in a bid to help countries tackle a possible foreign capital flow shortage.

In May 2008, the ASEAN plus three finance ministers agreed to transform the CMI to CMIM, with each country contributing a share to a common reserve fund in the scenario of a financial crisis.

The ratio of contribution between ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the plus three countries -- China, Japan and South Korea, was set at 20:80, said Korn.

The five major economies in the ASEAN including Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, will make an equal contribution and altogether take the bigger share of the 20-percent proportion, while the other smaller economies including Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar will take the rest, with the exact amount of distribution yet to be finalized, said Korn.

The ratio of contribution among China, Japan and South Korean for the 80-percent share was still under discussion, said Chinese Finance Minister Xie Xuren.

The finance ministers agreed to speed up the process in finalizing the key terms before the ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting in Bali, Indonesia in May, said Xie. The ministers also agreed to establish an independent regional surveillance mechanism to promote economic monitoring in the region.

The meeting also reiterated the importance of the Asian Bond Market Initiative (ABMI) among the participants. The meeting resolves to create a new roadmap which focuses on the promotion of the issuance of local currency-denominated bonds, facilitation of demand of local currency-denominated bonds, improvement of legal framework and strengthening of infrastructure for bond markets in the region, said Korn.

The meeting reaffirmed the important role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in mitigating the impacts of the global financial turmoil and providing necessary capital to regional growth, by more lending on infrastructure development and trade finance in the region.

The ministers agreed for an immediate and substantial capital hike for ADB, said Korn. "We call for an early agreement on the Fifth General Capital Increase of ADB by its next Annual Meeting in May 2009," said Korn.

Sunday's Special ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' Meeting was held ahead of 14th ASEAN Summit scheduled on Feb. 27 - March 1 in Cha-am, central beach resort in Thailand. ([www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn))