

# Indonesia News Digest #No 28 July 24-31 2006

Saturday 4 November 2006, by [ASAP](#) (Date first published: 31 July 2006).

## Contents

- [TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)
- [NEWS & ISSUES](#)
- [ACEH](#)
- [WEST PAPUA](#)
- [PORNOGRAPHY & MORALITY](#)
- [HUMAN RIGHTS/LAW](#)
- [LABOUR ISSUES](#)
- [POLITICS/POLITICAL PARTIES](#)
- [GOVERNMENT/CIVIL SERVICE](#)
- [WAR ON CORRUPTION](#)
- [ENVIRONMENT](#)
- [HEALTH & EDUCATION](#)
- [ISLAM/RELIGION](#)
- [ECONOMY & INVESTMENT](#)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### NEWS & ISSUES

- \* Blast at Indonesia oil refinery, 150 hurt
- \* Locals suffer from forest policy inconsistencies
- \* Publisher says book ban harks back to 'red scare'
- \* Pacific talks to ease threat of separatism
- \* Persija Park demolition starts despite land dispute
- \* Shops torn down as overpass work begins
- \* City's children lacking safe places to play

### ACEH

- \* Indonesia's Aceh canes two in public for

adultery

- \* Aid groups are criticized over tsunami

reconstruction

- \* Aceh: Government declares sixteen organisations 'illegal'

WEST PAPUA

- \* Tribes hold peace talks in Papua, no deal yet
- \* Suyanto: TNI still keeping on guard against OPM
- \* Indonesian court jails two more over mine protest
- \* Autonomy brings little progress to Papua: Study
- \* Defendants in Abepura incident jailed for five to six years
- \* Papuan resistance meets in PNG to unify

PORNOGRAPHY & MORALITY

- \* 'Anti-porno' fight tests Muslim tolerance in Indonesia
- \* NU states opposition to sharia bylaws
- \* Playboy Indonesia: Modest flesh meets Muslim faith

HUMAN RIGHTS/LAW

- \* Government urged to drop restrictions on communism
- \* Criminal Code draft 'impinges on privacy'
- \* Experts point to holes in Criminal Code draft

LABOUR ISSUES

- \* Special agency to take over labor exports
- \* Indonesia criticized on migrant policies
- \* Medan workers protest shortage of gas

POLITICS/POLITICAL PARTIES

- \* Local elections affirm fickle nature of party politics

- \* PDI-P moves in on splinter group 'territory'

#### GOVERNMENT/CIVIL SERVICE

- \* Activists say recess funds prone to abuses

- \* House should kick out more lawmakers, say activists

#### WAR ON CORRUPTION

- \* AGO girding for tougher war on corruption

- \* President asked to drop 'policy-error' decree

#### ENVIRONMENT

- \* As mud flows in East Java, people ask what next

- \* Forest fire haze hits major city in Sumatra

- \* Logging, habitat loss threaten Kalimantan, Sumatra orangutans

#### HEALTH & EDUCATION

- \* Indonesia burns 100 tonnes of useless donated medicines

- \* Activists say migrant workers vulnerable to HIV/AIDS

#### ISLAM/RELIGION

- \* Religious leaders united against Israel

- \* Indonesia cartoon editor charged

- \* Survey reveals Muslim views on violence

- \* Young Muslims gather, look to future

- \* Ahmadiyah members consider seeking asylum in Australia

- \* Indonesian sect meets Australia's consul

#### ECONOMY & INVESTMENT

- \* Indonesian economy continues to lose altitude

\* IMF debt may be fully repaid this year

## **NEWS & ISSUES**

### **Blast at Indonesia oil refinery, 150 hurt**

Agence France Presse - July 29, 2006

Jakarta — An explosion at an oil refinery in Indonesia early Saturday injured nearly 150 people and caused about 7,000 residents to flee their homes, police said.

The explosion took place at a joint Pertamina-Petrochina oil refinery in eastern Java province as workers tried to contain a gas leak by setting it on fire, local police chief Rumhadi said.

There were no deaths reported, but nearly 150 people were hospitalized suffering from respiratory problems after inhaling gas, said Rumhadi, who like many Indonesians goes by one name. "Police are still investigating the cause of the accident," he said.

Although the fire was put out, around 7,000 residents from 10 villages in the district about 350 miles east of the capital, Jakarta, will not be allowed to return to their homes and must stay in government offices until the area is safe, Rumhadi said.

Indonesia's state-owned Pertamina and PetroChina of China did not immediately comment on the blast.

---

### **Locals suffer from forest policy inconsistencies**

Jakarta Post - July 31, 2006

Adisti Sukma Sawitri, Jakarta — Muhidin, 34, a farmer from Dompu, West Nusa Tenggara, is in despair. The Dompu District Court recently sentenced him to seven months in prison for cultivating a piece of land in the So Ncadu Conservation Forest.

He was found to have violated the 1999 Law on

Forestry by crossing into the conservation area to grow cashew trees.

"Muhidin is innocent. He and his friends are victims of policy inconsistencies between the central government and the local administration," Alamudin, a member of the Dompu farmers' advocacy team, said at a seminar on the abuse of local communities in forestry management.

Muhidin's initiative to farm the land was motivated by a Dompu administration bylaw that allows locals to cultivate about 750 hectares of the forest in a joint forestry management program.

Without giving a clear reason, the administration changed its policy at the end of last year and arrested Muhidin, along with 80 other farmers in the area, for cultivating land in the forest.

Muhidin and his friends are not the only victims of policy inconsistencies in forest management. Such problems have happened throughout Indonesia for decades, and have been exacerbated by policy changes due to regional autonomy.

Up to 65 million people live in and around a total of 50 million hectares of conservation forests in Indonesia.

"I think the government deliberately leaves the problem unresolved, so it can blame locals for chopping down the woods and living in conservation forests," activist Abusaid Pelu of the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (Kontras) told The Jakarta Post on Wednesday.

He accused the central government, regional administrations and businesses of trying to scapegoat forest settlers in order to cover up their own roles in rampant deforestation.

A similar case occurred in Muna regency, Southeast Sulawesi, when residents were battling the local administration over its effort to remove them from a conservation forest in Kontu subdistrict.

The Muna administration had previously supported the cutting of teakwood by logging companies, but two years ago it suddenly stopped the logging activities. Later it expelled hundreds of locals who had moved in to cultivate the cleared land.

At least 12 residents and four members of a local advocacy team were arrested when the administration closed the area to further farming.

"They have used the forestry law to arrest these people, even though they benefited from the teakwood clearance revenue as a source of regional income for years. So which conservation area are they talking about?" Abusaid said.

Hariadi Kuntodihardjo, a forestry expert from the Bogor Agriculture Institute, said the problems with managing forest communities in Indonesia stemmed from the government's poor assessment of the local situation before establishing and implementing laws. "The government and local administrations have never involved residents in enacting regulations, although they know that the locals are affected by them," he said.

Hariadi added that the government actually had a good forest community model that involved locals in managing some parts of the forests, but had never applied it in a substantive way.

Meanwhile, Forestry Minister Malam Sambat Kaban said local administrations and local communities were both to blame. He said his ministry was limited in its ability to advocate for residents.

"Basically, we don't want to hurt locals but we cannot take firm actions against the administration because they are overseen by the Home Ministry," he said.

He urged law enforcement authorities to act objectively in dealing with these complicated situations.

---

## **Publisher says book ban harks back to 'red scare'**

Jakarta Post - July 28, 2006

M. Taufiqurrahman, Jakarta — Two scholarly treatises on Indonesian communism remain banned more than 40 years after the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was obliterated in the wake of an abortive coup.

The Attorney General's Office (AGO) and the Customs and Excise Office prevented the entry of the two books imported by Jakarta-based publisher Equinox.

Copies of the Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics by Australian historian Rex Mortimer and The Rise of Indonesian Communism by Indonesianist Ruth McVey are now being held in customs pending approval from the AGO for their release.

Publisher Mark Hanusz of Equinox said he wrote to the AGO asking for the books' release, but found himself mired in red-tape. "After we sent the letter, they called and said they needed a copy for review. We told them the only copy we have is with the customs office," Hanusz told The Jakarta Post.

Equinox printed a limited number of the two books in the US to test the local market, but those held in Customs are the proofs of the works.

The books are part of a series called Classic Indonesia, a collection of books published by the Cornell University Press and long out of print. Mortimer's work was published in 1974, while McVey's book was originally published in 1965 as the wave of anti-communist sentiment got underway.

Hanusz believes many other scholarly works on communism remain banned. "In spite of the media opening and the closing of the information ministry, there is still censorship for books about communism."

AGO spokesman I Wayan Pasek Suarta said it was hardly surprising the books were withheld. "Learning from their titles, the books could be categorized as materials that could disrupt the country's ideological foundations and provoke the rise of communist movement."

However, after the Post informed him they were academic works, Wayan said approval could be given for their release after two or three months.

He noted the AGO could ban books based on their contents under the 2004 law on its scope of authority. "Everyone should also bear in mind that the decree of the People's Consultative Assembly

that bans the propagation of Marxism and Communism is still intact."

The AGO spokesman was unaware that Indonesian-language versions of Karl Marx's Das Kapital and works by Vladimir Lenin, Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Leon Trotsky are widely available in bookstores throughout the country.

---

## **Pacific talks to ease threat of separatism**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Abdul Khalik, Kuala Lumpur — In an attempt to reduce outside influence over its eastern territories, especially Papua province, and to limit the danger of separatism, Indonesia on Wednesday hosted a Southwest Pacific dialog on the sidelines of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Kuala Lumpur.

The meeting was chaired by Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda, and was attended by Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters, Papua New Guinea's Petroleum and Energy Minister Sir Moi Awei, the Philippines Foreign Minister Alberto G. Romulo and Timor Leste Foreign Minister Jose Luis Guterres.

"We need to hold a dialog with our neighbors in the eastern part, like what we have in the western part in the form of ASEAN, because these neighbors are very influential on our eastern territory, such as Papua," said the Indonesian Foreign Ministry's director general for Asia, Pacific and Africa, Primo Alui Joelianto, who attended the talks.

He highlighted the importance of the dialog, pointing out that the majority of Indonesians living in eastern areas of the country were ethnic Melanesians, who constitute the majority in many Pacific islands.

"Failing to pay adequate attention to our eastern neighbors and the situation in our eastern territories can cause our eastern areas to fall



under the influence" of outside forces, Primo said.

Indonesia continues to be sensitive to the possibility of losing Papua, where a low-level separatist movement has been active for decades. Also, the independence of Timor Leste, a former Indonesian province, is still fresh in the minds of Indonesian authorities.

In addition to racial differences, many Papuans believe they are not benefiting from the exploitation of the province's abundant natural resources.

Five years since the passage of the law on special autonomy for Papua, a status which also is shared by West Irian Jaya province, people in the provinces have yet to truly benefit from their rich natural resources. According to the latest data from the State Ministry for the Development of Disadvantaged Regions, 19 of 20 regencies across Papua were classified in 2005 as underdeveloped.

A series of violent clashes, culminating in the tumultuous rally against gold mining firm PT Freeport Indonesia in mid-March, just a few days after the gubernatorial election, and the choice of 43 Papuans to seek asylum in Australia the previous month, only added to Indonesia's concerns over the province. Maluku, West Timor and Flores, to a lesser extent, also share some of Papua's problems.

Primo said that the meeting also aimed at strengthening people-to-people contacts among the six participating countries.

"The ministers share a common view that cooperation in the areas of education and culture should be further promoted. They also discussed ways to fight terrorism, combating communicable diseases and illegal fishing," he said, adding that the dialog would be continued in the Philippines, which will play host to the next AMM and ARF meetings.

---

## **Persija Park demolition starts despite land dispute**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Adianto Simamora, Jakarta — Despite an ongoing land dispute and mounting protests from area residents, public order officers began demolishing the historic Menteng Stadium in Central Jakarta on Wednesday.

The stadium is also the base of city soccer club Persija, and is commonly referred to as Persija Park.

As some 1,200 officers began tearing down the property and nearby cafes, Persija lawyer Victor Sitanggang told angry club supporters that the land ownership dispute was still being processed by the Central Jakarta District Court. "The demolition is illegal because the court has yet to issue any decision on the land's status," Victor said.

Three bulldozers, an excavator and seven trucks were involved in the demolition, which started at 7 a.m. Persija club members protesting outside the stadium demanded to see public order officers' demolition warrant.

"One of the officials hit me with a stick," said Miftah, a member of Persija's student soccer team. An hour later the warrant, issued by the public order agency, was delivered to the Persija supporters.

Victor said he would take the letter, which ordered the demolition of Menteng Stadium and was signed by Central Jakarta's mayor, Muhyat, to the police as proof that the city administration was ignoring the ongoing legal process.

Separately, city administration law bureau head Jorhal Siahaan said the demolition was legal. "The Central Jakarta district court has not ordered the city administration to withhold any actions in connection with the legal process," he said.

Siahaan said that as long as the court did not issue any orders, the city administration would go ahead with its plan. The city intends to replace the stadium with a new multi-sport facility and

green area, along with a five-story carpark. Persija is to move its headquarters to the Voetbalbond Indische Jakarta (VIJ) Stadium in Roxy, Central Jakarta, while its matches are to be held at Lebak Bulus Stadium in South Jakarta.

According to a gubernatorial decree on heritage conservation, Menteng Stadium is a designated historical site. It was originally the Voetbalbond Indische Omstreken (Indies Football Association) ground. Victor said that Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, gave the stadium to Persija in the 1960s to replace the Ikada Stadium, which was demolished to make way for the National Monument (Monas).

The fight between the city administration and Persija officials over the stadium began in February this year. Persija brought to court their concerns over the legality of three certificates the city administration had obtained in 2001 for the 35,458 square meters of land on which the stadium stands.

Victor said that the city administration's action also contravened the 2005 Law on Sports, which states that any plans to build or shift the function of a sports venue needs the approval of the state minister for youth and sports affairs.

Jornal said the city administration had sent a letter to minister Adyaksa Dault to notify him of the plan, but was yet to receive a response.

Meanwhile, a meeting between Menteng residents and the city's environmental management body to discuss the potential environmental impact of the planned redevelopment was interrupted by news of the demolition.

"Of course, it's shocking," said body official Febri Prasetyadi. "I don't know whether or not it is connected with the planned renovation of the Menteng soccer fields." He said the frustrated residents were depending on the environmental body to force the city to drop its development plans for the area.

The body's head of environmental impact affairs, Ridwan Panjaitan, said his unit's recommendation should be used as a basis for continuing or dropping the plans for Persija Park.

"We have gathered input from several parties, including people living near the project. But we can't simply rely on the claims of certain parties. We have to see it from the broad view of public need," he said.

---

## **Shops torn down as overpass work begins**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Multa Fidrus, Tangerang — At least 35 shops and makeshift kiosks were demolished Tuesday by the Tangerang regency administration to make way for the construction of the Ciputat overpass.

Traders along Jl. Dewi Sartika, Jl. Juanda and Jl. Aria Putra were forced to leave after unsuccessfully campaigning against the demolition. "We have done enough bargaining and negotiating with traders who refused to leave," Deden Sugandhi, the administration's assistant for development control, said Tuesday.

Traders had demanded greater compensation for the land and buildings than had been offered, but the local government refused to pay.

Deden said the administration had warned the traders to leave their buildings by July 24, but few had complied with the warning until it was clear the buildings were to be demolished.

"We will notify the Public Works Ministry once the demolition is complete. The ministry can start the construction work immediately as it is responsible for it," he said, adding that the local administration had only been responsible for acquiring the land.

The Tangerang administration spent Rp 25 billion from its 2005 budget and another Rp 15 billion from this year's budget on buying the land. The overpass, which is estimated to cost Rp 100 billion, is being funded by the Public Works Ministry through a loan from the Japanese International Bank Corporation.

The administration and the ministry believe the

800-meter-long overpass, which will run from Jl. Dewi Sartika to Jl. Juanda, is the only solution to the chronic traffic congestion in the area.

---

## **City's children lacking safe places to play**

Jakarta Post - July 26, 2006

Anissa S. Febrina, Jakarta — As soon as he got home from school Monday, eight-year old Yoga changed out of his uniform, reached for his yellow plastic kite and ran out to join several friends in a narrow alley in Cipete, South Jakarta.

His first attempt at flying the kite failed when it hit an electricity pole on one side of the lane. A few minutes later the kite made it into the air, but then a motorcycle forced Yoga to move, and down came the toy. Child's play is anything but easy in Jakarta.

"The development of the city has not paid enough attention to the needs of children, even for something as basic as playing," non-governmental organization Plan Indonesia project manager Amrullah said Monday. "We plan to push the agenda in order to get children heard in the process of making the city's spatial plan," he said.

Currently, the city's open green space covers only 7,250 hectares, nine percent of the city's total area. Jakarta plans to increase the percentage of open green space to 13.94 percent by 2010, a smaller target than the 26 percent stated in the city's 1985-2005 spatial plan.

With some 32 percent of Jakartans living in houses that provide less than 10 square meters of space per person, many children are forced to play on the streets.

Indonesia lags behind other countries in public outdoor facility ratios. There is just over half a square meter of open public space for each person in Jakarta. In comparison, the ratio is two square meters per person in Malaysia, and in crowded Japan it is five square meters per person.

As a result of the lack of open spaces, especially playgrounds and parks, children make use of whatever areas are available to them. Those living in shanty towns behind business districts play in empty building project lots. As soon as construction starts, the children lose their football field.

Median strips often serve the same function. Drivers frequently complain about children running in front of cars while pursuing balls and toys.

A 2003 study of Kwitang, Central Jakarta, conducted by urban planning researcher Hamid Patilima concluded that the city administration had not paid enough attention to providing open public spaces. As a result, children in Kwitang play in parking lots, on riverbanks and in the street.

Access to a close, safe and suitable play area is recognized as a basic right in the United Nations Convention on Children's Rights.

The Indonesian Children's Welfare Foundation says Indonesia's children were ranked last in a recent study of fitness and physical level in Asian children, a dismal result aided by the absence of recreation areas available in the country, particularly for city children.

The study also showed Indonesian children spend most of their time at home, either doing homework or — less productively — watching television.

Various businesses have opened recreation centers in the city's malls and commercial outdoor playgrounds in suburban areas such as Serpong and Depok. But with entrance fees of around Rp 35,000, many people cannot afford to take their children to such parks. Children like Yoga are left to play in the streets and alleyways, competing with cars and motorcycles for space.

## ACEH

### **Indonesia's Aceh canes two in public for adultery**

Reuters - July 30, 2006

Banda Aceh — Two people in Indonesia's Aceh have

been caned for adultery, the latest case of public punishments since courts in the province were allowed to implement Islamic sharia law. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation but only Aceh has the right to adopt sharia law in the judicial system.

Aceh courts received that freedom in 2003 as part of an autonomy package Jakarta offered in an attempt to quell separatist passions in the province, where thousands died in a long-running insurgency.

"Both of them were arrested by sharia police in a kiosk in Sawang district two weeks ago after they were caught in an intimate situation," Tengku Marnus Labsyar, head of the South Aceh Sharia's office, told Reuters by telephone. He said the woman was a 23-year-old widow, while the married man was a 35-year-old teacher.

Television footage showed first the man and then the woman, both dressed in white, given nine and seven strokes respectively with a rattan stick on a platform surrounded by a jeering crowd in the compound of the Kasik Putih mosque in Samadua, a town in the south of Aceh.

The woman was led away sobbing after receiving her punishment from a blindfolded man wearing a red robe. The caning took place on Friday. Aceh has previously caned people under sharia law for gambling and stealing. The rulings by sharia courts have to be approved by Aceh's governor.

Caning is a common judicial practice in neighbouring Malaysia and Singapore. Most Indonesian Muslims are considered relatively moderate and the government is officially secular, but Aceh is a more staunchly Muslim province.

Located on the northern tip of Sumatra island, Aceh is dubbed the "Verandah of Mecca" because Islam first entered Indonesia from there centuries ago. Analysts say Aceh sharia courts are unlikely to use stronger penalties such as stoning for adultery or amputation for theft.

[Additional reporting by Telly Nathalia in Jakarta.]

---

## **Aid groups are criticized over tsunami reconstruction**

New York Times - July 27, 2006

Jane Perlez, Masjid — For a moment, the villagers in this seaside community glimpsed a vision of a splendid future: houses with shady verandas, a new elementary school and an end to the squalid barracks that had been their world since the Asian tsunami swept all before it 19 months ago.

But the houses, built with untreated, rickety wood by the aid agency Save the Children, turned out to be uninhabitable — some of them were thrown together in three days and nights, the villagers said. The foundations of the school remain abandoned, overgrown with weeds.

"People are mad," said Innu A. Barkar, the village head, as he walked around the empty houses, some of them relegated for use as chicken yards. "The aid workers gave promises, but they don't turn out to be reality."

Life in Aceh, the northernmost province of Indonesia where 170,000 people perished in the December 2004 tsunami, has resumed a semblance of normality.

For the most part, children are in school, roads are being rebuilt, outdoor markets are packed with local produce, employment is not too hard to find, and even the peace accord between the national government and separatist guerrillas is sticking. Almost everyone has been moved out of muddy tents, though many families still live in dilapidated barracks.

But beneath the activity, a veil of disenchantment with international aid agencies pervades, a feeling that extravagant promises backed by unprecedented donations, large and small, from the around the world have yet to materialize.

To many, the \$8.5 billion that humanitarian agencies, foreign governments and Indonesia say they will spend on the rebuilding of Aceh seems a



mirage. In some ways, they are right. So far, the World Bank says only \$1.5 billion of the \$8.5 billion dedicated to the disaster has yet been disbursed.

More than that, much of what has been spent has not been spent well. A scathing report issued in mid-July by experts from governments, the United Nations and international aid agencies, and endorsed by former President Bill Clinton, makes clear that the villagers are not just grumbling.

Many of the hundreds of aid agencies that poured into Aceh in the aftermath of the tsunami displayed "arrogance and ignorance" and were often staffed by "incompetent workers" who came and went quickly, the report said.

Although the billions of dollars in donations translated into a record \$7,100 for each affected person — compared with \$3 for each survivor of the 2004 floods in Bangladesh — the people of Aceh have not seen the fruits of the generosity, the report added.

The assessment, which Mr. Clinton noted in a foreword contained "uncomfortable reading," rapped the aid agencies for paying more attention to advertising their "brands" and releasing self-laudatory reports than accounting for their expenditures.

The agencies performed relatively well during the first three months after the tsunami when they delivered food and water, and kept diseases at bay. Much of that success was "thanks largely to local inputs," the report said. For the longer term reconstruction, the report said that lack of expertise by the agencies had led to "shoddy results."

House building is in fact the main source of complaint. In some areas, clusters of new houses, their corrugated iron roofs glinting in the tropical sun, have sprouted in the barren landscape. In others, row upon row of dilapidated barracks, swollen with families squatting in tiny rooms, attest to the slow going in building new family dwellings. In all, about 25,000 houses, constructed by a wide variety of agencies, have been completed out of a projected 120,000 that are needed, according to the United Nations agency

Habitat.

There were many reasons the rebuilding has fallen short, said Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, director of the Indonesian rehabilitation and reconstruction agency. Flush with donations from the public as never before, the aid agencies felt compelled to press ahead with building houses even though they lacked experience.

"They said, 'Let's build,'" Mr. Kuntoro explained. "They don't talk about contracts; there are no agreements with contractors. It's build houses, boom, boom, boom." He said he had warned the agencies. "I kept telling them that the type of people they had, the way they managed, had to change," he said. "It took until the end of last December to convince them to change."

As for the disappointments in Masjid, Save the Children said it would demolish 371 unusable houses it had built here and elsewhere, and would repair 200 others.

The agency, which suspended its construction programs in order to investigate what went wrong, has ordered prefabricated houses from Canada. Starting in September, it plans to train villagers on how to assemble them, said Mike Kiernan, the group's director of communications.

Three housing inspectors have been fired from the agency for failing to do their jobs, Mr. Kiernan said. Similarly, Oxfam dismissed 10 staff members on grounds of gross misconduct after uncovering collusion between them and Indonesian contractors that resulted in shoddy houses, said Ian Small, the director of Oxfam in Aceh.

There were other problems as well, some peculiar to Aceh. One of the big stumbling blocks, for instance, has been the supply of wood, the most common material in local housing.

The province of Aceh, a great storehouse of timber with some of the most valuable forests in Indonesia, is also one of the most over-logged places in the nation. In a move to preserve the endangered forests, the Indonesian rehabilitation and reconstruction agency, which is overseeing the rebuilding, issued a ruling that basically prohibited the use of wood from Aceh.

The scramble for enough wood for 20,000 one-room temporary houses became an enduring quest for Kevin Duignan, a building contractor from New Zealand who came to Aceh to head up the housing efforts of the International Federation of the Red Cross.

To build the houses, he issued families do-it-yourself kits with tools and steel frames bought in Bangkok. But to get the wood planks for the walls, the Red Cross signed on with a British timber company, which supplied Baltic pine bought in Scandinavia.

Concerned about potential health problems associated with the wood's antitermite treatment, the Red Cross headquarters in Geneva took two months to approve the contract. Finally, the wood was milled in Britain, and then shipped via Singapore to Medan, the Indonesian port just south of Aceh, Mr. Duignan said.

But often the journey by ship from Britain to Singapore took much longer than the three weeks it was supposed to take, and delivering the wood over Aceh's rotten roads ate up still more time. By mid-July, just 8,900 of the planned 20,000 temporary houses that were supposed to be up months ago were finished, Mr. Duignan said.

One of the occupants of the tiny new homes, Cut Darnita, decorated her interior with vases of fabric roses and orchids, a cheery red rug and a coffee table draped with a white linen cloth. The five-member family lay down mats on the floor to sleep at night. "It's small but nice," she said of the room, about 226 square feet. When would she get a permanent home? Ms. Darnita shrugged.

Not all the news is bad. Work on a highway down the devastated west coast of the province, financed by the United States government, is under way, and a new port has opened in Meulaboh, the seaside town that was smashed to smithereens.

Of the lucky ones with a roof over their heads, those with houses built by the Turkish Red Crescent Society are the most pleased.

"They've given us good quality," said Khairuman, 45, a building laborer, and his wife, Suginah, 43, as they showed off their blue-tiled bathroom

replete with bath and shower in the beachside community of Lampuuk. Like many Indonesians, they use one name.

The Red Crescent Society paid \$10,000 for each brick house, about double the cost of houses built by other agencies. And it sent a team of engineers with experience from the 1999 earthquake in Turkey. "The people of Aceh suffered; they need to stay in good houses," said an engineer, Ali Pekoz. From the sunproof window glass to imported hinges on the doors, the Turks chose the best fittings, he said.

The harsh analysis by Mr. Clinton's evaluation group has prompted some introspection among the major aid agencies. The criticisms come as some argue here in Aceh, and in Washington, that more experienced private contractors or national armies should take on future reconstruction efforts in disaster areas.

But the humanitarian agencies reject that idea, saying they bring a special dimension to the work that is implied in their very name. "I suppose we all could have given the billions raised for the effort to the Halliburtons of this world, and perhaps the job would be done by now," Mr.

Small of Oxfam said in a recent speech. "But would that build a fairer, more accountable and equitable society where the poor are not left behind for the lack of a voice and where women are empowered to effect change, and society as a whole has built up the capacity to go forward on its own?"

---

## **Aceh: Government declares sixteen organisations 'illegal'**

Green Left Weekly - July 26, 2006

James Balowski, Jakarta — Less than two weeks after the House of Representatives passed the Aceh governance bill — which the government says will pave the way for greater autonomy in Indonesia's northern-most province — on June 21, the Aceh governor issued a decree declaring 16 Acehnese

groups “illegal”.

While most of the organisations named in the decree are anti-separatist militia groups set up by the military prior to the signing of the peace agreement between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement last August, the list also includes the Aceh chapter of the highly respected environmental forum Walhi, the Aceh Referendum Information Centre (SIRA), the Acehnese solidarity organisation Student Solidarity for the People (SMUR) and a number of other student and activist groups.

SIRA and SMUR have been campaigning to ensure that the Aceh governance bill adheres strictly to the peace deal — particularly over issues such as Acehnese control over its vast natural resources, the right to form local political parties and the establishment of an ad hoc human rights court to try perpetrators of past human rights abuses in the province. In a July 13 statement, SIRA said the new bill contravened the spirit of the peace deal and is even worse than the 2001 special autonomy law, which was enacted in a bid to appease separatists.

Walhi has been highly critical of the Aceh Nias Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency for using timber from conservation forests and illegally importing timber from outside of Aceh to rebuild the thousands of houses destroyed in December 2004’s massive earthquake and tsunami.

Although SIRA has reaffirmed that despite the word “referendum” in its name, it is no longer seeking an independent Aceh and fully supports the peace deal, in recent months the organisation has been the target of attacks.

In February, the SIRA offices in western Aceh were vandalised by a group of around 100 militia. In June, the Indonesian government’s senior representative on the Aceh Monitoring Mission, Major-General Bambang Darmono, claimed that SIRA was illegal and called for the organisation to be disbanded. Then on July 10, three SIRA activists were arrested for distributing a leaflet calling for a general strike against the endorsement of the Aceh governance bill.

The bannings came in the wake of mounting public

pressure for stern government action against groups taking the law into their own hands, in particular the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and the Betawi Brotherhood Forum (FBR). Although the FPI is best known for smashing up Jakarta nightspots and exhorting money, while the FBR is used to provide hired thugs in local disputes, in recent months the two have been campaigning for the enactment of the controversial Law Against Pornography and Porno-Action (UUAPP). Most Indonesians see this as a step towards the implementation of Islamic law and it has generated a wave of popular resistance from women, who view it as a further violation of their already limited rights.

More recently, FPI made headlines by vandalising the offices of the local version of Playboy magazine, harassing women activists campaigning against the UUAPP and even forcing former president Abdurrahman Wahid — a moderate Muslim cleric and steadfast advocate of pluralism — off the stage at a meeting in West Java in May. In almost all cases police simply stood by and watched.

Rather than putting pressure on police to take action against the members of these groups who are clearly breaking the law, the government is instead seeking to revise the 1985 law on the freedom to organise in order to allow for the disbanding of organisations deemed to have “disrupted security and public order”.

## **WEST PAPUA**

### **Tribes hold peace talks in Papua, no deal yet**

Jakarta Post - July 31, 2006

Markus Makur, Timika — Two tribes involved in a series of deadly clashes over the past week in Mimika regency, Papua, have sat down for peace talks, but no deal has yet been reached.

Ten people have died in fighting between the tribes since July 21. Four of the dead were from the Damal tribe and six from the Dani tribe. The government has been criticized for being slow to step in and stop the fighting.

Though talks have so far failed to reach a settlement, Elminus Mom, chief of the Damal tribe, said he was prepared to end the violence. "We are still waiting for a decision from the families of the victims from the Dani tribe. We're still in negotiations, under the sponsorship of the Mimika regency administration," Elminus said.

While waiting for the results of the talks, the Damal tribe held a traditional funeral for one of its members killed Sunday. The body of the deceased was incinerated, which the Damal believe frees the soul to move into the next life. If this traditional ceremony is not performed, they believe the soul will remain trapped on earth, disturbing family members.

There have been conflicting reports about how the clashes in Mimika began. Most say the fighting began July 21, when Yohanes Kogoya from the Damal tribe was killed by arrows while attending the funeral of Nugi, the son of the Bhintuka village head, who was from the Dani tribe. Nugi reportedly drowned in a river, but the Dani blame the Damal for the death.

Fighting later broke out in the area of Kwamki Lama, not far from the massive gold and copper mine operated by PT Freeport Indonesia.

The situation around Kwamki Lama was calm Sunday, and residents were able to attend to their daily business. Two companies from the Mimika Police and paramilitary police unit Brimob have been deployed to Kwamki Lama to prevent the violence from escalating.

---

## **Suyanto: TNI still keeping on guard against OPM**

Tempo Interactive - July 31, 2006

Dimas Adityo, Jakarta — The Indonesian military (TNI) will continue to keep on guard against the Free Papua Movement (OPM) groups that are still exist in the Papuan interior, even though several members surrendered to the government late last week.

"The next measure is that vigilance must be maintained", said TNI commander in Chief Marshal Djoko Suyanto when contacted by Tempo yesterday. Maintaining vigilance said Suyanto does not mean TNI troops will be pursuing the groups that still exist. "We are no longer on the offensive in terms of conducting military operations to pursue them", he said.

Rather, the steps being taken by TNI troops in Papua at the moment are to make approaches to the members of OPM groups that are still in the mountains to return to society. "We are inviting them to come down to the villages, more in the direction of social activities, so no longer through military operations", said Suyanto.

According to Suyanto, the TNI's policy of no longer conducting military operations to pursue OPM separatists has been applied for several years now. "This has been the case since [the time of] Pak Tarto (former TNI chief Endriartono Sutarto)", he said.

Suyanto said that the military strength of the OPM groups who are still in the mountains is now minimal. "In any single group there is less than 10 people", he said. They are spread among several groups in the villages far in the interior.

Likewise is the case with regard to the weapons they possess. Although they still have them it is not very strong. "Like those who surrendered last week they only had homemade weapons", he said.

[Translated by James Balowski.]

---

## **Indonesian court jails two more over mine protest**

Agence France Presse - July 26, 2006

Jakarta — A court in Indonesia's easternmost province of Papua on Wednesday jailed two people for five and six years each for taking part in violent protests against a US-run mine, a lawyer said.

Hundreds of protesters clashed with security



officers in March near Papua's capital Jayapura over the mine run by US giant Freeport-McMoran, leaving six people dead.

The Jayapura district court found Selpius Bobi, 22, guilty of "inciting others to commit violence" during the melee and sentenced him to five years, said lawyer Iwan Niode. He said the court also sentenced 20-year-old Elias Tamaka to six years for "resisting against authorities by using force" during the clash.

"We are going to file an appeal this Friday for the pair and for Nelson Rumbiak and the other 10 defendants," Niode told AFP. Niode refused to attend the trial, charging that it was a "theatrical act" and that his clients were innocent. The same court on Monday sentenced Rumbiak to six years while 10 of his co-defendants were jailed for five years.

Sixteen Papuans, mostly students, have been standing trial accused of stoking the violence in Papua's Abepura, which left five security personnel and one civilian dead.

Critics accuse Freeport-McMoran of not giving enough to the people of Papua in return for the mine. They allege the mine causes pollution and that the military's protection of the site leads to human rights abuses.

At the time, the violence fanned fears of further unrest in the isolated province some 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) east of Jakarta, where Indonesia has grappled with a sporadic separatist conflict for decades.

---

## **Autonomy brings little progress to Papua: Study**

Jakarta Post - July 26, 2006

Ridwan Max Sijabat, Jakarta — Papua's "special autonomy" status has not brought significant progress to the people because it has failed to address their fundamental needs, a survey suggests.

The survey was conducted by National Solidarity for Papua (SNUP) in cooperation with Partnership for Governance Reform in Indonesia. It examined the impact of special autonomy, which began in 2002 in an effort to ease separatist tensions and grant Papuans greater control over their government and the province's resources.

The 323 respondents were from different backgrounds and locations across six regencies. They said their welfare has not improved because the local political elite, the bureaucracy and non-governmental organizations are out of touch with the common people.

Seventy-six percent of respondents said autonomy has yet to strengthen basic services in the areas of health care, education and the economy. This, they said, is closely related to rampant corruption and nepotism among those in power.

SNUP executive director Bonar Tigor Naipospos said a sizable portion of the funds granted to Papua to implement autonomy have been spent on things other than essential needs.

"Besides the conflicting interests between local people and their elite group, the two resource-rich provinces have spent a lot of money to establish new institutions required by the special autonomy law, on the controversy over the formation of West Irian Jaya province and on local elections," Naipospos said while presenting the survey's results Monday.

West Irian Jaya was split off as a separate province in 2002, despite complaints that the move violated Papua's special autonomy law.

Naipospos said a majority of Papua's 2.5 million people still lived in poverty.

Forty-six percent of respondents said that the newly-established Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) and political parties had not paid serious attention to their fundamental problems, and that the increasing number of security personnel did not improve their sense of security. Instead, respondents felt their freedom of expression had been hampered.

Seventy-six percent said the administration at all

levels in the two provinces needed reform, and that NGOs should be encouraged to closely monitor the implementation of autonomy in outlying areas.

Naipospos said the proposed reform of the bureaucracy and the adoption of transparency and accountability have to be carried out by the provinces' newly elected governors.

"West Irian Jaya Governor Octavianus Atururi and Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu should start their jobs by reforming the bureaucracy while pressing the MRP to issue the necessary bylaws to implement autonomy," he said. Only two such bylaws have been issued, on health and education, and critics have called them unworkable.

Bram Atururi was sworn in by Home Minister Moh. Ma'ruf on Monday for the 2006-2011 period. Barnabas Suebu took the oath as Papua governor Tuesday.

Laode Ida, the deputy chairman of the Regional Representatives Council (DPD), blames Jakarta for the slow development of autonomy. He said the central government still interferes in Papua's internal affairs. "Jakarta remains suspicious that the local political elite and bureaucracy are sympathetic to the separatist movement," he explained.

He said that the territory has received more than Rp 6 trillion in autonomy funds annually but no significant progress has been made on health, education, transportation and the economy, four sectors given high priority by the law.

He called on the two provinces to review all contracts with national and multinational companies to seek greater economic benefits for local development programs.

Observer Mohamad Sobary said there was nothing surprising in the survey results. He added it was important for Jakarta and the Papua political elite to cooperate to make autonomy effective.

"The politicians in the two provinces should learn from the church institutions how they have won the hearts and minds of the Papuan people in their religious mission," he said.

---

## **Defendants in Abepura incident jailed for five to six years**

Jakarta Post - July 25, 2006

Nethy Dharma Somba, Jayapura — The Jayapura District Court on Monday sentenced 11 protesters involved in a deadly March 16 clash with police in Abepura to jail terms of between five and six years.

The men were charged with a series of offenses during the violence in front of the Cenderawasih University campus, including disobeying a police officer's order to disperse and violent offenses.

Five people were mobbed to death in the clash, including four policemen and one member of the Air Force. Another group of men is on trial for the murders.

The heaviest sentence was given to Nelson Rumbiak, who was jailed for six years, two more than the four years demanded by prosecutors. The panel of judges ruled Nelson was guilty of violating the Criminal Code when he took a tear gas canister belonging to Daud Soleman, a police officer. Soleman died in the incident.

Other defendants — Patrisius Aronggear, Thomas Ukagol, Penius Waker, Othen Dapyal, Elkana Lokobal, Mon Obadja Pawika, Bensuir Mirin and Musa Asso — were each sentenced to five years jail for similar offenses.

The defendants' lawyers left the court when the verdicts were read out to protest the sentences they called "subjective" and said did not take into account witness testimony and other evidence.

"The judges's verdicts have been contaminated by an evaluation outside the court. The judges are like laymen — they have sentenced the defendants before the legal process is completed, only because they were influenced by watching TV coverage of the incident or reading newspapers," Paskalis Letsoin, one of the lawyers, said. Paskalis said the team would appeal against the

verdicts.

---

### **Papuan resistance meets in PNG to unify**

Australian Associated Press - July 24, 2006

The meeting in the port city of Madang brought together commanders from six commands in the West Papuan National Army.

Meeting organiser Jonah Wenda told AAP most of the commanders had crossed the border from Papua to attend the meeting and they had pledged to continue their struggle for a free Papua through non-violent means.

The meeting continued the work of the West Papua Coalition for National Liberation to bring together all resistance groups under one umbrella organisation, he said.

A low-level secessionist struggle has been going on in the province for decades with Melanesian Papuans pitted against Indonesian security forces.

Wenda said the commanders signed a memorandum of understanding to form a new coordinating body in October. Their aim was to use peaceful means to free West Papua, promoting defence rather than offence or violent struggle, he said.

"We don't want to attack but if the Indonesian army chooses to attack, we will stand to defend our people and our land and the future of West Papua."

## **PORNOGRAPHY & MORALITY**

### **'Anti-porno' fight tests Muslim tolerance in Indonesia**

Reuters - July 29, 2006

Jonathan Lyons, Jakarta — A battle brewing over a draft anti-smut law has laid bare deep divisions within Indonesia and, say critics, threatens its traditionally tolerant approach to Islam.

With parliament back in session from August 18, the world's biggest Muslim nation faces what could prove a defining moment. Pressured by growing demands from Muslim activists, lawmakers are expected to hammer out the legislation in the coming months.

Just what kind of bill emerges — and how much liberal Muslims, secular nationalists, and non-Muslim minorities water it down beforehand — remains to be seen.

Already, proposed changes would remove kissing in public from its catalog of proscribed acts. Other revisions exempt art and cultural activities from censorship, and reduce the chance of vigilante enforcement by Muslim hardliners.

Supporters say tough measures are necessary to protect the public from corrupting Western influence. Although barred by law, explicit material is available with relative ease in Indonesia, and television programs regularly feature bared flesh and sexual innuendo. Indonesia's population of 220 million is roughly 85 percent Muslim.

"We need to protect our young generation from moral degradation," said Tifatul Sembiring, chairman of the fast-rising Islamist party, PKS. "There has not been an anti-pornography bill in Indonesia, while (such laws) exist in a western liberal country like America."

Many mainstream politicians, including President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, have yet to take a stand, apparently for fear of alienating influential religious forces, including members of the governing coalition.

Some are no doubt also wary of hardline Muslim gangs, who have taken to smashing up nightclubs, bars and discos. Recent targets include offices of the Indonesian edition of Playboy. The magazine is tame by local standards but the name conjures up powerful images of Western excess.

Stalking horse

Opponents see the "Anti-Pornography and Porno-acts" law as a stalking horse for demands for austere Saudi-style Islamic law, which they say is

at odds with Indonesian values.

"There is now a growing tendency for conforming Islam, and identifying it, with the Arabs," said Lily Zakiyah Munir, a Muslim intellectual and graduate of a traditional Islamic boarding school.

In general, Islam in Indonesia is "immersed in local culture and local custom," with a wide tolerance for dissent, said Munir, who says the proposed bill dangerously distorts her faith.

"Now things seem to be changing. More and more people... have reduced religion to what is visible rather than internalizing the values and teachings of the religion."

In recent years, Indonesia has seen rising popularity of modest dress for women and men, increased use of Arabic honorifics and phrases, and national efforts to regulate citizens' behavior.

For example, a proposed new criminal code would impose harsh penalties on unmarried couples living together and other private acts deemed to violate social and religious norms.

Seizing on the decentralization that accompanied the fall of the authoritarian Suharto government in 1998, some locales have passed restrictive laws designed to further public morality.

One such ordinance requires shopkeepers to close their businesses during Muslim prayer-times. Another bylaw gives police the power to detain women for prostitution based on subjective judgments about their appearance. It was widely ridiculed after the arrest of a schoolteacher waiting innocently on the street for her husband.

---

## **NU states opposition to sharia bylaws**

Jakarta Post - July 29, 2006

Indra Harsaputra, Surabaya — The country's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), strongly reiterated its opposition Friday to efforts to turn Indonesia into a theocratic state.

NU lawmaking body chief Sahal Mahfudz said the organization needed to reaffirm its commitment to the country's secular traditions amid concerted moves to introduce sharia as a legal foundation for drafting legislation.

"The NU upholds pluralism in line with the Pancasila. We oppose the implementation of sharia because this will only lead to disintegration. Sharia can be implemented without being formalized," Sahal told the opening ceremony of a three-day national NU ulema conference in Surabaya, East Java.

He added that the NU should continue to be at the forefront in campaigning for the preservation of local values.

The organization has been particularly vocal in its opposition to the passage of sharia-based bylaws in several areas of the country.

NU chairman Hasyim Muzadi said in a recent meeting with Vice President Jusuf Kalla that the country risked disintegration from the campaign of some groups to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state.

The NU has joined other commentators in pointing out that the moves undermine the all-encompassing principles of the state ideology Pancasila.

Kalla, who officiated at the opening of the congress, also believed there were efforts to create conflict by promoting Islam to replace Pancasila in multiethnic, religiously diverse Indonesia. "One indication of the plot is the drawing up of numerous sharia-inspired bylaws," Kalla said in his address to 2,000 senior Muslim clerics.

He backed NU's campaign against the implementation of sharia in the country. "We fully support NU's stance on opposing the sharia-inspired bylaws that have been enacted in several regions."

Since the passage of the regional autonomy law in 2000, 22 municipalities and regencies have implemented bylaws showing the influence of sharia, including stipulations for Koran literacy among schoolchildren, the obligation for women to wear headscarves in public and heavy punishment for adultery, alcoholism and gambling.



Concerns about sharia will be one among many subjects discussed by the senior clerics during the congress. Other issues likely to invite heated debate are growing tension in the Middle East following the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and Palestine, disaster mitigation and the involvement of NU members in politics.

The latter is especially sensitive, with Sahal saying the trend of NU figures joining political parties compromised the organization's true spirit. "Ulemas should not use the NU as vehicle to meet their political objectives... it would only tear the NU apart and tarnish its good image," he said.

---

### **Playboy Indonesia: Modest flesh meets Muslim faith**

New York Times - July 24, 2006

Jane Perlez, Denpasar — When Erwin Arnada, editor in chief of Playboy magazine in Indonesia, answered a summons at police headquarters in the national capital, Jakarta, he turned up smiling, behaved like a good citizen and, in turn, was treated politely during nearly six hours of questioning.

The Playboy edition in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, was designed with local customs in mind. It contains no nudity, and its first centerfold featured a model wearing a modest negligee.

The parrying, he recalled, went something like this: "When did you first meet Kartika Oktavina Gunawan?" the police asked, referring knowledgeably to the model who appeared in the first centerfold of the Indonesian edition wearing a modest blue negligee that made lingerie advertisements in Western newspapers seem decidedly lewd.

"How can you not remember?" the policeman asked, according to the editor's account of the recent good-natured encounter. "Because I meet many beautiful people every day," Mr. Arnada said he replied.

The questioners chuckled enviously, he said. They charged him, and Ms. Gunawan, with violating the indecency provisions of the criminal code, then let them go.

Playboy arrived in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, three months ago with an edition specially created to take account of local customs — no photographs of nude women, no nudity at all.

Playboy is published under license in 20 countries, mostly in Europe. Indonesia is the first Muslim country for the magazine since a Turkish edition folded in the mid-1990's.

Fairly predictably, an Indonesian group, the Islamic Defenders Front, which specializes in attacks on nightclubs and gambling dens, threw rocks at the Playboy office in Jakarta, causing so much physical — and psychological — damage, Mr. Arnada said, that it was impossible for the staff to continue publishing there.

The magazine decamped here to the capital of Bali, a Hindu island, where foreign tourists parade in skimpy swimsuits and frolic in alcohol-suffused nightclubs.

The second and third issues were produced from the magazine's new headquarters, a floor of a house belonging to a Hindu spiritual leader, a friend of Mr. Arnada, who is a Muslim. The latest layouts of the magazine are fashioned among Balinese wall hangings and religious offerings to the Hindu gods.

While the reaction of the Islamic groups in the capital was not surprising, the magazine was also caught in a parliamentary debate over an antipornography bill that is testing the heart of Indonesia's tolerance.

The Indonesian Society Against Piracy and Pornography, which is pushing the bill, filed suit against the magazine, prompting the police investigation.

Goenawan Mohamad, the founder of Tempo, an Indonesian newsweekly, and a distinguished columnist, says Mr. Arnada has fashioned a magazine so tame that it would be absurd to ban

it.

Although he supported the right of Playboy to publish, Mr. Mohamad said he found it difficult to be really enthusiastic about the magazine's cause. "Playboy is a well-known magazine because of women's lack of dress," he said. "What's the fuss?"

In an effort to make the Indonesian edition palatable to local sensibilities, the first issue's interview of the month was with the nation's most famous author and dissident novelist, Pramoedya Ananta Toer. He died April 30 at the age of 81, soon after the issue appeared. Most of the articles in the first three issues were the run-of-the-mill fare of any general interest magazine in Asia, an account of amputees from Cambodia's civil war, the stories of Indonesian mail-order brides, a photo essay about domestic violence against children and a long article on East Timor.

The photographs of the centerfold Playmate in sparse though hardly salacious clothing (the second playmate was a Bali-based Frenchwoman, Doriane Amar — the attacks had temporarily frightened off Indonesian models) and a lonely hearts column geared to men were about the strongest suggestion that Indonesia's Playboy was actually aimed at male readers.

The cover of the third issue was certainly fleshier, though still demure compared with other men's glossies on the newsstands here: an Indonesian model dressed in a long mohair sweater and a pair of briefs shows cleavage and the suggestion — though only a suggestion — of her navel.

For Mr. Arnada, 41, who has a background in publishing entertainment tabloids and producing horror movies, all the fuss reflects fears about the intrusion of Western culture. "Why else do they keep shouting about Playboy?" he asked.

A widely distributed publication in Indonesia, Red Light, which is owned by one of the biggest Indonesian media conglomerates, Jawa Pos, is far more provocative, Mr. Arnada said.

Printed on crude newsprint and sold on the street

by hawkers for the equivalent of 20 cents, Red Light carries advertisements for prostitutes and their phone numbers, features photos of naked men and women and is festooned with sexually provocative headlines.

The Indonesian Press Council, a government body, in fact has supported publication of Playboy, saying the country now has freedom of the press. So for the moment, Mr. Arnada and Ponti Corolus, who looks after the financial side of their publishing company, Velvet Silver Media, appear to have prevailed.

Mr. Arnada's case on a charge of purveying indecency remained with the police, but had not been sent to the prosecutors. Before that happened, he said, "I hope they drop the charges."

The first two issues of 100,000 copies each sold out briskly, even at the relatively steep price of \$3.80. The third is doing nicely.

Some of the major advertisers — cigarette and cellphone companies, and brands of perfume, sunglasses and watches — who fled the second issue, afraid of threats from the Islamic Defenders Front, returned for the third issue.

Mr. Arnada, a self-described party boy, said a prominent Balinese nightclub owner had agreed to hold a Playmate event.

But even the businessman, Mr. Arnada remains cautious. "I don't say I win," he said. "I don't know where the ball is going. Suddenly I'm a suspect, and other publications with nude pictures are having a good life."

## HUMAN RIGHTS/LAW

### **Government urged to drop restrictions on communism**

Jakarta Post - July 31, 2006

Ary Hermawan, Jakarta — The government should end the bans on communism and Marxist-Leninism in the new Criminal Code because the restrictions are outdated and repressive, experts say.

While he acknowledged the good work done in

revising the code first enacted by the Dutch in 1918, political analyst Daniel Dhakidae said there was no need to incorporate regulations that banned ideologies deemed subversive.

The bans are a throwback to the anti-communist Soeharto era, he told The Jakarta Post. The regulations are irrelevant in a democratic country like Indonesia, where people could study many ideologies through the Internet, he said.

"This part of the draft is ridiculous. Why do we have to be afraid of an ideology that has been abandoned by its main proponents," Daniel said. The government should keep in mind that the former Soviet Union has collapsed, while the People's Republic of China is gradually abandoning communism, he said. Fidel Castro's Cuba is one of the last communist states left in the world, he said.

The draft code punishes people found to have spread communist teachings with jail terms of up to seven years. Those learning Marxist teachings as part of a course of study, however, are exempt from punishment. Anyone attempting to establish a communist organization in the country or make contact with similar groups abroad still risks prosecution.

Communism and related teachings were banned after a coup attempt in 1965, in which five members of the armed forces and one civilian were murdered. The killings were widely blamed on the now-defunct Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and the bloodletting that followed pitted the military and religious groups against the communists. Historians estimate that from 400,000 to a million people died in this violence, which saw the downfall of Sukarno's Old Order and the beginning of the Soeharto regime.

Memories of the coup and its aftermath still linger and materials deemed communist by the authorities continue to be banned today.

The Customs and Excise Office recently seized two scholarly treatises on Indonesian communism — Indonesian Communism under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics by Australian historian Rex Polimer and The Rise of Indonesian Communism by Indonesianist Ruth McVey.

New editions of the two works, originally published by Cornell University Press, were imported by Jakarta-based publisher Equinox. The publishers have protested the seizure. They say rather than promoting communist ideologies, these books are dispassionate political histories of the PKI.

Political commentator Fadjoel Rahman said the Criminal Code should only regulate people's deeds — not their thoughts. "People should not be made into criminals because of their ideas," he told the Post.

Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation chairman Patra M. Zen said the passages on communism were unnecessary because the draft already included articles that criminalized attempts to undermine the Pancasila state ideology.

"Anyone can try to replace the Pancasila, not only those believing in communism," Patra said. In their extreme forms, liberalism, conservatism, fascism and religious fundamentalism all threaten the existence of the Pancasila, he said.

Senior lawyer Adnan Buyung Nasution said if the subversion law was incorporated into the revised code, it would undermine the country's emerging democracy. "It would be dangerous. You can't judge what is in people's minds. No matter how vicious a person's thoughts are, they should not be charged with a crime if they haven't done anything," he said.

---

## **Criminal Code draft 'impinges on privacy'**

Jakarta Post - July 28, 2006

Ary Hermawan, Jakarta — Critics are accusing the government of compromising individual rights in the newly drafted Criminal Code that provides stiff punishment for cohabitation and other private behavior.

The bill has already triggered heated debate because it comes amid growing religious conservatism and, activists say, a systematic

erosion of the country's pluralistic foundations. Sharia-based regional bylaws have been passed in several areas across the country.

"I think some parties are attempting to apply the substance of sharia-based bylaws nationwide through the amendment of the Criminal Code (KUHP)," Women's Legal Aid Foundation (LBH Apik) chairwoman Ratna Batara Murti told The Jakarta Post.

The draft, a copy of which was obtained by the Post, includes the stipulation: "Anybody who cohabitates... could be sentenced to five years in prison."

Ratna said the passage of the bill would pave the way for state intervention in the private lives of citizens, which is a gross violation of the international civil rights convention ratified by the country.

"The draft will consequently outlaw all forms of sexual activity beyond marriage. It is definitely discriminatory and solely based on mainstream sexual discourse."

Ratna also said the bill criminalized prostitution, while sex workers were not criminals but victims of poverty and patriarchal society. She added that it clashed with the anti-trafficking law currently being drafted by her institution. "It's ironic. While we're trying to protect prostitutes from trafficking and other violence, the government is making them criminals."

Ratna urged the government to carefully evaluate the contentious articles before filing the bill with the House of Representatives. "The draft would need to be adjusted with the new laws currently being deliberated before the House," she said.

Muslim scholar Masdar Farid Mas'udi said Islamic jurisprudence deemed adultery, cohabitation and fornication as crimes. "Muslims believe that we do not own our bodies as they belong to God who created them."

He added that the purpose of sharia in prohibiting adultery and cohabitation was for the protection

of women. "Women are obviously the parties who suffer the losses, physically and psychologically," he told the Post. "The most crucial thing is that the law must be consistent to its purpose, which is to protect women."

Criminologist Adrianus Meliala said it appeared the article was incorporated into the bill to uphold the traditional definition of marital unions. "I believe that the article has been formulated to respect the institution of marriage. But, of course, I can't accept the notion that cohabitation is considered a crime."

Pocut Eliza, secretary of the team assigned to draft the bill, said the amendment of the Criminal Code would accommodate public input. The new law also will accommodate the customary law in connection with acts considered as criminal according to societal norms and local traditions.

---

## **Experts point to holes in Criminal Code draft**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Ary Hermawan, Jakarta — Legal experts have faulted the bill on the Criminal Code, drafted by the government to replace its outdated antecedent, for glaring omissions on democratic and human rights principles.

Indonesian Legal Aid Institute Foundation chairman M. Patra Zen outlined at least five contentious articles in the bill, initiated 25 years ago to replace the Dutch colonial code and now being drafted by a special team under the Justice and Human Rights Ministry.

"I'm afraid that the government is now trying to extend its power through the Criminal Code," he said on the sidelines of a seminar on the bill Wednesday.

He urged the government to evaluate articles on capital punishment, defamation and public disorder, state secrets and the prohibition of Marxism and communism.



"The application of the death sentence is against the human rights and it should be removed from the bill," Patra said, adding there was no direct correlation between the application of capital punishment and an attendant low crime rate.

Also controversial is the definition of "defamation" in Article 308, which states that "anybody who publishes obscure, excessive and incomplete news that could prompt public disorder could be sentenced to one year in prison".

Patra said the phrase "excessive" and "public disorder" were open to wide-ranging interpretations, and they should be made more specific or totally removed from the bill.

The government has in the past used such articles to jail journalists for reports deemed to endanger the nation's "social order". "Freedom of the press that gives journalists the right to publish news is not a criminal act," Patra said.

He also questioned an article that could lead to five years' imprisonment for those convicted of defaming the president and vice president. "What if we try to criticize the person of the president, not the institution, then will we also be charged?"

University of Indonesia scholar Rudy Satrio Mukantardjo, who specializes in the study of the Criminal Code, said the House of Representatives would encounter difficulty in deliberating the bill because of the many points requiring lengthy discussion. "It could take years for its deliberation," he said.

Pocut Eliza, the secretary of the team assigned to draft the bill, said that President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Justice and Human Rights Minister Hamid Awaluddin had requested revisions to the draft. "We'll have a meeting to discuss the bill's contentious articles next Monday," she said. But she argued that criminal law reform was urgently needed as part of the process of decolonization, modernization and democratization.

The bill, consisting of 36 chapters and 741 article, would incorporate new laws, including on corruption and child protection. It also includes articles on pornography and money laundering

although their drafts are still before the House.

## **LABOUR ISSUES**

### **Special agency to take over labor exports**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Ridwan Max Sijabat, Jakarta — A special agency would protect Indonesian migrant workers and oversee the labor export program under a decree expected to be issued next month by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Manpower and Transmigration Minister Erman Suparno said the planned agency would begin operations in September. Its establishment is required by the 2004 law on labor protection.

"The special agency, directly under the supervision of the President, will take over the role the Manpower and Transmigration Ministry has long played in overseeing labor export procedures," he told a seminar on the protection and empowerment of migrant workers Tuesday in Jakarta.

Following the establishment of the agency, Erman said, the ministry would focus on drafting regulations to enforce a 2004 law concerning the protection of migrant workers, and designing labor training programs to improve workers' skills.

The ministry's Directorate General for Overseas Labor Development would be liquidated after the agency was formed, he added.

The ministry has been under fire for the extortion of migrant workers before they leave and after they return to Indonesia. Erman was also criticized for taking a series of steps to reform labor export procedures before the establishment of the special agency.

"We support a sweeping reform of the labor export procedures but the move should have been made by the special agency to avoid conflicts of interest," said Husein Alaydrus, chairman of the Association of Labor Export Companies.

"All sides should let the new agency reform the

current export procedures, including designing a new export and protection system," he added.

The manpower ministry under Erman simplified the labor export procedures so that workers could obtain their documentation in only 12 days, rather than three months, before leaving to work overseas.

Erman also made plans to issue so-called "smart cards" to workers to simplify their banking transactions, and appointed a new consortium to provide an insurance scheme for migrant workers.

Under the planned reforms, Indonesia is expected to be able to send around one million workers abroad annually, with about Rp 25 trillion (about US\$2.7 billion) projected to flow back into Indonesia. Currently, around 350,000 workers go overseas annually.

Husein said labor exporters were suspicious of the involvement of Erman's National Awakening Party (PKB) in the planned insurance consortium and in the transportation of workers to their home villages from Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport

---

## **Indonesia criticized on migrant policies**

Jakarta Post - July 29, 2006

Hera Diani, Jakarta — National Commission on Violence Against Women Chairwoman Tati Krisnawaty looked a tad irritated when most of the questions posed in a press conference Friday focused on the death of an Indonesian migrant worker in Lebanon.

While the death of Siti Maemunah, 24, was tragic, Tati felt it was garnering attention only because it occurred in the international spotlight focused on Israel's attacks on Lebanon.

"Death and violence are faced daily by more than 2.7 million Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Saudi Arabia, but they have received little exposure. It becomes such a futile death," she told the

conference, which closed a three-day regional meeting on the rights of migrant workers.

The death of Siti, Tati added, should become a wake-up call to protect Indonesian migrant workers, particularly those like Siti who are undocumented.

The commission and activists from neighboring countries urged the Indonesian government to take the lead in protecting migrant workers in Southeast Asia, since it has the highest number of such workers.

Nisha Varia, a senior researcher at New York-based Human Rights Watch, said that among 12 countries monitored by her organization, Indonesia stood out in the number of abuse cases involving migrant workers. Still, she said, the government paid little attention.

"Indonesia must take strong and immediate steps to improve the recruitment process because there are exploitations and abuses in every stage of the immigration and recruitment process," she said.

The government, she added, should provide better legal protections, improve its memorandums of understanding with destination countries like Malaysia and cooperate more with other countries in establishing regional standards.

There will be a high-level dialog about migrant workers at the United Nations in December, Varia said, adding that Indonesia should stand up at the forum to demand an emphasis on human rights in all policies concerning migrants.

Human rights activist Irene Fernandez of Malaysia said it seemed Indonesia wanted good relations with her country, even if its own people paid a price as a result.

"There have been five or six crackdowns in Malaysia against undocumented migrant workers, but the Indonesian government's response has been unsatisfying. Of course, employers love to have undocumented workers," said Fernandez, a co-founder of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development.

Malaysian activists criticized the crackdowns as

violent, she said. "Malaysia should change its framework and review the immigration act. There is no framework for the protection of human rights and it cannot be tolerated. Indonesia has to make sure it works, and it isn't just a statement," Fernandez said.

The meeting also urged Indonesia to ratify the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

Homayoun Alizadeh, who represents Southeast Asia and Timor Leste at the UN High Commission on Human Rights, said ratification was the first step toward protecting migrant workers. "The Philippines and Timor Leste have ratified it; I hope Indonesia will be the third country to follow suit," he said. No destination country in the world has ratified the convention.

Fernandez said if the countries of origin took the lead, destination countries would consider ratifying the convention. "We will continue to push Malaysia. But Indonesia is responsible for protecting its citizens, while Malaysia is accountable to the international community," she said.

---

## **Medan workers protest shortage of gas**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Medan — Some 800 employees of companies that are heavily reliant on gas staged a protest Wednesday at the North Sumatra provincial council and the governor's office demanding the government reduce the current gas-supply shortage.

The workers, all members of the Gas Customers Communications Forum, said a number of companies had sent workers home because of the supply shortage.

A representative of workers at glove-making company PT Intan Hevea Industry, James HS Ketaren, said the company had lowered its production over the past three weeks, sending home 100 workers.

"Our company is in a tricky situation, which has forced it to send workers home. We are producing 600,000 fewer pairs of gloves a day. The decline is unavoidable due to the gas-supply shortage," James told The Jakarta Post at the protest. The company usually produces around 1.5 million pairs of gloves a day.

He said the government needed to act fast, before more workers lost income. The company currently receives 0.2 bar of gas a day from state gas company PGN, from 1 bar a day previously. Because of this the company can only operate two of its seven machines.

Jefri Sirait, the manager of PT Kawasan Industri Medan industrial complex, said the gas-supply shortage in the province has seriously affected business. He said the shortage had affected 57 companies, including 20 in the industrial complex.

Responding to the shortage, the general manager of PGN in North Sumatra, Arsyad Rangkuti, said the company had been limiting its gas supply since July 9, when state oil and gas company Pertamina told it to only distribute gas in accordance with the contract between them. Before that, Pertamina had been more flexible about whether PGN distributed more gas than the contract allowed.

The new policy, he said, was made because of the declining capacity of gas wells and the increasing demand for gas from state power company PLN, due to last year's fuel price increases.

"Official notice of the new policy was delivered to our office by Pertamina on July 7 and, on the same day, we notified our customers," Arsyad said.

## **POLITICS/POLITICAL PARTIES**

### **Local elections affirm fickle nature of party politics**

Jakarta Post - July 31, 2006

Meidyatama Suryodiningrat, Jakarta — If one thought that regional elections would produce a more accurate map of the strengths and ideological leanings of political parties, think again!

Thirteen months and some 211 local elections — including seven at the provincial level, 130 at the regency level and 34 at the municipal level, with eight more due this year — since the first one was held in Kutai Kartanegara, East Kalimantan, we have learned that political parties are as fickle as voters.

The only conclusion that can be made is that the balance of power is very much “status quo”, mirroring the results of the 2004 general election.

Nationalist parties are not waning, but neither are Islamic ones gaining in strength. No party is making solid gains and no parties seem to have succeeded in making inroads toward establishing a bottom-up support system across the archipelago.

Most, if not all, political parties have been un-ideological, peddling alliances for the sake of victory. This includes two of the major players, Golkar Party and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P).

PDI-P can claim the upper hand with victories in several high-profile areas, such as gubernatorial elections in West Sumatra, North Sulawesi and Central Kalimantan, and elections in the cities of Surabaya and Ambon. The party can also be proud of approaching its target of victory in 40 percent of regional elections.

Nevertheless, a thorough tabulation shows that generally the spoils have been somewhat evenly split.

Golkar Party has not achieved its declared target of sweeping up 60 percent of the elections. But frankly that target was unrealistic, given its returns in the 2004 general election of just 21.5 percent.

Golkar’s “failure” was again mainly due to its inability to win on Java, where it won less than a dozen elections. Most of Golkar’s victories were in eastern Indonesia.

Despite this, Golkar still won about one-third of contested elections. It won only two of the seven gubernatorial elections, but it still prevailed in over a third of the regency-level elections and in

nearly half of the mayoral polls.

It should also be noted that compared to the PDI-P, Golkar does much better in single party candidacies (tickets/candidates which are backed by only one party). Golkar won 39 elections where it was the sole party sponsor, compared to PDI-P which only won 19 elections by itself.

The most interesting development is how pragmatic the parties have been. Ideology and political lines, which seem so dominant in Jakarta, are easily crossed in the regions. There is no detectable pattern of coalitions, other than being a coalition of (short-term) interest.

Nearly two-thirds of winning tickets (candidates) were nominated by a coalition of parties. One winning ticket in Banyuwangi, East Java, was supported by as many as 18 political parties.

Nowhere is this lack of consistency in coalitions more apparent than in East Java, where political parties, namely Golkar, the PDI-P and the National Awakening Party (PKB), compete with each other in one regency but coalesce in an adjacent one.

Despite claiming to be staunch nationalist-pluralist parties, neither Golkar nor the PDI-P is adverse to cooperating with each other or with Islamist parties such as the PKS, as was the case in Pandeglang, Banten.

Neither do they turn away from cooperation with parties, such as Partai Patriot and the PKPB, which at the national level are considered “inconsequential”.

One consistent trend demonstrated by the results of regional elections is to debunk the “myth” of a “greening” of the political landscape. Nationalist parties remain the predominant force. Coalitions involving nationalist parties remain the predominant winners. Islamist parties, or their coalitions, have won just 17 elections. Two of these are significant: the PKS winning in Depok, and a PKS-PBR coalition winning the gubernatorial post in Bengkulu.

One lesson that can be learned from all these elections is that parties like the PDI-P have been relatively successful because they are more open



to receiving nominations from outside the party. Compare this to Golkar which, until recently, remained mired in its old style, politically laced internal nomination process.

While it may be a good short-term strategy for parties to look outside for nominations, in the longer term there are serious questions about the viability of the parties since the elected representatives will not necessarily be party loyalists, and may not be personally inclined to follow party directives once in office.

---

### **PDI-P moves in on splinter group 'territory'**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Suherdjoko and Ridwan M. Sijabat, Semarang/Jakarta — Hundreds of members of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle's (PDI-P) Central Java chapter occupied the Panti Marhaenis building in Semarang on Wednesday.

The building has been the office of a splinter group of the PDI-P, the Reformed Democrat Party (PDP), since early 2005.

Supporters of the two opposing groups, which use the same bull head symbol, clashed but no casualties were reported.

One of the PDP's Central Java representatives, Agus Teguh Santoso, said he had received word Tuesday the PDI-P planned to take over the building.

"We were preparing for the PDP's first national working conference from July 30 to Aug. 1, when we heard the building would be taken over at midnight. However, nothing happened," he said.

Instead, more than 200 PDI-P members came to the building at 3:30 a.m. Police officers were guarding the building at the time. The two groups agreed that neither of them would occupy the building. But after the PDP supporters left, the PDI-P supporters stayed behind.

The building was formerly the headquarters of

PDI-P's Central Java chapter, under the leadership of Mardijo. However, the office was moved after Mardijo was fired by PDI-P leader Megawati Soekarnoputri because he insisted on running for Central Java governor in the 2004 election.

Mardijo later joined the PDP, which consisted of former PDI-P figures who were not aligned with Megawati. "This building belongs to the Marhaenis Foundation, not the PDI-P. The PDI-P had the privilege of using it, and now it's the PDP's turn," Mardijo said.

In Jakarta, the PDP condemned the building's occupation by the PDI-P. "We regret the uncivilized actions of the political party concerned. We have lodged a complaint with the police and hope justice will be upheld," PDP secretary-general Didik Supriyanto said. Didik said the PDP had begun renting the Marhaenis building in March.

Laksamana Sukardi, a member of the PDP executive committee, said he had told PDP supporters in the province not to attempt to take back the building, to avoid physical clashes.

Laksamana and Didik, along with many others, formed the PDP after failing to bring about the PDI-P's reform at a national congress in Bali in 2005, following the latter's defeat in the 2004 general election.

The deputy chairman of the PDI-P, Tjahyo Kumolo, challenged the PDP to prove its right to the building in court. He said his party had the right to use the building because all members of the Marhaenis Foundation were also PDI-P members and assured the building had not been taken over using physical force.

## GOVERNMENT/CIVIL SERVICE

### **Activists say recess funds prone to abuses**

Jakarta Post - July 29, 2006

Ridwan Max Sijabat, Jakarta — The funds given to lawmakers to visit their constituents during their one-month recess are prone to abuse due to a lack of standard accountability procedures, say anti-

graft activists and analysts.

The government allocated Rp 27 billion (nearly US\$3 million) on May 6 to finance trips by the 550 members of the House of Representatives to their electoral districts during the current recess, so that they could hear directly from their constituents. The legislators are allowed up to Rp 50 million each to cover the costs of transportation, accommodation and meetings with constituents.

Sources at the House secretariat general said Friday that more than 40 percent of lawmakers have received recess funds.

The House ended its session on June 16 for a one-month recess, during which lawmakers usually hold meetings with constituents. Critics said the recess funds could be spent on other purposes due to the absence of internal supervision in the House.

"If the recess fund is booked as part of lawmakers' income and the recipients are not required to uphold standard accountability, it is quite prone to corruption," Ibrahim Zuhdi Fahmi Badoh of Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW) said at a discussion here Friday.

He said the ICW has reason to worry about the funds being misused because the House has failed to exercise good oversight in other areas. "How can the public be convinced of the field tour's effectiveness while the House has performed poorly in carrying out its legislative, budgetary and social control functions?" Ibrahim asked.

He also charged that most legislators have been spending the recess participating in their local party meetings, rather than holding forums with voters. "Legislators should play a role as parliamentarians or people's representatives rather than as party figures during the field tour," he said.

Former legislator Imam Churmen said, based on his own nearly 30 years in the House, the field tour during the recess has been frequently abused. Imam was a legislator with the United Development Party (PPP) and the National Awakening Party (PKB) from 1971 to 2004. He said many legislators often spent

only a handful of days out of their recess seeing constituents, or did not see them at all in order to keep what was then a small amount of recess funds.

"Before 1999, legislators did not receive any funds during recess. After that, we received only Rp 7 million each," he explained.

Mahfudz Siddiq, chairman of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) faction in the House, said more than 40 percent of the party's 45 legislators have already received recess funds to cover their spending during their field tours.

"Our faction has decided to receive the recess funds, and all faction members are required to be transparent in spending the funds and to account for their field tours following the recess," he said.

House Secretary-General Faisal Djamal said his office has established technical and administrative procedures in distributing the funds. He added that legislators must be able to show how they used the money.

"Legislators must sign several forms about the proper use of funds and be accountable for their trips through their respective factions," he said. He added, however, that he had no authority to supervise whether the funds would be spent or pocketed, or used according to their specified purpose.

Faisal explained that Rp 31.5 million of each legislator's recess funds was intended to finance at least seven meetings with relevant groups of people. The remaining Rp 18.5 million was meant to cover the lawmaker's transportation, entertainment and accommodation fees.

The deputy chief of the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK), Baharuddin Artonang, said legislators should give a financial accounting of their trips and activities during the recess in accordance with the standard audit procedures. He said the spending would be audited.

"Ideally, the House secretariat general should set up an internal audit team to avoid irregularities in the House's activities, including the field

tour," he said.

It has been difficult for the BPK to uncover any suspicious use of House finances in the past, however, because the audit agency has handed over its results to the legislature.

---

## **House should kick out more lawmakers, say activists**

Jakarta Post - July 24, 2006

M. Taufiqurrahman, Jakarta — Activists want to know why Democrat Party lawmaker Aziddin has been the only legislator so far dismissed from the House of Representatives for unethical conduct. Aziddin is one of numerous unscrupulous lawmakers who should be made to leave by the House's disciplinary committee, they say.

Sebastian Salang, secretary-general of the Forum of Concerned Citizens for Indonesia's Parliament (Formappi), said there were many legislators who had committed more serious transgressions than Aziddin but for some reason had managed to elude the council's scrutiny.

"It has been an open secret that numerous House members have acted as middlemen (in deals). These lawmakers, who run their own businesses, often use their clout to bully ministers to give them contracts," Sebastian told The Jakarta Post over the weekend.

However, Sebastian said the disciplinary council often found it difficult to corroborate allegations with evidence. "That is why Aziddin was the only lawmaker dismissed, the disciplinary council had for long time collected evidence to support their allegations, and they found Aziddin guilty of a long list of offenses," he said.

The council had found Aziddin was involved in lucrative land deals before a haj fund scandal that surfaced last week led to his dismissal.

Religious Affairs Minister Maftuh Basyuni told House Commission VIII on social and religious

affairs that Aziddin had served worked as a middleman for a firm to secure a government contract to build a dormitory for haj pilgrims in Mecca.

In its latest round of investigations, the disciplinary council uncovered three serious offenses involving three lawmakers, however the axe only dropped on Aziddin, with two other "unscrupulous" lawmakers given reprimands.

They were Tamsil Linrung of the Prosperous Justice Party, accused of serving as a broker in the procurement of medical equipment for disaster-stricken provinces, and Anhar Nasution of the Reform Star Party, who was alleged to have demanded a Rp 700 million kickback from a regent in tsunami-ravaged Aceh province for the quick disbursement of Rp 700 billion in emergency funds. A reprimand was also given to senior Golkar Party legislator Ferry Mursyidan Baldan, who chaired the House special committee on the Aceh governance law, for paying legislators with Home Ministry money to finish deliberating the bill.

Some activists believe Aziddin was singled out because his misdeeds were exposed by a government minister before the House.

Benyamin Tukan, an activist from [awasiparlemen.org](http://awasiparlemen.org), an Internet database for lawmaking activities run by the Center for Press and Development Studies, said the disciplinary council should investigate public complaints about lawmakers in the same way the Corruption Eradication Commission received input from graft watchdogs before launching an investigation. "It is time for the disciplinary council to open itself up and hear more reports from the public," he said.

Responding to the suggestion, deputy chairman of the disciplinary council Gayus Lumbuun, a lawmaker with the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, said the council welcomed input from the public. "But we have the final say over what decision the council should take, as it concerns our own members," Gayus told a discussion organized by a private radio station.

## **WAR ON CORRUPTION**

### **AGO girding for tougher war on corruption**

Jakarta Post - July 27, 2006

Jakarta — The war against corruption has become tougher for the Attorney General's Office since the Constitutional Court ruled Tuesday that investigators can name suspects only if they are believed to have violated formal regulations.

Previously, AGO investigators were allowed to name graft suspects and bring them to court simply on the basis of reports from the public. The ruling came in a Constitutional Court review of the 1999 Law on Corruption.

Attorney General Abdul Rahman Saleh said Wednesday that although his office respected any verdicts, especially those handed down by the Constitutional Court, the AGO had its own views on the subject. "I feel sad about this because it will make our war against corruption harder," he said. "I guess this is going to be a big day for corruptors."

The Law on Corruption stated that a person would be considered to be breaking the law if he violated formal or written regulations, such as the Criminal Code, or unwritten values, such as the principles of justice and other social norms.

In response to the Constitutional Court ruling, Abdul Rahman said that even the 1945 Constitution states that the country acknowledges unwritten social norms as a basis for legal action. "Because no matter how perfect a written regulation is, it will never be able to cover all violations of the law in the eyes of the public," he said.

The Constitutional Court reviewed the 1999 law at the request of both Dawud Djatmiko, who is facing a graft trial at the East Jakarta District Court, and the Indonesian Legal Society. The Constitutional Court, chaired by Jimly Asshiddiqie, said social norms such as proper conduct and principles of justice were indefinite standards that could vary from place to place.

The court, however, declined to review the 2002 law that established the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). "The petitioners have failed to

explain the violations of constitutional rights they suffered as individuals or a group as a consequence of the execution of the KPK law," Jimly said.

Deputy KPK chairman Tumpak Hatorangan Panggabean voiced similar disappointment over the court ruling. He said Tuesday the war on corruption would go ahead despite the verdict, but added that the KPK was now forced to work harder to collect evidence before bringing charges.

The Indonesian Legal Society argued in its petition that the KPK law contradicted the principles of people's sovereignty and the balance of power as stated in the Constitution. It said this had disturbed "the administrative system of the government and in turn disrupted the life of its citizens due to a lack of legal certainty."

The KPK was also accused of being ineffective and discriminatory in investigating and charging people with corruption. Antigraft activists fear some parties are trying to hinder the KPK's drive against corruption.

---

## **President asked to drop 'policy-error' decree**

Jakarta Post - July 24, 2006

Adisti Sukma Sawitri, Jakarta — More public figures are adding their voices to the chorus of opposition against a planned government decree that would protect officials from prosecution for "erroneous" policies.

The decree would diminish government control of the public sector and hamper efforts to ensure good and clean governance in Indonesia, which is ranked among the world's most corrupt countries, critics say.

"We don't need a ruling that would prevent us from creating a good and clean government... one of the main goals of the current regime," People's Consultative Assembly Speaker Hidayat Nur Wahid said.



Hidayat said he would personally ask President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to drop the decree.

Kalla initiated the drafting of the regulation early this year with Home Minister M. Ma'ruf.

Internal mechanisms in government agencies could deal with alleged corruption cases without necessarily having to involve the police, prosecutors and the courts, Kalla said.

Ma'ruf said last month the decree was necessary because many regional officials were not doing their jobs over fears they would be prosecuted for policy mistakes.

These worries have led to over-cautious spending and some development project delays, he said. The central bank has reported that regencies and municipalities spent only an average of 20 percent of their total budgets last year.

However, the regulation's critics have dismissed the fears as exaggerated and said honest officials had nothing to fear from law enforcement agencies.

In the draft decree, law enforcers can only start graft investigations into officials after the government's Internal Oversight Body (APIP) conducts a preliminary probe. They must also get permission from governors or government ministers to begin the investigations, according to the draft.

Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) advisor Abdullah Hehamahua said the planned decree would hinder his office's work. "The regulation would make our jobs more complicated and... would erode our powers and authority, which are mandated by the law," he said.

The 2002 law on the KPK gives the commission the right to investigate any individual based on reports and evidence provided by the public.

Regional Representatives Council deputy chairman La Ode Ida said the decree would make it more difficult for people to control state officials via the commission.

"If the public, particularly the media, cannot balance the power of government agencies then who will?" he said. La Ode said the decree would give

top government officials extra powers and would discourage people from exercising their right to report graft offenses.

He said the decree was part of "systematic" attempts to restrict the public scrutiny of officials, which included the bill on state secrecy currently before the House of Representatives.

Press Council member Sabam Leo Batubara noted a journalist in Medan in North Sumatra was recently sentenced to a year in jail after reporting on a graft case implicating a university rector. "This sentence will discourage journalists and people in general from reporting graft cases," he said.

## ENVIRONMENT

### **As mud flows in East Java, people ask what next**

Jakarta Post - July 28, 2006

Indra Harsaputra, Sidoarjo — Almost two months since it began, hot mud continues to pour from the ground in the East Java regency of Sidoarjo.

Work has been done, including setting up a snubbing unit to try and detect the exact source of the mud, building a relief well to block the mudflow and signing at least 140 contracts with various companies to speed up the work.

Still, as of Thursday, mining, oil and geology experts could not say whether these efforts were doing any good, and the mud continued to come, inundating around 190 hectares in Porong district.

This uncertainty over what, if anything, can be done to stem the mudflow, which started May 29 at the site where a gas well was being drilled, has turnpike operator PT Jasa Marga worried.

"If the mudflow can't be stopped soon, we plan to build a new turnpike. We're afraid the mudflow will again inundate the Surabaya-Gempol turnpike, forcing its closure again," said the company's president director, Frans Sunito, when inspecting the area.

He provided no details on where a new turnpike

might be built, saying the company would first have to coordinate with the government over the plan. However, a new toll road could be the best option for the company, considering it lost about Rp 380 million (US\$41,304) a day when the turnpike was closed the last time.

The road reopened to traffic last week, but the two-week closure caused export companies to lose Rp 1 billion a day, while the Organization of Land Transportation Owners estimated its members lost Rp 9 billion a day.

The secretary-general of the Association of Mining Companies in East Java, Hudin Al-Sorry, said the turnpike's reopening could not guarantee it would not again be affected by the mudflow. "Several companies have restarted their operations but who will be responsible if the mudflow again inundates the road?" he told The Jakarta Post.

Police have named the general manager of gas well driller Lapindo Brantas Inc., Imam Agustino, a suspect in the case, along with eight others.

The uncertainty that surrounds the mudflow and the efforts to stop the deluge has also affected residents.

"I'm worried about the psychological state of the mudflow victims in shelters if the mud can't be stopped," Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari said while visiting Pasar Baru market, where many residents have taken shelter. The Sidoarjo regency administration says more than 2,000 families, comprising more than 7,000 people, have lost their homes due to the mudflow.

To help the families, starting in August Lapindo will pay them up to Rp 2.5 million per year to allow them to rent houses until the mudflow problem is resolved. "What can you do? We were told to move out. We were happier living in our own houses and working like we used to," said Agus, a displaced resident.

Several people have been found trying to take advantage of the situation by applying for identity cards in the regency to allow them to collect money from the company.

Renokenongo village head Hasan said more people

were applying for identity cards since Lapindo promised to pay compensation. He said at least 300 people were applying for cards each week, a sharp increase from the regular 50 applications.

"I didn't know some of the applicants but I had to help them because they got angry and threatened me. I'm a victim myself and I'd rather avoid conflict," he said.

Another concern is farmers whose fields have been inundated by the mud. They are worried about losing their livelihood because experts say the mud contains sodium, aluminum, iron and chloride, which could permanently damage the fertility land.

The mudflow also has affected 1,736 employees of 15 companies whose operations have been affected by the disaster. Most of these companies say they don't know when they might reopen.

---

## **Forest fire haze hits major city in Sumatra**

Agence France Presse - July 27, 2006

Jakarta — Acrid smoke from raging ground and forest fires on Indonesia's Sumatra blanketed the city of Pekanbaru, stinging eyes and reducing visibility, a meteorology official said.

"The smoke is visible and it stings the eyes. It is especially felt when riding a motorcycle," said Anwar from the meteorology office in Pekanbaru, the capital of Riau province, a major source of the haze in recent years.

The latest report on the fires released by the Indonesian Space and Aviation Agency showed that a total of 28 hotspots were detected in Sumatra, 25 of which were in Riau. Seven others were burning in Kalimantan, the Indonesian portion of Borneo island.

Anwar said that since dawn visibility had been at less than 1.5 kilometers (one mile).

"We've also only had weak winds in the past few days... not strong enough to drive away the smoke," Anwar said.

Haze caused by burning in Indonesia and some parts of Malaysia to make way for crops causes an annual haze that afflicts countries in the region including Singapore and Thailand.

Some 1,500 firefighters have been deployed this month to help battle the blazes, Indonesian officials have said. Most fires appeared to have been started to clear land in commercial timber or palm oil plantations.

While the government has banned the practice of using fire to clear land enforcement remains weak.

In 1997 and 1998 choking haze caused mainly by Indonesian forest fires enveloped parts of Southeast Asia for months, losing the region some nine billion dollars due to a disruption of air traffic and other business activity.

Malaysia and Indonesia agreed last week to join forces to stamp out fires in palm oil plantations, which are contributing to the annual problem.

---

### **Logging, habitat loss threaten Kalimantan, Sumatra orangutans**

Jakarta Post - July 25, 2006

Jakarta — The conversion of jungles into plantations is becoming the biggest threat to the survival of orangutans in Kalimantan, while illegal logging will likely remain the most significant threat to the big apes in Sumatra, an environmentalist says.

Large-scale forest conversion in Kalimantan has just begun to increase in this decade, said Carel P. van Schaik of the Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Foundation.

"In the '90s, there were a lot of forest fires in Kalimantan, instead of forests being converted into oil palm plantations," he said in Jakarta recently.

In Sumatra, he said, the massive conversion of forests into oil palm plantations during the 1990s caused a more than 50 percent decline in the

orangutan population. "It was the biggest habitat destruction for the last 15 years," said van Schaik, who also teaches at the University of Zurich.

BOS executive director Aldrianto Priadjati confirmed the decrease in the orangutan population in Kalimantan and Sumatra, the big apes' original habitat. "According to data released by International Workshop on Population and Habitat Viability Analysis in 2004, there are 57,797 orangutans left in Kalimantan and 7,501 in Sumatra," he said.

Aldrianto said the population could plunge to zero over the next decade or two, as predicted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, if steps were not taken to mitigate the threats.

According to a World Bank report, oil palm plantations are the major reason forest has been destroyed at the rate of two million hectares each year for the last decade.

Until recently, the government had planned to clear 1.8 million hectares for oil palm plantations along Indonesia's border with Malaysia on Borneo. Research showed, however, that only 10 percent of the land was suitable for oil palms. The rest was either too high or too steep.

Agriculture Minister Anton Apriyantono said in early May that the government would clear only 180,000 hectares. BOS hopes there will not be any further forest conversion into oil palm plantations.

"It's not that we are opposed to the use of palm oil as a new alternative biofuel. I agree that the project may bring more job opportunities and development to this country," said Aldrianto. "However, the government should allow plantations of the oil palm to be planted on existing unused land instead of clearing more forests."

Clearing more land, he added, would impair the forest's functions of absorbing water, producing clean air and providing homes for a wide variety of plants and animals.

The Forestry Ministry's director of biodiversity conservation, Adi Susmianto, said the government

always weighs the social, economic and environmental aspects of its programs.

"The oil palm plantation project will be good for the country's economy, but the question is whether it will also be good for our society and environment," he said. Adi said that he opposed any project that would hamper conservation.

## **HEALTH & EDUCATION**

### **Indonesia burns 100 tonnes of useless donated medicines**

Agence France Presse - July 28, 2006

Bogor — About 100 tonnes of useless and out-of-date medicines donated by foreigners after a major earthquake last year have been incinerated this week, an official said.

"One hundred tonnes have already been burned, beginning from Tuesday," Vincent Aloysius from the cement plant where the drug disposal is taking place in Bogor, south of Jakarta, told AFP. He said a further 100 tonnes were set to be burned from Saturday at the plant's incinerator.

The medicines were sent to Indonesia in the wake of an 8.7-magnitude quake that struck off the coast of Nias island in March 2005, killing more than 850 and injuring 6,000.

The destruction was organised by the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme, which is funding the incineration. Indonesia has struggled to deal with hundreds of tonnes of unwanted medicines being donated in the wake of a slew of disasters in recent years.

After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami which killed 168,000 people in Aceh province, some 600 tonnes of expired, damaged or inappropriate medicine were donated. A further 50 tonnes of such drugs are also set to be destroyed following the May 27 Yogyakarta earthquake, which killed some 5,800 people.

---

## **Activists say migrant workers vulnerable to HIV/AIDS**

Jakarta Post - July 25, 2006

Hera Diani, Jakarta — Many have been raped, abused and neglected. But there is another factor that is rarely raised in discussions about the chronic struggles of Indonesian migrant workers: their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

There are no official statistics available on the number of HIV/AIDS cases among migrant laborers, but data from the Association of Medical Clinics for Migrant Workers (HIPKTEK) released at a seminar Monday showed 0.09 percent of potential migrants who applied for jobs in the Middle East tested positive for HIV/AIDS.

There has been an increase in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among workers planning to travel to the Middle East.

The showed there were 131 cases of HIV/AIDS among potential migrant workers who underwent testing while applying to work in the Middle East from January through October 2005. This was an increase from 2004, when 203 potential migrant workers out of 233,626 seeking work in the Middle East tested positive.

Many were women, reflecting the fact that more than 80 percent of Indonesian migrant workers are female.

Thaufiek Zulfahary of Women's Solidarity for Human Rights (Solidaritas Perempuan), who presented the data, said workers in other countries were believed to be as vulnerable. "But the government does not see the workers as a high-risk group," he told the seminar.

The factors contributing to workers' vulnerability, Taufiek said, include lack of information, low rates of condom use, poor health-seeking behavior, and lack of access to health services.



"There is a pre-departure orientation seminar and pre-departure training held for the migrant workers, but it is not sufficient. From our observation, only 45 minutes is allocated to health issues, with only 15 minutes devoted to HIV/AIDS," Thaufiek said.

The training materials even contained some incorrect information, he added, such as statements that HIV can be transmitted through saliva or by wearing the clothes of people who have HIV/AIDS — neither of which is a mode of transmission.

The migration process itself can expose workers to HIV/AIDS, Thaufiek said, because of sexual abuse perpetrated by brokers. During medical checks, women who want to become migrant workers have to strip down to their underwear, making them vulnerable to assault. They have little information on how HIV is spread, and they lack the confidence to ask for safeguards such as sterile needles.

Potential migrant workers' privacy and confidentiality are not respected, according to HIPKTEK. The potential workers do not receive health certificates. There is mandatory HIV testing, but no counseling or information is offered. None of the potential migrants interviewed knew they were being tested for HIV.

Once they are placed in jobs, female migrant workers are still vulnerable to sexual assault. Their quality of health care, if any, is poor.

Solidaritas Perempuan urged the government to ensure migrant workers' access to accurate health information and affordable, good-quality health care.

"Migrant workers must be directly involved in the discussion, development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of laws, policies and programs aiming to protect and promote migrant worker's access to health information and services," Thaufiek said.

## ISLAM/RELIGION

### **Religious leaders united against Israel**

Jakarta Post - July 29, 2006

A group of leaders of different faiths demanded Friday that the UN intervene to put an end to the Israeli military assault on Lebanon.

"We are here to urge the UN to immediately organize a special emergency assembly to discuss the issue," Muhammadiyah leader Din Syamsuddin (center in photo) said after a meeting with officials at the UN representative office here.

Din was accompanied by several leaders of major religions here, including popular Muslim cleric Abdullah Gymnastiar, Andreas Yewangoe of the Communion of Indonesian Churches (PGI) and Rev. Theophilus Bella of the Catholic community. UN representative Georg Peterson met the group and said he would convey the message to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Din said Indonesia's interfaith leaders, like their peers around the world, condemned the Israeli aggression that killed many civilians and devastated scores of vital infrastructure facilities in Lebanon and Palestine.

"We also condemn the killing of members of the UN peace-keeping mission in Lebanon." He said the UN should not hesitate to investigate the deaths and take action against Israel for human rights violations.

A reluctance to deal with the issue by the UN would diminish its international reputation for failing to enforce international law and keeping world peace, he added.

The chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights, Abdul Hakim Garuda Nusantara, has sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressing dismay at the UN Security Council's failure to reach a consensus to stop Israeli military operations.

He described the attacks as a violation of the UN charter and many international covenants. "...On behalf of Komnas HAM, I appeal to you to seek other means, within the scope of your mandate and competence, to mobilize international actions to ensure that Israel ceases its military operations in Lebanon..." he said in the letter, of a copy

of which was made available to The Jakarta Post.

---

## **Indonesia cartoon editor charged**

BBC News - July 29, 2006

An Indonesian journalist faces trial over his decision to publish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. Teguh Santosa, online editor of Rakyat Merdeka, is charged with inciting hatred towards a religious group.

Mr Santosa posted the cartoons in February at the height of international controversy over drawings which first appeared in a Danish newspaper. The images, including one which showed Muhammad with a bomb in his turban, sparked anger across the Islamic world. Islamic tradition explicitly prohibits any depiction of Allah and the Prophet.

Denmark was forced to temporarily close its embassy in the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, as days of protests peaked.

Mr Santosa said he published the images to give readers the full story on the cartoons issue. "We just wanted to let people know about the cartoons, which were being strongly protested at that time," he told the Associated Press news agency.

Mr Santos, who was formally arrested and charged on Thursday, faces up to five years imprisonment if found guilty, his lawyer said. Media freedom watchdog Reporters without Borders condemned his arrest and called for the charges to be withdrawn.

---

## **Survey reveals Muslim views on violence**

Jakarta Post - July 28, 2006

Ridwan Max Sijabat, Jakarta — Up to 1.3 percent of Indonesian Muslims nationwide admit using violence against people or objects they consider contradictory to their beliefs, a survey found, with more than 40 percent ready to wage war for

their faith.

Acts of violence in the survey on religion and violence by the Center for Islamic and Social Studies (PPIM) ranged from 0.1 percent of respondents admitting their involvement in demolishing or arson of churches constructed without official permits, to 1.3 percent who committed "intimidation" against those they considered had blasphemed Islam. The survey spanned 1,200 Muslims in 30 of the country's 33 provinces.

"The percentage looks very small but it is very high in its real figure when you note that 85 percent, or 200 million, of the country's 230 million population are Muslims," PPIM researcher Jajat Burhanudin said Thursday during the release of the results.

However, other scholars said violence was traditionally widespread in local cultures, and it was unfair to blame Islam for its prevalence.

The survey, conducted from 2001 to March 2006, found 43.5 percent of respondents were ready to wage war on threatening non-Muslim groups, 40 percent would use violence against those blaspheming Islam and 14.7 percent would tear down churches without official permits.

"This condition has helped terrorists easily recruit new comrades and makes the country a fertile ground for sectarian radicalism," Jajat said.

He added that a simultaneous study on the reasons for the results found Islamic teaching and Islamism made the most significant contributions to violent behavior, both in the domestic and public spheres. "The more Muslims give their support for certain Islamic teachings legitimizing the use of violence, the more violence will happen."

He noted that between 30 percent and 58 percent approved of amputation of the left hand for thieves and the stoning to death of rapists, as well as other tenets of sharia law, and opposed the election of non-Muslims for president.

Simplistic understanding of Islamic teachings and

the introduction of so-called "yellow books", detailing Islamic law and regulations, in Islamic boarding schools contributed to the emergence of hard-line groups, the issuance of sharia bylaws and sowed hostility toward non-Muslims, he said.

"To end this, the government must take strategic steps to campaign for pluralism among the people and enforce the law to ensure legal certainty."

But Islamic scholar Azyumardi Azra said the roots of the violence could not be blamed entirely on Islam, but also on the vengeful nature of some local cultures and common social and political problems, such as poverty, unemployment and political instability.

"The country's self-image of kindness, tolerance and hospitality must be questioned because local cultures are very close to violence," he said.

Although there has been increasing unrest since the end of authoritarian rule in 1998 and the dawning of the reform era, he said there were numerous ethnic conflicts since the 1950s.

Azyumardi, also rector of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Ciputat, Tangerang, suggested the reformulation of all Islamic teachings that could be construed as promoting violence and the development of democracy through a campaign for pluralism and tolerance.

"Besides, the country is in dire need of a strong government to create political stability and good governance and ensure the rule of law, while the development of democracy should not end with the general elections and local elections,"

He warned that religious radicalism would become a dangerous threat unless good governance was created, laws were enforced and old religious doctrines were reformulated.

---

## **Young Muslims gather, look to future**

Jakarta Post - July 26, 2006

Makassar — Hundreds of young people from across

the country attended Monday the first congress of the newly formed Association of Young Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI Muda).

The Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals' executive committee is opposed to the use of its name, saying it will confuse the public. However, the young people said they would produce future leaders, with a genuine intellectual curiosity, for the ICMI.

"The birth of the ICMI Muda does not signify a split within the ICMI. Quite the contrary, the ICMI Muda will strengthen the ICMI," AM Iqbal Parewangi, the head of ICMI Muda's national working committee, said.

Iqbal said his organization would continue using ICMI Muda. "We decided at the congress to go ahead with using ICMI Muda. No one can change our minds."

---

## **Ahmadiyah members consider seeking asylum in Australia**

Jakarta Post - July 25, 2006

Denpasar — Members of the Ahmadiyah religious group sought asylum Monday at the Australian diplomatic mission in Denpasar and claimed the government neglected their needs.

Representatives of the group, accompanied by two legal advisers, met with staff from the Australian consulate-general in Denpasar. They told them they felt abandoned by the local government, which had promised them a safe haven to live and practice their faith.

About 187 members of Ahmadiyah — a splinter group of Islam that follows the teachings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad — fled their homes in Lingsar district, West Lombok, from attacks in February. They are now living in a shelter in Denpasar.

"We came here to seek asylum from the Australian consulate-general and report to it about the poor handling by the local government," one of the

legal advisers, Syamsir Ali, was quoted as saying by Antara newswire.

He said the local government paid little attention to the members. "There isn't any medical care nor education for us. Some of our members even died from the lack of medical care."

He quoted deputy consul general Adelaide Worcester as saying the consulate-general would relay the members' demand to the Australian Embassy in Jakarta.

February's attack came after growing unease among locals about the presence of Ahmadiyah members in the village, especially after rumors spread of the planned construction of a boarding school. A mob stoned the Ahmadiyah compound and set buildings on fire, injuring at least four people.

Many Indonesian Muslims consider Ahmadiyah a heretical sect because it recognizes Pakistani Mirza as the last prophet, instead of Prophet Muhammad

Human rights advocates have criticized the police's slow handling of attacks on the group, which has been officially recognized in Indonesia since 1953.

---

## **Indonesian sect meets Australia's consul**

Australian Associated Press - July 24, 2006

An Indonesian Islamic sect which claims it has been persecuted by extremist Muslims met with Australia's consul in Bali to seek support, warning they may lodge pleas for political asylum.

Asylum claims lodged by a group of 43 Papuans plunged Indonesian and Australian relations to a fresh low earlier this year before Prime Minister John Howard promised support for Indonesian unity.

Two leaders from Ahmadiyah, a minority Muslim group, met with Australia's vice consul in Bali, Adelaide Worcester, to complain about the harassment and eviction of 187 sect followers in neighbouring Lombok island.

Over the past few months one of their members had been stabbed to death and more than 50 houses had been torched by Islamic hardliners. As a result, most were now living in a temporary shelter in the Lombok capital Mataram.

"We met (Worcester) and talked about what we have been going through, and we think Australia is one of the countries which is concerned about human rights," sect spokesman Syamsul Ali said. "Australia has accepted our brothers from Pakistan who requested asylum. We hope we can get it too." Sect members, he said, were so frustrated, they were also considering applying for asylum in countries including Germany, Japan and the US.

"This is a dead end, and the only way is to ask for political asylum," Ali said. "In a radical country, Ahmadiyah will always be preyed upon." Ahmadiyah sect members have infuriated extremist Muslims with claims that Mohammed was not the last prophet.

Followers describe their version of Islam, founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in India, as the one prophesied in the Koran and by Mohammed himself.

Hardliners last year attacked the sect's annual meeting in Bogor, south of Jakarta, throwing stones and bricks at participants, while Indonesia's peak Islamic body, the Indonesian Ulemas Council, declared the group heretical.

Ali said Indonesia's government and security forces had done nothing to stop the violence against them, recommending only that they move to Borneo island.

"But who can guarantee we will not be murdered there?" Ali said, pointing to bloodletting between local Dayak people and Muslim immigrants from Madura island in 1999. Australian consulate officials refused to comment on whether the meeting took place.

## **ECONOMY & INVESTMENT**

### **Indonesian economy continues to lose altitude**

Jakarta Post - July 31, 2006

Jakarta — If Indonesia's economy was a jumbo jet,



it would be flying on the single engine of exports at the moment, with the other engines of private consumption, investment and government spending having stalled out.

And there are rising concerns about the ability of exports to continue providing enough thrust for the economy, with many industries in the country seeing a downturn in their first-half output, sales and profits, on the current slump in demand and rising production costs.

The automotive sector, for example, saw sales of passenger and commercial vehicles fall 49 percent to only 149,634 units during the first six months ending in June, as compared to the same period last year.

Astra International, the country's largest automotive firm, saw car sales drop 30 percent and motorcycle sales 26 percent, president director Michael D. Ruslim reported of the company's first-semester results. This led to a 39 percent fall in net income to Rp 1.86 trillion (US\$204 million).

The country's cement industry also had a poor start to the year. According to data from the Indonesian Cement Association, first-half domestic cement consumption dropped 3.3 percent to 14.5 million tons from a year earlier, affecting producers' sales and output.

"The sector may experience flat growth for 2006," said Dwi Sutjipto, president director of PT Semen Gresik, Indonesia's largest cement maker. Though demand is expected to pick up next semester on the back of infrastructure and reconstruction projects, observers do not believe this will compensate for the first-half drop in consumption. Last year's total cement production was around 33 million tons, with some three million tons exported.

Companies involved in the food business also are facing hard times, with monthly sales of processed food until June slowing to Rp 18 trillion from Rp 20 trillion, according to Indonesian Food and Beverages Association chairman Thomas Dharmawan.

The Industry Ministry announced earlier industrial production growth reached only 2.38 percent in the

first half. Its target for the whole year is 7 percent. The textile, leather, footwear, and pulp and paper industries have also seen slower demand. However, the agricultural, energy and mining sectors have bucked the trend due to a recent rise in commodity prices.

Local demand for goods and services slumped after last year's fuel price hike bumped inflation up to 17 percent and sapped people's purchasing power. Ensuing high interest rates worsened the situation, curbing demand for both consumer and business loans.

On-year inflation in June eased to 15.53 percent, but the central bank's key interest rate, which lenders refer to for their rates, remains at 12.25 percent.

All of these factors combined to hamper the country's main growth engine of private consumption, as government spending failed to provide the much-needed drive.

The country's economy only expanded by 4.6 percent in the first quarter of this year, the fifth consecutive quarter of slowing expansion, from 6.2 percent the previous year.

Investment has not helped much, with the Investment Coordinating Board reporting only a 4.6 percent increase in foreign direct investment to \$3.5 billion during the first semester.

In view of these factors, Bank Indonesia sees growth staying put again in the second quarter, at between 4.6 and 5.1 percent, and wrapping up the year at the lower end of the central bank's projection of 5.0 to 5.7 percent. The International Monetary Fund, meanwhile, projects Indonesia's economy will grow 5.2 percent this year.

The Central Statistics Agency is scheduled to announce Indonesia's economic growth data in mid-August. "I think growth in the second quarter will not be far from the first, with consumption and investment still slow. For the whole year, our forecast is only 5.4 percent," said Citigroup's chief of economists for Indonesia, Anton Gunawan, during its recent investor gathering. "Indonesia needs more spending, especially from the

government."

---

## **IMF debt may be fully repaid this year**

Jakarta Post - July 25, 2006

Indonesia may be able to press ahead this year with its plan to fully repay its remaining debt to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — a year earlier than scheduled — on the back of recently strengthening foreign exchange reserves, the central bank said Monday.

"If we have enough money, then we will repay it this year," Bank Indonesia Governor Burhanuddin Abdullah told reporters Monday. "If not, then we'll give it another six months and made the final payments then."

Burhanuddin's latest remarks are in line with those made by BI Senior Deputy Governor Miranda S. Goeltom in Malang last week, when she said that the repayment process would be completed this year.

In June, Indonesia repaid half of its remaining US\$7.8 billion debt to the IMF, which it received in the form of standby loans as part of a multibillion dollar bailout package after the eruption of the regional financial crisis in the late 1990s.

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati had earlier this year proposed accelerating the repayment of the debt to ease the increasing interest burden arising from it, with the government and the central bank finally agreeing to the repayment of the debt in two tranches.

Burhanuddin had said that a second payment could be made either in November or December this year, or in 2007, after the making of the first payment in June. The original schedule for the repayment of the total debt was December 2010.

The decision to fully repay the IMF debt will, however, still depend on the adequacy and sustainability of Indonesia's forex reserves,

Burhanuddin said. He stated that the reserves must be sufficient to cover the cost of between 4.5 and 4.7 months of imports, and the interest payments on the government's foreign debts. "If (the reserves) are more than that, then we will be able to pay (this year)," he said.

Indonesia's forex reserves currently stand at US\$44 billion, figures from the central bank show, which is enough to cover the cost of almost 5 months of imports and foreign debt interest payments. BI has also strengthened its reserves position through a number of swap agreements with other central banks in the region.

But BI still needs to exercise prudence in managing the reserves, which serve to support the rupiah, given the jitters affecting the rupiah recently in the wake of persistently rising oil prices and worries over the new crisis in the Middle East.