

Actions, demos, protests...

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Central Java farmers demand closure of plantation company

Around 200 farmers from the National Farmers Union (STN) demonstrated in the Central Java provincial capital of Semarang on September 4 demanding that the National Land Agency (BPN) revoke the business licence belonging to the plantation company PT Rumpun Sari Kaligintung.

The farmers, who came from the regencies of Temanggung, Semarang and Batang, started the action at in the Simpang Lima area in Central Semarang then marched on foot to the Central Java BPN offices some two kilometers away. The march was also joined by elderly people, women and even children, and enlivened by spirited shouts and constant singing.

In speeches the farmers said that PT Rupun Sari Kaligintung, which operates on the border between Semarang and Temanggung, had violated its licence because it was obliged to work 148 hectares of land for a tea plantation but had only planted on 15 hectares with the remaining land left idle.

"In the end farmers worked the fallow land, but of course it was not free. The farmers were paid cheap to become tea pickers, were required to plant Abbasiyah trees and pay a rent of 10,000 rupiah for a staked area of land. This is like the practice of colonialism", said action coordinator Adi during a break in the action. (Detik.com, 4/9/2006)

Hundreds of PT Great River workers demonstrate at Mandiri Bank

Hundreds of workers from the company PT Great River International (GRI) demonstrated at the central offices of Mandiri Bank in Jakarta on September 4.

They were demanding the payment of two month's outstanding wages.

"Mandiri Bank as the proxy for PT GRI shareholders must pay our wages. Between the months of July and August we were only paid 50 percent of our wages", said one of the workers, Inung. The workers also called on Mandiri Bank not to sell off PT GRI because they were worried that this would only make their futures even more uncertain.

"Our wages have not increased for five years. We are asking for our wages to be increased in accordance with the minimum regional wage. We also want to be registered under the social security program (Jamsostek)", said Inung.

Like other demonstrations, the protesters brought banners and posters with messages such as "Police arrest [president director] Sunjoto and his cronies". As of 10.50am the protesters were still demonstrating in front the entrance of the Mandiri Bank and there is no information as to whether bank officials were prepared to meet with them. (Detik.com, 4/9/2006)

Kupang students demand resignation of university rector

Around 100 students from the Widya Mandira Catholic University in Kupang demonstrated on September 5 demanding that university rector Cosmas Fernandez resign. The students, who also sealed off the campus gate, said that Fernandez was authoritarian, uncommunicative and did not listen to the student's wishes. A similar action had been held the day before.

After sealing off the front gate, the students gave speeches and put up a number of banners and posters with messages such as "The rector is authoritarian" and "Bring down the rector now". As a result of the gate being sealed, administrative staff as well as students were unable to enter and campus activities were totally paralyzed. Guarded over by dozens of police, the protest also caused a traffic jam in front of the campus. (Detik.com, 5/9/2006)

Primary school students, parents protest demolition

Demonstrations don't just involve university students and adults. In the Central Java city of

Solo, hundreds of primary school students from the Joyosuran State Primary School took part in a demonstration recently. They were opposing the demolition of their school to make way for the construction of the Pasar Kliwon sub-district offices.

Accompanied by their parents, the students held the action on the school grounds. The protesters said they were deeply disappointed by the decision to demolish the school that they said demonstrated the local government's failure to prioritise education. If the school is demolished, students will be forced to move to the Kusumodilagan State Primary School some two kilometers away. (Liputan 6, 5/9/2006)

Farmers in Semarang demand return of land

Hundreds of farmers from various parts of Central Java held a demonstration at the office of agricultural affairs in Semarang on September 5. They were demanding that the plantation company PT Perkebunan Rumpun Sari immediately return their land that was handed over to the company during the era of Suharto's New Order regime after they had been harassed and intimidated by the military. (Liputan 6, 5/9/2006)

Yogyakarta students protest plan to import rice

Hundreds of students from a number of tertiary education institutions in the Central Java city of Yogyakarta demonstrated on September 5 against the government's plan to import rice. The protesters said that the move would only bring suffering to Indonesian farmers who are already facing an extremely difficult economic situation. The students demanded that the government enact policies to advance the agricultural sector, as the majority of Indonesian's population are farmers. (Liputan 6, 5/9/2006)

Protesters oppose division of Lebak regency

Around 1000 residents from three sub-districts in the Lebak regency of Banten province demonstrated on September 5 calling on the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) to postpone the division of the southern part of Lebak. The residents, who came from the sub-districts of Gunung Kencana, Cijaku and Cikukur said that they were not ready for the new regency that is to be named Cilangkahan because the

level of infrastructure is still minimal. (Liputan 6, 5/9/2006)

PT Natraco workers demand wage increase

Hundreds of PT Natraco workers in the West Sumatra regional capital of Padang went on strike on September 5 demanding that their salaries be increased in accordance with the provincial minimum wage and for the reinstatement of a colleague who was dismissed over earlier demands for a wage increase. The workers are demanding that the company that produces cinnamon increase the daily wage to 26,000 rupiah from the current level of 15,000 rupiah. (Liputan 6, 5/9/2006)

PT Sanyo employees strike over suspension of workers

Around 1,800 PT Sanyo Indonesia employees in the East Jakarta Industrial Park area in the Cikarang sub-district of Bekasi went on strike today. "We are demanding the that the suspicion of three PT Sanyo Trade Union leaders be reversed", said trade union deputy secretary Zainuddin, one of the workers who was suspended.

The solidarity strike was held because the decision by the company to suspend the workers was done without going through the mechanisms stipulated by the labour law. The three workers were suspended following a demonstration in April 2005.

The strike began at 7.30am when workers from the administration, compressor and home products divisions refused to start work, remaining outside and putting up banners and giving speeches. The workers say they will continue the actions until September 11 or until their demands are met. (Tempo Interactive, 5/9/2006)

Solok residents seal off PLN, legislators' homes

On September 5, residents from Suku Tanjung in the Solok district of West Java sealed off the offices of the state owned electricity company PLN and the official residences of Solok DPRD members in the Kayu Aro area. They were demanding that the Solok regional government pay them compensation for 2.5 hectares of land that is being used for the construction of two buildings. (Liputan 6, 6/9/2006)

Students reject plan to dump Lapindo mud in sea

A visit by East Java Governor Imam Utomo to the Bangkalan regency of Madura Island in East Java was marred by a student demonstration. The protesters were demanding that the governor reject plans to dump water from the PT Lapindo Brantas mud disaster into the Madura Strait saying that it is a principle income source for fishers in Madura. (Liputan 6, 6/9/2006)

Sanyo workers go on strike again

Thousands of PT Sanyo Indonesia workers took strike action again today with around 1,500 workers putting up tents alongside the factory in the East Jakarta Industrial Park. Although worker representatives were able to meet with management they said, "they did not touch on what had happened". The workers said that they would wait for assurances from the company until 1pm. "If the suspicions are revoked, we will return to work. But if not, we will stay on strike", said trade union deputy secretary Zainuddin. (Tempo Interactive, 6/9/2006)

Students pelt PLN offices with rotten tomatoes

Angry over PT PLN's policy of returning to rolling blackouts, student from the Student Critics Forum (Formaks) demonstrated at the PLN offices in South Sulawesi provincial capital of Makassar by pelting the office with rotten tomatoes.

"PLN as a state owned enterprise, in fact causes residents to suffer. Electricity is the most basic of necessities. But PLN's services are very poor as demonstrated by the rolling blackouts", said action coordinator Tenri Wara speaking before a protest at the Makassar State Islamic University.

After giving speeches at the university, the students then moved off to the PLN offices where they pelted the building with rotten tomatoes and chilies. They then set fire to old tyres causing the situation to become tense when security personnel tried to stop them. In the end the students disbanded peacefully but said that would return if their demands were not met. (Detik.com, 6/9/2006)

Earthquake victims demand even distribution of funds

Around 2,000 victims of the earthquake in the Central Java regency of Bantul demanding the even distribution of assistance funds held a

demonstration at the offices of the Yogyakarta Governor Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X on September 6.

The protesters, who come from the Peoples Forum for Victims of the Earthquake (Forkob) and originate from sub-districts all across Bantul, said they would stay overnight if the governor failed to meet them.

Arman Kurniawan, one of the action coordinators, said that they disagree with the first stage of reconstruction assistance only being allocated for 47 houses that were destroyed by the quake and said that the funds but be distributed evenly to all of the earthquake victims.

"We also oppose the assistance being distributed based on groups. Because this will trigger a conflict. The government should learn from the experience of distributing living allowances that also cased divisions", said Kurniawan (Detik.com, 6/9/2006)

Villagers demand land compensation

Dozens of villagers from Kiajaran Kulon in the Lohbener sub-district of Indramayu regency, West Java, demonstrated at the offices of the local village administration on September 6. They were demanding compensation for land that had been cleared for the broadening of the Jl. Pantai Utara road. The residents also called on the local village head to resign because they said he had not defended their rights. (Liputan 6, 7/9/2006)

Villagers blockade entrance to disputed land

The clearing of land in the village of Nanggala Mekar in the Ciranjang sub-district of Cianjur, West Java, is not running smoothly. Hundreds of residents blockaded the entrance to site when officials from the Cianjur District Court came to clear the disputed land. The villagers are in a dispute with a person who claims to have purchased the land. (Liputan 6, 7/9/2006)

Students demand closure of dishonest petrol station

Hundreds of students in Makassar demonstrated on September 7 demanding that the state owned oil company Pertamina close down a dishonest petrol station. The students almost clashed with Pertamina

security personnel but tensions were diffused after an official from Pertamina's public relations department met with them. (Liputan 6, 7/9/2006)

Public hospital doctors strike over honorariums

Scores of doctors from the Kepanjen Public Hospital in the East Java city of Malang went on strike on September 6. They were demanding that the hospital be more transparent in the allocation of honorariums.

According to the protesters, not all doctors should not receive the same honorariums as they all have different levels of skill and experience. They said that they would not return to work until the hospital management meets their demands.

In response, the director of the hospital, Doctor Agus Arifin said that it was not a serious problem and that the hospital management would levy sanctions against the striking doctors. (Liputan 6, 7/9/2006)

Indramayu farmers protest against rice imports

Farmers from Indramayu under the banner of the Anti Broker and Speculators Movement (GATS) demonstrated at the House of Representatives (DPR) building in South Jakarta on September 8. The protesters were opposing rice imports and demanding that the government pay more attention to the fate Indonesian farmers.

Arriving by bus, the 30 or so farmers immediately began putting up banners and posters with the messages such as "Beware of masked rice speculators", "Defend farmers!" and "Don't trust them!".

In speeches they said the government's plan to import rice it would make things even more difficult for farmers. "Look, the government does not pay enough attention to farmers in Indonesia. If our demands are not met, we will hold even larger demonstrations until our voices are heard", said GATS action coordinator Syaiful Bahri. (Detik.com, 8/9/2006)

Textile workers demand outstanding wages

Hundreds of workers from a textile factory in the

Pekalongan regency of Central Java demonstrated at the local DPRD not long ago. They were urging the assembly members to assist them, as the company has not paid their wages for the last three months. Unfortunately the action failed to get the attention of the DPRD, as there were no assembly members willing to meet with the workers. Following the action the workers held a joint prayer in front of the home of the factory's director. (Liputan 6, 8/9/2006)

Yogyakarta street traders oppose relocation

Hundreds of Yogyakarta street traders demonstrated at the DPRD on September 9. They were protesting over their forcible relocation from Jl. Mangkubumi to the Kuncen area of Wirobrajan. The traders said that the Kuncen area is unsuitable because it is far from the busy areas of the city. (Liputan 6, 9/9/2006)

Victims of transmission line project demand compensation

Thousands of residents from the Jepara regency demonstrated at the Semarang DPRD on September 9 demanding compensation for their homes and land that lie beneath high-voltage transmission lines (SUTET). The protesters were demanding compensation of 65,000 rupiah per square meter and rejected PLN's offer of 5,000 rupiah. (Liputan 6, 9/9/2006)

Students demand free education for earthquake victims

Hundreds of students from various universities demonstrated at the Gajah Mada University (UGM) campus in Yogyakarta on September 9 demanding free education for victims of the Central Java earthquake. The action was marred by an incident in which students and campus security personnel started pushing and shoving each other when the protesters tried to meet with UGM Rector Sofyan Effendi. The rectorate had refused to meet with the students because the demonstrators were not just from UGM but included students from other universities. (Liputan 6, 9/9/2006)

Public figures, civil servants demand investigation

Hundreds of public figures and state civil servants from the Kendal regency in Central Java demonstrated at the regional police headquarters in Semarang on

September 9. They were demanding that the police conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into suspected corruption by Kendal Regent Hendy Budoro and the speaker of the Central Java DPRD, Murdoko. The protesters called on the police not to be selective in handling the corruption cases involving some 61 billion rupiah of the regional budget. (Liputan 6, 9/9/2006)

Bojong dump site residents attack sub-district head

A demonstration by hundreds of resident living in the vicinity of the Bojong dumpsite has again ended in rioting. The incident took place when hundreds of Bojong residents were demonstrating against the Bogor regional government's plan to remove a number of items of equipment from the Bojong dumpsite.

Initially the demonstration proceeded in an orderly manner but then turned ugly when they evicted Klapanunggal sub-district head Panji Sutisna from the site. A number of protesters hit and kicked Sutisna and almost destroyed his car.

As of this afternoon, the residents were still protesting and had blockaded the road to the dumpsite. A number of vehicles, including a fire truck were forced to turn back. The residents are threatening to keep the road closed if the Bogor government tries to remove the equipment.

This is not the first action. In October 2005 residents from Klapanunggal also blockaded the site and built a wall in the middle of the road and cut down trees to create a blockade. (Liputan 6, 9/9/2006)

Refugees occupy North Maluku governor's office

Hundreds of refugees, victims of the riots in Tobelo, North Halmahera, have again occupied the North Maluku governor's office in Ternate. The protesters, the majority of which were women and children, are demanding to be repatriated, as they can no longer put up with living in refugee camps.

The refugees have been living in the camps for almost seven years. Their demands to be returned home have been ignored by North Maluku Governor Thaib Armain and the government's promise to repatriate them have been delayed by an alleged lack of funds. (Liputan 6, 10/9/2006)

Vice presidential visit greeted with protests

A recent visit by Vice President Jusuf Kalla to the Hasanuddin University in Makassar was greeted by dozens of protesting students. The students were condemning the government's plan to privatise the Hasanuddin campus, which they said would result in an increase in education fees.

The protest was marred by a clash when the students tried to meet with Kalla after he had entered the campus grounds with protesters and security personnel pushing and shoving each other. Outnumbered by the security personnel, the students were eventually forced to flee to safety. (Liputan 6, 10/9/2006)

Bogor students refuse to attend classes over illegal fees

Hundreds of students from the Pakuan University in Bogor, West Java, refused to attend classes on October 9 and instead held a demonstration at the university rectorate building. The students were demanding that the rectorate investigate illegal fees being levied against new students. According to the students, these fees amount to more than 125 million rupiah with each new student being forced to pay a "ghost" fee of 50,000 to 1 million rupiah each. (Liputan 6, 10/10/2006)

Pasuruan residents protest over factory waste

Hundreds of residents from five villages in East Java regency of Pasuruan demonstrated recently over the acrid fumes caused by waste from a gelatin factory located in the area. They were demanding that the factory provide compensation to pay for healthcare. (Liputan 6, 10/10/2006)

Market traders almost clash with police

Traditional market traders in the village of Passo in Maluku almost clashed with civil service police on October 7 after government officials forcibly tried to demolish their kiosks and evict them from the area without prior notice. The traders said they had already paid the required fees to the Ambon municipal government of as much as 750,000 rupiah per year. The officials eventually gave in and canceled the eviction. (Liputan 6, 10/10/2006)

Demonstration by refugees ends in clash, dozens injured

A demonstration by hundreds of refugees from the Ambon riots at the North Maluku governor's office has ended in a clash. The incident was triggered by the beating of a student who was taking part in the demonstration by an official from the governor's office. Angry, the protesters responded by breaking through the front gate and a clash broke out when officials tried to force the protesters back. Dozens were injured in the incident. (Liputan 6, 10/10/2006)

Kendari workers demand payment of holiday bonuses

Around 800 workers from a fish processing company in the city of Kendari, South East Sulawesi, went on strike and padlocked the factory gates on October 9. The action was held after workers heard rumors that due to financial losses, PT Darma Samudra Kendari would not be providing workers annual holiday bonuses. Responding to the protests, the company denied that it would not be paying holiday bonuses but added that previous bonuses had been paid based on performance but that this year, in accordance with government regulations, they would only be paid the equivalent of one month's wages. (Liputan 6, 10/10/2006)

Bandung workers demand severance pay

Hundreds of workers from PT Naintex in Bandung demonstrated again at the Gedung Sate building complex demanding to be paid severance pay. The workers were demanding to be paid 13 billion rupiah to be distributed among 933 workers who were dismissed by the company eight months ago. (Liputan 6, 10/10/2006)