

Indonesia News & Views

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CENTRAL JAVA

Central Java Province is located exactly on the center of Java Island. Semarang is the capital city of province. The province has rich culture and tradition descending from Hindu and Buddha as well as Islamic influences. One of the most remarkable religious monuments found in Central Java is Borobudur Temple, the most magnificent monument to Mahayana Buddhism in the world.

source: www.my-indonesia.info

RI's Economy to Continue Growing: Observer

Bandarlampung - An economic observer said she believed Indonesia's economy would continue to grow in 2010.

Aviliani, an economist at the University of Indonesia, said

"in 2010 growth in other countries may not be better than in Indonesia and therefore investors are likely to choose Indonesia for their short-term investment." Speaking in a dialogue on

Indonesia's economic outlook, she said economic growth in countries around the world would not yet be stable. Although they were trying to issue bonds (continued to page 4)

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Government
www.indonesia.go.id

Department of Foreign Affairs
www.deplu.go.id

Ministry of Cultural and Tourism
www.budpar.go.id ,
www.my-indonesia.info

National Agency for Export
Development
www.nafed.go.id

Investment Coordinating Board
www.bkpm.go.id

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DOMESTIC ISSUES

Political Issues

President Yudhoyono Announces New Cabinet Line-Up



President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Merdeka Palace on Wednesday night (21/10/2009) announced the United Indonesia cabinet line-up for 2009-2014 term of office as follows:

1. Coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs : Joko Suyanto
2. Coordinating minister for economic affairs: Hatta Radjasa
3. Coordinating minister for people`s welfare: Agung Laksono
4. Minister/state secretary minister: Sudi Silalahi
5. Home Affairs minister: Gamawan Fauzi
6. Foreign Affairs minister: Marty Natalegawa
7. Defense minister = Purnomo Yusgiantoro
8. Law and Human Rights minister: Patrialis Akbar
9. Finance minister: Sri Mulyani Indrawati
10. Energy and mineral resources minister: Darwin Zehedy Saleh
11. Industry minister: M.S. Hidayat
12. Trade minister: Marie Elka Pangestu
13. Agriculture minister: Suswono
14. Forestry minister: Zulkifli Hasan
15. Transportation minister: Fredy Numberi
16. Maritime and Fishery minister: Fadel Muhammad
17. Manpower and transmigration minister : Muhaimin Iskandar
18. Public works minister: Djoko Kirmanto
19. Health minister: Endang Rahayu Setianingsih
20. National education minister: Muhammad Nuh

21. Social Affairs minister: Salim Segaf Aljufri
22. Religious affairs minister: Suryadharma Ali
23. National Development Planning minister: Armida Alisyahbana
24. Culture and Tourism minister: Jero Wacik
25. Research and Technology minister: Suharna Surapranata
26. Cooperatives and State Enterprises minister: Sarifuddin Hasan
27. State minister for environment: Gusti Muhammad Hatta
28. State minister for women`s empowerment: Linda Agum Gumelar
29. State administrative reforms minister: EE Mangindaan
30. Development of disadvantaged regions minister: Helmy Faisal Zaini
31. State Enterprises minister: Mustafa Abubakar
32. Communications and Information minister: Tifatul Sembiring
33. Youth and Sports affairs minister: Andi Mallarangeng
34. People`s housing minister: Suharso Monoarfa

Head of National Intelligence Agency (BIN): Sutanto
Attorney General: Hendarman Supanji
TNI chief: Gen Djoko Santoso
National Police Chief: Bambang Hendarso Danuri

Yudhoyono also mentioned Kuntoro Mangkusubroto as Chairman of the President Work Monitoring Unit and Development Control.

All the ministers will be installed on Thursday (Oct 22), the president added.(ANTARA)

Yudhoyono Officially Inaugurated As President

People's Consultative Assembly speaker Taufik Keimas led the official inauguration of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Boediono as Indonesian president and vice president for the 2009-2014 period on Tuesday (20/10/2009).

President Yudhoyono and Vice President Boediono took their oaths, based on their religion, Islam.

"With this inauguration, you are now the official president of Indonesia for 2009-2014. Now you are a leader of a nation, not a group or political group," Keimas told Yudhoyono before the plenary session.

Although Keimas stumbled at some points, missing some words when reading out his speech, he managed to gain the applause from Assembly members and invited guests when he congratulated Yudhoyono. (the Jakarta Post)

Yudhoyono Envisions Indonesia's Global Leadership

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Tuesday (20/10/2009) that Indonesia would play a more active role in the international arena, both at the regional and global levels.

Speaking during his inauguration at the People's Consultative Assembly building, President Yudhoyono said that Indonesia would continue its leadership in the current negotiation for a climate deal that would be completed in Copenhagen in December.

Yudhoyono also said that Indonesia would also be more active in pursuing global economic reforms through various international organizations that Indonesia is a part of, especially through the prestigious Group-20.

Indonesia, Yudhoyono said, would also continue to play its leadership role in Southeast Asia through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to create an "ASEAN community."

"We want to create an ASEAN community to make this Southeast Asian region a peaceful, prosperous and dynamic region," he told the plenary session, which was also attended by leaders of neighboring countries.

Australian Prime Minister Minister Kevin Rudd, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and East Timor Prime President Jose Ramos Horta attended Yudhoyono's inauguration.

Yudhoyono also said that Indonesia would continue to play its role in the United Nations, especially to help the world achieve Millennium Development Goals and create "harmony among civilization." (the Jakarta Post)

UN to Continuously Support Newly Elected Government of Indonesia

Jakarta - The United Nations will spare no effort to support the newly elected government of Indonesia to tackle challenges to be faced in the future, UN Resident Coordinator in Indonesia Mustofa says.

Speaking on the occasion of a reception to celebrate the 62th UN Day here on Friday (23/10/2009) evening, he said that Indonesia had strong policies, government, institution and leadership in place to make these goals a reality.

"We must in the next critical five years work together to achieve them," he said.

The year 2009 has proven to be a challenging year. A number of small to medium disasters have impacted thousands of people across Indonesia, mostly recently with the devastating earthquakes in West Java and West Sumatra.

"I would like to acknowledge government leadership and efficient response in addressing the needs of the affected populations. I also like to acknowledge the support of the international community in completing the government response with relief and humanitarian assistance in West Sumatra," he said adding that all UN agencies worked in close collaboration to respond to the disasters and to help the affected community.

Indonesia as the largest Muslim democracy and the third largest world democracy, has brought its contribution to world peace and development as marked with this country's valiant soldier playing an integral role within UN peace keeping forces in many regions of the world (Africa, Middle East, Asia and Europe).

According to him, Indonesia also played a key role in facilitating dialog between the international community and Myanmar to alleviate the suffering of millions of children, men and women who were victims of cyclone Nargis.

"We all remember the Bali Conference and the leadership role Indonesia played in focusing the attention of the whole on the threats to our common good, par excellence and climate change," he said adding that the contribution of Indonesia to this global effort was worth appreciating.

In addition, he went on to say that Indonesia's strong commitment to the Human Right Council was clearly illustrated by being one of the countries to embrace the Universal Periodic Review, thus paving the way for all member states of the United Nations to engage in public discussion on human rights issues.

"On behalf of the United Nations, I would like to thank the government and the people of Indonesia for the trust and close partnership they extended to the UN system. Indonesia's longstanding and strong commitment to the work of the UN is exemplary and this is a critical ingredient in the success of our work," he said. (ANTARA)

Five Government Leaders Attend Yudhoyono's Inauguration

Government leaders from Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and East Timor are attending the inauguration of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Jakarta on Tuesday (20/10/2009).

Australian Prime Minister Minister Kevin Rudd, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah and East Timor Prime President Jose Ramos Horta all have arrived at the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) building.

Representatives from Japan, the United States, South Korea, New Zealand, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Czech Republic are also on attendance.

In addition to the foreign dignitaries, former president B.J. Habibie and former vice president Try Sutrisno were also among the guests. Megawati Soekarnoputri, who lost to Yudhoyono at the presidential elections, was absent, but her daughter Puan Maharani was there.

Meanwhile, outgoing vice president Jusuf Kalla, who also lost to Yudhoyono at the elections, attended the inauguration. Megawati's husband, Taufik Keimas, the MPR speaker, will swear in Yudhoyono. (the Jakarta Post)

Obama Sends Delegation to Attend Yudhoyono's Inauguration

Jakarta - President Barack Obama announced on Saturday the designation of a presidential delegation to Jakarta, Indonesia, to attend the inauguration of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as president on October 20, 2009.

Lisa P. Jackson, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, will be the head of the delegation, according to information on the official website of the US Embassy in Jakarta.

Members of the US presidential delegation will be Cameron Hume, US Ambassador to Indonesia, and David N. Merrill, president of the United States-Indonesia Society.

The People's Consultative Assembly or MPR on October 20, 2009 is scheduled to install President-elect Yudhoyono for his second term in office, and Vice President-elect Boediono.

Yudhoyono who won re-election in the presidential race last July in competition with former president Megawati Soekarnoputri and Vice President Jusuf Kalla, has since Saturday been calling several prospective ministers prior to his inauguration for his second term in office from 2009 to 2014.

President Yudhoyono and Vice President Jusuf Kalla as well as other United Indonesia cabinet members ended their term of office on Monday (19/10/2009).

A total of 30 prospective ministers for the new cabinet of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono have undergone fit-and-proper tests since Saturday.

On Saturday, October 17, 2009, a total of 16 ministers underwent the test at Yudhoyono's Cikeas residence in Bogor, West Java. And on

Sunday, 16 others underwent the same test. (ANTARA)

Rudd Asks SBY to Curb People Smuggling

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono accepted Tuesday (20/10/2009) a request from Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to help curb people smuggling from restive countries via Indonesia into Australia.

While details of the request are not yet official, presidential spokesman Dino Patti Djalal said related officials would continue to meet to resolve the problem on an "ad hoc" basis, as it was more a "regional than a bilateral issue".

"We think [people smuggling] will grow in the future," Dino said.

"Therefore, much cooperation between Indonesia and Australia is needed to find a solution to lessen its occurrence."

Indonesia and Australia are scheduled to share their solutions at the upcoming APEC Summit in Singapore in November.

Rudd has been under pressure from his opposition following a soaring number of boat people, particularly from Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan, coming into Australia. (the Jakarta Post)

Economic Issues

RI's Economy to Continue Growing: Observer

Bandarlampung - An economic observer said she believed Indonesia's economy would continue to grow in 2010.

Aviliani, an economist at the University of Indonesia, said "in 2010 growth in other countries may not be better than in Indonesia and therefore investors are likely to choose Indonesia for their short-term investment."

Speaking in a dialogue on Indonesia's economic outlook, she said economic growth in countries around the world would not yet be stable. Although they were trying to issue bonds, the securities might not sell well, and

therefore investors would still prefer Indonesia for their short-term investment.

She also said, however, Indonesia had to be careful and ensure that the funds that had entered the country would not eventually flee to other countries.

"If recovery occurs in those countries in 2011, it is feared the funds that have entered Indonesia will go away," she said.

So, the funds that had entered must be maintained well so that investors would not withdraw them for investment elsewhere, she said.

Aviliani said, according to the 2010 national budget's macro-economic assumptions, the country's economy was expected to grow 5.5 percent while the GDP would stand at Rp5,981.4 trillion, inflation at 5.0 percent, three-month key rate interest at 6.5 percent, oil price at US\$65 per barrel and oil lifting at 0.965 million barrels a day.

The chief of the Bandarlampung Bank Indonesia, M Dahlan, said total bank assets in Lampung province until August 2009 reached Rp23.2 trillion or grew 4.35 percent compared to the last position in 2008.

Distribution of credits grew 4.28 percent to Rp16.4 trillion while the third party funds collected by banks in the province grew 4.10 percent from Rp14.9 trillion to Rp15.5 trillion, he said.

The growth of credits is quicker than collection of third funds because the loan to deposit ratio of the banks in Lampung rose a bit from 114.1 percent to 114.3 percent. (ANTARA)

BKPM to Minimize Complexity in Licensing

Surabaya, E Java - The National Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) has been trying to minimize the complexity in obtaining an investment license under the one-stop service program, a spokesman said.

"The one-stop service system for investors will be introduced both at regional and central government level," BKPM deputy head for investment services Achmad Kurniadi said here on Wednesday (28/10/2009).

The system was ready to be applied at the central, provincial, district, and city administrations, he said.

"In the meantime we are also applying specific criteria to each of the areas, especially with regard to Foreign Investment (PMA) and Domestic Investment (PMDN) infrastructure," he said.

Regarding the licensing process for investors, he expressed hope the application of the one-door service system can overcome the problems usually facing the BKPM.

"Therefore, we believed that the new system could be applied in less than six working days," he disclosed.

In the meantime, East Java assistant governor for economic and development affairs Chaerul Djaelani said his administration will continue to learn the provincial investment regulations in the region, especially that many investors have been complaining about the regulations.

"For instance, cement producer PT Holcim Indonesia had complained about the many and complex regional regulations on plant investment in one of the regions in East Java," he said.

In the near future, provincial regulations will be adjusted to district and city rules, he said, adding that the idea was aimed at seeking the best solution to the problems which had caused hesitation on the part of investors to do business in the province. (ANTARA)

Investment in Small and Medium Industries Rp324 Billion

Mataram - Investment in 78,713 small and medium handicraft industries in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) up to September 2009 had reached Rp324 billion.

"The figure indicated that the formal and non-formal industrial enterprises had been growing," head of the NTB industry and trade agency H. Hery Erfan Rayes said here Wednesday (28/10/2009).

He said the number of business units managed to employ 217,188 people, which may increase along with several government programs of raising the performance of small and medium industries in the region.

He also said that the handicraft industrial enterprises have a strong resilience in facing the economic crisis.

He said further that development of small and medium industries in NTB has a strategic significance because they absorbed a great deal

of employees and have a big investment. Besides, the sector provides an economic prospect in raising local income from the non-oil/gas sector.

However, Rayes said, development of small and medium industries is currently still facing classical problems like lack of capital, low quality human resources, and too simplified packaging.

The lack of creativity of the small and medium business players in NTB in designing and increasing the quality of their products have also been posing a serious obstacle to the marketing of their products, including in their exports.

"Consequently, the handicraft products of NTB cannot compete with those from the other regions," he said.

In this context, Rayes said his side has taken several measures to minimize the problems facing the small and medium industries in NTB by giving them education and training to improve the quality of their products. (ANTARA)

Chinese Investors Interested in S Sulawesi's Mining Potentials

Makassar - A number of Chinese investors who are members of PT. Choice Plus said they have become interested in making an investment in South Sulawesi's mining sector.

Coordinator of the Chinese investors Arifin Susilo said here Wednesday that the Chinese investors had expressed readiness in investment in the mines in the province.

The projects include the construction of a coal storage tank in Malino, Gowa regency, which he said is already underway, and they are now even building a hydro-electric and coal-fired power plants in the region.

"We are also running a ferrous sand project in Bone regency, and developed a partnership with local counterparts," he said.

Besides in Bone, the Chinese investors said they were also ready to invest in Tana Toraja regency. "We have conducted a survey and are ready to develop the potential of the mines in Toraja," he said.

He also said he already has a market for the mining products and the representative office of the investors also promised to build a factory of mining products which may also be exported to China. (ANTARA)

Padang Government to Exempt Investors from Licensing Fees

Padang - Padang city's municipal administration is to exempt companies intending to invest in Padang from all licensing fees and complete official document processes within a maximum of one week, a spokesman said.

"Five companies have already stated their intention to invest in Padang and they will all be freed from the obligation to pay licensing fees, including Building Construction Permit (IMB) fees. One or two of them are to begin constructing soon," Padang Mayor Fauzi Bahar said here Tuesday (20/10/2009).

Speaking at the West Sumatra Governor's office during a visit by Artha Graha business group chief Tomi Winata, and a few other businessmen, Bahar said the city government was to make the concessions to encourage investment in the city to countervail a recession in the local economy caused by the devastating quake of September 30.

He said the magnitude-7.9 quake had destroyed many star-rated hotels and other business structures or work places in Padang, causing the cessation of as many economic activities and the loss of possibly thousands of associated jobs.

With a drastic increase in the number of unemployed people, Padang was now also facing the possibility of a corresponding rise in its crime rate.

The Padang city government was therefore trying to attract investors whose businesses could revitalize the local economy and create badly needed job opportunities. And to that end, it would grant companies investing in Padang special facilities.

At the same time, the mayor said, the city government had called on the owners or managements of the ruined business establishments not to lay off any of their workers.

Companies or employers who lay off workers would face lawsuits filed by their workers and the city administration would assist these workers by hiring lawyers for them, Bahar said.

"Many of our residents have already lost their homes by the quake and the business community should not add to their plight by laying off workers," he argued.

Meanwhile, thousands of workers at private hospitals, modern markets and hotels in Padang are reported to be facing the prospect of retrenchment.

Last week, hundreds of employees of a hospital named Bunda Medical Center (BMC) held a rally to protest the fact that each of them had received a letter from the management asking them to resign. (ANTARA)

Kubotec International to Invest US\$12 Million in Makassar

Makassar, S Sulawesi - Japanese investor Kubotec International signed a memorandum of understanding with Makassar's tap water company (PDAM) on Thursday (15/10/2009) for an investment worth US\$12 million.

Makassar Mayor Ilham Arief Siradjuddin, flanked by the president director of PDAM Makassar, Tajuddin Noer, said the memorandum was effective for 10 years for provision of technology from Japan to improve tap water supply services.

"This was done due to the high rate of leakages in water distribution," he said.

Kubotec which is a subsidiary of Kubota Corporation would invest US\$12 million over a 10-year period to meet the target, namely reducing "non-revenue water" to 25 percent within five to eight years and maintain the level in the next two-year period.

"So the scheme is 100 percent result-based meaning Kubotec would only get a return after the result is proven," he said.

He said the project was the initial stage towards a wider relationship with PDAM Makassar to make the company to be the best in Indonesia.

Kubotec president director Yamasita said the signing of the memorandum was aimed at improving the quality of PDAM's water and service.

According to PDAM data the leakage of PDAM water reached 46 percent and therefore, Yamasita said he would reduce it to 25 percent of the capacity which is at 2,340 liter per second.

"The leakage rate is very high, equal to around 1,000 liter per second. We will try to overcome it using a device from Japan," he said.(ANTARA)

IFC Plans to Invest \$1.2 Billion in RI

Jakarta - The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's private investment arm, plans to invest up to US\$1.2 billion in Indonesia in the next three years to help boost the country's development.

"In the next three years, IFC investment will reach US\$300 million to US\$400 million per year focusing on long-term financing, risk sharing and equities," IFC Manager for Indonesia Adam Sack said here on Thursday (15/10/2009).

In its long-term strategy, the IFC will boost the private sector capability to play a greater role in the face of economic challenges, he said.

"The private sector plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges. Our aim is to make our strategy have a positive impact through the development of the private sector," he said.

The IFC is planning to engage in the financial, agricultural and manufacturing sectors in the future and is eyeing investment opportunities in the electricity and housing sectors, he said.

He said the IFC is also looking into the possibility of direct investment in the banking industry to give farmers and micro, small and medium businesses wider access to financing sources.

"We will still invest in the banking sector particularly to encourage financing sources for the micro, small and medium businesses. In the future, we will explore the possibility of investment in the form of equities but their share will only reach 15-20 percent or not the majority. We are eyeing at least three more banks," he said.

So far, the IFC had invested in a number of banks and financing companies, either in the form of equities or through linkage programs, he said.(ANTARA)

Investment in Energy and Mineral Resources Projected to Increase 56 Pct

Jakarta - The government has set itself the target of increasing investment in the energy and mineral resources (ESDM) sectors by 56 percent from US\$18 billion this year to US\$28.063 billion in 2010, a cabinet minister said.

ESDM Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro said here on Friday (16/10/2009) that the planned investment in 2010 consisted of US\$15.415 billion on oil and gas, US\$10.146 billion on electricity and US\$2.502 on general mining.

"Compared with the investment this year, the investment in 2010 increased by about 18 billion dollars," the minister said.

He expressed optimism that investment in the ESDM sector would increase following the issuance of Law No.4 / 2009 on mineral and coal mining, and Law No. 9 / 2009 on electricity which would provide certainties for businesses.

"After all, the government has given a positive sign for a more interesting investment," the minister added.

Director General for Mineral Resources and Geothermal, Bambang Setiawan, said meanwhile that the relatively biggest investment would be made on the geothermal energy following the acceleration of the development of the 10.000 MW power project.

Based a plan, a 4,733 MW power project would be developed until 2014, or 48 percent of the 10.000 MW project.

Investment in the geothermal sector is expected to reach US\$10.853 billion. (ANTARA)

ADB to Fund Lahendong IV Geothermal

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will finance the construction of the Lahendong IV geothermal power plant in Tomohon, North Sulawesi, to meet local power shortages.

"We've agreed to provide a loan of US\$40 million, which is 90 percent of the total construction cost of the geothermal power plant. Its construction will start next year and is expected to have a generating capacity of 20 megawatts (MW)," said Ayun Sundari, the director of ADB's external relations, here on Tuesday.

Previously, ADB had given a loan of \$30 million to finance the construction of the 20 MW

Lahendong II geothermal power plant in the same area which was started in 2004 and completed in June 2007. Lahendong I and III, which each has a generating capacity of 20 MW, were funded by France and Japan.

She said that the geothermal funding was part of ADB's program to help the

development of renewable energy sources in Indonesia. "We've allocated a total fund of about \$161 million for such development in Indonesia," she said, adding that about \$70 million of the fund had been spent.

The Lahendong IV plant was due to be completed in 2012 when the province's electricity demand will be much higher than its supply. With an increase in electricity demand estimated at 8.5 percent per year, it is predicted that peak demand will reach 320 MW by 2014.

Currently, the province has a peak demand of about 140 MW while serving about 300,000 customers.

Its total installed generating capacity is 186 MW, but actual power generating capacity is only 141 MW.

There is no reserve capacity. "The province is in urgent need of new power plants to provide enough power supply for its social and economic development," she said.

If the Lahendong capacity was fully tapped, it could meet expected peak demand, given total geothermal reserves of 340 MW, she said.

With many provinces facing power shortages, the government has initiated two accelerated programs of electricity production. The first 10,000 MW program is under way and almost completed, and second will start next year.

Under the second program, the Indonesian government plans to generate 10,000 MW of electricity, with about 4,700 MW to come from geothermal power plants across the country. Based on data from state-owned utility PLN, Indonesia has a total geothermal reserve of approximately 27,000 MW, of which about 9,600 MW in Sumatra, 5,400 MW in Java, 1,500 MW in Sulawesi, and the rest in other parts of the country.

But until now it only managed to generate 1,155 MW from 16 geothermal power plants already in operation in Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. They are Darajat (I, II, III), Dieng I, Kamojang (I, II, III, IV), Lahendong (I, II, III), Salak (I, II), Sibayak, and Wayang (I, II).

Indonesia was expected to turn to renewable energy sources like geothermal in order to meet power shortages whilst noting the growing awareness of green principles in the international energy market. (The Jakarta Post)

Government to Boost Investment in Infrastructure Development

Jakarta - The government will stimulate investment in infrastructure development in order to boost economic growth to about 6-7 percent in the coming five years, a cabinet minister said.

"We hope for a total investment of Rp 2,000 trillion while actually we will have investment of about Rp1,600 trillion in the coming five years," Minister for National Development Planning/Head of National Development Planning Board (Bappenas) Paskah Suzetta said here on Friday (16/10/2009).

He said the infrastructure sector was expected to boost economic growth to about 6-7 percent in the coming five years.

The minister said investment in this sector needed to be promoted because the government would only be able to finance some 30 percent of the total infrastructure projects.

Suzetta said that it was expected that about 70 percent of the infrastructure projects were expected to be financed by private companies, among others through a private public placement (PPP) scheme.

"We will support the PPP scheme by providing a good regulation. We are revising the government regulation No. 67 on the government's guarantee. We hope in the next 100 days we will finish it," the minister said.

Investment on infrastructure will increase economic growth. At present, the biggest contributor to Indonesia's economic growth is the consumption sector which contributed 60 percent to the Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Investment only contributed 5.2 percent, he said.

In the meantime, chairman of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) Ms Hidayat said that Indonesia needed a fund of Rp2,855 - Rp2,910 trillion to finance its infrastructure development in the 2010 - 2014 period. (ANTARA)

Canadian Company to Explore Oil Reserves in Kotabaru, South Kalimantan

Kotabaru, - Nico Resources Ltd., a Canadian oil and gas company, plans to

explore petroleum reserves in the West Sageri Block in Kotabaru, South Kalimantan.

The company's manager for geological affairs, Mu'adz Chalik, said here on Wednesday after conducting an initial study, a Nico team would now carry out a seismic observation to know in detail the oil and gas reserves in the Sageri Block.

"We hope the Kotabaru district administration which oversees the Sageri Block will support us in implementing our plan," he said.

Nico who owns 11 oil and gas mines in Indonesia would conduct seismic observation activities in the Sageri Block until 2011.

After knowing detailed conditions and the risks it might deal with as well as the deposit in the field the company would immediately seek an exploration license.

He said based on an initial study the company's team had discovered oil permeation in the seabed at a depth of 200-2,200 meter in Block Sageri.

The location, Mu'adz said, is located next to the mining area of PT Pearl Oil Ltd which is now just conducting exploitation preparations.

Mu'adz said Nico Resources also had branches in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries.

BP Migas official Hasibuan said it would not be a problem although Nico's planned mining location was located next to that of PT Pearl Oil.

"The two companies had each received a valid license. So, it is not a problem. On the other hand, Kotabaru would even enjoy multiple advantages as there would be two companies to conduct exploitations in its region," he said.

Kotabaru district head Sjachrani Mataja said the Kotabaru administration would support and give all the recommendations needed by Nico for conducting oil and gas mining in the region.

"We support not only 100 percent but 1,000 percent," he said.

The head of the Kotabary legislative assembly, Alpidri Supian Noor, said the local legislative assembly would help in whatever Nico would need for the implementation of its plan.

Alpidri said the Makassar Strait waters and Kotabaru were fishing locations of fishermen from Kotabaru and Sulawesi and this had to be

put under consideration to avoid possible conflict in the future.(ANTARA)

India is New Destination of South Kalimantan CPO Exports

Banjarmasin - India has now become the third biggest destination of Indonesia's CPO exports, after Malaysia and Vietnam.

The foreign trade chief of the South Kalimantan Industry and Trade office Djumiah said that during 2009, South Kalimantan's CPO exports to India reached 86.7 thousand tons worth more than 53.8 million US dollars on Tuesday (20/10/2009).

Indonesia's CPO exports to Malaysia reached only 63.5 thousand tons worth 41.6 million US dollars, and to China 28.4 thousand tons worth 16.5 million dollars, she said.

While the exports to Vietnam reached only 17.5 thousand tons worth over 11.6 million US dollars, to Pakistan as a new export destination reaching 312 tons worth 31 thousand U.S. dollars.

The Indonesian CPO exports to Vietnam, said Djumiah, were started only in August 2009, so that it became a new destination.

In the meantime, she said the total of Indonesia's CPO exports in August 2009 reached 352.2 thousand tons, or an increase of 388 percent from 72.1 thousand tons in the same period of 2008.

The exports in 2009 up to August were worth 234.7 million US dollars, while in 2008 it was worth only 73.8 million US dollars.

According to Djumiah, the exports to various countries in 2009 increased thanks to the constant price adjustments of the commodity in recent months. (ANTARA)

Socio-Cultural Issues

Indonesia Overall Champion of 3rd Wizmac 2009

Surabaya - An Indonesian team came out as the overall champion of the 3rd Wizard Mathematics International Competition 2009 in Lucknow, India, on October 27-30.

"The title was given to the Indonesian team after it won 10 gold, nine silver and five bronze medals at the 3rd WIZMIC 2009,"

education minister's special staff, Ir Sukemi, said to ANTARA by phone here on Friday (30/10/2009).

He said the Indonesian team won all the medals through individual and team contests in the event attended by 207 participants or 52 teams from nine countries.

"From the individual contest the Indonesian team won eight golds, seven silvers and four bronzes while from the team contest it won two gold, two silver and one bronze medals. So total medals it won are 10 golds, nine silvers and five bronzes," he said.

He said the highest mark in the individual category was held by Henry Jayakusuma from Indonesia.

"The Indonesian team also received the highest appreciation namely the Overall Champion title for the Group Prize category under the names of Agasha, Stanley, Kevin Pratama and Fahmi," he said.

WIZMIC is an international mathematics competition forum for junior high school students below 14 years old held in Lucknow, India, since 2007.

In the first event Indonesia won two gold, one silver and one bronze medals from the individual category and one fold from the team competition.(ANTARA)

Badminton Duos Triumph in Good Day for Indonesia

Markis Kido and Hendra Setiawan capped Indonesia's most successful Super Series tournament of the year on Sunday, winning the men's doubles title at the French Open Super Series.

Facing Denmark Open champions Koo Kien Keat and Tan Boon Heong of Malaysia, top-seeded Markis and Hendra rallied from one set down to win 15-21, 21-15, 21-14 at the Stade Pierre de Coubertin in Paris.

The Malaysians muscled their way to winning the first set, hitting nine smash winners to the Indonesians' one as they sprinted ahead after

being level at 11-all. That dominance soon faded, though, as Markis and Hendra led for all but one point in the next two games.

Their victory was the cherry on top of an already successful tournament for Indonesia. Nova Widianto and Liliyana Natsir marked their return to the spotlight on Sunday after an eight-month absence from the podium, beating compatriots Hendra Aprida Gunawan and Vita Marissa 21-7, 21-7 in the mixed doubles final.

"We're so happy about our second title. We've been waiting for it all year. It shows that we're not through yet, and I'm getting more confident," Nova, 32, told the Jakarta Globe in a text message.

This year is the last for the partnership between Nova and Liliyana, who opened 2009 by winning the Malaysia Open mixed doubles crown. With Nova's approval, the Indonesian Badminton Association (PBSI) plans to find Liliyana a new partner after they failed to retain their world championship this year in India.

Nova and the PBSI have suggested his age has limited the pair's performances in the worlds and Super Series tournaments.

The victory marked the third consecutive Super Series tournament with an Indonesian winner, a quick turnaround after a seven-tournament drought. Markis and Hendra's men's doubles victory at the Japan Open on Sept. 27 snapped the dry spell, and Simon Santoso followed that by winning the men's singles crown at the Denmark Open.(Jakarta Globe)

Eight Countries Join Cross-Culture Festival in Surabaya

Surabaya - Representatives from eight countries are participating in a Cross-Culture Festival 2009 here from October 15-18, 2009, a local culture and tourism official said.

The eight countries are China, South Korea, India, France, Poland, Thailand, Ecuador, and Venezuela, according to Wiwiek Widayati, head of East Java culture and tourism office, said here Thursday (15/10/2009).

"The delegations from the eight countries will present their typical dances, arts, and music," Widayati said after opening the festival.

She said the objective of the festival was to develop artistic and cultural values from various regions in Indonesia and abroad to realize the spirit of diversity.

"Through the Cross Culture Festival 2009 in Surabaya we want to realize the spirit of diversity," Widayati said.

Besides the eight countries, 14 districts and municipalities in Indonesia were also participating in the festival to perform their respective arts and culture.

She said the Indonesian participants are among others from the districts of Ponorogo, Probolinggo, Lamongan, Gresik, Jombang, Bantul, Palembang, Langsa, Serdang Badagai, Brebes, Jembrana, Waringin Timur, Semarang, and Manokwari.

According to Widayanti, the Cross Culture Festival 2009 was intended to introduce domestic arts and culture to the foreign participating countries.

"The festival is also intended to attract as many tourists as possible to visit Indonesia, especially Surabaya, East Java," she said, adding that the number of foreign tourists visiting Surabaya from 2007 to 2008 was significant.

She said domestic tourists visiting Surabaya in 2007 numbered about 2 million but foreign tourists who came to East Java's capital then totaled only 100,000.

In 2008, however, the numbers increased significantly, namely 7 million people for domestic tourists, and 150,000 for foreign tourists.

"Through this festival, we want Surabaya to be the window of arts and culture in East Java and Indonesia," she said, adding that the activities in the festival included a workshop on culture and art, a cow race in the Kenjeran area, and Yosakoi dance.(ANTARA)

International Student Exchange Programs Considered More Effective to Promote Tourism

Denpasar, - Promoting Bali's arts, culture and customs under student exchange programs with other countries is more effective than

most conventional means, a local tourism worker said.

Promoting Bali's tourism through international student exchange programs is not only much less costly but also more effective, Kawiana Made, a tourist guide, said here Monday (26/10/2009).

He said youths who had joined the Indonesian National Committee of Indonesian Youth (KNPI) in Klungkung district are promoting their region by holding a foreign student exchange program with other countries at Udayana University's Faculty of Letters.

The student exchange programs are part of the Bali International Program for Asian Studies (BIPAS) initiated in 2009 in which many foreign students take part, among others from Germany, China, Finland, Denmark and Switzerland.

Meanwhile, the secretary of KNPI's Klungkung branch, Wayan Buda Parwata, said while in Bali the foreign youths were invited to witness the local people's activity such as palm sugar making, local teenagers painting on canvas in Kamasan village.

Paintings made in Klungkung's Kamasan village have distinctive traditional patterns well-known for a long time among art lovers in Indonesia and foreign countries.

On their visit to Klungkung, 40 km east of Denpasar, the foreign students were guided by Made Rajeg, a lecturer at Udayana University's Faculty of Letters. They were also invited to see some tourism objects at Pura Goa Lawah, and a handicraft weaving activity in Sampalan Village.

Made Rajeg said the student exchange program was more effective in promoting Balinese tourism than the usual promotions carried out in the market countries, on the ground that students who came here could tell about their experience in the 'Island of Gods' after they return to their home countries.

Moreover, during foreign student activities in Klungkung, they were also invited to attend workshops discussing Balinese culture such as customary clothing and Balinese 'Gamelan' (traditional percussion music).

The participants of the student exchange programs always seemed very enthusiastic, he said. (ANTARA)

Indonesia by province: Central Java

Central Java Province is located exactly on the center of Java Island. Semarang is the capital city of province. The province has rich culture and tradition descending from Hindu and Buddha as well as Islamic influences. One of the most remarkable religious monuments found in Central Java is Borobudur Temple, the most magnificent monument to Mahayana Buddhism in the world.

Tourist Office:

Jl. Madukoro Blok BB/1D,
Semarang 50144,
Phone. (024) 7608570-2, 7613180, 7613181
Fax. (024) 7608573
<http://www.central-java-tourism.com>

Getting there:

- An extensive network of good roads and railway links major cities and villages.
- Airport both in Semarang and Solo.
- Major seaport in Tanjung Emas, on the northern side of Semarang.
- Door- to- door travel minibuses are available to and from Java and Sumatra Island.

Tourism Events:

- Wayang Kulit (Leather Puppet Shadow Show) from 9.00 pm every Saturday until dawn in Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI) Jalan Achmad Yani Semarang. It takes episodes from the Ramayana and Mahabarata epics.
- Wayang Orang (Javanese Opera) performed every night from 8 pm to 10 pm in Sriwedari auditorium Solo Sunday closed.
- Waisak Ceremony, Magelang, Central Java. The “Waisak” is religious event observing the birth of Sidarta Gautama held at Mendut and Borobudur temples. This ceremony is first started with religious praying in Mendut.
- Sekaten Fair, Solo, Cental Java. A traditional fair held on April annually during the Islamic month of Rabiul Awal or maulud (Javanese Calendar) to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad. The fair takes place at Alun-alun Utara of the Kasunanan

Palace’s North Square and open for visitors day and night.

Places of Interest:

Semarang



Semarang is located on Java’s northern coast and it is the capital of Central Java. Going around Semarang surroundings are perfect for day trips and side-excursions. In the older side of the city, near harbor, you can still find an interesting collection of buildings dating back to the Dutch colonial era and the Dutch East Indies Company. The city offers evening performances of Wayang (puppet show) drama played by live actors, actresses and dancers at Ngesti Pandowo Theatre. For sport fans there are tennis courts in all major hotels and 2 golf courses located in the town suburbs.

For short trips out of Semarang within radius of about 60 km, including Jepara, northeastern side of Semarang, is surrounding by white sand beaches, and also famous for its wood carving industry as well as an ancient Portuguese Fort. Kudus, about halfway between Jepara and Semarang, is home to the Minaret Mosque built in the 15th century and also known with its kretek (traditional cigarette) industries. Demak has the oldest mosque in Central Java.

Borobudur Temple



This famous Buddhist temple, dating from the 8th and 9th centuries, is located in central Java. It was built in three tiers: a pyramidal base with five concentric square terraces, the trunk of a cone with three circular platforms and, at the top, a monumental stupa. The walls and balustrades are decorated with fine low reliefs, covering a total surface area of 2,500 m². Around the circular platforms are 72 openwork

stupas, each containing a statue of the Buddha. The monument was restored with UNESCO's help in the 1970s

Solo

Solo is a pleasant city with a lively character and known as “the City that Never Sleeps“. One can always find something to eat or buy because vendors of all kinds and small food stalls remain open 24 hours. Solo is home for two royal houses with centuries of power and influence over the city. Solo today remains distinctly Central Javanese with an elegance all its own. It is one of the major centers of batik, and souvenir hunters may find old Javanese antiques. Becak (tricycle rickshaw) and Andong (trad-horse carriage) are the most flexible type of traditional transportations within the city and are available everywhere.

Kasunanan Palace

Kasunanan Palace is the royal residence of King Pakubuwono in the 17th century. The palace has an art gallery exhibiting royal heirlooms, antiques and other invaluable objects in a genuine royal Javanese atmosphere. Open from 9 am to 2 pm, Friday closed.

Pura Mangkunegaran (Mangkunegaran Palace)

Pura Mangkunegaran (Mangkunegaran Palace) Another palace built in 1757, with typical Javanese architecture consisting of “Pendopo” (an open front hall to receive guests), “Pringgitan” (an porch to hold leather puppet shadow play) and private apartments. Two sets of 17th century Javanese gamelan instruments are exhibited and played every Wednesday in the Pendopo. The palace also exhibits complete collection of masks, wayang orang costumes, leather and wooden puppets, religious articles and jewelry. Dancing practise in Mangkunegaran Palace: Wednesday from 10 am to 12 pm.

Kemuning Tea Plantation

Between Suku and Ceto Temple, there is a 300 hectares rug of green tea plantation called Kemuning Tea Plantation.

Dieng Plateau

Dieng Plateau is located about 4 hours from Semarang where some of the oldest Hindu

temples in Java found. These temples are 50 feet high stand on a crater floor amidst sulphurous fumes. The road to the Dieng Plateau passes through tobacco plantations and beautiful mountain scenery.

Bandungan and Gedong Songo Temple

Bandungan and Gedong Songo Temple are holiday resort located on the slopes of Mt. Ungaran, about 900 meters above sea level. Gedong Songo is a group of nine small Hindu Javanese temples built in the 8th century, can be reached either by car or on horseback from Ungaran.

Sukuh Temple

Sukuh Temple is called as the pyramid “Inca” lookalike decorated with wayang (puppet) stone carvings of Hindu origin and erotic symbols. The temple is located only 34 km from Solo.

Mendut Temple

Mendut Temple is located only 3 kilometers from Borobudur. Mendut is said to face toward Benares, India, where Buddha Gautama taught his five disciples. The smaller temples of Mendut, which house the great statue of Buddha and the Pawon temple, form an integral part of the Borobudur complex. The three-meter tall Buddha and the two Bodhisatva figures of Lokeshvara and Vajrapani are among the greatest manifestations of Buddhist thought and art.

Baturaden

Baturaden is the most outstanding resort in Central Java province located around 14 km on the northern side of small town Purwokerto. It occupies a fine site on the slopes of Mount Slamet, 650 m above sea level, feel the coolness air and surroundings by beautiful gardens, pines forest, hot springs, ponds and bungalow-style hotels.

Jatijajar Cave

Jatijajar Cave, a magnificent cave near Pantai Ayah (Ayah Beach), located 170 km from Solo. It has also many long beautiful stalagmite and stalactite. A diorama of the legend of “Lutung Kasarung” (a Prince that changed becomes a Monkey) and some lakes and river in the cave wait to be explored.

Sangiran, the Land of Mystery

Sangiran is known as the Land of Mystery, when in 1891, Eugene Dubois, a French anthropologist discovered fossils of *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, or 'Java Man'. 1930 and 1931 marked as the discovery of fossils of a man from the Pleistocene Period. In mid-1980, scientists were startled by the discovery of a complete 4 m tall elephant. Sangiran is located only 18 km from Solo.

[Source: www.my-indonesia.info]

ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

Online Forest Fire Monitoring System Launched in Indonesia

Jakarta - Indonesia has gained a new tool to rapidly detect and monitor damaging forest fires with the launch of an Australian-funded online system in Jakarta on Thursday (29/10/2009).

Indofire is a collaborative project between Indonesia's Ministry of Forestry, Institute of Aeronautics and Space (LAPAN), Ministry of Environment, the Australian Government and the Western Australian state government agency Landgate, according to information on the official website of the Australian embassy.

Fires in forests and peatlands and the smoke haze they produce are seasonal problems in Indonesia.

Indofire downloads satellite information for all of Indonesia twice a day. This data appears on the Indofire website within an hour. This facilitates fast detection of fires, allowing fire fighters to respond quickly and reduce the fires' spread and severity.

Indofire also includes mapping information which allows forestry officials to identify where fires start and track their spread.

Deforestation and fires in forests and peatland account for more than 65 per cent of Indonesia's greenhouse gas emissions. Monitoring, controlling and reducing fire is a key means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from these sources.

The A\$1.5 million Indofire system has been developed as part of the A\$40 million Indonesia-Australia Forest Carbon Partnership. This practical cooperation between Indonesia and Australia on REDD (reducing emissions

from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries) aims to ensure REDD is part of a future international agreement on climate change.

Other partnership activities include the A\$30 million Kalimantan Forests and Climate Partnership and support for development of Indonesia's National Carbon Accounting System.

Indofire provides free and open access to governments, industry and the public online. To try the system visit www.lapan.go.id/indofire or <http://indofire.dephut.go.id/> (ANTARA)

Forestry Ministry to Reduce Hotspots by 20 Percent

Jakarta, - The Ministry of Forestry will reduce the number of hotspots by 20 percent per year in the next five years.

Head of the forestry information center of the forestry ministry Mashyud said in Jakarta Monday (26/10/2009) the project is one of the agendas of the new Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan for the next five years.

"The project will be synchronized with a strategic program of the forestry ministry for the 2009-2014 period" Mashyud said.

He said in the last five years the forestry ministry had already been trying to deal with forest fires optimally, and the ministry managed to reduce the fires from thousands of hotspots in 2005 to only tens of them in 2007.

Mashyud also said that actually land and forest fires were not the sole responsibility of the forestry ministry, but of many other circles, including the regional administrations, as well.

"Until last year, the fires did not only rage within the forests, but outside as well. In fact only 30 percent of the fires ranged in forested land, and 70 percent outside the forests, so that actually not all the fires are the responsibility of the forestry ministry," he said.

Nevertheless, Masyhud said, the forestry ministry has also been helping other sides put out forest fires outside forested land.

Besides dealing with fires, Masyhud said the forestry ministry has also been stepping up the rehabilitation of 500,000 hectares of land per year in the next five years, in relation to reducing land degradation rate from 1.08 million ha to 900.000 ha per year, he said.

In the meantime, the forestry minister has also reminded all the parties responsible for fires to increase control and supervision, and reduce air and water pollution, as well as emission control.

"Starting next year, the forestry ministry will also establish synergy with others in putting a halt to environmental damage of 11 disaster-prone river basins," he said.(ANTARA)

Indian Ocean Nations Test Tsunami Warning System

Sirens blared, parents grabbed their children and hundreds ran to emergency shelters in Indonesia as countries bordering the Indian Ocean conducted a test Wednesday of a warning system set up after the devastating 2004 tsunami.

But at least one survivor was too paralyzed by memories of the killer wave to take part in mock evacuations off Aceh, Indonesia.

"What is this all for? My chest has gone tight and I am shaking," said Hamiyah, a 58-year-old woman who lost her in-laws, four children and five grandchildren in 2004.

Planned for 18 countries, the drill was intended to simulate a tsunami similar to the one sparked by the 9.2 magnitude quake off Indonesia five years ago, the United Nations said in a statement.

That quake generated waves that eradicated entire coastal communities, killing some 230,000 people in one of the worst natural disasters of modern times.

"When the siren sounded, I immediately thought of my child, grabbed her and ran," said Bakhtiar, 50, who lives in the village of Gampong Pie, along the Indonesian coastline in Aceh province.

In Aceh's Ulee Lheue village, which was all but wiped out by the tsunami, about 200 residents gathered at a mosque after an explosion was sounded from a loudspeaker that was meant to signal an earthquake.

Around ten minutes later a siren blared out, starting the drill.

But Hamiyah refused to take part, breaking down and staying at home, rebuilt after the disaster, with her two surviving children.

"It reminds me of the past and makes me really sad. Please stop reminding us," she said, sobbing, as people ran for quake-proof

emergency shelters, some carrying the "wounded," as a voice over mosque loudspeakers urged people not to panic.

"We want to send the message to the world that we continue to improve our disaster mitigation skills," said Aceh Vice Governor Muhammad Nazar.

Dubbed "Exercise Indian Ocean Wave 09," the drill was the first comprehensive test and evaluation of the warning system put in place after the 2004 disaster, said the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO.

It comes two weeks after a tsunami smashed into the Pacific islands of Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga, killing at least 183 people.

In Thailand, where more than 5,000 Thais and foreign tourists perished, no evacuation drill was planned but its National Disaster Warning Center was responding to the dummy telegrams, faxes and e-mails being sent out by the Hawaii-based Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, said Capt. Saran Thappasook.

In Myanmar, officials were to relay the warnings to tsunami-prone areas, said Thein Tun, director general of the Meteorological Department, while in Malaysia 1,200 villagers on the northern resort island of Langkawi were directed to higher ground as firefighting trucks and ambulances ferried the elderly and pregnant women.

But in Sri Lanka's southern coastal village of Godawaya, a tsunami warning tower failed to emit a siren. Local fishermen who had stayed home to take part waited for a few hours and decided to go to work.

Later, officials manning the tower went around the village announcing a "tsunami threat" through loudspeakers and calling on residents to quickly move to a Buddhist temple on higher ground. Women who were at home gathered at the temple.

Air Force SGT M.G.A. Nandana declared the drill was still a success since they an alternative warning method was found in case the warning tower failed.

Ray Canterford, an official at Australia's Bureau of Meteorology, said ahead of the exercise that the Hawaii-based center would issue an earthquake alert to trigger the drill.

In Australia, the bureau would use the earthquake data from the tsunami warning center to calculate the size of any tsunami

wave and estimate the time it will take to hit the Australian coast.

None of the warnings would go public, and no evacuations were planned in Australia, Canterford said.

Australia was not affected by the 2004 disaster, but is playing a role in the regional system to improve response times and international coordination. Australia has a network of wave height sensors along its coastline, and two deep sea sensors in waters between Australia's northwest and Indonesia, where some 130,000 were killed.

Under the system, Australia, Indonesia and India swap data on a tsunami threat, and Wednesday's drill will test how efficiently messages are sent among those countries, Canterford said.

"It's a real time event," Canterford said. "We believe that all or most of the countries in the Indian Ocean are a lot better prepared now than they were in 2004."

UNESCO said Wednesday's exercise would allow Indian Ocean countries to test their communications, review their emergency procedures and identify any weaknesses. (the Jakarta Post)

UN Deputy Chief Praises RI's Emergency Responses

Jakarta - Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) for Humanitarian Affairs, Ambassador John Holmes, has praised the Indonesian government's emergency responses to natural disasters.

The Indonesian government's emergency response actions were good and very fast he said at a press conference in Jakarta on Thursday (15/10/2009).

"We will be very happy if we do not have to do our job here because the Indonesian government is handling it so well. Its emergency response actions are among the most successful in the world," he said.

However, the concerning thing now for the world community, especially in the Asian Region which had been hit by many disasters such as floods, typhoons and earthquakes, was preparing the necessary actions to minimize the impact of the disaster itself.

He said that Disaster Risk Reduction can rightly be a government programs to deal with

any disasters in the future and reduce casualties.

"Disaster Risk Reduction steps must be considered next. It is how the government familiarizes the people with what to do when a disaster like an earth quake occurs, and minimize casualties," said Holmes.

Beside informing the correct action when disaster strikes, the government must also ensure that all buildings or buildings to be constructed will meet seismic building standards or resilient foundations.

"For the Indonesian government must also consider the construction of buildings to be rebuilt in earthquake-prone locations, the building must meet requirements of earthquake resilience, so as to reduce the risk of a major disaster in the future," he added.

Regarding the development of infrastructure in earthquake-hit areas, Holmes said the first priority was reconstruction or repair of damaged hospitals and schools to help the recovery of the victims physically and psychologically.

Holmes had previously visited the disaster site in Padang, West Sumatra on Wednesday (Oct 14) by helicopter to see in person the impact of the magnitude-7.6 earthquake on the local people.

Earlier, Holmes also handed US\$38 million in emergency aid funds from the UN to the Indonesian government for earthquake victims in West Sumatra. (ANTARA)

Bali to Host International Meteorology and Climatology Meeting

Denpasar - Bali province is to host a world Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) meeting in Nusa Dua October 26-29, 2009.

The meeting will be participated in by 600 people from several countries in the world, said National BMKG chief Sri Woro B Harijano, when reporting the plan to hold the meeting to the Bali provincial administration's secretary, I Nyoman Yasa, here on Monday (19/10/2009).

Sri stated the meeting would discuss matters concerning climate change and its positive impact to boost research on such problems in Indonesia.

The meeting was expected to allow Indonesia as member of World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to work and follow international developments in the environmental field.

Sri added, Indonesia would raise some issues at the meeting, particularly issued related to the country's interest in increasing the capacity of its scientific research.

Meanwhile, I Nyoman Yasa expressed his appreciation and support for the international meeting. The activity, he added, was also expected to further lift the image of Bali's tourism in the international world.(ANTARA)

RI to Promote Forest and Ocean at International Climate Conference in Bali

Indonesia will promote the roles of forests and oceans to absorb emissions to tackle human-induced climate change during an international conference on climate change in Bali next week.

About 600 scientists of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will gather in Bali from Oct. 26 to Oct. 29 to finalize its fifth assessment report on climate change matters.

“Our delegates will demonstrate the ability of forest and ocean to absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions,” head of climate change and air pollution at the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) Advin Aldrian said Sunday (18/10/2009).

He predicted that Indonesia's total emissions would shrink significantly if the CO₂ absorbed in forests and oceans were counted.

“We will seek clarification from the IPCC on putting Indonesia as the world's third largest emitter (after the US and China),” he said.

The IPCC, a world body on climate science matters, was set up by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Advin said that Indonesia would send 29 delegates to the conference, including the BMKG's chairwoman Sri Woro Harijono, environmental expert Emil Salim, members of the National Council on Climate Change (DNPI) Agus Purnomo and Amanda Katili

Niode, and senior official from the state ministry for the environment, Masnellyarti Hilman, and ocean expert Agus Supangat.

Indonesia, the world's third largest forest nation with 120 million hectares of rainforest, has long been linked to poor forest management.

Massive forest fires since 1997 have been blamed as the main cause for Indonesia's position as the third largest emitter in the world.

A study by DNPI shows Indonesia's emissions were about 2.3 gigatons in 2005 of which 80 percent were from the forestry sector. This could jump to 3.6 gigatons by 2030.

The Guinness Book of World Records also claimed the deforestation rate in Indonesia was the global highest, equivalent to three soccer fields cleared every hour.

Indonesia, however, took the lead in promoting the role of the ocean in dealing with climate change to international forums by hosting the World Ocean Conference (WOC) in Manado in May.

Indonesia covers 5.8 million square kilometers including land and oceans, with more than 81,000 kilometers of coastline and millions of people living in coastal areas.

Advin said that Indonesian delegation would reveal a series of research results dealing with ability of forests and oceans to absorb CO₂ emissions.

“We will also ask the rich nations to assist developing nations by providing technology assistance and capacity building to calculate emissions absorbed in forests and oceans.

The IPCC has warned that the world needs massive emissions cuts to reduce the CO₂ concentration to prevent average global temperatures from rising by an additional 2 degrees Celsius.

It is predicted that climate change will increase average global temperatures and bring about changes in weather patterns, causing sea levels to rise, and increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as storms, floods and drought.

A study by the Asian Development Bank predicted average temperatures could rise by up to 4.8 degrees Celsius by 2100, which could cause sea levels to rise by up to 70 centimeters.(the Jakarta Post)

RI Has Significant Carbon Trading Potential

Denpasar - Indonesia has significant potential to engage in carbon trading but has yet to have sufficient skills compared with other countries grouped in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

"Indonesia's opportunity to sell carbon is big enough but it still needs reinforcement from developed countries," Indonesian Climate Change spokesman Agus Purnomo in Nusa Dua on Monday (26/10/2009).

Speaking after the opening of the 31st Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Purnomo said that through the panel the IPCC members were expected to reinforce the countries which had potential in carbon trade.

He said that of 227 proposals Indonesia submitted, at least 30 had been agreed by Carbon-dioxide Board in Germany, and even three to five proposals have had certificate.

But Purnomo added that Indonesia still needed a right time to sell carbon with reasonable price.

"It is better for Indonesia to postpone the carbon sale while waiting for the result of the 15th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen next December 2009," Purnomo said.

He said carbon price would probably be more expensive after the UNFCCC in Copenhagen to recommend countries with many carbon industries to reduce emission.

Meanwhile, Indonesian Climate Change Board chairman Rachmat Witoelar said the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in Bali was participated in by scientific institutions from geophysics, meteorology, environment, forestry, maritime, and government representatives.

"Through the IPCC, scientific aspects in climate change as the basic material for the preparation of next UNFCCC will be discussed," Witoelar said.

He said Indonesia would propose that developing countries be given assistance.

"Developed countries with much carbon emission should have responsibility to developing countries," Witoelar said in the company of Meteorology, Climatology and

Geophysics Agency (BMKG) chairman Sri Woro B Harijono.

The IPCC which is to last until October 29 is participated in by 430 delegates from 140 countries and research institutions.(ANTARA)

RI and UK to Work Closely Ahead of Climate Change Summit

Jakarta - Indonesia and the UK have agreed to forge cooperation in information exchange and adopt a common stand ahead of the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December, 2009.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown reached the agreement in a phone conversation on Wednesday night, presidential spokesman Dino Patti Djalal said on Thursday (29/10/2009).

In the phone conversation, Brown pledged to pay more attention to the issue of financing sources for the developing countries to preserve forests and play a strategic role in coping with climate change, Dino said.

"Prime Minister Brown appreciated President Yudhoyono's leadership, both at home and abroad particularly with regard to climate change. He also praised the Indonesian government for its policy and decision to set itself the target of lowering greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent by 2020," he said.

Brown described as "bold and ambitious" the Indonesian target while many other countries were still confined to discourses, he said.

"This is something that has come under the spotlight. Prime Minister Brown himself has described it as a bold target," he said.

Dino said Indonesia also had pledged to meet the upper limit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 41 percent in case of a global commitment to that effect.

Brown also promised to step up cooperation with Indonesia in preserving the latter's forests to reduce the impact of climate change, Dino said.

"Our forests play a strategic role in addressing climate change issues," he said.(ANTARA)

REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Indonesia Increases Troops in UNIFIL

Jakarta - Indonesia has increased its military personnel in the UN peacekeeping force in South Lebanon (UNIFIL) to support security and stability in the region.

The Indonesia troops in the UN peace-keeping force were called TNI Mechanical Company Garuda XXIII-C1/UNIFIL Contingent and were 150 strong. They were seen off in a military ceremony in Jakarta on Friday (30/10/2009).

The TNI chief of general staff, Vice Admiral Didik Heru Purnomo who led the sending off ceremony, said the Indonesian troops in outhern Lebanon were increased in accordance with a UN request, based on the security situation in southern Lebanon.

"With the increase, TNI troops in the UNIFIL now number 1,000 men. Previously, 850 Indonesian troops had served in UNIFIL for a year," he said.

Therefore, the TNI was preparing a replacement for the previous 850-man contingent, Didik said.

He said the overseas military assignment to join the UN peacekeeping mission is an honor and trust to Indonesia in general and the TNI in particular.

"It is in line with the performance and the achievements which were shown previously by TNI soldiers who had joined the UN mission in several areas, including Lebanon," he said.

Therefore, Didik told the departing troops to uphold the honor and trust of the international world in Indonesia and its military, through the peace mission. (ANTARA)

RI to Raise Problem of Press Freedom at AICHR Meetings

Hua Hin- Indonesia`s representative in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on

Human Rights (AICHR), Rafendi Djamin, said he would bring up the question of press freedom at the commission`s meetings.

"The problem of press freedom poses a great challenge in ASEAN despite it being one of the three pillars of democracy," Djamin said on the sidelines of the 15th ASEAN Summit in Hua Hin, Thailand, on Friday (23/10/2009).

He said there was need for tangible steps to prevent the suppression of press freedom in ASEAN member countries and therefore Indonesia would try to bring up the matter at AICHR meetings.

The problem of press freedom must receive the same portion of attention in AICHR as other human rights issues in ASEAN member countries, he said.

The first meeting among the AICHR members would take place on Saturday (Oct 24) on the sidelines of the 15th ASEAN summit where they would introduce themselves to each other.

AICHR is an inter-governmental consultative group and an integral part of ASEAN`s organizational structure.

The commission`s task is to formulate efforts to promote and protect human rights in the region through education, monitoring, and dissemination of international human rights values and standards as laid down in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Vienna Declaration and other human rights instruments.

It is responsible for the advancement and protection of human rights in ASEAN and would cooperate with other ASEAN organs dealing with human rights for proper coordination and synergy in the field of human rights.

AICHR has 10 members, each representing one of ASEAN`s 10 member countries, with Dr Sriprapha Petcharamasree of Thailand as chairman.

The nine other commission members are Om Yentieng (Cambodia), Rafendi Djamin (Indonesia), Bounkeut Sangsomsak (Laos), Awang Abdul Hamid Bakal (Malaysia), Kyaw Tint Swe (Myanmar), Rosario G. Manalo (Philippines), Richard Magnus (Singapore) and Do Ngoc Son (Viet Nam). (ANTARA)

Japan Woos RI Over East Asian Community Initiative

Japan will involve Indonesia in efforts to establish the East Asian Community that would bring Tokyo closer to its historical rivals China and South Korea.

After a meeting with his Indonesian counterpart Hassan Wirajuda in Jakarta, Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said Tokyo would like to discuss further the concept of the East Asian Community with Jakarta, which he said “had boasted mature democracy and a firm economy in recent years”.

“Indonesia is an important partner for Japan in efforts to achieve integration in East Asia,” Okada said through an interpreter.

“Indonesia plays an important role in ASEAN [the Association of Southeast Asian Nations]. Japan would like to have a dialogue with Indonesia about the establishment of the East Asian Community.”

Okada also met with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on Tuesday (13/10/2009).

Beijing, Tokyo and Seoul held a trilateral summit last Saturday in Beijing, where the three countries pledged further commitment for regional economic cooperation and development of the East Asian Community.

The East Asian Community initiative launched by Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has received a mixed response, with critics saying it may spark rivalry with similar regional groupings such as ASEAN.

ASEAN leaders have managed to bring Japan, China and South Korea under one umbrella — the ASEAN+3 — after decades of historic hostilities among the three.

Hassan said ASEAN+3 was a very important pillar of cooperation among East Asian nations, adding the new concept by the Japanese government should enhance the existing forum.

“Indonesia welcomes greater efforts by the new Japanese government to improve relations with other Asian countries,” he said.

“Indonesia and Japan always share similar views about the future of this region and we have always wanted to cooperate closely, and so we agree to consult each other about how cooperation and integration can work better in the future.”

Okada’s visit comes at a time when both countries are stressing the need for stronger ties to cope with global crisis. Last month, Prime Minister Hatoyama held a bilateral meeting with President Yudhoyono in Pittsburgh on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. It followed with a visit by the Japanese vice minister of economy, trade and industry last week.

“Indonesia and Japan have developed a very good relationship with strong cooperation in economic areas,” Hassan said.

“It’s high time we built a strategic partnership between the two countries. Indonesia and other ASEAN members should work harder toward the integration of East Asia.”

The foreign minister added Japan was Indonesia’s largest trading partner in 2008, with bilateral trade valued at US\$43 billion, an impressive rise from \$30.15 billion in 2007.

Okada said the Japanese government would provide further aid for the earthquake-devastated province of West Sumatra, hit by a 7.6-magnitude quake on Sept. 30. Japan has already dispatched relief supplies worth around JPY30 million (\$340,000).

Foreign Ministry spokesman Teuku Faizasyah said Indonesia had informed Tokyo about its needs for rebuilding in the quake-hit areas.

“In the meeting, Foreign Minister Hassan presented [details] about the reconstruction of public facilities, such as schools and hospitals.”

Okada will leave for Padang on Wednesday to see the widespread devastation.(the Jakarta Post)

India Optimistic Cooperation with RI to Increase Further

Jakarta - Indian Ambassador to Indonesia Biren Nanda expressed optimism that under President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s second-term administration, Indonesia and India will be able to further intensify their bilateral cooperation.

“We are looking forward to a further increase in bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the future,” Nanda said here on Tuesday (20/10/2009).

The ambassador praised Indonesia as one of three countries in Asia that had done well during the recent global financial crisis while

other countries in the region experienced economic slowdowns.

He also said India-Indonesia trade relations had developed rapidly during the past three years after the signing of a Joint Declaration for Indonesia-India Strategic Cooperation in 2005.

In the same year, Nanda said, both countries also agreed to make a commitment to enhance bilateral trade from four billion US dollars in 2005 to 10 billion US dollars in 2010.

"Fortunately, the target was reached two years earlier than expected, namely in 2008, but in favor of Indonesia, especially for palm oil and coal products. We predict trade between the two countries will reach US\$ 20 billion in 2014," he stated.

Among other Indonesian products that entered India's markets were paper, agricultural products, electrical tools, crude and synthetic rubber and wooden products.

Meanwhile, Indian had exported several products to Indonesia namely automobiles, engineering, textile, steel, mining machinery, banking services, resources and software.

The Indian envoy also praised Indonesia's role in international organizations such as in the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations (UN). (ANTARA)

Asia and Africa to Cooperate on Counterterrorism and Energy

Asian and African nations agreed Tuesday to enhance cooperation in eight areas, including counterterrorism and food and energy security amid rising concerns over radicalism and food shortages.

Senior officials from 58 Asian and African countries met for two days in Jakarta under the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) forum, which held its first summit in 2005 in Jakarta. Indonesia and South Africa co-chaired the meeting that kicked off on Monday.

The meeting was closed Tuesday with the declaration of "Jakarta Statements", in which participating countries agreed to focus on eight specific areas.

They cover cooperation on counterterrorism, transnational crime, food and energy security, small and medium enterprises, tourism,

university networks and gender equality as well as women's empowerment.

Participating countries also agreed to increase their efforts toward hosting capacity building programs for Palestine, which has attracted concern over its stalled peace process.

Indonesia has committed to training around 1,000 Palestinians from 2008-2013. Jakarta has involved private institutions to organized various training programs for the Palestinian people.

Director general for Asia Pacific and African Affairs Hamzah Thayeb told reporters after the meeting that both Asia and Africa had pledged to work together closely in the eight focus areas.

"Not only in economy, but also in politics, as both are closely related to each other. Indonesia has also pledged to help train Somalians for capacity building. We will discuss further details about this in the future," he said.

South Africa's deputy director general of Asia and the Middle East Jerry Matjila said Asia and Africa had agreed to further develop an institutional framework to build a bridge between both.

"We would like to translate the solidarity among Asian and African countries into economic and development cooperation... We already have eight focus areas and as we move into those areas, we begin to develop programs. We discuss what Indonesia can do and what Africa can do for a better future for all," he said.

NAASP will hold its second summit next year in South Africa. (the Jakarta Post)

RI Condemns Israeli Policy in East Jerusalem

Jakarta - The Indonesian government has condemned the Israeli policy to restrict Palestinians' access to Muslim shrines in East Jerusalem.

"Indonesia condemns the Israeli policy to impose restrictions on Palestinians in East Jerusalem. The policy violates the freedom of worship because it blatantly obstructs Palestinians' access to holy sites, including Al-Aqsa Mosque," Indonesian Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani said at a special session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva recently.

In a statement issued to ANTARA on Friday (16/10/2009), Ambassador Djani at the meeting also expressed Indonesia's deep concern about Israel's excavation to build a tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque, urging Israel to put an immediate halt to the project and respect the international law and UN resolutions concerned.

The meeting focused on the situation of human rights in Palestine and East Jerusalem, a report by the fact-finding mission in the Gaza Strip known as Goldstone Report and a periodic report of the UN Commission on Human Rights on Israel's violation of human rights during its military strikes from December 2008 to January 2009.

Djani attached significance to the Goldstone Report in what she described as more credible and comprehensive.

Therefore, she said the time had come for the UN Human Rights Council to discuss the substance of the report and take concrete action with regard to human rights violation in the Gaza Strip.

"The absence of concrete action will only place the UN Human Rights Council's credibility on the line," she said.(ANTARA)

Rafendi Djamin Elected RI Representative in ASEAN Human Rights Commission

Jakarta - The Indonesian government has appointed human rights activist Rafendi Djamin to represent it in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), a foreign ministry spokesman said.

Director of ASEAN Political and Security Affairs Ade Sukendar made the remarks here on Friday (16/10/2009).

"The process of appointing a human rights representative begins with national consultations in Jakarta in which the candidates need to be nominated by at least two organizations," he said.

Every ASEAN member country must assign a representative in AICHR which was established on the basis of Article 14 of the ASEAN Charter, he said.

ASEAN foreign ministers have agreed the terms of reference of the AICHR establishment at the 42nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) in Phuket, Thailand, July 19, 2009.

Later in 15th ASEAN Summit in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand, and on October 23, the ASEAN Heads of State/Government will inaugurate the AICHR.

"After the 10 ASEAN member countries appointed their AICHR representatives, they will meet for an introduction on the sidelines of the ASEAN 15th Summit, and then hold their first meeting next year in Jakarta to set an action and other issues," he said, adding that further meetings will be held next year in Vietnam - as the rotating chairman of ASEAN.

Ade said AICHR will at least meet twice a year to carry out the mandate of the AICHR terms of reference for the next five years which will focus more on human rights promotion efforts in the region.

AICHR is an inter-agency consultative organization and an integral part in the structure of the ASEAN organization.

The Commission has a duty to formulate the promotion and protection of human rights in the region through education, monitoring, dissemination of values and international human rights standards as mandated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Vienna Declaration and other human rights instruments.

AICHR that serves as human rights institution in ASEAN is responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights in the regional grouping.

In addition, AICHR will work with other related ASEAN agencies on human rights within the framework of coordination and synergy in the field of human rights.

ASEAN groups Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. (ANTARA)

Southeast Asia to Launch Human Rights Body

Southeast Asian leaders plan to launch a pivotal but sharply criticized human rights commission Friday (23/10/2009) and grapple with how best to achieve economic integration by 2015.

The three-day summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will include talks with the leaders of Asia's other major powers, including China and India.

The leaders of Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines were not expected to arrive in time for Friday morning's opening ceremony, officials said. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen is hosting an official visit by South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, Indonesia is swearing in a new government and Malaysia's government was presenting its budget to Parliament, said Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was running late due to Typhoon Lupit, the third storm in a month, due to hit the Philippines, her spokeswoman Lorelei Fajardo said.

One of the first orders of business will be the inauguration of the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, which activists say will do little to deter human rights violators like ASEAN member Myanmar because it imposes no punishments and focuses on promotion rather than protection of human rights.

ASEAN officials respond that the commission is a work in progress and can be strengthened in the future.

Members of the 10-nation bloc have recently escalated their criticism of Myanmar. But the summit will again likely act by consensus, avoid confrontations and maintain that the group's approach to engaging Myanmar works better than the West's sanctions and threats.

The summit will also sign a declaration on climate change and discuss food security, bio-energy, disaster management and how trade barriers can be brought down to bring about a European Union-style grouping within the next six years.

The bloc will then meet with leaders of China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Thailand has deployed more than 36,000 military and police both in Bangkok and to guard the seaside summit of Asian leaders, working to prevent any repeat of the disruptions that shut down another meeting

earlier this year, an official said Thursday (22/10/2009).

The government is still smarting from the storming of the East Asian Summit in April in the seaside city of Pattaya, where anti-government protesters charged through thin police ranks and forced the evacuation of several leaders by helicopter and boat.

A main protest organizer said no new demonstrations are planned this week in Bangkok or at the summit venue, the beach resort of Cha-am, 200 kilometers (120 miles) south of the capital.

About half of the security forces mobilized have thrown a security cordon around this summit venue, and the others will be on alert in the Thai capital, said government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn. He said 20 newly bought bulletproof SUV's will chauffeur leaders to their meetings.

"Security forces have also set up emergency escape routes by land, air and sea," he said. "We don't expect it to be necessary but we want to be ready and to assure leaders that they will be able to meet without distraction."

Security forces have also been empowered to impose curfews and restrict freedom of movement around Cha-am and Bangkok.

Thailand has been rocked by years of protests and counter protests by supporters and opponents of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in a 2006 military coup on accusations of corruption, abuse of power and disrespect to the country's monarch.(the Jakarta Post)

RI and Russia Establish Joint Commission

Indonesia's chamber of commerce and its Russian counterpart has agreed to establish a joint business council to enhance the bilateral ties between both countries during a joint commission session that closed Tuesday (20/10/2009).

"Indonesia and Russia discussed about bilateral ties in various sectors, such as trade, banking, energy, mining, agriculture and

tourism," says a press release sent by the Foreign Ministry.

The Indonesian delegation was led by the Director General for American and European Affairs Retno L. P. Marsudi, while the Russia delegation was headed by a representative of the Indonesia-Russia Business Council, of Anatolij I. Yarochkin.

Bilateral trade between Indonesia and Russia stood at US\$1.6 billion in 2008, an increase by 114 percent from a year before. Indonesia and Russia are working on establishing cooperation between Jakarta's state oil company of Pertamina and Moscow's LukOil, Antam and RusAl, Minang Jordanindo and Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant.(the Jakarta Post)