
Indonesia erupts again

Jakarta, October 9

HUNDREDS OF Islamic students on Tuesday demonstrated outside the US embassy for the second day running in Indonesia against US-led attacks against Afghanistan.

"America and Britain are the enemies of civilisation," read a banner carried by the demonstrators, who had earlier rallied outside the capital's United Nations building.

The protesters joined about 150 activists who had camped overnight outside the heavily guarded mission after staging a noisy rally there the evening before.

In the city of Makassar on Sulawesi Island, dozens of protesters burned the Stars and Stripes and vandalised a billboard belonging to American fast food giant, McDonalds.

They also threatened to round up and expel US citizens living in the city.

There have been no reports of serious violence and Indonesian security forces have promised to protect foreigners. Nevertheless, the US embassy and other diplomatic missions have cautioned westerners to take care.

AP

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Indonesia
40-14

Megawati denounces U.S. strikes

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, OCT. 15. The American projection of an "all-encompassing" war against terrorism is beginning to go awry. Moderate leaders like the Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, are beginning to criticise the United States for the "unilateral" action against Afghanistan.

Speaking at a mosque in Jakarta on Sunday night, Ms. Megawati, who chose not to name any country, made it clear that she did not back the American military strikes against Afghanistan. "Whoever commits terror must be punished. However, the search for and the bringing to justice of perpetrators of terror or those parties who harbour them must be in accordance with law that is generally acceptable," the President said.

"It is unacceptable that someone, a group or even a Government — reasoning that they are searching for perpetrators — attack a people or another country for whatever reason," Ms. Megawati was quoted as saying. "Blood cannot be cleansed with blood," the Indonesian President, who only recently had a meeting with the U.S. President, Mr. George Bush, in Washington, said.

At the gathering where her

Vice-President, Mr. Hamzah Haz, was also present, the Indonesian leader said, "We cannot imagine that other groups or nations can make their own measurements and rules to decide who is right or wrong and then attack other parties." The President's remarks, which may well be triggered by domestic political compulsions, come after Mr. Hamzah openly called for a halt to military strikes against Afghanistan.

Earlier, Indonesia had said it was concerned about the military strikes and that the U.S should limit them. The current remarks of the President, however, show that Jakarta does not support the military action. The President's remarks amount to a vote of no-confidence against the American approach toward dealing with "terrorism" and Afghanistan. The Vice-President, who is seen as a hardliner, had demanded an end to the American military strikes even before the President had spoken.

"If the military strikes are not stopped, many more Afghans will fall victim," Mr. Hamzah, who heads the United Development Party (PPP), told his party's national conference on Saturday. "As part of the nation, we in PPP

must support the campaign against terrorism, but we are opposed to attacks on Afghanistan," Mr. Hamzah was quoted as saying by *Jakarta Post*.

Insisting that the Indonesian stand be "firmer" than the position taken by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Vice-President also demanded that the U.S. should produce convincing evidence linking Osama bin Laden with the September 11 terrorist attacks. Interestingly, Mr. Hamzah said he would not forbid anyone from holding anti-American protests, which have been a recurring feature on the Indonesian streets in recent days.

"Please go ahead and voice your aspirations...I wouldn't prohibit demonstrations as long as the law is not breached," the In-

onesian Vice-President stated. While Indonesia wants to be in the good books of the U.S. and the West, internal politics would seem to dictate that Ms. Megawati cannot remain quiet as the U.S. continues its relentless bombing of Afghanistan.

Hardline Islamist leaders, who played a major role in her becoming President, seem to be mounting pressure on Ms. Megawati through their public statements on the U.S.-led terrorist strikes. It is an open secret that at least one of the hardline leaders has ambitions to become President. The hardline leaders, it would appear, could have forced the President to distance herself from the moderate position taken by her Government on the strikes.

THE HINDU

16 OCT 2001

Megawati's U.S. visit, a message to Muslims

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, SEPT. 17. The Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, is one of the few world leaders who will be meeting the American President, Mr. George Bush, later this month.

As leaders cancelled their U.S. trips in the wake of Tuesday's horrific attacks in New York and Washington, the U.S. was keen that Ms. Megawati keep her date with Mr. Bush. And, with good reason. Ms. Megawati is the President of a country where the largest number of Muslims live. According to reports, Mr. Bush personally informed Ms. Megawati that she should go ahead and visit the United States despite the attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.

At a time when the United States is preparing to go to war against Osama bin Laden and his associates, a visit by Ms. Megawati will be politically correct. It will signal that Washington is targeting only "jehadi" Muslims who are out to attack the United States while engaging those who are for a democratic way of life.

The expected meeting between Ms. Megawati and Mr. Bush at the White House in Washington on September 18 also comes at a time when there have been attacks on minorities in the United States. The killing of an Indian Sikh and a Pakistani Muslim only go to highlight the dangers that people who look like Osama and have Muslim names are facing

in the U.S. these days. With Ms. Megawati's visit the U.S. wants to send out the message that engagement with moderate Muslim States is an ongoing process.

Within Indonesia itself, the President's visit to the U.S. could well anger some extreme Islamic elements. "If the bombing of Afghanistan takes place when Ms. Megawati is in the United States, there will be some response from these elements," a Jakarta-based analyst told this correspondent. However, the response from the Islamic elements hasn't been very voluble in Indonesia and there hasn't been any significant opposition to Ms. Megawati's visit.

"There have been some suggestions that Ms. Megawati should not go to the U.S., but that has been more on account of her safety," the analyst maintained. As far as Ms. Megawati is concerned, a meeting with the American President will be timely given the recent political troubles in Indonesia. Indonesia, which has had military contacts with the U.S. suspended following the events in East Timor, is interested in a full restoration of the military relationship.

Ms. Megawati will surely take this opportunity to restore military-to-military ties as well as develop a personal rapport with Mr. Bush.

The focus, however, will not be on the State of Indonesia, but the troubles in America and its response during Ms. Megawati's visit.

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Setting peace train in motion

S. B. Bria
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SCEPTICS would be forgiven if they conclude that Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri's visit to the conflict-ridden province of Aceh on Saturday achieved zilch. What did you expect from a six-hour visit to a province that has been ravaged by violence for more than three decades? Certainly, not miracles.

Ms Megawati's presence did not even bring respite. Two days before her arrival, Aceh was shocked by the murder of Syiah Kuala

University rector Dayan Dawood. It was a reminder that the killing in Aceh continued with or without her visit, and that it would probably continue afterwards.

It would be unfair, however, to dismiss Ms Megawati's trip to Aceh as a futile exercise. This was a visit to be made early in her presidency, if only to send the message that Aceh is a major national issue that she will personally tend to.

No one can accuse her of neglecting the problem that all her three successors - Suharto, BJ Habibie and Abdurrahman Wahid - not only failed to address, but had even aggravated. Ms Megawati's trip to Aceh should be seen more as part of a block-building process towards a comprehensive resolution.

She started this process with her Independence Day address on 16 August when she apologised to the people of Aceh for all the mistakes that previous administrations in Jakarta had made. She rightly repeated that apology directly to the people in Aceh, during her short trip on Saturday.

As difficult and complex as the Aceh problem may seem, Ms Megawati has made the right gestures early in her presidency. She has also passed into law the Nangroe Aceh Darussalam Bill, which not only recognises Aceh's special place in the republic, but also grants the people there sweeping autonomy in managing their own affairs, including natural resources.

Saturday's visit, coming after the public apology and the special autonomy law, has at the very least kept up the momentum for peace. Her meetings with leaders representing some, but not all, political factions in Aceh, may not have gone down too well, but again, this was

By her visit to the violence-torn province of Aceh, the Indonesian President has sent the signal that the issue is of national importance and that she would personally look into it

another gesture on her part to personally take on the Aceh problem, rather than delegating it to others. While all these gestures have helped maintain the momentum for peace, they are certainly not enough. The President must do more before she can expect to make any headway.

It is wrong to assume, as some people in Jakarta appear to have done, that the new Special Autonomy Law will be enough to appease, if not all, at least the majority of the people in Aceh, and

that there is nothing more that Jakarta can do or offer.

President Megawati could, and should, promise more to the people of Aceh; first, with regard to finding a negotiated political settlement, and second, with regard to upholding justice for all the wrongs that Jakarta has committed in Aceh.

Mr Habibie and Mr Wahid made many promises that they both failed to deliver. The last thing that the people in Aceh want to hear today is more empty promises from a new leader in Jakarta.

But with or without more promises from Ms Megawati, the Acehnese deserve nothing less than a political settlement and justice.

The search for a negotiated settlement with all the political factions in Aceh, including those who want a separate state like the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), is essential for enduring peace.

The delivery of justice - meaning no less than meting out stiff punishment for military officers responsible for human rights atrocities in the past - will win Ms Megawati the trust and goodwill of the Acehnese.

They have been betrayed too many times and have the right to mistrust the intentions of the leaders in Jakarta.

Saturday's visit, and all the other gestures from President Megawati, have helped set the peace train in motion.

The task at hand now, for everyone who wants to see peace in Aceh, is to help keep this momentum alive.

It is a long road but Indonesians must not throw away probably what is the last chance to secure peace in Aceh and to keep the province within the republic's fold.



Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri in traditional Achenese attire on her way to the Governor of Aceh's house in Banda Aceh on Saturday. - AP/PTI

- The Jakarta

Post/Asian News Network.

THE STATESMAN

11 SEP 2001

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Megawati visits Aceh, apologises again

S B Asia
- Indonesia

BANDA ACEH (INDONESIA), SEPT. 9. The new Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri visited the troubled Aceh province on Saturday and apologised for mistakes by previous governments during a longrunning separatist war that has left thousands dead.

The statement stopped short of recognising accusations by rebels and human rights groups that Indonesia's military has been responsible for much of the bloodshed. "The central government in the past has made many mistakes and there have been shortcomings. For that, on behalf of myself and the Government, I, as the President of the Republic of Indonesia, offer my greatest apologies to the people of Aceh," she said.

This and a call for peace brought repeated cheers and applause from several thousand people who had gathered outside the city's ornate Baiturrahman Mosque that dominates the provincial capital, Banda Aceh. However, she became visibly irritated when a group of about 20 students stood up in the crowd in a bid to disrupt her speech that was televised nationally.

"If we want to be honest, solving these problems can not be done with violence. Only by peaceful means can we rebuild Aceh," she said. Ms. Megawati called on Aceh's four million people to give her new government time to solve the crisis. Security was tight during her visit. Outside the mosque armoured vehicles and dozens of heavily armed soldiers stood guard. Army snipers were stationed in a nearby tower. Representatives of the main rebel group said they would not meet her.



The Indonesian President, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri, in traditional Acehese attire arrives at the Governor's house in Banda Aceh on Saturday. — AP

The visit is Ms. Megawati's first to Aceh since becoming President on July 23. It comes amid rising violence and demands by military leaders to launch a full-scale offensive against the rebels. Soon after she became President, Ms. Megawati formally apologised for military atrocities, but insisted she would never grant the province independence. On Saturday, she urged Aceh's people to accept recently passed laws that grant the province a greater chunk of revenues from its natural resources, including large natural gas reserves that are being tapped by U.S. oil giant Exxon-Mobil Corp.

Under the new laws, the Acehese — most of whom are staunchly Muslim — also have the right to impose Islamic Sharia law. Even though 90 per cent of Indonesia's 210 million people are Muslim, the Acehese practice a more conservative version of Islam than the rest of the country. In a sign of respect to the Acehese, Ms. Megawati wore an Islamic headscarf when she landed.

The Government hopes that greater autonomy will defuse support for the armed rebellion that has claimed about 1,200 lives so far this year and more than 7,000 in the past decade. — AP

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Mega tour

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BY TRAVELLING to nine ASEAN capitals in eight days, the Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, signalled the regional grouping's centrality in her foreign policy approach.

Ms. Megawati, whose visit to South East Asia ended in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday, set off on her first tour abroad a month after she took power in July, when the Indonesian Parliament ousted Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid as President.

Her stops in Manila, Hanoi, Phnom Penh, Vientiane, Bangkok, Yangon, Bandar Seri Begawan, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were a signal to the rest of the region that Indonesia remains relevant to ASEAN and South East Asia.

The reality of Indonesia, once the unchallenged leader of ASEAN, was not lost on the new President. Addressing Indonesians in Malaysia, Ms. Megawati stated that she was "ashamed" to have taken over a poor country begging for help from its neighbours.

"If I were an ostrich, I would bury my head in the sand in shame... We have to ask for help... Even countries like Myanmar are offering rice supplies to feed our people," the President said.

"Can you imagine how it feels asking help from your neighbours when you come from a country said to be the biggest in the region, and with the most potential?"

There is little doubt that Indonesia is looked upon poorly in the region; more as a problem than an asset though a change in leadership in Jakarta has generally been welcomed in the region. The President is upset at poor Myanmar offering Indonesia "rice" — but that, as she must have found out for herself, is part of the current perception that Jakarta is in need of help.

"Ms. Megawati was signalling by her visit that Indonesia believes that ASEAN remains the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy," says Mr. Endy M. Bayuni, executive editor of *The Jakarta Post*. The President, he says, believed ASEAN was the "main vehicle" of foreign policy. In his view, the President's tour also sent out the signal that, in time, Indonesia would be ready to

take on a leadership role in ASEAN once the current problems of corruption, collusion and nepotism (or KKN in Indonesian parlance) and a wobbly economy were addressed.

Mr. Endy Bayuni also believes that Ms. Megawati was distancing herself from the policies pursued by Mr. Wahid, who had proposed the formation of a West Pacific Forum. Such a Forum, comprising Australia and New Zealand, among others, it was felt, would undermine ASEAN. Now, the President had again stressed the centrality of ASEAN.

Mr. Wahid's threatening remarks about Singapore, including a call to turn off the nation's water supply, had disturbed many in the region.

Given its size and importance, a temperate Indonesia is seen as vital for stability in the region.

While there is a sense of relief at the political change in Indonesia, it is still early days in Ms. Megawati's presidency. Her clout in the neighbourhood hinges on her performance internally.

If she is able to take the economy forward and address some of the burning separatist questions, then her reputation will be on the upswing.

Talking to reporters on her way back to Indonesia, Ms. Megawati made specific reference to an issue that seems to have caused her concern; international terrorism and illegal arms trade in the region. She discussed this issue with ASEAN leaders during her

different stops.

"We need to prevent the spread of terrorism," Ms. Megawati was quoted as saying, adding that there was a need for intelligence officers of ASEAN countries to meet before the region's leaders held their own summit in Brunei in November.

It may be recalled that Malaysia recently arrested one of its nationals for a bomb blast in Jakarta. The authorities believe that he is a member of the Malaysian Mujahideen Group, a radical outfit.

Given the number of unresolved bomb attacks in Indonesia, and radical Islamic outfits active in the Philippines and now, perhaps, in Malaysia, security cooperation does appear to be a priority for ASEAN.

By proposing a meeting of intelligence officials, Indonesia has taken the initiative to evolve cooperation on ways and means to deal with this problem.

Given the fact that Indonesia has been obsessed with itself for the last three years, such a proposal indicates that Jakarta is looking outward at last. And it is willing to make specific suggestions in a bid to address problems.

During her visit to Singapore, top Economic Ministers joined Ms. Megawati, indicating the importance of Singapore's economy to that of Indonesia.

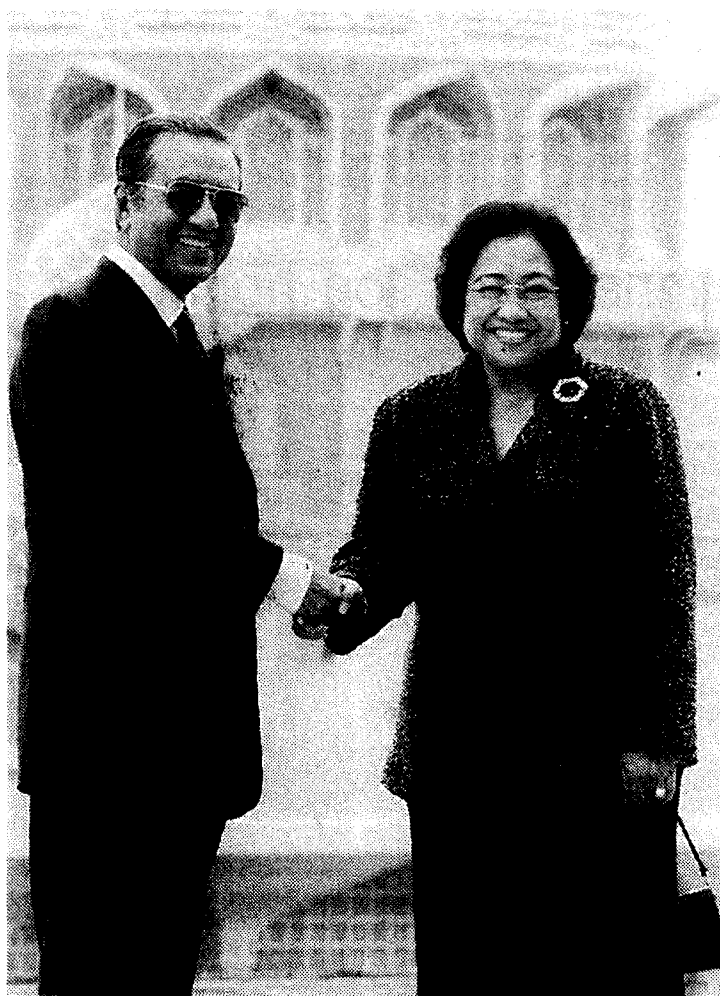
There is little doubt that with Ms. Megawati in Indonesia, the Philippines under Ms. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Thailand led by Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra there should be more domestic stability and, hence, more cooperative endeavours through the ASEAN process.

Within many countries in ASEAN, continuity of leadership in individual nations is equated with political stability. In that sense, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, hopefully, will be "stable" for the next few years.

Forward-looking leaders like Ms. Megawati can definitely make a difference in revitalising ASEAN, which has been unable to do much in the last few years. The 1997-98 economic crisis and the political changes have all contributed to ASEAN's loss of sheen.

But, as the new Indonesian President probably knows, the hard part of her job is at home, not abroad.

Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri's clout in Indonesia's neighbourhood depends on her performance internally. Amit Baruah on her nine-nation ASEAN tour.



Megawati Sukarnoputri with Mahathir Mohamad... trying to be good neighbours.

INDONESIA / BREAK WITH PAST POLICY

Megawati apologises to Aceh, Irian Jaya

By Amit Baruah ¹⁹⁷⁸ ¹⁰⁻¹⁶

SINGAPORE, AUG 16. The Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, today provided the first glimpses of how she proposes to steer the ship of State by apologising to the troubled provinces of Aceh and Irian Jaya for past wrongs.

The President, in an address on Indonesia's 56th independence day, however, made it clear that any resolution of separatist demands in these provinces had to be within the Indonesian union. Ms. Megawati, who speaks little, is unlike her ousted predecessor, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, who was willing to talk about anything and everything and remained open and accessible to the media all through his tenure.

"Our multitude of crises cannot be overcome all at once...only by (working together) can we gradually emerge from this time which has been very painful for us all," the President was quoted as saying in Jakarta. She also said if Indonesia was to avoid political instability — of the kind seen in recent years — there was a need to fix the country's Constitution. While ruling out the possibility of independence, Ms. Megawati publicly apologised to the six million residents of both Aceh and Irian Jaya. "We convey our deep apologies to our brothers who have long suffered as a result of inappropriate national policies," the President said.

Hoping that the people of Aceh and Irian Jaya would accept autonomy proposals, Ms. Megawati stated: "But one thing is clear. All this (autonomy) will take place within the context of maintaining the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia." (The loss of East Timor is deeply felt by many Indonesians — the East Timor example is not one that will be followed in the case of either Aceh or Irian Jaya — two provinces with long running separatist movements).



Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri addresses Parliament in a speech marking the anniversary of Independence from Dutch colonial rule 56 years ago, in Jakarta on Thursday. — Reuters

The President also spelt out what she felt were the roles of the Indonesian military (TNI) and the national police, which were separated by Mr. Wahid as part of the reform of the security structure.

"The TNI must concentrate on defending the integrity of the country's territory while the national police should focus on establishing security..." she said. In a statement that should please the military, the President said it would be unfair to expect the TNI to maintain the country's integrity and security without proper equipment to perform their duties. "It's highly illogical to place such an onerous burden on the military and police, and not to provide them with adequate equipment and logistics," she said. At the beginning of her speech, the President said Indonesia had been able to deal with some of the problems facing the country. "Initially, many observers and foreign countries feared that Indonesia would disintegrate into anarchy," Ms. Megawati maintained.

THE HINDU

17 AUG 2001

Megawati sending right signals to neighbours

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, AUG. 13 The Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, is signalling the relevance of the Association of South-East Asian Nations to her country by scheduling a visit to nine ASEAN countries from August 20 to 29.

Given the fact that the internal state of Indonesia was being seen in several ASEAN countries as a major problem for the organisation as a whole, her planned visits are significant in themselves.

Ms. Megawati's ousted predecessor, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, travelled abroad frequently, but towards the end of his tenure it became evident that Mr. Wahid would be a transitory political phenomenon in Indonesia. And that did affect some of his foreign policy initiatives.

Since taking over as President and forming her Government, Ms. Megawati has received wide support — from both within the region and outside. The peaceful change of guard has been appreciated in the neighbourhood even as the magnitude of Indonesia's domestic problems remain.

Mr. Robert Zoellick, U.S. Trade Representative, who was in Jakarta recently, said that he was "delighted" and "extremely impressed" by Ms. Megawati's grasp of issues during a three-hour-long meeting.

The Cabinet formed by the President was "extraordinarily strong" and her Government was sending all the right signals, Mr. Zoellick was quoted as saying after the meeting.

Close on the heels of Mr. Zoellick came the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard, on a short-notice working visit to Indonesia following an invitation from Ms. Megawati.

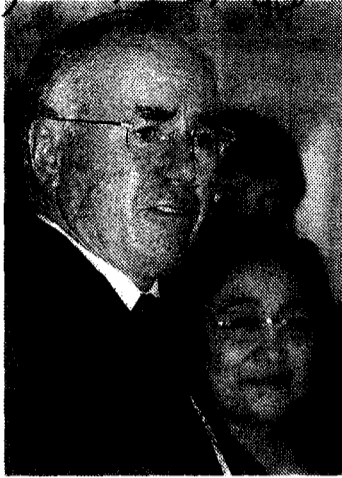
In recent years, Indonesia's relationship with Australia has emerged as the most difficult one to manage. The issue of East Timor and the Australian position led to widespread outrage in Indonesia.

In his last days as President, Mr. Wahid did pay a fence-mending visit to Canberra, but the focus at the time was more on his departure from office than on foreign affairs.

Mr. Howard, who arrived in Jakarta on Sunday, was quoted as saying after meeting Ms. Megawati on Monday that both countries had agreed to look to the future rather than dwell on the past.

"There have been differences in the past but there's little point in dwelling needlessly on the past when there's a combined determination to look to the future," Mr. Howard told businessmen at lunch.

A joint communique issued after the Howard-Megawati meeting said: "The Prime Minister reaffirmed Australia's support for Indonesia's territorial integrity



The Australian Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard, speaks to journalists as the Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, smiles during a press conference at the Merdeka Palace in Jakarta on Monday. — AFP

and unity...." They also "underlined the importance of a comprehensive approach to solving the problems of Aceh and Irian Jaya through advancing the primacy of dialogue, greater respect for human rights and the implementation of special autonomy status within the unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia".

Mr. Howard, whose party faces elections at home at the end of the year, said his visit was "very successful and very important".

"It's enabled us, I think, together to put the relationship on the basis of what I describe as positive realism," the Australian Prime Minister said, adding that Ms. Megawati needed to create a "beckoning" economic environment for foreign investors.

In these days where the health of a country is measured internationally by its ability to create the right conditions for foreign capital, Indonesia has a long way to go.

But, as has been stressed by several international players, Indonesia's new Cabinet, especially the economic Ministers, are the "right" people for the job.

Given such a view, international lenders are likely to take a "softer" position on extending assistance to Indonesia.

Clearly, this is a time for foreign leaders to gauge Ms. Megawati and tap her for views on regional and international issues. The Indonesian President's views on key issues are largely unknown, and her meetings would be an occasion for others to ascertain her opinions.

There is little doubt that Ms. Megawati is taking on a positive approach on foreign relations by visiting all nine ASEAN capitals in one ago. The visits signal that ASEAN remains the key focus area for Indonesia.

THE HINDU
1 AUGUST 2001

W.D. ~~W.D.~~ **Abu Sayyaf** ~~SSA~~
beheads four ~~Q~~

MANILA (PHILIPPINES), AUG. 3. Muslim extremists raided a southern Philippines village, seizing 36 Filipino hostages and beheading at least four in their biggest attack since taking a group of captives including three Americans from a beach resort in May, the military and police said.

Military leaders said soldiers and police found four bodies early on Friday as they pursued the Abu Sayyaf militants who already had been holding about 20 hostages in the remote jungles of Basilan island before they struck again on Thursday night. "All were found dead — beheaded," said the military's Deputy Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim. The Basilan provincial police chief, Senior Superintendent Akmadul Pangambayan, had said earlier that five decapitated bodies were discovered after the attack on Thursday on a village outside Lamitan town on Basilan. Other military and police officials said there were four beheadings.

The Lamitan police chief, Inspector Omar Adjid Dalawis, put the initial number of captives at 36. But an army spokesman in Basilan, Maj. Alberto Gepilano, said 24 people were captured and at least 16 remained in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf by Friday afternoon. Gen. Calimlim said 11 hostages were freed in the morning to relay the Abu Sayyaf's demand that the army end its campaign to eradicate the group. Police said the motive of the latest attack was not immediately clear. — AP

THE HINDU

Judge murder taint on Suharto son

Jakarta, August 7

SUSPECTS IN the murder of a senior Indonesian judge have accused former President Suharto's fugitive youngest son of masterminding the killing, police said on Tuesday.

Police have linked the millionaire fugitive Hutomo Mandala Putra, or "Tommy" Suharto, to a spate of fatal bombings in the country and the murder two weeks ago of the chief judge who last year sentenced him to 18 months in jail for graft.

"The suspects said that it was Tommy who gave the order. They said he gave them \$10,800 and firearms to carry it out," Jakarta police spokesman Anton Bahrul Alam said. Two motorcycle gunmen shot Supreme Court judge Syaifuddin Kartasasmita in broad daylight in the capital Jakarta last month, sending chills through a judicial system better known for settling cases with bribes than bullets. Police said they had arrested two men over the killing on Tuesday, hours after

finding explosives and documents linking Tommy Suharto to a spate of bombings, which have rocked the troubled nation for months.

Former playboy Tommy has been on the run since November, making the police subject to widespread ridicule for their failure to capture one of the country's best known figures.

Police showed copies of a photograph they said was used by the Suharto son for a fake ID card and which showed him wearing a beard and bearing the name "Ibrahim."

The accusations came as a homemade bomb exploded in Surabaya, Indonesia's second largest city, killing a woman as she was buying her breakfast from a street vendor outside her home. He was injured.

"The residents of the house are just an ordinary family... it is located in East Surabaya, in a normal residential area with small houses. We just don't understand why those crazy people put the bomb there," city police chief Ito Sumardi said.



AP PHOTO
A June 1968 photo of President Suharto (right) with five-year-old Hutomo Mandala Putra, popularly known as Tommy.

Tommy's lawyer urged the former playboy to give himself up because he believes he has been treated unfairly. Nudirman "As his lawyer, I still think that Tommy has to surrender himself...but he doesn't want to do so because he believes he has been treated unfairly," Nudirman told local radio station

Ramako. Police said raids on the homes of friends of Tommy in the past three days had uncovered evidence of his involvement in the Jakarta bombings over the past year but police said they had found no trace of Tommy.

Jakarta police chief Sofjan Jacob told reporters on Monday that the still powerful Suharto clan had three days to surrender the former playboy and millionaire businessman. There have been a number of unsolved bomb attacks in the crisis-racked country in recent months including a massive blast in the Jakarta Stock Exchange building in the centre of the capital, killing 15 people, mostly drivers.

Munir said he had not made direct contact with his client, who denies any wrongdoing, since November. "I have never contacted Tommy since he has been on the run. Never. I only make contact with (his) family via a contact person — I receive information from them which allows me to do my job as his lawyer," Munir said.

HP-16

INDONESIA / NEW PRESIDENT UNDER PRESSURE FROM FACTIONS

Megawati Cabinet formation delayed

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, AUG. 2. Ten days have passed since Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri was elected the President of Indonesia, but there's no sign of a new Cabinet to govern the troubled nation.

Ms. Megawati, who was to have announced her Cabinet tomorrow, is learnt to have put off the decision until next week.

The delay in putting together a new team to run the Government is understandable given the fact that her Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) does not enjoy a majority in Parliament.

Also, the President must accommodate the interests of powerful faction leaders who helped in the impeachment of Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid and catapulted Ms. Megawati to the country's top job.

The President today consulted with political leaders on "names" which could be included in the Cabinet. Apparently, faction leaders have been asked to submit candidates to their choice in a sealed envelop to the President.

"It (the Cabinet) should be announced by next week. The final selection is the prerogative of the President," Mr. Akbar Tandjung, leader of the Golkar Party, said in Jakarta today.

Mr. Hidayat Nurwahid of the Justice Party said: "Mrs. Mega (short for Megawati) asked for names from political parties... the Cabinet will be announced next Thursday at the latest.

"On matters related to the TNI (Indonesian military) commander, the Defence Minister and the Coordinating Minister for Politics, Social and Security Affairs, the President will hold intensive talks with the TNI and the national police," he added.

Other than the factions demanding their own men in Government, leading lights of the PDI-P too are engaged in jockeying for position in the new Cabinet.



The Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri (right), walks with the Chairman of the Golkar Party, Mr. Akbar Tandjung (third from right), the Deputy Speaker of the top Assembly, Mr. Matori Abdul Djallil (second left) and the Chairman of the top legislature, Mr. Amien Rais (left) after a meeting with political leaders in Jakarta on Thursday. — Reuters

It remains to be seen whether, in a bid to accommodate and appease faction leaders, Ms. Megawati compromises on the need to have competent professionals holding some of the key Cabinet jobs.

Overall, her relationship with the military is expected to be stable as the PDI-P has said more than once that the party was in no hurry to see the TNI return to the barracks. It is clear that Ms. Megawati has to keep the politicians happy, but whether she keeps the lion's share of the portfolios for the PDI-P or distributes

it in a proportional manner remains to be seen.

It would also be interesting to see whether the party of the ousted President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, is accommodated in Government.

Given the fact that the party has been alienated (along with its leader), Ms. Megawati would do the politically correct thing by taking in some representation from Mr. Wahid's National Awakening Party (PKB). According to available reports, Mr. Wahid is on his way back to Indonesia after receiving medical treatment in the

United States. His role, too, will be closely watched in the days ahead — whether he takes on an active political role or waits and watches from the sidelines.

As Indonesians wait for a new Government, they would probably allow Ms. Megawati time to pick those who can address some of the pressing problems facing the country.

Once the Government is formed, the people of Indonesia would expect Ms. Megawati and her Cabinet to deliver the goods.

A PRESIDENTIAL ACCESSION

49-12
2/17

INDONESIA'S DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS are being reinterpreted yet again in the emotion-charged context of a unanimous impeachment of the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). The quick ascension of the charismatic Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, as the country's new executive leader should satisfy the international community that Indonesia is trying to pace its steps in its hour of a unique constitutional crisis. Ms. Megawati's flair for populist gestures as also a quiet style will now be measured against Mr. Wahid's flamboyant habits of weaving a web of statesmanly vision which was swept aside by his own erratic policies and personalised rule. On trial now is an evolving notion of the rule of law which epitomises a 'constitutional' system that the Indonesians have been struggling to give themselves since the fall of an autocratic leader, Gen. Suharto, in 1998. Outwardly, it has been a manifest power struggle in the past few months between a beleaguered Mr. Wahid and the MPR. The 'end-game' was hastened by the cavalier fashion in which Mr. Wahid tried to decree a 'civil emergency' in a transparent bid to prevent the MPR from impeaching him. The MPR's hands were strengthened by the opinion of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court against such an emergency at this juncture. Moreover, Indonesia's military forces, once the ally of a 'paternalistic' but authoritarian ruler like Gen. Suharto, refused to serve as a pawn in Mr. Wahid's hands, although his democratic election as the President in 1999 could hardly be doubted.

The latest national trauma only underlines the need to keep Indonesia on course for a stable role as the world's third largest democracy (after India and the United States). Mr. Wahid is

known for political wit and his secular credo within the arena of the world's biggest Muslim-majority state is also widely acknowledged. Yet, it was ironic that he flaunted his final presidential 'order' regarding a still-born emergency as the weapon of a "jihad" or holy Islamic crusade to save Indonesia in his concomitant role as an erudite religious cleric.

Ms. Megawati's party had won the most seats but not an absolute majority during the parliamentary elections of 1999 that heralded a democratic renewal. In the electoral-college-style presidential poll which followed those parliamentary elections, Ms. Megawati lost to Mr. Wahid in a transparent process. Yet, his subsequent record of ineffective and erratic rule turned out to be the rallying cry of his political opponents, inclusive of Ms. Megawati who until recently played second fiddle to a visually impaired Mr. Wahid or appeared to do so in regard to the political and administrative matters of state. It was only a few months ago that the MPR first sought to impeach Mr. Wahid on grounds of corruption, but the Assembly began shifting its inquisitorial focus towards his alleged inefficiency in the context of a ruling by the Attorney General exonerating him of any direct involvement in graft. In a sense, the peculiarities of the 'constitutional' process adopted to judge Mr. Wahid must be seen as tell-tale evidence of Indonesia's meandering march towards a normative system of non-ideological democracy within the rubric of an executive presidency. Also, many among the anti-Wahid activists on the political-constitutional front were variously associated with the Suharto period. So, with Indonesia's territorial integrity and multi-ethnic fabric too being under immense strain now, sagacity is the only normative political mantra.

THE HINDU

OLD FOE IS MEGAWATI DEPUTY

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC

Jakarta (Indonesia), July 26: The National Assembly on Thursday elected a conservative Muslim politician, Mr Hamzah Haz, as the country's next vice-president, filling the post vacated by Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri when she became head of state. The vote follows Monday's replacement by the Assembly of Mr Abdurrahman Wahid as President with Ms Megawati. Thursday's ballot came after much infighting between the country's political and military elites, who are jockeying for the top Cabinet posts in the Megawati's new government.

Mr Haz, 61, is the leader of the United Development Party and a former minister in Mr Wahid's first Cabinet in October 1999. He resigned from the government the following month, after allegations of involvement in corruption.

Mr Haz's party and other Muslim groups in the electoral college opposed Ms Megawati's candidacy for President in June 1999, after the country's first free parliamentary elections in decades. They claimed that "the irreversible laws of Islam" banned a woman from becoming head of state.

But over the past year, they have joined a loose coalition of other groups — including the Golkar Party of former dictator Suharto and the armed forces — in backing Ms Megawati and seeking Mr Wahid's impeachment.

In the final round of voting in the 695-member Assembly, Mr Haz defeated Golkar's chairman Akbar Tanjung by 340-237, with the rest either abstaining or boycotting the proceedings.

Three other candidates had been eliminated in the first two rounds of voting. (AP)



ELECTED: Indonesia's new vice-president, Mr Hamzah Haz (right), hugs the other candidate, Mr Akbar Tanjung, after winning the election at the Parliament in Jakarta on Thursday. (AP)

Wahid prepares for next battle

Jakarta, July 26: As Indonesia's Parliament elected a new deputy to President Megawati Sukarnoputri, deposed President Abdurrahman Wahid was leaving for the US to get back in shape for the "next battle," his daughter said. "We are going to go there (the US) for a check-up. I think the most important thing is to get him back in shape, to get his health ready for the next battle," said one of his daughters, Zanuba "Yenny" Chafsoh Wahid.

Yenny, speaking in an interview with CNN, said it was not yet the end for her father. "This is not the end of a chapter." "We will ask him to start building a new power-base again, he will play a bigger role in the society, he can act as the contact of the people without being hindered by having to watch what he says and stuff like that," she said of the future.

She did not elaborate on the plan but said that her father's mistake was believing so much in people's

goodwill.

Ms Yenny also said that what the politicians had done was wrong. "They did not opt to change the system, but change the man and this is not right," she told CNN.

"He showed us that even though, we might have lost the battle, I think he has won the moral war," Ms Yenny said.

"His dignity, his integrity is preserved... We will walk out of the palace with our heads up." (AFP)



BENDING OVER BACKWARD: Former Indonesian President Wahid performs morning exercises at the presidential palace on Thursday. (Reuters)

Wahid leaves palace for US, given an emotional farewell

BY TOMI SOETJIPTO

Jakarta, July 26: Sacked Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid finally left the presidential palace on Thursday after refusing to budge for three days, triggering emotional scenes among thousands of supporters waiting outside.

Mr Wahid, bitter at his ouster and predicting the country would fall back into corruption and anarchy, said he would be back.

"I will come back and continue fighting for democracy," he told the throng which responded with cheers and gifts of bouquets of flowers.

He then left for the airport for a flight to the United States for medical checks.

Wahid rode in a black Mercedes Benz which was shepherded into the central

Merdeka (Freedom) Square as supporters waved flags and shouted support for the Muslim cleric and attacked the regime of disgraced former President Suharto.

The mood was rowdy but festive and there was no sign of violence. People waved banners saying "Gus Dur, I love you," using the Muslim cleric's nickname, and wearing Wahid T-shirts.

Earlier in the day, Mr Wahid warned that Indonesia would fall again under military control and made clear that his lifelong friendship with Ms Megawati was over.

"Indonesia will be looted," he said. "There will be no law and human rights will be undermined."

Mr Wahid was widely respected when he lost power but is now regarded as little more than an object of pity. (Reuters)

INDONESIA / TANDJUNG LOSES THE RACE

HD-16 277

Muslim leader chosen Megawati deputy

JAKARTA, JULY 26. Indonesian legislators today elected an unlikely deputy for their first woman President — a Muslim politician who has said women are not fit to lead the world's largest Muslim nation. The choice of United Development Party (PPP) chief, Mr. Hamzah Haz, underlines the potential instability in the fragile alliance that dumped Abdurrahman Wahid and replaced him with the daughter of the founding President, Sukarno, on Monday.

But Mr. Haz also provides crucial religious support that Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri needs to survive in power — and only time will tell if he is a friend or foe, analysts say. Sources said Mr. Haz's relationship with Ms. Megawati is cool and formal.

"Megawati is very nationalistic therefore Hamzah Haz, theoretically, should provide a good mix," Mr. Lin Che Wei, head of Research at Sg Securities, told Reuters. Mr. Haz beat the parliamentary Speaker, Mr. Akbar Tandjung by winning 340 votes among the 611 members of the top Assembly who voted.

Both men embraced and kissed after the result as legislators cheered. Mr. Haz was sworn in later in the day.

Just hours after sacking the country's first democratically elected leader, the nearly one dozen parties involved began squabbling over the spoils, an early warning Ms. Megawati's coalition could become as fractious as Mr. Wahid's.

The PPP, the third largest party, had threatened it would not join the yet-to-be-announced Cabinet if Ms. Megawati's old job went to Mr. Tandjung, who also heads Golkar, the second-largest party and former political tool of the ousted autocrat, Suharto.

Ms. Megawati's Indonesian democratic party-struggle (PDI-P) is the largest but does not command a majority. PPP officials said Golkar already had enough power through holding the parliament Speakership.

Golkar is also still heavily tarnished by its links to Mr. Suharto.

After Ms. Megawati's party won the most votes in 1999's parliamentary election, Mr. Haz helped galvanise a Muslim alliance that crushed her Presidential bid because she was a woman, and then lost heavily to her in a run-off for the Vice-Presidency.

However, some analysts say his Islamic credentials could make a good partner to Ms.



The Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, and the Vice-President, Mr. Hamzah Haz, wave to mediapersons after the latter's swearing-in ceremony in Jakarta on Thursday. — AP

Megawati's more secular, nationalist views.

As the Supreme People's Consultative Assembly was meeting, Mr. Wahid prepared to leave the Dutch-built Presidential palace where he has remained holed up since being ousted. He will leave for the U.S. on Thursday for medical checks.

The selection of Vice-President has a crucial influence on the shape and tone of Ms. Megawati's administration because it reflects the forces and alliances she will have to factor in

when she creates her cabinet.

Mr. Haz's election and Mr. Wahid's departure may also seal Indonesia's first peaceful transition of power, which would provide a welcome boost to the battered economy.

Stocks and the rupiah rallied on Mr. Wahid's sacking, but have since shed some of their gains amid a reassessment of Ms. Megawati. After the relief at the lack of violence comes growing concern about her so-far untested abilities. — Reuters

THE HINDU

27 JUL 2001

Does Megawati want what Indonesia wants?

TIMOTHY MAPES
JAKARTA, INDONESIA

ON Sunday night, Indonesia's protracted leadership crisis was rushing toward an explosive finale. Facing a legislative session that threatened to impeach him in the morning, President Abdurrahman Wahid appeared on national television to confront the military — which had just moved 80 tanks into position outside his palace — and warned that he intended to declare a state of emergency in a matter of hours.

So what was Wahid's vice president and putative successor, Megawati Sukarnoputri, doing at this critical juncture for the world's fourth-largest country? She was at the movies, watching the animated fairy-tale *Shrek* with her daughter and her grandchildren.

Megawati's behaviour epitomises the aloof, regal approach that she often takes toward governing this vast country, which is beset by a daunting array of political, economic and social problems. The 54-year-old eldest daughter of Sukarno, Indonesia's founding father, was sworn in Monday as Indonesia's fifth president. But Megawati rarely speaks in public or offers clear opinions about what policies Indonesia should pursue to cope with a dangerous mix of increasing lawlessness, stubborn separatist movements and an economy that has yet to fully recover from the ravages of the Asian economic crisis.

Markets and investors cheered Megawati's election as



a signal that the chaos that marked Wahid's 21 months in power may finally end. Still, no one is certain what a Megawati presidency will mean for Indonesia. A former housewife and college dropout, even her close aides admit she often has trouble making decisions and has done very little during her tenure as vice president to show

she can run a country of Indonesia's size and complexity.

Some Indonesians hope Megawati's popularity and rhetorical reticence will provide a stabilising influence on the country. Yet others worry that Megawati's habitual silence masks indecision or her inability to deal with the tough questions Indonesia must tackle to regain

What was Wahid's successor doing at this critical juncture for the world's fourth-largest country? She was at the movies, watching the animated fairy-tale *Shrek* with her daughter and her grandchildren

economic and political stability. One close aide acknowledges that she has no clear views on economic policy. Other Indonesians fear that Megawati's new administration will be strongly dependent on the diverse political factions that lead the push in Indonesia's Parliament to oust Wahid. Those include ex-President Suharto's former political party, tight-wing Islamic parties and the military.

For one thing, many worry that Megawati's hard-line nationalism has led her to build close ties with Indonesia's military, which played a key role in pushing her into the presidency by ignoring Wahid's late-night order to block the National Assembly's move to impeach him. Megawati has frequently appeared at military parades and socialised with retired Gen Wiranto, the former military chief who was tarred with allegations that he was responsible for

human-rights abuses in East Timor in 1999 when he served as Indonesia's armed forces chief.

Military analysts say Megawati's impending ascendancy to power had already led to increasingly violent crackdowns against separatists in the mineral-rich provinces of Aceh and Irian Jaya. Megawati has pushed hard to give the military a freer hand in Aceh, a move that rights groups complain has led to hundreds of deaths in battles between security forces and rebels over the past few months.

"With the military backing her appointment, I think the situation in Aceh will get much worse in the next few weeks," says Nurdin Abdul Rahman, who runs a group that cares for Acehese torture victims and who has fled the province because he fears for his safety.

Many also fear that Megawati will slow, or drop altogether, the efforts that were made by Wahid — albeit unsuccessfully — to punish the rampant corruption that flourished under former President Suharto. Several leading members of Golongan — Suharto's former party — were influential in securing her elevation to the presidency, and are expected to insist that the corruption cases brought against them by Wahid be quietly dropped.

"I think she'll be more interested in maintaining her legitimacy by providing stability, rather than pinning it on countercorruption efforts," says Douglas Ramage, who runs the Asia Foundation's office here. "I would imagine that she wouldn't pursue (corruption

cases) too vigorously."

Megawati's husband, Taufik Kiemas, could also cause problems for the new president. He has already set off alarm bells among Indonesian public interest groups for his widening network of business arrangements and for his role in arranging finances for Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party Struggle.

Some observers also worry she will be vulnerable to attack from right-wing Islamic groups that initially backed Wahid for the presidency in 1999, only to turn against him after he failed to satisfy their demands for power in his government. Those groups scorned Megawati in 1999 by publicly announcing that they would never support a woman as president of Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country.

Other Indonesians suggest, however, that Megawati's widespread popularity and the lengthy negotiations that led to her taking power will help her to weather Muslim demands for a substantial role in the new government. Megawati's party holds 31 per cent of the seats in Indonesia's Parliament, while Wahid's party holds about 10 per cent.

"She does have legitimacy in a way that Wahid never had," due to her popularity and her party's strong showing in the 1999 parliamentary election, Ramage says, noting that all the Islamic parties have had to publicly revoke their opposition to having a female president. "There are no longer options they can use to attack her."

(The Wall Street Journal)

Wahid leaves as rivals squabble

Jakarta, July 25 (Reuters): Sacked President Abdurrahman Wahid found a face-saving way out of Indonesia's political crisis today but as he prepared to leave for a medical check-up in the US his rivals squabbled over the spoils.

With legislators voting to choose President Megawati Sukarnoputri's deputy, a move crucial to shaping her government as she tackles the crises paralysing the battered nation, friends and aides of Wahid said he had finally accepted defeat.

"He accepted the reality of history," Ruslan Abdulgani, a former foreign minister, told reporters after visiting Wahid, who was in still holed up in the Dutch-built presidential palace, behind razor-wire barricades.

"He (Wahid) said he hoped Megawati succeeded in returning the situation in a good way," Abdulgani added. Wahid aides said he would quit the palace tomorrow day to head for the US.

Megawati, under pressure to name a new Cabinet, travelled to Wahid's volatile political heartland to visit the grave of her father, the still-idolised founding president, Sukarno.

But just 48 hours after showing unprecedented unity to dump Wahid, Indonesia's swarm of political parties were divided on the way forward in the

world's most populous Muslim country. The selection of Vice-President will be important to the shape and tone of Megawati's coalition government not just for the person, but because it will reflect the forces and alliances she will have to factor in when she creates her Cabinet.

The Muslim-based United Development Party (PPP), the third largest and crucial in harnessing Islamic support, is threatening to refuse any Cabinet posts if the vice presidency goes to the rival Golkar party.

Golkar, the second largest party, is the former political vehicle of ousted autocrat Suharto and still heavily tarnished by the relationship. The vote in the top assembly went into a second round this evening after no candidate won a majority.

The head of the PPP, Hamzah Haz, was leading the race, followed by Akbar Tandjung of Golkar and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a retired general and ex-chief security minister.

Around 500 students protested at parliament over Tandjung's candidacy because of his links to Suharto, who quit amid social and political chaos in 1998.

With Wahid completely isolated and no sign of his supporters taking to the streets, the violence many feared across the nation has so far not broken out.

Megawati takes control amid optimism, calm

Jakarta remains quiet, financial markets continue to soar

Many obstacles ahead of you, Singapore tells new President

Jakarta, July 24: Seizing the reins of power once held by her father, Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri began her first full day in office on Tuesday. But the presidential palace is still occupied by Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, the ousted leader who's refusing to leave.

Major Indonesian cities, including the capital of Jakarta, were calm on Tuesday and financial markets continued to soar on news of the change in leadership in the world's fourth-most populous country.

"We have high hopes for Megawati," said Sugeng Sugito, a 42-year-old bus conductor. "She does not have much experience but we hope she will be good."

The legislature on Monday voted unanimously to sack Mr Wahid and elect Ms Megawati, the 54-year-old daughter of founding President Sukarno.

Mr Wahid had repeatedly warned that his ouster would trigger violent protests and the immediate secession of six restive provinces, but that has not happened.

Nor has there been any major public jubilation for Ms Megawati, who served as Mr Wahid's vice-president and is considered Indonesia's most popular politician because of her party's first place showing in the nation's first free elections in 1999.

Despite her popularity, there is widespread concern about Ms Megawati's leadership mettle and her close ties to the military, which has a history of human rights abuses, corruption and interference in politics.

Ms Megawati earned praise for standing up to former dictator Suharto in the mid-1990s, but some believe her rise reflects more of an elite power struggle than a commitment to the common good.

"I am hoping that the Megawati forces will come to their senses and realise that this is not simply about power, but also about how to make a difference," said Andi Mal-larangeng, a political analyst in Jakarta.

Indonesia's major political players, including the military, supported Ms Megawati's ascension to the presidency. The National Assembly voted her in with a 591-0 vote, although the proceedings were boycotted by about 100 pro-Wahid legislators.

Mr Wahid, a nearly blind Muslim cleric who has suffered two strokes, remained holed up in the presidential palace on Tuesday, and no one knew if and when he would leave.

"Wahid will not leave the palace," said his spokesman, Adhi Massardi. He said Ms Megawati had sent an envoy to Mr Wahid late on Monday asking for a meeting between the two. Mr Amien Rais, the National Assembly speaker who orchestrated Mr Wahid's impeachment on corruption and incompetence charges, said Mr Wahid should be persuaded, not forced, to vacate the palace. Mr Akbar Tandjung, the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, also said he would like to avoid force "but if he stays there we can ask the police to remove him."

Mr Wahid has made no public statement since his ouster on Monday afternoon. (AP)



POWER SMILE: Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri greets Jakarta police chief Sofyan Jacob (right) as controversial national police chief General Surojo Bimantoro (centre) looks on at the vice-presidential palace in Jakarta on Tuesday. Ms Megawati started her first day in office with the sensitive task of trying to coax her predecessor, Abdurrahman Wahid, to leave the presidential palace. (Reuters)

'Megawati will be on a short lease'

By JONATHAN THATCHER

Jakarta, July 24: Indonesia's new President, better known for her silence than political incisiveness, is likely to get a brief honeymoon from legislators who hoisted her to power just two years after snatching it from her. Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri takes over the giant Asian country after four years of punishing turmoil that has pushed its population deeper into poverty, terrified its mostly wealthier neighbours and proved too much for the three previous Presidents. The list of tasks is daunting from soothing warring provinces to mending a broken economy and there is little in her past to suggest she is up to the job.

Her habitual silence has left many wondering whether she may simply lack ability and during her vice-presidency she was frequently criticised for failing to speak out on major issues. But for others, her measured style after two garrulous and ineffective leaders offers some yearned-for predictability.

Ms Megawati also commands popularity among the masses and for some this is as important as anything and offers a welcome change. "I believe Indonesia can be better because what we need now is not a genius, but someone who can lead a team by utilising the potential of others, someone who will listen to the advice of others," University of Indonesia political analyst Maswadi Rauf said. "Those qualities are more apparent in Megawati." In 1999, she looked certain to win the country's first democratic election only to see Mr Abdurrahman Wahid push past her.

The coalition which backed Mr Wahid and was dominated by Muslims, opposed her on the grounds that the world's largest Muslim nation should not have a woman at its head. (Reuters)

Megawati faces gruelling first day as President

By DEAN YATES

Jakarta, July 24: Indonesia's new President Megawati Sukarnoputri started her first full day in office on Tuesday faced with the sensitive task of trying to coax her predecessor and erstwhile friend from the presidential palace.

Ms Megawati, the daughter of founding President Sukarno, is also expected to name a Cabinet within several days to start tackling the political and economic woes that have made Indonesia one of Asia's most unstable and ungovernable states.

Foreign leaders, especially of Jakarta's anxious neighbours, have

welcomed Ms Megawati's accession from vice president and also praised the peaceful transition in the world's fourth most populous nation, more used to bloodshed when changing leaders.

Indonesia's 210 million people have also breathed a sigh of relief that the violence many feared would accompany Mr Wahid's fall 21 chaotic months into his five-year term has failed to erupt.

Jakarta was quiet early on Tuesday. So too was Mr Wahid's heartland in East Java, where some of his supporters have pledged to die for him but where Islamic leaders have urged calm.

Some 100-200 Wahid supporters



OUT OF FAVOUR: An employee at a government building removes a portrait of former Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid in Jakarta on Tuesday. (Reuters)

from East Java camped out at a mosque near the palace overnight but said they wanted no trouble.

"We just want to express support for Wahid and show that many Indonesians still want him as the President," Taufikurrahman, from the volatile East Java town of Pasuruan, said.

A big question mark hangs over Ms Megawati's abilities and of those who will form her team. Although she is adored by the impoverished masses and her party won the most votes in a 1999 election for Parliament, she is still well short of a majority.

And in the space of four years, Indonesia has gone from being a

regional heavyweight and economic success story to the east Asian country analysts fret about most after North Korea.

The Asian economic crisis in late 1997 savaged Indonesia's economy, helping uncork forces that led to the bloody downfall of Mr Suharto the following year and setting the stage for the political chaos that has endured ever since.

It is also not clear how Ms Megawati will remove Mr Wahid from the palace, even though he has no military or police support to stay. Politicians such as Mr Amien Rais, speaker of the Supreme People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and Mr Wahid's most

Singapore, July 24: Singapore officially welcomed Megawati Sukarnoputri as Indonesia's new President but warned that the country faced a tough road after former leader Abdurrahman Wahid's erratic rule.

"You have a difficult job ahead of you. There are no quick or easy solutions," Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said in a statement extending his "warmest congratulations" to Ms Megawati.

"But Indonesia must begin the process of national reconciliation and pull itself out of the prolonged crisis."

President S.R. Nathan sent a similar message and the *Straits Times* newspaper on Tuesday devoted at least six pages to the change at Indonesia's helm. A front page commentary in the *Business Times* echoed official concern that Indonesia's economy required immediate help as neither Ms Megawati nor Indonesia could "afford another round of political bloodletting."

"Indonesia needs urgently to close the rifts that the protracted political conflict opened up and to restore credibility and trust in its public institutions," the paper said. (Reuters)

Wahid may leave palace by weekend

Jakarta, July 24: Ousted Indonesian leader Abdurrahman Wahid will hopefully leave the presidential palace this week but is unlikely to be forcibly evicted, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Asked by reporters when Mr Wahid would go, Mr Bambang Kesowo, a top aide to new President Megawati Sukarnoputri, said:

"Probably this week, hopefully. We will try gradually (to get Wahid to leave) as everything cools down, that's more pleasant, isn't it?"

Mr Wahid's refusal to leave the palace after being dumped from power on Monday by the top assembly has added a further twist to a months-long drama over his erratic leadership.

Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri, apparently keen to avoid confrontation, has been holding meetings in the vice-presidential office. (Reuters)

ardent political enemy, have indicated the ailing 60-year-old Muslim cleric would be persuaded, not forced, to leave.

Indonesia's financial markets greeted the prospect of Mr Wahid's downfall with glee on Monday with the rupiah and the stock market both staging hefty gains.

But a sustained recovery in both will need a credible economic team and clear policies from a woman more famous for her reticence and silence than her grasp of governance.

She is expected to draft in some respected faces to key economic posts. (Reuters)

The Indonesian President, Ms. Megawati (freedom) to a cheering crowd of supporters at a campaign rally for the 1999 parliamentary elections in Bogor, south of Jakarta, in this May 24, 1999 photo.

Jockeying on for key posts

JAKARTA, JULY 24. Indonesia's political and military elites jockeyed on Tuesday for the Vice-President's position and Cabinet posts in the new government of Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, with groups closely associated with the former dictator, Suharto, expected to benefit from their past support for her.

Meanwhile, the former head of state, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, remained holed up in the presidential palace, a day after the National Assembly sacked him and elected Ms. Megawati to succeed him.

Palace guards were withdrawn and his official limousine taken away. The nearly blind, 61-year-old leader was seen being driven around the palace grounds in a private car.

Scores of anti-riot policemen carrying sticks and plastic shields stood outside the palace gates as curious onlookers gathered around the ornate, white-columned mansion.

"He (Mr. Wahid) feels that he is still president of Indonesia, legally and morally," said Mr. Wahid's spokesman.

But power had unmistakably shifted to Ms. Megawati, as party leaders, generals and other politicians filed through her downtown office congratulating her and discussing appointments to the new administration.

The National Assembly Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais, announced

that a new Vice-President would be elected on Wednesday.

"I am going to be a (vice presidential) candidate for my faction," said Mr. Akbar Tandjung, head of the Golkar Party — Suharto's former political machine.

Officials said that the other main candidates were Mr. Hamzah Haz, leader of a Muslim Party who was sacked from Mr. Wahid's first Cabinet on suspicion of corruption, and Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, a retired four-star general and former security minister.

Ms. Megawati remained characteristically tightlipped about the prospects that the powerful number two job in her administration might be taken up by a member of Suharto's former inner circle.

Suharto ruled Indonesia with an iron fist for 32 years after deposing Ms. Megawati's father, founding President Sukarno, in 1967. Though Ms. Megawati earned respect for standing up to Suharto in the mid-1990s, today she maintains close ties to the former dictator's loyalists.

"Megawati has no preferences about who becomes Vice-President," said Mr. Rais after emerging from talks with her.

Her Cabinet is scheduled to be announced within days and is expected to reflect the composition of the coalition that propelled her to power, including Golkar, Mr. Hamzah Haz's United Develop-

ment Party, and the armed forces, which have a long tradition of interfering in politics.

Ms. Megawati's immediate priority will likely be to deal with Indonesia's moribund economy. Because she is largely untested as a leader and she has never outlined a policy agenda, it was hard to know exactly what Megawati will do.

Still, the financial and stock markets welcomed the close of Mr. Wahid's turbulent and rudderless administration. The rupiah currency surged 10 per cent on the news of his ouster. On Tuesday, it rose another 3.3 per cent.

Many fear that Ms. Megawati's close association with both her father's nationalist legacy and the military will translate into a hardline stance on her greatest challenge: holding together the vast Southeast Asian nation of 210 million people.

Human rights activists warned on Tuesday that the new President was likely to give a free hand to her military allies to use repression to crush pro-independence movements in Aceh and Irian Jaya provinces.

Mr. Wahid had tried to deal with the separatists through negotiations, but the armed forces, which have been accused of gross human rights abuses, have long pushed for a free rein to deal with the problem in their own way. — AP

ONE EYED STRATEGY

Wahid sealed his own fate 5/6

ABDURRAHMAN Wahid had tried everything to stop the House of representatives (DPR) from voting his impeachment by the people's consultative assembly (MPR). His failure to respond to the first censure motion against him opened up a rift with his vice-president, the more popular Megawati Sukarnoputri, who asked her party to vote the second censure against Wahid. On 17 May, the secretary of the National Awakening Party asked Sukarnoputri to resign because of her support for a special impeachment session. At one of the last meetings that Wahid had with his vice-president, he threatened civil emergency, falling just short of martial law, and also "legal action against certain individuals". With the result that when the DPR did meet to for a special impeachment session, the motion was backed by the three largest parties, including Sukarnoputri's PDI-P. Meanwhile, Wahid replaced his powerful minister for security with someone said to be more acceptable to Sukarnoputri, but in the prevailing atmosphere the move attracted the strong suspicion that Wahid was looking for someone who could back him on the declaration of an emergency. He asked his police chief to resign, the latter refused to do so unless ordered by parliament, which is not really correct behaviour, since the police is answerable to the executive. It was a clear indication that the security forces were having second thoughts about taking orders from this president.

By 2 July, Wahid had burnt his boats with parliament, accused his opponents of treason, said he would not appear before the special impeachment session, acknowledging at the same time that he could be toppled. His own party has barely 50 seats in the DPR. That left him with the theoretical option of dissolving parliament and declaring a state of emergency, theoretical, because it was obvious to everyone that neither the army, nor the police were willing to go along with the move. Wahid has brought about his downfall not only through his incompetence — he has done almost nothing to stabilise the economy — but also through his arrogant refusal to respond to parliament's legitimate concerns and clear his own name. His point was that the president should not be answerable to the DPR, which was very short-sighted on his part. He had spoken about seeking a ruling from the Supreme Court but on 28 June, just two days before the DPR voted in favour of a special impeachment session, his attorney general cleared him of all charges, a move that the MPs could legitimately interpret as blatantly political. By then, the writing on the wall was large enough to be read with the one good eye Wahid has. He should have stepped down, instead of being thrown out ignominiously.

Indonesian soldiers lounge around outside a razor wire barricade near the presidential palace in Jakarta on Monday.

New President promptly disbands Wahid team

To name new Cabinet in the next few days

Jakarta, July 23: New Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri on Monday said she would name her Cabinet within several days.

She also said in a brief statement to reporters she had disbanded the cabinet of ousted President Abdurrahman Wahid and those ministers could no longer take decisions.

Ms Megawati was sworn in a few hours earlier as the country's fourth President in as many turbulent years after the country's top assembly sacked Mr Wahid for incompetence.

She did not give any further details and did not take questions.

Mr Wahid has not commented since his ouster, but his aides said before the assembly vote he would not accept impeachment.

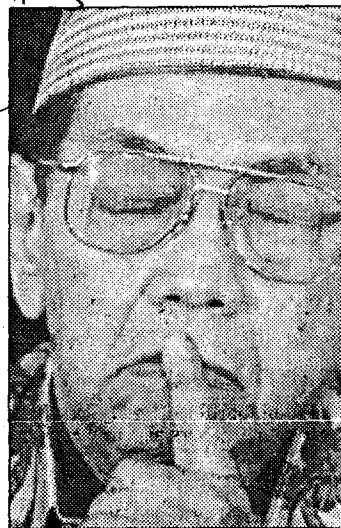
Indonesia's newly appointed

President Megawati Sukarnoputri, the nation's fourth leader in as many turbulent years, on Monday appealed to Indonesians to put their differences aside and build a great nation. In a prepared, seven-minute speech after taking the oath of office before the top assembly, Ms Megawati did not refer to President Abdurrahman Wahid, who was dumped less than an hour earlier after a chaotic 21-month rule.

But she appealed to all sides to accept the assembly's decision to appoint her leader, following her father, founding President Sukarno, into the palace.

"I call on all parties to accept this democratic process with sincerity... this is the voice of the people which we must uphold," she said.

(Reuters)



BROODING: Impeached President Abdurrahman Wahid in deep thought before declaring an emergency and attempting to dissolve Parliament in Jakarta on Sunday. (Reuters)

Ousted leader in shock, accepts the inevitable

Jakarta, July 23: Indonesia's Abdurrahman Wahid on Monday sadly accepted the inevitable that he had been dumped as President but was in a state of shock, a confidant and adviser said.

"There is, of course, a rather sombre mood (in the palace)," Mr Wahid biographer and Australian academic Greg Barton told ABC television in Australia.

"It's a sad acceptance of what now appears to be inevitable. I think for the President most of all, it's come as a shock and he's having trouble dealing with it."

Mr Wahid was replaced by his estranged vice-president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the country's founding leader, who was sworn in as the fourth President in as many turbulent

years. The supreme People's Consultative Assembly dumped Mr Wahid for incompetence just hours after he declared a state of emergency and tried to dissolve the legislature in a desperate bid to hold on to power.

"We may get a response from (Wahid) as early as tonight but my feeling is it's going to take him a day or two to really come to terms with (the assembly's decision to dump him)," Mr Barton said.

"I think when he's faced with the real possibility of people being on the street, and possible violence, he's going to urge his supporters to not take to the streets and not risk violence. "He's in a state of shock, I think, but I don't think today's proceedings surprised him at all," Mr Barton added. (Reuters)



FINALLY TRIUMPHANT: President Megawati Sukarnoputri gets ready to make her first speech to Parliament as President in Jakarta on Monday. The special Assembly session impeached Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, who attempted to suspend the session by presidential decree, and installed his deputy in the top post. (AP)

Revenge is sweet for Sukarno's daughter

Jakarta, July 23: Megawati Sukarnoputri, who became Indonesia's fifth President on Monday after her one-time childhood friend Abdurrahman Wahid was ignominiously ousted by Parliament, is seen as a popular but untested Conservative.

It was sweet revenge for 54-year-old Ms Megawati, who in 1999 saw presidency of the world's largest Muslim-populated nation snatched from her because she was a woman.

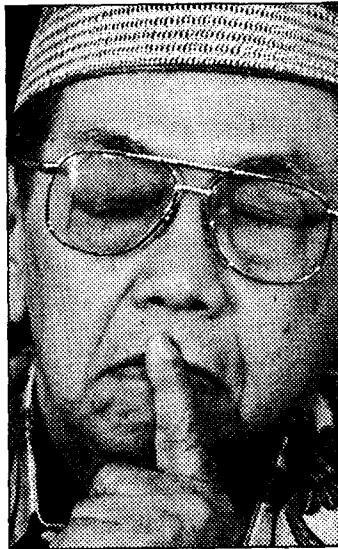
Then she burst into tears, robbed of the country's top job despite her party's election victory because of the objections of a coalition of Muslim parties, which on Monday did a U-turn to back her unanimously. The National Assembly based the legitimacy of the transfer of power in part on Indonesia's sketchy constitution, and in part on a hastily-sought Supreme Court opinion.

But that the eldest daughter of Indonesia's founding President Sukarno has democratic credentials to take the helm of the world's fifth most populous country, is unquestioned.

Her Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle, at the forefront of efforts to oust Mr Wahid, won the 1999 elections with a resounding 34 per cent of the vote, and holds the largest number of seats in Parliament.

But despite the grass-roots adulation she won and retains by challenging former strongman Mr Suharto in the last decade of his 32-year autocratic rule, "Mega," as she is affectionately known, has never really been politically tested. (AFP)

House kicks out Wahid, welcomes Megawati



Abdurrahman Wahid ponders before declaring emergency in Jakarta. (AFP)

Jakarta, July 23 (Reuters): Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid was kicked out of office today and his deputy Megawati Sukarnoputri sworn in after lawmakers finally lost patience with his erratic rule.

The decision by the country's top legislature came after it rejected Wahid's declaration of a state of emergency earlier in the day and the half-blind cleric refused to stand down just 21 months into his five-year term.

"(The MPR) states that Abdurrahman Wahid is removed from the presidency before his term ends because he clearly violated the state guidelines ... and therefore Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri is appointed as the President of the republic of Indonesia," assembly speaker Amien Rais said.

She was sworn in moments later, vowing to do her best for the

country. The big question mark remained whether Wahid, the country's first democratically elected President, would go quietly or would have to be forced from the presidential palace.

A confidant and adviser to Wahid said he sadly accepted the inevitable — that he had been dumped as President — but was in a state of shock.

Wahid biographer and Australian academic Greg Barton told ABC television in Australia of "a rather sombre mood" at the palace. "It's a sad acceptance of what now appears to be inevitable. I think for the President most of all, it's come as a shock and he's having trouble dealing with it."

Wahid had long refused to cooperate with the top People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and efforts to call him to appear to account for his rule. Wahid, 60, led the country's largest Muslim

movement, the Nadhatul Ulama, for 15 years before rising to power in 1999. The NU, said to number 40 million members, also has a large number of fanatical Wahid supporters.

With several hundred supporters rallying outside the presidential palace, a spokesman for the embattled Muslim cleric earlier likened his stand to a jihad, or Islamic holy war, to save the world's fourth most populous nation from collapse.

But the capital Jakarta, where security forces guarded parliament and other potential flashpoints, was calm — as was Wahid's East Java stronghold, home to diehard supporters who have pledged to lay down their lives for him.

"The President considers the decree he issued as a jihad to save the state," Wahid's spokesman, Yahya Staquf, told reporters be-

fore the vote. "Yes, he'll stay," he said, announcing then that Wahid would not stand down.

Call for peace

With a showdown with Wahid a possibility, Asian neighbours, Australia, the United States and the European Union were quick to call for a peaceful resolution. Megawati echoed that call.

After taking the oath of office, she read a seven-minute speech urging all sides to accept her election. "I call on all parties to accept this democratic process... this is the voice of the people which we must uphold," she said, dressed in a traditional white blouse and a batik sarong.

"Let us build our country together... let us erase all the fights among us which have only deepened the sorrow of the people."

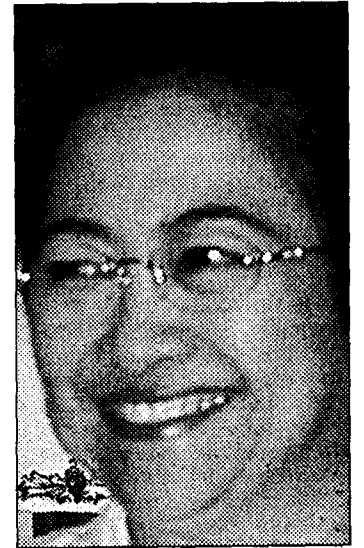
Indonesia has been plagued by heightened separatist, ethnic and

communal violence since the fall of former President Suharto. Bombs rocked two Jakarta churches yesterday, injuring at least 64 people.

Wahid has been blamed for failing to solve many of the social and economic problems that beset the country but it remains to be seen whether the popular Megawati, daughter of founding President Sukarno, will have the ability and strength to pull the country out of chaos.

She heads the country's largest political party, the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) and has tried to stay above the political fray, refraining from public comment as the crisis unfolded.

But her characteristic silence has led to questions over what her policies are for rescuing the country. The European Union's executive body urged all parties and security forces to remain calm.



Megawati Sukarnoputri after being sworn in as the new President in Jakarta. (AFP)

Daughter retains the Sukarno shine

Jakarta, July 23 (Reuters): Indonesia's taciturn new leader Megawati Sukarnoputri today followed her father's footsteps into Jakarta's presidential palace more by default than design, after the top assembly sacked her boss.

Ambitious, she has long coveted the top job but her rise to power is largely the result of Wahid's own erratic bumbling and manoeuvring by his enemies.

Many of Wahid's current foes are the same people who engineered his surprise win in October, 1998.

"She doesn't need to be that good, anything is better than Gus Dur (Wahid)," said one politician close to Megawati.

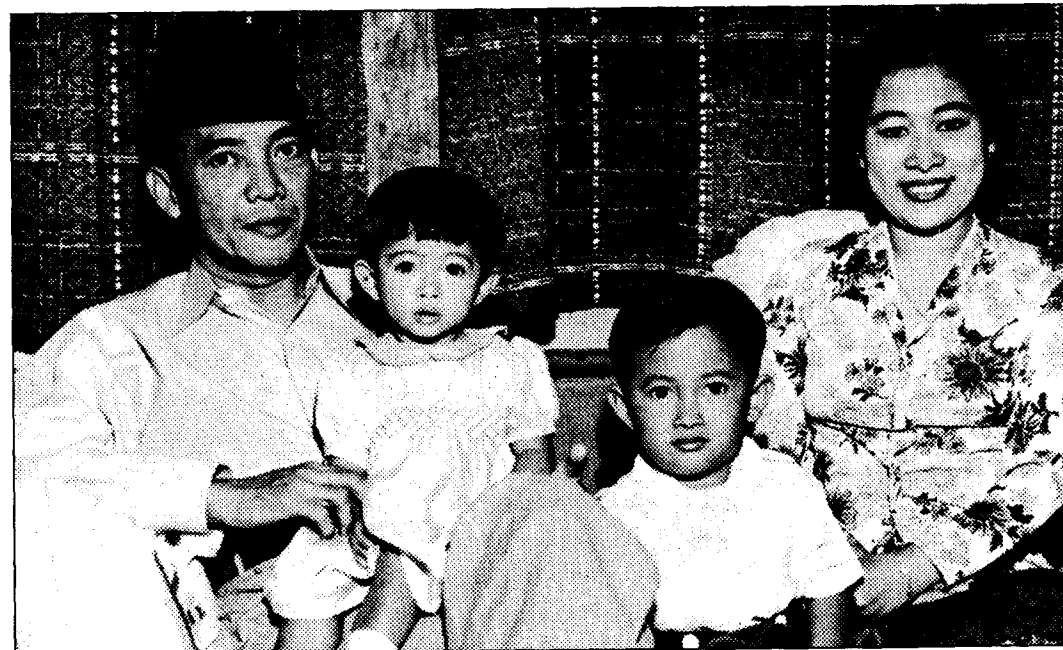
"It will all depend on her cabinet team, the people she has around her."

As vice-president, Megawati, 54, automatically took over from her former friend after he was dumped by the top legislature over his chaotic rule.

While her political skills, or lack of them, are an issue of hot debate, Megawati is hugely popular among ordinary Indonesians: the urban poor, the unemployed, students and low-paid workers.

Importantly, she is also liked by many of Wahid's own passionate supporters, especially in their shared heartland of East Java on Indonesia's main island.

Megawati leads parliament's largest party, the Indonesian De-



A file picture of Achmed Sukarno posing with his his wife (extreme right), their son Guntur and daughter Megawati (second from left) at their home shortly after Sukarno was elected President. (AFP)

mocratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P). Major Muslim parties and organisations — except Wahid's Nahdlatul Ulama — have now thrown their support behind her.

But PDI-P does not have a majority in parliament or the top legislature, the People's Consultative Assembly, which elects the president.

Like Wahid, Megawati must rely on an inherently unstable alliance of forces to remain in power. And like Wahid, she will

have to pay for this support by handing out powerful positions.

Throughout the crisis which has crippled the country since before the start of the year, Megawati, who became an unlikely icon of democracy in the dying days of the autocratic Suharto regime, has remained typically silent.

Once close to Wahid, the pair have been ever more estranged since he pipped her at the post at the presidential election and

snatched away what her friends say she believes is her rightful legacy.

Megawati's ability to lead the world's fourth most populous nation is unknown. Her silence is variously interpreted as wily political cunning, or as a sign of her inadequacies.

Ironically Suharto, the man who pushed her own father from power in the mid-1960s, helped propel her into the unlikely role of icon for the masses by clumsi-

ly trying to crush her political following in 1995 and 1996. He was ousted in 1998.

The popularity of the Sukarno name, and her own stubborn resistance to Suharto's autocratic regime, mobilised millions in her support.

It was enough to give PDI-P a substantial victory in 1999 parliamentary elections and make her an apparent shoo-in for the presidency until she stumbled at the last.

After a childhood in Jakarta's presidential palace, Megawati and her family found themselves living in modest surroundings after her father, the independent nation's first leader, was ousted after 17 years in power in 1966.

Sukarno died under virtual house arrest in 1970 and was buried with little ceremony in a pauper's grave next to his mother. He is still popular and tapes of his rousing speeches, as well as portraits and other memorabilia, remain popular in stalls and shops across the nation.

It is said Sukarno's children once pledged never to become involved in politics. But this changed in the 1980s when Megawati, her flamboyant choreographer brother and younger sister all joined the Indonesian Democratic Party as "vote getters". Sukarno remains a popular figure with Indonesians, many of whom lack first-hand knowledge of his dalliances with communism and an era of economic chaos.

Sad Gus Dur in state of shock

Jakarta, July 23 (Reuters): Indonesia's Abdurrahman Wahid today sadly accepted the inevitable — that he had been dumped as President — but was in a state of shock, a confidant and adviser said.

"There is, of course, a rather sombre mood (in the palace)," Wahid biographer and Australian academic Greg Barton told ABC television in Australia.

"It's a sad acceptance of what now appears to be inevitable. I think for the President most of all, it's come as a shock and he's having trouble dealing with it."

Wahid was replaced by his estranged vice-president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the country's founding leader, who was sworn in as the fourth President in as many turbulent years.

The supreme People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) dumped Wahid for incompetence just hours after he declared a state of emergency and tried to dissolve the legislature in a desperate bid to hold on to power.

"We may get a response from (Wahid) as early as tonight but my feeling is it's going to take him a day or two to really come to terms with (the assembly's decision to dump him)," Barton said.

"I think when he's faced with the real possibility of people being on the street, and possible violence, he's going to urge his supporters and anyone else who has sympathies towards him to not take to the streets and not risk violence.

"He's in a state of shock, I think, but I don't think today's proceedings surprised him at all." Barton said it was clear the MPR had authority over the President "for better or for worse".

"This exposes of course the shortcomings of the constitution, it's well set up for authoritarian government, not so well set up for democracy." After taking the oath of office, Megawati read a seven-minute speech urging all sides to accept her election. "I call on all parties to accept this democratic process... this is the voice of the people which we must uphold," she said. But it was unclear how Wahid would leave the palace. His aides have said he will refuse to stand aside.

Earlier, Wahid laughed and joked over a lunch of soybeans and fruit as the top assembly moved ever closer to dumping him. "Wahid is resting," spokesman Yahya Staquf told reporters as the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) debated the Muslim cleric's fate. "At lunch, Wahid laughed and joked. Lunch was normal." The 60-year-old Wahid has suffered two strokes and is half blind and normally dines on a special menu of mainly soybeans and some fruit prepared by the staff canteen at the palace, where he gets around in an electric golf cart.

Wahid ousted, Megawati President

JAKARTA POST
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JAKARTA, July 23. — The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) unanimously voted to dismiss Mr Abdurrahman Wahid as President and appoint Vice-President Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri as his successor.

All 591 MPR members registered for the session rejected Mr Wahid's accountability and voted to appoint Ms Sukarnoputri to replace the President.

With the completion of the vote, Ms Sukarnoputri was officially declared the country's fifth President.

The vote was held in the absence of two MPR factions — the National Awakening Party

(PKB) and the National Brotherhood Democratic Party (PDKB) — which announced at Saturday's opening of the Assembly's special session that they would not attend the political event.

Just after securing the unanimous support of MPR's registered members, Ms Sukarnoputri was officially installed as President to replace Mr Wahid.

Ms Sukarnoputri took her oath as the country's fifth President.

She then gave her inaugural address to the MPR legislators, expressing her gratitude for her appointment.

Before the new President delivered her speech, MPR secretary-general Mr Umar Basalim read Assembly Decree No. 3/MPR/2001 which made offi-

cial Ms Sukarnoputri's appointment as President.

Mr Basalim also announced the revocation of two MPR decrees — No. 7/MPR/1999 on the installation of Mr Wahid as President and No. 8/MPR/1999 on the installation of Ms Sukarnoputri as Vice-President.

He also announced that the MPR had agreed to allow Ms Sukarnoputri to complete Mr Wahid's term to 2004.

As the announcement was being made of Ms Sukarnoputri's installation as President, bouquets were sent to her official house on Jl Teuku Umar in Central Jakarta and her personal house in Kebagusan sub-district, Pasar Minggu, South Jakarta, Antara reported.

Singaporean ambassador to Indonesia, Mr Edward Lee, became the first foreign envoy to visit Ms Sukarnoputri today.

Mr Lee arrived at the new President's house around 7 p.m. to congratulate her on her appointment and to extend greetings from Singaporean Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong.

Shortly after, Ms Sukarnoputri suspended the Persatuan National Cabinet formed by sacked President Mr Wahid and promised to form a new Cabinet in a few days.

The decision will become effective from tomorrow.

On page 5:
■ A story of lust for power, Photograph

INDONESIA / EMERGENCY DECREE DECLARED VOID

Parliament votes out Wahid

MD-19
29/7

By Amit Baruah

HANOI, JULY 23. Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri took over as the fifth President of Indonesia after the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) unanimously voted today to oust Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid from the country's top job.

The 54-year-old daughter of Indonesia's first President, Sukarno, Ms. Megawati is the first woman to become the President of this archipelagic nation of 220 million people. At the end of a day-long session, which proceeded peacefully, the Upper House of Indonesia's Parliament voted to revoke the mandate given to Mr. Wahid in October 1999 and then proceeded to appoint Ms. Megawati as the new President in his place.

Ms. Megawati, who took the oath of office in front of hundreds of MPR members in Jakarta this evening, will now have to deal with the fallout of Mr. Wahid refusing to "step aside". Her party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), is the largest faction in Parliament. However, as expected, the declaration of a "state of emergency" by Mr. Wahid last night had little effect, but to advance the MPR session by one hour this morning. His "emergency decree" was also deemed illegal by the Supreme Court, a ruling Mr. Wahid has contested on technical grounds.

The ousted President, a scholar and intellectual, was voted out in tragic circumstances — refusing to quit even under the most adverse of circumstances — lacking in support from the very State structure he presided over. His last few television appearances were pitiable, a weak, blind man, talking tough to his audience, but probably aware that his words were having little effect. While Indonesian markets have hit the highest in 10 months, the state of the nation hardly inspires confidence given the separatist troubles in three major provinces of the Republic.

In her acceptance speech in the MPR, the new President acknowledged the difficulties



Abdurrahman Wahid

that she would have to face. Declaring her allegiance to the 1945 Constitution, Ms. Megawati said she would dedicate herself to the task of nation-building. "I am very conscious that the work ahead of me will not be easy," Ms. Megawati stated. There is a need, she said, to come out quickly from the crisis facing the country. The new President also acknowledged that there was a sense of tiredness in the country. "I understand that goodwill is not enough to resolve Indonesia's problems," she said, calling upon all sections to accept the democratic process in the country. Here, it would appear, Ms. Megawati was calling upon Mr. Wahid, his political faction and the Nadhlatul Ulama (the former President's power base) to accept the decisions taken by the MPR today.

Addressing "all the people of Indonesia", in a speech that was carried live on television, a

confident-sounding Ms. Megawati, reading from a prepared text, said everyone should look forward to the construction of a united Indonesia. The military, the police, the legislature and the judiciary have all backed Ms. Megawati to the hilt as a mercurial Mr. Wahid squandered the goodwill that he had after taking over as President in October 1999 — the first exercise of the ballot by the Indonesian people in 50 years. His inability to deal with the legacy of General Suharto, the inability of the State apparatus to bring the former dictator and his family to account and a general failure to address the pressing economic problems of the people led to a demand for change in the country.

However, it must be said for the record that Suharto's men continue to dominate the State structure in the country despite being "out of power" and Ms. Megawati may encounter some of the same problems that Mr. Wahid failed to resolve. The case of Mr. Tommy Suharto, the youngest son of the former dictator, perhaps sums the Indonesian crisis the best. Convicted by a court, Tommy remains at large in Indonesia with the police making only proforma efforts to track down the "absconder". In a typical demonstration of Mr. Wahid's bizarre ways, just before Tommy vanished into the blue, he had a "meeting" with Mr. Suharto's youngest son, raising the hackles of the democratically-minded in Indonesia.

In spite of all his idiosyncrasies, the "soft touch" approach of Mr. Wahid to complex issues in Aceh and Irian Jaya did find appreciation. His sacking of Gen. Wiranto, the powerful military chief, was greeted with tremendous approval. As Ms. Megawati enters Mr. Wahid's shoes, there is every likelihood that Indonesia will move from a "soft touch" to a "hard-handed" approach. The new President is known to be close to the military and is likely to allow them a much greater say in addressing the separatist problems in Aceh and Irian Jaya.

Wahid declares emergency

JAKARTA, July 22. ^{23/7} In Indonesia's embattled President, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, tonight declared a state of emergency, assuming wideranging powers just hours before an impeachment hearing that was expected to dump him. Mr Wahid said in a brief nationally-televised address that his emergency decree would dissolve the top Assembly seeking to impeach him, adding he had ordered police to prevent the impeachment hearing due to start within hours.

An aide said fresh elections would be held within a year and that the activities of the second largest party, former President Suharto's Golkar, would be frozen.

— Reuters

(Earlier report on page 5)

Lawmakers back Megawati for President post

5/2/00
Indonesia

JAKARTA (INDONESIA), JULY 22. A dangerous constitutional stand-off gripped Indonesia on Sunday when two bombs rocked the capital and lawmakers, set on ousting the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, rallied behind his deputy and main rival, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri.

About 40 military tanks and an infantry battalion were deployed in a park adjacent to the presidential palace. Lt. Gen. Ryamizard Ryacudu, the commander of the army's elite Strategic Reserve, said the show of force was part of a security operation and was not designed to intimidate Mr. Wahid, whose reformist policies have angered top generals. Dozens of armoured vehicles remained stationed at the heavily guarded Parliament. Legislators were pressing ahead with impeachment proceedings against Mr. Wahid, even though he says he will defy a summons to appear before the National Assembly when it reconvenes on Monday. Mr. Wahid, who has denied charges of corruption and incompetence, also has threatened to declare a state of emergency.

Blasts in churches

Two explosions rocked two churches in an east Jakarta suburb on Sunday morning. Church officials said 72 worshippers were injured in one blast at the Santa Anna Roman Catholic Church where Mass was being celebrated before a congregation of 800. The Health Ministry said 64 people had been treated in five hospitals. A few minutes later, a bomb exploded in an unattended minibus outside a nearby Protestant church.

Mr. Wahid said the explosives used had been traced to an army warehouse and that he had ordered the military to investigate.

Meanwhile, the leaders of most political parties in the 695-member Assembly met Ms Megawati at her south Jakarta



Onlookers gather near the wreckage of a bus that was damaged in an explosion outside a church in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sunday. — AP

home on Sunday and later announced they were backing her bid to take power. "We all have agreed to give her moral support in her quest to lead a new Government," said Mr. Amien Rais, Chairman of the Assembly. "Only by doing this can we make the nation stable once more and regain the people's confidence."

Mr. Rais predicted that a change of leadership could take place as early as Tuesday. "I think Wahid's political time will only be a matter of hours," he said. Ms Megawati, who rarely speaks to reporters, made no comment.

No one has claimed responsibility for Sunday's bombings that happened less than 24 hours after Mr. Wahid warned that the attempt to push him from power could trigger bloody unrest. Police blamed the bombs on unidentified forces wanting to disrupt the impeachment process against Mr. Wahid, a Muslim cleric who has long preached tolerance toward Indonesia's Christian minority, which has been targeted during past political turmoil.

Mr. Adhi Massardi, a presidential spokesman, said the

church bombings might be linked to the fact that a small Christian party on Saturday joined Mr. Wahid's party in opposing an otherwise overwhelming vote to launch the impeachment proceedings. Army generals opposed to Mr. Wahid's reforms have been linked with Muslim extremists who have fought Christians in eastern Maluku province. A special forces sergeant arrested after a bombing in September, mysteriously disappeared from an army stockade last week.

Despite Mr. Wahid's protestations that the Assembly has no right to bring him down, Mr. Rais said the body had supreme constitutional power to fire the head of state. Mr. Rais, one of Mr. Wahid's harshest critics, said that once dismissed, Mr. Wahid would be allowed to stay on at Jakarta's state palace for a short time. However, he said that Mr. Wahid might face prosecution if he refused to accept the Assembly's ruling.

"After a few weeks, if he insists on living at the palace, we cannot tolerate him any longer," Mr. Rais said. "I believe the police will arrest him." — AP

Wahid warns of a backlash if impeached

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JULY 21 The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, warned of a possible backlash by his supporters as the plenary session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) voted overwhelmingly to summon the President on Monday.

Some 600 members of the 700-strong Upper House of Parliament or MPR attended today's meeting, which was presided over by the Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais. The President said he would not attend the "illegal" session. If, as is very likely, Mr. Wahid boycotts the MPR session, then the MPR will then proceed to impeach him and then appoint the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, in his place.

"If they (go ahead with the impeachment move), don't blame me if the crowd takes care of everything by themselves," Mr. Wahid told a press conference today. Almost in the same breath, the President said: "I am a follower of Mahatma Gandhi." (Mr. Wahid is a known supporter of the Mahatma and a solid friend of India). The President refused to give a direct response when asked if he would go ahead with threats to impose a state of emergency. "I have many options. I won't tell what I will do. But I will do something," Mr. Wahid, who seems to be fast running out of options, said.

In a related development, the President's political faction, the National Awakening Party (PKB) warned that it would resort to civil disobedience if the MPR went ahead and elected a new President. "We will not recognise a new Government elected illegally and we will call for civil disobedience by asking people not to pay their taxes and return their ID (identity) cards," Mr. Effendi Choirie, a PKB official, was quoted as saying. "Indonesia is in a very bad condition and the (MPR) decision shows that common sense and conscience no longer reign..." he added.

At today's plenary session, which was boycotted by the PKB, an overwhelming number of MPR members, cutting across political factions, voted to call Mr. Wahid to appear before them



The Chairman of the National Assembly, Mr. Amien Rais, bangs the gavel during the plenary meeting of the highest legislative body, the MPR, at the Parliament building in Jakarta on Saturday. At left is his Deputy, Mr. Husnie Thamarin. — AFP

on Monday. All the major political factions, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), the Golkar Party, the United Development Party (PPP), Reform Faction and the Crescent Star Party (PBB) put up a united face in the MPR. As was to be expected, the Indonesian military/police faction in the MPR also joined their colleagues in deciding to advance the MPR session from August 31 and call the President to deliver his "accountability" speech on Monday.

The military/police faction argued that the appointment of Gen. Chaeruddin Ismail as "acting police chief" by Mr. Wahid yesterday had created divisions within the police force as

it was "highly loaded with political interests". ".....therefore the TNI/Polri (military/police) faction leave the matter in the hands of the Assembly, that it will take the best decision for the sake of the State and nationhood," the faction said in a statement.

With the military faction playing ball with Ms. Megawati, the President cannot depend on the State apparatus for any extreme action (like a state of emergency) that he might contemplate. However, given the state of the President's mind and his actions till date, he might just impose a "state of emergency" to create further chaos and confusion.

Wahid renews emergency threat

APD-16 By Amit Baruah WJ

SINGAPORE, JULY 19. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, has said that he would "impose" a state of emergency in the country tomorrow, but delay its implementation till July 31 — the day a special session of Parliament is scheduled to begin.

"Efforts have been made in the direction of a political compromise. But I cannot tell you the details since developments are taking place on an hour-to-hour basis," the President was quoted as saying today.

However, some legislators from the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) have said that the special session would be advanced if Mr. Wahid went ahead with his threat to impose a state of emergency. The apparent decision of the President to "impose" an emergency, but not implement the decree also looks to be a face-saving device for Mr. Wahid, given his unilateral deadline of July 20 announced earlier.

In the present circumstances, it is clear that the President does not enjoy the support of the military and the police without which the imposition of the emergency would become meaningless. In fact, not only are the military and police brass not supporting Mr. Wahid but they have made plain their decision to secure the MPR session — a clear indication on which side of the political divide they stand.

The MPR Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais, one of those who has played a major role in the likely impeachment of the President, said: "I don't think any compromise still has a chance."

"He is counting the days," Mr. Amien said in a reference to Mr. Wahid. However, the House of Representatives Speaker and Golkar party leader, Mr. Akbar Tanjung, has leapt into the compromise arena and has met with close associates of Mr. Wahid recently.

Mr. Akbar said the agenda had been discussed with the President's associates which included the hand-over of daily affair of Government to the Vice-Presi-



The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, addresses a group of Muslim leaders in Kediri town in East Java province on Thursday. — Reuters

dent, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri. The Golkar leader said he had conveyed the contents of his discussions to Ms. Megawati and Mr. Amien Rais. Mr. Akbar admitted that he did not get any response from Ms. Megawati. "I have been mooting this (compromise) idea for two months now. There was a chance for me to develop the suggestion, so I did. But we did not get any agreement."

There appears to be little doubt that the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) headed by Ms. Megawati is in no mood for a compromise. In fact, such a compromise arrangement has no place in the Indonesian Constitution. Also, a previous attempt at giving the Vice-President the powers to run the Government by the President did not work.

Ms. Megawati has the perfect opportunity to take over as President. It seems highly unlikely that she would want to arrive at a compromise and lose the opportunity to impeach Mr. Wahid.

From the Golkar point of view, these efforts at trying to arrange a grand compromise could well be aimed at Mr. Akbar trying to secure the job of Vice-President with support from the PDI-P.

The waffling on the part of Golkar could well be aimed at eliciting support from Ms. Megawati on the crucial issue of who will be the next Vice-President.

Megawati's party for advancing session

By Amit Baruah

40-16
SINGAPORE, JULY 15. The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), headed by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, has supported the idea of bringing forward the August 1 special session of Parliament if the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, goes ahead with his threat to impose a state of emergency on July 20.

Ms. Megawati and her party, who have so far been quite restrained and proper in their statements, seem to be aware that the mercurial President could go ahead with his emergency threat and, so, have agreed to advance the August 1 session if required.

"We support MPR (People's

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Consultative Assembly) in bringing forward the special session... if we deem that the fate of the nation is being directly or indirectly threatened by the President's policies," Mr. Theo Sjafei, a PDI-P official, was quoted as saying in Jakarta.

"We expect the special session to result in a legitimate and effective Government, one from collusion, corruption and nepotism and able to bring the country out of its current confusion," Mr. Theo maintained.

The party authorised Ms. Megawati, who is likely to become President in case Mr. Wahid is removed from office, to take any decisions during the special session.

The party also warned politicians to "avoid violence

S & Anis - Indonesia
when seeking solutions to the country's problems. The party also asks MPR members to conduct themselves as statesmen who put the people's interest before their own.

"We also ask security personnel, at all levels, to maintain security and order before, during and after the special session," Mr. Theo added.

The PDI-P Secretary-General, Mr. Soetjipto, played down rumours of a rift within the party. "Many say there is friction among our members, both in the House (of Representatives) and the Assembly (DPR)... I'm quite sure that all of us will remain solid to fight together at the special session."



An aide helps the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, enter the car after he attended a student seminar in Jakarta on Sunday. — AFP

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Spinning out of control?

THE BIZARRE order for the arrest of the Indonesian police chief has brought the crisis in the archipelago to a head. The President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, wants his "sacked" police chief, Gen. Suroyo Bimantoro, arrested, but the police have refused to carry out the order.

Though the Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Marzuki Darusman, now claims no "formal order" was issued by the President, it is apparent that this is part of beating a retreat. The fact of the matter is that the President does not have control over the security forces — a sign that his writ does not run. And, given the political polarisation that has taken place, the police are aware that they have a certain degree of "immunity".

Mr. Abdurrahman is increasingly lonely at the top. An intellectual, a humanist, the President has, however, ended up alienating all the major political factions in the country and his removal from office appears to be only a matter of time.

There is exactly a fortnight to go for the convening of the special People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) session which will call the President to account and, in all likelihood, then vote to remove him from office. The order to arrest Gen. Bimantoro has galvanized the Opposition and there is talk of advancing the MPR session from August 1. As of now, no decisions have been taken, but the Opposition could well have sounded this warning in order to dissuade Mr. Wahid from taking any other extreme steps.

"The convening of the special session is only a matter of hours, no longer days, away," the MPR Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais, was quoted as saying. Preparations, it appears, have been made for a snap session. "So I warn Assembly members to be alert during the coming days... please don't fall asleep," he said. All MPR members have been directed to come immediately to Jakarta while those in the capital have been barred from going out.

"Assembly leaders have concluded that Gus Dur's (the President's nickname) manoeuvres are a threat to the safety of this country and is driving it to disintegration... what has been going on in our national police is only one example of his confused



Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri and Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid... will she replace him?

decision-making," the MPR Speaker added.

Separately, the House of Representatives Speaker and Golkar party leader, Mr. Akbar Tandjung, who secretly met the President, has denied that any compromise had been reached between Mr. Abdurrahman and his faction. "No one has ever said that the meeting (with Gus Dur) would affect the special session. As I have said before, the special (MPR) session must be held to find a solution to this political deadlock, in order to find that solution we could

against it by key aides. Since then he has sacked some of his key Ministers and brought in new faces, but his principal problem remains — how to deal with the MPR session. The President has gone to the extent of saying that if he is removed from office, some of the provinces may well decide to split away from the Indonesian Republic.

His last-minute attempts at a compromise have been rebuffed by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, who failed to turn up at a meeting

emergency appears to be a very distant prospect.

For all those interested in Indonesia and its well-being, the sooner Mr. Abdurrahman grasps this reality, the better. He must take into account the statements from his own military commanders that they would not impose a state of emergency.

"In certain cases, disobeying an order is justified... obviously, if an order would destroy the country or if it is something criminal, then a soldier is obliged not to obey it," the Indonesian Army's Chief of Staff, Gen. Endiartono Sutarto, said recently. Other military commanders, too, have expressed similar sentiments.

In the military's current calculations, Ms. Megawati is a better candidate to lead the nation. Unlike Mr. Abdurrahman, she is known to be "close" to the military and is unlikely to interfere in its internal affairs. Therefore, a Megawati presidency should suit the military just fine.

There is a grave danger between now and the MPR session (whenever it is held) that matters could get out of hand in Indonesia. Till date, the move against Mr. Abdurrahman has proceeded constitutionally. The endgame, too, should be played out according to the Constitution.

There is a grave danger between now and the Parliament session that matters could get out of hand in Indonesia, writes Amit Baruah.

meet one another in an informal manner," Mr. Akbar said in Jakarta.

As the MPR session nears, and the possibility of a "snap" session is now real, the President must begin to ponder over his alternatives. So far, the President has remained content to issue threats of proclaiming an emergency. He has also threatened to dissolve Parliament and call fresh elections.

At one stage, Mr. Abdurrahman appeared to be on the brink of imposing an emergency, but was advised

on Monday. Other political leaders, it seemed, took a cue from the Vice-President and also stayed away.

The inability of the President to adopt a consensual style of working has alienated his erstwhile allies and, given the fact that his party is a minor one in Parliament, he has little chance of surviving a vote in the MPR.

And, as far as the imposition of emergency is concerned, it would appear that if he cannot get his "sacked" police chief arrested, then getting the military to impose a state of

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INDONESIA / WAHID FACES DEFIANCE BY SECURITY FORCES

Police move in to foil chief's arrest

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JULY 12. Indonesia's troubles multiplied today with the police refusing to obey an order from the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, to arrest their chief, Gen. Suroyo Bimantoro.

Elite police personnel massed outside the residence of Gen. Bimantoro, who was "sacked" some time ago by the President but has refused to step down citing rules that only Parliament was competent to remove him.

Reports from Jakarta said two armoured cars and at least 80 police personnel were stationed outside the police chief's residence. Gen. Bimantoro himself was said to be in Singapore for routine medical treatment.

That the order from the President would not

be implemented became clear when Mr. Wahid's handpicked police deputy chief, Gen. Chaeruddin Ismail, said: "How come an order (for arrest) is given on TV?"

Earlier in the day, a spokesman for the President said the Coordinating Minister for Security Affairs, Gen. Agum Gumelar, and Gen. Ismail had been ordered to take legal action against those officers involved in insubordination — this included the Jakarta police chief, Inspector-General Sofjan Jacob.

The order for arresting the police officials comes as the August 1 deadline for the convening of the special People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) session to impeach the President nears.

It would appear that the President has acted in the face of what he sees as defiance from

top police officials who have refused to obey his orders.

In fact, Gen. Bimantoro was appointed Indonesia's ambassador to neighbouring Malaysia in a bid to ease him out of the job, but the police chief rebuffed the President's offer.

Session may be advanced

Following the order from the President, senior political figures in the country have stated that the MPR session could well be advanced in the wake of this new development.

"I think the MPR must weigh this very important information," the House of Representatives (DPR) Speaker, Mr. Akbar Tandjung, was quoted as saying in Jakarta.

Mr. Akbar claimed that the MPR's working committee had given the green light to convene a plenary session to determine whether there was a need to bring forward the special meeting of the MPR. It is evident that the President's political support has been eroded and all the principal factions are opposed to any drastic measures proposed by Mr. Wahid.

The President has repeatedly warned that he will impose a state of emergency if the MPR wants to hold him accountable. Mr. Wahid still maintains that he will dissolve Parliament and call for fresh elections.

The defiant attitude of the police force is evident from their decision to hold a show of strength outside the police chief's house.

In the wake of this development, it is not known what the President will do. He may well order the military to step in, but top Generals have repeatedly stated that they will not implement illegal orders from the President.

So far, despite the political crisis in the country, matters had been proceeding in a constitutional manner — other than the drama surrounding the "sacking" of the police chief. Now, however, this drama could well take a different turn. It would appear that if the police are refusing to act according to Mr. Wahid's wishes, the military may well do the same.



Police in armoured personnel carriers stand guard outside the home of Indonesia's police commander, General Suroyo Bimantoro, in Jakarta on Thursday. — Reuters

Wahid Cabinet

JAKARTA, July 10. - President Abdurrahman Wahid today effected his third Cabinet reshuffle this year.

Mr Marsillam Simandjuntak, a Wahid aide, has succeeded Baharuddin Lopa (who died recently) as the attorney general.

Defence minister Mohamad Mahfud, another Wahid aide, has been named justice minister. Retired army General Agum Gumelar will be defence minister in addition to being the top security minister. - AP

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Megawati not to attend meet

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JULY 8. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid's efforts at securing a last-minute compromise suffered a blow when it was announced that the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, would not attend a reconciliation meeting tomorrow.

"Ms. Megawati will not attend the meeting because she has a full schedule as Vice-President," the deputy secretary-general of her Indonesian Democratic Party of Independence (PDI-P) was quoted as saying today.

"The meeting doesn't have a clear agenda so its purpose is questionable. Moreover, we have not yet received a formal invitation from the President," Ms. Agnita Singdaikane Irsal said.

An earlier "compromise" meeting scheduled by the President was postponed to give enough time to Ms. Megawati to attend the meeting.

However, with her party official setting out the agenda on the compromise efforts, it is clear that Ms. Megawati is looking solely at the August 1 session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) to deal with the President.

There remains every likelihood that the MPR will impeach the President. For his part, Mr. Wahid

has stated publicly on several occasions that he will not go before the MPR if the objective of the special session is to hold him accountable for his performance.

On the other hand, Ms. Megawati's party has stated that it is not interested in bringing forward the August 1 special session following threats issued by Mr. Wahid that he would impose a state of emergency and dissolve the Parliament.

While the President has repeatedly threatened to impose emergency, it is not clear whether he has the support in the military to implement his decision.

The recent drama around the "sacking" of the police chief, Gen. Suroyo Bimantoro, is reflective of the parlous state of the President's hold on the country's reins.

The General first refused to be dismissed on the grounds that only Parliament could sack him and then declined Mr. Wahid's offer to become the country's ambassador to Malaysia. Several senior police officers have reposed faith in Gen. Bimantoro's leadership — stating that they did not accept a new deputy appointed by the President — as their new boss.

And, now, with the PDI-P looking ahead to the MPR special session, Mr. Wahid may have few options left.

Indonesian Governors vow to maintain order

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JULY 2. Eight provincial Governors in Indonesia have issued a "declaration" vowing that they would not allow areas under their charge to descend into chaos.

The declaration, which was read out to the press in Yogyakarta, is a clear statement of the problems facing the country in the wake of the likely impeachment of the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, in early August.

"This declaration is our response to the current national condition. Whatever happens in the Central Government, we don't want any regional conflicts," the Yogyakarta Governor, Mr. Hamengkubuwono X, was quoted as saying.

"It's our obligation to make our people feel safe and secure. That's what we are gathering for," he stated. Several provincial military and

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police commanders also attended the Governors' meeting.

Referring to the upcoming special session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) where Mr. Wahid's fate will be decided, the declaration said: "We also hope that the special session will be able to restore mutual trust and respect among Indonesian people, and to put public interest, national unity, and State sovereignty above all for the sake of a new Indonesian society.

"We also remind the Indonesian people that the worsening social and economic... (situation), short-term political objectives and the weakening sense of nationalism could speed up the process of national disintegration," the Governors warned.

Promising to ensure that security personnel would be asked to act decisively to protect public security, the "declaration" added:

"People's patience and tolerance have almost reached their limit. If the limit is crossed, there will be social conflicts. Therefore, we hope that the special session will decide things based on professionalism, not just political sentiments."

Copies of the declaration will be sent to Mr. Wahid, the House of Representatives (DPR) Speaker, Mr. Akbar Tandjung, and the MPR Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais.

The statement issued by the Governors can be seen as an expression of concern at the conditions in Indonesia. With Mr. Wahid's ouster almost certain if the MPR meets as scheduled, politics in the country is polarised.

However, whatever be the political machinations taking place, Indonesia appears to be a country which is just drifting along, without any governing hand.

Legislators determined to oust Wahid

By Amit Baruah

JAKARTA, MAY 30. The days of the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, are numbered. With the mood in Parliament distinctly opposed to the President, and the legislators not interested in a compromise, his impeachment or resignation in the coming months looks almost certain.

Waiting in the wings is the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, who will take over as President in case Mr. Wahid quits. In the case of impeachment, the 1945 Constitution is silent, but analysts expect that Ms. Megawati will take over in that event as well.

Even today, a spokesman for the President made it clear that he has no intention of resigning. On several occasions, Mr. Wahid has threatened to impose a state of civil emergency, but so far has not gone ahead with his threat.

The House met under a security blanket. Mercifully, there was no major confrontation with the President's supporters outside the DPR in Jakarta and the activists began dispersing peacefully late this evening.

Hawkers did brisk business, as the President's supporters, said to be "fanatical", wore green headbands and carried the flag of his Nadhlatul Ulama organisation. Many of them had travelled all the way from East Java in a bid to "save" their President.

For Mr. Wahid, however, the writing is on the wall. The compromise President, elected to office in October 1999, after no party got an absolute majority (the country's upper House of Parliament indirectly elects the President), seems to be on his way out.

However, Mr. Wahid still has two months in which he may either make desperate moves or still work on a possible compromise with the Vice-President's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) to stay on in of-



Supporters of the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, knock down the gates of Parliament during a protest in Jakarta on Wednesday. Thousands of Wahid supporters converged on the legislature to vent their anger at lawmakers who voted for a special assembly which may impeach the beleaguered President. — AP

fice.

When the DPR convened this morning, legislators belonging to his National Awakening Party (PKB) said the session should be postponed since Mr. Wahid had been cleared of his involvement in two corruption scandals by the Attorney-General's office.

"We would like to remind you all to end this political process because legally Gus Dur (the President's popular nickname) has been declared innocent," Mr. Ali Masykur Musa, a PKB Parliamentarian, told the House.

However, Ms. Dwi Ria Latifa of the PDI-P said the Attorney-General's communication did not halt the probe into the corruption

scandals, for which the President was first censured by the DPR in February this year.

"The letter is not an order to halt the probe into the cases. There is no reason to halt this plenary (session)," she told the DPR. After an adjournment, the DPR voted in favour of continuing with its sitting.

With the PDI-P and the Golkar Party, the two biggest factions in the DPR, backing a special session, it was apparent during the course of the day that a vote would be a mere formality given the fact that the President's party holds less than 10 per cent of the seats in the 500-member House.

The PDI-P, in a prepared state-

ment, stated that the President has "failed to make significant improvement" and that he had also ignored the second censure issued by the House. In turn, the Golkar party claimed Mr. Wahid had become more confrontational.

The DPR session has also coincided with the G-15 summit for which leaders from as many as 19 countries are in town.

As can be expected, Indonesians were more interested in following the live telecast of the DPR rather than the G-15 summit. Even in the media centre set up at the Jakarta Convention Centre, where the summit is taking place, all eyes were on the DPR telecast.

Wahid impeachment debate begins

Jakarta, May 30

INDONESIA'S PARLIAMENT convened on Wednesday to vote on demands for the impeachment of President Abdurrahman Wahid, even as his fervent supporters deployed hundreds of paratroopers to end the violence.

A move to impeach became a certainty when the two main parties — representing a majority — formally came out in favour of impeachment during a raucous debate, held under heavy police and military guard.

In speeches to the Parliament, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle — headed by Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri — and the Golkar Party demanded the nation's highest legislative body, the People's Consultative Assembly, go into a special session and decide Wahid's fate.

The move could see Wahid — a nearly blind, 60-year-old Muslim cleric — swept from office by

August. Combined, the two parties hold 273 seats in the 500-member Parliament.

In recent days, thousands of Wahid's supporters have rampaged through his home province of East Java, where he is revered as an Islamic holy man and sage. Wahid has warned repeatedly that the move to oust him could spark bloodshed and the breakup of Indonesia.

The mobs have attacked and burned the offices of his political opponents and destroyed churches and mosques. Hundreds of supporters blocked roads and burned tires.

On Wednesday, the military deployed 600 paratroopers in the town of Pasuruan, the site of the worst violence, to bring to an end to the protests. Troops fired warning shots at protesters, eventually dispersing the crowds.

During Wednesday's debate, a letter from Wahid — who did not attend — was read to the legisla-



tors, rejecting earlier reprimands against him by Parliament, which he said "failed to specify what pledge of office has been violated" by him.

Lawmakers also received a report from prosecutors who have cleared Wahid of any criminal wrongdoing in two graft scandals. The prosecutors' conclusions have done little to dampen the drive to oust Wahid, which Parliament speaker

Akbar Tandjung said earlier was motivated by "the president's performance, attitude and policies".

Parliament has reprimanded Wahid twice. If it passes a third in Wednesday's vote, it will pass a request to the People's Consultative Assembly to start impeachment against Wahid when it meets in August. The assembly consists of 500 parliamentary deputies and 200 representatives of regional legislatures and social groups.

The assembly, acting as an electoral college, picked Wahid over Megawati in October 1999, after a number of Muslim parties objected to a woman presi-

dent. But those groups, along with the Golkar party of former dictator Suharto, have since abandoned Wahid and switched their support to Megawati.

Since last year, Megawati has remained silent about Wahid's leadership, which has been dogged by erratic policy-mak-

ing, bloody ethnic battles across Indonesia, and economic mismanagement.

But it seemed clear that she is now ready to grab the presidency after she spurned an offer to share power with Wahid last week.

"His time is over," said Benny Subianto, a political analyst. "All his cards have been played. There is nothing else."

While Parliament debated his fate, Wahid took the stage of a nearby convention centre and welcomed visiting heads of state and government from the G-15 group of developing nations.

Wahid's decision to proceed with the summit despite his nation's crippling political crisis underscores an open contempt he has displayed toward lawmakers who seek his ouster.

For months, Wahid has refused to acknowledge the legislature's right to move against him and said that any impeachment attempt would be illegal. AP

THE INDUSTRIAL TIMES

CRISIS IN INDONESIA

Battle between Wahid and parliament

THREE years after Suharto made an ignominious exit, his democratic successor, Abdurrahman Wahid finds himself in more or less the same situation. Wahid refused to resign in March when parliament was seized of two bribery scandals that tarnished his image. Two censure motions have been passed by the house of representatives, to which Wahid's response has been dismissive and intimidatory: He has described the censures as unconstitutional, threatened to go to the Supreme Court to have the parliamentary committee which recommended the censure declared illegal and is on the brink of declaring a state of emergency, dissolving parliament and calling for fresh elections. The problem with Wahid is that he has had all his political training with the Nahdlatul Islam, a revivalist organisation, and his democratic instincts are suspect, to say the least. Besides he thinks he has some kind of supreme moral authority which allows him to remain president in the face of all opposition — a habit that is obviously derived from his days as a religious leader where he commanded the unquestioning loyalty of millions of followers, many of whom are mobilising suicide squads in East Java.

Apart from the fact that he doesn't take parliament seriously enough, he has had very little success in restoring the Indonesian economy to reasonably good health after the external debt crisis that led to Suharto's downfall. There is inflation, there is unemployment. Fortunately, for Wahid, there is also separatism which he, rather incomprehensibly, thinks justifies his decision to remain president. Why? He is as much of a Javan like the rest of them and it is not certain that he commands the Army's loyalty more than other politicians. In fact, the military staged flag marches in Jakarta the last time Wahid's supporters planned to go on the rampage and are said to be reluctant about the emergency idea. Wahid tried to come to some kind of arrangement with his vice-president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, but the fact that her party, the PDI-P, voted in favour of the motions has put their relationship under greater strain. Also the PDI-P collaborated with Amien Rais, an Islamic politician of a variety more radical than Wahid, and with its traditional enemy, Golkar and, therefore, must have built enough political bridges to make a bid for the presidency on an anti-Wahid platform, although, whether this spirit of cooperation will maintain itself under Sukarnoputri, is anybody's guess. Apparently, nobody is keen on fresh elections and this is usually because no one knows where they stand with the people. However, if Sukarnoputri and Wahid don't come to an agreement, then dissolution is certain. Wahid has that prerogative, there is no reason for him not to use it.

Debate on Wahid's impeachment begins today

By Amit Baruah

JAKARTA, MAY 29 In a bizarre conjunction of circumstances, the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, will be opening the G-15 summit tomorrow morning almost at the same time as the Lower House of Parliament begins discussing the impeachment move against him.

While Mr. Wahid opens the meeting at the Jakarta Convention Centre, the House of Representatives or DPR will meet at the nearby Parliament building to call a special session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) which has the authority to impeach the President.

Mr. Wahid's supporters demonstrated outside the Supreme Court in Jakarta today — calling on it to issue a decree declaring the special session unconstitutional and also outlaw the Golkar party, a ruling instrument created by the former President, Gen. Suharto.

In East Java, Mr. Wahid's stronghold, his supporters reportedly burnt two churches in Pasuruan after being forced away from some Government buildings they were trying to attack.

In the provincial capital of Surabaya, the supporters were dispersed by police, who fired warning shots as some 3,000 activists tried to storm the local legislature.

The police have promised to take strong action against Mr. Wahid's supporters if they break the law in the capital, which is



Indonesian soldiers on Tuesday park armoured personnel carriers near the Jakarta Convention Centre and Parliament, the venues for the G-15 summit beginning in Jakarta on Wednesday. — AP

currently playing host to leaders from 19 countries.

"If they (Wahid loyalists) try to provoke mass unrest, we'll beat them up," Jakarta's police chief, Inspector-General Sofyan Jacob, was quoted as saying.

The "decree" issued by Mr. Wahid yesterday calling upon the Security Minister, Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, to restore "order" did not have any perceptible impact.

In fact, the "decree" seems to have been issued after several Ministers reportedly opposed the planned declaration of a state of emergency.

"I myself, the military chief, the police chief were in one voice...we would not support and openly disagreed with the issuance of an (emergency) decree," Mr. Bambang was quoted by the mass-circulated *Kompas* daily as saying.

Hectic political meetings continued in the capital today, with the Indonesian Party of Struggle (PDI-P) headed by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, announcing that they would support the convening of a special MPR session.

"We will tell (the Lower House of) Parliament tomorrow that we

want a special session to be convened to impeach the President," said the PDI-P said after a meeting today.

For his part, Mr. Wahid has refused to answer the second memorandum issued by the DPR on April 30, saying that the whole process was unconstitutional.

Pro-democracy groups, meanwhile, have warned the Indonesian military (TNI) not to enter the "political contest" — underlining that this would be the military's single largest contribution to democratic practice.

Senior Generals, including the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Endiartono Sutarto, have opposed the civil emergency plan which will allow him to dissolve Parliament and, consequently, avoid impeachment.

The TNI faction in the DPR voted in support of the motion to issue the first censure motion against the President earlier this year while they abstained from voting on the second memorandum. There have also been suggestions (that have been denied) that the President wants to appoint new individuals to top military jobs, but so far he has not done so.

It is clear that the DPR session comes at a crucial stage of Indonesian democracy. In all likelihood, a special session will be called given the majority those in favour of such a move enjoy. The President, however, is in no mood to go along with the sentiments of Parliament.

Indonesia Army warns Wahid

Jakarta, June 28

INDONESIA'S ARMY warned President Abdurrahman Wahid on Wednesday not to try to save his embattled presidency by declaring a state of emergency before lawmakers impeach him.

Instead, it promised to protect the National Assembly when it convenes impeachment proceedings in August.

Other senior officials and the speaker of Parliament also came out against the possibility of an emergency decree, under which the nation's two main legislatures could be dissolved.

In an interview at the end of a three-day visit to Australia, Wahid said he might invoke emergency rule and call in the military if the People's Consultative Assembly moves against him.

"It's easy, I just declare a state of emergency," he told ABC radio when asked how he would avoid impeachment.

28/6
He said he could call elections within a year and the military would obey him as its top commander. "They will do anything the supreme commander will order," he said.

However, in Jakarta, Army spokesman Brig Gen Franciscus Bachtiar said the security forces would not close down the Assembly. The armed forces were loyal to the State and would not become "tool for the Government."

"The Army calls on the President not to declare a state of emergency," he said.

Asked if troops would obey an order from Wahid to dissolve the assembly, Bachtiar said: "If the impeachment session goes ahead, we will join with the police and secure the event."

Speaking later in New Zealand, Wahid brushed off suggestions that the military would not back him if he tried to rule by decree.

AP

5 killed in Indonesian separatist violence

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE 5/19

BANDA ACEH (Indonesia), June 24. - At least five people were killed in separatist related violence in Indonesia's Aceh province, the military and Free Aceh Movement (FAM) activists said today.

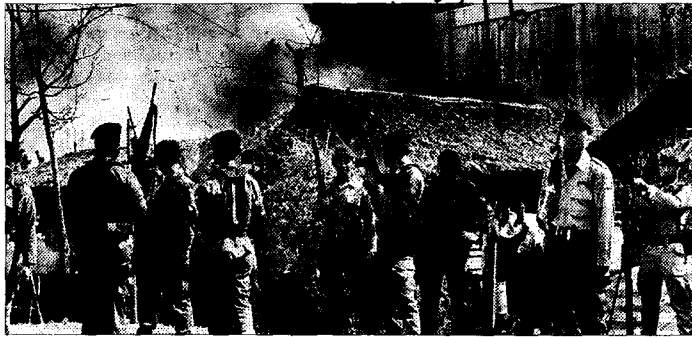
Troops shot dead a suspected rebel during a clash in the Lhoknga district some 12 km south of here yesterday, a military spokesman, Major Edi Sulistiadie, said.

Maj Sulistiadie said 10 soldiers raided a house where suspected FAM members were assembling home-made bombs.

One rebel was killed and the rest fled to a nearby forest. Troops found bomb-making materials in the house, he added.

But a FAM spokesman, Ayah Sofyan, denied an exchange of fire had taken place there.

"Because they found no FAM members, the Indonesian



Police officers stand guard near a burning refugee camp in Pontianak in Borneo island in Indonesia on Sunday. - AP/PTI

armed forces (TNI) conducted a sweep of the area, shot two civilians and took them away in a truck," Sofyan said over the phone, adding the fate of the two remained unknown.

Meanwhile, the body of a man with gunshot wounds was found in a forest and another body with a bullet in the head was found in South Aceh yesterday, the local Red Cross office said.

In North Aceh, soldiers shot dead a suspected FAM member yesterday, the local military spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Firdaus, said.

Soldiers had shot dead another suspected FAM member in a raid on a house in West Aceh late on Friday. Four suspected rebels escaped, Maj Sulistiadie said.

Ethnic violence: Malay youths armed with knives at-

tacked a refugee camp in the Boreno town of Pontianak today, burning hundreds of makeshift shacks which houses some 8,000 refugees from past ethnic unrest in other parts of the island, adds AP from Jakarta.

There were no immediate reports of fatalities or serious injuries in the town, the provincial capital of West Kalimantan, around 700 km north of Jakarta.

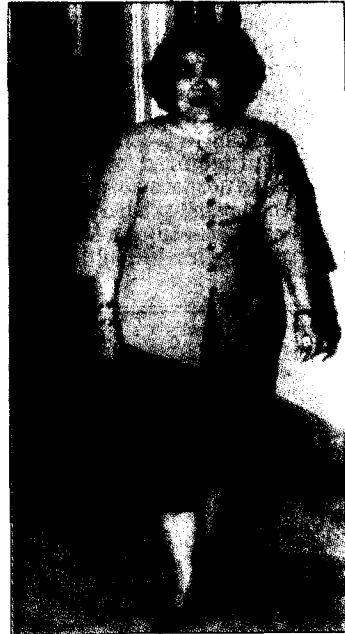
The violence started after a child was killed in an attempted robbery near the camp yesterday, said a police officer speaking on condition of anonymity. The officer declined to provide further details.

Clashes pitting indigenous tribes against the settlers, mostly from the island of Madura, have flared periodically in the region. In February, ethnic Dayaks killed at least 500 Madurese migrants in central Kalimantan. Many of the victims were hacked to death.

THE STATESMAN

Protest Day II over labour laws in Indonesia

11/15/6



AP PHOTOS

Police officers beat up a protestor during a clash at Bandung, West Java, Indonesia on Thursday. (Right) Indonesia's Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri arrives for an economic meeting at Jakarta.

Jakarta, June 14

POLICE FIRED tear gas and warning shots on Thursday when protesters threw lumps of wood and rocks at officers guarding a parliament building in Bandung.

Witnesses said officers also beat one protestor. The clash was the second outbreak of violence in the West Java provincial capital in two days.

About 3,000 demonstrators blocked roads in Bandung in protest against new labour laws, which unions claim will make it easier for employees to fire work-

ers. On Wednesday, mobs in the same city set fire to dozens of vehicles and also attacked the local parliament.

About 5,000 labourers protested in Sidoarjo, a town close to East Java's provincial capital, Surabaya, on Thursday.

There were no reports of violence.

Indonesia has been hit by a wave of labour disputes recently as unions flex their muscles after decades of repression under former dictator Suharto, who was forced from office in 1998.

Indonesian workers are some of the lowest paid in the world,

with salaries often too small to cover living costs.

Meanwhile in Jakarta, the Government delayed fuel price hikes planned for Friday pending a social impact report.

The rises had been demanded by the International Monetary Fund under a politically tough economic reform program.

However, there had been fears the hikes could spark more demonstrations at a time when the government's popularity is sinking and the president is facing impeachment on corruption allegations.

AP

Wahid fights lone battle against police chief

Jakarta, June 3

INDONESIAN POLICE chiefs and key legislators dealt embattled President Abdurrahman Wahid a fresh blow on Sunday, rallying behind the national police commander who is defying a presidential order to stand aside.

In separate statements, the MPs and more than 100 police generals accused Wahid of trying to politicise the police and said they would not stand for it.

Wahid, struggling to fend off impeachment, fought back, warning the officers of tough action if they disobeyed him and

accusing national commander General Surojo Bimantoro of meddling in politics.

Jakarta police chief, Inspector-General Sofjan Jacob on Sunday read a declaration of support signed by the generals after they met Bimantoro late on Saturday night.

"We do not want any intervention or to be politicised," he read. "The police are not a tool of power but the tool of the State." The signatories included the man Wahid appointed to take over from Bimantoro.

After their briefing from Bimantoro on Sunday, leaders of eight of parliament's 10 factions

also rejected his sacking.

"We will reject anyone who uses (the police) as a political tool, including the presidential decision to make the police chief non-active," Justice and Unity Party official Sutradara Ginting told reporters on behalf of the factions.

Parliament has the right of veto over the appointment and sacking of the national police chief, but its power to veto a declaration of non-active status is unclear.

Wahid sacked several key ministers on Friday and declared Bimantoro non-active in his latest move to avoid impeachment.

Non-active status means Bimantoro is relieved of his duties but formally retains his title.

A presidential spokesman told a hastily convened news conference on Sunday that Wahid sacked Bimantoro because he was meddling in politics. "This decision should be obeyed," the spokesman said. "If not, there will be firm action."

Bimantoro told reporters after Saturday's meeting he was still in charge. "I am still the police chief, there is no replacement," he said.

Wahid is increasingly isolated in his bid to hold on to power.

Reuters

119-16 (11)
4/6 Wahid warns
against defiance
S. H. ASU . 9/22

JAKARTA, JUNE 3. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, warned on Sunday that he would move against those who ignore him, after police and lawmakers disregarded his decision to fire the national police chief.

The police chief, Gen. Suroyo Bimantoro, defied Mr. Wahid's dismissal of him from the Cabinet by attending a ceremony promoting police officers in Jakarta on Sunday.

He later met senior legislators who accused Mr. Wahid of violating the Constitution by firing the chief without consulting Parliament.

Gen. Bimantoro said he would only step down if Parliament asked him to, which is unlikely to happen.

Mr. Wahid's spokesman said that firing Gen. Bimantoro was constitutional and that the police chief had been meddling in politics.

He said Gen. Bimantoro was trying to create a rift between the President and the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, who many lawmakers want to replace Mr. Wahid if they oust him during impeachment proceedings in August.

"Those actions will be considered insubordination and stern action will be taken if this is ignored," Mr. Wahid's spokesman said.

The President, facing impeachment over allegations of corruption and incompetence which he denies, fired Gen. Bimantoro and

a number of other members of his Cabinet on Friday and condemned the police for their handling of recent violence in East Java, where officers shot and killed one of Mr. Wahid's supporters last week.

Mr. Wahid ordered an investigation into the violence and warned police officers on Saturday not to disobey him, saying that those who did not accept Gen. Bimantoro's removal would be prosecuted for insubordination.

Lawmakers were not fazed.

"The police chief is still Bimantoro. He is still active," said Mr. Arifin Panigoro, a top lawmaker from Ms. Megawati's party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.

The powerful army is also backing Gen. Bimantoro, the Internet edition of the *Jakarta Post* said on Sunday, quoting sources.

Several senior army officers met late Saturday to discuss the situation, said the military spokesman, Air Vice Marshal Graitto Usodo, but he declined to say if the army was backing the police chief's stand against Mr. Wahid, calling it "a political matter". Mr. Wahid, a Muslim scholar, is from East Java and many people there revere him as a holy man and sage, regarding attempts to oust him as tantamount to sacrilege.

Some analysts believe the army is backing Ms. Megawati, a nationalist who has not expressed interest in military reform. — AP

Wahid swears in new security chief, Megawati stays away

BY MUKLIS ALI

Jakarta, June 2: Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid swore in a new chief security minister on Saturday following a sudden cabinet reshuffle that analysts see as part of last-ditch efforts to ward off impeachment.

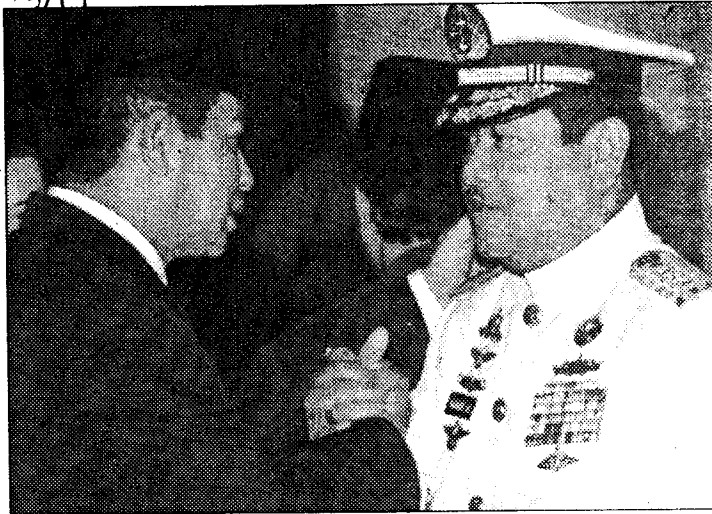
Highlighting Mr Wahid's growing friction with his estranged deputy, vice president Megawati Sukarnoputri snubbed the ceremony that she would normally be required to attend. And a row deepened over the police chief refusing to step aside as ordered.

The only minister sworn in on Saturday was Agum Gumelar, who has the powerful chief security portfolio. Officials had said all six new ministers following Friday's reshuffle would be sworn in and it was unclear why the rest were not.

Before the ceremony, retired General Gumelar told reporters that Ms Megawati had given her blessing to his appointment. Aides have indicated Ms Megawati was not consulted over the reshuffle.

Mr Wahid implied that General Gumelar would do a better job than his widely respected predecessor Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, whose sacking has been condemned by politicians and local media. Mr Yudhoyono, also an ex-general, had stood up to Mr Wahid over his plan to declare a state of emergency to fend off impeachment. General Gumelar said after being sworn in that he would follow Mr Yudhoyono's policies but brushed aside questions about his stance on the threatened state of emergency.

"His skill is in diplomacy and in his consistent attitude... This will



FACE CHANGE: Indonesia's new chief security minister, Agum Gumelar (left), shakes the hand of Indonesian military chief Admiral Widodo after the swearing-in ceremony at the presidential palace in Jakarta on Saturday. (Reuters)

make it easier to carry out security and to resolve our political problems," Mr Wahid said at the ceremony.

Mr Yudhoyono had won praise for his calm as Indonesia's political crisis has risen to fever pitch, threatening to plunge the world's fourth most populous country into chaos.

Mr Wahid loyalists rampaged in East Java this week, torching churches.

They also tried to storm Parliament on Wednesday.

"The reshuffle is an indication that the President is well and truly panicked," the *Jakarta Post* quoted deputy Parliament speaker Soetardjo Soerjogoeritno of Ms Megawati's party as saying.

Local media said dozens of

police generals and Parliament Speaker Akbar Tandjung had backed the police chief's refusal to follow Mr Wahid's order to quit — an extraordinary public show of defiance in a country that prizes deference to superiors.

The police chief, General Bimantoro, who also openly blocked Mr Wahid's plan to declare a state of emergency, said Parliament had to agree to the order first.

The standoff continued on Saturday when Mr Wahid installed another officer to take over General Bimantoro's duties and ordered the police to respect the decision.

The police spokesmen were not immediately available to comment, but on Friday, General Bimantoro had said he would continue to do his job. (Reuters)

Megawati skips function at Palace

By Amit Baruah

JAKARTA, JUNE 2. The Indonesian Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, today failed to show up for the formal appointment of the new Security Minister, Gen. Agum Gumelar (Retd.), at the Presidential palace.

The function, which was attended by the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, is a sign of further deteriorating relations between the "big two" as Parliament remains poised to impeach the President.

Just yesterday, the President sacked four Ministers — including his Security Minister, Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and

the Attorney-General, Mr. Marzuki Darusman.

Mr. Bambang's sacking comes after he publicly opposed declaration of a state of emergency — an idea put forward by the President to hang on in office.

The former Security Minister, who gave the Wahid Government considerable credibility and was seen as a good administrator, was reportedly offered another Cabinet job, but he refused to accept it. The President also "sacked" the national police chief, Gen. Suryo Bimantoro, yesterday. But the police chief has refused to hand over charge, saying that the new appointment had to be approved by Parliament.

Interestingly, the Army Chief, Gen. Endiarto Sutarto, too did not turn up for the ceremony at the Presidential palace. He too has opposed the declaration of a civil emergency by the President.

It is becoming evident that Mr. Wahid's increasingly erratic ways of functioning is pushing Indonesia to the brink.

If Mr. Bambang resisted the idea of the emergency, it remains to be seen whether his successor, said to be close to Ms. Megawati, will play ball with Mr. Wahid.

The President, who has repeatedly refused to resign, is set to face a session of the country's supreme legislative body — the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) on August 1 — where impeachment proceedings against him are likely.

It is clear that Mr. Wahid is following the advice provided by close aides who have a lot to lose if he is ejected from the presidency. In such a scenario, the President and his men can do a lot of damage to the fledgling Indonesian democracy. Though Mr. Wahid does not enjoy the support of a majority of Generals, he can push the military into a corner by his actions — which can lead to unintended results for the country.

If the President does go ahead with plans to impose a state of civil emergency, then he must have the backing of the military brass if such a move is to be enforced. Presumably, this would include a crackdown on Mr. Wahid's parliamentary detractors.



The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid (second right), congratulates the newly-installed National Deputy Police Chief, Lt. Gen. Chaeruddin Ismail (left), during swearing-in at the presidential palace in Jakarta, on Saturday. — AFP

Wahid adds fuel by firing six ministers

FROM TOMI SOETJIPTO

Jakarta, June 1 (Reuters): Indonesia's political crisis looked close to spinning out of control today after an increasingly isolated President Abdurrahman Wahid, desperate to fend off impeachment, sacked six ministers.

But the police chief, who has openly rejected Wahid's plans to declare a state of emergency to block his impeachment in August, refused an order to resign unless parliament agreed. Wahid said he had appointed former general Agum Gumelar as the new chief security minister to improve ties with his estranged deputy, Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

One minister said Gumelar was close to the country's largest party, headed by Megawati and who holds Wahid's fate in her hands. A defiant Wahid earlier in the day warned of "firm action" to protect the country and the latest move suggests he may be close to declaring an emergency.

Presidential spokesman Yahya Staquf said the reshuffle was "to increase the efficiency of

the Cabinet". Among those sacked was powerful former general and chief security minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who also opposed any state of emergency.

Yudhoyono, widely praised for his calm as the country's political temperature has risen to a fever pitch, said there was no indication Wahid would declare an emergency. "(But) I do not know what is in the mind of the President," Yudhoyono told a hastily convened news conference.

Wahid loyalist and defence minister Mahfud M.D. said he would resign if the Muslim cleric took such drastic action. Also pushed out was attorney-general Marzuki Darusman, replaced by Justice Minister Baharudin Lopa. Darusman's sacking comes despite him clearing the President earlier in the week of any wrongdoing in two graft scandals.

One-week deadline

Wahid has given his political enemies one week to back off. "I give a deadline of Friday next week, after that we shall see," he told worshippers at a Jakarta mosque. Speaking later on state TV, Wahid

while friends. Megawati is widely expected to take over the presidency should the supreme People's Consultative Assembly re-move Wahid when it meets on August 1. The top assembly comprises the 500 members of parliament and 200 appointees.

Analysts give him little chance of surviving the assembly hearing, called to consider his ouster over two graft scandals and a term in office that has drawn little but flak from friends and foes. The embattled President has insisted he will not quit. "I don't care what the country is in danger," Wahid, 60, said in a speech earlier at the presidential palace. He did not elaborate.

In the speech, Wahid reiterated that his ouster would prompt several parts of the troubled country to break away, comments previously played down by analysts and government officials.

Instability ahead

In Jakarta, hundreds of Wahid student supporters gathered at the palace. But there was no sign of the thousands who tried to

storm parliament on Wednesday. In East Java, Wahid's stronghold, leaders from most of Indonesia's official religions visited churches wrecked earlier this week by rampaging mobs. Some Indonesian media and legislators have bemoaned the MPR's move to wait until August before impeaching Wahid, saying the country desperately needed stability.

After declaring a state of emergency, Wahid could dissolve parliament and call a snap election, although many legislators have said they would accelerate the impeachment process instead.

Wahid has little left to cling to apart from the state of emergency and the threat of violence by his loyalists.

Jakarta stocks fell 2.3 per cent today, partly on the rumours of sackings which swirled late in the trading day.

While the impasse means little hope of any sustained economic recovery, finance minister Prijadi Praptosuhardjo hoped deliberations with the often hostile parliament on passing critical 2001 budget revisions would not be delayed.

President Wahid reshuffled his Cabinet as part of efforts to save his leadership

- Chief security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, replaced by transport minister Agum Gumelar
- Attorney General Marzuki Darusman, replaced by justice minister Baharudin Lopa
- Maritime Minister Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, replaced by Rochimin Damanhuri
- Junior minister for economic restructuring Cacuk Sudarjanto. No replacement named
- Cabinet secretary Marsilam Sumanjatak has become the new justice minister
- Bidi Mulya Suyitno has become the new transport minister



made clear he wanted to patch things up with Megawati, the daughter of founding President Sukarno. Aides say Megawati has grown increasingly irritated with Wahid's erratic 19-month rule and would reject an offer the cleric made last week to share more power as an attempt to escape the political noose tightening around his neck. "Agum Gumelar is the

best person because my relationship with him is good and his relationship with Megawati is good. I want a person who can nurture the relationship with Megawati, to prevent us from splitting up," Wahid said. He said he still wanted a political compromise that did not violate the Constitution. Analysts regard that as unlikely given the growing enmity between the erst-

THE

JUN 20

Wahid deadline to Assembly

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2/6
ASSOCIATED PRESS

JAKARTA, June 1. — The Indonesian President, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, today gave the national Assembly one week to drop plans to impeach him, but failed to say what he might do if hostile lawmakers ignored his demand.

Earlier, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid said he would take "stern action" to maintain national unity and called on his opponents to negotiate an end to the nation's political crisis.

"I will give them until Friday. After that we'll see what happens," Mr Wahid said after weekly prayers at a Jakarta mosque.

"The government is working hard to handle the security problem so that the political situation can be stabilised," he said.

Recently, Mr Wahid has repeatedly threatened to declare a state of emergency and close down the country's two main legislatures in his bid to stave off impeachment.

The military and some senior Cabinet minister have openly opposed such a move and have forced him at least twice to

back down. Without their support there is little likelihood that Mr Wahid, a nearly blind Muslim cleric, could rule by emergency decree.

Even so, the embattled leader was in a defiant mood at the state palace where he addressed a seminar on Indonesia's national philosophy, which calls for a strong unitary state.

I was sacked, says minister: Indonesia's powerful chief security minister, who had publicly urged Mr Wahid not to declare a state of emergency to stave off impeachment, said today he had been sacked.

"This morning ... Mr President took a decision to sack me and replace me with (the transport minister and retired general) Mr Agum Gumelar. I am loyal to the President and will accept this decision," Mr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono told a news conference.

The sacking dramatically raises the stakes in Indonesia's deepening political crisis.

Meanwhile, Mr Yudhoyono said today there was no sign that Mr Wahid planned to declare martial law to ward off impeachment though he indica-

ted anything was possible.

"Up until now, there is no indication that he will impose martial law status," Mr Yudhoyono told reporters after announcing he had just been fired. Reporters had asked Mr Yudhoyono if Mr Wahid planned to declare a state of emergency.

Mr Yudhoyono added that he had been told that national police chief General Bimantoro will also be replaced.

"I don't know what is in the mind of the President," he said.

Defence minister ready to quit: The defence minister and a key ally of Mr Abdurrahman Wahid said today he would resign if the Muslim cleric declared a state of emergency to ward off an impeachment threat, adds Reuters.

"If the President issues a decree (declaring a state of emergency), I will propose a new defence minister," Mr Mahfud said.

"I will propose a new minister who is more stern and could take repressive action because the decree will need someone like that." Top generals have already told Mr Wahid that they wouldn't follow any state of emergency order.

THE STATESMAN

Supporters of the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, brandish sharpened bamboo spears as they rally near the State Palace in Jakarta on Thursday. — AP

Wahid impeachment: special session on Aug. 1

By Amit Baruah

JAKARTA, MAY 31. A special session of the Indonesian People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which could lead to the impeachment of the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, will be held on August 1, the MPR Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais, announced today.

"A consultative meeting between MPR leaders and chairman and secretaries of the Assembly's 11 factions has just concluded that the MPR special session will be held on August 1, 2001," said Mr. Rais at a press conference.

Though Mr. Rais still held out the prospect of an increasingly unlikely compromise, the MPR move to convene the special session comes hours after the Lower House voted to call it last night.

Mr. Wahid himself refused to take questions on domestic issues at a press conference he ad-

dressed at the end of the two-day G-15 summit which concluded in Jakarta today.

However, his Foreign Minister, Mr. Alwi Shihab, told reporters after the G-15 meeting: "We are not talking about accepting or rejecting the House's decision to ask for a special session. The most important thing is to hope for a compromise."

"We still have two months...and that means there is plenty of time. A compromise can be reached in an hour."

It remains unclear what Mr. Wahid might do now. He has, so far, shown no inclination to quit office.

Mr. Wahid also threatened to impose a civil emergency which would permit him to dissolve Parliament and, consequently, escape potential impeachment proceedings.

Minister says Wahid to seek compromise

THE JAKARTA POST
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JAKARTA, May 31. – The President, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, is seeking for a compromise to solve the current political problem, a Cabinet minister says.

"We are not talking about accepting or rejecting the House's decision to ask for a special session. The most important thing is to hope for a compromise," the foreign minister, Mr Alwi Shihab, said after attending the closing ceremony of the G-15 summit here today. The President had two months to find a solution to the political problem, he said.

"We still have two months. That means around 60 days, and that means there is still plenty of time. A compromise can be reached in an hour," Mr Alwi said as quoted by Antara.

He declined to reveal the kind of compromise that the President is seeking.

People's Consultative Assem-



Mr Abdurrahman Wahid

bly Speaker Mr Amien Rais revealed today that the special session of the Assembly, which is slated to hear Mr Abdurrahman Wahid's accountability speech, will be held on 1 August.

"A consultative meeting between the MPR leaders and chairmen and secretaries of the Assembly's 11 factions has just concluded that the MPR special session will be held on 1 August 2001," Mr Amien told a media

conference, as quoted by Metro TV private television station. "Tomorrow the Assembly's working body will convene to set up the Ad-hoc committee, which will be responsible for drafting the special session's internal regulations," he said.

When asked about the annual session of the MPR, Amien said the regular session which has been decided to be held every August, will be held one, two or three months after the special session. Earlier in the day, Amien said the recommended special session was not "the end of the world for President Abdurrahman Wahid".

"A special session is not a final verdict for President Abdurrahman Wahid. That is why we have high hopes that all political party leaders and national figures can restrain themselves and their followers so that they do not jeopardize the democratic process," Mr Amien said, as quoted by Antara.

NOTE: TESLIA

2001

Impeached Indonesian President refuses to quit

By Harvey Stockwin
The Times of India News Service

HONG KONG: After the Indonesian House of Representatives approved the impeachment of President Abdurrahman Wahid late on Wednesday evening, the fourth largest nation in the world still faced a protracted crisis, with its leader isolated from all the power centres that matter, but still refusing to resign.



A. Wahid

While mobs of Wahid supporters were repulsed on Wednesday, after breaking into the grounds of Parliament, fears of more such violence remain high both in Jakarta and, more particularly, in Mr Wahid's home bailiwick of East Java.

The never-tried-before Indonesian impeachment process passed relatively quickly through its third and final stage in the House of Representatives. While the first motion of censure at the end of January had stressed charges of corruption against Mr Wahid, and while the second censure at the end of April had stressed his incompetence in governing, this third censure motion also highlighted his unconstitutional behaviour in threatening the breakup of the nation if he was ejected from office.

The reasons for Mr Wahid's impeachment have thus become ever more political, partly as result of the inept way in which Mr Wahid has sought to deflect the parliamentary criticisms. A letter from Mr Wahid, belatedly arrived, explaining his actions, but actually refuting

Parliament's right to impeach him, just before the Wednesday session, together with a copy of the Attorney-General's report exonerating Mr Wahid from two charges of corruption.

These were brushed aside by all the main political parties as the impeachment of Mr Wahid was authorised by 365 votes to four, with the roughly 50 members of Mr Wahid's own National Awakening Party (NAP) walking out before the vote was taken, together with the five members of a small Christian party. Seeking to convey a neutral attitude towards the civilian political conflict, the 38-member military faction were among the 39 members who abstained, leaving about 37 absentees.

Now the process enters its final stage before the 700-member People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). The MPR consists of the 500 members of the House of Representatives plus 200 members from Indonesia's regions. According to the rules of the MPR, the special session must take place in two months time. At that session, there will not be any trial as there was with President Bill Clinton in the United States. The MPR will first hear a justification of his stewardship from Mr Wahid, before voting to accept or reject the impeachment submitted by the lower house. Present indications are that the impeachment will be approved by an overwhelming majority of the 700 MPR members.

On Thursday, the speaker of the MPR, Amien Rais, and leading members of the various political parties, were discussing when to hold the special session, notably whether it could be held sooner, so as the end the nation's protracted political crisis.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

JUN 22

INDONESIA'S DEMOCRATIC PANGS

A NEW MOMENT of truth beckons a restive Indonesia in its emotive quest for constitutional democracy. As a vast archipelago-state already shattered economically in recent years, Indonesia now faces an unprecedented test in its nervous experiments with democratic rule of law. The Indonesian optimists tend to believe that a critical mass of political resurgence is almost imperceptibly taking shape, while the prophets of gloom point to a spiralling crisis in basic governance itself. For those hoping for a scheme of order that might follow the incremental chaos of the present moment, a glimmer can be seen in the latest decision by the agenda-managers of the People's Consultative Assembly to discuss the impeachment of the beleaguered President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, on August 1. This constitutional activism has been triggered by the collective will of the House of Representatives. The House has recommended an impeachment hearing in the context of the President's defiance in the face of two censure motions that had been adopted concerning his alleged complicity of some kind or other in two separate cases of suspected corrupt deals. Given the inadequacy of Indonesia's evolution as a resurgent democracy, the present political puzzle in Jakarta cannot be easily explained with conceptual precision or an exactitude of terminology. The law-makers are, on the whole, engaged in a power struggle with a visually impaired Mr. Wahid. Having proven himself inept at preserving the aura of being a champion of democracy, Mr. Wahid is not only fighting an essentially unequal battle for primary survival in office but also threatening to inflict a mortal blow to the country's fragile democracy itself. This marks a poignant irony as his election as President in 1999 signalled the first democratic event of its kind for over 40 years in a country which had in fact begun its post-colonial era with conspicuous aspirations of political pluralism.

Mr. Wahid's style as a paternalistic guru of

Indonesia's democratic renaissance has often put him on a collision course with the legislators. Some of them see themselves as the potential architects of a new democratic order. The point of reference for this tussle is the political verdict of the people in 1999, and not surprisingly, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri has so far succeeded in casting herself as the leader deprived of her legitimate popular mandate to govern Indonesia. Having agreed to serve as Mr. Wahid's deputy following her defeat in the presidential poll of 1999, Ms. Megawati will now succeed him if he is finally voted out of office. As the Vice-President, she has until very recently played by the rule-book and abided by the President's political policies and directives. By doing so, Ms. Megawati has certainly enhanced her political stock, although she remains ill at ease in toeing the line of a person who had outsmarted her without actually stealing the presidential election from her.

Indonesia's titanic struggle for a sense of direction, let alone a democratic order or an economic revival, is of considerable importance to the larger international community in the present context of changing power equations. As a populous country, which now is at risk of losing the battle for democracy, Indonesia has often been shaped in the past by its military forces. The peculiarities of its political evolution, punctuated by Sukarno's energetic but erratic rule and by Gen. Suharto's authoritarianism, account for this. It is, therefore, a matter of some importance at this stage that the military leaders are generally believed to have refused to collaborate with Mr. Wahid in his uncharacteristic effort to try and consolidate his hold on power. They may have actually advised him against proclaiming an emergency with martial law as its core. The current mood of the military establishment, which has yet to recover fully from its own shocks of recent years, cannot yet be taken as the defining reality.

Wahid cleared of graft charges

Jakarta, May 28

INDONESIA'S ATTORNEY-GENERAL on Monday cleared President Abdurrahman Wahid of any wrongdoing over two graft scandals that drew parliamentary censures and triggered a push towards impeachment.

But the decision is unlikely to derail growing pressure to oust the ailing Muslim cleric 19 chaotic months into his five-year term because the criticism has moved beyond the scandals to a more general attack on his erratic leadership.

The two scandals—Buloggate and Bruneigate—centre on the theft of \$4.1 million from the state commodities regulator Bulog by people claiming to act on Wahid's behalf and his acceptance of a \$2 million donation from the Sultan of Brunei outside formal Government channels.

Wahid has told security forces to enforce law and order in the country, but has stopped short of declaring a state of emergency.

Monday's nationally televised address left little clue as to how the country's deepening leadership crisis might be resolved and Wahid himself warned attempts to oust him would break the giant nation apart.

"I order the coordinating minister of politics and security to take action and special steps needed in coordination with security forces to tackle the cri-



AP PHOTO

An Indonesian soldier stands guard during a rally in Pasuruan, East Java, Indonesia, on Monday.

sis, to enforce law and order and security as soon as possible," the near-blind Wahid said in the announcement, read for him by an official.

Presidential secretary Abdul Mudjib Manan said Wahid was not delegating authority and the order would last "until every-thing settles down".

But the signs are that will not be soon and police throughout the country on Monday were

placed on top alert.

During the morning, Wahid supporters went on the rampage in his political stronghold of East Java, attacking buildings linked to his political opponents and in one town police fired warnings shots to keep a mob of thousands under control.

In what promises to be yet another vote of no-confidence against the stumbling Muslim cleric, Parliament on Wednesday

is almost certain to press for impeachment hearings against Wahid over the chaotic 19-month rule. Wahid last week offered Vice-President Megawati effective control of Government, but her aides said she will spurn the move. Wahid looks increasingly isolated as he desperately seeks ways to cling to power, and even the military has shown clear signs of siding with his deputy.

Reuters

Wahid threatens to declare emergency

Jakarta, May 27

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT Abdurrahman Wahid on Sunday raised the stakes in his increasingly desperate attempts to hang on to power by threatening to declare a civil emergency if parliament went ahead with efforts to impeach him.

A civil emergency is one step below martial law and would give the police wide-ranging powers of search and arrest, and impose a curfew and press censorship though a civil administration would remain in charge.

But it is far from certain that the security forces, which have been increasingly favoring his estranged vice-president, would follow the order.

"President Abdurrahman Wahid sees a civil emergency as an alternative if a special session is implemented," presidential spokesman Adhie Massardi told reporters. He said if the session went ahead "the reaction from people would be uncontrollable" but added Wahid was still trying to convince MPs to change their minds.

Parliament meets on Wednesday to decide whether to take its two formal censures of Wahid a step further and call on the top legislature, the People's Consultative Assembly, to convene for impeachment hearings.

MPs, almost united in their criticism of Wahid's stumbling 19-month rule, account for 500 of the 700-seat assembly.

They have already pledged to reject his offer to transfer power



Megawati & Suharto: FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS?

to his enigmatic deputy, Megawati Sukarnoputri, which he made on Friday in the hope of staving off the impeachment.

Despite the mounting leadership crisis, Megawati has refused to be rushed into deciding whether to accept the offer. If she rejects the offer, the impeachment hearings are a near certainty. With the crisis over his leadership deepening, Wahid has become increasingly isolated from the political mainstream.

And the powerful military, trying hard to look neutral, has shown clear signs of siding with Megawati who appears like a president-in-waiting. Fears are rising with the political temperature that Indonesia could slide back into the bloody violence that has plagued it since the downfall of long-serving autocrat Suharto three years ago.

Fanatical followers, including

suicide squads, in his political heartland of East Java have repeatedly threatened to hit the streets if he is ousted.

About 1,000 members of the giant Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) which Wahid's grandfather founded, gathered in a peaceful rally in Sunday in the east Javanese port town of Banyuwangi.

"We have to be a Kumbokarno to defend the constitution and President Abdurrahman Wahid," local NU leader KH Zulkarnain told the crowd. He said Wahid supporters were waiting to decide whether to head for the national capital to defend the president. "Parliament is full of no-good people... If they hold the special session, we don't know what will happen," said Yusuf Dahlan, who heads paramilitary guards.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 MAY 2001

Wahid threatens to impose emergency

HD-12
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S.S. Azmi
- Indonesia

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MAY 26. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, has warned that his country will break apart if he is ousted from office.

"One must take this (the threat of the country's break-up) seriously," he said in brief remarks to reporters in Jakarta after a medical check-up today. The President, like many other Indonesians, is awaiting word from the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, on a new power-sharing deal reportedly worked out by the country's Cabinet.

Mr. Wahid, who is growing increasingly desperate to cling on to power, was quoted as saying today that his political power base of East Java and the troubled province of Aceh would break away if the legislature moved to remove him from office.

"(If it goes ahead) the Governor...will appear on television, saying East Java rejects the (likely) special session (of the People's Consultative Assembly or MPR)," Mr. Wahid maintained. Again and again, the President has warned that he might impose a state of emergency in order to dissolve Parliament and call for fresh elections.

However, Mr. Wahid's plans have been stymied by the top brass of the military who have refused to go along with his bizarre

plans which are sure to cause Indonesia more harm. While the exact contours of the power-sharing deal offered to Ms. Megawati remain unclear, it is unlikely that the Vice-President will consent to a simple "decree" announcing a division of responsibilities. Such a division of responsibilities has been attempted earlier, but has made no difference to the status of the Vice-President.

Now, however, the ball is in the Vice-President's court since the House of Representatives meets on May 30 when it is likely to call for a special session of the MPR to impeach the President. "I have said all along I'm ready," the President was quoted as telling reporters when asked if he was ready for a power-sharing arrangement with Ms. Megawati. "(But) I have to set limits. (There will be) no transfer of authorities (sic) and I will determine the broad lines of Government policy," he added.

From the Vice-President's point of view, this is her opportunity to become President. If she lets go the chance this time, then Ms. Megawati may have a long wait ahead of her. Clearly, there is much tension in the air about the direction Indonesia and its politics are going to take. All eyes remain on Ms. Megawati, her decision on the power-sharing offer and the May 30 session of the House of Representatives.

THE HINDU

27 MAY 2001

Wahid, Megawati quit talks

JAKARTA POST/ANN & REUTERS

JAKARTA, May 25. - Indonesia's crippling leadership row today dragged the nation deeper into confusion when President Mr Abdurrahman Wahid and his deputy quit crisis Cabinet talks, raising speculation of a widening split between the two.

Asked if he would declare a state of emergency, which would allow him to dissolve parliament, Mr Wahid said: "Not tonight."

He gave no explanation as he left the Cabinet meeting barely 20 minutes after it began and just a few minutes after Vice President Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri left without comment, apparently to chair a party meeting.

Earlier Mr Wahid denied widespread speculation that he planned a state of emergency - which the armed forces leadership has said publicly it would refuse to implement.

The Cabinet meeting was called to discuss a compromise drafted by a team of seven ministers to head off moves for a special session of the top legislature to consider impeaching Mr Wahid over his stumbling rule.

The meeting continued after Mr Wahid and Ms Megawati left, but it was unclear what decisions

it could take without the two leaders or whether anything had been settled while they were there.

It is uncertain if anything short of sharing power could appease MPs who are almost certain next week to demand an impeachment hearing by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR).

Ms Megawati, the taciturn daughter of founding President Sukarno, automatically replaces Mr Wahid if he falls and, as leader of the largest party, holds his fate in her hands.

Though Ms Megawati and other leading politicians say a special MPR session is virtually unstoppable, the Assembly could still decide just to rap Mr Wahid over the knuckles rather than sack him.

Thousands of Mr Wahid's supporters and opponents are due to rally in the capital on Wednesday and many fear his ouster would plunge the battered country back into bloodshed three years to the month after former President Mr Suharto's violent downfall.

Police are on high alert in Mr Wahid's stronghold of East Java, where thousands of fanatical faithful have raised suicide squads.

Mr Wahid denied rumours earlier during the day that he planned to transfer authority to Vice President Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Wahid may seek SC help

JAKARTA POST
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JAKARTA, May 22. - The Indonesian President, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, may turn to the Supreme Court for legal assistance in facing the House of Representatives, in another desperate attempt at survival.

Minister of justice and human rights, Mr Baharuddin Lopa, said that the President might ask the Supreme Court to issue a ruling on the legality of the House's special committee that probed Mr Wahid's alleged role in two financial scandals known as Bulogate and Bruneigate.

"As the highest judicial organ, I think the Supreme Court can issue a ruling to settle any legal disputes, especially in a case where there is worsening

antagonism between the President and the House," Mr Lopa said on the sidelines of a hearing with the House.

Mr Wahid had reportedly planned to impose a state of emergency, which would have enabled him to dissolve the House, but this was rejected by the military and major political parties. Mr Wahid's political life is in danger as the House is scheduled to convene later this month to evaluate the President's response to its second memorandum of censure.

The House issued the second censure on 30 April after it concluded that the President had failed to heed the initial rebuke handed to him about three months ago. The House Speaker, Mr Akbar Tandjung, has repeatedly hinted that the House

will call for the impeachment of the President by asking the People's Consultative Assembly to convene a special session demanding that Mr Wahid account for his actions.

Mr Wahid has repeatedly protested his innocence and criticised the special committee as being illegal. If the Supreme Court agrees with the President regarding the existence of the committees, then the House will have to drop its censures.

When asked whether such a Supreme Court ruling would be binding, Mr Baharuddin said: "Of course, both parties would be expected to abide by it."

Newly inducted Supreme Court Chief Justice, Mr Bagir Manan, however, has insisted that the court would stay aloof from political issues.

THE STATESMAN

23 MAY 2001

Megawati puts subtle pressure on Wahid

By Amit Baruah ¹⁰⁻¹⁵

SINGAPORE, MAY 21. Slowly, but surely, the Indonesian Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, is piling on the pressure.

The reticent Ms. Megawati, who has so far not directly attacked the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, today gave sufficient indication of her unhappiness with the current state of affairs in the country. Without taking Mr. Wahid's name, the Vice-President said a leader's legitimacy flowed from what he did for the people rather than his personal power.

Of late, there have been reports that a desperate President could do anything — including imposing a state of emergency and dissolving the lower House of Representatives (DPR) — to cling on to power.

In an address to military officers, the Vice-President commented that Indonesia risked becoming the sick man of Asia given the current state of the country's affairs.

The country, she said, needed a leader who would solve the problems of the people rather than accumulate power.

In the meantime, the military brass, disturbed by reports that the President was preparing to sack senior Generals, have begun to distance themselves from the President.

"If he (the President) insists on this (imposing a state of emergency to cling on to power), we will no longer support him," the Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Endiartono Sutarto, was quoted as saying.

As if on cue, the Chief of the Army's Strategic Reserves Command (Kostrad), Lt. Gen. Ryamizard Ryacudu, said the Army



The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid (left), being accompanied by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, during a ceremony at the presidential palace in Jakarta on Monday. — Reuters

would back the "people" in a conflict with the Government, identifying the DPR as the "people's representatives".

"We will maintain loyalty to the President because he was legitimately elected, but if the people make a different demand, we will adjust ourselves accordingly," Lt. Gen. Ryamizard was quoted as telling an "allegiance ceremony" attended by some 800 Kostrad men in Jakarta yesterday.

"A soldier's politics is the na-

tion's politics. Let there not be a single Kostrad soldier who... becomes a traitor to the Republic and the people of Indonesia," the General said.

It is evident that the top brass of the military has decided not to support Mr. Wahid in any extreme step he might take in clinging on to office.

In an editorial entitled, "When enough is enough", *The Jakarta Post* newspaper said in an editorial today: "There is strong reason

to believe that the President, in his current fight with the House of Representatives, will try to preempt the legislature from convening on May 30, when it is expected to call for a special session of the People's Consultative Assembly to start impeachment proceedings against him."

THE HINDU

22 MAY 2001

Megawati hints at bid for top post

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MAY 20. The Indonesian Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, today said she did not have any ambition to become President, but would follow the desires of her party to assume the country's top job.

The Vice-President's remarks come 10 days before the House of Representatives (DPR) is scheduled to meet to ask the upper House or People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) to begin impeachment proceedings against the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid.

Addressing her supporters in Malang, East Java, through a video link from Jakarta, Ms. Megawati was quoted as saying: "As mandated by the (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle; PDI-P) congress — the highest institution of the party — I was asked to be President. "The reality is (becomes) different with this mandate (from her party). I have no ambition to become President except to implement that mandate," she was quoted as saying.

The Vice-President called on party members to join hands in a bid to end the continuing political and economic crisis in Indonesia. "Before we ask other elements of the country, PDI-P members should first consolidate ourselves in helping bring the country out of the crisis... without unity it is difficult for the nation to survive the crisis," she said.

Ms. Megawati also rejected the suggestion that fresh elections held the key to solving the country's problems. "Such an expedited election (polls are due in 2004) could worsen the situation and therefore, will prolong the people's misery," she maintained.

The Vice-President, who returned suddenly



Supporters of the Indonesian Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, unfurl a large banner depicting her father and country's first president, Sukarno, during a rally commemorating his 100th birth anniversary and the anniversary of her Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) in Malang, East Java, on Sunday. Tens of thousands turned out for the mass rally in support of Ms. Megawati. — AP

from Singapore, held meetings with the Army and then the Naval Chief have spoken out in brass as speculation mounted that Mr. Wahid would take some precipitate action to safeguard his position. Indonesia is rife with rumours (which have been strongly denied) that the President wants to reshuffle the military brass, who have strongly opposed Mr. Wahid's plans to dissolve the House of Representatives and impose emergency. First, the Army Chief

While the President has repeatedly denied that he plans to reshuffle the Army leadership or take any other steps to stay on in power, speculation persists about what Mr. Wahid might do in the next couple of days.

THE HINDU

MAY 20

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Will his luck run out?

THE SURVIVAL of the scholar-politician in office will be nothing short of a miracle. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, has been abandoned by his allies, including the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, and left wobbling and alone at the top.

These developments were not unexpected. First censured on February 1, it was evident that the President's reply to the House of Representatives (DPR) did not satisfy the lower House of Parliament. And, within the stipulated three months, the DPR issued a second memorandum of censure after which a third will follow — referring the Wahid "case" to the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), or the upper House, to take up the impeachment process.

The first set of charges against Mr. Wahid related to his alleged involvement in two separate "corruption" scandals; evidence of a rather weak sort was presented against the President. The April 30 memorandum, however, focussed only on the President's style of functioning. It was evident that the deputies had decided to go for the President's jugular.

Around the time the DPR met in Jakarta, several thousand supporters of the President belonging to the Nadhlatul Ulama, a group once headed by Mr. Wahid, gathered in the capital, in a show of support. The threats of violence, mercifully, did not materialise and the activists, most of them coming from east Java, dispersed peacefully.

While the threat of violence has receded, the President, perhaps, is aware that his only support is outside Parliament and not inside it. He did tell his supporters not to indulge in violence, a welcome message for what is seen as a turbulent period in the country's history.

Ms. Megawati decision to withdraw support to Gus Dur, as the President is known, does not

If Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid survives in office it will be nothing short of a miracle. Amit Baruah on the evolving scenario in Indonesia.

seem to have been a sudden decision. Mr. Wahid's style of functioning, often seen as erratic, seems to have led to her decision to join efforts to discipline and, possibly, impeach him.

While there are reports from Jakarta that last-minute efforts to reach a compromise are still being attempted by the President's supporters, Mr. Pramono Anung, a close associate of Ms. Megawati, said in Singapore recently that the Vice-President was not interested in "power-sharing". However, Mr. Pramono also made it clear that the Vice-President wanted to act constitutionally and did not want to speed up a "special session" of the MPR which could impeach Mr. Wahid.

The decision of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) to go by the book is not in concert with the haste displayed by other factions such as the National Mandate Party (PAN) headed by the MPR Speaker, Mr. Amien Rais. Unlike Ms. Megawati, who has not spoken in public against Mr. Wahid, Mr. Amien Rais has had no hesitation in blasting the President.

Addressing a seminar in Singapore on Thursday, Mr. Rais said: "The current President was elected by MPR to serve the people and carry



Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid... besieged.

out the mandate given to him. He has failed to do so and so it is the MPR's duty to call him to task, and if necessary, to hand over the position to his constitutional successor. That person currently is Mrs. Megawati."

Mr. Rais, who has Presidential ambitions himself, stated that he did not believe that the Indonesian military (TNI) did not have the "moral courage" to intervene in the country's politics in case civilian politicians were unable to manage the nation.

Interestingly, Mr. Pramono from the PDI-P said his party did want to send the military back to barracks. "The armed forces must be professional and involved in the defence of the country," he said.

There is little doubt that the military is waiting and watching. However, for now, it appears that jostling politicians are at the centre stage, not the military. The military does back Ms. Megawati, who is known to back the security forces more than the current President.

Indonesia's neighbours are also carefully looking at the direction the country might take. While so far it has held together despite the problems, Indonesia's well-wishers are hoping for a smooth change at the top — one which

will not create more problems for the country. As is well known, Ms. Megawati herself is an untested leader. She does not address people or issues directly. So, you end up in a situation where her policies are articulated through aides and associates.

In a recent article, Mr. Jusuf Wanandi of Jakarta's Centre for Strategic and International Studies, argued: "The country is starting to burst at the seams with all the recent and ongoing conflicts. Given the importance of the President as the highest executive, an immediate change of leadership is critical... this period of transition is one of catharsis for Indonesia. How it will end is uncertain. It will have to run its course before a turnaround can happen."

"Patience is called for in assessing Indonesia. Also, the conviction that the country is not falling part," Mr. Jusuf Wanandi added.

There can be no two opinions that concerns within and outside Indonesia about the country's future are growing. The next few days are likely to be critical. A smooth transition in the country would do much to assure both Indonesians and outsiders that civilian democrats can still run the show.

THE HINDU
13 MAY 2001

House censures Wahid for second time

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MAY 1. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, was formally presented with a second memorandum of censure today by a House of Representatives official after a long sitting of the DPR yesterday.

Barring Mr. Wahid's own party and another small faction, all other parties, including the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) headed by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, supported the second censure move.

The impeachment of the President now looms large unless he resigns or is able to arrive at a last-minute compromise with his detractors, a prospect that looks highly improbable.

Mr. Wahid, who now has one month to respond to the censure memorandum, is expected to answer the criticism levelled against him in the next few days.

There is little doubt that the DPR will once again reject his reply and the drama will then move to the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which can impeach the President. That process too could take a couple of months.

Analysts also believe that rather than face the impeachment process, Mr. Wahid could resign, but so far the combative President has given little indication that he will give in meekly to his critics.

In yesterday's vote, 363 legislators voted in favour of censuring the President again, 52 opposed the motion and another 42 abstained in a House of 500. Most of those who abstained belonged to the military (TNI) faction.

Stating its position, Ms. Megawati's faction contended in the House yesterday:



"After observing the President's behaviour, policies and statements, PDI-P concludes that he failed to address the first censure and calls on Parliament to issue a second censure."

The Golkar party, a ruling instrument created by General Suharto, and now headed by the DPR Speaker, Mr. Akbar Tanjung, said: "The President has completely failed to address the substance of the first censure. Indonesia has to reduce the climate of uncertainty but, unfortunately, the President often contributes to this uncertainty."

The Reform Faction, comprising Islamic factions, took the view: "The President, through his actions and words, has often discredited and mistreated Parliament. To this day, he has not been willing to admit his own failings."

In a bid to appear neutral, the TNI, which backed the first memorandum of censure issued by the DPR on February 1, said: "We realise our roles: safeguarding national integrity and unity from all threats, and to remain neutral in political life or in conflict between the country's politicians."

There is little doubt that the passage of the second memorandum has added to the already tense and complicated political situation in the country.

In an editorial, *The Jakarta Post* today wrote: "By issuing the second censure motion, the House has taken the battle in the ongoing power struggle with the President to a new stage, although it does not necessarily mean that the end is in sight."

"What it does mean is that Abdurrahman's credibility and political legitimacy have been further eroded, which will make his leadership even more difficult, with all the consequences for the country that this entails. What it does mean is that the people in this country must be prepared for an even bumpier ride between now and the conclusion of the power struggle, whenever that may be," the editorial said.

Stating that the Vice-President would succeed the President, the *Post* added: "This is not a mean feat by any measure because Megawati will inherit a nation that is not only deeply entrenched in economic crisis, but also politically fractured, perhaps even more so than when Abdurrahman took power 17 months ago."

THE HINDU

2 MAY 1998

Wahid closer to impeachment

Jakarta, April 30

INDONESIA'S PARLIAMENT moved to censure embattled President Abdurrahman Wahid on Monday, bringing him closer to impeachment and an end to his chaotic 18-month rule.

About 15,000 Wahid supporters marched through the streets of the capital, but dispersed peacefully, quelling fears of bloodshed.

As parliament debated his fate, the 60-year-old Wahid relaxed at the presidential palace listening to his favorite classical music, the official Antara news agency quoted a presidential aide.

By mid-afternoon, the two largest parties -- Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri's Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) and Golkar -- and several minor parties had already backed a second censure over two multi-million graft scandals.

"PDI-P has concluded that the president has really not paid full



AP PHOTO

Supporters of Abdurrahman Wahid at a rally in Jakarta.

attention to the first censure, so PDI-P proposes to the parliament to issue a second censure," said MP, Dwi Ria Latifa.

But she denied the rebuke was

an attempt to bring Wahid's stormy rule to an early end, although many political analysts say impeachment is now likely.

"Of course, there is still a

chance for Gus Dur (Wahid) to survive, but it is very, very slim," political analyst, Amir Santoso said, adding Wahid's best chance of survival was to share power with Megawati.

Newspaper columnist and political analyst, Daniel Dhakidae, said Wahid could still strike a political deal, but was more likely headed for a fall. "In the end, I believe there is going to be an impeachment session."

Wahid will have a month to appease his critics and reply to the second censure before his enemies can push for an impeachment hearing of the top legislature, the People's Consultative Assembly. But the task appears too great. "If he can fix his way of governing, if he could mend the economy, if he could stabilise the nation, if he could save the rupiah, what's wrong then with maintaining Gus Dur?" asked senior Golkar legislator Ekky Syahrudin.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 MAY 2001

Wahid supporters pour into Jakarta

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JAKARTA, APRIL 28. Several thousand supporters of Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, flooded Jakarta today to defend their beleaguered leader, set to face his second parliamentary censure next week.

Trains jam-packed with his fanatical supporters arrived at Senen station in the Capital's centre shouting "Hidup gus Dur" or long live gus Dur, referring to the president by his nickname. Most of Mr. Wahid's followers travelled from his political heartland of east Java, also the base of the country's largest Muslim organisation Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

"From the reports we have got so far, 35,000 people have arrived in Jakarta (in recent days)," the NU member, Mr. Endang Sobirin, was quoted as saying by the official An-

tara news agency on Saturday. The NU leaders are expecting up to 200,000 to attend the gathering ahead of Monday's critical parliamentary session which is likely to bring Mr. Wahid closer to the grim prospect of impeachment. Jakarta was otherwise quiet today, with only minor and peaceful demonstrations. "Things remain under control," a police spokesman said.

Around 40,000 police and troops have been assigned to guard the Capital from Wahid's followers and police have said they will shoot any rioters.

The Cabinet said it feared the censure would push the country back into violence. Parliament first censured Mr. Wahid over two financial scandals in February. He has denied any wrongdoing. Reuters

119-12
**Army 'orchestrated
Timor violence'** 2/2/4

SYDNEY, APRIL 21. Senior Indonesian commanders planned and orchestrated the militia violence that swept East Timor after it voted for independence two years ago, says a United Nations report.

Mr. James Dunn, former Australian diplomat, conducted a five-month investigation for the U.N. and concluded that high-ranking Indonesian officers had begun planning the terror campaign two months before the independence ballot in August 1999.

He named numerous officers who had plotted and supervised the violence, which left more than 1,000 dead and created 250,000 refugees.

He said it was "inconceivable" that Gen. Wiranto, former chief of Indonesia's armed forces, had been unaware of his troops' actions.

The 60-page report, completed four months before East Timor's first elections are due to take place, has not been made public by the U.N. but the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which obtained a copy, published extensive sections Friday. © Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2001

119-12

2 APR 2001

Wahid rejects power-sharing with Megawati

JAKARTA, APRIL 1. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, has refused to bow to demands for more power-sharing with the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, reports said today.

110-16 2/4
"The President said that the separation of powers between the head of state and the head of the government must be based on the Constitution," the presidential spokesman, Mr. Adhi Massardi, said in the *Jakarta Post*.

"If we really want to do that, the Constitution must be changed first and the amended arrangement could then be implemented after 2004," Massardi added, referring to the end of Mr. Wahid's five-year term.

After a decree of the National Assembly issued at its annual session in August last year, Mr. Wahid agreed to delegate more administrative powers to the Vice President. — AFP

THE HINDU

- 2 APR 2001

Fears of fresh trouble in Jakarta

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MARCH 22. The domestic political situation in Indonesia has dissuaded the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, from travelling abroad. Over the last couple of weeks, there have been demonstrations for and against the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, in Jakarta and other cities in the troubled country.

The fears of fresh demonstrations have created concerns in Jakarta. Yesterday, a senior Government Minister briefed Jakarta-based diplomats and promised them that the Government was committed to maintain law and order.

It is pretty obvious that the international community remains concerned about the political uncertainties in Indonesia.

There are indications that members of Ms. Megawati's party are not keen that she travel abroad at a time when the country is going through a period of political uncertainty. Currently, Mr. Wahid

has been served with a memorandum of censure by Parliament to which he is said to be drafting a reply.

While the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), headed by the Vice-President, supported the serving of the memorandum, the party has since said they want to proceed "constitutionally" in the matter.

Other faction leaders like Mr. Amien Rais and Mr. Akbar Tanjung, however, want that a second memorandum be served as early as possible on Mr. Wahid.

Yesterday and today, the Defence Minister, Mr. Mohamad Mahfud, added to the confusion by stating that Mr. Wahid was prepared to step down if it was "proved" that Mr. Wahid had violated the Constitution.

"However, if they (the Opposition factions) cannot find constitutional grounds, then the President will remain until 2004," Mr. Mahfud, who is prone to or is made to make controversial statement, reiterated in Jakarta today.

THE HINDU

MAR 22

President Wahid pledges to fight impeachment move

Jakarta, March 21

INSIDE A white-columned palace ringed by razor wire, President Abdurrahman Wahid pledged on Tuesday to stay in power and said a campaign to impeach him over two financial scandals was unconstitutional and doomed to fail.

"They cannot get rid of me," he said of rival political party bosses plotting his downfall as the sprawling southeast Asian nation lurches from one crisis to another. In an interview with the associated press, Wahid warned that the world's fourth most populous country, already gripped by economic gloom as well as ethnic and separatist fighting, might well break apart if he was forced out. He brushed aside street protests against him and dismissed rumours of a rift with vice president Megawati Sukarnoputri. "There are several thousand people who would like to see me dumped, but (the majority of) people don't like it," he said. "My job as president is to protect the constitution and the constitution says that Indonesia must have territorial integrity ... Because of that I won't resign."

"Almost blind, weakened by strokes and unable to walk unaided, Wahid, 61, is an unlikely political warrior. Even so, he is talking and acting tough. In the past few weeks, he has fired two ministers for disloyalty and

2213
threatened to dismiss a third.

Still, many analysts say his days in office are numbered and impeachment proceedings are likely to start within a few months. Yet Wahid remains optimistic about his own survival, as well as the chance of his homeland shaking off chaos and becoming a solid democracy in less than a generation. He said he has been lobbying lawmakers to disobey their party chiefs and vote against impeachment. Ultimately a majority in Parliament would back him, he predicted.

Wahid stresses he has done nothing wrong and denies he is implicated in two multimillion-dollar corruption scandals. In any case, he argues, according to the constitution the president can be impeached only for treason. "But I didn't do that," he said, adding he would soon present a detailed rebuttal of the allegations in parliament.

On February 1, the legislature overwhelmingly issued a memorandum censuring Wahid, starting a long process toward his possible impeachment. Wahid said on Tuesday the memorandum was part of a political game by the Parliament, which he once likened to a kindergarten. "If it is studied by a logical man, a reasonable man, then they will see that there is no argument at all for putting me to the special session," Wahid said.

Even so, political leaders

seem determined to push Wahid out. On Tuesday they agreed to draft a second censure memorandum, the last step before impeachment. Wahid was elected 17 months ago, in the wake of the 1998 downfall of the former dictator Suharto amid protests and riots. Many believed that the Muslim leader with a record of tolerance and bridge-building would soon roll back the excesses of military-backed authoritarianism, entrench democracy, end endemic graft and fix the moribund economy. But things quickly soured as his fragile coalition government bickered and Wahid made increasingly erratic decisions.

Political reform has all but stalled and the international monetary fund has shelved a crucial loan program over concerns about a lack of economic change. Suharto, now 79, has dodged prosecution for corruption on medical grounds. His son, Tommy, is a fugitive. Wahid admitted on Tuesday that both cases were symbolically important to the establishment of rule of law and promised that Suharto would soon undergo even health tests. Tommy would eventually be captured, Wahid said.

With the end of Suharto's rule, communal conflicts have exploded across the 3,200-mile-long collection of islands that make up Indonesia.

AP

WAHID'S TROUBLES

518 Prelude to parliamentary politics 21/3

APART from his own style of running the government, which has been described as erratic and incompetent, some of the political tension that Wahid's 17 month rule has generated has to do with partisan rivalries. In the middle of last year he dismissed two ministers, belonging to Megawati's PDI-P and Golkar respectively, inviting strong criticism from Akbar Tandjung, leader of Golkar, who also got the House to raise the matter officially. His immediate problems have to do, however, with his personal masseur, who reportedly siphoned off 35 billion rupiah from Bulog, the official logistic agency, and a \$ 2 million gift that he received from Mohammed Bolkihah, Sultan of Brunei. This is chickenfeed compared to what Suharto and his children were able to make in their time, but it indicates that financial malfeasance is now a sensitive issue in Indonesian politics especially for those who claim to have brought about the anti Suharto revolution.

This is going to be a partisan battle fought on the streets as much as in the two elected bodies. If it turns violent, as it promises to do, it may bring Indonesia's nascent democracy to a dead halt with consequences no one can foretell — the army waits and watches. So far, partisan rivalries were contained by the consensus that brought anti-Suharto forces to power — that the Golkar system of governing the country, through close collaboration between the army and the party apparatus, must be dismantled. Now that the Golkar is a spent force, the political system may witness the dissipation of this consensus and the spirit of cooperation between the principal political forces that went with it. The campaign against Wahid, may become the precursor of the more routine kind of democratic politics to come.

Defiant Wahid brushes off impeachment attempt

JAKARTA, MARCH 20. Struggling to hold together the world's fourth most-populous nation, Indonesian's beleaguered President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, said he was confident he would defeat any effort to impeach him over financial scandals.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Mr. Wahid said he had lobbied individual lawmakers and was prepared to fight an impeachment measure in court, if needed.

Mr. Wahid was elected after the downfall of Indonesia's former dictator, Gen. Suharto. With the end of Gen. Suharto's iron-fisted rule, ethnic conflicts have exploded in the islands. Guerilla wars for independence are raging in two provinces.

In the restive province of Aceh, eight more people have died in the fighting, officials said on Tuesday. Two helicopters carrying the Indonesian Energy Minister and his entourage

were slightly damaged by gunfire, but no one was hurt. The widespread unrest and political scandals have led to street demonstrations for and against Mr. Wahid's 17-month-old administration. On Tuesday, a crowd of about 1,700 gathered at Parliament in support of Mr. Wahid. Many analysts have raised fears about the street clashes between rival sides and have said Mr. Wahid's days are numbered.

But speaking at his state palace, which was heavily guarded and ringed with razor wire, Mr. Wahid claimed the Opposition against him was limited to the leaders of some rival political factions and would eventually fizzle.

"They cannot get rid of me," he said. "Please remember there is a third branch of the government — the judiciary." Last month, Parliament issued a memorandum censuring Mr. Wahid over his alleged involvement in two multimillion-dollar scandals. — AP



Indonesia's President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, being interviewed in Jakarta on Tuesday. — AP

THE HINDU

21 MAR 2001

7-20
Fresh violence
claims 15
in Aceh 19/3
5-5

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JAKARTA, March 18. - Fresh fighting between rebels and security forces left about 15 people dead in Indonesia's Aceh province, police and human rights workers said today.

Local police chief, Lt Col Hussein said, officers shot three rebels to death yesterday, on the outskirts of the provincial capital Banda Aceh. A civilian was also killed in a separate gunfight nearby.

Human rights workers said bodies of four villagers were found yesterday in southern Aceh, about 1,750 km northwest of Jakarta. The victims appeared to have been shot dead. In eastern Aceh, seven civilians were killed yesterday. Human rights activist, Mr Nasruddin Badai said the victims were executed by Indonesian security forces after being arrested and taken away.

Unrest in Borneo: Dayak tribesmen have continued their killing spree in Borneo, murdering about eight migrants, adds AFP from Jakarta.

19 MAR 2001

19 MAR 2001

An archipelago's angst

INDONESIA IS in a state of prolonged uncertainty. There is no end in sight to the troubles of the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, or those faced by his country. Of late, the Opposition and student demonstrators have upped the ante in the streets of Jakarta and other cities only to be countered by the supporters of the President, better known by his nickname of "Gus Dur".

His troubles and those of Indonesia are not new. Separatist violence in Aceh and Irian Jaya, the ethnic cleansing by the Dayaks against the Madurese in Central Kalimantan and the earlier communal violence in Maluku are all signs of how grave the problems of Indonesia are.

Mr. Abdurrahman, of course, is now facing tremendous political pressure. A compromise candidate, the President, a moderate man, is aware that powerful forces are working to oust him as demonstrated by the memorandum of censure presented to him by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). For his part, the President has done little to show that he is serious about addressing the concerns expressed by many well-wishers in Indonesia. His continuing travels abroad at a time when Kalimantan was burning have come at a cost to his reputation.

Speaking to the press in Jakarta earlier this week, Gus Dur warned that his ouster would lead to the "disintegration" of Indonesia, with several provinces going to announce their immediate independence. "I will not resign," he said after a Cabinet meeting, adding, "I have to preserve the integrity of Indonesia."

As the President rejected calls for his resignation, one of his main opponents, Mr. Amien Rais, MPR Speaker, conceded that Parliamentary factions had been unable to fast-forward a session of the upper House to censure the President again. "Due to the absence of constitutional grounds, the House should continue with the process leading to a second memorandum," he was quoted as saying in Jakarta.

The Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) has already made it clear that it does not support another session of the MPR to serve a second memorandum on Gus Dur. Under the Indonesian system, if the President does not reply to the first memorandum in three months only then can a second censure document be presented. The Constitution does not permit the shortening of this period.

Interestingly, a representative of the 39-strong military faction in the MPR, which supported the serving of a censure memorandum on the President, did not support bringing forward the session. "Our faction's main concern is to salvage the nation and the state instead of (achieving) short-term political objectives," Major-

she becomes President.

It is also clear that while there are those who are taking advantages of the President's physical handicaps, there is no guarantee that a successor to Mr. Gus Dur will be able to deal with Indonesia's problems any better. The military, for one, would like to retrieve the earlier powers it held

responsibility for what is happening. They should recognise that if indeed Mr. Wahid is to blame, it is because he is the reflection of the Indonesian people and an epitome of our times.

"He is more than half-blind — many of us in Indonesia are, not visually, but to our faults, to the nature of our problems, and the



Abdurrahman Wahid with Megawati Sukarnoputri... holding on for now.

General Budi Harsono, who represented the military at the meeting of the Parliamentary factions, said.

It would appear that the military, which is veering around to supporting the Vice-President in the power struggle (Ms. Megawati will be President if Gus Dur were to resign or is impeached), is playing a game of wait and watch. And since Ms. Megawati herself does not want to get rid off Gus Dur in an unconstitutional fashion, the military faction's position would appear to reinforce her position.

The Vice-President would also be aware of the possibility that she might meet the same fate as that of Gus Dur since her PDI-P, though the largest faction with 185 seats in the MPR, will remain dependent on other parties such as Golkar and that of Mr. Amien Rais to continue in office even if

during the reign of General Suharto, powers that Gus Dur may not have been able to curtail but has certainly diluted.

Writing in the *International Herald Tribune*, Ms. Julia I. Suryakusuma, a sociologist, argued: "The time has come for Indonesians as a whole to take some re-

There is no end in sight to Abdurrahman Wahid's troubles or those faced by Indonesia... But there is no guarantee that a successor will be able to deal any better,
writes AMIT BARUAH.

need to change in fundamental ways."

"People are baying for a change in leadership... if this is the only way we can use out newfound freedom — to change our leaders by whatever means, without changing, for example, our political system and behaviour — then all we are doing is substituting one leader who reflects the people for another leader who reflects the people," the academic added.

While this is a real problem for Indonesians to grapple with, often political realities are quite different. They are often the result of political strategies and the fallout of events. Gus Dur may be able to cling on to political power in the months to come. But that hold will be tenuous and subject to intense scrutiny and pressure from his opponents and "allies" within the Government.

Wahid warns forces over handling of protesters

JAKARTA POST
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JAKARTA, March 15. — Indonesian President Mr Abdurrahman Wahid on Wednesday warned the security forces over the handling of protesters after reports reached the palace that several students had been beaten by the security forces.

"The President has ordered the security forces to avoid any casualty in dealing with protesters," palace spokesman Mr Wimar Witoelar said. Despite reports of casualties, the President was pleased to learn that there were no fatalities during Wednesday's protest demonstrations in Jakarta, Wimar said as quoted by Antara news agency.

The President, he said, expressed the hope that today's process of learning to become a democracy could run well and bring benefits to all.

Mr Wahid did not complain about the noisy demonstrations near the palace,

although he was worried about the possibility of bigger rallies, said Mr Wimar.

Call for critics' death

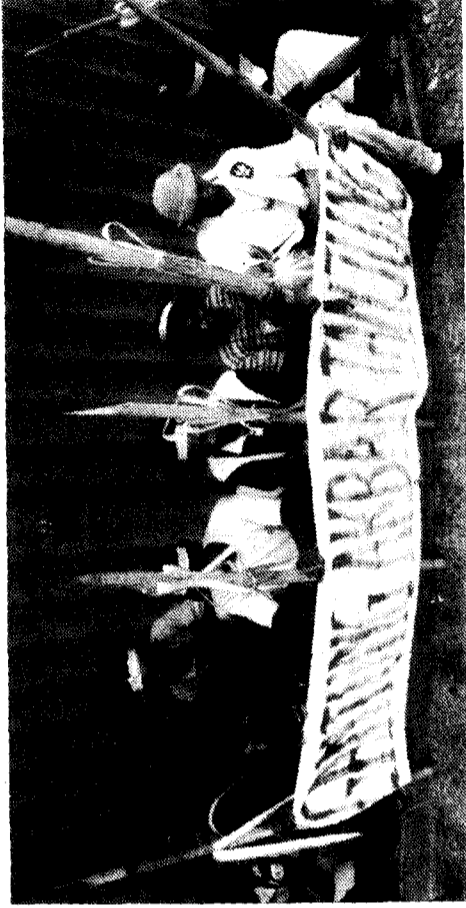
Thousands of supporters of Indonesia's embattled President Mr Abdurrahman Wahid rallied today calling for one of his leading critics to be killed.

In the port-town of Ketapang about 3,000 demonstrators, carrying sickles and machetes, vowed to attack Mr Amien Rais, the Speaker of the nation's highest legislative body and one of Mr Wahid's most outspoken opponents.

"We're going to wage war against Amien Rais's followers," protest organiser Mr Muhammad Haikun shouted at the crowd. "Kill Amien Rais!"

The demonstrators blockaded the port in the town, about 900 kilometres east of Jakarta. About 100 armed police officers watched the protest but did not intervene.

Police in the town said several houses



President Abdurrahman Wahid's supporters hold sharpened bamboo poles and a banner which reads "Hang Akbar Tanjung", referring to the leader of the Golkar Party, in Ketapang (East Java) on Thursday. — AP/PTI

es belonging to people opposed to Mr Wahid were marked with red crosses late last night by an unknown group — a sign of possible violence between Wahid supporters and opponents.

Another group of Wahid followers raided the nearby office of the Golkar Party, which was the central pillar of Mr Suharto's regime and is now leading the charge against Mr Wahid.

16 MAR 2001

Manila gears up for Estrada arrest

S.B.M.
Phe-Lyn
57-11

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

MANILA, March 15. — The Philippines government is bracing for a possible backlash should they move to arrest the ousted President, Mr Joseph Estrada, over the corruption cases.

It has tasked the Philippine National Police to set up a special unit to deal with public disturbances should Mr Estrada be indicted for corruption and arrested.

Pro-Estrada demonstrators held rallies at the Supreme Court earlier this month following the court's ruling that Mr Estrada no longer enjoyed presidential immunity against arrest.

The police team would deal with street protests and other possible contingencies, PNP chief, Mr Leandro Mendoza, said today.

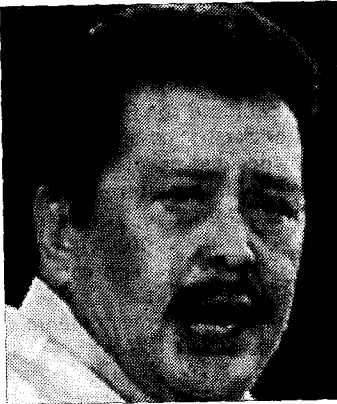
He had earlier expressed concern that Mr Estrada's supporters could cause dis-

turbances in the streets if the ex-President was arrested.

The government is planning to file charges of large-scale corruption, bribery and embezzlement against Mr Estrada. This will all be covered under the general charge of "plunder", a non-bailable offence that is punishable by death.

Mr Ed Urieta, sheriff of the anti-graft court called Sandiganbayan, said in an interview with the Inquirer that "there is the possibility of marathon demonstrations or camp-ins" during the Estrada trial.

Pro-Estrada groups have reportedly threatened to barricade Mr Estrada's suburban Manila home to shield him from arrest.



Mr Joseph Estrada

Despite his ouster on 20 January over a growing corruption scandal, Mr Estrada still retains a substantial following especially among the urban poor.

Mr Mendoza said if Mr Estrada was arrested to face corrup-

tion charges, this would be the job of the sheriffs of the special anti-graft court where he would be tried.

The justice secretary, Mr Hernando Perez, said many prospective witnesses were still too afraid to come forward to testify against the deposed leader.

"There are many prospective witnesses who are either afraid or embarrassed and do-

n't want to testify," he said in a radio interview.

Mr Perez said some of these prospective witnesses, including "one of the rumoured mistresses of former president Estrada," were negotiating with the government through emissaries about testifying. He did not identify them.

He said they were not forcing any reluctant witnesses to testify but persuading them to discuss the option with their lawyers.

While the Supreme Court has ruled that Mr Estrada can face criminal charges, it has prevented the government from filing such charges until after 23 March.

Opposition leaders have charged that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo wants to jail Mr Estrada quickly to avoid the prospect of having to arrest him just before national elections on 14 May where pro-Estrada candidates, including his wife, are running for the Senate.

THE STATESMAN

7 5 MAR 2001

Wahid admitted to misusing state money

JAKARTA POST & AFP
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JAKARTA, March 16. - Indonesia's former national police chief told state prosecutors that President Mr Abdurrahman Wahid had admitted giving funds from a state agency to a businesswoman friend, a report said today.

The payment is one of several in the \$ 3.5 billion scandal in which Mr Wahid was believed to be implicated, and which led Parliament to censure him, setting in motion a process that could end in his impeachment.

Former police chief, Mr Rusdiharjo, repeated his claim that Mr Wahid confessed to handing over the funds, saying he did not realise they were from the state food agency Bulog.

"He admitted that he was wrong, saying 'excuse me...I can't see, so I don't know who issued the cheque, I just handed it over,'" Mr Rusdiharjo was quoted as saying in the *Jakarta Post*.

Meanwhile, the President dismissed the forestry minister Mr Nurmahmudi Ismail on Thursday saying there were different visions of forestry issues between the two, defence minister Mr Moh. Mahfud MD, said on Friday. He declined to give further details. Mr Wahid also refused to comment. Mr Mahfud said Mr Wahid would formally announce the dismissal later on Friday after returning from a trip to South Sumatra.



Mr Abdurrahman Wahid in Mecca on Friday. The Indonesian President had gone to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj. - AP/PTI

THE STATESMAN

17 MAR 2001

Opp. gives Wahid a little breathing space

G-3 19/3
Jakarta, March 13 (Reuters): Be-leaguered Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid won some breathing space today when his powerful chief political foe conceded it was impossible to call an early session of the top legislature to impeach him.

The comments by Amien Rais, who heads the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), give Wahid at least a few more months and appear to rule out an early sitting of the assembly. "The MPR can't take the initiative to bring forward the special session because we could not find any house rules to stipulate such," Rais said.

A special session was mooted after parliament censured the increasingly embattled Wahid last

month over two graft scandals.

Indonesia's first democratically elected leader is under mounting pressure to step down after just 16 turbulent and increasingly bloody months into a five year term. The instability has rocked financial markets, driven the rupiah and stocks to two-year lows and prompted the army chief to warn that the military would take control of security from the overstretched police if the nation descended further into chaos.

Rais helped engineer Wahid's surprise rise to power, but has since become one of his most outspoken critics and has been pushing for the MPR to meet within weeks rather than wait the few months specified by the constitu-

tion. In fresh protests in the capital, violence flared briefly when police fired tear gas after demonstrators hurled Molotov cocktails at them during a rally in central Jakarta.

Several people were wounded, some knocked unconscious, in clashes with police, who also attacked journalists covering the protest outside the headquarters of the former ruling Golkar party. Separately and earlier in the day, more than 1,000 students massed in the grounds of parliament for a second day of largely peaceful protests to demand that Wahid steps down.

Across town, a similarly-sized group of pro-Wahid protesters rallied outside the presidential palace to voice their support for the frail Muslim cleric.

They were expected to be joined by supporters from the 40-million strong Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) — the largest Muslim group in the world's largest Muslim nation — who were expected to arrive in Jakarta from their East Java heartland.

THE TELEGRAPH

14 MAR 2001

Indonesia may collapse: Minister

ACHMAD SUKARSONO
JAKARTA, MARCH 12

INDONESIA'S Chief security minister warned the country was on brink of collapse as thousands of pro and anti-government protesters flooded the streets of Jakarta on Monday.

Protesters hurled rocks at each other outside the presidential palace leaving several people suffered minor injuries, but there no reports of all-out clashes or other trouble amid security.

"Without... stability, law and security, our country will become a sea of mayhem, violence and worry," the leading *Kompas* daily quoted Chief security minister and retired general Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono saying.

"This uncertainty will have a severe impact, not only on the political front but also in our economic, social and security fields," the *Jakarta Post* newspaper quoted him as saying.

Yudhoyono said last month's parliamentary censure of President Abdurrahman Wahid over his role in two graft scandals — which could trigger his impeachment — was not only a blow to the Muslim cleric but the entire government.

The political instability and ongoing communal violence have rocked financial markets, driving the rupiah through 11,000 against the dollar, its weakest in more than two years. It was trading at 11,210/11,510 by 0515 GMT.

The stock market has also hit a two-year low, falling below the psychologically important 400 point mark. By 0450 GMT, the composite index



Indonesian students shout anti-Wahid slogans as they march in central Jakarta on Monday demanding his ouster — Reuters

had fallen 5.5 percent to 391.44 points.

Monday's protests are the latest in a series attacking Wahid's failure to drag the country of economic despair and quell communal bloodshed that has killed thousands. Witnesses said about 5,000 students rallied to demand the ouster of Wahid, under increasing political pressure over his erratic 16-month rule. Most massed near the presidential palace in central Jakarta.

Nearby, more than 500 Wahid supporters burned effigies of the President's main political enemies, including parliamentary speaker Akbar Tandjung and the head of the top legislature Amien Rais. Both men are former Wahid allies.

Parliament censured Wahid in February over his role in two graft scandals, a rebuke that could lead to impeachment.

The anti-Wahid protesters, who said they planned to occupy the presidential palace for a day, also demanded the government drop a 20 percent fuel price hike planned for April. But protesters have so far made no attempt to break into the palace grounds, which is guarded by more than 2,500 riot police.

However, Wahid on Monday said that he had no intention of resigning and urged the Vice-President to play a more active role in the government. "I don't want to resign. I want to maintain this country's integrity," he said. "In the cabinet meeting, I have ordered Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri to be proactive in running this government," Wahid said.

— Reuters

INDIAN EXPRESS

13 MAR 2001

INDONESIA / PARTIES DISCUSS LEADERSHIP CHANGE

Support grows for Megawati

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MARCH 3. A meeting between leaders of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) led by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, the National Mandate Party of Mr. Amien Rais, and General Suharto's Golkar party, has raised the issue of a change in leadership in Indonesia.

While it remains unclear about the agreement reached at the meeting in Jakarta on Friday, it is evident that the issue of the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, continuing in office, did come up for discussion.

"I guess the people of this nation should mentally prepare themselves to face another change of national leadership," Mr. Amien Rais, who is also the Speaker of the upper House of Parliament, said after the meeting.

Mr. Rais, who is an Islamic hardliner, chose not to give details about the meeting to reporters; he only said that there was an "unspoken conclusion" that if change of leadership is to happen, it should take place in a prudent and constitutional manner.

Mr. Wahid, who is away on a foreign tour, has received considerable flak for continuing with his travels despite the killings of over 450 persons in ethnic violence in Central Kalimantan province.

The President has already been served with a memorandum calling for his explanation in two corruption-related issues by Parliament. In case Mr. Wahid does not reply, another memorandum can be served on him, and then a possible process of impeachment could begin.

Apparently, one of the breakthroughs at the meeting was that the Islamic parties dropped their objection to Ms. Megawati, "a woman", becoming the President of Indonesia.

"Muslim people would never have a problem with a female leader, particularly if she were Muslim too," Mr. Hidayat Nurwahid, Justice Party chairman, was quoted as saying. "Since Mega (as the Vice-President is popularly known in Indonesia) is a true Muslim, we do not see any problem in supporting her to replace Gus Dur (the President's nickname)," he said.

AP, PTI report.

In what could be a far reaching move, the U.S. administration is reported to be toying with idea of encouraging the Indonesian military to take over the reins of power to prevent the nation from breaking apart, media reports said.

The Washington Post newspaper reported on Friday that the Bush administration was appalled by the brutal ethnic violence in In-

donesia and Mr. Wahid's failure to take decisive action.

To prevent the nation of 214 million from breaking apart and plunging into chaos, the U.S. was reportedly thinking of dumping Mr. Wahid and turning to the military to restore order and preserve the country.

The paper, however, warned against any such action and urged the Bush administration to instead help Mr. Wahid.

Meanwhile, about 6,000 Madurese settlers boarded navy ships on Saturday to flee a bloody rampage by Dayak natives on Indonesia's Borneo island.

Authorities promised the refugees will be able to return, but the fear left behind by the massacres made that scenario seem unlikely.

Two ships carrying 7,000 refugees departed the central Kalimantan town of Sampit on Friday for east Java. An additional two warships were set to leave Sampit on Saturday carrying 6,000 refugees.

The Dayak campaign to rid central Kalimantan province of Madurese has largely succeeded, with an estimated 50,000 people having been driven from their homes. Several thousand Madurese refugees were still languishing in a disease-infested camp in Sampit, waiting for ships to evacuate them.



Madurese refugees fleeing Central Kalimantan and (right) an Indonesian soldier displays a Dayak murder weapon.

Indonesia burns, its leaders slumber

THE KILLING fields of Kalimantan are a telling commentary on the state of Indonesia. For 11 days as the violence raged, the authorities did nothing. Indonesia, it appeared, had no Government; the law of the jungle was allowed to prevail in Central Kalimantan province.

The indigenous Dayak population, furious with migrant Madurese settlers, embarked on what can only be called a killing spree aimed at ousting those who had been settled by the Government in Central Kalimantan. As the debate raged in Indonesia on whether or not the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, should return home from his foreign tour, the Dayaks, it appeared, lived and operated in another world.

They went about their job systematically, killing 118 Madurese in one go after the refugees came out of the jungles. Their bodies were dumped where they were killed with machetes. Some reports even speak of heads being displayed as trophies by the Dayaks. An Associated Press reporter quoted an eyewitness about the killings in Parenggean: "As they got down from the trucks they were killed right way.... Chop chop! There was no way they could run. They fell as they were chopped."

"After the Parenggean refugees had been in the jungles for three days, local Government officials secured an agreement with the Dayaks to allow the Madurese to be evacuated peacefully.... Believ-

ing the authorities promise to protect them, about 390 (refugees) emerged from the jungle on Sunday.

"But a few hours later, about 60 Dayaks armed with homemade weapons arrived at the (Government) office... they cut off a woman's head and kicked it down the street... the outnumbered police fled the building without firing a shot. The Dayaks then herded 118 of the refugees onto trucks and drove them to a nearby soccer field. They forced the Madurese

who forcibly split and distributed ethnic communities around Indonesia to weaken their communal power. Ironically, the idea was that this would strengthen the nation by fostering a common Indonesian nationality at the expense of independent ethnic identities. But it didn't work. Rather than bringing various ethnicities together as countrymen, the forced mixing is tearing Indonesia apart," *The Asian Wall Street Journal* said in an editorial.

As Indonesians and the world

conditions to the police and the military, who stood and watched the violence, is a damning indictment of the inability of the Government to perform its most fundamental duty — ensuring the safety of life and limb. For its part, the military would be only too happy to expose the inadequacies in a civilian, democratic structure.

As one Indonesian analyst put it, the Government had taken on the role of the Red Cross — it was merely acting to evacuate its citizens. Whatever be the grievances of the Dayaks, and there are many, there is no place for ethnic cleansing in today's world — that message was, unfortunately, not sent out by the custodians of the law.

Was Gus Dur (the President's nickname) allowing Ms. Megawati, waiting in the wings to take over, to preside over a messy situation? Was politics governing the President's decision to continue with his foreign tour at all costs?

Neighbours believe that the country is drifting along; the absence of leadership can create problems for the entire region — given the fact that Indonesia, with its 210-million-strong population, is easily the largest country in South East Asia.

Indonesia's leaders seem to have failed their people. The violence in Kalimantan adds to the long list of problems in Aceh, Irian Jaya and in the Maluku islands. Where is this troubled country headed?

Indonesia's top leadership appeared to be playing a game of one-upmanship as the Dayaks were massacring the Madurese, writes AMIT BARUAH.

out of the vehicles and killed them."

A total of 469 people have so far been killed, the toll, in fact, could be much higher. It is not for the first time that such killings have taken place — 3,000 people were killed in 1997 in Kalimantan.

Clearly, the Suharto era policy of resettling people from the islands of Java and Madura to relieve population pressure has failed. The industrious Madurese, it would appear, have marginalised the Dayaks even further with logging companies taking over their land and forests.

"The roots of the current crisis were created by General Suharto,

focused on the sheer barbarity of the crimes, the country's top leadership, it appeared, was playing a game of one-upmanship. The President declared from one foreign capital after another that he had been told by senior Ministers that there was no need for him to return home; that the situation was being exaggerated by the press.

For her part, the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, acting as the Head of State in the absence of Mr. Wahid, visited Central Kalimantan only on Friday, after everything was over. In any case, the inability of Ms. Megawati to issue clear instruc-

Jakarta mulls emergency in Borneo

FROM DARREN WHITESIDE

Sampit (Indonesia), Feb. 28 (Reuters): Indonesia's government said today it was considering a civil emergency for Borneo where police have shot rioters to try stop a wave of ethnic violence that has killed hundreds.

Chief security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said the government would decide tomorrow whether to impose a civil emergency in Central Kalimantan, where indigenous Dayaks have slaughtered Madurese immigrants in 10 days of ethnic savagery. Civil emergency is one step down from martial law.

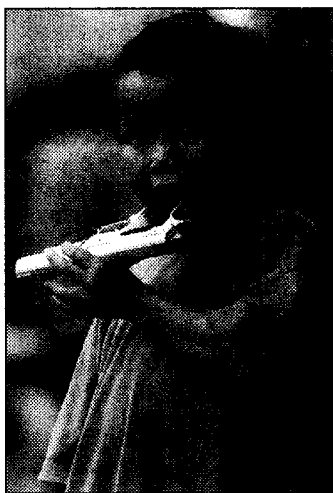
Yudhoyono told reporters Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri would also visit the province tomorrow.

Police spokesman inspector-general Didi Widayadi said five rioters were shot yesterday in the town of Sampit and the provincial capital Palangkaraya. One was killed.

"Police shot five people who were involved in disorder yesterday. Three in Sampit and two in Palangkaraya. One of them died," Widayadi said in Jakarta today.

Widayadi threatened to prosecute any personnel who failed to take tough action to stem tide of violence.

He did not say if those shot were Dayaks, the descendants of feared headhunters who have often beheaded their Madurese victims and ripped out their



A Madurese boy plays with a toy gun in a refugee camp in Sampit, Borneo, on Wednesday. (Reuters)

hearts. Criticism of President Abdurrahman Wahid also mounted today, with politicians and respected religious figures slamming the Muslim cleric for refusing to cut short a two-week overseas trip to deal with the Borneo bloodshed.

Widayadi said troops would be withdrawn from the river town of Sampit, scene of most of the killings and where soldiers and police exchanged fire yesterday.

He said this had nothing to do with the incident, adding it had been planned because Sampit was no longer as volatile and that troops were needed elsewhere in the province.

THE TELEGRAPH

1 MAR 2001

Army-police clash mars Borneo peace effort

REUTERS

JAKARTA, Feb. 27. - A gunfight broke out today between Indonesian police and soldiers entrusted with restoring peace to Borneo island, where ethnic bloodshed has killed hundreds in the last nine days.

An unknown number of people were injured in the clash at the Central Kalimantan river port town of Sampit, north-east of Jakarta, national police spokesman, inspector-general Mr Didi Widayadi, said.

"It was a misunderstanding between police and soldiers, there were some shooting casualties, but at this stage I can't confirm the number", Mr Didi Widayadi said.

Mr Widayadi also confirmed that the indigenous Dayaks had massacred 118 Madurese immigrants trying to flee the bloodshed over the weekend.

"They (the Dayaks) were in a trance... running amok. They did not realise what they had

done. There were 118 victims from the incident," he said, adding that the 10 policemen sent to protect the refugees fled when the attack took place.

Many of the dead have been beheaded and hearts have been ripped from some corpses.

Estimates of the total number of dead - almost all Madurese - over the nine days vary widely, and it is not clear if the 118 massacre victims are included in earlier estimates of 400 killed.

Earlier today, mobs of Dayaks torched homes abandoned by Madures, in the provincial capital, Palangkaraya, screaming "Long live the Dayaks!"

After doing almost nothing to stop the violence since it started, security forces today began seizing weapons, fanning through the city and confiscating hundreds of swords and spears from Dayaks.

"No one is now allowed to bring weapons onto the streets.

This operation will go on," Palangkaraya police chief, JA Sumampouw said.

Vice president visit: Indonesian vice president, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri will soon be paying a visit to southern Borneo, an official said today.

"The vice president is in charge of the peace restoration process there. She is preparing to see the location herself, soon," chief politics minister Mr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono told hundreds of Megawati loyalists at a function.

He did not give any further details.

Ms Megawati is in charge of the country, while the President Mr Abdurrahman Wahid's is on a two-week visit to Africa and the Middle East. He is due back this week.

Earlier this week, Mr Yudhoyono himself visited the scene of the latest outbreak of violence in the province of Central Kalimantan which has left many dead.

THE STATESMAN

28 FEB 2001

Communal carnage in Borneo jeopardises Indonesian unity

By Harvey Stockwin

HONG KONG: Back in the 1960s, visiting the traditional log houses on stilts of the Dayak community in the jungles of Malaysian Borneo, you could still occasionally see the skull of a human head hanging on the wall. A couple of times, I saw typical pre-war thin-rimmed Japanese glasses adorning some skulls. It was a reminder that during World War II, the Dayaks had reverted to the head-hunting ways of their ancestors as they failed to "welcome" the "liberation" supposedly provided by the Japanese Imperial Army.

At the time of my visits, amidst the armed confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia, rumour had it that the Dayaks were not above a little head-hunting against Indonesian infiltrators. But it was widely assumed that, amidst increased modernisation and education, the head-hunting habit had been firmly relegated to the past. This week, President Abdurrahman Wahid's leadership was once again shown to be inept and self-indulgent, a new example of ethnic cleansing got underway, the unity of Indonesia continued to unravel, and South East Asian stability was increasingly placed in jeopardy as the Dayaks in Indonesian Borneo resurrected their old head-hunting habit with a vengeance.

Numerous Indonesian and foreign eye-witnesses report that, amidst renewed communal carnage, the bodies of many headless men, women and even children have been seen. One group of foreign journalists was "welcomed" by Dayaks waving a freshly severed head. There is no knowing how many have been killed, and current death tolls of over 200 dead are an unreliable guide to an increasingly grim and widespread reality. The killings appear to have begun in the town of Sampit in Central Kalimantan (Borneo) last Sunday.

As has happened several times in the last decade, the Dayaks attacked the immigrants from Madura, a crowded island east of the

main island of Java. The Madurese were transported in significant numbers to Kalimantan under the transmigration policy adopted during the 33-year rule of former President Suharto. The rationale for transmigration was to lessen the overcrowding of Java and Madura and to populate the emptier areas of the archipelago. An unfortunate side-effect of this policy was to subject a slowly modernising people, like the Dayaks, to intense pressures from the more commercially-minded people like the Madurese.

Before this latest outbreak of communal savagery, a majority of residents in Sampit were Madurese. Today, the Madurese are either taking refuge in a camp near government offices or trying to get on board three vessels sent by the Jakarta government to take them to Suraybaya in East Java. During this past week, the communal violence has certainly spread through the rural areas of Central Kalimantan around Sampit — and maybe even further afield. Numerous Madurese villages are now burning, as the Dayaks follow up the killings with arson. Their intention seems plain: to rid Central Kalimantan of all Madurese immigrants. Those Madurese who have managed to escape the bloodbath are now anxious to depart.

The govt. has inadvertently promoted this process of ethnic cleansing in two ways. If the troops stationed in Sampit had fired with their weapons as soon as the carnage began, the widening violence might have been limited or even halted. Feeling outnumbered, the troops instead stood by and let the pogrom proceed. But there have been no reports so far of the Dayaks having any guns — they appear to be only armed with machetes. About 1,000 army reinforcements were due to arrive in the area but since the communal frenzy has spread over the region, it will be difficult to end. So the govt. allows the continued ethnic cleansing by sending ships to take away the Madurese and any other immigrants wishing to depart.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 FEB 2001

Violence in Indonesia spreads, toll 270

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, FEB. 25. The death toll in the week-long ethnic clashes in the Indonesian town of Sampit in the central Kalimantan province has gone up to 270 even as desperate refugees tried to flee the area (Agency reports put the toll at 400).

According to available reports, the violence had also spread to Palangkaraya, the provincial capital of central Kalimantan, where houses of several Madurese settlers were torched by Dayak tribesmen.

The reports said violence had broken out in another town, Samuda, some 40 km south of Sampit. An estimated 15,000 Madurese are said to have fled into the jungles to escape their attackers.

Angry Dayak mobs have attacked Madurese settlers, using savage methods to decapitate the bodies of their victims. The violence stems from a perception that the Madurese are dominating the economy of the region.

In the meantime, thousands of refugees awaited evacuation from Sampit, the worst-hit town. While 5,000 refugees have been evacuated by ship so far, another 10,000 are still waiting to leave. According to reports, these refugees were traumatised and had not eaten for days.

The Indonesian Security Minister, Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, visited the troubled area today, but the Indonesian Government seems powerless to stop the violence unleashed by the Dayak tribesmen.

A Sampit-based priest was quoted as saying that the Dayaks were determined to drive all the Madurese out of the area. "Wherever there are Madurese, they (the Dayaks) attack. Because they believe that the Madurese must be abolished... I travelled around the city yesterday and they told me they would not go home until all Madurese had left," Fr. Willy Bald Kfaffer of the St. Yohannes Don Bosco Church was quoted as saying.

Reuters reports:

Top Indonesian security officials flew into the ravaged Borneo

district on Sunday. The visit marked the first serious response from the embattled Government in Jakarta to the ethnic violence.

The Chief Security Minister, Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, led the delegation that included the military chief, Admiral Widodo, on a tour of Sampit, scene of most of the killings. He said the top priority was to save lives. "The military and police deployed here should be used effectively to control the situation and return conditions to order," Mr. Yudhoyono said in apparent criticism of the free rein armed Dayaks have over most of the town.

Plumes of smoke rose from several places across the town, although it was unclear if there had been fresh attacks. The grisly massacres — some victims were beheaded and their heads paraded through Sampit — underscore the mess Indonesia finds itself in more than three years after plunging into political and economic chaos.

The beleaguered President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, speaking during a trip to West Asia, reiterated that the nation was in danger of disintegration because unnamed politicians were undermining his rule, the *Jakarta Post* reported. Raising fears of spreading violence, the official *Antara* news agency reported that several buildings in Palangkaraya belonging to immigrants had been torched on Sunday.

Meanwhile, some 4,000 supporters of Mr. Wahid hit the streets in east Java on Sunday, resuming protests against efforts to oust him from power. Packed into trucks, the protesters drove around the town of Madiun shouting slogans in support of Mr. Wahid before gathering for a mass prayer.

Police said the civilian militia of a major religious organisation once headed by Mr. Wahid had cordoned off the Madiun office of the rival Golkar party, which has borne the brunt of pro-Wahid street protests this month.

THE HINDU

26 FEB 2001

Wahid goes on yet another foreign jaunt

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, FEB. 22. The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, is easily the world's most travelled Head of State.

Keeping up his travelling tradition, Mr. Wahid left Jakarta for a two-week tour of West Asia, which will take him to Yemen, Dubai, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria and finally to Saudi Arabia for Haj.

Many believe that Mr. Wahid has already set a world record for visits abroad. After being elected President in 1999, Mr. Wahid visited 26 countries in four months. According to available information, the President has spent one-quarter of his time in office outside the country.

In 1999, Mr. Wahid's visits included Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Laos, Myanmar, Japan, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan and China. Last year, the President visited Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, the Vatican, the Czech Republic, Belgium, India, South Korea, Thailand, Brunei, South Africa, Mexico, Cuba, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, the United States, Iran, Pakistan, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt and the United Nations for the Millennium Summit.

The country's Foreign Minister, Mr. Alwi Shihab, has justified the President's travels by saying that this was done "in order to rebuild the good image of Indonesia in the eyes of the international community".

However, a major difference between his previous travels and today's is that the country is far more tense than earlier and the President's leadership is under greater public scrutiny.

Mr. Wahid, before flying out of Jakarta today, was unfazed. "Be calm", he said when asked if he had a parting message for the people. "There is nothing going on. Mrs. Mega (a reference to the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri) is here."

The Defence Minister, Mr. Mohammad Mahfud, who accompanied the Vice-President to the airport to see off the President, was quoted as telling reporters that the political pot would be kept boiling during Mr. Wahid's absence from the country.

"I am sure there will be elements who will try to stir things up, maybe there will be elements who will try to sharpen the conflict between the executive and the legislature," Mr. Mahfud said, adding, "all of this is relatively normal, and not dangerous".



Indigenous Dayaks brandish spears and machetes in Sampit, central Kalimantan province, in Indonesia on Wednesday. Ethnic clashes between Dayaks and migrants from other provinces have claimed more than 100 lives, according to police. — AP

THE HINDU

23 FEB 2001

Indonesia Navy starts Borneo evacuation, toll 210

Sampit (Indonesia), February 24

TERRIFIED REFUGEES crammed onto an Indonesian navy ship on Saturday to escape marauding mobs in Borneo as officials said the death toll from a week of ethnic bloodshed had reached 210.

Officials said the Navy had dispatched another two vessels to pick up some 24,000 refugees holed up in the steamy river town of Sampit, centre of the violence between indigenous Dayaks and immigrants from Madura island off east Java.

A passenger ferry was also heading to the town in Central Kalimantan province, they said. "According to the data we have, the number of dead is 210. The condition in the town is improving but is still a bit tense," said Jauhar Pauzni, a local government spokesman in Sampit, 465 miles northeast of Jakarta.

Officials have been gradually revising up the death toll as more bodies are discovered in Sampit and surrounding areas. Pauzni said 11 people had been wounded. Some victims have been beheaded and their heads paraded through town. Others have been burned to death. Smoke rose from burning buildings in several places in Sampit on Saturday morning and many shops were closed. Police have arrested about 80 people over the violence, including three alleged master-



A Madurese girl waits on a crowded truck of refugees being evacuated from Sampit on Saturday.

minds, the official Antara news agency reported on Saturday.

There were no reports of fresh attacks. The latest Kalimantan violence underscores Indonesia's volatility and flared as embattled President Abdurrahman Wahid left on a trip to West Asia and Africa this week, leaving behind a fragile country crying out for leadership.

Dayaks, once fearsome headhunters, roamed around in search of Madurese following a

week of violence which witnesses and officials say has largely gone from fighting between the rival groups to one-sided Dayak attacks on Madurese. Soldiers have cordoned off makeshift camps sheltering the refugees, who are mainly Madurese. Long simmering tension between Dayaks and Madurese occasionally boils over in Kalimantan, stoked by land disputes and competition for jobs.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 FEB 2001

Indonesian navy to evacuate settlers

JAKARTA POST
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

PALANGKARAYA (Indonesia), Feb. 23. — The official toll from the week-long clashes in Borneo rose to 143 today even as many more bodies are still lying scattered in the streets, some beheaded and others burnt.

An Indonesian navy ship was expected to reach Borneo this afternoon to evacuate terrified refugees, Reuters adds.

The government has called in the navy to help evacuate thousands of refugees to Java. A navy ship capable of carrying 2,000 people is headed for the battered town. Officials estimate around 15,000 Madurese have already fled Sampit.

Sampit in central Kalimantan, the centre of the clashes between indigenous Dayaks and Madurese immigrants, remained relatively calm and under heavy security. "The situation this morning is quite calm, though the police are still on alert," a police officer said.

But Dayak tribesmen, armed with swords, bows and arrows, and blow-guns were still seen prowling the streets of Sampit in search of Madur-



A portrait of Mr Abdurrahman Wahid held upside down on a mock coffin during a demonstration in Jakarta on Friday. — AP/PTI

ese settlers. Small skirmishes were reported today, police said.

Hundreds have died in Borneo in the last two years in unrest between Dayaks and

immigrants, mainly Madurese settlers.

Tension has been stoked by the now abandoned and widely discredited policy of resettling Indonesians from over-

crowded areas, like Madura and Java, in underpopulated provinces. Central Kalimantan is the only province where Dayaks remain in majority.

The latest violence flared as

Mr Abdurrahman Wahid left for a two-week trip to West Asia and Africa.

The President yesterday dismissed fears that the country could descend into chaos but also appealed to the people to remain calm.

The police chief has blamed the fresh unrest on two local officials angry at being overlooked for new jobs in a reshuffle after the provinces received more autonomy.

Illegal immigrants

Malaysian authorities have arrested 178 illegal immigrants in two raids within a gap of 12 hours amid rising concern that political upheaval in neighbouring Indonesia could spur a wave of illegal arrivals, AP adds from Kuala Lumpur.

Police and military officials raided two boats, carrying illegal immigrants, in Malacca. But the nationality of the arrested is not yet known.

About 70 men, aged between 20 and 42, were arrested on Wednesday after they landed on a beach. Hours later, soldiers scuffled with about 110 people who landed illegally on a beach along the same coast. Security has been tightened along the coast to guard against illegal immigration.

THE STATESMAN

24 FEB 2001

Wahid unruffled about Borneo bloodbath

Jakarta, February 22

INDONESIAN PRESIDENT Abdurrahman Wahid dismissed fears of an explosion of unrest as he flew out of the crisis-racked country on Thursday, but bloodshed escalated into beheadings even before he boarded his plane.

More than 100 people have been slaughtered—many decapitated or burned to death—in a revival of ethnic violence in remote Central Kalimantan province on Borneo, officials and media said. About 15,000 people have fled their homes to seek shelter at police posts and Government offices.

The unrest on Borneo, once notorious for fierce headhunters, underlined the chaos racking the world's fourth most populous country under Wahid's increas-

ingly fragile leadership. Wahid's seizure on his absence to fuel instability, the frail Muslim cleric appealed for calm before leaving Jakarta's Halim military airport on a two-week trip to Africa and West Asia.

"No. There will be no problems because there is Vice-President Megawati Sukarnoputri," he told reporters.

In what have become almost routine events, several hundred protesters hit the streets of Jakarta in driving rain earlier on Thursday, yelling anti-Wahid slogans and criticising him for leaving the country. There were no clashes with police.

The palace has offered little explanation for Wahid's trip, which includes a pilgrimage to Mecca. Indonesia's most-trav-

elled President faces possible impeachment after being censured by Parliament on February 1 over two graft scandals. Wahid must formally respond to parliament within three months of that date.

His political support bleeding away, Wahid is under increasing fire over the graft scandals, and his failure to kick start the economy, soothe separatist tensions and ease communal unrest that has killed thousands.

In Borneo, local regency spokesman Jauhar Puzni said that out-of-control mobs of indigenous Dayaks had surrounded the town on Thursday, bent on wiping out immigrants from Madura island, off Java.

"There are still a lot of corpses lying scattered on the streets all around Sampit," he told Reuters

from Sampit, 750 km (465 miles) northeast of Jakarta. "The mobs...are targeting the Madurese and they want to wipe them out."

Heavily armed police roamed Sampit as charred and hacked bodies were pulled from scrub and smouldering ruins. Puzni said 55 bodies—all with heads—have been recovered since the latest violence, a revival of long-running tension, erupted on Sunday. The official Antara news agency reported another 20 headless corpses had been found.

Wahid, 60, leaves Jakarta in a huge range of such problems, some so acute that many question his chances of surviving many more months in office after just 16 months of his five-year term. But with thousands of his supporters rampaging through

east Java in protest following his censure, Wahid has made very clear the dangers his opponents face if they push too far.

Analysts say the tortuous process of impeachment, and the fear of mass violence if it is done any other way, are probably Wahid's best political protection for the moment.

But just as unnerving is the state of the economy with growth expected to slow this year because of the almost complete absence of foreign investment, declining consumption and a

Jakarta is also struggling to win a new loan from the IMF, which for months has refused to hand over any more cash until more reforms are implemented.

Reuters

HD-17
11/2

Safe, for now



Indonesians demonstrate their support for Abdurrahman Wahid... democracy at work?

MR. ABDURRAHMAN Wahid has won a temporary reprieve. The Indonesia Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), led by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, and the former ruling party, Golkar, have said there is no legal basis to support advancing a session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) for a possible impeachment move against the President.

Political tensions have been rising in Indonesia after Mr. Wahid was censured by the House of Representatives (DPR) last week. The Vice-President's party, Golkar and the military (TNI) faction joined hands with the Islamist opposition to

censure the President for his alleged dealings in two corruption scandals. The President's supporters, belonging to the Nadhlatul Ulama, have gone on the rampage in eastern Java, torching the headquarters of Golkar in the city of Surabaya on Wednesday.

It is, indeed, ironical that, for a country which was dominated by corruption and cronyism during the 32-year-rule of Gen. Suharto, the first-elected President of Indonesia in 40 years — Mr. Wahid — is on the mat for "corruption". While corruption cannot be condoned, especially at the highest levels, the focus in Indonesia has quickly shifted from the corruption of the Suharto era to the two scandals involving Mr. Wahid.

With the Indonesian Supreme Court "freeing" Gen. Suharto from house arrest and saying that he should be brought to trial when he is "fit", it is clear that the former General is unlikely to face the courts again. He had been acquitted earlier in a minor case of embezzlement last year. The former dictator's son, Mr. Tommy Suharto, is a fugitive

Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid has won a temporary reprieve...

But, says AMIT BARUAH, his future is in the hands of his Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri.

from justice — the "short" arm of the law has not been able to locate him anywhere. His continued evasion of justice is a signal that the law enforcement efforts have solid links to the past regime.

In the current political scenario, it would appear that with the two major political parties deciding to back-off from an immediate confrontation with Mr. Wahid, the President has some time to ponder his future. It is, however, clear that the Vice-President, who will be President if Mr. Wahid is forced to resign anytime in the future, has made her first move by backing the findings of a parliamentary committee into the two corruption scandals involving Mr. Wahid. She has, however, stopped short of supporting any moves for convening an early session of the MPR to consider impeaching Mr. Wahid.

"Our faction will not support an expedited special session because it goes against the Constitution," Mr. Heri Achmadi, PDI-P secretary, was quoted as saying. He added that all 153 members of the faction had been barred from signing a petition calling for the President's resignation.

In turn, the Golkar chairman, Mr. Akbar Tandjung, said: "The Golkar faction has decided to follow up the issuance of the first memorandum of censure and see if the President improves the way he runs the Government. And our legislators have been ordered to comply with the party's ruling on how to exercise legislative rights." "Our faction will be patient and wait for corrections to be made by the President within the next three months. If no improvement is made, we will call for the issuance of the second memorandum of censure," he added.

For the record, Lt. Gen. Agus Wijoyo, told the press in Jakarta: "With regard to the institution of the presidency, our (TNI) stance is one of obedience and loyalty to the legitimately and constitutionally elected President." "The TNI is of the opinion that other possibilities remain open and (the censure) should not automatically and necessarily be followed by a special session (to impeach Mr. Wahid)," the Army chief added.

In 1999, when Mr. Wahid was elected President, it was evident that he was a compromise candidate. Today, in 2001, the other, bigger players in Parliament are making their moves against the President, whose main body of support remains his religious supporters.

It is clear that the President's future is in the hands of the PDI-P and Ms. Megawati personally. There is no love lost between Golkar and Mr. Wahid, despite the fact that Golkar claims to have snapped links with the Suharto family.

However, even if Ms. Megawati becomes President, she, too, can face the same forces within Parliament. The institutional basis to Indonesian democracy remains weak and that is a factor all leaders will have to contend with.

Mr. Wahid, meanwhile, has repeatedly ruled out the possibility of his resignation. In a reference to the recent torching of the Golkar office in Surabaya, the President remarked: "All of this actually (serves as) a bitter lesson for all of us, and it should not continue. But this is the price to pay for the continuing process of democracy."

'TNI foiled Wahid bid to impose martial law'

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, FEB. 5. The Indonesian military (TNI) opposed a request by the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, to impose martial law in the country, a report in *The Straits Times* newspaper claimed today.

The request from Mr. Wahid did not receive support because it "had the fishy smell of a political ploy to dismiss Parliament", the report from the Singapore newspaper's Indonesia correspondent said. A senior General was quoted as saying that the demonstrations by students also did not pose a threat to public order.

The report showed that Mr. Wahid wanted to pre-empt Parliament by seeking to impose martial law in the country as it debated what action to take in two corruption scandals allegedly involving the President.

The newspaper also quoted an aide to the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, as confirming "talk" that the President wanted to impose martial law but was thwarted by her, the Security Minister, Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and the military chiefs.

"Gus Dur (the President's nickname) insisted on applying martial law (at a high-level meeting) to dissolve Parliament. There was a huge silence. Nobody supported his plan. So he left an unhappy man," the report said.

Undaunted, the President then toyed with the idea of replacing his Generals. "Diplomatic and military sources said he went as far as to sign a decree replacing the Army Chief, General Endriartono Sutarto, with Lieutenant-General Agus Wirahadikusumah... again the Vice-President thwarted him, refusing to endorse the decree," the newspaper said.

A senior General said had the President insisted on pushing through the decree, the military would have "rebelled".

"Mr. Abdurrahman finally accepted that he could not bully his way out of a Parliamentary censure when his legislative supporters reported to him on Thursday night that he had been deserted by all other factions," it added.

Reuters reports:

The head of Indonesia's top legislature today urged Mr. Wahid to surrender power peacefully to avoid months of instability and confusion over possible impeachment.

The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) chief, Mr. Amien Rais, a key Wahid ally and now one of his most vocal enemies, said Mr. Wahid had lost public support because of his stumbling leadership, capped by a parliamentary censure over two graft scandals.

THE HINDU

16 FEB 2001

WAHID'S WOES

The next Estrada?

SRB
MV
Indonesian

INDONESIA'S president Abdurrahman Wahid is an enigma. When Jakarta's stock exchange was bombed last year, killing 15 people, Wahid claimed that "Tommy" Suharto, playboy son of the former strongman who ruled Indonesia for 32 years, was linked to the blast. The playboy was also convicted in November to 18 months in prison for a \$11.2 million land scam, but as of date, despite the "manhunt" that was launched police have failed to pick up Indonesia's most known face while corruption charges against Suharto were dropped. To further erode Wahid's moral authority, his personal masseur has admitted to embezzling \$4 million from the state food agency, allegedly at his behest. Indonesia's parliament has censured him, a move that could be a prelude to impeachment.

Is Wahid then set to go the way of Joseph Estrada? The parallels with the Filipino situation are seductive — people power brought down Ferdinand Marcos' rule in 1986 as it did Suharto in 1998. But in certain respects Indonesia's problems are worse, and unlikely to be resolved even if Wahid were to be removed from power. Violence relating to the separatist movement in oil-rich Aceh continues unabated, communal riots between Muslims and Christians are frequent, and militias run amok in Timor. All of which keeps international investors jittery; both the Jakarta stock exchange and the rupiah have been plummeting over the past year. In many respects, Indonesia is like a country emerging from years of Communist dictatorship. The *nomenklatura* still holds the levers of power and is willing to break up the country rather than let go — members of the Suharto clique rather than Muslim fundamentalists are suspected by police to be behind the bloody bombings of Christian churches. Wahid, infirm and almost blind, hardly looks like the best man capable of handling the situation. The worry is that the military is waiting in the wings to take power.

THE STATESMAN

- 6 FEB 2001

Muslims hit streets for embattled Wahid



Indonesian Muslim women students march on outskirts of Surabaya, the capital of East Java province and the country's second largest city, in support of President Abdurrahman Wahid on Sunday. — Reuters

GRACE NIRANG
JAKARTA, FEB 4

THOUSANDS of members of Indonesia's largest Muslim group rallied in support of floundering President Abdurrahman Wahid on Sunday, as the group warned it might lose control of its members.

Members of the 40-million strong Nahdlatul Ulama, angry at Parliament's censure of Wahid over two graft scandals, protested in Indonesia's second largest city Surabaya on Saturday when they blocked streets for several hours before dispersing. Sunday's *Kompas* daily quoted NU chief Hasyim Muzadi warning the organisation could lose control. "We will try to prevent any clash with other parties. But our power is limited," *Kompas* quoted him saying.

Surabaya is the capital of East Java, the heartland of NU, which Wahid once led and

where his popularity is strong. As the leading Islamic group in the world's biggest Muslim nation, NU plays a key political and social role. The censure is the first step towards possible impeachment of Indonesia's first democratically-elected President.

It caps mounting frustration over Wahid's erratic rule which has largely failed to pull Indonesia out of years of political and economic turmoil or end communal bloodshed. But most analysts expect him to survive for now because of the lack of a credible alternative, the length and complexity of impeachment and the fear of violence in the streets.

However, the censure is also seen as a devastating blow to his legitimacy and few expect him to see out his five-year term, due to end in 2004. Wahid has refused calls to quit and says he still has the loyalty of Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who heads the country's largest party and whose support is crucial.

Megawati herself has remained silent since the censure. On Sunday, Wahid said he could not step down when Indonesia was in such strife. "I love this country so much. It is impossible for me to leave this country when it is in trouble," the *detik.com* news portal quoted him telling the Jakarta Arts Council at his lavish palace retreat in the hillside town of Bogor, South of Jakarta.

In Indonesia people targeted by demonstrations often claim protesters have been paid by their opponents to turn up.

Wahid was dealt another blow on Saturday when Administrative Reform Minister Ryaas Rasyid quit over a row about the technical details of how to implement controversial devolution of political and economic power to the country's restive regions. Although the resignation has nothing to do with the censure, its timing underlines the growing dissatisfied faction with his leadership.

Wahid says he won't quit, denies allegations

JAKARTA: Defiant in the face of possible impeachment, President Abdurrahman Wahid said on Friday that he would not quit until his term came to an end in 2004, despite a humiliating censure by Parliament over two corruption scandals. He also denied lying about his role in the multimillion-dollar affairs and said hundreds of lawmakers had condemned him without knowing the facts.

"I will not step down," he said after praying at a Jakarta mosque. "I will complete my presidential term." Mr Wahid dismissed speculations that he planned to fire key officials and army generals, saying his opponents were spreading rumours as part of a "psychological war". Earlier at the state palace, Mr Wahid promised to cooperate more with the legislature, which less than 24 hours before censured him for breaking his oath of office and violating anti-graft laws. He apologised to Indonesia's people, not for his own actions, but for what has become a bitter stand-off with the Parliament, which he once likened to a kindergarten. He was sorry ordinary people had been disturbed by the political wrangling, which had triggered massive street protests.

On Thursday an overwhelming majority of lawmakers accepted the findings of a parliamentary inquiry that claimed Mr Wahid misled investigators and the nation about his involvement in graft. "There are people who talk about public lies and words that are not ethical at all, but they are still being used by those who consider themselves to be the people's representatives," Mr Wahid said. "It is a shame that the factions used data from (the inquiry) which is not based on facts."

If he does not respond satisfactorily to Parliament's demands within 90 days, the legislature can censure him again. A month after that it can start impeachment proceedings. Top security minister Gen. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said Wahid had already prepared political and legal responses.

"Parliament's decision is nothing to worry about," Mr Yudhoyono said after meeting with Mr Wahid on Friday. "The government is functioning normally." Earlier this week, the parliamentary committee issued its report linking Wahid to the scandals, but presented no conclusive evidence that he had benefited from the schemes. (AP)

U.S. relaxes ban on sale of copter parts from U.K. to India

WASHINGTON: In the first India-related action, the Bush administration has relaxed the ban on sale of helicopter spares by Britain to India if they contain parts of U.S. origin, a move seen as a forerunner of total lifting of post-Pokhran American sanctions.

The defence department has issued a notification relaxing the ban on helicopter equipment. The U.S. ban on sale of helicopter parts had hindered deals between India and Britain necessitating fresh tooling to make the parts.

Meanwhile, outgoing Indian ambassador Naresh Chandra said on the basis of the contacts India has had with those who are now policy makers of the Bush administration and public indications by secretary of state Colin Powell, the new government appeared serious about carrying on the dialogue with India.

It is noted here that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's national security adviser Brajesh Mishra and new U.S. defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld will be in Munich soon for the annual Davos equivalent in defence and might meet on its sidelines for a dialogue. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

3 FEB 2001

2 FEB 2001

Wahid on collision course with House

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, FEB. 3. A major confrontation between the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, and the House of Representatives (DPR) is currently underway with the House scheduled to present Mr. Wahid with a memorandum of censure next week.

The decision of the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, to back the findings of a Parliamentary probe into Mr. Wahid's alleged corruption scandals, has pushed the President to the wall. By her "no-confidence" vote, Ms. Megawati has placed a question mark on Mr. Wahid being able to complete his term as President in 2004. If the President resigns under the Indonesian Constitution, then Ms. Megawati will step into his shoes as Vice-President. Mr. Wahid, however, is a fighter and has declared that there is no question of his resigning as being demanded by several quarters.

In recent remarks to the press, the President has promised to accelerate the "reform" agenda, which clearly has been on the backburner. Whether he is able to do so will be clear in the next few weeks. So far, the President and his team of Ministers have been unable to prosecute the former dictator, Gen. Suharto, and his



The Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, greets the Vice-President, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri, during an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet in Jakarta, on Saturday. — AP

family. Instead, the focus is now on Mr. Wahid and his "corruption" — something which the former First Family must be enjoying. While it is unclear whether Ms. Megawati's party will back an impeachment move against Mr. Wahid, it is clear that the route to the Presidency does lie (like in the Philippines) in the resignation of the President.

Until a few days ago, Mr. Wahid was loudly proclaiming the support of Ms. Megawati — just before her party legislators launched a sharp attack on Mr. Wahid in

the DPR session considering the Parliamentary committee's report. Interestingly, the TNI (as the Indonesian military is known) faction in the DPR also backed the corruption findings against the President — indicating their displeasure with the President.

Mr. Wahid has denied that he is planning to appoint a new chief of the TNI and army: a move which will lock him into another confrontation with the DPR. The President is supposed to consult with the DPR before making senior appointments. While nearly

all Parliamentary factions are ranged against Mr. Wahid, support has come for him from an unlikely quarter — the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer. "I don't think it's inevitable that there will be impeachment proceedings against President Wahid which would lead to his overthrow," he has been quoted as saying.

Despite mounting calls for the President's resignation, Mr. Downer said there was a "good measure" of support for the President. Australia, it may be recalled, has been bitterly attacked in Indonesia for its role in East Timor.

However, of late, Mr. Wahid has tried to mend fences with the Australians and has even planned a visit to that country. He reiterated Australia's support for Indonesia's territorial integrity. "If the international community were to give more support to the secessionist movements...the international community would be responsible for a very serious deterioration in the security situation ... for an awful lot of people would get killed," Mr. Downer was quoted as saying.

A close watch is being kept on the latest developments in the region by neighbouring countries. The next few days and weeks could be crucial for both Indonesia and Mr. Wahid himself.

THE HINDU

4 FEB 2001

House clears decks for Wahid impeachment

REUTERS

JAKARTA, Feb. 1. — Indonesia's Parliament today overwhelmingly endorsed a report that found that President Mr Abdurrahman Wahid had acted improperly in two graft scandals, opening the way for possible impeachment.

Mr Wahid's party stormed out during the 393-4 vote, drawing jeers and shouts from other legislators.

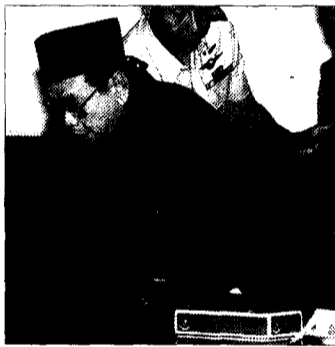
The move comes amid mounting frustration over Mr Wahid's erratic 15-month rule which has largely failed to pull Indonesia out of years of political and economic mess.

Despite the seriousness of a censure, Mr Wahid is unlikely

to be forced out just yet due to the lack of a credible alternative, long impeachment process and the risk of bloodshed.

Parliament's speaker, his deputies and party chiefs are now meeting to draft options on what action should be taken against Mr Wahid. The choices will later be put to the House.

During the heated debate, several parties controlling a



Mr Abdurrahman Wahid takes a seat before the start of a Cabinet meeting in Jakarta on Thursday. — AP/PTI

firm majority of the chamber's 500 seats, demanded Parliament formally reprimand Mr Wahid for lying and abusing his power.

A minister said Mr Wahid still had the cabinet's support.

"Certainly the cabinet sup-

ports him," the research and technology minister, Mr AS Hikam, said after a cabinet meeting attended by Mr Wahid

and the Vice-President, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri.

Mr Wahid says he has Ms Megawati's crucial support, though her Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P), the country's largest party, joined the censure push.

Outside the parliamentary complex in Jakarta, more than 15,000 pro- and anti-Wahid protesters faced off in driving rain but there were no serious clashes by late afternoon.

More than 5,000 anti-Wahid students marched from Parliament to the presidential palace, where they chanted for Mr Wahid to quit. The mounting pressure on Mr Wahid could stop him from completing his term which ends in 2004.

THE STATESMAN

2 FEB 2001

INDONESIA / HOUSE ACCEPTS REPORT ON SCAMS ^u 2/2

Wahid's position vulnerable

By Amit Baruah ³¹⁰⁻¹⁶

SINGAPORE, FEB. 1. Abandoned by his key ally, the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri, the Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, was isolated in the House of Representatives (DPR) today.

By an overwhelming 393-4 vote, the 500-strong House voted in Jakarta to accept the findings of a Parliamentary committee on two corruption scandals allegedly involving the President. According to the report, Mr. Wahid "could be suspected of playing a role" in a \$3.9 billion embezzlement scandal involving the State logistics agency, Bulog, and that there were "inconsistencies" in his explanations for a \$2 million gift from the Sultan of Brunei.

With Ms. Megawati's party and Golkar, the erstwhile ruling party still linked to the Suharto family, joining hands, Mr. Wahid had little chance of

escaping the wrath of Parliament today. The next steps could be crucial for Mr. Wahid and Indonesia. Unlike a few months ago, Parliament may not rest with simply presenting a memorandum to the President.

Under the Indonesian Constitution, a memorandum can be presented to the President, who must respond to it within three months. If he does not respond, the process can then be repeated and, finally, a session of the upper House or MPR convened to "impeach" the President.

While it is still early days in Indonesia, the crucial aspect of today's developments is that Ms. Megawati, herself an aspirant for the top job, has decided to strike out on her own. It remains to be watched whether her party will go all the way in censuring the President and then presenting him with a memorandum. On a previous occasion, Mr. Wahid got away with an

apology, it may not be so easy this time around. Ironically for Indonesia, the focus is no longer on the Suhartos and their corruption. It has now shifted to Mr. Wahid and his wrongdoings.

The inability of the Wahid Government to bring to justice Mr. Tommy Suharto, fugitive son of Gen. Suharto, and nab those behind a series of sensational crimes, has undermined the position of the President.

A sense of drift, punctuated by a series of well-planned and pinpointed attacks, has marked the 15 months of the Wahid Government.

While the President himself has won wide support for his moderate policies, he has been unable to take forward the reform agenda. This has dissatisfied the pro-democracy sections and also provided an opportunity for those linked to the Suharto regime to rear their head again.

THE HINDU

2 FEB 2001

40-16
INDONESIA / WAHID REJECTS CALLS TO QUIT 2001

Protesters storm Parliament building

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JAN. 29. The Indonesian police today fired teargas shells at thousands of anti-Government protesters trying to enter the Parliament building in Jakarta as the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, said there was no question of his stepping down from office. Reports said some of the student protesters managed to break into the House of Representatives (DPR) compound, where the police separated them from supporters of the President.

"No way. I will not resign because I was elected by MPR," the President told mediapersons in a reference to his being elected to office by the People's Consultative Assembly.

The protests came as the DPR went into session to consider a report by one of its committees on two charges of corruption against the President — one termed Bruneigate and the other Bulogate.

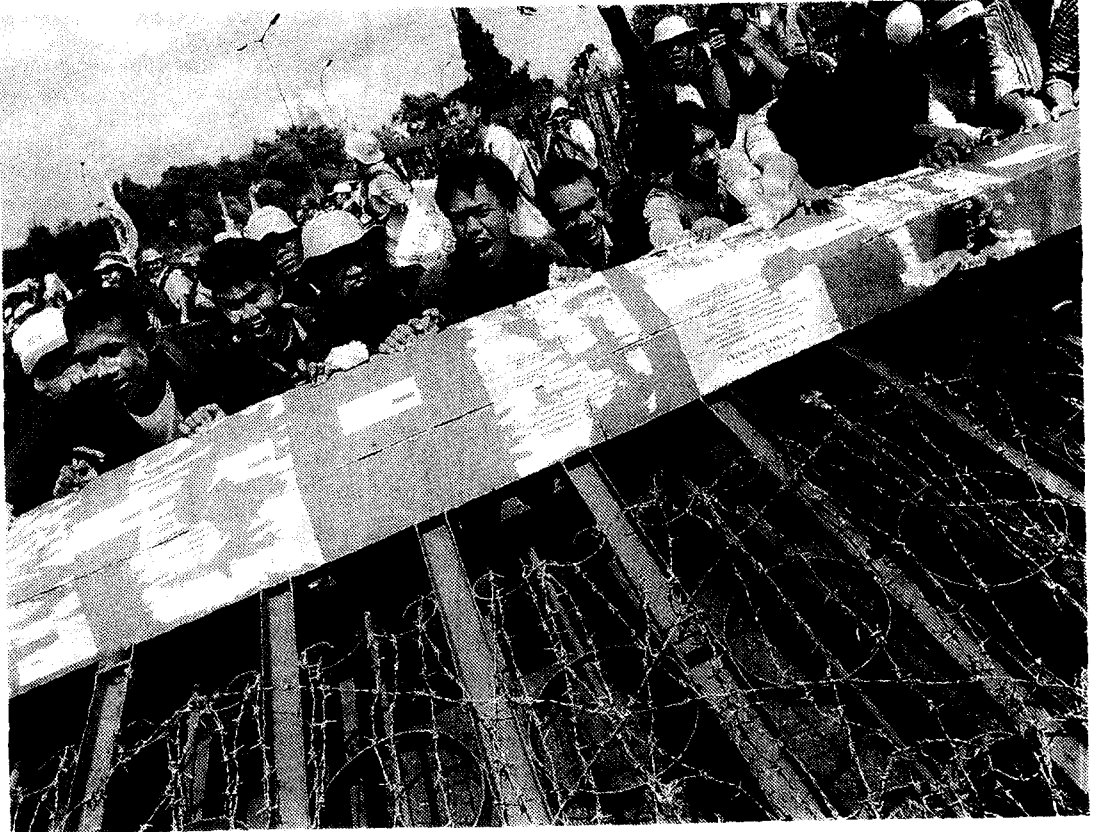
In Bruneigate, Mr. Wahid is charged with accepting \$ 2 millions from the Sultan of Brunei, which Mr. Wahid said, was a personal gift and used to provide humanitarian assistance in the troubled province of Aceh.

Bulogate revolves around \$ 3.9 millions allegedly extracted from the State logistics agency, Bulog, by the President's personal masseur, Mr. Alip Agung Suwondo.

"We are demanding (that Mr. Wahid) continue reforms... we can't see (democratic) reform working at the moment," one student leader was quoted as saying. "If he (the President) is found guilty of corruption, the students will ask for him to step down," the student leader added.

Analysts said today's protest against Mr. Wahid was the largest-ever since he took over as President.

Through the committee's report, which apparently refers to Mr. Wahid's "involvement" in the corruption scandals, a section of the MPR wants to begin impeachment proceedings against Mr. Wahid.



Anti-government student demonstrators push forward the gates to the Parliament complex after knocking it down during a mass protest in Jakarta on Monday. An estimated 10,000 protesters had marched through the streets of the capital demanding that the President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, quit over two corruption scandals. — AP

Importantly, the President continues to have the support of the leading political party, Indonesia Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P), headed by the Vice-President, Ms. Megawati Sukarnoputri.

"I don't think PDI-P wants to topple Gus Dur (the President's nickname), but they don't want him to continue his present style of governance," Mr. Muchtar Buchori, a leading PDI-P legislator was quoted as saying in Jakarta.

The fact that there is really no alternative to Mr. Wahid continues to work in his favour. Even though the PDI-P is the largest party, its leader, Ms. Megawati, has been continuing to support Mr. Wahid.

Despite a massive reshuffle in the Cabinet and the fact that Ms.

Megawati has been designated to hold Cabinet meetings, there is a continuing sense of drift in the administration.

The string of bomb blasts on Christmas Eve, the continuing ability of the convicted son of Gen. Suharto, the flamboyant Mr. Tommy Suharto, to elude justice, as well as the inability of the State to book the former dictator himself on charges of corruption have all undermined the Wahid Government.

While there is little doubt that the President himself believes in conciliation and has dealt humanely with conflicts in Aceh and Irian Jaya, there are mounting pressures on him to take a hard line towards these conflicts.

Soon after the ouster of Gen.

Suharto at the height of the economic crisis of 1998, the students, who took a leading role in his removal, pressed on for reforms, but their presence in the streets reduced gradually.

If the students do get back on to the streets, a new challenge will arise for Mr. Wahid. Given the example of Mr. Joseph Estrada in neighbouring Philippines, many may have come to believe that a similar movement can be launched against Mr. Wahid.

For the moment, Mr. Wahid seems to be safe but the pace of democratic reform has left many dissatisfied. If he wants to keep the students inside their classrooms, then more and speedy reforms are definitely called for.

THE HINDU

30 JAN 2001

Indonesia urges UN to return to West Timor

REUTERS

JAKARTA, Jan. 16. — Indonesia today urged the UN to resume work in West Timor to help repatriate thousands of East Timorese refugees in camps and insisted UN staff were safe from armed militia.

Foreign minister Mr Alwi Shihab, speaking after a meeting between President Abdurrahman Wahid and UN General Assembly president Mr Harri Holkeri, said the repatriation process would be open to criticism if the international body stayed away.

UN organisations fled West Timor last September after three foreign aid workers of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees were hacked to death by pro-Jakarta East Timorese militia in the West Timor border town of Atambua.

The militia, with backing from elements of the Indonesian military, ravaged East Timor in 1999 when the territory voted to break from Jakarta's harsh 23-year rule.

Around 300,000 East Timorese either fled to West Timor or were forced by militia to uproot. Around 100,000 remain in squalid border camps.

"The UN should return there immediately, so that the process of registering the refugees will not be regarded as one-sided," Mr Shihab told reporters without elaborating.

THE STATESMAN

17 JAN 2001

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4/1

The great betrayal

S. B. M. M.
N. S. M. M.

The intense students' movement in Indonesia led to the downfall of Suharto's dictatorship. But justice still eludes the people, says ASH NARAIN ROY

INITIATING THE process of systemic change and democratic reforms in a country with strong authoritarian traditions is one thing. And keeping abreast of forces released by these reforms and the expectations thus aroused is quite another. South Korea, where student protests brought about the downfall of an authoritarian regime bringing to justice political leaders for their abuse of power, faced such a dilemma in the Nineties. Today, Indonesia is confronted with a similar situation. If it was the 'People's Power' movement in the Philippines which toppled the Ferdinand Marcos regime in 1986, the campus-based student movement led to the ouster of another tyrannosaurus in Indonesia in 1998.

That the student movement tasted success in Indonesia when the world was celebrating the 30th anniversary of a student revolt in France was perhaps only a coincidence. The 1998 student movement was reminiscent of the turmoil in 1965-66 which ousted the Sukarno regime. Ironically, President Suharto, who used the student revolt to capture power in 1966, himself became a victim of the same forces three decades later.

The students are still chanting 'Hang Suharto', but the movement seems to have lost much of its steam. Today, few Indonesians believe that Suharto will ever see the inside of a courtroom for his innumerable crimes and corruption, let alone the inside of a prison.

Suharto's trial is seen more as a test of Indonesia's fragile democracy than an attempt to get back the billions that the former President is alleged to have amassed during his ham-fisted rule. Suharto has been under house arrest for the past several months and has suffered two strokes. He has failed to appear at the trial citing ill-health. The court's decision to drop the case on the grounds that Suharto is too ill has further dented the image of the present regime in Jakarta.

Indeed, Indonesia under President Abdurrahman Wahid is moving like a crab. Wahid's steps have hardly taken a path of linear progress. Each involves a degree of deviation, each forward step is a sideways one towards disorder and confusion. He has done precious little to get rid of the

PLATFORM

rancid oligarchy and rotten elite of the old political and social order. His quirky charm too is wearing thin.

Wahid is possibly his own worst enemy, undermining the very steps his Government has undertaken by his impulsiveness and his tendency to cry wolf. One day he says he wants the Suharto case to be reopened, the other day he promises to pardon him if he apologises and returns all his ill-gotten money. He is under attack from the students and the opposition for not moving quickly in the investigation against Suharto.

Suharto's trial was regarded as central to his agenda of eradicating corruption and

violence is ravaging the Aceh and Irian Jaya provinces. Those loyal to the Suharto regime, including the military, are behind this violence. Besides, Suharto's rule has inflicted too much damage on civil and political institutions to expect any instant recovery.

Meanwhile, Wahid has questioned the integrity of the legal system. The criminal code makes no clear reference to a defendant's refusal to attend court. The court keeps on summoning the former President and he continues to defy the summons. The farce goes on.

Suharto's hand-picked successor B.J. Habibie first started investigation into the former President's massive appropriation of wealth in late 1998. But the inquiry moved much too slowly and finally it was dropped for lack of evidence. Habibie paid the price during the elections.

Wahid has gone on record saying that national reconciliation is a priority for the nation. If elections are held today, he is sure to lose. Once revered like a saint, and extremely popular, Wahid has not only failed to heal the wounds of the past, he has betrayed the hopes of the people.

Unlike South Korea where two ex-presidents Roh Tae-Woo and Chun Doo-Huan were brought to justice for abuses of power, Indonesia is still groping in the dark. It is heading towards a long and difficult winter of political discontent.

The intense and protracted student movement in Indonesia captured the imagination of the people because they were tired of the demagogical rhetoric of 'development' which was basically used to camouflage the greed and corruption of the ruling elite. Student movements in South East Asia have, in recent years, evolved into articulate and dynamic outbursts of public disaffection and anti-establishment politics. But they have fallen to the standard manipulations of control and co-option practised by the political class and the elite.

The students are nursing their wounds. Despite their sustained struggles and a new government, justice still eludes them. But then, if justice had always triumphed, Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi wouldn't be languishing under house arrest. And Suharto wouldn't be a free man.



Fall of a dictator: Students in Jakarta

initiating democratic reforms. As things stand, Indonesia is getting dragged into the second phase of a crisis following the chaos that surrounded the ouster of Suharto in 1998.

Today, the protests are on, and so does police repression and violence. Though the East Timorese crisis has been resolved despite the mess created by the militia owing allegiance to Indonesia, the religious war in Moluccan Islands, where nearly 3,000 Christians and Muslims have been killed in the last 20 months, has hardly abated. Also, there have been communal clashes on the islands of Sulawesi, Bali and Lombok.

Bomb blasts in churches and mosques have become daily occurrences. Separatist