

# Indonesia

*Star of Southeast Asia*



## INDIA-INDONESIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

# Another Milestone in Look East Diplomacy

By G. Kalyan Kumar

**T**he recent visit of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to New Delhi has opened a new chapter in India-Indonesia bilateral relations.

The President visited India from January 24-26 and graced the Republic Day parade on 26 January as the Chief Guest, and held wide ranging bilateral talks, taking the relations to a new plane. India regards Indonesia as the most influential member of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations, and adorns the Chair of ASEAN at the moment. Thanks to Indonesia's increasingly important role in global affairs, such as the G20 and other multilateral forums, India views Indonesia as a key country in its 'Look East' policy.

Indonesia and India are two Asian powers with growing economies and are part of the coveted G20 club. India's GDP is US\$1.8 trillion while that of Indonesia is US\$700 billion. Both the countries are founding members of Non Aligned Movement (NAM) and made solid contributions to its growth under the illustrious leadership of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Indonesia's first President Sukarno.

The bilateral cooperation got a boost when both the countries signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement in 2005. In 2007, the countries held the Third Indonesia-India Joint Commission meeting, chaired by the foreign ministers of both countries, in which an action plan was drawn up to implement the partnership.

## Chief Guest

The Indonesian President graced the Republic Parade on 26 January as the Chief Guest. It may be recalled that the honour of being India's first Chief Guest of its first Republic



*Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh meeting the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in New Delhi on January 25, 2011.*

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Parade also went to Indonesia. India's first Republic Day parade held in 1950 had the Indonesian President Sukarno as the Chief Guest. Now, after six decades, in 2011 Indonesia has yet again been honoured by India when it invited the President to be the Chief Guest.

During Yudhoyono's talks with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, the two leaders expressed satisfaction at the growing trade and investment ties between the two countries and set a new target for raising the bilateral trade volume to US\$25 billion by 2015.

India and Indonesia signed 18 business Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) worth US\$15.1 billion during the visit, covering infrastructure, manufacture and mining. The Indonesian President also addressed a meeting of the captains of industry from both countries. Yudhoyono in his address to the Indian industry appreciated India's rising investment in Indonesia, which had grown from US\$11.6 million in 2007 to US\$44 million in 2010. The President urged the Indian industry to invest more and take advantage of the conducive industrial environment in his country.

### Bilateral Talks

Yudhoyono held delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi's Hyderabad House on 25 January and explored ways of further invigorating their robust bilateral ties. They resolved to improve intelligence-sharing, the development of more effective counter terrorism policies, enhanced liaison between law enforcement agencies, mutual assistance in the areas of border and immigration control to stem the flow of terrorist related material, money and people and specific measures against transnational crimes, including international terrorism through the already existing mechanism between Indonesia and India.

The two leaders also decided to hold summit level meetings on the sidelines of multilateral events and annual bilateral summits. They also announced the setting up of an Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) to prepare a blue print for India-Indonesia relations over the next 15 years.

A recent example in hi-tech cooperation with India was the launch of Indonesian micro satellite Lapan-Tubsat, used for environmental monitoring in 2007 from India's Sriharikota space centre. A Cultural Agreement between the two Governments under which Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP) take place, has been in place ever since 1955. The



*The Chief Guest President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the President, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil being received by the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh on their arrival at the 62nd Republic day celebrations, in New Delhi on 26 January 2011.*

CEP for the period of 2011-2014 was also signed during the visit of the Indonesian President. The focal points of cultural exchanges are the two Indian Cultural Centres established in Jakarta and Bali.

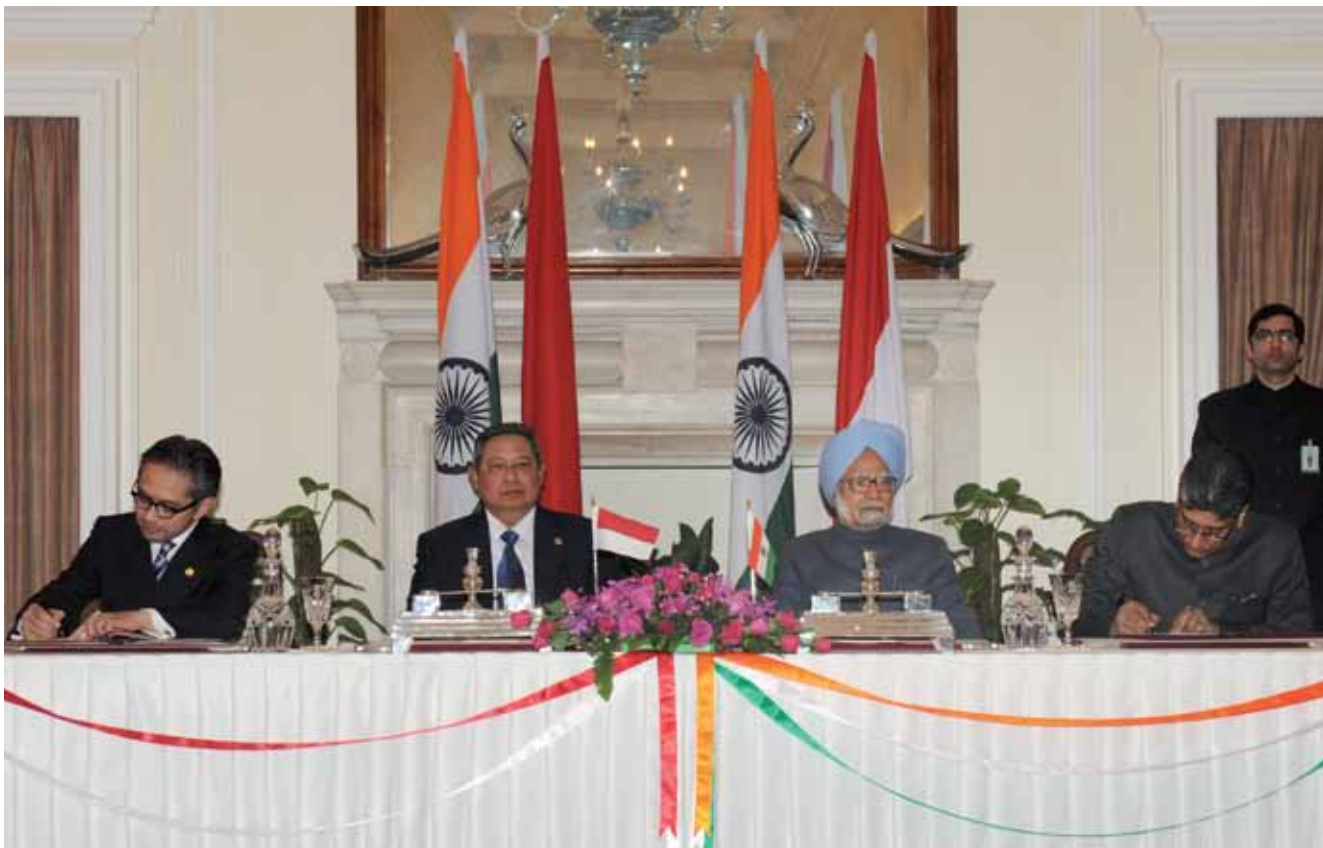
### Joint Statement

A Joint Statement issued at the end of the visit stated that the two leaders would forge "active cooperation through numerous frameworks governing Defence, Science and Technology, Space cooperation, Agricultural science, Culture,

Tourism, and Youth affairs and Sports. The two leaders also acknowledged cooperation in Education, Media, Air services, Energy resources including oil, gas, coal, and renewable energy, prevention of smuggling, prevention of illegal trade in narcotics, disaster management, cooperation in the area of small and medium enterprises, meteorology, climatology and geophysics including climate change, health, marine and fisheries".



*Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh with the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, at the delegation level talks, in New Delhi on 25 January 2011.*



*The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mr. R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa and the Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri S. Sundareshan signing the Memorandum of Cooperation in Oil & Gas between Indonesia-India, in the presence of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr. H. Susilo Bambang and the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in New Delhi on 25 January 2011.*

## Important Agreements

Major agreements were signed during the visit of President Yudhoyono to India in January 2011. They include:

1. MoU between Regional Government of Central Kalimantan and International Coal Ventures Ltd to set up a mineral processing facility/steel plant for \$ 3.5 bn;
2. Agreement between National Fertilizers Ltd, India and PT Pupuk Sriwidjaja (PUSRI) for off take of fertilizers from Indonesia for US\$165 mn;
3. MoU between Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd and PT Eastern Infrastructure International for coal-based power plant in Indonesia for US\$500 mn;
4. MoU between Ministry of Industry of Indonesia and TRIMEX Sands to cooperate in the field of Heavy Minerals for US\$1 bn;
5. Agreement between Adani Group, PT Bukit Asam and Regional Government of South Sumatera to set up railway for transport of coal to the nearest port for US\$1.65 bn;
6. MoU between Regional Government of South Sumatera and Reliance Coal Resource Ltd for coal assets/rail line and port project for US\$1.5 bn;
7. MoU between Regional Government of Jambi and Reliance Coal Resource Ltd for coal assets/rail line and port project for US\$1.5 bn;
8. MoU between the regional Government of Jambi and Archean Energy and Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd. For integrated transportation infrastructure development and establishment of coal terminal for US\$300 mn;
9. MoU between PT Adani Global and Kendal Regency, Central Java and PT Mega Urip Pesona to construct a coal-fired power plant for US\$3 bn;
10. MoU between PT Angkasa Pura I and GVK Construction for airport project at Yogyakarta for US\$500 mn;
11. MoU between PT Pembangunan Bali Mandiri and GVK for construction of airport in Buleleng, Bali for US\$1bn;
12. Framework Agreement between Pipavava Shipyard, PT PAL Indonesia and SKIL Infrastructure Ltd for fast patrol boats, corvettes, light frigates, etc. for US\$1bn;
13. MoU between PT Surya Kepanjen and SEW Trident Global for development of toll road on BOT basis for US\$100-200 mn;
14. MoU between PT Walden Global Services and Secure Matrix India for Informational Technology Security Transfer for US\$5mn;
15. MoU between PT Multi Polar Technology (Lippo Group) and HCL Technologies on cooperation to work in IT services sector; and,
16. MoU between Investment Coordinating Board of Indonesia and Tata Power on Capacity Building.



# Resource Rich; Economically Strong

**I**ndonesia, officially the Republic of Indonesia, is a country in Southeast Asia and Oceania. It comprises 17,508 islands having a population base of around 238 million people and is the world's fourth most populous country. Indonesia has the world's largest population of Muslims. Indonesia has an elected legislature and president. The nation's capital city is Jakarta. It is a founding member of ASEAN and a member of the G-20 major economies. The Indonesian economy is the world's 18th largest economy by nominal GDP and 15th largest by purchasing power parity.

## Etymology

Indonesia derives its name from the Latin *Indus*, and the Greek *nesos*, meaning island. The name dates to the 18th century, far predating the formation of independent Indonesia.

From 1900, the name Indonesia became more common in academic circles outside the Netherlands, and Indonesian nationalist groups adopted it for political expression. Adolf Bastian, of the University of Berlin, popularized the name through his book *Indonesien oder die Inseln des Malayischen Archipels*, 1884-1894. The first Indonesian scholar to use the name was Suwardi Suryaningrat (*Ki*

*Hajar Dewantara*), when he established a press bureau in the Netherlands with the name *Indonesisch Pers-bureau* in 1913.

## History

Ideal agricultural conditions and the mastering of wet-field rice cultivation as early as the 8th century BCE, allowed villages, towns, and small kingdoms to flourish by the 1st century CE. Indonesia's strategic sea-lane position fostered inter-island and international trade, including links with Indian kingdoms and China, which were established several centuries BCE. Trade has since fundamentally shaped Indonesian history.

The nutmeg plant is native to Indonesia's Banda Islands. One of the world's most valuable commodities, it drew the first European colonial powers to Indonesia. From the 7th century CE, the powerful Srivijaya naval kingdom flourished as a result of trade and the influences of Hinduism and Buddhism that were imported with it. Between the eighth and 10th centuries CE, the agricultural Buddhist Sailendra and Hindu Mataram dynasties thrived and declined in inland Java, leaving grand religious monuments such as Sailendra's Borobudur and Mataram's Prambanan. The Hindu Majapahit kingdom was founded in eastern

Java in the late 13th century, and under Gajah Mada, its influence stretched over much of Indonesia.

## Geography

Indonesia consists of 17,508 islands, about 6,000 of which are inhabited. These are scattered over both sides of the equator. The largest are Java, Sumatra, Borneo (shared with Brunei and Malaysia), New Guinea (shared with Papua New Guinea), and Sulawesi. Indonesia shares land borders with Malaysia on Borneo, Papua New Guinea on the island of New Guinea, and East Timor on the island of Timor. Indonesia shares maritime borders across narrow straits with Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines to the north, and with Australia to the south. The capital, Jakarta, is on Java and is the nation's largest city, followed by Surabaya, Bandung, Medan, and Semarang.

## Sixteenth Largest

At 1,919,440 sq km, Indonesia is the world's 16th-largest country in terms of land area. Its average population density is 134 people per square kilometre (347 per sq mi), 79th in the world. At 4,884 metres (16,024 ft), Puncak Jaya in Papua is Indonesia's highest peak, and Lake Toba



Lake Toba, Sumatra

in Sumatra its largest lake, with an area of 1,145 sq km.

The country's largest rivers are in Kalimantan and include the Mahakam and Barito; such rivers are communication and transport links between the island's river settlements.

Indonesia's seismic and volcanic activity is among the world's highest. Indonesia's location on the edges of the Pacific, Eurasian, and Australian tectonic plates makes it the site of numerous volcanoes and frequent earthquakes.

Indonesia has at least 150 active volcanoes, including Krakatoa and Tambora, both famous for their devastating eruptions in the 19th century. The eruption of the Toba super-volcano, approximately 70,000 years ago, was one of the largest eruptions ever, and a global catastrophe. Recent disasters

due to seismic activity include the 2004 tsunami that killed an estimated 167,736 in northern Sumatra and the Yogyakarta earthquake in 2006. However, volcanic ash is a major contributor to the high agricultural fertility that has historically sustained the high population densities of Java and Bali.

### **Climate**

Lying along the equator, Indonesia has a tropical climate, with two distinct monsoonal wet and dry seasons. Average annual rainfall in the lowlands varies from 1,780-3,175 millimetres (70-125 in), and up to 6,100 millimetres (240 in) in mountainous regions. Mountainous areas—particularly in the west coast of Sumatra, West Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua—receive the highest rainfall. Humidity is generally high, averaging



Puncak Jaya, Papua

about 80 percent. Temperatures vary little throughout the year; the average daily temperature range of Jakarta is 26-30 °C.

### **Borders**

Indonesia shares land borders with Papua New Guinea, East Timor, and Malaysia. Other neighbouring countries include Singapore, Philippines, Australia, and the Indian territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Indonesian archipelago has been an important trade region since at least the 7th century, when Srivijaya and then later Majapahit traded with China and India. Local rulers gradually absorbed foreign cultural, religious and political models from the early centuries CE, and Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms flourished.

### **Foreign Period**

Foreign powers were drawn to its natural resources. Muslim traders brought Islam, and European powers fought one another to monopolise trade in the Spice Islands of Maluku during the Age of Discovery.

The first Europeans arrived in Indonesia in 1512, when Portuguese traders, led by Francisco Serrão, sought to monopolise the sources of nutmeg, cloves, and cubeb pepper in Maluku. Dutch and British traders followed. In 1602 the Dutch established the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and became the dominant European power. Following bankruptcy, the VOC was formally dissolved in 1800, and the government of the Netherlands established the Dutch East Indies as a nationalised colony.

For most of the colonial period, Dutch control over the archipelago was tenuous outside of coastal strongholds; only in the



Krakatoa volcano

early 20th century did Dutch dominance extend to what was to become Indonesia's current boundaries.

**Dutch Rule:** After three and a half centuries of Dutch colonialism, Indonesia secured its independence after World War II. Indonesia's history has since been turbulent with challenges posed by natural disasters, corruption, separatism, a democratisation process, and periods of rapid economic change. The current nation of Indonesia is a unitary presidential republic consisting 33 provinces.

Across its many islands, Indonesia consists of distinct ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. The Javanese are the largest—and the politically dominant—ethnic group. Indonesia has developed a shared identity defined by a national language, ethnic diversity, religious pluralism within a majority Muslim population, and a history of colonialism including rebellion against it.

Indonesia's national motto, *'Bhinneka Tunggal Ika'* ("Unity in Diversity" literally, "many, yet one"), articulates the diversity that shapes the country. Despite its large population and densely populated regions, Indonesia has vast areas of wilderness that support the world's second highest level of biodiversity. The country is richly endowed with natural resources, yet poverty remains widespread in contemporary Indonesia.

**Religion**

**Islam:** Although Muslim traders first travelled through South East Asia early in the Islamic era, the earliest evidence of Islamised populations in Indonesia dates to the 13th century in northern Sumatra. Other Indonesian areas gradually adopted



Sukarno, accompanied by Mohammad Hatta, declaring the independence of Indonesia on 17 August 1945, at Pegangsaan Timur 56 (now Jalan Proklamasi), Jakarta.

Islam, and it was the dominant religion in Java and Sumatra by the end of the 16th century. For the most part, Islam overlaid and mixed with existing cultural and religious influences, which shaped the predominant form of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in Java.

**Towards Independence**

Japanese occupation during World War II ended Dutch rule, and encouraged the previously suppressed Indonesian independence movement. Two days after the surrender of Japan in August 1945, Sukarno, an influential nationalist leader, declared independence and was appointed president. The Netherlands tried to re-



establish their rule, and an armed and diplomatic struggle ended in December 1949, when in the face of international pressure, the Dutch formally recognised Indonesian independence (with the exception of the Dutch territory of West New Guinea, which was incorporated into Indonesia following the 1962 New York Agreement, and the UN-mandated Act of Free Choice of 1969).

Sukarno, Indonesia's founding president Sukarno moved from democracy towards authoritarianism, and maintained his power base by balancing the opposing forces of the military and the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). An attempted coup on 30 September 1965 was countered by the army, who led a violent anti-communist purge, during which the PKI was blamed for the coup and effectively destroyed. Between 500,000 and one million people were killed.



The 2004 presidential election was the first in which the people directly elected the president and vice president. The president may serve a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms.



### Suharto Era

The head of the military, General Suharto, out-manoeuvred the politically weakened Sukarno, and was formally appointed president in March 1968. His New Order administration was supported by the US government and encouraged foreign direct investment in Indonesia, which was a major factor in the subsequent three decades of substantial economic growth. However, the 'New Order' was widely accused of corruption and suppression of political opposition.

Indonesia was the country hardest hit by the late 1990s Asian Financial Crisis. This increased popular discontent with the New Order and led to popular protest across the country. Suharto resigned on 21 May 1998. In 1999, East Timor voted to secede from Indonesia.

### New Era

Since Suharto's resignation, a strengthening of democratic processes has included a regional autonomy programme, and the first direct presidential election in 2004. Political and economic instability, social unrest, corruption, and terrorism slowed progress, however, in the last five years the economy has performed strongly. Although relations among different religious and ethnic groups are largely harmonious, sectarian discontent and violence has occurred. A political settlement to an armed separatist conflict in Aceh was achieved in 2005.

### Government

Indonesia is a republic with a presidential system. As a unitary state, power is concentrated in the central

government. Following the resignation of President Suharto in 1998, Indonesian political and governmental structures have undergone major reforms. Four amendments to the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia have revamped the executive, judicial, and legislative branches.

The president of Indonesia is the head of state, commander-in-chief of the Indonesian National Armed Forces, and the director of domestic governance, policy-making, and foreign affairs. The president appoints a council of ministers who need not be elected members of the legislature. The 2004 presidential election was the first in which the people directly elected the president and vice president. The president may serve a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms.

### MPR

The highest representative body at national level is the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). Its main functions are supporting and amending the constitution, inaugurating the president, and formalizing broad outlines of state policy. It has the power to impeach the president. The MPR comprises two houses; the People's Representative Council (DPR), with 560 members, and the Regional Representative Council (DPD), with 132 members. The DPR passes legislation and monitors the executive branch; party-aligned members are elected for five-year terms by proportional representation. Reforms since 1998 have increased the DPR's role in national governance. The DPD is a new chamber for matters of regional management.

### Foreign Relations

In contrast to Sukarno's anti-imperialistic antipathy to western powers and tensions with Malaysia, Indonesia's foreign relations since the Suharto 'New Order' have been based on economic and political cooperation with Western nations. Indonesia maintains close relationships with its neighbours in Asia, and is a founding member of ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. The nation restored relations with the People's Republic of China in 1990 following a freeze in place since anti-communist purges early in the Suharto era. Indonesia has been a member of the United Nations since 1950, and was a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC).

Indonesia is signatory to the ASEAN Free Trade Area agreement, the Cairns Group, and the WTO, and has historically been a member of OPEC, although it withdrew in 2008 after ceasing to be a net exporter of oil.



Suharto is appointed President of Indonesia at a ceremony, March 1968.



# NEW HORIZONS IN INDIA-INDONESIA RELATIONS

IIBA is engaged in intensifying its inter and intra organizational synergies by augmenting its partnerships with the apex trade and industry organizations in India and Indonesia. Its aim is to analyze and disseminate the tangible potential of the FTA.

India Indonesia Business Association welcomes H.E. Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudhono, President of the Republic of Indonesia on his visit to India as the Guest of Honour at the Republic Day parade. This landmark event is bound to leverage the proficiencies and synergies of the economies of India and Indonesia. The business deliberations that will be part of the exercise, will lead to a ramping of bilateral collaborations and businesses among the stakeholders of the regions two largest democracies.

India Indonesia Business Association ([i2b@vsnl.com](mailto:i2b@vsnl.com)) as the only recognized India-based bilateral organization engaged in promoting and facilitating commercial and economic collaborations between both countries is intensely monitoring these positive and challenging developments. IIBA is engaged in intensifying its inter and intra organizational synergies by augmenting its partnerships with the apex trade and industry organizations in India and Indonesia. Its aim is to analyze and disseminate the tangible potential of the FTA, identify newer avenues for collaboration in trade and investment, and more importantly to jointly take the

India-Indonesia Strategic Partnership to significantly higher thresholds.

The year 2010 established many new benchmarks due to substantial investment surges into Indonesia by India's industrial majors. It also witnessed the implementation of the ASEAN - India Free Trade Agreement especially vis-a-vis India-Indonesia. This will lead to the lowering of tariffs and consolidations across products, sectors and services. But there is a lot more to be done.

The year 2011 proclaims itself with a big bang. Thirty bilateral agreements worth US\$12 billion between both governments and between Indian and Indonesian businesses will be signed during the Presidential visit boosting trade and investments numbers to "never before" highs. Investments will follow into infrastructure projects such as railways, ports, fertilizers and education with further possibilities of airports in Bali and Yogyakarta. Bilateral trade which topped US\$12 billion last year now has a new 'summit' prediction - US\$20 billion this year.

The India-Indonesia partnership reflects the Olympic motto "Citius, Altius, Fortius." - "Swifter, Higher, Stronger."

## TOURISM

# WONDERFUL INDONESIA

By Nikita Gurung

In 2011, Indonesia's Tourism new slogan is *WONDERFUL INDONESIA*. The new tagline will be attached to the logo of the stylized Bird of Paradise. Enchanting beaches, stunning scenery, vibrant culture, the rich flora and fauna of Indonesia are what attract millions of people from all over the world. The age old temples carry its own charm compared to luxurious hotels and exciting nightlife.

The confluence of various cultures and ethnic groups has resulted in the creation of Indonesia's motto '*Unity in Diversity*'. Natural attractions are complemented by a rich cultural heritage that reflects Indonesia's dynamic history and ethnic diversity.

### Target 7.7 Million

Boosted by Indonesia's positive economic growth and the number of international in Indonesia Tourism Minister Jero Wacik has expressed confidence that tourism will grow by 10 percent to reach

7.7 million visitors in 2011.

In 2010 Indonesia achieved a record 7 million international arrivals up 8.5 percent compared to 6.4 million in 2009. This high target was reached despite setbacks in arrivals caused by the eruption of Mt. Merapi and Mt. Bromo on Java and the earthquake followed by tsunami that hit Mentawai in West Sumatra.

The total earnings received from international tourists were US\$7.6 billion.

Tourists stayed longer in Indonesia in 2010.

### MICE Power

A large number of international meetings and conferences will be held in Indonesia's many cities with state-of-the-art convention facilities. The Minister expects MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) to grow by 40 percent. Domestic tourism has experienced very positive growth, said the Minister.

### Culture

In the field of Culture, in 2010 Indonesia's Angklung (bamboo musical instrument) was included in UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This follows UNESCO's recognition of Indonesia's Wayang, Keris and Batik as World Cultural Heritage.



*Angklung with eight pitches*





Kuta Beach, Bali

Minister Jero Wacik urged the tourist industry, especially hotels to display these artefacts prominently as essential part of their décor with the explanation that these are UNESCO recognised World Heritage.

Other cultural assets that have been registered with UNESCO awaiting approval during the UNESCO Congress will be held in Bali in November 2011. They are the dynamic Saman Dance of Aceh in the Urgent Safeguarding List, and the Cultural Landscape of Bali, namely Pura Taman Ayun, the riverbed at Pakerisan, and the rice terraces of Jatiluwih. Tana Toraja Traditional Settlements in South Sulawesi has been registered for UNESCO recognition in 2011.

### Tourist Attractions

**Jakarta:** Jakarta is the capital of Indonesia. The vibrant city is a unique blend of all that is modern with the traditional. Besides skyscrapers, colonial structures built by European powers show form an essential part of Jakarta's skyline. The National Monument or 'Monas' which is Indonesia's most famous landmark is located in Jakarta. It is a 137 metre tall obelisk topped with a flame sculpture coated with 35 kg of gold. It is a symbol of people's determination to achieve freedom and was built during the Sukarno era of fierce nationalism.

Old warehouses and colonial buildings now house a variety of museums. The National Museum has an extensive collection of historical, archaeological

and ethnographic artefacts that provide information about the diverse ethnic groups residing in Indonesia.

The authentic *Betawi* house in the Textile Museum puts on display exclusive silk and batik cloths, antique and contemporary productions. The museum houses a collection of 327 kinds of textiles from all over the country.

Jakarta is a foodies paradise. They



The National Monument (Monas), Jakarta

range from exotic Asian cuisines to American fast food to Fine French dining; it all boils down to one city that is Jakarta. The best time to visit Jakarta is during the dry season ie May to September.

**Bali** - Bali is enchanting. Considered one of the most popular holiday destinations for people all over the world, this island is a magnificent blend of spectacular mountain scenery, beautiful beaches and resorts, lively culture and friendly people. Bali is a small island that is located just to the east of the island of Java, and just west of the island of Lombok. It is bordered by the Bali Sea and the Indian Ocean. Bali's appeal lies in the lush terraced rice fields which offer peace and serenity.

The Balinese are noted for their colourful ceremonies and dramatic dances which are a real treat for the eye. It has luxurious beaches and exciting night life. It can be seen by the intricately carved temples in and around Bali, that Hindu religion and culture has a strong hold here. The most impressive are Besakih, Tanah Lot and Uluwatu. Bali is famous for its beaches like *Kuta Beach* which is a stretch of white sandy beach and most suited for surfing.

For art enthusiasts there are stone and woodcarvings, traditional and modern paintings that are easily available in *Ubud*, a small town in Bali which is a famous art and craft centre. *Gunung Batur*, a semi dormant volcano right in the volcanic centre of the island is an amazing place from where one can capture the pristine sunrise.



*Borobudur temple, Java*

**Java** - This is an island in Indonesia that houses Indonesia's most famous cultural icon, the colossal, multi-tiered *Borobudur temple* which is the world's biggest Buddhist monument. The temple was built during the reign of Syailendra dynasty in the 9th century which clearly shows traces of influence of Indian architecture. This monument is both a place for Buddhist pilgrimage and a shrine to the Lord Buddha. The details and illustrations carved on the walls of the temple show Lord Buddha's road to enlightenment. Java is also famous for Dieng plateau and the Suku temple. Traditional dance dramas (*Wayang Orang*) or shadow puppets (*Wayang Kulit*) should not be missed at any cost. The Grand Mosque, located in Demak is a picturesque blend of Hindu and Islamic architecture, still honoured and worshipped by Javanese pilgrims. A whole stretch of mountain ranges can be seen across central Java offering a panoramic view.

**Lombok** - This is an island with stunning beaches and varied landscape. Surprisingly the best time to visit the island is during the rainy season (October-April) when humidity decreases. The dry



*The Grand Mosque, Demak*

season can be very hot and dusty. Lombok is also a popular holiday spot and proves tough competition to neighbouring Bali. The Gili islands, a small coral fringed island is remarkably ideal place for people who are interested in the sun and the sand. Kuta is well known for its beach resort.

A prominent place to visit is Museum *Negeri Nusa Tenggara Barat*. The geology, history and culture are put on display in the museum. Pura Lingsar, a large temple complex built in 1714 is also a popular tourist destination. This temple is located 6 km east of *Mataram*- the capital of *Lombok*. One can reach *Lombok* by ferry from neighbouring Bali otherwise it is well connected with an international airport in the capital city of *Mataram*.

**Sumatra** - Widely known as 'Africa of Asia' due to its rich wildlife, Sumatra is a perfect getaway from the maddening crowds elsewhere. The rich flora, fauna and magnificent beaches attract thousands of tourists to this magical island. The best time to visit Sumatra is September and October. *Medan* is the capital of Sumatra and is well known for the architecture of the city which shows strong Dutch influence.

**Lake Toba** - it is one of the biggest and most famous lakes in Indonesia. Located in northern Sumatra this is South East Asia's largest freshwater lake. An island named *Samosir* in the middle of the lake is its unique feature. It is an ideal location for a relaxing holiday. Its countryside is covered with tobacco, rubber, and palm oil plantations. Medan is well connected with Jakarta, Penang and Singapore.

## Wildlife

There are 50 national parks in Indonesia, of which six are listed as World Heritage Sites. *Gunung Leuser National Park* located in Sumatra is the largest national park, followed by *Kerinci Seblat*



*Gunung Leuser National Park, Sumatra*

*National Park* and *Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park*; all three are recognised as Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The Komodo National Park in the *Lesser Sunda Islands* is a national park which was founded in 1980 in order to protect the Komodo dragon, the world's largest lizard. An orangutan sanctuary of *Bukit Lawang* is located inside the *Gunung Leuser National Park*. The lush green tropical forest of Sumatra and Java are also popular tourist destinations.

*Toba Lake*





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