

**Ismet resumes post as Tangerang regent**

Page 4

**Abbas, Olmert meet to discuss Gaza**

Page 11

**Internet addresses are a private detail**

Page 21



**Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan carries Binjimin Pandey (left) and Anjali Pandey during the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the Aishwarya Bachchan Karva Mahavidyalaya girls' college in Daulatpur village, 63 kilometers northeast of the northern Indian city of Lucknow, on Sunday. Amitabh announced during the ceremony that he will take care of the two children's education.**

**Pakistan troops kill 25 militants**

Pakistani security forces retook control of a major road tunnel in the northwest late Sunday after a day of fighting in which at least 24 militants were killed, the army said. Militants had occupied the Japanese-built tunnel in the lawless town of Darra Adam Khel on Friday, blocking traffic between the main city of Peshawar in North West Frontier Province and the city of Kohat. Residents said hundreds of vehicles were stranded on both sides of the tunnel, as the militants had erected barricades on the road to the tunnel. "The security forces have cleared the Kohat tunnel and taken its control after fighting which killed 24 people," an army official said, requesting anonymity. — AFP

**S. California braces for another storm**

A brief hiatus from nearly a week of stormy weather was interrupted by deadly avalanches, flooded streets and mud and rock slides in rain-soaked Southern California. Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties braced for another bout of heavy rain as flash flood watches were in effect through Sunday because of thunderstorms, possible hail and wind gusts as high as 80 kph. Heavy showers arrived late Saturday, a day after a break in the storms enabled workers to find the body of a third skier killed by a snow slide and rescue a missing snowboarder who survived a frigid night in the San Gabriel Mountains. — AP

**TEXT YOUR SAY**

**Villain or hero**  
Former president and architect of the New Order regime, Soeharto, died of multiple organ failure Sunday. Do you think Soeharto was a villain, a hero or both? Send your thoughts via SMS to +62 811 187 2772. Please include your name and city.

— Editor

# SOEHARTO DEAD



SOEHARTO

**Adianto P. Simamora**  
*The Jakarta Post/Jakarta*

**T**he father of development is dead. Venerated for much of his 32-year tenure as the liberator, he appeared to be after more than two decades of authoritarian rule under his predecessor, Sukarno, and vilified near its end for his authoritarian rule and for the corruption he appeared to condone in his later years in office. Indonesia's second president, Soeharto, died quietly on Sunday aged 86 at Pertamina Hospital in Jakarta.

A variety of illnesses had sapped the former military strongman of his vitality during the last years of his life. He leaves behind the partially grown seeds of an ambitious industrial modernization plan and a legacy of sectarian strife and unbridled corruption.

Doctors said Soeharto died at about 1:10 p.m. after suffering multiple organ failure, following 23 days in the hospital's intensive care unit.

The medical team treating Soeharto said his health dramatically deteriorated early Sunday.

They said Soeharto fell unconscious for the first time since his arrival at the hospital on Jan. 4, after his blood pressure fell sharply. The doctors then placed him on a ventilator to allow him to breathe.

"From 3 a.m. on Sunday, his blood pressure declined sharply," said Joko Raharjo, a member of the medical team. "We tried to increase his blood pressure but it did not work. He was not in a coma, but was unconscious."

Accompanied by Soeharto's daughter, Siti Hardiyanti "Tutut" Rukmana, the team of doctors addressed a press conference, declaring that Soeharto had "peacefully" passed away at 1:10 p.m.

Tutut, Soeharto's eldest daughter, asked the public to

forgive her father.

"We, on behalf of the whole family, thank everyone who has prayed for our father," a tearful Tutut said at the media conference. "Please forgive my father for all his mistakes."

The former general was admitted to the hospital on Jan. 4, due to anemia and severe edema.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono expressed deep sympathy to Soeharto's family and announced seven days of national mourning, which began Sunday.

Yudhoyono, Vice President Jusuf Kalla, Cabinet ministers and other high-ranking officials paid their last respects to Soeharto at his private residence on Jl. Cendana, Central Jakarta, where he was laid in state.

The news of Soeharto's death drew people from across the city to Cendana, forcing the police to close the street.

Outside Soeharto's residence, around 100 troops from the Army's Special Forces and Strategic Reserve Command guarded the area as thousands of people came to express their condolences.

Mourners wept while others chanted *Ina Lillah Allah* (there is no God but Allah) as the ambulance carrying Soeharto's body arrived at the home.

Heavy rain fell around Jl. Cendana at about 8 p.m., while the rest of Jakarta was dry. President Yudhoyono is slated to lead the state funeral for Soeharto at the Astana Giriwangun family cemetery in Karanganyar, Central Java, on Monday at about 11 a.m.

Yudhoyono canceled a trip to Bali to attend a UN conference against corruption which opens Monday, sparking criticism from graft watchdogs who said the cancellation was a sign of the President's ambivalent commitment to the anti-corruption drive.

Soeharto's remains will be

laid in state at the At-Tien Mosque at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah in East Jakarta before being flown to Surakarta, Central Java.

A number of foreign dignitaries are expected to attend the funeral. Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong joined mourners who paid homage to Soeharto on Sunday evening. Timor-Leste Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao, who was jailed during Soeharto's rule, and former Malaysian premier Mahir Muhammad will pay their last respects to Soeharto on Monday morning.

Soeharto assumed power in 1966 after a counter movement against a coup attempt blamed on the communists in 1965. After 32 years of rule, which saw political and economic stability at the expense of freedom and human rights, he stepped down in 1998, following mass protests and rioting.

As he left office, calls rose for his successors to bring him to justice for corruption and human rights abuses, but to no avail.

State prosecutors are filing a civil lawsuit against Soeharto, demanding the return of about US\$600 million in state money allegedly stolen by his foundations. During Soeharto's hospitalization, his children had asked for an out-of-court settlement.

The Attorney General's Office dropped corruption charges against Soeharto in May 2006 after his doctors said he was not healthy enough to stand trial.

Director of the Setara Institute rights group, Hendarli, said the final uncertain status of Soeharto served as a bad precedent for the country's law enforcement.

"We have witnessed bankruptcy and discriminatory law enforcement during Yudhoyono's presidency. It is due to the failure of the government to create a breakthrough when Soeharto was still alive," he said. (uw/aww)

## Govt declares seven days of national mourning

**The Jakarta Post Jakarta**

**P**resident Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono announced seven days of national mourning for former president Soeharto who died Sunday, despite the government's ongoing legal case against the former leader.

During a press conference following a Cabinet meeting on national food resilience at the State Palace, Yudhoyono asked the nation to pray for Soeharto's peaceful rest.

The President, on behalf of the government and Indonesian people, expressed deep condolences on the death of Soeharto. Yudhoyono also called on people across the country to show their respect for Soeharto, given his "great contributions to the state."

"We lost one of the nation's best citizens. Bapak Soeharto," Yudhoyono said. He also asked people to fly the Indonesian flag at half-mast during the seven-day mourning period.

Cabinet Secretary Sudi

Silalahi said the national mourning began Sunday.

The national flag at the State Palace was lowered to half-mast immediately after the President's statements, as were a number of flags along Jakarta thoroughfare Jl. MH Thamrin.

Yudhoyono, Vice President Jusuf Kalla and a number of Cabinet members paid homage to Soeharto, who was lying in state at his private residence on Jl. Cendana in Central Jakarta before his funeral, which is scheduled for Monday at the Soeharto family cemetery in the Central Java town of Karanganyar.

The government has filed a civil lawsuit against Soeharto to recoup Rp 185.9 billion (US\$19.67 million) and \$240 million in state money allegedly misused by his foundations.

A state prosecutor earlier said Soeharto's death would not bring an end to the case, and that the government would continue to seek the return of the money from the former president's children.

Article 25 of the 1990 government regulation that covers state ceremonies for state officials and national figures, stipulates a seven-day national mourning period can be declared when a serving or former president or vice president dies.

During the mourning period, the national flag is flown at half-mast across the country.

The government provides assistance, including facilities and security, to the family of the deceased in organizing a funeral.

President Yudhoyono last declared a three-day national mourning period on Dec. 27-29 in 2004 for the thousands of people in Aceh and Nias who were killed in the Indian Ocean tsunami on Dec. 26. President Megawati Sukarnoputri announced one day of national mourning on Nov. 15, 2002, after 202 people, mostly foreign tourists, were killed in terrorist bombings on Bali on Oct. 12.

A group of families of victims of the 1966 crackdown

on communists said they would defy the government's announcement of a national mourning period. They said

Soeharto's crimes were too serious to be forgiven. The mass killings of people allegedly linked to the

Indonesian Communist Party began when Soeharto announced a ban on the party. (af)



AP/Presidential Office

**LAST GOODBYE:** President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (second right, front row), joins Soeharto's relatives and offers prayers before the body of the former president at his house on Jl. Cendana, Central Jakarta, on Sunday.

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