

## FOOD

# Housewives upset over high garlic prices

Rachmadea Aisyah

THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

The sharp increase in prices of commodities such as garlic has annoyed shoppers in many parts of the country as they have to spend more to buy basic goods, the prices of which usually increase during Ramadan.

Heni Trisniati was surprised when none of the supermarkets nor small grocers near her house in South Tangerang, Banten, were selling garlic last weekend.

Heni, a 54-year-old housewife who cooks daily for her husband and two sons, said she struggled to cook without garlic, just like many other households. She found the herb in other places but the price was also high.

"The last time I bought garlic was one week ago at a supermarket and the price had gone up to Rp 60,000 [US\$4.20] per kilogram, when normally it only costs me Rp 20,000," Heni told *The Jakarta Post*. "The smaller grocers I went to said they were not restocking garlic because they were afraid the high prices would suddenly drop and they would lose money."

Dewi Khalimah, a 52-year-old housewife who runs a small business selling fresh packaged *sambal* (chili sauce), shared a similar experience. Her specialty *sambal bawang* (garlic chili sauce) uses bird's eye chili and garlic as its main ingredients. Given the latter's price jump, she decided to temporarily stop production as her customers would not buy her *sambal* at a higher price.

Heni and Dewi are two out of millions of Indonesians lament-



Antara/Yusuf Nugroho

**Half down:** Workers sort garlic cloves at Bitingan Market in Kudus, Central Java, on Wednesday. The price of garlic was reported to be declining over the past week from Rp 100,000 (US\$7) to Rp 50,000 per kilogram.

ing the unexpected surge in garlic prices, a major ingredient in local food that is mostly imported.

According to *hargapangan.id*, which monitors staple food prices across Indonesia, the average price of garlic nationally rose to Rp 63,900 per kg on May 7 from Rp 49,750 on April 30. The garlic price rose to Rp 87,500 per kg in Jakarta and Rp 103,350 per kg in East Kalimantan. In addition to garlic, prices of other food commodities such as chili, tomatoes and eggs have also increased.

Statistics Indonesia (BPS) recorded 582,994 tons of garlic were imported in 2018, nearly all

of which was from China. This year, the Trade Ministry issued permits for eight garlic importers to bring in 115,765 tons of garlic into the country until December 2019. The delay in the shipment of the garlic has contributed to the shortage of supplies.

BPS reported that garlic was among the main drivers of April inflation, which unexpectedly rose to 0.44 percent from 0.11 percent in March. Garlic contributed 0.09 percent out of the 0.44 percent average increase in price.

Afrizal Gindow, chairman of the Indonesian Horticulture

Seed Producers Association, said farmers could not do anything about garlic imports as the plant thrives in subtropical climates that Indonesia does not have.

"We have conducted several studies and trials [to cultivate garlic] but the results were never good," Afrizal told the *Post* over the phone on Tuesday. "Several farmers in North Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara have attempted to do so, but the crops were nowhere near good enough for mass production."

As for horticulture commodities that could be cultivated in Indonesia, such as shallots, Afrizal claimed that farmers had the proper cultivation knowledge and techniques as well as high productivity.

However, as most of the farmers plant the same food crop at the same time, the harvest time occurs once instead of several times during the year. This is why prices of food commodities fluctuate sharply from time to time.

After denying rumors that the government had decided to call off garlic imports, Coordinating Economic Minister Darmin Nasution said 100,000 tons of imported garlic had entered Indonesia last week.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Andi Amran Sulaiman blamed high garlic prices on importers who he said had conspired to inflate prices.

His office, said Amran, had blacklisted 56 garlic importers accused of meddling with garlic prices as well as failing to abide by the government's policy of planting 5 percent of garlic imports.

# People power may be 'treason'

Marguerite Afra Sapiie,  
Nurul Fitri Ramadhani  
and Ghina Ghaliya

THE JAKARTA POST / JAKARTA

Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu has slammed the threat by the Prabowo Subianto camp to mobilize "people power", saying that the idea could be harmful to the nation if it was implemented and such protests could be considered treasonous.

Ryamizard commented on journalists' questions about a suggestion made by Prabowo's team that they would mobilize people on the streets to protest if the General Elections Commission (KPU) does not address their findings of alleged widespread cheating in the recent presidential election.

The former Army general, who has refused to concede defeat and has declared victory multiple times despite quick-count results showing he lost to incumbent Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, has said that protests may take place if the official count on May 22 confirms his defeat.

"As minister of defense, I don't like the idea of 'people power' because it harms the nation," Ryamizard said on Wednesday, "I don't want this nation to be torn apart."

"If people power is forced through, it could be considered treasonous. There is a punishment for acts of treason," he went on.

Ryamizard, a retired general himself, hoped that such protests would not take place, saying that if the KPU found no evidence of widespread cheating in the election, all parties must accept the election organizers' decision.

To anticipate any potential trouble, the Indonesian Military (TNI) and National Police will jointly deploy 450,000 personnel to guard a number of vital facilities, particularly the offices of the election organizers, with both institutions warning that there may be a number of actions by parties that will not accept the election result when it is announced on May 22.

The number is far larger than that which was deployed in 2014, when only about 31,000 military and police personnel were deployed on the announcement day at the KPU.

National Police chief Gen. Tito Karnavian also said on Tuesday that people mobilizing for street protests must abide by the law, otherwise those involved could be charged with committing treason.

Furthermore, if the protesters insinuated that they wanted to topple the government, Tito said it would fall under the remit of treason as stipulated in Article 107 of the Criminal Code. The ar-

Violent measures  
challenging KPU results  
could be deemed treason

Police, TNI ready  
to safeguard KPU  
on announcement day

ticle carries a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

The statement about people power was first made by senior National Mandate Party (PAN) politician and Prabowo-Sandiaga 2019 campaign adviser Amien Rais.

Since polls closed on April 17, Prabowo has declared victory multiple times, despite established pollsters projecting that Jokowi won the election with 54 to 55 percent of the vote.

In the past few weeks, the Prabowo camp has claimed that it has evidence of massive cheating and election fraud and has submitted a report to the Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) detailing 73,715 instances of miscounting that it claims were fraudulent in the KPU vote-count information system (Situng).

Gerindra Party deputy chairman Sufmi Dasco Ahmad said the KPU had committed an administrative violation by publishing its Situng system as the commission had no authority to do so. "Besides violating the rules, the KPU is also not ready to work with the system, so the Situng has become unreliable and disturbing," Sufmi said.

The camp has asked Bawaslu to stop the Situng.

But Sufmi denied that plans to bring people on to the street emanated from the Prabowo camp saying that they would prefer to settle any disputes "according to procedures".

In a press conference on Wednesday, Prabowo said his team would publish all data gathered by them and used for internal real counts so that people could compare these with the count done by the KPU.

"We're holding workshops inviting IT experts from various universities to review [the KPU count]. Next week, we'll hold a press conference," Prabowo said.

National Police spokesperson Dedi Prasetyo said the focus on May 22 would be on Jakarta, especially the KPU and Bawaslu offices in Central Jakarta, and other vital locations nationwide.

Dedi did not elaborate on how many police personnel would be deployed to tackle possible riots incited by those unsatisfied with the official election results.

"What is clear is that the Police and the TNI guarantee the security, peace and comfort of Jakarta and surroundings," Dedi told *The Jakarta Post*.

May 9, 2019  
J. Pos

# Postelection division: Real or imagined?

Karina M. Tehusijarana

THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

The aftermath of the 2019 presidential election has been full of questions on the place of religion in Indonesian politics and whether Indonesians have become more polarized along religious lines.

"The question of religion and the state always comes up [during election years], as we know," Centre for Strategic and International Studies executive director Philips Vermonte said at a recent discussion on politics and religion in Central Jakarta.

"It seems to me that we need thorough thinking on whether or not this is a temporal phenomenon or a continued phenomenon."

The question of rising religious influence over politics has been at the forefront of politics since the trial and subsequent conviction of then-Jakarta governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama for blasphemy in 2017.

According to quick counts by several established pollsters, as well as ongoing vote tallies from the General Elections Commission, Joko "Jokowi" Widodo dominated Central Java and East Java, considered the strongholds of Islamic mass organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as well as "majority-minority" provinces such as Bali, East Nusa Tenggara and Papua.

Meanwhile, Prabowo Subianto won big in provinces that are considered to be modernist Islamic strongholds such as Banten, West Java, West Sumatra and Aceh.

Despite the election results, Ronald Lukens-Bull, a professor of anthropology and religious studies at the University of North Florida, said he was unconvinced that the Indonesian populace was really as polarized as some perceived.

"Let's just assume that there

Apparent division shown between moderates and 'not-so-moderate' groups

Political presence of Islamic groups would not end with 2019 general election

are two poles: the moderate pole that backed Jokowi and the not-so-moderate pole that backed Prabowo," he said.

"Well, in the not-so-moderate pole there are three prominent groups — what used to be called the HTI [Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia], PKS [the Prosperous Justice Party] and FPI [Islam Defenders Front] — that call each other *kafir* [infidel]," he continued.

"There is at most a temporary alliance, maybe to oppose all things touched by Ahok, and that would include Jokowi. If Prabowo had won, without a common enemy, I think they would start to fracture."

Lukens-Bull added that the "moderate pole" that backed Jokowi was also not particularly united. "According to exit polls, 55 percent of people associated with NU voted for Jokowi, which means that 45 percent voted for Prabowo," he said. "So that label — NU — is not meaningful politically."

Association for Elections and Democracy executive director Titi Anggraini posited that the perceived increase in polarization was the result of changes in the electoral system.

"I think the polarization was unnatural because it was forced by the election system through the presidential nomination threshold," she said.

The 2017 General Elections Law requires that a party or coalition of parties secure at least 20 percent of seats in the House of Representatives or 25 percent

of the popular vote to nominate a presidential candidate.

"The presidential threshold drives political parties into 'forced marriages'. The coalitions formed by the parties are not natural coalitions and that's why in 2014 and 2019 we had the same candidates," Titi said.

Despite doubts on the extent of religious and political polarization among the electorate, experts and observers agreed that the increasing political presence of conservative Islamic groups would not end with the 2019 elections, despite the loss of their preferred candidate.

Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict researcher Nava Nuraniyah said while an Islamist "people power" movement in response to Prabowo's loss was unlikely, it did not mean that the groups had given up on politics.

She pointed to a social media post by popular preacher and Prabowo supporter Felix Siauw on election day after the quick count results came in as an example.

"He said: 'This is not a defeat because look how far we've come. 10 years ago the *dakwah* [Islamic preaching] wasn't this strong but now it's very strong. This is what we call a mini victory before the real victory,'" Nava said.

She added that the groups had a longer term agenda of incorporating Islamic moral values into national legislation.

Lukens-Bull agreed, saying that such groups had already shown that they were able to introduce "small, incremental restrictions that so-called moderates have a hard time opposing", citing the 2008 Pornography Law.

"While Prabowo may have lost, the fact is that these groups can get enough votes to pass incremental bits of sharia in the legislature," he said.

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# Govt picks only two winners in oil and gas block auction

Stefanno Reinard Sulaiman

THE JAKARTA POST/JAKARTA

The government has only named two winners from the recent auction of five oil and gas blocks as other bidders failed to meet the auction requirement, a senior official has said.

Deputy Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Arcandra Tahar said the Kuwait-based energy firm Kufpec Regional Ventures (Indonesia) Ltd., and the consortium of Canada-based Sonoro Energy Ltd. and PT Menara Global Energi were named as the winners of two of the five oil and gas blocks offered in the auction.

Kufpec will develop and operate the Anambas Block in West Natuna, while the Sonoro consortium will develop the ready-to-produce Selat Panjang Block in Riau. From the auction of the two oil and gas blocks, the government secured US\$109.2 million in investment commitment (KKP) for exploration activities.

Meanwhile, no winners were picked for the development of the other three oil and gas blocks, which included West Ganal Block, West Kaimana Block and West Kampar. Arcandra said as none of the bidders for the three oil and gas blocks had met the auction requirements, they would be

Kufpec will develop, operate Anambas Block in West Natuna

Sonoro consortium will develop ready-to-produce Selat Panjang Block in Riau

Government secured \$109.2 million in investment commitment (KKP) for exploration

reauctioned,

"Some of the bidders met the requirements, but some did not," he said on Tuesday during the announcement of the winners. "The blocks that received no winners will be reauctioned," he added.

The five oil and gas blocks were auctioned in February through a regular mechanism.

Meanwhile, the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry's director general for oil and gas, Djoko Siswanto, said the ministry considered making some revisions to the terms and conditions of the auction of the three oil and gas blocks, especially in relation to the size of the signature bonus, which has to be paid by bidders, and the size of the investment commitment they have to provide.

Eko Lumadyo, the managing

director for Indonesia of Neptune Energy Ltd., which bid for the development of the West Ganal Block, said that he was confused as why his company was found to have failed to meet the auction requirements.

He said that he was not satisfied with the deputy minister's statement, saying that the explanation was still unclear.

West Ganal Block is a cut-off asset from United States-based energy giant Chevron's Makassar Strait Block, which has been excluded from the mega gas project Indonesia Deepwater Development (IDD).

Arcandra said the West Ganal block would be re-auctioned even though there were already two bidders, namely Neptune Energy Ltd. and a consortium firm between state energy holding company Pertamina and Italian ENI S.p.A.

"We need to get a clear and clean process. There are some questions about the bids that we need to have clarified. Hence, we decided to retender this one [West Ganal]," the deputy minister said.

On the other hand, ENI's representative Davide Casini Ropa, the vice president of exploration in ENI Muara Bakau B.V., said that he had no problem about the

retender. "It is a common thing. Sometimes a retender happens, not only in Indonesia. Although, it has happened for the first time to me since I have been here in 2016, but I see nothing strange about it," he said.

Ato Suyanto, state energy holding company Pertamina's project manager for West Ganal, said after the meeting that the government had asked the firm to resubmit its proposal soon in order to comply with new requirements.

"We will resubmit the proposal as there will be a revision and additional requirements from the government," he said.

Of the 17 blocks that were auctioned last year, only nine were sold.

Commenting on the low response of investors to the government's oil and gas block auctions, local energy watchdog Energy Watch Indonesia executive director Mamit Setiawan said it indicated that oil and gas exploration in Indonesia was no longer attractive to either local or foreign investors.

"The government should make some improvements in order to make the investment climate more attractive. Why it is no longer attractive? It is because of the gross split scheme or other problems," he said.

# Public calls for disbandment of FPI as permit ends

The Jakarta Post

JAKARTA

As the permit for hard-line group Islam Defenders Front (FPI) is due to expire next month, calls have been mounting for the disbandment of the group, which has a track record of religious-related violence.

FPI's five-year permit as a mass organization will end on June 20.

The government requires all organizations to register and extend their permits with the Home Ministry, as stipulated in Law no. 16/2017 on mass organizations, to control them.

However, an online petition urging the Home Ministry not to extend the FPI's permit has garnered widespread support from the public, with more than 180,000 petitioners since it was created on May 6.

The petition, created by Ira

About 180,000 online petitioners have called on disbandment of FPI

FPI permit for mass organization will expire on June 20, needs to be extended

Bisyir on *change.org*, refers to the FPI as "an organization that spreads radicalism and supports violence just like Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)".

The HTI is a Muslim group disbanded by the government in 2017 for contravening the Pancasila state ideology and the principle of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Calls for the FPI's disbandment have grown over the years, with many accusing the group of acting above the law with its constant raids, violent tendencies and anti-Pancasila sentiments.

FPI leader Habib Rizieq called for the implementation of a sharia-based Indonesia during a "212 reunion" rally, referring to a rally in December 2016 that demanded then-Jakarta governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama be jailed for blasphemy.

FPI spokesman Slamet Maarif rejected claims that his group spread radicalism, adding that the group would request a permit extension from the Home Ministry, CNN Indonesia reported.

Home Minister Tjahjo Kumolo said his ministry had not received a request for a permit extension from the FPI.

He said that upon receiving such a request, his ministry would evaluate the FPI before issuing a permit extension, adding that the public's opposition to the group would not automatically be taken into consideration.

"What is important is that mass organizations must accept Pancasila as the state ideology," Tjahjo told *The Jakarta Post* on Wednesday.

He added that his ministry would ensure citizens' rights to freedom of speech and freedom of association as long as they adhered to the state ideology.

The Home Ministry's director general for political affairs and general administration, Sudarmo, said his ministry would consider mass organizations' track records as well as suggestions from concerned ministries and institutions before issuing permits.

"There are 17 requirements that mass organizations must fulfill to obtain permits, among them is that they must not be involved in activities that violate the law," he said.

Sudarmo said the government

would not accommodate mass organizations that did not have permits, although no sanctions would be imposed on them.

"The FPI still has time to request a permit extension. The process usually takes up to 15 days," he said.

Sociologist at Yogyakarta State University, Amika Wardana, said the FPI's right to association should be respected as long as the group was not proven to be involved in organized crime.

He added that challenging the state ideology through ways allowed by the constitution should not be a reason to ban groups, especially in a democratic country that upheld civil rights.

Amika argued that although the FPI has conducted raids before, the group had also opted for legal processes to influence policy-makers, such as by filing a judicial review in 2013 to support local administrations in prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages — which it won.

"If the FPI has been involved in organized, violent crimes, then there must be legal proof. The problem is that the police seem to be overly careful when dealing with the FPI, such as in raid cases, so there has not been a way to legally prove that these incidents are organized," he said.

Senior FPI member Novel Bamukmin lambasted the petition that targeted the group, saying it was initiated by "blasphemers" who are intimidated by the Muslim majority.

"It's clear that the petition is from transgressors, communists and LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] supporters," he told the *Post*. (ars)

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## Indonesia coal price dips nearly 8 percent

**JAKARTA:** The Indonesian coal price reference (HBA) has continued to decline this month due to shrinking market demand to US\$81.86 per ton, or a month-to-month (mtm) decrease of 7.86 percent.

Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) Ministry spokesperson Agung Pribadi said that East and West Asian countries, especially China and India, were currently limiting their Indonesian coal imports.

"China and India have started to reduce their coal imports from Indonesia. The countries launched a protection policy and have increased domestic coal production to fulfill [local] demands," Agung said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Indonesian Coal Mining Association (APBI) estimated last year that Indonesia's annual coal exports to China was around 110 to 120 million tons for a market share of 25 percent, making China its biggest coal importer.

The energy ministry had observed a declining trend in Indonesia's coal price since October 2018, when coal was \$100.89 per ton. It then fell to \$97.90 per ton in November and \$92.51 per ton in December.

The negative trend continued this year, dropping to \$92.41 per ton in January, \$91.8 per ton in February, \$90.57 per ton in March and then to \$88.85 per ton in April.

The government has targeted a national coal production similar to the actual output in 2018 of 485 million tons, of which 25 percent was for domestic market obligation. —JP

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PHARMA

# Kimia Farma plans expansion to Vietnam

Riska Rahman

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State-owned pharmaceutical firm PT Kimia Farma is eyeing healthcare and pharmaceutical companies at home and overseas this year to diversify and expand its business.

Kimia Farma president director Honesti Basyir said the company was assessing the possibility of acquiring a major pharmaceutical distribution company in Vietnam as part of its efforts to expand to other Southeast Asian countries.

Honesti said two companies in Vietnam could be potential acquisition targets for Kimia Farma, one being the biggest retail pharmacy firm in Vietnam and the other being the third-biggest.

According to the company's finance director, IGN Suharta Wijaya, the retail pharmaceutical business in Vietnam was much more profitable than in Indonesia. "For example, a pharmacy outlet in Indonesia can book Rp 1.5 billion [US\$104,735] in sales per month. In Vietnam, a pharmacy outlet could get about Rp 4 billion per month," he told the press in Jakarta on Tuesday.

He predicted that the acquisition could increase the revenue his company earns from the retail business from currently 10 percent to around 15 percent of total revenue. Suharta, however, admitted that the acquisition could be hampered by investment regulations in the country, which prohibit foreign companies from becoming majority shareholders. "We're only interested in a majority stake in the company we wish to acquire," he said.

In addition, Kimia Farma plans to acquire two hospitals this year. Both of the hospitals are located in Jakarta, with one of them being state-owned and the other one privately owned.

Honesti said they were categorized as class C and D hospitals, meaning they only provide a limited range of medical services. While he refused to go into more details on the hospital acquisition plan, Honesti expressed hope that the acquisitions could be completed this year.

Kimia Farma had allocated Rp 4.2 trillion in capital expenditure this year, Rp 1.7 trillion of which would be used to finance inorganic growth while the rest would be used to finance the firm's operations, he said.

The company plans to raise Rp 1.5 trillion this year from the issuance of bonds with a maturity of three to five years, Suharta said.

He said the company was still awaiting approval from the government, as its majority shareholder, but hoped the bonds could be issued in June.

Moreover, Honesti said, the company was considering a right issue to get additional capex funds as well as increase the public's ownership in Kimia Farma from 9.98 percent to around 20 to 30 percent.

He said the fundraising measures were necessary to reduce funding costs. According to its financial report, Kimia Farma's revenue grew 19.43 percent year-on-year (yoy) to Rp 1.85 trillion in the first quarter of this year, but profit declined by 28.45 percent yoy to Rp 22.03 billion due to an increase in funding costs by almost 160 percent in the three-month period.

Honesti said he expected the company's total revenue to grow 20 percent in the second quarter of this year as the financial report of pharmaceutical firm PT Pharos, which was acquired earlier this year, had been consolidated with Kimia Farma's balance sheet. At present, Kimia Farma owns 56.77 percent of Pharos.