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## **RI CAR SALES TO FALL ONE-THIRD THIS YEAR**

Jakarta, Jan 20 (ANTARA) - Car sales in Indonesia will drop by almost one-third this year due to higher vehicle prices from a weakened rupiah and lower consumer spending amid the global economic slowdown, an economic consultant predicted here Tuesday.

Vivek Vaidya, Asia Pacific director of Automotive & Transportation for Frost & Sullivan consultants, said 2008 had been a record year for Indonesian vehicle sales making the country the second biggest automotive market in Southeast Asia after Thailand.

But he forecast sales would drop 29.2 percent from 603,774 units in 2008 to 427,278 units this year - a decline which began with last year's credit crunch.

"In the fourth quarter of 2008 there was panic in the automotive industry and that's going to impact on 2009 very badly," he said.

Vaidya said pick-up trucks would be hardest hit, declining 35.8 percent as companies defer vehicle purchases in the tough economic times.

"There is a tendency among companies to keep and maintain their current fleets of vehicles or sell them to minimize loss as manufacturers suffer from a decline in exports," he said.

Beyond the current downturn, however, Indonesia would be well positioned to take advantage of growing demand in Brazil, Russia, India and China in coming years, as well as domestic demand for cheaper cars, Vaidya said.

He predicted Asia would be the largest manufacturer of low cost cars by 2020, adding that Indonesia must take advantage of this growth area by strengthening its auto components sector and implementing policies to encourage growth in coming years.

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AUSTRALIAN CHEER AT GELORA BUNG KARNO STADIUM

Jakarta, Jan 29 (ANTARA) - Outnumbered and outcheered, on a night when their Socceroos were outplayed, Australian fans at Wednesday's Asian Cup qualifier had a big task ahead of them in raising a cheer.

Indonesia played an attacking game, especially in the first half, stirring the local crowd into a frenzy. Shouts of "Indonesia, Indonesia" rung out around the stadium, while the drumming section from the cheersquad hammered out its beats.

Australian coach Pim Verbeek said the Indonesians were particularly difficult to beat at home with their noisy fans.

Meanwhile, just over 100 Australians - and one inflatable kangaroo - grouped together near the Gate I area of Gelora Bung Karno Stadium to muster what noise they could. Cheers of "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi" started several times but petered out quickly.

Rory Carroll of Sydney spent much of the night starting chants from his front row seat, trying to lead the group. It was a tough job.

"There's not much chanting from the crowd so far," he said at half time.

"They're trying to get into it, but there are only so many Socceroos supporters here." Kevin Thompson of Brisbane was one of the few die-hard Socceroos fans that were there.

After 17 years in Jakarta, Thompson said he'd been waiting a long time to be among an Australian crowd watching the Socceroos.

"The Aussie crowd's pretty small, but everyone's behind their team, it's a good turnout," he said.

At half time the mood in the Australian section was tame, reflecting not only the small number of supporters, but also Australia's onfield performance.

At half time, Tina Walton of Cootamundra in New South Wales wanted to know why the apparently fit Australian players seemed so flat-footed.

"The Australians are looking a bit slow, a bit lacklustre out there. What's wrong with them?" she said.

Rory Carroll, between attempts to raise cheers from the quiet group, admitted he too was disappointed with the first half.

"We're not playing the total football that we've been playing during the qualifiers," he said.

Matthew Hogben of Perth was also unimpressed, describing the game so far as lacklustre.

Tina Walton was more upbeat at half time.

"We can kick their arse!" she said.

"The Socceroos just need a bit of home town support. They know the Aussies are here, when they came out onto the pitch they acknowledged us. They need that little bit of support," she said.

Sure enough, in the second half, the mood did lift as the Socceroos took a more aggressive approach against their fading opponents.

But several tense moments in front of the goals at both ends bore no results and the Australian crowd resigned to the fact there would be no victory for their small party to celebrate.

Greg Redden of South Australia said even with a nil-nil result it had been a good game, with plenty of action in the second half keeping it interesting.

"I thought we'd win but that's okay. It was well played, fast and open," he said. \*\*\*5\*\*\*  
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ASEAN NEEDS TO WORK TOGETHER, RI TO CHANGE EXPORT-BASED ECONOMY

Jakarta, Jan 30 (ANTARA) - To meet the challenges of the global financial crisis, ASEAN must work together while Indonesia needs to move away from its export-based economy, Asian Development Bank expert Masahiro Kawai said here Friday.

"It is very difficult in the environment because of the global slowdown and shrinking global and industrialized countries' markets to try to grow by way of exports," he said focusing on the need to move away from an export-based economy.

"Indonesia and Korea are facing international liquidity shortages and difficulty in raising funds from the international capital market," Kawai said in a forum *The Global Financial Crisis: Prospects, Challenges and Responses from ASEAN and East Asia* held by the ASEAN Secretariat.

Another impact was that remittance inflows were expected to slowdown in the Philippines, Indonesia and India, he added.

Thus Kawai outlined five policy recommendations for ASEAN member countries. These included avoiding beggar-thy-neighbour policy reactions such as competitive currency depreciation, export promotion policies and import restrictions in favor of producing policy synergy through concerted action, such as joint fiscal boosting.

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## **EVERYTHING IS BROKEN**

By Michael Quin

Along a street like any other in central Jakarta runs a fence, elegant and topped with golden paint. To one side sits Indonesia's central bank with lavish towers, lawns manicured by scores of busy hands, and perfect well-swept paths. On the other side of the divide lies a cracked sidewalk with four holes, each large enough to swallow a man. On this, the public side of the fence, there is no careful maintenance.

Walking by and dodging holes is Mr. Sunoko, a 50-year-old hotelier on his way home from work. He says the holes have been there for a long time and can't understand how people are just expected to navigate them every day.

"These holes are very dangerous," he says. "At night if people are walking and they aren't aware of them they might drop in. And it's not only Jakartan people, many foreigners also walk here, looking up while they're sight seeing."

Many of Jakarta's streets are like this. Some are far worse.

For those not familiar with the streets, for the tired, the drunk, those walking during floods, the vision impaired, the elderly or disabled, the danger of falling in these holes is very real.

Kevin Radityama, a 19-year-old student in central Jakarta, once made the mistake of using a sidewalk after heavy rain.

"I was walking in Sarinah [central Jakarta] and there was a very deep hole filled with water because of the rain. I didn't know there was a hole so I just walked, stepped in it and I twisted my ankle. I told the Police about it but they just said: what can we do?" he says.

"When we tell the government there is a hole, or something like that, they say okay we'll fix it. But they don't do it, they just talk and talk. I don't think they really care about things like this."

The frustration of Jakartans like Mr. Sunoko and Mr. Raditayama is clear. But for those with disabilities whose lives are severely limited by poor infrastructure, the apparent lack of interest from local government is beyond frustrating.

Chairwoman of the Indonesian Disabled Women's Assemblage, Mrs. Ariani, says the poorly maintained streets are just part of a long list of reasons why Jakarta is a disabled person's nightmare: 10-inch curbs, uneven footpaths, ramps too steep to use and a lack of wheelchair access on public transport all add to their worries.

"The fact that Jakarta's roads and sidewalks are badly damaged makes even more

obstacles for disabled people,” she says.

Her organisation is making recommendations to the government concerning this, but is yet to hear back or see any change.

“The government is taking a very long time to follow up on it's commitment to build facilities for the disabled,” she says.

Other Jakartans trying to make their complaints heard have been calling community radio stations to report dangers like potholes, fallen trees or power outages.

Nita Roshita, from Jakarta's 89.2 FM Green Radio, often hears from listeners concerned with the condition of the streets. Her station follows up complaints with the relevant authority.

While the utility companies respond well and repair problems quickly, she says, the public works department are hard to reach, often handballing inquiries between the state Ministry for Public Works, the Jakarta Public Works department, and back again.

“People are frustrated. Every three to six months the local government sends press releases saying that Jakarta has been fixed: there are no holes in the streets anymore, or there are fewer holes. But people say that is impossible because they still find holes in the street and people still have accidents because of them,” she says.

After hearing from so many disgruntled listeners, Mrs. Roshita doesn't understand why the authority won't move to resolve such a straightforward and uncontroversial issue.

“This problem's been going on for years and if they want to claim it in the budget and fix it then they should do it. It would be very popular,” she says.

At the centre of all this is the Jakarta Public Works department, headed by Budi Widiyanto.

In an interview, Mr. Widiyanto admits there are problems with Jakarta's streets.

“The conditions of our sidewalks aren't good in many places, and they are dangerous, but along the main roads they are in good shape,” he says.

Mr. Widiyanto says his department's priority this year is planting gardens in the city and is unable to provide any data on how many dangerous holes there might be in Jakarta, nor when they will be fixed.

But apparently work is underway, with Rp 3 billion tagged for sidewalk maintenance this year.

“As soon as we know about a hole, we fix it. We have our own monitoring team and sometimes we also have the information from the people who use the street,” he says.

The monitoring team consists of one person in each of Jakarta's 43 sub-districts. Between them all, this year, they've found seven holes to fix.

The hole in the sidewalk across the street from the Jakarta Public Works office was not one of them.

Mr. Widianoro explains the crumbling streets and missing cement slabs aren't the result of poor maintenance by his department, but rather the fault of street stalls, scooters, and even thieves.

In the end, liability for providing safe streets rests with the Jakarta Public Works department.

But for all the stories of injuries resulting from holes in the sidewalks that Jakartans will tell you, the Public Works department has not once been held accountable.

When asked why this is, Mr. Widianoro replies with a wide smile:

“No one has ever made a claim against us. They could make a claim against us if they fell in a hole and injured themselves but so far no one has. I don't know why.”

One of the reasons may be that most Jakartans aren't sure they can.

Along one particularly potholed sidewalk, passersby were asked if they'd make a claim against the local government after falling into a hole and injuring themselves. Almost 80 per cent said they would not, with most of those saying they didn't believe they could.

Accountability means little if it is not enforced. Until a real fear of accountability exists, the situation of Jakarta's broken sidewalks may never be resolved by those with the power to do so.

In a country dealing with poverty, corruption and natural disasters there are no doubt bigger fish to fry.

But surely this issue of the potholed pavements indicates a general lack of accountability in government, and of the long way still to go on the rocky road to democracy.

## STUDYING ABROAD: AN EXPERIENCE MORE STUDENTS MUST DO

Jakarta, February 4 (ANTARA) - Indonesian students recently returned from a study tour in Japan have told teaching staff and the Japanese ambassador how important it is for more Indonesian students to do the same.

The two 16-year-old girls, Syarafina and Masajeng, from Jakarta's Al-Azhar Islamic school were grateful to the Japan Youth Exchange Program (JENESYS) for funding their two-week trip and hoped the Indonesian government would support similar programs so others could experience what they did.

"I'd really recommend for young people to do this. When we go to another country for a pretty long time, and not just for vacation, we actually find ourselves in a new environment so that we have to be outside of our comfort zone and really try to blend with other people. This way we learn tolerance, try new things and dare to be different with other people," Syarafina said.

She also said being a Muslim in a non-Muslim country was a good experience in understanding and tolerance, because no matter how different their faith they discovered many beautiful people with good values.

But it was also the little things they found different on their trip which interested them, such as the food and local habits.

"It was different, the customs and the living habits. For example in Japan we only showered once a day and here we shower twice a day because it's really dry and cold there so we don't really sweat," Syarafina said.

During the trip the girls met Australians, New Zealanders, Malays and Indians, who they really liked. But it was their southern neighbors who they liked the most.

"We love Australians! They're so nice, and so casual. It was only a short time we met them on the bus trips but we became like a family. They were really nice. And cute!" Syarafina said.

The girls said there were a lot of differences between them and their Australian friends but they learnt on the trip to accept difference and be tolerant. They also improved their casual spoken English and had fun picking up some Australian slang too.

The girls said that young people can learn so much from an experience like this and really expand their minds, but they recognized that most Indonesians couldn't afford to travel to expensive countries like Japan or Australia.

"We really need to get more support from our government for programs like this one which was funded by the Japanese. We weren't going to get there without that support," Syarafina says.

Masajeng agreed and would like to have another international experience in the future, but for now is concentrating on her end of semester tests.

Meanwhile Syarafina has only one thing on her mind:

“I’d love to go to Sydney!” she says.

By Michael Quin