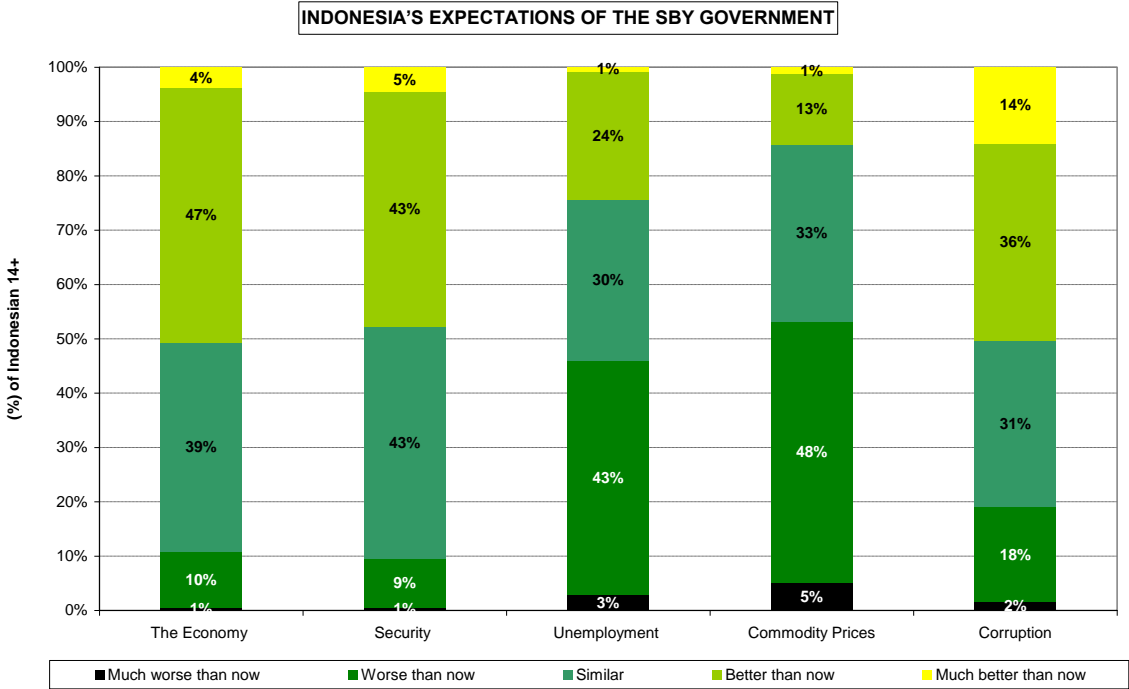


The nation looks forward to the next government, with hope.

Election fever has died down. A new cabinet is in the making. And a new poll reflects an upbeat Indonesia. The big question today in the minds of many: Will President Yodhoyono live up to the expectations of his people or will he let them down?

To gauge the post-election mood of the people, Roy Morgan Research recently conducted a special poll across the cities, towns and villages of Indonesia. 2,058 respondents 14 years and older were asked a set of five questions about Indonesia’s in-coming government. “What do you think will happen in the next five years under SBY’s stewardship” was the question asked, probing five key aspects: the economy, the security situation, jobs, the price of everyday essentials and corruption. The results were pleasantly surprising, reflecting a bouyant national mood. Across the country, young and old, male and female, urban and rural, the people have high hopes for a resurgent Indonesia. The noticeable differences were that the young were even more positive than their elders, women were more cautiously optimistic than men, as were rural folk in comparison to their city cousins.

For 51 per cent of the people, Indonesia’s economic prospects for the next five years are “better than now”, with 4 per cent hoping it will be “much better than now”. Another 39 per cent expect the situation to “remain the same”. Only one in ten Indonesians expect conditions to worsen. The doom and gloom is shared predominantly by urban males. A hand-maiden of the economy, Indonesia’s security situation is also expected to improve, with almost half the country in agreement. The quick response to the recent bombings will have had a positive impact on many, both in the country and overseas. Another 43 per cent expect things to “remain the same”, with only 10 per cent feeling even more insecure.





The two issues with the lowest hopes are unemployment and price of commodity. Only 25 per cent of Indonesians believe that more and more jobs will become available and unemployment will continue to ease over the next five years. The government's recent efforts to gainfully employ the workforce with funding of both federal and local projects has not yet had a positive impact on Indonesians across the nation. Perhaps the most cautious tone was struck on the issue of commodity prices. In constant pain from rising prices of everyday essentials, women especially are the most careful in their response to this bread-and-butter question. Only 14 per cent expect the pain to ease, 33 per cent believe the situation will "remain the same", but 53 per cent are convinced that prices will continue to rise and conditions in the next five years will be "worse than now". The realism is sobering, painting a picture of a hopeful nation but with tempered optimism.

The President-as-candidate struck a chord with the electorate on Indonesia's most debilitating social issue: corruption. His efforts to fight the malaise, the promise to continue the fight undoubtedly made their mark. Today, half the country believes that the incoming cabinet will continue to combat corruption and conditions will be "better than now". In fact, 14 per cent of respondents expect it to "much better than now".

The poll in Indonesia was conducted in tandem with Roy Morgan Single Source, a syndicated survey with over 25,000 respondents 14 years and older interviewed each year. Almost 90 per cent of the population is covered, from the cities, towns and villages around the country. The data is updated every 90 days.

The promises have been made, the mandate has been given. The President and the incoming cabinet have an opportunity to create history for this young and vibrant democracy. SBY is poised to become a leader of iconic proportions, with the support of a hopeful people. Whether he will live up to those expectations or dash their hopes in the next five year term will largely be dependent on him. Meeting Indonesia's challenges will require the courage and determination of a good man with good intentions. The world today has little to offer him by way of worthy examples. Moral decay continues to set in, not just in ideological terms but in the harshest of realities. In the world's showcase of democracy, the United States, Wall Street is getting ready to pay some of the highest paid executives the biggest payout in bonuses, ever. Some \$140 billion has been earmarked. The fact that this was a taxpayer-funded recovery has been forgotten. The bonus is akin to rewarding rapists with teaching roles at girls schools. In the 12 months of the global financial crisis, another 100 million were added to world's list of hungry people, on the brink of starvation.

The constant juxtaposition of the filthy rich and the filthy poor will hopefully give the President and his team reason to pause and reconsider. People cannot be sacrificed at the altars of extreme views, to the left or to the right. Finding the middle ground is the key to Indonesia's future. Social justice should not be ignored in the name of free market principles.

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