

30 MAY 2001

Indon-Demonstration

PRO-ABDURRAHMAN SUPPORTERS DEMONSTRATE AS PARLIAMENT VOTES FOR
IMPEACHMENT

By: Openg Onn

JAKARTA, May 30 (Bernama) -- Thousands of fanatical pro-President Abdurrahman Wahid supporters, mostly from East Java, staged a demonstration at the parliament building in the heart of the city today as the house decides to impeach him in the People's Consultative Council (MPR).

The demonstrators gathered outside the presidential palace earlier in the morning before marching to the parliament complex, causing traffic jams at Jalan Husni Thamrin and Jalan Sudirman, the city's main thoroughfares.

They gathered around the entrance and tried to force their way into the sprawling compound of the building just a few hundred metres away from the Jakarta Convention Centre (JCC), venue of the Group-15 Summit which is attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Tight police and military blockades managed to keep them at bay.

The summit was declared open by the embattled Abdurrahman this morning amidst tight security mounted by at least 4,000 military and police personnel.

Some of the demonstrators were seen trying to scale the compound's high perimeter fence but the razor-sharp barb wires enforced around the top had made their effort futile.

When they arrived here during the last few days, police launched thorough checks on train and bus passengers, confiscating sickles, machetes and spears brought by them.

In East Java, Abdurrahman's political heartland, at least one person was killed today as police tried to disperse thousands of demonstrators comprising members of the Nahdatul Ulama (NU), the biggest Muslim organisation, storming the streets in various towns of the densely populated province.

They also burnt down two churches, houses and buildings belonging to rival Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah and National Mandate Party (PAN) led by Amien Rais, the MPR speaker who has engineered the election of Abdurrahman as Indonesia's fourth president but who has now turned into his ardent critic.

Police around the country have been put on full alert since Sunday and have been ordered to take tough action against troublemakers with the order of shooting on sight those who caused damage to public properties.

-- BERNAMA

OPP RZS RM