

when almost two-thirds of its 8.5 million inhabitants are away.

### **Leadership and hierarchy**

It is important to understand the preferred leadership styles in Indonesia. Foreigners often perceive the Indonesian leadership style as paternal. President Soeharto is often considered a father figure. A prominent Indonesian, Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, whose anniversary is commemorated on Education Day, states the following principles of Javanese leadership:

- ◆ leaders should stand in front to set a good example to followers (*Ing ngarso sungtulodo*);
- ◆ leaders should stay among the followers in order to work together (*Ing madya mangun karso*); and
- ◆ leaders should stand behind to give support and encouragement (*Tut wuri handayani*).

Understanding the hierarchical structure of Indonesian organizations and identifying the right channels to pursue in them will help you develop successful business relations. You may need someone with good contacts acting on your behalf. Contacting the right people, going through the appropriate channels, taking into account who does what, and taking care not to circumvent the chain of command are delicate but necessary tasks. Secretaries can help you gain

access to their bosses. You should treat them with respect, as you should all staff in your counterpart's organization. Civil officials should be accorded deep respect because their reason to be is to take care of people. Their assistance can be of great value to you and your business venture.

### **Privacy**

Foreigners unaccustomed to Indonesians are often taken aback when their Indonesian work colleagues question them about their age, children, religion and so on. Don't be alarmed. Such personal questions are typical and considered "fair game" in the business realm. Indonesians believe they really don't know someone until they know him or her personally. Try not to be put out by such questions, and answer politely. You should consider personal questions as a gesture of friendship, rather than as an invasion of privacy.

During your mission to Indonesia, you may find your Indonesian partner providing you with a full schedule that includes evening programs, leaving you with almost no free time for yourself. Or they may offer to take you to places of interest. This is not meant to invade your privacy. Their actions stem from a sense of responsibility to ensure that you, their guest, are well taken care of and not lonely. Treating guests well is important to Indonesian people.