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BUSINESS AS USUAL: Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri (middle) at the Singapore Art Museum last night.

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THE death of Indonesia's second President on Sunday may have put incumbent Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's plans on hold, but it is business as usual for another former President, Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri.

While Mr Yudhoyono attended Mr Suharto's funeral in Solo yesterday, after cancelling a planned Bali visit, Ms Megawati officiated at the opening of an arts exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum last night.

Ms Megawati's move was largely seen as a snub against Mr Suharto's leadership. Said Assoc Prof Vedi Hadiz, an Indonesian academician from the National University of Singapore's Sociology Department: "It may be an expression of protest but put forward in a rather muted way."

Ms Megawati is the daughter of Mr Sukarno, Indonesia's first President, whose term was ended by a

1965 coup led by Mr Suharto, then one of the generals in his army. Her mother Fatmawati was one of Mr Sukarno's nine wives. Placed under house arrest, Mr Sukarno died three years after he was deposed.

Mr Evan Abelard Laksmana, a researcher of Indonesian affairs at S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), thinks Ms Megawati's move was more political than vengeful.

Last September, Ms Megawati announced her re-election bid for the presidency to her *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDI-P) party cadres.

Mr Evan told TODAY: "Her party has maintained that the legal case against Suharto must continue.

"Megawati is smart in that by not attending, and sending instead her daughter and brother to represent the Sukarno family for the funeral, she is not sending a mixed signal that goes against her party's position. At the same time, she is

consolidating her support base."

Meanwhile, Mr Sukarno's third wife, Japanese-born Ratna Sari Dewi Sukarno, yesterday described Mr Suharto as "Indonesia's Pol Pot".

Pol Pot was the late leader of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge regime which was guilty of committing genocide there.

"The Sukarno family remains very upset with the treatment of Sukarno by Suharto at the end of Sukarno's life," said Prof Vedi. "It is fairly common knowledge that when Sukarno was under house arrest and he was seriously ill, he did not get access to medicine."

Mr Suharto has been credited with improving the nation's economy, but his 32-year rule was tainted by allegations of human rights abuses such as the killing of at least half a million communists and their sympathisers from 1966.

Ms Dewi said: "He ended his life living among friends. I think he was a very lucky man."