

# Highlights of the 2019 campaign

It has been a long and winding road to the April 17 elections. Insight recaps the twists and turns on the campaign trail.

**Aug 9, 2018**

President Joko Widodo surprises many when he picks senior cleric Ma'ruf Amin as his running mate. While many expect him to choose an influential figure from the Muslim community, the popular guess is former constitutional court chief justice Mahfud MD – not the chairman of the Indonesia Ulama Council who has a reputation for conservatism that seems at odds with Mr Joko. Rival Prabowo Subianto, too, raises eyebrows by naming businessman Sandiaga Uno as his vice-presidential pick, defying expectations that he would run with a member of one of the other parties in his coalition. Mr Sandiaga resigns from Mr Prabowo's Gerindra party to run as an independent.



**Sept 23**

The election campaign officially kicks off, with the two contenders vowing to run a peaceful race.



**Jan 17, 2019**

Mr Joko and Mr Prabowo come out of the first of five presidential debates evenly matched. But a mostly silent Dr Ma'ruf turns in a forgettable performance, compared with the energetic Mr Sandiaga, fanning criticism over Mr Joko's choice of running mate.



**Jan 18**

Mr Joko, in a shock move, says he will release convicted radical cleric Abu Bakar Bashir (above, centre) from jail due to humanitarian reasons. He quickly backpedals on the widely criticised announcement, saying that Bashir, who has been in poor health, would have to fulfil certain conditions, such as pledging allegiance to Indonesia, before he can be released. The cleric, considered the spiritual leader of South-east Asia terror group Jemaah Islamiah, has yet to do so.



**Jan 24**

Former Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama – an ally of Mr Joko – is released from jail after serving nearly two years for a blasphemy conviction. The Christian Chinese immediately courts controversy when it emerges that he would marry his ex-wife's former aide Puput Nastiti Devi, who comes from a Muslim family. He disappears from the Jakarta political scene, disappointing supporters hoping for his comeback.



**Feb 17**

The second debate, involving just the two presidential hopefuls, is marked by Mr Prabowo being tripped up by a question from Mr Joko on how the former intends to improve the local infrastructure to support Indonesia's "unicorns". Mr Joko is referring to start-ups valued at more than US\$1 billion (S\$1.4 billion) but Mr Prabowo appears baffled, responding: "When you say unicorns, do you mean the things online?"

**Feb 27**

Mr Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, the elder son of Indonesia's former president and Democratic Party chairman Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, takes charge of the party's campaign efforts ahead of the elections. The party is part of a coalition backing Mr Prabowo. Mr Agus' father is unable to do so as he is in Singapore, where former first lady Ani Yudhoyono has been hospitalised since Feb 2 for treatment for leukaemia.

**March 17**

All eyes are on Dr Ma'ruf for his solo match-up with Mr Sandiaga. But after his lacklustre showing in the inaugural debate, the cleric manages to hold his own in the third debate, which sees the pair outline their camps' visions on culture and education, among other things.

**March 20**

A Kompas survey shows support for Mr Joko and Dr Ma'ruf dropping to 49.2 per cent, from 52.6 per cent six months ago – a rare instance in recent years of a leading survey showing Mr Joko's electability dipping below the 50 per cent psychological mark. Other polls from various institutions would follow in the coming weeks, showing the healthy two-digit lead commanded by Mr Joko for much of the campaign dwindling.

**March 24**

The start of the open campaign period, which would see candidates swing into high gear, holding large rallies and rolling out innovative initiatives such as a hologram of Mr Joko explaining his programmes.



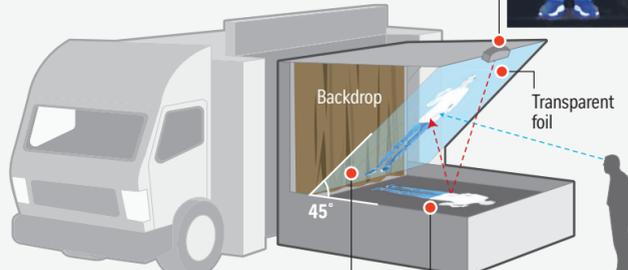
Supporters of President Joko Widodo and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin showed up at their campaign event last week in Tangerang in white body paint. It was a homage to Mr Joko's call for Indonesians to vote for the candidates dressed in white, referring to himself and Dr Ma'ruf, who are in white in a photo on the ballot.

## The Jokowi hologram

Indonesian presidential candidate Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and his running mate, Dr Ma'ruf Amin, are using hologram technology (right) during their political campaigning. Here is how it works.



**1 Projector** projects life-size hologram images of Mr Joko onto a dark reflective surface.



**2 Transparent foil** captures the reflected images from the reflective surface.

**3 Audience** sees hologram images of Mr Joko.

A truck that doubles as a stage transports the hologram equipment during campaigning.

**March 30**

The two presidential hopefuls square off in a fiery debate, this time locking horns on issues such as defence and governance. Amid these weighty topics, things get personal when Mr Prabowo calls accusations that he supports the establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Indonesia cruel and nonsensical. "My mother was a Christian. I was born from the womb of a Christian," he says.



**April 4**

Dr Ma'ruf's past comments on Mr Basuki come back to haunt him after a video of the cleric saying that the former governor is the "source of conflict" in Indonesia and "must be finished off" goes viral. The video, says Dr Ma'ruf, is from a meeting with other religious leaders that took place before he was appointed Mr Joko's running mate.

**April 6**

Mr Joko heads to the Indonesian island of Batam for a rally, where he pledges to get a team ready next month to look into details of a bridge project linking Batam and nearby Bintan, to boost connectivity in the Riau Islands.

**April 7**

Jakarta-born Prabowo holds a massive rally in the capital's Gelora Bung Karno stadium, where he pledges, among other things, to fight corruption if elected. The event is slammed by his ally, Dr Yudhoyono, who says it is "too exclusive" as it is dominated by Islamic activities.

**April 10**

A day after Mr Joko returns to his home town of Solo, urging voters to help him extend his lead in the 2014 polls, Mr Prabowo holds his own rally there as well, in a final push to gain ground in Central Java, a province that has been a stronghold of his opponent. Mr Agus turns up in a noticeable show of support – as his father's criticism of Mr Prabowo's rally in Jakarta has given rise to speculation about a rift in the alliance.

**April 13**

All four candidates meet once again in the fifth and final presidential debate, fielding questions on topics such as the economy and social welfare.

## WHAT'S TO COME

**April 14-16**

Cooling-off period. No campaigning is allowed, to allow voters time to mull over their picks.

**April 17**

More than 192 million Indonesians will head to the polls, which open at 7am (8am Singapore time), to vote for their president and MPs. Unofficial quick counts of the votes are expected from pollsters by early evening.

**April 25 - May 22**

A progressive release of official results for the general election will take place from April 25.

**May 23 - June 15**

Candidates can contest election results within this period.

**Oct 1**

Inauguration of MPs.

**Oct 20**

Inauguration of the next president and vice-president of Indonesia.