

Thursday, Aug. 26th, 2020

GENERAL NEWS AND HEADLINES

RI not yet in talks to develop vaccine from Russia: COVID-19 task force

CNN Indonesia (<https://tinyurl.com/y6npgucx>);

National COVID-19 task force spokesperson Wiku Adisasmito emphasized that the government had not yet discussed any cooperation with Russia regarding the clinical trials for their potential COVID-19 vaccine named Sputnik V.

"There has not been any talk about a vaccine from Russia," Wiku said on Thursday. He said the government was currently focusing on the candidate vaccines developed by three China-based companies, namely Sinovac Biotech, Sinopharm Group and CanSino Biologics. The candidate vaccines from Sinovac and Sinopharm are both in Phase 3 clinical human trials.

"Indonesia is open to all potential vaccines in the world as long as they are of high quality. Meanwhile, we also await the readiness of the *Merah Putih* [Red and White] vaccine from Indonesia," said Wiku.

Russian Ambassador to Indonesia Lyudmila Georgievna Vorobieva expressed her country's readiness to cooperate with Indonesia in developing a potential vaccine.

Indonesia's SDG rank lags behind other Southeast Asian countries: VP

Kompas (<https://tinyurl.com/y4d9wjgi>)

Vice President Ma'ruf Amin said more efforts were needed to achieve the country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as Indonesia currently ranked 101 in the world with a total score of 65.3.

"We still lag behind neighboring Southeast Asian countries," Ma'ruf said at the 1st International Conference on Islamic Civilization (1st ICIC) held online by Sultan Agung Islamic University (Unisula) on Thursday.

One way to improve Indonesia's ranking will be to align SDG achievements with national development priorities. The government, Ma'ruf said, was also preparing SDG institutions that would strengthen coordination and also create a cooperative platform to finance programs related to Indonesia's SDGs.

According to the 2020 SDG Index, although still lagging behind other Southeast Asian nations, Indonesia has shown considerable progress in achieving its SDGs. This was reflected by several indicators that had improved, such as poverty reduction, health and welfare, quality of education, clean energy accessibility, innovations in industry and the strengthening of justice institutions.

Mobilization Organization Program budget reallocated

Kompas (<https://tinyurl.com/yvfylyay>); *CNN Indonesia* (<https://tinyurl.com/y45e5a9y>)

Education and Culture Minister Nadiem Makarim has said the budget for the Mobilization Organization Program (POP) will be reallocated for teachers' credit and economic needs for the year and that the program will be postponed to next year.

The budget is expected to help teachers with distance learning programs for schools that cannot yet reopen as the pandemic shows no sign of abating in Indonesia.

Minister Nadiem said this decision was made at the request of the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI), who said the program should be postponed so the budget could be used for more immediate needs.

With the program's postponement, Nadiem said his ministry had been in talks with the PGRI and Muhammadiyah to have them rejoin the POP next year.

Since Nadhlatul Ulama (NU) has decided to rejoin the program, Nadiem expressed hope that PGRI and Muhammadiyah would consider too.

BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS NEWS AND HEADLINES

OJK: Bank loans growth improves slightly in July

CNBC Indonesia, (<https://tinyurl.com/y5xmumna>); Kontan, (<https://tinyurl.com/y4aqrhee>)

The Financial Services Authority (OJK) said bank loan growth in July reached 1.53 percent year-on-year (yoy), slightly higher than the previous month at 1.49 percent yoy. OJK chairman Wimboh Santoso said the improvement was due to the government's decision to relax large-scale social restrictions (PSBB). State-owned banks and rural banks (BPD) made significant contributions to bank loan growth in July, Wimboh added. Loan growth from state-owned banks increased by 3.36 percent yoy while BPD increased by 2.3 percent yoy. On the other hand, loan growth in private commercial banks was only 0.4 percent yoy.

Freeport requests deadline extension for copper smelter construction

Kontan, (<https://tinyurl.com/y2hzc78>); Kompas, (<https://tinyurl.com/y4udhs6e>); Katadata, (<https://tinyurl.com/yycvsgwo>)

House of Representatives Commission VII members have invited gold and copper miner PT Freeport Indonesia for questioning over its request to extend the deadline of its copper smelter construction. The smelter is being built in the Java Integrated Industrial and Port Estate (JIPE) in Gresik, East Java. Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry Coal and Mining Director General Ridwan Djamaluddin said construction progress had reached just 5.86 percent against the 10.5 percent target. Freeport vice president Jenpino Ngabdi told House members that the construction project had been delayed for six months due to the COVID-19 pandemic and would not meet the initial deadline of December 2023.

Govt to complete gas network construction for 127,864 households this year

Investor Daily, (<https://tinyurl.com/y3dzwcyt>)

The Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry has completed up to 68 percent of household gas networks (Jargas), the ministry's oil and gas infrastructure planning and development director general, Alimuddin Baso, has said. The government

aims to complete the construction of the Jargas network for 127,864 households located across 23 regencies and cities. Previously, the government targeted to complete Jargas network construction for 226,070 households but decided to carry over half of them to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perppu on OJK, BI and LPS will not undermine independence: House member

Bisnis Indonesia, (<https://tinyurl.com/yxszlwxld>)

House of Representatives' member from the Golkar Party, Melchias Markus Mekeng, has said the government's plan to issue a regulation in lieu of law (Perppu) on financial system reform will not undermine the independence of Bank Indonesia, the Financial Services Authority (OJK) and the Deposit Insurance Corporations (LPS). Melchias argued that extraordinary situations like the COVID-19 pandemic required extraordinary measures. "They should listen to the President as the head of state," Melchias told reporters.

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