

**Thursday, Mar. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020****GENERAL NEWS AND HEADLINES****Gowa mass prayer's foreign attendees quarantined***Liputan6, (<https://tinyurl.com/yx4g8hc4>)*

South Sulawesi Police spokesperson Ibrahim Tompo reported that his force would guard foreign nationals from several Asian countries who had arrived in Indonesia to attend a grand religious gathering in Gowa regency, South Sulawesi. The gathering itself has been postponed because of mounting anxiety over the high risk of COVID-19 transmissions among the thousands of the gathering's attendees.

Ibrahim clarified that the foreign nationals were to be quarantined until they could be sent back to their home countries. He explained that the quarantine was not particularly part of a COVID-19 protocol, although all foreign nationals were still asked to not carelessly make physical contacts with locals and to temporarily limit their activities to only within the isolation area.

Details regarding the number of personnel guarding the area were not disclosed. However, Ibrahim said the Indonesian Military was involved in providing medical examinations, as well as ensuring the security of both foreign nationals and locals.

**Fewer private vehicles on city streets after call for social distancing***Antara, (<https://tinyurl.com/wy4aapc>)*

The Jakarta Police's Traffic Directorate has recorded a significant decrease in traffic congestion as fewer vehicles have been roaming the streets following President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's call for citizens to practice social distancing and work from home in an effort to stem the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

Traffic Directorate police commissioner Sambodo Purnomo Yogo said the President's work-from-home policy had notably affected the density of traffic across the city.

Sambodo said the number of vehicles passing down Jl. Sudirman-Jl. MH Thamrin, specifically those from Ratu Paza to Sarinah, had declined by 14 percent to 49,279 by Monday. Meanwhile, the number of vehicles heading to Ratu Plaza from Sarinah had decreased by 18 percent to 23,027 by Tuesday.

## **BMKG monitors fault in South Sumatra after consecutive earthquakes**

*The Jakarta Post*, (<https://tinyurl.com/wxejboq>)

The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) has recorded an increase in seismic activity around a fault in Pagar Alam city, South Sumatra, beginning on Feb. 27.

The most recent tremor was confirmed to have occurred on Sunday morning with a magnitude of 2.1 on the Richter scale. Earlier, a total of 10 minor earthquakes occurred, including two on Feb. 27, one on March 4, two on March 6 and four on March 9. The magnitude of the earthquakes ranged from 1.5 to 3.2.

"We're still focusing on monitoring the fault's activity because it's uncommon. Hopefully, no major earthquake will follow," the BMKG's Kepahiang-Bengkulu Geophysics Station researcher Sabar Ardiansyah told *The Jakarta Post* on Sunday.

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## **BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS NEWS AND HEADLINES**

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### **BI cuts rate to 4.5 percent**

*CNN Indonesia*, (<https://tinyurl.com/u3tdln7>); *Kompas*, (<https://tinyurl.com/s6fhueg>)

Bank Indonesia cut its seven-day reverse repo rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 4.5 percent following a two-day board of governors meeting. BI also lowered its deposit facility and lending facility rates to 3.75 percent and 5.25 percent, respectively. The economy is projected to grow 4.2 to 4.6 percent this year because of the COVID-19 outbreak, BI Governor Perry Warjiyo said. Previously, BI predicted the economy to grow 5 to 5.4 percent.

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### **Morgan Stanley predicts 75 bps 7DRRR cut**

*Kontan*, (<https://tinyurl.com/wfglcty>)

Multinational investment bank and financial services company Morgan Stanley predicts Bank Indonesia will cut its seven-day reverse repo rate (7DRRR) by 25 basis points (bps) until the end of 2020. According to the bank's published research, 18 out of 30 central banks had loosened their monetary policy since mid-January, while four countries: Brazil, Germany, India and Japan had pursued quantitative easing. The bank also predicts the United States Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank to expand their quantitative easing program.

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## **Rupiah depreciates to nearly Rp 16,000 per US dollar**

CNBC Indonesia, (<https://tinyurl.com/tqaubmu>); The Jakarta Post, (<https://tinyurl.com/wdjzftw>); Kompas, (<https://tinyurl.com/vl2c8wk>)

The rupiah continued its deep depreciation and reached Rp 16,000 per US dollar, a level not been seen since June 1998 when it reached Rp 16,650 after rioting that led to the downfall of president Soeharto, who led Indonesia for 32 years.

"Global investors are panicking over the spread of the coronavirus and their main concern is not the virus but its economic impacts, which are still difficult to predict at this time," said Sucor Sekuritas client coverage head Jason Gozali on Thursday.

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## **Govt prohibits medical mask and antiseptic exports**

Kontan, (<https://tinyurl.com/sx869kn>); CNN Indonesia, (<https://tinyurl.com/s3n893k>); Kompas, (<https://tinyurl.com/sacs7jm>); Republika, (<https://tinyurl.com/wl5fdrd>)

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has ordered his ministers to prohibit medical mask and antiseptic exports to ensure the availability of medical supplies in the country as a part of the effort to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Trade Minister Agus Suparmanto has issued Trade Ministerial Regulation No. 23/2020 as a follow up to Jokowi's directive. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) recorded a surge in medical mask exports from US\$2.1 million in January to \$75 million in February.

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## **BPJS Kesehatan to join fight against COVID-19**

Kontan, (<https://tinyurl.com/uhammadzj7>); Tempo, (<https://tinyurl.com/rwh4z9j>)

The government is preparing a new regulation to allow the Health Care and Social Security Agency (BPJS Kesehatan) to pay for COVID-19 treatment. Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said the regulation would be issued through a presidential regulation. The regulation is being prepared as a response to a suggestion made by BPJS Kesehatan president director Fachmi Idris. Fachmi urged the government to give discretion to his agency in funding COVID-19 treatment through a presidential regulation.

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