

GENERAL NEWS AND HEADLINES

Blasphemy verdict widely condemned

(*The Jakarta Post*, headline)

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's two-largest Islamic organizations, have criticized the blasphemy conviction against Meiliana, a Buddhist resident of Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, for complaining about the volume of the *adzan* (call to prayer). The Medan District Court sentenced Meiliana to 18 months in prison for blasphemy after her complaint of the *adzan* was perceived as an insult to Islam.

The two organizations said the court's ruling was too harsh in addressing Meiliana's action, which could only be seen as mild misconduct. The NU said Meiliana's complaint was not blasphemous. Muhammadiyah, similarly, urged the court to review blasphemy-related articles and laws as many of the provisions were vague and open to interpretation. These two organization's position is in contrast to that of the Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) North Sumatra chapter, which issued a fatwa in January 2017 declaring Meiliana's statement as blasphemous.

Regions push back as MUI approves MR vaccine

(*The Jakarta Post*, p.2)

Following months of debate over the active ingredients of a measles-rubella (MR) vaccine, the MUI has granted clearance for Muslims to use the formula although it contains porcine-derived gelatin. The MUI's decision was based on three considerations, namely the necessity of the vaccine, the absence of a halal vaccine, and statements from competent and trusted experts on the dangers of not vaccinating against measles and rubella.

Nevertheless, despite the MUI's approval, resistance against the vaccine remained strong in several regions, with the MUI's own provincial branch calling on Muslims to avoid vaccinating their children. Fearing the vaccine is haram, a number of parents in these regions have urged schools to ban the vaccine. Rumors that vaccine could cause paralysis have also caused hesitation and reluctance among parents to vaccinate their children.

The General Elections Commission (KPU) said the Elections Supervisory Agency's (Bawaslu) decision to contravene KPU Regulation (PKPU) No. 14/2018 stipulating the prohibition of former graft convicts from

Differing opinions that may endanger elections (Kompas, p.2)	contesting elections was due to the two organizations' differing opinions. According to the KPU, the regulation is legitimate and binding, while the Bawaslu sees the regulation as non-binding. Such differences will put elections in jeopardy. The KPU asserted that the regulation had been legalized and codified. Thus, the KPU would violate the law if it accepted Bawaslu's ruling, which allowed three former graft convicts to compete in the upcoming legislative election. Bawaslu, on the other hand, urged the KPU to uphold its ruling. The agency argued that until the Supreme Court finished reviewing the regulation, the prohibition had no legal standing.
Jokowi not to rush to decision (Media Indonesia, p.3)	President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and running mate Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) chairman Ma'ruf Amin have yet to name the chairman of their campaign team. President Jokowi, who alongside Ma'ruf has the exclusive authority to choose the chairman of the team, is reportedly not rushing to find the most suitable figure to fill the position. Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) secretary-general Hasto Kristiyanto said on account of his busy schedule, Jokowi had yet to get a chance to deliberate the position carefully. Hasto affirmed that the chairman should have down-to-earth and humble characteristics and not bear the burdens of the past.
Gerindra imposes requirement (Republika, p.3)	As Sandiaga Uno will compete in the upcoming presidential election, the Jakarta deputy governor's office has been empty. The Gerindra Party and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which nominated Sandiaga to run for the office last year, will decide on Sandiaga's replacement. Regardless, the parties have yet to arrive at a decision as they are reportedly still waiting for the issuance of a presidential decree on Sandiaga's resignation. Despite the absence of an agreement between the two parties, Gerindra hopes that its politician, Muhammad Taufik, will replace Sandiaga. This is because with Sandiaga leaving the office, there will be no Gerindra representation in the Jakarta regional government. Nonetheless, if the PKS insists on nominating one of its own as the replacement, Gerindra will require Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan to join the party so that it will still have representation in the government.
Disaster management deemed terrible	Following a number of earthquakes in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) in the past weeks, volunteers have deemed the coordination between disaster

(Koran Tempo, headline)	management agencies very poor. Several regions that sustained tremendous impact from the quakes have yet to receive relief and assistance. Uva Utomo, a doctor who has been volunteering, said coordination between regional governments and the volunteers was almost non-existent. Uva said in managing a national-scale disaster, daily coordination meetings led military commands, governors or disaster mitigation agencies should be conducted to delegate tasks and allocate areas to distribute relief. Regardless, such meetings have reportedly not been conducted.
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BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS NEWS AND HEADLINES

The dilemma of coal export (Bisnis Indonesia and Kontan, Headline)	The government is serious about improving foreign exchange incomes, which the Energy and Resources Mineral Ministry (ESDM) announced it will increase coal export quota by 100 million tons to 585 million tons in 2019. By referring to ESDM Ministerial Regulation No. 1924/2018, the government is seeking to obtain additional foreign exchange input by US\$1.5 billion. Nevertheless, several energy observers such as Center for Energy and Mining Law Bisman Bakhtiar, are concerned its implementation could damage the implementation and monitoring of 25 percent domestic market obligation (DMO). Bisman said the government should remain consistent in applying the 25 percent DMO to producers if they wish to increase the export quota while also calculating the environmental effect and potential non-tax state revenue (PNBP) from the action. Meanwhile, the Ministry's Mineral and Coal Director General Bambang Gatot said they will strictly give additional export quota to companies (from total 30 coal producing companies) who have fulfilled their 25 percent domestic market obligation.
Five big caps companies surge in share values (Investor Daily, Headline)	PT Indah Kiat Pulp & paper (INKP), PT Bukit Asam (PTBA), Pt Vale Indonesia (INCO), PT Aneka Tambang (ANTM) and PT Indo Tambangraya (ITMG) are five out of 45 companies in the LQ45 index (the most liquid companies in market) to score the highest capital gain year-to-date. INKP, PTBA, INCO, ANTM and ITMG, for instance booked 254.17 percent, 67.48 percent, 39.10 percent, 33.60 percent and 29.47 percent gains, respectively. The Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) noted that the increase is also followed with major decline as global economic market is under pressure from various

	uncertainties and growing protectionism. Although the abovementioned companies booked fantastic achievements only 11 companies from the LQ45 index are scoring positive gain year-to-date. The IDX data also showed that mining and chemical sectors remain undisturbed with global economic turmoil by booking 25.39 percent and 19.47 percent year-to-date growth.
No more rating needed to issue bond (Kontan, p.1)	Insurance industry stakeholders hope for faster policy guaranteeing regulation issuance since it would become the basis of Policy Guarantee Institution (LPP) establishment. The policy guaranteeing regulation is a mandate of Regulation No. 40/2014 on insurance, where it aims for better consumer protection, said the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Insurance and Pension Fund head Herris B. Simajuntak. According to the regulation, LPP should have been established since Oct.17, 2017 but always put on delay as the government and the parliament have not included the topic into priority program.
New import PPh is counterproductive (Kontan, p.2)	The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is concerned with the new import regulation that imposes additional final income tax (PPh), ranging from 2.5 percent to 10 percent depending on import value, on imported capital goods with local substitution. The Chamber's vice president Shinta W. Kamdani worries that the regulation would push products' price up and consequently affect people's purchasing power. Some imported goods are locally substitutable yet comes with higher costs and promotes for higher production costs. At the same time, the PPh implementation would become a bad signal for investors in the middle of free trade agreement negotiations (FTA) and government's attempt to reap more benefit from the existing FTAs.
Market awaits policy guaranteeing regulation (Bisnis Indonesia, p.22)	Insurance industry stakeholders hope for faster policy guaranteeing regulation issuance since it would become the basis of Policy Guarantee Institution (LPP) establishment. The policy guaranteeing regulation is a mandate of Regulation No. 40/2014 on insurance, where it aims for better consumer protection, said the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Insurance and Pension Fund head Herris B. Simajuntak. According to the regulation, LPP should have been established since Oct.17, 2017 but always put on delay as the government and the parliament have not included the topic into priority program.

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