

# INDONESIA NEWS

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## PRESIDENT OPENS THE 1ST FINANCE MINISTERS AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS MEETING-G20

President Joko Widodo opened the 1st Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting – G20, virtually from the Bogor Presidential Palace, Thursday (17/2). Indonesia's G20 presidency encourages synergy and collaboration between countries in formulating appropriate fiscal and monetary policies to address global problems.

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## President Meets WB Delegation to Discuss G20, Energy Transition

President Joko Widodo received several World Bank executives at the Merdeka Palace on Wednesday (16/2) to discuss a wide range of issues, including the energy transition mechanism, mangrove rehabilitation, capital transfer, and Myanmar.

**COORDINATING** Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, conveyed this information in a written statement issued by the press, media, and information bureau of the Presidential Secretariat the same day. Pandjaitan accompanied President Widodo at the meeting, which was attended by the World Bank's managing director of operations, Axel Van Trotsenburg; WB vice president for East Asia and the Pacific Region, Manuela V. Ferro; and World Bank

country director for Indonesia, Satu Kahkonen.

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, who was also present at the meeting, said the World Bank has thrown its weight behind the agenda of Indonesia's G20 Presidency. Indonesia's G20 Presidency, which has received support from the international community, will play an essential role in post-COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery, she added.

"Many countries are still left behind and, of course, they should draw attention. (Hopefully),

the theme of Indonesia's (G20 Presidency) 'Recover Together, Recover Stronger' can really come true and the Indonesian leadership, with the support of G20 (member states) and international institutions, can pay attention to the countries that still cannot recover," she remarked.

The support from G20 member states and international institutions can come in the form of equal access to COVID-19 vaccines and economic recovery assistance for low-income countries, she elaborated. "This is an extraordinary challenge. So, this is one of the issues for the G20 to discuss. The World Bank will support and, of course, the Indonesian leadership is important," she said.

The meeting also discussed how Indonesia can serve as a role model for the realization of the energy transition, is committed to implementing the Paris Agreement and lowering

carbon emissions, in accordance with the nationally determined contribution (NDC), she informed. To realize the green energy ambition, Indonesia needs international support in terms of funding and policy framework, Indrawati said.

During the meeting, the President stressed Indonesia's strong commitment to achieving the goal and said that Indonesia will not only talk about but take action, too, she added. Widodo also drew attention to the upward trend in global commodity prices that may put global economic recovery on hold, she said. "Mr. President wishes that global economic recovery will not be disrupted because the increase in the prices of foodstuffs will burden the public. Therefore, there needs to be a global agreement to that effect," she remarked. (\*)

## Ministry Proposes Hajj Package of Rp45 Million

**THE** Religious Affairs Ministry, as the authority on national Hajj and Umrah travel, has proposed that Rp45,053,368 (US\$3,153) be charged per person for Hajj pilgrimage this year. "The ministry has proposed that the total cost for 2022 Hajj pilgrimage be Rp45,053,368 per person," Minister Yaqut Cholil Qoumas told members of Commission VIII of the House of Representatives (DPR RI) during a meeting on Wednesday (16/2), which was accessed online from Jakarta.

Many factors, including flight costs, living

costs, visa fees, and COVID-19 PCR test fees in Saudi Arabia, were considered before deciding the total fee that would be charged from each Indonesian Hajj pilgrim, the minister informed. The new fee is also expected to alleviate Hajj pilgrims' burden by shifting most of the financial responsibility to the authority, he added. "(The total fee is expected to) balance the total Indonesian Hajj pilgrims with the cost burden in the future, and is also expected to alleviate the financial burden on Hajj pilgrims," Qoumas remarked.

The Hajj fee levied on Indonesian pilgrims has been steadily increasing for years: the total fee in 2020 was in the range of Rp31.45 million–Rp38.35 million, and the total fee in 2021 was set at Rp44.3 million, he noted. The ministry has also proposed that Rp8.9 trillion (US\$632 million) of the national Hajj cost be funded from indirect sources, which includes efficiency cost, benefits, and other legitimate sources, the minister informed. The flight distance from embarkation points, price rationality, and service quality factors were also

considered while drafting the national Hajj budget and considering the budget sources, he added.

The minister said that the government will present the proposed Hajj fee to the House working committee for further deliberation. The Saudi authorities are yet to announce their final decision on opening their border to Hajj pilgrims despite the first pilgrims scheduled to embark on Hajj on June 5, 2022, so that they can complete their pilgrimage within the timeframe permitted by the Islamic calendar, Qoumas said. (\*)