| **Nadiem's reforms, up to teachers now** | Education and Culture Minister Nadiem Makarim has planned four reforms in compulsory education, in an attempt to reduce state control and give more autonomy to teachers and schools, a move that is feared will worsen the quality gap across provinces.

Observers said the reforms, which will affect schools from elementary to high school level, may not be suitable for the country, in which teachers are not equally educated nor equally paid.

The first reform mandates a new form of assessment that can be determined by teachers in each school to replace the current final school exams (USBN), while the second will abolish the national exams (UN). The third reform will simplify RPPS for teachers, requiring them to do less paperwork to describe their classroom plans and spend more time developing and evaluating the learning process with their students.

The last reform will change the current zoning system that has regulated school admissions since 2017. It will reduce the number of seats allocated to students who live near each school from 80 to 50 percent, while increasing seats for those with high academic achievement to 30 percent.

Education expert Totok Amin Soefijanto of Paramadina University said Nadiem's policy emphasized the role of teachers in improving the quality of education, but in fact, not all teachers were ready for the great responsibility. |
| **KPK Supervisory Council to be finalized soon** | Chairperson and members of the Supervisory Council (Dewas) of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) will be appointed and inaugurated by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo on Dec. 20, 2019.

Appointment of the council's chairperson and members by the President follows Article 69A Paragraph 1 of Law |
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<td>No. 19/2019 on the KPK, which stipulates that the initial chairperson and members of the KPK Supervisory Council will be appointed by the President.</td>
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<td>KPK deputy chairman Saut Situmorang stated that the presence of the council may be disastrous for the KPK, potentially hampering eradication of corruption due to potential conflicts of interest.</td>
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<td>Chairperson of the Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation Afinawati highlighted that the Supervisory Council had been opposed by the public from the beginning, with many suspicious the KPK was coming under the President's control.</td>
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<td>&quot;The KPK leaders were chosen through a strict selection process. The criteria set for KPK leaders are tougher than those of Dewas but the latter has greater authorities,&quot; said Asfinawati.</td>
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<td><strong>Election organizers criticized</strong></td>
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<td>The General Elections Commission Ethics Council (DKPP) has recorded a total of 506 complaints filed against the administering of the 2019 elections. Of the 506 complaints, 50 were related to the presidential election and the other related to legislative elections, council chairman Harjono said. Papua was also identified as the region with the highest number of complaints.</td>
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<td>In response to the complaints, Home Minister Tito Karnavian called on election organizers to improve their professionalism prior to the upcoming 2020 regional elections in order to minimize possibilities of horizontal conflicts between supporters of electoral candidates.</td>
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<td>Tito added that social media should also be handled appropriately as its influence had been proven to sway the public during the 2019 elections.</td>
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<td><strong>PPP congress issues recommendations for government and House</strong></td>
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<td>The national congress of the United Development Party (PPP) concluded Sunday with six recommendations for the government and the House of Representatives.</td>
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<td>The Muslim-based party asked the two institutions to immediately pass pending bills. They include a bill on alcoholic beverages, a bill on the Criminal Code amendment, a bill on the Criminal Procedure Code and a correctional bill.</td>
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<td>PPP deputy chairperson Fernita Darwis said the government should maintain communication with...</td>
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Muslims, especially Islamic scholars, during deliberation of the bills. "Not to mention religious organizations and educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools," said Fernita.

Concerning elections, the PPP asked the government to review the simultaneous elections and reinstate the proportional allocation of seats for parties in electoral districts and the closed mechanism to name legislative candidates.

The PPP also encouraged the government and law enforcement agencies to improve coordination and internal oversight to prevent corruption and drug abuse. The PPP also asked the government to avoid excessive use of force in handling demonstrations.

An index indicating religious harmony in the country has shown an increase but officials and the public have doubted such a measure given the number of religion-related conflicts that continue to occur across the country.

The religious harmony index for this year was 78.83 out of 100, an increase from last year's score of 70.9. The index was based on a national survey carried out by the Research and Development Agency (Balitbang) of the Religious Affairs Ministry from May to June in all 34 provinces. It assessed perceptions of tolerance, equality and cooperation among people of different religions.

This year's score, which falls within the range of 61 to 80, indicates that Indonesia is in "the high level of interreligious harmony" even though the result is below 2015's score of 75.36. While the index has shown an improvement, some people still question the validity of the report.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to implementing a 50 percent-blended biodiesel (B50) requirement but has acknowledged that under current oil production projections, it will be difficult to achieve within the next five years.
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<th><strong>Illegal levies still charged at Tanjung Priok port</strong></th>
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<td>Based on Bisnis Indonesia’s investigation, truck drivers are still charged illegal levies at Priok Port, despite the practice first being uncovered by this daily on Feb. 19, 2013.</td>
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<td>The Jakarta International Container Terminal (JICT) handled an estimated 2,098,000 units of twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers in 2018.</td>
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<td>Drivers are asked to pay an illegal levies of Rp 12,000 (86 US cents) per load. Therefore, the total illegal levies paid each year could total Rp 25 billion.</td>
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<td>JICT deputy director Riza Erivan said his party did not tolerate anyone who fostered extortion practices, especially in port areas.</td>
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<td>According to him, crane operators cannot slow down the process of loading and unloading containers, because each step has key performance indicators (KPI) that must be met.</td>
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<td>Nevertheless, he promised to conduct an investigation in the field.</td>
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> “We will mandate the use of B30 starting Jan. 1 [2020] and will move up to B40 by the end of next year [...] but it appears we will have to stop at B50 because supplies are insufficient,” Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Minister Luhut Pandjaitan said in Jakarta on Tuesday.

According to Indonesian Oil Palm Association (GAPKI) data, Indonesia produced 51.1 million tons of CPO last year, of which 34.7 million tons was exported, with 13.5 million tons consumed domestically and the remainder stored for future use.

According to the Office of the Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Minister’s own projections, the productivity of Indonesia’s palm oil plantations will see a 3 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the next 31 years.

Under such projections, Indonesia will only be able to produce 22 million tons of CPO for domestic use per year, without compromising exports and reserve stocks, by 2035, 11 years after Jokowi’s term ends.

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*(The Jakarta Post, p.2)*

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Illegal levies still charged at Tanjung Priok port

(Bisnis Indonesia, headline)
Since 2015, all transactions at the JICT terminal have implemented a cashless payment system. Because of this innovation, JICT's load volumes increased from 1.4 million TEUs in 1999 to more than 2.4 million TEUs a year.

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<th><strong>US$1.8 billion saved from trade protection</strong></th>
<th>Trade Ministry data show that Indonesia managed to save US$1.8 billion (Rp 25.3 trillion) in export potential thanks to the government’s success in easing trade restrictions imposed by the country’s trading partners.</th>
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<td><em>(Bisnis Indonesia, p.3)</em></td>
<td>Indonesia conducted trade talks with a number of trading partners including Pakistan, Canada, the European Union, Malaysia, South Korea, the Philippines and Australia this year. The negotiations allowed Indonesia to reduce import tariffs imposed by these countries on several commodities such as vanaspati ghee, certain steel products, hot rolled steel coils, uncoated paper, cement and A4 size photocopy paper.</td>
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<td>Indonesian Employers Association (Apindo) deputy chairman Shinta W. Kamdani expressed appreciation for the achievement. “However, we need to be aware of the new kinds of trade barriers imposed by other countries,” she said on Sunday.</td>
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<td>The WTO reported that from October 2018 to October 2019, new import barriers created by countries around the world totaled US$747 billion in value, the highest in history. In the same period a year prior, US$588 billion in additional import barriers were added.</td>
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<td><strong>QR code payment must use Standard QRIS starting Jan. 1</strong></td>
<td>Bank Indonesia has released a standard for QR code implementation in Indonesia, dubbed the QR Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) to boost non-cash transactions in the country.</td>
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<td>The standard allows customers to pay at all merchants with only one QR code, despite using different digital wallets for payment. To create the QRIS, the central bank partnered with the Indonesian Payment System Association (ASPI). The system will be implemented nationwide starting from Jan. 1, 2020.</td>
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<td>In the initial stage, the QRIS will focus on the QR code transaction mechanism for Merchant Presented Mode (MPM) in which the merchant displays a QR Code that can be scanned by the customer to initiate a transaction.</td>
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The other transaction mechanism available is Customer Presented Mode (CPM) where merchants can scan customers’ QR code.

To date, 19 payment service providers (PJSP) have received approval from the QRIS. They are Bank DKI, OVO, Gopay, Bank Mandiri, Bank Sinarmas, Telkom, LinkAja, BCA, Maybank, Mega, Dana, Paytren, ShopeePay, BRI, Nobu Bank, CIMB Niaga, BNI, Permata and Danamon.

Hopes are high for publicly listed Bank Permata after it was revealed that a majority stake in the lender is to be acquired by Thailand’s Bangkok Bank, effectively putting an end to wild rumors about the acquisition since early this year.

Bangkok Bank announced on Thursday that it had agreed to buy 89.1 percent of the private bank’s shares for around US$2.67 billion as part of its overseas expansion.

The majority of Bank Permata shares are currently owned by British financial giant Standard Chartered and Indonesian diversified conglomerate PT Astra International, with each owning 44.56 percent of the bank, which operates about 330 branches in 62 cities across Indonesia.

Finance consulting company Koneksi Kapital Indonesia’s head of research, Alfred Nainggolan, said Bank Permata would be looking for a spot in the BUKU IV category, which includes banks whose core capital exceeds Rp 30 trillion ($2.14 billion).

“This is because they will have more capital funds through this acquisition as Bangkok Bank also operates in the banking industry while Astra does not,” Alfred told The Jakarta Post over the phone on Friday.
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