



## **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest**

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*The **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest** is a biweekly collection of summaries of articles related to conservation, the environment and sustainability in Indonesia which have appeared in print or online in local, regional and global English-language media. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections. To learn more about us and to access previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our*

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### A. Marine & Fisheries

#### [Data show decline in Indonesian fish stocks amid push for higher production](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 22 April 2022

Indonesia's fish stocks have declined in the past five years. New data released by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) puts Indonesia's estimated fish stock at 12 million metric tons, down nearly 4% from the 12.5 million metric tons estimated in 2017, showing that 53% of the country's 11 fisheries management areas (WPPs) are now deemed "fully exploited," up from 44%. Observers said the figures are cause for concern in light of the ministry's intention to increase production at a time when more WPPs are already fully exploited. A major plan by the ministry is to reopen the country's fishing grounds to vessels funded by foreign investors, which were previously blamed for depleting fish stocks over the course of several years. The DKP also aims to designate some areas for fishing industry while reserving others for nursery grounds. "What's needed now is more control on capture and exploitation of fish instead of increasing production," said Mohammad Abdi Suhufan, national coordinator for the NGO Destructive Fishing Watch (DFW) Indonesia.

**Reference:** "[Decision of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries regarding fisheries resource estimates estimation No. 19/2022](#)", (*Keputusan Menteri Kelautan dan Perikanan Republik Indonesia 19/2022 tentang Estimasi Potensi Sumber Daya Ikan*)

#### [A seagrass restoration project to preserve the past may also protect the future](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 3 May 2022

Globally, seagrasses are disappearing at rates rivalling those of coral reefs and tropical rainforests, losing as much as 7% of their areas each year, according to the IUCN. Threats to seagrass meadows come from climate change, pollution, coastal development, and invasive species. In 1994, it was estimated that Indonesia contained 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> of seagrass, arguably the most of any country in the world. In 2017, however, Indonesia's seagrass cover was estimated at just 1,507 km<sup>2</sup>. In West Yensawai village on the island of Batanta in West Papua's Raja Ampat archipelago, a group of 19 teenaged girls and two boys organized by the Indonesia Climate Change Trust Fund (ICCTF) under the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) have been planting seagrass seedlings at sites where seagrass cover

has been lost. Tonny Wagey, director of the ICCTF, says he hopes the seagrass rehabilitation in West Yensawai can contribute to the protection of the wider Raja Ampat archipelago marine ecosystem, and as well the Coral Triangle.

### **MSC provides close to US\$ 1 million to support sustainable fishing and ocean conservation**

—Press Release, *Marine Stewardship Council*, 20 April 2022

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) will provide US\$936,000 in grants to support marine conservation and sustainable fishing through its Ocean Stewardship Fund (OSF), half of which will be used to support fisheries in developing economies that are transitioning to sustainable practices, including Indonesia, Mexico and India. The 22 grants ranging in size from US\$6,500 to US\$68,000 will also focus on improvements to better protect endangered, threatened and protected species or vulnerable ecosystems. Since 2019, the council has directed 5% of its annual royalties from sales of MSC-certified sustainable seafood to the OSF, which has now opened to third-party donations. The Indonesia grants include £49,375 (US\$62,000) to support recovery and management of fisheries and ecosystems in the Teluk Saleh Inshore snapper/grouper fishery, £50,000 for Yayasan WWF Indonesia and the Indonesian mud crab fishery at Kei Kecil in the Maluku Islands, £44,608 to PT Cassanatama Narindo to improve sustainability in the Indonesia Central Java shrimp fishery.

### **Community-led coral reef restoration project are rare hits among misses**

—Aimee Gabay, *Mongabay*, 4 May 2022

A recent review documented 533 coral reef restoration projects in Indonesia over the past three decades, but many of these projects may have failed because they lack monitoring or long-term evaluation. Only 85 incorporated a post-installation monitoring program, and 55% of these revisited the restoration site only once. However one self-funded community-led reef restoration project on Gili Trawangan off Lombok proved to be an exception. “The growing popularity of reef restoration has made people think they can have a go at it with little scientific guidance and preparation, only to find out later that the location, methodology, or coral species used are not suitable,” said Rili Djohani, executive director of the Coral Triangle Center (CTC). “It’s very important to increase awareness and understanding about where coral restoration could be useful, and, conversely, where it is absolutely pointless,” said Arnaud Brival, co-founder of a community-based reef restoration project in Raja Ampat, West Papua.

**Paper:** Razak, T. B. et al, “[Coral reef restoration in Indonesia: A review of policies and projects](#)”, *Marine Policy* 137 (March 2022). [doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104940](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2021.104940)

## **B. Forests & Land Use**

### **Tropical forest losses put goal of zero deforestation by 2030 beyond reach**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 28 April 2022

Tropical countries lost 11.1 million ha of tree cover in 2021, a third of which occurred in primary forests, the world’s most biologically diverse ecosystems, according to the Global Forest Watch platform managed by the World Resources Institute (WRI). Indonesia and Gabon saw their rates of primary forest loss decline significantly in recent years, but this was offset by high deforestation rates in countries such as Brazil and Bolivia. The trend is a disaster for the climate, biodiversity, indigenous peoples and local communities, said WRI’s Frances Seymour. Forests help keep the air cool and moist. Without forests, global temperatures would be about 0.5° higher now. Halting deforestation by 2030 would require a consistent decline in forest loss each year for the rest of the decade—a decline that isn’t happening in the tropics as a whole. “We’ve got 20 years of data now showing persistent annual loss of millions of hectares of primary tropical forest alone,” Seymour said. “We have to bring that number down to zero.”

**Paper:** Deborah Lawrence et al, “[The Unseen Effects of Deforestation: Biophysical Effects on Climate](#)”, *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change*, 24 March 2022 [doi.org/10.3389/ffgc.2022.756115](https://doi.org/10.3389/ffgc.2022.756115)

### **Study: Troubled trees need better conservation to reach biodiversity conservation goals**

—Carolyn Cowan, *Mongabay*, 26 April 2022

A study shows that three-quarters of the land most important for protecting tree diversity in South and Southeast Asia lies outside the regions' protected areas, with 63 different tree species threatened by overexploitation, fire, overgrazing, conversion, and climate change, including rainforest species that are rarely cultivated. Indonesia, home to more than half of the tree species studied, was identified as a leading candidate for conservation, accounting for 40.5% of the conservation priority areas, including sites for seed collection and storage to preserve genetic diversity and the potential for assisted migration and sustainable agroforestry. Tree-based conservation can help revitalize livelihoods of people living in and around forests. "If we don't maintain adequate genetic diversity of native trees ... [no one] will be able to produce the restoration interventions that can deliver on degraded land, climate and biodiversity," said Christopher Kettle, one of the study co-authors. "If they're all going extinct, we are not going to have genetically diverse resources to use as solutions."

**Paper:** Hannes Gaisberger et al, "[Tropical and subtropical Asia's valued tree species under threat](#)", *Conservation Biology* 2022, [doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13873](https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13873)

## **C. Conservation & Protected Areas**

### **Three critically-endangered Sumatran tigers killed in Aceh**

—*AFP*, 25 April 2022

Three critically-endangered Sumatran tigers were found dead in Aceh after being ensnared by traps, police said. Rampant deforestation has reduced the tigers' natural habitat and increasing conflicts with humans has left only about four hundred of the endangered species remaining in the wild. Two of the dead tigers were found by local conservationists in Aceh at an oil palm plantation in East Aceh district. Police found the third tiger about 500 m from where the other two tigers were found, its feet also ensnared in a Zire sling. "Our initial suspicion is that the tigers died after being caught in boar traps because when we found them their feet were ensnared by a thick, steel sling, a local police chief said. Up to ten tigers are killed in Indonesia every year, according to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

### **Five arrested for trying to sell infant orangutan**

—Apriadi Gunawan, *The Jakarta Post*, 30 April 2022

Five persons were arrested by the North Sumatra Police and the Natural Resources Conservation Agency for attempting to sell an endangered orangutan. The suspects, aged 17 to 20, including a female teenager, all from Binjai city. The four-month-old orangutan was priced at Rp 23 million (US\$1,583), a police spokesperson said. According to the suspects, the orangutan had been taken from a forest in East Aceh regency, Aceh. Panut Hadisisiwoyo of the Medan-based Orangutan Information Center (OIC) said there is still demand for infant orangutans as pets in the local market. In order to get the infants, hunters often kill the mothers. Two adult orangutans have been killed so far this year, according to OIC. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) inaugurated a rescue center in North Sumatra in January to house orangutans rescued from wildlife smuggling cases. Converted from an old oil palm plantation, the 10-ha Sumatran Rescue Alliance (SRA) is a collaboration between the North Sumatra and Aceh provinces' Natural Resource Conservation Center and the OIC.

## **D. Energy, Mining, & Climate Change**

### **Janet Yellen, Luhut Panjaitan discuss potential to speed Indonesia's transition away from coal**

—Reuters via *The Jakarta Post*, 28 April 2022

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen met with Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan to discuss accelerated transition away from coal in Indonesia's

power sector. Yellen and Luhut spoke about the potential for a Just Energy Transition Partnership that would bring together funding from donor countries, multilateral investment banks, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector to speed the decommissioning of coal-fired power plants, the Treasury Department statement said. Indonesia is using its stint as G20 president to push for more international funding for the green energy transition in developing countries, but the world's top exporter of thermal coal and 8<sup>th</sup> biggest source of carbon emissions is under pressure to back up its calls with more ambitious plans to cut emissions at home. The government of President Joko Widodo plans to phase out coal for electricity by 2056 and has brought forward its net-zero emissions target from 2070 to 2060 or sooner, but weaning itself off the dirty, climate-heating fuel remains a challenge.

### [Indonesia's Pertamina to double down on geothermal energy](#)

—Erwida Maulia, *Nikkei Asia*, 29 April 2022

Indonesia's state-owned oil and gas giant Pertamina aims to double its geothermal generating capacity over coming years with investments of up to US\$4 billion, including adoption of new technology to cut development costs. Pertamina Geothermal Energy (PGE) currently runs geothermal power plants in six Indonesian regions with a total installed capacity of 672 megawatts (MW). The company wants to double that figure, President Director Nicke Widyawati said, and also seeks to build binary cycle units in existing facilities to boost electricity generation at lower cost. Binary cycle technology does not require drilling new wells, she explained, so development can be faster and investment costs lower. At the pilot site in Tomohon, Sulawesi, geothermal liquid from the existing 120-MW geothermal plant that was being injected back into the earth is now being used to generate additional electricity. PGE's adoption of binary technology could be a game-changer for Indonesia's geothermal development by reducing the costs of exploration and drilling that have made it difficult for geothermal to compete with coal-fired power.

### [Coal miner Bayan Resources is suing Indonesia's investment board over revocation of permits](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 25 April 2022

Indonesian coal mining company Bayan Resources has challenged the government's decision to revoke its permits, which effectively reduced the total concession area in Borneo held by five Bayan subsidiaries by 16%. On April 8, five Bayan subsidiaries filed a lawsuit at the state administrative court in Jakarta against Bahliil Lahadalia, the head of the national investment agency BKPM for revoking their mining permits, part of a series of permit revocations ordered by President Joko Widodo in January to retake land from companies the government says have failed to exploit them fully. The mass revocation prompted up to 50 mining companies to lodge complaints. The revocation could backfire on the government, according to Grita Anindarini of the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL). Under a 2021 regulation on mining, a concession can only be automatically revoked if the concession holder has committed a crime or is declared bankrupt, or if there has been environmental degradation. "If any of these criteria aren't met, then there is maladministration, Grita said.

### [Twelve women killed in landslide in North Sumatra illegal gold mine](#)

—AFP via *The Jakarta Post*, 29 April 2022

Twelve women aged 30 to 55 working in an illegal gold mine in North Sumatra province were killed when a cliff collapsed and triggered a landslide, police said. Unlicensed mines are common across mineral-rich Indonesia. Illegal gold mining is rampant in Mandailing Natal, 300 km south of the provincial capital of Medan, where abandoned sites attract locals who work for leftover gold without using proper safety equipment or standards. Illegal gold mining in Indonesia is also associated with the use of mercury by small-scale miners to extract gold from the ore, which can result in environmental damage as well as devastating impacts on the health of the miners and their families.

### [Iwan Dento, "hero" of South Sulawesi's limestone karst mountains](#)

—Wahyu Chandra, *Mongabay*, 25 April 2022

Environmental activist Iwan Dento has opposed the mining of the limestone karst formations in his homeland of Maros in South Sulawesi province for more than a decade. Until 2013, this karst mountain

area of Rammang-rammang north of Makassar was extensively mined for marble and limestone, but local resistance led to protective regulations and the establishment of an ecotourism area. Archeological evidence of a prehistoric civilization dating back more than 40,000 years on Sulawesi have been found in limestone caves in the area. In 2017, activists called on the government to issue a new regulation to better protect Indonesia's karst areas. Ecotourism has become an alternative source of employment in this area as it has started to attract visitors. The Maros-Pangkep Geopark, established in 2015 to protect the region's archeological, ecological, and cultural value became a national geopark in 2017 and is being assessed for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

## E. Pollution & Waste

### [Opinion: Wasteful waste-to-energy project](#)

—*Tempo English*, 25 April 2022

A plan to build waste-to-energy power plants (PLTSA) is no solution to the acute problems of managing household wastes. Building such power plants in Jakarta and 11 other cities would result in poisoning the air with dioxins and other dangerous chemicals. Regional governments would have to pay waste management services fees to investors even if less waste is sent than originally agreed. Also, the state electricity company PLN would be required to purchase PLTSA electricity for US\$13.35-14.54 per kilowatt hour for 25 years, which would result in serious PLN losses. Burning waste to produce electricity solves the downstream problem but not the upstream issue, which is minimizing household waste. Household waste is currently expected to reach 70.8 million tonnes in 2025 and twice that by 2050, according to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK). Adopting a reduce-reuse-recycle (3R) concept would promote waste management in households and help people reduce and recycle their own wastes. Success in managing waste at the source would help reduce negative externalities.

### [Better deep-bore wells aim to stop Indonesia's waste of ground water](#)

—A. Asnawi, *Mongabay*, 28 April 2022

Agriculture and other industries thrive in Pasuruan, a fertile rice-growing district in East Java that is home to active volcanos and rich aquifers, but proliferation of unregulated wells risks losing that bounty. Hundreds of crude artesian wells that lack valves to control the discharge is causing the wasteful discharge of millions of liters of fresh water, according to Ni'matul Khasanah, a soil scientist and ecologist with World Agroforestry (ICRAF). This is resulting in degrading the watershed, lowering the discharge rate at some water springs. Deep-bore wells serve as critical infrastructure across the Indonesian archipelago. Each of the 600 artesian wells in Pasuruan loses as much as 38 million liters of water during the three-month rainy season each year. ICRAF has designed a model artesian well with protective casing and a valve fitted to support water conservation, but to date only seven model wells have been constructed. The problems are higher cost and the need for local government to take long-term water security seriously.

## F. Investment & Finance

### [GEF announces record US\\$5.3 billion in pledges and a new environmental funding strategy](#)

—Rhett Butler, *Mongabay*, 26 April 2022

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has announced a record US\$5.25 billion in pledges to support conservation and environmental protection over the next four years, a 30% increase over the last replenishment. One of the world's largest environmental funders, the facility is also seeking to make grant-making more flexible, including new mechanisms for non-state actors (such as NGOs, the private sector, and communities to secure direct GEF support rather than having to go through governmental channels, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO and Chairperson of the GEF said. This could make it easier for indigenous and local communities to secure funding for conservation projects and environmental initiatives. "GEF resources are for countries, not just governments of those countries," Rodriguez said. Historically, NGOs needed to go through government channels to secure GEF funding. "That limits who



can receive GEF support since in some countries civil society can have adversarial relationships with government,” Rodriguez explained. “We want to change that.”

## G. Other

### [West Java \*pesantren\* explores Islam through nature](#)

—Khairul Anam, *Tempo English*, 2 May 2022

A day at the Ath Thaariq Ecology *Pesantren* [Islamic boarding school] in West Java’s Garut regency begins with morning prayer and Islamic study and continues with classes at public schools outside. At Ath Thaariq, in addition to Islamic studies, the 30 *santris* [students] are taught how to live in balance with nature. All students join in tending to the gardens and fields, processing food crops, and making natural fertilizer. The administrators, Kiai Ibang and Nissa Wargadipura, a married couple who had been environmental activists since high school, divide teaching responsibilities. “Kiai covers the religious field, while I take on the environmental part,” said Nissa. The school’s one-hectare of land is managed using principles of agricultural ecology and the Sundanese concepts of *kebun talun* (a vast home garden with food crops), and *leuweung talun* (large forest garden). The *santris* are taught how to harvest and manage the crops. The results must be sufficient for daily food consumption. Ath Thaariq offers an alternative to mall culture, shopping at stores, and destroying nature.

### [Government to accept Constitutional Court ruling on revised Papua Autonomy Law](#)

—Nur Janti, *The Jakarta Post*, 27 April 2022

The Indonesian government will comply with the upcoming ruling by the Constitutional Court on a petition for judicial review filed by the Papuan People’s Assembly (MRP) last year challenging several provisions in the revised 2021 Papua Special Autonomy Law, including the provision allowing the central government and the House of Representatives (DPR) to bypass approval by the MRP and the Papuan Regional Legislative Council (DPRP) in creating new provinces, regencies and municipalities in the region. The statement came after President Joko Widodo met with representatives from the MRP on 26 April, the first meeting since the DPR endorsed three new bills that would break up the existing boundaries of Papua Province to create new provinces of South Papua, Central Papua and Papua Central Highlands. However, a statement by the MRP said that while President Widodo had said the government would comply with a Constitutional Court ruling regarding the 2021 amended law, he stopped short of confirming that the government would postpone or cancel plans to form new provinces in the region. It was announced that the DPR will postpone further deliberations on the three bills until after the Constitutional Court ruling is issued.

### [Garuda Shield maneuvers: Indonesia seen as tilting toward US against China](#)

—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 20 April 2022

While Indonesian foreign policy remains on a neutral track, the country’s military is tilting ever more toward the United States and the West with preparations underway for the biggest-ever combined arms exercise in August, which for the first time will skirt the South China Sea. The annual Garuda Shield manoeuvres, which began in 2009, are being expanded this year to accommodate eight other countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste. In addition to operations in southern Sumatra, East Kalimantan, and the Malacca Strait, there are plans for amphibious landing in the Natuna Islands, south of the location where Chinese Coast Guard and research vessels breached Indonesia’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) last year. In previous exercises, Garuda Shield has stayed clear of the southern reaches of the South China Sea, where China’s nine-dashed-line boundary claim intrudes into Indonesia’s EEZ and parts of the 154-island Natuna archipelago. Beijing protested last year’s exercise, which was largely confined to south Sumatra, East Kalimantan and North Sulawesi.

### [Ukraine crisis disrupts Indonesia’s wheat supply](#)

—Ainur Rohmah, *Asia Sentinel*, 2 May 2022

Dwindling supplies of wheat on world markets due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict has led to an increase in the price of wheat-based food products in Indonesia, where packets of instant noodles make up a major part of the diet, raising fears of food shortages. The country imported 2.8 million tonnes or 25% of its total wheat needs from Ukraine last year, but Ukraine suspended export of wheat, oats, and other staple foods in March. According to the FAO, Indonesia is the largest wheat importer in the world, purchasing 10.3 million tons in 2020. Consumption of instant noodles in Indonesia reached 12.6 million portions in 2020, the second highest in the world after China. Other wheat suppliers to Indonesia include Australia (4.6 million tonnes), Canada (1.9 mt), Argentina (606,000 tonnes), the US (447,000 tonnes) and India (318,000 tonnes.) Francis Welirang, Chairperson of the Indonesian Wheat Flour Producers Association (Aptindo) said the impact of reduced wheat supply has not been felt significantly so far because most producers have reserves to cover several months.

## I. The Covid-19 crisis

### Covid-19 cases continue to decline despite Ramadan relaxation of pandemic mobility rules

—Nina A. Loasana, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 April 2022

Indonesia has seen a decline in the number of new Covid-19 cases over the past few weeks despite continued relaxation of pandemic rules and increase in public mobility. The total caseload fell 38% in early April from 15,055 cases to 9,328. The country recorded 833 new cases on 14 April, the first time the number of cases dipped below 1,000 since mid-January. The improved results came amid an unprecedented relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions as the country seeks to transition to endemicity. Authorities waived mandatory quarantine requirements for fully-vaccinated travellers last month. For the first time in two years, the government has allowed Muslims to pray at public mosques without mandatory physical distancing requirements or limits on the number of worshipers allowed to gather at one time. Public mobility has also increased dramatically, especially in public parks, supermarkets, malls and vacation spots, national Covid-19 task force spokesperson Wiku Adi Sasmito said.

### Indonesian Muslims fully celebrate Eid al-Fitr after two years

—NinieK Karmini, *AP News*, 2 July 2022

Millions of Muslims in Indonesia returned home to celebrate Eid al-Fitr in full swing following two years of subdued festivities due to pandemic restrictions and travel curbs. The annual exodus, known as “*mudik*”, resumed after President Joko Widodo announced that the government would ease restrictions on the holiday for the first time since 2020. Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the Islamic holy month Ramadan, when the faithful fast from dawn to dusk. The return has brought great excitement to people in the world’s most populous Muslim-majority country as family gatherings and meetings with friends resumed while people flocked to shopping centers. Indonesians crammed into trains, ferries, buses, and motorcycles as they poured out of major cities to return to their home villages to celebrate the holiday with family. The government anticipated that 85 million travellers would crisscross the giant archipelago for Eid al-Fitr this year, significantly more than before the pandemic, when an estimated 30 million people participated in the annual exodus.

## II. Indonesia’s presidency of the Group of 20

### Indonesian president seeks to unite the G20 in talks with Ukraine and Russia

—News Desk, *The Jakarta Post*, 28 April 2022

President Joko Widodo said he had spoken with the leaders of Ukraine and Russia to express support for peace efforts in an attempt to unite a Group of 20 (G20) forum divided by the conflict.. As this year’s G20 president, Indonesia has sought to remain neutral in dealing with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, refusing to condemn Moscow beyond its flagrant violation of sovereignty. The US and its allies in the G7 group of industrialized nations, a subset of the G20, have sought to punish Russian president Vladimir Putin,



including by threatening a boycott of the G20 Summit in Bali in November unless Russia is removed from the forum. Indonesia has instead invited Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky to attend the summit in hopes this would appease critics of Russia and limit distraction from the forum's priority agenda items. President Widodo confirmed that he had spoken with Zelensky and invited him to the G20 summit in a phone call on 27 April. President Widodo also refused a request by Zelensky for military support, but said Indonesia would send humanitarian assistance instead. Widodo said he had spoken with Putin by phone on 28 April, reiterating his call for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, and that Putin had reaffirmed his plan to attend the summit.

### [Asia's Ukraine dilemma: Interests, not values, underpin ambivalence about Russia](#)

—*The Economist*, 23 April 2022

Having found itself at a crossroads, Indonesia is attempting to go in every direction at once. It initially joined much of the world in deploring Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but a few days later President Joko Widodo said both Russia and Ukraine were friends of Indonesia. By mid-April, a debate had broken out about whether to take advantage of the crisis by buying discounted Russian oil. Indonesia holds the rotating presidency of the G20 this year. Some western leaders have said they would ditch the G20 November summit meeting if Russian President Vladimir Putin shows up. "This is about the sovereignty of Russia," says Riza Ghautama, an exporter of crude palm oil, who says he does not support Russia's invasion, but understands why it felt compelled to act. Russia, he says, was just trying "to defend itself". Connie Bakrie, an Indonesian defence expert, accuses the West of hypocrisy. How can it condemn Russia for seeking a sphere of interest when Western powers have done the same, she asks.

### [Japan, Indonesia confirm cooperation toward free, open Indo-Pacific](#)

—*Kyodo News via The Jakarta Post*, 1 May 2022

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indonesian President Joko Widodo confirmed that they will strengthen cooperation to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific amid China's growing assertiveness in the region and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Kishida said that Japan views Indonesia, this year's host of the Group of 20 major economies summit, as a strategic partner sharing universal values such as democracy and the rule of law. The two sides agreed that the war in Ukraine must be ended through dialogue and to work together to deal with the economic and humanitarian impacts of the war. Indonesia the same day said Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed his intention to attend the G20 summit in November and that Indonesia has invited Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky to the meeting. With Japan and other Group of Seven nations taking a tough line on imposing sanctions on Russia following its attack on Ukraine, Kishida also plans to ask other ASEAN members, most of which have so far stood aloof from such action against Moscow, to collaborate.

### [Indonesia navigates the first big stress test of its G20 presidency](#)

—The Editorial Board, *The Jakarta Post*, 28 April 2022

Indonesia appears to have navigated the first major stress test of its Group of 20 presidency after officials from the US and its allies walked out of a high-profile meeting of the economic forum in Washington on 20 April. Unperturbed by the protests against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said she was confident the strike "will not erode cooperation or the importance of the G20 forum. As the meeting's chair, Indrawati acknowledged that the Russia-Ukraine war had resulted in an "extraordinary" situation that prompted countries to support adapting the existing agenda to enable the G20 to address the economic impact of the war. Crucially, however, she also secured a collective commitment to address other pre-existing challenges. Ever since the war broke out in February, Indonesia has sought to ensure that the G20 program would not be hijacked by global politics. The US and its Group of 7 (G7) allies insist on punishing Moscow by any means necessary, but for other G20 members the US crusade may seem overzealous and ultimately distracting. For its part, Indonesia has sought to maintain its neutrality by presiding over a voluntary association of nations that remains divided over what to do about Russia.

### III. The palm oil crisis

#### [How Indonesia's policy stumbles over palm oil unfolded](#)

—Bernadette Christina, *Reuters* 29 April 2022

When Indonesian cooking oil prices started climbing in November, authorities faced pressure to contain the cost of the household necessity made from palm oil and used by most people in the world's fourth most populous country. But months of rapid-fire government policies that followed, including twice halting exports of palm oil, have both stunned and confounded global edible oil markets, and the policy U-turns driven by frustration over stubbornly high cooking oil prices have caught even some senior officials off guard. In November 2021, the government initially tried pressure on cooking oil prices, then introduced subsidies to purchase more than a million litres of cooking oil. In January, the government tried export permits requiring 20% and then 30% of sales of certain edible oil products be allocated to the domestic market and imposed a price ceiling. Despite those measures, cooking oil was still disappearing from stores. Changing course again, the government tried to replace the ceiling with subsidies, but in March, export curbs were removed and the palm oil export levy increased, resulting in palm oil returning to supermarket shelves but at much higher prices. On 22 April, an angry President Joko Widodo announced a ban on exports of palm oil, though ministers disagreed about which palm oil products were affected until 28 April, the day the export ban went into effect.

#### [Palm oil crisis shakes up Indonesia's politics, global supplies](#)

—News Desk, *The Jakarta Post*, 25 April 2022

A cooking oil crisis initially triggered by the Russian-Ukrainian war is now shaking up both domestic politics and the global supply chain after the government announced it would ban exports of crude palm oil (CPO), a key ingredient of cooking oils, amid student protests against skyrocketing food prices. The export ban came only two days after the Attorney General's office detained Indrasari Wisnu Wardhana, a Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Trade official and three executives from major palm oil producers over alleged violation in processing palm oil export permits. The three companies—the Permata Hijau Group, PT Wilmar Nabati Indonesia, and PT Musim Mas—are all members of the powerful Indonesian Palm Oil Association (Gapki). Indonesia is the world's biggest producer of palm oil, accounting for more than half of global supply. Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani Indrawati noted that the CPO export ban would hurt other countries, but stressed it was necessary to control the domestic price of cooking oil.

#### [Farmers: Palm oil export ban will hurt us](#)

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 25 April 2022

Indonesian farmers fear the government-imposed ban on palm oil exports will see [oil palm] fresh fruit bunch (TBS) prices free fall amid an expected domestic supply glut. Henry Saragih, chairman of the Indonesian Farmers Union (SPI), said some regions had seen TBS prices drop 30-50% since the crude palm oil (CPO) export ban was announced. In 2021, only 16.29 million tonnes out of a total of 46.89 million tonnes of CPO produced in Indonesia were absorbed by domestic buyers, with the remainder exported abroad. Palm Oil Smallholders Union (SPKS) chairman Mansuetus Darto also said that there had been a significant decrease in TBS prices after the CPO export ban was announced. "Corporations with export contracts are put at a disadvantage, and they're taking it out on farmers by buying oil palm fruit bunches at cheaper prices," Darto said.

#### [Palm oil export ban could cost Indonesian government US\\$1.4 billion a month](#)

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 27 April 2022

The government-imposed ban on exports of crude palm oil (CPO) is expected to result in the loss of as much as US\$1.4 billion in revenues if it is maintained for a full month, Andrian Bagus Santoso, an economist with the state-owned Bank Mandiri said. Permata Bank chief economist Josua Pardede said total exports of CPO and derivatives were worth an average of US\$1.1 billion per month in 2021, and

estimated potential foreign exchange losses of US\$700 million to US\$1.2 billion if the ban is implemented for a full month. India was the biggest importer of CPO and derivatives from Indonesia in 2021, while China, Bangladesh and Pakistan were also major buyers. Coordinating Economic Affairs Minister Airlangga Hartoto said on 26 April that the export ban would continue until the domestic price of cooking oil drops to Rp14,000 (US\$0.97) per liter. Andrian said that domestic cooking oil prices are expected to decline following the ban, but that it would be “difficult to predict” when prices would drop as far as to Rp 14,000 per liter.

### **Palm oil export ban traps 290,000 tonnes of palm oil shipments for India**

—Reuters via *The Jakarta Post*, 29 April 2022

Indonesia’s palm oil export ban has trapped at least 290,000 tonnes of the edible oil originally destined for India at ports and mills, industry officials said. The disruptions in shipments will create a vegetable oil shortage in top importer India, the officials said. Malaysia, the world’s second biggest exporter of palm oil, is struggling to meet higher demand and asking for near record prices. India is the world’s biggest importer of palm oil and relies on Indonesia for nearly half of the 700,000 tonnes it imports every month. New Delhi was banking on Indonesia to fill the gap after sunflower oil shipments were halted due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Black sea countries account for 60% of world sunflower output and 76% of world exports, while Indonesia and Malaysia account for the bulk of global palm oil shipments. Argentina, Brazil, and the US are the main suppliers of oil from soy.