



Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest
2021 – 6: 18 March 2021

If you would like to add colleagues and friends or remove yourself from distribution, please let us know by email at <newsdigest@starlingresources.com>. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections.

Starling Resources is a Bali-based sustainability consulting and advisory practice. To learn more about us and access all previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our website, www.starlingresources.com.

The corona-virus crisis in Indonesia

[Indonesian lawmakers bulldoze government to approve dubious vaccine](#)

— *Asia Sentinel*, 17 March 2020

Efforts to develop an indigenous Covid-19 vaccine for Indonesia have been called into question after the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM) said the development of the “dendritic injection” regime initiated by former Minister of Health Terawan Agus Putranto failed to comply with accepted clinical principles. The “Nusantara” vaccine is a personalized treatment developed by taking blood from the body of the patient, separating white blood cells and dendritic cells, combining the dendritic cells with recombinant antigens and then reinjecting the cells into the body of the patient, a process that takes about one week for each person treated. Terawan was dismissed by President Jokowi in December after problems with the country’s Covid-19 response became evident, following statements by the Minister that prayer alone could keep the coronavirus out of Indonesia and that the virus would heal itself. Nonetheless, a House of Representatives committee is pressing the agency to immediately approve clinical trials for the drug, which Terawan adapted from a process he invented to cure cancer.

[Six cooperative schools in Bali threatened with closure over Covid-19 violations](#)

—Jack Daniels, *Bali Discovery*, 17 March 2021

As many as six cooperative schools primarily international schools, have received formal reprimands from the Badung Regency office of Education, Youth, and Sports (*Disdikpora*) and had their principals summoned to be warned that permits to operate international schools serving large numbers of foreign children were now at risk. I Made Mandi, the acting head of Disdikpora-Badung, stressed that face-to-face teaching is still forbidden due to fears of Covid-19 contagion and community mobility restrictions (PPKM). In their defence, the international schools’ principals explained that parents and students had complained about the difficulties of remote learning and internet teaching, and also cited problems with counselling students. Under threat of possible closure, however, the six international schools have agreed to cease to conduct face-to-face teaching in Badung Regency.

[Moderna and Sinopharm vaccines will be mainstays of private inoculation drive](#)

—Gisela Swaragita, *The Jakarta Post*, 15 March 2021

The Indonesian government expects to receive more than 20 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine from the US pharmaceutical firm Moderna and from the Chinese firm Sinopharm for use in a private vaccination program this year. “We have negotiated and asked for commitments for a supply of 15 million vaccine doses from Sinopharm and 5.2 million from Moderna, said Honesti Basyir, CEO of state-owned pharmaceutical company PT Bio Farma. The government aims to inoculate 181 people by March 2022 through the free public vaccination program that began in January. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) has pushed for the government to authorize an independent inoculation drive, known as the Gotong Royong program, to allow businesses to buy vaccine supplies to be used for their own employees and family members. More than 11,500 companies have signed up for the plan, which would cover about 7.4 million employees and family members, according to Kadin Chairman Rosan P. Roeslani.

[Indonesia delays rollout of AstraZeneca vaccine](#)

—Marchio Irfan Gorbiano, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 March 2021

Indonesia is delaying rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine manufactured by British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca pending a review by the World Health Organization (WHO) into concerns about blood clots, a move that experts say could affect the country’s ambitious vaccination targets. Indonesia has received 1.1 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine through the international COVAX facility, with 10 million more doses expected by April. The government is liaising with the WHO and its Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on immunization to decide whether to use the AstraZeneca vaccine in the government’s mass vaccination program as originally planned. “Hopefully, [we will have clarity] soon, because the vaccines [we have already received] have an expiration date in late May,” Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin told lawmakers at a hearing. Indonesia joins Denmark, Norway, Ireland, the

Netherlands and other countries that have also suspended usage of the AstraZeneca jab in their inoculation programs pending clarification of possible blood clot risks.

Marine & Fisheries

[A last stand for tuna in Indonesian waters](#)

—Christopher Pollon, *Hakai Magazine*, 2 March 2021

Skipjack are flying through the air as 20 fishers hook and pull fish out of the water to the deck of a boat in the Molucca Sea off Sulawesi. Catching one tuna at a time by a crew of individual fishers—“pole and line” on some labels—is about as sustainable as tuna fishing gets, avoiding the massive by-catch associated with other fishing methods. The skipjack is the smallest commercially-exploited tuna and the most abundant of the 15 tuna species. They are found throughout the world’s tropical and sub-tropical waters, but most are now caught in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) along a 7,400-km band of water known as “Tuna Alley”, but most skipjack are caught by purse seining. Like cod and other tuna species, eventually this species too will decline. “All industrial fisheries, with very few exceptions, are ultimately drained of life,” according to Daniel Pauly of the University of British Columbia. “They increase and push, push, until they collapse. Why should skipjack tuna be any different.”

[Opinion: Underwater beauty key to sustainable tourism in Indonesia](#)

—Rifky Maulana, Rivky Rasyid, *The Jakarta Post*, 1 March 2021

Indonesia’s coastline (95,181 km) the second longest in the world. It’s marine area measuring 5.8 million km², accounts for 71% of Indonesia’s sovereign territory. It is part of the Coral Triangle, which spans Indonesia and parts of Malaysia, the Philippines, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Indonesia is the center of marine biodiversity in the Coral Triangle, with some of the highest levels of coral and reef fish biodiversity known anywhere in the world. Before the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted global tourism, Indonesia was attracting more than 15 million tourism visitors a year, but that fell to just 4 million in 2020. The pandemic period should present an opportunity to rethink and redesign the way we exploit nature as a tourism attraction, change mass tourism to sustainable tourism that focuses on quality while oriented to sustainability. The pandemic has made many parties realize the sustainable tourism is the key to Indonesian tourism’s future success in creating economic growth that is equitable and sustainable.

Indonesia sinks 10 illegal foreign fishing vessels

—*The Star*, 5 March 2021

"On [March 4 2021] we sank ten illegal foreign fishing vessels flying Vietnamese and Malaysian flags," Antam Novambar, acting director general of Marine Resources and Fisheries Supervision of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries said. Eight vessels were Vietnamese-flagged boats and two were Malaysian-flagged vessels. Batam Prosecutor Office's head Polin Octavianus Sitanggang said the sinking was carried out over two successive days. "In the process, we made holes on the hulls of the boats and filled them with water and ballasts to make it easy to sink the boats," Sittanggang said.

[Enabling conditions for an equitable and sustainable blue economy](#)

—Andrés M. Cisneros-Montemayor et al, *Nature*, 17 March 2021

The future of the global ocean economy is envisioned as advancing toward socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically viable ocean industries, but tensions exist within sustainable development approaches, arising from differing perspectives framed around natural capital or social equity. Stark differences in outlook on the capacity for establishing a blue economy arise when social conditions and governance capacity are considered—not just resource availability. Key differences in the capacity of regions to achieve a blue economy include factors such as national stability, corruption, and infrastructure, which can be improved through targeted investments and cross-scale cooperation. Knowledge gaps can be addressed by integrating historical natural and social science information on drivers and outcomes of resource use and management, thus identifying equitable pathways to establishing or transforming ocean sectors. Policymakers must engage researchers and stakeholders to promote evidence-based, collaborative planning to ensure sectors are chosen carefully, local benefits are prioritized, and that the blue economy delivers on its social, environmental, and economic goals.

Forestry & Land Use

[A million hectares of Papuan forest licensed for clearing](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 8 March 2021

Over a million hectares of natural forests in Indonesia's Papua and West Papua provinces have been for conversion to non-forest use, mostly for oil palm plantations, according to a new report by a coalition of NGOs. Indonesia's decades-long commodities boom—from palm oil to coal to paper pulp—resulted in razing much of the forests on the western islands of Sumatra and Borneo. Now, those same industries are moving into Papua. While almost all of these areas remain intact now, they will be vulnerable after the government moratorium on new oil palm plantations expires at the end of the year. Issuance of forest conversion make it possible for plantations, mines and infrastructure projects to be built in forest areas, effectively legitimizing large-scale forest clearing, according to Dedy Sukmara of the NGO Auriga, a coalition member. This could spell disaster for wildlife and plants in Papua's forests, among the most biodiverse on the planet.

Report: [Planned Deforestation — Forest Policy in Papua](#)

—Koalisi Indonesia Memantau, *Menatap ke Timur: Deforestasi dan Pelepasan Kawasan Hutan di Tanah Papua*, February 2021.

[Plans for vast food estates return with a vengeance for southern Papua](#)

—*awasMIFEE*, 11 March 2021

The Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE) was a 1.28 million hectare megaproject launched by the government in 2010. A decade later, the anticipated expansion of rice and other food crops on the estate had not been realised, but the project did provide stimulus to the expansion of oil palm plantations in the north-east of Merauke Regency. But the fantasies of the Jakarta elite of flattening the forests and savannahs and draining the wetlands of southern Papua have not been extinguished. The spectre of MIFEE was raised again in 2015, when President Joko Widodo visited an experimental rice project in the area. Now the government plans the largest food estate ever to include not only much of Merauke Regency but also parts of Mapp and Boven Digoel, a total area of over 3.2 million ha, almost all of which is still natural forests, savannah and wetlands within the territories of several indigenous tribes who, needless to say, have not been consulted.

Report: [Swallowing Indonesia's Forests](#)

—Global Forest Coalition, *Swallowing Indonesia's Forests*, March 2021

[Palm oil conflicts persist amid lack of resolution in Indonesian Borneo](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 15 March 2021

The framework for resolving land disputes involving palm oil companies in Indonesian Borneo has failed, allowing conflicts to fester for a decade or more with little hope of ever being settled. Researchers from the Royal Institute of Southeast Asia and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) and the Indonesian NGO Gemawan focused on 32 conflicts between palm oil companies and communities in West Kalimantan. In most cases, communities say there were not fairly compensated for their land or else the companies failed to allocate parts of their plantation concession to be managed by locals under plasma cultivation schemes. There are many conflicts related to the plasma schemes promised by companies which aren't being met or which people feel aren't being implemented well and transparently," said KITLV researcher Ward Berenschot. "Second is land grabbing. People feel their lands have been taken away by companies without fair compensation." The researchers said authorities tend not to enforce the law on companies and take a harder line on community members protesting against the companies.

[Deforestation hits record low, but experts fear a rebound](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 9 March 2021

The deforestation rate in Indonesia last year fell by 75% to an historic low, with the government crediting its policies to prohibit forest clearing, while experts attributing the development to more rain, falling prices for oil palm, and the economic slowdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Deforestation loss of 115,459 ha in 2020 "is remarkable for us because this is the lowest deforestation figure that we've ever achieved" said Belinda Arunarwati Margono, Director of Forest Resource Monitoring for the Ministry of

Environment and Forestry. Arief Wijaya, senior manager of Climate and Forests at the World Resources Institute (WRI) Indonesia agreed the government's efforts "should be appreciated", but noted that 2020 was one of the wettest years in the past four decades and the drop in global palm oil prices. A recent study has also attributed slowing deforestation last year to declining expansion of oil palm plantations and lower palm oil prices. Land use change, which includes deforestation and forest fires, accounts for most of Indonesia's greenhouse gas emissions.

Report: [Slowing Deforestation in Indonesia follows declining oil palm expansion and lower prices](#)

—David Gaveau et al, *Nature*. [in peer review], posted online 15 January 2021

Getting hands-on with pollination can boost cocoa yields

—Sarah Derouin, *Mongabay*, 8 March 2021

Small-scale farms produce most of the cocoa and are a major source of income for people in major cocoa growing countries, including Indonesia, but cocoa trees are finicky. To boost yields, farmers turn to mainstream farming practices, such as fertilization and insecticides. Do these work? A study in *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment* compared agrochemical treatment to hand-pollination of cocoa trees in Indonesia focusing on 28 small-scale cocoa farms in Sulawesi found the hands-on pollination increased yields and boosted farmer income even after the higher labor costs were factored in, generating yield increases of 51% per tree [in partially hand-pollinated areas] and 161% where all cocoa flowers were hand-pollinated. As the push for sustainable chocolate continues, author Manuel Toledo-Hernández said he hopes bigger companies will see the benefits of investing in pollination services, noting that the method that can be used alongside zero-deforestation initiatives. "It is not only about yields, but also food security, forest conservation, and biodiversity. Hand pollination, not pesticides or fertilizers, increases cocoa yields and farmer incomes."

Manuel Toledo-Hernández et al, *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment* (1 December 2020).

[Forest hotspots flare up as Indonesia anticipates a drier dry season this year](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 11 March 2021

Forest fires have begun to flare up in several regions including Riau and West Kalimantan, signaling the return of forest fires even though the dry season has yet to start. The Riau Disaster Mitigation Agency (BPBD) recorded forest fires covering up to 650 ha in 10 of 12 regencies and cities in the province, including fires 100 ha of forest fires inside the UNESCO-recognized Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu biosphere. Satellite surveillance by the National Institute of Aeronautics and Space (Lapan) detected seven hotspots across the archipelago in January and 153 in February, but environmentalists warn against complacency. The Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) predicts this year's dry season will return to its normal drier characteristic when the effects of the La Niña phenomenon wear off by May. In most of the country, the dry season will start over the June to September period. "This year's dry season will be drier than 2020, which was affected by the La Niña," BMKG climatology deputy Herizal said.

[GAPKI forms taskforce to seed up oil palm replanting for plasma smallholders](#)

—Didiet Nugraha, *The Palm Scribe*, 10 March 2021

The Indonesian Palm Oil Producer Association (GAPKI) has formed a taskforce to accelerate the replanting of smallholder oil palm plantations for plasma scheme partners of its member companies and achieve the government's target of replanting 180,000 ha of smallholder plantation this year, GAPKI Chairman Joko Supriyono said. Indonesia's oil palm sector suffers from low productivity of only 3.6 tons of Crude Palm Oil (CPO) per ha, though the potential is 6 to 8 tons per ha. "This low productivity is caused by many factors, including the minimal use of superior seedlings, a lack of knowledge concerning good agricultural practices, weak organizational capabilities and limited access to capital," said Musdalifah Mahmud, Deputy II of the Coordinating Minister for the Economy. Indonesia has 16.38 million ha planted to oil palms, of which 41% are in the hands of smallholder farmers. GAPKI is developing a partnership pilot model in North Sumatra to find the best model for cooperation between companies and smallholders to support smallholders replanting their plantation areas with superior seedlings.

Energy, Climate Change, Mining & Pollution

[Mining sites in Indonesia's disaster-prone areas a ticking time bomb](#)

—Sinan Serhadli, *Mongabay*, 3 March 2021

Nearly 800 mining concessions in Indonesia are located in areas prone to earthquakes, landslides and floods. Mining activity in these areas could lead to disaster for communities and the environment, including spills of toxic tailings and pollution of water sources. The Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam), an Indonesian NGO, says 104 mining concessions covering an area of 1.6 million ha are vulnerable. The risks came under the spotlight following severe flooding in the Borneo province of South Kalimantan in January, which was attributed to degradation of the water catchment area by coal mines and oil palm plantations. Grita Anindarini, program director at the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL), said all disaster-prone areas should have been off-limits to mining because they are designated as protected zones. In practice, however, authorities often issue mining and other licenses for commercial activity in disaster-prone areas, flouting zoning bylaws in the process. The proliferation of mining activity will exacerbate disaster risks in areas already fragile due to environmental destruction wrought by the mining industry

King Coal: How Indonesia became the fossil fuel's final frontier

—Nithin Coca, *Mongabay*, 17 March 2021

Since 2000, Indonesia transformed itself from a bit player in the global coal industry to a leading exporter and consumer of the fuel. Now, even as investors and key export markets shift toward alternative energy sources, Indonesia's laws are increasingly tying future economic growth to the fossil fuel. "Indonesia remains one of the biggest challenges for people who would like to shift the world's dependence on coal," says Isabella Suarez, Southeast Asia analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air. Since 2010, Indonesia has opened 22.7 GW of coal-fired power capacity, third in the world behind India and China, leaving coal accounting for nearly 60% of the country's electric power. Indonesia's exports of coal also grew steadily from 67 million tons (mt) in 2000 to 616 mt in 2019, making Indonesia the world's largest exporter of thermal coal. Coal is also politically well-connected in Indonesia. Former presidential candidates Aburizal Bakrie and Prabowo Subianto have significant stakes in coal, as do numerous members of parliament and even ministers in President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's cabinet, including Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan.

Never mind the mercury: Indonesia says coal ash isn't hazardous

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 11 March 2021

The Indonesian government has declared coal ash is no longer a hazardous waste product, despite containing heavy metals such as mercury, lead and arsenic, in a nod to industry efforts for greater deregulation. Under a new government regulation issued on 2 February, fly ash and bottom ash from burning coal in power plants and other facilities are no longer deemed to be hazardous waste. The delisting, which came in response to lobbying efforts by industry groups, was based on the so-called Omnibus Law on Job Creation passed by Parliament last October, a law that activists warned would serve the interests of the mining and "dirty energy" industries. Indonesia is one of the world's top coal producers, and the fossil fuel accounts for the majority of the country's power generation. Industry associations that pushed for reclassifying fly and bottom coal ash include the Indonesian Coal Mining Association (APBI), the Indonesian Palm Oil Association (GAPKI), the Indonesian Pulp and Paper Association (APKI), and the Indonesian Textile Association (API).

ASEANO awards grants to young scientists for research on plastic pollution

—Aria Cindyara, *AntaraNews*, 10 March 2021

The ASEAN-Norwegian Cooperation Project on Local Capacity Building for Reducing Plastic Pollution in the ASEAN Region (ASEANO) has awarded grants to four young scientists and researchers, including an Indonesian, for research on reducing plastic pollution. ASEANO said it disbursed the grants in collaboration with Indonesian think-tank Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) as part of efforts to find innovative solutions to tackle the problem of plastic pollution. "More than 11 million tons of plastic end up in the oceans every year, and this is expected to double in the next 20 years," said Norwegian Ambassador to ASEAN, Morten Høglund. The Ambassador reiterated Norway's strong commitment to clean oceans and rivers, adding that it has been one of the country's strongest priorities globally for the past few years. The recipients of the grant included an Indonesian lecturer from Padjajaran University, Ibnu Faizal, whose research revolves around waste distribution and patterns of the mangrove ecosystem in Citarum River's estuaries, especially in Muara Gembong area in West Java.

[Making Women Visible in Plastic Waste Management: Examples from Indonesia](#)

—Lengga Pradipta, *ModernDiplomacy*, 8 March 2021

In most developing countries, plastic contamination has become a major problem that requires immediate concern and management. In Indonesia, women take role as the main contributor to raise such awareness in segregating and sorting plastic waste. This fact is parallel with the research that has been conducted by Phelan et al (2020) in two small islands in Indonesia (Selayar and Wakatobi), which found that women are mostly identified as binners (those who manage waste disposal) while men are likely identified as litterers. When looking at recent developments in the field, the relevance of gender-sensitive approaches to handling plastics becomes even more apparent. Since women play such an important role in the use and recycling of plastic waste, it is critical to involve them as a key player in changing household and community disposal habits. Furthermore, as the primary caregivers in the home, women should raise awareness among family members about the dangers of plastic waste. Similar actions can be taken in society.

[Indonesia seeks cooperation with Dutch in climate change adaptation](#)

—Katriana, *Antaraneews.com*, 11 March 2021

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) has offered to cooperate with the Netherlands to cope with climate change adaptation. According to a written statement received here on Thursday, Minister Siti Nurbaya highlighted numerous efforts made by Indonesia and could set an example for the Netherlands and the global community in addressing climate change. "Indonesia has concrete examples of efforts to achieve economic resilience, social and livelihood resilience, as well as ecosystem and landscape resilience," the minister remarked at the Week of Indonesia-Netherlands Education and Research (WINNER) Forum. Hence, Minister Nurbaya has invited all parties, including the Netherlands, to work together, deepen commitment through united actions to raise public awareness, and innovate to realize climate change adaptation in Indonesia and globally as well as to achieve one of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the meantime, the WINNER program, organized by the Dutch Embassy in Jakarta, mirrors the long-standing history of research and educational collaboration between both nations.

[The king of nickel bets big on green future in batteries](#)

—*Bloomberg News*, 14 March 2021

Tsingshan Holding Group Co., the world's largest nickel producer, shocked the nickel market by targeting two significant challenges: Getting enough nickel and ensuring it is delivered in a climate friendly way. Tesla's Elon Musk has said nickel is the metal that concerns him most as he looks to scale up battery production. Without new sources of supply, the electric vehicle (EV) industry could face critical shortages in just a few years. Tsingshan's rise was driven by its development of a low-cost production process that is also extremely carbon-intensive. The company's vow to be greener demonstrates how the fight against climate change is forcing producers with poor environmental records to find new solutions that reduce pollution and emissions. Tsingshan also benefits from solid government support in Indonesia after helping transform the archipelago into a heartland of nickel and stainless steel production. The second shock was the announcement that Tsingshan would make battery-grade nickel using an alternative process previously reserved for use in making stainless steel.

[Indonesia: Danger Lurks At Illegal Gold Mines](#)

—Keisyah Aprilla, *Eurasia Review*, 10 March 2021

Seven people were killed and dozens more survived a landslide at an illegal gold mining site in Buranga, a village in Central Sulawesi province. The deadly accident underscores the dangers of small-scale mining for gold and other metals at more than 8,600 sites across the Indonesian archipelago. Dozens of people die every year at these small-scale mines, mostly during landslides. The economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has pushed residents to pan and mine for gold because they don't have jobs, observers said. Moh Taufik, coordinator of the Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam) in Central Sulawesi, stated that "We seriously urge the police to take action, because this is clearly a criminal act under the mining law," he said. Of the country's more than 8,600 illegal mining sites, about 25% are gold mines, according to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Central Sulawesi Governor-elect Rusdi Mastura has vowed to crack down on illegal mining activities when he takes office in June.

[Indonesia Offers More Aggressive Tax Perks for Electric Cars](#)

—Arys Aditya, Grace Sihombing and Claire Jiao, *Bloomberg Green*, 15 March 2021

Indonesia aims to boost sales of electric vehicles (EVs) with a new regulation to cut tax breaks for hybrid automobiles. Battery-powered EVs will retain their 0% luxury tax rate, while plug-in hybrids will see their tariff increase from 0% to 5% under a draft regulation issued by the Ministry of Finance. Full and semi-hybrid vehicles will be taxed at 6-12% compared to the previous range of 2-12%. The rates apply only to locally-produced EVs and hybrids. The initiative is built on the country's role as a leading source of nickel to enable production of other components for green vehicles across international markets. "Investors who will build electric cars in Indonesia feel they are not competitive enough because the tax rate is not differentiated from plug-in hybrids," Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani Indrawati said. Higher rates will kick in in two years after the battery-powered EV sector realizes investments of 5 trillion rupiah (\$347 million), or when it starts commercial production with an investment of the same amount.

[Indonesia needs to engender cooperation as co-head of global climate group](#)

—Duli Rulliadi and Eko NM Saputro, *The Jakarta Post*, 15 March 2021

Indonesia was recently elected as a co-chair with Finland of the Coalition of Finance Ministers on Climate Action. Financing will determine the degree of victory in the climate change battle, so Economic policies should therefore take climate change into account and be aligned with the Paris Agreement. While this appointment reflects international recognition of Indonesia's domestic climate efforts and commitment, the country must be aware of the challenges for climate action at the global level. The coalition's new leadership must link its agenda with relevant climate agendas across other global forums, including the World Bank, which has launched the Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience requiring all its projects to be screened for climate and disaster risks; the IMF, which has also recently integrated climate into its annual country economic assessment in the Article IV consultations; and the G20, which has also initiated environment taxes and sustainable finance as part of its climate change mitigation strategy.

[Indonesia needs renewable energy law to pave way for cleaner energy](#)

—Muhammad Oktada Hilman et al, *The Jakarta Post*, 17 March 2021

Given its abundant renewable energy potential, Indonesia has set an ambitious target of increasing the share of renewable energy (RE) to 23.0% of the national energy mix by 2025. As of the end of 2020, however, the RE share had reached just 11.5%, well below the initial target of 13.4% set by the New and Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Directorate (EBTKE). The lengthy process of drafting a regulatory framework on renewable energy has contributed significantly to the snail's pace of Indonesia's energy transition compared to other Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam. The upcoming bill would support the recent RE-related regulations by tackling the silo effect due to the fact that the renewable energy regulations currently fall under several ministries and prioritizing RE-generated electricity over fossil fuel energy. The bill is a necessity, since it will provide legal certainty and pave the way for RE investments. More importantly, enacting a renewable energy law will demonstrate the government's commitment to energy transition.

Conservation & Protected Areas

[Wildlife Rescuers Saved A Baby Orangutan Named Bomban From Life In A Tiny Cage](#)

—Rachel Funnell, *IFL Science*, 15 March 2021

Wildlife rescue workers have been hard at work in Indonesia after an investigation following reports from local residents of an orangutan being held captive by a farmer in the Sebomban River area in February. Keeping orangutans is illegal in the region, so the Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU) of the Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) and International Animal Rescue (IAR) stepped in to rescue the young animal. "Keeping orangutans as pets starts with hunting. Usually, the mother orangutan is killed so that her baby can be taken," said Karmelee L Sanchez, director of programs at IAR Indonesia. Named Bomban after the area where he was recovered, the baby orangutan had been locked inside a small cage measuring just 50 by 40 centimeters). The rescue team approached the farmer and successfully freed

Bomban from his cage. They found him in reasonably good health. After a quarantine period, he will be rehabilitated at the Orangutan Conservation Centre.

Opinion: The singing apes of Sumatra need rescuing too

—Sinan Serhadli, *Mongabay*, 3 March 2021

For many people, apes in Sumatra means charismatic orangutans that have deservedly captured the world's attention and the focus of conservation efforts. But gibbons, the singing acrobats of Sumatra's forest canopy, are crucial for the health of the forest ecosystem due to their role as seed dispersers, and the illegal trade in gibbons for pets across Sumatra needs to be taken as seriously as the trade in orangutans and other primates. Perhaps the most characteristic forest sound is the mesmerizing chorus of siamangs breaking the silence after the call of lar or agile gibbons. All three species of gibbon living in Sumatra's forests are classified as endangered, including the siamang (*Symphalangus syndactylus*), the lar (*Hylobates lar*) and the agile gibbon (*Hylobates agilis*). Population numbers for all three are largely unknown. Gibbons are protected by law, but people that own or trade gibbons are rarely punished. On the entire island of Sumatra, there is only one gibbon rehabilitation center, which is already at full capacity.

Other

Indonesian governor's arrest illustrates corruption as a source of environmental damage

—Wahyu Chandra, *Mongabay*, 4 March 2021.

Activists called on investigators to examine infrastructure projects approved by a provincial governor arrested last week for allegedly taking bribes from a construction company. Nurdin Abdullah, governor of South Sulawesi province, was charged with taking at least IDR 5.4 billion (US\$378,000) in bribes to grant a road construction planned to serve a new tourism development to a local company and from other companies for other contracts. The projects included Makassar New Port venture, which involved land reclamation and dredging sand from nearby Sangkarrang Islands, which disturbed traditional fishing areas. Muhammad Al Amin, executive director of the South Sulawesi chapter of the NGO Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), said Nurdin's arrest was emblematic of the corruption carried out by the ruling elites across Indonesia. Besides selling off permits and land concessions to plantation and mining companies, local leaders also farm out infrastructure projects in exchange for bribes they then kick back up to their party or use to fund their re-election campaigns, Amin said.

What money won't buy: Diet quality drops for rural Indonesians as incomes rise

—Monica Evans, *CIFOR Forest News*, 3 March 2021

It may seem logical that as people earn more they are generally "better off" and it is true that economic development is often correlated with better health and education outcomes. Over the past two decades, Indonesia has experienced rapid economic growth and significant poverty reduction, driven in part by the transition from traditional, small-scale multi-crop farming to intensified, specialized and commercialized agriculture. But malnutrition is still a major issue, and stubbornly-high rates of child stunting (36%) sit uncomfortably alongside growing issues with overweight and obesity. Particularly when it comes to healthy foods, people who have money sometimes spend more on fatty foods, sugary drinks and snacks that are high in sodium. A study by researchers at Goettingen University and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) examined the relationship between dietary quality, agricultural production diversity and incomes among rural Indonesian households over 2000-2015. They found that as production diversity declined—as households switched to more specialized forms of agriculture—dietary quality tended to decline alongside it.

Report: Dietary diversity of rural Indonesian households declines over time

—Nadjia Mehraban, Amy Ickowitz, "Dietary diversity of rural Indonesian households declines over time even as incomes rise" in *Global Food Security*, March 2021