



Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest
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The Coronavirus crisis in Indonesia |

[Policy inconsistencies muddy “mudik” measures](#)

—Nina A. Loasana, *The Jakarta Post*, April 2021

In order to prevent another Covid-19 spike, the government has tightened travel restrictions on the Idul Fitri tradition of *mudik* (exodus) for the second year in a row, but public officials' comments have been plagued by inconsistencies. The *mudik* ban was announced in late March to apply to everyone in the country from 6-17 May. This year's Idul Fitri is slated for 12 or 13 May, depending on the sighting of the moon, and the peak of *mudik* normally occurs one week. Twenty million people typically travel to their hometowns for the holiday every year. Under the new restrictions, people travelling by public land, sea or air transport are required to submit negative results of PCR, antigen or GeNose breathalyzer test taken no more than 24 hours before the trip. But authorities say residents are still permitted to travel within an urban agglomeration such as Greater Jakarta without a new test result, and the government is allowing all tourism destinations to remain open.

[Indonesia bans travelers from India amid imported Covid-19 cases](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 24 April 2021

Indonesia has restricted all passenger travel from India following discoveries of imported Covid-19 cases from the South Asian country, where a recent surge of coronavirus cases has overwhelmed its health system. New more infectious variants of the virus, including a “double mutant” variant, may have helped accelerate the surge in infections. Coordinating Economic Minister Airlangga Hartarto said authorities would stop granting visas to Indian nationals and foreigners who lived in or visited India within the past 14 days. Indonesians who visited India within the past two weeks may return home, but they must isolate themselves for 14 days in a designated quarantine center and have two Covid-19 tests, one at the start and end of their quarantine. The Ministry of Health reported that at least 12 cases were confirmed among 129 passengers arriving at Soekarno-Hatta Airport from India earlier in April. The travel restrictions have raised concerns about plans for a travel corridor between India and Indonesia's resort island of Bali starting in July.

[Indonesian air traffic forecast to fully recover by 2026](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 20 April 2021

Indonesia' air traffic is expected to recover to pre-pandemic levels by 2024 for domestic flight volumes and 2026 for international flights as measured by passenger numbers, according to a study conducted by Padjadjaran University. The projections assume that Indonesia will successfully complete its second phase vaccination program, bringing the total number vaccinated to 181.5 million or 70% of the population by March 2022, and that most of Asia, Europe and the US optimized their vaccination programs in that same year, as per schedule. The study confirmed the industry's long-held belief that the airline industry's recovery will be pegged, above all, on domestic travel and outbreak containment. The study projects international flight volumes beginning a robust recovery in 2023 and fully recovering by 2026, when international travel passenger volume would reach 38.21 million, slightly more than the 2019 figure of 36.59 million.

Marine & Fisheries

[Indonesia seizes 72 boats over illegal fishing in 2021](#)

– Devina Halim, *Andalou Agency*, 16 April 2021

Indonesia's maritime security agency has detained 72 boats, including 12 foreign vessels, over alleged illegal fishing in the country's waters since the beginning of 2021, a ministry said on Friday. In a statement, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) said the 12 foreign vessels included five Malaysian-flagged and seven Vietnamese-flagged boats. The other 60 local boats were seized for not having legal documents or not having proper fishing gear, the ministry added. Antam Novambar, acting director-general of the Marine Resources and Fisheries Monitoring for the KKP said that legal proceedings have been initiated. He added that the ministry has directed his department to take firm action against boats found to have violated the rules.

[Indonesia and Vietnam renew calls to finish EEZ negotiations](#)

—Dian Septiari, *The Jakarta Post*, 25 April 2021

Indonesia and Vietnam have renewed calls to complete ongoing negotiations on the delimitation of the maritime boundary between their exclusive economic zone (EEZ) near the South China Sea to provide clarity and avoid fishing boat incidents. President Joko Widodo hosted Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh at Bogor Palace in advance of the ASEAN leaders meeting on Myanmar. Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said the president stressed the importance of accelerating the negotiations, which have been underway for 11 years, and that the boundary issue must be resolved based on international law, namely the 1982 UNCLOS. Indonesia and Vietnam have overlapping EEZ claims in the area north of the Natuna Sea. At their meeting, the two leaders agreed to maintain ASEAN's shared position on the South China Sea issues and to quickly conclude negotiations on an efficient and effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in line with international law.

[Ramadan Brings New Supply Constraints to Crab Meat Market](#)

—[Seafoodnews.com](#), 29 April 2021

The global crab meat market continues to soar, but further supply constraints are on the horizon. Currently, the country of Indonesia is celebrating Ramadan, which began on April 12 and concludes May 12. On May 11, the Muslim community will celebrate the festival of Eid al-Fitr, also called the "Festival of Breaking the Fast." This festival, which is typically celebrated for one to three days, ends the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting during the Ramadan observance.

Forestry & Land Use

[Indonesia's bid to control deforestation wildly off-target, experts say](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 22 April 2021

Indonesia plans to reverse its status as one a major global sources of greenhouse gas emissions by reducing deforestation and reducing reforestation, but those objectives appear unrealistic given the current pace of deforestation and prevailing policies that still allow for significant levels of forest clearing for plantation agriculture. Under the new plan submitted to the UN Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC), the government submitted three scenarios. The most ambitious would halve the deforestation rate and reforest 10.6 million ha of land by 2050, but the country is still on track to lose a further 55 million ha of forest by 2040, according to Dodik Ridho Nurrochmat, at the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB). The loss of key forests and peatlands ecosystems due to illegal logging and conversion to plantations has meant the disappearance of one of the world's great buffers against climate change. A recent study showed that 1.57 million ha of natural forest are in areas targeted by the government for conversion into farmland.

Energy, Climate Change, Mining & Pollution

[Jokowi dodges net-zero emissions pledge at climate summit](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 27 April 2021

Joko Widodo opted to shy away from declaring a net-zero carbon emission pledge at the carbon summit hosted by US President Joe Biden. The president opened his speech by reiterating the country's commitment to mitigating the crisis: "Indonesia is serious about tackling climate change and calls upon the world to take concrete action." But he did not specify any net-zero emissions goal, nor indicate when Indonesia would reach the point of balancing out its emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs). During the summit, Widodo welcomed other countries net-zero pledges and said that "Developing countries will follow suit if the developed nations support [them] and are being credible with their commitments." Prior to the summit, some Indonesian officials said the government was mulling to adopt a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2070. Indonesia Forum for the Environment (Walhi) executive director Nur Hidayati said Jokowi's speech showed a lack of sense of crisis as a head of state, although Indonesia had already suffered from the impact of the climate crisis.

[Indika Energy to cut coal income by 50%](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 17 April 2021

Publicly listed PT Indika Energy, one of Indonesia's top coal mining firms by output through its subsidiary, PT Kideco Jaya Agung, plans to cut its coal income in half by 2025 amid growing global pressures on the industry. The company, which earned 70% of total revenues in 2020 from coal sales, plans to diversify into logistics, metal mining, forest plantations, and renewable energy, including operating nearly 1,000 megawatts peak (MWp) of solar photovoltaics by 2025. Indonesia's total installed solar power generating capacity stood at only 153.5 MWp in 2020, according to Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources data. "We will also make a commitment on net-zero emissions in the future because this is about how to balance. This is also why we are going into nature-based businesses—it's about how we can get carbon credits," Indika President Director Arsjad Rasjid told *The Jakarta Post*. Indika is gradually transforming its business, starting by reducing the company's revenue exposure to coal," analyst Fabby Tumiwa said.

[South Korea faces public reckoning for financing coal plants in Indonesia](#)

—[Seulki Lee](#), *Mongabay*, 15 April 2021

Public financial institutions in South Korea are among the biggest funders of the US\$3.5 billion expansion of the Suralaya coal-fired power generation facility. Two new units to be built by Doosan Heavy Industries, a South Korean firm, and operated by a power company partly owned by a South Korean public utility, even though south Korea itself is transitioning away from coal power and some lawmakers want to bar further use of public funds for coal power. In Suralaya, in West Java Province, residents blame black particles of coal ash from the coal power complex for health problems and the loss of local fisheries. In South Korea, questions have been raised about whether the Suralaya power plant should go forward in light of South Korea's shift away from coal. A 2020 white paper published by South Korean lawmaker Yangi Won-young and a group of NGOs described South Korean financing for expanding the Indonesia plant as "privatization of profits, socialization of losses."

[Informal waste collectors key to new recycling era](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 27 April 2021

Businesses are aiming to lift the lives of informal waste pickers, the backbone of Indonesia's waste management system, while optimizing the circular economy in the packaging sector. Formally employing scavengers entails providing them with proper equipment, fixed incomes and good access to health care and education, and would also help eliminate child labor, according to Karyanto Wibowo, chairman of the Packaging and Recycling Association for Indonesia's Sustainable Environment (PRAISE). Local waste collection is dominated by the informal sector, with scavengers collecting 354,900 tons of plastic waste per year, compared to waste banks and government facilities which collected just 69,900 tons, according to Novrizal Tahar, Waste Management Director of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. But despite this contribution, waste pickers often earn below minimum wage and endure harsh and hazardous working conditions. Coca-Cola Amatil Indonesia recently started construction of a recycling facility for polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles in Bekasi, West Java, which aims to process 25,000 tons of plastic waste annually.

Conservation & Protected Areas

[Lung damage, hunger, disorientation blamed for mass stranding of pilot whales](#)

—Luh De Suriyani, *Mongabay*, 21 April 2021

Indonesian wildlife experts announced their findings on 34 of 52 short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrohynchus*) that washed up on Madura Island in February. The experts said the alpha pilot whale, a female, suffered from shortness of breath caused by damaged alveoli in her lungs, hunger, and inflammation of the melon, the fatty organ used for echolocation, leading her to lead the rest of the pod ashore, where they perished from dehydration and exhaustion. Twenty-six of the 34 whales examined were female. Three males from the pod survived the initial stranding and were pushed back out to sea, but beached again at a different location, resulting in the death of two of them. Marine mammal experts often cite water pollution, extreme weather, and fishing activity as possible causes of whale and dolphin strandings. “Indonesia’s Ocean Health Index is far from satisfactory — at 65 out of 100,” said Haeru Rahayu, Director-General of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP). “We need a breakthrough to improve this.

[17 Belitung sites get UNESCO global geopark status](#)

—Antara News, 19 April 2021

“The meeting of the UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) Council has declared that 17 geosites in Belitung Geopark meet the qualifications as new members of UGG,” Bangka Belitung Islands Governor Erzaldi Rosman Djohan disclosed in Pangkalpinang on Monday. “The world currently recognizes the 17 tourist sites because of their uniqueness in terms of geology, biology, and culture. Hopefully, [the UNESCO recognition] will increase the number of tourist arrivals in the province,” Governor Djohan remarked. He said the unique geology of Belitung Island and its ecosystem support several species of flora and fauna, some of which are only found on the island. The island’s unique geological sources are a major draw for tourists, he added. In addition, Belitung Island also has historical value in terms of social and economic civilization, the governor said. The island has four potential geological heritages of high value, he added.

[Conservation Groups Petition US Officials to Ban Import, Sale of Banggai Cardinalfish](#)

—Animal Welfare Institute, April 22, 2021

Conservation groups filed a petition today urging the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to ban the import and sale of threatened Banggai cardinalfish (*Pterapogon kauderni*), a popular ornamental reef fish which is endemic to the Banggai Archipelago of central Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia. Noted for its bold black bands and white-speckled fins, Banggai cardinalfish populations have plummeted by as much as 90% since the 1990s due to decades of overexploitation by the aquarium trade. The species is now listed by the IUCN as endangered, and it is the first marine aquarium fish to become an international CITES issue. The United States has long been a major importer of the cardinalfish and is the world’s largest importer of coral reef wildlife overall, responsible for about 60% of the global market. “If the United States continues to import Banggai cardinalfish, there simply won’t be any left to take from the wild,” said Dianne DuBois, a staff scientist at the US-based Center for Biological Diversity.

Other

[Fellowship helps young Indonesians make sustainable development innovations](#)

—Tri Ondah Oktavianti, *The Jakarta Post*, 17 April 2021

Jakarta performing arts community Empu Sendok Arts Station (ESAS) is helping young Indonesians make innovations for sustainable development throughout the country. Through a program called the Transformational Leadership Learning Lab, the community is seeking to address socioeconomic issues in the archipelago. The program was developed in collaboration with the United in Diversity (UID) Foundation. The fellows came from a variety of regions, including East Nusa Tenggara and Central Sulawesi. “We selected a group of young and vibrant changemakers from different disciplines,” ESAS cofounder and program facilitator Felia Salim said during the program’s virtual graduation ceremony last week. The fellows worked on two prototype projects, namely the Kampung Paping Adventure Journal in

East Java and the Waste Collection Point in Aceh. UID Foundation senior learning facilitator Ben Chan said the fellows would showcase the two prototype projects before they were replicated in various regions of the country.

[Indonesia declares Papuan rebels terrorists](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 29 April 2021

Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Mahfud MD announced an updated list of terror groups, adding armed criminal groups (KKB) in Papua. “The government has deemed that organizations and people in Papua who commit mass violence are categorized as terrorists ... in line with Law 8/2018,” Mahfud said. The declaration came days after Brig. Gen. I Gusti Putu Danny Karya Nugraha, the regional State Intelligence Agency (BIN) head, was killed in a confrontation with separatist rebels after they reportedly fired on patrolling security forces in the Papuan highlands on 25 April. The following day, police said nine guerillas and a police officer had died and two officers were wounded in an extended shootout in Puncak District in what appeared to be retaliation for killing of the regional BIN head. Mahfud said the Indonesian Military (TNI) would assist the police at the front lines of the fight against separatist groups.

[Reshuffle marks new era of research, innovation](#)

—Marchio Irfan Gorbiano, *The Jakarta Post*, 29 April 2021

President Joko Widodo has carried out a cabinet reshuffle following the establishment of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) as an independent state body and the Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM), appointing Nadiem Makarim as the new Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and Laksana Tri Handoko, head of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI), as the new chief of BRIN, with a mission to overhaul all research conducted by government bodies and universities. Meanwhile, Bahlil Lahadalia, head of the BKPM, has been named the country’s first investment minister. The decision to merge the Ministry of Education and the research ministry was intended to simplify the coordination of university rectors under a single institution in matters related to research and development, Nadiem explained. But critics voiced questions about whether the new agency would be prone to political influence. “What is needed is expertise and funding, not politicization or intervention in research, said Noory Okthariza of the Centre of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

[Indonesian Submarine Tragedy Sends Several Messages](#)

—Philip Bowring, *Asia Sentinel*, 25 April 2021

The loss of a 40-year-old German-built Indonesian submarine with 53 crew on board between Java and Bali captured attention as a human tragedy, but the incident seems certain to focus attention on the need for better equipment and more robust maritime posture in the face of Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea. This has focused attention on quiet moves by Jakarta to upgrade its defense capability in deals with the US and at least in embryo with Japan and India. Indonesia will never join the Quad Alliance (Japan, the US, Australia, and India) aiming to form a united front against Chinese expansionism, but its sympathies are clear.

One key is President Joko Widodo’s bitter two-time rival for the presidency, defense minister Prabowo Subianto, a nationalist and secularist who favors more spending on the navy and air force. Quad links with Indonesia were further highlighted by the visit of Prabowo and Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to Tokyo in March. For Indonesia, the meeting represented a significant step toward partial alignment, however modest, with a Quad member and the US’ closest Asian ally. Prabowo was in India last year, but shared strategic issues are partly shadowed by anti-Muslim attitudes of Modi and his ruling BJP. China’s maritime actions in the South China Sea over the past two years, its actions against Muslims in Xinjiang, and its now ambiguous role in Myanmar have raised Indonesian consciousness even as the country continues to benefit from Chinese investment — and supplies of the Chinese Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine.

The End

