



## **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest**

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*The **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest** is a biweekly collection of brief summaries of English-language articles related to conservation, environment and sustainability that have appeared in print or online in Indonesian, regional or global media. We welcome all comments, suggestions, and corrections.*

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This will be the last issue of the Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest in 2021. We will resume publication in January 2022.

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## A. The Covid-19 Crisis in Indonesia

[Indonesia tightens mandatory quarantine for travellers](#)  
—Nina A.Loana, *The Jakarta Post*, 3 December 2021

[Indonesia has increased the mandatory quarantine period for all international arrivals from seven days to ten days, effective 3 December, as the Omicron variant continues to spread across the world. The government had previously banned foreigners that have been in Hong Kong, South Africa, and nine other African countries within two weeks before departing to Indonesia, excepting Indonesian nationals returning from those countries, who are subject to a 14-day quarantine. Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, who leads the government's Covid-19 response in Java and Bali, said the extended quarantine period had been ordered by President Joko Widodo. "This policy will be evaluated every now and then as we understand and continue to find out more information about this new variant," Luhut said. Not much is known about Omicron at the moment, but preliminary evidence suggests that it may be more transmissible than Delta, the most infectious COVID-19 variant to date.](#)

[Tourism faces Level 3 public activity restrictions during Christmas and New Year holidays](#)  
—Haris Eko Faruddin, *The Jakarta Post*, 1 December 2021

[Public activity restrictions \(PPKM\) level 3 will be reinstated in the upcoming year-end holidays. The official rules for level 3 curbs are contained in Home Ministerial Instruction No. 62/2021. The level 3 rules are in effect from Dec. 24 to Jan. 2, 2022. This policy is carried out as an effort to prevent a spike in COVID-19 cases and the spread of a new variant, Omicron. By suppressing the level of community mobility, the spread of COVID-19 can also be suppressed. The decision to reimpose PPKM level 3 restrictions during the holidays was based on our experience from last Christmas and New Year, when cases increased sharply in January and February. \[See next article\]](#)

[Government cancels decision to implement PPKM Level 3 restrictions \[translated\]](#)  
—Francisca Christy Rosana, *Tempo.co*, 7 December 2021

[\[Translated\] Coordinating Minister for Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan explained the government's reason for not implementing community activity restrictions or PPKM level 3 in the Christmas and New Year periods throughout all regions in Java and Bali. "The government has decided to make a more balanced policy by not giving equal treatment in all areas ahead of Christmas and New Year's Eve," said Luhut on 6 December. The implementation of the PPKM level](#)

status will continue to follow the pandemic situation as applicable in each district or city, he explained. Luhut said the decision was based on the results of a sero-survey which found that Indonesian people already have high levels of Covid-19 antibodies in line with the acceleration of vaccination achievements. Currently, [those who have received] the first dose of vaccine in Java and Bali has touched 76%, while recipients of the second dose of vaccine reached 56%. Meanwhile, vaccines for the elderly reached 64% for the first dose and 42% for the second dose.

Garuda starts vaccinated travel lane to Singapore

—The Jakarta Post, 3 December 2021

Garuda Indonesia has begun a vaccinated travel lane (VTL) service to Singapore amid the emergence of Omicron, a newly discovered coronavirus variant. Starting 6 December, the national flag carrier will serve six VTL flights per week between Jakarta and Singapore using Airbus A330-300 aircraft. Under the initiative, fully vaccinated travellers can visit Singapore without having to undergo quarantine upon arrival. Travellers arriving in Singapore from Indonesia must have a printed medical certificate in English with a negative Covid-19 PCR test result taken within 48 hours before departure and have a certificate for full-dose vaccine (except children under 12 flying with vaccinated adults. Upon arrival at Changi Airport, Singapore, they will be tested again with the PCR & Antigen Rapid Test and self-isolate at their respective residences (6 - 24 hours) until the test results come out.

The social dilemma of booster vaccines in Indonesia

—M. Rifqy Nurfauzan Abdilla, The Jakarta Post, 2 December 2021

The government is weighing the possibility of a paid booster jab scheme amid uncertainty over how long the current vaccine immunity will last and fears of a looming third wave of COVID-19, especially as the more infectious Omicron variant is spreading. However, the government has said that the program would only be available to the public at large when the fully-subsidized mass vaccination program has been completed and at least 50% of the population has received two jabs, a target that could be reached early in 2022. This has raised concerns among vaccinated persons worried about getting infected before the paid booster jab program even starts due to the economy reopening and the approaching holiday season. Another phenomenon is that some wealthy Indonesians are travelling abroad to get their booster shots. At this point, only front-line health workers have received booster shots in Indonesia. When the booster program is expanded, it should begin with other health workers and the elderly, who are the most vulnerable groups.

Pandemic to cost global tourism sector US\$2 trillion in 2021

—Mathieu Gorse et al, Agence-France-Presse and The Jakarta Post, 30 November 2021

The coronavirus pandemic will cost the global tourist sector US\$2 trillion in lost revenue in 2021, the UN's tourism body said on Monday, calling the sector's recovery "fragile" and "slow". The forecast from the Madrid-based World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) comes as Europe is grappling with a surge in infections and as a new heavily mutated COVID-19 variant, dubbed Omicron, spreads across the globe. International tourist arrivals will this year remain 70-75 percent below the 1.5 billion arrivals recorded in 2019 before the pandemic hit, a similar decline as in 2020, according to the body. The global tourism sector had already lost US\$2 trillion in revenues in 2020 due to the pandemic, according to the UNWTO, making it one of the sectors hit hardest by the health crisis. "Despite recent improvements, uneven vaccination rates around the world and new COVID-19 strains" such as the Delta variant and Omicron "could impact the already slow and fragile recovery" of the tourism sector in 2022, the UNWTO said.

## B. Marine & Fisheries

Natuna fishers contend with foreign poachers—and now local competition

—Dian Septiari, The Jakarta Post, 27 November 2021

As a fisherman from Laut Island, the northernmost habitable place in Natuna regency, Riau Islands province, 46-year-old Asmareno says he often has run-ins with foreign fishing vessels, an experience he describes as “very disturbing”. “They don’t bother us, but they do tell us to leave, which we do because we are afraid,” he said. Nowadays, however, Asmareno is also concerned about competing with fishermen from Java, who have started to overcrowd local fishing spots. Locals have decried what they say is the unfair advantage given to out-of-town fishermen sponsored by the government to protect the border from foreign encroachment. The move has forced Natuna’s fishing community locals to share their fishing grounds with better-equipped fishermen from Java, Sumatra and elsewhere. At a public discussion held on the island, Asmareno asked Home Minister Tito Karnavian and Coordinating Political, Legal and Security Affairs Minister Mahfud MD—both members of the National Border Management Agency (BNPP)—to assign the out-of-town fishermen to waters at least 30 miles away from Laut Island.

Restoring coastal forests can protect coral reefs against sediment runoff  
—Aimee Gabay, *Mongabay*, 7 December 2021

Nearly half of global coral reefs are seriously threatened by sediment runoff—the transport of accumulated material from land to sea, often with harmful pollutants, according to a new study, but it also points to a potential solution: reforestation. Over the last 30 years, corals have declined by 50%, with expected losses of 70-90% by mid-century. Sediment runoff interferes with the ability of corals to survive, feed, grow and reproduce, and contributes to the exacerbation of other issues, such as ocean warming and acidification. Remote sensing, geographic information system (GIS) modelling and agricultural census data were used to investigate if forest restoration could reduce the amount of sediment reaching coral reefs. Indonesia and the Philippines account for a combined 52% of the global sediment export in coastal areas near coral reefs assessed in the study. “Our main issue in Indonesia now are these crazy coastal developments. It’s all about projects,” said Tries Razak, a scientist researching coral reef restoration at the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB).

Paper: Andrés F. Suárez-Castro et al, “Global forest restoration opportunities to foster reef conservation”, *Global Change Biology* 27:20 (October 2021), pp. 5238-5252.

Latest delay casts pall over WTO bid to end harmful fishing subsidies  
—Elizabeth Fitt, *Mongabay*, 2 December 2021

Hopes that World Trade Organization (WTO) members would finally reach a meaningful agreement to ban subsidies that enable overfishing this year were dashed when organizers postponed the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) indefinitely due to concerns over the Omicron Covid-19 variant. Globally over-exploited fish stocks have risen from 18% to 34% over the 20 years that WTO members have been talking about banning “harmful” fisheries subsidies, according to UN FAO reports. Worldwide, governments dole out an estimated US\$22 billion in such subsidies every year. The number of items where consensus has yet to be reached has been reduced in recent months, but the trickiest of the remaining bracketed items include addressing fuel subsidies, allocating exemptions from the rules to developing and least-developed countries, and working out a subsidies ban in disputed territories. “Solutions exist to the major remaining sticking points—the overarching question is whether there’s the political will to solve them,” said Isabel Jarrett, who manages a campaign to reduce harmful fisheries subsidies at PEW Charitable Trusts.

## C. Forests & Land Use

Fresh calls for renewing oil palm moratorium mount after jobs law ruling  
—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 9 December 2021

Civil groups say the government should renew the moratorium on establishing new oil palm plantations following the recent Constitutional Court ruling that the “Omnibus” Job Creation Law is provisionally unconstitutional. Despite government claims that the Job Creation law set new mechanisms to regulate new plantations similar to the moratorium, environmentalists argue that without renewal of the moratorium, the new regulations could whitewash new oil palm plantations in forest areas illegally planted before or during the moratorium. Palm Oil Farmers Union (SPKS) head of advocacy Marselinus Andri called for the moratorium to be renewed through a new presidential instruction, which was not an implementing regulation of the jobs law so it would not violate the recent Constitutional Court ruling which also ordered the government not to issue any implementing regulations while it was redoing the law-making process of the jobs law. “We need to improve palm oil governance through the moratorium, without waiting for the jobs law amendment as it will take some time,” Andri said.

‘Forests will disappear again,’ activists warn as Indonesia ends plantation freeze  
—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 6 December 2021

Palm oil industry watchdogs are warning of a possible surge in deforestation across Indonesia following the end of a three-year freeze on issuing permits for new plantations originally intended to allow the industry to address problems of deforestation, land conflicts, and labor uses associated with palm oil. The 2018 moratorium expired in September 2021, but though the government had the option of extending it, it chose not to do so, meaning palm oil companies can now apply for licenses for new oil palm plantations. With prices for crude palm oil (CPO) hitting record highs, the pent-up demand to establish new plantations could pose a threat to Indonesia’s forests, warned Bony, a researcher at Sawit Watch. “They were just waiting for the tap to be turned back on.”

Lands deemed suitable for conversion total 47.3 million ha, of which intact forests account for 21 million ha, according to Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI) researcher Mufti Fathul Barri. “If these forests are granted permits, more than 21 million ha of forest will disappear.”

As Indonesia wavers on deforestation, young climate activists demand action  
—Resty Woro Yuniar, *This Week in Asia*, 14 November 2021

Climate activists and environmentalists are calling for investors to be more aware and stop funding companies involved in forest clearing in Indonesia after Jakarta’s apparent backtracking on a pledge to stop deforestation in Southeast Asia’s biggest economy. In a twitter communication, Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya Bakar said that “forcing Indonesia to [reach] zero deforestation is clearly inappropriate and unfair”, adding that massive development under President Joko Widodo’s 5.96 trillion (US\$417 billion) infrastructure program “must not stop in the name of carbon emissions or in the name of deforestation.” Indonesia, with the third-largest area of tropical forest in the world, had days before endorsed a legally non-binding pledge to halt and reverse forest loss and degradation by 2030, alongside 216 other nations accounting for nearly 91% of global tree cover and 85% of the world’s primary tropical forest. According to a study by *Forests and Finance*, Chinese financial institutions provided around US\$15 billion in loans and underwriting between January 2016 and April 2020 for companies driving tropical deforestation.

Indonesia to ‘walk the talk’ on deforestation despite COP26 U-turn  
—Reuters News Agency, 11 November 2021

Indonesia’s foreign minister Retno Marsudi defended her country’s objection to the global deforestation pledge, promising during a visit by her British counterpart to ‘walk the talk’ on climate commitments. Indonesia, home to a third of the world’s tropical forests, was among 137 countries that signed an agreement at COP26 to end deforestation by 2030, but the Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya Bakar backtracked on the promise within days, calling the pledge “clearly inappropriate and unfair.” Speaking at a news conference in Jakarta, Marsudi said “Indonesia’s concrete achievements on forestry are beyond doubt. Indonesia does not want to be

trapped in rhetoric. We prefer to walk the talk.” Vice Foreign Minister Mahendra Siregar later said Indonesia’s pledge did not mean that deforestation would be halted completely, but referred instead to “sustainable forest management.”

Lessons from the Indonesia-Norway REDD+ break-up

—Ida Aju Pradnja Resosudarmo, *East Asia Forum*, 10 November 2021

[T]wo issues plagued the Letter of Intent (LOI) and its implementation from the start. First, the LOI’s ambitious substance and timelines did not adequately consider political hurdles. Indonesia’s dissolution of the independent REDD+ agency required by the LOI and its replacement by a division in the Ministry of Environment and Forestry was a particular setback. Second, Norway and Indonesia have different views on REDD+ measures, standards and instruments. Despite these differences, Indonesia developed a range of information and monitoring systems for managing deforestation and climate change control and established the Environment Fund within the Ministry of Finance to manage REDD+ and other environmental funds secured from domestic and international sources. Underlying these different perspectives was the larger issue of trust. But despite significant improvements, Indonesia’s forest and land governance has been historically weak. Still, achievements were made, including the [temporary?] banning of further conversion of primary forests and peat ecosystems, oil palm moratorium, more transparent forest industry licensing and forest change monitoring, and intensified forest and land fire management.

In a warming world, deforestation turns the heat deadly, according to Borneo study

—Grace Dungey, *Mongabay*, 25 November 2021

Localized deforestation and global warming are contributing to an increase in heat-related deaths in Berau, a district in Indonesia’s East Kalimantan province on the island of Borneo, according to a new study, which mapped changes in forest cover and ground temperature in Berau between 2002 and 2018. The researchers concluded that a deforestation-induced rise in mean daily maximum temperatures of 0.95° Celsius over the 16-year period resulted in additional deaths of 101-118 people annually. “When you consider it has taken the wider world 150 years to warm by +0.95°C, compared with just 16 years in Berau ... the dramatic impacts of deforestation on this region’s climate become clear,” said lead author Nicholas Wolff, a climate change scientist with global NGO The Nature Conservancy (TNC), which also worked on the study. As global climate changes, a billion people are threatened by heat stress, with disproportionate health effects in low-latitude tropical countries like Indonesia. Intact tropical rainforests increase humidity, generate rainfall and produce wind currents, all with cooling effects, while the shade of a forest canopy also produces cooler ground temperatures.

Paper: Nicholas H. Wolff, et al, “The effect of deforestation and climate change on all-cause mortality and unsafe working conditions due to heat exposure in Berau, Indonesia: a modelling study”, *The Lancet Planetary Health* 5:12 E882-E892, 11 November 2021.

With loss of forests, Bali villagers find themselves vulnerable to disaster

—Luh De Suriyani, *Mongabay*, 29 November 2021

The village of Penyaringan in Bali’s Jembrana regency was badly hit earlier this year Penyaringan by flash floods and landslides. Penyaringan also suffers from *ngawen*, which refers to the practice of entering the village’s protected forest to grow crops such as bananas, vanilla, and *porang*, a tuber. The practice began in 1999 when mass riots broke out in parts of Bali after local favorite Megawati Sukarnoputri failed to win the presidential election. The *ngawen* area now covers 76 ha of the protected forest, and there have been conflicts between villagers and the village forest management body. About 250 families continue to plant crops in the protected forest, but now are bound by agreements to protect the remaining protected forest, banning cutting down of trees, and prohibiting cultivation of species such as coconut or cloves. The management body coordinates with religious authorities in the predominantly Hindu community to impose

customary sanctions on offenders. Villagers are divided between those who believe reduced forest cover from *ngawen* caused the flashflood this year and those who say it was simply because the rain was heavy that day.

Paper: [Assessing costs of Indonesian fires and the benefits of restoring peatland](#)  
—L. Kiely et al, *Nature Communications* 12, 2 December 2021

[From the abstract:] Deforestation and drainage has made Indonesian peatlands susceptible to burning. Large fires occur regularly, destroying agricultural crops and forest, emitting large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> and air pollutants, resulting in adverse health effects. In order to reduce fire, the Indonesian government has committed to restore 2.49 million ha of degraded peatland, with an estimated cost of US\$3.2-7.0 billion. Here we combine fire emissions and land cover data to estimate the 2015 fires, the largest in recent years, resulted in economic losses totalling US\$28 billion, whilst the six largest fire events between 2004 and 2015 caused a total of US\$93.9 billion in economic losses. We estimate that if restoration had already been completed, the area burned in 2015 would have been reduced by 6%, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 18%, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions by 24%, preventing 12,000 premature mortalities. Peatland restoration could have resulted in economic savings of US\$8.4 billion for 2004–2015, making it a cost-effective strategy for reducing the impacts of peatland fires to the environment, climate and human health.

Tree-planting goals miss the forest for the lack of diverse, good-quality seeds  
—Sheryl Lee Tian Tong, *Mongabay*, 7 December 2021

Ambitious plans by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and India to restore tens of millions of hectares of degraded land by 2030 could be foiled by the lack of good quality, genetically diverse native seeds, a new report says. Researchers surveying forest restoration practices in the countries found hundreds of millions of dollars invested but also a third of practitioners regularly planting seedlings of unknown origins, which can lead to “reforested areas” more akin to low biodiversity tree plantations than thriving and resilient natural forest ecosystems. The main problem lies with fragmented national seed systems that are unable to deliver sufficient quantities of good quality seeds of diverse species and provenances. Common obstacles include limited budgets for restoration and conservation, a lack of collaboration between forestry and agriculture ministries, and over-reliance on civil society and NGOs to address problems. Also, many large tropical trees in the region tend to be *Dipterocarp* species whose seeds cannot survive drying and freezing, making long-term storage in seed banks ineffective.

## D. Energy, Mining and Climate Change

Freeport Indonesia, the country’s biggest mining firm, may drop coal for natural gas  
—John McBeth, *AsiaTimes*, 3 December 2021

Pushed by its minority shareholders, Indonesia’s mining company is studying a plan to switch from coal to natural gas to power its massive Grasberg underground copper and gold mine in the Papua Central Highlands. Freeport Indonesia (PTFI) has the option of either piping gas from BP’s Tangguh liquified natural gas (LNG) plant 490 miles away in West Papua’s Bintuni Bay or establishing a regasification plant to handle LNG shipments at its Timika port on the southern coast of Papua. “We’re still looking at which one is best,” PTFI president-director Tony Wenas said. “But I’m sure we are not going to use coal anymore.” PTFI currently relies on a 195-MW coal-fired power station near Timika, linked by a 100 km transmission line to the high altitude mine where there is an additional 130-MW of diesel power to handle peak loads and emergencies. The company is already installing 128-MW of dual-fuel generating sets to power a 20 km long electrified underground rail network, dewatering and ventilation systems, and a third mill.

ADB launches energy transition mechanism with Indonesia and the Philippines  
—Nicholas Nhede, *Smart Energy International*, 9 November 2021

An Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM) to be established by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Indonesian and Philippines governments will help the two countries simplify the switch to renewable energy, ensure energy security, and mitigate climate change. The ETM is the first of its kind in Southeast Asia. Masatsugu Asakawa, president of the ADB, said the ETM “can usher in a transformation in the battle against climate change in Asia and the Pacific. “Indonesia and the Philippines [can] be pioneers in the process of removing coal from our region’s energy mix, .. contributing to the reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions, and shifting their economies to a low-carbon growth path,” Asakawa said. Currently 67% of Indonesia’s electricity and 57% of the Philippines’ power generation comes from coal. Increasing renewable energy deployment is vital for both countries to mitigate climate change. The ADB will connect the two governments with global climate change-focused funds and pilot two funding mechanisms for early retirement of coal-fired power plants and new clean energy development.

Indonesia carbon trade trial indicates taxable emissions

—Reuter News Agency, 29 November 2021

Indonesia’s energy ministry recorded around a million tonnes of taxable carbon emissions during a recent trial covering 32 coal power plants, Rida Mulyana, a senior official at the energy ministry said, as the country prepares to launch its new carbon trading mechanism. The world’s eighth-biggest greenhouse gas emitter aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and to use a carbon tax and trading to help control emissions. Indonesia will start charging a carbon tax of 30,000 rupiah (\$2.09) per tonne of CO2 equivalent (CO2e) next April, levied on coal-fired power plant operators with emissions above a set limit. Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati has said cross-border carbon trade won’t be allowed until Indonesia meets its emission goals, underlining that its domestic carbon price would be among the cheapest in the world. Indonesia required \$365 billion investment between 2020-2030 to cut 29% of emissions. A government study showed last month that to reach its 2060 decarbonisation target Indonesia needs to invest \$200 billion per year in 2021-2030.

Pertamina aims to become sustainability-driven energy player

—Tempo.co, 5 December 2021

Indonesia’s state-owned electric power monopoly PT Pertamina (Persero) said it is aiming to become a world-class sustainability-driven energy player through implementation of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) programs. The enterprise will support the country’s efforts to achieve 29% decarbonization before 2030, starting by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. “Our operational efficiency in the refinery and upstream facility, flare gas utilization, waste heat recovery, and increasing utilization of geothermal energy, all contribute greatly towards the reduction of emissions,” Nicke Widyawati, Pertamina’s CEO and president-director said. As part of its environmental goals, Pertamina has reduced its energy consumption and intensity, thereby reducing its carbon footprint, she added, noting that the company has cut its emissions by 27% over the last ten years. Pertamina is the largest Indonesian company involved mainly in oil, natural gas, and renewable energy sectors, and so it plays an important role as the guardian of the nation’s energy security, and its wide range of activities affect the lives of millions of people in the country, she observed.

## E. Pollution and Waste Management

Toxic air and our food system

—M. Ikhsan Shiddieqy, The Jakarta Post, 27 November 2021

The 2.5 micron particulate matter concentration of Jakarta’s air can reach 26.9 ug/m3, five times the maximum limit set by the World Health Organization. The key to preventing an air pollution catastrophe will be reducing air pollution from the food system. Agriculture is a key sector in Indonesia’s economy and we should improve the food production system to become less harmful



to the environment. Several steps need to be taken. One is that biomass and agriculture-waste burning must stop. Burning is the easiest way to get rid of waste. Farmers usually burn their rice straws after harvesting. Open burning in landfills also releases harmful dioxins and black carbon. In certain circumstances, burning is a common practice to establish natural land for other purposes, involving little or no cost, but it leads to uncontrolled and destructive fires. The environmental consequences of this practice are not only a huge amount of air pollution, but also the loss of biodiversity.

Indonesia's new plan for coal: It pollutes land and air, so why not the sea too?  
—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 1 December 2021

Having declared coal ash non-hazardous waste, the Indonesian government wants to turn it into bricks to be used for coral transplanting. In November, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) announced a deal with coal power plant operator PT Pembangkitan Jawa Bali Paiton to produce the bricks using fly ash and bottom ash, or FABA, left over from burning coal. "We see the potential use of FABA in coastal and marine areas as coral transplantation media [and for] tetrapods and fishers' houses," said Pamuji Lestari, the ministry's acting head of marine zoning. Environmentalists pointed out that coal waste contains arsenic, lead, mercury, chromium and other chemicals known to be toxic to the environment and public health. "It would be the wrong interpretation of the circular economy, and would instead be circular pollution," Ahmad Ashov Birry, program director of Trend Asia, an NGO. Birry said the decision to delist coal ash as hazardous catered to industry associations who said the classification hampered their efforts to sell the waste for reuse.

Indonesia needs to sort out how to sort its waste  
—Grace Nadia Chandra, *Jakarta Globe*, 30 November 2021

Indonesia's effort to manage its plastic waste has been hampered with a basic problem for years now: all of its garbage remains unsorted. "I think that's our biggest challenge, how can we sort our waste," Rofi Alhanif, the assistant deputy for waste management under the ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment, said in a webinar. A 2019 World Bank report estimated Indonesia generated 175,000 tons of waste a day, of which about 14% or 24,500 tons is plastic. That is equal to about 8.9 million tons of plastic waste a year. The large amount of unsorted waste requires a lot of resources for sorting and segregation before the trash can be processed or recycled. "It takes effort to separate, whether the responsibility falls on government or the private sector," Rofi said. "We have communicated with various plastic recycling associations. No plastic cannot be recycled. All of it can be reused. The problem is if the plastic waste has been mixed [with other waste]".

## F. Conservation and Protected Areas

UK conglomerate 'caught red-handed' clearing orangutan habitat in Sumatra  
—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 8 December 2021

PT Agincourt Resources, part of Astra International, the Indonesian subsidiary of the UK conglomerate Jardine Matheson (Jardines), is deforesting the only known habitat of the critically endangered Tapanuli orangutan (*Pongo tapanuliensis*), clearing 13 ha of rainforest for its Martabe gold mine on top of the 100 ha already deforested since 2016, satellite imagery revealed. Mighty Earth advocate Annisa Rahmawati said forest-clearing activities were still being detected as of November 21. In 2019, Jardines agreed not to expand farther into Tapanuli orangutan habitat following a campaign by the NGO Mighty Earth. First described as a new species in 2017, the Tapanuli orangutan is the most threatened of all the great apes, at risk from hunting, conflict killing, and habitat loss from agriculture and industrial development, including the Martabe gold mine and a planned hydroelectric plant. Fewer than 800 of the apes are estimated to survive in a tiny tract of forest less than one-fifth the size of the Jakarta metropolitan area.

Indonesia ranks high on legal wildlife trade, but experts warn it masks illegal trade. OK 174  
—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 3 December 2021

Indonesia is one of the top ten exporters of live animals, based on data from the Convention on International Wildlife Trade (CITES) analysed by Outforia, an Oslo-based outdoor and nature website. The most traded animal from Indonesia is the arowana fish (*Scleropages spp.*), highly prized in the Asian aquarian trade. Much of this trade is legal and monitored, but countries with rich biodiversity like Indonesia should try to minimize them and focus on conserving the ecosystems in which these species are found, said Sunarto, a research associate at the University of Indonesia's Institute for Sustainable Earth and Resources. The persistence of the illegal wildlife trade and its significant overlap with the legal trade is seen as a major threat to the conservation of many species. Industry watchers point to significant disparities between the numbers of animals exported from Indonesia declared as captive-bred, and the numbers of specimens that breeding facilities in the country actually have the capacity to produce, suggesting that many exported live animals may be wild-caught specimens laundered through a captive-breeding facility.

## G. Other

Opinion: Constitutional Court declares 2020 Job Creation law conditionally unconstitutional  
—D. Nicky Fahrizal, *The Jakarta Post*, 5 December 2021

After a long public discourse regarding the 2020 Job Creation Law, the Constitutional Court finally declared the 2020 Job Creation Law (also known as the Omnibus Law) conditionally unconstitutional. The court found that the government bypassed proper legal procedures and requirements for public consultation. The ruling gives the government and the House of Representatives two years to revise the law in accordance with law-making procedures and wider public participation. The Job Creation Law is the result of a mega-political constellation where the law is seen as a compromise between the political elite and market players who want reforms in the economic sector, as well as a strategy for various parties to gain access to influencing national interests and resources. The government and the House need to work quickly and properly so that legal certainty for the business world can be guaranteed, while political consolidation among supporting political parties should be carried out immediately to maintain political credibility.

The writer is a researcher at the Politics and Social Change Department, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Jakarta.

President Widodo reassures investors after court rules passing of omnibus law unconstitutional  
—Marchio Irfan Gorbiano and Dzulfiqar Fathur Rahman, *The Jakarta Post*, 30 November 2021

President Joko Widodo has promised businesses their investments will not be affected by the recent Constitutional Court ruling on the Job Creation Law. The procedure of passing the law—the key legislative item in the President's ambitious yet controversial reform agenda—was recently declared unconstitutional by the court, which also ruled that the government and the House of Representatives must start the law making process again from scratch within two years. If they fail to do so, the law will be permanently repealed and all the previous laws it has replaced must be reinstated. In the meantime, the law remains effective. The ruling was a major blow to the president's bid to cut red tape and bring investment to Indonesia, but he gave assurances that the law remained in effect pending the legislative do-over. "Therefore, I assure businesses and investors, both domestic and international, that the investments that have been made and investments that are being processed and will be in process are safe and secure."

Court delivers victory for indigenous rights in Papua  
—*Aljazeera*, 7 December 2021

An Indonesian court has delivered a landmark victory for Indigenous rights in a case that pitted West Papuan activists against several palm oil companies. On 6 December, the Jayapura Administrative Court ruled in favour of a district head who had revoked permits allowing palm oil companies to operate in indigenous forest areas and turn them into plantations. Johnny Kamuru, head of Sorong Regency, cancelled the permits after indigenous groups said they had not consented to the conversion of their ancestral lands into palm oil concessions. Three of the companies took legal action against Kamuru, including PT Papua Lestari Abadi and PT Sorong Agro Sawitindo, whose bids to have their permits reinstated was rejected by the court. Kamuru has also been sued by a third company, PT Inti Kebun Lestari, in a separate ongoing case. Under authority granted by President Joko Widodo in 2018, palm oil permit reviews are supposed to be carried out by the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment and Forestry. Neither ministry has commented on the case in Sorong, which involves the Moi people, one of more than 250 ethnic groups in Papua and West Papua. In 2019, President Widodo issued a moratorium on the development of new oil palm estates as part of a push to end deforestation. That moratorium expired in September and has been superseded by Indonesia's controversial Omnibus job creation bill, which was recently declared provisionally unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court.

Intrigue on the high seas between Indonesia and China  
—John McBeth, *AsiaTimes*, 2 December 2021

An unprecedented Chinese protest over Indonesia drilling for natural gas in its own waters casts new light on Jakarta's stragge silence over a recent 7-week incursion by a Chinese research vessel and two armed Coast Guard escorts. Indonesian officials declined to comment on the report by Reuters News Agency, but made it clear through informal channels that they had rejected the demand and that the drilling program was completed on schedule. Diplomats say staying silent implies Beijing has succeeded in enforcing its unilateral nine-dash line of territorial sovereignty that intrudes into Indonesia's 200-mile economic exclusion zone (EEZ) and encompasses other proven offshore gas fields. It is the first time Beijing has set out to pick a quarrel with Indonesia, which is not a claimant to the disputed Spratly Islands and which has always maintained the nine-dash line is illegal under the United Nations Law of the Sea. Quoting parliamentarians briefed on the issue, Reuters said the initial Chinese protest letter was followed by repeated demands for Indonesia to stop the drilling in the Tuna block by Harbour Energy, a joint venture between Premier Oil and state-owned Russian company Zarubezhneft. The Chinese are also reported to have sent a second letter protesting the largest-ever land exercise between Indonesia and the United States last August, which involved 4,500 troops and ranged across Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. China has never done that before either, despite the fact that these maneuvers have been conducted since 2009 and normally remain within Indonesian territorial waters and far from the South China Sea.

The government and the ulema  
—Editorial board, *The Jakarta Post*, 2 December 2021

All is not well in relations between the government and the ulema, or at least some of them. Such prolonged tensions sow confusion among the *umat* [Muslim faithful] with dangerous polarizing effects. Citizens should not be forced to choose between following the government or their religious leaders.

The 212 Movement, led by conservative ulema, had planned to hold its reunion on 2 December, marking the date of its launch in 2016 when they staged one of the biggest protests in Jakarta in nearly two decades. That protest, opposing the re-election of then-Jakarta governor Basuku "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama, a Christian of Chinese descent the ulema had accused of blasphemy, saw an estimated turnout of more than 2 million people. Ahok not only lost the election but also went to jail. This time the Jakarta administration and police declined permission to the 212 Movement to hold a commemorative meeting at the National Monument (Monas) square, or anywhere in Jakarta. The animosity between some conservative ulema and President Joko

Widodo, who had endorsed Ahok's re-election, continues to this day.

The president has attempted to appease the conservative ulema by bringing some into his government. Vice President Ma'ruf Amin was an important protagonist in the 212 Movement and testified in court against Ahok in the blasphemy trial. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), many of whose members joined the 2016 protests, is now a staunch supporter of Widodo's government. The 212 Movement also suffered with the jailing of Rizieq Shihab, a firebrand cleric, on charges of violating Covid-19 health protocols. The Islam Defenders Front (FPI), which Rizieq launched and chaired, has been declared illegal.

Indonesia is not an Islamic state, but it is wrong for the government to alienate the ulema. It is equally wrong, however, for the government to share power with ulema. We have seen how religious leaders quickly become intoxicated with power once they have it. There is no better time than now for the government and ulema to make peace once and for all and help end the polarization of the nation.

Note: In Indonesian, the term ulema (*ulama*)—"men of religious learning and prestige"—refers to Islamic scholars and teachers as well as important Muslim socio-religious leaders.

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