



**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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## A. The Covid-19 Crisis in Indonesia

### [Indonesia starts booster shot rollout amid lingering equity concerns](#)

—Dio Suhenda, *The JakartaPost*, 12 January 2021

The government will start administering free Covid-19 booster shots in an effort to strengthen peoples' immunity in response to the highly transmissible Omicron variant, President Joko Widodo said. The rollout comes amid concern that providing additional shots to fully vaccinated people could exacerbate vaccine inequity across the country. People aged 18 or older who received their second vaccine dose at least six months ago will be eligible to receive a booster shot, with priority for the elderly and immunocompromised people, he added. The statement marked a shift from the original plan, which consisted of free booster shots for the elderly and fully-subsidized participants in the national health insurance program plus paid doses for the rest of the public. Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin said Indonesia has sufficient vaccine stock from existing contracts and donations from other countries to administer the booster shots. Eligible persons can get the booster shot at government health facilities, including community health centers (*Puskesmas*), state-owned hospitals and regional hospitals, Budi added.

### [Government plays down threat of more transmissible Omicron strain of Covid-19](#)

—Dio Suhenda, *The Jakarta Post*, 11 January 2021

Health authorities reported 75 new cases of the Omicron variant on 8 January, bringing the total number to 414, of which 31 were reported to be cases of local transmission. However, Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Pandjaitan, in charge of pandemic control in Java and Bali, said Indonesia was still on top of Covid-19, noting that the immediate spike was down to recent international arrivals, many of whom tested positive on entering the country. According to the Ministry of Health, Indonesia had over 790,000 international arrivals the week of 1-7 January, of whom some 21,000 tested positive for Covid-19. Minister Luhut said the number of Covid-19 deaths remains under control. "Do not go overseas in the next two or three weeks," Minister Luhut counselled, "so that you will not bring the disease back with you." Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin said only two of the 414 Omicron cases had developed more than mild symptoms.

### [Experts warn of upcoming third wave as Omicron spreads.](#)

—Nina A. Loaana, *The Jakarta Post*, 8 January 2022

Cases of the highly transmissible Omicron variant continue to grow in Indonesia a few weeks after the country reported its first confirmed case, but the new variant has not caused the type of surge recorded in other countries. Experts note that the Omicron variant is more widespread among the Indonesian population than the official data shows. Clinical pathologist Tonang Dwi Ardyanto said the true scale of spread of the Omicron infection had been obscured by the lack of Covid-19 testing and the use of “substandard” rapid antigen test instead of the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. I Gusti Ngurah Mahardika, a virologist at Udayana University, said poor contact tracing was also a factor, estimating that the true number of infections could be 10-15 times higher than what is shown in the government’s data. Dicky Budiman, an epidemiologist at Griffith University, said the high transmissibility of Omicron, 3 to 4 times more contagious than Delta, increased the likelihood of a third Covid-19 wave in Indonesia.

### **Indonesia's diplomacy shifts focus to national health security**

—Dian Septiari, *The Jakarta Post*, 7 January 2022

Indonesia will strengthen national health security as a major foreign policy priority in 2022, following repeated crises brought on by the global Covid-19 outbreak. In a virtual speech, Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi said the pandemic had forced changes in the country’s diplomatic priorities, including strengthening protection for Indonesian citizens abroad, support for the national Covid-19 response, and contributing to maintaining world peace. “Indonesia’s diplomacy will [focus] on self-sufficiency and national health security ... through realizing vaccine provision commitments from bilateral and multilateral cooperation, the minister said. Amid a global rush for vaccines, Indonesia has had to compete with countries rich and poor to secure enough vaccines to protect its people. Among the countries Indonesia has struck vaccine deals with are China, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. So far, Indonesia has secured commitments for more than 300 million doses of vaccines sourced from overseas vaccine producers. Indonesia also expects to secure vaccine candidates for up to 20% of the population through the COVAX mechanism, a UN-backed funding framework.

### **Survey finds 85% of Indonesia population have Covid-19 antibodies**

—Stanley Widiyanto, *Reuters*, 6 January 2022

More than 85% of Indonesia's population has antibodies against COVID-19 from a combination of infections and vaccinations, a government-commissioned survey revealed, but epidemiologists warned it was not clear whether this level immunity could help contain a fresh wave of coronavirus infections. New cases per day have declined from more than 50,000 during July and August, when infections were driven by the Delta variant, to just a few hundred in recent months, but this does not negate the need for more people to be vaccinated, said Pandu Riono, an epidemiologist involved in the survey. “The point is to have the majority of people develop hybrid immunity [from immunization and infection] to control the pandemic.” Only 42% of Indonesia’s population of 270 million are double-vaccinated. Dicky Budiman, an epidemiologist at Australia’s Griffith University, said the survey’s findings should be treated cautiously because Indonesia's vaccination rates lags behind many countries and there is no guarantee how long antibodies might last.

## **B. Marine & Fisheries**

### **Foreign capital, blamed for depleting Indonesia’s fish stocks, is set to return**

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 11 January 2021

Indonesia’s Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DKP) government has drafted regulations to reopen its capture fisheries sector to foreign investment, prompting concerns of a return to rampant illegal fishing that previously depleted the country’s fish stocks. The capture fisheries sector has banned foreign investment in 2016 under then-minister Susi Pudjiastuti’s in order to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by foreign vessels in Indonesian waters. The new regulations would allow foreign-funded Indonesian companies to catch fish in seven of the country’s eleven fisheries management

areas (WPP) for fifteen years. The DKP says it will regulate the companies' catch quotas, vessel size, fishing gear, landing ports, and live fish carriers and Indonesian entities will retain organizational and operational control. "No foreign vessel is entering Indonesia to catch fish; it's still Indonesian legal entities," Muhammad Zaini, Director General of Capture Fisheries said. But the Indonesian Ocean Justice Initiative said Indonesian fishing authorities are still unable to optimally monitor fishing vessels, citing weak operational capacity, a dearth of patrol boats, and ineffective coordination.

### [Shrimp group first in Indonesia to win Fair Trade Certification](#)

—Toan Dao, *Seafood Source*, 11 January 2022

BlueYou Consulting and Fair Trade USA have announced the first Fair Trade certified aquaculture project in Indonesia, involving 324 small-scale shrimp farmers and a local processing facility run by aquaculture feed producer and shrimp exporter PT Central Proteina Prima Tbk (CP Prima) in Sumatra. The certification means they have been found to satisfy international standards of sustainable and socially equitable management on labor and human rights. The project applied the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification methodology to the semi-intensive shrimp farming area of Wahyuni Mandira in South Sumatra. Participating farmers can expect to receive a premium of at least US\$ 0.15 (Eur 0.13) per kilogram of final product, which the cooperative's members can decide how to use for community and environmental projects.

### [Pacific tuna group touts IUU reduction, warns fishery observers need protection from Covid](#)

—Nick Sambides Jr., *Undercurrent News*, 20 December 2021

Pacific Island nations involved in harvesting tuna needed to better guarantee the safety of observers from the coronavirus in order to better crackdown on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, a press conference by the Pacific Island Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) announced, highlighting a new study that showed IUU harvesting declined 62% in 2017-2019 in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Addressing misreporting of catch by WCPFC members has not been helped by the suspension of 100% observer coverage since the pandemic began, Duncan Souter, CEO of MRAG Asia Pacific said. "The mere fact that there's an independent observer on board tends to change behavior," Souter said. An average of 192,186 tonnes of IUU tuna was harvested each year over 2017-2019, accounting to US\$333 million in ex-vessel value and equal to 6.5% of the total WCPFC catch-area harvest and a 62% reduction from 2010-2015, driven by reductions in estimates for illegal transshipping and fish aggregation device (FAD) fishing, curtailment of unauthorised landings in foreign ports.

### [Indonesia aims for sustainable fish farming with "aquaculture villages"](#)

—Luh De Suriyani et al, *Mongabay*, 7 January 2022

The Indonesian government plans to develop a network of 136 villages with aquaculture farms by the end of the year, in a bid to spur the post-pandemic economic recovery by catering to global demand for farmed seafood. The villages will cultivate high-value aquaculture commodities, including shrimp, lobster, crab and seaweed. "Boosting production of commodities for exports comes first," TB Haeru Rahayu, the ministry's director-general of aquaculture fisheries, said at an online event. At the start of his second term in office, in 2019, President Joko Widodo ordered the fisheries ministry to boost the country's aquaculture productivity. Experts have welcomed the government's push to boost the aquaculture sector, but say it must guarantee sustainable environmental planning, particularly in terms of land clearing and waste management for the farms. Indonesia is one of the top exporters of farmed seafood, but aquaculture in the country has long come at the expense of carbon-rich mangrove forests and other important coastal ecosystems.

### [Conference paper on sustainable aquaculture development in Indonesia](#)

— Rizna A. Wardhana, Erna Yuniarsih, Irham Adhitya, "Sustainable Aquaculture Development in Indonesia" in *Proceedings of the International Workshop on the Promotional of Sustainable Aquaculture(SEAFDEC/AQD Institutional Repository)*, December 2021.

Despite the abundance of potential marine resources, including fisheries, Indonesia still struggles with issues in the aquaculture sector. Environmental issues, aquaculture feeds, fish diseases, and exceeding carrying capacity are among the many challenges that Indonesia faces, which the country seeks to address through Harmonizing and simplifying regulations to encourage investments, interconnecting business chain from downstream to upstream in the industry and strengthening product competitiveness through IndoGAP (Good Aquaculture Practices) implementation.

**Paper:** Wen Wen, Alan White, USAID Sustainable Ecosystems (SEA), "[Allen Coral Atlas for Coral Reef Management in Indonesia: A Brief Review](https://doi.org/10.20935/AL4145)", *Academic Letters* 4145 (November 2021). <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL4145>

More than 90% of coral reefs in Indonesia are impacted by destructive fishing, overfishing, anchoring, boat activities, trash, etc. It is obvious that adaptive coral reef management should be adopted and implemented, but the lack of accurate data for coral reef management has disconnected policymakers from understanding the real status on coral reef conditions in the field which can lead to appropriate decision making. It also makes it difficult to get accurate, free, high-resolution coral reef datasets online. The "Allen Coral Reef Atlas (Atlas <https://allencoralatlas.org>) is an online map and monitoring conservation tool that aims to provide high-resolution map, up-to-date bleaching and turbidity monitoring, and global imagery of the world's coral reefs with detailed composition and structure, including geomorphic zonation (i.e., reef rim, outer flat, inner flat marine, lagoon, etc.) and benthic cover type (i.e., coral, algae, seagrass, rock, rubble, and sand). The accuracy of the Atlas makes this a welcome addition to the arsenal of support needed to adequately plan for and implement coral reef conservation in Indonesia.

## C. Forests & Land Use

### [Analysts: Carbon credits key to keeping Indonesian shrimp out of the mangroves](#)

—Dan Gibson, *Undercurrents News*, 2 January 2021

Although mangrove deforestation may have slowed or reversed in recent years, a team of analysts from the US-based Boston Consulting Group (BCG) reported that "[h]istorically aquaculture has been responsible for around 50% of mangrove deforestation in Indonesia, and in some regions mainly as the result of extensive *Penaeus monodon* (black tiger shrimp) production. BCG estimates that 17% of the world's mangroves or roughly 3 million ha can be found in the country. However, coastal areas occupied by mangroves are often those most desired by black tiger shrimp farmers, even though poor water pH and soil quality make them less than ideal. The value of the benefits provided by mangroves as flood defences, barriers to seawater intrusion, and as carbon sinks are more substantial than previously thought, generating an annual societal and environmental value of US\$4,000-8,000 per hectare. The value of carbon sequestration can be directly monetized through carbon offsets, making preservation of intact mangroves 20% more valuable than cutting down mangroves to make way for aquaculture, with a payback period of only 2.7 – 3.4 years.

### [Indonesia revokes thousands of inactive land permits for mining, forestry, and plantations](#)

—Dzulfiqar Fathur Rahman, *The Jakarta Post*, 7 January 2021

The government has revoked thousands of inactive land-use permits in the mining, forestry and plantation sectors covering millions of hectares to improve permit governance and land distribution. President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said 2,078 of the revoked permits were for mining, 192 for forestry and 36 for plantations. Investment Minister Bahlil Lahadalia said the revoked mining permits accounted for nearly 40% of the total, suggesting that companies would not be able to reclaim the permits. Of the forest use permits, 192 companies holding permits covering 3.12 million ha, mostly in Papua, West Papua, North Maluku, Central Kalimantan, and Aceh provinces. In Papua, 50 companies managed over 835,000 ha, 26.7% of the total. Arsjad Rasjid, Chairman of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce (Kadin), said the government's move would contribute to a favourable investment climate through accountability and transparency. "There is a huge multiplier effect from the use of those lands, from job creation to reduce

poverty and improve living standards to supporting trade, property development, and more, Arsjad said in a press release.

### **Womangrove collective in Tanakeke Islands reclaims the coast from shrimp farms**

—Wahyu Chandra, *Mongabay*, 6 January 2022

A women's collective in the Tanakeke Islands off the southeast coast of Sulawesi has restored dozens of hectares of mangroves since its founding six years ago. The twenty members of the Womangrove collective focus on restoring replanting mangroves in abandoned shrimp and fish farm areas originally established in areas of cleared mangroves, and have to date planted more than 110,000 seedlings. Mangroves play an important ecological role as a buffer between the sea and coastal areas that mitigates the effects of storms and acts as a powerful carbon sink. But over the past 30 years, Indonesia has lost nearly half of its mangrove area, according to the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The Womangrove collective was founded with the support of Oxfam, the Canadian development agency CIDA, and the Blue Forest Foundation (YHB), an Indonesian foundation. Some women involved in the program have become village officials thanks to administrative and speaking skills learned through their involvement in workshops conducted by Oxfam's former Restoring Coastal Livelihoods (RCL) program.

### **Project could redefine palm oil-driven deforestation as reforestation in Indonesia**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 7 January 2022

A proposal from the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB) calls for oil palm to be classified as a forest crop—a move that would make it possible for existing plantations to be treated as forest and allow establishment of new plantations as a form of reforestation without any need to delist the plantation as forest estate area. The proposal by Yanto Santosa, a professor of forestry at IPB, is aimed at allowing oil palm plantations to be legally developed in forest areas and to allow oil palm plantations to count toward Indonesia's carbon sequestration goals, despite studies pointing out that clearing rainforest and peat forest for oil palm leads to enormous volumes of carbon emissions. Naresworo Nugroho, Dean of IPB's forestry school, said planting oil palm in forest areas could lead to the absorption of 57.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per hectare per year, more than some timber forest species. Oil palm plantations undoubtedly do store carbon, but nowhere near as much as the natural forests they replace.

### **Community control of forests hasn't slowed deforestation, study finds**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 4 January 2022

A study found that Indonesia's social forestry program, which gives local communities access to manage the country's forests, has not led to an overall reduction in deforestation. Instead, forest loss in community-titled forests aimed at conservation actually increased. It's clear that under favourable conditions, the social forestry program can reduce deforestation, the researchers noted. Indonesia's Social Forestry program is one of the largest of its kind, aiming to reallocate 12.7 million ha of state forest to local communities and give them legal standing to manage their forests. Village forest titles are granted to villages, while community forest titles are granted to cooperatives for periods of 35 years. Both titles allow for non-logging activities such as collection of non-timber forest products such as honey, agroforestry, and ecotourism as well as restricted logging for non-commercial purposes. But despite being designed with conservation in mind and touted by the government as contributing to a decline in deforestation, the study found that forest loss increased in village and community forests.

**Paper:** Kraus S., et al, "**No aggregate deforestation reductions from rollout of community land titles in Indonesia yet**", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118(43) <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2100741118>

### **Groups welcome deforestation decline in the endangered Leuser Ecosystem**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 3 January 2022

*Indonesia's Leuser Ecosystem, known for being the last place on Earth where critically endangered Sumatran rhinos, tigers, elephants and orangutans coexist, experienced a decline in deforestation in*



2021, according to satellite analysis by local forest watchdog HAKA. As of November 2021, the ecosystem had lost 4,472 ha of forests, compared to 7,331 ha in 2020. The decline is attributed to increased monitoring efforts and greater scrutiny of palm oil producers operating in the landscape, and from brands and buyers with zero-deforestation commitments. Rudi Putra, at the Leuser Conservation Forum (FKL), said the satellite findings are in line with recent field observations. “We no longer find large-scale forest clearing within the Leuser Ecosystem, Putra said. In the past, there were many companies actively clearing the forest, but nowadays the deforestation is mostly small-scale, less than 5 ha.” The Rainforest Action Network (RAN), in a year-end review, also noted that an increasing number of palm oil producers previously implicated in forest destruction had stopped land clearing and issued commitments to comply with the no-deforestation policies of major brands and traders.

### **[‘Land mafia’ makes its mark in Sumatran village’s fight against an oil palm firm](#)**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 28 December 2021

In 2020, residents of Suka Mukti village in southern Sumatra paid 10 million rupiah each, about \$700, to a government agency to obtain titles to their land—a process that is officially supposed to be free. This year, the same agency declared the certificates illegal because, it says, the land falls inside a concession held by a palm oil company. The fiasco has shone a light on the corruption and opacity that cloud the land-titling process in Indonesia, and the role of a “land mafia” in keeping it that way to serve the interests of big businesses. The National Land Agency says more than 100 of its officials are suspected of being part of this mafia, but has done little to address the problem, and continues to violate a Supreme Court ruling that could bring greater transparency to land ownership across Indonesia. Activists say the land mafia have been emboldened by the government’s pro-business policies, including directives to make it easier for investors to secure land for projects.

### **[2019 forest fires in Indonesia were twice as bad as government claimed, study shows](#)**

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 16 December 2021

Independent researchers using advanced satellite imaging systems have identified 3.11 million ha of forest and peatlands that were burned in 2019, nearly twice the Landat-derived official estimate of 1.64 million ha issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) and 50% more than the MODIS MCD64A1 burned-area estimate of 2.03 million ha. “Though we observed proportionally less peatland burning, in absolute terms we still observed a greater area of peatland affected (0.96 million ha) than the official estimate (0.64 million ha). David Gaveau, a co-author of the new study who has been researching Indonesia’s forests for nearly two decades, was deported from Indonesia last year after publishing preliminary findings for the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) website reporting that the burned area was larger than the government claimed. However, officials deny the deportation was linked to the findings, saying it was because Gaveau did not have the proper permit to conduct research in Indonesia.

**Paper:** David L. A. Gaveau et al, “[Refined burned-area mapping protocol using Sentinel-2 data increases estimate of 2019 Indonesian burning](#)”, *Earth Systems Scientific Data* 13, 5353-5368, <https://doi.org/10.5194/essd-13-5353-2021>, 2021.

### **[Illegal mangrove logging surges in Indonesia’s Batam island amid economic hardship](#)**

—Yogi Eka Sahputra, *Mongabay*, 10 December 2021

Police in Indonesia’s Riau Islands have reported a 280% increase in seizures of mangrove timber from would-be smugglers in 2021. Much of the wood was cut on the main island of Batam and is destined for illegal export to Singapore and Malaysia. Police attributed the surge in illegal logging to economic hardship among local fishers. Logging of mangroves is illegal in Indonesia and can be punished by up to five years in prison and heavy fines. Hendrik, a coordinator of Akar Bhumi, a Batam-based NGO focusing on mangrove rehabilitation, said the illegal logging of mangroves was contributing to environmental damage across the Riau Islands. “Fish and shrimps lay their eggs between the mangroves, and if they’re cut down, then there won’t be a place for those marine animals to live anymore,” Hendrik said, adding that mangrove deforestation would only fuel the cycle of declining fish catches for the local fishers.

### [Government waffles on forestry stance in Indonesia's climate pledge](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 31 December 2021

Indonesia's forests were the centerpiece of President Joko Widodo's address at the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in November 2021, in which he highlighted Indonesia's achievements in reducing the rate of forest fires, contributing to the country achieving its lowest deforestation rate in years, but the government's claims have been questioned by environmental activists. Indonesia annulled its bilateral agreement with Norway on reducing carbon emissions by mitigating deforestation and land degradation. Activists argue that the government often disregarded external data on deforestation and tree cover loss. Indonesia attracted headlines around the world after the Minister of Environment and Forestry tweeted a statement regarding a global declaration to end deforestation by 2030 that had been signed by Indonesia. Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar called the goals in the declaration "inappropriate and unfair" and said the government aimed to balance environment protection and economic development, stressing that President Widodo had been "very clear" that Indonesia's development agenda should be aligned with policies to reduce deforestation and carbon emissions.

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

### [The Coal War I—Government bans coal exports to save domestic power supply](#)

—Retno Sulistyowati, *Tempo.eng*, 10 January 2022

On 30 December the government imposed a coal export ban due to a supply crisis at coal-fired power plants directing coal mining license holders to direct all their production to state electricity company PLN and private plants. But by 30 December, as many as 17 state-owned and independent PLTU only had enough coal to generate power for ten more days of operation. Some had to be powered off in rotation starting 5 January. Shutting down all of them would impact 10 million PLN customers in Java, Madura, Bali, and much of the rest of the country. Pandu Patria Sjahrir, General Chair of the Indonesian Coal Mining Association, warned that the losses could exceed US\$ 3 billion per month. With high prices for export coal, producers were failing to meet the industry's domestic market obligation (DMO), targeted at 137.5 million tonnes for 2021. By November, it was clear that the coal DMO had only reached 63.47 tonnes, and as many as 418 coal mining license holders had not sold a single tonne for domestic needs.

### [The Coal War II—Two actors behind the coal export crisis](#)

—Aisha Shaidra, *Tempo.eng*, 10 January 2018

China is the largest importer of Indonesian coal, followed by India, Japan, and South Korea. In 2020, 127.8 million tonnes were shipped to China. Bumi Resources' Dileep Srivastava called on the government to lift the export ban from companies that fulfilled their Domestic Market Obligation (DMO). There was also a coal export ban in August 2021, but it only affected companies which failed to meet their DMO. This time all permit holders were ordered to stop exports. According to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, as of October at least 115 coal mining companies had met or exceeded the DMO requirement for 25% of total production. However, 418 companies had sold no coal domestically, while another 80 companies did sell domestically, but failed to reach the 25% minimum DMO. Adaro Energy earned US\$1.96 billion from coal exports as of September 2021, 40% more than in the same period of 2021. Adaro is owned by Garibaldi Thohir, brother of Minister of State-Owned Enterprises Erick Thohir.

### [The Coal War III — A costly show of force](#)

—Yopie Hidayat, *Tempo.eng*, 10 January 2021

The reason coal mining companies failed to meet their Domestic Market Obligation (DMO) is easy to understand. The government had pegged the price of coal sold to the PLN at US\$70 per tonne. The export price for Indonesian coal skyrocketed after January 2021 to reach US\$215 per tonne by November, nearly triple the PLN ceiling price. Coal miners' licenses reflect the privilege of extracting natural resources, constitutionally mandated to be as much as possible for the welfare of the people. But the government's harsh punishment was an excessive show of force. According to the Ministry of



Energy, 85 of 592 coal companies actually met their DMO last year, but the blanket export ban punished them and the others indiscriminately. Moreover, the country enjoyed a huge jump in export revenues in 2021, partly from coal. If the DMO mechanism failed to secure coal supply for the PLN, the government should revise that regulation. It could implement an export tariff, or an export royalty—there are a myriad of possible alternatives.

### [Indonesia to gradually lift coal export ban](#)

—Vincent Fabian Thomas, *The Jakarta Post*, 11 January 2021

The Office of the Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Panjaitan announced that Indonesia would begin a gradual easing its month-long ban on coal exports that began on 1 January by allowing 14 coal-loaded vessels to set sail for their destinations while other such vessels transported their cargo to domestic power plants. “Everything’s good. Supplies of coal [at coal-fired power plants] have reached 15 to 25 days,” Luhut told reporters. “When will we reopen for export? We will gradually see to that starting Wednesday [12 January].” However, the Coordinating Ministry and the ministries of trade, energy and [the state-owned electric power monopoly supplier] PLN still need to determine how to ensure coal mining companies’ long-term compliance with their Domestic Market Obligation (DMO) before fully reopening exports, he said. The Coordinating Ministry said the government would form a new public services agency (BLU) to collect coal levies, which would then be used to subsidize PLN’s coal purchases.

### [Geothermal plant begins operations in South Sumatra](#)

—Elsya A. Elokari, *The Jakarta Post*, 7 January 2022

Power Producer PT Supreme Energy announced that the 91.2 MW Rantau Dedap I geothermal power plant (PLTP) in South Sumatra has begun commercial operations. The plant is a joint venture between Supreme Energy, the French utility company ENGIE and Japanese firms Marubeni and Tohoku Electric Power (TEP). Total investment for the first phase of development was more than US\$700 million. The project, which is located in remote, steep highlands with an elevation of 2,600 meters above sea level, is expected to reduce Indonesia’s carbon emissions by 486,000 tonnes per year. Indonesia, which holds the world’s largest geothermal reserves, aims to have a total of 3.35 GW of geothermal production capacity by 2030, according to the country’s long-term electricity procurement plan (RUPTL).

### [Low tariffs still hinder geothermal power growth in Indonesia](#)

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 December 2021

Low electricity offtake tariffs are a key challenge to developing geothermal power plants in Indonesia. Current regulations peg offtake prices for renewable energy to that of coal-fired power plants (PLTU), which have much lower production costs because of coal price caps, economies of scale, and the lack of carbon taxes. Out of a potential total of 23.7 GW in geothermal resources, only 2.18 GW or 9.2% has been utilized, with only 1.33 GW more allocated for expansion plans until 2035. Fabby Tumiwa, director of the Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR), said some geothermal projects had proposed rates US\$0.09 to US\$0.12 higher than PLN’s expected range of US\$0.07-US\$0.08, which is ‘not easy’ to achieve because of geothermal projects’ higher upstream investment costs. “There is no additional monetary value for geothermal as one of the few renewable energy sources that can operate as a source of baseload power,” said Putra Adhiguna, an analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

### [Coal-dependent Indonesia starts tapping huge solar power potential](#)

—Gayatri Suroyo, Bernadette Christina, *The Jakarta Post*, 7 January 2021

Despite its status as a tropical archipelago of 17,000 islands straddling the equator, Indonesia ranks last for installed solar power capacity among the G20 nations, but demand is picking up driven by policy changes and a steep fall in the prices of Chinese-made photovoltaic (PV) cells and environmentally-conscious middle-class consumers. From 2018 to November 2021, the number of private rooftop solar panel users rose to about 4,500, with a total installed capacity of 44 MW up from just 1.5 MW, according

to the state-owned power utility PLN. The Indonesia Solar Energy Association (ISEA) predicts installed capacity for rooftop solar panels could top 1,000 MW next year and increase by 3,000 – 5,000 MW per year starting in 2025. At present, coal still powers 60% of Indonesia's 73,000 MW of electric generation capacity, compared with 180 MW or 0.24% from solar, which includes solar farms as well as rooftop PV cells. Falling prices for PV cells has driven the growth of rooftop solar since electricity produced from panels is cheaper than power sold by PLN.

### **Indonesians protesting against mines run growing risk of 'criminalization'**

—Agus Mawan, Nuswantoro, *Mongabay*, 17 December 2021

Indonesians defending their lands against mining operations are frequently met with criminal persecution on dubious charges, observers say. In 2020, 69 Indonesians were “criminalized” in with cases involving disputes with mining companies, according to data from the watchdog NGO Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam). Sapoy leads a group, the Kali Progo People's Collective (PMKP), that since 2017 has protested against the mining of sand and rock in the vicinity of the Progo River, the main source of freshwater for many households in Sleman district. “The locals feel threatened by the mining activities there,” according to Himawan Adi, head of advocacy for the Yogyakarta chapter of the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi), who said the police probe into the Jomboran village protesters is the first recorded case of a criminal investigation related to environmental protests since the passage of the country's amended mining law in May 2020. The law has been widely criticized for stripping back environmental protections and favouring miners in disputes with affected communities.

## **E. Pollution and Waste Management**

### **The Waste-to-Energy Sector in Indonesia presents a lucrative opportunity for Japanese investors**

—*Cekindo*, 13 December 2021

At the 2nd Indonesia-Japan Business Forum (IJBF), the Indonesian government presented prospects for investments in three renewable energy projects: the Semarang Waste-to-Energy Project, the Jakarta Bantar Gebang Refuse-Derived Fuel Plant, and the Banyumas Minihydro Plant. In addition, notable projects are currently in tendering progress in Legok Nangka, West Java and South Tangerang, Banten, both with 10-20 MW capacity. Market-sounding activities for a proposed Waste-to-Energy facility in Bali took place in November 2020. While the timetable for delivery of these projects has been disrupted by the pandemic, healthy pipeline of projects supported by recent Indonesian government policy reforms now have brighter prospects. Waste management (whether it generates power or not) is covered under KBLI No. 382211 on management and disposal of non-hazardous wastes, eliminating the requirement for foreign investors to find a local partner in Indonesia. Barriers to WtE development include concerns about rate of investment, financiers' willingness to provide funds, transportation costs, ash disposal issues, and technical feasibility concerns.

### **Amid challenges, Indonesia reaps benefits from circular economy**

—A Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 24 December 2021

Over 2019-2020, more than 420,000 tonnes of plastic waste were collected from waste banks, temporary disposal sites (TPS) and from scavengers. Recycling this plastic waste generated more than Rp 1 trillion (US\$70.53 million) of revenues, according to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK), while Rp 7.4 trillion of revenue was generated from recycling more than 3 million tonnes of paper waste. Rosa Vivien Ratnawati, KLHK Director General of Waste Management said mainstreaming circular economy principles, including improving waste collection, is essential to growth of the domestic recycling industry. Indonesia produces about 20 million tonnes of paper and plastic waste per year, but only about 46% is absorbed by the recycling industry. Only eight regencies and cities have proper waste management, while 91% of the 500 cities and regencies do not. This is partly because the 2014 Regional Autonomy Law stipulates that regional administrations should manage waste generated in their respective areas, but does not list waste management as an essential public service, leaving regional administrations free to focus their resources elsewhere.

## F. Conservation and Protected Areas

### [Environmentalists fear for Komodo dragon as Indonesia pushes tourism](#)

— ABC Net AU, 27 December 2021

Seeking to capitalise on a leading tourism opportunity, developers are removing trees and pouring concrete for new luxury tourism facilities in Komodo National Park, angering environmental activists who fear the habitat for the Komodo Dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*), will be irreparably harmed. The multi-million dollar expansion includes an expanded ranger station, viewing platform, boat dock, and other infrastructure. Komodo dragons were recently reclassified by the IUCN from “vulnerable” to “endangered”, due to the anticipated impact of rising temperatures and sea levels. The plans have caused alarm at UNESCO, which designated the park a World Heritage Site in 1991. “This is definitely a project of concern because we feel the impacts on the universal value [of the park] have not been properly evaluated,” said Guy Dubonnet, chief of UNESCO’s natural heritage unit. UNESCO also expressed worry about reducing the wilderness zone to one-third the previous area, addition of tourism concessions, lack of an adequate environmental assessment, and increasing the target number of visitors to 500,000 a year.

### [New shrews just dropped: Sulawesi yields up to 14 newly described species](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 30 December 2021

Scientists have described 14 species of shrews new to science from the biodiversity haven of Sulawesi Island. The species-level description of the shrews from the genus *Crocidura* is the largest number of new mammals described in a single scientific paper since 1931, researchers said.

**Paper:** Esselstyn, J. A. (2021), “[Fourteen new, endemic species of shrew \(Genus \*Crocidura\*\) from Sulawesi reveal a spectacular island radiation](#)”, *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* 454(1), doi:10.1206/0003-0090.454.1.1

## G. Other

### [Unrest in Papua—The new TNI Commander’s softer approach](#)

—Raymundus Rikang, *Tempo.eng*, 10 January 2021

Gen. Andika Perkasa, the new commander of the Indonesian Military (TNI), conveyed his intention to settle the protracted conflict in a meeting with religious and educational figures in Jayapura, Papua Province on 29 December. “He wants the situation in Papua to be resolved peacefully,” said Apolo Safanpo, Rector of Cenderawasih University. Andika’s plan to shift away from a military approach in Papua was revealed during his fit-and-proper tests as a candidate for TNI Commander last November. Andika, the son-in-law of former State Intelligence Agency Chief Abdullah Mahmud Hendropriyono, also conveyed his new strategy when he visited Vice President Ma’ruf Amin at his official residence on 24 November.

The TNI Commander visited Papua at least twice in December 2021, meeting with unit commander and ordering all forces in Papua to operate as they normally do in other provinces. According to Andika, military operations in Papua have tended to be ineffective. He said TNI operations in Papua could only recover 111 rifles over the past two years. During that time frame, soldiers in Sumatra and Kalimantan were able to confiscate 160 and 516 weapons respectively, but we rarely hear news of violence in those two provinces. “This means that with normal troop strength we can help out without injury to any party, and I believe we can do the same in Papua by having normal unit levels.

According to Col. Aqsha Erlangga of the Cenderawasih Regional Military Command, the new TNI commander is also changing his troops’ operational patterns. Previously, the TNI emphasized battle operations supported by units stationed outside of Papua. However, Andika is shifting toward a territorial approach in which the military will rely solely on soldiers from the military districts and sub-districts in Papua.

Andika also told officers in Papua that soldiers have not been intensive enough in conducting friendly meetings with local residents. “Frequent dialogue will create public trust,” Commander Military District Lt. Col. Harry Ismail said. To follow Andiko’s instructions, Harry has ordered his men to refrain from brandishing weapons when they visit homes of residents in Maybrat, and directed his personnel to assist local church congregations in arranging Christmas services.

The TNI commander has also stated that the priority assignment for the military and its commanders in Papua is territorial construction. “They are to focus on their core duties and on social communication functions—nothing else,” Andika reportedly said.

There are six regencies in Papua Province where military and police have been involved in shootouts with armed groups and which are considered conflict-prone red zones: Mimika, Intan Jaya, Lani Jaya, Nduga, Pegunungan Bintang, and Puncak.

### [Indonesia sticks to foreign policy doctrine as great powers clash](#)

—Dian Septiari, *The Jakarta Post*, 7 January 2022

As the rivalry between the US and China becomes more intensified in the Indo-Pacific region, Indonesia’s Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi has pledged to continue to work within the framework of ASEAN as the primary conduit for the country’s diplomacy. The minister noted that “deepening rivalry between great powers ... not only presented yet another challenge for ASEAN,” but also added to the world’s problems of coronavirus, conflicts and tensions, refugee crises and climate change, and said Indonesia’s foreign policy doctrine of being independent and active would be increasingly relevant. “ASEAN should remain an anchor for stability, peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region,” the foreign minister said in her virtual speech.

In September, the US announced a new security partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom (UK), dubbed AUKUS, which China has protested as a “threat to regional stability. The US also doubled down on its “Quad” engagement with Japan, Australia and India by holding an in-person summit in Washington. Shortly before Retno’s speech, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australian Prime Minister signed a treaty to facilitate joint exercises and strengthen mutual security cooperation. The Biden Administration has stepped up pressure on China by launching a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics and continuing protests over alleged human rights abuses against the Uighur minority, as well as reiterating its pledge to stand with Taiwan in the event of an attack by China.

Meanwhile, China works to protect its sweeping “Nine-Dash Line” claims in the South China Sea—claims that were invalidated by an international tribunal in 2016—and maintains its military presence in the world’s busiest sea lanes where a handful of Southeast Asian nations also have overlapping claims. Although Indonesia is not a claimant, China insists that it has “disputes” with Indonesia over what it calls “relevant waters” near Indonesia’s North Natuna Sea, where an oil and gas drilling project was completed last year despite the looming presence of Chinese vessels. In her address, Retno reiterated that negotiations on the delimitation of maritime boundaries must be based on the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Indonesia will continue to reject any claims that lack international legal basis,” she said.

**Ends**