



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 waives quarantine for fully vaccinated foreign arrivals and relaxes public activity curbs](#)
—Dio Suhenda and Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 23 March 2022

Indonesia waived quarantine requirement for all arrivals from overseas and eased activity restrictions in parts of Java and Bali on 22 March as the number of daily new coronavirus cases dropped more than 90% from mid-February. Just 4,700 new cases were reported on 21 March. Tourism and Creative Economy Minister Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno said the new travel policy would help revive tourism and create new economic opportunities. The decision followed successful implementation of a two-week quarantine waiver for visitors vaccinated against Covid-19 on the islands of Bali, Batam, and Bintan which showed a low positivity rate and declining Covid-19 reproduction. The government also lowered the public activity restriction (PPKM) level in six regencies and cities in Java. “Preparations for a post-pandemic transition [to endemicity] are expected to be completed by June,” Sandiagio explained, adding that people would be permitted to engage in religious activities during the upcoming Ramadan fasting month, and that people who are fully vaccinated would be allowed to travel to their hometowns.

[Endemic Covid-19 in sight](#)

—Hussein Abri Dongoran, *Tempo*, 14 March 2022

The Indonesian government plans to lower Covid-19 from pandemic to endemic status. The Ministry of Health predicts that this transition could take place within the next six months if conditions meet requirements. Recent assessments by the US Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization suggest that the pandemic is on the decline and will soon become endemic, Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin said. Survey data suggests that 86.6% of Indonesians already have antibodies, and a majority of those who never tested positive for Covid-19 and had not been vaccinated had similar antibody levels. Pandu Riono, an epidemiologist at the University of Indonesia, said high immunity levels were due to the country’s relatively high vaccination uptake, “but the government still must prepare for the emergence of a new variant.” The steps to reach Covid-19 endemicity would be a transmission and reproduction rate below one for six months and increasing the second vaccination dose to over 70% of the population, Minister Budi explained to President Joko Widodo.

[Visa on Arrival \(VoA\) program in Bali to be extended to China and India nationals](#)

—Divya Karya, *The Jakarta Post*, 15 March 2022

A cabinet meeting approved extending Indonesia's Visa on Arrival (VoA) program to Chinese and Indian nationals, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy Sandiaga Uno said on 14 March. The VoA program previously covered tourism visitors from 23 countries, including the US, New Zealand, Italy, Germany, and all Southeast Asian nations. The meeting also revoked the obligation for visitors to have a domestic sponsor for a tourism e-visa request. Under previous post-pandemic rules, tourism visitors had to find a sponsor for a visa, at a cost of about Rp 3.5 million (US\$329). The new visa will cost Rp 500,000. Air carriers Garuda, Singapore Airlines, and Australia's Jetstar have resumed international direct flights to Bali. Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan said the government also planned to expand the VoA program to other entry points, including Jakarta and Surabaya.

B. Marine & Fisheries

[Former fisheries minister's prison sentence for corruption reduced](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 10 March 2022

Former Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (DKP) Edhy Prabowo had his jail sentence for corruption slashed from nine to five years after the Supreme court ruled that the lower court's sentence had been unduly harsh and that Edhy had done "good work" in office, pointing to Edhy's lifting a ban of lobster larvae exports. Edhy's conviction in 2021 was in fact for collecting nearly US\$2 million in bribes from crony-linked companies that were awarded the lucrative lobster larvae export contracts. Edhy was sentenced to five years in July 2021, but the Jakarta High Court extended his sentence to nine years when he first appealed that sentence last November. "Edhy Prabowo is a corruptor who abused his position as the minister of marine affairs and fisheries by issuing a policy to make a profit in an illegal way," Susan Herawati, secretary-general of the Coalition for Fisheries Justice (KIARA), said in a statement to Mongabay. "The punishment should be defended or even increased, not discounted and given leniency."

[Tech-enabled start-ups are helping transform Indonesian fisheries, but challenges remain](#)

—Khamila Mulia, *KrAsia*, 18 March 2022

In light of the gap between the potential of Indonesian fisheries and challenges of underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of transparent market pricing, tech entrepreneurs have developed smart solutions to improve operations and livelihoods of small-scale fishers. One is eFishery, which raised over US\$110 million over eight rounds since 2014. Indonesia's fishing industry is highly fragmented, which means aquaculture e-commerce firms need to localize their solutions, according to Gibran Huzaifah, founder of eFishery. Another start-up, Integrated fishery platform Aruna, has raised around US\$100 million since 2017, focusing on connecting traditional fishers with global seafood markets based on fair trade. This includes aid for coastal communities and a network of field officers to hold regular discussions with traditional fishers about obstacles and problems in their daily operations. "Start-ups still have to work with middlemen who are part of the supply chain and double as leaders of farer groups," said Aldi Adrian Hartanto, a partner at MDI Ventures which has invested in several agritech and fishery start-ups.

[Associated Mangrove Aquaculture to build coastal resilience and contribute to blue economy](#)

—*Wetlands International*, 25 February 2022

Mangrove removal for aquaculture is a major cause of coastal erosion, which means associated mangrove and brackish water aquaculture land-use systems represent complementary opportunities for Indonesia and other countries to address negative impacts. Innovative Associated Mangrove Aquaculture (AMA) systems can restore mangrove greenbelts in the estuary along inland waterways and protect adjoining fishponds. As such, AMAs offer a sustainable

aquaculture approach that can be integrated with Indonesia's mangrove restoration programmes and aquaculture management plans to contribute to climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and development of a Blue Economy.

Policy Brief: "[Associated Mangrove Aquaculture \(AMA\) to build Nature-based coastal resilience and a blue economy in Indonesia](#)", *Wetlands International*, 25 February 2022

Paper: Estradivari, Dominic A. Andradi-Brown, et al, "[Marine Conservation in the Sunda Banda Seascape, Indonesia](#)", *Marine Policy* 138 (April 2022).

The Sunda Banda Seascape (SBS), located in the world's epicenter for marine biodiversity, has designated 85 marine protected areas (MPAs) totalling 8.1 million ha. Most of the SBS MPAs were recently established, and management has been influenced by policy and governance changes at the national and provincial levels. SBS MPAs protect more than 30% of mangrove, seagrass, and coral reef habitats in the seascape. Fishing is one of the most common livelihoods in MPA communities. 90% of fishers in the SBS use traditional gear, and destructive fishing is identified as the greatest threat to marine resources. Balancing the expansion of MPAs with strengthening MPA management effectiveness and integrating diverse social-ecological local contexts are important to achieving effective equitable marine conservation.

[Minister of Fisheries provides assurance of sufficient fish supply to meet demand during Ramadan](#)

—Aditya Ramadhan, Uyu Liman, *Antara News*, 24 March 2022

Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Sakti Wahyu Trenggono has assured there will be sufficient fish supply to meet demand during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and Eid al-Fitri. "Fish demand during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitri is expected to reach 2.64 million tonnes, while fish supply over April-May is predicted to be 2.99 million tonnes, the minister said in a meeting with Commission V of the Indonesian House of Representatives. However, the average price of fish is expected to increase by 5-10% during the first week of Ramadan due to an increase in demand and the usual reluctance of fishers to venture out to sea during the first week of the holy month.

C. Forests & Land Use

[Tropical deforestation emitting far more carbon than previously thought](#)

—John C. Cannon, *Mongabay*, 15 March 2022

Global carbon emissions from deforestation of tropical forests more than doubled in the first two decades of the 21st century from 0.97 ± 0.16 PgC yr⁻¹ in 2001-2005 to 1.99 ± 0.13 PgC yr⁻¹ in 2015-2019, a study found. Earlier assessments relying on government statistics "painted a very different picture", said Paul Elsen, a scientist with the World Conservation Society and a co-author of the paper. Three countries—D.R. Congo, Indonesia, and Brazil—exhibited the greatest forest carbon loss. In Indonesia and other peninsular/maritime Southeast Asia areas, the increase in carbon loss is attributed mainly to conversion of forest to oil palm and rubber plantations. Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah state and some Indonesian islands are lingering hotspots of forest carbon loss, but the rate of loss has not increased since 2010, which may reflect depletion of accessible forest following long histories of exploitation. Despite stabilization in forest loss, Indonesia still leads tropical Asia in annual forest carbon loss at 203.6 TgC yr⁻¹ followed by Malaysia.

Paper: Yu Feng, et al, "[Doubling of annual forest carbon loss over the tropics during the early twenty-first century](#)", *Nature Sustainability*, (28 February 2022).

Paper: Yu Feng, et al, "[Upward expansion and acceleration of forest clearance in the mountains of Southeast Asia](#)", *Nature Sustainability*, (28 June 2021).

Paper: Yonky Indrajaya et al, [“Tropical Forest Landscape Restoration in Indonesia: A Review”](#), *Land* 328 (21 February 2022).

Indonesia has the second-largest biodiversity in the world, but deforestation and forest degradation have caused habitat degradation, loss of biodiversity, deterioration of water quality, air pollution and increased greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Forest restoration at the landscape level is conducted to balance ecological integrity and human well-being as well as reducing CO₂ emissions to realize Indonesia’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) emissions reductions from the forestry sector. The paper examines regulatory, institutional, and policy aspects of forest restoration in Indonesia, silvicultural techniques. Restoration governance in Indonesia has focused on wetlands ecosystems including peatlands and mangroves, but due to the severely degraded condition of many forests, the government is adapting its restoration approach from the early focus on ecological restoration to landscape restoration which recognizes that involving local communities is critical to success.

[Deforestation for palm oil in Southeast Asia falls—is it a trend or a blip?](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 23 March 2022

Deforestation for oil palm cultivation in Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea dropped to its lowest level since 2017, according to a new analysis by China Reaction Research (CCR), the second consecutive year of declining palm-linked deforestation in the region that produces more than 80% of the world’s palm oil. Researchers attribute the decline to some companies adopting policies not to deforest, clear peatland or exploit workers (NDPE) while others may simply be running out of forest to clear. But concerns persist as Indonesia ramps up its palm oil-based biodiesel program, which sources some of its product from known deforesters. Palm oil prices are already reaching record highs amid a plunge in global edible oil stocks, which could spur expansion of plantations as clearing forest for oil palm becomes even more profitable. In Indonesia, the world’s biggest producer, palm oil deforestation peaked between 1997 and 2006 at 400,000 ha per year, spurred by government policies that encouraged plantation expansion on the islands of Borneo and Sulawesi and the Papua region.

[Opinion: Fate of Indonesian rainforest area the size of Belgium hangs in the balance](#)

—Sam Lawson, *Mongabay*, 17 March 2022

In November 2018 Earthsight and Mongabay published an investigation into the Tanah Merah oil palm project in Indonesia’s Papua province, revealing that the project, encompassing 280,00 ha of pristine rainforest in Boven Digoel district, set to release 104 million tonnes of CO₂—more than most countries emit in a year—represented the single largest threat to Indonesia’s forests. Indonesia instituted a moratorium on issuance of new permits for oil palm plantations that same year, but the problem was that so many permits had already been issued that deforestation could continue unabated for decades to come. It came as a surprise then in January 2022 when Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister of Environment and Forestry, announced she had cancelled 192 existing forest release permits covering a combined area of 3.1 million ha. Rather than protecting forests, however, Siti’s act may have been just a house-cleaning operation to make it possible for corrupt officials and greedy businessfolk to obtain fresh new licenses to the same land, including the Tanah Merah site.

Sam Lawson is the director of Earthsight.

[Indonesia hikes palm oil export levy amid accusations of ‘policy panic’](#)

—Bernadette Christina and Fransiska Nangoy, *Reuters*, 18 March 2022

Indonesia—the world’s biggest exporter of palm oil—announced a surprising policy U-turn when it removed export volume restrictions and significantly raised its maximum palm oil export levy instead. The new regulation, which took effect immediately, introduces higher progressive rates when the reference price for the edible oil reaches US\$1,050 a tonne. From there, for every US\$50

increase in the reference price, the levy will increase by \$20 up to a maximum US\$375 per tonne when the reference price is at least US\$1,500. Under previous rules, the maximum export levy was US\$175 per tonne. Indonesia's reference for crude palm oil (CPO) price for March stood at US\$1,432.24 per tonne. Indonesian exporters are also required to pay an export tax on palm oil shipments on top of the levy, which currently can be US\$200/tonne. The government said it would use the proceeds of the levy to subsidize domestic bulk cooking oil sales for the next six months.

[Indonesia's eight-year moratorium on forest clearing under-delivered—but so did the donors](#)
—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 15 March 2022

The 86.9 million tonnes of emissions reductions Indonesia achieved by keeping its forests standing between 2011 and 2018 represented just 4% of the country's reduction target under the Paris Agreement, but those carbon savings should have been worth US\$434.5 million under Indonesia's pact with Norway, in which the Nordic country pledged to pay US\$1 billion if Indonesia could slow its emissions from deforestation and land-use change. To date, however, Oslo has only agreed to pay US\$56.2 million, according to a study. The moratorium prevented only 150,089 ha of deforestation of dryland forest, and avoided deforestation in peatlands during the period were effectively null, a "small dent" in Indonesia's overall commitment to mitigate climate change and just 4% of the 29% emissions target reduction by 2030 that Indonesia committed to in its National Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement. With its \$56.2 million, Norway effectively bought emissions reductions at less than US\$1 a tonne, unfair from Indonesia's perspective if compared to carbon prices of US\$125 or more in other jurisdictions.

Paper: Ben Groom et al, "[Carbon emissions reductions from Indonesia' moratorium on forest concessions are cost-effective yet contribute little to Paris pledges](#)", *PNAS* 119:5 (24 January 2022)

D. Energy, Mining and Climate Change

[Time to review biodiesel policy amid skyrocketing crude, palm oil prices](#)
—Edi Suhardi, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 March 2022

The Oil Palm Plantation Fund Management Agency (BPDPKS) recently reported to the House of Representatives that almost Rp 140 trillion [US\$9.76 billion] had been collected from palm oil export surcharges over 2015-2021 under the crude palm oil (CPO) funding scheme. Almost 80% of this amount was used to subsidize biodiesel, but only 5% was allocated to replanting smallholder oil palm estates, which would contribute to increased production without requiring establishing new plantation areas. In 2021 alone, subsidies for biodiesel totalled Rp 51.8 trillion, up 85% from 2020 as a result of skyrocketing CPO prices and increasing the biodiesel blend to 30% CPO (B30). The Oil Indonesia Oil Palm Smallholders' Association (APKASINDO), which account for around 40% of the estimated 16 million ha of oil palm estates in the country, protested strongly that the fund's use was not in line with the main objective of the CPO support fund, which is to enhance palm oil sustainability through replanting smallholder estates with higher yield seedlings.]

[Billionaire Prayogo Pangestu gains full control of Star Energy Geothermal](#)
—*The Jakarta Post*, 12 March 2022

Indonesian billionaire Prayogo Pangestu gained full ownership of the geothermal power firm Star Energy after closing a US\$440 million deal by which his company, Green Era Inc., a Singapore-based renewables investment company, acquired a one-third stake from the Thai electricity company BCPG. The other two-thirds had already been acquired in 2018 by the diversified Indonesian petrochemical giant PT Barito Pacific, which is majority-owned by the Pangestu family. Star Energy controls geothermal plants in Indonesia with a total capacity of 875 megawatts (MW), including the Wayang Windu, Salak, and Darajat plants in West Java. The company said it

planned to spend US\$2.5 billion to increase total generating capacity to 1,200 MW by 2028. Indonesia, which holds the largest known geothermal reserves in the world, plans to have a total of 3.35 gigawatts (GW) of geothermal generating capacity by 2030. To date, out of a potential total of 23.7 GW in geothermal resources, only 2.18 GW or 9.2% has been utilized, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

[Activists call for better geothermal safety after accident](#)

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 March 2022

Activists have urged regulators to better enforce workplace safety at geothermal power plants after a hydrogen sulfide leak at state-owned geothermal company PT Geo Dipa Energy (DGE) in Dieng, Central Java, resulted in the death of one person and serious injuries to five others. Ki Bagus Hadi Kusuma, an activist with Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam) said recurring accidents at geothermal projects have ranged from hydrogen sulfide gas leaks, well and pipe explosions, to mudflows similar to the Lapindo mudflow disaster in East Java. The Sorik Marapi Geothermal Power site in Mandailing Natal, North Sumatra, saw three accidents in the last two years, while the Mataloko geothermal project in Flores, Nusa Tenggara Timur, has experienced multiple hot mud bursts in the middle of local plantations since 2009, activists claim.

[Indonesia Energy Transition Outlook \(IETO\) 2022 published](#)

—Institute for Essential Services Reform, 10 March 2022

The Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR) has just published the latest edition of its annual *Indonesia Energy Transition Outlook (IETO) 2020*, previously titled *Indonesia Clean Energy Outlook — ICEO*. The report comprises analyses of Indonesia's current status and recent development with respect to the energy transition in the fossil energy, electric power, solar power, energy storage, electric vehicle, clean fuels and energy efficiency sectors; sub-national breakdowns, and sections on financing energy system decarbonization and energy transition readiness.

Report: Fabby Tumiwa and Pamela Simamora (eds), Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR), "[Indonesia Energy Transition Outlook 2022—Tracking Progress of Energy Transition in Indonesia: Aiming for Net-Zero Emissions by 2050](#)", December 2021.

[France pledges support for Indonesia's energy transition](#)

—Dian Septiari, *The Jakarta Post*, 17 March 2022

Rémy Rioux, Director General of the French Development Agency (AFD), met with officials in Jakarta to reaffirm France will support Indonesia's energy transition and promotion of sustainable finance. "We want to be helpful and provide something specific; additionally we wish to build long-term relationships with institutions beyond the finance project," he said. The AFD has committed to mobilize 1.3 million Euros (US\$ 1.4 million) for feasibility studies and strengthening state-owned electricity company PLN's capacity to develop wind farms in Banten. A pre-feasibility study estimated the potential for wind power [at the site] at 350 megawatts (MW). The Banten wind farm has the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 540,000 tons of CO₂ per year," PLN chief Darmawan Prasodjo said. The project would begin this year, with the aim to begin operation by 2025. The AFD also renewed its partnership with state infrastructure financing firm PT Sarana Multi Infrastruktur (PT SMI) for another three years to finance green infrastructure and low carbon development.

[US pledges to support Indonesia's transition toward sustainable energy](#)

—Dian Septiari, *The Jakarta Post*, 19 March 2022

The US will continue to support Indonesia's transition to green energy as part of that country's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, two US officials said. Robert Blake, Senior Advisor to Special Presidential Envoy for Climate and US Treasury Department climate counsellor John

Morton met with Indonesia's Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments Luhut Pandjaitan, Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, and Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Arifin Tasrif to discuss how the US could help Indonesia accelerate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including through developing renewable energy sources, reducing coal consumption, and strengthening efforts to combat deforestation. In our discussions, "Indonesia expressed interest in accelerating the decommissioning of coal-fired power plants and ... allowing renewable energy to develop at scale and reach its full potential, Morton told reporters in a briefing, adding that the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) had expressed interest in supporting possible projects in Indonesia.

[Government outlines strategy to turn forestry and land-use sector into a carbon sink by 2030](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 19 March 2022

Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya Bakar has issued a decree outlining the strategy to turn the forestry and land-use sector into a carbon sink by 2030. At present, forestry is Indonesia's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, totalling nearly 925,000 gigagrams of carbon dioxide equivalent (Gg CO₂e) in 2019. The decree outlines approaches to halting the rates of deforestation and forest degradation, improving social forestry, rehabilitating forests and restoring peatlands and mangroves that could enable the forest and land-use sector to absorb more carbon than it releases. Minister Sisi said that after a carbon sink in forestry was achieved by 2030, further efforts to reduce emissions in energy, agriculture and other sectors would follow until Indonesia brought its greenhouse gas emissions down to net zero by 2060 or sooner. However, activists argue the plan is just a way to deflect pressure from environmental groups without actually halting deforestation. The quickest way to achieve a carbon sink is to stop deforestation completely, said Greenpeace's Iqbal Damanik.

[Ministry: Indonesia will need 127.1 million tonnes coal for domestic market in 2022](#)

—Pritish Raj, Suyash Pande, *S&P Commodity Insights*, 22 February 2022

Indonesia will require 127.1 million tonnes of coal from producers for the domestic market in 2022 in order to fulfil local energy needs and avert a shortfall, Lana Saria, Director of Coal Business Fostering at the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said in a presentation on 22 February. While power plants under the state-owned electricity company (PLN) will require 64.2 million tonnes, independent power producers (IPPs) will require 62.9 million tonnes. In 2021, PLN's coal supply realization from 116 supply partners stood at only 112 million tonnes, a shortfall of 16% from the original plan. The new requirement comes weeks after the country relaxed the three-week coal export ban imposed 1 January after domestic stocks slipped to critically low levels as producers failed to meet their domestic supply obligation, or DMO. Under the DMO, coal mining companies need to allocate 25% of their annual production to the domestic market.

[Hyundai launches plant to produce Indonesia's first electric automobile](#)

—Fransiska Nangoy, *Reuters*, 17 March 2022

Hyundai Motor Group launched a new automotive plant that will produce Indonesia's first locally-assembled electric vehicle (EV), part of President Joko Widodo's project to develop a full EV supply chain utilising the country's mineral resources. "We need to be an important player in the global supply of electric cars," Widodo said at the launch. Indonesia is a major producer of nickel, an important material for EV batteries, and also produces cobalt, bauxite and copper, which are also used in EV production. By 2024, all EVs produced in Indonesia will use locally-manufactured batteries and other key components, the president said. Hyundai said it would invest US\$1.55 billion [in the plant] up to 2030, with an initial annual production capacity of 150,000 vehicles, to later be expanded to 250,000. Euisun Chung, the group's chairman, said the new EV plant would be linked with a Hyundai-LG joint venture battery plant scheduled to open in 2024.

E. Pollution and Waste Management

Indonesia bolstering green economy through waste management

—Sugiharto P, Tenzu T, *Antara News*, 17 March 2022

The Indonesian government is encouraging implementation of green economy through waste management to realize social welfare and equality while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcity, said Rofi Alhanif, Assistant Deputy of Waste and Sewage Management at the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investments (*Kemenko Marves*). According to the National Plastic Action Partnership (NPAP), Indonesia produces 6.8 million tons of plastic waste every year, of which about 10% reaches the sea. According to Alhanif, a green economy approach to resolving plastic waste problems will require investments of US\$5.1 billion, which could add 150,000 formal workers and 3.3 million informal workers to plastic waste treatment industries. The government claims it reduced marine plastic waste over 2018-2020 by 15.3% by reducing the total volume of plastic waste from 615,674 tonnes to 531,540 tonnes. “Our calculation is that 25-30% of plastic waste can be reduced over the next three years, hopefully enabling the target of 70% reduction by 2025 to be realized.

Paper: Hans Fredrik Veiteberg Braaten et al, “[Plastic pollution in Indonesia and the Philippines: current status and upcoming knowledge needs](#)”, Norwegian Institute for Water Research, 18 October 2021 (ASEAN-Norway Cooperation Project on Local Capacity Building for reducing Plastic Pollution in the ASEAN region).

Indonesia needs to get serious about recycling industry so plastic waste doesn't get crazier

—Ariandono Dijan Winardi, *VOI*, 23 February 2022

Data from the Environment Agency (DLH) stated that the use of single-use plastic shopping bags in DKI Jakarta decreased by 82% after the enactment of a government regulation in 2019 concerning the obligation to use environmentally-friendly reusable shopping bags. But there is still a long way to go, though the portion of plastic bag use is now relatively small compared to total plastic waste, including bottles, glasses, plastic packaging, including plastic waste from wholesalers, packaging, specialty stores and other sources. Developing the circular economy is a solution, but this requires improvements in waste collection systems to make it possible to immediately separate types of waste. Meanwhile, increasing the number of community-based waste banks can increase the supply of plastic waste to the recycling industry. In 2014, there were only 1,172 waste banks in operation. By 2018, this number had increased to 7,488. The Indonesian Plastic Recycling Association (ADUPI) says 70% of total recycled plastic products were exported.

Scarce and contaminated water

—Dini Pramita, *Tempo*, 21 March 2022

The Asian Development Bank's *Asian Water Development Outlook 2020* classified Indonesia's water resilience as Category 3, ranking it below Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and the Philippines, based on access to clean water, sanitation, water impact on health, and government support for the water ecosystem. The National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) warns that annual water availability in Java—which contains 56% of Indonesia's population—is projected to decline to 476.6 m³ per capita by 2040 and 445.82 m³ per capita by 2045, indicating absolute water crisis. Land conversion and deforestation is a causative factor, according to Firdaus Ali, an expert staff member at the Ministry of Public Works. Forest conversions reduce the capacity of soil to absorb rainwater in upstream areas. According to the Ministry of Health, over 80% of household drinking water sources in Indonesia are contaminated by feces. “The only water that can be utilized by people is water that has been absorbed by forest [soils] in upstream areas and flows along rivers.

F. Conservation and Protected Areas

[Thriving in the pandemic](#)

—Dina Pramita, *Tempo*, 14 March 2022

Rama and Dygha, a pair of Javan hawk-eagles (*Nisaetus bartelsi*) at the Javan Hawk-eagle Wildlife Center in Mount Halimun-Salak National Park (TNGHS) in Bogor take turns brooding their single egg. In July 2020 the pair hatched another chick, Parama, now ready to be released into the wild. Another pair, Prabu and Ratu, hatched their offspring Prawara in April 2021. Prawara was born in the wild after the egg was incubated for 47 days at TNGHS. All hiking trails in the area were closed to the public while the parent birds brooded. Javan hawk-eagles are extremely sensitive to the presence of humans and will abandon their egg if a human is spotted close to the nest. During the pandemic, which reduced visitors, the birds thrived, said Wardi, Coordinator of the Javan Hawk-Eagle Center at TNGHS. Park Head Ahmad Munawir said other wild animals are moving in the park more freely, including Javan leopards, silvery gibbon. After the pandemic, Munawir said he would change the pattern of tourism from mass tourism to special interest tour.

[Opinion: Back to nature](#)

—*Tempo*, 14 March 2022

Covid-19 has given the mountains and forests a break from human hands. Since the start of the pandemic, many tourist attractions and hiking trails in national parks have been closed, bringing peace and quiet back to the forests. Red frogs are reappearing in Mount Halimun-Salak National Park, which had not been seen for more than 134 years. Other returning wild animals in the park are the honey bear, emerald dove, golden cat, and the Java. These restored ecosystems must be preserved. National parks need to revise management systems to support ecological restoration so that improvements continue. Laws with the potential to damage the habitats of wild animals should be revoked, for example the Omnibus Job Creation Law, which gives companies the power to take over forests. The government must not wait for the forests to be destroyed and for wildlife to be wiped out.

[Probe finds palm oil firm illegally clearing forest in Sumatra wildlife haven](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 18 March 2022

An investigation by the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) discovered that a palm company has been clearing forests illegally in Sumatra since at least 2016. The 799 ha of forest cleared by PT Nia Yulided Bersaudara (NYB) makes it the top deforester among companies with oil palm concessions in Sumatra's Leuser Ecosystem. The investigation found that the company's logging activities and timber royalty payments were not registered in government databases, which is illegal, and its initial permit was granted by Tarmizi Abdul Karim, the former acting governor of Aceh province. Tarmizi's son-in-law is the president of NYB. The Leuser Ecosystem in Aceh and North Sumatra provinces, covering nearly 2.3 million ha, is the last place on the planet where critically-endangered Sumatran rhinos, tigers, orangutans and elephants coexist. NYB also evaded the wholesale revocation of concession permits for plantation companies announced by the government in January this year.

G. Sustainable Funding & Finance

[PLN secures US\\$380 million loan for 1 GW hydropower plant in West Java](#)

—*The Jakarta Post*, 17 March 2020

State-owned electricity firm PLN has secured a US\$380 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), part of the World Bank Group to help finance construction of the 1,040 megawatt (MW) Upper Cisokan hydropower plant (PLTA) in West Java. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and World Bank plan to finance the remaining US\$230 million portion of the US\$610 in total investment required. State-Owned Enterprises

Ministry deputy for finance and risk management Nawal Nely said the hydro power plant was expected to reduce the state budget's dependence on and sensitivity to oil and gas price fluctuations. "The Upper Cisokan hydro power plant project is a timely and critical step by PLN in the energy transition process," she said. "This is the only project with a match between loan duration and project life expectancy, so that the risk of refinancing, apart from having a manageable interest rate, can also be managed."

[Using public funding to attract private investment in renewable energy in Indonesia](#)

—Murtiani Hendriwardani et al, International Institute for Sustainable Development, February 2022

Indonesia has an opportunity to accelerate its energy transition by supporting renewable energy development, but the right mechanisms and policies to incentivize private actors to invest in the sector will be necessary. Indonesia can send positive signals by leveraging public funding in the form of fiscal incentives, budget transfers, and capital injections. Specific measures include creation of public finance institutions (PFIs) dealing with specialized infrastructure, issuance of Green Sukuk and green bonds, and expanding the role of state-owned enterprises, particularly the national electricity company PLN and the national and oil and gas company Pertamina, as well as international and multilateral financing. Five principles Indonesia should follow include: 1) Do not provide public funds for fossil fuel production; 2) Rise money from fossil fuel subsidy reform and taxes; 3) Swap support from fossil fuels to clean energy; 4) Incentivize investments in clean electricity; and 5) Ensure the transition is a just one.

Brief: Murtiani Hendriwardani et al, International Institute for Sustainable Development, "[Using public funding to attract private investment in renewable energy in Indonesia](#)", 23 February 2022

[Science-Based Targets Initiative accused of providing a platform for greenwashing to global brands](#)

—Joe Lo, *Climate Home News*, 6 February 2022

The Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) was slammed as a "platform for greenwashing" in a report by the New Climate Institute (NCI). NCI examined the climate plans of 18 multinational corporations which SBTi had rubber-stamped as compatible with 1.5°C or 2.0°C of global warming. "For at least 11 of these, we find their targets are highly contentious," the reports argued. Nestlé, Ikea and Unilever are among the brands with climate plans SBTi judged to meet the strongest 1.5°C standard, but which NCI found to have "very low integrity". SBTi is the most prominent global standard-setter for corporate climate targets globally, having endorsed more than a thousand as in line with international climate goals. But NCI said it had a conflict of interest, as it is funded by the same companies whose plans it validates, charging them up to \$14,500. It also questioned whether SBTi had sufficient resources to find hidden flaws in corporate plans.

[The world is financing its own extinction](#)

—Patrick Greenfield, *The Guardian*, 17 February 2022

The world is spending at least US\$1.8 trillion on subsidies every year, about 2% of global GDP, subsidising activities that contribute to climate change and biodiversity loss, according to the report from The B Team, a global non-profit. Climate change and land-use change are projected to make wildfires more intense, with a global increase in extreme fires of up to 14% by 2030, 30% by 2050, and 50% by the end of the century, according to a new UN Environment Program and GRID-Arendal report. The report said the arctic is likely to experience significant increases in burning. If greenhouse gas emissions continue at their current rate, tropical forests in Indonesia and the southern Amazon are also likely to see an increase in burning. In 2015, 4.5 million ha of forest and peatland burnt, with emissions from peat fires alone reaching between 1.5 and 1.75 GtCO₂—more than the entire annual emissions of the country of Japan for that year.

Paper: United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and GRID Arendal, "[Spreading like Wildfire: The Rising Threat of Extraordinary Landscape Fires: A UNEP Rapid Response Assessment](#)", 23 February 2022.

Special section on postponing Indonesia's 2024 elections

[Talk of extending Joko Widodo's term puts Indonesia's democratic resilience under spotlight](#)
—Kate Lamb, *Reuters*, 17 March 2022

Senior political figures in Indonesia back the idea of extending President Joko Widodo's tenure as president beyond his constitutionally-mandated two-term limit. Recent comments by Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investments, who argues a majority of Indonesians support the idea, has fuelled concerns about a threat to democratic reforms two decades after strongman president Suharto was forced out of office. Others backing the idea include Minister of Investment Bahlil Lahadalia, Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartoto, and National Awakening Party head Muhaimin Iskandar. Supporters argue that the president needs more time to oversee economic recovery and implement his US\$32 billion capital relocation plan, which has been disrupted by the pandemic. But Jakarta Post senior editor Endy Bayuni said the political angling was dangerously subversive and a "sure recipe for the end of democracy" if allowed to continue. The president has said he would abide by the Constitution, but analysts suggest elites are testing the waters by floating the proposal.

[Strong resistance against the donkeys](#)
—Budiarti Utami Putri, *Tempo*, 21 March 2022

On 9 March former president Megawati Soekarnoputri issued a command to PDI-P party leaders reaffirming her opposition to postponing the election. "Ibu Mega's attitude is clear, when it comes to the [1945] Constitution, there is no compromise," said Komarudin Watubun, PDI-P Honorary Council Chairman. The constitution stipulates that the president and vice president serve terms of five years, and can only serve for two terms. Following Megawati's decree, PDI-P cadres aggressively voiced opposition to postponing the elections. On 15 March, Puan Maharani, Speaker of the House of Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*, or DPR), who is also Megawati's daughter, asserted that the government and the DPR have agreed the elections will be held on 14 February 2024. The PDI-P also turned its back on its own proposal to amend the Constitution to strengthen the powers of the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, or MPR) to set state policy outlines known as National Guidelines of State Policy (*Garis Besar Haluan Negara*, or GBHN) during the New Order era.

[PDI-P puts brakes on plan to amend the Constitution](#)
—Yerica Lai, *The Jakarta Post*, 21 March 2022

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) has suspended its push for a constitutional amendment to strengthen the People's Consultative Assembly (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*, or MPR) following proposals from other members of the ruling party coalition to delay the 2024 elections. Several prominent figures had proposed the delay and called for extending Joko Widodo's term as president beyond 2024, which would require amending the constitution. The PDI-P, of which President Widodo is a member, rejected these proposals, despite support from members of the President's inner circle and the Golkar Party. The PDI-P called for a pause on its own initiative to amend the Constitution to grant the MPR greater power to formulate and enforce "state policy guidelines" similar to the institution's authority during the Soeharto regime. MPR Deputy Speaker Arsul Sani of the United Development Party (PPP) said his party preferred no amendment to one laden with other agenda items. "If other things are to be included, it would be better to have no amendment," Arsul said.

[Kadin voices concern over elections imbroglio](#)
—Vincent Fabian Thomas, *The Jakarta Post*, 21 March 2022

The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) voiced concerns over the confusion surrounding the 2024 elections, fearing it may lead to political instability. Shinta Kamdani, Kadin deputy chair and coordinator for investment and maritime affairs, said stability was essential for Indonesia to keep up with other countries in terms of competitiveness. “We have a big asset, which is Indonesia’s political stability,” she said. Having “ripples” is okay as long as they do not create instability.” Kamdani’s comments suggest that the Indonesian business community is already scrutinizing the 2024 elections, which have been turned murky by recent developments. The presidential election is scheduled for Feb. 14, 2024, yet the government and House of Representatives failed last month to pass the election budget because of disagreements over costs after three political parties from President Joko Widodo’s ruling coalition proposed postponing the 2024 elections by one or two years and after Coordinating Minister Luhut Pandjaitan claimed that a majority of Indonesians favoured extending the president’s term.

Special section on Indonesia and the Russia-Ukraine War

[Ukraine way may bring windfall to Indonesia’s trade balance](#)

—Vincent Fabian Thomas, *The Jakarta Post*, 14 March 2022

The Russo-Ukraine war is expected to positively impact Indonesia’s trade balance as most of the country’s exports benefit from surging commodity prices. These include crude palm oil (CPO), coal, and metals like aluminum, copper and nickel. “Despite the hike in [global] oil prices, we are still gaining amid the ongoing crisis in Eastern Europe, a consequence of becoming a net exporter of commodities,” said David Samual, chief economist at Bank Central Asia (BCA). Coal prices passed US\$439 per tonne on 8 March, a five-fold increase over 2021, while the price for CPO in early March doubled from the same period last year. Coal and CPO account for about 25% of Indonesia’s exports. However, 60% of Indonesia’s domestic oil consumption is imported, and surging commodity prices for imported raw materials also affects domestic manufacturing. “Overall, the impact is mixed, but the plantation and mining sectors have remained positive,” said Josua Pardede, chief economist at Bank Permata.

[Exports pick up in February as coal ban ends and commodities surge](#)

—Dzulfiqar Fathur Rahman, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 March 2022

Indonesia’s exports grew faster in February as the government lifted the export ban on coal and commodity prices surged following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) reported that exports last month grew 34.14% year-on-year, while import growth eased. Coal was the biggest export commodity leading the growth, which also benefited from surging prices for palm oil and nickel, with mining commodities growing 84.6% compared to a year earlier. Overall, Indonesia posted a US\$3.38 billion trade surplus in February, the 22nd consecutive month of trade surplus buoyed by rising commodity prices as the global economy recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic.

[Ukraine threatens rain on Indonesia’s G20 parade](#)

—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 15 March 2022

Maintenance crews and busy painting and dollying up the route from Bali airport to the luxury tourist enclave of Nusa Dua for the Group of 20 Summit in late October. It may be seven months out, but Indonesian President Joko Widodo wants everything ship-shape for an event he regards as Indonesia’s coming-of-age and a milestone in his two-term presidency. Yet in far-off Ukraine, the brutal Russian invasion threatens to rain on his parade just as tourists are starting to return to post-pandemic Bali. With the crisis already casting a dark cloud over the conference, a president who normally takes little interest in foreign affairs is faced with the tough decision to disinvite Russian President Vladimir Putin. Unless he does, as many as 15 leads led by US President Joe Biden will almost certainly decide not to come rather than be in the same room with someone they

detest and who is already being accused of war crimes. But without Putin and the Russian delegation, there is a risk that China and India could mount a boycott of their own. Indonesia's reluctance to impose sanctions on Russia reportedly stems from a US\$1.4 billion oil refinery being built on Java's north coast by state oil company Pertamina and Russian energy giant Rosneft, which is also involved with premier oil in a new gas discovery in the North Natuna Sea.

[Indonesia: The lion that mellowed](#)

—Philip Bowring, *Asia Sentinel*, 15 March 2022

Indonesia's place as president of the Group of 20 most economically important nations this year looks like a blown opportunity for leadership. Its typically flaccid diplomacy has yet to take any initiative on the most critical issue facing the globe—Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The G20 may be focused on economic, not political issues, but Russia's actions threaten at least as much global economic damage as the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet Indonesia's presentation of itself via the G20 website displays a list of minor issues leading to the summit in Bali in November, itself as much a tourism promotion exercise as anything more meaningful. It has made no attempt to use its position to rally the majority of G20 members to take a stand on an invasion which threatens to disrupt not only trade in key commodities but which could lead to breakdowns in supply chains serving a wide variety of global industries. Indonesian policymakers need to understand that being a big country sometimes means having to make uncomfortable choices. Trying to be nice to everyone simply does not make sense in approaching the Ukraine situation, let alone protecting its own seas and exclusive economic zone resources from another expansionist power. For a long time, Indonesia has coasted along seeing itself as the de facto leader of Asean, but fact that the regional grouping is a spent force in international affairs is at least in part due to Indonesia's reticence.

[Peace on the G20 agenda](#)

—Editorial Board, *The Jakarta Post*, 17 March 2022

The world faces another major economic recession, this time the result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the economic sanctions imposed on the aggressor, which have disrupted global trade and financial systems. We think it would be futile for Indonesia as this year's president of the Group of 20 to try to keep the war off the agenda. It can try, but the impacts of Russia's invasion are bound to haunt discussions of global health, a sustainable energy transition, and digital transformation—the three areas Indonesia has prioritized. Rather than ignoring the issue, Indonesia should make the war in Ukraine a main part of the agenda. And rather than waiting passively for events to unfold, Indonesia should take an active role in the search for peace. Pressures to expel Russia or exclude it from the summit will be a test of Indonesia's global leadership. Indonesia should use the presidency to play an active role in mediating peace between Russia and Ukraine and to ease the tensions between Russia and the United States.

[Finance minister: Russia-Ukraine conflict “real threat” to economic recovery](#)

—Vincent Fabian Thomas, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 March 2022

Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati has raised concerns over heightened geopolitical tension. Sri Mulyani, who served as managing director to the World Bank in the past, said the conflict has created a very high degree of uncertainty as economic sanctions led to extreme increases in commodity prices as well as volatility in capital and financial markets, with risks of supply chain disruption, inflation, unequal vaccination rates and impending global monetary tightening, [posing] a very real threat for the economic recovery both in advanced as well as emerging countries. Indonesia could withstand the situation relatively well because its high trade surplus and foreign reserves provide a comfortable cushion to the volatility and uncertainty [related to] its position as a net exporter of commodities. “I think we are relatively [shielded] from this conflict,” she said. Thomas Rookmaaker, head of Asia-Pacific sovereign ratings at Fitch, said surging commodity prices would significantly push up Indonesian inflation this year, especially food prices, while the effect on fuel prices remains to be seen due to fuel price subsidies.

[Russian ambassador: Putin plans to attend G20 summit](#)

—Stanley Widiyanto, Antie Teo, *Reuters*, 23 March 2022

Russian President Vladimir Putin intends to attend a G20 summit being hosted by Indonesia later this year, Russia's ambassador in Jakarta said on Wednesday, following calls by some members for the country to be barred from the group. "Not only G20, many organisations are trying to expel Russia," Russian Ambassador Lyudmila Vorobieva said at a news conference. "The reaction of the West is absolutely disproportional." The US and its Western allies are assessing whether Russia should remain within the Group of Twenty (G20) of major world economies following its invasion of Ukraine, sources said.

Dian Septiari reported separately in the *Jakarta Post*: "It will depend on many things including the [improving] Covid-19 situation, but so far, yes [...] he wants to come," Vorobieva said. "We are very appreciative of the firm position of the Indonesian government." Her comments came after reports that the United States was contemplating pushing Russia out of the G20. "We believe it cannot be business as usual for Russia in international institutions and the international community, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said.

H. Other

[Indonesia's new capital on shaky financial ground](#)

—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 23 March 2022

Indonesia's government is scrambling to find alternative sources of funding after Japanese conglomerate SoftBank Corporation withdrew its support for the country's US\$32.5 billion new administrative capital in East Kalimantan citing return-on-investment issues. Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut Panjaitan said in 2020 that the Tokyo-based venture capital company had offered to invest US\$30-40 billion in the project, known as Nusantara, but SoftBank has never mentioned a figure. Media reports suggest the withdrawal may stem from financial setbacks. The market value of SoftBank's stock fell US\$55 billion last year after the company refused to pledge a continuation of buybacks to prop up the stock price. Now analysts question whether Softbank Chairman and CEO Masayoshi Son was serious about the venture from the start. According to news portal Katadata, Son prepared the ground for exiting from the new capital project by making "unreasonable demands", including his insistence that the government plan for a population of 50 million if Nusantara were to meet the economies of scale needed to make it "investible". Son also reportedly urged the government to consider relocating all industries from Greater Jakarta to East Kalimantan, leading the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) to remove Softbank from its list of potential investors last year.

[Amnesty International Indonesia continues campaigning for investigation of human rights abuses in Papua despite "militia" protest](#)

—News Desk, *The Jakarta Post*, 18 March 2022

Hundreds of protestors wearing camouflage gear claiming to be members of Laskar Merah Putih (Red and White Paramilitary) demonstrated at the headquarters of Amnesty International Indonesia (All) in Jakarta on 17 March, calling Executive Director Usman Hamid a traitor and demanding that the government expel the international human rights group from the country. Usman said he was concerned by the confrontation. "It reminds me of militaristic [methods] of the New Order regime to silence human rights activists," he said. In response to the protest, All said it would continue lobbying government to conduct a full investigation into human rights abuses in Papua. Earlier that week, at least two protesters in Papua were killed and several others wounded when a demonstration turned violent. The protestors were accusing the government of excluding Papuans in its plan to create new provinces from Papua and West Papua provincial jurisdictions, claiming that breaking up the existing provinces would be used to tighten the government's control over the Papua region.

[PPATK monitors social media activities of new 'crazy rich people'](#)

—M Rosseno Aji, *Tempo*, 10 March 2022

The Financial Transactions Report and Analysis Center (PPATK) announced that it had terminated the transactions of 121 accounts suspected of being linked to illegal investments, comprising 49 different identities in 56 different financial service providers. The amount we stopped was almost HRp 355 billion (US\$24.8 million), PPATK head Ivan Yustianandana said. A PPATK spokesman explained that the PPATK is monitoring activities of young people who suddenly appeared on social media showing off their wealth in the form of luxury goods. The monitoring effort was launched after police named two crazy rich people, Doni Salmanan and Indra Kenz suspects in a case of online gambling and fraud and money laundering using Binomo and Quotek mobile apps. Doni Salmanan, known as “Crazy Rich Bandung” was named as a suspect in the Quotek case and Indra Kenz, known as “Cray Rich Medan”.

[Indonesia declares fight against illegal mercury trade as COP4 Minamata Convention host](#)

—A. Muh. Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 22 March 2022

Indonesia has tabled a global declaration calling on parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury to tackle illegal trade in the metal. The draft of the non-binding declaration was presented at Nusa Dua Bali where Indonesia is hosting the fourth Conference of Parties (COP4) to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Indonesia is expected to lead discussions about annexes listing products that use mercury and manufacturing processes where mercury or mercury compounds are used. The Minamata Convention, which entered into force in 2017, aims to protect global health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury, named after a Japanese city which became the epicenter of Minamata disease, a neurological disorder caused by severe mercury poisoning. Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya Bakar stressed the urgency of addressing the rising illegal trade in mercury, particularly in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector (ASGM). The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) says the illegal trade in mercury reached an estimated US\$100-215 million in 2020, and estimated that half the mercury used in the ASGM sector was acquired through illegal trade.

Ends