

Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest

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The Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest is a biweekly collection of summaries of articles related to conservation, the environment, and sustainability in Indonesia which have appeared in print or online in local, regional, and global English-language media. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections. To learn more about us and to access previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our website at www.starlingresources.com. If you would like to add colleagues or friends to our distribution list or unsubscribe, please contact us at newsdigest@starlingresources.com.

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A. Marine & Fisheries

[Indonesia backtracks on a plan that was criticized for 'privatizing' fisheries resources](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 11 August 2022

The Indonesian government has abandoned a plan to contract long-term fishing rights to private companies following intense criticism from small-scale fishers and experts. The plan would have allowed foreign and local fishing companies to operate for up to 30 years in designated fishing areas with set catch quotas and fishing gear. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) said the scheme would boost economic growth while guaranteeing stability for investors. However, experts said the proposal would reduce the government's authority and discriminate against marginalized fisher groups. "Is this really in line with the needs of traditional fishers and aimed to benefit them, or does this instead roll out a red carpet for the corporations and foreign investors that want to exploit the fisheries' resources?" asked Susan Herawati, secretary-general of the Coalition for Fisheries Justice (KIARA). Muhammad Zaini Hanafi, director-general of the KKP's Directorate of Marine Capture Fisheries, said feedback from marine experts and small-scale fisheries had led to a decision to focus on catch quota-based fishing.

In Sumatra, rising seas and sinking land spell hard times for small-scale fishers

—Tonggo Simangunsong, *Mongabay*, 16 August 2022

Fishers operating near the port of Belawan on the island of Sumatra report declining catches and reduced livelihoods due to tidal flooding. Geological conditions in the area, the result of millions of years of alluvial deposits from ancient rivers and nearby Lake Toba, are relatively young and vulnerable to subsidence. Clearing of mangrove forests to make way for mangrove plantations along the coast has also contributed to flooding, according to Onrizal Onrizal, a researcher from the University of North Sumatra. From 1977 to 2006, some 60% of the mangroves on the east coast of North Sumatra were damaged, impacting fishes and other aquatic biota. Last year Belawan residents staged a protest demanding that the mayor of Medan address the tidal flooding, which they blame on the conversion of mangroves into oil palm plantations. Indonesia's Peat and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM) is targeting the rehabilitation of 600,000 ha of mangrove forest in nine provinces, including 21,370 ha in North Sumatra.

Government applies five blue economy strategies to maximize marine potential

—Aditya Ramadhan, Resinta S, *Antara News*, 2 August 2022

Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, Minister of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP), recently discussed the implementation of five blue economy strategies to maximize the potential of Indonesia's marine resources at a working meeting of the Marine Fisheries Human Resources Research Agency. The first strategy is to expand the conservation area to 30% of the total marine area to increase fish populations and maintain carbon sequestration. The second is to maintain the sustainability of fishery resources, increase regional economic growth, and boost the welfare of fishers by catching fish based on quotas. The third is to maintain the carrying capacity of the environment through environment-friendly fish cultivation and aquaculture focused on shrimp, crab, lobster, and seaweed. The fourth uses marine spatial planning to protect coastal and marine ecosystems. The fifth strategy would implement the Sea Love Month program under which fishers are not allowed to catch fish for one month in a year. Instead, fishers must remove garbage from the sea for collection.

Climate change and overfishing threaten once 'endless' Antarctic krill

—Elizabeth Claire Alberts, *Mongabay*, 11 August 2022

Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) are tiny filter-feeding crustaceans found in the Southern Ocean. Their total biomass has been estimated at 300-500 million tonnes, greater than that of any other multicellular animal. Krill sequester 23-39 million tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere annually through their feeding and excrement cycles. Krill is used as a feed additive partially replacing fish meal in the global aquaculture industry and for the production of krill oil, a dietary supplement. However, overfishing, climate change impacts, and ocean acidification threaten krill stocks. While not at immediate risk of extinction, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that climate-induced stressors present a considerable potential risk for the global krill supply. A consensus-based body has established a rule limiting krill catches in the main krill fishing area to 5.61 million tonnes. However, krill fishing nations—Norway, China, South Korea, Ukraine, and Chile—inch ever closer to that limit every year, so NGOs are pushing for tougher limits or a complete moratorium on krill fishing.

Report: [Krill, Baby Krill: The corporations profiting from plundering Antarctica](#), Changing Markets Foundation (August 2022)

Study reveals extent of labor abuse and illegal fishing risks among fishing fleets

—Elizabeth Selig, *Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions*, 5 April 2022

A new modelling approach combines machine learning with expert insights to map regions and ports most at risk for labor abuse and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. Key risk factors include vessels' country of registration and the type of fishing gear carried, offering policymakers and regulators a set of vessel characteristics and regions to monitor when sourcing seafood. The researchers found that labor abuse and IUU fishing are globally pervasive, with more than half of 750 assessed ports around the world associated with one or both risks. However, the study also highlighted potential pathways to mitigate risks through actions at ports that detect and respond to labor abuse and deter the landing of illegally caught fish, and revealed that vessels registered to countries that have poor control of corruption, vessels owned by countries other than the flag state and vessels registered to China have a higher risk of engaging in illegal activities. Certain fishing gear types—drifting longliners, set longliners, and trawlers—also pose higher risks.

Elizabeth R. Selig et al, (2022), "[Revealing global risks of labor abuse and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing](#)", *Nature Communications* 13:1612

Indonesian fishing boat captain killed by Papua New Guinea patrol vessel

—Dewi Rina Cahyani, *Tempo English*, 24 August 2022

Papua New Guinea (PNG) soldiers fired at Indonesian boats suspected of fishing illegally in PNG waters on 22 August, killing the captain of one of the vessels, Indonesian authorities in Jayapura said. Two of three boats were captured, while the third, the KMN Calvin 02 escaped, but the captain, Sugeng, was killed by gunfire. According to reports received by the Indonesian Navy, the fishing boats from Merauke, in Papua province, had entered deep into PNG waters to illegally catch white snapper fish. "We are still waiting for a response from the PNG authorities because apart from the shooting, the PNG security forces also arrested and detained two Indonesian fishing boats," said Andriana Supandi, Indonesian Ambassador to PNG. The PNG vessel was reported to be one of three Guardian class patrol boats provided to PNG by Australia to control smuggling and illegal fishing and to perform search and rescue duties.

B. Forests & Land Use

Could the new EU regulation on the sustainability of timber be used to protect Indonesia's forests?

— *Tempo English*, 22 August 2022

Indonesia cannot ignore a new EC regulation scheduled to come into force in 2023 which will require commodities entering and exiting the EU to be free of deforestation and forest degradation. This requisite could be met under the existing Timber Legality and Sustainability Verification System (SVLK) as revised in 2021, but implementation on the ground is sporadic. The Independent Forestry Observation Network found that the forestry industry often ignores legal aspects of the SVLK. The main problem is the lack of independence of the auditing body. If the EU and other large countries are serious about mitigating climate change, they should carry out more strict verification of the origins of forestry products they import, but Indonesia must be more serious about ensuring that the SVLK is properly and fully implemented with better law enforcement. One solution would be making certification bodies truly independent, funded by levies from the income from forestry products, and improving control of deforestation in forestry concessions and unplanned deforestation resulting from illegal logging and fires.

Proximity to roads and palm oil mills is a key factor in peatland clearing by smallholders

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 16 August 2022

The closer smallholder farmers growing oil palm in Sumatra are more likely to expand into carbon-rich peat forests the closer they are to roads and palm oil mills, according to a new study of smallholder oil palm expansion. The province of Riau has the second-largest area of peatland in Indonesia and the highest level of palm oil production of any province, as well as a rapid rate of expansion of smallholder farm area, which has come at the expense of natural ecosystems. The likelihood of peat forest conversion declined by 59% for every kilometer increase in distance to the nearest road, and by 7% for every kilometer increase in the distance to the nearest mill. However, the spatial patterns of smallholder palm cultivation were distinct from those of industrial oil palm plantations. Palm fruit must be processed within 48 hours after harvest, making smallholders who do not have other means to transport their own product to mills highly dependent on road access.

Paper: Jing Zhao, et al, (March 14 2022), "[Spatial patterns and drivers of smallholder oil palm expansion within peat swamp forests of Riau, Indonesia](#)", *Environmental Research Letters* 17. doi:10.1088/1748-9326/ac4dc6.

Encircled by plantations, an Indigenous community in Sumatra abides changing times

—Suryadi, *Mongabay*, 22 August 2022

<https://news.mongabay.com/2022/08/encircled-by-plantations-a-sumatran-indigenous-community-abides-changing-times/>

The customary forest at Indragiri Hilir in eastern Riau province, known as *Hutan Keramat Penyabungan*, or the Sacred Forest of the Penyabungan River, has been a holy site for the Talang Mamak Indigenous group in Talang Durian Cacard village for generations, but all that remains of the group's customary forest today is about two hectares. Indragiri Hilir has lost more than half its old-growth primary forest to fast-expanding oil palm and acacia plantation concessions, according to Global Forest Watch. The last of the Talang Mamak visit the remaining forest every year before the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha, but access now requires traversing a corridor bisecting multiple oil palm plantations and a Sinar Mas-owned timber concession which encircle the sacred ground on all sides, occupying land where previous generations grew fruits and vegetables. Out of necessity, Talang Durian Cacard farmers have adapted to change by planting oil palm themselves, but like millions of other smallholder farmers, their plots do not perform well due to a lack of quality planting materials.

[Agriculture groups warn of loss of farming land](#)

—Wahyoe Boediwardhana, *The Jakarta Post*, 16 August 2022

Agriculture groups have warned the central government that Indonesia is rapidly losing its farming land. Its 8.4 million ha of farming land in 2012 had declined to 7.4 million ha by 2019. At this rate, there will only be 3.6 million ha of farming land left by 2045. Participants at the *Rembug Tani* (Agricultural Meeting) called on the government to immediately shift toward sustainable food farming to protect farmland from conversion to other sectors, including enforcing the Agricultural Law to prevent investors from buying large plots of farmland and then leaving it unused. Warsito, deputy chairman of the East Java Indonesian Farmers Association (HKTI), called for replacing the fertilizer subsidy with a harvest subsidy. "At the moment, farmers have difficulty obtaining fertilizer during the planting season, but come harvest time, the government opens [agricultural] imports that crush local commodity prices," he said. Around 29% of the Indonesian workforce is engaged in agriculture, fisheries, and the livestock sector, accounting for nearly 13% of GDP.

C. Conservation & Protected Areas

[Bomb fishers arrested in Raja Ampat face up to 20 years in jail](#)

—*Bird's Head Seascape*, 12 August 2022

Seven "bomb" fishers were arrested by Water Police on 30 July in the Sele Strait of Sorong Regency, West Papua. The Sele Strait lies between the island of Salawati and the mainland of West Papua. The

fishers were caught in the process of detonating a series of underwater bombs and they attempted to dump several bombs overboard when approached by the patrol boat. The police confiscated 47 packets of explosives, a dive compressor, and dive gear, along with their boat and its two 40 HP engines. The fishers are being held in custody, charged with violating two Indonesian laws, one of which carries a maximum sentence of up to 20 years in prison while the other carries a maximum of 6 years imprisonment and a fine of Rp 1.2 billion (US\$80,000). Authorities described the arrested fishers as “veteran” bomb fishers from Buaya (Crocodile) Island, near Sorong. In January 2020, police apprehended five other bomb fishers from the same Island.

[Commentary: Plight of long-tailed macaque highlights neglect of less threatened species](#)

—Sinan Serhadi, *Mongabay*, 17 August 2022

The IUCN declared the long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) to be endangered due to rapid population decline and the prognosis of further losses if current trends of exploitation and habitat destruction continue. In Indonesia, the long-tailed and pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*) species, now both endangered, are not legally protected. Keeping them as “pets” or killing them as pests is therefore not illegal. One reason for the conservation failure for these species may be that conservation NGOs are largely focused on endangered or critically endangered species such as orangutans and tigers because donors are reluctant to fund initiatives to protect species that are only classified as “vulnerable” or “near threatened”. Species that are on the brink of extinction need all the attention they can get, but why at the same time do we let species that have been taken for granted reach the point where even they become endangered? In the case of Indonesia, protected species status should be applied to all wildlife regardless of its conservation status.

Sinan Serhadli works across Southeast and South Asia for the People Resources and Conservation Foundation

[Farmer killed in suspected Sumatran tiger attack](#)

—Apriadi Gunawan, *The Jakarta Post*, 18 August 2022

The body of a 58-year-old farmer was found at a rubber plantation in South Tapanuli, North Sumatra with wounds thought to have been sustained in an attack by a Sumatran tiger. In April, a South Tapanuli Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) veterinarian was bitten and clawed by a Sumatran tiger that he was trying to free from a wild boar trap. The Sumatran tiger, previously recognized as a separate subspecies, was reclassified in 2017 as a population within the Sunda tiger (*Panthera tigris sondaica*) subspecies, comprising the Sumatran tiger and the now extinct Javan and Bali tiger populations. The surviving Sumatran tiger population has been considered Critically Endangered by the IUCN since 2008 due to poaching, habitat loss, and human-wildlife conflict. Fewer than 400 Sumatran tigers are believed to remain in the wild. In 2016, the North Sumatra BKSDA established the Barumon tiger Sanctuary in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the Parsamuhan Bodhicitta Mandala Medan, a local organization.

[‘Cursed’ dam project in orangutan habitat claims 16th life in less than two years](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 24 August 2022

Police are investigating possible negligence in the death of a Chinese construction worker at the site of a controversial hydroelectric dam in the only known habitat of the critically endangered Tapanuli orangutan following a tunnel collapse at the PT North Sumatra Hydro Energy (NSHE) site, which has now seen 16 fatal accidents since December 2020. Activists and scientists flagged the area's susceptibility to landslides due to heavy rainfall, hilly terrain, and earthquakes. The China-backed project is already controversial because of its location in the Batang Toru forest, the only place on earth where Tapanuli orangutans (*Pongo tapanuliensis*) exist. An estimated 767 Tapanuli orangutans live in the forest, divided among three sub-populations. Researchers say the dam will further fragment their habitat. Amanda Hurowitz, from the campaign group Mighty Earth, calling on China to end its US\$277 million involvement in the project, said the Batang Toru project could put an entire orangutan species at risk of extinction.

D. Energy, Mining & Climate Change

[Commentary: Indonesia's Covid-19 recovery plan primarily relies on dirty energy](#)

—Denny Gunawan, Elisa Wahyuni, *The Conversation*, 19 August 2022

Southeast Asia's largest economy is trying to rebound to pre-pandemic or higher levels through its National Economic Recovery program, but this program, unfortunately, relies heavily on fossil fuels. Most of the strategic measures in the program are likely to benefit the fossil fuels industry instead of new and renewable energy. The most significant funding, Rp 95.3 trillion (US\$6.4 billion) is allocated to state-owned enterprises linked to fossil fuels, including oil and gas firm Pertamina, electricity firm PLN, airline company Garuda Indonesia, and train operator KAI. In addition, Rp 13.1 trillion is disbursed to subsidize electricity for poor households, mainly supplied by burning coal. These policies could come back to hit Indonesia's economy and Earth's sustainability over the medium-to-long term [as prices for imported oil, gasoline, and LPG surge. These policies need to change in line with Indonesia's commitment to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060. Abundant sunshine and decreasing costs for solar panels should be the main drivers for harnessing solar energy in Indonesia to supply homes and businesses.

Denny Gunawan is a PhD candidate at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia.

Elisa Wahuni is a graduate student at the Technical University of Munich.

[Indonesia plans fuel price hike to control ballooning subsidy casts](#)

—Reuters via *The Jakarta Post*, 16 August 2022

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Arifin Tasrif was quoted by local media saying that the government plans to increase fuel prices to control ballooning subsidy costs, with the price hike complemented by new rules on subsidies fuel sales. The government tripled its energy subsidy budget to Rp 502 trillion (US\$ 34.06 billion) this year to keep prices of subsidized gasoline and diesel as well as some power tariffs unchanged amid rising global energy prices, but Ministry of Finance officials announced last week said that amount may not be sufficient due to rising fuel demand. Pertamina, the state energy firm, said it had already sold two-thirds of its total quota of subsidized diesel fuel and 73% of the quota for subsidized gasoline. Said Abdullah, a senior member of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), told Reuters that fuel prices should be raised twice this year to manage the growing fiscal burden, suggesting that the first hike be made by late August.

[Government weights US\\$13 billion subsidy hike if no decision made to raise fuel prices](#)

—Vincent Fabian Thomas, *The Jakarta Post*, 24 August 2022

Indonesia may need to provide another Rp 300 trillion (US\$13.4 trillion) in subsidies if no decision is made to raise the price of subsidized fuel, as consumption is set to exceed the quota set for the year. Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani Indrawati said the hike would swell the subsidy and compensation budget by 40% to Rp 700 trillion. The additional outlay would only cover additional consumption of Peralite, Pertamina's subsidized RON-90 fuel, and its diesel brand, Solar, she said. If additional subsidies for electricity and liquified petroleum gas (LPG) were included, a larger sum would be required. "This is what would happen if we do nothing," the Minister said, noting that the current estimated 2022 subsidy figure of Rp 502 trillion was already triple the amount initially budgeted for this year. Sri Mulyani said two other options are still on the table: restricting fuel sales or increasing the price of subsidized fuel. "All three [options] are bad, right?" she said, "but our state budget is already encumbered."

[PLN pushes for entity to collect coal levies from coal-mining firms](#)

—*Tenggara Strategics* via *The Jakarta Post*, 18 August 2022

A coal-supply crisis looms over the state-owned electricity company PLN as coal mining firms export more coal rather than meeting their domestic market obligation (DMO) amid skyrocketing prices. The company is pushing for the establishment of a Public Service Body (BLU) to collect coal levies to secure the domestic availability of coal. Producers are obligated to allocate at least 25% of their annual production for domestic use at a maximum price of US\$70/tonne. Companies that fail to meet the

obligation must pay fines and compensation, but with coal prices at the US\$400/tonne level, coal miners prefer to pay fines and compensation while profiting from exports at higher prices. This is leading to critical coal shortages at PLN, putting 10 million consumers and businesses on the PLN grid across Java and Bali at risk of blackout. An earlier coal export ban shocked global supply chains and was cancelled after only one month. Coal producers still export, but PLN's coal supply is now only secure for the next 15 days.

Opinion: Preventing another coal crisis

—Purwani Diyah Prabandari, *Tempo English*, 15 August 2022

The government cannot ignore the looming coal crisis threatening the state electricity company. PLN's coal stocks have fallen below the minimum safety level of 20 days. A domestic market obligation (DMO) rule obliging coal producers to sell 25% of their coal production on the domestic market was supposed to protect against coal mining companies exporting all their coal, but some domestic purchasers, such as fertilizer and cement factories and mineral smelters—can buy coal at or near global market prices, so the coal companies can show they fulfilled their DMO without having to sell cheaply to PLN. Ironically, penalties for failing to fulfill DMO obligations are only US\$5-15 per tonne, almost nothing compared to the profits made by exporting. The companies' excuse—that they are waiting for the establishment of a new coal Public Service Agency (BLU)—is unacceptable and poses a potential moral hazard. The levies coal producers would pay are recorded as state revenues but are not paid into state accounts, making the scheme highly prone to abuse.

Widodo: Indonesia must boost downstream investment to take over global green markets

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

Indonesia will pursue greater production in downstream industries and take over world markets in green products, President Joko Widodo said in his State of the Nation address on 16 August. In the case of nickel, downstream investment increased Indonesia's steel export value by 18 times over the last seven years to Rp 306 trillion (US\$20.7 billion), making Indonesia part of the global supply chain for electric vehicles (EVs). "The government must [also] push for downstream production in bauxite, copper, and tin, and also integrate new downstream projects with renewable energy-based plans to ensure the products will be competitive in global markets," Widodo said. Bobby Gafur Umar, from the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), said building downstream projects in the mining sector alone was not enough, because many of Indonesia's other downstream products were only slightly refined versions of their raw forms, citing crude palm oil (CPO), which he described as only one level more refined than fresh fruit bunches.

Tesla strikes US\$5 billion deal to purchase nickel products from Indonesia

—Reuters via [KONTAN.CO.ID](https://www.kontan.co.id), 8 August 2022

US electric car maker Tesla has signed contracts worth about US\$5 billion to buy battery materials from nickel processing companies in Indonesia. Indonesia has been trying to get Tesla to set up a production facility in the country, which has major nickel reserves. Luhut Pandjaitan, the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investments, said Tesla recently signed a five-year contract with nickel processing companies operating at Morowali on Sulawesi island. The nickel materials will be used in Tesla's lithium batteries. Indonesia is keen to develop electric vehicles and batteries industries at home and has stopped exports of nickel ore to ensure supply for investors, attracting new investments from Chinese steel giants and South Korean companies like LG and Hyundai. But most nickel investments so far have gone to the production of crude metals such as nickel pig iron and ferronickel. The government plans to impose an export tax on these crude metals to boost revenues while encouraging more domestic production of higher-value products, a senior official said.

President Joko Widodo: Tesla must make cars locally, not just batteries

—Danny Lee and Faris Mokhtar, *Bloomberg News*, 19 August 2022

President Joko Widodo said he wants electric vehicle (EV) maker Tesla to manufacture cars in Indonesia, not just batteries, and he is willing to take the time needed to convince Tesla CEO Elon Musk to see the country as more than just a rich repository of natural resources. “What we want is the electric car, not the battery,” Widodo said. “We want a huge ecosystem of electric cars.” Indonesia has previously pushed for Tesla to invest in its nickel industry to produce and supply batteries for EVs. The president said he had similar expectations for Ford Motor Co., Hyundai Motor Co., Toyota Motor Corp., and Suzuki Motor Corp., signalling his intent to ensure Indonesia is not relegated to being just a raw material supplier in the global EV supply chain. Home to almost a quarter of global nickel reserves, Indonesia is an attractive destination for auto and battery manufacturers looking for battery materials. The government has held talks on potential partnerships with Musk’s team on EVs and a possible SpaceX launch site in the country.

[EV boom takes a heavy toll in an Indonesian mining region](#)

—*YaleEnvironment360*, 22 August 2022

Lithium-ion batteries are a key component of electric vehicles (EVs), and essential to EV production is nickel, but nickel mining is often a heavily polluting enterprise. This is nowhere more evident than in Indonesia, which produces nearly a third of the world’s nickel. In *From Dreams to Dust*, which won the 2022 Yale Environment 360 Film Contest, Indonesian filmmakers visit the coastal community of Tapunggaeya on the island of Sulawesi which has been ravaged by more than a decade of nickel mining, the hills torn apart by vast open-pit mines that cause life-threatening landslides, pollute drinking water, and contaminate coastal waters. The film follows a 36-year-old truck driver who describes how his once-idyllic village has been transformed into an industrial zone where landslides forced the closing of the village school and formerly white-sand beaches and clear waters are now fouled by red-brown mud. Sulawesi’s nickel mines are owned by a combination of smaller companies, state-owned enterprises, and industrial giants like Brazil’s Vale S.A.

E. Pollution & Waste

[Plastic Pollution in the surface waters in Jakarta, Indonesia](#)

—Mega Muitiara Sari, et al, *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 13 August 2022

Plastic pollution in the ocean primarily originated from land-derived mismanaged plastic waste that is transported by rivers. To estimate the plastic litter generation in the surface waters of Jakarta and Indonesia, a field survey was conducted at six riverine sampling points and three holding facilities during the rainy season. The study found that plastic comprised 74% of the mass of the anthropogenic litter in rivers and 87% in holding facilities. Approximately 9.9 g/person/day of plastic litter was discharged into Jakarta’s surface water during the rainy season and recovered by floating booms.

[Seasonal heterogeneity and link to precipitation in the release of microplastic during the Covid-19 outbreak from the Greater Jakarta Area to Jakarta Bay, Indonesia](#)

—Muhammad Reza Cordova, et al, *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 11 August 2022

To reduce environmental microplastic contamination, we need to better understand its sources and transit from land to sea. This study examines microplastic contamination in Jakarta’s nine river outlets. The trend of microplastic contamination tends to increase with anthropogenic activity toward Jakarta Bay from the bay’s east side. This investigation found polyethylene, polystyrene, and polypropylene in large proportion due to their widespread use in normal daily life and industrial applications. Our research observed an increase in microplastic fibers made of polypropylene over time. We suspect a relationship between Covid-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) waste and the microplastic shift in our study area.

F. Investment & Finance

[G-20 report says multilateral development banks are holding back hundreds of billions](#)

—Shabtai Gold, *Devex News*, 20 July 2022

Multilateral development banks could unleash hundreds of billions of dollars in new lending to lower-income nations at a time of overlapping global crises if they were to take on calculated new risks, according to a report commissioned by the Group of 20 major economies. New lending could get out the door as soon as next year if shareholders push through a series of reforms, relax their strict aversion to risk, and ease capital requirements without risking their high credit ratings, the report said. Of the 15 institutions reviewed, ten have AAA ratings from primary credit rating agencies. These include the World Bank (IBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Having the most trusted credit ratings enables multilateral banks to borrow from capital markets at very low rates, which then get passed on to lower-income countries that face steep interest rates when they try to borrow—if they can borrow at all.

[Boosting MDB's investing capacity](#) (2022). An Independent Review of Multilateral Development Banks Capital Adequacy Frameworks. (Commissioned by the Group of 20).

I. Absolving past gross human rights abuses

[Widodo draws ire for decree on human rights abuses](#)

—Nur Janti, *The Jakarta Post*, 19 August 2022

President Joko Widodo's plan to settle past gross human rights violations through non-judicial means has elicited a backlash from civil society groups and victims' families who fear it would only result in continued impunity for the violators. In his annual State Address on Tuesday, the president announced he had signed a decree on the formation of a nonjudicial settlement team for past gross human rights violations and that preparations were underway for deliberations on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (KKR) bill in the legislature. Pending gross human rights violations cases include killings during the anti-communist purges of 1965-66, the 1989 Talangsari massacre in Lampung, the 1998-99 Semanggi tragedies in Jakarta, as well as the 2001 Wasior, 2003 Wamena, and the 2014 Paniai incident in Papua. Hendaridi, Chairman of the Setera Institute, a human rights watchdog, dismissed Widodo's move as mere "political rhetoric" and said the formation of the team would only entrench impunity rather than bring justice to victims and their families.

[Opinion: Absolving the sins](#)

— *Tempo English*, 22 August 2022

Those responsible for gross human rights violations can now sleep soundly, for their sins will be buried deeper after President Joko Widodo has established the Non-Judicial team to Settle Past Gross Human Rights Violations. The non-judicial route can work if it provides justice for victims and their families, meaning the public must be told the truth and perpetrators must own up to their crimes. The time to have used this mechanism in Indonesia would have been in 1998 during the transition from the New Order regime, but this did not happen, partly because those responsible for human rights abuses were still part of the government, as they are today, with President Joko Widodo's appointment Prabowo Subianto in 1997 and 1998. Prabowo, a leading candidate to become president in 2024, was discharged from the military for the kidnapping of activists in 1997 and 1998 as Minister of Defense. Widodo would do better to push for passing the Truth and Reconciliation Bill, which has been in limbo for years.

II. Dividing Papua province into new political jurisdictions

[Carving up Papua Province](#)

—John McBeth, *Asia Times*, 19 August 2022

Carving the sprawling province of Papua into four pieces is widely seen as a move to divide and conquer the rebellious indigenous population but President Joko Widodo insists that it is intended to speed up development and deliver better public services to a vast region where poverty is commonplace. Breaking

up the province dilutes the political domination of the majority Dani tribe of Papua governor Lukas Enembe and weakens the authority of Timika-based leader Eltinus Omaleng, an Amungme. Changes to Papua's Special Autonomy Law last year cleared the way for the recent division, which appears to cut across the seven tribal areas that Widodo had previously recognized in a presidential instruction. Critics claimed the move was made without proper consultation and would bring more non-indigenous Papuans into local government posts, a festering sore point among highland community leaders. Central Papua, home to Freeport Indonesia's Grasberg copper and gold mine and a long-planned hydroelectric project on the Urumuka River, looks to be the economic engine for the region.

III. Looking ahead to the 2024 presidential election

Indonesia's 2024 election will pit party elites against popular figures

—Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Fulcrum*, 16 August 2022

Indonesia's major political parties have begun jostling for position for the 2024 presidential election, but party elites may be forced to give way to the people's demands for the most popular choice. Gerindra Chairman Prabowo Subianto is running for president with National Awakening Party (PKB) Chairman Muhaimin Iskandar as his running mate, confirming perceptions among party elites that nominations will almost exclusively go to party chairpersons or senior party cadres. The party leaders of Golkar, the National Mandate Party (PAN), and the United Development Party (PPP), which have joined together in the United Indonesia Coalition (KIB) also intend to prioritize the chairpersons of the KIB parties. Within the Democratic Party of Indonesia-Struggle (PDI-P), Chairwoman Megawati Sukarnoputri has signalled support for her daughter, Puan Maharani, rather than Ganjar Pranowo, even though Puan trails far behind Ganjar in polls. If the party elites manage to freeze out the current frontrunners in popular polls (except for Prabowo, who leads most polls), this could mark a shift in Indonesian politics.