



Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest

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

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A. The Covid-19 Crisis in Indonesia

[Jakarta braces for post-Idul Fitri virus surge](#)

—Yerica Lai, *The Jakarta Post*, 22 May 2021

At least 1.5 million people travelled to their hometowns for the Idul Fitri holiday last week despite a government *mudik* (exodus) ban, and crowds also flocked to some tourist locales. To counter the expected rise in new cases, the Jakarta Health Agency has increased the number of isolation and intensive care unit beds available. Stickers have been placed on the houses of residents who travelled outside the city indicating they must self-isolate for five days after their return and informing other local residents to stay alert. In a briefing with regional heads, President Joko Widodo warned of a second wave of cases, calling on local governments, regional police forces and agencies to work together over the coming weeks. Last year, Indonesia saw nationwide Covid-19 cases surge 68-93% after the Idul Fitri holidays, while

fatalities climbed 28-66%. However, Masdallina Pane of the Indonesian Epidemiologists Association said the 5-day self-isolation for people returning from their hometowns was not ideal and that a 14-day quarantine would have been better.

Studies find vaccines working as Indonesians tiptoe around adverse vaccine events

—Ardila Syakriah, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 May 2021

Recent studies highlight the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccines at preventing infection, hospitalizations and deaths while the government deals with rising vaccine hesitancy following reports of adverse events. The UK's autonomous health agency reported that two doses of the Astra Zeneca vaccine that Indonesia is rolling out are 60% effective against the India variant and 66% against the UK variant two weeks after vaccination. Most of the 9.8 million Indonesians who have received their second vaccination received the CoronaVac vaccine from Sinovac, a Chinese firm. An Indonesian Ministry of Health study of 120,000 medical workers who received the Sinovac vaccine found that it was 94% effective in preventing symptoms, 96% effective in preventing hospitalizations and 98% effective in preventing deaths from 28 up to 64 days after the second jab, but this good news came amid growing concern about vaccine hesitancy. As of mid-May, there have been 229 reports of serious adverse effects and 10,627 non-serious adverse effects from vaccination among the millions of vaccine recipients.

Covid-19 resurgence poses risk to economy

—Vincent Fabian, *The Jakarta Post*, 27 May 2021

Bringing the budget deficit down to below 3% of GDP in 2023 from 6% in 2020 may prove challenging as efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia continue. A new surge in cases would lead to pressure on hospitals and pressures to tighten mobility restrictions, hurting the economic recovery and causing job losses, forcing the government to disburse more stimulus funds. Intensifying testing after millions of Indonesians defied the Idul Fitri travel ban to visit their hometowns, the government has detected cases of the variant B.1.617 which exacerbated the pandemic in India. In a report, Bahana Securities analysts said government would need to reduce annual deficit spending from IDR 956 trillion (US\$66.9 billion) last year to IDR 543 trillion in 2023. This would require increasing annual tax revenues and slashing spending to rebalance the budget. Bahana said this could be done by lifting the value added tax (VAT) from 10% to 11-12% and a planned revision of the general taxation rules, including increasing taxes on high-net-worth individuals.

Indonesia may tax wealthy individuals and top polluters to boost state revenues

—(Bloomberg), *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 25 May 2021

Indonesia's Finance Ministry has presented proposals that would increase taxes on high-income individuals and top polluters in a bid to replenish state coffers. "The goal ... is not just revenue collection, but sustainability of the state budget," Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati said. The government needs to collect more revenues to sustain spending while reducing its budget deficit back within the legal limit of 3% of GDP from 6% last year. A new carbon emissions tax or increasing existing excise, motor vehicle and fuel taxes would help Indonesia curb greenhouse gas emissions while raising funds for green state investments and social welfare. The country could also add a new 35% income tax bracket for individuals earning more than IDR 5 billion (US\$349,628) a year, or introduce multiple tiers for value-added taxes (VAT) with lower rates for basic necessities and higher rates on luxury items. Indonesia began collecting VAT on goods and services sold to residents through online platforms last year, or announce a new tax amnesty program.

Opinion: Migrant workers and a second Southeast Asian Covid-19 wave

—Wahyu Susilo, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 May 2021

As in 2020, this year's Idul Fitri holiday was marked by "exodus" as people returned to their hometowns despite mobility restrictions imposed by the government to prevent new Covid-19 infections. An estimated 1.5 million people travelled to their hometowns in Java and Sumatra during the holiday. The entire region is experiencing a second wave of transmissions. Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have imposed new local lockdowns, while Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines have reported new cases and rising death rates. Limiting mobility and closing borders has severely impacted migrant workers, causing many to lose their jobs. ASEAN needs to renew its commitment to addressing the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers, including relaxing immigration policies to prevent the criminalization of migrant workers and promoting equal rights and access to health services, testing and vaccination. Protecting migrant workers against the virus constitutes recognition of their role as drivers of economic growth. Nobody should be left behind in the effort to achieve global herd immunity to Covid-19. *The writer is Executive Director of Migrant CARE.*

Indonesia begins self-funded vaccinations involving 22,700 companies

—Lenny Tristia Tambun, *Jakarta Globe*, 18 May 2021

Indonesia began a new Covid-19 vaccination drive under the "gotong royong" (mutual self-help) vaccination program allowing private companies to procure and distribute vaccine for their employees. More than 22,700 companies have registered with the program, according to Rosan Perkasa Roeslani, Chair of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin). President Joko Widodo said the program will accelerate the return to normalcy among key sectors and kick-start the economy. "We all hope that with all the hard work, we can realize economic growth of 7% for the second quarter [of 2021], the president said. On the first day, 18

companies had their employees vaccinated using the Sinopharm vaccine from China. Since the government's public vaccination program began on 13 January, Indonesia has administered 13.8 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine, with about 9 million already receiving double doses, but this number represents only 3.3% of the country's 270 million population. "Hopefully by August or September at the latest, at least 70 million people will have received the shot," the president said.

Join the (other) queue: Private firms in Indonesia start their own vaccination effort

—*The Economist*, 15 May 2021

In times of hardship, Indonesians turn to each other. That is the idea behind *gotong royong*, or mutual assistance, so it is unfortunate that the organisers of a private vaccination scheme borrowed the name. Rather than encouraging Indonesians to help each other, the program encourages the richer ones to help themselves. When the government kicked off its public vaccination drive in January, it pledged to jab 181.5 million people by the end of the year. The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kadin) suggested private companies could move things along faster by paying for vaccines and inoculating their employees and their families. With just 7.6% of Indonesian adults have had their first dose so far, bosses are eagerly enrolling their businesses in the scheme. But the biggest hurdle for Indonesia is not cost but supply—Indonesia faces an acute shortage of vaccines. Perceptions of unfairness are another worry. If the scheme mostly vaccinates younger, healthier and wealthier Indonesians, it is likely to cause resentment among the rest.

B. Marine & Fisheries

Indonesia and Australia agree on joint operation against illegal fishing

—Ade Irma J, Fardah, *Antara News*, 24 May 2021

Indonesia's Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA), Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (DKP) and the Australia Border Force (ABF) and Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct joint maritime patrols to safeguard the sea borders of both nations against illegal fishing activities. The program, Operation Gannet 5, commenced with a workshop and online meetings to discuss requirements for the first joint patrol, scheduled to take place over 24-26 May. The geographic focus of the operation is the area of Eastern Indonesia that shares a maritime boundary with Australia. BAKAMLA will deploy the patrol vessel KN Tanjung Datu-301 and the Ministry's Directorate-General of Surveillance and Control of Marine and Fishery Resources (PSDKP) will deploy two

patrol vessels and air surveillance aircraft, while Australia's ABF will deploy the patrol vessel ABFC Cape Nelson along with two aircraft. In addition to thwarting Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, the operation will also target fish aggregation devices (FADs) on the Indonesia-Australia maritime border.

[NGOs urge rebuilding Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stocks ahead of IOTC meeting](#)

—Bernadette Carreon, *SeafoodSource*, 24 May 2021

Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE) and the International Pole and Line Foundation (IPNLF) called on the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to adopt a proposal to rebuild Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna stocks at the upcoming virtual IOTC session on 7-11 June. Their joint statement noted that yellowfin tuna is “overfished and subject to continued overfishing, that scientists warn the stock could collapse within five years, and that a Special Session of the Commission was held in March to deal with sustainability of the fishery. “However, an unwillingness to negotiate, primarily on the part of the EU and other distant-water fishing nations, resulted in the meeting ending without the adoption of an updated rebuilding plan for the overfished stock,” the statement said. The organizations also called for adoption of a proposal to improve management of fish aggregating devices (FADs) to reduce catches of juvenile tropical tunas and the help mitigate other ecological impact of drifting FADs, including marine plastic pollution, ghost fishing, and bycatch of turtles, sharks, and marine mammals.

Statement: **[Joint Statement by BLUE and IPNLF in advance of the 25th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission](#)**, 20 May 2021.

[ISSF adopts new measure to protect Indian Ocean yellowfin if IOTC fails to act](#)

—Chris Chase, *SeafoodSource*, 18 May 2021

The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) announced the adoption of a new conservation measure to reduce sourcing of Indian Ocean yellowfin tuna. The Measure will take effect if the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) fails to take action at its June 2021 meeting to safeguard the stock, following the IOTC failure to take a decision in March on a proposal backed by a coalition of more than 100 NGOs and multiple seafood companies. ISSF endorsed interventions include reducing catch targets, addressing overcatch, agreement on permanent limits and target reference points for tropical and temperate tunas by 2022, science-based limits on deployment of fish aggregating devices (FADs), and establishing a working group on electronic monitoring to develop minimum monitoring standards by 2022. “ISSF and participating companies are committed to long-term sustainable use of valuable Indian Ocean

tuna resources,” ISSF President Susan Jackson said. “We will take steps as needed ... when fisheries management falls short, and we will do so transparently through a well-established audit and compliance process.”

Satellites keep watch over global reef health in world first

—Makenna Flynn, *Allen Coral Atlas*, 19 May 2021

Scientists working with the Allen Coral Atlas have launched a beta version of the first global satellite-based coral reef monitoring system to track coral bleaching event in near real-time from January 2021 forward and provide an overall view of trends and changes in coral reef health to inform conservation efforts and policy. The Allen Coral Atlas is a collaboration among Arizona State University, the University of Queensland, Vulcan Inc., Planet, and National Geographic. The system detects variations in reef brightness using high-resolution satellite imagery powered by an algorithm indicating whether reefs are under stress caused by marine heatwaves. The organizers plan to expand the monitoring system to include a broader range of impacts on reefs, such as land-sea pollutants and sediments. “This first reef monitoring system is simply a drop in the bucket for what is to come,” said Greg Asner, Managing Director of the Atlas.

C. Forests & Land Use

Illegal loggers use pandemic as cover to ramp up activity in Sulawesi

—Wahyu Chandra, *Mongabay*, 24 May 2021

Illegal logging of rainforests on the island of Sulawesi surged by 70% in 2020, according to a local NGO. JURnal Celebes director Mustam Arif attributed the increase to scaling back of local law enforcement as part of wider mobility restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic. Illegal logging by locals is rampant in the region of Mahalona Raya in East Luwu, but the scale and coordination and transport of the wood suggests the activity may be an organized crime funded by well-resourced business people. Muhammad Jabir Bonto, the deputy speaker of the Takalar District legislative council, a member of the Golkar Party, was charged with cutting down trees in a conservation area without permits in early 2021. South Sulawesi lost 335,038 ha of rainforest due to illegal logging from 2000 to 2017. JURnal Celebes has called on the government to ramp up law enforcement and strengthen implementation of Indonesia’s timber legality verification system (SVLK). Of 25 timber companies monitored by the NGO, only six have SVLK certificates, Mustam said.

[Indonesia benefits from near-record palm oil prices, but India's demand may drop](#)

—Indonesia-Investments, 23 May 2021

Indonesia is the world's largest producer of crude palm oil (CPO). Together with Malaysia, the two countries account for 90% of the world's total palm oil production. There is plenty of opposition and criticism of Jakarta's allowing CPO to play such a large role in the domestic economy, but the country is taking advantage of the windfall from soaring CPO prices, which are contributing to its recovery from the severe coronavirus pandemic. The opposition has everything to do with the environmental impacts of oil palm plantations, which include deforestation and degradation of wildlife habitats, which has been an obstacle to achieving a free trade agreement with the EU. However, people from developed countries need to understand that countries will only start caring more about the environment when poverty has been diminished and per capita income is a stable level, though there are studies that conclude there exists a positive correlation between per capita GDP and per capita carbon dioxide emissions.

[FSC-certified timber company may have cleared orangutan rainforest habitat](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 17 May 2021

An Indonesian company with ties to Japanese conglomerates has allegedly cleared large swaths of rainforests, including habitat for critically endangered orangutans, according to a report. The company, Alas Kusuma, allegedly cleared 6,000 hectares of forest in the western part of Indonesian Borneo between 2016 and March this year through its logging subsidiary, PT Mayawana Persada (MP), the research consultancy Aidenvironment said in a report. In 2020 alone, MP cleared 2,800 hectares of forest, making Alas Kusuma the second-largest deforester in Indonesia's pulp and paper sector. An orangutan population and habitat viability assessment conducted by an expert group of scientists in 2016 identified most of the cleared area as orangutan habitat. MP has denied the allegation. *Little is known about the company, but it is believed to have business links to Japanese companies and is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).* In response to the charges, FSC said it's investigating the allegations made by Aidenvironment related to the alleged involvement of two FSC certificate holders.

D. Energy, Mining and Climate Change

[Can Indonesia really quit coal after 2023?](#)

—James Guild, *The Diplomat*, 25 May 2021

A recent article reported that Indonesia will no longer build new coal-fired power plants after 2023 but will complete dozens of projects under construction that will continue emitting carbon for decades to come. Indonesia has large coal reserves and the powerful domestic coal lobby would resist jettisoning coal power. However, international sentiment on fossil fuels is rapidly changing rapidly and major international players have announced they will end financing for coal projects. Under-developed eastern Indonesia is really not suitable for high-capacity power plants or extensive transmission grids but could benefit from new solar and wind generating capacity. This would give the state-owned electricity utility experience in operating decentralized grids drawing on multiple generating sources, vitally important if grids on Sumatra and Java now powered by fossil fuel plants will ever make the switch to renewables at scale. Whether Indonesia can really quit coal remains to be seen, but focusing on renewables and decentralized grids in Eastern Indonesia now would be a start.

Jakarta ranked as the world's most environmentally vulnerable metropolis

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 19 May 2021

Indonesia's financial hub and most densely-populated city has been ranked as the world's "worst performing" metropolis in a study of the world's 576 largest cities, scoring particularly badly in terms of air pollution, flooding, and earthquakes. "With rising [carbon] emissions driving weather-related risk .. the risks to citizens, real assets and commercial operations are only going to rise" wrote Will Nichols, head of Environment and Climate Change at Verisk Maplecroft, a business risk consultancy. In 2019, Indonesian President Joko Widodo admitted Jakarta's environmental risks were a major reason the government wanted to move the capital to East Kalimantan. "We need to stop overwhelming Jakarta with over-population, traffic congestion, water and air pollution," the president said. The city's policy, as embodied by the Jakarta Cleaner Air program, assumes motorized vehicles contribute the largest share to Jakarta's air pollution, but environmental groups have countered this view with maps showing that most air pollution comes from coal-fired power plants in the neighboring provinces of Banten and West Java.

Indonesian president slammed for "wait and see" approach on climate action

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 20 May 2021

Expert observers criticized Indonesian President Joko Widodo for not announcing a more ambitious emissions target at the leaders' summit on climate convened by US President Joe Biden in April. Nadia Hadad, Program Director of the NGO Madani, called the event a missed opportunity for Indonesia to show global leadership. Fabby Tumiwa, Executive Director of the Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR), questioned Widodo's failure to mention coal in his speech. Arief Wijaya, of the World Resources Institute (WRI), criticized the absence of a more Indonesian ambitious carbon neutrality goal, adding that he suspects the government is

fearful that more ambitious emissions targets might hurt economic growth at a time when the country is trying to emerge from a slump caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Sonny Mambunan, at the University of Indonesia's Research Center for Climate Change, said a failure to act on climate change would be far more detrimental to economic recovery. "Wouldn't it give Widodo a headache if 600,000 jobs were lost due to rising temperatures?"

[Climate Change Is destroying 45,000-year-old cave paintings in Indonesia](#)

—Laura Millan Lombrana, *Bloomberg Green*, 13 May 2021

Ancient cave paintings depicting humans and animals that were created during the Pleistocene Era between 25,000 and 45,000 years ago in Indonesia are deteriorating fast due to climate change impacts. Seasonal rainfall combined with droughts threatens the conservation of cave art in the Maros-Pangkep limestone karst site on the island of Sulawesi, researchers led by archaeologist Jillian Huntley said in a paper published in *Nature*. The area is home to the oldest known hand stencil and possibly the earliest narrative scene in prehistoric art. The rising frequency and severity of El Niño-induced droughts from anthropogenic climate change and seasonal moisture injected by monsoon rains is causing salts and minerals to crystallize on the limestone caves where paintings have survived thousands of years. The deterioration has accelerated over the past four decades. An increase of 1.5-2.0° C in global average temperatures by the end of the century is likely to have grave implications for the survival of this ancient cave art.

Paper: [J. Huntley et al, "The effects of climate change on the Pleistocene rock art of Sulawesi"](#), *Nature Scientific Reports*, 13 May 2021

E. Pollution and Waste Management

[Citizen Lawsuit Seeks Court's Help in Battle for Clean Air in Jakarta](#)

—Richard C. Paddock, *New York Times*, 19 May 2021

A Jakarta court is expected to rule in a suit accusing the president and top officials of failing to curb air pollution. Five years ago, a scan of Istu Prayogi, one of the plaintiffs, revealed the kind of damage that comes from smoking cigarettes, but he had never smoked. Instead, he spent hours a day in traffic in Jakarta, one of the world's most polluted cities. The suit would require national and local governments to set stricter standards for hazardous pollutants and actively enforce them in the Jakarta metropolitan area, a vast urban area of five separate cities that have grown together to create a megacity of more than 29 million people. Anies Baswedan, Jakarta's governor, wants to work with the plaintiffs to solve the city's pollution problems, an

advisor said. The environmentalists who brought the suit say many of the worst sources of pollution are outside Jakarta's city limits, so it will require presidential leadership and regional efforts to address the problems.

[Indonesian documentary declares war on single-use plastics](#)

—Ian Lloyd Neubauer, *Nikkei Asia*, 22 May 2021

The filmmakers behind "Pulau Plastik," a documentary about the scourge of plastic waste that pockmarks many of Indonesia's 17,000 islands, sneak into a paper and cardboard recycling factory selling plastic waste smuggled from the West in containers intended for only paper waste. "We would not have this fuss if America didn't send us their garbage," activist Prigi Arisandi shouts through a megaphone at a protest. His frustration is understandable. A widely referenced 2018 IUCN study said Indonesia was the world's second largest source of marine plastics after China, but a study in *Science Advances* identified the US as the world's largest producer of plastic waste, followed by the EU-28, India, China, Brazil and Indonesia. The film begins as a hard-nosed investigation into Indonesia's plastic waste problem. Corrupt and incompetent officials facilitate illegal plastic imports, while a poorly educated public and irresponsible food manufacturers exacerbate the problem. The film then examines what happens when such a proliferation of plastic waste pollutes not only the planet but our bodies.

Paper: [Kara Lavender Law et al, "The United States' contribution of plastic waste to land and ocean."](#) *Science Advances*, 30 October 2020.

[Indonesians take matters into their own hands to deal with e-commerce waste](#)

—Ursula Florene, *krAsia*, 25 May 2021

When Carolina Handjaja returned from the US to Indonesia a year ago, she noticed that groceries and other items she was ordering online were wrapped in layers of plastic, then packed in a cardboard box or another plastic bag. With the growth of e-commerce amid social restrictions related to the pandemic, the volume of waste—mainly plastic, bubble wrap, cardboard and sticker labels—is quickly creating another environmental problem. Indonesians produced over 67 million tons of waste in 2020, of which plastic waste accounted for 6.8 million tons. Cities and regions like Jakarta and Bali have banned single-use plastic bags from retail stores and restaurants, but implementing stricter measures isn't easy for e-commerce platforms. Rebricks and Rekosistem are new Jakarta-based recyclers. Rebricks turns plastic waste into paving bricks, but only accepts low-density polyethylene (LDEP) products, bubble wrap and

plastic labels. These new companies are helping, but their capacity is still limited. An estimated US\$18 billion in capital is needed to achieve a circular economy for plastic by 2040.

F. Conservation and Protected Areas

[Study: Wealth inequality fuels flow of wildlife from poor countries to rich](#)

—Malavika Vyawahare, *Mongabay*, 18 May 2021

Toxic Bubble Bounce Mushrooms and Green Iguana disco Mushrooms may sound like psychedelic drugs, but they are actually names of brilliantly-coloured live corals from Indonesia and small Pacific islands available for sale online. Possible links between Covid-19 and the wildlife trade have focused attention on legal and illegal markets for wild animals. Most live corals traded internationally end up in the US, which is the largest importer of wildlife by far, while Indonesia, Jamaica and Honduras are the biggest exporters of wildlife. The study considered mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, insects, amphibians, anthozoans (including corals), hydrozoans and snails. More than 4 million individual animals were traded internationally over 1998-2018. The transactions are legal, but that is no guarantee that the trade does not harm wild populations. Corals are increasingly grown on coral farms, but despite this the demand for wild harvested corals has not diminished. Indonesia, the largest supplier of corals, imposed an export ban in 2018 over threats to coral reef health, but lifted the ban last year.

Paper: [Jia Huan Liew et al, "International socioeconomic inequality drives trade patterns in global wildlife market"](#), *Science Advances*, 5 May 2021.

[Reptile traffickers trawl scientific literature to target newly described species](#)

—Pavel Toropov, *Mongabay*, 26 May 2021

"What happens when a new species of gecko is discovered?", asks Sandra Altherr, a co-founder of Pro Wildlife, a German conservation NGO. "Two Germans grab their suitcases and get on a plane." The anonymous men in this joke are reptile traders, whose objective is to get hold of new species as quickly as possible to sell to collectors at the highest prices. Alice Hughes, a professor at Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden, co-authored a recent study that showed 35% of all reptile species—nearly 4,000—were in trade, including many newly-discovered species. "Last year there was a paper on a lizard from Sumatra which had not been seen for 170 years," said herpetologist Jordi Janssen at the Monitor Conservation Society.

“They published a location. On social media, I then saw a post by a convicted reptile smuggler that he went to Sumatra multiple times to find the animal. I am sure it will be in trade as soon as [Covid-19] restrictions are gone. ”

Paper: [Alice Hughes et al, “Thousands of reptile species threatened by unregulated global trade,”](#) *Nature Communications*, 29 September 2020

[More than 179 Bird species in Indonesia under threat of extinction](#)

—Suriani, *Antaranews*, 29 April 2021

At least 179 species of birds in Indonesia are under threat of extinction, according to the flora and fauna conservation organization Burung Indonesia, including 31 species in the critically-endangered category, 52 endangered, and 96 vulnerable. In addition to deforestation and habitat loss, bird hunting and trapping have been the primary causes of declining bird populations. These include the *perkici dada-merah* or Sunset lorikeet (*Trichoglossus forsteni*), *emuluh janggut* or Brown-cheeked bulbul (*Alophoixus bres*), *empuluh pipi-kelabu* or Grey-cheeked bulbul (*Alophoixus tephrogenys*), *cucak aceh* or Aceh bulbul (*Pycnonotus snouckaerti*) and *anis kembang* or Chestnut-capped thrush (*Geokichla interpres*).

[On an island scarred by tin mining, mangrove planting preserves shrimp tradition](#)

—[Taufik Wijaya](#), *Mongabay*, 13 May 2021

For centuries the mangrove trees around Bangka-Belitung province have provided food, medicine and more for the islands’ inhabitants. But this once-teeming ecosystem surrounding the two main islands between Singapore and Jakarta today faces extinction. Vast areas of these valuable mangrove forests have been uprooted to make way for aquaculture farms, oil palm plantations and other uses. Bangka Island is also the source of about 90% of all the tin mined in Indonesia, the world’s second-largest producer of the metal, used mainly in solder in electronic devices. This adds to the pressure on the mangroves as people migrate to the islands to mine tin. Many rural communities who traditionally relied on these mangroves to earn an income from fishing and making *belacan* shrimp paste now confront escalating threats to their livelihoods. However, the Indonesian government last year announced an ambitious plan to replant mangrove trees. In Batu Betumpang, work has begun, planting 50,000 seedlings in a 25-hectare area.

G. Other

Police Intelligence Chief: Troop surge in Papua aims to ‘wipe out’ armed rebels

—Tom Allard, *Reuters*, 21 May 2021

A new security crackdown on armed separatists in the central highlands of Papua will be maintained until they are wiped out, Paulus Waterpauw, head of the National Police Intelligence and Security Agency said. Some 400 extra troops have been deployed following the assassination of a senior intelligence official there and the designation of the region’s armed separatist groups as “terrorists” by the Indonesian government last month. “The objective is to wipe out those behind these horrible acts of violence,” Waterpauw said. “This operation will go on until we get the maximum result, noting there had been 26 attacks by armed separatists this year.

Papuan separatist leaders say their struggle is legitimate because the former colonial power the Netherlands promised the region it could become independent before it was annexed by Indonesia in 1963. Indonesia says the Papua region is its territory following a 1969 vote backing Papua’s integration was accepted by the United Nations. “We are continuing to receive credible reports of excessive use of force by the military and police, including extrajudicial killings, harassment, arbitrary arrests and detention of indigenous Papuans, Ravina Shamdasani, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told Reuters in April.

The Indonesian government has also launched a campaign to prosecute allegedly corrupt officials in Papua accused of siphoning off some of the IDR 1,092 trillion (US\$ 76 billion) of funds transferred to the region by the central government since 2001. This “huge” amount of funding has not led to major improvements in the welfare of Papuans, who remain among the most poverty-stricken in Indonesia, Waterpauw said, adding that the National Police Anti-Terrorism Unit, known as Detachment 88, has not yet been deployed to Papua, explaining that designating separatists as terrorists will help authorities uncover their funding. Earlier this week, Mahfud MD, Indonesia’s Coordinating Minister of Political, Legal and Security Affairs, said the separatist movement in Papua has three wings: political, clandestine, and terrorist. “We invite dialogue with the political and clandestine group,” he said.

Editorial: Repeating History in Papua

—*Tempo.en*, 15 May 2021

The government of President Joko Widodo seems to be repeating the dark history of this nation. In the past, Dutch colonialists exploited our natural resources and detained and killed Indonesians, but now the people of Papua are experiencing the same thing. They are oppressed and sidelined in their own land. The people of the Dutch East Indies were frequently insulted and referred to as “monkeys”. We were treated unfairly, became victims of racial discrimination, and finally woke up and fought back. After Papuan students in Surabaya were called “monkeys” two years ago, it is no surprise that thousands of Papuans responded with large-scale demonstrations and widespread opposition.

Now the Indonesian government has officially applied the label “terrorist” to the Papuan independence movement. This label applied by Coordinating Minister of Security Mahfud Md is very similar to the “extremist” term used by the Dutch colonial authorities to describe the Indonesian independence movement. Apart from increasing the police and military presence in Papua, the Indonesian government is offering sweeteners by offering to increase the budget for the easternmost provinces. Another policy is to further divide Papua into smaller provinces, in the hope that this will result in the Papuan elite having less time to oppose Jakarta. This divide and conquer strategy could have been taken directly from the guidebook written by the colonial powers in the past.

We know the Dutch strategy failed and that Indonesia became independent in 1945. We could suffer the same fate as the Dutch if this mistaken approach in Papua is continued. It is not too late to change direction. President Jokowi could begin by admitting that there are human rights abuses in Papua that must be properly investigated. But the approach to the Papuan problem that Jokowi has chosen will lead to Indonesia acting like a colonizer, something the 1945 Constitution says must be erased from the face of the earth.

Ends