



**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: Indigenous groups face COVID vaccine barriers](#)

—DW, 28 July 2021

According to the Indonesian Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (AMAN), less than 1% of 17 million Indigenous Indonesians have been vaccinated. Devi Anggraini, the head of Perempuan AMAN — the women's wing of the alliance — warned that many Indigenous communities lack access to basic health care facilities and typically live hours away from the closest town. "We have lost so many tribal leaders in Indigenous villages," she told DW. In addition to geographical obstacles, bureaucracy has hampered vaccination efforts in Indigenous communities. The Indonesian government requires all citizens to show their identity cards to get their shots. The majority of Indigenous people, however, do not possess an identity card, explained Anggraini. According to her, the government should take a more proactive role by sending health workers to remote Indigenous communities to administer the jabs, instead of expecting them to leave their settlements and travel to vaccination centers.

[In Indonesia, wave of COVID-19 deaths at home forces new strategy](#)

—Chris Barrett and Karuni Rompies, *The Sidney Morning Herald*, 3 August 2021

Independent data collecting group LaporCOVID-19 reports that 2833 people died in Indonesia between June 11 and July 30 while either self-isolating at home or while outdoors at a hospital compound waiting

for a bed, 1341 of them in Jakarta. When the surge of infections first hit following the Muslim holidays in May, people with milder symptoms were asked to use telemedicine services rather than rushing to hospitals to further burden overstretched medical facilities. However, the alarming trend in deaths outside medical facilities has prompted senior minister Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, President Joko Widodo's key lieutenant, to urge governors, district chiefs and mayors across Indonesia to try and convince self-isolating patients to go to centralised government isolation facilities. Indonesia is nearing the unwanted milestone of 100,000 deaths to the virus during the pandemic, with more than 1000 recorded daily since July 16 including a peak of 2069 on Tuesday last week.

As for the increasing number of Indonesians dying at home, health authorities say underlying diseases are a factor.

### [Indonesia extends COVID restrictions again as deaths stay high - Nikkei Asia](#)

—Erwida Maulia, Nikkei Asia, 3 August 2021

Indonesia will extend its tight mobility restrictions across major cities in densely populated Java, Bali and elsewhere, as deaths from COVID-19 rise despite declines in new infections, the government said on Monday. The partial lockdowns that have been in place since July 3 will be extended for at least another week through next Monday, President Joko Widodo said in a Monday evening address. Indonesia averaged 39,000 new cases a day in the past week, down from a peak of about 50,000 in mid-July. The country's rolling seven-day average for confirmed daily infections is now below that of the U.S. and India, according to Oxford University's Our World in Data. However, Indonesia's daily death toll is more alarming, having climbed to an average of 1,789 in the past week from about 1,000 in mid-July. It leads the world in highest daily deaths from COVID-19 in the past week, followed by Brazil, Russia and India, according to Our World in Data.

### [No Longer 'Hidden Victims.' Children Are Dying as Virus Surges in Indonesia](#)

—Richard C. Paddock and Mukti Suhartono, *The New York Times*, 25 July 2021

Hundreds of children in Indonesia have died from the coronavirus in recent weeks, many of them under age 5, a mortality rate greater than that of any other country and one that challenges the idea that children face minimal risk from Covid-19, doctors say. The deaths, more than 100 a week this month, have come as Indonesia confronts its biggest surge yet in coronavirus cases over all — and as its leaders face mounting criticism that they have been unprepared and slow to act. The jump in child deaths coincides with the surge of the Delta variant, which has swept through Southeast Asia, where vaccination rates are low, causing record outbreaks not only in Indonesia, but in Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam as well. Indonesia this month overtook India and Brazil in the number of daily cases, becoming the new epicenter of the pandemic. Based on reports from pediatricians, children now make up 12.5 percent of the country's confirmed cases, an increase over previous months.

## B. Marine & Fisheries

### [Indonesia reimposes ban on destructive seine and trawl nets in its waters](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 28 July 2021

The Indonesian fisheries ministry issued a new decree at the end of June that excludes several seine and trawl nets from being operated in the country's waters. These are locally known as *dogol* and *cantrang*, midwater trawl nets (*pukat ikan*), and bottom otter trawl nets (*pukat hela dasar*). "This issue has become a global concern," Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, the fisheries minister, said. "If we keep allowing cantrang fishing to continue, we can prove that the Java Sea has been overfished and its coral reefs have been destroyed." These devices are highly effective for catching large amounts of fish, but also extremely non-discriminative. 50% of cantrang catches were bycatch and discards. The cantrang ban was initially imposed in 2015, then subsequently eased in the face of criticism from fishers, before being revoked last year by a minister who has since been jailed on unrelated corruption charges. With the latest development, Trenggono has completely banned the use of these seine and trawl nets across the archipelago.

### [Indonesia Exempts Yachts From Luxury Tax for Marine Tourism](#)

—Yudith Ho, *Bloomberg*, 31 July 2021

Indonesia will exempt yachts and cruise ships used for tourism from a 75% luxury tax as the world's biggest archipelago looks into ways to revive its vacation industry amid the pandemic. Similar sailing vessels built for public transport are also exempted, while those imported for other uses are still subject to the levy, the tax office said in a statement on Saturday. The move is meant to boost marine tourism as it has vast potential. The government is exploring ways to improve tourism revenue as the local virus resurgence put a halt to plans to reopen island destination Bali, whose economy has been battered by the pandemic.

### [Indonesia to send more tuna vessels out into international waters](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 28 July 2021

Indonesia is expanding its longline fishing fleet in the high seas as part of its plan for a world-leading sustainable tuna fishery by 2025. *The plan is part of a five-year sustainable tuna fisheries policy update to be issued by the Indonesian fisheries ministry by the end of August.* The expansion aiming to operate farther beyond the country's exclusive economic zone and into international waters, is part of the country's efforts to tap into the increased harvest quota granted to Indonesia by regional fisheries management organizations. The global tuna fishery is valued at more than \$40 billion annually, with Indonesia at the top of the list. In addition to the expansion of tuna longliners, the ministry also plans to adopt a tuna harvest strategy for the country's waters; limit the number of operating fish aggregating devices; implement a temporary moratorium on tuna fishing in the Banda Sea to protect juveniles; and reduce the carbon footprint of its vessels.

### [MSC Launches Online Training Platform for Sustainable Fisheries](#)

— Shannon Chai Tjokrorahardjo, *Jakarta Globe*, 23 July 2021

Sustainable fishing standards group Marine Stewardship Council, or MSC, has launched an online training platform to propel Indonesia's fisheries towards sustainability. The training aims to hone fishery stakeholders' technical knowledge on improving sustainability and meeting MSC fisheries standards, which measure the sustainability of wild-capture fisheries. According to the MSC, Indonesian stakeholders will be the first to test out the online training platform. Also in this program, MSC is teaming

up with the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry. Indonesia currently has three MSC-certified fisheries, which demonstrate healthy fish stocks, minimize environmental impacts and have effective management assessed by third party assessors. Trian Yunanda —the fish resource management director at the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry— welcomed the partnership with the MSC. “The Ministry of Marine Affairs and its stakeholders continue our commitment to contribute in the development of various efforts of the realization of sustainable fishery practices in Indonesia,” Trian said.

## C. Forests & Land Use

### [Indonesia aims to transform forests into carbon sink](#)

— A. Muh Ibnu Aqil, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 July 2021

The government is aiming for the forestry and land use sector to be not only carbon neutral but also a carbon sink by 2030 as part of a greater emissions reduction strategy. Indonesia has targeted to reduce emissions by 29 percent independently and 41 percent with international assistance in its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat in 2016. The latest updated NDC document, submitted by the Environment and Forestry Ministry on July 21 of this year, says that a large chunk of emissions reduction is expected to come from the forestry and land use sector by 2030, at 24.5 percent. The ministry is now trying to take corrective measures to support the plan, including by reducing deforestation and preventing land degradation and forest fires, according to Deputy Minister Alue Dohong. Yet, activists are still unconvinced that Indonesia’s forests can be carbon neutral by 2030 while some existing strategies still threaten natural forests.

### [For an Indigenous group in Sumatra, a forest regained is being lost once more](#)

—Barita News Lumbanbatu, *Mongabay*, 27 July 2021

The Indigenous community of Pandumaan-Sipituhuta in Indonesia’s North Sumatra province have started replanting frankincense trees in their customary forest after a company had cleared the land to make way for a pulpwood plantation. The community has been in conflict with the company, PT Toba Pulp Lestari, since 2009, which has led to numerous clashes and criminal charges brought by the company against community members. The government finally granted recognition of the Indigenous group’s rights to its ancestral forest at the end of 2020. But the size of the customary forest had been slashed by more than half after the government earmarked some of the forest to be converted into large-scale agricultural plantations under the national food estate program.

### [Deforestation and the Palm Oil Industry](#)

—Joko Supriyono and Fadhil Hasan, *The Jakarta Globe*, 4 June 2021

Our president's success on deforestation has been a country-wide effort. The government — particularly President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo — has recently won significant praise from international observers for its success in reducing Indonesia's deforestation rates. For the past 15 years or more, Western critics and institutions have focused on very Western-oriented solutions, even though their partner countries like Indonesia had different socio-economic needs. The reductions in deforestation under President Jokowi have been driven by Indonesia, not by any global summits or Western-led initiatives. This is a huge achievement that deserves more recognition. On the ground, it has been a joint effort by the president, his ministries, civil society groups, and the private sector. This environmental success story could not have happened without the commitment and drive of the Indonesian palm oil community. It has been a story of collaboration and discussion: a mature approach that many of the loud anti-palm oil voices in the West could learn from.

#### [Lower House Member asks government to try India and Brazil's approach to foreign NGOs](#)

— Ya'cob Billiocta, *Merdeka*, 17 July 2021

The negative campaigns of [foreign] non-governmental organizations (NGOs) against the Indonesian forestry sector is expected to have a damaging impact on important aspects of the national economy. A member of Commission IV of the Lower House (DPR), Firman Subagyo, suggested that the Indonesian government must be dare to take bold and determined action against campaigns that interfere with national interests. "Indonesia must be able to follow the example of India and Brazil who acted decisively against foreign NGOs in their countries. NGOs that operate in Indonesia but interfere with national interests must be banned and not be allowed to carry out activities in Indonesia," Firman, who is a Golkar Party politician, told reporters in Jakarta on Saturday 17 July. In Firman's evaluation, natural products from developing countries such as Indonesia continue to be obstructed by various trade policies and negative campaigns by NGOs. According to him, Indonesia must be bold and firm against the negative campaigns of NGOs.

#### [Indonesia: Residents Seek Compensation for 'New Bali' Project in Lombok](#)

—Ahmad Syamsudin and Nithin Coca, *Benar News*, 29 July 2021

Some residents of an Indonesian island where a world-class luxury resort and motor-racing circuit is being constructed with China-linked money say they have been threatened in connection with the project or have not received fair compensation for their land. The Mandalika Special Economic Zone, a multi-billion-dollar project on Lombok Island, is part of an ambitious program introduced by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo in 2016 to create "10 new Balis," in a bid by his government to attract many more tourists to the archipelago-nation. The development project, however, has drawn concerns from the United Nations. In April, U.N. human rights experts issued a statement urging the Indonesian government to respect the rights of those affected by the Mandalika project. "Credible sources have found that the local residents were subjected to threats and intimidations and forcibly evicted from their land without compensation," the statement said. The Indonesian government rejected the allegations as "false," calling the U.N. statement "hyperbolic."

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

### [Indonesia needs \\$312b to make good on carbon pledge: Minister](#)

—Divya Karyza, *The Jakarta Post*, 29 July 2021

Indonesia needs to invest US\$312 billion to reach its target for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, according to Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati. The figure is based on the estimated contribution stated in the reworked nationally determined contribution (NDC), Indonesia's pledge made under the Paris Agreement on climate change. "That's a huge number. [...] The question now is how to finance the implementation," the minister said. Indonesia's state budget plan identifies climate change control spending through budget tagging, which shows that the individual items currently add up to 4.1% of the total budget. From 2018 to 2020, Indonesia allocated \$7.08 billion, or 4.3% of the total state budget, to climate change measures, which is only 34% of the annual funding needed, according to Sri Mulyani. On the national level, the government has issued several fiscal policies. The government has also begun marketing so-called green sukuk to retail investors with the aim of financing projects apt to slow climate change.

### [Indonesia to make biomass co-firing mandatory in power plants](#)

—Bernadette Christina Munthe and Fransiska Nangoy, *Reuters*, 23 July 2021

Indonesia plans to make the co-firing of biomass in power stations mandatory as part of its efforts to phase out coal power plants, which account for more than 60% of its electricity supplies, an energy ministry director said on Friday. The Southeast Asian country is the world's biggest thermal coal exporter and relies heavily on the fuel domestically, but authorities have pledged to start phasing out coal under climate change commitments. "This co-firing programme is an intermediate solution as we determine how to phase out coal power plants," Chrisnawan Anditya, a renewable energy director at the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry, told an online seminar. PLN has said it is planning to gradually retire its coal power plants as part of its ambition to reach carbon neutrality by 2060. The state power company plans to start co-firing at 52 of its biggest coal power plants and has estimated it could replace 9 million tonnes of coal per year with biomass.

### [World's Largest Solar Farm Costing \\$2B to Be Built in Indonesia](#)

—*The Maritime Executive*, 22 July 2021

Plans were unveiled for the world's largest floating solar power and energy storage system. At a cost estimated at \$2 billion, the system will be developed by Singapore's Sunseap Group in cooperation with Badan Pengusahaan Batam (BP Batam) operators of a free trade zone in Indonesia and installed at Batam Island. Under an MOU between the two organizations, Sunseap will develop the floating photovoltaic system (FPV) and ESS energy storage system. The FPV is projected to have a capacity of 2.2 GWp and span around 1600 hectares, making it the largest FPV in the world to date. Construction is slated to begin in 2022 with a plan to be completed in 2024. The floating solar panels will be installed on a former saltwater bay, which has been converted into the Duriangkang Reservoir, the largest reservoir in Batam. According to the CEO of Sunseap "Floating solar systems will go a long way to address the land constraints that urbanized parts of Southeast Asia face in tapping renewable energy."

### [Promptly tackle climate change to prevent Jakarta from sinking: MUI](#)

—Abdu Faisal, Nabil Ihsan, *Antara News*, 2 August 2021

Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) sought actions from Indonesian scientists and politicians to tackle climate change following US President Joe Biden's recent statement that Jakarta would be submerged within a decade due to rising sea levels. "We should not take President Biden's statement lightly," MUI Deputy Chairman Anwar Abbas declared. Abbas deemed the scientists' vigilance and response to the climate change issue as necessary to dismiss any misconception of inaction until it was too late. The MUI deputy chairman also called on world leaders and scientists, especially those engaged in matters to address climate change and global warming, to take unified actions to study and handle them. Abbas pointed to continued land subsidence in Jakarta every year while the sea levels had kept rising due to ice melting in the North and South pole regions at an almost equal pace. He called on the central and regional governments to also coordinate to assuage the impacts of climate change on Indonesia and join hands with other countries to tackle it.

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

### [Indonesia needs \\$477b investment for near-zero plastic pollution goal](#)

—Eisya A. Eloksari, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 July 2021

Indonesia needs investment of US\$477 billion to reach its goal of near-zero plastic pollution by 2040, according to the Indonesia National Plastic Action Partnership (Indonesia NPAP). The NPAP was unveiled by Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Minister Luhut Pandjaitan in April last year as part of a global partnership to fast-track the circular economy. Rofi Alhanif, an official at the environment and forestry management department of Luhut's ministerial office, said the investment could increase the number of plastic recyclers and lift their overall annual capacity by 2.8 million tons. Rofi added that such investment would create 120,000 jobs in the formal sector and 3.3 million in the informal sector. Informal workers are the backbone of Indonesia's waste management system. The Environment and Forestry Ministry noted that scavengers collected some 354,900 tons of plastic waste per year, while waste banks and government-owned facilities collected just 69,900 tons per year.

### [Startup Aims to Turn Waterborne Plastic Waste Into Fuel](#)

—*The Maritime Executive*, 30 July 2021

A UK-based startup is looking to solve two environmental problems with one solution, pulling plastic trash from waterways - where it would normally wind up in the ocean - and turning it into a fuel for ships. Plastic-to-fuel startup Clean Planet Energy has partnered with riverine waste NGO Riverrecycle to build out a combined floating debris to fuel value chain. Riverrecycle is already running offices in seven countries, including Indonesia and the Philippines, where the project will begin. It has won funding from



the ICTSI Foundation to begin removal of plastic litter from Manila's Pasig River, and that work is already under way. Clean Planet Energy will complement its efforts with the construction of a plastic-to-fuel plant in Manila. Clean Planet's ecoPlant uses patented pyrolysis and oil-upgrading technology to convert waste plastics into clean fuels. The fuels produced can be used as a direct replacement in fossil-fuel engines, and the company estimates that it reduces net CO2 emissions by about 75 percent.

#### [Indonesia devises technology to recycle COVID-19 medical waste](#)

—Martha S, Resinta Sulistiyanda, *Antara*, 29 July 2021

The National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) has developed several technologies to process and recycle COVID-19 medical waste. "In the midst of this pandemic, the volume of medical waste is increasing, but the capacity to process it is still limited," Head of BRIN Laksana Tri Handoko said. The BRIN head later noted that the agency with its scientists had come up with proven technologies to expedite the waste recycling capacity, most importantly, for recycling waste of the micro and mobile scale. Such technologies are ideal for areas with relatively small populations with less waste rather than building large incinerators at high prices and constrained by centralized waste collection, Handoko explained. The BRIN has also developed technology to recycle hazmat suits and medical masks with polypropylene material. Handoko noted that only 4.1% hospitals in Indonesia had permits for incinerators, while there was only 20 waste treatment businesses in the country, and nearly all of them were concentrated in Java with uneven distribution.

#### [Indonesia adopts policies to support circular economy](#)

—Prisca Triferna V, Suharto, *Antara*, 22 July 2021

The Environment and Forestry Ministry has said it has adopted several policies to support a sustainable circular economy in the country by driving the creation of more garbage banks, among other things. "To support the implementation of circular economic policies, the upstream policies focus on sorting and processing garbage at its source, empowering garbage banks, and implementing the expanded responsibility of producers through the roadmap for the reduction of waste by producers," Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya said. Garbage banks will be pushed to play the role of an offtaker, or a garbage collection point, and the recycling industry will later process the garbage into raw materials. The minister expressed the hope that the capacity of the plastic recycling industry will increase threefold and the capacity of the paper recycling industry will grow twofold. To raise the recycling capacity, the ministry has adopted several strategies, including increasing the plastic and paper raw material collection capacity, sorting waste from its source, and offering incentives, she added.

## **F. Conservation and Protected Areas**

#### [UNESCO voices concern over Indonesia's 'Jurassic Park'](#)

—Konradus Epa, *UCA News*, 3 August 2021

The United Nations' Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has called on the Indonesian government to stop all tourism infrastructure construction projects in Komodo National Park in Catholic-majority East Nusa Tenggara province. "The Indonesian government needs to temporarily halt tourism infrastructure projects in the protected Komodo habitat, which is considered to have outstanding universal value," the World Heritage Committee (WHC) said. It called on the Indonesian government to submit a revised environmental impact assessment that will be reviewed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Indonesia is building tourist facilities dubbed "Jurassic Park" on Rinca island, one of the last remaining habitats of the endangered Komodo dragon. Cypri Jehan Paju Dale, a researcher and environmentalist at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies, called the WHC's move "a massive achievement for conservation and tourism." "It's a win against the destruction of a conservation area and World Heritage Site by the current regime's tourism development," news portal Tempo quoted him as saying on Aug. 1.

### [Southeast Asia losing tigers as deadline looms to double population by 2022](#)

—Carolyn Cowan, *Mongabay*, 29 July 2021

Tigers once roamed throughout the dense forested interior of mainland Southeast Asia and several islands of Indonesia. However, the long-term survival of this flagship conservation species now hangs in the balance. In 2010, government ministers from the 13 countries that still had wild tiger populations committed to implementing measures to double the wild population of the big cats by 2022. However, it is highly unlikely that this goal will be met, with many countries in the region actually seeing their tiger populations go extinct or decline since the pledge was made. In Indonesia, fewer than 600 Sumatran tigers (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) remain, with declining trends edging their status to critically endangered. Population declines are driven by habitat loss due to logging, plantation expansion and extractive industries; illegal trade in tiger products; poaching and snaring. Conservation groups are calling on governments in Asia to phase out tiger "farms" that feed the trade in tiger parts, and to renew their commitments to boosting tiger numbers.

### [Restoring mangroves to raise people's welfare and mitigate climate change](#)

—Sudibyo Wiradj, *The Jakarta Post*, 26 July 2021

Indonesia is scrambling to restore its sizeable mangrove forest loss, with the national Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM) tasked with accelerating the process over the next four years, as the consequences of mangrove deforestation have been increasingly alarming. The BRGM, in collaboration with the Environment and Forestry Ministry, the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry, provincial administrations, NGOs and other stakeholders, is targeting the restoration of about 600,000 hectares of mangrove forests over the next four years. The mangrove restoration project is being carried out in stages, with the BRGM and its partners embarking on the project in May of this year. "By July, we had managed to rehabilitate 10,500 hectares of mangrove forests of the targeted 83,000 hectares of mangrove forests for 2021," he said. Hartono explained how massive mangrove deforestation could occur in Indonesia, with a shift in land function as a primary cause. He said many mangrove forests had been converted into shrimp ponds, agricultural land and infrastructure.

