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The government has announced plans to set up a climate change trust fund to manage all financial aid from donor countries for Indonesia to mitigate the effects of global warming. The National Development Planning Board (Bappenas) said it would work with the Finance Ministry to jointly manage the fund. "We plan to pool all grants and loans for climate change provided by donors into the trust fund," Basah Hernowo, Bappenas director of forestry and water resource conservation, told The Jakarta Post. Currently, most financial aid from donors goes directly to the sectors it is aimed at.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 24 October 2008](#) ; **See also** [Indonesia to set up climate trust fund to woo donors](#)

Actions by Indonesia to control its haze problem have seen some effect. This was revealed at the Sixth Meeting of the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution held in Thailand recently. The number of hotspots in the country has dropped to half the level seen two years ago. And while open burning activities in Southeast Asia have increased, the level of haze has not gone up significantly - likely a result of efforts by countries to suppress the fires, and wetter than normal weather conditions. Indeed, the region is likely to see average or above-average levels of rainfall over the next three months, according to the ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Centre (ASMC).

Source: [Channel News Asia, 23 October 2008](#)

The issue of climate change will remain the focus of nations worldwide despite the international concern over the global financial crisis. "Efforts to manage the problem of climate change can contribute towards resolving the financial crisis," said Environment Minister Rachmat Witoelar last week, reporting the results of the environment ministers meeting in Warsaw, Poland on October 13. Witoelar said environment ministers were of the opinion that finance ministers need to be involved in efforts to deal with climate change. In following up the meeting's results, Poland will hold a finance ministers meeting on December 8. Similarly, a meeting of industry ministers will take place on November 28.

Source: [Tempo Interactive, 23 October 2008](#)

Asian and European leaders plan to call for new goals to fight climate change up to 2012 to be agreed by the end of next year, according to a draft summit statement seen last week. "Leaders welcomed the substantial progress made at the climate change conference in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007," said the draft "chair's statement" from the biannual Asia-Europe Meeting. "They confirmed their commitment to securing an ambitious, effective and comprehensive agreed outcome now, up to and beyond 2012, by the end of 2009 on the basis of the Bali road map," said the draft. The 27 EU and 16 Asian nations also plan to issue a separate joint statement on Saturday committing them to comprehensive reform of global financial systems.

Source: [Earth Times, 24 October 2008](#) ; **See also** [China onboard for climate pact goal- Danish PM](#) and [PREVIEW: World hopes for US change](#), also [China says greenhouse gases catch up with U.S.](#)

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will be informed on all views being expressed in the media.*

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Keen to earn money from the forest, called the Ulu Masen ecosystem, the government of Aceh province joined a leading conservation group and the financial market to save it. In return, the province is set to earn millions of dollars through the sale of carbon credits to investors, with a portion of the cash flowing to local communities to encourage them to halt illegal logging and pay for alternative livelihoods. Money from the initial sale of credits for this project is expected to flow in the coming months.

Source: [PlanetArk, 30 October 2008](#) ; See also [FACTBOX-Forest preservation-carbon credit schemes in Asia](#), and also [FACTBOX: U.N. scheme aims to use carbon credits to save forests](#)

Executive Director of the Indonesian Forest Association Nanang Roffandi Ahmad has said he regrets the many levies charged for forestry licenses. He mentioned Papua as the place with the most levies. "There are more than 20," said Nanang at the Forestry Expo this week. Forestry minister MS Kaban promised to arrange a standard for forestry licenses so that the levies can be reduced and investment activities can be better.

Source: [Tempo Interactive, 28 October 2008](#)

Mars said it was "shocked" that Indonesia had confiscated and destroyed thousands of cartons of its sweets because of melamine contamination fears even though tests had shown they were safe to eat. Indonesia's Food and Medicine Supervision Agency, BPOM, confirmed 2,000 cartons of Snickers and M&Ms had been destroyed but refused to explain why or comment on the case, which Mars said had cost it half the year's predicted revenue. The case highlights the challenges of investing in Indonesia, where officials sometimes appear to act arbitrarily.

Source: [FT.com, 29 October 2008](#)

Cement producer PT Holcim Indonesia has reiterated its commitment to regenerate its limestone mining site on Nusakambangan island, Central Java, amid concerns raised by activists about deteriorating environmental conditions on the island. In cooperation with the Cilacap Natural Resources Conservation Center (BKSDA), Holcim Indonesia's Cilacap plant has continued cultivating the island's native trees at the site. "We care about the environment. Holcim naturally will be responsible for the recovery program," PT Holcim Indonesia's relationship management director Rusli Setiawan told The Jakarta Post last week after a meeting with BKSDA chief forest ranger Dedy Supriyanto.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 24 October 2008](#)

A NGO filed a complaint with city police against a soap company for dumping wastewater into the Kali Tengah river in Gresik. Executive director of the Institute for Ecological Studies and Wet Land Conservation (Ecoton), Prigi Arisandi, said the soap company had released wastewater containing ortho-phospat and detergents into the river. "The disposal of hazardous wastewater into the river has damaged paddy plants using irrigation water from the river," he said. He said his organization, which represents residents and farmers in Gresik, had asked the police to investigate the pollution and take action against the company.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 29 October 2008](#)

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The Prince of Wales plans to visit Jambi forest in early November to oversee a project aimed at restoring the forest's ecosystem and saving endangered species, the Indonesian Forestry Ministry says. "Minister MS Kaban is expected to join Prince Charles' trip," the ministry's director of forest management Listya Kusumawardhani told reporters in Jakarta early this week. The British Embassy in Jakarta said Prince Charles would visit Indonesia from Nov. 1 to Nov. 5. The last time the heir to the English throne visited the country was in 1989.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 28 October 2008](#) ; **Related story:** [Britain`s Prince of Wales to visit RI early November](#) and [Jambi Police Prepare for A Visit by Prince of Wales](#)

The United States has pledged nearly 40 million dollars to save the world's greatest expanse of coral reef, mangrove and fish ecosystems, the US embassy in Manila said recently. The assistance -- worth 39.45 million dollars -- will go to the Coral Triangle Initiative, a consortium formed to promote sustainable fisheries and coastal resource management programmes in East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands. The six million square-kilometer (2.3 million square-miles) expanse of water and coastline where the Pacific and Indian Oceans meet contains the greatest concentration of marine organisms anywhere in the world, scientists say.

Source: [AFP, 24 October 2008](#)

Country representatives attending upcoming United Nations climate change conferences in Poland and Denmark have agreed to build their discussions on the results of last December's Bali conference, the Indonesian environment minister said last weekend. Rachmat Witoelar said the agreement was reached during a video conference involving Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen on the sidelines of an ASEAN-European meeting in Beijing on Friday. The video conference was mediated by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 27 October 2008](#) ; **Related story:** [Yudhoyono, UN chief hold teleconference on climate change](#)

Indonesia's state oil firm Pertamina will increase the sale of palm-based biodiesel in a move to cut energy subsidies, a company official said this week. In September, Indonesia issued a ministerial decree making the use of biofuel mandatory with effect from 2009. The resource-rich nation has been pushing for the use of biofuels to cut the use of costly petroleum products and to help ensure the survival of its biodiesel industry. Indonesia's combined capacity for biofuel using palm oil as a feedstock is 2 million kilo liters per year, but it is running at 20 percent of capacity, data from the national biofuel development team shows.

Source: [Palmoilprices.net, 27 October 2008](#)

A new U.S. law aimed at stopping illegal logging that generates billions of dollars and threatens the world's forests is causing concern among companies on the front line of implementing the legislation. The intent is to reduce demand for wood illegally harvested from government-protected areas in countries such as Indonesia, Honduras and Russia and which finds its way into a variety of

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imported goods sold in the United States. Companies that trade in illegally sourced wood or file false import declarations would have their goods confiscated and could face criminal penalties as well.

Source: [Reuters, 28 October 2008](#) ; **See also** [Indonesia to audit all timber operations to cut illegal logging](#)

Experts estimate that orangutans could become extinct in the wild within 25 years. At present, there are an estimated 54,000 Kalimantan orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus*) in Kalimantan, and approximately 6,600 Sumateran orangutans (*Pongo Abellii*) in Sumatra. Numbers are getting smaller though, due to illegal animal trading and Indonesia's dwindling forests; a direct result of illegal logging and "slash and burn" agriculture. In some pet markets in Jakarta, certain traders secretly sell orangutans at expensive prices. The purchase of such animals is not easy; a lot of money is required to bribe authorities and pay for the issuance of documentation to avoid arrest by police.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 28 October 2008](#) ; **See also** [Big bucks, trust needed in orangutan trade](#)

A species of cockatoo feared to have become extinct has been "rediscovered" with the sighting of a handful of breeding pairs on a remote Indonesian island, researchers said recently. Ten Yellow-crested Abbott's cockatoos were found on the Masalembu archipelago off Java Island, the Indonesian Cockatoo Conservation group said. The group included four breeding pairs and two juveniles.

Source: [Discovery News, 23 October 2008](#)

The global financial crisis has become a blessing to pythons and corals as demand among US and European consumers for such exotic Asian luxuries, has nose-dived. "So far this October the orders for live pythons from the US and Europe are only 10 to 20 percent of what they were in October last year," said George Saputra of the Indonesian Reptile and Amphibian Trade Association. This year, Indonesia's export quota for reticulated pythons is 157,500 for skins or skin products, and 4,500 for pets, according to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna.

Source: [Inquirer.net, 30 October 2008](#)

Animal protection organization ProFauna Indonesia is organizing a two-week-long campaign to save the lives of birds in Manokwari, Papua, with the slogan, "Parrots and cockatoos are more beautiful in nature". "The campaign aims to encourage Papua's young generation to love their surroundings and be proud of the native species that can only be found here," said ProFauna Indonesia's campaign officer Tri Prayudhi. He added that the campaign would run from Oct. 24 to Nov. 6 and was aimed at students from five elementary and five senior high schools. Based on ProFauna Indonesia's 2001-2002 investigation, about 15,000 parrots and cockatoos caught in Papua had been illegally sold and exported.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 29 October 2008](#)

Key tuna species are under threat from over-fishing in Asia's diverse Coral Triangle region and a drastic rethink is needed to stave off collapse, environmental group WWF said recently. Tuna species in the triangle, including heavily overfished bluefin and bigeye tuna, are under increasing pressure as

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fleets move in from depleted fishing grounds in other parts of the world, WWF researcher Lida Pet Soede said. The Coral Triangle -- which is bounded by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and East Timor -- contains spawning and nursery grounds as well as migratory routes for up to 89 percent of the world's tuna catch, according to the WWF. The triangle is one of the most biologically diverse areas on earth.

Source: [Antara News, 21 October 2008](#)

Jember Nature Conservation Center (BKSDA) rejected plans of the regency administration to turn Nusa Barong Island into a tourist destination. They said the uninhabited island locating 4,5 kilometer in the Puger coast in Southern Jember is a nature conservation area. "If they want to change the status of the island, they must get authorization permission from the Forestry Minister and the House of Representatives (DPR)," said East Java BKSDA chief, Abdullah Efendi Abbas last week.

Source: [Tempo Interactive, 24 October 2008](#)

The city administration aims to complete by the end of this year some of the payments for the acquisition of land for the construction of the East Flood Canal. East Jakarta's land committee chairman Arifin said the administration had prepared Rp 177 billion (US\$17 million) to pay for 370 plots of land. "As of today, we have paid for 147 out of 517 plots of land in the nine sub-districts," he said. He said the committee had recorded a total 808 plots of land, which encompassed more than 258 hectares. The acquisition project would cost more than Rp 646 billion, he said.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 28 October 2008](#) ; See also [Airport road project could worsen city's floods: NGOs](#)

The number of tuberculosis (TB) patients in Indonesia is the third largest in the world after China and India, according to a report of the World Health Organization (WHO). Indonesia ranks third on the list of 22 high-burden tuberculosis countries in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global TB Report 2006, there were 540,000 new TB cases and an estimated incidence rate of 110 new sputum smear-positive (SS+) cases per 100,000 people in 2004. Indonesia has received foreign assistance including from the Netherlands and Canada, to help treat the infectious disease.

Source: [Antara News, 28 October 2008](#)

The number of countries and institutions donating money to combat bird flu has decreased over the past three years despite suggestions the disease still poses a real and immediate threat. Head of the National Committee for Bird Flu Control and Pandemic Preparedness, Bayu Krisnamurthi, said in this week that 35 countries and institutions had pledged to donate money to combat the disease during a bird flu conference in Beijing in January 2006, but that only 17 had actually made donations at the Bamako conference in December of the same year. Only nine institutions made donations a year later in December 2007 during the New Delhi conference, and six donated in the Oct. 24-26 Sixth International Ministerial Conference on Avian and Pandemic Influenza in Cairo.

Source: [The Jakarta Post, 30 October 2008](#) ; See also [Bird flu fight hindered by fatigue, says UN agency](#) and [Avian Flu Threat: New Approach Needed](#)