

PERSPECTIVE

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A Roadmap for Consolidating Jokowi's Legacy

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Indonesian President Joko Widodo (R) gestures after giving basic a need package to people affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus during an aid distribution in Jakarta on 18 May 2020. Photo: ADEK BERRY / AFP.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- While Jokowi may have entered his second term with little political constraints in formulating his priorities and shaping his legacy, the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted his plans significantly.
- With about two years left in power, Jokowi needs a viable roadmap and rigorous implementation to achieve significant results for his stated priorities – viz. economic transformation, continued infrastructure development, human capital development, bureaucratic reform, simplification of regulations, recovery from the pandemic, moving of the capital to East Kalimantan, and preparing the National Long-Term Development Plan 2026-2045.
- Jokowi would need to establish the technocratic foundations for competent governance, which must include systematic mechanisms reinforced with a culture of meritocracy and accountability. He would also need to have a successor who shares his vision and commitment. Only then would Jokowi's achievements be able to outlast his tenure and cement his legacy of having substantially uplifted Indonesia's economic and social progress.

INTRODUCTION

On all counts, Indonesian President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s second term in office started on the right footing. He had won by a larger margin (compared to when he first contested in 2014) and he had the majority of parliamentarians behind him. In fact, his coalition had grown to include some parties that opposed him during the elections, and he had successfully co-opted his erstwhile opponents, Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno, into his cabinet. With very little formal opposition in parliament and political considerations (since this is his second and final term) to constrain him, Jokowi enjoys significant leeway to shape his political legacy.

Having had some success in achieving his *Nawacita* (nine ideals) in his first term—particularly in reducing poverty and narrowing the inequality gap between Java and the rest of Indonesia by means of infrastructure development—Jokowi followed up by offering ‘five visions’ in his second term: economic transformation, continuation of infrastructure development, human capital development, bureaucratic reform, and simplification of regulations.¹ He also promised to move the national capital, and lay the foundation for achieving the Indonesia 2045 dream by formulating the National Long-Term Development Plan 2026-2045.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 intervened. Jokowi had barely started his second term and outlined his agenda when the pandemic swept through Indonesia. Plans to gear up the economy and reform the bureaucracy had to be put on hold to manage the unprecedented public health, economic and political challenges posed by the pandemic. While the pandemic may now finally be under control – if the Omicron variant does not bring on another devastating wave of infections – Jokowi and his administration have only less than three years left to consolidate his legacy. But if we take into account the fact that quite a few of his cabinet members (and the political parties backing them) will be jostling for favourable positions in preparation for the 2024 elections, Jokowi may at best have only 15 months left to materialise his plans. In this remaining time, what then should his priorities be?

This essay suggests, from a pragmatic perspective, which political promises should be prioritised and may be fulfilled within Jokowi’s remaining tenure as president. It also offers a roadmap for how these priorities may be achieved, and to what extent. The outcome will have implications for Jokowi’s legacy and how he, the second popularly elected president of Indonesia, will be remembered.

KEEPING THE PROMISES: FOCI AND PRIORITIES

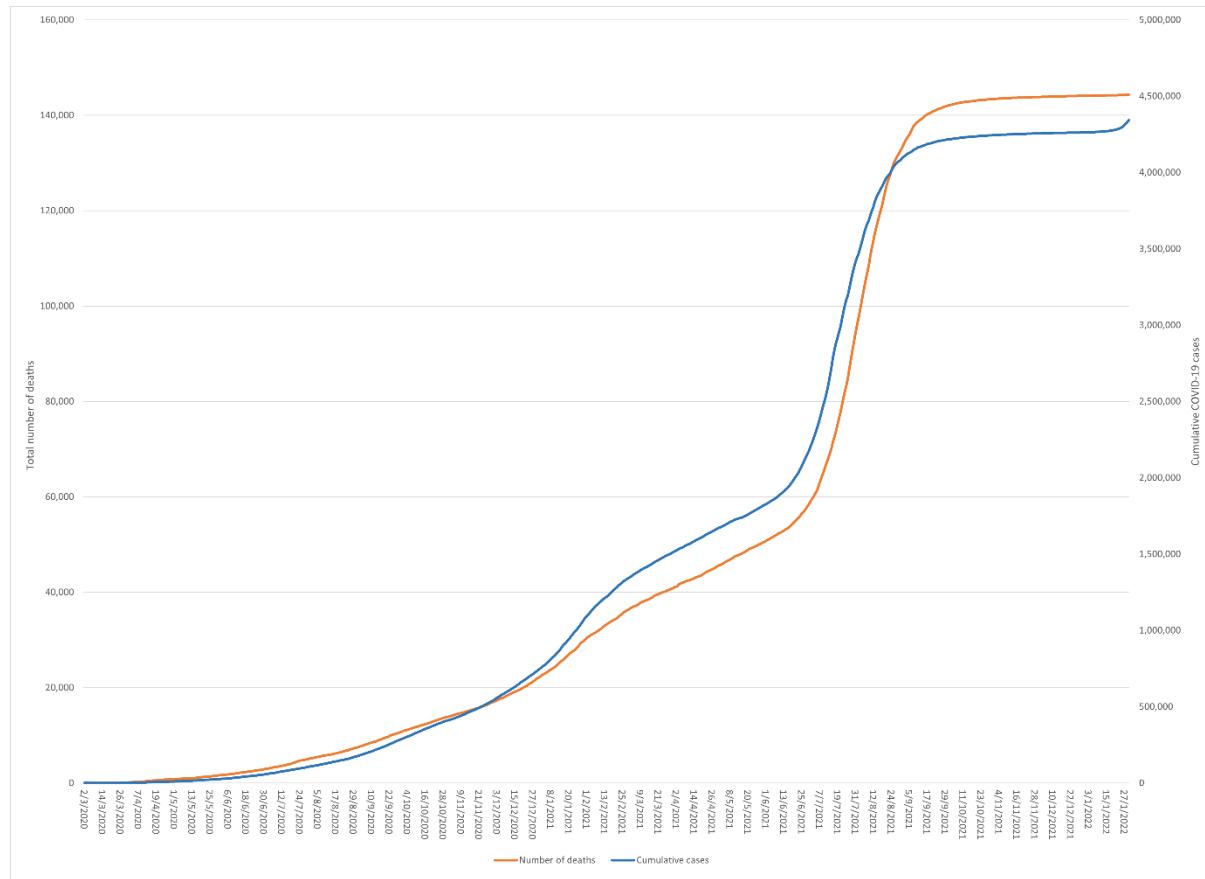
The political promises of Jokowi’s first term were packaged as *Nawacita* (nine ideals), outlined in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015-2019. These aim at (i) renewing the state’s obligation to protect all people and provide security to all citizens; (ii) making the government’s presence felt through reliable governance; (iii) building Indonesia from its peripheries and strengthening rural areas; (iv) rejecting a weak state by reforming the law system; (v) improving people’s lives by improving the quality of education and health and distribution of wealth; (vi) improving people’s productivity and

competitiveness; (vii) achieving economic independence; (viii) revolutionising the nation's character; and (ix) strengthening diversity and social restoration.² The promises of *Nawacita* were partially fulfilled through massive infrastructure projects that improved connectivity, and the doling out of resources that enhanced village facilities, assisted human development and revamped national health insurance, among others. However, reform in areas such as law enforcement, human rights protection and access to justice still need significant attention.³ To be sure, the Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla administration had achieved encouraging results, building infrastructure rapidly across the country, keeping economic growth steady at around 5% despite global volatility, capping inflation at 2.72%, pushing unemployment down to 5.3%, reducing the poverty rate, for the first time, to the single digit rate of 9.41%, and lowering the Gini coefficient (that reflects inequality) to 0.381. Although dissenters may criticise Jokowi's lack of achievements in law enforcement,⁴ protection of human rights,⁵ and environmental issues,⁶ the President did deliver on some of the key bread and butter issues during his 2014-2019 term in office.⁷ On the foreign policy front, it is worth noting that Jokowi is now downplaying his maritime fulcrum vision to turn Indonesia into a global maritime hub.⁸ This is possibly because so little progress had been made on that front that this promise was deliberately neglected and has been allowed to be 'forgotten'.⁹

For his second term, with Maruf Amin as his vice president, Jokowi has presented five foci: economic transformation, continuation of infrastructure development, human capital development, bureaucratic reform, and simplification of regulations.¹⁰ Also on Jokowi's agenda are the moving of the capital to East Kalimantan and preparing the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2026-2045. These are for realising the "Indonesia 2045" dream of becoming the fourth or fifth largest economy in the world.¹¹

But as Jokowi proceeded to consolidate his legacy in his second term, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia severely. From March 2020 to the end of January 2022, more than 4.34 million people were infected and 144,000 died (see Figure 1)—about 60% of them since July 2021.¹² In two months, from 1 July to 31 August 2021, 73,496 people died.

Figure 1: Cumulative Covid-19 Infection and Death Rates in Indonesia (Mar 2020 – Jan 2022)



The impact of the pandemic put a serious dent on Jokowi's achievements. At the end of 2020, the economy had shrunk by 2.07%, unemployment had risen to 7.07%, and the poverty rate had returned to the double-digit figure of 10.19%.¹³

Undoubtedly, the fulfilment of Jokowi-Maruf's goals has been affected. Two years into Jokowi's second term, the Executive Office of the President (KSP) issued a progress report on the government's performance.¹⁴ Of the five foci, only the continuation of infrastructure development seems to be on track, though suffering some hiccups.¹⁵ Economic transformation and human capital development have definitely been disrupted.^{16, 17} Meanwhile, the bureaucratic reform and regulation simplification that are being pushed with the help of the 'Omnibus' Job Creation Law have not yet been implemented optimally, particularly at the subnational level where much investment actually takes place.¹⁸ Moving the national capital to East Kalimantan has also been hampered: it is not just a matter of infrastructure development being held back by the pandemic, but also the difficulty involved in relocating civil servants (ASN) from Jakarta.¹⁹

The government's hesitation to prioritise health over the economy at the beginning of the pandemic could have been due to fear that the goals set under the five foci would not be realised.^{20,21} But now that the pandemic appears to be under control, the government will

need to determine its priorities among the five foci, the drafting of the RPJPN and the relocation of the capital. This requires a roadmap that sets feasible targets, which in turn will consolidate Jokowi's legacy during the remainder of his tenure as president.

The key question then is, what should Jokowi prioritise?

A VIABLE ROADMAP

In what follows, we suggest what the viable priorities are, and a roadmap for how they can be met, following Jokowi's own 'framework'. *First*, where *economic transformation* is concerned, efforts should be directed towards building a productive and competitive economy through investments in productive sectors, incentives for SMEs and the informal sectors, poverty alleviation (especially eradicating extreme poverty), and village development via the village fund (*dana desa*).²² In terms of physical *infrastructure development*, priority should be given to the boosting of productivity and tackling inequality between Java and the rest of the archipelago. This means completing connectivity infrastructure on the main islands apart from Java, such as the Trans-Sumatera, Trans-Kalimantan, Trans-Sulawesi and Trans-Papua toll roads, seaports (especially in East Indonesia), airports outside Java, and enhancing maritime transport.²³ Development of *human capital* should be directed towards circumventing the demographic trap—i.e., when people in the productive age range are in fact not productive. Some measures that can be implemented include ensuring universal health care coverage, compulsory education, and defragmenting existing schemes for social protection and public services.²⁴ At the same time, the National Talent Management (MTN), as a body for developing Indonesia's talent ecosystem, needs to be established.²⁵ *Bureaucratic reform* is needed to improve state capacity through de-bureaucratisation, introduction of a merit system, overhaul in the capacity-building curriculum for civil servants, and the introduction of a civil service database.²⁶ *Simplification of regulations* should increase the ease of doing business. In this regard, the implementation of the Omnibus Law should ensure that effective investments take place in a hassle-free environment and generate new jobs.

Achieving the above is crucial and best driven directly by the President, since many cabinet members are associated with political parties and interests, and will be caught up in manoeuvres and campaigning for the 2024 elections. The most realistic approach is for Jokowi to install capable people as vice ministers to work on the technocratic aspects of the foci and ensure delivery of his ideas while the ministers are busy with politics.

Second, the process for COVID-19 response and economic recovery, as Jokowi himself mentioned in a presidential official release, is to transition from pandemic to endemic status.²⁷ Yet scholars and epidemiologists have not seen any clear strategy for meeting this target.²⁸ Indonesia is in need of a comprehensive plan that can carry out epidemiologic, economic, and social interventions properly. This implies the immediate execution of three measurable steps: suppression, stabilisation, and normalisation. Suppression aims to reduce the number of cases and deaths. In this stage, the government should implement a 'pull and push' strategy, i.e., combining mobility restriction measures with massive tracing—particularly when new variants are found and new waves hit. Stabilisation controls the

transmission scale and prepares for the re-opening of social-economic activities. The focus here is the development of infection control techniques (like air circulation in high-risk public places such as restaurants, malls and factories) and strengthening surveillance for tracing and isolation. And lastly, normalisation seeks to assist people with living a normal life, albeit under medical surveillance. The government should focus on completing vaccination roll-outs (which at the moment has barely reached 60 per cent of the population) and accelerating booster shots, strengthening healthcare facilities (hospitals and clinics) with adequate healthcare workers, equipment and medicine, and encouraging a ‘new normal lifestyle’ that adheres to public hygiene protocols (*Indonesian Scientists Alliance for Pandemic Resolution*, 2021).²⁹

The government’s re-assignment of budgetary resources from physical infrastructure development to non-physical human resources development in the 2022 State Budget (RAPBN) is a move in the right direction. The infrastructure budget is only IDR384.8 trillion—compared to the health budget at IDR255.3 trillion, social protection at IDR427.5 trillion, and education at IDR541.7 trillion.³⁰ This shows the government’s determination to handle the pandemic, having learnt lessons from the past 17-18 months that not doing so could in turn lead to the economic and political crisis it was trying to avoid.

The real challenge is in the implementation though, and this is where (stalled) bureaucratic reforms have implications. A complicated bureaucracy does not help in crises and pressing situations, as evidenced in delays in social assistance distribution,³¹ payment of incentives for health facilities and health workers,³² provision of compensation to the families of health-workers who had died,³³ and the vaccination process.³⁴ Reform of the bureaucracy will not be easy. Even though some reforms have already been implemented, such as a merit-based system for recruitment, it will be impossible to complete comprehensive reform (including single salary and voluntary severance for civil service) in the remaining time. To sidestep bureaucratic hurdles that cannot be resolved in the short term, one measure to handle the pandemic is to strengthen the role of the Directorate General for Prevention and Disease Control (P2P) of the Ministry of Health, or to give the coordinating mandate to the National Agency for Disaster Mitigation (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana or BNPB) to act as the highest authority in times of crisis and disaster. If this proves to be effective, it could become a significant legacy of Jokowi’s.

Thirdly, the moving of the national capital, taking into account the dynamics of the pandemic, needs to be planned out carefully. Since its announcement at the annual state address on 16 August 2019, no concrete step had been taken until the government handed the bill on the capital to the parliament at the end of September 2021.³⁵ And now, since parliament has officially ratified the Law on the Capital on 18 January 2022,³⁶ the development of the new capital, named ‘Nusantara’, will have to commence immediately. Physical infrastructure development must be prioritised, implemented, and strictly monitored.³⁷ Since moving all the ministries and personnel is a mammoth logistical task,³⁸ the timeline needs to be clear, feasible and well-defined, even if it means laying out a timetable that extends over a decade or two. What needs to be made publicly clear is what the current Jokowi-Ma’ruf administration is responsible for, and what subsequent administrations have to accomplish. This means that the regulatory framework derivative

of the Law on the Capital (such as Governmental and Presidential Regulations, among others) and institutional framework must be put in place, including the establishment of the long-discussed Capital Authority, or a similar agency, as the executing state body.

Finally, the Jokowi administration is well-placed to formulate a vision for Indonesia 2045 through the finalisation of RPJPN 2026-2045. The RPJPN has to be ambitious and bold enough to give a clear direction and a firm framework for Indonesia to march towards becoming a developed country. This RPJPN must be able to address the nation's main challenges, of which there are at least eight: low social mobility, rapid urbanisation, tertiarisation,³⁹ climate change, food security, natural resources management, energy security, and quality of institutions (*Knowledge Ecosystem and Innovation*, 2020).⁴⁰ Furthermore, it has to be able to plan, identify and prioritise programmes that can address the challenges above, while navigating the political landscape.⁴¹

CONCLUSION: CONSOLIDATING A LEGACY AND BEYOND

If the issues raised in the last section can be addressed, Jokowi will be on his way to consolidating his legacy. Moreover, if the right measures are taken, what would be consolidated is not merely a legacy but a technocratic foundation that would help Indonesia become one of the largest economies in the world. This gravitation towards technocratic competence has been evolving, from the regional governments to the national government, as direct elections of leaders has thrown up candidates that have to be accountable to the electorate, part of which implies effective and efficient governance. To consolidate this legacy beyond Jokowi's tenure, the government needs to put in place systematic mechanisms to safeguard the Indonesian state's technocratic competence.

First among the mechanisms is bureaucratic reform. The challenge for Jokowi is to devise a way to push and monitor these initiatives so that they get accomplished within the next two years. Second, a mechanism needs to be put in place to assess all government achievements objectively. While any form of evaluation can be contentious, what is important is that systematic evaluation tools to audit government performance be introduced to measure the quality of governance on a regular basis, which in turn would reinforce the credibility of government institutions. Third, all reports on the government's achievements, notably those released by the Executive Office of the President, should be organised into a knowledge repository made accessible to the public. In turn, this will serve as a repository of the legacies of respective Indonesian presidents and their administrations.

The suggestions in this essay focus on measures that can help Jokowi lay the technocratic foundation for Indonesia's governance and build Indonesia's future. Should such measures be taken, then there will be substance for thinking of Jokowi as "Bapak Indonesia Maju"—Father of a Progressive Indonesia. But with so little time left, Jokowi will need a friendly successor to build on what he has started, although this successor would also have his/her own political vision.

A true legacy is not merely based on memories of the past that persist in the present. It is the opening of the gate to the future. Jokowi's best legacy is a foundation upon which his

successors can continue to make Indonesia not only more advanced, but also more civilised and dignified.

¹ See <https://kppip.go.id/siaran-pers/lima-fokus-kerja-di-periode-kedua-pemerintahan-jokowi/> Somehow, there is no ‘standard’ to the formulation, particularly for ‘simplification of regulation’ which is also often termed as ‘ease of investment’ and ‘economic transformation’ as ‘focused and targeted APBN/state budget.’ See for example <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2019/10/20/151257765/5-visi-jokowi-untuk-indonesia?page=all>.

² See [https://www.wapresri.go.id/en/nawa-cita/#:~:text=Nine%20Priorities%20Agenda%20\(Nawa%20cita\)](https://www.wapresri.go.id/en/nawa-cita/#:~:text=Nine%20Priorities%20Agenda%20(Nawa%20cita))

³ See <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1119148/mengukur-capaian-5-tahun-pemerintahan-jokowi-jk-di-bidang-politik>

⁴ <https://nasional.okezone.com/read/2019/10/19/337/2118978/5-tahun-jokowi-jk-penegakan-hukum-dan-ham-dinilai-masih-lemah>

⁵ See <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/10/20/10495561/4-tahun-presiden-jokowi-janji-penyelesaian-pelanggaran-ham-masa-lalu-yang?page=all> – See also

⁶ See <https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/838329-setara-soal-hukum-lingkungan-jokowi-hanya-di atas-kertas>

⁷ This is consistent with what he said in an exclusive interview with BBC, that he focused on few priorities (mainly infrastructure) in the first period, and in the second period, he “might [focus on] environment, innovation, and then human rights.” He said, “We cannot do everything. Not that we are not willing to, but I like working with focus, with priorities.” See “Presiden Jokowi dalam wawancara eksklusif dengan BBC: ‘Prioritas saya ekonomi, tapi bukan saya tidak senang HAM dan lingkungan” <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-51382305>

⁸ See https://www.kominfo.go.id/content/detail/8231/menuju-poros-maritim-dunia/0/kerja_nyata

⁹ See <https://www.jpnn.com/news/menagih-janji-jokowi-soal-visi-poros-maritim-dunia>; also <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20190715182845-32-412333/angin-lalu-poros-maritim-di-pidato-jokowi>

¹⁰ See <https://kppip.go.id/siaran-pers/lima-fokus-kerja-di-periode-kedua-pemerintahan-jokowi/>

¹¹ This is officially stated in the document published by The Ministry of National Development Planning “Indonesia 2045” ([https://www.bappenas.go.id/files/Visi%20Indonesia%202045/Dokumen%20lengkap%202045_fi nal.pdf](https://www.bappenas.go.id/files/Visi%20Indonesia%202045/Dokumen%20lengkap%202045_final.pdf)). Jokowi himself has been claiming so since his 2019 presidential campaign. See <https://katadata.co.id/agungjatmiko/berita/5e9a51a7280af/jokowi-2045-indonesia-mampu-menjadi-negara-ekonomi-terbesar-keempat>

¹² See covid19.go.id/peta-sebaran

¹³ Data from Statistics Indonesia and various ministries, gathered by the ADB in the COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Program Monitoring Report accessible <https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/ino-54139-001-dpta-1> see pp.2-3

¹⁴ Full report is downloadable from the Executive Office of the President (KSP)

<https://drive.ksp.go.id/s/HJNc4DpL8yxLoGs/download> (accessed 29 November 2021)

¹⁵ See <https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20211101/98/1460434/menhub-sebut-3-tantangan-pembangunan-infrastruktur-saat-pandemi>

¹⁶ See <https://investor.id/editorial/267599/transformasi-akselerasinbsppemulihan-ekonomi-nnbsp>

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- ¹⁷ See <https://www.kemenkopmk.go.id/optimalisasi-sdm-di-tengah-pandemi>
- ¹⁸ See <https://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/implementasi-uu-cipta-kerja-di-daerah-dinilai-masih-belum-solid>
- ¹⁹ See <https://fulcrum.sg/moving-the-indonesian-capital-political-ambition-or-realistic-vision/>
- ²⁰ See <https://fulcrum.sg/to-lockdown-or-not-indonesias-dilemma-in-handling-the-covid-19-second-wave/>
- ²¹ See <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2021-113-grave-failures-in-policy-and-communication-in-indonesia-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-by-yanuar-nugroho-and-sofie-shinta-syarief/>
- ²² Attempts at alleviating poverty through the massive social protection scheme in response to Covid-19 has begun to bear fruits as the poverty rate returned to the pre-pandemic level of 9.71% at the end of 2021. See <https://www.thejakartapost.com/business/2022/01/17/poverty-rate-falls-to-prepandemic-level.html>
- ²³ See <https://infopublik.id/kategori/nasional-ekonomi-bisnis/584362/kemenhub-penyelesaian-infrastruktur-jadi-arah-kebijakan-pembangunan-transportasi-2022>
- ²⁴ This idea has been in the government's mind since 2016 and it needs now to be realised—or its implementation should at least be started. The social protection integration scheme must be completed by mid-2022 and can be piloted in 2022-2023, before the end of Jokowi's term in office.
- ²⁵ As per President's Regulation, the grand design and institutional proposals must be completed by the end of 2021 and its budgeting must be confirmed in the RAPBN 2022 to be realised in 2022-2023. See <https://setkab.go.id/presiden-terbitkan-keppres-tentang-gugus-tugas-manajemen-talenta-nasional/>
- ²⁶ See <https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2021/07/14/membangun-kapasitas-negara>
- ²⁷ See the most official source: <https://www.presidentri.go.id/siaran-pers/presiden-jokowi-siapkan-transisi-dari-pandemi-ke-endemi/>
- ²⁸ See <https://www.kompas.com/sains/read/2021/09/11/100300823/epidemiolog-indonesia-masih-jauh-untuk-transisi-pandemi-ke-endemi-ini-yang?page=all>
- ²⁹ See <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210901203436-20-688564/roadmap-indonesia-terbebas-dari-pandemi-versi-ilmuwan>
- ³⁰ Before pandemic non-infrastructure budget was much lower. For example, budget for health was IDR113,6T (2019), IDR172,3T (2020), then increased to IDR326,4T (2021). Education budget is similar to it: IDR460,3T (2019), increased to IDR473,7T (2020), and IDR540,3T (2021).
- ³¹ See <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20210714074039-532-667345/bansos-telat-cair-bukti-mensos-gagal-perbarui-data-terpadu>
- ³² See <https://katadata.co.id/febrinaiskana/berita/6051fa9e1b99c/persatuan-perawat-soroti-pemberian-insentif-yang-terlambat>
- ³³ See <https://laporcovid19.org/post/siaran-pers-perlunya-perbaikan-tata-kelola-penyaluran-insentif-dan-santunan-kematian-bagi-tenaga-kesehatan>
- ³⁴ See <https://www.kompas.com/sains/read/2021/07/12/130715823/program-vaksinasi-indonesia-kenapa-lambat-ini-jawaban-menkes-budi?page=all>
- ³⁵ See <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/09/30/08532981/babak-baru-pemindahan-ibu-kota-ruu-ikn-diserahkan-ke-dpr?page=all>
- ³⁶ See <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/01/18/20300131/uu-ikn-disahkan-ini-kedudukan-bentuk-hingga-susunan-pemerintahan-ibu-kota?page=all>
- ³⁷ See <https://fulcrum.sg/moving-the-indonesian-capital-political-ambition-or-realistic-vision/>
- ³⁸ The target would be to move about 127,000 civil servants from Jakarta to the new capital from 2023 to 2027. See <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/01/17/20273641/siap-siap-ini-bocoran-jadwal-pemindahan ASN ke ibu kota negara baru>
- ³⁹ Tertiarisation is a shift from the primary (farming, agriculture, commodity) and secondary (processing) sectors to the tertiary (service) sector.

⁴⁰ The official document can be downloaded here <https://www.menpan.go.id/site/publikasi/unduh-dokumen/buku/file/6433-cetak-biru-ekosistem-pengetahuan-dan-inovasi>

⁴¹ At this point, there is the possibility of political intervention from the PDI-P. See <https://www.todayonline.com/commentary/can-jokowi-salvage-legacy-derailed-covid-19>; see also <https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/426213/pdip-ingin-amendemen-uud-1945-fokus-pada-pphn>

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