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Indonesia Passes Law to Move Capital to Borneo Jungle

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Indonesia's parliament on Tuesday passed a law to move the country's capital from Jakarta to an area deep within the **jungle** of Kalimantan on Borneo island.

The country's leaders have been considering the move for several years.

The new law provides a legal system for President Joko Widodo's \$32-billion project. It explains the requirements for the development of the new capital, including financing and governance.

The new capital will be "a **symbol** of the identity of the nation, as well as a new center of economic gravity," Planning Minister Suharso Monoarfa told parliament.

The move will start from between 2022 and 2024, with roads and ports built first. Some projects will operate as public-private partnerships, the finance ministry said.

Jakarta, a city of 10 million people, suffers from overcrowding, flooding and air pollution. Several former presidents have considered moving the capital, but none have advanced the idea until now.

Widodo first announced his plan in 2019. The plan got delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new city has a name that he chose: Nusantara. The word is a Javanese term for the Indonesian island group.

There is not a set date for the finalization of the project. Jakarta will remain the capital until there is a presidential order to formally change it.

The government said in a statement that the new capital will strengthen trade relationships and give Indonesia a better position in “world trade **routes**, investment flows and technological **innovation**.”

The government also said the new capital will be “low-carbon.” It added that the city will support health and technology industries.

Critics say the law was pushed through with little consideration for environmental concerns or public opinion.

Nusantara will be led by a chief official who acts as a minister, a member of the law’s special committee said on Monday. Jakarta’s former governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, also known as Ahok, is among those being considered for the position.

I’m Susan Shand.

The Reuters News Agency reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English.

Words in This Story

jungle – *n.* a tropical forest where plants and trees grow very thickly

symbol – *n.* an action, object, event, etc., that expresses or represents a particular idea or quality

route – *n.* a way of achieving or doing something

innovation – *n.* a new idea, device, or method

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