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Indonesia's giant capital city is sinking. The skyscrapers of central Jakarta loom to the northwest beyond Kampung Melayu, an urban village crowding the banks of the Cili... Show more BY ADI RENALDI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSHUA IRWANDI, VII MENTOR PROGRAM PUBLISHED JULY 29, 2022 15 MIN

READ JAKARTA Apart from the narrow, unpaved road, the two-meter-high concrete coastal wall is the only thing that separates Suhemi's small restaurant in North Jakarta from the sea. In Muara Baru, the storm surge collapsed the wall, and the sea flooded Suhemi's house. Indonesia has grand plans for Jakarta—a new capital on Borneo, a giant bird-shaped sea wall to protect Jakarta itself—but they don't solve the underlying problem. In 2002, the government built the coastal wall, to give the residents peace of mind and time—a respite from the steady sinking of the land under the city and the steady rising of the sea. Driven by a storm coming off the Java Sea and torrential rains, the floods claimed 80 lives around the city and caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damage. Can the government's plan save it?