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*The **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest** is a biweekly collection of summaries of articles related to conservation, the environment, and sustainability in Indonesia that have appeared in print or online in local, regional, and global English-language media. We welcome comments, suggestions, and corrections. To learn more about us and to access previous editions of the News Digest, please visit our website at www.starlingresources.com. If you would like to add colleagues or friends to our distribution list or unsubscribe, please contact us at newsdigest@starlingresources.com.*

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A. Marine and Fisheries

[Prabowo's Free Nutritious Meal Program Revolutionary Health Policy: KKP](#)

—Dewi Elvia Muthiariny, *Tempo*, 18 September 2024

Budi Sulisty, Director General at the Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry (KKP), praised the free nutritious meal program, calling it a public health revolution. A key promise of the Prabowo-Gibran campaign, the program aims to meet Indonesia's nutritional needs, especially through protein intake. Speaking at a discussion on fish milk, Budi introduced the milk as a new protein drink derived from Fish Protein Hydrolysate (HPI). Developed by KKP's biotechnology team in 2017, fish milk was officially launched in 2023 by the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and the Minister of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises. Ekowati Chasanah, a Principal Expert Researcher at BRIN Marine and Land Bioindustry Research Center, also played a pivotal role in this research. Budi emphasized that fortifying staple foods with fish protein will enhance nutritional value and help combat stunting. The program will prioritize pregnant women, children, and toddlers, aiming to ensure future generations have access to sufficient protein. Budi hailed this innovation as crucial for public health, reflecting the government's commitment to improving the nation's nutrition.

[Pokmaswas: The Catalyst for Sustainable Blue Swimming Crab Fisheries in Lampung](#)

M. Khazali, Guswarman and Meutia Isty Wulandari, *EDFOceans*, 18 September 2024

Scientific Advisory Group, a group of scientists and academia, highlights the prevalence of destructive fishing activities as the main cause of dwindling catches and shorter fishing seasons. Local fishers corroborate the finding. Hasan Ubaidillah, leader of the Jaya Bahari Abadi Community Surveillance Group (Pokmaswas), raised concerns about illegal and destructive fishing practices, citing its negative impact on blue swimming crab stocks. A 2021 Provincial Marine and Fisheries Agency report showed 914 vessels using destructive fishing gear in Lampung's waters, damaging habitats and reducing catches. In response, Pokmaswas, formed in 2017, has worked to combat illegal fishing, advocate sustainable practices, and empower small-scale fishers. Their efforts include reporting violations, like the July 2024 arrest of trawl fishers in the Way Kambas Marine Protected Area. Pokmaswas' step-by-step approach, supported by government and stakeholders, aims to build self-sufficiency in combating illegal fishing. Recent data showing a small rise in the blue swimming crab's Spawning Potential Ratio, from 17% in 2021 to 20% in 2023, provides hope for the species' recovery and a sustainable future.

[Marine ecosystems still overlooked in Indonesia's new conservation law, critics say](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 12 September 2024

The newly revised 2024 conservation law emphasizes terrestrial over marine conservation, raising concerns about the neglect of the country's marine ecosystems. While the law includes provisions for coastal areas and small islands, it remains primarily focused on land-based conservation. Critics like Arisetiarso Soemodinoto of the Fisheries Resource Center argue that the law is inadequate given that two-thirds of Indonesia's territory is water. Environmental groups, including the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance, have also criticized the lack of Indigenous participation and insufficient public consultation. Other observers highlight the law's failure to address sustainable fisheries and destructive practices like illegal fishing and coastal land reclamation. Although the law introduces stronger penalties for environmental crimes and outlines responsibilities for protecting fish species and marine life,

experts like marine science professor Zuzy Anna stress that weak enforcement and corruption could hinder its effectiveness. Despite these criticisms, the law offers clearer jurisdictional guidelines for marine and coastal areas, which could improve conservation management in the face of overfishing and pollution crises.

[Indonesia's Trade Minister Reinstates Sea Sand Exports](#)

—Dewi Elvia Muthiariny, *Tempo*, 10 September 2024

The Trade Minister has reauthorized the export of sea sand through regulation revisions, aligning with Government Regulation (PP) No. 26 of 2023 on Marine Sediment Management. The updated policies, Minister Regulations (Permendag) No. 20 and 21 of 2024, amend previous rules on prohibited exports and export policy. Isy Karim, Director General of Foreign Trade, explained that sea sand exports are only permitted if domestic needs are met and exporters comply with legal requirements. Before exporting, exporters must fulfill several requirements outlined in the regulations. These include being registered as a Registered Exporter (ET), obtaining an Export Approval (PE), and having a Surveyor Report (LS). Additionally, exporters must submit a stamped statement declaring that the exported sea sedimentation sand originates from the permitted collection location. Sea sand export aligns with efforts to manage sedimentation, as outlined in the Decree of the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries No. 47 of 2024. The regulations take effect 30 working days after promulgation on August 29. Isy expressed hope that these provisions would boost the economy.

B. Forests and Land Use

[Forest Fires Expand to 13,000 Hectares in West Kalimantan, Risk of Triggering Haze: BPBD](#)

—Petir Garda Bhwana, *Tempo*, 15 September 2024

From January 1 to August 30, land and forest fires in West Kalimantan burned 13,057.7 hectares across 13 districts. The West Kalimantan Provincial Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) reported that the fires occurred on peatlands, mineral soils, forests, and non-forest areas, raising concerns about worsening environmental conditions and haze. Sambas Regency was the hardest hit, with 1,984.52 ha burned, followed by Sanggau (1,865.29 ha), Kubu Raya (1,701.65 ha), and Ketapang (1,582.70 ha). Other districts with land and forest fire areas of less than a thousand ha are Bengkayang 826.90 ha; Sintang 799.02 ha; Melawi 757.20 ha; North Kayong 547.58 ha; Mempawah 534.27 ha; Sekadau 127.85 ha; and Singkawang City 30.18 ha. The capital city Pontianak remained free from fires. BPBD urged local governments to intensify patrols in fire-prone areas and called on landowners to supervise their properties more responsibly, noting that most fires occurred on idle land used for farming. The agency also emphasized the need for immediate disaster mitigation to minimize the spread of fires and reduce the impacts of haze.

[Deputy Minister of Environment and Forestry Affirms Forest Management No Longer Centered on Wood, Reveals Urgent Problems](#)

Team, *ForestInsights*, 13 September 2024

—News

Deputy Minister of Environment and Forestry Alue Dohong emphasized a shift in Indonesia's forest management, moving away from a wood-centric approach to a more holistic landscape management model. Speaking at the 16th International Symposium of the Indonesian Wood Research Society on September 11, he outlined five pillars guiding sustainable forest management: Area Certainty, Business Guarantee, Productivity, Product Diversification, and Competitiveness. Dohong highlighted the importance of integrating forest policies to promote environmental conservation, economic prosperity, and social welfare. Forests are vital for climate regulation, biodiversity, and economic development, but face challenges like deforestation and climate change. He called for comprehensive strategies to address these issues. The ministry has already initiated multi-forestry businesses, expanding beyond wood to include ecosystem services such as carbon management, tourism, and biodiversity conservation. Previously, one permit was only allowed for one activity. This approach incorporates local and Indigenous communities, aiming to ensure the sustainability of forests for future generations while balancing various uses like food and energy.

President Jokowi Launches Wanagama Nusantara Forest Area at IKN

—Office of Cabinet Secretary, *SetkabNews*, 13 September 2024

President Joko Widodo launched the Wanagama Nusantara educational and research forest in the Capital City of the Archipelago (IKN) on September 13. Developed by Gadjah Mada University (UGM), this project focuses on tropical rainforest restoration and sustainability research. Jokowi emphasized the need to realize the Wanagama Nusantara concept and support infrastructure development for research hubs on tropical sustainability. UGM Rector, Prof. Ova Emilia, explained that Wanagama Nusantara mirrors UGM's forest in Yogyakarta, aiming for forest restoration and reforestation in Kalimantan. The 621-hectare forest will serve as a center for education, research, and community involvement, supporting IKN's vision as a "Forest City." The project reflects Indonesia's global commitment to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Collaboration efforts extend beyond UGM, with Mulawarman University, and future partnerships with Brawijaya University, IPB, and ITB. The initiative was supported by multiple government officials, academic leaders, and private sector partners.

For Indonesian oil palm farmers, EU's deforestation law is another top-down imposition

—Dyna Rochmyaningsih, *Mongabay*, 5 September 2024

By the end of this year, exporters of products derived from palm oil and six other agricultural commodities to Europe will be required to comply with the newly enacted EU Regulation on Deforestation Free Products, or EUDR. Jaharuddin, a 50-year-old farmer in Aceh faces economic challenges as his main crops, corn and cacao, struggle to sell. After years of declining sales, he turned to oil palm, which offers a more stable income. However, he remains unaware of the potential impact of the new EUDR, which can hurt his livelihoods. The EUDR requires exporters to provide proof that their crops did not come from deforested areas and that their supply chains are free of human rights abuses and environmental violations, a difficult task for smallholders who sell their crops through middlemen and often lack documentation. While oil palm expansion has led to deforestation, experts argue that smallholders are often unfairly blamed for large-scale forest clearance. Jaharuddin hopes the government will help farmers prepare for the new regulations. He stresses that small farmers need practical support and inclusion in policy discussions to balance environmental protection with economic survival.

Lee, J. S., Abood, S., Ghazoul, J., Barus, B., Obidzinski, K., & Koh, L. P. (2013). [Environmental Impacts of Large-Scale Oil Palm Enterprises Exceed that of Smallholdings in Indonesia](#). *Conservation Letters*, 7(1), 25-33.

Eggen, M., Heilmayr, R., Anderson, P., Armson, R., Austin, K., Azmi, R., ... Carlson, K. M. (2024). [Smallholder participation in zero-deforestation supply chain initiatives in the Indonesian palm oil sector: Challenges, opportunities, and limitations](#). *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*, 12(1), 00099.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area

[East Kalimantan Prepares Roadmap to Save High Conservation Value Areas in Oil Palm Plantations](#)

—Sucipto, *Kompas*, 18 September 2024

The East Kalimantan Provincial Government is developing a roadmap to designate High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) amidst the expansion of oil palm plantations. This effort aims to balance economic benefits with environmental sustainability. In 2023, East Kalimantan was Indonesia's fifth-largest palm oil producer, contributing 4.22 million tons. Acting Secretary of the Plantation Service, Andi Sidik, emphasized the importance of sustainable plantation practices to protect HCVA, which covers 456,827 hectares, though only 60% is officially designated. The roadmap aims to guide the protection and monitoring of these areas, which hold significant biological, ecological, and cultural value. Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) and other stakeholders support the initiative, noting the need to align with global sustainability standards like the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). However, challenges remain, including land clearing and the lack of consistent reporting from companies and local governments. This roadmap seeks to ensure better coordination and sustainable management of East Kalimantan's palm oil plantations.

[Revised anti-wildlife trafficking law in Indonesia brings bite to the rules, but enforcement is key](#)

—Linda Yulisman, *The Straits Times*, 15 September 2024

Indonesia's illegal wildlife trade has long threatened species such as orangutans and songbirds, but a revised law aims to curb this issue. The new "Law on Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and their Ecosystems," enacted in August, imposes harsher penalties for traffickers, including fines up to 5 billion rupiah for individuals and 50 billion for corporations, along with increased jail time. The law also targets transnational criminal networks, addressing wildlife trafficking and money laundering simultaneously. The revised law is a step forward in bringing those involved in the network of wildlife traffickers to justice, including the financial backers who play a crucial role in transnational illegal trading in wildlife and animal body parts, conservationists and experts say. Authorities hope stricter enforcement will disrupt illegal trade, valued at up to \$1 billion annually. A recent case involved the seizure of rhino horns and elephant-ivory pipes, with authorities claiming it to be the largest bust in a decade. Neighboring countries like Singapore remain key hubs for smuggled wildlife, including endangered species. Conservationists emphasize that thorough

investigations and consistent enforcement are crucial to ending these crimes and restoring the country's biodiversity.

[Threatened by State Forests, Barambang Katute Indigenous Community Urges Recognition](#)

—Stephanus Aranditio, *Kompas*, 14 September 2024

The Barambang Katute indigenous community in Sinjai, South Sulawesi, faces the loss of over 1,000 out of 3,000-ha customary territory due to government claims of state forest. The community has lived in fear since the Soeharto era because their customary forest was annexed and recognition has not been given. Customary Chief Ismail (72) highlights the longstanding conflict, exacerbated by recent boundary markers installed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in August, which residents successfully removed. The community, historically threatened by air pollution and environmental damage, struggles with diminished resources and increasing poverty. Despite their long standing presence, only one out of seven local indigenous groups has received formal recognition from the government. The Barambang Katute community demands formal recognition and adherence to Constitutional Court Decision Number 35, which excludes customary forests from state forest designation. They also oppose business permits under recent laws, citing exclusion from decision-making. The Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) criticizes the government's slow progress in recognizing indigenous territories, with only 13.8% of registered lands officially recognized.

[More alarms over Indonesia rhino poaching after latest trafficking bust](#)

—Donny Iqbal and Nopri Ismi, *Mongabay*, 5 September 2024

Indonesian authorities are investigating the connection between a recent rhino horn trafficking bust in southern Sumatra and a poaching spree targeting Javan rhinos, responsible for 26 deaths since 2019. On August 23, police arrested a 60-year-old man, Z.A., in South Sumatra for attempting to sell eight rhino horns, ivory pipes, and dugong tusks. Four of the horns were identified as belonging to endangered Indonesian rhino species. This arrest follows an investigation into organized poaching in Ujung Kulon National Park, where up to 26 Javan rhinos, a third of their population, may have been killed between 2019 and 2023. The crackdown on wildlife trafficking is part of broader efforts to combat illegal poaching in Java and Sumatra. While poachers have been convicted, such as Sunendi, who received 12 years in prison, others, like the buyer Willy, were acquitted, prompting an appeal from prosecutors. The resurgence of rhino poaching raises concerns over the accuracy of official rhino population counts, which conflict with reports of missing animals and declining numbers.

D. Climate Change, Energy and Mining

[Earth's Temperature Over the Past Year Has Been 1.64 Degrees Celsius Hotter](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 16 September 2024

Between September 2023 and August 2024, global temperatures hit a record high, with a 1.64°C increase compared to pre-industrial levels. In Indonesia, August 2024 saw temperatures 0.71°C higher than the 1991-2020 average. The European Union's Copernicus climate service reported this, highlighting that June, July, and August 2024 were among the

hottest months ever recorded. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) also confirmed August 2024 as the hottest August in 175 years, continuing a 15-month streak of record-breaking heat. Indonesia experienced significant temperature anomalies, with South Sumatra recording an anomaly of 1.8°C. Global sea ice continues to shrink, with NOAA noting that Arctic and Antarctic ice areas are at their second and fourth lowest levels, respectively. The report warns that to prevent the worst effects of climate change, the global temperature rise must be limited to 1.5°C by the end of the century, requiring a 43% reduction in emissions by 2030. However, emissions are still increasing.

[25-fold surge in malaria at Indonesia gold frontier raises deforestation questions](#)

—Zulkifli Mangkau, *Mongabay*, 16 September 2024

Diagnosis of malaria in Pohuwato district in Sulawesi soared by more than an order of magnitude in 2023. Lukman Ahmad, a 56-year-old gold miner in Pohuwato district, contracted malaria for the first time after 25 years of mining. He developed severe symptoms, including headaches and fever, while working near Mount Pani, a region experiencing rising malaria cases. Malaria diagnosis surged from 32 in 2022 to 815 in 2023, with four out of five cases affecting miners like Lukman. Mining sites, which create ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, have been linked to the spike in malaria. Deforestation caused by mining and tree clearing in the area has further worsened the situation. Experts, including University of Indonesia professor Budi Haryanto, emphasize the urgent need for better malaria prevention measures at mining sites. Despite his illness, Lukman quickly returned to work, as mining remains his only means of providing for his family. Global incidences of malaria have declined markedly since the 1990s after the Gates Foundation and other donors poured money into prevention programs, but progress has slowed in recent years.

[The Earth is Boiling, What Can We Do?](#)

—Ichwan Susanto, *Kompas*, 16 September 2024

The Earth is experiencing unprecedented warming, with global temperatures exceeding 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, a threshold set by the 2015 Paris Agreement to prevent severe climate impacts. According to the Copernicus climate service and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the average global temperature increase of 1.1°C has led to extreme weather events and disruptions in climate patterns, such as heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and intensified droughts. This warming has caused the melting of glaciers and polar ice caps, contributing to rising sea levels that threaten coastal areas. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reports that sea ice extent around the poles is at its second lowest in 46 years. Additionally, higher sea temperatures are harming coral reefs. Greenhouse gas emissions, primarily from industrial activities and deforestation, are driving this crisis. To mitigate the impacts, reducing greenhouse gas concentrations is crucial. Individuals can contribute by adopting environmentally friendly practices, such as using public transport, reducing food waste, and supporting sustainable policies. Collective efforts can significantly impact the global climate.

['Stop the stupidity': Indonesia's top court orders end to mine in quake zone](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 5 September 2024

The Indonesian Supreme Court has revoked the environmental permit for a controversial zinc-and-lead mine in North Sumatra, citing the project's location on an active tectonic fault and lack of community consultation. The ruling halts development by PT Dairi Prima Mineral (DPM), which faced opposition from local villagers concerned about the risks posed by a planned tailings dam. The ruling upholds a lower court's decision last year that sided with

independent scientific analysis that the region was far too prone to earthquake risk for the planned mine and its waste dump to be feasible. Experts warned the dam could collapse due to the region's high seismic activity, with over 27 earthquakes this year alone. Villagers and activists have welcomed the ruling, saying they hope it puts “a stop to this stupidity.” Despite the ruling, DPM's parent company, China-backed NFC, plans to proceed with their business. The decision raises questions about Indonesia's commitment to responsible mining, as no indication the environment ministry will comply with the order to revoke the permit. Local residents like plaintiff Marlince Sinambela vow to continue opposing the mine.

E. Pollution. Waste and Disaster

[Have We Reduced Plastic Waste Consumption?](#)

—Evy Rachmawati, *Kompas*, 17 September 2024

Plastic plays a key role in modern life, from construction materials to food packaging. However, single-use plastics have caused environmental damage. According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), global plastic production has skyrocketed, with over 450 million tons produced annually—a sharp rise from 2 million tons in 1950. Indonesia is one of the largest producers of plastic waste, generating 12 million tons each year, with 9% ending up in the ocean. Plastic waste is a major environmental problem, particularly in cities like Jakarta, Surabaya, and Denpasar, where plastic packaging dominates. Southeast Asian countries lead in microplastic consumption per capita, with Indonesians ingesting around 15 grams of microplastics monthly. Plastic production also contributes to climate change, generating 1.8 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. Poor waste management exacerbates these issues, leading to economic losses, especially in Indonesia, where plastic waste in waters results in annual losses of up to Rp 255 trillion. Despite efforts to improve, less than 10% of global plastic waste is recycled.

[Residents End Holiday with Pollution in Jakarta](#)

—Atiek Ishlahiyah al Hamasy, *Kompas*, 17 September 2024

On Monday, September 16, Jakarta experienced extreme heat and ranked as the second most polluted city globally, according to IQAir. The air quality index reached an unhealthy 148 in the morning and worsened to 164 by the afternoon. Residents, like Faridah (27), wore masks while venturing out, with many Jakarta commuters following the same precaution. Despite the poor air quality, Ragunan Wildlife Park attracted 39,768 visitors, while others like West Jakarta resident Arman Reswara opted for greener spaces like Tebet Eco Park. Some families, however, stayed indoors due to concerns about the heat and pollution. Urban planning expert Nirwono Yoga emphasized the need for strong measures to combat pollution in Jakarta, suggesting improvements in public transport and restrictions on private vehicles. Jakarta's Environmental Agency is collaborating with local governments to tackle vehicle emissions through testing and other initiatives aimed at reducing air pollution. The agency will tighten its supervision of mobile and stationary emission sources to reduce air pollution. They also encourage community organizations and academics to discuss the issue and offer solutions.

[Estimated Economic Losses Due to Plastic Waste Leaking into the Sea Reach IDR 255 Trillion](#)

—Pradipta Pandu, *Kompas*, 11 September 2024

Plastic waste leaking into Indonesian waters not only harms the environment but also poses economic threats, with estimated losses reaching Rp 255 trillion annually. According to BRIN researcher Muhammad Reza Cordova, national waste management has not significantly improved, with Indonesia only achieving 41.68% of its target to reduce plastic waste in the ocean by 2023. Reza estimates that plastic waste leakage from 2018-2023 averaged 484,000 tons per year. This pollution affects sectors like fisheries and maritime, as plastic waste damages coral reefs, impacting fish populations and reducing fishermen's catches. Additionally, health risks arise as contaminated marine life enters the human food chain. Efforts to combat this issue include a partnership between Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), focusing on waste management in rivers to prevent leakage into the sea. The initiative targets processing up to 5,000 tons of plastic waste from five major river regions. Indonesia continues to develop infrastructure, utilize technology, and promote behavioral change to address plastic waste effectively.

[Sumatra citizen lawsuit seeks accountability for haze-causing fires](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 9 September 2024

Residents of South Sumatra have filed a lawsuit against three pulpwood companies—PT Bumi Mekar Hijau, PT Bumi Andalas Permai, and PT Sebangun Bumi Andalas Wood Industries—over toxic haze caused by fires in their concessions from 2015 to 2020. These companies, suppliers to Asia Pulp & Paper, are blamed for 254,787 ha of burned land, contributing to respiratory and mental health issues, economic disruption, and environmental damage. In the lawsuit, residents of areas affected by haze from the fires say they want the companies to know that “what they are doing is wrong because it damages our families and the environment.” Citizen lawsuits are increasingly being used by communities across Indonesia, amid rising dissatisfaction with the inability of law enforcement to crack down on serial violators. The lawsuit seeks compensation, marking the first in the province to demand strict liability for fire-related losses. Supported by NGOs like Greenpeace Indonesia, the plaintiffs include farmers, fishers, and environmental activists. In 2016, one of the companies was fined for similar incidents, but penalties remain too low to deter repeat offenses.

[Air pollution declined in Europe and China in 2023: UN](#)

—Agnès Pedrero, *TheJakartaPost*, 5 September 2024

Fine particle air pollution (PM2.5) decreased in Europe and China in 2023 due to lower emissions linked to human activity, according to a UN report. PM2.5 particles, smaller than 2.5 micrometers, are harmful when inhaled over time, as they can enter the bloodstream. These particles come from fossil fuel combustion, transportation, industry, wildfires, and desert dust. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) noted a significant drop in PM2.5 levels in Europe and China, attributed to reduced emissions. However, India and Southeast Asia saw higher levels due to industrial and human activity. The report highlighted that climate change and air quality are interconnected and must be addressed together. While air pollution in the U.S. remained steady, North American wildfires in 2023 caused unusually high emissions. The WMO also reported lower-than-usual dust emissions in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa. The report, released ahead of International Day of Clean Air on September 7, stresses the growing health risks from pollution, as nine out of ten people globally breathe highly polluted air.

F. Technology, Investment and Finance

[Questions remain as 2025 budget moves closer to approval](#)

—Deni Ghifari, *TheJakartaPost*, 17 September 2024

The government and House of Representatives are nearing approval of the 2025 state budget, but concerns remain about the transition to the new administration and funding for key projects. House Budget Committee member Dolfie Othniel Frederic Palit criticized the lack of program and function details for ministries and agencies, as required by law. Finance Minister Sri Mulyani argued that the necessary details were in the Financial Notes, but updates were delayed due to time constraints. Despite these concerns, the House and government agreed to pass the budget with a stipulation allowing for more detailed provisions later. The budget, drafted by President Joko Widodo's administration, will guide President-elect Prabowo Subianto's government after he takes office in October. Experts like Indef's Tauhid Ahmad see potential for a budget revision, though Dolfie believes no revision is planned. Economists say the market remains calm, acknowledging that key details will depend on the new administration's decisions.

[RI eyes former mining land for solar power plants](#)

—Divya Karyza, *TheJakartaPost*, 17 September 2024

The Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry plans to convert former coal and mineral mines into solar power projects to increase renewable electricity generation. Lana Saria, a natural resource economics expert at the ministry, said many mines in Sumatra and Kalimantan are suitable for ground-mounted solar panels. Some post-mining areas, like PT Mega Prima Persada, have already installed solar panels, while others await PLN's quota. The ministry has identified 501 hectares of former mining sites capable of generating 760 megawatts (MW) of electricity. Future solar projects in East Kalimantan and Bangka Belitung are expected to add a total capacity of 2.3 gigawatts (GW). However, Indonesia lags behind regional peers, such as Thailand and Vietnam, in solar power capacity. Factors hindering growth include terrain, coal power oversupply, and higher costs due to import taxes. In 2022, Indonesia attracted \$1.48 billion in renewable energy investments, missing its \$1.8 billion target.

[Are Indonesia and Vietnam's multibillion-dollar clean energy deals stuck? Experts say not yet](#)

—Victoria Milko and Aniruddha Ghosal, *AssociatedPress*, 13 September 2024

In 2022, Indonesia and Vietnam signed multibillion-dollar Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) aimed at shifting their economies away from coal dependency and toward cleaner energy. Funded by developed nations, these deals provide financial support to phase out heavily polluting coal-fired power plants and promote renewable energy sources like solar and geothermal. Indonesia's JETP deal includes over \$20 billion for retiring coal plants early and developing renewable energy infrastructure, with a focus on bolstering the country's renewable energy supply chains over the next three to five years. Despite these ambitious goals, critics argue that progress has been slow. They claim little has been achieved since the agreements were signed. However, supporters of the JETP deals maintain that the delays are expected given the complexity of the transitions. They point out that stakeholders are collaborating to create necessary policies for the first time, which could unlock further funding.

They argue that more time is needed to see tangible results, as laying the groundwork for these significant shifts in energy production takes time.

[Opening Isf 2024 Indonesian President Urges Increased Global Cooperation And Collaboration To Tackle Climate Crisis](#)

—Bureau of Communication of the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs, *MoFAPortal*, 5 September 2024

President Joko Widodo opened the Indonesian International Sustainability Forum (ISF) 2024, calling for global cooperation to combat climate change and promote sustainability. Indonesia, with over 3,600 GW of green energy potential and the world's largest mangrove forest, is committed to equitable access to green energy and inclusive economic growth. Widodo emphasized the need for developed countries to invest boldly and provide accessible technology and funding to support developing nations' efforts in climate mitigation. The forum, hosted by the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment and Kadin, aims to share decarbonization strategies and enhance global sustainable development. With over 11,000 participants from 53 countries, ISF is the second-largest climate event in the Asia-Pacific. The event focuses on energy transition, green industry, biodiversity, sustainable living, and the blue economy, with 12 MoUs signed to further the energy transition. Key speakers include international ministers and climate experts, highlighting Indonesia's pivotal role in advancing sustainability.

G. Human Rights and Gender Equality

[Anti-SLAPP for Environmental Warriors](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 18 September 2024

In a democratic country, people have the right to speak up and fight for their environment and living space. Public participation and criticism are essential, yet silencing of critical voices, particularly those defending the environment, is on the rise. Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP) are frequently used to target activists and communities challenging environmental destruction. These lawsuits, often initiated by corporations or public officials, exploit legal loopholes like the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE). Cases such as activists Haris Azhar and Fatia Maulidiyanti, who faced defamation charges for alleging government involvement in mining, highlight the issue. SLAPP also occurs in protests, as seen with 34 Rempang residents arrested for opposing a national strategic project. Despite anti-SLAPP provisions in Indonesia's Environmental Law, 126 SLAPP cases have been recorded between 2014 and 2023, particularly in mining and energy sectors. The recent issuance of Ministry of Environment and Forestry regulation No. 10/2024 offers protection for environmental activists. However, more commitment from the police is needed to prevent further legal attacks on activists.

[Java activists risk jail for exposing shrimp farm pollution crisis](#)

—Basten Gokkon, Nanang Sujana and Sandy Watt, *Mongabay*, 16 September 2024

In 2023, environmental activist Daniel Frits Maurits Tangkilisan was sentenced to seven months in prison under Indonesia's controversial online hate speech law for a Facebook post criticizing illegal shrimp farms in Karimunjawa National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Tangkilisan was part of the #SaveKarimunjawa movement, which exposed the environmental damage caused by shrimp farms, including mangrove deforestation and ocean pollution. While the movement succeeded in closing some farms, many remain, affecting local tourism and fisheries. Tangkilisan's case was seen as a SLAPP (strategic lawsuit against public participation), aimed at silencing critics. Environmental and human rights groups condemned the prosecution, calling it an abuse of the legal system to suppress activism. In May 2024, Tangkilisan was exonerated after serving four months in prison, highlighting the ongoing challenges faced by environmental defenders in Indonesia. (note: the article also consists of a 7:39-minute video with AI-generated transcripts and English subtitle).

[Double Burden of Women Farmers in Central Kalimantan](#)

—Dionisius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 12 September 2024

Women farmers in Indonesia play a crucial yet undervalued role, balancing household responsibilities with farming. This issue was highlighted in a study by the Gemawan Foundation and the Indonesian Forest People Foundation (YIHUI) in three Kalimantan provinces. The study identified five key challenges facing women farmers, including limited access to knowledge, lengthy trade procedures, lack of leadership opportunities, inadequate policies, and the double burden of household and farm work. For example, in Pilang Village, Central Kalimantan, a farmer named Mama Abe and her husband struggle with crop failures due to changes in farming techniques after a burning ban. Despite the difficulties, women like her continue to work hard, selling cooked vegetables for extra income. Although women contribute significantly to agriculture—43% of the workforce in developing countries according to FAO—they often face limited access to resources like land and water. YIHUI calls for policies that protect and empower women farmers, ensuring they have equal access to resources and decision-making opportunities for a more sustainable future.

[Waiting for a More Humane Dialogue in Rempang](#)

—Panduwiyoga, *Kompas*, 12 September 2024

The agrarian conflict on Rempang Island, Batam, Riau Islands, has persisted for a year, with residents opposing eviction due to the National Strategic Project (PSN) Rempang Eco City. On September 7, 2023, seven residents, including Karim (54), were arrested for resisting land measurements for the project, which threatened to displace 855 families from five traditional villages. Karim, a fisherman, expressed confusion over his arrest, emphasizing the residents' moral obligation to defend their ancestral land. The project includes a solar panel glass factory by Xinyi International Investments, and residents are being relocated to Kampung Tanjung Banun. Critics, such as agrarian expert Rina Mardiana, argue that the government's actions prioritize economic growth over residents' cultural and spiritual ties to the land. Efforts to relocate residents have been slow, and tensions remain high. Rina urges the government to engage in more empathetic dialogue, acknowledging the deep connection between the community and their land, which cannot be reduced to economic interests.

I. RI General Elections

[Local poll candidates must adhere to campaigning schedule: Bawaslu](#)

—Khaerul Izan and Nabil Ihsan, *Antara*, 14 September 2024

Indonesia's General Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) has advised prospective candidates for the 2024 local elections not to campaign before the designated period. Bawaslu commissioner Puadi made the statement in response to some candidates greeting residents during Car-Free Day events, which could be seen as an early campaign move. While there is no specific ban on greeting residents at such events, Puadi urged candidates to avoid actions that could be interpreted as political campaigning ahead of the official campaign period. This ensures fair competition among all candidates. Once candidates are officially recognized by the General Elections Commission (KPU), their activities will be regulated under electoral campaign laws. The campaign period for the 2024 local elections is set from September 25 to November 23, 2024, followed by a cooling-off period before the elections on November 27.

[KPU prepares regulation for revotes in uncontested elections](#)

—Dio Suhenda, *TheJakartaPost*, 13 September 2024

The General Elections Commission (KPU) is preparing regulations for regional elections rerun in 2025, targeting areas where sole candidate pairs fail to win in uncontested races. Concerns arose after 41 regions saw only one pair register for the November 2024 elections. The KPU is drafting guidelines to handle situations where a sole candidate does not secure over 50% of the vote, which is required to declare a winner. The rerun will follow the same procedure, including candidate registration and a campaign period. The KPU aims to shorten the process while protecting candidates' rights. If no candidate wins, the government will appoint interim leaders until the rerun takes place. Experts welcome the 2025 elections, seeing them as necessary to avoid prolonged caretaker leadership but caution that grand coalitions can still cause uncontested races. While calling the rerun “the most logical” way, election expert Titi Anggraini urged the KPU to proceed with caution. The policy should not only determine the date for the revotes, but also ground rules for the stages preceding them, from the registration to the campaign. Lawmakers will meet again on September 27 to finalize the regulations.

[Regional Elections Begin to Boost Business World Turnover](#)

—Benediktus Krisna Yogatama, *Kompas*, 13 September 2024

Amidst declining domestic demand and weak purchasing power, Indonesia's simultaneous regional elections have boosted some businesses. Antonius Joenoes Supit, President Director of PT Sreeya Sewu Indonesia, noted that campaign spending during the elections has increased business turnover, particularly in sectors like poultry feed and processed foods. However, PT Indofood Sukses Makmur's Director, Franciscus Welirang, said the elections had a minimal impact on their retail products. The garment industry, represented by the Bandung Garment Entrepreneur Association, has experienced a 70% rise in demand for campaign uniforms, although other textile SMEs remain slow due to market competition from imports. Despite these gains, business leaders stressed that regional elections alone won't solve the broader issue of declining purchasing power. They called on the government to introduce incentives to stimulate the economy and improve job opportunities, echoing concerns that the middle class has seen a significant drop in consumer spending. Bank Indonesia's Retail Sales Survey also indicated sluggish retail sales.

II. Indonesia in Geopolitics

[Prabowo's succession plan looms large as top diplomat readies exit](#)

—Radhiyya Indra and Nina A. Loasana, *TheJakartaPost*, 17 September 2024

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has announced she will take on a new role as the UN's special envoy on water after her term ends next month. Appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Retno will focus on global water and sanitation issues, starting her new role on Nov. 1, shortly after President Joko Widodo hands over power to Prabowo Subianto on Oct. 20. Retno expressed her honor at being the first person, and the first Indonesian, to hold the position. As her successor remains undecided, speculation points to Sugiono, deputy chairman of the House Commission I, as a likely candidate. The Gerindra Party politician and former Army Special Forces member is part of Prabowo's inner circle. Analysts predict Prabowo will take a more active role in foreign policy, and with his administration taking shape, Sugiono's recent involvement in foreign affairs meetings has fueled rumors of his potential appointment. However, Sugiono denied any involvement in the cabinet planning, stating it is the president-elect's prerogative.

[Indonesia invites Russian varsity for joint underwater volcanoes study](#)

—Khaerul Izan and Nabil Ihsan, *Antara*, 14 September 2024

Former Indonesian president Megawati Soekarnoputri has invited Russia's St. Petersburg University (SPBU) to collaborate on deep-sea research in Indonesia, particularly on underwater volcanoes. As chair of Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Megawati met with SPBU Rector Nikolay Kropachev to discuss joint efforts in predicting volcanic eruptions. Indonesia has identified five active underwater volcanoes, and Megawati sought Russian expertise in this field. Kropachev expressed willingness to form a research team, noting that Russia is also studying underwater volcanoes, including one near Japan. Megawati emphasized the importance of such research, citing the historical eruption of Mount Krakatau in the 1800s, which darkened skies for months. Both sides are open to further cooperation, with Megawati proposing a formal agreement. Megawati's visit to Russia included meetings with Kropachev, Minister for Women's Empowerment Bintang Puspayoga, and professor of the Faculty of International Relations at St. Petersburg University Connie Rahakundini Bakrie.

[Indonesia puts moratorium on new Bali hotels amid overtourism fears](#)

—Rebecca Ratcliffe and agencies, *TheGuardian*, 10 September 2024

Indonesia will halt new hotel construction in parts of Bali to prevent overdevelopment and ease pressure on local infrastructure, the environment, and culture. Tourism has surged in Bali since pandemic restrictions were lifted, with 2.9 million foreign visitors arriving in the first half of this year. However, the influx has led to increased traffic, construction, and frustration over disrespectful behavior by tourists. Hermin Esti, an official at the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime and Investment Affairs, confirmed plans for a moratorium on new hotels, villas, and nightclubs, though the timeframe is unclear. Senior minister Luhut Pandjaitan suggested it could last up to a decade. The government is auditing Bali's tourism to balance economic growth with environmental and cultural preservation. Bali introduced a \$9 tourism tax in February to help protect its cultural heritage and is exploring infrastructure improvements, including a rail link to relieve road congestion. Authorities are concerned that further growth could push Bali into over-tourism, similar to Barcelona.

[A family affair: can Asia break free from the power of its political dynasties?](#)

—Jonathan Yerushalmy, *TheGuardian*, 9 September 2024

Anger is rising at Indonesia's new administration – while Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos and Brunei are all led by the children of former leaders. Political dynasties remain influential across Asia, as protests erupted in Indonesia following amended election laws favoring the rise of President-elect Prabowo Subianto and his vice-president, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, the son of current leader Joko Widodo. This marks a shift, as Jokowi was initially seen as a break from Indonesia's traditional elite when he rose to power in 2014. His status as a political outsider saw him garner widespread support. Ten years on Jokowi's image has been transported from the cover of *Time Magazine* to the hands of protesters. They accuse Jokowi of nepotism and undermining democracy by paving the way for his son's political future. Asia has long been dominated by powerful political families, including in countries like Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Weak political parties, high campaign costs, and closed networks help these families maintain control, perpetuating inequalities. Despite voter anger, opposition to dynastic politics remains fragmented, and real change is hard to achieve.

[See the best moments from Pope Francis' Asia-Pacific trip — his longest ever](#)

—David Rising, *AssociatedPress*, 7 September 2024

Pope Francis concluded his longest and most challenging trip, covering over 32,000 kilometers across Asia-Pacific from September 2 to 13. He visited Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, and East Timor, where 98% of the population is Catholic. The pope also traveled to the world's poorest country, Papua New Guinea, and one of its richest, Singapore. In Indonesia, Francis urged religious tolerance and met with President Joko Widodo and President-elect Prabowo Subianto. He greeted Catholic priests, nuns and seminarians at Jakarta's main cathedral. After a meeting with the grand imam of Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque, the two issued a joint call to fight religiously inspired violence and protect the environment. In PNG, he addressed tribal violence and donated medicine, clothing, and toys. In East Timor, nearly half the population gathered to see him as he emphasized preventing abuse, referencing a past scandal involving a Timorese bishop. In Singapore, Francis marveled at the modern skyline but reminded leaders to care for the poor. His message throughout the trip focused on interfaith dialogue, environmental stewardship, and social justice, concluding with a call for religious harmony: "All religions are a path to arrive at God."