



Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest

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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

[Indonesia to boost agricultural industrialization, focusing on seaweed development](#)

—Julian Isaac, *IndonesiaBusinessPost*, 16 October 2024

President-elect Prabowo Subianto's government plans to enhance its industrialization strategy, with a strong focus on agricultural commodities, particularly seaweed, as announced by Investment Minister Rosan P. Roeslani. The government has created a strategic roadmap to diversify beyond the mining sector, prioritizing key agricultural products such as crude palm oil, nutmeg, rubber, coconut, and blue swimming crab. Rosan emphasized that seaweed will be a key commodity due to its extensive downstream applications, including food products, cosmetics, and jelly production. With Indonesia's coastline spanning 99,093 kilometers, the country has significant advantages for seaweed cultivation, potentially adding US\$11.8 billion in value to the economy. To initiate this program, a pilot seaweed farming project worth US\$2 million will be launched next year. Since 2020, Indonesia's industrialization initiatives have attracted US\$78.7 billion in investments, with a strong focus on smelters and the agricultural sector. By tapping into its natural resources, the government aims to diversify the economy, create jobs, and enhance its global market position for sustainable products.

[Maritime security, a challenge for Prabowo leadership](#)

—Gusty da Costa, *IndonesiaBusinessPost*, 15 October 2024

Maritime security is a pressing concern for President-elect Prabowo Subianto, who will take over from President Joko Widodo. The International Maritime Bureau reported 55 piracy incidents in Indonesian waters in 2023, with 38 in the Singapore Strait, the world's busiest maritime trade route. Maritime observer Marcellus Hakeng Jayawibawa emphasized that these figures reflect Indonesia's weak maritime security management and surveillance capabilities. He noted that insufficient funding for the maritime sector hampers efforts to strengthen security, as

Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (Coast Guard)'s budget constitutes only 0.2% of the total defense budget. Marcellus called for the establishment of a robust Coast Guard equipped with advanced technology, such as long-range detection radars and patrol vessels, to combat piracy effectively. He also highlighted the importance of international cooperation with countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, the United States, and China for maintaining stability in key trade routes. Marcellus urged the new administration to prioritize maritime security through targeted policies and stronger international partnerships to enhance Indonesia's geopolitical position.

Indonesian Coastal Communities Stage Protest at Maritime Ministry to Reject Sea Sand Exports

—Ririe Ranggasari, *Tempo*, 10 October 2024

Indonesian coastal communities protested in front of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) in Central Jakarta on October 10, in response to the government's decision to reopen sea sand exports after a 20-year ban. This regulation, signed by Trade Minister Zulkifli Hasan, has sparked outrage as locals believe it undermines Indonesia's sovereignty. Susan Herawati, secretary general of the People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice (KIARA), condemned the KKP's move to allow sea sand mining to resume, stating that it shows the government does not prioritize the needs of coastal communities and fishermen. She criticized the KKP's spokesperson for making statements that align with capitalist interests rather than the people's welfare. Susan argued that the government's regulations should reflect the voices of those affected by sea sand mining and called for transparency about the motivations behind the resumption of exports. She emphasized that if the KKP genuinely serves the interests of fishermen, it should heed their concerns and reconsider this policy, which she believes will have detrimental effects on their livelihoods.

Reviving the Vision of the Maritime Axis

BM Lukita Grahadyarini, *Kompas*, 10 October 2024

The future government under President-elect Prabowo Subianto must revitalize Indonesia's maritime axis vision, which has waned since Joko Widodo's second administration. The "World Maritime Axis" concept is critical for achieving the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045, emphasizing Indonesia as a sovereign and sustainable archipelagic state. Given that two-thirds of the territory is maritime, with significant potential for marine resources, the maritime sector's development is essential. The

initial maritime axis plan, introduced in 2014, focused on revitalizing maritime culture, managing marine resources, developing infrastructure, promoting maritime diplomacy, and enhancing defense capabilities. However, the sector's contribution to GDP has stagnated at an average growth of just 2% over the past five years, falling short of the national average of 5%. Dani Setiawan, chairman of the Indonesian Traditional Fishermen's Union, highlighted that government support has shifted to land-based sectors, leaving unresolved issues such as poverty among fishermen and illegal fishing. He urged the new administration to reaffirm the maritime identity and address these longstanding challenges to foster economic growth and cultural values essential for national development.

Thousands of Fish Aggregating Devices Do Not Have Permits

—BM Lukita Grahadyarini, *Kompas*, 8 October 2024

The Indonesian government is taking steps to regulate the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) in its waters, as thousands remain unlicensed. Mohammad Abdi Suhufan, Special Assistant to the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, expressed concern over the large number of unlicensed FADs despite existing regulations. The Ministry has designated 3,443 locations for FAD placement across 11 fisheries management areas, with permits issued by governors for waters 4-12 nautical miles from shore and by the Minister for areas beyond that. The lack of enforcement and compliance has led to a surge in unauthorized FAD placements, with Greenpeace noting a 15-year trend of increasing illegal installations. To address this, the Ministry has introduced licensing booths, starting at the Bitung Ocean Fishing Port, where seven FAD permits have been issued, and 21 applications are pending. The initiative aims to enhance understanding of licensing procedures among business operators and improve the management of FADs to support measured fishing policies.

B. Forests and Land Use

Delayed deforestation rule unlikely to break IEU-CEPA stalemate

—Ruth Dea Juwita, *The Jakarta Post*, 14 October 2024

The delay in implementing the European Union's deforestation-free rule (EUDR) for imported products may allow more time for negotiations between Indonesia and the

EU on the Indonesia-EU Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IEU-CEPA), but analysts believe it will not resolve key differences. Indonesia's major concern is gaining palm oil market access to the EU, while the EU seeks changes to Indonesia's local content requirements, foreign ownership limits for banks, and customs duties for electronic transmissions. Despite efforts from President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to finalize the deal, significant disagreements remain. Jokowi had aimed to complete negotiations before leaving office, but analysts, including Chris Humphrey of the EU-ASEAN Business Council, doubt this is achievable. The political climate, with a new Indonesian administration incoming and the EU appointing a new College of Commissioners, adds uncertainty. Both sides need to show more political will to conclude the deal, but further delays appear likely.

[From Bolivia to Indonesia, deforestation continues apace](#)

—Agence France-Presse, *TheJakartaPost*, 8 October 2024

Deforestation surged in 2023, with 6.37 million hectares of trees lost, equivalent to nearly the size of Ireland, according to a new report by 24 research organizations and NGOs. This deforestation rate "significantly exceeded" levels needed to meet the global commitment to end deforestation by 2030, made by over 140 world leaders in 2021. Forests, home to 80% of terrestrial plant and animal species and key to regulating water cycles and absorbing carbon dioxide, continue to face alarming destruction. In Bolivia, deforestation rose 351% between 2015 and 2023, mainly due to agriculture. Indonesia saw deforestation increase in 2023, driven partly by demand for eco-friendly materials and nickel mining. Brazil showed progress in the Amazon under President Lula's protective measures, but deforestation in the Cerrado savanna worsened. Logging, road-building, and fires also contribute to forest degradation, which damaged an area twice the size of Germany in 2022. Experts urge stronger policies and enforcement to protect forests from political and economic pressures as well as a fundamental shift in consumption and production models to stop overexploiting natural resources.

[Indonesia concerned over EU deforestation law rules, not implementation timeframe](#)

—Ananda Teresia and Bernadette Christina, *Reuters*, 3 October 2024

Indonesia has welcomed the European Commission's proposal to delay the implementation of its anti-deforestation law but emphasized the need to focus on

implementation regulations rather than timing. Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Airlangga Hartarto, urged the EU to cancel its country benchmarking system, which classifies nations as high, standard, or low risk for compliance with the law. The European Union Deforestation-free Regulation (EUDR) bans imports of commodities linked to forest destruction, affecting Indonesia, the world's largest palm oil exporter. Indonesia has criticized the law for harming smallholders and discriminating against its palm oil industry, with the EU being Indonesia's fourth-largest export market. Airlangga suggested the delay should be two years instead of 12 months and rejected the EU's right to act as a "rating agency." Indonesia's palm oil association (GAPKI) welcomed the delay, saying it would allow more time to prepare. Malaysia, the second-largest palm oil producer, also opposed the EU policy, calling it costly and burdensome for its industry.

[Past failures can't stop Indonesia from clearing forests, Indigenous lands for farms](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 3 October 2024

Indigenous Papuans in Merauke are alarmed by helicopters and excavators, alongside the Indonesian military, as one of the world's largest deforestation projects unfolds. This initiative, covering 1 million hectares for rice cultivation, is overseen by the Ministry of Defense and aims to address food security amid climate challenges. Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto has appointed the controversial Jhonlin Group to manage the project, raising concerns about human rights violations and a lack of free, prior, informed consent (FPIC) from local communities. Indigenous leaders express fears of conflict and displacement, with the military's presence escalating tensions. Protests have erupted, highlighting that local residents were not adequately informed or consulted about the project. Critics argue this project mirrors past failures in Indonesia's agricultural initiatives, threatening ecological integrity and Indigenous rights. Despite government assurances, concerns linger over environmental impacts, land dispossession, and the project's export focus, which may not benefit local communities facing food insecurity. The previous similar mega project in Kalimantan has failed, leaving behind destroyed landscapes, with the current project also looking "assured to fail".

[Cost-benefit analysis exposes 'bogus' promises of palm oil riches for Papuans](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 3 October 2024

A study by Indonesia's Pusaka Bentala Rakyat Foundation challenges government claims that palm oil cultivation boosts economic welfare in Papua. Their cost-benefit analysis reveals that while palm oil investments generated 17.64 trillion rupiah (\$1.15 billion), the social and environmental costs from deforestation and habitat loss exceeded 96.63 trillion rupiah (\$6.30 billion). The resulting cost-benefit ratio of 5.48 indicates that the damages outweigh the benefits. In Papua, home to Asia's largest intact rainforest, deforestation has surged, with 663,443 hectares lost over two decades, primarily for palm oil. The South Papua province faced the highest losses, totaling 37.7 trillion rupiah (\$2.5 billion). Detrimental effects include river pollution, deforestation, and limited job opportunities for Indigenous Papuans, who often work as low-paid laborers. Moreover, the expansion of plantations has exacerbated food insecurity, leading to a decline in local food sources. Calls for a policy rethink are growing, urging the government to revoke palm oil concessions and transfer land management rights to local communities to mitigate these impacts.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area

[mamberamo-declared-as-indonesia's-57th-national-park](#)

—Prisca Triferia Violleta and Yashinta Difa, *AntaraNews*, 16 October 2024

Minister of Environment and Forestry Siti Nurbaya Bakar announced the declaration of Mamberamo as Indonesia's 57th national park, calling it the "last bastion of biodiversity defense." She acknowledged the ministry's efforts over the past decade to enhance the management of conservation areas through various programs, collaborations, and policy transformations. During the declaration event in East Kalimantan on October 15, Nurbaya expressed gratitude to all stakeholders, including regents and indigenous communities, for their support in this initiative. She highlighted the government's commitment to strengthening biodiversity conservation through the revision of the Law on Conservation of Biological Natural Resources and Ecosystems. Mamberamo National Park, previously Foja wildlife reserve, spans 1.7 million hectares across 12 administrative districts in Papua Province. Regent of Mamberamo Raya Yimin Weya emphasized the park's high biodiversity, which includes the bird of paradise and numerous fish species. He advocated for community involvement in its management, hoping it would improve

local livelihoods and human resource capacity in forestry, conservation, and tourism.

Dugong watching in Alor waters

—Kornelis Kaha and Raka Adji, *AntaraNews*, 12 October 2024

At Kabola Beach in East Nusa Tenggara, the sound of waves crashes against the shore as local fishers chat in traditional lopo houses. The sun shines brightly at 31 degrees Celsius, and the fishers eagerly await tourists hoping to see Mawar, a friendly dugong that has become a key attraction. Mawar, who often surfaces and interacts with tourists, has provided additional income for local fishers, who can earn between Rp2 million to Rp4 million (around US\$128 to US\$256) per month from being a tourist guide. Sixteen fishers have formed the Sinar Kabola Community Monitoring Group to protect Mawar and the marine habitat in the area, which is part of the Alor Islands Aquatic Park. The group works with the Marine and Fisheries Office to maintain the coastline and ensure a safe environment for fish and dugongs. Tourists pay Rp150,000 (US\$9.63) for domestic visitors or Rp200,000 (US\$12.85) for foreign visitors. The dugong serves as an important tourism asset for the region, highlighting Alor's rich cultural and marine potential.

World Wildlife Populations Have Dropped Drastically in 50 Years

—Stephanus Aranditio, *Kompas*, 11 October 2024

WWF in its "Living Planet Report 2024" reveals a staggering 73% decline in the average size of wildlife populations over the past 50 years, signaling a critical point for the Earth due to environmental damage and climate change. Compiled by the Zoological Society of London, the report analyzed nearly 35,000 population trends across 5,495 species from 1970 to 2020, highlighting an 85% decline in freshwater ecosystems, 69% in terrestrial ecosystems, and 56% in marine ecosystems. Specific species like the hawksbill turtle, Amazon River dolphin, and tucuxi have seen dramatic population drops. Climate change exacerbates these declines, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, where losses average 95%. While some species have stabilized due to conservation efforts, like mountain gorillas and European bison, these successes are insufficient. WWF-Indonesia Aditya Bayunanda urges countries to implement ambitious plans to restore nature and combat biodiversity loss. He adds that governments need to open up greater public and private funding

to be able to take large-scale action and better align climate, nature, and sustainable development policies and actions.

[Sumba's sandalwood ponies](#)

—Ahmad Pathoni and Jessica Hromas, *TheGuardian*, 8 October 2024

On the arid island of Sumba in Indonesia, sandalwood ponies play a crucial role in local culture and daily life. These small, resilient horses are used for transport, crop carrying, and, most importantly, traditional ceremonies. Gerson, a caretaker at a luxury hotel, notes that "horses are intertwined with our way of life here." Sumba is increasingly attracting adventurous tourists drawn by its rugged beauty and cultural heritage, with horseback riding on sandalwood ponies becoming a unique attraction. Believed to be descendants of Mongolian horses, these ponies have adapted well to Sumba's harsh terrain and are highly valued in the community. Despite their cultural significance, the number of sandalwood ponies is declining due to economic pressures and crossbreeding with larger imported horses. They play a vital role in traditional practices, such as the Belis bride price and the pasola festival, where horsemen engage in ceremonial spear battles. Tourism may offer a lifeline for preserving Sumba's traditions, as increased awareness and interest can help support the local culture and its prized ponies.

[Orangutan conservation and communication: Gary Shapiro's half-century journey from zoos to the wilds of Borneo](#)

—Rhett Ayers Butler, *Mongabay*, 8 October 2024

Orangutans, known for their human-like behaviors, have intrigued many, including Gary Shapiro, a pioneer in primate communication. His new book, *Out of the Cage: My Half Century Journey from Curiosity to Concern for Indonesia's "Persons of the Forest,"* reflects his journey from academic studies to living among ex-captive orangutans in Borneo. Inspired by Drs. Allen and Beatrix Gardner, Shapiro began his work with orangutans at Fresno City Zoo, where he taught a juvenile named Aazk an artificial symbolic language, marking the start of his lifelong fascination with orangutan cognition. At Camp Leakey, he discovered the emotional and social complexities of orangutans, notably Princess, who learned over 30 signs to communicate. Shapiro's advocacy for orangutan conservation grew as he recognized the threats they face from habitat destruction. He co-founded the Orangutan Foundation International and promotes education and outreach to inspire future conservationists. Shapiro supports the concept of "orangutan personhood,"

advocating for their rights as sentient beings. His book urges a reevaluation of our relationship with these remarkable species amid the ongoing climate and biodiversity crises.

D. Climate Change, Energy and Mining

[El Nino Leads to Highest Temperature Rise in 2023](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 16 October 2024

In 2023, global temperatures surged to unprecedented levels, rising nearly 0.3 degrees Celsius compared to the previous year, largely due to a strong El Niño following a prolonged La Niña. A study from the University of Miami highlights that the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) was the primary driver of this spike, rather than direct impacts of climate change. The researchers found that even without human influence, a similar temperature increase could occur, especially following a prolonged La Niña. Historically, such temperature anomalies are rare, but the likelihood jumps to 10.3% when preceded by La Niña, as evidenced in previous years like 1977. Although 2023's ocean temperatures were extremely high, they were only slightly above those seen during previous El Niño events in 2015 and 2016. Importantly, the study reinforces that human greenhouse gas emissions continue to drive long-term climate warming. With global temperatures now exceeding 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, immediate action is needed to reduce emissions and mitigate ongoing climate impacts.

Raghuraman, S. P., Soden, B., Clement, A., Vecchi, G., Menemenlis, S., and Yang, W.: [The 2023 global warming spike was driven by the El Niño–Southern Oscillation](#), *Atmos. Chem. Phys.*, 24, 11275–11283.

[A Missed Decade of Indonesia's Climate Action](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 16 October 2024

Indonesia faces increasing climate challenges, with record high temperatures and an urgent need for effective adaptation strategies. Despite the 2015 Paris Agreement's goal to limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius, current trends show an increase of 1.2 degrees since pre-industrial times, with projections suggesting a

rise of 3 degrees this century. A recent [united-in-science-2024](#) report by the World Meteorological Organization warns of an 80% chance that average temperatures will exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius within the next five years. Indonesia's emissions target was updated in 2022, aiming for a 31.89% reduction without international support, yet emissions rose by 6.9% in 2022. The Climate Action Tracker labeled these targets as "Critically Insufficient," indicating they are inadequate for achieving the Paris goals. Major challenges include reliance on coal power, with emissions from the energy sector now surpassing those from agriculture and forestry. To effectively address these issues, experts emphasize the need for sustainable energy solutions and inclusive development strategies that strengthen community resilience against climate impacts.

[Climate change made Hurricane Milton worse, scientists say](#)

—Gloria Dickie, *The Jakarta Post*, 12 October 2024

Hurricane Milton, which claimed 16 lives in Florida, was made worse by human-caused climate change, according to scientists from World Weather Attribution. The group's analysis found global warming increased Milton's wind speeds by 10% and intensified rainfall by 20-30%. Milton rapidly intensified from a Category 1 to a Category 5 hurricane in under 24 hours, fueled by record-warm waters in the Gulf of Mexico, before making landfall as a Category 3 storm. Scientists say climate change has made such extreme temperatures in the Gulf 400-800 times more likely. The US National Hurricane Center noted that Milton had the third-fastest intensification of any Atlantic hurricane on record, with winds reaching 290 km/h. The study also found storms like Milton are now twice as likely due to global warming. Environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, stressed that climate change is driving the increasing severity of storms, with fossil fuel use as the main culprit. Milton is the second Category 5 hurricane of the season, which is expected to produce more major storms due to climate change.

[Carbon removal no solution if world overshoots warming target, scientists say](#)

—David Stanway, *The Jakarta Post*, 10 October 2024

Efforts for carbon dioxide removal (CDR) from the atmosphere won't avert climate catastrophe if global temperatures surpass the 1.5°C threshold, scientists warned in a study published in *Nature*. While CDR can slow warming by reducing accumulated greenhouse gases, it cannot address other climate impacts, such as rising sea levels and disrupted ocean circulation. "Even if temperatures are lowered, the world will

not be the same," said Carl-Friedrich Schleussner of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis. CDR technologies face challenges, including limited capacity and high costs, with current removal at 2 billion tonnes annually—far short of the 7-9 billion tonnes needed. Additionally, thawing permafrost and shrinking peatlands could release methane, driving further warming. Joeri Rogelj of Imperial College London emphasized that using land solely for carbon management could conflict with biodiversity and food production. The study underscores that only ambitious emissions reductions can effectively minimize climate risks.

Schleussner, CF., Ganti, G., Lejeune, Q. et al. 2024. [Overconfidence in climate overshoot](#). *Nature* 634, 366-373

[Indonesia's enforcement 'weakness' exposed in Chinese man's trial on illegal mining](#)

—Resty Woro Yuniar, *SouthChinaMorningPost*, 4 October 2024

The trial of a Chinese national, YH, accused of illegally mining over \$65 million worth of gold in Indonesia has highlighted the nation's enforcement weaknesses regarding illicit mining operations. YH is charged with illegally extracting 774.27 kg of gold and 937.7 kg of silver, causing estimated state losses of 1.02 trillion rupiah (about \$65.9 million). His operations employed over 80 workers using heavy machinery and mercury, which was found in high levels in gold samples. Mining experts emphasize that Indonesia's inadequate law enforcement fosters illegal activities, often protected by authorities. Muhammad Jamil from the NGO Mining Advocacy Network (Jatam) stated that illegal mining has become a persistent issue, with officials failing to address it. In 2021, the government identified 2,741 illegal mines, employing 3.7 million people. The recent fatal landslides at unlicensed mines, resulting in at least 23 deaths, further underscore the dangers posed by illegal mining, which also harms local communities and exacerbates state losses. Despite promises to establish a task force to combat illegal mining, no significant action has yet occurred.

E. Pollution and Waste

[In Colombia, children trade plastic waste for school supplies](#)

—David Salazar, *TheJakartaPost*, 12 October 2024

On a beach in Colombia, children trade plastic waste for pseudo coins that can be used to "buy" clothes, books, and school supplies. Bahia Malaga National Park, known for humpback whale sightings, attracts tourists but also accumulates tons of plastic waste from their visits. Pollution will be a key topic at the upcoming UN COP16 biodiversity conference in Cali, starting Oct. 21, as approximately eight million tons of plastic enter the ocean annually, according to the UN. The Plastico Precioso Uramba charity has led a significant clean-up effort in Bahia Malaga, collecting about 16 tons of garbage since 2019. Their innovative approach involves rewarding plastic collection with a currency system: each 250 grams of plastic earns a plastic coin redeemable for goods at a charity-run store. For instance, a notebook costs the equivalent of 30 bottle caps. Sergio Pardo, the charity's director, emphasizes that this initiative turns waste into economic incentives. Children like 13-year-old Juan Jose Lopez actively participate in collecting bottle caps, fostering environmental advocacy within their families and communities.

[Ministry records 41.68 percent drop in plastic waste leaks into ocean](#)

— Prisca Triferina and Raka Adji, *AntaraNews*, 4 October 2024

The Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment reported a 41.68% decline in plastic waste leakage into the ocean since 2018, equivalent to 256,614 tons. In an online discussion, Rofi Alhanif, the ministry's Assistant Deputy for Waste Management, noted that ocean plastic leakage reached 615,675 tons in 2018, while 359,061 tons leaked in 2023, according to the National Coordination Team for Marine Debris Management (TKNPSL). The Indonesian government aims to reduce ocean plastic waste by 70% by 2025, as outlined in the Marine Debris Handling National Action Plan (RAN PSL). However, Alhanif highlighted several challenges, including suboptimal waste collection rates, particularly in rural areas, and inadequate budgets for waste management systems and human resources. He pointed out that plastic consumption is rising with the population and that waste management in ports and marine tourism areas remains inefficient. Additionally, there is a need to enhance public awareness and improve the integration of land and sea waste data management systems.

[Illicit waste burning reaches alarming rate of 48% Indonesian households](#)

—Nur Janti, *TheJakartaPost*, 3 October 2024

A global report by Lloyd's Register Foundation reveals an alarming trend in Indonesia, where nearly 48% of households resort to burning their waste due to inadequate public waste management services. This practice, although illegal, is driven by the scarcity of disposal facilities, leading to significant health and environmental issues. Open burning releases harmful pollutants, including black carbon and “forever chemicals,” which contribute to global warming and pose serious health risks. The report estimates that around 1 million people die annually in lower-income countries due to diseases linked to mismanaged waste. Residents in Java confirm the report's findings, citing the absence of accessible waste management options. For instance, Ilmia Safitri from Yogyakarta expressed concern over her neighbor's waste burning, which affects her child's bronchitis condition. Communities often rely on informal waste collectors and have started initiatives like waste banks to encourage responsible waste management. The report emphasizes the need for better waste collection infrastructure to address the uncontrolled disposal and to protect public health. Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Ministry acknowledges the reliance on community efforts for waste management and plans to improve public landfill facilities in the coming years.

Williams, M., Gower, R., Green, J., Whitebread, E., Lenkiewicz, Z., & Schröder, P. (2019). [Policy positions: No time to waste](#) Tearfund.

[In the battle against plastic pollution, Asia's informal workers are critical allies](#)

—Annerieke Douma, *Mongabay*, 2 October 2024

Nguyen Thi Thanh Thuy, a Vietnamese waste worker, has dedicated four decades to the waste collection industry, operating primarily in landfills. With limited household waste separation in Vietnam, informal workers like Thuy handle 90% of the country's plastic recycling by manually sorting materials for collection centers. Southeast Asia contributes over half of the world's ocean plastic due to inadequate waste management, but this region also has significant potential to combat plastic pollution by leveraging its informal workforce. Thuy and approximately 20 million other informal workers contribute nearly 60% of global plastics recycling. Despite their vital role, they often work under poor conditions with low pay and health risks. In Indonesia, the informal sector includes about two million waste pickers, known as *Pemulung*, who facilitate recycling efforts in coastal communities. Initiatives like Prevented Ocean Plastic Southeast Asia and the Mahija Parahita Nusantara Foundation aim to integrate these workers into formal waste management systems, creating jobs and ensuring a steady demand for recycled materials. As Asia grapples

with worsening plastic pollution, it is crucial to protect and empower informal waste workers to enhance both their livelihoods and environmental outcomes.

F. Technology, Investment and Finance

Businesses hope for Sri Mulyani's return as finance minister

—Deni Ghifari, *TheJakartaPost*, 16 October 2024

Businesses are hopeful that Sri Mulyani Indrawati will be reappointed as Indonesia's finance minister in Prabowo Subianto's upcoming cabinet, citing her proven track record and ability to maintain fiscal stability. After a meeting with Prabowo on Monday, Sri Mulyani confirmed she was asked to continue in her role. Deputy Finance Ministers Suahasil Nazara and Thomas Djiwandono were also called in for talks, with a potential new deputy, Anggito Abimanyu, joining them. Business groups, including the Indonesian Employers Association, AmCham, EuroCham, and Kocham, highlighted Sri Mulyani's expertise and importance in securing investor confidence, especially in the face of Prabowo's ambitious programs. Sri Mulyani's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and her global recognition strengthen her standing. Investors are particularly focused on ensuring that Prabowo's policies, including free meal programs and defense spending, will not compromise fiscal sustainability. Despite Prabowo's campaign to spin off tax and customs offices, Sri Mulyani stated no such plans are currently in motion. The IDX Composite index rose 0.89% in response to the cabinet discussions.

Rules still stacked against renewables as Jokowi era draws to close

—Divya Karyza, *TheJakartaPost*, 14 October 2024

Indonesia has made little progress in its energy transition over the past decade as President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) has struggled to balance renewable energy growth with coal dependency. Despite efforts to promote clean power, coal use in captive power plants surged, growing nearly eightfold from 1.4 GW in 2013 to 10.8 GW in 2023, according to Global Energy Monitor data. The delay in passing a renewable energy bill has been a key obstacle. Experts, including Putra Adhiguna from the Energy Shift Institute, argue that the next administration must prioritize this bill to attract investment and support economic growth. Indonesia remains heavily reliant

on coal, which provides 61% of its electricity. While recent regulations partially restrict new coal plants and aim to boost renewable investment, the sector remains unattractive due to low pricing flexibility. Indonesia's renewable energy investment has stagnated, with only \$1.5 billion recorded in 2023. To meet targets, stakeholders are calling for regulatory changes, particularly in the geothermal sector, where growth has been slow.

[Freeport halts production at new copper smelter after fire](#)

—Aditya Hadi, *The Jakarta Post*, 15 October 2024

PT Freeport Indonesia (PTFI) has temporarily halted operations at its new copper smelter in Gresik, East Java, following a fire at the gas cleaning plant on Monday. The fire, which began at 5:45 p.m., was extinguished without casualties. PTFI is conducting an assessment to determine the cause and extent of the damage, as well as the potential impact on its production schedule. The smelter, inaugurated by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo on Sept. 23, is the largest single-line copper smelter globally, built with a \$3.7 billion investment. It processes copper concentrate from Freeport's Grasberg mine in Papua, with an annual output capacity of 900,000 tonnes of copper cathode, 50 tonnes of gold, and 210 tonnes of silver. The facility is central to Indonesia's strategy to boost its downstream mineral processing industries. The fire's impact on the smelter's full-scale production, expected by January 2024, is under investigation, and further delays have not been ruled out.

[Indonesia's Economic Transformation: Industrialization Based on Science, Technology, and Sustainability](#)

—Ninuk M Pambudy, *Kompas*, 14 October 2024

Prof. Bambang Brodjonegoro delivered the keynote speech at the seventh Widjojo Nitisastro Memorial Lecture, organized by the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (AIPI) on October 14, 2024, in Jakarta. His address highlighted the urgent need for economic strategies as President-elect Prabowo Subianto and Vice President-elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka prepare to take office. Prabowo has set an ambitious economic growth target of 8% to transform Indonesia into a wealthy nation by 2045. Brodjonegoro emphasized that Indonesia must leverage its demographic bonus, which will end around 2045, to achieve sustainable growth. He compared Indonesia's situation to that of South Korea and Japan, which successfully transitioned from poverty to wealth through investments in science and technology. He warned against relying solely on natural resources, advocating for a shift towards

industrialization that combines natural resource advantages with technological advancements. Brodjonegoro also noted that urbanization plays a critical role in economic growth, suggesting that Indonesia must better utilize its urban population for industrial development. His speech paid tribute to Prof. Widjojo Nitisastro's contributions to Indonesia's economic transformation, particularly in population control and agricultural development.

G. Human Rights, Indigenous People and Gender Equality

Indonesia civil society rallies behind student investigated over nickel protest

—Christ Belseran, Irfan Maulana and Asad Asnawi, *Mongabay*, 15 October 2024

Criminal investigations of environmental advocates in Indonesia persist. Recently, anti-mining activists Christina Rumalatu and Thomas Madilis were summoned by police under the controversial Electronic Information and Transactions Law (ITE) following a demonstration. This defamation law, originally intended to combat online crimes, has been criticized for its misuse against free speech. Christina's potential prosecution relates to her advocacy to link severe flooding in Halmahera with ongoing landscape changes due to nickel mining. Between 2019 and 2023, over 300 advocates faced criminal proceedings, with many charges stemming from complaints by influential figures. The Mining Advocacy Network, along with various youth organizations, organized a demonstration in August, where Christina criticized environmental damage caused by PT Indonesia Weda Bay Industrial Park. Her statements and actions have sparked retaliatory legal actions, illustrating a broader trend of intimidation against civil society under President Joko Widodo's administration. Support for Christina has grown, with multiple organizations offering legal aid and public demonstrations advocating for her rights.

Indigenous People, Jokowi's Forgotten Supporters

—Stephanus Aranditio, *Kompas*, 12 October 2024

A decade into President Joko Widodo's leadership, a key promise from his 2014 campaign to ratify the Indigenous Peoples Bill remains unfulfilled. Following a meeting between the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) and Jokowi in 2014, six “Nawacita” commitments for Indigenous Peoples were

established, garnering over 12 million votes from Indigenous communities. However, by the end of his term, Jokowi failed to mention Indigenous issues in significant speeches, leading to feelings of betrayal among these communities. Instead of progress, Indigenous rights have been undermined by expedited laws favoring corporations, such as the Mineral and Coal Law and the Job Creation Law. AMAN reported 687 agrarian conflicts over 10 years, resulting in criminalization of 925 Indigenous members. The recent violent incident in East Nusa Tenggara against the Poco Leok community opposing a geothermal project illustrates ongoing neglect of Indigenous voices in development decisions. AMAN leaders call for immediate action from the incoming Prabowo Subianto administration to pass the Indigenous Peoples Bill and address legal frameworks that threaten Indigenous rights.

Tensions flare as Indonesian islanders resist China solar development

—Yogi Eka Sahputra, *Mongabay*, 10 October 2024

A violent confrontation between local villagers and officers of a land developer on the island of Rempang resulted in injuries and a police complaint. They resisted eviction for a major solar panel manufacturing project led by Hong Kong-based Xinyi International Investment. Earlier, the government announced the \$11.6 billion Rempang Eco-City project, covering 7,000 hectares and requiring the displacement of about 7,500 residents, including many seafarers. The developer, PT Makmur Elok Graha (MEG), is linked to the Artha Graha Group, owned by businessman Tomy Winata. Tensions escalated on September 6 when a demonstration against the evictions was met with police teargas, resulting in over 40 arrests. During a confrontation with MEG security, 66-year-old Siti Hawa was injured while trying to protect her community. Human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have called for a halt to the project, emphasizing the need to respect Indigenous rights and involve communities in decisions affecting their land. Despite the violence, residents assert their determination to resist the project, which aims to export solar electricity to Singapore by 2030.

Javan fisherwomen lead fight against marine dredging amid fears of damage

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 10 October 2024

Fisherwomen along the north coast of Java are protesting the government's recent decision to allow the export of dredged sea sand, warning that it could worsen rising sea levels and marine ecological degradation. In May 2023, the government lifted a 20-year ban on sea sand exports, leading to widespread criticism despite officials

claiming dredging would only occur in open waters away from coastal areas. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries designated seven dredging locations covering approximately 590,000 hectares, allowing the extraction of up to 17.65 billion cubic meters of sand. In Demak, one designated area spans 57,438 hectares, alarming local fishers who fear detrimental effects on their environment and livelihoods. Experts argue that the government's focus on export profits overlooks the significant economic losses to fishing communities, projected to reach \$77.4 million. They caution that dredging will disrupt marine ecosystems, harm fish populations, and undermine Indonesia's capacity to sequester carbon in marine environments. Fisherwomen like Tri and Masnuah vow to continue their resistance while urging the government to address existing climate and coastal issues.

Violence Against Women and Children Declines, Emotional Violence Remains High

—Sonya Hellen Sinombor, *Kompas*, 7 October 2024

In 2024, the prevalence of violence against women, children, and adolescents in Indonesia decreased compared to 2021, according to two national surveys launched by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection on October 7. The National Women's Life Experience Survey (SPHPN) revealed that domestic violence against women dropped from 9.4% in 2016 to 6.6% in 2024, while the National Survey of Children and Adolescents' Life Experiences (SNPHAR) indicated a reduction in physical violence against boys and girls. However, emotional violence among adolescents has risen, with 47.8% of female and 43.14% of male adolescents experiencing it. Notably, 1 in 5 women reported domestic violence, with higher incidents among working women and those living in urban areas. The surveys suggest that government interventions are making progress, but issues remain, especially concerning emotional abuse and violence against children. The launch also introduced the ALIFA application, aimed at tracking regional budgets for children's welfare. Stakeholders acknowledged the importance of ongoing efforts to address violence against vulnerable populations.

I. RI General Elections

[Awaiting Prabowo-Gibran's grand ministerial cabinet](#)

—Yuni Arisandy Sinaga, *AntaraNews*, 16 October 2024

Indonesia is set to enter a new era of leadership with Prabowo Subianto, the retired army general and current defense minister, taking office as the 8th president on October 20, alongside Gibran Rakabuming Raka as vice president. Backed by several political parties, including the Gerindra Party, Prabowo and Gibran won the 2024 presidential election in February. As they prepare for their administration, questions arise regarding the composition and size of the new cabinet. Discussions about expanding the number of ministries from 34 to around 40 have already begun. Prabowo aims to optimize his cabinet to fulfill the vision outlined in his electoral campaign document, the Asta Cita (Eight Aspirations). On September 19, the House of Representatives passed amendments to the State Ministries Law, allowing the president to create new ministries and restructure existing ones. Reports suggest the Prabowo-Gibran cabinet could include up to 46 ministries. Prabowo has begun consulting potential ministers, including Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, while also inviting various figures for deputy ministerial roles, signaling a significant reshaping of Indonesia's government ahead of the October 21 inauguration.

[Money Politics is Vulnerable during the Campaign Period](#)

—MB Dewi Pancawati, *Kompas*, 14 October 2024

Money politics is a major concern as Indonesia approaches its simultaneous regional head elections, with a Kompas poll revealing that 47.7% of respondents fear voter bribery. This issue has plagued Indonesia's democratic processes across various elections. The Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) identified vote-buying as a recurring vulnerability, with 82 cases reported in the 2019 general elections and 262 cases in the 2020 regional elections. Despite regulations prohibiting monetary inducements, violations persist. Public enthusiasm for participating in the upcoming elections is low, with 25% unaware of the candidates running. Only 39.4% of respondents are familiar with the gubernatorial, regent, or mayoral candidates, underscoring the need for candidates to engage voters effectively. Many respondents (65.7%) expressed a desire to learn about candidates' visions and work programs. The election campaign period is a crucial opportunity for candidates to connect with voters and communicate their plans. However, the shadow of money politics looms large, highlighting the necessity for concerted efforts from all stakeholders to uphold democratic integrity and combat these corrupt practices.

[Deceased candidate's wife touted as replacement in North Maluku race](#)

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 14 October 2024

Following the death of North Maluku gubernatorial candidate Benny Laos in a boat explosion, the alliance supporting him is considering nominating his wife, Sherly Tjoanda, for the upcoming November election. A spokesperson for Benny's campaign, Muksin Amrin, mentioned that the alliance is planning to pair Sherly with Benny's running mate, Sarbin Sehe, a former local official. Discussions with Sherly are set for Tuesday to gauge her interest in continuing her late husband's campaign. Benny was killed along with five others when their speedboat exploded while refueling at Bobong Port, Taliabu Island. Sherly sustained minor injuries. The police, along with forensic investigators, are working to determine the cause of the explosion and have interviewed witnesses and survivors. Despite Benny's death, Home Minister Tito Karnavian confirmed that the election will proceed as scheduled, allowing Benny's alliance seven days to nominate a replacement. Benny, a former Morotai Island regent, was the frontrunner in the North Maluku gubernatorial race along with Sarbin, backed by eight political parties.

[PDP Law Comes into Effect Next Week, Personal Data Still Vulnerable to Misuse in 2024 Regional Elections](#)

—Norbertus Arya Dwiangga Martiar, *Kompas*, 11 October 2024

On October 17, 2024, Indonesia's Law Number 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection (PDP) will take effect, urging organizers of the 2024 Regional Head Elections to manage participant and voter data carefully. A data leak incident involving Jakarta Pilkada candidate Dharma Pongrekun-Kun Wardana highlighted the General Election Commission's (KPU) failure to comply with the PDP Law. Researcher Parasurama Pamungkas from the Institute for the Study and Advocacy of Society (Elsam) emphasized the need for clear guidelines on data use by political parties. Gina Sabrina from the Association for Legal Aid and Human Rights warned that the alleged data theft is just the "tip of the iceberg" in political data misuse, citing 417 complaints from residents whose identity card data were misappropriated. She criticized the KPU's inadequate response and the lack of serious law enforcement, which could lead to more incidents. Bawaslu DKI Jakarta Commissioner Benny Sabdo acknowledged the importance of data in the elections and promised to improve supervision amid ongoing challenges in addressing data misuse complaints.

2024 Election Increases Number of Female Senators in DPD

—MB Dewi Pancawati, *Kompas*, 8 October 2024

In the 2024 election, women's representation in the Regional Representative Council (DPD) increased to 35.5%, signaling progress in gender mainstreaming. Of the 152 DPD members elected across 38 provinces, 54 are women, marking a significant rise from previous years. This trend is seen as a positive step for gender equality and the strengthening of regional autonomy efforts. South Sumatra notably sent all female senators, while several provinces, including South Sulawesi and Papua, have no female representatives. Despite this progress, political kinship remains prevalent, with over half of the female senators connected to public or political figures. Women's representation in the DPD has surpassed that of the House of Representatives (DPR), where female representation remains at 21.9%. The increasing involvement of women in the DPD is expected to improve the quality of legislation and advance gender equality in Indonesian politics. However, the DPD's supervisory role remains limited, underscoring the need for more empowerment of the institution in the coming term. The role of senators needs to be expanded further.

II. Indonesia in Geopolitics

Backsliding democracy mars Jokowi's political legacy

—Yerica Lai, *TheJakartaPost*, 16 October 2024

When Joko "Jokowi" Widodo entered national politics in 2014, he was seen as a democratic reformer, promising to challenge family dynasties and military elites. However, critics argue that his legacy has been marred by undermining democratic norms, using legal tools to consolidate power, and weakening institutions like the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Jokowi's presidency saw the rise of a dominant political coalition, reducing opposition influence and passing contentious laws that restrict free speech and dissent. Observers say he used his power to manipulate opposition parties, turning a minority government into a near two-thirds majority. His government expanded the Blasphemy Law and revised the Criminal Code, raising concerns over civil liberties. Recently, speculation grew that Jokowi sought to maintain influence after his term by supporting his son Gibran's political rise and endorsing Prabowo Subianto in the 2024 election. Critics fear Jokowi's

moves have pushed Indonesia toward "competitive authoritarianism," where elections remain, but democratic competition is increasingly undermined.

[Indonesia's Prabowo briefs potential ministers on economy, geopolitics](#)

—Reuters, *TheStraitsTimes*, 16 October 2024

Indonesia's incoming president, Prabowo Subianto, held briefings with potential ministers on Wednesday, focusing on economic growth and geopolitical issues ahead of his inauguration on Sunday. Among those summoned were current finance minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati and other key figures. Prabowo's spokesperson, Dahnil Anzar Simanjuntak, said the briefings aimed to align the ministers on issues like anti-corruption and boosting economic growth from 5% to 8%. Key speakers included American political scientist John Mearsheimer and hedge fund founder Ray Dalio, discussing both domestic and international challenges. Prabowo's goals include ending poverty and malnutrition and implementing a multi-billion-dollar program providing free meals to 20 million students. Prabowo has pledged to maintain a non-aligned foreign policy, avoiding taking sides between major powers like China and the U.S. Several ministers, including Sri Mulyani and Airlangga Hartarto, attended the briefing. Prabowo, a former military commander, will be inaugurated alongside his vice president, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, son of outgoing president Joko Widodo.

[Joko Widodo's mixed legacy: infrastructure triumphs and democratic concerns](#)

—Amy Sood, *SouthChinaMorningPost*, 14 October 2024

As Joko Widodo prepares to leave office after a decade as Indonesia's president, he leaves behind a mixed legacy marked by significant infrastructure achievements and concerns about democratic backsliding. Widodo, often called Jokowi, earned the title of "infrastructure president" for overseeing major projects, including the construction of highways and Southeast Asia's first high-speed rail line. His administration achieved a steady 5% economic growth rate, though this fell short of the 7% target he had set. Critics argue that he has weakened democracy in Indonesia, despite maintaining high approval ratings throughout his two terms. Speculation arose in 2022 regarding Widodo's intentions to extend his presidency beyond the constitutional two-term limit, particularly after support for such a move was voiced by senior officials, including close ally Luhut Pandjaitan. Although Widodo denied any plans to amend the constitution, the rumors sparked a national

debate, with critics warning that such actions could undermine Indonesia's hard-won democratic reforms.

[As President Prabowo takes the stage, will Indonesia get a strongman or legacy keeper?](#)

—Amy Sood, *SouthChinaMorningPost*, 12 October 2024

After more than a decade as a prominent figure in Indonesian politics, Prabowo Subianto will finally assume the presidency next weekend, succeeding his rival-turned-ally, Joko Widodo. The key question is whether the 72-year-old will continue Widodo's policies or pursue a new direction. Prabowo's victory in the February general election was significantly bolstered by Widodo's implicit support. Running on a continuity platform, he chose Widodo's eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as his vice-presidential candidate, which improved his polling prospects. Following the election, the parliament lifted limits on cabinet size, allowing Prabowo greater flexibility to form a government. Analysts suggest that this change will help him consolidate power and accommodate allies but may also lead to bureaucratic inefficiencies and an inflated state budget. Lawmakers, largely supportive of both Widodo and Prabowo, passed the revisions, which remove the previous cap of 34 ministries. Reports indicate that Prabowo could expand his cabinet to as many as 44 ministerial positions when he takes office in October.

[RI, Asia-Pacific nations discuss ocean-based climate action](#)

—Sinta Ambarwati and Yashinta Difa, *AntaraNews*, 9 October 2024

Indonesia and Asia-Pacific countries are advancing ocean-based climate action through the Regional Dialogue on Ocean-Based Climate Action (OBCA). This approach aims to boost environmental resilience, support coastal communities, and promote economic sustainability, said Victor Gustaaf Manoppo, Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry's Director General. He emphasized that leveraging the ocean's role in mitigating climate change can contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water). Indonesia is collaborating with island nations like Fiji and the Maldives to draft a joint resolution to accelerate ocean-based climate action internationally. In 2023, Indonesia initiated UNESCAP Resolution 79/2, focusing on marine resource protection for climate mitigation. During a bilateral meeting with UNESCAP, Manoppo presented Indonesia's marine policy priorities, including expanding marine conservation areas. UNESCAP Executive Secretary Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

highlighted the need for regional cooperation on marine issues, expressing hope that Indonesia will lead initiatives such as South-South Cooperation.

End

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