



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

[When Tropical Fish Move South: A Warning for Indonesian Fishermen](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 28 July 2025

Climate change is driving tropical fish to migrate into cooler southern waters, including off eastern Australia, as warming currents like the East Australian Current carry larvae to previously uninhabitable zones, according to a [July 2025 *Journal of Animal Ecology*](#) report. These fish are now surviving, thriving, and even outcompeting native species, reshaping

marine ecosystems. In Indonesia, where fisheries contribute \$26.9 billion to the economy and supply 50% of national protein, the warming seas are triggering coral bleaching, disrupting fish habitats, and shifting fishing grounds—threatening food security and livelihoods. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the World Bank warn that species such as tuna and sardinella are already affected, while others like mangrove red snapper face extinction risks. Small-scale fishers, especially in shallow waters, are the most vulnerable, as deep-sea fish move out of reach, widening the economic gap with industrial fleets. Without global emissions cuts, Indonesia's marine biodiversity and coastal economies will face irreversible damage.

The World's Oceans Are Scorched by Heat Waves, Triggering Extreme Weather

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 27 July 2025

A record-breaking marine heatwave in 2023, now persisting into 2024, has impacted 96% of the world's ocean surface, raising average sea temperatures by 1.3°C and lasting up to 120 days—four times longer than historical averages. Reported in [Science on July 24](#) by Tianyun Dong and colleagues, this phenomenon has intensified coral bleaching, marine species migration, and fishery losses, posing severe threats to global food security and coastal economies. Regional anomalies, like the 525-day heatwave in the North Atlantic and concurrent warming in the Eastern Tropical Pacific during El Niño, signal possible tipping points in Earth's climate system. The study highlights key drivers including increased shortwave radiation, weakened winds, ocean advection, and reduced cloud cover. Separate findings published in [Nature](#) emphasize that 80% of ocean heatwaves occur below 100 meters, making subsurface impacts largely overlooked. Scientists warn that marine heatwaves, exacerbated by climate change, may trigger more extreme weather, biodiversity loss, and economic disruptions unless urgently addressed through deeper understanding and adaptive marine conservation strategies.

Batang coal plant's seawater permit imperils marine life, fishing communities

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 26 July 2025

The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries has approved PT Bhimasena Power Indonesia's Batang coal plant in Central Java to use 3 billion cubic meters of seawater annually for cooling, raising concerns over marine pollution, coastal ecosystem damage, and fishers' livelihoods. Granted under a new ALSE permit on July 22, the plant is the first in Java authorized to use seawater for industrial cooling. Environmentalists and fisher groups warn that the discharge of heated water degrades water quality, disrupts fisheries, and accelerates ecological decline. Local communities report declining shrimp catches and income since the plant began operations in 2022, amid sedimentation and coal dredging impacts. Critics also highlight intimidation of opposing residents and inadequate environmental oversight. Greenpeace and KIARA argue the policy prioritizes industrial profits over sustainable marine management, while the plant—built with \$4 billion in Japanese and Indonesian investment—undermines Indonesia's energy transition goals. Experts call for urgent energy reform as coal dependency strains state utilities and contradicts climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Widyarani, Cahyaningsih, S., Wulan, D. R., & Sembiring, T. (2019). [Water quality assessment around a coal-fired power plant in southern coast of Java, Indonesia](#). *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, 25, 100463.

Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources: Sea Sand Mining Permit Regional Authority

—Aditya Putra Perdana, *Kompas*, 26 July 2025

Authority over sea sand mining permits has shifted from the central to local governments following Presidential Regulation No. 55/2022, which delegates licensing for coastal mining activities within provincial and 12-nautical-mile zones. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) is coordinating with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) on implementing Government Regulation No. 26/2023, which governs marine sedimentation management and reopens the door for sea sand exports under certain conditions. Critics, including WALHI and legal experts, warn that this policy threatens marine ecosystems, weakens maritime sovereignty, and contradicts President Joko Widodo's maritime vision. The policy shift also coincides with Trade Ministry Regulation No. 22/2023, which removes sea sand from the list of prohibited exports, raising fears of uncontrolled exploitation. Environmental groups plan to file a judicial review against the regulation, arguing that the economic gain from sand exports does not justify the potential damage to coastal communities and marine biodiversity, particularly in vulnerable areas.

ISA Council Ends with No Nod to Deep-Sea Mining, Despite Continued Push from Industry

—Petir Garda Bhwana, *TempoNews*, 22 July 2025

The International Seabed Authority (ISA) Council concluded its July 21, 2025 meeting without adopting a long-awaited mining code, reinforcing a halt on deep-sea mining until robust regulations are in place. The session exposed unresolved legal, environmental, financial, and governance challenges and launched a probe into The Metals Company's controversial push to mine international waters via the U.S., sparking concern among ISA members. Activists, scientists, Indigenous leaders, and financial institutions—managing €3.8 trillion in assets—have called for a moratorium, citing threats to ocean health and global legal norms. ISA's investigation marks a pivotal move to uphold the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and prevent industry circumvention. Legal experts say a moratorium offers legal clarity and environmental protection, preserving the deep sea as a shared human heritage. With 37 nations now backing a ban or pause, attention turns to the ISA Assembly next week, as momentum from the UN Ocean Conference pushes for global consensus on halting destructive mining in the planet's last untouched frontier.

Indonesia moves to revise sea sand export policy after court ruling

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 18 July 2025

Indonesia is revising a controversial regulation that lifted a 20-year ban on sea sand exports after the Supreme Court annulled key provisions, citing violations of the 2014 Marine Law and risks to marine ecosystems. The court's June 2 decision followed a legal challenge by academic Muhammad Taufiq, prompting Marine Affairs Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono to collaborate with other ministries to amend the regulation. Critics, including environmental groups and marine scientists, warn that dredging threatens biodiversity, coastal communities, and blue carbon stocks—vital to Indonesia's climate goals—despite government claims that exports will follow domestic needs. However, only 2.4% of the permitted sand volume is allocated for local use, with the rest earmarked for export. A [CELIOS study](#) estimates profits from exports could reach \$32.1 million, but fishing communities may lose up to \$77.4 million. Environmentalists argue the policy prioritizes commercialization over sustainability, calling instead for marine restoration. Since the 2023 rule took effect, reports of unauthorized dredging have surged across the country.

Indonesia's KKP to Revitalize 20,000 Ha of Fish Ponds in Forest Areas

—Irsyan Hasyim, *TempoNews*, 18 July 2025

The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries has obtained rights to manage over 20,413 hectares of forest land from the Forestry Ministry for the President's priority food security program. Focused on revitalizing existing but unregulated fish ponds across four regencies in West Java's North Coast—Bekasi, Karawang, Subang, and Indramayu—the initiative aims to boost tilapia aquaculture using eco-friendly systems. Secretary of the Directorate General of Fish Farming, Tinggal Hermawan, confirmed the land remains classified as forest and will include wastewater treatment plants and vegetation zones to protect the marine ecosystem. The government targets increasing pond productivity from 0.6 to 144 tons per hectare annually, potentially generating 1.18 million tons of fish worth Rp 30.65 trillion and creating over 119,000 jobs. The project also seeks to uplift impoverished communities along the Pantura. While a decree underpins the program, the Forestry Ministry has not yet responded to media requests for details regarding its legal basis.

B. Forests and Land Use

Sumatra is burning

—Editorial Board, *The Jakarta Post*, 29 July 2025

Sumatra is facing a worsening land fire crisis, with Riau declared the epicenter as all 12 regencies report blazes across 1,000 hectares of forest and peatland. Emergency status has been declared in Riau, parts of West Sumatra, and recently North Sumatra, where fires have destroyed over 4,400 hectares, including near the UNESCO-designated Lake Toba. These peatland fires, often sparked by illegal slash-and-burn practices, are difficult to extinguish and threaten public health, ecosystems, and tourism. The Meteorology Agency warns the crisis may intensify as the peak dry season nears. In response, authorities have arrested 51 suspects, shut down four palm oil firms, and deployed water bombings, weather modification, and patrols. While current fires remain smaller than the 2015 haze disaster, weak enforcement and ongoing illegal clearing pose serious risks. Experts urge stronger law enforcement, community engagement, peatland restoration, and climate resilience measures to prevent the crisis from escalating into a national and cross-border environmental catastrophe.

'Lungs of the Earth': Indonesians fight for peatland

—AFP, *The Straits Times*, 25 July 2025

Indonesia's vast peatlands—critical carbon sinks and biodiversity havens—are rapidly disappearing due to agricultural expansion, sparking local and global concern. In South Sumatra's Lebong Itam, environmentalist Pralensa and residents fear palm oil company Bintang Harapan Palma is draining peatland for plantations, despite local protests. Only 18.4% of Indonesia's peatlands remain undisturbed, with most converted for palm oil or timber, threatening endangered species, traditional livelihoods, and climate stability. Drained peat is highly flammable and caused Indonesia's devastating 2015 fires, which cost over US\$16 billion. Despite regulations banning damaging activities, weak enforcement allows continued exploitation. In nearby Bangsal, residents face worsening floods, haze, and shrinking buffalo grazing lands. A landmark lawsuit blaming timber companies for fire-related damage was rejected in July, with plaintiffs pledging to appeal. As peatland communities push for legal protection and sustainable practices, they stress the spiritual and ecological value of the wetlands.

[Where there's political will, there's a way to stop tropical deforestation, study finds](#)

—John Cannon, *Mongabay*, 24 July 2025

A new study finds that strong political will—often driven by long-term public pressure and civil society advocacy—is crucial to preventing tropical deforestation, with Brazil and Indonesia cited as key examples. Researchers surveyed 36 experts, including policymakers and environmental advocates, and found broad consensus that political commitment, bolstered by tools like satellite monitoring and legal frameworks, significantly contributed to slowing forest loss. Brazil's Forest Code and Indigenous land rights, along with Indonesia's corporate reforms and NGO advocacy, were identified as key drivers. The findings flip the usual approach of analyzing deforestation causes by instead focusing on what enables forest protection. Despite complex and shifting political contexts—such as Brazil's mixed response to upcoming EU deforestation regulations—experts agree that grassroots activism and sustained advocacy are foundational to building political momentum for conservation. The study underscores that forest protection is possible when societies commit to it, offering a hopeful message amid ongoing climate challenges and global environmental fatigue.

Garrett, R. D., et al. (2021). [Forests and Sustainable Development in the Brazilian Amazon: History, Trends, and Future Prospects](#). *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 46(1), 625–652.

Gaveau, D. L. A., et al. (2022). [Slowing deforestation in Indonesia follows declining oil palm expansion and lower oil prices](#). *PLOS ONE*, 17(3), e0266178.

Lyons-White, J., et al. (2025). [Political Will Has Been Critical for Protecting Forests in the Brazilian Amazon and Indonesia](#). *Conservation Letters*, 18(4).

[Hope and frustration as Indonesia pilots FSC's logging remedy framework](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 22 July 2025

Indonesia is testing the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC) new “remedy framework,” which allows previously disqualified logging firms to regain certification by repairing environmental and social harm. The process is under scrutiny after NGOs reported serious flaws in FSC's pilot implementation with APRIL, a major pulp company disassociated in 2013 over deforestation and social conflict. A review of baseline assessments in North Sumatra found many affected Indigenous communities were excluded or unaware of the process, with reports of land seizures, violence, and lack of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The FSC and APRIL insist the process must continue, citing urgent community needs, but critics call for suspension until transparency, proper consultation, and third-party verification are ensured. The process faces further controversy amid allegations that APRIL's parent, RGE, is tied to secretive companies responsible for recent deforestation. With tensions escalating and threats against activists mounting, the trial of the FSC framework could determine whether it delivers genuine justice or merely greenwashes corporate harm on a global stage.

[Government to take over land not utilized after two years](#)

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 16 July 2025

The government will reclaim certified land left idle for over two years as part of a renewed land reform policy, said Agrarian and Spatial Planning Minister Nusron Wahid. Warning letters will be issued in stages, and if no development occurs within 587 days after the first letter, the land will be declared abandoned and redistributed. The policy applies to all land titles, including right-to-cultivate (HGU), right-to-build (HGB), and right-to-use, with no exceptions. Of the 55.9 million hectares of certified land nationwide, 1.4 million hectares have already

been deemed abandoned. Nusron revealed that 48 percent of the certified land is controlled by just 60 families, highlighting a root cause of Indonesia's structural poverty due to concentrated land ownership. He emphasized that past policy failures contributed to economic inequality and said President-elect Prabowo Subianto had tasked him with correcting this through principles of justice, equality, and sustainability. The initiative seeks to ensure land benefits the broader population rather than a wealthy elite.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area

[Orangutans make up for lost sleep with daytime naps, study finds](#)

—Carolyn Cowan, *Mongabay*, 24 July 2025

A 14-year study in Gunung Leuser National Park has found that Sumatran orangutans compensate for lost sleep by napping more during the day, much like humans. Researchers tracked 53 wild orangutans and discovered that shorter night sleep led to longer daytime naps, with each lost sleep hour resulting in about 10 minutes of napping. The findings, published in *Current Biology*, mark the first quantitative assessment of sleep patterns in wild great apes and reveal how social factors, travel distance, and heat affect sleep. Orangutans slept less when near others and on hotter days, highlighting potential climate-related risks. As critically endangered primates with high energy needs due to their large brains and arboreal lifestyle, orangutans rely on quality sleep for recovery and survival. Researchers warn that habitat loss, climate change, and human disturbances could reduce their ability to rest adequately. The study underscores the importance of preserving intact forests that provide orangutans with the flexibility to maintain healthy sleep patterns critical to their wellbeing.

Ashbury, A. M., et al. (2025). [Wild orangutans maintain sleep homeostasis through napping, counterbalancing socio-ecological factors that interfere with their sleep](#). *Current Biology*, 35(13), 3163-3173.e4.

Garbarino, S., et al. (2021). [Role of sleep deprivation in immune-related disease risk and outcomes](#). *Communications Biology*, 4(1).

Lovato, N., & Lack, L. (2010). [The effects of napping on cognitive functioning](#). *Progress in Brain Research*, 155-166.

Gravett, N., et al. (2017). [Inactivity/sleep in two wild free-roaming African elephant matriarchs — Does large body size make elephants the shortest mammalian sleepers?](#) *PLOS ONE*, 12(3), e0171903.

Lyamin, O. I., et al. (2008). [Cetacean sleep: An unusual form of mammalian sleep](#). *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 32(8), 1451-1484.

[Sacred sites & cultural practices key to Indonesia fish conservation: Study](#)

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 23 July 2025

A new study finds that sacred waters protected by Indigenous traditions play a critical yet overlooked role in freshwater fish conservation, despite being excluded from national biodiversity and cultural heritage frameworks. Published in *Aquatic Conservation*, the research highlights how local belief systems safeguard ecologically vital sites like mahseer habitats in West and East Java, shielding them from pollution, overfishing, and degradation.

Customary systems such as *sasi* in Maluku and *lubuk larangan* in Sumatra also enforce sustainable fishing through rituals and seasonal bans. Researchers urge the government to formally recognize these culturally protected sites under the Essential Ecosystem Areas framework to bridge scientific and traditional conservation. Experts stress that national policies must include local wisdom to build more inclusive conservation strategies. While Indonesia manages over 36 million hectares of protected areas, freshwater ecosystems remain underprotected. Mapping and integrating sacred sites could fill these gaps, preserving both biodiversity and cultural heritage amid growing environmental threats.

Budi, D. S., et al. (2025). [The Sacred Waters and Fish: Traditional Practices and Fish Conservation in Indonesian Communities](#). *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems*, vol. 35, issue 6.

Fertile Waters Become a Hunting Ground for Whale Sharks

—Defri Werdiono, *Kompas*, 21 July 2025

A 5-meter-long whale shark was found stranded and later died on Pangi Beach, Blitar, East Java, on July 17, marking another incident in a series of whale shark strandings along Indonesia's southern coast. The protected species, initially discovered alive by fishermen, was buried after authorities prohibited the public from consuming its meat. Similar strandings occurred in recent years, including in Cilacap and Malang, where some incidents sparked controversy when locals harvested meat. Experts attribute these occurrences to whale sharks chasing prey into shallow, nutrient-rich bays or getting entangled in fishing nets. Despite conservation efforts and protective regulations, slow reproduction and habitat threats keep whale sharks endangered. Key habitats like Cendrawasih Bay and Saleh Bay host over 300 individuals combined and are critical for feeding and migration. Conservationists stress the importance of marine protection and education among coastal communities to prevent harm to whale sharks, whose increasing strandings may signal broader ecosystem imbalances and rising marine-human conflict in Indonesian waters.

Study finds worrying uptick in proboscis monkey trade in Indonesia

—Spoorthy Raman, *Mongabay*, 18 July 2025

A new study reveals a troubling rise in the illegal trade of endangered proboscis monkeys (*Nasalis larvatus*), native to Borneo, driven by demand from zoos and online pet markets. Researchers documented around 100 monkeys in trade between 1999 and 2024, with a sharp increase in the past decade—nearly half advertised on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. All traded individuals originated from Indonesia, with seizures also involving shipments to India, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Despite legal protections and CITES Appendix I listing, enforcement remains weak; only 11 convictions were found, with low fines averaging \$325. Zoos in Indonesia now house at least 74 proboscis monkeys—up from just three zoos pre-1999—despite their specialized diets making captive care difficult and often fatal. Experts warn that the high mortality in captivity fuels ongoing wild capture. Researchers urge stronger enforcement, accurate trade reporting, and stricter regulation of online sales to halt exploitation threatening this species already imperiled by habitat loss, hunting, and infrastructure development in Indonesian Borneo.

Nijman, V., & Shepherd, C. R. (2025). [Review of the trade in proboscis monkeys over the last 25 years](#). *Discover Animals*, 2:36.

Wardatutthoyibah, W., et al. (2018). [The sufficiency of existed protected areas in conserving the habitat of proboscis monkey \(*Nasalis larvatus*\)](#). *Biodiversitas Journal of Biological Diversity*, 20(1), 1–10.

Meijaard, E., & Nijman, V. (2000). [The local extinction of the proboscis monkey *Nasalis larvatus* in pulau Kaget nature reserve, Indonesia](#). *Oryx*, 34(1), 66-70.

D. Climate Change

[Indonesia Maintains Zero Emission Commitment in an Era of Major Distractions](#)

—Dionisius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 28 July 2025

Amid global setbacks in climate commitments, Indonesia reaffirmed its net-zero emissions goal at the Indonesia Net-Zero Summit (INZS) 2025, where nearly 100 climate groups urged more ambitious targets. Despite distractions like the U.S. exit from the Paris Agreement and the rise of greenwashing, INZS called for net-zero by 2050 and a national emissions cut below 2019 levels by 6% in 2030 and 21% in 2035. The forum stressed that climate action must become a national economic and political agenda, not just a government responsibility. Deputy Minister Diaz Hendropriyono reiterated Indonesia's global climate role and continued adherence to the Paris Agreement. Meanwhile, energy economist Yayan Satyakti warned that fears over transition costs and the country's fossil fuel dependence hinder progress. He emphasized the need for research, private sector involvement, and gradual coal plant retirements supported by renewable infrastructure. Experts argue that with coal reserves dwindling, the next decade is critical to prepare energy systems, or Indonesia risks falling behind in the global green transition.

[New IESR study suggests policies to curb individual carbon footprints](#)

—Gembong Hanung, *TheJakartaPost*, 26 July 2025

Urban residents across Java emit significantly more carbon dioxide (CO₂) than their rural counterparts, according to a [newly-launched study by the Institute for Essential Services Reform \(IESR\)](#). Based on surveys involving 423 individuals across Java, the report found that urban dwellers in areas like South Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta produce around 3.4 tonnes of CO₂ annually—45% more than rural residents in Cianjur and Purworejo, and 21% more than those in smaller cities like Bogor and Serang. Despite this, urban emissions remain below the global average of 4.7 tonnes. The transportation sector was identified as the largest contributor to this gap, with private car and air travel usage outweighing motorcycle use. Researchers urge policies to promote cleaner mobility, such as incentives for low-emission vehicles and reduced reliance on private cars. Officials welcomed the study as a foundation for localized climate action. They aim for net-zero emissions by 2060, with Jakarta targeting a 30% reduction by 2030 and expanding public transit to meet that goal.

[Climate Crisis, Food Crisis, and the Way Out](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 22 July 2025

Indonesia's soaring rice prices in 2024—reaching over Rp 17,000 per kg in some regions—highlight the country's deepening food vulnerability amid climate change, particularly during El Niño-induced droughts. Despite increased rice import quotas and promising harvest forecasts in 2025, climate-driven production shocks persist, reflecting a broader global trend. A [study](#)

[by Maximilian Kotz and team at Barcelona Supercomputing Centre](#) found that extreme weather events from 2022–2024 triggered food price spikes in 18 countries, with Indonesia seeing a 16% rice price surge in February 2024 due to drought. As climate extremes intensify, experts warn that Indonesia's overreliance on rice makes its food system fragile. Advocates urge a shift from forest-clearing food estate programs to diversified, climate-resilient local crops like sago, sorghum, and breadfruit. Rising food prices, already the second most-cited global climate concern, risk worsening malnutrition, poverty, and economic instability. Experts argue for urgent emission cuts, better climate forecasts, and fundamental agricultural reform to avert a prolonged food crisis, warning that Indonesia's future food security hinges on adaptation—not expansion.

The Second National Development Planning Conference (NDC) Demonstrates Indonesia's Leadership in Addressing the Climate Crisis

—Pradipta Pandu Mustika, *Kompas*, 22 July 2025

Indonesia is finalizing its second NDC to strengthen its climate leadership and aim for net-zero emissions ahead of schedule. The document, already submitted to the President, is expected to set more ambitious emission reduction targets aligned with the global 1.5°C temperature limit. Dino Patti Djalal, founder of think tank FPCI, emphasized that the NDC must include clear roadmaps for cutting emissions across key sectors—forestry, industry, energy, and transportation—while empowering businesses and communities. Priorities include decarbonizing industry, accelerating coal phase-out, boosting renewable energy, and expanding electric vehicle adoption. The NDC must also account for emissions from major infrastructure programs, such as Prabowo's 3-million-house initiative. Environment Minister Hanif Faisol stressed that the second NDC is not just a report but a national roadmap to a sustainable, low-carbon economy. It responds to COP28's global mandate to cut emissions 43% by 2030 and 60% by 2035. Key measures include expanding the renewable energy mix, achieving FOLU Net Sink 2030, and transforming waste and agriculture sectors to support climate resilience.

World's major courts take growing role in climate fight

—Kelly Macnamara, *TheJakartaPost*, 21 July 2025

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is set to deliver a landmark advisory opinion outlining states' legal obligations to combat climate change and potentially address consequences for major polluters, following a global push for stronger legal accountability amid sluggish political action. This move builds on recent historic rulings, including the Inter-American Court's assertion that severe climate harm is as serious as genocide or torture under international law, and the Law of the Sea Tribunal's declaration that carbon emissions are marine pollutants. Legal expert Andrew Raine noted nearly 3,000 climate cases have been filed in 60 countries, with courts increasingly seen as tools to enforce climate commitments. High-profile wins—such as the Dutch Supreme Court's order to cut emissions and Germany's ruling on intergenerational equity—have influenced global jurisprudence. The ICJ opinion, requested by Vanuatu, could shape future claims for reparations from top emitters and strengthen legal frameworks, even though it's non-binding.

Wetland Restoration: A Secret Weapon Against Climate Change

—Tatang Mulyana Sinaga, *Kompas*, 21 July 2025

Restoring degraded wetlands through revegetation and rehydration can significantly reduce carbon emissions and enhance climate resilience, according to a new study by RMIT University, Australia. Published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*, the study found

that restored wetlands along Victoria's Loddon River cut emissions by 39%, improved native plant cover, and boosted ecosystem function within one year. Researchers observed a 53% rise in surface carbon storage, 55% more soil moisture, and improved nitrogen retention—key for water quality and preventing harmful algal blooms. Wetlands also showed greater resilience to drought and flooding. Lead researcher Lukas Schuster emphasized the dual benefits of carbon capture and climate adaptation, urging policymakers to integrate wetland restoration into climate strategies. Despite their value as carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots, wetlands are often destroyed for agriculture or infrastructure, turning them into major greenhouse gas sources. The findings highlight the urgency to protect and restore wetlands globally, with Denmark's experience showing ecological limits, as even after 17 years of restoration, botanical diversity in some areas remains low.

E. Energy and Mining

[ICW Warns That the Energy Transition Agenda is Vulnerable to Hijacking](#)

—Willy Medi Christian Nababan, *Kompas*, 28 July 2025

Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) warned that the country's energy transition agenda is highly vulnerable to corruption, particularly through policy hijacking by political and business elites. ICW's Egy Primayogha said state capture—where elites manipulate policy for self-interest—threatens to turn the energy transition into a false, unjust solution. ICW cited how focus on electric vehicles has led to unchecked exploitation of critical minerals like nickel, while broader issues such as early coal plant retirements are neglected. Corruption risks also plague renewable energy projects and coal retirement funding, such as those under the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). Weak institutions, lack of accountability, and sidelined public participation worsen the issue. Policy strategist Sartika Nur Shalati added that a just energy transition must include social aspects like worker re-skilling and equitable community involvement. She criticized existing regulations for enabling new coal plants and highlighted project failures caused by poor grassroots engagement and legal gaps in renewable energy governance.

[Illegal Mercury from Indonesia Flows into Domestic and International Markets](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 27 July 2025

Indonesia has emerged as a major supplier in the global illegal mercury trade, with over 1,500 tons used annually—mainly for extracting gold at unregulated sites in nearly 200 regions—posing severe environmental and public health threats, according to the Nexus3 Foundation. Driven by soaring gold prices, the trade flourishes online with fake certifications, bypassing regulations and flooding domestic and international markets. Despite ratifying the Minamata Convention in 2017, Indonesia still sees mercury use in over 1,200 small-scale gold mining operations, contributing nearly 70% of the country's total mercury emissions. From 2014 to 2023, Indonesia exported over 2,100 tons of mercury, often under the same customs code as mercury-contaminated waste, leading to regulatory confusion. Law enforcement has seized over 45 tons of mercury, though much of it reportedly re-enters the black market. Experts urge the government to review export codes, ban cinnabar mining, enforce stricter laws, and finalize legal frameworks to safely handle seized mercury, warning of dire health consequences, especially for children in contaminated communities.

RI insists on mineral export curbs amid US tariff deal

—Divya Karyza, *TheJakartaPost*, 24 July 2025

Indonesia will strictly regulate critical mineral exports under domestic laws, despite a new trade agreement with the United States aimed at easing tariffs. Energy Ministry Secretary General Dadan Kusdiana emphasized that only processed, not raw, minerals such as nickel and copper would be exported, in line with Indonesia's downstream industrialization strategy. The yet-to-be-finalized deal lowers US import tariffs on Indonesian products from 32 to 19 percent, while Indonesia agrees to scrap most tariffs and trade barriers for US goods. However, Energy Minister Bahlil Lahadalia stressed the agreement does not override national regulations and affirmed coordination with President Prabowo on the matter. Indonesia, which has banned raw mineral exports like nickel and bauxite, aims to add value domestically and maintain sovereignty over its vast natural resources. The deal comes amid US efforts to diversify critical mineral sources away from China, positioning Indonesia as a strategic supplier, though its resource policies have previously sparked disputes, including a 2021 EU complaint to the WTO.

Nickel boom on an Indonesian island brings toxic seas, lost incomes, report says

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 23 July 2025

Widespread nickel mining on Kabaena Island has severely degraded the environment, harmed public health, and devastated the livelihoods of local Bajau fishing communities, according to a [2025 report by NGOs Satya Bumi, Walhi, and Sagori](#). The report attributes deforestation, sea pollution, and sedimentation to the operations of three mining companies—AMI, AMINDO, and AHB—leading to biodiversity loss, including threats to sea turtles and endangered macaques, and income drops of up to 69.4% in affected villages. Over 40% of residents reported illnesses linked to mining pollution, and 69.4% said they were never consulted, violating international consent standards. Land conflicts, unpaid compensation, and criminalization of protesters have further inflamed tensions. The mining activities—possibly illegal under Indonesian laws governing small islands and protected forests—are linked to politically connected elites and supply chains reaching global EV brands like Tesla and Ford. Following the report's release, the NGOs faced cyberattacks, which they condemned as threats to democracy. The groups call for audits, legal reforms, reparations, and corporate accountability.

Accessibility, Affordability Key in Energy Policymaking

—Bambang Ismoyo and Akmalal Hamdhi, *JakartaGlobe*, 23 July 2025

Indonesia's energy policymaking must balance availability, affordability, and accessibility, said Muhammad Pradana Indraputra, a senior official at the Energy Ministry. He acknowledged the difficulty of transitioning from fossil fuels, stressing that while Jakarta continues to pursue its energy transition targets, the government must first ensure reliable and affordable energy access across regions, especially remote areas. Indonesia's dependence on imported energy—producing only 600,000 barrels of oil per day against a 1.4 million daily demand—has hurt its trade balance, reinforcing the urgency to build domestic energy self-sufficiency. The government has drafted a 10-year electrification strategy to boost the share of renewables in the national energy mix. Pradana emphasized, "From us, for us," highlighting the need to reduce foreign reliance and expand energy access equitably. The remarks set the stage for the two-day Energi dan Mineral Festival, opening July 30, which will spotlight President Prabowo Subianto's vision for energy independence and Indonesia's mineral industrialization strategy.

Energy Mix Target Missed, Industry's Role Awaited

—Dionisius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 23 July 2025

Indonesia has postponed its 23% renewable energy mix target from 2025 to 2030, citing implementation challenges and insufficient industrial support, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. As of 2024, renewables only contributed 14.68% to the national mix—well short of the goal—and coal still dominates at 58%. The government remains committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2060, with plans to add 42.6 GW of renewable capacity and accelerate the transition through policies like the early retirement of coal plants. While industrial sectors such as glass manufacturing struggle to switch energy sources, downstream efforts using renewable energy have begun. The electric vehicle sector, key to cutting transport emissions, also faces infrastructure and regulatory hurdles, with only 207,000 EVs on the road—far below the 2030 target of 15 million. Experts blame missed targets on inconsistent policies, unfulfilled incentives, and overlapping regulations, urging stronger government leadership, clearer roadmaps, and institutional reform to ensure Indonesia's clean energy future remains on track.

F. Pollution, Waste and Disaster

Burning, burying and banning: Indonesia's cities struggle to manage their garbage

—Jeff Hutton, *Mongabay*, 23 July 2025

Indonesia is facing a growing waste crisis as unregulated dumping continues despite a national ban on open landfills. In Bantul, Yogyakarta, residents discovered 1,800 cubic meters of mixed waste illegally dumped near Pandansari Beach, prompting outcry from local watchdogs like Haryanto's Forum Peduli Gadingsari. With over 35% of 32 million tons of annual waste unmanaged, Environment Minister Hanif Faisol Nurofiq in April ordered the closure of 343 open landfills (TPA). Local governments must now sort and divert waste or face penalties, but implementation struggles persist. Bali Governor I Wayan Koster has offered cash incentives and budget cuts to enforce waste sorting, citing tourism risks. However, illegal dumping and corruption remain rampant, as seen in South Tangerang, where an official diverted contract waste to unauthorized sites. Waste incineration and recycling efforts face resistance from locals and infrastructure delays. Experts highlight that cultural resistance to household waste sorting and insufficient funding hinder sustainable waste management, with many areas, including Bantul, still reliant on overburdened sites like TPA Piyungan for disposal.

Environmental Agency Responds to IQAir's Poor Jakarta Air Quality Report

—Zacharias Wuragil, *TempoNews*, 22 July 2025

The Jakarta Department of Environment urges residents to rely on official air quality data from 111 government-installed Air Quality Monitoring Stations (SPKU), accessible via the JAKI app and udara.jakarta.go.id, before engaging in outdoor activities. This follows a July 16, 2025, report from IQAir showing “very unhealthy” PM2.5 levels in parts of Central, East, and North Jakarta. While most SPKUs recorded “unhealthy” air quality, only one — in RPTRA Tipar Asri, Cilincing — registered “hazardous” levels. Officials stress that the government's Air Pollution Standard Index (ISPU) follows national regulations and offers validated, user-friendly data. Asep Kuswanto, head of the Jakarta Environment Department, emphasized the

need for data accuracy in safeguarding public health. Clean Air Asia's Ririn Kusuma welcomed citizen sensor efforts but warned against relying solely on platforms like IQAir, which often use unverified individual sensors. Residents are advised to compare private and official sources, as this data is essential for making informed, health-conscious decisions during outdoor activities.

Bali to ban production of plastic sachet in 2026

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 20 July 2025

The Bali provincial government plans to ban small plastic sachets starting in 2026, following its earlier decision to prohibit the production of bottled water in containers under 1 liter. Vice Governor I Nyoman Giri Prasta confirmed that studies are underway and decisions are expected soon, with support from Governor Wayan Koster. The move responds to environmentalists' calls, including the Nusantara River Research Agency (BRUIN), which urged broader bans in line with national waste regulations. In 2024, Bali produced 1.2 million tonnes of plastic waste. However, bottled water producers expressed strong objections, citing a lack of legal clarity, unfair targeting, and insufficient dialogue. They argued for comprehensive waste management reforms, including recycling incentives and producer responsibility, rather than selective bans. Some urged fairness across all plastic-packaged products, such as sugar and cooking oil, noting they already use recyclable materials. The Bali administration has not yet confirmed whether broader bans will follow but aims to achieve a "clean and green" future.

Jakarta Rivers Remain Heavily Polluted, Data Shows

—Zacharias Wuragil, *TempoNews*, 21 July 2025

Jakarta's rivers remain severely polluted, with 36–71% of water quality monitoring points showing high contamination over the past four years, according to the city's Environmental Agency. While a few locations improved to moderate pollution in 2024, overall water quality remains alarmingly poor due to untreated household greywater and industrial waste. Erni Pelita Fitratunnisanya, head of pollution control, cited direct waste disposal from homes, tofu factories, laundries, livestock farms, and markets as major contributors. Many densely populated settlements and businesses lack proper wastewater treatment, with pollutants from dishwashing, cooking, and trading activities flowing directly into rivers. The agency plans stricter enforcement, education campaigns, and expansion of Wastewater Treatment Plants (IPAL) in coordination with local governments and MSMEs. Erni emphasized the need for an integrated treatment network and stronger regulation to curb pollution and meet safe environmental standards, underscoring that meaningful change requires a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach across Jakarta's residential and commercial areas.

West Sumatra boat accident once again exposes Indonesia's poor maritime safety record

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 16 July 2025

A speedboat carrying 18 passengers capsized off Indonesia's Mentawai Islands on Monday amid poor weather and high waves, once again highlighting the country's dire maritime safety standards. The vessel, which departed from North Pagai Island to Sipora Island, was overloaded and lacked both a radio and sailing permit. Although all passengers—who included local officials and contractors—survived after swimming for hours to shore, many suffered severe exhaustion. Officials confirmed the boat was licensed for only 10 people. This tragedy follows the deadly Tunu Pratama Jaya ferry sinking in the Bali Strait earlier in July, which killed at least 18 and left 17 missing. A preliminary investigation found the ferry sank

due to crew negligence, including leaving the engine room hatch open. Authorities now plan a salvage operation amid continued calls for stricter safety enforcement. Indonesia, a vast archipelago, remains one of the world's worst performers in maritime safety, as noted in the Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2025.

G. Technology, Investment and Finance

[Why a Forest-Based Economy Is More Valuable than Nickel Mining](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 31 July 2025

Despite Indonesia's nickel industry being hailed as a new economic driver, a [recent AEER report](#) reveals that the Morowali forest in Central Sulawesi offers far greater and more widely distributed economic value—IDR 2.81 trillion annually—44.6% more than the region's 2023 government revenue. However, over IDR 1 trillion of this value lies within nickel mining concessions and is at risk due to ongoing deforestation. AEER warns that mining has erased 37,660 hectares of forest between 2019 and 2023, contributing to CO₂ emissions, biodiversity loss, and worsening floods. While Morowali contributes nearly half of Central Sulawesi's GDP, most profits flow to elites and external investors, leaving local communities with high poverty, pollution, and displacement. The tailings from nickel processing, projected to hit 47 million tons annually by 2026, pose escalating environmental threats. Experts urge the government to reassess extractive policies, impose a moratorium on forest mining, and recognize forests as valuable ecological capital, ahead of NDC submission.

[Sluggish Growth Engines, Economic Slowdown Expected in Q2-2025](#)

—Dimas Waraditya Nugraha, *Kompas*, 30 July 2025

Indonesia's economic growth in Q2 2025 is expected to remain limited, with projections unlikely to surpass the 4.87% year-on-year growth recorded in Q1. Economists cite the absence of Ramadan and Eid momentum, weak fiscal stimulus, and sluggish government spending—only 38.8% of the state budget spent by mid-year—as key constraints. Although the government launched a Rp 24.4 trillion stimulus package for the school holiday period, only 55.7% had been realized by June's end. Household consumption, which drives over 54% of GDP, shows signs of strain, with slowing spending, declining savings, and reduced durable goods purchases. Public spending during school holidays grew only 9% compared to 11% in 2024, while car sales, consumer credit, and money supply also declined. Despite these pressures, the IMF projects 2025 growth at 4.8%. The government remains optimistic, citing ongoing fiscal support and potential export gains from lower U.S. tariffs. However, economic indicators like the Consumer Confidence Index continue to signal weakening momentum in domestic demand.

[Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines have secured lower tariffs with the US - lessons for other ASEAN states](#)

—Kiki Sregar and Denny Armandhanu, *CNA*, 24 July 2025

As the US imposes steep tariffs starting August 1, Southeast Asian nations are looking to trade pacts secured by Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines as potential templates for negotiation. These countries have all agreed to zero tariffs on US goods and committed to large-scale US imports—moves analysts say helped reduce threatened US tariffs to 19–20%.

Indonesia's deal includes \$15 billion in US energy, \$4.5 billion in agricultural products, and 50 Boeing jets, along with removing export and non-tariff barriers. Vietnam and the Philippines struck similar deals, but concerns persist over their fairness and long-term implications, especially regarding critical mineral exports. Experts warn such concessions may undermine ASEAN unity and trigger inter-member competition, weakening the bloc's negotiating power. Direct engagement with President Trump, including high-level calls and visits, appears to have been key to closing deals. However, analysts stress that zero-tariff commitments may not be suitable for all ASEAN economies, and the ad hoc nature of Trump's decisions leaves outcomes unpredictable.

[Japan Develops Thin, Flexible Solar Panels, Challenging China's Dominance](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 21 July 2025

Japan is heavily investing in next-generation perovskite solar panels to counter China's dominance in silicon-based solar technology and achieve its net-zero target by 2050. Backed by \$1 billion in subsidies, the Japanese government aims to produce panels capable of generating 100 megawatts by 2027 and 20 gigawatts by 2040—equivalent to 20 nuclear reactors. Perovskite panels are ultra-thin, flexible, and cheaper than silicon, making them ideal for Japan's mountainous terrain. The new technology, which can be fully manufactured domestically, offers significant energy and economic resilience, though challenges remain with lifespan and toxicity due to lead content. Japan's move revives ambitions to reclaim solar leadership, once dominant in the early 2000s before China gained over 80% of global market share. In contrast, Indonesia lags far behind with no public perovskite projects and solar contributing only 0.1% to its electricity, hindered by weak policy support, fossil fuel subsidies, and underdeveloped local industry. Japan's advancements underscore the gap and highlight the urgent need for renewable energy reforms in Indonesia.

[Trump says Indonesia to pay 19% tariffs, buy 50 Boeing jets under trade deal](#)

—Staff and agencies, *TheGuardian*, 16 July 2025

US President Donald Trump announced a new trade deal with Indonesia that includes \$15 billion in US energy purchases, \$4.5 billion in American agricultural imports, and 50 Boeing jet orders, following negotiations that avoided a steeper 32% tariff on Indonesian goods. Instead, a reduced 19% tariff will apply, while US goods gain full access to Indonesia's market. The pact, finalized after Trump's talks with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, comes as part of the administration's push for bilateral trade deals to prevent broad tariff hikes. The timeline for implementing the reduced tariffs and purchase commitments remains unclear. Although Indonesia's trade with the US totaled under \$40 billion in 2024, with a nearly \$18 billion trade deficit on the US side, the volume is steadily growing. The deal adds to Trump's recent trade pacts with Britain and Vietnam, amid continued talks with India and the EU. Indonesian officials reportedly view the agreement positively, as Trump signals more bilateral deals ahead.

H. Human Rights, Indigenous People and Gender Equality

[Activists Highlight Rewriting of History, Urge Government to Investigate 1998 Human Rights Violations](#)

—Nina Susilo, *Kompas*, 27 July 2025

Activists from the People's Democratic Movement have strongly rejected the government's ongoing Indonesian history rewriting project, accusing it of obscuring past human rights violations, including the 1998 activist kidnappings and mass sexual violence. In a coordinated statement across major cities on July 27, prominent former activists and civil society groups demanded a transparent investigation, full implementation of National Human Rights Commission's Joint Fact-Finding Team findings, the establishment of an ad hoc human rights court, and state-backed recovery for victims. Critics also condemned the limited public access to the 10-volume draft led by historian Susanto Zuhdi, which is said to be 90% complete. Historians and activists fear the new narrative favors military perspectives and undermines past atrocities, particularly in Papua, Timor-Leste, and during the New Order. Activists insist history must reflect truth, not state convenience, warning that unresolved enforced disappearances remain active crimes.

[ASEAN Women's Challenges in the Peace and Security Agenda](#)

—Elsa Emiria Leba, *Kompas*, 26 July 2025

Women play a vital role in ASEAN's peace and security agenda, yet their full participation is hindered by inconsistent national commitments and threats to community resilience. Despite adopting UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), implementation varies across ASEAN due to differing national priorities. Indonesia has advanced WPS through action plans addressing social conflict and violent extremism, but continuity is threatened by leadership changes. Experts, including BRIN's Irine Hiraswari, warned that weak policy frameworks and ineffective checks and balances hamper progress. Structural and cultural barriers also limit women's deployment in peacekeeping, with Indonesia sending just 2,556 female personnel since 2008 out of 24,000. ASEAN WPS Officer Rebecca Baylosis and Canadian WPS Network Chair Katrina Leclerc emphasized that effective implementation requires sustained collaboration between governments, civil society, and communities.

[Across Southeast Asia, Indigenous women challenge extraction and erasure](#)

—Hu'ong Thien, *Mongabay*, 25 July 2025

Since December 2022, Maria Suryanti Jun, a 46-year-old Indigenous woman from Poco Leok, East Nusa Tenggara, has emerged as a leading voice opposing the expansion of the Ulumbu geothermal plant, citing lack of transparency and violation of Indigenous rights. Backed by German development funds, the project sparked protests over inadequate community consultation and threats to customary lands. Maria and fellow women, deeply connected to the land through farming and cultural traditions, face repression, including violence and sexual harassment by security forces. As part of a larger Southeast Asian trend, Indigenous women like Maria confront double marginalization—from gender inequality and state disregard for Indigenous rights—yet they continue to lead grassroots environmental movements. Despite limited education and linguistic barriers, Maria seeks international solidarity and empowers young women through cultural education.

[Indonesian palm oil company sues experts who helped secure \\$18m pollution ruling](#)

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 24 July 2025

Top environmental experts, Bambang Hero Saharjo and Basuki Wasis, are being sued by palm oil firm PT Kalimantan Lestari Mandiri (KLM) for providing court testimony that helped convict the company for fires that destroyed over 500 hectares of peatland in 2018, contributing to severe haze and public health crises. Despite KLM's liability being upheld by the Supreme Court, the company now seeks Rp364.5 billion (\$22.4 million) in damages,

alleging the experts acted unlawfully. Activists and legal experts denounce the lawsuit as a SLAPP (strategic lawsuit against public participation), aimed at silencing environmental defenders and deterring expert testimony in pollution cases. Both scientists say the lawsuit disrupts their critical work in over 15 ongoing cases. Although law and recent Supreme Court regulations protect experts from such suits, poor implementation allows polluters to exploit legal loopholes.

Prioritize the Human Rights Perspective in the 2025 RKUHAP

—Nino Citra Anugrahanto, *Kompas*, 21 July 2025

Academics and legal practitioners are urging the government and parliament to halt the deliberation of the 2025 Draft Criminal Procedure Code (RKUHAP), criticizing it for strengthening law enforcement authority without adequate safeguards and lacking a human rights perspective. During a public hearing at the University of Indonesia, experts warned the draft risks enabling abuse, such as arbitrary arrests and entrapment tactics. Ahmad Sofian of the Criminal Law and Criminology Educators Association said the draft fails to harmonize with the new Criminal Code and undermines due process by limiting pretrial motions and appeals. Constitutional law expert Bivitri Susanti emphasized that legal frameworks should prioritize citizens' rights, not institutional power. Lecturer Aristo Pangaribuan warned that weak evidentiary standards, like relying on only two testimonies, could lead to wrongful arrests and abuse of prosecutorial power for political or personal gain.

I. Government Priority Program

With Rice Stocks Abundant, the Government Holds a Large-Scale Market Operation

—Kurnia Yunita Rahayu, *Kompas*, 30 July 2025

Amid rising rice prices, the government has pledged large-scale market operations, backed by a current stock of 4.2 million tons and an expected increase to 6.7–7.2 million tons by end-2025. The President chaired a cabinet meeting on July 30 to address the issue, with Agriculture Minister Andi Amran Sulaiman confirming that 1.3 million tons will be distributed under the Food Price Supply Stabilization (SPHP) program and 365 tons via social aid. However, only 0.34% of the planned SPHP stock was distributed between July 14–29, with officials citing logistical and verification delays. Meanwhile, rice prices remain high, averaging Rp 14,333/kg—14.66% above the national ceiling price. The number of regions affected by rising prices jumped to 219 districts. To tackle the crisis, the government will also expand rice production and enforce regulations against adulterated rice. Of 268 brands inspected, 212 failed to meet standards, prompting legal action and plans to reclassify rice into just two categories: regular and special.

Poverty Is Increasingly Shrinking. What Does This Mean?

—Budiawan Sidik A, *Kompas*, 26 July 2025

Indonesia's national poverty rate dropped to 8.47% in March 2025, the lowest level since the 1970s, according to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), marking a significant improvement from 9.03% the previous year. The number of people in extreme poverty also declined sharply to 0.85%, down from 1.26%. These figures, derived from the March 2025 National Socioeconomic Survey (Susenas) of 345,000 households, reflect better quality of life and

increased public expenditure, with the poverty line rising to Rp 609,160 per capita/month. Contributing to this trend is the rise in employment: 145.77 million people were working by February 2025, a 2.52% increase from the previous year. However, informal employment remains dominant at 59.4%. Urban areas still offer easier job access, while rural poverty, though decreasing to 11.03%, remains more severe. Nonetheless, the rural poverty severity index has improved, suggesting fairer expenditure distribution and better economic participation in villages.

Residents Urge Public Disclosure of Mass Poisoning Cases Caused by MBG Packages in Kupang City

—Fransiskus Pati Herin, *Kompas*, 23 July 2025

A mass poisoning at SMPN 8 in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, has hospitalized 186 students after consuming meals from the Free Nutritious Food (MBG) program, sparking public outrage and calls for a transparent investigation. Despite the scale of the incident—the largest since MBG launched in January 2025—neither city nor provincial officials have reprimanded the responsible kitchen. Critics, including residents and activists, accuse the government of protecting politically connected parties. The affected students reported nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea after eating rice, vegetables, beef, and fruit. Kupang Mayor Christian Widodo acknowledged signs of mass poisoning and urged a facility review, while Governor Emanuel Melkiades Laka Lena and the Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (BPOM) said investigations are ongoing but declined to confirm when results will be public. Past MBG-related issues include raw chicken and hair in meals.

Launching the Red and White Cooperative, President Prabowo Reminds of the Importance of Supervision

—Kurnia Yunita Rahayu, *Kompas*, 21 July 2025

President Prabowo Subianto officially inaugurated 80,081 Merah Putih Cooperatives (KDMP) in Klaten, Central Java, on July 21, emphasizing the urgent need for strict oversight to prevent corruption, a historical weakness in Indonesia's cooperative movement. The event, attended by ministers, military and police chiefs, and regional leaders, marked a major push to empower village economies, break exploitative supply chains, and eliminate middlemen. Prabowo recalled past failures—such as the New Order-era Village Unit Cooperatives (KUD)—due to corrupt management and warned against repeating mistakes. He stressed using technology to ensure transparency in fund distribution. Coordinating Minister for Food Zulkifli Hasan stated the KDMPs aim to build production and distribution platforms to serve local economies. As of now, 108 KDMPs have begun operations, utilizing local assets, with a target for full implementation in three months. Prabowo acknowledged political resistance to cooperatives from those benefiting from economic dominance but believes the movement aligns with Indonesia's cooperative spirit.

New Subsidized Fertilizer Distribution Scheme to Launch Next Month

—Nikson Sinaga, *Kompas*, 21 July 2025

Starting August 1, Indonesia will implement a new subsidized fertilizer distribution scheme under Presidential Regulation No. 6/2025, aiming to improve fertilizer access for eligible farmers and enhance national food production. The scheme expands fertilizer allocation from 4.7 million to 9.5 million tons, includes new recipient categories such as fish cultivators and forest village institutions, and adds SP-36 and ZA to the existing urea, NPK, and organic fertilizers. Cassava joins the list of 10 eligible commodities, and verification of recipients will now be handled centrally by the Ministries of Agriculture and Marine Affairs, eliminating the

need for regional decrees. PT Pupuk Indonesia President Director Rahmad Pribadi has been inspecting distribution readiness across Aceh, confirming smooth operations and farmer satisfaction during early trials starting July 17. Full implementation nationwide will support the main planting season in October. Feedback from farmers has been positive.

II. Indonesia in Politics and Geopolitics

[Trump trade deal may present geopolitical challenges for Indonesia](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 31 July 2025

The United States has lowered Indonesia's trade tariff to 19 percent—down from a threatened 32 percent—following what Indonesian officials called an “extraordinary struggle,” with President Prabowo hailing it as a new era of “mutual benefit.” As part of the deal, Indonesia committed to purchasing US\$15 billion in oil and gas, \$4.5 billion in agricultural goods, and 50 Boeing aircraft. While the government praised the agreement as a strategic win for labor-intensive industries, analysts warn of long-term risks. The deal obliges Jakarta to eliminate non-tariff barriers for U.S. imports, raising concerns over fiscal burdens, loss of trade diversity, and possible friction with other partners like the EU, just weeks after Jakarta finalized its economic partnership deal with Brussels. Experts suggest the agreement may undermine Indonesia's nonaligned foreign policy and deepen dependency on Washington, complicating efforts to diversify trade. Comparatively, while it took the EU a decade to secure tariff relief, Trump obtained major concessions from Jakarta in a matter of weeks.

[Results of the RI-Malaysia Consultation, from Trade to Education for Children of Migrant Workers](#)

—Nina Susilo and Iqbal Basyari, *Kompas*, 30 July 2025

Indonesia and Malaysia, during their 13th annual consultation on July 29, agreed to ease cross-border trade between Indonesian territories and Malaysia's Sabah and Sarawak regions by removing minimum trade limits and supporting equivalent Border Crossing Posts (PLBN) on both sides. President Prabowo Subianto and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, meeting at Jakarta's Merdeka Palace, endorsed trade facilitation under the ASEAN Free Trade framework. Coordinating Minister Airlangga Hartarto confirmed that Sabah and Sarawak leaders agreed to establish border posts without requiring an MoU. The talks also addressed declining fish catches, the status of Indonesian migrant workers—2.7 million of whom were in Malaysia in 2020—and the need for more community learning centers for their children. Foreign Minister Sugiono emphasized efforts to boost bilateral trade, which rose 4.5% to USD 25.5 billion in 2024, and cited scheduling challenges as the reason for the delayed meeting. Experts urged both governments to improve transparency and address persistent labor and trafficking concerns in border areas.

[Indonesia signs contract with Turkey to buy 48 Kaan fighter jets](#)

—Reuters, *TheStraitsTimes*, 29 July 2025

Indonesia has signed a contract to purchase 48 Kaan fighter jets from Turkey as part of its push to modernize its ageing military, the Defence Ministry announced on July 29. The agreement, signed on July 26 at the International Defence Industry Fair in Istanbul and witnessed by Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, reflects both countries' commitment to

joint technology development and strengthening Indonesia's defence industry. While contract value and delivery dates were not disclosed, the Kaan is Turkey's first homegrown fifth-generation fighter jet, powered by General Electric F-110 engines, with serial production expected by 2028. This deal complements Indonesia's previous order of 42 French Rafale jets worth US\$8.1 billion in 2022, and its ongoing considerations to procure China's J-10s and US-made F-15EX aircraft. Additionally, Indonesia signed a memorandum of understanding with Turkey's Tais Shipyard to buy two Milgem Istif-class frigates, further expanding its defence procurement. The latest acquisitions underscore Jakarta's strategic efforts to diversify its military partnerships and enhance national defence capabilities.

[Indonesian Diplomacy Strengthens Climate Action](#)

—Pradipta Pandu Mustika, *Kompas*, 26 July 2025

Indonesia is intensifying its global climate diplomacy to align international cooperation with national emission reduction targets, Deputy Environment Minister Diaz Hendropriyono said at the Indonesia Net Zero Summit on July 26. Despite ranking 7th or 8th globally in carbon emissions with 1.3 gigatons of CO₂e, it continues to promote clean energy and sustainable development through forums like the G20, ASEAN, BRICS, and the Paris Agreement. The government is finalizing its second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2031–2035, set for UN submission by September. Diaz emphasized the call for greater climate financing support from BRICS and other developed nations, highlighting the current \$100 billion annual commitment shortfall. MPR Vice Chairman Eddy Soeparno proposed a dedicated Carbon Economy and Climate Change Management Agency to coordinate low-emission efforts across ministries. While policy updates show progress, Think Policy founder Andhyta Firselly Utami stressed that stronger leadership and institutional structure are crucial for consistent and measurable climate action amid ongoing global disruptions.

[Seeking Humanity for Gaza](#)

—Mahdi Muhammad, *Kompas*, 26 July 2025

Nearly two million people in Gaza face starvation as Israel continues a blockade preventing vital humanitarian aid, food, and medical supplies from entering the region. Since March 2025, Israel has restricted all aid except through the U.S.-established Gaza Humanitarian Fund, where nearly 1,000 people have been shot while queuing for food. From October 2023 to July 25, 2025, at least 122 Gazans, including 83 children, have died from malnutrition. Aid stockpiled at the border is rotting due to delays, while Israeli forces restrict entry of humanitarian workers and confiscate medical equipment. Observers and volunteers report that Gaza is being transformed into a "concentration camp," echoing forced relocation to so-called "Humanitarian Cities." Academics and officials, including Indonesia's Foreign Ministry and UNRWA, call this a clear case of genocide and ethnic cleansing, citing the international system's failure to act. Global solidarity is growing, but meaningful intervention remains elusive amid ongoing violations, rising deaths, and systemic human rights abuses.

[Indonesia V-P Gibran's Papua assignment puts spotlight on his place in Prabowo's government](#)

—Hariz Baharudin, *The Straits Times*, 25 July 2025

Vice-President Gibran Rakabuming Raka's appointment to lead Papua's development has drawn scrutiny over whether it signals political trust or marginalisation within the President's administration. Named head of the Steering Committee for the Acceleration of Development in Papua in July, Gibran oversees coordination efforts in a region plagued by poverty and conflict but will not be based there. Analysts argue the move, lacking a formal presidential

instruction, may limit his influence. Critics also link his rise to a controversial 2023 court ruling that changed age eligibility for candidates, benefitting Gibran, President Joko Widodo's son. Experts warn Papua's challenges require more than symbolic gestures. Unlike his predecessor, Gibran has not been assigned broader national roles, suggesting limited authority. Observers believe his visibility is being carefully managed to prevent overshadowing Prabowo while maintaining a constitutional presence, raising concerns over the sincerity and effectiveness of Jakarta's approach to Papua.

[Indonesia backs peaceful resolution in Thai-Cambodian border dispute](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 25 July 2025

Indonesia is closely monitoring the escalating border conflict between Cambodia and Thailand, expressing confidence that both ASEAN members will resolve the dispute peacefully in line with international law. The Indonesian Foreign Ministry affirmed its commitment to safeguarding nationals in affected areas, as renewed clashes—now the fiercest in a decade—have killed at least 16 people, mostly Thai civilians, and displaced over 138,000. Fighting erupted Thursday around the Ta Muen Thom temple and has since spread to at least 12 sites along the 817-kilometer border, involving heavy artillery and airstrikes. Cambodia accuses Thailand of military aggression, while Bangkok insists it is acting in self-defense and rejects third-party mediation. Malaysia, as ASEAN chair, has urged both nations to de-escalate and offered to mediate, supported by a personal call from Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to both leaders. Despite international concern and mediation offers—including from US and China—Thailand insists bilateral mechanisms are sufficient, while Cambodia appeals to the UN for urgent intervention as tensions continue to spiral.

[Indonesia, Singapore agree to enhance defense ties, including cyber](#)

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 23 July 2025

Indonesia and Singapore have agreed to deepen defense cooperation through expanded joint exercises across land, sea, air, and cyber domains amid rising geopolitical tensions and growing regional security concerns. The agreement was reached during a closed-door meeting in Jakarta between Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin and Singapore Armed Forces Chief Vice Adm. Aaron Beng, held alongside the 26th annual Indonesia-Singapore Combined Armed Forces dialogue (CARM-INDOSIN). Both nations reaffirmed their commitment to regional peace and discussed advancing cyber defense, a growing priority for Indonesia as it works to modernize its military with help from cybersecurity-savvy Singapore. A Defense Ministry statement emphasized the strategic importance of human resource development and interoperability between the two forces. The cooperation builds on a 2022 agreement to strengthen bilateral defense ties, and follows concerns in Southeast Asia over global conflict spillovers. Analysts see the deal as a signal of deepening alignment to confront shared challenges while upholding regional stability through dialogue and military readiness.

[Indonesia's Nusantara dream becomes a vice-ridden nightmare](#)

—Resty Woro Yuniar, *SouthChinaMorningPost*, 21 July 2025

Indonesia's flagship "smart forest city" capital project Nusantara, originally a US\$28.5 billion legacy of former president Joko Widodo, is increasingly beset by scandal and skepticism, with reports of rampant prostitution, gambling dens and cockfighting undermining its envisioned image. Local lawmakers and officials have raised alarms in parliamentary hearings about the proliferation of illicit activities in the new city, while the Nusantara Authority downplays the scale of the issue. As questions mount over its social and moral integrity, concerns are

intensifying over Nusantara's sustainability and viability under President Prabowo Subianto's leadership.