



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

Maritime Security Needs Partnership

—BM Lukita Grahadyarini, *Kompas*, 1 May 2024

Maritime security is crucial due to rising transnational crimes at sea, according to Norwegian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Andreas M Kravik. Challenges include environmental crimes, piracy, and IUU fishing. Disruptions in maritime supply chains, affecting 80% of global trade, pose economic and security risks. Overfishing and climate change exacerbate these threats. Technology helps security efforts but also introduces vulnerabilities, like cyber-attacks on maritime infrastructure. Indonesian Navy Fleet Admiral Denih Hendrata stressed maritime security's role in economic development and safety. However, limited resources hinder full jurisdictional coverage. Meanwhile, according to the CEO of Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative, Mas Achmad Santosa, the government and law enforcement agencies are responsible to make the blue economy a concrete policy, and ecological priority must be the main consideration above economic and political considerations. Greenpeace Indonesia praised MMAF's actions against illegal fishing but criticized policies allowing fish transshipment at sea, without strict control and monitoring requirements, has created a large gap for IUU fishing actors to operate.

Fisheries Crime Cases Lack of Response

—Aditya Putra Perdana and BM Lukita Grahadyarini, *Kompas*, 29 April 2024

Fisheries crime cases, particularly involving smuggling diesel fuel for foreign ships in the Arafura Sea, have lacked a timely response, with no follow-up from stakeholders even after two weeks. PT Pertamina Patra Niaga's Corporate Secretary, Irto Ginting, is still checking the incident's details. The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries seized Indonesian fish transport ship KM Mitra Utama Semesta for transshipment with two illegal foreign vessels, implicating fuel smuggling and crew exchange. Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono vowed to pursue the foreign ships and their fuel suppliers, promising cooperation with Pertamina and Interpol. The directorate-general of oil and gas is yet to respond. Researcher Akmaluddin Rachim highlighted weak supervision leading to such incidents and emphasized stricter monitoring and law enforcement. Efforts are underway to improve digitalization for fuel distribution oversight. Past incidents reveal a history of illegal fuel sales to foreign ships. The downstream oil and gas regulatory agency emphasizes transparent case processing and enhanced supervision to prevent recurrence, with significant potential state savings.

Steps Back for Exports of Sea Sand and Lobster Seeds

—BM Lukita Grahadyarini, *Kompas*, 24 April 2024

The decision to resume exports of sea sand and clear lobster seeds in Indonesia, after years of bans, is met with criticism. Critics argue that the move contradicts sustainability principles and poses significant ecological and economic risks. Abdul Halim from the Maritime Study Center for Humanity sees it as a flawed pursuit of state revenue at the expense of coastal communities. The potential volume of sea sand offered for exploitation is substantial, attracting numerous business interests, including foreign entities. The export quota for clear lobster seeds also raises concerns about the impact on local ecosystems and livelihoods. Yonvitner from IPB University views these policies as shortsighted, emphasizing that focusing on raw material exports doesn't align with broader maritime development goals. Meanwhile, Parid Ridwanuddin of Walhi condemns the government's disregard for ecological and climate justice, highlighting the long-term damage and loss of biodiversity. The cost of environmental restoration far exceeds the revenue gained from sand mining. Such policies, according to

critics, undermine Indonesia's aspirations for sustainable development and pose significant risks to coastal communities and ecosystems.

Annual ocean conference raises \$11.3b in pledges for marine conservation

—Elizabeth Claire Alberts, *Mongabay*, 17 April 2024

The 9th Our Ocean Conference (OOC) convened in Athens, coinciding with news of a global coral bleaching event, emphasizing the urgency for ocean protection. Government, NGO and philanthropic delegates committed over \$11.3 billion, lower than in previous years, to initiatives including marine protected areas (MPAs), combating IUU fishing, and climate change mitigation. Greece pledged new MPAs and a bottom trawling ban. Concerns were raised over slow implementation of commitments and insufficient progress toward the 30% ocean protection goal. Calls intensified to ratify the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) and halt deep-sea mining. Despite challenges, 72% of previous commitments are in progress, with a new secretariat established for future OOCs. The 10th OOC will take place in Busan, South Korea in 2025. The conference concluded with a call for decisive action to secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

B. Forests and Land Use

Deforestation in Indonesia Spiked Last Year, But Some Trends Are Improving

—Victoria Milko, *TheDiplomat* from *AssociatedPress*, 30 April 2024

In 2023, Indonesia experienced a 27% rise in primary forest loss compared to the previous year, with significant deforestation occurring in protected areas such as national parks cleared for palm oil, paper, and mining operations. Despite this increase, the loss is viewed as relatively low historically. Concerns arise over the connection between recent deforestation and the global demand for Indonesia's nickel reserves, considered vital for green energy technologies. While the expansion of industrial plantations continues, there are indications of a reduction in large-scale deforestation, attributed partly to growing pressure from NGOs, consumers, and governments against deforestation practices. President Joko Widodo's freeze on new palm oil plantation permits and government efforts to prevent and suppress fires have contributed to mitigating forest destruction. However, small-scale deforestation persists, threatening protected areas and endangered species like tigers and elephants. Improved fire prevention measures and investments have helped mitigate the impact of El Niño-induced forest fires, contrasting with the severe haze crisis of 2015-2016.

After being proposed four times, the Kinipan Traditional Forest is starting to find a bright spot

—Dionius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 30 April 2024

The Laman Kinipan indigenous community in Central Kalimantan is hopeful as they submit their customary forest proposal for the fourth time. Their struggle gained attention in 2020 when their leader, Effendi Buhing, was arrested amid conflict over palm oil plantation

companies. However, all charges were dropped, and their proposal for a customary forest aims to protect their land. Despite submitting proposals repeatedly over three years, the government has not responded. Recently, they met with local officials to resubmit their documents, hoping for clarity this time. The main issue lies in defining boundaries, particularly with Karang Taba Village, which has conflicting interests with the community. Willem Hengki, head of Kinipan Village, highlighted the importance of reaching an agreement with Karang Taba Village. If not, they will defer to the acting regent for a decision, ensuring existing agreements with neighboring villages are respected. Acting Lamandau Regent Lilis Suryani affirmed the government's commitment to resolving the issue through mediation, aiming to find a solution that satisfies all parties involved.

Targeted by many illegal loggers, forests in East Aceh are increasingly deteriorating

—Zulkarnaini, *Kompas*, 30 April 2024

Illegal logging activities in East Aceh are causing significant forest degradation, with at least 31 cubic meters of wood discovered in a production forest area. Throughout 2023, the region lost 611 hectares of forest cover, exacerbating the risk of natural disasters and contributing to global warming. Despite joint patrols, illegal logging persists due to limited monitoring resources. East Aceh consistently ranks among the top districts for forest cover loss, attributed to various factors including timber sales, encroachment, and illegal activities by companies. The loss of forest cover not only disrupts protected animal habitats, leading to conflicts between wildlife and humans, but also increases the likelihood of ecological disasters like floods and landslides. Moreover, forest degradation contributes to climate change and global warming, impacting national food security by disrupting the agricultural sector. Urgent restoration efforts are needed, with the government promoting social forestry schemes involving local residents. Efforts to restore damaged forests are crucial to mitigate environmental damage and enhance ecological resilience.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation, and Protected Area

Borneo and Sumatra megaprojects are carving up clouded leopard forests

—Carolyn Cowan, *Mongabay*, 29 April 2024

A new study warns that major infrastructure projects in Borneo and Sumatra, including two highway networks and Indonesia's capital city relocation to East Kalimantan, are set to severely erode forest connectivity across key habitats of the Sunda clouded leopard, which are crucial forest-dependent predators. These developments could fragment forests, increase habitat loss, and isolate populations, impacting biodiversity. The Indonesian capital move, particularly, poses significant risks to wildlife across Borneo. Forest connectivity loss could have cascading effects on ecosystems and species beyond clouded leopards. Conservationists emphasize the urgent need for better road design, wildlife crossings, and improved environmental impact assessments to mitigate these threats. Plans for the new capital city offer an opportunity for conservation efforts, but there are concerns about the focus on restoring previously destroyed forests instead of protecting existing ones. The study underscores the need for balanced development strategies guided by scientific analysis to ensure human-wildlife coexistence.

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A single gang of poachers may have killed 10% of Javan rhinos since 2019

—Jeremy Hance, *Mongabay*, 26 April 2024

A poaching case currently being heard in an Indonesian court has revealed that at least seven Javan rhinos were killed from 2019-2023 for their horns. The world's sole remaining habitat of Javan rhino is located in Ujung Kulon National Park, with official population estimates standing at around 70 individuals. A single main suspect has been arrested and indicted in the case, with three alleged accomplices still at large. Sunendi admitted to poaching and selling the rhino horns. The revelation raises questions about the park's security, which has been closed off to the public since September 2023. The punishment for poaching in Indonesia is five years, potentially 25 years with firearm possession charges. Despite previous claims of protection, allegations of poaching persist, casting doubt on official population numbers. Conservationists urge harsh penalties to deter poachers and advocate for a second rhino site as well as captive-breeding programs to safeguard the species. Recent camera trap images show Javan rhinos still reproducing. The species is critically endangered, and its loss would be a blow to global biodiversity.

Nardelli, F., & Robovský, J. (2022). [New data on the ecology and conservation of the Javan rhinoceros *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desmarest, 1822 \(*Perissodactyla*, *Rhinocerotidae*\)](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcz.2022.100001), *Gazella*, 49, 182-205.

Study challenges use of charismatic wildlife as umbrella species for conservation

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 20 April 2024

A study from Indonesia's Leuser Ecosystem challenges the focus on charismatic "umbrella species", such as tigers and rhinos, for biodiversity protection. Researchers found that focusing on these well-known species, while getting more conservation attention, neglects other important wildlife and may not accurately represent overall biodiversity. Camera trap data from the pristine Leuser Ecosystem revealed overlooked species like the sambar deer and clouded leopard had higher occupancy and diversity levels compared to tigers and rhinos. The findings suggest a need to monitor multiple species, not just charismatic ones, for effective wildlife management. The study proposes a data-driven approach to select umbrella species, highlighting the importance of assessing a species' performance in representing

broader biodiversity. Conservationists advocate for targeted conservation efforts based on occupancy patterns. Public awareness of this concept can enhance conservation efforts by fostering more targeted approaches. Validating a species' role as an umbrella species before allocating resources is crucial.

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Indonesian capital project finally gets guidelines to avoid harm to biodiversity

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 19 April 2024

Beset by criticism over its environmental and social impacts, the controversial project of building Indonesia's new capital city in the Bornean jungle has finally come out with guidelines for biodiversity management. Nusantara project is hailed as a "green forest city," but just 16% of its total area is currently intact rainforest. The "Indonesia's biodiversity management master plan" outlines a four-point mitigation policy of avoiding harm, minimizing any inevitable impacts, restoring damaged landscapes, and compensating for residual impacts. The master plan targets 65% forest cover by 2029, focusing on reforestation and species protection. It emphasizes monitoring, involving local communities, and promoting education to foster coexistence with wildlife. The master plan considered input from experts, but several didn't make it into the final document, including a call for the mitigation policy to extend to a wider area beyond the Nusantara site. Despite efforts, concerns persist over habitat fragmentation and wildlife disturbance. Balancing development with biodiversity preservation remains critical for Nusantara's sustainable future.

D. Climate Change, Energy, and Mining

Will New Leader End Progress in Saving Indonesia's Forests?

—Fred Pierce, *YaleEnvironment360*, 30 April 2024

In the last decade, Indonesia has made significant headway in halting the loss of its forests. But the election of Prabowo Subianto as president is raising concerns that a boom in nickel, used in EV batteries, could lead to a new wave of deforestation. Despite past progress in reducing deforestation, fears mount that Prabowo's focus on nickel for EV batteries could lead to ecological devastation. With promises to double GDP through mining and downstream industry, he plans to expand nickel production. Nickel mining, predominantly for export, damages forests and relies on coal-powered refineries. Indonesia is the only one of the world's top 10 greenhouse-gas emitters to be still increasing its reliance on coal for power. Prabowo's history with human rights abuses and coal mining fuels apprehension. Despite hopes for environmental improvements, his ties with China, a major investor, pose challenges. Western companies, reliant on Indonesian nickel, can influence forest protection by demanding zero deforestation practices. The fate of Indonesia's rainforests hangs in the balance as Prabowo's presidency begins in October, impacting global climate goals and ecological sustainability.

What Can 'Green Islam' Achieve in the World's Largest Muslim Country?

—Sui-Lee Wee, Hasya Nindita and Ulet Ifansasti, *TheNewYorkTimes*, 17 April 2024

A growing movement known as "Green Islam" is trying to mobilize clerics and congregants to address climate change through religious teachings and actions. Led by figures like Grand Imam Nasaruddin Umar of the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta, efforts include retrofitting mosques with renewable energy systems, issuing fatwas on environmental protection, and promoting sustainable practices rooted in Islamic principles. Tangible results showed: installing 500 solar panels has lowered the mosque's power bill by 25% and with slow-flow faucets plus water recycling system, worshipers use far less water to cleanse themselves before prayers. Despite challenges such as skepticism and resistance, the movement has gained traction, with organizations like the Indonesian Ulema Council and grassroots initiatives endorsing eco-friendly measures. Figures like environmentalist Aak Abdullah al-Kudus and activist Elok Faiqotul Mutia exemplify the movement's diverse supporters, advocating for reforestation, renewable energy, and waste management. Through education and advocacy, Green Islam aims to harness the influence of religious leaders to inspire environmental stewardship among Indonesia's predominantly Muslim population, with the ultimate goal of fostering a sustainable future guided by faith.

E. Pollution and Waste

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Environmental Activist Aeshnina Urges Canada's Justin Trudeau to Stop Exporting Plastic Waste to Indonesia

—Petir Garda Bhwana and Rachel Farahdiba Regar, *Tempo*, 28 April 2024

On April 21, 2024, Aeshnina "Nina" Azzahra Aqilani, co-captain of River Warrior Indonesia or Riverin, joined a global march in Ottawa, Canada, urging an end to the "plastic era" due to its devastating impact on communities and the environment, driven by fossil fuel interests. At the event, she highlighted Canada's export of plastic waste to Indonesia, emphasizing her previous unanswered plea to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Aeshnina expressed deep concerns about hazardous pollution and contamination from plastic waste, citing instances of waste build-up and burning for fuel in the tofu making industry in East Java. Canadian Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, promised a response to the march's participants and acknowledged ongoing illegal exports. Aeshnina also wrote to Indonesian presidential candidates and previously to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and US President Donald Trump, demanding action against waste dumping. Prigi Arisandi, Ecoton's Executive Director and Aeshnina's father, lauded her efforts as a Gen Z advocate for environmental sustainability.

Survey finds that 60 firms are responsible for half of world's plastic pollution

—Sofia Quaglia, *TheGuardian*, 24 April 2024

A recent study reveals that approximately 60 multinational corporations contribute to over half of the world's plastic pollution, with six of them responsible for a quarter of that burden. The research, spanning five years and involving over 1,870,000 plastic items across 84 countries, highlights the significant role of these corporations in plastic waste generation. Notably, single-use packaging for food, beverages, and tobacco products forms the bulk of the collected rubbish. While less than half of the litter bears identifiable branding, the responsibility falls on just 56 fast-moving consumer goods companies, with a quarter of the

waste traced back to only six companies including Altria, Philip Morris International, Danone, Nestlé, PepsiCo, and Coca-Cola. Despite some companies' efforts to address plastic pollution voluntarily, the study suggests these measures are insufficient, as evidenced by the doubling of plastic production since 2000 and a mere 9% recycling rate. The findings underscore the pressing need for a globally binding treaty to regulate plastic production and pollution, currently under discussion in international talks, highlighting the urgent necessity for collective action to combat this global environmental challenge.

F. Investment and Finance

Ministry unveils new funding initiative for climate-resilient health system

—Dio Suhenda, *TheJakartaPost*, 1 May 2024

The Health Ministry, alongside UNDP and WHO, introduced a \$5 million initiative, backed by the Green Climate Fund, to bolster Indonesia's health system against climate change impacts. Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin highlighted zoonotic disease risks and noninfectious ailments. The program will finance research, pilot projects, and emission reductions in hospitals. Stakeholders aim to enhance collaboration for effective fund utilization. Similar efforts will assist 16 countries, including ASEAN neighbors Vietnam and Thailand. While the funds won't solve all issues, they'll demonstrate tangible outcomes for replication. WHO emphasized Indonesia's vulnerability, citing a joint study by UNICEF, the Health Ministry, and the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), which found that changes in regional climate patterns were affecting agroecosystems and water availability, leading to water and food shortages and related diseases, such as malnutrition, pneumonia, diarrhea, and dengue fever – the latest cases surged, with 540 deaths reported this year. WHO affirmed its commitment to combating climate health risks, foreseeing a greener, healthier future. Funds are expected to be disbursed by 2025, subject to Finance Ministry approval.

Microsoft to power data centres with big Brookfield renewables deal

—[Antoine Gara](#) and [Amanda Chu](#) in New York, [Rachel Millard](#) in London, and [Camilla Hodgson](#) in San Francisco, *FinancialTimes*, 1 May 2024

Canada's Brookfield Asset Management and technology giant Microsoft signed a \$10 billion agreement. They aim to meet clean energy commitments while addressing the energy needs of cloud computing and Artificial Intelligence. This "global framework agreement" promises 10.5 gigawatts of generating capacity, equivalent to powering 1.8 million homes. The initiative will focus on building wind and solar farms in the US and Europe from 2026 to 2030. It comes amid concerns about the energy demand of AI, with data centers forecasted to double electricity consumption by 2026. This partnership reflects a broader trend of tech companies investing in renewables. Microsoft aims for 100% renewable energy consumption by 2030. Brookfield, a major renewable power developer, is expanding its portfolio with corporate deals like this. Corporate deals covering a record 46GW of solar and wind capacity were announced in 2023, with Amazon the top purchaser, according to figures published in February by Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

Investment Realization in Indonesia Reaches IDR 401.5 Trillion in Q1/2024

—Adinda Ade Mustami, *Kontan*, 29 April 2024

Indonesia Ministry of Investment/Investment Coordinating Board (BKPM) reported the realization of investments for the first quarter of 2024 that reached IDR 401.5 trillion. This figure represents 24.3% of the target set by President Joko Widodo, which stands at IDR 1,650 trillion. This figure marks a 22.1% growth year on year, and is 9.8% higher than the previous quarter. In detail, the realization of foreign direct investment (FDI) amounted to IDR 204.4 trillion, growing 15.5%. FDI continues to be the largest contributor to investment realization for the period of January-March, with a contribution of 50.9%. In addition, the realization of domestic investment (PMDN) amounted to IDR 197.1 trillion, showing a high growth of 29.7%. The PMDN contributed 49.1% to the total investment realization in the first three months. The investment realization outside Java reached IDR 201.0 trillion and the investment realization in Java reached IDR 200.5 trillion of the total investment realization.

G. Human Rights and Gender Equality

Explainer: A look back at the significance of labor movements

—Dio Suhenda, *TheJakartaPost*, 1 May 2024

May Day rallies in Indonesia, though criticized for congestion and facility damage, have been instrumental in securing better working conditions. Labor movements, with a history predating the national holiday's recognition 10 years ago, have achieved significant milestones. Demonstrations in the 1950s led to the introduction of annual religious-holiday bonuses (THR) for all workers, initially championed by the All-Indonesian Labor Union (SOBSI). Labor movements also influenced the establishment of social security agencies like Healthcare and Social Security Agency (BPJS Kesehatan) and the Workers Social Security Agency (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan), enhancing workers' welfare. Seven years of advocacy led to the enactment of the 2004 Social Security Law. Furthermore, pressure from labor organizations prompted the passage of the 2003 Labor Law, improving labor rights. However, the 2020 Job Creation Law, replacing the 2003 law, has sparked controversy for potentially undermining workers' rights, despite objections from labor groups.

From a Heavy Metal Band in Hijabs, a Message of Girl Power

—Sui-Lee Wee, Hasya Nindita and Nyimas Laula, *TheNewYorkTimes*, 27 April 2024

Voice of Baceprot, an Indonesian heavy metal band comprised of hijab-wearing members, has gained widespread acclaim both domestically and internationally for their empowering music. The band addresses progressive themes such as female empowerment, pacifism, and environmental preservation through their lyrics, attracting fans and praise from renowned musicians like Flea and Tom Morello. Despite facing criticism and even physical threats for challenging stereotypes of gender and religion, the band remains steadfast in their mission. Originating from a conservative part of West Java, the members, Marsya, Sitti, and Widi, found solace and passion in heavy metal music after initially dabbling in pop. Their journey from being labeled as troublemakers to becoming role models for young women reflects their resilience and determination. As they continue to spread their message of empowerment, Voice of Baceprot remains committed to addressing societal issues and inspiring change through their music.

Indigenous community fights to save its lands on Indonesia's historic tin island

—Moh Tamini, *Mongabay*, 25 April 2024

The Lanun Indigenous community of Belitung Island have responded to increasing environmental damage by building their capacity in skills such as advocacy and mediation. Life has changed due to factors like forest clearing for oil palm monoculture and illegal mining. The Lanun community has been active in protecting their environment and traditional practices. They patrol the forests, aiming to deter illegal activities. Forest loss is significant, with East Belitung district losing a third of its old-growth forest from 2002-23. Land use changes have impacted fishing incomes, while tin mining waste and pesticides disrupt the ecosystem. In 2021, UNESCO announced this area would become an international geopark, which required joint applications by government and local communities to conserve a landscape of global significance. Despite UNESCO recognition, challenges persist. Lanun elders promote ecotourism, but the disappearance of river tributaries and environmental degradation threaten the community's future. Leaders and villagers emphasize the urgent need to halt deforestation for their life survival.

Activists file last-gasp suit as Indonesia fails again to pass Indigenous bill

—Richaldo Hariandja, *Mongabay*, 23 April 2024

Civil society advocates representing over 2,000 customary communities are launching legal challenges over parliament's failure to pass a long-awaited bill on Indigenous rights during President Joko Widodo's tenure. The Lawyers for Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) initiated the lawsuit in March, pressing for progress before the administration changes. The suit seeks to compel the parliament to expedite passage of the bill, which has remained deadlocked for more than a decade amid intransigence by elected representatives. Attorney Fatiatulo Lazira highlights the urgency of legal certainty for Indigenous peoples facing threats, such as land confiscation and criminalization. Despite promises, the draft Indigenous bill has languished for over a decade. AMAN cites a Constitutional Court ruling affirming Indigenous land rights in 2013. Parliamentary responses have been lacking. With little legislative action, AMAN turned to the courts. However, few expect any progress over the next months, with a new parliament to be sworn in on Oct. 1 and a new president on Oct. 20. AMAN remains committed to lobbying and legal action to secure Indigenous rights.

I. RI General Elections

Indonesia election: Prabowo formally declared president-elect after court rejects legal challenges

—Rebecca Ratcliffe, *TheGuardian*, 25 April 2024

Prabowo Subianto has been officially declared Indonesia's president-elect by the electoral commission, following the dismissal of legal challenges to his victory by rival candidates. Despite accusations of state interference and unfair rule changes, the country's highest court upheld Prabowo's landslide win in February's election. Prabowo, a former general with a controversial past involving human rights allegations, emphasized unity and collaboration in his acceptance speech, urging leaders to prioritize people's welfare and combat poverty and corruption. Despite his tainted history, Prabowo has attempted to soften his image and formed a strategic alliance with the son of the outgoing president, Joko Widodo. However, accusations of election interference linger, including claims of unfair advantages gained

through social aid distribution and the controversial candidacy of Jokowi's son as vice president. The constitutional court's rejection of challenges clears the path for Prabowo to assume office in October, as his rivals vow to respect the decision.

House of old men: 2024 election sees lowest number of young lawmakers

—Radhiyya Indra, *TheJakartaPost*, 25 April 2024

A recent study by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) highlights the decline of young politicians in Indonesia's House of Representatives, attributing it to dynastic politics and incumbent dominance. Only 87 lawmakers under 40 were elected in the 2024 election, comprising 15% of all elected candidates, the lowest in history. The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) led the race, followed by Golkar and Gerindra. While young lawmakers peaked at 23% in 2009, the trend reversed due to dynastic politics and incumbents. Over 56% of this year's legislators served in the previous term. Despite some parties prioritizing youth, competition remains tough, with many young candidates connected to political families. Suggestions include revising the election system and promoting equal opportunities. Additionally, the election saw a rise in female lawmakers, reaching nearly 22%. Voter turnout was over 81% of the 204 million eligible voters.

II. Indonesia in Geopolitics

Microsoft to invest \$1.7 bbn in AI, cloud infrastructure in Indonesia

—Newswire, *AlJazeera*, 1 May 2024

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella announced a \$1.7 billion investment in AI and cloud services in Indonesia, marking the company's largest investment in the country. The plan includes training 840,000 Indonesians in AI and supporting local tech developers. Nadella emphasized AI's transformative potential, stating it will reshape lives and work in Indonesia. With a population of 280 million, Indonesia boasts the third-largest developer community in Southeast Asia. A 2020 study by Kearney projected AI could contribute nearly \$1 trillion to Southeast Asia's GDP by 2030, with Indonesia capturing a significant portion. This move aligns with Microsoft's global strategy to enhance AI development, demonstrated by recent investments in Japan and the UAE. Nadella's visit follows Apple CEO Tim Cook's meeting with Indonesian leaders, indicating tech giants' growing interest in the country's tech sector.

Jokowi, Lee in final retreat call on successors to maintain strong ties

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 30 April 2024

President Joko Widodo and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong have symbolically handed over the future of Indonesia-Singapore relations to their successors, Prabowo Subianto and Lawrence Wong, emphasizing continuity and deeper collaboration. The leaders commemorated their close cooperation and milestone agreements, setting a positive tone for the transition. Lee's final leaders' retreat with Jokowi marked a significant moment, with Wong joining in, signifying a new era of leadership. Reflecting on past achievements, including defense cooperation and airspace agreements, Lee expressed confidence in Prabowo and Wong to elevate bilateral ties further. The meeting underscored ongoing economic cooperation, with Singapore being Indonesia's top foreign investor. While the meeting marked

the end of Jokowi-Lee leadership, business talks played a major theme at the Bogor gathering. Among the list of items discussed were future cooperation, particularly in the fields of politics, security, economic development, investment in renewable energy projects and electricity exports. Singapore is seeking to import 4 gigawatts of low-carbon electricity by 2035, with around half of the figure sourced from Indonesia.

Indonesia may offer dual citizenship to attract overseas workers, minister says

—Newswire, *TheJakartaPost* from *Reuters*, 30 April 2024

Indonesia is considering offering dual citizenship to attract overseas workers, a move not currently allowed under Indonesian law. Luhut Pandjaitan, the coordinating minister for maritime affairs and investment, announced plans to grant dual citizenship to former Indonesian citizens abroad, aiming to entice skilled Indonesians back home. The proposal coincides with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella's commitment of a \$1.7 billion investment in Indonesia. Between 2019 and 2022, nearly 4,000 Indonesians acquired Singaporean citizenship, highlighting a trend of migration. However, Indonesia's Directorate General of Immigration has not provided immediate feedback on the dual citizenship proposal. Dual citizenship has sparked controversy previously, as seen in President Joko Widodo's dismissal of Energy Minister Arcandra Tahar in 2016 over holding both US and Indonesian passports.

End