



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.*

CONTENTS

- A. Marine and Fisheries
- B. Forests and Land Use
- C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Areas
- D. Climate Change, Energy and Mining
- E. Pollution, Waste, Water and Disaster
- F. Technology, Investment and Finance
- G. Human Rights, Indigenous People and Gender Equality

- I. Government Priority Program
- II. Indonesia in Politics and Geopolitics

A. Marine and Fisheries

Shrimp exporters face cancellations from US buyers, association says

—Ni Made Tasyarani, *TheJakartaPost*, 8 April 2025

Indonesian shrimp exporters are facing major setbacks following U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of sweeping new tariffs, including a 32 percent tariff specifically targeting Indonesia starting April 5. Budhi Wibowo, head of the Indonesian Fishery Product

Processing and Marketing Entrepreneurs Association (AP5I), reported on April 7 that multiple U.S. buyers have canceled or postponed contracts, severely disrupting the \$1.9 billion U.S. market, which accounts for 32 percent of Indonesia's total fisheries exports and 63 percent of its shrimp exports. The move threatens the livelihoods of some 2 million fishermen and the operations of around 800 seafood factories, as profit margins in the sector are already under 5 percent. While exporters seek alternative markets, Wibowo stressed that transitioning is not easy due to certification hurdles. He urged President-elect Prabowo Subianto to negotiate directly with Trump and called for banking support, including extended loan terms and lower interest rates, to keep businesses afloat. The uncertainty looms large over an industry that had recently seen a 9.1 percent rise in fishery trade surplus and growing U.S. demand.

KKP Increases Fish Export to Korea

—Muhammad Nursyamsi, *Republika*, 7 April 2025

The Ministry of Marine and Fisheries (KKP) successfully secured approval from South Korea's National Fishery Products Quality Management Service to increase the number of Indonesian fish processing units (UPIs) eligible to export to Korea, following negotiations and a bilateral inspection in August 2024. As of April 2, 11 additional UPIs have been approved, bringing the total to 660 units. Head of the KKP Quality Agency, Ishartini, stated that this achievement stems from the "Arrangement on the Cooperation in Quality Control and Hygiene Safety of Import and Export Fish and Fishery Products", which facilitates smoother bilateral trade in fishery commodities. The agreement enables pre-border inspections and faster customs clearance, reducing delays and enhancing responsiveness to regulatory changes. Ishartini emphasized that the recognition of Indonesia's quality assurance systems—aligned with international standards—supports not only export growth but also public health and the sustainability of marine resources. Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono reiterated the need for rigorous upstream-to-downstream quality assurance to ensure fish remain safe, high-quality, and free from microplastics.

Fate of Indonesian Tuna Fishermen Under Trump Tariff Pressure

—Fransiskus Pati Herin, *Kompas*, 5 April 2025

On April 5 Indonesian tuna exporters expressed concern over the impact of the U.S. President Donald Trump's newly announced reciprocal tariff policy, which raises import tariffs from several countries, including Indonesia. The policy imposes a 32 percent tariff—triple the previous 10 percent—on Indonesian tuna, potentially lowering U.S. purchase prices by 10–15 percent. Tuna entrepreneur Kun Kusno, who sources from small-scale fishermen in Maluku, fears that the price cuts will trickle down to local suppliers, squeezing already vulnerable coastal communities. Similarly, Robert Tjoanda, another Maluku-based exporter, worries about disruptions to the Vietnam processing route, which re-exports to the U.S. Both entrepreneurs note the limited domestic market as an inadequate alternative, with local tuna prices far lower than export rates. Fishermen like Yadi Bustan in West Seram have no option but to accept whatever prices are offered. Maluku legislator Anos Yeremias urged the Indonesian government to begin immediate negotiations with the U.S., warning that the livelihoods of over 100,000 fishing households in the province are at stake amid rising costs and a weakening economy.

Fighting Antibiotic Allegations of Farmed Products

—Brigita Maria Lukita G, *Kompas*, 2 April 2025

Indonesia risks losing access to the European Union (EU) market for its aquaculture products after September 3, 2026, due to non-compliance with EU Regulation 2019/6 on veterinary

medicinal products, which restricts the use of antimicrobials in animal-based food products. The European Commission recently listed 49 countries deemed compliant, excluding Indonesia and 12 others like India and Sri Lanka. This poses a serious threat to Indonesia's global fisheries reputation, despite the EU accounting for less than 5% of its shrimp exports. The EU, one of the world's largest fishery consumers, is seen as a benchmark market, with stringent food safety standards. Indonesian shrimp industry players, led by the Shrimp Club Indonesia, reaffirmed a 20-year commitment to antibiotic-free farming in a March 2025 declaration, urging the government to strengthen monitoring systems and ensure regulatory alignment. Authorities are now coordinating with the EU Delegation and Indonesian Embassy in Brussels to maintain market access. Failure to comply could jeopardize Indonesia's shrimp export credibility and national aquaculture sustainability.

An unexplained death, 'abuse and slavery': Indonesian fishers reveal life on long haul vessels

—Helen Davidson and Chi-hui Lin, *TheGuardian*, 1 April 2025

The death of an Indonesian crew member, YK, aboard a Chinese-owned tuna trawler in the Indian Ocean in 2023 has highlighted widespread labor abuses and a lack of accountability in the seafood industry. YK, who had pleaded to return home, was confined in a storage room after a violent altercation with the captain and later found dead under suspicious circumstances, his body showing signs of trauma. His remains were stored in the ship's freezer for six months, and the case was dismissed as a workplace accident, with his family receiving minimal compensation. Indonesian fishers, like Ricky, recount grueling conditions, withheld wages, and physical abuse, often aboard Chinese and Taiwanese vessels. A recent U.S. lawsuit against Bumble Bee Foods alleges the company profited from seafood caught through exploitative labor. With over 100,000 fishing-related deaths annually, advocates stress urgent reforms, including better oversight, legal protections, and worker access to communication to prevent further exploitation at sea. Many affected fishers, despite their experiences, return to the industry due to limited employment options.

B. Forests and Land Use

Illegal Mining Occupies Unmul Educational Forest, Ironwood Trees Fallen

—Sucipto, *Kompas*, 8 April 2025

Illegal mining has damaged at least 3.26 hectares of the Special Purpose Forest Area (KHDTK) used for forestry education and training by the Faculty of Forestry at Mulawarman University (Unmul) in Samarinda, East Kalimantan. The encroachment, carried out using heavy equipment and causing severe environmental destruction including the felling of ironwood and hundreds of other trees, occurred during the Eid holiday on April 5. Despite Unmul reporting the encroachment as early as August 2024, authorities from the Kalimantan Forestry Law Enforcement Agency Gakkum only inspected the site on April 7, after videos of the mining activities went viral. KHDTK, designated in 2020 and covering 299.03 hectares, serves conservation, research, and educational purposes and is a habitat for protected species like sun bears. Gakkum has launched an investigation, collecting statements from up to 10 individuals and verifying overlapping permits and equipment ownership. Although mining activity had ceased by the time of inspection, authorities are prioritizing the case to determine those responsible for the irresponsible actions.

World's largest deforestation project fells forests for bioethanol fuel, sugar and rice in Indonesia

—Victoria Milko, *APNews*, 7 April 2025

Indonesia is set to clear 4.3 million hectares of rainforest—an area the size of Belgium—on the islands of Papua and Kalimantan for its government-backed food and energy estate project, the largest planned deforestation operation in the world. Initiated under former President Joko Widodo and expanded by current President Prabowo Subianto, the project aims to boost food security and produce bioethanol from crops like sugarcane. However, it threatens critically endangered ecosystems and displaces Indigenous communities who depend on the land. The largest site, the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate in Papua, overlaps with a rich ecoregion and could emit over 315 million tons of CO₂, according to leaked and independent assessments. Despite government claims of reforesting 6.5 million hectares of degraded land, experts stress that new forests cannot replace the biodiversity and carbon storage of old-growth rainforests. Local residents report loss of access to hunting and fishing grounds, sparking outcry from environmental groups over irreversible ecological damage and harm to Indigenous livelihoods and culture.

Indonesia's peatlands face growing flood risks amid widespread degradation

—Hans Nicholas Jong, *Mongabay*, 7 April 2025

Nearly half of Indonesia's 24 million hectares of peatlands are vulnerable to flooding due to degradation from industrial exploitation, with 6 million hectares classified as highly vulnerable, according to a new report released in April 2025 by watchdog Pantau Gambut. The report examined Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Papua, revealing that 43% of peatlands are at risk because of subsidence, drainage, and irreversible drying caused by deforestation and land-use mismanagement. Kalimantan and Riau in Sumatra are among the worst affected, with Dumai city experiencing tidal floods even without rain. In 2021, South Kalimantan suffered deadly floods that displaced nearly 40,000 people and caused \$81 million in damages. The NGO criticized the Indonesian government for focusing mainly on fire prevention, overlooking the hydrological collapse that leads to flooding. It urged regulatory updates to include flood indicators in peatland management and expand corporate accountability. At the global level, Pantau Gambut warned that the EU Deforestation Regulation, effective end-2025, fails to address peatland hydrological destruction, risking continued damage from imports tied to degraded peat ecosystems.

Dreams of Criminalization Victims Amidst Palm Oil Land Control

—Dionisius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 4 April 2025

The sentencing of Syachyunie, Head of Tempayung Village in West Kotawaringin, Central Kalimantan, to six months in prison on March 26, for leading a traditional *hinting pali* ritual during a community protest demanding promised plasma land from a palm oil company, has spotlighted ongoing agrarian conflicts in Indonesia. Despite hundreds participating in the action, only Syachyunie was prosecuted, prompting criticism from her attorney, Gregorius Retas Daeng, who filed an appeal citing lack of dialogue between communities and companies. The protest follows a broader context of unrest: in the first 100 days of the Prabowo-Gibran administration, 63 land conflicts erupted across over 66,000 hectares, affecting more than 10,000 families, mostly due to land grabbing and plasma disputes. The Forest Area Control PKH Task Force, under Presidential Regulation No. 5/2025, has seized millions of hectares of oil palm land deemed to be in forest zones, including both corporate

and smallholder areas, leading to fear among farmers. Critics warn that these actions may escalate tensions unless land rights and existing community claims are first resolved.

Forest Area Regulation Based on Presidential Decree Number 2/2025, Will It Lead to Nationalization?

—Norbertus Arya Dwiangga Martiar, *Kompas*, 2 April 2025

President Prabowo Subianto established the Forest Area Regulation Task Force (Satgas PKH) through Presidential Regulation No. 5 of 2025 on January 21 to reclaim misused forest lands. By March 23, the task force had verified 1.17 million hectares across nine provinces and 64 regencies, reclaiming over 1 million hectares—some previously under the Duta Palma Group, whose owner was convicted of corruption. On March 10 and 26, more than 438,000 hectares were handed to state-owned PT Agrinas Palma Nusantara. Deputy Attorney General for Special Crimes, Febrie Adriansyah, clarified that the effort is not nationalization but legal recovery, guided by geospatial data and coordination across agencies, with worker rights protected. However, civil society groups like AMAN warn that the policy could enable land grabs and criminalize Indigenous peoples, criticizing the task force's militaristic structure. They urge a revision to prevent social injustice. The reclaimed lands' future—whether returned to forests or managed plantations—will be decided by the Ministry of Forestry in line with government policy.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area

Sumatran elephant found dead near Mount Leuser National Park

—Apriadi Gunawan, *The Jakarta Post*, 8 April 2025

A dead male Sumatran elephant, estimated to be 12 years old, was discovered in a palm oil plantation near Mount Leuser National Park in Bukitmas village, Besitang district, Langkat regency, North Sumatra, authorities reported Monday. The carcass, buried at the site, showed no visible wounds and both tusks remained intact. Police and conservation officials from the North Sumatra Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) and Mount Leuser National Park (TNGL) collected tissue samples for lab testing to determine the cause of death, which remains unknown. The elephant was found along a known migration route in muddy terrain. This incident follows two other elephant deaths in the same regency, one in which the tusks were missing, raising suspicions of poaching. In April 2022, a female elephant was also found dead with stab wounds and missing tusks. Sumatran elephants are listed as critically endangered by the IUCN and are protected under CITES Appendix I, which bans their commercial trade. Indonesia is home to an estimated 2,000 Sumatran elephants remaining in the wild, facing increasing threats from habitat loss and poaching.

Get Ready to Welcome 24-Hour City Parks in Jakarta

—Fransiskus Wisnu Wardhana Dhany, *Kompas*, 7 April 2025

Starting June 2025, select parks in Jakarta—including Lapangan Banteng, Taman Ayodya, Tebet Eco Park, and Taman Menteng—will open for up to 24 hours daily, the Jakarta Provincial Government announced. The initiative, aligned with campaign promises by Governor-elect Pramono Anung and Deputy Rano Karno, aims to expand access to green spaces, enhance public expression, and generate up to 500,000 new jobs. Jakarta Deputy

Governor Rano Karno said the policy considers population density and park capacity, with security, lighting, sanitation, and public transport connectivity as key priorities. Activist Niken Prawestiti from Ayo ke Taman welcomed the move, noting it would provide more inclusive social spaces, particularly for workers seeking alternatives to malls after hours. She emphasized balancing human activity with ecosystem needs, simplified park use procedures, and ongoing evaluation. The plan also allocates Rp 300 billion for empowering MSMEs through food courts and park vendors. With only 5.45% of Jakarta's area classified as green space—far below the legal mandate of 30%—this effort underscores parks' crucial role in combating pollution and offering communal urban oases.

Community-based conservation cuts thresher shark fishing by 91% in Indonesia: Study

—Basten Gokkon, *Mongabay*, 28 March 2025

A conservation program in eastern Indonesia successfully reduced thresher shark catches by 91% among participating fishers from 2021 to 2023 by providing alternative livelihoods, a recent study finds. Conducted in Alor Archipelago, East Nusa Tenggara, the initiative targeted nine voluntary fishers, some of whom saw income increases of up to 5.2 times their previous earnings. However, economic hardship, community pressure, and local conflicts led some fishers to resume shark fishing toward the program's end. The study, published in *Oryx* on February 11, underscores the importance of long-term, community-driven conservation efforts, particularly in Indonesia, the world's largest shark-fishing nation. Experts stress that while government policies regulate shark fishing, small-scale fishers remain overlooked. Conservationists urge stronger partnerships with local communities, financial support, and regulatory measures to sustain conservation gains. The research provides a model for reducing catches of endangered species while improving livelihoods, highlighting the need for tailored economic interventions and government-backed conservation strategies to protect thresher sharks and other vulnerable marine species.

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D. Climate Change, Energy and Mining

Indonesia in 2035: Climate risks to security in the Indo-Pacific

—Michael Copage, Robert Glasser and Isabelle Bond, *ASPI*, 9 April 2025

Indonesia is likely to face severe climate-related disruptions by 2035, posing significant threats to its economy, national security, and regional stability, according to a recent report, [Indonesia in 2035: Climate risks to security in the Indo-Pacific](#). Released in early 2025, the report highlights that Indonesia—home to Southeast Asia's largest population and with densely populated coastal areas—is highly vulnerable to climate hazards such as sea-level rise, shifting rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events. These impacts could lead to large-scale food insecurity, coastal displacement, and slowed economic growth. Despite this, Indonesia's climate risks have received limited attention compared to Pacific island nations, even though disruptions in Indonesia could have broader cross-border consequences for Southeast Asia and neighboring Australia. The scenario presented is not a forecast but a tool to explore pathways of compounding risks and prompt strategic responses. The report urges

both Indonesia and Australia to intensify collaboration, with Australia encouraged to adopt a whole-of-government approach to support its neighbor in climate risk mitigation and regional resilience-building as the climate crisis accelerates.

Guessing the Impact of Trump Tariffs on Global Climate Action

—Pradipta Pandu Mustika, *Kompas*, 8 April 2025

On April 2, U.S. President Donald Trump announced sweeping new tariffs on imports from key global trading partners—including the EU, China, Mexico, India, and Southeast Asia—aiming to reduce the U.S. trade deficit but sparking fears of a global trade war. Experts warn the policy could disrupt global economic stability, drive up the cost of clean energy technologies, and hinder international climate action. The tariffs affect vital components like wind turbine parts and lithium batteries, with Trump imposing rates as high as 46%, threatening U.S. clean energy development and global value chains. Researchers from institutions including Princeton University and the Centre for European Reform highlight risks to carbon pricing, low-carbon investments, and emissions reduction efforts, particularly in steel and aluminum industries. However, some view the shift as a strategic opening for developing countries—especially China, which leads in clean tech manufacturing—to dominate the global renewable energy market. While critics argue Trump's policy is environmentally and economically regressive, others assert the global energy transition will persist, with or without U.S. leadership.

Global temperatures at near historic highs in March

—AFP, *TheJakartaPost*, 8 April 2025

Global temperatures remained at historic highs in March 2024, with Europe recording its hottest March ever and the world marking its second-warmest, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service on Tuesday. The ongoing heat streak, which began in July 2023, has now seen nearly every month exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels — a critical threshold set by the Paris climate accord. March was 1.6°C hotter than pre-industrial times, with Europe's temperatures surpassing the previous March record by 0.26°C. The continent also experienced contrasting rainfall extremes, with some areas seeing their driest March in decades and others their wettest. Scientists, including Friederike Otto of Imperial College London, emphasize that these anomalies confirm the escalating impact of human-induced climate change. Beyond temperature, the warming has intensified extreme weather, fueling deluges, droughts, cyclones, and heatwaves, such as those in Central Asia and Argentina last month. Despite the expected cooling from the waning El Niño, temperatures remain abnormally high, leading experts to re-evaluate contributing climate drivers amid what is likely Earth's hottest period in 125,000 years.

Analysis: Royalty hike plan backfires on sluggish mining sector

—Tenggara Strategics, *TheJakartaPost*, 4 April 2025

The government's plan to raise royalties on 12 mining commodities—including nickel, copper, gold, and coal—has sparked backlash from industry players who warn it could worsen investment conditions amid low commodity prices and rising operational costs. Introduced during a downturn in the mining sector, the proposed hike revises two key regulations (PP 26/2022 and PP 15/2022) to increase non-tax revenue (PNBP) as state revenue contracts and the government faces a 2.53% budget deficit. However, industry groups argue the move contradicts efforts to strengthen downstream industries, particularly in critical minerals like nickel, whose benchmark price dropped from \$35,995 per dmt in 2022 to \$15,822 in 2024. Unlike the 2022 royalty hike, this proposal comes when coal and metal ore prices are

slumping—coal fell to \$109.77/ton in March 2024—causing PNPB to decline by 16.2% and mining sector growth to contract. Indonesian Energy, Mineral and Coal Suppliers Association, Aspebindo, has urged a dynamic royalty system linked to price fluctuations. Without such adjustments, stakeholders fear the policy will damage Indonesia’s global competitiveness and deter investment in key resource sectors.

Ground-level ozone pollution poses growing threat to planetary health

—Sean Mowbray, *Mongabay*, 2 April 2025

Ground-level ozone pollution — a major threat to human health, agriculture, and biodiversity — is worsening globally due to rising temperatures and stalled weather systems caused by climate change, according to experts interviewed by Mongabay. Unlike the beneficial stratospheric ozone layer, tropospheric ozone is a toxic pollutant formed when methane, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds from vehicles, industry, agriculture, and wildfires react with sunlight. In 2024, the hottest year on record, ozone levels spiked during European heatwaves, highlighting the so-called “ozone-climate penalty.” Scientists warn the problem will intensify, especially in tropical nations like Indonesia, India, and parts of Africa and Latin America. Ozone’s impacts are severe: it damages lungs, contributes to cardiovascular issues, and is linked to over a million premature deaths annually. It also reduces crop yields, impairs forest growth, and weakens the Earth’s ability to absorb carbon, worsening climate change. Experts urge swift action to reduce ozone precursors and address climate change, as ozone pollution knows no borders and its long-range impacts endanger planetary health.

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E. Pollution, Waste, Water and Disaster

Bottled Drinking Water Becomes Mainstay, Citizens' Wallets Are Under Pressure

—Margaretha Puteri Rosalina, M Pascalia Judith J and Albertus Krisna, *Kompas*, 8 April 2025

As 2030 nears, Indonesia is falling short of its Sustainable Development Goal to provide safe and affordable drinking water for all, with technical drinking water service coverage dropping to 26.77% in 2023, down from 35.15% in 2019, due to population growth outpacing service expansion, according to the Ministry of Public Works. Only 11.8% of households have access to safe drinking water, far below the 2030 target of 45%, pushing many—especially low-income families—to rely on bottled and refillable water. While WHO deems these sources unsustainable, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics shows a growing reliance: by 2023, 40.64% of households used bottled water, up from 36.28% in 2018, with Jakarta topping usage at 79.4%. Refilled water, used more by the poor due to affordability (Rp 9,000–10,000/gallon), dominates over branded bottled water, which costs twice as much. Concerns over the safety and appearance of tap or well water, especially during heavy rains or due to contamination, drive this shift. Residents cite better perceived quality, practicality, and poor tap water access as key reasons.

Two Sides of Jakarta's Air Quality Improvement

—Fransiskus Wisnu Wardhana Dhany, *Kompas*, 8 April 2025

Jakarta's air quality improved significantly during the 2025 Eid al-Fitr holiday period (March 24–April 6), with pollutant levels dropping 43–75% compared to 2024 and 18–69% compared to 2023, according to a report by the Jakarta Environmental Agency released Tuesday (April 8). This improvement, however, was attributed to reduced human activity and rainfall, not to systematic policies. Head of the agency, Asep Kuswanto, noted the temporary drop in PM2.5 levels fell into good to moderate categories, but pollution spiked again as normal activities resumed post-holiday. Greenpeace Indonesia's Bondan Andriyanu emphasized that natural factors, such as rain, likely played a major role and criticized the lack of sustained, science-based pollution control measures. He called for annual pollution source identification studies and real-time data transparency to guide targeted emissions policies. Bondan also stressed the need for coordinated efforts beyond Jakarta, involving the central government and

neighboring regions, especially in managing emissions from coal-fired power plants and industrial zones. Without consistent data and cross-sector collaboration, Jakarta's air pollution control remains reactive and inadequate.

World Health Day 2025

—FX Wikan Indrarto, *Kompas*, 7 April 2025

On April 7, World Health Day will mark the start of a year-long global campaign themed *“Healthy beginnings, hopeful futures”* to spotlight maternal and newborn health, urging governments and communities to eliminate preventable deaths and invest in long-term well-being. Every year, nearly 300,000 women die due to pregnancy or childbirth complications, over 2 million babies die in their first month, and another 2 million are stillborn—amounting to one preventable death every seven seconds. The campaign responds to alarming statistics: 80% of countries are not on track to meet the 2030 maternal survival target, and one-third will miss the newborn mortality goal. Most neonatal deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries due to poverty, poor sanitation, and limited access to quality health care. WHO calls for better laws, stronger healthcare systems, skilled health workers, and four critical postnatal visits to ensure survival in the most vulnerable first days of life. The campaign aligns with international plans like ENAP and EPMM, pushing for targeted investments that offer high returns by saving lives and reducing illness for mothers and children globally.

Aid cuts could have ‘pandemic-like effects’ on maternal deaths, WHO warns

—Kat Lay, *TheGuardian*, 6 April 2025

Global maternal deaths risk rising sharply due to funding cuts by wealthy nations, with UN agencies warning of “pandemic-like effects,” especially in war-torn regions. In a report released Sunday, April 6, 2025, the UN revealed that progress in reducing pregnancy and childbirth deaths—down 40% globally from 2000 to 2023—is slowing and could reverse. Conflict-affected and fragile countries, home to just 25% of global births, account for 61% of maternal deaths. The situation worsened after COVID-19, which added 40,000 maternal deaths in 2021 due to healthcare disruptions. Experts, including WHO's Dr. Bruce Aylward and UNICEF's Catherine Russell, stressed that U.S. aid cuts have already shuttered clinics, disrupted medicine supplies, and led to job losses for health workers, jeopardizing life-saving care for the most vulnerable. Maternal death risk is shockingly unequal—1 in 66 for girls in poor countries versus 1 in 7,933 in rich nations, and 1 in 51 in war zones. UN officials urged urgent global investment in midwives, nurses, and community health services to prevent further backsliding.

Gov't Predicts 72,300 Tons of Waste During 2025 Eid Homecoming, Surpassing Last Year

—M Faiz Zaki, *TempoNews*, 27 March 2025

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry is anticipating a significant rise in waste during the 2025 Eid al-Fitr holiday, with an estimated 72,300 tons expected to accumulate over the seven- to ten-day homecoming period, Minister Hanif Faisol Nurofiq announced on March 26, at Rest Area KM 57A in Karawang. This projection, based on the Transportation Ministry's estimate of 146 million travelers, surpasses the 58,000 tons of waste recorded during Eid in 2024 despite a lower number of travelers this year. The increase is believed to be linked to the longer holiday duration. Each person is projected to generate between 49.52 and 70.74 grams of waste per day depending on the holiday's length. To mitigate the impact, the ministry issued Circular Letter Number 02 of 2025, urging local governments to implement

flexible yet effective waste management strategies. Hanif also encouraged travelers to reduce waste by using reusable containers, emphasizing the continued importance of waste reduction and proper disposal practices across regions.

F. Technology, Investment and Finance

Indonesia braces for economic slowdown as U.S. tariffs threaten exports, currency, jobs: experts

—Huaxia, *Xinhua*, 4 April 2025

Newly imposed 32% U.S. tariffs on Indonesian imports, announced in April 2025, are expected to severely impact Indonesia's economy by year-end, potentially triggering a recession in the fourth quarter, economic experts warned on Thursday. Bhima Yudhistira, Executive Director of the Center for Economic and Law Studies, said the tariffs would slash export volumes, especially in the automotive, electronics, apparel, and textile sectors. Lukman Leong of Doo Financial Futures noted the rupiah is under intense pressure, compounded by the volatile U.S. dollar index following President Donald Trump's aggressive tariff policy. Analysts said the current market sentiment is "very negative and risk-off," urging Bank Indonesia to intervene to stabilize the currency. Economist Wijayanto Samirin from Paramadina University predicted that the tariffs would not only hinder the nation's projected 5% economic growth but also disrupt the stock market and lead to widespread layoffs in labor-intensive export sectors. The warnings underscore the broad economic threat the tariffs pose to Indonesia's trade, financial stability, and employment outlook.

Export Dreams and MSME Survival Strategies

—Dionisius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 2 April 2025

Lebaran 2025 has brought different economic dynamics for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across Indonesia, as consumer spending declines amid widespread frugality. Business owners like Wahyuningsih, a spice beverage producer in Surakarta, and Nindita Nareswari of the Huma Gawin Itah (HGI) MSME group in Palangka Raya, reported lower sales despite festive promotions, with Nindita's hampers dropping by 60 percent compared to last year. The shift in consumer behavior—opting to make snacks at home or reduce spending—has forced SMEs to adapt by offering economical packages and selling via online platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia. While the domestic market tightens, many SMEs are eyeing international opportunities. However, challenges such as high export standards, including the need for HACCP certification, require collaboration and investment—like HGI's shared production kitchen. Meanwhile, the government continues to support exports, with the Ministry of Trade recently overseeing the first shipment of sustainable pottery products by East Java MSMEs to Japan, valued at over \$48,000. These developments highlight both the resilience and aspirations of Indonesia's SMEs during challenging times.

Growing demand for patchouli oil is driving the industry in Indonesia, but at what cost?

—Edna Tarigan, Dita Alangkara and Fadlan Syam, *APNews*, 29 March 2025

In Simboro, West Sulawesi, rising global demand for patchouli oil—driven by social media and wellness trends—has led to a boom in farming and distillation, but at the cost of rapid

deforestation and increased landslide risk, officials warned. Farmers like Haruna, 42, and Hardi, 36, are drawn to patchouli's high market value, with prices reaching up to 2.4 million rupiah (\$147) per kilogram. Patchouli oil, derived from the *Pogostemon cablin* plant, is widely used in perfumes and cosmetics and thrives in Indonesia's tropical climate, which supplies over 80% of the global market. However, local authorities, including the head of West Sulawesi's Environment and Forestry Agency, Zulkifli Manggazali, caution that planting on steep slopes accelerates erosion and landslides. A recent tragedy in Mamuju underscored this risk. Patchouli's short land-use cycle further exacerbates forest loss, as new areas are cleared after only two harvests. Officials urge transitioning to longer-term, sustainable crops like durian to balance economic needs with environmental protection.

G. Human Rights, Indigenous People and Gender Equality

Death sentences keep rising in Indonesia as global executions hit new record: Amnesty

—Radhiyya Indra, *The Jakarta Post*, 8 April 2025

Indonesia continues to issue an increasing number of death sentences, contributing significantly to global figures as executions worldwide reached their highest level since 2015, according to 2024 Amnesty International's Death Sentences and Executions. The report recorded 1,518 executions globally in 2024—a 32 percent increase from 2023—despite only 15 countries carrying out executions, the lowest number recorded for the second year in a row. While Indonesia has not conducted any executions since 2016, its courts sentenced 85 people to death last year, 64 for drug-related offenses and 21 for murder, positioning the country among nations still actively handing down capital punishment. Amnesty International Indonesia's executive director Usman Hamid urged the government to follow Malaysia's lead, which abolished the mandatory death penalty in 2023, and align with the global shift toward abolition. Of the world's nations, 145 have abolished the death penalty in law or practice, and 113 are fully abolitionist. Amnesty's secretary-general Agnès Callamard emphasized that the declining number of executing countries signals growing rejection of this "cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment."

Meeting with Commission III of the DPR, Civil Society Coalition Highlights Several Irregularities in RKUHAP

—Willy Medi Christian Nababan, *Kompas*, 8 April 2025

A coalition of civil society organizations, including YLBHI, ICJR, LBH Jakarta, and Amnesty International, met with Commission III of the Indonesian House of Representatives at the Parliamentary Complex in Jakarta on March 8, to voice concerns over irregularities in the draft Criminal Procedure Code (RKUHAP). The closed-door meeting with Commission Chair Habiburokhman aimed to address opaque legislative processes and clauses that could enable abuse of power by law enforcement. Coalition members, including YLBHI Chair Muhammad Isnur and ILRC's Siti Aminah Tardi, emphasized the need for transparency and human rights-based reforms, citing past incidents of wrongful arrests and abuses. They criticized the draft's failure to ensure accountability and called for expanded judicial oversight, particularly in coercive measures and pretrial mechanisms. However, Habiburokhman dismissed the coalition's proposals as too radical, sparking disappointment over the DPR's apparent reluctance to improve the legal system. The groups warned that without genuine

reform, the RKUHAP risks undermining justice for all, from ordinary citizens to marginalized communities, urging the DPR to fulfill its constitutional duty to create just, accountable laws.

Singer Rara Sekar draws inspiration from nature, encourages people to return to simple living

—Rodney Muhumuza and Vicram Sombu, *APNews*, 5 April 2025

Indonesian singer and climate activist Rara Sekar, who goes by hara, performed the poignant song *Kabut Putih* on April 3, at the Skoll World Forum in Oxford, England, using music to inspire climate action and remembrance. The song, written in 1971 by political prisoner Zubaidah Nuntjik, resonates with Indonesia's history of political violence and environmental degradation. Sekar told the Associated Press the song is “very healing,” especially during moments of despair in her activism. A member of the New York-based Found Sound Nation, Sekar uses performance and community engagement to raise awareness of climate issues in Indonesia, one of the world's top greenhouse gas emitters due to deforestation, fossil fuel burning, and peatland fires. Her activism promotes a low-waste lifestyle rooted in foraging and communal living, including cycling campaigns across Java to reconnect people with nature. Indonesia, home to the world's third-largest rainforest, has lost over 74 million hectares to development since 1950. Sekar said her creative work aims to restore balance between humans and nature through song and action.

Sumbanese Women Save Ancestral Traditions

—Fransiskus Pati Herin, *Kompas*, 2 April 2025

In Maubokul Village, East Sumba, the traditional guessing game *padikang* is being kept alive by children, despite the erosion of Sumbanese traditions. On March 25, Rambu Ana Intan Tamu Ina (31) accompanied them, reflecting on how local customs are fading due to religious shifts and modernization. The Merapu belief system, once central to Sumbanese identity, has been marginalized despite official recognition, leading to the loss of traditional ceremonies, houses, and cultural expressions like dances. Even naming conventions and household greetings have shifted, replacing indigenous terms with external influences. Intan, the only daughter in a patriarchal family, was denied higher education but became a teacher and advocate for women's and indigenous rights. She pioneered early childhood education in her village and has worked on domestic violence cases, including a 2024 murder investigation in Waingapu. Through her activism, she continues to fight for Sumba's cultural preservation and gender equality, striving to ensure that local traditions and women's rights are not forgotten.

A pig's head and decapitated rats: a new era of intimidation dawns for journalists in Indonesia

—Kate Lamb, *TheGuardian*, 28 March 2025

Investigative journalist Francisca Christy Rosana received a mutilated pig's head in a box at her office on March 19, followed by six decapitated rats, in a wave of threats against Tempo media, one of the country's most critical news organizations. The threats, considered a chilling escalation of intimidation tactics, come as President Prabowo Subianto faces scrutiny over press freedom. Tempo's reporting, including coverage of electoral scandals and military law revisions, is believed to have triggered the attacks. Online harassment and doxxing of Francisca and her family further heightened concerns. The Alliance of Independent Journalists and the Committee to Protect Journalists condemned the threats as symbolic death threats, warning of growing dangers to press freedom under Prabowo's leadership. Critics argue that the government's initial dismissive response, including a presidential spokesperson's remark to “just cook it,” signals tolerance for attacks on journalists. With

media self-censorship rising, the incident raises fears over Indonesia's press independence in its post-Suharto democratic era. Police are investigating, but concerns over press safety persist.

I. Government Priority Program

Eid, Momentum for Prabowo Government to Evaluate

—Yohanes Mega Hendarto, *Kompas*, 7 April 2025

A poll on March 17–20 conducted by Kompas Research & Development reveals a divided Indonesian public under President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka's new administration. While 53.9% of respondents reported no concern, 44.1% expressed anxiety, mostly due to recurring corruption scandals over the past three months. These include the naming of suspects in illegal tin mining linked to PT Timah, corruption at Pertamina involving crude oil management, and financial irregularities at the Indonesian Export Financing Institution and Bank BJB. Additional concerns stemmed from budget efficiency measures introduced by Presidential Instruction No. 1/2025, which cut Rp 306.69 trillion in state spending, affecting regional economies and slowing projected economic growth to 4.7%. Scarcity of subsidized 3-kg gas cylinders and controversial new policies, such as tax hikes and the delayed appointment of civil servants, also fueled dissatisfaction. Despite this, 97.2% of respondents still support giving the government a chance to improve, especially in policy communication. During Eid, 53.6% favored the government offering a public apology, symbolizing a mix of forgiveness and demand for accountability.

Prabowo Wants Food Self-Sufficiency: TNI Takes Care of Rice, Police Plant Corn

—CompareBusiness, *Kumparan*, 7 April 2025

Deputy Minister of Agriculture Sudaryono clarified the roles of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the National Police (Polri) in supporting national food self-sufficiency efforts. He stated on January 14, at the Presidential Palace Complex in Central Jakarta, that the TNI is tasked with overseeing rice production, from planting to absorption, as part of its Military Operations Other Than War, contributing to social welfare by mobilizing communities and improving harvest outcomes. Meanwhile, the Polri is involved in corn-related programs, not by directly planting but by encouraging and supporting communities and agricultural extension workers, particularly in Papua, where promoting corn cultivation is also aimed at reducing the influence of armed groups through welfare-based approaches. Sudaryono emphasized that this collaboration is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ministries and security institutions to secure food commodities—TNI focusing on rice and Polri on corn—as part of broader efforts to ensure national food security and improve public welfare.

President Prabowo envisions Indonesia as world's food barn

—Livia and Kenzu, *AntaraNews*, 7 April 2025

President Prabowo Subianto voiced confidence that Indonesia could become the "world's food barn," as he led a simultaneous rice harvest across 14 provinces from Majalengka, West Java on April 7. Speaking with regional governors, he emphasized that this vision is achievable through inclusive policies that prioritize farmers' welfare and land productivity.

Governors including Muzakir Manaf (Aceh), Lalu Muhammad Iqbal (West Nusa Tenggara), and Rahmat Mirzani Djausal (Lampung) praised new government initiatives such as setting the price of unhulled rice at Rp6,500 per kilogram and the direct distribution of fertilizers and agricultural machinery. These measures, they reported, have significantly boosted harvests, with South Sulawesi alone producing 1,993 tons of unhulled rice in the first quarter of 2025—matching its total output for the previous year. Prabowo stated that Indonesia not only aims to achieve national food security but also aspires to assist countries facing food shortages. He expressed hope that more farmers across the archipelago would soon benefit from policies designed to ensure prosperity and resilience in the agricultural sector.

UNESCO Urges Schools to Prioritize Nutritional Value of School Meals

—Najla Nur Fauziah, *TempoNews*, 7 April 2025

UNESCO released a new report on April 7 titled [Education and nutrition: Learn to eat well](#), calling for governments worldwide to improve the nutritional quality of school meals and integrate food education into curricula. While nearly half of the world's primary school students now access school meals, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay emphasized the need to focus on what children are eating, advocating for balanced meals made with fresh produce to support their health and learning. The report revealed that in 2024, school meals boosted student enrollment by 9% and attendance by 8%, yet in 2022, 27% of school meals were developed without input from nutritionists. Only 93 of 187 countries had food-related school standards, and fewer regulated food sold in cafeterias or vending machines. With childhood obesity doubling since 1990 and food insecurity rising, UNESCO warned that insufficient nutrition standards pose serious risks. The organization pledged to provide tools to help governments and educators promote healthier school environments and support global coordination through the Coalition for School Meals.

Waiting for the Land Bank Agency's Role for Housing

—Brigita Maria Lukita G, *Kompas*, 1 April 2025

The Land Bank Agency, established by the Indonesian government in 2021 under Government Regulation No. 64 and Presidential Regulation No. 113, is under scrutiny for its limited contribution to the national target of building three million homes. Despite possessing 33,116 hectares of land assets, only 73.04 hectares—or 0.22%—have been allocated for housing, mainly in Batubara (North Sumatra), Tanjung Pinang, Purwakarta, and West Bandung. Housing experts, including Muhammad Joni from the HUD Institute, criticize the agency for lacking a clear roadmap and prioritization of affordable housing for low-income communities. The agency, accountable to the President, aims to utilize underused assets, including confiscated and ex-BLBI lands, to provide legally secure land for developers at prices ranging from IDR 80,000 to 120,000 per square meter. Head of the agency, Parman Nataatmadja, emphasized collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Housing to accelerate land distribution. Observers warn that without transparency, strategic planning, and coordination, the agency risks adding bureaucracy instead of solving housing shortages.

II. Indonesia in Politics and Geopolitics

President Prabowo: We Think Big Because Indonesia is Big (3-End)

—Nina Susilo, *Kompas*, 8 April 2025

On Sunday, April 6, President Prabowo Subianto held a four-hour discussion with editors-in-chief of national media at his residence, Padepokan Garudayaksa in Hambalang, Bogor, to outline his administration's progress and priorities, particularly in the social sector. Under the "President Prabowo Answers" session, he emphasized key initiatives such as the free nutritious meals program (MBG), which has reached over three million beneficiaries and is projected to meet its target of 82.9 million by October or November. Prabowo also cited the reallocation of state budgets—saving up to IDR 22 trillion from official travel—to fund education reforms, including plans to build 200 public boarding schools annually for underprivileged children. He stressed that addressing child hunger and stunting is a moral imperative, drawing on his campaign experiences and invoking international models. While acknowledging challenges in execution, Prabowo vowed to fight poverty and inequality through bold reforms, increased oversight, and ambitious yet grounded planning, asserting that feeding and educating children is central to Indonesia's democratic and economic advancement.

A Series of Prabowo's Responses, from the Revision of the TNI Law to the Eradication of Corruption (2)

—Nino Citra Anugrahanto, Iqbal Basyari, Nina Susilo, Cyprianus Anto Saptowalyono, Sutta Dharmasaputra, *Kompas*, 7 April 2025

President Prabowo Subianto addressed mounting public concerns over several contentious issues during a media interview with seven editors-in-chief at his private residence in Hambalang, Bogor, on April 6. Nearly six months into his presidency since October 2024, Prabowo defended the rapid revision of the TNI Law, which critics argue threatens civil supremacy and risks reviving the military's dual function from the New Order era. He justified the urgency of the revision as necessary to extend the retirement age of top military officials and maintain leadership stability. Amid nationwide protests and accusations of declining transparency and increased militarism, Prabowo insisted there was no hidden agenda, emphasizing that military personnel assigned to civil roles would retire first and that civil supremacy remained intact. Responding to demonstrations that erupted in cities like Jakarta and Surabaya, some of which ended in chaos, he affirmed the constitutional right to protest but warned against paid agitators and pledged to investigate any abuses by security forces. Prabowo reiterated his trust in the TNI and urged critics to remain objective.

Facing Trump's Tariff Policy, Prabowo Mentions Potential for Domestic Markets and New Markets (1)

—Nina Susilo, Cyprianus Anto Saptowalyono, Sutta Dharmasaputra, Iqbal Basyari and Nino Citra Anugrahanto, *Kompas*, 7 April 2025

During a discussion with media leaders at his private residence in Padepokan Garudayaksa, Hambalang, Bogor, President Prabowo Subianto addressed the potential economic impact of former U.S. President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff policy. He warned that Indonesia's labor-intensive industries—textiles, garments, footwear, and furniture—could be hit hard, urging the country to reduce dependence on the American market and diversify exports, especially to emerging regions like Africa. Prabowo emphasized Indonesia must "stand on its own feet" and prepare long-term strategies instead of relying solely on free market ideals shaped by Western economic doctrines. He cited efforts including ministerial visits to Malaysia and upcoming discussions in Washington to mitigate potential disruptions. He acknowledged the U.S.'s right to protect its interests but stressed the importance of resilience and domestic market strength. Amid global uncertainty, he expressed confidence in Indonesia's strong economic fundamentals, noting past survival through multiple crises.

Prabowo called for unity and dialogue, underlining the need for proactive planning in response to global market shifts.

Indonesia responds to U.S. tariffs with strategic measures, diplomatic engagement

—Stefanno Sulaiman, John Mair and Christian Schmollinger, *Reuters*, 7 April 2025

Indonesia will pursue diplomatic negotiations with the United States to address the 32% tariff imposed by the Trump administration on its exports, Prabowo Subianto announced it during a rice harvest event in West Java. The new tariffs, set to take effect April 9, affect six Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia. Rather than retaliate, Jakarta plans to send a high-level delegation led by Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto, who met with over 100 business associations to prepare a proposal. The plan includes increasing imports of U.S. goods such as cotton, wheat, oil and gas, easing non-tariff barriers, and potentially relaxing local content requirements for American tech firms. Indonesia, which recorded a \$16.8 billion trade surplus with the U.S. last year—its third-largest export market—aims to protect its labor-intensive industries. The tariffs come amid growing economic strain, as Indonesia grapples with a slumping rupiah and a stock market downturn. Bank Indonesia has pledged aggressive intervention in currency markets when they reopen after a public holiday.

Indonesia responds to U.S. tariffs with strategic measures, diplomatic engagement

—Huaxia, *Xinhua*, 4 April 2025

The Indonesian government is ramping up economic and diplomatic efforts to counter the impact of a new 32 percent U.S. tariff on key exports, which will take effect on April 9, 2025. According to a press release from the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs on Thursday, the tariffs will affect Indonesia's electronics, textiles, footwear, palm oil, rubber, and fisheries sectors. In response, the government is assessing the potential economic fallout and preparing mitigation strategies. Susiwiwono Moegiarso, secretary of the coordinating ministry, emphasized Indonesia's commitment to stabilizing Government Securities yields, maintaining Rupiah exchange rate stability, and ensuring foreign exchange liquidity in collaboration with Bank Indonesia. President Prabowo Subianto has also directed his cabinet to accelerate structural reforms and streamline regulations, especially regarding Non-Tariff Measures, to boost the country's trade competitiveness. On the diplomatic front, Indonesia is engaging with Malaysia, current ASEAN chair, to formulate a collective regional response, as all 10 ASEAN member states are expected to face similar tariff challenges from the United States.

Eid 1998, Concern Amidst the Monetary Crisis

—Raynard Kristian Bonanio Pardede, *Kompas*, 2 April 2025

Indonesia's economic outlook ahead of Eid 2025 appears bleak as the rupiah weakens against the US dollar, layoffs spread across industrial sectors, and the Jakarta Composite Index plunges to a pre-pandemic low in mid-March. The Ministry of Transportation projects a 24.34 percent drop in Eid homecoming travelers compared to 2024, with only 146.48 million people expected to travel. Consumer spending has also stagnated, with the Mandiri Spending Index rising just 1.4 percent in early Ramadan—far below increases seen in 2023 and 2024. This somber atmosphere has drawn comparisons to the 1997–1998 monetary crisis, when Indonesia faced severe inflation, mass layoffs, and halted infrastructure projects due to soaring imported raw material costs and dried-up liquidity. Historical Kompas archives reveal that by early 1998, more than a million workers were affected by layoffs, particularly in the construction, banking, and manufacturing sectors. As in 1998, this year's Eid may feel muted,

with quieter transportation hubs, discounted tickets, and workers banding together to return home, echoing the hardship and austerity of past crises.

Lights out: Bali guards protect island's day of silence

—I Made Argawa/AFP, *TheJakartaPost*, 30 March 2025

Bali came to a complete standstill on March 29, as the island observed Nyepi, the annual Hindu Day of Silence, during which locals and tourists are required to remain indoors for 24 hours starting at 6 a.m. The unique tradition, marking the Balinese New Year, prohibits travel, work, entertainment, and even the use of lights, with the international airport and streets shut down. Thousands of *Pecalang*—traditional village security guards—patrol neighborhoods to ensure strict compliance, including educating non-Hindus about the sacred day. Exceptions are granted only for essential services like hospitals. The day follows the vibrant *Ogoh-ogoh* effigy-burning ritual, symbolizing the banishment of evil spirits. Nyepi, a public holiday since the 1980s, encourages deep self-reflection, renewal, and environmental harmony, as pollution drops noticeably during the island-wide pause. While the majority of Indonesia is Muslim, over 80% of Bali's population practices a local form of Hinduism. Officials emphasize the importance of preserving this spiritual and cultural tradition, with violators—especially tourists—risking warnings, arrest, or even deportation for non-compliance.