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Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest

2024 Issue 23 — 14 November

*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

[Traditional Fishermen Repeatedly Arrested by Malaysian Authorities, Reflecting Weakness of Indonesian Maritime Diplomacy](#)

—Pandur Wiyoga, *Kompas*, 11 November 2024

Throughout 2024, Malaysian authorities arrested at least 31 traditional Indonesian fishermen from Riau and the Riau Islands, marking a diplomatic issue between Indonesia and Malaysia. The latest incident involved three fishermen from Natuna, arrested on November 9 for fishing in Malaysian waters near the border with Sarawak. This raises concerns over the 2012 Indonesia-Malaysia Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which allows for expulsion, not arrest, unless criminal activities are involved. The MOU is being seen as violated due to the increasing arrests. In addition to the recent incident, 17 fishermen from Natuna, along with fishermen from Bintan and Bengkalis, were arrested earlier in the year. Fishermen usually face months of imprisonment and high fines. Experts argue that Indonesia should summon Malaysia's ambassador for an explanation and address the ongoing issue. The fishermen's arrests typically occur in overlapping waters where EEZ

claims between the two nations remain unresolved. Calls are made for the new Indonesian government to take stronger action to protect fishermen and resolve the maritime dispute.

[Indonesia-China strengthen cooperation in fisheries sector: Minister](#)

—Muhammad Harianto and Resinta Sulistiyandari, *AntaraNews*, 10 November 2024

During President Prabowo Subianto's state visit to China, Indonesia's Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, strengthened fisheries cooperation by signing the Technical Cooperation Guidelines (TCG) with Chinese Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Han Jun in Beijing on November 9. The signing, witnessed by Presidents Prabowo and Xi Jinping, follows an arrangement made in September 2023. The TCG focuses on joint ventures, vessels, fishing quotas, and sustainable fisheries practices, with an emphasis on fish capture, product processing, and onshore infrastructure, such as fishing ports. It also includes skill exchange, training, and data sharing. The collaboration aims to improve fisheries worker welfare and community development around fishing areas, while enhancing the downstream sector. Both parties are committed to strict supervision to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU Fishing) and to protect marine resources. This strategic partnership supports food security, boosts state revenue, and benefits local fishing communities.

[How the oceans fared at the COP16 biodiversity conference in Colombia](#)

John Cannon, *Mongabay*, 8 November 2024

At the COP16 summit in Cali, Colombia (October 21–November 2), delegates agreed on a protocol to protect the high seas, covering two-thirds of the world's oceans. This marks a step toward the U.N.'s 30×30 biodiversity goal to protect 30% of oceans by 2030. The Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) was ratified by 14 nations. Funding for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in international waters was secured, including \$51.7 million from philanthropic organizations. Despite these advances, only 8.5% of oceans are currently protected, and progress toward the 30% target remains slow. Other developments included Portugal's new MPA around the Azores and discussions on biodiversity funding mechanisms, such as biodiversity credits and a Global Fund for Coral Reefs. Indonesia, with its extensive marine resources, plays a crucial role in ocean

protection, with efforts to expand its own MPAs. Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) also gained greater representation in conservation discussions.

[Indonesia's Opportunity Opens to Push Fisheries Market to the US](#)

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

Indonesia aims to capitalize on market opportunities arising from the protectionist policies of U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump, particularly in processed fishery products. With the U.S. being the primary destination for Indonesia's fishery exports, the country is focusing on attracting Chinese investment to develop seaweed processing factories to target the U.S. market. Indonesia, the world's largest producer of tropical seaweed, has seen significant growth in seaweed processing, especially in hydrocolloids like carrageenan and agar, which have clear market demand. However, challenges persist, including U.S. policies prioritizing domestic production, which could impact Indonesia's shrimp exports. Indonesia is currently facing an anti-dumping investigation concerning shrimp exports, with a temporary anti-dumping duty imposed. This comes amid a decline in shrimp export values to the U.S. by 8.1% in 2024. To overcome these challenges, Indonesia is focusing on increasing the competitiveness of its fishery products, such as producing value-added items like breaded shrimp, which remain in demand in the U.S. despite trade difficulties.

[Indonesia fisheries minister eyes aquaculture expansion under Prabowo](#)

—M Ambari, *Mongabay*, 6 November 2024

Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, Indonesia's fisheries minister, has announced an ambitious plan to revitalize 78,000 hectares of unproductive shrimp ponds along Java's northern coast. Many of these ponds, some idle for over 30 years, will be restored using hybridization technology, with a successful 80-hectare trial in West Java as a model. Indonesia aims to improve shrimp production, diversify species, and boost exports, particularly to China and the U.S. By 2028, the country hopes to reach over \$500 million in shrimp exports to China. However, aquaculture growth has historically contributed to the loss of mangrove forests, with about 40% of Indonesia's mangroves destroyed in the past three decades. Minister Trenggono also plans to introduce a quota system, enhance fishery monitoring, and tackle plastic waste in coastal areas. The government is seeking to modernize aquaculture and address environmental challenges, including climate change and ecosystem degradation, while fostering a "blue economy" that creates jobs and promotes

sustainability. However, issues like labor abuse and environmental risks remain concerns.

B. Forests and Land Use

Satellite data detect appearance of new roads in primary forests in Borneo

—Shreya Dasgupta, *Mongabay*, 13 November 2024

Satellite data has detected the construction of new roads cutting through primary forests in the Barito River watershed, located in Central and South Kalimantan, Indonesia, near a protected area. This region has experienced significant deforestation, with over half of its original forest cover lost between 2001 and 2019. Recent imagery from Global Forest Watch (GFW) shows ongoing deforestation, particularly in primary forests just outside the Sungai Barito protected area. The new roads are part of a broader expansion of plantations, likely for wood fiber and oil palm, as indicated by Ministry of Forestry data. Between 1990 and 2019, land under plantations in the Barito watershed grew by over 1,100%, while primary forests, mangroves, and swamps declined. These roads appear to connect plantations, further encroaching on the primary forest. The forest in question is classified as a production forest, allowing for conversion into logging and pulpwood concessions. The expansion of plantations and deforestation in the region continues to be a significant environmental concern.

Reaching 319,856 Ha, Social Forestry in West Sumatra Reduces Deforestation

—Yola Sastra, *Kompas*, 11 November 2024

West Sumatra's social forestry program has expanded to cover 319,856 hectares as of August 2024, exceeding its annual target of 50,000 hectares. Managed by the West Sumatra Forestry Service, this initiative aims to reduce deforestation, support forest farmers, and promote sustainable forest use. Acting Head of the Forestry Service, Bambang Suyono, reported that forest farmers' monthly income rose to IDR 2.31 million in 2023, a notable increase from IDR 1.51 million in 2020. The program includes various schemes, such as community forests and forestry partnerships, which have shown positive environmental impacts, including increased forest cover by 3,884 hectares in 2023. The Indonesian Conservation Community (KKI) Warsi, a

partner in the initiative, recently awarded grants totaling IDR 985 million to 10 social forestry groups to further local enterprises in products like candlenut and eucalyptus oil. Group leader Marena Wati expressed that these funds support both economic growth and forest preservation, emphasizing the dual benefits of sustainable forestry practices for communities and the environment.

Supporting Free Nutritious Meals, Central Kalimantan Prepares 100,000 Hectares of Land to Build Milk Industry

—Dinosius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 11 November 2024

The Central Kalimantan Provincial Government is preparing 100,000 hectares of land in North Barito and Pulang Pisau to establish a milk factory and dairy farm, with investment from the Vietnamese company, True Happiness Group. The project is part of a national initiative to support the Free Nutritious Meals program in schools, with an initial 50,000 hectares designated for cattle farming. This facility aims to accommodate 250,000 cattle and will include a UHT milk and powdered milk processing plant. The investment will boost local economies and reduce food imports. Central Kalimantan's Governor, Sugianto Sabran, sees the project as key to realizing the region's goal of becoming a national food barn, complementing the Food Estate and rice field creation programs. However, environmental concerns have been raised by local experts, as the land consists largely comprised of company permits and agricultural areas. The conversion of forests or peatlands could lead to ecological damage, underscoring the need for careful planning and sustainable practices in this large-scale development.

Mining drove 1.4m hectares of forest loss in last 2 decades: Report

—Kristine Sabillo, *Mongabay*, 5 November 2024

A recent analysis by the World Resources Institute (WRI) reveals that global mining has caused extensive deforestation, even in protected areas and Indigenous lands. Between 2001 and 2020, mining-related activities destroyed nearly 1.4 million hectares of forest, releasing about 36 million metric tons of CO₂ annually—comparable to Finland's fossil fuel emissions in 2022. Most of this forest loss, around 90%, occurred in 11 countries, including Indonesia, Brazil, and Russia. The impact is especially dire in tropical rainforests and lands governed by Indigenous communities, who rely on these forests for sustenance and cultural practices. Coal and gold mining alone drove 71% of this deforestation. While forestry and wildfires cause more forest loss, the localized effects of mining—such as landslides and

flooding in Indonesia—are severe. The WRI recommends responsible mining practices, like reducing mineral demand and collaborating with local communities. Adopting circular economies for reusable energy minerals can help balance mining needs and forest conservation, emphasizing a shift to responsible extraction methods for a sustainable future.

[Radost Stanimirova, Nancy Harris, Katie Reytar, Ke Wang and Melissa Barbanell, Mining Is Increasingly Pushing into Critical Rainforests and Protected Areas](#). *World Resources Institute*. 23 October 2024.

Smallholders offer mixed reactions to calls for delay in EU deforestation law

—Aimee Gabay, *Mongabay*, 1 November 2024

The EU’s proposed delay of its anti-deforestation regulation (EUDR), which aims to block deforestation-linked products from entering the EU market, has drawn mixed reactions from smallholder farmers, particularly in Indonesia. Scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2025, the regulation faces concerns that smallholders, especially in regions like North Aceh, are unprepared. Farmers, such as Nigeria’s Onyekachi Anozie Uwalaka, view the delay as an opportunity to better comply, but others fear it could weaken momentum against deforestation. In Indonesia, where oil palm smallholders often lack legal land rights and access to support, the delay could disrupt efforts to map farm plots and improve traceability, according to experts like Denny Bhatara from Kaoem Telapak. Despite some progress, such as in cocoa production, where countries like Ivory Coast and Ghana have developed traceability systems, Indonesian smallholders face challenges without adequate government backing. Environmental groups, like Fern and Mighty Earth, warn that the delay could lead to increased deforestation, while others argue it provides time to refine the regulation. Government support is essential for ensuring farmers meet EUDR requirements and avoid market exclusion.

C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area

Satellite Images Expose Deforestation Evidence: Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve Ravaged by Palm Oil Plantations

—Irsyan Hasyim, *Tempo*, 13 November 2024

The Rainforest Action Network (RAN) and The Tree Map have revealed widespread deforestation in the Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve, Aceh, driven by illegal palm oil plantations. Using ultra-high-resolution satellite images, they tracked deforestation from June to September 2024. The Rawa Singkil Reserve, a critical habitat for Sumatran orangutans, has lost 2,577 hectares of forest since 2016, with 74% of it cleared. The satellite data shows detailed images of oil palm plantations in various growth stages, highlighting the illegal deforestation within the reserve. Despite the European Union's Deforestation Regulation, which banned products contributing to deforestation, RAN identified palm oil from the reserve in international supply chains, implicating companies like Royal Golden Eagle Group and Musim Mas Group. RAN's investigation also uncovered a new loophole in palm oil "laundering" by land speculators. The deforestation, occurring at four times the rate between 2021-2023, threatens the biodiversity of the region and releases stored carbon into the atmosphere. Indonesian authorities have launched an investigation into the illegal encroachment.

[Govt designs model to fully realize potential of conservation areas](#)

—Prisca Triferna Violleta and Cindy Frishanti Octavia, *AntaraNews*, 12 November 2024

Indonesia's Marine Affairs and Fisheries Ministry (KKP) has developed a model to optimize marine conservation areas, aiming to address climate change and biodiversity while supporting fisheries. Firdaus Agung Kunto Kurniawan, Director of Ecosystem and Aquatic Biota Conservation, announced this collaborative initiative with partners like the Nusantara Nature Conservation Foundation (YKAN) during the North Misool conservation area's establishment in Jakarta. The model emphasizes Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as vital to fisheries, climate change adaptation, biodiversity preservation, and the blue economy. Targeting 97.5 million hectares by 2045, this "30x45" goal would protect critical ecosystems, including mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs, which naturally store greenhouse gases. Kurniawan stressed the need for scientific methods to demonstrate conservation benefits not only for marine species but also for local communities' socio-economic resilience and climate adaptation. The plan highlights Indonesia's commitment to expanding MPAs effectively, showing measurable impacts on both environmental and community well-being.

Six Orangutans Released, One Repatriated from Thailand

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

The Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF) recently released six rehabilitated orangutans into Bukit Baka-Bukit Raya National Park in Central Kalimantan, in honor of National Heroes' Day. The orangutans, including Runtu, a 23-year-old repatriated from Thailand, have spent years undergoing rehabilitation to prepare for life in the wild. This release is the 44th such initiative by BOSF in Central Kalimantan, with a total of 533 orangutans reintroduced into protected areas since 2012. BOSF Chief Executive Officer Jamartin Sihite emphasized that the release serves as a reminder of the urgent need to protect Indonesia's endangered species and ecosystems, advocating for collaboration among various groups to sustain conservation efforts. The orangutans, symbolized as "heroes" for their resilience, play a vital role in the tropical rainforest ecosystem, according to the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency. Despite the progress, over 300 orangutans still await release, highlighting the ongoing need for habitat preservation and community involvement in conservation efforts.

Study shows, via clouded leopards, how to better protect forests

—Carolyn Cowan, *Mongabay*, 8 November 2024

New research in Borneo suggests that protected areas can be more effective if strategically located in regions at high risk of development, rather than in remote, rugged areas that are typically selected. The study, led by Ewan Macdonald from the University of Oxford, used the Sunda clouded leopard as a biodiversity indicator. This "assertive" conservation approach aims to preserve high-biodiversity zones under development pressure, as these areas are critical for sustaining ecosystems, genetic diversity, and forest carbon storage. Proactive conservation strategies, modeled in the study, retained greater forest connectivity and enhanced habitat connectivity by over 50% compared to current protected area practices. However, such strategies face economic and political challenges, as at-risk land is more costly and often contested by developers. The findings are expected to contribute to a spatial planning toolkit, allowing policymakers to make more informed decisions about land use to balance environmental and development needs. This approach could better protect Borneo's clouded leopards and similar species, offering a sustainable alternative to traditional conservation methods.

Macdonald, E. A., Cushman, S. A., Malhi, Y., & Macdonald, D. W. (2024). [Comparing expedient and proactive approaches to the planning of protected area networks on Borneo](#). *npj Biodiversity*, 3(1).

[UN talks on saving nature stumble on finance hurdle](#)

—Mariëtte le Roux and Benjamin Legendre, *AFP/TheJakartaPost*, 3 November 2024

The COP16 biodiversity conference in Colombia concluded without an agreement on increased funding for species protection, delaying final decisions due to a lack of quorum as delegates departed. The conference aimed to advance the 23 biodiversity targets set in 2022, including protecting 30% of land and sea, restoring ecosystems, and reducing pollution by 2030. Although the conference drew 23,000 delegates, negotiations split between developed and developing nations over funding mechanisms, with a proposed biodiversity fund rejected by the European Union, Switzerland, and Japan. Developing countries argued existing funds were insufficient and restrictive. Despite the deadlock on funding, delegates approved a fund to share profits from genetic data use with Indigenous communities, and a permanent body to represent Indigenous interests under the UN's CBD, marking significant wins. Yet, funding remains a critical issue, with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reporting only \$15 billion allocated of the \$200 billion target. The impasse reflects broader challenges in securing North-South financial transfers for environmental goals, raising concerns for future climate and biodiversity talks.

D. Climate Change, Energy and Mining

[Indonesia to build 75 GW of renewable energy in the next 15 years, COP29 envoy says](#)

—Stanley Widiyanto, Gayatri Suroyo and Lincoln Feast, *Reuters*, 13 November 2024

Indonesia aims to attract international investors to build 75 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy over the next 15 years, as part of its commitment under President Prabowo Subianto's administration, announced Indonesia's climate envoy Hashim Djojohadikusumo at COP29 in Baku. This goal is part of Indonesia's pledge to reach carbon neutrality by 2060, which includes phasing out coal and expanding renewable sources like solar, hydro, geothermal, and nuclear power. Currently,

Indonesia's 90 GW installed power capacity relies on coal for over half of its energy, with less than 15% from renewables and no nuclear capacity. The government plans to implement a 70,000 km green transmission line to support renewable energy expansion. However, analysts note that coal subsidies and unattractive renewable tariffs have historically hindered renewable development. Additionally, Indonesia plans to offer carbon offset projects and reforest 12.7 million hectares of degraded land, with potential interest from the Bezos Earth Fund, though no formal funding has been confirmed.

[Indonesia vows to 'enhance climate actions', Hashim tells COP29](#)

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 13 November 2024

At COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to aggressive climate action, announced by presidential envoy Hashim Djojohadikusumo, brother of President Prabowo Subianto. Representing Prabowo, Hashim outlined Indonesia's goals to achieve annual economic growth of over 8% while advancing net-zero emissions by 2060 or sooner, targeting a reduction of 1 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions. To support this, Indonesia aims to shift from fossil fuels to renewables, increasing its renewable energy capacity to 75 GW, up from 13 GW currently. Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni and Environment Minister Hanif Faisol Nurofiq joined Hashim in urging international collaboration to curb global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Indonesia's climate strategy includes reforesting over 12 million hectares of degraded land and advancing a blue economy by protecting marine ecosystems. Hashim highlighted the country's potential with saline aquifers capable of capturing 500 gigatonnes of carbon, requiring \$235 billion in investments and technology partnerships. The delegation also plans to strengthen Indonesia's carbon market using 557 million tonnes of verified carbon credits.

[COP29: What is the latest science on climate change?](#)

—Gloria Dickie, *Reuters/TheJakartaPost*, 12 November 2024

At COP29, climate change negotiations are under increased pressure as 2024 becomes the warmest year on record, with global temperatures approaching critical thresholds. New research suggests that the world may have already surpassed the 1.5°C warming threshold, a critical point for irreversible climate impacts. Ocean warming is intensifying storms like hurricanes, which are intensifying more rapidly and causing increased flooding, even in mountain towns. Wildfires are becoming more destructive due to drier conditions, with climate change linked to a significant

rise in wildfire deaths. Coral reefs are facing their largest bleaching event on record, and scientists are concerned that the Amazon rainforest may be approaching a tipping point due to severe droughts, threatening its ability to sustain itself. Studies also indicate that forests are struggling to absorb carbon dioxide, exacerbating the climate crisis. Additionally, volcanic eruptions may increase due to melting glaciers reducing pressure on the Earth's crust, and the Atlantic's ocean currents are weakening, posing risks to Europe's climate stability.

[Measuring the Impact of Trump's Victory on Climate Change](#)

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 9 November 2024

Donald Trump's re-election as the 47th U.S. president poses serious concerns for climate policy, both domestically and globally. Known for his climate denial, Trump previously rolled back environmental regulations, withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, and promoted fossil fuel production. Analysts expect a repeat of these policies, potentially including a withdrawal from the UN climate framework. Trump's stance could result in 4 billion additional tonnes of U.S. carbon emissions by 2030. Despite the economic momentum behind green energy, Trump's emphasis on fossil fuels and deregulation could slow U.S. climate progress. His campaign rhetoric includes repealing the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) investments in clean energy, though opposition from Congress and industry might make this difficult. Trump's approach could weaken climate commitments from other major emitters like China, but some experts believe that the EU and China may step up in global climate leadership. Climate advocates stress the urgency of sustained action, as this decade is crucial for climate progress. COP29 will test global resilience, with hopes for renewed commitments despite U.S. policy shifts.

[Pursuing Prabowo's Target, Ministry of Finance Evaluates Geothermal Development Incentives](#)

—Agnes Theodora, *Kompas*, 9 November 2024

Despite Indonesia's abundant geothermal resources, development remains limited. To achieve energy self-sufficiency by 2028-2029, the government aims to reassess current incentives and consider new ones. While tax holidays and exemptions on import duties and property taxes during exploration exist, these measures have not fully stimulated sector growth due to high costs and financial risks associated with geothermal projects. PT Geo Dipa Energi, a state-owned enterprise and significant player in the geothermal sector, has received government support through capital

injections and loan guarantees. Additionally, policy revisions have eased domestic sourcing requirements for certain machinery, helping reduce project costs. Investment in geothermal has improved slightly, but high initial expenses, exploration uncertainties, and low electricity tariffs continue to pose obstacles. Experts argue that tariffs need to rise to provide a reasonable return on investment. A feasible solution could involve increased subsidies or financial backing for Indonesia's state electricity company, PLN, enhancing its purchasing power and making geothermal projects more appealing to investors, thereby helping Indonesia unlock its geothermal potential.

E. Pollution, Waste and Disaster

Modern Waste Processing in Jakarta Not Yet Optimal, "Waste to Energy" Concept Not Yet Implemented

—Atiek Ishlahiyah Al Hamasy, *Kompas*, 11 November 2024

Waste management in Jakarta is under scrutiny for lacking modernization despite available budgets, as noted by DPRD member Nabilah Aboe Bakar Al Habsyi. She highlighted that the Waste-to-Energy (WTE) approach, which transforms waste into energy, remains unrealized. WTE technology, which generates electricity, heat, and fuel, could reduce waste while boosting local revenue and economic benefits for Jakarta. Additionally, Nabilah suggested repurposing plastic waste for building materials. Jakarta's planned waste fees, starting January 2025, have also raised concerns, with calls for more efficient management before burdening residents. Environmental data shows Jakarta's waste has increased to 3.14 million tons in 2023, while managed waste has declined. The current reliance on Bantargebang landfill is costly, with annual fees and transportation totaling around Rp 3.4 trillion. Executive Director Ali Ahmudi Achyak advocates for the Intermediate Treatment Facility at Sunter, capable of handling 2,200 tons of waste daily, as a cost-saving measure. Jakarta Environmental Agency head Asep Kuswanto mentioned the city's shift toward Refuse Derived Fuel facilities, citing lower costs, alongside initiatives to enhance recycling and processing.

Bullet Train Speed Hampered by Extreme Weather in “Disaster Supermarket” Area

—Machradin Wahyudi Ritonga, *Kompas*, 10 November 2024

The Whoosh bullet train in Greater Bandung, West Java, was halted for 90 minutes on November 9, due to strong winds that blew metal roofing onto the tracks. This incident marks one of many recent hydrometeorological disasters in a province dubbed the "disaster supermarket" for its range of natural events. Extreme weather since November 1 has led to 52 disaster incidents, including floods, landslides, and storms, affecting 17,473 residents, with 362 houses damaged. West Java's Acting Governor Bey Machmudin has urged readiness for further extreme rain, advising residents to prepare for potential floods and landslides. Disaster-affected residents, including 500 families in Banjaran, Bandung, have received basic needs support, while officials emphasize clearing garbage to prevent flood risks. Meteorological data warns of continued heavy rains until April, intensifying disaster potential. The late BNPB Head Doni Monardo previously labeled West Java a “disaster supermarket,” due to the occurrence of all kinds of natural disasters, underscoring the need for environmental protection and community vigilance to mitigate these recurring hazards.

Ministry of Environment Finds 26 Companies Suspected of Polluting Ciujung River in Banten

—Antara Team, *Tempo*, 9 November 2024

The Ministry of Environment has identified 26 companies suspected of polluting the Ciujung River in Serang Regency, Banten. The river, which spans 142 kilometers, serves hundreds of thousands of residents in Tanara, Tirtayasa, Careng, and Lebakwangi. Minister Hanif Faisol Nurofiq revealed that drone mapping and satellite imagery helped pinpoint the polluting companies, including two pulp and paper factories in the Kragilan area. These factories have been found to have illegal waste disposal sites, one covering 42 hectares with an annual waste projection of 2 million tons. The Ministry has sealed off these sites and ordered environmental audits. The companies could face prosecution under the Environmental Protection and Management Law. The Ciujung River has been a pollution hotspot since 2017, impacting the livelihoods of residents in three regencies. Hanif called on local governments to take decisive action and emphasized the importance of direct government intervention to address the ongoing environmental issues.

Microplastics Impact Cloud Formation and Influence Weather and Climate

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 9 November 2024

Scientists at Pennsylvania State University have discovered that atmospheric microplastics may influence weather and climate by acting as ice-nucleating particles, which help form ice crystals in clouds. Microplastics, small plastic particles less than 5mm, have been found globally—from ocean depths to mountaintops and even within human bodies. In this new study, researchers observed that when suspended in water droplets, microplastics caused freezing at 5–10°C warmer than usual, potentially affecting precipitation and cloud formation patterns. Lead researcher Miriam Freedman noted that microplastics in clouds might alter precipitation, impact climate modeling, and even pose risks for aviation. These pollutants can change how clouds distribute water, sometimes reducing rain by forming smaller droplets or increasing heavy rain events when droplets accumulate. The study also simulated environmental aging, finding that microplastics' interaction with atmospheric gases can change as they weather over time, influencing cloud properties and potentially affecting climate. While the exact climate impacts remain unclear, researchers highlight the urgent need to understand how microplastics affect cloud dynamics and temperature regulation.

Busse, Heidi L., Devaka Dharmapriya Ariyasena, Jessica Orris, and Miriam Arak Freedman. [Pristine and Aged Microplastics Can Nucleate Ice through Immersion Freezing](#). *American Chemical Society ES&T Air*. November 2024.

Jakarta's Air Quality Returns to Unhealthy Category, with Depok and Tangerang Worse

—Yohanes Paskalis, *Tempo*, 8 November 2024

On November 8, Jakarta's air quality deteriorated, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaching 164, categorized as "Unhealthy." The concentration of fine particles (PM2.5) was recorded at 73.5 micrograms per cubic meter, which is 14.7 times higher than the World Health Organization's recommended annual air quality limit. This decline followed a brief improvement on November 5, when moderate rain temporarily lowered the AQI to 93, a level just below the "Good" category, making the air generally safe for healthy individuals while advising sensitive groups to limit outdoor activities. However, by November 6, the AQI increased to 121 and continued rising, reaching 153 the next day, which kept it in the "Unhealthy" range. The high air humidity and temperature, which stood at around 26°C, contributed to this

deterioration. Jakarta's AQI is now worse than nearby cities, including South Tangerang (200), Tangerang City (188), and Depok City (171). Jakarta is ranked 7th globally in pollution, with Lahore and Delhi at the top.

[Ten States Press US to Take Tougher Stance in UN Plastic Treaty](#)

—Valerie Volcovici and Sonali Paul, *Reuters/USNewsWorldReport*, 1 November 2024

Ten US states urged the federal government to take a stronger stance in the upcoming UN negotiations on a global plastic treaty. The letter, signed by attorneys general from states including New York, California, and Pennsylvania, called for the US to back a treaty that rejects "false" solutions like certain forms of recycling and protects communities affected by plastic production. This plea comes ahead of the final round of negotiations for the INC-5 treaty in Busan, South Korea. While the US had previously supported a treaty that would cap global plastic production, the states now seek further commitment. They want the treaty to acknowledge the link between plastic pollution and climate change and promote a plastic reuse system. In contrast, major producers like Saudi Arabia and China have opposed limits on plastic production, focusing instead on plastic waste management. California's attorney general has also sued Exxon Mobil for misleading the public about recycling, intensifying the pressure for stronger action. Indonesia, as an emerging leader in climate and plastic issues, can play a role in advocating for a comprehensive treaty.

F. Technology, Investment and Finance

[Indonesian bankers say growth, inflows could be hit by Trump's policies](#)

—Stefanno Sulaiman and John Mair, *Reuters*, 13 November 2024

Indonesia's economic growth and portfolio investments could be impacted by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's proposed policies, including potential trade restrictions that could trigger a U.S.-China trade war, according to state-owned bank executives. Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) President Sunarso warned that a trade war could cut Indonesia's GDP growth by up to 0.3%, dropping it to 4.6%-4.9% for the next year. Both China and the U.S. are key trade partners for Indonesia, and a downturn in global commodity prices due to decreased Chinese demand could also

impact Indonesia's exports, including palm oil, coal, and nickel. Bank Mandiri CEO Darmawan Junaidi highlighted concerns over rising global commodity prices, while Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI) Director Royke Tumilaar noted that Trump's tariffs could hinder future rate cuts by the Federal Reserve, complicating Indonesia's monetary policy adjustments. Typically, Indonesia benefits from capital inflows when the Fed lowers rates, but a shift toward U.S. protectionism could lead to outflows from emerging markets like Indonesia. President Prabowo Subianto has discussed these concerns in meetings with U.S. leaders.

'We can achieve that gradually': Indonesia's economic adviser on 8 per cent growth goal

—Tam Tam Mei, *The Straits Times*, 13 November 2024

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's goal of achieving 8% annual economic growth is ambitious, but National Economic Council (DEN) Chairman Luhut Pandjaitan outlined a gradual strategy to reach it. Key initiatives include digitalizing government services to boost efficiency and transparency, and an export-driven growth strategy enhanced by foreign investment. For instance, the INA-Digital platform consolidates 27,000 government-related apps into a single portal, aiming to reduce corruption and improve public service delivery. Luhut emphasized Indonesia's strengths, including its large nickel reserves that support electric vehicle production, adding that export reforms will focus on adding value to raw materials. He also highlighted a free-meal program aiming to feed 83 million Indonesians by 2029. The DEN, including former ministers and key economic experts, will provide strategic policy advice directly to the President. In this effort, Indonesia continues courting international partnerships, including talks with Nvidia co-founder Jensen Huang to explore investment opportunities. Luhut assured that Prabowo's agenda will enhance Indonesia's competitiveness through sustainable reforms and responsible resource management.

RI, Chinese companies to ink contracts valued over USD10 billion

—Desca and Kenzu, *AntaraNews*, 9 November 2024

During his state visit to China, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto announced that Indonesian companies would sign over \$10 billion in contracts with Chinese corporations. Speaking at a bilateral meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, Prabowo highlighted that the agreements, primarily in science and technology, mark a strengthening partnership. He praised Premier Li's

focus on “practical steps,” noting that such an approach would facilitate rapid progress in cooperation between the two nations. Prabowo, set to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and NPC Chairman Zhao Leji, emphasized the growing Chinese investment in Indonesia, reflecting a collaborative rise in economic participation benefiting both countries. He also looked forward to the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and China in 2025, indicating expanded cooperation across multiple sectors. Premier Li noted that Prabowo’s choice of China for his first overseas visit underscored the significance of China-Indonesia relations, stating that the partnership has reached a new stage toward building a “shared future.”

Trump Returns as US President, Chinese Industry Prepares to Relocate Factories to Indonesia

—Benediktus Krisna Yogatama, *Kompas*, 9 November 2024

With Donald Trump’s return to the White House in 2025, the US is expected to raise import tariffs, particularly on Chinese goods, potentially reaching 60%. This could drive Chinese exporters to relocate factories to countries that provide easier access to the US market, with Indonesia being a key destination for industries like textiles and footwear. However, Indonesia faces competition from other Southeast Asian countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia, which offer similar advantages. To attract these investments, Indonesia must enhance its industrial ecosystem, reduce reliance on imported raw materials, and address key factors like regulatory certainty and wage concerns. Taiwanese entrepreneurs with factories in China are particularly interested in moving to Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. However, the government must improve trade agreements, like the Indonesia-EU Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, to remain competitive. Additionally, Indonesia must be mindful of potential US trade restrictions, which could affect its export market and overall industrial growth.

Indonesia to import 1 million dairy cows for Prabowo’s free meals scheme

—Reuters and Bloomberg, *SouthChinaMorningPost*, 6 November 2024

Indonesia plans to import 1 million dairy cows between 2025 and 2028 to boost milk production, supporting President Prabowo Subianto's free meals program for 83 million people, a key election promise. The Agriculture Ministry estimates that the program will require 3.6 million tonnes of milk by 2029, raising total demand to 8.5 million tonnes. Current milk output stands at 1 million tonnes, far below the 4.7

million tonnes in demand. By 2029, with the imported dairy cows, milk production is projected to reach 8.17 million tonnes, with potential cow sources including Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, the U.S., and Mexico. Amidst slow growth in Q3, with GDP expanding at 4.95%, President Prabowo aims to accelerate economic growth to 8% during his term. To achieve this, he has formed a National Economic Council with veteran advisors, including ex-Trade Minister Mari Elka Pangestu and ex-Finance Minister Chatib Basri. The council, led by Luhut Pandjaitan, is focusing on policies to strengthen middle-class purchasing power and planning incentives for labor-intensive investment to spur growth.

G. Human Rights, Indigenous People and Gender Equality

[Indonesian Workers Say They Faced Modern Slavery in the UK. Who Is Responsible?](#)

—Aisyah Llewellyn, *TheDiplomat*, 13 November 2024

Budi, a 20-year-old Indonesian, is suing the UK Home Office, claiming he was subjected to modern-day slavery under the UK's seasonal workers scheme. In July 2022, Budi left Jakarta with hopes of a lucrative job picking fruit, only to face exploitation. The promised two-year visa turned out to be a short, six-month visa, with workers forced to pay upfront costs for flights, medical checks, and visas. Budi spent over US\$5,400, including \$3,200 borrowed from loan sharks. Upon arrival, he worked long hours on farms under harsh conditions, including an unreasonably high workload and inadequate clothing during cold temperatures. After being moved between several farms, he earned only \$1,200, which was not enough to repay his debts. Unable to return home without facing financial ruin, Budi has filed a case against the UK, alleging human trafficking and modern slavery. Cross border cases, where legal matters straddle different jurisdictions such as Budi's experience, highlight concerns about exploitative practice in the post-Brexit seasonal labor migration scheme.

[Indigenous Rights Violated in East Kalimantan's REDD+ Jurisdictional Pilot Project: World Bank and Indonesian Government Face Accountability Calls](#)

—News Team, *ForestPeople*, 12 November 2024

Civil society organizations have raised concerns about indigenous rights violations in East Kalimantan's REDD+ Jurisdictional Emission Reductions Pilot, funded by the World Bank. The project aims to reduce emissions through sustainable land management but has been criticized for excluding the Dayak Bahau indigenous community from decision-making processes and benefits. The project requires indigenous groups to have legal recognition to access benefits, a process hindered by bureaucratic barriers. The Dayak Bahau have faced delays in gaining legal status, increasing the risk of displacement. In response, 19 civil society groups filed a formal complaint to the World Bank's Grievance Redress Service, citing discriminatory practices and government intimidation. The World Bank's zero-tolerance policy on retaliation has not been effectively enforced, leaving indigenous communities vulnerable. Civil society has called for the suspension of World Bank Carbon Fund disbursements to Indonesia until the issues are resolved. A more inclusive, rights-based approach is needed to address systemic challenges and ensure indigenous rights are protected.

An 'ocean grab' for a property megaproject leaves Jakarta fishers grounded

—Irfan Maulana, *Mongabay*, 8 November 2024

On the outskirts of Jakarta, farming and fishing communities face displacement due to the construction of Pantai Indah Kapuk II, a vast commercial and residential development planned for the northeast coast of the city. Local fishers like Joy, who rely on the sea for their livelihoods, have been restricted by a bamboo barrier that obstructs access to the water. The development, part of a national priority project, is displacing farmers and fishers without fair compensation for lost land or productive trees. Indonesia's rapidly growing urban population has exacerbated the housing shortage, with over 12 million homes needed nationwide. While the local ombudsman has yet to receive reports of unfair land acquisition, developers have not responded to requests for comment. Environmental groups and local residents are concerned about the impact of such projects, which they see as "ocean grabbing," cutting off vital coastal access for communities. As the development progresses, those displaced, like Joy, are left uncertain about their future livelihoods and homes.

Rejecting Transmigration, the "Papua is Not Empty Land" Movement Reaches Central Kalimantan

—Dinosius Reynaldo Triwibowo, *Kompas*, 6 November 2024

The “Papua is Not Empty Land” movement has spread to Kalimantan, with Papuan students in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan, protesting against the transmigration program and rice field development in Papua. Led by the Papua Student Coordination Body (BKMP), the students argue that the program ignores basic needs such as human rights, education, and healthcare, which are more pressing for Papua's population. They assert that Papua is not empty land to be settled, but a region with indigenous ownership and rights. The protest follows statements from the Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, who proposed the transmigration program for economic equity, particularly targeting South Papua. However, Minister of Transmigration Iftitah Sulaiman clarified that the program would focus on relocating fellow Papuans, not outsiders. The protest also critiques the rice field development program, which has been linked to forest destruction and the erosion of Papuans' traditional food systems, such as sago and sweet potatoes. The students warn that these projects could lead to cultural loss, resource competition, and social conflict.

[Indonesian mother imprisoned for protesting palm oil factory next to school](#)

—Sri Wahyuni, *Mongabay*, 5 November 2024

Gustina Salim Rambe, a mother from North Sumatra, was sentenced in October 2024 to over five months in prison after protesting a palm oil factory built adjacent to two schools in Pulo Padang village. The factory, operated by PT Pulo Padang Sawit Permai (PPSP), resumed operations despite local opposition, causing pollution in the area. Gustina's demonstration in May 2024 led to her arrest for obstructing access to the factory. Her case gained national attention after a video of her consoling her daughter from jail went viral. Representatives in Indonesia's national Parliament called for "restorative justice" rather than criminalizing Gustina's protest. Civil society groups argued that existing regulations, such as the 2009 Environment Law and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry's 2024 regulation, should protect those advocating for a healthy environment. From 2019-24, Amnesty International documented 454 cases of attacks on civil society advocates, highlighting the criminalization of environmental defenders in Indonesia. Local activists continue to face intimidation and prosecution for their efforts to protect the environment.

I. RI General Elections

Flood Management Becomes One of the Topics in the Final Debate of the Jakarta Pilkada

—Atiek Ishlahiyah Al Hamasy, *Kompas*, 13 November 2024

The final debate for the 2024 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election focuses on environmental and climate issues, with flood management being a key topic. The debate covers six sub-themes: flood management, settlement arrangement, emission reduction, renewable energy, waste management, clean water availability, and green space planning. The debate consists of six segments, including vision and mission presentations, in-depth discussions, and Q&A sessions. The candidates address Jakarta's ongoing flooding problems, especially as the rainy season begins. The Ridwan-Suswono pair plans to normalize and naturalize rivers, while Dharma-Pongrekun aims to design city layouts that improve waste management and include emergency reservoir parks. Experts urge the candidates to present innovative solutions to control local flooding caused by heavy rainfall. Recent floods have affected several areas, with many sub-districts at risk. In preparation for the election, the Jakarta Disaster Management Agency has coordinated with the KPU to ensure polling stations are not located in flood-prone areas, ensuring smooth operations despite potential natural disasters.

Patrols Intensified Ahead of Voting to Prevent Money Politics

—Vina Oktavia, *Kompas*, 12 November 2024

Two weeks before the Bandar Lampung mayoral election, the Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) has not received reports of violations related to money politics or civil servant neutrality. Despite this, monitoring will intensify as the potential for violations remains. Hasanuddin Alam, the coordinator of Bawaslu's Legal Division, noted that money politics is a recurring issue in regional elections, with election officers set to focus on supervision. Bawaslu and the Integrated Law Enforcement Center (Gakumdu) have conducted outreach to 146 locations across 20 sub-districts to educate the public about election violations and the risks of criminal sanctions. The 2024 Election Vulnerability Index ranked vote-buying as a key concern. Despite regulations prohibiting money or material distribution during campaigns, such practices persist, including giving money or basic necessities to sway voters. Lampung Police Chief Helmy Santika emphasized the need for collaborative efforts to combat money politics and ensure fair elections.

Additionally, preparations for the final public debate and voting simulations are underway.

East Java Pilkada, Delving into the Gubernatorial Candidates' Commitment to Farmers, Fishermen, and MSMEs

—Runik Sri Astuti, *Kompas*, 12 November 2024

East Java's economy is driven by farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and MSMEs, which play a crucial role in supplying food across Indonesia. President Prabowo Subianto's recent Government Regulation No. 47 of 2024 offers debt relief to MSMEs in agriculture, fisheries, and other sectors, targeting around 1 million debtors, including those in East Java. This policy aims to support local producers, freeing them from debt burdens and enabling access to new capital for business growth. East Java is a key food producer, leading in rice, livestock, and fisheries. The policy's implementation is vital for the region, where MSMEs contribute significantly to the economy. Gubernatorial candidates for East Java have expressed support for this debt relief, with promises to ensure effective implementation. Luluk Nur Hamidah and Khofifah Indar Parawansa both committed to supporting MSMEs, while Tri Rismaharini focused on boosting farmer incomes through processing innovations. As the region prepares for the gubernatorial election on November 27, 2024, candidates' commitments to these sectors will be closely watched.

South Sulawesi Pilkada Debate, Transparency and Green Economy Become the Concerns of Both Candidates

—Emanuel Edi Saputra, *Kompas*, 10 November 2024

In the second debate for the South Sulawesi gubernatorial election on November 10, candidates M Ramdhan Pomanto-Azhar Arsyad and Andi Sudirman Sulaiman-Fatmawati Rusdi discussed transparency, green economy, and resource management. Both candidates emphasized transparency and community participation in managing natural resources, including mining. Ramdhan highlighted community involvement from surveys to exploitation stages, particularly in protecting upstream areas and addressing unresolved customary land issues. He criticized the lack of community input in spatial planning (RTRW). Andi underscored the need for detailed spatial planning at regional levels to address flood risks and noted the importance of sustainable, labor-intensive investments, including renewable energy, to build investor trust. Both candidates agreed on the need for transparency to attract investment, with Ramdhan promoting a master plan to

leverage South Sulawesi's tourism and marine potential. Ramdhan is supported by parties including the PDI-P and PKB, while Andi is backed by Nasdem, Golkar, and others. The debate highlighted the candidates' differing approaches to governance and investment strategies for the region's economic and environmental future.

[North Sumatra Pilkada Debate, Medan Block Mining Issue in North Maluku Emerges](#)

—Adrian Fajriansyah, *Kompas*, 6 November 2024

The fourth segment of the 2024 North Sumatra gubernatorial election debate heated up when candidate Edy Rahmayadi attacked his opponent, Muhammad Bobby Nasution regarding the Medan Block mining issue in North Maluku. Edy raised concerns about mining operations being associated with Medan and urged Bobby to clarify his stance on the matter. Edy stressed that the name “Medan Block” should be changed to “North Maluku Block” to avoid unfair associations with Medan. Bobby, the current Mayor of Medan, shifted focus to the North Sumatra Provincial Government's mining permits, accusing them of causing environmental harm and pointing to unchecked illegal mining activities that damage roads and rivers. Bobby urged Edy to report any violations officially rather than basing allegations on media reports and rumors. The “Medan Block” term previously surfaced in a bribery case involving former North Maluku Governor Abdul Gani Kasuba, where it was alleged that Bobby's name was used to facilitate mining permits in North Maluku.

[Prabowo visits KIM-backed candidates in Bali](#)

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 4 November 2024

President Prabowo Subianto is actively supporting candidates from his Onward Indonesia Coalition (KIM) to secure major wins in this month's regional head elections. Beginning in Merauke, South Papua, Prabowo traveled to Denpasar, Bali, where he endorsed gubernatorial candidate Made Muliawan Arya, a Gerindra politician and Denpasar Legislative Council member. Arya, running with former Buleleng regent Putu Agus Suradnyana, faces PDI-P-backed opponents Wayan Koster and I Nyoman Giri Prasta. Prabowo voiced support for Arya's proposed northern Bali airport to alleviate air traffic at I Ngurah Rai International Airport, aiming to establish Bali as a hub akin to Singapore or Hong Kong. Later, Prabowo met with former President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo in Surakarta, where KIM-backed Central Java gubernatorial candidate Ahmad Luthfi and Surakarta mayoral candidate Respati Ardi also attended. Last week, Prabowo held a private dinner with KIM-supported Jakarta

gubernatorial candidate Ridwan Kamil, though polls indicate varied support within KIM for Kamil. Prabowo's regional visits reflect his intent to consolidate KIM support and promote infrastructure-driven growth in these regions.

II. Indonesia in Geopolitics

[Indonesia and Australia hold joint military drills after signing a new defense agreement](#)

—Trisnadi and Niniek

Karmini, *AssociatedPress/TheWashingtonPost*, 13 November 2024

Indonesia and Australia commenced joint military exercises, Keris Woomera 2024, off Java's coast, engaging 2,000 troops in air, maritime, amphibious, and land operations. This four-day drill includes live-fire exercises, joint landings, and non-combat evacuations at East Java's Banongan Beach, with tanks, artillery, and attack helicopters. The exercise, part of Australia's Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2024, follows the recent Australia-Indonesia Defense Cooperation Agreement, aimed at enhancing interoperability and regional security. Indonesian Lt. Col. Empri Airudin emphasized the drill's role in strengthening bilateral trust and military capabilities. Australian Amphibious Task Force Commander Chris Doherty noted it would test the full capacity of Australia's task force, facilitating rapid response capabilities for diverse missions. The defense partnership aligns with President Prabowo Subianto's defense priorities, as he seeks to bolster Indonesia's military and international defense collaborations. Amid rising Indo-Pacific tensions, Indonesia recently confronted a Chinese vessel in disputed South China Sea waters but promotes cooperation with China, with Subianto securing \$10 billion in deals and planning high-level diplomatic meetings.

[On South China Sea, White House: Indonesia Should Work with Its Legal Experts](#)

—Eva Mazrieva, *VOAIndonesia*, 13 November 2024

Indonesia and the United States have agreed to strengthen their 75-year diplomatic partnership, following a meeting between President Prabowo Subianto and US President Joe Biden in Washington, DC, on November 12. This marks Prabowo's second overseas visit since taking office. Both leaders committed to enhancing economic growth, digital innovation, and technology cooperation. A key issue discussed was the South China Sea, with both sides supporting freedom of navigation and adherence to international maritime law, particularly UNCLOS.

However, Prabowo's recent visit to China has raised concerns due to a joint statement with President Xi Jinping, which suggested cooperation on overlapping maritime claims. This has caused confusion over Indonesia's stance on China's nine-dash-line claim, which Indonesia has historically rejected. Critics warn that Indonesia's position could be undermined by its agreement with China. The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs clarified that the cooperation with China respects international law, particularly UNCLOS. This diplomatic ambiguity has raised questions about Indonesia's foreign policy approach.

Indonesian president meets Biden and speaks with Trump, pledges cooperation

—Reuters, *The Straits Times*, 13 November 2024

On November 12, Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto met US President Joe Biden at the White House, where he emphasized his commitment to strengthening US-Indonesian relations. Prabowo, who follows a non-aligned foreign policy, also called President-elect Donald Trump to offer congratulations, posting a video of the call on social media. Prabowo's trip to Washington followed his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, highlighting Indonesia's balancing act between the US and China. The US views Indonesia as a vital partner in Southeast Asia, given its strategic importance and large Muslim-majority population. During his meeting with Biden, the two leaders discussed climate issues, the Middle East conflict, and the South China Sea, where Indonesia does not recognize China's territorial claims. Prabowo also met with representatives from US companies, including Freeport-McMoRan and Chevron, encouraging them to invest in Indonesia's mining and energy sectors. Indonesia is positioning itself as a key partner to both China and the US in this complex geopolitical landscape.

Polemic of Prabowo-Xi Agreement on Maritime Territory, Indonesian Navy Still Refers to UNCLOS

—Edna Caroline Pattisina, *Kompas*, 12 November 2024

The Indonesian Navy reaffirmed its commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) amidst cooperation discussions with China. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Ali stated that Indonesia is not a claimant in South China Sea disputes, as there is no overlap between Indonesia's waters and China's nine-dash line claim. Ali's remarks came during the 79th Marine Corps anniversary event, where he emphasized UNCLOS's importance in preventing regional conflicts and confirmed a diplomatic approach toward reducing tensions

with China. The joint statement by Prabowo Subianto and Xi Jinping, which mentions “overlapping claims,” has sparked concern among legal experts, who argue it may imply acceptance of China’s nine-dash line, a claim unrecognized by UNCLOS. Former Lemhannas Governor Andi Widjajanto stressed that Indonesia's foreign policy should adhere to four principles based on UNCLOS. Meanwhile, Indonesia celebrated the Marine Corps’ contributions, with Admiral Ali inaugurating new vehicles for high-mobility deployments, including peacekeeping missions in the Middle East, as part of the celebrations.

Protecting Island Nations, Indonesia and Canada Interested in UNCLOS Sustainability

—Edna Caroline Pattisina, *Kompas*, 9 November 2024

The Indonesian Navy and Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) are expanding cooperation in areas such as personnel exchange, procedural training, and technology, as affirmed by RCN Commander Vice Admiral Angus Topshee during his visit to Jakarta. Topshee highlighted shared interests between Canada and Indonesia in upholding the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to protect their archipelagic territories. He stressed the importance of preventing conflicts in the Asia-Pacific and emphasized Canada’s commitment to maintaining security in the region, amid growing U.S.-China tensions. Discussions included the involvement of the Canadian Navy in Indonesian-led events like the 2024 Super Garuda Shield and the Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo, along with future joint initiatives like the Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Canada and the International Maritime Security Symposium in Indonesia. Navy Chief Admiral Muhammad Ali expressed appreciation for Canada’s role in fostering regional stability and collaboration. Scholars noted the potential benefits but urged a focus on national interests, especially regarding food security and maritime resources, advocating for technology transfers to support maritime goals.

Prabowo’s China visit to focus on economic cooperation, not maritime issues: analysts

—Meredith Chen, *SouthChinaMorningPost*, 7 November 2024

Prabowo Subianto’s first overseas visit since taking office focuses on strengthening economic ties with China, despite recent tensions over the South China Sea. Analysts note that Prabowo's primary agenda is economic cooperation, aiming to enhance areas like food, energy, and transport. While in Beijing, Prabowo met with

President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, where both sides are expected to reinforce their "comprehensive strategic cooperation" and aim for a "shared future." Although previously took a strong stance on South China Sea issues as defense minister, Prabowo is likely to maintain a moderate approach on this visit, prioritizing economic goals over maritime disputes. The visit also coincides with Indonesia's aspirations to join BRICS, signaling a balanced approach between Western and Eastern alliances. Prabowo aims to project Indonesia's independent foreign policy, countering past criticisms of pro-China bias and showcasing the country's geopolitical neutrality amid US-China rivalries.