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## **Indonesia Sustainable Development News Digest**

**2025 Issue 3 — 30 January**

*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](http://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](mailto:newsdigest@starlingresources.com).*

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### **A. Marine and Fisheries**

## Seaweed Cultivation Investment Opportunities in Maluku Wide Open

—Raynard Kristian Bonanio Pardede, *Kompas*, 28 January 2025

Seaweed cultivation in the Maluku Islands has significant economic potential but remains underutilized. According to Karolis Iwamony, Head of Fisheries Cultivation at the Marine and Fisheries Service, Maluku's coastal areas offer 158,482 hectares for fisheries, with 94% of the utilized space dedicated to seaweed farming. Despite this, only 5.37% of the potential area is currently used. In 2023, Maluku's fisheries produced 251,563 tons, contributing to the region's improved economic conditions, as seen in the rising Maluku Fish Farmer Exchange Rate (NTPi). However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, high transportation costs, and insufficient private sector investment hinder further growth. The southeast and southwest Maluku regions show promise for expansion, but digital and logistical limitations complicate distribution. Experts suggest that seaweed, a versatile raw material for food, cosmetics, and even paper production, could become a major contributor to Maluku's economy. With global demand for seaweed expected to reach \$11.8 billion by 2030, Maluku could increase its share of the global market, especially with targeted investment and development in regions like Buru and Ambon City.

## Land Emergence Scheme, from Sea Fence to Developer

—Rhama Purna Jati, *Kompas*, 24 January 2025

A sea fence in the waters of Tangerang, Banten, has raised concerns due to its involvement in land-grabbing schemes. According to RM, a broker involved in the business, the bamboo sea fence method has been used since 1988 by coastal residents to create land for ponds, which over time become fertile for cultivation. However, in recent years, large-scale land creation, spanning 30.16 kilometers, has led to land being bought and resold for development projects, with some plots becoming luxury housing. This has raised alarm as the sea fence disrupts local fishermen's livelihoods. Investigation into the sea fence revealed that certificates issued for land in the ocean were flawed, violating government regulations. The Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning has identified areas where illegal land certifications were granted, especially in waters previously considered public property. While the Indonesian Ombudsman and the Ministry of Maritime Affairs are investigating, the case highlights the broader issue of illegal erosion of marine spaces, with some land being used for fishing ponds, industrial areas, or even plantation expansion.

## Government revokes permits for land across from Tangerang sea fence

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 23 January 2025

The Agrarian and Spatial Planning Ministry (BPN) has revoked hundreds of right-to-build permits (HGB) and land ownership certificates (SHM) near Tangerang's coastal waters, citing procedural violations. BPN head Nusron Wahid stated that most permits were invalid as they covered offshore areas, contravening Government Regulation No. 15/2021, which allows certificates under five years old to be canceled without court approval. The ministry is investigating potential ethical or disciplinary violations in the permits' issuance. Two companies, PT Intan Agung Makmur and PT Cahaya Inti Sentosa, held permits for most of the 263 affected plots, with 17 SHM issued to individuals. The plots were linked to a mysterious 30-kilometer bamboo sea fence, allegedly part of a massive reclamation project. The Navy, under President Prabowo Subianto's orders, began dismantling the barrier on January 18. Navy Chief Admiral Muhammad Ali and House Commission IV Chair Titiek

Soeharto led the effort, which has benefited local fishermen by reopening fishing routes and providing reusable bamboo. Fisherman Kosim praised the initiative for aiding their livelihoods.

### **Indonesian unicorn eFishery allegedly faked most of its sales**

—Bloomberg, *The Straits Times*, 22 January 2025

Indonesian agritech unicorn eFishery, valued at \$1.4 billion, is under scrutiny following allegations of inflated sales and profits. An internal investigation, initiated by a whistle-blower, revealed potential revenue inflation of nearly \$600 million in the first nine months of 2024, according to a draft report by FTI Consulting. The report suggests over 75% of reported figures were falsified, with actual revenue at \$157 million versus the claimed \$752 million. Despite presenting a \$16 million profit, the firm allegedly incurred a \$35.4 million loss during the period. eFishery, backed by high-profile investors like SoftBank, Temasek, and G42, rose to prominence for providing smart feeding devices to fish farmers. The probe has led to the dismissal of CEO and co-founder Gibran Huzaifah. Investigators uncovered discrepancies, including inflated feeder numbers (24,000 versus the claimed 400,000). The fraud allegations may be damaging for Indonesia's start-up scene and come at a critical time as young firms and investors struggle to raise new funding.

### **RI-US complete debt transfer process for coral reef conservation**

—Prisca Triferina and Resinta Sulistiyandari, *AntaraNews*, 19 January 2025

The Governments of Indonesia and the United States have finalized a \$35 million debt transfer agreement for coral reef conservation, completed on January 15. The funds will be used to protect coral ecosystems in the Bird's Head Seascape and the Sunda Banda Sea, both part of the Coral Triangle, which hosts 75% of the world's coral species. The agreement, initiated in July 2024, was facilitated by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Conservancy International (CI) in partnership with Indonesian organizations Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) and Yayasan Konservasi Cakrawala Indonesia. According to Indonesia's Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the funds will support marine protected areas, coastal ecosystems like seagrass and mangroves, habitat connectivity zones, and conservation efforts for endangered marine species. YKAN Executive Director Herlina Hartanto emphasized community involvement, stating that local communities will receive training to tackle environmental challenges. The funds will be managed in a trust overseen by a Supervisory Committee led by the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Ministry of Finance, and conservation organizations.

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## **B. Forests and Land Use**

### **Controversy Over the Conversion of 20 Million Hectares of Forest for Food and Energy**

—Administrator, *InfoSawit*, 27 January 2025

The Indonesian government's plan to allocate 20 million hectares of forest for food and energy development has drawn strong criticism from civil society groups, who warn of severe ecological and economic consequences. The initiative, aimed at promoting bioenergy such as B40 biodiesel, raises concerns over deforestation and land use conflicts. Environmental groups highlight the risks of expanding palm oil plantations, with Satya Bumi's research indicating that Indonesia's current 17.77 million hectares of palm oil plantations are nearing

the maximum sustainable limit of 18.15 million hectares. Sawit Watch warns that further conversion of food land—698,566 hectares lost between 2015 and 2024—threatens national food security. Additionally, the push for wood biomass energy has already led to deforestation and disruption of indigenous communities. Experts warn that biomass demand could drive deforestation of up to 3.3 million hectares. With 15.53 million hectares of the allocated land coming from protected and production forests, critics urge the government to improve land governance and transparency before proceeding to avoid further environmental and social harm.

### **Coming to a retailer near you: Illegal palm oil from an orangutan haven**

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

Illegal deforestation has surged in Indonesia's Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve, a critical habitat for endangered species and part of the Leuser Ecosystem. A report by the Rainforest Action Network (RAN) reveals 2,577 hectares of forest loss since 2015, with deforestation quadrupling from 2021 to 2023—well past the EU's 2020 cutoff for deforestation-free imports. The destruction, linked to palm oil expansion, threatens biodiversity and global climate stability. RAN identifies local elites—not smallholders—as key drivers, selling land and supplying illegal palm oil to mills like PT Global Sawit Semesta and PT Aceh Trumon Anugerah Kita. These mills supply global brands including Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, and Mondelez, raising concerns about tainted supply chains. Some brands have suspended sourcing, while others remain unresponsive. Satellite imagery now provides unprecedented proof of illegal plantations. RAN warns of further reserve downgrades as deforestation continues. Activists call for stronger corporate accountability and landscape-level conservation strategies to protect one of the world's most biodiverse ecosystems.

### **Prabowo Establishes Task Force to Combat Forest Area Violations**

—Dani Aswara, *TempoNews*, 23 January 2025

President Prabowo Subianto has established the Forest Area Order Task Force under Presidential Regulation No. 5 of 2025 to combat illegal activities in forest areas, improve land management, and maximize state revenue. The task force operates under the President's direct authority, with Defense Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin as Director and the Deputy Attorney General for Special Crimes as Executive Chair. Key officials, including the Attorney General, TNI Commander, National Police Chief, and several ministers, provide strategic oversight. The task force is responsible for inventorying illegally occupied land, enforcing laws through legal action, and recovering state assets. It has the authority to investigate unauthorized mining and plantation activities, imposing penalties ranging from fines to criminal prosecution. Collaboration with academics, community groups, and the private sector is encouraged to enhance effectiveness. A progress report must be submitted to the President every six months. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to protecting forest areas, cracking down on illegal activities, and optimizing forestry sector revenues.

### **Indonesia develops carbon trading mechanism for FOLU sector**

—Prisca Triferina and Raka Adji, *AntaraNews*, 20 January 2025

Indonesia's Forestry Ministry is developing a mechanism to facilitate carbon trading in the forestry and other land use (FOLU) sector, aligning with the country's carbon market expansion. Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni announced the initiative following the launch of Indonesia's international carbon trading system, emphasizing its role in strengthening carbon pricing efforts. The ministry is consulting with the Financial Services Authority (OJK) to

explore market-based approaches for trading emissions reductions from the FOLU sector. Indonesia targets a *net sink* condition in this sector by 2030, ensuring carbon absorption exceeds emissions. The initiative follows Indonesia's commitments at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and aims to boost investor interest in carbon markets. OJK Chair Mahendra Siregar affirmed his agency's support for carbon pricing mechanisms, highlighting the broader economic value of FOLU-based carbon trading. This move is part of Indonesia's larger strategy to finance emissions reductions and accelerate sustainable land use, requiring an estimated Rp204 trillion to meet its 2030 FOLU *net sink* target.

### **UGM Experts Urge Government to Reassess Plan to Open 20 Million Hectares of Land**

—Jelita Agustine, *UGMNews*, 20 January 2025

The government plans to open 20 million hectares of agricultural land, but experts from Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) argue the move is unnecessary. Following a meeting with President Prabowo Subianto, Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni confirmed the plan, which has sparked public debate. During the *Pemikiran Bulaksumur* seminar, UGM professors emphasized that Indonesia's food security challenges stem from inefficient fertilizer use, inadequate irrigation, and an aging farming population, not a lack of land. Professor Subejo stressed the need to improve agricultural productivity and encourage youth participation in farming instead of clearing forests. Professor Widiyatno from UGM's Faculty of Forestry warned against deforestation, advocating for the use of degraded land instead. He also highlighted Indonesia's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, which massive land clearing could undermine. Anthropologist Dr. Laksmi Adriani Savitri cautioned that past land-clearing projects have harmed Indigenous communities, causing conflicts over land rights. She urged the government to engage local communities in meaningful dialogue before proceeding with the plan.

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## **C. Biodiversity, Conservation and Protected Area**

### **Fatal tiger attacks highlight Sumatra's rising forest degradation**

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 29 January 2025

A rise in Sumatran tiger attacks, including two fatalities in the past month, has highlighted severe habitat loss and escalating deforestation in Sumatra. Last week, Zainuddin, a coffee farmer in West Lampung, was found dead after going missing for three days, with tiger paw prints near his farm inside South Bukit Barisan National Park—a protected area struggling with illegal encroachment for agriculture. Similar attacks last year led to three deaths and an arson attack on the park's management office, prompting authorities to evacuate two tigers. However, West Lampung's military command has ruled out further relocations, warning that continued captures could threaten the species' survival. Sumatran tigers, with fewer than 600 remaining, face poaching threats and diminishing prey due to deforestation and an African Swine Fever outbreak killing wild pigs. Habitat loss is worsening, with Bengkulu losing over 1,100 hectares of forest last year alone. Meanwhile, East Aceh has also seen rising tiger conflicts, with at least nine cows killed in the past month. Authorities plan stricter enforcement against illegal farming and hunting in protected areas.

### **Unair Marine Expert: Sea Fences Potentially Damage Ecological and Economic Order of Coastal Communities**

—Irsyan Hasyim, *TempoNews*, 28 January 2025

Indonesia's vast maritime resources face serious challenges with the emergence of sea fences built under Building Use Rights (HGB), raising concerns over ecological damage and social justice. Muhammad Amin Alamsjah, Dean of Fisheries and Marine Sciences at Airlangga University, argues that privatizing sea areas contradicts Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, which mandates state control for public benefit. The fences threaten marine ecosystems by accelerating sedimentation, disrupting fish nursery grounds, and damaging coral reefs and seagrass beds. Fishermen face restricted access to traditional fishing areas, forcing them to venture farther at higher costs, reducing fisheries productivity and economic stability. Amin warns that privatization of maritime zones conflicts with Indonesia's internationally recognized territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), risking disputes and undermining the sea's role as a unifying resource for the nation. He urges the state to take firm action against illegal HGB sea fences and prioritize marine protection. "Indonesia must ensure its oceans remain a shared resource, not controlled by a select few," he emphasized.

### **How Social Media Is Changing Young People's Views of Nature**

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 23 January 2025

Young people's engagement with social media and gaming influences how they understand and interact with nature, according to new research published in *People and Nature* on January 21. Led by Jack Reed from the University of Exeter, the study found that teens often experience nature first online, shaping their perceptions and behaviors when they visit natural environments. The research, conducted at three Outward Bound Trust outdoor education centers in the UK, involved 50 participants (ages 12–17) from urban schools. Findings suggest that social media and games like *Minecraft* serve as knowledge bases, helping young people interpret real-world nature experiences. Instead of viewing digital engagement as a barrier, researchers advocate using online nature content as a bridge to foster deeper connections. Educators and policymakers can integrate digital literacy into outdoor education, leveraging young people's existing familiarity with nature-themed content. Technology has been an integral part of young people's lives, and rather than restricting it, policymakers should use it to inspire real-world exploration and stronger connections to nature.

Reed, Jack, Simon Kennedy Beames, and Gale Macleod. (2025) [Young people's networked constructions of nature: Evidence from a qualitative multiple case study in the United Kingdom](#). *People and Nature*.

### **Rising deforestation threatens rare species in Indonesia's ancient Lake Poso**

—Liz Kimbrough, *Mongabay*, 22 January 2025

Indonesia's Lake Poso, a biodiversity hotspot in Central Sulawesi, is facing rapid deforestation and environmental threats. Satellite data show a sharp decline in forest cover, with Poso district losing 155,823 hectares between 2014 and 2021, largely due to nickel mining, oil palm plantations, and smallholder expansion. The loss has intensified flooding, displacing traditional farming and fishing communities. The lake, an Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) site, harbors unique species found nowhere else, but habitat destruction endangers its delicate ecosystem. The 515-megawatt hydropower project by PT Poso Energy, operational since 2019, has disrupted migratory fish patterns, leading to drastic declines in eel catches. While the company claims compensation measures and environmental mitigation, locals report worsening conditions. Indigenous communities, for



whom Lake Poso holds deep cultural significance, are increasingly affected. Grassroots movements, particularly women-led initiatives, are mobilizing to defend their land, livelihoods, and the lake's future. Scientists warn that without urgent conservation efforts, Lake Poso's fragile ecosystem may not withstand ongoing pressures.

Kaban, S., et. al. (2023). [Water Quality and Trophic Status to Estimate Fish Production Potential for Sustainable Fisheries in Lake Poso, Central Sulawesi](#). *Polish Journal of Environmental Studies*, 32(5), 4083-4093.

Damanik, A., et. al. (2024). Perspectives from modern hydrology and hydrochemistry on a lacustrine biodiversity hotspot: Ancient Lake Poso, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Journal of Great Lakes Research*, 50(3), 102254. DOI:[10.1016/j.jglr.2023.102254](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jglr.2023.102254)

### **Indonesia seeks international marine conservation collaboration**

—Kuntum Khaira Riswan and Yashinta Difa, *AntaraNews*, 22 January 2025

Indonesia is seeking international collaboration to strengthen marine conservation, citing financial and technical challenges as global responsibilities. Marine Affairs and Fisheries Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono emphasized this at the launch of the Climate and Ocean Adaptation and Sustainable Transition (COAST) program, a partnership with the UK. Indonesia, home to 23% of the world's mangroves, 18% of coral reefs, and 15% of seagrass, aims to protect 30 million hectares of marine areas by 2030 and 97.5 million hectares by 2045. The country has initiated a blue carbon economic model in marine conservation areas, which store 98 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent and absorb 360 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>eq. Four pilot projects in East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, Riau Islands, and Central Java will be implemented over 10 years with a \$3 million investment, targeting the protection of over 17 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>eq. With marine conservation costs estimated at \$2.5–3.4 billion, Indonesia welcomed the UK's COAST program, which will provide up to £18 million in funding.

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## **D. Climate Change, Energy and Mining**

### **Solar Power Overtakes Coal in Europe, Indonesia Lags Behind**

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 26 January 2025

Solar power is set to surpass coal in the European Union's electricity production in 2024, according to Ember's [European Electricity Review 2025](#). This marks a significant achievement for renewables, with solar becoming the fastest-growing electricity source. The shift is part of a broader trend in Europe, where wind and solar energy have increased the share of renewables to 47%, reducing fossil fuel reliance from 39% to 29%. Despite progress, more work is needed, particularly in wind energy and energy storage. The report highlights the role of battery storage in maximizing renewable energy, with EU battery capacity doubling in 2023. In Indonesia, solar energy potential remains largely untapped despite abundant sunlight. The IESR's [Indonesia Solar Energy Outlook 2025](#) shows slow growth in solar energy, with current capacity at 718 MW, far from the country's potential of up to 19,835 GW. Challenges include unattractive prices for developers and intermittent solar production, which can be mitigated by energy storage technologies. Indonesia's transition to renewable energy faces hurdles due to reliance on coal and regional connectivity issues.

## Indonesian parliament proposes revision of mining law

—Fransiska Nangoy and Martin Petty, *Reuters*, 23 January 2025

Indonesia's parliament has proposed revisions to the country's mining law to support the development of the mineral processing industry and streamline mining permits for religious groups and universities. President Prabowo Subianto aims to accelerate the sector's growth and energy transition, having formed a special task force for this purpose. The proposed revisions include giving priority access to mining areas for companies engaged in "downstreaming" activities, with preferences based on investment size, mineral value-add plans, and job creation. Religious groups and universities may also be granted priority access to certain mining areas, depending on their capacity to manage the operations and contribute to local economic and educational development. Last year, Indonesia issued a regulation allowing religious organizations to manage mining assets, which has faced criticism as a political reward. Additionally, mining areas under 2,500 hectares would be prioritized for small businesses to support local economies.

## Indonesia Aims to Curb Emissions Growth by 2035 in Forestry Bet

—Norman Harsono and Sheryl Tian Tong Lee, *Bloomberg*, 22 January 2025

Indonesia aims to limit emissions growth to 23% by 2035 from 2019 levels, focusing on forest and peatland conservation to mitigate pollution. Environment Minister Hanif Faisol Nurofiq confirmed this target in an interview, with emissions projected to reach 1.3–1.4 billion tons annually by 2035. The country will submit its updated emissions goals to the United Nations by mid-February. However, the plan has faced criticism for its heavy reliance on forests as carbon sinks and insufficient cuts in polluting industries in the near term. Indonesia's forests have historically been a net carbon emitter due to deforestation, but the government aims to turn them into carbon sinks by 2030. To align with the Paris Agreement, emissions would need to be reduced by 51% by 2035, according to [Climate Action Tracker](#). The plan includes programs like peatland conservation and mangrove planting. However, challenges remain with policy coherence between ministries, especially as Indonesia grapples with potential green policy changes under President Prabowo Subianto's leadership.

## Plan to grant universities mining concessions draws flak

—News Desk, *TheJakartaPost*, 22 January 2025

Indonesia's proposed revision to the Mining Law, which includes granting mining concessions to higher education institutions, has sparked criticism from civil groups. The proposed changes, discussed during a meeting of the House of Representatives' Legislation Body (Baleg), suggest that universities with at least B-level accreditation could receive mining licenses. Critics, including the Mining Advocacy Network (JATAM), argue that this move is an attempt to legitimize pork barrel politics and exploit universities for mining profits, instead of focusing on education or research related to mining. The revision also includes provisions for religious organizations and local small businesses to manage mining operations. The process has been criticized for being rushed and lacking public consultation. Lawmakers raised concerns about the academic analysis of the draft and the absence of stakeholder engagement. Environmental groups like the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL) warn that the revision could lead to irresponsible mining practices, potentially damaging the environment. Despite these objections, the Baleg approved the revision to proceed as a House initiative.

## Coal gasification, an old technology, is quietly expanding across Asia



—Nithin Coca, *Mongabay*, 21 January 2025

Several of Asia's largest economies, including China, Indonesia, and India, are pushing coal gasification as part of their clean energy transition, claiming it produces a cleaner fuel and reduces reliance on imported natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas. However, experts and activists disagree. Gasified coal remains a highly polluting fossil fuel. In China, coal gasification for industrial uses grew by 18% in 2023, consuming over 340 million metric tons of coal annually. Indonesia, too, is advancing coal gasification projects as part of its energy strategy, despite concerns over high costs and environmental impacts. Investors have pulled back from Indonesia's first gasification plant, and Japan's plan to retrofit the Matsushima coal plant with gasification technology has faced rising costs, raising doubts about its feasibility. While Japan views gasification as a way to reduce emissions from coal power, critics argue it's a loophole that allows coal plants to continue operating, undermining the country's pledge to phase out unabated coal. The challenges of high capital and environmental costs have also hindered coal gasification projects in the U.S., Netherlands, and Australia.

Tanaka, K., Cavalett, O., Collins, W. J., & Cherubini, F. (2019). [Asserting the climate benefits of the coal-to-gas shift across temporal and spatial scales](#). *Nature Climate Change*, 9(5), 389-396.

Kholod, N., Evans, M., Pilcher, R. C., Roshchanka, V., Ruiz, F., Coté, M., & Collings, R. (2020). [Global methane emissions from coal mining to continue growing even with declining coal production](#). *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 256, 120489.

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## E. Pollution, Waste and Disaster

### **Weather tracker: Floods and landslides in Indonesia leave at least 20 dead**

—Daniel Adamson, *TheGuardian*, 24 January 2025

Heavy rain across Indonesia has triggered severe flooding and a deadly landslide on Java Island, killing over 20 people, with several others missing. The landslide occurred in a mountainous area near Pekalongan, collapsing bridges and burying homes and vehicles in mud. Indonesia is highly vulnerable to such disasters during the rainy season (November to April), but the climate crisis is intensifying storms, leading to more severe flooding outside the typical season. In May 2023, flash floods in West Sumatra killed 67 people. Meanwhile, Pakistan is facing a winter drought, with rainfall in eastern Punjab province down by over 40% in the past four months. This has devastated agriculture, which makes up 25% of Pakistan's GDP. Many farmers are being forced to switch careers due to unreliable rainfall patterns. In North America, Arctic air caused bitter cold and heavy snow in the southern U.S., with New Orleans recording 17 cm of snow, breaking a 1948 record. The storm caused fatalities, disrupted travel, and left 100,000 people without power, while electricity demand spiked due to the extreme cold.

### **Nickel Supports Renewable Energy, but Mining It Harms the Environment**

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 23 January 2025

Nickel, a key material for renewable energy infrastructure such as batteries and corrosion-resistant steel, faces growing demand. However, its mining, especially in forested areas, poses significant environmental threats. A recent study by University of Queensland reveals

that emissions from nickel mining sites can be up to 500 times greater than previously estimated, especially in regions like Indonesia. Biomass carbon emissions from deforestation for mining, often ignored in sustainability reports, exacerbate these impacts. The research emphasizes the need to avoid mining in areas with "irrecoverable carbon," such as old-growth rainforests and mangroves, to mitigate irreversible carbon losses. Although nickel is highly recyclable, the rising demand for technologies like electric vehicles and renewable energy plants necessitates more mining. Effective rehabilitation practices and careful carbon offsetting could help reduce emissions, but mining companies must prioritize minimizing land transformation and report deforestation impacts. As demand for nickel grows, it is crucial for the mining sector to balance sustainability with resource extraction.

Mervine, E.M., Valenta, R.K., et al. (2025). [Biomass carbon emissions from nickel mining have significant implications for climate action](#). *Nature Communications* 16, 481.

### **Landslide and Flood Season Amidst Weather Turmoil**

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 22 January 2025

A landslide in Kasimpar Village, Petungkriyono District, Pekalongan Regency, Central Java, on January 20, killed 19 people, with 7 still missing, based on data by the National Disaster Management Agency. The disaster, part of a series of hydro-climate events, was triggered by prolonged heavy rainfall, exacerbated by the La Nina, which follows the El Nino. The landslide destroyed homes, vehicles, and bridges, and rescue efforts are hindered by continuing rain and damaged roads. According to the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, the area's steep terrain and erodible volcanic soil made it highly susceptible to landslides, especially after intense rainfall. Early warnings were issued, but local and national factors, including the shift from drought to heavy rain, contributed to the disaster. The Asian Monsoon phenomenon, weak La Nina, and convergent wind patterns are predicted to continue to affect atmospheric dynamics, supporting the formation of high-intensity rain. This indicates the need for vigilance against disaster risks, especially in areas with steep topography that are prone to flash floods and landslides that can be deadly.

### **The Plan to Destroy 20 Million Hectares of Forests: A Path to Ecological Disaster and Climate Crisis**

—News Desk, *TrendAsia*, 20 January 2025

The Indonesian government's plan to convert 20 million hectares of forests for energy and food crops threatens both the economy and the environment. Aimed at achieving food and energy self-sufficiency, it could worsen the climate crisis, releasing an estimated 4.9 billion tons of carbon emissions and decreasing agricultural productivity, which has already fallen by 30-33% in Indonesia. The plan would also further endanger biodiversity, including critically endangered species like orangutans, with fewer than 120,000 remaining in the wild. Experts warn that expanding palm oil plantations, already covering nearly 18 million hectares, would exceed environmental capacity and lead to severe degradation. The conversion also risks displacing indigenous communities and exacerbating forest fires, which caused IDR 220 trillion in damages in 2015. Despite government assurances, research shows that the plan would likely lead to deforestation, particularly for biomass and palm oil plantations. Civil society organizations urge the government to focus on optimizing existing land, respecting indigenous rights, and adopting sustainable practices to achieve true food and energy sovereignty while preserving Indonesia's natural resources.

### **Indonesia targets river pollution to combat marine debris**

—Dewa Ketut Sudiarta Wiguna and Yashinta Difa, *AntaraNews*, 19 January 2025

The Indonesian government is intensifying efforts to address marine plastic pollution by focusing on major rivers contributing to plastic waste, particularly in Java and Bali. Environment Minister Hanif Faisol highlighted the Ciliwung River, which accounts for 20-30% of plastic waste entering the ocean, and other critical rivers like the Citarum, Bengawan Solo, and Brantas. In Bali, attention is also given to the Badung and Mati rivers, which, despite their shorter lengths, significantly impact marine ecosystems. The government's strategy involves deploying giant nets across key waterways to intercept plastic waste before it reaches the ocean. This initiative is supported by the UNDP and international partners such as Norway and the UAE, with the UAE providing advanced trash net booms for installation in 14 locations in Bali. Minister Nurofiq emphasized that these nets will be installed by the end of the year. The initiative is part of Indonesia's broader goal to reduce ocean plastic waste by 70% by 2025, addressing the alarming 359,061 tons of plastic waste that entered the ocean in 2023.

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## F. Technology, Investment and Finance

### Tech Stock Sell-Off Eases After DeepSeek Scare

—Joe Rennison, *TheNewYorkTimes*, 28 January 2025

Tech stocks rebounded after a sharp sell-off triggered by Chinese AI startup DeepSeek's claim that it could match top chatbots with fewer chips. The S&P 500 gained 0.9%, while the Nasdaq rose 2%, with Nvidia recovering 8%—reclaiming \$200 billion of its lost value. Alphabet, Microsoft, and Oracle also saw gains. Despite tech leading the S&P 500's recovery, it remains the only sector with negative year-to-date returns. Seema Shah of Principal Asset Management warned that DeepSeek's rise underscores the need for market diversification beyond the "Magnificent Seven." Investors also face concerns over inflation and potential tariffs. Meta and Microsoft will report earnings, offering insights into AI sector resilience. Apple follows later this week, while Nvidia reports in late February. Global markets felt the shockwave—Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 1.4%, and Softbank fell 5%. European stocks bounced back, with ASML slipping further. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve is expected to keep interest rates unchanged, with markets closely watching Chair Powell's remarks for economic cues.

### Investors wary of Indonesia's big climate promises amid record of flip-flopping

—Jeff Hutton, *Mongabay*, 27 January 2025

Indonesia's ambitious climate targets, including shutting nearly all coal-fired power plants and adding 75 GW of clean energy by 2040, face skepticism from experts. President Prabowo Subianto's pledges, made at the G20 summit, appear unrealistic given current renewable capacity of just 13 GW and regulatory hurdles deterring investment. Rooftop solar policies have flip-flopped, while the government's cap on new solar projects threatens private sector growth. The country's EV conversion program also struggles, with only 1,500 motorcycles converted in 2024 out of a 50,000 target, hampered by bureaucracy. Meanwhile, carbon trading is expanding, but Indonesia still needs \$146 billion in private investment to meet its Paris Agreement commitments. Analysts warn that Indonesia is setting itself up for criticism by making sweeping pronouncements without credible plans. The Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), once a key mechanism, now seems stalled, with no clear alternative.

Experts suggest Indonesia should pursue bilateral agreements with remaining JETP partners to maintain momentum in its energy transition.

### **RI victory in CPO case at WTO may mean little in practice**

—Ruth Dea Juwita, *TheJakartaPost*, 20 January 2025

Indonesia secured a victory in its WTO case against the EU over palm oil-based biodiesel restrictions, with the panel ruling that the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II discriminated against Indonesian biofuels in favor of European-made rapeseed and sunflower oil. However, experts caution that the ruling may have little practical impact. The EU can appeal, but with the WTO appellate body inactive since 2019, enforcement remains uncertain. The ruling acknowledges Indonesia's concerns over trade barriers but upholds the EU's classification of palm oil as a high-risk biofuel for deforestation and emissions. While Jakarta hopes this decision could ease trade negotiations and affect the EU's delayed deforestation-free regulation, experts warn of potential delays similar to Indonesia's stalled nickel export case. Trade Minister Budi Santoso emphasized monitoring the EU's policy adjustments, while industry leaders tempered expectations, stressing the need for direct negotiations. Analysts suggest Indonesia should diversify export markets given the regulatory uncertainties surrounding palm oil trade with the EU.

### **World Bank, IMF expect RI economy to grow 5.1% this year**

—Deni Gifari, *TheJakartaPost*, 20 January 2025

The IMF and World Bank have maintained their 2025 GDP growth projection for Indonesia at 5.1 percent, highlighting long-term challenges for developing economies. The World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects* report warns that the next 25 years will be tougher for emerging markets due to high debt burdens, weak investment, slowing productivity, and rising climate costs. Chief economist Indermit Gill stressed the need for domestic reforms to attract private investment and improve resource efficiency. Developing economies now account for 45 percent of global GDP, up from 25 percent in 2000, with 40 percent of their exports going to other developing nations. Deputy chief economist Ayhan Kose urged these countries to enhance trade cooperation and infrastructure. The IMF's *World Economic Outlook* noted US economic confidence as a driver of capital outflows from emerging markets. Both institutions estimate Indonesia's 2024 GDP growth at around 5 percent, below the initial 5.2 percent target. Bank Indonesia cited declining exports and weak household consumption as key factors, prompting a recent interest rate cut to stimulate demand.

### **Indonesia launches international carbon exchange**

—AFP, *TheJakartaPost*, 20 January 2025

Indonesia officially opened its carbon exchange to international buyers on Monday, aiming to generate funds for its ambitious climate goals. The market, launched in September 2023 for domestic participants, allows foreign investors to purchase carbon credits, which represent activities reducing or avoiding carbon emissions. These credits help companies offset emissions to comply with regulations or enhance their environmental credentials. The initiative supports Indonesia's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, as pledged by President Prabowo Subianto, who also promised to phase out coal power plants by 2040. Despite these goals, Indonesia, one of the world's largest polluters, has struggled to transition away from coal. The government hopes funds from carbon credit sales will finance over 75 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2040, though detailed plans remain unclear. Environment Minister Hanif Faisol Nurofiq described the exchange's opening as a milestone for sustainability, with assurances of credit accountability and prevention of double-counting.

However, experts like Fabby Tumiwa of the Institute for Essential Services Reform raised concerns about low domestic demand, project “additionality,” and compatibility with international standards. Initial trades accounted for 41,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

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## **G. Human Rights, Indigenous People and Gender Equality**

### **Indonesia Pushes for Thorough Inquiry into Shooting Incident Involving Its Citizen by Malaysian Authorities**

—Dian Kencana, *SeaToday*, 28 January 2025

Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Sugiono, has called for a thorough investigation into a shooting incident involving Malaysia's Maritime Enforcement Agency (APMM) on January 24 in Tanjung Rhu, Selangor, which resulted in the death of an Indonesian citizen and injuries to several others. The incident occurred when APMM patrols intercepted a boat carrying five undocumented Indonesian migrant workers. The shooting reportedly happened after the individuals allegedly resisted. Sugiono expressed deep regret over the loss of life and urged a comprehensive probe into the incident, including the alleged excessive use of force. He also extended condolences to the family of the deceased and the injured. The identities of the victims are still being verified, according to Judha Nugraha from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (KP2MI) confirmed one fatality and four injuries, calling for transparent legal proceedings. KP2MI Deputy Minister Christina Aryani condemned the excessive use of force and demanded a full investigation by the Malaysian authorities. This incident has raised serious concerns about the safety of Indonesian citizens abroad.

### **Discriminatory laws, impunity worsen Indonesia's human rights situation: HRW**

—Nur Janti, *TheJakartaPost*, 25 January 2025

Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its [World Report 2025](#) criticized Indonesia's human rights record in 2024, highlighting deteriorating conditions under former President Joko Widodo's leadership, which ended in October. HRW noted that the government failed to address religious freedom violations, discrimination against women, and unrest in Papua. Attacks on religious minorities, including the Ahmadiyah community, were prevalent, with mosques closed by authorities and religious services disrupted by local groups. Additionally, over 700 discriminatory regulations were issued during Jokowi's presidency, including controversial revisions to the Criminal Code that restrict freedom of speech and blasphemy. Discrimination against Papuans remained unchecked, with military impunity for human rights violations. HRW urged the new administration of President Prabowo Subianto to revoke these discriminatory regulations and address ongoing human rights abuses. One of the proposed measures is the pardoning of 44,000 prisoners, including activists, with plans to integrate them into government programs after undergoing human rights training. HRW emphasized the need for a government commitment to improving civil and political rights in the country.

### **KontraS Touches on Prabowo Government's Commitment to Abolishing Death Penalty**

—Alfritia Nefi and Novali Panji Nugroho, *TempoNews*, 21 January 2025



The Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS) has questioned President Prabowo Subianto's commitment to abolishing the death penalty after Indonesia abstained from supporting the United Nations' death penalty moratorium on December 17, 2024. While 130 countries endorsed the moratorium, Indonesia was among the 22 abstentions, signaling a lack of approval for the measure. KontraS Coordinator Dimas Bagus Arya noted that this decision contradicted Prabowo's campaign promise to end the death penalty. Furthermore, the government's recent discussions, including comments from Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs about accelerating the executions of drug convicts, indicate a continuation of the death penalty. Dimas criticized the punishment as discriminatory and problematic, often targeting those who are not the primary perpetrators, and raising concerns over legal manipulation in death penalty cases, particularly in drug-related offenses. He urged the government to implement a moratorium and abolish the death penalty to protect the right to life and justice.

### **Indonesia to Offer Compensation, Restitution for Victims of Human Rights Violations, Minister Says**

—Novali Panji Nugroho, *AntaraNews*, 21 January 2025

Indonesia's Human Rights Minister, Natalius Pigai, announced that the government will provide compensation, rehabilitation, and restitution for victims of past gross human rights violations. The Ministry of Human Rights, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs, will offer social assistance to these victims, restoring their status and supporting their rehabilitation. Pigai emphasized the government's readiness to attend to victims and provide the necessary help. To date, Indonesia has recognized 12 cases of gross human rights violations, as confirmed by former President Joko Widodo in January 2023. These violations include incidents such as the 1965-1966 mass killings, the 1989 Talangsari and Rumoh Geudong incidents, enforced disappearances in 1997-1998, the May 1998 riots, and various tragedies in Aceh and Papua during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The recognition followed the reports and recommendations of the PPHAM Team (Non-Judicial Resolution of Past Gross Human Rights Violations), established under Presidential Decree No. 17 of 2022.

### **Papua's noken bag, the knotted legacy of resilience and identity**

—Firdia Lisnawati and Edna Tarigan, *APNews*, 17 January 2025

The noken bag, a traditional handcrafted item from Papua, is commonly seen in markets in Jayapura and other cities in the province. Made from natural fibers like tree bark or leaves, the bag is a cultural symbol, reflecting Papuan heritage. UNESCO recognized it as needing urgent safeguarding in 2012 due to a decline in traditional crafting methods, with factory-made bags posing competition. Mariana Pekei, a local crafter, sells handmade noken bags in Youtefa market, highlighting the challenges of crafting them from tree bark, which involves collecting raw materials from the forest and manually processing the fibers. The bags vary in size and complexity, with larger ones requiring more precision and patience. They are often dyed with natural colors like light brown and yellowish brown, representing the land and people of Papua. Noken bags are not only practical but serve as powerful cultural symbols of resilience and unity. Despite high transportation costs, crafters travel to Jayapura to share their craft and sell the bags, popular as souvenirs.

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## **I. Indonesia in Geopolitics**



## **Indonesia's Evolving Maritime and Defense Cooperation with China: Balancing Diplomacy and Sovereignty**

—Muhammad Zulfikar Rakhmat, *ChinaGlobalSouthProject*, 29 January 2025

January has been a pivotal month for Indonesia as it navigates its relationship with China, marked by key defense and security discussions that reflect Indonesia's strategic balancing act. The country is strengthening ties with Beijing while safeguarding its sovereignty, particularly in the South China Sea. Key meetings included the Bakamla-CCG Maritime Security Talks on January 8, where both nations discussed maritime cooperation, safe shipping lanes, and combating illegal fishing. The following days saw PLA Chief of Joint Staff Liu Zhenli's visit to Jakarta, focusing on expanding military cooperation, joint exercises, and military technology collaboration. On January 22, Indonesian Defense Minister Sjafrie traveled to Beijing to continue discussions on enhancing military exercises and technology sharing. Despite these engagements, Indonesia maintains its opposition to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. Experts warn that Indonesia must ensure its security partnerships do not compromise its territorial integrity. To balance this, Indonesia is also strengthening ties with Japan, Australia, and the U.S., ensuring its strategic autonomy amidst growing geopolitical challenges.

## **Indonesia will not speculate about Trump aid freeze, Foreign Ministry says**

—Yvette Tanamal, *TheJakartaPost*, 29 January 2025

Indonesia has stated it will not speculate on the U.S. plan to freeze foreign grants and loans, pending official communication from Washington. A Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Rolliansyah "Roy" Soemirat, clarified that Indonesia would only respond to official statements through diplomatic channels. This follows a recent announcement from the U.S. Department of State that paused all foreign assistance, funded by the Department and USAID, to review and realign it in line with the "America First" policy. The halt affects countries like Indonesia, where USAID provides around \$100 million annually for projects on corruption eradication, climate change, education, and health. While the freeze includes over 80 countries, Israel and Egypt are exceptions. This move comes amid wider policy shifts, including U.S. aid to Ukraine, which received \$17.2 billion in 2023. Indonesia, a key recipient of U.S. assistance, will await further official discussions before taking any steps in response.

## **Indonesia's new leader expands military's role in test of fragile democracy**

—Ananda Teresia, *Reuters*, 28 January 2025

Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto is facing growing criticism over his increasing reliance on the military in governance, drawing comparisons to Suharto's authoritarian rule. Just months into office, Prabowo has expanded military involvement in civilian affairs, notably tasking armed forces with running much of his \$28 billion free school meals project. His allies in parliament are also pushing legislation to allow active-duty officers in senior government roles, raising fears of democratic backsliding. While supporters argue military efficiency justifies its expanded role, critics warn of a return to Suharto-era power centralization. Analysts see Prabowo's moves, including a military-led land cultivation expansion and infrastructure projects, as a potential rollback of post-1998 reforms. Retired generals and democracy advocates caution against unchecked military influence, warning of weakened civilian oversight. With a dominant parliamentary coalition and broad public approval, Prabowo's leadership could reshape Indonesia's democratic landscape, potentially reviving elements of military rule last seen under Suharto's New Order.

### **Palestinian student appreciates Prabowo's scholarship program**

—Andi F and Tegar Nurfitri, *AntaraNews*, 26 January 2025

Indonesia has awarded full scholarships to 23 Palestinian students, enabling them to study at the Indonesia Defense University. Jana Abu Salha, one of the recipients, expressed profound gratitude to the Indonesian people and government, particularly President Prabowo Subianto, for their continued support of Palestine. Salha emphasized that Indonesia's commitment extends beyond political and humanitarian aid, highlighting the life-changing impact of the scholarship program. She noted that studying in Indonesia has instilled values of dedication and discipline among Palestinian students, while also strengthening the bond between both nations. Launched in 2023 under Prabowo's leadership as defense minister, the scholarship program provides fully funded five-year education in fields such as military medicine, pharmacy, civil and electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and information security. Salha described it as a tangible demonstration of Indonesia's solidarity with Palestine, offering Palestinian youth a rare opportunity for higher education amid ongoing challenges. This initiative reinforces Indonesia's long-standing support for Palestine and contributes to building future Palestinian professionals equipped with critical skills.

### **Assessing Indonesia's Relations with the US After Joining BRICS**

—Siwage Dharma Negara and Leo Suryadinata, *Fulcrum*, 27 January 2025

Indonesia officially joined the BRICS bloc, marking a significant shift in its foreign policy under President Prabowo Subianto. BRICS' acceptance of Indonesia reflects its goal to expand influence in the Indo-Pacific. Prabowo likely views membership as an opportunity to play a larger leadership role on the global stage, akin to Indonesia's founding president Sukarno. However, Indonesia's alignment with BRICS may strain its relations with the United States and Western powers, particularly with BRICS' emphasis on de-dollarisation and local currencies for trade. While critics argue BRICS membership could complicate Indonesia's ties with the US, particularly due to potential trade disruptions and tariffs, Indonesia is positioning itself to leverage the bloc's growing economic influence. This move aligns with Prabowo's development goals, particularly in energy and food security, while diversifying export markets. However, Indonesia's balance between its BRICS commitments and aspirations for OECD membership will be crucial, as the country seeks to strengthen its geopolitical position without alienating key partners. The full impact on US relations will depend on Indonesia's approach to managing both blocs.

## **II. Government 100-Day Programs**

### **Prabowo's First 100 Days Raise Hopes, Eyebrows**

—Ainur Rohmah, *AsiaSentinel*, 28 January 2025

As President Prabowo Subianto reaches his 100-day mark, his administration has drawn mixed responses due to an aggressive consolidation of power and controversial policies. The government's coalition controls 81% of parliamentary seats, leading to concerns about the erosion of democracy. His cabinet, with over 100 individuals, has been likened to the authoritarian "Guided Democracy" era of Suharto. Prabowo's policies, such as the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program and efforts to combat land mafia, have been popular among lower-income groups, though criticized for execution challenges and potential environmental harm. His foreign policy shifts, including closer ties with China and the US, and a

controversial stance on the South China Sea, have sparked debate. Environmental critics, such as Greenpeace Indonesia and Celios, argue that Prabowo's government continues to favor oligarchs and promotes policies damaging to the environment, including deforestation for food and energy projects. Prabowo's ambitious target of 8% economic growth faces skepticism amid economic challenges, deflation, and job losses. His militaristic approach to forest management has raised concerns about repression of local communities.

### **Indonesian president Prabowo's first 100 days marked by u-turns, missteps ... and sky-high popularity**

—Kate Lamb, *TheGuardian*, 27 January 2025

Indonesia's newly inaugurated President Prabowo Subianto began his tenure with a military-style boot camp, projecting discipline. However, analysts say his leadership has been chaotic, with inconsistent policies and reversals. Prabowo, a former general, won by a landslide in 2024, largely due to his promise of free meals for 90 million schoolchildren and pregnant women. While the program is popular, his administration has faced sharp criticism over erratic policymaking. Key missteps include a last-minute VAT policy change and a controversial stance on China's South China Sea claims—later contradicted by Indonesia's foreign ministry. Foreign policy decisions, including joining BRICS and skipping an ASEAN meeting, have raised concerns about Indonesia's direction. Domestically, surprise prisoner releases and talk of pardoning corruption convicts added to uncertainty. Analysts say these blunders stem from managing a bloated coalition and Prabowo's shifting positions. Despite his 80.9% approval rating, his leadership remains unpredictable.

### **100 Days of Prabowo-Gibran: Opportunities to Accelerate Indonesia's Energy Transition**

—Uliyasi Simanjuntak and Kurniawati Hasjanah, *IESRNews*, 22 January 2025

As President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka complete their first 100 days in office, the Institute for Essential Services Reform (IESR) critiques their energy transition strategy. While the government has pledged energy independence and zero emissions by 2060, concrete actions remain scarce. IESR calls for tactical measures, such as achieving a 23% renewable energy mix by 2025, and accelerating renewable energy capacity development. Despite the president's commitment to renewable energy, the National Electricity General Plan (RUKN) maintains a 2060 net-zero target and includes coal plant construction plans until 2035. IESR urges the government to challenge fossil fuel interests and implement policies like reducing fossil fuel subsidies and shifting funds to renewable energy. Additionally, IESR emphasizes the need for caution with biodiesel production, advocating for diversified feedstocks to avoid deforestation and promote sustainability. The organization also recommends tax levies on coal exports to fund renewable energy investments. IESR stresses that clear, sustainable policies must be in place within the next 100 days to ensure a successful energy transition.

### **Food Self-Sufficiency Nightmare**

—Ahmad Arif, *Kompas*, 22 January 2025

Indonesia's long-standing goal of food self-sufficiency has often led to environmental harm and community disruption, despite recurring efforts. President Prabowo Subianto renewed this ambition in his October 2024 inauguration speech, pledging that the country would achieve food self-sufficiency within 4-5 years and become the world's food barn. However, this vision is marred by past failures and environmental concerns. Previous attempts, such as the New Order's rice self-sufficiency drive and President Yudhoyono's food estate program,

resulted in deforestation, environmental degradation, and unfulfilled promises, including abandoned rice fields and failed cassava projects in Merauke. The Green Revolution, though aimed at increasing agricultural output, also exacerbated biodiversity loss and over-reliance on costly chemical inputs. These initiatives failed to consider local needs and ecological sustainability. As food imports, especially wheat, soar, Bappenas has outlined a more sustainable and regionally tailored food system. This approach emphasizes inclusivity and environmental care, recommending the exclusion of food estates from future plans for a resilient food system.

### **Food poisoning outbreak mars Indonesian president's flagship free meal program**

—Kate Lamb, *TheGuardian*, 21 January 2025

Dozens of Indonesian schoolchildren have suffered food poisoning after consuming meals from President Prabowo Subianto's new flagship program, aimed at combating stunting and malnutrition. Launched this month, the program is a key part of Prabowo's election promises, targeting 82.9 million children and pregnant women by 2029. However, recent incidents raised concerns about food safety. In Sukoharjo, Central Java, 40 students fell ill after eating marinated chicken, leading to nausea and vomiting. Similar reports of food poisoning have surfaced in Nunukan, North Kalimantan. The government has responded by withdrawing the food and treating the affected children, calling the incidents an important evaluation for ensuring future food safety. The program, with an estimated \$45 billion cost over five years, has been praised for its potential to reduce stunting, which affects 21.5% of children nationwide, particularly in less developed eastern regions. Despite the challenges, Prabowo's policies have received strong public support, with an 80.9% approval rating as he nears his 100th day in office.