

The Indonesian Update

Monthly Review on Economic, Legal, Security, Political, and Social Affairs

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Navigating Civil Liberties in the Human Rights Bill

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The Dynamics of SOE Downsizing from an Institutional Perspective ■

Analysis of the State Budget Accountability for Fiscal Year 2025 ■

Politics

Safe Campus and Independent Academics: ■

Examining the Relationship between Sexual Violence and Academic Freedom

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Optimizing the Biomedical Genome Science Initiative (BGSi) ■
to Strengthen Disease Prevention in Indonesia

Examining the Potential Application of Behavior ■
Change Models in the Free Nutritious Meal Program

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FOREWORD

The July 2026 edition of the Indonesian Update features a feature report titled “Civil Liberties in the Human Rights Bill.” This article examines the dynamics of the drafting of the Human Rights Bill (RUU HAM), particularly in relation to the protection of civil liberties, and highlights the challenges and opportunities in strengthening respect for, protection of, and fulfillment of human rights in Indonesia.

In the social sector, the Indonesian Update addresses public health issues through the article “BGSi for Disease Prevention in Indonesia,” which touches on the importance of implementing an evidence-based approach in disease prevention efforts in Indonesia. Furthermore, the article “Potential Application of Behavior Change Models in the Free Nutritional Meal Program” examines the opportunities for applying behavior change approaches to increase the effectiveness of the Free Nutritional Meal Program.

In the political field, this edition presents the article “Safe Campus, Free Academics” which discusses the importance of maintaining academic freedom and creating a safe, inclusive, and conducive campus environment for the development of science and freedom of expression in higher education.

In the economic field, this edition contains two analyses related to institutional governance and fiscal accountability. The article “The Dynamics of State-Owned Enterprise Retrenchment from an Institutional Perspective” discusses the implications of the State-Owned Enterprise retrenchment policy for institutional governance and the national economy. Meanwhile, the article “Analysis of the Accountability of the 2025 State Budget” examines the accountability aspect of state financial management through an evaluation of the implementation of the 2025 State Budget.

Through the monthly publication of the Indonesian Update which raises various strategic and current issues, it is hoped that this report can contribute to policy makers in government institutions, business actors, academics, researchers, think tanks, and civil society, both at home and abroad, to obtain contextual analysis of the political, legal, social, and economic dynamics in Indonesia, while enriching understanding of the challenges and direction of public policy going forward.

Happy reading.

Main Report

Navigating Civil Liberties in the Human Rights Bill

-Afifah Fitriyani Oceanto-



Public debate surrounding the Human Rights Bill (*Rancangan Undang-Undang Hak Asasi Manusia* or **Human Rights Bill**) has intensified since its inclusion in the 2026 National Legislative Program (*Program Legislasi Nasional* or **Prolegnas**) Priority List and its ongoing preparations by the Ministry of Human Rights. This growing public attention should serve as an important opportunity to hear citizens' aspirations in strengthening the protection of human rights while updating Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights, particularly at a time when civic space and the enjoyment of human rights in Indonesia are increasingly under pressure.

Civil liberties constitute one of the fundamental pillars of a democratic state, as they guarantee every individual the right to express opinions, access information, assemble peacefully, and associate freely without arbitrary interference by the state. These rights are enshrined in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and are further protected under various international human rights instruments ratified by Indonesia (Hukumonline, 2025). Therefore, it is essential to examine and ensure that the Human Rights Bill not only recognizes these rights in a normative sense but also provides effective legal protection through clear and precise legal provisions that do not create opportunities for restrictions that may undermine human rights.

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Accordingly, this article seeks to examine the extent to which the Draft Human Rights Bill safeguards civil liberties. The analysis focuses on two main aspects: first, the regulation of civil liberties within the Draft Human Rights Bill; and second, several critical observations regarding the substance of those provisions.

Regulation of Civil Liberties in the Draft Human Rights Bill

The regulation of civil liberties in the Draft Human Rights Bill is dispersed across a number of provisions governing civil and political rights as integral components of human rights that the state is obliged to respect, protect, and fulfill. Among these, several provisions warrant particular attention due to their significance, namely **Article 14, Article 19, Article 20, Article 21, Article 27, Article 30, and Article 49**.

First, Article 14 of the Draft Human Rights Bill governs the freedom of religion and belief. This provision guarantees every individual the right to adopt a religion and/or belief according to their conscience; to practice their religion or belief, either individually or collectively, in private or in public; to teach and disseminate religious teachings; and to establish places of worship. Under **Article 14(4)**, the exercise of these rights may only be restricted by law where such restrictions are necessary in a democratic society for the purposes of national security, public order, public health, public morals, and/or the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Second, Article 19 regulates the freedom of opinion, expression, communication, and access to information. The provision guarantees every individual the right to express opinions orally, in writing, through artistic works, or by any other medium of their choice. It also guarantees the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, utilize, and disseminate information through any available means.

These protections apply both offline and online (in the digital sphere). Restrictions on these rights may only be imposed by law where they are necessary in a democratic society for the purpose of respecting the rights or reputations of others, safeguarding national security, maintaining public order, protecting public health, and/or preserving public morals.

Third, Article 20 guarantees every individual's right to peaceful assembly. The exercise of this right may only be restricted by law where such restrictions are necessary in a democratic society for the purposes of national security, public safety, public order, public health or public morals, and/or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

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Fourth, Article 21 of the Draft Human Rights Bill governs the freedom of association. It guarantees every individual the right to establish and join organizations with others, including the right to form and become a member of a trade union to protect their interests. The exercise of this right may only be restricted by law where such restrictions are necessary in a democratic society for the purposes of national security, public safety, public order, public health or public morals, and/or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Fifth, Article 27 guarantees the freedom of movement, including the right to choose one's residence, as well as the right of every Indonesian citizen to leave and re-enter the territory of Indonesia. Restrictions on these rights may only be imposed by law where they are necessary in a democratic society for the purposes of national security, public order, public health, public morals, and/or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Sixth, Article 30(3) governs the right to privacy. This provision guarantees every individual the right to the protection of their privacy and private life, family, home, honor, dignity, and communications against arbitrary or unlawful interference. In addition, the Draft Human Rights Bill introduces several novel rights, including the right to autonomy over neural and brain activity, cognitive liberty, personal decision-making autonomy, and mental and psychological continuity as integral components of the protection of individual privacy and personal integrity.

Seventh, Article 49 of the Draft Human Rights Bill regulates workers' freedom of association. This provision guarantees every worker the right to establish and join a trade union of their choice, as well as to engage in industrial action. The exercise of these rights may only be restricted by law where such restrictions are necessary in a democratic society for the purposes of national security, public order, and/or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

From a normative perspective, the Draft Human Rights Bill has made considerable progress in accommodating the protection of civil and political rights, including by recognizing the evolving nature of rights in the digital sphere. Nevertheless, these provisions still leave several important issues unresolved, particularly regarding the clarity of the parameters governing restrictions on rights, the availability of effective oversight mechanisms, and the assurance of effective implementation.

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Critical Observations on the Regulation of Civil Liberties

1. The Expansion of Rights Recognition Has Not Been Accompanied by Stronger Protection Mechanisms

The Human Rights Bill expands the recognition of various forms of civil liberties, including emerging rights shaped by technological advancements. However, most of its provisions remain limited to normative recognition and are not accompanied by adequate mechanisms for implementation, protection, remedies, or state accountability in cases of rights violations.

Under **Article 14**, the Human Rights Bill guarantees every individual's freedom to adopt a religion and/or belief, practice their faith, teach, and disseminate religious teachings. Nevertheless, the provision does not explain how the state will ensure that freedom of religion and belief can be enjoyed safely, equally, and without discrimination by all citizens, particularly members of religious minority groups and adherents of indigenous beliefs. The Draft Human Rights Bill also fails to establish mechanisms for protection or redress in cases involving violations of religious freedom or acts of intolerance.

A similar concern arises under **Article 19**, which governs the freedoms of opinion, expression, and access to information, including in the digital sphere. Recognizing the digital sphere as an area requiring human rights protection is a welcome development. However, the Human Rights Bill does not clarify how the state will safeguard freedom of expression online without creating new forms of restriction, such as excessive digital surveillance, the criminalization of expression, or disproportionate limitations on access to information. Consequently, the recognition of rights in the digital sphere has not yet been accompanied by adequate standards of protection.

Under **Article 20**, the Human Rights Bill guarantees every individual's right to peaceful assembly. However, the provision does not establish standards governing how law enforcement authorities should facilitate or disperse peaceful assemblies. Under international human rights standards, any restriction on the right to peaceful assembly must satisfy the principles of necessity and proportionality. These principles require law enforcement officials to prioritize non-violent means and to resort to restrictions or the use of force only as a last resort, in a manner proportionate to the threat encountered (UNODC, n.d.). The absence of such standards means that the protection of the right to peaceful assembly remains largely dependent on law enforcement practices in the field, creating the risk of excessive restrictions on peaceful demonstrations and the exercise of freedom of expression.

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Furthermore, **Articles 21 and 49** guarantee the freedom of association, including workers' rights to establish trade unions and engage in industrial action. Nevertheless, these provisions do not provide safeguards against union-busting practices, intimidation of members of civil society organizations, or the arbitrary dissolution of organizations. Nor do they establish mechanisms for remedies or state accountability in cases where the freedom of association is violated, raising questions about the effectiveness of the protection afforded to these rights.

In addition, **Article 27** guarantees the freedom of movement and the right to choose one's place of residence, including every citizen's right to leave and re-enter Indonesia. However, the Draft Human Rights Bill does not establish procedures for reviewing state-imposed restrictions on freedom of movement, such as travel bans imposed during criminal investigations or travel restrictions justified on grounds of national security or public health emergencies. Although such restrictions may be legally permissible under certain circumstances, the Draft Human Rights Bill does not guarantee individuals the right to be informed of the reasons for the restriction, to challenge the decision, or to obtain an effective remedy where restrictions are imposed arbitrarily or without a clear legal basis.

On the other hand, **Article 30** represents one of the Human Rights Bill's most significant innovations by introducing a broader conception of the right to privacy, encompassing cognitive liberty, autonomy over neural and brain activity, and mental and psychological continuity. The recognition of these emerging rights reflects an effort to align human rights protection with rapid technological developments. However, the Human Rights Bill does not provide clear definitions or legal parameters for these concepts, leaving considerable room for divergent interpretations in their implementation.

Moreover, although the protection of personal data and electronic systems is already governed by Law No. 27/2022 on Personal Data Protection, Law No. 11/2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions, as most recently amended by Law No. 1/2024, as well as various regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs concerning electronic system governance and personal data protection, these legal frameworks do not comprehensively address the protection of mental privacy and cognitive liberty. In particular, they do not establish adequate safeguards or limitations on the use of technologies such as digital surveillance, facial recognition, and artificial intelligence, which have the potential to influence individuals' cognitive processes and decision-making. Furthermore, the Human Rights Bill does not establish an independent oversight mechanism or provide effective remedies for violations of these emerging rights. Consequently,

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the protection of the right to privacy, particularly in the context of rapidly evolving digital technologies remains largely declaratory rather than enforceable.

2. The Regulation of Restrictions on Civil Liberties Remains Susceptible to Broad Interpretation

The Human Rights Bill adopts the principles governing limitations on human rights as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly the requirement that restrictions on rights must be prescribed by law, necessary in a democratic society, and pursue a legitimate aim. These principles are reflected in the provisions governing freedom of religion (Article 14), freedom of expression (Article 19), freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 20), freedom of association (Article 21), and freedom of movement (Article 27).

However, nearly all of these provisions continue to rely on broadly framed limitation clauses using terms such as “national security,” “public order,” “public safety,” “public morals,” and “respect for the rights and freedoms of others.” The principal concern is that the Draft Human Rights Bill does not establish clear legal parameters defining these concepts or explaining how they should be applied in practice. For instance, it provides no detailed guidance on the meaning of “public morals,” “public order,” or a “democratic society,” nor does it specify the criteria by which a particular restriction may be assessed as satisfying the principles of necessity and proportionality.

The absence of such parameters creates significant room for overly broad interpretations when restricting civil liberties. In the context of **freedom of expression**, for example, the need to respect the rights or reputations of others may be invoked to justify restrictions on expression if it is not accompanied by clear legal standards and procedural safeguards. Likewise, with respect to the **freedoms of peaceful assembly and association**, the Human Rights Bill does not specify how restrictions should be imposed, which authorities are empowered to impose them, or what oversight mechanisms should exist to ensure that such restrictions are not excessive or arbitrary, thereby creating a risk of human rights violations.

These shortcomings should be addressed to ensure that the Human Rights Bill does not become a new instrument through which the state unduly restricts civil liberties and weakens human rights protection. Instead, the Bill should reinforce the state’s threefold human rights obligations: **to respect, to protect, and to fulfill** human rights (Hukumonline, 2022).

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The Human Rights Bill marks significant progress by recognizing a broad range of civil liberties, including rights in the digital sphere. However, the recognition of rights alone is not sufficient. Without robust protection mechanisms and clearly defined limits on the restriction of rights, the Bill risks becoming merely an expanded catalogue of rights rather than a legal framework that provides stronger and more effective guarantees for the protection of civil liberties in Indonesia.

Conclusion

The Human Rights Bill represents a critical opportunity to reinforce the foundations of human rights protection in Indonesia, particularly at a time when civic space is becoming increasingly constrained. Its recognition of the freedoms of religion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, privacy, and emerging rights in the digital sphere reflects an effort to adapt Indonesia's human rights framework to evolving societal and technological developments.

However, these normative advances must be accompanied by more operational and enforceable provisions to ensure that these rights are not merely declaratory. Without clear mechanisms for protection, oversight, and effective remedies, as well as narrowly defined parameters governing permissible restrictions on rights, the Human Rights Bill risks falling short of providing meaningful and effective guarantees for the protection of civil liberties in Indonesia.

Recommendations

In accordance with the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a. **The Ministry of Human Rights** should clarify the legal parameters governing restrictions on rights in the Human Rights Bill, including clear definitions of national security, public order, public morals, and a democratic society, in accordance with the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- b. **The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR RI)** should ensure that the Human Rights Bill goes beyond the mere normative recognition of civil liberties by establishing comprehensive mechanisms for protection, oversight, remedies, and state accountability in cases of rights violations, including those occurring in the digital sphere.
- c. **The Government and the DPR RI** should harmonize the Human Rights Bill with the Human Rights Law, the Electronic Information and Transactions (EIT) Law, the Personal Data Protection Law, and other relevant legislation to ensure legal certainty and strengthen the protection of civil liberties.

Economy

The Dynamics of SOE Downsizing from an Institutional Perspective

-Putu Rusta Adijaya-



President Prabowo Subianto aims to reduce the number of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) from 1,000 entities to 250, as many are deemed unprofitable yet require the Indonesian public to pay the bills for the salaries of their commissioners and directors (national.kompas.com, June 28, 2026). The President added that this efficiency measure was intended to curb potential corruption within SOEs that had resulted in financial losses for the state (money.kompas.com, July 2, 2026).

Regarding corruption in SOEs, state losses incurred between 2000 and 2024 from just 16 corruption cases amounted to IDR83.3 trillion (kompas.id, July 20, 2025) according to the following data:

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Table 1. 16 SOE Corruption Cases (2000–2024) and Resulting State Losses

Num.	Corruption Cases	State Losses
1	Bulog Gate II	IDR40,000,000,000
2	Bulog-Goro Land Swap	IDR52,500,000,000
3	Corruption involving fictitious cattle imports, rice exports, and gratuities	IDR78,388,000,000
4	Corruption in the Customer Information System rollout procurement	IDR116,159,289,576
5	Garuda Indonesia corruption (Airbus and Rolls-Royce)	IDR9,200,000,000
6	Garuda Indonesia (Bombardier CRJ and ATR)	IDR9,370,000,000,000
7	Corruption involving the misuse of the 2.1 GHz/3G frequency	IDR1,358,000,000,000
8	PT Asuransi Jiwasraya (Persero) corruption	IDR16,807,283,375,000
9	Bank Mandiri fictitious loan corruption	IDR57,589,360,823
10	Garuda Indonesia corruption	IDR14,042,391,332
11	PT Asabri case	IDR22,780,000,000,000
12	PT Waskita Karya case	IDR1,435,832,513,548
13	LNG PT Pertamina case	IDR1,830,000,000,000
14	PT Pelindo II case	IDR37,970,277,778
15	Tata Niaga Timah case	IDR29,000,000,000,000
16	PT Indofarma case	IDR377,491,463,411
TOTAL		IDR83,364,456,671,468

Source: <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/korupsi-bumn-terus-bebani-negara>, (July 20, 2025).
Processed by the author.

Corruption within State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) is evident across various sectors, including aviation, mining, healthcare, financial institutions,

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and the food industry. According to kompas.id (July 20, 2025), numerous corruption cases involving SOE subsidiaries were uncovered throughout 2024. Examples included 24 corruption rulings involving Bulog, 6 involving PLN, and over 500 rulings within state-owned banks (kompas.id, July 20, 2025).

Regarding efforts to streamline SOEs, Dony Oskaria—Head of the SOE Management Agency (BP BUMN) and Chief Operating Officer of Danantara—explained on money.kompas.com (July 2, 2026) that 240 SOE-related companies had been cut by July 2026. This restructuring aligns with the establishment of the Danantara Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF), which consolidates state assets to enhance competitiveness (investortrust.id, April 23, 2026). The same source outlines four main categories in this restructuring process: first, the liquidation of companies whose debt burdens exceed their asset values and which are no longer competitive; second, the divestment of small-scale entities operating outside core business areas; third, the merger of SOEs based on industrial sectors; and finally, a focus on developing strategic SOEs to serve as the backbone of the national economy and defense (investortrust.id, April 23, 2026).

A concrete example of this is the consolidation of four SOE investment management companies into Danareksa: PT Mandiri Manajemen Investasi (owned by Bank Mandiri), PT BRI Manajemen Investasi (under BRI), PT BNI Asset Management (owned by BNI), and PT PNM Investment Management (affiliated with Permodalan Nasional Madani/PNM) (Katadata, June 8, 2026). The Government stated that the savings resulting from this streamlining state-owned enterprises (SOEs) amounted to approximately IDR50 trillion annually. Furthermore, the Government assured that the streamlining would not lead to layoffs, but rather involve transferring and retaining employees within the consolidated SOEs (national.kompas.com, June 14, 2026).

However, according to Toto Pranoto, Managing Partner of the SOE Research Group at LM FEB Universitas Indonesia—as cited by ekonomi.bisnis.com (June 26, 2026)—the primary challenge of this major merger lies in post-merger implementation. He added that value creation efforts often failed due to poorly executed integration.

The Dynamics of SOE Downsizing from an Institutional Perspective

In the theory of institutional economics, Douglas North (1991)—a laureate of the 1993 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel—argues that institutions (categorized into formal types

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such as constitutions, laws, and property rights, and informal types such as sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of ethics) provide incentive structures and determine transaction costs within an economy. Applying the economic logic of internal and external costs—where internal costs form the basis of pricing and external costs are those borne by third parties during the production and consumption of goods and services (econation. one, accessed July 14, 2026)—the reduction of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) from 1,000 to 250 entities will inevitably entail both internal and external costs. The internal transaction cost aspect involves the elimination of unnecessary expenses and losses associated with SOEs that consistently fail to turn a profit and perpetually incur deficits; this is significant because, as stated by President Prabowo, the Indonesian people have ultimately been the ones bearing the cost of salaries for SOE commissioners and boards of directors.

However, if the rules of the game—regarding who oversees the consolidation, how accountability is handled during the merger process, and post-merger implementations—are unclear, overlapping, or characterized by a lack of transparency and accountability, then external costs (such as diminished public trust and reduced public oversight) will rise.

Given that institutions establish incentive structures and determine transaction costs within an economy, efforts to streamline these state-owned enterprises (SOEs) should adopt the approach proposed by the 2024 laureates of the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel: Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. They categorize institutions into two types: inclusive institutions and extractive institutions.

Inclusive institutions are those that foster participation, competition, innovation, and equality of opportunity, while upholding property rights; such institutions generate long-term benefits for all (nobelprize.org, October 14, 2024; ie.edu, October 17, 2024). Conversely, extractive institutions are those that restrict opportunities to, or are controlled by, a select elite.

In other words, the process of consolidating or merging several state-owned enterprises (SOEs) into a single macro-entity—absent strengthened independent oversight mechanisms or process transparency—risks structurally steering the initiative toward an extractive institutional framework, regardless of the good intentions behind the policy. This echoes a point made by Milton Friedman on the 1975 television program *The Open Mind*: “One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.”

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To foster transparency and the provision of periodic information, the Government must formulate a roadmap for the restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and make it public. Furthermore, the government must drive and strengthen the governance and accountability of Danantara and the SOE restructuring process through clearer regulations. Finally, the Government must ensure that comprehensive audits are conducted both before and after the merger process to demonstrate transparency regarding the use of state assets and to restore public trust.

Within this framework, trust can be understood as a function of the credibility of the Government's commitment. When institutions are inclusive, the public, investors, and markets have rational grounds to believe that the effort to streamline SOEs represents an efficient allocation of state assets—one subject to accountability should any irregularities arise. Conversely, when institutions are extractive—meaning the public cannot verify or even ascertain the consolidation outcomes or the destination of state assets—the risk of eroding socio-economic and political trust increases.

Policy Recommendations

Referring to the explanations above, the following are policy recommendations for the administration of President Prabowo Subianto.

First, regarding the promotion of transparency and the provision of periodic information, government entities—such as the State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) management body (BP), Danantara, and the Ministry of SOEs—must formulate a roadmap for SOE restructuring and make it publicly available. Once the roadmap is established, the Government must ensure universal public access to it. This ensures accountability and provides institutional certainty regarding success indicators and the restructuring process itself, allowing for periodic evaluation.

Second, the Government and the House of Representatives (DPR RI) must foster and strengthen the governance and accountability of Danantara and the SOE restructuring process through clearer regulations. These regulations should address the division of authority, accountability mechanisms, state asset management, and oversight of merger processes—from the initial stages through to the post-merger phase. Regulatory clarity will reduce institutional transaction costs, minimize overlapping authority, and mitigate sectoral ego.

Third, the Government—in collaboration with the Audit Board (BPK), the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), the Attorney General's Office, and independent auditors—must ensure that comprehensive audits are conducted both before and after merger processes. This is crucial given that public trust is currently being tested, particularly due to corruption cases within the SOE sector. Consequently, these audit results should be published periodically to demonstrate transparency in the use of state assets and to help restore public confidence.

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Analysis of the State Budget Accountability for Fiscal Year 2025

–Putu Rusta Adijaya–



The year 2025 presents a challenging period amidst prevailing global conditions, such as increasing fragmentation in world trade, geopolitical dynamics, and volatility in international financial markets. The Ministry of Finance (Kemenkeu) has indeed characterized this period as one fraught with challenges (pasardana.id, July 3, 2026). Consequently, the State Budget (APBN)—specifically the 2025 budget—continues to serve as a shock absorber to protect the public and sustain growth momentum and economic fundamentals; the Government is implementing measured expansionary fiscal policies while keeping the deficit in check (kemenkeu.go.id, July 14, 2026).

In terms of performance, the 2025 state budget can be considered relatively solid. According to kemenkeu.go.id (July 14, 2026), Indonesia's economic growth reached 5.11%, reflecting the resilience and fundamental strength of the nation's economy. Secondly, the 2025 budget deficit was maintained at 2.81% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), demonstrating the Government's ability to provide economic stimulus without disregarding fiscal prudence. Thirdly, public purchasing power was preserved, with inflation standing at 2.92% year-on-year (YoY).

Fourth, an economic stimulus package worth IDR110.7 trillion was launched, focusing on maintaining public purchasing power, strengthening the real sector, supporting MSMEs and labor-intensive sectors, boosting the housing

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sector, and implementing initiatives ranging from apprenticeship programs and holiday travel discounts to youth empowerment. The results were reflected in improved public welfare: the poverty rate fell to 8.25%, the open unemployment rate dropped to 4.85%, extreme poverty declined to 0.78%, and the Human Development Index (HDI) rose to 75.90 (kemenkeu.go.id, July 14, 2026).

Regarding the execution of the State Budget (APBN), realized state revenue in 2025 reached IDR2,765.13 trillion, while realized state expenditure amounted to IDR3,435.46 trillion. These expenditures were utilized to support government priority programs, maintain economic stability, and provide a social safety net for the public. Equally important, the Minister of Finance announced that the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BPK) had once again issued an Unqualified Opinion (WTP)—often referred to as a “clean” opinion—on the 2025 Central Government Financial Report (LKPP), an achievement the government has consistently maintained since 2016 (kemenkeu.go.id, July 14, 2026).

Despite the solid figures on paper, Didik Haryadi, a member of the House of Representatives (DPR RI) from the PDI Perjuangan faction, raised several concerns. Summarized from bloombergtechnoz.com (July 7, 2026), the following are Didik Haryadi’s 16 observations regarding the 2025 State Budget.

Table 1. Critical Notes on the 2025 State Budget by the PDI-P Faction

Num.	Critical Notes on the 2025 State Budget
1	Several development targets were not met. The poverty rate exceeded the 7–8% target. The Fishermen’s Terms of Trade (NTN) reached only 103, falling short of the 105–108 target range.
2	Of the eight funded National Priorities, only 33% of the targeted indicator achievements were reported.
3	Economic growth of 5.11% fell below the 5.2% target.
4	The government needs to explain how it is implementing its commitment to improving the quality of state spending—making it more efficient and effective through sound governance and ensuring that the distribution of benefits is better targeted.

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5	It is necessary to present central government spending achievements by function—as stipulated in Article 8, paragraph (2), letter a of the 2025 State Budget Law—along with success metrics and the impact on public welfare and national development.
6	The government needs to explain how it is fulfilling its commitment regarding personnel expenditure through bureaucratic reform and productivity enhancements.
7	It is necessary to outline achievements in increasing the Domestic Component Level (TKDN) in the procurement of goods and services, including the measures taken and the results attained.
8	Highlighting the achievement of poverty graduation targets for 2025 as a success of empowerment and poverty alleviation programs.
9	Only 90.68% of the mandatory education budget spending was realized; consequently, IDR67 trillion in education funds—to which the public is entitled—was not disbursed by the government.
10	Government performance reporting regarding the 2025 State Budget (APBN) Law must be supported by accurate data.
11	Utilization of the National Socio-Economic Single Data (DTSEN).
12	Use of the Excess Budget Balance (SAL) and its impact on the State Budget (APBN).
13	The debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 39.8% in 2024 to 40.5%. Throughout 2025, the government incurred an additional IDR846 trillion in debt, bringing the total government debt to IDR9,658 trillion by year-end.
14	Reports on the completion of government programs utilizing year-end escrow account budgets for the 2024 and 2025 fiscal years show totals of IDR22 trillion and IDR43 trillion, respectively.
15	The ownership structure of permanent investments—comprising government equity participation through BP BUMN and BPI Danantara—along with the audited financial statements of BPI Danantara, serves as the basis for compiling the financial statements of LKBUMN and LKPP.

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16	Accountability for the performance of managing all separated state assets is required to verify that such management fulfills the constitutional mandate, specifically Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.
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Source: <https://www.bloombergtechnoz.com/detail-news/114181/pdip-soroti-efektivitas-apbn-2025-beberkan-16-catatan>, July 7, 2026. Processed by the author.

When examining the Government’s narrative of a “credible and safe” fiscal stance against the opposition’s view that it is “off-target and ineffective,” the perspective of economic freedom offers a useful analytical lens. Deficit and debt ratios maintained below statutory thresholds suggest that the government is exercising a high degree of discipline, constraining its own discretion.

However, a deficit that widens significantly relative to the annual state budget law—nearing the 3% threshold—demonstrates that adherence to legal mandates does not automatically equate to adherence to one’s own planning. For instance, while the realized 2025 state budget deficit of 2.81% of GDP remains below the 3% limit, the initial target was 2.53%. This 0.28 percentage point discrepancy represents a credibility gap that requires a clear explanation and accountability.

Furthermore, a closer look at the Heritage Foundation’s *Index of Economic Freedom* (2026) reveals that the rule of law in Indonesia indeed requires substantial improvement. For instance, the rule of law—encompassing sub-components such as property rights, government integrity, and judicial effectiveness—is still rated as “weak” by the index. The Heritage Foundation concludes that “overall, law enforcement in Indonesia remains weak. The country’s scores for property rights, judicial effectiveness, and government integrity all fall below the global average.”

Regarding fiscal policy discipline and the Government’s fiscal transition, the new administration faces a dilemma: whether to uphold the fiscal commitments inherited from the previous administration—thereby ensuring continuity and market credibility—or to adjust spending priorities in line with its new vision and programs, a move that carries the risk of widening the deficit beyond initial plans, as previously discussed. The additional stimulus of IDR110.7 trillion rolled out throughout 2025 may reflect a new policy choice aimed at responding to global pressures; however, this also contributes to ballooning expenditure, ultimately leading to a larger deficit.

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The Government needs to provide a justification supported by quantitative and empirical evidence for the widening budget deficit, rather than relying solely on the narrative of the state budget (APBN) acting as a shock absorber. Regarding mandatory education spending that has not yet reached 100%, the Government must strengthen inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaboration and transparently communicate the obstacles preventing the target from being met. Furthermore, given that performance indicators for only about 33% of the eight National Priorities are currently reported, the Government needs to establish a periodic mid-year evaluation mechanism; this would allow deviations from targets to be identified and corrected at an earlier stage, rather than waiting for a year-end evaluation.

Thus, the accountability of the 2025 State Budget (APBN) reveals a two-sided reality. On one hand, aggregate indicators—such as the deficit-to-GDP and debt-to-GDP ratios, which remain within established limits—demonstrate maintained formal fiscal discipline that aligns with statutory boundaries.

On the other hand, the 16-point critical assessment by the PDI-P Faction highlights a gap between procedural compliance and the substantive effectiveness of implemented fiscal policies, particularly regarding the execution of priority programs and the accurate targeting of social spending and subsidies. As a transitional budget managed by a new administration amidst mounting global pressures, Indonesia's future fiscal credibility will hinge heavily on the government's ability to narrow this gap, rather than merely keeping aggregate ratios below legal thresholds.

Policy Recommendations

According to the explanations above, the following recommendations are offered for the administration of President Prabowo Subianto. First, regarding the widening deficit, the Ministry of Finance must provide quantitative and empirical justification rather than relying merely on the “shock absorber” narrative. Furthermore, concerning the utilization of the Integrated Social Welfare Data (DTSN), the Ministry of Finance must fully employ DTSN as the sole basis for distributing social assistance and subsidies, adhering to a measurable and optimally executable timeline.

Second, regarding the education mandatory spending—which has yet to reach the 100% target—the government (through the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and local governments) must strengthen coordination to evaluate the reasons behind the suboptimal realization of this spending. The evaluation results must be published transparently and reported to the House of Representatives (DPR RI), accompanied by a follow-up plan to improve planning quality, accelerate budget execution, and ensure fulfillment of the constitutional mandate regarding the education budget allocation.

Third, regarding the eight National Priorities—for which only 33% of the targeted indicator achievements have been realized—the DPR RI, through its Budget Committee and relevant commissions, needs to conduct periodic performance evaluations of the State Budget (APBN) execution mid-fiscal year. These evaluations aim to ensure the achievement of National Priorities, identify the causes of deviations at an early stage, and urge ministries and agencies to take corrective measures so that development targets can be met more effectively.

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Safe Campus and Independent Academics: Examining the Relationship between Sexual Violence and Academic Freedom

-Felicia Primaresti-



The Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Permendikbudristek) Number 30/2021 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Violence (PPKS) in Higher Education is one of the most progressive policy breakthroughs during the leadership of Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Nadiem Makarim. Although it was initially met with pros and cons, particularly regarding the use of the concept of consent *and* concerns from some groups about its normative implications, the regulation's presence marks a paradigm shift in handling sexual violence in higher education.

Campuses are no longer viewed solely as educational institutions but also as spaces responsible for ensuring the safety, dignity, and rights of every member of the academic community. This regulation was later revised by the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 55/2024 concerning the Prevention and Handling of Violence in Higher Education Environments.

This momentum was further strengthened by the enactment of Law Number 12/2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (TPKS Law). Unlike previous sectoral regulations, the TPKS Law provides a more comprehensive legal basis for the prevention, handling, protection of victims, and criminalization of perpetrators of sexual violence. Therefore, Regulation

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of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 30/2021 and the TPKS Law are expected to be complementary instruments in creating a safe higher education environment free from sexual violence.

Normatively, the presence of these two regulations should encourage a decrease in the incidence of sexual violence in higher education institutions. Reporting mechanisms will become clearer, victims will have better access to protection and support, and the academic community will hopefully have a better understanding of various forms of sexual violence that were previously often considered normal behavior or merely ethical issues.

However, reality shows that this problem remains unresolved. Throughout 2024, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (2024) recorded 4,178 cases of violence against women. Meanwhile, in the 2021–2024 period, the National Commission on Violence against Women received reports of at least 82 cases of sexual violence occurring in higher education environments. These barriers can be interpreted as administrative, social, and cultural barriers that prevent many victims of sexual harassment and violence from reporting. Some possible reasons why victims are reluctant to report include fear of stigma, unequal power relations with the perpetrator, and concerns about the impact on their studies and academic careers (Fitri, 2023).

Therefore, evaluating policy implementations cannot simply focus on the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms or the enforcement of sanctions. The issue of sexual violence in higher education also needs to be understood in relation to the university's fundamental function as a space for academic freedom. When academics live in unsafe situations, experience intimidation, or are afraid to share their experiences due to power relations, their ability to learn, teach, conduct research, and express ideas freely is diminished. In other words, sexual violence is not only a violation of individual rights but also a threat to a healthy academic climate.

This paper shall attempt to re-examine the issue of sexual violence in higher education through the perspective of academic freedom. Rather than viewing the two issues as separate domains, it argues that protection from sexual violence is a prerequisite for the realization of substantive academic freedom. Universities that fail to guarantee a sense of security for their academic community will ultimately struggle to create a truly free environment for critical thinking, discussion, research, and the dissemination of knowledge.

Sexual Harassment and Violence within the Framework of Academic Freedom

Referring to the Academic Freedom Index developed by the V-Dem Institute (2025), Indonesia scored 0.33, indicating that the level of academic freedom remains relatively low. The assessment was based on five main indicators: Freedom to Conduct Research and Teaching (1.55), Academic Exchange and Dissemination (2.09), Institutional Autonomy (1.95), Campus Integrity (1.83), and Freedom of Academic and Cultural Expression (1.87). These indicators essentially describe the extent to which the academic community can carry out its academic functions without intervention or pressure from other parties.

These findings align with the Indonesian Institute's qualitative study on mapping academic freedom violations in Indonesian universities (2025), which showed that threats to academic freedom in Indonesia are still dominated by actors with powerful relationships with universities, particularly university and government officials. Thus, the discourse on academic freedom has tended to focus on various forms of external and internal intervention that restrict the freedom to teach, research, discuss, and express ideas.

However, this framework fails to fully explain how social conditions on campus shape the quality of academic freedom. Threats to academic freedom don't always come in the form of censorship, criminalization, or political intervention; they can also arise through the creation of an unsafe campus environment for academics.

In this context, Campus Climate Theory (2023), developed by Dr. Sylvia Hurtado and Dr. Susan Rankin of The University of New Mexico, offers a more comprehensive perspective. This theory views the quality of campus climate as determined by at least four main dimensions: historical legacy, structural diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral and social climate. These four dimensions explain how institutional history, group representation within campus structures, individual perceptions of safety and acceptance, and patterns of social interaction shape the experiences of academics during their education, research, and community service activities.

Within this framework, sexual violence and harassment in higher education, particularly in the Indonesian context, are no longer understood solely as legal violations or failed policy implementation. Instead, they are part of a broader campus climate that directly impacts students' sense of safety, trust

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in the institution, academic participation, and their ability to learn, teach, conduct research, and express ideas freely. In other words, a campus that fails to create a safe environment also potentially fails to realize substantive academic freedom.

In the context of historical heritage; for example, higher education in Indonesia cannot be separated from the colonial experience that shaped the education system and power relations within it. During the colonial period, access to higher education was enjoyed only by elite groups, such as the *priyayi* (*priyayi*) and a handful of native Indonesians who were prepared to support the colonial administration (Ramdani, 2025). Meanwhile, women and other social groups had very limited access (Cakra Wikara Indonesia, 2022). Although higher education has become more inclusive today, these hierarchical and feudal patterns of relations continue to be reproduced in academic culture, such as the strong emphasis on seniority, patronage, and lecturer-student relationships that place authority as something that is difficult to question (The Indonesian Institute, 2025).

According to a 2024 study by the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, unequal power relations can create situations where victims of sexual harassment and violence are reluctant to report, fearing academic and professional consequences. This is also linked to the structural diversity on campus, which is directly related to the representation of various groups within organizational structures and decision-making processes.

One indicator of structural diversity can be seen from the representation of women in leadership positions in higher education. This representation is important because it determines the extent to which diverse experiences and perspectives are accommodated in the decision-making process, including in the development of policies for the prevention and handling of sexual violence. However, women's representation in strategic positions remains relatively limited. Although women's participation in higher education in Indonesia has reached 51% (Kemendikbudristek, 2020), their representation as rectors, deans, professors, and policymakers remains low (Astuti, 2022). According to data from the State Islamic University (UIN) Raden Fatah (2022), the number of female rectors in state universities (PTN) was only around 10–15%, while in private universities (PTS) it was around 8%. In fact, research by the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Gadjah Mada University (UGM) (2022) showed that female leadership contributed to the creation of more inclusive and egalitarian organizations and results in more comprehensive decision-making.

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Unfortunately, similar inequalities are also experienced by minority groups, including people with disabilities, indigenous communities, and religious minorities. A study at several Australian universities conducted by Gretgrix & Farmer (2026) showed that the underrepresentation of minority groups in campus structural positions is due to a lack of knowledge about the use of an intersectional approach. In fact, the results of a study by Bhowmik et al. (2026) indicate that a lack of diversity in leadership structures has the potential to result in policies that are less sensitive to the experiences of vulnerable groups, including in the prevention and response to sexual violence. If this is still minimal, it is not surprising that the needs of victims and the perspectives of affected groups are often not adequately accommodated in university governance.

Thus, academic freedom is not a condition that emerges spontaneously, but rather is shaped by a university's ability to create a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment for all members of the academic community. This sense of security includes protection from sexual violence and assurances that minority groups, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and religious minorities, can participate fully without discrimination or intimidation.

In this context, sexual violence is not only influenced by individual behavior, or the failure to implement regulations alone, but is also a manifestation of historical legacies, power relations, and institutional cultures that have not been attempted to be changed and continue to shape the campus climate to this day.

Recommendations

- a. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (Kemendikisaintek) must strengthen the implementations of Permendikbudristek Number 55 I/2024 by developing national indicators for a safe and inclusive campus climate and incorporating these aspects into the evaluation of higher education governance.
- b. At the institutional level, universities must strengthen the independence and capacity of the PPKPT Task Force through budgetary support, human resources, and reporting and follow-up mechanisms that

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Sexual violence in higher education has often been positioned as a legal, ethical, or policy implementation issue. However, these issues are also closely related to the quality of the campus climate, which determines the extent to which academics can learn, teach, research, and express their ideas freely.”

are legally based and free from conflicts of interest. Furthermore, universities should encourage diversity in leadership structures and policymaking by increasing the representation of women, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other minority groups.

- c. At the institutional level, universities need to improve the literacy of the entire academic community regarding gender equality, power relations, sexual violence, reporting mechanisms, and victims' rights and protection through ongoing education, training, and campaigns. These efforts also need to be supported by strengthening the capacity of the PPKPT Task Force, providing easily accessible support services, and establishing a safe, independent, and victim-oriented reporting mechanism.
- d. The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) and quality assurance institutions need to integrate indicators of security, inclusivity, and protection against gender-based violence into accreditation instruments and internal quality assurance systems.

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Optimizing the Biomedical Genome Science Initiative (BGSi) to Strengthen Disease Prevention in Indonesia

-Made Natasya Restu Dewi Pratiwi-



The ongoing transformation of global health systems is no longer to focus solely on treating diseases but also on preventing them before they become more severe. Advances in genomics, bioinformatics, and other omics technologies have encouraged the development of the precision public health paradigm, an approach that integrates genomic, epidemiological, environmental, and social determinants of health data to deliver more targeted public health interventions for populations (WHO, 2024). This approach is considered capable of improving the effectiveness of disease prevention while strengthening evidence-based public health surveillance systems.

Indonesia's commitment to developing genomics-based health services (omics) is reflected in the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number HK.01.07/MENKES/505/2024 on the Implementations of the Biomedical Genome Science Initiative (BGSi) for Precision Medicine and the Development of Genomics-Based Health Services. Through this policy, the Government is establishing a national genomics ecosystem comprising whole genome sequencing, biobanks, disease registries, bioinformatics analysis, and a genomic database representing the Indonesian population. The implementations of BGSi marks a strategic step toward strengthening national research capacity and supporting the development of more effective healthcare services tailored to the genetic characteristics of the Indonesian population.

Despite these positive intentions, the current direction of BGSi, as outlined in existing policies, remains largely focus on genome-based diagnosis and treatment rather than disease prevention. In fact, genomic data has far greater potential to support preventive efforts through the identification of disease risk factors, mapping population and regional susceptibility to diseases, strengthening early warning systems, and developing more contextualized behavior change interventions. Therefore, this paper argues that the scope of BGSi should be expanded beyond supporting precision medicine to encompass population-based disease prevention. By doing so, Indonesia's investment in genomics can not only improve the quality of healthcare services but also serve as a foundation for developing more effective, adaptive, and evidence-based disease prevention policies.

BGSi Needs to Move from a Therapeutic Approach to Public Health

The establishment of BGSi through the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number HK.01.07/MENKES/505/2024 marks an important step toward modernizing Indonesia's national health system. The program is designed to build a national genomics ecosystem through the development of biobanks, whole genome sequencing, bioinformatics, and genomic databases that support the advancement of precision medicine based on Indonesia's genetic data (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). The implementations of BGSi demonstrates the Government's commitment to strengthening innovation-driven healthcare services, enabling treatments to be delivered more accurately, effectively, and according to each individual's biological characteristics.

However, a closer examination of the policy's objectives and scope reveals that BGSi remains largely focused on supporting diagnosis, treatment, and clinical services. The substantial potential of genomic data to strengthen population-level disease prevention has yet to receive sufficient attention. Recent developments in the concept of precision public health demonstrate that genomic data is not only valuable for precision medicine but can also be used to identify the distribution of disease risk factors, map vulnerable population groups, strengthen early warning systems, and design more targeted disease prevention interventions (Roberts et al., 2024).

Furthermore, genomic data and various omics approaches, including genomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, and microbiomics, can identify disease risk factors even before clinical symptoms emerge. As such, these data are not only relevant for clinicians in determining

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personalized treatment but are also essential for epidemiologists, public health planners, and policymakers to better understand disease patterns at the population level and project future disease burdens (WHO, 2022; OECD, 2023).

Unfortunately, this preventive function has not yet become a primary focus of BGSi implementations. Integrating genomic data with behavioral, environmental, socioeconomic, and other health risk factors would significantly strengthen Indonesia's national health system compared with using BGSi solely for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. Through such an integrated approach, the Government could identify population groups with greater biological susceptibility to specific diseases while simultaneously understanding the environmental and behavioral factors that contribute to disease development. These insights could then be translated into more targeted disease prevention policies through a genomic data-driven public health approach, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the risk profiles of communities in different regions.

The use of genomics for disease prevention is no longer merely a theoretical concept. For example, the United Kingdom has integrated genomic data with clinical data to identify individuals at high risk of disease, enabling earlier screening, behavioral interventions, and preventive care (Department of Health and Social Care, 2020). Similarly, Australia, through its National Health Genomics Policy Framework, has positioned genomics as a key component of its national strategy to strengthen disease prevention, improve diagnosis, and support evidence-based policymaking (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2017).

Within Southeast Asia, Singapore has established the National Precision Medicine Programme, which integrates genomic data with electronic medical records and population health data to support early disease detection, biomedical research, and the development of more precise health policies (National Precision Medicine Programme Singapore, 2023). This experience demonstrates that integrating genomic investments into public health systems can strengthen not only precision medicine but also evidence-based disease prevention.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that BGSi implementations continue to face several challenges. These include the high costs associated with whole genome sequencing, biobank management, and bioinformatics analysis; disparities in laboratory infrastructure and genomics expertise across regions; concerns regarding the protection of personal genomic data; and the limited representation of Indonesia's diverse population

within genomic datasets. Ensuring adequate representation across different ethnicities, geographic regions, genders, disability groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds is essential to minimizing analytical bias and ensuring that BGSi can support the development of more inclusive, precise, and evidence-based disease prevention policies.

Future Improvements for BGSi

To address the challenges outlined above, several aspects of BGSi need to be strengthened to ensure that its benefits extend beyond curative healthcare services. First, BGSi should be developed as a national genomic surveillance platform. Such a system should be capable of continuously analyzing disease trends under both routine conditions and during increases in disease incidence. It would enable the Government to detect changes in pathogen characteristics, identify the emergence of new variants, and anticipate increasing disease risks associated with environmental changes at an earlier stage. This would allow public health authorities to respond proactively before a significant rise in cases occurs (Pratiwi, 2025).

Second, interoperability between genomic databases and the national health information system needs to be strengthened. Indonesia already has multiple health data sources, including SATUSEHAT, disease registries, infectious disease surveillance systems, and regional health databases. However, without effective integration, these datasets remain fragmented and underutilized. Integrating genomic data with clinical information, lifestyle factors, nutritional status, socioeconomic conditions, and environmental data would provide a more comprehensive understanding of disease determinants and improve the effectiveness of public health interventions.

Third, the development of BGSi should be accompanied by greater investment in cross-disciplinary human resource capacity. The implementation of omics-based public health requires collaboration among bioinformaticians, epidemiologists, biostatisticians, data scientists, public health experts, behavioral scientists, as well as legal and ethics experts. Without sufficient capacity, genomic data may remain confined to research repositories without being translated into actionable policy recommendations. Moreover, unequal distribution of expertise across regions risks further widening disparities in the utilization of genomic technologies.

Fourth, strengthening data governance is a fundamental prerequisite for the long-term sustainability of BGSi. As the use of genomic data expands, stronger regulatory frameworks will be required to ensure privacy protection, informed consent mechanisms, cybersecurity, and appropriate

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governance for data sharing across institutions. A robust ethical and governance framework will enhance public trust in genomic data collection while ensuring that genomic information is used responsibly and exclusively for public health purposes.

Strengthening these aspects would also create opportunities for Indonesia to enhance its preparedness for future pandemics. Climate change, deforestation, urbanization, and increasing human–wildlife interactions are expected to heighten the risk of emerging infectious diseases. Therefore, investment in BGSi should not be viewed solely as a means of improving precision medicine but as an integral component of Indonesia’s national health security and resilience strategy. At the regional level, BGSi also has the potential to serve as an initial model for establishing an ASEAN genomic surveillance network, enabling member states to exchange genomic data, monitor pathogen evolution, track disease trends, and identify potential outbreaks in a more timely and coordinated manner (Pratiwi, 2025).

Ultimately, the success of BGSi should not be measured solely by the number of genomes sequenced or the effectiveness of individualized therapies. Instead, it should also be evaluated by the extent to which genomic data can help prevent disease through more predictive, evidence-based, and prevention-oriented public health policies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen BGSi governance and maximize its contribution to disease prevention in Indonesia:

- a. The Ministry of Health should expand BGSi’s mandate beyond supporting precision medicine to establish it as a national platform for genomic surveillance, mapping disease risk factors across regions, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic conditions, and informing the development of evidence-based disease prevention policies.
- b. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Health Development Policy Agency (Badan Kebijakan Pembangunan Kesehatan/BKPK), the Center for Data and Information Technology (Pusat Data dan Informasi/Pusdatin), and local governments, should strengthen the interoperability of genomic data with SATUSEHAT, disease registries at healthcare facilities, and national health surveillance systems. Such integration would enable genomic analyses to be translated into more targeted, representative, and effective public health interventions.

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Investment in BGSi should not be measured solely by its ability to advance precision medicine, but also by its capacity to prevent disease before it occurs. Going forward, the sustainability of BGSi will depend on stronger data governance, more inclusive representation of Indonesia's diverse population, greater investment in interdisciplinary human resource capacity, and the effective translation of molecular data into evidence-based, equitable, and context-specific public health policies."

- c. The Ministry of Health should actively collaborate with civil society organizations, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, academic experts, and the genomics industry to accelerate capacity building in bioinformatics, genomic epidemiology, biostatistics, behavioral sciences, and public health. At the same time, efforts should be made to expand the representation of genomic data across diverse regions, ethnic groups, genders, disability groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds to minimize analytical bias and ensure more inclusive policy development.
- d. The Government of Indonesia, in collaboration with the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), should initiate the development of a regional genomic surveillance network to facilitate the secure exchange of genomic data, harmonize data governance standards, strengthen patient data protection protocols, and enhance early warning systems and pandemic preparedness through the application of omics technologies across Southeast Asia.

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Examining the Potential Application of Behavior Change Models in the Free Nutritious Meal Program

-Made Natasya Restu Dewi Pratiwi-



The Free Nutritious Meals (Makan Bergizi Gratis/MBG) Program has been implemented for more than a year. It has become one of the Government's national priority programs, with the number of beneficiaries continuing to increase. The expansion of the target population reflects the Government's commitment to strengthening community nutritional security. However, the growth scale of the program has also created various implementation challenges, requiring substantial improvements in governance to ensure that its benefits are commensurate with the significant public investment.

The results of the Indonesian Institute's 2025 Policy Assessment in the social sector show that the implementations of MBG continue to face several fundamental challenges. These include the limited integration of MBG with specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions for stunting prevention; weak food quality control and food safety mechanisms; the continued operation of Nutrition Fulfillment Service Units (Satuan Pelayanan Pemenuhan Gizi/SPPG) that do not comply with hygiene and sanitation standards; limited involvement of local governments; and insufficient transparency in monitoring and evaluation data (Pratiwi, 2025). At the same time, nutrition education, which should serve as a key instrument for promoting healthy eating habits, has not been implemented systematically. As a result, MBG risks have become merely a food distribution program rather than an instrument for driving sustainable behavior change within communities (Pratiwi, 2026).

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If the Government is committed to ensuring that MBG delivers a lasting impact on improving nutritional status, governance reforms should extend beyond operational improvements to include the integration of a social and behaviour change approach. Ideally, the MBG Program should be designed to promote lasting changes in people's knowledge, attitudes, and healthy eating practices so that its benefits continue even after beneficiaries are no longer receiving program support. Therefore, this paper shall examine the potential adaptation of a social and behaviour change approach in the implementation of Presidential Regulation Number 115/2025 on the Governance of the Free Nutritious Meal Program as a strategy to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the MBG Program.

The Gap in Integrating Social and Behaviour Change Design into MBG Regulations

Presidential Regulation Number 115/2025 has, in fact, created an opportunity to integrate a behaviour change approach through Article 4 paragraph (4), which mandates that the implementations of the MBG Program be accompanied by food safety and nutrition education delivered by government institutions according to their respective authorities. However, this provision remains largely normative and does not provide clear operational guidance for implementations. The regulation does not specify the responsible institutions, the appropriate forms of educational interventions, the frequency of implementations, inter-agency coordination mechanisms, or the indicators for measuring success. As a result, the education component risks becoming merely an administrative complement rather than an integral part of the program's overall design.

To make this mandate more operational, the division of responsibilities among government institutions should be clarified by optimizing existing government programs. For example, the Ministry of Health has developed the Balanced Nutrition Guidelines and the Nutrition Action Module, which integrate nutrition education, behaviour change communication, engagement with schools and health workers, and systematic monitoring and evaluation within nutrition programs (UNICEF, 2021; Pratiwi, 2025). These initiatives can serve as valuable references for developing technical guidelines for nutrition education under the MBG Program, ensuring that a standardized framework for educational implementation is available across all regions.

In addition to the lack of clear implementation guidelines, Presidential Regulation Number 115/2025 also fails to incorporate indicators that measure changes in healthy eating behaviours as part of the MBG Program's performance evaluation. From a public health perspective, however, the

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success of nutrition interventions should not be measured solely by the quantity of food distributed or the number of beneficiaries reached, but also by the extent to which the intervention improves people's knowledge, attitudes, and food consumption practices toward healthier dietary patterns.

Evidence shows that nutrition interventions integrating behaviour change theories produce more consistent improvements in healthy food consumption, maternal and child nutritional status, and the long-term sustainability of healthy lifestyle practices than interventions that rely solely on food assistance or one-way educational campaigns (Watson et al., 2023). Therefore, indicators of behaviour change should become an integral part of the MBG monitoring and evaluation framework.

These indicators could include improvements in beneficiaries' knowledge of: (1) the principles of balanced nutrition; (2) the ability to select healthier foods both at home and outside school; (3) awareness of how to choose and cultivate nutritious local foods at the household level; and (4) practical skills for preparing food more healthily and hygienically. Through these indicators, the Government would not only be able to confirm that food has been distributed but also obtain evidence that the MBG Program has successfully fostered sustainable healthy eating behaviours and strengthened household food security.

The integration of nutrition education should also be tailored to the characteristics of each target population. In schools, educational activities can be delivered before or after meal distribution through interactive sessions on balanced nutrition, food label literacy, and the health risks associated with consuming ultra-processed foods. Extracurricular activities can also serve as effective channels for reinforcing these messages. Meanwhile, for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and caregivers of young children, nutrition education can be integrated into services provided through Integrated Health Posts (Posyandu), including counselling on infant and young child feeding practices, safe and nutritious food preparation, and the development of household nutrition gardens as a sustainable family food source.

If nutrition education is implemented consistently, it will empower communities, promote social and behaviour change, and incorporate local wisdom through the promotion of indigenous foods and traditional food preparation practices, the MBG Program will not only improve immediate nutritional intake but also strengthen communities' capacity to make healthier food choices independently (Flores-Vazques et al., 2024; Pratiwi, 2026). The following section presents lessons learned from nutrition program implementation in Indonesia and India that can inform improvements to MBG governance.

Lessons Learned from the Implementations of Behaviour Change Approaches

Experiences from various countries demonstrate that the success of nutrition programs is determined not only by the provision of food but also by the program's ability to promote sustainable behaviour change. In Indonesia, UNICEF has developed a Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Strategy that integrates nutrition education through schools, health workers, parents, social media, and peer educators, supported by a theory of change and behaviour change indicators as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework (UNICEF, 2021).

Meanwhile, India's experience shows that healthy eating behaviours can be strengthened through participatory and gender-responsive family counselling (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit/ GIZ GmbH, 2022). This approach recognizes that responsibility for child nutrition should not rest solely with women or mothers, but should instead be shared by both men and women within the household. In addition, nutrition education should adopt practical and case-based learning methods that enable participants to apply the knowledge they acquire in their daily lives, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustained behaviour change.

One practical example is the implementation of healthy cooking demonstrations involving groups of mothers, health workers, and children, complemented by community-based, cross-sectoral communication initiatives. Lessons from India demonstrate that nutrition education is not merely an additional component of national nutrition programs but a core element that determines the success of efforts to improve community nutritional status.

These lessons are particularly relevant for Indonesia, given that the implementation of the MBG Program remains largely oriented toward the quantity of food distributed. Consequently, the program's success is measured primarily through output indicators, such as the number of beneficiaries reached and meals distributed, rather than through improvements in healthy eating behaviours, which should be the ultimate objective of public health nutrition interventions (Pratiwi, 2025). To address this gap, the implementations of MBG could adopt the Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, and Behaviour (COM-B) model, which has increasingly been used as a framework for designing behaviour change interventions in nutrition and public health (Meloncelli et al., 2024).

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The COM-B model explains that behaviour change can occur only when individuals possess sufficient capability, opportunity, and motivation to perform the desired behaviour. In the context of the MBG Program, capability can be strengthened through interactive nutrition and food safety education. Opportunity can be created by supportive environments involving schools, Pos Pelayanan Terpadu/Posyandu (Integrated Health Posts), families, community health volunteers, and greater access to healthy food environments. Meanwhile, motivation can be enhanced through community participation, the involvement of religious and community leaders, peer support groups, the promotion of local foods, and communication strategies that encourage the development of long-term healthy eating habits.

By adapting the COM-B model, the MBG Program can move beyond simply providing nutritious meals to building the community's capacity to adopt and sustain healthy eating behaviours independently. Such an approach would make the MBG Program more sustainable by shifting its focus from food distribution alone to fostering lasting behaviour change toward healthier dietary practices.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the integration of social and behaviour change design into the governance of the MBG Program:

- a. The National Nutrition Agency should collaborate with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Population and Family Development, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Villages and Development of Disadvantaged Regions to develop technical guidelines for nutrition education targeting MBG beneficiaries in schools, Posyandu, and the wider community. These guidelines should promote healthy eating practices while optimizing the Sustainable Food Home Area (Kawasan Rumah Pangan Lestari/KRPL) program as an entry point for empowering households to cultivate nutritious food at home.
- b. The National Nutrition Agency should regularly conduct surveys and community-level public consultations to gather feedback from program beneficiaries, local communities, civil society organizations, and academic experts. This feedback can be used to improve the design of the MBG Program, making it more relevant, context-specific, responsive to local wisdom, and empowering for communities.

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Rather than measuring the success of the MBG Program solely by the number of beneficiaries reached and the quantity of meals distributed, Presidential Regulation Number 115/2025 on the Governance of the Free Nutritious Meal Program should also incorporate indicators that measure changes in healthy eating behaviours. Without integrating a social and behaviour change approach into the program design, the MBG Program risks falling short of its potential to sustainably improve community nutritional status and strengthen household food security. Therefore, the program's performance indicators under the Presidential Regulation should be revised to prioritize sustainable behaviour change, ensuring greater long-term impact while maximizing the effectiveness of the substantial public investment allocated to the MBG Program.

- c. The National Nutrition Agency should establish a recognition and incentive system for local governments that demonstrate strong commitment to facilitating community behaviour change. In addition, good practices and lessons learned from successful regional initiatives should be systematically documented and disseminated to facilitate knowledge exchange, strengthen local capacity, and support the replication of successful approaches across regions.
- d. The National Nutrition Agency should strengthen the enforcement of standard operating procedures governing the nutritional quality of MBG menus through a transparent audit mechanism for every Nutrition Fulfillment Service Unit. This is essential to ensure that MBG menus comply with nutritional standards that exclude ultra-processed foods. Furthermore, documentation and dissemination of locally based MBG menu recipes should be prioritized to encourage each region to preserve local food diversity while maintaining consistent quality control in meal preparation.

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