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INDONESIA

ELECTION 2024

BUSINESS

Index
Politics
Jakarta
Society
Archipelago

Index
Economy
Tech
Companies
Regulations
Markets

WORLD

OPINION

CULTURE

Index
Asia & Pacific
Americas
Europe
Middle East & Africa

Index
Editorial
Commentary
Insight
Analysis
The Brief
Academia
Interview
Podcast

Index
Lifestyle
Entertainment
Arts & Culture
Technology
People
Health
Parenting
Food
Books
Environment

1 of 8 6/8/2023, 8:02 AM **DEEPLOOK** FRONT ROW Index

Inforial

Longform Biz

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MORE

М	ultimedia	
	Index	
	Video	
	Photo	
Tr	avel	
	Index	
	News	
	Destinations	
	Jakpost Guide To	
Sp	orts	
Jo	bs	
Ev	rents	
W	riting Center	
lm	nages	
Pu	ıblishing	

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Between CAFTA and environmental 🗶

2 of 8 6/8/2023, 8:02 AM

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M. Hudaya Bulya (The Jakarta Post)

PREMIUM NSW, Australia • Fri, February 12 2010

Ali Rama published an attention-grabbing article entitled "China's emergence and its impact on ASEAN" (The Jakarta Post, Feb. 4, 2010). His work analyzed the impact of implementing the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area (CAFTA) on ASEAN countries and put forward a number of suggestions. However, I do disagree with some of his suggestions.

In his article, Rama proposed that China's market would provide huge opportunities to increase export performance by shipping agricultural products such as rice, rubber, sugar and palm oil. Concerning palm oil, I want to highlight and discuss this matter further.

Let's look at the data, according to Sawit Watch around 50 percent or 7.8 million hectares of palm oil plantations in Indonesia are controlled by foreign investors from Malaysia, Singapore, US, UK and Belgium (cited in Antara News Aug. 12, 2009). And a number of Malaysian investors have one of the biggest controlling shares of the plantation.

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3 of 8 6/8/2023, 8:02 AM

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4 of 8

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5 of 8 6/8/2023, 8:02 AM

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6 of 8

×

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Business

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Jakarta

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Academia

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7 of 8 6/8/2023, 8:02 AM

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8 of 8