

Generative AI may change elections this year. Indonesia shows how

JAKARTA, Feb 08 (Reuters) – Fika Juliana Putri, a 19-year-old shopkeeper in East Jakarta, plans to vote in Indonesia's presidential election next week for a once-feared former special forces commander. She likes him, she says, because he's cuddly.

A doe-eyed cartoon version of Gen. Prabowo Subianto – produced using generative AI – is emblazoned on billboards across Indonesia. It's reproduced on sweatshirts and stickers, and featured prominently on #Prabowo-tagged posts that have some 19 billion views on TikTok.

Prabowo is Indonesia's defence minister. But on social media, his chubby-cheeked AI avatar makes Korean-style finger hearts and cradles his beloved cat, Bobby, to the delight of Gen Z voters. About half of Indonesia's 205 million voters are under 40.

The general elections on Feb. 14 in Indonesia, the world's third-largest democracy, offer a glimpse of how generative AI may transform large-scale political campaigning, experts say.

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