

## Lombok Soon To Open Again To Mining Activities

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Damage caused by illegal mining at Pondok Ganjar, Selodong, Sekotong, Kabupaten Lombok Barat.

The government of West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) would re-open the province for mining activities, pending a revision to the regional regulation (Perda in its Indonesian acronym) No. 11/2006 on spatial arrangement, used as a setting to forbid mining at the tourism haven.

In an interview with TAMBANG Magazine, Heriyadi Rachmat, Head of NTB's Regional Mining Office, stated that the Perda No. 11/2006 had prohibited all mining related activities in the whole island of Lombok. The regulation had placed the regional governments in a dilemmatic position, as environmental considerations had overpowered the island's potentials of mineral reserves.

"This Perda is unpopular because it prohibits professional and modern mining practices in Lombok island, while at the same time is powerless to prevent traditional mining activities," said Mr. Rachmat. He added that environmental damage caused by traditional mining practices was bigger than that of professional miners'.

Mr. Rachmat also revealed some legal basis which could be employed to revise the regional regulation No. 11/2006. Firstly the Spatial Law No. 26/2007 which stipulated that all rulings that were introduced prior to its establishment should be adjusted within two years' time. Secondly, the governmental regulation No. 16/2008 which declared Lombok island as a major mining zone, and thirdly, the new "Minerba" law No. 4/2009 which stipulated that all mineral-rich regions would be primed to be included in the mapping of national mining zones.

The Perda No. 11/2006 had been administered in the whole areas of Lombok in view of the island's vulnerability against environmental damages. A data from NTB province's hydrology station showed that the island has suffered an annual water deficit of 1.6 billion cubic meters. It is also feared that mining activities on the island would instigate environmental damages, which is detrimental to the island's tourism industry.

With a total area of only about 4,725 km<sup>2</sup> (1,825 sq mi), the island of Lombok is mineral-rich, with manganese, iron sand, gold, copper, silver and black tin lined up as among its main mining products. The island's western region of Sekotong is furthermore said to be home of high-grades gold.