

Dispute Over Land After Coal is Found

Wahyudi Soeriaatmadja - Straits Times Indonesia | November 25, 2011

A couple of years ago, Britain-based Churchill Mining pumped in millions to invest in exploration work on a plot of land for a coal project in East Kalimantan and discovered tonnes of untapped coal.

But before it could get going on full mining works, it found itself locked in a bitter court battle with the previous owner of the land, politician and retired general Prabowo Subianto, who reclaimed rights to the area upon realizing its worth. The matter has gone all the way to Indonesia's Supreme Court.

The East Kutai mining rights dispute has cast a dampener on Indonesia's drive to lure foreign direct investments to help the country - with a massive population of 240 million - boost economic growth and create more jobs.

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