

However, as it turned out, police later announced that there was no indication of any suspicious circumstances surrounding his death and that the victim had died of natural causes.

Nevertheless, the death of a journalist who had been relentless in writing about the impact of mining and logging on the environment in the area, should serve as a reminder for the authorities on the need to follow up on the issues he has been writing about. It should spur the government to do more to preserve the environment and uphold the law.

Environmental destruction by businesses, including the mining and logging industries, has been going on for far too long.

This destruction has been caused by both legal and illegal activities in the forests of Kalimantan, Sumatra and other regions of the country. It must be brought to a halt immediately. Mining, logging and palm oil companies may be critical to the economy but they must all operate within the law.

The key is sustainable development. Indonesia has every right to exploit its natural resources but it must do so in a well-managed and sustainable manner which also protects the environment. But once the irreversible damage is done, those guilty should pay.

In this regard, we should laud the government for its intention to seek compensation for the losses incurred as a result of the oil slick that polluted Indonesia's waters, following an oil well blowout off the northern coast of Australia.

The oil slick has affected the lives of thousands of people living along the coast in eastern Indonesia, especially in West Timor and its neighboring islands.

The oil slick has deprived thousands of fishermen, seaweed cultivators and pearl farmers of their livelihoods, and the damage to marine environment is also substantial. The government has said that it has irrefutable evidence that the oil polluting our seas and shores originates from the well that suffered the blowout.

Although located within the territorial jurisdiction of the Australian government, the well is

operated by a Thai company.

Damage caused, especially by dangerous substances like oil, should be compensated for and the money should be used to carry out repairs as well as to compensate the victims. It is critical we save our natural habitat, not just for the benefit of future generations but also for economic reasons. In most instances, the laws are already there but they are not enforced.