



## Bali Included as 'No List 2020', a Shocking news on the end of 2019

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### ABSTRACT

A US-based tourism magazine 'Fodor' includes Bali as 'No List 2020'. The news infuriated Bali Governor Wayan Koster. Koster presumed the action was an example of foul play in tourism competition. Meanwhile, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Wishnutama Kusbandio claimed he did not bother with the Fodor's review. The news might be the Fodor's strategy as a media to reach a wider audience. Fodor's included Bali as "No List 2020" due to three major factors namely poor waste management, clean water existence, and foreign tourists' disrespectful attitude. Findings showed what

the media wrote apparently reflects the today's reality on the Island of Gods. However, the local Government has been starting to make significant improvement from waste management, and tourism standard. Tourism stakeholder in Indonesia especially Bali, might be infuriated by Fodor's No List 2020. Rather than to negatively respond to the news, it is better to consider it as positive feedback for Bali tourism. In addition, a good quality feedback from media as one of society control would be well appreciated if it is providing problem-solving solution instead of only focus on critics.

**Keyword:** Fodor's, No List 2020, Bali, Tourism

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### BACKGROUND

A US-based tourism magazine 'Fodor' includes Bali as 'No List 2020'. The news infuriated Bali Governor Wayan Koster. Koster presumed the action was an example of foul play in tourism competition. Fodor's is a US-based publisher, and 'No List' is a travel suggestion that the publisher covers annually. On Fodor's latest issue, three significant factors determined why Bali was included on "No List 2020". They are waste, clean water availability as well as recently-viral tourist inappropriate behaviour on the island.

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Due to the publication, Koster asked Balinese citizens and business owner to ignore the news. He requested the communities to display that Bali is clean and live a healthy living, by starting to manage the waste properly.

Waste management can be started from a personal level by stop littering. Then on a family level, households and industrial waste must be sorted and managed to minimise its residue. For instance, Koster expressed his admiration for Japanese citizen who upholds cleanliness. He expected similar behaviour should be copied as a good habit. Soon, He would invite all business practitioners to meet and discuss the waste issue as well as the foreign tourists' inappropriate behaviour in Bali.<sup>1</sup>

On Friday, 22 November 2019, Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Wishnutama Kusbandio claimed he did not bother with the Fodor's review. The news might be the Fodor's strategy as a media to reach a wider audience."Oh, I believe that was the media opinion. For me, Bali is worth to visit, and has much potential," he told reporters.

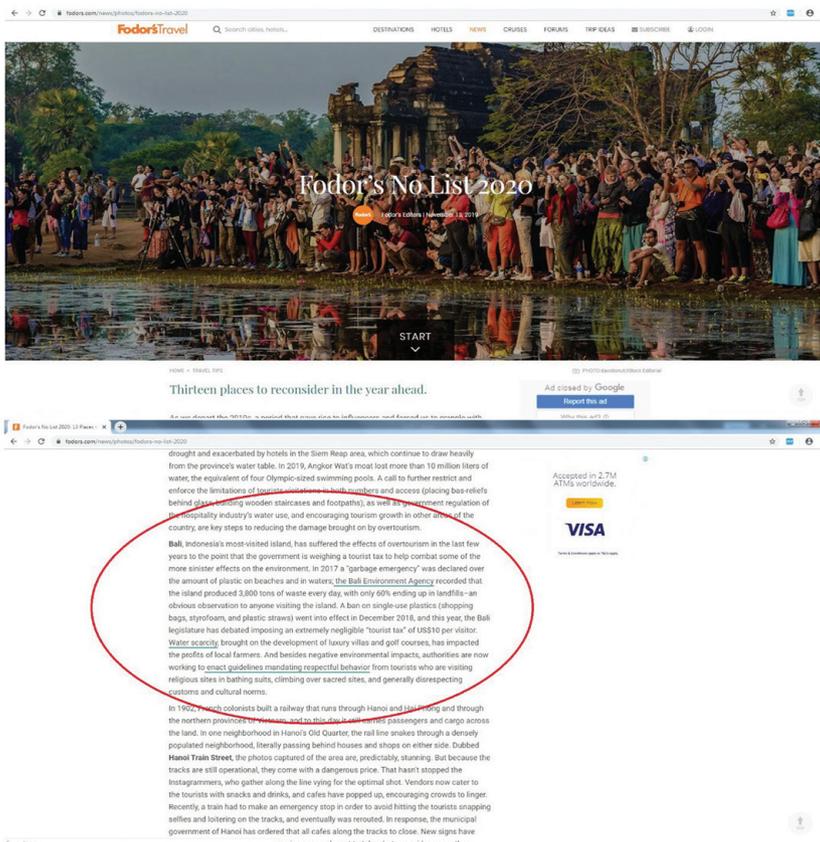
However, He asserted, corrective steps must be taken. Not only by the Government and tourism stakeholder but also the community is expected to work comprehensively in overcoming the problems. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy upcoming agenda will focus on efforts to improve the quality of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia by increasing their shopping expenses and probabilities.

Furthermore, Wishnutama revealed the plans to create five new destinations in 2020. In supporting the development of the brand new destinations, the central government is preparing some infrastructure such as roads, airports, seaports and commercial facilities.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, in tourism practitioners' perspective, they argued the issue was exaggerating. Chairman of the Promotion of the Bali Tourism Board, I Gusti Ngurah Rai Suryawijaya claimed there are 146 thousand rooms available, with average occupancy rate only reach 65% from the total room available. Thus, he said there are adequate rooms, and ideally, the rooms could cover up to nine million tourists.

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**Figure 1.** A US-based tourism magazine ‘Fodor’ includes Bali as ‘No List 2020’. , three significant factors determined why Bali was included on “No List 2020”. They are waste, clean water availability as well as recently-viral tourist inappropriate behaviour on the island.<sup>2</sup>

However, Rai insisted that tourism promotion is looking for quality tourism since Bali is moving toward quality and sustainable tourism. Various facilities such as short cut, cable car from the airport to Canggu, and the underground route has been reviewed for supporting the tourism industry development. Tourism service standards would also be improving.

Concerning about trash issue, Rai admitted that the tourists often complain about the waste problem. Nevertheless, the local government had tried to find a solution for managing waste independently.

Besides Bali, Komodo Island in East Nusa Tenggara is also being noted on the list. Security, politics, over-tourism, and high price become several reasons why Fodor decided to add two prominent tourism objects of Indonesia on their ‘No List 2020’.<sup>4</sup>

**WHAT IS FODOR?**

Fodor’s is a US-based publisher, founded by travel enthusiast Eugene Fodor. The brand covers multiple

media platforms, providing English language travel and tourism information for over 80 years.

Instead of discussing things-to-do, accommodation and tourist attractions, the media annually updated to give practical guidance, such as tipping advice, as well as about the local people and their custom. On their 2004 Webby Award nomination website, *fodors.com*, they have claimed to publish more than 14 series of 440 guides on over 300 destinations all over the world, with more than 700 contributors.

Then, why Fodor decided to wrote such a controversial article?

‘No List’ is a travel suggestion that the publisher covers annually. On Fodor’s latest issue, three significant factors determined why Bali was included on “No List 2020”. They are waste, clean water availability as well as recently-viral tourist inappropriate behaviour on the island.<sup>3</sup>

On their article, Fodor outlines *Every year, we use the No List to highlight issues—ethical, environmental, sometimes even political—that we’re thinking about before, during, and long after we travel. For this year’s No List, as we do every year, we highlight places and issues that give us pause. The underlying issues are ones that we’ll certainly be grappling with in the decade to come. But, ultimately, we know that our readers—all you globe-trotting world citizens—will continue to make up your own minds. As such, being featured on the No List is not a scarlet letter. Rather, it’s a promise that when we do cover the destinations mentioned here—all of which are, truly, wondrous places—we’ll be doing so responsibly, warts and all.*

It could not help but make us wonder, are those things actually happening in Bali? Or is it a hoax?

**FACT CHECK**

A recent study conducted by the Bali Partnership shows that waste is poorly managed. From these results, almost 52 per cent of waste in Bali is stranding.<sup>6</sup>

The research by the Bali Partnership was presented on a meeting at the Bali Governor’s Office on Thursday 20 June 2019. The study revealed that waste production in Bali reaches 4,281 tons per day. From the 52 per cent that unable to be managed, 11 per cent is being washed away and end up to the sea.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, to deal with the problem, the Provincial Government of Bali has imposed single-plastic policy to significantly reduced the plastic waste in early 2019. The result is beyond expectation, the usage of the plastic bag and its residue is significantly dropped within three

months. After successfully deal with plastic waste, then the upcoming government agenda is to impose home and industrial level waste management.

Regarding the water crisis, The results of research conducted by the Idep Selaras Alam Bali Foundation show that Bali is experiencing a clean water crisis. Some of the latest findings are an intrusion of seawater through underground

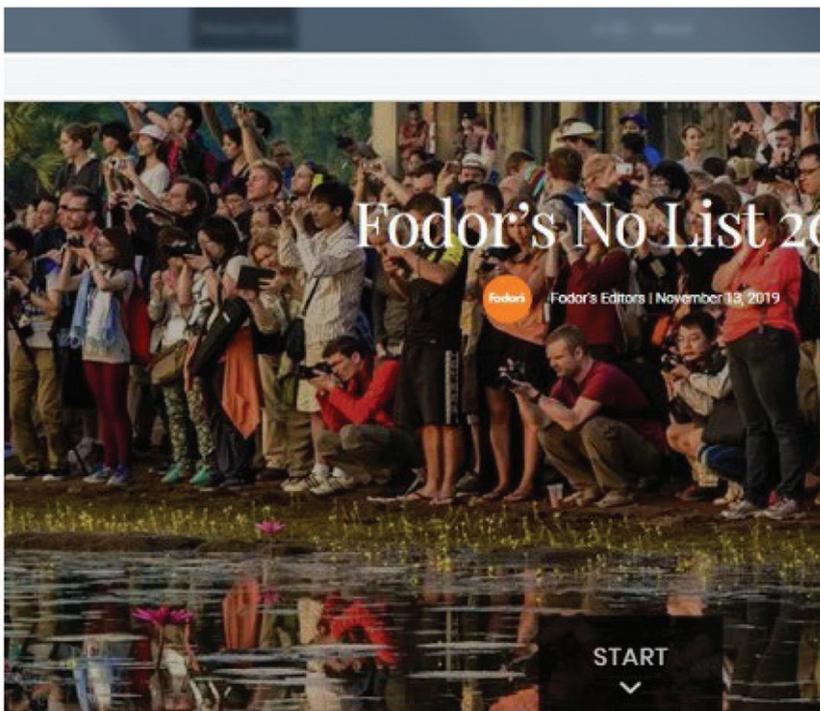
due to excessive exploration of groundwater, polluted groundwater, a high number of green area conversion, and extended drought. In some areas of Bali, particularly in the southern part, groundwater levels have declined by more than 50 meters in less than ten years. Many wells begin to dry up or become polluted. This decrease in groundwater level is caused by groundwater uptake (exploration), which far exceeds the recharge level (recharge). It could get worsened if the phenomenon continues to occur.<sup>8</sup>

The similar finding also has been found by Dr Stroma Cole, senior lecturer in Geography and Environmental Management of the University of the West of England. Cole concluded, the water crisis will reach its peak in 2020-2025, if there is no real action in awareness, conservation, and policy coordination. Some factors driving this water crisis are very complex. Starting from the tourism industry pressure, unpaid underground water taxes, land conversion, inefficient water management, and low citizens awareness.

“Tourism in Bali is killing people,” Cole said, after presenting research results on the Bali water crisis in Denpasar, Tuesday 14 March 2015. In 2010, the United Nations issued a consensus that water and sanitation are human rights. “The water cost should be no more than 4% of income, safe and not contaminated, easily accessible, and sufficient in availability.”

Is the tourism business exploitative of water? Head of the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bali, Tjokoda Artha Ardhana Sukawati or Cok Ace could not conclude. However, from the Bali Hotel Association (BHA) and Howarth HTL data show that the more expensive or the more stars, the higher the use of electricity and water. Hotels with a tariff of more than US \$ 440 consume more water than four cubic meters or 4,000 litres per person. Far from assuming the water needs of the population of 183 litres per day in Bali. The least consumption of tourists in hotels with prices less than US \$ 59, almost 1,000 litres per person. It does not include the average water use of each person 183 litres/day. It means in Bali more than 750 million litres water is used per day.<sup>10</sup>

Streetfight, credit card scams, and disrespectful act toward sacred temples that have been done by the foreigner, forcing the stakeholder to establish tourism standard. Through new policies, including tourist tax. Several countries have implemented levies on foreign tourists who visit their country. For instances, in Japan, there is Sayonara Tax (International Tourist Tax) for every local and foreign tourist who left from Japan. Then Croatia, New Zealand, and Malaysia also established a



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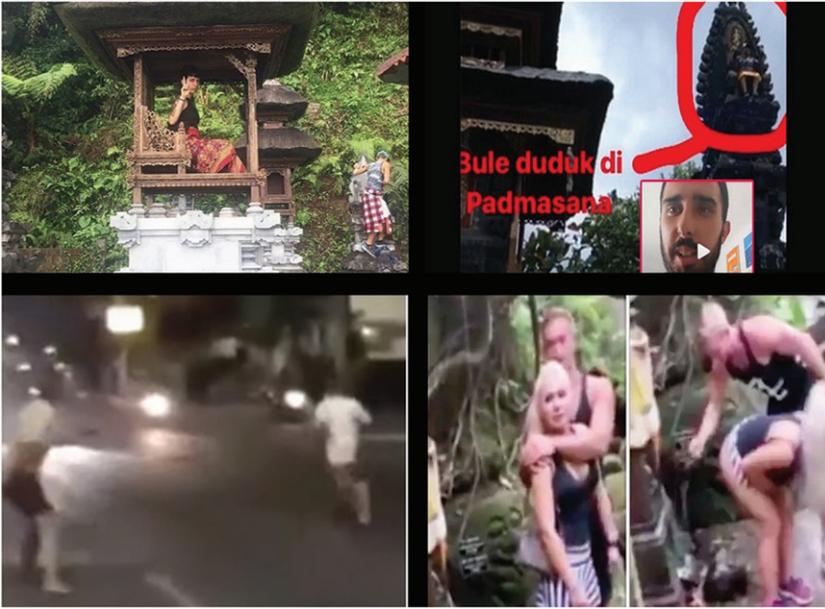
## Thirteen places to reconsider in the year ahead.

As we depart the 2010s, a period that gave rise to influencers and forced us to grapple with our carbon footprints, and set sail for the '20s, we at Fodor's are asking ourselves a simple question: How can we be better travelers in the decade to come?

We're hardly alone in asking it. We all desperately wish to see and experience this wonderful world, but how can we do so responsibly? Ultimately, we must each, individually, come to our own conclusions. And that's how we view this year's No List.

Every year, we use the No List to highlight issues—ethical, environmental, sometimes even political—that we're thinking about before, during, and long after we travel. For this year's No List, as we do every year, we highlight places and issues that give us pause. The underlying issues are ones that we'll certainly be grappling with in the decade to come. But, ultimately, we know that our readers—all you globe-trotting world citizens—will continue to make up your own minds. As such, being featured on the No List is not a scarlet letter. Rather, it's a promise that when we do cover the destinations mentioned here—all of which are, truly, wondrous places—we'll be doing so responsibly, warts and all.

Figure 2. Explanation of “No list 2020”<sup>5</sup>



**Figure 3.** Streetfight, credit card scams, and disrespectful act toward sacred temples that have been done by the foreigner, forcing the stakeholder to establish tourism standard.<sup>9</sup>

tourist tax policy. Some impose such taxes on accommodation costs or charge tourist taxes on the price of plane tickets. This levy is used for the development and maintenance of tourist facilities, such as printing brochures, to renovating museums and castles. The amount depends on the policies of each city government and the numbers can change every year.

In Bali, the tourist tax later would be used as a source to fund the preservation of Balinese culture including to improve the quality of tourism.<sup>11</sup>

Koster ensures that tourists will receive even benefits the levy is imposed. The policy is part of the tourism standard in Bali, where tourists will get total satisfaction in travelling, from accommodation to food to travel insurance. "Bali must be the first and can be an example in the application of this regulation," said Koster.<sup>12</sup>

From the presented facts, the conclusion could be drawn that what Fodor's mentioned on their website about unpleasant experiences in Bali is indeed should be taken into account. Tourism stakeholder in Indonesia especially Bali, might be enraged by foreign tourism media included Bali as their less favorite destination to travel in 2020. Yet the news can be considered as input for tge stakeholder and related party to improve and create better experience for the upcoming visitor in future who would like to spend their precious time on the island. On the other hand, a feedback from media as one of society control or third party would be

better if they provide solution as feedback, not only focus to criticise the problem.<sup>13</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Fodor's included Bali as "No List 2020" due to three major factors namely poor waste management, clean water existence, and foreign tourists' disrespectful attitude. What the media wrote apparently reflects the todays reality on th Island of Gods. However, the local Government has been starting to make significant improvement from waste management, and tourism standard. Tourism stakeholder in Indonesia especially Bali, might be infuriated by Fodor's No List 2020. Rather than to negatively response to the news, it is better to consider it as positive feedback for Bali tourism. In addition, a good quality feedback from media as one of society control would be well appreciated if it is providing problem-solving solution instead of only focus on critics.

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