

In North Jakarta, flooding is part of daily life

Two children chased each other cheerfully, splashing about in polluted water flowing through a small alley in Muara Angke, Pluit, in North Jakarta, while their mother watched television in their home nearby.

Their mother, Carini, in an effort to stop water from flooding their home, had deployed a few sacks of charcoal as a barrier. After all, she made no bones about the floodwaters that regularly inundate her home.

She and her family members had already made peace with the floods, she told The Jakarta Post. "We even use floodwater to wash our clothes if the water looks clean," she said.

Carini knows by heart what time the water will start rising.

"Every day the water rises at 8 a.m. until around 10 or 11 p.m.," she said, adding that the water could at times be ankle-high.

Before she decided to elevate her home's floor last year, floodwaters had been as much as 1 meter high.

Carini has been living in the fishing village of Muara Angke for the past 12 years, and insists she will remain there in spite of the perennial inundation. Her home is where their livelihood is as her husband is a fisherman who sets sail from the seaside village.

Muara Angke is one of 27 sites in North Jakarta that are prone to tidal flooding, including Penjaringan, Kapuk Muara, Tanjung Priok and Ancol. The frequent flooding occurs because the elevation of the fishing village is slightly lower than sea level. Compounding the problem is the mounds of garbage that block the passage of water in nearby streams.

Sumri, a food vendor at the nearby Muara Angke traditional market, said the aqueduct that channels tidewater was clogged with garbage.

"[The flooding] has never subsided. The best we can hope for is ankle-high flooding," she said.

Sumri said although she and her family were used to the flooding, it could be very disruptive at times, especially during bathing hours. "My toilet is in the back of the house, so I have to pass the water every time I go there," she said.

Subandi, Sumri's brother-in-law who also lives in the home together with his wife and son, said the toilet was 30 meters away. "To avoid any skin problems we always wash our feet after returning from the toilet," he said.

Sumri said living so close to water also forced them to spend more on water. She buys clean water once every two days. "We need it for drinking and cooking."

Despite the persistent garbage, the authorities have done little. "I can't remember the last time the aqueduct was cleaned. The last time it was cleaned was when the head of the neighborhood initiated a cleanup," Subandi said.

"I don't think the subdistrict administration wants to do a cleaning job," he said, laughing.

The lack of initiative from the local government has prompted residents to deal with the flooding on their own. On Jl. Cumi, an alley next to the Pluit Port that is regularly flooded, residents built an embankment from debris they collected to stop tidal water from flowing into their neighborhood.

The North Jakarta Public Works Agency could not be reached for comment. ([map](#))

