

Floods hit northern part of Java

With floods crippling several parts of the archipelago, the northern coast of Java Island is the latest to fall victim. Heavy rains coupled with high tides in Jakarta have brought the count of flood evacuees to over 48,000, as wider parts of the capital and buffer cities became inundated over the weekend. Since carrying out efforts to pump floodwater out, the Jakarta administration has intensified aid distribution to flood victims. The Jakarta Disaster Mitigation Agency (BPBD) claimed that the logistics would be enough for a total of 140 shelters housing 48,263 evacuees.

BPBD spokesperson Edy Junaedi said on Sunday that his agency, in cooperation with related agencies, was continuing to stock up on aid items and would distribute them to shelters until the evacuees were ready to return home. North Jakarta Mayor Heru Budi Hartono said on Sunday that his office had one week's logistics for around 7,000 evacuees in 40 shelters. "The National Disaster Mitigation Agency [BNPB] has also promised to prepare one week's worth of supplies that we can get three days before we run out the existing items," he said. To ensure safe supplies, each post is permitted to request specific necessities directly to the related agency.

"The health post could report to the North Jakarta Health Office on how much baby food the residents needed," he said, adding that the office would send the items directly. Meanwhile, Pengadegan subdistrict head Rachmat Hazami said that the shelters lacked baby necessities such as baby food, diapers and milk. "Most of the supplies distributed are general items like rice and instant noodles," he said, adding that the evacuees needed more blankets and sleeping mats. The BPBD predicted that flooding would continue over the next three days as rain of mild to heavy intensity would continue to fall. The Angke Hulu sluice gate in West Jakarta and Karet sluice gate in Central Jakarta remained at "alarm" status as of 6 p.m., although the status of Manggarai gate in South Jakarta had been reduced to "alert II".

The height of water in Pluit Reservoir in North Jakarta has reached 140 centimeters, far higher than its safe status of 50 cm. Flooding has not only displaced thousands of people but has also cut road access and destroyed river embankments. Meanwhile, flooding in Bekasi, east of Jakarta, has claimed one life. The victim was identified as Yati Wiharti, 65, who lived in the Margahayu housing complex. Giri, a neighbor who found Yati with bruises on her head, said the victim had probably slipped and fallen. A number of housing complexes and Dr. Subki Abdul Kadir Islamic Hospital in East Bekasi were still experiencing the affects of flooding on Sunday.

The death toll resulting from flash floods and landslides in North Sulawesi has reached 18 people. The disaster has caused Rp 1.871 trillion (US\$15.51 million) in losses. Other districts affected by flooding were Minahasa, North Minahasa, Southeast Minahasa and the islands of Sangihe and Sitaro. According to the BNPB, 80,331 residents have been displaced due to the flash floods and landslides in the province, while at least 565 houses in Sario, Singkil, Tikala, Paal Dua and Wanea subdistricts were destroyed. Incessant and heavy rain has also caused flooding in the northern parts of Java, including Cirebon and Indramayu in West Java and Pekalongan, Batang, Kendal, Semarang, Demak and Kudus in Central Java. Up to 1.5 meters of floodwater in as many as three districts in Cirebon and 17 districts in Indramayu started to recede on Sunday afternoon. West Java's River Water Resource Management Coordinating Team secretary, Yoyon Suharyono, said the flooding had been caused by high-intensity rain that kept hitting the northern part of West Java, causing rivers to overflow. Cirebon Deputy Mayor Nasrudin Aziz said that around 1,000 houses were inundated as a result of overflowing rivers, namely the Krian, Cikalong and Cikenis, which pass through residential areas.

Nasrudin said his administration had distributed instant food, blankets and medicine to the victims. Meanwhile, flooding in Indramayu that resulted from the overflowing of the Bugel and Plawad rivers hit 17 districts, including Patrol, Anjatan, Sukra, Losarang, Lohbener, Kanghaur, Balongan, Bongas, Cikédung, Terisi, Kroya and Indramayu.

The flooding, which measured from 50 cm to 2 m deep, damaged at least 3,000 houses out of 4,500 affected. As many as 5,000 people were forced to take refuge in Pekalongan on Saturday while 4,000 houses in Kendal became inundated on Friday. Flooding also disrupted Java's northern coastal highway (Pantura) and railway tracks, as well as the Tawang train station in Semarang. However, a spokesman from train operator PT Kereta Api Indonesia (KAI) Purwokerto Zone 5 operations, Surono, said that railway operations had not been disrupted by the flooding. Even if there are delays, it is because of flooding in Jakarta," he said.

According to the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), most parts of Central Java will be pounded by heavy rain in the coming days. (nai)