

# **Illegal mining activities to be reviewed**

The Central Java administration intends to evaluate the illegal mining of non-minerals and non-metals, categorized as C materials, across the province as such activities are believed to have caused severe environmental damage. The materials include sand, stone and limestone.

“All category C mining activities in Central Java need to be reviewed,” Governor Ganjar Pranowo said in Semarang recently.

He said he would meet with all the regents and mayors of the province’s 35 regencies and municipalities to decide on a policy to address the problem.

A recent flash flood in Kledung subdistrict, Temanggung regency, resulting from damage to the Sibiting River embankment, was one example of the environmental damage, he said.

The embankment could not withstand the strong current resulting from rainwater passing through a former C material mining site. The activities have been blamed for causing recurring disasters, like floods and landslides, in Semarang.

The widespread illegal mining of category C materials is also evident in other regions, such as Magelang, Wonosobo, Klaten and Semarang municipality.

Illegal sand quarrying in Muntilan and Klaten, for example, has led to severe damage to the Mount Merapi evacuation route as trucks overloaded with sand pass along the route every day.

The allowed tonnage on the route is 6 tons, but trucks sometimes carry up to 13 tons.

Ganjar said evaluating mining regulations was also part of disaster mitigation. He also called on law enforcers to take firm measures against illegal miners.

The governor’s initiative to evaluate the mining of category C materials was received warmly by Semarang City Council Commission C deputy speaker Agung Budi Margono.

Agung said that category C mining contributed less than Rp 100 million (US\$8,598) in annual city revenue but had caused tens of billions of rupiah in financial losses.

“I agree that the police should take stern measures against illegal miners to create a deterrent effect,” he said.

Semarang Water Resources, Energy and Mineral Resources Management Agency data shows that currently 20 businesses mine category C materials in Semarang, 19 of which are illegal or do not have permits.

However, acting Semarang Mayor Hendrar Prihadi said that despite the fact that mining category C materials caused environmental damage, the materials were still needed for reclamation purposes.

“This [issue] has to be considered,” Hendrar said.