

Jakarta, Bogor to tackle flooding

Governor Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and Bogor Regent Rachmat Yasin agreed on Monday to carry out several joint efforts to reduce perennial flooding affecting the Greater Jakarta area. Talking to reporters after a meeting with Jokowi at City Hall on Monday evening, Rachmat emphasized his commitment to take part in efforts to solve the issue, saying he wanted to demolish illegal buildings built on green spaces. "I will continue my administration's efforts to demolish illegal villas built on water catchment areas in Bogor regency. I am targeting 800 villas this year," he said, declining to elaborate on the details of building ownership. "I don't care whether the owner is a high-profile figure or not. A violation is a violation. This isn't only about Jakarta's [effort to reduce floods] but also about Bogor's spatial planning," he added.

According to Rachmat, his administration had demolished 241 buildings in 2013. The city administration will give Rp 5 billion (US\$410,000) in grants to the Bogor regency to demolish the illegal buildings this year. The Bogor regent said his administration also fully supported Jokowi's administration to build two reservoirs in his area. The Jakarta administration aimed to acquire 107 hectares of land in Cipayung Datar and 24.8 hectares in Sukamahi, Bogor regency, while the Public Works Ministry would build the reservoirs. "As many as 145 families in Cipayung Datar and 130 families in Sukamahi will be affected by the plan. I have disseminated the plan to 3,000 people and nobody rejected it. The Jakarta administration will assess the land value and acquire it. I have provided a land plot near the area for the residents to build new homes," he explained.

The Jakarta administration is also set to normalize the Ciliwung River's upstream area, as the Bogor regency stated its budget was not enough to carry out the project. "We don't always expect cash from Jakarta. It could also be heavy equipment," he said. Jokowi appreciated Rachmat's support, saying that "we should acknowledge that not all local leaders were this brave". The governor said the city administration would be the owner of the two planned reservoirs.

"I will discuss further with the public works minister about the maintenance," he said, citing the construction would begin in 2015. Earlier in the day, Jokowi said the city administration planned to build nine reservoirs covering hundreds of hectares in the capital, three of which would be built starting from February. He declined to elaborate on the details. Separately, Deputy Governor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama said the city administration would check all embankments in Jakarta, most of which had deteriorated over the years. "We will check them all. We aim to build sheet piles along all rivers to support its function, as well as preventing squatters from occupying the riverbanks," he said. According to Jakarta Public Works Agency water resources maintenance division head Joko Susetyo, the agency had received a bigger budget to repair embankments this year compared to last year, while declining to elaborate on the details.

He said most embankments in Jakarta were struggling to stand the test of time. "Most embankments, particularly the West Flood Canal [KBB], are too old and often see leakages here and there," Joko told The Jakarta Post. Ahok added that building inspection roads along the riverbanks would also be the city administration's priority after repairing the embankments.