

Jakarta, Bogor team up to mitigate floods

Governor Joko “Jokowi” Widodo and Bogor Regent Rachmat Yasin on Tuesday reiterated their commitment to regreen the upstream area of Bogor regency to ease Jakarta’s floods.

The meeting was a rare show of cooperation between the two neighboring regions’ leaders.

On a rainy day in Puncak in Bogor regency, Jokowi’s entourage arrived at the upstream area of the Ciliwung River in Tugu Selatan village, Cisarua, Bogor, at 10 a.m. to attend a tree-planting ceremony hosted by Green Radio.

Rachmat, a United Development Party (PPP) politician who paid a visit to City Hall recently, lauded the governor’s gesture, saying that “Mas Jokowi’s visit shows his commitment to work together with neighboring regions to rehabilitate Bogor’s green areas.”

Despite the rain, Jokowi — an Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) member — and Rachmat planted eucalyptus trees near Telaga Saat Lake. Up to 40,000 trees are to be planted in different locations across Bogor regency.

Both men were sporting raincoats matching their own party colors: Jokowi in red, Rachmat green.

The governor emphasized the importance of working together with neighboring regions.

“We don’t want to keep playing the blame game. The most important thing is to resolve the issues one by one, little by little and to give support [to our neighboring regions] because the city administration can’t work alone,” Jokowi said.

Jokowi and Rachmat later inspected the area where the central government, through the Public Works Ministry, planned to build two new reservoirs, called Megamendung (previously Ciawi) and Sukamahi reservoirs.

The Jakarta administration allocated Rp 1.2 trillion (US\$98.4 million) to acquire 107 hectares of land in Cipayung Datar and 24.8 hectares in Sukamahi, while it is the responsibility of the Public Works Ministry to build the reservoirs.

Both leaders, however, declined to point out the exact locations to avoid land price speculation.

“The reservoirs will be able to hold up to 11.8 million cubic meters of water and may reduce water flowing to Jakarta by 40 percent when it rains,” Rachmat said.

This was not Jokowi’s first attempt to reach out to leaders of neighboring administrations to solve the capital’s urban issues.

Recently, Jokowi met with several Banten officials, including Banten Deputy Governor Rano Karno, Tangerang Mayor Arief R. Wismansyah and Tangerang Regent Ahmed Zaki Iskandar to discuss flood-mitigation programs.

The city administration will distribute Rp 45 billion in grants to nine neighboring cities and regencies, including Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, South Tangerang and Bekasi, to finance flood-mitigation programs this year alone.

However, the city administration’s efforts has not always been met with support, such as when the Depok administration rejected Deputy Governor Basuki “Ahok” Tjahaja Purnama’s proposal to buy a plot of land in neighboring Depok, to prevent it from being turned into a residential area.

Depok Mayor Nur Mahmudi turned down the offer, saying that the deputy governor should focus on the capital’s issues.

It was hardly the first disagreement between neighboring regions in greater Jakarta.

Under former governor Sutiyoso’s administration, the city aimed to take over the management of Bantar Gebang landfill in Bekasi, West Java, but the plan was opposed by the Bekasi administration.