

Anti-flood projects far from finished

Construction projects initiated to address rampant annual flooding in Jakarta are far from complete. According to city officials. Among others, unfinished projects include the Ciliwung normalization program and a 1.27 kilometer-long (km) underground tunnel that would connect the Ciliwung River in Bidaracina, East Jakarta, with the East Flood Canal (KBT), also located in East Jakarta.

According to Ciliwung-Cisadane Flood Control Office (BBWSCC) head T. Iskandar, the city administration still has a long way to go to complete the projects.

“For example, the Ciliwung normalization project starts from Jl. TB Simatupang in South Jakarta and runs to the Manggarai sluice gate in South Jakarta — a 17.5 km stretch. To date, the city administration has only completed 1.5 km,” Iskandar told reporters at City Hall on Thursday.

Many obstacles have hampered completion of the Ciliwung normalization program, most of which are related to land acquisition. Many residents in Kampung Pulo, East Jakarta, for example, refused to give up their houses.

Although the city administration offered Kampung Pulo residents compensation for their land and a room at the rusunawa (low-cost apartments) currently under construction in Kampung Melayu, East Jakarta, many residents objected to the relocation plan.

Meanwhile, residents who owned land in Condet, East Jakarta, requested high levels of compensation from city administration in exchange for their land.

Iskandar said that the Ciliwung normalization project contract expired in 2016. “Therefore, the Public Works Ministry and the city administration must pick up the pace,” he said. Iskandar added that the construction of underground tunnels was also hindered by land acquisition issues.

“The underground tunnel in South Cipinang Besar, East Jakarta, is also constrained by land acquisition. There are five plots of land 3,200 square meters wide which we must acquire,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Bidaracina — KBT tunnel construction program — has sparked protests from motorists and local residents.

The construction not only caused traffic congestion in the area, but also interfered with waterways in the neighborhood.

Separately, Jakarta Deputy Governor Basuki “Ahok” Tjahaja Purnama said that land acquisition was the biggest obstacle for the construction projects.

“Land acquisition is something that we cannot rush or force,” Ahok told reporters at the Government Procurement Regulatory Agency (LKPP) office in South Jakarta on Friday.

However, he said, if Kampung Pulo residents still refused to move to the Kampung Melayu rusunawa after its completion, he would have to force them to relocate.

“It’s much better, not only for the city but for them if they move to the rusunawa. If they still refuse to move then the city administration may have to force them,” Ahok said.