

## Water to become central issue globally: LIPI

The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) has warned that water will become a global issue which will influence politics and trigger international conflicts over the next 50 years.

“Clean water is decreasing in Indonesia and rivers are being contaminated by pollutants. These are the results of our bad attitude toward the environment. This water crisis has been an issue for 20 years,” Bambang Sunarko, head of the Biology Research Center at LIPI Cibinong Science Center, told reporters on Wednesday.

He was speaking on the sidelines of a seminar entitled “Water and Biodiversity” held to commemorate International Day for Biological Diversity.

He said over the next 50 years, water would play a role in politics and wars. Today, some countries have already experienced food and energy crisis.

“Indonesia has a rich biodiversity, but we import rice. We should not import water in the future,” Bambang said.

The head of LIPI’s Zoology Department, Rosichon Ubaidillah, said the quality of water for housing, agriculture and fishery in most rivers, lakes and ponds had decreased drastically in line with rapid industrial and infrastructural development.

However, information and quantitative data on the quality of water is still limited and sporadic.

Rosichon said half of the water tests in the country used chemical and physical indicators, which are complicated and expensive. Researchers barely use biological indicators such as aquatic insects, which is simpler and faster.

“The higher the diversity of aquatic insects, the better quality of water we have for life,” he said.

He said that between 2006 and 2010, LIPI and the Bogor Institute of Agriculture (IPB) released papers containing pictures of various insects that lived in fresh water, which could be used to monitor the quality of water in Jakarta and surrounding areas, including in Cianjur, West Java. However, the papers were now obsolete as water in the areas had since become polluted, he said.

Water pollution is not the only environmental problem in Bogor. West Java’s Environmental Impact Management Agency recently conducted emission tests that showed that air pollution in Bogor had reached a worrying level.

The agency’s monitoring manager, Asep Bayu, said carbon monoxide particles in the city measured 1,000 to 5,000 micrograms per cubic meter every day.

“The figure is still under the benchmark level, but it has the tendency to increase to a worrying level,” he said.

The agency conducted vehicle emission tests on Tuesday in which 25 out of 500 cars using gasoline and diesel fuel did not pass the test. The tests were conducted on Jl. Raya Panjaitan, Jl. Raya Pemuda and Jl. Raya Yasmin.

Asep said most of the cars that did not pass the test were old cars. His agency reminded the car owners to fix their cars and put stickers on cars that passed the test.