

Tensions high as floods hit Depok, Bekasi again

Hundreds of people in Depok and Bekasi in West Java faced flooding again on Tuesday, evacuating their homes and moving to higher ground to avoid a repeat of the inundations in January.

Residents of the Pondok Mitra Lestari housing complex in Jatirasa subdistrict in Bekasi, for example, were seen moving motorcycles and cars to the Grand Galaxy housing complex, which sits on higher ground.

“I’m still traumatized by the floods on Jan. 18,” one resident, Evi, 35, said while evacuating her furniture on Tuesday, as quoted by Antara news agency.

While some residents were seen jostling for safe parking spots, others were annoyed by careless drivers who sped by, sending waves of flood water into their homes.

“All access to the block around my house has been shut and yet cars still dare to drive at a high speed, causing floodwater to flow into my house,” another resident, Dimas, 25, said.

The water level at the housing complex had increased slowly since 11 p.m. on Monday before reaching one meter on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Boim, a 45-year-old resident of Kampung Poncol, South Bekasi, was electrocuted when he grabbed a live wire to steady himself after slipping in his inundated home.

Engkus Kustara, a team leader for the Bekasi Disaster Preparedness Agency, said on Tuesday that at least 11 housing complexes had been inundated since early Monday after the Bekasi River overflowed its banks and part of its embankment collapsed.

The other inundated areas of Bekasi are the Villa Jatirasa, Pondok Gede Permai, Kemang Ivy, Deltamas, Perumahan Pekayon and Century housing complexes; a housing complex owned by the Manpower and Transmigration Ministry; Pangkalan Bambu; and community units RW 04 in Sepanjang Jaya and RW 26 in Margahayu.

“Those housing complexes are situated right along the banks of the Bekasi River,” Engkus said, adding that water levels along the river varied from 1.8 to 4 meters.

He said the collapse of the Bekasi River’s embankment on Jan. 18 had worsened the situation, especially for Block C of the Pondok Gede Permai housing complex, where the Cileungsi and Cikeas Rivers met.

“We repaired the embankment during the last flooding, although not permanently. We now use river stones secured with tied wires,” Engkus said.

Meanwhile, rare floods have inundated dozens of houses in neighborhoods unit in the Beji district of Depok municipality since 3 a.m. on Tuesday.

While no one has evacuated the district, it is the first time that the area has been flooded in 10 years.

Run off from the Kawin River eroded and finally collapsed the river’s embankment and a bridge connecting to Perumnas I Depok at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday

“The embankment, which was built in the Dutch colonial era, has been repaired three times. The last time it was repaired was 10 years ago. Now it has collapsed again,” Sumintra, a resident of Jl. Camar in Depok Jaya told The Jakarta Post.

Floods in the residential area had receded by midday after officials built a temporary embankment.

The collapse of the embankment prompted officials at state elementary school SDN 05 in Depok to send home 100 first-through-third- grade students on Tuesday.