

Residents must play a part in flood prevention

Governor Joko “Jokowi” Widodo on Sunday ordered neighborhood officials across the city to mobilize residents to clean up to prevent their area from flooding. Jokowi said that the cleaning of several rivers in the capital would mean nothing if smaller rivers and drains across the city remained dirty.

“The first thing you need to do is organize communal work to clean up the area, at least once every two weeks,” he said as quoted by kompas.com. He said that it was the duty of officials to mobilize residents to clean up and avoid flooding.

“Larger water channels, are the responsibility of the Public Works Ministry, the medium ones are mayors’ jobs, and the small ones have to be cleaned up by residents under the order of officials from community and neighborhood units,” he said.

However, it is not enough to handle the problem of flooding by cleaning up water channels or dredging rivers if the city lacks sufficient green space. Jokowi has also asked officials to encourage residents to be actively involved in the creation of parks in a bid to add more green space in the city.

He said that residents should start planting trees or donating plants to city’s parks as well as keeping parks clean, tidy and free from street vendors and homeless people. An official from the Ciliwung and Cisadane Rivers Control Office also said that the plan to dredge Ciliwung to solve the capital’s flood problems may be to no avail as there is insufficient green space to support the river.

The plan to expand the river to 35-meters-wide to prevent flooding, due to commence next year, would flop if the number of water catchment areas remained at the current level of 9 to 10 percent of Jakarta’s total area. Ciliwung River is one of 13 rivers that run through the capital. The river flows from its source in Bogor, West Java, to the Jakarta Bay. When the river overflows, it affects many residents as it runs through the city’s busy and residential areas. Despite its impact, the river has never been dredged like other rivers.

The Jakarta Disaster Mitigation Agency (BPBD) chief Arfan Arkili said that the city had prepared a total of 26,098 officers from numerous agencies to handle flooding problems.

The city police have also made flood preparations. They have found a perfect alternative to rubber dinghies, which are not considered the best vehicle to transport flood victims. They have also called upon the police’s Mobile Brigade (Brimob) unit, which acts as the police’s search and rescue team, to fashion jerrycans into rafts.

The police have constructed 10 jerry can rafts and have distributed them to the capital’s five police resorts in addition to the 12 rubber dinghies the police currently possess. The rafts are made of several jerrycans that are tied with rope to bamboo to form a 4-meter long dinghy that can accommodate 10 people.

According to the Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency’s (BMKG), Jakarta will likely see significant rainfall in the coming months.