

Most Merapi temporary shelters still unfinished

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Sleman, Yogyakarta — Although three months have passed since the recent devastating eruptions of Indonesia's Mount Merapi, most of the temporary shelters the government promised to build for displaced victims are not yet ready for occupation, according to a local official.

"Many of the shelters that have been built cannot yet be occupied due to problems related to the supporting infrastructure," Sleman District Chief Sri Purnomo told reporters when he accompanied Yogyakarta Governor Sri

Sultan Hamengkubowono X on a visit to shelters at Banjarsari, Glagaharjo and Cangkringan, on Saturday. Through Feb. 15, the official said, 1,651 shelter units had been built, or 65 percent of the total of 2,613 units to be built. Only 657 shelters are occupied.

Purnomo said that the problems with the shelters include lack of electricity and clean water facilities. The electric grid has not reached the areas where the shelters are built due to a lack of power lines, he said.

In addition, many shelters do not have clean water because they are at a high elevation, making the digging of deep wells problematic. They are also far from existing water supplies.

Sanitation facilities and drainage pipes also have not yet been constructed and rain water floods many areas where the shelters are located.

Besides those technical problems, Purnomo said, there has been resistance from some villagers who only want to move with their neighbors from destroyed villages.

Mount Merapi, among the world's most active volcanoes, erupted violently from Oct. 26 through mid November 2010, killing 354 people and displacing hundreds of thousands from the slopes of the mountain.

P.S.

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