

Artists oppose Borobudur International Festival

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The Borobudur International Festival that will take place from June 11 to June 17 is being opposed by local artists and cultural activists due to its huge budget of Rp 10 billion (US\$1.22 million).

Cultural activist Priyoto said on Thursday that the

public must keep an eye out for the possible misuse of the money, half of which will come from the Central Java administration.

He said the suspicion was triggered by the administration's plan to build a mega-project the Jagad Jawa arts market in the Borobudur temple compound.

The project is opposed by local vendors who will not be able to sell merchandise and

souvenirs to tourists at the temple. Instead, they must rent kiosks at the market, located two kilometers from the temple.

A Borobudur temple observer, Susanto Mendut, also questioned the plan to hold such an international-scale festival.

"Why would the administration want to popularize Borobudur? It's already well known around the world.

This festival is just a project to spend the people's money," said Susanto, who also opposes the construction of Jagad Jawa.

Central Java tourism board head Henky Hermantoro said the money was needed to provide accommodation for foreign participants from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, the United States, Australia and the Philippines.

The festival itself was being held to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the temple's major renovation by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Seminars, exhibitions and competitions will mark the festival, which will also take place in Semarang and Surakarta besides the Borobudur temple compound.

To show their opposition, the artists and activists will stage the Borobudur Agitative and the Kampong Festival in the Borobudur temple park-

ing lot and Langgeng gallery and studio in Magelang, Central Java, respectively. Both events will be held from June 12 to June 27.

"Both events are staged to educate our bureaucrats on how to run an international-scale festival with a small budget and one that involves the local community," Susanto said.

Dedy Irianto of Langgeng gallery and studio said that both events would take place regularly in the future.

"My personal reason is to encourage artists and activists to create in Magelang with Borobudur as the inspiration," he said.

The low-budget event will involve big names in Indonesia's cultural fields. Poet WS Rendra, architect Marco Kusumawijaya, cultural observer Sindhunata, and painters Dede Eri Supria, Djoko Pekik, Made Wianta and Tisna Sanjaya are among participants confirmed for both events.