



JP/Eva Aruperes

People plant mangroves along the beach of Bangka Island, North Sulawesi. Mangroves in the area are heavily damaged due to mining and tourism activities.

Residents, tourists clean up Bangka mangrove forest

Lita Aruperes

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Residents joined hands with dozens of tourists on Thursday to clean up a mangrove forest on Bangka Island, North Sulawesi, which has been heavily damaged due to mining activities in the area.

Using five motorboats, hundreds of people, consisting of environmentalists, a diving resort owner and tourists, gathered in Ehe village, North Minahasa regency, North Sulawesi.

Angelique Batuna, the owner of Murex Resort, coordinated the activity, explaining that people had volunteered for the cleanup to help preserve the environment.

Ehe village is one of four villages on Bangka, a 4,778-hectare island, which attracted nationwide attention because of widespread iron ore mining activities.

"The beach used to be beautiful with a vast mangrove forest. Now it's all gone," said environmentalist Jull Takaliuang from the Suara Nurani

Awareness increasing on polluted tourist spots, once known for their beauty

Foreigners and locals participate in cause

Minaesa Foundation.

The group proceeded to plant 650 mangrove seedlings in the area. Foreign tourists also participated in the program.

"A large part of the mangrove forest has been damaged. We have tried to restore it, but it may not help much," said Jenny Sadzig from Germany.

The group also collected trash from along the beach and around the mangrove trees.

"Maybe soon it will be dirty again, but that's OK," said Hergen Spalink, a tourist from the US.

Cleanup programs have been held in various tourist spots across the archipelago over the past two weeks.

A group of divers went deep into the waters of Labuan Bajo, East

Nusa Tenggara (NTT), to collect trash from the seabed.

The team, comprising 50 divers from several countries, picked up about 482 kilograms of plastic out of the 1,370 kilograms of trash collected.

Komodo Dive Operator Community head Ica Marta Muslin said the effort was part of the divers' commitment to Komodo National Park, named one of the best diving spots in the world.

Indonesia produced 3.2 million tons of plastic waste in 2010, with around 1.29 million tons of that ending up in the ocean, according to a study published in the journal *Science*. The figure places Indonesia second only to China, with its 8.8 million tons of waste, or 27 percent of global plastic waste.

Up to 3.5 million tons of China's plastic waste ends up in the ocean.

The study found that around 8 million tons of plastic waste ends up in the world's oceans every year, or, as the report mentions, enough plastic to cover an area 34 times the size of

Manhattan with an ankle-deep layer. It was also the total amount of plastic waste produced globally in 1961.

As much as 1 ton of plastic trash was cleaned up by more than 500 volunteers on Mount Rinjani in West Nusa Tenggara over two days last week.

Mt. Rinjani National Park Management (TNGR) said the volcano, famous for its beauty and notorious for its trash along its trails, had been relatively cleaner after the two-day cleanup.

"We collected more than 1.4 tons of trash. One ton was inorganic material, like glass and plastic bottles, instant noodle and snack packaging, and we collected 400 kilograms of organic garbage, like dried leaves and tree bark," said TNGR head Agus Budi Santosa in Mataram.

The cleanup was held on Dec. 10 and 11 and included 500 people from the Indonesian Military, the National Police, the Forestry Agency, the Tourism Agency, the National Search and Rescue Team, the mountaineering community and local residents.