

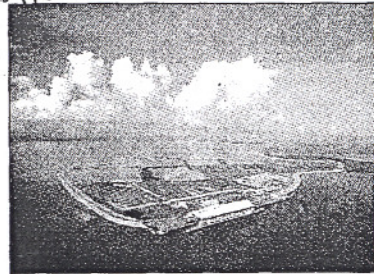
# In Singapore, garbage island rises from the sea

**Singapore:** Once there was a dirty bit of sea next to the world's busiest port here. Today it is an island where birds nest and people play, though the entire island is made of rubbish.

You wouldn't know unless you were told. There's no sight or smell at Semakau landfill to indicate it is the last depository of Singapore's garbage. The corals and all the animals of the beach have been fooled too — they think it's a natural island, and they have grown in droves around it.

Singapore has been incinerating its waste for decades. A place had to be found to dump the ash that's left behind. Since the city state has hardly any space left, the planners looked at the sea.

They put a seven-kilometre perimeter



**TRASH TROVE:** A view of the Semakau landfill

wall around 350 hectares, divided up the area inside into small portions, and started filling it up with ash in April 1999.

## Wastewater sludge can be used to generate energy

Scientists have determined that wastewater sludge has the potential of becoming a new resource for alternative energy. Research has demonstrated that sewage actually contains 10 times the energy needed to treat it, and it is technically feasible to recover energy from sludge. According to a report in ENN (Environmental News Network), wastewater treatment is coming under increasing scrutiny with the financial cost of energy. ANI

Today, four of the portions are full, but the rate at which the ash is being generated is going down, much to delight of the

municipal authorities. Singaporeans are getting more aware of the need to recycle what they used to throw away earlier. At the current rate, the landfill will be operational till 2045, the planners estimate.

The place is so clean it has turned into a new holiday spot. Students come in droves for inter-tidal walks where they gawk at mangrove roots, seagrass, coral reefs, crabs, starfishes, sponges, shrimps and many other forms of life that thrive in the belt between high and low tide marks.

Birdwatchers come to glimpse at some of the 66 species recorded at Semakau, sport-fishermen love its artificial lagoon and even amateur astronomers prefer it because they can get away from the glare of the city lights. IANS