

Singapore races to save 'Garbage of Eden'

July 28 2023, by Martin ABBUGAO



Trucks transport ash from incinerated garbage on Pulau Semakau island, which serves as Singapore's offshore landfill.

Visitors to the island hosting Singapore's only landfill might expect foul odors and swarms of flies, but instead they are greeted with stunning views of blue waters, lush greenery and wildlife.

Welcome to Pulau Semakau, the land-scarce city's eco-friendly trash island, where ash from the incinerated garbage of its nearly six million people is dumped.

With just over a decade to go until the site is projected to be filled, the government is in a race against time to extend the lifespan of the island landfill, so serene it has earned the moniker "Garbage of Eden".

"This is the only landfill in Singapore, and due to the small area and the competing land needs, it is difficult to find another location," Desmond Lee, the landfill manager at the National Environment Agency (NEA), which oversees the island, tells AFP.

"It is imperative that we continue to use the Semakau landfill for as long as possible, and if possible extend its life beyond 2035," he says.

'Massive waste

Singapore generated 7.4 million tons of [waste](#) last year, of which about 4.2 million tons, or 57 percent, was recycled.

Plastics remain a sticking point for the island's waste drive, with just 6 percent recycled last year. Food waste, of which 18 percent was recycled, also poses a problem.

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