

# Coastal urbanisation turns oceans into garbage dump

UN report on pollution says

AFP, The Hague

The rapid urbanisation of coastal lands together with the dumping of waste and sewage in seas and oceans is a major source of marine pollution that could get worse as

population growth continues, a UN report released yesterday in The Hague warned.

"An estimated 80 per cent of marine pollution originates from the land and this could rise significantly by 2050," the report of the United

Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said.

UNEP experts stressed that the problem of coastal urbanisation is mostly found in developing countries and essentially needs a financial solution.

The report "The state of the marine environment" presented by UNEP's executive director Achim Steiner at a press conference here Wednesday, will be sent to around a hundred countries expected to participate in a UNEP conference in

Beijing on the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment.

The UNEP report noted "good progress is being made in being made on three of nine key indicators" like oil pollution but also a turn in "the wrong direction" for four other indicators including dumping waste water, garbage and a related excess of nutrients in the water.

"Nutrients from sources like agriculture and animal wastes are fertilizing coastal zones, triggering toxic algal blooms and a rising number of oxygen deficient dead zones," the experts warned.

On the other hand the report welcomed the drastic reduction, by 90 percent, of oil pollution since the mid 1980s.

The experts also noted that there was a reduction in persistent organic pollutants such as pesticides and chemicals, thanks to measures taken as part of the 2001 Stockholm Convention.

Almost 40 percent of the world population lives on a narrow coastal band that takes up only 6.7 percent of the earth's surface and depend on natural resources. The population density in the coastal region which was 77 people per square kilometer in 1990 could go up to 115 people per square kilometer in 2025, UNEP warned.



PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court during its anti-adulteration drive seizes spurious medicines from a shop called 'American Herbal Care' at Malibagh in the city yesterday. The court fined the owner of the shop Tk 40,000.

## 'Galactic bulge' yields new class of planets

AFP, Washington

A seam of stars at the centre of the Milky Way has shown astronomers that an entirely new class of planets closely orbiting distant suns is waiting to be explored, according to a paper published last week.

The finding opens up a new area of investigation for space scientists probing extra-solar planets -- planets that orbit stars other than our own, it says.

Astronomers have spotted 202 extra-solar planets since the first was spotted in October 1995.

Their technique is based on the so-called "wobble" method. Under this, the astronomer measures the frequencies of light from the star. There is a telltale oscillation, or wobble, in this light if the star is tugged by a planet.

So far, planets with the shortest orbits, of 1.2-2.5 days, have mainly been found encircling stars that are hot and bright, with a mass at least three-quarters that of our Sun.

An international team of astronomers, using a camera aboard NASA's Hubble telescope, delved into a zone of the Milky Way known as the "galactic bulge", thus called because it is rich in stars and in the

gas and dust which go to make up stars and planets.

They uncovered the existence of 16 planets in the category of close orbiters, taking between 0.4 and 3.2 days to go around their respective stars.

Many of the planets are the size of Jupiter, the largest planet in our Solar System.

Two of the 16 have orbits of less than a day, creating a new category of "ultra-short" orbits.

In addition, the planets generally orbit stars that are somewhat lighter than the typical stars seen in earlier extrasolar discoveries.

The team, led by Kailash Sahu of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland, report their work in Nature, the British weekly science journal.

They believe that any planets which orbited at such a close distance to brighter, hotter stars would be destroyed by solar radiation. And large Jupiter-sized planets are being spotted at these remarkably close orbits because the star, being of low mass, exerts a relatively low gravitational pull.



PHOTO: STAR

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding uninterrupted supply of water, gas and electricity.

## Programmes to celebrate Eid

BSS, Dhaka

Elaborate programmes have been taken yesterday at a high-level inter-ministerial meeting to celebrate the Eid-ul-Fitr, one of the biggest religious festivals of the Muslims, in a befitting manner.

The meeting was held at the Ministry of Religious Affairs with its secretary Ataur Rahman in the chair.

The meeting was told that the main Jamaat of the Eid-ul-Fitr will be held at the Jatiya Eidgah at 8:00am. In case of bad weather, the main Jamaat will be held at 8:30am at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will give separate messages on the occasion.

The meeting also decided that the notification of the Eid Jamaats will be publicised through print and electronic media.

Concerned ministry, city corporation and other organisations concerned were asked to make arrangement for the Jamaat at the National Eidgah.

Highlights of the Eid-ul-Fitr also include hoisting of national flag at all public and private buildings, the main thoroughfares starting from the Dhaka Gate at Banani to Bangabhaban and road islands will be decorated with the national flag and banners inscribed with Eid Mubarak in Bengali and Arabic, public buildings will be illuminated on the Eid-day night, Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will air special programmes and newspapers will publish special supplements on the Eid-ul-Fitr, improved diets will be served at different hospitals, jails, government children homes, vagrant welfare centres and distressed homes.