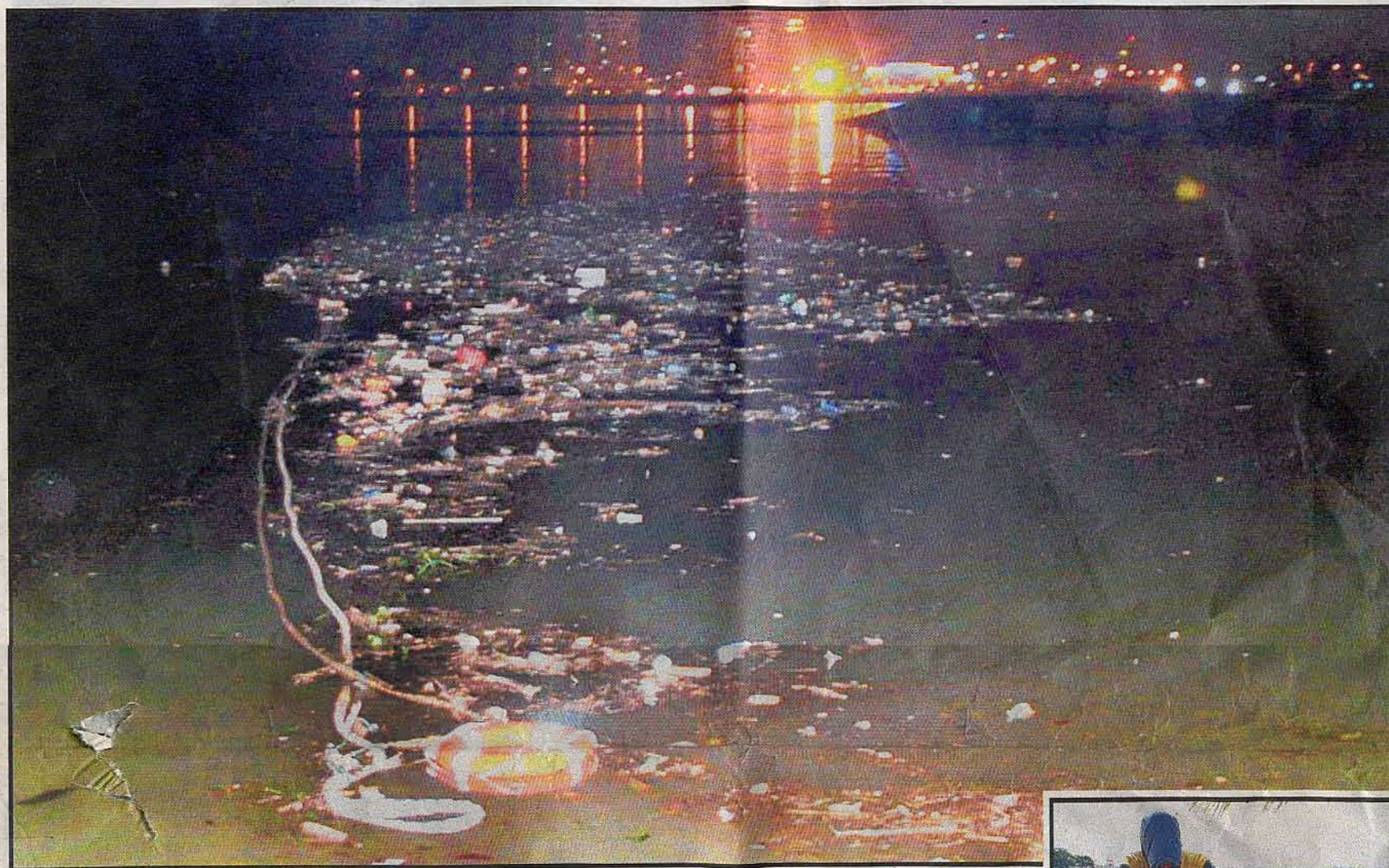


# Garbage strait



◆ A section of the Johor Strait (left) and contractors tasked with the daily job of removing rubbish (below).

Pictures: SIN CHEW DAILY

20 tonnes of rubbish is cleared from the Johor Strait every day



**T**HEY fish out everything from animal carcasses to plastic bags and disposable baby diapers.

Each day's haul amounts to 20 tonnes and the "fishing ground" is the Johor Strait. Of this, driftwood and forest waste amount to five tonnes.

Mr Mukhtar Helmi and his team can be found at work between 7am and 6pm daily, clearing rubbish that clogs up the strait, reported the New Straits Times.

Another team, led by Mr Aziz Halil, removes two tonnes of rubbish daily.

All this makes the Johor Strait one of Malaysia's most polluted waterways.

The most badly affected areas are a 7km stretch that ends at Danga Bay on the west of the Causeway, and an 8km stretch that ends at Kampung Senibong on the east of the Causeway.

The cleaning teams work under the supervision of the Johor Baru City Council, which is responsible for the cleanliness of the strait.

Mr Mukhtar said: "On weekends, we collect up to 25 tonnes of rubbish. This does not include debris such as driftwood."

Mr Aziz and his team have to work harder as well, as their

collection of rubbish increases to four tonnes on weekends.

He said: "The rubbish can be a put-off for locals and visitors."

Why so much rubbish?

Both contractors claim that villagers, squatters and illegal industries are responsible for discharging waste into rivers. These rivers flow into the strait.

Johor Baru Mayor Abdul Latiff Yusof blamed the problem on a lack of civic consciousness.

He said money spent on cleaning up the Johor Strait could be better used on other public projects.

**The rubbish can be a put-off for locals and visitors.**

— Mr Aziz Halil, one of the contractors cleaning up the waterway