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► 'Malaysia has consistently guaranteed access to basic utilities, with targeted assistance such as free supply for low-income households'

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HULU LANGAT: Malaysia's pull as a hub for data centres, artificial intelligence and semiconductor industries is largely due to its water and energy resources, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Speaking at the launch of the Langat 2 Water Treatment Plant, he said these resources must be treated as strategic assets not only for public use but also to anchor high-value technology investments.

"Ask investors and they will tell you that water and energy are top priorities, followed by our professional workforce.

"But for us, it's not just about availability. They must also remain affordable so that the people are not burdened."

Anwar said Malaysia has consistently guaranteed access to basic utilities, including affordable water, with targeted assistance such as free supply for low-income households.

"This is an achievement we can be proud of."

He added that the RM4.2 billion Langat 2 project, largely built by local firms and engineers despite requiring some imported equipment, demonstrates Malaysia's capacity to manage advanced water infrastructure.

"This project showcases our engineering and technical expertise in mastering modern technology.

"Although certain components were imported, the management and maintenance have been successfully handled by Malaysians themselves. This is a proud achievement."

Anwar acknowledged Malaysia's "water paradox" – there are floods several times a year yet shortages in some areas.

"In a country where water overflows and floods two or three times annually, it is unthinkable that we still suffer from shortages. This reflects weaknesses in management."

He cited Jordan, which conserves and distributes water effectively despite minimal rainfall, and urged Malaysians to adopt both modern technology and sustainable practices, including reducing wastage in daily routines such as ablution.

He stressed that water management would be prioritised under the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP) as part of strengthening economic resilience.

"Malaysia cannot bring about meaningful change without economic strength. That strength depends on resilience, energy sufficiency and the capacity of domestic industries to drive growth."

Anwar added that Langat 2 is not only a technical milestone but also a commitment to ensuring reliable and affordable supply for households and industries.

Deputy Prime Minister and Energy Transition and Water Transformation Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said Malaysia's water supply coverage reached 97% last year, with a "comfortable" reserve margin of 14.9% in Peninsular Malaysia and Labuan.

He said the sector still faces challenges.

He added that there is a need to improve access to treated water, boost reserve margins in some states, tackle problems of non-revenue water (NRW), ageing infrastructure and the financial unsustainability of some operators.

Fadillah said through the Water Sector Transformation Roadmap 2040, measures under the 13MP would be prioritised, including the Critical Pipe Replacement Programme, holistic NRW solutions and rebates for operators who meet reduction targets.

He said these efforts are expected to lower NRW levels to 28.8% by 2030.

"I believe these initiatives will significantly strengthen water services, helping consumers face future challenges while securing long-term needs."

The Langat 2 Water Treatment Plant, built by Pengurusan Aset Air Berhad for Air Selangor, is Malaysia's second-largest water facility.

With a capacity of 1,130 million litres per day, it now supplies treated water to Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya, directly benefiting about 791,000 consumer accounts.



Anwar, accompanied by Fadillah, at the opening of the Langat 2 Water Treatment Plant in Hulu Langat yesterday. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN