

## **Tapping into groundwater is the way forward, says PM [NSTTV]**

By T.N.Alagesh - March 26, 2022 @ 2:50pm

BERA: The huge volume of groundwater resources should be tapped to help serve as an alternative source of water for the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today.

The Bera member of parliament said the use of groundwater in Malaysia was less than three per cent compared with other countries.

"Malaysia utilises less groundwater compared with Denmark which uses 100 per cent of its groundwater, Austria uses 98 per cent, our neighbours Thailand optimise up to 80 per cent, China 78 per cent and the United States about 50 per cent.

"Currently in Malaysia, groundwater is used as a source of drinking water in Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Perlis, Kedah, Sabah and Sarawak.

"Malaysia is estimated to have about 5,000 billion cubic metres of underground water with the capability to process about 64 billion cubic metres a year. The groundwater reserve is huge and will be able to serve as an alternative source for the country," he said in his speech when launching the World Water Day 2022 at the Bera public park here today.

Ismail Sabri said the National Water Resources Study (NWRS) for Peninsular Malaysia (2000-2050) had proposed to build more water catchment areas or reservoirs to meet the needs and demands for domestic water supply and irrigation until 2050.

"The study found that groundwater can be used as an alternative source for rural and remote areas catering for various use including industrial, agriculture and domestic use through several appropriate methods and processes. The Energy and Natural Resources Ministry through the Department of Mineral and Geoscience has begun efforts such as mapping, developing, monitoring and establishing a Groundwater Data Centre and Inventory.

"This approach is to boost the use of groundwater as a conjunctive source of national water supply during the construction of underground dams, artificial aquifers (managed aquifer recharge) and river bank filtration. Continued measures will be carried out to strengthen and harmonise governance related to groundwater resources with all the stakeholders at both the federal and state level," he said, calling all stakeholders to pay attention and take continuous action to preserve water resources, especially groundwater to ensure water availability.

Ismail Sabri said the government was in the midst of studying the National Water Resources Policy (NWRP) by taking into account the current situation and challenges faced by the water sector in the country.

"The policy will cater for the Water Sector Transformation 2040 and other development plans under the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP). The policy emphasises the need to protect the environment in order to conserve water resources, namely both surface water and groundwater," he said.

Ismail Sabri stressed that despite the country having sufficient water resources to provide safe and treated water, the people have to be aware that there were still various issues and challenges related to water resources management that have to be addressed.

"First, there is sometimes an excessive quantity of water during the rainy season and an insufficient amount during the dry season. Secondly, the deteriorating water quality and unbalanced distribution.

"The issues and challenges in managing the national water resources have to be addressed effectively to achieve sustainable and holistic management of national water resources. Uninterrupted availability and sustainability of clean water resources will further ensure the well-being of Keluarga Malaysia," he assured.

In his speech, Ismail Sabri said to tackle the floods in Bera, the Department of Irrigation and Drainage was implementing an environmentally-friendly drainage master plan (Pisma) for Bera town

"It will serve as a guide and reference to plan future developments especially in ensuring a more systematic and sustainable drainage system. Once completed the project will benefit some 100,000 villagers in Bera and reduce the risk of floods," he said.

Also present at the programme with the theme 'Conserving Water Resources (Utilising groundwater)' was Environment and Water Minister Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man.



The huge volume of groundwater resources should be tapped to help serve as an alternative source of water for the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today. NSTP/ FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG