



Opening Address

YAB Datuk Amar Haji Fadillah bin Haji Yusof
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy Transition
and Water Transformation

in conjunction with

Opening Ceremony of Asiawater 2026

7 April 2026, 2.30 pm
Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

[Salutation]

Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Bin Mamat,
Chairman, Informa Markets Malaysia

Datuk Ir. Abdul Kadir Bin Mohd Din,
Chairman, Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Air Negara (SPAN)

**Distinguished Guests, Industry Leaders, Valued Partners,
Members of the Media,**

Assalamualaikum and Salam Malaysia MADANI.

1. Alhamdulillah, it is a profound honour to join you today for the **Opening Ceremony of ASIAWATER 2026**, the region's foremost platform for advancing sustainable water and wastewater solutions. On behalf of the **Government of Malaysia** and the **Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation (PETRA)**, I extend a very warm welcome to all participants.

2. It is encouraging to see such strong international participation at this year's event, with over **20,000 trade**

professionals from more than 50 countries expected, underscores the urgency of water security as a global priority.

3. We are truly grateful to all who have travelled from near and far to join us today. **Your presence, despite the uncertainties in the global economy and geopolitics, is a powerful reminder of our shared commitment in protecting the most essential resource of all - WATER.**

WATER RESILIENCE

Distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen,

4. Water is the very foundation of human civilisation. It is more than a resource, it is life itself. A reliable supply of clean water and effective wastewater management protect public health, sustain industries, preserve our ecosystems, and strengthen the resilience of our communities.

5. Today, our water systems are under growing strain. Climate change is reshaping rainfall patterns, rapid urbanisation is driving up demand for water services, and ageing infrastructure continues to challenge many utilities across both developed and developing nations. These are not distant

challenges, they are realities we face right now, and they demand urgent, coordinated action.

6. As climate change accelerates, it brings more intense and unpredictable rainfall that leads to severe flood. Thus, to strengthen our resilience against floods, PETRA is implementing a nationwide programme of **Flood Mitigation Plan (RTB)** projects. These include river bunds, flood walls, retention ponds, control gates, and pumping systems.

7. Under the **Thirteenth Malaysia Plan (13MP)**, a total of **140 projects both new and ongoing have been approved**, reflecting a structured government approach in reducing flood risks.

8. Importantly, climate change considerations are now built directly into the design and technical calculations of these projects. By incorporating the **Climate Change Factor (CCF)**, we ensure that the infrastructure we build today in Malaysia will remain robust and effective in the face of tomorrow's challenges.

9. Recent developments in the Middle East have also delivered a sobering reminder of just how vulnerable critical water infrastructure can be in times of conflict. We recognise that when water treatment plants or distribution systems are

disrupted, access to safe water and sanitation quickly becomes a humanitarian concern. **Malaysia therefore, joins the international community in expressing our hope for peace and stability in all affected regions.**

10. Against this global backdrop, the work undertaken by PETRA and our partners across the water sector has never been more critical. The Government of Malaysia remains firmly committed to strengthening our national water sector through sound policies, robust regulatory frameworks, and responsible environmental stewardship.

MOU WATER MANAGEMENT — MALAYSIA AND NETHERLANDS

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

11. Today also marks another pivotal step forward in our national agenda for resource resilience. The exchange of the Memorandum of Understanding in the field of water management between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of the Netherlands signifies a strategic alignment between both parties.

12. This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to integrating cutting-edge technology with forward-looking, sustainable policy frameworks.

13. By pooling our institutional strengths and expertise, we are reinforcing the resilience of our water ecosystems, supporting sustainable industrial growth, and above all, safeguarding the fundamental right to clean, safe, and reliable water for every citizen we serve.

WATER SUSTAINABILITY (NON-REVENUE WATER - NRW)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

14. Malaysia's water infrastructure is among the most advanced in the region. Yet, we continue to face challenges from ageing assets and the persistent issue of **Non-Revenue Water (NRW)**.

15. As we move into the Thirteen Malaysia Plan, **I urge all water operators to go beyond "business as usual". True efficiency is not about maintaining the status quo, it is about a relentless pursuit of operational excellence.**

16. Reducing NRW is a core responsibility and it is capital-intensive. While the Government has committed significant allocations to support water operators, long-term success requires **innovative financing models, effective governance, and strong collaboration between Federal and State Governments, as well as industry stakeholders.**

17. Through SPAN, we are exploring frameworks to enable operators to transform into **efficient, investment-ready utilities.** Strengthening financial positions through efficient service delivery and periodic tariff reviews is key to building resilience and self-sufficiency.

18. At the same time, operators must prepare for the realities of climate change. Ensuring water security requires maintaining a **reserve margin of 10–15%**, supported by systematic planning and robust infrastructure development.

19. PETRA remains steadfast in aligning these efforts with the restructuring of the water supply industry, securing long-term resilience for all Malaysians.

20. In this era of 2026, the tools at our disposal have never been more powerful. I encourage operators to embrace **digitalisation and full integration with the National Water**

Sector Industry Database System. Data-driven decision-making is no longer optional, it is essential for building a responsive and resilient water management system.

21. Sustainable water management is a shared responsibility. Nationwide initiatives continue to promote responsible consumption, reminding us that every drop saved contributes to a stronger, more sustainable future.

WATER DEMANDS FOR THE DATA CENTRE SECTOR

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

22. Malaysia is strengthening its long-term water security planning. This includes improving system reserve margins, enhancing integrated river-basin management, and advancing elements of the circular water economy including water reuse and recycling.

23. In wastewater management, we continue to expand connected sewerage services with modern treatment facilities and extended networks, improving environmental outcomes and safeguarding public health.

24. As artificial intelligence and cloud computing expand, the demand on data centres grows. These facilities generate intense heat and rely on cooling systems that consume up to **95% of their total water use**. Combined with water-intensive industries such as semiconductors and textiles, this places immense pressure on our water supply.

25. Part of the solution lies in **water reclamation**. By treating and reusing wastewater, we can power the digital economy without depleting natural resources. Currently, Malaysia produces **48.5 million litres per day (MLD)** of reclaimed water, primarily in Klang Valley and southern Peninsular. PETRA's target is to reach **118 MLD by 2030**, intended for industrial use other than food and beverage sector.

26. To achieve this, PETRA will launch a comprehensive study in the second quarter of 2026 to address infrastructure, financing, and legal challenges. Engagements with state governments and water operators will ensure alignment of strategies, forming the foundation of a **National Water Reclamation Policy**.

27. In line with this, PETRA is implementing amendments to the **Water Services Industry Act 2006 [Act 655]**, streamlining

provisions for water supply and sewerage services, including reclaimed water and water residue.

MALAYSIA'S GREEN JOURNEY

28. Water and energy are inseparable. Water treatment, pumping, distribution, and wastewater processing are energy-intensive activities. Emerging technologies such as advanced treatment, and large-scale water recycling depend on reliable and increasingly sustainable energy systems.

29. PETRA is therefore advancing an **integrated national approach** that aligns energy transition with water transformation. This ensures both sectors evolve in tandem, strengthening Malaysia's resilience and sustainability. This reflects the broader aspirations of **Malaysia MADANI**, a nation that is sustainable, inclusive, and forward-looking.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

30. Water challenges do not stop at national borders. Across ASEAN and beyond, we face common concerns from climate change, urbanisation, and infrastructure resilience. Platforms

such as **ASIAWATER** play an important role in positioning Malaysia as a regional hub for water innovation, industry collaboration, and knowledge exchange.

31. Initiatives like the **Regional Expert Dialogue** and extensive conference programmes provide valuable opportunities for policymakers, regulators, technology providers, and industry experts to exchange ideas and share best practices. The partnerships formed here will shape solutions not only for Malaysia but for the wider region.

32. The theme of ASIAWATER 2026, **collaboration and innovation for a sustainable water future** resonates strongly with Malaysia's national water agenda. By working together across governments, industries, research institutions, and communities, we can build water systems that are resilient, efficient, and future-ready.

33. On that note, it is my great pleasure to declare **ASIAWATER 2026 officially open.**

Terima kasih, thank you.

Wabillahi taufik wal hidayah.

Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.