

Water: One body to run it

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THE assurance given by the prime minister in tackling water-related issues is an important milestone. Water is a matter of national security and failure to safeguard it will lead to security and supply problems.

One of the main issues is that the management of water throughout the usage cycle is still segregated.

Many agencies are involved and integrated efforts are not in place. Climate change has a direct impact on water sources, but a divided water management can cause more damage than climate change.

The water sector actually operates in a closed-loop system. The raw water we consume is from the environment. We treat and supply it to consumers and, finally, produce waste water.

This waste water needs to be treated before being discharged into the environment again.

For this model to function, the environment must be able to sustain our waste and demand parameters. This is because the environment, as a whole, has limited carrying capacity.

The closed-loop system is beneficial, but our failure to be efficient can cause water shortage, pollution and high water tariffs.

One of the first steps is to unify the water agencies under one ministry. They should be under the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry at federal level. The ministry can then engage state governments more effectively. Water is a precious gift. How we manage it can differentiate Malaysia from the rest.

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