BUSINESS NEWS

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FASHION'S THIRST: THE TRILLION-LITRE CRISIS BEHIND YOUR CLOTHES

The fashion industry wastes 79 trillion liters of water annually, driving urgent calls for sustainable production, responsible consumption, and material innovation.

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Founder:
Kazi Mahmood

Editorial Director:
Asir Fatagar

Columnists:

Dr Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani

Johan Chairil

Sharifah Azzahra

Address:
B28, Lorong Seri Damai Perdana 5,
Taman Impian Perdana, 25150 Kuantan, Pahang

Contact Us
kazi@businessnews.com.my

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When Rivers Run Rivalry: The World's Quiet Water Wars

Water is increasingly the raw material of conflict. Across the globe, rivers and aquifers that once seemed inexhaustible are becoming strategic assets — or battlegrounds. Consider Nile River basin politics: Ethiopia's Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile triggered deep resistance from Egypt, which views the river as lifeblood of its agriculture and civilization. Meanwhile in South Asia the Brahmaputra River's headwaters in China and downstream flows into India raise fears of precedent-setting upstream control.

Low-intensity water violence is now routine. In the borderlands of Iran and Afghanistan, skirmishes erupted over the Helmand River and Harirud. And in drought-hit rural East Africa, disputes over wells and grazing near water are frequent.

Compounding the danger: climate change amplifies scarcity; infrastructure becomes weaponised; water flows become negotiation leverage. The result: water is no longer just a utility. It is power. For editors, policymakers and the public this means shifting the frame—from resource management to geopolitical security. Unless multilateral mechanisms adapt and upstream/downstream states embed equity in water-sharing treaties, the "water wars" of headlines may seem tame compared with what's coming. Conflict over water will not replace conventional war — but it will nudge, underpin and reshape it.

Sinking Cities:

How Groundwater Depletion Drives Land Subsidence in Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh

By Johan Chairil

Groundwater over-extraction for domestic and industrial use is causing Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh City to sink rapidly. This article investigates the environmental, social, and economic impacts of land subsidence threatening these megacities' futures.

Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh City, two of Southeast Asia's most dynamic urban centers, are facing a critical and often overlooked environmental crisis: land subsidence caused by excessive groundwater extraction. While these cities power economic growth for millions, their foundations are literally sinking, posing severe risks to their populations, infrastructure, and long-term sustainability.

Sinking Cities:

Groundwater Depletion and Land Subsidence

The Roots of the Crisis

At the heart of the problem is groundwater depletion. Both Jakarta, Indonesia, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, rely heavily on underground water sources to meet the soaring demands of their growing urban populations and industries. Surface water supplies are often inadequate or contaminated, and municipal water infrastructure struggles to keep pace with expansion. As a result, residents and businesses turn to groundwater wells, frequently drawing beyond sustainable limits.

In Jakarta, the dependence on groundwater is staggering: it is estimated that nearly 60% of the city's water needs are met by wells dug into aquifers beneath the city. In Ho Chi Minh City, although the city has improved its water supply network in recent years, over a third of the population still relies on groundwater wells, especially in peri-urban and industrial zones.

Excessive pumping lowers the water table, causing the soil, particularly soft sediment and clay layers beneath the cities, to compact irreversibly. This results in land subsidence—the gradual sinking of the ground surface. Jakarta experiences some of the highest rates globally, with certain districts sinking as much as 10 to 20 centimeters annually. Ho Chi Minh City has similarly alarming average rates of 2 to 5 centimeters per year, with hotspots exhibiting even faster subsidence.

Sinking Cities:

Groundwater Depletion and Land Subsidence

Consequences of Sinking

The cumulative effects of land subsidence exacerbate numerous vulnerabilities. Infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and buildings are increasingly prone to damage and collapse. Flood defenses and drainage systems become less effective, increasing flooding risks during seasonal rains and tropical storms. In Jakarta, sinking land combined with rising sea levels threatens to submerge significant portions of the city in coming decades. The northern coastal areas are particularly at risk, with some studies warning that parts of the metropolitan region could be underwater by 2050 if current trends continue unchecked.

Ho Chi Minh City faces a similar fate. As the Mekong Delta experiences decreasing sediment supply due to upstream damming and accelerated coastal erosion, the land subsidence intensifies flood susceptibility in the city. Floodwaters can infiltrate deeper, affecting residential communities and economic hubs, disrupting lives and livelihoods.

Moreover, the economic cost is mounting. Repair and maintenance of subsided infrastructure impose heavy financial burdens on city governments. Jakarta already invests substantial sums each year to stabilize critical areas, while businesses and residents shoulder additional indirect losses due to disruptions and damages.

Sinking Cities:

Groundwater Depletion and Land Subsidence

Responses and Challenges

Efforts to address groundwater depletion and land subsidence have been initiated but face complex challenges. Jakarta has developed a multi-pronged strategy, including expanding piped water access to reduce well dependence, regulating groundwater extraction through licensing, and constructing giant sea walls as part of the controversial National Capital Integrated Coastal Development project. However, enforcement remains uneven, and illegal wells continue operating in many neighborhoods.

Ho Chi Minh City has prioritized upgrading its water supply systems, aiming to ensure universal clean water access by 2030. Regulations on industrial groundwater use have been tightened, and pilot projects to recharge depleted aquifers are underway. Still, the rapid urban expansion driven by population growth and industrialization complicates control measures.

Public awareness and community involvement are also crucial. Many residents remain unaware of the long-term dangers of drawing groundwater or lack affordable alternatives. Coordinated efforts between government agencies, urban planners, and civil society are vital to implement sustainable water management and land use practices.

Image from Hublot

Sinking Cities:

Groundwater Depletion and Land Subsidence

Looking Forward

The sinking of Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh City illuminates urgent lessons for other rapidly urbanizing coastal mega-cities worldwide. Sustainable water governance, investment in infrastructure modernization, and adaptation to climate-induced sea level rise must be pursued in tandem. Crucially, integrating scientific research, such as satellite-based subsidence monitoring and groundwater modeling, into policymaking can guide targeted interventions efficiently.

The clock is ticking. Without accelerated and collaborative action, the economic engines of Indonesia and Vietnam risk stalling beneath rising tidewater and collapsing foundations. Jakarta and Ho Chi Minh City can yet transform their sinking crises into opportunities for resilient, equitable urban futures—if the imperative to safeguard their ground beneath their feet is met decisively today.

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Malaysia can no longer take water for granted

By Dr Ahmad Zaharuddin Sani

The scent of petrichor after rain is as Malaysian as nasi lemak. We've always seen water as endless—humid skies, frequent downpours, rainforests like giant sponges. Drought feels like someone else's problem.

But this comfort is a myth. Malaysia faces a water crisis—not of scarcity, but of mismanagement, complacency, and waste. We're not immune to Southeast Asia's water woes; we're just experiencing them quietly.

I write not as an expert, but as a concerned citizen. Cracked pipes, polluted rivers, and inaction threaten our future. We must stop taking water for granted.

Malaysia can no longer take water for granted

The Illusion of Abundance

Malaysia gets ample rain, but it's uneven. Some areas flood while others dry. Much water runs off to sea, unharvested. Our infrastructure leaks: 30–40% of treated water is lost in aging pipes and inefficient plants. Rivers are poisoned by industrial waste, farm runoff, and sewage. Enforcement is inconsistent; fines rarely deter.

We waste water daily—hosing cars, leaving taps running, ignoring leaks. Habits add up.

Lessons from Neighbors

Southeast Asia is a warning:

- Drought: Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia face severe dry seasons. Malaysia sees longer, harsher dry spells.
- Pollution: The Mekong and Citarum are toxic. Our Langat River suffers repeated contamination, affecting millions in the Klang Valley.
- Urban stress: Jakarta, Bangkok, Manila outgrow water systems. Kuala Lumpur faces the same demand surge.
- Floods: Monsoons and rising seas disrupt supply. Climate change worsens extremes.

Malaysia can no longer take water for granted

- Agriculture: Over 70% of regional water goes to inefficient irrigation. Malaysia can do better.
- Groundwater: Over-extraction sinks cities like Jakarta. Malaysia's coastal areas are at risk.
- Governance: Fragmented management and weak regulation stall progress. Malaysia's biggest hurdle.

A Call to Action

We can't wait for disaster. Water is a loan from future generations. We need urgent, collective change.

1. Stronger Governance
   - Create a National Water Commission to unify policy and enforcement.

Malaysia can no longer take water for granted

- Pass a National Water Act guaranteeing safe water as a right.
- Adopt Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) linking water, land, and ecosystems.
- Strengthen transparency and anti-corruption measures.

2. Modern Infrastructure

- Replace leaky pipes and upgrade treatment plants.
- Recycle wastewater for irrigation and industry.
- Explore affordable desalination for coastal areas.
- Deploy smart systems to monitor use and detect leaks.

3. Protect Sources

- Restore forests and wetlands to store rain.
- Enforce buffer zones along rivers.
- Push drip irrigation and low-chemical farming.
- Mandate industrial wastewater treatment.

4. Empower People

- Teach households and businesses to conserve.
- Promote rainwater harvesting.
- Support community-led water management.
- Launch education and media campaigns.

Malaysia can no longer take water for granted

The Time is Now

Storm clouds gather. We are not owners of water, but custodians. Let's not be the generation that squandered it.

Act with urgency—government, business, communities, individuals. Fix the leaks. Clean the rivers. Change the habits. Let's secure a water-abundant future for Malaysia. Not another drop wasted.

Promote Water Conservation in Homes and Businesses: We need to make the public aware of the necessity of water conservation and provide them with practical tips on water conservation in their lives. Encourage Water Harvesting: Rainwater harvesting can be used as a supplementary source of water for non-potable purposes, such as gardening and car washing.

Empower Community-Based Water Management Initiatives: The local communities need to be empowered to manage their own water resources and participate in the decision-making. Raise Awareness Through Education and Media Campaigns: The public needs to be aware of the problems facing our water resources and the necessity for sustainable water management. The Time for Action is Now.

Malaysia can no longer take water for granted

The darkening storm clouds are a stark reminder that Malaysia can no longer take water for granted. We must act now, with determination and urgency, to secure our water future. It is a collective effort, requiring the participation of government, business, communities, and individuals. We must act in the understanding that we are not owners of this resource, but custodians, with the responsibility of protecting it for generations to come.

To honor that trust, we must be willing to rethink, reimagine, and redo everything we know about water management. Let us not be the generation that squandered our water resources and left behind a future of scarcity and degradation for our children. Let us instead be the generation that took up the challenge, embraced sustainable water management, and secured a water-secure future for Malaysia. The time for action is now.

Let's not waste another drop. Let's build a future where water flows freely and sustainably for all Malaysians, today and tomorrow.

Fashion's Thirst: The Trillion-Litre Crisis Behind Your Clothes

The fashion industry wastes staggering amounts of water — fast fashion is the main culprit, while luxury fashion's decline has arguably normalized unsustainable practices. One may wonder, how much water is actually wasted in the fashion industry?

Luxury Fashion vs Fast Fashion

Speculatively, with the alleged deterioration of the luxury fashion industry, this has subtly condoned the alleged practices of the fast fashion industry. If you're buying a "luxury" t-shirt for RM5,000, the quality difference would probably not be that stark when compared to an RM30 one.

79 Trillion Litres WASTED

The fashion industry consumes an estimated 79 trillion liters of water each year, largely due to wet processing techniques and some say to cotton cultivation. To address this, companies are adopting innovations such as waterless dyeing, closed-loop recycling systems, and low-water fibers.

Fashion's Thirst: The Trillion-Litre Crisis Behind Your Clothes

Growing regulatory pressure and consumer demand for sustainability are accelerating these changes, pushing the sector toward more responsible water use. However, there are projections of this figure rising to 118 billion cubic meters by 2030.

Amount of Water Needed for ONE Apparel

A single piece of apparel can require thousands of liters of water to produce, depending on the material and type of garment. For example, a cotton T-shirt typically needs about 2,000–2,700 liters, while a pair of jeans can consume 7,000–10,000 liters from cotton farming to dyeing and finishing.

According to Sustainably Chic, nearly 2 billion people are affected from water shortages in their regions.

Fashion's Thirst: The Trillion-Litre Crisis Behind Your Clothes

This is a concerning number as most if not all living creatures need water to quite literally stay alive.

Fashion Industry is NOT Alone in High Water Consumption

Unfortunately, the fashion industry is not the only major contributor to this, as AI servers would need a significant amount of water as well. AI servers in data centers consume massive amounts of water, primarily for cooling. A single large facility can use around 1.1 million liters per day, equivalent to the daily use of 100,000 homes.
Recommended Next Steps

One of the few ways of overcoming this is buying what you need rather than buying what you want. There are local brands out there that do offer 100% organic materials (which are

The Trillion-Litre Crisis Behind Your Clothes

generally longer lasting) for their clothing with affordable price tags. They can typically be found in department stores, or are their own stand-alone stores.

Checking the composition tag is one of the most important steps when shopping for clothes, as not every item from a specific brand — even those marketed as sustainable or organic — will truly meet those standards. High-end luxury labels, just like fast-fashion retailers, often incorporate synthetic fibers such as polyester, nylon, or acrylic for durability, stretch, or cost efficiency.

Having more organic and sustainable clothing would equate to them lasting longer in your wardrobe, which would then equate to the reduction in purchasing unnecessary articles of clothing which would have used up thousands of liters of water.

Rivers of Discord:

How Water Scarcity Is Redrawing the World's Political Fault Lines

A realistic strategy will also be regional and multilateral. No single country can instantly recreate a full value chain; a resilient approach blends domestic projects, allied hubs for processing and shared R&D to lower technology barriers. Stockpiling of truly critical materials, combined with recycling targets and procurement rules favouring domestically processed inputs, can help underwrite the long lead times required to scale new facilities.

In practical terms, success looks like functional diversity: a patchwork of mines where viable, regional processing nodes, robust recycling industries, downstream magnet and alloy plants in friendly jurisdictions, and a diplomatic architecture that promotes transparent, reciprocal investment. It also requires patient capital and political continuity: China's advantage was built over decades of coordinated policy and subsidies. Democracies must design incentives that last long enough to produce industrial outcomes rather than flash-in-the-pan initiatives.

Rivers of Discord:

How Water Scarcity Is Redrawing the World's Political Fault Lines

In 2025, the global struggle over shared water resources has intensified into one of the most volatile geopolitical challenges of the century. Climate change is shrinking river flows while rising populations and agricultural demand are pushing nations toward confrontation over access to the world's most essential resource — water.

Nowhere is this tension more visible than in South Asia's Indus River Basin, where the historic Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan, once hailed as a model of cooperation, is under severe strain. India's talk of renegotiation has drawn fierce warnings from Pakistan, which depends almost entirely on the river for its agriculture. Melting Himalayan glaciers and erratic monsoons have further deepened the crisis.

The World's Political Fault Lines

In Africa, the Nile River Basin has become a flashpoint between Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt. Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam promises energy security for Addis Ababa but threatens to diminish downstream flows that sustain millions in Egypt and Sudan. Negotiations remain deadlocked, raising fears of escalation.

Across the Middle East, Turkey's dam-building along the Tigris and Euphrates continues to unsettle Syria and Iraq, where dwindling supplies are crippling farms and forcing mass migrations. Meanwhile, the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Basins face persistent disputes among India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, as upstream diversions strain downstream livelihoods.

Experts warn that the weaponization of water — from deliberate dam sabotage to water cut-offs — is increasingly being used as leverage in regional conflicts, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa.

With billions now facing water insecurity, analysts say these disputes are not isolated but part of a global pattern. From Asia to Africa and beyond, rivers that once sustained civilizations are becoming frontlines in a new age of environmental geopolitics — where control of water may soon rival oil as the defining power struggle of the 21st century.

Severe Drought Threatens Over a Dozen Nations as 2025 Crisis Deepens

The year 2025 is seeing escalating drought conditions across multiple regions, with Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Djibouti identified as the countries facing the highest risk. Extreme weather, climate change, and ongoing humanitarian crises have intensified food insecurity and water shortages across Africa and Asia.

According to global assessments, other nations at severe risk include Mauritania, South Africa, Namibia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Tajikistan — all reporting worsening crop failures and dwindling water reserves.

In Eastern and Southern Africa, over 90 million people are facing acute hunger, while Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Morocco, and Turkey are becoming new drought hotspots. Latin America's Amazon Basin is also grappling with declining rainfall and environmental stress.

Meanwhile, Yemen's capital, Sana'a, could become the first city in the world to run out of water by the end of 2025, underscoring the scale of the global drought emergency.

Severe Drought Threatens Over a Dozen Nations as 2025 Crisis Deepens

The water problem

The top countries facing drought in 2025 include Somalia, Zimbabwe, and Djibouti, due to factors like extreme weather and existing humanitarian crises. Other countries with high risk include Mauritania, South Africa, Namibia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Mozambique, and Tajikistan. These nations are experiencing significant challenges, including food insecurity, crop failure, and severe water scarcity.

Top 10 countries with the highest drought risk in 2025

- Somalia: Highest drought risk score and facing a humanitarian crisis due to drought-linked hunger.
- Zimbabwe: High risk with devastating crop failures and increased food insecurity.
- Djibouti: High risk, exacerbated by existing crises.
- Mauritania: High risk score.
- South Africa: High risk score.
- Namibia: High risk score.
- Eritrea: High risk score.
- Afghanistan: Facing an acute drought, particularly impacting northern regions.
- Mozambique: High risk score.
- Tajikistan: High risk score.

Severe Drought Threatens Over a Dozen Nations as 2025 Crisis Deepens

Other regions and countries facing drought challenges

- Eastern and Southern Africa: Over 90 million people are facing acute hunger in this region, which has experienced some of the worst recorded droughts.
- Mediterranean: Countries like Spain, Morocco, and Turkey are identified as drought hotspots.
- Latin America: The Amazon Basin is experiencing drought conditions.
- Yemen: The capital, Sana'a, is projected to run out of water in 2025, making it one of the first capitals to face such a crisis.

Polluted Rivers and Groundwater Crisis in Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum

By Johan Chairil

Industrial waste, sewage, and agricultural runoff are severely contaminating vital rivers like the Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum. This article explores the environmental impact, health risks, and urgent need for coordinated action to restore these crucial waterways.

Rivers are the lifeblood of Southeast Asia's ecosystems, economies, and communities, yet some of the region's most vital waterways—the Mekong in mainland Southeast Asia, the Chao Phraya in Thailand, and Indonesia's Citarum River—are besieged by severe pollution from industrial waste, untreated sewage, and agricultural runoff. This contamination threatens human health, biodiversity, and food security, underscoring an urgent environmental and governance challenge.

Polluted Rivers and Groundwater Crisis in Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum

Mekong River: A Shared Lifeline Under Threat

The Mekong River, which flows through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, supports over 60 million people, providing water for drinking, farming, fisheries, and industry.

However, rapid industrialization, urban expansion, and intensified agriculture have resulted in elevated levels of pollutants entering the river. Industrial effluents, heavy metals, pesticides, and untreated sewage are key contaminants, exacerbated by lax enforcement and insufficient wastewater treatment across the basin.

Chemical runoff from farms includes nitrogen and phosphorus compounds, which contribute to eutrophication and harmful algal blooms, affecting aquatic ecosystems and fisheries crucial to millions of livelihoods. Upstream damming has altered water flow and sediment transport, compounding the stresses induced by pollution. The degradation of water quality in the Mekong basin poses public health risks, including waterborne diseases and exposure to toxic substances.

Polluted Rivers and Groundwater Crisis in Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum

Chao Phraya River: Thailand's Water Quality Crisis

The Chao Phraya River is integral to Thailand's agriculture, industry, and urban water supplies, including Bangkok. The river has suffered chronic pollution due to discharge from factories, municipal sewage, and runoff laden with pesticides and fertilizers from intensive farming. Poorly treated or untreated sewage remains a major pollution source; only about 30 percent of the population is connected to municipal sewage systems, the rest relying on septic tanks often leaching contaminants into groundwater and nearby waterways.

Pollution levels in the Chao Phraya have led to declines in fish populations and disruption of aquatic ecosystems, threatening food security. The odour and discoloration of the water have also increased, impacting tourism and public well-being. Efforts to upgrade wastewater treatment infrastructure continue, but rapid urban growth and industrial activities outpace remediation.

Polluted Rivers and Groundwater Crisis in Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum

Citarum River: Indonesia's Toxic Challenge

The Citarum River, running through Indonesia's West Java province, is widely regarded as one of the world's most polluted rivers. Approximately 2,000 factories, predominantly textile manufacturing plants, discharge an estimated 20,000 tons of waste and 340,000 tons of wastewater daily into its waters. The river, spanning 300 kilometers and relied upon by 25 million people, provides water for agriculture, domestic use, and industry despite being heavily contaminated.

Industrial pollutants include lead, mercury, chromium, zinc, and a variety of organic toxins. These contaminants have caused a drastic decline in fish populations—up to 60% loss since 2008—and widespread health problems among communities reliant on the river. Plastic waste and untreated domestic sewage contribute further to the degradation.

The Indonesian government has launched ambitious cleanup initiatives, including a seven-year plan to restore the Citarum, but enforcement remains inconsistent, and illegal "ghost drains" continue to channel untreated industrial wastewater directly into the river. Communities living along the riverbanks disproportionately suffer from skin diseases, respiratory problems, and disruptions to agriculture and fisheries.

Polluted Rivers and Groundwater Crisis in Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum

Common Drivers and Consequences

Across these rivers, the intersection of weak regulatory enforcement, inadequate infrastructure, rapid urbanization, and economic activities drives pollution. Industrial zones often discharge untreated waste legally or illegally; agricultural runoff laden with fertilizers and pesticides leaks into waterways; and many urban and rural communities lack access to proper sewage treatment, causing raw sewage to flow into rivers and groundwater.

The consequences are multifaceted. Human health is jeopardized by contaminated drinking water and exposure to toxic substances, manifesting in skin diseases, cancers, and gastrointestinal illnesses. Aquatic biodiversity and fisheries—the primary protein source for millions—are in decline. Sediment and nutrient balance disruptions threaten agricultural productivity and food security. Economically, pollution inflates public health costs, damages tourism, and diminishes industrial productivity.

Polluted Rivers and Groundwater Crisis in Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum

Towards Sustainable Solutions

Addressing this crisis calls for integrated water resource management across sectors and borders. Investment in modern wastewater treatment, strict industrial pollution controls, and enforcement against illegal discharges is essential. Agricultural best practices that minimize chemical runoff can protect rivers and groundwater. Public-private partnerships and community engagement enhance transparency and compliance.

International cooperation is particularly vital for transboundary rivers like the Mekong, involving coordinated monitoring, data sharing, and policy alignment. Innovative technologies such as satellite pollution tracking can improve governance.

Ultimately, ensuring clean rivers and safe groundwater is critical not only for environmental integrity but for the health, livelihoods, and resilience of Southeast Asia's growing populations. The Mekong, Chao Phraya, and Citarum rivers symbolize both the challenge and the imperative to restore the region's water lifelines for present and future generations.

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Atlas Copco Advances Generational Change With Clean Water Access For Orang Asli Communities In Pahang

(From left to right: James Poon Hong Wai Board of Director and Advisor of Global Peace Foundation Malaysia, Mr. Khalid Shaikh, General Manager of Atlas Copco Malaysia , His Excellency Ambassador Niklas Wiberg from the Embassy of Sweden & Batin Awang, Village Head of Kampung Bukit Serok Lama)

The initiative underscores the importance of corporate-community collaboration in addressing Malaysia's rural water access challenges and advancing national sustainability goals.

Clean Water Access For Orang Asli Communities In Pahang

Atlas Copco Malaysia recently inaugurated its sixth *Water for All* project at Kampung Bukit Serok Lama, Rompin, Pahang, on 6th of June 2025 Together with Global Peace Foundation, the initiative's main objective is to provide clean water access and improved sanitation for the Orang Asli community, addressing a long-standing challenge that continues to affect many rural and indigenous populations across Malaysia.

Beyond improving daily convenience, this effort aims to help families nurture better health and hygiene habits. Through the installation of solar-powered water pumps, newly built washrooms, and solar lights, the project also enhances sanitation and safety, lighting the way toward a more dignified and sustainable future for rural and indigenous communities across Malaysia.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by His Excellency Ambassador Niklas Wiberg from the Embassy of Sweden; Mr. Khalid Shaikh, General Manager of Atlas Copco Malaysia; Management Team of Global Peace Foundation Malaysia and Batin Awang, Village Head of Kampung Bukit Serok Lama

Their collective presence underscored the growing importance of cross-sector collaboration in advancing Malaysia's sustainability and inclusivity goals.

Clean Water Access For Orang Asli Communities In Pahang

Tuan Hamidi bin Md Piah, Officer for Rompin District's Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA) extended his support for the event. He said "This initiative reflects our shared responsibility to uplift the Orang Asli community, ensuring they have access to basic necessities while preserving their culture and traditions."

The event reflected a shared commitment to building generational change, where cross-sector collaboration empowers Orang Asli communities to thrive through sustainable access to clean water and improved livelihoods.

Bridging the water access gap for generations to come

Across Malaysia, 53 percent of Orang Asli villages still face inconsistent access to water supply. Since its conception in 2017, Atlas Copco Malaysia's Water for All initiative has supported over 500 villagers in gaining access to clean water and improved sanitation, demonstrating the long-term impact and scalability of the initiative in transforming rural communities nationwide.

This latest project in Pahang continues that legacy, combining renewable technology, local partnerships, and community empowerment to address water challenges in a sustainable manner.

Clean Water Access For Orang Asli Communities In Pahang

The Water for All initiative directly addresses this gap by combining renewable energy technology with community empowerment. At Kampung Bukit Serok Lama, the solar-powered system ensures consistent access to clean water, reducing dependence on rainwater collection and unsafe river sources that expose families to health risks.

The construction of washrooms and sanitation facilities further supports improved hygiene, reduces waterborne diseases, and enhances the quality of life for the 100 villagers in the community.

Championing sustainability through-employee driven initiative
At the heart of the initiative lies Atlas Copco's Water for All programme, driven by voluntary employee contributions that support water projects for underprivileged communities. What began as a simple act of giving has evolved into a shared movement of compassion and purpose within the company.

Employees from across departments come together, united by the belief that access to clean water should never be a privilege but a basic right. This spirit of collective responsibility has become part of Atlas Copco's DNA, turning empathy into action and transforming lives in the process.

Clean Water Access For Orang Asli Communities In Pahang

Mr. Khalid Shaikh, General Manager of Atlas Copco Malaysia, said, "Atlas Copco Malaysia is committed to driving sustainability and supporting the broader Malaysian society through two key efforts. First, we invest in workforce development via training and competence programs for fresh graduates, engineers, and technicians. Second, the employee-backed 'Water for All' program provides essential drinking water and sanitation facilities to some of the nation's most deprived Orang Asli communities."

"Past projects have already transformed lives, especially for women in those villages, and we are dedicated to expanding these vital initiatives to even more communities across Malaysia." he added.

A model for corporate-community partnership in Malaysia's sustainability agenda

Malaysia's Water Sector Transformation 2040 and Thirteenth Malaysia Plan both highlight water security and sustainable community development as national priorities. Atlas Copco's partnership with Global Peace Foundation Malaysia and the Embassy of Sweden aligns with these frameworks, showcasing how corporate partnerships can complement national goals and local efforts.

Clean Water Access For Orang Asli Communities In Pahang

By engaging local authorities such as JAKOA and community leaders, the initiative exemplifies how inclusive, multi-stakeholder collaboration centred on the Orang Asli community as an important partner can drive tangible, inclusive progress where it matters most."

H.E. Ambassador Niklas Wiberg from the Embassy of Sweden said, "The Water for All project by Atlas Copco has a meaningful impact for the villagers as it provides access to clean and safe water, improves sanitation, reduces waterborne diseases, and enhances overall quality of life by freeing up time for education, work, and other economic activities through an innovative initiative using solar-powered water pumps. It also empowers local indigenous communities, as well as the wider community to become more self-sufficient and strengthens local development.

"The Embassy of Sweden in Malaysia is happy to support this project as it aligns well with our commitment to further the sustainability agenda; encourage a culture of innovation; drive community engagement; as well as promoting social and environmental responsibility," he added.

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