Our vast water, energy resources a major draw, says Anwar

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HULU LANGAT: Malaysia's vast water and energy resources are key to its appeal as a prime destination for foreign investment, with the new Langat 2 water treatment plant (WTP) further bolstering it, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Speaking at the official opening of the Langat 2 WTP here yesterday, the Prime Minister said the state-of-the-art facility marks a significant milestone in Malaysia's infrastructure development, making it attractive for investors in sectors like data centres, semiconductors and artificial intelligence (AI).

"The Langat 2 project underscores our capability to manage complex, high-tech initiatives with our own expertise.

"This is a proud moment for Malaysians, demonstrating our ability to manage and execute such massive projects efficiently using local talents," he said of the project developed by Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB).

The WTP is capable of producing 1,130 million litres of treated water per day (MLD) to support the demand in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

"Water and energy infrastructure are critical factors for investors," he said at the event that also saw the attendance of Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, who is also Energy Transition and Water Transformation Minister; ministry secretary-general Datuk Mad Zaidi Mohd Karli; PAAB chairman Datuk Seri Jaseni Maidinsa; and Selangor infrastructure and agriculture committee chairman Datuk Izham Hashim.

Addressing the ongoing challenges in Malaysia's water industry, Anwar highlighted the need to replace old water pipes, particularly to reduce water wastage and non-revenue water (NEW).

NRW refers to a combination of losses through leaks, pipe bursts, system overflows, pilferage, underbilling (by old water meters) or usage that is unbilled (such as for firefighting and other emergencies).

"We still face challenges with water wastage and outdated infrastructure, but projects like Langat 2 show we are on the right path," he said;

Built in the Hulu Langat district at a cost of RM4.22bil, the WTP is fed by raw water transfer from the Kelau Dam in Pahang through a 44.6km tunnel across the Titiwangsa range for the benefit of nearly 800,000 consumer accounts.

The supply coverage includes key urban and suburban areas within the northern corridor (Ampang, KL north - Wangsa Maju to Maluri, Keramat and Gombak) and the western corridor (KL city centre, KL south, Petaling, Sungai Besi, Kinrara and Puchong).

"This is not just a plant; it is a symbol of our commitment to sustainable development and efficient resource management.

"By connecting two major corridors, the northern and western, Langat 2 ensures a stable and sufficient water supply, crucial for the continued economic growth and industrial development of the area," Anwar added.

Landmark project: Anwar launching the Langat 2 water treatment plant. Looking on are (from left) Mad Zaidi, Fadillah Yusof, Izham and Jaseni. — LOW BOON TAT/The Star

During his speech, Fadillah announced that his ministry will concentrate on reducing (NRW), as outlined in the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP).

"Through the Critical Pipe Replacement Programme, we are implementing a comprehensive solution to tackle NRW across Malaysia. Our goal is to significantly reduce water wastage and improve efficiency," he said.

He said incentives will be offered to water operators who successfully meet NRW targets in identified states.

"The ministry's initiatives aim to lower the NRW rate to 28.8% by 2030," he said.

In his speech, Jaseni said that the Langat 2 project has made significant progress after years of planning and implementation, which included land acquisition, managing resident resettlement, and compensation, all of which took time.

"The success of Langat 2 is a joint effort and assistance from various stakeholders, such as the Federal Government, the Selangor state government, the Pahang state government, the National Water Services Commission (Span), Air Selangor and PAAB.

"This reflects a strong inter-governmental commitment in delivery," he said.

Jaseni pointed out that the plant uses advanced technologies like a granular activated carbon system for double filtering and real-time monitoring of operations through a supervisory control and data acquisition system.

"These innovations underscore Malaysia's push towards integrating modern technology in public utilities," he said.

He added that environmentally friendly features of Langat 2 include the static mixer and zero discharge system.

"The use of a 1.92km conveyor pipe system for waste disposal reduces both road safety risks and carbon emissions," said Jaseni, adding that PAAB also received recognition from the Malaysia Book of Records for seven engineering feats during the construction of Langat 2.