

Appreciating the value of clean rivers

OVER 97% of all the water on earth is salty and most of the remaining 3% is frozen in the polar ice caps.

The atmosphere, rivers, lakes and ground store less than 1% of all fresh water, and this tiny amount has to meet the needs of all living things on Earth.

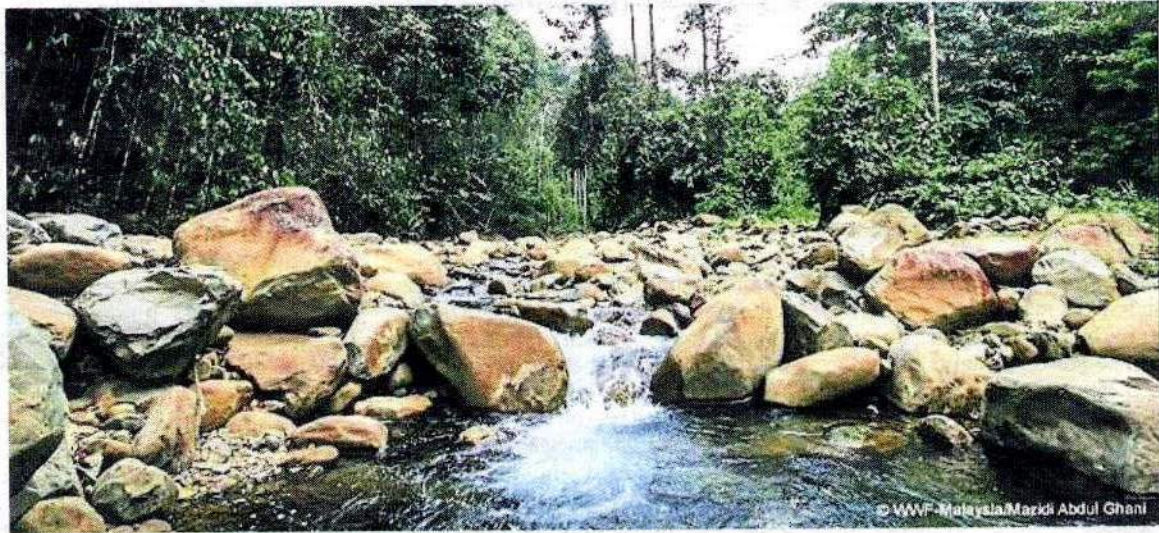
In Malaysia, our major source of fresh water contributes to 97% of total water supply. As water is available throughout the year here, we take it for granted and forget that it is actually a precious resource for our survival.

According to the environment quality report published by the Department of Environment (DOE), in 2013, 5.3% of the 473 rivers in Malaysia were reported to be polluted and 36.6% were slightly polluted.

Although the percentage of polluted rivers decreased by 1.7% from 2012, the percentage of rivers being slightly polluted increased by 2.6%.

Water pollution has become a serious problem in Malaysia and impacts negatively on the sustainability of our water resources.

The quality of coastal waters in



Klang and Kuala Langat is declining due to the increase in waste dumping in the upstream river ways, especially from housing and industrial areas, as well as from discharge of human activities such as agricultural and land development.

Rapid economic growth has also exerted severe constraints on present water utility infrastruc-

tures, especially in areas with high economic growth like the Klang Valley.

Polluted rivers not only have adverse effects on humans but also on plants and other living organisms and the country's economy too.

Accessibility to natural clean water which we would otherwise get at zero cost is reduced when

rivers are polluted.

In conjunction with World Rivers Day on Sept 27, WWF-Malaysia calls for the recognition of our waterways as a precious yet limited resource that is critical for human survival.

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