

'Brief cabinet on water resources'

ALLOCATION: Council to seek more funds for river maintenance, mitigation works

**AZURA ABAS
AND FAZLEENA AZIZ**
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

DEPUTY Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi wants the cabinet to be briefed as soon as possible on the need to beef up the management of Malaysia's water resources.

This was conveyed by Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar after the National Water Resources Council meeting, which

was chaired by Zahid yesterday.

Wan Junaidi said the council estimated that notes and memos on matters related to the country's water resources would be ready for tabling in cabinet by next month.

"One of the issues to be presented is water dams, including conducting inspections on dams' structural integrity to identify the mitigation works that need to be done."

He said there were 41 dams in Malaysia, and the oldest was built in 1905 in Perak.

Wan Junaidi said the council had agreed to apply for additional al-



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi chairing the National Water Resources Council meeting in Putrajaya yesterday. With him is Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (left). Pic by Fariz Iswadi Ismail

location for river maintenance and mitigation works.

In a statement issued after the meeting, Zahid said it was estimated that RM80.95 million was needed annually to clear garbage from rivers.

"The Drainage and Irrigation Department clears an average of

2,248.6 tonnes of garbage each month when it conducts river maintenance nationwide."

Zahid said the council had agreed to form a committee to look into river sand mining at state level and revise the guidelines to check the deterioration of water quality and protect water-related economies im-

pacted by such activities.

The council had also agreed on strategies listed in the Strategic Plan for Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on water-related issues and took note of the implementation of the Water Safety Plan by the Health Ministry.