

Independent Nations, Interconnected Waters

August brings **Independence Day** celebrations for **Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia.**

But independence doesn't mean isolation. Their **waters are interconnected** and so are their **challenges.**

Photo credit: Getty Images





Global Water
Partnership
Southeast Asia

Photo credit: Getty Images

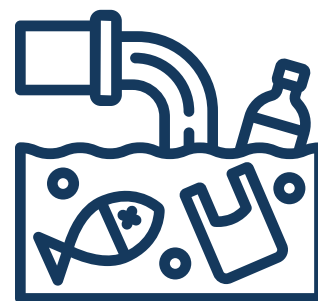
Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia share marine waters, rivers, and climate systems, but all face common water risks.



**URBAN
FLOODING**



DROUGHTS



**WATER
POLLUTION**



**CLIMATE
CHANGE
IMPACTS**

These risks are **exacerbated** by factors like **population growth**, **urbanisation**, **industrialisation**, and **agricultural practices**.

Source: Reuters (2024); Lowy Institute (2021); Southeast Asia Development Solutions (2025).

SINGAPORE



TOP CHALLENGES



Singapore's key water challenges include **limited natural resources**, reliance on **imported water**, **space constraints**, and **growing climate risks**, making water security a national priority.

SMART SOLUTIONS



To secure its water future, Singapore adopts a “**Four National Taps**” strategy: **local catchment**, **imported water**, **NEWater (recycled water)**, and **desalination**. These are supported by **smart technologies** like **real-time water meters**, **leak detection systems**, and **integrated flood management**, alongside strong **public education to promote water conservation**.

Source: Public Utilities Board (PUB) Singapore's National Water Agency (2024); Lee, Poh Onn (2019); World Bank, (2021).



Photo credit: Netfalls

INDONESIA



TOP CHALLENGES



Indonesia faces **water scarcity**, **pollution**, and **groundwater overuse**, worsened by **weak governance** and climate impacts like **floods and droughts**. **Access** remains **unequal** as **infrastructure struggles** to **keep up** with rising **environmental** and **population pressures**.

SMART SOLUTIONS



Innovations like **rainwater harvesting**, **desalination**, **community-based water management**, and **stronger policies** can **boost clean water access** and **resilience**. **Tech adoption**, **local engagement**, and **integrated water planning** are key to turning crises into sustainable opportunities.

Source: Space4Water Portal (2023); Laura Gersony, Circle of Blue (2023); ODI and the Global Green Growth Institute (2020); Business Insider (2024); Wired (2024); Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) Technical Report (2021).



Photo credit: Getty Images

MALAYSIA



TOP CHALLENGES



Malaysia **loses 37% of its treated water**, costing over RM2 billion a year, while most drinking water comes from **polluted rivers**. With worsening **floods, droughts**, and **growing urban** demand, the pressure on water is reaching a breaking point.

SMART SOLUTIONS



The needs of **pipe replacement & smart leak detection**, **nature-based flood control** (like SMART Tunnel), **river clean-up & decentralized wastewater systems**, **new tariffs + public-private green water projects**, and **data-driven planning** (Water Sector Transformation 2040, IWRM).

Source: The Star (2024); Newsfile Corp (2025); The Edge Malaysia (2024); Eco-Business (2024); Business Today Malaysia (2025); The Malaysian Reserve (2024).

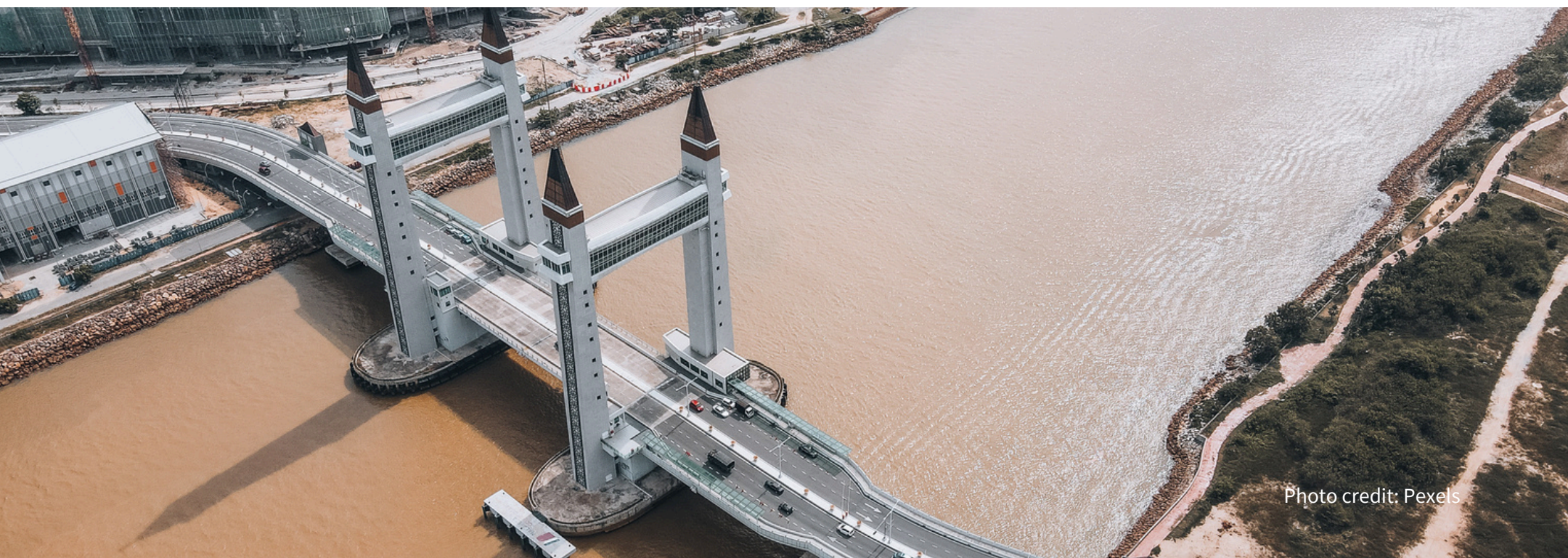


Photo credit: Pexels



Retno L.P. Marsudi

**United Nations Secretary-General's Special
Envoy on Water**

***“Water is life. We must put
water at the top of the
global political agenda and
work together to make
water a shared, universal
common good for all”.***

Water doesn't recognize borders. Our future depends on cooperation, innovation, and community action.

**Southeast Asia shares
19 transboundary water sources
and faces common risks: floods, droughts, pollution.**

Our future depends on cooperation, innovation, and community action.

“Water, the lifeblood of our planet, unites us in a shared responsibility. The global water crisis, transcending borders and economies, demands urgent collaboration.”



Dato' Sri Fadillah Yusof
**Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister
and Water Minister**



Grace Fu

**Minister for Sustainability and the
Environment and Minister-in-charge of
Trade Relations Singapore**

***“From three reservoirs in
1965 to 17 today, Singapore’s
water story is one of
resilience and innovation.
But climate change brings
new challenges. Let’s not
take water for granted, every
drop counts, every effort
matters.”***

Source: PUB Singapore National Water Agency, 2025 (www.pub.gov.sg)

Photo credit: PUB Singapore National Water Agency