

S'gor MB airs water grouses at global forum
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Selangor Menteri Besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim today took the state's ongoing water services industry battle to the world by raising Malaysia's water privatisation "failure" at an international forum.

According to a press release from the MB's office, Abdul Khalid told the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille, France, that the water services privatisation was abused by the rentier class.

"Clearly, privatisation of water services has been flawed in Malaysia. The question from the state government now is whether privatisation can work, and if so, how?

NONE"Malaysia is a case in which water services was used by the rentier class, domestic drivers of privatisation and political kingmakers, through their well-oiled connections," Khalid (right) said.

While not dismissing its benefits, he said that in the case of Malaysia, the consumer and state's interests were not protected due to faulty agreements.

"There should have been specific and detailed clauses providing penalties for the companies' failure to comply with conditions.

"In our case, the agreement was so flawed that when the water distributors experienced financial difficulties, the government eventually underwrote the companies' debt!" he said.

Watered down federalism

He added that "watered down" federalism practised in Malaysia is also impeding the state government from reforming the water industry.

"Instead of pushing for complete and wholesale buying of the water services industry and resolving it holistically, the federal government has extended the private operators' leases," he said.

NONEThe MB was among seven federated state leaders who spoke at the session themed "Towards Better Water Governance, Solution for Regional Actors".

According to the MB's office, this is the first time in the two-year dispute with water concessionaires that the matter was raised at an international forum.

Abdul Khalid is scheduled to speak on the same issue at another event in London tomorrow.

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