

Don't abuse political freedom, DPM tells students

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GEORGE TOWN: Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on Thursday advised undergraduates against abusing the political freedom they have been accorded under an amendment to the Universities and University Colleges Act.

"This is a question of responsibility of young people towards the nation. The government does not restrict their rights. The act provides for democracy and freedom. It is hoped that the undergraduates will use this freedom for national development and not mere politicking," he said.

A recent amendment to the Act allows university students to hold positions in both political parties and campus organisations. The amendment was one of the several pledges of reform made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

It is hoped that undergraduates would not abuse their political freedom to engage in unhealthy political activities, Muhyiddin said when responding to a question on the consequences of the amendment when he met students of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) during his one-day visit to Penang.

The deputy prime minister had earlier addressed a gathering of about 6,000 civil servants and youths at a dialogue at the Dewan Tunku Canselor of USM.

Muhyiddin, who is also the Education Minister, said undergraduates of today were more matured in making decisions and they could also channel their grievances to the relevant authorities for a solution.

At the ensuing dialogue session, Muhyiddin gave the assurance that the loan facility under the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) would be maintained for as long as necessary.

He said the issue of abolishing PTPTN should not arise and be played up because the loan facility was aimed at assisting needy students to further their studies.

"The PTPTN issue should not be politicised. The government made available RM43bil in loans for disbursement to students.

"Such a fund is most necessary for those who fail to secure scholarships. Abolishing it would be tantamount to denying the right of people who want to pursue higher education," he said.

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