

Scrapping PTPTN would harm academia, says Khaled
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 28 — The proposed scrapping of federal study loans would lead to uncompetitive institutions of higher learning and students, Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said today.

“If we abolish the PTPTN, that means that public universities must provide free education,” the higher education minister was quoted as saying by Bernama Online.

“What would happen to IPTS (private higher learning institutions) then? Who would pay for them? Meaning, these institutions would have to be closed and everybody would have to study in IPTA (public colleges and universities),” he added.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said Pakatan Rakyat would scrap the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loans if voted into power, saying these “burdened poor Malays and made them beggars”.

Today, Khaled said the government took a more pragmatic approach towards the study loans by converting these to scholarships for high achievers.

“If everybody obtains a first class degree, each of them would have the loan converted to scholarship. This is as good as abolishing the PTPTN,” the minister said.

In 2010, the PTPTN gave RM278 million in waivers to 9,545 students after they graduated with first class honours.

The fund was incorporated in 1997 to provide student loans to those pursuing tertiary educations.

Since its inception, PTPTN has issued some RM38 billion in loans and recently saw its annual allocation raised to RM6 billion.

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