

Vote opposition to dump PTPTN, says Khaled
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 — Students who want the federal higher education fund (PTPTN) abolished can vote for the opposition instead of holding demonstrations, Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin said today.

The higher education minister said it was pointless to hold a rally to protest PTPTN loans as the 13th general election would be called soon and told students to cast ballots instead of marching.

“If there’s a party that promises to get rid of PTPTN... they should just support that party in the election.

“The time is already very near... What for you want to do a demonstration? They’re just wasting time,” he told reporters at Putra World Trade Centre.

The Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition pact has promised to abolish PTPTN loans and provide Malaysians free higher education when it comes to power.

Students, led by Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM), are planning to hold a rally next month calling for the abolition of PTPTN.

Khaled (picture) earlier announced at the closing ceremony of the 2012 National Higher Education Carnival here that the Cabinet has approved an additional RM6 billion in funding for PTPTN loans for 2012/13.

His ministry had asked for an additional RM16.5 billion to fund higher education loans for the 2012-2015 period.

Khaled also said today that PTPTN was necessary despite the low tuition fees at public universities as students still need to pay for food and accommodation.

The government was now subsidising around 90 per cent of tuition fees for most undergraduate courses, he noted.

He said that as at February 29, a total of 1.9 million students have taken PTPTN loans worth RM43.6 billion.

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