

**PTPTN cannot simply be abolished, says Hadi**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 21—The National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loan scheme cannot be abolished without having a proper replacement process in place, PAS has said.

The opposition party president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said that stated process has to be fair to all Malaysians, and that Islam stressed that privileged citizens had a duty to aid the less fortunate.

"That is why PTPTN cannot simply be abolished just like that, there has to be a process. A fair process which is not burdensome to the poor and one where the more privileged must bear responsibility," he was quoted by Sinar Harian as saying today.

The Marang MP (picture) cited Islamic scholar Ibnu Khaldun, saying that education is a form of industry whereby it generates productive, educated citizens who in turn help boost a country's economy.

The problem, said Hadi was the Barisan Nasional (BN) government's spendthrift ways and misappropriation of federal funds.

"Give it (Putrajaya) to us (to rule) we will know what to do. Under the Islamic concept, the poor will not be left behind," said the PAS president.

Hadi's remarks come amid a vigorous campaign by other Pakatan Rakyat (PR) coalition partners in promoting free education and pushing for the PTPTN to be abolished,

The federal opposition has insisted that the government can cover the country's education bill with oil profits, and by reducing corruption and plugging leakages in the administration.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) strategists told The Malaysian Insider that the coalition will meet soon to fine-tune its policy solution for funding tertiary education in hopes of winning over Malays in their 20s, who make up one-sixth of the voting population.

Opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has led the line in calling for the end of PTPTN, which critics say has saddled many fresh graduates with heavy debt, even before they are gainfully employed.

Student activists have been camping out in tents, in shifts at Dataran Merdeka since last Saturday after hundreds of them marched across the city's capital to lobby for free tertiary education, after being disenchanted by pay-back terms and conditions over the government's higher education loan scheme.

Student activist groups will suspend activities until Sunday their ongoing campaign at

Dataran Merdeka, in deference to a concert in honour of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, while "Occupy Dataran" is refusing to vacate the site.

"(From) tonight, there will be no events until Sunday evening, because we respect the Agong," Mohd Syahid Mohd Zaini, president of student group Malaysia Bangkit told reporters yesterday.

Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia and Legasi Mahasiswa Progresif, the other student groups present, said they will also follow suit.

A royal concert is due to be held at the location to commemorate the Agong's recent installation, from 10am to 11.30pm today.

However, another movement calling itself "Occupy Dataran" has said it will remain throughout the entire concert performance.

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