

**Abolishment Of PTPTN May Impact On Education Cost - Mahathir
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said students who wanted the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) to be abolished should return their loans or refrain from taking it, rather than take to the streets to demonstrate.

The former prime minister said, those who suggested that the government do away with the PTPTN, should look into ways of supporting these students financially.

He said, the abolishment of PTPTN would have an impact, not only on the cost of education, but also in distributing the benefits which would also benefit the rich.

"If you abolish it, you have to replace it with something else that could be more costly, for example, giving free education to everyone. In this case, even the rich will enjoy," he told reporters here today.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir chaired a high level strategy session for the select group titled, 'Drivers of the New Economic Landscape on the Home and Global Front - A Malaysian Private Sector's Dilemma', organised by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia here today.

Dr Mahathir said the aim of PTPTN was to help the poor get better education at university level, adding that it was the responsibility of the Malaysian Government to help the poor.

"The idea of having PTPTN is to help people who are unable to pay for a good education, but if the fees are free, the rich will also receive the same benefit, and this is not fair to the poor.

"Why should we help the rich? We should help the poor, PTPTN is for the poor," he stressed.

On the abolishment of the Internal Security Act (ISA) for replacement by the Security Offences Act tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Dewan Rakyat sitting today, Dr Mahathir said he did not want to comment on the new law since he had not studied it.

On the ISA, he said: "It is not the ISA which was the problem. It is the way it was implemented.

"As you know, the Americans have a much tougher ISA than us, they have detained (detainees) without trial. The people in Guantanamo Bay, for the past 10 years, have not faced a trial and nothing...what more, they allowed torture while being detained (under detention)."

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