

**Anwar: PTPTN can be scrapped by curbing wasteful spending**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**March 31, 2012**  
**By Anisah Shukry**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today said that scrapping the federal higher education fund (PTPTN) is possible by eliminating the country's wasteful expenditure.

The Pakatan Rakyat (PR) de facto leader cited the country's RM150 billion revenue, saying that much money was wasted on construction that had ballooned in cost as well as leakages and bribes as reported by the Auditor-General.

"I am not stupid. I know the implications of abolishing PTPTN. But I understand the figures," Anwar (picture) said at a dialogue with young professionals in Subang Jaya.

While admitting that he had not ironed out the details on how to scrap the fund, the opposition leader said a committee would look into it and that the underlying principle was to provide free education for all, without punishing the poor.

Asked by a participant if he would be able to immediately abolish the PTPTN in PR-ruled Selangor prior to the general election, Anwar said education is and will remain the responsibility of the federal government.

"The state government only acts as a backup. We don't want to make a precedent by interfering with education in Selangor and thus burdening other states," he said.

PR had previously 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 the PTPTN.

But Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin said today that students who want the PTPTN to be scrapped should vote for the opposition rather than take to the streets as the 13th general election would be called soon.

Khaled had earlier announced at the closing ceremony of the 2012 National Higher Education Carnival here that the Cabinet had 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 that the PTPTN was necessary despite the low tuition fees at public universities as students still needed to pay for food and accommodation.

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

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/anwar-ptptn-can-be-scrapped-by-curbing-wasteful-spending/>