‘RM43b in loans have helped 2 million students’

ACADEMIC BONUS:
More than 11,000 students have had their PTPTN loans converted into full scholarships

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THE National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) loans not only helped students to obtain tertiary education, but also encouraged them to compete academically with each other.

This is because those who did well in their studies would have their loans converted into full scholarships.

Last year, 11,764 students who graduated with first-class honours had their loans converted into scholarships.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office Datuk Ahmad Maslan said PTPTN provided education loans to students of both public and private universities.

PTPTN, established 16 years ago, had given out a total of RM42.9 billion in loans to close to two million students.

However, only 84 per cent were servicing their loans, he said after meeting more than 100 student leaders from various institutions of higher learning at the Inland Revenue Board training centre here yesterday.

“In the 1990s, only a handful could further their studies. Back then, I believe parents had to mortgage their homes, land and even jewellery to provide their children with proper and better education.”

Meanwhile, student leaders present at the event, said PTPTN should continue.

They, however, agreed that improvements should be made to the loan scheme.

Universiti Tunku Abdul Razak student Gilbert Katong, 22, suggested that discounts be given to graduates who failed to get a first-class honours.

“Students in private institutions have to take up RM48,000 in loan for a degree. To pay back that sum would be a challenge for most of us. By giving discounts, there will be more reason for us to strive better in our studies.”

Another student, Rozairi Ismail, 22, of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak proposed an increase in PTPTN loan for Sabah and Sarawak students to cover their logistical needs.

They also shared similar sentiments — that the PTPTN issues should not be politicised.

“We are the ones studying for a better future and not the politicians.

“They can politicise anything under the sun, but please do not drag us to fulfil your political agenda.”

Unimas’ Mohamad Firdaus Saac said he had received ideas and feedback from university students which he would present to the higher education minister and also education minister.
Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office Datuk Ahmad Maslan meeting student leaders at the Inland Revenue Board training centre in Kuching yesterday. Pic by Mohd Radzi Bujang