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# Study loan defaulters barred from travelling

■ By Baharom Bakar  
news@nst.com.my

**KUALA TERENGGANU:** Over 200,000 National Higher Education Fund Corporation loan defaulters will be barred from leaving the country for business, pleasure or even to perform the haj.

Known by its Bahasa Malaysia acronym PIPTN, the board has submitted the names of the 200,000 loan defaulters to the Immigration Department to stop them from leaving the country.

Its president, Datuk Razali Ismail, said the Immigration Department would inform

PIPTN of individuals who were stopped from leaving at the exit points.

He said the list would be submitted to the Public Service Department to enable it to take disciplinary action against defaulters who were government servants.

"From 534,000 borrowers in the country, 324,000 have settled their loans while the remaining 200,000 have yet to do so, even though most are working and earning wages.

"Their failure to pay back their loans has caused PIPTN to be burdened with debts amounting to RM700 million as well as experiencing prob-

lems in offering new loans," he said after launching the Excellence in Education Programme for Orphans in the Kuala Terengganu parliamentary constituency at SMK Sultan Ahmad.

Razali, who is also Kuala Terengganu MP, presented savings books to 260 orphaned students.

The move to ban loan defaulters from travelling abroad was taken after PIPTN's previous measures to recover the loans, including publishing their names, blacklisting them, taking them to court and imposing higher penalties, brought little success.

Section 22A of the PIPTN Act empowers the PIPTN chief executive to request the inspector-general of police or the Immigration director-general to ban defaulters from leaving the country until they settled their loans.

Razali said the defaulters should not blame the government or PIPTN if they were unable to travel abroad or faced legal actions as the measure was taken as a last resort.

"They have been warned countless times to pay back their loans. We also sent them payment schedules when they graduated."

