

# 130,000 yet to settle PTPTN loan can't leave the country

OVER 130,000 National Higher Education Corp Fund (PTPTN) study loan defaulters have been barred from leaving the country, said Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah.

As of Aug 31 this year, the passports of 132,801 loan defaulters have been blacklisted by the Immigration Department, he said in reply to Datuk Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena).

He said those blacklisted owed the Government more than RM1.2bil and refused to repay despite repeated warnings.

"We have been very flexible with the loan defaulters and are willing to negotiate repayments schedules.

"However, despite sending notices and reminders to them over a period of 13 months, they refused to even respond," he said.

He refuted Mahfuz's claims that PTPN was not flexible and oppressive against the loan defaulters.

"I can find no other words to say other than PTPN has been too flexible and soft on the matter," he said.

Saifuddin said hardcore loan defaulters had refused to respond when PTPN offered to



At The Dewan Rakyat

negotiate terms of repayment.

He cited several cases where loan defaulters had telephoned him in the wee hours of the morning from KLIA International Airport when they were stopped from leaving the country.

"There was a case where a defaulter asked for my help to allow him to leave for India to visit his sick mother and I assisted him.

"However, there was also a case where a defaulter said he wanted to go to Bali for his honeymoon, and this I refused to help," he said to laughter from many MPs.

On the same issue, Independent Pasir Mas MP Datuk Ibrahim Ali warned the Government that the Opposition would use the PTPN loan issue as a political ploy to gain support from defaulters in the coming polls.