

## **Gov't to help solve Bernama TV wage crisis**

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**By Anjolie Ngan**

Communications and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek said that he will not turn his back on those in need in the media industry.

Answering a question on Bernama TV (Btv) wage problem, Shabery said that if he can help the flood victims in Kelantan, he will definitely lend a helping hand to journalists.

However, he stressed that he does not want the act to be misconstrued as a government bailout.

"I will be bashed by many parties if I simply use government money to bail out a company with a failed business venture.

"So, this is another dilemma we're dealing with as well," he told reporters in Putrajaya today.

Shabery said that a meeting have been set up today with Btv to discuss, among others, the future of the organisation, whether it will stay or if a different model can take its place.

"I will meet up with them (Btv) out of compassion to find a way (to solve this issue).

"But I dont want to be misconstrued by others who say we (the government) are bearing the losses of a private entity by paying their staff's wages on compassionate grounds," he asserted.

Speaking about humanity and compassion, he said he has even asked his friends in the ministry to help come up with a solution to this problem.

### **Possible revamp for BTV**

Shabery said many other television companies around the world have succeeded in their venture.

Btv, he added, might just need a different model and branding.

"However should it suffer losses, is it fair for the government to bail it out?" he asked.

BTV, a private entity owned by Bernama TV Synergy Sdn Bhd, last paid its journalists on Dec 24.

Meanwhile, answering a question about Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) recent financial problems, Shabery said the problem is not about lack of funds.

"They've already been contacted. It is not that the company does not have money to pay anything. It is simply because of the delay in processing the staff claims," he pointed out.

He added that since the government came out with a new procedure for claims and the cut-off date falls on Dec 20, some have overlooked and submitted theirs after.

"It's not that they (RTM) don't have money or won't pay; it is simply because of a technical issue," he said.

RTM's staff have complained that the salary for more than a hundred of its part-time staff have been delayed for nearly two months.

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