

Minister wants 'buy RM10, get RM10' prepaid card

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Communication and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek will ensure the people can enjoy the purchase of telephone prepaid value-added cards with the formula, 'buy RM10, get RM10'.

He said the stand would be forwarded during a meeting with heads of telecommunication companies in the country before it was taken to the cabinet for a decision.

"I asked the people (for their views) and they wanted to buy a RM10 prepaid card, (which gives) RM10 when it is activated.

"As such, I make the decision here (on the formula) because it is what the people want. I will follow what the people want," said Ahmad Shabery in a special edition programme, 'Suara Kita Hak Kita' produced by Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) which was telecast live on TV1 last night.

Ahmad Shabery, who was tasked by Prime Minister Najib Razak with handling the issue over value-added prepaid cards, following the introduction of the Goods and Sales Tax (GST), was analysing the topic, '#Topup: What is the problem?' in the one-hour programme.

He subsequently, conceded to the existence of confusion and contradictory statements over the issue, and apologised.

"This is a new system... got teething problems. God willing, if wrong, we own up. What needs to be repaired, we repair," he said, while appealing to the people to be patient while the problem was being solved.

He clarified that until the matter was decided upon the soonest, the sale of telephone prepaid cards would be done based on the current price, namely, with the additional six percent of GST.

Regarding the 'buy RM10, get RM10' formula, Ahmad Shabery, who regarded the task of solving the prepaid card issue as a challenge, hoped the telecommunication companies would understand the aspiration.

Telcoms told to be sensitive

He stressed that like the government, telecommunication companies, too, must be sensitive to the needs of the people as their businesses required the support of the people.

The minister said the people's hope was affordability and the quality of service and experience when using the service provided.

Ahmad Shabery stressed that broadband should be a basic right of the people and not just a facility.

In the meantime, he drew attention that the prepaid telecommunication sector was a huge industry worth about RM15 billion a year.

It is an intricate ecosystem that involves various parties like telecommunication companies, suppliers and service providers, and any change in the system will take time.

Earlier, when asked about his reaction when the prime minister entrusted him with the task of resolving the prepaid issue, Ahmad Shabery said he was initially surprised.

"The directive by the prime minister shows that he wants all ministers to be prepared to face situations like this," he said, adding that it showed the government was serious in resolving any issue faced by the people.

- Bernama

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