

Government Confident Telecommunication Service Charges Can Be Lowered In Future - Ahmad Shabery

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GEORGE TOWN, March 2 (Bernama) -- The government is confident telecommunication service charges imposed on consumers can be lowered in future following the construction of good infrastructure in the country, said Communication and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek.

He said at present his ministry was holding negotiations and dialogues with telecommunication companies (Telcos) to study problems arising that prevented them from offering services at cheap rates.

"Is it due to the tax system, policy or licence...because all this while we regard Malaysia as having one of the cheapest licences that they need to pay. So what are the other reasons that do not allow them (Telcos) to lower their rates.

"We do not want to compare only with Thailand, but also with America, Japan and Korea that ultimately we want Malaysia to become a country that is cheaper and has better quality than these countries," he told reporters after officiating the 'Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs Across New World' programme in George Town, Monday.

Ahmad Shabery said the local authorities and state governments needed to play a role in assisting these Telcos to provide the best services, including by not imposing strict conditions, especially on the construction of telecommunication towers.

Ahmad Shabery said strict conditions and regulations imposed by local authorities would result in escalating costs to the Telcos concerned and thus constrained them from providing the best service at cheap rate to consumers.

"If we examine the models used in developed countries, the pull must come from the local government as it will compete with other countries," the minister said.

Hence, he said a cordial relationship between the local government and Telcos was needed to streamline issues raised so that the objective could be achieved at the same time.

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