

KJ apologises to Veveonah on behalf of govt

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Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin with Veveonah Mosibin and her parents. -- Pix from Khairy Jamaluddin's Twitter acct.

KUALA LUMPUR: Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin today, on behalf of the government, offered an apology to Veveonah Mosibin and her parents.

This followed claims made by two deputy ministers over her of action of climbing a tree to gain better internet access that went viral on the social media.

In his Facebook post, Khairy shared his meeting with Veveonah at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) today.

"I have apologised to her and her parents of behalf of the government.

"I also have suggested for Veve (Veveonah) to work with Malaysia Innovation Foundation in developing innovative projects at her village to preserve the environment," wrote Khairy, who is also Rembau MP.

In the post, Khairy also shared a few photos of him with Veveonah and her parents.

In June, Veveonah, who hails from Kampung Sapatalang in Pitas, made headlines after a video of her climbing a tree to gain better internet access to sit for online examinations during the RMCO was shared on social media.

The video subsequently went viral and sparked intense discussions online, with many calling on the authorities to tackle internet connectivity problems in rural areas.

During a Dewan Negara session on Sept 3, Senator Datuk Donald Peter Mojuntin had asked what the government plans to do to ensure proper internet access in rural areas, citing Veveonah's case.

Deputy Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Zahidi Zainul Abidin, however, responded to the question by saying the Sabahan student was just a YouTuber and was not sitting for an exam.

Zahidi said his department's checks showed that Veveonah was just trying to make a name for herself and did it for entertainment purposes.

After severe backlash by politicians and netizens, Zahidi apologised to Veveonah on the same day and said he had received "inaccurate information" on the matter.

Earlier today, Zahidi made a formal apology in the Dewan Negara.

Meanwhile, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Abdul Rahim Bakri took down his Facebook post on Veveonah following criticism from social media users, who largely said he should not be picking on Veveonah and should instead work on improving the overall Internet coverage in Sabah.