

NEWS FEED

AIS, TRUE 'CONSULT NBTC' ON PLANS TO END 2G SERVICE

Advanced Info Service (AIS) and True Corp have reportedly consulted with the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission on their plans to discontinue 2G cellular service, citing the continued decline in the number of 2G subscribers they have. NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith said yesterday that "some telecom operators" had written to the regulator to consult on their plans to shut down 2G service, saying that their 2G subscriber numbers stood at just 700,000 to 800,000 combined at present, out of a total of 113 million mobile-phone subscribers, most of whom are now with 3G and 4G networks.

An NBTC source said it was AIS and True that had consulted the NBTC on the matter.

Takorn said the watchdog was concerned that their plan to switch off of 2G service would damage the interests of 2G subscribers, as well as the business of importing 2G handsets.

Therefore, the switch-off should be proceeded with amid the utmost caution, he said, citing countries like Australia and Singapore and their plans to switch off 2G service.

The secretary-general said the NBTC would invite these telecom operators to discuss the issue and the possible impact on consumers, and would study the ways that other countries were shutting down their 2G service in order to lay down guidelines for doing so in the Kingdom.

The NBTC office will carefully consider the various means to discontinue 2G service and will inform the public about progress at each stage of the deliberation process, he stressed.

The AIS mobile-phone service concession expired in September 2015, while that of True ended in September 2013.

Both before and after their concessions ended, the companies were allowed to secure spectrum licences from the NBTC, which they mainly use to provide 3G and 4G services.

The mobile-service concession held by Total Access Communication, better known as DTAC, ends in September next year.