

Consensus sought on market entry of 900MHz band

SIRIVISH TOOMGUM
THE NATION

ALL PARTIES involved should meet to seek the best way for the 900MHz band to go into service, said Total Access Communication (DTAC) chief corporate affairs and business development officer Rajiv Bawa yesterday.

DTAC and Advanced Info Service groups have submitted bid applications to the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) for the 1800MHz licences but declined to bid for a 900MHz licence, resulting in the cancellation of the latter's auction scheduled for August 18.

Despite its interest to acquire a low spectrum band, DTAC decided not to bid for the 900MHz over the auction conditions which it said would lead to operational risks and unpredictable costs for the company. The auction conditions state that the winner of the 900 MHz licence is solely responsible for any and all interference of this 900MHz slot with that allocated for proposed railway projects.

Bawa said a solution to this concern is

for the NBTC to allocate the idle 450MHz band to the planned high speed railway projects instead.

This way, the NBTC will also be able to bring back the 5MHz slot for the railway projects, combining it with the 5MHz slot allocated for the auction, and put the total 10MHz bandwidth in auction.

The other option is for the railway projects to use the 900MHz band but each of all involved parties will install the signal jam prevention system on their own, instead of obligating the 900MHz bid winner to shoulder this jam prevention responsibility alone.

CAT Telecom granted the concession of 1800MHz and 850MHz to DTAC and the concession will expire on September 15. The NBTC will reclaim these two bands, rebanding the 850MHz to be 900MHz, and put both the 1800MHz and 900MHz bands in auctions.

DTAC and the NBTC are still in talks on the remedy period to prevent any interruptions to its 850MHz customers when the CAT concession expires.

The period refers to the duration the NBTC would allow telecom operators to continue using existing spectra to offer the service on an interim basis after their concession ends. This is to give them time to migrate all customers to other networks.

Bawa said that he is hopeful that the NBTC will grant the remedy period to DTAC as it is a joint responsibility between them to ensure uninterrupted services for consumers.