

NBTC stays firm on rejection of DTAC's plea for remedy period

TELECOM OPERATOR NOW PINS HOPE ON COURT ORDER OVER 850MHZ SUBSCRIBERS BEFORE END OF CONCESSION

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THE NATIONAL Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday reiterated its decision to deny a remedy period to the 850MHz subscribers of Total Access Communication (DTAC).

The matter now moves to the Central Administrative Court where DTAC had already filed a lawsuit on September 6, seeking temporary protection for its 850MHz customers, after the NBTC declined to approve its consumer protection plan before its concession ended after midnight on September 15, 2018.

The company's share price yesterday fell 5.14 per cent to close at Bt41.50.

DTAC chief corporate affairs and business development officer, Rajiv Bawa, said yesterday that DTAC acknowledged the NBTC resolution and the company was awaiting the court's order on the matter.

NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith said that once the court makes a ruling on the case, the NBTC was ready to comply with the order.

Six out of seven commissioners voted 4:2 yesterday. One commissioner is on an overseas trip.

The majority of the commissioners said there was no justification to grant DTAC the remedy period as the number of its 850MHz customers remaining in the concession was not enough to justify DTAC's entry into the remedy period.

As of Sunday, DTAC still had around 94,625 customers on the 850MHz concession, of which around 60,000 are human users and the rest machines.

The remedy period is a temporary duration that the NBTC provides to

telecom operators to continue to offer service after the concession ends, so as to give time to consumers to migrate to other networks.

Earlier, DTAC had said that around 1 million of its group customers will be hit if the NBTC

declined to grant the remedy period to its 850MHz subscribers before the concession ended.

Around 90,000 are those using 850MHz in the concession and the rest of over 1 million are subscribers of its subsidiary DTAC TriNet, who regularly roam with the 850MHz network.

However, Takorn said that the watchdog counted only those in the concession.

Takorn said that the NBTC had earlier granted remedy periods to DTAC's competitors, as it was NBTC failure to hold the auctions of their spectra before their concession ended.

In DTAC's case, the auctions had been held before the concession

ended. CAT has granted the concession to DTAC to operate the 1800MHz and 850MHz services. The NBTC has reclaimed these bands and rebanded the 850MHz as 900MHz, and put them up for auctions in August.

However, no one bid for the 900MHz but only 1800MHz.

DTAC recently said that it had prepared a raft of measures to mitigate the impact of the end of concession on its customers.

It has prepared several consumer-protection measures, including aggressive expansion of its 2.1GHz network to make up for the potential shutdown of the 850MHz network.

The company also has proactively reached out to its customers with planned compensation proposals for network problems they may experience in the coming weeks.

DTAC HAS PREPARED SEVERAL CONSUMER-PROTECTION MEASURES. IT ALSO HAS PROACTIVELY REACHED OUT TO ITS CUSTOMERS WITH PLANNED COMPENSATION PROPOSALS FOR NETWORK PROBLEMS THEY MAY EXPERIENCE IN THE COMING WEEKS.