

WORLD CUP

Broadcast deal reached, but funds still sought

POST REPORTERS

The Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) has clinched a deal with Fifa to pay US\$33 million (about 1.2 billion baht) for the rights to broadcast live all 64 matches of World Cup 2022, SAT governor Kongsak Yodmanee said yesterday.

This is being viewed as confirmation for Thai World Cup fans that they will be able to watch the matches live for free after weeks of uncertainty surrounding the SAT's bid to find funding for the payment of the broadcast rights.

The price was first quoted at 1.6 billion baht when the SAT secured only 600 million baht on Monday from the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC).

The remaining 600 million baht is still being sought, but a source said the SAT is confident it will have the funds to pay for the rights in full.

The board of the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF), chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Prawit

Wongsuwan, will today meet to consider a request by the SAT to borrow fund money on the condition that it repays it when it receives more sponsorships, said Mr Kongsak.

The source said that some private companies have also pledged to contribute funds to help pay for the broadcast rights.

Under the so-called "Must Have, Must Carry" rule, introduced by the NBTC, the showing of seven major sporting competitions, including the World Cup, for free in Thailand is obligatory.

On Wednesday, 21 TV broadcasters were invited for talks with the NBTC about who will broadcast which matches after the World Cup kicks off on Sunday, he said.

They are expected to come up with a joint World Cup broadcasting schedule at their next meeting with the NBTC, he said.

Hosted by Qatar, the curtain raiser will be a game between the host country and Ecuador at 11pm on Sunday.

The World Cup matches will run until Dec 18.

**FIFA WORLD CUP
Qatar 2022**