

2022 WORLD CUP

Broadcasting rights in jeopardy

Fifa has threatened to pull the plug on Thailand's broadcasting of World Cup 2022 final matches if the kingdom fails to meet its standard encryption of broadcasting signals, the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) said yesterday.

The SAT has notified the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) about Fifa's warning that Thailand's transmission access was also being used in other countries.

The warning coincided with the release of a photo by Khaen Sarika, a popular Thai columnist, showing World Cup fans in Laos cheering their favourite teams on a TV screen. This is despite the fact Laos does not hold the right to broadcast any of the games.

SAT governor Kongsak Yodmanee has asked the NBTC to ensure all parties strictly follow Fifa's broadcasting transmission encryption standard. They were named as five multiplexer DTTs, Thaicom Plc, and all companies providing set-top box (STB) services.

Fifa has asked the SAT to strictly encrypt its over-the-air transmissions at least to the minimum standards called "BISS CA Director" or "Power/u", said Mr Kongsak.

Thaicom Plc and the providers of STB services cannot use the BISS 1 Simulcrypt as they are now doing, he said, or Thailand will forfeit its World Cup broadcasting rights.



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TECHNOLOGY

NBTC restates SIM registration warning

A maximum of 5 can be linked to 1 ID card

KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has reiterated warnings against the use of one ID card to register for more than five SIM cards, which violates the regulation, as it is ramping up efforts to combat fraudulent online activities and illegal transactions.

In July, the NBTC board resolved to impose hefty punishments for mobile operators that fail to address the problem, with a fine of 1 million baht per day.

Trairat Viriyasirikul, acting secretary-general of the NBTC, said there were many cases where small dealers or distributors registered a lot of SIM cards themselves and these SIM cards later changed hands with other people.

"This is a critical problem for fraudulent online activities, although the regulation has been in effect for years," said Mr Trairat.

All carriers must ensure one ID card is used to apply for no more than five SIM cards, he said.

Operators must strictly ensure dealers do not breach the regulation or they could face hefty fines.

If an individual wants to register more than five SIM cards, they need to contact the carriers' service centres.

An NBTC survey in June discovered many small dealers allow an individual

to register more than five SIM cards, said Mr Trairat.

The telecom regulator is also considering forcing existing mobile subscribers who own more than 10 active SIM cards to re-register at mobile operators' service centres as part of the effort to combat online and phone scams.

The move is meant to obstruct offenders who use "mule" bank accounts to commit illegal transactions through mobile banking apps.

Various parties have held meetings several times to find ways to combat online crimes. They include the Digital Economy and Society (DES) Ministry, the NBTC, the Royal Thai Police, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Bank of Thailand, the Thai Bankers' Association and mobile operators.

Sutisak Tantayotin, deputy secretary-general of the NBTC, said the agency's management panel is considering imposing stricter measures to address mule accounts on mobile platforms.

He said the agency is looking into the possibility of forcing individuals who subscribe a substantial number of SIM cards to re-register.

It may start at those holding 10 or 30 SIM cards and the law governing it is expected to be forwarded to the NBTC board for consideration soon, he said.

The move was partly pushed by the police through the joint discussion, Mr Sutisak said.

If the law is enforced, mobile subscribers who own excessive SIM cards must re-register in the stipulated timeframe, or else they would not be able to make phone calls, he said.