

Big mobile companies extend relief for Pabuk-hit customers

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Five mobile operators have agreed to extend remedy measures until Jan 16 for customers who were in affected areas during tropical storm Pabuk.

More than 1.6 million subscribers of the five operators were affected by the storm, especially those in Nakhon Si Thammarat, but many did not ask for remedies via operator call centres during Jan 4-6, the original deadline. Those customers are now allowed to ring call centres until Jan 16.

The remedy measure is 50 free minutes of call service plus one gigabyte of internet service.

Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), said the decision was made yesterday after a meeting with Advanced Info

Service (AIS), Total Access Communication (DTAC), True Move H Universal Communication (TUC), TOT and CAT Telecom.

"The move ensures that the remedy measure covers all mobile users in the affected areas, even though the exact number of those who were affected will not reach 1.6 million," he said.

According to reports from the operators, there were 700,000 users in affected areas under AIS, 600,000 under TUC and 300,000 under DTAC. Of those affected, 90% of AIS and TUC users and 20% of DTAC users asked for the remedy.

Some 4,000 mobile users in affected areas are on TOT and 1,000 are on CAT.

Mr Takorn said the communication situation in affected areas returned to normal over the weekend. Electricity

poles had been downed by the storm, meaning some areas could not use power for a time.

"The storm did not cause any significant difficulty for mobile services, thanks to the readiness of all operators," he said.

WAR ROOMS

According to Mr Takorn, each operator set up a war room to monitor and manage the crisis until the situation reverted to normal.

The telecom regulator previously ordered the big three operators to provide 24-hour call centre service as an alternative to the state-emergency call centre to facilitate customers.

The operators' call centres coordinated with the NBTC as the major channel linked to the Interior Ministry's operations.