

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

# NBTC board approves Oct 31 for 2G shutdown

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The board of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) approved yesterday a timeline for the 2G mobile system shutdown at midnight Oct 31.

The move will help mobile operators more efficiently manage network capacity, paving the way for 5G wireless broadband service by 2020.

The major mobile operators must seriously begin preparing all related backup systems to serve the transfer of 2G users to 3G and 4G systems, including new promotion packages, said the regulator.

The NBTC will report the move to the cabinet to ask for cooperation with the governors of all provinces, to help alert 2G users nationwide.

Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the NBTC, said the number of 2G users in the country continues to decline, especially after the regulator announced its plan to shutdown the 2G service in December last year.

As of December 2018, there were 5.2 million subscribers using the 2G mobile system service, comprising 2.2 million subscribers for Total Access Communication, 2 million for

Advanced Info Service, and 1 million subscribers to True Corporation.

He said there are 4.9 million 2G users in the country, down by 300,000 from December last year.

The 2G shutdown has been pushed by the three major operators for months, with the proviso that 2G users must not spend more for the transition, meaning the operators may have to subsidise 2G users with new handsets, Mr Takorn said.

The NBTC board yesterday also approved the preparation process for the shutdown of the 2G system.

All mobile operators have to make the public aware of the shutdown plan, focusing on 2G users.

The NBTC office will stop using all related standards for communication radio equipment and base stations under 2G GSM, and will inform all importers and sellers to not import all related equipment and handsets for 2G GSM.

"2G users will benefit when they are transferred to the 3G and 4G systems because there is a lower tariff rate," he said.