

SATELLITE TELEVISION

GMM Z GETS BT12 BN BUDGET FOR CONTENT**GMM Grammy** to spend money on rights to future English soccer gamesWATCHIRANONT THONGTEP
THE NATION

GMM Grammy plans to spend Bt12 billion on its satellite business unit GMM Z to import content including future English Premier League soccer seasons and produce local programmes to boost sales of its set-top boxes over three years.

"We target cumulative sales of 5 million set-top boxes by 2015. This will give us enough viewers to attract advertising revenue and cover a wide range of customers from upscale to mass market," Paiboon Damrongchaitham, chairman of GMM Grammy, said yesterday.

The company might have to suspend other major investments from this year until mid-2015. Paiboon declined to comment on a newspaper report that GMM Grammy intended to sell its stakes in Post Publishing and Matichon Group.

Paiboon, who has run the country's music and entertainment giant for almost 30 years, said that after conducting a stress test, the firm found that in the worst case, GMM Z might suffer a Bt5-billion loss if it fails to achieve its target.

"But it is considered an acceptable risk because the company has

enough cash flow and assets to offset those possible losses," he said.

Once licences become available, the company is prepared to launch at least 10 pay-TV channels by October.

The company will offer a prepaid service to registered customers wanting to access pay-TV content on its 10 special channels via GMM Z satellite receivers.

For example, the Bt300-monthly package offers five or six sports channels and the Bt200 package four entertainment channels.

The upcoming pay-TV services will be run by GMM Z, which also distributes and sells satellite TV set-top boxes under the same name.

Besides pay TV channels, GMM Z satellite customers can view four special channels for free - GMM Z Hits, GMM Z Theatre, GMM Z Genius and GMM Sports.

GMM Grammy has earmarked an extra budget of Bt1.5 billion for producing its own content for screening on its free-to-air satellite channels. They are Acts Channel, Bang Channel, Fan TV, Green Channel, Money Channel, Japan Korea Network, Saranair Channel, MAXXI TV and O Shopping.

The operating cost per channel is usually about Bt100 million a year.