

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

# Applications for NBTC board to start this month

**KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA**

The application period for new board members of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is expected to begin this month.

Six NBTC board members who are working under a special extension of their term granted by the previous government are to be replaced. The incumbent commissioners' terms ended in October 2017.

Meanwhile, the Senate is expected to establish a list for the committee responsible for selecting new board members by this week, according to a source at the NBTC who requested anonymity.

The committee comprises representatives from the Supreme Administrative Court, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the Bank of Thailand, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Auditor-General and the Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission.

In June, the cabinet gave the green light for the recruitment of new NBTC board members to address the decision-making vacuum for critical issues.

The selection committee, the source said, will iron out the qualification criteria for applicants and other details.

"The application submission is expected to start by this month and run between 20 and 30 days," the source said.

Under the NBTC Act, 14 short-listed candidates from seven fields

of expertise must be sought first, two from each field. The fields encompass telecom, broadcasting, TV operators, law, consumer protection, engineering and economics.

Next, the 14 candidates will be narrowed down to seven, one from each field.

Digital Economy and Society Minister Buddhipongse Punnakanta told the *Bangkok Post* the recruitment is expected to be completed within three months.

At present there are six NBTC commissioners, including chairman Sukit Khamasundara, who turns 70 this year, and vice-chairman Prasert Silphiphat, who turns 70 in 2021.

The existing act stipulates that NBTC commissioners must not be over 70. But the previous government overrode that requirement via Section 44 powers, and the members can work until new board members have been appointed.

Meanwhile, the recruitment-related amendment to the

act is still under consideration by a House committee. The amendment bill will also have to be passed by the Senate before going to parliament for a revote.

The amendment shortens the process of the recruitment, as the selection of seven board members will be done only one time through a Senate vote. No obligation is required for the seven board members to represent seven fields as stipulated in the existing act.



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**BUDDHIPONGSE PUNNAKANTA**

Digital economy and society minister