

BOARD PICKS NBTC CHAIRMAN

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Board picks NBTC chairman

Members settled on Dr Sarana last week

KOMSAN TORTERMMASANA

Dr Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruk, a former member of the now defunct National Legislative Assembly, has been voted chairman of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) by the regulator's newly selected board members.

He is one of five candidates approved as members of the NBTC board via Senate voting in December. The new board members are expected to be royally endorsed this month, after which they can start working.

A source close to the five revealed that the list of board members and the name of the new chairman would together be put forward for royal endorsement.

This differs from the past when board members needed to be royally endorsed before they could select the chairman.

Dr Sarana has close ties to Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan as he looks after Gen Prawit's health and cardiac system, the source said.

The source added that the five selected board members met late last

week and voted Dr Sarana to be the new chairman.

Dr Sarana is the most senior of the five and has a high level of trust among key government figures, the source noted.

Takorn Tantasith, the former NBTC secretary-general who ended his working term in September 2020, is expected to serve as an adviser to the new chairman.

Mr Takorn is the most versatile person with experience in the NBTC's top management, handling spectrum licence auctions for 3G, 4G and 5G networks and a series of tough regulations, the source added.

Meanwhile, Suebsak Suebpakdee, executive director of the Telecommunications Association of Thailand, has called on the NBTC to step up efforts to regulate over-the-top (OTT) platforms, which are flourishing.

Concerns have been raised about the economic contribution of these platforms and their responsibilities in terms of personal data protection and the broadcast of illicit content.

Mr Suebsak pointed out that the NBTC should find ways to categorise such a service and introduce clear principles on how to govern them. OTT platforms should be registered but the state must first come up with a clear regulatory framework for the issue, he added.



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Executive director, Telecommunications Association of Thailand