

## BURNER PHONES FROZEN

The regulator introduced harsh measures for mobile operators that allow the registration of more than 5 SIM cards by an individual. **B3**

# NBTC moves to curb excess SIM issuance

## Regulator to impose harsher measures

### KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is imposing harsher measures against mobile operators that allow the registration of more than five SIM cards by an individual through dealers, vowing to fine the carriers 1 million baht per day for violating the restriction.

The resolution was reached at an NBTC board meeting on Wednesday.

The regulator has set a deadline of 30 days by which time carriers need to sort out the problem in order to avoid being fined.

According to the NBTC, if an individual wants to register more than five

SIM cards, they need to contact the carriers' service centres. The move is meant to prevent scammers from using many SIM cards to deceive members of the public.

The move came after an NBTC survey in June discovered that many small dealers allow an individual to register more than five SIM cards. This prompted the NBTC to instruct the operators to quickly rectify the problem.

NBTC acting secretary-general Trairat Viriyasirikul said the NBTC board assigned its management to instruct the mobile operators to strictly comply with the law, which could help ward off fraudulent call centre and SMS scams.

He said the operators must redress the problems within 30 days, or otherwise face a hefty punishment from the administrative order.

He said the NBTC, Advanced Info Service Plc (AIS) and the police had worked together on a raid on eight

locations in Bangkok suspected to be linked with call centre scams.

The raids resulted in the seizure of 43 IP PBX transmitters and 30 wireless routers.

Meanwhile, a working group responsible for addressing fraudulent call centre and SMS problems held its first meeting on Wednesday to find ways to deal with these problems.

The group comprises 11 agencies, including the NBTC, the Digital Economy and Society Ministry, the Personal Data Protection Committee, the Bank of Thailand, the Technology Crime Suppression Division, four major mobile operators, the Telecommunications Association of Thailand (TCT) and the Consumer Organisation Council.

The group proposed an idea that involves instructing telecom service licensees to add a "+" sign for incoming calls from overseas and add a channel, called USSD, to allow people to



Mobile SIM cards on display at the NBTC office.

SAWAT KETNGAM

voluntarily choose to reject incoming calls from abroad, according to Prawit Leesathapornwongsa, advisor to the NBTC board chairman.

Mr Prawit, who chairs the working group, said the NBTC called for cooperation among the telecom operators to comply with the proposal. The requirements cover both the operators who have their own frequency and those that do not.

He said the TCT proposed the development of an application to screen phone numbers in the same way the call-filtering app Whoscall does to guard against scammers.

In addition, the mobile operators participating in the meeting also proposed that the NBTC serves as a central agency to receive the registration of the names of SMS senders to tackle those who use fake identities to send SMS messages to deceive members of the public.