

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

# NBTC seeks tough measures for merger

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Three of the five board members of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) are looking into tough remedy measures to govern the amalgamation deal of True Corporation and Total Access Communication (DTAC) in what appears to be a discouragement for the merger, an industry source said.

The NBTC will hold a meeting on Thursday when it is expected to come up with resolutions to govern the telecom mega deal.

The source, who requested anonymity, said the board is likely to define its authority first as to whether it has the power to consider approving or rejecting the merger at the meeting.

It is most likely the board will eventually allow the deal to proceed but the majority of board members will push for harsh measures to govern the deal, the source said.

"Approving the deal to proceed is the safe way to guard against future legal backlash of Section 157 of the Criminal Code, which concerns malfeasance," the source said. This section targets state officials who cause damage to the state's benefits.

Previously, True's minority shareholders filed a complaint based on Section 157 against the NBTC for a delay in making a decision on measures to govern the deal, saying the prolonged process is damaging their benefits and the industry as a whole.

If the board gives the green light to

the deal but prescribes strict measures, the commissioners would avoid a Section 157 backlash as the merging parties can only lodge a petition with the Administrative Court, asking it to revoke the board's resolution that involves harsh measures.

If that is the case, the deal's procedure could get stuck until the court makes the ruling.

The measures to be prescribed on Thursday could be harsher than the 14 measures drafted and proposed by the office of the NBTC, which are seen as "too weak" by some commissioners, the source said.

The draft prohibits the merger of True Move H Universal Communication (TUC), a mobile business arm of True, and dtac TriNet (DTN), a mobile service unit of DTAC, within three years.

TUC and DTAC also face a ban on frequency sharing for three years. TUC and DTN will also be forced to allot 20% of their mobile network capacities for mobile virtual network operators for rental.

According to the source, Thursday's meeting could come up with harsher measures than the draft, including banning frequency sharing between TUC and DTN indefinitely as well as prohibiting the consolidation of TUC and DTN indefinitely.

"These conditions would definitely create a barrier for the merger deal. It is likely that three commissioners would push for these conditions in the meeting on Oct 20," the source added.

**SECURITY**

# Local fixes for rogue drones

**POST REPORTERS**

A Thai research team is developing a radar system capable of detecting an unauthorised drone flown within a 2-kilometre radius, a technology hoped to help enhance efforts to regulate drones for security reasons.

The proliferation of drones in Thailand has raised concerns over the risk they could be deployed in criminal activities which may include terrorist attacks, said Assoc Prof Akkarat Boonpoonga, the head of the drone-detecting radar system development project at the Faculty of Engineering, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok (KMUTNB).

Drones may be used by people to trespass on off-limits places such as palaces or steal into events requiring high security such as royal ceremonies, he said.

The drone-detecting radar technology which his team is working on is actually nothing new for many other countries; but the prices are usually way too high for such gear to be imported, he said.

"Our team has decided to develop its own version of the technology to make it more affordable for Thai security authorities," he said.

The device being developed can be fitted to a car so it can be moved around where needed, he said.

The radar scanning system has a maximum coverage of 16 square kilometres at ground level and one to two kilometres above ground, he said. The device is capable also of detecting the real-time speeds of a target and accurately predicting the direction in which the target is moving, even while in the dark or in the rain, he said.

The radar-scanning ability, however,

is still limited in cases where the surroundings are crowded with tall buildings, as the radar system can barely penetrate buildings, he said. This means the results of radar scanning may not be accurate in this type of environment, he said. The newly developed drone-detecting device is now being tested on the KMUTNB's premises as permitted by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission, he said.

When the test is complete and the development complete, the device will be handed over to a key security agency such as the Royal Thai Air Force, which has the right to use the 9-11GHz frequencies for real-world testing, he said.

The KMUTNB intends to develop the radar sensing system further so it is equipped also with a drone jammer so security authorities can also capture unauthorised drones after they have detected them, he said.