

NBTC's No.2 quits for politics

AEKARACH SATTABURUTH

Settapong Malisuwan has quit as vice-chairman of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) to pursue a political career in the Bhumjaithai Party.

Col Settapong tendered his resignation letter to the NBTC yesterday with immediate effect, he said.

He said he had taken an interest in politics and decided to join Bhumjaithai now that he has stepped down from the commission. "My career choice has to be made clear," he said.

It took him three days to consider his options before he decided to enter

politics and join the party, he said.

Col Settapong said the resignation would not have an adverse impact on the NBTC or pile a bigger workload onto the remaining commissioners.

Meanwhile, Bhumjaithai has denied it is forging links with other parties in support of Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha returning as prime minister in the next election.

It has been alleged the party favours Gen Prayut making a comeback as prime minister after Sino Thai Engineering and Construction PCL, in which Bhumjaithai leader Anuthin Charnvirkul has shares, was awarded infrastructure projects by the regime.

Songsak Thongsri, the party's deputy leader, insisted it was not taking sides as it was capable of deciding on its own which coalition bloc it will join after the election, tentatively set for Feb 24.

The accusation that the party has pledged loyalty to the regime was a ploy to discredit it, he said. Bhumjaithai has been gaining traction with voters and certain political elements are bent on setting it back, he added.

Mr Songsak said Mr Anuthin is only one of many shareholders in Sino Thai Engineering. Whoever benefits from the projects it has won has little to do with Mr Anuthin or the direction of the party, he claimed.