

BOARD PICKS ON THE HORIZON

A source at the NBTC board says the process of choosing the two latest members would be finalised within the next three months. B4

NBTC vacancies to be filled in 3 months

New board to be endorsed this month

KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

The two vacant slots on the new board of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) are expected to be filled in the latest round of the recruitment process within the next three months.

In December last year, the Senate voted in favour of five of the seven prospective candidates put forth by the selection committee, who became new NBTC board members.

Accordingly, the selection committee will have to enter into another round of the recruitment process to fill the two vacant positions.

The move is in line with Section 16(2) of the amended NBTC Act, which obliges the selection committee to complete the selection of the seven prospective candidates in seven fields for the Senate vote.

A source at the NBTC board who requested anonymity indicated the process of choosing the two latest members would be finalised within the next three months, possibly before the government could weather a tough time in May due to a no-confidence debate and vote.

"The government, particularly the prime minister, is likely to encounter severe challenges in late May because of the censure debate with votes, which could fuel a chance of a house dissolution," the source said.

Meanwhile, Kiatpong Amatayakul,



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ANONYMOUS SOURCE
NBTC board

chairman of the selection committee, has issued the panel's notification in regards to the selection criteria for the two vacant members of the NBTC board in the law and telecoms fields.

The notification was published in the *Royal Gazette* on Jan 21.

The Upper House on Dec 20 voted in favour of five candidates becoming new NBTC board members.

They comprise Air Marshal Thanapant Baicharoen, deputy secretary-general of the NBTC, in the broadcasting field; Proengroeng Ramasoota, a lecturer at Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Communication Arts, in the TV field; Dr Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruck, a medical specialist and a former member of the defunct National Legislative Assembly, in the field of consumer protection; Torpong Selanon, president of the Thailand Association of the Blind, in the field of people's liberty and rights; and Suphat Suphachalasai, director of Thammasat University's Institute of Area Studies, in the economic field.

The two who failed to win enough votes are Kittisak Sriprasert, former chief executive of CAT Telecom, in the telecom field, and Lt Tanakrit Ekkayokkaya, deputy chief executive of the Office of the Thai Media Fund, in the law field.

Recently the five chosen candidates voted and selected Dr Sarana as the chairman of the NBTC board.

The new NBTC board is expected to receive royal endorsement by this month, after which it can start operating.

With the five members, the board can start functioning in line with the amended NBTC Act, ending months of decision-making vacuum at the telecoms and broadcasting regulator.