

FIVE OUT OF SEVEN AIN'T BAD

With the NBTC board still missing two members, any resolution by the approved members could be challenged. **B3**

Concern over NBTC board resolutions

Legality mullied if only 5 take office

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There are concerns among people in government about the legality of resolutions from the new board of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) if only five prospective candidates of the seven-member body are royally endorsed to take positions.

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

The new board must receive royal endorsement before officially starting. With only five members, the board can start functioning in line with the amended NBTC Act.

However, a source at the Secretariat of the Senate who requested anonymity said NBTC resolutions from a five-member panel may be questioned in terms of legality.

Some majority votes, such as three out of five, could be legally challenged because the board is supposed to have seven members and a majority vote is required for resolutions, the

source said.

The selection committee has begun a new round of the recruitment process to fill the two vacant positions in the telecoms and law fields, which is expected to be completed in the next three months.

Several parties in government have raised concerns about the legal interpretation of the votes, the source said.

"What will the NBTC or the government do if a resolution passes with three votes, but is then challenged by outsiders?" asked the source.

This could explain why the royal endorsement of the five chosen candidates is still pending, though it was expected to take place in January, the source said.

According to the NBTC Act, the commissioners have a working term of six years after their names are royally endorsed and published in the *Royal Gazette*.

This scenario could raise questions as to when the board's term ends if the five ratified candidates are royally endorsed first, then another two take positions later, the source said.

The five chosen candidates are: Air Marshal Thanapant Raicharoen in broadcasting; Pinongrong Ramasoota in TV; Dr Sarana Boonbaichaiyapruk in consumer protection; Torpong Selanon in public liberty and rights; and Suphat Suphachalasai in economics.