



BANGKOK POST GRAPHICS

# Eight operators setting up dedicated cyberthreat team

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Eight telecom companies have signed an agreement to establish the Telecom Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) to monitor and prevent cyber-attacks in the sector.

The move is in line with the government's digital economy roadmap, as well as the upcoming cybersecurity bill that was passed by the National Legislative Assembly last week.

Monchai Noosong, president of the Telecommunications Association of Thailand (TCT), the body through which the companies agreed on the new team, said the CERT will be self-regulated, with full-scale operations ready in 12 months.

However, all related parties will initially cooperate through sharing of information about threats and warnings of cyber-attacks, as well as collaboration on analytics on a case-by-case basis to deal with increasingly sophisticated cyberthreats to state agency websites and e-commerce transactions.

The eight telecom companies are TOT, CAT Telecom, Advanced Info Service, Total Access Communication, True Internet Corporation, Symphony Communication, CSLoxinfo and United Information Highway.

Mr Monchai said telecom is one of six critical sectors that must be strong to handle threats, along with energy, finance, investment, healthcare and insurance. Telecom infrastructure is the backbone of all critical sectors.

The Bank of Thailand already has a CERT procedure to cope with threats. The Thailand Telecom CERT will be the second such team to connect with the

government's CERT, which is operated by the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA).

The Telecom CERT has not set a budget yet, with all the members contributing.

Mr Monchai said the TCT asked for funding of 20 million baht from the telecom regulator through its Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research and Development Fund.

On Friday, Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, who witnessed the signing, said cyber-attacks and online fraud have increased significantly in all sectors because of the convenience of digital platforms and infrastructure development.

Development of digital services also creates risks of cyberthreats.

According to a report by the NBTC, there were 124 million users of 3G and 4G services by the end of 2018. Data usage has significantly increased from 1,033 petabytes in 2017 to 1,728 petabytes in the fourth quarter last year, up 68%.

Fixed broadband internet usage per household has increased from 33% in 2017 to 43.34% by the end of 2018.

The ETDA has reported that 203 state agency websites are at risk of cyber-attack.

Thailand was ranked 22nd among 194 countries and third in Asean for risk of cyber-attacks, according to the International Telecommunication Union's Global Cybersecurity Index 2017.

"Creating Thailand Telecom CERT is an initiative to ensure greater readiness in cyber-attack monitoring and prevention among all sectors on a single standard," Mr Takorn said.