

Thai News Update: 25 February 2019

1. Thai Airasia Owner In Talks To Buy Stake In Rival Nok Air

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

Asia Aviation Plc, the owner of low-cost carrier Thai AirAsia, on 25 February said it was considering to buy a stake in rival Nok Airlines Plc , sending its share prices soaring. The company is currently considering whether such investment is appropriate," Chief Financial Officer, Santhat Sanguandikul, said in a statement, referring to acquiring shares from the billionaire Jurangkool family, sending Nok Air's share prices up 13%. The company has a market capitalisation of 9.3 billion baht and the stock is currently trading at 3.06 baht, its highest since March 2018.

2. Tobacco Chiefs Slapped Down Over Commercial Weed Plans

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The Tobacco Authority of Thailand (TAT) can apply for a licence to grow cannabis but it will not cover any kind of commercial use, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The stand comes after the government legalised the use of cannabis for medical and research purposes. According to the TAT, hemp, especially, could be commercially developed into raw materials for use in the medical industry, automobile parts, garments or even food supplements.

3. NESDC Tasked With Export Babysitting Duties Amid Row

Source: Bangkok Post ([Link](#))

The government's planning unit, the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), has been assigned to work closely with the Commerce Ministry to provide updates on the export sector so that exporters can find more markets to offset the impact of the trade row between the US and China. Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said he was concerned about economic growth prospects in the first quarter because of state investment delays and slowing exports in the fourth quarter of last year.

4. Thammasat Devises Better Test For Childhood Learning Disabilities

Source: The Nation ([Link](#))

To help Thailand battle illiteracy and improve screening for learning disabilities among children, Thammasat University's School of Engineering (TSE) has developed an innovative computer program that can yield results in 30 minutes with 95-per-cent accuracy. Noo Khor An (Kids Wish to Read), a user-friendly program compatible with tablets and smartphones, is helpful in identifying children's learning problems stemming from heredity or brain disorder. Academics estimate that up to 40,000 Thai newborns a year are afflicted, said Jaturong Tantibundit, a lecturer in electrical and computer engineering at TSE. The early detection of learning disabilities is crucial in enabling timely intervention and effective management. Children can be taught how to compensate for any slowness in learning and educators can set out appropriate study programmes so youngsters can keep up with their peers.