

Thai News Update: 27 February 2019

1. MPI Marks 10-Month High

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

Thailand's manufacturing production index (MPI) in January hit the highest level in 10 months with a 0.2% year-on-year rise to 107.99 points, driven by higher production volume in the automotive, air-conditioning and sugar industries. The MPI increased for the fourth straight month in January, said Nattapol Rangsitpol, director-general of the Office of Industrial Economics (OIE). "The economy is growing thanks to overall support such as the upcoming general election on March 24 and newly implemented megaprojects," Mr Nattapol said.

2. Foreign Films Catching On To Tax Rebate

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

Thailand's incentives offered to international films shot locally have begun to bear fruit, with a growing number of productions applying for the tax rebate. More big-budget movies are filming in the country after producers learn about the measure, said Sirirat Theenanondh, chief of film business promotion at the Thailand Film Office under the Tourism Department. Although the production number is lower than the 810 recorded in 2017, revenue is a bit higher, grossing some 3.14 billion baht, compared with 3.07 billion earned in 2017.

3. Section 44 Mulled To Aid Mobile Giants

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

The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) is weighing whether to invoke Section 44 to assist the country's top three mobile operators by delaying the final payments on their bidding fees for the 900-megahertz spectrum auction. NCPO spokesman Col Winthai Suwaree said a meeting on 26 February, chaired by Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, considered using the authority of the NCPO to invoke the special executive power based on a proposal by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC).

4. NokScoot's First Shanghai Flight Touches Down At Pudong

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

NokScoot, the joint-venture low-cost carrier of Thailand's Nok Air and Singapore's Scoot, celebrated its first flight to Shanghai when it touched down early on 26 February morning at Pudong International Airport, after departing from Don Mueang International Airport. Passengers on flight XW858 were warmly welcomed in Bangkok upon check-in with colourful paper lanterns and a mock-up of Shanghai's skyline, in front of which they could take photos. NokScoot is initially operating four weekly flights from Bangkok to Shanghai, with frequency becoming daily from March 4. The new service is part of NokScoot's commitment to grow its footprint in China. NokScoot uses Boeing 777-200 wide-bodied twin-aisle jets, configured with a total of 415 seats, on all flights to and from its hub at Don Muang International Airport.

5. Japan To Revise ASEAN Free-Trade Pact

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

The Japanese government endorsed at a cabinet meeting on 26 February a plan for a revised free trade agreement (FTA) with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that includes the liberalisation of the service sector and investment field. The pact between 10-member ASEAN, Japan's major trading partner in Asia after China, will take effect among countries that have completed their domestic procedures. Japan will sign the accord Wednesday and seek parliamentary approval in the fall, while ASEAN countries are expected to start signing it from 23 February. The original economic partnership agreement with ASEAN took effect in 2008. It was the first multilateral free trade accord for Japan, and focused on the trade of goods, according to the Foreign Ministry.