

AVIATION

Nan airport gets upgrade

Nan has opened a new air passenger terminal whose capacity is four times the size of the previous facility.

The new terminal along with other upgraded facilities at the state-run airport has come into operation enabling this tranquil northern province to cope with growing passenger traffic.

It will ease the constraints of the old terminal, which was able to process only 100

passengers per hour.

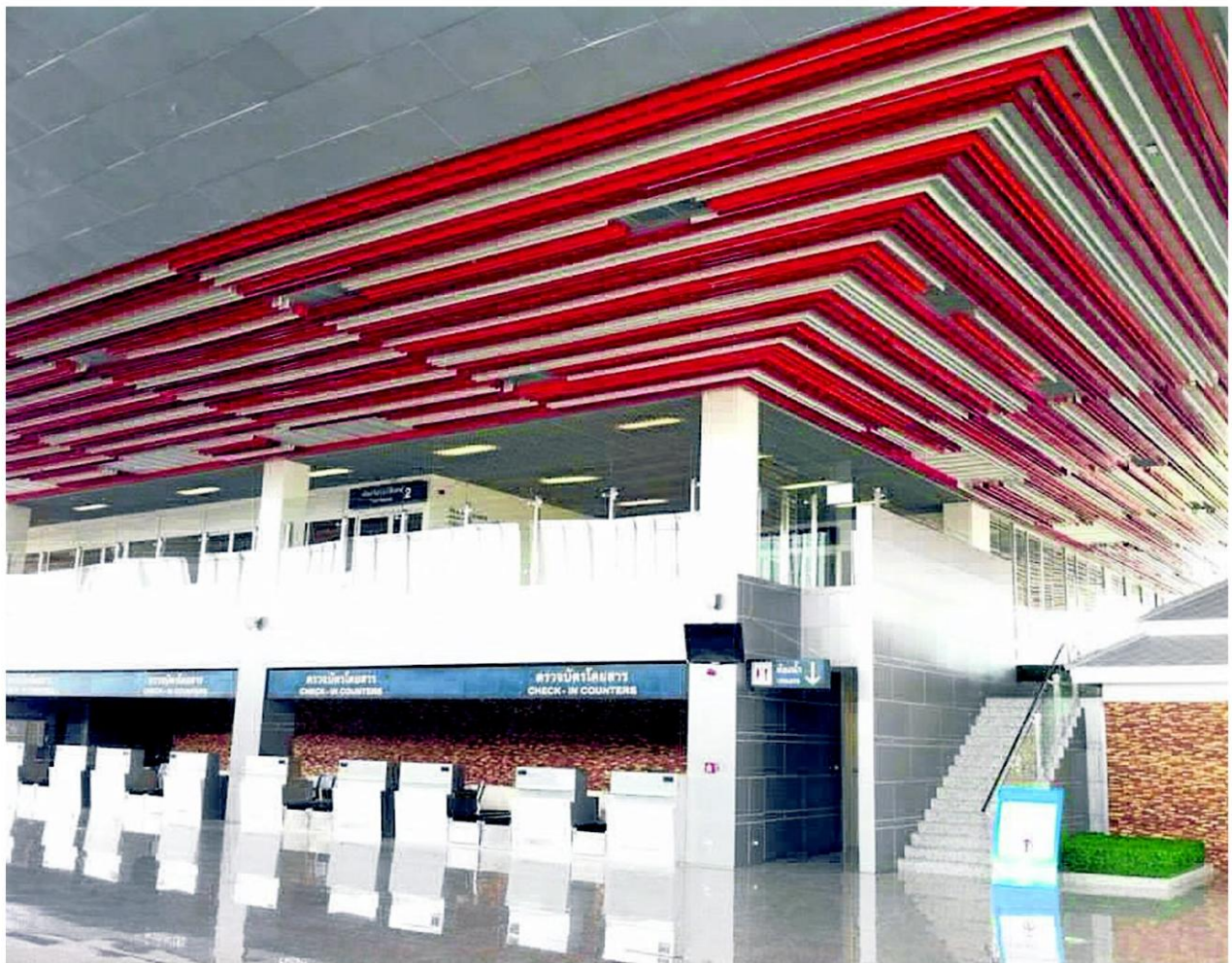
Nan is described as an up-and-coming tourist destination, with 600,000 visitors last year contributing 1.7 billion baht to the local economy, said Satit Boontong, head of the Nan Tourism Business Association.

He said the province's expanding tourism industry was spurring new hotel investment, as the current combined room inventory of 2,500 was considered insufficient during the high season.

Airport director Rujipa Homjan said the low-cost carrier Thai AirAsia was thinking of serving Nan with regular flights from Bangkok's Don Mueang airport.

At present, two airlines serve Nan.

Nok Air operates flights from Don Mueang airport, while Kan Air flies in from Chiang Mai.



The check-in zone at Nan airport's new passenger terminal. RARINTHORN PETCHAROEN