

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(15 August 2016 – 19 August 2016)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>MITS centre targets 180 SMEs</p>	<p>The Malaysian Automotive Institute (MAI) and Altair Inc are targeting 180 SMEs to use the newly launched MAI Intelligent Technology Systems (MITS) automotive technology centre by year-end. The technology centre, which was equipped with a high performance computing server, could boost product design capabilities and innovations within the local parts supply and car components chain. The COO of MAI, Mr. Nizmar said MITS aimed to fill the technological gap within the domestic automotive sector by providing a one-stop facility that integrates advanced software, hardware as well as technical consulting support for automotive parts design and development and system engineering works. Currently, at least 10 SMEs are keen to use MITS. More SMEs is expected to come on board & use the technology to boost capability.</p> <p><i>(Source: New Straits Times, 17 August 2016)</i></p>
<p>SINGAPORE</p> <p>DBS plays innovation matchmaker for SMEs</p>	<p>DBS, Infocomm Investments and IPI Singapore have teamed up to launch DBS TechMatch, a programme to help match SMEs to the appropriate innovation. The initiative requires SMEs to first submit a DBS Techmatch request online, which will require them to define a business problem. The DBS BusinessClass team will then review the request before connecting these SMEs to an existing solutions provider that offers the required technology. For SMEs looking for specific technology and expertise, IPI sources for these through its international network and database of technology opportunities. For SMEs with business problems that do not have ready technology solutions, Infocomm Investments takes them through a five-day solution process, by working with selected university students and come up with a viable concept. SMEs will then work with the solution providers to put the solutions into practice.</p> <p><i>(Source: The Straits Times, 16 August 2016)</i></p>
<p>SINGAPORE</p> <p>Productivity scheme for SMEs to be strengthened</p>	<p>The Technology Adoption Programme (TAP) will be enhanced to better match technology solutions to the business needs of SMEs, announced the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, Tharman Shanmugaratnam. The TAP aims to help local SMEs improve productivity through the use of ready-to-go technologies and innovations from public sector R&D organisations. Three new approaches have been outlined by the Government to strengthen the TAP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. cultivate innovation through increased coordination by reaching out to tap private sector systems integrators to help firms identify its technology needs; ii. broaden the supply of new solutions and technologies in the private sector, customise and simplify it, and match it to SMEs; and iii. working with trade associations, chambers of commerce, universities and companies to bring together efforts in innovation, productivity, automation and skills development to help companies in over 20 sectors. <p>Mr Tharman also urged banks to take a medium- to long-term view in lending to businesses, citing that it is often during difficult times that innovations arise.</p> <p><i>(Source: Channel News Asia, The Straits Times, 17 August 2016)</i></p>

<p>INDONESIA</p> <p>Telkom provide Internet support to SMEs</p>	<p>PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia or Telkom will provide high-speed Internet access, from 10-100 mbps to support SMEs. The program is part of Telkom's partnership with the Cooperatives and Small-Medium Enterprises Ministry for the 'Digital SME Village' program. The partnership is aimed at increasing SMEs' digital penetration level by optimizing the role of Integrated Business Training Centre. To help SMEs raise their product sales, Telkom has also prepared an online transaction facility in collaboration with blanja.com and Jarvis Store, using the online payment services provided by Pay Fin.</p> <p><i>(Source: Tempo.co, 15 August 2016)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p> <p>Commerce outlines five schemes for 20-year strategy</p>	<p>The Commerce Ministry announced five strategies for its 20-year programme to boost domestic and export trade as part of its mission to stimulate economic growth amid uncertain external factors. The five agendas are to promote trade in services ahead of trade in goods; to promote start-ups and SMEs; to amend rules and regulations and encourage the use of innovation for commercialisation; to promote marketing ahead of manufacturing and use Thailand as a regional trading centre; and lastly to encourage farmers to market their products themselves. The 20-year strategy will be implemented from this year until 2035. Commerce Minister, Apiradi Tantraporn said that while global economic growth remained uncertain, the ministry as the marketing arm of the country would act as the facilitator and business-development unit to drive Thai economic growth as well as promote exports and investment overseas.</p> <p><i>(Source: The Nation, 19 August 2016)</i></p>

HOW 'EAT' HAPPENED



Opportunity doesn't come knocking every day, so when it does show up, you had better make the best of it - as did Datuk Sharifah Hishmah Shahabudin. A batik entrepreneur, Sharifah was inspired in 1997 to move into the food and beverage business when she was offered a retail space at the Suria KLCC.

The managing director of Happy Recipe, who has been in the batik manufacturing business since 1985, remembers how a client invited her to open a batik outlet there. But she did not decline the offer but instead she asked if they could give her a space for some other business. When asked what business this might be, the idea just came to her: kuih. "I was given about a year to prepare the concept. By 1998, we had moved in and were selling kuih on the ground floor near the escalator," she relates. With the help of her family who were excited by her F&B idea, Sharifah started a little shop called La Cucur. Business was good, and she has many happy memories of those days, including how they would hand out free samples for people to try.

As the business grew, Sharifah moved from her 220sq ft shop to a 900sq ft space in 2012, upgrading it into a restaurant. She used to employ eight workers. Today, she has 25. According to Sharifah, they used to serve about 200 customers a day, but the numbers have improved vastly, ranging between 800 and 900. Apart from the mains, her restaurant serves over 60 types of kuih, including kuih lapis, karipap and cucur udang.

In 2003, she and her family established Pandan Sutera to manage the two La Cucur outlets (the other is at Bangsar Village). Later in 2010, they set up Happy Recipe to run their central kitchen. Sharifah has also moved into the catering business. "I remember there were times when offices in the KLCC area had meetings or events, and they would come down to my outlet to buy all the kuih. The mall management would ask why I had nothing to sell on that particular that day," she says. And that was how the idea for the catering business came about.

"We will continue to explore new recipes that cater to the mass market. We always make sure they are neither too salty nor too sweet or spicy," she concludes.

(Source: The Star, 15 August 2016)

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