

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(23 January 2017 – 27 January 2017)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>SME Bank first DFI in Asean to join The Montreal Group</p>	<p>SME Bank has been recognised as the first development financial institution (DFI) in Malaysia and ASEAN to be a member of The Montreal Group (TMG), which is a global forum for state-owned development banks focused on assisting SMEs. Founded in 2012 by seven members with a total estimated combined assets of US\$2 trillion (RM8.9 trillion), TMG was established to encourage exchange of ideas, best practices and foster greater understanding of the international market for the growth of SMEs. Group Managing Director of SME Bank, Datuk Mohd Radzif said it does not just offer financing but also carry the role of nurturing and developing SMEs through the bank's various intervention programmes. Meanwhile, Centre for Entrepreneur Development and Research Sdn. Bhd. (CEDAR), a wholly owned subsidiary of SME Bank, has coached more than 33,000 participants in various SME entrepreneurial training programs.</p> <p><i>(Source: Bernama, 26 January 2017)</i></p>
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>Malaysia's National SME Act expected to be tabled in Parliament this year</p>	<p>MITI has reaffirmed its commitment to put the SME development on the country's main agenda. YBhg. Datuk Seri Mustapha Mohamed said that the draft of the National SME Act is now 70% complete. "It is expected to be tabled in Parliament this year. Through the Act, the framework to develop SMEs will be enhanced to achieve 41% SME contributions towards GDP by 2020," he said. Mustapha also said that multinational companies in Malaysia should share and contribute their expertise and resources to help local SMEs to develop and sustain their businesses. He also stressed the importance for SMEs in Sabah and Sarawak to be part of the economic development of Malaysia and receive the benefits from the various programmes and plans implemented by the Government. He thus urged SMEs and industries to grab the advantages and opportunities present in the huge ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) market with over 600 million people and the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).</p> <p><i>(Source: SMB World Asia, 23 January 2017)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p> <p>Mushroom's SME programme crosses the borders</p>	<p>Mushroom Television Co is taking its hit SME programme called Young Self-Made Millionaire (YSM) to Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. YSM has won the hearts of start-up types by presenting creative and strategic thinking, and has received outstanding feedback from SMEs. The TV programme will also respond to the government's interest in developing and expanding a business in every way to make a stable economy in this region. The ASEAN market is also a strategic target of Thai government, and they hope such expansion will lead to expanded trade cooperation and strengthen the economic ties in the region. With the airing of YSM in neighboring countries, young entrepreneurs in those places will be able to create a network of partners, as well as develop and exchange their knowledge. The TV programme will also lead to other collaborations and development in partnership with local entrepreneurs in the CLMVT (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand) market.</p> <p><i>(Source: The Nation, 24 January 2017)</i></p>

<p style="text-align: center;">SINGAPORE</p> <p>DBS launches online Letter of Credit service</p>	<p>DBS Bank has launched a new service that allows SMEs to apply for a Letter of Credit (LC) online within five minutes and have it issued within two business days. The first in Singapore, the service makes it simpler and faster for SMEs to apply for trade finance services while on the go. SMEs use LCs to provide assurance of payment to their overseas suppliers. Before the online service was introduced, SMEs had to visit a bank branch to submit their ad-hoc LC application and it could take up to a week to obtain an LC. Group Head of Product Management, Global Transaction Services, DBS Bank said: "LC is commonly used trade finance instruments globally, and we are pleased to make the LC application process a truly digital experience for Singapore SMEs as they can benefit from a faster turnaround in the application process, enabling them to provide payment confirmation to their suppliers faster, and thus, improve their competitive advantage." From now until 31 May 2017, SMEs can enjoy a fee waiver of SGD100 when they apply for an LC online.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Finextra, 25 January 2017)</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">BRUNEI</p> <p>Local e-commerce platform to help MSMEs</p>	<p>CUBE Junction (CJ), a local e-commerce platform, was officially launched on 26 January 2017, providing Brunei MSMEs with a new way to take their businesses both online and abroad. CJ is a Bruneian company with a hybrid online social network and marketplace. Through CJ, buyers and sellers can interact with each other in real-time, and conduct their transactions on CJ's online market place – all in one platform. Strategic alliance agreements with AFL Logistic, Hong Kong, for logistic services and Cargolink Indonesia, will allow CJ to establish its presence in other countries such as China, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Through the strategic alliance agreements, CJ will be expanding its international freight forwarder alliances beyond the ASEAN region and China. It also aims to be a premier e-commerce platform for the people in the regions of BIMP-EAGA, Asean and Asean+3. Meanwhile, CJ is exploring opportunities for a platform to promote Halal products ranging from food to cosmetics to apparel and footwear.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Borneo Bulletin, 27 January 2017)</i></p>

NOT SITTING ON HIS LAURELS

From manufacturing simple boxes to a wide variety of office furniture, founder and managing director of Bristol Technologies Sdn Bhd, Yong Yook Seng, are taking things one step at a time to build the fundamentals of a company. Yong started as a small wooden boxes manufacturer based in Salak South, Kuala Lumpur in 1980. He set up shop in his own backyard and hired only one staff. This entailed getting wood scraps from sawmills and getting people to nail them together to make boxes. He made 12,000 boxes a month and production went on like this for two years. But Yong was practical. He knew that such a business was of low value and would be prone to having many competitors given the simplicity of the product. Thus, he then built a new revenue stream for the company.



In 1983, he established Bristol Industries as an office chair manufacturing company with 20 staff in Segambut, Kuala Lumpur. In the first year alone, the company managed to manufacture and sell about 12,000 chairs to various offices. Yong continued to look for ways to expand the company's market. They started participating in furniture fairs overseas and in 1988, started exports to Dubai. In 1990, they moved into their own 18acre factory in Seri Kembangan, Selangor. Yong also saw more opportunities in the furniture business to venture into.

Today, they have over 50 products and have nine offices worldwide, including in India, Thailand and Singapore. His staff count has also increased to 500. In 2015, they achieved a revenue of RM38 million and over 70% of their products were exported to over 20 countries such as India, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and the US. Another aspect that he shared about growing his company is to always think ahead, and in some cases, it means thinking about the rain even when it is still sunny.

"We make a habit to grow with very little bank borrowings. During the financial crisis, we did not retrench any staff," he states proudly. In year 2000, they rebranded to its current name, Bristol Technologies, and invested a lot in advertising and promotions to build the brand name. Moving forward, they are planning to build a factory in India, China and Indonesia, which Yong hopes would materialise in the next two years.

(Source: The Star, 23 January 2017)

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