

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(26 August 2019 – 30 August 2019)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>Facebook aims to train 1,000 SMEs</p>	<p>Facebook Malaysia launched the 2nd phase of 'Made by Malaysia, Loved by the World' programme to provide Malaysian SMEs with adequate training to grow internationally. The second phase will take off in September 2019 and is aiming 1,000 SMEs from 7 states across Malaysia i.e. KL, Penang, Sabah, Sarawak, Pahang, Perak and Johor. The programme, which made its debut last year in collaboration with MATRADE and Avana, is all set to launch a new partnership with DHL Express (M) Sdn. Bhd., as SMEs want to know more on logistics and supply. DHL has previously done some good programmes with SMEs and they will be the best people to share global insights on logistics learning. Facebook cited that some of the common challenges for SMEs are getting the right target customers, reaching the global arena and they do not have the means to do research the way that large companies can. So, one of the topics being included in this programme is the cross-border insights finder, where SMEs can find the necessary information on the costs and potential competition in the market. The programme also offers short e-learning modules via Facebook Blueprint, which include customised learning to help SMEs widen their businesses globally.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Malaysian Reserve, 26 August 2019)</i></p>
<p>BRUNEI</p> <p>DARe inviting Brunei SMEs to apply for grants up to \$20k</p>	<p>Darussalam Enterprise (DARe) is inviting Brunei MSMEs looking for funding to grow their businesses to apply for up to \$20,000 in grants under their co-matching scheme. The co-matching component of the grant requires MSMEs to put forward 30% of the project cost, with DARe's grant funding the other 70% for a maximum of \$20,000. The funding (in principle) is given to help improve the MSMEs productivity and grow their revenue, especially local businesses that have the potential to export. DARe's co-matching grant is separated into two categories: Starting Up which provides up to \$10,000 and Expansion which provides up to \$20,000. Those seeking up to \$10,000 under the Starting Up category must be registered businesses under 12 months old who are looking to use the funds to obtain certification, equipment or market their business within a period of 12 months. Meanwhile, those seeking up to \$20,000 under the Expansion category should implement the funding within 12 months for activities that can expand the company and its productivity; including adoption of technology & software, equipment, marketing and services for accredited certifications.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: BizBrunei, 30 August 2019)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p> <p>Industry Ministry to promote small business stimulus plan</p>	<p>The Industry Ministry has promptly pushing forward the latest stimulus package from the government, allocating 10 billion baht through the Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion Fund. This fund supports financial tools for local SMEs under the management of OSMEP. Industry Minister said SMEs and micro enterprises are the backbone of the Thai economy. Thai SMEs depend on labour-intensive operations, giving them higher costs than large enterprises, he said. Other measures for SMEs include a credit guarantee from Thai Credit Guarantee Corporation and credit lines from state banks worth a combined 100 billion baht. The ministry wants to emphasise the Thailand 4.0 initiative to be a tool for improvement for SMEs. Thai SMEs contribute roughly 80% of the country's GDP with 3 million companies. In the meantime, the ministry also plans to sign an agreement in a near term with Japan's Osaka prefecture for collaboration on trade development and agriculture manufacturing to promote SMEs of both countries, thus establishing a 23rd agreement between Thailand's Industry Ministry and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Bangkok Post, 26 August 2019)</i></p>

NO OVERNIGHT SUCCESS FOR INSTANT NOODLES PRODUCER

The resolve to escape poverty has prompted an undergraduate majoring in accounting to drop out of UiTM and plunge into business. Hailed from Penang, Mohammad Ilyas @ Ilyas Zulkiffli returned to his hometown to start an online business selling cosmetics and motorcycle engine oil.

With the profits made from the business, he set up Zerotobeheroes Resources, which produces instant noodles known as Mymee Minda, with a capital of RM20,000 early this year. Zerotobeheroes Resources has a factory in Alor Setar and employs seven full-time and six part-time workers. The company produces four different flavours of instant noodles, namely tomyam, curry, soup, and mi Bandung. They are priced at RM10 for a box of five packets of noodles..

“These products are the only instant noodles which come with dates and raisins, good for energising and strengthening the mind,” he says. Ilyas decided to quit his studies and eke a living to help his single mother and five younger siblings. “Since I was a kid, I used to eat instant noodles (due to the hardship) and I was often told that it was not good for health. However, it is no longer an issue now for most of the households. Some students even stock up instant noodles in their hostels,” he says. Although dates and raisins seem more attuned to the Malays, Mymee Minda is also promoted and marketed among non-Malay customers.

Zerotobeheroes Resources now sells about 100,000 boxes of instant noodles a month compared with 20,000 boxes a month when it first started. They are marketed through distribution agents in each state. “We are targeting to increase our production to 500,000 boxes a month by year-end and eventually, one million boxes a month next year. We will expand our empire to neighbouring countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia,” he says.

The average sales for Mymee Mind is between RM100,000 and RM300,000 a month and Ilyas expects sales to reach RM1 million in the next six months. To Ilyas, business has freed him from poverty, hence independence (Merdeka) to him means to free oneself from the comfort zone, poverty, hardship and insecurity. He calls on young people, who aspire to go into business, to have a strong discipline and a good mentor.

“It’s not easy to succeed. Maybe you don’t know how to get started in business, but it’s okay. Find people who can guide you and be with those having positive mindset because they will foster positive thinking. My advice to newcomers is to seek knowledge and a mentor. With knowledge, you’ll take positive action. And don’t be afraid to fail. Failure will make us begin to find a way to succeed,” he says.

(Source: The Star, 26 August 2019)

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