

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(21 October 2019 – 25 October 2019)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>Aspirasi and Lazada Malaysia help SMEs, micro-enterprise merchants in business growth</p>	<p>SMEs and microenterprises merchants listed on e-Commerce platform, Lazada Malaysia, can now enjoy easy financing solutions through Aspirasi, which is a micro financing platform and fintech services provider under Axiata Digital. It recently collaborated with Lazada Malaysia to provide the new financing support to these merchants on the e-Commerce platform. Through Aspirasi, merchants could get easy financing with free insurance, cashback upon completion of repayment, zero early settlement charges, immediate financing decisions, and cash in the merchant's account within 48 hours during the promotional period from 26 October until 31 December 2019. The collaboration will leverage Aspirasi's end-to-end digital financial services that offer fast and simple financing solutions in an effort to boost the business growth of Lazada Malaysia merchants. The partnership aims to drive growth for micro-enterprises and SMEs whilst building Malaysia's digital economy.</p> <p><i>(Source: News Straits Times, 26 October 2019)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p> <p>3 billion baht in SME loans issued for 2020</p>	<p>The Industry Ministry plans to provide soft loans worth 3 billion baht under the Pracha Rat scheme for SMEs in 2020. The loan scheme is focused on business in agriculture, creative & digital sectors, offering an interest rate of 1% yearly for seven years. Each borrower can borrow a maximum of 3 million baht. The soft loan is part of the 20-billion-baht Pracha Rat fund, aimed at helping SMEs. Since 2017, the government has provided soft loans under the Pracha Rat fund to 10,567 SMEs for a combined amount of 16.1 billion baht. The Pracha Rat fund has a balance of 3.8 billion baht. SMEs can apply the soft loan for investment or as working capital, starting from 15 December 2019. There is also a 750-million-baht new development project to sharpen SMEs' competitiveness, said Industry Minister. The government wants to help SMEs access funding at low interest rates. The ministry expects the 3 billion baht in loans will result in more than 10 billion circulating in the domestic economy.</p> <p><i>(Source: Bangkok Post, 25 October 2019)</i></p>
<p>CAMBODIA</p> <p>'Cambodia-Japan brand' could boost local exports</p>	<p>Japan pledged to promote business partnerships between Cambodian and Japanese SMEs and proposed the creation of 'Cambodia-Japan brand'. The Japanese government wants to see more business ventures between Cambodian and Japanese people to export abroad and supply the local market. The products of these joint ventures are suggested to be marketed under the Cambodia-Japan brand. These joint ventures can hire skilled Cambodian workers who are now working in Japan. There are about 12,000 Cambodian skilled workers employed by Japanese enterprises which gives a good starting point for these joint ventures. The trade between the Cambodian and Japanese governments has grown remarkably in recent years, reaching \$1.5 billion last year. Such partnerships with Japanese businesses are an ideal way of boosting the local SME sector, particularly in agriculture. Taking advantage of the skills and know-how of Japanese manufacturers will be beneficial for everyone, particularly Cambodian SMEs and farmers.</p> <p><i>(Source: Khmer Times, 24 October 2019)</i></p>

FROM HOMEMAKER TO ENTREPRENEUR

THANKS to the Internet opening up opportunities to do business online, homemakers have an avenue to generate additional income, as the majority are already small-scale entrepreneurs with localised businesses. That said, many lack formal training in sales or business operation management, with some wary of relying on technology and seeing digital transformation as a challenge, rather than a growth opportunity.

As the founder of Adara Venture, Farajannah Othman can attest to, however, the right guidance from a suitable digital partner can make all the difference. Her business, which sells kerepek – or chips – under the brand AdaraLicious, started off as a fun project to fill her spare time. With RM2,000 in capital, she initially produced and sold the crispy snacks to her neighbours and friends from the comfort of her own home.



“At the time, I was just ‘having fun’ using the skills of producing traditional food. I also wanted to help my husband by bringing in more income for the family,” she shares. Within a short span of time, she was able to build a loyal customer base and generate a steady monthly income to support the family. The budding entrepreneur, who founded AdaraLicious earlier this year, then ventured into online business via social platforms and other means to reach out to new customers.

Realising the need for proper guidance and support to digitally transform the business for growth, she took it upon herself to find such workshops and came across Digi’s MY Digital SME full-day hands-on workshop, which helps

SMEs establish a digital footprint for their businesses. She says, “My knowledge in digitalisation and in building an online business empire is limited and I was only aware of the common functions for online marketing. Hence, when I first heard about digitalisation, I felt it would be a costly investment, but I decided to give it a try anyway.”

“When I heard about Digi’s MY Digital SME programme, I was compelled to join and see what other potentials I could discover. The programme has been insightful, especially for home-makers like me looking to make extra income. Digitalisation doesn’t have to be expensive, we just need to know the right resources as shown at the workshop by industry players such as Digi, Google, Avana Facebook Commerce, Rev Asia and Shopee.”

Farajannah is confident that she can leverage technology to further expand her business beyond the previous 50 to 100 monthly shipments nationwide. The goal is to achieve double-digit growth in revenue and customers by reaching out to the potential markets in neighbouring countries.

MY Digital SME is a platform spearheaded by Digi, in collaboration with SME Corp, Mahir Digital Bersama Google, Avana Facebook Commerce, Rev Asia and Shopee.. The programme series is designed to be a full-day hands-on digitalisation workshop, where business owners & entrepreneurs can expect to create an online presence for their business upon completion.

Through the workshops, SMEs are empowered to digitalise their businesses, further fostering SME digital growth by also enabling entry into an ecosystem of digital solutions that are cost efficient and scalable to meet different business needs.

(Source: The Star, 21 October 2019)

Knowledge Management & Strategy Division
SME Corp. Malaysia
29 October 2019