

# SME WEEKLY NEWS

(9 December 2019 – 13 December 2019)

Countries	Highlights
<p><b>MALAYSIA</b></p> <p><b>China's Second Construction Co keen on its Halal Gelatin Industrial Park</b></p>	<p>China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC), the world's largest construction company, has express interest to participate in Sanichi Technology Bhd's (STB) development of Malaysia and Asean's first Halal Gelatin Industrial Park. The Melaka Halal Gelatin Industrial Park (MHGIP) will house a JAKIM certified halal gelatin plant, coupled with related downstream industrial activities for applications across diverse industries and sectors, from food sector to pharmaceutical, cosmetic &amp; health products, among others. MHGIP development will be completed in 2 phases over the next 5 years with target operation of halal gelatin plant by mid-2021 and completion of industrial park by 2025. This will give a gross development value (GDV) of up to RM1.3 billion and halal gelatin plant production value of up to RM250 million per annum for this niche lucrative market. Minister of MED, Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof recently shared that the global halal industry is a low hanging fruit for SMEs to harvest. The ministry is intensifying its efforts in attracting downstream halal business players to Malaysia, which includes Halal gelatin producers, from R&amp;D to commercialisation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: News Straits Times, 9 December 2019)</i></p>
<p><b>MYANMAR</b></p> <p><b>Government sets sights on curbing illegal trade</b></p>	<p>The government will increase its focus on the eradication of illicit trade by drawing up better strategies. The Private-Sector Development Committee was formed in 2016 to help solve the challenges faced by the private sector through better coordination between government ministries, state and regional governments, and the business sector. Vice President U Myint Swe said that illegal trade through border areas has serious impacts on local SMEs, and urged efforts to combat the problem be stepped up. As part of the efforts, the government has formed the Illegal Trade Eradication Steering Committee, which will focus on promoting cooperation between state-level government departments on key focus areas and strategies to curb the issue. The Economist Intelligence Unit stated that Myanmar ranked the lowest on its Global Illicit Trade Environment Index in 2018. The steering committee will focus on strict control of illegal trade, boosting local SME businesses, better collection of state revenue, prevention of bribery, and ensuring fair trade practices. The main driver of illegal trade is profit from evading taxes. Another cause is the restriction on the legal imports on certain goods, according to the European Chamber of Commerce report.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Myanmar Times, 10 December 2019)</i></p>
<p><b>THAILAND</b></p> <p><b>FTI, BoT support SMEs' overseas ambitions</b></p>	<p>The Federation of Thai Industries (FTI) and the Bank of Thailand (BoT) have agreed to launch new measures for Thai SMEs in encouraging them to expand overseas. The two parties will select 50 competitive companies from 5 industries: auto parts, rubber, food &amp; processed food, home appliances &amp; electronics as well as furniture. The 50 selected companies have to increase their export value every year under measures for the scheme. The firms have to be capable of developing a foothold in other countries. Vice-chairman of FTI said the measure is a pilot project to support Thai SMEs in overseas investment aspects such as finance, marketing and regulation. The two parties plan to extend the SME project to let new companies participate in the future. Many companies are hindered from international expansion because of difficulties obtaining loans from commercial banks. BoT plans to talk with Thai banks about special financial measures to support SMEs' overseas business since many local SMEs are suffering from the strong baht as their competitiveness erodes in comparison with large companies.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Bangkok Post, 9 December 2019)</i></p>

## FILLING THE HEALTHCARE GAP

Summing up the real cost of the medical industry, Datuk Dr. Tan Meng Lee's perceived how unattainable medical care could impact the average person, "I was taken aback by the struggles that people were actually facing due to the increasing cost," Tan says. Aiming to make a difference, he decided to play an active role by using his knowledge in the healthcare industry to map out strategies that could eventually help to control the cost and open up access to decent healthcare.

Today, ASP Medical Group, a company founded by him, is at the forefront in helping to solve the medical cost problem with innovative solutions. The group primarily provides third party claims



administration services, along with clinic management services and medicine and equipment supply, among other things. In its quest to keep medical fees under control and increase accessibility to healthcare, ASP Medical has established a network of more than 1,000 healthcare providers, comprising primary care physicians, secondary care medical centres and tertiary care hospitals. Through its network of healthcare providers, ASP Medical provides a range of services to more than 50 local and global companies. It currently has close to a million people in its database.

The group is now looking at ways to lower the cost of medicine and drugs. They are working on an online e-pharmacy platform that will lower prices of drugs through bulk buying and a more efficient supply chain. The group has also developed an app to furnish users with vital information like pharmacy / hospital locations, set up a one-stop platform for healthcare services like online consultation, registration, inpatient arrangements, 2<sup>nd</sup> medical opinions & 1-hour medicine delivery.

The app also allows users to book appointments and have access to medical reports & prescriptions without any hassle, and helps facilitate cashless treatment at panel medical and dental clinics. It offers urgent care, behavioral health services, preventative health care and chronic care. These digital-based platforms enable them to gather real-time data and reveal insights that would help doctors improve their delivery to patients. Another important component in ASP's service is the Electronic Health Records (EHRs) which replaces outdated paper records, a massive game changer for everyone in the medical field. By accessing patient records digitally, it allows medical coding experts to work from home, which minimises cost from increased efficiency and productivity.

In taking care of one's health, Tan advocates a holistic approach. Not only will this reduce the cost of seeking healthcare services, it is also vital for one's wellbeing. Thus, the company put in place a point-and-reward system to motivate its subscribers to adopt a healthy lifestyle and be proactive in taking stock of their health through steps like health screenings. Tan says this is one of the keys to keeping healthcare costs low as it helps to prevent the need for additional care or treatment.

As a business, the company is seeking out expansion opportunities before the market becomes too competitive. Tan is keen to tap into overseas markets to expand and take the company beyond Malaysia. He has been scouting for opportunities in the region, with hopes to expand its services to Singapore, Indonesia and Taiwan. Currently, its operations are mainly focused in KL and Penang.

The company continues to regard technology as the driving force that allow medical professionals to track, retrieve and utilise valuable data in the fight to control diseases and provide better healthcare. ASP Medical has focused its resources to launch many innovative medical products, such as medical mobile app, health tracking, telemedic and electronic medical systems to help address the issue of affordability and accessibility. Shaping the organisation to be innovative has helped to keep the group one step ahead in offering solutions with far-reaching impact to the public.

*(Source: The Star, 9 December 2019)*