

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(13 June 2016 – 17 June 2016)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>SMEs encouraged to enter Japanese market</p>	<p>Seminar on 'Doing Business in Japan', co-organised by MATRADE and Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), highlighted the possibilities and potential of business expansion to Japan. Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the seminar was necessary to encourage SMEs to put export plans to Japan in motion. With Tokyo hosting the next Olympics in 2020, he encouraged Malaysian businesses to tap into the potential of supplying products and services for the sports event. Malaysia and Japan had both signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, which is expected to be an impetus for greater business prospects in terms of market access and the reduction or elimination of tariffs. To further promote bilateral trade and investment with Japan this year, 13 programmes will be held including the International Sourcing Programme, Export Acceleration Mission to Tokyo as well as the Trade and Investment Mission to Japan.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Star, The Sun Daily, 17 June 2016)</i></p>
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>CIMB, Lazada team up to support expansion of SMEs</p>	<p>CIMB Bank Bhd. and Lazada Malaysia (Lazada) have signed a partnership agreement that enables Lazada merchants to apply for small and medium enterprise (SME) loans called Enterprise Clean Loans (ECL). The customised ECL, a non-collateral financing with competitive interest rates, offers financing of up to RM300,000 per company with loan tenures of up to five years. The collaboration is a joint effort by CIMB Bank and Lazada to provide a holistic solution and added convenience to empower local SMEs to grow their business. Chief Executive of CIMB Group, Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz said that the collaboration is another initiative to meet the evolving and growing digital needs of the customers, particularly in the eCommerce space.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Astro Awani, 19 June 2016)</i></p>
<p>SINGAPORE</p> <p>Business sentiment among SMEs rises for first time in 7 quarters</p>	<p>Business sentiment among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has risen for the first time in seven consecutive quarters, according to the latest SBF-DP SME Index. The six-month forward-looking index showed that the level of business confidence rose by 1.9 points to 51.9 points, after hitting an all-time low of 50 in the last quarter. The Singapore Business Federation (SBF) reported that the score of 51.9 indicates that SMEs are "marginally optimistic" about their growth prospects and expect improvements in their turnover and profits in the second half of 2016. Anticipating a boost in sales, more SMEs also plan to hire more workers over the next six months. The increase in the index is likely to be supported by the stabilising commodity and oil prices, lower volatility in the export markets and positive expectations from the recently announced measures in the Singapore Budget.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Channel News Asia, 16 Jun 2016)</i></p>

<p>THAILAND</p> <p>KTB links with Alibaba to give SMEs a boost</p>	<p>Krungthai Bank (KTB) has signed a collaboration agreement with Alibaba.com and Crown Tech Advance to help Thai SMEs expand their e-commerce business channels. The agreement also aims to promote their products, services and reputation in the global market via the Alibaba.com website. Under the collaboration, the bank would offer its members working capital for international trade plus a business advisory service and an exemption of the corporate online fee for one year. Jerry Wu Zhe, country manager for Alibaba.com Thailand, said that this partnership would enable more Thai SMEs to export quality products to international markets and meet global buyer demand in a more efficient way through e-commerce.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Nation, 17 June 2016)</i></p>
<p>PHILIPPINES</p> <p>Intensify online presence</p>	<p>The regional office of the Department of Trade and Industry-Davao (DTI) urged micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the region to strengthen online presence through learning the dynamics of e-commerce, thus enable MSMEs to seize opportunities in the bigger market. The Union Bank is set to launch its e-Commerce circuit which is an innovative solution that can be utilized by local SMEs for the growth of their businesses and is accessible for the consumers to purchase local products easily. Last January, DTI launched the 'e-Commerce roadmap' that will set the direction of the electronic business transactions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Sun Star Davao, 14 June 2016)</i></p>

WHO DOESN'T LIKE ICE-CREAM?

Fruit popsicle business, PopWagon was established almost three years ago. Its three founders; Ryan Choong, Kenneth Lee and Patricia Lim, were in the fruit tea business prior to this but the business eventually died down and sales became sluggish, forcing them to start cracking their heads over the business.

“Our brainstorming centred around the idea of fresh fruits because, not only was it related to the teas we sold, but it was also practical and could immediately be carried out,” Choong said. They began experimenting with different flavours and worked on improving their product in the initial stages, and introduced the popsicles to the market via their kiosks. And it became an instant hit!



PopWagon carries a mixture of fruit popsicles, including local flavours such as red bean and durian as well as classic favourites like chocolate. They produced on average between 10,000 and 15,000 popsicles a month. “We have had many interested parties approaching us, wanting to carry our popsicles. They are from other states outside of Selangor as well as from Singapore, China, Indonesia, the Middle East and even Africa,” he said.

As the demand for their product grows, Choong said they will be looking into setting up a proper manufacturing factory, complete with all the necessary certifications. Their long-term plan will be exploring the possibility of exporting the products, having recently listed with MATRADE.

(Source: The Star, 13 June 2016)

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