

SME WEEKLY NEWS

(14 March 2016 – 18 March 2016)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>DNeX starts merchant development programme for SMEs</p>	<p>E-commerce services provider for trade facilitation, Dagang NeXchange Bhd (DNeX), has implemented a new merchant development programme for SMEs on its eMarketplace for the halal industry, the Global Halal Exchange (GHX). The merchant development programme is aimed at providing relevant assistance and support for anchor tenants of the GHX to further grow their businesses.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: New Straits Times, 17 March 2016)</i></p>
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>PM pledges equal chances for all Malaysians</p>	<p>The Government strives harder to strengthen women's positions in all fields while ensuring equal opportunities for all, irrespective of gender, race and religion. Prime Minister, YAB Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said various steps had already been taken to aid not only women but everyone with ideas, initiative and the drive to succeed. He cited micro-credit schemes by SME Corp. Malaysia, Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia and Tekun Nasional. SME Corp. Malaysia has programmes to help those keen on doing business.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Star, 18 March 2016)</i></p>
<p>MALAYSIA</p> <p>Technology Park to allocate RM10m fund for bumi entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Technology Park Malaysia (TPM) is expected to allocate RM10 million for the TPM Facilitation Fund over five years to assist bumiputera entrepreneurs explore new economic frontiers. The fund would be allocated in stages, beginning the first half of the year and would benefit more than 30 bumiputera start-up companies in the engineering sector. The initiative will be a platform for bumiputera entrepreneurs to participate in the Bumiputera Entrepreneur Startup Scheme (SUPERB) managed by Unit Peneraju Agenda Bumiputera (TERAJU) and together with other bumiputera entrepreneurs to forge their business networking and obtain hand-holding assistance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: The Star, 17 March 2016)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p> <p>About 40,000 SMEs have registered to enter tax system</p>	<p>About 40,000 SME operators in Thailand have registered with the Revenue Department (RD) to enter into the tax system under a tax amnesty scheme which will require them to keep one single accounting book. The number of registered SME operators entering the tax system has exceeded the set target of about 35,000 SME operators estimated by the RD. RD expects to collect an addition of 30 percent in revenue tax or about 100 billion baht within next year with the e-payment new system.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: Thai PBS, 15 March 2016)</i></p>

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<p>SINGAPORE</p> <p>SME optimism crashes to all-time low as economic outlook crumbles</p>	<p>Turnover Expectations and Profitability Expectations indices from the SBF DP Information SME Index for third quarter 2016 registered weaker quarter-on-quarter readings, reflecting the current state of the business health in Singapore. The overall index score fell 1.1 points to 50.0, marking the first time that overall sentiment turned neutral after six straight years of consistent optimism. The convergence of domestic factors such as low economic growth and rising business costs as well as global headwinds, such as heightened volatility in the financial markets, have impacted SMEs in Singapore.</p> <p><i>(Source: Singapore Business Review, 17 March 2016)</i></p>
<p>INDONESIA</p> <p>Call for lower lending rates for MSMEs</p>	<p>The domestic banking industry is urged to lower lending rates for MSMEs this year in a bid to boost the economy. Micro loans are known to be the most expensive form of credit from the country's commercial banks. Micro loan segment currently carries the highest rates with an average of 19.4 percent per year, according to data compiled recently by major banks. The data showed that the corporate segment offered an annual rate of 11.1 percent, while retail, mortgage and non-mortgage consumer loans offered 12 percent, 11 percent and 12.2 percent, respectively.</p> <p><i>(Source: Jakarta Post, 16 March 2016)</i></p>
<p>AUSTRALIA</p> <p>Two-thirds of Australia's SME owners dip into personal finances to fund their businesses</p>	<p>Scottish Pacific's latest SME Growth Index found that SMEs resorting to personal finances (including credit cards with high interest charges) to support business growth was very high at 65.4%, with 17% regularly drawing on personal finances and 48.4% doing so occasionally. Only 10% of SME owners had never settled business expenses using non-business sources. Meanwhile, SMEs show strong demand for more flexible lending terms as an alternative to standard term bank debt, including alternatives such as debtor finance, invoice discounting and factoring. In the past year, there has been a 20.6% increase in non-bank lending demand, from 13.6 to 16.4% of total SMEs. Findings also show that more than two-thirds (67.9%) of SMEs are willing to pay a higher rate to obtain finance if it means they do not have to provide real estate security.</p> <p><i>(Source: Business Insider Australia, 17 March 2016)</i></p>

“Just nice hotels”



The Tandop group of hotels, founded by Steve Low, was among the first to pioneer budget hotels in shophouses that were decent, cosy and came with good amenities.

According to founder and chief executive officer Steve Low, a native of Alor Setar, when he started Tandop in 1998, travellers often found themselves in a situation where they either had to pay RM50 for a very basic room or up to four times that amount for a nice room.

Low's aim was to fill that Goldilocks zone of accommodations, neither too cheap nor too expensive, and not posh but clean and cosy, with good amenities.

"I like going places and know that not everyone can travel in luxury but would still prefer to be in comfort. I remember my dad, who was quite poor in the past, having trouble looking for reasonably-priced hotels. "It inspired me and made me see the need for good budget hotels," he says.

With its eight boutique and capsule hotels spread across the three northern states of Perlis, Kedah and Penang, the Tandop group of hotels has come a long way since Low's first crack at the hospitality industry back in 1998. He was just 18 when he opened his 25-room motel in Alor Setar.

It also seems like natural progression for him to go into property development as his next step. "It has definitely caught my eye, particularly commercial, residential and hotel development," he says. In fact, he is opening a five-storey hotel this year in Alor Setar.

Source: www.thestar.com.my

Economics and Policy Planning Division
SME Corp. Malaysia
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