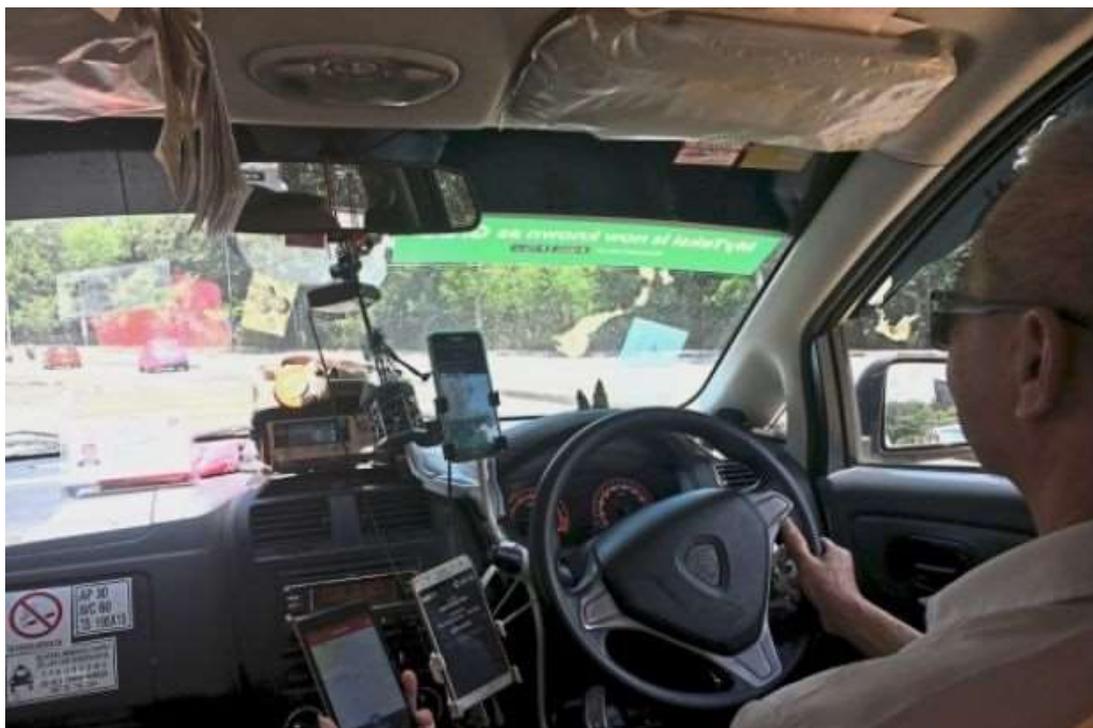


SME WEEKLY NEWS

(4 March 2019 – 8 March 2019)

Countries	Highlights
<p>MALAYSIA</p>	<p>Data as key to unlocking SMEs path to digital</p> <p>Growth Malaysia announced that they will be helping Malaysia SMEs to go Digital. Fave Malaysia along with Grab Malaysia, Maybank Bhd, Malaysian Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), Funding Societies and industry group, Productivity Nexus for Retail & F&B are merging societies. Growth Malaysia is targeting 100,000 merchants by year 2020. The more data that has been accumulated from the merchant, the better for Growth Malaysia partners can find a way on serving the SMEs merchant. The traditional mindset has been changed as more unconventional path of lending to SMEs in being paved.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(DNA, 6 Mac 2019)</i></p>
<p>THAILAND</p>	<p>UOB launches scheme for Thai SMEs</p> <p>Bank and partners will help to identify relevant technology solutions for their business needs and apply for funding for them. United Overseas Bank (UOB) has launched the Smart Business Transformation Programme to help SMEs in Thailand to digitalise. The scheme is aimed at SMEs from the food and beverage, fast moving consumer goods, construction, logistics, retail, wholesale and travel industries, particularly those who are keen to adopt the technology, have regional growth plans and an annual turnover of between 25 million baht (S\$1 million) and 1 billion baht (S\$50 million). The program will be run in collaboration with the state-run Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), the Office of SME Promotion (OSMEP) and the FinLab, a business accelerator jointly run by UOB and SGInnovate. As such, UOB (Thai) will help the Thai SMEs selected for the programme with their regional expansion plans and will also provide working capital funding for the SMEs to implement technology transformation projects.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Source: finews.Asia, 7 March 2019)</i></p>
<p>INDIA</p>	<p>Scaling small businesses with alternative finance</p> <p>Lack of access to finance is one of the commonly cited reasons on constraint of SMEs for growth and scaling up. Generally, commercial banks. The emerging channel in financial remediation is alternative finance which is driven by technology. For example, crowdfunding and peer to peer (P2P) lending are two technological based platform that enable SMEs to obtain lending. However, as of now there is still no proper regulatory framework and has remained a grey area awaiting inputs from Securities and Exchange Board India (SEBI). There is still lack of clarity on their authorization and legal status.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(The Economic Times, 7 March 2019))</i></p>

Vying for a slice of e-hailing price



EaziCar Sdn Bhd still believes that there is a share in the market that it could tap on especially in the e-hailing business. The Johor based company believes that it could capitalized on smaller states which have a higher need for transportation.

Co-founder and chief executive officer Alex Teow says now is the optimal time for the Johor-based startup to make its entry. EaziCar's differentiation factor is not so much in its technology, but in the way it caters to its drivers' and passengers' needs.

EaziCar Sdn Bhd's drivers get a balance of benefits such as medical benefits, subsidised fuel prices and access to cheaper automotive services such as mechanics and car washes as well as steady income. On the other hand, the passengers, on the other hand, get a variety of incentives including cashbacks for their rides.

The company aims to break even by the end of its first year of operations in Iskandar alone. While this may seem a tall order for a tech-based service provider, Teow insists it is not an ambitious target at all. EaziCar is looking at revenue of RM224mil by end-2021.

Economics and Policy Division
SME Corp. Malaysia
13 March 2019