

# Asia (ex-China) Retail & E-commerce

## Biweekly Updates

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## Asia at a Glance



**E-commerce: Lazada allies with Unilever for e-commerce cross-functional collaboration**

Lazada, Alibaba-backed e-commerce retailer in Southeast Asia, has forged an alliance with U.S. personal care giant Unilever to work together on category development, supply chain and fulfilment, data and marketing, social commerce and talent development. The two companies will also look to increase product range, reduce shipping costs and optimize the customer service experience, as a way to resolve issues related to online sale and the associated high delivery costs in Southeast Asia<sup>1</sup>.

**Apparel and footwear: Woodland India plans foray into Japan and South Korea**

Woodland India, an apparel and footwear company from India, plans to make inroads into the Japanese and South Korean markets in the next 12 months. The company is also set to boost its presence in multi-brand stores and to add 120 exclusive stores across India by the end of next year. In fiscal 2016, Woodland India racked up revenue of US\$279.9 million. It has set up 600 exclusive stores plus presence in 5,000 multi-brand stores in India<sup>2</sup>.

## Japan



**Statistics: CPI up 0.3% yoy in February 2017**

Japan's consumer price index added 0.3% yoy in February 2017. By category, prices of eight out of 10 major components increased in February 2017, including clothes & footwear (up 1.3% yoy), education (up 1% yoy), food (up 0.8% yoy), furniture & household utensils (up 0.6% yoy), medical care (up 0.6% yoy), culture & recreation (up 0.4% yoy), transportation & communication (up 0.3% yoy) and miscellaneous (up 0.3% yoy). By contrast, prices of fuel, light & water charges and housing fell 2.1% yoy and 0.2% yoy respectively in February 2017<sup>3</sup>.

**Statistics: Consumer confidence index up 0.7 point mom in March 2017**

Japan's consumer confidence index rose 0.7 point mom in March 2017. The growth was due mainly to an increase in consumer confidence in all four major components, including overall livelihood (up 0.9 point mom), income growth (up 0.7 point mom), employment (up 0.7 point mom) and willingness to buy durable goods (up 0.7 point mom) in March 2017<sup>4</sup>.

**E-commerce: More retailers in Japan offer virtual payment services**

An increasing number of retailers in Japan have accepted payments from tourists via the blockchain technology, aiming to make

shopping more convenient for foreign tourists through avoiding currency exchange burdens. For instance, local electronic giant Bic Camera has started accepting payment by bitcoin for purchases of up to 100,000 yen on a trial basis at its flagship store in Tokyo's Yurakucho and Shinjuku districts. As of December 2016, payment by bitcoin was accepted at 4,500 stores in Japan, including bars, cafes and sushi restaurants. In addition, some local retailers have also introduced electronic payment service to lure more tourists. Japan's major convenience store chain Lawson has started accepting Alipay at some 13,000 branches in Japan since January 2017<sup>5</sup>.

### Apparel: Adastria to acquire Los Angeles casualwear brand Velvet for US\$37 million

Japan's apparel company Adastria announced that it will acquire Los Angeles-based casualwear brand Velvet for US\$37 million (4,144 million yen). The Japanese company believes that the solid platform provided by Velvet will enable Adastria to expand its presence in the North American Market. The acquisition of Velvet will be Adastria's second investment in the North American market. In April 2016, the Japanese company made its first investment in the market though taking a minority stake in San Francisco-based clothing brand Marine Layer<sup>6</sup>.

### Beauty and personal care: Shiseido ends distribution contracts with Burberry

Japan's cosmetics giant Shiseido has decided to terminate its global and domestic distribution agreements with British luxury fragrance brand Burberry. The move comes after Burberry revealed its new partnership

with American beauty brand Coty for further expansion into the global beauty market. Despite the end of its distribution tie-up with Burberry, Shiseido plans to further expand its fragrance business through focusing on long-term licensing and brand acquisition<sup>7</sup>.

### Beauty and personal care: French beauty brand Buly 1803 launches in Tokyo

Buly 1803, a French beauty brand, has opened its first store in Japan in Tokyo's Daikanyama area. With a floor area of 513 sqft, the new store features the brand's entire line of skincare and fragrance products, including oils, powders, clays, perfumes and scented candles. Apart from Tokyo, Buly 1803 has also opened stores in Paris, Taipei, Seoul and London<sup>8</sup>.

### Home products: Muji plans to open 40 new stores in China each year over the next four years

Japan's home product retailer Muji plans to open about 40 new stores per year in China over the next four years, stepping up its expansion in the market. Through the massive store expansion, the retailer is expected to have up to 360 stores in China by 2021, making it the largest overseas market for Muji. The company is also undertaking a joint venture hotel project in collaboration with Japan's Odakyu Electric Railway, aiming to open a Muji-themed hotel in Beijing by the end of 2017. The rooms will feature Muji-branded products, including bedding, curtains and other furnishings. A Muji store will also be set up inside the hotel<sup>9</sup>.

## South Korea

### Statistics: CPI adds 2.2% yoy in March 2017

South Korea's consumer price index advanced 2.2% yoy in March 2017. Prices of all major expenditure categories went up in March 2017, including transport (up 6.4% yoy), food & non-alcoholic beverages (up 3.5% yoy), miscellaneous goods & services (up 2.8% yoy), restaurants & hotels (up 2.3% yoy), alcoholic beverages & tobacco (up 1.4% yoy), education (up 1.3% yoy), clothing & footwear (up 1.2% yoy), housing, water, electricity, gas & other fuels (up 1.1% yoy), healthcare (up 1.1% yoy), furnishings, household equipment & routine maintenance (up 1% yoy), recreation & culture (up 1% yoy) and communication (up 0.2% yoy)<sup>10</sup>.

### E-commerce: UberEats to launch in South Korea

Uber Technologies, an app-based transportation service provider, is mulling the launch of its on-demand meal delivery service UberEats in South Korea. UberEats Korea, which is expected to launch within 2017, will team up with local restaurants, allowing customers to place orders on UberEats's website or mobile app. It will also partner with other delivery apps such as Yogiyo, FoodFly and Baedal Minjok, of which Baedal Minjok is currently the market leader taking up over 50% market share followed by Yogiyo and Baedaltong. Founded in Los Angeles in 2014, UberEats has established presence in 58

cities, covering key Asian cities such as Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong and Thailand<sup>11</sup>.

### Beauty and personal care: Shinsegae's E-mart taps cosmetics industry with new cosmetics brand Scentence

E-mart, South Korea's largest grocery retailer owned by Shinsegae, has launched its first cosmetics brand Scentence, as a way to step into the cosmetic market. Targeting the mass market, Scentence is an eco-friendly brand offering quality cosmetic products at affordable prices. The brand has opened eight retail stores in South Korea and also offered their product online<sup>12</sup>.

### Beauty and personal care: U.S drug store CVS Pharmacy launches South Korean beauty products in tie-up with e-tailer Peach & Lily

U.S drug store CVS Pharmacy has launched more than 100 South Korean beauty products at its 2,100 stores in the U.S. in a partnership with Peach & Lily, an online portal for South Korean beauty products founded by South Korea beauty expert Alicia Yoon. The move aims to offer U.S customers wider access to South Korean beauty products. South Korean beauty brands available for the first time in the U.S at CVS Pharmacy include Frudia skincare, Elisha Coy, JJYoung by Caolion Lab and Ariul Egg. Besides, Peach & Lily will also launch its Peach Slices beauty brand exclusively at CVS Pharmacy<sup>13</sup>.

## Taiwan

### Statistics: CPI up 0.18% yoy in March 2017

Taiwan's consumer price index added 0.18% yoy in March 2017. Prices of seven major expenditure categories moved up in March 2017, including transportation & communication (up 3.85% yoy), miscellaneous (up 1.39% yoy), healthcare (up 1.15% yoy), clothing (up 0.27% yoy), education & entertainment (up 0.25% yoy), food (up 0.13% yoy) and housing (up 0.09% yoy)<sup>14</sup>.

### Statistics: Consumer confidence index up 0.49 point mom in March 2017

Taiwan's consumer confidence index increased by 0.49 point mom to 78.12 in March 2017. By category, consumer confidence related to stock investment moved up by 3 points mom in March 2017, followed by household finance (up 0.60 point mom) and domestic price level (up 0.3 point mom). However, consumer confidence regarding property investment and job market slid 0.7 point mom and 0.3 point mom respectively in March 2017, while confidence as to domestic economic outlook stayed unchanged<sup>15</sup>.

### E-commerce: Uber returns to Taiwan

Uber has returned to the Taiwan market with a reformed riding service focused on cooperation with car rental companies. The decision was made at the urging of its

supporters on the island. After resuming its operations, Uber Taiwan pairs up with car rental companies, instead of individual drivers<sup>16</sup>. Meanwhile, the company also extends its services to remote townships and villages. Previously, Uber ceased its operations in Taiwan from 10 February 2017 for its failure to comply with local transportation service rules<sup>17</sup>.

## Thailand

### Statistics: CPI up 0.8% yoy in March 2017

Thailand's consumer price index moved up by 0.8% yoy in March 2017. By category, prices of transportation & communication and raw food & energy rose 3.3% yoy and 1.2% yoy respectively in March 2017, followed by food & non-alcoholic beverages (up 0.7% yoy), recreation & education (up 0.6% yoy), tobacco & alcoholic beverages (up 0.5% yoy), medical & personal care (up 0.4% yoy) and apparel & footwear (up 0.1% yoy). By contrast, prices of housing & furnishing shrank 1.2% yoy in March 2017<sup>18</sup>.

### Duty-free shops: King Power Group plans 10 billion baht expansion for the next five years

King Power Group, Thailand's largest duty-free operator, plans to allocate 10 billion baht (US\$290.4 million) for business expansion over the next five years. The fund will be used to add five branches in Thailand and abroad, raising its total store count to 14 by 2021. The new stores in Thailand are set to open in

major tourist destinations, with Chiang Mai among the list. The company will also bid for a duty-free shop concession at U-Tapao International Airport, which serves Pattaya and Rayong. For international expansion, King Power is also looking to operate airport duty-free shops in several Asean markets, such as Myanmar and the Philippines<sup>19</sup>.

### E-commerce: DHL eCommerce steps up expansion in Thailand

DHL eCommerce, the e-commerce unit of Deutsche postal service giant DHL Group, is accelerating its expansion in Thailand through optimizing its delivery network nationwide to offer next day delivery in remote areas and extending its pick-up service to include small e-commerce vendors. The move aims to cash in on the thriving Thai e-commerce market, which is expected to grow triple in size to 3.6 billion euros by 2020. Established in January 2016 in Thailand, DHL eCommerce offers end-to-end domestic delivery service, B2C international cross-border shipping and fulfillment solutions service in Thailand<sup>20</sup>.



### Shopping malls: MyTown Shopping Centre unveils in Kuala Lumpur

MyTown Shopping Centre, a retail project jointly developed by Malaysia's conglomerate Boustead Holdings and Luxembourg-based retail banker Ikano, has recently opened in Kuala Lumpur's central business district. With a retail space of 1.6 million sqft, the new

shopping mall comprises more than 400 stores, an outdoor dining area and a two-acre community park for community events. It houses the biggest Ikea and Zara stores in Malaysia, Malaysia's first Best flagship store, Parkson Department Store, Village Grocer, H&M, Golden Screen Cinemas and Food Empire<sup>21</sup>.



### Statistics: Retail sales down 2.5% yoy in February 2017

Singapore's retail sales dropped 2.5% yoy in February 2017. The decline was mainly led by a fall in retail sales of food & beverages (down 17.4% yoy), supermarkets (down 15.4% yoy), department stores (down 15% yoy), wearing apparel & footwear (down 12.5% yoy), mini-marts & convenience stores (down 8.9% yoy) and computer & telecommunications equipment (down 5.7% yoy). Nevertheless, retail sales of petrol services stations and motor vehicles surged 14.6% yoy and 9.4% yoy respectively in February 2017, followed by medical goods & toiletries (up 4.5% yoy), recreational goods (up 4% yoy), furniture & household equipment (up 2.9% yoy), optical goods & books (up 2.6% yoy) and watches & jewellery (up 0.1% yoy)<sup>22</sup>.

### Luxury: Chloé makes debut in Singapore

French luxury fashion house Chloe has opened its first boutique in Singapore at The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands. The new store, covering a floor area of 184 sqm, houses

various products of the brand, including handbags and small leather goods, ready-to-wear items, jewellery, sunglasses and scarves. To celebrate its debut in Singapore, Chloé has also created a limited edition of Faye bag inspired by the city's iconic symbols of the orchid and the phoenix<sup>23</sup>.

### Luxury: Louis Vuitton to launch in Singapore's Changi Airport

French luxury giant Louis Vuitton will open a two-story store at Singapore's Changi Airport in January 2018. It will be the first airport store in Asia Pacific to be directly managed by Louis Vuitton. With an area of 530 sqm, the new store will be located in Terminal 3's departure transit hall. It will feature a tailored merchandise mix catered to travelers<sup>24</sup>.

### Home products: Courts expands its online business

Courts, a Singapore-based furniture and consumer electronics retailer, has doubled its product offerings online to 14,000 products through a collaboration with e-commerce agency SmartOSC. The move is part of Courts' efforts to revamp its e-commerce business. The retailer also plans to enhance its click-and-collect offering, which currently accounts for about half of its online sales. Listed on the Singapore Exchange in 2012, Courts has established its presence in Southeast Asia, with focus in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia<sup>25</sup>.

# Endnotes

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