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## This Week's Highlight : Digital Economy To Drive Malaysia's Double-Digit Growth Aspiration

INTERACTION...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (right) having a dialogue with youths at the Premier Dialogue on the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) at Universiti Malaya Thursday night. Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamalluddin was the moderator. fotoBERNAMA by Faisal Jaafar

KUALA LUMPUR -- Digital economy is the answer to Malaysia's double-digit growth aspiration, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said. "We must push hard and must make a success of Digital Malaysia," he said at the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) Townhall Dialogue here, Thursday.

## This Week's Top Stories

Monday

### IRBM Collects Over RM114 Bln In 2016 Direct Tax

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia (IRBM) collected more than RM114 billion in direct taxes for 2016, slightly lower that the RM116.8 billion in 2015. Deputy Chief Executive Officer(Management) Datuk Mohd Nizom Sairi said Monday, the amount collected is also less than the RM115 billion targeted for the year following the weak economy, as well as fall in global oil prices.

Tuesday

### Felda To Embark On Asset Disposal Exercise

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) will undertake an aggressive asset disposal exercise this year, both locally and overseas, in a bid to stabilise its cash flow, fund other activities and recover 'problematic assets' under Felda Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd (FIC).
Newly-appointed Chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad said Tuesday, the exercise included the sale of its 35 million shares in Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) at RM8.05 per share worth RM280 million.

Wednesday

### US-Malaysia Trade To Maintain Growth - Business Council

KUALA LUMPUR -- The US-ASEAN Business Council is confident that trade between the US and Malaysia will continue to grow under the Donald Trump administration, considering Malaysia's positive trade environment.
Senior Vice-President and Regional Managing Director Michael Michalak said even though the new US administration did not favour the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the fact that Malaysia had taken several reform measures based on the negotiation would make business environment here more positive.

Thursday

### FIC Restructuring To Boost FELDA's Investment - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd's (FIC) restructuring plan is part of the government's efforts to strengthen the business and investment arm of FELDA, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.
"I believe that other efforts will be made to ensure that FELDA's business continues to grow and record profit in order to provide more benefits to the settlers," the prime minister said in a post on his official blog NajibRazak.com Thursday.

Friday

### BNM's International Reserves Reach RM422.9 Bln As At Jan 13

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) international reserves amounted to RM422.9 billion (equivalent to US$94.3 billion) as at Jan 13, 2017 compared with the RM424.2 billion (US$94.6 billion) recorded as at Dec 30, 2016. The reserves position is sufficient to finance 8.7 months of retained imports and is 1.3 times the short-term external debt, the central bank said in a statement Friday.

# SMEbrief

## Chinese Cos Keen To Work With Local SMEs

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's recent visit to China has obviously benefitted small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with the SME Corporation Malaysia (SMECorp) receiving several enquiries from Chinese companies expressing interest to collaborate with their Malaysian counterparts. SMECorp Chief Executive Officer Datuk Hafsah Hashim said Monday, so far, interest was shown by Chinese SMEs involved in the information and communications technology and services industry.

## SMEs Need To Transcend Market Challenges - Riot

KUALA LUMPUR -- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) need to transcend market challenges and empower a strong enterprise as well as technology driven economy in this era of disruptive technologies, said Human Resource Minister Datuk Seri Richard Riot. "It is an innovative approach for you to adopt in order to remain competitive especially with tough economic challenges," he said at the SME and Entrepreneurship Business Awards 2017 here, Wednesday.

## SMEs Need To Go Into E-Commerce To Remain Competitive

KUALA LUMPUR -- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) should start going into e-commerce to remain competitive in the global market, said Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan.

"SMEs need to be more creative in their sales approach and e-commerce is the most creative way for businesses to increase their sales," he told Bernama after launching the Book Truck PTS in Batu Caves here Thursday.

## SMEs Must Utilise Social Innovation To Generate Higher Income

KEPALA BATAS -- Small and medium enterprise (SME) entrepreneurs must utilise social innovation as a new platform in generating higher income, said Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Senator Datuk Seri S.K. Devamany. "Entrepreneurs need to aware of innovation, observev changes in the client's demands, marketing, branding and advertising," he told a press conference after launching ICSMEE's seminar on social innovations, here Thursday.

## Youths Urged To Tap SME Promotion Year Of Opportunities

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) is encouraging young entrepreneurs to take advantage of the government declaring 2017 as the startup and small and medium enterprises (SME) promotion year. Chairman Datuk Noraini Ahmad said Friday, Malaysia's young entrepreneurs are very talented and creative in their businesses, be it offline or online.

# PropUP

# Propertyupdate

## HIL Units To Acquire RM71 Mln A&M Concrete, Show Piece

KUALA LUMPUR -- HIL Industries Bhd's indirect unit, AMJ Construction Sdn Bhd (AMJC), is acquiring 99 per cent equity interest in A&M Concrete Products Sdn Bhd (A&M Concrete) and the entire equity interest in Show Piece Sdn Bhd for RM71 million. AMJC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of HIL, through Satu Tunas Sdn Bhd and HIL Properties Sdn Bhd has signed a conditional share sale agreement with Steven Junior Ng Kwee Leng and Malcolm Jeremy Ng Kwee Seng for the acquisition of A&M Concrete worth RM22 million.

## Developers Call Off RM3.5 Bln Housing Project In Jakarta

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's largest property developers have decided to cancel a joint effort to develop a multi-billion affordable housing project in Jakarta, Indonesia. On Aug 2, 2016, Sime Darby, I&P Group, S P Setia (Indonesia) and PT Hanson International Tbk signed an MOU to jointly develop 500 hectares of land in Maja, Tangerang, which is about 80km from Jakarta. The project had a gross development value of RM3.5 billion, said Sime Darby Bhd in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday.

## Property Investment Gaining Popularity - Consultancy Firm

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property investment would continue to be relatively more popular than other forms of investments in this country for 2017, said property consultancy firm, CH Williams Talhar & Wong Sdn Bhd. Its Managing Director, Foo Gee Jen said Wednesday, this was mainly because the return on investment from the property sector was higher, at about 5.2 per cent, compared to returns from bonds, stock market and mutual funds of about two to three per cent.

## Gadang Unit, Kwasa Land To Develop Residential Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gadang Holdings Bhd via Elegance Sonata Sdn Bhd (ESSB), has entered into a Development Rights Agreement with Kwasa Development (3) Sdn Bhd (KD3) for a residential development in Kwasa Damansara township. The development known as R3-1 is projected to have a gross development value of RM700 million, said Gadang Holdings in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday.

## HBA Proposes Mechanism For PR1MA Home Buyers

KUALA LUMPUR -- There should be an allocation mechanism by the government for buyers of Projek Perumahan 1Malaysia (PR1MA) homes following the new income eligibility which has been increased from RM10,000 to RM15,000.

The House Buyers Association (HBA) said Thursday, as more people from the middle income group are now eligible to own PR1MA homes, the core objective of the programmes, which is to provide affordable homes to the lower income earners should be safeguarded.

# MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

## Scoreboard

Gainers - 300

Losers - 428

Not Traded - 608

Unchanged - 404

Value - 1592327305

Volume - 15803741

### Bursa Malaysia Closes Lower

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia closed lower Friday, dampened by cautious sentiment on US policy uncertainty, offsetting positive factor from China's better than expected gross domestic product growth. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) declined 1.62 points to end at 1,664.89 compared with Thursday's close of 1,666.51. After opening 1.35 points lower at 1,665.16, the index moved within the range of 1,664.89 and 1,667.92 throughout the day. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the market was dominated by cautious sentiment ahead of Donald Trump's inauguration as US president scheduled at midnight (Malaysia time). "All is cautious, focusing on the US despite better China's (gross domestic product) GDP growth," he told Bernama. He said Trump's first speech as US president was expected to give more direction on his government's policy, including that of economy. China's GDP grew 6.8 per cent in the fourth quarter, beating economists forecast of 6.7 per cent, signalling growth was stabilising in the world's second largest economy. Losers edged gainers by 428 to 300, with 404 counters unchanged, 608 untraded and 20 others suspended. Volume decreased to 1.58 billion shares worth RM1.59 billion from Thursday's 1.87 billion shares worth RM1.73 billion. Main Market turnover fell to 1.11 billion units worth RM1.52 billion from Thursday's 1.32 billion units worth RM1.63 billion.

**Exchange Rate**
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

| | Buying | Selling |
|---|---|---|
| USD | 4.4450 | 4.4480 |
| EUR | 4.7321 | 4.7358 |
| GBP | 5.4625 | 5.4679 |
| 100 YEN | 3.8619 | 3.8648 |
| SGD | 3.1112 | 3.1135 |

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

### FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit rebounded to end slightly higher against the US dollar Friday in line with most emerging Asian currencies on the back of a softer greenback overnight. At 6 pm, the local unit was traded at 4.4450/4480 against the US dollar from Thursday's 4.4470/4510. A dealer said the greenback lost its grip following a less hawkish comments from Federal Reserve (Fed) chair Janet Yellen on Thursday. Yellen commented that the US monetary policy is still accommodative and would continue to raise interest rates slowly as not to harm the recovery the Fed has sought to nurture. "Sentiments are also cautious today, ahead of Donald Trump's inauguration as US president later today," said the dealer. The ringgit was traded higher against a basket of major currencies. It appreciated against the Singapore dollar to 3.1112/1135 from 3.1172/1211, and rose against the euro to 4.7321/7358 from 4.7396/7457 on Thursday. The ringgit improved against the yen to 3.8619/8648 from 3.8818/8856 and gained versus the British pound to 5.4625/4679 from 5.4734/4787 Friday.

### Money-Market: BNM's Intervention Helps Short-Term Rates Close Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM22.58 billion from RM27.42 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM7.57 billion from RM10.84 billion. The central bank conducted a RM22.50 billion conventional money market tender and a RM7.50 billion Qard tender, both for three-day money. Earlier, it conducted two conventional money market tenders, a reverse repo tender and four Qard tenders. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.95 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.11 per cent respectively.

### KLIBOR Futures Close Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed untraded Friday. Spot month February 2017 and March 2017 were pegged at 96.55, respectively. Meanwhile, April stood at 96.53 and June 2017 were unchanged at 96.50. Both volume and open interest remained nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.42 per cent.

### KLCI Futures End Mostly Higher On Mild Buying

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed mostly higher Friday on mild buying. Spot month January 2017 and February 2017 added 1.5 points each to 1,666.5, respectively, June 2017 climbed one point to 1,658.5 while March 2017 slipped half-a-point to 1,663. Turnover was lower at 3,396 lots from Thursday's 5,181 lots, while open interest decreased to 27,874 contracts from 30,162 contracts previously. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI ended 1.62 points lower at 1,664.89.

## No Change To Current Types Of Withdrawal, Says EPF

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has yet to receive any proposal to reactivate the withdrawal for computer purchases from the second account. As of now, there are no changes to the current types of withdrawals, said EPF in a statement here Monday to clarify several news reports which carried the remarks by Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong on the proposal to resume the withdrawal facility.

## INCEIF, IFRC Signs MoU To Leverage On Islamic Social Finance

KUALA LUMPUR -- The International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to leverage Islamic social finance opportunities in support of Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian aid programmes. INCEIF President and Chief Executive Officer Daud Vicary Abdullah told Bernama here Monday, the partnership would focus on four main areas namely capacity building for the IFRC team, research and tools to raise funds, social mobilisation and thought leadership and utilisation of humanitarian aid.

## Simpanan Shariah 2017 Sees Take-Up Of RM59 Bln As Of Dec 23

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) says as of Dec 23, 2016, RM59.03 billion of the initial RM100 billion fund allocated for the Simpanan Shariah 2017 had been taken up. In a statement here Tuesday, it said 635,037 members had switched to the Simpanan Shariah, with the majority at 99.41 per cent, being Muslims.

## MFRS 9 Game Changer For M'sian Banks- RAM

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Financial Reporting Standard (MFRS) 9 on 'Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement', which will replace MFRS 139 effective Jan 1, 2018, is poised to be a game changer for the banking sector in Malaysia. In a statement here Tuesday, RAM Rating Services Bhd (RAM) said the new approach would prompt banks to adopt a more risk-based approach in executing their business strategies.

## Onshore FX Market Records Healthy Volume- FMC

KUALA LUMPUR -- The financial markets continue to see healthy activities with the onshore foreign exchange (FX) market recording a daily average volume of US$9.2 billion (US$1 = RM4.46) across all types of FX transactions, according to the Financial Markets Committee (FMC) here Tuesday. The committee, which was set up by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) last May, said the daily average volume for onshore spot and forward market transactions, particularly for the ringgit currency pair, has been above US$2 billion, similar to the level recorded in December 2016.

## FMC: Ringgit Stable Amid Declining Exchange Rate Volatility

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit has been stable amidst global uncertainties and developments in the United States as markets anticipate policy details by the incoming Donald Trump administration. The Financial Markets Committee (FMC), which was set up by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) in May last year, said here Tuesday the exchange rate volatility declined with average ringgit intraday movement narrowing to around 61 points from an average of 82 points in December last year.

## BNM Refutes Media Postings On Electronic Pick-Pocketing

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said Wednesday recent media postings on electronic pick-pocketing on individuals with contactless cards were not true. In a statement here Wednesday, BNM said contactless cards were equipped with safety features that made them a secure mode of payment. "To date, there are no cases of cloned EMV chip cards being reported," it said.

## Bank Negara Maintains OPR At 3.00 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has maintained the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3.00 per cent. BNM said in a statement here Thursday, at the current OPR level, the degree of monetary accommodativeness was consistent with policy stance to ensure the domestic economy continues on a steady growth path, amid stable core inflation, supported by sustained financial intermediation in the economy.

## Bank Islam MD Says Unlikely To Extend Contract

PUTRAJAYA -- Datuk Seri Zukri Samat Thursday said it is unlikely for him to extend helming Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd when his tenure as the bank's managing director ends in June this year. Zukri, who joined the bank in June 2006, said he had spent 'quite a long time' with Bank Islam. "I will be crossing 11 years. I think it is high time the bank needs new and younger leaders to take it to the next level," he told reporters here Thursday.

## 6-Digit Pin Required For Contactless Transaction Above RM250 From July 1, 2017 – CIMB Bank

KUALA LUMPUR -- Contactless debit card holders are required to enter the six-digit personal identification number (PIN) for transactions above RM250 from July 1, 2017, said CIMB Bank Bhd (CIMB). In a statement here Friday, CIMB said, currently, each contactless transaction was limited to RM250 and signature or PIN was required for transactions above the amount. "There are also fraud controls in our system that will detect and deal with the unauthorised transactions based on a certain logic set by the bank," it said.

**Perodua Targets 2017 Sales To Surpass 200,000 Units**

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) has set a sales target of 202,000 units for 2017, a contraction of two per cent from the 207,1000 units recorded in 2016, amid a continuous challenging economic environment. President and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Aminar Rashid Salleh told reporters here Tuesday, said despite a three per cent contraction in sales performance for 2016 as compared to the initial target of 216,000, market share last year grew to 35.7 per cent from 32 per cent, the highest in history.

**AIA PAM Declares Distributions Of RM2 Mln For Islamic Moderate Fund**

KUALA LUMPUR -- AIA Pension & Asset Management Sdn Bhd (AIA PAM) has declared a distribution of RM2 million for its AIA PAM Islamic Moderate Fund. AIA Bhd, the holding company of AIA PAM, said the fund was one of the biggest Islamic balanced private retirement funds in the industry with RM110 million of assets under management (AUM). "As at Jan 17, 2017, the net asset value (NAV) per unit of the fund was RM1.1379," it said in a statement here Friday.

**Malindo Air To Double Passenger Traffic To 10 Mln This Year**

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malindo Air aims to double its passenger traffic from 5.6 million in 2016 to 10 million this year. Chief Executive Officer Chandran Rama Muthy said to achieve the target, the airline would take delivery of 10 new aircraft this year. Speaking to reporters after the launch of the Malindo KL Sentral ticketing office and check-in counter here Tuesday, he said the additional aircraft would enable the airline to increase its flight frequency to several regional destinations.

**Demand For Medical Gloves Reaches Critical Situation - Association**

KUALA LUMPUR -- The demand for medical gloves is not only growing but has reached a critical situation as some countries are badly hit by the Bird flu and are running out of stock. In a statement here Tuesday, the Malaysian Rubber Glove Manufacturers Association (MARGMA) said it was optimistic of the usual eight to 10 per cent annual growth for medical gloves and forecast higher revenue due to higher selling prices.



**Go Auto Aims To Sell 1,100 Units Of Haval H1 This Year**

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- Go Auto Sales Sdn Bhd, manufacturer and the only authorised distributor of China's Great Wall Motor (GWM) vehicles and Haval Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) in Malaysia, aims to sell 1,110 units of the Haval H1 model unveiled Tuesday. Go Auto Chief Executive Officer, Ahmad Azam Sulaiman, said the sales target for H1, previously known as Haval M4, would surpass the sales 986 units last year.

**Malaysia's CPI Up 2.1 Pct In 2016**

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is a measure of inflation, rose 2.1 per cent to 116.9 in 2016 compared to 114.8 registered in 2015, said the Department of Statistics Malaysia. This was following a 3.9 per cent rise in the index for food and non-alcoholic beverages, which carries a weightage of 30.2 per cent to the index. In a statement here Wednesday, the Statistics Department said the increases were, nevertheless, partly offset by the transport group which had dropped 4.6 per cent due to lower prices for petrol.

**TCRS Restaurants Eyes 18-19 Pct Growth In Sales This Year**

KUALA LUMPUR -- TCRS Restaurants Sdn Bhd expects a 18-19 per cent growth in sales this year, backed by its massive expansion plans, both locally and overseas, as well as the introduction of new products. Co-Founder/Chief Executive Officer, Wong Kah Lin told reporters here Wednesday, last year, the group's sales rose by seven per cent to over RM100 million.

### M Xpress Eyes More Market Share In Int'l Shipment

SUBANG -- M Xpress, formerly known as Sure-Reach Worldwide Express Sdn Bhd, aims to capture between two and three per cent market share of the international shipment market within two years, Group Managing Director Peter Chan told reporters here Wednesday. He said M Xpress was strengthening its network and connection in the country and the global arena by partnering the largest independently-owned courier network in the world, SkyNet Worldwide Express and BOXiT Holdings Sdn Bhd.

### Agro Capital Allocates RM30 Mln To Grow Aquaculture Business

KUALA LUMPUR -- Aquaculture company, Agro Capital Management Bhd (ACMB) has allocated RM30 million to acquire more farmland in the country for aquaculture farming, Executive Chairman Datuk Mohd Nasir Baba said. Speaking to reporters here Wednesday, he said Agro Capital planned to own 405 hectares of land and reach a production capacity of 500 metric tonnes of aquaculture produce by the end of next year.

### M'sia Poised To Become Regional Gateway For Logistics, Delivery Services

SUBANG JAYA -- Malaysia has the right characteristics to become a regional logistics and delivery services gateway, said Deputy Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Jailani Johari. "This is because of our country's strategic location, steady economic growth, good regional linkages and strong transport infrastructure," he said at a signing ceremony here Wednesday.

### Pos Malaysia Eyes RM30 Mln Revenue From FlexiPrepaid

SHAH ALAM -- Pos Malaysia Bhd targets to rake in an additional revenue of RM30 million through its latest delivery service, FlexiPrepaid. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Mohd Shukrie Mohd Salleh told reporters here Wednesday, FlexiPrepaid was a nationwide premium delivery service that is connected to a tracking system. The service also included free pick-up for 100 packages and above, giving cost-savings of up to 50 per cent compared to other similar services, he said.

### Commodities Sector Targets Export Revenue Growth Of 5-8 Pct For 2017

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- The commodities sector has targeted export revenue growth of between five and eight per cent this year with the strengthening of the equity market and new ventures. Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong told reporters here Wednesday, the strengthening of the commodities sector in 2017 would be achieved through free trade negotiations with Iran and new market opportunities in West Asia and South Europe.

### F&N To Expand Export Market, Banks On Thailand

KUALA LUMPUR -- Fraser & Neave Holdings Bhd (F&N) will continue to focus on increasing exports to more than 30 per cent this year, supported by its own brands such as the Teapot condensed milk. Chief Executive Officer Lim Yew Hoe told reporters here Thursday, said growing its export business, which represented the third pillar of this food and beverage company, was a natural progression after successfully expanding its business in Thailand.

### THHE Destini Secures RM738.9 Mln OPV Contract

KUALA LUMPUR -- THHE Destini Sdn Bhd has secured a RM738.9 million contract for the supply, delivery, testing and commissioning of three units of offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) for Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday, THHE Destini said, the contract, for 42 months, was expected to contribute positively to its earnings and net assets per share for the financial years ending Dec 31, 2017 to Dec 31, 2020.

### Texas Chicken To Open More Outlets In Northern Region

GEORGE TOWN -- Texas Chicken Malaysia, one of the largest global fast-food restaurant chains specialising in fried chicken, aims to expand its presence in Malaysia, especially in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. Chairman of Texas Chicken franchise holder, Envictus International Holdings Ltd, Datuk Jaya J B Tan told reporters here Thursday, following the opening of its first outlet in Penang here, Texas Chicken Malaysia wanted to open another one in Kedah.

### Firefly Lowers Passenger Target For 2017 To 1.6 Mln

SUBANG JAYA -- Firefly Sdn Bhd has lowered the passenger target for 2017 to 1.6 million from 1.7 million last year due to lower demand and increased operational costs on the back of a softer ringgit. Chief Executive Officer Ignatius Ong told reporters here Friday, although the ringgit's depreciation was good in attracting foreign customers into Malaysia, it also needed to allow Malaysians to travel abroad to places as Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand.

### E-Plus Debuts On NSX

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia-based events management company, E-Plus Limited (E-Plus), debuted on the National Stock Exchange of Australia (NSX) Monday, with a market capitalisation valued at RM40 million. In a statement here Monday, E-Plus said under the stock code of 8EP, the company issued 245 million shares with an initial market price of AUD$0.05 (RM0.16) per share.

### Not Taking The Company Private - FGV

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd's (FGV) board of directors Monday clarified that there has been no discussions on taking the company private. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday, FGV said the announcement was made after making due enquiries with Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) as the major shareholder.

### MATRADE To Lead Over 700 Companies To China This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE), in collaboration with private exhibitors, aims to lead more than 700 companies on a mission to expand Malaysian brands into China's second and third tier cities this year. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud said at a briefing here Monday, with the agency coordinating the participation of Malaysian companies' in trade fairs under the public private partnership (PPP), he is optimistic of achieving the target of 100 more companies from last year.

### World Bank: Provide Opportunities To Learn To Deliver Quality Public Services

KUALA LUMPUR -- Governments and international development agencies can improve delivery of public services, even with limited resources, by providing opportunities and space for learning, said the World Bank in a statement here Monday. It said enrolments in schools for example had increased especially among girls, but the quality of education often had not.

### M'sia's Investment Prospects Remain Bright - MICCI

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's investment prospects remain bright despite the unexciting global economic growth, says Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI). Its President, Datuk Wira Jalilah Baba told reporters here Monday, investments in Malaysia were still encouraging on the back of a stable gross domestic product. "Malaysia is still attractive, according to the (Global) Competitive Report. We are still among the top countries and a top choice in ASEAN, as well as being investor-friendly," she said.

### MPIC Establishes RM30 Mln Oil Palm Mechanisation Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC) will establish an Oil Palm Mechanisation Fund. Its Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong told a press conference here Tuesday, that the fund is being launched with an allocation of RM25 million from the government, while RM5 million has been contributed by the private sector.

### 1.2 Mln People Ride MRT During Promotional Period

KUALA LUMPUR -- Some 1.2 million people rode the first phase of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) line between Sungai Buloh and Semantan since it began operations on Dec 16 until Monday. Muhammad Isom Azis, Chief Operating Officer of the Sungai Buloh–Kajang Line, Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd, said here Tuesday, the MRT received between 27,000 and 30,000 commuters on average each day during the promotional one-month free ride.

### CEO Confidence Rises Despite New Risks, Uncertainty - PWC

KUALA LUMPUR -- Chief executive officers (CEOs) from around the globe are becoming more confident about the prospects and outlook of the global economy, said PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in a statement here Tuesday. PwC, in its 20th annual survey of CEOs worldwide, said 38 per cent of them were confident about their company's growth prospects in the next 12 months, while 29 per cent believed that the global economy would pick up this year.

### Tan Chong Registers New Unit In Thailand

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tan Chong Motor Holdings Bhd has registered a wholly-owned unit, Tan Chong Mekong Trading (Thailand) Co Ltd (TCMT), in Thailand Tuesday. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday, Tan Chong said, the principal activity of TCMT was to carry on business as an international trading centre with the objective to procure raw materials, components and parts for industries such as car for domestic wholesale trade and export.

**Strong Engagements Between M'sia And UK To Continue, Says UK Envoy**

KUALA LUMPUR -- British High Commissioner to Malaysia, Vicki Treadell, gave assurance that strong engagements between the United Kingdom and Malaysia will continue amid the former's exit from the European Union (EU). In a statement here Tuesday, she said both countries would have a unique opportunity to work together across two Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018 and 2020 on issues including trade and counter extremism.

**M'sia, Japan Ink MoC To Enhance Cooperation In Information & Communications**

PUTRAJAYA -- Malaysia and Japan have agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of information and communications sectors, especially on broadcasting and cybersecurity. This follows the signing of Memorandum of Co-Operation (MoC) on Information and Communications between Malaysia's Communications and Multimedia Minister Dr Salleh Said Keruak and Japan's Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Sanae Takaichi here Tuesday.

**Malaysia Digital Hubs To Be Launched In March**

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia Digital Hubs for the start-up community in the digital economy is expected to be launched in March, Treasury Secretary-General, Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah told reporters here Wednesday. The launch, together with other details including the location of the hub, are expected to be announced by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Global Transformation Forum (GTF) 2017. Mohd Irwan Serigar said the digital hub would be an endeavour through multiple collaborations involving the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) and the private sector.

**Unemployment Rate Improves In November**

KUALA LUMPUR -- The unemployment rate in November 2016 improved from 3.5 per cent in October 2016 to 3.4 per cent, said the Statistics Department in a statement here Wednesday. "However, on a seasonally-adjusted month-on-month basis, the unemployment rate in November 2016 was 3.6 per cent, up 0.1 percentage point from the preceding month," it said.

**US-M'sia Trade Will Continue Growing, Says US-ASEAN Business Council**

KUALA LUMPUR -- The US-ASEAN Business Council is confident that trade between the US and Malaysia will continue to grow under the Donald Trump administration, considering Malaysia's positive trade environment. Senior Vice-President and Regional Managing Director Michael Michalak told reporters here Wednesday, even though the new US administration did not favour the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the fact that Malaysia had taken several reform measures based on the negotiation would make business environment here more positive.

**Modenas Enters Into RM68.9 Mln RRPT With Kawasaki**

KUALA LUMPUR -- DRB-HICOM Bhd's unit, Motosikal Dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd (Modenas), has entered into a Recurrent Related Party Transactions (RRPT) with Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd worth RM68.9 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday, DRB-HICOM said, the nature of the transactions included the provision of technical support, payment of royalties and supply of completely-knocked-down components for motorcycles by Kawasaki to Modenas, as well as, the supply of components to Kawasaki by Modenas.

**FIC New Board Members In Early Feb - Shahrir**

JERANTUT -- Felda hopes to announce the new board of directors for Felda Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd (FIC) in early February. Its chairman, Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad said the board members who resigned could still make a return to the board. "Datuk Hanapi Suhada (FIC director) also resigned. Let me take another look and discuss it with the management and the minister responsible," he told reporters here Wednesday.

**Exim Bank Allocates RM1 Mln For CSR Programmes**

KUALA LUMPUR -- Export-Import Bank of Malaysia Bhd (Exim Bank) has allocated RM1 million annually for its continued corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes. Chairman Datuk Mat Noor Rawi told reporters here Friday, the bank plans nationwide CSR programmes this year.

**VCAM Launches ASEAN 5 ESG Opportunity Fund**

KUALA LUMPUR -- VCAP Asset Managers Sdn Bhd (VCAM) has launched its ASEAN 5 ESG Opportunity Fund, strengthening its position as a key player in the region in promoting sustainable and responsible investing. In a statement here Friday, VCAM said the fund is an actively managed equity growth and value fund that aims to provide returns to investors by selectively investing in listed securities within its reference benchmark constituent list, the FTSE4Good ASEAN 5 Index.

## IWK Inks Collaboration Agreement With Tokyo-Based TGS

KUALA LUMPUR -- Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd (IWK) Monday inked a collaboration agreement with Tokyo Metropolitan Sewerage Service Corporation (TGS) to train 30 workers from both IWK and the National Water Services Commission Malaysia (SPAN) in Tokyo, Japan starting this year till 2018. IWK Acting Chief Executive Officer Mohamed Haniffa Abdul Hamid said in his speech, the training in the areas of operations and maintenance of sewerage system would also be supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Bureau of Sewerage Services of Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

## AirAsia To Host First Hackathon Event

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia will host its first open innovation hackathons event at its newly opened RedQ headquarters in Sepang from March 18-19. In a statement here Monday, the airline said the event named 'Airvolution 2017: Spearheading Innovation in ASEANn' will be participated by 20 teams which will go head-to-head to create new applications and tools to address a travel-related challenge to be revealed later.

## No Plans To Withdraw Flights To Perth, Says Malaysia Airlines

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines said it has no plans to discontinue flights to Perth or any other Australian destinations. This was in response to Tourism and Culture Minister Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz's statement that a number of Tourism Malaysia offices abroad would be closed following discontinuation of Malaysia Airlines' flights to the cities involved. "Malaysia Airlines has no plans to withdraw its daily services to Perth or any other Australian cities (that it flies to)," the carrier said in a statement here Monday.

## M'sians Can Now Have A Sneak Peek Of HSR At KL Sentral

PETALING JAYA -- Malaysians can now get a preview of what the high speed rail (HSR) has to offer at the China High Speed Railway Experience Cube at KL Sentral. The exhibition consists of a cockpit stimulator and passenger seats together with a virtual reality device to give visitors a holistic experience. Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) chairman Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar, who launched the exhibition, told reporters here Monday this was a good opportunity for the public to prepare for the HSR era with the KL-Singapore link slated to be completed by 2026.

## IRIS Appoints Choong COO Of Trusted Identification Business Segment

KUALA LUMPUR -- IRIS Corp Bhd has appointed Choong Choo Hock Chief Operating Officer (COO) to head its Trusted Identification business segment. "The appointment is of immediate effect. Choong will lead the Trusted Identification manufacturing operations and responsible for driving performance and delivering IRIS' innovations to markets worldwide," it said in a statement here Tuesday.

## Perlis Launches Latest Ecotourism Two-In-One Homestay Package

KANGAR -- Perlis' latest launch of the ecotourism product - Ecotourism Package and Perlis-Satun Homestay Package, Thailand - is expected to boost the state's tourism industry. Tourism Malaysia deputy director-general Datuk Chong Yoke Har said the 'two-in-one' product was aimed at promoting the benefits of a homestay vacation experience between the two countries in conjunction with Visit ASEAN Year 2017 through a single package.

## Senai-Desaru Expressway Offers 10 Pct Discount For CNY

JOHOR BAHRU -- In conjunction with the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebration, the Senai-Desaru Expressway Berhad (SDEB) is offering a 10 per cent discount on toll rates at the E22 Expressway near here. SDEB chief executive Officer Jamal Abd Nasir Taharim Deb said in a statement here Tuesday, the discount applied to all users of Class One vehicles, whether via electronic payment, Touch n Go or Smart Tag.

## Langkawi Taxis Use Wowora Apps To Smoothen Service

LANGKAWI -- The Langkawi Taxi Owners and Drivers Association will expand the use of Wowora application among its members following the success of the trial project implemented since December. Its president Ramli Ahmad told Bernama here Tuesday, so far, about 100 taxi operators had signed up to use the application that could be downloaded from either Google Play or the App Store on their smartphones.

## Prasarana May Extend 50 Pct Discount To Other Lines

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prasarana Malaysia Berhad does not rule out the possibility of extending the 50 per cent discounted fare promotion from 6am to 7am to its other lines in the future.

Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Zohari Sulaiman told reporters here Wednesday, thus far, the promotion offered to commuters on Rapid KL Light Rail Transit (LRT) Kelana Jaya line beginning Sept 16 last year, had received encouraging response.

## Mustapa Appoints Nik Norzrul As New MSBC Chairman

KUALA LUMPUR -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed has appointed Datuk Dr Nik Norzrul Thani as Chairman for the Malaysia Singapore Business Council (MSBC), effective Jan 1, 2017. In a statement here Friday, MSBC said Nik Norzrul replaces Datuk Lim Say Chong, the Chairman of Carlsberg Brewery Malaysia Bhd. Nik Norzrul is Chairman and Senior Partner of Zaid Ibrahim & Co. and a member of ZICOlaw network.

# 2017, Year Of New Opportunities - Feng Shui Master

By Soon Li Wei

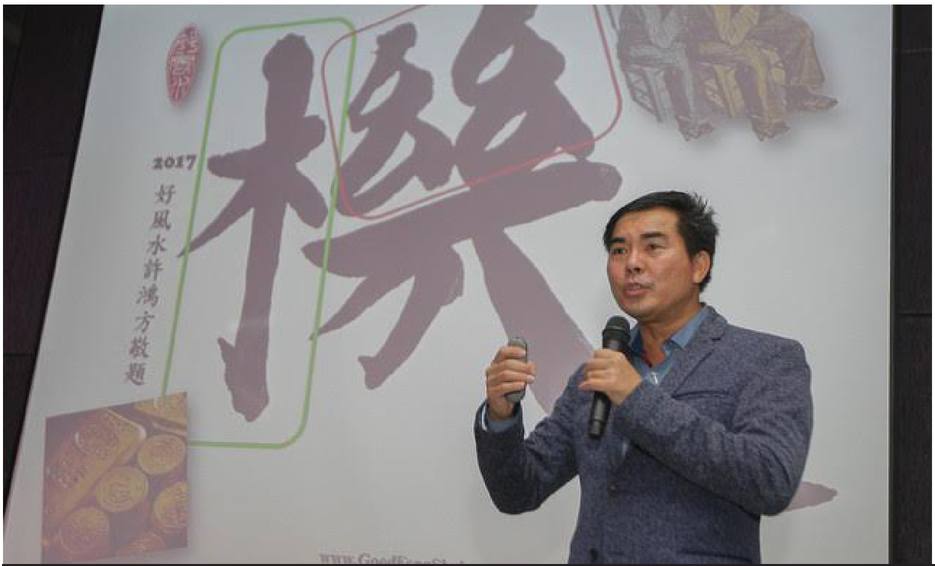
KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- 2017, the year of the 'fire Rooster' in the Chinese zodiac is dubbed as the "Year of New Opportunities", says a Feng Shui master.

Kenny Hoo said based on the annual 'Ba Zi' and 'Gua' in Feng Shui, there would be light at the end of the tunnel and a lot of good opportunities this year.

"Basically, there will be challenges in various fields during the first quarter of the year; however there will be signs of improvement after that," he told Bernama during a Chinese New Year dinner organised by AkzoNobel here.

Hoo said 2017 would be a good year for business players to plan ahead with greater innovation and creativity for their greater advancement.

"There will be more new and innovative business opportunities emerging this year. Wise selection of business partners can bring about unprecedented returns in the mid to long term.




NEW OPPORTUNITIES...Feng Shui master Kenny Hoo has predicted 2017, the year of the 'fire Rooster', to be a good year for business players to plan ahead. - fotoBERNAMA by Mohd Hilmizudin Daud

## WATER, KEY ELEMENT

"However, for those who cannot withstand the wave of changes and challenges, they will be easily wiped off from the market space," he cautioned.

Hoo said 'water' is the key element for 2017 as shown in the annual Ba Zi chart, which is the mediating factor to bring about agreement or reconciliation for better harmony and prosperity.

"Water is synonymous with blue, hence Blue is the colour of 2017. Incorporating more blue into your home or workspaces, or using blue items such as daily wear and furniture will boost one's luck and energy level," he said.

With regard to the 12 Chinese Zodiacs, Hoo said 2017 would be "a lovely and romantic year" for those born in the year of the Rat, Monkey and Dragon.

"There will be lots of couples lining up for marriage, moving into new houses and having babies. Painting some Red or Purple colour in the southeast sector of their house can further enhance the baby luck for married couples.

## EXTRA CARE IN HEALTH

However, Hoo said, the three zodiacs must take extra care in health, particularly with regard to the digestive, respiratory system, liver and eyesight, in the months of February and August.

He said those born in the year of the Snake, Rooster and Ox, would also have lots of advancement academically this year but must be extra careful in personal safety when travelling in March, September and December.

2017 will be a busy year for those born in the year of the Boar (pig), Rabbit and Goat as there will be more travelling; thus they must be extra careful while on the road in the months of March, May and September.

"There will be higher chance for them in property transactions, move to new houses or office space in 2017; minor renovations such as repainting the existing house or office can enhance health and wealth luck," said Hoo.

For the Tiger, Horse and Dog, this year will be fruitful and prosperous as they will have greater wealth and better luck, especially when it comes to love, relationship, wealth and career advancement.

-- BERNAMA

## LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :



# BURSA MALAYSIA

### Bursa: FBM KLCI To Test 1,680 Next Week

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to trend higher next week with the FBM KLCI to hit the 1,680 level on better sentiment as the ringgit improves against the US dollar.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan, said sentiment was expected to improve prior to Donald Trump's inauguration Friday as US President, as his speech was expected to provide more details on his government's policies, including economic policy.

He said recent decisions by the European Central Bank to maintain its interest rate, as well as optimism from the Japanese central bank and Bank Negara Malaysia on their respective country's economic growth would also help to improve sentiment.

"The fundamentals are there, it's just the sentiment that keeps the local stock market subdued this week," he told Bernama.

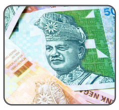
Nevertheless, he said the market bellwether FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) had improved 30 points or 1.8 per cent this month, a good indication for the rest of the year.

He added that the support level for next week was seen at 1,660 and the resistance level at 1,680.

For the week just-ended, the local index trended mostly lower, dominated by cautious sentiment on the US policy after Trump assumes office.

On a week-to-week basis, the FBM KLCI fell 7.61 points to 1,664.89 from 1,672.5 last Friday.Weekly turnover fell to 9.1 billion units worth RM8.25 billion from 11.99 billion units worth RM9.69 billion last Friday.

Main market volume narrowed to 6.08 billion shares valued at RM7.74 billion from 7.99 billion shares valued at RM8.98 billion previously.



### Ringgit To Trade Softer Against US Dollar Next Week

By Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to be softer against the US dollar and trade between RM4.45 and RM4.48 next week, as investor sentiment is dampened by expectations of US interest rates increase.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan, said the US Federal Reserve chair, Janet Yellen, had already hinted of further interest rate increases following a strong employment and inflation data released last Wednesday.

"Bank Negara Malaysia's decision to maintain the overnight policy rate at 3.00 per cent is also seen as dovish, and coupled with the softer commodity prices, it will drag the ringgit lower," he told Bernama.

Meanwhile, Hong Leong Research said the ringgit had strengthened 0.22 per cent week-on-week to 4.4490 against the greenback but slipped against the currencies of seven of the G10 countries amid signs of unsustainable recovery in oil prices.

"We are slightly bearish on the ringgit against the US dollar next week, as the anticipated retreat in market activity ahead of the Chinese New Year holidays will stem buying support.

"However the local note could still advance if oil prices recover further and on a softer US dollar, but we reckon gains will be modest at best," it said.

For the week just-ended, the ringgit was traded higher at 4.4450/4480 against the greenback compared with last Friday's 4.4600/4640.

The local note also ended mostly higher against other major currencies except for the British pound.

The ringgit appreciated versus the Singapore dollar to 3.1112/1135 from 3.1243/1282 last Friday, increased against the yen to 3.8619/8648 from 3.8898/8949 and improved against the euro to 4.7321/7358 from 4.7468/7524.

It fell against the British pound to 5.4625/4679 from 5.4439/4497 previously.

**Short-Term Rates Likely To Be Steady Next Week**

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are likely to be steady next week with Bank Negara Malaysia expected to offer tenders to absorb excess funds from the system.

For the week just-ended, the overnight rate was quoted at 2.95 per cent while the one-, two- and three-week rates were at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 and 3.11 per cent, respectively.

The central bank intervened on a daily basis to mop up surplus liquidity by conducting conventional money markets, repo tenders, reverse repo tenders and Commodity Murabahah programmes.

It also conducted Qard tenders and range maturity auction tenders.

The total liquidity surplus for the week just-ended was lower at RM22.58 billion in conventional operations against RM23.08 billion last Friday.

Islamic funds decreased to RM7.57 billion from RM7.63 billion previously.

The benchmark three-month interbank rate stood at 3.42 per cent

**KLCI Futures Likely To Trend Higher Next Week**

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI)futures contract is expected to perform better next week, in line with the anticipated uptrend in the cash market.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan, said the benchmark FBM KLCI was anticipated to hit the 1,680 level next week on improving sentiment amid a stronger ringgit.

"Our fundamentals are still intact, just sentiment that weighed down the market," he told Bernama.

He said this was evidenced by the optimism by Bank Negara Malaysia that the country's economy would stage a recovery this year.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2017 lost 8.5 points to 1,666.5, February 2017 and March 2017 fell seven points each to 1,666.5 and 1,663, respectively, and June 2017 eased 1.5 points to 1,658.5.

Turnover for the week declined to 22,831 lots from last Friday's 30,185 lots and open interest eased to 27,874 contracts from 30,026 contracts previously.

The benchmark FBM KLCI ended the week 7.61 points weaker at 1,664.89 from 1,672.5 last Friday.

**CPO Futures To Move Between RM3,100-RM3,150 Next Week**
By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures prices are expected to trade lower at between RM3,100 and RM3,150 a tonne next week on profit-taking ahead of the Chinese New Year holidays which begin on Jan 28.

Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader, Jim Teh, said as the festive season drew nearer, physical buying especially from China would likely decline as Malaysia's third-largest palm oil importer had stocked up the commodity early in the week.

"Furthermore, the palm oil refiners are also unlikely to keep the stocks during the holiday," he told Bernama.

"The RM3,100 to RM3,150 price range can be seen as 'ang pow' for the oil palm planters as the prices are much higher than the planting cost," he said.

Teh pointed out that the CPO prices would also be tracking rival soybean oil prices on the regional market next week, as the narrowing spread between the two commodities would allow consumers to have more options to choose.

He said the weather was unlikely to play a role next week as the monsoon season in the country was over.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2017 fell RM46 to RM3,234 a tonne, February 2017 lost RM40 to RM3,142, March 2017 eased RM19 to RM3,101 a tonne and April 2017 declined RM30 to RM3,053 a tonne.

Weekly turnover slid to 202,079 lots from 281,378 lots last week while open interest narrowed to 232,573 contracts from 252,506 contracts previously.

On the physical market, January South fell RM10 to RM3,300 per tonne.

**Rubber Market To Trade Cautiously Next Week**
By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to trade cautiously next week due to profit-taking after prices surged to nearly five-year highs this week, a dealer said.

The tyre-grade SMR 20 rose to its highest level since May 2012 to close at 1,011 sen per kg on Monday.

The dealer said the market direction for next week would be unclear as investors had been growing wary of the recent rally, while on the other hand, physical supply remained tight.

The dealer said tighter supplies had driven the local rubber prices upwards after Thailand was hit by its worst floods in more than 30 years recently.

However, she said some traders were taking a wait-and-see approach after rubber prices hit historical highs.

"The rebound in crude oil prices is also expected to cap the fall," she told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 at noon slid 28.5 sen to 950 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk added 66 sen to 752 sen a kg.

The 5 pm closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 decreased 32 sen to 924 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk advanced 60 sen to 751 sen a kg.

**KLIBOR Futures To Remain Quiet Next Week**

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to remain quiet next week.

For the week just-ended, the market was untraded with open interest remaining nil.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, new spot month February 2017 and March 2017 remained pegged at 96.55, respectively.

Meanwhile, April stood at 96.53 and June 2017 were unchanged at 96.50.

Contract month January 2017 expired at 96.55 on Thursday.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market remained at 3.42 per cent on Friday.

**KLTM To Stage Mild Rebound Next Week**
By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is likely to improve slightly next week on technical rebound as the market ended sharply lower on Friday.

A dealer told Bernama that the market would get support from China ahead of the Chinese New Year festival.

However, the new US President Donald Trump's inauguration on Friday is likely to cause market anxiety, thus limiting demand from traders in the tin market.

Tin price is expected to hover around US$21,000 per tonne throughout next week.

On Friday, the tin price closed at US$20,650 a tonne, down US$300 from US$20,950 a tonne on Friday last week.

On the London Metal Exchange (LME), the tin price fell US$325 to US$20,750 a tonne from US$21,075 a tonne previously.
Weekly volume on the KLTM fell to 157 tonnes from 187 tonnes last week with China, South Korea, Japan, Pakistan, Brazil and local buyers accounting for the bulk of the trade.

The price differential between the KLTM and LME stood at a discount of US$100 a tonne from a discount of US$125 a tonne last Friday

**Gold Futures Expected To Trend Higher Next Week**

By Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trend higher next week, tracking the US Commodity Exchange's gold futures market, said a dealer.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer, Viola Wong, said the weakness in the ringgit was expected to be the key factor to lift the demand for gold.

"Ringgit is expected to trend lower on the back of a stronger US dollar next week after the US President Donald Trump's inauguration on Friday.

"This will continue to boost foreign demand as well and provide support to the gold price, as the ringgit-based gold becomes cheaper to foreign buyers," Wong told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2017 slid three ticks to RM170.75 a gramme and February 2017 lost five ticks to RM171 a gramme.

March 2017, April 2017 and June 2017 fell 12 ticks each to RM171.45, RM171.5 and RM172.65 a gramme, respectively.

Weekly turnover increased to 62 lots worth RM1.07 million from 56 lots worth RM964,400 recorded last week.

Open interest on Friday was higher at 263 contracts from 233 contracts previously.