BERNAMA
MALAYSIAeBiz
WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP 29 MAY - 2 JUNE 2017

Edition167
June 2, 2017

This Week's Highlight : I Will Never Sell Malaysia's Sovereignty - Najib

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak looking at the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park development plan at the official opening of China Construction Bank (Malaysia) Bhd in Kuala Lumpur Friday. -- fotoBERNAMA by Nur Ain Shafinas

KUALA LUMPUR -- The real and transformative results of the excellent relations that Malaysia and China have built do not compromise the country's sovereignty one bit, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said. "I will never sell Malaysia's sovereignty," he said before launching the opening of China Construction Bank (Malaysia) Bhd here Friday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

8 Ministries Achieve 100 Pct KPI Target

PUTRAJAYA -- Eight ministries achieved the 100 per cent key performance indicator (KPI) target under the Ministry Bumiputera Economic Empowerment (PEB) programme last year (2016), said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. They are the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry; Home Ministry; Foreign Ministry; Youth and Sports Ministry; Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry; Rural and Regional Development Ministry; Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry; and Women, Family and Community Development Ministry.

TUESDAY

EPF Posts RM11.79 Billion Investment Income Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund's (EPF) investment income jumped 73.9 per cent to RM11.79 billion in the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 (1Q17) from RM6.78 billion in the same quarter last year. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan said in a statement Tuesday, the bullish performance was boosted by the significantly improved domestic and global markets in the quarter under review.

WEDNESDAY

PM Announces Initiatives To Turn Cyberjaya Into Smart City

CYBERJAYA -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Wednesday announced 11 major projects and initiatives to turn Cyberjaya into a smart city model. They include the Cyberjaya City Centre, the Cyberjaya Innovation Fund for the Future (CIFF), the Financial Technology (FinTech) Regional Hub, the Cyberjaya Futurise Centre, the Blue Ocean Entrepreneurs Township (BOET).

THURSDAY

BNM Approves RHB- AMBANK Merger Talks

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Bank Bhd and AMMB Holdings Bhd have obtained approval from Bank Negara Malaysia to commence discussions for a proposed merger between the two parties. "We are confident that if the proposed merger takes place, it will create greater synergy for the enlarged banking group, benefiting our shareholders, customers, employees and all other stakeholders," said Group Managing Director for RHB Bank Datuk Khairussaleh Ramli in a statement Thursday.

FRIDAY

RHB-AmBank To Lead In Asset Management, Insurance, Broking

KUALA LUMPUR -- The RHB Bank Bhd (RHB) and AMMB Holdings Bhd (AmBank) merger would allow the enlarged entity to claim the number one spot for asset management, general insurance and equity broking, and the number two spot for Islamic banking in Malaysia, according to analysts. In a statement Friday, AllianceDBS Research said if the deal goes through, the merged entity would also become Malaysia's fourth largest bank with an estimated asset of RM386 billion, and ASEAN's ninth largest in terms of assets.

SMEbrief

Entrepreneur Icon Develops Smart Gadget

TAIPING -- Online business enthusiast, Perak Icon Entrepreneur 2016 Shahrulnizam Baharuddin has developed and marketed Vantage In Car Intelligent Gadget, a smart device for cars in Malaysia. The 32-year-old Taiping entrepreneur said Monday, he had sold 2.9 million units of the gadget, which retailed for between RM90 and RM120, in the past year, through his Facebook page – 'Vantage In-Car-Intelligent Gadget'.

SMEs Encouraged To Take Advantage Of MIMF 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The annual Malaysia International Machinery Fair (MIMF) 2017 continues to be an important global trade fair and local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) should take advantage of the platform to promote their products, brand and build a business network, globally.

Malaysia Promas International Business Society President Datuk Chong Chong Tik said, Malaysia's processed food industry was increasing in tandem with the strong demand for quality food, hence, the need for the right technology.

"This trade fair provides the platform to search for food processing machinery and equipment to produce quality food.

"There would be about 800 booths put up by exhibitors from 600 participating companies, worldwide. It is essential for newly set-up SMEs to establish a name for themselves and get the upper hand among local and international competitors," he told a press conference Wednesday on the four-day MIMF 2017 which would kick off on July 27.

Malaysia Offers Vast Opportunities For Foreign Franchise Cos

HO CHI MINH CITY -- Malaysia offers vast opportunities for franchise companies from abroad, particularly ASEAN countries, to expand into the local market.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin said Malaysia has specific legislation to regulate the franchise industry in order to spur its growth.

"Malaysia leads the franchise industry in the region as we are armed with the Franchise Act 1998, and has an inclusive development plan to support the industry.

"Not many countries have such laws to regulate the franchise industry like Malaysia," he said during the Malaysia-Vietnam business forum in conjunction with the ninth Vietnam International Retail & Franchise Show here Thursday.

PropUP Propertyupdate

TH Properties To Tap UK, Indonesian Markets

By Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa

BANGKOK -- TH Properties Sdn Bhd (THP) is expanding its property development business by exploring the property market in London, United Kingdom (UK) and Indonesia after having successfully ventured into the real estate sector in Australia.

Its Chairman Datuk Azizan Abd Rahman said Tuesday, said THP would spend £32 million (£1=RM5.50) to buy a prime land in London, strategically located between Queensway and Notting Hill, and is within walking distance to Hyde Park and Kensington Palace.

Hap Seng To Focus On Affordable Housing

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hap Seng Consolidated Bhd will focus on the development of affordable houses particularly in Sabah for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2017, due to increasing demand in the state.

Group Managing Director Datuk Lee Ming Foo said Wednesday, despite the challenges faced by the property market this year as a result of prudential lending policies imposed on the banking industry, the group still saw opportunities, particularly in the affordable housing segment.

Property Sector To Post Stable Outlook - LBS

PETALING JAYA – Malaysia's property sector is expected to post a stable outlook this year, driven by the better gross domestic product (GDP) which is forecast to grow between 4.3 to 4.8 per cent for 2017.

LBS Bina Group Bhd Managing Director Tan Sri Lim Hock San said Wednesday, the strong GDP growth of 5.6 per cent in the first quarter of this year signalled that the economy is currently in a better position.

PropertyGuru Foresees Potential Uptrend In Property Prices

KUALA LUMPUR -- PropertyGuru, an online property portal, foresees a potential uptrend in prices of residential properties – landed and high rise units, going forward, driven by improved market sentiment.

Malaysia Country Manager Sheldon Fernandez said, the trend over the next few quarters could also be determined by sentiment of owners and developers towards the market.

"From our quarterly survey for the last two years beginning 2015, we can see the market sentiment has shifted from downward to stabilise and began the upward trend in the first quarter of this year.

This indicated that the local property sector could be bottoming out," he told reporters at the launch of the PropertyGuru Market Index (PMI) for Malaysia here, Thursday.

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 732

Losers - 246

Not Traded - 482

Unchanged - 318

Value - 2577844887

Volume - 24556680

BURSA: Heavyweights Lift Bursa Malaysia To Close Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia, which remained in positive territory the whole day, closed higher driven by gains in most heavyweights. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) ended at its highest for the day at 1,776.95, up 13.84 points from Thursday's close of 1,763.37. After opening 4.49 points higher at 1,767.6, the index also touched a low of 1,766.25. On the broader market, gainers thumped losers 732 to 246, with 318 counters unchanged, 482 untraded and 30 others suspended. Volume increased to 2.45 billion units valued at RM2.57 billion from the 2.21 billion units valued at RM2.23 billion recorded Thursday. A dealer said sentiment in the local market was positive throughout the day, due to bullish global equities following strong private payrolls data from the United States, which added 253,000 jobs in May, beating a Reuters poll of 185,000. "Local equities were in a consolidation mode in May. We see some investors now taking the opportunity to accumulate on weakness, given improving fundamentals and receding external geopolitical risks," he added. Main Market turnover increased to 1.62 billion units worth RM2.43 billion from 1.53 billion units worth RM2.12 billion recorded Thursday.

MARKET

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.2790	4.2820
EUR	4.8015	4.8053
GBP	5.5062	5.5105
100 YEN	3.8380	3.8417
SGD	3.0873	3.0901

CLOSING MALAYSIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE: JUNE 2, 2017

FOREX: Ringgit Closes Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed higher against the US dollar Friday, supported by buying in the local note, a dealer said. At 6 pm, the local unit was quoted at 4.2790/2820 against the greenback from Thursday's close of 4.2860/2900. A dealer said the ringgit had started to pick up momentum in line with regional currencies, as investors refrained from making major trades ahead of the United States (US) non-farm payrolls data, scheduled for release Friday. "Positive data will signal an interest rate hike in the US this month," the dealer said, adding, it would likely cause Asian currencies to retreat. Against a basket of major currencies, the ringgit traded mostly higher, except against the British pound, it slipped to 5.5062/5105 from 5.5037/5105. It rose against the Singapore dollar to 3.0873/0901 from 3.0948/0988 and appreciated to 3.8380/8417 from 3.8585/8628 compared with the yen. The local unit strengthened against the euro to 4.8015/8053 from 4.8153/8202.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates End Stable On BNM's Intervention

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 RM25.32 billion from RM34.13 billion in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM8.8 billion from RM12.89 billion. Earlier, BNM conducted two tenders, namely a conventional money market and Qard Islamic range maturity auction. The central bank also conducted a RM25.3 billion conventional money market and a RM7.7 billion Qard money market tender, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.96 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.11 per cent respectively.6 per cent and 3.11 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Close Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives was untraded Friday. June 2017, July 2017, August 2017 and September 2017 remained pegged at 96.53, 96.51, 96.50 and 96.49, respectively. Volume and open interest remained nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.43 per cent.

KLCI Futures Contract Ends Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended higher Friday, in line with the bullish underlying cash market. Spot month June 2017 added 10 points to 1,775, July 2017 rose 12 points to 1,776, September 2017 gained 9.5 points to 1,773 and December 2017 was up 8.5 points at 1,771.5. Turnover shrank to 5,051 lots from 5,423 lots Thursday while open interest narrowed to 35,915 contracts from 37,807 contracts on Thursday. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 13.84 points better at 1,776.95.

Hong Leong Financial's Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Jumps To RM763.82 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hong Leong Financial Group's pre-tax profit for the third quarter ended March 31, 2017 rose 29 per cent to RM763.82 million versus the RM591.9 million registered in the same period a year ago due to higher contributions across all operating divisions. Revenue for the third quarter also increased to RM1.23 billion as compared to RM1.03 billion posted in the same period of last year, the group said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

AIA PAM Declares Distribution For Conservative Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- AIA Pension & Asset Management Sdn Bhd (AIA PAM) has declared a distribution of three sen for the AIA PAM-Conservative Fund, which also registered a net return of 5.25 per cent for the period ended April 30, 2017. AIA PAM General Manager Ng Chze How said in a statement Tuesday, the investment strategies would continue to be agile and proactive in line with changes in economic and financial market volatility and remain focused on generating long-term returns for its members.

CIMB Urges Customers To Use Pin For Card Transactions

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Bank Bhd is calling on all its merchants and customers to switch to PIN (Personal Identification Number) as verification for all locally issued payment cards such as debit, credit, prepaid and charge cards transactions performed at point-of-sale (POS) terminals in Malaysia. From July 1 onwards, signatures cannot be used as verification for purchases at POS terminals, instead a six-digit PIN will be required, it said in a statement Wednesday.

Public Mutual Declares Distributions Of RM502 Million For 11 Funds

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public Bank's wholly-owned subsidiary, Public Mutual Bhd, has declared distributions of over RM502 million for 11 funds, for the financial year ended May 31, May 2017. In a statement Wednesday, it said the funds were Public Far-East Select Fund (2.00 sen per unit), Public Regional Sector Fund (2.00 sen per unit), Public Global Select Fund (2.00 sen per unit), Public China Titans Fund (2.00 sen per unit), Public Dividend Select Fund (0.30 sen per unit) and Public Ittikal Fund (3.00 sen per unit).

Ringgit Appreciated 1.8 Pct Against Us Dollar In April, Says BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit appreciated 1.8 per cent against the US dollar in April following inflows into both the bond and equity markets, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). The central bank said in a statement Wednesday, the local unit was supported by measures taken by the Financial Market Committee, specifically to enhance liquidity in the bond market and allow greater hedging flexibility in the onshore market.

International Reserves Remain Usable, Says BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The detailed breakdown of international reserves under the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (IMF SDDS) format indicates that as of end-April, the country's reserves remain usable, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). In a statement Wednesday, the central bank said in accordance with the IMF SDDS format, the detailed breakdown of international reserves provided forward-looking information on the size, composition and usability of reserves and other foreign currency assets.

Alliance Financial Group Posts Lower Pretax Profit For FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Alliance Financial Group Bhd's pre-tax profit eased to RM681.40 million for the financial year ended March 31, 2017 (FY17), against RM694.78 million in the same period last year. Revenue for the period was higher at RM1.47 billion from RM1.42 billion a year earlier, it said in a statement Wednesday.

CIMB Clinches 21 Awards At Asset Triple A Islamic Finance Awards 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Group bagged 21 awards at the Asset Triple A Islamic Finance Awards 2017, including that of "Sukuk House of the Year, Asia Pacific" for the fifth consecutive year. Group Chief Executive Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz said the success reflected continued efforts that the group has invested over the years to strengthen its Islamic finance capabilities. "These multiple wins will spur us on to keep delivering the best customer value proposition to our clients, and to forward our aspiration to become a leading ASEAN universal bank," he said in a statement Friday.

RHB-Ambank Merger Talks Boost Positive Sentiment

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Bank Bhd (RHB) and AMMB Holdings Bhd's (AmBank) proposed merger to create one of Malaysia's biggest lenders has signalled positive development in Malaysia as well as the ASEAN region. Ushering an epoch of consolidation in the banking industry, IQI Global Chief Economist, Shan Saeed, told Bernama, the future direction of the banking group was now subject to the enlarged entities' priorities. "Going forward, I see more and more banks will be going into the consolidation phase, and there would be fewer and fewer players providing financial services to clients," he said.

Ajinomoto Posts FY17 Pre-Tax Profit Of RM211.47 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ajinomoto (Malaysia) Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended March 31, 2017 jumped to RM211.47 million from RM53.94 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue increased to RM419.92 million from RM400.20 million previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

TA Enterprise Returns To Black With Pre-Tax Profit Of RM114.27 Mln In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- TA Enterprise Bhd returned to the black with a pre-tax profit (PBT) of RM114.27 million recorded in the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 (1Q17) against a pre-tax loss (LBT) of RM70.73 million in the same quarter a year ago. Revenue surged to RM307.36 million from RM198.29 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, TA Enterprise said the better performance in the quarter under review was mainly attributable to the contribution from the broking, investment holding and hotel operation divisions.

MRCB's Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM29.26 Mln In Q117

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd's (MRCB) pre-tax profit rose to RM29.26 million for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 (Q117) from the RM18.65 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue also increased to RM524.85 million for the quarter under review from RM436.01 million recorded previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

MMC's Q1 Profit Before Zakat & Tax Slips To RM92.38 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- MMC Corporation Bhd's (MMC) profit before zakat and tax (PBZT) for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 fell to RM92.38 million from RM95.55 million in the same quarter last year. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, MMC said the lower PBZT was attributable to the lower volume handled by the Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) and was supported by the contribution from the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (RAPID) Material Offloading Facilities operations at Johor Port Bhd and the progress recorded at Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT)-Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya (SSP) Line.

MPay Eyes One Million e-Wallet Users By 2020

KUALA LUMPUR -- Managepay Systems Bhd (MPay) aims to increase the number of its MPay e-Wallet users to one million by 2020, Managing Director Datuk Chew Chee Seng told a press conference Monday. He said the number of users could jump to 100,000 by year-end with the inclusion of businesses from Johor Corporation's subsidiaries following the two entities' collaboration on the nationwide deployment of credit card machines.

MNRB Back In The Black With RM98.4 Mln Profit

KUALA LUMPUR -- MNRB Bhd posted a pre-tax profit of RM98.37 million in its financial year ended March 31, 2017 (FY17) compared to a pre-tax loss of RM31.05 million a year earlier, mainly driven by improvement in its reinsurance business and gains in investment income. Revenue was higher at RM2.54 billion from RM2.52 billion previously, mainly due to higher gross contributions by the company's takaful subsidiary, Takaful Ikhlas Bhd, said MNRB in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

Panasonic's FY17 Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM158.10 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Panasonic Manufacturing Malaysia Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended March 31, 2017 fell to RM158.10 million from RM185.17 million in the same period in 2016. Revenue, however, increased to RM1.12 billion from RM1.1 billion previously, mainly due to higher sales in the export market for fan products, sales recovery and contribution from project sales, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

DRB-Hicom Trims Losses By 73 Pct To RM222.18 Mln For FY 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- DRB-Hicom Bhd (DRB-Hicom Group) trimmed its pre-tax loss for the financial year ended March 31, 2017 to RM222.18 million compared to RM822.13 million the previous year. In a statement Tuesday, the group said it managed to keep a similar revenue level during the year, coming in at RM12.06 billion against RM12.17 billion previously. On prospects, the group's overall businesses in automotive, services and property are expected to improve in line with the economic growth.

MY E.G Records Higher Q317 Pre-Tax Profit

KUALA LUMPUR -- MY E.G. Services Bhd's pre-tax profit for the third quarter of the financial year ending June 30, 2017, increased to RM54.48 million from RM33.40 million chalked-up in same period in 2016. Revenue soared to RM99.22 million from RM70.12

million previously, mainly due to higher transaction volume from online renewal of foreign workers' permits, foreign worker rehiring programme services and foreign worker insurance, as well as, increase in contributions from motor vehicle trading related services, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

Alliance Financial Group Posts Lower Pretax Profit For FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Alliance Financial Group Bhd's pre-tax profit eased to RM681.40 million for the financial year ended March 31, 2017 (FY17), against RM694.78 million in the same period last year. Revenue for the period was higher at RM1.47 billion from RM1.42 billion a year earlier, it said in a statement Wednesday.

Scomi Posts Pre-Tax Loss Of RM87.8 Mln For F&17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Scomi Group Bhd recorded a pre-tax loss of RM87.8 million for the financial year ended March 31, 2017 compared with a pre-tax profit of RM25.79 million recorded in the previous financial year. Revenue fell to RM862.94 million from RM1.38 billion chalked up in the corresponding quarter in 2016, the group said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday.

FGV Trims Losses To RM31.66 Mln, Revenue Up 15 Pct To RM4.32 Bln In 1Q17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) reported a smaller pre-tax loss of RM31.66 million in the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 compared with a pre-tax loss of RM82.193 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue, however, increased 15 per cent to RM4.32 billion from RM3.76 billion achieved previously due to higher income from the plantation, logistics & others and sugar sectors by 11 per cent, 57 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively, compared with the same period last year, said the company in a statement Wednesday.

Sime Darby Pre Tax Profit, Revenue Rise In Third Quarter

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sime Darby Bhd's pre-tax profit jumped to RM1.01 billion in the third quarter ended March 31, 2017 from RM791.0 million recorded in the same period last year, due to improved contributions from the plantations, industrial and motor divisions. Revenue for the quarter increased to RM12.45 billion from RM10.23 billion, previously. For the nine-month period, the conglomerate's pre-tax profit surged to RM2.56 billion from RM1.73 billion in the same period a year earlier, while revenue rose to RM34.88 billion from RM32.24 billion, it said in a statement Wednesday.

Time Dotcom's Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM55 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Time DotCom Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 rose to RM55.51 million from RM39.3 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue jumped to RM218.41 million from RM175.19 million previously. Chief Executive Officer Afzal Abdul Rahim said in a statement Wednesday, higher margin contribution from indefeasible rights of use (IRU) and non-recurring sales contracts, higher interest income, lower foreign exchange loss and improved share of profits from equity accounted investments contributed to returns.

Mah Sing's Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM120.57 Mln In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Mah Sing Group Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 fell to RM120.57 million from RM126.38million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue, however, rose 20 per cent to RM723.54 million from RM709.17 million previously, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday.

Media Prima Seeks Revenue Growth From Non-Traditional Media

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's integrated media company, Media Prima Bhd, is seeking to grow its digital and non-traditional revenue streams through strategic business initiatives following a challenging outlook on traditional media. Group Chairman Datuk Seri FD Iskandar said in a statement Monday, the company had launched a number of key ventures last year that were 'Business to Consumers' in nature such as home shopping platform, CJ Wow Shop, the revamped online video streaming subscription service, tonton, mobile gaming and digital lifestyle applications for mobile users.

AirAsia Progresses Towards Becoming An ASEAN Airline

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia is continuing its expansion in the region to become a truly ASEAN airline, Group Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said in a video message Monday. He said the expansion continued with the impending joint venture (JV) in Vietnam and interest expressed by the Cambodian government for AirAsia to venture into the country.

Disruptive Competition The Greatest Challenge In Telecommunications Sector-Survey

KUALA LUMPUR -- Up to 37 per cent of Chief Technology Officers (CTOs) and Chief Information Officers (CIOs) have seen disruptive competition as the single greatest strategic challenge in the telecommunications sector, according to a survey conducted by Ernst & Young Advisory Services Sdn Bhd (EY). Titled, "Digital Transformation for 2020 and Beyond", nearly three out of four survey respondents, or up to 74 per cent, had placed disruptive competition as their top three challenges, it said Monday.

Nokia To Recapture Malaysian Market With New Smartphones

PETALING JAYA -- Nokia aims to recapture Malaysian market share with the roll-out of its latest Android-powered smartphones, the Nokia 3, 5 and 6 here Tuesday. HMD Global, the exclusive licensee of the Nokia brand of mobile phones and tablets, said the trio of Android devices would be available at local retails stores from mid June. Vice-President for Asia Pacific, James Rutherfoord said the smartphones, which combined superior craftsmanship, distinctive design and features with a pure Android experience, marked the beginning of an exciting new era for Nokia.

Malaysian F&B Products Gaining Popularity In Thailand

By Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa

BANGKOK -- Malaysian food and beverage (F&B) products have gained popularity in Thailand, accounting for 28.2 per cent of the nation's total exports to the country, said Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation's (MATRADE) Trade Commissioner in Thailand, Norman Dzulkarnain Nasri. "Processed food was Malaysia's fourth biggest export to Thailand last year, and the country has huge business potential that could be explored by Malaysian F&B companies," he told Bernama Wednesday.

Local Businesses To Improve In 2Q17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Business in the second quarter of 2017 (2Q17) is expected to increase to 4.5 per cent as recorded by the confidence indicator compared to (-6.9) per cent in the preceding quarter, said the Department of Statistics. The confidence indicator summarises the overall views on the short-term business situation in various sectors in Malaysia, the department said in a statement Wednesday.

More Recruitments In IT, Telecommunications Industry

KUALA LUMPUR -- Online recruitment for information technology (IT), telecommunications, and IT-based business processes industry grew by 12 per cent in April compared to the same month last year. According to the Monster Employment Index (MEI) Malaysia released by Monster.com Wednesday, online hiring by the oil and gas industry also grew by 11 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) in April, while hiring in production/ manufacturing, automotive and ancillary increased by six per cent.

April PPI Increases 7.5 Pct Year-On-Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Producer Price Index (PPI) for local production increased 7.5 per cent for April 2017 compared to the same month of last year. The Department of Statistics Malaysia in a statement Wednesday said the highest increase was recorded by the mining index, followed by manufacturing, electricity and gas supply, agriculture, forestry and fishing, while water supply declined. The PPI for local production, however, declined by 0.9 per cent in April 2017 compared to the previous month.

Malaysia's 2016 Labour Productivity Up By 3.5 Per Cent

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's labour productivity grew by 3.5 per cent to RM78,218 in 2016 from RM75,548 previously, said International Trade and Industry Minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed Wednesday. He said the result, slightly lower than the 3.7 per cent annual growth targeted under the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020), was mainly due to the financial market's volatility and uncertain business confidence.

Adya Hotel Offered To Manage Four-Star Hotel In Saudi Arabia

By Hamdan Ismail

LANGKAWI -- PKB Hotel Management & Services Sdn Bhd (PKBHMS), that manages the Adya Hotel on this island resort, may take up an offer to manage a new four-star hotel in Saudi Arabia this year. A fully-owned subsidiary of Permodalan Kedah Bhd, the management company was made the offer by the owner of the 297-room hotel during discussions held here recently, PKBHMS Chairman Nor Saidi Nanyan told Bernama.

Lower Competitiveness Ranking Won't Hurt Investor Sentiment - Don

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- Investor sentiment towards Malaysia's economy remains intact despite the country's competitiveness ranking slipping five notches to 24th position, Sunway University's Business School Prof Dr Yeah Kim Leng said. He told Bernama the ranking would not have much immediate impact, especially among investors, be it local or foreign, since their sentiment was driven more by short-term factors such as growth prospects and current economic and financial conditions

Fonterra Maintains Product Prices Despite Weakening Ringgit

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dairy giant Fonterra Brands (M) Sdn Bhd is maintaining product prices despite feeling the impact of the weakened ringgit. Managing Director Jose Miguel Porraz Lando told reporters Thursday, the local note's devaluation had resulted in an increase in the cost of goods as the company purchases most of its milk powder and raw ingredients in US dollars.

NEC Calls For Malaysian Overseas Projects To Utilise Local Resources

PUTRAJAYA -- The National Export Council (NEC) has urged Malaysian contractors and service providers to increase the procurement of Malaysian products and services for their overseas projects to help accelerate the country's exports. In a statement in conjunction with the NEC's second meeting which was chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Thursday, the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) said to date, 54 projects owned by Malaysian companies or involved Malaysian establishments were taking shape in 16 countries with a value of RM109.71 billion.

Beyonics Invests Another US$3 Mln At I-Park @ Indahpura

KULAI -- Beyonics International Pte Ltd has invested another US$3 million (US$1=RM4.28) in its stamping facility at i-Park @ Indahpura here, bringing its total accumulated investment in Johor from 2015 to date to US$20 million. Its Chief Executive Officer, Scott Smith told reporters Thursday, the new facility was expected to be completed this September and it would function as a mega factory that caters to all core capabilities including complete box build assembly.

Malaysia's Internet Connection Is Asia-Pacific's 10th Fastest

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's average Internet connection speed is the 10th fastest in the Asia Pacific, says international content delivery network service provider, Akamai. According to Akamai's First Quarter 2017 State of the Internet Report, Malaysia has an average connection speed of 8.9 Megabits per second (Mbps), a 9.1 per cent increase from last quarter and a 40 per cent improvement from the first quarter of last year. "Malaysia's 10 Mbps Broadband Adoption has also increased, recording a 17 per cent quarter-on-quarter change and a 179 per cent year-on-year improvement," it said in a statement Thursday.

GrabCar Drivers To Benefit From MoU With Perodua

KUALA LUMPUR -- GrabCar drivers will benefit from the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Perodua and Grab Malaysia via value-added services. Perodua Sales Sdn Bhd Managing Director Datuk Dr Zahari Husin said in a statement Wednesday, the MoU allows for minimal time for a GrabCar registration and also serve as a one-stop centre for servicing and spare parts, insurance and road tax issuance and renewal.

TNB Wins Best Digital Transformation Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) bagged the "Best Digital Transformation Project" award during the Asian Utility Innovation Week 2017 Expo, in Bangkok, Thailand from May 24-25. In a statement Wednesday, TNB said it was selected based on its digital transformation initiative which was able to save costs and improve the efficiency of business operations.

Capitaland, K Two Sign Agreement To Construct Pedestrian Bridge

KUALA LUMPUR -- Capitaland Malaysia Mall Trust (CMMT) has entered into a joint collaboration agreement (JCA) with K Two Realty Holding Sdn Bhd (K Two) for the construction of a link bridge between Sungei Wang Plaza (SWP) and Berjaya Times Square. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, CMMT said the JCA signed between CMMT's trustee, MTrustee Bhd and K Two required the parties to fund, plan, project manage and complete the construction of the link bridge, including the construction of external escalators at SWP's side façade.

Legoland To Celebrate 5th Anniversary In September

JOHOR BAHRU -- Legoland Malaysia will offer a variety activities in conjunction with the fifth anniversary of the theme park in September this year. "The past five years have been great, and we are currently drafting an exciting show in conjunction with the fifth anniversary," General Manager Kurt Stocks told reporters Thursday. He said Legoland Malaysia would also be announcing the park expansion plans.

Skypark Terminal Expects Increase In Passengers Traffic

KUALA LUMPUR -- SkyPark Terminal expects an increase in passenger traffic with efforts taken to improve connectivity, cost, and convenience. This includes boosting rail and land connectivity for passengers to and from from the airport, Subang SkyPark Sdn Bhd Executive Director Tan Sri Ravindran Menon said in a statement Thursday. He said among the notable introduction at the airport was the SkyPark KTM Rail Link, slated for completion by end-2017, that would serve as an extension to the Subang Jaya KTM line, and connect the airport directly to KL Sentral.

AppAsia And CMI To Establish Digital Content Business Partnership

KUALA LUMPUR -- AppAsia Bhd's wholly-owned unit, AppAsia Studio Sdn Bhd, has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China Mobile International Limited (CMI) to establish a digital content business partnership for three years. AppAsia, in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, said the AppAsia Studio role"s would be to provide content to CMI as well as evaluate, supply and manage the content for distribution on CMI affiliated companies' platform called Migu.

Graham Is ExxonMobil Exploration And Production Malaysia President/ Chairman

KUALA LUMPUR -- ExxonMobil Exploration and Production Malaysia Inc. has appointed Edward E. Graham as President and Chairman effective Thursday. In a statement, ExxonMobil said he had also been appointed Chairman of ExxonMobil Subsidiaries in Malaysia.

PUNB Appoints New CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB) has appointed Datuk Azhar Ahmad as its new Chief Executive Officer, effective Thursday. He replaces Datuk Dzulkifli Fadzilah whose tenure ended Wednesday. In a statement, PUNB said Azhar's expertise and wide berth of experience, combined with PUNB's board of directors, would strengthen its position, while achieving the target of becoming a premier centre of excellence for the development of Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

Malaysia To Set Up Task Force To Improve Ranking In World Competitiveness Yearbook

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia will establish a task force, comprising representatives from the public and private sector, to improve its ranking in the World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY), said the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) in a statement Thursday. Malaysia is ranked at 24th position in the latest WCY 2017, compiled by The Institute for Management Development (IMD), World Competitiveness Centre based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Bumiputera Empowerment Is Impressive, But How Much Do They Gain?

By Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- After chairing the Bumiputera Economic Council (MEB) meeting Monday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak proudly announced that 23 Ministries have at least reached 90 per cent of their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and eight had attained 100 per cent of their performance targets.

This achievement is impressive and laudable indeed. But it begs the question as to how much these bumiputera target groups have really benefited from these vast expenditures.

It is good to spend public funds to empower bumi businessmen and women, but are there leakages like corruption and wastage of public funds and sub contracting? More importantly, are these tax payers` funds actually equipping these bumi contractors with the right skills, capabilities and real experience in sustaining the bumi business progress?

A large chunk of 63 per cent of the value of the annual works of ministries and government agencies was awarded to bumi contractors. This is a significant size of government budget funding and it is hoped that the bumi contractors did not subcontract or rent out too much to others.

It is therefore proposed that our government monitors these subcontracts to especially foreigners, who will then benefit more than the bumi contractors. They would take away their experience and acquired expertise back to their own countries.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Then our bumi contractors would not have gained as much knowledge and skills as they should, in obtaining these small and especially large contracts. Hopefully, the bumi contractors are competent and capable, otherwise the public suffer from wastage and poor performance of projects and services.

The bumi cooperatives also benefitted from a large cumulative turnover of RM31 billion. Hopefully, these huge funds are efficiently managed to enhance the welfare of the needy cooperatives and especially the low income cooperative members.

More affordable houses were built in 2016 for bumis. About 3,476 units were built in 2016 compared to only 213 units in 2015. This is most welcome although much more could be done in this vital area of high demand for low cost housing. The Industrial Building System (IBS) can accelerate the building of affordable housing and government should step up the building of affordable housing through the IBS, even if vested interests obstruct the IBS.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (middle) chairing the Bumiputera Economic Council meeting at Perdana Putra in Putrajaya Monday. Also present Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (third, left). -- fotoBERNAMA by Zulfadhli Zulkarnain

Actually housing is a basic need and comprises a large share of consumer spending in rentals and meeting housing loan installments. Greater priority could therefore be given to build affordable housing, not only for bumis but for non-bumis as well.

When too much differentiation is made to provide basic needs like housing and scholarships, to Malaysians of different races, reactions and even resentment builds up. This can cause national disunity, which has to be avoided in the interests of better welfare and progress for the whole country.

SLIM FOR TRAINING BUMIS

The 1 Malaysia Training Scheme (SLIM) is most useful for training bumis to find suitable employment. With thousands of bumi and other graduates left unemployed the SLIM's role to train them to find suitable jobs especially in the fields of technology and the service industries, is worthy of all our support.

But it begs the question as to why the public universities seem to be producing so many unemployable graduates. The private universities do not have similar problems. Hence it might be pertinent to review the curriculum and the medium of instruction in many of our universities to ensure that we are not churning out more unemployable graduates, most of whom would be bumiputeras.

The Bumiputera Economic Empowerment (PEB) programme is a pillar in our overall socio economic development planning and the foundation of the 11th Malaysia Development Plan. The PEB has to be pursued energetically to achieve its KPIs.

However, we have at the same time to ensure that the enormous funds that are generously provided by the government for bumi enhancement, are efficiently and effectively utilised to benefit the bumiputeras positively.

We cannot carry on with these protective policies up to 2050 under the Transformation National 50, without adversely affecting Malaysia`s long term sustainability and the progress of the bumiputera and other Malaysian communities.

We have to face the realities of a more competitive and digitalised economy that is already here to stay - or lose out to the rest of the world! Our leaders must ensure that Malaysia Boleh!

BERNAMA
MALAYSIAeBiz
June 3, 2017
Market Outlook

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

Bursa Malaysia To Be Firmer Next Week

By Farhana Poniman

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to be on an uptrend next week, driven by the steady ringgit as well as the "feel good" sentiment in the external market, with the release of strong economic data in the United States.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the steady ringgit at RM4.28 against the US dollar, was a good sign for the local stock market as it reflected improved foreign fund inflows.

"The environment outside Malaysia is also positive with the strong performance of regional bourses, upbeat US private sector job figures and signs of improvement in the global economy.

All of these factors will translate into higher optimism in corporate earnings, thus providing a boost for Bursa Malaysia," he told Bernama.

He said Japan's Nikkei share average recorded its highest close since mid-August 2015, climbing 1.6 per cent to 20,177.28 on Friday.

MERGER PLAN A CATALYST

On the local front, Nazri Khan said the merger plan between RHB Bank Bhd and AMMB Holdings Bhd would be a major catalyst for the banking sector on Bursa Malaysia next week and likely push the FBM KLCI towards the 1,800 level.

Meanwhile, Alliance-DBS Research said expectations of an earnings recovery was kept intact by a satisfactory first quarter 2017 earnings season, where 65 per cent of companies under its coverage met expectations.

It said local equities were in a consolidation mode in May, but, given the improving fundamentals and receding external geopolitical risks, investors saw this as an opportunity to accumulate on weakness.

"We continue to prefer cyclical to defensive stocks and those with clear earnings growth catalysts. Our big-cap picks are Maybank, Genting and Gamuda. Among small-mid caps, we like BIMB, Sunway Construction, VS Industry, Serba Dinamik, Globetronics and Yong Tai," Alliance-DBS Research added.

Weekly turnover fell to 12.34 billion units valued at RM14.01 billion from 16.20 billion units valued at RM14.43 billion recorded last week. Main Market volume decreased to 8.55 billion shares valued at RM13.4 billion from 10.45 billion shares valued at RM13.56 billion

Ringgit To Trade Higher Versus US Dollar Next Week

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR – The ringgit is expected to trade higher versus the US dollar next week and hover around the 4.2-level, supported by buying from foreign and local investors following an improvement in the global economy, as well as positive economic development in the country.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the local unit was slowly picking up momentum and economists expected the trend to continue.

Nazri Khan told Bernama that the merger plan between RHB Bank Bhd and AMMB Holdings Bhd would boost confidence among investors and welcome more foreign funds into the country.

The two banks have received the nod from Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to commence merger negotiations.

Separately, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan said BNM's measures to clamp down on currency speculators, who had been using the offshore market non-deliverable forwards to speculate on the ringgit, had paid off with the currency improving and foreign portfolio investors coming back.

INVESTOR CONFIDENCE

Nazri Khan said, "Many research houses, investment banks and fund managers such as BNP Paribas Investment Partners, Deutsche Bank, Western Asset Management and Fidelity International viewed Malaysia with optimism."

"Foreign portfolio investors have returned since April this year, of which 10 per cent of the money has come back into the Malaysian government and central bank bonds.

Collective in their opinion, the research houses, investment banks and fund managers are of the view that Malaysia is on the right track where the worst of foreign outflows is behind us," he said, adding, the ringgit had shown continuous improvement this year and was the best performing currency, regionally, in April 2017.

For the week just-ended, the ringgit moved between 4.2705 and 4.860 against the US dollar.On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the ringgit traded higher at 4.2790/2820 against the greenback from 4.3440/3470 last week.

The local note ended mostly lower against other major currencies for the week. It fell against the Singapore dollar to 3.0873/0901 from 3.0844/0886 last Friday, but improved versus the Japanese yen to 3.8380/8417 from 3.8452/8496 previously.

The ringgit depreciated against the British pound to 5.5062/5105 from 5.4912/4955 and weakened vis-a-vis the euro to 4.8015/8053 from 4.7859/7897.

Money Market Expected To Remain Steady Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-tenured interbank rates are expected to remain steady next week as Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continues to intervene in mopping up excess liquidity in the market.

A dealer said the central bank was expected to intervene with daily tenders and via conventional and Islamic instruments, to stabilise the local money market if needed.

"Usual tools to absorb excess funds from the system would include money market tenders, repo tenders, range-maturity auctions of both conventional and Islamic, and commodity Murabahah programme money market tenders," the dealer added.

For the week just-ended, BNM intervened daily to flush the system of surplus funds.The total liquidity surplus declined to RM25.32 billion against RM37.49 billion in conventional operations last Friday, while Islamic funds expanded to RM8.8 billion from RM4.7 billion.

On a week-to-week basis, the benchmark three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) stood at 3.43 per cent. Meanwhile, the overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.96 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, throughout the week.

KLCI Futures To Be Steadier Next Week

By Farhana Poniman

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM

KLCI) futures contract will likely be steadier next week, mirroring the expected bullish underlying cash market.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the steady ringgit and positive external environment would lift the FBM KLCI higher next week and this would translate into higher optimism in corporate earnings, while providing a boost to the local bourse.

"The steady ringgit, at RM4.28 against a US dollar, is a good sign for the local stock market as it reflected improved foreign fund inflows.

The environment outside Malaysia is also positive with the strong performance staged by regional bourses, an upbeat US private sector job figures and signs of improvement in the global economy," he told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2017 rose 1.5 points to 1,775, July 2017 stood at 1,776.5, September 2017 rose two points to 1,773 and December 2017 was up 1.5 points to 1,771.5.

Turnover for the week was higher at 61,145 lots from 52,028 lots recorded last Friday, while open interest narrowed to 35,915 contracts from 57,100 contracts previously. On Friday, the underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 13.84 points better at 1,776.95.

CPO Futures To Trade Within RM2,580 - RM2,620 Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is likely to trade within a higher range of between RM2,580 and RM2,620 per tonne next week on stronger demand ahead of Hari Raya Aidilfitri, which is expected to fall on June 25.

Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader, Jim Teh said the better demand would mainly come from countries in the Middle East, India and Pakistan.

"These countries are expected to start stocking up palm oil for cooking purposes from next week for the celebration," he told Bernama.

However, Teh noted that demand from China would likely remain weaker next week.

Recently, Chinese soybean oil importers were reported as wanting to cancel their cargo, mainly ordered from Brazil.

DEMAND AT HEALTHY LEVEL

"This will definitely affect demand for the local CPO, the main rival of soybean oil," he said.

Meanwhile, Teh pointed out that local CPO production currently stood at a healthy level, thanks to the warm humid weather.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2017 dipped RM110 to RM2,730 a tonne, July 2017 gave up RM68 to RM2,609 a tonne, August 2017 eased RM58 to RM2,497 a tonne and September 2017 was RM50 lower at RM2,433 a tonne.

Weekly turnover, however, improved to 249,151 lots from 204,185 last week, and open interest widened to 254,973 contracts from 236,672 contracts. On the physical market, June South was RM10 lower at RM2,810 per tonne.

Rubber Market To Trade Cautiously Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to trade cautiously next week as investors remain on the sidelines following confirmation of the United States quitting the Paris climate deal.

A dealer said US President Donald Trump's withdrawal of the world's largest economy from the deal would have an impact on global crude oil prices.

"A slide in crude oil prices would make the rival synthetic rubber cheaper and lower demand for natural rubber," he said.

He also noted that a firmer ringgit could also hamper demand for the commodity as it would become more expensive for non-ringgit holders.

However, he did not rule out a rebound taking place next week, judging from the bearish performance of the local rubber market a week earlier.

WEAKER PRICES

For the week just-ended, trading was mostly lower, tracking the weaker rubber futures prices on regional markets and stronger ringgit's movement against the US dollar.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 at noon slid 46 sen to 611 sen a kg and latex-in-bulk eased half-a-sen to 631 sen a kg.

The 5 pm closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 was 20 sen lower at 612 sen a kg and latex-in-bulk slid six sen to 631 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Subdued Next Week
KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely remain subdued next week on a lack of demand given the absence of market catalysts.

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

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2017, July 2017, August 2017 and September 2017 remained pegged at 96.53, 96.51, 96.50 and 96.49 respectively.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market was also unchanged at 3.43 per cent on Friday.

KLTM Likely To Trade Mixed Next Week
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is likely to start strong and soften mid-week as buyers consider the current price level as high, a dealer said.

"Trading can thus be seen as mixed.The KLTM is expected to trade at US$20,500 a tonne at the start of the week with China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Pakistan and the United States providing the buying support," he added.

Throughout this week, the KLTM traded within the price range of US$20,350 and US$20,550 a tonne.

On Friday, the KLTM traded at the same level as last week at US$20,430 a tonne, while on the LME, the tin price slipped US$160 to end at US$20,450 a tonne versus US$20,610 a tonne last week.

Weekly turnover eased to 146 tonnes from 233 tonnes recorded last week. The price differential between the KLTM and LME was at a discount of US$20 a tonne compared with a discount of US$180 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Likely To Trade Lower Next Week
KUALA LUMPUR -- The gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) is likely to trade lower next week, tracking the performance on the US Commodity Exchange's gold futures, a dealer said.

He said investors will be eyeing the US Federal Reserve, which is scheduled to hike interest rates this month.

"However, as the US dollar has fallen sharply immediately after the release of the payroll data, which showed fewer-than-expected jobs were added to the US economy last month, we hope this will provide support to the precious metal market," the dealer said.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the gold futures on Bursa Malaysia for spot month June 2017, July 2017, August 2017 and October 2017 fell 11 ticks each to RM174.10 a gramme, RM174.50, RM175.00 and RM175.30 respectively.

Turnover for the week was higher at 52 lots worth RM905,500 from 40 lots worth RM678,000 recorded last week, while open interest fell to 251 contracts versus 271 contracts.