MALAYSIAeBiz

BERNAMA

WEEKLY *BUSINESS ROUNDUP MAY 12- MAY 16, 2014*

May 16, 2014

This Week's Highlight :
M'sia May Achieve High-Income Status Earlier – Najib

ONE FOR THE ALBUM…Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin together with Cabinet Ministers pose for photographers after the launch of the National Transformation Programme (NTP) at Angkasapuri Monday night. --fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says, the country is well on its way to becoming a high-income nation by 2020, perhaps may even achieve the status earlier than projected. This expectation is possible given that the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), introduced in 2010 has maintained its strong momentum over the last three years, thus helping the economy to achieve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 4.7 per cent in 2013. In 2013 alone, the ETP contributed RM7.4 billion to the Gross National Income (GNI), creating 29,373 new employment opportunities and driving RM8 billion worth of investments, said Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, in his remarks in the ETP's Annual Report 2013 released by the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) Monday.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday
GNI Per Capita Reaches US$10,600 Last Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita grew an impressive 42.5 per cent to US$10,600 last year from US$7,059 in 2009, demonstrating that the country is on track to achieve its high-income goals of US$15,000 per capita by 2020. The Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) said in a statement Monday, since the launch of the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) in 2010, private investment has recorded a strong surge, growing 15.3 per cent from 2010 to 2013.

Tuesday
GTP, ETP Yield Good Revenue Last Year - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Tuesday that 2013 had brought much revenue to the country following the drafting and implementation of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). Both programmes were introduced to bring progress to Malaysia and achieve the national aspiration of becoming a high-income developed nation by the year 2020, said the prime minister in his latest posting in his Facebook.

Wednesday
Varsities Urged To Publish Research Notes On GST

KUALA LUMPUR -- Deputy Minister of Finance Datuk Ahmad Maslan says, economic faculties in local universities should publish research notes and give talks on the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The move was crucial to explain the GST to undergraduates so that they would not be confused by the falsehoods spread by irresponsible groups on the GST which would be enforced on April 1 next year, he said after a briefing on the GST at Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) here Wednesday.

Thursday
FGVH Plans World's First Carbon Nanotubes, Graphene Production

From D.Arul Rajoo

CAMBRIDGE (England) -- A plant that will produce the world's first high grade carbon nanotubes and graphene from by-product of oil palm plantations is expected to be built in Malaysia soon. The project, to be undertaken by FGV Cambridge Nanosystems (FGV-CNL), will have the capacity to produce between 50 and 100 tonnes of the products a year, Cambridge Nanosystems' Director Dr Krzysztof Koziol, the inventor of the cutting-edge technology, told the Malaysian media here Thursday.

Friday
Malaysia's GDP At 6.2 Pct Q1 – Zeti

KUALA LUMPUR --- Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew 6.2 per cent in the first quarter, driven by stronger expansion in domestic demand and higher exports, Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said Friday. Zeti said the Malaysian economy would remain firm on a steady growth path, anchored by domestic demand with additional support from improved external environment.

SMEbrief

MIDA New York Eyes SMEs For Investment Potential

By Manik Mehta

NEW YORK -- Following signs of a steady recovery in the United States economy, the New York office of the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), is intensifying efforts to reach out to industries and businesses in the country. Lee Yong Ming, the MIDA New York director, wants to tap the investment opportunities available, particularly, among small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

"There is inherent untapped potential within the US SME sector which relies on updated information about opportunities in Malaysia. We want to also help them navigate the administrative aspects of their engagement in Malaysia," he told Bernama Monday.

MIDF Allocates RM100 Mln Loan For SMEs' Wage Plan

SHAH ALAM – The Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Bhd (MIDF) has allocated RM100 million for a soft loan scheme for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to implement the minimum wages initiative. MIDF Managing Director Datuk Mohd Najib Abdullah said Monday, SMEs may apply for the fund provided by the government, through SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp), to increase their automation and improve on the commercialisation process.

PUNB Allocates RM75 Mln For Bumiputera Automotive Entrepreneurs

PUTRAJAYA -- Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB) has allocated RM75 million for the 2014-2019 period to support Bumiputera entrepreneurs in the automotive industry, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said. In his speech at the launch of the PUNB Auto Pro Forum 2014 Thursday, Najib said as of April 2014, PUNB has created over 590 automotive businesses for 671 Bumiputera entrepreneurs with approved projects worth RM157 million.

SME Owners Still Unaware Of Good Credit Standing - CBM

PETALING JAYA -- Many micro borrowers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are still not aware of the importance of a good credit standing and its value threshold, says Credit Bureau Malaysia (CBM). "The impact of not realising the information and direction for the loans include individuals resorting to credit cards or in other words use debt to run their businesses. It's a wrong way of doing business," its Chairman Datuk Wan Azhar Wan Ahmad told reporters Thursday.

PropUP Propertyupdate

Four Iconic Projects Identified Under Teraju Initiative

KUALA LUMPUR -- Four more large iconic projects have been identified under the "Carve Out and Compete Initiative" this year, under which as much as 40 per cent of the works will be awarded to Bumiputera companies, says the Unit Peneraju Agenda Bumiputera (Teraju).

These projects are Menara Warisan Merdeka, owned by PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn Bhd; Bukit Bintang City Centre, owned by UDA Holdings Bhd; Sungai Buloh Rubber Research Institute, owned by Kwasa Land Sdn Bhd; and Matrade Exhibition Centre, by Naza TTDI. This information was revealed in the "Economic Transformation Programme 2013 Annual Report" released by the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) Monday.

Danau Mutiara Sees 70 Pct Take-Up Rate At Launch

KUALA LUMPUR -- More than 70 per cent of all types of units available at the Danau Mutiara residential project in Putrajaya were taken up at its recent launch. The project, with a gross developmental value (GDV) of RM213 million, is being undertaken by Putra Perdana Development Sdn Bhd, a unit of Putrajaya Perdana Bhd. At the launch Monday, all bungalow units, all civil servant reserved units and all those fronting the existing lake were sold out. Selling prices start from RM2.3 million and up to RM4 million with built-up areas ranging from 4,218 to 5,456 square feet.

Mapex Perak To Showcase 2,543 Houses Worth RM2.7 Bln

IPOH -- The Real Estate and Housing Developers Association (REHDA) Perak will showcase a total of 2,543 units worth RM2.704 billion at its Malaysia Property Expo (Mapex) Perak 2014. REHDA Perak Chairman Datuk Francis Lee Yew Hean told a media briefing Wednesday, the event, to be held at Stadium Indera Mulia for three days beginning Friday, has attracted 22 developers.

UBB Targets RM2 Bln Property Sales In 5 Years

By Kenny Teng Khoon Hock

GEORGE TOWN -- United Bintang Bhd (UBB), an importer and exporter of used and reconditioned heavy machinery, is eyeing RM2 billion worth of property sales on Penang island over the next five years following its venture into property development.

Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Ideal Property Group Datuk Alex Ooi, who is a major shareholder of UBB with a 32 per cent stake, told Bernama Wednesday, the group's focus would be on Penang island, and potential joint-ventures with landowners had been lined up under its five-year plan.

AmFIRST REIT Plans RM80 Mln Subang Mall Upgrade

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmFIRST Real Estate Investment Trust (AmFIRST REIT) plans to invest RM80 million to upgrade and refurbish the Summit Subang USJ Mall with modern design concept.

The mall would be given an extensive outdoor refurbishment with glass wall and would spot a fresh new look in a bid to enhance the vibrancy of businesses there, Trust Manager, Am ARA REIT Managers Sdn Bhd Chief Executive Officer Zuhairy Md Isaid told a media briefing Thursday.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard
Gainers - 341
Losers - 420
Not Traded - 528
Unchanged - 328
Value - 2301905317
Volume - 16803222

BURSA MALAYSIA: FBM KLCI Closes At New High For Third Consecutive Day

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- Last minute buying pushed the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) to close at its best Friday, marking another high for the third consecutive day, despite the weaker performance on other regional bourses. The key index, which was traded easier throughout the day, finished at 1,883.34, rising 3.51 points after hitting a low of 1,879.82 earlier.

"Bursa Malaysia saw lacklustre trading for most of the day. Despite the Dow Jones Industrial Average falling for the last two consecutive days, the FBM KLCI closed at a new all-time high today," said Maybank Investment Bank chief chartist Lee Cheng Hooi. Decliners thumped advancers 420 to 341, with 328 counters unchanged, 528 untraded and 21 others suspended. Volume increased slightly to 1.68 billion shares worth RM2.3 billion from 1.63 billion shares worth RM2.35 billion transacted on Thursday. Main Market volume improved to 1.36 billion units worth RM2.19 billion from 1.35 billion units worth RM2.28 billion on Thursday. Turnover on the ACE market expanded to 280.3 million shares valued at RM103.15 million from Thurday's 191.47 million shares valued at RM50.07 million. Warrants dipped to 35.91 million units worth RM7.52 million from 81.24 million units worth RM17.6 million previously.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.2325	3.2355
EUR	4.4340	4.4391
GBP	5.4309	5.4376
100 YEN	3.1822	3.1858
SGD	2.5810	2.5853

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Closes Lower Against US Dollar As Market Players Stay On The Sidelines

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed lower against the US dollar with some market players staying on the sidelines ahead of the weekend, a currency dealer said. At 5 pm, the ringgit was quoted at 3.2325/2355 against a US dollar from Thurday's 3.2250/2270 close. The ringgit was traded lower against other major currencies. The domestic unit was lower against the Singapore dollar at 2.5810/5853 from Thurday's 2.5759/5787 close and depreciated against the yen to 3.1822/1858 from 3.1644/1689 on Thursday. It went down against the British pound to 5.4309/4376 from 5.4017/4086 Thurday and eased against the euro at 4.4340/4391 from 4.4079/4130 previously.

Money Market: Short-term Rates Close Stable On BNM Intervention

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday as Bank Negara Malaysia intervened to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The surplus in the conventional system fell to RM15.568 billion from RM23.041 billion estimated in the morning, while in the Islamic system, the excess was trimmed to RM2.549 billion from RM6.053 billion estimated earlier. In the morning, the central bank called for eight tenders -- an Islamic range maturity auction, a Commodity Murabahah Programme, two repos and four conventional money market tenders. The bank also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM15.5 billion and a RM2.5 billion Al-Wadiah money market tender, both for three-day money. The overnight rate stood at 2.95 per cent while the one-week, two-week and three-week rates stood at 3.03 per cent, 3.07 per cent and 3.10 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Contract Ends Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract was untraded Friday. May 2014, June 2014, July 2014 and September 2014 remained pegged at 96.54, 96.53, 96.42 and 96.34, respectively. Open interest amounted to 3,080 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.40 per cent.

KLCI Futures Contract Up On Positive Underlying Cash Market

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed higher Friday as investors took the cue from positive underlying cash market. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Thomas Yew Jia-Jong said Asian markets traded mixed after overnight US markets selloff. However, the Malaysian market remained resilient, with the FBM KLCI rising to a record high at 1,883.34, up 3.51 points, with institutional buying support on selected blue chips. He said the FKLI was traded in tandem with the cash market, starting off on cautious trading with a lower opening as a result of negative global markets' sentiment. "It traded in a tight range throughout most of the trading session and late buying support in the cash market boosted the FKLI to close at 1,880.5 points," he told Bernama. At close, May 2014 rose four points to 1,880.5, June 2014 gained 3.5 points to 1,879.5, September 2014 garnered five points to 1,872, and December 2014 added one point to 1,871. Turnover improved to 4,320 lots from 3,847 lots on Thursday while open interest increased to 33,429 contracts from 32,464 contracts Thurday. The benchmark index finished 3.51 points higher at a new high of 1,883.34 points.

IFSA Strengthens M'sia As Global Islamic Finance Hub - Pemandu

KUALA LUMPUR --- The Islamic Financial Services Act 2013 (IFSA) introduced last year will further strengthen Malaysia's position as a global hub for Islamic finance, says Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu). The country already holds two-thirds of the global sukuk issuance. The Act, which came into force on June 30 last year, is set to provide the foundations for end-to-end Syariah compliance for the Islamic finance industry in Malaysia, it said in the Economic Transformation Programme Annual Report 2013 released Monday.

AmBank Launches New Branch In Segamat

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmBank group has launched a new branch in Taman Utama, Segamat, Johor to provide clients with easier access to its full range of products and services. AmBank (M) Bhd Senior General Manager and Head of Retail Distribution Suraya Hassan said, the branch was poised to take advantage of Segamat's increasing importance for the citizens of Johor. "The branch sports our latest ergonomic design which is planned to enhance efficiency and provide superior experience for customers," she said in a statement Monday.

Maybank Investment Issues 3 New Call Warrants

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maybank Investment Bank Bhd is issuing three new European style cash-settled call warrants over the ordinary shares of three local companies, namely, Mah Sing Group Bhd, Press Metal Bhd and Scientex Bhd. The warrants will be listed Thursday with an issue size of 100 million each, Maybank Investment said in a statement Wednesday.

SME Bank To Fly Y-Biz Challenge Victors To Romania

PENAMPANG -- SME Bank Wednesday fulfilled its pledge to fly the bank's Y-Biz Challenge 2013 winners, from Sekolah Menengah St Michael here, to Romania. "They forked out their own money to take part in the exhibition and we thought SME Bank should also play a role to ease the financial burden of future Y-Biz Challenge winners so they, too, can have the opportunity to go to Romania and hopefully, win," Group Managing Director Datuk Mohd Radzif Mohd Yunus told reporters here Wednesday.

Bank Islam Plans 16 New Branches By 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- BIMB Holdings Bhd (BHB) plans to leverage the continued business growth of its Islamic banking unit, which aims to have a network of 150 branches nationwide by 2015. The bank was set to open seven new branches this year and nine more in 2015, Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd Managing Director Datuk Seri Zukri Samat told reporters after BHB annual general meeting here Thursday. Bank Islam currently has a network of 134 branches nationwide.

AmIslamic Bank Distributes RM1.7 Mln Business Tithes

KUANTAN -- AmIslamic Bank Bhd has distributed some RM1.7 million in business tithe contribution to asnaf (groups categorised as eligible for aid from tithe) for the 2013 financial year. Of the total, some RM250,000 was distributed to poor students through foster children programmes organised with the cooperation of Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Mara), General Manager Mohamad Sabirin A Rahman told reporters Thursday.

RHB Expects Malaysia's GDP To Grow 5.4 Pct 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Research expects Malaysia's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow 5.4 per cent in 2014 on resilient domestic demand and stronger exports. The research house said in a note Thursday, domestic demand was envisaged to remain resilient at a pace of 6.5 per cent and act as a main anchor for economic growth this year due to resilient consumer spending.

CIMB Unit Buys R.E.A.L Education Stake For RM33 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Private Equity (CIMB PE) has acquired a 33 per cent stake in R.E.A.L Education Group for RM33 million. Group Chief Financial Officer Kenny Kim said in a statement Thursday that R.E.A.L is an outstanding player in the education industry, offering a differentiated range of learning programme that resonate with the needs of Malaysians today.

Allianz Targets Over 150,000 New Customers in 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- Allianz Malaysia Bhd, a unit of Allianz Societas Europaea, is eyeing more than 150,000 new customers locally this year due to the good acceptance of Malaysians towards its range of products following multiple campaigns. Malaysia is important as a core market as Allianz now has 2.8 million customers in the country, and it garnered a market share of 11 per cent for general insurance, 8.0 per cent for life insurance and 14 per cent for motor insurance, its most popular product, Chief Executive Officer Jens Reisch said after the launch of the "1 Thing That Matters" campaign Wednesday.

Research Firms Maintain Rating Recommendations On MAS

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- Two research firms have maintained their rating recommendations on Malaysia Airlines (MAS) following the company's below-than-expectation first quarter financial results ended March 31, 2014. Kenanga Research and Hong Leong Investment Bank (HLIB) have pegged their ratings at "under-perform" and "sell" on MAS, with a lower target price of 14 sen and 15 sen, respectively. As at 10:14 am Friday, the national airline's shares were flat at 21 sen, the second most active shares traded on Bursa Malaysia, with 24.817 million lots changing hands. Reportedly, MAS incurred a net loss of RM443 million in the first quarter compared with a net loss of RM279 million in the same period a year ago, saying the losses were made worse by the disappearance of Flight MH370, which slowed down demand for air travel.

March Manufacturing Sales Reach RM56.5 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The sales value for the manufacturing sector in March 2014 rose by 10.1 per cent (RM5.2 billion) to RM56.5 billion from the RM51.3 billion reported a year ago. On a month-on-month basis, the sales value increased by 5.7 per cent (RM3.0 billion) compared with the preceding month of RM53.5 billion, said the Statistics Department in a statement Monday.

March Rubber Exports Down 6.3 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR --- Natural rubber exports in March declined 3,981 tonnes or 5.4 per cent versus the same period a year ago, the Statistics Department said Monday. On a month-on-month basis, total natural rubber exports decreased by 4,685 tonnes (-6.3 per cent) from February 2014.

Malaysia's IPI Up 4.3 Pct In March

KUALA LUMPUR --- Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) increased by 4.3 per cent in March 2014 as compared with the same month last year. The increase was due to the positive growth in the manufacturing index and electricity index which rose 6.4 per cent and 4.6 per cent, respectively, the Statistics Department said in a statement Monday.

Dialog Q3 PBT Rises ToRM63.5 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dialog Group Bhd's pre-tax profit (PBT) rose to RM63.51 million for the third quarter ended March 31, 2014, compared with RM53.15 million in the same period a year ago. Revenue was marginally higher at RM638.324 million from RM636.569 million previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

Distributive Trade Sector Records RM231.2 Bln Sales

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Distributive Trade sector registered a sales value of RM231.2 billion in the first quarter 2014, up 8.1 per cent from the same quarter in 2013. Within the sub-sectors, retail trade recorded the highest percentage growth in sales value at 11.2 per cent, followed by wholesale trade (7.1 per cent) and motor vehicles (4.4 per cent), the Statistics Department said in a statement Monday.

Petronas Revenue Surges To RM84 Bln Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas revenue for the first quarter ended March 31, 2014 surged to RM84 billion from RM76.7 billion in the first quarter last year. However, pre-tax profit was slightly lower at RM27.2 billion from RM28.8 billion in the same quarter last year, President and Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Shamsul Azhar Abbas told a media briefing Wednesday.

Pharmaniaga Turns In RM38.159 Mln PBT Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pharmaniaga Bhd's pre-tax profit (PBT) rose to RM38.159 million in its first quarter ended March 31, 2014 from RM36.924 million in the same period a year ago. Revenue, however, fell to RM468.672 million from the RM500.339 million previously, said the company in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday.

Petronas Eyes Over RM90 Bln PBT FY2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas expects its pre-tax profit (PBT) for the 2014 financial year (FY2014) to still breach above RM90 billion despite being pessimistic of its performance for the next two quarters. President and Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Shamsul Azhar Abbas told reporters Wednesday, this year would be challenging for its business due to fear factor from the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

Matrade Confident Lifestyle Sales Will Double This Year

KUALA LUMPUR --The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) is confident sales from the lifestyle segment will double this year, says Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dr Wong Lai Sum. "Last year, the lifestyle segment generated RM1.4 billion in sales and we hope to double that this year," she told reporters after the promotion agency signed a memorandum of understanding with Stylo International, a foreign fashion network.

MBSB Records RM266.9 Mln PBT Q1

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysia Building Society Bhd (MBSB) has chalked up a pre-tax profit (PBT) of RM266.964 million for the first quarter ended March 31, 2014, up 12.6 per cent when compared with RM237.110 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue was higher at RM667.11 million during the period under review from RM562.475 million registered previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

MAS Incurs Q1 Net Loss Of RM443 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines (MAS), which incurred a net loss of RM443 million for the first quarter ended March 31, 2014, compared with a net loss of RM279 million in the same quarter a year ago, said losses were made worse by the disappearance of MH370 which slowed down demand for air travel. "…. our group needs to accelerate efforts to improve its revenue stream and better manage our high costs which have increased in line with greater capacity," MAS Group Chief Executive Officer Ahmad Jauhari Yahya said Thursday.

Silk Holdings Bags RM23 Mln Carigali Hess Contract

KUALA LUMPUR -- SILK Holdings Bhd (SILK)'s subsidiary, Jasa Merin (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, has been awarded a contract by Carigali Hess Operating Company Sdn Bhd to provide a straight supply vessel worth RM22.92 million. The contract is expected to contribute positively to SILK Group's earnings for the financial year ending July 31, 2014 and beyond, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

Gas Malaysia Posts RM56.1 Mln PBT Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gas Malaysia Bhd's pre-tax profit increased 8.9 per cent to RM56.1 million in the first quarter ended March 31, 2014 compared to RM51.5 million in the same period last year due to higher volume of gas sold. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, the company said its revenue for the period rose 8.4 per cent to RM580.6 million from RM535.4 million a year ago.

Construction Output To Surpass Last year's RM93 Bln – MBAM

KUALA LUMPUR --- The construction sector's output this year looks set to surpass last year's RM93 billion, fuelled by ongoing and new public sector projects. The sector has seen a year-on-year growth of 20 per cent for the first quarter, boding well for the entire year's prospects, said President of Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) Matthew Tee after the launch of its Coffee Table Book by Deputy Works Minister Datuk Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin Thursday.

Inari Q3 Net Profit Soars 101.5 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Inari Amertron Bhd's net profit for the third quarter ended March 31, 2014 (Q3) soared to RM25.0 million from RM12.4 million in the same period a year ago. In a statement Thursday, the group said its performance came on the back of a 237.8 per cent jump in Q3 group revenue to RM191.8 million, out of which RM106.8 million was attributed to the consolidated contribution from its optoelectronics business acquired at end-June 2013.

Dialog Q3 PBT Rises To RM63.5 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dialog Group Bhd's pre-tax profit rose to RM63.51 million for the third quarter ended March 31, 2014, compared with RM53.15 million in the same period a year ago. Revenue was marginally higher at RM638.324 million from RM636.569 million previously, It said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

Aeon Q1 PBT Declines TO RM66.7 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Aeon Co (M) Bhd posted a pre-tax profit of RM66.7 million for the first quarter ended March 31, down from RM74.8 million in the same quarter a year ago. Its revenue, however, rose to RM945.5 million from RM869.3 million in the first quarter last year, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

Reach Energy To Raise RM750 Mln From IPO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Reach Energy Bhd, a special purpose acquisition company focused on exploration and production in oil and gas industry, will raise RM750 million from its initial public offering (IPO). It said in a statement Monday, the IPO would offer one billion shares at an issue price of 75 sen each and the public offering would come with one billion free detachable warrants on the basis of one warrant for each share subscribed.

Kedah Gets RM4 Bln Investment In Manufacturing Jan-March

ALOR SETAR -- Kedah has received investments totalling RM4 billion in the manufacturing sector for the January-March period this year, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Tun Dr Mahathir said. The total approved investment for that period far exceeded the overall investment into the state which amounted to RM2.5 billion last year, he told reporters after chairing the state executive councillor meeting here Wednesday.

Fama's Retail Sector To Contribute RM5 Bln In 2020

KANGAR -- The retail sector involving the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority's (Fama) entrepreneurs is expected to contribute a sales value of RM5 billion in 2020, says Fama chairman Tan Sri Badruddin Amiruldin. "The Fama retail channel now exceeds 2,500 and 1,000 Pasar Tani targeted to start operations in 2020 will contribute a sales value of about RM2 billion towards realising the goal," he said after closing the annual meeting of the Koperasi Usahawan Pasar Tani Perlis Bhd Wednesday.

BiotechCorp Targets RM5 Bln Investments This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd (BiotechCorp) expects its bioeconomy trade and investment mission to the United States (US) next month to help achieve an investment value of RM5 billion for this year, said Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal. To date, investment in the bioeconomy sector was worth RM2 billion, Mohd Nazlee told a media briefing on the trade and investment mission to the US Wednesday.

Time Engineering To Venture Into Regional Trade Facilitation

KUALA LUMPUR --- Time Engineering Bhd (TEB), soon to be known as Dagang NeXchange Bhd pending approval of its registration processes, will pursue opportunities in trade facilitation in regional e-commerce markets this year. TEB will leverage on its subsidiary Dagang Net Technologies Sdn Bhd's Pan Asian Alliance network, which includes countries such as Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, TEB's Executive Deputy Chairman Datuk Samsul Husin said after the company's annual general meeting here Monday.

Sarawak Scores Highest Investment Q1

KUCHING -- Sarawak has wooed RM7.3 billion in total investments in the first quarter of this year to emerge as the state with the highest investment in the country for the period, the State Legislative Assembly was told Monday. State Industrial Development Minister Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan said, based on the latest report by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), the figure surpassed the total investments attracted by Kedah with RM4 billion and Selangor RM1.9 billion.

Malindo Air Optimistic klia2 Operation Will Straighten Out

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian hybrid airline, Malindo Air is extremely positive that operations at the klia2 will straighten out within the next one or two weeks. "Our offer to help out is always open to other carriers as we are committed to ensure the smooth -sailing of operations at klia2," said Malindo in a statement Monday.

Govt Meets GTP Targets - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the government managed to meet the targets of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP), with some of it delivered ahead of schedule. "The achievements of the GTP to date are a testament to the dedication of all involved," he said in a Note from the Prime Minister included in the GTP Annual Report 2013 launched Monday night.

Najib Shares GTP Success Stories Of Six Individuals

KUALA LUMPUR -- The success stories of six individuals received special mention from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. They were Chandrasekaran, Selvestone Junit, Wilson Bato Anak Tanggai, Dr Artiran Kaur, Chaang Tuck Cheong and Zulsuzina Sharif. The six were examples of the success of the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), he said at the launch of the GTP and ETP Annual Report at Wisma Angkasapuri Monday night.

More Efforts Needed To Achieve High-Income Economy - Wahid

KUALA LUMPUR -- Much more needs to be done towards achieving a high-income economy by 2020, says Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar. "Our focus now is to remain on the right path towards the creation of a high-income economy by 2020," said Abdul Wahid, who is also in-charge of the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), in his remarks in the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) Annual Report 2013 released Monday.

GTP: Ministers' KPI Shows Improvement

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of ministers involved in the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) have shown progressive improvement since 2011, according to the GTP Annual Report 2013 released by the Prime Minister's Department Monday. The KPIs achieved 87.4 per cent of their targets in 2013, up from 86.5 per cent in 2012 and 83.6 per cent in 2011, the report said. All 30 ministers had been given specific KPIs under their respective ministerial scope covered by the Ministerial Key Results Area (MKRA).

Muhyiddin Confident of Higher GTP, ETP Performance

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin is confident that the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) are capable of recording a higher achievement in future with a more effective government delivery system. The Deputy Prime Minister said Monday, if last year all the seven National Key Result Areas (NKRA) reported an average achievement of 104 per cent, then this year, it was not impossible that a higher achievement could be targeted.

Govt Expects Fiscal Deficit To Decline To 3.5 Pct This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Federal Government's initiatives to reduce the fiscal deficit continued to pick up pace and is expected to bear fruition and decline to 3.5 per cent this year from four per cent last year. The federal debt was projected to come in at 54.7 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and continue to be below the government's debt ceiling of 55 per cent of the GDP, said the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) in the 2013 Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) Annual Report Monday.

Private Investment To Drive Economy Under ETP

KUALA LUMPUR -- Private investment continues to drive economic growth, accounting for 92 per cent of Malaysia's total investments under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), says Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala. Public spending, which will make up the remainder, will be focusing on catalytic projects such as the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), River of Life (ROL) and the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex (PIPC), he said in his remarks in the ETP Annual Report 2013 released Monday.

ETP Puts Malaysia On Track To Developed Nation Status

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) has greatly benefited the nation by raising investment and per capita income, putting Malaysia in a good position to attain developed nation status earlier than 2020, says Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak. The Prime Minister said Monday, the ETP, which began in 2010, has continued to spur momentum in the private sector, helping to raise gross national income (GNI) per capita to US$10,060 in 2013 from US$7,059 in 2009.

Govt Focusing On Expanding Downstream Sector - Pemandu

KUALA LUMPUR --The government is focusing to expand the downstream sector, lift domestic production and push into renewable energy in an effort to add further value to the oil, gas and energy sector. Petronas would lead the charge, supported by industry players such as Shell, ExxonMobil and Royal Vopak, which have contributed to considerable investments, the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) said Monday.

Don't Twist The Facts On GST, Says Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak hit out at irresponsible people who attempted to twist the facts on the impending Goods and Services Tax (GST) which in actual fact will help rake in more revenue for the country and not burden the people. "As an example, GST will not be imposed on essential consumer goods such as rice, sugar, salt, flour, cooking oil, salted fish, bus, rail and light rail transit fares, education and health services," he said in his speech in conjunction with the release of the Government Transformation Programme and Economic Transformation Programme 2013 Annual Reports here Monday night.

All Systems At Klia2 Running Smoothly - MAHB

KUALA LUMPUR -- All systems at the new budget airport klia2 are working smoothly on its fourth day of operations since its largest tenant AirAsia moved in last Friday, Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) said. The airport operator said it continues to work closely with all stakeholders including airlines, government agencies and service contractors to ensure operations are running smoothly. "All is well on its way to normal operations," it said in a statement Monday.

Still Room For Employers To Restructure Salary – Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- There is still room for employers to restructure the salary implementation in Malaysia to be in line with the needs of a high-income country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. The employees' productivity in Malaysia, which increased 2.3 per cent last year, could be improved further when work value was added in terms of technology, innovation and creativity, he said in conjunction with the release of the Government Transformation Programme and Economic Transformation Programme 2013 Annual Reports Monday.

FGVH Plant To Buy 1 Mln Tonnes Local Soybean, Canola

From Nani Rahayu Yusof

BECANCOUR (Quebec) -- Twin Rivers Technologies-ETGO (TRT-ETGO), an oilseeds crushing and refining plant owned and operated by FELDA Global Ventures Holdings (FGVH), is set to buy almost a million metric tonnes (MT) of locally grown soybean and canola from Quebec and Western Canada. FGVH Chairman Tan Sri Isa Samad told Bernama Wednesday, the plant, with a crushing capacity of 3,000 MT and refining capacity 1,200 MT per day, is set to purchase 450,000 MT of soybean from Quebec and Ontario and half a million MT of canola seed from Quebec and Western Canada.

MAS New Business Plan Will Not Affect Rural Air Service

MIRI -- The Rural Air Services (RAS) for Sarawak and Sabah provided by MASwings Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Malaysia Airlines (MAS), will not be affected by the national carrier proposed new business plan. MASwings Chief Executive Officer Datuk Mohd Nawawi Awang said Friday, the company currently has a contract with the government until 2017, to operate RAS which provides flight services to the interior and highlands areas in both states.

BNM Redefines External Debt To Include Ringgit-Denominated Securities

KUALA LUMPUR --- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has redefined its external debt to include non-resident holdings of ringgit-denominated debt securities, non-resident deposits, trade credits provided by foreign trade counterparts and other debt liabilities. BNM Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said Friday, the increase in the external debt was due mainly to higher offshore borrowing by the private sector and non-resident holdings of ringgit-denominated debt liabilities.

Malaysia's Q1 BOP Records Higher Surplus Of RM19.8 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's current account balance posted a higher surplus of RM19.8 billion for the first quarter (Q1) of 2014 compared with RM14.8 billion in the preceding quarter, the Statistics Department said. In a statement Friday, the department said this was mainly attributed to a lower deficit of both primary income of RM6.4 billion and services accounts of RM2.7 billion.

FGV Named Palm Oil Plantation Company Of The Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) received the 2014 Frost and Sullivan Palm Oil Plantation Company of the Year Excellence Award for the second consecutive year. In a statement Tuesday, the largest oil palm plantation company said the award acknowledged its best practices in business operations and outstanding 2013 performance.

AirAsia First Airline To Pilot Interpol I-Checkit System

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia Bhd will pilot the International Criminal Police Organisation's (INTERPOL) I-Checkit system as part of ongoing efforts to enhance international travel security. In a statement Tuesday, the airlines said the system would screen the passports of all its prospective passengers against the world police body's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) database.

Mustapa To Attend APEC Trade Ministers Meeting In China

KUALA LUMPUR -- International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed will attend the 20th APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting in Qingdao, China, from May 17 to May 18. Mustapa's participation in the meeting would enable Malaysia to remain engaged in the APEC process and contribute to initiatives to promote deeper economic integration, the ministry said in a statement Wednesday.

WIEF Foundation, S. Korea To Hold Investment Roundtable December

KUALA LUMPUR -- The World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) Foundation will organise the WIEF Investment Roundtable in Pyeongchang, Gangwon, South Korea in December 2014. A memorandum of agreement was signed between WIEF Foundation Chairman Tun Musa Hitam and Governor of Gangwon Province, Choi Moon-Soon, recently, said Musa in a statement Wednesday.

Kedah To Organise Investment, Trade Seminar In Tokyo

ALOR SETAR -- The Kedah government is organising a trade and investment seminar in Tokyo, Japan in a bid to attract investors from that country to the state, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Tun Dr Mahathir said. The seminar is part of a programme in conjunction with the Kedah investment and trade delegation visit to Japan on May 20 to 25, 2014, he said after chairing the state and executive councillor meeting here Wednesday.

Vincent Tan, Shahril Samsuddin To Speak At Forbes CEO Conference

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- Berjaya Corporation Group of Companies Founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan and SapuraKencana Petroleum President and Group Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Shahril Shamsuddin will be among 25 business luminaries to speak at the 14th annual Forbes Global CEO Conference in Singapore this October. The three-day conference, beginning Oct 28, will also see Peter Woo, The Wharf (Holdings) Ltd Chairman, Alliane Boots Executive Chairman Stefano Pessina Alliance Boots, OUE Ltd Executive Chairman Stephen Riady and Visy Australia/ Pratt Industries USA Global Chairman Anthony Pratt addressing the participants on several issues, Forbes said, in a statement Thursday.

MOF Extends Shahril's Contract as Prasarana Group MD

KUALA LUMPUR -- Syarikat Prasarana Negara Bhd Group announced Thursday that Managing Director Datuk Seri Shahril Mokhtar will continue to lead the group for the next two years after his current term ends on Sept 30. Chairman Tan Sri Ismail Adam said in a statement, Shahril's contract was extended until Sept 30, 2016, by the Ministry of Finance in a letter dated May 7.

DKSH Opens Healthcare Distribution Centre In Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR - DKSH Business Unit Healthcare has boosted its presence in Malaysia by expanding its infrastructure through the opening of a 130,000-sq ft healthcare distribution centre in Shah Alam, Selangor. The new facility at Hicom Industrial Estate replaces DKSH Malaysia's older central distribution centre in Petaling Jaya which had been operating at full capacity, said President and Chief Executive Officer Dr Joerg Wolle in a statement Friday.

Boeing, Scoot Sign 787 Pilot Training Pact

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

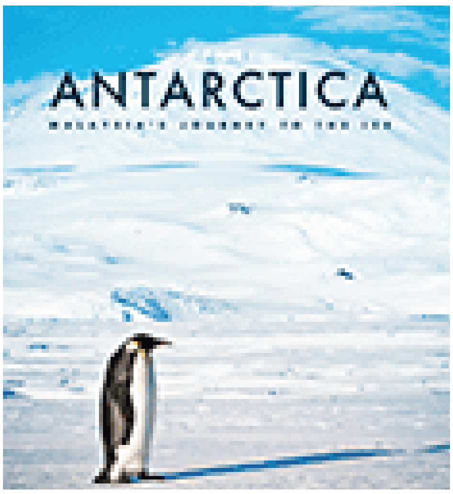
SINGAPORE -- Boeing and Scoot Friday announced a five-year pilot training agreement to support the Singapore-based airline's fleet transition to 787 Dreamliners. Under the agreement, Boeing Flight Services, a business unit of Boeing Commercial Aviation Services, will provide 787 flight training to Scoot pilots at Boeing's Singapore training campus.

M'sia's O&G Firms Secure RM1.27 Bln Sales In Houston

KUALA LUMPUR --Malaysia's oil and gas companies have generated RM1.27 billion in sales at the Offshore Technology Conference (OTC) on May 5 to May 8 in Houston, the United States, in early this month. Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) said Friday, the sales generated were from the 208 one-to-one business meetings arranged by the national trade promotion agency.

Nasdaq Omx Launches SMARTS For Global FX Surveillance

KUALA LUMPUR -- The NASDAQ OMX Group, Inc. (Nasdaq:NDAQ), the world's leading provider of market technology, Friday announced the launch of its SMARTS FX Trade Surveillance for global foreign exchange (FX) trading. The SMARTS FX Trade Surveillance module gives surveillance and compliance teams the ability to monitor trading in FX products for possible manipulation of rate fixes, insider trading/front-running, unusual pricing and other suspect behaviours.



Malaysia On Track To Achieving Developed Nation Status

LAUNCHED...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (fourth from right) and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (third from left) together with Cabinet Ministers after the launch of the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) 2013 Annual Report at Wisma Angkasapuri Monday.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is on track to achieving high-income nation status by 2020, with positive indicators showing the nation can realise its goals. The Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) said that key macro-economic indicators showed that the country was on track to achieve its high-income goals. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who is also Finance Minister Monday launched the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP)'s Annual Report 2013 released by Pemandu. Najib in his remarks said Malaysia may even achieve the status earlier than projected.

ETP Maintains Strong Momentum

This expectation is possible given that the ETP, introduced in 2010 has maintained its strong momentum over the last three years, thus helping the economy to achieve the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 4.7 per cent in 2013. In 2013 alone, the ETP contributed RM7.4 billion to the Gross National Income (GNI), creating 29,373 new employment opportunities and driving RM8 billion worth of investments, said Najib, who is also the Finance Minister. Najib said that this is despite continued uncertainties in the external environment, which had shown a gradual recovery since the global financial crisis of 2008/2009. Since 2010, 196 projects had been launched under the National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs), accounting for RM219.3 billion in total committed projects.

Projects Under NKEAs Create New Jobs

These, in turn, are expected to generate RM144 billion in GNI and create 437,816 new jobs. "These activities have increased our GNI per capita to US$10,060 during the year (2013). The numbers, however, only tell half the story. "What has heartened me the most about the ETP has been its ability to improve the people's quality of life, whether through projects which are focussed on uplifting local communities or through big ticket initiatives such as the construction of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system in the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley NKEA," he said. He said these projects were selected for their potential to generate higher income for the people, contribute to productivity gains and stimulate spillover effects across the national economy.

ETP's Progress In O & G Hailed

Meanwhile, an analyst commended the ETP's progress in the Oil and Gas (O&G) sector, in particular, the refinery and petrochemical integrated development or Rapid project. "It's good to see the O&G activities in Pengerang taking shape, the latest development being the village relocation which will begin in the third quarter of this year." Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar at the media briefing, said the Government was taking a prudent approach to growth. "The subsidy rationalisation will continue but in a manner that is not counter-productive, with less resistance from the public. "Fuel subsidy will be the focus in 2014. The last rationalisation was last year. The Government is coming out with an execution plan."

GST, Subsidy Rationalisation Important Reforms

CIMB Research said the combined effort of the GST, subsidy rationalisation and more cost-efficient spending were important reform measures that the government had to implement on the path towards fiscal consolidation. "From the GNI targets and poverty alleviation, we are certainly on the right track towards 2020, but it is very important to ensure the pace of structural reforms continues. This is to ensure that when we reach there, we stay there."

Positive Changes Seen

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapha Mohamed said numerous positive changes were seen after the government introduced the two programmes especially in generating national income and creating job opportunities. "The people led a life of depravity in the past but with numerous government aid they have been able to boost their standard of living, for example poverty has also gone down. "More importantly, we still have five to six years more to achieve a developed nation status and the government still needs the support of the people to ensure the nation could achieve it by 2020," he said.

Benefits To The People

Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said the complete report on the national development was also felt by the people in the town and rural areas. "Adult to preschool children also feel the positive development such as renumerations and transformation aid which were given to ease their burden," he said.According to the report tabled, in the fourth National Key Result Area (NKRA), namely, to boost the standard of living of low income households, poverty rate had dropped to 1.7 percent in 2012 while hardcore poverty had almost been eradicated.

Positive and Satisfactory Results

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nancy Shukri said positive and satisfactory achievements had been seen this year although the government still had several more years to achieve the target of a developed nation status by 2020. "They are targeting the right people to serve and to reduce their difficulties... clearly, many needy groups have been assisted through numerous transformation programmes," she said.

Najib's Humanitarian Approach

Communication and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek said a humanitarian approach by the prime minister in tabling the GTP 2.0 report touched the heart and was easily understood by all levels of society. "Normally, the tabling of reports like this is in the form of statistics but with the humanitarian approach such as sharing the experiences of individuals who have felt its benefit, it is not only easier to understand but also touches the heart of the people," he said. Ahmad Shabery suggested that all state governments, be it Barisan Nasional or opposition to use the approach to table their reports. When tabling the GTP report, the Prime Minister also shared the experiences of several individuals who succeeded in numerous sectors, among them in the Retail Shop Transformation, lMalaysia Clinic and 1AZAM Programme.

--BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA: FBM KLCI Likely To Continue Uptrend Next Week

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR-- The local bourse is expected to continue its upward momentum next week, benefiting from the global weakness and bracing for another stronger session riding on defensive funds inflow.

Affin Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Dr Nazri Khan said the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) will be boosted by small- to and large-cap rotation coupled with easing-neutral monetary policies from major central banks -- the US Federal Reserve, European Central Bank and Bank of England.

“Further strength on top Bursa dividend stocks namely Maybank, Axiata, TM, DiGi, Hong Leong Financial Group and IOI Corp suggests more upside bias for the FBM KLCI next week,” he told Bernama. On the global front, Nazri said the US economic readings and first quarter corporate earnings, which are expected to be favourable, would positively influence market sentiments, with the FBM KLCI likely to touch the 1,900-point level. He also said the latest upwardly revised global growth and emerging market outlook by the International Monetary Fund should bring more buyers into the market.

On a week-to-week basis, the FBM KLCI hit new highs for three consecutive days since Wednesday and closed the week on an all-time high of 1,883.34, rising 16.62 points from last Friday.

The market was closed on Tuesday for the Wesak holiday. The Plantation Index, which received huge demand ahead of a possible El Nino threat, surged 214.09 points to 9,152.02, the Finance Index soared 60.09 points to 17,083.85, and the Industrial Index increased 23.42 points to 3,206.71. The FBM Emas Index surged 91.74 points to 12,995.47, the FBMT100 Index chalked up 92.62 points to 12,644.8, the FBM Ace garnered 79.91 points to 6,669.4 and the FBM 70 improved 28.26 points to 14,032.11.

Weekly turnover expanded to 6.71 billion shares worth RM8.66 billion from the 6.59 billion shares worth RM8.28 billion transacted last Friday. Main market volume slipped to 5.32 billion shares valued at RM8.29 billion from last week’s 5.85 billion shares valued at RM7.77 billion. Warrant turnover appreciated to 179.98 million units worth RM37.02 million from 160.61 million units worth RM24.39 million previously. The ACE market volume narrowed to 1.2 billion shares valued at RM323.76 million from 1.98 billion shares valued at RM468.45 million.

FOREX: Ringgit Likely To Be Steady Against US Dollar

By Siti Radziah Hamzah

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is likely to hold steady at between 3.10 and 3.23 against the US dollar next week, said dealers. Despite the cautious stance adopted by players amid uncertainties over the ringgit's immediate direction, dealers said the market would gradually react to the announcement of the first quarter Gross Domestic Product (GDP) announcement. "The market will absorb the announcement by the central bank," Hong Leong Bank Fixed Income and Economic Research Senior Manager Choong Yin Pheng told Bernama.

She added that the market was also cautious on expectations of an interest rate hike in the future. Malaysia's GDP growth improved significantly to 6.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2014 from 4.2 per cent in the same period last year, anchored by domestic demand and a turnaround in net exports. For the week just ended, the ringgit closed lower at 3.2325/2355 from 3.2275/2305 last Friday. Against other major currencies, the ringgit was firmer against the Singapore dollar at 2.5810/5853 from 2.5849/5894, but fell against the yen to 3.1822/1858 from 3.1714/1749. It was up against the British pound to 5.4309/4376 from last Friday's 5.4554/4612 and closed higher against the euro at 4.4340/4391 from 4.4585/4639.

MONEY MARKET: Short-Term Rates To Hold Steady Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR --Short-term rates are likely to be steady next week as Bank Negara Malaysia is expected to offer tenders to absorb excess funds from the money market system, dealers said. For the week just ended, the overnight rate was quoted at 2.95 per cent while the one, two and three-week rates were pegged at 3.03 per cent, 3.07 per cent and 3.10 per cent respectively. During the week, the central bank intervened on a daily basis to mop up surplus liquidity by conducting conventional, Islamic, commodity murabahah programme, range maturity auction, Islamic range maturity auction and repo tenders. It also carried out late borrowings to further reduce the excess funds. The borrowings reduced the system's total liquidity surplus for the week just ended to RM15.568 billion in conventional operations and RM2.549 billion in Islamic funds. The underlying three-month interbank rate was pegged at 3.40 per cent.

FBM KLCI Futures To Trade Higher Next Week

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade higher next week, tracking the better underlying performance of the cash market. Affin Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Dr Nazri Khan said the FBM KLCI would likely test the 1,900-point psychological level on high volume and rising oscillators. "Any decisive break above the 1,880-point level would mark a significant turning point, causing a flush of more buying up to 1,900 points, the major resistance level the market perceives as the next breakout price target," he told Bernama. For the week just ended, the benchmark FBM KLCI finished the week at 1,883.34, up 3.51 points from the previous week. Both May 2014 and June 2014 rose 19 points each to 1,880.5 and 1,879.5 respectively, September 2014 gained 15 points to 1,872, while December 2014 increased 13 points to 1,871. Turnover this week declined to 18,361 lots from last week's 26,804 lots, while open interest widened to 33,429 contracts from 30,631 contracts last Friday.

CPO Futures To Trade Mixed On Speculative Buying

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives would likely experience cautious trading next week at between RM2,600 and RM2,700 per tonne with anticipation of speculative buying. Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader Jim Teh said next week's market sentiment is expected to be cautious on an uncertain global economic environment.

"Traders have started to book the Ramadan stock this week so we expect the demand will be a little bit slower next week," he told Bernama. However, he said, the price range is still good compared with other commodities, which are expected to experience a downtrend next week. Palm prices are set for the biggest weekly gain in three weeks, after stronger-than-expected export data lifted the market to the highest level in over two weeks. Exports are expected to remain strong upon the upcoming festive season, which should be supportive for the palm market. Cargo surveyor data showed that shipments of Malaysian palm products jumped 23-28 per cent in the first half of May compared with a month ago, with bigger purchases from India, Pakistan, and Europe.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2014 rose RM25 to RM2,629 per tonne, July 2014 added RM15 to RM2,592 per tonne, August 2014 climbed RM13 to RM2,580 per tonne while September improved RM14 to RM2,574 per tonne. Weekly turnover slipped to 117,248 lots from 161,299 lots last week, while open interest widened to 214,777 contracts from 209,203 contracts previously. On the physical market, May South was flat at RM2,650 per tonne.

Rubber Price May Follow Weak TOCOM Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Rubber prices on the Malaysian rubber market may trade lower next week, following expectations of a weaker Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM). A dealer said sentiment in Japan remains weak, reflecting a stronger yen, amid an outlook of more supplies. "Dealers expect more supply from the producing countries in the market soon because of the end of the wintering season in the region, which will further pressure prices," he said. He said the fall in the dollar/yen is probably having the biggest impact, and TOCOM rubber could be trading below 200 yen next week, which could accelerate further selling. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 at noon rose 12.5 sen to 543.5 sen a kg, and latex-in-bulk gained three sen for 456 sen a kg. The 5 pm closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 added 13 sen to 541 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk increased 4.5 sen to 456 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To See Quiet Trade Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR --The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to see quiet trade next week, said dealers. No trading was recorded during the week just ended.On a Friday-to-Friday basis, May 2014, June 2014, July 2014 and September 2014 remained pegged at 96.54, 96.53, 96.42 and 96.34 respectively. Open interest amounted to 3,080 contracts.

KLTM: Foreign Demand To Boost Tin Market Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Demand from Japan and Europe is expected to continue to provide a boost to the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) next week. A local tin trader said the tin price is expected to remain well bid next week with price bias towards testing the US$23,511 level supported by the overseas demand. For the week just ended, the metal's price finished US$80 higher at US$23,400 per tonne compared with US$23,320 last Friday, with trading dominated by Japanese, European and local buyers. Weekly turnover decreased slightly to 194 lots from 198 lots last week. The premium between the KLTM and the London Metal Exchange narrowed to US$460 per tonne from US$485 per tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures Likely To Trade Lower Next Week

By Azizul Hj Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trade lower next week. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealers told Bernama they are pessimistic about the gold price for next week, with the local bourse sharing the same bearish sentiments as the New York Commodity Exchange (Comex) gold market. Gold at Comex, they said, is still jittering to move above US$1,300 due to the hawkish US Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision, the current dollar appreciation and the easing of the Ukraine crisis.

Another local trader said the recent strong US data signalled brighter prospects for the world's largest economy, reducing the safe haven's appeal as an investment hedge. Some traders were seen initiating fresh short positions on the local bourse last Friday, he said. However, he warned, geopolitical factors and uncertainty in Ukraine will continue to affect gold physical prices as well as futures contracts.

Meanwhile, a technical analyst from RHB Retail Research said selling pressure is seen intact as long as the commodity stays below RM137 a gramme. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month May 2014 improved two ticks to RM134.25 a gramme, while June 2014, July 2014 and August 2014 gained six ticks each to close at RM134.70 a gramme, RM134.95 a gramme and RM135.05 a gramme respectively.

Total volume fell to 1,436 lots valued at RM19.38 million against 2,719 lots valued at RM38.2 million traded last Friday. Open interest on Friday stood at 3,261 contracts versus 4,040 contracts previously.