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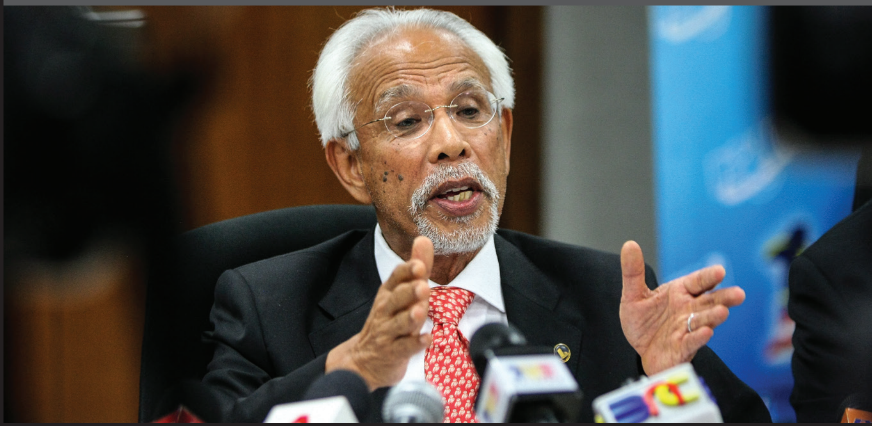
This Week's Highlight : Felda Prepared To Regain Jalan Semarak Land - Shahrir



Felda Chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad says action will be taken to regain ownership of the land in Jalan Semarak. -- fotoBERNAMA (file pix) by Izzuddin Abd Radzak

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda is prepared to take all forms of action to regain ownership of the land estimated at RM270 million in Jalan Semarak here, following a report that raised questions about the land transfer deal. Its chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad said Thursday, apart from the police report lodged on Dec 12, other action taken were registering a caveat on the land, revoking the power of attorney issued and taking civil action against the parties involved. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in a series of posts on his Twitter account said that action would be taken in the case of any negligence or misconduct based on the investigation report by the authorities.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

FTA With Sri Lanka Will Facilitate Malaysian Exports

From Azeman Ariffin

COLOMBO -- Products and services from Malaysian companies are expected to easily penetrate the market in Sri Lanka if both countries are able to forge a Free Trade Agreement. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said among the main products Malaysia exported to Sri Lanka was palm oil but it was subjected to several specific taxes, and if the FTA was implemented, the taxation system in both countries would be reviewed.

TUESDAY

Lower BNM Reserves Due To Foreign Fund Outflow

KUALA LUMPUR, -- The alleged US$39.6 billion (US$1=RM4.07) loss between 2013 and 2015 is actually an amount that reflected the decline in international reserves due to outflows of foreign funds and not losses due to forex trading by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani said. "These outflows were due to concerns over weak global growth prospects, anticipation of monetary policy normalisation in the US and the sharp decline in global oil prices," he said in a statement Tuesday.

WEDNESDAY

Malaysia, Maldives Ink Four MoUs To Strengthen Cooperation

From Harlina Samson

MALE -- Malaysia and the Maldives inked four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) Wednesday to strengthen cooperation between the two countries. Visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom witnessed the signing of the MoUs.

THURSDAY

Najib's Visit Strengthens Malaysia-Maldives Ties, Collaborations

From Harlina Samson

MALE (Maldives) -- The close bilateral ties between Malaysia and the Maldives Thursday have been strengthened through collaborative efforts and smart partnerships in various sectors which benefit both countries. Taking advantage of the multi shared values, religion and culture, Kuala Lumpur and Male want the 49-year diplomatic relations to be further enhanced to foster closer people-to-people ties of both nations, making it the pillar of Maldives-Malaysia relations.

FRIDAY

BNM International Reserves At US$102.2 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) international reserves amounted to US$102.2 billion (RM431.6 billion) as at Dec 15, 2017 compared with US$101.9 billion (RM430.4 billion) as at Nov 30, 2017. In a statement Friday, the central bank said the reserves position was sufficient to finance 7.5 months of retained imports and was 1.1 times the short-term external debt.

SMEbrief

Alibaba Conducts Training For Malaysian SMEs

By Rosemarie Khoo Mohd Sani

KUALA LUMPUR -- World e-commerce giant, Alibaba, has conducted a business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce training programme for Malaysia's small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Electronic World Trade Platform (eWTP) Malaysia B2B Project Director, Terry Jiang said, the programme, held across nine major cities nationwide over the past two weeks, which ended today, attracted 330 SMEs.

Tekun Aims To Assist 35,000 Micro Entrepreneurs

KUALA LUMPUR -- The National Entrepreneurial Group Economic Fund (Tekun Nasional) aims to assist 35,000 micro entrepreneurs in 2018 with an allocation of RM500 million as provided for in the Budget 2018. In a statement Wednesday, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Datuk Baharom Embi said of this amount, RM450 million is for 31,000 Bumiputera entrepreneurs and the balance of RM50 million for 4,000 entrepreneurs from the Indian community.

40 Mid-Tier Cos To Partake In Devt Programme

SHAH ALAM -- Some 40 local mid-tier companies (MTCs) from various sectors are expected to participate in the Mid-Tier Companies Development Programme (MTCDP) to increase their export and strengthen core business functions. Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Chua Tee Yong said Wednesday, these companies would be selected under the MTCDP's Wave 5 programme starting April next year.

PUNB Targets RM200 Mln Loans For 500 Entrepreneurs

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB) expects to disburse RM200 million in loans to 500 entrepreneurs under its seven financing schemes next year, focusing mainly in the halal and digital economy sectors. Chairman Tan Sri Mohd Ali Rustam said Tuesday, from Jan 1, 2017 to Nov 30, 2017, PUNB had approved financing totalling RM177 million to 459 companies, involving 631 entrepreneurs.

Bernama Boost For Koko Minda Food Industries

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama) Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding with Koko Minda Food Industries (M) Sdn Bhd, a producer of cocoa-based beverages, as part of an effort to assist small and medium enterprises to expand their business. Bernama General Manager Datuk Zulkefli Salleh said Bernama, through its corporate social responsibility initiative, could play an important role in promoting the products of SMEs right up to the foreign markets.

PropUP — Property*update*

Prime Office Rentals In KL To Continue Declining

KUALA LUMPUR, -- Prime office rentals in Kuala Lumpur are projected to continue declining in the next 12 months on increasing supply of new office space and as low occupancy levels remain the main concerns of the industry. According to the "Asia-Pacific Prime Office Rental Index for the third quarter (Q3) of 2017" report by global property consultant, Knight Frank, prime office rentals declined 0.4 per cent in the third quarter (Q3) compared to the previous quarter.

M101 Appoints CRCC Main Contractor For Skywheel

KUALA LUMPUR – M101 Holdings Sdn Bhd has appointed China Railway Construction Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CRCC) as the main contractor for the development of M101 Skywheel, which has an estimated gross development value of RM2.2 billion. In a statement Tuesday, the company said M101 Skywheel, a project designed by Studio F. A. Porsche, is headed for completion by 2021 and well on its way to becoming Malaysia's next iconic landmark.

Stamp Duty For Property Transfers To Remain At 3 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government is not increasing the stamp duty rate for the instrument of transfer of land, share or lease (Form 14A) from three per cent to four per cent as announced under the Budget 2017. In a statement Wednesday, the Ministry of Finance said the proposal to increase the stamp duty rate on instruments of transfer of real estates worth more than RM1 million was supposed to be effective Jan 1, 2018 .

Mah Sing Optimistic Over 2018 Property Outlook

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer, Mah Sing Group is optimistic over the property sector's outlook in the first half of next year, saying it would continue to reinvent affordability by developing quality homes in strategic locations with prices that the people can afford. This was in line with market demand and the government's broad objective to enable everyone to own a house, said Group Managing Director, Tan Sri Leong Hoy Kum Wednesday.

CPI Land To Launch Tuan Residency Condo Early 2018

KUALA LUMPUR -- Boutique property developer CPI Land Sdn Bhd expects to launch its Tuan Residency condominium project in early 2018. CPI Land said Wednesday, the project, which has a gross development value of RM280 million, is expected to be completed by end of 2020. "Tuan Residency will house 557 residential units with a built-up area ranging from 878 square feet.

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 400

Losers - 442

Not Traded - 596

Unchanged - 429

Value - 1548232120

Volume - 16359902

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.0770	4.0800
EUR	4.8304	4.8344
GBP	5.4587	5.4639
100 YEN	3.5965	3.5998
SGD	3.0317	3.0346

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

Bursa Malaysia Ends Higher In Thin Trading

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia ended higher in thin trading Friday buoyed by buying interest in selected index-linked heavyweights amid the year-end window dressing, dealers said. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) rose 9.03 points to 1,760.24 after opening 1.64 points higher at 1,752.85, from Thursday's close of 1,751.21.The local stock market saw choppy trading earlier but stayed positive towards closing, moving between 1,748.49 and 1,760.24.

Market breadth was however negative with 442 losers against 400 gainers, while 429 counters were unchanged, 596 untraded and 33 others suspended. Total volume fell to 1.63 billion shares worth RM1.54 billion from 2.47 billion shares valued at RM2.06 billion on Thursday.

A dealer said most investors were cautious ahead of the long weekend as the local bourse will be closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

Besides that, the dealer said optimism on US tax cut plans and increase in oil prices also boosted the stock market. Main Market volume declined to 1.03 billion units worth RM1.43 billion compared with 1.25 billion units valued at RM1.86 billion on Thursday.

Ringgit Closes Lower Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit eased slightly against the US dollar at close Friday on lack of buying interest ahead of the long weekend, said a dealer. At 6 pm, the local unit stood at 4.0770/0800 against the greenback from 4.0760/0800 on Thursday.

The dealer said the ringgit saw thin trading in line with most emerging Asian currencies as market participants shied away from the market ahead of the Christmas holiday. Christmas is on Monday and Bursa Malaysia will be closed. Meanwhile, the ringgit traded mostly lower against a basket of major currencies.

It rose against the euro to 4.8304/8344 from Thursday's 4.8423/8474, but depreciated against the Singapore dollar to 3.0317/0346 from 3.0287/0332. The domestic unit eased against the British pound to 5.4587/4639 from 5.4525/4590 and depreciated against the yen to 3.5965/5998 from 3.5912/5957.

Short-Term Rates Close Stable On BNM 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 eased to RM27.11 billion from RM43.36 billion in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM8.03 billion from RM11.31 billion.

Earlier, BNM called for a range maturity auction tender, three Qard tenders and a commodity Murabahah programme. The central bank also conducted a RM27.1 billion conventional money market tender and RM7.8 billion Qard money market tender, both for four-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.97 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.

KLIBOR Futures Contract Ends Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended untraded Friday. January 2018, February 2018, March 2018 and June 2018 were all pegged at 96.55, 96.53, 96.50 and 96.45, respectively. Both volume and open interest remained at 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 closed higher today, tracking the underlying cash market.

December 2017 and January 2018 each rose 7.0 points to 1,756.50 and 1,758, respectively, March 2018 added 3.0 points to 1,754.50 and June 2018 increased 6.0 points to 1,750. Turnover surged to 15,286 lots from Thursday's 3,806 lots, while open interest increased to 37,592 contracts from 25,642 contracts.

The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 9.03 points higher at 1,760.24.

BNM, Thailand Insurance Commission To Enhance Cooperation

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) and Thailand's Office of Insurance Commission have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation for the mutually beneficial development of the insurance sector of both countries. The MoU would support measures by the insurance regulatory authorities of both countries to promote effective and well-functioning insurance markets for the protection and risk management of individuals and businesses, BNM said Monday.

SEACEN Conference Revisits Central Bank Mandates

KUALA LUMPUR -- The need to revisit central bank mandates after the global financial crisis, including the extent to which financial stability should be incorporated into the monetary policy framework, were among the topics discussed at the recent 53rd South East Asian Central Banks (SEACEN) Governors' Conference/High Level Seminar. During the three-day conference from Dec15-17, the governors highlighted that the persistent low inflation, uneven growth, accumulating financial imbalances and volatile capital flow environment had complicated the macroeconomic policy formulation.

Sunway Unit Gets US$100 Mln Loan From Sumitomo

KUALA LUMPUR – Sunway Bhd's wholly-owned unit, Sunway Treasury Sdn Bhd, has secured a US$100 million (US$1 = RM4.08) banking facility from Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (M) Bhd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, the group said, Sunway Treasury has secured a Commodity Murabahah Revolving Credit-i (Committed) Facility, under the Shariah concept of Commodity Murabahah for financing its general corporate purposes, for a tenure of up to a maximum of 12 months.

Takaful Ikhlas, Agrobank To Introduce Agro Mabrur-I Plan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Takaful Ikhlas Bhd, in collaboration with Agrobank, introduced Agro Mabrur-i, to provide protection card and claim payment within 24 hours for immediate death expenses. A product under Tenang Protection Scheme, which was launched by Bank Negara Malaysia on Nov 24, 2017 at the Financial Carnival in Kuching, Sarawak, Agro Mabrur-i is a family takaful product underwritten by Takaful Ikhlas and offered to all Agrobank customers and the public.

Digistar Subsidiary To Issue RM80 Mln Bond

KUALA LUMPUR -- Digistar Corporation Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Jaya Persada Sdn Bhd (JPSB) has proposed to issue an unrated fixed rate serial bonds of up to RM80 million in aggregate nominal value. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, Digistar said the issuance would have a tenure of up to 14 years over three tranches, and it would be unrated, transferable and tradable.

SC Issues New Guidelines For SRI Funds

KUALA LUMPUR – The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) has issued Guidelines on Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) Funds to facilitate and encourage greater growth of the funds in Malaysia. The new guidelines, which would enable funds to be designated as SRI, would widen the range of SRI products in the market and attract more investors in the SRI segment and applicable for both conventional and Shariah-compliant funds, it said in a statement Tuesday

Malaysia's Islamic Digital Economy Attracts Venture Capitalists

KUALA LUMPUR -- Three venture capital companies have shown interest in capitalising on Malaysia's Islamic Digital Economy's growth potential, said Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC). MDEC Growth Ecosystem Development Vice-President Norhizam Kadir said Wednesday, they were Captii Ventures, Ethis Ventures and Quest Ventures.

Maybank Named Safest Bank In Malaysia, Indonesia

KUALA LUMPUR – Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) and its Indonesian arm, PT Bank Maybank Indonesia emerged as the safest banks operating in their respective countries, according to a country-by-country ranking by Global Finance Magazine. In a statement Thursday, Global Finance said banks were selected through an evaluation of long-term foreign currency ratings – from Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch – and total assets of the 1,000 largest banks worldwide.

FMC Sees Improvement In Onshore Market Liquidity

KUALA LUMPUR -- The liquidity has improved in the onshore market and is able to meet the hedging needs of both residents and non-residents, said the Financial Markets Committee (FMC). In a statement Thursday, the committee said, the onshore foreign exchange market sustained a daily average volume of US$9.9 billion (US$1 = RM4.07) in 2017 compared to US$8.1 billion in 2016 and of this, forward and swap transactions recorded an average of US$3.8 billion daily.

IOI Properties Unit Issues RM100 Mln Sukuk Murabahah

KUALA LUMPUR – IOI Properties Group Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Fortune Premiere Sdn Bhd (FPSB), has made its first issuance of RM100 million in nominal value of Sukuk Murabahah. The issuance is based on the Shariah principle of Murabahah (via Tawarruq arrangement) under its Sukuk Murabahah Programme, established with a tenure of up to 15 years from the date of the first Issuance.

Malaysia To Record Moderate Growth In 2018 - MIDF

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economy is expected to be on a moderate growth momentum next year with gross domestic product (GDP) projected to grow at 5.5 per cent, said MIDF Amanah Investment Bank Bhd Chief Economist, Dr Kamaruddin Mohd Nor Monday. He said although the projection was slightly lower compared to this year's forecast of 5.8 per cent, it was still considered a respectable figure, adding that the moderation was due to the high base effect in 2017.

Chin Hin Unit Bags RM238.3 Mln Contract

KUALA LUMPUR -- Chin Hin Group Bhd's indirect wholly-owned unit, Metex Modular Sdn Bhd, has secured a RM238.4 million project from Saujana Vision Sdn Bhd. In a statement Monday, Group Managing Director, Chiau Haw Choon, said the project in Pengerang, Johor, involved building an integrated workers' complex with comprehensive facilities using the pre-fabricated modular building system (PMBS), which is the highest level in the industrialised building system (IBS).

Salcon JV Bags RM77.1 Mln Contract In Vietnam

KUALA LUMPUR -- Salcon Bhd's unit, Salcon Engineering Bhd (SEB), together with its joint-venture (JV) company in Vietnam, bagged a construction contract worth 4.26 billion Vietnamese dong (equivalent to RM77.10 million). In a filing to Bursa Monday, the company said the contract would involve the rehabilitating and upgrading of the Haiphong water supply system awarded by Haiphong Water Joint Stock Company, the water authority of Haiphong City, Vietnam.

Hai-O Q2 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM27.85 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR – Hai-O Enterprise Bhd's pre-tax profit for the second quarter (Q2) ended Oct 31, 2017 rose to RM27.85 million from RM20.32 million in the same quarter a year ago. Its revenue increased to RM123.53 million from RM99.78 million in the same quarter last year, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Econpile Accepts RM32.8 Mln Substructure Works Contract

KUALA LUMPUR – Econpile Holdings Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Econpile (M) Sdn Bhd (EMSB), has accepted a RM32.8 million contract from Majestic Maxim Sdn Bhd to undertake bored piling, pilecaps and substructure works. The contract is for a 45-storey mixed development project in Kuala Lumpur, said the company in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Iris Secures RM4.96 Mln Contract From MOHA

KUALA LUMPUR -- IRIS Information Technology System Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of IRIS Corporation Bhd, has received an acceptance letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) for a RM4.96 million contract. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, IRIS said the contract is for the provision of maintenance services of equipment, software, and Facial Live Capture Image at all Passport Recipient and Issuance Offices of the Immigration Department.

Bina Puri Unit Wins Solar Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bina Puri Holdings Bhd's unit, BP Energy Sdn Bhd (BPHB), has received an award from the Energy Commission on Dec 4 to build, own and operate a solar farm in Kunak, Sabah. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, the company said, the project involved the development of a large-scale solar photovoltaic plant of 5.00 megawatt (AC) on build-own-operate basis.

Lazada Group Rakes In US$250 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR – Lazada Malaysia, together with Lazada Group, raked in US$250 million (US$1=RM4.07) in gross merchandise value (GMV) for its 12.12 Grand Finale Sale held in tandem with the company's recent Online Revolution campaign. In a statement Tuesday, Lazada Malaysia said the 12.12 sales figure was more than double that achieved in the previous year and also shattered the 11.11 sales record of US$123 million.

Top Glove Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM121.99 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Top Glove Corp Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended Nov 30, 2017 rose to RM121.99 million compared with RM89.76 million in the corresponding quarter a year ago.Revenue increased to RM938.12 million from RM785.58 million previously, it said in a statement Tuesday.

Brahim Unit To Triple Lifestyle Production

By Azizul Ahmad

BANGI -- Brahim's Holdings Bhd's privately-held company, Dewina Holdings Sdn Bhd, expects to triple production capacity next year to support its expansion into meals-ready-to-eat (MRE) lifestyle segment. Dewina Managing Director, Nur Fatin Ibrahim said Wednesday, the capacity growth at the company's existing plant in Bangi, Selangor, to three million MRE packaged foods per month from one million currently would be contributed mostly by its new investment in machinery.

Aeon Credit Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Up 5 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR – Aeon Credit Service (M) Bhd's pre-tax profit for the third quarter (Q3) ended Nov 30, 2017 increased five per cent year-on-year to RM95.30 million from RM90.80 million in the corresponding period a year ago. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Aeon Credit said its revenue rose to RM312.34 million for the quarter under review from RM280.34 million previously.

Daya Secures RM67 Mln Contract From Petronas Carigali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Daya Materials Bhd's subsidiary, Daya Secadyme Sdn Bhd has received a letter of award from Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd for the provision of integrated production chemicals supply and services worth RM67 million. In a filing to

Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Daya Materials said the contract is for a five-year period beginning Dec 11, with an option for extension for a further one year.

Ahmad Zaki Gets RM138.38 Mln Construction Job

KUALA LUMPUR – Ahmad Zaki Resources Bhd's (AZRB) wholly-owned subsidiary, Ahmad Zaki Sdn Bhd has received and accepted a Letter of Award from Institute of Technology Petronas Sdn Bhd (ITP) for the construction of academic buildings and a TNB substation for RM138.38 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, AZRB said the contract works is expected to be completed in the next 30 months until July 15, 2020.

Muhibbah Eng Gets RM189 Mln Contract

KUALA LUMPUR – Muhibbah Engineering (M) Bhd has been awarded a contract sum of approximately RM189 million from Mass Rapid Transit Corp Sdn Bhd. "The contract is for Mass Rapid Transit Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya line 2 project," it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

Protasco Wins RM442.6 Mln PPA1M Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Protasco Bhd has been awarded a RM442.6 million project under the 1Malaysia Civil Servants Housing Project (PPA1M) in a joint-venture (JV) with Kop Mantap Bhd. Protasco's wholly-owned unit, Protasco Development Sdn Bhd, will hold a 51 per cent interest in the JV while Kop Mantap, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Koperasi Polis Diraja Malaysia Bhd, will own the remaining 49 per cent, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

FGV Unit To Dispose Of 16 Pct Stake In AAGI

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd's (FGV) indirect unit, Felda Marketing Services Sdn Bhd (Felma), has proposed to dispose of 16 per cent equity interest in AXA Affin General Insurance Bhd (AAGI) for RM224.38 million. In a filing to Bursa Thursday, FGV said Felma is a 51 per cent-owned subsidiary of Felda Palm Industries Sdn Bhd which in turn is a 72 per cent-owned subsidiary of Felda Holdings Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary company of FGV.

Sarawak Cable Unit Gets RM18.4 Mln Contract

KUALA LUMPUR – Sarawak Cable Bhd's unit, Aerial Power Lines Sdn Bhd, has received a Letter of Acceptance from the Ministry of Health for the supply of medical evacuation and flying doctor helicopter service valued at RM18.4 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Sarawak Cable said, the two-year contract was expected to contribute positively to the group's earnings and net assets for the financial years ending 2018 to 2020.

Timber & Timber Product Exports To Reach RM23 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR – The timber and timber product exports are expected to record five to six per cent growth to RM23 billion this year, surpassing RM22.11 billion last year, said Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) Director-General, Datuk Dr Jalaluddin Harun. He said for the first ten months of this year, the exports of timber and timber products grew by 6.2 per cent to rake in over RM19 billion.

Bright Prospects For Dialog Axiata In Sri Lanka
From Azeman Ariffin

COLOMBO -- Axiata Group Bhd's unit, Dialog Axiata Plc, which is Sri Lanka's largest telecommunications service provider, has bright prospects to increase its investment by another US$300 million in the country as its licence issue is being be resolved. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Monday, the additional investment, which was held back due to the delay in the renewal of its licence by the Sri Lankan government, could go ahead as the problem was being resolved through negotiations between both governments.

Public Warned Against Conmen Posing As PUNB "Agents"
KUALA LUMPUR -- Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB) has advised the public to be wary con artists purportedly posing as its "intermediaries" or "agents" by using its logo, acronym or name. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Azhar Ahmad said Monday, PUNB had never appointed or enlisted the services of any intermediaries, associations, agents or representatives to deal with entrepreneurs or would-be entrepreneurs who were seeking its loans.

TNB Does Not Expect Tariff Hike Until Early 2018
KUALA LUMPUR — Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) does not anticipate any hike in electricity tariff until early next year, said Chief Financial Officer, Datuk Fazlur Rahman Zainuddin Monday. "We don't foresee major changes. It still very much in the hands of the government to make that decision (on hike).

Equalisation Of KLIA, KLIA2 PSC For Fairer Competition
KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysia Airport Holdings Bhd (MAHB) said the decision to equalise the Passenger Service Charge (PSC) rates between the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (klia2) was to facilitate fairer competition between the airlines operating at both terminals. In a statement Monday, MAHB also stated that klia2 is not a low-cost airport terminal, but a second permanent terminal for KLIA that would accommodate the airport's future growth.

Malaysia To See 3.2 Pct Real Wage Growth 2018
KUALA LUMPUR -- The average salary in Malaysia is expected to grow by 3.2 per cent in 2018, an increase over the 1.3 per cent growth recorded in 2017, said global management consulting firm, Korn Ferry Hay Group (Korn Ferry). In a statement Tuesday, Korn Ferry projected that financial services, construction and property development and management industries, are expected to record the highest salary increases, while sectors such as health and life sciences, oil and gas and industrial products would register the lowest growth.

Singapore Cautions Against CryptoCurrency Investment
By Massita Ahmad

SINGAPORE -- The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) has advised the public to be cautious and understand the significant risks they take on if they choose to invest in cryptocurrencies. In a statement Tuesday, MAS said, it was concerned the public may be attracted to invest in cryptocurrencies, such as bitcoin, due to the recent escalation in their prices.

Firefly Awaits Price Differentiation Mechanism
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia should segregate domestic airports into different categories until the price differentiation mechanism, which will classify local airports, is ready for implementation, said Firefly Sdn Bhd Chief Executive Officer Ignatius Ong Tuesday. "They (The Malaysian Aviation Commission) are looking at a systematic (measure) which should have price differentiation between airports, (however) they did say it's going to take two years to trace (the details of each airport)... they need to do it faster," he told reporters on the sidelines of Firefly's corporate social responsibility programme here.

Envoy Sees Huge Potential In Indon Infrastructure Devt
JAKARTA -- Investment in Indonesia's infrastructure development sector offers huge potential to boost bilateral trade and achieve the trade target of US$30 billion (US$1 = RM4.08), said Malaysian Ambassador to Indonesia, Datuk Seri Zahrain Mahamed Tuesday. He said Malaysian companies should grab this opportunity to invest at a time when Indonesia aimed to further enhance its infrastructure development nationwide.

Malaysia Well-Prepared To Remain As Key Technology Player
From Azeman Ariffin

COLOMBO -- Malaysia is well-prepared to remain as a key technology player in South-East Asia, as the region embraces the transformations of the digital era, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. He said Malaysia was on the right track, with initiatives such as the digital free trade zone (DFTZ) and National Strategic Plan on Internet of Things (IoT).

Labuan Devt Blueprint To Spur Island's Economy

LABUAN -- Labuan has prepared a long-term economic development plan, namely the "Labuan Development Blueprint", to aggressively spur the island's economy in tandem with the national development. Labuan Member of Parliament, Datuk Rozman Isli said Tuesday, a number of development projects had been approved by the government through the Labuan Corporation (LC) for implementation beginning next year.

Revised NAP 2014 To Be Presented Next Year

PUTRAJAYA -- The revised National Automotive Policy 2014 (NAP 2014) will be presented in the first half of next year, said Malaysia Automotive Institute (MAI) Chief Executive Officer Datuk Madani Sahari Tuesday. He said the revision of the policy, which was being undertaken by MAI, included expanding its current scope of implementation to cover commercial vehicles and other aspects of mobility.

30 Pct Club Efforts Yield Results For Women

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 30 per cent Club Malaysia chapter, a group driving a business campaign to have higher representation of women on corporate boards, made good progress in 2017, said its founding Chair, Tan Sri Zarinah Anwar Tuesday. Since being launched in Malaysia in May 2015, the 30 per cent Club's initiatives such as the Business Leaders' Roundtable, mentoring programme and placement of women directors had yielded positive results, she said in a statement.

More Private Sector Investment Needed To Boost Fibre Infrastructure

PUTRAJAYA -- More investment in fibre infrastructure from the private sector is needed to support the digital economy and provide high-speed broadband at lower prices, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Salleh Said Keruak said Wednesday. The minister said that the government's initiative in expanding the existing fibre networks through the Nationwide Fiberisation Plan (NFP) would, among others, leverage Tenaga Nasional Bhd's (TNB) extensive fibre trunk network.

Malaysia Not A Failed State - Chua

SHAH ALAM -- Malaysia is not a failed state as claimed by certain quarters as the country continues to attract investments besides recording a positive gross domestic product (GDP) growth over the years, says Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Chua Tee Yong. Malaysia continued to posts trade surpluses every year since 1997, he said Wednesday. "As such, I'm disappointed when the opposition says our government is failing or becoming a failed state as we continue to attract investments and post (positive) GDP."

Malaysia's E-Commerce Penetration Rate To Rise In 2018

KUALA LUMPUR – With the right infrastructure in place, Malaysia's electronic-commerce (e-commerce) penetration rate is set to accelerate to between four and five per cent in 2018 from the current 2.5 per cent. In a statement Wednesday, 11street Chief Executive Officer, Hoseok Kim, said the country's e-commerce industry would achieve greater heights next year following improvements in infrastructure and logistics services nationwide.

Greater KL Co-Working Operators To Continue Growing

KUALA LUMPUR -- Greater Kuala Lumpur (Greater KL) is expected to continue seeing the emergence of local co-working operators in 2018, supported by technological advances which enables a flexible working culture. Knight Frank Malaysia Research and Consultancy Executive Director, Judy Ong said Thursday, the serviced office and co-working segments were gaining popularity through strong government-led initiatives by Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), leading to the launch of the Malaysia Digital Hub and the Malaysia Tech Entrepreneur Programme.

Green Packet Unit, ATV To Operate Free-To-Air Channels

KUALA LUMPUR -- Green Packet Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Kiple Media Sdn Bhd (KMSB) and Asia Television Digital Media Sdn Bhd (ATV) will cooperate and form a joint venture to operate three digital free-to-air channels in Malaysia. The partnership will see ATV investing HK$50 million (HK$100=RM52.28) into KMSB to operate broadcasting television channels in Malaysia and through this joint venture, Green Packet and ATV will deliver content to the Malaysian households next year, Green Packet said in a statement Monday.

Cold Storage Opens New Flagship At KLCC

KUALA LUMPUR -- Supermarket chain Cold Storage has recently opened its new flagship store at KLCC Suria Shopping Mall with a new concept and a brand new look to further excite customers and enhance their shopping experience. Inspired by its fresh new tagline, "The Fresh Food People", Cold Storage KLCC aims to be the innovative source of fresh inspiration and passion to help consumers in their modern lives.

AirAsia Offers Two Mln Big Points In Latest Campaign

KUALA LUMPUR -- The public stand to win over two million BIG points in the "AirAsia Open Doors" campaign, starting today until Jan 14, 2018. Launched in conjunction with the airlines 6th anniversary celebration, the low cost carrier said Monday, the campaign follows its story in opening doors for over a decade to allow travellers to discover many unexplored destinations in the region and beyond.

TPM Start-UPS Achieve Success At MCY 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- Several Technology Park Malaysia Corp Sdn Bhd's (TPM) start-up enterprises from its incubation programme have won several awards at the recent Malaysia Commercialisation Year 2017 (MCY 2017) Awards and product commercialisation launch organised by the Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation (MOSTI). In a statement Tuesday, TPM said, the MCY 2017 Awards and product commercialisation launch were held in conjunction with the Global Entrepreneurship Community Summit 2017 on Dec 12-13, 2017.

New Perodua Myvi Gets 5-Star Safety Cert

PUTRAJAYA -- The new Perodua Myvi has received a 5-star ASEAN New Car Assessment Programme (ASEAN NCAP) safety rating, said Perodua President/ Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Dr Aminar Rashid Salleh Tuesday. In a statement, Aminar said, as a 'People First' company, the new Myvi represented its strongest effort thus far in ensuring the safety of the drivers and vehicle's passengers.

Batik Air Launches Jakarta-Kota Kinabalu Direct Flights

KUALA LUMPUR -- Batik Air launched twice-weekly direct flights from the Jakarta Soekarno - Hatta International Airport (CGK) to the Kota Kinabalu International Airport (BKI) Wednesday, as part of efforts at expanding its international network. Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) Managing Director, Datuk Badlisham Ghazali said in a statement, the service would benefit both countries.

Samsung To Launch New Phones In January

By Wan Asmanizan Wan Ahmad Najib

KUALA LUMPUR – Samsung Malaysia Electronics (SME) Sdn Bhd today announced the launch of its latest additions to the Galaxy A series – Galaxy A8 (2018) and A8+ (2018). In a statement Wednesday, Samsung said, the Galaxy A8 and A8+ would feature a dual front camera, a large infinity display and stunning ergonomic design that drew on its flagship design heritage and experience.

Malaysia's E-Commerce Penetration Rate To Rise

KUALA LUMPUR – With the right infrastructure in place, Malaysia's electronic-commerce (e-commerce) penetration rate is set to accelerate to between four and five per cent in 2018 from the current 2.5 per cent. In a statement Wednesday, 11street Chief Executive Officer, Hoseok Kim, said the country's e-commerce industry would achieve greater heights next year following improvements in infrastructure and logistics services nationwide.

Leading Index Up 0.2 Pct To 120.1 In Oct

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Leading Index (LI), which monitors economic performance in advance, and the Coincident Index, which measures current economic activity, have improved in October 2017 compared to the previous month. In a statement Friday, the Department of Statistics Malaysia said the LI registered a growth of 0.2 per cent in October 2017 to 120.1 points from 119.9 points in September 2017, mainly induced by real money supply (0.4 per cent) and the number of new companies registered (0.3 per cent).

SP Setia's New Hub To Take Semenyih To Greater Heights

KUALA LUMPUR -- SP Setia Bhd's new commercial hub in Setia Ecohill Taipan, with a gross development value (GDP) of RM130 million, is set to take Semenyih to greater heights by offering various facilities and amenities to its community. In a statement Friday, Setia EcoHill General Manager, SM Koh, said the property was ready for business, way ahead of the expected completion, scheduled to be in the second quarter of 2018.

A Year Of Convergent Play For Telcos

By Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali

Telcos Seen Integrating Their Services As 2017 Draws To A Close.

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- As 2017 draws to a close, it will be seen as a year of convergent play for telecommunication companies (telcos) with fixed line and mobile telecommunication players starting to integrate their services. GlobalData Plc, Senior Analyst, Alfie Amir said the mobile market remained saturated and stagnant in Malaysia and as such, the recent price war among telcos, did not seem to work to their advantage.

This is evident from the active price war involving Celcom and Digi which did not really show much gains, but instead, chalked up a loss of subscribers. He said Telekom Malaysia (TM) and its mobile arm Webe, began to integrate this year though not fully, by offering and bundling their services.

“The integration was not as easy and straight forward when seen from a user’s perspective. Instead, it was very challenging at the back-end, as they were separate companies and required a lot of hand-shaking,” he added.

MAXIS A STEP AHEAD

Alfie said Maxis also went a step ahead in convergent play with its Maxis One Prime offer which integrated everything into a true bundle solution, offering mobile and home broadband, a fixed phone line together with an option for home entertainment devices. Celcom, on the other hand, ventured into fixed broadband space by launching its services in Sabah, which was seen as a good step. “The state is an underserved area for fixed broadband connectivity and not one which had the focus of TM or Maxis,” he added.

“Malaysia is a matured market for telcos, but there is still lots to do for fixed and mobile convergence compared with other peers, for whom the convergent play has been going on for many years. “Basically, the intensified competition in matured markets will drive costs lower. However, this is not quite the case yet in Malaysia, because the fixed line coverage is still dominated by TM.Other fixed line providers are still limited by TM’s wholesale partnership for infrastructure,” he added.

Alfie said for other telco operators to build their own infrastructure was a challenge and not economical. “Therefore, they will not be a strong driver to push costs down in the Malaysian market for the next two to three years,” he added.

SIGNIFICANT DECLINE

He was also of the view that the telco sector saw a significant decline in total mobile subscriptions in 2017, which is expected to slide by 2.1 per cent from the 44.4 million subscribers in 2016 to 43.5 million by this year-end. He said this was due to an expansion of the fixed broadband which resulted in users relying less on mobile broadband as a source of connection, as well as better mobile coverage and user experience, which led in turn to a decline in the use of multiple SIM cards.

Currently, mobile coverage in Malaysia is quite matured with 2G accounting for more than 90 per cent, 3G also at around 90 per cent and the long term evolution (LTE) already exceeding 80 per cent.

“By the end of the year, Maxis is expected to grab 35.4 per cent of total revenue, with Digi at 26.2 per cent and Celcom having 25.9 per cent,” he said. By subscribers, Digi took the lead in early 2017 and by year-end, is expected to hold about 27.2 per cent of the total number with Maxis having 25.9 per cent and Celcom, 24.0 per cent.

-- BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

Bursa Malaysia To Continue Positive Momentum

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to continue its positive momentum moving into 2018 next week, boosted by positive local and regional catalysts, including the recovery of the economy. After finishing the last trading day of 2017 on a healthy note, Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) is expected to continue its uptrend moving into 2018.

"For the first time in four years, the key index ended on a year-end rally sentiment, rising about 9.0 per cent year-on-year and about 4.0 per cent compared to November," he told Bernama. Towards the year-end, he said the FBM KLCI was supported by a strong commodity performance, including, copper, oil and gold, which recorded record highs.

"With the recovery in the domestic economy and strengthening of the ringgit, Bursa Malaysia is expected to remain in upward momentum for at least the first quarter of next year," he added. Nazri Khan said for next week, he expected the key index to move between a range of 1,780 and retest the September 2017 high of 1,800 points.

During the last trading week of this year, the market's performance was supported by the rally in commodities, namely oil and copper prices, amid thin trade ahead of the New Year's weekend. Oil prices, which reached a two-and-a-half year high due to an attack on a Libyan pipeline, were slightly firmer after taking a breather on Wednesday, while the rally in copper prices continued with the metal trading near a four year-high.

On a Friday-to-Friday comparison, the FBM KLCI gained 36.57 points to 1,796.81, with the market being mostly influenced by window dressing and profit-taking ahead of the long New Year holiday weekend. The FBM Emas Index improved 280.82 points to 12,942.57, the FBMT 100 Index increased 279.93 points to 12,614.20, the FBM Emas Shariah Index surged 292.05 points to 13,602.92, the FBM 70 bagged 435.10 points to 16,085.54 and the FBM Ace added 138.05 points to 6,603.55.

On a sectoral basis, the Finance Index rose 266.55 points to 16,961.38, the Plantation Index improved 2.97 points to 7,903.37, while the Industrial Index advanced 88.17 points to 3,280.70. Due to the shorter trading week, the total turnover decreased to 10.16 billion shares worth RM8.46 billion from 12.22 billion units worth RM10.94 billion last week. Main Market volume slipped to 5.89 billion shares worth RM7.58 billion from 6.45 billion shares valued at RM9.92 billion. Warrants turnover was down to 999.13 million units valued at RM248.63 million against last week's 1.03 billion units worth RM178.09 million.

The ACE Market narrowed to 3.24 billion shares worth RM615.99 million from 4.61 billion shares valued at RM804.24 million transacted previously. The market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

FOREX: Ringgit To Resume 2018 On Stronger Footing

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit's rally is expected to continue into 2018, strengthening to the 4.00 region against the US dollar, on support from weak greenback sentiment and recovery in commodity prices. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the local unit, which ended 2017 on a strong note, would be traded positively next week and fuelled by positive local developments.

"It includes robust economic growth, bullish foreign fund inflows into Malaysia and a strong equity market performance. "The prospect of a higher overnight policy rate will also help support sentiment in the market. "The bull run will continue next year. We have a lot of strong catalysts driving the ringgit, with our reserves showing an increasing trend. These all bodes well for the ringgit," he told Bernama.

The central bank's international reserves amounted to US$102.2 billion (RM431.6 billion) as at Dec 15, 2017 compared with US$101.9 billion (RM430.4 billion) as at Nov 30, 2017. Nazri Khan also said the improved household debt level, which declined to 84.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) as of September 2017 from 88.4 per cent overall last year, would also help drive ringgit momentum.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the ringgit was stronger against the greenback at 4.0440/0500 versus 4.0770/0800 in the previous week. The local note traded mixed against a basket of major currencies. It climbed against the Singapore dollar to 3.0265/0323 from 3.0317/0346 on last Friday, and rose against the yen to 3.5912/5968 from 3.5965/5998.

The ringgit, however, fell against the British pound to 5.4602/4687 from 5.4587/5639 and weakened vis-a-vis the euro to 4.8451/8535 from 4.8304/8344. The local market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates To Be Kept Steady

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain stable next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) likely to intervene by offering tenders to absorb surplus liquidity from the system. For the week just ended, the overnight rate was quoted at 2.97 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.

The central bank intervened on a daily basis to mop up excess liquidity by conducting conventional money market, Qard, reverse repo, range-maturity auction, and Commodity Murabahah Programme tenders. In a short trading week, the total liquidity surplus in the conventional system for the week just ended expanded to RM34.1 billion from RM27.11 billion last week, while in the Islamic system, it improved to RM14.05 billion from RM8.3 billion. The benchmark three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rates (KLIBOR) stood at 3.43 per cent. The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

KLCI Futures To Uptrend Next Week

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia (FBM) KLCI futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is likely to be on an uptrend next week on firmer foreign fund inflows and stronger ringgit against the US dollar, dealers said. The sentiment next week will also likely be in tandem with the cash market.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said towards the year-end, the

FBM KLCI was supported by a strong commodity performance, with copper, oil and gold registering a record high. He told Bernama that the sentiment is likely to continue moving into 2018. For the week just ended, the futures market was mostly higher in tandem with the cash market.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, December 2017 rose 22.5 points to 1,779, January 2018 gained 27 points to 1,785, March 2018 increased 25.5 points to 1,780 and June 2018 advanced 26 points to 1,750. Weekly turnover perked to 65,855 lots versus 29,650 lots, while open interest slid to 34,024 contracts from 37,592 contracts. For the week just ended, the FBM KLCI improved 36.57 points to 1,796.81 from 1,760.24 last Friday. The market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

CPO Futures To Trade Higher At Start Of New Year

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- The crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade higher next week, buoyed by expectations of stronger buying momentum from China and ahead of the Chinese New Year. “We would like to enter 2018 with our inventory declining to two million tonnes from the current 2.5 million tonnes,” Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Derivative Dealer, David Ng told Bernama. He also said besides the Chinese buyers, most international purchasers would likely join the fray and help push the commodity’s price to between RM2,350 and RM2,450 per tonne.

For the week just ended, the market traded mixed. It earlier traded higher on the back of good export figures. It was reported that exports of Malaysian palm oil products from Dec 1-25 rose one per cent from a month earlier. Towards the end of the week, the CPO price fell, dragged down by a higher ringgit versus the US dollar. It was also tracking the performance of the soybean oil on the Chicago Board of Trade. The market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2018 increased RM37 to RM2,444 per tonne, February 2018 rose RM51 to RM2,481 per tonne, March 2018 jumped RM52 to RM2,503 per tonne and April 2018 was RM54 higher at RM2,521 per tonne. Weekly turnover depreciated to 103,955 lots from 223,518 lots last Friday and open interest shed 272,396 contracts from 297,310 contracts. On the physical market, January South was RM40 higher at RM2,450 per tonne.

Rubber Market Likely To Remain Subdued

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to remain subdued next week on weak demand with traders still away in the early part of the new year, dealers said. A dealer said the commodity price would likely move sideways and also depend on market supply, alongside the ringgit’s performance. The movement of the rubber futures on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) will also influence prices on the domestic market next week. For the week just ended, the rubber market reacted positively earlier to a report that top rubber producing countries had decided to withhold natural rubber (NR) exports of 350,000 tonnes with immediate effect until March 31, 2018.

The International Rubber Tripartite Council (ITRC) announced the implementation of the Fifth Agreed Export Tonnage Scheme (AETS) by Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. Under the framework, the three countries would also cooperate to increase NR consumption domestically.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board’s noon price for tyre-grade SMR 20 was nine sen higher at 580.5 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk increased 10 sen to 462.0 sen a kg. The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 jumped 17.5 sen to 590 sen a kg, but latex-in-bulk rose

13 sen to 462.5 sen a kg. The local market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

OPR Hike Prospect Likely To Fuel KLIBOR Interest

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade higher next week on the prospect of a hike in the overnight policy night rate by Bank Negara Malaysia. For the week just ended, the market was untraded with open interest remaining at nil. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2018, February 2018, March 2018 and June 2018 were all pegged at 96.55, 96.53, 96.50 and 96.45 respectively. The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday. The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market remained at 3.43 per cent on Friday.

KLTM Expected To Start 2018 On A Downtrend

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to start 2018 on a downtrend next week with traders anticipated to take profits off the table, following the commodity's current high price. A dealer said the tin price on the local market had appreciated to US$19,670 a tonne on Friday, compared to the US$19,410 a tonne recorded last Friday. "We are expecting a technical correction next week because it has rebounded quite a lot. With that, we see potential for profit-taking," he added.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the price on the KLTM rose by US$260 to US$19,670 per tonne from US$19,410 per tonne last week. On the LME, it improved by US$575 to end at US$19,950 a tonne from US$19,375 a tonne previously. Turnover for the holiday-shortened week declined to 161 tonnes from the 246 tonnes recorded last week. The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday. On the price differential between the KLTM and LME, the latter was on a discount of US$280 per tonne compared with a premium of US$35 per tonne last week. Next Monday, the market will be closed for the New Year holiday.

Gold Futures To Trade Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade higher next week in tracking the strong gains on the New York Commodity Exchange's (COMEX) gold futures market, said Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer, Chang Hui Ying. She said market focus would be on the US employment data, set to be released next Friday, which would indicate the condition of the world's biggest economy.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, December 2017 rose 32 ticks to RM168.70 a gramme, January 2018 increased 26 ticks to RM169.00 a gramme, while February 2018 and March 2018 gained 17 ticks each to RM169.25 and RM169.95 a gramme respectively. Weekly turnover surged to 20 lots worth RM338,725, from 14 lots worth RM199,190 last week, while open interest on Friday narrowed slightly to 101 contracts from 103 contracts.

The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday. fell 98 ticks to RM164.90 a gramme, January 2018 and February 2018 gave up 108 ticks to RM165.30 and RM165.802 respectively, while new spot delivery month, March 2018 stood at RM166.50 a gramme. Weekly turnover increased to 47 lots worth RM786,640 from 21 lots worth RM360,415 last week, while open interest on Friday was slightly lower at 102 versus 104 contracts previously.