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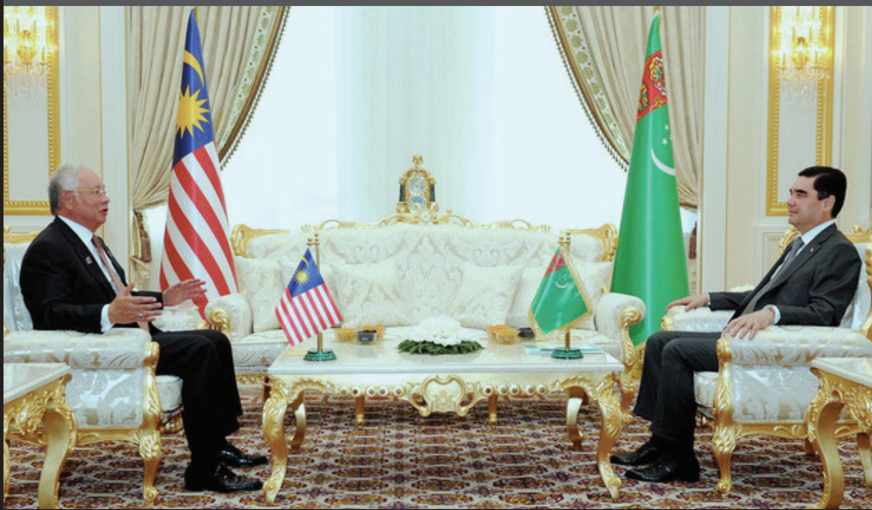
This Week's Highlight :
M'sia Wants To Explore New Areas Of Cooperation In Turkmenistan

From Nur-ul Afida Kamaludin



BILATERAL DISCUSSION…Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (left) discussing with Turkmenistan President, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov at the Presidential Palace in Ashgabat on Tuesday.

ASHGABAT (Turkmenistan) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said Malaysia wants to explore new fields of collaboration in Turkmenistan including in halal products and Islamic banking.

Malaysia is also interested in sharing its expertise in the mining, construction, chemicals, tourism and communications sectors, he said here on Tuesday.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

M'sia Expects Total Trade To Surpass Last Year's Target

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia expects total trade this year to surpass that of 2013 by between five and six per cent based on positive global performance, said Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

The positive development was a good indicator for the country to achieve the forecast figure, he told reporters on the sidelines of the GLC ExplorAce 2014, here Monday.

Tuesday

Govt Committed To Improving Industrial Safety

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government is committed to improving industrial safety in order to attract more investors to Malaysia, said Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. To assuage industry's concerns over prevention, protection and safety, RM8.0 million has been allocated for the provision of two Hazmat (hazardous materials) and two Decon (Decontamination) vehicles, the International Trade and Industry Minister said at the handover of the vehicles to the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (JBPM) here Tuesday.

Wednesday

Rise In Global Economy Will Boost M'sia's Exports

KUALA LUMPUR -- The global economy is on track to chart a stronger growth in 2014, supported by stronger growth in developed countries, says RHB Research Institute. The scenario would likely improve demand for the Malaysia's exports and lift the country's manufacturing sales in 2014, it said in a statement here Wednesday.

Thursday

Najib Confident GDP Will Be Maintained In Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is confident the nation's economic growth will be maintained in the second quarter of the year driven by political stability and investors' confidence towards government policies. He said the momentum would also be spurred by vibrant domestic activities coupled with a competitive export sector in the first quarter. This target is in tandem with the 5.2 per cent forecast by the International Monetary Fund for 2014," he said here Thursday.

Friday

M'sian Businesses Committed To Reduce Corruption – Survey

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian businesses confirmed that steps have been taken to reduce fraud, bribery and corruption in their companies, according to a survey by Ernst & Young (EY). Some 83 per cent of the respondents in Malaysia confirmed that their companies have an anti-bribery/anti-corruption policy and code of conduct, EY said in a statement here Friday.

SMEbrief

Govt Helps SMEs To Be Competitive Vendors

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government will continue to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) become competitive manufacturers and component suppliers for the domestic and global markets, says Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. The International Trade and Industry Minister said his ministry has created a central monitoring unit aimed at promoting the vendor development programme (VDP) at MITI and government-linked companies (GLCs), he told reporters after launching the GLC ExplorAce 2014 here Monday.

MDeC To Train SMEs Via E-commerce Reward

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC) is set to train 600 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) via its newly-launched e-commerce reward programme.The programme, in partnership with Telekom Malaysia (TM) and easyparcel.my, is an initiative to raise SMEs productivity by doing business online and further boost adoption in Malaysia. "E-commerce is a key component of the digital economy and its significance has also been recognised as a key information communication technology sub-sector in the Digital Malaysia," said MDeC SME Cluster and Initiative Director, Wee Huay Neo in a statement here Thursday.

Transformation Using Felda Concept To Improve Lives Of Fishermen

BESUT -- To improve the lives of fishermen in Terengganu, the state government will introduce a transformation programme for fishermen using the Felda concept. This is to help bring the group out of poverty, thereby making fishing a career that is more modern and competitive in future. Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman said initially, the state government would cooperate with the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry to obtain training and expertise on the fishing industry, including downstream activities.

RM5 Mln For 'Jom Bertani' Programme – Muhyiddin

BESUT -- The government has allocated RM5 million for the implementation of the "Jom Bertani" (Let's Farm) Programme nationwide in a bid to encourage the people to get involved in the production of food for self consumption. As such, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said all state governments were advised to identify and to provide suitable land for the programme, which will be implemented in stages to give a new breath to the national agrofood sector and to reduce food import dependency.

PropUP Property*update*

Paramount Eyes More Synergies Between Education, Property

SUBANG, -- Paramount Corp Bhd (PCB) wants to seek more synergies between its education and property businesses in the Klang Valley, northern Peninsular Malaysia and in other markets, moving forward.

PCB Executive Deputy Chairman/Group Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Teo Chiang Quan, said Monday, the company looked forward to replicate its university metropolis concept -- Paramount Utropolis in Glenmarie, Shah Alam -- in Penang and more markets.

KLCCP Sees Steady Revenue On Organic Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- KLCC Property Holdings Bhd (KLCCP) expects organic growth and cost reduction plans to keep its revenue stream steady, said Chief Executive Officer Datuk Hashim Wahir.

"In the short term, there will be no new space coming out. Our last was the KLCC Tower 3. "Therefore, we are not expecting any big jump in revenue," he told reporters on the sidelines of the Invest Malaysia 2014 here Monday.

Mah Sing Expects 4 Pct Hike In Construction Costs With GST

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer, Mah Sing Group Bhd, expects construction costs for residential houses to increase by four per cent after the introduction of goods and services tax (GST) next year. Executive Director, Corporate and Investment, Datuk Steven Ng Poh Seng told reporters on the sidelines of Invest Malaysia 2014 here Monday, the increase would be driven by higher material costs.

IJM Land's Privatisation To Lead To Improved Investability

KUALA LUMPUR -- The privatisation of IJM Land Bhd will result in an enlarged profit and share capital base, which may lead to improved investability in IJM Corporation Bhd. The 64 per cent-owned subsidiary of IJM Corp will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of IJM.

IJM's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Teh Kean Ming said in a statement here Monday, the proposal to privatise IJM Land is to consolidate the business and mutually benefit the shareholders of both companies.

More Mega Infrastructure And Property Devt For M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government expects more mega infrastructure and property developments to be launched this year to support the construction sector's growth, Works Minister Datuk Fadillah Yusof said. He said according to the Economic Report 2013/2014 released by the Finance Ministry, the growth in the sector remains firm at 9.6 per cent, led by the civil engineering and residential sub-sectors.

Property Prices To Move Sideways – IOI

KUALA LUMPUR -- The IOI Group of Companies expects property prices to move sideways in the near term due to tighter loan borrowings by banks, said Group Executive Chairman Tan Sri Lee Shin Cheng.

However, property prices were expected to start moving upwards once the cooling measures introduced by the government took place in time to come, he said after IOI Properties Group Bhd presentation in conjunction with Invest Malaysia 2014 here Tuesday.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard
Gainers - 412
Losers - 345
Not Traded - 522
Unchanged - 347
Value - 1388492158
Volume - 12584968

BURSA: KL Shares Post Modest Gains

By Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar

KUALA LUMPUR -- Stocks on Bursa Malaysia ended slightly higher Friday on mild buying interest amid profit-taking ahead of the weekend, dealers said. At 5 pm, the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) rose 2.87 or 0.15 per cent to 1,876.74, after opening 2.8 points lower at 1,871.07. The benchmark index had hovered between 1,870.09 and 1,876.74. Market breadth was positive as gainers outpaced losers 412 to 345, while 347 counters were unchanged, 522 untraded and 17 others suspended.

Total volume decreased to 1.26 billion shares valued at RM1.39 billion from 1.18 billion shares worth RM1.45 billion Thursday. Dealers said equities were higher despite the mixed regional market following the overnight losses incurred on Wall Street. "Bursa Malaysia is quiet as investors turn their attention to the 2014 FIFA World Cup, the long-awaited and biggest sporting event on earth which began today," a dealer said.

However, HLIB Research holds the view that investors should look beyond the short-term volatility and take it as an opportunity to position for the FBM KLCI's year-end target of 1,910 level. Affin Investment Bank's Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Dr Nazri Khan said seasonal trends during the festive FIFA World Cup usually favours a weak finish to the month of June with profit-taking. "Despite the lag, the FBM KLCI is holding up well at above the 1,860 support level due to high dividend appeal, resilient domestic liquidity and its lower vulnerability to foreign investor withdrawals," he told Bernama. Main Market volume fell to 986 million units valued at RM1.32 billion from 1.01 billion units worth RM1.41 billion Thursday.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.2175	3.2195
EUR	4.3661	4.3695
GBP	5.4640	5.4690
100 YEN	3.1581	3.1604
SGD	2.5759	2.5777

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Lower On Weak Sentiments

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- Weak market sentiments following the overnight sluggish US retail sales and weekly jobless claims data have curbed demand for the ringgit, pushing the currency to close lower today, a dealer said. At 5 pm, the ringgit was quoted at 3.2175/2195 against the US dollar compared with 3.2070/2090 Thursday. Speaking to Bernama, the dealer said the market was also affected as traders positioned themselves on the sidelines ahead of the weekend.

Meanwhile, the ringgit was traded mostly lower against other major currencies. It depreciated against the Singapore dollar to 2.5759/5777 from Thursday's 2.5674/5693, and fell against the yen to 3.1581/1604 from 3.1426/1452. The local unit weakened against the British pound to 5.4640/4690 from Thursday's 5.3980/3024 and decreased against the euro to 4.3661/3695 from 4.3388/3418 previously.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday following Bank Negara Malaysia's intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM15.67 billion from the RM19.35 billion estimated in the morning, while in the Islamic system, the excess was reduced to RM2.5 billion from RM3.25 billion. In the morning, the central bank called for three conventional money market tenders, a repo tender and three Al-Wadiah tenders. The central bank conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM15.7 billion and a RM2.5 billion Al-Wadiah money market tender, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.96 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.05 per cent, 3.09 per cent and 3.13 per cent respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Close Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed untraded Friday. June 2014, July 2014, August 2014 and September 2014 stood at 96.49, 96.38, 96.33 and 96.30 respectively. Open interest totalled 7,340 contracts. The underlying three-month KLIBOR increased one per cent to 3.52 per cent.

KLCI Futures End Lower

By Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI futures (FKLI) contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended lower in thin trade Friday in line with the equities market. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Low Cheng Yang said investors remain cautious after Wall Street's recent steep falls. The US' Producer Price Index and Michigan Consumer Expectation may determine the US market Friday amid the unexpected violence in Iraq, he told Bernama.

However, Low said investors gained a bit of comfort from the optimism over the Chinese economy. China's industrial production was reported to have met expectations, signaling that the economic giant is more likely to recover steadily, but the government may be required to impose additional stimulus. At close, spot month June 2014 fell 3.5 points to 1,876.5, July 2014 slipped two points to 1,880, September 2014 declined 1.0 point to 1,877 and December 2014 was flat at Thursday's close of 1,876.5.

Turnover decreased to 2,344 lots from 3,505 lots on Thursday, while open interest increased to 33,641 contracts from 30,903 contracts previously.

Bond Liberalisation Measures Augur Well For M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- The liberalisation measures for bond markets announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Monday bode well for the country moving forward, said market players. CIMB Group Holdings Bhd Group Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Seri Nazir Razak, said, Monday, the measures would give more flexibility for companies to issue bonds at a reduced cost and issuance period.

Bank Persatuan Targets RM1.5 Bln Funds, Deposits

BUTTERWORTH -- Penang-based Koperasi Bank Persatuan Malaysia Bhd or Bank Persatuan, is confident of realising its target of drawing funds and deposits of RM1.5 billion by year-end, says Chairman Datuk Yusra Sabar. The confidence was based on the bank's attractive products such as Ar-Rahnu pawnbroking scheme, Al-Wadiah scheme, investment deposit certificates, corporate and cooperative deposits, he told reporters here Monday.

M'sia's Household Debt Not Alarming – Idris

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's household debt is a concern but not alarming, says Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala. Malaysia's household debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio rose to 86.6 per cent in 2013 from 72.4 per cent in 2009. He said at Invest Malaysia 2014 here Monday, the impairment loan ratio had also come down to 1.3 per cent last year from 3.1 per cent in 2009.

M'sia Seeks To Pioneer Islamic Wealth Management

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia hopes to be the first in the world to introduce Islamic wealth management, and champion the new product under the Islamic financial system, said Finance Deputy Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan. "We understand the concept of wealth management from the Shariah perspectives that covers both the physical as well as spiritual facets of wealth. This principle stands in contrast to the conventional wealth management that focuses on only the physical or material wealth," he told reporters after officiating a conference on Islamic Wealth Management, here Wednesday.

Strong Momentum In Leasing, Islamic Finance, Foundations - LFSA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Labuan Financial Services Authority (LFSA) is set to continue seeing a strong momentum for its leasing, Islamic financing and foundations segments this year. "From 2008 to 2013, LFSA had shown growth each year by broadening its areas of business and reinventing itself. It has been evolving with the changing demand especially in the Asia-Pacific region," Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz told reporters when releasing LFSA's results for last year here Thursday.

Bank Persatuan Eyes RM400 Mln Member Share Capital

JOHOR BAHARU -- Penang-based Koperasi Bank Persatuan Malaysia Bhd targets to raise its member share capital to RM400 million by 2015. Speaking at the opening of the bank's Johor Baharu branch in Bandar Baru Uda here Thursday, Chairman Datuk Yusra Sabar said as of December last year, the bank's member share capital stood at RM361 million comprising RM325.5 million from 66,177 individual members and RM35.5 million from 442 cooperative members.

Etiqa Focuses On Agency Force To Grow Family Takaful

KUALA LUMPUR -- Etiqa Takaful Bhd is intensifying its focus on the agency force to help widen its reach among Malaysians and strengthen its position as the takaful market leader in the country. In a statement here Thursday, the takaful arm of Maybank group said the agency force contributed 20.6 per cent of the total gross contribution to Etiqa's family takaful business.

Bumi Armada Establishes RM1.5 Bln Sukuk Programme

KUALA LUMPUR -- International offshore oilfield services provider, Bumi Armada, with its wholly-owned subsidiary Bumi Armada Capital Malaysia Sdn Bhd (BACM), have entered into documentation for the establishment of an unrated sukuk issuance programme of up to RM1.5 billion in nominal value. In a statement here Thursday, Bumi Armada said the sukuk programme would provide BACM with the flexibility to raise funds via the issuance of Sukuk Murabahah from time to time, with varying tenures, to meet the requirements of the Group.

BSN On Track To Hit RM66 Mln Micro Loan Target

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) is on track to achieve its RM66 million micro loans target by year-end, said Micro Financing Department Senior Vice President Nilammasri Jaafar. Micro loans disbursed by BSN have declined slightly to RM66 million from RM132 million previously, and the bank has channelled about 50 per cent of the total financing, she said after the opening of the Kuala Lumpur International Hijab Fair (KLIFH) 2014 here Friday.

PUNB Approves RM128 Mln In Loans

MELAKA -- Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB) has approved RM128 million in loans to 350 entrepreneurs from Jan 1 to May 31 this year, said Chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam. Of the total, RM41.4 million was disbursed to 21 entrepreneurs under the Prosper wholesale scheme, followed by 143 entrepreneurs in the Prosper retail scheme (RM33.8 million); 96 in the Prosper Teras scheme (RM23.7 million); eight in the Small and Medium Enterprise scheme (RM23.5 million); and 82 in the Prosper young entrepreneur scheme (RM5.6 million), Mohd Ali told reporters after a PUNB meeting with Melaka entrepreneurs here Friday.

HLIB Maintains 5.5 Pct GDP Forecast

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hong Leong Investment Bank (HLIB) is maintaining its full-year 2014 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast at 5.5 per cent, following the strong gross export growth in April which surged 18.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY). The research house still expects quarterly YoY GDP growth to taper off due to a higher base and fading export boost. "After a resilient export growth in January-April, which rose 12.8 per cent YoY, indicators are now pointing to a softer export performance in the near-term. "Intermediate imports declined for the second consecutive month by 3.9 per cent YoY in April, regional exports began to soften while China's purchase manager's index remained subdued at 50.8 in April," it said in a note here Monday.

Maybank IB Sees Weak Q2 Performance For Aviation

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's aviation sector is expected to post a weaker financial performance for the second quarter of the year compared to the first quarter, especially for long-haul flights, said Maybank IB Research. "We observe that published ticket prices are generally higher than for the same period last year, with the exception of a few destinations -- the North China, Australian and Thai routes. "We expect a modest year-on-year yield growth of between two and three per cent this year, but this is coming off a very low base," the research firm said in a note here Monday.

Ford's Retail Sales Surge To 1,116 Units

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ford Motor company's retail sales jumped 59 per cent year-over-year to 1,116 units in May, driven by growing demand for the sporty new Fiesta. The exceptional month was bolstered by growing demand for the Fiesta and continued strength of the Ranger, Kuga and Focus nameplates. "We're seeing terrific consumer response to our expanding vehicle line-up in Malaysia, which is helping drive increasing traffic to our Ford showrooms across the country," said Managing Director for Malaysia and Asia Pacific, David Westerman in a statement here Monday.

Sime Darby To Almost Double Market Cap To RM100 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia-based multinational conglomerate, Sime Darby Bhd, plans to almost double its market capitalisation to RM100 billion on Bursa Malaysia by 2016 from RM57.73 billion recorded to date. In line with the five-year strategy blueprint for financial year 2012 until 2016, Sime Darby would continue to expand and strengthen its position in diversified business activities such as plantation, industrial, motor, property and energy and utilities. Executive Vice-President Group Strategy and Business Development Alan Hamzah Sendut told reporters here Monday, from the financial perspective, the company has recorded a lower financial result due to volatility in global commodity prices.

SEC Declares RM6.50 Mln Dividend To Sabah Govt

KOTA KINABALU -- Sabah Energy Corporation Sdn Bhd (SEC) has declared a dividend of RM6.50 million to the Sabah state government for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2013. This was in addition to a special gross dividend of RM76.3 million paid out during the same financial year.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, who is also State Finance Minister, said cumulative gross dividends paid to the state government now stand at RM169 million, in a statement here Monday.

KPJ's Growth-Focused Efforts Bring Positive Results

JOHOR BAHARU -- KPJ Healthcare Bhd (KPJ) is very encouraged by the growth-focused efforts that have brought more positive returns this year. Its President/ Managing Director, Amiruddin Abdul Satar, said the group's Malaysia segment's revenue for the first quarter ended March 31, 2014 (1Q14) rose by nine per cent to RM544.6 million compared with RM400.5 million in the same period of 2013. He said this was due to the increased activities of the existing and newly-opened hospitals, he said to reporters after the company's annual general Meeting here Tuesday.

M'sia's Healthcare Records Strong Growth Over Last Decade

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's healthcare industry has recorded strong growth over the last decade driven primarily by local consumption of healthcare products and services, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. In his latest posting on his Facebook account here Tuesday, he said under the government's Economic Transformation Programme, growing the country's healthcare industry is a vital National Key Economic Area (NKEA). He said, to date, 37 project owners were expected to create 26,628 new jobs and generate an income of RM6.66 billion as well as RM4.86 billion worth of new investments.

M'sia's IPI Up 4.2 Pct In April

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) increased by 4.2 per cent in April 2014 as compared with the same month last year. The rise was contributed by positive growth in the manufacturing, mining and electricity indices, which rose 4.0 per cent, 4.7 per cent and 3.9 per cent respectively. "In seasonally adjusted terms, the April 2014 IPI rose by 3.6 per cent on a monthly basis," the Statistics Department said in a statement here Wednesday.

April Manufacturing Sales Up To RM53.2 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The sales value for the manufacturing sector in April 2014 rose by 7.7 per cent (RM3.8 billion) to RM53.2 billion from the RM49.4 billion reported a year ago. On a month-on-month basis, however, the sales value decreased by 4.8 per cent (RM2.7 billion) compared with the preceding month of RM55.9 billion, said the Department of Statistics Malaysia here Wednesday. The department said the total number of employees engaged in the manufacturing sector in April was 1.026 million persons, an increase of 0.2 per cent compared with the preceding month.

Bosch Eyes 30 Pct Sales Growth In Asia Pacific

PETALING JAYA -- Robert Bosch (Southeast Asia) Pte Ltd (Bosch Group) expects sales in Asia Pacific to grow 30 per cent by 2015. The group also targeted Asia Pacific to contribute 60 per cent to its worldwide sales turnover by 2020, from 24 per cent at present, its President and Managing Director Martin Hayes said at a media briefing Wednesday.

SP Setia Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM165.4 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- SP Setia Bhd saw its pre-tax profit rise to RM165.4 million for the second quarter ended April 30, 2014, from RM145.1 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue expanded to RM952.4 million, in the quarter under review, from RM753.7 million recorded previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday.

The higher profit was due to a generally higher profit recognition arising from better site progress from residential developments in the Klang Valley and Johor Baharu.

BAuto Pre-tax Profit Rises To RM181.6 Mln For FY14

KUALA LUMPUR -- Berjaya Auto Bhd's (BAuto) pre-tax profit jumped to RM181.6 million for the financial year ended April 30, 2014 (FY14), from RM69.2 million previously. This was mainly due to a better gross profit margin from certain popular models in Malaysia as well as the full-year profit contribution from associated companies Mazda Malaysia Sdn Bhd and Berjaya Auto Philippines Inc, it said in a statement here Wednesday. BAuto registered an increase in revenue for FY14 to RM1.45 billion versus RM1.06 billion in the preceding year.

Security Software Spending Hit RM268.5 Mln In 2013

KUALA LUMPUR -- Security software spending in Malaysia reached RM268.5 million in 2013, an increase of 12.9 per cent over 2012, according to information technology research and advisory company, Gartner, Inc. Globally, security software revenue totalled US$19.9 billion in 2013, up 4.9 per cent from the 2012 revenue of US$19.0 billion. Gartner in its statement here Wednesday said the lower-than-expected growth was due to commoditisation of key subsegments and the decline in growth for two of the top five vendors.

EPF Well Managed, Records Higher Revenue - PAC

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) practices a high corporate governance and has achieved a revenue that exceeds the target as a result of the various investments made locally and abroad. The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed said that in the first quarter of this year, the EPF recorded gross revenue of RM8.834 billion, an increase of 58 percent compared to the RM5.604 billion recorded in the corresponding period of last year. The revenue was accrued from profits derived from the various forms of investment made by the EPF in the real estate sector, equity and bond including from abroad, he told reporters here Wednesday.

klia2 Airport Capsule Hotel Targets 4.5 Mln Travellers

SEPANG -- The Capsule by Container Hotel at klia2 is aiming to capture a clientele of 4.5 million travellers or 10 per cent of the anticipated 45 million passengers this year at the new low carrier terminal. This follows the company's success in launching the Container Hotel in the heart of Kuala Lumpur. "Travelling is fun. But without proper facilities to support the journey, the whole experience can easily turn into a frustrating affair. That's when the Capsule comes in. It is designed to provide flexible, high quality and affordable accommodation for travellers to refresh and recharge on -the-go," Zu Container Sdn Bhd Chief Executive Director Ryan Loo said in his speech before officiating the Capsule.

RHB Eyes 10 Pct Market Share For Credit Card Segment

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Banking Group is aiming for its credit card segment to capture 10 per cent market share within a year from the current eight per cent. RHB Bank Bhd Head, Cards and Unsecured Business Senior Vice President, Elvy Kassim, said the target would be driven by aggressive campaigns and cross-selling collaborations with potential partners.

"We are coming out with campaigns and partnerships and we hope to achieve the number soon," she told reporters after introducing the new addition to the bank's line of cards, MYEG-RHB Visa credit card, here Thursday.

Najib Announces Further Measures To Promote Investment

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has announced further liberalisation to promote investment in a broader spectrum of assets and capacity building. Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, said in his keynote address at Invest Malaysia 2014, Monday, the country aims to further strengthen the Malaysian capital market so it may act as the catalyst for sustainable, long-term growth domestically and in the region.

Proton To Re-Strategise To be World-Class

KUALA LUMPUR -- Proton's immediate plan would be to change its strategy from being a maker of cheap cars to become a world-standard car manufacturer, said newly appointed Chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. The fourth prime minister said Proton has always been labelled as a cheap or poor quality car maker. "Now Proton wants to produce cars which are of world standard, but you have to pay a higher price," he told reporters after launching HLAF Annual Award and Workshop here Monday.

Govt Cuts Dependence On O&G & Focus On Services

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government is cutting its dependence on the oil and gas O&G sector to focus on promoting services, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala. Revenue from the O&G sector is expected to constitute 29 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) this year, down from the 40 per cent in 2009, he told the Invest Malaysia 2014 conference here Monday.

M'sia's Economic Outlook For 2014 Remains Strong – World Bank

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economic growth outlook for 2014 remains strong, underpinned by strong external demand, says the World Bank. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the Invest Malaysia 2014 here Monday, its Senior Economist for Malaysia Dr Frederico Gil Sander said improvements in exports since end-2013, had continued into the first quarter of this year, following positive developments in the advanced economies.

Help MAS Or Let It 'Fly On Its Own' - PAC

KUALA LUMPUR -- The time has come for the government to make a decision on whether to continue helping Malaysia Airlines (MAS) to operate or let the national carrier 'fly on its own'. Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed said Tuesday, with the emergence of low-cost airlines and Open Sky policy, the National Aviation Policy (NAP), which has been protecting MAS all these years, is seen as irrelevant.

Boeing Business Jets Finalises Order For BBJ 777-300ER

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- Boeing Business Jets (BBJ) Wednesday announced the order of a BBJ 777-300ER (Extended Range) airplane to an undisclosed customer. "2014 continues to be a positive year for BBJ with strong order activity. Customers are showing strong interest in our wide-body VIP products and the BBJ 777-300ER is an airplane that really provides unmatched comfort and range on long-haul flights," President, Boeing Business Jets, Capt. Steve Taylor said in a statement released by Boeing here Wednesday.

Petronas Invests US$8 Bln In Turkmenistan

From Nur-ul Afida Kamaludin

ASHGABAT (Turkmenistan) -- Petronas has invested about US$8 billion in oil and gas (O&G) exploration works in Turkmenistan to further increase its production, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. He said with this large investment, the involvement of Petronas in the Central Asian nation which is rich in O&G, will become more strategic in the future. "Petronas also plans to increase its gas and petrochemical flow (in the exploration area) ," Najib told the Malaysian media at the Ashgabat International Airport here before leaving for home on Tuesday night.

TH Heavy Allocates RM90 Mln Capex For Yard Ops

KUALA LUMPUR -- TH Heavy Engineering Bhd is allocating RM90 million for capital expenditure (capex) for its yard operations and between US$230 million and US$250 million for its floating production and storage offloading (FPSO) segment. The group would finance the capex through fund raising in the capital market, Chairman Datuk Azizan Abd Rahman said at a media briefing after the group's annual general meeting here Wednesday.

Celcom Axiata Allocates RM950 Mln Capex For Network

KUALA LUMPUR -- Celcom Axiata Bhd is allocating RM950 million for capital expenditure (capex) this year to provide better network quality and improve data performance for its customers. Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Seri Shazalli Ramly, said at a media briefing on the company's financial results here Wednesday, RM400 million would be to roll out 2,014 active fourth-generation long-term evolution sites nationwide by year-end.

M'sia Takes Steps To Enrich Startup Ecosystem

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- Malaysia is actively taking steps to enrich the startup ecosystem and putting local startups on the regional and global stage, says MaGIC (Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre) chief executive officer Cheryl Yeoh. "Malaysia has the largest technology IPOs in the region, so we have a lot of talent in Malaysia and MaGIC wants to create a platform where we can actually expose this talent," she said after a panel discussion at Echelon 2014, Asia's premier technology and business event, here Wednesday.

AirAsia Finally Soars In India

By Saraswathi Muniappan

NEW DELHI -- With the airline code i5, AirAsia India finally took off as the fourth low cost carrier in the country today with its maiden flight from Bangalore to India's smallest state, Goa. AirAsia's mantra from the time it was launched in India last February, has been to revolutionise air travel within the country. That it has got off to a grand start in this regard is evident from the way tickets for the airline's maiden flight was sold out within 10 minutes of opening for sale on May 30.

Iskandar M'sia: S'pore Highest Investor With RM11 Bln

NUSAJAYA -- Singapore continues to be the top foreign investor in Iskandar Malaysia with committed investments of RM11 billion up to April this year. Iskandar Regional Development Authority Chief Executive, Datuk Ismail Ibrahim, told reporters here Thursday, from 2006 up to end-April, the economic corridor has attracted a total of RM138.61 billion in committed investments.

Endeavor M'sia Looks For Local Entrepreneurs

KUALA LUMPUR -- Endeavor Malaysia, the local affiliate of the global non-profit organisation Endeavor, is actively searching for local entrepreneurs across all industries with the potential to scale up their businesses globally. Endeavor will help these entrepreneurs navigate their growth challenges by connecting them to over 3,000 global business leaders for targeted mentorship, access to a global investor network and partnerships for top talent, its Managing Director Zaman Ahmad said in a statement here Thursday.

Govt Mulls Tax Exemption For RON95, Diesel

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government is mulling over the possibility to exempt the people from paying fuel taxes on RON95 and diesel when the Goods and Services Tax (GST) is implemented in April next year. Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan said this was because right now, RON95 and diesel were exempted from sales tax at the rate of 58.62 sen per litre and 40 sen per litre, respectively. He said at the Dewan Rakyat here Thursday, the subsidy and exemption of sales tax on the two commodities meant quite a large liability for the government.

M'sian Firms At SIAL China Generated RM38.9 Mln Sales

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 20 Malaysian companies taking part at the recent three-day SIAL China 2014 food trade fair in Shanghai generated total sales of RM38.9 million and received over 1,500 trade enquiries, said the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). It was Malaysia's eighth participation in the trade fair since 2004, MATRADE said in a statement here Friday. "Malaysian companies promoted palm oil-based products, beverages, frozen food, bakery products, food ingredients, confectionery and ready-to-eat products and functional food," it said.

MAS, Tourism Australia Offer Great Holidays

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines (MAS) is partnering Tourism Australia to offer fares starting at RM999 to six Australian cities, namely, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Darwin. In a joint statement here Friday, MAS said for bookings made between June 14-July 7, 2014, for immediate travel till March 31, 2015, passengers stand to enjoy an up to 50 per cent off the current all-inclusive fares on both economy and business Class.

M'sia Welcomes 7.09 Mln Tourists In Q1

PUTRAJAYA -- In tandem with the "Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014," the country has welcomed 7.09 million tourists for the first quarter of this year from 6.45 million tourists during the same period last year, a hike of 10 per cent. Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) said in a statement here Friday, the top 10 tourist generating markets to Malaysia were Singapore, Indonesia, China, Thailand, Brunei, India, Australia, Japan, the Philippines and the United Kingdom.

MFA Targets 8 Pct Transaction Growth At FIM 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Franchise Association (MFA) is targeting to record eight per cent growth in transactions at Franchise International Malaysia (FIM) 2014, compared with RM368 million recorded in 2013. The association was optimistic of achieving the target based on its annual growth rate of 5-10 per cent recorded in previous years. "The target is made based on the participation of the franchisors in various business sectors, which have grown rapidly and are widely accepted," MFA main committee member Abdul Rahman Mohamed told reporters here Friday.

M'sia Hosts ASCI 2015 With RM3.55 Mln Impact

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has won the bid to host the 9th Congress of The Asian Society of Cardiovascular Imaging (ASCI) 2015 and the event from June 11-13 here, is expected to have an economic impact of RM3.55 million. The successful bid was announced by the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) here Monday. "Over 500 international delegates expected to attend the event organised for the first time in Malaysia by the National Heart Association of Malaysia (NHAM)," the MyCEB said in a statement Monday.

M'sian Financial Planning Council Launches Journal

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Financial Planning Council (MFPC) Tuesday launched a wealth management and financial planning journal in conjunction with its 10th anniversary celebrations. The journal features original researched articles and concepts of effective approaches to all aspects of financial planning and management. The council, in a statement, said the journal would also feature current issues.

Ekovest Gets RM117 Mln Facilitation Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ekovest Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Ekovest Properties Sdn Bhd (EPSB) has entered into a facilitation fund agreement with the Government of Malaysia and Bank Pembangunan Malaysia Bhd Tuesday in relation to a grant provided to EPSB's commercial development known as The Gateway@KL Bund. The commercial development is on a 5.87-hectare land near Setapak located within Precinct 1 of the River of Life (RoL) project, Ekovest said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday. The RoL is an Entry Point Project identified in the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley National Key Economic Area (NKEA) under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

BMW M'sia Unveils Locally-assembled BMW 3 Series

KUALA LUMPUR -- BMW Group Malaysia Wednesday introduced the new locally-assembled BMW 3 Series Gran Turismo, the 14th BMW variant to be assembled in the country. The premium automaker offers the BMW 3 Series Gran Turismo in two variants - BMW 328i Gran Turismo and BMW 320d Gran Turismo. "As an addition to our strong portfolio of locally-assembled premium vehicles, the new BMW 3 Series Gran Turismo further underlines our commitment to this country which has been our home for over ten years," BMW Group Malaysia Chief Executive Officer, Dr Gerhard Pils, said in a statement here Wednesday.

MAS Appoints North & East India Area Manager

NEW DELHI -- Malaysia Airlines has appointed Amit Mehta as its Area Manager for the North and East India region. Amit Mehta, who has been working with MAS since 2007 as sales manager in North India, will focus on boosting the airline's presence in the Indian market, driving global partnerships and strategic alliances. He would be completely taking charge of global travel management strategy and sales operations for the North and East region of India, MAS said in a statement here Wednesday.

Melaka Holds Agriculture & Entrepreneurship Carnival

MELAKA -- The Melaka state-level Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Carnival will be held in the compound of the Melaka State Development Corporation, Melaka International Trade Centre, here for three days beginning from June 20. State Agriculture and Entrepreneur Development Executive Councillor Datuk Hasan Abdul Rahman said the carnival was held in conjunction with Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Show (MAHA) themed 'Road to MAHA 2014', which is held in every state. The carnival is jointly organised by the Melaka state government and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, he told a press conference here Wednesday.

Novosol Introduces Advertising Platform

KUALA LUMPUR -- Novosol Sdn Bhd has introduced its advertising technology and service, moLotus, to target the major campaigns for the Hari Raya festive season. The mobile advertising company is confident that the service would be well accepted by brands, agencies and consumers. "With our introductory pricing and offers, this is great opportunity for brands to delight their loyal customers while generating revenues," Chief Executive Officer Minhaz Lokhandwala said in a statement here Wednesday.

Petronas Awards Contract To Ophir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas) has awarded a small field risk service contract (SFRSC) to Ophir Production Sdn Bhd for the development and production of petroleum from the Ophir field, located offshore Peninsular Malaysia. Ophir Production is jointly owned by Octanex Pte Ltd, Scomi D&P Sdn Bhd and Vestigo Petroleum Sdn Bhd. In a statement here Wednesday, Petronas said under the terms of the contract, it was the project owner and Ophir Production the contractor.

TM Introduces 'Stream Champion Deal' Product

SEREMBAN -- Telekom Malaysia's (TM) latest offering, the "Stream Champion Deal", promises an upgrade in terms of broadband speed to ensure an uninterrupted and unlimited streaming experience. Customers can enjoy a free upgrade of their broadband speed to the UniFi VIP 10 or UniFi VIP 20 when they subscribe to the HyppTV Mega Pack or Sports Pack, TM Negeri Sembilan General Manager Ramlan Omar told reports this after the bowling competition between TM Negeri Sembilan and its customers and media in the state here Wednesdy night.

Matrade Encourages Entrepreneurs To Register For YEF 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) has urged young entrepreneurs to register for the Young Exporters Forum (YEF) 2014. The event is aimed at exchanging ideas and gaining insights into the successful experiences of Malaysian youth in the international market.

Hosted by the trade promotion agency, the one-day forum will be held on June 18, and officiated by Minister of International Trade and Industry (MITI) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Matrade said in a statement here Thursday.

OPEN-DOOR…Westports CEO Ruben Emir Gnanalingam encourages open and healthy dialogue with the employees.

WESTPORTS: Up Close With The Man At The Helm

This is a first of a two-part interview with Westports Holdings Bhd Chief Executive Officer Ruben Emir Gnanalingam. It provides an insight into Ruben the son, the entrepreneur, the CEO and his management style, achievements and vision for Westports.

By Salbiah Said

PORT KLANG -- Becoming a chief executive officer does not happen overnight. Ruben Emir Gnanalingam says he had to work his way through the ranks before taking the reins at Westports Holdings Bhd. His father, Tan Sri Datuk Gnanalingam or Tan Sri G, as he is fondly known to many, devised a plan on how he could join Westports, one of the busiest ports in the country. "What my dad did was to make sure that I understand all positions in the company, including those of the rank-and-file", he told Bernama in an interview. Ruben, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London in 1998, accepted the challenge and sensed his father's wisdom. His father, who is also a marketing guru, wanted him to learn and understand the ropes of the port business.

Passing the Baton

Tan Sri G, who is the Executive Chairman, could have passed the baton to Ruben, his eldest son and heir apparent to the throne he has successfully steered and built, on a silver platter eight years ago. But the shrewd tycoon, who started Westports in 1994 from a barren swampy island and transformed it into the main container terminal operator in Port Klang, insisted that his son should learn the business the hard way. "If you don't get to the ground, you won't understand how hard it is for them, and the limits they can take", said Ruben, who joined Westports as a trainee in 1999 and spent the first three months familiarising with the port operations as a worker, including working the night shifts. "It was a very good experience as it helps me understand how the port works. I enjoyed my three-month stint", reminisced Ruben, who also holds a diploma in port management from the University of Cambridge in 2001. After three months, he was ready to move to the next level. Under his stewardship, Ruben formulated a five-year corporate plan for Westports and a second five-year plan upon completion of the first.

Learning Through Mistakes

In 2000, he resigned from Westports during the dotcom era to set up Makmal Jaya Sdn Bhd, a Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) status incubator to invest and nurture Malaysia's high-tech start-ups. Five years later, Ruben sold off his shares in the information technology (IT) firm that he co-owned with several partners, and returned to Westports. "I think to a certain extent my dad was probably happy I made mistakes somewhere else and not in his port. Wherever you go, you learn through mistakes. The faster way to learn is through mistakes. Nothing leaves a better impression than making a mistake", said Ruben. In July 2005, he was appointed to Westports' Board and designated as Executive Director in January 2006. Ruben was promoted to CEO in 2010.

Same Management Styles

Ruben and his father believe in the same management principles and ideas. "In essence, our management styles are very similar." "I think, the key difference, if at all, is that I like to use more data, purely because of rapid technological changes. I get the benefit of more data while my father relies more in his gut feeling. Because of his experience, he has everything in his head and heart". "We believe that companies must have the right culture, and making mistakes is the best way to learn. No one puts you down for making mistakes, but people will laugh at you if you make the same mistakes twice", said Ruben. "Now that I am the CEO, a lot of the people who were then my seniors before are now my colleagues and reporting back to me, which is a good thing. As they were my bosses before, they have no problem telling me when I am wrong".

Open Relationship, Healthy Dialogue

Ruben added: "People should be able to challenge you. That's why I have a lot of people, who are my peers, who can tell me I am doing right or challenge me if I have made the wrong decision. They are not yes-men who are afraid to tell you when you are wrong. I am willing to accept their criticisms". Under his management, Ruben encourages open and healthy dialogue. "We have a very open relationship. I think, they might have been apprehensive to talk freely if they were not my bosses in the past." Ruben has introduced the 'Suggestion Box' concept as a feedback channel for the employees. "Basically, it is for them to write to me directly. They can tell me 'thank you' or 'I don't like the food at the canteen' and give suggestions and ideas. I read the letters first – all of them, and I understand every single one of them". "We have other avenues, but this one is direct. They can come here directly to see me but some are too shy to bring up small things. I reply to all letters, but only to those who identify themselves. Some of them have proposed great ideas, and we have implemented them", said Ruben.

Biggest Challenge

Being the man at the helm, Ruben says his biggest challenge so far is formulating strategic business plans. "Things are changing, people and company must evolve over time. I am evolving fast enough to lead the company in a certain direction. If I don't evolve fast enough for the company, it would be obsolete. I have to make sure the company is changing at all times. It is important to have a strategy. You can't tell what the future is going to hold.

If you know, it is easy to plan". Ruben stresses that he wants to ensure that improvements are taking place at every level within the company. This he does by meeting his staff very regularly. "If you don't meet people, you are not a leader. People working with you must be improved in their lives and career – at every level. A leader has to play a role in guiding people. If you stifle the people below you, you're not a leader. You must make them better", said Ruben.

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

KL Shares To Stage Further Correction Next Week

By Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar

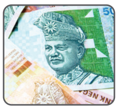
KUALA LUMPUR -- Shares on Bursa Malaysia are expected to stage further correction to between 1,860 and 1,880 point level amid major weakness in the global market. Several short term forces are pressuring global shares, and these include the uninspiring US economic data, violence in Iraq, rising oil price, corporate profit warnings and a downgraded global growth outlook from the World Bank.

"We see flattish global stocks struggling for momentum. Stocks are now ripe for a pullback after recent gains," Affin Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Dr Nazri Khan told Bernama. On the domestic front, he said the Malaysian economic and corporate calendar was expected to be quiet this week, with the market looking to external events for direction. He said there were signs of a languid runaway bull market, with the FBM KLCI struggling to exit from its four-week consolidation. "A break above 1,880 level will reflect a shift to bullish sentiment and push for a rally towards 1,900.

"Any downside action below the uptrend line support at 1,860 will draw greater selling pressure towards 1,830," Nazri said. Several newsflows that might keep the market abuzz includes Sona Petroleum Bhd undertaking a US$140 million loan to fund the planned purchase of two major Thai oil and gas blocks. Add to that, Johor Corp spending RM800 million for new hospitals expansion over the next three years to strengthen its healthcare business.

Also, Petronas is building the second urea and ammonia plant in Sabah worth RM3 billion via Petronas Chemicals Group Bhd. For the week just-ended, the FBM KLCI jumped 14.04 points to 1,876.74 on buying momentum despite investors turning their attention to the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The Finance Index fell 38.87 points to 17,148.52, the Industrial Index gained 31.85 points to 3,192.05 while the Plantation Index increased 93.51 points to 9,232.84. The FBM Emas Index rose 76.22 points to 12,974.34, the FBMT100 Index advanced 71.26 points to 12,614.53, the FBM Ace added 44.29 points to 6,636.05 and the FBM 70 lost 11.79 points to 14,053.4. Weekly turnover declined to 6.22 billion shares valued at RM7.62 billion from last week's 6.31 billion shares worth RM8.01 billion.

Main market volume decreased to 4.16 billion worth RM7.34 billion from 5.29 billion shares valued at RM8.38 billion. Warrants turnover declined to 123.44 million shares valued at RM18.3 million from 181.21 million shares worth RM25.87 million. The ACE market volume fell to 778.21 million shares worth RM245.18 million from 816 million shares valued at RM198.27 million recorded last week.



Lack Of Market Movers To Drive Ringgit Lower Versus Us Dollar Next Week

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The lack of market movers will likely see the ringgit traded weaker next week, with the local currency to hover between 3.20 and 3.24 against the US dollar. Hong Leong Bank senior manager for bond and economic research Choong Yin Pheng said traders would closely monitor the next US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting, scheduled on Wednesday. "The meeting would provide fresh direction for the ringgit-greenback movement next week as there would be projection on the economy," she told Bernama.

On a weekly basis, the ringgit ended higher at 3.2175/2195 against the US dollar from last Friday's 3.2210/2130. The ringgit started the week higher, advancing to its highest in nearly seven months at 3.1930 per dollar on Monday. It fell thereafter as the greenback became unfavourable after the World Bank late on Tuesday cut its global economic growth forecast for this year to 2.8 per cent from 3.2 per cent earlier. Movement was then mostly driven by market anticipation on when the US Federal Reserve might raise its interest rates. Meanwhile, against other major currencies the ringgit finished the week mostly lower. It depreciated against the Singapore dollar to 2.5759/5777 from last Friday's 2.5639/5661, fell against the yen to 3.1581/1604 from 3.1388/1414, and decreased against the British pound to 5.4640/4690 from 5.3967/4007.

The local unit, however, appreciated against the euro to 4.3661/3695 versus 4.3779/3812 previously. The euro became unfavourable against a basket of major currencies due to the diverging monetary policy stance between the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Federal Reserve after the ECB cut its main rates to record lows on Thursday last week.

Short- Term Rates Likely To Remain Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain steady next week as Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continues to intervene to siphon off excess funds from the interbank system, said a dealer. The dealer said BNM would call for several money market tenders in the conventional, Islamic and repo systems on a daily basis in line with the amount of liquidity surplus. During the week just-ended, the central bank entered the money market daily as the system was flushed with funds from the conventional money market, Wadiah and repo tenders. The closing liquidity surplus in the conventional system amounted to RM15.67 billion while in the Islamic system it totalled RM2.5 billion. The overnight rate was 2.96 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates were 3.05 per cent, 3.09 per cent and 3.13 per cent, respectively.

KLCI Futures To Be Volatile Next Week

By Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures (FKLI) contracts are likely to be volatile next week, tracking the possible escalating geopolitical conflict in the Middle East. "Trading volume will also be relatively low during the 2014 FIFA World Cup," Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Low Cheng Yang told Bernama. Meanwhile, Affin Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Dr Nazri Khan said tensions in Iraq was expected to be temporary and should only be confined to the northern part of the country. “As of now, it does not yet pose a significant threat to the global oil production since the northern Iraq region represents only a small proportion of global oil production,” he said. For the week just-ended, the FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI jumped 14.04 points to 1,876.74 supported by buying momentum despite investors turning their attention to the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2014 rose 10.5 points to 1,876.5, July 2014 added 11.5 points to 1,880, September increased 10 points to 1,877 and December 2014 went up 11 points to 1,876.5. Turnover for the week declined to 19,545 lots from last week’s 27,734 lots, while open interest increased to 33,641 contracts from 32,444 contracts last Friday.

CPO Futures Likely To Trade Between RM2,350 And RM2,500 Next Week

By S. Joan Santani

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely see cautious trading next week with prices to range between RM2,350 and RM2,500 per tonne with the anticipation of speculative buying. Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader Jim Teh said that despite the higher stocks in producing countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, the market could have discounted this factor next week. Speaking to Bernama today, he said the demand was also expected to slow down as the Middle East and India had already stocked up for Ramadan. Palm oil stocks in Malaysia, have continuously increased since March and stood at 1.84 million tonnes at end-May.The market players were anticipating stocks to hit the two million-tonne mark in September as production increases ahead of sluggish global demand, said another dealer.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2014 decreased RM17 to RM2,403 per tonne, July 2014 added RM11 to RM2,433 per tonne, August 2014 increased RM13 to RM2,427 per tonne while September 2014 edged up RM11 to RM2,425 per tonne. Weekly turnover decreased to 163,124 lots from 188,232 lots last week while open interest increased to 212,139 contracts from 202,554 contracts last Friday. On the physical market, June South added RM10 to RM2,450 per tonne.

Rubber Prices To Move In Narrow Range Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian rubber prices are expected to move in a tight range next week on low demand for the commodity, a dealer said. The weakening ringgit against the US dollar would boost demand for the soft commodity and eventually would lend support to the prices, another dealer said. For the week just-ended, rubber prices were traded mixed, tracking the weaker ringgit against the greenback despite positive performance on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board’s official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 at noon increased 4.5 sen to 534 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk added one sen to 458.50 sen a kg. The 5 pm closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 increased 10 sen to 538 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk rose 3.5 sen to 460.50 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Expected To Be Lacklustre Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to remain lacklustre next week in the absence of fresh leads, dealers said. During the week, the market was only traded on Thursday with a turnover of 700 lots. Open interest was unchanged at 7,240 contracts while turnover amounted to 700 lots. On a week-to-week basis, June 2014, July 2014, August 2014 and September 2014 stood at 96.49, 96.38, 96.33 and 96.30, respectively. The underlying three-month KLIBOR increased to 3.52 per cent from last week's 3.49 per cent.

Tin Price On KLTM To Hover At US$22,700 To US$22,800 Per Tonne Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tin price on the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to hover around US$22,700 to US$22,800 per tonne next week, supported by consumer demand from Japan and Europe. A dealer said the sustained demand would lend some support to the local tin market as the prices had fallen to a four-month low last week. "The price should remain at this level for the next coming weeks," he added.

For the week just-ended, the metal finished US$640 lower at US$22,750 per tonne from US$23,290 per tonne recorded last Friday. Trading was dominated by Japanese, European and local buyers. Weekly turnover fell to 119 lots from 155 lots last week. The premium between the KLTM and the London Metal Exchange slightly widened to U$465 per tonne from US$455 per tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures Contract To Take Cue From Iraq Conflict

By Noor Soraya Mohd Jamal

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives next week will highly be determined by the Iraq political crisis situation, a dealer said. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer Desmun Chan Coin Mun said if violence escalated, gold price would likely be pushed upwards and break its resistant level at US$1,278 to US$1,280. However, he added, should the situation stabilises, the market would take cue from the Commodity Exchange (COMEX).

"We expect gold will likely experience some pullback as the COMEX gold price is testing strong resistance at US$1,275 to US$1,280 level," he told Bernama. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2014, July 2014 and August 2014 soared 18 ticks each to RM130.45, RM130.80 and RM131.20, respectively.

Volume rose to 5,278 lots worth RM68.8 million, from 2,981 lots worth RM38.7 million, recorded last week. Open interest on Friday stood at 5,343 contracts compared with last week's 5,554 contracts.