MALAYSIAeBiz
BERNAMA WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP 10 - 14 NOVEMBER 2014

This Week's Highlight :

M'sian Economy Expands By 5.6 Pct In Q3 2014

EXPANDING…"Private sector activity remained the key driver of growth during the quarter, with private consumption registering 6.7 per cent growth while public consumption recorded positive growth of 5.3 per cent." - BNM's Governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz. --fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian economy expanded by 5.6 per cent in the third quarter this year, higher than the 5.0 per cent achieved in the same quarter last year, driven by private sector demand, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). Meanwhile, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for the second quarter was revised higher to 6.5 per cent from 6.4 per cent previously. Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said positive growth rates were also recorded across all economic sectors for the third quarter. The construction sector recorded 9.6 per cent growth, followed by services sector (6.1 per cent), manufacturing (5.3 per cent), agriculture (4.0 per cent) and mining (1.4 per cent), she told a media briefing on Malaysia's third quarter GDP performance here Friday.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

RMB Clearing Bank - Catalyst For Growth Between M'sia -China - Najib

From Azlina Aziz

BEIJING -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is pleased the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the People's Bank of China and Bank Negara Malaysia will further strengthen financial and economic relations. The RMB clearing bank will be a catalyst to support the rapid growth in bilateral trade, investment and financial flows between Malaysia and China. "Today's event is another affirmation that we will continue to pursue this goal for mutual benefits to both countries. As we are aware, the establishment of the RMB Clearing Bank resulted from the discussion between President Xi Jinping and myself last May," said Najib, who is also Finance Minister in a statement released here Monday.

Tuesday

Big, Bold Changes Needed For Economic Reform - Najib

By Niam Seet Wei

BEIJING -- Big and bold changes are needed for economic reform to succeed, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. Despite acknowledging that reform might be costly with winners and losers in the process, he said some degree of short-term pain must be endured for long-term gain. "All forms of reform have costs that need to be shouldered, but this is for the people's benefit," he told a retreat session at Yangi Lake on the second day of the 22nd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders Meeting (AELM) here Tuesday. Najib expressed support for Chinese President Xi Jinping's stand that economic reform and innovation should not depend on capital, land or labour force.

November 14, 2014

Wednesday

Asean Confident Of Implementing Measures Under AEC Blueprint

From Minggu Simon Lhasa

NAY PYI TAW -- Asean member states are confident that by end-2015, at least 95 per cent of the measures under the Asean Economic Community (AEC) Blueprint will be implemented. A slight shortfall is expected and measures not achieved within the target year will be continued and incorporated into the Post 2015 Economic Vision that is now being developed, according to Malaysia's Minister of International and Industry, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. Briefing Malaysian reporters on the progress here this morning, he said the overall average Asean implementation rate of measures under the AEC Blueprint was a credible 82.1 per cent, and slightly higher for Malaysia at 83.9 per cent.

Thursday

M'sia's Construction Industry Remains Robust

KUALA LUMPUR -- The construction industry grew at the rate of 14.3 per cent until the middle of this year with projects worth RM69 billion carried out until September, Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said. He said 39 per cent of the projects valued at RM27 billion were non-residential projects, residential projects (33 per cent/ RM23 billion), infrastructure projects (22 per cent/ RM15 billion), and social services (six per cent/ RM4 billion). Fadillah said the construction sector grew 10.9 per cent last year with projects valued at RM124 billion, of which 30 per cent or RM38 billion were residential projects.

Friday

Decline In Savings Not Worrying As Investments Remain Strong - Zeti

KUALA LUMPUR -- The decline in savings among businesses and individuals is not at worrying levels as investment activities are still strong, Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said. She said the decline translated into narrowing surplus in the balance of payment which accounted for three per cent of the gross national income. "Yes, we are seeing some moderation in savings activity but this has not put a limit on access to funding. "This is proven by investments that continue to grow significantly," she told a media briefing on the country's third quarter Gross Domestic Product (GDP) performance here Friday.

SMEbrief

PNS To Help Bumi SME Entrepreneurs

PASIR PUTEH -- Perbadanan Nasional Bhd (PNS) plans to help at least 20 Bumiputera entrepreneurs in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) per year. PNS Head of Financing Rasydan Jusoh said PNS will help the selected entrepreneurs by giving them a RM24, 800 loan to expand their respective businesses. "The entrepreneurs will have to repay the loan in two or three years' time with 3 per cent interest, which is the lowest interest rate. "The selected entrepreneurs are required to own their business premises and to have Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia as minimum academic qualification," he told reporters after officiating the opening of Cold Time coffee outlet here Monday.

MIDA Urges Domestic Players To Move Up Value Chain

KUALA LUMPUR -- More domestic players, particularly the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are urged to move up the value chain by investing in automation and technology to enhance productivity, said Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA). Its Deputy Chief Executive Officer 1, Datuk Phang Ah Tong, said the supply chain was now more integrated in Asia compared to the US and Eurozone for many industries. "This is mainly due to the positive growth rate of six per cent projected in the region over the next few years," he told a media briefing in conjunction with the seminar on 'Production Technology For the Future' here Tuesday.

Small Enterprises Should Improve Competitiveness In Wake Of AEC

KUALA LUMPUR -- Small and micro enterprises should be prepared to increase their competitiveness in production in the wake of regional integration through the Asean Economic Community (AEC) next year. Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Hamim Samuri said the abolition of import duties and tariff barriers among Asean countries would provide opportunities for Malaysian manufacturers to export their products such as processed food, electrical and electronics, timber and rubber products and products manufactured by the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). "Indirectly, AEC would increase the quality and competitiveness of Malaysian businesses in Asean and subsequently global market," he said during a question-and-answer session at Dewan Rakyat, here Tuesday.

BNM, NCG To Host Payment System Forum & Exhibition For SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) and the National Cards Group will organise a 'Payment System Forum and Exhibition 2014 on Nov 27 at Sasana Kijang. Themed 'Migration to E-payments: Payment Cards Acceptance', the forum aimed to build awareness and promote the acceptance of e-payment cards among businesses, especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and microenterprises, BNM said in a statement, here Tuesday. "The forum will provide the latest developments on payment card acceptance in the country and covers topics on acceptance infrastructure and the future of debit card, among others," it said.

PropUP — Property*update*

CIDB: Affordable House Quality Still Not Up To The Mark

KUALA LUMPUR -- The quality of affordable houses in the country is still not up to the standards, said the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Malaysia. Development Sector Senior General Manager Ahmad 'Asri Abdul Hamid said out of 700 projects assessed by CIDB under Quality Assessment System in Construction (Qlassic), the majority of them were medium and medium high cost housing projects. "Based on the assessment done so far, the developers involved in the segment are the ones who approache us, and not the affordable house developers," he told reporters after media workshop on Qlassic Monday.

iProperty Records 38 Pct Growth In Mobile Users

KUALA LUMPUR -- iProperty.com recorded a 38 per cent increase of mobile users and a 16 per cent rise in visitors to its website. iProperty Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Georg Chmiel, said the portal also reported a similar increase in its customers responding to the inquiries of properties. "The portal, which is Asia's No.1 property portal network, saw tremendous growth in the number of mobile users and visitors to its website. The significant increase in the number of leads generated for our customers is an affirmation that more and more Malaysians are turning to iProperty.com Malaysia to find their dream home or next property investment," he said.

MRCB To Build RM115 Mln Overhead Bridge

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd (MRCB), a property and infrastructure developer, will build a RM115 million overhead bridge to connect Jalan Klang Lama with the New Pantai Expressway. Construction is expected to take two years. Its Deputy Executive President, Datuk Ishak Mohamed, said the bridge would be one of the alternative routes which would shorten the travel time to Bangsar, Sunway and Subang from Seputeh. He said this at the groundbreaking ceremony here Tuesday.

Seacera To Diversify Into Property, Construction

KUALA LUMPUR -- Seacera Group Bhd plans to diversify into property development and construction to enhance its business prospects. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday, the group said the proposed diversification would reduce the risk of dependency on its sole businesses, namely manufacturing and trading of homogeneous and ceramic tiles. "The board believes that the proposed diversification would contribute positively to its future earnings, supported by revenue contribution from property development and construction activities," it said.

MARKET

Scoreboard

Gainers	235
Losers	548
Not Traded	577
Unchanged	315
Value	1602185550
Volume	16498895

BURSA: FBM KLCI Ends Lower On Selling By Institutional Funds

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) ended lower Friday on selling by institutional funds, amid weakness on oil and gas-related counters, a dealer said.

At 5 pm, the benchmark FBM KLCI stood at 1,813.79, down slightly by 2.02 points, after hovering between 1,808.7 and 1,814.57 throughout the day.

Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew said the stock market performance was "disappointing" this week, extending the declines last week, with selling seen by institutional funds in order to declare dividend by year-end.

"They are taking profit at this time. If they don't lock in profit, they won't be able to pay dividend by the end of this year," he told Bernama.

He said the situation was made worse after oil and gas counters were badly hit as crude oil price tumbled to its lowest in four years.

On the broader market, losers led gainers by more than double at 548 to 235, with 315 counters unchanged, 577 counters untraded and 19 others suspended.

Total volume decreased to 1.64 billion units worth RM1.6 billion from 1.69 billion shares worth RM1.72 billion on Thursday.

Main Market volume decreased to 1.15 billion units worth RM1.48 billion from Thursday's 1.2 billion units worth RM1.6 billion.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.3460	3.3480
EUR	4.1705	4.1740
GBP	5.2465	5.2503
100 YEN	2.8768	2.8793
SGD	2.5794	2.5817

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Extends Losses Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit extended losses against the US dollar Friday, due to a weak risk appetite for the local unit, dealers said.

At 5 pm, the ringgit was quoted at 3.3460/3480 vis-a-vis the greenback compared with 3.3380/3400 on Thursday. A dealer said the unfavorable third-quarter growth data of 5.6 per cent, the slowest pace for this year, further weighed on sentiment for the ringgit.

The national growth, however, was higher than that the 5.0 per cent achieved in the same quarter of last year, driven by resilient domestic demand, said Bank Negara Malaysia. The ringgit was traded mostly higher against other major currencies.

It rose against the Singapore dollar to 2.5794/5817 from 2.5840/5873 on Thursday, appreciated against the yen to 2.8768/8793 from 2.8890/8913, and strengthened against the British pound to 5.2465/2503 from 5.2644/2682. The ringgit, however, fell against the euro to 4.1705/1740 from 4.1608/1636 previously.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to mop up excess liquidity from the financial system.

The liquidity surplus in the conventional system increased to RM13.46 billion from RM13.25 billion estimated in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM3.2 billion from RM6.83 billion. In the morning, the central bank called for five tenders -- one conventional money market, one repo, one Commodity Murabahah Programme and two Al-Wadiah.

BNM also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM12.5 billion and a RM3.2 billion Al-Wadiah money market tender, both for three-day monies. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.22 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.27 per cent, 3.31 per cent and 3.35 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures End Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts ended untraded Friday. November 2014, December 2014, January 2015 and March 2015 was at 96.21, 96.22, 96.18 and 96.20, respectively. Open interest was at 2,970 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.78 per cent.

KLCI Futures Close Lower On Weaker Cash Market

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed lower Friday on weaker cash market, a dealer said.

Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd Head of Research, Pong Teng Siew, said FBM KLCI was also down due to selling from institutional funds amid weak oil and gas-related counters performance. "The market was down for two weeks in a row as institutional funds take profit to pay dividends for year end," he told Bernama.

Spot month November 2014 eased four points to 1,815.5, December 2014 fell six points to 1,814.5, March 2015 eased 6.5 points to 1,813 and June 2015 declined 7.5 points to 1,813.5. Turnover decreased to 4,777 lots from Thursday's 5,933 lots while open interest declined to 27,452 contracts from 28,575 contracts previously. On the cash market, the FBM KLCI eased 2.02 points to 1,813.79.

Moody's Expects Increase In Asean Bank's Bond Issuances

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- Asean banks will increasingly turn to capital markets, particularly by issuing bonds, in order to fund their lending operations, says Moody's Investors Service. Its Assistant Vice President/Analyst, Alka Anbarasu, said loan growth in most parts of the Asean region has steadily outpaced deposit inflows over the past several years, leading banks to use most of their stock of deposits to fund loans. "Going forward, we expect that further growth will also be driven by funding needs, rather than solely by choice. Therefore, funding and liquidity will increasingly become factors that differentiate Asean banks' credit profiles," Anbarasu said.

BNM & People's Bank Of China In RMB Clearing Tie-Up

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Monday announced the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the People's Bank of China (PBC) on the Renminbi (RMB) clearing arrangements in Malaysia. Under the MoU, both central banks agreed to coordinate and cooperate on the supervision and oversight of the RMB business, exchange of information and to facilitate the continuous improvement and development of the arrangement. "The MoU signifies another important step in our continuous joint effort to build capabilities in the Malaysian financial system to better serve the ever rising bilateral trade, investment and financial flows between China and Malaysia," said BNM.

CIMB-RHB-MBSB Merger Likely To Start In 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- The mega bank merger of CIMB Group Holdings Bhd, RHB Capital Bhd and Malaysia Building Society Bhd (MBSB) will likely start in the first quarter of 2015, upon receiving the nod from Bursa Malaysia and shareholders. RHB Islamic Bank Bhd Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Ibrahim Hassan, said the banks now were at discussion stage to finalise the proposed merger. "At this moment, we are working hard towards meeting the due diligence (investigation and audit of the proposed merger) and we are also conducting integration meetings," he told a media conference at the 11th Kuala Lumpur Islamic Finance Forum 2014 here Monday.

BNM Urged To Expedite Implementation Of IFSA 2013 Act

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) has urged Bank Negara Malaysia to speed up the introduction of deposit and investment products under the Islamic Financial Services Act (IFSA) 2013. SC Syariah Advisor Prof Madya Dr Aznan Hassan said challenges faced by the SC and local Islamic banks include the timeline for the approval of new products that have been proposed to the central bank. "The market players are hoping to get the approval from the central bank as soon as possible so that they can move their plans forward and introduce the new IFSA-based products to customers. This could help the industry promote the products under the newly-introduced IFSA 2013 Act and take Islamic banking to a higher level," he told reporters on the sidelines of the 11th Kuala Lumpur Islamic Finance Forum 2014 here Monday.

CGC Confident Of Surpassing RM2.7 Bln Loan Target

PETALING JAYA -- Credit Guarantee Corporation (M) Bhd (CGC) is confident of surpassing the RM2.7 billion loan volume target this year, its President Datuk Wan Azhar Wan Ahmad said. Wan Azhar, who is also CGC Chief Executive Officer, said the corporation had already achieved 90 per cent of its target in terms of the number of accounts. "Currently the number of account holders is 5,022 against the 5,600 account holders target. The team will push in November and December to ensure our key performance indicators are met," he told reporters at the signing of a strategic alliance with Affin Bank Bhd, here Tuesday.

CIMB Islamic Bank Signs MoU On Collaboration With INCEIF

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Islamic Bank Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Global University of Islamic Finance (INCEIF) to build a collaborative framework towards establishing a research centre for Islamic banking studies. CIMB Islamic Bank Chief Executive Officer Badlisyah Abdul Ghani said the bank had allocated RM1.5 million as sponsorship over the three-year collaboration period. He said the MoU also aims to enhance and strengthen Malaysia's position as a globally recognised marketplace for Islamic banking and Islamic finance. He told this at a media conference, here Tuesday.

RM100 Mln Loan For Local Entrepreneurs To Enter World Market

KUALA LUMPUR -- A memorandum of agreement signed between Export-Import Bank of Malaysia Bhd (Exim Bank) and Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) Tuesday will provide local entrepreneurs with a RM100 million loan to penetrate the international market. Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said the agreement will enable 50 local small and medium entrepreneurs obtain loans from RM300,000 to RM2 million. "One of the components that makes it difficult for local entrepreneurs to penetrate the global market is finance. With this agreement, it gives us the opportunity to sponsor entrepreneurs from various fields to penetrate foreign markets," Mohd Shafie told reporters at the signing of the agreement here Tuesday.

Asian Nations Have Potential To Expand Islamic Finance

KUALA LUMPUR -- Asian countries have the potentials to expand the Islamic finance industry if they are aware of the long-term shifts in global economy activity, said Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Shah. He said the region, specifically the East and South-East Asia, are expected to contribute over 50 per cent of global growth through 2018. "On average, the region is expected to grow almost twice as fast as the rest of the world over the next decade," he said. Sultan Nazrin, who is the royal patron for Malaysia's Islamic Finance Initiative, said this at the 11th Kuala Lumpur Islamic Finance Forum 2014 (KLIFF 2014) with the theme 'Maturing Towards a Sustainable and Globalised Market' here Tuesday.

Maybank Islamic Generates RM1 Bln Deposit Growth For PMA-i

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maybank Islamic Bhd has generated close to RM1 billion in deposit growth for its Premier Mudharabah Account-i (PMA-i) in six months, following the launch of the Save & Drive Deposit Campaign in April. The year-long campaign, which ends on March 31 next year, was initiated to drive the deposit account growth in the account which pays an attractive monthly dividend of up to 1.0 per cent. Head of Maybank Community Financial Services (CFS) Malaysia, Hamirullah Borhan said in a statement here Tuesday, the bank is committed to serving the needs of its Small-and-Medium Enterprise (SME) and Business Banking (BB) customers, as well as growing deposit growth.

M'sia Smelting Posts Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Of RM9.25 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Smelting Corp Bhd posted a pre-tax profit of RM9.25 million in its third quarter (Q3) ended Sept 30, 2014 compared with a pre-tax loss of RM13.43 million in the same period last year. Revenue for the quarter rose to RM528.92 million from RM420.33 million in the same period previously. Earnings per share stood at 4.7 sen against a loss per share of 22.3 sen previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, the company said the increase in revenue in the quarter reviewed was mainly due to higher sales quantity of refined tin and higher average tin prices in the quarter.

AirAsia X Achieves 24 Pct Growth In Q3's ASK

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia X Bhd achieved a 24 per cent growth in Available-Seat-Kilometres (ASK) to 6.36 million in the third quarter of 2014, despite significantly softer market conditions. In a statement here Monday, the carrier said the higher passenger growth was translated to above 80 per cent of the passenger load factor, as it continued to stimulate demand to fill up new capacity injected during the quarter. However, the capacity added in the third quarter was lower than earlier planned.

AirAsia Group Load Factor Rises 2 Pct In Q3

KUALA LUMPUR -- The AirAsia Group recorded a two per cent increase in load factor to 78 per cent in the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2014 versus the same period last year. AirAsia Bhd, in its preliminary operating statistics released Monday, said at the group level, number of passengers carried increased by one per cent to RM10.7 million while capacity dropped one per cent, year-on-year (y-o-y). The low-cost carrier said group fleet size now stood at 171 aircraft. For domestic operations, AirAsia Bhd said the percentage of seats filled was unchanged at 77 per cent in the quarter under review.

MAHB: Passenger Movements Up 0.1 Pct In Oct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) said passenger movements for October 2014 increased marginally by 0.1 per cent to 6.831 million compared with 6.827 million in the same month a year earlier. "This is an improvement after a contraction of 5.0 per cent in August and a contraction of 1.8 per cent in September," said MAHB in a statement Monday. It added that the international sector grew by 0.7 per cent while domestic sector declined by 0.5 per cent over the same period last year. "North Asia, Middle East and Europe sectors recorded a decline in traffic compared with last year," it said.

Sept IPI Up 5.4 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Industrial Production Index (IPI) grew by 5.4 per cent in September 2014 compared with the same month last year, contributed by the positive growth in all three indices of manufacturing, mining and electricity. In a statement here Tuesday, the Statistics Department said manufacturing rose 4.7 per cent, mining 7.1 per cent and electricity 6.5 per cent. The IPI for August remained unchanged at 6.5 per cent year-on-year, it said. On a monthly basis, the September IPI had decreased by 0.2 per cent due to decreases in two of the indices -- manufacturing (-1.9 per cent) and electricity (-0.9 per cent).

Sept Manufacturing Sales Up 4.1 Pct To RM55.4 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The sales value for the manufacturing sector in September 2014 rose by 4.1 per cent (RM2.2 billion) to RM55.4 billion from the RM53.2 billion reported in the same month a year ago. On a month-on-month basis, the sales value decreased by 0.6 per cent (RM400 million) compared with the preceding month. Year-on-year, the increase in sales value for the month under review was contributed by 65 of 138 industries surveyed, the Department of Statistics Malaysia said in its Monthly Manufacturing Statistics here Tuesday.

Ford Oct Sales Increase By 2 Pct To 1,209 Units

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ford's October sales rose by two per cent from the previous month to 1,209 units, led by continuing strength in demand for the Ranger, EcoSport, Kuga and Fiesta nameplates. In a statement here Tuesday, Ford Motor Co Managing Director, Malaysia and Asia-Pacific Emerging Markets, David Westerman, said its year-to-date sales had now risen 28 per cent to 11,426 units putting the company on pace for a record sales year in Malaysia. "We're excited to be continuing our Malaysia growth plan with each new global Ford vehicle that we introduce, providing customers with even more choice," he said in a statement here Tuesday.

Astro Eyes Higher Revenue Next Year

PETALING JAYA -- Astro Holdings Bhd (Astro) expects its business to grow next year on the back of increased revenue from its various operations. "The other lines of revenue are sales of content and programming rights not only within Malaysia but in the region," Chief Executive Officer Datuk Rohana Rozhan told reporters on the sidelines of Astro's launch of 10 new channels here Tuesday. Rohana said subscriptions are the main contributor to Astro's revenue, with advertising at between six to seven per cent of total revenue.

Natural Rubber Output Up 20.5 Pct In Sept

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's natural rubber (NR) production in September 2014 rose 20.5 per cent or 10,242 tonnes to 60,187 tonnes compared to August 2014, the Statistics Department said. However, on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis, the production showed a decline of 16.7 per cent. In a statement here Tuesday, the department said the smallholdings sector contributed 90.5 per cent to total production, while the estate sector accounted for the remaining 9.5 per cent.

Takaful Contributions Set To Hit US$3.02 Bln This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Takaful Association forecast takaful contributions to increase to US$3.02 billion this year from US$2.44 billion last year, on the back of market penetration rate of 14 per cent, said chairman Zainudin Ishak. He said to meet the target, industry players needed to come out with more regular premium products such as protection, child education, retirement and medical. "With only 30-year experience, coupled with 10 per cent market share or maybe less than that, there is an upside for us to offer the regular premium products instead of single premium, which has 50 per cent market share for takaful sector," he told media briefing at the Takaful Rendezvous 2014 here Tuesday.

BMW Group Optimistic Of Higher Sales With New Mini 5-Door

KUALA LUMPUR -- BMW Group Malaysia, which unveiled its new Mini Cooper S five-door Wednesday, is confident of garnering higher sales as the new model is expected to boost demand. Managing Director Alan Harris said the new model, which has been just released, attracted quite an interest from customers. He however did not divulge details. "We have some orders in the bank. I can't give specific numbers. But we believe that this car will be very successful for us," he told reporters after the launch of new Mini Cooper S five-door here Wednesday.

Hap Seng Plantation's Pre-Tax Profit Falls 22 Pct In Q3

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hap Seng Plantations Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit declined 22 per cent to RM32.13 million for the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2014 from RM41.19 million in the same period last year. Revenue, however, grew 7.0 per cent to RM123.41 million from RM115.2 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday, the plantations company attributed the weaker pre-tax profit to higher production costs, while the better revenue was due to higher sales volume of crude palm oil.

Gas M'sia Posts Higher Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Of RM69.38 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gas Malaysia Bhd posted a higher pre-tax profit of RM69.38 million in the third quarter (Q3) ended Sept 30, 2014 compared with RM59.13 million in the corresponding period last year. Revenue for the quarter rose to RM734.40 million from RM583.70 million the year before due to higher volume of gas sold and the upward revision of natural gas tariff. Basic earnings per share stood at 4.19 sen against 3.60 sen previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday, Gas Malaysia anticipates the increase in gas volume and number of customers to sustain in the remaining quarter of the financial year 2014.

Shell Posts Pre-Tax Loss Of RM212.65 Mln In Q3

KUALA LUMPUR -- Shell Refining Company (Federation of Malaya) Bhd recorded a pre-tax loss of RM212.65 million in its third quarter ended Sept 30, 2014 compared with a pre-tax profit of RM51.83 million in the same period last year. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday, the company attributed the loss to weak refinery margins, and said its after-tax loss of RM199.8 million in the period was due to stockholding losses of RM153.7 million. Revenue for the quarter dwindled to RM3.44 billion from RM3.94 billion in the same period last year due to decreasing product prices since early July this year.

Digital News Asia Gets RM1 Mln Funding From Equity Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- Digital News Asia (DNA), an independent technology news portal, has secured RM1 million in seed funding from IdeaRiverRun (IRR), a private equity fund. The investment will be used to fund DNA's regional expansion in Southeast Asia, further build its team and develop new products and channels, it said in a joint statement here Monday. DNA (www.digitalnewsasia.com) was established to act as a catalyst for the growth and development of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector in Southeast Asia by providing insightful and analytical coverage of the ecosystem in the region.

M'sia Can Lead Think Tank Initiative Under OIC - GCC

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has the potentials to lead a think tank initiative under the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said Federation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Chambers Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Secretary-General, Abderrahim Hassan Naqi. He said Malaysia has the experience and economic stability to lead the think tank. "The country should lead but with the condition that the think tank is independent and has good and strong financial support," he told reporters at the OIC Round Table Talk here Monday.

Demand For Halal Products To Drive Muslim Economies : GCC

KUALA LUMPUR -- The huge demand for halal products would ramp up the outlook for Muslim countries' economies in the future, said Federation of Gulf Cooperation Council Chambers Secretary General, Abderrahim Hassan Naqi. He said currently half the food, cosmetics and medicines sold in Muslim countries are imported from non-Muslim countries. "The opportunities are quite huge for Islamic (Muslim) countries to tap into because we have many resources such as oil, gas and mining but we are hindered by politics," he told reporters at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Round Table Talk here Monday.

Khazanah Open To Proposals For MAS Restructuring

PORT KLANG -- Khazanah Nasional Bhd is open to receive proposals and ideas from various quarters for the restructuring of Malaysian Airline System Bhd (MAS). Khazanah Deputy Chairman Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop said the company was prepared to listen and weigh the ideas or proposals so that the restructuring process could proceed smoothly and successfully to enable MAS to get back to become the national airline that is the pride of the rakyat. Besides being a symbol of national pride, he said Khazanah also wanted to turn around MAS to profitability as well as enabling it to provide huge benefits in the nation's tourism and trade sectors.

TPP Negotiations To Enter Final Phase Early Next Year

From Azlina Aziz

BEIJING -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said that all 12 countries involved in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) have agreed for the final round of negotiations to be held early next year. Leaders involved in the TPP negotiations, being held on the sidelines of the ongoing Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Beijing, however, agreed that the negotiations were subject to several factors. The meeting was chaired by US President Barack Obama. "I informed them that we have several sensitive areas which are close to our internal policies. Top among them is the Bumiputera agenda and government-owned companies. We want the 12 countries in the TPP to allow flexibility for Malaysia's request to be considered," he told Malaysian journalists Monday night.

Internet Bandwidth Consumption Grows 105 Pct In 1st Half 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- The aggregated Internet bandwidth consumption in the country grew by 105 per cent to 306,970 Mega bits per second (Mbps) in the first half of this year, the Malaysian Internet Exchange (MyIX) said. MyIX is a non-profit organisation initiated by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) in September 2006 and ran by Persatuan Pengendali Internet Malaysia. MyIX Chairman Chiew Kok Hin described the growth as exponential compared with 349,277 Mbps for the whole of 2013, he said at a media workshop themed 'Let's Talk Internet' organised by MCMC and MyIX here Tuesday.

Casio Makes Official Entry Into M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- Consumer electronics manufacturer, Casio Computer Co Ltd, made its official entry into Malaysia today, through its new subsidiary Casio Malaysia Sdn Bhd. Casio Malaysia Managing Director, Hiroyuki Sezai, said the official introduction of Casio Computer to Malaysia followed launches in Singapore and Jakarta earlier this year. "This is keeping with the brand's rapid expansion throughout South-East Asia. Our goal is to immediately begin selling products that meet the needs of Malaysians with target sales of five billion yen in 2016 (100 yen = RM2.88)," Sezai said at the official opening of Casio Malaysia Sdn Bhd here Wednesday.

Q3 Was Challenging For Businesses In Asia-Pacific - Survey

KUALA LUMPUR -- The third quarter of 2014 was a challenging time for businesses in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the Global Economic Conditions Survey (GECS). The survey of finance professionals around the world was carried out jointly by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA). In the quarter, the survey found that overall, the region suffered a significant loss of confidence after nine months of relative buoyancy, with only 15 per cent of respondents reporting confidence gained, against 48 per cent who reported losses. "Tightening conditions are, to some extent, to blame for the recent poor confidence readings," the ACCA said a statement here Thursday.

Pos M'sia Launches Extension Of Online Shopping

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pos Malaysia Bhd launched its latest extension of online service portfolio, EziPoz, to enable customers to shop directly from over 305,000 US online merchants. Group Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Iskandar Mizal Mahmood, said the latest initiative was in collaboration with Singapore Post. "This new service will complement our mail segment following declining usage of mail service. It is a current worldwide trend," he told reporters here Thursday.

Pos M'sia Submits Proposal For Fuel Subsidy Rationalisation Plan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pos Malaysia Bhd has submitted the request for proposal to the government to manage the national fuel subsidy rationalisation programme, said Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Iskandar Mizal Mahmood. Speaking to reporters Thursday, he said the company remained hopeful of being selected for the contract. "We are awaiting the answer from the government. They are evaluating it right now," Iskandar told reporters after the launch of Pos Malaysia's latest online service portfolio, EziPoz, Thursday.

Zilzar.com Aims To Boost Presence In More Countries

By Nuramalina Ebrahim

KUALA LUMPUR -- Zilzar.com, the world's first global Muslim lifestyle marketplace e-commerce platform, targets to boost its presence in more countries such the United Kingdom and Turkey by next year, said Chief Executive Officer of Zilzar Tech Sdn Bhd, Rushdi Siddiqui. He said the company's vision was to have a halal ecosystem from a wider user base covering buyers, sellers, bloggers and entrepreneurs. The e-commerce platform encompasses 57 Muslim countries with a population of two billion, plus the 100 million Muslims outside the Muslim world."We are embarking on something ambitious globally. We want to address all the needs of the stakeholders in the Muslim life space," he said at the Fifth Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) World Biz Trade Exhibition and Conference here Thursday.

UNEP, RSPO Ink MoU To Raise Global Awareness Of Sustainable Palm Oil

KUALA LUMPUR -- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that aims to raise the global awareness of sustainable palm oil. The MoU commits both UNEP and RSPO to a framework of cooperation and understanding, and facilitates collaboration in regard to the transformation of markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm. It aims to generate market demand for an important commodity that has the potential to play a key role in preserving Earth's biodiversity, according to a joint statement by UNEP and RSPO Friday.

Decline In Savings Not Worrying As Investments Remain Strong - Zeti

KUALA LUMPUR -- The decline in savings among businesses and individuals is not at worrying levels as investment activities are still strong, Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said. She said the decline translated into narrowing surplus in the balance of payment which accounted for three per cent of the gross national income. "Yes, we are seeing some moderation in savings activity but this has not put a limit on access to funding. "This is proven by investments that continue to grow significantly," she told a media briefing on the country's third quarter Gross Domestic Product (GDP) performance here Friday.

AirAsia Says Ready To Lower Fares To Stimulate Market

SEPANG -- Low-cost airline AirAsia says it is ready to lower its air fares to stimulate the market and contribute to greater passenger volume. AirAsia Group Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said it would be a 'huge bonus' for the airline if the fuel price drops further next year, as it would cut costs. "However, oil prices change so quickly, let's see what happens. The message is that we want to lower fares and stimulate the market. "If the fuel price continues to drop, we may also get rid of the fuel surcharge to get more people to fly," he told a press conference after the ground breaking of AirAsia's new headquarters here Friday.

Two Starwood Hotels Listed In Reader's Choice Awards 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- Luxury and lifestyle travel magazine Conde Nast Traveler recently listed two Starwood Hotels & Resorts in Malaysia -- the Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu and The Andaman, A Luxury Collection Resort -- in the 'Best in World' Reader's Choice Awards 2014. In a statement here Monday, Starwood Hotels and Resorts Malaysia said the Le Meridien Kota Kinabalu was voted under the category of Best Hotels in Southeast Asia and The Andaman, A Luxury Collection Resort under the Top 20 Resorts in Asia category.

BMW Launches 320i Sports Sedan

KUALA LUMPUR -- BMW Group Malaysia (BMW) has introduced the new BMW 320i Sport Edition, the latest addition to the premium sports sedan segment. BMW Managing Director Alan Harris said the individual elements of the new edition were perfectly matched to create a distinctive character that was simply unmistakable in this new variant of the BMW 3 Series. "The availability of such designs creates a clear differentiation between the model series, enabling drivers to tailor their car to their design preferences and personal lifestyle," he said in a statement here Monday.

SEDA Hosts Inaugural Open Day On Feed-In-Tariff Scheme

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) on Saturday hosted its inaugural Open Day for the public to have face-to-face discussions on the feed-in-tariff (FiT) mechanism. SEDA Chairman Datuk Yee Moh Chai said in his opening speech that the purpose of the Open Day was to enable the public to find out more about the FiT for solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for homeowners. "Please note that SEDA has never guaranteed solar PV quota to any applicant or PV company, and yet there are unscrupulous people who are making easy money out of the public with fabricated information," he said here Tuesday. SEDA will hold two more Open Days -- at Sunway Hotel in Seberang Jaya, Penang on Nov 15, 2014, and at Pacific Sutera Harbour Resort in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah on Dec 6, 2014.

Khazanah's Avicennia Capital Taps Ankel As Group CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Alexander Ankel has joined insurance-based Avicennia Capital Sdn Bhd as group chief executive officer, corporate sector sources said. Avicennia Capital is Khazanah Nasional Bhd's insurance holding company which owns two insurance operations in Malaysia, Sun Life Malaysia Assurance Bhd and Sun Life Malaysia Takaful Bhd, while in Turkey it owns Acibadem Saglik ve Hayat Sigorta A.S. As group CEO, Ankel will take charge of Avicennia Capital's continued business expansion into the insurance space and lead the integration process, the source said.

'PB FD Xtra Campaign' Now Offers Higher Interest/Profit Rates

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public Bank Bhd (PBB) and Public Islamic Bank Bhd (PIBB) have revised the promotional interest/profit rates for the 'PB FD Xtra Campaign' to up to 4.28 per cent per annum, effective Oct 27, 2014. Earlier, the banks offered interest/profit rates of 4.08 per cent per year. In a statement, Public Bank said the campaign period has been further extended to Feb 28, 2015, from Dec 31, 2014. "The campaign, which aims to reward customers with higher promotional profit rates, is open to the banks' new and existing individual and non-individual customers," it said in a statement here Tuesday.

PNB Darby Park Gets CrescentRating's Highest Muslim-Friendly Rating

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- PNB Darby Park Executive Suites has been awarded a Muslim-friendly rating of 7 by CrescentRating. It is the highest rating for hotels and signifies that the hotel specialises in catering to halal/Muslim-friendly requirements. Located in Malaysia's business and shopping district of Kuala Lumpur, the PNB Darby Park Executive Suites is a four-star serviced apartment hotel popular with business and leisure travellers. It has been adding services and facilities to cater to Muslim guests, and its two main restaurants, 10 Binjai and The 39 Restaurant, have been halal-certified by JAKIM since 2007 and offer guests plenty of local and international halal dining options.

Naza Brabus Opens RM8 Mln Showroom, Performance Centre

KUALA LUMPUR -- Naza-Brabus Motor Sdn Bhd opens its RM8 million showroom and performance centre in Glenmarie, Shah Alam here Tuesday. In a statement here Tuesday, vice President of 4-Wheel Division of Naza World Group of Companies David Hector Ratnaike said the new showroom will display models such as Brabus ML WideStar, Brabus iBusiness S class and Brabus SLK.

Jabra Sees New Trend In Fitness Tracking Devices In M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- Audio solutions manufacturer Jabra Malaysia sees a growing trend in wireless fitness tracking devices in Malaysia. "We notice that people are getting more health-conscious and consumers definitely want to be healthier, and we see this as an up and coming market here," said its Sales Director for Central Asia Ann Goh after the launch of the Jabra Sport Pulse Wireless headphones. The lightweight headphones feature Dolby quality sound and an in-ear heart rate monitor. Goh said Jabra is looking at 10 to 20 per cent market growth by year-end for the new product.

JIPS - Policing The Police

By Mohd Azhar Ibrahim

KUALA LUMPUR -- On July 25, 2014, Bukit Aman had established the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) Department of Integrity and Standard Compliance or Jabatan Integriti dan Pematuhan Standard (JIPS) to enhance the integrity of police personnel and ensure they comply with standard operating procedures when carrying out their duty and responsibilities.

JIPS Director Datuk Zubaidah Md. Ismail, with the assistance of Deputy Directors Datuk Abdul Ghafar Rajab (Integrity) and Datuk Ahmad Safian Md. Yassin (Compliance) will monitor and ensure that all police officers and personnel comply with the integrity guidelines set by the PDRM.

"My task is to make the public feel comfortable with the police and feel confident that their complaints and police reports will be handled swiftly, professionally and efficiently," Zubaidah said to Bernama during a JIPS visit to the NKRA Against Corruption recently.

The department aim to clean up the police force and will come down hard on rogue officers or those charged with dereliction of duty.

The JIPS is fashioned after the New York Police Department's (NYPD) Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB), which regularly conducts random and targeted integrity tests on its officers to keep them constantly on their toes.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who paid a visit to the NYPD recently, said that the IAB's proactive approach to corruption control and investigations is what really sets it apart.

Zahid said he had held talks with former IAB chief Charles Campisi to get the NYPD to share with the PDRM its experience and best practices in fighting corruption and keeping its officers in check.

JIPS Director Datuk Zubaidah Md. Ismail (third, right) and Deputy Directors Datuk Abdul Ghafar Rajab (second, right) and Datuk Ahmad Safian Md. Yassin (rear, second right) during a courtesy visit to the NKRA Against Corruption. -fotoBernama

According to Zubaidah, JIPS receives about 40 complaints a day. These complaints of delays and dereliction of duty give the perception that there is widespread corruption in the force, when in fact; they are issues that relate to inefficiency.

Zubaidah personally goes through the department's Facebook page where members of the public can air their grouses with the police.

"We want to improve the front liners – those police officers on the beat, in patrol cars, controlling the traffic, and manning the counters at the police stations," she said.

The JIPS director frequently goes round incognito to check up on how these police officers are doing.

There are suggestions that instead of an in-house unit, the PDRM should consider having an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) – to monitor and enhance police integrity and performance.

However, Bukit Aman thinks that by having highly experienced police officers who are intimately familiar with PDRM's work culture, the JIPS is best equipped to work out how to identify and collect evidence against venal fellow officers, and mete out the necessary criminal or disciplinary processes.

Nevertheless, PDRM maintains an open-door policy. The JIPS will work closely with the MACC's Anti-Corruption Advisory Board and the Consultation and Corruption Prevention Panel to ensure the effectiveness of its integrity enhancement programme.

The department is empowered to raid police stations and conduct random tests to catch crooked cops.

"This is a hot seat. You are policing the police – you are going to generate a lot of heat in the process," Zubaidah said.

Ironically, her unpopularity will be the measure of her success in achieving the department's key performance index (KPI).

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

BURSA: FBM KLCI Uncertain, Can Rebound On Window Dressing

KUALA LUMPUR -- The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) trend is uncertain next week but could rebound on window dressing, a dealer said.

Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew said year-end window dressing activities, which were expected to occur within the next two weeks, could lift the local stock market to a near high or a new high.

“We expect a strong rebound. It (Window dressing) should happen no later than the end of this month,” he told Bernama.

On the oil and gas related counters, he said the downtrend in the counters is expected to continue as there is no certainty in the level of crude oil bottom price.

“We cannot predict when the downtrend will end but the longer it drags down, the sharper the rebound will be,” he added.

The weekly turnover contracted to 9.95 billion shares worth RM8.98 billion from 11.20 billion shares worth RM10.53 billion last week.

Main market volume decreased to 5.79 billion units valued at RM7.98 billion from 7.70 billion units valued at RM9.53 billion previously.

FOREX: Ringgit Likely To Trade Lower Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The stronger US dollar and weak growth prospect for Malaysia would likely put pressure on the ringgit against the greenback next week, a dealer said.

United Overseas Bank (Malaysia) Bhd, in its research note, said the weak ringgit could contribute to a higher inflationary environment.

“As such, we still see some risk of a 25 basis points interest rate increase in the first quarter next year,” it said.

Currently, the benchmark interest rate stood at 3.25 per cent.

For the week just ended, the ringgit was traded easier against the US dollar at 3.3460/3480 from last Friday’s 3.3450/3470.

The local market was mainly dominated by ‘dollar play’ during the week, shifting demand away from the ringgit.

The ringgit further declined after the announcement of the third-quarter growth of 5.6 per cent on Friday. The ringgit was traded mostly higher against other major currencies.

It rose against the Singapore dollar to 2.5794/5817 from 2.5838/5864 on Friday, appreciated against the yen to 2.8768/8793 from 2.9034/9056, and strengthened against the British pound to 5.2465/2503 from 5.2931/2976.

The ringgit, however, fell against the euro to 4.1705/1740 from 4.1458/1493 previously.

Money Market: Short-Term Rates Likely To Remain Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain stable next week on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention in the money market to absorb surplus liquidity, a dealer said.

A dealer said the central bank is expected to continue to call for money market tenders on a daily basis, comprising conventional and Islamic, including commodity murabahah programme, range maturity auctions and repo tenders, on a daily basis.

For the week just ended, BNM intervened daily to flush the system of surplus.

On a weekly basis, the liquidity surplus in the conventional system increased to RM13.46 billion from RM12.93 billion last Friday, while the excess in the Islamic system declined to RM3.2 billion from RM3.02 billion.

The overnight Islamic reference rate was at 3.22 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates pegged at 3.27 per cent, 3.31 per cent and 3.35 per cent, respectively.
The benchmark three-month KLIBOR inched up to 3.78 per cent from last week's 3.77 per cent.

KLCI Futures Could Rebound In Tandem With Cash Market

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives trend is uncertain next week but could rebound in tandem with cash market, dealers said.

Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew attributed this to year-end window dressing within the next two weeks.

"We expect a strong rebound that could lift the benchmark index to a near high or a new high," he told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, November 2014 lost 9.5 points to 1,815.5, December 2014 fell 21.5 points to 1,814.5, March 2015 erased 13 points to 1,813 and June 2015 shed 12.5 points to 1,813.5.

Turnover for the week shrank to 27,396 lots against last week's 28,512 lots while open interest trimmed to 27,452 contracts from 28,878 contracts previously.

For the week just ended, the benchmark FBM KLCI eased 10.4 points to finish at 1,813.79 compared with the previous week.

CPO Futures To Be Bullish Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures prices are expected to be bullish next week in anticipation of strong export data, said Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Derivative Product Specialist David Ng.

He said the data would be released next Monday by Cargo Surveyors Intertek Testing Services and Societe Generale de Surveillance.

"CPO futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade between RM2,150 a tonne and RM2,300 a tonne next week," he told Bernama.

The narrowing price differences between soy oil and palm oil will continue to put pressure on CPO prices next week, Ng said, adding that however, the weakening ringgit would help limit the downside for CPO.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, November 2014 slipped RM1 to RM2,191 a tonne, December 2014 fell RM13 to RM2,188 a tonne, January 2015 dipped RM8 to RM2,204 a tonne and February 2015 dropped RM9 to RM2,215 a tonne.

Weekly turnover decreased to 213,900 lots from 263,151 lots last week, while open interest dwindled to 261,299 contracts from 289,165 contracts, previously.

On the physical market, November South ended RM20 lower at RM2,210 per tonne.

Rubber Market To Trade Mixed Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market trend is expected to trade mixed next week due to the downtrend on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange as well as the weaker yen, a dealer said.

The dealer said another contributing factor would likely come from the low trending market in crude oil prices that was also predicted to observe a mixed trend next week.

"From my observation the local rubber market price will start lower from Monday, continuing from Friday's closing price, but will see a mix market by the end of next week," she told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 went up 14 sen to 512.00 sen a kg and latex-in-bulk rose 5.5 sen to 407.50 sen a kg.

The unofficial closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 increased 8 sen to 510.00 sen a kg and latex-in-bulk rose 2.5 sen to 407.00 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Likely To See Little Change Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to see little change next week amid stable interest rates, a dealer said.

During the week, the KLIBOR futures market was traded only on Thursday.

Open interest widened to 2,970 from 2,670 contracts last Friday.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, November 2014, December 2014, January 2015 and February 2015 stood at 96.21, 96.22, 96.18 and 96.20, respectively.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR inched up 0.01 per cent to 3.78 per cent.

Tin Price To Trade Between US$19,800 & US$20,000

KUALA LUMPUR -- The tin price on the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to trade between US$19,800 and US$20,000 a tonne next week, supported by overseas demand, said a dealer.

He said European and Japanese traders were expected to help sustain the metal price at this level as sellers would be reluctant to sell below this level.

For the week just-ended, the KLTM moved between US$19,900 and US$20,200 a tonne, mostly influenced by the trend on the London Metal Exchange (LME) with trading dominated by Japanese, European and local buyers.

Weekly turnover rose to 263 lots from 246 lots last week.

The premium between the KLTM and the LME widened to US$385 a tonne from US$285 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures To Remain Bearish Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Trading in gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely remain weak next week due to flagging demand, dealers said.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Lim Eng Wee said gold prices were expected to remain under pressure on improving US jobs data and a stronger US dollar as well as falling crude oil prices.

He said the healthier US jobs data had undermined gold's appeal as a hedge against economic uncertainty while a stronger greenback made the dollar-denominated precious metal more expensive for investors of other currencies.

The drop in oil prices also weighed heavily on gold demand as an inflation hedge, he told Bernama.

However, he said the Eurozone saw deflation as a greater threat than inflation in the euro area next year and expected investors concern to switch to risk of deflation and pressure gold prices further.

Back home, the local gold market experienced range-bound trading throughout the week.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, November 2014 rose 14 ticks to RM124.10 a gramme while December 2014, January 2015 and February 2015 increased 20 ticks each to RM124.60, RM124.90 and RM125.20 a gramme, respectively.

Total volume fell to 1,130 lots worth RM14.10 million from to 1,327 lots worth RM15.79 million transacted last week.

Open interest on Friday reduced to 2,023 contracts from 2,099 contracts, previously.