MALAYSIAeBiz

BERNAMA WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP 9 - 13 FEBRUARY 2015

February 13, 2015

This Week's Highlight : Malaysian Economy Grows 6 Per Cent In 2014

POSITIVE…"Inflation is projected to be lower in 2015, on expected lower oil prices and further providing support for private consumption activities." - Bank Negara Governer Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz . –File pic

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian economy grew by 6 per cent in 2014 as against 4.7 per cent in 2013, Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said Thursday. In the fourth quarter, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 5.8 per cent compared to 5.6 per cent in the third quarter of the year, mainly driven by stronger private sector spending and domestic consumption, she said in in announcing the fourth quarter GDP growth results here.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

Wan Zulkiflee Appointed Petronas President/CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has announced the appointment of Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin as Petronas President and Chief Executive Officer effective April 1, 2015 until March 31, 2018. Wan Zulkiflee takes over from Tan Sri Shamsul Azhar Abbas, whose contract term ending Monday has been extended to March 31, 2015. In a statement here Monday, Najib said the government is grateful to Shamsul Azhar for his contributions to Petronas since assuming the post in 2010.

Tuesday

BNM's Int'l Reserves At RM386.5 Bln As Of End-Jan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) international reserves amounted to RM386.5 billion (equivalent to US$110.6 billion) as at Jan 30, 2015. The central bank, in a statement here Tuesday, said the reserves position was sufficient to finance 7.9 months of retained imports and was 1.1 times the short-term external debt. The bank said the main components of the international reserves were foreign currency reserves (US$101.4 billion), International Monetary Fund position (US$0.9 billion), Special Drawing Rights (US$1.9 billion), gold (US$1.4 billion) and other reserve assets (US$5.0 billion).

Wednesday

Cheaper Electricity From March 1 To June 30

PUTRAJAYA -- The power tariff for consumers in Peninsular Malaysia will be reduced by 2.25 sen/KWH from March 1 to June 30 this year following a review of fuel and other generation costs. Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili said this was decided during the Cabinet meeting Wednesday after it was informed that the Imbalance Cost Pass-Through (ICPT) savings could be passed on to consumers in the form of cheaper tariff amounting to RM726.99 million after taking into account the drop in global fuel prices and generation costs.

Thursday

Najib: Further Asean Integration Means Advent Of New Economic Power

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Thursday said further integration in ASEAN will lead to the world witnessing the emergence of a new economic power in Southeast Asia. "I say new, because although our economies have been trade and commercial hubs for centuries, we are today creating an economic union unlike anything since the days of empire," he said. In realising that, the Prime Minister said ASEAN's priority must be to ensure that integration leads to equitable wealth creation and distribution as well as deepen financial integration and inclusion.

Friday

1MDB Settles RM2 Bln Loan In Full

KUALA LUMPUR -- 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) Friday confirmed that it has settled, in full, a RM2 billion loan owed by its operating subsidiary to Malaysian banks. The loan was settled in advance of the due date, per the terms of the loan facility agreement, its President and Group Executive Director, Arul Kanda, said in a statement here. "With the settlement of this loan, I reaffirm 1MDB's commitment to continue meeting all our debt obligations as they become due," he said. 1MDB is a strategic development company wholly-owned by the Malaysian government.

SMEbrief

Study Reveals APAC Online Shoppers Reluctant To Buy From SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR -- There is a marked reluctance among online shoppers in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region to buy directly from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This is according to a research study into global consumer behaviour around cross-border e-commerce conducted by independent research firm Forrester Consulting and commissioned by FedEx Express. The study showed that 57 per cent of APAC respondents ranked buying direct from SMEs as their least-preferred business type for cross-border shopping, ranking it below multi-brand online marketplaces, brand or manufacturer websites and brick-and-mortar retailers.

PNS Plans To Help 320 Franchise Entrepreneurs This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perbadanan Nasional Bhd (PNS) plans to help at least 320 franchise entrepreneurs this year, said Managing Director Datuk Syed Kamarulzaman Syed Zainol Khodki Shahabudin. “This is a higher figure compared to the 295 franchise entrepreneurs we assisted in 2014. “We believe franchising is the way to improve the livelihoods of Malaysian franchisers, but doing it without knowledge would be a fruitless effort,” he told reporters at the ‘Leadership in a Chaotic World’ tea talk here Tuesday. The talk, presented by Oxford University Prof. Dr. Lalit Johri, is a collaboration between PNS Academy and the Oxford Business Alumni Kuala Lumpur.

M’sian Companies Urged To Participate In ASEAN SME Showcase

KUALA LUMPUR -- SME Corporation Malaysia has urged Malaysian companies, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to participate in the ASEAN SME Showcase and Conference 2015 from May 26-28. The highlight of the event, being held in conjunction with Malaysia’s Chairmanship of ASEAN 2015, is the business matching session, SME Corp Chairman, Tan Sri Mohamed Al Amin Abdul Majid said. “The business matching session will facilitate links among SMEs in ASEAN, forge strategic business partnerships between them, as well as spur the development of numerous business segments across the region,” he added in his welcoming remarks at the soft launch of the ASEAN SME Showcase and Conference 2015 here Wednesday.

PropUP Propertyupdate

Penang’s Residential Market Likely To Slowdown In Q2 2015

BUTTERWORTH -- The transaction volume of Penang’s residential market is likely to slow down in the second half of this year, amid cautious buying ahead of implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), says a property consultant. According to PA International Property Consultants (Penang) Sdn Bhd, the transaction volume is likely to decrease five to 10 per cent, but prices would be maintained.

BBCC Project To Include Sony’s ‘Zepp’ Live Event Hall

KUALA LUMPUR -- The proposed Bukit Bintang City Centre (BBCC) mixed development will include a 2,500 capacity live event hall under Sony’s ‘Zepp’ branding as its entertainment component. BBCC Development Sdn Bhd, a consortium partnership among UDA Holdings Bhd (UDA), Eco World Development Group Bhd (EcoWorld) and the Employees Provident Fund Board (EPF), Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Zepp Hall Network Inc (Zepp) for opportunities in the entertainment component of the BBCC project. Zepp is a subsidiary of Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc (Sony Music).

No More Cooling Measures In Property Sector - Minister

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government ministry will not impose any more cooling measures for the property sector for the rest of the year. “This is due to the current economy and challenges faced by the country. We have cooling measures at the moment, such as 70 per cent loan-to-value ratio and foreigners not being allowed to buy houses. As such, we will not be imposing anymore cooling measures,” its minister, Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan told reporters after attending the Greater KL and Malaysia Smart City Conference 2015 here Thursday.

REHDA Targets Over RM130 Mln Sales At Mapex 2015

GEORGE TOWN -- Though, the Malaysian property has softened since mid-2014, the Real Estate and Housing Developers’ Association Malaysia (REHDA) Penang branch is eyeing more than RM130 million in sales transactions at the four-day Malaysia Property Exhibition (Mapex) here from Feb 21. Chairman Datuk Jerry Chan said now is the best time for buyers to purchase properties as the price has stablised with no more wild fluctuations.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 493

Losers - 303

Not Traded - 632

Unchanged - 343

Value - 2329590387

Volume - 19631828

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.5780	3.5810
EUR	4.0879	4.0917
GBP	5.5048	5.5108
100 YEN	2.0087	2.0115
SGD	2.6371	2.6397

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

BURSA: Bursa M'sia Snaps Losing Streak, O & G Stocks Dominate Trading

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia closed on a firm note on Friday, snapping a four-day losing streak, boosted by persistent buying momentum amid positive market sentiment. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished at its intra-day high of 1,800.95, up 11.88 points after slipping as low as 1,790.31 at one time. The key index broke past the 1,800-level just 10 minutes before trading closed, lifted by gains in small-capitalised stocks and blue-chips, mostly oil and gas-related counters.

Dealers said trading on Bursa and its regional peers was on an upside due to a rally in global oil prices, with the benchmark Brent crude oil hovering above US$59 in Asia Friday, following the overnight Russia-Ukraine ceasefire deal. This resulted into the domination of oil and gas-related counters in the list of most active stocks on the local bourse Friday. Advancers outnumbered decliners 493 to 303, while 343 counters were unchanged, 632 untraded and 12 others suspended. Total turnover expanded to 1.96 billion units valued at RM2.33 billion from the 1.68 billion units valued at RM2.51 billion transacted on Thursday. Main Market volume widened to 1.49 billion shares valued at RM2.23 billion from the 1.14 billion shares valued at RM2.4 billion on Thursday.

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed higher against the US dollar Friday as buying interest emerged in Asian emerging currencies including the ringgit, dealers said. At 5 pm, the local note was quoted at 3.5780/5810 against the greenback from Thursday's 3.6030/6060.

A dealer said investors started to move to Asian currencies on talk that the US Federal Reserve might increase its mid-year rates due to last week's robust U.S. non-farm payrolls data. However, he said, the gains were limited by concerns over further developments in Greek debt negotiations.

The local note was traded mixed against other currencies. Against the Singapore dollar, it strengthened to 2.6371/6397 from 2.6462/6487 previously and went up to 3.0087/0115 from 3.0113/0140 against the yen Thursday.

The local note ended lower against the pound at 5.5048/5108 from 5.4892/4952 Thursday, and against the euro it depreciated to 4.0879/0917 from 4.0793/0831 on Thursday.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates ended stable Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to reduce excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system eased to RM20.15 billion from RM22.12 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, the surplus dwindled to RM3.70 billion from RM8.01 billion.

In the morning, BNM called for four tenders -- one conventional money market, one repo, one Commodity Murabahah Programme and one Al-Wadiah. The central bank also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM20.1 billion and a RM3.7 billion Al-Wadiah money market tender, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.28 per cent, 3.32 per cent and 3.36 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Contracts End Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed untraded Friday. February 2015, March 2015, April 2015 and June 2015 remained pegged at 96.21, 96.24, 96.24 and 96.23 respectively. Open interest amounted at 1,520 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.82 per cent.

KLCI Futures Contracts End Higher, Track Cash Market

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI futures (FKLI) contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives rebounded to close higher Friday on gains in the underlying cash market.

At close, February 2015 rose 20 points to 1,801, March 2015 advanced 20.5 points to 1,800, while June 2015 and September 2015 improved 21 points each to 1,798.5 and 1,797.5 respectively.

Total turnover sank to 4,915 lots from Thursday's 9,706 lots while open interest narrowed to 38,029 contracts from 42,391 contracts previously. The underlying FBM KLCI finished 11.88 points higher at 1,800.95.

Perfect Rider Plus Plan To Boost Policy Holders For AmGeneral

PETALING JAYA -- AmGeneral Insurance Bhd expects its enhanced Perfect Rider plan, the Perfect Rider Plus, to add an additional 35 per cent to its number of policy holders by year-end. Senior Vice President of Agency Distribution, Grace Quah said on the back of this growth, the company also expects a RM10 million increase in premiums in the same period. She said the Perfect Rider plan had at present about 60,000 policy holders.

"This plan is more affordable with a premium of RM88, which is less than 25 sen per day," she she told reporters this after the launch of the Prefect Rider Plus plan here, Monday.

Gross Premiums For General Insurance Sector To Grow Between 5.5-6 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gross premiums for the general insurance sector are expected to grow between 5.5 per cent and six per cent this year, said General Insurance Association of Malaysia (PIAM) chairman Chua Seck Guan. Chua said despite headwinds in the global economic environment, the general insurance market would remain resilient due to strong domestic consumption. "The Malaysian market is unique because a sizeable chunk of its economy comes from domestic consumption," he told reporters here Monday. He said in 2014, gross written premiums increased by 5.9 per cent to RM17.09 billion compared with RM16.15 billion in 2013.

EPF Aims 26 Pct Foreign Assets In Three Years

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's largest retirement fund, the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), aims to increase foreign assets to 26 per cent of total assets within three years. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan said the increase was about one per cent annually from 23 per cent, at present. "The growth in foreign assets will be contributed by fixed income, equities and real estates," he told reporters here Monday.

SC Releases Guidelines On Regulation Of Markets For ECF Registration

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC), released Tuesday, the Guidelines on Regulation of Markets to introduce new requirements for the registration of equity crowdfunding (ECF) platforms and governance arrangement for its operators. In a statement here Tuesday, the SC said the guidelines are placed under Section 34 of the Capital Markets and Services Act 2007. "The guidelines require the operator's board of directors to be fit and proper and have the ability to operate an orderly, fair and transparent market. The guidelines entrust the operator with obligations to ensure issuers' compliance with platform rules in playing a critical role in ensuring confidence in the ECF platform," it added.

GHL Teams Up With Aim To Provide Cashless Collection Of Loan Repayments

PETALING JAYA -- GHL Systems Bhd (GHL) has signed an agreement with AIM Solutions Sdn Bhd (AIMSSB), a subsidiary of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia Sdn Bhd (AIMSB), to provide cashless collection of loan repayments by borrowers of Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM). "AIM, which was set up in 1987, provides micro financing to about 350,000 borrowers across Malaysia, including lower income and small entrepreneurs, to assist them in setting up their businesses," GHL said in a statement Wednesday. It said GHL and AIMSSB had developed an end-to-end system to facilitate the collection of loan repayments via MyDebit (previously known as e-Debit), or borrowers' ATM cards, to replace the present cash collection.

Abdul Wahid Hopes Bank Mandiri's Move To M'sia 1st Step Towards ABIF

KUALA LUMPUR -- Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar has expressed the hope that Indonesian bank, Bank Mandiri's move to have a presence in Malaysia, is a first step towards the Asean Banking Integration Framework (ABIF). "I am looking forward to more ASEAN banks operating in each other's country. With the banks operating across the region, we will see more business and people being integrated," he said. Speaking at a leadership discussion entitled,"Dynamics of Competitive Cooperation" in conjunction with the CAP10 Asean CEO Summit here, he said Asian banking had the biggest potential. "We have spoken about this for a long time.

'Cuti-Cuti BSN' Campaign Nets 16,000 New Account Holders

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Simpanan Nasional's (BSN) 'Cuti-Cuti BSN' campaign from Sept 8 to Dec 31, 2014 netted some 16,000 new account holders. The campaign, open to BSN account holders aged 13 and above, also resulted in over 72,000 applications to convert to BSN's Visa payWave debit card, the bank said in a statement here Thursday. BSN said 10 grand prize winners who made deposit transactions of over RM250,000 won a 5D/4N holiday package to Korea, and will visit Nami island, Petite France, the Museum of History and the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) studio. Meanwhile, 40 monthly winners, who made deposit transactions of up to RM80,000 and used their Visa payWave debit cards, were rewarded with a 3D/2N trip to Singapore that includes a visit to Universal Studios, Merlion Park and Istana Kampung Gelam.

DiGi FY14 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM2.65 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- DiGi.Com Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2014 increased to RM2.65 billion from RM2.14 billion registered a year ago. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, it said revenue rose RM7.02 billion from RM6.73 billion previously. Chief Executive Officer Lars Norling said the company's solid growth across revenue streams, particularly in Internet revenue, was attributable to its deep focus on quality of service and customer excellence.

PPSB Expects Slight Growth In Cargo Handling In 2014

GEORGE TOWN -- Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) expects better financial results for 2014 given the increase in container handling business last year. General Manager for Marine, Shahruddin Zakaria said 1.3 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) were handled last year. "We manage to reach 1.3 million TEUs last year from our initial forecast of 1.2 million and I believe we can record a slightly better result for 2014," he told reporters here Monday.

Dialog's Q2 Pre-Tax Profit Increases To RM107.03 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dialog Group Bhd's pre-tax profit for the second quarter ended Dec 31, 2014 rose to RM107.03 million from RM82.19 million in the same quarter a year ago. Revenue, however, fell to RM570.29 million from RM694.16 million previously due mainly to lower international revenue. "International revenue for the current quarter was reduced by 19 per cent against the same period last year. This is mainly due to slow activities in the engineering and construction sectors in Singapore, fabrication in Australia and New Zealand and lower sales of specialist products and services in India and Brunei," it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday.

M'sia's IPI Up 7.4 Pct In Dec 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) grew 7.4 per cent in December 2014 compared with the same month a year ago. "The increase was due to positive growth in all indices of manufacturing (7.8 per cent), mining (6.9 per cent) and electricity (3.0 per cent)," the Statistics Department said here Tuesday. The IPI in November 2014, however, was revised to 4.8 per cent, year-on-year. On a month-on-month basis, in seasonally adjusted terms, the IPI in December 2014 increased by 2.0 per cent due to increases in the manufacturing (3.6 per cent) and electricity (0.1 per cent) indices. The department said manufacturing output recorded strong growth by 7.8 per cent, year-on-year, for December 2014 after an increase of 3.9 per cent in November last year.

MDIC Targets RM439 Mln Revenue By Year-End

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia Deposit Insurance Corporation (MDIC) is targeting a revenue of RM439 million and operating expenses of RM109 million which will contribute to a net surplus of RM330 million this year. The corporation said the surplus in the Deposit Insurance Funds (DIFs) would amount to RM1.2 billion and the Takaful and Insurance Benefits Protection Funds (TIPFs) will total RM1.3 billion by year-end. "The DIFs and TIPFs are accumulated reserves to cover losses that may arise from providing protection to depositors and policy owners respectively," it said in a statement here Tuesday.

Palm Oil Stocks, Output & Exports Down In Jan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's palm oil stocks, output and exports fell in January 2015 from a month ago, according to the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB). In January, total palm oil stocks decreased 12.18 per cent to 1.77 million tonnes, from 2.01 million tonnes in December 2014. Of that, processed palm oil accounted for 888,996 tonnes and crude palm oil (CPO) at 881,303 tonnes, it said in a statement here Tuesday. In January, MPOB said CPO output declined 14.96 per cent to 1.16 million tonnes from 1.36 million tonnes in the previous month.

Ford Sales Achieves Record Sales In Jan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ford Motor Company (Ford) achieved record sales for its entire line-up in Malaysia in January as retail sales jumped 38 per cent, year-on-year, to 1,544 units. In a statement here Tuesday, Ford said the record sales were fuelled by the continuing demand for the Ranger pickup truck Fiesta and the EcoSport compact suburban utility vehicle. "The Ranger pickup continued to be our best-selling nameplate in Malaysia and delivered a record performance with retail sales surging 87 per cent, year-on-year, to 1,169 units. January also saw the opening of an upgraded Ford facility in Batu Pahat, Johor, which offers service, spare parts and sales under one roof," it said.

500,000 Visitors Expected At Puteri Harbour Theme Park This Year

JOHOR BAHARU -- TAR PH Holdings Sdn Bhd is targetting to attract 500,000 visitors to its RM110 million Puteri Harbour Theme Park this year. General Manager Fahruddin Najumudeen said the target was in line with the many activities lined up this year to lure tourists. “The activity will include mini performances by favourite kids character like ‘Bob The Builder’ which will start on Feb 19,” he told reporters in Nusajaya. Last year, 65 per cent of the visitors to the theme park comprised locals while foreign tourists from Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Hong Kong and China accounted for the remainder.

F&N’s Pre-Tax Profit Down 5.7 Pct In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Fraser & Neave Holdings Bhd’s (F&N) pre-tax profit was 5.7 per cent lower at RM81.24 million for the first quarter ended Dec 31, 2014 from RM86.13 million recorded in the same period of 2013. Revenue, however, increased 9.3 per cent to RM1.04 billion from RM947.76 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday, the carbonated drinks manufacturer said operating profit was sharply lower by RM15.9 million due to a lower sales volume and product mix, higher operational costs mainly due to higher logistics, warehousing and staff-related costs. “The current quarter’s earnings were further affected by the absence of one-off bad debt recovery of RM1.2 million in the corresponding quarter, as well as, receivables and cooler impairment charges of RM4.1 million in the current quarter on account of the East Coast floods,” F&N said.

Amway’s FY14 Pre-Tax Profit Down To RM134.61 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Amway (Malaysia) Holdings Bhd’s pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2014 declined to RM134.61 million from RM145.20 million recorded a year ago. Revenue, however, rose to RM855.80 million from RM834.22 million, due to positive momentum generated in the new performance year of the distributors commencing September, as well as the positive impact of sales and marketing programmes, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tueasday. The company’s basic earnings per share was slightly lower to 60.74 sen versus 66.32 sen previously.

Hartalega Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM69 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hartalega Holdings Bhd’s pre-tax profit was lower at RM69 million for the third quarter ended Dec 31, 2014 from RM74.67 million in the same period in 2013. Revenue was higher at RM286.41 million from RM267.82 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday, the nitrile gloves producer attributed the lower pre-tax profit to a reduction in operating profit margin partly due to an increase in electricity and natural gas cost, as well as start-up expenses for its next generation complex (NGC) project. The higher revenue, however, was due to the sales volume increase of of 7.0 per cent and the weakening of the ringgit.

Takaful’s Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM186.7 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Syarikat Takaful Malaysia Bhd’s pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2014 rose by 4.1 per cent to RM186.7 million due to lower management expenses. “It rose from RM179.3 million in the same period in 2013. However, our revenue dropped to RM1.65 billion from RM1.71 billion previously,” Tafakul said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday. It said for the fourth quarter, its pre-tax profit decreased to RM44.23 million from RM53.74 million in the same quarter a year earlier. “Revenue rose to RM401.49 million from RM378.50 million previously,” it said.

Westport’s FY14 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM578.781 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Westports Holdings Bhd’s pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2014 increased to RM578.781 million from RM517.008 million a year ago. However, revenue for the full year declined to RM1.562 billion from RM1.712 billion, Westports said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday. For fourth quarter (4Q14) ended Dec 31, 2014, the port operator’s pre-tax profit rose 8.1 per cent to RM142.168 million from RM131.497 million in the same quarter of last year, while revenue slipped to RM384.487 million from RM502.632 million. In a separate statement, Westports attributed the higher 4Q14 pre-tax profit to strong growth in operational revenue. Chief Executive Officer Ruben Emir Gnanalingam said the company had achieved its highest operational revenue, profit level and container throughput volume of 8.4 million Twenty-Foot Equivalent Unit (TEUs) last year.

DiGi.Com Expects Stronger Demand For Mobile Internet In M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- DiGi.Com Bhd (DiGi) expects to see a stronger demand for mobile internet in Malaysia with Internet subscribers growing by 31 per cent to 6.4 million, year-on-year, from a stronger customer base of 11.4 million in 2014. During a conference call here Monday, Chief Executive Officer Lars Norling said Malaysians were increasingly spending more time on the social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. "We will strengthen our infrastructure capabilities to support the best Internet experience and deliver service excellence to our customers via DiGi's 'Let's Inspire' key propositions.

Kestrel Airlines, Harmony Harvest Team Up To Boost State Aviation

IPOH -- The strategic partnership between Ipoh-based Kestrel Airlines Sdn Bhd and China's Harmony Harvest Investment Holdings Ltd will boost Perak's tourism industry. As a result of the partnership, Perak will be made the aviation hub for several destinations. Describing the collaboration as an effort by the state government to make Perak the aviation hub for several destinations and spur the growth of the tourism industry, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said the partnership would involve 36 Airbus and Boeing planes. "We expect to get more tourists from China, Hong Kong, Macau, as well as, other countries," he told reporters here Monday.

Distributive Trade Sector Up 7.3 Pct In Q4

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's distributive trade sector increased further by 7.3 per cent year-on-year to RM244.07 billion for the fourth quarter 2014. In a statement here Tuesday, the Statistics Department said the increase was propelled by the retail trade sub-sector (11 per cent), motor vehicles (7.3 per cent) and wholesale trade (4.8 per cent). "On a quarterly basis, sales value showed an increase of 1.6 per cent," it said. The total number of persons engaged in this sector was 1.6 million persons with an increase of 1.8 per cent or 28,371 persons as compared with the same quarter of the previous year. On a quarterly basis, the number of persons engaged rose by 0.6 per cent or 9,894 persons.

Global Oil Price Plunge Will Not Affect AEC Implementation

KUALA LUMPUR -- The plunge in global oil prices will not impact the implementation of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), said Deputy Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Ir Hamim Samuri. He said plans for ASEAN to declare itself as a single economic community were moving ahead with speed. "We are convinced that even the global slump in oil prices will not have an adverse effect towards the realisation of the AEC," he said at Affin Hwang Capital Conference Series 2015 here Tuesday.

Cyient LTD To Invest RM100K For Uniten Smart Grid Tech

KUALA LUMPUR -- Cyient Limited, a global provider of engineering, data analytics, network and operations solutions, will invest RM100,000 initially to provide smart grid technologies to Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten). Smart grid is a form of electricity network utilising digital technology and connects suppliers, distributors and consumers. Asia Pacific Cyient Ltd Vice-President Sanjay Krishna said the increasing demand for electricity in Malaysia and consumer expectation of increased reliability and better quality has led to the creation of an intelligent utility network known as the smart grid. The Malaysian government was looking forward to optimise the use of energy resources in the country and urged Tenaga Nasional Bhd to lead the development of new ideas and solution for the country's Smart Grid programme," he told reporters here Tuesday.

Make Strategic Decisions In Face Of Crisis - Daim

KUALA LUMPUR -- In the face of a crisis, decisions made must be strategic, not tactical or short-term that only soothes the symptoms but not the underlining fundamental ills, Former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin said. He said although Malaysia is not in a crisis yet, it would serve the nation well to pay attention to investigate what a crisis "looks and sounds" like and come up with the best possible response. "It will be foolish and near-sighted if our responses are merely knee-jerk reactions, cavalier posturing or unconvincing. We must think out of the box and resist conventional approaches, and instead realise that the situation or times around us may be an opportunity to make changes or decisions that are strategic and bear long-term and long-lasting effects," he said at Affin Hwang Capital Conference Series 2015 here Tuesday.

Embrace Social Media As Stakeholders Engagement Tool - InvestKL

KUALA LUMPUR -- The social media should be embraced not just for marketing purposes, but also stakeholder engagement, says InvestKL Corporation Chief

Executive Officer (CEO) Datuk Zainal Amanshah. In making the call, he said most companies in Malaysia already understood the importance of greater integrity and actively exercised their engagement with stakeholders, but needed to increase communication, while being more interactive to gain trust. "The expectations are there, especially with Malaysia having assumed the chairmanship of ASEAN this year," he told reporters here Tuesday.

M'sia's Free-To-Air TV To Provide Better Quality Pictures

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's free-to-air television, scheduled to go digital in 2015, will provide viewers with better quality pictures and sound compared to the analogue terrestrial reception that Malaysians are currently viewing. In a statement here Tuesday, Deputy Minister of Communications and Multimedia Datuk Jailani Johari said the quality of sound and pictures would improve with the transfer from analogue to digital terrestrial TV (DTT) broadcasting. "Industry players and viewers are set to gain from the various features of DTT offered by MYTV Broadcasting Sdn Bhd under its Five Pillars services," he said when officiating a seminar organised by MYTV Tuesday.

Puncak Niaga Announces Further Extension Of Stop Date

KUALA LUMPUR -- Puncak Niaga Holdings Bhd Tuesday agreed with Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd to a second extension to March 9 of the 'stop date' for the hand over of the former's water concession business as well as Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas) to the Selangor government. Puncak Niaga said there were still pending issues related to the transfer between the Selangor and federal governments as well as the consent from Unit Kerjasama Awam Swasta of the Prime Minister's Department on the sale of Syabas. In a statement here Tuesday, Puncak Niaga Chief Operating Officer Datuk Syed Danial Syed Ariffin urged both parties to resolve the matter immediately, saying it affects the level of services and management of the water supply system.

M'sia's Vibrant Private Sector, Political Stability Draw China's Investments In Asean

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's vibrant private sector economy and stable political enviroment have provided the opportunity for the country to emerge as a gateway for China's investments in Asean, said Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai. He said thes factors position Malaysia in a more competitive environment and make the country a stepping stone for China's investments in the region. "China will also be able to tap into our uniquely multi-cultural talent pool that is a reflection of the world's greatest civilisations and religions, which is an advantage for a better understanding of the region," he said in a speech at the World Chinese Economic Forum (WCEF) Hi-Tea and Special Conferment Ceremony here Tuesday.

TNB Tariff Cut Consistent With Govt Aspirations - Mustapa

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tenaga Nasional Bhd's (TNB) move to reduce electricity tariffs is consistent with the government's aspirations and in accordance with international rates, said Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. Mustapa applauded the reduction in electricity tariffs, saying it would reduce the cost of doing business. Earlier Wednesday, TNB announced a reduction in electricity tariffs by 2.25 sen/kWh or 5.8 per cent, from March 1 to June 30, 2015. According to TNB, its average tariff will be reduced from 38.53 sen/kWh to 36.28 sen/kWh.

Boeing Offers 'Extremely Affordable' Super Hornet Deal To Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Boeing Company has a distinct advantage over its competitors in offering its Super Hornet jet fighter deal to Malaysia as the aircraft represents an "extremely affordable" offering over the long-term. The global aircraft manufacturer also stands ready to assist Malaysia in dealing with funding challenges in acquiring the high-endurance fighter jet, more so, due to financial constraints brought on by the global economic slowdown. "No aircraft in this competition will come close to the affordability that the Super Hornet brings," Howard M Berry, Boeing's Vice President for F/A18E/F International Sales, Global Strike, Defense, Space & Security, told Bernama.

CIMB Group To Close Its Offices In Australia

KUALA LUMPUR -- The CIMB Group will close its offices in Sydney and Melbourne following a strategic review of its entire business. This follows the group's announcement on that it was looking to reduce its Asia Pacific investment banking and equities operating cost by 30 per cent in 2015. "We have taken a long hard look at our Asia Pacific investment banking business. The realities of today's capital markets and the absence of sufficient flows have directly contributed to this decision," said Acting Group Chief Executive Officer Tengku Datuk Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz in a statement here Monday. He said the rest of CIMB Group's Asia investment banking platform remained intact.

mTouche To Grant Global Marketing Rights To Inovisi

KUALA LUMPUR -- mTouche Technology Bhd, an MSC Malaysia-status company listed on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia, plans to grant exclusive licensing rights for its proprietary application One Krypto to PT Inovisi Infracom Tbk (Inovisi). mTouche Monday signed an agreement with Indonesia's Inovisi, which will give the latter global marketing rights and revenue sharing as long as the average monthly licensing fees surpass RM540,000. In a statement here Monday, mTouche said the agreement will grant Inovisi exclusive rights to distribute, market and commercialise the One Krypto app in Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, South Korea and China.

Suzuki Opens 3S Centre In Jln Klang Lama

KUALA LUMPUR -- Suzuki Malaysia Automobile Sdn Bhd has teamed up with Regal Motors Holdings Sdn Bhd, car dealer, to open a 3S (sales, services, spare parts) centre in Jalan Klang Lama, Selangor. In a statement here Tuesday, Suzuki said the RM500,000 centre, its 33rd in the country, featured six service bays and would be manned by a well-trained team of technicians. "The showroom will feature the latest Suzuki models available to the Malaysian market. By expanding our network, we are able to cater to the needs of our increasingly customer base, provide accessibility, a reliable support system and dedicated after-sales care," said Suzuki Malaysia Automobile Sdn Bhd Managing Director, Keiichi Suzuki.

Paramount Unveils RM260 Mln KDU University College

KUALA LUMPUR -- Paramount Corp Bhd Tuesday unveiled its RM260 million KDU University College (KDUUC) flagship campus at Utropolis in Glenmarie, Shah Alam Tuesday. The opening of the campus marked a new phase of growth not just for KDUUC but also for the 32-year old Paramount Education, formerly known as the KDU Education Group, Paramount said in a statement here Tuesday. Its group Chief Executive Officer, Jeffrey Chew, said the opening of the new campus also marked the re-establishment of KDU College in Damansara Jaya.

Petron Kicks Off Road Safety Campaign For Chinese New Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petron has kicked off its road safety programme for motorists starting Friday to Feb 15, 2015 at selected participating service stations nationwide in conjunction with the Chinese New Year. Its head of corporate safety, security, health and environment, Lokman Hani, said the service stations would provide road safety reminders, display road safety tips and offer free vehicle safety inspections. "The Petron Road Safety Programme is one of our longest running and biggest advocacy campaigns. "We want to continue promoting good driving and riding habits to motorists especially during the festive seasons," he told reporters after handing over goodies to motorists at Petron's Sungai Besi southbound service station.

KLIA Welcomes Turkmenistan Airlines

SEPANG -- Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) Thursday welcomed the maiden flight of Turkmenistan Airlines (TA). Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) Managing Director Datuk Badlisham Ghazali said TA's presence would further promote KLIA's status as the preferred hub in the region. "TA is the 64th international carrier to serve at KLIA and it would operate one flight weekly from Ashgabat to Kuala Lumpur and vice-versa route every Thursday. "Travellers have the option to use KLIA via Turkmenistan Airlines as a connector to Europe and Asia," he said in his welcoming speech here.

Transvia To Buy Up To 20 Next-Generation 737-800S

SINGAPORE -- Boeing and Transavia Co, a wholly-owned unit of the Air France KLM Group, Thursday announced an order for 17 Next-Generation 737-800s, including options for three additional airplanes. In a statement, Boeing said the order, valued at US$1.6 billion at current list prices, was previously booked and attributed to an unidentified customer on the Boeing Orders & Deliveries website. It said the order will significantly support the growth of Transavia's operations from France and the Netherlands.

Malaysian Economy Expands At Fastest Rate In Four Years

By Salbiah Said

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- Despite sliding oil and commodity prices, the Malaysian economy grew at its fastest pace in four years in 2014, with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 6 per cent, buoyed by strong construction and manufacturing activity.

SEALED...Bank Negara Governor, Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz shaking hands with World Bank Group Vice President for East Asia and the Pacific Region, Axel Van Trotsenburg at the signing ceremony in Putrajaya on Jan 27, 2015 to sign the agreement for the establishment of the World Bank Group office. (File Photo)

The stronger-than-expected momentum lifted full-year growth in 2014 to six per cent, the fastest rate since 2010, and surpassed economists' forecast of 5.8 per cent.

GDP for the fourth quarter grew 5.8 per cent from 5.6 per cent in the third quarter, according to Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz said.

"The reason why Malaysia has been able to ride out this challenging period is because we have a diversified economy," she told a press conference here Thursday.

MIDF Research Head Zulkifli Hamzah said the GDP of 5.8 per cent in the fouth quarter of last year proves that the Malaysian economy is highly resilient amid slumping oil prices and ringgit, and flagging stock prices.

AUGURS WELL FOR THE RINGGIT

He said Malaysia's ability to record a high GDP rate during the quarter reflected the diversity of its economic activities.

"For the whole of 2014, the six per cent growth is a positive figure as we were expecting the GDP to be lower. "This augurs well for the prospect of the ringgit," said Zulkifli.

However, he said the direction of the stock market is still strongly influenced by the trend in oil prices, which is beyond Malaysia's control.

Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said the six per cent growth rate is still encouraging despite the uncertain world economy.

He said the number is still positive and remains the highest compared with other Asean members.

"With this growth, I am confident that Malaysia will continue to progress to be a high-income nation by 2020," he said.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Maybank Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Abdul Farid Alias said Malaysia's GDP of six per cent is a strong growth on the back of economic challenges faced by the nation last year.

He said the challenges are expected to continue this year, thus Malaysia's revised GDP of between 4.5 per cent and five per cent for 2015 is a decent growth amid current market environment.

"The year 2015 will be another challenging year due to external rather than internal elements, following world's economic volatility and (falling) oil prices," he said.

IQI Holdings Sdn Bhd Chief Economist Shan Saeed said the strong growth is very much expected in the light of the government's ability to weather external challenges.

He said the government has done a good job in upholding confidence in the economy with its effective policies.

"What I like about Malaysia is that there has always been an economic consistency and the government shows that it is very much in control of the situation.

"I believe the strong GDP trend will continue in 2015 and expect Malaysia to register economic growth of between 5.0 per cent and 5.5 per cent this year," he said.

BERNAMA
MALAYSIAeBiz
February 14, 2015
Market Outlook

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

1. Bursa Malaysia
2. Forex
3. Money Market
4. FBM KLCI Futures
5. Crude Palm Oil (CPO) Futures
6. Rubber Futures
7. KLIBOR Futures
8. Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM)
9. Gold Futures

BURSA MALAYSIA

BURSA: Positive Sentiment To Lift Bursa Higher Next Week

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- Market sentiment on Bursa Malaysia is expected to remain positive next week, giving a further lift to the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI).

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan said last Friday's positive sentiment, boosted by external news like the ceasefire in Ukraine, rising oil prices, easing of tension over the debt repayment of Greece and further central bank policy accommodation in China and Sweden, would spur risk appetite next week.

"In Asia, we saw a strong overnight showing, driven by liquidity injection from China's central bank and overall regional currency strength," he added.

He told Bernama the recent back-to-back strong positive economic data released by Bank Negara Malaysia of 5.8 per cent fourth quarter 2014 and full year growth of 6.0 per cent, suggested that the country's economic fundamentals remained intact, and would influence sentiment.

This is alongside Standard and Poor's Rating Services having reaffirmed Malaysia's currency ratings with a stable outlook, Bank Negara's strong international reserves of RM386.5 billion as at Jan 30, 2015 and a 7.4 per cent growth in the Industrial Production Index (IPI).

During the week-just-ended, the FBM KLCI slipped 12.3 points to 1,800.95 from 1,813.25 the previous week, weighed on by the volatility in global oil prices and the loss in TNB's shares due to a tariffs adjustment.

The key index, which broke its psychological level of 1,800, rebounded slightly on Friday, backed by the recovery in oil prices.

Meanwhile, the FBM Emas Index fell 33.58 points to 12,428.34, the FBMT100 Index lost 55.15 points to 12,107.6, the FBM Emas Syariah Index trimmed 51.41 points to 12,929.56, while the FBM Ace dropped 219.8 points to 6,413.05.

However, the FBM 70 increased 44.68 points to 13,503.28. Weekly turnover doubled to 10.43 billion units valued at RM11.44 billion from 5.98 billion units valued at RM6.93 billion previously.

Main market volume widened to 7.43 billion shares worth RM10.77 billion from 3.75 billion shares worth RM6.39 billion.

FOREX: Ringgit To Rebound Further On Positive GDP Figures

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to rebound further next week on the back of the just released Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth data for the fourth quarter and full year 2014.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank vice-president and retail research head Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said there is strong, positive economic data to suggest Malaysia's economic fundamentals remain intact.

"Malaysia's GDP growth for the final quarter of 2014 exceeded expectations, recording a 5.8 per cent year-on-year expansion and outpacing the 5.6 per cent growth recorded in the third quarter.

"The results also beat the consensus estimate of economists of 5.0 per cent," he told Bernama.

For the week just ended, the currency market experienced a choppy trading pattern, due to uncertain external economic factors.

Investors also remained sidelined on concerns over the European Ministers' meeting on the Greece debt agreement.

Nazri Khan said the possible mid-year rate hike by the US Federal Reserve had resulted in some investors withdrawing their greenback assets.

For the week just ended, the ringgit weakened to 3.5780/5810 against the US dollar from last Friday's 3.5460/5490, and traded mostly lower against other major currencies.

It depreciated against the Singapore dollar to 2.6371/6397 from 2.6335/6379 and improved vis-à-vis the yen to 3.0087/0115 from 3.0215/0243.

The local unit was easier against the euro at 4.0879/0917 from last Friday's 4.0588/0636, and fell against the pound to 5.5048/5108 from 5.4307/4364.

Money Market: Short-Term Rates To Remain Steady

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain steady next week on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention in the money market to absorb excess funds.

The central bank is anticipated to intervene on a daily basis to mop up excess funds from the system.

For the week just ended, BNM intervened on a daily basis, conducting conventional, Al-Wadiah, repo, Islamic range maturity auction and Commodity Murabahah Programme tenders.

The tenders were conducted for the period of between seven days and 44 days.

The overnight rate for the week stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates were pegged at 3.28 per cent, 3.32 per cent and 3.36 per cent respectively.

The underlying three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate was fixed at 3.85 per cent.

On Friday, the total liquidity surplus in the conventional system stood at to RM20.15 billion from RM21.69 billion last Friday, while in the Islamic system, the surplus amounted to RM3.70 billion compared to RM7.91 billion previously.

KLCI Futures To Trend Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are set to trend higher next week as investors weigh on the upbeat cash market, a dealer said.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan expects the equity market to trade upward next week as Malaysia's economic fundamentals remain intact.This follows the release of positive economic data, including Bank Negara Malaysia's strong international reserves of RM386.5 billion and bullish 2014 Gross Domestic Product results.

Malaysia's economy grew 5.8 per cent in the fourth quarter, exceeding the 5.6 per cent growth recorded in the previous quarter, beating the consensus economist estimates of 5.0 per cent.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, February 2015 and March 2015 trimmed 3.5 points each to 1,801 and 1,800 respectively, June 2015 fell six points to 1,798.5, while September 2015 eased 2.5 points to 1,797.5.

For the week-just-ended, total turnover widened to 32,289 lots from 21,141 lots last week, while open interest improved to 38,029 contracts from 37,557 contracts previously.

The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) was 11.88 points higher at 1,800.95.

CPO Futures To See Subdued Trading Next Week

By Rosemarie Khoo Mohd Sani

KUALA LUMPUR -- The crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to see subdued trading next week, with the Chinese New Year (CNY) holiday.

Interband Group Senior Palm Oil Trader Jim Teh said prices could be capped between RM2,200 and RM2,300 per tonne.

"It is not going to be an active trading week, as most traders have taken off for the CNY.

"Also, China stocked up earlier last month.So, it should suffice for the country in respect of the CNY," he told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, February 2015 fell RM65 to RM2,265 per tonne,March 2015 went down RM80 to RM2,271 per tonne, April 2015 shrank RM61 to RM2,285 per tonne, and May 2015 tumbled RM46 to RM2,287 per tonne.

Weekly turnover widened to 267,786 lots from 228,862 lots last week, while open interest decreased slightly to 252,505 contracts from 253,380 contracts.

On the physical market, November South fell RM60 to RM2,300 per tonne from last week's RM2,360 per tonne.

Rubber Mart Likely To Witness Quiet Trading

By Rosemarie Khoo Mohd Sani

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to witness quiet trading next week with "everyone in a holiday mood" for the Chinese New Year, a dealer said.

He said Chinese traders had started packing up for the celebration and are expected to move away from the market for a long period.

"It is normal to experience a quiet market around this time with prices probably ending lower," he told Bernama.

However, he said the market would also continue to monitor the ringgit's movement, the performance of the regional futures market and the crude oil prices.

For the week just-ended, the rubber market traded mostly mixed, mainly influenced by the lower production season and lack of demand for the commodity.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR20 was seven sen higher at 502.50 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk added 16 sen to 387.50.

The unofficial closing price for tyre-grade SMR20 gained 10 sen to 505.50 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk surged 17 sen to 389.50 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Likely To Stay Lacklustre Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to remain lacklustre next week.

For the week just ended, there were two contract months traded and open interest rose to 1,520 contracts as compared to 1,320 contracts previously, while volume amounted to 200 lots. Spot month February 2015, March 2015, April 2015 and June 2015 were pegged at 96.21, 96.24, 96.24 and 96.23 respectively. The underlying three-month KLIBOR remained at last week's 3.85 per cent.

KLTM Expected To Trade At US$18,000 A Tonne Level Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The tin price on the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to trade at the US$18,000 a tonne level next week, a dealer said. He also said consistent supply is expected to sustain the metal price at this level.

"But on the sellers side, traders are not keen to sell at this level," he added. For the week just-ended, the KLTM moved between the range of US$17,700 and US$18,600 a tonne, mostly influenced by the trend on the London Metal Exchange (LME), with trading dominated by Japanese, European and local buyers.

Weekly turnover increased to 310 tonnes from the 196 tonnes recorded last week. The premium between the KLTM and the LME narrowed to US$270 a tonne from a premium of US$340 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures To Likely Trend Higher On Buying Support

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia derivatives are likely to be on the uptrend next week, supported by buying momentum.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Ong Su Ling told Bernama, gold prices are expected to see upward movement as the dollar weakens, amid disappointing US data, while strong purchases by China ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday, could provide short-term support on prices.

"Investors will also observe Greece's fate as talks continue on Monday over its debt, as well as the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting on Thursday," she said. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, February 2015 declined 75 ticks to RM140.35 a gramme, while March 2015 and April 2015 eased 69 ticks each to RM141.05 a gramme and RM141.50 a gramme, respectively.

May 2015 decreased 81 ticks to RM141.50 a gramme. Volume for the week rose to 861 lots worth RM12.29 million from 522 lots worth RM7.55 million last week. Open interest on Friday was higher at 3,256 contracts compared with last week's 2,952 contracts.