MALAYSIAeBiz
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This Week's Highlight : Najib Outlines Five Govt Philosophies For 11MP

FOCUS...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak addressing the monthly assembly of the PM's Department in Putrajaya Monday.--fotoBERNAMA

PUTRAJAYA -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has outlined five government philosophies for the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP) (2016-2020) namely pro-growth, pro-people, pro-business, environment friendly and emphasis on nation building. The prime minister, when outlining the philosophies at the monthly assembly of the Prime Minister's Department (JPM), here Monday said as government and administrative officers, the 11MP, that is the development plan for the period 2016 until 2020, must become their main focus.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

MAB To Retain Current Routes Of Malaysia Airlines

SEPANG -- Malaysia Airlines Bhd (MAB) will retain the current domestic and international routes of Malaysian Airline System Bhd (MAS), but focus on a competitive cost structure in pursuit of becoming the regional leader by 2018. The company will also retain the existing aircraft fleet, said CEO-designate Christoph Mueller at a media briefing Monday. MAB is the entity established to take over the assets and operation of MAS as part of the national carrier's 12-point recovery plan announced by major shareholder Khazanah Nasional Bhd.

Tuesday

MAB Remains Full-Service International Airline - Khazanah

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Airlines Bhd (MAB) will remain a full-service international airline, maintaining Malaysia Airlines' (MAS) current domestic routes and a regional 'backbone' with broad connectivity globally through partnerships, said Khazanah Nasional Bhd Tuesday. Khazanah, the national airline's largest shareholder, said MAB's network would serve, among others, the ASEAN, China, India and domestic markets, with service to key international destinations in Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.

Wednesday

1MDB Provides Breakdown Of How The RM42 Bln Was Used

KUALA LUMPUR -- 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) has given a clear breakdown of how the RM42 billion debt raised by the strategic development company was used contrary to speculation and criticism that money was alleged to be "lost" or "missing". "RM18 billion was used to finance the purchase of power assets like Powertek Energy Sdn Bhd (RM8.5 billion), Kuala Langat Power Plant (RM2.3 billion), Jimah Energy (RM1.2 billion) while the remaining RM6.0 billion was inherited debt," said 1MDB Chief Executive Officer Arul Kanda Kandasamy in a statement here Wednesday.

Thursday

Malaysia's Productivity Rose 3.5 Pct Last Year - Mustapa

PETALING JAYA -- Malaysia registered a productivity growth of 3.5 per cent last year to a productivity level of RM61,708 from RM60,437 in 2013. Based on the Productivity Report 2013/2014 launched Thursday by International Trade and Industry Minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, the growth signified that the country's labour productivity was a strong contributing factor to the gross domestic product growth of six per cent in 2014. Speaking to reporters at the report launch, he said Malaysia was on track to achieve its goal of having a 3.7 per cent annual productivity growth rate by 2020.

Friday

M'sia Continues To Draw Strong Investment Interest From Japan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia, with various incentives in place and conducive business environment, continues to draw strong investment interest from Japan. International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said todate, Japanese investments in Malaysia totalled RM101 billion in the manufacturing sector and employed some 450,000 people. Malaysia had not only received good interest from Japan but the latter was also the largest foreign investor last year with approved investments of RM10.9 billion in the manufacturing sector.

SMEbrief

Over 17,000 Traders Yet To Submit GST Statements

PUTRAJAYA -- A total of 17,105 out of 75,634 traders registered under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) have failed to submit the GST-03 statements by the May 31 deadline, said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong Monday. In line with this, he said the Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) would organise a 'GST With Customers' programme to provide explanation to traders on the calculation method and submitting of statements based on procedures and the stipulated taxable period.

Tropical Bioessence Targets RM10 Mln Sales In 2015

KOTA BAHARU -- Tropical Bioessence Sdn Bhd, a Bumiputera small and medium enterprise (SME) based in Masjid Tanah, Melaka, is confident sales would hit RM10 million this year. The company, involved in the processing of herbs, extraction and spray dry of botanical materials and contract manufacturing of cosmetic products under the brand name of 'Sutra', chalked up sales of RM5 milion as at end-May, said Managing Director Mohd Khairil Said. "Up to now, we have 750 distributors, nationwide, and we are working to increase the number by an additional 250 distributors in the near future," he said in an interview Wednesday.

MITI Expects Only 20 Pct Increase In Vendor Registration Under PPV

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) expects a slight increase of 20 per cent in the registration of new vendors under the Bumiputera Vendor Development programme (PPV) this year due to a weak oil and gas sector. Its minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said it would be very challenging to maintain last year's record of an 80.4 per cent increase or 1,303 new vendors registered under the PPV from that of the previous year. Nine vendor companies were accredited as Strategic Suppliers to Tenaga Nasional Bhd, one of the PPV suppliers, on March 12 this year, he added. "This recognition reflects the commitment shown by competitive and viable Bumiputera vendor companies in producing products that meet the standards to penetrate the international market," he told a news conference after launching the "GLC SME Explorace 2015" here Tuesday.

PropUP Property*update*

Takaso Unit In JV For Pahang Property Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Manufacturer of condom and baby care products Takaso Resources Bhd has entered into a joint venture arrangement for property development activities in Pahang. In its filing to Bursa Monday, it said its 70 per cent subsidiary Takaso Development (Kuantan) Sdn Bhd entered into a joint venture with SSPP Development Sdn Bhd for a proposed mixed development on a parcel of land in Kuantan.

RBI To Build 150,000 Condo Units For Civil Servants

KUANTAN -- Bumiputera property developer, RBI Land Sdn Bhd, plans to build 150,000 affordable condominium units simultaneously in 84 locations, nationwide, including Sabah and Sarawak, especially for civil servants. Chief Executive Officer Roslan Ibrahim said Tuesday, the project would be developed on Malay reserve land and other land reserved for development within one year.

Hua Yang To Start Selayang Land Devt In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer Hua Yang Bhd is expected to start developing its land in Selayang in the fourth quarter of 2016 with completion set for between five to seven years. The resolution for the proposed acquisition of the 2.43 hectare land for RM120 million was passed at the group's extraordinary general meeting (EGM) here Tuesday.

iProperty.com Adds 5 New Categories To 2015 Awards

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property website, iProperty.com Malaysia, will add five new categories in its upcoming iProperty.com People's Choice Awards 2015, bringing the total number of categories to 15. The five new categories are for 'Best Northern Development', 'Best Southern Development', 'Best Affordable Development', 'Best Waterfront Development' and 'Best International Development', it said Wednesday.

Paramount Eyes RM400 Mln Property Sales FY15

PETALING JAYA -- Property and education group, Paramount Corp Bhd targets to achieve RM400 million sales from its property division in the financial year ending Dec 31, 2015 (FY15). Last year, property sales amounted close to RM317 million. Group Chief Executive Officer Chew Sun Teong said Wednesday, the company was confident of achieving the target on the back of continuing demand from buyers.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 345

Losers - 412

Not Traded - 711

Unchanged - 345

Value - 1318434060

Volume - 11771053

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.7170	3.7200
EUR	4.1842	4.1887
GBP	5.6885	5.6946
100 YEN	2.9793	2. 9822
SGD	2.7568	2.7601

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

KL Shares Close Mixed As Buying In Heavyweights Limits Losses

KUALA LUMPUR -- Share prices on Bursa Malaysia closed mixed Friday as buying in selected heavyweights helped limit losses, dealers said. At 5 pm, the FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) rose 3.85 points to 1,745.33 after hovering between 1,737.88 and 1,746.28 throughout the day. British American Tobacco and LTKM were the top two gainers in rising RM2 and 31 sen each to RM63 and RM7 respectively. Losers outpaced gainers 412 to 345, while 345 counters were unchanged, 711 untraded and 12 others suspended. Total volume slipped to 1.18 billion units worth RM1.32 billion from 1.36 billion units worth RM1.68 billion on Thursday. A dealer said most Asian markets fell, after Greece held back its debt repayment to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He said Greece had requested the IMF to bundle all four payments scheduled for June to one lump sum and be deposited at end-June. The first of the four payments of US$399 million was due this Friday. Main Market volume decreased to 714.27 million shares worth RM1.18 billion, from 884.50 million shares worth RM1.55 billion on Thursday.

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Marginally Lower Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed slightly lower against the US dollar and most major currencies Friday due to the lack of interest for the local currency, dealers said. At 5 pm, the ringgit was lower against the greenback at 3.7170/7200 from Thursday's close of 3.6950/6980. The dealer said the ringgit fell to its lowest level since April 15 due to several factors. "The local note was under pressure following the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries meeting, which is now ongoing in Vienna, Austria. Any movement in oil prices would affect the ringgit as Malaysia is a net oil exporter. "Another reason that might have weakened the ringgit is uncertainty that weighs on local sentiment," he added. Against other major currencies, the ringgit was traded mostly lower. It inched down to 2.7568/7601 from 2.7480/7511 against the Singapore dollar and eased to 2.9793/9822 from 2.9779/9815 versus the yen. Vis-a-vis the British pound, the local note was little changed from Thursday's 5.6885/6946 from 5.6885/6942 while against the euro it improved to 4.1842/1887 from 4.1883/1932.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed steady Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to mop up surplus liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system eased to RM27.87 billion from RM34.79 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM3.41 billion from RM10.70 billion. In the morning, BNM called for three tenders of a conventional money market range maturity auction tender, an Al-Wadiah and repo. The central bank also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM25.3 billion and a RM3.4 billion Al-Wadiah tender, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.27 per cent, 3.32 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 on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended untraded Friday. June 2015, July 2015, August 2015 and September 2015 were pegged at 96.32, 96.36, 96.38 and 96.39, respectively. Open interest amounted to 902 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.70 per cent.

KLCI Futures End Mostly Higher

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts closed mostly higher Friday as the cash market turned in a mixed performance. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Thomas Yew Jia-Jong said the FBM KLCI managed to close slightly higher amid weaker export data. "Malaysian exports fell 8.8 per cent in April from a year earlier due to lower sales of commodity-based products. "The index could consolidate as investors continue to weigh concerns over the country's outlook," he told Bernama Friday. June 2015 and July 2015 rose 2.5 points each to 1,734 and 1,734.50, respectively, September 2015 added 3.0 points to 1,732, while December 2015 wasflat at 1,730.50. Turnover was lower at 5,764 lots from 9,901 lots recorded on Thursday, while open interest slipped to 37,141 contracts from 40,500 contracts. The benchmark FBM KLCI ended 3.85 points better at 1,745.33 points.

Bank Islam Eyes Fund Size Of RM2 Bln For New Investment Accounts

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Islam (M) Bhd is aiming for a fund size of RM2 billion for the newly launched Waheed Investment Account (WIA Wakalah) and Special Investment Account(Mudarabah) products under the Term Investment Account over the next six months. Another account also launched today was the Al-Awfar Account. Chief Strategy Officer of the Managing Director's Office Hizamuddin Jamalludin said the accounts have targeted among its investors, corporate customers, government agencies, universities and small and medium enterprises. Speaking to reporters here Monday, he said the bank also plans to maintain a RM2 billion fund size under its Transactional Investment Account, with 1.2 million account holders for Al-Awfar Account, which targets individual and retail institutions. Bank Islam is the first Islamic bank to offer such products that comply with guidelines set by the Islamic Financial Services Act 2013 (IFSA).

Bank Rakyat Plans To Collaborate With Bank Rakyat Indonesia

By Azeman Ariffin

JAKARTA -- Bank Kerjasama Rakyat Malaysia Bhd (Bank Rakyat) plans to expand its services to Indonesia through a collaboration with the republic's biggest bank, PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI). Bank Rakyat president, Datuk Mustafha Abd Razak, said via the collaboration, both banks would provide banking services to customers in the two countries. "For example, Indonesian workers in Malaysia can become BRI's customers and use services offered by Bank Rakyat in Malaysia for remittances and withdrawals. The same goes for Malaysian students and workers in Indonesia...they can become customers of Bank Rakyat and use similar services offered by BRI," he said to reporters here Monday. However, he said the method of cooperation would only be decided in detail by a working committee between the two banks after getting approvals from the two countries' respective central banks later.

Al-Rajhi Bank Funds Education Centres Under Yayasan Salam

KUALA LUMPUR -- Al-Rajhi Bank (Malaysia) provided RM325,000 in funding Tuesday to two education centres under the management of Yayasan Salam. The centres are the Taska Baitul Amal and Pusat Jagaan Baitul Amal and the funding was under the bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) Baitul Amal Children's Programme which provides for 70 children from the ages of two months to six years. Roseta Mohd Jaafar, Al-Rajhi Bank's Vice-President, Head of Corporate Communications said the programme is geared to help underprivileged children in the Jalan Chow Kit area. "There are plans to expand programmes such as this to other areas, within the next five years. But for now, we are focused on these two centres. We have also allocated RM500,000 for the CSR programme this year," she told reporters here Tuesday.

RAM Ratings Calls Stable Outlook On Malaysian Banking Sector

KUALA LUMPUR -- RAM Ratings has assigned a stable outlook on the Malaysian banking sector, which it says reflects its robust capitalisation levels and sturdy loan quality. Its Financial Institution Ratings Co-Head Sophia Lee said the stable outlook also recognises Bank Negara Malaysia's track record of effective banking regulation and the country's potential as an Islamic finance hub. "While the country's household debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio remains elevated, the associated risks are contained," Lee said in a statement here Tuesday in conjunction with the rating agency's publication of its inaugural report in the Banking Sector Assessment (BSA) series Tuesday. The BSA provides guidance on the likely changes to the risk profile of a country's banking sector over the intermediate term. Chief Executive Officer Foo Su Yin said: "RAM's first BSA report is on the Malaysian banking industry, on which we have 25 years' insight and experience.

BNM Commences Formal Inquiry On 1MDB

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has commenced a formal inquiry on 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) to examine any contravention of the Central Bank's rules and legislation. "This has involved the issuance of a legal directive requiring information from the entity," BNM said in a statement here Wednesday. BNM said it is also taking statements from individuals involved in the governance process and obtaining information from other relevant domestic and foreign parties. In addition, BNM said it has forwarded information received from foreign authorities to the relevant investigation agencies after obtaining the permission from the foreign authorities. "The Central Bank wishes to emphasise that further disclosure of details of the investigation may undermine the outcome of the investigation," it said.

Khazanah Issues World's First Ringgit-Denominated Sri Sukuk

KUALA LUMPUR -- Khazanah Nasional Bhd has successfully offered and priced a RM100 million seven-year Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) sukuk to be issued via a Malaysian incorporated independent special purpose vehicle, Ihsan Sukuk Bhd. This issuance is pursuant to Ihsan's RM1.0 billion sukuk programme, the first programme approved under the Securities Commission Malaysia's SRI sukuk framework. "The sukuk was priced at the price guidance of 4.30 per cent per annum and was fully subscribed through a day of book-building. There was participation from a diverse investor group including foundation, corporations, banks, pension fund and asset management companies," the investment holding arm of the government said in a statement here Thursday.

TA Investment Declares Distribution For Two Funds

KUALA LUMPUR -- TA Investment Management Bhd (TAIM) has declared a gross income distribution of 2.0 sen per unit for the TA South East Asia Equity Fund (TASEF) and 2.0 sen per unit for its TA Islamic Fund (TAIF) for registered unit holders as at May 29, 2015. TAIM noted that the Southeast Asian (SEA) region had underperformed in April 2015 as investors turned more cautious, amid a rotation from the region to the north Asian market, especially China. "The weak first quarter results from Indonesia and Thailand caused some foreign funds to relocate their positions to other emerging markets," the fund manager said in a statement here Monday.

M'sian Firms Rake In RM778.66 Mln Sales At MSE Jeddah

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian companies raked in RM778.66 million in export sales, at the recent Malaysia Services Exhibition (MSE) in Jeddah, in conjunction with the Saudi Building and Interiors Exhibition 2015 (SBIE). MSE Jeddah was held for four days from May 11 with the SBIE 2015 reportedly attracting over 300 exhibitors from 11 countries. Matrade in a statement here Monday said 18 Malaysian companies participated in the event with 284 business meetings pre-arranged during the event. "The Malaysian participants received 614 trade enquiries for their services during exhibition and the Malaysia Pavilion was visited mainly by Saudi Arabian companies from major cities like Riyadh, Makkah, Madinah, Dammam as well as other Arab entities from around the region," it added.

M'sian Exporters Generate Sales Of RM19.52 Mln At HOFEX 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian exporters generated sales of RM19.52 million from 207 pre-arranged business meetings at the three-day Hong Kong Food Expo (HOFEX) 2015. The Malaysian delegation to the expo from May 6 was represented by 12 local companies, including Fikrisz (M) Sdn Bhd, Top Fruits Sdn Bhd, Agro Jerneh Sdn Bhd and Lai Hin Trading. The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) said in a statement here Tuesday that Malaysian halal products showcased during the event were biscuits, cocoa products, ready-to-eat meals, sauces and pastes, beverages, poultry and meat, plastic packaging as well as flavouring, colouring and fragrance. The biennial event has become a platform for participants to browse, purchase and discuss the latest trends of the regional and global food and hospitality industry.

Mercedes-Benz M'sia Records Best Ever Sales In May With 1,143 Units

KUALA LUMPUR -- Mercedes-Benz Malaysia had another record month for passenger cars in May, registering 1,143 units, which was an improvement of more than 100 per cent from the 544 sold during the same period last year. The luxury marque passenger car sales were spearheaded namely by the C-, E- and S-Class models which recorded 888 units last month, it said in a statement here Wednesday. Main contributors to this figure were the strong sales of the E300 Blue TEC Hybrid launched in January 2015, the C200 and S400L Hybrid. The compact car family, comprising the new A-, and B-Class, CLA and GLA models, posted total May sales of 254 units with sales led by the continued success of the A-Class.

M'sian Firms Rake In Sales Of RM351.55 Mln At MSE Doha

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian companies raked in sales of RM351.55 million at the recent Malaysia Services Exhibition (MSE)in Doha, Qatar. It was held in conjunction with the "Project Qatar 2015 : The 12th International Construction Technology and Building Materials Exhibition 2015." The organiser, the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) had pre-arranged 1,032 business meetings between the 10 participating Malaysian exhibitors with Qataris' and foreign companies. Among the services and products featured at MSE Doha were architectural services, engineering services, nano-coating products, waste-bins, benches, and glass products among others, Matrade said in a statement here Wednesday.

Utusan Melayu To Diversify Into Other Businesses

KUALA LUMPUR -- Utusan Melayu (Malaysia) Bhd plans to sustain its newsprint business while also venturing into other businesses to broaden its earnings base. This is to mitigate the group's declining revenue which has dropped to RM291.2 million for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2014 (FY14) from RM342.4 million in FY13, with the newsprint division making up 96 per cent of revenue. The group has incurred a bigger net loss of RM81.9 million in FY14 compared with RM16.2 million in FY13. "We acknowledge that as the largest contributor to the group, the newsprint revenue is falling, but by venturing into other businesses, it will act as a support to the newspaper business," said its Group Managing Director, Datuk Mohd Noordin Abbas.

Paramount Corp Eyes RM400 Mln Property Sales In FY15

PETALING JAYA -- Property and education group, Paramount Corp Bhd targets to achieve RM400 million sales from its property division in the financial year ending Dec 31, 2015 (FY15). Last year, property sales amounted close to RM317 million. Group chief executive officer Chew Sun Teong said the company was confident of achieving the target on the back of continuing demand from buyers. "We have been very much on track as the sales numbers in the first quarter (Q1) of this year have already reached RM150 million due to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) implementation on April 1. Some buyers are buying properties before the GST implementation as they are concern of the hike in prices after GST," he told reporters here Wednesday.

MPHB Upbeat On Earnings In Coming Quarters

KUALA LUMPUR -- MPHB Capital Bhd is upbeat on its earnings for the next six months, backed by the ongoing Rawang joint venture property development with Bandar Raya Development, along with the roping in of Generali Asia N.V. MPHB Chief Operating Officer Kheoh And Yeng said the first phase of the Rawang project received good response with most of the bookings coming from non-Bumiputeras. "More non-Bumputeras had made the bookings. Usually it takes a while. However, we foresee a formidable sales in earnings after we recognise the sales in the coming quarters," she said. The first phase of the Rawang project was launched in May.

Matrade Achieves RM76.4 Mln Sales At 15th OGA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) has so far achieved RM76.4 million in sales at the two-day incoming buying mission (IBM) session of the 15th Asian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Engineering Exhibition (OGA), far exceeded its target of RM50 million. Its Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud said the response to the biennial IBM was satisfactory, considering dealings were done over two days. He said the total sales figure had yet to be ascertained as the IBM session involving seven countries and 18 companies, ending Wednesday, had yet to be concluded. "Considering to the limited timeframe, we hope most of the foreign companies involved in the OGA's IBM would extend their stay and follow up in identifying their needs," Dzulkifli said.

Petronas Lubricants Marketing Aims 20 Pct Business Growth In 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas Dagangan Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Petronas Lubricants Marketing (M) Sdn Bhd, aims to achieve up to 20 per cent lubricant business growth in East Malaysia this year. Petronas Lubricants chief executive officer Zubair Abdul Razak said the target was driven by its transformation strategy and appointment of nine local market execution partners (MEPs) in Sabah and Sarawak to strengthen its business. "The East Malaysian market has been identified as a key growth driver for our lubricant business," he said in a statement here Wednesday.

Westports Aims To Up Cargo Handling Capacity To 13 Mln TEUs

PORT KLANG -- Westports Malaysia expects to increase its cargo handling capacity to 13 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) from 11 million TEUs following the completion of its Container Terminal 8 (CT8) by mid-2017. Its Chief Executive Officer, Ruben Emir Gnanalingam, said in tandem with the construction of CT8, Westports was also building a new container gate for local cargo as well as other back of terminal support facilities. "Our focus is always skewed towards a supply-driven approach to meet our customer demand. With CT8, we will be able to handle big vessels while continuously maintain the highest level of productivity and all other service string," he said in his speech to celebrate the maiden voyage of the world's most environmentally friendly and ultra large container vessel, MV Barzan, at Westports Container Terminal 7 here Thursday.

South Korea's Coway To Further Explore M'sian Market

From Mazizul Dani

SEOUL -- South Korea's largest water and air-purifier maker Coway Co Ltd plans to expand to 15 new areas in Malaysia in the second half of this year. Executive Vice President for Overseas Business Unit Kim Yong Seong said the expansion plan is driven by the strong performance in Malaysia, where its unit Coway (M) Sdn Bhd recorded sales of RM268 million last year, up 22 per cent over 2013. New areas to be explored include Temerloh, Seri Manjung, Mersing, Kuching and Miri, he told Malaysian reporters at the launch of new products at its research and development centre here. Kim said the company is optimistic of strengthening its business in Malaysia after reaping sales of over 10,000 units as of April 2015, and plans to make the country its Southeast Asia hub for centralised control.

M'sia: Approved Investments In Q1 Rise By 18.8 Pct To RM57.4 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's approved investments for the primary, services and manufacturing sectors rose by 18.8 per cent to RM57.4 billion in the first quarter of this year (1Q15), from RM48.3 billion in the same period of 2014. International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamad said the manufacturing sector was the major contributor, accounting for 58.5 per cent of the total or an equivalent of RM33.6 billion, followed by services (38.9 per cent or RM22.3 billion) and primary (2.6 per cent or RM1.5 billion). "This increase comes despite the World Bank's lower growth forecast for the Malaysian economy for 2015. It reflects the faith of investors in Malaysia as an attractive investment destination and the country's ability to hold its own in an increasingly competitive environment," he said at the Malaysia Investment Performance 1Q15 announcement here Monday.

BiotechCorp Eyes RM4 Bln Investments This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Biotechnology Corp (BiotechCorp) expects to attract investments valued at RM4 billion this year, said Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal. He said the BiotechCorp trade and investment promotion missions to Italy and the United States between June 9 and June 18 are expected to rake in at least RM1 billion in potential investments. "We talked to some investors in the last two or three years who are still not decided on investing. "We hope to close some of these investments (during the missions) and we want to create at least another RM20 billion in terms of potential investments in the next five years," he told reporters here Monday. BiotechCorp's Italy mission will begin in Milan on June 9 with the Malaysia Bioeconomy Partnering Day, followed by the launch of Bioshoppe products at Expo Milano 2015.

MAS Sends Termination Letters To 20,000 Staff

SEPANG -- Malaysian Airline System Bhd (MAS) will be sending termination letters to its 20,000 employees beginning Monday, followed by offer letters to 14,000 employees to join new entity Malaysian Airlines Bhd (MAB). MAB is a new entity established by MAS' major shareholder Khazanah Nasional Bhd to assume the contracts, assets and liabilities of the national carrier in a bid to turn around the airline to profitability. Chief executive officer-designate Christoph Mueller in a briefing Monday said the 14,000 employees who received the offer letters would be given 12 days to decide while employees who decide to join MAB would start working in the new entity beginning on Sept 1. Describing MAS' restructuring process as a "hard reset", he said MAB's business model would be principally commercial with the hope that the airline would grow again by 2017.

Sunway Contributes RM123 Mln For BRT-Sunway Line Construction

PETALING JAYA -- Sunway Bhd has contributed RM123 million to construct the elevated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)-Sunway Line costing a total of RM634 million, said Sunway Group Founder and Chairman, Tan Sri Dr Jeffrey Cheah. BRT-Sunway Line is implemented under the innovative Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programme via the collaboration between Prasarana Malaysia Bhd and Sunway Bhd. "We contributed a total of RM123 million even though it was RM90 million in the original contract," he said at the official launch of the country's first elevated BRT system by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak here Monday. He said additional funds were needed to construct the elevated covered walkways, car parking bays and other safety and security features to enhance accessibility and connectivity.

Internet Bandwidth Consumption Grew 218 Pct In 2014

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia recorded over 200 per cent jump in Internet bandwidth consumption to 760,331 Mega bits per second (Mbps) in 2014 from 349,277 Mbps in 2013, the Malaysian Internet Exchange (MyIX) said. MyIX, a non-profit organisation initiated by the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), attributed the increase in Internet consumption to the greater prevalence of social media platforms and users, use of applications such as MyTeksi and Uber, online games and e-commerce purchases. "MCMC's survey in 2011 showed about 36 million phone users were subscribed in Malaysia which rose to nearly 45 million by end 2014 with a 148.5 penetration rate per inhabitant. This shows that technically, the introduction of MCMC's Youth Communication Package (YCP) helped to increase nationwide phone subscribers by 25 per cent," said MyIX Chairman

Chiew Kok Hin in a statement here Tuesday.

MSM M'sia Aims To Control Midstream Sugar Market Of S'pore, M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd aims to control the Singapore and a majority of Malaysia's midstream sugar market with the completion of its refinery in Tanjung Langsat, Johor. President and Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Sheikh Awab Sheikh Abod said construction of the refinery would begin in August this year and expected to be completed between 20 to 22 months. "The refinery will be fully operational by mid-2017. Our aim is to control the entire Singapore and majority of the Malaysian market by that year, if not all," he told reporters here Tuesday. MSM operates the sugar business of Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd.

M'sian Shipping Masterplan Draft To Be Ready Year-End - Liow

PUTRAJAYA -- The Malaysian Shipping Masterplan draft, which seeks to identify issues and make recommendations on the criticality of the shipping industry, will be ready by year-end, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said. He said the masterplan would elaborate and recommend appropriate strategies and measures to revitalise to the shipping industry in particular and the supporting industry in general. "The masterplan would change the entire spectrum of Malaysian shipping and propel it to greater heights, when implemented," he said when opening the Malaysian Shipowners' Association (MASA) new office here Tuesday. Liow said shipping is crucial to Malaysia as it is the means of connectivity and a lifeline to the country's economy since more than 95 per cent of the country's trade is seaborne.

Investment In Science, Technology, Innovation Crucial In Future Devt

KUALA LUMPUR -- Investment in science, technology and innovation (STI) is a priority as Malaysia moves towards becoming a high-income nation by 2020, Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) acting chief executive officer Hazami Habib said. She said there was a need to leverage on STI to produce technologies, products and services in focal areas pertinent to economic growth, national development and global competitiveness. "The government needs to apply the strategic STI options, opportunities and priorities in support of the nation's socio-economic agenda," she told reporters here Tuesday.

GIPV 2015 Aims To Boost IP Monetisation

By Mohd Azhar Ibrahim

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) will hold the Global IP Valuation Conference 2015 (GIPVC 2015) on June 9-10. Held in collaboration with the Finance Ministry and the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry, the event, themed 'Ideas2Value: Accelerate ASEAN', provides a snapshot of the IP valuation landscape in ASEAN. "The GIPVC 2015 is an excellent platform for private-public sector engagement on issues and challenges faced by industry players, IP owners, IP valuation practitioners, and financial institutions with regard to IP-based financing," MyIPO deputy director general Abdul Aziz Ismail told Bernama Friday.

1MDB's Investments Are Long-Term - Ahmad Husni

KUALA LUMPUR -- It will take time for 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) to benefit from its investments in power generation and land assets because these projects are long-term, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah. Too much focus, however, has been given by the media on the state strategic investment fund's debts totalling RM42 billion, he said. "The RM42 billion has to be seen not merely in the context of debts but also in the context of assets, finance costs and shareholders' funds," he said in a special TV1 programme on '1MDB: Where Is The Money?' aired here Wednesday night. He also denied allegations by various quarters that RM27 billion out of the RM42 billion had vanished, saying the money had been used by the company to acquire assets.

Tanjung Bin Energy's Completion On Track With 1st Boiler Start-Up

KUALA LUMPUR -- The boiler of Malakoff Corporation Bhd's 1,000 megawatt Tanjung Bin Energy (T4) coal-fired power plant was successfully ignited using fuel oil on May 31, 2015. The milestone achieved signified that the completion of T4's construction was on track. "The fuel-firing of the boiler on May 31, 2015 is a major step towards the timely completion of the power plant. It will pave the way for the next equally important milestones, such as the boiler's coal-firing and thereafter the power plant's synchronisation to the national power grid," said Chief Operating Officer Habib Husin in a statement here Thursday. T4 is expected to achieve its commercial operations date of March 1, 2016.

RSG Secures Rights To Bring Smurfs Live Attraction To SE Asia

KUALA LUMPUR -- RSG Movie Animation Park Studios (MAPS) Sdn Bhd together with Perak Corporation Bhd have secured the Malaysian licensing rights to the Smurfs Properties from worldwide licensor, International Merchandising Promotion and Services (IMPS). RSG is the co-owner and co-developer of Movie Animation Park Studios, chaired by Ramelle Ramli. "RSG is pleased to clinch this licensing agreement and collaborate with IMPS to showcase South East Asia's very first Smurfs live animation attractions in MAPS. Bringing the Smurfs to MAPS is very much in line with RSG's commitment in redefining family fun as it allows us to give Malaysians the opportunity to experience and enjoy the iconic brand without them having to leave the country," the chairman said here Monday. Alongside the smurfs, MAPS also has in its portfolio of popular franchise characters such as DreamWorks Animation's Mr Peabody & Sherman, Megamind, The Croods and Caspers the Friendly Ghost.

Malaysia To Host First BFA International Conference

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia will host the first Boao Forum for Asia Energy, Resources and Sustainable Development Conference on June 10 aimed at promoting regional economic integration. Organised by the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI), the two-day forum will focus on energy, resources and sustainable development, as well as, discuss China's 'One Belt and One Road' (OBOR) initiative. ASLI Chief Executive Officer and Director Tan Sri Dr Michael Yeoh said the Boao Forum was the Chinese equivalent of the World Economic forum and offered good opportunities for Malaysian businessmen to make a lasting impact, not just benefitting the country but for all South East Asian nations. "One aim of the forum is to revitalise the Maritime Silk Road with the emergence of China playing a pivotal role in mutual regional prosperity," he said here Monday.

AirAsia Unveils Ramadan Promotion Deals

KUALA LUMPUR -- Low-cost carrier, AirAsia Group, is offering one-way all-in-fares from as low as RM8 for domestic destinations and RM59 for international destinations, including to Indonesia and Brunei. This includes intra-East Malaysia routes for the travel period from June 15 to July 15, which coincides with the month of Ramadan, the airline said in a statement here Monday. The promotional fares are available for booking online at airasia.com, AirAsia mobile application on the iPhone and Android devices, as well as, the mobile site mobile.airasia.com from June 1 to June 7, 2015. AirAsia X, the long haul affiliate of the AirAsia Group, is also offering promotional all-in-fares from RM299 for one-way travel to various destinations in Japan, Taiwan and Australia.

AirAsia To Fly To Goa Beginning August

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia Bhd has announced another unique route, connecting Kuala Lumpur to Goa, India, with three times weekly flights beginning August 27. The route is the airline's fourth unique route that it announced within a month, besides the other brand new routes such as Kuala Lumpur to Pattaya, Johor Bahru to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, the airline said in a statement here Tuesday. To celebrate the launch of this unique route, the low cost airline is offering promotional all-in-fares from RM149 one way, available for booking from now to June 7, June 2015, for travel from August 27, 2015 until May 31, 2016.

Jetstar Asia To Move To klia2

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- All Jetstar Asia flights arriving and departing from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Malaysia will be shifted to the klia2 terminal from July 8, 2015. klia2 is located less than two kilometres away from the KLIA Main Terminal and is accessible from KL Sentral via the KLIA Express and KLIA Transit. In a statement here Tuesday, Jetstar said there is no change in the flight schedule, ground handler, check-in facilities or check-in timings. However, passengers transferring between KLIA Main terminal and klia2 will need to clear immigration and collect their checked bags before they can transfer to their next flight.

Samsung Ranked No. 1 Brand In Asia

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- Samsung claims top spot in Asia's Top 1000 Brands report from Campaign Asia-Pacific. The report in collaboration with global information and insights company, Nielsen, named Watsons, Lotte or AirAsia in the top 50 or top 25 of the ranking. The annual survey is the biggest and most influential of its kind, revealing which brands consumers value the most across the region. Asia's Top 1000 Brands for 2015 also shows a rise in stature for many local Asia brands. Asia's Top 1000 Brands report aggregates data from an online survey that Campaign Asia-Pacific and Nielsen developed together. The report incorporates consumers in 13 key regional markets across Asia-Pacific: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

NEW MAS BHD ON COMMERCIALLY SUSTAINABLE PATH

By Mikhail Raj Abdullah and Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

MAS Bhd CEO-Designate Christoph Mueller --fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The right actions are being taken to put the new Malaysia Airlines Bhd (MAS Bhd) group on a commercially sustainable footing, a renowned professor of strategy and an expert researcher on the airlines industry, said.

Professor Loizos Heracleous of Warwick Business School in the United Kingdom, has come out in support of Chief Executive Officer-Designate Christoph Mueller for his steps to resuscitate the financially ailing airline.

Responding to comments that Malaysia Airlines (MAS) was 'technically bankrupt,' he said while the national carrier's service levels historically have been very good, its efficiency has been lagging, leading to frequent losses.

"As a legacy state-owned carrier, Malaysia Airlines has had some constraints in terms of optimising routes, staffing levels and general operational efficiency," he said in a an e-mail to Bernama.

The tragic events of last year only hastened restructuring actions that were sorely needed and should have been taken a long time ago, said Heracleous, who has trained or advised executives from several blue chip corporations including IBM, Total, Rolls-Royce, KPMG, Standard Chartered, O2, and Bank of China.

TURNAROUND EXPERIENCE

"It augurs well for the future performance of Malaysia Airlines that its new CEO has experience in leading successful turnaround programmes. It appears that he will be allowed by the corporate parent to do his job in terms of enhancing operational efficiency and competitiveness.

"It is important that during this restructuring process Malaysia Airlines does not take its eye off the ball with respect to service quality.

At a briefing Monday, Mueller said the new MAS Bhd group will remain an international full-fledged service carrier and not a regional carrier. It will also retain all its domestic routes.

Termination letters were sent to 20,000 employees Monday. Of that number, a total of 6,000 staff will have their contracts terminated while 14,000 will be offered employment with the new MAS Bhd.

FUTURE GROWTH

He said more than 40 projects had been identified to position the company for future growth, including overhauling the information technology (IT) system and refurbishing inflight offerings.

Mueller said MAS also lacks a state-of-the-art IT system which could lower operational costs by 20 per cent, while driving ancillary revenue from retail and merchandising.

The airline, he added, also had a high number of suppliers at 20,000 and MAS Bhd would trim this to between 2,000 and 2,500.

He said other planned improvements for the MAS Bhd includes, the introduction of a premium class with full flat beds, refurbishment of cabin interior and upgrading of inflight entertainment.

According to Mueller, MAS Bhd also plans to increase the domestic flight frequencies of subsidiaries, Firefly and MASwings.

He said the rebranding plan for the airline is expected to be concluded in the next eight weeks.

As part of the rebranding the MAS Bhd headquarters would be located at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), while the Subang office operations would be shut down entirely with Firefly moving to a location close to the Subang airport.

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA *MALAYSIA*

BURSA: FBM KLCI To Continue Downtrend

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit's renewed weakness and untimely cautious local economic sentiments, coupled with the uncertain global economy, are expected to further weigh down the FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) next week. Affin Hwang Investment Bank vice-president and head of retail research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan said the macro factors which are expected to affect the local index next week include the unsuccessful Greece negotiations and renewed bond volatility.

"The previous week saw the FBM KLCI continue its sixth losing weekly streak, driven down by TM and TNB due to news reports that there could be tariff cuts soon. The FBM KLCI failed to break above the 1,750 resistance level while several doji candlesticks appeared in the daily technical chart suggesting more downside ahead," he told Bernama.

Due to the volatile market sentiment, Nazri said the local benchmark index is likely to continue its downtrend, testing the 1,700 support level over the next weekly session. Meanwhile, on a Friday-to-Friday basis, the benchmark FBM KLCI shed 2.19 points to 1,745.33 from 1,747.52.

Weekly turnover declined to 7.37 billion units worth RM8.94 billion from 9.07 billion units worth RM11.63 billion previously. Main market volume decreased to 4.65 billion units worth RM8.17 billion from 5.19 billion units worth RM10.53 billion last week.

FOREX: Ringgit To Be Easier Versus Greenback

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to be easier versus the US dollar next week due to several factors including the uncertain local sentiment, which would weigh on the ringgit's performance. "However, we expect a positive outcome from the meeting between the Finance Ministry and Fitch International Rating Agency to discuss Malaysia's sovereign rating.

"We expect Malaysia's robust banking system, resilient economic fundamentals and strong initiatives on fiscal consolidation to give positive indicators to the rating agency hence improve the local currency," Affin Investment Bank's vice-president/head of retail research Dr Nazri Khan told Bernama.

Throughout the week, the ringgit was traded mostly lower on lack of demand. Another dealer said traders remained on the sidelines following the recent Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting

Countries meeting. He said as Malaysia is a net exporter of oil, any movement in the oil prices (from the outcome of the meeting) would affect the local currency.

On a weekly basis, the ringgit traded lower against the US dollar at 3.7170/7200 from last Friday's 3.6660/6690. It also weakened against the other four major currencies. It declined against the Singapore dollar to 2.7568/7601 from 2.7182/7222 last Friday and fell marginally versus the yen to 2.9793/9822 from 2.9603/9634 last week.

The local currency declined against the British pound to 5.6885/6946 from 5.6009/6073 and eased against the euro to 4.1842/1887 from 4.0172/0212 last Friday.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates To Remain Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interest rates are likely to remain stable next week as Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continues its intervention to mop up excess liquidity. A dealer said the central bank is expected to continue to call for money market tenders on a daily basis.

For the week just ended, BNM intervened daily by conducting conventional, Al-Wadiah, repo and Commodity Murabahah programme tenders to reduce excess liquidity in the system. The overnight rate for the week stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.27 per cent, 3.32 per cent and 3.35 per cent, respectively.

On Friday, the central bank called for late tenders by offering a conventional tender for RM25.3 billion and an Al-Wadiah tender for RM3.4 billion, both for three-day money. Total surplus in the conventional system this week was reduced to RM27.87 billion, while RM3.41 billion remained in Islamic funds. The underlying three-month interbank rate stood at 3.70 per cent.

KLCI Futures Likely To Continue Downtrend

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to continue the downtrend on the cash market next week. Affin Hwang Investment Bank vice-president and head of retail research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan said the benchmark FBM KLCI, which ended the week 3.85 points better at 1,745.33 on Friday, is expected to test the 1,700 support level over the next weekly session.

"We can see that local equities are still struggling to recover after posting the biggest monthly loss in four years (since August 2011 following the oil and ringgit volatility) where the FBM KLCI corrected 135 points or 7.2 per cent over the last six weeks.

"Equity market sentiments were dragged down by weak manufacturing data in the US and Europe and dim hopes that a deal between Greece and its creditors is within reach," he told Bernama. For the week just ended, the futures market was on a downtrend due to weaker buying support.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month June 2015 lost 5.5 points to 1,734.50, while September 2015 slipped 6.5 points to 1,732 and December 2015 slid 7.50 points 1,730.50. Turnover for the week fell to 43,642 lots from 97,354 lots last week, while open interest declined to 37,141 contracts from 41,453 contracts previously.

CPO Likely To Continue Uptrend Next Week

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are anticipated to continue their uptrend momentum next week on positive export data forecast. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Ong Su Lin said while the report is scheduled to be released by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board on Wednesday, a survey by Reuters showed that palm oil exports are forecast to surge 40 per cent in May, the biggest monthly rise in eight and a half years.

"This shows that demand is greater than supply," she told Bernama, adding palm oil stocks are also anticipated to ease in May due to the high exports. Meanwhile, Interband Group of Companies senior palm oil trader Jim Teh said he expects the price to range between RM2,150 and RM2,200 a tonne next week. He also anticipates a profit squeeze, following strong gains this week.

For the week just ended, the CPO price recorded the biggest weekly rise in four months underpinned by the weak ringgit and rallies in the soybean oil market. On a weekly basis, June 2015 surged RM150 to RM2,320 a tonne, July 2015 jumped RM128 to RM2,343 a tonne, August 2015 chalked up RM125 to RM2,341 a tonne and September 2015 perked RM121 to RM2,341 a tonne. Weekly turnover rose to 200,197 lots from 176,335 lots last week, while open interest widened to 229,266 contracts from 200,166 contracts previously. On the physical market, June South gained RM120 to RM2,320 a tonne.

Rubber Market Likely To Be Firmer Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to continue to be firmer next week driven by bullish sentiment from China, dealers said. A dealer said the world's second largest economy is anticipated to release positive economic data which would influence the buying sentiment. "This would give a further lift to the rubber market which currently has already seen demand from China returning with several confirmed purchases," he said. The rubber market is also likely to be influenced by regional futures markets, namely the Tokyo Commodity Exchange and Shanghai Futures Exchange.

For the week just ended, rubber prices were mostly higher propped up by the weaker ringgit and returning demand from China. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's sellers official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 was eight sen firmer at 587 sen per kg, while latex-in-bulk rose 26 sen to 513 sen per kg. The unofficial sellers' closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 edged up two sen to 587 sen per kg, while latex-in-bulk improved 23 sen to 512 sen per kg.

KLIBOR Futures Likely To Remain Flat

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to remain flat next week. For the week just ended, the KLIBOR futures market was untraded.

Open interest ended the week unchanged at

902 contracts. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2015, July 2015, August 2015 and September 2015 stood at 96.32, 96.36, 96.38 and 96.39, respectively. The underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.70 per centn.

KLTM To Hover Around US$15,500 A Tonne Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is likely to hover around the current level of US$15,500 per tonne next week and is expected to move in a positive direction. A dealer said the KLTM's price movements in the first two days of next week would be similar to the week just ended, due to technical correction as the London Metal Exchange will still be closed.

"The impact of the LME tin price will only be visible on the KLTM price on Tuesday or the day after. For the rest of the week, the price might move in an upward direction," the trader said. He also noted that the ringgit's depreciation against the US dollar will also help local traders as transactions are made in the greenback.

This would assist the market, especially when the commodity is traded below the ideal price of US$20,000 per tonne, he added. "We hope the KLTM will rebound to the ideal price soon," he said, adding that the price has dropped to US$14,200 per tonne in the last two months. Throughout the week, the local market saw weaker demand especially from the traders.

The market closed the week US$20 lower at US$15,500 per tonne with Japanese, European and local players accounting for the week's turnover of 250 tonnes, against 255 tonnes registered last week. The premium between the KLTM and LME narrowed to US$310 per tonne on Friday versus US$325 per tonne registered previously.

Gold Futures To Trade Cautiously Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade in a cautious mode next week as more US economic data is released. Among the data is that for sales and the weekly initial jobless claims.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Ong Su Ling said the stronger US jobless claims data for the week just ended and released Thursday is set to keep the Federal Reserve on track to raise interest rates later this year. "This scenario could hurt demand for gold as it is non-interest paying asset. "The estimated figures from today's US non-farm payrolls report is expected to be positive to the US economy and therefore, we expect that it could weigh on gold prices in the coming week," she added. The local market was traded mostly lower for the week just ended.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2015 rose 11 ticks to RM140.95 a gramme, July 2015 was up 10 ticks to RM141.30 and August 2015 increased nine ticks to RM141.75. A new contract month, September 2015, was introduced at RM142.10 per gramme on Friday. Volume for the week rose to 784 lots worth RM11.095 million from 222 lots worth RM3.1 million last week. Open interest was slightly higher at 2,342 contracts from 2,235 contracts last Friday.