This Week's Highlight:
Foreign Investors Buy RM5.5 Bln Domestic Stocks Q1

TESTIMONIAL...Malaysia's long-term economic plan works for Malaysians, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at Invest Malaysia 2016 in Kuala Lumpur Tuesday. Pic: Azhar Pidek fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Foreign investors purchased RM5.5 billion worth of domestic stocks in the first quarter of this year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. "So, it is clear that we have an economic plan, that has worked, and that it is still working. It is a long-term plan that works for the benefit of Malaysians not just today, but tomorrow, and in the years and decades to come," he said at Invest Malaysia 2016 here Tuesday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

MDEC Attracts RM4.57 Bln New Investment 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), formerly known as Multimedia Development Corporation, registered a total of RM4.57 billion worth of new investments last year, up from RM2.9 billion in 2014. Its Chief Executive Officer Datuk Yasmin Mahmood said Monday, the achievement last year was a record high for new investments since the establishment of MDEC in 1996, despite the challenging economic conditions.

TUESDAY

Malaysian Economy Sustainable At The Core - PM

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Tuesday, Malaysia's economy is sustainable at the core, rebuffing allegation that the country's economy was in trouble. He said the Islamic capital market registered a steady growth of 6.7 per cent last year, retaining its overwhelming lead in the global sukuk arena while the world's longest bull market continued at Bursa Malaysia, aided according to some, by the Cabinet reshuffle on July 28 last year.

WEDNESDAY

TNB Completes Deal On Entry Into Turkey's Energy Sector

From Mohd Shukri Ishak

ISTANBUL -- Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) has completed a deal on its entry into Turkey's expanding energy sector with the successful transfer of shares in GAMA Enerji AS to Global Power Enerji AS, a wholly-owned unit of TNB. This follow TNB's successful acquisition of a 30 per cent stake in GAMA Enerji on Dec 14, 2015 from GAMA Holding AS, International Finance Corp and IFC GIF Holding, a fund managed by the IFC Asset Management Co.

THURSDAY

FTA Further Strengthens Malaysia-Turkey Relations

From Mohd Shukri Ishak

ISTANBUL -- Malaysia-Turkey ties have grown stronger since the signing of the free trade agreement (FTA) in 2014, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. He said Thursday, although trade between the two countries soared by 48.8 per cent in 2015 compared to the previous year, more efforts were needed to ensure it could achieve the target of US$5 billion (US$1 = RM3.89) by 2020.

FRIDAY

Entrepreneurship Action Plan To Shift Graduates' Mindset

PUTRAJAYA -- The Higher Education Institution Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2016-2020 launched Friday could shift graduates' mindsets from seeking work to creating jobs, says Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh. He said the plan targets the participation of 100 per cent of higher education institution students in entrepreneurship programmes and 15 per cent in business activities, besides aiming to get five per cent of graduates to be self-employed rather than working for someone else by 2020.

SMEbrief

Doha Hosts 12th International Network Meeting For SMEs

DOHA -- Qatari Minister of Economy and Commerce Sheikh Ahmed Jassim Mohammed Al-Thani, Wednesday, inaugurated the 12th Annual Meeting of International Network for SMEs (INSME 2016) which is being held for the first time here, in cooperation with Qatar Development Bank (QDB).
The three-day event is themed 'Enabling Smart SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) as Key to Success', Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported.

50 Malaysian Companies To Tap China's Halal Market

PUTRAJAYA -- The Secretariat for the Advancement of Malaysian Entrepreneurs (SAME) will lead a delegation of 50 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to China in May to explore the halal market among the country's 26 million Muslims. Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Wee Ka Siong said Wednesday, the 10-day trade mission to Xian, Inner Mongolia and Qing Hai was being mounted after the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in March. SAME, Halal Development Corporation and Bank of China signed an MoU to develop the halal trade with China.

European Business Group To Help Malaysian Students Become Entrepreneurs

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- Brussels-based European Confederation of Junior Enterprises (JADE) is keen to help university students in Malaysia acquire and sharpen their entrepreneurial skills by operating business ventures known as Junior Enterprises (JE). "JE dramatically improves a student's career perspective with 60 per cent of them usually finding work before ending their studies," JADE Vice President Marion Depouilly told Bernama in an interview recently.

MDV, Teraju Co-Launch RM100 Mln Shariah-Compliant Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- Minister of Finance Incorporated's wholly-owned unit Malaysia Debt Ventures Bhd (MDV) has collaborated with Unit Peneraju Agenda Bumiputera (TERAJU) to co-launch a new RM100 million shariah-compliant Bumiputera Technology Fund (BTF) for Bumiputera technology companies. The move aims to facilitate the companies' business expansion through shariah-compliant working capital and asset financing facilities, MDV said in a statement Thursday.

PropUP Propertyupdate

PKNS, Lam Soon Seal 60 Year Land Lease Agreement

SHAH ALAM -- The Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS) Tuesday signed a 60-year land lease agreement with Lam Soon Edible Oil (M) Sdn Bhd (Lam Soon) to develop offices, warehouses and research and development centres in Selangor Cyber Valley in Sepang. Lam Soon will pay about RM76.9 million to lease the land from PKNS. PKNS General Manager Azlan Md Alifiah said construction, over 9.68 hectares, was scheduled to begin in the second quarter of the year.

Mapex 2016 To Showcase RM1.37 Bln Properties

SEREMBAN -- A total of 2,215 properties worth over RM1.37 billion will be offered at competitive prices at the Malaysia Property Exposition 2016 (Mapex 2016) organised by the Negeri Sembilan Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda).Chairperson, Jenny Wang Lee Peng said Tuesday, 21 developers would showcase an impressive line-up of commercial and residential properties at the expo to be held from April 22 to April 24.

iProperty.com Malaysia Agents Advertising Awards Is Back

KUALA LUMPUR -- iProperty.com Malaysia has announced that it is once again gearing up to launch the second iProperty.com Agents Advertising Awards (AAA). The awards pay tribute to real estate agencies and individuals who champion best advertising practices and exhibit excellence in customer service, iProperty Group Chief Executive Officer Georg Chmiel said in a statement Wednesday.

Astaka To Launch RM6 Bln Property Project In Johor

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer, Astaka Holdings Ltd, will launch a 4.8-hectare project with a gross development value (GDV) of RM6 billion in Johor this year. In a statement Thursday, the company said, the "One Bukit Senyum' project will comprise signature Grade-A offices, high-end retail, 5-star hotels and serviced residences."The GDV includes The Astaka @ One Bukit Senyum launched recently, which is the tallest residential building in Malaysia and Singapore," it said.

PropertyGuru.com Is Malaysia's Top Property Site

KUALA LUMPUR -- PropertyGuru.com, the region's leading property site, is now the market leader in Malaysia with 42 per cent market share as verified by leading independent cross-platform measurement company, CornScore. "We have over 1.3 million properties listed regionally, enabling home transactions worth US$12 billion (US$1 = RM3,89) per year," PropertyGuru said in a statement Thursday.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 326

Losers - 422

Not Traded - 587

Unchanged - 395

Value - 1705652633

Volume - 15851364

BURSA Malaysia Extends Gains For Third Day Running

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia extended gains for the third day Friday, spurred by last-hour buying in selected heavyweights. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) went up 4.21 points to intraday peak of 1,727.99 from Thursday's close of 1,723.78. The key index, which opened 1.32 points lower at 1,722.46, moved to as low as 1,721.10, before ending at the peak. Market breadth, however, was negative with losers outpacing gainers by 422 to 326 with 395 counters unchanged, 587 counters untraded and 18 others suspended. Total volume shrank to 1.58 billion shares worth RM1.70 billion from 1.63 billion shares worth RM1.95 billion on Thursday. A dealer said last-hour buying in the telecommunication and finance-linked counters pushed the key index higher. Main Market turnover strengthened to 1.20 billion units worth RM1.63 billion from Thursday's 1.15 billion units worth RM1.86 billion.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.9000	4.0100
EUR	4.3930	4. 4046
GBP	5.5232	5. 5381
100 YEN	3.5656	3.5757
SGD	2.8683	2. 8773

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Closes Easier Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed easier against the US dollar Friday on subdued appetite for the note amid a strengthening greenback, dealers said. At the close, the local note ended at 3.9000/0100 against the greenback from 3.8900/8930 Thursday. The local unit was traded lower versus other major currencies. A dealer said oil producers were positive ahead of the meeting in Doha on April 17 to discuss an output freeze plan as an objective to prop up oil prices. Currently, the international benchmark Brent crude oil stands at about US$43 per barrel, he said. The ringgit fell against the Singapore dollar to 2.8683/8773 from 2.8521/8554 Thursday and declined against the yen to 3.5656/5757 from 3.5626/5663 on Thursday. It fell against the British pound to 5.5232/5381 from 5.5012/5074 on Thursday and was lower against the euro to 4.3930/4046 from 4.3825/3866 Thursday.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates Close Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term inter-bank rates ended stable Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to reduce the liquidity surplus in the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM26.43 billion from RM28.68 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM6.648 billion from RM14.213 billion. In the morning, BNM called for five tenders, comprising two conventional money market tender, a Qard tender, a Commodity Murabahah Programme and a reverse repo tender. BNM also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM25 billion and a Qard money market tender for RM6.6 billion, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates were pegged at 3.30 per cent, 3.35 per cent and 3.39 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures End Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives were untraded Friday. April 2016, May 2016, June 2016 and September 2016 remained pegged at 96.31, 96.32, 96.35 and 96.35, respectively. Open interest was nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.70 per cent.

KLCI Futures End Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended higher Friday in sync with the sentiment on the underlying cash market. Spot contract April 2016 added 3.00 points to 1,721.50, May 2016 edged up 4.00 points to 1,717.00, June 2016 advanced 3.00 points to 1,713.00 and September 2016 was traded 4.00 points better to 1,699. Turnover rose to 4,609 lots from Thursday's 4,511 lots, while open interest increased to 37,978 contracts from 37,166 contracts Thursday. The benchmark FBM KLCI ended 4.21 points better at 1,727.99.

Takaful Malaysia Foreign Ownership At 9.58 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Foreign ownership in Syarikat Takaful Malaysia Bhd (Takaful Malaysia) stood at 9.58 per cent as at March 31, 2016. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, Takaful Malaysia said this was represented by a total of 78.16 million ordinary shares of 20 sen each of the issued and paid-up capital held by foreigners. "The said percentage is within 30 per cent of the prescribed limit allowed to be held by foreigners under the company's articles of association," it said.

M'sia Continues To Develop New Assets On Islamic Finance Principles - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia is continuing to develop new financial assets, such as carbon credit-based solutions along the principles of Islamic finance, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said. He said the assets are sustainable and reward-generating to investors, underpinned by real economic activities, are end-to-end Shariah-compliant and can be sold to the world's carbon buyers. "In this regard, we will consider providing incentives to companies that offset their carbon footprint with Malaysian rainforest credit," he told reporters here Tuesday.

Bank Muamalat To Sell Gold-i Worth About RM56 Mln For FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd targets to sell about 320 kilograms (kgs) of Muamalat Gold-i (MGi) valued at approximately RM56 million for the financial year ending March 31, 2017 (FY17). Chief Operating Officer (Business), Mashitah Osman, said MGi was the bank's latest initiative to boost its wealth management segment which included Takaful, investment and will writing.

EPF Expects About 1.5 Mln Members To Convert To EPF-i In 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) expects about 1.5 million of its members to convert to its first fully syariah-compliant fund (EPF-i) after the fund's implementation in January 2017. "It is just another option for the members to decide whether to go for the syariah fund or stick to the present conventional fund," said EPF Chief Executive Officer Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan here Tuesday.

Flattish Growth Puts Insurance Industry In Consolidation Mode - MII

By Farhana Poniman

KUALA LUMPUR -- Insurance industry players are taking advantage of the expected flattish growth this year to review their processes and improve efficiency, said the Malaysian Insurance Institute (MII). MII Chief Executive Officer Datuk Syed Moheeb Syed Kamarulzaman said here Wednesday, the industry had always performed in accordance to the economy and as it is now, the signs were pointing towards weak public demand.

Bank Islam Targets TAP Mobile Banking Income To Grow 6 Pct This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd (BIMB) expects its fee-based income from Transact-at-Palm (TAP) Mobile Banking-i service to grow six per cent this year from five per cent last year. Managing Director Datuk Seri Zukri Samat said here Thursday, the bank aimed to increase its TAP subscribers to 600,000 by year-end from 560,000 currently following a series of campaigns to be launched soon. "Revenue from TAP service rose 35.6 per cent to RM7 million at end-2015 compared to 2014," he said.

Malaysian Re Receives Licence To Carry On Retakaful Business

KUALA LUMPUR -- MNRB Holdings Bhd's (MNRB) wholly-owned unit, Malaysian Reinsurance Bhd (Malaysian Re), has received a licence from the Minister of Finance to carry on its general retakaful and family retakaful businesses, effective April 13, 2016. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, MNRB Group said, it had undertaken an internal restructuring exercise for its retakaful businesses. Under this exercise, the general retakaful and family retakaful businesses would be managed by Malaysian Re through its newly-established retakaful division.

Manufacturing Sales Down 1.4 Pct Y-O-Y At RM51.4 Bln In Feb

KUALA LUMPUR -- The sales value of the manufacturing sector in February 2016 declined by 1.4 per cent to RM51.4 billion from RM52.1 billion reported a year ago. In a statement here Monday, the Department of Statistics said the sales value decreased by 7.0 per cent when compared on a monthly basis. It said the decline was mainly due to a decrease in the manufacture of liquefied or compressed inorganic industrial or medical gases, followed by the manufacture of refined petroleum products.

Construction Sector To See 8-10 Pct Growth This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The construction sector is expected to grow between eight and 10 per cent this year from 8.2 per cent in 2015, driven by the government-related projects, says Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof here Monday. He said projects such as Greater KL, light rail transit, mass rapid transit as well as new highways, including Pan Borneo, were providing tremendous growth potentials for the industry and the country's economy. "With (projects) which have been planned under the public sector and numerous housing projects, we should be able to achieve this year's growth target," he said.

MAHB: March 2016 Passenger Movements Up 2.7 Pct To 9.5 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Passenger movements at airports under Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd's (MAHB), including the Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport (SGIA), grew 2.7 per cent year-on-year to 9.5 million in March 2016. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday, MAHB said international traffic jumped 2.9 per cent to 4.2 million passengers while domestic traffic increased 2.6 per cent to 5.3 million passengers.

Malaysia's 11street Eyes Triple-Digit Growth By Year-End

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's online e-mall, 11 street, is eyeing triple-digit growth by year-end to be driven by significant growth in the number of sellers and merchandise on its platform. Chief Executive Officer, Hoseok Kim, said here Monday, currently, there were about 13,000 sellers on its platform with 90 per cent of them Malaysians. He said the online e-mall, which was formed in April last year, has over five million products.

Further Falls In Air Fares Likely In 2016 - IATA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Further falls in air fares are likely to be seen in 2016 as hedging contracts unwind, says the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in a statement here Tuesday. It also said the decrease in air fares would be driven by the decline in oil prices seen towards the end of last year as it feeds through.

Sarawak's Trade Records RM125.76 Bln Last Year

KUCHING -- Sarawak recorded a 24 per cent drop in its total trade to RM125.76 billion in 2015 against RM156.84 billion registered in 2014 due to a decline in oil and commodity prices, which is the state's main exports, says Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem. "The state's five main commodities are liquefied natural gas which contributed RM47.07 billion to last year's total, crude oil (RM14.29 billion), palm oil and palm kernel oil (RM8.11 billion), timber products (RM6.61 billion) and petroleum products (RM653 million)," he said here Tuesday.

Modenas Enters Into RM79.98 Mln Transaction With Kawasaki

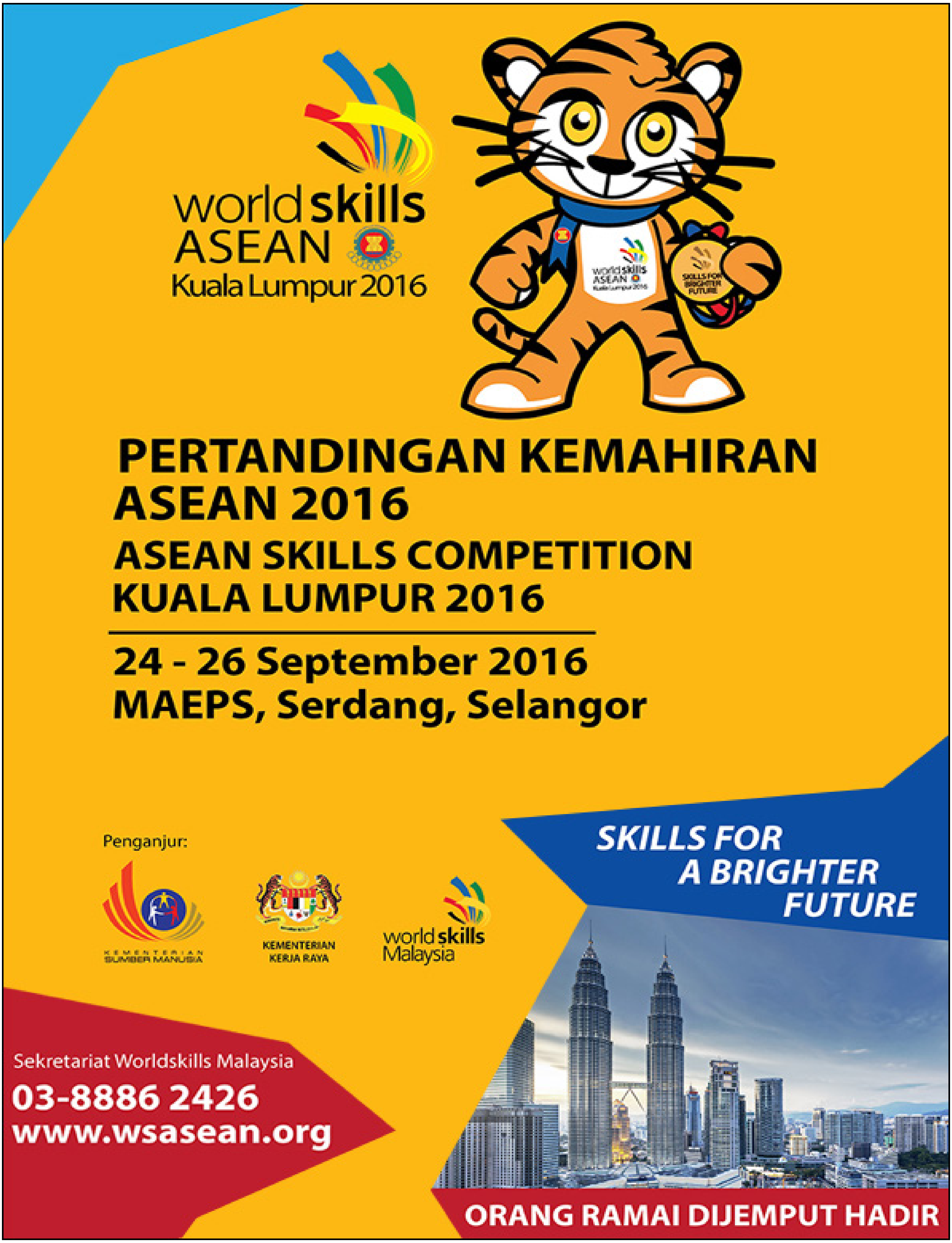
KUALA LUMPUR -- DRB-Hicom Bhd's, unit Motosikal Dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd (Modenas), has entered into a recurrent related party transactions (RRPT) with Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd worth RM79.98 million. DRB-Hicom said here Tuesday, the nature of the transactions included the provision of technical support, payment of royalties and supply ofcompletely-knocked-down components for motorcycles by Kawasaki to Modenas, as well as, the supply of components to Kawasaki by Modenas.

Malaysia Can Achieve Up To Seven Pct Growth This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has the potential to record up to seven per cent economic growth this year driven by the outcome of the implementation of various economic and transformation plans, said Khazanah Nasional Bhd. Its Managing Director, Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar, said here Tuesday, while the projections of Bank Negara Malaysia, Ministry of Finance and other external parties of four and 4.5 per cent growth were considered decent, there was a potential of higher growth of 6.5 per cent and seven per cent as anticipated by economists.

Bank Muamalat Expects To Maintain Growth At Seven Pct For FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd expects to maintain its profit growth of seven per cent for the financial year ending March 31, 2017 (FY17) -- the same level achieved in the previous financial year. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Mohd Redza Shah Abdul Wahid said here Tuesday, the growth was expected to be moderate on the back of slowing economy and rising cost of living. "The growth would continue to be driven mainly by consumer financing and probably about 30 to 40 per cent from the corporate sector," he said.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MOSTI Approves Over 100 Projects Worth RM20 Mln Under MSI Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) has approved over 100 projects worth RM20 million under MOSTI Social Innovation Fund (MSI) since its introduction in April last year. MOSTI Deputy Minister Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah said here Monday, among the projects approved were in the agriculture, technology and education sectors. “The fund, which covers all the 28 agencies under the ministry, aims to help local communities adopt new technologies and boost their productivity,” he said.

Malaysia Airlines Offers Travel Options To Rayani Air Passengers

KUALA LUMPUR -- Passengers holding Rayani Air tickets will be able to rebook their cancelled flights via Malaysia Airlines. The national carrier is offering to transfer stranded passengers at discounted fares following Rayani Air’s suspension. These fares are available from Monday until April 30, 2016, for immediate travel until July 31, 2016, said Malaysia Airlines in a statement here Monday.

BiotechCorp To Launch 3 Projects Worth RM300,000 This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd (BiotechCorp) is expected to launch by year-end three projects, each involving an investment of RM100,000, says Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal. The three projects -- the production of kacip fatimah (Labisia pumila) for weight loss; seaweed production for skincare and food; and mushroom production from waste coffee in urban areas such as the Klang Valley -- could create more jobs in the country, he said here Monday.

AirAsia Offers Rescue Fares To Passengers Of Rayani Air

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia is offering all Rayani Air passengers who were affected by the recent suspension of their operations a discount of 50 per cent to and from Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi, Kota Baharu, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu. In a statement here Monday, AirAsia said the 50 per cent discount, for those travelling from Monday until April 27, is applicable to all Rayani Air passengers who hold a confirmed flight booking.

Axiata Completes Acquisition In Ncell, Looks Forward To Work With Nepali Govt

KUALA LUMPUR -- Upon marking its milestone entry into the Nepal telecommunications market, the Malaysian-Axiata Group Bhd is looking forward to working with the Nepali government and regulators to further improve the quality of connectivity and technology in the country. The telco company Tuesday announced that it had completed its acquisition of Ncell Private Limited or Ncell, the number one mobile operator in Nepal. President and Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Jamaludin Ibrahim said the unique mix of a controlling stake of a well-managed number one player in a healthy, growing market, presents Axiata the perfect expansion opportunity of its footprint.

Govt Allocates RM60 Mln As R&D, Commercialisation Grants For 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government via Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC) Sdn Bhd, has allocated RM60 million as grants for research and development (R&D) and product commercialisation for 2016. Of the figure, RM40 million is allocated for commercialisation of the local R&D fund, Technology Acquisition Fund (RM10 million) and Business Start-Up Fund (RM10 million). MTDC Chief Executive Officer Datuk Norhalim Yunus said here Tuesday, the funds are crucial for local companies to expand their businesses at home and in the global market.

M’sia, Major Beneficiary Of Globalisation Despite Challenges - Mustapa

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has been one of the major beneficiary of globalisation, despite major challenges to the nation, says Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. Citing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) which was established in 2015, he said here Tuesday, the regional economic integration agenda could help Malaysia move up the value chain with good production and corporation among small and medium enterprises.

Malaysia Airlines Hopes For Fruitful Meeting

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines Bhd (MAB) is optimistic the meeting between airlines operators and the Ministry of Transportation Tuesday to discuss the proposed hike in fee charges by the Department of

Civil Aviation (DCA) will be fruitful. MAB Chief Commercial Officer Paul Simmons hoped the outcome of the meeting would be moderated to prevent any future consequences to airline operations.

Tabung Haji Denies Involvement In PTPTN Loan Repayment

KUALA LUMPUR -- Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH) has refuted claims on social media of its involvement in the debiting of money from a depositor's account to repay National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) loans, saying they are baseless. "TH does not have any joint venture related to the payment of PTPTN loans. Any withdrawal from depositors' accounts needs to have the agreement of the depositors themselves," it said in a statement Tuesday. However, it said, the party involved in the matter has apologised to TH by letter and through social media.

M'sia-Turkey Business Club Sees Boost In Exports To Turkey

KUALA LUMPUR -- The newly-formed Malaysia-Turkey Business Club (MTBC) expects exports to Turkey this year to grow more than the 54.5 per cent growth achieved last year, said Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). MATRADE Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud said here Wednesday, the new club, which will complement the existing council that promotes Malaysia-Turkey trade, would further enhance networking between companies in various sectors from both nations.

QL Resources To Invest RM100 Mln To Bring In FamilyMart Franchise

KUALA LUMPUR -- Agro-food company, QL Resources Bhd, will invest RM100 million to bring in the franchise of Tokyo-based convenience store, FamilyMart Co Ltd, to Malaysia. "The RM100 million will include the establishment of 300 FamilyMart stores in Peninsular Malaysia in five to six years' time, with the first store to be opened by year-end," Group Corporate Development Director, Chia Lik Khai told reporters here Wednesday.

Sarawak's Capital Investments Surge To RM11.8 Bln In 2015

KUCHING -- Sarawak's capital investments surged to RM11.8 billion last year from RM8.4 billion in 2014 and RM6.8 billion in 2013, Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said here Wednesday. He said the Malaysian Investment Development Authority projected the state's capital investments this year's to surpass last year's figure. "I hope Sarawak will attract more high-technology (projects) with high-impact investments," he said.

Proton Basically Agrees To Govt Terms For RM1.5 Bln Soft Loan - Mustapa

KUALA LUMPUR -- Proton Holdings Bhd (Proton) has, in general, agreed to the terms of the RM1.5 billion soft loan, approved by the government last week, says International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. "We do not see big problem on that," he told reporters here Wednesday. Mustapa said currently, the national car manufacturer was in discussion with the Ministry of Finance on the matter.

Munchy's To Expand To Myanmar, Taiwan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Homegrown snack food manufacturer, Munchy Food Industries Sdn Bhd (Munchy's) is expanding its market to Myanmar and Taiwan in a bid to be a top regional player in the next five years. Chief Executive Officer Tan Chuan Kok said here Thursday, the company is currently negotiating with its respective partners in the two countries to open new production lines there.

Theta Edge To Develop Virtual Haj Mobile App

By Sankara Subramaniam Venkatachakan

SHAH ALAM -- Muslims who plan to visit Mecca at least once in their lifetime to complete the Haj will have a chance to experience a virtual tour of the holy city with a mobile application developed by Theta Edge Bhd (Theta Edge), a subsidiary of Lembaga Tabung Haji. Theta Edge Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Shukor Karim said here Thursday, Theta Mobile Sdn Bhd (Theta Mobile) is currently developing a mobile application to enable observant Muslims to visit the important sites of Islam within the holy city of Makkah and Madinah through a 3D virtual tour.

GCH Retail Secures Long-Term Contracts With Farmers, Fishermen

KUALA LUMPUR -- Major retail player, GCH Retail (M) Sdn Bhd, has eliminated the role of middlemen by securing long-term contracts with farmers and fishermen for direct supply hence reducing cost and product price. Its Malaysia and Brunei Regional Director, Datuk Tim Ashdown, said the economic challenges had affected consumer sentiment in the last 12 months which was actually a cyclical process. "The long-term contract will help local farmers and fishermen as this is a form of guaranteed income. "This will also indirectly reduce the prices of food as we are going straight to the supply and eliminating middlemen," he told reporters here Friday.

Eastspring Investments Appoints Tang CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Eastspring Investments Bhd, the Asian investment management arm of Prudential plc, has appointed Raymond Tang Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In a statement here Monday, Eastspring said, Tang, an industry veteran with over 30 years of experience, would be responsible for growing the company's business in Malaysia and further developing relationships with its clients.

Foundation Allocates US$10 Mln For Sustainable Devt

KUALA LUMPUR -- Jeffrey Cheah Foundation has allocated US$10 million (US$1=RM3.88) for its strategic collaboration on sustainable development with the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). In a statement here Monday, the foundation said the allocation would be used to create the world's best curriculum, academic and executive programmes on sustainable development via several objectives, including the establishment of Jeffrey D. Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development (Sachs Centre) at Sunway University here.

Vietjet Offers 50,000 KL-Ho Chi Minh Promotional Tickets From RM0

KUALA LUMPUR -- Vietnam low-cost airline, Vietjet Air, is giving away 50,000 promotional tickets from just RM0 in conjunction with its newest international route connecting Kuala Lumpur with Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on June 1. Vietjet Vice-President Nguyen Thi Thuy Binh said here Tuesday, the launch of the new route was part of its master plan to increase its operations in the South East Asian region.

FTSE Russell Launches FtTSE4Good ASEAN 5 Index

KUALA LUMPUR -- Global index provider, FTSE Russell, has launched the FTSE4Good ASEAN 5 Index, an environmental, social and governance (ESG) index developed in collaboration with ASEAN exchanges. In a statement here Tuesday, FTSE Russell said the new benchmark comprised companies listed on the stock exchanges of Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand.

Techninier, U Mobile Holds Mobile Game Tournament

KUALA LUMPUR -- Techninier Sdn Bhd, a mobile social gaming platform provider, has partnered U Mobile Sdn Bhd to hold a mobile game tournament exclusively for U Mobile customers through its own built game, 'Sky Invasion'. In a statement here Tuesday, Techninier said the mobile game tournament would run from Tuesday until Aug 1. U Mobile subscribers can participate for free and stand a chance to win prizes worth RM100,000 including the grand prize, a brand new Kia Picanto 1.2 AT, as well as, other prizes such as motorcycles, electronics and vouchers.

P1 To Leverage On TM Customer Base To Boost Mart Position

KUALA LUMPUR -- Packet One Networks (M) Sdn Bhd (P1), soon to be known as Webe, plans to leverage on Telekom Malaysia Bhd's (TM) customer base to strengthen its position in the market. Its Chief Executive Officer, Puan Chan Cheong, said here Wednesday, the digital mobility services provider was expected to unveil its rebranding strategy and services later this year as it was currently undertaking internal user testing.

Celcom Launches WONDEROAM Roaming Service

KUALA LIMPUR -- Mobile telecommunications provider, Celcom Axiata Bhd, Thursday launched its international roaming services, WONDEROAM. The roaming services include WONDEROAM 1 Day Social RM10, WONDEROAM 1 Day Internet RM38 and WONDEROAM 1 Week RM138, which allows its customers to enjoy Internet service in up to 165 countries on one flat rate. Chief of Sales and Marketing Officer, Zalman Aefendy Zainal Abidin, said here Thursday, travelling abroad and using the devices as normal use could cause customers to worry about high charges.

Digi Launches 'Video Freedom' Pass

KUALA LUMPUR -- Digi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd has launched the 'Digi Video Freedom' pass in efforts to expand its coverage nationwide. Its Head of Postpaid and Digital Services, Praveen Rajan, said here Thursday, 'Digi Video Freedom' pass aimed to offer services that complemented the users' digital lifestyles.

Azman Hashim Receives IBFM's Islamic Finance Pioneering Initiative Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmBank Group chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim has received the Islamic Finance Pioneering Initiative Award at the Islamic Banking and Finance (IBFIM) third certification awards ceremony. The award was accorded to Azman for his contribution in the establishment of the first Islamic bank in Malaysia, which has served as the benchmark for other regional Islamic financial institutions.

Lessons On Going Abroad From Food Franchising Mentors

By Salbiah Said

SPECIALITY...D'Tandoor Putrajaya's speciality dish, the 24-hour roasted whole leg of lamb called Raan Srikandi unveiled at the launch of its new menu on March 30, 2015. Pic: Mahyudin Mohamad fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- Malaysian franchisors planning to venture abroad must always think outside the box, says founder of D'Tandoor Food Industries Sdn Bhd, Datuk Abdul Malik Abdullah.

"You need to know what your customers want. It's not easy to maintain your brand, but customers will pay for new things," he said at a seminar on Enhanced Franchise Development programme (EFDP) organised by the Malaysian External Development Corporation (MATRADE) recently.

"Always innovate and don't stick to one. From time to time, improve your product with creative ideas to stay relevant. It's a tough challenge," added Abdul Malik, who is also Managing Director of D'Tandoor International Group of Restaurants.

He said the company started as a conventional restaurant in Malaysia, but due to lack of manpower and resources, it decided to venture into franchising. "We started as a family business and have been running it professionally as we grow. The fastest to grow is franchising."

D'Tandoor had its beginning in 1984 when Penang-born Abdul Malik, started working in a Northern Indian Restaurant, Shezan in Subang Jaya. After working in Shezan, he was given the trust to manage Shikara, which had outlets in Bangsar and Petaling Jaya but had to be closed later due to the economic slowdown.

REAL CHALLENGES

He later joined Kelab Aman for four years from 1986 to 1990 which was considered the platform for Abdul Malik and his wife Mumtaz Begum Mohd Sidek, to open their own restaurant and face the real challenges.

In 1990, he decided to migrate to Sydney, to look for better opportunities and fresh ideas to be brought back and implemented in Malaysia. While he was there, he did the Diploma Course in Business Management.

In 1993, Abdul Malik returned to Malaysia and opened the first D'Tandoor Restaurant in Damansara Utama with cofounder, Tan Hun Kim. Since then, d'Tandoor has become the pioneer and a household name in Malaysia, with outlets overseas.

International restaurants of D'Tandoor are available in Perth, Sydney, New Zealand, Damam and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, Cambodia and upcoming international restaurants include Mauritius, Jakarta and Abu Dhabi.

It is planning to expand its outlets in every major state in Malaysia and is also looking into China, Dubai and Khazakhstan.

Putrajaya's D' Tandoor won the Indian Restaurant category for Innovative Restaurant at the Malaysia Tourism Awards (MTA) 2014/2015 recently.

STUDY THE MARKET

Franchising and Field Services Manager of halal fast food restaurant chain, MarryBrown Sdn Bhd, Kairul Azman said franchisors must first study the need in the markets and their culture before venturing into a new market.

"You need to find out how best your franchise can be marketed in the country. The location and distance will reflect the cost. Factor in language barriers and printing costs for brochures too," he said.

Others include marketability of products and services. Kairul cited spicy food products, for instance, would not guarantee success in American and British markets.

Franchisors also need to study access of raw materials, human resource requirements and they must be prepared to comply with regulatory bodies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), he said.

MarryBrown, which started in Johor Baharu in 1981, now operates more than 350 international outlets serving fried chicken, burgers, finger food, desserts, and beverages aside from serving Malaysian local dishes.

It currently has 148 outlets in Malaysia and plans to increase to 200 outlets by the second quarter of this year.

-- BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

Bursa Malaysia To Trade Higher Next Week
By Rosemarie Khoo

KUALA LUMPUR -- Shares on Bursa Malaysia are expected to trade higher next week, supported by positive domestic and regional sentiments.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank vice-president/head of retail research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the market had been on an upward trend for the past two months with the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) forming a solid psychology level at the 1,700 level.

"We have similar upward momentum from our crude palm oil (CPO) and rubber that support the sentiment for next week. The crude oil price also has stabilised and its recovery to US$43 per barrel, orchestrated well for Bursa Malaysia's stocks," he told Bernama.

Nazri said as China's trade data remained positive and solid, the figures indicated its economy was stabilising.

The upcoming Sarawak election and the Ecoworld International initial public offering (IPO) will be the domestic catalysts in supporting the local bourse's sentiment, he added. Nazri called on investors to accumulate the "Sarawak election-theme play" counters, namely Naim Holdings and Ta Ann Holdings.

For the week just ended, the market has been on consolidation mode as expected after the previous week's rally.

The FBM KLCI confined in tight range as sentiment turned cautious ahead of a weekend meeting of oil producers.

Oil producers led by top exporters, Saudi Arabia and Russia are expected to meet in Qatar on Sunday to discuss freezing output to rein in ballooning global over-production.

On a weekly basis, the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished 9.59 points higher at 1,727.99.

Weekly turnover leaped to 8.17 billion units valued at RM8.65 billion from 7.78 billion units valued at RM9.60 billion last week.

Main market volume gained to 5.61 billion shares valued at RM8.21 billion from 5.13 billion shares valued at RM9.16 billion previously.

Ringgit To Remain Strong Next Week
By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit will likely remain strong as the Brent crude oil is hovering around US$43 dollar per barrel, renewing optimism towards the local note.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank vice-president/head of retail research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the optimism would help Malaysia's oil and gas revenue.

"With oil palm and rubber (prices) going up, we have a momentum from the commodities to support the sentiment for next week," he told Bernama.

He said as China's trade data remained positive and solid, the figures indicated its economy was stabilising.

On the home front, the upcoming Sarawak election will be the domestic catalyst to support the sentiment.

"For the first quarter of this year, foreign funds turned net

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buyers at RM5.5 billion, a reversal from a net outflow of RM3.3 billion in the same period a year ago," Nazri said. The local note ended at 3.9000/0100 against the greenback on Friday, lower than 3.9000/9050 registered last Friday.

The ringgit fell against the Singapore dollar to 2.8683/8773 from 2.8521/8554 Thursday and declined against the yen to 3.5656/5757 from 3.5626/5663.

It fell against the British pound to 5.5232/5381 from 5.5012/5074 on Thursday and was lower against the euro at 4.3930/4046 from 4.3825/3866 Thursday.

Money Market To Stay Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian money market will likely remain stable next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continuing to intervene to manage surplus liquidity.

A dealer said the central bank is expected to conduct daily tenders to reduce excess liquidity from the financial market.

For the week just-ended, BNM intervened on a daily basis to absorb excess funds by conducting conventional money market tenders, Qard, repo, reverse repo and Commodity Murabahah Programmes.

On Friday, the central bank's action helped reduce the market's total liquidity surplus of RM26.43 billion from RM28.68 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it reduced to RM6.648 billion from RM14.213 billion previously.

The overnight rate stood at 3.21 per cent while the one-, two- and three-week rates were at 3.30 per cent, 3.35 per cent and 3.39 per cent respectively.

Meanwhile, the benchmark three-month interbank rate remained unchanged as last Friday's 3.70 per cent.

KLCI Futures To Be Well Supported Next Week
By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to be well supported next week as the underlying cash market may trade higher in the immediate term.

"Technically, indicators are positive and still pointing north.

"The FBM KLCI, which seems to have formed a solid bottom near the 1,700-point level, is set to test the 1,730 and 1,750 levels next week, and this will justify a rally in futures contracts," a senior trader told Bernama.

However, the conclusion of the oil producers meeting this weekend is crucial for the markets as the outcome may dictate the direction for crude oil prices, as well as influence and set a new tone for the local bourse, he added.

Oil producers led by top exporters, Saudi Arabia and Russia are expected to meet in Doha, Qatar on Sunday to discuss freezing output to rein in ballooning global over-production.

For the week just-ended, the benchmark FBM KLCI had consolidated with a slight upward bias and the FBM KLCI futures had mostly taken the cue from its performance.

Comparing Friday to Friday, the spot month April 2016 advanced 11.50 points to 1,721.50, May 2016 and June rose 13.00 points each to 1,717.00 and 1,713.00, respectively, while September 2016 added 7.50 points to 1,699.00.

Weekly turnover shrank to 26,008 lots from last week's 32,886 lots while open interest rose to 37,978 contracts from 40,994 contracts previously.

The benchmark FBM KLCI settled at 1,727.99, up 9.59 points from 1,718.40 last Friday.

CPO Futures To Trade In Cautious Mode Next Week
By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures prices are likely to trade within a tight range of between RM2,500 and RM2,600 a tonne next week on lack of fresh leads, a dealer said.

Interband Group of Companies senior palm oil trader Jim

Teh foresees a speculative play on the market next week in cautious trading as the local currency is expected to strengthen further.

“However, the reduction in stock to about 1.8 million tonnes from 2.5 million tonnes last year should provide little support in helping traders to make decisions on the market,” he told Bernama.

For the week just-ended, lack of buying interest saw the market remaining subdued.

April 2016 fell RM9 to RM2,638, May 2016 and June 2016 declined RM37 each to RM2,627 a tonne and RM2,643 a tonne, respectively, while July 2016 eased RM29 to RM2,641 a tonne.

Turnover rose to 246,253 lots from last Friday’s 187,158 lots while open interest advanced to 323,814 contracts from 285,652 contracts previously.

On the physical market, April South depreciated RM40 to RM2,630 a tonne.

Rubber Market To Trend Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to trend higher next week due to bullish sentiment on the oil price outlook.

A dealer said the atmosphere was positive among oil producers ahead of their meeting in Doha on Sunday to discuss an output freeze plan in the quest to prop up oil prices.

He said, however, with the expectations of further ringgit appreciation, gains in the commodity may be capped next week.

For the week just-ended, the local market was mostly higher, driven by the ringgit’s strength and weaker crude oil prices.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board’s official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 jumped 42.5 sen to 585 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk gained 21.5 sen to 474 sen a kg. The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 appreciated 28 sen to 577.0 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk expanded 17 sen to 473.0 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Subdued

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to remain subdued next week due to lack of trading interest.

For the week just-ended, the market remained untraded.

April 2016, May 2016, June 2016 and September 2016 were pegged at 96.31, 96.32, 96.35 and 96.35 respectively.
Open interest was nil.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR remained at 3.70 per cent, equivalent to that of last week.

KLTM To Extend Upward Trend Next Week

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tin price on the KLTM is expected to keep a strong tone with the metal projected to stay above US$17,100 per tonne to reflect continuous demand from Japan and Europe.

A dealer said the uptrend in copper prices, the benchmark for most metals, was also expected to affect the local tin price.

“Once the London Metal Exchange (LME) resumes trading on Monday, we will be able to see a clearer direction for tin,” he told Bernama.

The closing price on Friday was higher at US$17,100 per tonne than the US$16,850 per tonne hit on Monday, which was the highest for the week.

He said the strong performance was sustained during the week by overseas investor inflows and robust market fundamentals.

For the week just-ended, the metal finished US$350 higher at US$17,100 per tonne compared with US$16,750 per tonne last Friday, with trading dominated by European and Japanese buyers.

Weekly turnover was slightly lower at 226 tonnes against last week's turnover of 229 tonnes.

The price differential between the KLTM and the LME was at a discount of US$50 a tonne compared with a premium of US$100 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures To Trade Slightly Lower Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade slightly lower next week with the ringgit expected to continue its upward momentum.

A dealer said the strengthening of the ringgit due to a rally in global oil prices had added pressure on gold.

"With the equities market set to remain strong and oil prices continuing to edge higher, gold is likely to face continuing pressure," he said.

He said the Bursa Malaysia's gold futures market would also track the performance of the New York Commodity Exchange's (COMEX) gold market, the price setter for the precious metal.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, April 2016 loss 10 ticks to RM154.50 a gramme and July 2016 slipped 17 ticks to RM155 a gramme, while May 2016 increased three ticks to RM155.30 a gramme and June 2016 added seven ticks to RM155.65 a gramme.

Weekly turnover rose to 151 lots worth RM2.28 million from 99 lots valued at RM1.46 million last week.

Open interest on Friday widened to 566 contracts from 553 contracts previously.