BERNAMA
MALAYSIAeBiz
WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP MARCH 17-21, 2014

March 21, 2014

This Week's Highlight :
Zeti: M'sia Less Vulnerable To Economic Crisis

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economic structure and resilient financial system will make the country less vulnerable to major economic contraction, says Bank Negara Malaysia governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz.

"Whether there will be a next financial crisis is beyond our control and I am optimistic that the next round of crisis will be well managed," she told a media conference in conjunction with the BNM's 2013 Annual Report Wednesday.

She was asked to comment on the remark by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad Monday that Malaysia should get ready for another financial crisis in the wake of escalating prices and reduced purchasing power.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

Petronas, Shell Announce Limbayong Oil Discovery Offshore Sabah

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas and Shell Malaysia Monday announced oil discovery in offshore Sabah. The discovery was made by Shell via the Limbayong-2 well during the appraisal of the Limbayong gas field, said Petronas in a statement.

The drilling of the Limbayong-2 appraisal well was carried out by the consortium of Shell Malaysia (35 per cent), Conoco Phillips (35 per cent) and Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (30 per cent).

Tuesday

56 Nations Seek Malaysia's Halal Ecosystem Expertise

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Fifty-six countries are currently seeking Malaysia's expertise on the halal ecosystem, says Halal Industry Development Corp (HDC) Chairman, Datuk Seri Jamil Bidin. "With 1.8 billion Muslims in the world today, there is indeed a huge demand for countries to tap into," he told Bernama in an interview Tuesday.

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Wednesday

BNM: GDP Forecast Between 4.5-5.5 Pct This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economy is expected to grow between 4.5 and 5.5 per cent this year, compared with 4.7 per cent in 2013, with construction and services to contribute the bulk of the growth. The construction sector is likely to register a growth of 10 per cent this year from 10.9 per cent in 2013, followed by services 6.2 per cent (2013: 5.9), Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said in its 2013 Annual Report released Wednesday.

Thursday

Govt To Gazette Section 114 Of Water Services Act

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Federal Government will gazette Section 114 Act 655 of the Water Services Industry Act 2006 in two weeks' time to acquire control of the operations of water concessionaires in Selangor. Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili told reporters here Thursday, he needs to meet the Cabinet Committee on the Selangor water issue next week, and then the Attorney-General, to decide on gazetting the section.

Friday

MISC Disposes Entire Stake In MILS For RM250 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- MISC Bhd has disposed of the entire equity interest it held in MISC Integrated Logistics Sdn Bhd (MILS) for RM250 million to Golden Age Logistics Sdn Bhd (GAL). In a statement to Bursa Malaysia, the company said it entered into an agreement for the Sale and Purchase of Shares (SPA) with GAL Friday. GAL is a special purpose vehicle and wholly-owned subsidiary of Utusan Printcorp Sdn Bhd (UPSB).

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SMEbrief

RM2 Mln Business Boost For Terengganu Poor

KUALA TERENGGANU -- Yayasan Diraja Sultan Mizan has allocated RM2 million a year to help the poor to do business. A member of the foundation's trustee Datuk Mohd Fadzli Yusof told reporters Tuesday, 600 traders have benefitted from the fund by venturing into various businesses over the past five years.

Maybank Allocates RM1 Bln Loan For SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) has allocated about RM1 billion this year to a loan fund for small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) in the country. Of the amount, between 50 per cent and 60 per cent could be set aside for bumiputera SMEs, Maybank Singapore Group Head for Community Financial Services and Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Lim Hong Tat, said after an agreement signing ceremony Wednesday.

CGC-DPMM To Facilitate Bumiputera SMEs' Credit Access

KUALA LUMPUR – The Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC) and the Malay Chamber of Commerce, Malaysia (DPMM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding Tuesday to establish a collaborative framework to further strengthen their support for the development of Bumiputera small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Both parties will work closely to increase awareness and understanding among DPMM members on the guarantee and credit financing facilities offered by CGC and also by financial institutions in general, CGC President President and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Wan Azhar said in a statement here.

Indonesian Firms Eyeing Iskandar Malaysia

By Elmi Rizal Alias

JAKARTA -- The rapid pace of development in Iskandar Malaysia (IM) continues to be the focus of Indonesian investors, particularly for medium-sized industries, keen on expanding their business to the international stage. Four medium-sized entrepreneurs had already stated their interest in investing in IM, as a step towards moving into other areas globally, Chief Executive of the Iskandar Region Development Authority (IRDA) Datuk Ismail Ibrahim told the Malaysian media Tuesday.

PropUP Propertyupdate

Kajang Property Prices To Surge With MRT Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property prices in Kajang are expected to surge with the availability of better public transport infrastructure like the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), said Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan. Business activity in the town, the last station on the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT line, will also be enhanced with the better bus, rail and taxi connectivity, he told reporters while on a working visit to the MRT project in Jalan Reko, Kajang, near here last Saturday.

M101 To Launch 8 Projects Worth RM3 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- M101 Holdings Sdn Bhd aims to launch eight development projects with a total gross development value (GDV) of RM3 billion in the next three years, said Executive Director Datuk Chua Eng Pu. "We have completed one project last year and plan to build three more this year with a total GDV of RM1 billion," he told a media briefing after the launching ceremony here Monday.

Matrix's Sendayan Metropark Shop Units Sold Out

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer Matrix Concepts Holdings Berhad (MCHB) recorded a take-up rate of 100 per cent at the soft launch of their Sendayan Metropark Shop Offices. In a statement Monday, the group said all 50 units of the shop lots with Gross Development Value (GDV) of RM60 million, were snapped up via a balloting system within an hour.

Vacancy Rate At Luxury Condos Expected To Rise

KUALA LUMPUR -- The vacancy rate at luxurious condominiums in the country is expected to rise to an alarming 35-38 per cent this year amid a supply glut, said CH Williams Talhar & Wong Sdn Bhd Tuesday. This compares to a vacancy rate of 32 per cent in 2013 and 35 per cent in 2012, said Managing Director Foo Gee Jen at a press conference on the property market outlook for this year.

Phase 1 Of DA Land's RM2 Bln Devt Project Launched

PETALING JAYA -- Boutique developer, DA Land Sdn Bhd, has launched the first phase of The TWO development project, with an estimated gross development value (GDV) of RM2 billion for a period of between four and five years. The outdoor and indoor world-class theme on the 24 hectares land in Rawang, with a total GDV of RM5 billion will consist of three main phases for a period of 10 to 15 years, Chief Operating Officer Sip Mun Yee said after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sanderson Group Thursday.

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MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard
Gainers - 439
Losers - 328
Not Traded - 533
Unchanged - 322
Value - 3128607070
Volume - 17518278

Bursa Malaysia: KL Shares Close Higher On Bargain Hunting

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- Share prices on Bursa Malaysia closed higher Friday on bargain hunting across the board in line with the stronger regional stock markets, dealers said. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished at 1,820.48, up 2.31 points, after hovering between 1,816.85 and 1,821.69. A dealer said Southeast Asian stock markets staged a mild rebound, tracking the firmer US equities board as Wall Street shook off concerns over recent Federal Reserve policy.

Meanwhile, the Department of Statistics released the consumer price index (CPI) data for February, which showed an increase of 3.5 per cent from the same month last year. Commenting on the data, Affin Investment Bank Vice President/Head of Retail Research, Dr Nazri Khan, said the increase was within investors expectations, as Bank Negara Malaysia in its annual report Wednesday projected inflation to grow by three to four per cent this year. "The increase in CPI should not be a problem as it is still lower than the gross domestic product (GDP) growth projection of 4.5 to 5.5 per cent this year," he told BERNAMA. At the close, gainers outpaced losers 439 to 328, while 322 counters were unchanged, 533 untraded and 28 others suspended. Turnover stood at 1.75 billion shares worth RM3.12 billion from Thursday's 1.51 billion shares worth RM1.85 billion.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.3070	3.3100
EUR	4.5587	4.5632
GBP	5.4513	5.4582
100 YEN	3.2374	3.2410
SGD	2.5943	2.5983

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Continues Slide Against The Greenback

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit continued its decline against the US dollar Friday following the announcement by the US Federal Reserve that it would continue its stimulus programme, said a dealer. The local unit depreciated against the US dollar to 3.3070/3100 from Thursday's 3.2950/2980. It was reported that the greenback hovered near a three-week peak against a basket of major currencies Friday. Against other major currencies, the ringgit was traded mostly lower, except for the British pound, when it rose to 5.4513/4582 from 5.4542/4612. The ringgit fell to 2.5943/5983 from 2.5823/5867 versus the Singapore dollar, dipped to 3.2374/2410 from 3.2175/2216 against the yen and weakened to 4.5587/5632 from 4.5550/5598 against the euro.

Money Market: Short-Term Rates Close Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday following Bank Negara Malaysia's intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM16.271 billion from RM29.860 billion estimated in the morning, while in the Islamic system, the excess dwindled to RM3.994 billion from RM5.833 billion earlier. In the morning, the central bank called for six tenders -- one range maturity auction, two repos and three Al-Wadiah. It also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM16.3 billion and a RM2.7 billion Al-Wadiah money market tender, both for three-day money. The overnight rate stood at 2.94 per cent while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.01 per cent, 3.04 per cent and 3.07 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Close Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts closed untraded Friday. April, May, June and September 2014 remained at 96.65, 96.62, 96.61 and 96.53, respectively. Open interest totalled 3,030 contracts. At the 11am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.32 per cent.

KLCI Futures Close Higher On Strong Buying Interest

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed higher Friday on strong buying interest amid a firmer cash market, a dealer said. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Desmun Chan Coin Mun said the futures contracts surged for the highest weekly gain of the year, propped up by positive sentiment from the US. "Strong buying interest remains as better-than-expected months US data has raised the confidence of investors," he told Bernama. The US Conference Board Leading Economic Index, a measure of US economic health, increased 0.5 per cent in February, the largest increment in three months. At close, March 2014 perked 8.5 points 1,824, April 2014 and June 2014 advanced 9.5 points each to 1,822.5 and 1,817 respectively, and September 2014 gained five points to 1,812.5. Turnover rose to 10,818 lots from 6,570 lots Thursday, while open interest widened to 42,027 contracts from 37,871 contracts. The underlying FBM KLCI closed 2.31 points higher at 1,820.78.

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BANK NEGARA MALAYSIA
CENTRAL BANK OF MALAYSIA

BNM: M'sian Economy, Financial System Can Withstand External Shocks

KUALA LUMPUR -- Although intermittent spikes in currency volatility will remain a feature of the international financial markets in the near-term, Malaysia's economy and financial system have the capacity to withstand the shocks in the external environment, says Bank Negara Malaysia. Sentiments would continue to be affected by uncertainties over the financial conditions in the advanced economies and the resilience of some emerging economies, it said in the 2013 Annual Report released here Wednesday.

BNM: M'sian Investors Can Snap Up Bonds's Sell-Off By Foreigners

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is not concerned over the sell-off of Malaysian bonds by foreign holdings as local institutional investors are capable of stepping in to snap up the bonds. "We are not concerned because our papers especially the sovereign issuance in the market remained of high quality," she told a press conference at the release of BNM's Annual Report 2013 and Financial Stability and Payment Systems Reports 2013 here Wednesday.

Base Rate To Replace BLR in 2015 - Zeti

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Base Rate, a new reference rate for the pricing of floating-rate bank loans, will be introduced next year to replace the Base Lending Rate that has been in place for more than 30 years, says Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz. This enhancement to the interest rate framework aims to increase the relevance of the reference rate to the financial sector, improve the pricing mechanism that is more market-based, and ensure greater transparency for households and businesses, she said in the BNM 2013 annual report Wednesday.

BNM: Base Rate Provides More Transparent Reference

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Base Rate that will replace the Base Lending Rate (BLR) aims to provide a more transparent reference rate to enable customers to make better decisions on which of the many loan products offered by financial institutions to choose from, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Wednesday. The central bank said the Base Rate, which takes effect on Jan 2 next year, will also better reflect changes in cost arising from monetary policy and market funding conditions, while encouraging greater discipline and efficiency among financial institutions in the pricing of retail financing products.

BNM: Major Economies Expected To Improve This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Most major economies are expected to register improved growth this year, with the United States leading the pack with a growth forecast of 2.8 per cent, thanks largely to continued improvement in the private sector and lower fiscal constraints. Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said Japan was expected to record a growth of 1.7 per cent from 1.5 per cent, previously, while Europe will begin to recover from the Euro zone debt crisis with a positive growth of one per cent compared with minus 0.5 per cent last year.

BNM To Focus On Enhancing E-Payment Usage

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) will focus on the implementation of pricing reforms for payment services, the roll-out of the National Bill Payment Scheme (NBPS), and introduction of appropriate regulation for interchange fee-setting arrangements to promote greater use of e-payments from 2014 to 2015. To accelerate the migration to e-payments, it has adopted a three-pronged approach of implementing a conducive pricing structure, enhancing the e-payments infrastructure and promoting greater awareness on e-payment benefits, it said in its 2013 Financial Stability and Payment Systems Report Wednesday.

BNM: RM13 Mln Refunded To Customers In 2013

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) says, it continued to take firm action on financial service providers (FSPs) that failed to observe its guiding principles on fees and charges, resulting in refunds of more than RM13 million to affected customers last year. "While we seek to leverage on competitive market forces to ensure that fees and charges imposed on financial products and services are not excessive, FSPs must comply with the guiding principles on fair and reasonable fees and charges," it said in its 2013 Annual Report Wednesday.

BNM Continues Empowering Consumers Via Education Initiatives

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continued to devote significant resources to enhancing financial capability by empowering consumers through education initiatives, it said in its latest annual report Wednesday. The bank said its ongoing collaboration with the education ministry to integrate financial education into the primary school curriculum was making encouraging progress, with the progressive incorporation of financial education themes into it, beginning this year.

BNM's Liquidity Standards' Concept Paper Expected Mid-Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is expected to publish a concept paper on new liquidity standards by mid-2014 to manage liquidity risks so as to elevate industry practices in areas such as stress testing and contingency planning. The proposed standards will address the scope of level two assets, which includes the highly-rated corporate debt securities that can be recognised as high-quality liquid assets (HQLA), it said in its 2013 Annual Report Wednesday.

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JCorp's 2013 Pre-Tax Profit Surpasses RM1 Billion Mark

KUALA LUMPUR -- Johor Corp's (JCorp) pre-tax profit for financial year ended Dec 31, 2013 rose by 121 per cent to RM1.37 billion from RM617 million in the same period of 2012.

"The group's pre-tax profit was against the backdrop of RM6.57 billion revenue which did not take into account the quick service restaurant sector which was equity accounted following the acquisition of QSR Brands Bhd," it said in a statement here Thursday. JCorp said 85 per cent of the profits were derived from the three core businesses -- plantation, property and healthcare.

BNM's 2013 Net Profit Declines To RM5.45 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) net profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2013, declined to RM5.45 billion from the RM5.6 billion recorded in the same period of 2012. In its 2013 annual report Wednesday, BNM said total income declined to RM6.74 billion from RM6.91 billion previously.

It comprised revenue from foreign reserves management, including interest and dividends, non-treasury income and realised capital gains or losses.

Glomac Posts RM35.455 Mln Pre-Tax Profit In Q3

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer, Glomac Bhd, recorded a pre-tax profit of RM35.455 million in the third quarter ended Jan 31, 2014, compared with RM37.034 million registered in the same quarter last year. The lower pre-tax profit was due to higher land conversion premium rates and higher construction cost, Glomac said in a statement.

Passenger, Commercial Vehicle Sales Reach 50,718 Units February

KUALA LUMPUR -- The sale of passenger and commercial vehicles in February increased by 1.13 per cent to 50,718 units from 45,046 units in the same month last year. The Malaysian Automotive Association (MAA) said in a statement Tuesday, of the 50,718 units sold in February, 45,704 were passenger vehicles and the remaining 5,014 commercial units.

Norway Expects Higher Salmon Exports To Malaysia

PETALING JAYA -- Norway expects to increase the volume of its salmon exports to Malaysia last year of 1,900 tonnes by between five and ten per cent to ten this year, its Seafood Council Regional Director, Christian Chramer, said. "Apart from healthy lifestyle, the increase in retail growth as well as increasing sushi demand, will also also contribute towards higher volume in salmon exports to Malaysia," he told reporters here Tuesday.

ANGKASA Targets RM500 Mln Turnover This Year

KOTA BAHARU -- The National Co-operative Movement of Malaysia (ANGKASA) is aiming to generate a turnover of RM500 million this year with the participation of 500 schools, nationwide, under the School Cooperative Empowerment programme. President Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah told reporters here Wednesday, the programme offered early exposure to students to the world of retailing, entrepreneurship and leadership.

Inokom Aims To Boost Output By 50 pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Vehicle assembler, Inokom Corp Sdn Bhd, aims to increase its production by 50 per cent next year, said Managing Director, Mohd Rizal Jelain. Some 20,000 vehicles would be assembled for this financial year ending June 2014, with the bulk of them to be exported to Thailand, he told a media briefing here Tuesday.

Aeon Expects Steady Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- AEON Co (M) Bhd is expecting a steady revenue growth of five per cent this year, with 30 to 40 per cent expected to come from the food segment. "We are also expecting the food segment to grow by double digits this year," its Managing Director Nur Qamarina Chew Abdullah told reporters on the sidelines of a salmon promotion event at AEON Bandar Utama supermarket Tuesday.

Newwin Engineering Targets Annual Turnover of RM150 Mln

DUNGUN -- Newwin Engineering (M) Sdn Bhd, an oil and gas plant maintenance management service provider, is optimistic of generating an annual turnover of RM150 million in the next five years. Managing Director Mohamad Othman said Tuesday, the company was confident of achieving the target after having secured several new projects including in the Petronas industrial development zone in Pengerang, Johor, which would begin in 2017.

Scientex's Pre-Tax Profit Surges To RM44.4 Mln Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- Scientex Bhd's pre-tax profit for the second quarter ended Jan 31, 2014 surged to RM44.4 million from RM33.195 million in the same period of the last financial year. "The increase in pre-tax profit was mainly due to contribution from the property division," Scientex said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

SP Setia Eyes RM5 Bln Sales In FY14

SHAH ALAM -- Property developer, SP Setia Bhd, aims to achieve sales

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of RM5 billion from its Malaysian and overseas projects for the financial year ending Oct 31, 2014 (FY14). President/ Chief Executive Officer, Tan Sri Liew Kee Sin told reporters Thursday, this was due to the government's implementation of cooling measures like real property gains tax, removal of developer interest-bearing scheme and tightening of the loan-to-value ratio for property purchases.

Ranhill Utilities Targets 8-12 Pct Growth Year-on-Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ranhill Utilities Sdn Bhd, a water and waste services provider, is confident of achieving a growth rate of between eight and 12 per cent year-on-year. This follows its strong position in the foreign and domestic markets, its Business Development head, Khairul Effendy Tusam, told reporters at the company's memorandum of understanding signing Thursday.

ECM Libra Posts RM14.8 Mln Pre-Tax Profit FY2013

KUALA LUMPUR -- ECM Libra Financial Group Bhd posted a pre-tax profit of RM14.79 million for the financial year ended January 31, 2014, compared to a pre-tax loss of RM33.86 million in the previous financial year. Revenue, however, fell to RM28 million from RM165.6 million.

Top Glove Investing RM80 Mln In 2 Factories

KUALA LUMPUR -- The world's largest glove manufacturer, Top Glove Corporation Bhd, is to invest about RM80 million as part of its expansion plan to build a new factory and to upgrade another factory this year. The upgrading of Factory 27 in Lukut, Negeri Sembilan, is slated for completion by May this year while the new factory is to be completed by December, Executive Director Lim Chong Guan said during a conference call briefing on the group's second quarters results Thursday.

Benalec To Sell 22 Parcels of Land For RM235.1 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Benalec Holdings Sdn Bhd is selling 22 parcels of leasehold commercial land to Ultra Harmony Development Sdn Bhd for RM235.1 million. The land totalling 50 hectares is located in Melaka, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

LPI Capital To Focus On Core Underwriting Business

KUALA LUMPUR -- General insurer, LPI Capital Bhd says, it will continue focusing on the organic growth of its core underwriting business by maintaining its prudent policy to sustain healthy margin amid economic volatilities. For the financial year ended Dec 31, 2013, the company's pre-tax profit registered an impressive growth of 20 per cent to RM256.8 million from RM214 million registered in 2012, it said in a statement Monday.

Takaful Industry To See Double-Digit Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- The takaful industry is expected to record double-digit growth this year from RM5.5 billion contributions last year, said Malaysia Takaful Association Deputy Chairman, Wan Azman Wan Mamat. Wan Azman said of the RM5.5 billion contributions last year, RM3.6 billion came from family takaful sector and RM1.9 billion from general takaful sector. He said this at the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the association and University of Islamic Finance here Monday.

M'sian Firms Reap RM52.75 Mln Sales In Japan

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian companies achieved RM52.75 million sales at the FOODEX Japan Trade Fair held in Makuhari Messe in Chiba, the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) said Monday. Malaysia's national pavilion, comprising 24 Malaysian companies, received 1,790 trade enquiries from importers, distributors and procurement centres from Japan, China and South Korea throughout the four-day fair from March 4, the national trade promotion agency said in a statement.

Desa Murni Targets RM48 Mln Sales By Year-End

KUALA TERENGGANU -- Desa Murni Batik Sdn Bhd, renowned for its wide range of indigenous batik, is optimistic sales will hit RM48 million by year-end given the increase in demand for its products. Managing Director Mohd Suhaimi Embong told reporters here Monday, it had raised its target by RM10 million this year with the opening of additional outlets.

Sapura Industrial Posts RM23.7 Mln Pre-Tax Profit

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sapura Industrial Bhd's pre-tax profit rose to RM23.7 million in the financial year ended Jan 31, 2014 (FY 2014), from RM17.4 million the preceding year. Revenue for the period increased to RM274.3 million from RM265.7 million in FY 2013, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday.

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Mahathir: Be Ready For Next Financial Crisis

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia needs to be ready to face another world financial crisis which was expected in the face of escalating prices and reduced purchasing power, former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says. "With current and past financial crises we should dissect them and in turn get ideas on how to prepare ourselves to overcome them," he told a media briefing after the Perdana Leadership Foundation International Roundtable on 'Surviving the Next Global Financial Crisis', here Monday.

Malaysia Cited As Benchmark To Overcome Financial Crisis

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has been cited as a benchmark in respect of methods employed to overcome a financial crisis by UK-based DRPM Group (Holdings) Ltd Founder and President, Dr Karen Phillippa Malmgren. "Malaysia has been acknowledged as having chosen a very different path in meeting the challenge of that financial crisis. People are now looking back at Malaysia's example in considering what to do going forward," she told reporters after the Perdana Leadership Foundation International Roundtable here Monday.

Global Markets Seen Volatile On Emerging Market Worries

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- With worries around various emerging markets -- notably China and Ukraine at present -- 2014 is already shaping up as a more volatile year for shares, says Dr Shane Oliver, Head of Investment Strategy and Chief Economist, AMP Capital Investors Ltd. More broadly, share market investors should allow for the likelihood of a 10 to 15 per cent correction at some point along the way this year and somewhat more constrained returns than seen over the last two years, he said in his weekly market and economic update.

Missing Jetliner Not A Factor In KL Shares' Decline

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- External factors, and not the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, have influenced the decline in share prices on Bursa Malaysia last week. These factors include uncertainty over China's economic growth and continuing political tension in Ukraine, AMP Capital Investors Head of Investment Strategy and Chief Economist, Dr Shane Oliver told BERNAMA.

RHB: Incident Won't Severely Impact MAS' Travel Demand

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Research said the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines (MAS) Flight MH370 is not expected to have a severe impact on the national carrier's air travel demand in the medium to longer term. "The incident will be another blow to its prospects for a turnaround, but so far, flight bookings and load factor of MAS have seen no change in trends and no signs of slowing down," the research house said in a note Monday.

Missing MH370 Jetliner Has Not Affected Passengers' Confidence

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- The missing Malaysia Airlines' (MAS) jetliner incident has not dealt a dent in the air travellers' confidence to fly on the national carrier. Passengers, who have flown with the airline, said they still considered the Malaysian flag bearer as one of the world's best full-service airline in terms of safety and service.

FELDA Hopeful Of Better Collaboration With World Bank

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) says, it is optimistic the recent visit by an eight-member World Bank delegation to Felda Gunung Besout will pave the way for more collaboration between them. "We were also able to share FGV's commitment to meeting the increasing global demand for sustainable palm oil while demonstrating our on-ground operations," Group President and Chief Executive Officer Mohd Emir Mavani Abdullah said in a statement Monday.

M'sia-China Ties Remain Strong Despite Missing MH370 - Mustapa

KUALA LUMPUR -- International Trade and Industry Minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, is confident Malaysia-China trade will remain strong despite the missing MH370 aircraft. In 2013, the bilateral trade amounted to RM203.23 billion and China was the country's second biggest trade partner after Asean countries. "Until now, we only have figures for the first two months of the year which did not change much, he told a media briefing after the ministry's session with Foreign Missions and Business Councils here Thursday.

BNM: Malaysia Needs To Build Resilience Against Potential Crisis

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has to strengthen its resilience to cushion its economy from a potential crisis, says Bank Negara Malaysia deputy governor Dr Sukhdave Singh. "We are acting pre-emptively to make sure the vulnerability is addressed. At this stage, we don't see one (potential financial crisis). Given that we are in the period of transition, the risks are

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there," he told reporters after a panel discussion on the Malaysian economy.

Malaysia Focuses On High-Tech To Achieve High-Income Status
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia is giving emphasis to the development of high-technology industries to meet its aspiration to become a high-income country and the investments in these areas are encouraged, said International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed. "To achieve higher levels of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness in the high-technology industries, Malaysia is focusing on the development of the entire value chain to create greater linkages between the manufacturing and related support services," he said after officiating at the launch of the Kuala Lumpur office of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd, Japan (MHI) Thursday.

Discount Card Can Replace BR1M – Economist
KUALA LUMPUR -- The government could look into the possibility of offering lower income households a discount card to buy their daily essentials to replace 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M), said an economist. "Human nature is that if they get extra money upfront, they may use the money for unproductive spending," said Alliance Banking Group chief economist, Manokaran Mottain Thursday referring to the government's scheme of offering cash handouts for households earning less than RM3,000 a month.

Malaysian Shipping Cos Cry For Help
By Joan Santani Santanasamy
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's shipping industry is in urgent need of financial help to maintain capacity, expand fleet, service loans and meet overhead expenses amid the drop in cargo volumes. Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA) Senior Fellow, Nazery Khalid told BERNAMA, the industry, despite playing a crucial role to help the country chalk up trade exceeding RM1 trillion, faced the most challenging business time now.

Epson Ventures Into Textile & Garments Industry
By Muhammad Firdaus Borhan
KUALA LUMPUR –Epson Malaysia, a leader in digital imaging and printing solutions, has ventured into textile and garment industry, with the launch of its new Direct-To-Garment printers line-up here Friday. Epson Malaysia Country Manager Yasuhiro Kasai told BERNAMA, the new Sure Colour F-Series printers were Epson's solution for relevant businesses and commercial users to keep up with the demanding environment of fashion and textile industry.

Molecor Enters Regional Water Pipe Market
KUALA LUMPUR -- Molecor (SEA) Sdn Bhd is entering the Southeast Asia water pipe market after securing a project to manufacture and market PVC-O (orientated PVC) pipes under the "HYPRO" brand in the Southeast Asia region. The company, which is 65 per cent owned by Fitters Diversified Bhd with Ricwil (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and Molecor Technologia SL holding the remaining 25 per cent and 10 per cent stakes respectively, specialises in providing pipeline solutions. The three parties Thursday signed an agreement, witnessed by the Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water, Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili.

GE, GNS To Develop Biogas-To-Power Solution
KUALA LUMPUR -- General Electric (GE) has signed an agreement with Green and Smart Sdn Bhd (GNS) to jointly develop a palm oil mill effluent (POME) biogas-to-power solution for Malaysia. "GE's support will encompass expertise in gas engine technology and resources to support a joint development programme on POME biogas-to-power potential within the palm industry in Malaysia," GE said in a statement Friday.

Malindo Air Opens KL Ticketing Office
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malindo Air, Malaysia's hybrid airline, says it launched its latest ticketing office last week in Kuala Lumpur for the convenience of urban residents. In a statement Thursday, the airline said the new ticketing office, located at Ground Floor, 2 Lorong Medan Tuanku 1, Off Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, is open from 9 am to 6 pm on weekdays and between 9 am and 4 pm on weekends.

Che Wan Alias Appointed CEO Of Alhijrah TV
KUALA LUMPUR -- AlHijrah TV has appointed Tokoh Maulidur Rasul 2013 Che Wan Alias Che Wan Abdullah as its chief executive officer effective Feb 18. Che Wan Alias, who was previously AlHijrah TV content development and control general manager, replaced Datuk Bukhari Che Muda who died of cancer on Nov 10 last year, said AlHijrah Media Corporation in a statement Friday.

February CPI Up 3.5 Pct
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures inflation, rose 3.5 per cent to 109.8 in February 2014 from 106.1 in the same month last year. Compared with January, the CPI was up by 0.3 per cent, the Statistics Department said in a statement Friday. The 3.5 per cent rise in the CPI was brought about by the increased indices of all the main groups except those of miscellaneous goods and services (-0.8 per cent) and communications (-0.5 per cent). Notable increases among the main groups with high weights are transport (5.4 per cent); food and non-alcoholic beverages (4.0 per cent); housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels (3.4 per cent).

BNM International Reserves At RM424.2 Bln At March 14
KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's international reserves stood at RM424.2 billion (equivalent to US$129.6 billion) as of March 14, 2014. In a statement Friday, the central bank said the reserves' position was sufficient to finance 8.9 months of retained imports and was 3.3 times

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Boeing Rolls Out First Next-Generation 737

KUALA LUMPUR -- The first Boeing Next-Generation 737 to be built at the increased rate of 42 airplanes per month rolled out of the factory in Renton, Washington on March 20, 2014. The airplane will now undergo functional, systems and flight testing over the next three weeks before being delivered. Market demand remains strong for the Next-Generation 737, the world's best-selling commercial jetliner.

SapuraKencana Petroleum Inks RM16.5 Bln Refinancing Deal

KUALA LUMPUR -- SapuraKencana Petroleum Bhd has inked a RM16.5 billion refinancing deal with 13 local, regional and international banks to replace and streamline facilities as well as finance two recent acquisitions. The acquisitions include the Seadrill tender-rig business which has since been renamed SapuraKencana Drilling and purchase of the entire equity interest in Newfield Malaysia Holding Inc, it said in a statement Thursday.

EPF Revises Unit Trust Fund List for 2014/2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Monday announced the revised list of Fund Management Institutions (FMIs) and unit trust funds for 2014/2015 for its EPF members Investment Scheme (EPF-MIS), which takes effect April 1, 2014 until March 31, 2015. The scheme allows members to use part of their savings in Account 1 for investments in approved unit trust funds through the FMIs, which the EPF reviews annually based on a set of evaluation criteria that focuses on the consistency of fund performance as approved by the Ministry of Finance.

EPF Outsources RM72 Bln To External Fund Managers

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has outsourced close to RM72 billion to its external fund managers investing in both equities and fixed income, representing about 13 per cent of EPF's total investment assets. "We put high expectations on our fund managers to continuously deliver their full commitment to manage the funds professionally and prudently," its Chairman Tan Sri Samsudin Osman said at the 2013 External Portfolio Managers' Annual Awards here Thursday.

MIDA Confident Of Luring RM8 Billion Investments

By Zairina Zainudin

JOHOR BAHRU -- The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) is confident of attracting RM8 billion in investments this year from foreign companies that will establish their regional operations in Malaysia. Its Director for Regional Establishment and Supply Chain Management Division, Roeslina Abbas told reporters here Wednesday, the target was achievable given Malaysia's strong geographical position in the region and high purchasing power as well as its growing national economy.

Mohamad Ezam Appointed Communications Director To Finance Ministry

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who is also Finance Minister, has appointed Mohamad Ezam Mohd Nor, 47, as Director of Communications for the Finance Ministry effective March 15, 2014. In a statement here, the ministry said Mohamad Ezam was appointed communications director after he quit as a senator on March 5, 2014.

Christopher Ong Is DHL Express' MD Malaysia, Brunei

KUALA LUMPUR -- Express delivery company DHL Express Monday announced the appointment of Christopher Ong as the new Managing Director of DHL Express Malaysia and Brunei. Based in Kuala Lumpur, Ong, who was formerly Country Manager of DHL Express in Vietnam, will be spearheading all facets of the business operations and activities of DHL Express in Malaysia, in particular leading the company's strategic development in the country.

MRT Line 2 Gets Government Nod

KUALA LUMPUR -- Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) says the MRT second line has been approved by the federal government. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Wira Azhar Abdul Hamid told reporters last Saturday, the company is waiting for the official announcement to enable it to begin work on the MRT Line 2, which will probably link Sungai Buloh with Putrajaya.

Hyundai-Sime Darby To Open Six 3S Centres

KUALA LUMPUR --Hyundai-Sime Darby Motors (HSDM) is setting up six 3S (Service, Sales and Spare Parts) centres this year to make its services easily accessible to customers. The continuous expansion of Hyundai's network of 3S centres will enhance customers' ownership experience with one-stop facilities offering integrated sales, service and parts to cater to their automotive needs, its managing director Lau Yit Mun said Wednesday.

Feed-In Tariff Quota Deferred To Q2

PETALING JAYA -- The Feed-in Tariff (FiT) quota, which is scheduled to be announced by the Sustainable Energy Development Authority Malaysia (SEDA) Tuesday, has been deferred to the second quarter of this year. "This postponement is to allow SEDA to refine their proposal," Deputy Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister, Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, told reporters at the 'International Sustainable Energy Summit (ISES) 2014' here Tuesday.

IFIs To Embark On Transition of Islamic Deposits

KUALA LUMPUR -- Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs) will embark on an exercise to reclassify Islamic deposits as defined under the Islamic Financial Services Act 2013 (IFSA 2013). The Act has introduced two major classifications of products for the acceptance of money from customers by Islamic banking institutions – Islamic deposits and investment accounts, the Association of Islamic Banking Institutions Malaysia (AIBIM) said in a statement Thursday.

Bumitama Secures RM500 Million 5-Year Sukuk Issuance

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bumitama Agri Ltd and Maybank Investment Bank Bhd (Maybank IB) have priced and issued Bumitama's first RM500 million five-year sukuk issuance under its maiden RM2 billion sukuk programme in nominal value. Maybank IB said in a statement Friday, it would act as Joint Principal Adviser, Joint Lead Arranger, Joint Lead Manager and Joint Bookrunner for the sukuk (Islamic Bond) Programme.

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EPF Housing Withdrawal Can Boost Your Retirement Savings

By the EPF Corporate Communications Department

Many agree that home ownership and retirement make a powerful pair. Home ownership is about security, comfort and fulfilling one's dream of having a place to call your own. By becoming a homeowner, you will be able to enjoy the security of having a roof over your head and the opportunity to gain from capital growth.

Reviewing your financial commitments

Buying a home may be the largest single investment many Malaysians will make in their lives. But before you commit to buying your dream home, you must remember that the more money you spend on your dream home, the less you will have for your retirement. Before deciding how much you can really afford to put aside, you must first review your monthly income and expenses. Financial commitments such as car loan, education loan and insurance premiums must also be considered. Various other items, such as property tax and assessment and maintenance, must also be kept in mind. Once the budget has been decided, you have the option to acquire a brand new home from a developer, build your own house or buy a pre-owned house from an individual owner. Although buying a new house may be the most desirable as its price would probably be the most affordable, you may need to wait for a couple of years before being able to move in. You would then need to service the interest for your loan as well as the monthly rent. On the other hand, buying a pre-owned house allows you to move in almost immediately, but you may have to set aside money for repairs or renovation works, which sometimes can be quite costly. The location of your home would also be a factor to consider. If you intend to live in the same area for long or even for your entire life, it is worth waiting for the right house and saving more money before making that decision.

In this respect, there is no harm in lowering your expectations and settle for a house that you can afford for now. After all, you can always sell the house later and use the proceeds to buy the house of your dreams.

EPF Housing Withdrawals

Buying property with EPF funds can enhance your retirement savings as this asset class provides diversification as well as a hedge against inflation. In relation to this, the EPF has introduced three withdrawal types to assist members with the process of owning a house.

Withdrawal to purchase or build a house

This withdrawal allows you to withdraw from your Account 2 to partially finance the purchase or construction of a house by you as an individual or a joint-purchase with your spouse, your parents or siblings. The maximum amount you can withdraw is based on the following, whichever is lower:

i. The difference between the price of the house and the housing loan with an additional 10% of the price of the house, or

ii. the balance available in Account 2.

In the case above, the member can only withdraw RM25,000, which is the balance available in his or her Account 2.

The minimum amount eligible for withdrawal is RM500 while the maximum amount is subject to the balance of savings in Account 2 or the balance of the housing loan, whichever is lower. This withdrawal also allows you to assist your spouse to reduce his or her housing loan even though you are not named in the Sales and Purchase Agreement.

To illustrate further:

Price of house / construction cost	RM150,000
Housing loan	RM130,000
Difference between the price of house/ construction cost and housing loan	RM20,000
Additional 10% of the price of house / construction cost	RM15,000
Amount eligible for withdrawal	RM35,000
Balance in Account 2	RM25,000
Amount that can be withdrawn	RM25,000

Withdrawal is allowed for your first house only. However, if you have made a withdrawal previously to purchase your first house and subsequently sold the house, you may withdraw to buy a second house. Proof of sale of your first house must be produced.

Withdrawal to reduce or redeem housing loan

You can also withdraw the remaining balance in Account 2 once a year to reduce or redeem the balance of your housing loan taken from approved sources for the purchase or construction of a house.

The approved sources of housing loans include:

- financial Institutions licensed under the Bank and Financial Institution Act 1989 (BAFIA);
- Federal/ State Government or other government financial agencies; or
- Member's employer;
- Licensed co-operative society/ company (approved by the Development and Co-operative Department, Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Co-operative);
- Licensed insurance company approved by Bank Negara.

Housing Loan Monthly Instalment Withdrawal

This allows you to withdraw from your Account 2 to pay for your monthly housing loan instalment where payments are made via direct-crediting into your personal bank account on a monthly basis. Under this withdrawal, members below the age of 55 with a minimum balance of RM600 in their Account 2 can withdraw their savings to make monthly payments towards their housing loans. Members with non-performing loans (NPLs) are allowed to apply for this withdrawal. However, the monthly payments will be made directly to the lending financial institution until the arrears are cleared, after which they will be paid directly into the member's personal bank accounts.

In the interim period, the monthly payments will be made via banker's cheques in the name of the lending financial institution. To apply for the withdrawals, simply bring along your personal bank book and Housing Loan Repayment Statement to any EPF branches. You can find out details of the documents required by logging on to **www.kwsp.gov.my.**

Safe haven

Housing is an excellent, long-term investment that provides both economic and social benefits. With its promise of financial growth, it is one of the best ways to build a nest egg.

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LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

Bursa Malaysia To Trade Sideways Next Week

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) is likely to trade sideways next week on mixed external factors and the ringgit's volatility. Affin Investment Bank Vice President/ Head of Retail Research, Dr Nazri Khan, said upside factors from improved US economic data would be capped by the choppy reaction to the Ukraine-Russia tensions, the US Federal Reserve's earlier-then-expected interest rate hike and the ringgit's volatility. "We expect the index to gradually trend higher in tandem with Wall Street and its Asian peers in the wake of the upbeat US economic data.

"However, the fact that our local currency has dipped between 2.1 per cent to 3.31 per cent against the US dollar, may suggest some volatility in the local unit which will cap any rallies on Bursa Malaysia next week," he told BERNAMA. Nazri said although it is believed that stocks should temporarily consolidate, positive signs from an improved US economy might indicate good buying opportunities. "The upside surprise seen in the US economic data should reinforce expectations that the world's largest economy has overcome the slowdown in activity and meet its normalised gross domestic product (GDP) growth target of 2.8 per cent for 2014, benefitting most Asian trading partners," he added.

On the local front, he said Bank Negara Malaysia's bullish statement on tame inflation of between three and four per cent this year, and a robust GDP growth projection of between 4.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent against 4.7 per cent in 2013, should lend some support towards stabilising sentiment on Bursa. On a week-to-week basis, the FBM KLCI rose 15.36 points to 1,820.48. The Finance Index strengthened 150.74 points to 16,439.06, and the Industrial Index gained 18.40 points to 3,166.91, while the Plantation Index lost 46.37 points to 8,839.16. The FBM Emas Index perked 105.46 points to 12,617.45, the FBMT100 Index improved 101.62 points to 12,281.51, the FBM 70 rose 106.76 points to 13,859.21 and the FBM Ace expanded 54.09 points to 6,686.98.

Weekly turnover fell to 7.29 billion shares worth RM10.08 billion from last Friday's 8.45 billion shares worth RM10.34 billion. Main market volume declined to 5.27 billion shares valued at RM9.47 billion from 6.25 billion shares valued at RM9.74 billion last week. Warrant turnover decreased to 94.04 million units worth RM10.9 million from 106.39 million units worth RM11.62 million previously. The ACE market volume expanded to 1.9 billion shares valued at RM583.36 million from 1.78 billion shares valued at RM583.36 million last week.

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Forex: Ringgit To See Continued Volatile Trading Next Week

By Nurul Hanis Azmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to face continued volatile trading next week in the wake of recent announcements by the US Federal Reserve, said a dealer. The Fed had on Wednesday concluded its two-day meeting saying it would continue trimming its monthly bond purchases by US$10 billion to US$55 billion, signalling an economic recovery ahead for the country. In addition, it also raised projections for the future interest rate by 25 basis points to one per cent by end-2015, and by 50 basis points to 2.25 per cent by end-2016.

“However, this downtrend will not last long. The ringgit will rebound once it comes to terms with the trend,” she told BERNAMA. On the domestic front, Bank Negara’s bullish statement on tame inflation and a robust gross domestic product projection of between 4.5 and 5.5 per cent this year, compared with 4.7 per cent in 2013, should lend some support to stabilising sentiment on Bursa Malaysia and providing some boost to the local note, said another dealer. On a weekly basis, the ringgit was traded lower against the US dollar at 3.3070/3100 from last Friday’s 3.2780/2810. It also ended the week lower against other major currencies. The ringgit fell to 2.5943/5983 from 2.5878/5922 against the Singapore dollar and depreciated to 3.2374/2410 from 3.2245/2281 versus the yen. The local unit also slid to 5.4513/4582 from 5.4471/4530 against the British pound and weakened to 4.5587/5632 from 4.5472/5521 to the euro.

Money Market: Short-Term Rates To Remain Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR --Short-term rates are expected to remain stable next week following Bank Negara Malaysia’s (BNM) intervention in the money market to absorb excess funds, dealers said. The central bank is expected to call for several money market tenders, including conventional, Islamic, Commodity Murabahah programme, range maturity auctions and repo tenders, daily. For the week just ended, BNM intervened daily to absorb surplus funds. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system amounted to RM16.3 billion, while the excess in the Islamic system stood at RM2.7 billion. The overnight rate was unchanged at 2.94 per cent, while the one-week, two-and three-week rates stood at 3.01 per cent, 3.04 per cent and 3.07 per cent respectively.

FBM KLCI Futures: China’s Manufacturing Data To Influence Market

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- The movement of the FTSE Bursa Malaysia Kuala Lumpur Composite Index (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives next week will be influenced by manufacturing data from China. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Desmun Chan Coin Mun said investors would turn to the country’s manufacturing data next week to check on how well the world’s second largest economy is performing. “If China’s economy is doing well, we can expect another rally for the index during the week,” he told Bernama. Apart from China, he said economic growth results in the US during the coming week would also be the relevant focus. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month March 2014 and April 2014 garnered 27 points each to 1,824 and 1,822.5 respectively, June 2014 advanced 27.5 points to 1,817 and September 2014 improved 23.5 points to 1,812.5. Turnover for the week rose to 34,516 lots from 30,560 lots

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last week, while open interest widened to 42,027 contracts from 38,857 contracts. The underlying FBM KLCI for the week just ended chalked up 15.36 points to 1,820.48 from 1,805.12 last week.

CPO Futures Likely To Trade Easier Next Week

By Amanina Mohamad Yusof

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade lower next week at between RM2,500 and RM2,600 per tonne on the lack of buying support for the commodity, a dealer said. Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader, Jim Teh said slower demand from China and India is expected to weigh on the CPO futures prices in the near term. “Most buyers have stayed on the sidelines in the market as they perceived the current price as being too high,” he told BERNAMA. Teh expects the production of fresh fruit bunches to increase due to the current wet weather. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, April 2014 increased RM1 to RM2,822 a tonne while May 2014 slid RM32 to RM2,764 a tonne, June 2014 lost RM42 to RM2,729 a tonne and July fell RM41 to RM2,697 a tonne. Weekly turnover fell to 231,429 lots from 239,479 lots last week, while open interest decreased to 224,776 contracts from 238,133 contracts previously. On the physical market, April South ended RM40 lower at RM2,860 per tonne.

Rubber Prices Likely To Remain At Current Levels

KUALA LUMPUR – Prices on the Malaysian rubber market are likely to be traded at current levels next week on mild buying support for the commodity in the absence of fresh leads. A dealer said despite an expected supply shortage next week due to unfavourable weather conditions, slow demand from China would weighed on the local market. Some Chinese rubber importers have defaulted on shipments as tyre grade prices sank recently to multi-year lows, raising concerns of a further demand slowdown in the world’s top consumer. “The defaults may push rubber prices lower,” the dealer said, adding, reports of high rubber stocks in China and Japan weighed down market sentiment. This week, rubber prices were range-bound trading with buyers mostly sidelined. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board’s official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 lost 15.5 sen to 623.5 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk increased 1.5 sen to 495 sen a kg. The unofficial closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 declined 11.5 sen to 627.5 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk rose one sen to 496 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Expected To Stay Quiet Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures market on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is likely to remain quiet next week. For the week just ended, the KLIBOR futures contracts saw one month traded in distant month June 2015, which rose two ticks to 96.29 with a turnover of 20 lots. Meanwhile, open interest was down to 3,030 contracts versus last week’s 3,895 contracts. On a week-to-week basis, April 2014, May 2014, June 2014 and September 2014 stood at 96.65, 96.62 and 96.61 and 96.53, respectively. The underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.32 per cent.

KLTM: Tin Price To Trade Between US$23,000 - US$23,100 A Tonne

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- The tin price on the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to move between US$23,000 and US$23,100 per tonne

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next week. A local tin trader told BERNAMA the metal is expected to trade in a tight range with a bias towards testing the US$23,100 level next week on continued strong demand from the Japanese and European buyers. "The trend over the past two weeks has shown that local sellers are reluctant to park their offers below the US$23,000 level. "So, expect range bound trading on the KLTM, unless there is a surprise fluctuation on the London Metal Exchange (LME) amid changes in global market sentiment," he said. He added the global tin price could increase further if the current stock level declines. For the week just-ended, the metal price finished US$90 higher at US$23,040 per tonne from US$22,950 registered last Friday, with trading dominated by Europeans, Japanese and locals. The weekly turnover declined slightly to 148 lots from last week's 150 lots. The premium between the KLTM and LME also narrowed slightly to US$420 per tonne from US$430 per tonne last Friday.finished US$525 higher at US$23,430 per tonne, compared to the US$22,905 registered last Friday, with trading dominated by European, Japanese and local buyers. The weekly turnover improved slightly to 223 lots from last week's 220 lots.The premium between the KLTM and LME widened significantly to US$525 per tonne from US$205 per tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures Expected To Remain Well Bid Next Week

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- The gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to remain well bid next week. Chief Economist at IQI Group Shan Saeed said developments in Ukraine's Crimea region and the US Federal Reserve (Fed)'s interest rate hike message will keep gold in the limelight going forward. Shan said regardless of what happens in Crimea next week, gold prices are likely to be one of the few beneficiaries. "Macro variables, physical demand and geo political factors will continue to impact gold prices," he added. Meanwhile, Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Lim Eng Wee, said Bursa's gold futures contract will continue tracking the COMEX gold futures next week. Important levels for the local spot month contracts to check on next week would be the resistance at 143.05 and 144.25 and support at 139.90 and 137.95. For the week just-ended, physical gold closed at RM137.66 a gramme. The local gold futures contracts ended the week higher on Friday, as it tracked the COMEX gold futures and amid demand for a safe-haven commodity. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, March 2014 and April 2014 recovered early losses by 38 ticks to RM142.75 and RM142.90 a gramme respectively, while May 2014 and June 2014 declined by 32 ticks to close at RM143.20 a gramme. Open interest on Friday stood at 1,620 contracts versus 1,253 contracts previously. Total volume, however, rose to 2,292 lots valued at RM30.83 million against 1,394 lots valued at RM20.0 million.

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