MALAYSIAeBiz
BERNAMA
WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP 16 - 20 MAY 2016
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This Week's Highlight :
Malaysia Capitalising On Innovation To Forge Ahead - PM

From Siti Hawa Othman

ASPIRATIONS...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak delivering his address at the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council (GSIAC)-Khazanah Distinguished Lecture Series in London Tuesday. Pix: Nur Ain Shafinas fotoBERNAMA

LONDON -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says the challenge for Malaysia now is to move on to the next step of development by growing through innovation, increase in productivity and more effective use of knowledge for greater economic and social development.

"We need to find better ways of producing goods and services, and delivering them more effectively, and at lower cost, to a greater number of people," he said at the Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council (GSIAC)-Khazanah Distinguished Lecture Series here, Tuesday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Malaysia To Deliver On Economic Plan Amid Uncertainties - PM

From Siti Hawa Othman

LONDON -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak says Malaysia is committed to delivering on its long-term economic plan despite uncertain times. "We are doing our best in terms of growth, strong growth," he said in his address at Bursa Malaysia's private breakfast session with fund managers here Monday.

TUESDAY

July Target For HSR MoU Signing - Najib

From Siti Hawa Othman

LONDON -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said a memorandum of understanding (MOU), to facilitate the High-Speed Rail (HSR) project, is expected to be signed in July by Malaysia and Singapore. "We expect to sign the MOU with Singapore in July. That's the target,", he said at Bursa Malaysia's private breakfast session with fund managers at Marlborough House on Monday.

WEDNESDAY

Sajid And Sadiq Welcome Khazanah To London

From Siti Hawa Othman

LONDON -- The launching of Khazanah Europe Investment Ltd (KEIL)'s office on Tuesday by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, was also honoured by the attendance of two UK's prominent figures namely Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Sajid Javid and the newly-elected Mayor of London Sadiq Khan. Both have made it big on the political scene in the UK with Sadiq's victory to become London Mayor prompting Sajid to congratulate him with that famous phrase, 'One Son Of A Pakistani Bus Driver To Another.'

THURSDAY

TPP Will Boost Malaysia-Peru Bilateral Trade - Mustapa

From Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

LIMA -- Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed is confident that the implementation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement will drive two-way trade between Malaysia and Peru. This is because Peru was among the 12 countries, including Malaysia, which signed the TPP Agreement on Feb 4, 2016 in New Zealand, said Mustapa, who is leading a trade and investment mission organised by MATRADE to Peru, Mexico and Chile from May 14 to May 27.

FRIDAY

BNM's International Reserves At RM382.3 Bln At May 13

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) international reserves amounted to RM382.3 billion (equivalent to US$97.2 billion) as at May 13. In a statement Friday, BNM said the reserves position was sufficient to finance 7.9 months of retained imports and is 1.2 times the short-term external debt.

SMEbrief

M'sia Committed To Match Local SMEs With Chinese Cos

By Samantha Tan

BEIJING -- The Malaysian government is committed to bring potential small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) into China and match them with suitable Chinese counterparts, says the Secretariat for the Advancement of Malaysian Entrepreneurs (SAME). In a statement Monday, it said as a first step, a delegation of 10 local SMEs, several Malaysian-listed companies and government-linked corporations, are currently on a 10-day trip to explore China's halal market.

China's Shaanxi Halal Hub Welcomes M'sian SMEs With Incentives

BEIJING -- Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are now able to further explore and tap into China's huge food and beverage (F&B) industry especially in the halal segment following incentives offered by China. China is offering investment incentives to Malaysian SMEs to set up in the YangLing Agro Processing Industrial Zone in Shaanxi province, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong in a statement Tuesday.

SME Corp Kedah/Perlis Targets RM3 Mln Sales From SME Week

ALOR SETAR -- SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp) Kedah/Perlis is aiming for cash sales of RM3 million in conjunction with the five-day Small Medium Enterprises (SME) Industry Week 2016 from May 25. SME Corp Kedah Perlis Director Syed Nahar Syed Harun said Wednesday, the figure was targeted from two locations of the programme, namely Taman Jubli Emas, Suka Menanti Alor Setar and Stadium Kangar,Perlis.

Determine Threshold Amount Before Taxing Online Businesses - KJ

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government needs to set a threshold amount that suits the annual income of online business, before tax is imposed on them. Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said Wednesday, this is to ensure the tax imposed does not hamper nor burden the online and medium-sized business operators mostly comprising young entrepreneurs.

Online Businesses With Less RM500K Turnover Won't Be Taxed

By Zafirah Mohamad Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR -- Online businesses operated by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with a yearly turnover less than RM500,000 need not fear of being taxed, says SMECorp Chief Executive Officer Datuk Hafsah Hashim. "Imposing tax will definitely impact those who have just started to conduct online business. But, they have to understand that tax will be imposed on companies with a sales turnover of more than RM500,000," she said Thursday.

PropUP

Property*update*

Melaka Investigates Excessive Release Of Malay Quota Property

MELAKA -- The Melaka state government will conduct a detailed study on the excessive release of Malay quota property as stated in Series 1 of the 2015 Auditor-General's Report Wednesday. Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Idris Haron said the release of the Malay quota property was given after a developer had passed through a very tight process, as such it was very difficult to exceed the apropriate Malay quota release.

HCK Unit, DBSB To Develop Kuching Housing Venture

KUALA LUMPUR -- HCK Capital Group Bhd's (HCK) 70 per cent unit, HCK Premier Builders Sdn Bhd (HPBSB), today signed a joint venture development agreement with Daya Builders Sdn Bhd (DBSB) to undertake a housing project in Kuching, Sarawak. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, HCK said the project includes the development of 147 terrace and 18 semi-detached houses, as well as 144 apartment units in Matang Land District on leasehold land of 9.08 hectares (22.45 acres).

LPHS Did Not Supervise Bumiputera Housing Quota

SHAH ALAM -- The Selangor Housing and Property Board (LPHS) was found not to have implemented the governance action plan and supervised the Bumiputera housing quota, and these need to be improved, according to the Auditor-General's Report 2015 Series 1. According to the report released Wednesday, these happened because the blueprint was not endorsed by the state executive council to be comprehensively utilised except involving the quota rate fixing of Bumiputera housing.

Managing Of Bumiputera Housing Quota In Penang Unsatisfactory

GEORGE TOWN -- The managing of Bumiputera Housing Quota by the Penang Government was found to be unsatisfactory, according to the Auditor-General's Report 2015, Series 1. The report tabled in the Dewan Rakyat on Wednesday said although the state government had set 30 per cent bumiputera quota for each housing development project, the audit carried out from August to November last year found bumiputera property ownership to be below the 30 per cent target.

Release Of Malay Quota By Six Developers Exceeds Limit

MELAKA -- The weak control of Malay quota for private housing projects in the state had, among others caused the excessive release of Malay quota by six developers, according to the first series of the 2015 Auditor-General's Report which was released Wednesday.

Audit conducted at the Melaka Land and Mineral Office (PTG) and state housing board found the release of such properties resulted in the 30 per cent quota in rural areas and 10 per cent in urban areas not met as set.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard
Gainers - 365
Losers - 408
Not Traded - 553
Unchanged - 399
Value - 1638873592
Volume - 17120319

FBM KLCI Ends In The Red

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia finished lower Friday with the key index ending in negative territory due to selling pressure especially in telco, plantation and consumer stocks, dealers said. Losers edged gainers 408 to 365 with 399 counters unchanged, 553 untraded and 15 others were suspended. Volume rose to 1.71 billion shares worth RM1.64 billion from 1.39 billion shares worth RM1.80 billion. A dealer said the local bourse has been trading lower since mid-afternoon, erasing gains recorded earlier Friday due to continuous selling by investors. Conversely, regional peers such as Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 89.69 points to 16,736.35 and Hong Kong Hang Seng gained 161.86 points to 19,856.19. "Asian shares edged up in the morning up until mid-day but later fell and on track for a weekly loss," the dealer said, adding that the downtrend was in line with the lower US stock market. Meanwhile, Thursday, Bank Negara Malaysia decided to maintain the overnight policy rate (OPR) at 3.25 per cent. The central bank last raised the OPR by 25 basis points on July 10, 2014. It was reported that some analysts were expecting to see a cut in the interest rate to support the economy. Main Market turnover was higher at 1.06 billion units valued at RM1.52 billion from 928.84 million units valued at RM1.71 billion on Thursday.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.0780	4.0850
EUR	4.5751	4.5846
GBP	5.9421	5.9543
100 YEN	3.6952	3.6032
SGD	2.9534	2.9589

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit ended higher against the US dollar Friday in tandem with stronger crude oil prices, said a dealer. At 5 pm, the local unit was quoted at 4.0780/0850 against the US dollar from 4.0800/0830 on Thursday. International Brent Crude futures rose above US$49 per barrel due to potential tightening global supply, said the dealer. The local unit was also traded higher against other currencies. It rose against the Singapore dollar to 2.9534/9589 from Thursday's 2.9593/9632 and appreciated against the euro to 4.5751/5846 from 4.5786/5832 Thursday. The ringgit strengthened against the yen to 3.6952/6032 from 3.7061/7098 on Thursday and increased against the British pound to 5.9421/9543 from 5.9752/9812.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates Close Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank 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 eased to RM22.001 billion from RM30.605 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM7.940 billion from RM12.871 billion previously. BNM had earlier called for three conventional money market tenders, a RM480 million repo tender and a RM7.5 billion Islamic range maturity auction tender. The central bank also conducted a conventional money market tender for RM22.0 billion and a Qard money market tender for RM5.4 billion, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.20 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates were pegged at 3.31 per cent, 3.35 per cent and 3.40 per cent respectively.

KLIBOR Futures End Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended the day untraded. Spot month June 2016, July 2016, August 2016 and September 2016 were pegged at 96.35, respectively. Open interest was nil. At the 11am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.67 per cent.

KLCI Futures End Lower

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended lower Friday in tandem with the weaker underlying cash market. Spot contract month May 2016 fell 8.50 points to 1,622.5, June 2016 shed 7.5 points to 1,619, September 2016 lost nine points to 1,606 while December 2016 was six points lower at 1,598. Turnover rose to 7,877 lots versus 7,432 lots on Thursday while open interest rose to 42,746 contracts from 41,720 contracts Thursday. The benchmark FBM KLCI closed 4.97 points easier at 1,628.79.

Leverage On MNCs To Widen Global Value Chain – BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia should leverage on the large number of multinational companies (MNCs) operating here to widen the global value chain (GVC), with emerging market economies now contributing more to global growth than advanced economies. Bank Negara Malaysia Economic Department Director Fraziali Ismail said here Monday, MNCs operating in Malaysia produce different components and parts which are integrated together, which is what the GVC is all about.

Global Fund Managers Show Keen Interest In M'sia's Stock Mart

KUALA LUMPUR -- Global fund managers are showing interest in capital market opportunities in Malaysia, as reflected by the overwhelming demand received during the Invest Malaysia 2016 London (IM2016 London). Bursa Malaysia Bhd Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Tajuddin Atan, said here Tuesday, the event was the largest gathering of UK-based fund managers to meet the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Significant Improvement In Govt Agencies' Financial Mgmt

KUALA LUMPUR -- The financial management performance by government agencies in 2015 has improved with 180 ministries, departments and agencies scoring excellent five-star ratings compared with 114 in 2014. Auditor-General, Tan Sri Ambrin Buang, said here Wednesday, the significant achievement showed that the implementation of the Accountability Index had encouraged the control officers to undertake improvement actions on financial management.

MIDF To Launch 2 Syndicated Loans Worth RM6 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Bhd (MIDF) will launch two syndicated loans this month with a total value of RM6 billion. Group Managing Director Datuk Mohd Najib Abdullah said here Thursday, the first loan, amounting to RM5 billion, is for the KL118 development project while the other loan, worth RM1 billion, is for a Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (Score) project.

BNM Maintains OPR At 3.25

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia has decided to maintain the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3.25 per cent as it remained accommodative and supportive of economic activity. The central bank last raised the OPR by 25 basis points on July 10, 2014. "Overall domestic financial conditions have remained stable," it said in a statement here Thursday.

Islamic Banking Sector Fastest Growing Segment Online Under Finance

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Islamic banking sector is the fastest growing segment online under the finance category, with a 68 per cent increase, year-on-year, said Google Malaysia. Google Malaysia Sales and Finance Head Chuah Jia Wen said the company noted the affinity and association when people searched for personal loans in the Islamic banking sector.

Nazir Razak Did Not Misuse His Position- CIMB Board

KUALA LUMPUR -- The comprehensive review on the banking activities relating to Datuk Seri Nazir Razak's personal account has found that the CIMB Group Chairman and CIMB Bank Director did not misuse his position. In a statement here Wednesday, CIMB said in accordance with the findings and other supporting factors, Nazir would resume his role and position in the group, effective Thursday.

Takaful Ikhlas Hands Over RM60,000 Business Zakat To Care Centre

PETALING JAYA -- Takaful Ikhlas Bhd (Takaful Ikhlas) and Islamic Aid Malaysia (IAM) Thursday handed over business zakat of RM60,000 to the Excell CP Centre, a day care centre for children with cerebral palsy (CP). Takaful Ikhlas Head of Syariah Compliance Wan Jemizan W. Deraman said the contribution is part of Takaful Ikhlas's corporate social responsibility programme to reach out to those in need, especially children with CP.

PM Lauds Khazanah Sponsorship And Residency Programmes

From Siti Hawa Othman

LONDON -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in opening the regional office of Khazanah Europe Investment Ltd (KEIL) here on Tuesday night, announced an endowment fund by Yayasan Khazanah for the sponsorship of Malaysian students as well as the establishment of the Khazanah Residency Programme. He said Yayasan Khazanah, a foundation of Khazanah Nasional Bhd, would make an endowment of GBP5.0 million over five years, to sponsor three Malaysians every year, in perpetuity, to pursue full-time postgraduate studies at the University of Oxford, under the Rhodes Scholarship for Malaysia programme.

IDB Plans To Open Regional Office In KL

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is considering opening its regional office here and is reviewing the role of this office in assisting the development of member countries. Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzalah said here Friday, IDB had envisioned Malaysia to play a bigger role regionally especially as the link with China.

MTC Marketing Mission To US Rakes In Sales Of RM9.02 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Timber Council's (MTC) marketing mission to the United States from April 4-12 raked in RM9.02 million in confirmed and potential sales. The mission was also in conjunction with the International Wood Products Association's 60th World of Wood Convention in Austin, Texas, in the United States (US). It was attended by more than 250 importers, service providers, government agencies and suppliers of wood products from 25 countries.

FGV Aims Higher Profits, No M&A In The Pipeline

KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) aims to record higher profits in the current financial year ending Dec 31, 2016 supported by growth in existing assets. Newly-appointed Group President and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Zakaria Arshad said the conglomerate was not targetting any immediate merger and acquisition (M&A), at least until year-end.

Perak Water Board Posts Pre-Tax Profit Of RM35.77 Mln

IPOH -- The Perak Water Board (LAP) has recorded a profit before tax of RM35.77 million for Jan 1 to April 30, 2016 period, higher than that achieved in the same period last year. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir said here Monday the increase of 7.1 per cent was due to several factors including the growth of new industrial and residential areas in the state.

Malaysia's 2015 Palm Oil Exports To Turkey Up Four-Fold

From Mohd Khairi Idham Amran
ISTANBUL -- Malaysia's exports of palm oil to Turkey rose more than four-fold in 2015 compared with the previous year driven by the free trade agreement (FTA) between both countries. Malaysian Palm Oil Council Chairman Datuk Lee Yeow Chor said here Monday, the FTA, which took effect in August last year, boosted Malaysia's palm oil exports to Turkey last year to 398,729 tonnes compared with 77,682 tonnes in the previous year.

MATRADE Expects Medical Device Exports To Increase By 10-12 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's medical device exports are expected to rise by 10-12 per cent this year from RM15.53 billion achieved last year supported by tremendous demand. Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud, said here Tuesday, the outlook for the medical device industry was promising for Malaysia to continue to record its double-digit growth this year.

Tough Start For Petronas As Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Slips 60 Pct To RM6.8 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- National oil firm, Petronas says its pre-tax profit slipped 60 per cent to RM6.8 billion for the Q1 ended March 31, 2016 against RM17 billion posted in the same quarter in 2015. This was posted on the back of a RM49.1 billion revenue, which was 26 per cent lower, compared with the RM66.2 billion recorded in the previous corresponding period.

MSM Malaysia Posts Lower Pre-Tax Profit In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2016, fell to RM60.56 million from RM90.36 million recorded in the same period last year. The leading sugar producer said here Thursday, revenue, however, rose to RM553.16 million from RM508.49 million previously, mainly due to higher tonnage sold in the domestic and export market segments by 11 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively.

MRCB Bags MRT Line 2 Contract Worth RM648 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd (MRCB) has bagged the Package V210 of the MRT Line 2 Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya project worth RM648 million from Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday, MRCB said the package would involve the construction and completion of a viaduct guideway and other associated works from Persiaran Apec to Putrajaya Sentral.

Tropicana Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM29.83 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer, Tropicana Corporation Bhd's pre-tax profit fell to RM29.83 million in the first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2016 from RM41.07 million registered in the same period last year. Revenue decreased to RM286.93 million from RM390.92 million previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

Varsity Graduates Urged To Venture Into Franchise Businesses

PUTRAJAYA -- University graduates have been urged to venture into franchise businesses on a small scale for a start to gain experience before progressing further. Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism (KPDNKK) Deputy Secretary General, Datuk Basaruddin Sadali said here Monday, the franchise business was among those comprising various stages and differing capital base.

Economic Growth Continue To Sustain On Domestic Support - Irwan Serigar

PUTRAJAYA -- The country's economic growth is expected to sustain, driven by domestic demand which would then contribute to higher national income and better standards of living for the people, said Ministry of Finance Secretary-General Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah. He said here Monday, this was not only evident from the rapid 4.2 per cent Gross Domestic Product growth recorded in the first quarter of this year but was also in tandem with the GDP growth of between 4.0 and 4.5 per cent forecast for 2016.

Malaysia, UK Have Strong Foundation To Forge Ahead – PM

From Siti Hawa Othman

LONDON -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said he believes Malaysia and the UK have a strong foundation to forge ahead in the future while expressing hope that the latter will remain in the European Union. "We hope that both countries would work together towards strengthening our relationship," he said here Monday.

Boeing, China Airlines Celebrate Delivery Of World's First Co-Branded 777

KUALA LUMPUR -- Boeing and China Airlines celebrated the delivery Monday of the world's first co-branded 777 at a ceremony in Everett, US, marking the carrier's 10th 777-300ER (Extended Range). In a statement here Tuesday from Everett, China Airlines' Vice President of Corporate Planning, Steve Chang, said the airline was delighted to celebrate 100 years of Boeing by working together with it to accomplish the first co-branded livery 777-300ER.

MATRADE To Assist Proton Expand Export Markets

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) is committed to working closely with national car maker, Proton Holdings Bhd, to expand its business potential in export markets. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud said here Tuesday, MATRADE would provide assistance on market intelligence about the respective export potential countries.

Malaysians Are Still Among The World's Top Savers

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian consumers' saving intention, at 67 per cent, is one of the highest globally, according to the latest Nielsen Global Survey of Consumer Confidence and Spending Intentions. In a statement here Tuesday, Nielsen said saving intentions among Malaysian and Southeast Asian consumers continue to be a priority, based on its survey for the first quarter (Q12016) of this year.

Brahim's Exports To Account For 60 Pct Of Business With TPPA's Full Implementation

KUALA LUMPUR -- Brahim's Dewina Group, owner of the Brahim's brand, is optimistic that exports will account for more than 60 per cent of the company's business when the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) is fully implemented. Group Managing Director Nur Fatin Ibrahim said here Wednesday, TPPA would help lessen the tax burden on the company and make exports more competitive.

Malaysia Aims To Become Business Tourism Hub In Asia

GEORGE TOWN -- Malaysia is currently exploring the business tourism market as it is targeting to become an established business tourism centre in Asia. Tourism Malaysia Director-General, Datuk Seri Mirza Mohammad Taiyab, said here Wednesday, he was confident that business tourism in Malaysia would see a boost given the country's strategic location.

Claims In Construction Sector Hits RM1.4 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The total claimed amount of all disputes in the construction industry has risen significantly to RM1.4 billion since the Construction Industry Payment and Adjudication Act (CIPAA) 2012 came into effect in 2014. The latest total amount adjudicated stands at RM278 million, said Director of the Kuala Lumpur Regional Centre for Arbitration (KLRCA) Professor Dr Sundra Rajoo on the sidelines of the CIPAA 2016 conference here.

M'sia Raises Concern Over Rising Protectionism At APEC

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Wednesday expressed its concern over the rising protectionism among some countries amid the sluggish global economic growth. International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said these protectionist measures must be closely monitored so as not to jeopardise the benefits of an open trading system.

MOSTI Formulating Strategic Plan To Strengthen Design & Creative Industry

SHAH ALAM -- The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation is formulating a five-year strategic plan to make the design and creative industry as one of the national agendas. Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau said here Thursday, the plan, which is being formulated by the Malaysian Design Council, would chart the direction of the industry to propel its growth, and increase the sector's contribution to the country's economy.

Time Disposes Of Its Entire Stake In DiGi

KUALA LUMPUR -- Time Dotcom Bhd has disposed of its entire stake of 68,729,545 shares in DiGi for RM307.2 million in cash. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Friday, Time said the exercise, which was undertaken via private placement, represented about 0.9 per cent of the issued and paid-up capital of DiGi.

M'sian Timber & Timber Products Exports To Hit RM24 Bln This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The export value of Malaysia's timber and timber products is expected to increase to RM24 billion this year from RM22.14 billion in 2015, despite the current economic uncertainties. Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MITB) Director-General Dr Jalaluddin Harun said here Friday, the higher target is driven by rapid development in Qatar and Iran and the high demand in Japan, the United States and the European Union as well as India and Australia.

Bayer Keen To Extend Partnership With MADA & MOMA

KUALA LUMPUR -- German-based chemical and pharmaceutical company Bayer Co (M) Sdn Bhd is keen to extend its collaboration with the Muda Agricultural Development Authority (MADA) and Sarawak's Ministry of Modernisation of Agriculture (MOMA). Managing Director Manoj Saxena said here Friday, the collaboration would leverage on the success of two pilot projects in which it had partnered with MADA and MOMA in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

2016 iProperty.Com People's Choice Awards Open For Nominations

KUALA LUMPUR -- Nominations are now open to all developers in Malaysia until July 15 for the 2016 iProperty.com People's Choice Awards. Dubbed as the "Oscars" of the industry, the event is the only one where property buyers and investors are given an opportunity to select the winners and honour the best developers and developments in Malaysia. Nomination forms, award criteria and other information is available at http://www.iproperty.com.my/awards.

Acer Unveils Highly Anticipated Switch Alpha 12 Series Laptop

KUALA LUMPUR -- Acer Monday unveiled the Switch Alpha 12 series, the industry's first liquid-cooled (fanless) 2-in-1 ultra slim and convertible laptop in Malaysia. Acer Sales and Services Sdn Bhd Director of Products, Sales and Marketing for Malaysia Chan Weng Hong said the company was constantly innovating and transforming its products to become a hardware, software and services company. The Switch Alpha 12, with Windows 10, would be available via Acer online and at outlets from next week from RM2,499.

MAS Appoints New MASwings CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines has appointed Captain Izham Ismail as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of its sister airline, MASwings, effective July 1. He takes over from the current CEO, Captain Ritzerwan Rashid, who will retire at end-August. Izham will focus on developing a comprehensive and sustainable plan to improve MASwings' operations, financial performance and customer service experience," Malaysia Airlines' CEO, Christoph Mueller said in a statement here Monday.

Flood Relief Programme For Nissan Customers

KUALA LUMPUR -- Edaran Tan Chong Motor Sdn Bhd (ETCM) and Tan Chong Express Auto Service Centre have begun the Nissan Flood Relief Programme to offer rehabilitation and to aid Nissan customers whose vehicles were damaged by flash floods in the Klang Valley last Thursday. With immediate effect until June 30, the programme offers owners a 25 per cent discount on Nissan genuine spare parts on affected Nissan vehicles and free towing of up to RM150.

Petronas' 1st Floating LNG Facility Sets Sail To M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas' first floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility, 'PFLNG Satu', has set sail to the Kanowit gas field offshore Sarawak on its historic 2,120-nautical mile journey to Malaysia from South Korea. In a statement here Monday, Petronas said on Saturday, the 365 metre-long PFLNG Satu with a dry weight of 132,000 tonnes was towed from Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering Co Ltd's shipyard in Okpo for the offshore phase of the project.

DRB-Hicom Appoints Former Ekuinas CEO As Director

KUALA LUMPUR -- Conglomerate DRB-Hicom Bhd has appointed Datuk Abdul Rahman Ahmad as Independent and Non-Executive Director effective Monday. "He was until recently the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ekuiti Nasional Bhd (Ekuinas), a government-linked private equity firm. "Prior to joining Ekuinas, he was the Group Managing Director/CEO of Media Prima Bhd from 2003 to 2009 and also held the post of Group Managing Director/CEO of Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd," DRB-HICOM said in a statement here.

Husni To Lead M'sian Delegation To IDB Meeting In Jakarta

KUALA LUMPUR -- Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah will lead the Malaysian delegation to the 41st Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) from May 17-19 in Jakarta, Indonesia. In a statement here Tuesday, the Ministry of Finance (MoF) said Malaysia's participation in the meeting will be an opportunity to share experiences.

Only RM40 Per Trip Promotion With MasterCard Extended-ERL

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Express Rail Link (ERL) joint promotion with MasterCard, which offers a 20 per cent discount for the purchase of KLIA Ekspres Standard Return Tickets online, has been extended until Sept 30, 2016. ERL said here Tuesday, the promotion, first introduced in January until June, was extended due to overwhelming response.

AirAsia Implements Full Self-Check-In At Klia2 Beginning Wednesday

KUALA LUMPUR -- A self-check-in for all AirAsia and AirAsia X guests, travelling through Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 (klia2), will be fully implemented from Wednesday. As such, counter check-in at klia2 will no longer be available. The process is part of the airline's efforts to create a smoother and seamless travel experience for all guests, said AirAsia in a statement Tuesday.

MATRADE's Business Opportunities Seminar Kicks Off In Lima

From Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

LIMA -- The first ever Seminar on Business Opportunities with Malaysia organised by the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) kicked off in Lima, Peru on Monday to overwhelming response. The seminar was held as part of the trade and investment mission to Peru, Mexico and Chile from May 14 to 27 led by Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

Maybank Clinches 15 Awards In Three Countries

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) clinched 14 awards at the Human Resources' (HR) Asia Recruitment Awards 2016 held in Hong Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur recently. Maybank also won the Malaysia Best Employer Brand at the Malaysia Best Employer Awards event held earlier this month.

It's All About The 2020 Goal

Commentary by Siti Hawa Othman

INVESTMENT MISSION...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak delivering his keynote address at the Malaysia - UK Investor Showcase at Marlborough House in London Monday. Pix: Nur Ain Shafinas fotoBERNAMA

LONDON (Bernama) -- In all his addresses and explanations to guests and participants alike, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak never failed to state that what was being done was to ensure Malaysia attains high-income status by 2020 and that we are on track.

That has been the goal of the Vision 2020 put forth before and the National Transformation Programmes (NTP) being lined up to get it there. Assurance was given on the need to raise productivity and innovate, to develop skills and talents and to do whatever possible despite the challenges, to achieve that quantum leap.

And Najib's working visit to the United Kingdom from May 13-18 has been deemed satisfactory, with the events attracting a huge number of foreign dignitaries and investors wanting to hear first-hand the true story about Malaysia and its economy. The delegation even got to meet the first-ever woman Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and the first-ever Muslim Mayor of London. The Marlborough House, where the Commonwealth Secretariat is located, was packed with people attending the Malaysia-UK Investor Showcase, eager to know more.

PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES

The event was co-hosted by the UK-ASEAN Business Council, High Commission of Malaysia in London, Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) and Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC). Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland, CWEIC chairman and former Conservative Minister Lord Jonathan Marland as well as Minister of State for Trade and Investment Lord Price were there to give their thoughts on Malaysia and its relationship with the UK and within the Commonwealth.

As Scotland put it, her priority as secretary-general is "to put wealth back into the Commonwealth and to put the common back into wealth," revealing the Commonwealth's vast untapped potential, with plenty of opportunities awaiting Malaysian investors in the UK and its former colonies.

And there were proud moments for Malaysians at the mention of the Battersea project by prominent UK dignitaries as a shining example of how Malaysian investors had helped to regenerate that idle part of London. And now another landmark is coming, with projects by EcoWorld International, adding to the other properties owned by Malaysian funds and companies such as the EPF, FELDA and Sime Darby.

KEIL'S REGIONAL OFFICE

The euphoria was summed up at the launch of Khazanah Europe Investment Ltd's (KEIL) regional office on the 22nd floor of The Shard, which also houses the Shangri-la Hotel.

The Shard is a new iconic symbol for London, blending with the natural skyline of the city which had frowned on historical backdrops such as the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral, Big Ben and Westminster Abbey.

The brief presence of the new London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who took time off his busy schedule just to be there, says it all, that there are interesting prospects ahead. But it's not all about London, as there are also opportunities across the whole of the UK, as pointed out by Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Sajid Javid, who was also present at the KEIL opening, a point also stressed by Lord Price in his welcoming remarks at the Investor Showcase. So London, here we come. Well no, they said come to the whole of the UK.

So Malaysians, you are most welcome there. But we want you Britons to come to Malaysia too. Cheers.

-- BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

Bursa Malaysia To Trend Lower Next Week

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to trend lower next week given the cautious and softer tone in being influenced by the US stock markets, said analyst. "Given the weak technicals, we also continue to believe the FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI is yet to bottom-basing and could stage further weakness if the ringgit and commodities continue to fall," said Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Retail Research Head, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan. Bottom basing is an example of a current sideways price pattern that is becoming a common bottom. The big focus in global stock markets is the shift in expectations that US interest rates could rise earlier than previously expected. The minutes from the Federal Reserve's April policy meeting made it clear that a June increase remained firmly on the cards, he told Bernama. He said on the domestic front, three major headlines are likely to cushion market weakness. "Malaysia's balance of payments for the first quarter, which showed the current account surplus had narrowed to RM5.0 billion or 1.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) after rising in the previous quarter to RM10.5 billion or 3.5 per cent of it. "Then, Bank Negara Malaysia's action of maintaining the overnight policy rate at 3.25 per cent, meeting market expectations and sending accommodative signals to support economic activity.

"Thirdly, the government announced that Malaysia would remain in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) and is set to complete the domestic ratification process for it by mid-2017. "The announcement should catalyse exporters stocks which benefit strongly from the conclusion of the TPPA," he added. Weekly turnover decreased to 8.41 billion units valued at RM8.85 billion from 8.86 billion units worth RM10.10 billion last Friday. Main market volume fell to 5.34 billion units valued at RM8.23 billion versus 5.46 billion units worth RM9.43 billion.

FOREX: Ringgit Likely To Be Rangebound Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is likely to be rangebound next week in trading against the US dollar with market players remaining cautious over an imminent US interest rates hike as early as June, said a dealer. The dealer said the currency market is expected to retain its softer tone as demand shifts to the greenback ahead of the US Federal Reserve meeting in June. He added that the local unit is also likely to benefit from the movement of crude oil prices next week as it trends higher amid tightening global supply. For the week just ended, the ringgit traded mostly lower against the greenback.

The local unit retreated at 4.0780/0850 against the US dollar on Friday from 4.0210/0280 in the previous week. It ended mostly lower against other currencies. The ringgit rose against the yen to 3.6952/6032 from last Friday's 3.6988/7063, but declined against the Singapore dollar to 2.9534/9589 from 2.9331/9391 previously. It depreciated against the euro to 4.5751/5846 from 4.5642/5738 and softened against the British pound to 5.9421/9543 from 5.7963/8080.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain steady on the money market next week with Bank Negara Malaysia offering tenders to absorb excess funds from the financial system. For the week just-ended, the overnight, one-week, two and three-week Islamic rates remained flat at 3.20 per cent, 3.31 per cent, 3.35 per cent and 3.40 per cent respectively. The market was flush with funds this week with the central bank intervening to soak up excess funds daily by conducting conventional, Islamic, repo and commodity murabahah programme tenders. It also conducted late borrowings to further reduce the surplus which stood at RM22.001 billion in conventional operations and RM7.940 billion in Islamic funds on Friday.

KLCI Futures To Trade Lower Next Week

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trade lower next week, in line with the weak outlook for the cash market. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Retail Research Head Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the FBM KLCI might continue to trend further downward on persistent selling pressure. Last week, the FBM KLCI underwent a choppy trading session within a tight 1620 - 1640 sideways range, as the local benchmark made an attempt to stabilise following a 6.8 per cent correction over the last five weeks since April 2016.

"It is good to see that the FBM KLCI still managed to garner some buying support near the 1,620 level as investors accumulated battered quality stocks. "However, we see rising selling volume as market breadth remains negative with 490 weekly decliners against 310 weekly advancers," he told Bernama. For the week just ended, the futures market was mainly lower on selling pressure coupled with the softer ringgit to the US dollar and global market weakness. On a week-to-week basis, spot contract month May 2016 rose 1.5 points to 1,622.5, June 2016 gained two points to 1,619, September 2016 edged up 0.5 of-a-point to 1,606, while December 2016 remained at 1,598.00. Turnover for the week decreased to 37,061 lots from 47,941 last week, while open interest declined to 42,746 contracts versus contracts previously. The benchmark FBM KLCI settled at 1,628.79, down 4.97 points from 1,628.26 last Friday.

CPO Futures To Be Lower Between RM2,500-RM2,600 A Tonne

By Farhana Poniman

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures prices on Bursa Malaysia would likely be lower, in the range of between RM2,500 and RM2,600 a tonne next week, in anticipation of better production in May. Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader Jim Teh, said the better output, driven by favourable weather conditions, could weigh on CPO prices. "We expect to see a correction in the market next week. CPO prices gained almost 10 per cent in the first quarter this year due to lower production from crop-damaging El Nino. "However, we are seeing a reversal in that trend, now that the weather has improved," he told Bernama. Meanwhile, cargo surveyor Intertek Testing Services said the export of Malaysian palm oil products for May 1-15 rose 16.3 per cent to 563,172 tonnes compared with 484,271 tonnes for the April 1-15 period. June 2016 fell RM47 to RM2,557 a tonne, July 2016 fell RM39 to RM2,548 a tonne, August 2016 was RM32 lower at RM2,528 a tonne and September 2016 declined RM29 to RM2,499 a tonne. Turnover rose to 261,918 lots from 260,278 lots last week, while open interest decreased to 323,864 contracts from 334,333 contracts previously. On the physical market, May South fell RM20 to RM2,650 a tonne.

Rubber Market Likely To Trend Lower

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to trend lower next week on worries over slowing demand from top consumer China. A dealer said investors are increasingly worried that China's economy might be losing momentum again, thus impacting demand for the commodity. "Signs of recovery in the Chinese economy seems to be fading as its official Purchasing Managers' Index eased to 50.1 in April from 50.2 in March. "Traders are concerned that policymakers may be taking a more cautious stance on further stimulus as bad debts soar," he added.

For the week just ended, the local market was traded from mixed to lower, tracking the performance of the bearish Tokyo Commodity Exchange rubber futures. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 declined 46 sen to 515.50 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk slipped 27 sen to 473 sen a kg. The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 fell 48.5 sen to 512.50 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk declined 24 sen to 471.5 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Expected To Be Flat Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to be flat next week due to a lack of fresh leads. A dealer said investors are also likely to stay on the sidelines awaiting positive news before participating actively in the market. The futures market was flat during the week just ended, as open interest remained at nil. On a week-to-week basis, June 2016, July 2016 and September 2016 remained at 96.35. May 2016 expired at 96.33 and newly introduced month, August 2016, stood at 96.35. The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market stood unchanged at 3.67 per cent.

KLTM Likely To Rebound To US$17,000 Level

By Joan Santini

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is likely to see a rebound towards the US$17,000 a tonne level next week on the back of renewed demand, but gains will be capped against jittery market sentiment, a dealer said. He said the KLTM would see active participation from Europe, Japan, China, South Korea and Malaysia on the back of fresh industrial demand in the respective countries. "However, traders are worried over news that the Federal Reserve has hinted at a potential interest rate hike early next month, due to better US economic data and a firmer US Dollar. "Following this prospect, the move would weigh on tin prices, which will become more expensive for buyers using other currencies," he told Bernama. The dealer also said the strengthening of the greenback may reduce the appeal of tin as a hedging asset and keep prices moving within a tight range. As usual, the market will simply follow the London Metal Exchange (LME) the global tin price trend-setter, for direction. During the week, the tin price on the KLTM took its cue from the trend on the LME in trending lower on Monday, Thursday and Friday, but higher on Tuesday and Wednesday. The KLTM saw the keen participation of Japanese, European, Chinese, South Korean, Pakistani, and local traders. Weekly turnover fell to 174 tonnes tonnes from 234 tonnes last week. The price differential between the KLTM and the LME was at a discount of US$125 a tonne on Friday from a premium of US$180 a tonne recorded previously.

Gold Futures Expected To Trend Lower Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trend lower next week, on the possibility of a rate hike by the Federal Reserve in June. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer Ler Wee Liang said the gold market's performance at the moment is substantially different compared to few weeks ago. "It is quite sensitive towards any rise in US interest rates which will lift the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion," he told Bernama. Ler also said the gold market will be continuously pressured by the growing expectation of an interest rate hike and firmer US dollar until June. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, May 2016, June 2016 and July 2016 fell by six ticks to RM165.15, RM164.70, RM165.60, a gramme, respectively, while August 2016 was unchanged at RM165.50 a gramme. Weekly turnover advanced to 86 lots valued at RM1.35 million from 51 lots worth RM842,000 recorded last week. Open interest on Friday rose to 531 contracts from 506 contracts previously. 52,054