BERNAMA MALAYSIAeBiz
WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP 30 MAY - 3 JUNE 2016
June 3, 2016

This Week's Highlight : Let's Transform At Fast Pace - Najib Tells ASEAN

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (third, left) with the ASEAN leaders at the World Economic Forum on ASEAN 2016 in Kuala Lumpur Wednesday. Pix Courtesy PMO.

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak called on ASEAN to embrace transformation by taking active steps to integrate, innovate and advance as they were crucial ingredients for Southeast Asia to emerge as a single and cohesive economic entity.

ASEAN, with a combined GDP of US$2.6 trillion, is already the seventh largest economy in the world, he said at the World Economic Forum on ASEAN titled 'Shaping The ASEAN Agenda For Inclusion and Growth' here Wednesday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Malaysia Intensifies Initiatives To Promote Luxury Tours - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia must intensify further plans, preparations and implementation of various initiatives to attract more mass tourists and luxury travellers, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Monday. He said this was in line with the latest trend in the tourism sector which focused on elite tourism. Quoting the report from 'The World Travel Monitor', in 2014, the world population undertook 46 million international luxury trips.

TUESDAY

Malaysia Ready To Facilitate Japan's FDI Inflows In Halal Industry

From Zairina Zainudin

TOKYO -- Malaysia is ready woo and facilitate Japan's foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, especially in the halal industry, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Tuesday. He said hence, the government would streamline the FDI inflow process with state governments, local authorities, the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

WEDNESDAY

TPPA Will Not Undermine ASEAN Unity - Mustapa

KUALA LUMPUR –– The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) will not undermine ASEAN unity as a single community, says Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed. There had been much discussions within ASEAN to disseminate information on the challenges and opportunities offered by the TPPA, he told reporters at the World Economic Forum (WEF) on ASEAN 2016 here Wednesday.

THURSDAY

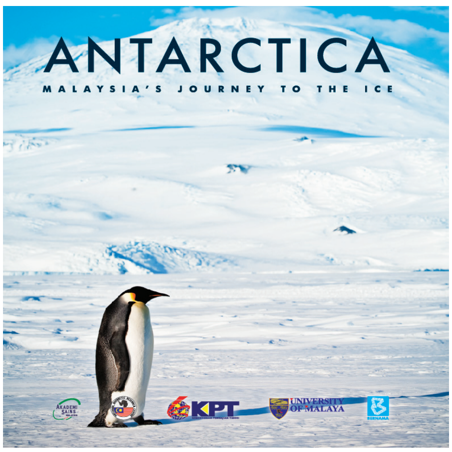
Government Receptive To New Ideas For Innovation - PM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government has reassured that it will be receptive to new ideas which will lead to innovation, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. "We need an ecosystem, culture of innovation and education system that would encourage people to think innovatively and creatively, he said at the Yayasan Sime Darby Young Innovators Challenge 2016 Awards ceremony here Thursday.

FRIDAY

Malaysia's April Trade Surplus At RM9.06 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's trade surplus increased by 31.9 per cent to RM9.06 billion in April this year from RM6.87 billion in the previous year, making it the 222nd consecutive month of trade surplus since November 1997. The International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) said Thursday, Malaysia's exports grew by 1.6 per cent in April this year to RM61.35 billion supported by expansion in exports to ASEAN, the US and Taiwan.



SMEbrief

SMEs Need To Boost Productivity To Get Financial Aid

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) need to bring up their productivity level in order to help them secure financial assistance, said Indonesia-based company Sinarmas Agribusiness and Food. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Franky Oesman Widjaja said Wednesday, ASEAN countries have realised the importance of financial assistance and are trying to address this issue for all types of sectors.

SMEs Help Economy Move Up Value Chain - Johari

PETALING JAYA -- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are drivers of innovation which helps the economy move up the value chain, as well as compete in the marketplace, said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani. "SMEs must also leverage social media, Internet marketing and e-commerce to capture a wider reach of customers in existing markets, as well as potential customers in untapped markets," he said after the Credit Guarantee Corporation SME Awards ceremony here Wednesday.

88 Pct Bumiputera SMEs Still At Micro Stage

KUALA LUMPUR -- About 88 per cent of Bumiputera small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs) in the country are still at the micro stage with an annual revenue less than RM300,000. Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said Wednesday, most of them were operating in the manufacturing and services sectors.

ASEAN SMEs Should Focus On R&D To Raise Revenue

KUALA LUMPUR -- ASEAN companies, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), should beef up their research and development (R&D) efforts in order to achieve higher revenues, said International Trade and Industry Minister II Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan. "We have the supply chain so let's just work together. Advancement in R&D is crucial as it could smoothen things up and increase revenue in the long term," he told reporters on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum on ASEAN 2016 here Thursday.

SME Bank Extends Outreach Programme For SME Entrepreneurs

KUALA LUMPUR -- SME Bank has extended its outreach programme to the southern region of the Peninsular Malaysia to assist small and medium (SME) entrepreneurs. SME Bank Group Managing Director Datuk Mohd Radzif Mohd Yunus said in a statement Thursday, the second series of the outreach programme was launched in Melaka today with the aim of financing up to RM100 million to eligible companies.

PropUP Propertyupdate

iProperty.com Invites Msians To Vote For Agents Ad Awards

KUALA LUMPUR -- iProperty.com Malaysia invites Malaysians to vote for their favourite real estate professional and agency at the upcoming iProperty.com Agents Advertising Awards 2016. iProperty Group Chief Executive Officer, Georg Chmiel, said Monday, Malaysians could vote for their preferred real estate professional in five out of the 18 categories set while the remaining 13 categories would solely be judged by statistics and a panel of judges.

Matrix Expects Aussie Project To Be Fully Taken Up

SEREMBAN -- Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd expects its M.Carnegie Boutique Apartment housing project, its first overseas venture in Melbourne, Australia, with a gross development value of RM100 million, to be fully taken up by end-August. At a media briefing on the project Wednesday, Group Managing Director Datuk Lee Tian Hock said since its launch on May 25, sales have been brisk with 20 out of 52 units in the apartment project already sold.

Damansara Realty To Raise RM150 Mln For Property Devt

KUALA LUMPUR -- Damansara Realty Bhd (DBhd) will raise up to RM150 million by issuing redeemable convertible notes to spur its property development opportunities in the country. In a statement Thursday, DBhd said it would issue the unsecured and non-guaranteed notes in four main tranches to the Advance Opportunities Fund I ("AOF"), an open-ended fund established in the Cayman Islands.

PropertyGuru Sees Positive Signs In 2016 Real Estate

KUALA LUMPUR -- Real estate investors in Malaysia are warming up again to the idea of purchasing properties in the country despite its slowing economy, weakening currency and rising property prices, said PropertyGuru. According to its Malaysia Property Market Sentiment Survey Report H1 2016 released here Thursday, property buyers have shown satisfaction with the industry, with 49 per cent of survey respondents saying that they are confident that there are good prospects for long-term capital appreciation.

PECB Turning Abandoned Malay Reserve Land Into Housing Estates

KUALA LANGAT -- Selangor State Development Corporation's (PKNS) wholly-owned unit, PKNS Engineering and Construction Bhd (PECB) is developing abandoned Malay reserve land in Selangor into housing estates. General Manager Ahmad Pauzi Mhd Noor said the first of such projects, Bentara Helang, was launched here Thursday.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard
Gainers - 402
Losers - 342
Not Traded - 601
Unchanged - 366
Value - 1454488594
Volume - 12997657

BURSA: KL Shares Close Higher On Consistent Buying

KUALA LUMPUR -- Shares on Bursa Malaysia closed higher on consistent buying support in heavyweights on firmer oil prices and strengthening ringgit, dealers said. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished 5.93 points higher at 1,636.46 after opening 3.22 points higher at 1,633.75. The index fluctuated between 1,632.14 and 1,638.57 throughout the day. A dealer said that the bullish trade data for April 2016 announced earlier Friday had boosted confidence among investors. Malaysia's trade surplus increased by 31.9 per cent to RM9.06 billion in April this year from RM6.87 billion in the previous year, making it the 222nd consecutive month of trade surplus since November 1997.

The dealer said the decision on output from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) meeting in Vienna was within expectation and this had also provided little support to the index. According to a report, the meeting which ended Thursday failed to reach any agreement on a clear oil-output strategy as Iran insisted on raising production to regain market share lost during years of sanctions, which were lifted in January. Market breadth was positive as gainers led losers 402 to 342 with 366 counters unchanged, 601 untraded and 15 others suspended. Volume slipped to 1.30 billion units worth RM1.45 billion, from 1.75 billion units worth RM1.84 billion recorded on Thursday. Main Market turnover fell to 775.82 million shares worth RM1.34 billion, from Thursday's 987.89 million shares worth RM1.73 billion.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.1430	4.1480
EUR	4.6182	4.6250
GBP	5.9788	5.9876
100 YEN	3.8058	3.8121
SGD	3.0098	3.0154

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit ended higher Friday against the US dollar in line with most emerging Asian currencies and the better equity market. At 5 pm, the ringgit was quoted at 4.1430/1480 against the US dollar from 4.1470/1520 on Thursday. A dealer said the news on Malaysia registering an increase by 31.9 per cent in trade surplus for April 2016 had brought about a positive sentiment to the market which supported the local currency. The greenback remained firm but investors stayed cautious ahead of US job data to be released later Friday to find clues on the direction of the Federal Reserve's decision on interest rates, she said.

The ringgit was also traded mostly higher against a basket of other major currencies except for the Japanese yen. It appreciated versus the Singapore dollar to 3.0098/0154 from Thursday's 3.0145/0192, rose against the euro to 4.6182/6250 from 4.6484/6552 and improved against the British pound to 5.9788/9876 from 5.9891/9971. The local unit, however, slid against the yen to 3.8058/8121 from 3.8035/8099 Thursday.

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 declined to RM21.44 billion from RM30.10 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM6.90 billion from RM11.09 billion previously. BNM had earlier called for six tenders, comprising four conventional money market tenders, a Qard tender Islamic range maturity auction and a repo tender. The central bank also conducted a conventional money market tender for RM21.4 billion and a Qard money market tender for RM6.5 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 untraded Friday. Spot month June 2016, July 2016, August 2016 and September 2016 were all pegged at 96.35 respectively. Open interest was nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.67 per cent.

KLCI Futures Close Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed higher Friday in tandem with the better cash market. Spot contract month June 2016 rose 10 points to 1,635.5, July 2016 added 10.50 points to 1,633.50, September 2016 increased 11 points to 1,627.50 while December 2016 gained eight points to 1,617. Turnover slipped to 3,468 lots from 5,646 lots on Thursday while open interest decreased to 39,026 contracts from 40,482 contracts Thursday. The benchmark FBM KLCI closed 5.93 points better at 1,636.46.

CIMB Bank Launches Corporate Card Solutions

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Bank Bhd Monday launched its corporate card to meet businesses' increasing need for efficiency, transparency and control in their operational expenditure. Group Chief Executive Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz told reporters here Monday, the corporate card solutions, which incorporates the corporate card and purchasing card, would help companies significantly improve their operational and cost efficiency by automating their transactional flows.

UOB Caters To Growing Japanese Investment Flow Into SEA

KUALA LUMPUR -- United Overseas Bank Singapore Ltd (UOB), has expanded its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Advisory Unit in response to the rising trend of Japanese companies' investment flow into Southeast Asia. In a statement here Monday, UOB, the parent company of United Overseas Bank (Malaysia) Bhd (UOB Malaysia), said it had set up a dedicated team to help Japanese businesses seize new opportunities and expand into the region.

Public Mutual Declares Distribution Of RM424 Mln For 10 Funds

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public Bank's wholly-owned subsidiary, Public Mutual, has declared distributions of over RM424 million for 10 funds for the financial year ended May 31, 2016. In a statement here Tuesday, it said Public Dividend Select Fund, Public Ittikal Fund, Public Islamic Equity Fund, Public Islamic Select Treasures Fund, Public Balanced Fund and Public Select Bond Fund were open for the Employees Provident Fund Members Investment Scheme.

Broad Money Up 1.5 Pct In April

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's broad money (M3) growth on an annual basis, increased 1.5 per cent in April, driven mainly by the continued extension of credit to the private sector by the banking system. In its Monetary and Financial Developments April 2016 statement here Tuesday, Bank Negara Malaysia said the expansion, however, was partially offset by the decline in net foreign assets caused by net external capital outflows during the month.

RHB Bank To Continue Collaboration With RinggitPlus.Com

PETALING JAYA -- RHB Bank Bhd will continue its collaboration with RinggitPlus.com following the six-month 'Get More' campaign jointly organised by the two financial companies. RHB Bank Group Executive Director and Head of Group Retail Banking U Chen Hock told reporters here Tuesday: "Every campaign will not be of the same nature but the collaboration in terms of allowing our customers to go to RinggitPlus to source our products, the collaboration is still on."

CGC Targets To Increase Loan Base To RM14.5 Bln By 2020

PETALING JAYA -- Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC) aims to increase its loan base to RM14.5 billion by 2020 from RM9 billion currently, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mohd Zamree Mohd Ishak told reporters here Wednesday. He said the corporation was also targeting to increase its graduation rate -- companies that no longer require loans from CGC -- to 50 per cent by 2020 from 47 per cent currently, involving 18,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

ABM Explains Why Banks Adjust Their Interest Rates

KUALA LUMPUR -- A few banks have recently increased their base rates (BR) and base lending rates (BLR), mainly due to a hike in the total costs of funding, The Association of Banks in Malaysia (ABM) said. It said in a statement here Wednesday, the downward trend of the three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) in the first quarter (Q1) of 2016 was insufficient to offset the rise in the total funding costs experienced throughout 2015 and 2016.

RHB Research Expects OPR At 3.25 Pct In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Research Institute expects Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to keep the overnight policy rate (OPR) stable at 3.25 per cent for the rest of 2016, given the central bank's more optimistic forecast for a better performance in the second half (2H) of the year. "We are, however, becoming increasingly wary of the rising downside risks of economic growth slowing more than expected, and this may increase the chances of BNM leaning towards a 25-basis point cut of the OPR in 2H 2016," it said in a research note here Wednesday.

BNM Establishes Financial Technology Enabler Group

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia has established a Financial Technology Enabler Group (FTEG), which will be responsible for formulating and enhancing regulatory policies to facilitate the adoption of technological innovations in the Malaysian financial services industry. The FTEG is part of the central bank's commitment to supporting innovations that will improve the quality, efficiency and accessibility of financial services in Malaysia, it said in a statement here Thursday.

Ringgit To Move Btw 3.8-4.2 Against US Dollar This Year - Economist

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to move between the 3.8 and 4.2 against the US dollar this year, says IQI Group Holdings Chief Economist/ Investment Strategist Shan Saeed. He told reporters here Thursday, the target was achievable given good fundamentals such as the stable economic outcome, lower taxes, stable government, solid aggregate demand and steady growth infrastructure investment.

Eversendai Posts Pre-Tax Loss Of RM46.74 Mln In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Eversendai Corporation Bhd recorded a pre-tax loss of RM46.74 million for the first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2016, against a pre-tax profit of RM21.18 million in the same quarter a year ago. Revenue, however, increased to RM440.73 million from RM402.78 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, the company said the loss was mainly due to a higher loss resulting from fair value of financial assets and unrealised foreign exchange loss, without which would have been a profit of RM 24.2 million.

KUB Posts RM7.63 Mln Pre-Tax Profit In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- KUB Malaysia Bhd recorded a lower pre-tax profit of RM7.64 million in the first quarter ended March 31, 2016, compared with RM18.05 million reported in the same period last year. Revenue however rose to RM126.75 million for the quarter under review from RM100.77 million chalked up previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday.

MyEG Q3 Pre-Tax Rises To RM33.41 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- MyEG Services Bhd's pre-tax profit edged up to RM33.41 million for the third quarter ended March 31, 2016 from RM19.17 million. Revenue rose to RM70.13 million versus RM38.97 million, due to among others higher transaction volumes from online renewal of foreign workers' permits and insurance and increase in revenue contribution from Road Transport Department related services, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday.

IATA: Global Air Freight Markets Up 3.2 Pct In April

KUALA LUMPUR -- Global air freight markets for April 2016 showed a 3.2 per cent increase in freight tonne kilometres (FTKs) over the same period last year, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said. In a statement here Monday, IATA said the increase was broad-based across all regions, with the exception of Latin America, which fell 5.9 per cent due to continued weak economic conditions.

DRB Hicom Posts Pre-Tax Loss Of RM821.27 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- DRB-Hicom Bhd posted a pre-tax loss of RM821.27 million for the financial year ended March 31, 2016 (FY16) compared with a pre-tax profit of RM501.83 million registered in the corresponding year. Revenue slipped to RM12.17 billion from RM13.69 billion previously. In a statement here Tuesday, DRB Hicom said the losses were attributed largely to PROTON group's poor performance with lower sales of motor vehicles amid stiff competition, volatility in foreign exchange rates and weak consumer sentiment.

Astro Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM280.07 Mln

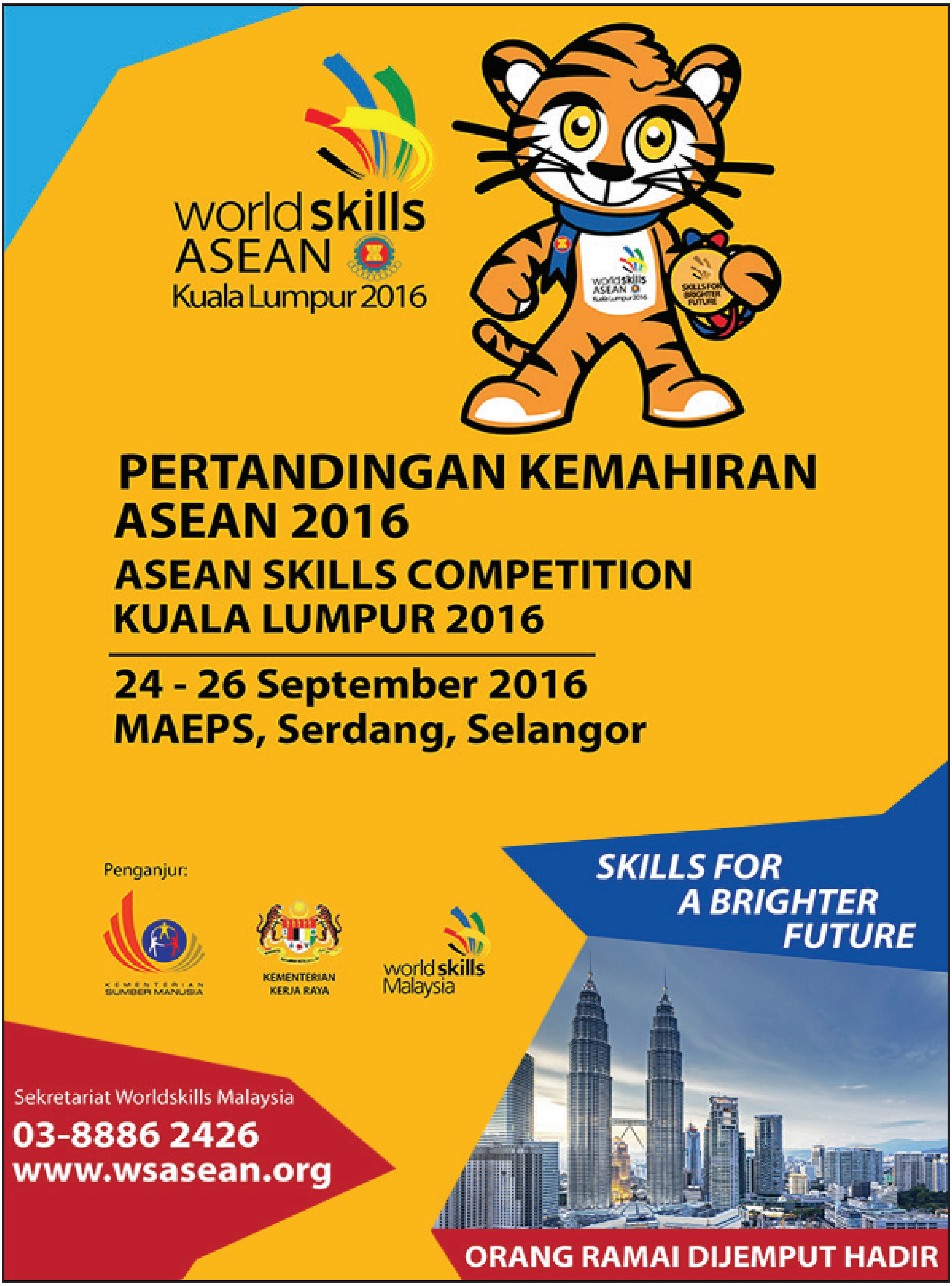
KUALA LUMPUR -- Astro (M) Holdings Bhd's (Astro) pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended April 30, 2016 rose to RM280.07 million from RM230.42 million in the same quarter last year. Revenue added to RM1.36 billion from RM1.33 billion previously, mainly due to an increase in advertising and home-shopping of RM14.1 million and RM27.4 million respectively, Astro said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday.

MyFarm Outlet Records RM4.2 Mln In Sales Within 3 Months

PUTRAJAYA -- The first direct purchase market, MyFarm Outlet at Precinct 7, recorded a whopping RM4.2 million in sales within three months of operations since March 1. Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority (Fama) Chairman Tan Sri Badruddin Amiruldin told reporters here Tuesday, this reflected the strong trust Putrajaya customers had toward the programme announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in the recalibrated 2016 Budget.

Time Dotcom's Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM39 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Time DotCom Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2016 declined to RM39.3 million from RM57.54 million in the same period last year. Revenue, however, increased to RM175.19 million from RM171.19 million previously. Time DotCom, in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday said the drop in profit was due to the absence of one-off revenues from global bandwidth sales and non-recurring contracts accounted for RM31.7 million of the total data revenue recognised in the first quarter last year.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ORANG RAMAI DIJEMPUT HADIR

Public-Private Cooperation Key To Nation's Competitiveness Ambition

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public and private collaboration will be key to lifting Malaysia to be among the top 10 most competitive nations globally by 2020. Malaysia Productivity Corporation director-general Datuk Mohd Razali Hussain told reporters here Tuesday, the increasing general awareness on public-private collaboration had helped drive more participation from the private sector to provide information that led to improvement in government services.

Statistics Dept Sees Business Slowdown In Q2 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- Business in the second quarter 2016 is expected to slow down, as shown by the confidence indicator of -3.7 per cent as compared to -0.7 per cent in the preceding quarter, said the Department of Statistics. The confidence indicator summarises the overall views on the short-term business situation in various sectors in Malaysia, the department said in a statement here Tuesday.

MCKIP Attracts RM15.08 Bln In Investments, Says Ong

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP) is continuing to attract more Chinese companies and has to date recorded investments of RM15.08 billion, said Second Minister of International Trade and Industry Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan in a conference here Tuesday. Saying that these investments not only reaffirmed commitments by Malaysia and China to strengthen economic ties, but also included the latest investment of RM1.58 billion by LJ Hightech Material Sdn Bhd and Guangxi Investment Group Co. Ltd.

M'sia No. 2 In SEA For Content Piracy - Irdeto

By Massita Ahmad

SINGAPORE -- Malaysia recorded the second largest share of content piracy in Southeast Asia at 17 per cent for the first quarter of 2016, second to the Philippines, says Irdeto, a world leader in digital platform security. "Content piracy ignores traditional geographical divides and boundaries. Even in countries with relatively strong legislation, content providers are still faced with piracy issues," Irdeto Vice President & General Manager, South East Asia, Jerry Park told Bernama in an email interview.

Online Traders Need To Register For GST Promptly

KUALA LUMPUR -- Online traders need to register their businesses promptly with the Royal Malaysian Customs Department to facilitate the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Customs Department Director-General Datuk Seri Khazali Ahmad told reporters here Tuesday, only businesses with a taxable turnover of RM500,000 and above were required to register for the tax regime.

Medical Devices Projects Worth RM1 Bln In Pipeline - MIDA

KUALA LUMPUR -- There are currently RM1 billion worth of medical devices projects in the pipeline, from both foreign and domestic sources, said the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) Deputy Chief Executive Officer II Datuk N.Rajendran did not however disclose the number of projects, only that 293 had been implemented with investments of RM12.3 billion from 2002-2015, while creating 57,312 jobs. Speaking to reporters here, Wednesday, he said about 57.7 per cent or RM7.1 billion of these investments were from foreign sources and the remaining 42.3 per cent or RM5.2 billion from domestic sources.

Perusahaan Saudee Eyes ASEAN Market

By Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa

BANGKOK -- Perusahaan Saudee Sdn Bhd, a producer of beef and chicken-based products based in Kedah, aims to penetrate the markets in other ASEAN countries after making its presence felt in Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia and the latest, Thailand. Its general manager Azman Manaf recently told Bernama, Thailand was the latest market for the group following the appointment of Firadows Halal Foods as its importer in this country.

ASEAN Members Urged To Leverage On Social Media To Reshape Economy

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- ASEAN members should leverage on social media to reshape their economies, given that 40 per cent of the region's population consist of the younger generation, Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) chief executive officer, Datuk Yasmin Mahmood told Bernama here Wednesday. "Social media is the force across ASEAN and it is driven by two things, the fact that there's a younger population in ASEAN, who are digital natives and grow up understanding the digital world, especially on social media".

MyCC Issues Final Decision Against 5 Enterprises For Price Fixing

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC) has issued a decision on finding of infringements against five companies -- an information technology (IT) services provider to the shipping and logistics industry in the Penang area, and four container depot operators -- for engaging in price-cartel activities. In a statement here Wednesday, MyCC named the IT services provider as Containerchain (M) Sdn Bhd and the container depot operators as Ayza Industries Sdn Bhd/ Ayza Logistics Sdn Bhd; ICS Depot Services Sdn Bhd; E.A.E. Depot & Freight Forwarding Sdn Bhd; and Prompt Dynamics Sdn Bhd.

China Remains Important Market For AirAsia

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia Bhd regards that China remains as its important market this year, its Chief Executive Officer, Aireen Omar told reporters here Wednesday. She said AirAsia is the biggest International airline in China, operating 45 routes to 18 destinations. "We have hubs to connect into various destinations in China like how we fly from Guangzhou not only to Kuala Lumpur, but also to Johor.

MDEC, UKTI Team Up To Strengthen ICT Sector

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) and UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, to strengthen UK-Malaysia partnership in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. In a statement here Thursday, MDEC said both countries would jointly promote the adoption of digital economy solutions in areas such as Internet of Things (IoT), cybersecurity, e-commerce and fintech in addition to artificial intelligence, as well as, encouraging academia and industry collaboration.

High-Quality Talent Fundamental To Business Services Sector Success

KUALA LUMPUR -- As the business services sector is knowledge-intensive, access to high-quality talent is fundamental to its success, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (ASLI) director Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam said in his welcoming keynote address at the Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Summit 2016, here Thursday. He said a vibrant and robust business services sector would be beneficial as it is a high value-added concern.

RM30 Mln For Human Capital Devt For Iskandar M'sia This Year

JOHOR BAHARU -- The Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) is allocating RM30 million for the development of human capital for the economic corridor this year. Chief Executive Datuk Ismail Ibrahim told reporters here Friday, RM10 million will come from IRDA itself under the Iskandar Malaysia Employment Grant (IMEG) with another RM20 million from the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF).

Malindo Air Extends Malindo Air Travel Fair 2016 Until June 5

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malindo Air has extended the exclusive fares offer for its recently launched Malindo Air Travel Fair 2016 until June 5, 2016 following overwhelming response. In a statement here Monday, the airline said the air travel fair, which offered exclusive fares with discounts of up to 90 per cent and ended on May 29, was extended with travel validity from May 23, this year until March 31,2017.

AirAsia Japan To Re-launch In October

SEPANG -- AirAsia is optimistic of resuming its operations in Japan this October, said Group Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes. "We (AirAsia) don't control the regulators but AirAsia Japan is looking good and really feeling good," he told reporters here Monday. AirAsia entered the Japanese market in 2012 in a tie-up with All Nippon Airways but the project ended in 2013 following a dispute over business practices.

Communication Ministry To Lead M'sian Delegates To Music Idem In Cannes

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia will lead a delegation of companies to the Marché International du Disque et de l'Edition Musicale (MIDEM), a trade show for the new music ecosystem, held annually in Cannes, France. In a statement here Tuesday, the ministry said this marks the fourth consecutive participation by Malaysia to the annual international business-to-business event to promote the nation's music industry.

TalentCorp Appoints Shareen Shariza As New CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp) has appointed Chief Operating Officer Shareen Shariza Datuk Abdul Ghani as new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective Wednesday. Shareen replaces Johan Mahmood Merican, whose secondment to TalentCorp ends on May 30, 2016, after more than five years as CEO, said TalentCorp in a statement here Tuesday.

MATRADE Sets Up CEO Club For Mid-Tier Companies

ALOR GAJAH -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) has set up a CEO Club for mid-tier companies (MTCs) as a platform to enhance their business network. Its Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud said here Tuesday, the club would help provide a restructuring strategy such as a business network, as well as sharing of ideas and experiences, and successes among CEOs and executives of MTCs.

Nasim Launches All-New Peugeot 408 e-THP

KUALA LUMPUR -- The C-segment contributed an average 35 per cent annual sales for Peugeot with the 408 being the best-seller with over 5,000 units sold to date. Naza Corporation Holdings Sdn Bhd group chief operating officer Datuk Samson Anand George said here Wednesday, the company expects to sell between 60 to 80 units monthly of the model this year, which is a conservative target in view of the current economic conditions.

More Dynamic Proton Prevé Unveiled In Chile

KUALA LUMPUR -- Proton Holdings Bhd (Proton) and Andes Motor, a unit of the Kaufmann Group, have unveiled the more dynamic Proton Prevé sedan for the Chilean market. Proton chief executive officer (CEO) Datuk Ahmad Fuaad Kenali said here Wednesday Proton was optimistic of its sales goal as it reentered the Chilean market through Andes, Chile's leading buses, trucks and luxury cars distributor.

AirAsia X Fleet Stands At 31 With Two New Airbus A330-300

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia X's total fleet now stands at 31 including two brand new Airbus A330-300 aircraft delivered in May, the low cost carrier said in a statement here Thursday. The two aircraft were delivered from the Airbus facility in Toulouse, France, to Kuala Lumpur on May 14 and May 28, respectively, and began operations immediately.

Oji Asia Opens RM40 Mln Diaper Manufacturing Plant In Banting

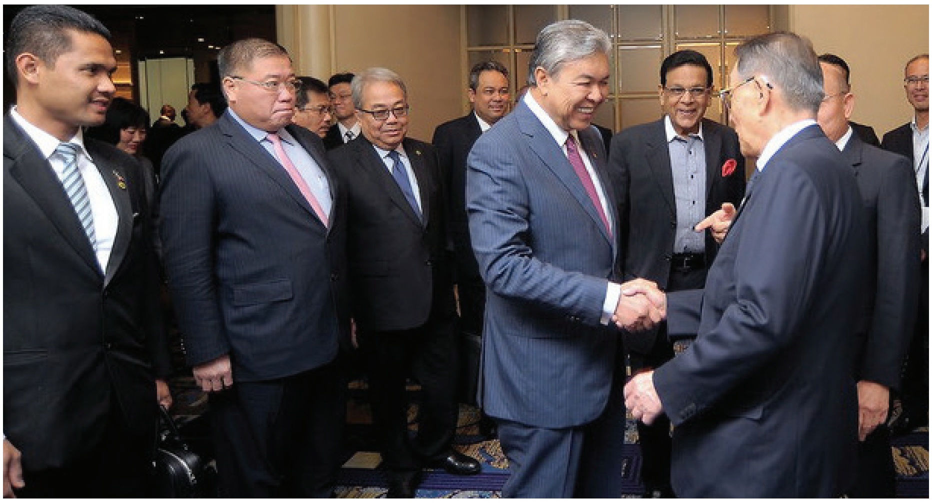
KUALA LUMPUR -- Oji Asia Household Product Sdn Bhd (OAHP) has opened a manufacturing plant in Banting, Selangor with an investment of RM40 million to produce quality disposable diapers. Oji Holdings Corporation President and Co-CEO Susumu Yajima said in a statement here Thursday, the strategic investment will also give Oji sufficient supply, readiness and flexibility to meet the growing demand around the region.

AirAsia Offers 20 Pct Discount On Mobile Bookings

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia is offering a 20 per cent discount on all flights purchased via its mobile app and mobile website from June 3 (0000, GMT +8) to June 5, 2016 (2400, GMT +8) for travel between June 6 and Sept 30, 2016. In a statement here Friday, AirAsia said to enjoy the discount, guests booking via the mobile app or mobile website (mobile.airasia.com) only have to enter the "MOBILE20" code when prompted.

Zahid's Japan Visit Boosts Collaboration In Halal Industry

From Zairina Zanudin



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (second, right) being introduced to Japanese investors at the the 34th joint JAMECA-MAJECA conference in Tokyo Wednesday. Pix Hafizie Shabudin FotoBERNAMA

TOKYO (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's first official visit to Japan last week as Deputy Prime Minister has not only reinforced long-standing bilateral economic ties but also paved the way for cooperation in new growth areas particularly in the halal industry. There is much that Malaysia can offer Japan in terms of its expertise in producing halal goods and services since a million Muslim tourists and athletes are expected to converge in Japan when Tokyo hosts the 2020 Olympics.

Malaysia's reputable status as the world's leading halal hub and the global reference and trade centre for the new mainstream halal industry is highly regarded by the Japanese government, which should rightly be exploited. There is much Kuala Lumpur can also offer in terms of halal certification, technology transfer and the standard operating procedures in determining halal products and services. The Japanese government is keen to transform Tokyo into a Muslim-friendly destination for which Malaysia stands ready to lend a helping hand.

NEED FOR CONSISTENT ENGAGEMENT

As such, there is a need for consistent high-level engagement between Malaysia and Japan and Ahmad Zahid's visit underscores that point. Besides, Japan itself is home to some 100,000 Muslims, of whom 10 per cent are native Japanese, while the rest are foreigners residing in Japan. As the deputy prime minister pointed out, Malaysia will assist Japan's multi-billion halal industry, whereby officers from the Department of Islamic Development and Halal Development Corporation will be stationed in Tokyo. Looking ahead, deeper economic cooperation with Japan is essential as Malaysia positions itself as a strategic gateway for the ASEAN Economic Community and more so since Japan is the world's third largest economy.
At the 34th joint Japan-Malaysia Economic Association and the Malaysia-Japan Economic Association (JAMECA-MAJECA) conference here, Ahmad Zahid invited Japanese and other global investors to tap business opportunities in the enormous ASEAN market, using Malaysia as the springboard to the region.

JAPAN'S HSR PARTICIPATION WELCOMED

Malaysia also welcomed Japan's participation in the international bidding process for the Southeast Asia's first High-Speed Rail project, connecting Kuala Lumpur-Singapore in about 90 minutes compared with three hours it would currently take by road.

With its high technology and good track record in high-speed train systems, Japan is keen to be involved in the project and signalled their readiness to offer a reciprocal package for Malaysia. Ahmad Zahid stressed that Malaysia very much needs an offset programme which is why the contract will be awarded based not just on price and specifications, but on the benefits accruing to the government and people. The memorandum of understanding to facilitate the project is expected to be signed by Malaysia and Singapore next month.

Ahmad Zahid's meetings in Japan were fruitful and constructive, covering a wide range of bilateral and regional issues. It has set the stage for more substantive linkages by the time both countries celebrate their 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year in trade and investment and especially in the development of Japan's halal industry.

-- BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

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

Bursa Malaysia Likely To Continue Upward Momentum

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to continue its upward momentum next week on a healthy outlook for the domestic economy and a recovery in oil prices, an economist said. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Retail Research Head Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said Malaysia's recent positive manufacturing purchasing managers index (PMI) should provide confidence among investors. "Malaysia's April broad money (M3), which expanded 1.5 per cent, which proved that our economy is on a healthy track, should also provide a clearer direction to investors in the coming weeks," he told Bernama. On foreign markets, he said the European Central Bank's decision to maintain its interest rate level should provide support to the local benchmark index. "The US Federal Reserve is also expected to put the interest rate hike plan on hold, awaiting the outcome of the British referendum," he added. Moving forward, he said investors may focus on consumer-related stocks, on expectations that the public would begin to stock up ahead of the Hari Raya holidays. Nazri foresees the FBM KLCI resistance level at 1,650 followed by 1,680, with the support level at 1,620 followed by 1,600 points. Weekly turnover decreased to 7.19 billion units valued at RM13.13 billion, from the previous week's 8.51 billion units worth RM8.39 billion. Main market volume rose to 5.67 billion units valued at RM12.80 billion, versus 5.61 billion units worth RM7.89 billion recorded last week.

FOREX: Ringgit Likely To Remain Bearish

By Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is likely to remain bearish against the US dollar next week, with the greenback staying firm on heightened expectations of a US interest rate hike in the near term. Hong Leong Bank Senior Manager for Bond and Economic Research Choong Yin Pheng said the ringgit's performance would continue to be influenced by the greenback's movement. "Any hawkish statement by the Federal Reserve and positive US economic data to be released later today and next week will continue to pressure the ringgit and most Asian emerging currencies downwards," she told Bernama. Meanwhile, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on Thursday refrained from changing its oil output policy after members failed to agree on a new production ceiling. "The decision is much anticipated by the market and the reaction is more or less muted and will not greatly affect our local currency," she said. The ringgit is likely to remain bearish next week, trading at between the 4.10 to 4.22 level against the US dollar, she added. For the week just ended, the ringgit was traded lower for four consecutive days against the greenback, except for Friday. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the local unit was lower at 4.1430/1480 against the US dollar from 4.0780/0840 in the previous week. It also ended lower against other currencies. The ringgit declined against the yen to 3.8058/8121 from last Friday's 3.7171/7236, and eased against the Singapore dollar to 3.0098/0154 from 2.9647/9706 previously. It depreciated against the euro to 4.6182/6250 from 4.5588/5671 and softened against the British pound to 5.9788/9876 from 5.9743/9839 last Friday.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates Likely To Stay Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian money market is likely to remain stable next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continuing to intervene to manage surplus liquidity. The central bank is expected to conduct daily tenders to reduce excess liquidity from the financial market. For the week just ended, BNM intervened on a daily basis to absorb excess funds by conducting several tenders -- conventional money market, Qard, Qard tender-iRMA, repo and range maturity auction. On Friday, the central bank's action helped reduce the market's liquidity surplus in the conventional system to RM21.44 billion from RM30.10 billion earlier. The market liquidity in the Islamic system fell to RM6.90 billion from RM11.09 billion previously. The overnight rate stood at 3.20 per cent while the one-, two- and three-week rates were at 3.31 per cent, 3.35 per cent and 3.40 per cent respectively throughout the week. Meanwhile, the benchmark three-month interbank rate was unchanged at 3.67 per cent.

KLCI Futures Likely To Trade Higher

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trade higher next week in line with the positive 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 would continue its momentum, boosted by the healthy outlook for the domestic economy and recovery in oil prices. He told Bernama that investors may focus on consumer-related stocks moving forward, on expectations that the public would begin to stock up ahead of the Hari Raya holidays. For the week just ended, the futures market was mainly higher on positive sentiment, with spot month June 2016 adding 1.0 point to 1,535.50 and September 2016 advancing 14 points to 1,627.50, while December 2016 shed 6.50 points to 1,617. Turnover declined to 51,135 lots from 83,146 lots last week while open interest decreased to 39,026 contracts versus 61,455 contracts previously. The benchmark FBM KLCI settled at 1,636.46, down 0.73 point from 1,637.19 last Friday.

CPO Futures Likely To See Yo-Yo Trading

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures will likely see yo-yo trading next week in the absence of positive factors, dealers said. Interband Group of Companies Senior Trader Jim Teh said prices would likely move between RM2,500 and RM2,520 per tonne next week. "The market would probably move like a yo-yo and enter a correction period. We have been speculating about a downtrend in prices for a while," he told Bernama. He said the CPO prices would also track the ringgit's movement against the US dollar. "The weakening ringgit will allow the global market to purchase the vegetable oil at lower prices," he added. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2016 and July 2015 rose RM93 each to RM2,680 and RM2,680 per tonne respectively, August 2016 climbed RM108 to RM2,666 per tonne while September 2016 improved RM110 to RM2,646 per tonne. Weekly turnover surged to 488,218 lots from 228,996 lots last week while open interest widened to 319,324 contracts versus 311,641 contracts previously. On the physical market, June South was RM40 higher at RM2,660 per tonne from last Friday's RM2,620 per tonne.

Rubber Prices Likely To Continue Upward Trend

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian rubber prices will likely continue their upward trend next week on the current strong sentiment, aided by an anticipated increased interest from buyers, dealers said. A dealer said the local rubber market would continue to closely watch the movement of regional futures markets on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange which is currently trading steadily. Another dealer said improving global prices of oil, the raw material used in the production of synthetic rubber, would contribute to higher prices for natural rubber. Oil prices currently stand at US$50 per barrel. "However, the rubber prices will also track the ringgit's movement," the dealer added. For the week just ended, the Malaysian Rubber Board's (MRB) official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 rose 17 sen to 522 sen per kg while latex-in-bulk was up 4.5 sen at 453 sen per kg. The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 gained 9.5 sen to 522.5 sen per kg while latex-in-bulk declined 0.5 sen to 452 sen per kg.

KLIBOR Futures Likely To Remain Quiet

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to remain untraded next week on lack of interest. A dealer said the market has been quiet for some time, awaiting potential market-moving events. The futures market was also untraded for the just-ended week with open interest remaining nil. On a week-to-week basis, June 2016, July 2016, August 2016 and September 2016 remained at 96.35. The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market stood unchanged at 3.67 per cent.

KLTM Expected To Be Flat

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) will likely be flat next week on sluggish demand due to uncertainty in China's economy. A dealer said the slowdown in China's economy, which is the commodity's major consumer, would have a negative impact on tin demand. "There are not many catalysts on the demand side right now, so we expect the local market to be flat next week," he added. For the week just ended, the metal finished US$350 per tonne higher at US$16,350 per tonne compared with US$16,000 per tonne last week. Weekly turnover decreased marginally to 167 lots from 177 lots last Friday. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the premium between the KLTM and LME narrowed to US$50 per tonne from US$145 per tonne.

Gold Futures Expected To Trend Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely trend higher next week as weaker US non-farm payroll report is expected reduce possibility of an early interest rate hike. The US non-farm payrolls only added 38,000 jobs for May, significantly lower from market estimation of 160,000. A dealer said demand for the precious metal would likely be stronger next week as the Federal Reserve would likely put a pause on its plan to aggressively increase interest rates, considering the unfavourable data. “The New York Commodity Exchange gold futures will likely be bullish next week and the local market will likely mirror its performance. “Higher interest rates would increase the opportunity cost of holding non-interest yielding gold, thus potentially diminishing its demand,” he added. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2016 added 37 ticks to RM163 a gramme, July 2016 rose 32 ticks to RM163.65 a gramme and August 2016 improved 46 ticks to RM164.25 a gramme. During the week, a new contract month was introduced, September 2016 which stood at RM164.60 a gramme. Weekly turnover fell to 37 lots, valued at RM557,350, from 104 lots, valued at RM1.52 million, recorded last week. Open interest on Friday declined to 290 contracts from 540 contracts previously.