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This Week's Highlight : Malaysia, Indonesia Benefit From Close Ties - Najib

WARM...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak extending a warm handshake to Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the 12th World Islamic Economic Forum in Jakarta Tuesday. Pix: Dayana Nabila Shaipul Anuar fotoBERNAMA

From Azlina Aziz

JAKARTA -- Close relations between Malaysia and Indonesia in terms of investment and economy have benefited both countries, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said. The prime minister said many issues were discussed during the 11th Annual Consultation between him and Indonesian President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) on Monday with the aim of taking the ties to a higher level.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Focus On Price Of Essential Goods - Johari

PUTRAJAYA -- The Finance Ministry will closely examine two key components -- the price of essentials good and services as well as income -- to address the rising cost of living, says Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani. "With the change in lifestyle, the basket of necessary goods today includes cars, handphones, computers and Internet access," he said in his remarks before chairing the 2017 Budget Focus Group Meeting:"Cost of Living" here, Monday.

TUESDAY

Islamic Wealth Mgmt New Growth Area For Malaysia - Najib

From Azlina Aziz

JAKARTA -- Malaysia has identified Islamic wealth management as a new growth area going forward, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak here Tuesday. The country is also looking forward to opportunities to collaborate with other jurisdictions, as well as with industry and academia, to expand international connectivity, strengthen talent and capabilities, and grow the global Islamic capital market for the benefit of all, he said in his special address at the opening ceremony of the 12th World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) here.

WEDNESDAY

Malaysia-China US$160 Bln Trade Target Achievable

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia-China trade target of US$160 billion can only be achieved by 2020, instead of next year, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) said. MATRADE Director for China Unit, Market Access Section Ong Yew Chee said Wednesday, although the trade volume between both countries had been increasing for the past few years, the target could only be met in 2020 at a minimum average annual growth of five per cent.

THURSDAY

Malaysia, Ukraine To Expedite Joint Trade Commission

PUTRAJAYA -- Malaysia and Ukraine have agreed to expedite the setting up of a joint trade commission to enhance two-way business and trade potentials. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, in a joint press conference with visiting President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, after their bilateral meetings here Thursday, said they discussed the possibility of Malaysian companies participating in long-term projects such as healthcare and tourism in Ukraine.

FRIDAY

Malaysia's RM41.79 Bln Trade Reflects Strong Exports

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's export sector continued on a positive note with the trade surplus in the first half of this year (1H16) increasing to RM41.79 billion from RM41.69 billion registered in 1H15. June's trade surplus was RM5.52 billion, making it the 224th consecutive month of trade surpluses recorded since November 1997, said the International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) in a statement Friday.

SMEbrief

40 Malaysian Cos To Participate In Canton Fair

KUALA LUMPUR -- Forty Malaysian companies will participate in the 120th China Import and Export Fair (Canton Fair) Autumn Session from Oct 31 to Nov 4, 2016 in Guangzhou, China. Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) Director for China Unit, Market Access Section Ong Yew Chee said Wednesday, the exhibitors would mainly showcase food and beverages, pharmaceuticals and houseware products.

Entrepreneurs Vital For Malaysia's Drive To Developed Status - Irwan

JAKARTA -- Entrepreneurs are a critical component of Malaysia's drive to achieve fully developed nation status by 2020, said Treasury Secretary-General Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah Wednesday. "They are the cornerstones of the knowledge economy and integral to helping achieve our goal of becoming a high-income nation," said Irwan at the soft launch of the inaugural Global Entrepreneurship Community (GECommunity) by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, held on the sidelines of the 12th World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) here.

MITI Urges Companies To Build Strong Foundation In Laos

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) urged Malaysian companies to build a strong foundation and further expand their presence in Laos to capitalise on the country's huge potential. Its Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said Wednesday, Malaysian companies had been playing an important role in the economic as well as social development in Laos and had continued to expand their presence in the republic in the last decade.

Sabah To Prioritise Helping SMEs

TAWAU -- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are no doubt the backbone of economic growth in the Sabah as well as the country. Sabah Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Tawfiq Abu Bakar Titingan said Tuesday, the state government would give priority to raise the economy of the SME industry.

Pos Malaysia Urges E-Commerce Entrepreneurs To Be Contract Customers

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pos Malaysia Bhd has urged all small business entrepreneurs particularly those involved in e-commerce, to register themselves as contract customers in order to enjoy benefits and discounts while making their deliveries. Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Mohd Shukrie Mohd Salleh said Thursday, from May to June, Pos Laju experienced an encouraging 30 million in walk-in customers for its courier service with deliveries almost doubled to 400,000 parcels a day.

PropUP — Property update

Axis Reit To Acquire RM42 Mln Land, Complex From Scomi

KUALA LUMPUR-- Axis REIT Managers Bhd (ARMB) is acquiring a parcel of land along with an industrial complex facility on it from Scomi Coach Sdn Bhd for RM42 million cash. In a statement here Monday, ARMB said upon completion of the deal, the property, which is located in the Sungai Choh Industrial Area in Selangor, would be leaseback to Scomi Engineering Bhd (SEB) for a period of 15 years with an option to renew it for another five years.

M'sian Cos, PT Hanson RM3.5 Bln Affordable Housing Tie-Up

JAKARTA -- Three Malaysian companies, namely Sime Darby Bhd, I&P Group Sdn Bhd and SP Setia (Indonesia) Sdn Bhd, have teamed up with Indonesia's PT Hanson International Tbk to jointly develop an affordable housing project here. The project, with a gross development value of RM3.5 billion on a 500-hectare land, is situated in Maja, Tangerang, about 80km from Jakarta.

Astaka To Develop JB City Council's New HQ

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Johor Baharu City Council (MBJB) and Astaka Holding's unit, Astaka Padu Sdn Bhd, have inked a non-binding memorandum of understanding. Under the MoU, Astaka will construct, develop and sell to MBJB a 14-storey Grade A office tower, the Menara MBJB. It is slated to be the MBJB's new headquarters, said Astaka in a statement Wednesday.

Johor Halal Park Gets Boost With Landmark Pacts

JOHOR BAHARU -- Johor Halal Park (JHP) gets a shot in the arm with three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) signed recently that are expected to propel its growth towards becoming one of the best halal industrial parks in the world. UMLand J-Biotech Park Sdn Bhd (UJP), a joint-venture company between United Malayan Land Bhd (UMLand) and Johor Biotechnology & Biodiversity Corporation (J-Biotech) have signed MoUs with three separate entities during the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) 2016 which ended today in Jakarta.

Vivocom, Seni Perspek To Develop Perak Residential Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Vivocom Intl Holdings Bhd's unit, Vivocom Enterprise Sdn Bhd (VESB), has signed a collaboration agreement with Seni Perspek Sdn Bhd for the development of a residential project in Kinta, Perak, for RM189.54 million. The project, in Bandar Tasik Amanjaya, consists of block A3 and Block E11 of four phases with a minimum of 4,032 units of residential units to be built, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 444

Losers - 332

Not Traded - 543

Unchanged - 367

Value - 1950222052

Volume - 21718120

KL Shares End Firmer, Lifted By Higher Oil Prices, Better Trade Data

By S. Joan Santani & Harizah Hanim Mohamed

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia closed on a firm note Friday backed by a bounce in oil prices and upbeat Malaysia's trade surplus for the first six months of 2016, dealers said. Gainers trounced losers 444 to 332 while 367 counters were unchanged, 543 untraded and 19 others suspended. Volume increased to 2.17 billion units worth RM1.95 billion from 2.05 billion units worth RM1.53 billion on Thursday. US crude oil prices settled 2.7 per cent higher at US$41.93 a barrel, a day after rising more than three per cent amid a drawdown in gasoline inventories while international benchmark, Brent crude was up 2.67 per cent to US$44.25 a barrel. The rally in crude oil prices have lifted investors risk appetite. Forex Time Vice-President of Market Research Jameel Ahmad said sentiment in the Malaysian economy should receive a boost following the unexpected growth in exports of 3.4 per cent for June. "This should help provide optimism for various reasons, for one, the higher demand for Malaysian goods should help offset the concerns over the uncertain external environment having a negative impact on the Malaysian economy," he said. Main Market turnover increased to 1.27 billion shares worth RM1.83 billion from 1.14 billion shares worth RM1.41 billion recorded on Thursday.

MARKET

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
US	4.0200	4.0250
S'PORE	2.9993	2.9033
YEN	3.9806	3.9875
POUND	5.2911	5.2989
EURO	4.4783	4.4855

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher On Liquidity-Driven Market

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit finished higher versus most major currencies, including the US dollar, buoyed by the liquidity driven market, dealers said. At 6 pm, the local unit was quoted at 4.0200/0250 against the US dollar from 4.0490/0540 on Thursday. It was reported that the Bank of England (BoE) has decided to cut its interest rates for the first time after more than seven years in an effort to prevent the post-Brexit recession. The rate was cut to a new record low of 0.25 per cent from 0.5 per cent and there might be a possibility for another cut in the coming months. "This move will benefit those who would like to seek loans from the bank, but disadvantage savers, who have been getting low returns due to the rock-bottom interest rates, will likely sell their pound to purchase our local note," a dealer said. The ringgit was traded higher against a basket of major currencies. The dealer said this was due to the oil price, which was still trading above US$40 a barrel. The local unit rose against the Singapore dollar to 2.9993/9033 from 3.0129/0188 on Thursday and was up against the yen to 3.9806/9875 from 3.9931/9992. The local note was higher against the British pound to 5.2911/2989 from 5.3840/3922 Thursday and advanced against the euro to 4.4783/4855 from 4.5045/5117.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates End Stable On BNM's Intervention

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM22.39 billion from RM25.34 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM5.5 billion from RM12.4 billion. BNM had earlier conducted two tenders of a conventional money market and Qard Islamic range maturity auction. The central bank also conducted a conventional money market tender for RM21 billion and a RM5.5 billion Qard, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.95 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.10 per cent respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Contract Closes Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed untraded Friday. At close, spot month August 2016 was pegged at 96.54 while September 2016, October 2016 and December 2016 were all quoted at 96.59, respectively. Open interest was nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.40 per cent.

KLCI Futures Contracts End Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended higher Friday, in tandem with the firmer underlying cash market. At the close, August 2016 and December 2016 were 8.5 points higher at 1659.5 and 1,644, respectively; September 2016 added 9.5 points to 1,655 and March 2017 gained 10.5 points to 1,636.5. Turnover rose to 6,414 lots from 4,472 lots on Thursday and open interest increased to 41,111 contracts from 38,949 contracts, yesterday. The benchmark FBM KLCI up 8.75 points higher at 1,664.04.

KAF Investment Aims To Generate RM100 Mln For First Feeder Fund

KUALA LUMPUR -- KAF Investment Funds Bhd (KAF) aims to generate RM100 million from its first feeder fund, KAF Australian Islamic Property Fund (KAIPF), within the first six months of its launch. Crescent Wealth Malaysia Country Head Mas Johan Harris told reporters here Monday, the fund was aimed at giving Malaysian non-institutional investors direct access to Australian commercial property.

Life Insurance Coverage To Grow 10 Pct In 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The national insurance and takaful penetration rate should grow at least 10 per cent next year in order to reach the national target of 75 per cent coverage by 2020, Life Insurance Association of Malaysia (LIAM) said. "If we are going to meet the target, we need to register at a 10 per cent growth of the coverage to 65 per cent from the current's 55 per cent," LIAM president Toi See Jong told reporters here Monday.

New Agrobank Chairman Mohamad Zabidi Eager For More Success

KUALA LUMPUR -- Agrobank's newly appointed Chairman, Tan Sri Mohamad Zabidi Zainal, is eager to achieve further success for the government-owned bank. In a statement here Monday, Mohamad Zabidi said he believes that Agrobank is strongly positioned to deliver its mandated role to develop and grow the country's agriculture sector.

BNM, Otoritas Jasa Keuangan Ink Regulatory Cooperation Deal

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Monday signed a bilateral agreement with Otoritas Jasa Keuangan under the ASEAN Banking Integration Framework (ABIF). BNM said in a statement here Monday, the agreement, which seeks to operationalise the earlier Heads of Agreement in 2014, would provide greater access and operational flexibility for Malaysian and Indonesian Qualified ASEAN Banks operating in the respective jurisdictions.

Bank Rakyat Set To Achieve Six Pct Loan Growth Target

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Rakyat is on track to achieve its loan growth target of six per cent this year based on the past seven months' performance. Managing Director/President, Datuk Mustafha Abd Razak, told reporters here Tuesday, despite the challenges in the market following global economic uncertainties, the growth was still moving in the right momentum.

CIMB Hails Move To Give Greater Mart Access To Indonesian, M'sian Banks

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Group Holdings Bhd Tuesday applauded the move by Indonesian and Malaysian regulators to give their banks greater access to each other's markets, which is positive for the banking industry in both countries. CIMB Group Chief Executive Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz said in a statement here Tuesday, the move provided an additional impetus for CIMB Group to expand its existing business in Indonesia, particularly in the Islamic and consumer segments, where there are a lot of growth opportunities given the republic's 260 million population.

Malaysia Debt Ventures To Raise RM1 Bln Via Islamic Bonds

KUALA LUMPUR -- Technology financier, Malaysia Debt Ventures Bhd (MDV) plans to raise RM1 billion via sukuk in the fourth quarter of this year in an effort to increase its lending ability including to start-ups. Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Datuk Md Zubir Ansori Yahaya told reporters here Wednesday, the new sukuk issuance, the company's second Islamic bond issuance, would likely have a government-guarantee status.

BNM Issues Enhanced Corporate Governance Standards For Financial Institutions

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has issued an enhanced standards aimed at raising the bar for corporate governance across financial institutions, effective immediately. In a statement here Wednesday, the central bank said among the key changes introduced in the standards were strengthened requirements on board composition, including a requirement for boards to have a majority of independent directors.

Bank Notes With New BNM Governor's Signature Out Soon

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank notes with the signature of the new Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Governor Datuk Muhammad Ibrahim are expected to be in circulation soon. The governor told reporters here Thursday, the central bank would need some time to replenish existing notes bearing the former governor's signature with the new notes.

Bank Negara's Int'l Reserves At RM391.1 Bln As At July 29

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM)'s international reserves amounted to RM391.1 billion (equivalent to US$97.3 billion) as at July 29 July, 2016. In a statement here Friday, BNM said the reserves position was sufficient to finance 8.1 months of retained imports and was 1.2 times the short-term external debt.

MMHE Posts Pre-Tax Loss Of RM821,000 In 2Q16

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Marine and Heavy Engineering Holdings Bhd (MMHE) registered a pre-tax loss of RM821,000 for the second quarter ended June 30, 2016 against a profit before tax of RM17.6 million in the corresponding quarter of last year. Group revenue was lower at RM297.44 million from RM582.12 million previously, according to the company's filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Pos Malaysia To Rake In RM3.5 Mln Revenue During Haj Season

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pos Malaysia Bhd expects to rake in RM3.5 million in revenue from its services provided to Malaysian pilgrims during the current haj season this year from RM3 million last year. Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Mohd Shukrie Mohd Salleh told reporters here Monday, its courier arm, Pos Laju, is expected to handle 255,000 kilograms (kg) of goods and baggage from the pilgrims compared with 217,000 kg last year.

Maxis To Stimulate ARPU With Pokemon GO

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maxis Bhd is striving to raise average revenue per unit (ARPU) for its prepaid plan, Hotlink, by introducing digital initiates involving the "Pokemon GO" game. Maxis Head of Prepaid, Consumer Business, Navin Manian told Bernama here Monday, the company also aimed to continue its focus on the foreign worker segment.

Etika Group Eyes Up To 40 Pct Revenue Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- Fast-moving consumer goods player Etika Group of Companies aims to increase its revenue by 30 to 40 per cent over the next three to five years. President/Chief Executive Officer Erwin Selvarajah told reporters here Tuesday, last year, the group's revenue reached RM1.5 billion, and he hoped this year's figure would exceed last year's.

AirAsia X Registers 27 Pct Increase In Passenger Load For 2Q16

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia X Bhd (AAX) carried 1.03 million passengers in the second quarter of 2016 (2Q16), an increase of 27 per cent from 810,944 passengers in 2Q15. In a statement here Tuesday, the airline said despite historically being the leanest quarter, operating performance in 2Q16 exceeded expectations due to demand across all regions, following the ongoing turnaround plan initiated last year.

Hartalega's Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Slips To RM68.12 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Premium latex glove manufacturer, Hartalega Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter (Q1) ended June 30, 2016 fell to RM68.12 million from RM79.92 million in the same quarter a year ago. Group revenue however increased to RM401.82 million from RM320.51 million previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday.

MyKadSmartShopper Targets 10 Mln Members By 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- I Synergy Holdings Bhd (ISH), which runs a loyalty programme, MyKadSmartShopper (MSS), targets 10 million registered members by end of 2017. ISH Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Lawrence Teo told a press conference here Thursday, the figure is achievable as Affiliate Junction (AJ), owned by ISH, is taking initiatives in advertising and organising roadshows, campaigns and through word of mouth.

MISC's Q2 Pre-Tax Profit Jumps To RM1.37 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- MISC Bhd's pre-tax profit for the second quarter ended June 30, 2015 surged to RM1.37 billion from RM772.57 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue, however, declined to RM2.39 billion from RM2.6 billion previously. MISC, in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday, said the better pre-tax profit was contributed by higher profits from its offshore business and gains from acquisition of subsidiaries.

Jewellery Expo To Rake In RM15 Mln Sales

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia International Jewellery Fair 2016 expects to generate between RM10 million and RM15 million in sales, down from RM40 million recorded last year. Johnson Lim, Chief Executive Officer of Elite Expo Sdn Bhd, the fair organiser, told reporters here Friday, the amount expected was much lower than last year as the size of exhibition this year was half as big as last year.

Abdul Wahid Rejoins Corporate World

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar rejoined the corporate world Monday as the newly-appointed Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) chairman. An accountant by profession, Abdul Wahid had helmed Malayan Banking Bhd as president and chief executive officer from 2008 to 2013 after heading the reorganisation of Telekom Malaysia and restructuring of UEM Group.

Digi To Increase Internet Consumer Base With New Prepaid Packs

PETALING JAYA -- Digi Telecommunication Sdn Bhd (Digi) aims to increase its Internet consumer base with the introduction of two new prepaid packs. Chief Marketing Officer Loh Keh Jiat told reporters here Monday, the Digi Prepaid Live and Digi Prepaid Best would enhance the Internet experience of users by enabling them to stay connected at all times and enjoy more digital streaming.

UMW Group's Unit & Spark Labs To Provide Co-Working Spaces

KUALA LUMPUR -- UMW Group's unit, UTech Americas, Inc. has entered into a joint venture agreement with Spark Labs International, Inc., a US expansion platform for technology and media companies, to provide co-working spaces and/or offices for lease, as well as various professional services. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday, UMW Holdings Bhd said a limited liability company named U-Spark, LLC was established Monday, following the joint venture under the Delaware Limited Liability Company Act.

Govt Aims To Position M'sia As Sales, Marketing Hub For M & E

JOHOR BAHARU -- The government aims to turn Malaysia into a sales and marketing hub for machinery and equipment (M&E), as well as a technology refurbishment centre for machine tools and packaging machineries, said Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Azman Mahmud. He told reporters here Monday, the target had been set due to the industry's promising prospects whereby it had grown robustly in the last seven years with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 28.5 per cent.

M'sian Pre-Retirees Expect To Save For 4 Years Longer - Study

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pre-retirees in Malaysia now expect to save for four years longer than their predecessors for their retirement, according to new research from HSBC. Based on the views of over 1,000 people in Malaysia, the current generation of retirees started saving for their retirement at 33 and retired at 56, saving for an average period of 23 years, HSBC said in a statement here Tuesday.

Healthcare Industry To Create RM13 Bln Revenue This Year

PUTRAJAYA -- Malaysia's healthcare industry is expected to generate nearly RM13 billion in revenue this year, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam told reporters here Tuesday. He said the medical devices sector, which is the key segment of the industry, is expected to contribute RM11 billion in exports, with revenue from the health tourism and pharmaceutical sectors expected to reach RM1 billion and RM800 million respectively.

No Members Of The Public In MRT Trial Runs

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month trial runs of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) starting Oct 1 would not involve the members of the public, says Mass Rapid Transit Corp Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp). Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Seri Shahril Mokhtar, said in a statement here Tuesday: "These trial runs will not involve members of the public as we have to be absolutely sure that everything works fine before we open the line to them."

InvestKL On Track To Attract 13 MNCs This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- InvestKL remains on track to attract 13 multinational corporations

(MNCs) this year amid the global economic uncertainty. Chief Executive Officer Datuk Zainal Amanshah told reporters here Tuesday, InvestKL is currently in the midst of finalising several deals on top of the three MNCs it had secured in the first half of this year.

P&G Malaysia Consolidates Distributors In East Malaysia
KUALA LUMPUR -- Procter & Gamble Malaysia Sdn Bhd (P&G) is awarding distribution rights for products under its umbrella to Kim Teck Cheong Consolidated Bhd (KTC) to cover the East Malaysia market. Hence, effective Oct 1, 2016, KTC, via its subsidiary KTC Borneo, will cover all of East Malaysia, encompassing Sabah, Labuan and now Sarawak, it said in a statement here Wednesday.

WIEF Continues To Provide Various Networking Platforms
From Azlina Aziz

JAKARTA -- Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) Tun Musa Hitam believes the forum is the best platform in terms of nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit, progressive thinking and business evolution. He said this year's edition, hosted by Indonesia, recorded the highest participation rate to-date with more that 4,000 delegates attending the three-day event. "It also managed to attract many non-Muslim participants," Musa told Malaysian reporters here Thursday.

Ford Offers Discount Up To RM15,000 On Selected Models
KUALA LUMPUR -- Ford, and its local distributor Sime Darby Auto Connexion (SDAC), are offering cash rebates up to RM15,000 on selected models nationwide this month. From now till Sept 30, customers can enjoy cash rebates of up to RM15,000 for the Kuga, up to RM13,500 for the EcoSport and up to RM8,000 for the Focus and Fiesta, according to a statement from SDAC Thursday.

Gloria Jean's Invites Asia's Baristas To Join Competition
KUALA LUMPUR -- Australia-based Gloria Jean's Coffees has invited baristas in Asia to participate in its Asia Barista Championships here on Aug 6. The winner will have an opportunity to attend the Retail Food Group (RFG) International Barista Championships in the Gold Coast, Australia in September, and win AU$3,000 (about RM9247) and the title of RFG International Barista Champion, it said in a statement here Thursday.

ACCCIM: M'sia's New Company Law Simplifies Company Incorporation
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) welcomes Malaysia's new company law, saying it will make it simpler for all, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to incorporate a company. President Datuk Ter Leong Yap told reporters here Friday, a company can now be formed with just a single person who can be the sole shareholder and director.

Bank Negara Urges Insurance Agents To Play Their Key Role
KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia wants insurance agents to step up and play their key role in advancing the important benefits of insurance to the economy and the wider society, given that financial technology is gaining traction in Malaysia. Assistant Governor Chew Cheng Lian told a convention here Friday, the insurance industry had just entered the first phase in the progressive liberalisation of the motor and fire insurance tariffs, which began on July 1, and expected to pave the way for more product innovation.

MIDA To Approve 100 IBS-Based Projects By 2020
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) aims to approve 100 projects that adopt the Industrialised Building System (IBS), with a total of RM2 billion additional investment by 2020, said Chief Executive Officer Datuk Azman Mahmud. As of March 2016, MIDA has approved 56 IBS-related projects with investment worth RM1.7 billion, he told reporters here Friday.

Maybank Appoints Two New Independent Directors

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) has recently appointed two new Independent Directors to its board -- Nor Hizam Hashim and Dr Hasnita Hashim. In a statement here Monday, Maybank Chairman Tan Sri Megat Zaharuddin Megat Mohd Nor said the new appointments were part of the group's ongoing efforts to ensure the board is equipped with the appropriate experience and diverse skills sustainably and also with a view to future succession planning.

TM Announces Webe Digital's CEO And Executive Director

KUALA LUMPUR -- Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM) Monday announced the appointment of Azizi A. Hadi as the new Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Webe Digital Sdn Bhd, succeeding CC Puan, effective Monday. Webe Digital (formerly known as Packet One Networks (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd) is a subsidiary of TM.

RHB Bank Appoints Rebecca Sta Maria As Independent Director

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Bank Bhd has appointed Tan Sri Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria as its independent director effective Monday. Rebecca, 58, had previously served the International Trade and Industry Ministry as its Secretary-General from 2010 to June 2016. Meanwhile, RHB Bank shares ended flat at RM5.09 Monday.

ETCM Recalls Nissan Vehicles For Airbag Inflator, Back Door Stay Replacement

KUALA LUMPUR -- Edaran Tan Chong Motor Sdn Bhd (ETCM) and Tan Chong Ekspres Auto Servis Centre (TCEAS) have recalled certain models of Nissan vehicles to replace the Takata Airbags Inflator and Back Door Stay. In a statement here Monday, ETCM said approximately 110,945 units of Nissan vehicles are involved in the Takata Airbags Inflator replacement exercise while approximately 22,173 units would undergo a change of the 'Back Door Stay field'. Among affected models include the Navara, Latio, Grand Livina, X-Gear, X-Trail, Teana, Liberty, Serena S-Hybrid C26 and NV200 M20.

MMU Partners With Cloudera To Cultivate Next Gen Of Data Professionals

KUALA LUMPUR -- Multimedia University (MMU) and Cloudera haVE formed a partnership through the Cloudera Academic Partnership (CAP) programme to collaborate in cultivating the next generation of data professionals. In a joint statement here Tuesday, MMU and CAP said the programme would allow students from MMU'S Faculty of Computing and Informatics (FCI) to access the latest Cloudera Enterprise curriculum, software and skills training for the Apache Hadoop platform.

MAA Takaful Renamed Zurich Takaful Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR -- MAA Takaful Bhd has been renamed Zurich Takaful (M) Bhd. Zurich Insurance Group (Zurich) in a statement here Tuesday said this followed its acquisition of the Takaful provider on June 30, 2016.

KPJ Healthcare, Sojitz, Capital Medical To Open Oncology Centre In Jakarta

KUALA LUMPUR -- KPJ Healthcare Bhd's wholly-owned unit, Kumpulan Perubatan (Johor) Sdn Bhd, has signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Sojitz Corp and Capital Medica Co Ltd for the proposed opening of an oncology centre in Jakarta, Indonesia for US$12 million (US$1=RM4.04). In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday, KPJ Healthcare said, the agreement was signed during the 12th World Islamic Economic Forum in Jakarta Tuesday.

Business Matching Programme For Creative & Multimedia Industry

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) is hosting a business matching or International Sourcing Programme (INSP) for the creative and multimedia industry from Aug 11-12 to accelerate export sales for local ICT companies. The programme is expected to gather more than 25 international delegates and 60 local companies, the agency said in a statement here Wednesday.

AirAsia To Offer Discounts At MITM Travel Fair

KUALA LUMPUR-- AirAsia Bhd is offering 20 per cent discounts on online fares during the MITM Travel Fair Kuala Lumpur 2016 (MITM 2016) from Aug 5-7, 2016. In a statement here Thursday, the official airline partner of MITM 2016 said the offer will be available for the travel period of Aug 8, 2016 to Apr 6, 2017.

MHIT Premiums Not Spared From Rising Healthcare Costs

KUALA LUMPUR: There is growing awareness around the world that Medical and Health Insurance and Takaful (MHIT) is a viable option to access healthcare services that are increasingly expensive, despite the fact that MHIT premium is not spared from the effects of medical inflation.

While public sector healthcare provision in Malaysia is still subsidised, with RM23.3 billion allocated for this sector in the 2015 National Budget, there are growing fears that subsidising healthcare in tandem with medical inflation would no longer be sustainable.

Regardless, healthcare costs continue to rise unabated for a number of reasons:

DEMAND FOR BETTER HEALTHCARE SERVICES

A more affluent nation has generated a stronger demand for better healthcare services and medicinal products, resulting in higher healthcare costs.

An aging population and a higher prevalence of chronic and lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and obesity are other factors contributing to the increase in healthcare costs.

Malaysia's Statistics Department has revealed that between 2010 and 2040, the number of Malaysians aged 65 years and above is projected to increase more than three folds and in 2021, the number of Malaysians aged 65 years and over would reach 7.1 per cent of total population.

Statistics from the Ministry of Health show a rise in non-communicable diseases, with hypertension cases increasing 43 per cent, diabetes up 88 per cent and obesity 250 per cent higher in 2012 compared with 2002.

Such demographic and changing health patterns require long-term and expensive healthcare support that may not be sustainable on public funding.

HIKE IN MEDICAL FEES

The medical fee schedule was first regulated in 2006 and the latest rates are the first changes made as part of the Private Hospitals and Other Private Healthcare Facilities Regulations 2006.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN HEALTHCARE

Higher medical fees are also due to an increase utilisation of advanced health technologies in medical facilities. For example, we have evolved from X-rays to CT scans and now to MRIs. With medical innovation, consumers have a wider choice of diagnostic treatments.

MHIT – AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION

In the light of these developments and despite the fact that the fee or premium of MHIT is not spared from the effects of escalating healthcare costs, MHIT is still an attractive option to buffer consumers against medical inflation.

That is because MHIT adopts the principle of risk sharing whereby policyholders individually contribute via their premiums to a pool of funds. For instance, when a policyholder is diagnosed with an illness or sustains an injury that requires hospitalisation, his insurer will use the funds from this pool to cover his medical expenses.

The premium for a policyholder is calculated based on actuarial principles (using utilisation and claims amount statistics). Thus premium amounts are dependent on the following:

· Age of the insured - Older people tend to suffer from more illnesses. Thus premiums increase with age to account for the higher utilisation and claims amount at older ages.

· Types of medical care plan – there is a wide range of medical care plans to meet the needs of a diversified community from basic to more comprehensive offerings. An increase in medical care costs would impact the premiums of these plans to different extents depending on benefit types and limits of each plan type. Reimbursement type medical plans are more susceptible to inflationary cost as versus fixed hospital income products. For example if cost of treatment of a specific condition currently is RM C, you could expect after one year, treatment for that same condition to cost RM (C X 1.15) if medical inflation is at 15 per cent per annum.

· Geographical coverage of the plan- MHIT policies have 'geographic limits' so policyholder will not be reimbursed for non-emergency medical treatment received outside the areas as specified in the insurance cover. Most policies restrict cover to treatment within Malaysia. Policies that allow for overseas treatment will have higher premiums as cost of medical treatment in some other countries can be much higher than in Malaysia.

· Experience of Utilisation and Claims Paid Out– It is highly important that you do not wait until you fall sick or needed medical care to purchase a MHIT product. Waiting to obtain health insurance or takaful coverage until one needs coverage then creates a pool of insureds with "high utilisation," which then increases the premiums that insurance companies must charge in order to pay for the high claims incurred. Hence, it is important for you to start your medical and health insurance protection early in order for you to obtain a MHIT that meets your needs and fits your long-term budget (taking into account drop in income after retirement and amount of savings you need to accumulate).

MOVING FORWARD

With the costs of medical and health insurance on the rise and with the lack of other alternatives to cover escalating medical charges, MHIT may still be the best option to help consumers protect their savings during a medical crisis.

Insurers and takaful providers are not only committed to educating the public on the importance of MHIT, but are also working closely with the healthcare providers to ensure fair pricing on the treatments provided.

There are many MHIT options in Malaysia and consumers are certainly spoilt for choice. However, discernment is required when selecting the MHIT of choice that would both meets the individual's needs and budget. Always make sure you are clear about the terms and conditions of the policy before you buy it.

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

BURSA Malaysia Uptrend To Continue

By S. Joan Santani and Harizah Hanim Mohamed

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to continue its uptrend next week backed by positive factors such as recovery in the crude oil prices, country's trade data and Bank of England's (BOE) cut in interest rate. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Retail Research Head, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan, said the rally in the crude oil prices would provide another lift to the local bourse next week. US crude oil prices settled 2.7 per cent higher at US$41.93 a barrel, a day after rising over three per cent amid a drawdown in oil inventories while international benchmark, Brent crude was up 2.67 per cent to US$44.25 a barrel. Nazri said the sentiment on the local bourse also improved on upbeat trade surplus of RM41.79 billion in the first half of this year, which reflected Malaysia's strong export sector. "The benchmark FBM KLCI is ready to stage further upside if the ringgit and commodities continued to strengthen, with immediate support at the 1,690 points level while key resistance at the 1,677-1,667 points level," he told Bernama. Nazri said another factor that boosted the market was the cut in interest rate by the Bank of England from 0.5 per cent to 0.25 per cent and the stimulus programme to soften the economic shock after the 'Britain exit' (Brexit) referendum to leave the European Union. "The BOE has decided to cut its lending rate for the first time in more than seven years to a new record low of 0.25 per cent from 0.5 per cent as measures to prevent post-Brexit recession. "The rate cut was seen as a good move as it will benefit the ringgit and those who would like to seek loans from the bank," he said. For the week-just-ended, the local market saw range-bound trading, helped by trading in heavyweights led-by energy stocks, trade and services, industrial stocks as well as volatile in the crude oil prices. Weekly turnover increased to 10.02 billion units worth RM8.94 billion from 8.88 billion units worth RM8.72 billion last week. Main market volume fell to 6.25 billion shares worth RM8.39 billion from 6.42 billion shares worth RM8.29 billion previously.

FOREX: Ringgit Likely To Touch 4.01-Level Against US Dollar

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit will likely trade higher against the US dollar next week to touch the 4.01-level, lifted by among others, the liquidity-driven market and the higher oil prices, says Affin Hwang Investment Bank. Vice-President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan, said most of emerging Asian currencies, including the local note, will be on the upward trend on positive sentiment following the Bank of England's (BOE) interest rate cut. "The BOE cut its lending rate for the first time in over seven years to prevent recession following the 'Britain exit' referendum. "The rate was cut to a low of 0.25 per cent from 0.5 per cent and there might be another possibility of a cut in the coming months," he told Bernama. Nazri said the move was seen as good as it would benefit the ringgit. "The move will benefit those who seek loans from the bank, but disadvantage savers, who have been getting low returns due to the rock-bottom interest rates. "They will likely sell their pound to purchase our local note," he said. The Bank of Japan, on the converse, decided to keep its interest rates steady, but will increase purchases of exchange-traded funds. The ringgit will likely trade higher next week helped by the higher oil prices. Last Thursday, the oil prices rose due to the large drawdown in US crude inventories. Meanwhile, the International Brent crude futures were traded at US$43.28 a barrel, up 0.44 per cent. For the week just-ended, the ringgit touched a one-and-a-half week high against the US dollar, when the US economy posted a slower growth. It rose against the greenback to 4.0200/0250 on Friday from 4.0670/0740 the previous week. The ringgit increased against the Singapore dollar to 2.9993/9033 from 3.0108/0169 last week. It eased against the yen to 3.9806/9875 from 3.9257/9343 last Friday. The local note rose against the British pound to 5.2911/2989 from 5.3583/3691 last Friday and appreciated against the euro to 4.4783/4855 from 4.5180/5274 last Friday.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- The money market is likely to remain stable next week on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. 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, range maturity auction, Islamic range maturity auction, Qard as well as commodity murabahah programme. On Friday, BNM's actions reduced the market's liquidity surplus in the conventional system to RM22.39 billion from RM25.34 billion last week, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM5.5 billion from RM12.4 billion previously. The overnight Islamic reference rate was one per cent higher at 2.95 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively. Meanwhile, the benchmark three-month interbank rate stood at 3.40 per cent.

FBM KLCI Futures Contracts To Be Well-Supported

By Harizah Hanim Mohamed

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to be well-supported next week as the underlying cash market is projected to trade higher. Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd Head of Research, Pong Teng Siew, said in general, Bursa Malaysia was expected to be positive next week and continue for the rest of the month and extended to September. He said the market generally climbed because the funds, which were mostly from Europe were flowing into emerging markets and Malaysia will be one of the beneficiaries. "So far, the funds have been flowing into Indonesia, Thailand, Taiwan and South Korea, we expect it to be coming here soon," he told Bernama. For the week just-ended, the market was mainly higher on positive sentiment. Spot month August 2016 added 11.5 point to 1,659.5, September 2016 advanced 12.0 points to 1,655, December 2016 was 13.5 points higher at 1,636.5. Turnover declined to 30,059 lots from 107,693 lots last week while open interest decreased to 41,111 contracts versus 60,159 contracts previously. The benchmark FBM KLCI up 8.75 points higher at 1,664.04 from 1,653.26 last Friday.

CPO Futures To See Profit-Taking

By Rosemarie Khoo Mohd Sani

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures prices on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to see profit-taking next week after a strong surge this week. Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader, Jim Teh, said the prices could go down to RM2,300-RM2,350 a tonne next week on the back of news reports that China has released two million tonnes of rapeseed oil from its state reserves. "This could mean that imports from top consumers, China and India, would be lower," Teh told Bernama. Teh said this, however, may be limited as speculators expected La Nina, usually associated with wet weather, to take place in the coming months. "If it happens, it could cause supply disruptions that are positive for CPO prices overall," he said. Nevertheless, he said, the CPO market remained 'healthy'. He also said investors would also expect the Malaysia Palm Oil Board monthly report, expected to be released on Aug 10, to show higher inventories in July. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, August 2016 jumped RM131 to RM2,505 per tonne, September 2016 surged RM94 to RM2,430 a tonne, October 2016 rose RM91 to RM2,407 a tonne and November 2016 improved RM85 to RM2,311 a tonne. Weekly turnover fell to 196,644 lots from 197,456 lots last week, while open interest eased to 248,914 contracts from 257,412 contracts previously. On the physical market, August South gained RM130 to RM2,510 per tonne

Rubber Market Likely To Remain Stable

By Rosemarie Khoo Mohd Sani

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to remain stable next week amid fluctuating crude oil prices, dealers said. A dealer said there were also uncertainties in the benchmark Tokyo Commodity Exchange futures market following Japan's stimulus package announced earlier this week. "The current development in Japan, including the yen's performance, would be among the factors affecting the rubber market in the region. "On the home front, the rubber market would also depend on the ringgit's performance against the US dollar. The local rubber market, despite these factors, is still stable overall," he told Bernama. On a weekly basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 gained 10.5 sen to 517.50 sen a kg while while latex-in-bulk dipped 2.5 sen to 453.0 sen a kg. The unofficial physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 added 10.5 sen to 515.50 sen a kg and latex-in-bulk fell 12 sen to 449.0 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Expected To Remain Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to remain untraded next week. The futures market was untraded for the week just-ended. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month August 2016 was pegged at 96.54 while September 2016, October 2016 and December 2016 all stood at 96.59. The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market stood at 3.40 per cent.

KLTM Expected To Be Firm

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to be firm next week with prices moving US$17,900 and US$18,200 a tonne, a dealer said. He said this trend will also be in line with the uptrend on the London Metal Exchange. "The local market was bullish throughout the week, except on Aug 4, where it declined marginally on technical correction. "The price has breached the US$18,000 level and is poised to prompt encouraging demand from traders in the days ahead," he told Bernama. For the week just-ended, tin finished US$110 higher at US$18,080 per tonne compared with US$17,900 per tonne last Friday. Turnover fell to 177 lots from 201 lots last week. The premium between KLTM and the LME narrowed to US$410 from US$425 per tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures Contracts Likely To See Uncertain Trading

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to see uncertain trading next week, tracking the US COMEX gold market and the US Federal Reserve (Fed) decision on the interest rates, said Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd. Its Dealer, Amberlyn How, said the trading will likely be volatile, especially after the release of upbeat US non-farm payrolls. "The gold prices will not go up so much or down and there is a possibility of a technical correction," she told Bernama. How said the US Fed was expected to consider a couple of non-farm payroll releases before deciding on rates. "The downside for the gold price is expected to be limited after Bank of England's easing," she said, adding that the trading of the local currency will also influence the gold market. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, July 2016 last traded rade at RM174.60 a gramme, and new spot month August 2016 improved 52 ticks to RM177.20 a gramme, September 2016 advanced 61 ticks to RM177.85 a gramme and October 2016 was 54 ticks better at RM178 a gramme. Weekly turnover eased to 89 lots worth RM1.58 million from 96 lots worth RM1.52 million last week. Open interest on Friday decreased to 266 contracts versus 286 contracts previously.