This Week's Highlight :
Budget 2017: Inclusive Prudent Spending, Wellbeing Of Rakyat

PRUDENT BUDGET...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak presenting the Budget 2017 in Parliament Friday. Also seen Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (left). Pix Nur Ain Shafinas fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Friday tabled the 2017 Budget which stresses inclusive prudent spending towards the wellbeing of the "rakyat" (people) in facing the challenging economy which is being tested by uncertainty at the global level. Themed "Ensuring Unity and Economic Growth, Inclusive Prudent Spending, Wellbeing of the Rakyat", Najib, who is also Finance Minister, proposed several steps and key strategies to face these challenges.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

2017 Budget To Strengthen Malaysian Economy Amid Global Slowdown - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 2017 Budget, which will be presented in Parliament Friday, will cover measures to strengthen and move forward the Malaysian economy to face the global slowdown, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. The government would also focus on industries reeling from the sluggish global economy which had impacted international trade, Najib told Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) in the Dewan Rakyat Monday.

TUESDAY

Govt Never Planned To Abolish GST - Johari

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government had never planned to abolish the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which was implemented on April 1, 2015 in a bid to restructure the nation's consumption tax system to make it more transparent and efficient, said Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani.

"The GST that came into force has taken into account the people's current socioeconomic situation so as to minimise its impact on the people, especially those in the lower-income groups," said the Second Finance Minister Tuesday.

WEDNESDAY

Rising Cost Of Living A Major Concern - iProperty.com

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysians are concerned about the rising cost of living and would like a reduction in income tax, more efforts to curb crime and delivery of affordable housing schemes, according to a survey by iProperty.com Malaysia. While the nation waits for the Budget 2017 to be announced on Oct 21, iProperty.com Malaysia has conducted an online survey on approximately 300 respondents, highlighting the big issues affecting Malaysians.

THURSDAY

Alternative Budget By Opposition Financially Not Feasible - MOF Official

By Mikhail Raj Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR -- The alternative budget presented by the Opposition is a ruse to confuse the people as it is financially not feasible, a senior Ministry of Finance Official said Thursday. Citing the proposal to raise the minimum wage to RM1,500, the official asked as to who would foot the bill for the extra RM500 or from where the money would come from.

FRIDAY

Malaysia's Economy To Expand 4.0-5.0 Pct In 2017 - MOF

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economy is expected to expand between 4.0 and 5.0 per cent in 2017, given the nation's strong economic fundamentals coupled with the 2017 Budget strategies and programmes.

The Economic Report 2016/17, released by the Ministry of Finance in conjunction with the 2017 Budget announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Friday, said the expansion translated into gross national income (GNI) per capita growth of 5.0 per cent to RM39,699 from RM37,812.

SMEbrief

SMES, M40, B40 To Benefit from Budget - AmBank

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmBank Group expects small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the Middle 40 (M40) and the Bottom 40 (B40) households will benefit from the upcoming Budget 2017. Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Sulaiman Mohd Tahir said in a statement Wednesday, “We hope that prudent incentives are put in place for this business segment.”

Graduate Entrepreneur Fund Scheme To Boost Yearly Sales

KUALA LUMPUR -- Seventy-seven per cent of entrepreneurs who received help under the Graduate Entrepreneur Fund scheme are recording increasing annual sales, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) said Thursday. Its Deputy Minister, Datuk Ahmad Maslan said 16.5 per cent of the entrepreneurs, who were assisted under the programme, were also able to expand their business by opening branches and outlets or exporting goods abroad.

Govt To Strengthen MTCs’ Core Business Functions

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government will continue to assist Mid-Tier Companies (MTCs) to strengthen their core business functions and accelerate export growth through various initiatives, says the Finance Ministry. The initiatives included the establishment of Mid-Tier Companies Development Programme (MTCDP) in 2014, aimed at unlocking export potential while offering customised support to MTCs, it said in its Economic Report 2016/ 2017, released Friday.

Govt Allocates RM75 Mln For SME Devt

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government will allocate RM75 million to implement programmes under the small and medium enterprises (SME) Master Plan to promote the development of SMEs. In addition, a guarantee of up to RM15 billion is provided under the various schemes of Syarikat Jaminan Pembiayaan Perniagaan Bhd (SJPP) to be extended till 2025, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said when tabling the 2017 Budget in Parliament Friday.

SMEs Tax Rate Cut To 18 Pct From 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government will reduce the small and medium enterprises (SME) tax rate on chargeable income up to the first RM500,000 to 18 per cent from 19 per cent effective the year of assessment 2017. Further, to boost the local vendor development programme in the manufacturing and services sectors, a double deduction on expenses incurred by the anchor company, will be extended until Dec 31, 2020, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when tabling the 2017 Budget in Parliament here Friday.

PropUP — Property update

Retirement Planning Must Include Housing, Social Engagement - Expert

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR -- Retirement planning must include housing and social engagement for retirees to maintain their standard of living in old age, a syariah-registered Financial Planner said. Founder of Life Success Resources Dr Niki Shuhada Shukor said Tuesday, retirement planning for housing does not necessarily involve moving to a smaller house as retirees could maintain their current house as long as they could afford the expenses.

SDB Unit Disposes Land For RM71 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Selangor Dredging Bhd’s (SDB) indirect unit, SDB Damansara Sdn Bhd (SDSB), is disposing of 16 pieces of land located in Damansara Heights for RM71 million to Bukit Selesa Development Sdn Bhd (BSDSB). SDSB, a unit of SDB Properties Sdn Bhd, which in turn is the property arm of SDB, has entered into an agreement with BSDSB to purchase the said land, said SDB in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

BDB Hopes Govt Will Expedite Affordable Homes Process

KUALA LUMPUR -- Kedah-based property developer, Bina Darulaman Bhd (BDB), hopes the government will undertake efforts to expedite the process of delivering affordable homes to the market by providing green lane in approving development submissions in Budget 2017. Group Managing Director Datuk Izham Yusoff said in a statement Tuesday, this could be achieved by reducing the development charges which will then ease pressure on margins.

Property Managers Urged To Reinvent Themselves Amid Economic Challenges

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property managers need to reinvent themselves by adopting new technologies and mind set and changing their way of doing things, said Second Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong Wednesday. The prevailing challenging economic scenario requires the profession to continuously find new ways and methodologies to enhance client services, he said.

BUDGET: Better End-Financing Scheme For PR1MA House Buyers

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 2017 Budget Friday introduced a new end-financing scheme for the 1Malaysia People’s Housing programme which provides for easier and more accessible financing for buyers. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said through the scheme, financing will be easier and more accessible to buyers with a total loan of 90 to 100 per cent while loan rejection rate will be reduced drastically.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 326

Losers - 392

Not Traded - 540

Unchanged - 409

Value - 2050246108

Volume - 14415674

Bursa Malaysia Ends Higher Fuelled By Budget 2017 Announcement

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia bucked the downtrend in most regional bourses to close higher Friday, propelled by the announcement of Budget 2017. Losers outpaced gainers 392 to 326, while 409 counters were unchanged, 540 untraded and 18 others suspended. Volume fell to 1.44 billion units worth RM2.05 billion from 1.50 billion units worth RM1.49 billion on Thursday. A dealer said market sentiment was lifted by news that government-linked investment companies would allocate a special fund of RM3 billion to fund managers under the Securities Commission to invest in potential small and mid-cap companies. "Investors started nibbling on selective value-buy bluechips in consumer, finance, plantation, industrial products and property sectors in a positive reaction to the 2017 Budget," he added. The Main Market turnover swelled to 1.11 billion units worth RM2.00 billion from 926.70 million units worth RM1.41 billion on Thursday.

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Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.1830	4.1890
EUR	4.5595	4. 5677
GBP	5.1158	5. 1248
100 YEN	4.0279	4.0341
SGD	3.0027	3.0078

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Lower Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit ended marginally lower against the US dollar Friday on lack of buying interest, a dealer said. At 6 pm, the ringgit was quoted at 4.1830/1890 against the greenback from 4.1810/1880 Thursday. A dealer said the ringgit's performance was in line with most emerging Asian currencies as the greenback appreciated on the back of positive US home resale data for September. "There was hawkish comments from a US Federal Reserve permanent voter on a policy to support an interest rate hike in December if the US economy remained stable," the dealer said. The ringgit was traded higher against a basket of major currencies. It appreciated against the Singapore dollar to 3.0027/0078 from Thursday's 3.0081/0136 and rose against the British Pound to 5.1158/1248 from 5.1326/1433 previously. The local unit gained against the euro to 4.5595/5677 from 4.5845/5938 and improved against the yen to 4.0279/0341 from 4.0303/0374 Thursday.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) intervening to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system eased to RM21.42 billion from RM28.04 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM8.99 billion from RM15.27 billion previously. Earlier, BNM conducted six tenders -- four conventional range maturity auction (RMA), a Qard Islamic RMA and a Commodity Murabahah Programme. The central bank also conducted a RM21.3 billion conventional money market tender and a RM8.1 billion Qard money market tender, both for three-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.95 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.01 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.10 per cent respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives was untraded Friday. New spot month November 2016, December 2016, January 2017 and March 2017 were all stood at 96.62, respectively. Both volume and open interest remained nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.40 per cent.

KLCI Futures End Lower

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed lower Friday. November 2016 fell 1.50 points to 1,662.50, December 2016 and March 2017 both declined 1.00 point each to 1,663 and 1,652.50, respectively. October 2016 was, however, unchanged at 1,663.50. Turnover rose to 7,469 lots from 3,934 lots on Thursday while open interest increased to 43,196 contracts from 40,646 contracts Thursday. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 2.80 points higher at 1,669.98.

Maybank Islamic To Maintain Double-Digit Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maybank Islamic Bhd aims to maintain a double-digit growth for financial year ending Dec 31, 2016, said Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Mohamed Rafique Merican. "The bank would invest on development and infrastructure to continue with its upward momentum," he told reporters here Monday.

AmBank Group Launches AmGraduate Programme

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmBank Group and the Asian Banking School have launched a revamped AmGraduate Programme to provide a targeted, fast-track graduate programme for Gen Y and readying talents for critical positions in the banking industry. The programme is earmarked for fresh graduates or those with less than a year working experience to participate in an accelerated 18-month graduate programme, AmBank Group Chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim said in a statement here Monday.

CIMB's Unit Sign Stockbroking Agreement With Chinese Co

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Group Holdings Bhd's (CIMB) wholly-owned unit, CIMB Group Sdn Bhd, has signed a heads of terms agreement with China Galaxy International Financial Holdings Ltd here Monday. In a statement Monday, CIMB said, the agreement was to explore a strategic partnership in the stockbroking business and identify further areas of cooperation in the relevant markets.

RHB, MBS To Develop High Performance Workforce

KUALA LUMPUR -- The RHB Banking Group (RHB) has signed a strategic partnership with Melbourne Business School (MBS) for the RHB Leadership Signature Programme Series, aimed at developing talents for a high performance workforce. In a statement here Monday, RHB said the programme, designed as a capstone to springboard its employees' career progression and succession, would begin in December 2016 with 145 participants.

BNM Expands Eligibility Criteria Of Fintech Sandbox Framework

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has expanded the eligibility criteria to clarify the focus of innovations that the Financial Technology (fintech) Regulatory Sandbox Framework aims to support. It said in a statement here Tuesday, innovations should have clear potential to improve the accessibility, efficiency, security and quality of financial services.

Insurance Sector Told To Focus On Talent Devt, New Technologies

KUALA LUMPUR -- Takaful and insurance operators must focus on talent development, leverage new technologies and improve trust among customers to ensure sustainable growth in the industry, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said. Its Governor, Datuk Muhammad Ibrahim said in his keynote address at the sixth Malaysian Insurance Summit here Tuesday, the insurance and takaful sector, which boasted huge growth potential, were becoming stagnant in recent years.

Safeguard Payment Cards, Pins, ABM Advises Cardholders

KUALA LUMPUR -- Cardholders need to be responsible to safeguard both their payment cards and Personal Identification Numbers (PINs), said The Association of Banks in Malaysia (ABM). In a statement here Wednesday, the association also urged cardholders to notify their card issuers immediately in the event of loss/stolen or unauthorised use of their payment cards or if they have reason to believe that their PINs have been compromised.

M'sia To Ensure Sovereignty Won't Be Compromised By Joining AIIB

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia will ensure that the country's sovereignty is not compromised by becoming a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), said Second Finance Minister, Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani. Johari said this at the winding-up of the debate on the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Bill which was tabled for the second reading at the Dewan Rakyat Wednesday.

Consider Combined Expenses & Common Retirement Goals, Married Couples Advised

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK) has advised married couples to consider combining their expenses and have common retirement goals to avoid excessive spending on their assets. AKPK Financial Education Department Head, Nor Akmar Yaakub, said here Wednesday, this would ensure that the couples would not be caught offguard should something happen to one of them.

Bank Negara's Int'l Reserves At RM405.6 Bln As At Oct 14, 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- The international reserves of Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) stood at RM405.6 billion (equivalent to US$97.8 billion) as at Oct 14, 2016 compared with RM405 billion (equivalent to US$97.7 billion) as at Sept 30, 2016. In a statement here Friday, BNM said, the reserves position is sufficient to finance 8.5 months of retained imports and is 1.2 times the short-term external debt.

Banking System Disburses RM598.5 Bln Loans In First 7 Months Of 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian banking system has disbursed loans totalling RM598.5 billion in the first seven months of this year, a decrease of 3.1 per cent from RM617.8 billion registered in the same period last year. In the Economic Report 2016/2017 released here Friday, the Ministry of Finance said loan approvals during the same period were significantly lower by 16 per cent to RM192.6 billion from RM229.4 billion approved previously.

2016 GDP To Register Drop To 4-4.5 Pct Compared To 2015
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2016 is projected at between four to 4.5 per cent with the half year performance at 4.1 per cent. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak told Dewan Rakyat here Monday, the GDP decline when compared to 2015, was due to the soft global economic growth momentum.

Kansai Paint's Revenue To Grow 10 Pct In 2016
KUALA LUMPUR -- Kansai Paint Co. Ltd.'s unit, Kansai Paint Asia Pacific Sdn Bhd (Kansai Paint) is confident of a revenue growth of 10 per cent in the financial year 2016 from RM455 million last year from the Malaysian coatings market. The Japanese paint manufacturer, in a statement here Monday said the expected revenue growth was due to the expansion of its product portfolio and distribution network, as well as the 100 per cent stake acquisition of local paint maker Sancora Paints Industries Sdn Bhd (Sancora Paints).

Takaful Malaysia's Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM63.83 Mln
KUALA LUMPUR -- Syarikat Takaful Malaysia Bhd's (Takaful Malaysia) pre-tax profit for the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2016 rose to RM63.83 million from RM44.41 million recorded in the same period last year. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday, it said revenue increased to RM426.97 million from RM389.24 million previously, mainly due to higher sales from the family takaful mortgage-related products.

China's Zoomlion International Trading Eyes Share Of M'sian Market
From Ali Imran Mohd Noordin

CHANGSHA (HUNAN, CHINA) -- Zoomlion International Trading Co Ltd, a Chinese heavy industry market leader, is eyeing a share of the construction and equipment rental business in Malaysia. It also wants to develop its service response team in the country. Deputy General Manager Geoffrey Tao told the media here Tuesday that Malaysia was also important in the context of the company's Southeast Asian market with certain countries experiencing rapid development in infrastructure.

TalentCorp To Draw 100 Top Youths For MyAPEC YouConnect By Year-End
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Talent Corporation Malaysia (TalentCorp) aims to draw about 100 top youths, aged between 21 and 30, by year-end to participate in its inaugural MyAPEC YouConnect programme. International Trade and Industry (MITI) Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed told reporters here Tuesday, currently, 40 companies, comprising local and international firms, ranging from banking, electronic, elecommunications to airlines have joined the programme.

Merchantrade Asia Expects Transactions To Reach RM5.2 Bln This Year
KUALA LUMPUR -- Remittance service provider, Merchantrade Asia Sdn Bhd, expects outbound transactions to reach RM5.2 billion this year, surpassing last year's RM4.5 billion, driven by greater adoption of the remittance service by Malaysians. Managing Director Ramasamy Veeran expects the amount of remittance to increase as parents continue to send money to their children studying abroad, while the usage of the online platform to remit money, is increasing daily, he told reporters here Tuesday.

Felda Mobile Targets 500,000 Settlers To Subscribe To New Service
KUALA LUMPUR -- Felda Mobile Sdn Bhd aims to attract 500,000 Felda settlers nationwide to subscribe to products and services under its mobile digital service provider (MDSP) venture with Tune Talk Sdn Bhd in the next two to three years. Felda Mobile Chief Executive Officer Shah Redza Hussein told reporters here Tuesday, the first phase of the venture would start this December whereby the company is slated to launch its digital value added services including messaging system with push notifications and remittance service.

Perodua Sells 150,900 Cars In Nine Months Of 2016
KUALA LUMPUR -- Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) has sold 150,900 vehicles in the first nine months of this year, capturing an estimated total industry volume (TIV) market share of 36.1 per cent on healthy delivery of its new model, Perodua Bezza. The company said in a statement here Tuesday, this was lower compared with 157,500 vehicles sold in the first nine months of 2015.

DinarDirham Founder Aims To Open 100 Outlets By 2020
By Nurul Jannah Kamaruddin

KUALA LUMPUR -- DND Worldwide Holdings Sdn Bhd, a financial technology (fintech) company that provides solutions for "DinarDirham" metal and currency investment, targets to expand its operations by opening 100 branches by 2020. Its founder, Muhd Azrainuddin Zainal told Bernama, 20 of the branches would be opened in Malaysia. With the opening of the branches, the company aims to create 1,200 job opportunities in the country.

IATA Forecasts Passenger Demand To Double Over Next 20 Years
KUALA LUMPUR -- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) expects 7.2 billion passengers to travel in 2035, a near doubling of the 3.8 billion air travelers this year. The prediction is based on a 3.7 per cent annual Compound Average Growth Rate (CAGR) noted in the release of the

latest update to the association's 20-Year Air Passenger Forecast, it said in a statement here Wednesday.

Maxis Rings Up Higher Profits In Q3

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maxis Bhd posted RM680 million in pre-tax profit for its third quarter ended Sept 30, 2016, up 20 per cent when compared with RM566 million registered in the same quarter last year. Revenue stood at RM2.15 billion versus RM2.16 billion previously. "We had solid operational and financial progress this quarter," Chief Executive Officer Morten Lundal said in a statement here Wednesday.

Mercedes-Benz Targets Sale Of 12,000 Units In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- Mercedes-Benz Malaysia Sdn Bhd is optimistic to achieve the sale of 12,000 cars in 2016, surpassing last year's 10,845 cars, based on the positive growth achieved in the nine-month period of this year. President and Chief Executive Officer Dr Claus Weidner told reporters here Wednesday, from January to September, the company sold 9,047 cars, up 10 per cent from the same period last year, underpinned by new model launches.

DiGi's Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM585.38 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- DiGi.Com Bhd's pre-tax profit rose to RM585.38 million in the third quarter (Q3) ended Sept 30, 2016 from RM537.03 million registered in the same period last year. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Wednesday, the telecommunications company (telco) said its robust earnings was fuelled by a 10.4 per cent year-on-year growth in postpaid revenue and improved prepaid sustainability.

Customs Dept Collects RM54.867 Bln Gross Revenue In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Royal Malaysian Customs Department has collected RM54.867 billion in revenue for the first nine months of this year, the Finance Ministry said. "From the enforcement aspect, 566 cases were solved involving tax amounted to RM489.63 million due to continuous operations," Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong said when launching the Malaysian Royal Customs Department Encyclopedia project here Wednesday.

MRT Corp Expects Annual Revenue Of RM2.5 Mln From Retail Spaces

SERI KEMBANGAN -- Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) expects annual revenue of RM2.5 million from the rental of retail spaces at the 19 elevated stations along the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang (SBK) Line set for launch on Dec 15. Director of Commercial and Land Management Datuk Haris Fadzilah Hassan told reporters here Wednesday, 15 companies had won bids from among 49 who submitted 223 applications for the retail space in April this year.

Public Bank's Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Slips To RM1.56 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public Bank Bhd's pre-tax profit for the third quarter (Q3) ended Sept 30, 2016 declined to RM1.56 billion from RM1.61 billion recorded in the same quarter last year. Revenue increased to RM5.03 billion during the period under review from RM4.91 billion previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday.

Naza Quest Aims To Sell 2,200 Chevrolet Vehicles In 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- Naza Quest Sdn Bhd, the sole distributor of General Motors products, aims to sell 2,200 Chevrolet vehicles next year and increase its market share to three per cent of the total industry volume. Its Vice-President, Head of Company, Mohd Farid Rosli told reporters here Thursday, the company would be leveraging its all-new Colorado pick-up truck which was expected to contribute about 60 per cent of its sales.

ICT Contributed 17.8 Pct To M'sian Economy In 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector contributed 17.8 per cent (RM206.1 billion) to the nation's economy in 2015 from 17.0 per cent (RM188.4 billion) in 2014. In a statement here Friday, the Department of Statistics Malaysia said the increase was mainly driven by telecommunication services. On the e-Commerce segment, it said the value added of the segment accounted for 5.9 per cent (RM68.3 billion) of the total Gross Domestic Product last year, up from 5.8 per cent in 2014.

September CPI Up 1.50 Pct To 115.3

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2016 rose by 1.5 per cent to 115.3 compared with 113.6 registered in the same month last year. Among the major groups which recorded increases were the index for food and non-alcoholic beverages which rose 3.0 per cent from September 2015, as well as, housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels (+2.1 per cent), the Department of Statistics Malaysia said in a statement Friday.

Govt Revenue Up 3.4 Pct To RM219 Bln In 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- Government revenue collection is expected to grow by 3.4 per cent to RM219.7 billion in 2017, contributed by a higher collection of tax revenue, largely from companies income tax. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) said in the Economic Report 2016/2017 released Friday that non-oil related revenue continued to be the major contributor to total revenue with a share of 86.2 per cent, attributed mainly to higher goods and services tax collection of RM40 billion.

74 Pct Of M'sians Have Reservations Over Mobile Banking

KUALA LUMPUR -- Although most Malaysians are open to the idea of mobile banking, 74 per cent still have reservations about conducting certain banking activities via their mobile devices in the next six months as security remains a key concern, Nielsen Holdings Plc said in the Nielsen Mobile Shopping, Banking and Payment Report, released recently. It cited other key reasons as small device screen (29 per cent), preference to visit physical bank branch for banking needs (29 per cent) and lack of access to a stable Internet connection (15 per cent).

MATRADE Sees Big Market Potentials In Morocco

KUALA LUMPUR -- There are ample room for Malaysia and Morocco to further expand trade ties as both countries have huge potentials for their respective business communities to tap into, says the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Dzulkifli Mahmud, who called for more collaborations and cooperation between the two countries, told a seminar here Monday, at present the overall trade volume between Malaysia and Morocco was still low.

Najib Assures Rationalisation Won't Affect Public Service Delivery

KUALA LUMPUR -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has given his assurance that the public service delivery system would not be affected even in the current challenging economic times although the government had to restructure and reduce its expenditure."Therefore, key infrastructure projects such as the High-Speed Rail link to Singapore, the MRT and LRT, are all still going ahead of the schedule," he said at the launch of the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) Five-Year Report, exhibition and symposium here Monday.

MITI: Car Sector 'Under Control', No Special Measures Required

KUALA LUMPUR -- The current challenging situation in the local car sector is still 'under control' and does not necessitate any special measures to boost sales, said the Ministry of International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI). Its minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed told reporters here Monday, he met with a car manufacturer earlier that day and this particular company's sale went down by 10 per cent for the first half this year, over the same period last year. "We hope there will be some growth at the end of the year because the car sector is important for the economy," he said.

Morocco Can Be Malaysia's Gateway Into Africa

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Moroccan Centre for Export Promotion (Maroc Export) said Morocco can become a gateway for Malaysian companies to penetrate or enhance export to Africa, especially the western and central parts of the continent. Maroc Export Secretary General, Zouhair Triqui told Bernama here Monday, Morocco being an African country itself, had wide experience in trade and knew its neighbours very well.

M'sia E-Commerce Market Yet To Reach Full Potential - iCommerce

By Massita Ahmad

SINGAPORE -- Malaysia e-commerce market has not reached its maximum potential, says iCommerce Asia's Founder and Managing Director, Syed Ali Ridha Madihid. "The majority of e-commerce transactions in Malaysia happen in the Klang Valley, followed by Penang and Johor. However, there is a massive potential market outside those states, especially in Sabah and Sarawak," he said in an email interview with Bernama.

MOSTI Seeks Cheaper Rubber Tapping Device To Overcome Worker Shortage

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) is seeking to introduce an affordable automated rubber tapping device as one way to overcome the worker shortage. Minister Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau told reporters here Wednesday, at present the sector has a problem bringing in foreign workers.

Treasury Quashes Rumour On GST Hike

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government has no intention of increasing the existing six per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the 2017 Budget which will tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on Friday. Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani brushed off rumours that the government would increase the GST by two per cent at a conference here Wednesday.

Latin American Countries Seek HDC's Assistance In Developing Halal Industry

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Three Latin American countries, namely Brazil, Chile and Mexico, have sought the Halal Industry Development Corporation's (HDC) assistance and expertise to develop their halal industry. HDC Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Jamil Bidin told Bernama here Wednesday, they planned to emulate the success of Malaysia's halal ecosystem in their countries.

CRRC Confident Of Having Edge In Bid For KL–S'pore HSR Project

From Ali Imran Mohd Noordin

CHANGSHA (HUNAN, CHINA) --

China-based locomotive expert, China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC), is confident it has an edge in bidding for the construction of the Kuala Lumpur – Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR) project. Luo Chongfu, Vice President of CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co Ltd (CRRC ZELC), a subsidiary of CRRC, told reporters here Wednesday, with the result of the bidding to be announced soon, the long term relationship built via various projects with Malaysia will give it an edge.

Mydin To Open Seven New Branches Over Next Two Years
SUNGAI PETANI -- Mydin Mohamed Holding Sdn Bhd (Mydin) plans to open seven new branches throughout the country over the next two years, including one in Sarawak by year-end. "As the current economic situation is quite challenging, we have to be more cautious, but at the same time we have to move forward to remain competitive," Director Azmin Saduruddin told reporters here Friday.

Malaysia's Insurance Industry Remains Sound
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's insurance industry remains sound with the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) standing at 234.9 per cent from January to July 2016. The CAR measures the adequacy of the capital available in the insurance and shareholders' funds of the insurer to support the total capital required. Malaysia's life insurance sector saw a 5.9 per cent, year-on-year ,(y-o-y) growth to RM5.5 billion in new business premiums in the first seven months of the year, said the Economic Report 2016/2017 released here Friday.

M'sia Needs To Accelerate Technology Adoption To Spur Manufacturing
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia needs to accelerate the adoption of technology and innovation as well as increase investment in human capital and research and development (R&D). This is necessary to move up the value chain of the manufacturing sector to achieve the manufacturing sector growth target of 5.1 per cent per annum and contribute 22.5 per cent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as, 18.2 per cent to total employment by 2020, said the Ministry of Finance here Friday.

M'sians Need To Enhance Financial Literacy
KUALA LUMPUR -- Given the uncertainties in the global economic environment, it is imperative for Malaysians, particularly the vulnerable and low-income group, to enhance their financial literacy which will increase their appreciation for the need to save, says the Ministry of Finance. "Savings serves the basis for wealth accumulation, preparedness for financial uncertainties and comfortable retirement," the ministry said in its Economic Report 2016/2017, released here Friday.

Private Sector Activity To Be Supported By Pro-Growth Fiscal
KUALA LUMPUR -- Strong domestic demand, especially private sector expenditure, is expected to drive Malaysia's economic growth next year. The private sector activity would be supported by pro-growth fiscal and accommodative monetary policies in an environment of stable inflation, which is projected to range between two and three per cent, said the Economic Report 2016/17 released here Friday.

13 Mln Tourists Visited Malaysia As At End-June
KUALA LUMPUR -- The government is targetting to attract 30.5 million tourists in 2016 and as at end-June this year, a total of 13 million tourists had visited Malaysia. To boost and energise the industry, various programmes were implemented including Malaysia Inbound Tourism Association (MITA) Tourism Fair 2016 and Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) Fair 2016. According to the Economic Report 2016/17 released by the Finance Ministry Friday, as at end-August a total of US$2 million (RM8.4 million) was spent on these programmes.

Strong Global Growth Expected Next Year But Downside Risks Remain
KUALA LUMPUR -- Global economic growth is anticipated to expand 3.4 per cent next year, compared with 3.1 per cent this year, thanks to improvements in the United States (US), as well as stronger performance in the emerging markets and developing economies. Notwithstanding the improvement in global growth, downside risks remain for the world economy, according to the Economic Report 2016/2017 released by the Ministry of Finance here Friday.

NTT Data Adopts Ipay88 To Penetrate Int'l Online Payment Mart

KUALA LUMPUR -- Japanese information technology group, NTT Data Corporation, will adopt Malaysian-based iPay88 technology as its flagship payment gateway technology to become the world's top five payment gateway providers. In a statement here Monday, iPay88 Sdn Bhd said the strategic business move taken by NTT Data was partly facilitated by its acquisition of a majority stake in iPay88, via its subsidiary, NTT Data Asia Pte Ltd, in September 2015.

Spotlight On Oils And Fats Industry At OFIC 2016 In KL

By Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Oil Scientists and Technologists Association (Mosta) will hold the Oils and Fats International Congress (OFIC) 2016 here from Oct 19-21. Mosta President Tan Sri Augustine Ong Soon Hock told Bernama Monday, the conference, held biennially, will bring together international speakers in the field of nutrition, agronomy, economics, industry, mechanisation, downstream activities and research and development.

Malindo Air Prohibits Samsung Galaxy Note 7 On All Flights

KUALA LUMPUR -- The carriage and checking in of Samsung's Galaxy Note 7 smartphone is prohibited on all Malindo Air's flights from 12.01 am, Oct 18, 2016. In a statement here Monday, the airline said the ban was due to concerns over potential fire risk from the device's battery after a number of incidents worldwide.

Maswings Bans Samsung Note 7 Smartphones Onboard Its Flights

MIRI -- Maswings Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned unit of Malaysia Airlines, has banned the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 smartphone, with immediate effect, onboard its flights for safety reasons. The device must not be transported by any person, via carry-on baggage and checked in baggage on all our flights, the regional community airline said in a statement here Monday.

Malaysia Milk Recalls 200ml, 1L Marigold HL Milk

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Milk Sdn Bhd is recalling its 200ml and one-litre Marigold HL Milk. General Manager Poh Eng Lip said here Monday, the quality of the milk was compromised due to bacterial contamination, with side effects of consuming the compromised quality of milk possibly including mild stomach discomfort although there are no long-term side effects.

AirAsia To Make Langkawi Its 6th Int'l Hub

GEORGE TOWN -- AirAsia Bhd aims to make Langkawi International Airport its sixth international hub in Malaysia after Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak. Chief Executive Officer Aireen Omar told reporters here Monday, Langkawi offers huge potential for growth following the launch of the Langkawi to Guangzhou, China route early this year.

KPJ To Open Specialist Hospital In Batu Pahat

KUALA LUMPUR -- KPJ Healthcare Bhd's subsidiary, Puteri Specialist Hospital (Johor) Sdn Bhd, is planning to open a specialist hospital in Batu Pahat, Johor, costing RM67.6 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday, KPJ said Puteri Specialist had inked an Agreement to Lease with Johor Land Bhd and Johor Corp for the proposed development and leasing of a hospital building.

AirAsia Bags 2 Awards At World Travel Awards

KUALA LUMPUR -- Low-cost carrier AirAsia was named "Asia's Leading Low-Cost Airline" for the fourth time and also won its first "Asia's Leading Inflight Service" award at the World Travel Awards (Asia and Australasia) in Da Nang, Vietnam on Saturday. AirAsia Group Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said in a statement here Tuesday, the airline's success shows that its service is not only best-in-class, but also the best of both low-cost and full-service.

M'sian Firms Ink Deals Worth Over US$4 Mln At MIPCOM 2016 In Cannes

KUALA LUMPUR -- Four Malaysian production companies, Primeworks Studios, Animasia Studio, Scubazoo and Global Station, Tuesday announced multiple deals worth over US$4 million (US$1 = RM4.20) at MIPCOM 2016 held in Cannes, France. In a statement here Tuesday, National Film Development Corp Malaysia (FINAS) said this was witnessed by the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia's Deputy Secretary-General (Policy), Datuk Mohid Mohamed, and FINAS Chairman, Datuk Mohd Khusairi Abdul Talib. This year, the ministry and FINAS led the Malaysian delegation of over 40 creative companies to MIPCOM 2016 from Oct 17-20, FINAS said.

Zeti Appointed Member Of AIIB Advisory Panel

KUALA LUMPUR -- Former Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz has been appointed as a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)'s international advisory panel, it said in a statement here Wednesday. Zeti, ranked the world's best central bank chief in 2009 by Global Finance magazine, retired in April after 16 years of being at the helm of BNM.

Central Spectrum Signs MoUs On Collaboration In HTCP

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Central Spectrum (M) Sdn Bhd's unit Halal International Selangor (HIS) has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with universities from the United Kingdom, China, Korea and Taiwan to collaborate in HIS's Halal Technical Competent Person (HTCP) programme. "These MoUs are to establish and expand training collaboration in HTCP, which will strengthen competencies in the broad field of Halal industries," Central Spectrum Chief Executive Officer Mahmud Abbas told Bernama.

Najib Unveils Pro-Business Budget To Bolster Economy

By Azlina Aziz & Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The government provided a major boost to private investments and small and medium scale enterprises through pro-business strategies in the 2017 Budget that clearly is set to instill greater investor confidence and propel the economy to greater heights amid external headwinds.

In measures which encourage domestic demand, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said private investment would expand 8.1 per cent to RM230 billion in 2017, arising from several infrastructuture projects that would lead to continued brisk construction activity much to the glee of contractors.

In tabling the budget at the Dewan Rakyat Friday, he also handed out incentives to heighten Malaysia's position as an Islamic financial centre, empower Bumiputera entrepreneurship and further develop the country's five economic corridors.

Najib, who is also Finance Minister, allocated RM50 million for scientific research to raise the quality of palm oil products and RM30 million for replanting, reflecting the golden crop's position as major export commodity.

In pushing for a business-friendly environment, the Prime Minister also announced that fixed line broadband service providers will offer higher broadband speed at the same price which will facilitate international commerce and invigorate internet-based innovation.

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

In keeping the economic momentum moving forward and stimulate private investment, Najib proposed multi-billion ringgit infrastructure projects covering all states including Sabah and Sarawak.

Among the major infrastucture projects are the upgrading of Jalan Lok Kawi – Penglat – Papar, Sabah; Jalan Kampung Keruak – Gua Musang – Kuala Berang; construction of Batang Lupar Bridge, Sri Aman; and the reconstruction of Sandakan Power Station Project.

He also announced that the Goods and Services tax (GST), which was a saviour to government in view of the plunge in crude oil prices, managed to rake in a collection of RM30 billion as of Oct 19, 2016.

INCLUSIVE PRUDENT SPENDING

The budget, themed "Ensuring Unity and Economic Growth, Inclusive Prudent Spending, Wellbeing of the Rakyat," was valued at RM260.8 billion, up 3.4 per cent from the 2016 recalibrated budget.

It is the eighth national budget presented by Najib at the Dewan Rakyat Friday since becoming Prime Minister in 2009. Of the total allocation, RM46 billion would for development expenditure which does not include contingencies that amounts to RM2 billion.

"The revenue collection in 2017 is expected to expand at around three per cent to RM219.7 billion.

"The government is expected to achieve the fiscal deficit target of three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017, compared with 3.1 per cent this year," he said.

-- BERNAMA

WHAT'S IN STORE.. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who is also Finance Minister, holding up a briefcase containing his Budget 2017 speech text at the Treasury Building in Putrajaya before heading for Parliament Friday. Also present Second Finance Minister, Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani (second, right), Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Othman Aziz (second, left), Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong (left) and Treasury Secretary-General Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah (right). Pix: Harry Salzman. fotoBERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

Bursa To Continue Uptrend, Fuelled By Budget 2017

By Joan S. Santanasamy

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is likely to continue its uptrend next week, fuelled by the positive announcement of the 2017 Budget. However, the gains will be modest due to uncertainty in the global market, a dealer said.

He said the RM3 billion allocation for small- and mid-capitalised (mid-cap) companies would set a new tone for government-linked investment companies (GLICs) as it would help them to diversify their investment portfolios.

“This allocation would spur investor buying interest in small and penny stocks,” he told Bernama.

He said the 2017 Budget was good for the market as it could help boost economy growth and corporate earnings.

“We see the support level for FBM KLCI to be around 1,650-1,680 points next week,” the dealer said. However, the underlying market sentiment remains cautious due to uncertainty over the US Federal Reserve’s (Fed) interest rate hike and crude oil price volatility.

“Conflicting statements on the timing of the Fed’s interest rate hike adds to the market uncertainty,” the dealer said.

He said the floundering global oil prices and the Fed’s interest rate hike probability would continue to weigh on interest in Bursa Malaysia next week.

FXTM Research Analyst Lukman Otunuga said stock markets were erratic on Thursday with most major arenas violently swinging between losses and gains due to a combination of depressed oil prices and resurgent in the US dollar.

For the week just ended, the benchmark FBM KLCI added 11.01 points to 1,669.98 compared with 1,658.97 last Friday.

Weekly turnover decreased to 5.75 billion units worth RM8.51 billion versus 7.56 billion units worth RM8.52 billion last Friday.

Main market volume eased to 4.62 billion units worth RM8.15 billion against 4.81 billion units worth RM8.11 billion last week.

Ringgit To Rally Next Week On Positive Budget 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to rally next week on positive sentiment from the 2017 Budget announcement, a dealer said.

Forex Time Research Analyst Lukman Otunuga said the 2017 Budget uplifted sentiment on Malaysia’s economy as it offered some clarity on how the nation would tackle the new year.

“The key topics revolved around government spending to accelerate growth, boost investments for small and midcap businesses and reduce the budget deficit.

"Malaysia remains on a quest to reclaiming economic stability and as such, had displayed within the budget a theme to bolster unity and economic growth," he said.

He said falling commodity prices and a resurgent dollar continued to pressure most emerging nations, but Malaysia had displayed resilience with gross domestic product growth predicted at between four and five per cent in 2017.

"With inflation predicted to rise to the upper limit of three per cent in 2017 and exports 2.7 per cent, the overall outlook for Malaysia looks quite encouraging," he said.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the local note strengthened against the greenback to 4.1830/1890 from 4.1980/2050.

The ringgit also ended mostly higher against a basket of currencies.

It appreciated against the Singapore dollar to 3.0027/0078 from 3.0247/0302 last Friday, but eased against the yen to 4.0279/0341 from 4.0230/0301.

The ringgit strengthened against the British pound to 5.1158/1248 against the previous week's 5.1249/1339 and improved against the euro to 4.5595/5677 from 4.6245/6331.

Money Market To Remain Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The money market is expected to remain stable next week on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to mop up surplus 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, including conventional money market, range maturity auction (RMA), Qard Islamic RMA, Commodity Murabahah Programme and repo tenders.

On Friday, the central bank's action helped reduce the market's total liquidity surplus to RM21.42 billion in the conventional system and RM8.99 billion in Islamic funds.

The overnight Islamic reference rate remained unchanged at 2.95 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.01 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.10 per cent respectively.

The benchmark three-month interbank rate also remained unchanged at 3.40 per cent.

KLCI Futures Expected To Improve Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to improve next week, riding on the performance of the underlying cash market.

A dealer said the market sentiment would be supported by the positive announcement of Budget 2017 as it augured well for the market and could help boost the country's economic growth and corporate earnings.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, October 2016 lost eight points to 1,655.5, November 2016 rose 6.7 points to 1,662.20, December 2016 was 7.5 points higher at 1,663 and March 2017 improved 7.5 points to 1,652.50.

Turnover eased to 25,798 lots from 28,002 last week, while open interest widened to 43,196 contracts versus 41,111 contracts previously.

The benchmark FBM KLCI ended the week 11.01 points higher at 1,669.98 from 1,658.97 last Friday.

CPO Futures To See Yo-Yo Trading Next Week

By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely see yo-yo trading next week with prices ranging between RM2,500 and RM2,700 per tonne, a dealer said.

Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader Jim Teh said the market would probably move like a yo-yo and enter a correction period as investors from European countries had bought adequate supply ahead of the Christmas holiday.

Meanwhile, he said the proposed allocations announced in the 2017 Budget was expected to boost the commodity prices on the local front.

“For example, a RM50 million fund was proposed for scientific research to enhance the quality of palm oil products and this will help spur demand for better quality oil,” he told Bernama.

The 2017 Budget has proposed an allocation of RM286 million to increase exports of commodities, including palm oil, RM20 million to upgrade estate roads for the benefit of oil palm smallholders, and RM30 million grants through the Malaysian Palm Oil Board for oil palm replanting by smallholders.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, November 2016 rose RM78 to RM2,759 per tonne, December 2016 increased RM68 to RM2,728 per tonne, January 2017 climbed RM66 to RM2,724 per tonne, while February 2017 improved RM64 to RM2,721 per tonne.

Weekly turnover surged to 257,606 lots from 239,268 lots last week, while open interest widened to 239,476 contracts versus 245,035 contracts previously.

On the physical market, October South was RM70 higher at RM2,780 per tonne from last Friday’s RM2,710 per tonne.

Rubber Prices To Remain Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to remain stable next week, mainly supported by China’s encouraging economic growth, a dealer said.

He said China’s gross domestic product growth of 6.7 per cent in the third quarter indicated the country’s expanding economic activities, spurring demand for rubber.

He said in addition, the rubber market also depended on the movement of crude oil prices.

“If crude oil prices were to improve next week, they will certainly lend a support to the rubber prices as well,” he added.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board’s noon price for tyre-grade SMR 20 dipped 44.5 sen to 590.5 sen a kg from 635.0 sen a kg last Friday, while latex-in-bulk rose nine sen to 496.0 sen a kg from 487 sen a kg previously.

The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 lost 42 sen to 598.5 sen a kg from 640.5 sen a kg last week, while latex-in-bulk added 7.5 sen to 495.5 sen a kg from 488.0 sen a kg previously.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Untraded Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to continue their lacklustre trading next week.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, new spot month November 2016, December 2016, January 2017 and March 2017 were all pegged at 96.62.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market stood at 3.40 per cent.

Foreign Demand To Boost KLTM Next Week

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Demand from Asia, mainly China, Japan and South Korea, is expected to boost tin price on the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) to surpass the US$20,000 per tonne level next week.

A local tin trader said the metal was expected to remain well bid next week with tendency movement between US$19,700 and US$20,200 per tonne.

"Technically, if the US$20,000 resistance is broken and starts forming a strong base above the level, a new high could be seen next week," he told Bernama.

The metal's record high on the KLTM this year was at US$20,080 per tonne, transacted on Sept 30.

"Demand possibly from Asia's large industrial manufacturers and occasionally from Europe, South Asia and Latin America, are still there. So tin is still bullish," he added.

For the week just ended, tin finished US$300 higher at US$19,900 per tonne compared with US$19,600 per tonne last Friday.

Turnover, however, declined to 167 lots from 173 lots last week.

The premium between the KLTM and the LME narrowed to US$90 from US$110 per tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures To Trade Lower Next Week

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to be on the downside next week on the US Federal Reserve's interest rate hike possibility later this year.

"This high expectation provides firm support to the greenback and will further weigh on gold, making dollar-priced gold more expensive for holders of other currencies," Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Chang Hui Ying told Bernama.

However, another dealer said the gold market would also be influenced by the ringgit's movement next week.

For the week-just-ended, gold futures contracts were traded slightly higher on the back of a weaker ringgit, making the gold cheaper for investors.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, October 2016 added 34 ticks to RM171.10 per gramme, November 2016 gained 29 ticks to RM171.25 per gramme, December 2016 rose 27 ticks to RM171.50 per gramme, and January 2017 improved 21 ticks to RM171.35 per gramme.

Weekly turnover fell to 31 lots worth RM533,335 from 45 lots worth RM767,095 a week before.

Open interest rose to 271 contracts from 270 contracts previously.