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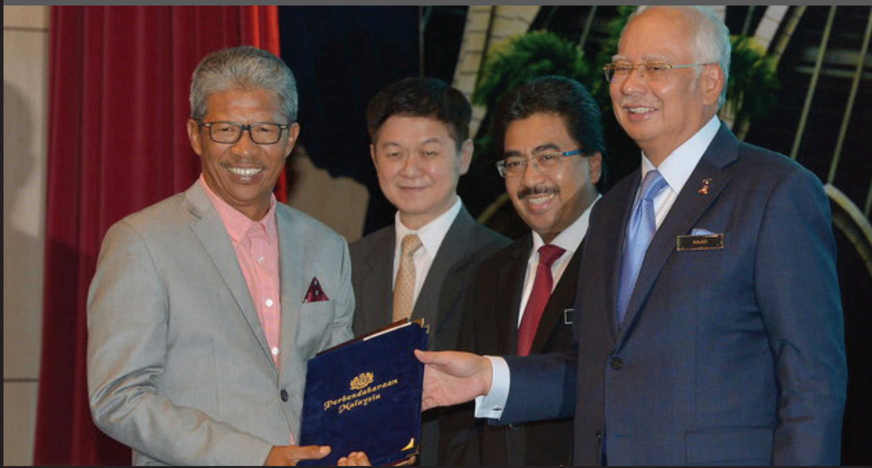
This Week's Highlight :
GST, Subsidy Rationalisation Right Decision - Najib



APPRECIATION... Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (right) presenting a certificate of appreciation to former Inland Revenue Board Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Dr Mohd Shukor Mahfar (left) at a ceremony to pay tribute to the dedication of Treasury staff for the years 2015 and 2016 in Putrajaya Wednesday. Looking on are Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani (third, left) and Deputy Finance Minister II Datuk Lee Chee Leong Photo Harry Salzman

PUTRAJAYA -- The government's bold step in implementing a structural change, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and subsidy rationalisation, was the right decision as it managed to increase the country's revenue, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

"The achievement did not come easily as the government had to make a difficult and challenging decision," Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said at a ceremony to pay tribute to the dedication of Treasury staff for the years 2015 and 2016, here Wednesday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Customs Department Targets RM3 Billion From GST

PETALING JAYA -- The Royal Malaysian Customs Department (RMCD) has target to collect RM3 billion in Goods and Services Tax (GST) this year, through its Customs Blue Ocean Strategy (CBOS) 3.0. Director General Datuk Seri Khazali Ahmad said the department aimed to inspect about 200,000 of the 433,000 GST-registered companies in the CBOS 3.0 operation from Monday until Dec 31.

TUESDAY

Najib Wants PLCs To Participate In SL1M

KUALA LUMPUR -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak wants public-listed companies (PLCs) to participate in the 1Malaysia Training Scheme (SL1M) or they may face difficulty securing large government contracts. "I want private companies, especially public-listed companies, to participate in the SL1M programme. I will instruct the Treasury to make this a precondition for them to secure large government contracts," said the prime minister Tuesday.

WEDNESDAY

Commodity Emerges As Biggest Net Exporter In 2016

PUTRAJAYA -- The commodity sector is now the biggest net exporter in Malaysia and in 2016 contributed RM91 billion followed by electrical & electronics industry and oil & gas sector. Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong said Wednesday, Malaysia recorded RM122 billion export earnings from commodity and commodity-based products last year from RM117 billion in previous year.

THURSDAY

Zeti Willing To Cooperate With BNM Forex Loss Probe

KUALA LUMPUR -- Former Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz says she is willing to cooperate with the investigation into the alleged foreign exchange (Forex)trading loss of US$10 billion by the central bank in the 1990s. Speaking to reporters here Thursday, Zeti "The investigations were all completed before my time (as Governor). I was with the central bank for 35 years. After that event, tremendous discipline followed," she added.

FRIDAY

Malaysia Records Net Assets Of RM81.2 Billion

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's net international investment position at the end of December 2016 recorded a net assets position of RM81.2 billion compared to RM26.5 billion in the third quarter of 2016 (3Q16). In a statement Friday, the Department of Statistics said, at the end of December 2016, direct investment abroad stock recorded RM569.4 billion compared to RM539.8 billion in 3Q16 and foreign direct investment stock accounted for RM545.6 billion from RM525.5 billion in 3Q16.

SMEbrief

SMEs Urged To Diversify Into Other Currencies

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of International Trade and Industry is urging small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to reduce their risk exposure by diversifying into currencies other than the euro or US dollar amid the current weakening of the ringgit against both currencies. Deputy Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said Monday, the SMEs should take advantage of the China's government policy of using the renminbi for cross-border trade settlement to settle their trade transactions with their Chinese counterparts.

Hong Leong Bank Expects Solid Performance In FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hong Leong Bank Bhd (HLBB) expects to perform very well in the financial year ending June 30, 2017 (FY17) in tandem with improving domestic economic conditions. Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Domenic Fuda said Tuesday, the bank would focus on increasing its loans growth in potential sectors such as small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Funding Societies Expects To Finance 200 SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR -- Modalku Ventures Sdn Bhd (Funding Societies), a Malaysian-founded regional Peer-to-Peer (P2P) financing online platform, expects to finance about 200 local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) this year with an allocation of RM20 million. Co-Founder Kelvin Teo said Wednesday, the company was targeting 2,000 investors, comprising a mix of local and foreign professional investors and financial institutions.

Govt Targets 25 Pct Bumiputera SME Exports

IPOH -- The government has targeted to boost the exports of Bumiputera small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from 18 per cent to 25 per cent by 2020 under the Bumiputera Exporters Promotion Programme. Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said Thursday, the programme, which was being implemented by SME Corporation Malaysia in collaboration with Majlis Amanah Rakyat, provided grants up to RM500,000 and loans up to RM5 million to eligible SMEs.

DPMM Members Urged To Tap Saudi Arabian Market

By Tuan Azam Tuan Johan

KUALA TERENGGANU -- The Malaysian Malay Chamber of Commerce (DPMM) has urged its members to seize the opportunity to invest in the food and beverage sector in the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia. Its Secretary-General, Datuk Seri Syed Hussien Al Habshee said Thursday, as Saudi Arabia lacked sufficient food and beverage products, it was a good opportunity for Malay entrepreneurs to penetrate the market or even become a major exporter due to their steady increase in demand.

PropUP Property*update*

PKNS To Launch Housing Project In Antara Gapi

SHAH ALAM -- The Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS) will be launching a housing project comprising 96 units of double-storey semi-detached houses in Section 2, Antara Gapi near Serendah on Feb 25. PKNS Central Region Development general manager Azmi Adnan said Monday, the project, dubbed 'Lavender', offered such houses at a price of between RM923,500 and RM1.174 million each, with four variations of floor plans and designs.

KL Remains Top Choice For Commercial Investment, Devt

KUALA LUMPUR -- Kuala Lumpur remains the top choice for commercial investment or development, followed by Selangor, (23 per cent), Penang (17 per cent), Johor (20 per cent) and Sabah (11 per cent).

In a statement Tuesday, the global property consultancy said, according to its Malaysia Commercial Real Estate Investment Sentiment Survey 2017, the respondents' interests in the capital city had waned marginally for the year ahead.

UEM Sunrise Subsidiary Eyes RM750 Mln MCOBA Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- UEM Sunrise Bhd's unit, Sunrise Innovation Sdn Bhd, will develop the Malay College Old Boys Association (MCOBA)'s land here into a mixed development project, with a gross development value (GDV) in excess of RM750 million. The group said Tuesday, its unit would build two blocks of service apartments, together with other supporting facilities on the 1.07-hectare site, located along Jalan Syed Putra in Seputeh.

Melati Ehsan Sees Contribution From Property, Construction

KUALA LUMPUR -- Melati Ehsan Holdings Bhd is expecting equal revenue contribution from its property and construction segments by financial year ending Aug 31, 2018. Managing Director Tan Sri Yap Suan Chee said Tuesday, the group saw the need to increase its activities in the property segment as it had been leaning heavily on its construction arm, which was currently undergoing a challenging phase.

Secondary Market Good Option For First Time Buyers

KUALA LUMPUR -- As an alternative, first time home-buyers should look into the secondary market with properties there more affordable, says the Finance Ministry. Director-General of Valuation and Property Services Dr Rahah Ismail said Thursday, the primary market pricing is usually inflated, due to freebies and rebates, and there is a higher chance for loan eligibility in the secondary market.

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 358

Losers - 530

Not Traded - 472

Unchanged - 360

Value - 2558601565

Volume - 30146547

BURSA: KL Shares Down For Second Consecutive Day

By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- Share prices on Bursa Malaysia settled lower for the second consecutive day Friday as the local market was seen entering a period of congestion following the recent rally, said a dealer. At 5 pm, the key FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished 6.13 points lower at 1,698.35. The index, which opened at 1,706.48 from Thursday's close of 1,704.48, moved between 1,696.48 and 1,707.31 throughout the day. Market breadth was negative, with losers outnumbering gainers 530 to 358, while 360 counters were unchanged, 472 untraded and 53 others suspended. Volume, however,rose to 3.01 billion units worth RM2.56 billion against Thursday's 2.79 billion units worth RM2.67 billion. Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew said the rally had been seen on the local bourse before and after the Lunar New Year since last month. "Certainly, it appears to be a profit-taking exercise as we see a normal and quieter market after the Chinese New Year," he told Bernama. "The boost in the liquidity that occurred since end of last year probably would not be a substantial boost as it gets exhausted and comes to an end," he said. However, Pong believes the rally has yet to finish. "We are not quite ending the rally yet, it just doesn't move very much upside at this point," he added. Main Market turnover fell to 2.18 billion units worth RM2.42 billion from 2.22 billion units worth RM2.57 billion on Thursday.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.4370	4.4440
EUR	4.7001	4.7084
GBP	5.5622	5.5719
100 YEN	3.9440	3.9513
SGD	3.1612	3.1666

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit ended higher against the US dollar Friday as investors' interest shifted away from the greenback, following the release of the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) meeting minutes Thursday. At 6 pm, the local unit was traded at 4.4370/4440 against the US dollar versus 4.4470/4510 Thursday. A dealer said most Asian currencies would likely see weekly gains against the greenback due to expectations the Fed would probably wait until the second quarter to raise interest rates, rather than in March. "Furthermore, sentiment towards the US dollar was hurt by uncertainties around the tax reform plan of US President Donald Trump's administration," he added. Meanwhile, the local note was traded lower against other major currencies. It fell against the Singapore dollar to 3.1612/1666 from 3.1452/1485 Thursday and versus the yen, it decreased to 3.9440/9513 from 3.9278/9323 on Thursday. Vis-a-vis the euro, the ringgit depreciated to 4.7001/7084 from 4.6894/6954 Thursday and declined against the British to 5.5622/5719 from 5.5467/5535 previously.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are likely to be steady next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) expected to offer tenders to absorb excess funds from the system. For the week just ended, the overnight rate was quoted at 2.95 per cent while the one-, two- and three-week rates moved between 3.01 per cent and 3.10 per cent. The central bank intervened on a daily basis to mop up surplus liquidity by conducting conventional money market, reverse repo, repo and Qard tenders. The total liquidity surplus for the week just ended was slightly higher at RM26.76 billion in conventional operations against RM26.65 billion last Friday. Islamic funds eased to RM6.06 billion from RM6.18 billion previously. The benchmark three-month interbank rate stood at 3.41 per cent.

KLIBOR Futures Contracts End Week Unchanged

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended unchanged Friday. Spot month March 2017, April 2017, May 2017 and June 2017 were pegged at 96.55, 96.53, 96.52 and 96.50, respectively. Volume was nil while open interest amounted to 50 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.43 per cent.

KLCI Futures Close Easier

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed easier today, in line with the weaker underlying cash market. February 2017 closed 3.5 points lower at 1,697, March 2017 and September 2017 both fell 2.5 points to 1,697.5 and 1,689.5, respectively, while September 2017 gave up three points to 1,693. Turnover improved to 26,482 lots from 19,283 lots on Thursday while open interest rose to 58,006 contracts from 51,127 contracts previously. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 6.13 points weaker at 1,698.35.

Islamic Banking M&A Plausible, Says AllianceDBS

KUALA LUMPUR -- A new wave of merger and acquisition (M&A) activities in the Islamic banking space is plausible, although the timing remains the key risk, says AllianceDBS Research. Potential M&A candidates include the Malaysia Building Society Bhd (MBSB), and Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd (Muamalat), it said in a statement Monday.

EPF To Bank On Private Market Investments For Better Returns

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) will continue efforts at creating greater access to private market investments this year for better returns, Chief Executive Officer Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan told reporters Monday. He said among the focus is infrastructure, property and private equities.

Beware Of Bogus Calls, Warns Association of Banks In Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Association of Banks in Malaysia (ABM) Monday warned the public of bogus calls using its hotline number, 1-300-88-9980, alleged to be from a bank concerning credit card usage. "ABM would like to alert the public that such calls are fraudulent in nature," said the association in a statement Monday, adding that it received enquiries from the public about the phone calls purportedly made using ABM's hotline number.

Affin Holdings Submits Proposals To BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- Affin Holdings Bhd has submitted an application to Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to seek its approval and/or recommendations to the Finance Ministry on its proposed reorganisation, distribution and subscription. "Affin Bank Bhd has also submitted an application to the Securities Commission (SC) to seek approval for the change in controllerof Affin Hwang Investment Bank Bhd, Affin Hwang Asset Management Bhd and AIIMAN Asset Management Sdn Bhd (formerly known as Asian Islamic Investment Management Sdn Bhd), pursuant to the proposed reorganisation," it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Takaful Malaysia's Cash Back For No Claims Customers Totals RM209 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Syarikat Takaful Malaysia Bhd, the first and only Islamic insurance company in Malaysia to reward 15 per cent cash back for no claims to general takaful customers, has paid out approximately RM209 million cash back since 2009. In a statement Tuesday, Group Managing Director, Datuk Seri Mohamed Hassan Kamil, said Takaful Malaysia's focus for 2017 was to increase awareness of the 15 per cent cash back benefit.

BNM's Int'l Reserves Remain Unchanged At US$95 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's international reserves remained unchanged at US$95 billion (equivalent to RM426.2 billion) as at Feb 15, 2017 when compared with Jan 31, 2017. The reserves position is sufficient to finance 8.4 months of retained imports and is 1.1 times the short-term external debt, it said in a statement Wednesday.

LTAT Declares 12 Pct Dividend, Bonus For FY16

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Armed Forces Fund Board (LTAT) will be paying 12 per cent dividend and bonus for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 (FY16), involving a sum of RM685.5 million. Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein in a statement Wednesday said payout comprised of 6 per cent dividend and 6 per cent special bonus in the form of unit trusts for active members. He said the rate declared was higher than the average yearly dividend and bonus of 11.3 per cent since LTAT's was set up 44 years ago.

PIAM Sees Better Growth This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- General Insurance Association of Malaysia (PIAM) expects to achieve better growth this year from last year's 1.1 per cent, following the gradual implementation of phased liberalisation in the motor and fire insurance. Chairman Antony Lee Fook Weng told reporters Thursday, with the phased liberalisation, more new products and add-on covers would be offered at market rates, helping the industry grow despite the tough economic environment.

Associations Launch Code To Boost Consumer Confidence In Insurance, Takaful Industry

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Code of Practice on Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), launched Friday, is expected to further boost the consumer confidence in the integrity of the insurance and takaful industry. The code is an initiative by three associations -- Life Insurance Association of Malaysia (LIAM) Persatuan Insurance Am Malaysia (PIAM) and Malaysian Takaful Association (MTA) -- to set up strict procedures to safeguard the use of personal data in the life, general and takaful insurance. LIAM Chief Executive Officer, Toi See Jong told Bernama Friday, under the PDPA, the consumer's data would be properly capped, accurate and protected.

Code Of Practice On PDPA Launched

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Healthcare Industry Eyes RM5 Bln Revenue Contribution To GDP
KUALA LUMPUR -- The healthcare industry is eyeing a revenue contribution of up to RM5 billion to Malaysia's 2017 gross domestic product. This is on the back of an estimated one million healthcare travellers visiting the country this year. In 2016, the industry's contribution to the GDP exceeded RM1 billion, said the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) in a statement here Monday.

Malakoff's FY16 Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM637.54 Mln
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malakoff Corp Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 (FY16) fell to RM637.54 million from RM701.19 million in the same period of 2015. Its revenue, however, rose to RM6.1 billion from RM5.3 billion previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, the independent water and power producer attributed the pre-tax profit fall to lower contribution from its Port Dickson Power Bhd plant, change in residual values estimate from gas-fired power plants and higher maintenance costs.

Petronas Chemicals' Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM4.11 Bln In FY16
KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas Chemicals Group Bhd's pre-tax profit surged to RM4.11 billion in the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 (FY16), from RM3.83 billion recorded in the previous year. Revenue rose to RM13.86 billion from RM13.54 billion previously, as higher sales volume coupled with stronger US dollar, mitigated the effects from lower prices of petrochemical products, the group said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

BroadGroup Sees Strong Growth For Asia Data Centre Market
KUALA LUMPUR -- BroadGroup, an international event and consulting group, has predicted a strong growth for Asia data centre market with growth in Malaysia could be as high as 36 per cent. In a statement here Monday, it said, the market in Asia continued to expand with growth in capacity and power availability across all countries over the next three years.

FTGSC To Pay 0.032 Sen Income Distribution For Sukuk Fund
KUALA LUMPUR -- Franklin Templeton GSC Asset Management Sdn Bhd (FTGSC) has declared total income distribution of 0.032 sen per unit for the Franklin Malaysia Sukuk Fund as at Dec 31, 2016. In a statement Monday, FTGSC said, the fund recorded 5.67 per cent gross return with dividend reinvested since it was launched on Nov 18, 2015.

Padini's Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM72.74 Mln In Q2
KUALA LUMPUR -- Improved gross profit margins helped Padini Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit soar to RM72.74 million in the second quarter ended Dec 31, 2016, from RM44.53 million recorded in the corresponding quarter in 2015. Revenue surged 25 per cent to RM426.65 billion from RM340.38 million registered previously, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

DNeX's Pre-Tax Profit Rises Six-Fold To RM142.05 Mln
KUALA LUMPUR -- Dagang Nexchange Bhd (DNeX)'s pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 jumped six-fold to RM142.05 million from RM23.43 million registered in the preceding year. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, the group said its revenue rose 87 per cent to RM178.5 million from RM95.6 million previously due to the substantial completion of vehicle entry permit (VEP) and road charges (RC) contract.

Hong Leong Pre-Tax Profit Increases To RM1.37 Bln
KUALA LUMPUR -- Hong Leong Bank Bhd posted a 30.5 per cent increase in its pre-tax profit to RM1.37 billion for the six-month period for financial year ended Dec 31, 2016, against RM1.05 billion in the same period last year. The group said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday, the increase was mainly due to higher net income of RM178.2 million, with lower operating expenses of RM129.5 million, lower allowance charge for impairment losses on loans, advances and financing of RM32.6 million.

Pharmaniaga's Pre-Tax Profit Declines To RM72.02 Mln
KUALA LUMPUR -- Pharmaniaga Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 declined to RM72.02 million from RM112.72 million registered a year earlier. The pharmaceutical company attributed the lower performance primarily due to fewer orders from the concession business coupled with higher finance, selling and distributions costs, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

KPJ Healthcare's Q4 Pre-Tax Profit Surges To RM63.6 Mln
KUALA LUMPUR -- KPJ Healthcare Bhd's profit before zakat and tax for the fourth quarter ended Dec 31, 2016, surged 33 per cent to RM63.6 million from RM48.1 million recorded in the same quarter last year in line with the increase in revenue. The group's revenue stood at RM744.9 million, up six per cent, compared with RM701.6 million recorded previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

MFA Targets RM370 Mln Transaction For FIM2017
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Franchise Association (MFA) is targeting RM370 million in transactions to be generated from

the three-day Franchise International Malaysia 2017 (FIM 2017), beginning May 12, and about 10,000 visitors to patronise the fair. Vice-Chairman Izham Hakimi Hamdi told reporters Tuesday, FIM recorded almost the same sales volume last year, driven by the food and beverage, services and education franchises.

Veritas Eyes Double-Digit Growth For Solution Despite Gloomy Economy

KUALA LUMPUR -- Veritas Technologies remains positive and aims for a double-digit growth for its 360 Data Management solution despite the gloomy economy. Its Veritas Country Manager for Malaysia, Audrey Chan told reporters Tuesday, the gloomy economy did not spell doom and it was crucial for businesses to adopt the solution to protect their data.

DKSH's FY2016 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM68.90 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- DKSH Holdings (M) Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 rose to RM68.90 million from RM51.01 million in FY2015. Revenue, however, fell to RM5.27 billion against RM5.57 billion, previously, due to a change in telecommunications client, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

MSM Malaysia's Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM148.52 Mln In FY16

KUALA LUMPUR -- MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 fell to RM148.52 million (FY16) from RM372.13 million in the same period of 2015. Revenue, however, rose to RM2.66 billion from RM2.31 billion previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, MSM Malaysia attributed the higher revenue to the improved selling price, higher volume of refined sugar sold as well as higher trading revenue.

TM Projects Revenue Growth Of 3.5-4 Pct For FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM) expects to perform well in the financial year ending Dec 31, 2017 (FY17), with revenue growth projected to grow at between 3.5 and four per cent, driven by its data, Internet and multimedia services. Group Chief Executive Officer, Tan Sri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa, said Wednesday, while UniFi continued to lead its growth, TM would continue to leverage on its strategic investments in Webe and the TM Business Solutions.

TH Plantations' Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM127.3 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- TH Plantations Bhd posted a higher pre-tax profit of RM127.3 million for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 from RM18.7 million in the same period of 2015 amid the high commodity price environment. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, the plantation arm of Lembaga Tabung Haji said the bottom line was partially boosted by the sale of THP Gemas Sdn Bhd in the fourth quarter.

Axiata Records Unprecedented Forex Losses In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- Axiata Group Bhd's pre-tax profit for financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 slipped by 66 per cent to RM1.13 billion due to, among others, merger and acquisition-related costs and underperformance of operating companies and associates. In 2015, its pre-tax profit was RM3.33 billion. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Axiata said, its revenue, however rose to RM21.56 billion for the year ended Dec 31, 2016 compared with RM19.88 billion in 2015.

Pos Malaysia's Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Doubles To RM52.74 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pos Malaysia Bhd's pre-tax profit for the third quarter ended Dec 31, 2016 almost doubled to RM52.74 million from RM29.6 million in the same quarter of 2015. Revenue grew to RM635.72 million for the quarter under review from RM494.63 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Pos Malaysia attributed the better performance to higher contribution from its courier business, which was driven by an increase in demand from e-commerce.

RHB Bank's Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM2.23 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Bank Bhd's pre-tax profit for financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 (FY16) fell to RM2.23 billion from RM2.25 billion in the same period last year. Revenue edged down to RM10.57 billion from RM10.77 billion before, it said in a statement Friday.

BHIC Returns To The Black With Pre-Tax Profit Of RM82.20 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Boustead Heavy Industries Corp Bhd (BHIC) returned to the black for financial year ended Dec 31, 2016 (FY16) posting a pre-tax profit of RM82.20 million against FY15's pre-tax loss of RM3.94 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Friday, BHIC said, its revenue of RM307.5 million was RM41.9 million higher than the RM265.6 million in FY15.

Kanger, FRIM To Jointly Develop Malaysian Bamboo Industry

KUALA LUMPUR -- Kanger International Bhd and the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) will jointly work to develop the Malaysian bamboo industry. This follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the FRIM to jointly expand research and development, manufacturing and production of bamboo products, bamboo plantations and development of the bamboo industry in Malaysia. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, Kanger International said the MoU should be effective for three years from the date of signing and might be extended by written mutual consent.

Rubber Industry Not A Sunset Industry - Mah

KLANG -- Malaysia's rubber industry is not a sunset industry following demand for high-value engineering rubber products from many countries, Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong told reporters Monday. He said Malaysia has the ability to produce high-value engineering rubber products used specially in the field of vibration and earthquake engineering.

Medo Asia To Invest RM250,000 For 2nd Online Portal

KUALA LUMPUR -- Medo Asia Sdn Bhd plans to invest RM250,000 to build a second online service portal catering to the business-to-business (B2B) segment. The company recently launched an online service, MedicalOpinionAsia.com, that connects patients directly to 50 highly respected medical experts in Malaysia, enabling them to seek a second medical opinion. Managing Director and Co-founder, Stuart J Venner Pack told reporters Monday, the service is a digital healthcare innovation created to address an increasing number of patients wanting another opinion before treatment.

Channel Complaints To The Right Authorities, Says SSM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM) has advised members of the public to identify the relevant ministry or government agency before channelling their complaints. SSM, in a statement Monday, said this would not only help expedite corrective measures to be taken but also ensure that complaints are efficiently addressed.

Proton Needs Strategic Partner To Expand Abroad - Johari

KUALA LUMPUR -- Proton Holdings Bhd needs a foreign strategic partner to enable it to expand its overseas markets by producing high-quality cars and strengthen its position in the long run. Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani told reporters Tuesday, it was time for Proton to stand on its own feet after 32 years of government supervision. "The strategic partner can help enhance Proton's technology and ability to compete in the international markets and produce high-quality cars," he said.

Malaysia Airlines Receives IATA Fast Travel Green Certificate

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines has become the first Malaysian carrier to receive the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Fast Travel Green certificate. It recognises the airline's efforts at making passenger travel more flexible and convenient via self-service facilities. Malaysia Airlines earned the Green ranking by meeting five of the requirements, namely check-in, bags ready-to-go, flight re-booking, self-boarding and bag recovery, it said in a statement Thursday.

TM, UMLand J-Biotech Sign Collaboration Agreement

KUALA LUMPUR -- Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM) and UMLand J-Biotech Park Sdn Bhd have signed a collaboration agreement for the provision of TM's high-speed broadband network infrastructure and UniFi services. In a statement Thursday, TM said, the agreement was in relation to its Integrated Business Solutions at Johor Halal Park (JHP) development in Pasir Gudang, Johor.

Celebrity Fitness, Fitness First Asia To Merge

KUALA LUMPUR -- Celebrity Fitness and Fitness First Asia are merging to create one of the largest fitness club networks in Asia, with the combined entity under Evolution Wellness Holdings Pte Ltd (Evolution Wellness). Evolution Wellness will comprise 152 wholly-owned fitness clubs across Asia, bridging two of the most experienced management teams in Asian health and fitness, said Chief Executive Officer Simon Flint, in a statement Thursday.

Honda Malaysia, PDB Collaborate To Help Replace Front Airbag Inflators

KUALA LUMPUR -- Honda Malaysia Sdn Bhd is collaborating with Petronas Dagangan Bhd (PDB) to provide further convenience for its customers to replace Takata front airbag inflators. In a statement Thursday, Honda Malaysia said, owners of affected airbag inflators could replace them at selected Petronas stations.

Competition Commission Proposes Financial Penalty On Lonpac Insurance

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Competition Commission (CC) has proposed to impose a financial penalty of RM8,301,445 on Lonpac Insurance Bhd (Lonpac) for an alleged infringement. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, LPI Capital Bhd (LPI) said Lonpac, a wholly-owned subsidiary of LPI, had received a Notice of Proposed Decision by the CC under Section 36 of the Competition Act 2010.

Motor Insurance Claims Record Daily Pay Out Of RM13.8 Mln In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- Motor insurance claims which amounted to RM5.02 billion in 2016, has raised concerns within the general insurance industry, as it worked out to a staggering daily pay out of RM13.8 million. General Insurance Association of Malaysia (PIAM) Chief Executive Officer Mark Lim told reporters Thursday, road accidents often resulted in large claims involving death and injuries to motorists/ passengers, as well as severe losses in own and third party property damages.

100 Local Entrepreneurs To Take Part In Halal Food Expo In Xi'an, China

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Institute of Halal Research, University of Malaya (IHRUM) and Upaya Vista Sdn Bhd have selected 100 local entrepreneurs to represent Malaysia in the Third China Xi'an International Halal Food Expo 2017 in Xi'an, China from April 11 to 18. Universiti Malaya Academy of Islamic Studies Director Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Mohd Yussof told reporters Thursday, the expo would be the best access for local entrepreneurs to penetrate into the international halal markets and expand their businesses globally.

Green Light For Affin To Complete Negotiations With Felda Marketing

KUALA LUMPUR -- Affin Holdings Bhd said that Bank Negara Malaysia has no objection for the group to complete its negotiations with Felda Marketing Services Sdn Bhd and AXA Asia on the proposed acquisition of additional equity interest in AXA Affin General Insurance Bhd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Affin Holdings said it had submitted an application to the central bank to seek its approval for an extension time up to Aug 5, 2017.

Ministry Sets Timeline For MSPO Certification Mandatory Compliance

PUTRAJAYA -- The Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry has set the timeline for the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) certification mandatory compliance to up to Dec 31, 2019 with the aim to uplift the industry to global standard. Its Minister Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong told reporters Friday, the compliance would be implemented in stages with plantation players that were certified with Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) to comply with the MSPO certification by Dec 31, 2018.

Leading Index Up 0.9 Pct In Dec 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Leading Index (LI), which monitors Malaysia's economic performance in advance, rose 0.9 per cent to 117.4 points in December 2016 from 116.4 points in the previous month. This was supported mainly by the number of housing units approved (0.8 per cent), real imports of semi-conductors (0.4 per cent) and real imports of other basic precious and other non-ferrous metal (0.4 per cent), the Statistics Department said in its "Malaysian Economic Indicators: Leading, Coincident and Lagging Indexes December 2016" Report.

Samsung Rolls Out 'Samsung Pay' Service

KUALA LUMPUR -- Samsung Malaysia Electronics Sdn Bhd has rolled out its mobile payment service, 'Samsung Pay' in Malaysia Friday, through strategic partnerships with banks and merchants in its quest to provide cashless payment service to its customers. Its Mobile and IT Business Unit Vice-President, Lee Jui Siang told reporters, its partners included Malayan Banking Bhd, CIMB Bank Bhd, Citibank Bhd, Standard Chartered Bank Bhd and Hong Leong Bank Bhd.

RHB Islamic To Disburse RM50 Mln For Entrepreneur Development

PETALING JAYA -- RHB Islamic Bank Bhd is expecting to disburse at least RM50 million this year to facilitate entrepreneurs development under the Teras Fund programme by the Bumiputera Agenda Steering Unit (Teraju). Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Adissadikin Ali told reporters Friday as of 2016, over RM200 million from the RM400 million fund had been disbursed under the collaboration with Teraju, which started in 2012.

Malaysia To Host Counter-Terrorism Financing Summit 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia will host the Third Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) Summit from Nov 20-23 this year, a manifestation of the country's support and commitment in addressing terrorism and terrorism financing. Previously, the CTF Summit was co-hosted and founded by the financial intelligence units of Australia and Indonesia. In a joint statement, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC)and the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (PPATK, Indonesia) Monday said the CTF is a platform for participating countries to collaboratively develop real solutions in countering terrorism financing.

Johor Port, PT Pelabuhan Indonesia IV Signs MoU For Collaboration

KUALA LUMPUR -- Johor Port Bhd, a member of the MMC Group, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PT Pelabuhan Indonesia IV (PELINDO IV) which will involve several collaboration including a sister port partnership programme. Besides this, the MoU would also pave to the way for Johor Port to share its experience and expertise with PELINDO IV in the areas of port training services, consultation on container and conventional operations and collaboration on inter-port logistics services.

Maserati's Levante Now Available In Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maserati's first suburban utility vehicle (SUV), the Levante, is now available in Malaysia through NAZA Italia, the official importer and distributor for Maserati. In a statement Monday, NAZA World Group Executive Chairman, Datuk Wira SM Faisal Tan Sri SM Nasimuddin, said as Maserati's first entry into the SUV segment, it has the poise and power to exceed expectations, setting it apart from its peers.

MAB To Offer 25 Pct Discount For China Flights

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airlines Bhd (MAB) is offering 25 per cent discount for economy flights to Chinese cities of Nanjing, Haikou, Fuzhou and Wuhan for bookings made from Monday until Feb 28. In a statement, the national carrier said the promotion was valid for travel between Feb 22 and Aug 20, 2017, and fares included complimentary 30kg baggage, inflight meals and entertainment.

BookDoc Receives New Strategic Partner

KUALA LUMPUR -- BookDoc, an online platform that connects patients to healthcare professionals, received an injection of an undisclosed amount of US dollars, led by a family member of Stanley Ho, the Macau billionaire tycoon. Headquartered in Malaysia, BookDoc welcomed the double-digit millions dollar investments, describing the member of the Dr Stanley Ho family as a strategic investor after Prince Abdul Qawi of the Brunei Royal family who invested in the company barely a year ago, it said in a statement Monday.

Kacific Broadband To Launch Satellite In 2019

KUALA LUMPUR -- Kacific Broadband Satellites Pte Ltd, which has ordered the Kacific-1 satellite from The Boeing Co based on the 702 satellite platform, will launch it in 2019. In a statement Tuesday, Kacific said, the platform satellite will be shared with JCSAT-18, ordered by SKY Perfect JSAT Corp Kacific Chief Executive Officer, Christian Patouraux, said Kacific-1 will enable people in areas that currently lacked affordable high-speed Internet to access online education, healthcare and public services and grow their local economies.

Malindo Air Launches KL-Jeddah Route

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malindo Air has launched a new service from here to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with a one-hour stop-over in Ahmedabad, India. In a statement Tuesday, Malindo Air said, the introductory promotional fares (return all-in) for the flights would start from RM3,999 for business class and from RM2,899 for the economy class.

DSA 2018 Moves To Brand-New Venue

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Defence Services Asia Exhibition and Conference 2018 (DSA 2018) will be held at a brand-new venue here from April 16-19, 2018. The Asian premier defence and services show will move to the recently-completed Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC) in Jalan Tunku Abdul Halim here. The move to MITEC was announced by Deputy Defence minister Datuk Seri Mohd Johari Baharum in Abu Dhabi Tuesday, where DSA is participating in the International Defence Exhibition & Conference (IDEX).

Badlisham Wins Leadership Award In London

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd's (MAHB) Managing Director, Datuk Badlisham Ghazali, has been awarded the Leadership Excellence in Airport Management Award for his leadership and drive in ensuring sustainable growth of MAHB. In a statement Tuesday, MAHB said, Badlisham's initiative of enhancing the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and establishing it as a preferred ASEAN hub, developing KLIA Aeropolis and strengthening international presence won him the recognition.

MILE 2017 To Showcase Integrated Islamic Lifestyle

KUALA LUMPUR -- The inaugural Malaysia International Islamic Lifestyle (MILE 2017) set for April 5-8 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre will feature 150 companies. Organised in conjunction with the 14th Malaysia International Halal Showcase, MILE 2017 marks another milestone for Malaysia in the development of the halal industry and Islamic economy, it is expected to draw more than 30,000 visitors. Bringing together culture and trade in an integrated experience of Islamic lifestyle, MILE 2017 broadens its remit beyond the food sector, said MILE in a statement here, Tuesday.

Petronas Earnings Look Good Amid Tough Environment - CEO

By Mikhail Raj Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- National oil corporation, Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas), will record a lower revenue for 2016 from RM248 billion in 2015 owing to the plunge in crude oil prices when it reports its financial results in March.

Petronas President and Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin, said this was based on crude oil prices declining to an average of US$43 (US$1 = RM4.45) per barrel for 2016 against an average of US$54 a year earlier.

However, Wan Zulkiflee said, he was encouraged that other profit margins for the oil company increased, including that of earnings before interest, depreciation and amortization as well as profit after tax.

He attributed Petronas' comparatively good showing despite the tough operating environment to strategic cost-cutting responses, or "Project Cactus", which was launched when prices tumbled to a historical low of US$27 in February last year,

"Project Cactus led to operational efficiency and enabled us to cut our controllable costs by 14 per cent," he told a media briefing here Tuesday.

MANPOWER CUT

Petronas also saved hundreds of millions of ringgit by cutting manpower by 2,300 last year to 51,000 currently, of which about 11,000 were foreign workers in view of its numerous overseas plants and projects.

"We cannot promise there will be no retrenchments this year but it will be focused on non-performers as was the case in 2016.

"But the bigger prize from Project Cactus is that we have cut down on a lot of duplication and achieved higher accountability," he said.

Petronas' operations would premise on a conservative crude oil price of US$45 per barrel for this year, he said.

He said Petronas would also keep to its commitment of paying out a dividend of RM13 billion to the government from RM16 billion previously.

REAL SAVIOUR

He noted that Petronas was only one of several oil majors whose credit rating was not downgraded by Standard & Poor's or Moody's which was a "real saviour" as otherwise it would have to pay more when raising bonds.

"We cleaned up our books a lot in terms of impairment, whereby we allocated RM20 billion for impairment in 2015 and RM13 billion in 2016," he said.

Turning to its projects, Wan Zulkiflee said, there was no delay at the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development Project at Pengerang in Johor and that it was 54 per cent completed as at end-2016.

He also said Petronas emerged among the winning bidders at Mexico's first competitive deepwater oil auction and was in arrangements to study two oil fields in Iran and commissioned the ninth liquefied natural gas (LNG) train in Bintulu.

Looking ahead, he said, 2017 would be a better year for the oil and gas industry but not necessary for service providers and vendors, citing the oversupply of vessels and fabrication yards.

-- BERNAMA

CUTTING-EDGE...Petronas 'PFLNG Satu', the first of its kind technology launched in March, 2016. - Photo Courtesy of Petronas

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

Bursa Malaysia To Trend Sideways Next Week

By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is likely to trend sideways next week, with the benchmark index moving between 1,700 and 1,710 levels, said a dealer.

Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew said the local market had entered into a period of congestion following the recent gains, and it was likely to enter sideways mode.

“It is not likely to move any further, but after the profit-taking activities, maybe it will enter a quieter trading, and see range-bound trading at the levels between 1,700 to 1,710,” he told Bernama.

As the market sentiment remained tepid over the past two days, Pong reckoned the downtrend would continue to linger until the following week.

“As market sentiment is still too weak to recoup losses, it is more likely to keep the losses until next week, and lead to a little rebound further by end of the week,” he said.

For the week just ended, the local market saw range-bound trading, supported by the better-than-expected gross domestic product data and affected by losses in heavyweights led by trade and services counters.

The KLCI began to lose its upward momentum since Thursday due to profit-taking activities, and in line with the downtrend on the regional markets.

On a week-to-week basis, the FBM KLCI lost 9.33 points to 1,698.35 from 1,707.68 last Friday.

Weekly turnover expanded to 13.88 billion units worth RM12.59 billion from 11.34 billion units worth RM 12.19 billion previously.

Main Market volume widened to 10.12 billion shares valued at RM11.92 billion against 8.22 billion shares valued at RM11.62 billion.

Ringgit To Trade Higher Against US Dollar Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to trade higher, averaging between 4.42 and 4.43 next week, supported by expectations that the US Federal Reserve will not raise interest rates next month.

A dealer said the release of the dovish-than-expected Fed’s meeting minutes on Wednesday did little to boost expectations of an interest rate hike in March, and would likely continue to weigh on the US dollar.

“Furthermore, sentiment towards the greenback was also hurt by the perceived lack of progress and uncertainties over the US tax reform,” he added.

Meanwhile, Bank Negara Malaysia’s international reserves remained unchanged at US$95 billion (equivalent to RM426.2 billion) as at Feb 15, 2017 compared with Jan 31, 2017.

The central bank said this was sufficient to finance 8.4 months of retained imports and was 1.1 times the short-term external debt.

For the week just-ended, the ringgit moved between 4.4370 and 4.4560 against the US dollar.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the ringgit was traded higher at 4.4370/4440 against the greenback from last Friday's 4.4510/4550.

Against other major currencies, the local note traded mostly lower except the euro.

The ringgit depreciated versus the Singapore dollar to 3.1612/1666 from 3.1416/1451 last week, decreased against the yen to 3.9440/9513 from 3.9417/9463 and the British pound to 5.5622/5719 from 5.5273/5336.

It rose against the euro to 4.7001/7084 from 4.7372/7428.

Short-Term Rates Expected To Be Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are likely to be stable next week with Bank Negara Malaysia expected to offer tenders to absorb excess funds from the system.

For the week just ended, the overnight rate remained unchanged at 2.95 per cent, while the one-week, two-week and three-week rates were at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.11 per cent respectively.

The central bank intervened on a daily basis to mop up surplus liquidity by conducting tenders, including conventional money markets, Islamic range maturity auctions, range maturity auctions, reverse repo tenders and Qards.

The total liquidity surplus for the week just ended was higher at RM37.64 billion in conventional operations against RM29.21 billion last Friday.

Islamic funds decreased to RM7.54 billion from RM7.91 billion previously.

The benchmark three-month interbank rate stood at 3.43 per cent.

KLCI Futures To Trend Higher Next Week

By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts are expected to trend sideways next week, tracking the performance of its underlying cash market, a dealer said.

Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew said the local market had entered into a period of congestion following the recent gains, and it was anticipated to enter its sideways mode.

"It is not likely to move any further, but after the profit-taking activities, maybe it will enter quieter trading, and see range-bound trading at the levels of between 1,700 and 1,710," he told Bernama.

Throughout last week, the futures contracts saw range-bound trading in tandem with the volatile cash market.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, February 2017 fell 12.5 points to 1,697, March 2017 lost 11 points to 1,697.5, June 2017 shed 11.5 points to 1,693 and September 2017 was 10.5 points lower at 1,689.5.

Turnover for the week surged to 70,481 lots from 24,043 lots last Friday.

Open interests improved to 58,006 contracts from

28,959 contracts last week.

The benchmark FBM KLCI ended the week 9.33 points easier at 1,698.35 from 1,707.68 last Friday.

CPO Futures To Stay On Uptrend Next Week
By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to be on the uptrend next week, banking on good production amid favourable weather conditions, a dealer said.

Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader Jim Teh told Bernama that as the El-Nino phenomenon, which brought prolonged droughts has simmered, it would enable better cultivation of crops, thus improving yields.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month March 2017 fell RM117 to RM2,977 a tonne, April 2017 decreased RM91 to RM2,860 a tonne, May 2017 declined RM53 to RM2,806 a tonne, and June 2017 went down RM21 to RM2,758 a tonne.

Weekly turnover was higher at 408,289 lots from 333,313 lots last Friday, while open interest declined to 280,948 contracts from 281,124 contracts previously.

On the physical market, March South declined RM220 to RM3,020 a tonne from the previous week.

Rubber Likely To Be Firmer Next Week
By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to be firmer with an upside bias next week, a dealer said.

The price movement is expected to be influenced by the performance of the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM), the ringgit and crude oil futures.

TOCOM futures contract prices, which set the tone for tyre prices in Southeast Asia, are anticipated to recover from last week's lacklustre performance.

Besides that, oil prices are prone to influence rubber prices as their rise and fall would determine the pricing of natural rubber's competitor -- synthetic rubber.

"The market is expected to remain firm amid added buying interest, provided there were no unprecedented anomalies," he told Bernama.

For the just-ended week, the Malaysian rubber market was on a subdued buying momentum following lack of catalyst, as regional markets weighed down futures market performance.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's noon price for SMR 20 declined 56.5 sen to 902.5 sen a kg and latex-in-bulk trimmed 22 sen to 778.0 sen a kg.

The 5pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 was down 55.5 sen to 902 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk decreased 31.5 sen to 774.5 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Flat Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely remain flat next week.

For the week just ended, volume amounted to 50 lots and open interest at 50 contracts.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, March 2017 remained pegged at 96.55, April stayed at 96.53, May 2017 was unchanged at 96.52, and June 2017 stood at 96.50.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market stood at 3.43 per cent on Friday.

KLTM Likely To Rebound Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to rebound next week on improved overseas demand with the metal prices moving between US$18,800 and US$19,500 a tonne.

“Price on KLTM was dampened by profit-taking last week. Now with the price going down, this will attract more fresh buyers, especially those from China.

“Their (China) economy is improving. Demand for tin will also improve,” a dealer told Bernama.

The dealer said the market would also continue to be heavily influenced by the tin price on the London Metal Exchange (LME).

For the week just ended, the KLTM saw lower tin trading with demand mostly influenced by the movement on the LME.

The local tin price finished the week at US$19,050 a tonne, US$700 weaker from US$19,750 a tonne on Friday last week.

On the LME, the tin price also fell US$940 to end at US$18,785 a tonne

versus US$19,725 a tonne last week.

Weekly volume on the KLTM dropped to 167 tonnes from 204 tonnes last week with Japanese, South Korean, European, Chinese, Taiwanese and local players accounting for the bulk of the trade.

The premium between the KLTM and LME widened to US$265 a tonne from US$25 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures Likely To Be On Uptrend Next Week

By Farhana Poniman

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to be on an uptrend next week as the market dismisses possibility of an interest rate hike in March.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer Chua Zheng Liang said the precious metal was fragile towards interest rate as it could increase the opportunity cost of holding non-interest-bearing gold.

“We expect gold prices to be bullish next week following the US Federal Reserve’s hawkish speech on interest rates, indicating that it was in no hurry to raise the benchmark rate,” he told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, February 2017 rose 78 ticks to RM178.60 a gramme, March 2017 increased 76 ticks to RM177.80 a gramme, while April 2017 and May 2017 rose 50 ticks each to RM177, and RM177.60 a gramme respectively.

Turnover for the week improved to 159 lots worth RM2.85 million from 63 lots worth RM1.09 million last week.

Open interest on Friday was higher at 437 contracts from 355 contracts recorded last week.