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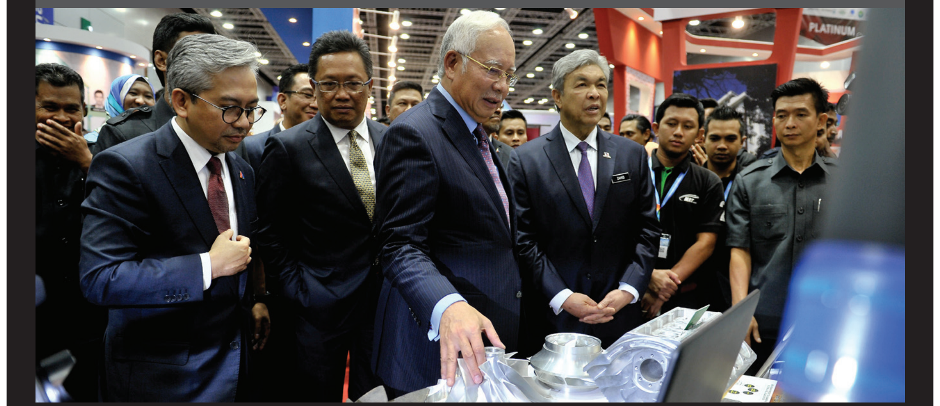
This Week's Highlight : Najib Unveils Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap 2.0



BUMIPUTERA-OWNED...Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (middle) looking at a bumiputera-owned product at the expo site after launching the Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap 2.0 at the KL Convention Centre Wednesday.Also present Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (third, right), Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Dahlan (second, left) and Teraju CEO Datuk Husni Salleh (left). fotoBERNAMA by Faisal Jaafar

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Wednesday launched the Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap (BETR) 2.0 of the Bumiputera Wellbeing Transformation which would serve as a new look for the empowerment of Bumiputera Agenda. "In fact, the Bumiputera Wellbeing Transformation covers way more important beyond that as it includes every aspect of wellbeing such as education, health, social and culture," he said at the launching ceremony here.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

APEC Ministers To Discuss TPPA Direction In Vietnam

KUALA LUMPUR – International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said a detailed discussion on the direction of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is scheduled to be held in Vietnam during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation ministers' meeting this May. Most countries in the TPP agreement (TPPA), including Malaysia, have yet to decide on the decision of its direction, he said In Parliament here Monday.

TUESDAY

MAS To Complete Restructuring In Five Years

By Andrew Sagayam

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Airlines (MAS) is halfway through its RM6 billion restructuring exercise which is likely to be completed in five years' time, says its CEO Peter Bellew. "For the last eight months, we have been trying to sell a lot of tickets and get the brand name back out there publicly all over the world," he said in a special interview programme with BNC's Mikhail Raj Abdullah aired over Astro CH502, Hyppy TV, and MYTV, and posted on www.bernama.com.

WEDNESDAY

Bumiputera Empowerment Agenda Generates RM108 Billion - Najib

KUALA LUMPUR -- A total of RM108 billion was generated through all the initiatives under the two Bumiputera Economic Empowerment Agendas until March this year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Wednesday. He said the two agendas were the Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap, which was launched in 2011 and the Bumiputera Economic Empowerment in 2013.

THURSDAY

PNB's Strategic Companies Worth RM20 Billion Q1 2017

TEMERLOH -- The market value of PNB's strategic companies rose by RM20 billion in the first quarter of 2017, as a result of its Strategic Plan 2017-2022, said Group Chairman Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar. "We hope that this will improve our domestic equity performance via PNB s group of companies," he said during the launch of PNB's Malaysian Unit Trust Week (MSAM) 2017, officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak here Thursday.

FRIDAY

Melaka Gateway Not A Project To Sell Country's Sovereignty - PM

MELAKA -- Development of Melaka Gateway is not a project to sell Malaysia's sovereignty or add debts to the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Friday. "If foreign investors come, they invest in Malaysia, build factories in Malaysia, on Malaysia's soil. We can control. How can (we) lose sovereignty? We will always defend our sovereignty," he said in his speech at the Melaka government monthly assembly at the Melaka International Trade Centre in Ayer Keroh here.

SMEbrief

Cisco Launches New Initiative For SMEs, Mid-Markets

KUALA LUMPUR -- Cisco has launched Cisco ST>RT, a new initiative for Malaysia's small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-markets to take advantage of the vast opportunities created by the nation's booming digitalisation. Cisco ST>RT provides SMEs and mid-market businesses with access to a suite of simple, secure and smart enterprise-class technologies, specifically tailored to their business size and priced to match, said Cisco Malaysia's Managing Director, Albert Chai in a statement Monday.

Need More Bumiputeras In Export Sector - MATRADE

KUALA LUMPUR -- Only 5,797 Bumiputera entrepreneurs, or 10.13 per cent, who are registered with Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (MATRADE) are involved in the export sector. "The country needs more Bumi exporters in order to increase the contributions of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to exports from 17.8 per cent to 23 per cent by 2020," MATRADE Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Sharimahton Mat Salleh told a media briefing Tuesday.

Teraju Eyes Bigger Target For TKB Bumiputera Development

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Bumiputera Agenda Steering Unit (Teraju) is eyeing the expansion of the target for Bumiputera development under the Bumiputera Wellbeing Transformation (TKB) agenda. TKB is the continuation of Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap. Teraju Chief Executive Officer Datuk Husni Salleh said Wednesday, the agenda outlined a few changes in philosophy and concept to include more than just economy but also, among others, education and social mobility as well as the well-being of the Bumiputeras.

Maybank Targets RM120 Mln Sales At MSAM 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) has set a sales target of RM120 million to be clinched at the six-day Malaysian Unit Trust Week (MSAM) 2017 which began Thursday at Dataran Temerloh, Pahang. Head of Community Financial Services Malaysia, Datuk Hamirullah Boorhan said sales at this year's MSAM were expected to be driven by Amanah Saham Bumiputera (ASB) and ASB 2. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak launched the bank's new payment gateway, Maybank2u Pay at the MSAM 2017. Hamirullah said the pilot launch of the payment gateway, in early March, had seen encouraging response with close to 600 applications from small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

MATRADE: Malaysian SMEs Urged To Take Part In Export

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- The export contribution of Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is still low despite their huge number, said the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). Chief Executive Officer Dr Mohd Shahreen Zainooreen Madros said the overseas forays among over 900,000 local SMEs stood at merely 17.8 per cent, with the SME Masterplan targeting the figure to rise to 23 per cent by 2020. "The role of SMEs is crucial to the economy and social development as they contribute nearly 36 per cent of the country s gross domestic product and 65 per cent of the country's employment," he told Bernama at the Beyond Nations Public Contest prize-giving ceremony, here Thursday.

PropUP Propertyupdate

Property Market Reaches Maturity, Says Valuation Dept

KUALA LUMPUR -- The property market has reached maturity with the bulk of transactions dominated by the secondary sub-sales segment, said the Valuation and Property Services Department Tuesday. Director-General of Valuation and Property Services Dr Rahah Ismail said 80 per cent of the country's property transactions were driven by the secondary market due to ample market supply.

2016 Property Market Transactions Down 11.5 Pct

KAJANG -- The property market recorded 320,000 transactions, worth RM145.41 billion, in 2016, a decline of 11.5 per cent, against the previous year. In a statement Tuesday, the Valuation and Property Services Department said the residential sub-sector continued to drive the overall market with a 63.4 per cent contribution in volume and 45.1 per cent in value while affordable houses continued to be in demand with more than 65.0 per cent of the residential transactions recorded for properties costing within RM300,000 and below.

RHB Islamic To Finance Two PR1MA Projects In Kelantan

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Islamic Bank Bhd will provide financing facilities totalling RM31.35 million to part finance two Prima Corporation Malaysia (PR1MA) projects in Kelantan. The facilities encompass the provision of financing to property developers, AUEI Teras Holdings Sdn Bhd (AUEI) and Vertex Central Industries Sdn Bhd for a total amount of RM17.75 million for a PR1MA project in Kubang Kerian, and RM13.6 million for another project in Machang. The collaboration was announced at an exposition hosted by the Bumiputera Agenda Steering Unit (Teraju) entitled Steering Bumiputera Agenda 2017 here Wednesday.

Property Ownership By Foreigners Not Affecting Locals - Lee

KUALA LUMPUR -- The percentage of property ownership by foreigners in the country has declined since the government set a minimum RM1 million as property prices for foreigners in 2014, the Dewan Negara was told Wednesday. Deputy Finance Minister Senator Datuk Lee Chee Leong said, statistics showed the percentage of transfer to foreigners for various property sectors was also less than two per cent, indicating that opportunities for locals to own houses were still not affected.

KL House Prices On Uptrend - Knight Frank

KUALA LUMPUR -- House prices in Kuala Lumpur continue on an uptrend, posting a modest 5.1 per cent year-on-year increase, despite the weaker property market condition, says Knight Frank in its Global Residential Cities Index Report for the fourth quarter 2016. Knight Frank Malaysia Managing Director Sarkunan Subramaniam said Thursday, going forward, prices of residential properties in prominent and established areas in the city, were expected to remain resilient with moderate capital appreciation.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 588

Losers - 320

Not Traded - 457

Unchanged - 386

Value - 2649141064

Volume - 31204098

BURSA: Positive Market Sentiment Drives Bursa Malaysia To End Stronger

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia ended the week on a stronger footing friday, riding on positive market sentiment that helped lift investors' risk appetite globally. Speaking to Bernama, a dealer said Asian bourses rallied Friday as investors positively reacted to the solid Wall Street performance overnight, optimism for US tax overhaul, US trade probe on Chinese steel exports, steady oil prices, as well as gains in the Japanese stock market.

"The bullish Wall Street sparked appetite in the global stock market with investors mostly flocking to the emerging markets," he said, adding the recovery in ringgit also partly aided the day's upsurge. Overall market breadth in Bursa Malaysia was positive with gainers trouncing losers 588 to 320, while 386 counters were unchanged, 457 untraded and 17 others suspended. Trading was brisk with volume swelling to 3.12 billion units worth RM2.65 billion, from 2.64 billion units valued at RM2.24 billion billion recorded Thursday. Main Market turnover expanded to 2.27 million units worth RM2.51 billion, from 1.77 million units valued at RM2.12 billion registered on Thursday.

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Slightly Lower Against Greenback

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit ended slightly lower against the US dollar

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.3980	4.3000
EUR	4.7076	4.7111
GBP	5.6259	5.6298
100 YEN	4.0286	4.0315
SGD	3.1466	3.1485

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

Friday, pulled down by expectations of lower crude oil prices and in line with the weaker performance of regional peers. At 6 pm, the local unit was quoted at 4.3980/3000 against the greenback compared with Thursday's close of 4.3960/3000. A dealer said news reports indicated that the benchmark Brent Crude and US West Texas Intermediate crude oil prices would see a 5.2 per cent and 4.6 per cent weekly drop respectively on Friday, after investors expressed worry over the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' oil cut effect.

"The decline in global crude oil prices will hamper Malaysia's revenue from the oil and gas sector, and therefore, diminish investor interest towards the local note," he added. He said in addition, geopolitical tensions over North Korea, along with the uncertainty surrounding the French Presidential election and general election in the United Kingdom, had reduced the risk appetite among investors towards Asian currencies, including the ringgit.

At close, the ringgit was traded mostly higher against most major currencies. It traded higher against the Japanese yen at 4.0286/0315 from 4.0312/0352 on Thursday, strengthened against the British pound to 5.6259/6298 from 5.6392/6452 and advanced against the euro to 4.7076/7111 from 4.7310/7366. However, it depreciated against the Singapore dollar to 3.1466/1485 from 3.1465/1498.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM30.63 billion from RM40.04 billion in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it eased to RM8.39 billion from RM12.91 billion.

Earlier, BNM conducted four conventional money market tenders, three Qard tenders and a Commodity Murabahah Programme tender. The central bank also conducted a RM30.6 billion conventional money market tender and a RM8.4 billion Qard money market tender, both for four-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.96 per cent, while the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.11 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Contract Ends Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended untraded Friday. Spot month May 2017, June 2017, July 2017 and September 2017 remained pegged at 96.54, 96.52, 96.50 and 96.48, respectively. Volume and open interest remained nil. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.43 per cent.

KLCI Futures Contract Closes Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed firmer Friday, in line with the higher underlying cash market. At close, April 2017 was 10 points firmer at 1,754.50, May 2017 and September 2017 rose nine points each to 1,747.50 and 1,748 respectively, while June 2017 was seven points better at 1,747.

Turnover increased to 7,676 lots from 4,043 lots Thursday, while open interest widened to 38,863 contracts from 35,509 contracts. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 14.44 points higher at 1,756.06.

Banking &Finance

Viral Info On EPF Nomination Is Not TRUE - EPF

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Monday refuted information which has been circulated through the Whatsapp application that EPF savings belonging to members with beneficiaries below the age of 18 upon their death would automatically be channelled to Amanah Raya Berhad. In a statement issued by its Corporate Affairs Department Monday, EPF said the information on the EPF nomination that had been viralled was not true.

BNM's FTEG Seeks Public Ideas To Improve Financial Services

KUALA LUMPUR -- BNM in a statement Monday said the call for participation of ideas is open through the "Fintech Hacks" initiative which aims to identify pain points in the delivery and consumption of financial services, and solicit ideas using the application of technology to address the gaps. "The Fintech Hacks call for participation is part of BNM's efforts at involving the public in contributing their ideas and experience to spur and inspire the development of Fintech solutions that have the potential to revolutionalise the way financial services are delivered to consumers in Malaysia," it added.

Ambank Islamic-Indah Water Tie-Up To Boost JomPay Transaction Volume

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ambank Islamic Bhd expects its transaction volume via JomPay to increase four-fold in the next three to six months through their partnership with Indah Water Consortium (IWK). Ambank Islamic and IWK Monday signed an agreement with JomPay to make it easier for customers to pay their IWK sewerage bills. Ambank Group Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Sulaiman Mohd Tahir told reporters Monday the group targeted to grow its JomPay transactions to between RM50 million and RM60 million in the next three to six months from the current RM35 to RM40 million.

M'sian Banks Only Spend 3 Pct Of Employee Payroll On Training- BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian banking industry, on average, only allocated around three per cent of employee payroll for their annual training expenditure, said Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Muhammad Ibrahim. He said at a launch Tuesday, this was in contrast with international comparisons of around 4.0 and 4.5 per cent, despite the importance of prioritising and channelling greater resources towards talent development.

KWAP Is Axiata's edotco New Shareholder Via RM440 Mln Private Placement

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's pension fund, Kumpulan Wang Persaraan (Diperbadankan) (KWAP) emerged as the new shareholder of Axiata Group Bhd's unit, edotco Group Sdn Bhd, via a US$100 million (RM440 million) private placement exercise. "It is an honour for us to welcome KWAP as new shareholder to edotco," Axiata President and Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Tan Sri Jamaluddin Ibrahim said in a statement Tuesday.

Sime Tenders For Cash Repurchase Of Sukuk

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sime Darby Bhd Tuesday tendered for cash repurchase of two sukuk worth US$1.5 billion multi-currency sukuk to Sime Darby Global Bhd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday, it said, both sukuk, worth US$400 million were due in 2018 and 2023, respectively."

Ringgit's FV Should Be RM4.20 To US Dollar - MIER

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) estimates the ringgit's fair value based on economic fundamentals to be at RM4.20 to the US dollar. At 9.03 am Tuesday, the ringgit was traded at 4.4070/4120 against the greenback, down from the 4.4030/4060 recorded at 6 pm on Monday. Senior Research Fellow Dr Zulkiply Omar said the value is based on the strength of the economy and the demand for ringgit as exports grow in tandem with the global economic growth.

Cambridge Summer School Programme To Address Main Disruptors In Banking World

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Asian Banking School's (ABS) flagship Cambridge Summer School Programme was officially launched here Tuesday by Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Muhammad Ibrahim. A collaboration with the University of Cambridge's Judge Business School, the programme is the second in ABS's flagship series after last year's roll out of the Global Banking Leaders Programme with Cass Business School in London, the ABS said in a statement Wednesday.

BNM Reappoints Azlan, Yeah To MPC

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has reappointed Datuk Seri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali and Dr Yeah Kim Leng as external members of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) for a two-year term effective April 1, 2017. The reappointment will continue to enhance the collective expertise and experience relevant to the responsibilities and functions of the MPC, the central bank said in a statement Wednesday.

BNM's Int'l Reserves At US$95.7 Bln As At April 14

KUALA LUMPUR -- The international reserves of Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) amounted to US$95.7 billion (equivalent to RM423.2 billion) as at April 14, 2017 compared with US$95.4 billion (equivalent to RM422.2 billion) registered as at March 31, 2017. In a statement Thursday, BNM said the reserves position was sufficient to finance 8.2 months of retained imports and was 1.1 times the short-term external debt.

Kelington Group's Unit Secures RM24.2 Mln Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Integrated engineering solutions provider Kelington Group Bhd's unit, Kelington Engineering (S) Pte Ltd, has secured a new project worth RM24.2 million from Givaudan Singapore Pte Ltd. The project was for the engineering design, procurement, installation, testing and commissioning of process piping system for the company, which is one of the largest global manufacturer of flavour, fragrances and active cosmetic ingredients. In a statement Monday, the company said the project would contribute to its capabilities and track record in handling process engineering contracts, which was a segment that it aimed to grow.

Ekovest's Unit Secures RM79 Mln Worth Of Contracts From City Hall

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ekovest Bhd's unit, EkoRiver Construction Sdn Bhd, has secured a RM79 million contract from the Kuala Lumpur City Hall, to undertake the "Blue River" project in the vicinity of Masjid Jamek. The contract is for a period of 18 weeks and is scheduled to be completed before Aug 30, this year. "The appointment of EkoRiver Construction is expected to contribute positively to the future revenue and earnings of Ekovest Bhd," the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

MATRADE's MTCDP To Record 10-15 Export Growth This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) is confident that the Mid-Tier Companies (MTCs) will achieve export growth of 10-15 per cent this year, supported by 23 new companies under Wave 4 of the Mid-Tier Companies Development Programme (MTCDP). Last year, export revenue from Wave 1, 2 and 3 of the MTCDP grew by 10.4 per cent to RM6.82 billion in 2016 as compared to RM6.18 billion in 2015.

Prasarana Eyes Transportation Projects In Indonesia

KUALA LUMPUR -- Prasarana Malaysia Bhd (Prasarana) has forged ties with its Indonesian counterpart, Akademi Perkeretaapian Indonesia (API), for the provision of training, while exploring business opportunities and bidding for various public transportation projects in the republic. Prasarana Group President and Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Seri Azmi Abdul Aziz told reporters Monday, the Indonesian government was planning to enhance the transportation system in the country.

Petronas Lubricants To Achieve 1-3 Pct MCO Product Volume Increase This Year

SEPANG -- Petronas Dagangan Bhd's unit, Petronas Lubricants Marketing (M) Sdn Bhd (PLMM), is confident to achieve between one and three per cent volume increase for motorcycle oil (MCO) products range with the newly motorcycle oil launched, Petronas Sprinta with UltraFlex, this year. PLMM Chief Executive Officer, Zubair Abdul Razak told reporters Monday, the new range of motorcycle lubricant resists oil thinning that causes rattling noises as well as combat oil thickening leading to sluggishness.

Malaysia's 2017 Timber Exports To Improve 5 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- The export of Malaysian timber is expected to increase five per cent this year from RM21.86 billion in 2016, supported by demand from India, Plantation Industries and Commodities Deputy Minister Datuk Datu Nasrun Datu Mansur told reporters Tuesday. He said the export value of sawn timber, plywood and medium density fibreboard to India recorded an increase of more than 25 per cent last year compared to 2015.

Luxe Motorhomes And Caravans Aims To Sell 50 Units

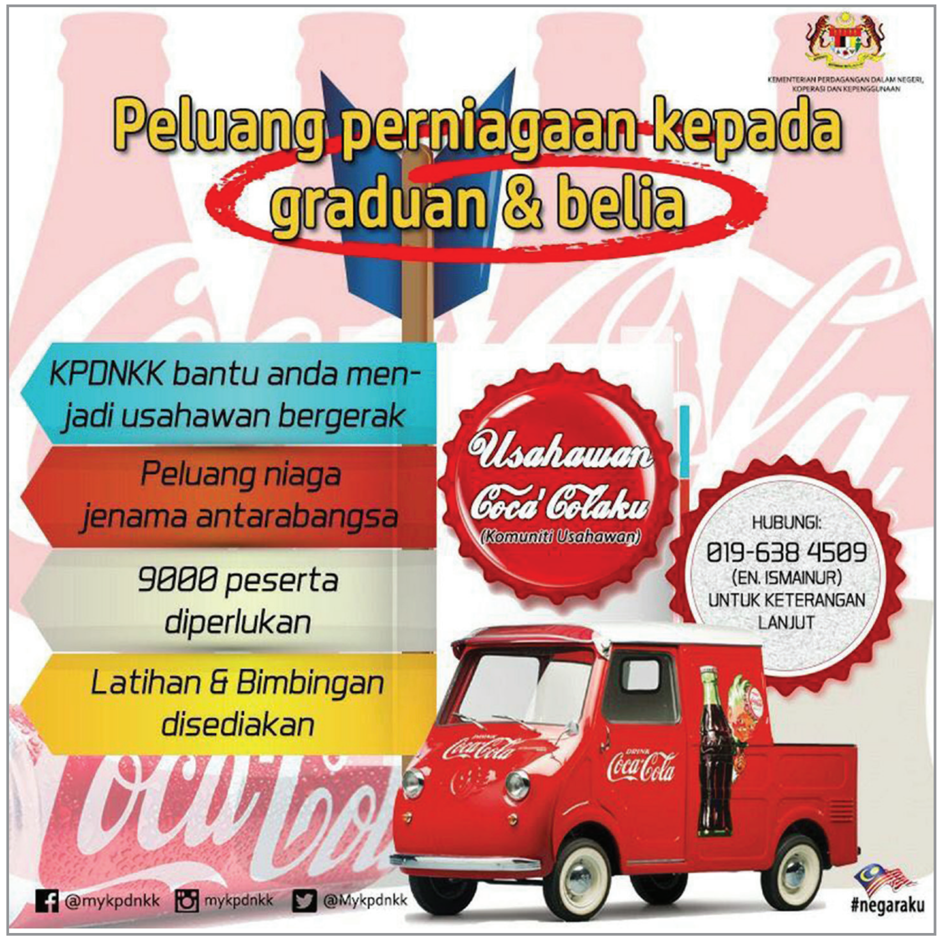
SHAH ALAM -- Luxe Motorhomes and Caravans Malaysia aims to sell 50 'Benimar Mileo' motorhomes, which made its debut in the Malaysian market Wednesday. International Trade and Industry Minister, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, said the introduction of the motorhome in Malaysia was a new experience that could potentially create more business opportunities which will help the car and tourism sector. "There are few in the country despite the many attractions of the motorhomes. Trade of the motorhomes recorded only about RM2 million last year," he told reporters Wednesday.

Eatigo To Welcome More Merchants By Year-End

KUALA LUMPUR -- Eatigo, Southeast Asia's restaurant reservation online platform, aims to double the number of local merchants on its application in Malaysia by year-end, up from the current 110 merchants. Eatigo International Pte Ltd Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Michael Cluzel told reporters Wednesday, the company was confident of achieving the target due to Malaysia's dining culture, which called for more restaurants to offer their services.

CPI Hits 5.1 Pct In March, Highest In 8 Years

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Consumer Price Index (CPI), a measure of inflation, rose by 5.1 per cent in March 2017 to 119.6, owing to the low base last year and higher fuel retail prices compared to March 2016, said the Statistics Department. The CPI for the month under review was the highest since November 2008, when it rose by 5.7 per cent, it said in a statement Wednesday.



Malaysia's Digital Economy Could Exceed 20 Pct To GDP Earlier Than 2020

KUALA LUMPUR -- The contribution of Malaysia's digital economy to the gross domestic product (GDP) at about 17 per cent currently, is expected to exceed the projected target of 20 per cent earlier than 2020, Treasury Secretary-General Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah said Wednesday. He expressed confidence that the level is achievable earlier as Malaysia had started making waves in the digital economy arena this year, first with the launch of the Digital Free Trade Zone or DFTZ (on March 22) and now, the Malaysia Digital Hub.

Modenas To Tap India's Bajaj Motors Expertise To Enter Street Bike Segment

KUALA LUMPUR -- Motosikal Dan Enjin Nasional (MODENAS), a member of DRB-HICOM Bhd is set to enter the Malaysian street bike segment through a collaboration with India's Bajaj Auto Ltd (BAL). DRB-HICOM Group Managing Director Datuk Seri Syed Faisal Albar believed the move would strengthen the brand and help it capture a larger share of the motorbike market. "The cooperation is in line with our aspiration to strengthen the MODENAS brand as a whole, by offering a wider range for motorcycle enthusiasts," he said in a statement Wednesday.

Boon Siew, Honda Ink Agreement To Export RS150R Motorcycle

CYBERJAYA -- Boon Siew Honda Sdn Bhd Thursday inked an agreement with Honda Motor Co. Ltd. to export the Malaysian assembled RS150R motorcycle model. Boon Siew Honda Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Nobuhide Nagata in his speech at the signing ceremony at the Malaysia Automotive Institute (MAI) Thursday said the motorcycles would be exported from next month.

Bat's Pre-Tax Profit Declines To RM156.38 Mln In 1st Quarter

KUALA LUMPUR -- British American Tobacco Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 slipped to RM156.38 million from RM231.07 million recorded in the same quarter last year. Revenue fell to RM779 million from RM1.02 billion previously, the group said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday.

KPJ Healthcare Eyes 10 Pct Growth In Revenue, Net Profit For FYE2017

JOHOR BAHRU -- KPJ Healthcare Bhd, a private healthcare provider, is banking on the growth of new hospitals, to record a 10 per cent revenue growth and net profit for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2017. President and Managing Director Datuk Amiruddin Abdul Satar was optimistic, given the group's performance last year, that the target can be achieved driven by the new hospitals that were currently undergoing construction. "New hospitals, we are talking about new areas, new locations that will provide stronger engine of growth in 2017," he told reporters Thursday.

Perodua Maintains Sales Target At 202,000 Units

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) is maintaining its sales target at 202,000 units for the year, President/Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Aminar Rashid Salleh told reporters Thursday. The group's sales had improved quarter-to-quarter, recording a 6.6 per cent growth despite a challenging first quarter of 2017 (1Q17), he said.

Perodua To Produce More EEV MODELS/BM

KANGAR -- Perusahaan Automobil Kedua (Perodua) plans to produce several new energy efficient vehicle (EEV) models to remain competitive in the compact car segment through its five-year plan (2017-2021). Perodua Manufacturing Sdn Bhd Acting Senior General Manager Mohd Saifuzzaman Mohammad told reporters Monday, the plan was aimed at fulfilling the demand for low fuel efficient compact cars.

Thailand's BJC Keen To Import More Malaysian Products

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- Thai-based Berli Jucker Public Company Limited (BJC) is keen to import more Malaysian products following its latest acquisition of Big C Supercentre Public Company Limited. BJC, via the 97.94 per cent stake in Big C that it owns now for RM27.02 billion, is the third largest grocery retail group in South-East Asia and Thailand's second-largest hypermarket operator. "We see more Malaysian products in the company's stores, especially the halal products… this is not because of religious beliefs but also for health reasons," BJC Chief Executive Officer/President, Aswin Techajareonvikul, told Bernama.

Petronas In Talks With EC On Gas Tariff

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petroliam Nasional Bhd and Petronas Gas Bhd (PGB) are still in talks with the Energy Commission regarding gas tariff with the liberalisation of country's gas industry in the third quarter of 2016. PGB Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Yusa' Hassan told reporters Monday, PGB saw opportunities with the liberalisation as it has unutilised capacity in its infrastructure.

MPC Paves Way For Good Regulatory Practice Implementation

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC), a statutory body under the International Trade and Industry Ministry, conducted a successful engagement session with regulatory coordinators on the Implementation of Good Regulatory Practice (GRP) Monday. "The aims of the session were to improve the understanding of regulatory coordinators, update and provide feedback on the status of the GRP Implementation at ministries and agencies, as well as to get feedback on issues and challenges faced by ministries and agencies in its implementation," it said in a statement Monday.

SSM Offers 70 Pct Discount To Companies To Settle Compounds

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM) is offering 70 per cent discount for compounds imposed on companies and company directors, beginning Monday until May 17, 2017. Minister of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism, Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin told reporters Monday, the move was taken in conjunction with the 15th anniversary of SSM, which was incorporated on April 16, 2002.

Petronas In Talks With EC On Gas Tariff

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas and Petronas Gas Bhd (PGB) are still in talks with the Energy Commission to finalise the structure to liberalise the gas business including commercial terms such as gas tariff and the technical aspects as it has unutilised capacity. "We are in full support of gas liberalisation. Our infrastructure, both regasification and gas transmission, will also open to third party access," PGB Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Yusa' Hassan told reporters Monday.

Sarawak's LRT To Be Ready By 2020, Says CM

KUALA LUMPUR -- A light rail transit (LRT) system connecting Kuching, Samarahan and Serian divisions could materialise by 2020, Sarawak Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Abang Openg said. He told reporters Monday, the LRT system was being studied for inclusion in the public transport plan to solve traffic congestion in the three divisions as their total population had reach one million.

Sarawak To Have Methanol Plant By 2021

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sarawak will undertake a methanol and methanol derivatives project with the first plant worth US$800 million (US$1=RM4.40) expected to be ready by 2021, Chief Minister Datuk Amar Abang Johari Abang Openg told reporters Tuesday. The project will play a significant role in Sarawak's economic transformation and extend the oil and gas downstream value-chain to transform the state into a petrochemical hub in the region.

Sabah Forgoes Natural Resource Revenue In Order To Protect Environment

KOTA KINABALU -- Sabah has taken a bold move to forgo substantial revenue from its natural resources, especially timber, in order to uphold its commitment towards environment protection. However, Sabah Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Musa Aman said Tuesday, the step proved fruitful when the state achieved 26 per cent of total protected areas (TPAs), or 1.87 billion hectares (ha) of greenery.

Feasibility Study On Kulim Airport To Conclude In The Next Few Months

KAJANG -- The Transport Ministry and the relevant authorities are conducting a feasibility study for the proposed Kulim International Airport which will be completed in the next few months, said Deputy Finance Minister I Datuk Wira Othman Aziz Tuesday. Othman said the proposed airport would help accommodate the growing tourist arrivals in the northern region, which were currently being catered to by the Penang International Airport and Langkawi International Airport.

Locally-Assembled Renault Captur Available For M'sian Market

KUALA LUMPUR -- Renault and TC Euro Cars Sdn Bhd (TCEC) have commenced local assembly of the Renault Captur crossover for the domestic market. Priced at RM109,000, it is one of Renault's most in demand models and has had more than 760,000 units produced globally since 2013. It is also the number one seller in Europe's B-segment. "Malaysia is the only other country worldwide, outside of Spain, to assemble The Captur," TC Euro Cars Chief Executive Officer, Kuan Kim Luen said.

Mavcom Resolves 95 Pct Of Complaints

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom) has successfully managed, resolved and closed 95 per cent of the 1,639 complaints received between March 2016 and February this year. The Commission, in a statement said its inaugural Consumer Report released Tuesday, highlighted that the highest number of complaints received were on Rayani Air with regards to refunds.

MHB Tenders For Projects Worth RM1.7 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Marine and Heavy Engineering Holdings Bhd (MHB) is currently tendering for several projects worth about RM1.7 billion, said Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Wan Mashitah Wan Abdullah Sani Wednesday. "Recently, we secured a RM1 billion contract from Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd for the engineering, procurement, construction, installation and commissioning works for the central processing platform at the Bokor Phase 3 Re-Development Project in Sarawak.

Organisations Allocate Budget For Mobile Apps

KUALA LUMPUR -- The demand for mobile applications in Malaysia and the region is on the rise with 58 per cent of organisations allocating budgets for the next 24 months to develop mobile applications, according to the findings of a recent survey. Titled, 'Maturing Mobile Journey for Enterprises', the survey was conducted in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia and featured inputs from some 275 senior information technology decision makers. It also revealed that banking institutions had the most advanced mobile applications compared with other industries.

EPF To Explore Natural Resources Sector As Next Investment Target

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) is exploring the natural resources sector as its next investment area as it is more sustainable and able to provide long-term income, said Chief Executive Officer Datuk Shahril Ridza Ridzuan. He told reporters Thursday, the pension fund was one of the largest investors in oil palm-based companies, as well as, shareholders in several oil palm companies.

M'sian Economy Likely To Continue Expanding Next 4-6 Months

KUALA LUMPUR -- The economy is expected to continue expanding in the next four to six months, with the annual change of Leading Index (LI) increasing 0.8 per cent in February this year, says the Statistics Department. In a statement Friday, the department said the annual change of LI, which monitored the economic performance in advance, increased 0.5 per cent in January 2017.

BTM Resources Signs MoU With Two China's Power Companies

KUALA LUMPUR -- BTM Resources Bhd has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China Western Power International Pte Ltd and Sichuan No. 2 Electric Power Construction Company to set up a RM435 million municipal waste to energy plant (WtE Plant). In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, BTM Resources said its obligation was to secure a waste disposal concession of not less than 25 years from the Melaka government and suitable tipping fee, as well as a power purchase agreement.

Sunway Appoints New GM For The Banjaran Hotsprings

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sunway Hotels and Resorts has appointed Castaldi Alex Rosario as General Manager for The Banjaran Hotsprings Retreat in Perak. In a statement Monday, Sunway Hotels and Resorts said Rosario has 15 years experience in the luxury hospitality industry including successes in Dubai, Bali, Rome and Koh Samui.

PB Bags Multi-Purpose Terminal Operator Of The Year Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- Johor Port Bhd (JPB), a member of the MMC Group, bagged the Multi-Purpose Terminal Operator of the Year award, at the recent Frost & Sullivan Asia Pacific Best Practices Awards ceremony. Chairman Datuk Seri Che Khalib bin Mohamad Noh said in a statement Monday, the award signified JPB's unwavering commitment in raising standards higher to provide value added quality services for customers.

320 Conferred Registered Financial Planner Designation

KUALA LUMPUR --- A total of 320 individuals were conferred with the full Registered Financial Planner (RFP) and Syariah RFP designation by the Malaysian Financial Planning Council (MFPC) recently. The 7th MFPC Graduation Organising Chairman Victor Kho Chu Ing said in a statement Monday, a theme "Be Professional, Be Ethical" was chosen as this year's ceremony focused on formulating the importance of ethics towards the profession as financial planner.

7th China Roadshow To Intensify Govt's Efforts To Tap China's Lucrative Mart

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 7th China Roadshow 2017, which begins in Beijing, China, Monday is expected to further intensify the government's on-going efforts through the Tourism and Culture Ministry's to tap the lucrative China's outbound market, which contributes significantly to the tourist arrivals in Malaysia. In a statement here Monday, the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) said the roadshow would pitch and showcase the best and latest of Malaysia's unique offerings to attract more corporate and meeting groups from China.

AirAsia Flies Airbus A330 To Maldives And Macao

KUALA LUMPUR -- Low-cost carrier AirAsia will offer promotional, all-in-one way flights, to Maldives and Macao for one month, from as low as RM169 and RM129 respectively. In a statement Tuesday, AirAsia Bhd said the Airbus A330 would fly directly to both destinations from tomorrow until May 18, 2017. Bookings can be made from today until April 23, 2017.

FIATA World Congress In KL To Generate RM10 Mln Economic Impact

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 56th International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FIATA) World Congress this October is expected to attract up to 1,200 delegates and have an estimated economic impact of RM10 million. Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said Tuesday the Congress, at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from Oct 4-8, is a perfect platform for the global logistics community to know what the government is doing to support and improve the capability of the industry in Malaysia.

UEM Group Appoints Noorazman As Deputy Chairman

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Board of Directors of UEM Group Bhd has appointed Datuk Noorazman Abdul Aziz as Non-Executive Deputy Chairman of the company, effective April 14, 2017. The engineering-based infrastructure and services group said Noorazman was a long-standing board member of UEM Group, appointed on Nov 15, 2010, it said in a statement Tuesday.

Astro Accelerates Digital & Business Transformation With Amazon Web Services

KUALA LUMPUR -- Astro Malaysia Holdings Bhd has signed an agreement with Amazon Web Services Inc (AWS) to use cloud computing services and leverage on AWS Professional Services for its group-wide digital and business transformation. Following the agreement, Astro said it would incorporate a cloud and mobile-first, analytics-driven approach to accelerate innovation in pursuit of new personalised experiences for customers, it said in a statement Tuesday.

AAX, IAA Enters Commercial Services Agreement

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia X Bhd (AAX) and PT Indonesia AirAsia (IAA) have entered into a commercial services agreement. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, AirAsia X said the company would provide commercial sharing services and support to IAA.

Bursa Malaysia To Close On Monday To Mark King's Installation

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia Bhd and its subsidiaries will be closed on Monday, April 24, 2017, in conjunction with the installation of Sultan Muhammad V as Malaysia's 15th Yang di-Pertuan Agong. "Bursa Malaysia and its subsidiaries will resume operations on Tuesday, April 25," the exchange said in a statement Friday.

Tasir Kenyir Cruise Ship To Offer Golfing Option

By Zalina Maizan Ngah

GOLF CRUISE... Golfing becomes a reality after Pandragon Lake Service & Enterprise takes delivery of its RM10 million ship in June 2018. fotoBERNAMA by Arjasneh Ahmad

KUALA TERENGGANU (Bernama) -- Fancy a game of golf from the top deck of a luxurious ship whilst cruising on Tasik Kenyir, Terengganu? With keen focus, a good shot can land your golf ball in a hole in one of the 340 charming islets around the lake, close to where the ship is moored. Such a golfing challenge will become a reality in June 2018 after Pandragon Lake Service & Enterprise takes delivery of its newest four-storey cruise ship, to be named Afiq II.

The brainchild behind the "golfing whilst cruising" concept is Pandragon general manager Mohd Apandi Abdullah and he is confident it would attract avid golfers who would want to try their hand at teeing off from a unique golf course atop a ship cruising on Southeast Asia's largest man-made lake. The ship is still under construction with 60 per cent of the work already done. Once it is complete, the 38-metre long and 10.6-metre wide vessel can house up to 60 passengers and will feature 17 cabins, a meeting room, gymnasium, karaoke centre, spacious kitchen and an exclusive lounge.

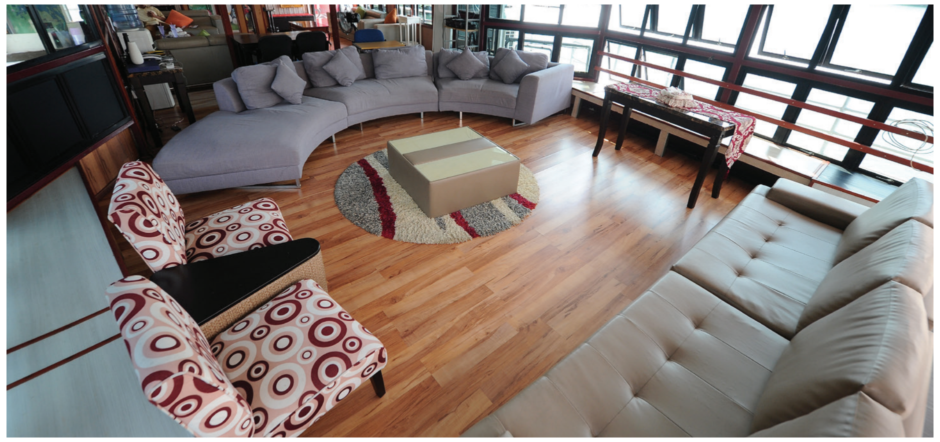
The cruise ship, costing RM10 million, would be similar to the luxury boats of its class operating in other countries, said Mohd Apandi, describing Afiq II as "my soul".

HOUSEBOAT SERVICE

"I conceived the new ship's design based on the ships I've seen during my travels abroad. I also wanted a ship that was an improved version of the one I have now," he told Bernama recently. Mohd Apandi's company currently operates a houseboat - named Pan Dragon Cruise - at Tasik Kenyir. He said when he decided to venture into the houseboat industry four years ago and invested RM1.2 million on the business, many of his friends thought he was being foolish.

"I was told such an investment was risky and that I might lose all my money. But I was confident it will yield good returns over the long term and I went for it, mainly because Tasik Kenyir is endowed with priceless fauna and flora."

He said he was inspired to operate his own houseboat after his visits to various countries but it was his trip to the world-renowned Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River, bordering Zambia and Zimbabwe, in Africa that left a deep impression on him. Pointing to Tasik Kenyir's 14 waterfalls - the most famous being the Lasir Waterfall - flowing rapidly around the lake, he said: "Tasik Kenyir bears some resemblance to Victoria Falls."



VISIT BEAUTIFUL TERENGGANU

His Pan Dragon Cruise houseboat has 11 cabins, including a VIP suite, a mini cafe and an air-conditioned lounge that can accommodate up to 40 people at any one time. The meals served aboard are similar to the cuisine served at five-star hotels. In conjunction with Visit Beautiful Terengganu 2017, Pandragon is offering attractive packages to visitors who wish to spend one or two nights on its houseboat and feast their eyes on the natural beauty of Tasik Kenyir.

Among the striking waterfalls they will get to visit are the Lasir Waterfall, Sungai Bujweh Waterfall and Lata Terap. Visitors will also be taken to the Kelah Sanctuary at Sungai Petang, gazetted as a protective zone for the preservation and reproduction of the lake's freshwater fish, where they can enjoy "close encounters" with various fish species. Asked what the secret of his success was that has earned him the reputation as one of the most successful houseboat operators at Tasik Kenyir, Mohd Apandi said: "My principle is to give back what I've received, and this is what I'm now doing for the state government. I'm doing whatever I can to enhance Terengganu's popularity among tourists, starting with my business at Tasik Kenyir."

BERNAMA

Market Outlook

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

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

Bursa Malaysia: Upward Momentum To Continue Next Week

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR --The upward trajectory on Bursa Malaysia will likely to continue next week as investors are set to accumulate their positions on the back of positive developments globally. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the local market would be actively traded as investors' appetite was restored as worries over the geopolitical tension related to the North Korea and Syria had eased.

He said the US tax reform, as indicated by the Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin that the White House planned to release a tax plan "very soon", would be among the main focus next week.

"If Trump managed to secure approval from the Congress, this would trigger bullish sentiment into the global stock market," he told Bernama.

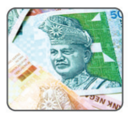
Market players would also closely monitor the French presidential election, as the outcome could influence the movement of the global stock market, be it directly or indirectly, he added. On the local front, Nazri Khan said the recently-launched Bumiputera Economic Transformation Roadmap (BETR) 2.0 of the Bumiputera Wellbeing Transformation would positively spur buying for bumiputera-linked stocks next week.

Stronger Sentiment

For the week just-ended, the local stock market performed stronger as sentiment in the market recovered following the easing geopolitical tension related to North Korea and Syria. Other external factors which influenced the movement on Bursa included the trading performance on Wall Street and other regional peers, US tax reform, volatility in oil prices as well as US trade probe on Chinese steel exports.

The FBM Emas Index soared 182.46 points to 12,490.58, the FBMT 100 Index chalked up 178.11 points to 12,126.22, the FBM Emas Shariah Index advanced 88.66 points to 12,848.06, the FBM 70 surged 235.5 points to 14,730.78, and the FBM Ace improved 156.5 points to 6,158.12. Weekly turnover declined to 14.29 billion units worth RM11.31 billion from 18.92 billion units valued at RM11.54 billion recorded last week. Main Market volume contracted to 9.85 billion shares worth RM10.65 billion from last week's 12.27 billion shares valued at RM10.64 billion.

Warrants' turnover increased to 893.88 million units worth RM112.2 million from 812.96 million units valued at RM102.98 million transacted last week. The ACE Market shrank to 3.49 billion shares worth RM536.93 million from 5.78 billion shares valued at RM789.85 million traded previously.



Ringgit Likely To Remain Firm Next Week

By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is likely to remain firm at the 4.40 level against the US dollar next week on the back a retreating greenback and improved commodity prices. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/ Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said US President Donald Trump's remark that he favoured a weaker US dollar had lifted the local note recently.

"Trump's remarks had prompted investors to shift their interest towards emerging market currencies including the ringgit," he told Bernama.

Apart from that, Nazri Khan said the firmer crude oil prices which traded at around US$54 per barrel recently also lent support to the local note.

"In addition, China's better-than-expected gross domestic product growth, which rose by 6.9 per cent in the first quarter of the year, had indirectly, bolstered the ringgit. As China's economy is stronger, Malaysia's exports to the republic are expected to improve," he said.

Malaysia-China Bilateral Trade

Earlier this month, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry announced that bilateral trade between Malaysia and China grew by 28.9 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM19.79 billion in February 2017, whereby exports jumped 47.6 per cent y-o-y to RM9.57 billion.

For the week just-ended, the ringgit was traded mixed and moved between 4.3960 and 4.4090 against the US dollar.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the ringgit was traded higher at 4.3980/4000 against the greenback from 4.4050/4100 last week. It ended mixed against other major currencies. The local note improved against the Singapore dollar to 3.1466/1485 from 3.1521/1572 last week and advanced against the yen to 4.0286/0315 from 4.0450/0503.

It weakened against the British pound to 5.6259/6298 from 5.5107/5187 last Friday and declined against the euro at 4.7076/7111 from 4.6786/6847 last week.

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 Qard, repo, reverse repo, range maturity auction, conventional money market, commodity Murabahah programme tenders and Islamic range maturity auction Qard tenders. On Friday, the central bank's action helped to reduce the market's total liquidity surplus to RM30.63 billion in the conventional system and RM8.39 billion in Islamic funds.

The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.96 per cent and the one-, two- and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.11 per cent, respectively. The benchmark three-month interbank rate was unchanged at 3.43 per cent.

KLCI Futures To Trend Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract is likely to trend higher next week, tracking the improved development on the cash market, a dealer said. He said the local market would be actively traded following positive investors' sentiment after concerns over the geopolitical tension related to the North Korea and Syria had subsided.

Other factors that would also influence the market next week include the US tax reform and the French presidential election.

"These two are expected to bring big impact on the global stock markets," he added. Meanwhile, for the week just-ended, the market was mostly higher, cushioned by the easing geopolitical tension related to North Korea and Syria. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, April 2017 rose 26.5 points to 1,754.50, May 2017 and Sept 2017 increased 22 points each to 1,747.50 and 1,748, respectively, while June 2017 was 20 points better at 1,747. On Friday, the benchmark FBM KLCI ended 14.44 points higher at 1,756.06.

CPO Futures To Move Within RM2,450 - RM2,550 Next Week

By S. Joan Santani

KUALA LUMPUR – Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade between RM2,450 and RM2,550 per tonne next week on stronger demand ahead of the Ramadan fasting month, a dealer said. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Derivative Products Specialist, David Ng, said the demand for palm oil was expected to rise due to higher demand for cooking oil in countries such as India and the Middle East.

"We would also see exports improving as demand picks up from India and the Middle East that observe Ramadan " he told Bernama.

It was reported that shipments from Malaysia came in weaker-than-expected between April 1 and April 20, and Intertek Testing Services data showed exports declined one per cent compared with the same period a month ago. Ng also said the weaker ringgit was also expected to lift the market next week as a softer ringgit made edible oil cheaper to purchase.

"CPO prices will also be tracking rival soybean oil prices on the regional market next week, as the narrowing spread between the two commodities would allow consumers to have more options to choose."

Higher Production

For the week just-ended, CPO prices were traded lower to higher on the back of an anticipation of higher production for April, fluctuation of the ringgit, movements in crude oil prices as well as soybean oil market. Ng said expectations of a recovery in palm oil production, after the severe impact of the El-Nino last year, would have little downside pressure on the commodity. Malaysia's palm oil output increased 6.33 per cent to 1.46 million tonnes in March from 1.26 million tonnes produced in February. It was reported that palm oil output in Southeast Asia was expected to rebound this year, notably from the second half of the year as fresh fruit bunch yields recovered from the crop-damaging effects of the dry El Nino weather pattern.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month May 2017 rose RM18 to RM2,669 a tonne, June 2017 added RM34 to RM2,588 a tonne, July 2017 increased RM27 to RM2,530 a tonne and August 2017 was RM23 to RM2,492 a tonne. Weekly turnover increased to 297,183 lots from 277,026 lots last week while open interest advanced to 275,088 contracts from 259,774 contracts previously. On the physical market, May South fell RM90 to RM2,720 per tonne.

Rubber Market Expected To Recover Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR – The Malaysian rubber market is expected to see a rebound next week on positive sentiment lifted by the Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries' (ANRPC) anticipation of a possibility of faster demand growth for natural rubber (NR), dealers said. A dealer said demand for NR was expected to derive from non-ANRPC regions, in addition to a balanced demand-supply situation for the second quarter of 2017.

ANRPC producing countries -- Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia - might limit exports of NR to reduce price volatility, the dealer said. He said the local rubber market would also continue to watch closely the movements of rubber futures prices on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM), which ended higher in the week just-ended.

"Sentiment is also expected to remain cautious on anticipation of a slight increase in the ringgit, as well as global crude oil prices movement, " said the dealer. For the week just-ended, the market traded lower to mixed despite an uptrend in the TOCOM, as well as the ringgit and crude oil movements. The rubber market was closed last Friday due to Good Friday. On a Friday-to-Thursday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's noon price for SMR 20 fell by 16.5 sen to 692 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk decreased 39.5 sen to 613.50 sen a kg. The 5pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 declined 22.5 sen to 678 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk declined 40 sen to 612 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Quiet Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is likely to remain quiet next week. For the week just-ended, the market was untraded with open interest remaining nil. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, new spot month May 2017, June 2017 and July 2017 remained at 96.54, 96.52 and 96.50 respectively.

April 2017 ended at 96.55 while new month, September 2017 stood at 96.48. A dealer said the increase was due to measures announced by Bank Negara Malaysia to deepen financial markets, including revising rules to allow investors to fully hedge their currency exposure and permit all domestic players to short sell government bonds. The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market remained at 3.43 per cent on Friday.

Tin Price To Remain On Uptrend Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is likely to remain on an uptrend next week on better demand for the commodity, driven by China's faster-than-expected economic growth. A dealer said the local tin price was on a steady increase this week and this trend was expected to continue.

"The major factor for this increase is positive investor sentiment due to news of China's faster-than-expected economic growth of 6.9 per cent in the first quarter of this year, given that the country is a major consumer of tin," he added. For the week just-ended, the KLTM rose US$250 to US$19,850 a tonne from US$19,600 a tonne recorded last Friday. Weekly turnover eased to 166 tonnes from 167 tonnes recorded last week while the price differential between the KLTM and the London Metal Exchange was at a discount of US$25 a tonne compared with a discount of US$5 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures Likely To Trend Higher Next Week

By Niam Seet Wei

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trend higher next week, as investors are wary of the outcome of the French Presidential election on Sunday, dealers said. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer, Leo Goh Boon Hao, said the uncertainty would prompt investors to shift their interest to the safe-haven asset.

"Besides that, the escalating geopolitical tensions over North Korea, the United Kingdom's general election proposed for June, along with expectations of a US tax cut announcement in the near future, would also spur the demand for gold," he told Bernama.

The local bourse will be closed on Monday in conjunction with the installation of Sultan Muhammad V as the 15th Yang di-Pertuan Agong. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, April 2017 fell 36 ticks to RM180.70 a gramme, while May 2017, June 2017 and July 2017 declined 34 ticks each to RM180.20, RM179.70 and RM179.40 respectively.

Turnover for the week slid to 39 lots worth RM705,100 from 65 lots worth RM971,600 last week. Open interest on Friday was slightly higher at 290 contracts from 289 contracts previously.

MALAYSIAeBiz : Market Outlook