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This Week's Highlight : Malaysia's Economy Grows 5.6 Pct Q1

ROBUST... Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Seri Muhammad Ibrahim (right) while announcing the first quarter GDP performance during a press conference at Bank Negara Friday.The Malaysian economy recorded a robust growth of 5.6 per cent in the first quarter of this year against 4.1 per cent in the same quarter of 2016, backed mainly by strong domestic demand and private expenditure. -- fotoBERNAMA by Mohd Khairul Fikiri Osman

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economy recorded robust growth of 5.6 per cent in the first quarter of this year (1Q17) against the 4.1 per cent registered in the same quarter of 2016, boosted by strong domestic demand and private expenditure. Speaking at a press conference Friday, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Governor Datuk Seri Muhammad Ibrahim said growth for the just ended quarter was the best since the corresponding quarter of 2015, which saw gross domestic product (GDP) at 5.8 per cent.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Arul Kanda Remains 1MDB CEO - Najib

From Mokhtar Hussain

BEIJING -- Arul Kanda will continue to remain the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and will also be involved in the development of the iconic Tun Razak Exchange (TRX), Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Monday.Arul Kanda has provided good leadership for the resolution of the rationalisation of 1MDB and "he will continue to be there," Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, told Malaysian journalists at the end of the two-day Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation here.

TUESDAY

China's OBOR Initiative Provides Enormous Benefits - Najib

From Datuk Mokhtar Hussain

BEIJING -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak believes that China's "Belt and Road" Initiative provides an enormous opportunity for Malaysia to achieve the status of a developed nation, particularly with the implementation of game-changing infrastructure projects resulting from the initiative. "This is a wonderful opportunity for us to advance the Malaysian economy together with the Chinese economy," he said to Malaysian journalists after attending the two-day Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation here Tuesday.

WEDNESDAY

June 30 Deadline To Submit Proposals For Bandar Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR -- Proposals to develop the Bandar Malaysia project will be accepted up to June 30, 2017 with a final decision on the master developer being made by July 14, says newly-appointed TRX City Sdn Bhd and Bandar Malaysia Sdn Bhd Chairman Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah.He said in a statement Wednesday, TRX City would conduct a request for proposal (RFP) process, inviting expressions of interest for the role of master developer for Bandar Malaysia, with the site remaining under the 100 per cent ownership of the Ministry of Finance.

THURSDAY

M'sia, Indonesia Will Retaliate Boycott Against Palm Oil

KUALA SELANGOR -- Malaysia and Indonesia will retaliate against countries including the European Union (EU) which boycott palm oil, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.Najib said he had discussed with Indonesian President Joko Widodo during the ASEAN Summit in Manila recently, that Malaysia and Indonesia, through the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), would convince those countries that the negative claims against palm oil are totally baseless.

FRIDAY

More Measures Possible To Deepen Financial Markets - BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia is not ruling out the possibility of introducing another round of measures, if needed, to deepen Malaysia's financial market, said Governor Datuk Seri Muhammad Ibrahim Friday. For now, the central bank was in the midst of analysing the outcome of two measures that had been introduced by the central bank on Dec 3, 2016 and March 13, 2017, respectively, he said when announcing Malaysia's economic performance for the first quarter of this year.

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SMEbrief

SME Week Targets 3-6 Pct Sales Growth

KUALA TERENGGANU -- The Terengganu government, with the cooperation of SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp), targets to increase potential sales by 3-6 per cent during the state level SME Week to be held from May 17-21, compared to RM15.2 million potential sales last year. State Rural Development, Entrepreneur, Cooperatives and Consumerism Committee Chairman, Nawi Mohamad, said the target was achievable with the participation of several hypermarkets and anchors such as Giant, Mydin, Lulu, Sabasun, Tesco and Lazada.

IBS Players Need To Capitalise On Financing Assistantance

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

PETALING JAYA – Industrialised Building System (IBS) players need to make the most of the RM500 million financing assistance from the government, said Small Medium Enterprise Development Bank (M) Bhd (SME Bank). Its Contract Financing Head for the Enterprise and Development Banking Unit, Muhammad Zafri Ismail Khan said Wednesday, the two types of financing assistance provided, namely working capital and term financing, were tailored for IBS players, including real estate developers, manufacturers, contractors, as well as installers of IBS products.

1,500 SMES To Be Listed On AliBaba.com Platform

KUALA TERENGGANU – A total of 1,500 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) will be listed on the AliBaba.com e-commerce platform by year-end, said International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed Thursday. He said the selection of the eligible SMEs, with a diverse product range, would be carried out throughout the country from Oct 1. It will be conducted by SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp), the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation and the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation.

SIRIM Unveils Technology And Market Radar To Assist SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR -- SIRIM Bhd is offering Technology and Market Radar (TMR), a business tool to assist small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to identify relevant technology and market trends and make strategic decisions on technology investment. SIRIM said in a statement Thursday, TMR was also suitable for ministries and agencies to retrieve relevant and strategic information on technology and business trends, as well as to analyse opportunities and challenges.

ECF Game Changer To SME Finance

KUALA LUMPUR -- Equity crowdfunding (ECF) can be a game changer for small and medium enterprises (SME) as it can help ease financing issues for these enterprises. SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp) Deputy Chief Executive Officer Rizal Nainy said in a statement Thursday, ECF allowed a large number of individuals to invest in early-stage or incumbent enterprises in exchange for an equity stake, plus a share of the distributed profit in the enterprises concerned.

PropUP Property *update*

CCM, Lafarge Mull Expediting Construction Of Affordable Housing

By Hamdan Ismail

LANGKAWI -- The Cooperative Commission of Malaysia (CCM) will hold discussions with cement producer Lafarge Malaysia Berhad on speeding up the construction of more affordable housing in the country.Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Hamzah Zainudin Tuesday said, "We will identify several cooperatives, as the real estate sector is one (field) that we wish to emphasise on through CCM," he told reporters after a meeting with the management of Lafarge Malaysia, at its cement plant here Tuesday.

DBKL: Buildings Without Parking Spaces After MRT Project

KUALA LUMPUR -- Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is planning to erect buildings without parking spaces around the capital city once the Sungai Buloh-Serdang-Putrajaya Klang Valley MRT Line 2 is completed and operational, said Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Mhd Amin Nordin Abdul Aziz."When the MRT project is completed and operational, it will not be necessary to have many parking bays because an increasing number of people will be using public transportation including the light rail transit (LRT) and public buses," he told reporters after attending DBKL Labour Day celebration here Wednesday.

Large Landbank Leaves UEM Sunrise On Firm Footing

KUALA LUMPUR -- With a large landbank of 5,261 hectares and potential gross development value (GDV) of RM80 billion, property developer UEM Sunrise Bhd remains a strong company, says outgoing Chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Tajuddin Ali."The current soft market has enabled the company to strengthen its internal processes and further build the required fundamentals to achieve goals and vision," he told a press conference after the company's ninth annual general meeting here Thursday.

SP Setia Eyes Higher Contribution From Overseas Projects

SHAH ALAM -- Property developer, SP Setia Bhd aims to increase contribution from overseas projects to 20 per cent of revenue this year from eight per cent last year. President, Datuk CJ Khor said Thursday, the revenue would be propelled mainly by its Australian project, namely a mixed development with a gross development value (GDV) of A$478 million at Exhibition Street in Melbourne's central business district, and the A$38 million residential project in Prahran, Melbourne.

Tambun Indah To Launch Property Projects Worth RM122.7 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR – Penang property developer, Tambun Indah Land Bhd, is scheduled to launch two new projects at its Pearl City township development by mid-2017 with a combined gross development value (GDV) of RM122.7 million.The projects, Pearl Saujana (Phase 1) and Pearl 28 with a GDV of RM102.7 million and RM20 million respectively, are landed residential property developments, it said in a statement here Thursday..

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BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 623

Losers - 302

Not Traded - 459

Unchanged - 364

Value - 3238430895

Volume - 32734204

Bursa Malaysia Snaps Losing Streak To Close Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia snapped a three-day losing streak to end higher Friday as investors confidence improved following Malaysia's firmer economic performance in the first quarter ended March 31 this year, coupled with a rebound in crude oil prices, dealers said. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) closed 1.11 points higher at 1,768.28 from Thursday's close of 1,767.17. After opening 1.23 points higher at 1,768.40, the index moved between 1,767.89 and 1,771.50 throughout the day. Market breadth was positive, with gainers outpacing losers 623 to 302 with 364 counters unchanged, 459 untraded and 20 others suspended. Volume increased to 3.27 billion units valued at RM3.24 billion from the 3.00 billion units valued at RM2.64 billion Thursday. Malaysia's economy recorded a robust growth of 5.6 per cent in the first quarter of this year from 4.1 per cent in the same quarter last year, boosted by strong domestic demand and private expenditure. Regional markets were also slightly higher in tandem with the improved performance of Wall Street due to strong US economic data amid political turbulence in the United States. Main Market turnover added to 2.09 billion units worth RM3.05 billion from 1.85 billion units worth RM2.48 billion Thursday.

MARKET

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.3180	4.3230
EUR	4.8176	4.8245
GBP	5.6177	5.6247
100 YEN	3.8723	3. 8782
SGD	3.1056	3.1114

CLOSING MALAYSIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE: MAY 19, 2017

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Higher On Encouraging GDP Figures

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed higher against the US dollar following the encouraging first-quarter (1Q17) Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth data released Friday. At 6 pm, the local unit was quoted at 4.3180/3230 against the greenback from Thursday's closing of 4.3260/3290. Malaysia's economy recorded robust growth of 5.6 per cent in 1Q17 against the 4.1 per cent in the same quarter of 2016, boosted by strong domestic demand and private expenditure. It was the best since the corresponding quarter of 2015, which saw the GDP at 5.8 per cent. The surprise upside of the data brought ringgit higher against most of major currencies except with the euro. The ringgit rose against the Singapore dollar to 3.1056/1114 from 3.1062/1088 on Thursday and strengthened versus the Japanese yen to 3.8723/8782 from Thursday's 3.9203/9244. The local unit appreciated against the British pound to 5.6177/6247 from 5.6398/6446 but contracted vis-a-vis the euro to 4.8176/8245 from 4.8096/8147 Thursday.

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 RM30.50 billion from RM32.46 billion in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM7.78 billion from RM10.80 billion. Earlier, BNM conducted two conventional money market tenders and three Qard tenders. The central bank also conducted a RM30.50 billion conventional money market tender and a RM7.78 billion Qard money market tender, both for three-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 Untraded For The Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives was untraded for the fifth consecutive day. June 2017, July 2017, August 2017 and September 2017 remained pegged at 96.53, 96.51, 96.50 and 96.49, 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 Ends Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives ended higher Friday in tandem with the underlying physical market. May 2017 improved 9.50 points to 1,769, June 2017 rose 8.50 points to 1,769.50, September 2017 was 8.00 points higher at 1,768 and December 2017 bagged 8.00 points to 1,767. Turnover decreased to 3,830 lots from the 6,159 lots recorded on Thursday, while open interest narrowed to 37,779 contracts from 41,160 contracts. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 1.11 points higher at 1,768.28 Friday.

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OCBC Al-Amin Launches OCBC 360-I

KUALA LUMPUR -- OCBC Al-Amin Bank Bhd has launched the OCBC 360-i, a Shariah-compliant version of OCBC Bank (Malaysia) Bhd's popular high interest-bearing savings account, OCBC 360. In a statement Monday, OCBC Al-Amin said the savings account was based on the Islamic banking principle of tawarruq, and is an innovative account which rewards customers with "bonus profit" on a monthly basis for performing one or more of three common types of transactions via the account.

Labuan IBFC To Maintain Captive Insurance Premium Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Labuan International Business and Financial Centre (Labuan IBFC) hopes to maintain the growth of its earned premium for captive insurance business at 18.8 per cent this year, supported by the premium contributed by the local giant companies. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Danial Mah Abdullah told a media briefing Tuesday, last year, the financial centre earned premium for captive insurance business rose 18.8 per cent to US$252 million (US$1= RM4.32) due to the higher retention for all sectors, including the fire, marine, engineering and motor sectors.

IFSI Sustains Total Assets Value At US$1.9 Tln In 2016

KUALA LUMPUR -- The global Islamic Financial Services Industry (IFSI) was able to sustain its total assets value at about US$1.9 trillion in 2016, according to the latest report by the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB). The fifth edition of the annual IFSB report highlighted important developments in the growth, stability and other aspects of the IFSI, including the finding that the total assets level was sustained, despite subdued economic growth conditions and impact of new geopolitical developments. Acting IFSB Secretary-General Zahid ur Rehman Khokher said in a statement Tuesday, while the IFSI had in many respects, withstood the challenging operating environment, it had however, moved away from the double-digit growth trajectory witnessed in previous years.

BIMB's 1Q17 Pre-Tax Profit Up 15.8 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- BIMB Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit increased 15.8 per cent to RM246.2 million in the first quarter (1Q) ended March 31, 2017, compared to RM212.5 million chalked up in the corresponding period of 2016. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday, the bank said revenue rose to RM919.64 million from RM890.8 million recorded in the same period of 2016. Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Zukri Samat said its main operating subsidiaries, Bank Islam and Takaful Malaysia, kept up the earnings momentum in the 1Q17 to deliver stronger for the group.

BNM: Trainer Reference Manual To Help Develop Islamic Finance Talent Pool

PUTRAJAYA -- A Trainer Reference Manual which uses the standard shariah code as its basis, will be developed to create a potential talent pool for the Islamic finance industry, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) Deputy Governor, Shaikh Abdul Rasheed Abdul Ghaffour Tuesday. He said BNM, industry specialists and academics, were working together to develop the manual to widen the knowledge reach in Islamic finance, and which goes beyond the financial system to the academic sector.

ATM, Online Banking Safe, Ignore Ransomware Attack Rumours

KUALA LUMPUR -- The electronic messages on disruption of online/Internet banking and Automated Teller Machine (ATM) services, possibly due to ransomware attacks, that have been circulating via social media are not true, said the Association of Banks in Malaysia (ABM). The association said in a statement Wednesday, member banks that offered online/Internet banking and ATM services have confirmed that these services were operating as usual.

Change To Stay Ahead, Says LIAM

GENTING HIGHLAND -- Life insurance professionals and financial advisors should constantly change and adapt to stay ahead, says Life Insurance Association of Malaysia (LIAM) Management Committee Member Gan Leong Hin. The landscape of the global life insurance industry was being transformed with changes in demography, regulations and technological innovations. "We should ask ourselves if we are prepared to manage these disruptive forces that are affecting our businesses", he said at the 16th Asia Pacific Life Insurance Congress 2017 here Wednesday.

LIAM-MTA To Develop Online Guide For Insurance Products

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Life Insurance Association of Malaysia (LIAM) and the Malaysian Takaful Association (MTA) is developing an integrated financial website, equipped with self-assessment tools to guide consumers in choosing suitable life insurance products. Additionally, the associations would also introduce an online insurance product which would allow consumers to compare prices and product features, said LIAM Management Committee Member Gan Leong Hin Wednesday.

SC Introduces Key Recommendations For ETFs

KUALA LUMPUR -- A task force on Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) led by the Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) has released a set of key recommendations aimed at attracting greater investor participation and incentivising issuances by ETF managers in the local market. The objective of the task force, chaired by the SC and comprising Bursa Malaysia, fund managers, market makers and institutional investors, is to spur sustained development and competitiveness of the Malaysian ETF market. SC Managing Director of Development and Islamic Markets, Zainal Izlan Zainal Abidin told reporters Wednesday, the recommendations sought to enhance the ecosystem and drive further growth of the local ETF industry.

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CTRM Expects Revenue To Exceed RM1 Bln By FY19

By Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali

MELAKA -- DRB Hicom Bhd's unit, Composite Technology Research Malaysia Sdn Bhd (CTRM), expects its revenue to exceed RM1 billion by financial year 2019 (FY19), on the back of steady growth of 4-5 per cent year-on-year. The company achieved a revenue of RM855 million in FY16. CTRM Group Chief Operating Officer, Shamsuddin Mohamed Yusof told reporters Monday, the company currently produces various aircraft components especially for Airbus including the A350 fan cowl and other parts like wing components, nacelle and tail plane for A320, A400M and A380 aircraft.

Petronas Gas Posts RM577 Mln Pre-Tax Profit In Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas Gas Bhd registered a slightly lower pre-tax profit of RM577 million in the first quarter ended March 31, 2017, down RM1.7 million from the same quarter last year mainly due to higher operating costs attributed to one-off staff costs adjustment and depreciation expense in line with completion of major capital projects. The Group's revenue, however, increased to RM1.17 billion, up RM38.6 million or 3.4 per cent, compared with the corresponding quarter due to higher utilities revenue in tandem with higher off-take by customers, as well as higher sales prices in line with fuel gas price revision coupled with higher re-gasification revenue attributed to higher storage fees, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here, Monday.

Muda Holdings' Pre-Tax Rises To RM20.93 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Muda Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit rose to RM20.93 million for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017, compared with RM16.32 million a year ago. Revenue increased to RM316.72 million from RM290.50 million, boosted by the higher demand and selling prices of industrial paper. "The better outlook of major economies and uptrend in selling prices of industrial paper, has boosted sales volume and average selling prices of industrial paper by 9.6 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively, as customers begin to replenish their inventory," it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Rohas Tecnic's Unit Bags RM300 Mln Contract

KUALA LUMPUR -- Rohas-Euco Industries Bhd (REI), a unit of Rohas Tecnic Bhd (RTB), has secured a contract, worth an estimated RM300 million, from Electricite du Lao to supply and construct transmission lines, substations and distribution lines in Laos. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, RTB said the project, to commence in the second half of the year, would be completed in 24 months.

Axiata Unit To Acquire 65 Pct Stake In Suvitech

KUALA LUMPUR -- Axiata Group Bhd's wholly-owned unit, Axiata Business Services Sdn Bhd (ABS), has entered into a share sale and purchase agreement to acquire a 65 per cent stake in Suvitech Co Ltd for up to US$11.05 million (RM47.91million). In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, Axiata said the proposed acquisition of Suvitech was both strategic and synergistic for ABS, as Suvitech's platform was a plug-and-play solution for ABS enterprise and IoT business in Thailand.

PetChem Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM1.63 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas Chemicals Group Bhd's (PetChem) pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 rose to RM1.63 billion from RM896 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue rose to RM4.69 billion from RM3.14 billion previously due to the significant increase in overall average product prices by an average of 22 per cent, higher sales volume, higher prices and a stronger US dollar, PetChem said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Malaysia's Q1 GDP Likely To Be Boosted By Manufacturing Sector

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's first quarter (Q1) gross domestic product (GDP) growth is likely to be boosted by the manufacturing sector, says Standard Chartered Research. It said the Department of Statistics (DOS) will release Malaysia's Q1 GDP data on May 19. "We forecast a GDP growth of 4.9 per cent year-on-year, higher than the 4.5 per cent in Q4-2016," it said in a research note Monday.

Dialog Group Posts Higher Q3 Pre-Tax Profit, Revenue

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dialog Group Bhd posted a higher pre-tax profit (PBT) of RM119.68 million in the third quarter ended Mac 31, 2017, up from RM97 million in the same quarter a year ago. Revenue improved to RM913.6 million from RM641.4 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday,

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the group said the strong financial performance achieved was mainly attributable to higher contributions from the group's joint ventures, in particular from Pengerang Independent Terminals.

Inari Amertron's Q3 Pre-Tax Profit Soars 135.7 Pct To RM54.28 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Inari Amertron Bhd's pre-tax profit for the third quarter (Q3) ended March 31, 2017 soared 135.7 per cent to RM54.28 million from RM23.03 million registered in the same quarter last year. Revenue increased to RM274.03 million, up 26.1 per cent, from RM217.32 million recorded previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday. The electronics manufacturing service provider said the higher revenue was attributed to the increase in demand of products and changes in its product mixed.

Pharmaniaga's Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM27.78 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pharmaniaga Bhd posted a higher pre-tax profit (PBT) of RM27.78 million in the first quarter ended Mac 31, 2017, up from RM26.54 million in the same quarter a year earlier. Revenue improved to RM618.29 million from RM559.20 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday, Pharmaniaga said the better performance was contributed by higher demand from government hospitals under its concession business, a double-digit growth from its private sector business, as well as the group's Indonesian operations.

Eversendai Secures Projects Worth RM1.3 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Eversendai Corporation Bhd, a steel construction company, with a presence in 15 different countries, has secured projects worth RM1.3 billion for the year 2017 to-date. Executive Chairman and Group Managing Director Tan Sri A K Nathan said in a statement Tuesday, India continued to be a focal point for the group as the country continued to push construction as part of their rapid economic growth.

Fujifilm Sees Instax Mini 9 To Drive Global Sales In FY17

KUALA LUMPUR -- Fujifilm (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd is confident its newly-launched camera, Instax mini 9, will drive its global target sales of 7.5 million units in the 2017 financial year by leveraging on social media users. Managing Director Yoshi Nakamura told reporters Tuesday, the company expected the Instax Mini 9 to contribute about 65 per cent to total sales due to its affordable price and cater for the mass market while the balance would be contributed by other segments.

Amway Q1's Pre-Tax Profit Eases To RM13.31 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Amway (Malaysia) Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended March 31, 2017 dipped to RM13.31 million from RM24.86 million recorded in the same quarter of last year. Revenue shrank to RM237.15 million from RM305.94 million recorded previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, Amway said the decline in pre-tax profit was due to lower sales and escalated import costs primarily from the weaker ringgit and higher product cost.

Panasonic Malaysia Eyes 5 Pct Sales Growth In FY18

KUALA LUMPUR -- Panasonic Malaysia Sdn Bhd is aiming for a five per cent increase in sales in its financial year ending March 31, 2018 (FY18) after recording sales of RM1.72 billion in FY17, said Managing Director Cheng Chee Chung. He told reporters Wednesday, consumer goods, which contributed over 70 per cent to sales in FY17, would probably contribute between three and four per cent of sales projection, while the balance would come from project sales and solutions business.

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UMW Oil & Gas To Focus On Domestic, Sea Markets For FY17
KUALA LUMPUR -- UMW Oil & Gas Corporation Bhd (UMW) is focused on bidding for tenders in the local market for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2017, to strengthen its presence as a major oil and gas player in the country. President Rohaizad Darus told reporters Monday, the group was also re-exploring the Southeast Asian market, specifically Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Myanmar.

China To Become FGV's Largest Palm Oil Products Importer
KUALA LUMPUR -- China is expected to surpass Pakistan to become Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd's (FGV) largest palm oil products importer in the next three to four-months, following the deal inked between the company and China's Sinograin Oils Corporation on Sunday. FGV Group President/ Chief Executive Officer Datuk Zakaria Arshad told reporters Monday, currently, China was FGV's third biggest market for palm oil products after India.

MSM In Talks With Govt To Increase Sugar Price By A Further 29 Sen
KUALA LUMPUR -- MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd is still in talks with the government to increase local sugar price by a further 29 sen per kilogramme (kg) to ensure the company's profitability this year. Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV) Group President/Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Zakaria Arshad told reporters Monday, the volatility in raw sugar prices, coupled with the ringgit performance had made this year a very challenging year.

MBits Digital Gets Two Chinese Partners To Develop Digital Hub
From Mokhtar Hussain

BEIJING -- Two Chinese companies are investing in MBits Digital Sdn Bhd for the development and deployment of Malaysia's digital infrastructure. MBits Digital Sunday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China's PowerChina Co. Ltd, and Longvision Media Co. Ltd as strategic partners with a total investment of US$1.6 billion. MBits Digital chairman Sara Nattaya said the investment was for the development of the Digital One Belt, One Road Project, a hybrid hub, providing Malaysia a digital route to globalisation.

Malaysia Faces ASEAN Peer Pressure To Conclude EU FTA
From Azlee Nor Mahmud

BANTING -- The conclusion of the European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by ASEAN member nations, Singapore and Vietnam, has put a sense of urgency for Malaysia to finalise the agreement as well, said the Ministry of International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI). Second Minister, Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan told reporters Tuesday the proposed FTA did not have a timeline, however, Malaysia was facing challenges from its ASEAN peers to conclude the trade pact.

Inflation In Malaysia To Moderate To 4.4 Pct In April – RAM Ratings
KUALA LUMPUR -- RAM Ratings expects inflation in Malaysia to moderate to 4.4 per cent in April 2017, compared to the high of 5.1 per cent in March due to the tapering off of the low-base effects from the transport fuel component. In its inaugural issue of the Economic Insight report Tuesday, the rating agency said the transport fuel component had contributed significantly to the run-up in headline inflation, in the first quarter of this year.

Malaysia-New Zealand Trade To Surge By 2020
PETALING JAYA -- The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) expects Malaysia's total trade with New Zealand to increase 10 per cent by 2020 following the long-standing business relationship between both countries. Last year, Malaysia's total trade with New Zealand stood at RM5.46 billion, with exports amounted to RM2.82 billion and imports valued at RM2.63 billion. Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said Tuesday, this year marked the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and Malaysia, encompassing trade, education, security and defence, and tourism.

MRCB Proposes Rights

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Issue, Warrants To Raise Up To RM2.8 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd (MRCB) has proposed a one-for-one rights issue and warrants to raise up to RM2.8 billion to finance projects, including the upgrading of the National Sports Complex in Bukit Jalil here. In a statement Wednesday, MRCB said the exercise involved a rights issue of 2.86 billion new shares on a one-for-one basis and rights warrants of 571.34 million new warrants on a one for five basis.

Livestock Malaysia Conference And Exhibition To Be Highlight Of HPPNK

PUTRAJAYA -- The Livestock Malaysia Conference and Exhibition 2017, alongside the Malaysia Food Festival, is expected to be the highlight of the National Farmers, Livestock Breeders and Fishermen's Day (HPPNK) celebration from Sept 28-Oct 1. Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek told reporters Wednesday, Livestock Malaysia will focus on innovation, service and agriculture technology that can enhance productivity and save costs.

Acer Launches World's 1st Curved Screen Gaming Laptop

PUTRAJAYA -- Acer Malaysia launched its flagship gaming laptop, Predator 21 X, the world's first curved screen gaming laptop. With only one exclusive unit up for grabs in Malaysia from the global 300 units, Acer Sales & Services Sdn Bhd General Manager of Products, Sales and Marketing Chan Weng Hong told reporters Wednesday the extremely exclusive product was priced at RM39,999.

CPI Rises 4.4 Pct In April

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's consumer price index (CPI) rose 4.4 per cent on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis in April 2017 from 2.1 per cent registered in the same month last year. However, core inflation remained stable at 2.5 per cent, said the Statistics Department Wednesday. Among the major groups which recorded increases were the transport index and the food and non-alcoholic beverages index.

MyCreative Targets To Invest RM50-60 Mln This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- MyCreative Ventures Sdn Bhd (MyCreative), a government investment arm, is targeting to invest about RM50-60 million this year to finance up to 25 companies involved in creative industries. Chief Executive Officer, Johan Ishak told reporters Thursday, MyCreative, which is tasked to spur the creative industry via strategic funding, was allocated RM200 million through government budget and had already committed the whole amount to 100 companies since December 2016.

Japanese Co, Dkay Ventures Sign Agreement To Produce Halal Dumpling

KUALA LUMPUR -- Japanese traditional confectionery company, Tokachiseika Co Ltd Thursday inked an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) agreement with Dkay Ventures Sdn Bhd on the production of halal gyoza (dumpling) in Malaysia. Tokachiseika's President Hiroyuki Komano told reporters Thursday, under the agreement, the halal gyoza would be produced by Dkay Ventures and is expected to be marketed in August this year to Japanese restaurants in Malaysia and Japan.

Sarawak's Jan-March Timber Export Value Registers RM1.42 Bln

KUCHING -- Sarawak's total export earnings from timber and timber products registered RM1.42 billion for the first three months this year. Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan, who is also Second Minister for Urban Development and Natural Resources said Thursday, the tight supply of logs at home and uncertain markets, continued to impact the export of timber from the state.

Ringgit, Best Performing Currency In Asia Ex-Japan So Far In Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit has been the best-performing currency in Asia, ex-Japan, so far in the second quarter, gaining 2.5 per cent against the US dollar, said Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia. "The supportive factors that have been in place for some time now (are the) exceptionally attractive valuations, underweight foreign investor positioning and improving external balances," it said in a note Thursday.

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Northport And Weifang Sime Darby Sign MoU

KUALA LUMPUR -- Northport (Malaysia) Bhd and Weifang Sime Darby Port Co Ltd have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a sister port relationship that will cooperate in port management and facilitate halal trade shipment between Malaysia and China. In a joint statement Monday, Northport and Weifang Sime Darby said under the collaboration, both parties would share experience, capabilities and resources in the field of port management and related activities.

Malindo Air Offers Two Mln Promotional Seats

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malindo Air is offering two million promotional seats in economy and business class during its Mid-Year Mega Sales, with travel validity from July 1, 2017 until March 31, 2018. The promotional fares, which range from RM69 to RM1,999 are available from now to May 21, 2017 and valid for all purchases made online, over the counter at all Malindo Air ticketing offices, and through travel agencies, the airline said in a statement here Monday.

Labuan IBFC, LIIA To Host Inaugural Asian Captive Conference

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Labuan International Business and Financial Centre (Labuan IBFC) and the Labuan International Insurance Association (LIIA) will jointly organise the first ''Asian Captive Conference" in Sasana Kijang, Kuala Lumpur, beginning Aug 16, 2017. Themed, "De-Risking Asia: The Growing Role of Self-Insurance", the two-day conference is aimed at creating awareness on the role of self-insurance, specifically captives, in Asia, said IBFC in a statement Tuesday.

Petronas LNG, MISC, Gas4Sea Ink MoU To Promote LNG

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas LNG Ltd (PLL), a subsidiary of Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas), and its shipping affiliate, MISC Bhd, have inked a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Gas4Sea partners to promote liquefied natural gas (LNG) as the preferred marine fuel, it said in a statement Tuesday. Gas4Sea, comprising ENGIE S.A., Mitsubishi Corporation and Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha, is a partnership created to jointly promote LNG as the cleaner maritime fuel by providing LNG bunkering services in the global market.

UCSI To Hold Conference On 4th Industrial Revolution

KUALA LUMPUR -- Close to 200 academicians and corporate figures are expected to attend a conference on the Fourth Industrial Revolution aimed at encouraging exchange of views and enhancing the capability of universities in drafting the right curriculum, developing new knowledge and jobs. Organised by UCSI University, the conference on May 23 will be themed "Shaping the Malaysian Industry for the Fourth Industrial Revolution". Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic and International Affairs Professor Datuk Dr Ahmad Zainuddin told Bernama Tuesday, the conference aimed at pairing the Fourth Industrial Revolution with the 2050 National Transformation Programme, in line with developing technology and the community's lifestyle.

Proton Saga Wins Compact Sedan Of The Year Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Proton Saga, manufactured by Proton Holdings Bhd, was named the ''Compact Sedan of the Year" at the recent ''Vehicle of the Year Award" event jointly hosted by a motoring site, Drive Safe and Fast, and Allianz General Insurance Company (Malaysia) Bhd. "We are humbled and very pleased with this recognition. "The new Saga has come a long way since its introduction in 1985 as a lot of improvements, enhancements and refinements have gone into the making of the new Saga," said Proton Chief Executive Officer Datuk Ahmad Fuaad Kenali in a statement Tuesday.

Chevron To Open 10-15 New Caltex Stations In Peninsular

KUALA LUMPUR -- Chevron Malaysia Ltd, marketer of the Caltex brand, is expected to open 10-15 new petrol stations this year in order to increase its sales pipeline in Peninsular Malaysia. Deputy General Manager Malaysia/Singapore/Cambodia Jeff Tan Meng Yih told reporters Wednesday, working on the retailer-owned retailer-operate model was one way to strengthen its presence in the country and with more pipelines, more licences can be issued to dealers interested in opening and operating a petrol station.

Zamzamzairani Appointed Chairman Of UEM Sunrise

KUALA LUMPUR -- UEM Sunrise Bhd has appointed Tan Sri Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa as its new chairman, effective Thursday, to replace Tan Sri Dr Ahmad Tajuddin Ali who has retired. A respected and well-known corporate figure, Zamzamzairani's vast experience in the telecommunication industry spanned more than 30 years beginning with Telekom Malaysia Bhd before assuming key positions in multinational companies.

Pre-Seed Funding For Start-Ups Launched

KUALA LUMPUR -- Cradle Fund Sdn Bhd has unveiled its pre-seed funding programme, the Cradle Investment Programme 300 (CIP300), aims to assist 25 start-ups to develop and commercialise their products. The CIP300 will provide financial and value-added assistance of up to RM300,000 for entrepreneurs to kick-start innovation-based business ventures. Cradle Fund received RM22 million from the Ministry of Finance for this year, of which, 50 per cent will be used for grants, while the balance for co-investment programmes. "Half of the RM22 million allocation will be set aside for CIP300, and a big chunk of it will go to the Direct Equity 800 (DEQ800) programme which was launched last month," Cradle Fund Chief Executive Officer Nazrin Hassan told reporters Wednesday.

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Insight

China's Investment In Malaysia A Boost To Developed Status

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran & Rosemarie Khoo Abdullah

BEIJING -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak and China Prime Minister Li Keqiang (right) during a bilateral meeting in conjunction with his visit to China recently. Photo by Zulfadhli Zulkarnain

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's current visit to China has been one of the most productive with significant, judging from the signing of nine business agreements between Malaysian and Chinese companies, worth RM31.3 billion, in various areas including construction, agriculture, stock exchange, infrastructure and port and, airport operations.

With China's economic presence becoming more prominent in the region and globally, Malaysia is reaping the benefit of a strong bilateral relationship with China, which President Xi Jinping described was "at its best".

Xi praised Malaysia for the country's support to the ''One Belt One Road'' initiative and expressed his support to any Chinese company wanting to invest in Malaysia as long as they fulfilled the required criteria.

As Malaysia pursued its ambition to become a developed nation, support from the world economic powerhouse will be a major boost to the economic development as seen in a number of developed countries in the past such as South Korea and Singapore which had also been dependent on capital and technological transfer from other developed nations.

Meanwhile, Najib, who is on a five-day working visit to China, beginning last Friday, discussed with Wanda Group of the possibility for the Chinese multinational conglomerate taking over as master developer of the ambitious and mammoth Bandar Malaysia project.

NEW MILESTONE

A new milestone was also achieved there for the Digital Free Trade Zone as Malaysia and China's giant e-commerce, Alibaba Group, was expected to kick start operations in October, capitalising on Alibaba's iCloud e-commerce platform.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Bhd Economist Izzuddin Yussof said the increasing relationship between Malaysia and China was mostly due to strategic reasons rather than about China per se.

"On infrastructure projects, the government has a preference towards China due to the low cost of funding offered," he told Bernama, adding that, furthermore, Chinese companies had the capability of carrying out these projects and this was an attractive package for the Malaysian government to pursue.

RHB Research Institute, Head of ASEAN Economics, Peck Boon Soon said China was just another foreign direct investor that could help Malaysia grow its economy although its investments were becoming more visible in recent years.

"Until today, Malaysia still receives a sizeable amount of foreign direct investments from the United States, Europe, Japan and Singapore but China is becoming more prominent in recent years due to its policy of encouraging investments abroad," he pointed out.

Peck said China's net direct investment in Malaysia rose from just RM25 million in 2011 to RM975 million in 2014 and jumped to RM3.8 billion last year.

ONE BELT ONE ROAD

"Despite the sharp increase, the RM3.8 billion only accounted for less than 10 per cent of total net foreign direct investment in the country," he pointed out, adding that the share would be significantly larger if Hong Kong's investment was considered as part of China.

As part of the visit, Najib attended the "One Belt One Road" forum which discussed China's long-term strategic vision involving large-scale Chinese and multilateral financing of infrastructure development in many developing countries, notably in the Asian region and also Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

"The Belt and Road Initiative will certainly increase China's good working relations with these belt and road countries, in my view," said Peck.

"Intra-trade activity in the region is likely to increase, and at the same time, we will become more dependent on each other just as how the European Union had become - though it will remain a trade and investment activity," said Izzuddin.

Bilateral trade between China and ASEAN, had grown from US$9 billion in 1991 to US$346 billion in 2015, and as such, the ''One Belt & One Road'' initiative has become a key geopolitical priority for ASEAN countries.

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LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

Bursa Malaysia To Trend Higher Next Week On Improved Sentiment

By S.Joan Santani

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to trend higher next week on improved sentiment following a modest recovery in global markets and commodity prices, which has helped clear investor uncertainties.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan, said regional stock markets, including Malaysia, had steadied, backed by the better performance on Wall Street and the stronger economic data for jobs and business activities after a steep sell-off two days ago.

“Trade will shift their focus to local catalysts, as concerns surrounding US politics wane,” he told Bernama, adding, regional bourses and Bursa Malaysia would still watch Wall Street’s performance for further clues.

The rebound in crude oil prices will also set a better tone for Bursa Malaysia next week.

On Friday, Brent crude was up 28 cents to US$52.79 per barrel and US crude rose 29 cents to US$49.64 per barrel, on growing optimism that the big producer countries would extend output cuts to curb a persistent glut.

ROBUST GROWTH

On the local front, Nazri said Malaysia’s encouraging Gross Domestic Product data with robust first quarter 2017 growth of 5.6 per cent would also encourage the local bourse.

For the week just ended, the local bourse trended range-bound following the softer tone on Wall Street and political turmoil in the US.

On a week-to-week basis, the FBM KLCI fell 7.59 points to 1,768.28, the FBM Emas Index shed 32.22 points to 12,685.88, the FBMT 100 Index declined 40.83 points to 12,307.17 and the FBM Emas Shariah Index decreased 48.44 points to 13,009.49.The FBM 70 slid 5.95 points to 15,313.96 and the FBM Ace surged 163.45 points to 6,601.71.

Weekly turnover rose to 16.98 billion units valued at RM15.60 billion from 13.49 billion units worth RM10.82 billion recorded last week.

Main Market volume increased to 11.30 billion shares valued at RM14.71 billion from last week’s 8.43 billion shares worth RM10.10 billion.

Ringgit To Stay Firm Around 4.30 To Greenback Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to stay firm at around the 4.30 level to the US dollar next week, driven by the positive Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth spillover effect.

The encouraging GDP data for the first quarter 2017 (1Q17) released by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) on Friday helped strengthen the local unit by 0.18 per cent and the positive effect is expected to be extended.

This is more so when the Malaysian economy is in a recovery mode arising from the stronger performance in exports and domestic capital expenditure.

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Malaysia's economy recorded robust growth of 5.6 per cent in the 1Q17 against the 4.1 per cent in the same quarter of 2016, boosted by strong domestic demand and private expenditure.

It was the best since the corresponding quarter of 2015, which saw the GDP at 5.8 per cent.

STABILITY IN THE RINGGIT

When announcing the 1Q17 GDP data, Bank Negara Malaysia Governor Datuk Seri Muhammad Ibrahim said the ringgit showed stability due to measures to develop the domestic financial market, and the trend was now better reflected in the strength of the ringgit vis-a-vis the strength of the economy.

"As we move forward, the ringgit will further reflect the strength of the Malaysian economy. Continued external uncertainties though might result in higher volatility in the ringgit's movement," he added.

Standard Chartered Bank Malaysia, meanwhile said, there was significant room for the ringgit to catch up for further gains, given the scale of portfolio outflows in the past four years.

"While a stronger ringgit might be seen as a signal of confidence in the domestic economy, we think the central bank may aim to rebuild its foreign exchange reserves more determinedly at some point," it added in a statement.

For the week just-ended, the ringgit moved between the range of 4.3440 and 4.3140 against the US dollar.

RINGGIT HIGHER VS GREENBACK

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, it traded higher at 4.3180/3230 against the greenback from 4.3440/3470.

The ringgit, however, ended mostly lower against other major currencies.

The local note declined against the Singapore dollar to 3.1056/1114 from 3.0859/0900 and edged down against the yen to 3.8723/8782 from the 3.8213/8246 recorded last week.

It slipped against the British pound to 5.6177/6247 from 5.5859/5902 and was lower against the euro at 4.8176/8245 from 4.7232/7269.

Money Market Likely To Stay Stable Next Week

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-tenured interbank rates are expected to remain stable next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continuing to intervene by mopping up excess liquidity in the market.

The central bank is expected to intervene with daily tenders and via conventional and Islamic instruments, to stabilise the local money market if needed, a local money dealer said.

"Usual tools to absorb excess funds from the system would include money market tenders, repo tenders, range-maturity auctions of both conventional and Islamic, and commodity murabahah programme money market tenders," she told Bernama.

BNM maintained the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at the prevailing rate of 3.00 per cent recently, saying at the current level of the OPR, the stance of monetary policy was accommodative and supportive of economic activity.

When announcing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data for the first quarter 2017 on Friday, BNM said domestic financial market conditions remained orderly, amid headline inflation rising to 4.3 per cent due to higher fuel prices.

BNM INTERVENTION

For the week just ended, BNM intervened daily to flush the system of surplus funds.

The total liquidity surplus for the week just-ended was reduced to RM30.50 billion in conventional operations against RM34.78 billion last Friday, while Islamic funds declined to RM7.78 billion versus RM8.66 billion previously.

On a week-to-week basis, the benchmark three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) stood at 3.43 per cent.

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Meanwhile, the overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.96 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.02 per cent, 3.06 per cent and 3.11 per cent respectively, throughout the week.

KLCI Futures On Uptrend Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract is likely to trend higher next week, reflecting the anticipated stronger performance of the underlying cash market.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said traders would shift focus to local catalysts as concerns surrounding US politics waned, with Bursa Malaysia performing better in line with Wall Street.

The rebound in crude oil prices will also set a better tone for regional markets next week.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, May 2017 eased 3.0 points to 1,769, June 2017 eased 2.0 points to 1,769.50, December 2017 shed 2.5 points to 1,767, while September 2017 was unchanged at 1,768.

Turnover for the week was significantly higher at 23,173 lots from 14,267 lots recorded last Friday, while open interest narrowed to 37,779 contracts from 38,487 contracts.

On Friday, the benchmark FBM KLCI ended 1.11 points better at 1,768.28.

CPO Futures Seen Trading Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade higher next week, boosted by increasing demand ahead of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

A dealer said Ramadan, which takes place at May-end, will see Muslims break a day-long fast with communal feasting, leading to higher palm oil usage for cooking.

“Increasing demand, as seen in rising shipments ahead of Ramadan, could help boost palm oil prices,” he added.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Analyst David Ng said the Malaysian Palm Oil Board’s announcement of a lower export tax of six per cent from seven per cent previously, could also help boost palm oil demand in the short-term.

For the week-just-ended, CPO prices were traded mostly higher throughout the week on increasing demand and firmer crude oil prices.

FRIDAY-TO-FRIDAY

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month May 2017 increased RM25 to RM2,885 a tonne.

June 2017 eased RM9 to RM2,759 a tonne, July 2017 decreased RM16 to RM2,635 a tonne and August 2017 fell RM23 to RM2,556 a tonne.

Weekly turnover rose to 284,081 lots from the previous week’s 190,676 lots, while open interest widened to 257,640 contracts from 254,834 contracts.

On the physical market, May South was RM60 higher at RM2,920 per tonne.

Rubber Prices On The Rise Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The rubber market is expected to continue its uptrend next week on the back of optimism over the improvement in crude oil prices.

A dealer said there was growing optimism that oil producing countries would extend output cuts to curb a persistent glut in crude oil.

“The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is scheduled to meet on May 25 to decide whether to extend their agreement to limit supplies,” he added.

For the week just-ended, trading was mostly higher, tracking the stronger rubber futures prices on regional markets, especially the Tokyo Commodity Exchange and the ringgit’s movement against the US dollar.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board’s noon price for SMR 20 gained 28.5 sen to 664.5 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk improved 22 sen to 642.0 sen a kg.

The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 rose 23 sen

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to 655.5 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk appreciated 21 sen to 645.5 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Flat Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to remain flat next week.

For the week just ended, the market was quiet and untraded on subdued demand, as well as a lack of market catalysts.

The instrument's open interest remained nil.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, June 2017, July 2017, August 2017 and September 2017 remained pegged at 96.53, 96.51 96.50 and 96.49 respectively.

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

KLTM Expected To Trade Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) will likely see higher trading next week on stronger demand with the metal price moving up to US$20,400 a tonne.

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

"We predict that the metal price will continue to trade on an uptrend, as stocks on the LME are at a low level and will take some time to be replenished," he told Bernama.

Throughout this week, the KLTM traded mostly higher with prices moving between US$19,800 and US$20,200 a tonne.

On Friday, the tin price closed at US$20,200 a tonne, US$300 higher from the US$19,900 a tonne on Friday last week.

GAINS ON LME

On the LME, the tin price gained US$100 to end at US$20,200 a tonne versus US$20,100 a tonne last week.

Weekly volume on the KLTM increased to 176 tonnes from 125 tonnes last week with the participation of traders from South Korea, Europe, China, Pakistan, the United States and locals accounting for the bulk of the transactions.

There was no price differential between the KLTM and LME on Friday compared with a premium of US$370 a tonne last week.

Upside Bias For Gold Next Week Amid Geopolitical Risks

By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) are expected to consolidate with an upside bias on geopolitical risks next week, with the unsettled political turbulence in the United States (US) possibly boosting the safe-haven appeal.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer Leo Goh Boon Hao said gold surged 1.46 per cent on a weekly basis, even as the US political scenario boosted demand for safe-haven assets.

"In the week ahead, should any geopolitical risks in the US or elsewhere escalate, gold prices are expected to surge higher," he told Bernama.

Gold is often seen as an alternative investment during times of geopolitical and financial uncertainty, gaining alongside bond yields, while stocks usually take a hit.

The gold futures contract on BMD normally moves in sync with the New York Commodity Exchange's (Comex) gold market.

FRIDAY-TO-FRIDAY

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, gold futures on Bursa Malaysia for May 2017 rose 51 ticks to RM174.15 a gramme, June 2017 advanced 48 ticks to RM174.25 a gramme, while July 2017 and August 2017 gained 37 ticks each to RM174.65 and RM175.15 a gramme.

Turnover for the week was higher at 62 lots worth RM1.08 million, from the 30 lots worth RM509,490 recorded last week, while open interest on Friday was higher at 265 contracts from 228 contracts previously.

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