MALAYSIAeBiz
BERNAMA WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP 25 - 29 DEC 2017
Edition194
Dec 29, 2017

This Week's Highlight : Excessive Speculation Causes RM31.5 Bln Forex Losses

EXPOSED...Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani says the speculative activities did not reflect BNM's mandate to maintain an orderly condition of the foreign exchange market. -- fotoBERNAMA (file photo) by Harry Salzman

KUALA LUMPUR -- Excessive speculative activities had caused Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to suffer foreign exchange transaction losses of RM31.5 billion in the 90's, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani. Citing an internal audit report prepared by BNM's internal auditors dated Jan 21, 1994, he said the monthly maturing buy and sell foreign exchange transactions which amounted to an average of RM140 billion in 1992 increased to a staggering RM750 billion in 1993. "A substantial portion of such transactions was very speculative in nature and did not reflect BNM's mandate to maintain orderly condition of the foreign exchange market as per Section 4 of the Central Bank of Malaysia Ordinance 1958," he said in an open letter to former prime minister Tun Mahathir Mohamad, Tuesday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Both Aerotrain Services At KLIA Back To Normal

PUTRAJAYA -- Both aerotrain services at KL International Airport (KLIA) resumed their normal operations from 3.48pm Monday, the airport operator, Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB), has confirmed. The services of an automated people mover that transports passengers between the main terminal to the satellite buildings were reportedly shut down temporarily due to emergency maintenance works.

TUESDAY

Electricity Tariff Rate Remains Unchanged

KOTA KINABALU -- The government has agreed to maintain the current electricity tariff rate for consumers in Peninsular Malaysia for the next three years, Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister, Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili said Tuesday. The government had also agreed to maintain the existing tariff rate for Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan for the January to June 2018 period, he added.

WEDNESDAY

1MDB Makes Full Payment To IPIC

KUALA LUMPUR – 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) has remitted to International Petroleum Investment Co PJSC (IPIC) in full all the funds required to be paid to IPIC by Dec 31, 2017. In a statement Wednesday, 1MDB said this was pursuant to the Settlement Deed with Minister of Finance Incorporated and IPIC. "All funds were paid from proceeds of the on-going rationalisation programme," it said.

THURSDAY

Household Debt Down To 84.6 Pct, Reflects Economic Upturn

PUTRAJAYA — Malaysia's household debt has declined as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and was at 84.6 per cent as of September 2017 from 88.4 per cent overall last year. This decline is also reflective of the economic upturn this year. Communications and Multimedia Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Salleh Said Keruak said Thursday, the economic upturn was also seen as Malaysia was having a healthy labour market with the minimum wage set to increase in 2018, alongside the low unemployment rate of 3.4 per cent as of October 2017.

FRIDAY

New ePerolehan Provides Better Control & Monitoring - Johari

PUTRAJAYA -- The new ePerolehan (eP) procurement system which replaces the current system on Jan 1, 2018, is expected to facilitate optimum control and monitoring of the utilisation of government allocation, Second Finance Minister, Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani said. He said all procurement of supplies and non-consultative services for federal government ministries, departments and agencies will be conducted online. "The government procurement of supplies and services is estimated to be worth RM18 million annually," he told reporters after the launch here Friday.

SMEbrief

Allocation For SME Development Outlines 5 Categories

JASIN -- The RM20 billion allocation approved for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) under Budget 2018 outlines five key categories in order to accelerate their growth. Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said the categories identified were financing, marketing, human capital, infrastructure and business premise development, technological advancement in line with the fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0).

SKU Food Entrepreneurs Need To Enhance Quality For Foreign Forays

SHAH ALAM -- The Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) has urged stock keeping unit (SKU) food entrepreneurs in Selangor to enhance the quality of their products to enable them to penetrate the international market. FAMA Selangor Director Datuk Abdul Ghariff Rahim said Wednesday, there was a huge demand for SKU frozen food products like biscuits and chocolates abroad, especially from Singapore.

Tekun's Ar Rahnu Disburses RM13.8 Mln Loan

ALOR SETAR -- The National Entrepreneurial Group Economic Fund (Tekun Nasional) has disbursed RM13.8 million in financing via its Ar Rahnu gold pawnbroking services from 2015 until last Saturday. Its Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Baharom Embi said Wednesday, the financing involved 6,080 transactions concluded at its branches in Shah Alam, Wangsa Maju, Semenyih and Klang.

2017, A Bounty Of Opportunities For SMEs

By Siti Noor Afera Abu

KUALA LUMPUR – The year 2017 has been declared as the 'Start-up and Promotion' year for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and indeed it has been a booming year with opportunities aplenty.

It was a year that was filled with activities including the advent of the Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) and Leading Entrepreneur Accelerator Platform (LEAP) Market to help thrust the SMEs forward.

Yet it was not without its challenges as the SMEs continued to face challenging times due to the volatile and uncertain economy that could curb growth and prospects.

During these tribulations, the SMEs found it difficult to penetrate markets or maintain their competitive edge especially in the digital era, hence the need to focus and improvise strategy and efficiency to stay relevant in the business and to the customers.

PropUP — Property update

Pensonic Unit To Buy Port Klang Land For RM20.07 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pensonic Holdings Bhd's (PHB) unit, Pensonic Sales & Service Sdn Bhd, is acquiring two contiguous freehold land in Kapar, Selangor from Cekal Unggul Sdn Bhd for about RM20.07 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, PHB said the company would use the land for the construction of a new warehouse and office block.

MRCB Disposes Of Stake In 59INC To TH Properties

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd (MRCB) has disposed of its 200,000 ordinary shares in 59INC Sdn Bhd to TH Properties Sdn Bhd for RM100.138 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday, it said the disposal represented MRCB's 40 per cent equity interest in 59INC.

SEAL's Unit To Dispose Of Land For RM30 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Seal Incorporated Bhd's (SEAL) unit, Seal City Sdn Bhd has entered into a sale and purchase agreement to dispose of all that piece of vacant land and hereditaments measuring 35.55 hectares in Bandar Amanjaya, Kuala Muda District, Kedah to Tristar Bay Sdn Bhd for RM30 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, SEAL said the net proceeds arising from the proposed disposal were expected to be utilised for the working capital of the SEAL Group and its subsidiaries.

Hua Yang Plans RM800 Mln Devt In Kajang

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer Hua Yang Bhd plans to unveil mix projects with a gross development value (GDV) of RM800 million in Kajang, Selangor, comprising serviced apartments, retail units and affordable homes. This is following its acquisition of another property developer, Kajang Heights Development Sdn Bhd along with eight hectares freehold land for a total purchase consideration of RM70 million, it said in a statement Wednesday.

Kimlun Units To Acquire Johor Land For RM36.08 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR – Kimlun Corporation Bhd's indirect wholly-owned subsidiaries, Kiiville Sdn Bhd (KVSB) and Kii Ashbury Sdn Bhd (KASB), have proposed to acquire freehold agricultural and commercial land in Johor for RM36.08 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, Kimlun said KVSB proposed to acquire freehold commercial land in Pulai measuring 20,836.3 square metres from Mah Sing Properties Sdn Bhd for RM14.25 million.

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 489	
Losers - 468	
Not Traded - 494	
Unchanged - 389	
Value - 2766448143	
Volume - 31389179	

Bursa Malaysia Ends The Year With A Big Bang

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia ended the year's trading with a big bang as the Composite Index hit a year high of 1,796.81 points with extensive buying on heavyweights such as Sime Darby Plantation, Maybank and DiGi, supported by upward momentum of regional peers, dealers said. The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) closed at 1,796.81, up 17.71 points from Thursday's close of 1,779.10, after opening 1.55 points higher at 1,780.65. Over the course of the day, the key index also moved to as low as 1,776.94. Market breadth was positive with 489 gainers against 468 losers, while 389 counters were unchanged, 494 untraded and 49 others suspended. Total volume rose to 3.14 billion shares worth RM2.77 billion from 2.64 billion shares worth RM2.10 billion on Thursday. Sime Darby Plantation, which contributed 6.30 points towards the composite index, rose 52 sen to RM6 while Maybank and DiGi, which contributed 4.61 and 3.60 points each, jumped 24 sen and 26 sen to RM9.80 and RM5.10, respectively. Head of Research of Etiqa Insurance & Takaful, Liu Hing Luen, said the benchmark index was supported by local and foreign funds buying towards the close of trading, with the ringgit strengthening against the US dollar. "There were a bit of foreign inflows, coupled with some local fund buying, as well as the recovery of the ringgit, which touched the 4.045 level (at 5pm), the highest for this year (so far)," he told Bernama Friday. Malaysian Association of Technical Analysts' Professional Member, Amir Hassan, said the FBM KLCI's performance Friday has been also been influenced by window-dressing, which was usual at year-end. "Most of the last-minute buying was in blue-chips, plantation and banking counters," he said, adding that the positive sentiment may continue until the first quarter next year, ahead of the 14th General Election, before investors decided on any new direction. Main Market volume rose to 1.89 billion units worth RM2.49 billion compared with 1.30 billion units worth RM1.81 billion on Thursday.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	4.0440	4.0500
EUR	4.8451	4.8535
GBP	5.4602	5.4687
100 YEN	3.5912	3. 5968
SGD	3.0265	3.0323

CLOSING MALAYSIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE: Dec 29, 2017

FOREX: Ringgit Ends 2017 On Year-High

By Zarina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- A strong rally by the ringgit against the US dollar pushed the local unit to end 2017 at a year high on Friday, alongside the bullish sentiment for it, and amid a broadly weaker greenback, dealers said. With a persistent upward momentum, the ringgit finished the last trading day at 4.0440/0500 versus the US dollar against 4.0650/0680 recorded Thursday. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice President/ Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the buoyant ringgit was fuelled by recovery in commodities, especially crude oil, crude palm oil and copper. He said the upbeat performance was also influenced by the numerous positive local developments, including bullish foreign fund inflows into Malaysia, a strong equity market performance alongside upbeat economic data, as well as, prospects of a higher overnight policy rate. "We have a lot of strong catalysts driving the ringgit, with our reserves showing an increasing trend. These all bodes well for the ringgit," he told Bernama. The central bank's international reserves amounted to US$102.2 billion (RM431.6 billion) as at Dec 15, 2017 compared with US$101.9 billion (RM430.4 billion) as at Nov 30, 2017. The US dollar remained under pressure, closing Friday at a near one-month low, with the recent steep fall in the US Treasury bond yields and weaker-than-expected economic data as among the key reasons. Meanwhile, the ringgit also traded firmer against a basket of major currencies. It climbed against the Singapore dollar to 3.0265/0323 from 3.0372/0401 and appreciated vis-a-vis the yen to 3.5912/5968 from 3.6002/0041 Thursday. The local unit rose against the euro to 4.8451/8535 from 4.8495/5543 and strengthened versus the British pound to 5.4602/4687 from 5.4654/4711.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates Close 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 shrank to RM34.1 billion from RM51.08 billion in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM14.05 billion from RM17.89 billion. The central bank has called for two tenders today, comprising range maturity auction and Qard tender. BNM also conducted a RM33.1 billion conventional money market tender and RM14 billion Qard money market tender, both for four-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 2.97 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. January 2018, February 2018, March 2018 and June 2018 were all pegged at 96.55, 96.53, 96.50 and 96.45, respectively. Both volume and open interest remained at 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 closed higher Friday, tracking gains on the underlying cash market. December 2017 climbed 3.5 points to 1,779, January 2018 rose 2.5 points to 1,785, March 2018 added 1.0 point to 1,780, while June 2018 gained half-a-point to 1,776. Turnover slipped to 7,927 lots from Thursday's 12,232 lots, while open interest decreased to 34,024 contracts from 41,723 contracts. The underlying benchmark FBM KLCI finished 17.71 points higher at 1,796.81.

RAM Ratings Reaffirm Malaysian Reinsurance's AA2/Stable/P1 IFS Ratings

KUALA LUMPUR -- RAM Ratings Services Bhd has reaffirmed Malaysian Reinsurance Bhd's AA2/Stable/P1 insurer financial strength (IFS) ratings and the AA3/Stable rating of its RM250 million Subordinated MTN Programme 2015-2030. RAM Ratings said in a statement Tuesday, the reaffirmation reflected Malaysian Reinsurance's improved year-on-year financial performance, which saw the reinsurer recording a healthier pre-tax profit of RM100.4 million in 2017 versus RM7 million in 2016, on the back of narrower underwriting losses and higher investment income, as well as amid improved market conditions.

Angkasa To Make 2018 The Digital Cooperative Year

LANGKAWI -- The National Cooperatives Movement of Malaysia (Angkasa) will make 2018 the Digital Cooperative Year to encourage cooperatives under its umbrella to involve in electronic commerce (e-commerce). Its president, Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah told reporters Wednesday, various awareness programmes would be organised for the purpose, in addition to providing facilities for them to engage in the online business.

Incomplete Documents Among Reasons MyDeposit Applications Rejected - Halimah

KOTA TINGGI -- Incomplete documents is one of the three major reasons the applications for the First House Deposit Financing Scheme (MyDeposit) are rejected and thus disqualified from receiving incentives of up to RM30,000. Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Deputy Minister Datuk Halimah Mohamed Sadique told reporters Wednesday, another factor was that the applicants did not meet the household income requirements, namely earning less than RM3,000 or above RM15,000.

Affin Hwang AM Declares Income Distribution For 24 Funds Worth RM203 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Affin Hwang Asset Management Bhd (Affin Hwang AM) has declared RM203.07 million as distribution for 24 funds, across the company's retail and wholesale funds. Among the funds are retail shariahcompliant funds, consisting of the Affin Hwang Aiiman Select Income Fund for which the distribution rate is RM0.015 per unit and the Affin Hwang Aiiman Income Plus Fund at RM0.0077 per unit, it said in a statement Wednesday.

HSBC Targets 100 Pct Renewable Energy Sources By 2030

KUALA LUMPUR -- HSBC Bank (M) Bhd is aiming to source 100 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030, with an interim goal of 90 per cent by 2025, in its stride to support a sustainable economy. Group Chief Operating Officer Andy Maguire said in a statement Thursday, in 2011 HSBC set its target of achieving 25 per cent renewable electricity by 2020, which it then revised to 40 per cent in 2017. "The experience we have gained in the renewable electricity market means we can now make a commitment to source 100 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2030," he said.

Nov Foreign Exchange Swap Volume Up By US$13.4 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Foreign exchange swap volume increased by US$13.4 billion (US$1 = RM4.05) to US$115.5 billion for November compared with October, mainly contributed by higher hedging activities due to recent non-resident portfolio inflows. In its Monthly Highlights November 2017 released here Friday, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) said, the average one-month swap points edged slightly higher at 54 pips from 52 pips in October. "In November, the ringgit was the best performer in the region, as the release of better-than-expected gross domestic product for the third quarter and expectations of monetary policy normalisation by BNM led to increased demand for ringgit assets by non-residents," it said.

Eastspring Investments Declares Income Distributions For Five Funds

KUALA LUMPUR -- Eastspring Investments Bhd has announced the income distributions for five of its existing unit trust funds. In a statement Friday, Eastspring said it would pay 0.038 sen per unit gross income distribution for Eastspring Investments Small-cap Fund, 0.039 sen per unit for Eastspring Investments Growth Fund, 0.0496 sen per unit for Eastspring Investments Balanced Fund, 0.027 sen per unit for Eastspring Investments Bond Fund and 0.029 sen per unit for Eastspring Investments Asia Pacific ex-Japan Target Return Fund.

BNM: Int'l Reserves As At End-Nov Remains Usable

KUALA LUMPUR -- The detailed breakdown of international reserves under the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (IMF SDDS) format indicated that as of end-November, the country's reserves remained usable, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). The central bank said Friday, in accordance with the IMF SDDS format, the detailed breakdown of international reserves provided forward-looking information on the size, composition and usability of reserves and other foreign currency assets. It also provided the expected and potential future inflows and outflows of foreign exchange of the federal government and BNM over the next 12-month period.

Over 1 Mln People Take Melaka River Cruise In 2017

MELAKA -- Approximately 1.07 million visitors had cruised down the historic Melaka river via the Melaka River Cruise (MRC) service between January and yesterday compared to 991,108 visitors recorded in the corresponding period last year, Melaka River and Beach Development Corporation chief executive officer Nazary Ahmad told a press conference Tuesday. He said the number was expected to continue to rise next year following the various infrastructural improvements being made to provide more comfort to the visitors.

PUC To Acquire 33 Pct Stake In Pictureworks

KUALA LUMPUR -- PUC Bhd has proposed to acquire a 33 per cent-stake in Pictureworks Holdings Sdn Bhd (PWHSB) for RM52.8 million. In a statement Wednesday, PUC Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Cheong Chia Chou said the exercise was part of the company's efforts to expand its revenue stream and diversify its business portfolio into the imagery capture sector, whereby PWHSB was expected to contribute 25 per cent or more to the group's net profit.

REDtone's Unit Secures RM250.76 Mln Project From MCMC

KUALA LUMPUR -- REDtone International Bhd's (REDtone) unit, REDtone Engineering & Network Services Sdn Bhd (RENS) has received an approval notice for the provision and implementation project for RM250.76 million. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, REDtone said the approval was from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission to appoint RENS as universal service provider for the provision and implementation of Time 3 Extension Phase 3 (Part 2) project, for the installation of 2G and 3G public cellular services in rural areas in eight major states of Malaysia.

Muhibbah Engineering Bags RM70 Mln Contract From TNB

KUALA LUMPUR -- Muhibbah Engineering (M) Bhd has received a contract of about RM70 million from Tenaga Nasional Bhd for the construction of a reinforced concrete jetty and platform for the establishment stations. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, Muhibbah Engineering said the establishment stations include a 230kV Senibong Switching Station and 230kV Overhead Line from PMU Senibong to Senibong Switching Station in Johor Bahru.

UCrest Signs Two Contracts Worth US$1.18 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Broadband, wireless and mobile health platform developer, UCrest Bhd has entered into two contracts with Trade House Atlantis Ltd for the sale of hardware related products worth about US$1.18 million (US$1=RM4.08). In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, UCrest said the first contract dated Sept 5, 2017 was valued at US$392,835 (RM1.60 million) and the second contract dated Sept 22 was worth US$788,798 (RM3.22 million), and the products were expected to be delivered latest by May 15, 2018.

EU's Resolution Affects 650,000 Oil Palm Smallholders– MPOB

JASIN -- The European Union's decision to ban the import of palm oil from Malaysia is seen as threatening the future of 650,000 smallholders in the industry apart from its negative impact to the country's economy. Malaysian Palm Oil Board chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Hamzah told reporters Wednesday, this was because Malaysia is the largest exporter of the commodity in the world and EU is the second largest export market of the country which contributes the highest export revenue.

Pos Aviation Awards Contract To PST Ventures

KUALA LUMPUR -- Pos Malaysia Bhd's unit, Pos Aviation Sdn Bhd, has awarded a contract to PST Ventures Sdn Bhd for the provision of security and ICT solutions for the redevelopment and refurbishment of the former low-cost carrier terminal (LCCT) for RM8.05 million. The company said in a filing Thursday, the development services would be completed within six months from the commencement date and PST Ventures would provide warranty services of up to five years from date of delivery of the relevant equipment.

BCorp Records Pre-Tax Loss Of RM153.46 Mln In Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- Berjaya Corporation Bhd (BCorp) recorded a pre-tax loss of RM153.46 million in the second quarter ended Oct 31, 2017 against a pre-tax profit of RM408.49 million in the same quarter a year ago. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, BCorp said the loss was mainly due to the provision for the portion impairment of the balance sales proceeds from the Great Mall of China project sale in China in accordance to accounting standards and the partial disposal of an associated company.

HSS Engineers Unit Bags RM82.5 Mln ECRL Contract

KUALA LUMPUR -- HSS Engineers Bhd's (HEB) unit, HSS Integrated Sdn Bhd (HSSI), has received a letter of award with an estimated value of up to RM82.5 million to provide supervising consultancy services for the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project. In a statement Thursday, HEB said HSSI was appointed by China Communications Construction (ECRL) Sdn Bhd to provide supervising consultancy services for infrastructure works from KM 0 to KM 231.5 of the ECRL Package 1.

Ranhill Subsidiary Renews Johor Water Concession For 3 Years

KUALA LUMPUR -- Ranhill Holdings Bhd's subsidiary, SAJ Ranhill Sdn Bhd, has renewed its licence as the exclusive water services operator in Johor for a three-year period commencing Jan 1, 2018. In a statement Thursday, Ranhill said the renewal was recommended by the National Water Services Commission (SPAN) and approved by the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water. It said since SAJ Ranhill accounted for some 77 per cent of Ranhill's total revenue, the renewal was expected to contribute to the group's short- and long-term growth.

JDE Asia Acquires 173,100 Oldtown Shares For RM3.10 Each

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dutch beverage company Jacobs Douwe Egberts Holdings Asia NL BV (JDE Asia) has acquired 173,100 shares of kopitiam chain operator Oldtown Bhd for RM3.10 per share from its discretionary clients. Oldtown, in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Friday, said the acquisition is related to the pre-conditional voluntary offer made by JDE Asia on Dec 11. On Dec 11, JDE made a pre-conditional cash offer to acquire all the issued shares of Oldtown at RM3.18 per share, valuing the company at RM1.47 billion.

Advancecon Unit Gets RM45.83 Mln Contract From Worldwide Property Mgmt

KUALA LUMPUR -- Advancecon Holdings Bhd's wholly-owned unit, Advancecon Infra Sdn Bhd (AISB), has been appointed a main-contractor for the earthworks and ancillary works for Alam Perdana Development, Selangor worth RM45.83 million from Worldwide Property Management Sdn Bhd. AISB is principally involved in the business of providing earthworks and civil engineering services. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Friday, Advancecon said, the scope of works comprised, among others, preliminaries, site clearance and earthworks, ground treatment works, detention pond, drainage diversion and arch culvert in the 178 hectares.

Domestic PPI Up 4.3 Pct In Nov, 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Producer Price Index (PPI) for local production rose by 4.3 per cent, year-on-year, to 108.3 in November 2017 compared to the same month last year. However, it was 0.4 of a point lower, compared with the 4.7 per cent growth recorded in October 2017. In a statement Friday, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) said the mining index recorded the highest increase at 30.7 per cent, followed by manufacturing (2.8 per cent), electricity and gas supply (0.5 per cent) and water supply (0.2 per cent).

Workers Prefer Access To Technology Above Other Perks -Adobe

KUALA LUMPUR -- Almost 50 per cent of office workers in Southeast Asia (SEA) rate access to technology above all other office perks like food and slick office design, said Adobe Systems Incorporate. In a statement Tuesday, the multinational computer software company said, "The Future of Work: Asia Pacific (APAC) Study" it conducted, also revealed that workers rated the ability to work across all their devices, continuous availability and an ability to collaborate with their team as the most important ways where technology had accelerated productivity.

Consumers Favour Simpler Travel Accommodation Booking Mode - Agoda

KUALA LUMPUR -- Online booking platform, Agoda says consumer preference for a simpler way of booking their travel accommodation will be the focus of the tourism industry next year. This will result in them going for companies that deliver streamlined travel experiences through leveraging on effective technologies and is contrary to the current trend, whereby, many major travel industry players continue to deliver complex products and loyalty programmes, it said in a statement Tuesday.

MyHSR's EIA Report Ready For Public Viewing

KUALA LUMPUR -- MyHSR Corporation Sdn Bhd's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report for the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High-Speed Rail (KL-SG HSR) is ready for public viewing, starting tomorrow until Jan 25, 2018. MyHSR Corp said in a statement Tuesday, the report would be displayed for public viewing at various locations, including the Land Public Transport Commission headquarters, Department of Environment (DOE) headquarters and DOE state offices in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor, as well as other local authorities' offices along the KL-SG HSR alignment.

Angkasa Focuses On Three Northern States As Solar Farm Hubs

PENDANG -- Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Berhad (Angkasa) will turn Kedah, Perlis and northern Perak as hubs for solar farms that could provide long-term benefits to numerous quarters. Its president, Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah said Wednesday, the three northern states were ideal for solar farms as they received high levels of sunlight that were suitable for solar panels.

Customs To Suspend Licences Of 20 Forwarding Agents Under Demerit System

SIBU -- The Royal Malaysian Customs Department is to announce the suspension of the licences of 20 forwarding agents nationwide next month. Its director-general, Datuk Seri Subromaniam Tholasy told reporters Wednesday, the suspension was in accordance with the Customs Demerit Point System introduced in April this year to curb smuggling through ports. He said the agents involved in smuggling or caught frequently committing offences and had accumulated 40 penalty points risked having their licences suspended or even cancelled.

EC Advises People To Ignore Viral Message On GE14

PUTRAJAYA -- The Election Commission Thursday advised the people to ignore the dates for dissolution of parliament and the 14th general election that have gone viral on social media. EC chairman Tan Sri Mohd Hashim Abdullah said parliament could only be dissolved with the consent of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the advice of the Prime Minister. The message had mentioned Jan 11, 2018, as the date for the dissolution of parliament and March 11 and 25 as the dates for nomination and polling, respectively.

IFCA Accelerator Programme Offers RM10 Mln To Nurture Prop-Tech Startups

KUALA LUMPUR -- IFCA MSC Bhd has launched its flagship RM10 million accelerator programme to nurture and develop local property-technology (prop-tech) companies by providing fundraising, business networking and mentorship. The IFCA accelerator programme is a collaboration with Google cloud's technology, the company said in a statement Thursday. In its first stage, the IFCA accelerator programme will identify 10 companies within the prop-tech space and nurture them to achieve global scale.

Thai AirAsia CEO Buys Back 36.3 Pct Stake In Asia Aviation

KUALA LUMPUR -- Thai AirAsia Co Ltd Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tassapon Bijleveld has bought back 36.3 per cent of the shares in Asia Aviation PCL for 8.279 billion Baht (RM1.03 billion) from King Power Group Chairman Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha and his family. Asia Aviation owned 55 per cent interest in Thai AirAsia and following the transaction, Tassapon's stake in the company grew to 41.3 per cent from five per cent previously. In a note Thursday, the Centre for Aviation (CAPA) said Srivaddhanaprabha and his family bought their stake in the company for 7.9 billion Baht last year.

Cahya Mata Sarawak Group MD To Retire

KUALA LUMPUR -- Cahya Mata Sarawak Bhd has announced the retirement of its Group Managing Director, Datuk Richard Curtis effective Dec 31, but will remain as a Non-Independent Non-Executive Director until Dec 31 next year. In a statement Friday, its Chairman, Tan Sri Syed Anwar Jamalullail said Curtis' legacy would be his pioneering leadership and the transformational role in implementing the company's long-term strategic plan to expand and diversify its business portfolios.

Smaller Firms Turn To Sustainability For Growth, Investment

KUALA LUMPUR -- Almost 30 per cent of smaller companies employing between 200 and 2000 workers place having a sustainable impact on the community and environment as one of their top three long-term objectives, HSBC Bank PLC said in a statement Friday. It said a survey of more than 1,400 decision-makers across 14 countries revealed that 50 per cent of their customers preferred products that were environment-friendly and have a positive social impact.

RHB Trustees Subscribes Sunway's One-Month Commercial Paper

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Trustees Bhd has subscribed to the one-month commercial paper (CP) with nominal value of RM25 million issued by Sunway Bhd, a substantial unit holder of Sunway Real Estate Investment Trust (SUNREIT). In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Friday, Sunway REIT Management Sdn Bhd, the manager of SUNREIT, said the investment in money market instrument that offers the most competitive discount rate is in line with SUNREIT's active capital management strategy. "The subscription will not have any effect on the total units issued and substantial unitholders' unitholding as they do not involve any issuance of new units of SUNREIT," it said.

Prasarana Extends Services For New Year 2018

KUALA LUMPUR -- The operating hours of Light Rail Transit (LRT), the Monorail, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT), Rapid Transit Bus (BRT) and Rapid KL Bus services to some stations will be extended until 2am on Monday to accommodate users welcoming New Year 2018. The Kelana Jaya LRT services for the KLCC and Masjid Jamek stations will be extended until 2am while the Pasar Seni, Ampang Park and USJ7 stations will end at 1am. "The Masjid Jamek and Bandaraya stations for the Seri Petaling LRT route will end its service at 2am," said a statement issued by Prasarana Tuesday.

MPay's Unit, MATRADE Collaborate To Provide e-Marketplace Service

KUALA LUMPUR -- Managepay Systems Bhd's (MPay) wholly-owned unit, ManagePay Marketing Sdn Bhd, is collaborating with Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) to provide an e-marketplace platform -- BuyMalaysia.com -- for the latter's eTRADE Programme. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday, MPay said MPay Marketing had accepted a letter of offer from MATRADE dated Dec 22, 2017.

Cross Street Bazaar Among Locations For Seven-Day Seven-Event Programme In Taiping

TAIPING --The Cross Street Bazaar in Jalan Lim Tee Hooi is among the locations chosen for the seven-day seven-event programme held in conjunction with the Larut British Malaya programme here. Programme coordinator Hilal Azman told a press conference Wednesday, since the programme commenced on Dec 25, it was estimated that between 4,000 and 5,000 people had visited the bazaar that boasted a total of 40 outlets selling various items. "The uniqueness of the bazaar was that the booths are made of wood and produced in 1885. Besides, the hustle and bustle of the bazaar have turned it into a new attraction to visitors," he said.

Bernama Radio And China Radio International Sign MoU

KUALA LUMPUR -- BERNAMA Radio and China Radio International (CRI) Wednesday signed a broadcasting cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the second season of Ni Hao and Selendang Sutera programmes. The ceremony was held at CRI headquarters in Beijing, China. CRI Southeast Asian Broadcasting Centre vice director-general Zhang Wen Wen said Wednesday, the cooperation for the second year would involve improving the existing content apart from creating new segments for the two programmes.

KTMB Extends Commuter Service On New Year's Eve

KUALA LUMPUR -- Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) will be extending the operation time for its commuter service to 2 am on Jan 1 in conjunction with the New Year's eve celebration. In a statement Wednesday, KTMB said they would provide additional train service covering the KL Sentral-Batu Caves, KL Sentral-Seremban, KL Sentral-Port Klang and KL Sentral-Rawang/Tanjung Malim routes.

AirAsia Welcomes Two International Inaugural Flights Into Sarawak

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia Bhd welcomed two direct international inaugural flights into Sarawak, from Shenzhen to Kuching and Singapore to Bintulu, which are part of its pipeline to boost international connectivity into Sabah and Sarawak. In a statement Wednesday, the low-cost airline said the Kuching-Shenzhen and Shenzhen-Kuching routes will operate daily at 22.45 pm and 3.50 am, respectively, while the Singapore-Bintulu and Bintulu-Singapore routes will operate at 9.10 am and 11.25 pm, respectively, with four weekly flights on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

Labuan IBFC Inc Appoints Farah Jaafar Crossby As CEO

KUALA LUMPUR -- Labuan International Business and Financial Centre Incorporated Sdn Bhd (Labuan IBFC Inc) has appointed Farah Jaafar Crossby as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) effective Jan 1, 2018. In a statement Wednesday, the agency said Farah, who currently heads the Marketing Intelligence and Strategic Communications unit, is a law graduate from University of Sheffield. She was previously a General Manager of the Association of Stock Broking Companies Malaysia and had also worked with Bursa Malaysia as well as the Asian Institute of Finance.

LRT, MRT, Monorail Obtain Latest ISO Certification

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Light Rail Transit (LRT), Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and monorail services operated by Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd today obtained the latest ISO certification from SIRIM QAS International. Its chief executive officer, Datuk Zohari Sulaiman said in a statement Thursday, the ISO9001:2015 certification for Quality Management System replaced the ISO9001:2008 certification obtained by the company before.

TAHPS Group Changes Name To Ayer Holdings

KUALA LUMPUR -- TAHPS Group Bhd has undergone a name change and will now be known as Ayer Holdings Bhd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, the company said its securities would be traded and quoted under the new name with effect from 9 am on Jan 3, 2018. "However, the stock number of the securities remain unchanged," it said.

Malaysia's Economy Strengthens Amid Taunting Factors

By Siti Radziah Hamzah

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The year has been kind to Malaysia as its economy strengthened amid a confluence of taunting domestic and external factors which include the low commodity prices and weak currency.

Most economists have been very cautious over the evolving economic outlook at the outset of the year and this was especially true in the context of rising protectionist policies in the US and populism sentiment globally, which could potentially set the world's growth into a tailspin, had they materialised.

The ongoing Brexit negotiations and a series of elections in major European countries such as France and Germany threatened to further divide the European Union amid uncertainty in global oil prices as supply glut continues to shape the oil and gas industry.

However, as the year progresses, the US Federal Reserve has been forthcoming in its interest rate decision, resulting in three rate hikes this year.

The Bank of England also raised its Bank Rate by 25 basis points during its November meeting, signalling that advanced countries have been gradually removing the monetary support as economic growth became more entrenched as evidenced by the decline in unemployment rate and increase in inflationary pressures.

DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH

Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd Chief Economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said such dynamics had benefited Asian economies, including Malaysia as exports registered double-digit growth for most of 2017.

"Some industries such as the electrical and electronics, as well as rubber gloves have been upgrading their production facilities and (carrying out) further automation in their production processes.

"This has allowed them to cater for higher order volume from the customers as they gained economies of scale, while competitive exchange rate also helped improve the appeal of Malaysians products," he told Bernama in an email interview.

FULL STEAM AHEAD... Malaysia's economy picked up speed to reach a two-year high of 5.6 per cent in the first quarter(Q1) after five consecutive quarters of slow growth since Q2 of 2015. -- fotoBERNAMA (file photo) by Mohd Khairul Fikiri Osman

Overall, Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) growth picked up speed to reach a two-year high of 5.6 per cent in the first quarter (Q1) after five consecutive quarters of slow growth since Q2 of 2015.

Boosted by strong domestic demand and private expenditure, GDP picked up momentum to record a 5.8 per cent growth in Q2 of this year. It went on to achieve a 6.2 per cent growth in Q3, the highest since Q2 of 2014, as activities in the services and manufacturing sectors picked up with even stronger public spending.

2017 GDP FORECAST AT 5.5 PCT

High economic growth achieved in Q3 has prompted the Netherland-base ABN AMRO Bank NV to project Malaysia's full year economic growth of 5.5 per cent and a moderate growth of 5.0 per cent next year.

"We have raised these forecast a couple of times this year. The Malaysian economy clearly did better than expected this year. One year ago, we expected the economy to grow by 4.0 per cent in 2017 and 2018," the bank's Senior Economist Arjen van Dijkhuizen told Bernama in an interview.

Back home, economists are predicting Bank Negara Malaysia would raise overnight policy rate by another 25 basis points next year as the country's economy progresses.

Bank Islam's Mohd Afzanizam said the country's economy was growing at a respectable pace and might continue to do so next year. "Therefore, keeping OPR status quo would mean the conduct of monetary policy is less prudent as this would encourage money to flow into unproductive sectors in search for higher yield."

"In other words, it promotes speculative activities if rates are kept low during strong economic growth. Perhaps, the economy needs a slightly higher OPR in order to reward the savers," he pointed out.

He added that the move could also help drive the ringgit higher as other economies in this region appeared to be taking a different path in terms of monetary policy.

Bank Islam is projecting Malaysia's 2018 GDP at 5.5 per cent from an estimated 5.8 per cent growth in 2017, mainly driven by domestic spending, especially from consumers and private investment amid stability in global demand. -BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

Bursa Malaysia To Continue Positive Momentum

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to continue its positive momentum moving into 2018 next week, boosted by positive local and regional catalysts, including the recovery of the economy.

After finishing the last trading day of 2017 on a healthy note, Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) is expected to continue its uptrend moving into 2018.

"For the first time in four years, the key index ended on a year-end rally sentiment, rising about 9.0 per cent year-on-year and about 4.0 per cent compared to November," he told Bernama.

Towards the year-end, he said the FBM KLCI was supported by a strong commodity performance, including, copper, oil and gold, which recorded record highs.

"With the recovery in the domestic economy and strengthening of the ringgit, Bursa Malaysia is expected to remain in upward momentum for at least the first quarter of next year," he added.

Nazri Khan said for next week, he expected the key index to move between a range of 1,780 and retest the September 2017 high of 1,800 points.

During the last trading week of this year, the market's performance was supported by the rally in commodities, namely oil and copper prices, amid thin trade ahead of the New Year's weekend.

Oil prices, which reached a two-and-a-half year high due to an attack on a Libyan pipeline, were slightly firmer after taking a breather on Wednesday, while the rally in copper prices continued with the metal trading near a four year-high.

On a Friday-to-Friday comparison, the FBM KLCI gained 36.57 points to 1,796.81, with the market being mostly influenced by window dressing and profit-taking ahead of the long New Year holiday weekend.

The FBM Emas Index improved 280.82 points to 12,942.57, the FBMT 100 Index increased 279.93 points to 12,614.20, the FBM Emas Shariah Index surged 292.05 points to 13,602.92, the FBM 70 bagged 435.10 points to 16,085.54 and the FBM Ace added 138.05 points to 6,603.55.

On a sectoral basis, the Finance Index rose 266.55 points to 16,961.38, the Plantation Index improved 2.97 points to 7,903.37, while the Industrial Index advanced 88.17 points to 3,280.70.

Due to the shorter trading week, the total turnover decreased to 10.16 billion shares worth RM8.46 billion from 12.22 billion units worth RM10.94 billion last week.

Main Market volume slipped to 5.89 billion shares worth RM7.58 billion from 6.45 billion shares valued at RM9.92 billion.

Warrants turnover was down to 999.13 million units valued at RM248.63 million against last week's 1.03 billion units worth RM178.09 million.

The ACE Market narrowed to 3.24 billion shares worth RM615.99 million from 4.61 billion shares valued at

RM804.24 million transacted previously.

The market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

FOREX: Ringgit To Resume 2018 On Stronger Footing

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit's rally is expected to continue into 2018, strengthening to the 4.00 region against the US dollar, on support from weak greenback sentiment and recovery in commodity prices.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the local unit, which ended 2017 on a strong note, would be traded positively next week and fuelled by positive local developments.

"It includes robust economic growth, bullish foreign fund inflows into Malaysia and a strong equity market performance. "The prospect of a higher overnight policy rate will also help support sentiment in the market.

"The bull run will continue next year. We have a lot of strong catalysts driving the ringgit, with our reserves showing an increasing trend.

These all bodes well for the ringgit," he told Bernama.

The central bank's international reserves amounted to US$102.2 billion (RM431.6 billion) as at Dec 15, 2017 compared with US$101.9 billion (RM430.4 billion) as at Nov 30, 2017.

Nazri Khan also said the improved household debt level, which declined to 84.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) as of September 2017 from 88.4 per cent overall last year, would also help drive ringgit momentum.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the ringgit was stronger against the greenback at 4.0440/0500 versus 4.0770/0800 in the previous week.

The local note traded mixed against a basket of major currencies.

It climbed against the Singapore dollar to 3.0265/0323 from 3.0317/0346 on last Friday, and rose against the yen to 3.5912/5968 from 3.5965/5998.

The ringgit, however, fell against the British pound to 5.4602/4687 from 5.4587/5639 and weakened vis-a-vis the euro to 4.8451/8535 from 4.8304/8344.

The local market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

Money-Market: Short-Term Rates To Be Kept Steady

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain stable next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) likely to intervene by offering tenders to absorb surplus liquidity from the system.

For the week just ended, the overnight rate was quoted at 2.97 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.

The central bank intervened on a daily basis to mop up excess liquidity by conducting conventional money market, Qard, reverse repo, range-maturity auction, and Commodity Murabahah Programme tenders.

In a short trading week, the total liquidity surplus in the conventional system for the week just ended expanded to RM34.1 billion from RM27.11 billion last week, while in the Islamic system, it improved to RM14.05 billion from RM8.3 billion.

The benchmark three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rates (KLIBOR) stood at 3.43 per cent.

The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

KLCI Futures To Uptrend Next Week

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia (FBM) KLCI futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is likely to be on an uptrend next week on firmer foreign fund inflows and stronger ringgit against the US dollar, dealers said.

The sentiment next week will also likely be in tandem with the cash market.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said towards the year-end, the FBM KLCI was supported by a strong commodity performance, with copper, oil and gold registering a record high.

He told Bernama that the sentiment is likely to continue moving into 2018.

For the week just ended, the futures market was mostly higher in tandem with the cash market.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, December 2017 rose 22.5 points to 1,779, January 2018 gained 27 points to 1,785, March 2018 increased 25.5 points to 1,780 and June 2018 advanced 26 points to 1,750.

Weekly turnover perked to 65,855 lots versus 29,650 lots, while open interest slid to 34,024 contracts from 37,592 contracts.

For the week just ended, the FBM KLCI improved 36.57 points to 1,796.81 from 1,760.24 last Friday.

The market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

CPO Futures To Trade Higher At Start Of New Year

By Nurul Hanis Izmir

KUALA LUMPUR -- The crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade higher next week, buoyed by expectations of stronger buying momentum from China and ahead of the Chinese New Year.

“We would like to enter 2018 with our inventory declining to two million tonnes from the current 2.5 million tonnes,” Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Derivative Dealer, David Ng told Bernama.

He also said besides the Chinese buyers, most international purchasers would likely join the fray and help push the commodity’s price to between RM2,350 and RM2,450 per tonne.
For the week just ended, the market traded mixed.

It earlier traded higher on the back of good export figures.

It was reported that exports of Malaysian palm oil products from Dec 1-25 rose one per cent from a month earlier.

Towards the end of the week, the CPO price fell, dragged down by a higher ringgit versus the US dollar.

It was also tracking the performance of the soybean oil on the Chicago Board of Trade.

The market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2018 increased RM37 to RM2,444 per tonne, February 2018 rose RM51 to RM2,481 per tonne, March 2018 jumped RM52 to RM2,503 per tonne and April 2018 was RM54 higher at RM2,521 per tonne.

Weekly turnover depreciated to 103,955 lots from 223,518 lots last Friday and open interest shed 272,396 contracts from 297,310 contracts.

On the physical market, January South was RM40 higher at RM2,450 per tonne.

Rubber Market Likely To Remain Subdued

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to remain subdued next week on weak demand with traders still away in the early part of the new year, dealers said.

A dealer said the commodity price would likely move sideways and also depend on market supply, alongside the ringgit’s performance.

The movement of the rubber futures on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) will also influence prices on the domestic market next week.

For the week just ended, the rubber market reacted positively earlier to a report that top rubber producing countries had decided to withhold natural rubber (NR) exports of 350,000 tonnes with immediate effect until March 31, 2018.

The International Rubber Tripartite Council (ITRC) announced the implementation of the Fifth Agreed Export Tonnage Scheme (AETS) by Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia. Under the framework, the three countries would also cooperate to increase NR consumption domestically.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's noon price for tyre-grade SMR 20 was nine sen higher at 580.5 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk increased 10 sen to 462.0 sen a kg.

The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 jumped 17.5 sen to 590 sen a kg, but latex-in-bulk rose 13 sen to 462.5 sen a kg.

The local market will be closed on Monday for the New Year holiday.

OPR Hike Prospect Likely To Fuel KLIBOR Interest

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade higher next week on the prospect of a hike in the overnight policy night rate by Bank Negara Malaysia.

For the week just ended, the market was untraded with open interest remaining at nil.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, January 2018, February 2018, March 2018 and June 2018 were all pegged at 96.55, 96.53, 96.50 and 96.45 respectively.

The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR on the cash market remained at 3.43 per cent on Friday.
KLTM Expected To Start 2018 On A Downtrend

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to start 2018 on a downtrend next week with traders anticipated to take profits off the table, following the commodity's current high price.

A dealer said the tin price on the local market had appreciated to US$19,670 a tonne on Friday, compared to the US$19,410 a tonne recorded last Friday.
"We are expecting a technical correction next week because it has rebounded quite a lot. With that, we see potential for profit-taking," he added.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the price on the KLTM rose by US$260 to US$19,670 per tonne from US$19,410 per tonne last week.

On the LME, it improved by US$575 to end at US$19,950 a tonne from US$19,375 a tonne previously.

Turnover for the holiday-shortened week declined to 161 tonnes from the 246 tonnes recorded last week.

The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday.

On the price differential between the KLTM and LME, the latter was on a discount of US$280 per tonne compared with a premium of US$35 per tonne last week.

Next Monday, the market will be closed for the New Year holiday.

Gold Futures To Trade Higher Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to trade higher next week in tracking the strong gains on the New York Commodity Exchange's (COMEX) gold futures market, said Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Dealer, Chang Hui Ying.

She said market focus would be on the US employment data, set to be released next Friday, which would indicate the condition of the world's biggest economy.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, December 2017 rose 32 ticks to RM168.70 a gramme, January 2018 increased 26 ticks to RM169.00 a gramme, while February 2018 and March 2018 gained 17 ticks each to RM169.25 and RM169.95 a gramme respectively.

Weekly turnover surged to 20 lots worth RM338,725, from 14 lots worth RM199,190 last week, while open interest on Friday narrowed slightly to 101 contracts from 103 contracts.

The market was closed on Monday for the Christmas holiday