BERNAMA
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WEEKLY BUSINESS ROUNDUP JULY 21 - JULY 25, 2014

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This Week's Highlight :
Flying Still Safe Despite Tragedies - IATA Chief

FLYING IS SAFE..International Air Transport Association (IATA) Director and Chief Executive Officer Tony Tyler said getting on an aircraft was still among the safest activities that one could do as safeguarding customers from harm during transportation around the world was core to the mission of the aviation industry. fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR-- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has maintained that flying is safe and that safety is its number one priority despite three tragedies in quick succession and events in the past seven days. In a statement here Friday, its Director/Chief Executive Officer, Tony Tyler, said every day, approximately 100,000 flights took to the sky and landed without incident. "In 2013, over three billion people flew and there were 210 fatalities. Regrettably, we have surpassed that number already this year," he said.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

No Merger With RHB & MBSB If There Are Unfavourable Risks – Nazir

KUALA LUMPUR -- CIMB Group Chief Executive Datuk Seri Nazir Razak said that there will be no merger between the bank, RHB Capital Bhd and Malaysia Building Society Bhd (MBSB) if there are any possible unfavourable risks.

"If we felt that the merger brought unfavourable risks to CIMB, there will be no merger. It is the responsibility of the management team to basically negotiate and come out with a deal that's good for all the shareholders. "I'm sure that in this case, all the management teams, including RHB and MBSB, will be doing the same," he told reporters at the CIMB Iftar dinner with CIMB Foundation's beneficiaries here Monday.

Tuesday

Pemudah Success In Simplifying Business Licences

PUTRAJAYA -- A total of nine business licences have been abolished, while 717 more have been re-engineered and simplified into 448 business licences at federal level, according to The Special Taskforce to Facilitate Business (Pemudah) Annual Report 2013. A total of 392 government agencies have implemented e-payment service providing 708 services compared with 250 agencies and 551 services in the previous year, said the report here Tuesday.

Wednesday

Govt's Financial Position Getting Stronger – MOF

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Ministry of Finance (MOF) is confident that the government's financial position would continue to be stronger to ensure sustainable development for the well-being of the people. Its Secretary-General, Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah said in a statement here Wednesday, the country's positive economic prospects would be able to support fiscal reform measures as planned.

Thursday

Airline Passenger Yields To Pick Up Next 12 Months – IATA

KUALA LUMPUR -- Airline passenger yields are expected to increase during the next 12 months, reversing the decline recorded in the second quarter of this year, says the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Based on its July survey results, 42 per cent of respondents projected that the outlook points to a positive reversal in the trend. "The outlook is supported by growth in air transport demand and potentially also by capacity management, since the view is for a solid rebound in passenger yields ahead," the survey said.

Friday

M'sia Can Become A Digital Economy By 2020 – Ahmad Shabery

PUTRAJAYA -- Malaysia can meet the challenge of becoming a digital economy by 2020 with the increasing daily use of new technology, said Communication and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek. Speaking at a media conference on Digital Malaysia "State of the Digital Economy" Update here Friday, he said with the rapid development in the digital world and the digital-based economy, the information and communication technology (ICT) sector could contribute to the growth of the Gross National Income (GNI) by 2020 by 17 percent compared to 10.5 percent in 2010.

SMEbrief

Sabah Confident Of Bumiputera Business Growth

KOTA KINABALU -- The Sabah government is confident that the state's robust economy will spur the growth of Bumiputera businesses. Speaking at the breaking of fast with Kumpulan Warisan Harta Sabah Sdn Bhd, the Malay Entrepreneurs and Merchants Association (Perdasama), Sabah Bumiputera Chamber of Commerce, and the Sabah Chapter of the Malaysian Malay Chamber of Commerce, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman said more Bumiputera entrepreneurs would succeed through painstaking planning and resolve along with continuous collaboration and smart partnership with related organisations.

Farmers Get Higher Income Through Ladang Merdeka Project

BACHOK -- Farmers participating in the Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority (Kada)'s 'Ladang Merdeka Kampung Kolam' project here have been able to increase their crop yield to more than seven tonnes per hectare. Kada Managing Director Mohd Rais Mohd Arifin said that with better crop yield, some of the farmers were able to reap income of nearly RM10,000. "The project, covering 43 hectares and involving 146 participants, produces more than 287 tonnes of padi this season, which is the highest compared with the other 16 Ladang Merdeka projects in the state," he told reporters at the presentation of tithe and share of income to the farmers here Thursday.

Risda Distributes RM154 Mln As Rubber Price Slump Special Aid

HULU SELANGOR -- Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (Risda) has distributed RM154 million as Rubber Price Slump Special Aid. Of the total, RM130 million were distributed to 260,000 smallholders, while the remaining RM24 million were given to 48,000 rubber tappers registered under Risda. Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal told reporters here Thursday, the special aid was given with the aim to help alleviate the burden of smallholders during the unstable condition concerning global rubber prices.

MHDC To Hold Handicraft Promo In Kemaman, Terengganu

KUALA TERENGGANU -- The Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation (MHDC) will hold a handicraft promotion in Terengganu to commemorate the 57th Merdeka anniversary.Terengganu MHDC director Mohd Latif Dirun said the 10-day programme will be held at Jalan Padang carnival site in Cukai, Kemaman from Aug 21 to Aug 30. "This promotion is one of our efforts in developing craft products and to provide career opportunities to young entrepreneurs besides generating income."Activities lined-up include sale of craft products, exhibition of craft products, performing arts and cooking demonstrations," he said in a statement here Tuesday.

PropUP Property*update*

Komtar JBCC Targets One Mln Shoppers By Year-End

JOHOR BAHARU -- The Komtar Johor Baharu City Centre (Komtar JBCC), a new shopping mall in the city, has targeted one million local and Singaporean shoppers a month when it is fully open by year-end. Jcorp president and chief executive officer Datuk Kamaruzzaman Abu Kassim said more retail outlets would be open for business by then while the first Angry Birds Park in Southeast Asia, on level three, would start operations in October. "Currently, only 23 new retail outlets are open and the number is expected to increase to 130 by year-end," he told reporters after accompanying Johor Menteri Besar and JCorp chairman Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin on a visit to the complex here Monday.

I- Berhad Eyes Partnership With Land Owners

SHAH ALAM -- I-Berhad, the developer of i-City here, is eyeing more joint ventures with local partners to undertake urban development projects in its next phase of growth plan. The company was scouring for land owners, owning between 12 and 20 hectares of land, to jointly develop the Malaysian MSC and tourism-concept development projects, I-Berhad Deputy Chairman Datuk Eu Hong Chew told a media conference after attending I-Berhad's extraordinary general meeting here Tuesday.

M'sian Developers Keen To Tap London Market

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian developers are keen to tap the London property market with a handful of the new players sizing up the market there. These companies were looking for sites of less than two hectares which offered them the opportunity to regenerate the property, Knight Frank Malaysia Sdn Bhd Associate Director, Herbert Leong, said at a media briefing on the London property market here Wednesday.

Construction Costs To Be Stable Next Year Despite GST

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maybank IB Research expects construction costs to be stable next year while the Goods and Services Tax impact to be muted. In a statement here Wednesday, the research house said several developments from the country's mega projects had added confidence that news would remain positive into 2015. "In the near term, key construction job flows are expected from Refinery And Petrochemical Integrated Development and several new highways in Greater Kuala Lumpur/ Klang Valley," it said.

Boustead Acquires Port Klang Land For RM310 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Boustead Holdings Bhd (BHB) is expanding its presence in the oil and gas sector, with the proposed acquisition of land in Klang for RM310 million. The acquisition comprises nine parcels with a combined area of 28.28 hectares in Pulau Indah and includes prime sea-fronting land, it said in a statement here Wednesday.

MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard
Gainers - 419
Losers - 406
Not Traded - 458
Unchanged - 352
Value - 1626921396
Volume - 17025876

BURSA: CI Marginally Higher On Last-Minute Buying In Heavyweights

KUALA LUMPUR -- Last-minute buying in selected heavyweights pushed the local benchmark to close slightly positive, dealers said. At 5 pm, the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) was 0.29 of a point higher at 1,877.34, after moving between 1,868.14 and 1,879.59 throughout the day.

A dealer said most major Asian stock markets were also higher Friday, after U.S. unemployment claims fell to an eight-year low and tensions over the downing of a Malaysia Airlines jetliner eased. The generally positive sentiment was fuelled by favourable US jobs data indicating that the world's largest economy is continuing to recover.

Investors have been on the sidelines since Flight MH17 was shot down last week over a part of eastern Ukraine controlled by pro-Russian separatists, killing all 298 people on board. However, the dealer said fears of aggressive sanctions against Russia, a major energy producer with close economic ties with Europe, have dimmed somewhat, boosting appetite for riskier assets such as stocks. Losers led gainers by 419 to 406, with 352 counters unchanged, 458 untraded and 39 others suspended. Total volume decreased to 1.7 billion units valued at RM1.63 billion from 2.03 billion units valued at RM1.99 billion transacted on Thursday. The market will be closed on Monday and Tuesday next week for Hari Raya Aidilfitri holidays and will resume trading on Wednesday.

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.1730	3.1760
EUR	4.2661	4.2711
GBP	5.3836	5.3894
100 YEN	3.1126	3.1168
SGD	2.5560	2.5586

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Marginally Higher On Renewed Demand

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed marginally higher against the US dollar and other major currencies Friday on renewed demand for the domestic currency. At 5 pm, the local note was quoted at 3.1730/1760 against the greenback from Thursday's 3.1735/1755. It rose against the Singapore dollar to 2.5560/5586 from 2.5630/5656 on Thursday and appreciated against the yen to 3.1126/1168 from Thursday's 3.1248/1276.

The local unit also strengthened against the British pound to 5.3836/3894 from Thursday's 5.3997/4041 and gained against the Euro to 4.2661/2711 from 4.2785/2825 Thursday. There is no interbank activity here on July 28 and 29 as the market will be closed for the Aidilfitri holiday.

Money Market: Short- Term Rates Close Stable

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed stable Friday following Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM19.27 billion from the RM24.15 billion estimated in the morning, while in the Islamic system, it was trimmed to RM2.40 billion from RM8.82 billion. In the morning, BNM conducted four conventional money market tenders, a repo tender and an Islamic range-maturity auction.

At the 11am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.59 per cent. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.22 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.26 per cent, 3.29 per cent and 3.32 per cent respectively.

There is no interbank activity on July 28 and 29 as the market will be closed for the Hari Raya Aidilfitri holiday.

KLIBOR Futures End The Week Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed untraded Friday. August 2014, September 2014, October 2014 and December 2014 stood at 96.35,96.35, 96.30 and 96.25, respectively. Open interest stood at 3,100 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.59 per cent. The market will be closed on July 28 and 29 for the Hari Raya holidays.

KLCI Futures Close Mixed

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed mixed Friday amid the better underlying cash market, dealers said. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Low Cheng Yang told Bernama that the FBM KLCI finished marginally higher as it reversed the earlier losses incurred by utility stocks. "Spot month futures contract ended differently. It was 3.0 points lower after exhibiting volatile trading session in line with the underlying cash market on Friday, as investors went bargain hunting during the intraday low near the 1,870 level," he said.

Meanwhile, he said the benchmark index for next week was seen to be on upside bias with little magnitude, and trading volume was expected to be thinner than on normal days as the nation celebrates Hari Raya Aidilfitri on Monday and Tuesday. At the close, spot month July 2014 fell 3.0 points to 1,874, August 2014 eased half a point to 1,874, September 2014 earned half a point to 1,871.5 and December 2014 rose 2.0 points to 1,872.

Turnover advanced to 22,119 lots from 12,765 lots on Thursday, while open interest increased to 55,747 contracts from 40,507 contracts. The benchmark FBM KLCI ended the day 0.29 of a point better at 1,877.34.

Turkiye Finans Issues RM800 Mln Sukuk Murabahah

KUALA LUMPUR -- TF Varlik Kiralama, a wholly-owned asset leasing company of Turkiye Finans Katilim Bankasi AS and Turkish-based participation bank, has issued a RM800 million sukuk under its inaugural RM3 billion Sukuk Murabahah Programme. In a statement here Monday, the bank said it is the first issuance by a Turkish issuer of Malaysian Ringgit denominated sukuk, in the Malaysian debt capital market.

BSN Expects Retail Spending To Grow To RM240 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Simpanan Nasional (BSN) Bhd expects retail spending this year to grow by about 100 per cent to RM240 million from RM100 million last year. For the first six months of this year, BSN said retail spending increased by about 45 per cent. Its Vice President/Head of Card Business Division, Mohd Sofian Amirudin, told reporters here Monday, the positive target was driven by likely increase in the number of BSN Visa Debit cardholders of one million.

BNM Likely To Maintain Current OPR Till Year-End

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is likely to maintain the current overnight policy rate (OPR) for the rest of the year, says the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER). Its executive director, Dr Zakariah Abdul Rashid, said the recent increase of 25 basis points was timely to curb the rising inflation and high household debt. "I don't think there will be a new increase in the immediate future. We have to monitor it closely because the upward adjustment of 25 basis points was only done in July. "Let's see how the economic environment react to it," he told a media briefing here Tuesday.

BNM International Reserves At RM423.8 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bank Negara Malaysia's international reserves amounted to RM423.8 billion (equivalent to US$131.9 billion) as at July 14, 2014. "The reserves position is sufficient to finance 8.9 months of retained imports and is 1.3 times the short-term external debt," the central bank said in a statement here Tuesday.

HSBC Wins Five Awards At Euromoney Awards

KUALA LUMPUR -- Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp (HSBC) Ltd won five awards at the recent Euromoney Asia awards ceremony in Hong Kong.In a statement here Wednesday, HSBC said it was named Best Bank in Asia in the Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2014, Best Flow House in Asia, Best Risk Adviser in Asia, Best Bank in Hong Kong and Best Investment Bank in Hong Kong.

MDV To Explore Other Tech Sectors For Financing Programme

By Siti Radziah Hamzah

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Debt Venture Bhd (MDV) has submitted a strategic paper to the government in its quest to promote more technology companies in the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP). MDV had sought a RM100 million fund in the 11MP to help technology companies bridge the gap between post research and development, and pre-commercialisation, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Md Zubir Ansori Yahaya told Bernama in a recent interview.

MRT Corporation Expects Danainfra To Issue Another Round Of Sukuk

PETALING JAYA -- MRT Corporation expects Danainfra Nasional Bhd to issue another round of sukuk by year-end for the purpose of financing the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT project. When asked about the expected value, MRT Corporation Chief Executive Officer Datuk Wira Azhar Abdul Hamid told reporters that it would depend on the company's cash flow requirements at the time, but noted, it would not be big.

CIMB's Regional Ambition Stays Despite Merger Talks At Home

By Minggu Simon Lhasa

BANGKOK -- CIMB Group Holdings Bhd, which is currently in the early stage of merger talks with RHB Capital Bhd and Malaysia Building Society Bhd (MBSB), is eyeing regional expansion opportunities through organic or inorganic growth. Its Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Nazir Razak said the group hoped to have a presence in all Asean countries, possibly before the implementation of Asean Economic Community on January 1 next year.

CIMB Islamic Bank Allocates RM148,000 For CSR Programmes In Perlis

ARAU -- CIMB Islamic Bank has allocated RM148,000 to carry out various community programmes in Perlis under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative said its Chief Executive Officer Badlisyah Abdul Ghani. Badlisyah said the community programmes carried out under the CSR initiative were 'Kasih Sejernih Air', 'Asnaf Berdikari', 'Pusat Sumber Teratak Rahmat Persatuan Al-Islah Perlis', and 'Sentuhan Kasih MAIPs' (Majlis Agama Islam Perlis).

"We identify the targetted groups to provide assistance and improve their living standard," said Badlisyah when handing the assistance and later launching the CIMB Islamic Bank Berhad's community based programme with MAIPs and HalFest Shapers Sdn Bhd at Kompleks Persatuan Al-Islah Perlis in Mata Ayer, near here Wednesday night.

Micron Proposes US$750 Mln Offering Of Senior Notes

KUALA LUMPUR -- Micron Technology, Inc. intends to offer, subject to market and other considerations, $750 million (RM2.4 billion) aggregate principal amount of senior notes due 2025.The Notes will be made available through an offering to qualified institutional buyers pursuant to Rule 144A under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act"), and outside the United States to non-U.S. persons pursuant to Regulation S under the Securities Act, said a statement issued Thursday by the company in Boise, Idaho (US).

Sasbadi Posts RM4.04 Mln Pre-Tax Profit For Q3

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sasbadi Holdings Bhd, en route for listing on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia on Wednesday, posted a pre-tax profit of RM4.04 million for the third quarter ended May 31, 2014 on the back of RM17.94 million revenue. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Monday, the company said the quarterly report was announced pursuant to the listing requirements which required it to announce Sasbadi's latest results at least two market days before the listing date.

IGEM 2014 Expected To Generate RM1.2 Bln In Business Leads

KUALA LUMPUR -- The International Greentech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference Malaysia (IGEM) 2014 to held in October is expected to generate RM1.2 billion worth of business leads. Themed, "Generating Green Wealth", the business leads could later be translated into business transactions. "They can result in product orders, business joint ventures or investment in manufacturing of green technology," said Malaysian Green Technology Corporation Chief Executive Officer Ahmad Hadri Haris here Monday.

BMW M'sia Sales Rise To 4,274 Vehicles

KUALA LUMPUR -- BMW Malaysia Sdn Bhd has delivered a total of 4,274 vehicles to its customers in the first half of the year, a 13 per cent sales increase from 3,795 vehicles delivered in the same period last year. Of the total delivery for the period under review, 3,724 vehicles were of the BMW brand, 296 MINI and the remaining 254 were BMW Motorrads. Chief Executive Officer Dr Gerhard Pils said in a statement here Tuesday, 2014 was already shaping to be another positive year for the company.

Maxis Service Revenue Up To RM2.05 Bln In Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maxis Bhd's service revenue for the second quarter ended June 30, 2014 rose by 0.6 per cent to RM2.05 billion compared with the first quarter this year. In a statement here Tuesday, Maxis said mobile Internet and value-added services revenue rose by eight per cent during the same period, while earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation margin on service revenue improved 0.5 percentage point to 53.5 per cent.

Ford Motor Confident Of Ending 2014 On A Positive Note

SHAH ALAM -- Ford Motor Company is confident of ending the year on a positive note based on last year's performance which was the best annual record in 20 years where sales rose 50 per cent to 10,660 units. Contributing to this superlative performance was the Ford Ranger variant which contributed up to 50 per cent of sales in Malaysia while the Fiesta variant accounted for 30 per cent and other Ford vehicles made up the remaining 20 per cent, its Sales and Marketing Director, Veemala Rethinasamy, said here Tuesday.

Heng Huat Posts RM3.75 Mln Pre-Tax Profit For Q1

KUALA LUMPUR -- Heng Huat Resources Group Bhd, en route for listing on Bursa Malaysia's ACE Market on Friday, posted a pre-tax profit of RM3.75 million for the first quarter ended March 31, 2014 compared with RM3 million in the same period a year ago. Revenue increased RM21.31 million from RM16.1 million previously, driven largely by the increased demand and higher average selling prices for the group's oil palm empty fruit bunch (EFB) fibre exports, Heng Huat said in a statement here Tuesday.

BAT Q2 Pre-Tax Profit Increases To RM330.45 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- British American Tobacco (M) Bhd's (BAT) pre-tax profit for the second quarter ended June 30, 2014 rose to RM330.45 million from RM281.74 million in the same quarter of last year. Revenue increased to RM1.23 billion from the RM1.16 billion previously, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday.

CCM Eyes Cooperative Revenue Of Over RM50 Bln By 2020

KUANTAN -- The Cooperative Commission of Malaysia (CCM) targets to achieve a revenue of more than RM50 billion by 2020 with the impending amendment to the Cooperative Act 1993. Through the amendment several regulations would be strengthened further, which would make the nation's cooperative sector more developed to be on par with the cooperatives in Europe and Scandinavia, its Executive Chairman Datuk Nik Ali Mat Yunus said after witnessing the zakat presentation by the Pahang cooperative operators here Tuesday night.

Westports Posts Higher Pre-Tax Profit In 1st Six Months

KUALA LUMPUR -- Westports Holdings Bhd posted a higher pre-tax profit of RM280.34 million for its first six months ended June 30, 2014, from RM251.95 million recorded in the same period last year. Revenue rose to RM772.18 million versus RM750.08 million a year ago while its basic earnings per share increased to 6.79 sen from 6.61 sen previously. In a statement here Wednesday, the company said that the stellar financial performance was achieved due to the robust growth in the container segment.

CIMB's Thai Asset Management Unit Sees Strong Growth

By Minggu Simon Lhasa

BANGKOK -- CIMB Group's asset management unit in Thailand expects to record a profit next year and becomes the top 10 asset management companies in Thailand within 12 months. The company gets a big boost to achieve the target following the 225 million baht acquisition by CIMB-Principal Asset Management Company Limited in Thailand (CPAMCL) of Finansa Asset Management Limited (FAM), the Group Chief Executive Datuk Seri Nazir Razak said here Wednesday.

Boeing Reports Increase In Q2 Revenue To US$22 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Boeing Company reported a one per cent increase in second quarter revenue to US$22 billion reflecting higher commercial deliveries. In releasing its financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2014, the global aviation company said that backlog remains strong at US$440 billion, with over 5,200 commercial airplane orders. "Strong operating performance across our production programmes and services businesses drove revenue and earnings-per-share growth and healthy operating cash flow, which supported US$1.5 billion in additional share repurchases in the quarter," Boeing Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jim McNerney said in a statement here Thursday.

AirAsia Reconnects Kuala Lumpur To Cebu

KUALA LUMPUR -- AirAsia has reconnected Kuala Lumpur to Cebu in the Philippines. The flight to the oldest city in that country, took off today with a 70 per cent load. The Kuala Lumpur-Cebu sector was previously serviced by AirAsia Philippines and terminated in December last year. AirAsia is the only airline to operate the three-times weekly direct flight between the two cities, said AirAsia in a statement here Thursday.

Public Bank's Q2 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM1.37 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public Bank Bhd's pre-tax profit for the second quarter ended June 30, 2014 grew to RM1.37 billion from RM1.34 billion registered in the corresponding period last year. The revenue was also higher at RM4.06 billion during the period under review, from RM3.8 billion recorded previously. At the group level, its pre-tax profit grew by 3.2 per cent to RM2.7 billion during the same period.

MAHB Records Q2 Pre-Tax Loss Of RM37.729 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) reported a pre-tax loss of RM37.729 million for the second quarter ended June 30, 2014 from a pre-tax profit of RM132.055 million for the same period a year ago. Revenue, however, increased to RM1.175 billion in the quarter from RM978.102 million for the corresponding period of a year ago. MAHB in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday said the pre-tax loss was mainly due to a higher share of associate losses, higher depreciation and amortisation, higher operating costs, higher finance cost and impairment of investment.

GST To Generate Additional Revenue Of RM3 Bln In 1st Year

KUCHING -- The government expects to earn an additional revenue of RM3 billion in the first year the Goods and Services Tax (GST) introduction starting April next year, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said. He said the additional revenue was expected to increase to RM9 billion in the second year of the GST implementation and the extra income would be spent for the benefit of the people, he told reporters after visiting the Kubah Ria Retail Complex here Thursday.

Reach Energy Aims To Seal Asset Acquisition In 12-18 Months

KUALA LUMPUR -- Reach Energy Bhd, enroute to a listing on Bursa Malaysia next month, plans to seal its acquisition of assets in 12-18 months.

"We have a handful of assets being evaluated but it will take time to conclude the deals due to regulatory and shareholders approval process," Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Shahul Hamid Mohd Ismail told reporters after the launch of the company's prospectus in conjunction with its initial public offering, here Thursday.

CIMB Niaga Reports Net Profit Of RP1.95 Trillion In 1st Half

KUALA LUMPUR -- PT Bank CIMB Niaga Tbk (CIMB Niaga) reported an unaudited consolidated net profit of Rp1.95 trillion in the first six months of 2014, down 8.5 per cent from Rp2.13 trillion reported in the corresponding period in 2013. This translates to earnings per share (EPS) of Rp77.7 and a return on equity (ROE) of 14.5 per cent. The decrease in net profit is mainly due to a narrow increase in net interest income and lower fee income as a result of challenging operating conditions, the group said in a statement here Thursday.

Terengganu Felda Allocates RM6.7 Mln To Pay Dividend To Settlers

KUALA TERENGGANU -- Terengganu Felda has allocated RM6.7 million in dividend and 'duit raya' for 7,459 families of Felda settlers in the state this year. Speaking at the presentation of donation of RM20,179.80 collected from Terengganu Felda settlers for Gaza Relief Fund here Thursday, its General Manager, Mohd Helmi Fakhzan Abdul Wahab said the amount comprised RM2.12 million in 'duit raya' and RM4.58 million in Felda Global Ventures Holdings (FGVH) Berhad's dividend.

Gadang Posts Q4 Pre-Tax Profit Of RM12.91 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gadang Holdings Bhd's pre-tax profit for the fourth quarter (4Q) ended May 31, 2014 rose to RM12.91 million from RM5.92 million in the same period last year. Revenue also increased to RM138.75 million from RM97.32 million previously, it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday. "The increase in revenue and profit before tax was a result of higher contribution from construction activities," it said.

GSC To Continue Expansion Plans

SEREMBAN -- Golden Screen Cinemas Sdn Bhd (GSC), Malaysia's leading film exhibitor and distributor, will continue its expansion plan with the setting up of four new cinemas by year-end, says GSC Chief Executive Officer Koh Mei Lee. Speaking at the opening of a 10-screen GSC Palm Mall here on Thursday, she said the four cinemas would be located in GSC Klang Parade, GSC Quill City Mall Kuala Lumpur, GSC Ipoh Parade and another flagship cinema, GSC NuSentral.

Keep An Eye On Canada's New Halal Guideline - Matrade

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian exporters are advised to keep an eye on the new halal guideline in Canada, said Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade). In a statement here Monday, Matrade said the Canadian government has introduced a new guideline on labelling of halal food products that would be enforced in April 2016. "Among others, the guideline requires halal claims on food labels, packaging or advertising materials to include the entire name of the certifying body or person," it said.

Sona Petroleum To Buy Stake In Salamander Energy Bualuang

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sona Petroleum Bhd via its wholly-owned unit, Sona Exploration and Production (Thailand) Ltd (SEPT), is acquiring a 40 per cent equity interest in Salamander Energy (Bualuang) Ltd (SEBL) from Salamander Energy (Bualuang Holdings) Ltd (SEBHL) for about RM895.2 million. Sona Petroleum in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday said the proposed transaction gives SEPT a 40 per cent effective participating interest in the B8/38 and G4/50 oilfield concession in the Gulf of Thailand.

iContro To Expand Business To Asean

KUALA LUMPUR -- iContro Software Sdn Bhd (iContro), a leading local Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) provider, is looking to expand its business to the Asean region with an "Asian Business Culture-infused system". iContro said after making an impact in Malaysia, it is now seeing increasing demand for its product in Singapore and has managed to clinch a deal from a public-listed company in that country. "This is a great start and we are confident of generating sales revenue of about S$3 million by year-end," said Chief Executive Officer Frank Lee in a statement here Monday.

Govt Looking At Ways To Overcome Rubber Price Slump

SIK -- The government will consider several measures to be implemented in the near future to overcome the slump in rubber prices and reduce its impact on local smallholders. Regional and Rural Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal told a news conference here Monday, among the measures which could be taken to increase productivity were using a good clone, implementing a tapping and fertilisation system as well as effectively implementing existing technology.

MAA Revises Upwards 2014 Auto Sales Forecast To 680,000 Units

PETALING JAYA -- The Malaysian Automotive Association (MAA) has revised upwards its total industry volume (TIV) forecast to 680,000 units for 2014, on the back of improving economic conditions. MAA president, Datuk Aishah Ahmad, said in a preview of the market in the first half of 2014, here Tuesday, the economy was expected to maintain its growth momentum in the second half of the year in line with the forecast growth rate of between 5-5.5 per cent for 2014 as announced by the government.

UTM Set To Produce More Biohealth Entrepreneurs

JOHOR BAHARU -- Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is confident of producing more new biohealth entrepreneurs through collaborative efforts and sharing of expertise with Geron Biomed Sdn Bhd. The partnership would enable more research and development activities and entrepreneurship programmes to be pursued, UTM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Wahid Omar told reporters after signing a memorandum of understanding on the collaboration here Tuesday.

M'sia's FDI Equity Inflow Into India Reaches RM1.72 Bln

By Saraswathi Muniappan

NEW DELHI -- Malaysia's foreign direct investment (FDI) equity inflow into India between April 2000 and May 2014 amounted to US$543.04 million (RM1.72 billion), said Minister of Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman. Investments have been received from Malaysian companies in various sectors including construction development: township, housing, built-up infrastructure and construction-development projects, Nirmala said in a written reply in Parliament here Wednesday.

M'sian Consumer Confidence Remains Firm In Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's Consumer Confidence Index (CPI) remained firm in the second quarter of this year with an increase of only one index point to 93 points compared with the previous quarter. According to the Nielsen Global Survey of Consumer Confidence and Spending Intentions, it was encouraging to see that Malaysian consumer confidence remained at the previous levels given all the untimely events in Malaysia in the first half of 2014. Country Manager of Nielsen Malaysia, Richard Hall, said here Wednesday, expectations were that consumer confidence would decline given the unfortunate incident of flight MH370, questions around the goods and services tax implementation and the tightening credit control.

Bernama Subsidiary To Venture Into Travel & Tourism Sector
By Harizah Hanim

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bernama Systems & Solutions Advisor Sdn Bhd (BESSAR), a subsidiary of the Malaysian national news agency BERNAMA mainly involved in developing ICT solutions, is diversifying into the travel and tourism sector, it was announced here Thursday. BESSAR's Chief Executive Officer Muniyati Muhamad said BESSAR had decided to purchase a 60 per cent stake in Goodwill Travel and Tours Sdn Bhd, an established travel company.

Asean Banks Face High Household Leverage As Credit Cycle Peaks
SINGAPORE -- Moody's Investors Service says the long positive credit cycle that has benefited banks in the Asean region may be on the verge of peaking. This will in turn introduce new challenges for lenders as pockets of asset-quality risk emerge due to tighter global monetary conditions. A Moody's Assistant Vice President and Analyst, Simon Chen said: "Our central scenario is that banking systems in Asean will be broadly resilient to the financial impact of a shift in interest rates. "But we expect an uptick in non-performing loans (NPLs), particularly in the household segment", said Chen on Moody's just-released report, "Rising Household Leverage Poses Risks to Asean Banks as the Economic Cycle Shifts".

Zelan Bags RM248.5 Mln Contract From Petronas
KUALA LUMPUR -- Zelan Bhd's unit, Zelan Construction Sdn Bhd (ZCSB), has received a RM248.5 million contract from Petronas Refinery and Petrochemical Corp Sdn Bhd. The contract is for the provision of basic design, detailed engineering, procurement, construction & commissioning of material for off-loading facilities jetty at Tanjung Setapa for the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (Rapid) project at Pengerang, Johor. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday, the group said the contract duration for the works is 18 months.

Sync Media Secures Funding To Develop School Communication Platform
KUALA LUMPUR -- Cradle Investment Programme (CIP) catalyst recipient, Sync Media (M) Sdn Bhd, has secured a RM250,000 funding from a local angel investor to develop its School Communication Platform. In a statement here Thursday, CIP said the platform offered a mobile solution that aimed to break down the barriers of communication between teachers and parents. Sync founder/chief executive officer, Muhammad Zharif Md Sarif, said the investment would go to expand the company's sales team and hire developers to perfect the platform for both Android and iOS environments.

MRCB To Buy 51 Pct Stake In Penang Sentral For RM50.75 Mln
KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd (MRCB) has entered into a share sale agreement with Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd (PHB) to acquire the latter's entire 51 per cent equity interest in Penang Sentral Sdn Bhd (PSSB) for RM50.751 million. The purchase will increase MRCB's stake in PSSB to 100 per cent. The acquisition would be financed via internally generated funds and/or bank borrowings, MRCB said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday.

MIER's Claim Inaccurate - Deputy Minister
PUTRAJAYA -- Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong has described as inaccurate a claim made by the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) that the government's financial performance in the first quarter of this year was weak and the national debt had exceeded the ceiling. He said although the debt was high, there was still room for the economy to grow and move in a healthy manner and would not affect the 2015 Budget. "If we look at the analyses made by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund or rating agencies, they do not paint an impression like MIER's. "There is still room for improvement to ensure low unemployment rate and the country's fiscal situation is safeguarded," he told reporters after chairing a meeting on "Focus Group: Enhancing Quality of Life and Happiness Index", here Thursday.

Four Firms In Iskandar M'sia Get Facilitation Fund of RM16.2 Mln
JOHOR BAHARU -- Four companies have received the facilitation fund amounting to RM16.2 million from TERAJU@Iskandar Malaysia in an information sharing programme on business opportunities and assistance for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Iskandar Malaysia Wednesday night. Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) Chief Executive Datuk Ismail Ibrahim said in a statement here Thursday, the information sharing programme jointly organised with the Bumiputera Agenda Steering Unit (TERAJU) is an annual event and aimed at explaining the programmes to help local Bumiputera entrepreneurs develop their business.

MITI Discontinues Review On Petition Against Newsprint Imports
KUALA LUMPUR -- The International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) has discontinued an administrative review to determine whether anti-dumping duties should be imposed on newsprint rolls imports. The investigation was initiated on Jan 30, 2014 following a petition from Malaysian Newsprint Industries Sdn. Bhd to the Investigating Authority, MITI said in a statement here Friday. It said the company claimed that newsprint imports from Canada, Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines and the US had hurt the domestic industry.

AmInvest Wins M'sia's Best Investment Management Company Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmInvest, AMMB Holdings Bhd's funds management arm, was named the country's "Best Investment Management Company" at the World Finance Management Awards 2014 for the third consecutive year. Chief Executive Officer Datin Maznah Mahbob said catering to the needs of its investors has been the number one priority of the company. "To be the only company in the world in the awards' history to win three years in a row for our funds management capabilities and commitment to excellence it truly gratifying," it said in a statement here Tuesday.

iCarnegie Global, Eduspec Sign Collaboration Pact

KUALA LUMPUR -- iCarnegie Global Learning, a strategy product and services business powered by Carnegie Mellon University, and Eduspec Holdings Sdn Bhd have signed a strategic collaboration agreement. In a joint statement here Tuesday, iCarnegie Global Learning and Eduspec said the agreement aimed to deliver a cutting-edge STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education curriculum focused on robotics and computer programming education for primary and secondary schools in the Asian Market.

DNex, Maybank To Offer Online Trade Financing Service

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dagang NeXchange Bhd (DNex) has formalised a collaboration agreement with Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) to provide a centralised online trade financing service by year-end. In a statement here Tuesday, DNex said under the collaboration, Maybank would use its online trade financing service to extend credit to exporters at competitive price.

TNB, Jimah East Power Sign Purchase Pact

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) has signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Jimah East Power Sdn Bhd for a 2,000-megawatt coal-fired electricity-generating facility in Port Dickson. Jimah East is the incorporated company of the consortium of 1Malaysia Development Bhd and Mitsui & Co Ltd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday, TNB said Jimah East would design, construct, own, operate and maintain the coal-fired electricity-generating facility in Mukim Jimah.

WCT Bhd Clinches RM341.878 Mln Job From Petronas

KUALA LUMPUR -- WCT Holdings Bhd's unit WCT Bhd has bagged a RM341.878 million from Petronas Refinery and Petrochemical Corp Sdn Bhd to build all the common permanent and temporary roads within the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development(RAPID) site at Pengerang, Johor. The company would also construct, among other things, the temporary drainage system, temporary drainage culverts, permanent bridges and road crossings, cable and utilities crossings, car and bus parking bays and material off loading facilities paving area, WCT said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Tuesday.

Celcom Makes Key Appointments To Further Strengthen Corporate, Operational Team

KUALA LUMPUR -- Celcom Axiata Bhd announced new key appointments and movements to further strengthen its corporate and overall operational management team. The company has appointed Zuraidah Datuk Jamaluddin as the new Chief Corporate Officer and Suresh Sidhu as the Chief Executive Officer of edotco. As for other realignment updates, Afizulazha Abdullah, who was formerly the Chief Digital Services Officer, is now the Chief Business Services and Solutions Officer, while Jefri Ahmad Tambi has been appointed as the Chief Corporate Communications and Government Liaison Officer.

Petronas Announces First Oil Production From Bentara Field

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Bentara field in the Balai Cluster Risk Service Contract (RSC) area, located offshore Sarawak, has achieved its first oil production on May 25, 2014, said Petroliam Nasional Bhd (Petronas). In a statement here Wednesday, it said the field, which was expected to produce over 1,000 barrels of oil per day was being developed and operated by BC Petroleum Sdn Bhd.

Royal Selangor Visitor Centre Gets TripAdvisor Certificate Of Excellence

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Royal Selangor Visitor Centre, one of the top attractions in Malaysia, has been awarded the TripAdvisor 2014 Certificate of Excellence for consistently achieving outstanding traveler reviews on the website. In a statement here Wednesday, executive director of Royal Selangor Marketing, Chen Tien Yue, said since its inauguration in March 2004, the centre has won the Malaysia Tourism 'Best Tourist Attraction Award' in the Category of Attraction with National Identity or Heritage, as well as the Asean Tourism Association Awards for Excellence as 'Best Asean New Tourist Attraction'.

Korean Products On Display At Mid-Valley City

KUALA LUMPUR-- Several South Korean companies are exhibiting agricultural, industrial and halal products besides cosmetics and wedding packages at the Mid-Valley Exhibition Centre here from Thursday until Saturday. Themed, "Korea Day 2014", a spokesman from the Korean Society in Malaysia said the exhibition is aimed at promoting business networking and showcasing Korean culture. He said the organisers expected a bigger turnout of 100,000 this time compared with 70,000 last year.

ShareInvestor To Hold Invest Fair M'sia On Aug 2-3

KUALA LUMPUR -- ShareInvestor, a leading financial Internet media and technology company, is organising its sixth annual edition of Invest Fair Malaysia on Aug 2-3, 2014. In a statement here Friday, ShareInvestor Chief Executive Officer Christopher Lee said: "This year marks the sixth time that we will host Invest Fair Malaysia. The growing interest among Malaysian investors and the unstinting support from sponsors, exhibitors and business have helped to contribute to the event's success. The two-day event will be held at the Mid Valley Exhibition Centre here.

Malaysians Rally Behind MAS Over MH17 Tragedy

By Salbiah Said

TRIBUTE... The flag bearer for the Malaysian contingent, Fatehah Mustafa, raised the Jalur Gemilang at half-mast while contingent members wore black armbands on their left arm to mark the flight MH17 tragedy at the official opening of the 20th edition of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow Thursday.--fotoBERNAMA

KUALA LUMPUR -- On July 17, Malaysians were jolted by the shocking news that Flight MH17 was believed to have been shot down in eastern Ukraine which resulted in the loss of 298 lives. The MH17 crash is the second catastrophe for Malaysia Airlines (MAS) this year, following the unsolved disappearance of Flight MH370 in March, which vanished with 239 passengers and crew on board on its way from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. The latest tragedy, involving another Boeing 777 triggered an outpouring of grief around the world, creating internet traffic to surge dramatically. The aircraft was reported to have been struck by a missile over the war-torn eastern Ukrain region of Donetsk.

Since then, the social media has been filled with comments expressing deep sadness for those aboard the ill-fated jet and great anger at those who brought it down. The double tragedy for MAS and the nation, has also brought Malaysians to express support for the national carrier. In the words of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak: “Regardless of nationality, we are all united in grief”.

Tribute To MAS

Facebook icon William Cheah in his tribute, says for the last 77 years, MAS, its crew and staff have been the flag bearers for Malaysia around the world. “Day in day out. Countless countries and people have experienced Malaysian Hospitality. It has been and still remains the pride of our nation. Since 1937. Before many of us were born. And it never failed us for decades. Granted it is ailing now. Part of it due to mismanagement, we can’t deny that. And also part of it due to global circumstances. But today, it is wounded badly. Shot by an unexpected enemy. An arrow that streaked from the ground and brought it crashing down on its knees. Its wings broken. I and many more true Malaysians will fight for it when it can’t defend itself much. We will raise it from its knees. We will bring it back to where it belongs. Soaring in the clouds and sky, carrying our flag, sharing our love and most of all, staking our claim of pride in the global arena”, says Cheah.

Outpouring Of Support

Malaysia’s Women Lifestyle website, Venusbuzz.com cited a caption on MAS website “Commitment to excellence remains at the heart of who we are”, which it says rings true to many. “No airline is perfect but in everything, one can always strive to improve, to be better than before. So let us continue to lend our support to MAS and our nation”, it says. “To our visitors, ‘Selamat Datang to Beautiful Malaysia’, and to Malaysians, welcome home” -That welcoming message never fails to warm our hearts whenever we touchdown onto Malaysian soil”, it adds. “Let us hope that answers and clarity will come to pass for all involved soon. In the meantime, let us stand as one, not just with MAS but to stand tall and unyielding as Malaysians for the Malaysians and the many others who lost their lives, and for those left behind”, it adds. As the tragedy enters its ninth day, the outpouring of support from loyal passengers is growing stronger by the day for MAS to continue with pride rather than letting itself end up just as a fond memory.

Letters of Love to MAS

The Facebook account that goes by the name of “A Fly Guy’s Cabin Crew Lounge” and enables flight attendants from around the world to network, share stories and photographs, has now turned into a site to express their condolences and sympathies for the MH17 crew who died in the crash.

A post titled “Letters of Love to Malaysia Airlines” uploaded 151 photos as “an album contains letters of love and support made by airline employees around the world”. “Over the past few days, airliners around the world have taken to the sky with heavy hearts. An air disaster doesn’t affect just one airline, it takes a part of all our spirits down with it. We are united by wings and airline staff around the world want our family at Malaysia Airlines to know we are standing behind them,” the post says.

Media Support

Former blogger, journalist and managing editor at the New Straits Times, Datuk Nuraina Samad, in her support for MAS says: “ I think until all this is over - which is not going to be anytime soon - I will hug every Malaysia Airline staff including MAS cabin crew that I meet. This is all figurative but you get my drift”.

Senior Manager at the East Coast Economic Region Development Council Nuryusyida Laily Yusof says: “To all Malaysians who are travelling by MAS this festive season (or beyond), I would like to suggest that we each write a “Thank You” card/note to be given out to the MH cabin crew on our flights”. “They’ve been taking good care of us all this while during our journey, now it’s the time for us to show THEM our support. Imagine how traumatised they are now after MH370 & MH17, yet they are still serving us with a big smile. Just a humble suggestion of mine, inspired by Datuk Nuraina Samad”, she says.

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA : FBM KLCI To Move Within 1,860-1,880 Points

By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) is likely to move between 1,860 and 1,880 points next week as the improving global economic conditions are unlikely to lift investor confidence. Affin Investment Bank Vice-President and Head of Retail Research, Dr Nazri Khan, said the local market was expected to brace for another week of sideways session, riding on low volume during the Hari Raya holiday-shortened session and muted response to the proposed mega bank merger of CIMB Bank-RHB Bank-Malaysia Building Society Bhd. "Over the medium term, however, the FBM KLCI is likely to play catch-up and track the strong gains on Wall Street, to re-test the resistance level of 1,880 led by high beta sectors, namely properties, oil gas and technology blue-chips," he told Bernama. Nazri said the local equities would eventually ride on positive global sentiment and bargain hunting to narrow the price gap with the rest of the world. "The fact that President Barack Obama would consider more diplomacy to solve the Russia-Ukraine geopolitical tension will be the catalyst needed to spur more market optimism," he said. For the week just-ended, the FBM KLCI rose 4.37 points to 1,877.34 from 1,872.97 previously. Weekly turnover advanced to 11.04 billion shares valued at RM9.9 billion from 6.92 billion shares worth RM9.005 billion recorded last week. Main market volume increased to 8.63 billion units worth RM9.31 billion from 7.509 billion units worth RM8.644 billion last Friday.

FOREX : Ringgit To Hold Firm Around 3.17 Level

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is likely to hold firm around 3.17 next week on extended slide of the US dollar, dealers said. A dealer said there would be a chance of a stronger upside if the local economic data were to further improve."There are still some chances of the ringgit advancing to the 3.16 level in line with economic fundamentals and strong demand for exports.

"The ringgit could gain further firmer momentum if it goes below 3.1650 support as that would trigger rounds of fresh selling of US dollar by hedgers," he said. He said the local note was also likely to face resistance at 3.18 and 3.19, where dollar-selling orders by local exporters were said to be lined up. A range of 3.16 - 3.19 could be expected for such short trading days next week, he said. On a weekly basis, the ringgit appreciated to 3.1730/1760 per US dollar against last

Friday's 3.1820/1850. It also ended the week higher against other major currencies. The local unit edged up against the Singapore dollar to 2.5560/5586 from last Friday's 2.5632/5659 and was up against the yen at 3.1126/1168 from 3.1365/1407 on Friday. The local note strengthened against the British pound to 5.3836/3894 from 5.4450/4505 and gained against the euro to 4.2661/2711 versus 4.3059/3109 last Friday. The market will be closed on July 28 and 29 for the Hari Raya holidays.

Money Market : Short-Term Rates To Remain Stable
By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain stable next week on Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM)'s intervention in the money market to absorb excess funds. A dealer said although there was a marginal spike in the previous month's consumer price index (to 3.3 per cent), there would not be another increase in the overnight policy rate (OPR) in the immediate future. BNM is likely to maintain the current OPR for the rest of the year to see how the economic environment reacted to it, he said.

For the week just-ended, BNM intervened daily to flush the system of surplus funds. The overnight Islamic reference rate increased to 3.22 per cent from 3.21 per cent last Friday, one-week rose to 3.26, while the two and three-week rates stood at 3.29 per cent and 3.32 per cent respectively. Meanwhile, the underlying three-month KLIBOR inched up to 3.59 per cent from 3.58 per cent last Friday. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system amounted to RM19.27 billion while the excess in the Islamic system stood at RM2.40 billion. Next week, BNM is expected to continue calling for several money market tenders comprising conventional and Islamic, comprising commodity murabahah programme, range maturity auctions and repo tenders, on a daily basis. The market will be closed on July 28 and 29 for Hari Raya holidays.

KLCI Futures To Move In Tandem With Cash Market
By Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR --The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to move in line with the expected volatility in the cash market next week. Affin Investment Bank vice-president/head of retail research, Dr Nazri Khan, said the local FBM KLCI eased following last week's failure to overcome the 1,880-1,890 points resistance. "Asian markets were generally higher last week following a strong Wall Street session buoyed by corporate earnings and better-than-expected manufacturing data from China, Germany and broader Eurozone.

"The near-term bias has turned in favour of the local bear camp with immediate support pegged near 1,860 level and 1,850 while resistance was spotted near 1,880 level, followed by 1,900 psychological level," he told Bernama. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, spot month July 2014 and September 2014 rose one point each to 1,874 and 1,871.5, respectively, August 2014 earned half a point to 1,874 and December 2014 was three points higher at 1,872. Turnover for the week rose to 50,212 lots from last week's 17,825 lots, while open interest increased to 55,747 contracts from 38,125 contracts last Friday. The market will be closed on Monday and Tuesday for Hari Raya holidays. Turnover for the week surged to 78,457 lots from last week's 16,774 lots while open interest increased to 48,683 contracts from 36,226 contracts last Friday.

CPO Futures To Rise On Weaker Output

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran

KUALA LUMPUR --Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trade higher next week on weaker production in Sabah and Sarawak amid labour shortage, a dealer said. Interband Group of Companies senior trader Jim Teh, said foreign workers taking long vacations during festive holidays were expected to affect production by 20 per cent. "CPO prices are expected to move between RM2,400 and RM2,450 next week," he told Bernama.

He said swiftlets would eat fresh fruit bunches when workers were not around for a long period and this would contribute to the declining production. The market will be closed on Monday and Tuesday for Hari Raya holidays. For the week just-ended, the futures market was mostly lower, influenced by the ringgit's movements and the Chicago soyabean oil market.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, August 2014 declined RM51 to RM2,335 per tonne, September 2014 fell RM40 to RM2,292 per tonne and October 2014 and November 2014 decreased RM44 each to RM2,265 per tonne and RM2,264 per tonne respectively. Weekly turnover declined to 155,334 lots from 186,421 lots last week while open interest eased to 241,027 contracts from 255,136 contracts previously. On the physical market, July South ended at RM40 lower at RM2,370 per tonne from RM2,460 per tonne last week.

Rubber Prices Likely To Be Quiet

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to be quiet next week in the absence of traders during the Hari Raya holidays, a dealer said. He said the market would be closed on Monday and Tuesday and was likely to remain quiet for the rest of the week after it resumed trading on Wednesday. The dealer said the local market would also be influenced by the movements of the rubber prices on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) and the Shanghai Futures Exchange during the week.

For the week just-ended, the rubber market was traded mostly lower, mainly influenced by the movements of the ringgit and the performance of rubber prices on TOCOM. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 eased four sen to 530 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk declined 9.5 sen to 443 sen a kg. The unofficial closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 slipped one sen to 532 sen a kg while latex-in-bulk decreased nine sen to 453.5 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures Likely To Stay Quiet

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are likely to remain quiet next week in the absence of fresh leads. "The central bank is likely to maintain the current overnight policy rate for the rest of the year and see how the economic environment react to it. "Therefore we can expect KLIBOR futures to remain range-bound or steady in the short term," a futures trader told Bernama. For the week just-ended, the market only saw trading on Thursday with a turnover of 200 lots for September 2014 contract.

Settlement prices for August 2014, September 2014, October 2014 and December 2014 ended the week at 96.35,96.35, 96.30 and 96.25 respectively. Open interest increased to 3,100 contracts from 2,880 contracts last Friday. On the cash market, the underlying three-month KLIBOR was unchanged at 3.59. The market will be closed on July 28 and 29 for the Hari Raya Aidilfitri Holidays.

KLTM : Prices To Move Within US$22,300-US$22,400

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tin prices on the Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) are expected to trade between US$22,300 and US$22,400 next week on good consumer demand, a dealer said. He said consumer buying support would most likely come from the Japanese and European traders. "The improved and favourable economic data from the US, Europe and China are anticipated to be a supporting factor for all metals," he told Bernama. The KLTM moved between US$22,100 and US$22,280 a tonne throughout Monday to Friday. For the week just-ended, the metal price finished US$130 higher at US$22,280 per tonne compared with US$22,150 last Friday, with trading dominated by European, Japanese and local buyers. The weekly turnover increased to 279 lots from 136 lots last week. The premium between the KLTM and LME narrowed to US$285 per tonne from US$430 per tonne last Friday. The market will be closed on July 28 and 29 for Hari Raya holidays.

Gold Futures Likely To Be Volatile

By Azlee Nor Mahmud

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia derivatives are expected to be volatile next week. Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Low Cheng Yang, told Bernama the domestic gold futures would also be on the receiving end of the US non-farm payroll and unemployment reports, amid a reduction in demand from both China and India buyers. On a Friday-to-Friday basis, July 2014 fell 38 ticks to RM132.35 a gramme, August 2014 and October 2014 declined 39 ticks each to RM132.60 a gramme and RM133.25 a gramme, respectively.

Meanwhile, September 2014 fell 49 ticks to RM132.75 a gramme. Volume decreased to 1,114 lots worth RM14.971 million from 1,156 lots worth RM15.5 million recorded last week. Open interest on Friday stood at 5,164 contracts compared with last week's 5,248 contracts. The market will be closed on Monday and Tuesday for Hari Raya holidays.