MALAYSIAeBiz
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This Week's Highlight : Malaysia Well-Positioned To Stamp Mark In ASEAN History

CENTRE-STAGE... Malaysia will take centre stage when it hosts the 26th ASEAN Summit, from April 24 to 27 in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi.

By Rosemarie Khoo Mohd Sani

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia is in the primary position of advantage to stamp its mark in ASEAN history, as it will be able to advocate matters that are favourable to its domestic economy. The position of ASEAN chair and the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) will unleash its potentials to be in the forefront of the ASEAN economy by leveraging on its domestic and the sound infrastructure strengths. With an ASEAN population of 625 million and an economy of US$2.4 trillion, which is the seventh largest in the world, the region offers a huge opportunity for Malaysia, especially the private sector, to tap and continuously grow.

This Week's Top Stories

Monday

Malaysia's 2015 GDP To Surpass World Bank Forecast - Chua

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's economic growth this year is expected to perform better than the World Bank's forecast, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said. "Last year, Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) growth was forecast at 5.5 per cent, 5.6 per cent and 5.7 per cent, but we had exceeded it," he said after visiting MPH Bookstore at Mid Valley Megamall here, in conjunction with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) implementation Monday.

Tuesday

Najib Launches Bank Of China As Renminbi Clearing Bank

PUTRAJAYA -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Tuesday launched the Bank of China as the renminbi clearing bank in Kuala Lumpur to facilitate and reduce the cost of doing business here. Malaysia is the second country after Singapore in ASEAN to establish a renminbi clearing bank with China. Najib said the landmark establishment of the renminbi clearing bank was the result of discussions between Chinese President Xi Jinping and himself in May this year.

Wednesday

Over 4,000 Companies Face GST Compound For Failure To Register

BUKIT MERTAJAM -- A total of 4,364 companies face a compound of RM15,000 for refusal to register for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) with the Royal Malaysian Customs Department. Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said the companies having annual turnover of more than RM500,000 would be charged if they fail to pay the fine. "We've given businesses ample time by extending the closing date of the registration from Dec 31 last year to Feb 28. Until the deadline, 370,558 companies had registered for the GST, he said after giving a briefing on the GST here Wednesday.

Thursday

Malaysia Successfully Prices US$1.5 Bln Global Sukuk

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia has successfully priced US$1 billion of 10-year and US$500 million of 30-year benchmark Trust Certificates (Sukuk) for a total deal size of US$1.5 billion. In a statement Thursday, the Ministry of Finance said the 30-year tranche was the government's inaugural sukuk issuance which is the longest tenured sukuk ever by a sovereign. The deal was oversubscribed, attracting an aggregate interest of over US$9 billion from a combined investor base of over 450 accounts, it said.

Friday

Sukuk: Foreign Investors Show Confidence In Malaysian Economy

KUALA LUMPUR -- The strong acceptance of Malaysia's US$1.5 billion global sukuk programme issued Thursday, demonstrates foreign investor confidence in the country's economy. "To raise the huge sum of money in the relatively challenging environment, speaks volumes of the confidence of investors in Malaysia's overall economy," said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar Friday.

SMEbrief

35 Firms Shortlisted For PM's Hibiscus Award 2014/2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- Thirty-five companies comprising industry leaders and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have made the shortlist for the Prime Minister's Hibiscus Award 2014/2015. The short-listed participants were selected from 54 entries received from a wide range of manufacturing and services industries, an increase of over 20 per cent in entries from the previous 2012/2013 cycle. Entries came from sectors including chemicals, furniture, hotels and resorts, eco-tourism as well as oil and gas.

Bumiputera Retailers Urged To Diversify Business - PKNS

SHAH ALAM -- The Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS) has urged Bumiputera retailers to diversify their business activities to compete with other communities in this country. PKNS Real Estate Sdn Bhd General Manager, Fakru Radzi Ab Ghani, in making the call said Bumiputera retailers should not confine themselves to selling products like headscarves but must introduce new strategies to engage in healthy competition. "Bumiputera entrepreneurs should consider engaging in businesses like food and beverage, hardware, groceries and men's fashion which offer high returns in the long run," he told reporters after a media briefing on PKNS's Retail 200 entrepreneurship programme here Thursday.

MTCC Participating In Sarawak Timber & SME Expo

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) is participating in the bi-annual Sarawak Timber and SME Expo 2015 from April 17-22, 2015. In a statement Thursday, MTCC said the expo will provide forest managers information on the requirements for forest management and chain of custody certification. "The expo, themed 'Towards Sustainable Industries', will help forest managers, processors and timber-based product traders to responsibly manage forest resources through best-practices and timber certification programme," it said.

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PropUP Property*update*

EPF To Dispose UK Property For 210 Mln Pounds

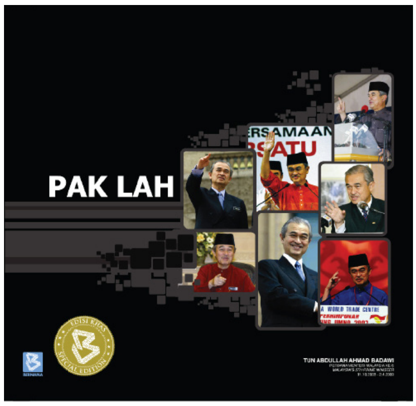
KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has entered into a sale and purchase agreement with British Land for One Sheldon Square in London for 210 million pounds (1 pound = RM5.43). "This marks the Fund's first property disposal in the United Kingdom (UK)," it said in a statement here Tuesday. The EPF acquired the property in 2010. One Sheldon Square comprises nearly 200,000 sq ft of freehold office space arranged over nine floors. It is fully let to Visa Europe Services until December 2022.

RM10 Bln Borneo Island City Set To Be New Sarawak Landmark

KUCHING -- Sarawak will have a new landmark with the completion of the RM10.6 billion Borneo Island City in the Muara Tebas district about 10 kilometres south of this city. The integrated development on a 566.56-hectare site is a joint venture between Assar Industri Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of state government-linked company Permodalan Assar Sdn Bhd, and Taiwanese giant Le Park International (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

KLCC Stapled Looking To Acquire Two Multi-Billion Ringgit Assets

KUALA LUMPUR -- KLCC Stapled Group, which comprises KLCC Property Holdings Bhd and KLCC Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), is looking to acquire two multi-billion ringgit assets from parent company, KLCC Holdings Sdn Bhd, over the next three to five years. The properties are mixed development projects code-named Lot 185 and Lot 91 and sprawled over 4.5 million sq ft and 1.5 million sq ft, respectively. "We are not only eyeing the projects but have the first right of refusal on the said properties, as well as, any other development projects owned by KLCC Holdings," KLCC Stapled Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Hashim Wahir told reporters after the company's annual general meeting here Thursday.



MARKET

BURSA MALAYSIA

Scoreboard

Gainers - 493

Losers - 334

Not Traded - 624

Unchanged - 357

Value - 2283768154

Volume - 25798436

Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.6240	3.6270
EUR	3.9212	3.9259
GBP	5.4418	5.4485
100 YEN	3.0487	3.0515
SGD	2.6944	2.6985

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

BURSA: KL Shares End 2.08 Pts Lower

KUALA LUMPUR -- The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) ended marginally lower Friday, reversing earlier gains on mild profit taking prior to the weekend. At 5 pm, the FBM KLCI settled at 1,845.86, down 2.08 points after fluctuating between 1,852.95 and 1,845.09. On the broader market, gainers overwhelmed losers by 493 to 334, with 357 counters unchanged, 624 counters untraded and 20 others suspended. A senior dealer said traders locked recent gains while some were sidelined prior to the weekend. He said investors' confidence in Malaysia's debt market will lend spill-over effects to Bursa next week. "The oversubscription to the Malaysian government's inaugural long tenured sukuk (on Thursday) marked the global investors' confidence in the Malaysian financial system and there will be spill-over effects to Bursa," he said, adding the foreign funds emerged as Bursa's net buyers Thursday. Total volume at Bursa Friday stood at 2.58 billion shares worth RM2.28 billion, down from Thursday's 2.70 billion shares worth RM2.52 billion. Main Market volume shrank to 1.63 billion units worth RM2.02 billion from Thursday's 1.67 billion units worth RM2.29.

FOREX: Ringgit Ends Firmer On Bullish Sentiment

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit ended the week firmer against the US dollar Friday, buoyed by bullish sentiment that helped spur demand for the local unit. At 5 pm, the ringgit was quoted at 3.6240/6270 against the greenback from 3.6520/6550 on Thursday. JF Apex Securities head of research, Lee Chung Cheng, said the ringgit received good response following the issuance of US$1.5 billion sukuk by the government. The positive sentiment also allayed concerns over the US Federal Reserve's rate hike and rising crude oil prices. "The rise in the ringgit has restored investor confidence in the Malaysian economy and its fundamentals," he told Bernama. The oversubscription of the Malaysian government's inaugural long tenured sukuk marked the global investor confidence in Malaysia's creditworthiness and financial system. The longest tenured sukuk ever by a sovereign, the inaugural 30-year tranche was oversubscribed by about six times, while the 10-year tranche was oversubscribed by almost seven times. Meanwhile, the ringgit was traded mixed against other major currencies. It strengthened against the Singapore dollar to 2.6944/6985 from Thursday's 2.6952/6994 and appreciated against the yen to 3.0487/0515 from 3.0612/0647 previously. The local unit, however, weakened versus the British pound to 5.4418/4485 from 5.4137/4196 Thursday and decreased against the euro to 3.9212/9259 from 3.8824/8871 on Thursday.

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

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates ended on a stable note Friday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to absorb excess liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system decreased to RM19.42 billion from RM29.12 billion earlier, while in the Islamic system, it fell to RM6.06 billion from RM8.75 billion. In the morning, BNM called for eight tenders comprising two each of the conventional money market, repo, Al-Wadiah and Commodity Murabahah Programme. The central bank also conducted a late conventional money market tender for RM19.5 billion and a RM5.1 billion Al-Wadiah money market tender, both for three-day monies. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.27 per cent, 3.32 per cent and 3.35 per cent, respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Contracts Close Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives closed untraded for the seventh consecutive sessions Friday. Both April 2015, May 2015, June 2015 and September 2015 stood at 96.32, 96.35, 96.39 and 96.42 respectively. Open interests totalled 922 contracts. At the 11 am fixing, the underlying three-month KLIBOR eased one per cent to 3.73 per cent.

KLCI Futures Contracts Move Higher

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts closed higher Friday in contrast with the easier cash mart. The heavily-traded spot month April 2015 added one point to 1,846 and May 2015 rose 0.5 point to 1,843.50. June 2015 and September 2015 advanced one point each to 1,840.50 points and 1,835, respectively. Turnover shrank to 4,505 lots from Thursday's 6,721 lots, while open interest dwindled to 36,157 contracts from 38,526 contracts previously. The benchmark FBM KLCI ended 2.08 points easier at 1,845.86 Friday.

RHB Capital To Raise RM2.5 Bln For Internal Reorganisation

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Capital Bhd plans to raise up to RM2.5 billion via a rights issue for an internal reorganisation. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, RHB Capital said the proposed rights issue would enable the company to raise funds to further strengthen the capital position of RHB Bank. RHB Capital said the estimated expenses relating to the proposed rights issue amount to about RM19.78 million, consisting mainly of professional fees, underwriting commission as well as fees payable to the relevant authorities.

OIC Keen To Learn From Malaysia's Micro-Finance Success

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has sought Malaysia's cooperation in sharing its expertise in micro-finance with member countries. Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan said Tuesday, Malaysia would capitalise on Tekun Nasional and Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia's (AIM) achievements as a model of micro-finance success that could be shared with the 57 OIC member countries. "OIC plans to assist low-income member countries such as Bangladesh, and they feel that our micro-finance model is a successful driver in raising the standard of living of Malaysian small and medium enterprises, he said after receiving OIC secretary-general Tan Sri Iyad Ameen Madani.

Ahmad Husni To Attend World Bank-IMF Meetings

KUALA LUMPUR -- Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah will lead the Malaysian delegation to the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings and the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting from April 15 to 17, 2015 in Washington. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) said as the Chair of ASEAN, Malaysia will represent the region at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting. The meeting will deliberate on the global economy, further measures to foster sustainable growth, improvements to the international financial architecture, financial regulations and international tax issues, MoF said in a statement Tuesday.

IBFIM To Export Expertise In ASEAN For IFP Programme

KUALA LUMPUR -- Islamic Banking & Finance Institute Malaysia (IBFIM) plans to tap the ASEAN countries for its training courses through Islamic Financial Planner (IFP) certification programme. IFP, a licence-to-practice certification programme for professionals in Islamic wealth management advisory services, currently has 720 certificate holders in Malaysia. Its chief executive officer (CEO) Datuk Dr Adnan Alias said Wednesday, by collaborating with Financial Planning Association (FPAM) in the IFP certfication programme, the institute aimed to penetrate the regional market.

EPF To Start Consultations On Full Withdrawal Age

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) will commence engagement programmes with key stakeholders and EPF members from April 20, 2015 on raising the EPF full withdrawal age. In a statement Wednesday, EPF said the engagement programmes will cover areas of improvements and enhancements to current EPF services and offerings, as well as proposals for addressing issues related to the inadequacy of retirement savings for the long term. Information on the proposals and options will be made available to the public on myEPF website (www.kwsp.gov.my) starting April 20.

MBSB Expects Loan Growth Of 7-8 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Building Society Bhd (MBSB) expects its loan growth pace to more than double to between seven and eight per cent this year, driven by an expansion in corporate loans and execution of a five-year business plan beginning this year.
President and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Ahmad Zaini Othman said Wednesday, MBSB's loans grew to just between two and three per cent last year, due to the distraction of the merger and acquisition (M&A) move with CIMB Bank and RHB Bank.

Maybank Investment Bank Issues Six New Call Warrants

KUALA LUMPUR -- Maybank Investment Bank Bhd (Maybank IB) is issuing six new European style cash-settled call warrants. The issues are over ordinary shares of Datasonic Group Bhd, Inari Amertron Bhd, Karex Bhd, Puncak Niaga Holdings Bhd, 7-Eleven Malaysia Holdings Bhd and Unisem (M) Bhd, Maybank IB said in a statement Thursday. The warrants will be listed Friday with a tenure of about 12 months each and an issue size of 100 million each.

IFSB To Convene 12th Annual Summit Next Month

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB) will convene its 12th Annual Summit from May 19-21, 2015 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The summit will be hosted by the National Bank of Kazakhstan with the theme 'Core Principles for Islamic Finance: Integrating with the Global Regulatory Framework'. In a statement Thursday, IFSB said the summit was specifically aimed at harnessing the latest developments and innovation in regulation, prudential standards, current market practices and future challenges of the global Islamic finance market.

Malaysia, World Bank Finalising Office Support Requirements

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia and the World Bank Group are finalising the Office Support Agreement, comprising provisions on programmes and activities, staffing and funding needs, for the setting up of the bank's office in the capital. The progress was discussed during a bilateral meeting between Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah with World Bank Group senior executives led by its Regional Vice-President for East Asia and Pacific, Axel van Trotsenburg on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings in Washington, D.C.Thursday.
The World Bank Group Office in Malaysia will be housed in Sasana Kijang, Bank Negara Malaysia's centre of excellence in central banking and financial services.

Ken HLGSs Expects Sustainable Earnings From Menara Ken @ TTDI

KUALA LUMPUR -- Property developer, Ken Holdings Bhd, expects its Menara Ken @TTDI project to contribute sustainable earnings of over RM10 million yearly, says group executive chairman, Datuk Tan Boon Kang. He said the income would be secured from renting the double platinum corporate offices, which were scheduled to be completed by year-end. "The building, among others, comprises platinum-grade office spaces, art gallery, performing arts theatre and a variety of food and beverages outlets," Tan told reporters here Monday. The Menara Ken @ TTDI has received awards for its sustainable design, architecture and green features. He said the property developer would kick-start another project in Kota

Digi Foresees Positive Growth In Customer Base With HyppTV Everywhere Launch

KUALA LUMPUR -- Digi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd foresees positive growth in its customer base with the launch of the HyppTV mobile application service, HyppTV Everywhere. The service is an inaugural collaboration with Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM). Digi Chief Marketing Officer Christian Thrane said its customer based was at 11 million last year, with the smartphone penetration increasing from 38.1 per cent to 49.3 per cent, while Internet subscribers grew 31 per cent in 2014. "We have a large number of people getting online through their smart devices and entertainment is an important part of the Internet experience. "HyppTV Everywhere gives us the flexibility to offer exciting video content for customers," he told reporters here Monday.

NR Exports Decline 25 Pct To 55,805 Tonnes In Feb 2015

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's natural rubber (NR) exports in February 2015 dropped by 25 per cent to 55,805 tonnes from the corresponding month last year, the Statistics Department said. In a statement here Monday, the department said Standard Malaysian Rubber (SMR) contributed 94.1 per cent of the total NR exports. The commodity was exported mainly to China (44.6 per cent) followed by Germany (14.4 per cent), the US (7.1 per cent), Iran (4.6 per cent), South Korea (2.9 per cent), Brazil (4.1 per cent), Turkey (1.9 per cent), Finland (3.1 per cent), and Portugal (1.7 per cent), it said. Imports of NR in February 2015 increased by 2.5 per cent to 64,944 tonnes compared with 63,337 tonnes a year ago.

NAZA Expects Higher Sales From Harley-Davidson Street 750

KUALA LUMPUR -- NAZA Prestige Bikes Sdn Bhd expects a 20 per cent increase in sales from the Harley-Davidson Street 750 model this year from 2014. NAZA World Two-Wheel Division associate vice-president Juan Chow Wee said the company expects to sell 150 units of the customisable Street 750, which appealed to young urban riders, this year. The Street 750 is expected to contribute 25 per cent to Harley-Davidson's overall product mix for this year. "Stripped down to its minimal essence, the all-new Harley Davidson Street 750 is built for young urban riders who want a bike to ride daily at every opportunity, not just a sculpture to park up and polish. It is also the latest model to join Harley-Davidson Dark Custom lineup, which helped make Harley-Davidson the top selling brand among young adults across the US for the past six years," he told a press conference after the launch of the model here Wednesday.

CapitaMalls Malaysia Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM38.24 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- CapitaMalls Malaysia Trust's pre-tax profit for the first quarter (Q1) ended March 31, 2015 rose to RM38.24 million from RM38.19 million in the same quarter a year ago. Revenue increased to RM81.0 million from RM78.9 million previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia, CapitaMalls Malaysia Trust said the higher revenue was due to contribution from the East Coast Mall which had completed its two-year asset enhancement works. It said the group also benefited from better gross rental income on the back of higher rental rates achieved from new and renewed leases.

Avon Optimistic GST Will Have Positive Impact On Bottomline

By Afifa Ishak

KUALA LUMPUR -- Direct selling cosmetic company, Avon Malaysia, is optimistic the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will have a positive impact on its bottomline. Head of Commercial Marketing at Avon Malaysia Aspalin Sirat said the new tax regime actually offered the company the opportunity to come up with various marketing plans and dynamic financial administration. "All staffers have undergone rigourous training in order for them to understand the basic rudiments of the tax. We are also confident sales will continue to grow. "We are communicating with customers through the soial media and direct interaction with walk-in customers at our boutiques on the GST and how we are handling price increases at Avon," she told Bernama.

Gibson Expects New Products To Boost Sales By 15 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gibson Innovations Malaysia, formerly known as WOOX Innovations, expects the newly introduced Philips Fidelio B5, a wireless sound bar, and home surround system, Philips Fidelio E5, to boost overall sales this year. "The new line up of the 'surround-on-demand' products are expected to contribute 15 per cent to overall sales," said Business Leader Andrew Tan at the launch of the product here Thursday. He said the target was achievable based on the overwhelming response to the first-generation of 'surround-on-demand' Philips Fidelio HTL9100 products in Malaysia. "We are number one in the sound bar category (globally) and Malaysian consumers are willing to pay for quality sound systems," he added.

Sasbadi Bags RM2.3 Mln Contract To Supply Textbooks

KUALA LUMPUR -- Sasbadi Holdings Bhd's wholly-owned subsidiary, Sasbadi Sdn Bhd (SSB), has received a contract worth RM2.3 million from the Ministry of Education to publish, print and supply textbooks to national schools throughout Malaysia. The contract is for the period from April 15, 2015 to Dec 31, 2017 and will not have any material effect on the group's earnings for the financial year ending Aug 31, 2015 (FY15). In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Thursday, the group said SSB was expected to deliver the first tranche of textbooks worth about RM1.95 million to the schools in the first quarter of FY16.

Internet Transactions In M'sia Projected To Grow To RM5 Bln This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- Internet transactions in Malaysia are projected to grow exponentially to RM5.0 billion by this year from RM900 million registered last year, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr. Wee Ka Siong said. Speaking at the soft launch of Asiatradeex.com, Malaysia's first ever business-to-business (B2B) marketplace, Wee said the scenario would indirectly impact the B2B marketplace too. Unlike business-to-consumer (B2C) e-marketplaces which are flooding the industry now, Asiatradeex.com enables listing of suppliers and buyers of raw materials, machinery, business process outsourcing services and more that businesses need. "B2B e-commerce will be important over the next few years, especially with the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) initiative which will see freer flow of products, services and manpower across Southeast Asian countries' borders," Wee said.

M'sia For Wants Access For More Mango And Papaya Varieties Into Japan

PUTRAJAYA -- Malaysia is requesting that Japan grant access for other mango varieties, other than the 'Harum Manis' species, which has penetrated the market there. Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said he had raised the matter during his meeting with Japanese Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Yoshimasa Hayashi in Tokyo on Thursday in an effort to gain access for the export of fresh produce to Japan. "Besides requesting for export access for various mango varieties, Malaysia is also requesting the same for papayas," he said in a statement in conjunction with his five-day visit to Japan beginning Tuesday.

Perodua Expects Accessories Sales To Grow 2-3 Pct

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perodua expects its accessories sales contribution to the after sales segment to increase by two to three per cent this year with the launch of its own line of accessories under the brand name 'GearUp'. President and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Aminar Rashid Salleh said here Thursday, accessories sales currently contributed about 10 per cent yearly to the company's after sales segment.

Naza Expects Citroen Grand C4 Picasso To Be Main Volume Driver

KUALA LUMPUR -- Naza Euro Motors Sdn Bhd expects the newly launched petrol-variant MPV Citroen Grand C4 Picasso to be one of its main volume driver this year. In a statement here Friday, Naza said the latest Malaysia Automotive Association (MAA) report showed that MPVs were the second biggest sub-segment of the market in 2014 with a share of 16 per cent. The MPV is the first previewed in Malaysia last June while in October, the diesel variant won the NST-Maybank Car of the Year Award 2014 in the MPV category. Chief Operating Officer Datuk Samson Anand George said here Friday, the company recorded a strong performance in 2014.

Malaysia's Economy To Grow At Slower Pace Of 4.7 Pct This Year

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE -- Malaysia's economic growth is expected to slow down to 4.7 per cent in 2015 before normalising to five per cent in 2016, while the current account would remain in a small surplus. In the East Asia Pacific Economic Update released Monday, the World Bank said lower oil prices would dampen growth through delays in capital expenditures in the oil and gas sector, a key driver of the recent investment boom. "Private consumption will moderate on tighter credit and a small impact from the introduction of the Goods & Services Tax, before rebounding in 2016. "A slight uptick in inflation is therefore expected despite low readings in the first half as lower oil prices are reflected throughout the economy," it said.

Malaysia Has No Plan For Capital Controls - Chua

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government has no plan to implement capital controls like during the 1997-1998 Asean financial crisis in the face of ringgit depreciation as the situation is different, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said. He said Malaysia achieved a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of six per cent in 2014 and 4.7 percent in 2013, driven mainly by robust domestic demand and external trade. "This development resulted from various initiatives taken (by the government) to diversify the economy, and enhance resilience and competitiveness," he said during the question and answer session at the Dewan Negara here Monday. Responding to a question from Senator Norliza Abdul Rahim, Chua said strong economic fundamentals like low unemployment, sound financial system and high international reserves had also contributed to the economic growth.

Govt To Roll Out Two Electric Tariffs Via eTOU Mechanism

KUALA LUMPUR -- The government plans to roll out two electric tariffs through enhanced Time of Use (eTOU) mechanism in the industrial sector nationwide by year-end. The Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA) said eTOU would be implemented first in the industrial sector as it has higher energy consumption in the country before introducing to all consumers. Its Deputy Secretary-General (Energy), Datuk Dr Nadzri Yahaya, said this would enable the industrial manufacturing process to efficiently use use energy at night compared to the morning and to mitigate against higher electricity bills. "Studies are still being done for this mechanism but the concept is the same as in Japan. We plan to maintain electricity rates during the day and lower them at night," he told reporters at the launch of ExxonMobil Energy Literacy Campaign here Tuesday.

IATA Launches Standard Safety Assessment Programme For Smaller Airlines

KUALA LUMPUR -- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has launched the IATA Standard Safety Assessment (ISSA) for smaller airlines. In a statement here Wednesday, association said the ISSA was a voluntary safety audit programme created primarily for smaller airlines not eligible for the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) because the operating airplane has a take-off weight lower than 5,700 kg. IATA said while the ISSA was not a substitute for IOSA and was not linked to IATA membership. "It is a way for smaller airlines and private charters to ensure their aircraft were up to the latest in safety standards," it said.

Petronas Dagangan To Offer Euro-4M RON97 Petrol In September

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas Dagangan Bhd will introduce RON97 petrol that complies with Euro-4M standard in September nationwide this year, said Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Mohd Ibrahimuddin Mohd Yunus. He said the company's RON97, RON95 and diesel currently comply with the lower Euro-2M standard. The price of the new Euro-4M fuel will be determined by the government, he said. "We already have two stations in Southern Johor -- in Pasir Gudang and Gelang Patah -- selling Euro-5 diesel, which is mainly meant for vehicles going into Singapore, especially trucks. "The demand is basically limited to this particular segment of motorists," he told reporters after the company's annual general meeting here Wednesday.

Proton Invites Businessmen To Join 3S Dealership Expansion Programme

KUALA LUMPUR -- Proton Holdings Bhd through its wholly-owned unit Proton Edar Sdn Bhd is inviting interested businessmen to join the group's new 3S (sales, service and spare parts) dealership expansion programme. The new programme is part of Proton's on-going nationwide transformation exercise to improve its after-sales services. Interested parties should submit a completed application form, relevant company documents and supporting documents to PROTON Edar's Network Planning & Development Division (more information is available at www.proton-edar.com.my). Applications are open until May 31, 2015. Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Abdul Harith Abdullah said the 3s programme is part of the Group's growth plans.

EU-Malaysia Bilateral Trade To Remain Strong This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The strong trade and investment momentum between the European Union (EU) and Malaysia is expected to continue this year, driven by the conducive business environment in the country. Last year, the bilateral trade grew to RM143.97 billion from RM135.78 billion in 2013, while investments from the EU to Malaysia rose to RM8.69 billion last year from RM5.11 billion. Ministry of International Trade and Industry Secretary-General Datuk Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria said Malaysia remained an important destination for EU investors and the grouping was ASEAN's second largest trading partner. "My meeting with the EU business community showed that they are very optimistic over the business environment in Malaysia. "Also, many were talking about expanding their businesses and none about downsizing," she told reporters here Thursday.

OIC Stresses Need For Sole Regulator Of Halal Certification

By Siti Baaqiah Mamat and Nur Ashikin Abdul Aziz

KUALA LUMPUR -- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary-General Tan Sri Iyad Ameen Madani has stressed the need for having one regulatory body for Halal certification, led by the Jeddah-based organisation. He said an OIC-level body should act as the referral organisation for halal certification as there have been too many regulatory bodies set up in countries worldwide for such certification. "Because Halal is Halal, it doesn't matter whether it is in Jakarta or Senegal or Armenia or Saudi Arabia. There has to be one definition, one standard, one technical description," he told Bernama in an interview.

11MP To Address Poverty From A Multi-Dimensional Perspective

KUALA LUMPUR -- The 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP), to be tabled in Parliament on May 21, will address poverty from a multi-dimensional perspective, says Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar. He said the dimensions to be considered were income, access to education, healthcare and living conditions when coming out with specific measures in addressing the issue. "Yesterday, we had a briefing with cabinet members. We received their inputs on the 11MP and we will make further changes. The next few weeks will be very intense as we make our final preparations," he told reporters here Thursday.

Malaysia To Re-Stock Phones To Meet Overwhelming Response

KUALA LUMPUR -- Samsung Malaysia Electronics Sdn Bhd will re-stock the Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge in Gold Platinum to meet the overwhelming response from Malaysian consumers. "The pre-orders for both Samsung Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge have been brisk since the launch on April 2 with Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge in Gold Platinum being the more popular choice among Malaysians," it said in a statement here Friday. Its vice president, Lee Jui Siang, said Samsung's devices were build around what mattered most to the customers. "The Samsung Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge have redefined what it means to have function that meets beauty. Blending purposeful design with power features, the Galaxy S6 and Galaxy S6 Edge deliver true value and that is why we believe it has been receiving positive responses globally and also here in Malaysia," he said.

mTouche Inks Agreement With Celcom Axiata

KUALA LUMPUR -- mTouche Technology Bhd, through its subsidiary MTB Securenet Sdn Bhd, signed a Master Application and Content Provider Agreement with Celcom Axiata Bhd via Celcom Mobile Sdn Bhd. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia here Thursday, mTouche said the agreement was to provide subscribers with its fully Malaysian developed encrypted and secured mobile communication application with a range of features including email. It added that the application allowed subscribers to communicate safely and confidentially, preventing data from security breach. "The increasing number of data breaches, hacking and cyber intrusions making headlines around the world today clearly reflects the need for an application like this," said mTouche Group Chief Executive Officer Zakhir Mohamed.

Malakoff To Raise RM3.15 Bln Proceeds From Listing Exercise

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malakoff Corporation Bhd, Malaysia's largest independent power producer, is expected to raise RM3.15 billion in proceeds from the listing of 1.52 billion shares at a maximum indicative price of RM1.80 per share, subject to final determination. Chairman Tan Sri Syed Anwar Jamalullail said the initial public offering (IPO), set for May 15, would be the largest listing since 2012, representing up to 30.4 per cent of Malakoff's enlarged issue and paid-up capital. "The IPO proceeds will be used to fully redeem an RM1.8 billion Junior Sukuk Musharakah while the balance will be used for future business expansion, working capital and fees, and expenses for the listing exercise," he told reporters here Friday.

Celcom Offers Mobile Fund Remittance Service

KUALA LUMPUR -- Celcom Axiata Bhd is offering its customers the convenience of using mobile phones to remit money via a remittance service, Doowit. In a statement here Monday, it said the service facilitates the transfer of funds in a quick, secure and hassle free-way, through their mobile phones from anywhere and anytime. Chief Marketing and Sales Officer Zalman Aefendy Zainal Abidin said customers can be assured that this is a secure mode and a useful financial tool, especially for foreign workers, who may grapple with limited time and work irregular hours. “With Doowit, customers can avoid queuing for hours for the traditional over-the-counter remittance procedures,” he added.

EPF Launches EPF-MIS Information Portal

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has launched an EPF Members Investment Scheme (EPF-MIS) Information Portal. Its objective is to provide information on unit trust funds offered under the scheme and Fund Management Institutions (FMIs) managing it. The portal can be accessed by members through the i-Akaun and is free, the EPF said in a statement here Monday. “The EPF-MIS is a scheme that allows members to voluntarily transfer a portion of their savings from Account 1 for investment, offering the option to enhance their retirement savings. Under this scheme, members can invest through FMIs appointed by the EPF, not more than 20 per cent every three months, of the total savings from Account 1 in excess of their respective basic saving,” it said.

Petronas Dagangan Launches ‘Ways2Win’ To Reward Loyal Customers

KAJANG -- Petronas Dagangan Bhd has launched a new two-month campaign, “Ways2Win”, to add value to purchases for fuel or goods from its Mesra convenience stores at petrol stations. The campaign gives consumers the freedom to choose how they want to be rewarded, whether through instant redemption or the chance to win three years’ worth of fuel via a competition, being held in conjunction with the campaign. Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer Mohd Ibrahimnuddin Mohd Yunus said the campaign is part of the company’s ongoing year-long effort to add value and reward loyal consumers.

Microsoft Expects Smartphone Launch To Boost Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- Microsoft expects the launch of its Lumia 640 Dual SIM and Lumia 640 XL smartphones to contribute positively to the company’s growth moving forward. Its General Manager of Mobile Devices Sales for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, Bruce Howe, said the smartphones would continue to strengthen the company’s market share, especially among high-end users. He, however, declined to elaborate. “We are here to revolutionise imaging through our new devices,” he told reporters here Tuesday.

Gamuda Land Officially Opens Gamuda Walk Shopping Mall

SHAH ALAM -- Gamuda Land Sdn Bhd, the property arm of Gamuda Bhd, Tuesday officially opened its ‘Gamuda Walk’ community lifestyle mall in Kota Kemuning here. “With easy access via Kesas (Shah Alam Expressway), LKSA (Kemuning–Shah Alam Highway) as well as NKVE (New Klang Valley Expressway), Gamuda Walk will also be a new shopping destination for other residential areas surrounding Kota Kemuning. “It also offers complete services for the whole family including supermarket and restaurants,” Gamuda Land General Manager, Leasing Herbie Tan told reporters here Tuesday.

Perodua Myvi Bags Best Value-For-Money Car Of The Year Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Perodua Myvi has bagged Frost & Sullivan’s best Value-for-Money Car of the Year Award for the 1.3L-above category. The award was on the basis of quantitative measurements, including sales volume and selling price of the model in 2014, part costs, fuel consumption and total cost of ownership over a five-year period or about 100,000 km usage. In a statement here Wednesday, President and Chief Executive Officer Datuk Aminar Rashid Salleh said the award demonstrated the company’s overall commitment to bringing the best in terms of inbuilt quality and value preposition.

KLTCC 2015 To Showcase Asean Publishing Industry

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Trade and Copyright Centre 2015 (KLTCC 2015), the largest copyrights trade show in South-East Asia, will showcase the ASEAN publishing industry through digital convergence of intellectual properties (IPs) from April 19 to 21, 2015. In a statement here Wednesday, organiser Perbadanan Kota Buku (PKB) said the three-day business-to-business extravaganza, from April 19-21, would be a meeting place for various publishers, licensors, buyers and those looking for opportunities to develop their content to various media. PKB’s Chief Executive Officer, Sayed Munawar Sayed Mohd Mustar, said with 140 booths for local and international exhibitors, including content creators, the KLTCC 2015 would see over 150 prominent international buyers attending.

Tony Fernandes Named World’s Top 100 Most Influential People

KUALA LUMPUR -- TIME Magazine named AirAsia’s Group Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes to the 2015 TIME 100, the magazine’s annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world. “It’s a tremendous honour to be included in TIME’s top 100 list – I was shocked when I first received the news but I am very proud and humbled,” he said in a statement here Friday. The Time Magazine’s list, now in its twelfth year, recognises the activism, innovation and achievement of the world’s most influential individuals.

Malaysia's Successful Sukuk An Endorsement Of Nation's Strong Fundamentals

GLOBAL SUKUK... Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak with Preliminary Offering Memorandum:1Malaysia Sukuk Global Berhad during the official launch for the Global Sukuk Issue in Kuala Lumpur. Also present (from left) CIMB Group Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Nazir Razak, Bank Negara Governor Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, Treasury Secretery General Tan Sri Dr Wan Abdul Aziz Wan Abdullah and Barclays Capital Director and Country Head Steve R Clayton. -- fotoBERNAMA (May 19, 2014)

By Farhana Poniman & Zarul Effendi Razali

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The success of Malaysia's US$1.5 billion sukuk issuance, after a lapse of almost four years, has drawn positive response from international investors who have reaffirmed their confidence in the country's long-term economic fundamentals, analysts said Friday.

In brushing off negative criticisms on the economy, they concur that sceptics are losing out on investment opportunities abound in Malaysia when the reality is that foreign appetite for Malaysia's financial instruments, including Islamic bonds, remains strong.

Malaysia's US$1.5 billion (RM5.4 billion) sukuk was oversubscribed, attracting an aggregate interest of over US$9 billion (RM32.8 billion) from a combined investor base of over 450 accounts.

The issuance consists of a US$1 billion (RM3.65 billion) 10-year and US$500 million (RM1.8 billion) 30-year benchmark Trust Certificates (Sukuk).

"The 30-year tranche was oversubscribed by approximately six times, considering this is quite a long-dated instrument, it shows that international investors are optimistic of Malaysia's long-term economic prospects," said Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd Head of Research Pong Teng Siew.

OVERSUBSCRIBED BY SIX TIMES

The 10-year tranche was oversubscribed by about six times. He said the oversubscription of Malaysia's sukuk indicates that foreign appetite for Malaysian bonds remains strong.

"Malaysia's success in the issuance and pricing of its global sukuk shows a clear demarcation between investors who believe in the long-term fundamentals of the economy and those with a very short-term investment horizon," said MIDF

Amanah Investment Bank Bhd Head of Research Zulkifli Hamzah. Subscribers of the Malaysian sukuk are clearly comfortable with the resilience of the Malaysian economy and the fiscal reform initiatives being pursued by the Government, he said.

Fitch Ratings' threat to downgrade Malaysia does not appear to have any bearing on the issuance, especially with regards to pricing.

"Sceptics are missing out on the opportunity to participate in the progress of the country, in its journey to become a high-income economy," he opined.

RINGGIT'S BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Pong also said the interest in Malaysian bonds came from the ringgit's bright outlook as the currency's weakening cycle had come to an end.

The ringgit opened higher at 3.6305/6335 to the US dollar as compared with Thursday's close of 3.6520/6550.

The main reason weighing on the ringgit was the stronger US dollar due to reports saying that the Federal Reserve would raise interest rates soon. "However, we believe an interest rates hike in the US will be unlikely given the weakening US economy," he added.

Treasury Secretary-General Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Serigar Abdullah said the government is extremely pleased with the success of the deal and the confidence global investors have in the Malaysia's credit story.

FOURTH USD-DENOMINATED SUKUK

The offering marked the country's fourth US dollar-denominated sovereign global sukuk issuance, following its successful global sukuk issuances in 2002, 2010 and 2011.

The 10-year tranche was allocated to investors in the Middle-East (24 per cent), Asia (50 per cent), Europe (16 per cent) and the United States (10 per cent), while the 30-year tranche was allocated to investors in the Middle-East (two per cent), Asia (50 per cent), Europe (19 per cent) and the United States (29 per cent).

The sukuk is expected to be assigned ratings of A- by Standard and Poor's Ratings Services and A3 by Moody's Investors Services Ltd.

-- BERNAMA

LIST OF MARKET REPORTS :

BURSA MALAYSIA

BURSA Likely To Trade Higher Next Week
By Azizul Ahmad

KUALA LUMPUR -- Shares on Bursa Malaysia are expected to trade higher next week supported by positive regional and domestic sentiment.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank vice-president/head of retail research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) is also expected to start accelerating and test the all-time high of 1896.23 recorded on July 8 last year.

He named the upcoming China stimulus, expectations of a delayed Fed rate hike and European liquidity, alongside a stronger ringgit, as among positive regional factors that could lift the local bourse.

On the domestic front, Nazri said the 11th Malaysia Economic Plan to be tabled in Parliament on May 21, will also lend a positive spill-over effect on Bursa Malaysia.

"It will also address Malaysia's economic growth from a multi-dimensional perspective, including corporate profit, business opportunities, worker income, access to education, healthcare, quality of work life and living conditions," he added.

He suggested conservative investors should accumulate Affin's top ten trading service stocks, namely IHH Healthcare, MISC, Petronas Dagangan, Telekom, Westport, Pharmaniaga, GD Express, Berjaya Auto, Integrax and Pos Malaysia.

Meanwhile, several senior dealers contacted said the confidence of global investors in Malaysia's debt market could also see a spillover effect on Bursa Malaysia, and the oversubscription to the Malaysian government's inaugural long tenured Sukuk, marked the global investors' confidence in the country's financial system.

Malaysia on Thursday successfully priced US$1 billion of 10-year and US$500 million of 30-year benchmark Trust Certificates Sukuk for a total deal size of US$1.5 billion.

The longest tenured Sukuk ever by a sovereign, the inaugural 30-year tranche was oversubscribed by about six times, while the 10-year tranche was oversubscribed by almost seven times.

For the week just ended, foreign funds which emerged as Bursa Malaysia's net buyers since Thursday, were seen accumulating finance related counters like Maybank and Public Bank, and some other FBM KLCI components.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the FBM KLCI gained 1.55 points to 1,845.86 from 1,844.31 last Friday. Weekly turnover grew to 12.11 billion units worth RM11.27 billion from 9.42 billion units worth RM9.26 billion last week.

Main market volume rose to 7.38 billion shares valued at RM10.07 billion from the 5.63 billion shares valued at RM8.45 billion the previous week.

FOREX: Ringgit To Advance Further Against Greenback Next Week

By Zairina Zainudin

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is expected to advance further against the US dollar next week, spurred by positive market sentiment amid a retreat by the US dollar.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the expectation of a delayed US Federal Reserve interest rate hike would provide an upside to the ringgit's movement.

He said the lacklustre global data did nothing to stall the ringgit's advance, which gained 1.3 per cent to 3.6400.

"We note as the dollar index fell 0.7 per cent to 97.61, pulling back from the recent 12-year high at just above 100, the local currency shown relative strength. "The ringgit also has gained new momentum towards 3.6000 since briefly breaking below 3.7000 on Wednesday," he told Bernama. Another dealer, said however, profit taking is likely to emerge next week to cap recent gains.

For the week just ended, the ringgit traded stronger against the US dollar at 3.6240/6270 from last Friday's 3.6655/6685.

The local unit was under selling pressure in the early part of the week and was traded at a 17-year low against the Singapore dollar on Wednesday.

However, it rebounded on Thursday to end the week higher as disappointing US economic data, coupled with buying from foreign fund managers due to bargain hunting, helped spur demand for the local unit.

The ringgit appreciated further after the issuance of the government's US$1.5 billion sukuk, which was oversubscribed.

Meanwhile, the ringgit ended the week easier against other major currencies, except for the Singapore dollar.

It depreciated versus the yen to 3.0487/0515 from 3.0475/0502, weakened against the British pound to 5.4418/4485 from 5.3652/3711, fell against the euro to 3.9212/9259 from 3.8873/8915 and eased vis-a-vis the Singapore dollar to 2.6944/6985 from 2.6887/6931 last Friday.

Short-Term Rates To Remain Stable Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain stable next week on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention in the money market to absorb the surplus liquidity.

A dealer said the central bank is expected to continue to call for money market tenders on a daily basis.

For the week just-ended, BNM intervened daily by conducting conventional, Al-Wadiah, repo, range maturity auctions, reverse repo and commodity murabahah programme tenders to reduce the excess liquidity in the system.

The overnight rate for the week stood at 3.21 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates stood at 3.27 per cent, 3.32 per cent and 3.35 per cent respectively.

The benchmark three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.73 per cent. On Friday, the total liquidity surplus in the conventional system was reduced to RM19.42 billion from an earlier estimate of RM29.12 billion. In the Islamic system, the liquidity surplus was reduced to RM6.06 billion from an earlier forecast of RM8.75 billion.

Following this, the central bank issued a late conventional tender for RM19.5 billion and a late Al-Wadiah tender for RM5.1 billion, both for three-day monies.

KLCI Futures To Test 1,850-Pts Level Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR-- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract (FKLI) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to be well bid next week with the key index expected to test the 1,850-points level.

A local senior trader said as such, he is recommending that investors continue to go long (buy) on the index futures, or adopt a 'buy on dip' strategy.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, contract month April 2015 rose eight points to 1,846, May 2015 added seven points to 1,843.5, June 2015 advanced 8.5 points to 1,840.5, while September 2015 bagged 6.5 points to 1,835.

Turnover for the week rose to 25,715 lots from 23,954 lots last week, while open interest grew to 36,157 contracts from 34,619 contracts previously. For the week just-ended, the benchmark FBM KLCI advanced 1.55 points to 1,845.86.

CPO Futures To Trade Higher Next Week

By Joan Santani Santanasamy

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trade higher next week. Interband Group of Companies senior palm oil trader Jim Teh said the market would be in speculative play, on expectations that Indonesia may cut its CPO export tax to zero.

Meanwhile, another dealer, David Ng of Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd said the market is likely to be cautious, as cargo surveyors Societe Generale de Surveillance (SGS) and Intelek Testing Services are expected to announce the palm oil export data for the first 20 days of April on Monday.

"The local market is also likely to be cautious as the ringgit is expected to trade higher next week, and thus capping gains in the CPO," Ng told Bernama. For the week just-ended, the futures market was traded between RM2,124 and RM2,184 a tonne, mainly influenced by the Chicago soybean market, currency movement and the CPO levy tax.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, May 2015 increased RM46 to RM2,184 a tonne, June 2015 advanced RM35 to RM2,163 a tonne, July 2015 rose RM27 to RM2,148 and August 2015 was RM25 higher at RM2,135 a tonne.

Weekly turnover fell to 34,999 lots from 51,659 lots last week, while open interest eased to 208,988 contracts from 225,293 contracts previously.

On the physical market, May South increased RM30 to RM2,190 a tonne from last week's RM2,160 per tonne.

Rubber To Trade Mixed Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is likely to trade mixed next week, in tracking crude oil prices and the ringgit's movement, a dealer said. The downtrend in the rubber price on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange and a stronger yen are also expected to weigh in on sentiment.

For the week-just-ended, rubber prices traded easier, in sync with regional peers.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's official physical price for tyre-grade SMR 20 increased 9.5 sen to 500.50 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk rose 6.5 sen to 407 sen a kg.

The unofficial closing price for tyre-grade SMR 20 was up by five sen to 497.50 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk fell 7.5 sen to 405 sen a kg.

KLIBOR Futures To Remain Flat Next Week

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

For the week just ended, there were no contract months traded.

Turnover was nil, while open interest amounted to 922 contracts. On a week-to-week basis, May 2015 increased to 96.35, while April 2015, June 2015 and September 2015 remained pegged at 96.32, 96.35 and 96.42 respectively. The underlying three-month KLIBOR decreased one per cent to 3.73 per cent.

Uncertainty Surrounds KLTM Next Week On Lack Of Leads

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is likely to be in an uncertain mode next week due to the absence of market moving news, a dealer said.

"Furthermore, we are now seeing poor demand. But, traders will keep a close eye on the tin price on the London Metal Exchange (LME) next week," he told Bernama.

For the week just-ended, the KLTM closed mostly lower, moving between US$14,750 and US$16,650 a tonne and mainly influenced by the lower close of the metal on the LME.

Turnover, however, increased to 205 lots from 200 lots last week, with trading dominated by the Japanese, Europeans and local buyers.

The price differential between the KLTM and LME narrowed to a premium of US$70 a tonne from US$270 a tonne last Friday.

Gold Futures To Trade At Current Level Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Gold futures contracts on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to trade at the current level of between RM143 a gramme and RM145.50 a gramme next week.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd dealer Ong Su Ling said investors are watching closely for the US consumer prices data released late Friday and comments from the US Federal Reserve (Fed) officials next Thursday.

"Many analysts are now betting that rates will not be raised until September, with the physical demand from both China and India remaining slow," said Ong.

The local market was traded mostly lower for the week just ended.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, April 2015 declined 46 ticks to RM140.10 a gramme, May 2015 eased 56 ticks to RM140.10 a gramme, June 2015 shed eight ticks to RM140.60 a gramme and July 2015 trimmed 50 ticks to RM141.20 a gramme.

Volume for the week surged to 2,091 lots worth RM29.85 million from 662 lots worth RM9.35 million last week.

Open interest was higher at 3,157 contracts from 2,926 contracts last Friday.