

This Week's Highlight : Malaysia's Economy On Right Track - PM



ON THE RIGHT TRACK...Malaysia's GDP growth of 5.9 per cent in 2017 proves that its economy is on the right track, says PM. -- fotoBERNAMA by Hazim Mohamed

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.9 per cent in 2017 proved that its economy is on the right track, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said. Najib, who is also Finance Minister, said this was achieved through intensive planning and strong national economic

policy. "Alhamdulillah, through intensive planning and strong economic policy, Malaysia's economy expanded 5.9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2017. This makes the overall growth for 2017 is also at 5.9 per cent, compared to 4.2 per cent in 2016. We're on the right track!" he said on his Twitter at @NajibRazak Wednesday.

WEDNESDAY

Malaysia's Economy Expands 5.9 Pct In 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian economy expanded 5.9 per cent in 2017 with private sector demand continuing to be the primary driver of growth while the outlook for 2018 remained favourable, supported by domestic demand, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). In the fourth quarter of 2017, the gross domestic product (GDP) also grew by 5.9 per cent. The 2017 GDP is higher than the 4.2 per cent and 5.0 per cent registered in 2016 and 2015, respectively. Malaysia's fourth quarter GDP growth in 2016 stood at 4.5 per cent.

THURSDAY

Malaysia Able To Achieve RM2 Trillion GDP By 2022

PETALING JAYA -- Malaysia is capable of achieving gross domestic product (GDP) of RM2 trillion by 2022 if it were to maintain its annual growth rate at between five and six per cent, says Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin. "With the ongoing efforts, we hope to achieve RM2 trillion GDP by 2022," he told reporters after giving a briefing on the country's economic statistics for the fourth quarter of 2017, as well as the year 2017, here Friday.

This Week's Top Stories

MONDAY

Aerospace Industry To Continue Healthy Growth

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia's aerospace industry is expected to continue its healthy growth momentum this year, driven by the record growth in the past three years and backlog of orders for aircraft in the Asia Pacific region. Second International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan said Monday that the industry was expected to grow by 5.0 per cent in terms of export to RM9 billion this year against RM8.49 billion recorded in 2017.

TUESDAY

Data Integrity, Members' Savings Unaffected By Fire - EPF

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has given the assurance that there has been no compromise to data integrity or members' savings in any manner due to the fire at its building in Jalan Gasing, Petaling Jaya, Tuesday. It said in a statement that its Petaling Jaya office and branch were temporarily closed until further notice due to the fire.



SMEbrief

PUNB Wants More Entrepreneurs To Explore DFTZ

MELAKA, -- Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad (PUNB) is encouraging more entrepreneurs under its purview to explore the Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) to grow their businesses, said its Chairman, Tan Sri Mohd Ali Rustam. "We foresee a big potential for the e-commerce sector in view of the government's target to have about 10,000 companies joining the DFTZ e-commerce platform by year-end," he said at Budget 2018 Entrepreneurial Discourse: 'What Do We Get?' at the Melaka international Trade Centre here Monday.

SMEs Record RM14 Mln Potential Sales At S'pore Airshow

KUALALUMPUR--The 18 Malaysian small and medium enterprises

(SMEs) which participated in the Singapore Airshow 2018, which was held from Feb 10-11, 2018, recorded potential sales of RM14 million. In a statement Monday, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) said, the SMEs were part of SME Corp Malaysia's EPP8: Developing SMEs in the Global Aerospace Manufacturing Industry programme.

PIKOM Inks 5 MoUs On SME E-Commerce Adoption

KUALA LUMPUR -- The National ICT Association of Malaysia (PIKOM) has signed memorandum of understanding (MoUs) with five associations in an effort to rope in more local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to adopt e-Commerce. The five associations are the Malaysia Retail Chain Association, Malaysia Wholesalers Association, Malaysia Digital Chamber of Commerce, Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents and the SME

Association of Malaysia.

MITI Allots RM30 Mln Grants For Young Entrepreneurs

DUNGUN -- The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) is allocating business grants worth RM30 million through the Bumiputra Youth Entrepreneurial Development Programme (TUBE) for 2,000 young entrepreneurs nationwide this year. Of the amount, RM2.1 million would be allocated to youths from Terengganu, its Deputy Minister, Datuk Ahmad Maslan said after visiting a frozen food processing factory at the Pulau Serai cottage industry incubator centre here Tuesday.



LIFESTYLE
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PropUP

Efficient Affordable Housing Reforms Need Collective Efforts - World Bank

KUALA LUMPUR -- There is an adamant need for a collective and concerted efforts from all stakeholders to ensure affordable housing reform takes place efficiently, said the World Bank. These require many institutions to play their roles, including the government, banks and agencies like the National Mortgage Corp and 1Malaysia People's Housing Programme, said Malaysia Country Manager, Faris H. Hadad-Zervos, said after a panel discussion on 'Navigating the Affordable Housing Market in Urban Cities', here Monday.

Malaysia Needs Centralised, Affordable Housing Initiative - BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- A centralised and affordable housing initiative and database will definitely enhance efficiency in planning, implementation

and execution, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). Malaysia needs to adopt a more advanced construction methods and smart placement of assets that would also lead to clear and effective cost management, its Assistant Governor, Norzila Abdul Aziz, said at the opening of the panel discussion on 'Navigating the Affordable Housing Market in Urban Cities', here Monday.

Rahim & Co: Property Mart Likely To Stabilise This Year

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian property market is expected to be stable this year after showing signs of bottoming out with the trough, said property consultant Rahim & Co International Sdn Bhd. Its executive chairman, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman said Monday, although the market did not show much improvement in transactional activity

Propertyupdate

from the downtrend that was seen since 2013, the pace of the property market slowdown had decelerated.

KKLW Allocates RM271.6 Million For PPRT Projects

PUTATAN -- The Rural and Regional Development Ministry (KKLW) is allocating RM271.6 million for the implementation of the Housing Programme For the Hardcore Poor (PPRT) this year, which would benefit 16,547 households. Its minister, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said Monday, the project would involve construction of 608 new PPRT units and repair of 5,521 PPRT houses.



MARKETS



Scoreboard

Gainers -	544
Losers -	213
Not Traded -	781
Unchanged -	354
Value -	1071793546
Volume -	11132838

Bursa Malaysia Closes Half-Day Trading On Higher Note

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia closed higher in half-day trading on the eve of Chinese New Year festive, supported by continued buying interest in selected heavyweights and low-liners, dealers said. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the volume transacted was healthy despite the half-day trading, following the better-than-expected Gross Domestic Product growth data announced by Bank Negara Wednesday. The Malaysian economy expanded by 5.9 per cent in 2017 versus 4.2 per cent in 2016. He told Bernama that sentiment was supported by the stronger ringgit, which stood at 3.8, and the benchmark Brent crude oil futures which fetched US\$62.33 a barrel. Gainers outpaced losers 544 to 213 while 354 counters were unchanged, 781 untraded and 20 others were suspended. Volume stood at 1.11 billion shares, worth RM1.07 billion, up from 1.93 billion shares, worth RM1.98 billion, recorded Wednesday. The Main Market volume fell to 601.53 million units, worth RM979.37 million, from Wednesday's 1.27 billion units valued at RM1.85 billion. Bursa Malaysia and its subsidiaries will be closed tomorrow (Feb 16) and will resume trading on Monday (Feb 19).



Exchange Rate
(Ringgit : Foreign Currency)

	Buying	Selling
USD	3.8910	3.8980
EUR	4.8583	4.8678
GBP	5.4704	5.4818
100 YEN	3.6559	3.6635
SGD	2.9659	2.9724

Source: Bank Negara Malaysia

FOREX: Ringgit Closes Higher Against US Dollar

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit closed sharply higher against the US dollar Thursday on continued buying interest and aided by the recovery in oil prices, said a dealer. At 6 pm, the local note appreciated against the greenback to 3.8910/8980 from Wednesday's 3.9170/9210. OANDA Corp Head of Trading for Asia Pacific Stephen Innes said a weaker US dollar and rebounding commodity prices also boosted sentiment for the ringgit, supported by Wednesday's announcement of Malaysia's robust economic growth of 5.9 per cent in 2017. Meanwhile, the ringgit was weaker against a basket of major currencies. The local unit was slightly lower against the Singapore dollar to 2.9659/9724 from Wednesday's 2.9654/9705 and declined against the yen to 3.6559/6635 from 3.6441/6488. It was sharply lower against the British pound at 5.4704/4818 from 5.4325/4400 and eased against the euro to 4.8583/8678 from 4.8383/8444 Wednesday.

Short-Term Rates Close Steady On BNM's Intervention

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term interbank rates closed steady Thursday on Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) intervention to reduce surplus liquidity from the financial system. The liquidity surplus in the conventional system fell to RM29.30 billion from RM37.04 billion this morning, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM7.73 billion from RM12.88 billion. Earlier, BNM

called for three conventional money market tenders, three Qard tenders and a reverse repo tender. The central bank also conducted a RM29.3 billion conventional money market tender and a RM7.7 billion Qard money market tender, both for four-day money. The overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.19 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates were pegged at 3.26 per cent, 3.30 per cent and 3.35 per cent respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Contract Ends Untraded

KUALA LUMPUR -- The three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (KLIBOR) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives was untraded Thursday. February 2018, March 2018, April 2018 and June 2018 remained pegged at 96.35, 96.32, 96.30 and 96.27, respectively. Both volume and open interest remained nil. On the cash market, the underlying three-month KLIBOR stood at 3.69 per cent at the 11 am fixing.

KLCI Futures Close Half-Day Trading On Positive Note

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract ended higher on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives in tandem with the higher close on the underlying market. Thursday's half-day trading session saw sentiment spurred by buying activities ahead of the Chinese Lunar festival as well as the better 2017 gross domestic product (GDP) data released Wednesday. The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished 3.35 points higher at 1,838.28 points at 12.30 pm. February 2018 bagged 9.5 points to 1,839.5, March 2018 rose 7.5 points to 1,836.0, June 2018 added seven points to 1,833.0 and September 2018 gained eight points to 1,830.0 points. Turnover fell to 2,057 lots from 3,318 lots registered on Wednesday while open interest declined to 25,209 contracts from 26,628 contracts Wednesday. The market will be closed Friday for the Chinese New Year festive and resume trading on Feb 19.

AmMetLife Takaful, AmBank Islamic Aim 6,000 Applications For ProtectSecure-i Murni

KUALA LUMPUR -- AmMetLife Takaful Bhd and AmBank Islamic Bhd target 6,000 applications, worth in excess of RM12 million in terms of annual contributions for the newly launched ProtectSecure-i Murni plan by the end of this year. AmMetLife Takaful chief executive officer, Noor Azam Mohd Yusof said Monday, the target seemed achievable since the plan had received more than 800 applications worth RM1.5 million in terms of annual contributions since it was launched last September.

Maybank Anticipates 30 Pct Rise In E-Ang Pow Transactions For CNY

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) is anticipating a 30 per cent rise in the number of e-Ang Pow transactions this Chinese New Year given the continued adoption of digital banking convenience among customers. Group Head of Community Financial Services Datuk Lim Hong Tat said in a statement Tuesday, last year the service saw a 15 per cent rise in the number of transactions to over 18,000, with value surging by almost 30 per cent to RM2.1 million.

High EPF Dividend Is Not Election Candy - Johari

PUTRAJAYA -- The 6.9 per cent dividend rate declared by the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) on Saturday – the highest since 1997 – is not an “election candy” but reflects the country’s strong economic growth, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani. He told the media Wednesday, the 6.9 per cent return for conventional accounts and 6.4 per cent for shariah savings came about as a result of EPF’s domestic and international investments.

Sufficient Supply Of Banknotes For CNY - ABM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Association of Banks in Malaysia’s (ABM) members have sufficient supply of banknotes in time for the Chinese New Year celebration, comprising new and old notes. In a statement Wednesday, ABM said, its member banks had been encouraging the use of quality fit banknotes which were as good as new when customers exchanged banknotes at their branches for the coming festive celebration starting Feb 16, 2018. ABM said the move was in support of Bank Negara Malaysia’s ‘Go Green’ initiative launched in 2013 to conserve resources and protect the environment.

Life Insurance Industry Records Strong Growth In 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- The life insurance industry continued its upward trend in 2017 with higher insurance protection for Malaysians, providing coverage amounting to RM1.38 trillion in sum assured for all policies combined. In a statement Wednesday, the Life Insurance Association of Malaysia (LIAM) said, the amount was six per cent higher than the RM1.3 trillion recorded in 2016.

i-VCAP Declares Income Distribution For Three ETF Funds

KUALA LUMPUR -- i-VCAP Management Sdn Bhd (i-VCAP) has declared an income distribution of RM8.75 million for its exchange traded funds (ETFs) under its MyETF Series of Shariah compliant funds for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2017. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, i-VCAP said the income distribution were for its MyETF Dow Jones Islamic Market Malaysia Titans 25 (MyETF-DJIM25), MyETF MSCI-Malaysia Islamic Dividend (MyETF-MMID) and MyETF MSCI SEA Islamic Dividend (MyETFMSEAD).

BNM To Introduce Policies To Preserve Economic, Financial Stability

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia will continue to introduce new policies, as new risks from external spillovers emerge, in order to preserve macroeconomic and financial stability, says Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). In its Quarterly Bulletin, released Wednesday, BNM said external spillovers would continue to affect emerging economies in ways that are both expected and unexpected.

RM13.1 Bln Deficit In Balance Of Payments For 4Q17

KUALA LUMPUR -- The overall balance of payments registered a deficit of RM13.1 billion in the fourth quarter of 2017 (4Q17) compared to a surplus of RM2.9 billion in the third quarter of the year, said Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). In its Quarterly Bulletin released Wednesday, BNM said, the current account surplus widened to RM12.9 billion in 4Q17, accounting for 3.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI), compared to RM12.5 billion in 3Q17.

OPR Adjustment Reflects Normalisation And Not Tightening - BNM

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) adjustment reflects a normalisation of key interest rates and is not a tightening of monetary conditions, says Bank Negara Malaysia. On Jan 25, 2018, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) normalised the degree of monetary accommodation by raising the OPR by 25 basis points to 3.25 per cent. “Continued positive macro-economic outlook provided an opportunity for the MPC to act pre-emptively,” it said Wednesday.

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Sabah Seaweed Industry Penetrates World Markets

SEMPORNA -- The Sabah seaweed industry has penetrated the international markets and China, Philippines and Japan were among the country's importers. Fisheries Department Director-General, Datuk Munir Mohd Nawawi told reporters Monday, the European Union members were also keen to import seaweed but this was dependent on the quality.

MAHB Passenger Traffic Up 6.5 Pct YoY In January

KUALA LUMPUR -- Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd's (MAHB) total passenger traffic grew by 6.5 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to 10.8 million passengers in January 2018. Of the total, international passengers accounted for 5.3 million passengers, a 10.8 per cent growth y-o-y, while domestic passengers recorded 5.5 million passengers, up 2.7 per cent, y-o-y, the airport operator said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

Batu Kawan's Pre-Tax Profit Declines To RM486.76 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Batu Kawan Bhd's pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended Dec 31, 2017 (FY17) declined to RM486.76 million from RM513.80 million recorded in the same period of 2016. Revenue declined to RM5.34 billion versus RM5.63 billion recorded a year ago, the company said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday.

KLK's Q1 Pre-Tax Profit Falls To RM441.50 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Kuala Lumpur

Kepong Bhd's (KLK) pre-tax profit for the first quarter ended Dec 31, 2017 (1Q17) to RM441.50 million from RM472.41 million in the same period a year before. Revenue declined to RM5.19 billion from RM5.50 billion previously. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Monday, KLK said, the 1Q17 pre-tax profit was 6.5 per cent lower on the back of a 5.5 per cent reduction in revenue.

Dilution Of Shareholding In Idea To Cost Axiata RM151.5 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- The dilution of Axiata Group Bhd's shares in its associate company, Idea Cellular Ltd (Idea), following its non-participation in the latter's move to issue 326.63 million new equity shares, is expected to result in Axiata facing an estimated loss of RM151.5 million for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2018. "Following the non-participation by Axiata, the allotment of Idea's shares on preferential basis to several entities has resulted in the dilution of Axiata's shareholding in Idea from 19.7 per cent to 18.1 per cent," Axiata said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

HSS Engineers' Pre-Tax Profit Rises To RM22 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Engineering and project management consultant HSS Engineers Bhd's pre-tax profit increased 10 per cent to RM21.91 million in the financial year ended Dec 31, 2017. Revenue rose to RM145.63 million from RM139 million in the previous year due to improved contribution from the project management division, it said in a filing with Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

E&O's Pre-Tax Profit For Q3 Rises To RM67.34 Mln

KUALA LUMPUR -- Eastern & Oriental Bhd's (E&O) pre-tax profit for the third quarter ended Dec 31, 2017 rose to RM67.34 million from RM49.29 million in the same quarter a year ago. Its revenue increased to RM331.9 million from RM243.32 million previously. "The favourable variance was attributed in part by the maiden revenue and profit recognition from the sale of the 20 per cent reclaimed land in Seri Tanjung Pinang 2A project to the Retirement Fund Inc," it said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

MISC 2017 PBT Slips To RM2 Bln

KUALA LUMPUR -- MISC Bhd's pre-tax profit for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2017 slipped to RM2 billion from RM2.81 billion recorded in the financial year ended 2016. Revenue, however, rose 4.6 per cent to RM10.04 billion from RM9.60 billion recorded previously, the group said in a filing to Bursa Malaysia Tuesday.

Dialog Posts RM144.77 Mln Pre-Tax Profit In Q2

KUALA LUMPUR -- Dialog Group Bhd's pre-tax profit for the second quarter ended Dec 31, 2017 rose to RM144.77 million from RM111.54 million registered a year ago. The higher profit achieved in the current reporting quarter was mainly due to increased contributions from its Malaysian operations and the group's joint ventures. In a filing to Bursa Malaysia Wednesday, the group said revenue also increased to RM857.43 million from RM856.78 million previously.



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Proton Dealers Told To Upgrade Outlets

KUALA LUMPUR -- Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Sdn Bhd (PONSB) has called on its dealers to upgrade their outlets over a period from 2018 until 2020. It said in a statement Monday, the target for 2018 is to substantially increase the number of 3S (sales, service and spare parts) outlets nationwide to enhance overall customer experience with the introduction of new models this year.

Russia's Orgkhim Biochemical Holding Invests RM200 Mln In Tanjung Langsat

JOHOR BAHRU -- Russia's Orgkhim Biochemical Holding is investing about RM200 million to build a plant to produce petroleum-based extender oils for eco-friendly synthetic tyres in Tanjung Langsat near Pasir Gudang. The project on a 2,023-hectare site is undertaken by its subsidiary, Norman Process Oils Malaysia Plant Sdn Bhd – its first investment outside Russia. Orgkhim Biochemical Holding Chief Executive Officer Nikolay Khodov told reporters Monday, the plant would be completed in 15 months' time and would start operations in the middle of next year.

George Kent Forms Consortium For HSR Bid

KUALA LUMPUR -- George Kent (Malaysia) Bhd has joined forces with Siemens AG (Germany), Alstom (France), Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS Group) (Italy) and Porr AG (Austria) to form a consortium to bid for the Kuala Lumpur - Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR) project. In a joint statement Monday, the consortium said it would work to prepare a joint offer encompassing engineering,

procurement and construction (EPC), and operations and maintenance (O&M) for the purpose of this tender.

Training For MTDC-Funded Firms' Reps To Enhance Competencies

KUALA LUMPUR -- The companies funded by Malaysian Technology Development Corp (MTDC) will be required to send representatives to undergo training at its Technopreneur Training Academy starting this year to enhance their competencies as technopreneurs. Its Chairman, Datuk Latt Shariman Abdullah told reporters Monday, the academy would provide a structured on-going training programme within a stipulated time period, to include soft-skills knowledge, branding and marketing courses, 'mentor speed dating', grooming and so on.

Motorola To Help Ensure Safe, Efficient Rail Transport

KUALA LUMPUR -- Motorola Solutions (Motorola) will assist and help ensure daily rail transport in Malaysia safe, efficient and reliable, particularly for the country's first Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) line. In a statement Tuesday, Motorola, said the landmark rail modernisation project is expected to bring significant benefits to Malaysia, including greatly improved transport services while reducing traffic congestion in the Greater Kuala Lumpur metropolitan area.

SC, Bursa Unveil Details Of Equity Market Measures

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) and Bursa Malaysia Bhd have outlined the operational details of various new measures to further enhance the vibrancy

and liquidity of the equity market as announced by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak recently. For the stamp duty waiver on shares of mid and small cap companies for three years starting March 1, 2018, eligible mid and small cap companies are those with market capitalisation of between RM200 million and RM2 billion, as at Dec 31, 2017, the two regulators said in a joint statement Wednesday.

MTEM Survey Shows Rising Economic Confidence In Q1 2018

KUALA LUMPUR -- Public confidence in the Malaysian economy is expected to rise in the first quarter (Q1) of 2018, supported by strong national economic governance and policies, according to the findings of a survey carried out by the Malay Economic Action Council (MTEM) and KajiData Research Sdn Bhd. In order to continue raising economic confidence, MTEM proposed five measures which included ensuring sufficient well-paying employment opportunities, MTEM Chief Executive Office Ahmad Yazid Othman said at a press conference Wednesday to announce the results of the survey done between Dec 22 and Dec 31, 2017, involving 1,379 respondents, nationwide.

Palestine Seeks Malaysian Investors To Help Build Economy

PETALING JAYA -- Palestine is inviting Malaysians to participate in building the country's as it seeks to attract foreign investments totalling US\$100 million (RM389.5 million) to develop the economy in Jerusalem. Palestine Development and Investment Company (PADICO) Chairman Munib Rashid al-Masri told reporters Thursday, vast opportunities existed in Jerusalem, particularly in tourism, housing, renewable energy, lightweight energy, and construction.

CIDB To Introduce Two New Categories Under MCIEA 2018

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) has introduced two new categories for nominations under the Malaysian Construction Industry Excellence Awards 2018 (MCIEA 2018). In a statement Monday, CIDB said, the new categories were Quality Assessment System for Building Buildings (QLASSIC) and Green Building.

Petronas Dagangan Bhd Offers Giveaways Worth RM8,888

KUALA LUMPUR -- Petronas Dagangan Bhd (PDB) is offering giveaways worth RM8,888 in the form of a Petronas Gift Card and Mesra loyalty points between February 12 and March 15, in conjunction with the upcoming Chinese New Year celebration. In a statement Monday, it said the promotion also offers eight PETRONAS Gift Cards worth RM888 each as well as giveaways of 8,800 Mesra points for 88 winners and 800 Mesra points for 8,888 winners.

iPay88 Teams Up With @CAT

KUALA LUMPUR -- iPay88 Holding Sdn Bhd (formerly known as iPay88 Sdn Bhd), an NTT Data company, as well as a Malaysia-based leading provider of online payment services solutions in ASEAN, has teamed up with @CAT Penang. In a statement Tuesday, iPay88 said, via the three-year partnership, it would offer co-working spaces for aspiring startups in Penang under @CAT, a community driven-initiative which aimed to help build an ecosystem for potential startups in Penang.



NYNYJA - First App With Built-In Digital Marketplace, Cryptocurrency Wallet

KUALA LUMPUR -- Global communications and mobile technology company, NYNJA Group Ltd has announced NYNJA, its first international communications app with a built-in digital marketplace and cryptocurrency wallet. NYNJA is a cross-platform app that combines voice, text and visual messaging with robust and secure business management and e-commerce features, it said in a statement Tuesday.

Petronas Renews Wan Zulkiflee's Contract

KUALA LUMPUR -- Tan Sri Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin's contract as Petronas President and Chief Executive Officer has been renewed for three years, effective April 1, 2018. In a statement Tuesday, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said Wan Zulkiflee had a wealth of experience in the country's oil and gas industry, and had served the company for more than three decades.

Raja Teh Maimunah Named Women Icon Malaysia 2017

KUALA LUMPUR -- Raja Teh Maimunah Raja Abdul Aziz was named Women Icon Malaysia 2017 at the Women Icons Summit & Awards on January 30. She is the Chief Executive Officer, AmlInvestment Bank Bhd and Managing Director, Wholesale Banking, AmBank Group. In a statement Wednesday, AmBank Group said Raja Teh Maimunah has over 23 years of experience in banking and finance, focusing on areas of Islamic and investment banking.

Acer Wins 'If Design Awards 2018' For Design Excellence

KUALA LUMPUR -- Taiwanese multinational hardware and electronics corporation, Acer, won 12 iF Design Awards 2018 for its design excellence of the Predator gaming device, software, gadgets and packaging

designs. Acer president of Corporate Marketing, Business Planning and Operations, Tiffany Huang said at the awards-presentation Tuesday, the awards included six for the Predator Orion 9000 desktop, Predator Triton 700 notebook, Predator X27 monitor, Predator X34P monitor, PredatorSense software and Predator Gaming Gadget packaging design. The other award winners were the Acer Swift 7 notebook, Aspire S 24 all-in-one desktop, VGO series gaming monitor, Holo360 and Vision360 cameras, and Pawbo Wagtag pet tracker.

RHB Appoints Former MITI Sec-Gen To Nomination Committee

KUALA LUMPUR -- RHB Bank Bhd has appointed Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) Chairman and former International Trade and Industry Ministry (MITI) Secretary-General Tan Sri Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria as a member of its nomination committee. Her appointment is effective Thursday, RHB said in a filing with Bursa Malaysia. Rebecca, who joined RHB Bank as an Independent NonExecutive Director on Aug 1, 2016, was MITI Secretary-General from 2010 to June 2016.

Takaful Ikhlas Wins Southeast Asia Islamic Business & Finance Award

KUALA LUMPUR -- Takaful Ikhlas Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of MNRB Holdings Bhd (MNRB), has recently won the Southeast Asia Islamic Business and Finance Award for the Best General Takaful Provider from the CPI Financial. Its President and Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Ab Latiff Abu Bakar said Thursday the award is a significant accomplishment for Takaful IKHLAS which has been in operations for almost 15 years.

Malaysia's Economy To Sustain Growth Above 5 Pct

By Mohd Khairi Idham Amran, Sharifah Pirdaus Syed Ali, Harizah Hanim Mohamed

KUALA LUMPUR – After recording a higher-than-expected gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.9 per cent in 2017, Malaysia's economy is expected to sustain growth of above five per cent this year driven by exports.

RHB Research Institute's Chief ASEAN Economist, Peck Boon Soon, said like in 2017 whereby a surge in exports boosted Malaysia's economic growth, the country's growth strength for 2018 would still likely be driven by exports. "As a result, we continue to envisage the export-driven growth to continue have a spillover effect on domestic demand," he told Bernama.

However, he said, a slowdown in demand from China due to a more moderate economic growth projected for 2018 might pose a headwind for Malaysia's exports and GDP growth. "Similarly, if the trade protectionism continues to intensify and worsen, it could pose a drag to global trade and Malaysia's growth as well," he said.

POSITIVE EFFECT

Nevertheless, he said, if the country's exports continued to do well this year, they were expected to generate a positive effect on the country's current account surplus of which a surplus in current account would continue to provide an underlying support for the ringgit. He said the cost of living was expected to stay elevated this year as inflation was projected to average about three per cent in 2018, compared with 3.7 per cent in 2017.

"With economic growth projected to sustain at a growth of above five per cent for 2018, it is hoped that it could help improve the people's income and cushion the elevated cost of living," he said. On the GDP growth, Peck said, Malaysia recorded the highest growth in three years lifted by a surge in exports and a spillover into domestic demand.

He said real exports jumped by almost 10 per cent in 2017, after expanding by just 1.1 per cent in 2016 while domestic demand grew by 6.5 per cent in 2017, a pick-up from 4.3 per cent in the previous year, underpinned by stronger private consumption and investments as well as a recovery in public consumption.

SECOND HIGHEST

Malaysia's economic growth, compared with major ASEAN-5 economies, was the second highest after Philippines (6.7 per cent) and better in terms of growth compared to Singapore (3.6 per cent), Indonesia (5.07 per cent) and Thailand, he said. Thailand's economic performance figures are scheduled to be release on Feb 19 but the Thai central bank estimated the country's GDP to grow between 3.8 and 4 per cent for 2017.

MIDF Amanah Investment Bank Bhd Chief Economist, Dr Kamarudin Mohd Nor, said Malaysia's 2017 GDP growth, which beat the market's expectation of 5.8 per cent, was expected to moderate to 5.5 per cent this year as economists believed it would be hard to beat 2017's trade performance, which was the highest in 13 years.

"It would be hard to outdo 2017's performance due to high base effect and 2017 was a very good year and exports, for example, grew by 18.9 per cent, the strongest since 2005," he said. He said domestic sector played a key role in supporting the growth and robust external trade performance in 2017 and also helped to contribute positively to the GDP growth.

-- BERNAMA



EXPORT-DRIVEN...Malaysia's economy is poised to grow above 5 per cent this year driven by exports, say analysts. -- fotoBERNAMA



Mengarusperdana Latihan Kemahiran

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Bursa Malaysia To Trade Firmer Next Week

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- Bursa Malaysia is expected to trade firmer next week, taking cue from the encouraging 2017 gross domestic product (GDP) data released on Wednesday.

Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice-President/Head of Retail Research, Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the 5.9 per cent GDP growth, deemed as positive and taking on the good momentum from last year, would improve investors' appetite on the local bourse.

"We can see that the volume has gone up too, which means we have the momentum to trend higher next week. "The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) is also likely to touch the 1,860 points level next week," he told Bernama.

Bank Negara Malaysia in a statement said Malaysia's GDP expanded 5.9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2017 from a year earlier, driven mainly by private sector demand, with support from the external sector, while the 2017 full-year GDP grew 5.9 per cent against the 4.2 per cent expansion in 2016.

2018 REMAINS FAVOURABLE

The central bank said the outlook for 2018 remained favourable, supported by domestic demand.

Nazri said that the ringgit was also expected to be higher next week amid a stronger current-account surplus of RM12.9 billion in the fourth quarter last year. "The rebound in the ringgit to currently quote at 3.8-level, recovery in oil prices as well as positive sentiment on global equity markets, will boost the FBM KLCI's performance and increase investors' confidence," he added.

Meanwhile, Maybank Investment Bank in a note said in the first half of 2018 (1H2018) Market Outlook session, it expects fiscal stimulus pre-GE14 (General Election-14) and Bank Negara's overnight policy rate (OPR) hike to be the two main thematic driving investment. "But for the longer term play, the focus is on multi-year orderbook replenishment in infrastructure construction, tourism and Look East Malaysia.

GENERAL ELECTION

"Fiscal stimulus in the lead up to the general election will be those in the consumer sector as a boost to disposal income is expected to continue and will be front loaded in 1H2018.

"While for the OPR, it will benefit banks and it is believed, contractors will have the highest potential of winning jobs for the upcoming megaworks," it added. On a Thursday-to-Friday basis, the benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) finished 18.46 points higher at 1,838.28.

The FBM Emas Index jumped 142.43 points to 13,117.49, the FBMT100 Index appreciated 127.74 points to 12,829.58 and the FBM Emas Shariah Index fell 132.54 points to 13,145.10. On a sectoral basis, the Plantation Index gained 50.94 points to 7,996.97, the Industrial Index declined 18.70 points to 3,202.66, while the Finance Index increased 137.94 points to 17,594.41.

WEEKLY TURNOVER

Weekly turnover went down to 6.46 billion units worth

RM7.76 billion from 15.68 billion units valued at RM16.43 billion.

Main market volume fell to 4.08 billion shares valued at RM7.30 billion from 10.01 billion units worth RM15.42 billion.

Warrant turnover decreased to 1.24 billion units worth RM242.26 million from 2.79 billion units valued at RM566.26 million last week. The ACE market slipped to 1.10 billion shares worth RM205.73 million from 2.83 billion units worth RM432.96 million previously. The local market was closed on Friday for the Chinese New Year celebration.



FOREX: Ringgit To Trend Higher Against US Dollar Next Week

By Siti Radziah Hamzah

KUALA LUMPUR -- The ringgit is likely to trend higher against the US dollar next week on rebounding commodity prices and amid the weaker greenback.

OANDA Corp Head of Trading for Asia Pacific, Stephen Innes said the weaker greenback, in general, was supporting demand for the ringgit, but higher oil prices would also add shine to it. Crude oil prices strengthened amid a suggestion Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, Khalid A Al-Falih that OPEC's current production cuts remain intact.

"I think the US dollar will slide further next week as the market will gradually focus on the expanding US dual deficits (trade and budget), which is a huge currency negative for the US dollar in an inflationary environment. "So, I am expecting the ringgit to trade between the 3.87 and 3.91 range against the US dollar next week with a stronger bias due to the negative US dollar outlook," he told Bernama.

SELLING ACTIVITIES

The US dollar fell against a basket of currencies on Friday on persistent selling activities despite stronger-than-expected inflation data and an increase in interest-rate expectations.

Meanwhile, the US West Texas Intermediate Light Sweet Crude Oil Futures rose 0.68 per cent to US\$61.01 per barrel.

The market was closed on Friday for the Chinese New Year celebration. On a Thursday-to-Friday basis, the local note finished at 3.8910/8980 against the greenback from 3.9370/9410 in the previous week.

The ringgit was, however, mixed against a basket of major currencies. It fell against the Singapore dollar to 2.9659/9724 from 2.9604/9643 and depreciated against the yen to 3.6559/6635 from 3.6096/6143 last week. The local unit also went down against the euro to 4.8583/8678 from 4.8279/8344, but strengthened against the British pound to 5.4704/4818 from 5.4795/4859.

Short-Term Rates To Remain Steady Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Short-term rates are expected to remain steady next week with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) continuing with its intervention to mop up excess funds from the financial system.

The central bank will intervene on a daily basis by conducting tenders, including conventional, range maturity auction tenders and repo tenders. On Friday, the overnight Islamic reference rate stood at 3.19 per cent, while the one-week, two and three-week rates were pegged at 3.26 per cent, 3.30 per cent and 3.35 per cent respectively.

The total liquidity surplus in the conventional system for the week fell to RM29.30 billion from RM34.92 billion last week, while in the Islamic system, it declined to RM7.73 billion from RM9.63 billion previously.

The benchmark three-month Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rates remained at last week's 3.69 per cent.

KLCI Futures Expected To Trend Higher Next Week

By Nurunnasihah Ahmad Rashid

KUALA LUMPUR -- The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contracts is expected to trend higher next week in tracking the better performance of the underlying cash market. Affin Hwang Investment Bank Vice President/Head of Retail Research Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said the confidence of

investors had lifted following the better-than-expected gross domestic product (GDP) data announced on Wednesday.

“With the KLCI having reached the 1,820-point psychological barrier since Monday, along with the better economic data, is proof that the confidence of investors is improving and would lift buying momentum,” he told Bernama.

Bank Negara Malaysia in a statement said Malaysia's GDP expanded 5.9 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2017 from a year earlier, driven mainly by private sector demand with support from the external sector, while for the full-year it grew 5.9 per cent against the 4.2 per cent expansion in 2016. Throughout the short trading week, the futures contracts was traded mostly higher, tracking the performance of the equity market.

TURNOVER FOR THE WEEK

On a Thursday-to-Friday basis, February 2018 added 23 points to 1,839.5, March 2018 and September 2018 surged 21.5 points each to 1,836.0 and 1,830.0 respectively, and June 2018 bagged 23.5 points to 1,833.0.

Turnover for the week decreased to 16,549 lots from last Friday's 50,068 lots.

Open interest slipped to 25,209 contracts from 33,522 contracts last week. The benchmark FBM KLCI ended the short trading week 18.46 points better at 1,838.28 from 1,819.82 last Friday.

Bursa Malaysia was closed on Friday for the Chinese New Year holiday.

CPO Futures To See Quiet Trading Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- Crude palm oil (CPO) futures prices on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to remain quiet next week, with traders still in a holiday mood, a dealer said.

Interband Group of Companies Senior Palm Oil Trader, Jim Teh, said thin trading was expected to pull down the CPO prices to trade between RM2,350 and RM2,410 a tonne.

“Traders hope the lower CPO inventory in the country will lift prices higher.

“Our CPO prices are actually excellent, despite weak

demand for the commodity for this week,” he told Bernama.

Statistics from the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) released earlier this week showed that Malaysia's palm oil exports in January 2018 rose 6.01 per cent to 1.51 million tonnes from 1.43 million tonnes in December 2017.

PALM OIL PRODUCTS

In addition, cargo surveyor Intertek Testing Services reported that Malaysia's palm oil products exports in the Feb 1-10 period increased 14.7 per cent to 412,207 tonnes, up from 359,346 tonnes shipped during the same period in January.

For the week just-ended, CPO prices were traded lower on profit-taking as buyers abstained from the market for the Chinese New Year holiday.

On a Friday-to-Thursday basis, February 2018 advanced RM10 to RM2,505 per tonne, while March 2018 slipped RM1 to RM2,518 per tonne, April 2018 decreased RM6 to RM2,508 per tonne and May 2018 was RM8 easier at RM2,506 per tonne.

Weekly turnover fell to 110,739 lots from 213,774 lots recorded last Friday and open interest shed to 240,540 contracts from 286,520 contracts. On the physical market, February South was RM5 higher at RM2,520 per tonne.

Rubber Market To Remain Subdued Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Malaysian rubber market is expected to remain subdued next week on weak demand and with traders still away for the Chinese New Year break, dealers said.

A dealer said the commodity price would likely move sideways and also depend on market supply, alongside the ringgit's performance. The movement of the rubber futures on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) will also influence prices on the domestic market next week.

For the week just ended, the lower market prices were also due to a decline in demand from the world's largest importer, China.

On a Thursday to Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber

Board's noon price for tyre-grade SMR 20 fell two sen to 554.0 sen a kg, while latex-in-bulk was 18 sen lower at 445.0 sen a kg.

The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 and latex-in-bulk remained at last week's 554.5 sen a kg and 466.0 sen a kg respectively.

KLIBOR Futures Likely To Be Quiet 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 in quiet trading.

A dealer said market players had been reluctant to participate actively in the market due to a lack of interest. For the week just-ended, there was lacklustre trading on the KLIBOR futures contract with no trading recorded throughout the holiday-shortened week.

The market was traded half-day on Thursday and closed on Friday for the Chinese New Year celebration. On a Thursday-to-Friday basis, settlement prices for February 2018, March 2018, April 2018 and June 2018 stood at 96.35, 96.32, 96.30 and 96.27 respectively.

The underlying three-month KLIBOR was unchanged from last week's 3.69 per cent.

KLTM Likely To See Quiet Trading Next Week

KUALA LUMPUR -- The Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) will likely experience weak buying momentum amid a quiet market next week with traders still in a holiday mood, a dealer said.

He anticipated the KLTM to see trading at between US\$21,500 and US\$21,700 per tonne for the week.

"I think the market will be quiet for the first two days of the week. But, momentum will likely (rebound from its current level) starting on Wednesday," he said, adding, the performance of the metal on the London Metal Exchange (LME) would continue to influence the local tin price.

On a Thursday-to-Friday basis, the price on the KLTM rose by US\$130 to US\$21,630 a tonne from

US\$21,500 a tonne last week. The KLTM was closed on Friday for the Chinese New Year celebration. Turnover for the week rose to 128 tonnes from 274 tonnes previously.

The LME increased by US\$250 to end at US\$21,575 a tonne from US\$21,325 a tonne previously. The premium between the KLTM and the LME narrowed to US\$55 per tonne on Thursday from US\$175 tonne on last Friday.

Gold Futures Likely To Extend Gains Next Week

By Siti Radziah Hamzah

KUALA LUMPUR -- The gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is likely to extend gains next week as investors remain cautious on global equity markets and a weaker US dollar, said an analyst.

OANDA Corp Head of Trading for Asia Pacific, Stephen Innes said higher US inflation combined with the US dollar exhibiting zero correlation to higher interest rates amidst burdening dual deficits, should play out favourably for the gold markets. "Gold is in a perfect spot to extend gains. Higher US inflation as expressed through the higher consumer price index data is positive. We could see a more significant move into gold if equity prices start to lose traction," he told Bernama.

Another dealer said Bursa gold futures market might track closely the movement of COMEX gold's Friday close to get the direction of the week.

The local gold market traded higher throughout the holiday shortened week in line with COMEX gold. The market was traded half-day on Thursday and closed on Friday for the Chinese New Year celebration. On a Thursday-to-Friday basis, February 2018 increased 46 ticks to RM169.40 a gramme, March 2018 rose 37 ticks to RM169.65 a gramme, April 2018 jumped 49 ticks to RM170.45 a gramme and May 2018 went up 37 ticks to RM170.20 a gramme respectively.

Weekly turnover eased to 15 lots worth RM286,365 from last week's 26 lots valued at RM436,615, while open interest eased slightly to 72 contracts from 75 contracts.