

For breaking news updates go to
www.theedgemarkets.com



ON EDGE TV

www.theedgemarkets.com



Alliance DBS
'cautious' on local
stock market,
maintains year-
end FBM KLCI
target at 1,750



Malaysia's
consumer
confidence down
to lowest in 6 years
ahead of GST

THEEDGE™

The Edge Communications Sdn Bhd
(266980-X)
Level 3, Menara KLK, No 1 Jalan PJU 7/6,
Mutiar Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor, Malaysia

Publisher and Group CEO Ho Kay Tat

Editorial
For News Tips/Press Releases
Tel: 03-7721 8219 Fax: 03-7721 8038
Email: eeditor@bizedge.com

Senior Managing Editor Azam Aris
Executive Editors Kathy Fong,
Jenny Ng, Siow Chen Ming,
Surinder Jessy, Ooi Inn Leong
Associate Editors R B Bhattacharjee,
Joyce Goh, Jose Barrock,
Vasantha Ganesan
Deputy Editors Cindy Yeap,
Kang Siew Li
Assistant Editors Adeline Paul Raj,
Tan Choe Choe
Chief Copy Editor Halim Yaacob
Senior Copy Editors Marica Van
Wynen, Lam Seng Fatt,
Melanie Proctor
Copy Editor Evelyn Chan
Art Director Sharon Khoh
Design Team Cheryl Loh,
Valerie Chin, Aaron Boudville,
Aminullah Abdul Karim,
Yong Yik Sheng, Tun Mohd Zafian
Mohd Za'abab
Asst Manager-Editorial Services
Madeline Tan

Corporate
Managing Director Au Foong Yee
Deputy Managing Director
Lim Shiew Yui

Advertising & Marketing
To advertise contact
GL: (03) 7721 8000
Fax: (03) 7721 8288
Chief Marketing Officer
Sharon Teh (012) 313 9056
General Manager, Digital Media
Kingston Low (012) 278 5540
Senior Sales Managers
Geetha Perumal (016) 250 8640
Fong Lai Kuan (012) 386 2831
Shereen Wong (016) 233 7388
Peter Hoe (019) 221 5351
Acting Senior Sales Manager
Gregory Thu (012) 376 0614
Ad-Traffic Manager
Vigneswary Krishnan (03) 7721 8005
Ad Traffic Asst Manager
Roger Lee (03) 7721 8004
Executive Ad-Traffic
Norma Jasma (03) 7721 8006
Email: mkt.ad@bizedge.com

Operations
To order copy
Tel: 03-7721 8034 / 8033
Fax: 03-7721 8282
Email: hotline@bizedge.com

IAC to address HR challenges in E&E sector

It aims for universities, government entities and industries to develop tertiary education curriculums

BY EMILY CHOW

PENANG: The Industry-Academia Collaboration (IAC) initiative for the electrical and electronics (E&E) sector was launched yesterday as part of a collaborative effort between the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida), Education Ministry and Talent Corp Malaysia Bhd (TalentCorp).

It aims for collaboration between universities, government entities and industries to develop tertiary education curriculums. It will include internship programmes and industrial training to enhance graduate employability. The programme costs RM30 million and is funded by TalentCorp.

Launched by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed at the Semicon Southeast Asia 2015 microelectronics exhibition at the Spice Arena in Bayan Lepas, Penang, this is the first IAC to take off under Budget 2015.

"This isn't our first time working with TalentCorp [but it's been] mostly on an ad hoc basis. What we are doing now is creating a strong marriage, a structured approach, to address human capital challenges and fill the gaps in the E&E sector," said Mustapa.

While noting the existence of other collaborative initiatives to address the needs of the E&E sector — such as Crest launched in 2012 — Mustapa hopes the IAC can be another example of how close collaboration between industries and universities can result in university curriculum enrichment to enhance graduate employability.

Such collaborations will include short courses, electives, final-year projects, adjunct lecturers and sabbaticals in the in-

dustry. They are expected to commence this year.

"There's been a lot of industry engagement with respect to [university] curriculum development. The feedback we get is that Malaysia is strong in hardware, like machines and automation, but when it comes to software, there are a few gaps to be filled," said Mustapa. "The priority is to further improve soft infrastructure, and this is where collaboration between the industry and academia is very important."

The IAC partnership follows the launch of Malaysia's National Higher Education Blueprint 2015-2025 in early April, and is in line to equip Malaysian graduates with skills for high-income career paths. At the moment, an estimated 53,000 Malaysian graduates remain unemployed after six months of graduating.

This collaboration also comes at a crucial time. A World Bank report finds that 62% of Malaysian firms face difficulty finding talent with the right skills, while 48% of companies identify a lack of talent as a constraint for future growth.

"This [partnership] is about producing the right supply of graduates, and the most sustainable talent supply is our local pool of universities," said Johan Mahmood Merican, chief executive officer of TalentCorp.

"This ensures that we have industry-ready-quality graduates for the growth of the sector — for all the priority clusters of the electronics sector."

The IAC initiative will be introduced to other priority industries besides the E&E sector. These include machinery and equipment or advanced engineering, medical devices, oil and gas, transport — including automotive, aviation and maritime, chemical and



Mustapa: What we are doing now is creating a strong marriage, a structured approach, to address human capital challenges and fill the gaps in the E&E sector.

petrochemical, health care and communications, content and infrastructure.

The E&E sector is one of Malaysia's 12 National Key Economic Areas. In 2013, Mida estimated it accounted for 32.8% of Malaysia's exports and 27.2% of total employment. Almost half of Malaysia's manufactured exports in 2014 — RM231.2 billion — were E&E exports.

On a separate note, Mustapa added that the event is the first Semicon microelectronics exhibition held outside Singapore.

"This is a success for Malaysia. We're a major player in testing and packaging, 20% of the world's market. The organisation of the event in Penang shows confidence in Malaysia as far as testing and packaging are concerned ... in promoting not only E&E but also manufacturing."

Najib: Fiscal position strong

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the country's fiscal position is strong and sustainable following the increase in tax revenue and gradual reduction in budget deficit.

He said the government tax revenue will continue to strengthen, with an estimated RM183.37 billion expected to be collected this year, an increase from RM171.77 billion

in 2014, he tweeted late yesterday.

Of the estimated tax revenue, RM135.64 billion will be derived from direct taxes, with the remaining RM47.73 billion from indirect taxes, he posted on Twitter.

In his tweet, which also shows a tax collection chart sourced from the Finance Ministry, it is noted that tax collection grew 9.24% year-on-year between 2010 and 2013.

Najib, who is also the finance minister, reaffirmed that Malaysia is on track to achieve a balanced budget by 2020, while the fiscal deficit target remains at 3.2% of gross domestic product in 2015.

In January, the government revised the fiscal deficit target to 3.2% from 3% in view of weaker crude oil prices and slower world economic growth projections. — Bernama

IN BRIEF

Eco World seeks three-month extension of corporate exercise

KUALA LUMPUR: Eco World Development Group Bhd is seeking a three-month extension to complete the last part of its major corporate exercise. In a filing with Bursa Malaysia yesterday, Eco World said it had submitted an application for an extension of another three months up to Aug 5, 2015, to complete the exercise. Originally, the company had until May 6, 2015, to complete the whole corporate exercise. The company said throughout the course of the past 5½ months from the date of Bursa Securities' green light for its corporate exercise, it completed all the components except the placement of new Eco World shares. — by Meena Lakshana

First foreign bank in decades opens in Myanmar

YANGON: The first foreign bank to operate in Myanmar in decades officially opened the door of its Yangon branch yesterday, the latest government bid to attract foreign investment in the emergent nation. Central bank governor Kyaw Kyaw Maung described the opening of Japan's Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ (BTMU) yesterday as a "new milestone", adding that he hopes it will strengthen the economy through increased investment and business financing. BTMU said the Yangon branch will provide full banking services, including deposits, loans and foreign exchange, to foreign companies and domestic banks operating in Myanmar. — AFP

'EU charges against Gazprom unacceptable'

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said yesterday EU charges against Gazprom are an unacceptable attempt to retroactively apply the bloc's latest energy rules to earlier contracts. The European Union yesterday charged the Russian gas giant with overcharging buyers in Eastern Europe and hindering competition. When asked to comment on the case, Lavrov said in an interview with three radio stations: "All contracts in effect now that Gazprom signed with its partners, were signed with full respect of the legal regime that existed in the EU at the time." — Reuters

Philippines wants 90 rebels prosecuted

MANILA: The Philippine Justice Department yesterday recommended murder charges against 90 Muslim rebels, even though such a move could jeopardise a peace process championed by President Benigno Aquino. The department said the Muslim rebels could be charged over a Jan 25 incident which left 44 police commandos dead in the rural district of Mamasapano. This could affect the government's peace process with the 10,000-member Moro Islamic Liberation Front. — AFP