



Daily Newswatch

Market Review

The FBM KLCI closed higher at 1,518.1 (+0.3%) on Wednesday, tracking regional gains as investors awaited further clarity on impending U.S. tariffs. The broader market remained mixed, with buying interest in the telecommunications sector emerging as the linchpin of the advance amid a shift toward high-dividend-yielding assets. Recent dividend announcements and a high-profile merger among Indonesian telecom operators have further boosted sector sentiment. Among index constituents, gains were led by AXIATA (+5.1%), followed by NESTLE (+4.5%) and MAXIS (+3.1%). Sector-wise, Telecommunications & Media rallied (+2.1%), while Consumer Products & Services (+0.6%) and Transportation & Logistics (+0.3%) also posted modest advances. Overall, market breadth was nearly balanced with 399 advancers versus 428 decliners.

US equities fell as the S&P 500 slipped 1.1% to 5,712.2, the NASDAQ Composite dropped 2.0% to 17,899.0, and the Dow Jones edged down 0.3% to 42,454.8, amid cautious sentiment over evolving trade policies.

In Asia, HSI rallied 0.6% to 23,483.3, while SHANGHAI CI was nearly unchanged, dipping just 0.04% to 3,368.7. Market participants are awaiting further clarity on President Trump's trade policy ahead of a new round of tariffs next week. Traders found some reassurance after Trump hinted at flexibility—stating not all levies would hit on the April 2 deadline and that some countries might receive breaks—while also opening a new front with a directive for 25% secondary tariffs on any nation importing oil or gas from Venezuela, a move that initially pushed oil prices higher before relief from Black Sea maritime security deals moderated the impact.

Macro News

- US:** Business equipment orders fall for first time in four months
- US:** Mortgage rates rise for first time in nine weeks
- UK** Inflation cools unexpectedly in boon for Reeves and rate cuts
- UK:** Forced to slash UK spending after growth forecast halved
- US:** China trade surplus too big to accept, ex-top US official says
- Singapore:** Partner to boost cross-border electricity trade for Asean Power Grid

Corporate News

- Nestcon:** Bags RM228m construction contract in KL
- Solarvest:** Secures RM103m EPCC contract from Penang Development Corp unit
- ITMAX:** Clinches RM30m smart surveillance contract from Pengerang Municipal Council
- Rohas Tecnic:** Bags RM93m transmission line contract from TNB
- Bintai Kinden:** Wins contract from Teladan to build office blocks in Seremban
- Dayang:** Secures two vessel contracts from Hibiscus
- CAB Cakaran:** Opens 15th outlet in Penang, plans 50-100 more in Peninsular Malaysia over next five to 10 years

Upcoming key economic data releases

	Date
US – Q4 GDP Growth Rate	Mar 27
US – Feb 2025 CPE Price Index	Mar 28

Key Indices	Last Close	Daily chg %	YTD chg %
FBM KLCI	1,518.1	0.3	(7.6)
Dow Jones	42,454.8	(0.3)	(0.2)
Nasdaq CI	17,899.0	(2.0)	(7.3)
S&P 500	5,712.2	(1.1)	(2.9)
FTSE 100	8,689.6	0.3	6.3
Nikkei 225	38,027.3	0.7	(4.7)
Shanghai CI	3,368.7	(0.0)	0.5
HSI	23,483.3	0.6	17.1
STI	3,963.7	0.2	4.6

Market Activities	Last Close	% Chg
Vol traded (m shares)	3,112.4	(0.6)
Value traded (RM m)	2,465.1	(1.7)
Gainers	399	
Losers	428	
Unchanged	480	

Top 5 Volume	Last Close	Daily chg %	Vol (m)
CLITE	0.230	(8.0)	70.5
RENEUCO	0.045	(10.0)	35.9
PBBANK	4.470	0.7	28.8
PERTAMA	0.135	(12.9)	28.8
DENGKIL	0.245	6.5	28.0

Top 5 Turnover	Last Close	Daily chg %	Val (RM m)
CIMB	7.040	0.6	160.4
MAYBANK	10.180	(0.4)	152.1
PBBANK	4.470	0.7	128.8
TENAGA	13.580	(0.1)	127.8
RHBBANK	6.800	0.4	83.6

Currencies	Last Close	% Chg
USD/MYR	4.430	0.2
USD/JPY	150.520	0.0
EUR/USD	1.074	(0.1)
USD/CNY	7.268	(0.1)
US Dollar Index	104.547	0.3

Commodities	Last Close	% Chg
Brent (USD/barrel)	73.8	1.1
Gold (USD/troy oz)	3,020.8	0.0
CPO (MYR/metric t)	4,637.0	1.1
Bitcoin (USD/BTC)	86,946.3	(0.4)



Macro News

US: Business equipment orders fall for first time in four months

Orders placed with US factories for business equipment unexpectedly declined in February, suggesting some companies are limiting investment as they await specifics on tariffs and tax policy. The value of core capital goods orders, a proxy for investment in equipment excluding aircraft and military hardware, decreased 0.3% last month, the first drop since October, Commerce Department figures showed Wednesday. The data aren't adjusted for inflation. Bookings for all durable goods — items meant to last at least three years — rose 0.9%. Excluding transportation equipment, orders increased 0.7%. *(Bloomberg)*

US: Mortgage rates rise for first time in nine weeks

The average US 30-year mortgage rate rose for the first time since early January, causing a pullback in refinancing and tempering purchase activity. The contract rate on a 30-year mortgage climbed 5 basis points to 6.7% in the week ended March 14 from the lowest level this year, according to Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA) data released on Wednesday. The rate on a 15-year fixed mortgage also rose. A sustained decline in mortgage rates would provide a much-needed boost for the housing market as affordability remains constrained by still-elevated prices. *(Bloomberg)*

UK: Inflation cools unexpectedly in boon for Reeves and rate cuts

UK inflation unexpectedly cooled in February, strengthening the case for the Bank of England to cut interest rates again in May and providing a morale boost for Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves ahead of a key economic statement Wednesday. Consumer prices climbed 2.8% in February from a year earlier, slowing from 3% the previous month, the Office for National Statistics said. It was below the 3% economists were expecting on average and in line with the 2.8% predicted by the BOE last month. Clothing prices were the biggest driver of the slowdown, while goods price inflation also eased, the ONS said. The pound extended losses, falling as much as 0.2% to US\$1.3. Money markets added to rate cut bets and now see a 75% chance of a reduction in May. *(Bloomberg)*

UK: Forced to slash UK spending after growth forecast halved

Rachel Reeves sought to blame global headwinds for a sharp slowdown in the British economy, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer tries to stabilize the UK's finances with sweeping spending cuts. The Office for Budget Responsibility now expects GDP to grow by just 1% this year, compared with its previous forecast of 2%, Reeves announced in the House of Commons on Wednesday as part of her spring economic update. Reeves also outlined a £6bn (US\$7.7bn or RM34.1bn) reduction in government spending alongside the growth downgrade, as she pledged to stick to her fiscal rules. "I am not satisfied with these numbers," she said of the forecasts, claiming that her planning reforms — a key plank of the government's agenda to lift growth — would add 0.2% to GDP by the end of the parliament. *(Bloomberg)*

US: China trade surplus too big to accept, ex-top US official says

China is running a trade surplus that the world economy can't "live with," former US president Bill Clinton's top trade official said, warning its exports would face new roadblocks without fixing the domestic causes fuelling the imbalances. "China is exploiting manufacturing, suppressing domestic consumption, and expects that the world can live with a 1tn dollar Chinese trade surplus, which most certainly the world cannot," Charlene Barshefsky said in an interview with Bloomberg Television in Hong Kong. Barshefsky, who negotiated the terms of China's accession to the World Trade Organization more than two decades ago, said that agreement was "absolutely not" a mistake, helping lift hundreds of millions out of poverty and turning the country into a major driver of worldwide demand during the 2008 global financial crisis. *(Reuters)*

Singapore: Partner to boost cross-border electricity trade for Asean Power Grid

Singapore and Vietnam signed a letter of intent (LOI) on Wednesday to enhance cooperation in cross-border electricity trade for the Asean Power Grid, exploring to increase the low-carbon electricity imports to the city-state to around two gigawatts (GW) by 2035. Singapore's Trade and Industry Ministry (MTI) said this builds on the conditional approval granted by the Energy Market Authority of Singapore to Sembcorp Utilities in October 2023, to import 1.2GW of low-carbon electricity via new subsea cables of around 1,000km, from Vietnam to Singapore. "The Vietnam and Singapore governments will continue to engage interested companies with credible and commercially viable proposals," it said in a statement on Wednesday. *(Reuters)*

Corporate News

Nestcon: Bags RM228m construction contract in KL

Nestcon Builders Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of construction outfit Nestcon Bhd, has secured a construction contract worth RM228.3m from Paramount Property (Cityview) Sdn Bhd. The project, located on Jalan Ampang Hilir, Kuala Lumpur, involves the construction of a 49-storey condominium tower and a seven-storey condominium block. According to its bourse filing, the contract is set for a duration of 37 months, with construction work scheduled to commence on April 29, 2025 and slated for completion by May 28, 2028. *(The Edge)*

Solarvest: Secures RM103m EPCC contract from Penang Development Corp unit

Solarvest Holdings Bhd's unit Atlantic Blue Sdn Bhd has secured an engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning (EPCC) contract from SV Flux Sdn Bhd, an indirect unit of Penang Development Corp (PDC), worth RM103.1m. SV Flux is indirectly owned by PDC Premier Holdings Sdn Bhd, a company wholly owned by PDC. SV Flux operates power generation facilities for the generation, transmission, and distribution of electric energy. It counts PDC deputy chief executive officers Datuk Mohammad Azhar Hamdan and Roslan Hassan as directors of the company. *(The Edge)*

ITMAX: Clinches RM30m smart surveillance contract from Pengerang Municipal Council

ITMAX System Bhd has secured a RM30.2m contract from the Pengerang Municipal Council (MPP) in Johor to implement smart surveillance systems. The scope includes installing artificial intelligence-enabled closed-circuit camera systems and establishing a smart integrated operations centre. The 15-year contract runs from March 25, 2025 to March 24, 2040, according to a bourse filing on Wednesday. This marks the fifth contract win for ITMAX this year. Excluding this latest addition, the company's unbilled order book exceeds RM1.4bn, set to be progressively recognised until May 2039. *(The Edge)*

Rohas Tecnic: Bags RM93m transmission line contract from TNB

Rohas Tecnic Bhd has bagged a RM93m transmission line contract from TNB for the expansion of its power grid network. The contract involves the design, supply, installation and commissioning of high-voltage transmission lines across selected regions, and is set to be executed over a period of 24 months. In a bourse filing on Wednesday, Rohas Tecnic stated that the new contract is expected to significantly boost its revenue and reinforce its position in the electrical services sector. *(The Edge)*

Bintai Kinden: Wins contract from Teladan to build office blocks in Seremban

Bintai Kinden Corp Bhd has won a RM27.2m contract for the construction of six blocks of shop offices in Seremban. The Practice Note 17 (PN17) company said the contract was awarded to its wholly-owned unit Kejuruteraan Bintai Kindenko Sdn Bhd by Pavilion Link Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Teladan Group Bhd. Construction at the site in Bukit Intan is expected to commence on April 9, with the project to be completed by July 8, 2026, said Bintai Kinden in a statement on Wednesday. *(The Edge)*

Dayang: Secures two vessel contracts from Hibiscus

Dayang Enterprise Holdings Bhd said on Wednesday that it has secured two contracts for the provision of accommodation workboats from Hibiscus Petroleum Bhd, DESB Marine Services Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned unit of Dayang, was awarded the two contracts by Hibiscus's subsidiaries, Hibiscus Oil & Gas Malaysia Ltd (HML) and SEA Hibiscus Sdn Bhd, according to Dayang's bourse filings. The contract with HML is for a duration of 30 days, with two extension options of up to 30 days each. The contract with SEA Hibiscus spans 110 days, with similar extension options. The value of both contracts will be determined based on work orders issued during the contract period. Both contracts are set to commence within the vessel delivery window from April 14 to April 18, 2025. *(The Edge)*



CAB Cakaran: Opens 15th outlet in Penang, plans 50-100 more in Peninsular Malaysia over next five to 10 years

One of Malaysia's largest food producers, CAB Cakaran Corporation Bhd, has expanded its retail footprint with the opening of its 15th medium-sized supermarket, Home Mart Fresh & Frozen Sdn Bhd, in Sri Rambai, Bukit Mertajam, Penang. This expansion strengthens CAB Cakaran's retail presence in Malaysia, with the group now operating eight fully owned Home Mart outlets and holding a 58% stake in seven Pasaraya Jaya Gading outlets. In a statement on Wednesday, CAB Cakaran said it plans to open another five to seven Home Mart outlets this year, depending on its ability to secure locations in the outskirts of Peninsular Malaysia. Group managing director Christopher Chuah Hoon Phong said the company's long-term strategy is to build a widespread network of such outlets across Peninsular Malaysia, as a key distribution channel for its products. *(The Edge)*

Stock Selection Based on Dividend Yield

	Sector	Price (RM)	Dividend/Share (RM)	Dividend Yield (%)
Bermaz Auto	Consumer	1.15	0.15	13.30
Amway (M)	Consumer	5.16	0.47	9.11
British American Tobacco (M)	Consumer	6.25	0.54	8.64
Sentral REIT	REIT	0.78	0.06	8.26
YTL Hospital REIT	REIT	1.03	0.08	8.06
REXIT	Technology	0.64	0.05	7.81
KIP REIT	REIT	0.87	0.07	7.75
Hektar REITS	REIT	0.48	0.04	7.71
CapitaLand Malaysia Trust	REIT	0.65	0.05	7.38
Paramount Corporation	Property	1.04	0.07	7.21
Ta Ann Holdings	Plantation	3.86	0.27	7.10
MBM Resources	Consumer	5.54	0.39	7.09
Taliworks Corporation	Utilities	0.72	0.05	6.99
MAG Holdings	Consumer	1.22	0.08	6.72
Magnum	Consumer	1.22	0.08	6.72

Source: Bloomberg

User guide: Mercury Securities compiles a list of dividend-yielding stocks for conservative long-term passive investors looking for regular income whilst capping downside risk of their investment.

Methodology: The list above includes stocks that have a high dividend yield, estimated to be greater than 4% per annum. These stocks also have a history of paying dividends consistently, having paid dividends for the past 3 years.

IPO Tracker

Company	Listing Sought	Issue Price (RM/Share)	No. Of Shares (m)		Closing Date	Listing Date
			Public Issue	Offer for Sale		
Hi Mobility Bhd	Main Market	1.22	95.0	35.0	19 Mar	28 Mar
SumiSaujana Group Bhd	ACE Market	0.24	310.0	90.0	25 Mar	09 Apr
MSB Global Group Bhd	ACE Market	0.20	133.0	74.0	04 Apr	15 Apr
Cuckoo International (Mal) Bhd	Main Market	1.29	143.3	222.1	10 Apr	30 Apr

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