CALENDAR OF EVENTS
January-March 2006

16 January 2006

In order to encourage greater participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the export markets, the Bank announced that all participating banks will offer two new trade finance products under both conventional and Islamic financing for the SMEs. The *Multi Currency Trade Finance* provides financing to Malaysian direct exporters in ringgit and major foreign currencies in the form of pre- and post-shipment financing. The *Indirect Exporter Financing Scheme* provides ringgit financing to indirect exporters without recourse, whereby the participating banks will discount their trade invoices arising from the supply of goods and services to direct exporters. Under this arrangement, the credit risks will be shared between the participating banks and Export-Import Bank of Malaysia Berhad.

17 January 2006

The Bank and the Securities Commission of Malaysia reported in a joint statement that the implementation of the framework on investment banks announced in 2005 was progressing as scheduled. It is envisaged that there would potentially be 17 investment banks emerging from implementation of the framework, and that discount houses and merchant banks would no longer be in the Malaysian financial landscape.

20 January 2006

The Monetary Policy Committee, decided to leave the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) unchanged at 3%.

20 January 2006

The Bank announced that with immediate effect, the limit for investments in credit facilities by life insurers for the purpose of meeting the minimum required margin of solvency (MOS) has been increased from 50% to 70% of the MOS. This liberalisation will enable life insurers to achieve improved asset-liability matching, as well as accord them greater flexibility to invest in high-quality long-term bonds, thus contributing towards the development of the domestic capital market.

21 January 2006

Governor Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr. Zeti Akhtar Aziz was conferred the honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) by the University of Nottingham at the fifth graduation ceremony of the University's Malaysia campus. In her acceptance speech, the Governor spoke on the importance of investing in human capital to strengthen the intellectual capacity of the nation, as knowledge accumulation and application lies at the core of a country's competitive advantage in the current global economy.

24 January 2006

At the 5th Annual Islamic Finance Summit in London, the Governor spoke on four key challenges that needs to be addressed for Islamic finance to sustain its development in the global financial system, which are:

- the development of a robust Islamic financial system at the national level;
- the development of efficient and active international Islamic financial markets;
- the adoption of IFSB standards; and
- the development of a sufficient pool of talent in Islamic finance.

30 January 2006

The Bank granted four new takaful licences to the following consortiums and joint ventures:

- HSBC Insurance (Asia-Pacific) Holdings Limited, Jerneh Asia Berhad and Kumpulan Wang Simpanan Pekerja;
- Hong Leong Bank, Millea Asia Pte. Ltd, Japan, and Hong Leong Assurance;
- Bank Simpanan Nasional and Prudential Holdings Limited; and
- MAA Holdings Berhad and Solidarity Co., Bahrain

In line with the current shareholding policy, the new takaful operators are permitted to have foreign equity interest of up to 49%. With the new licensees the number of takaful operators in the country increased to nine.

7 February 2006

Governor delivered the keynote address at the Islamic Financial Services Board Second International Conference “Islamic Banking: Risk Management, Regulation and Supervision” in Kuala Lumpur. In her keynote address, she spoke on the challenges of risk management in Islamic financial institutions, as well as the importance of effective regulation and supervision, as part of the efforts to promote a robust and sound Islamic financial system.

9 February 2006

The Bank announced the introduction of a new Islamic monetary instrument, the Bank Negara Malaysia Sukuk Ijarah, to add to the diversity of monetary instruments used by the Bank in managing liquidity in the Islamic Money Market. A special purpose vehicle, BNM Sukuk Berhad, has been established to issue the instrument. Due to its regular issuance, the Sukuk Ijarah is expected to serve as a benchmark for other short to medium-term Islamic bonds. The inaugural issuance took place on 16 February 2006 with an issue size of RM400 million.

10 February 2006

The Bank announced the launch of the SMEinfo Portal, www.smeinfo.com.my, a one-stop online information gateway for SMEs. The SMEinfo Portal, an initiative of the National Small and Medium Enterprise Development Council, offers comprehensive information on all aspects of SME development. The portal also features a free SME Directory to promote business and networking opportunities among SMEs across all sectors of the economy.

14 February 2006

In commemorating "Songket – The Regal Heritage" as inspired by the promotional works started by the late Datin Paduka Seri Endon Mahmood, three types of commemorative coins – gold, silver and bi-metal – were issued. The launching ceremony for the coins was officiated by the Prime Minister, Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

17 February 2006

At the Inaugural Annual Dinner of the ICLIF Alumni Association in Kuala Lumpur, Governor said that the new and highly challenging economic environment calls for leaders who are able to meet the new demands of the new economy, able to perform in a more competitive environment, able to reap the benefits of the new technologies, and finally able to operate in an environment of heightened uncertainty.

22 February 2006

The Bank announced that the Malaysian economy expanded an annual rate of 5.2% in the fourth quarter of 2005. The manufacturing and services sectors were the main drivers of this growth. A stronger upturn in exports provided added support to domestic private sector activities. Higher consumer sentiment and sustained business confidence underpinned the strong growth. For the whole of 2005, the combination of strong domestic demand and exports resulted in an overall growth in real gross domestic product of 5.3%.

The Monetary Policy Committee decided to raise the OPR by 25 basis points to 3.25% in order to align monetary conditions to the current environment. The stance of monetary policy continued to remain supportive of economic activity.

23 February 2006

Deputy Governor Datuk Zamani Abdul Ghani delivered a keynote address at the 2nd Seminar on Regulation of Takaful, themed "Building a Progressive Takaful Sector in the Overall Islamic Financial System" in Langkawi. The Deputy Governor shared the experience and approach that Malaysia has adopted to develop a comprehensive and effective Islamic financial system.

10 March 2006

The Minister of Finance announced that His Majesty the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong had consented to the extension of Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr. Zeti Akhtar Aziz's tenure as Governor of the Bank for another five years from 1 May 2006.

22 March 2006

The 2005 Annual Report of the Bank was released. The Malaysian economy was expected to grow at a faster rate with real GDP expanding by 6% supported by strengthening exports and resilient domestic demand.

23 March 2006

The International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF) was launched by the Prime Minister of Malaysia. In her welcoming address, the Governor said that the establishment of INCEIF represents an investment in human capital to support the global development of the Islamic financial services industry. INCEIF will offer the world's first certification programme in Islamic finance, the Certified Islamic Finance Professional (CIFP), as well as post-graduate programmes that will include specialised Masters and Doctorate degrees in the various Islamic finance disciplines.