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Market ends on easier note

SHARES on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) closed lower yesterday, its first loss in four days, as other regional markets slumped mainly on concerns over the possible devaluation of the Chinese yuan.

The benchmark KLSE Composite Index (KLCI) ended the day 1.35 per cent or 8.35 points lower at 610.19 while the broader Emas Index lost 1.70 points or 1.1 per cent to 156.12.

"There is a lot of nervousness in the region now especially over the instability of the Chinese currency and the Hong Kong dollar," said one analyst.

Even the rather positive outcome of the meetings between foreign fund managers and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Finance Minister, Tun Daim Zainuddin which took place yesterday failed to erase the negative sentiment.

Analysts said investors were expecting some announcement on the exit tax for the early repatriation of capital, of which Dr Mahathir said the Government is considering the introduction of such a tax.

The fall on Wall Street last Friday had also dampened investor sentiment, said one.

Meanwhile, on the scoreboard, losers beat gainers 367 to 273 while 159 other counters were unchanged.

Trading volume was lower at 274.997 million shares valued at RM601.800 million compared with 341.886 million shares worth RM721.126 million traded last Friday.

The broad-based BT Ordinaries lost 1.62 points to 146.50 while the BT Composite Index was slipped 4.76 points to 264.58. The 30-share New Straits Times Industrials Index lost 28.56 to close at 3,092.81.

Maybank was the most active with 16.630 million shares followed by Berjaya Group with 12.321 million changing hands while the third most active stock was Magnum which saw 10.817 million shares done.

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