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## Ups and downs in the ICT industry

THE local ICT industry seems to have gotten very interesting in the last two weeks. First the PIKOM elections went on smoothly. Next, the surprise of surprises, MIMOS decided to call for a press conference in an attempt to clear the air over a spate of negative news reports pertaining to its FOREX investments and management of the R&D outfit in Technology Park Malaysia.

Then DRB-HICOM launched its National PC initiative with much pomp and splendour with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad officiating at the event.

As if that is not enough, more news emerged about NASDAQ's lethargic performance, leaving tech players jittery and scratching their heads wondering if tech stocks are really worth their attention. The recent sale of a famous dotcom, drkoop.com, doesn't help to soothe worries on the continuing dotcom debacle.

The matter is made worse by major accounting scandals following the path of Enron. The latest casualty is WorldCom, which has recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the United States.

Still, there is a silver lining among the dark clouds, at least on the local scene. The listing of Maxis (finally!) has boosted investor interest and prompted many to closely track the counter.

YTL e-Solutions, which has also been listed recently on MESDAQ, is maintaining its resilience in the face of negative market sentiments.

In this issue, we take you into the world of corporate air travel. As costs of air travel for businesses can potentially escalate to unmanageable proportions, a good solution leveraging the power of the Internet may yield some answers on how to keep a lid on travel expenses.

Also, find out in our e-business section, how the marriage of the Internet and the idiot box may one day turn all of us into couch potatoes. From the look of things, the 'enhanced' television can potentially transform it into a media rich content and entertainment experience. The question is not whether it can happen but when it will take off.