

Economic at a glance

2025 GDP Growth	+5.2%
2026 GDP Growth Forecast:	+4.7%
2025 Export Growth:	+6.4%
2026 Export Growth Forecast:	+4.8%
2025 Unemployment Rate	3.0%
2026 Unemployment Rate Forecast:	3.0%
2025 Headline Inflation:	+1.4%
2026 Headline Inflation Forecast:	+1.8%
End-2025 OPR	2.75%
End-2026 OPR Forecast:	2.75%

2026 Top Picks Summary

Stock	Price (RM)	Target Price (RM)
ViTrox	4.52	5.30
MI	2.88	4.20
MSC	1.92	2.37
ATECH	0.61	1.00
FRONTKEN	3.95	4.60
EG	1.11	2.02
TENAGA	14.18	16.77
SJC	0.52	0.67
SSB8	0.55	0.81
RAMSSOL	0.80	1.41

Source: Apex Securities Berhad

Market Outlook

World Cup 2026 “Fever”: Expect Softer Trading

- FBM KLCI declined in six of the last nine World Cups, with average return of about -2.0% during the tournament.
- Trading activity typically softens, with five of the last seven events recording lower Bursa Malaysia volume.
- Market impact tends to be temporary, with post-World Cup direction remaining mixed.
- Near-term volatility may rise amid May seasonality, World Cup lull and Iran-related geopolitical risks.
- We introduce our FBM KLCI year-end target of 1,787, while favouring structural growth themes in AI and data centres, complemented by tactical small-cap exposure for alpha generation.
- Top picks: ViTrox, Mi Technovation, MSC, Frontken, Aurelius Technologies, Tenaga, EG Industries, Seni Jaya Corporation, Southern Score Builders and Ramssol.

Quick Take

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup approaching, investors may question whether market activity could soften during the tournament period, which typically coincides with mid-year holidays and reduced participation.

To assess this, we reviewed FBM KLCI performance and Bursa Malaysia trading volume across the last nine World Cups (1990–2022). While history does not necessarily repeat itself, past patterns may provide guidance on potential market behaviour during the upcoming tournament.

Our Findings

FBM KLCI has generally **tended to soften during the World Cup period**, with six out of the last nine tournaments recording declines during the event. Only the 2006, 2010 and 2022 World Cups saw clear positive performances. On average, the FBM KLCI delivered a return of approximately -2.0% during the tournament, although the median performance is slightly positive, reflecting the outsized decline during 1998.

The weakest performances were recorded in 1998 (-16.7%), amid the Asian Financial Crisis backdrop, followed by declines in 2002 (-4.6%) and 2018 (-2.1%). In contrast, stronger performances were observed in 2010 (+2.7%), 1990 (+1.1%), and 2022 (+1.9%), with the latter benefiting from the November–December timing which coincided with year-end rally support.

In terms of monthly pattern, June performance has typically been weak, while July tends to stabilise. Post-event direction remains mixed and inconclusive. Some years saw the market continue trending lower after the tournament, such as in 1990, 2002 and 2014, while other years recorded strong rallies, notably in 2006 and 2010. The remaining instances were mixed, including 1994 and 2018. Overall, the World Cup tends to temporarily dampen market momentum, but does not determine the medium-term trend.

Trading activity also shows a clear slowdown during the World Cup period. Bursa Malaysia trading volume generally contracts during the tournament. Comparing trading volume during the event against one-month prior shows declines in most years, including 1998 (-1%), 2002 (-45%), 2006 (-39%), 2010 (-15%), 2014 (-31%) and 2018 (-19%). The only exception was 2022, which recorded a 21% increase, likely due to post-pandemic volatility and the year-end timing.

Conclusion

Overall, five of the last seven World Cups saw trading volume decline during the event. **Liquidity typically returns within one to three months after the tournament**, suggesting that investors tend to reduce participation during matches and holiday periods. This supports the view of more subdued trading activity during the World Cup.

Historically, markets often experience mild window dressing and positioning activity ahead of the World Cup. During the tournament, the index tends to soften alongside lower trading volume and reduced participation. After the event, market direction is mixed, with the broader trend typically resuming based on underlying macroeconomic and earnings drivers.

Strategy

Given the traditionally volatile month of May, coupled with potential pressure during the World Cup and heightened geopolitical uncertainty from the Iran conflict, market gyrations could increase in the months ahead. Nonetheless, we believe investors should look beyond the short-term volatility and take any weakness as an opportunity to position ahead. In this report, we introduce our **FBM KLCI year-end target of 1,787**, derived from our Elliott Wave framework. With the complex WXY correction likely completed, the KLCI is expected to begin a new five-wave impulsive advance.

We continue to favour structural growth themes, notably AI and data centres, while tactically allocating to small caps to drive alpha generation.

Our top picks are ViTrox, Mi Technovation, MSC, Frontken, Aurelius Technologies, Tenaga, EG Industries, Seni Jaya Corporation, Southern Score Builders, and Ramssol.

Figure 1: Performance of FBM KLCI over last nine WC

Date	% Changes vs. before start of event						
	HIGH	LOW	JUN	JUL	A/F	AUG	DEC
1990 (8 Jun - 8 Jul)	1.39	-2.54	-0.19	7.61	1.10	-7.66	-13.63
1994 (17 Jun - 17 Jul)	0.55	-5.49	-2.02	-0.47	-1.96	9.46	-5.93
1998 (10 Jun - 12 Jul)	0.31	-15.77	-9.89	-20.37	-16.68	-40.09	13.63
2002 (31 May - 28 Jun)	0.01	-7.30	-4.46	-4.97	-4.57	-6.32	-14.88
2006 (9 Jun - 9 Jul)	1.14	-3.70	-0.28	2.03	0.83	4.46	19.51
2010 (11 Jun - 11 Jul)	3.41	0.24	1.76	5.39	2.74	10.16	17.63
2014 (12 Jun - 13 Jul)	1.05	-0.35	0.33	-0.28	0.44	-0.56	-6.15
2018 (14 Jun - 15 Jul)	-0.08	-6.00	-4.09	1.17	-2.09	3.18	-4.14
	HIGH	LOW	NOV	DEC	A/F	JAN	FEB
2022 (20 Nov - 18 Dec)	3.78	-1.49	2.72	3.19	1.92	2.50	0.34

Source: Bloomberg, Apex Securities

Figure 2: Bursa Malaysia total volume comparison

Year	3-mth B/F	1-mth B/F	During	1-mth A/F	3-mth A/F
1997	246	236	260	250	289
1998 (10 Jun - 12 Jul)	123	118	117	114	206
1999	449	509	875	743	259
2000	207	163	137	133	101
2000	269	189	136	144	99
2001	118	139	129	289	318
2002 (31 May - 28 Jun)	389	284	157	212	142
2003	175	202	479	735	595
2004	383	375	249	328	345
2004	348	334	296	312	358
2005	393	433	471	525	391
2006 (9 Jun - 9 Jul)	1057	863	527	720	459
2007	1411	1073	1324	1532	1171

2008	547	527	423	432	375
2008	545	521	413	438	380
2009	1779	1946	1235	1027	721
2010 (11 Jun - 11 Jul)	811	713	603	841	929
2011	959	840	886	1101	921
2012	1137	893	1116	1164	1074
2012	1313	1135	1146	882	1090
2013	1478	1487	1511	2345	1747
2014 (12 Jun - 13 Jul)	1804	2483	1710	1545	2678
2015	1989	1655	1610	1675	1881
2016	1715	1911	1368	1727	1805
2016	1711	1947	1398	1695	1795
2017	3374	1743	1710	2790	2181
2018 (14 Jun - 15 Jul)	2639	2559	2077	3162	2398
2019	2701	2643	2375	2026	2314
2020	6086	14020	7428	8464	9896
2020	8419	7354	10337	9665	8541
2021	4137	3098	3521	3397	3137
2022 (20 Nov - 18 Dec)	2424	3028	3675	2711	3351
2023	3330	4833	3012	3249	4173
2024	3051	3052	3012	2795	3019

Source: Bloomberg, Apex Securities

Figure 3: KLCI Long-Term Elliott Wave Count Signals Start of New Upcycle



Source: Bloomberg, Apex Securities

2026 Top Picks

Company	FYE	Market Cap (RM m)	Rec.	Price (RM) as at 13 April 2026	TP (RM)	Potential Upside	P/E (x)		P/B (x)		Div Yield (%)		ESG Rating
							FY26F	FY27F	FY26F	FY27F	FY26F	FY27F	
ViTrox Corporation	Dec	8,557.4	BUY	4.52	5.30	17.3%	43.3	34.9	6.6	5.7	0.5%	0.6%	★★★★
Mi Technovation	Dec	2,548.8	BUY	2.88	4.20	45.8%	20.9	18.7	2.2	2.0	1.2%	1.2%	★★★★
Malaysia Smelting Corporation Berhad	Dec	1,612.8	BUY	1.92	2.37	23.4%	9.9	7.8	3.3	3.2	9.9%	12.6%	★★★★
Aurelius Technologies	Dec	786.9	BUY	0.61	1.00	65.3%	11.5	10.4	1.4	1.4	5.2%	5.8%	★★★★
Frontken	Dec	6,532.6	BUY	3.95	4.60	16.5%	32.6	31.1	5.2	4.7	1.1%	1.2%	★★★★
EG Industries	Jun	1,009.8	BUY	1.11	2.02	82.0%	9.8	8.1	1.5	1.3	0.4%	0.4%	★★★★
Tenaga Nasional Berhad	Dec	82,657.2	BUY	14.18	16.77	18.3%	20.7	18.1	1.3	1.3	3.9%	3.8%	★★★★
Seni Jaya Corporation Berhad	Jun	111.0	BUY	0.52	0.67	28.8%	8.2	6.2	1.2	1.1	2.4%	3.2%	★★★★
Southern Score Builders	Jun	1,249.9	BUY	0.55	0.81	47.3%	17.5	12.7	5.3	3.5	1.7%	1.8%	★★★★
Ramssol Group	Dec	323.3	BUY	0.80	1.41	76.3%	11.6	10.3	2.1	1.7	0.6%	0.6%	★★★★

Source: Apex Securities Berhad

ESG Matrix Framework:

Environment

Parameters	Rating	Comments
Waste	★★★	Declares and labels all scheduled waste with the correct waste code.
Emissions	★★★	Conducts monthly inspections for all chemical storage facilities.
Paper	★★★	Promotes recycling practices in its offices.
Energy	★★★	Plans to build a rooftop solar photovoltaic system at its new head office.
Compliance	★★★	In compliance with local environmental regulations.

Social

Community	★★★	Participated in a mangrove restoration program at Parit Raja, Rambah.
Human Rights	★★★	Prohibit the employment of child labour and any form of forced labour across all operations.
Occupational Safety and Health	★★★	Equips all personnel with essential personal protective equipment in its workplace.

Governance

Policies	★★★	Adopt anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy to promote ethical business conduct.
Management	★★★	30% of its Board members are women directors, half of its Board members are Independent Directors.
Committee	★★★	Its independent non-executive chairperson is not a member of any of its board committees.

Overall ESG Scoring: ★★★

Recommendation Framework:

BUY: Total returns* are expected to exceed 10% within the next 12 months.

HOLD: Total returns* are expected to be within +10% to -10% within the next 12 months.

SELL: Total returns* are expected to be below -10% within the next 12 months.

TRADING BUY: Total returns* are expected to exceed 10% within the next 3 months.

TRADING SELL: Total returns* are expected to be below -10% within the next 3 months.

*Capital gain + dividend yield

Sector Recommendations:

OVERWEIGHT: The industry defined by the analyst is expected to exceed 10% within the next 12 months.

NEUTRAL: The industry defined by the analyst is expected to be within +10% to -10% within the next 12 months.

UNDERWEIGHT: The industry defined by the analyst, is expected to be below -10% within the next 12 months.

ESG Rating Framework:

★★★★★ : Appraised with 3% premium to fundamental fair value

★★★★ : Appraised with 1% premium to fundamental fair value

★★★ : Appraised with 0% premium/discount to fundamental fair value

★★ : Appraised with -1% discount to fundamental fair value

★ : Appraised with -5% discount to fundamental fair value

Disclaimer: The report is for internal and private circulation only and shall not be reproduced either in part or otherwise without the prior written consent of Apex Securities Berhad. The opinions and information contained herein are based on available data believed to be reliable. It is not to be construed as an offer, invitation or solicitation to buy or sell the securities covered by this report.

Opinions, estimates and projections in this report constitute the current judgment of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Apex Securities Berhad and are subject to change without notice. Apex Securities Berhad has no obligation to update, modify or amend this report or to otherwise notify a reader thereof in the event that any matter stated herein, or any opinion, projection, forecast or estimate set forth herein, changes or subsequently becomes inaccurate.

Apex Securities Berhad does not warrant the accuracy of anything stated herein in any manner whatsoever and no reliance upon such statement by anyone shall give rise to any claim whatsoever against Apex Securities Berhad. Apex Securities Berhad may from time to time have an interest in the company mentioned by this report. This report may not be reproduced, copied or circulated without the prior written approval of Apex Securities Berhad.

As of **Tuesday, 14 Apr, 2026**, the analyst(s), whose name(s) appears on the front page, who prepared this report, has interest in the following securities covered in this report:

(a) nil.