MMHE's negative surprise
Malaysia Marine and Heavy Engineering Holdings Bhd's (MMHE) upcoming results announcement for the third quarter ended Sept 30 may include a negative surprise, CIMB Research said. 1

IPO for Westports next year?
Westports Malaysia Sdn Bhd is looking to raise as much as US$500 million (RM1.52 billion) in an initial public offering (IPO) in the second quarter of 2013, sources said. 4

Top rubber growers to delay exports
Rubber exporters in Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, which represent about 70% of global supply, have started to curb shipments to help boost prices, the International Rubber Consortium Ltd said. 11

WASHINGTON: Groundbreaking on new US homes surged in September to its fastest pace in more than four years, a sign the housing sector's building recovery is gaining traction and supporting the wider economic recovery.

Housing starts increased 15% last month to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 872,000 units, the Commerce Department said.

Since July 2008, though data on starts is volatile and subject to substantial revisions. America's economy has shown signs of faster growth in recent months as the jobless rate has fallen and retail sales data has pointed to stronger consumer spending.

Yesterday's data showed housing, which was battered by the 2007/09 recession, is increasingly one of the brighter spots in the economy.

"One of the big headwinds for the economy has been the weak housing market and this indicates that headwind has dissipated," said Gary Thayer, an economic strategist at Wells Fargo Advisors in St Louis, Missouri.

Home building could add to growth this year for the first time since 2005 and the better economic signal is likely to be welcomed at the White House, where a sluggish economy is weighing on President Barack Obama's chances of re-election next month.

Economists estimate that for every new house built, at least three new jobs are created.

More home building could help compensate for some of the weakness recently in factory output, which is seen as due to sluggish export demand and cooling investment in capital goods.

US stocks were mixed, with the solid housing data outweighing weakness in technology stocks.

One of the big headwinds for the economy has been the weak housing market and this indicates that headwind has dissipated.

ECONOMIC STRATEGIST GARY THAYER below in January 2006 peak.

September market for single-family homes, the largest segment of the market, rose 11% to a 603,000-unit pace—the highest level since September 2006. 12

One of the bright spots in the economy has been the strong housing market and this indicates that headwind has dissipated.