

## REDUCING DEVELOPMENT GAP

# PM: Govt to implement geography-based policies

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government will implement geography-based industrial policies such as classifying activities and investments via regions in line with the advantages and level of development per region.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this was to reduce the development gap between more developed regions and states with the less developed ones.

“This will, for example, involve strengthening oil and gas downstream industries in Sabah and Terengganu or increasing value added electronic activities in Kulim and Bayan Lepas.

“The Klang Valley will continue to be developed to ensure its competitiveness among major cities in Asia. We will focus on improving the Klang Valley’s livability and urban sustainability to serve as an Asean hub for major corporations.

“Part of Kuala Lumpur’s devel-

opment will include the rejuvenation of the Sultan Abdul Samad building and its surroundings in line with the Kuala Lumpur Creative and Cultural District Strategic Master Plan to capitalise on its heritage and create a modern tourism attraction.”

Anwar said the government would continue to boost the development of Iskandar Malaysia in Johor via the creation of a competitive special financial zone to draw foreign investments and knowledge workers to reside in Malaysia.

“Benefits will be offered to qualified companies and individuals, including special tax rate incentives, a 15 per cent tax rate for knowledge workers as well as immigration fast lane access to facilitate easy entry for specialised workers from abroad.

“The gender gap in the labour force must also be closed. We cannot deny that female participation in the labour force, at 55.5

per cent, is still low compared with men at 80.9 per cent.

“There has to be a holistic effort from a legal and monitoring aspect as well as support programmes to encourage mothers to return to work.”

Anwar said this would include addressing systemic issues such as unpaid labour and gender discrimination.

“One of the initiatives in the Care Economy will include providing affordable daycare centres which can help boost the entry of women in the workforce.

“The government will simplify the registration process and expand the ‘whitening’ programme for unregistered daycare centres and nurseries at a cost of RM10 million.

“More must be done to ensure a higher female participation in the labour force. The aim is to have 60 per cent female participation in tandem with the regional economy,” he said.