

# Support Ekonomi Madani: G25

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The G25 group of influential Malays yesterday called on Malaysians to support Ekonomi Madani as the blueprint for making Malaysia a successful country.

It said Ekonomi Madani, which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on July 27, provides for the people's basic needs, irrespective of race and religion, whether they live in urban or rural areas, in the Peninsula or East Malaysia.

"Anwar has emphasised that he wants to make Malaysia a leading country in Southeast Asia in terms of achieving sustainable gross domestic product (GDP) growth and ensuring the equitable distribution of the expanding economic cake to all levels of Malaysian society.

"G25 finds this focus on equitability very appropriate and timely. This is linked to at least two of the six core values of Masyarakat Madani (civil society) concept - sustainability, prosperity, innovation, respect, trust and compassion."

G25 said ensuring equitability

## > 'Blueprint launched by premier provides for people's basic needs, irrespective of race and religion'

directly contributes to prosperity and compassion so that the lower income groups and the less fortunate would get their fair share of the economic opportunities arising from the fast-expanding economy.

"The prime minister believes the government itself must act decisively to bring about the distributive objective.

"We agree with Anwar that in strengthening the growth process, the poor must also benefit from the expansion of job and income opportunities."

It said as widely acknowledged, Malaysia has achieved much progress since Independence. Income levels and employment have risen to bring about remarkable progress in reducing absolute poverty across all states.

"On the other hand, it is also true that the share of wages in the GDP has not risen as fast as it

should. As Anwar said, this can be attributed to the over-reliance on cheap foreign labour in the commercial, industrial, and service sectors."

It said when companies wished to expand their operations, they imported cheap labour, thus depressing wage increases in the private sector.

It added that this led to Malaysia losing its skilled and professional manpower to Asian neighbours and other foreign countries, including those in the Middle East and the West.

"Among those going abroad are nurses, doctors, university professors, research scientists, engineers and accountants.

"This brain drain needs to be addressed urgently. We, therefore, agree with Anwar that this problem of low-wage culture needs to be given priority."

Ekonomi Madani plans to achieve over 5% GDP growth in

the next few years, compared with the more modest 4-5% growth rate projected in most forecasts for Malaysia.

"G25 hopes that to ensure the sustainability of the government's expansionary budget spending, the prime minister will take stronger measures to deal with leakages from corruption, rent-seeking practices, mismanagement, cronyism and favouritism among politicians and civil servants in the ministries and implementing departments.

"Measures to strengthen the revenue base and cut down on wasteful subsidies should also become part of the financial reforms to keep the fiscal deficit ratio under control."

The G25 also said the recent strengthening of the ringgit indicates growing confidence in Anwar's leadership.

"We believe Ekonomi Madani will further consolidate the political strength of the unity government to achieve prospects for peace and stability in the country, despite all the toxic speeches about race and religion from his political opponents."