

**PETALING JAYA:** The 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP) tabled yesterday sets the tone for a decisive five-year push to future-proof the economy, bridge income gaps and position the nation as a resilient, high-tech and inclusive economy.

Anchored on sustainability, reform and digital change, the blueprint outlines bold policy shifts designed to navigate a volatile global landscape while securing long-term growth and social cohesion.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the country's GDP is projected to grow at between 4.5% and 5.5% annually.

He said sector-wise, agriculture is expected to expand by 1.5% a year, mining by 2.8%, construction by 5.0%, manufacturing by 5.8% and services by 5.2%, reflecting a continued push toward high-value activities and structural reform across industries.

At the core of the plan are efforts to enhance education outcomes, improve healthcare access, and uplift marginalised communities, particularly in Sabah, Sarawak and rural heartlands. Inclusive growth, youth empowerment and greater civic participation also feature prominently, signalling a more people-centred approach to national development.

#### **Inclusive development**

The plan outlines tailored support for various communities. For *Bumiputera* entrepreneurs, the Gate to Global (GTG) programme will be expanded to support exports, innovation and digital marketing. In Sabah and Sarawak, *Anak Negeri* and *Bumiputera* communities would benefit from access to business premises, financing and training.

The Chinese community would see progress under the Kampung Baru Development Master Plan, with hawker centre upgrades and financing aid. For the Indian community, focus will be placed on STEM and TVET education, home upgrades and strengthened community governance.

#### **Cost of living relief**

To ease financial burdens, the STR and Sara schemes will be expanded to benefit 5.4 million households, including a broader B40 segment. A one-off RM100 Sara payment will be given to all Malaysians aged 18 and above.

The Payung Rahmah initiative will also be scaled up to improve food affordability through *Jualan*, *Menu*, *Kafe* and *Bakul Rahmah* programmes. In education, 17 forms of student aid, including meal subsidies, food supplements and scholarships, will be introduced.

Households will benefit from Tenaga Nasional Berhad Time-of-Use scheme to better manage electricity costs. Rahmah internet and insurance packages will continue, along with transport subsidies for students, senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

#### **Uplifting *Orang Asli***

A review of the Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954 is on the cards to strengthen *Orang Asli* land rights and legal protections. Education access will be widened through community-based schools and direct schooling assistance.

#### **Strengthening families and support systems**

Under the *Kasih Keluarga Negara* agenda, men are encouraged to embrace their roles as providers, protectors and educators. To boost female labour

# 13MP set to future-proof Malaysian Economy

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force participation to 60%, the plan expands access to childcare and offers training support for working mothers.

Special education services will be strengthened, with autism centres in every state capital. Support for disabled persons, senior citizens and *Orang Asli* includes skills training job placements and employer incentives under the National OKU Action Plan. NGOs would also gain access to alternative funding streams such as social *sukuk*, *waqf*, *zakat* and crowdfunding.

#### **Food security and agriculture**

Malaysia aims to grow agri-food value-added output to RM58 billion by 2030, with focus on increasing domestic production in Kelantan, Pahang, Terengganu, Sabah and Sarawak. The five-season *padi* programme will be expanded across six states.

Smart farming, R&D, mechanisation and youth-led satellite farms are among key strategies. Food sources will be diversified to reduce import reliance, while tighter safety regulations and a modernised supply chain will support SMEs and attract young talent

#### **Education**

A total of RM67 billion has been allocated to the education sector. This includes building new schools, upgrading 1,200 dilapidated ones, including Kemas (Community Development Department) premises and improving public university facilities.

Targets include 98% preschool and secondary enrolment, with compulsory preschool at age five. Vertical schools would help ease overcrowding in urban areas, and school construction will be required for new housing developments.

Key reform areas include STEM, AI, digital skills, language proficiency and gifted education. Preschool to secondary education will remain under the Education Ministry while pre-university and tertiary levels fall under the Higher Education Ministry.

A National Education Council will coordinate reform efforts. Teacher recruitment and upskilling will be prioritised while public universities are set to gain more autonomy and global visibility, especially within Asean, BRICS and the Global South.

#### **Labour Reforms**

The foreign workforce will be reduced from 15% to 10% by 2030 through tighter levy enforcement, automation and local hiring. The TVET Madani Programme will be upgraded, including tailored tracks for *tahfiz* and *huffaz* students. Three new certification tiers will align TVET with the

Malaysian Qualifications Framework. In 2024 alone, 212,000 students were enrolled in TVET. Anwar said labour reforms were critical for ensuring resilience and equity.

#### **Fair wages and gig worker protection**

The government will standardise wages across sectors and extend social protection to all workers, including those in the gig economy. The minimum wage will be broadened to cover graduates and semi-skilled workers under Masco Code 8 and above. GLCs and GLICs are urged to lead by example in offering fair wages. A Non-Work-Related Accident Scheme will also be introduced. A new legislative framework will protect digital economy workers.

#### **Affordable homes**

The government aims to deliver one million affordable homes by 2035, with 492,000 already completed or underway. Initiatives such as *Residensi Madani*, the Public Servants Housing Programme and state-led projects will be expanded.

The Housing Credit Guarantee Scheme will support B40 and M40 buyers. Industrialised Building System and Building Integrated Management will help cut costs. *Kota Madani* in

Putrajaya will serve as a model for inclusive urban living.

#### **Infrastructure expansion**

A major infrastructure push will upgrade road and rail networks nationwide. Developments will span both coasts, with urban mobility boosted through transit-oriented development, 217 new train sets and expanded bus fleets.

Rural areas will benefit from 2,800km of upgraded roads in Kapit, Bagan Datuk Lipis and beyond. The share of cargo rail will rise from 6% to 13%, reducing road congestion and crash risks.

#### **Health taxes and public wellness**

Health taxes will be expanded beyond sugar to cover tobacco, vape and alcohol, aimed at curbing non-communicable diseases and shifting public behaviour. Anwar said the move is a public health measure to ease pressure on the health system.

#### **Strengthening the health system**

RM40 billion will be channelled to the health sector to cut out-of-pocket costs and expand access. The *Madani Medical Scheme* will be broadened to ensure wider coverage. More hospitals and clinics will be upgraded in key states.



A total of RM67 billion has been allocated to the education sector for building new schools, upgrading 1,200 dilapidated ones and improving public university facilities, among others. **-AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN**