

PM: PLANS AFOOT TO BUY TURKISH MILITARY ASSETS

Armed Forces Council to decide on military gear suitable for purchase, says Anwar



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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has expressed Malaysia's intention to Turkiye to acquire military assets from the nation.

He said the decision regarding the plan was submitted to the Armed Forces Council without disturbance or interference from other parties.

"My policy, as informed to the joint chief of staff, is that we do not want any interference regarding what (assets) are necessary and purchased," he said.

"Previously there were military assets bought from South Korea. The equipment that is suitable and needed to be bought from Turkiye will be decided by the Armed Forces Council.

"We might see drones and helicopters... looking at Turkiye's specialisation and expertise. But I leave it to the military," he said after a bilateral meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan here on Wednesday.

He said it was up to the Defence Ministry to negotiate with the Finance Ministry and Turkiye for the purchase of such assets.

Anwar was speaking to the media in conjunction with his attendance at the 78th United Nations General Assembly.

Anwar had in July instructed the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) to revamp its asset procurement system to ensure outside parties could no longer rake in excessive commissions.

He said the revamp was necessary as the preparedness of the country's defence assets, such as ships, aircraft and tanks, was uncoordinated and not in line with



In May, the Defence Ministry announced a contract with Turkish Aerospace Industries to procure three Anka multirole unmanned aircraft systems. AFP PIC

Malaysia's geopolitical and strategic position.

The Defence Ministry, during the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition 2023 in May, announced a contract with Turkish Aerospace Industries to procure three Anka multirole unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

The contract, valued at RM423.8 million, will see the drones play a supporting role in operations conducted by the RMAF and police.

Anka, also known as Phoenix, is a medium-altitude long-endurance (Male) UAS designed for various military operations.

It specialises in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions, and is suitable for electronic warfare and combat operations.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) has been given permission from Turkiye to continue operating the Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen (ISG) International Airport.

The decision, conveyed by Erdogan to Anwar during their bilateral meeting, was made based on Turkiye's satisfaction with the success of the Malaysian company operating the airport through Khazanah Nasional Bhd.

"Erdogan has agreed that MAHB should continue operating the ISG (airport) as they (the Turkish government) are satisfied with the success of the company. Now they want to extend (its operations), including building a longer runway," Anwar said,

adding that Turkiye believed MAHB was capable of operating the airport and wanted it to be managed by the same company.

He said although the agreement to continue its operations by MAHB had been announced previously, Anwar said it would go through the normal process by the relevant ministry.

"This is a huge support and a boost of confidence for the Malaysian company to develop and manage the airport," he said.

Fully owned by MAHB, the airport is the sixth busiest gateway in Europe, with passenger numbers reaching 25 million in 2021, which is 70 per cent of the pre-Covid-19 pandemic level.

At the meeting, which was attended by cabinet ministers from both countries, Anwar said they had discussed efforts to increase bilateral cooperation in terms of investment and trade.

Malaysia is Turkiye's largest trading partner in Asean with a trade volume of US\$4.7 billion in 2022, a 35 per cent growth from 2021. Its total export volume to Turkiye in 2022 reached RM17.39 billion, which consists largely of palm oil, palm oil-based agricultural products, metal manufacturing, textiles, clothing, footwear, electrical and electronic products and palm oil-based manufactured products.

Total imports in 2022 stood at RM2.86 billion, including petroleum, jewellery, iron and steel products, chemicals and chemical products, textiles, clothing and footwear.