



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim launching the National Defence Industry Policy in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. NSTP PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

•SAKAU' AND 'SONGLAP' CULTURE

'DEFENCE DEALS RIFE WITH GRAFT, ABUSE'

Procurement freeze will remain until processes are cleaned up, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has warned that defence and security procurements

have long been plagued by the *songlap* (embezzlement) and *sakau* (misappropriation) culture, prompting the government to freeze new purchases while sweeping reforms are carried out to restore integrity and public trust.

Speaking at the launch of the National Defence Industry Policy (NDIP) here yesterday, he said corruption had become deeply entrenched, spreading beyond political actors to include elements within the civil service, the armed forces and enforcement agencies, such as Customs and Immigration.

"For those who follow developments in the defence industry and procurement, this is one of the areas where *songlap* and *sakau* are most aggressive," he said, stressing that without cleaning up the system, institutions could neither be strengthened nor elevated.

Anwar said the freeze on defence and security procurement,

which he ordered last week, would remain until a full review is completed under strict standards of transparency and accountability.

He added that the freeze would also be coordinated with the Home Ministry.

"No one can interfere in this process. Enforcement agencies and security forces can no longer carry on with practices that damage not only the country, but the industry itself," he said.

However, Anwar clarified that the freeze did not amount to interference in operational decisions, saying that it was up to the security forces on what weapons systems and equipment they needed.

"I am not here to decide the types of weapons and equipment required. You determine them and we carry them out through a transparent and reasonable process," he said, adding that he would provide full backing once new leadership within the armed forces is in place.

He said urgent reforms under the NDIP would tighten oversight, strengthen governance and ensure procurement processes were transparent and accountable, with Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled

Nordin leading the effort.

Beyond governance reforms, Anwar said the NDIP was aimed at strengthening the national defence ecosystem by building local technological self-reliance, empowering domestic supply chains and commercialising research and development.

"Tens of billions of ringgit have been spent, but if we are obsessed with commissions and accumulated wealth, how can we prioritise the interests of the domestic industry?" he said, adding that capable companies must be given space and support to grow, compete and export their products.

At the same time, Anwar cautioned against allowing isolated cases of misconduct to tarnish the reputation of the wider defence and security community.

He said the majority of security personnel were serving with discipline, professionalism and commitment.

"These cases must not be seen as representing the entire body of personnel in the Defence Ministry, the Home Ministry or enforcement agencies," he said.

"Isolated wrongdoing must not be allowed to tarnish the face of those who serve with integrity," he said.

He reiterated the government's commitment to supporting officers who upheld their duties while taking firm action against those found guilty of corruption or abuse of power.