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KUALA LUMPUR: Corruption scandals may have shocked the nation but Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday reassured Malaysians and international investors that the country's defence forces remain professional, capable and committed to national service, despite a small number of ongoing cases.

Speaking at the launch of the National Defence Industry Policy (NDIP), he acknowledged the recent corruption-related developments but emphasised that they should not tarnish the reputation of the broader defence force.

"It is important to acknowledge recent developments that have shocked not only the country, but also the world. Malaysia is still grappling with corruption-related issues, including land leasing cases.

"However, we must not allow issues involving a small number of individuals, (although) still under investigation, to tarnish the image and reputation of our military officers at all levels who have served with dedication."

He urged defence personnel to remain steadfast in their duties, ensuring the country's continued economic progress while safeguarding national peace and security.

"The government understands its responsibilities and the trust placed upon it, and the nation too depends on the service and preparedness of defence personnel.

"Hopefully, the dark episodes and 'tornadoes! which are rare in Malaysia but may occur once every two or three years, will not happen often and will not give a negative impression."

Highlighting Malaysia's trade growth, Anwar credited the combined efforts of the judiciary, senior officers, private sector and especially the armed forces, police and enforcement agencies for instilling confidence among citizens and international investors.

'Defence forces remain professional and capable'

> New policy to strengthen national security; restore confidence in sector, says Anwar

He reiterated that the government has never diminished the role of the armed forces, stressing that national security cannot exist without a capable and vigilant military.

"NDIP is a new step to strengthen national security, restore confidence in the defence sector and build a more credible and integrity-based local industrial capability.

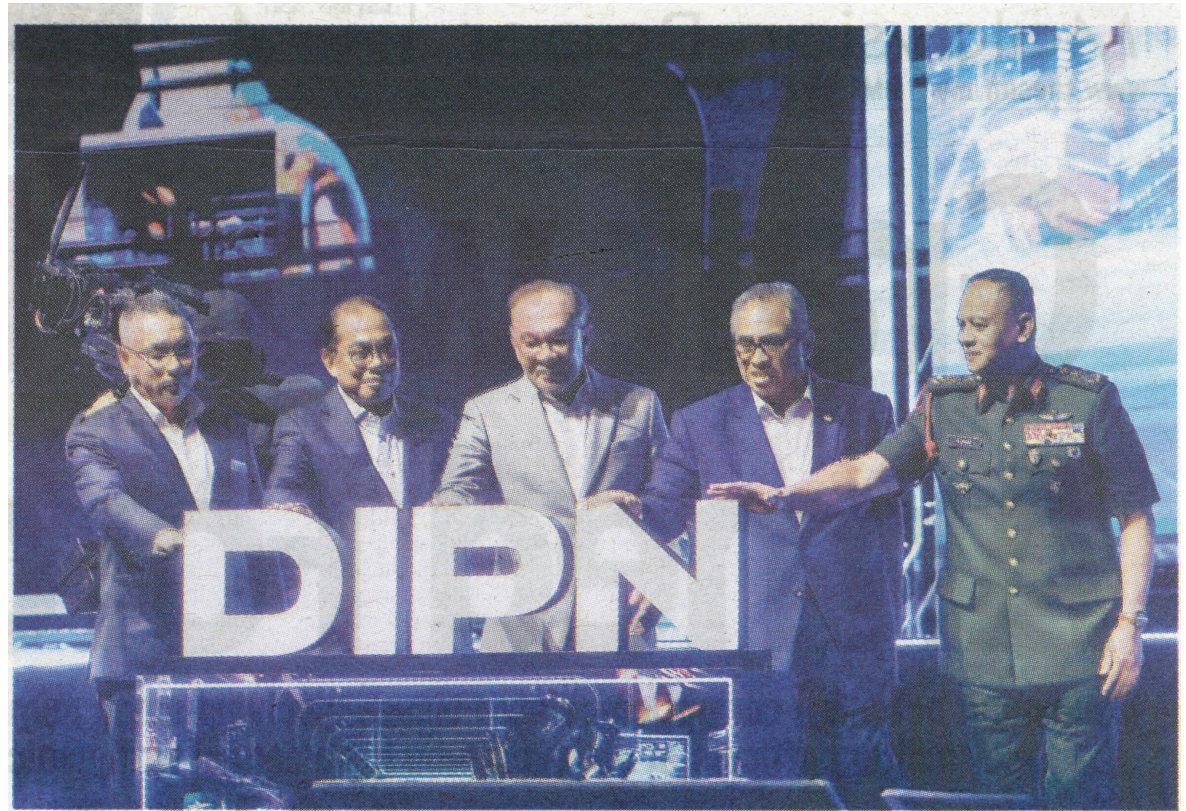
"This defence industry policy has been long-delayed. I think it is in line with the demands of the times and will hopefully overcome the crisis that has befallen the Armed Forces recently."

NDIP is built around four main pillars, namely strengthening governance and institutions, developing technological capabilities, reinforcing the ecosystem and local defence supply chain, and increasing global competitiveness and exports.

"Our focus begins with strengthening governance and institutions, which I always emphasise starts with good governance," said Anwar.

The second pillar focuses on developing technological capabilities, including through the Industrial Collaboration Programme.

The third pillar aims to strengthen the ecosystem and local defence supply chain, requiring



Anwar (centre) during the launch ceremony at Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre yesterday. Also present (from left) were Defence Deputy Minister Adly Zahari, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar and army chief General Datuk Azhan Md Othman. - **BERNAMAPIC**

technological self-reliance and continuous support for domestic industries.

"The ecosystem requires us not only to buy, but also to provide local technology self-reliance, strengthening the network - or what is called the local supply chain - and commercialisation of research and development."

The fourth pillar targets increasing global competitiveness

and exports, with the ultimate goal of enabling Malaysia to begin exporting defence products.

"NDIP must focus on transparency, accountability and the strategic development of local defence capabilities. All acquisitions must follow rigorous, transparent processes and be accountable.

"Strategic decisions, including weapon systems and equipment, should be based on clear national

requirements, capability gaps and long-term planning rather than personal or political gain."

He concluded that NDIP not only aims to build industrial capabilities, but also restores national hope, with full Cabinet support behind the policy.

"The entire Cabinet is together to improve and restore the role of capabilities, and also implement NDIP. That is my guarantee."