

# BRICS IS A STRATEGIC PATH

**A**S Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim prepares for his visit to Russia, the country's potential membership in BRICS+ has come under the spotlight. The original members of BRICS are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. There is a growing narrative suggesting that Malaysia's interest in BRICS+ signals a pivot away from Western alliances. This interpretation misses the strategic and nuanced reasons behind Malaysia's engagement with this grouping. Malaysia has long practiced a balanced foreign policy, engaging with both Western and non-Western powers to maximise benefits. This approach, rooted in pragmatic diplomacy, allows Malaysia to leverage opportunities from diverse global partnerships without being constrained by geopolitical allegiances. By joining BRICS+, Malaysia aims to deepen economic cooperation with emerging markets, enhancing trade, investment and technological exchange. This

complements Malaysia's relationships with Western nations and institutions.

BRICS+ provides a platform for Malaysia to achieve its developmental goals. The group's focus on infrastructure development, sustainable growth and technology transfer resonates with Malaysia's domestic priorities.

The inclusive economic agenda of BRICS+ aligns with Malaysia's objectives, offering additional avenues for achieving national development.

The fear that joining BRICS+ will affect foreign direct investments is unfounded. BRICS+ nations offer vast markets with growing middle classes and abundant investment opportunities. The group's emphasis on economic cooperation without political strings attached creates a stable and attractive environment for investors.

The perception that BRICS+ is an anti-Western entity oversimplifies the group's role and intentions. It was established to accelerate economic development and foster cooperation among emerg-

ing markets in trade, finance, agriculture, health, education, science, technology, innovation and environmental sustainability.

The organisation serves as a dialogue forum where members can collaborate on these crucial issues without the pressures of geopolitical alignment.

Critics often suggest that countries joining the group are inherently taking a stand against Western influence. This viewpoint overlooks the reality that BRICS+ provides an additional platform for economic cooperation, complementing existing Western-led institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

India, for example, maintains strong ties with both BRICS+ and Western alliances, leveraging the economic benefits from both spheres. This demonstrates that engagement with BRICS+ can be driven purely by national interests and the desire for diversified economic partnerships.

By considering BRICS+ membership, Malaysia is exercising its sovereign right to engage in

global economic diplomacy. This move ensures Malaysia remains competitive and relevant on the international stage.

Joining BRICS+ is a strategic decision aimed at fostering economic development through diversified partnerships. Embracing BRICS+ can lead to a more balanced global economic order where mutual interests drive cooperation, ultimately benefiting both developing and developed nations.

Diversifying economic partners through BRICS+ membership can strengthen Malaysia's economic resilience and reduce dependency on any single bloc.

This diversification is crucial in a multipolar world where economic stability can be enhanced by engaging with multiple partners.

BRICS+ intent to empower developing economies contributes to a more balanced and inclusive global economic landscape. This can support global stability and growth, which benefits all.

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