

Good relations could pave way for Malaysia, to become partner country of BRICS: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's good relations with the member countries of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) will enable Malaysia to become a "partner country" soon with the trade grouping.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia will be known as a BRICS "new partner country" before Malaysia finalises its participation.

"There is a possibility that Malaysia's application to join BRICS will take some time, but with good relations with member countries there is a possibility that we can become a 'country partner' as (part of) a BRICS partner country model or as a new partner country.

"In discussions with the Foreign Ministry, Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry and the council of ministers, we feel that there is wisdom and a need for us to be together in this new BRICS framework," he said during the minister's question time at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Anwar said preliminary assessments showed

that Malaysia's participation in BRICS has the potential to gain various benefits, particularly in improving trade and export performance, as well as strengthening the country's economic resilience.

"Cumulatively, the gross domestic product (GDP) of BRICS member countries amounted to US\$26.6 trillion (RM125 trillion), which is 26.2% of the world's GDP, which is almost the same as the economic strength of the G7 countries. The economic strength of the BRICS member countries as a bloc will help increase international trade among the member countries," he added.

Anwar said BRICS member countries have a large population of 3.21 billion and that continues to increase with the inclusion of Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates which have a total of 333 million people, forming a mega-market that includes about 3.54 billion people or almost 45% of the world's population. - Bernama



FRIENDLY BANTER ... Anwar, accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan (right) receiving a courtesy call from Uzbekistan Minister of Foreign Affairs Bakhtiyor Saidov at the Parliament building yesterday. - *BERNAMAPIC*