

Malaysia applies to join BRICS

> Nation's desire to be part of bloc formed main essence of discussions broached by Anwar during visit by Russian foreign minister

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia has sent an application to Russia to join the BRICS intergovernmental organisation.

Russia is the chair of the organisation, that also includes Brazil, India, China and South Africa.

Anwar said in a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office that Malaysia's desire to join the BRICS organisation was the main essence of his discussion with visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who called on him yesterday at the Seri Perdana Complex.

"Malaysia has sent a letter of application to Russia to join the BRICS organisation, as Russia is BRICS chair, and expressed openness to participating as a member country or strategic partner."

On June 18, Anwar had confirmed Malaysia's intention to join BRICS to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

BRICS, which initially included Brazil, Russia, India, and China, was established in 2009 as a cooperation platform for emerging economies, with South Africa joining the bloc in 2010.

The bloc now has been expanded to include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United

Arab Emirates.

BRICS now contributes to a quarter of the global economy, accounts for one-fifth of global trade and represents about 40% of the world's population.

Earlier, Lavrov, who arrived at the Seri Perdana Complex at 10am with his delegation, was welcomed by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan.

Also present were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, Bernama reported.

During the nearly hour-long meeting, Anwar and Lavrov also discussed strengthening Malaysia-Russia relations and expanding cooperation in various sectors, including trade, investment, security, defence, higher education, science and technology, tourism and culture.

The current situation in Palestine was also discussed, with Malaysia emphasising the urgent need for a permanent ceasefire and rapid provision of humanitarian aid in Gaza, as well as acceptance of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations.

On Ukraine, Anwar called for dialogue and discussion as the means to resolve the conflict.



Anwar receiving books from Lavrov when the latter called on him at Kompleks Seri Perdana in Putrajaya yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**