

MALAYSIA SET TO JOIN BRICS

PM has spoken to Brazilian president on joining the group, Foreign Ministry conducting a study

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MALAYSIA will soon initiate the process to join the intergovernmental organisation

known as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he personally spoke with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva regarding the country's intention of joining BRICS.

"The matter of joining BRICS has been forwarded to the Foreign Ministry for further study. In principle, we have agreed to join BRICS," he said after attending a kenduri at Mengkuang Semarak in Bukit Mertajam, Penang.

It had been reported that Malaysia was preparing to commence formal procedures to join the BRICS coalition, an intergovernmental organisation established in 2006.

Since its inception, BRICS had undergone two phases of expan-



Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan presenting sacrificial meat to attendees at the Kampung Angkat Madani ceremony and the ministry's ibadah korban event in Rembau yesterday.

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sion. In 2011, South Africa became a member alongside the original countries: Brazil, Russia, India and China.

In August last year, BRICS extended invitations to six new members, including Argentina.

However, Argentina later reversed its decision in late December the same year.

In January of this year, five new members — Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — formally became members of the group.

In **Rembau**, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said Malaysia was mulling to join BRICS to enhance its capacity in voicing various international is-

ssues more effectively.

He said Malaysia was currently analysing, monitoring and assessing the feasibility of becoming a BRICS member to see if it could bring substantial benefits to the country.

He said three factors formed the basis for Malaysia's participation, namely the interests and benefits to be gained, as well as the impact of participation, particularly in providing a platform for the country to voice its aspirations in international issues.

"It is not about boasting about becoming a BRICS member, but rather about the benefits, considering some member countries have exited the bloc after feeling

it no longer serves a meaningful purpose," he said after launching the Kampung Angkat Madani ceremony and the ministry's *ibadah korban* event in Kampung Kanchong Rantrau.

Mohamad said Malaysia needed to join certain groupings to have a voice on the world stage as the world was divided into various blocs.

"For example, we have the Asean bloc, a regional grouping with a significant voice comprising over 700 million people and the fourth largest gross domestic product in the world.

"Asean's is a strong voice and a solid platform for Malaysia. This is the impact," he said.