

Malaysia's BRICS bid gains momentum

VLADIOSTON: Malaysia has received a huge boost towards its goal of joining BRICS, which is deemed the foremost geopolitical rival of the G7 bloc of some of the world's wealthiest nations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he had accepted Russian President Vladimir Putin's personal invitation for Malaysia to attend the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24.

Putin's personal invitation shows that Malaysia was among the countries prioritised for BRICS membership, he added.

Putin extended the invitation at an extended and substantive bilateral-cum-working dinner on Wednesday on the sidelines of the 9th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF 2024) here.

The invitation is a clear testament to the importance Russia places on Malaysia, Anwar told Malaysian media ahead of EEF 2024's plenary session yesterday.

Anwar said he would thoroughly consider attending or sending a representative to the summit, given a hectic October schedule.

On July 28, Anwar said Malaysia had sent an application to Russia to join BRICS following the courtesy call made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on that day.

Russia chairs BRICS, which includes Brazil, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates.

Anwar said in the discussion with Putin, the focus was whether Malaysia should join BRICS immediately or start as a partner country.

"The important point is that we are one of the countries given priority due to the invitation extended to non-member nations."

Anwar said Malaysia was keen to join BRICS because it believed that the cooperation of countries within the Global South was highly beneficial.

He downplayed any condemnation from other countries over Malaysia's participation in BRICS. He said the only concern of other nations was perhaps that joining the Russia-led grouping would affect diplomatic and economic ties.

"There may be concerns if BRICS will have a negative impact on ties with other nations. I don't think (there is any condemnation)."