



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim shaking hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia, on Thursday.
REUTERS PIC/VYACHESLAV VIKTOROV/ROSCONGRESS FOUNDATION

'NON-ALIGNED COUNTRY'

BRICS INVITE A POSITIVE STEP'

Malaysia to gain if we enhance trade ties with BRICS members, says govt spokesman

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RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin inviting Malaysia to attend the BRICS Summit next month is a positive step, said uni-

ty government spokesman Fahmi Fadzil.

The communications minister said as a non-aligned country, Malaysia had the right to establish diplomatic and economic relationships with any nation.

"This is a positive and healthy development. The invitation from President Putin to Malaysia is a positive step and we hope it will yield benefits.

"As mentioned in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's speech (at the 9th Eastern Economic Forum), Malaysia has become a focal point for Russian tourists and we anticipate an increase in visitors," he told reporters at the Asia News Network

Summit here.

He said it would be a net positive for Malaysia if the country leveraged its economic capabilities to enhance trade relations with BRICS members.

"There are significant opportunities within BRICS. We know India, China and Brazil are among the member countries.

"If we can assess the economic potential to enhance bilateral or multilateral trade relations, it would be a net positive for Malaysia."

On Sept 4, Anwar said he had accepted an invitation to attend the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, from Oct 22 to 24.

He said Putin personally made

the invitation during a long bilateral meeting and working dinner.

The invitation, he said, was a clear testament to the importance Russia placed on Malaysia.

On July 28, Anwar announced that Malaysia had applied to join BRICS. This came after a courtesy call by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that day.

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

BRICS is considered a geopolitical rival of the G7 bloc involving some of the world's most developed nations.