

Anwar urges BRICS to boost intra-group trade

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► Calls for fairer international order and highlights Malaysia's shared vision as Asean chair

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for increased intra-BRICS trade and urged the group to emerge as a strong and principled force, anchored in equity, mutual respect and a shared commitment to creating a more balanced and just international order.

Lamenting unilateral tariff measures and protectionist policies, Anwar expressed confidence that BRICS - which today accounts for about 40% of the global economy - holds vast potential to boost trade within the grouping.

"With that collective strength, we can engage the world safely, fairly, and justly, negotiating on equal terms with all partners in the multilateral system," he said.

He also stressed the need for reform of key international institutions.

"We must demand the transformation of global governance structures, from the United Nations to the World Trade Organisation, the

International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, towards a more democratic and just multilateral order," he said at the BRICS business forum titled "Bridging Continents, Building Future: A Shared Agenda for Sustainable Progress" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Saturday.

Also present were Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin and Brazilian Confederation of National Industry president Ricardo Alban, Bernama reported.

Anwar firmly asserted that developing countries should no longer be regarded as peripheral players in the global system.

"We are not merely heirs of post-colonial history. We have now risen as a dignified force with our strengths in technology, trade, leadership and the moral voice of the world," he said.

"BRICS today goes beyond political rhetoric. It is a coalition of political, economic and civil society forces moving in tandem to demand a more just and equitable global system."

He highlighted BRICS's uniqueness through the active involvement of the private sector, women, youth and civil society, making it an inclusive and resilient collective movement rather than an elite discourse.

He added that as Asean chair, Malaysia shares this aspiration.

Anwar emphasised that BRICS and Asean

members must continue strengthening strategic cooperation, including enhancing cross-regional trade and investment for the shared benefit of developing countries.

BRICS 2025 is not merely a continuation of past efforts but a moment of renewed awakening.

"With visionary political leadership, a progressive private sector and a strengthening Global South solidarity, we have a real opportunity to reshape the global landscape," he said.

Anwar also voiced support for Lula, commending him as one of the few courageous global leaders today who speaks on behalf of those left unheard.

The BRICS group, originally established by Brazil, Russia, India and China, expanded to include South Africa in 2011, followed by Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in 2023 and Indonesia in 2024.

Malaysia, as well as Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Nigeria, Thailand, Vietnam, Uganda and Uzbekistan, have been accepted as BRICS partner countries.

Anwar arrived in Brazil to attend the 17th BRICS Leaders' Summit at Lula's invitation.

He was accompanied by Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Transport Minister Anthony Loke, Miri MP Chiew Choon Man and Paya Besar MP Datuk Mohd Shahar Abdullah.



Anwar makes a point during his speech at the forum yesterday.