

M'sia, Asean key players in Global South: PM

> During visits abroad, Anwar called for deeper South-South collaboration to consolidate economic, political influence to enable grouping to carve out own destiny

KUALA LUMPUR: As Asean chair, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is clearly asserting the position of Malaysia and the regional bloc as key players in the Global South.

The grouping, as a rising force to be reckoned with, is demanding a global shift from the dominance of bipolarity to equitable power-sharing through multipolarity.

Throughout his visits from South America to Southeast Asia, and most recently to Russia, Anwar's clear message has been for deeper South-South collaboration to consolidate economic and political influence, enabling these nations to carve out their own destinies rather than be dictated to by the North or developed countries.

His call for a stronger Global South is therefore timely as emerging economies grow in stature and influence, seeking a greater say in shaping the global economic and political agenda.

Given that the Global South represents 85% of the world's population and accounts

for more than 40% of global GDP, a share that is only expanding, its call for equity is highly justified.

As part of this strategy, Malaysia is now one of the nine partner countries in BRICS, an informal grouping of emerging economies. Its membership is fast expanding from the original five - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates became official members in 2024, giving the grouping greater clout in undertaking economic initiatives.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said Malaysia's Global South push is driven by the principle of a shared future, which has been well received by other leaders.

On his visit to Russia, during which he met President Vladimir Putin, Anwar told the Malaysian media that the nation remains committed to expanding regional and global partnerships amid shifting geopolitics, Bernama reported.

As an open trading economy, Malaysia must continually seek ways to protect its economic interests.

Anwar's call in Moscow for a stronger Global South voice echoed similar sentiments conveyed during Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Malaysia in April.

He also rallied the Global South to support reforms to the international financial system, especially the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation, which he believes should promote free trade and avoid discriminating against smaller nations.

"The rise of protectionism has begun even among G20 nations that were originally proponents of free trade principles.

"We will continue to promote an inclusive and sustainable approach to peace and security, both within our immediate region and beyond."

The upcoming Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit, involving 10 Southeast Asian and six Middle Eastern nations, is expected to strengthen Global South cooperation.

These meetings offer key opportunities to engage Asean's main trading partners and reaffirm its support for rules-based multilateralism, as Asean, BRICS and the Global South commonly oppose unilateralism.