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Asean Summit draws global leaders

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Many have confirmed attendance for the meeting in October, says Anwar

RIO DE JANEIRO: The upcoming 47th Asean Summit to be held in Kuala Lumpur in October may be the most prominent ever held, with participation from a number of leaders besides the "traditional" ones.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said so far, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva have confirmed their attendance.

"Of course, traditional partners like Japan, South Korea, China, India, Australia and New Zealand will also be there, among others. "I believe this will be a heavy responsibility (for Malaysia) but we can do it," he told Malaysian journalists after concluding his working and official week-long

visits to Rome, Paris and Rio de Janeiro, where Anwar attended the BRICS Summit and Business Leaders Summit.

Anwar said all parties supported multilateral cooperation and rejected unilateralism.

"While they may express it diplomatically without naming any nation, the sentiment is clear.

"Secondly, there is a call for the Global South to rise, something I emphasised in my speech to BRICS business leaders," he said.

Echoes of this point had been heard in previous smaller meetings including the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), but BRICS has a broader network, real economic strength and active programmes, like discussions on digital banking.

Anwar said South Africa and Brazil were becoming more

closely aligned with Malaysia and Asean.

"I believe this is a meaningful step, a 60-year-long attempt at solidarity that is now gaining real traction.

"In the past, Global South leaders had compelling visions but lacked economic or technological power," he said, adding that these days, some members build aircraft and others lead in AI.

"Their capabilities are much higher now, but the spirit of the Global South has never been hostile. We still prioritise relationships with developed nations beyond the Global South," he added.

On the successes of his trip, Anwar said in addition to the oil and gas sector, Malaysia scored in the possibility of building large vessels for O&G transport, a point of national pride for local firms.

He said a significant honour

was accorded to them when he was invited by President Lula to deliver the keynote address at the BRICS Corporate Business Conference which was attended by thousands, including women entrepreneurs and traders.

The Prime Minister also held bilateral meetings with leaders of India, Vietnam and South Africa, opening doors to increased trade and investment possibilities.

Anwar also met Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly on peace negotiations for Gaza, and the World Trade Organisation director-general to urge for fairer reforms and more equitable trade guarantees.

In his BRICS speech, Anwar stressed on AI and digitalisation as key themes and addressed the Gaza atrocities.

The Prime Minister said that during negotiations, he pushed

for conditions which benefitted the nation – for part of the production or a base to be in Malaysia.

Anwar was on a series of visits to three countries since July 1, starting with Italy, followed by France and ending with Brazil.

The visits to the major economic hubs of Rome, Paris and Rio de Janeiro were aimed at strengthening Malaysia's diplomatic ties and trade relations with the nations concerned.

The three markets collectively recorded bilateral trade valued at RM50.91bil last year.

Anwar was accompanied by a business delegation comprising representatives from major Malaysian corporations and innovative enterprises, including PETRONAS, Khazanah Nasional Bhd, Tenaga Nasional Bhd, Maybank, FGV, YTL Power and Sunway.