

China's Xi to Attend BRICS Summit in Russia Next Month

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Vladimir Putin and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi. **Kristina Kormilitsyna / POOL / kremlin.ru**

Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend the BRICS summit in Russia next month, China's foreign minister announced on Thursday.

The summit of emerging economies will be held from Oct. 22 to 24 in the Tatarstan capital of Kazan, with the Kremlin hoping the meeting will provide a chance to expand its influence and forge closer economic alliances, especially with Beijing.

"President Xi is very happy to accept your invitation, and arrive in Kazan as scheduled," Wang Yi told Russian President Vladimir Putin at a meeting in Saint Petersburg. "The two heads of state will have further strategic discussions."

Wang also heralded the "strong mutual trust and deep friendship" between Putin and Xi. Last month, the Kremlin leader said Russia's economic and trade links with China were "yielding results" as he welcomed Chinese Premier Li Qiang to Moscow.

BRICS, originally formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, aims to bring together the world's most important emerging economies, as well as act as a political and economic counterbalance to wealthier nations in the West. The group of countries expanded earlier this year to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates.

Serbian leader Aleksandar Vucic earlier this month turned down Putin's invitation to attend the summit in Kazan, saying he would have "important guests [coming] from abroad at that time."

AFP contributed reporting.

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