

Malaysia's diplomats need to be ready to adapt to changes, says Sultan Nazrin



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PETALING JAYA: With evolving challenges confronting diplomacy over time, Malaysia must be ready to adapt and leverage them to its best advantage, says Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

The Deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong said the country needs to re-imagine the “diplomat of the future” where diplomats need to take on the four roles of historians, scientists, communicators and bureaucrats.

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He said this in his address as the Royal Patron of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) on Thursday (Nov 18).

Sultan Nazrin said diplomats must be able to grasp the importance of geopolitical shifts, the rebalancing of global power, the evolving public health dimensions, as well as the implications of artificial intelligence, new technologies and digital diplomacy to develop sound foreign policy.

"Institutions like IDFR need to continually adapt and upgrade skills training to meet future challenges – so that we are not caught totally unprepared by black swan events," he said.

Sultan Nazrin added that IDFR should benchmark itself against the best in its field to equip diplomatic officers with the competencies, knowledge and values necessary to practice world-class diplomacy in the 21st century.

He added that Malaysian diplomacy also needs to focus on promoting regional and national well-being as the resurgence in geopolitical competition among major powers is also impacting our region.

Sultan Nazrin said the early conclusion to Asean's negotiations with China on an effective Code of Conduct for the South China Sea would be in Malaysia's mutual interest.

"The Code will facilitate more harmonious relations among the littoral states that have overlapping claims and disputes in the South China Sea. It is our fervent hope that the competition remains peaceful and benign, and does not deteriorate into open confrontation," he said.

Sultan Nazrin added that at times, all that was needed to spark violent conflict has been an accidental incident at sea or in the air.

He said that Malaysia must continue to abide by international goals, which are shared peace, mutual prosperity, freedom from oppression, and justice for all.

"We will pursue these ends by scrupulous adherence to the international norms and principles that are enshrined in the UN and Asean Charters," added Sultan Nazrin.

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Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah , Diplomacy , Adaptability , Institute Of Diplomacy And Foreign Relations , IDFR , Asean , United Nations
