

Sultan Nazrin reminds M'sian diplomats to keep 'Jalur Gemilang' flying high



By Hana Naz Harun - November 18, 2021 @ 1:05pm



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KUALA LUMPUR: The Foreign Ministry must engage more intensely with the private sector and civil society organisations at home and abroad, said the Sultan of Perak.

Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah said Malaysia relied heavily on the private sector for much of the country's wealth, while civil society organisations possessed tremendous talent and expertise.

"In order for Wisma Putra to better equip itself to fulfil the mission entrusted upon it in foreign affairs, our diplomats must continue to cultivate and enhance their roles as historians, scientists, communicators and bureaucrats.

"The Malaysian diplomatic establishment faces varied and complex challenges that are compounded by institutional, financial, human capital and other constraints.

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"For Wisma Putra, resource limitations in particular have become a major concern. Efforts to address the challenges and constraints squarely are urgently needed," he said in his royal address at the 30th anniversary of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) here, today.

He added that failure to adapt and enhance the country's capabilities would limit the capacity to deliver and impinge upon Malaysia's standing in the international community.

As a relatively small country, said Sultan Nazrin, Malaysia should continue to pursue increased strategic collaboration with like-minded states, particularly those within the region.

"In this regard, Malaysia and its Southeast Asian neighbours have done well to optimise their political and diplomatic capabilities as small to middle powers, by leveraging on productive regionalism to empower themselves further."

Sultan Nazrin, who is also IDFR royal patron, said as Malaysia approached its next turn as Asean chair in 2025, the Foreign Ministry should map out priorities that would best promote regional and national wellbeing, with the support of regional partners.

He also said Malaysian diplomacy faced other important tasks, adding that a successful and early conclusion to Asean's negotiations with China on an effective Code of Conduct for the South China Sea would be in our mutual interest.

While there was a resurgence in geopolitical competition among major powers that intruded into our region, Sultan Nazrin said it was our fervent hope that the competition remained peaceful and benign, and did not deteriorate into open confrontation.

"Malaysia and Asean have remained neutral in the past. They have distanced themselves from such confrontations and conflicts. This has been the fundamental premise of Asean's Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, which has served the region well.

"Malaysian diplomacy must strive hard to sustain the equidistance of Asean as an organisation, even if some member states may be susceptible to persuasion or pressure to tilt towards one side or another.

"It is critical for Malaysia and Asean to work cordially with all states for mutual peace and prosperity," he added.

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Sultan Nazrin also said Malaysian diplomacy must also commit to enhancing its efforts to work with other government and non-governmental international institutions to foster a more peaceful, just and humane international order.

While challenges confronting diplomacy continued to evolve and change, Malaysia must meet them squarely, he added, adapting to them and leveraging them to our best advantage.

He said we needed to reimagine the 'diplomat of the future', with institutions like IDFR needing to continually adapt and upgrade skills training to meet future challenges, to prevent from being caught totally unprepared by black swan events.

"Whatever the future holds, we must remain resolute to the attainment of our abiding international goals: 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 United Nations and Asean Charters.

"In that spirit, it is my fervent hope that the new generation

of Malaysian diplomats will keep the Jalur Gemilang flying high in the international arena, championing our national interests with pride and distinction.

"I have every confidence that IDFR will benchmark itself against the best in its field, ever striving to equip our diplomatic officers with the competencies, knowledge and values necessary to practice world-class diplomacy in the 21st century," added Sultan Nazrin.