

21ST CENTURY

'DIPLOMACY MUST CHANGE WITH TIMES'

Nations that do so can leverage more effectively, says Sultan Nazrin

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TRANSFORMATION in diplomacy is needed to keep up with the demands of the 21st century, said Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah.

It was not something new but nations that responded accurately to diplomatic changes could leverage more effectively to the new environment, he said.

"Communication technology, especially the technology with which countries and peoples communicate with one another, exerts an especially powerful influence upon the conduct of diplomacy," he said.

Sultan Nazrin said this in his royal address titled *Transformation for 21st Century Diplomats* at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations here yesterday.

Diplomacy has faced challenges throughout history, ever

since organised political entities began interacting with one another, said Sultan Nazrin, who is the royal patron of the institute.

"Then, as now, the geopolitics, geoeconomics and geotechnology of the day have been the primary drivers of transformation."

He added that the changes occurring in the environment for diplomacy were extremely important and had been gaining momentum since the end of the last century.

"It is impossible to ignore them. The changes are already impacting the world of diplomacy and becoming the new norm.

"This will entail making appropriate adjustments to the ways in which states formulate foreign policy and conduct diplomacy," he said.

Sultan Nazrin said Malaysian foreign policy and diplomacy continued to strive for a better regional and world order.

"This can be done in concert with like-minded friends in Asean and beyond. Some of the elements are already in place," he said.

He said this order must be one that placed the welfare of man, not the state, at the centre.

"The state is a vehicle and instrument for that purpose. The order must be based on the pur-



Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah delivering his speech at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY MOHD YUSNI ARIFFIN

suit of peace, prosperity and justice for all, according to the enforceable rule of international law.

"It must be an order that effectively criminalises war and the threat of war, unless manifestly and demonstrably for defence.

"In such a system, states cannot merely proclaim the existence of an imminent and serious threat. They must prove it."

He added that it must be an order premised on the principles of cooperative security and com-

mon security, not the zero sum principle of the realist paradigm.

"Such an order must seek to fully honour and enforce the provisions of International Humanitarian Law to protect innocent civilian populations.

"This requires, in particular, the scrupulous observance of the law's principle of distinction, and the principles of necessity and proportionality.

"This better regional and global order does not call for the complete re-invention or overhaul of

existing international institutions and instruments. It merely entails selective reform to empower them further," he said.

Sultan Nazrin also said such an order must rest on a strong moral and ethical foundation.

"This is already reflected to a large extent in the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and the Asean Charter.

"But they need to be strengthened. And they need the moral force that the voices of noble men and women can give," he said.