

# 'Malaysia must sustain Asean axis'

## Sultan Nazrin: Work towards mutual peace and prosperity as a region

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia and Asean must work cordially with all countries for mutual peace and prosperity, even if some member states might be susceptible to persuasion or pressure to tilt towards one side or another, says Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Shah.

He added that Malaysian diplomacy must strive hard to sustain the equidistance of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (Asean) as an organisation in the backdrop of a resurgence in geopolitical competition among the major powers.

"Malaysia and Asean have remained neutral in the past. They

have distanced themselves from such confrontations and conflicts," said Sultan Nazrin, who is the royal patron of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR).

"It is our fervent hope that the competition (among major powers) remains peaceful and benign, and does not deteriorate into open confrontation," Bernama quoted his address titled "Shaping A New Generation of Diplomats" at the IDFR's 30th anniversary celebration here yesterday.

Sultan Nazrin said Malaysia should also continue to pursue increased strategic collaboration

with like-minded states, particularly in the region, to capitalise on new opportunities in a highly competitive environment of a globalised world.

In this regard, he said Malaysia and its South-East 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.

"As Malaysia approaches its next turn as Asean Chair in 2025, the Foreign Ministry should map out priorities that best promote regional and national well-being, with the

support of regional partners," he said.

He added that 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.

He said institutions such as the United Nations General Assembly is important for promoting the rule of law in the relations among states while humanitarian organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross form part of an international order that strives to

discipline the conduct of war and alleviate the suffering of those unavoidably affected.

"As the 21st century progresses, Wisma Putra must perforce engage even more intensely with the private sector and civil society organisations at home and abroad," he said.

In his speech, Sultan Nazrin also expressed his opinion on what shapes a new generation of diplomats, stating that Malaysian diplomats must continue to cultivate and enhance their roles as historians, scientists, communicators and bureaucrats to help Wisma Putra to better equip itself.