

'A king is more than a symbol'

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KUALA LUMPUR: The role of monarchs should not be merely symbolic, restricted to carrying out ceremonial and traditional duties, said the Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah.

"A king is not a frozen decorative monument without life.

"A king should exhibit a firm, intelligent and just character, rich in knowledge and with wide experience," he said.

Speaking at a special forum on the Muslim Malay monarchy system in Bandar Seri Be-

gawan, in conjunction with the 60th birthday celebration of the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiyah, he said: "For the king to act wisely, intelligently, fairly and equitably, he must have officials and advisers who are knowledgeable and do not have veiled interests."

Raja Nazrin said a king should be able to link up the old with the new, bring about reforms besides retaining traditions and be ready to institute changes by allowing modernisation without discarding

the richness of inherited customs.

Raja Nazrin said administrators appointed to govern a country must prove their loyalty to the king by carrying out their responsibilities honestly, sincerely and with full determination and commitment.

"A king falls because of the collapse of a country, the country crumbles because of the people's anxiety.

"Weak governance causes the people to be anxious.

"Defective governance damages the country and, in the

end, weakens the king."

Raja Nazrin said a king should not underestimate the role of the media which was becoming more open.

"Managing the media is an art that requires skill, charm and prudence, balancing what should be clearly visible with what should be implied."

Raja Nazrin suggested the creation of a website on the monarchy, allowing the world to understand the institution of the monarchy from the perspective of the palace.

He also said that monarchs

bore the responsibility to help overcome terrorism, for example by initiating inter-religious and inter-cultural discussions, besides enhancing the understanding on Islam, voicing humanitarian demands and helping those who are suffering, especially in Palestine, Afghanistan and Lebanon.

He said the strengths and weaknesses of a king were dictated by the strengths and weaknesses of those entrusted to become the king's officials and advisers. — Bernama