

# Be 'glocal', Najib tells envoys

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian diplomats must push themselves to become envoys with the most credible voice in the new global environment.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the country needed diplomats who could develop excellent networking relationships so that national interests could be easily promoted.

He also urged them to engage with the Press to reach out to a broader audience.

Using the term "glocal", Najib said they had to think globally and act in the local interest so that they could allure their stakeholders at multiple levels.

"You must have the ability to represent Malaysia's political and economic interests not just as advocates but with a clear understanding of the wider bilateral, regional and global forces at work.

"We need diplomats with the temperament and skills to achieve "insider status" within the most influential social, political circles and networks of the host countries so that national interests are furthered ahead of our competitors," Najib said at the Sixth Conference of the Malaysian Heads of Mission at the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Jalan Wisma Putra.

The best diplomats, he said, were those who had the depth to speak with authority and finesse, could analyse global developments from different angles and alternative perspectives, could assess motivations and objectives and be conversant on trends, issues and events.

"Our envoys must be regarded as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) to shape and lead towards greater regional cohesion, security and prosperity.

"We must go further and develop intellectual, social and moral standing to become the most credible voice," he said.

Najib called on envoys to be able to "punch above our weight" to influence world affairs by taking stock of the country's 50 years of nationhood and sell the Malaysian success story.

"We have to find 'blue oceans' — identify and create new markets for our products and services.

"If English has become the *sine qua non* of effective global diplomacy, the ability to converse in regional and local languages of your host country will be equally critical in effective local diplomacy."

Only then, Najib said, could a diplomat add value to his service by providing accurate, unfiltered analyses of any situation or development of interest to Malaysia.



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Datuk Seri Najib Razak  
Deputy Prime Minister

Additionally, Najib urged envoys to deploy their public diplomacy abilities and harness the power of the mass media to reach a broader audience, enhance the country's

reputation and promote national interests and policies.

"The media can be a useful partner or a formidable foe. "Some merely inform, others argue a point of view, and

a few simply distort and sensationalise.

"Online fact and fiction has become infinite and used to great effect.

"There is now more competition for readership, viewership, eyeballs, revenues, profits and infamy," said Najib.

He added that the changes had made the business of governments more challenging, accountable and responsive.

"Your roles as chief advocates abroad has become more challenging.

"You now face the burden to separate facts from rumours, valid opinion from vicious libel, and genuine debate from frivolous diatribe.

"Always rely on your sense of better judgment as wisdom, conviction and character will be crucial for national interest.

"Present facts as you know them, ignore rumours, opine vigorously when well equipped, criticise sparingly when vulnerable, and encourage meaningful debate but avoid senseless confrontation," said Najib.

He also called on senior envoys and retired ones to impart their knowledge, experience and wisdom to the next generation.

"Effective diplomacy comes not only with meticulous protocol and excellent public relations but also with solid apprenticeship."