

Sultan: Resolve conflicts firmly to ensure peace

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KUALA KANGSAR: Any conflict that can undermine peace should be dealt with firmly. This is necessary because peace is the basis of a nation's progress and prosperity, said the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah.

He said conflicts could threaten national stability and sidetrack the focus of development efforts from the nation's resources, sources of wealth and human resources.

He believed that discussions and consultations, conducted with an open mind and rational thinking at civilised forums should be the channel to resolve conflicts.

"It will be difficult to arrive at solutions, particularly on sensitive issues touching on religion and race, if there are parties which prefer an approach where they can show who is more capable, stronger or more right with the win-all objective.

"Such an approach will spark off confrontation and end in both sides being the losers," he said at the investiture ceremony marking his 79th birthday here yesterday.

Sultan Azlan Shah said peace was the most important prerequisite to the prosperity and development of a country and must be protected.

"I urge everyone to appreciate this peace and refrain from doing anything or speaking words that can spark racial or religious conflicts."

The spirit of togetherness and unity stipulated in the Federal Constitution had promised that everyone in the country, regardless of race or religion, would be accorded fair and just protection, he added.

"This has to be further solidified and strengthened, as failure to do so would result in the destruction of the harmonious relationship established between the (various) races and religions.

"If the gaps are not closed quickly enough, racial and religious clashes could be triggered all over the country."

The Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah, in his address, said the nation must not compromise or delay action when dealing with con-



The Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah, bestowing the Darjah Datuk Paduka Mahkota Perak on Kuala Lumpur-Kepong Berhad director Yeoh Chin Hin yesterday.

licts which could sow discord among the people.

He said Malaysians need to protect the country's peace and not take lightly the agenda of certain quarters who try to raise racial and religious issues.

"The country is stepping into its 50th year of independence, and is now faced with racial and religious discourses which could threaten the nation's unity."

He said the situations were like glowing embers, fanning stumps and firewood, and if they were not curtailed, could intensify religious and racial fires which could destroy the country.

Raja Nazrin said ideological opposition, racial differences, sectarian conflicts and religious disputes had sparked lengthy civil wars in many nations.

More often than not, he said, the differences of opinions in religious and racial issues led to foreign power intervention, and as such the

sovereignty of a country could no longer be protected.

"It is with this awareness that I am actively involved with dialogues in several forums, domestically or overseas, to remind citizens here and everywhere in the world, of the dangers of analysing religious and racial issues."

Royal Malaysian Navy chief Laksamana Datuk Ramlan Mohamed Ali, who was awarded the Darjah Seri Panglima Taming Sari (SPTS) which carries the title "Datuk Seri", led 56 other recipients who received their awards yesterday.

The others were Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Azalina Othman Said, who was bestowed the Darjah Seri Paduka Mahkota Perak and Perak State Secretary Dr Abdul Rahman Hashim, who was bestowed the Darjah Datuk Paduka Cura Si Manja Kini.

A total of 888 people received awards and medals in conjunction with the celebration.