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Manage ties well with larger powers: Najib

> 'Developments in the South China Sea need careful handling by the region's nations'

BY **KAREN ARUKESAMY**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Leaders of the Asia-Pacific nations should recommit to effectively implement the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.

Stating this, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak stressed that Asean member countries should manage relations with larger world powers well.

He said developments in the South China Sea called for very careful handling

by countries in the region and beyond.

"Within the context of Asean, we look forward to the expeditious conclusion of a meaningful Code of Conduct in the South China Sea," Najib said in his keynote address at the 30th Asia-Pacific Roundtable here yesterday.

He said Malaysia would continue to rely on diplomacy and dialogue to peacefully resolve differences and disputes through adherence to the norms, customs and principles of international law.

He called on the Asean member states to strengthen unity, solidarity and cohesiveness to ensure the continued credibility and relevance of Asean.

Pointing at the challenges faced due to the global economic slowdown, he said Malaysia's economy remains resilient due to the hardwork of the people and policies

in place.

"I also firmly believe that in the effort to sustain a strong economy, we need to maintain close and healthy relations with our neighbours and friends, with whom we trade, connect and cooperate," he said, adding that it should be done regardless of political ideology and system.

"I do not believe in unnecessary confrontational stances and politicians adopting intentionally antagonistic foreign policy positions just for the sake of personal popularity. They are selfish, shortsighted and self-defeating for their own countries.

"The national interest must come before personal political interest," he said.

Najib said developing relations and economic partnerships with other nations promotes peace, stability and prosperity for the people.

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