

PM: Govt must be strong to maintain sovereignty

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MALACCA, Thurs. — Malaysia must continue to be ruled by a strong and effective Government if it is to maintain its sovereignty, the Prime Minister said.

To achieve this the Government must be allowed to maintain its effective majority in Parliament, so that its ability to act will not be undermined by those who may be acting under the direction of outside forces.

That Malaysia had not succumbed to outside influences, whether from the East or the West, was testimony to the strength of the Government.

"Our refusal to participate in the Commonwealth Games may be a

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small gesture but significant, as it demonstrates that we act independently," he said at the opening of the Malacca Cultural Museum.

The museum, situated next to the A Famosa, is a replica of the sultan's palace during the Malacca Sultanate. Among those present were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik and Culture, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who arrived with Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, said no one could question "our independence of action as we have a strong Gov-

ernment."

He said the people must not forget that there those who are not happy with the progress and prosperity of the nation and who may try to undermine all that had been achieved.

"We must be united and strong, always pre-

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pared to learn and improve, if we are not to be dominated politically, economically, culturally and so on," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had always been strong because the people had always wanted to be ruled by a strong

Government.

The Prime Minister and his wife were given a traditional "Malacca Sultanate palace-style" welcome when they were greeted by rows of "palace guards" armed with spears.

Two "palace officials" later escorted the Prime Minister and his entourage up the building for the opening ceremony, after which they toured the building and viewed the exhibits.

Earlier, in his speech, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik said Malacca, with her unique diversity of cultures, based on the Malay culture, was an example of what the future Malaysian society should be.

"Those who came here

as foreigners willingly adapted themselves to the local way of life, while retaining their basic identity.

"This cultural-adaptation process produced unique communities, such as the Babas, Chittys, Eurasians and Malays," he added.

Datuk Seri Rahim said these communities were never forced or asked to become Malays although their lifestyles were similar to that of the Malays.

He said the situation in the State should be used as an example for efforts to create a Malaysian identity.

"This is the best model for nation-building as it exists on willingness to adapt oneself to the local conditions," he added.