

PM: ROYAL NOD FIRST

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Rulers to discuss changes on Jan 16

By WONG CHUN WAI

KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will get the Rulers' consent to the constitutional amendments before tabling them in the Dewan Rakyat, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said a special Conference of Rulers would be held on Jan 16 to discuss the proposed amendments which would remove the Rulers' immunity.

Dr Mahathir reiterated the Government's assurance that it wanted to maintain the constitutional monarchy.

"There are many countries which do not provide such immu-

nity for Rulers but they still remain as Rulers," he told newsmen after presenting prizes to winners of the Premier Equestrian Championship (see Page 3).

The Dewan Rakyat will sit on Jan 18 and 19 and the Dewan Negara on Jan 20.

Dr Mahathir said in modern times, the people could not allow such immunity to be enjoyed by any quarter.

To a question on Semangat 46's decision to oppose the proposed amendment, the Prime Minister said he failed to understand the party's stand.

Semangat, he said, appeared to be confused over the position of the Rulers and the question of immunity.

He refuted a suggestion by the

party that any move to remove the Rulers' immunity would affect their sovereignty.

Asked to comment on the differences between the DAP and Semangat over the proposed amendments, he said the people supported the Government's move.

"They (opposition) will be questioned. The people will then ask what is their stand really if they refused to support (the proposed amendments)," he said.

To a question on Semangat's decision to hold ceramahs throughout the country to explain its stand on the proposed amendments, Dr Mahathir said the party had the right to do so but said the Government would act if security was threatened.