

Dr M: Predictions about future can go wrong

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HONG KONG, Wed. (P) Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he had always been hesitant when asked to predict the future, adding that one could be so wrong when doing so.

But the Prime Minister believes that journalists are much braver when it comes to predicting. "They are always making dire predictions about everything," he told journalists in his luncheon address to members

of the Foreign Correspondents Club here.

He recounted three instances of such activities by journalists.

"I remember one report in one of the most popular international weeklies where a journalist, on seeing the unremarkable Honda mini at an exhibition, commented — now Honda knows making cars is not like making motor cycles.

"Obviously he felt that,

Honda was not going to catch on.

"Another commented in the same magazine that Rotterdam Port was wasting money on container handling facilities because containerisation was not going to catch on.

"Malaysia has had more than its fair share of dire predictions. From time to time, we are told that there were about to be racial riots, the economy would col-

lapse, the Government would fall, etc.

"The latest is that although all East Asian countries will grow economically Malaysia cannot make the transition to high-tech because 20 per cent of its students fail maths.

"The magazine is probably right. When Malaysians add two and two together they get 8.8 per cent growth. It's okay to fail maths," he said.