

IN CONTROL ³⁰

Economy not as bad as some may think, says Dr M

By WAN HAMIDIHAMID

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians are not showing any signs of panic over the situation which has been described as an economic crisis by the foreign press, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Instead, the Prime Minister said, most Malaysians did not feel anything at all while some, such as palm oil producers, were even happy (because the commodity is traded in US dollars).

"While the world is saying our economy is in bad shape and has asked us to beg to the International Monetary Fund, strangely enough, we can still launch a new car," he said when launching the *Kembara*, the first national four-wheel-drive vehicle produced by Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said there must be something wrong with the foreign perception of Malaysians, because "we are not taking advice from foreign journalists" who describe the country as suffering from its worst ever crisis.

lie said the foreign media had been saying Malaysia was doing all the wrong things, contrary to the advice of

their journalists who seemed to know better about running a country.

"It is as if they know better than any government in the world. However, these journalists remain journalists and not ministers of any country," he added.

Stating that the foreign media only gave advice rather than constructively help countries which were not doing well economically, the Prime Minister said the journalists were like spectators at a football match.

"Spectators always think they know how to kick the ball into the goal post, but the players do not want to do what the spectators tell them to do.

"All spectators think the same way. We are like the players and we are in the business of running the country. Whatever others may think about our ability to shoot for goals, we can do things by ourselves for ourselves."

The Prime Minister said the *Kembara* had already shown signs of success when 475 units were booked before the launch.

"I'm sure Malaysians who are said to be bankrupt still have a few more ringgit for a *Kembara*," he said.