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PM SAYS A LEADER SHOULD BE A LONG-TERM PLANNER AND FULL OF IDEAS

PETALING JAYA, Aug 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister ⁹³ Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today a leader should be a long-term planner and one full of ideas.

"I believe that leaders should look far ahead and not look for immediate gain," he said at a dialogue with students and lecturers of the International Islamic University (IIU) at its campus, here.

He was responding to a question from one of the lecturers on the qualities a leader should have to lead a country towards a bright future.

Describing the question as a difficult one which he did not expect, Dr Mahathir said a person should not be a leader if he did not have any ideas or had only limited ideas, the same ideas that everybody else had.

Those are the two things that I can think of at the moment, he added.

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In the hour-long dialogue, the prime minister answered 11 questions covering campus affairs and local and international issues. Earlier, he had closed the IIU's 10th anniversary celebrations.

Present were Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also the IIU president, and Education Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud.

Dr Mahathir said that if a leader were to look for immediate gain, like winning the next election, for example, then he could become very easily corrupted.

He said some leaders would give out money to become popular but once they started giving, the people would ask for more, and in return, would give the leaders less and the future would not be very bright for the country.

On a suggestion from a student on the possibility of setting up an "Islamic Common Market", Dr Mahathir said it was not practical at the moment as most of the Islamic countries were still dependent on the rest of the world -- more

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At the moment, he said, the Islamic countries were not capable of "doing things by ourselves for ourselves" but were dependent on other countries.

"We cannot allow ourselves to be moved by sentiment only. We have to calculate and assess our strengths and weaknesses and determine between what is good and bad. At the moment, I am sorry to say that an Islamic Common Market is not possible", he said.

For example, he said, it was almost totally impossible for the Islamic nations to have a common market as most of them produced oil and as such, "who would want to buy it?".

He said that at this point, the Islamic countries could not afford to cut themselves from the rest of the world because it could badly affect their economies.

Moreover, they had not mastered the technologies needed to develop the economy of a country, he added. -- Bernama

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