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PM: Nation needs more managers than visionaries

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia needed more managers than mere visionaries to achieve the objectives of Vision 2020.

"I personally think we need managers more than visionaries. If people keep on looking into the future and not do anything, we are not going to reach there and achieve what we have targeted for.

"I would think managers would be our main need in the future," he said in a global interactive live interview over CNN tonight.

Dr Mahathir was responding to a question from a caller from Kuala Lumpur who wanted to know what kind of person the Prime Minister envisioned as a successor with less than 30 years to achieve industrialised nation status.

He was also asked whether he planned to stay on as Prime Minister for many more years and what would happen to Malaysia after he had stepped down.

"I don't think anything very radical will change just because I am not around. I have a very co-operative and cohesive leadership. In Malaysia for the past 40 years, we have had successions of leaders without any real upheaval.

"Now I have designated my successor. There should not be a problem. The only problem, of course, is when should I step down.

"It is very difficult to determine. But I think I will be able to read the signs."

When told by the host Riz Khan that there was no clue yet as to whether he would try for another term, Dr Mahathir said: "When the time comes I will make a decision."

Describing Dr Mahathir as a very strong and influential leader in and outside the region who was either loved or hated, Khan asked Dr Mahathir how he perceived this.

"I think there is a fair amount of support for me. This is expressed in many ways in this country. When I am abroad, there are people who say they think highly of Malaysia. They think of Malaysia as a kind of model.

"The moment I feel I am not liked, then I will go out."

Dr Mahathir gave frank and forthright answers to an array of questions ranging from the current currency issue to Vision 2020.

In the exclusive hour-long interview over the channel with Khan, Dr Mahathir answered about 25 questions.

Khan said "hundreds of questions" from around the globe were either faxed, telephoned or e-mailed via the Internet.

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