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Excuse me Mr PM, what's your view on this?

Intan Maizura

IT IS obvious the lady is rushing for time. When I finally get to meet Lorraine Hahn, she looked a tad flushed albeit serenely poised nonetheless.

I am told that she will be flying off to Hong Kong straight after our tete-a-tete. I have been given just an hour with one of Asia's most popular TV anchors and the host and face of CNN's "TalkAsia".

It's been a whirlwind three days for this pleasantly charming lady - meetings, meetings and more meetings. But there is one thing she's bursting to tell.

Eyes dancing with excitement, she lets out that she had just completed an exclusive with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and this is the reason for her visit to Malaysia.

"I have interviewed the PM three times before this but this particular session was a bit special," she said.

"It's the first time he has spoken to an international media since his resignation announcement and this time around, it felt a bit harder as it could possibly be the last time I'm speaking to him as the Prime Minister."

Aware that Dr Mahathir has been known for his hard stance against some of the Western media, Lorraine was thrilled that he agreed to talk to her for CNN's TalkAsia.

"This special for TalkAsia will show Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir as a very open and forthcoming man. We talked about many things," she said.

"He spoke at length about his parents, growing up during the Japanese occupation right down to his 'goreng pisang' selling days!

"Dr Mahathir also talked about that fateful Umno General Assembly where he broke down in tears after declaring his resignation as PM and the Umno president - he was quite forthcoming."

With admiration, Lorraine continued: "You know, when asked what he felt his greatest achievement was, he did not hesitate to reply. He felt and still feels proud that he has been able to balance and unite the multi-racial society in Malaysia quite effectively".

According to Lorraine, the PM is just like any other human being, with emotions.

"This interview that will be aired on CNN's TalkAsia on Astro will really reveal the Man behind the Statesman."

Did she have to exercise any self-censorship with her questioning, I was dying to know. Looking thoughtful, she replied:

"Not really but in general I do sometimes when I need to or when something is quite sensitive. I would ask myself whether the question is relevant or can I do without it. More importantly, I try and think about how the person would react".

Lorraine is not the sort to shy away from hard questions but as she put it: "I wouldn't be aggressive, it's just not my style. I don't feel the need to go for the jugular. My TalkAsia doesn't aim to put people in the hot spot - I just want to find out things about people".

As she calmly concluded: "Gone are the days when I want to break news. The most important thing now is to have my guests feel at ease and talk to