

## Loren face-to-face with Mahathir

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"He doesn't look 80 at all!"

That's what Loren Legarda says about Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, after their one-on-one interview in Putrajaya two weeks ago.

Mahathir, whose 22-year rule ended in 2003 when he retired from public office, turned 80 in July but, according to Loren, "looks as robust as ever." He continues to serve Malaysia as adviser to several government entities and as head of the **Perdana Leadership Foundation**, a think-tank organization that aims to preserve, develop and disseminate the intellectual heritage of past leaders.



Loren's one-hour "enlightened exchange" with Mahathir will be aired tomorrow night (Sept. 2) at 10 on her show *Real Stories Kasama si Loren* on ABC 5. Loren was the first Filipino journalist to be granted an exclusive interview since Mahathir's unexpected retirement two years ago.

"It's one of the highlights of my journalistic career," says Loren whose Mahathir interview is part of her show's series of features on influential personalities and opinion setters in Asia and across the globe. "I learned a lot from my brief meeting with him."

The interview covers various topics, from economic, political and social issues, to Mahathir's views on global debt, the war in Iraq and the fight against terrorism. Mahathir also shares his insights on how he was able to bring about economic progress in multi-racial Malaysia and his "Vision 2020" which aims to propel Malaysia to the ranks of developed industrial nations by 2020.

"I also asked him about the Sabah claim and the reported comeback of Anwar Ibrahim (sent to jail during Mahathir's rule)."

Did Loren ask Mahathir for some advice on the election protest she has filed against Vice President Noli de Castro?

"No comment," Loren smiles.