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Couple receive `special guests' Dr Mahathir and wife at wedding

CYBERJAYA, Sat. - For about a month, Natalya Rudina Shamsuar was carrying her wedding card, hoping to bump into Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

She wanted to hand the invitation card personally to Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah as it was her dream to have them attend her akad nikah (solemnisation of marriage) ceremony at the Cyberview Lodge today.

The 26-year-old said: "I decided to leave it to fate. Then one day, after getting my wedding dress fitted at the Bangsar Shopping Centre, I happened to see her (Dr Siti Hasmah).

"I gave her the card, hoping that she and the Prime Minister would attend," the radiant bride said after the ceremony.

With her was her husband Yuhanis Abdul Latif, 26.

Today, not only did Natalya wed her sweetheart, she also met her idol in person.

"It is really a dream come true. My family and I couldn't believe it when Dr Mahathir replied to say that he would be coming. He doesn't even know me. He has been my idol since I was in primary school," said the Kuantan lass who now lectures at the Multimedia University.

Asked what the Prime Minister said to her and Yuhanis, she said: "He congratulated us many, many times, told us he was happy for us. He's a nice man, just like I had imagined."

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah arrived at the lodge at 2.45pm to witness the ceremony, which was solemnised by Natalya's father, Shamsuar Mahmud.

The couple exchanged 11 hantaran (gifts).

In a unique twist, the bride's parents announced that they did not want any wang hantaran (cash gift) for their daughter as she was "priceless".

Instead, they asked Yuhanis to recite the Al-Fatihah from the Quran.

Yuhanis, who works in an event management company, is from Ipoh. His parents, Abdul Latif Saidin and Rahmah Walad, are both pensioners.

Natalya is the elder of two daughters by Shamsuar and Hamimah Abdul Karim. The couple met while studying at Universiti Malaya.

Dr Mahathir left the ceremony at about 4pm.