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# Politics of handshakes, hugs and kisses

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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will make a superstar appearance in Parliament next week while his loyal wife was in the news after making a courtesy call at 'Istana Segambut', the nickname for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's house.

THEIR husbands had met for what was known as a "historic handshake" and now it was the turn of the wives.

Pictures of the reconciliation between Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali have been making its way through social media.

Dr Siti Hasmah had called on Dr Wan Azizah at her Bukit Segambut home on Friday for what appeared to be a highly sentimental meeting after a lapse of 18 long years.

It was not exactly a forgive-and-forget kind of occasion – the nature of the rift and all those life-changing events that have happened in between are too deep and complex to mend the hurt and scars in a single meeting.

But these are two classy ladies who have seen more of life than the average person and they knew how to give the occasion the right touch without going overboard.

There were hugs and kisses, some tears and a trip down memory lane before they exchanged gifts – goat milk health products from Dr Wan Azizah (now we know the secret to her porcelain complexion) and a hard cover copy of the *My Name Is Hasmah* biography from the elder lady.

Beneath all that ladylike sweetness, the fact that Siti Hasmah had

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to make the first move shows that the once powerful and mighty have had to eat humble pie.

The occasion was duly recorded by Datuk Khairuddin Hassan, the man with the ringside view to so many events connected to the politics of the former Prime Minister.

But political insiders say the reunion was part of a carefully planned series of events aimed at sending out the message that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad are now together and that they want to let bygones be bygones.

The ground has been quite resistant to the "old man", as Dr Mahathir is known, and the "historic handshake" did not have the effect expected.

The man whom they used to call "Pharaoh" comes with too much baggage and, as such, more of such kiss-and-makeup events had to be dished out to convince the supporters of both sides to come along.

The next major hook-up is expect-

ed to be between Dr Wan Azizah and Dr Mahathir.

Both have actually come face-to-face after the historic handshake in a courtroom in Shah Alam when a select group convened in the holding room of the court to make small talk.

But that was a private thing and not for public consumption.

Dr Wan Azizah is not prepared to go public with Dr Mahathir as yet.

The brains behind all these moves is said to be PKR deputy president Datuk Seri Azmin Ali who has his eye on the big picture. He means to hold on to Selangor with the help of Dr Mahathir.

Dr Wan Azizah has chosen her words very carefully when it comes to Dr Mahathir. Many in her party notice that the word "forgive" is not part of her vocabulary.

There is unlikely to be forgiveness on the part of the PKR president until Dr Mahathir apologises and retracts all those accusations against her husband.

She wants it not just for her husband but also for her children and her grandchildren.

A few years ago, she would probably have had to wait till the cows come home for that to happen.

But Dr Mahathir is so hellbent on toppling Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak that anything is possible. It would

be a truly historic day when the big M finally caves in.

Dr Mahathir is taking his fight with Najib to Parliament. He will be making a grand entrance in Parliament on Tuesday to lend his support to the opposition MPs protesting the police scrutiny of three former ministers over statements on 1MDB.

Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal and Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah are in hot water over the matter and the police have confirmed that Ahmad Husni is being investigated.

Dr Mahathir will attend a meeting of MPs to discuss and take a stand on defending their parliamentary privileges and immunity.

"We are expecting some superstar impact from him. The higher agenda is to expose the notion that the PM is out to ensure his survival by controlling the legislature.

"Our target is also the Speaker (Tan Sri Pandikar Amin), we feel he has infringed on our privileges and rights," said a Pakatan Harapan MP.

The ex-ministers have become the *cause celebre* of the opposition bench. But the opposition bench is still getting used to the trio.

Muhyiddin, noted the above Pakatan MP, does not go out of his way to make friends.

He exercises a cautious warmth

and the last time he was seen on camera with the other opposition MPs was on budget day.

He is seated next to Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai and shakes hands on the way to and from his seat and that is about it.

"My take is that he is trying to avoid being manipulated by us," said the same Pakatan MP.

Shafie is even more low profile and does not mingle with the opposition bench especially with the DAP side which is still sore with him for "stealing" their representatives in Sabah.

Ahmad Husni has his own style and is not interested in the opposition agenda.

The Pakatan side was hoping for more fireworks from him but he has gone all quiet after the earlier eruption.

His friends on the government bench are probably itching for him to carry out his plan to go off to Jordan to study religion.

In that sense, the opposition's most dynamic and cooperative figure is none other than Dr Mahathir.

He is 91 but he seems prepared to scale mountains and cross oceans to bring down Najib.

**There is no Sunday Starters this week. Executive Editor Soo Ewe Jin will be back soon!**