

# They stole him from me

— Dr Siti Hasmah

*Without hiding her feelings, she says she never liked politics. It is one area she will never even put a toe into*



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*Pic by Muhd Amin Nahrul*

by **P PREM KUMAR,**  
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TUN Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali was apologising profusely for being slightly late for the interview. She had just flown with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the helicopter to a remote village in Pahang.

Dr Mahathir made a last-minute campaigning bid, 24 hours before the voting day for the Cameron

Highlands by-election. Dr Siti Hasmah then flew back to Kuala Lumpur (KL) after seeing her husband off to the Orang Asli village in Sungai Koyan.

"I feel rotten today because I have to sacrifice my husband. I had to go on a helicopter which I don't like, just for a short while to drop my husband for a by-election in Cameron Highlands," said a tired, but always spirited wife of the prime minister (PM). "During his first term, he has

never done it. But this time, I don't know, he decided to go and campaign for our candidate," she said.

Clearly, the 92-year-old Dr Siti Hasmah was not a huge fan of the rotorcraft. Past incidents related to such aircraft may be the reason of her worries.

"I hate helicopters," she said in jest. "They have a bad record in my mind," said Dr Siti Hasmah who has clocked millions of air miles in her 63-year marriage while accompany-

ing Dr Mahathir around the four corners of the globe.

Such intimate narratives may be trivial to outsiders. But it demonstrates the worries of a wife of her husband's trip.

No one can fault her though. Dr Siti Hasmah has seen it all over the past six decades, a large part next to the man who decided his life extends beyond the four walls of a clinic.

From the opening of Dr Mahathir's first clinic in Alor Setar to seeing her

husband expelled from Umno after a falling-out with Tunku Abdul Rahman, leading the nation for 22 years, battling two successors and returning to the campaign trails for the 14th General Election (GE14) and against all odds, back in Putrajaya at the age of 92 then.

Dr Siti Hasmah's resolve is second to none. Despite the mountains of sacrifices, she has stood next to her man.