

A MOTHER AND A DOCTOR

'TAKE CARE OF YOUR BABIES, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF'

The prime minister's wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, tells **FAUZIAH ISMAIL** and **BEATRICE NITA JAY** about the importance of healthcare, discipline and her family's Hari Raya tradition

THE role of a mother and a doctor seemed to be intertwined in Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Her message to mothers in Malaysia is for them to look after their children, who she described as "the products that we have been blessed with", and to make sure that they live a healthy life with all the care and love that a parent can give.

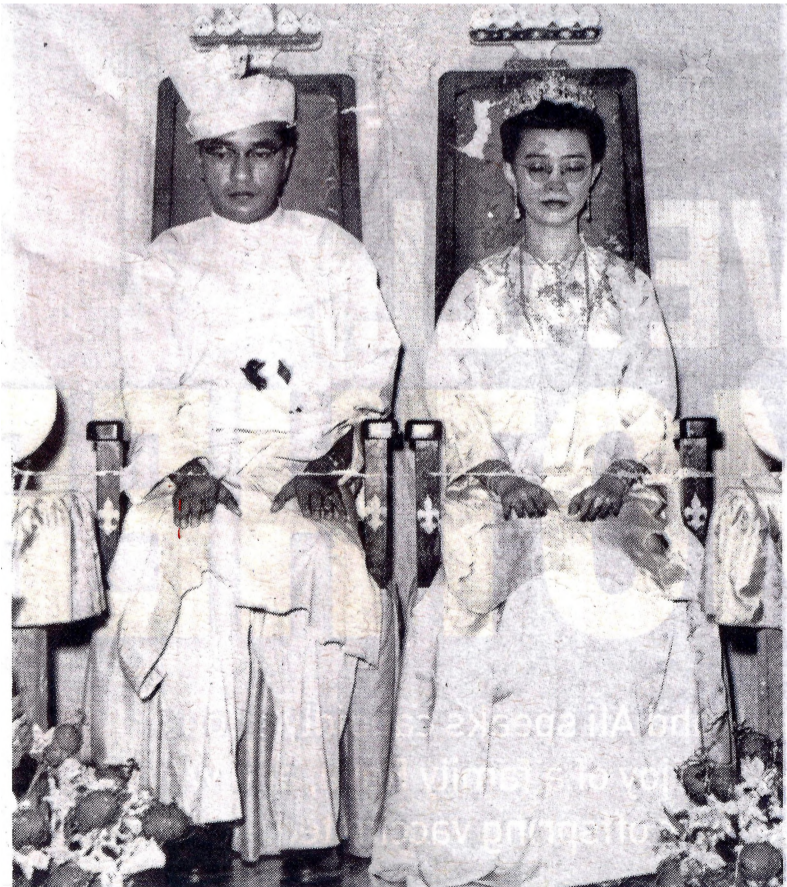
On top of that, she advised all

mothers to take care of themselves.

"Take care of your babies, take care of yourself," she said in an exclusive interview with the *New Sunday Times*.

Dr Siti Hasmah, 93, is not only a mother, but also a grandmother and a great grandmother. She and Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad have one great granddaughter.

She is a staunch advocate of



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali at their wedding ceremony in 1956.



public health. When she was serving as a doctor in Kedah, she championed rural health, organising programmes to promote hygiene, healthy lifestyles and immunisation for children.

She spoke at length on immunisation, which she considered the "utmost priority".

She couldn't understand why parents would deny vaccination to their children. Every mother with a baby aged 6 months and below needs to take the child to a clinic or hospital for vaccination for the sake of their health.

"They (parents) went through vaccination before. They are healthy to this day. Why don't they vaccinate their children? Surely, they wouldn't want their children to suffer later on. I don't know if there is a different agenda to this."