

A Tribute Issue

Admiration for Dr M's qualities

NST 31/10/2003 - 14 PRECISE

The road to strength and greatness can be accelerated but it will still take time. We must accept small gains if we cannot achieve quantum leaps.

— At the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference, Casablanca, Morocco, December 1994.

Of course, we would prefer to sell outside of Asean in hard currency and earn more foreign exchange. But where we can be competitive in each other's market, we should 'Buy Asean'.

— Offering his views on intra-Asean trade, December 1997.

■ FROM PAGE 12

their involvement in business dealings.

Dr Siti Hasmah said it greatly saddened her because Dr Mahathir is far from what these people had accused him of.

"I felt very much for them. I feel sorry for my children. People have the wrong perception about this. My husband has always made it clear to everyone, including his own children and relatives, on the matter of contracts and so on.

"His children or relatives getting favours from him as Prime Minister just never happened."

Dr Siti Hasmah said her children are where they are in their own right after having had the right professional and academic training.

"They are where they are with no help from their father. They work so hard and have all been on their own."

Indeed, Dr Siti Hasmah admires Dr Mahathir's strength, patience, resilience and fortitude.

"Always, when there are problems, he will tell me not to worry and that they will die off," she said.

When at home, they do not discuss his work. Because he keeps a hectic schedule, time spent at home is precious. It is even more precious during the rare times when their children and grandchildren are able to gather at their home for dinner.

Dr Mahathir, she said, tries his best to attend his children's and grandchildren's birthday gatherings or other family *kenduri* where he can catch up with kith and kin.

Like any other husband, he does try to come home for lunch and when he is not able to, he calls her up.

Dr Siti Hasmah said that at the moment she is "(with Dr Mahathir) everywhere he goes to fulfil people's requests to see him."

When all this is done and everyone gets to say *adieu* to Dr Mahathir, she will begin the monumental task of sorting out and packing their things in Putrajaya.

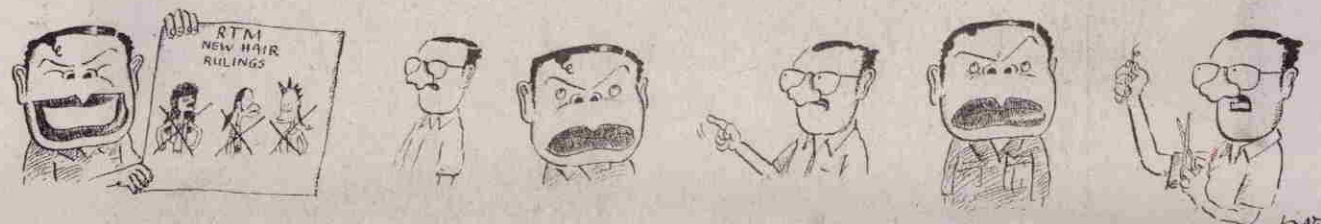
It is not easy, she reminds you, because, after October, all their belongings would have to be moved to their "two-bedroom, renovated-attic" house at the Mines.

It is not a palatial home on a large piece of land for a statesman and former Prime Minister who has contributed 22 years of his life to building the nation.

"It is a small house. It is what we will be happy in. And it is home where our children and grandchildren can visit," she said with a twinkle in her eyes.



I MISS YOU: Dr Mahathir welcoming Dr Siti Hasmah on her return from Iraq at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah airport in 2000. With him are their grandchildren



■ The writer is the Political Editor at NST