



**Wide choice:** A variety of household items such as hangers, pails and brooms were available at stalls specially set up at the residential colleges at UPM. — BRIAN MOH / The Star

# A new start

Leaving home is not easy for the many new undergraduates, but leave home they must, in pursuit of their dreams and a better education.





**New room:** Yee Wen is all excited as she points out her room to her parents and sister at the hostel in UPM.

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**T**HEY were the the lucky ones who made it, bringing pride and joy to their families after being accepted into one of 20 public varsities in the country.

And for many fresh undergraduates, their families came in full force from near and far to lend moral support as they registered for the 2010/2011 academic session.

Their families then helped them move into their new "home" located in the various halls of residence and hostels at the universities.

There was a festive air as the "freshies" came into the premises. Many had come with their families from villages and towns across the

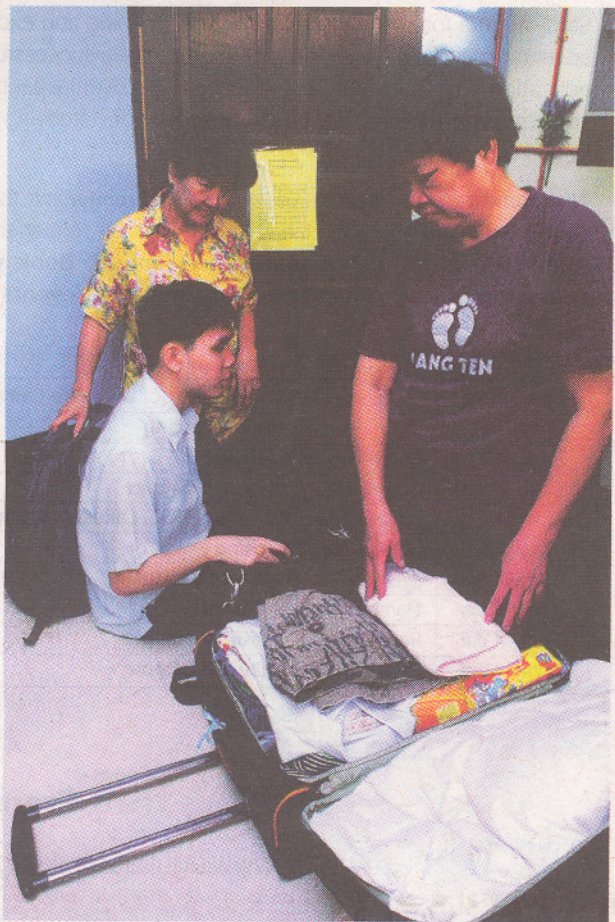
country driving overnight or taking taxis and other modes of public transportation.

While the majority of them were happy and excited at the prospect of being on their own, there were others who were sad and teary-eyed like 19-year-old Nur Nazahiah Ghazali.

She had travelled with her family from Dungun, Terengganu in the wee hours of the morning arriving before noon at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in Bangi on registration day, last Sunday

"I am going to miss my family, but I hope I will not be too lonely because my older brother is also studying here," said the Chemical Technology student as her family

**Settling in:**  
Hii (right)  
helps unpack  
Wei Siong's  
bag while his  
godmother  
Cecilia Low  
looks on.  
RAYMOND OOI /  
The Star





helped her to move in to her hostel. To make sure that she would not be too homesick, Nur Nazahiah brought her "security pillow" along with her.

Her father, Ghazali Mat assured her that she would be fine at the university. He however warned her not to go out alone especially at night.

It was indeed a special day for Chee Wen Hao, 20 who couldn't wait to enter varsity.

"I have been hearing stories about how my twin sister Wen Chin was enjoying her campus life.

"She had been accepted into Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) last year and now I can't wait to begin mine," said Wen Hao who is going to embark on a three-year Business Administration Degree programme.

Wen Hao had in fact made preparations to come to UKM soon after results for varsity admission was released, two weeks earlier.

He had shopped for formal clothes while his mother bought him food items and other daily provisions.

"I have many packets of instant noodles for him because I'm afraid that he will not be able to get used to the food here," said his mother Lee Eng Tong.

The family from Ipoh ended up ferrying two car loads of suitcases, bags, and boxes of stationery and other items to Wen Hao's residential college on registration day.

With Wen Hao now in university, his parents are left with an empty nest.

"This is inevitable. The children will have to leave someday, it is only then that they can learn to be more



**Long walk:** Nur Nazahiah's family helping carry her bags and other items to her hostel at UKM. By BRIAN MOH / The Star

independent," said his father Chee Seng Chuen with a tinge of sadness.

With her home in Gombak being just 40km away from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Laavanya M. Kumar, 20, was the envy of other students who had to travel almost half a day to reach the university.

"At least I can still go back home during the weekend break to visit my family," she said.

"But this is a huge change for me as I am leaving home for the first time," she added.

Laavanya came with her parents and sister to check into her new hostel and register for a

Microbiology course in UPM.

"Although this is the fifth choice in my university application, I am still happy to be given this course as I love to work in laboratories," she said.

As for special student Loh Wei Siong who is visually impaired, his most important possession was his laptop which he had packed for his stay in Universiti Malaya (UM).

"My laptop is pre-installed with a reader software programme and I am dependent on it," he said.

An inspiration to other students, the 20-year-old said he wanted to make his family proud by becom-

ing a successful lawyer after completing his studies in UM.

"I'm interested in legal studies because I find there are various options open for me in the field" he said.

However, it was with a heavy heart that his mother Hii Yu Ping saw him off.

Wiping away tears, she said she was worried about her son living alone in Kuala Lumpur, far away from his hometown in Kuching.

Wei Siong comforted his mother, telling her that he would be able to manage as he had stayed in hostels when he was in secondary school.





New students all eager and enthusiastic arrive at UM.



Family members were happy to lend a hand to the freshies moving in to the hostels at UM.





**All in the family:** Wen Hao gets help from his parents and twin sister Wen Chin at UKM. — LOW LAY PHON / The Star