

# Weightlifter Azizah vows to realise her Olympic dream

By **ASHREENA PILLAI**

**PETALING JAYA:** Weightlifter Azizah Fadzil has one last piece of business to take care of – to qualify for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro – before eventually calling it quits to concentrate on her studies.

The 23-year-old has deferred her four-year Bachelor of Communication studies at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) on a number of occasions due to her participation in competitions. She enrolled at UPM in 2011 and is now only in her fourth semester.

“I’ve been contemplating my future. I’m at a crossroads. I’ve put weightlifting ahead of my studies for a long time and I’m not getting any younger. The only thing that is driving me is the Olympics,” said Azizah who competes in the 53kg category.

Azizah would have called herself an Olympian if not for a cruel twist of fate. She virtually earned a place in the 2012 London Olympics, only to be denied at the last minute by a Vietnamese competitor.

Next year will be a crucial season for Azizah as she goes full swing to realise her Olympic dream.

This year, she finished seventh at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July and eighth at the World University Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand, earlier this month.

“I see a lot of youngsters coming through nowadays and a few of them have the potential to be future Commonwealth Games medallists. They’re all so young, so I feel sort of like a veteran,” said Azizah who began weightlifting in 2005 at age 14 and went on to feature for Penang in her first Sukma in Kedah in 2006.

“Saying goodbye to the sport will not be an easy decision for me. I’ve been doing it for about nine years now. It’s what I love, but I also know I can’t do it forever.”