General

Iftar in trays at campus remains in memories

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Kuantan, 30 April 2020 - Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) students were excited when allowed to return to their homes after being stranded on campus for more than 40 days due to the Movement Control Order (MCO) started on 18 March 2020.

The first phase of the balik kampung movement to the eastern zone involved 1,154 students from public and private universities, polytechnics and community colleges, covering Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu on the night of 30 April.

A UMP student, Muhammad Hazamuddin Wan Hassan, 25, from Kelantan said, being allowed to go home was highly anticipated for he missed his family so much.

He recalled his exciting experience on campus breaking fast together with his friends at the UMP mosque.

“It has been a tradition to prepare food for *iftar* (breaking fast) and eat together in trays filled with food with four or five other students.

“It is also a Ramadan memory when we can no longer gather for iftar, including in Padang MPK 1 in Kuantan, which is frequented by many in this state during Ramadan,” he said as he is now in his hometown in Tumpat, Kelantan.

He was among the first group of students who went back to their hometown in the eastern zone on 30 April.

He expressed his gratitude to all persons who worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and welfare of the students on campus during the MCO.

Meanwhile, a student of Bachelor of Mechatronics Engineering, Nur Salmiah Saliman, 22, who stayed temporarily at her aunt’s in Kuala Terengganu during the MCO acknowledged that she gained new experience compared to the previous Ramadan.

Nur Salmiah, hails from Kuching, Sarawak, initially planned to go back to her hometown but stranded in Terengganu.

She bought a plane ticket on 18 March and was supposed to fly to Sarawak on 25 March from the Kuala Terengganu Airport.

However, due to the MCO, her flight was cancelled twice, and she joined the group of Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) students to return to Sarawak.

“The feeling of observing this Ramadan first time away is different because, in 2018 and 2019, I

observed Ramadan with my friends in the Residential College 5, UMP.

“I usually looked for *kuih tepung pelita, lopes, sago* pudding and various satay in Ramadan bazaar, but not this time,” she said.

As she longs to eat together with her family during this pandemic, her mother sent salted *terubok* fish (longtail shad) that are found only in Sarawak.

Also, it is easy for her to communicate with her family using technologies. It is also meaningful that she has the opportunity to observe this Ramadan with her aunt, as she has not met her for nearly 20 years.

Nur Salmiah is the eldest of six siblings, and she is eager to meet her youngest sister aged six and have *iftar* together with her family.

It is expected that 6,500 students from Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu to return home in stages according to zones – eastern, central, northern, southern, Perak, Sabah and Sarawak until the last group on 10 May.
In light of the Covid-19 outbreak, UMP will implement online learning starting 1 June as one of the new normal initiatives.

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