Home away from home

WHILE most of his former schoolmates who were keen on pursuing their tertiary education overseas have selected countries such as India, Britain, and the US, Sri Lankan Lahiru Warusavithana’s (picture) choice of Malaysia is made based primarily on the opportunity to still see his parents regularly. The Singhalese from Colombo, Sri Lanka, reveals that his parents have business dealings in this part of the world and frequently travel to Southeast Asia, including Malaysia.

“I can meet my parents every two months and at the same time, Malaysia’s living expenses are within my budget compared to other countries,” the 22-year-old explained. The foreign student at Sunway College, Petaling Jaya, admits that Malaysia has developed many avenues offering higher education opportunities to international students.

He added: “Compared to my country, you have lots of private colleges providing adequate educational services. Education agents in my hometown recommend Malaysia highly to people like myself who wants to do a degree in business after my A-levels.”

Lahiru has set his sights on obtaining the Bachelor of Business (Marketing) upon completion of the three-year Victoria University degree programme. He finds the course interesting. He said: “Last semester, I had to interview a top level manager in a reputable company as part of my project. It was an interesting experience, where I could put what I’d learned in theory into practice.

Lahiru has been in Malaysia for almost a year, arriving on July 14 last year. His stay in the Klang Valley has been a period of adjustment. He said: “Before I came to Malaysia I thought Malaysia had only Malays.

“But I was so surprised to see so many Chinese and Indians as I had not heard of other races living in Malaysia.”

He was also surprised to find that Malaysia was such a developed country.

He explained that Malaysia reminds him of home in terms of its ethnic unity.

“In Sri Lanka, Singhalese, Tamil and Muslim people live together peacefully. So my hometown is a good example of ethnic unity. It is also just like Malaysians who are peaceful people, living together in unity and thinking of the country first.”

Lahiru has been fortunate in finding a group of friends, mainly Indian and Pakistan college mates, to indulge in his favourite sports of cricket. “Every week, we play cricket and it is good for us, reminding us of home,” he said.

However, he has to limit his passion for Singhala music to listening to it on his laptop and laments the fact that very few people here speak his mother tongue, Singhalese.
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