SINGAPORE: A new batch of Singapore Management University graduates will be crossing the stage and into the workforce.

Preparations are underway for the 2007 SMU commencement ceremony as graduands get ready for the big day.

Valedictorian Alvina Teh and salutatorian Li Xiangrun are two exemplary students who will be graduating on Saturday.

For Alvina, while the journey getting here has been an accomplishment, the main challenge is what lies ahead.

She tops her class of some 860 graduands, and is currently running a family publishing company with two of her siblings.

She said: "It is an auspicious occasion for sure but the day itself is not as important as what is going to lie ahead of that. At the beginning we came to SMU we were very green and ready to learn and our hand held on to others for guidance. But now we are different because we are ready to give and I hope that, as we go along our lives, we will hold that hand outstretched for others."

And it is this desire to give that is also guiding Xiangrun: "My dream actually is to help the poor, the rural poor and one of the objectives is to start a micro-financing organisation to help in the micro-financing aspects of the poor in Southeast Asia."

The commencement ceremony will be held at the Suntec City Convention Centre. - CNA/ch