

Muslims gather at Taipei Railway Station for Eid al-Fitr

Written by Taipei Times

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Mostly Indonesian Muslim women yesterday gathered to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, on Taipei Travel Plaza on the west side of Taipei Railway Station.

Photo: CNA

More than 500 Muslims yesterday gathered at Taipei Railway Station to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the ninth month on the Islamic calendar.

The group mainly comprised of Indonesian migrant workers who shared dishes and exchanged blessings at the gathering, which was organized by the Taipei Foreign and Disabled Labor Office.

The office distributed gifts, such as environmentally friendly utensils and fans, to attendees who uploaded their photographs to Facebook and handed out picnic blankets to those who took part in a Chinese word game.

Department Commissioner Lai Hsiang-lin (賴香臨) handed out traditional fragrance sachets to the attendees and extended the Taipei City Government's well wishes.

"The city government would like Taiwanese to treat migrant workers who are working and living here just as they would treat a fellow compatriot," Lai said.

Surwanti, an Indonesian caregiver who has been in Taiwan for 14 years, said she was happy to

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attend the event, adding that her employers treat her well and support her attending Muslim religious events.

As a Muslim, she was touched that Taiwan organized such an event to make her feel at home, she added.

Amalina, an Indonesian domestic helper who has been in Taiwan for four years, said that even though she was far from her family, she was happy to take part in the event, because she was able to spend Eid al-Fitr with her friends.

Taipei Deputy Mayor Tsai Ping-kun (蔡正元) said the celebration was important for Indonesian migrant workers and other Muslims in Taiwan, as they had shown their faith by fasting during the month of Ramadan.

"I think that fasting is not only a religious rite, but also a symbol of human rights, as there are many places in the world that are going through rough times, and fasting shows our devotion" to helping others, Tsai said.

The event also gave Taiwanese an opportunity to understand the cultures of migrants to promote friendship, said Tsai, who estimated that there are about 40,000 Indonesian migrant workers in the city.

Eid al-Fitr begins with the first sighting of the new moon, so it varies from country to country depending on geographical location.

In Taiwan, Tuesday was the 30th and last day of Ramadan, during which Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn to dusk, the Taiwan Imams Committee said.

There were 270,890 Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan as of the end of April, Ministry of Labor statistics showed.

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Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority nation in the world.

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