

Fewer foreign residents in Taiwan last year: MOI

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The number of foreign residents in the country declined last year, mainly because of a drop in the number of foreign workers in the manufacturing sector, the Ministry of the Interior said on Friday.

Ministry statistics showed that there were 552,792 foreign residents in Taiwan at the end of last year, down 6,508 from the previous year.

Among them, the number of foreign workers fell by 14,044 year-on-year, with the biggest drop recorded in the manufacturing sector amid a global economic downturn, a ministry official said.

The number of foreign spouses also decreased by 4,485, as many of them have obtained Taiwanese nationality, the official said.

Foreign workers accounted for the majority of foreign residents in the country at 351,016, or 63.5 percent of the overall foreign population.

Foreign spouses who have not acquired Taiwanese nationality were the second-largest group, numbering 51,758, or 9.36 percent of the total.

Most foreign residents, particularly migrant workers and foreign spouses, lived in Taoyuan County, Taipei County and Taipei City, the data showed.

Indonesians were the largest national group in Taiwan, accounting for 154,159, or 27.9 percent, of the total, followed by Vietnamese at 125,418, or 22.7 percent, and Filipinos at 75,086 or 13.6 percent.

Compared with 2008, the number of Thais decreased by 10,947, while the number of Indonesians increased by 10,254.

The data also showed that 83.4 percent of foreigners held residency visas; 15.31 percent were on visitor visas; and 1.31 percent had other forms of visas.

As at the end of last year, 84,619 foreigners were studying in Taiwan on visitor visas, with Japanese accounting for 21.7 percent of the total, followed by Americans who made up 21.4 percent and Malaysians who accounted for 7.9 percent.

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