Student

International students created new memories celebrating Ramadan at UMPSA

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GAMBANG, 30 March 2024 - Ramadan celebration among international students at UMPSA this year, has created new memories and experiences for them.

The celebration of Ramadhan, like any other year, spent with their beloved family, has changed as this time, they were on campus to begin the new semester.

Nevertheless, the Ramadan celebration among international students was still meaningful and filled with new memories and experiences.

Other than the experience of attending classes while fasting and being far away from home, all these experiences have taught them to be more patient, disciplined, and to appreciate the opportunities and time throughout Ramadan.

The international students in UMPSA, who came from 14 different countries, took this opportunity to have iftar gatherings among themselves and brought traditional food from their respective countries.

The exchange of dishes from different countries showed the diversity of food variations from various of cultures.

They also took the opportunity to introduce and share their local foods to local students and community.

In addition, the international student society from Yemen, known as the Yemeni Student Union (YSU), organized an iftar gathering on March 30, 2024.

Other international students around Pahang were also invited.

This event aimed to strengthen the relations among Yemeni students, especially at UMPSA and around Pahang.

Other than sharing various traditional Yemeni foods during iftar, they also performed Isyak and Taraweh prayers together, then ended with light refreshments.

Alsabaeei Amr, 20 years old from the Faculty of Computing, as the president of YSU, shared that he feels blessed as the iftar organized by YSU went smoothly and was attended by almost all Yemeni students at UMPSA.

Furthermore, they also had the opportunity to break their fast at the University Mosque with the unique tradition of eating together from platter (talam).

This practice, as one of the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, of eating from a shared platter indirectly provides an opportunity for these students to strengthen bonds of friendship.

On the other hand, for international students who are not Muslims, these kinds of experiences obviously are something new for them.

Other than that, UMPSA's international students also did not want to miss the chance to experience breaking their fast together at Majlis Bandaraya Kuantan 1 (MBK 1) field.

The field is located in front of Masjid Negeri Sultan Ahmad, and it is a famous gathering place for people in Pahang to come and break their fast together.

They expressed their appreciation and happiness as they have also been given the opportunity to interact with the Top Management of UMPSA through an iftar event with His Royal Highness Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah ibni Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, the Crown Prince of Pahang.

The event was also attended by the Minister of Higher Education, YB Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zamry Abd Kadir, the Chairman of the University Management Board, Dato' Seri Abdul Razak Jaafar, and the Vice-Chancellor of UMPSA, Professor Dato' Ts. Dr. Yuserrie Zainuddin as well as members of UMPSA.

Additionally, the Ramadan bazaar at UMPSA campus has provided a new atmosphere for international students as they were able to try and explore a variety of Malaysian food.

They were thrilled to see various types of rice, traditional dishes from different states in Malaysia, colourful desserts, and various types of drinks.

The bustling atmosphere of the Ramadan bazaar, visited by people of various races and ethnicities, emphasized the uniqueness and prosperity of Malaysia to international students.

The mutual respect and celebration of cultural diversity indirectly fostered closer relations between international and local students.

This was also acknowledged by Raed Abdullah, a Master's student in the Faculty of Computing, who witnessed the harmony and tolerance among the community.

Moreover, international students also took the opportunity to visit shopping bazaars around Kuantan.

The bazaars sell various types of clothing and items for the upcoming Eid celebrations.

They also bought Malaysian traditional Eid attire such as *Baju Melayu, samping, songkok, baju kurung,* and *kebaya* as their attire to celebrate Eid al-Fitri.

According to Nasiru Kamilah Oluwabusolami Adejumoke from Nigeria, she bought a pair of *kebaya* and plans to celebrate Eid al-Fitri in Johor with her friend's family.

She chose *kebaya* as her attire for the Eid celebration because of its' uniqueness and its Malay elements.

She also plans to send photos of the Eid celebration to her parents in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, a group of male international students also chose to buy *Baju Melayu, samping,* and *songkok* for Eid al-Fitr.

The experience of wearing a complete Baju Melayu outfit thrilled them and made them excited to celebrate Eid together with the UMPSA community.

There were also a few of them who were given the opportunities to participate in activities such as leading the Tarawih prayers at the mosque together with local community.

According to Alsabaeei Amr from Yemen, his experience as an imam during Ramadan last year at Surau Wan Ghani has made him more confident this year to accept invitations to lead prayers or participate in other religious activities.

The kindness and experiences he received have helped him to become closer to the local community.

Moreover, international students were also involved in Quran recitation (tadarus) activities throughout Ramadan at UMPSA.

They also participated in recording Eid al-Fitr greetings videos in Malay.

They had the opportunity to extend their wishes for a blessed Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr through public speaking, poetry, and creating short video recordings.

Overall, most international students in UMPSA shared that, as someone who always misses their hometowns when they are far away, they are thankful and grateful for the kindness and generosity of the people in this country.

This has created new and sweet memories for them and made their Ramadan celebration to be more meaningful at UMPSA.

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