Experts

Eid al-Adha for UMPSA International Students: Unique Stories

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Hari Raya Haji or Eid al-Adha is one of the biggest festive celebrated by Muslims worldwide, alongside Eid al-Fitr. This celebration occurs annually on the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th of Zulhijah. In Malaysia, it was celebrated on 17 June 2024.

International students at Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) come from 14 different countries, each with diverse backgrounds and cultures. During this festive season, international students also participated in the celebrations with many meaningful and memorable stories. Most of the international students at UMPSA celebrated the occasion on campus, either at UMPSA Pekan or UMPSA Gambang. They celebrated it with friends from their own country as well as with other international students. Early in the morning, they visited the UMPSA mosque to perform the Eid prayers, recited the takbir raya, and enjoyed special festive dishes together.



The

writer is with the UMPSA international students' community

Abdalla Idris Mohamed Mohamed Hamid, a student from Sudan, mentioned that this might be his final year celebrating Eid al-Adha in Malaysia as he is in his last semester. He feels a mix of joy and sadness because UMPSA has been like his second home after celebrating Eid al-Adha here for seven times. All the sweet memories and activities he experienced in this country will be cherished forever. Celebrating Eid al-Adha seven times with the Malaysian community, especially UMPSA residents, is something that he will never forget. This year, he and his friends decided to celebrate Eid al-Adha in Putrajaya and performed the Eid prayers at Masjid Besi Putrajaya.



Abdalla Idris Mohamed Mohamed Hamid, dressed in traditional attire, is taking a photo with his friend from Perak, Malaysia.



Abdullah Abdul Qader Babutain, wearing sunglasses, is with his friends after performing the Eid al-Adha prayer

Similarly, Abdullah Abdul Qader Babutain from Yemen, who will also be completing his studies this semester, celebrated Eid al-Adha at UMPSA Pekan together with his friends, and spent the afternoon enjoying food at the nearby beach. Both of them expressed their gratitude for the joyous celebrations they experienced here, even without their families.

Meanwhile, Nasiru Kamilah Oluwabusolami Adejumoke from Nigeria, celebrated the occasion with her friends at UMPSA and just stayed on campus. They performed the Eid prayers at the UMPSA mosque, then, took photos in their festive attire around campus, and enjoyed the festive food while chatting together. This celebration also served as a short break for her, as they are currently in the Study Week before their final exams next week.



Nasiru Kamilah Oluwabusolami Adejumoke is with her friends from UMPSA

Utami Meilia Ayu, an international student from Indonesia, shared that the Eid al-Adha celebrations in Malaysia and Indonesia are quite similar, celebrated with the performance of Qurbani (ibadah korban). This time, she celebrated it on campus with her fellow Indonesians friends by cooking various Indonesian dishes like sate taichan, seblak, cireng guyur, bakwan sayur, and cilok ayam. The joy of cooking together helped them alleviate their homesickness and making them feel less lonely in a foreign country.

On the other hand, Raed Abdullah from the Faculty of Computing returned to Saudi Arabia this year to celebrate Eid al-Adha with his family. He mentioned that the Eid al-Adha celebrations in Malaysia and Saudi Arabia are slightly different, even though the Qurbani rituals are performed in both countries. Some of the differences include the cultural atmosphere, types of food and dishes, traditional attire, and the traditional Arab dances performed with friends. Eid al-Adha was celebrated on June 16, 2024, in Saudi Arabia. His mother was the one who were most excited about his return. She prepared his favorite festive dishes, such as Arabian Rice with lamb, *Haneeth*, and *Kunafa*. He expressed his happiness and gratitude for the chance to celebrate Eid al-Adha with his family this year. He will return to campus soon to continue his studies.



The traditional Arab dance performance shared by Abdullah Raed



The Arab dishes prepared by Raed's mother, and the Indonesian dishes prepared by Utami Meilia Ayu and her friends

Abdullah Musayeb Afeef, a student from Bangladesh, celebrated the festive in Permatang Badak, Kuantan, with his family. In the morning, he and his family performed the Eid prayers at Sultan Ahmad Shah Mosque before heading to a cattle farm to carry out the Qurbani. In addition, special dishes such as Biryani rice, chicken pulao, Chola, Rasmali, and Mishti Bangladesh were prepared by his family as special dishes for the Eid morning.



Abdullah Musayeb Afeef in green attire with

his friends, Raed Abdullah in traditional Arab attire, Utami Meilia Ayu is pictured around UMPSA hostel, and also other international students pictured around UMPSA Pekan.

Moreover, some international students followed their Malaysian friends to their hometowns, particularly in Terengganu and Kelantan, as well as in Pahang. The proximity of these locations to UMPSA on the East Coast makes traveling easier for them. They gained valuable experiences and formed close bonds with their friends' families. Meanwhile for non-Muslim international students, they also had the chance to experience the festive atmosphere and learn about the various celebrations in Malaysia.

The unique stories, tolerance, and mutual respect foster harmonious and joyous celebrations of various festivals by different ethnicities and races in Malaysia. The diverse and unique stories behind UMPSA international students' Eid al-Adha celebrations are proof that Malaysians, particularly UMPSA residents, value diversity and embrace differences in religion, culture, and traditions.

Happy Eid al-Adha to all UMPSA residents.

Writers are Senior Language Teachers at Centre for Modern Languages (CML), Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA).
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E-mail: jamilahbebe@umpsa.edu.my **and** ainun@umpsa.edu.my

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