

Over 300 domestic helpers from Cambodia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka celebrate combined new year



Ms Iek Saron, a domestic helper from Cambodia, sprinkles water on Cambodia's ambassador to Singapore, Mr Ngoun Sokveng, as a blessing. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

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SINGAPORE - Domestic worker Iek Saron last celebrated the Khmer New Year at home two years ago but she and her fellow Cambodians did not let that stop them from enjoying the festivities here on Sunday (May 5).

Ms Iek, 32, was one of around 300 foreign domestic workers - not just from her native Cambodia but Myanmar and Sri Lanka as well - at a combined celebration organised by Fast, a Singapore non-profit organisation.

The event commemorated the Khmer New Year, Myanmar's Thingyan Festival marking its new year and the Sri Lankan Sinhalese New Year, which all fell in April.

"I miss home and I wish I could see my family, especially my daughter who is seven years old," said Ms Iek, who came here to work in 2017.

She added that she enjoyed the musical performances and games at the celebration held at the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training (Fast) Clubhouse in Jalan Bukit Merah.

She was even invited to sprinkle water on Cambodia's ambassador to Singapore, Mr Ngoun Sokveng, as a blessing.

There were traditional desserts laid on for the guests as well as dance performances and two lucky draws.

Fast vice-president Helen Tan told the gathering: "Celebrating the festivities of the different nationalities of foreign domestic workers working in Singapore is a regular feature of Fast's attempts to help our workers feel a sense of home away from home."

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She also called for a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the victims of the Sri Lanka Easter weekend bombings last month and their family members.

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