

Construction firms helping staff during Ramadan

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A break-fast event was held by GL Engineering and Construction for 39 of its Muslim Bangladeshi workers, as well as more than 30 other non-Muslim staff, yesterday. The event aims to foster closer ties among workers of different backgrounds, says the firm's managing director, Mr Lim Sing Tian. ST PHOTO: SEAH KWANG PENG

Measures include holding break-fast events, giving Muslim staff less labour-intensive roles

In the month of Ramadan, construction firms are paying special attention to the needs and welfare of their Muslim workers.

This could range from break-fast events to rotating them into less labour-intensive roles.

GL Engineering and Construction held a break-fast event for 39 of its Muslim Bangladeshi workers, as well as more than 30 other non-Muslim employees, yesterday.

Its managing director, Mr Lim Sing Tian, said the event aims to foster closer ties among workers of different backgrounds. "With many different nationalities, backgrounds and religions among our colleagues, it is important that we learn about each other's belief."

Mr Lim urged non-Muslim workers to help ensure that Muslim colleagues who are fasting have enough rest and sufficient food during their break-fast period and morning meals.

Muslims mark the month of Ramadan by fasting between dawn and dusk every day. The month ends with the festival of Hari Raya Puasa, which is on July 6 this year.

Other construction firms are also taking steps to help Muslim workers during Ramadan. Samwoh Corporation senior manager Hon Lip Yung said there were three key differences in how it deployed Muslim workers.

"The first is the working environment, where we try to shift them from outdoor to indoor jobs. Next is timing, where we will try to allocate them to night shifts instead of day shifts. Lastly, we try to give them jobs that won't require as much manual labour."

Mr Hon cited security guards and traffic marshals as less labour-intensive roles that Muslim workers can be assigned to during Ramadan. Samwoh currently employs 851 workers, of whom 185 are Muslim.

Mr Jimmy Chua, chief executive officer of construction firm Huatong, which has about 100 Muslim workers, said the firm tries to reduce the number of daytime working hours for Muslim employees.

He said Muslim workers work seven hours a day on average during Ramadan, compared with nine or 10 hours a day in other months.

"On the operations side, we try to send them on shorter jobs or routines if our schedule permits. We also have air-conditioned containers for them to rest and pray in."