

UAE: Indian Christian serves iftar to nearly 800 Muslim workers

09/05/2019 21:20 by admin

Indian Christian businessman Saji Cheriyan built the Mariam Umm Eisa (Mary, the Mother of Jesus) mosque after he saw workers spending their earnings on taking taxis to go to the nearest mosque to offer prayers during the holy month.

Dubai: An Indian Christian businessman, who built a mosque for Muslim workers in the UAE, is serving iftar meals to nearly 800 workers during the ongoing month of Ramzan. Saji Cheriyan, 49, who hails from Kerala's Kayamkulam, built the mosque last year for Muslim workers living in a worker accommodation that he rented out to 53 companies in Fujairah.

He built the Mariam Umm Eisa (Mary, the Mother of Jesus) mosque after he saw workers spending their earnings on taking taxis to go to the nearest mosque to offer prayers during the holy month.

Ramzan this year began on May 7.

Cheriyan, who landed in the UAE in 2003 with just a few hundred dirhams, hosts iftar for about 800 people including workers and other senior employees of various companies at an air conditioned convention centre in the same complex, the Gulf News reported.

"The mosque opened on the 17th night of Ramadan last year. So, I could offer iftar to the worshippers only for the remaining days. From this year, I would be doing it every day," he was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

The iftar meal includes dates, fresh fruits, snacks, juice, water and biryani.

"I have made arrangements to offer different types of biryani so that they don't get bored eating the same dish every iftar," he said.

Abdul Qayum, a 63-year-old Pakistani bus driver, who had iftar on Wednesday, appreciated Cheriyan's efforts.

"The world needs people like him. If there are no people like him, the world will end. We are praying for him. Allah will bless him."

Vajas Abdul Wahid, an Indian employed as assistant manager with a company, said there are employees of more than 50 companies living in the area.

"Senior employees and labourers are staying in separate accommodations. But, when we come here, we are all equal. We pray and have iftar together," he added.

The mosque in the East Ville Real Estate complex in Al Hayl Industrial Area can accommodate 250 worshippers at a time. Facilities for another 700 to pray in the interlocked courtyard of the mosque, which will be shaded by the time it opens, have also been arranged.

- TIE