

Mi 11 | 5G
MOVIE MAGIC
8+256GB RM 2999

*FREE Mi AIoT Gift Packs
(Worth: RM1356)

mi xiaomi

LEADER LETTERS COLUMNISTS

TRENDING



Two killed, two hurt, one trapped in expressway construction mishap



Mother, daughter drown after car plunges into lake in Bandar Baharu



Use All England win to aim for more success, PM advises Zii Jia



'Fitting in' approach to education should not be the way



By [Dzulkifli Abdul Razak](#) - February 8, 2021 @ 12:01am



This Jan 22 pic shows, Ahmad Amir Farraz Baktiaz (3rd right) with his cousin Mohd Lukman Haziq Mohd Nasir, 12 (2nd-left), brother Ahmad Hazim Baktiaz (left) and other siblings learning via the TV Pendidikan TV programme in Pasir Mas, during the MCO period. - NSTP/NIK ABDULLAH NIK OMAR

To say that schooling is thrown into chaos during the pandemic is an understatement.

Reportedly some 1.6 billion students are affected, according to the World Economic Forum, and many of them "may never return". Of those who do, more than half are not expected to receive the education required for basic numeracy and literacy.

Still some said that this is still an approximation as the pandemic insidiously creeps into our lives. If the well-off are not spared, imagine what can happen to the disenfranchised. Even before the pandemic, much

MOST POPULAR

LATEST

MOST READ

- 8m [30 new Covid-19 infections in Kelantan yesterday.](#)
- 13m [Two killed, two hurt, one trapped in expressway construction mishap](#)
- 15m [Calvin Klein's iconic Eternity gets re-imagined](#)
- 24m [Malaysia wants to promote local products with Japan's retail giant Don Don Donki](#)
- 25m [All schools in Cambodia shut as Covid-19 cases rise](#)
- 27m [foodpanda to help Malaysians who lost full-time jobs](#)
- 30m [HeiTech Padu set to ride on digitalisation boom](#)

VACCINE



WORLD Mar 21, 2021 @ 9:23am
[Half of all UK adults now vaccinated against Covid](#)



NATION Mar 20, 2021 @ 1:21pm
[Agong to launch Community Empowerment programme on March 29](#)

concern has been expressed about the latter with respect to their schooling, let alone education.

Now there are more reasons to worry about the future. But, this is not new, to say the least, going by the case of Greta Thunberg and her Fridays for Future movement worldwide. They chose to stay away from school because allegedly it does not guarantee their future any more.

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE

- [Allow schools to hold limited classes](#)
- [Prepare educators for e-learning](#)
- [NST Leader: The 'lost generation'](#)
- [Ensuring effective online teaching and learning](#)

Thunberg was clear about this when it came to the climate crisis that is looming. They took to the streets several times all over the world to express themselves, involving millions of youngsters. The indictment is obvious: schooling is no longer deemed relevant to this group of future-minded youth.

Their issues are not about resources and opportunities, but purpose and context. Thunberg herself comes from a region where schools are generally held in high regard. They truly function as the leveller of society – the real purpose of education since time immemorial.

For the others, most have been hijacked by various actors and events that distort education to what it is today. It is marked by disparities, inaccessibility and even unavailability in more distant places. What the pandemic has done is to further highlight the reality that has been staring at us for so long, but left unattended for some reason until lives were wasted, which instantly act as the push factor.

As a result, schools were closed almost worldwide at varying rates and discord. Some, mainly in the West, despite far superior amenities, were not exempted.

It adds to the notion that something is not quite right about the so-called schooling as presented in the current ecosystem operating from home. Sadly, we are still trying to fit in, forgetting that the socially unjust state of affairs education-wise has long divided the community right down the middle globally.

So, as we advocate the use of online learning as an alternative, if not a panacea, news of students having to climb trees to gain access online suddenly reared its head as a grim reminder of the forgotten reality. It takes a number of such embarrassing episodes before the reality really sinks in.

But, it is still about fitting in, with various approaches in an instant virtual space housed in a makeshift classroom at home. In some cases, it resembles a shared classroom accommodating school-going siblings of different levels. All in the name of fitting in when the ecosystem is nowhere suited for it!

Therefore, it takes little to imagine the quality of learning that actually takes place under such circumstances. Foremost is the absence of conducive ambience needed to support the process of effective learning in the best possible way. Concurrently are other in-house activities like cleaning, cooking and having meals, TV viewing or just plain leisure. All competing for attention, enough to distract the learning to be fitted in for the day.

Ordinarilv most Malavsian students will have to cone with some form of




NATION Mar 20, 2021 @ 1:02pm
[Pahang launches system facilitating vaccination registration for state residents](#)

LEADER Mar 20, 2021 @ 12:01am
[NST Leader: Boost N.I.P. registration](#)


NATION Mar 19, 2021 @ 2:24pm
[APM helps family in Kelantan village register for NIP](#)

WORLD Mar 19, 2021 @ 8:12am
[UK: No evidence clots caused by Covid-19 vaccines](#)


ACROSS NEW STRAITS TIMES




NATION 14 minutes ago
[Two killed, two hurt, one trapped in expressway construction mishap](#)




NATION 2 hours ago
[Mother, daughter drown after car plunges into lake in Bandar Baharu](#)



COLUMNISTS 11 hours ago
[Consider efforts to resume ties](#)



BADMINTON 12 hours ago
[Zii Jia is king of the All England](#)



CRIME & COURTS Mar 21, 2021 @ 6:46pm
[33-year-old Dato Sri Nicky wanted by Johor cops](#)

Similarly, most Malaysian students will have to cope with some form of homework or self-study after school hours, following dinner. In other words, they are back to the makeshift shared classroom for yet a couple of hours more.

This cycle (and thus pressure) is perpetual for as long as school remains closed. No wonder there is growing evidence of a heightened level of anxiety and stress when students are struggling to fit in – this approach is not only less productive but could also be harmful. It further distorts the true meaning and purpose of education as a leveller of society.

Perhaps it is time to rethink how to better learn, given the asymmetrical environment and ecosystem persisting, especially among the vulnerable. The pandemic has presented an opportunity to repurpose the entire ecosystem, instead of just fitting in, in preparing for the post-pandemic period, before it worsens.

The writer, an NST columnist for more than 20 years, is International Islamic University Malaysia rector

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times

RELATED ARTICLES

LETTERS Dec 2, 2020 @ 12:00am
Happy students make happier teachers

LETTERS Feb 20, 2021 @ 12:00am
Flexible teaching, learning approaches vital in embracing technology.

COLUMNISTS Feb 11, 2021 @ 12:01am
Give teachers the freedom to be innovative in online teaching

LETTERS Feb 13, 2021 @ 2:11pm
Direct education is key to workers' empowerment

Recommended by |

British boy who came to SG for cancer treatment heads home
Sponsored | CNA

Former IGP Mohamad Fuzi ties the knot | New Straits Times
New Straits Times

Find out if Asia will see the demise ...
Sponsored | CNA - Insight

[Watch More](#)

Doctor: if You Have Tinnitus (Ear Ringing) Do This Immediately!

Sponsored | discover-healthy-bo...

#Showbiz: 'No more hijab-clad home-wreckers for me' - Atikah Suhaime | New...

New Straits Times

#Showbiz: Siti releases children nutritional product named after daughter | Ne...

New Straits Times



GET MOBILE APP



<u>NEWS</u>	<u>BUSINESS</u>	<u>LIFE & TIMES</u>	<u>SPORTS</u>	<u>WORLD</u>	<u>OPINION</u>	<u>GALLERY</u>	<u>NSTTV</u>
Crime & Courts	Business Times	Sunday Vibes	Football	World	Columnists	Photos	EDUCATION
Exclusive	Property	Bots	Badminton	Region	Letters	Infographics	VOUCHER
Govt / Public Policy	Cars Bikes Trucks	Heal	Tennis		Leader		
Nation		Flair	Cycling				
Politics		Jom!	Golf				
		Groove	MMA				
			MotorSport				
			Cricket				
			Others				