



WAKTU BERBUKA PUASA



Imsak
05:47 AM

Maghrib
19:21 PM

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THE reopening of schools and universities is a hot topic globally. Some argue it should be done gradually so that students keep in touch with education before they lose it all. For sure, this must incorporate the strict discipline of breaking the transmission of Covid-19.

However, the "mantra" is beginning to lose its novelty and influence. It has by now become cliché because it is not rooted in education. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, the use of "social distancing" as one of the mantras is just educationally unsound, when what is required is "social solidarity" and "physical distancing" instead.

So schools must come to the rescue if the practice of breaking the Covid-19 circuit is to be meaningfully embedded. More so among the younger pupils, who are less aware and therefore must be well-trained.

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standard of hygiene and sanitation is to be maintained. Here, we are talking about a very organised way of teaching and learning that involves real-life demonstrations.

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It ranges from casual eating habits to toilet etiquette. Indeed, the latter is a real challenge considering the notorious habits Malaysians are known for.

But keeping hands sanitised is just one aspect. The rest will remain completely "submerged" in the consciousness level and must be awakened through education in schools. This is in view of the fact that cleanliness and hygiene is not part of the six student aspirations in the Education Blueprint; it could easily fall by the wayside over a period of time.


Mental hygiene is now recognised as the next potential "outbreak" if social solidarity (read: mutual emotional psychological support) fails to be realised as part of much-needed education — made worse by the wholesale misplaced adoption of social distancing (read: isolation, loneliness).

Reportedly, a mental illness crisis is looming as millions of people worldwide are surrounded by death and disease, and forced into isolation, poverty and anxiety by the pandemic, according to United Nations health experts.


"The isolation, the fear, the uncertainty, the economic turmoil — they all cause or could cause psychological distress," says Devora Kestel, director of the World Health Organisation's mental health department.

"The mental health and wellbeing of whole societies have been severely impacted by this crisis and are a priority to be addressed urgently," she notes.

Psychologists claim that more children are anxious and increasing cases of depression and anxiety have been recorded in several countries.



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even more vulnerable because we have by then become complacent without the essential education and tools to protect ourselves and community.

So get on with it through schools.

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

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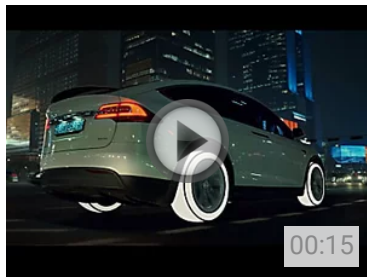
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