

EDUCATION

Updates

14 March 2020

ASIA & PACIFIC

Malaysia, March 13: All assemblies, sports activities at schools nationwide suspended [New Straits Times]. The Education Ministry announced the suspension of all outdoor assemblies and sports activities at schools nationwide. In a statement, the ministry said that students are banned from gathering in large groups as part of efforts to halt the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus. All Education Ministry programmes involving public gatherings, such as school sports programmes and co-curricular activities for the whole of March 2020 are now postponed, it said. It added that all ministry officials are also reminded to adhere to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for keeping students safe from Covid-19 infection. Ministry officials are also advised to delay travel plans abroad, especially to regions or cities that are experiencing a severe outbreak, it added. [\[LINK\]](#)

Malaysia, March 11: Internationalisation of universities [New Straits Times]. Internationalisation of Malaysian universities has grown in scale in the past decade. This is in line with “global prominence”, a major shift in the Malaysia Education Blueprint for Higher Education 2015 to 2025 (MEBHE) that aims to enhance the end-to-end international student experience, increase brand visibility, and strengthen existing and new markets for international students. Generally, the process of internationalisation includes fostering cross-border academic and research partnerships, exchange programmes, global-focused curriculum and recruitment of foreign students and academics to meet the demands of a globalised world. The Education Ministry, through its Higher Education department, seeks to boost the national higher education brand from being known for its affordability to being recognised internationally for its academic and research expertise. [\[LINK\]](#)

Malaysia, March 11. 6 local varsities among top 50 in world subject rankings. [New Straits Times]. Six Malaysian universities made it to the world’s Top 50 in the 2020 edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject announced last week. Universiti Malaya (UM) continued to maintain its position by having its Library and Information Science ranked at 38th, Electrical & Electronic Engineering at 46th and Development Studies at 49th. Taylor’s University scored the highest achievement, taking 16th position in Hospitality and Leisure Management. The Management and Science University (MSU) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) hit milestones by becoming first-time entrants in the same subject. MSU was

ranked at 28th while UiTM was at 31st. Theology, Divinity & Religious Studies offered at the International Islamic University of Malaysia rose to 37th place from the 51-100 band last year. Others in the top 50 subjects was Universiti Teknologi Petronas’ Mineral and Mining Engineering at No. 42 — also a new entrant. The 10th edition of the rankings evaluated 48 subjects, with 13,138 programmes taken by students at 1,368 universities in 83 locations across the world. QS uses four key metrics to compile the rankings — Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Citations per Paper and the H-Index (measuring the productivity of an institution’s research faculty). [\[LINK\]](#)

Singapore, March 13. All schools to be certified SG Clean by end-March [Straits Times]. By the end of March, all schools will have a cleaning regimen in place where they will have to adhere to a new hygiene checklist as part of the SG Clean scheme. To get the SG Clean certification, the schools must ensure that hand washing and toilet flushing facilities are functioning well, toilets are cleaned and disinfected twice a day, and a pest management programme is in place, among other things. Over 95 per cent of schools and institutes of higher learning have received the certification so far, said the National Environment Agency (NEA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Schools will be audited by the NEA to ensure the standards are maintained. [\[LINK\]](#)

Singapore, March 12. Using tech well in learning is not about giving every student a laptop [Straits Times]. Designing a good ecology for learning requires us to integrate new with old technology, think of the student, and provide skilled manpower to support teachers. Minister for Education Ong Ye Kung recently announced that all secondary school students will have personal learning devices by 2028 and schools will devote more time to teaching students about cyber wellness and digital literacy. [\[LINK\]](#)

Philippines, March 11. How Metro schools continue lessons amid coronavirus threat [Rappler]. With classes in Metro Manila suspended for at least a week, schools need to get creative to keep activities on schedule. The Department of Education ordered schools to implement social distancing measures amid the COVID-19 threat. With the uncertainty surrounding the incubation of the disease, schools are resorting to creative measures to keep classes running outside the classroom using online platform such as Google Classroom, Google Hangouts, Edmodo, Schoology, Turnitin, Zoom and Skype. [\[LINK\]](#)

[ASIA & PACIFIC \[CONT'D\]](#)

Australia, March 13: Australian schools and universities preparing for shutdowns over coronavirus [The Guardian]. Schools and universities are preparing for shutdowns as Australia's peak medical association warns the government will "almost certainly" have to go ahead with the widespread closure of education facilities. Following a meeting with state premiers on Friday, the prime minister, Scott Morrison, announced mass gatherings of more than 500 people should be cancelled in a bid to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. But schools, universities, public transport and airports were exempt from the advice, Morrison said, because they were essential services.

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Australia, March 12: Over 30,000 Chinese students have arrived in Australia since travel ban started [The Sydney Morning Herald].

A third of the 106,000 Chinese students initially trapped offshore by the coronavirus travel ban have made their way to Australia after waiting out their 14-day isolation periods in third countries. Since mid-February, 31,196 Chinese students have landed in Australia, Department of Home Affairs figures show. In recent weeks, up to 1000 students a day have been arriving to start or return to their studies. While the large number of students arriving is encouraging for universities and other international education providers, the sector has warned tens of thousands are still missing out on their studies and providers will feel the impact. [\[LINK\]](#)

New Zealand, March 10: Mathematics holiday programme a hit with families [Education.govt.nz]. Hundreds of Pacific learners and their families have been flocking to a ground-breaking mathematics holiday programme which will be implemented on a larger scale in 50 Auckland schools over the next four years. The Developing Mathematical Communities of Inquiry (DMIC) summer holiday maths workshops recently held in West Auckland exceeded expected numbers with more than 200 Pacific learners turning up to take part. The impact and success of the DMIC initiative has been recognised by Government with a \$7.2m investment which will introduce it into 25 schools this year and a further 25 schools next year. [\[LINK\]](#)

[AMERICAS](#)

NEW YORK, USA. Harvard students ordered to move out, as US universities cancel classes amid coronavirus outbreak [Straits Times]. Students at Harvard University have been given five days to move out of campus, as schools across the United States cancel classes and move lessons online due to the coronavirus outbreak. Tens of thousands of students in major American universities - including Stanford, Princeton and Columbia - are affected, with some colleges cancelling classes through the end of

the term. Ahead of the start of spring break at the end of this week, Harvard said it would have all classes online by March 23. The university, located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, asked its 36,000 graduate and undergraduate students not to return to campus after the recess and to continue studying remotely "until further notice". [\[LINK\]](#)

[EUROPE](#)

UK, March 14. Government insists schools should stay open [BBC]. Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has said keeping schools open in England is the "best course of action", despite fears about the coronavirus. It comes as blanket school closures are being announced in European nations such as Spain, France and Ireland. He told a head teachers' conference in Birmingham that sending all pupils home would put a big strain on key workers who would also have to stay at home. [\[LINK\]](#)

[AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST](#)

Oman, March 11. More Omani females enroll in higher education [Arabian Business]. The number of Omani students enrolling into higher education establishments in the Sultanate and abroad showed a 2.6 percent increase last year compared to the previous academic year. According to the Statistics and Information Department of the Higher Education Admission Centre (HAEC), Ministry of Higher Education, from the 24,445 new students, 57.3 percent were females. The number of admissions to government higher education establishments (15,151) represented 61.9 percent of total number of students, with 7,935 (32.4 percent) admitted to private higher education institutions. Some 1,359 students (5.6 percent) opted to enrol in higher education institutions abroad. The subjects that proved most popular with Omani students included business and administration (30 percent), engineering and technical specialisations (25.3 percent) and information technology (12.9 percent). [\[LINK\]](#)

UAE, March 9. Universities across UAE go virtual [Khaleej Times]. Following the government's health precautions against Covid-19, universities and higher education institutions across the country have also ensured their students have all the tools they need to keep up with academic work throughout the long spring break. Rabdan Academy, for example, designed teaching programmes and short courses to suit different platforms, using a bundle of teaching tools through face-to-face meetings and online conferences voice and video. Guidelines were also drafted and training on how all these should be used were held. [\[LINK\]](#)