

LEARNING CURVE **PERSPECTIVE**

# Beginning of the end of Hari Raya



**DZULKIFLI  
ABDUL RAZAK**

**W**HAT would be your reaction if you are officially notified that the recent Hari Raya and indeed the upcoming Christmas and other festivals are among the last 100 that we will celebrate? If you think that this a hypothetical or trick question, it is not.

In 2010, Frank Fenner, Emeritus Professor of microbiology at the Australian National University, predicted that the human race, along with some animals, will be extinct within the next 100 years. He claimed that the human race will be unable to survive a population explosion and “unbridled consumption” that they created. This phenomenon is irreversible. He lamented: “I think it’s too late. I

try not to express that because people are trying to do something, but they keep putting it off.”

After humans entered the unofficial scientific period known as the Anthropocene (the time since industrialisation), he reckoned that “we have had an effect on the planet that rivals any ice age or comet impact”.

He put the blame on the onset of climate change. Easter Island, off the coast of Chile, is cited as the ill-fated example.

More recently, Professor Nicholas Boyle of Cambridge University was quoted as saying that a “doomsday” moment will “determine whether the 21st century is full of violence and poverty or will be peaceful and prosperous”. Seemingly, in the last 500 years, there has been a cataclysmic “great event” of international significance at the start of each century, he claimed.

If so, the world is predictably embarking on its sixth mass extinction, faster than previously, scientists warned. Humans could be among the first victims.

Based on statistical documenta-

tion from scientists at Princeton and Stanford Universities and the University of California Berkeley, the Earth is reportedly experiencing a mass extinction event unrivalled since the Cretaceous mass extinction 66 million years ago.

It eradicated not only dinosaurs, but virtually all large land animals. Lead author of the study, Gerardo Ceballos, predicted that Homo sapiens are likely to die off early on in this sixth great extinction.

The study published in the journal *Science Advances* “shows without any significant doubt” that this is now happening. Ceballos added: “If it is allowed to continue, life would take many millions of years to recover, and our species itself would be likely to disappear early on.”

Undoubtedly, climate change, pollution and deforestation resulting in changes defying ecological sustainability are the main contributors to this extinction.

So much so that one of the authors asserted that “there are examples of species all over the world that are essentially the walking dead”. This is despite the fact that

the study maintained that it is “conservative” and the method used likely “underestimated” the severity of extinction.

In contrast, according to the peer-reviewed scientific literature, there are those who predict that habitat loss due to climate change will claim the lives of the last remaining humans on Earth as soon as 2030.

Guy McPherson, Emeritus Professor of natural resource and ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Arizona, subscribes to this doomsday scenario.

Succinctly, the study called for “rapid, greatly intensified efforts to conserve already threatened species, and to alleviate pressures on their population — notably habitat loss, over-exploitation for economic gain and climate change”.

Taking the lead from this grim possibility, issues of “over-exploitation for economic gain and climate change” certainly ring a bell to most, regardless of where they are, north or south, developed or developing, or rich or poor.

The case in point is the fact that

the current onslaught of heatwave is affecting everyone. It is becoming more intense, more frequent and lasts longer.

A United Nations agency states that the time between major heatwaves (2003, 2010 and 2015) is getting shorter.

So enjoy Hari Raya with this notion in mind, and take action appropriately so that we can have many more festivities after the century is over. Otherwise, do a count-down because this may be the beginning of the end of *lemang*, *ketupat*, *rendang* and traditional Hari Raya cookies.

We may not even last the 100 years, perhaps only until 2030. The choice is entirely ours. Hopefully, after Ramadan, we are wiser and better able to reset our being to be more restrained, prudent and humble.

Selamat Hari Raya, for now.

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