

Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	11 FEB 2015

'Syariah index will benefit all races'

PIONEER SCHEME: Najib's brainchild promotes good governance

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THE Malaysian Syariah Index will not only promote good governance but also benefit the people regardless of their religion, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Najib, who launched the index yesterday, said this was because it was to promote discipline, responsibility, justice, capability, effectiveness and transparency in governance.

The index, the first of its kind in the world and a benchmark for other Muslim countries, evaluates the government's seriousness and commitment to adhering to Islamic virtues in governance and identifies improvements to focus on.

It was the brainchild of Najib, who mooted the idea last August, and a comprehensive yardstick, with scientific indicator, in evaluating the Five syariah *Maqasid* (objectives) of "protection of religion, life, mind, race and property".

Najib said the uniqueness of the index was that its evaluation was comprehensive as it covered eight areas — legal, politics, economy, education, health, culture, infrastructure, environment and social — in its initial phase.

"We evaluate whether government policies and programmes via ministries and agencies meet the requirements of *Maqasid syariah*."

"Non-Muslims will benefit from it as it is aimed at seeking room for further improvement.



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** presenting the letter of appointment to **Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin**, as chairman of the Malaysian Syariah Index Administrative Committee, at the launch of the Malaysian Syariah Index at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday. **Bernama pic**

"If we accept discipline, responsibility, justice, capability, effectiveness and transparency as honourable and universal traits, then we will also accept its two functions," said Najib at the launch of the index in conjunction with a gathering of "Ulama-Umara" (scholars and leaders) at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre here.

"As a Muslim nation, to build an index that measures the level of seriousness to adhere to syariah in

administrative policies and development can be regarded as a pioneering initiative."

He said as an indicator system, the index measured efforts that were being undertaken and was not merely focused on achievements.

Najib also announced the setting up of a nine-member Malaysian Syariah Index Administrative Committee, chaired by National Fatwa Council's Malaysian Islamic Affairs chairman Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin.