

**Najib Launches Malaysian Syariah Index**  
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PUTRAJAYA, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- Prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Tuesday launched the Malaysian Syariah Index, a product that complements Islamic governance through a more comprehensive syariah requirement yardstick.

The index, the first of its kind ever developed in the world, evaluated and assessed the government's seriousness in achieving the five aspects of the 'Syariah Maqasid' or syariah requirement namely the protection of the religion, protection of life, protection of the mind, protection of the race and protection of property.

Najib said the uniqueness of the index was that its measurement was more comprehensive because in the initial phase it covered eight major areas namely legal, politics, economy, education, health, culture, infrastructure and environment, and social.

"We measure and review whether the policies and programs set by the government through the ministries and related agencies met the requirements of the 'Maqasid Syariah' (syariah requirement) itself," he said.

Najib said this at the 2015 Ulama-Umara Premier Program With the Prime Minister and the Launching of the Malaysian Syariah Index at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, in Putrajaya.

He said the Malaysian Syariah Index was a scientific measurement method that fulfilled two important functions namely evaluating the seriousness of government efforts from year to year in meeting Islamic standards concerning government policies and programs.

Secondly, he said the index was to identify improvements that needed to be given focus to achieve better benefits following the adoption of universal values in Islam.

The prime minister pointed out that the Malaysian Syariah Index was oriented towards measuring efforts instead of merely evaluating the level of achievement in translating Islamic principles and values.

In this context, he said, a higher index value for a particular field not only showed that the particular field had a higher syariah compliance level but also the quality of implementation of the particular policy and program could be read as being positive.

"The particular policy may comply with the syariah, but what is important is how the policy is implemented fairly, efficiently and accurately so that the beauty and blessing behind the Maqasid Syariah is more apparent," he said.

Najib said the Maqasid Syariah had actually been applied for a long time as a core of

administration in Malaysia but had yet to be measured at the real level.

He said most of the government policies and programs were not seen as fulfilling the requirements merely because they were not branded and labelled as Islamic.

"Does anything that is not labelled with the Islamic brand automatically become unIslamic? And does anything that is labelled as Islamic truly meet the Islamic requirement?" he said.

Najib cited the government's national primary schools which do not use the label as an Islamic national primary school, but its syllabus still emphasised Islamic values such as the Jawi script, Quran, Arabic and 'Fardu Ain'.

"If the status of a particular country's progress is measured using the Human Development Index then it is imperative for Malaysia to have an objective and scientific yardstick to determine our position in carrying out national administration based on the principles of Maqasid Syariah," Najib said.

He said although the term Syariah index had been used by various parties previously, such indices were more often used to measure the level of Syariah compliance in certain fields such as finance, hotel, food industry and stock market.

"If in the past we did not have a method of measurement that was scientific and systematic, with the use of this index we at least have a method to know our status not only in terms of the level of Syariah compliance, but the efforts of the government in formulating policies and programs," he said.

On the formation of the index model, Najib said the Technical Committee on the Malaysian Syariah Index had made benchmarking visits to four Islamic countries namely Indonesia, Pakistan, Turkey and Morocco to look at the level of Syariah compliance in selected fields.

"We are grateful because Malaysia is a blessed nation. With the peace and harmony enjoyed all this while, a comprehensive initiative such as the Malaysian Syariah Index model could be properly built and developed," he said.

In this regard, Najib called on everyone to accept the transparent efforts to improve government administration that fulfilled the Islamic requirement through Maqasid Syariah.

"If previously many people had disputed it, with the introduction of the index which is an objective, transparent, and comprehensive method a more accurate indicator can be created," he said.

The prime minister said the non-Muslim community would also enjoy the benefits of using the Malaysian Syariah Index and this was proven when many people who were holding the 'Mudharabah' account in Islamic banks were non-Muslims.

"Truly the noble values such as justice, transparency and the positive traits in the Islamic

contract system have attracted the non-Muslims to be among the top Mudharabah Account holders," he said.

The same was also true in the ownership of the Malaysian halal certificate where almost 68 per cent comprised the non-Muslims.

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