



TRIPARTITE COLLABORATION TO DEVELOP THE NEXT GENERATION OF SHARIAH EXPERTS

KUALA LUMPUR, 13 JULY 2026 – Bank Rakyat, Maybank Islamic Berhad (Maybank Islamic) and the Association of Shariah Advisors in Islamic Finance Malaysia (ASAS) today signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in conjunction with the launch of the Daurah International Next-Generation Shariah Experts (iNEX) and International Fatwa Advancement (iFTA) 2026 programmes.

The collaboration reflects a shared commitment by the three organisations to strengthen the development of future Shariah professionals through intensive academic learning, practical application and international engagement, while advancing governance, institutional cooperation and knowledge leadership within the Islamic finance ecosystem. To enhance the relevance, reach and industry impact of this year's programmes, Penang State Mufti Department has been selected as iNEX and iFTA strategic partner.

The ceremony was attended by Sahibul Fadilah Ustaz Roslan Esa, Chief Assistant Mufti at the Penang Mufti Department, Nor Haimee Zakaria, Bank Rakyat Chief Finance Officer, Dr. Muhd Ramadhan Fitri Ellias, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Group Islamic Banking and Maybank Islamic and Encik Makhtar Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Shariah Advisors in Islamic Finance Malaysia (ASAS).

Speaking at the ceremony, **Nor Haimee Zakaria** said, "The future of Islamic finance depends not only on innovation but on the strength of its scholars. Through this strategic collaboration, we are investing in the development of future Shariah leaders equipped with both classical jurisprudential foundations and contemporary industry expertise. This initiative reflects Bank Rakyat's long-term commitment to strengthening Islamic finance through knowledge, collaboration and talent development."



Dr. Muhd Ramadhan Fitri Ellias said, “Our collective aspiration goes beyond just a training programme. We want to contribute to the continuity of Shariah scholarship and strengthening the pipeline of future Shariah talent for the Islamic finance industry. As our industry continues to evolve, the need for competent scholars capable of navigating both the classical Islamic tradition and contemporary financial realities has become increasingly important. We sincerely hope that iNEX and iFTA will become sustainable platforms for scholarly excellence, stronger institutional collaboration, and the nurturing of future generations who will continue to guide Islamic finance with knowledge, wisdom and integrity.”

Daurah iNEX 2026, held from **13 to 17 July 2026** at Pullman KLCC, is an intensive regional capacity-building programme focusing on fiqh muamalat, usul al-fiqh, juristic reasoning and the application of Shariah principles within contemporary Islamic finance. The programme will be followed by the International Fatwa Advancement (iFTA) programme, scheduled to take place in Jordan from **1 to 8 November 2026**, providing participants with advanced exposure to international fatwa methodology.

“By leveraging Jordan’s strong institutional fatwa system and the expertise of its Muftis, iFTA provides participants with exposure to contemporary fatwa methodologies, institutional governance and the practical application of Islamic legal reasoning in today’s Shariah and Islamic finance landscape. This reflects our commitment to developing a globally relevant learning pathway that combines academic excellence with real-world exposure,” **Nor Haimee** added.

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