

**Umno And BN Have Long Fought For Welfare State**  
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ASTANA, KAZAKHSTAN -- Najib Tun Razak said the latest call by PAS which purportedly wants to create a welfare state is nothing new because Umno and the Barisan Nasional had always pushed for it all this while.

The Prime Minister said Umno's and the BN struggle all this while had fulfilled the elements of a welfare state such as in the fields of education, health, food subsidy and fuel which had all been enjoyed by the rakyat for a long time.

"The change in the PAS tagline slogan is no longer to create an Islamic state but a welfare state, which is nothing new but merely giving it a new label," he said at a media conference with Malaysian journalists on the first day of his official visit to Kazakhstan, here Monday.

Najib is on a two-day official visit ending tomorrow at the invitation of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev and will then attend the 7th World Islamic Economic Forum (WIFE) on Wednesday and Thursday where he will deliver a speech together with several leaders of other countries.

When asked to comment on the results of the election at the PAS general assembly recently, he said the result was influenced by consideration pertaining to the general election instead of reflecting the cause to develop an Islamic state or for the interest of Islam itself.

He said this was because they had played up the possibility of the general election being held in July to the extent that many of the PAS delegates had based their votes on the general election which had benefited those who were keen on a take over in the PAS leadership.

Responding to another question, Najib said he had asked a Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Nazri Aziz to hold a meeting with representatives of the BN components to identify candidates eligible for consideration for scholarships from those whose results were slightly less than 8A+.

"They have obtained good results but not eligible for scholarship (to continue their studies) whether outside or within the country. When I return home, I will decide on the matter," he said.

(Bernama)