

Najib: We are not secular

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is not a secular state but an Islamic nation that protects the rights of non-Muslims, the deputy prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the country had never been a secular state, but was governed by the fundamentals of Islam.

“Secular by the Western definition is a separation of Islamic principles in the way we govern the country. We have never been affiliated to that position.

“We have always been driven by our adherence to the fundamentals of Islam and the Constitution states that Islam is the country’s official religion,” he said after opening the International Conference on the Role of Islamic States in a Globalised World on behalf of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Najib said Malaysia did not want to be stereotyped by the Western definition of what is secular or otherwise. He added although Malaysia is an Islamic state, the rights of non-Muslims would be protected.

“They have their rights and we will protect them.”