

**Najib: Welfare state blunts competitive edge**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 — Countries that practise a welfare state concept will lose their competitive advantage due to an onset of complacency, the prime minister said today.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the situation has occurred to many developed countries, but not Malaysia as it adopts a different approach.

“We have a social safety net. It is different from the welfare state concept.

“With the welfare state, the economic conditions are uncertain. When you practise this, it is more towards the government giving in to all the demands of the people, they may not be working hard for it,” he said at the launch of the 1 Malaysia social welfare programme (1 Karisma).

A welfare state is where the government plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens, based on principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves with the minimal provisions for a good life.

Modern welfare states include countries such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland.

Najib pointed out that the welfare state concept was also different from the “negara berkeadilan” theme as espoused by PAS, and that he was not in any way referring to the latter.

“They can then say that if you don’t have work, you can live on the dole. What would happen to the advantage, competitiveness?”

“As a result, the country loses its competitive edge,” he said.

The PM stressed that Malaysians were a hardworking people, and that the social safety net is aimed towards helping “those in need” without compromising good values and “ethics.”

Najib later told over 1,000 NGOs present here that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government would work towards creating better economic opportunities for every Malaysian.

He said he was “humbled” by the show of support by the groups and how they had expressed confidence in his BN administration.

“This is BN’s reality — when we promise something, it is something we can deliver. We don’t break our promises,” said Najib.

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