

PM hints at more BR1M, scoffs at bankruptcy talk

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has used his history of increasing cash handouts to take a jab at the opposition's penchant for predicting economic doom.

In a posting on his Facebook today, Najib said the opposition had been predicting Malaysia's bankruptcy since the time he took over in 2009.

But not only has that not happened, he said, the Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) scheme, which benefits only low-income earners, has been steadily increasing in quantum since 2012 when it was first introduced.

"The truth is, every year we increased BR1M payments... and the criteria to receive BR1M has been broadened so more people benefit.

"Wait for #Bajet2017 for BR1M announcement and other initiatives," Najib wrote.

An accompanying video package highlights Najib's BR1M announcements in his previous budget speeches since 2011.

BR1M payments have been increasing in quantum - from RM500 for families earning RM3,000 and below, when it was first introduced, to RM1,000 in 2016.

The coverage of the BR1M scheme has also increased.

In 2015, a new category was introduced, allowing households with a combined income of between RM3,000 and RM4,000 to qualify for a RM750 handout.

This handout was increased to RM800 the following year.

BR1M was introduced soon after Putrajaya embarked on an aggressive plan to reduce government subsidies for fuel and other staple consumer items.

Critics have pointed out those increasing BR1M payments every year was a sign that people were not making enough to make ends meet.

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