

BR1M increased, Najib denies dishing out 'animal feed'

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BUDGET 2017 Despite falling revenue, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today announced a further increase to the Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M).

He also defended the cash handout policy, which had come under intense criticism from the likes of former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"BR1M is not animal feed (dedak) or bait. It is sincere assistance from the government as we always prioritise the rakyat's needs.

"Hence, we provide more assistance," he added when tabling Budget 2017 in Parliament this evening.

Mahathir had repeatedly accused Najib of giving out "animal feed" and accused him of using BR1M to buy votes.

Using an Indian accent in speaking Bahasa Malaysia, Najib related how one person had praised BR1M.

"He said, 'I don't care what people say about the government, what is important, BR1M helps me and my family a lot'," said the prime minister.

Najib then detailed the increase on the cash handouts.

Households earning under RM3,000 as well as those under the E-kasih poverty programme would now receive RM1,200 in 2017.

E-Kasih households received RM1,050 while those earning under RM3,000 received RM1,000 in the previous BR1M disbursement.

Najib also announced that BR1M for households earning between and RM3,000 to RM4,000 would be increased by RM100 to RM900.

Singles aged 21 and above would also receive RM50 more, compared to RM400 in Budget 2016.

When BR1M was introduced in 2012, it was only a RM500 voucher.

The latest adjustment is expected to benefit seven million people at a cost of RM6.8 million.

This is an increase of RM5 billion in costs since the policy was introduced in 2012.

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