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Najib **blasts** 'M'sia bankrupt' critics

> Cash handout under BR1M has been steadily increasing, PM reminds Opposition

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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak yesterday hit out at his critics in the opposition who he said have been predicting that Malaysia would go bankrupt ever since he assumed office in 2009.

"The Opposition has been predicting that the country would go bankrupt since I took over but instead I introduced the BR1M (Bantuan Rakyat Malaysia) scheme which has helped ease the financial burden of the public," he said.

"The quantum has been steadily increasing since it was introduced in 2012 and it benefits low-income earners," he added in a Facebook posting yesterday.

A video in the posting highlights Najib's successive

BR1M announcements in his previous budget speeches since 2011.

Najib said BR1M payments and the eligibility criteria had been broadened so that more people could benefit from it.

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

The BR1M scheme was introduced after the government started reducing subsidies for fuel and other consumer items. The cash handouts have been increasing from the initial RM500 for families earning RM3,000 and below, to RM1,000 in 2016.

In 2015, a new category was introduced, allowing households with a combined income of between RM3,000 and RM4,000



- ▶ Today, 4pm at Parliament House.
- ▶ Live telecast on TV3 and RTM.
- ▶ Live online at www.najibrazak.com.
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to qualify for a RM750 handout and in 2016 it was increased to RM800.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports a senior Finance Ministry official as

saying the government will table a responsible budget for next year, taking into account the concerns of all segments of society, and deliver on the promises it made to the people in the elections.

He said priority would be accorded to the people in sharing the nation's wealth, offering greater opportunities to raise their incomes by increased productivity and working from home and easing their financial burden by enhancing their purchasing power.

The official also shrugged off anticipation that the 2017 Budget would be an "election budget",

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