

Najib to table amendments to 2016 budget ‘soon’

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Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak will table amendments to the 2016 budget “soon” that will take into account the challenges expected in the new year, state news agency Bernama quoted him as saying on Friday.

Najib did not specify when the meeting would be tabled.

Amendments to the budget will have additional measures to optimise spending and the role of government linked firms, he said, speaking at a meeting with the Ministry of Finance staff.

Najib said inflation this year is expected to stay in the range of two to three percent. He added that the government projects GDP growth to remain stable at 4% to 5%.

The Prime Minister delivered a popular budget in October that gave cash to low income families and taxed the rich.

But revenues from oil and gas have continued to slump for Southeast Asia’s second largest oil producer amid a drop in global fuel prices. The 2016 budget assumed oil prices to be US\$48 per barrel. Brent Crude was trading at around US\$33 per barrel on Friday.

Najib said 2016 will be a challenging year but that the government is committed to upholding the people’s welfare and ensuring strong economic growth.

The ringgit, slumped more than 18% against the US dollar in 2015. Political uncertainty from a scandal over millions of dollars deposited in Najib’s personal account has also weighed on the currency and the economy. The prime minister has denied any wrongdoing.

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