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MAHATHIR-PACKAGE

DR MAHATHIR TO UNVEIL STIMULUS PACKAGE INCLUDING REVISED GDP

KUALA LUMPUR, April 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Finance Minister, will announce the much-awaited stimulus package aimed at providing a boost to the economy which has been affected by the fallout from the war in Iraq and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak.

Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who announced this today, said that Dr Mahathir would also release Malaysia's revised gross domestic product (GDP) for this year, which is expected to be lower than the 4.5 percent forecast earlier.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a two months' leave, would resume his duties in May.

Abdullah said this to reporters after launching the Technology Park Malaysia (TPM) Academy.

Analysts have said that the package might be worth between RM3-5 billion.

The Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER), a private think-tank, has revised the country's growth to 3.7 percent from 5.7 percent earlier.

"We have taken into account several factors in the formulation of the package and there is new information which needs to be included," he said.

Abdullah said the government has had a dialogue with the private sector while Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz, also had similar discussions with manufacturers.

He said that the inputs were crucial as they could be vital ingredients in the detailed formulation of the package.

Asked whether there were projects which would be deferred under the package, he said: "Maybe, we have to wait and see." -- BERNAMA

WNZ MR/SHO