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Economic package to help strengthen competitive edge

KANGAR, Mon. - The economic stimulus package expected to be announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad next month is aimed at assisting the local industries strengthen the country's competitive edge and increase the use of local material.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis said the industries include the tourism sector which had been affected by the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

"The objective is to compete with other countries and accelerate the projects to sustain our economy," he said after opening the Arau Umno division delegates meeting.

Present was Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim.

Jamaludin said the package would also stress on attracting foreign direct investments (FDI) to sustain domestic growth. "We need foreign investment, but we also need to market our domestic products," he said, adding that the country could not be over-dependent on foreign materials.

Jamaludin also announced the appointment of Beseri State Assemblyman Zahidi Zainol Abidin as his political secretary, effective April 1.

Zahidi, 42, a first-time assemblyman, was Shahidan's former political secretary. A former student leader, he graduated from Universiti Teknologi Mara in 1985.