

Putrajaya looking to launch stimulus package amid growing coronavirus concern

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PUTRAJAYA, Feb 10 -- The government is looking to launch an economic stimulus package to boost the local economy due to the challenges following the fast spreading 2019 Novel Coronavirus, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said the tourism industry is the one that is most affected by the outbreak as it has a direct effect on the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign.

However, the Prime Minister emphasised that the government has a plan to mitigate the outbreak's impact on the economy.

"When we announced the campaign, we did not expect the coronavirus (outbreak). But now, we have to stop airlines from flying to several areas in China," he said during a question and answer session with French multinational companies here today.

He added that Chinese tourists constitute a huge fraction of the tourist market, thus the tourism industry would have to brace for impact following their absence due to the outbreak.

It was reported that airlines worldwide, including Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia, have canceled many flights to and from China amid growing fears of the coronavirus.

To-date, the outbreak has claimed more than 900 lives, with more than 40,000 of confirmed cases recorded globally.

Meanwhile, on the Malaysia Airlines takeover, Dr Mahathir said that the government has yet to decide on who would take over the debt-ridden airline.

According to media reports, several airlines have expressed their interest in taking over Malaysia Airlines.

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