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## Azmin: Govt mulls stimulus plan to ease virus' impact

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government is considering a stimulus package to mitigate the impact of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak on the country.

Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali yesterday said it was not only an injection for the economy, but also the safety and wellbeing of the people.

"This year, the ministry allocated RM227 million to buy medical and non-medical equipment for health facilities.

"It is prepared to consider additional provisions."

He said the government would give priority to public health and wellbeing.

"Besides, the government has taken steps to ensure the country's readiness to address the coronavirus infection in line with the recommendations set by the World Health Organisation (WHO)."

WHO, on Thursday, announced a global public health emergency following the outbreak of 2019-nCoV.

Azmin said should the outbreak persist, it would impact

China's economy, and subsequently Malaysia's, as the country is Malaysia's largest trading partner.

Among the sectors that will be affected include tourism, aviation, transport, education, manufacturing, and construction.

Last year, Malaysia received almost 26 million tourists. More than three million of them were from China.

The tourism sector contributes 15 per cent to the gross domestic product.

"The manufacturing and construction sectors, which rely heavily on input from the country, are expected to be affected should China extend the

quarantine period or increase the number of cities to be closed to curb the spread of the virus."

Azmin said the government, international agencies and the private sector would take measures to reduce the virus' impact on the economy.

He expressed appreciation to the Health Ministry's employees and security personnel, who sacrificed their time and energy to fight the outbreak.



Datuk Seri Azmin Ali

