

# Country's debt only RM100b, says PM

SUN 21 APR 2001

KOTA BARU, Fri: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the country's debt is only around RM100 billion and not RM1 trillion as claimed by an opposition MP.

Mahathir said today the matter was brought up in Parliament by an MP who claimed that the government had lied about the country's

debt which had touched RM1 trillion.

"RM1 trillion is a lot of money, RM1,000 billion. If he can produce the proof, we would like to see it. From the figures we have, the government and private sector's debt is only around RM100 billion. Our debt is one of the smallest," he told a press conference after launching the

Unit Trust Week here.

The prime minister said the RM1 trillion figure was invented by the MP and he should have checked his facts before making such claims.

Mahathir said the country had no problem of repaying the loans and in fact, when there were funds, paid back the debts although it was not time yet for the payment.

"Sometimes, we repay the loans using borrowed money because we get them at a lower interest.

"That is why even during the recession, we are not pressured into taking loans from anybody. Even if the International Monetary Fund does not give (debts), we do not mind," said Mahathir.