

Don't worry about country's debt - Awang
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The country's debt last year amounted RM407.1bil or 53.1 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is no cause for worry, Dewan Rakyat heard today.

Deputy Finance Minister Awang Adek Hussein said of the amount, RM390.4bil or 96 percent was internal while RM16.7bil or four percent was external debt.

"Concern should be on foreign debt but at only four per cent, it is not worrying. Our GDP ratio is much lower than others including developed countries," he said when winding up debate on the ministry's Supplementary Supply Bill (2010) 2011.

Awang said the debts were from loans to finance the deficit and finance development projects planned. The loans will generate revenue to the government as it is an investment.

"The returns will be higher. This is normally the case except during an economic slowdown."

Commenting on alleged unequal treatment of Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia, he said the government gave due consideration without bias to any airline.

Awang said 24.6mil tourists visited Malaysia last year compared to 23.6mil in 2009 with tourism receipts rising to RM56.5bil from RM53.4bil in 2009.

"Part of this increase in tourist arrivals was due to AirAsia's promotion of low-cost fares," he added.

-Bernama

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