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ASW 2020 draws investments of RM1.57bn

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THE RM3 billion Amanah Saham Wawasan 2020 (ASW 2020), which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on August 27 last year, has to date drawn total investments of RM1.568 billion, or a subscription rate of 52 per cent.

Only 20 per cent of the Bumiputera portion of the unit trust fund was taken up while 85 per cent of the non-Bumiputera portion was subscribed.

Bumiputera investors were allocated 1.53 billion units, or 51 per cent of the fund, while non-Bumiputeras were offered the rest.

Perbadanan Nasional Bhd (PNB), the fund's manager, has been selling the three billion ASW 2020 units, priced at RM1 each, since September 1 last year.

As at June 29, a total of 808,000 investors had invested in the unit trust fund, of whom 327,000 are Bumiputeras (RM324 million) and 481,000 non-Bumiputeras (RM1.24 billion).

PNB group chief executive Datuk Mohd Hilmey Mohd Taib said the agency is not discouraged by the low subscription rate for the Bumiputera portion, which is largely because the Bumiputeras have other funds to invest in.

"They (Bumiputera) have not lost interest in investing their money as the Amanah Saham Nasional (ASN) and Amanah Saham Bumiputra (ASB) continue to draw investments," he told reporters after the launch of PNB's telephone inquiry service "Tele-Amanah" in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

To date, 1.27 million unitholders have invested a total of RM556 million in ASN while 4.69 million unitholders have invested RM28 billion in ASB.

In the past five months, the ASB received an average investment of RM36 million a month.

Sources said PNB saw a RM50 million surge in investments in the ASB between September and October last year, two months after the ASW 2020 was launched.

"We managed to sell about 1.5 billion (ASW 2000) units within nine months... it is not an easy task for PNB... other funds only managed about 200,000 units in the same period," he said.

It is understood that PNB may offer the remaining 1.2 billion unsubscribed Bumiputera ASW 2020 units to various Bumiputera institutions.

The ASW 2020, open to all Malaysians aged between 12 and 30 years, is aimed at creating investment opportunities as well as promoting an investment culture among the young.

To further facilitate transactions, PNB yesterday launched the "Tele-Amanah", a computer-based enquiry service for all ASN and ASB investors at a nominal charge of RM10. The system was launched by PNB chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid.

Investors will be given a personal identification number to obtain information on dividends, bonus and investment updates on the two funds.

Hilmey said investors may transfer funds from ASB to ASN or vice versa, but no withdrawals can be made.

"The funds transfer service allows investors to utilise their knowledge to maximum returns from the unit trusts.

"For example, investors can sell their ASB units at a higher price and buy back later at a lower price by making transfers between the two funds," Hilmey said.

He dismissed the possibility of a speculative market as unit trust prices are basically quite stable.

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