

Tabung Harapan Malaysia may end next month - Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is looking at the possibility of ending contributions to the Tabung Harapan Malaysia fund.

He said the government had not picked a date when the fund would draw to a close.

"We haven't decided, maybe next month," he told reporters after attending a roundtable discussion with ASEAN business leaders here today.

He noted that the fund showed that Malaysians loved their country and were willing to make sacrifices to overcome the country's debt issues.

"I think it's quite clear that people who have even small amounts of money are willing to help save the country," he said.

Dr Mahathir had announced the creation of the fund on May 30 to enable Malaysians to make donations to reduce the country's debt levels. The fund amounted to RM179.9 million as at 3 pm today.

The Prime Minister was also queried on the perception that the fund was being used by certain companies as a "lobbying mechanism" to gain favours such as projects.

"It could be but we're not affected," he said, adding that the government had, in fact, refused to accept a sizeable contribution from a company that "has some problems".

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir, who is the Pakatan Harapan chairman, said that the matter of PKR president-elect Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim contesting a by-election "as soon as possible"

was not raised during their meeting recently.

"He didn't say anything about contesting. He came and we had some discussion. Nothing about his contesting," he said, adding that they talked about matters such as issues affecting the Malay community.

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