

DATE : 25 October 2012
PUBLICATION : The Malaysian Reserve
SECTION : -
HEADLINE : PHB increases fund size by 50% to RM1.5b

ALL BUSINESS DAILY
The Malaysian Reserve

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Written by Farah Saad
Thursday, 25 October 2012 10:06 -

Pelaburan Hartanah Bhd (PHB) has increased its total fund size for Amanah Hartanah Bumiputera (AHB) by 50% to RM1.5 billion from RM1 billion, following healthy demand from Bumiputera investors.

The increase, in the form of 500 million additional units, will be backed by PHB's recently purchased DEMC Specialist Hospital and several blocks in Peremba Square, Shah Alam, said PHB managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Kamalul Arifin Othman at a media conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

PHB, together with Maybank Asset Management Sdn Bhd, yesterday announced a total payout of RM31 million to AHB unit holders or 3.25 sen per unit.

The income distribution is the second for the year, translating into an annualised income yield of 6.5%. The amount will be credit directly into unit holders' accounts today.

Investors will also be able to purchase units using savings in their Employee Provident Fund (EPF) accounts following an agreement between PHB and EPF, said Kamalul.

The maximum investment entry has also been increased to RM400,000 from RM200,000, in light of an increasingly affluent population, he said.

Meanwhile, he said PHB is "very confident" that it will receive the approval from the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) soon to begin work on its integrated commercial development in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur.

PHB had submitted the masterplan for approval early this year, and DBKL is close to a conclusion.

"We have completed and submitted the masterplan to DBKL. It is under evaluation, but we are very confident it will be approved very soon. We have had a very fruitful discussion with the authority," said Kamalul.

The development, with an estimated gross development value of RM5 billion, will be located on a 19-acre plot of land on Jalan Bangsar.

Several developers had submitted proposals for the development, but PHB has not decided which it will select and will wait until after the approval to make a decision.

“Once approval is granted, we will decide on the business model. Possibly we will carve up the land into several parcels and we might be working with a single or several developers. There are many proposals from established developers, but we are still waiting for the approval from DBKL before we proceed,” said Kamalul.

PHB currently has eight assets valued at RM1.5 billion, with a gross annual rental income of

RM100 million, and is currently scouting for new properties in the Klang Valley and other state capitals. Seven of its properties are currently under AHB, which was introduced in 2010.