

We're still fine-tuning the agreement, Muhyiddin explains delay

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Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) pro-tem president Muhyiddin Yassin has confirmed his party will not be inking the agreement to join Pakatan Harapan today.

It was previously reported that Muhyiddin had purportedly backed out from inking the agreement which was expected to be signed at the inaugural Pakatan Harapan Convention today.

Explaining his reasons, Muhyiddin denied claims that he had "cold feet" in relation to the agreement.

"When I touched my feet, they are still hot," he joked.

"Some say that I am backing out from signing the agreement. Actually, I definitely will not back out - I am serious and thorough in managing important matters like the first agreement with Pakatan Harapan," he said in his speech at the event held in Shah Alam today.

Muhyiddin said he had asked for the signing ceremony to be delayed to provide more time for top Bersatu as well as Harapan leaders to discuss the agreement further.

"I agree with a majority of the agreement," he added.

This includes matters relating to the position of Islam as the country's official religion, the right of followers of other religions to practice their own religions peacefully, the special position of the Malays and the bumiputera, the Malay language as the national language as well as the special position of the Malay rulers.

The agreement, he added, must also include the commitment of all interested parties in fighting corruption, among others.

"I suggest that a group made up of experts from all parties be formed to formulate these policies.

PPBM is ready to be involved and to take part in this group," he said, referring to Bersatu's acronym in light of the warning from the Registrar of Societies (ROS) not to use the word 'Bersatu'.

Muhyiddin added that the decision to cooperate with Harapan must be done in a collective and comprehensive manner.

"This needs a more thorough engagement process within the party and among the parties in formulating the terms of reference."

Muhyiddin also confirmed that he had asked the Pakatan Harapan secretariat to fix a suitable date and time for both Bersatu dan Harapan leaders to discuss the agreement further.

“After everything is agreed upon, I, representing PPBM, will sign the agreement to cooperate with Harapan,” he promised.

Bersatu, in the meantime, will hold a meeting in the next few days consisting of its supreme council members to discuss the cooperation with Harapan.

“The views from this meeting will be brought to the meeting with other top leaders of Harapan.

“I want all quarters to be involved in this discussion so that all terms agreed upon get the necessary input from the leadership of all parties,” he said.

English daily *The Star*, quoting sources, said Muhyiddin had asked for the signing of the agreement with Harapan to be postponed.

Former Bersatu member Khairuddin Abu Hassan said it was a possibility that Muhyiddin was having second thoughts on inking the agreement due to his desire to court PAS.