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'PAS NOT BEHOLDEN TO DR M'

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Party not bound by conditions or deadlines set by outsiders, says Takiyuddin

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PARTI Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad should not put pressure on Pas to form an election pact with his party.

Pas secretary-general Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan said Pas was its own party, reiterating that it was not bound by the conditions or deadlines set by outsiders.

"(Dr Mahathir) as a veteran politician should understand the ins and outs of a party.

"To us, we are not bound by his instructions," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

On Thursday, the former prime minister admitted that Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang had refused to meet PPBM president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to discuss a proposed election pact between them.

He also seemed to have made a U-turn on his one-month deadline issued to Pas, saying that the door for negotiation with the Islamic party would remain open.

Takiyuddin, however, said the discussion for an election pact was made at the deputy president level.

"For us, it is Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man and for PPBM,

their deputy Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir.

"It is Pas's decision to have meetings with PPBM and we determine who should lead our team to discuss (on the pact)."

He added that Dr Mahathir "did not understand" the approach undertaken by Pas, stressing that the party could discuss and hold dialogues with any party that did not clearly contradict their ideals.

Takiyuddin also said no one could force Pas to have an agreement with PPBM, adding that in a political discussion, no party should put conditions onto the other.

"Not all negotiations will be fruitful, so we don't understand why the need for him (Dr Mahathir) to put pressure on us," he said.



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Pas secretary-general

Asked whether there were quarters in Pas who wanted to work with PPBM, Takiyuddin said: "The matter does not arise."

Hadi had made it clear that Pas would not work with PPBM or any party that had ties with DAP.

He had said a political pact with PPBM and other opposition parties could only work without the involvement of DAP.

Pas and PPBM had hosted a closed-door meet-

ing on Feb 1, involving leaders of both parties.

PPBM was represented by Mukhriz and Pas by deputy president Tuan Ibrahim and vice-president Idris Ahmad.

After the meeting, the two parties officially formed a joint committee tasked with framing an outline for political cooperation between Pas and PPBM ahead of the 14th General Election.