

# Pairin made BN

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## chief in Sabah

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan has been appointed State Barisan Nasional chairman following the acceptance of his ruling Parti Bersatu Sabah into the coalition.

Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told reporters today that the United Sabah National Organisation's application to rejoin the coalition was also accepted.

This brings the number of parties in the coalition to 13. A third Sabah party, Berjaya, is already a coalition member.

Dr Mahathir said Berjaya president Datuk Mohamed Noor Mansor relinquished the post of State Barisan chairman in favour of Datuk Pairin.

"Today's meeting unanimously decided to accept both the PBS and Usno as

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# PM: Usno has

## accepted Barisan's stand

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members.

"And following Datuk Mohamed Noor's suggestion and Barisan practice that the Chief Minister or Mentri hold the State Barisan chairman's post, Datuk Pairin is appointed to the post with immediate effect," Dr Mahathir said after the coalition's Supreme Council and annual general meeting.

PBS first applied to join the Barisan after its victory in the last year's April election. A decision on the application was deferred twice at Barisan Supreme Council meetings in August and April.

The party then withdrew its application just before last month's State election but re-applied before the results were announced. (PBS won 34 of the 48 seats contested.)

Asked if the PBS and Usno admission into the coalition meant that the two parties would still serve on opposite sides in the State Government, Dr Mahathir said: "A precedence has been set. I believe they will work closely together."

From 1976 till 1982, both Usno and Berjaya were Barisan members. However, Berjaya formed the State Government while Usno was in the opposition.

Usno was expelled in 1982 for working against Barisan interests.

Asked why Usno's application to rejoin the coalition was accepted, Dr Mahathir said: "Usno has explained the reasons for its previous action. Now it no longer entertains any ideas about Labuan and the Constitution.

"It has accepted the Barisan stand."

When Barisan expelled Usno, Dr Mahathir gave two reasons:

● THE party had opposed the declaration of Labuan as Federal territory, and:

● PARTY president Tun Mustapha Datu Harun had planned to lay the blame for the problems in the Constitutional amendments on the Federal Government.