

**Pairin Dismisses Claim Bernard Maarat Wants To Stand As Independent Candidate  
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TUARAN, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) president Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan denied PBS Sook divisional chairman Datuk Bernard Maraat had insinuated that he would stand as an independent in the next general election if he was not selected as a BN candidate.

Pairin told this to reporters at the Aidilfitri Open house hosted by Local Government and Housing Minister Datuk Hajiji Mohd Noor at Dewan Bersatu here Sunday.

He was commenting on the claim by Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah (PBRS) Youth chief Kahirin Bador that Bernard, a former secretary general of PBRS who left PBRS to join PBS, had alluded as such at the recent PBS Sook annual general meeting AGM).

Kahirin had also urged Pairin to take action against the latter.

"I was present at the AGM and I did not hear him say anything to the effect... I don't know where they got the information from. Maybe they heard it somewhere or made it up," said Pairin, who is also a Sabah Deputy Chief Minister.

Pairin nevertheless stressed that any BN member who stood as an independent candidate in the election risked disciplinary action including expulsion.

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