

Expanding ties with East Kalimantan will create mutual benefits – CM

N&T 7-11-2019 5
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KOTA KINABALU: Sabah aims to expand ties with Indonesia's East Kalimantan to realise mutual benefits between both governments in boosting bilateral trade and security in the region.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal has reaffirmed calls for stronger relations between the two countries to prepare for immense potential from Indonesia's plan to relocate its capital to East Kalimantan.

"Even regionally, the planned relocation of this magnitude will bring a wave of major infrastructure development for East Kalimantan, as well as trigger economic spinoff effects for both Malaysia and Indonesia," said Shafie.

Speaking at the Sabah Geostrategic Convention, Shafie further underlined the importance for the state to be prepared for the impact of the relocation including enhancing cross-border security in the region.

The text of his speech was delivered by Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Jaujan Haji Sembakong, who is also Minister of Local Government and Housing.

Shafie further added, the economic impact from the relocation of the new capital will be enormous, and its impact will also be felt by neighbouring Brunei, Sarawak, as well as the rest of Kalimantan.

During the recent visit by state government officials to East Kalimantan, Shafie noted the delegation headed by Education and Innovation Minister, Datuk Yusuf Yacob has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Balikpapan University to expand ties with three state education institutions, which include Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Sabah Campus and Sidma College

The convention organised by the State National Security Council, gathered participants from 71 relevant state and federal agencies.

Sabah has a long history of trade with Indonesia with value of exports totalling RM170 million from 2014 to 2017, while imports peaked RM107 million in the same period.

The number of Indonesians working in Sabah totalled 120,011 in various sectors especially in plantation and agriculture which make up the most numbers at 68,796 people.