



Sabah watches as North Kalimantan undergoes rapid changes

TANJUNG SELOR, (North Kalimantan) – North Kalimantan, the newest Indonesian province and one that shares a border with Sabah, is undergoing rapid changes.

Indonesian Home Affairs Minister Tito Karnavian has commended the rapid development in the province which commemorates its 10th anniversary of establishment on October 25.

"I see a huge leap forward (in this province) because when I visited the province in 2017, Tanjung Selor was so empty.

"As the then Police Chief, (the decision to) establish the province's police, apart from ensuring security, was also to promote development and encourage residents to stay," Karnavian remarked at the anniversary commemoration ceremony on Nov 1.

The Indonesian government has announced massive multi-billion dollar development plans for North Kalimantan including a massive green industrial park involving major investments from China and the United Arab Emirates, amongst others, and a number of large hydro-electricity dams.

Located within easy reach of Sabah's southern district of Tawau, North Kalimantan's growth momentum is expected to have significant bearing on Sabah as a whole.

Karnavian also recalled that during his visit in 2019, he had officiated the North Kalimantan Police, as the province had its military installations and institutions consolidating. He was impressed by the quick development initiated by the regional authority.

"The region, particularly Tanjung Selor, is now better and livelier. I am impressed because the city developed from a quiet one to the (current situation) now when the city remains bustling even at night. It has now a lot of cafes, restaurants, hotels, department stores, schools, and other places."

The minister then reminded the regional authority to utilize the province's vast area and natural resources' potential to bolster development in North Kalimantan.

The regional authority should also develop advanced, educated, savvy, and healthy human resources as the province has only a modest population, he added.

Karnavian also urged the provincial authority to focus on educational and healthcare programmes by allocating 20 percent of the provincial budget for education as well as 10 percent for healthcare.

"If possible, make all school levels free of charge. Provide scholarships for pupils, good higher educational institutions, and develop vocational education according to the region's potentials, for instance, a polytechnic for the fishery, forestry, mining, or green energy sectors," the minister remarked.

The Ministry of Health is constructing the Sepaku Hospital located in the core area of Nusantara and expects completion in 2024.

