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LITTORAL MISSION SHIPS

First of 4 LMS delivered to ministry

KUALA LUMPUR: The first of four littoral mission ships (LMS) for the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) was handed over to the Defence Ministry yesterday.

A ministry official in a statement said the vessel, *Keris*, was handed over at a ceremony at Wuchuan Shipbuilding Industry Co Ltd at Wucang Port, Qidong in Shanghai, China.

The Malaysian delegation was headed by the ministry's procurement division secretary, Datuk Ahmad Husaini Abdul Rahman.

Present were Eastern Fleet commander Vice-Admiral Datuk Pahlawan Syed Zahrul Putra Syed Abdullah and Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNSSB) chief executive officer Ee Teck Chee.

The statement said the Malaysian officials did an inspection of the vessel and its documents, as well as took part in a sailing demonstration.

This was followed by a signing ceremony for the acceptance of the vessel by BNSSB on behalf of the government.

Keris' construction began on



Defence Ministry procurement division secretary Datuk Ahmad Husaini Abdul Rahman (centre) witnessing the signing ceremony on the acceptance of the Royal Malaysian Navy's 'Keris' by Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Ee Teck Chee (on Husaini's right) and China Shipbuilding and Offshore International Co Ltd representative Xu Ziqiu in Shanghai. PIX COURTESY OF DEFENCE MINISTRY

July 31, 2018 at the Wuchuan Shuangliu Manufacture Base in Wuhan and successfully underwent sea trials.

It was launched by Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu's wife Normah Alwi on April 15 last year and underwent final trials.

Keris is scheduled to be commissioned during a traditional ceremony by RMN chief Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Mohd Sany on Jan 6.

The LMS is part of the RMN's "15 to 5" fleet transformation programme, which involves reducing its current 15 classes of ves-



sels to just five — namely, the LMS, multi-role support ships, littoral combat ships, patrol vessels and submarines.

The LMS contract was signed between the ministry, BNSSB and China Shipbuilding and Offshore International Co Ltd on March 23, 2017.

It was the first major defence acquisition project from China, reportedly for a total of RM1.17 billion.

The second LMS, *Sundang*, is being built in China and is expected to be delivered in April.

The remaining two, to be delivered by the middle of 2021, will be built in Malaysia through a joint-venture between BNSSB and China Shipbuilding and Offshore International.

An LMS can be used for maritime surveillance and border security, as well as search-and-rescue operations.

The LMS is scheduled to be commissioned as KD *Keris* during a traditional ceremony by RMN chief Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Mohd Sany on Jan 6. **By Adrian David**