

Headline	First RMN Littoral Mission Ship commissioned as KD `Keris'		
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The crew of KD 'Keris' saluting after the ship's commissioning pennant is hoisted at Wucang Port in Shanghai, yesterday. PIC COURTESY OF THE ROYAL MALAYSIAN NAVY

First RMN Littoral Mission Ship commissioned as KD 'Keris'

KUALA LUMPUR: The first of the Royal Malaysian Navy's (RMN) four Littoral Mission Ships (LMS) was commissioned as KD *Keris* in China, yesterday.

RMN chief Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Mohd Sany officiated at the ceremony at the Wuchuan Shipbuilding Industry Co Ltd's Wucang Port in Qidong, Shanghai.

The historic commissioning, held in steep naval tradition, gave the vessel the Kapal Diraja (KD) prefix, signalling its official entry into the RMN's fleet.

Present were Defence Ministry deputy secretary-general (development) Mastura Ahmad Mustafa and senior officials of Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNSSB) and China Shipbuilding and Off-shore International Co Ltd (CSOC).

In a statement, the RMN said Reza delivered the symbolic commissioning oath at the ceremony, and later presented the command insignia to Commander Mohd Zulkarnain Mohd Rawi, the first commanding officer of KD *Keris*.

Reza and KD *Keris*' crew then presented a salute after the vessel's commissioning pennant was hoisted for the first time.

The construction of KD *Keris* began on July 31, 2018 at Wuchuan Shuangliu Manufacture Base in Wuhan. It was launched by Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu's wife

Normah Alwi on April 15 last year.

On Dec 31 last year, the physical hand-over of the vessel to the government was done by the final acceptance committee headed by the ministry's procurement division secretary, Datuk Ahmad Husaini Abdul Rahman, also at the Wucang Port in Qidong.

KD *Keris* is scheduled to depart from Qidong tomorrow and sail home to the RMN base in Kota Kinabalu, arriving on Jan 17.

The LMS is part of the RMN's "15 to 5" fleet transformation programme, which involves reducing its 15 classes of vessels to just five — the LMS, Multi-Role Support Ships, Littoral Combat Ships, patrol vessels and submarines.

The LMS contract was signed between the ministry, BNSSB and CSOC 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 also being built in China with an expected delivery date in April this year. The remaining two, to be delivered by mid-2021, will be built in Malaysia through a joint-venture between BNSSB and CSOC. An LMS can be used for maritime surveillance, border security and search and rescue operations.