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NAJIB RENAMES SHIP KM 'PEKAN'

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Vessel a gift from
Japan to honour
strong bilateral ties

LANGKAWI

WHEN Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak named the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency's (MMEA) "newest" offshore patrol vessel (OPV), there were two significant moments. In a ceremony steeped in maritime tradition, Najib renamed the OPV *KM Pekan*. Here is the first significance.

To have the prime minister rename a ship is not uncommon. But, the significance of this ship's

name was not lost. After all, Najib is Pekan member of parliament, a seat he has held since the death of his father, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

What may have been lost to many, though, was on the opposite side of the jetty where the OPV was berthed and the ceremony took place, was a sleek-looking vessel.

It is the Royal Malaysian Navy's second Scorpene submarine, aptly named *KD Tun Razak*.

KM Pekan, a gift from Japan, is a refurbished OPV previously named *JCG Erimo* when it was in service with the Japanese Coast Guard.

Najib renamed the ship in a ceremony on board the vessel at the Langkawi International Maritime

and Aerospace 2017 (Lima) exhibition.

He spent about an hour touring the vessel to inspect the modifications and upgrades done to it before it sailed from Japan to Malaysia.

The Japanese government had refurbished the OPV and presented it to Malaysia as a mark of its appreciation of their strong bilateral ties. They are refurbishing another for Malaysia.

MMEA director-general Datuk Seri Ahmad Puzi Ab Kahar said Malaysia appreciated the gift as it was a measure of the strong bilateral relationship and commitment from Japan to ensure that the peace, security and prosperity of the waters were preserved.