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Petronas takes delivery of giant splitter

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KUANTAN: Petronas has taken delivery of one of the world's largest pressure vessels, at a cost of RM10 million, to be installed at its petrochemical complex in Gebeng.

The vessel, which weighs 1,000 tonnes and is 105.5m in length, measures in as one of the heaviest and longest pressure vessels in the world, said Petronas vice president of logistics and maritime Datuk Haji Mohd Ali Yasin yesterday.

The vessel is one of five that must be delivered by next month to Petronas under a RM20 million contract, he told reporters after officially accepting delivery of the vessel from KNM Steel Construction Sdn Bhd.

The five vessels are to be installed at MTBE Malaysia Sdn Bhd's (a Petronas sub-

sidary) propane dehydrogenation (PDH) plant in Gebeng.

The gigantic vessel that was handed over yesterday is called PP Splitter. KNM took only eight months to finish the job.

Today, Petronas will move PP Splitter, via a crane, which is one of the largest in the world, from KNM's fabrication plant to Petronas' PDH plant 3km away. Mohd Ali said the process will take five hours because of the vessel's size and length.

The PDH plant to which it is headed has also recorded a world first. Mohd Ali said the PDH plant is the world's largest single train dehydrogenation plant.

The plant, which forms part of an integrated petrochemical complex being implemented in Gebeng, is set to begin operations in July next year.

The PDH plant will be designed to produce 300,000

tpa of propylene a year, which will be used as feedstock for the production of acrylic acid/esters and oxo-alcohols for Petronas' downstream business.

He said the successful production of the vessel is proof of the ability of local companies to meet Petronas' high standards.

Under the Ministry of Finance requirements, Petronas must give at least 30% of its projects to local companies, but Mohd Ali said Petronas often exceeds this level as sometimes up to 45% of its projects are awarded to

locals.

Petronas has awarded about RM5 billion worth of downstream projects in Pahang and Terengganu alone to local companies, of which RM2 billion went to bumiputera companies.

"If there are local companies which can do the job, then we don't have to import this equipment anymore," he said.

"By giving this pressure vessel contract to KNM we have saved RM6 million, because transporting the vessel from a foreign country would raise the costs."



Jubilant workers of KNM pose with the PP Splitter before it was handed over to Petronas. — BERHAMPUR