

GENERAL INFORMATION

A new era for Malaysia's hydrography: Rear Admiral Dr Najhan bin Md Said takes the helm

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Malaysia has entered a new era in hydrography with the appointment of Rear Admiral Dr Najhan bin Md Said as the nation's new Chief Hydrographer. His leadership marks a decisive step in advancing Malaysia's capabilities in seabed mapping, marine geospatial data, and maritime domain awareness.

Rear Admiral Dr Najhan officially assumed office on 27 October 2025, succeeding Rear Admiral Dato' Hanafiah bin Hassan. The handover ceremony, held at the National Hydrographic Centre (NHC) in Port Klang, was officiated by Admiral Tan Sri Dr Zulhelmy Ithnain, Chief of Navy, who expressed confidence that the new Chief Hydrographer would continue steering the Centre towards innovation and operational excellence.

Born in Tanjung Kling, Melaka, on 27 July 1973, Rear Admiral Dr Najhan began his naval career in 1991 and was commissioned two years later as an officer in the Executive Branch. His early posting to the Royal Australian Navy Hydrographic School at HMAS Penguin in 1996 sparked a lifelong commitment to hydrography, a discipline in which he has since earned national and international recognition.

Throughout more than three decades of service, Rear Admiral Dr Najhan has held a range of key appointments including Deputy Director General of Hydrography, Senior Director of the Planning and Development Division at Navy Headquarters, Deputy Commander of the Eastern Fleet Command Headquarters and Commanding Officer of KD PERANTAU. Beyond the Navy, he has contributed his expertise to the National Security Council and the National Task Force Headquarters, playing an instrumental role in policy formulation and operational planning related to maritime security.

Rear Admiral Dr Najhan is widely recognised as a Subject Matter Expert in the technical aspects of maritime boundaries determination. He is actively engaged in a series of negotiations concerning maritime boundaries. Additionally, he led Malaysia's Special Team responsible for the submission to the United Nations regarding the continental shelf beyond 200



nautical miles, representing a significant milestone in the nation's maritime sovereignty.

Internationally, he has been an active participant within the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), serving as a member of the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) since 2018. In 2024, he was elected Vice-Chair of SCUFN for the 2024 to 2028 term, further underscoring his standing and credibility within the global hydrographic community.

Academically, Rear Admiral Dr Najhan holds a Doctor of Philosophy and a Master of Science in Hydrography from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, as well as a Master of Maritime Studies from the University of Wollongong, Australia. His academic research in coastal erosion, marine habitat mapping, and seafloor ecosystems continues to contribute to Malaysia's expanding body of maritime knowledge.

Assuming leadership of the NHC at a time when hydrography intersects with digital innovation and climate resilience, Rear Admiral Dr Najhan envisions the Centre as a regional leader in ocean data management, marine geospatial infrastructure, and navigational safety. His focus on modernisation, data integration, and international collaboration is expected to further strengthen Malaysia's role within the East Asia Hydrographic Commission (EAHC), the North Indian Ocean Hydrographic Commission (NIOHC), and the IHO.