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Condor APC Upgrade Can Save Government RM1.58 Bln

By Azizul Ahmad KUALA LUMPUR, April 20 (Bernama) -- The old faithful workhorse, Radpanzer Condor (RPZ Condor) 4x4 Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC), is proven upgradable and the government is expected to save up to RM1.58 billion in defence budget if it agrees with the re-manufacturing programme. The upgraded version RPZ Condor prototype is showcased at DRB-HICOM Defence Technologies Sdn Bhd (DEFTECH) pavilion at the Defence Services Asia (DSA) 2016 exhibition at Putra World Trade Centre from April 18-21. Bernama was told the Armoured Re-manufacturing Programme (ARM) proposed by DEFTECH, which involved refurbishment and upgrade jobs, would cost half, compared to buying new APCs. DEFTECH Chief Executive Officer, Lt Col Datuk Amril Samsudin, said the Armour Directorate of the Malaysian Army has indicated that a total of 316 units of RPZ Condors needed to be refurbished and upgraded in stages to meet the Royal Armoured Corps's order of battle. "The cost of buying new APC of similar capabilities to RPZ Condor is about RM10 million per unit. "Re-manufacturing, however, would cost half. This is a saving of up to a gross of RM1.58 billion if the 316 units were placed under ARM," he told Bernama on the sidelines of the 15th DSA 2016 here. The current RPZ Condor has shown excellent overall performance, durability and reliability since its introduction in the Malaysian Army in 1981. The 4x4 wheeled APC was originally designed by Thyssen-Henschel of Germany and manufactured by Henschel Wehrtechnik GmbH. Malaysia was among the largest operators with 457 Condors in the 80s, with some destroyed in action during the country's involvement in United Nations' missions as far as Somalia in 1993 while rescuing the US Black Hawk helicopter pilot and army rangers. They were used in all four regiments of the Royal Amoured Corps of the Malaysian Army and were scheduled to be decommissioned by 2018. "However, the decommissioned RPZ Condor will be replaced with the armoured vehicle 8x8 GEMPITA for only two regiments of the Royal Armoured Corps. "Hence, the other two regiments will either need new assets or remanufacture refurbished of the present system," said Amril. In order to meet the urgent operational requirement, DEFTECH has proposed the remanufacturing program (on RPZ Condor) to the Malaysian Army for the other two regiments. "This could extend the service life span of our RPZ Condor by another 15 years," said Amril. Meanwhile, DEFTECH Project Manager for ARM, Lt Col (Rtd) Mohamad Yusoff Awang, said the system upgrades included the horsepower (hp) increment from 168 hp to 215 hp, manoeuverability enhancement from 491 nautical miles (Nm) to 800 Nm, increment in power-to-weight ratio from 13.4 hp to 16 hp. "The transformation also includes modification from manual to automatic transmission, transformation from rigid axle to independent axle and transformation from analogue to digital electrical system," he added. -- BERNAMA