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Boat-Combat (with pix)

MALAYSIA TO PRODUCE COMBAT BOATS BY YEAR END

PORT KLANG, April 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will be charting another first in the region by the end of the year with the production of combat boats utilising Swedish technology for local and regional markets.

Called the CB90, the US\$1 million (RM2.5 million) boat will be a swift answer to any threat to Malaysian waters, Perstima Maritime Chief Operating Officer Datuk Ahmad Haron said today.

The company will manufacture the boat at the Perstima Ramonia Shipyard in Teluk Ramonia, Johor, which is jointly-owned by Promet Bhd, he said.

"Production of this very versatile multi-purpose boat is expected to start in September," he told reporters at a press preview of the CB90 here.

The boat will be on show from Tuesday at the Defence Services Asia 96 (DSA 96) exhibition at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Perstima Maritime was given the manufacturing rights by the Swedish company N. Sundin Dockstavarvet AB which has also agreed to transfer its technology to Malaysians, Ahmad said.

The CB90 is made of high grade aluminium alloy for weight-saving and strength and installed with water jet propulsion system which provide the craft with optimum shallow draught capability.

The boat is able to negotiate narrow, winding, shallow water at high speed with a maximum speed of 40 knots and the usual loaded speed of 25 knots.

"This boat's main purpose is to serve as a troop carrier and patrol vessel," Ahmad said, adding that the boat could also be used to lay mines in sea.

It can carry 20 personnel and three crewmen and can be armed to carry three 12.7mm machine guns.

Ahmad said the CB90 which arrived here from Sweden last week is suitable for Malaysian waters especially for coastal surveillance, pirate combatting and sea rescue mission by the navy, police and marine authorities.

"We will be putting up this boat for test by the navy, police and marine authorities after the DSA 96 and later, in May, will be going for tests in Sabah waters including Terumbu Layang-layang and the east coast of Sabah," he said.

Ahmad said the company, a subsidiary of Perusahaan Sadur Timah Malaysia Berhad (Perstima), is venturing into the manufacturing of not only the combat boat for military purposes but also leisure vessels.

"We have made arrangements with three New Zealand companies for this purpose which requires a more refined technology," he said, adding that five of its trained staff with knowledge in composite material technology have been sent there to acquire the skill.

He added that Perstima Maritime decided to venture into boat and leisure craft manufacturing in view of the call made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to turn Malaysia into the Caribbean of the East and the growing interest in sea leisure activities in this region.

The boat designer and managing director of N. Sundin, K.A Sundin, said he designed the first prototype of the boat in 1989 for the Swedish navy and its first commercial production began in 1991.

"To date 80 CB90's are in use by the Swedish amphibious battalion and it has been proven very reliable, easily manoeuvred and maintained," he said, adding that the Norwegian navy had also ordered 16 boats from his

family-owned company, which was established by his grandfather in 1905. --
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