The Armoured Fighting Vehicle Rimau 6x6 or 'Armoured Personnel Carrier' manufactured by PT Pindad (PERSERO) on display at the 13th Defence Services Asia (DSA) exhibition in the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) yesterday. - Bernama photo

KUALA LUMPUR: Defence Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has told pro-opposition bloggers not to confuse the people with the issue of acquisition of 6x6 armoured cars, with locally-made AV8.

He said the government was studying the suitability of the 6x6 armoured car for use by the army under United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (Unifil), while the RM8 billion AV8 project was a plan for a made-in-Malaysia armoured car.

"They should understand that AV8 is an armoured personnel carrier (APC) with 15 variants for use in Malaysia, while APC 6x6 is for Unifil in Lebanon," he said after witnessing a memorandum of understanding between the National Service Training Department and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Mizan here yesterday.

Ahmad Zahid was asked to comment on opposition blogs which quoted Indonesian sources as saying that the government had selected 32 Anoa armoured car manufactured by PT Pindad, Indonesia because it was cheaper than AV8.

He said the government evaluated several 6x6 armoured cars from abroad, including Anoa from Indonesia, but had not made a decision.

Ahmad Zahid clarified that the need for a 6x6 armoured car for Malaysian soldiers in Lebanon was pressing because the existing Condor, which was used since 1989, was no longer suitable.

He said the development of AV8 might take a long time up to even 15 years.

"The prototype is expected to be completed next year but for Unifil, Condor is not suitable as it is 4x4. We need 6x6, and as such, a specification study is being conducted, including the capability of functioning in Lebanon," he said. - Bernama