

Mobile surgical unit makes its debut

KUALA LUMPUR — A Malaysian-designed mobile surgical unit, described as the first of its kind in the world, was unveiled at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital on Friday.

The unit is made up of three containers. Put together, they form a fully-functional, technologically-advanced operating theatre, complete with a disinfection room, scrub room and storage services department.

Manufactured by Johnson Medical Equipment Sdn Bhd, it will be based temporarily at the hospital's emergency department.

"Four of our operating theatres will close down for renovations in two weeks' time, and by then the unit will be operational to help take up the slack," said KLH's emergency medical and trauma services chief, Dr Abu Hassan Assari Abdullah.

"With the downturn in the economy, many hospitals will have to renovate instead of re-building from scratch. During the renovation period, such units are ideal for our use," he said.

The mobile unit, which can be dismantled, then reassembled within three hours, was also built to complement major disaster relief efforts.

Said Johnson Medical's group general manager Fredrik Nyberg: "Similar units are widely available in Europe, but they are so big they cannot fit into the roads here.

"Since this unit was built according to normal standards, you can use a standard crane to lift the unit onto a conventional low-bed truck, after which it can be transported to the disaster site."

Dr Abu Hassan, who worked with the company's technical director

Agne Nilsson during the two years it took to finalise the unit's design, said it offered a flexible environment for medical personnel to work in.

The unit's features include:

- ◆ A ventilation system that pumps 100 per cent fresh air into the operating theatre.

- ◆ Multi-movement ceiling pendants that provide electricity and medical gas, such as oxygen.

- ◆ Heavy-duty wall surfaces that can be cleaned easily.

"We have used about 85 per cent local content in building this," said the technical director, adding that construction had taken six months.

Although the total cost of the product lies between RM2 million (S\$852,000) and RM3 million, KLH bought the unit for RM1.7 million.

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