

No extra costs for London centre

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PUTRAJAYA: The Tun Abdul Razak Research Centre in Brickendonbury will be used as a training centre without additional expenses to renovate it.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said it would become a High Performance Training Centre, but would not be turned into a sports complex.

He said ways to maximise

the use of its facilities will be determined through feedback from national sports associations — and it would be made available for athletes approved by the government.

Najib, who chaired the Cabinet Committee for the Development of Sports yesterday, said four possible elements had been outlined for athletes to use the training centre to win exposure in Europe.

They are:

- The centre becomes the anchor for the under-17 and

under-19 football teams to play against clubs in the English Premiership and around Europe.

- The centre is used for short-term stints for sports like archery and in situations where athletes can train under foreign coaches who are unable to come to Malaysia.

- Cyclists based at the centre will train and compete in quality competitions in Europe.

- The centre acts as a transit

point for athletes competing in the region, including pre-world championship training for the badminton squad.

“We also want feedback from national associations on how the centre can be utilised by them.”

The Squash Rackets Association Malaysia is likely to base its players at the centre again when they compete in the British Junior Open in January. Sports Minister Datuk Azali-

na Othman Said confirmed that whatever activities carried out at the centre would be within the rules of the local authorities and they would not even think about major renovations.

The Brickendonbury authorities will not approve the building as a sports complex as it is gazetted as a heritage site.

“We need to expose the athletes. Being based overseas will make them independent

and since we have our own land, why shouldn't our athletes use it?”

“No additional costs will be incurred as we will be using existing facilities. We have considered the views of the public on the matter, and we did not make a RM490 million proposal to the Cabinet (to build a sports complex).

“The figure was put forward by consultants but we never considered it,” she added.