

Sepangar Bay to be strategic base

The Star - 12/6/2007

It will cater for submarines and bigger vessels

KOTA KINABALU: Malaysia's new naval base at Sepangar Bay will become a strategic regional base to accommodate not only submarines but also cater for the needs of bigger class foreign vessels, including aircraft carriers.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the base would be fully operational in mid-2009 with the acquisition of the French-

made Scorpene submarines.

He said the RM1bil base, which also has a naval air station, had been in operations since Aug 31 last year, when the Labuan Region Two Command headquarters from Sabah and Sarawak moved there.

"So far, we have expended RM660mil and RM330mil more will be spent to complete the entire base facilities," he said, adding that it

would be home to about 2,000 to 2,500 personnel once it was fully operational.

"This is our main and strategic base covering the South China Sea and the Sulu Sea.

"We are locating our main assets here," he said.

On the training of 145 Malaysian submariners in France, Najib said it was progressing smoothly.