

# S. Korea to build navy base near disputed isles

South Korea is planning to build a naval base close to a group of small islands claimed by both Seoul and Tokyo, so that its warships can be deployed more quickly than those of Japan in case of disputes

► **Disputed islands:** Known as ***Dokdo*** in South Korea and ***Takeshima*** in Japan. Less than 0.2 sq km in area but surrounded by rich fishing grounds and possible natural gas deposits. Seoul has occupied islands since 1954

► **Naval base:** To be built on South Korea's ***Ulleung Island*** – located just 87km from disputed islands. **Cost:** \$300 million

► **Construction:** To begin in 2012. 300m-long pier will be big enough to accommodate ***Dokdo***-class amphibious assault ships and high-tech ***Aegis*** destroyers. Due for completion by 2015

14,000-tonne ***Dokdo*** is largest ship in South Korean navy



► **Response:** Once base is complete, South Korean navy vessels could reach disputed islands about 75 minutes faster than Japanese ships