

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-808

ANSWERED ON-09.02.2017

Trade through South China Sea

808 . Shri V. Vijayasai Reddy

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether more than 50 per cent of India's trade passes through South China Sea;
- (b) whether any assessment has been made by the Ministry in view of the recent judgement of the International Court of Arbitration and subsequent position taken by China on the South China Sea;
- (c) if so, how India would have a smooth sail as far as navigation over flight and unimpeded commerce, through South China Sea;
- (d) whether any consultation between India and China have been held in the recent bilateral meeting between our PM and Chinese Premier; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (c) South China Sea is a major waterway and over US\$ 5 trillion trade passes through the sea lanes in this region. As per information available, over 55% of India's trade passes through South China Sea and Malacca Straits. Peace and stability in the region is of great significance to India. India undertakes various activities, including cooperation in oil and gas sector, with littoral states of South China Sea.

The Tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in the arbitration instituted by the Republic of Philippines against the People's Republic of China delivered its Award on 12 July 2016 clarifying issues concerning maritime entitlements in the South China Sea.

Government's position on this issue and the ruling is clear. The authority of Annex VII Tribunal and its award is recognized in Part XV of the UNCLOS itself. India's own record in this regard is well known. India supports freedom of navigation and over flight, and unimpeded commerce, based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the UNCLOS. India believes that States should resolve disputes through peaceful means without threat or use of force and exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that could complicate or escalate disputes affecting peace and stability. As a State Party to the UNCLOS, India urges all parties to show utmost respect for the UNCLOS, which establishes the international legal order of the seas and oceans.

(d) & (e) Prime Minister met the Chinese Premier in May 2015. No structured agenda based meeting has taken place after that. However, Prime Minister met Chinese President Xi Jinping several times last year, most recently at the BRICS Summit in Goa, where various issues of bilateral, regional and global significance were discussed. Both sides agree that peace and stability in our respective regions is important for realizing the Asian Century.