

Vietnam and India to discuss South China Sea

Tran Dai Quang.APTran Van Minh

Vietnam will take up South China Sea-related issues during the March 2-4 visit by President Tran Dai Quang. Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, the Ambassador of Vietnam said that Hanoi wished to fully utilise the comprehensive strategic partnership with India and was likely to sign a civil nuclear agreement during the visit.

“South China Sea issue will be discussed between leaders as the situation in the South China Sea is complicated. Some positive developments have taken place but the ground reality remains problematic,” said Ambassador Ton Sinh Thanh. Beijing’s claims over most of the South China Sea is a major issue between the two countries, and Hanoi has been one of the more vocal countries in the 10-member ASEAN grouping to find a solution to China’s expansionist policy in the crucial water body. The Ambassador however assured that his country remained committed to maintaining cordial ties with Beijing.

He clarified that Vietnam had not yet firmed up its position on the ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative of China and said, “OBOR is a big project, we need to look into it whether it is good for the country or not, will then take a position on this.”

Areas of convergence

The visit, he said, would provide India and Vietnam an opportunity to build on the areas of convergence in the strategic domain. The envoy acknowledged India’s support in capacity building by the Vietnamese naval forces and said that the Vietnamese army and the air force are in the process of considering some hardware purchase from India.

The presidential visit will begin with a stopover at Bodhgaya where Mr. Tran will reach on March 2. The delegation will reach New Delhi later on the same day and both sides will hold official talks on March 3.

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