

## Beijing wary of Indian presence in S. China Sea

China on Thursday objected to Vietnam's invitation to India to invest in oil and natural gas sector in the disputed South China Sea, saying it is firmly opposed to infringement of its rights using development of bilateral ties as an "excuse".

Vietnam's Ambassador to India Ton Sinh Thanh on Tuesday had told an Indian news channel that his country would welcome Indian investments in the South China Sea.

Responding to remarks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said: "China does not object to the development of normal bilateral relations of relevant countries in our neighbourhood... "But China firmly oppose relevant party to use it as an excuse to infringe upon China's legitimate rights and interests in the South China Sea and impair regional peace and stability," Mr. Lu said.

### Defence cooperation

Mr. Thanh had also said defence cooperation is one of the important and effective areas of cooperation between India and Vietnam and India can be helpful in expanding Vietnam's defence capabilities.

China has been opposing Oil and Natural Gas Corporation exploring oil in wells claimed by Vietnam in the South China Sea for years.

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