

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5353  
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2012  
EXPLORATION IN SOUTH CHINA SEA  
Tewari Shri Manish

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether China has agreed that India's oil and gas exploration in South China Sea is purely a commercial activity and that international law should be the basis of determining any issue relating to sovereignty and if so the details thereof;
- (b) whether only a small part of one of ONGC Videsh Limited's exploration blocks actually intrudes inside China's territorial claims and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether an unidentified Chinese warship confronted an Indian Naval vessel INS Airavat shortly after it left a Vietnamese port in the South China Sea in late July, 2011 and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of the objections raised by China to the presence of India in the South China Sea on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit held in November, 2011 at Bali, Indonesia; and
- (e) whether the China's projection of increased maritime power in the South China Sea has implications for India's national security and if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR)

(a) to (e) ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), in collaboration with Vietnamese companies, has been engaged in exploration activity in the South China Sea since 1988. During Prime Minister's meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in Bali in November 2011, China, which is a party to the South China Sea dispute, raised its concerns on India's hydro carbon exploration and exploitation projects in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam. Government has clearly conveyed that such activity by Indian companies is purely commercial in nature and that the dispute must be resolved peacefully by the countries concerned. As clarified by the Government in September 2011, there was no confrontation involving the INS Airavat in the South China Sea in July 2011. Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.