

Scarborough Shoal

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Scarborough Shoal Latest News

China is employing ships and a barrier to tighten control of the entrance to the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea amid roiling tension with the Philippines over the disputed feature.

About Scarborough Shoal

- It is a **disputed atoll** in the **South China Sea**, claimed by both **China** and the **Philippines** as part of their territory.
- It is called **Huangyan Island** by **China** and **Panatag Shoal**, or **Bajo de Masinloc** by the **Philippines**.
- It was named for the HMS Scarborough, an English ship chartered by the East India Company that struck the atoll in the 18th century.
- It lies roughly **220 km west of Luzon, the Philippines' main island**, and more than **800 km southeast of Hong Kong**.
- It is the **largest atoll in the South China Sea**.
- It covers an area of 150 sq.km. which **includes a shallow navigable lagoon**.

- **Most of the atoll is submerged at high tide, but several rocks, the most prominent of which is called South Rock, remain above water.**
- **What is the Dispute?**
 - **China's claim:** China makes a **historical claim** to the area, stating that they can **trace their ownership** of the area back to the **Yuan Dynasty** of the **1200s**.
 - **Philippines claim:** The Philippines claim the area on the **basis of geography**, as it is much **closer to the Philippines' main island of Luzon**, which contains the capital, Manila, but **lies over 500 miles from China**.
- It is **considered within the Philippines' 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone, based on the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.
- There are **no structures built** on Scarborough Shoal, but the feature is **effectively controlled by China**, which has **maintained a constant coast guard presence** at the feature **since 2012**.
- **Commercial Significance:** The surrounding waters have **rich fishing grounds**, and the seabed is believed to hold substantial **mineral resources**, including **petroleum and natural gas**.

Source: IT

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