

South China Sea Dispute

September 26, 2023 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

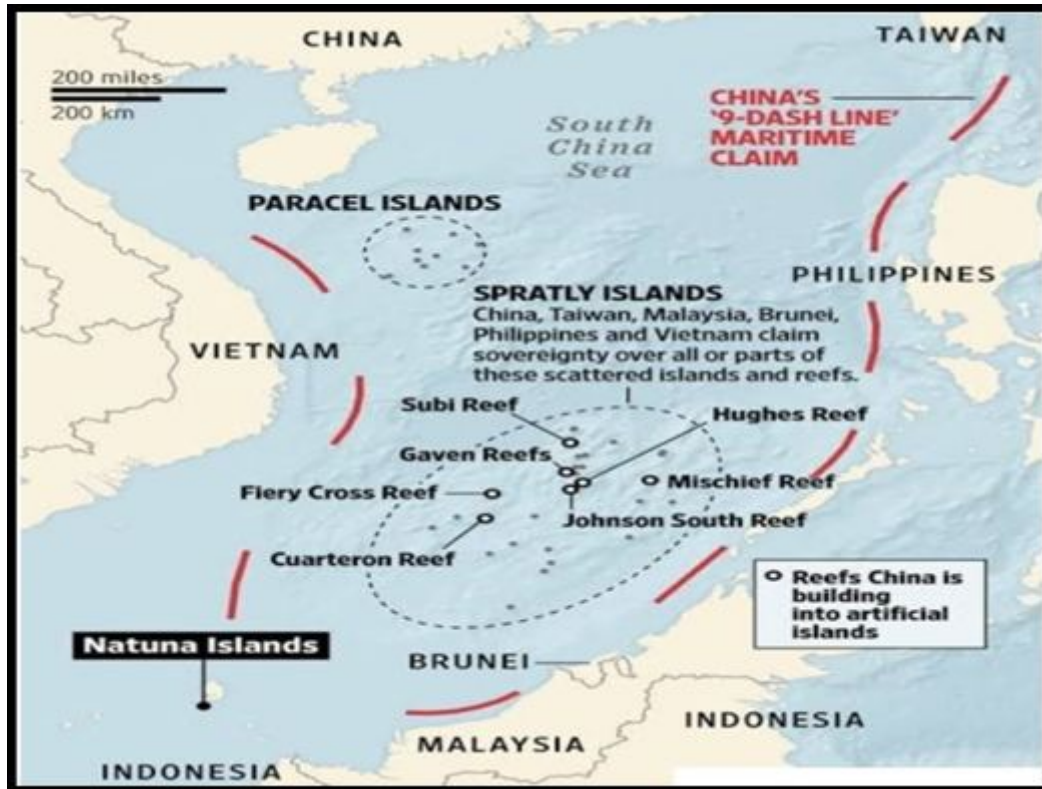
- **Why in news?**
- **About South China Sea**
- **What is South China dispute?**
- **Geopolitical significance of South China Sea:**
- **News Summary: Philippines removes South China Sea 'floating barrier' installed by China**
- **Background**

Why in news?

- The Philippines has removed a floating barrier installed by China to block Philippine fishing boats entering a contested area in the South China Sea.

- Manila says China violated its fishing rights with the 300m (1,000ft) barrier in the Scarborough Shoal.
 - China claims more than 90% of the South China Sea and seized the shoal in 2012.

South China Sea Dispute



- The South China Sea is a marginal sea that is part of the Pacific Ocean, encompassing an area from the Karimata and Malacca Straits to the Strait of Taiwan.

The dispute

- It is over territory and sovereignty over ocean areas in south China sea. This also includes the two islands namely - **The Parcel and the Spratly**.
- China often invokes the so called nine-dash line to justify its apparent historic rights over most of the South China Sea.
- Parts of this sea is also claimed by Taiwan, Malaysia, Philippines, Brunei and Vietnam.
- China has ignored a 2016 international tribunal decision that declared its assertion as without basis.
 - In 2016, Permanent Court of Arbitration awarded a verdict refuting Chinese claim over South China Sea.

Geopolitical significance of South China Sea:

- **For China**

- China declared its right to the islands of this region in an official address to the UN Secretary General back in May 2009.
- With its growing economy and increasing energy and raw material exports shipped through the Malacca Strait, Beijing needs to create strongholds in the sea to insure against possible risks.

- **For ASEAN**

- Many [ASEAN](#) countries like Vietnam, Philippines, Brunei etc. claim their sovereign rights over this region and hence are parties to the dispute.
- After the verdict, government of these countries would get more leverage in their own disputes with Beijing over South China Sea.

- **For USA**

- USA is aggressively pursuing its rebalancing strategy and hence it is wary of Chinese domination in this region.
- After the verdict, there are chances of more confrontation between USA and China in this region.

- **For India**

- India's presence in Pacific is increasing making it an important player in the Indo-Pacific region.
 - For this freedom of navigation through South China Sea is very important.
- India is also pursuing its economic interest in this region. It has collaborated with Vietnam to explore the petroleum resources in South China Sea.
 - This has been opposed by China
- Also, large volume of Indian trade happens through the Strait of Malacca.

- **Resource availability**

- The region has huge amount of oil and natural gas reserve.
- It holds one third of the entire world's marine biodiversity

- **For Multilateralism**

- South China Sea region has become a litmus test for multilateralism especially after the verdict of PCA which China is not willing to accept.
 - It has potential to affect the credibility of PCA.
- World community fears that aggressive posture of China may lead to defying of United Nation Convention on Law Of Sea (UNCLOS) which ensures freedom of navigation in high seas.

News Summary: Philippines removes South China Sea 'floating barrier' installed by China

- The Philippine coastguard has removed a floating barrier installed by China in a disputed area in the South China Sea. As per the Philippines, barrier posed a hazard to navigation, a clear violation of international law.

Background:

- **Barrier installed by China near Shoal**

- Earlier, the Philippine coastguard and fisheries bureau personnel discovered the floating barrier, on a routine patrol near the shoal.
- According to Filipino fishermen, the Chinese coastguard usually installs such barriers when it monitors a large number of fishermen in the area and then removes it later.

- **Scarborough Shoal claimed by the Philippines**

- The Philippines described the shoal as an integral part of the Philippine national territory.
- Scarborough Shoal is within the 200-nautical-mile EEZ of the Philippines as defined by international maritime law.
- It was affirmed by a ruling of The Hague's International Court of Arbitration.

- **Claim of China**

- Beijing claims the area as part of its territory and refers to Scarborough Shoal as Huangyan Island.
- In 2012, Beijing seized control of Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines and forced Filipino fishermen to travel farther for smaller catches.

Q1) Where is Scarborough Shoal located?

Scarborough Shoal is located in the South China Sea, about 120 nautical miles west of the Philippine Island of Luzon. The shoal is the largest atoll in the South China Sea and is a triangular-shaped chain of reefs and rocks.

Q2) What is nine-dash line?

The nine-dash line is a set of line segments on maps that represent the claims of China and Taiwan in the South China Sea. The line appears on some official Chinese maps and comparative maps of disputed claims in the South China Sea. It covers approximately 90% of the South China Sea.

Source: [Philippines removes South China Sea 'floating barrier' installed by China](#) | [Times Of India](#) | [BBC](#)

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