

India, Singapore naval drill shouldn't hurt other countries: China

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Beijing: China on Friday said that it does not oppose the joint naval exercise by India and Singapore in the disputed South China Sea as long as it does not "hurt" its interest.

File pic of Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying

Beijing said it was not opposed to such exchanges as long as regional peace was not disturbed.

"If such exercises and cooperation are for the benefits of regional peace and stability, then we have no opposition," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said here.

India and Singapore yesterday began a naval exercise in the contentious South China Sea, to which Beijing and other littoral countries have overlapping claims.

"We hold a very open attitude to normal exchanges between countries."

"We just hope when relevant countries conduct such exchange and cooperation, they should bear in mind such activities do not hurt the interests of other countries or have a negative impact to regional peace and stability," Hua added.

The week-long drill came as Beijing discussed the South China Sea issue with Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) and Singapore.

Though India and Singapore are not parties to the dispute, they have expressed concerns over the simmering tensions in the South China Sea waters, through which trade worth USD5 trillion passes every year.

The South China Sea has become the world's most contested region with China claiming almost the entire water body.

Besides China, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan also stake claim in the sea.

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