

China confirms protesting Manmohan Singh's visit to Arunachal Pradesh

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New Delhi, Feb.14 (ANI): A spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Thursday confirmed that Beijing has lodged a strong protest with the Indian Embassy over Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit last week to Arunachal Pradesh.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a regular bi-weekly news briefing in Beijing that:"Regarding Mr. Singh's visit to that area (Arunachal Pradesh), we have expressed our concern. Our position (on the issue) is clear. We hope that China and India will continue with consultations and negotiations which is good for peace and stability of the region. I believe both China and India are aware of this." China said that it had particular objection to Dr. Singh asserting that Arunachal Pradesh is "our land of rising sun."



Liu said the protest was conveyed at the lower levels of the Indian mission. Singh's remarks were seen as a clear message to China which claims major parts of Arunachal Pradesh as part of its territory. China has told India that it was not proper to make such comments when the two countries were engaged in talks over the boundary row.

China's protest was swiftly dismissed by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee saying Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and the Prime Minister has the right to visit any part of the country.

India and China have reiterated their willingness to find "a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution" to the "boundary question.", which has been in dispute since the 1962 war between the two countries. The two countries' Special Representatives have so far had eleven meetings on the issue since 2003 both in China and in India. The boundary dispute between India and China involve large areas along their 4,000-kilometre border.

India says China is occupying 43,180 sq km of Jammu and Kashmir, including 5,180 sq km ceded to Beijing by Islamabad under the Sino-Pakistan boundary agreement of 1963. China, in turn, says India is in possession of some 90,000 sq km of Chinese territory, mostly in Arunachal Pradesh. Before the appointment of Special Representatives, eight rounds of border talks had already been held between 1981 and 1987 and an additional 14 Joint Working Group meetings between 1988 and 2003. (ANI)