

China needs to come to table on border dispute: V K Singh

In Gandhinagar, holds 'grievance redressal meet' for NE community in state

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CHINA needs to come to the discussion table to resolve the long-standing border dispute on Arunachal Pradesh, Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs V K Singh said on Friday. "We are having a border dispute with China about Arunachal Pradesh. It doesn't become their (China's) region by merely putting claim on it (AP). To solve the issue, they (China) need to come to the discussion table. India and China may discuss this issue in the upcoming meeting (between Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ahmedabad on September 17), Singh told reporters here.

Just days before the impending visit of PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping to Gujarat, Gen. (Retd) Singh, the Union Minister in charge of North East Re-

gion, also held an informal grievance "redressal meet" of people hailing from the six states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and Manipur, who are based in Gujarat, on Friday. Singh met close to 50 members of the North-Eastern community, including students, professionals and homemakers in the lobby of the Gujarat National Law University's guest facility, which was not open to the media.

Outlining his vision for the N-E states, the Minister, during his opening remarks, promised 2,000 MW of power via clean energy to the six states of North East by way of rural electrification, an AIIMS-like institution, skill development centres and speedy road and infrastructure development.

"Things will take time, you have to trust us. In six states, clean energy will be harnessed which is not dependent on coal or gas but will be based on solar power. Rainwater harvesting measures will also be initiated.

There is a World Bank funded Rural Livelihood Mission which is dormant now but we plan to make it work soon," he told the students.

The Minister was in Gandhinagar to flag off GNLU's two-day "India's Foreign Relations - Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean: Strengthening the Political, Economic, Security and Cultural Prospects" where he was Chief Guest, before he met with members of the NE community. He was accompanied by Sunil Deodhar, the Poll Manager for Narendra Modi's Varanasi campaign, Sunil Trivedi, who is part of BJP's state election management wing and Rajendra Singh Chandel, the national co-convenor of BJP North East cell.

Speaking at the conference, Singh outlined issues of illegal trafficking of drugs, people, illegal fishing into Indian waters, illegal survey of Indian areas in a bid to start mining operations as issues that were being addressed by the new government's

"proactive foreign policy". "A new separate hostel for people of the North Eastern region will be started at Jawaharlal Nehru University soon, which will be extended to all other metros," he said.

Outlining the meet as one to address grievances, Singh took questions from more than eight people in the meeting. Sunep C Jamir, a youngster from Nagaland, said, "Firstly, sensitise people of law-enforcement agencies about North Eastern states, who don't even know where Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh are located as many think they belong to China or Nepal. Also, there are preconceived notions about our culture Just because I wear a different dress, don't treat me differently... No one wants to be an entrepreneur in Nagaland, but everyone wants to get into rural government jobs because they can earn a lot of money through corrupt means."

With PTI inputs



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GEN. (RETD) V K SINGH,
Minister of State for
External Affairs