



Scarborough Shoal

Source: ET

The **Philippines** has strongly opposed **China's announcement** to establish a **nature reserve** in the **South China Sea** at the disputed **Scarborough Shoal**, which has long been a **flashpoint of tensions** and **standoffs** between the two countries.

Scarborough Shoal

- **About:** It is a **triangular atoll**, located **200 km from the Philippines coast**, and within its **exclusive economic zone (EEZ)** under UNCLOS(1982).
 - It is part of the broader South China Sea disputes (**Spratlys, Paracels, Nine-Dash Line**), where **China's nine-dash line** overlaps with the EEZs of Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia.
- **Significance:** Rich in fish stocks and provides natural shelter for vessels.
 - Strategically placed near shipping lanes that handle **USD 3 trillion annual global trade**.
 - Control gives a geopolitical and military edge in one of the busiest waterways.
- The **2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling** rejected China's broad **South China Sea claims** and its **blockade of the shoal**, but left the **sovereignty issue unresolved**, causing ongoing tensions.



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