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Vietnam Considered Strong Pillar of Indian “Look East” Policy

Vietnam News Brief Service

14 October 2011: Vietnam is a strong pillar of India’s “Look East Policy” and India stands committed to forging closer relations with Vietnam both bilaterally and within the framework of ASEAN, President Pratibha Patil said. Indian President Patil made this affirmation in an interview given to the Vietnam New Agency after receiving Vietnamese counterpart Truong Tan Sang. Patil went on to say that the two countries’ bilateral ties have deepened in recent years to cover cooperation in areas such as political, defense and security, trade and investment and capacity-building and bilateral assistance. India and Vietnam enjoy a strategic understanding at regional and multilateral forums like ASEAN, East Asia Summit, ASEM, ARF and international organizations like WTO and UN.

She suggested both countries take advantage of their synergies to jointly face emerging challenges and also to exploit new opportunities.

President Truong Tan Sang’s visit to India will inject greater substance into the two countries’ ‘strategic partnership’ by providing high level political impetus, noted the Indian president.

During the visit, the two sides have agreed on several significant initiatives and proposals that will take their strategic partnership to a new level, Patil said, adding that several important agreements in areas including agriculture, culture, oil and gas amongst others will also be signed.

At an occasion of Sang’s state visit, the state-run Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (PetroVietnam) and its Indian partner ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) signed a three-year agreement to tighten cooperation in the field of oil and gas exploration and production. The two groups will jointly exploit gas and oil in Block 127 and Block 128 lying in Vietnam’s exclusive economic zone in the East Sea despite protest by China, the country illogically claims nearly the entire sea, including Vietnam’s Hoang Sa (Paracel), and Truong Sa (Spratly).

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