

《Hanoi faulted for hype on reclamation》

Sources tell China Daily that it was Vietnam that pushed for inserting "concerns" over land reclamation into a communique issued on Sunday by all 10 Southeast Asian countries.

The sources, who are close to the matter and requested not to be named, noted that Vietnam is like a thief crying "stop thief" as it has been working on land reclamation in the South China Sea in recent years and boosting its military deployment there.

Aside from concerns by some ASEAN countries about land reclamation, the communique released at the 50th annual Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is "generally positive about the cooperation between China and ASEAN", the sources said.

Speaking about the discussions taking place at the meeting, one of the sources said ASEAN countries gave sufficient endorsement to the achievements of China-ASEAN ties.

Regarding the South China Sea issue, the countries also spoke positively at the meeting of the joint efforts by China and ASEAN in the past year in stabilizing the South China Sea situation, the source added.

The second source told China Daily that the contents involving China within the meeting's joint communique are "mostly positive".

Articles 118 to 123 of the communique give a sufficient account of the development of China-ASEAN ties, the source added.

Article 118 says: "We acknowledged China's growing role in the region and highlighted that China's economic growth continues to benefit the region.... We looked forward to more high-level dialogues and exchanges between ASEAN and China."

The part regarding the South China Sea takes a smaller portion in this year's document than in those of past years, and its tone is generally more positive, the source said.

The source noted that there are differences within ASEAN about reclamation as the communique mentioned concerns expressed by "some ministers" on the land reclamation, and the document did not use the term "serious concerns".

"It was a stand-alone country, not the entire ASEAN, that has concerns over this. The country is Vietnam," the source said.

Since 2007, Vietnam has accelerated its land reclamation on 21 illegally occupied islands and reefs, and has built

military facilities, including helicopter pads.

"Undoubtedly, what Vietnam has done is the trick of a thief crying 'stop thief'," the source added.

