

India & South Korea Sign Civil Nuclear Agreement

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AsianScientist (Jul. 26, 2011) - India and South Korea signed a nuclear agreement on Monday that will allow the latter to bid for the sale of its nuclear reactors to India.

The pact was initialed at Seoul just a few hours after [Indian President Pratibha Patil arrived in the city](#). The nuclear deal had been accorded priority during her visit. Prior to her departure, she said in New Delhi that “she will push for a civil nuclear co-operation with South Korea.”

The significance of the agreement is that it now provides South Korea with a legal foundation to participate in India’s nuclear expansion program, and to bid for constructing nuclear power plants in India.

Soon after the agreement was signed by Indian Atomic Energy Commission chairman Srikumar Banerjee and South Korean foreign minister Kim Sung-hwan, it was termed by Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, as a “win-win” situation for both the countries.

South Korea is the ninth country with which India has signed a nuclear deal. The others are Russia, the U.S., France, Mangolia, Argentina, Kazakhstan, the U.K., and Canada.

Seoul’s state-run Korea Electricity Power Corporation has been trying to collaborate with India’s Nuclear Power Corporation to build reactors in this country.

The signing of the deal comes at a time when an [Indo-Japanese nuclear deal has run into rough weather](#). Nuclear experts in India said that South Korea wants to use this opportunity to sell its nuclear hardware to India.

Both India and South Korea decided to start talks on civil nuclear cooperation during a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak at the ASEAN summit in Hanoi last October.

South Korea wants to export its nuclear technology with a goal of exporting 80 nuclear reactors to various countries by 2030.

Currently, South Korea has 21 reactors providing 40 percent of this country’s power. Plans are afoot to increase it to 56 percent by 2020.

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