Indian President Pratibha Patil Visits South Korea To Finalize Nuclear Deal

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AsianScientist (Jul. 25, 2011) - India will explore possibilities of strengthening its nuclear understanding with South Korea during the visit of Indian President Pratibha Patil and chairman of Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) S. Banerjee this week.

On the eve of her departure, President Patil said that during her three-day trip she will "push for a civil nuclear co-operation with South Korea."

Indian nuclear experts told *Asian Scientist Magazine* that this collaboration is significant because it comes at a time when a pact with Japan has failed to materialize. They believe that South Korea is keen on signing a nuke deal with India since it will allow its firms to construct reactors in India.

> "Seeing that a Indo-Japanese nuke agreement has hit a roadblock, South Korea wants to use this opportunity to sell its nuclear hardware to India," said an official.

South Korea plans to export 80 nuclear reactors to various countries by 2030. As of 2010, South Korean companies have reached agreements to build reactors in Jordan and the UAE. The deal with UAE is valued at US$20 billion.

Apart from India, South Korea is also exploring opportunities in Turkey, Indonesia, and China. In December 2010, Malaysia expressed interest in obtaining South Korea's nuclear technology.

Previously, both India and South Korea had decided to initiate negotiations on civil nuclear co-operation during a meeting between PM Manmohan Singh and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak during the ASEAN Summit in Hanoi last October.

The nuclear agreement with South Korea is a result of a strong relationship which India enjoys with East Asian and Southeast Asian countries. If a formal Indo-South Korean nuclear deal is firmed up during President Patil's visit, it will be the ninth such agreement which India has signed with different countries.

The other nations with which India has nuclear pacts are Russia, the U.S., France, Mangolia, Argentina, Kazakhstan, the U.K., and Canada.

Currently, South Korea has 21 reactors operating at four sites, providing about 40 percent of the country's electricity. This is expected to go up to 56 percent by 2020.

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(Jul. 26, 2011) India & South Korea Sign Civil Nuclear Agreement.

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