

Canada, India poised to resume nuclear trade news

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Toronto: Setting aside years of mutual recrimination Canada and India are poised to sign a deal which will allow resumption of nuclear trade between the two countries. According to Canada's international trade minister the deal will help Canadian companies tap the lucrative Indian nuclear market.

Canada had ceased nuclear co-operation with India after it tested its first nuclear device in 1974. Once signed, the deal will allow Canada to resume sale of nuclear technology and materials to India after a gap of three and a half decades.

"We're very close to having an agreement with India related to the civilian use of nuclear energy for the purpose of helping them meet their energy needs," said trade minister Stockwell Day, without indicating when such a deal would likely be inked.

Indian diplomatic sources in Ottawa have apparently indicated that the agreement was on the verge of being finalised. Reports suggest that the Canada and India may even have exchanged the draft agreement.

Earlier, in January this year, Day had announced that government-owned Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. (AECL) had signed a memorandum of understanding with India for the supply of next-generation nuclear reactors.

With the successful conclusion of the Indo-US nuclear pact the international community has now lifted a three-decade ban on nuclear trade with India.

It is estimated that India may build or place orders for as many as 25 to 30 new reactors in the coming years. "The estimation is over the next 20 years, something like anywhere from CA\$50 (\$44) to CA\$150 billion (\$133 billion) worth of civil nuclear energy needs are what we're looking at," Day said Wednesday.

On Tuesday, a senior executive from AECL told Canada's finance committee that it was considering sale of its next-generation ACR 1000 reactors in foreign markets. The corporation is already in agreement with a leading Indian engineering firm for the costing of the ACR 1000s. Such an agreement can only be a prelude to a possible sale.

Saskatchewan's Cameco Corp, is also poised to sell uranium to India and is awaiting a formal agreement between India and Canada in this regard.
