

India chases uranium deal

Everyone knows what's coming after having fiddled with 'renewables' for a few years.

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Competition between the supercharged growth economies of India and China for long-term secure uranium supplies is heating up, with India's state-owned Nuclear Power Corp revealing it has approached uranium companies in Australia and Canada for a deal.

NPC chairman SK Jain said the company was seeking joint ventures where each investment would come in at \$US1.2 billion (\$1.57 billion). He said companies in Australia, which is the world's biggest holder of uranium resources, and Canada, the world's biggest producer, had been approached.

"Many uranium mines are not being fully exploited today" and would be expanded because of **demand from India and China**, Mr Jain said in a phone interview from Mumbai.

BHP Billiton, owner of the Olympic Dam copper/uranium mine in South Australia, would not comment on whether it had been approached. Energy Resources of Australia, owner of the Ranger mine and the undeveloped Jabiluka deposit in the Northern Territory, said India's interest was news to it.

Olympic Dam was the subject of a visit by a high-powered Chinese delegation following the recent signing of a nuclear safeguards agreement in Canberra that cleared the way for first uranium sales to the country.

The agreement comes as BHP works towards a tripling of uranium production from Olympic Dam, perhaps funded by firm Chinese contracts.