

N-deal: India, US narrow differences

India! Beware the soothsayers of DOE ... they want your pants.

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NEW DELHI: Seeking to conclude the bilateral nuclear agreement at the earliest, India and the US on Wednesday narrowed down differences on various issues as they wrapped up first round of official-level talks here with "good progress".

After three days of tough negotiations on issues like atomic fuel supply, storage, export control and sale of technology, the two sides decided to hold "fairly soon" the second round of discussions to conclude the Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, also called 123 Agreement.

The two sides had "very productive discussions", sources said. The two countries made "good progress towards reaching an agreed text" on the pact, the sources said.

The first round of formal talks saw the two countries discuss contentious issues like future nuclear testing by India and assurances on atomic fuel supplies by the US.

At the talks, the Indian side was led by S Jai Shankar, Joint Secretary (America) in the External Affairs Ministry, while the US delegation was headed by Richard Stratford, Director of the Department of Energy.

The Indian delegation also comprised officials from the Department of Atomic Energy while the US side includes representatives from the State Department and Bureau of Security and Non-proliferation.

The US side appeared satisfied with the talks, the sources said.

The officials of the two countries will now report to their respective governments and finalise date for the next round of talks.