

UAE's adoption of nuclear pacts will enhance its energy security

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Abu Dhabi: Nuclear power can make a real contribution to meeting commitments to transition to a low carbon economy whilst still enhancing energy security, said Lord Jones of Birmingham, UK Minister of State for Trade and Investment, yesterday.

He was speaking after the UAE and the UK signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

"The UK strongly supports the development of programmes for safe, secure, and economically viable civil nuclear power generation and research. We welcome the UAE's intention to adopt relevant international agreements and its determination to ensure the safety and security of nuclear material throughout the process."

Lord Jones said over many years the UK has developed a wealth of expertise and experience in civil nuclear business, on which the UAE will be most welcome to draw. "I hope we can learn from each other as we develop our respective civil nuclear programmes."

Signing the MoU was an important first step, and the UK looks forward to working closely with the UAE on these crucially important issues in the months and years ahead, he said.

A study conducted by the federal government revealed demand for electricity was set to increase to more than double the current annual demand of 15,546 megawatts (MW) of energy.

It was predicted, based on the growth in the economy and infrastructure, that 40,858MW of energy would be required to meet demand by 2020. Latest studies estimate the UAE has 100 years of oil and 150 years of gas left.

The UAE's white paper "Policy of the UAE on the Evaluation and Potential Development of Peaceful Nuclear Energy" acknowledges that fossil fuels and coal could meet energy demands, but it considers their economical and environmental cost too high to rely on them alone.

Transparent: Combat gas shortfall

The UK became the third country with which the UAE signed deals on peaceful nuclear cooperation after the US and France.

On March 23 the UAE announced it would set up an agency to assess and develop a peaceful and transparent energy programme. The Emirates Nuclear Energy Programme has capital of Dh375 million.

Foreign Minister Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan said last month that the move was necessary in order to combat a predicted shortage of natural gas. A study conducted by the federal government revealed demand for electricity was set to increase to more than double the current annual demand of 15,546 megawatts of

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