

Abu Dhabi power demand to soar 80% by 2012

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POWER SURGE: Demand for power in Abu Dhabi will rise 80% by 2012, Sheikh Diyab said. (Getty Images)

Abu Dhabi expects demand for power to rise almost 80% by 2012 on a boom in the Gulf emirate's construction and industry sector, according to a government forecast issued on Wednesday.

Demand will rise to 10,600 megawatts in 2012 from 5,910 MW this year, Abu Dhabi's five-year strategic plan showed.

Capacity will rise to 12,503 MW from 9,245 MW, led by two new power plants at Shuweihat to the west of the emirate.

International contractors are due to submit bids in the coming days for Shuweihat 2 plant, Abu Dhabi Water and Electricity Authority (Adwea) Chairman Sheikh Diyab bin Zayed Al Nahyan told a news conference on Wednesday. The plant will have power capacity of 1,600 MW and will also pump 100 million gallons a day of water.

"We also plan to launch another strategic project, Shuweihat 3, with capacity of 1,500 MW and 100 million gallons of water," he said.

Demand for power in the world's largest oil-exporting region is surging on population growth and commercial and industrial expansion fuelled by record oil prices.

Adwea's director of privatisation Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi told newswire Reuters he expected at least three international groups would bid for Shuweihat 2. The industry was facing challenges to meet growth needs due to a lack of contractors to build new power plants, he said.

"Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has promised Adwea more gas," Al Nuaimi said. "Fuel is not the problem. The challenge is engineering, procurement and construction

contractors. There is too much competition in the market with too many projects coming up."