

Qatar, Saudi link up to power grid

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DOHA: The first phase of GCC Interconnection Grid Project was successfully launched with electricity transmitting between Qatar and Saudi Arabia borders. The Doha South-Salwa 400kV line was energized for the first time on Wednesday marking the completion of the Phase I of the three-phased Interconnection Grid Project.

The operation is considered to be a vital development in the Gulf Cooperation Council Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) supported Interconnection Grid.

The Phase I, which is also known as the GCC North Grid, is designed to interconnect Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar; Qatar General Electricity and Water Cooperation (Kahramaa) officials announced here yesterday.

The contracts for Phase I of the power grid project were awarded in November 2001 to connect Qatar with Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. This phase of the project involves the installation of 400kV double circuit interconnection line from Al Zour station in Kuwait to south Doha station with a total length exceeding 800km. It includes as well the construction of six transformer stations in Al Zour, Al Fadely, Ghonan and Salwa in Saudi Arabia, Jasra in Bahrain and South of Doha.

The actual power exchange has started within GCC countries after the experimental operation of the substations in the interconnected countries. There has been exchange of 60 megawatt power between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait via Al Zour in Kuwait substation, and Al Fadhilli substation in Saudi Arabia and frequent converter facility. Other power exchange will be conducted with Bahrain through submarine cable.

Of the three-phased \$1.407bn GCC Interconnection Power Grid Project, the second phase will cover the interconnection of the independent systems in the UAE as well as Oman. This is also called GCC South Grid. GCCIA is not involved in the execution of Phase II.

The Phase III covers the interconnection of the GCC South Grid with the GCC North Grid. The three phases of GCC interconnection grid are expected to be completed by 2010.