

Ramokgopa: SA's electricity system is improving, but load shedding continues

By [Lindsey Schutters](#)

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South Africa's electricity system is showing signs of significant improvement, with unplanned capacity loss reducing from 14,100MW to 12,700MW, according to the Minister in the Presidency Responsible for Electricity, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa. He emphasised that this is not the end of load shedding, but rather an indication of the system's improving health.



Over the past fortnight, available capacity has consistently surpassed peak demand. However, load shedding continues due to two main factors. At least 3,000MW of available capacity is sourced from open cycle gas turbines (OCGT) running on diesel, and planned maintenance remains high, fluctuating between 8,000 to 9,000MW.

“Even with that scale of planned maintenance we still have a situation where we are able to keep load shedding at the levels of, at worst, Stage 3 or oscillating between no load shedding to Stage 3 at the worst moment,” he said.



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Despite the scale of planned maintenance, load shedding has been kept to a minimum, oscillating between no load shedding to Stage 3 at its worst. The Minister stressed that efforts are ongoing to reduce partial load losses, which occur when generating units fail to produce their full capacity.

Transmission crisis

Ramokgopa also highlighted the importance of onboarding new generating capacity, particularly renewable energy, to add additional capacity to the national grid.

He revealed that private sector financing is available and being encouraged but assured that the South African government will retain ownership of the grid through the Eskom owned and newly established National Transmission Company of South Africa.

Ramokgopa explained that government is working on an architecture and legal configuration to access funding, with the possibility of establishing an Independent Transmission Project office, similar to the Independent Power Producer Procurement office on the generation side.

“ This ensures that we are able to procure with speed, agility, applying some degree of innovation and ensure that we can access that liquidity that's sitting with the private sector without relinquishing state ownership of the grid ”

Despite acknowledging challenges in transmission expansion, Ramokgopa emphasised that the government is proactively addressing these issues, which are almost equivalent to those on the generation side.



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He warned that if not tackled immediately, these challenges could be even more catastrophic, potentially undermining the integrity of the system.

“We are not waiting for the crisis to confront us. We are going to address that situation immediately. This is in support of Eskom’s work consistent with their transmission development plan which advocates for the expansion of the network.”

ABOUT LINDSEY SCHUTTERS

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