

Eskom implements winter plan, but urges SA to use power sparingly

Eskom has reviewed its winter plan, but has cautioned the country to use electricity sparingly as the demand for power is expected to increase this week as cold weather gets a grip on parts of South Africa.



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“We have done an extensive winter plan and review of our power system and identified the problems. While the plan gives us confidence that we may go through winter with no or limited load shedding, we are mindful of the potential of risks on a very tight power system which may result in shifts on the power system and which could result in load shedding,” the power utility’s Group Chief Executive Phakamani Hadebe says. “The power system is expected to be tight for this week.

Hadebe said Eskom has mapped out scenarios where load shedding will be implemented in cases where unplanned breakdowns increase to more than 9,500, MW, as well as where there are delays in returning units from planned maintenance or in cases of unanticipated disruptive events.

Avoiding load shedding

“The first few days in April have given reassurance of the integrity of our plan as we managed to avoid load shedding on three days where it was forecasted due to good performance of our plant. We managed to go through periods of high demand in the evening peak without using a lot of diesel,” says Hadebe.

Over the next two months, Eskom expects additional power from generation units that were out for planned maintenance which is currently at about 6,000MW and will ramp down to about 2,000MW towards the highest demand period in May.

Two units that were on long-term outages at Kriel and Matla (1,050MW) will also be returned to service. Kusile 3 is also expected to synchronise to the grid for the first time towards the end of April.

The three power stations are all located in Mpumalanga.

In addition, imports from Cahora Bassa are expected to be back at full load. This follows damage caused to power lines from the hydropower plant in Mozambique, as a consequence of Cyclone Idai.

“We promise to keep our customers informed about the state of our power system on a continuous basis. The utility will implement its “Use electricity smartly” campaign this week. The campaign is aimed at reducing the use of electricity.

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