

Eskom generation capacity improving

Eskom has recorded a significant improvement with its energy generation moving from an average of 28,000 megawatts (MW) to close to 29,000MW in the past week, Electricity Minister, Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, announced on Sunday.



Image source: Brett Sayles from [Pexels](#)

“There’s a considerable improvement on the generation side, you can see that we’re beginning to normalise available capacity to be upward of 29,000MW,” he said.

He also took the time to thank the leadership of Eskom, starting with the Board led by Mpho Makwana, followed by the acting Eskom CEO Calib Cassim, and the entity’s Head of Generation Bheki Nxumalo and his team.

According to the Minister, from 7 to 11 August, Eskom had a generation capacity of 28,932MW and exceeded 29,000MW on two occasions.

Ramokgopa was updating the media on the progress made regarding the one-year implementation of the Energy Action Plan (EAP) and provided a weekly generation outlook.

“During winter, demand did surge and of course, the instrument that the system operator has to balance the grid was to ensure we intensify the stages of load shedding.

“The expectation now is that we’re entering a less severe period of cold and demand is going to taper down.”

As the team improves generation capacity, they are also working to ensure the long-term sustainability of the units to become more reliable by ramping up planned outages.

“Remember when we went into the winter period, the deliberate act to take out the units for service was going to be reduced so that we have many units as possible producing the megawatts.”

He also told the media that Eskom breached the 60% energy availability factor (EAF) as the demand comes down.

“However, for long-term sustainability, it’s important to take out these units as at when we deem it necessary because when these units come back they sustain levels of performance.”

On unplanned capacity loss factor (UCLF), he said it was also decreasing as well.

By definition, UCLF is the ratio between the unavailable energy of the units that are out on unplanned outages over a period compared to the total net installed capacity of all units over the same period.

According to the Minister, UCLF is still at an average of 15,000MW from 18,000MW in previous weeks, with plans to keep it under 14,000MW.

“An area that continues to be at albatross is on the partial load losses these are the units that are performing at the right levels although they are giving us the megawatts, are not at the level that is desired, which is currently sitting at 6,226MW.”

He assured the citizens that the state-owned entity that these were receiving attention.

“What we’re going to do and not compromise on is the philosophy of maintenance plan so you’re able to guarantee the performance of these units going into the future.”

He noted the underperforming units were due to historic reasons, including a lack of investment in maintenance.

“I think it’s important that we’re transparent in our conversations and take everyone along in relation to the progress or lack of progress could be making against the target we set ourselves.”

The Minister acknowledged that load shedding is causing “untold” devastation to the South African economy.

“There are people out of jobs and there are many companies that folded and finding it difficult to continue to produce. Retailers have to spend an upfront capital cost to meet the requirements associated with buying generators and operational costs for purposes of keeping the cold chain and their operations going.

“Small businesses in the townships are finding it difficult to continue and investors can’t find a legitimate reason to invest in the South African economy and therefore, there’s an opportunity cost associated with load shedding.”

However, Ramokgopa stressed that Eskom is working around the clock to turn this around by improving underperforming power stations and addressing breakdown issues.

“I’m very optimistic about the future. We set the bar very high. We’re going to improve this energy availability factor.”

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