

■ NATION

SA caught by surprise as Eskom flicks the off switch

STAFF WRITER

AILING power utility Eskom once again caught South Africans by surprise when it implemented Stage 2 load shedding yesterday.

The power cuts were implemented from 4 to 11pm, according to Eskom. No indication was given whether there would be any load shedding today.

“Eskom would like to inform South Africans and all its customers that the electricity system is severely constrained.

“In the power alert issued earlier this morning (yesterday), Eskom informed that unplanned breakdowns were at 12 300 megawatts, and that there was a probability of load shedding at short notice if unexpected shifts, such as additional unplanned breakdowns, were experienced.

“We have experienced a loss of additional generation. As a result, it has become necessary to implement Stage 2 rotational load shedding in order to protect the power system from a total

collapse,” said Eskom.

Eskom had on September 4 warned that in order to avoid load shedding, unplanned breakdowns needed to be contained at below 9 500MW.

“In the event generator breakdowns are experienced beyond 10 500MW, there will be high usage of emergency resources (diesel and pumped storage generators), which may lead to load shedding if the supply constraint is sustained for a long duration.

“The severe supply constraint being

experienced has come about due to high levels of unplanned breakdowns that have exceeded the 10 500MW limit.

“We unreservedly apologise to South Africans for the negative impact this may have on them and want to assure the nation that we continue to work tirelessly to ensure the security of energy supply. We remind customers that load shedding is conducted rotationally as a measure of last resort to protect the

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