

■ BREAKDOWN

South Africa left in the dark about surprise load shedding

ESKOM once again caught South Africans by surprise when it implemented Stage 2 load-shedding yesterday.

The power cuts were implemented from 4pm to 11pm, according to Eskom, with no indication on whether there would be any load-shedding today.

“Eskom would like to inform all its customers that the electricity system is severely constrained. In the power alert issued earlier this morning (Thursday), Eskom informed that unplanned breakdowns were at 12 300MW, 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 total collapse,” said Eskom.

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

“In the event that 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 constraints are 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,” Eskom said.

“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

power system from total collapse or a blackout,” said Eskom.

Customers were advised to check their load-shedding schedules on the Eskom or municipal websites.

Meanwhile Parliament has refuted claims that it owed Eskom R17 000.

Parliament spokesperson Moloto Mothapo said the information given to the standing committee on public accounts (Scopa) during the presentation by the deputy director-general of the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr Kevin Naidoo, was erroneous as Parliament did not have any electricity account with

Eskom, and thus could not owe or be in arrears with the entity.

“Parliament’s buildings, which include the parliamentary precinct and villages that accommodate MPs in Cape Town, are under the management of the Department of Public Works. This means the Department of Public Works, not Parliament, is billed for electricity and services of the parliamentary buildings.

“An an institution that conducts oversight over Eskom and is key to addressing the challenges confronting it, Parliament should not be among those contributing to the utility’s financial problems.” | **MERCURY CORRESPONDENT**