

SA to plug power gap with 3GW of gas projects and Koeberg extension

By Nelson Banya

5 Nov 2023

South Africa is accelerating plans for 3GW of gas-fired power generation to help to plug an energy deficit that is hurting the economy, electricity minister Kgosientsho Ramakgopa said in a press briefing on Sunday.



South African Minister of Electricity Kgosientsho Ramakgopa briefs members of the media after his visit to assess progress on bringing back online faulty units and boosting power generation at the Kusile Power Station, in Delmas. Source: Reuters/Siphwe Sibeko

Africa's most developed economy is facing daily power cuts because of regular breakdowns at state power utility Eskom's ageing coal-fired plants, with officials saying that up to 6GW of new generating capacity is required to end rolling blackouts.

Part of the government's plans to increase generation include a 2GW mobile facility and a 1GW plant near Coega, in the Eastern Cape, Ramakgopa said, adding that the government was at the procurement stage for the projects.



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"One of the things receiving priority is around the 3,000MW of gas. As you know gas, from an emissions standpoint, is a step down compared to coal, so it's important we accelerate that," Ramakgopa said.

Government's original plans for a 3GW gas-fired power plant in Richards Bay on the east coast were opposed by environmental groups calling for acceleration of renewable energy projects in line with a global shift away from polluting fossil fuels.

Ramakgopa said in June that South Africa expects more than 5.5GW of new renewable energy projects to come online by 2026.

Eskom is also seeking to extend to life of its 40-year-old 1.94GW Koeberg nuclear plant by 20 years beyond its scheduled shutdown next year.

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