

Power shortages set to continue

Saturday 30 January, 2010

author/source:Zimbabwe Independent published:Fri 29-Jan-

Only one unit is operating at Hwange. The other five are tripped Chris Muronzi



Zimbabwe will continue to experience power shortages. A Zimbabwe Power Company generation report dated January 24 2010, seen by businessdigest, shows that all is not well at Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC) with only one unit operating at Hwange. The other five are tripped due to system failure with only unit 6 expected to return to service soon. The ZPC report reads: "The total internal power generation capacity available from ZPC power stations is 835MW which is 53,2% of the forecast maximum demand of 1570MW. Six units are in service at Kariba and only one unit is service at Hwange Power Station. There is no generation at the small thermal power stations." Hwange Power Station is operating at a mere 13,4% of capacity producing 90MW against targeted capacity of 670 MW. Kariba is operating at almost near capacity. The plant is generating 745 MW against a targeted capacity of 750MW. All three small thermal stations are not generating any power. As of Monday this week, ZPC was producing only 835MW against a forecast demand of 1 570 MW.

ZPC's imports are not helping with the power company importing 230 MW of power against the required 300MW. Ironically, Zimbabwe is still meeting its end of the export bargain with Namibia. Documents show that ZPC is exporting 150MW to Namibia despite a crippling shortage of energy on the domestic scene. With a deficit of 655 MW, Zimbabwe will continue to experience power outages. At Hwange only Unit 4 is in service and sending out 90MW. According to reports, Unit 1 is need of a "major overhaul". Unit 2 and 3 are tripped due to a system disturbance but might return to service. Engineers are said to be inspecting Unit 5 which tripped almost two weeks ago. Unit 6 went out due to a tube leak and is now awaiting diesel to return to service. Worries over erratic power supplies have seen mines and industry engaging Zesa on how to ease the problems. But with the current problems at HPS, it could be long until blackouts are eliminated.