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Malawians to face extended blackout

JONATHAN PASUNGWI
STAFF REPORTER

Malawians should brace for long hours of loadshedding as Electricity Generation Company (Egenco) undertakes maintenance works at Nkula B Hydro-Power Station in Blantyre from tomorrow to December 18 2022.

The development has compelled Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (Escom) to revise its loadshedding schedule from tomorrow to Monday December 19 2022 due to reduction in available power supply.

In a statement issued yesterday, Escom said the country will only have about 171 megawatts (MW) to supply to essential services such as hospitals and water pumping stations in all the regions.

Reads the statement in part: "Therefore, all domestic and industrial customers will be

subjected to an average of 17.5 hours of loadshedding.

"Customers are advised to switch off electrical appliances during the stated period as power supply may be restored earlier than anticipated."

In its statement issued earlier, Egenco said there will be an emergency outage of Nkula B Power Station to repair the damaged bypass pipe.

The company stated that the machine was taken out from operation because of a leakage in the upstream bypass because of a fault that was developed on December 5 2022 that led to the national power blackout.

Consumers Association of Malawi executive director John Kapito yesterday described the situation as "very unfortunate". He said it will deactivate the Christmas mood.

He said: "One begins to question what is happening in this country where things are not working. We, as consumers,



Kapito: Consumers are helpless

we are left helpless and what is coming out now is an insult."

This year, Malawi has experienced several national power blackouts since January 24 due to Cyclone Ana followed by the second in February due to debris in the system following Cyclone Ana. ■

PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

Mpinganjira gets court relief

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expressed satisfaction with the outcome.

He said: "The judgement reverses the decision of the Financial Services Appeal Committee and by extension that of the registrar of financial institutions.

"It means that our clients can proceed with their intended share transfers subject of course to lawful scrutiny by the registrar. So, generally we are happy with the outcome."

On the other hand, Senior Counsel Modocai Mshisa, who represented RBM, said yesterday he had not yet studied the judgement.

He said: "For full appreciation of issues, it is important for anyone interested to look at full copies of the decision of the appeals committee and the skeleton arguments of both sides in the High Court.

"After I review the judgement and subject to what client may advise in respect of their right to appeal, I may or may not be able to comment on the judgement."

Mpinganjira and the others had argued before the committee presided over by Judge Michael Mtambo (now retired) and RBM as respondent that RBM erred in placing "unlawful and unreasonable limitations" on the rights of Thomson Mpinganjira and Peter Frank Mpinganjira.

They further submitted that the registrar of financial institutions also erred in law in deciding that Nathan Mpinganjira, William Mpinganjira and Annabel Mpinganjira were not fit and proper to hold shares in M Development Limited. M Development is a company with shares in FDH Financial Holdings Limited, the parent company of listed FDH Bank.

"The respondent erred in law when he considered irrelevant considerations in deciding whether [Nathan Mpinganjira and Annabel Mpinganjira] were fit and proper persons to hold shares in [M Development Limited], namely, that the said applicants are related by blood to [Thomson Mpinganjira]," they argued.

They further contended that RBM did not also give legally justifiable reasons for M Development's limited to dispose of its shares in FDH, adding that treated Thomson Mpinganjira and M Development Limited as one person.

In deciding the matter, Manda said the respondent erred in law in placing "unlawful and unreasonable limitations" on the rights of Thomson Mpinganjira and Peter Mpinganjira to deal and transact in the shares that they hold in M Development Limited as they are at liberty to so deal with their shares as they deem fit.

Manda has since ordered RBM to foot the costs of the case. ■

Ministry engages editors on amended land laws

MARTIN GELA JNR
CORRESPONDENT

Ministry of Lands has said the media is crucial in raising awareness of the new land-related laws enacted in July this year to ensure that Malawians are familiar with the processes.

Speaking during a meeting in Blantyre for editors drawn from various media houses in the Southern Region, Deputy Minister of Lands Deus Gumbwa said the new laws were signed by President Lazarus Chakwera in May.

He said the new laws are packaged in a language which some citizens cannot understand, as such the media will have to reach them with easy-to-use information.

Said Gumbwa: "About six land-related Bills were passed in 2016 and these are Land Act, Land Survey Act, Physical Planning Act, Registered Land Act, Land Acquisition and Compensation Act, and the Customary Land Act.

"However, there were some grey areas which needed review. That's why these laws have been amended to the advantage of citizens."

He explained that, for instance, with the help of Shire Valley Transformation Programme (SVTP), the ministry is piloting a land registration process in the twin Shire Valley districts of Chikwawa and Nsanje while Agriculture Commercialisation (Agcom) is implementing the same in other areas.

"We are doing the same in Phalombe, Nkhokotaka, Kasungu, Nkhata Bay and



Gumbwa: Media will play a key role in disseminating the land-related amendments

Karonga districts but we are happy that people out there are receiving the issue well," he said.

Among the amended laws is the Land Survey Act which states that any person who wants a survey of any kind should first notify the Surveyor General and later surrender the findings to that office according to Section 42. Those who violate this law will be fined between K500 000 and K1 million.

The Land Act, on the other hand, restricts selling of undeveloped land to individuals, a trend now common among real estate agents.

During the meeting, Ministry of Lands Principal Secretary Davie Chilongwa said a Bill is being developed to address the issue of sale of vacant plots. He

said the law will soon catch up with the estate agents.

"Most estate agents are selling vacant land and they are doing it illegally because even the land they are selling they do not have titles. Very shortly the law will catch up with them," he said.

Chilongwa also explained that government does not sale public land per se for developments, but asks successful applicants to pay development charges for the construction of roads and electricity as well as water utilities infrastructure.

The meeting was sponsored by the SVTP who are piloting land registration in the area of Traditional Authority Kasisi and Senior Chief Malemia in Chikwawa and Nsanje districts respectively. ■

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN GELA JNR