
SA ferrochrome majors shut furnaces due to power shortages

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It is reported that South African ferrochrome producers have announced that they had closed their smelting operations in order to reduce electricity demand to a minimum.

International Ferro Metals, an integrated ferrochrome producer said that it had been instructed by power utility, Eskom to switch off its two ferrochrome furnaces to prevent damage to the equipment and health hazards.

Xstrata also said that it had reduced load across furnaces at its Xstrata-Merafe Chrome Venture “until further notice” from Eskom.

Ms Sunel Pretorius Samancor Chrome spokesperson said that furnaces at three plants Witbank Ferrochrome, Ferrometals in Witbank and Tubatse in Limpopo were being switched off. She said that the operations would now move into a maintenance and safety cycle.

The struggling state owned power company Eskom advised its industrial clients that the emergency measures would remain in place for the next two to four weeks, as it could not meet the country’s growing demand owing to planned and unplanned outages. Most of South Africa’s big gold and platinum mines also came to a halt recently sending the prices of these metals to record highs.

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