

Power outage plunges several parts of French capital into darkness

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Paris Power Outage: Christmas lights are viewed in Paris, France. (Photo by Reuters)

Paris, December 9 (RHC)-- In a sign of what lies ahead, several districts in the French capital Paris have plunged into darkness following a mass power outage. According to French grid operator RTE, entire neighborhoods in southern Paris saw power blackouts that the grid authorities linked to a "technical glitch" on an electrical transformer of energy supplier Enedis Thursday night.

Many streets in the third, fourth, and fifth arrondissements in the French capital were hit by the power cuts around 10:15 p.m. local time (2115 GMT) and power was restored around 11:00 p.m., RTE's division for the region encompassing Paris, Ile de France, said on Twitter.

The power cut affected around 125,000 households along with street lights, it said, and came amid concerns that power blackouts could cripple infrastructure in France in the coming winter season. The government ministers have warned that in the coming days there are possibilities of more upcoming power blackouts in Paris if the gap between power supply and demand would continue.

The mayor of Paris Centre, Ariel Weil, took to Twitter to confirm the general breakdown. "Power cuts have just taken place in the 4th and 5th arrondissements," he said. Later, he returned to confirm a "general breakdown" but added that Enedis is "confident of a rapid return to normal everywhere."

There are growing concerns that shortages in energy supply could lead to more power outages that could affect industries and cripple infrastructure in France, amidst the ongoing harsh winter.

French President Emmanuel Macron urged people last Saturday not to "panic" in the face of the risk of power cuts, stressing that these could be avoided if they reduced their consumption by 10 percent. The prime minister of France, Elisabeth Borne sent out a circular to the prefects on November 30, which contained a plan for "targeted and scheduled power cuts" in the event of electricity shortage.

French opposition has accused the government of inconsistency on the energy report and the media informs the French about "survival kits" to put in place in such a scenario.

State-run utility EDF, a parent company of Enedis, is racing to get nuclear reactors hit by corrosion problems back on line. The rising inflation has also contributed to the disaster amidst the biting cold causing energy and food prices to soar.

It comes as European countries have been reeling under energy crisis in the wake of the war in Ukraine, which has taken a heavy toll on ordinary people by pushing up prices of food and fuel.

Western sanctions on Russia have caused the price of gas and electricity for residential houses in Europe to increase significantly. Before the war, now in its tenth month, Russia supplied 40 to 50 percent of natural gas needs of European countries.

According to experts, if the Ukraine war doesn't end by the time next winter hits, Europe's energy sector will face more serious risks than this year.

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