I. R. STRIKES

1998

JAN - SEPT. DEC
Wages forecast to rise between 9% and 10%

1998 as economy loses jobs

Strikes tipped to level out in

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Workers' pay - lagged

1998

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Uitenhage strike ‘may affect VW’s exports’

Own Correspondent

PORT ELIZABETH — Volkswagen’s R400m export order for Britain, as well as exports to Australia, could be hit by a work stoppage at the Uitenhage plant.

Although the plant still has stock in hand for the local market, the strike could affect the delivery of 5,000 Golfs to the UK by April.

Confirming that workers on both shifts had downed tools yesterday, Volkswagen spokesman Raymond Hartle said “if the stoppage continues it could affect Volkswagen’s export initiatives”.

According to Hartle, the strike, which started at 8.45am yesterday, was related to a company loan scheme.

National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) shop stewards informed the company that their members were unhappy with a R1 500 revolving loan scheme agreed with the company, and are now demanding a R1 500 school uniform loan, to be made available to all employees, regardless of take-home pay.

Volkswagen said it had reached agreement with the union last November to implement a R1 500 revolving loan scheme through Standard Bank.

About 4,400 Numsa members met the agreed requirements for the loan, but about 1,000 were not eligible because repayments would reduce their take-home pay to less than 35% of their gross earnings.

Numsa was not available for comment last night.
Row over school uniform loans threatens R400m exports

VW to seek order on Uitenhage strikers

FRANK NXUMALO
LABOUR CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg — Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) would apply for an urgent court interdict this morning if the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) was unable to persuade its striking members at the Uitenhage plant to return to work, Matt Genrich, the VWSA spokesman, said yesterday.

"The company has also warned Numsa that the strike seriously threatens to undermine the current export order of 6,000 Golf vehicles (valued at R400 million) to Britain. This order must be fulfilled by April this year and tight shipping deadlines are being compromised by the strike," Genrich said.

"In the current economic climate and in the face of very tough competition in the local motor industry, it is imperative that all parties work together to ensure a viable industry and protect jobs," he said.

Genrich said Numsa shop stewards had informed the company that their members were unhappy with a R1,500 revolving loan scheme conditionally agreed with VW, and were instead demanding a R1,500 school uniform loan to be made available to all workers regardless of whether they met company conditions.

He said more than 1,700 workers had already applied for the revolving loan scheme and would get it by Friday.

Genrich said it would appear the problem revolved around a group of about 1,000 workers who did not qualify for the loan scheme as they "were already heavily in debt."

"The company is not prepared to deviate from this agreement as it would create further socio-economic problems for employees who are already experiencing financial difficulties as a result of previous loans and other financial commitments incurred," Genrich said.

"By not working today, the average employee will have lost R200 in wages, which certainly does not make sense if employees claim to be short of money."

However, the union said, whether the strike would continue would only be known after a mass meeting scheduled for this morning. "Workers have agreed to an urgent meeting to determine whether or not they will continue with the strike," said Dumisa Ntuli, Numsa's spokesman.
Volkswagen threatens interdict on ‘illegal’ strike

PORT ELIZABETH — Volkswagen yesterday warned the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) that a strike at Volkswagen’s Uitenhage plant was illegal if workers were not on the job by 9am today the company would apply for an interdict forcing them to return, it said.

Workers downed tools on Tuesday morning after a loan scheme dispute. Numsa said members were unhappy with a R1,500 revolving loan scheme. They were demanding a R1,500 school uniform loan for workers regardless of their take-home pay.

A spokesman for Volkswagen said that in terms of the agreement with Numsa signed on December 5 last year, the loan applied only to workers earning above a specified minimum. About 1,000 employees did not qualify.

Volkswagen said that more than 1,700 employees would receive loans under the agreement. The company is not prepared to deviate from this agreement as it would create further socioeconomic problems for employees who are already experiencing financial difficulties as a result of previous loans and financial commitments incurred, the spokesman said.

Volkswagen warned Numsa the strike threatened to undermine an export order of 5,000 VW Golfs to Britain. The order must be fulfilled by April and tight shipping deadlines could be compromised, the company said.

Numsa’s general secretary, Mauyt Ngwenda, said yesterday the union understood the competitive nature of the motor industry and would try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible — Sapa.
Fewer strikes expected as threat of job loss increases

By Abdul Milazi

SOUTH Africa should brace itself for more job losses this year as the economy moves into a phase of "job-shedding", economists have warned. Jackie Kelly of Andrew Levy and Associates said companies will continue to outsource most of their non-core services to cut down costs and make their operations competitive.

She said trade unions will continue fighting for the narrowing of the wage gap between the highly paid and lowly paid workers, commonly known as the "apartheid wage gap".

She said this will lead to better increases for workers in the low-income bracket than average increases. "Remuneration rates will be boosted by the tightening of skills shortages as the economy enters its sixth successive year of expansion," said Kelly.

Kelly also said the two-year productivity agreement between the Chamber of Mines and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was expected to set a trend with more deals of that nature likely to be negotiated this year.

"Wages will again form the main strike trigger as unions put pressure on employers during annual wage negotiations. "Strike action, however, is expected to level out as job losses continue and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) intervenes to nip disputes in the bud."

Critical

She said the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) would remain committed to the African National Congress-South African Communist Party alliance, while remaining critical of key market-friendly ANC policies.

The ANC is also expected to remain sympathetic to Cosatu concerns, but within limits dictated by its need to address economic realities. "The ANC and Cosatu are, however, expected to move closer to one another as the 1999 election approaches."

Kelly said strikes had dropped by 64 percent last year to 650,000 workdays lost compared to 1.7 million days in 1996.
Pretoria — Striking workers at Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) in Uitenhage returned to work for the afternoon shift yesterday after production at the plant was disrupted for three days, a company spokesman said.

The strike resulted in a loss in production of 500 cars a day and cost R4 million in turnover, Raymond Hartle, the corporate relations manager for VWSA, said yesterday. Each worker also lost an average of R120 a day.

The strike was the result of unhappiness among members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) over a R500 revolving loan scheme conditionally agreed upon by VWSA. The workers were instead demanding a R1500 school uniform loan for all workers, regardless of whether they met company conditions.

Hartle said the return to work followed an undertaking given to VWSA's management by Numsa that all employees would resume normal duties from 2pm yesterday.

He said VWSA accepted this undertaking in good faith and on the strength of this undertaking had not proceeded to the Labour Court yesterday in an interdict application. No disciplinary action was currently planned against any employees.

However, Hartle said that if it appeared that employees were not complying with Numsa's undertaking, the company would proceed with the interdict application as soon as it could be heard in court.

"Numsa has also accepted the company's offer of assistance for those employees who do not qualify for the revolving loan scheme," he said.

"In terms of the offer, if an individual employee can prove that his or her child will be excluded from school for not having a school uniform, the company will provide up to R400 for each employee.

"The repayment terms of this loan will be based on each individual's circumstances," he said.
VOLKSWAGEN workers started returning to work yesterday, bringing an end to a dispute that started on Tuesday when they downed tools at the company's Uitenhage plant after some workers were refused loans for their dependents' school needs.

National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) spokesman Dumisa Ntshu said the workers agreed to return on the basis that their cases would be handled individually by the company. Workers dissatisfied with the company's handling of their cases would be attended to by the union's shop stewards, it was agreed.

Volkswagen spokesman Raymond Hartle said the illegal strike, if prolonged, would have affected the company's scheduled R400m export of cars to Britain.

Sapa reportedly strike cost the company almost R48m in turnover. Volkswagen communications GM Matt Gennrich said.

He said Numsa representatives had accepted the company's offer of assistance for those workers who did not qualify for the revolving loan scheme at a meeting with management yesterday. Numsa had given an undertaking that striking members would return to work immediately.

Volkswagen, in turn, would not proceed with its planned application for a court interdict if strikers complied with the undertaking and returned to work.

The agreement states that workers who do not qualify for the company's R1 500 revolving loan scheme can, under certain conditions, borrow up to R400 to buy school uniforms for their children.

Repayment terms will be based on each worker's circumstances.
Absa strike likely to be averted

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — The planned three-day strike at Absa, the banking group, could be averted as the South African Society of Bank Officers (Sasbo) said yesterday that Absa’s revised offer was likely to be accepted.

The parties deadlocked last Friday at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) when Sasbo rejected a company offer of a 10.25 percent wage hike, sticking to its demand of 11 percent.

Although Piet Heymans, Sasbo’s assistant general secretary, would not be drawn into revealing the details of the revised offer because of the “sensitivity” of the issue, he said it was an offer “we could live with.”

Meanwhile, Shaun Oelschig, a Sasbo spokesman, said hundreds of non-clerical staff at Standard Bank nationwide had been “invited to apply” for voluntary severance packages that could be worth about 10 months salary plus pension contributions.

John Verster, Standard Bank’s general manager for human resources, said the bank had been “looking at ways of reducing staff and costs in areas of non-core activities and operations.”

CT(OR) 27/11/98
Engen and strikers 'close to settlement'

Cape Town — Management and 300 striking maintenance workers, who are members of the Engineering and Maintenance Workers' Union, at Engen's Durban refinery are close to settling the nearly two-week dispute in the wake of increasing violence and one death, sources close to last night's negotiations said.

Maintenance contract workers went out on strike last week to defend 77 jobs, accusing Brown & Root Group 5 Industrial Services, which is contracted to maintain the refinery, of replacing South African workers with American contractors.

Tempers flared last week when picketing workers were dispersed by police. Strikers responded by blocking the entrances to the refinery on Monday and disrupted deliveries of products from the refinery. Union officials claimed 27 strikers were beaten by soldiers of the South African National Defence Force, who were called in under the National Key Points Act.

Peter Dent, Engen's refinery manager, said yesterday that a striking worker was fatally stabbed on Monday — allegedly by other strikers — as he attempted to return to work. He said the death had left both parties shaken, and union officials were keen to settle the dispute.

A union official said he believed that more than half of the 77 affected jobs could be saved and there was a possibility of placing the remaining workers elsewhere. He said the settlement could also include an offer to place all contract maintenance workers on three-year contracts.

Dent said negotiations between Brown & Root and the union were progressing well.
'DAMAGE COULD RUN TO R1 MILLION'

Saldanha workers go on the rampage

POLICE SAY that damage caused by workers at a West Coast construction site yesterday could be as much as R1 million.

MELANIE GOSLING and ERIC NTABAZALILA report.

THOUSANDS of workers went on the rampage at the Saldanha Steel construction site on the West Coast yesterday, torching staff and setting buildings and vehicles alight after a group of them had apparently been fired.

Saldanha Steel management said last night it was too early to estimate the extent of the damage, but police said it could run to R1 million.

Three vehicles were burned, a staff canteen, computer room and security post at the gate were gutted, the plant's main-frame computer was seriously damaged, and building plans went up in smoke. Several "minor injuries" were reported, no arrests were made.

Saldanha Steel project director Mr Ben Nel said: "It was horrifying, with the staff forced to hide behind their desks. The fire brigade and police were called but the fire brigade could not do anything as the situation was too terrifying." He said the damage was done by about 2 000 to 3 000 workers.

Police spokesperson Inspector Johan Loubser said members of the public order policing unit were called from Paull to control the crowd and the SA Navy was brought in to help the local fire brigade douse the burning buildings.

Loubser said: "The computer room and the kitchen were burned. Several people who didn't join in the strike were stoned. Things calmed down by late afternoon."

Nel said the trouble started when about 20 workers were told they were to be "demobilised". The 20 had then "instigated the other workers", telling them they were all fired. The workers then marched on the company offices in their thousands with a list of demands.

But, Nel said, it was company policy not to negotiate with the body of workers, and they were told to return to work, and leave their representatives behind to negotiate with management.

According to worker representatives, employees' major gripes include poor working conditions and below-standard accommodation and food.

They were also alleged to have been paid late. The company was allegedly deducting tax, and had not registered the staff with the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

One staff member, who did not want to be named, said the strike had been triggered when CBI Construction, working on the Saldanha Steel site, "fired" about 20 workers.

"The other workers got really angry. They started grouping. Management made the mistake of telling all the supervisors and foreign workers to group in one area, so they became targets." CBI is an American company and they've got a lot of foreigners working for them — Turks and Filipinos — which also makes the (local) workers angry.

Then the crowd started moving towards the Corex structure, where there were about 100 staff in white hats, supervisors and foreigners, mainly. We were told to move behind a crane and a large truck, but the crowd came towards us, throwing stones."

The man said he marched with the workers until he could sneak away on the back of a bakkie.

Nel said the company would be closed last night and today. Management intended to hold a news conference at 11am today.
Crisis Meeting after Not by Saldana

Big Rampage

Workers torch facility

The Commission on the Environment

The Workers Committee of the Union

The Commission on Environment and Protection

The Commission on Environment and Protection

The Commission on Environment and Protection

The Commission on Environment and Protection

The Commission on Environment and Protection

The Commission on Environment and Protection
Rampage leaves swathe of destruction in its wake

JOSEPH ARAIRES
STAFF REPORTER

The R6-billion Saldanha Steel construction site is as secure as a fortress - but yesterday it was trashed from inside by incensed workers, who caused millions of rands' damage.

In a two-hour rampage yesterday afternoon, at least 2000 workers terrorised colleagues, razed a project office and torched several vehicles. They also looted a bar in their housing compound and set it and two canteens alight.

The workers are staff of various subcontractors building the giant steel mill near Saldanha Bay.

By late afternoon the huge construction site was deserted and resembled a set for a science fiction horror movie. Construction vehicles were parked in the middle of roads, and cranes, some with their loads still hanging in mid-air, stood abandoned. The smashed windows of site offices were a grim reminder of what had gone before.

A few firemen and managers were hosing down the smouldering remains of what was only a few hours before had been the bustling offices of the United States-based company Chicago Bridge and Steel.

The burnt casings of computers, filing cabinets and other office equipment were an indication of the valuable information lost in the riot. A few metres away stood the shells of several burnt cars.

Dennis le Sueur of Superlag Insulations and Sheetmetal arrived at the site to find that while little equipment was damaged, other expensive items like generators were missing.

He said his day had started out normally - but just after lunch all hell broke loose. "There was no warning. We heard the chants of the workers and at the same time rocks and stones were flying everywhere. They forced us to abandon our posts and join the march."

One worker was slightly injured when a stone struck him on the head.

They joined the march and after things quietened down they returned to the site to pack up their equipment. "We will come back here only on Monday, if things are back to normal."

On the other side of the huge site, David Isaac said he had been working in one of the sub-stations when he was ordered to down tools by "hooligans". "They invited me to join them. As I emerged from the station they started stoning me. It was very difficult to dodge and escape unscathed. They were really letting us have it and you could sense how angry they were. I could not believe what was happening and ran like hell to get away."

Mr Isaac said he would wait to find out what was happening at the site before returning to work.

A worker said he had joined the march because it was the safe thing to do. "We were all very nervous and scared and didn't know what to expect. I feel sorry for the people who were trapped in the offices when they were stoned. At the same time I do understand how frustrated the workers are for having to work and live under such conditions."

The workers have grievances relating to retrenchments and living conditions.

Project director Ben Nel said there was a site agreement in place with the workers that talks could be held only if they continued working.

"We explained this to them in the morning but for some reason they refused and went on the rampage. The issue of retrenchments has also been discussed with them and the principle of 'last in, first out' was agreed to. There is no excuse for their behaviour."

Mr Nel said they were forced to call the police to restore order and minimise damage.

Last night hundreds of the workers packed their belongings and headed home after a day of violence.

The site will be closed today.

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Distorted view: one of the many vehicles that were damaged.

Homeward bound: workers head for home after violence at the construction site.
Wrecked: Saldanha Steel managers inspect some of the damage caused to the construction site after workers went on the rampage.
Work at Saldanha Steel site to resume next week

FRANK NXUMALO
CT 09/01/98
Johannesburg — Work on the Saldanha Steel site in the Western Cape would resume on Tuesday next week after about 6,500 workers went on the rampage earlier this week, Bernard Smith, the company's chairman said yesterday.

"As a result, the scheduled start-up in the second quarter of 1998 is unlikely to be unduly affected," Smith said.

All was quiet at the site, a joint venture between Iscor and the Industrial Development Corporation, yesterday after the workers were given a long weekend to cool off.

"It was necessary to do that, emotions ran very high, and it was miraculous that nobody was injured," Smith said.

Although management was still assessing on-site damage, he estimated it to be between R1 million to R2 million.

"As a result, the delay in restarting this construction could possibly be larger than is expected in the steel-making section, but I am convinced the iron-making facilities will be commissioned in the second half of 1998," Smith said, "I therefore believe that the financial impact on Saldanha Steel will be minimal."

The workers, who are employed by CBI, a US company subcontracted to Saldanha, reportedly went on a wildcat strike on Tuesday, hurling missiles and burning cars and buildings after Saldanha allegedly terminated their contracts.
Leaders you they will not take sacrifices lining down
Salamanca steel workers defiant

Paul Quinlan, a partner in the law firm of Quinlan, Quinlan & McNicholas, said the settlement of the workers' dispute was a significant victory for the company and its workers. The settlement, which was reached after months of negotiations, included a series of concessions by the workers, including agreements to work longer hours and to accept lower wages. The settlement also included a commitment by the company to invest in new equipment and to improve working conditions.

Workers at the plant were pleased with the settlement, which they said would improve their quality of life. "This is a big win for us," said one worker. "We have been fighting for this for a long time."

The settlement was signed on February 2, 2005, in front of a large crowd of workers and supporters. The company and the workers were both praised for their willingness to work together to reach a fair resolution.
Thousands ordered home after R1,5-million rampage

LINDSAY BARNES
STAFF REPORTER

Thousands of Saldanha Steel construction workers were bused home yesterday to “cool off” while management took stock of riot damage that will set part of the R6-billion project back more than a month.

Most of the workforce would return to work on Tuesday, amounting to the loss of a week to labour unrest, said Saldanha Steel general manager Piet Pretorius.

But people working for the main contractor, United States-based Chicago Bridge and Iron, could be unemployed for as long as six weeks until its office is fully operational again.

Damage caused to the steel mill construction site by workers on Tuesday is estimated at R1,5-million.

Yesterday Chicago Bridge suspended its independent contractors — 35% of its 1,800 workforce — and laid off the rest, promising they would be “brought back as soon as possible.”

As they were hired on contracts, the workers will not be paid in their absence.

Sandy Nurn, Chicago Bridge project director, said the delay was the result of the loss of the company’s project office, including the computers, staff records, documents and construction drawings.

The loss of all documentation and paper work for the past six months was inestimable and would have to be recovered, he said.

Mr. Nurn blamed the damage on a few rabble-rousers and said most of the workers were “decent people.”

It was rumoured that a few who had been retrenched misinformed 500 of their colleagues that they had all been sacked and this triggered the violence, he said.
THOUSANDS of train commuters were stranded as train control officers went on a wildcat strike during the afternoon rush hour yesterday.

The officers went on strike soon after wage negotiations between their unions and Metrorail reached a deadlock at 4pm yesterday.

Thousands of people were seen standing in long queues at various Johannesburg taxi ranks. The situation was apparently exacerbated by the fact that thousands of pupils, who had come from the townships to take part in a march, had swarmed the city railway stations.

A regular commuter, Ms Jabulile Mabaso, said she was angry at Metrorail upon learning she would have to find another means to get home.

"I used my last money to buy a train ticket hoping I would be ferried home as usual, only to be informed that trains were not operating," she said.

Another disgruntled commuter, Mr John Dlamini, said he was patient and understood the daily problems of trains running behind schedule. But he never expected to be told that trains would not operate at all.

"The train service in the country has gone from bad to worse. In the past commuters would have been informed about such an incident," he said.

Metrorail spokesperson Mrs Bantu Petaana confirmed that trains from the whole of Johannesburg to surrounding areas were not operating. She attributed the problem to the strike by train control officers.

"We were not aware that the workers were going to embark on a strike. They never indicated during the wage negotiations that they..."
Trains returning to normal as strike ends

Staff Reporter

Train services throughout Johannesburg were expected to resume by noon today after a wildcat strike during peak hours left thousands of commuters stranded last night.

Metrorail spokesman Annemarie Strydom said express trains were operating as normal on the Soweto, Pretoria/Germiston and Vereeniging to Germiston route over Meyerton, while a shuttle service is operating on the smaller routes and stopping at all stations.

She said all services were expected to be operating as normal by noon.

"Many of our drivers worked overtime last night to ensure that there were some trains running, and supervisory personnel occupied the important signal control points which were left unmanned by the strikers," she said.

"Because of the disruption many trains were backed up in shunting yards," said Strydom. She was unsure why some people stayed overnight at Johannesburg station because every effort was made to ensure there were trains operating.

Talks between the union and management were called off at 10pm last night and an agreement was only reached when discussions resumed this morning.
Metrorail strikers go back to work

Striking Metrorail train controller officers agreed to go back to work yesterday pending a resolution of the industrial dispute by the Transnet Industrial Council, said the South African Railworkers' Union (Sarwu). The workers had gone on an illegal strike on Wednesday while the union was still negotiating with management over leave allocation.

Barnabas Wondo, Sarwu's Southern Transvaal regional vice-chairman, said he expected the passenger train service to be 80 percent operational by yesterday evening. Wondo said the workers, who were currently working the whole calendar month without rest unless they applied for leave, were demanding at least one weekend off a month. — Frank Nxumalo, Johannesburg
ORGANISERS of one of the West Coast's most important investment conferences are concerned that this week's mob violence at the giant Saldanha Steel Project plant could chase away potential investment in the Western Cape.

Rioting workers caused damage estimated at R5-million just three weeks before Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin was scheduled to open the West Coast Investment Initiative's international investor conference at Saldanha Bay on February 25.

The conference is aimed at attracting investment to the region, one of eight development corridors set up to accelerate investment in areas ranging from the West Coast to Mozambique.

This week key players in the West Coast Initiative said the riot had been an isolated incident, but admitted that it could not have come at a worse time.

"I have not received one phone call from a sceptical investor, but of course we're worried," West Coast Investment Initiative project manager Dr Laurine Platzy said on Friday. A local official, who asked not to be named, said the investor conference would be the real litmus test. "Until then we'll not really know what the repercussions of the Saldanha incident are," she added.

Wesgro economist Nigel Gwynne-Evans said Tuesday's riot was a one-off incident.

"It took place in a very localised and isolated area in relation to the entire SPP plant. But it cannot have been good for the SDI, or positive for the region."

Platzy said Saldanha Steel was being built in phases, which meant workers would be laid off when their contracts expired.

"The basic concept of an industrial development zone is predicated on predictable industrial and environmental regulation. "This is to make sure that investors and employees know exactly what is expected of everyone," she added.
Tea farmers in Kenya set to continue strike

NAIROBI — The Kenyan tea growers union called on members to continue their one-week strike, newspapers reported yesterday.

On Friday, Agriculture Minister Musalia Mudavadi called a meeting of the union and the parastatal Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) to thrash out the dispute. Farmers were demanding 20 shillings a kilogram of green leaf and 80 shillings as a second payment bonus. The meeting agreed on 12 shillings a kilogram and 18 shillings bonus, to be paid quarterly. However, the union said on Saturday that members should continue strike action until the agreed payments were made.

The call to stop picking was made by the powerful but unregistered Kenya Union of Small-scale Tea Owners to protest against the KTDA's monopoly powers. "We have stopped picking our tea and since we are the owners of the tea farms, the KTDA should listen to our grievances or else we will continue the strike which will definitely affect the quality and price of tea," a striking farmer said.

The boycott, which got off to a slow start on Monday, came at the same time as a total work stoppage in Sri Lanka over wages. The two countries are the biggest tea producers. Sri Lanka had a record crop of 278,8-million kilogrammes last year, while Kenya's was 220.7-million kilogrammes.

Kenyan agriculture ministry statistics show that small-scale farmers produce 60% of Kenya's tea crop. Traders said increased demand resulted in a surge in prices at the Mombasa auctions. At last week's Monday auction, green leaf was selling at $3.28/kg compared to $3.25 the previous Monday.

A shortage caused by rains has also resulted in higher prices for Burundian tea — Sapa-AFP.
Saldanha workers to return to work

Reneé Grawitzky

THOUSANDS of workers are expected to resume work on one section of Saldanha Steel today after the operation was closed last Wednesday after striking workers went on a rampage causing millions of rands damage.

An estimated 2 000 workers ran amok, burning buildings and other facilities after a group of workers had been laid off as part of the winding down of construction.

Initial estimates of damage amount to R5m, excluding the costs of closing the operation for nearly a week.

Saldanha Steel chairman Bernard Smith yesterday was still unable to indicate total losses incurred. The construction of Saldanha is supposed to be completed later this year, at which point all of its original workforce of 9 000 workers will be laid off. Once operational, the plant will be manned by 800 people.

The company said yesterday construction would resume at the steel plant today.

Uncertainty still surrounded the resumption of operations on the iron-making plant after Saldanha's major contractor, Chicago Brick and Iron (CBI), suffered huge losses when their computer system and documentation were burnt down in one of the fires.

On Sunday CBI published a notice in the media advising workers not to return to work until notified.

Saldanha believed construction could resume on the iron-making side by Thursday. Smith said CBI had no infrastructure as yet to take workers back.

Discussions with unions would have to resolve whether workers would be paid for the time this section remained closed.

Town struggling to adjust: Page 12
20 000 truckers vote to strike over pensions

By Abdul Milazi

About 20 000 truck drivers will embark on a national strike next week in a move that threatens to bring business to its knees.

Transport and General Workers Union (T&G) president June Dube said they had no option but to ballot for a strike when employers refused to accede to workers' wage and conditions of service demands after five months of negotiations.

Dube said the major stumbling block was the issue of transferring the control of the road freight industry's provident fund to workers.

"Workers want to have control over their money and employers are not willing to accept that."

He said attempts at mediation and arbitration by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) failed to resolve the dispute.

"We decided to ballot our members last week and the majority voted in favour of a strike."

The Road Freight Employers Association (RFEA) said "We still believe that the existing dispute can be resolved through negotiation."

RFEA director of labour relations Nico Badenhorst said "We believe that the unions' demand for a union-controlled provident fund is hampering the progress of negotiating a settlement on other issues."

The two parties have been negotiating since last September but have not made any progress on other demands since deadlocking on who should control the provident fund.

Dube said T&G and six other unions had not placed any other demands on the negotiating table.

Badenhorst said the provident fund demand was contrary to the provisions of the National Bargaining Council constitution to which the seven unions were signatories.

A national strike by truckers in 1994 almost brought the economy to a standstill until Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and Labour Minister Tito Mboweni intervened to resolve the causes.
Cash-in-transit guards plan strike

THE Motor Transport Workers' Union, which represents cash-in-transit guards and employees, planned to start a country-wide strike as soon as this week, deputy general secretary Emily Fourie said at the weekend.

Fourie said the union rejected poor working conditions and "arrogance" from management.

Fidelity Guards cash-in-transit CS Pieter Bezuidenhout said the union's action was taken without fully informing the company.

He said a meeting was arranged with the union, which was cancelled after it introduced new conditions.

Bezuidenhout said he was not prepared to fight with the union in the media.

Bezuidenhout claimed the union represented less than 30% of the firm's employees.

He said Fidelity Guards was part of the industry's bargaining council and complied with the Labour Relations Act.
Tourism council looks at new ways to raise funds

Janet Parker

The Business Tourism Council was exploring various voluntary levies following the recent resignation of major hotel groups from the national grading and classification system.

The resignation had resulted in 80% of the SA Tourism Board's (Satur's) bed levy funding mechanism drying up.

Satur's executive director Michael Farr said that while the resignation had not affected the budget for the coming financial year, the loss of about R360m in income had resulted in cutbacks of certain planned activities.

These included a moratorium on staff appointments and savings on marketing in low-yield Asian markets such as Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Acting executive director Colm Walker said the council was discussing voluntary levy options with the industry such as the reintroduction of bed levies, and creating other mechanisms involving airlines, car hire operators and travel agents. There could be no prescription to the industry, and all levies would be voluntary, he stressed.

The council was also looking to create an awareness campaign on the value of tourism and the role which the public could play in promoting tourism.

Tourism was one of only two industries in SA in which job creation was growing, said Walker.

Electricity

Continued from Page 1

bribery to the ministers as possible, but it will not be an easy process, we have to develop the proposal within weeks," he said. Maduna would probably make specific recommendations to the cabinet for a final decision.

Mining- and energy-sector sources expressed concern that the decision on restructuring would be delayed further.

One person involved in the talks said: "The decision is highly politically sensitive, with a lack of stakeholders' consensus. There are fears that government will not settle on a decision until after the 1999 election. That would be disastrous for the sector."

The payment by electricity users is causing growing difficulties among local governments, which rely on electricity payments for about 60% of their total income. The problems have also hampered municipalities' ability to meet their electricity targets.

Stockbroking

Continued from Page 1

eventually to put at least 13% of BMJ black hands," he said.

The Public Investments Corporation's Inshaya Fund injected R300m for Mossel Bay developments.

In return Inshaya has received the right to subscribe for preference shares valued at R250m.

The scheme, previously aimed at disadvantaged people, was being offered 7.5-million convertible debentures valued at R40c each. These would be converted automatically into ordinary shares in 2001.

To qualify for participation in the scheme, applicants were required to make a 10% deposit on the listing value of the ordinary shares before the offer closed at noon on March 20.

The minimum amount applicants had to subscribe to participate was R40. A maximum of 100,000 shares may be purchased. The outstanding balance of zero-interest finance charges and costs would be paid by the participants in 2001.

PEANUTS By Charles Schulz

Heres my idea. . . .
Mickey Mouse is very wealthy.

Why don't we call Mickey Mouse and ask him to send us a Limo?

That's maybe a stretch.

We'll at least get his autograph.

He's 15.

And Mickey Mouse is very wealthy.
Guards go on strike

SECURITY guards from 11 trade unions will go on strike from tomorrow to demand better wages. The matter was referred to the Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration Commission (CCMA) but no solution was found.

At a press briefing in Johannesburg yesterday, Ms Emily Fourie of the Professional Labour Unions to participate in the strike include the Transport and General Workers Union. The unions wanted a salary increase of 12 percent, additional salary and double pay for Sunday work.

Fourie said employers had offered a six percent salary increase and 20 percent of employers' premises. The strike will continue until employers agreed to the unions' demands.

Fourie said employers were prepared to pay for a day and a half for the strike. — Sapa
Security guards strike for better wages

By Vima Li Sia

At least 10 000 security guards are expected to leave their posts at shopping malls, supermarkets and financial institutions and take their demands for better pay to the streets tomorrow.

The announcement of a wildcat strike has sparked fears for the safety of consumers at supermarkets, banks and companies employing security guards as they could be the target of criminal elements.

Security guards will gather at the Library Gardens from 7am before marching to the Department of Labour to present a memorandum containing their grievances.

"It will not be a full-blown strike because not all of the centres were notified in time, but it will have horrific implications for guarding in general," said Motor Transport Workers' Union (MTWU) spokesman Emily Foirle.

"The employers' organisation has asked for a meeting with the 10 unions involved, but the workers want them to be presented with something concrete before they call off the strike," she said.

Security guards are demanding a 12% increase in wages, a provident fund and a holiday bonus. If today's talks fail to bring agreement, about 130 000 guards could strike.
Security guards on strike

Johannesburg - Thousands of security guards went on strike today to push for improved salary packages after attempts to avert the industrial action failed last night.

Employees from more than 15 Gauteng security firms assembled in the Library Gardens at 8.30am to protest against working conditions and poor pay. They planned to hand a petition to Minister of Labour Tito Mboweni. – Argus Correspondent
Thousands of guards go on strike

Staff Reporters

In a "show of force", thousands of security guards went on strike this morning to push for improved salary packages after last-minute attempts to avert industrial action failed last night.

Representatives from more than 15 Gauteng security companies began assembling in the Library Gardens at 8.30am as part of the one-day stoppage to protest about working conditions and poor pay.

Later in the morning they will be addressed by representatives from their eight major unions, and a petition will be handed to Labour Minister Tito Mboweni.

Union members are hoping for a 95% turnout of night shift workers, while some day workers may also join the stoppage.

Chairman of the SA National Security Employers' Association and deputy chairman of Khulani Springbok Patros, Mick Bartmann, said companies around the country had reported that their workers were taking part in the strike.

"At this stage we are not sure how many guys are involved, but an early estimate is that 1,500 to 2,000 from security firms in Johannesburg and Pretoria are involved."

Serious acts of intimidation had been reported, he added.

"We hear that the guys are serious, and the strike will intensify on Monday."

But Fidelity Guards and Coin Security said they noted no significant action from branches across Gauteng.

According to Emily Faurie, deputy secretary-general of the Professional Transport Workers' Union, the strike would spread nationwide by Monday. About 130,000 guards would participate, she claimed.

Only bank-owned cash-in-transit company SBV Security would not be affected, as staff belonged to the SA Society of Bank Officials, which was not one of the unions in the dispute.

Workers are asking for a 12% increase and employers are offering 10%. The amount of the annual bonus and a provident fund are also on the table.

Armoured vehicles
Security unions face threat of interdict

Reneé Grawitzky

SECURITY employers threatened yesterday to apply for an interdict on the eve of a strike which could bring the security industry to a standstill, as close to 100 000 security guards take to the streets today in support of a 12% across-the-board wage increase.

Tension began mounting on Friday when members of the Transport and General Workers' Union went on strike ahead of the start of the national strike today. During a march in Johannesburg an altercation broke out between union members and police. Employers accused the union of attempting to intimidate nonstriking workers.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has intervened and called on all parties to attend a meeting tomorrow in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

Eight unions in the contract security industry gave employers 48 hours notice on Tuesday of their intention to strike in support of a range of demands, including the establishment of an industry provident fund. The minimum wage for security guards, who work on average a 60-hour week, range from the lowest of R700 a month to R1 130 a month.

Employers represented by two employer bodies, the SA National Employers' Association (Saneea) and the Security Service Employers Organisation said they had consulted senior counsel. Saneea chief negotiator Den Masterson said employers would give the unions 48 hours notice today of their intention to interdict the strike, which would have a devastating effect on the whole country if it went ahead.

Masterson refused to say on what basis the strike would be interdicted. A labour lawyer believed that the unions had complied with the requirements of the Labour Relations Act.

Professional Transport Workers' Union spokesman Emile Fourie said it was sad that the parties had to come to this point, especially in an industry which had to be uplifted and an "industry so crucial for the safety and security of all South Africans".

A source said the dispute had been exacerbated by a division between major employers, since a group of employers had split from Saneea late last year. Fourie said divisions also appeared to be looming between the eight unions.
Security guards take hard line on strike action

Hundreds of security industry workers gathered at the Library Gardens in central Johannesburg today to take part in a protest march to the Department of Labour offices.

The workers planned to hand over a memorandum outlining their demands for better working conditions.

They have embarked on a country-wide strike to demand a 12% wage increase, a 13th cheque and an upgraded status for security guards who have to carry firearms.

SA National Security Employment Association chief negotiator Don Masterson said employers would today apply for an urgent interdict in the Labour Court to have the strike declared unprotected.

Meanwhile, employers and unions have been issued with an order by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration to attend a joint meeting tomorrow to try to resolve the dispute. – Sapa
Guards vow to embark on strike

Cash-in-transit security men may not be part of striking union members

UNION representatives of security guards warned at the weekend that a full-blown strike would start today if their demand for a 12 percent pay increase is not met.

A protest by security guards at Johannesburg Library Gardens ended peacefully on Friday after 2 000 guards gathered to demand higher wages.

Security guards from Johannesburg, Pretoria and Vereeniging toyed with the idea of a full-blown strike today.

The deputy general secretary of the Professional Transport Workers Union, Mr Emily Fonse, said the strike could cripple South Africa within hours if the security industry did not accede to their demands.

Spokesman for the union Mr Isaac Khumalo said they expected at least 150 000 security guards from all over Gauteng to join the strike. Employer bodies represented had offered a six percent wage increase earlier this month.

"We will start here again on Monday morning if they do not meet our demands," Khumalo said.

Meanwhile, security employers will today apply for an urgent interdict in the Labour Court to have the planned strike declared unprotected.

Mr Don Masterson, chief negotiator for the SA National Security Employment Association, said last night if the interdict was granted, it would in terms of the Labour Relations Act give employers the power to terminate the services of strikers.

Eleven unions, including the giant Transport and General Workers Union which started its strike on Friday, would join in, Khumalo said.

It was not clear whether the cash-in-transit security men would also join. Most cash-in-transit workers belong to non-affiliated unions.

Council of South African Banks spokesman Mr Lincoln Male said the operations of the country's largest cash-in-transit company, SBV, would not be affected by the strike.
Guards desert banks, shops

130 000 staff expected to strike for better working conditions

STAFF REPORTER

Security guards gathered at the Johannesburg Library Gardens from early today on a strike for better working conditions which is expected to affect banks, businesses, shops and homes as they are left unguarded.

Bank ATMs were unguarded this morning and entrances to businesses, usually occupied by several security guards, were deserted.

More than 130 000 workers nationwide were expected to participate in the strike, upsetting the entire security industry as mass meetings are held in Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

In the smaller centres, workers are expected to gather outside their places of work. In Johannesburg, guards gathered to march to the Department of Labour to present a memorandum to minister Tito Mboweni.

The group of toy-toying guards in Library Gardens said: “Our employers are offering us a 10% wage increase, but we’d like to get a 12th cheque and leave pay. A 10% increase is fine when you earn about R3 000 but it’s not much when you earn R700.” The guards will be given 24 hours before the action is declared illegal.

South African National Security Employers’ Association chairman Mick Bartmann said “quite a few thousand” security personnel had participated in a run-up protest march on Friday, which had been “a serious day” for the industry.

“We received reports of serious intimidation over the weekend. People were injured, cars were stoned and damaged, and shots were fired on the premises of an East Rand security company on Saturday.”

Bartmann said employers and workers were deadlock over guards’ salaries and benefits, and the dispute was now countrywide.

“We have obtained legal opinion and the 11 unions concerned are being served with letters ordering them to call off the strike within 24 hours. If they fail to do so, we will apply for an urgent court interdict.”

Employers and security industry unions have been issued with an intervention order by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, requiring them to attend a joint meeting tomorrow.

But Emily Foure, spokesman for the guarding division’s Professional Transport Workers’ Union and the cash-in-transit industry’s Motor Transport Workers’ Union, said the strike would go ahead.

Unhappy security guard says it’s time to fight

BY GILL COFFORD

Vusi (45), a guard who has been employed by one of the largest private national security companies for seven years, earns a R1 150 salary.

He often puts in 12-hour overtime shifts but still takes home only about R800 at the end of the month.

He has no medical aid or provident fund, and had to pay for his work uniform, which cost R900. Vusi is an E-grade security guard, meaning that he has only basic training for which he had to pay R290. He may not carry a firearm.

He is assigned as a security guard at several premises, where he is required to patrol areas such as parking lots.

“If it rains or it gets very cold you are exposed. You aren’t provided with anything,” says Vusi.

Transport costs to and from his daily assignments are deducted from his salary, and are in addition to the costs of getting to work and back.

Vusi lives with his wife, a domestic worker, and four young children in a rented backroom of a house in KwaThema, East Rand. He works from 6am to 6pm, five days a week. He sometimes works six days a week, for which he is paid one-and-a-half times the normal rate, he says.

“I wake at about 5am so that I can go by train to work as it is the cheapest. A one-way train ticket is R16, but if I take taxis it’s about R40 a day,” he claims.

“So today it’s time to fight. We can’t carry on like this”
Guards strike hits local security industry

By Maciej Rubenstein

A strike by security guards has hit the security industry, with thousands of guards refusing to work in protest against low pay and poor working conditions. The strike has caused disruption to businesses across the region, with many employers reporting difficulties in finding replacement workers.

The guards, who are members of the Independent Contractors Federation, have been without a contract since the end of March, and have been working under temporary agreements.

The guards' union, the Independent Contractors Federation, has called on employers to pay the guards what they are owed and to negotiate a new contract.

Employers have been urged to consider hiring replacement workers or to use temporary labor to keep their businesses running.

The strike comes as the security industry continues to struggle with high unemployment and low wages.

The guards' union has called on the government to take action to improve working conditions for security guards.

The strike has also highlighted the need for better regulation of the security industry, with many employers accused of taking advantage of the guards.

The independent contractors federation has called on the government to introduce laws to protect workers in the industry.

Employers have been urged to consider paying the guards what they are owed and to negotiate a new contract.
Interdict sought against security strikers

Frank Nxumalo

Johannesburg — The South African National Security Employment Association (Sansea) had applied for a court interdict against striking security workers after 11 unions ignored the organisation's call to end their strike by 5pm yesterday, said Don-Masterson, the chief negotiator of Sansea.

Sansea would be seeking legal opinion on the legality of the nationwide strike, which started last Friday, by an estimated 150,000 security guards.

"We are claiming that the strike is not protected, therefore unlawful," Masterson said.

The strike was triggered by a deadlock between the parties at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) over a pay rise and conditions of work.

Workers rejected a revised offer by employers of a 10 percent wage increase and a 3 percent contribution for either a provident fund, a thirteen cheque and a double pay for Sunday work.

Workers are demanding a 12 percent wage rise, a 4 percent contribution by employers towards a provident fund, a thirteen cheque and double pay for Sunday work.

Masterson said he "hoped" a Labour Court hearing on the matter would be granted for Thursday, but the parties were expected to meet at the CCMA offices this morning.

INSECURE Frank Chepape, a municipal security worker, with union members during the security officers' strike in Johannesburg yesterday. He was released unharmed.

Photo: John Woodroof
Striking unions clash on streets

Johannesburg — A ban on gatherings of striking security workers in Johannesburg was announced yesterday evening after clashes with police and strikers in the city centre yesterday afternoon.

Violence broke out when police tried to move more than 3,000 striking security guards at the Library Gardens to make space for a National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) march.

The peaceful NUM march, calling for a moratorium on gold mine retrenchments, proceeded to the Chamber of Mines, where the marchers handed over a memorandum of their demands.

The chamber promised to look into the miners' grievances during the two-day gold summit scheduled for tomorrow in Johannesburg.

Meanwhile, police used stun grenades, teargas and bird shot when striking security guards, who were armed with bricks, bottles and traditional weapons, charged them. Chris Wilken, the police spokesman, said that at least 10 policemen were injured and at least five security guards hospitalised.

The nationwide guards' strike will continue today, pending the outcome of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) meeting between the parties.

The CCMA meeting was adjourned yesterday to allow the unions to prepare their case against the employers' application for a court order regarding the legality of the strike.

On Thursday, the unions rejected a revised offer of a 10 percent salary increase against their demand of 12 percent.

The South African Society of Bank Officials denied claims by the Professional Transport and General Workers' Union that it might join the striking security guards today.

But more than 50,000 transport workers allied to the Transport and General Workers' Union might join in if there is no settlement over a wage dispute.

Transport workers' representatives were still locked in talks with employers late yesterday.
A traffic officer extinguishes a car set alight by striking security guards in Johannesburg yesterday.

Police, security guards clash in city centre

Pule Molelebeledi and Pearl Sebolao

POLICE threw stun grenades and opened fire with rubber bullets at striking security guards in the Johannesburg city centre yesterday.

Police said there had been some shooting from the crowd, and security guards had thrown stones and bricks at police. At least six policemen and three security guards were injured.

A bakkie belonging to Peaceforce Security company was set alight.

Police spokesman Supt Chris Wilken said nobody had been arrested.

Police used razor wire to cordon off the area around the Library Gardens when security guards, who had been there since the morning, refused to make way for a National Union of Mineworkers' protest march.

Police cordoned off the area to prevent the guards from interfering with the NUM march. The guards were trapped behind the barricade until 6pm when the police removed the razor wire, after the NUM march ended.

The security guards were protesting in support of a three-day old wage strike. Jerry Ngcobo, national coordinator of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said security guards from the Western Cape and Eastern Cape would join the 11 unions already on strike today.

The security guards are demanding a 12% wage increase across the board, plus a 13th cheque, a bonus scheme, double time payment for Sundays and a national bargaining council.

Negotiations in the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration stalled when the unions indicated they would begin discussions only after employers agreed to withdraw their interim application against the strike. Talks will, however, resume today.
Police ready for strike violence

Johannesburg – Police will throw a security net around the Johannesburg city centre today after yesterday’s march by striking security guards led to mayhem.

In the most violent day in the city centre since the Shell House shootings four years ago, police fired tear gas, rubber bullets, stun grenades and threw a razor-wire cordon around the Library Gardens, where thousands of security guards had gathered for the second day. Strikers pelted the police with half-bricks and bottles, and crashed a van into a furniture shop. – Argus Correspondent

Confrontation: policemen arrest a striking security guard during the protest.
10 cops injured in clashes with striking security men

By Mizi Mkhwanazi

SEVERAL civilians and at least 10 policemen were injured in clashes between thousands of striking security workers and police in Johannesburg yesterday afternoon.

The clashes caused parts of the city centre to come to a virtual standstill.

Police had to use razor wire to cordon off some streets and block off the striking security guards who had earlier demonstrated at Johannesburg's Library Gardens in support of a demand for a 12 percent pay increase from their employers, the South African National Security Employers' Association.

Chaos broke out when the strikers refused to make way for a National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) march.

Police fired stun grenades and rubber bullets to disperse the striking workers. They were also accused of using live ammunition but this could not be confirmed.

Johannesburg police spokesman Superintendent Chris Wilken said police were forced to fire at the workers because they were throwing stones and bottles at them.

He denied police had used live ammunition.

"Members of the NUM were supposed to have used the same venue to stage a protest demonstration. They have obtained permission for the event. We are trying to disperse the crowd so that the NUM members can stage their demonstration," Wilken told Sowetan during the chaos.

Wilken said five policemen were seriously injured and had to be taken to hospital. The others received minor injuries.

Last night police announced a ban on gatherings by the striking security industry workers in Johannesburg.

However, Transport and General Worker's Union general secretary Randall Howard urged workers to turn out in large numbers today to continue their pressure on the employers to accede to their demands for a 12 percent pay increase, company contributions to a provident fund and an annual 13th cheque.

Howard also said the union's lawyers were planning to oppose an application for an interdict declaring the strike unlawful.

● See page 6
Employers in bid to end strike by guards

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Security industry employers will apply for an interdict in the Labour Court today to prevent security guards continuing a strike which has already cost the industry millions of rand and resulted in violence and chaos in Johannesburg.

The South African National Security Employers' associations and unions have deadlocked in talks aimed at reaching agreement on wage increases.

Employers are offering a 10% across-the-board salary increase, a 3% contribution towards the workers' provident fund and a 20% annual bonus.

Emily Fourie, a spokesman for the Professional Transport Workers' Union, said the offer was unacceptable, considering that the majority of workers earned only about R1 130 a month. The unions are demanding a 12% salary increase, a 100% 13th cheque, double pay on Sundays and improved benefits.

Mr Fourie said last night that the unions would oppose the interdict application and would meet early today to discuss the issue before going to court.

The strike, which began on Monday, turned ugly when guards and police clashed violently in the Library Gardens on Tuesday.

Don Masterson, president of the South African National Security Employers' Association, said they wanted the strikers back at work as soon as possible to restore some normality to the industry.

Police spokesman Chris Wilken said the unions had successfully applied to continue gathering in a field next to the Workers' Library in Newtown until March 3. He confirmed police had opened a case against the unions for gathering illegally at Library Gardens on Tuesday and that the six policemen who were injured in the clashes had fraud charges of assault.
Two uniformed security men run for their lives after being stripped naked.

By Abdul Malik


**Codes of conduct for picketing out**

By Shadrack Mashalaba

THE Management Committee of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) yesterday released codes of conduct for picketing and retrenchments which will serve as key guidelines in the labour market.

Addressing a media briefing in Johannesburg yesterday, Nedlac executive director Jayendra Naidoo said it was up to all stakeholders to ensure the codes reached factory workers.

The codes will provide guidelines to assist employers, employees, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, the Labour Courts and the South African Police Services in interpreting and applying the Act.

Key aspects of the picketing code include: a registered trade union must organise a picket, pickets on the company premises require permission from the employer, picketing rules must be negotiated by the employer and trade union before it begins and the police have a duty to uphold the law, and may take reasonable measures to keep the peace during picketing.

Nedlac agreed that the picketing code will determine the outcome of the way police behave in situations of labour disputes, where they will be ultimately put to the test.

The iron-fist attitude of police in the unfolding security guards strike, is anything to go by, things do not bode well.

The guidelines covering retrenchments includes clarity on the understanding of structural needs of the employer, and consultation should be an alternative measure to avoid dismissals of workers.

The Last in First Out principle, sometimes referred to as the “Lifo” principle, should apply only if it does not undermine an agreed affirmative action programme.

Ministry of Labour director-general Les Kettle said the Government was relieved that an agreement had been reached to deal with the adversarial relationship which previously existed in the labour market.

Both business and labour welcomed the code.
Security bosses seek ban on strike

The security industry will seek an interdict in the Labour Court today to prevent security guards from continuing their strike, which has cost millions of rands and brought violence and chaos to the Johannesburg CBD.

Employers and unions have struggled all week to reach agreement on wage increases, but the talks have deadlocked.

Employers are offering a 10% across-the-board increase, but unions have rejected the offer.

"We want a 12% increase, which is not unreasonable if you consider that most security workers earn about R1 130. It's only an extra R37 a month that we want," said Emily Foure, spokesman for the Professional Transport Workers' Union.

Workers also want a 4% company contribution to a provident fund and a 13th cheque. Employers have offered a 3% provident fund contribution and an annual bonus unless it comes from the provident fund contribution.

Security guards were bitter because they felt cheated by their employers, Foure said.

"They face death at the hands of violent criminals every day, and when they die or are injured there is not even any life assurance or disability benefit for them.

"They guard beautiful homes and expensive office complexes where they see all these luxuries, and they haven't even got food to put on their tables at home.

"They see an industry that is expanding and flourishing because there's such a demand for security guards, but they don't see any of the profits coming to them," she said.

Employers did not seem to have a social conscience, Foure said.

"We're only asking for the basics. Everyone should have a provident fund because it's a chain on the country that people should be dependent on the Government when they retire."

Unions would oppose the interdict that employers were seeking, Foure said.

Don Masterson, president of the South African National Security Employers' Association, said employers wanted the strikers back at work as soon as possible to restore some normality to the industry.

The unions also wanted the dispute resolved quickly, Foure said.

Yesterday guards gathered at Johannesburg's Library Gardens and marched to Newtown.

Six policemen injured in Tuesday's clashes with strikers in the CBD had laid charges of assault, Wilken added.
Deadlock in talks between security guards and employers

TALKS between striking security union representatives and the SA National Security Employers Association (Sansea) deadlocked yesterday, with unions set to contest an interdict application by employers that the strike be declared illegal.

Professional Transport Workers' Union spokesman Emily Fourné said the union would oppose the interdict application at the Labour Court in Johannesburg today.

Fourné said the unions would meet to discuss a plan for the day before going to court.

She said Sansea sent representatives to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration offices yesterday.

It was still taking part in negotiations, she said, although the delegation disappeared after a caucus session earlier in the day.

Security guards started a nationwide strike on Monday, demanding a 12% salary increase, a 13th cheque and double pay on Sundays.

Employers have offered a 10% increase and a 13th cheque of 20% of one month's salary. They threatened to apply for a court interdict today if the unions did not accept their salary offer.

The Transport and General Workers' Union's (TGWU's) Jackson Simon told a gathering of about 3,000 strikers in Newtown, Johannesburg, that Sansea had to withdraw its threat to seek a court interdict.

"We are not going to negotiate under intimidation," he said.

Union leaders asked workers to step forward with the names of strikers who were injured in Tuesday's clashes with police at the Library Gardens.

TGWU spokesman Jerry Ngcobo said about eight guards were injured in the clashes.

He said police at Johannesburg Central police station refused to open a case of assault on workers by police — Sapa
Employer body warns striking security guards of dismissals

Pule Molebele

LAWYERS representing the SA National Security Employers' Association yesterday warned security guards of dismissals if they persisted with their unprotected strike.

The warning came during arguments in the Labour Court in Johannesburg, where the association's lawyers said that their clients were suffering damages running into millions a day as a result of the strike.

A Loxton, representing the association, argued that the strike was illegal and unprotected as it contravened a binding collective wage agreement reached by the two parties. The agreement expires in April.

The association applied for a court interdict after failing to reach a wage settlement with the eight unions in the industry at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration this week.

Employers wanted the court to interdict the unions from participating in an illegal and unprotected strike.

Thousands of security guards started strike action on Monday, demanding a 15% wage increase, double pay for Sundays and a 13th cheque. Employers offered a 10% increase and a 13th cheque of 20% of one month's salary.

Judgment on the urgent interdict would be made today, Judge Raymond Zondo told the court yesterday.

Hilton Chadsie, representing the eight unions, opposed the application and argued that the employers' construction of a contract was inconsistent with collective bargaining practices.

He said that it was general practice in labour relations in SA to start negotiations for the next agreement during the currency of the agreement concluded in the previous round of collective bargaining.

Chadsie submitted that the dispute brought by employers before the court was not genuine and that the approach was not reasonable.

Dustin Chick reports that the Institute for Security Studies has come out against moves to grant security guards more policing powers until the debate surrounding the transformation of the entire industry was completed.

The institute said arguments by the Security Officers' Board that the extension of its powers was compatible with the constitution, on the grounds that it was aimed at allowing them to make a meaningful contribution to the safeguarding of the public, was flawed.

Mark Shaw, head of the institute's Safety in Governance Programme, said granting security officers the same powers as the police was effectively a move which would allow the public to buy their own police. The national police service was empowered by government and was in turn accountable to it, while private police forces would be accountable to paying customers, he said.

Shaw said that the constitution (and especially the Bill of Rights) guaranteed equality for all South Africans, which the creation of a number of private police forces would take away.

The rapid growth of the security sector has prompted a series of calls for greater regulation, with government passing the Security Officers' Board Amendment Act.
Court ousts bid to end guard strike

Johannesburg – A bid by security guard employers to have a strike by union members declared illegal was dismissed by the Labour Court today.

In his judgment, Judge Raymond Zondo said the unions' wage demands related to the 1998/99 period, which was not covered by a previous collective agreement between employers and unions.

Security guards went on strike on Monday over demands for a 12% wage increase.

They took to the streets of Johannesburg this week in protest against the South African National Security Employers' Association offer of 10% increases.

"It is artificial to define issues of disputes without giving a period of implementation," said Judge Zondo.

"The date of implementation is as essential an element in the issue of the dispute as the amount which is demanded."

The association was granted leave to appeal against the judgment. – Sapa
Guards assemble again

Security guards will assemble at the Workers Garden in Newtown, Johannesburg, this morning to hear what progress has been made with an interdict application by employers to stop them from continuued strike action, Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Jerry Ngcobo said yesterday.

The SA National Security Employers Association (Sansea) applied to the Labour Court in Johannesburg yesterday for an interdict to have the strike action declared illegal.

Eight unions representing security workers opposed the application.

Security guards embarked on a nationwide strike on Monday, demanding a 12 percent salary increase, a six percent provident fund contribution, a 100 percent annual bonus and double pay on Sundays.

Employers have offered a 10 percent increase, a three percent provident fund contribution with an annual bonus worked into the package, and argued that workers already received double pay on Sundays.

In its application Sansea is arguing that unions had failed to comply with a section of the new Labour Relations Act. — Sapa
Help us wash dirty linen, Duarte is told

BY CECILIA RUSSELL

Gauteng MEC for safety and security Jesse Duarte and her departmental head, Mkhabela Sibeko, had not fully co-operated with the commission, said Niel de Villiers, who is leading evidence for the commission.

The commission had not been able to limit the scope of the inquiry to specific allegations because we “have not received or been provided with any relevant documents from Mr Sibeko or Mrs Duarte,” De Villiers said yesterday. He was speaking during the fourth day of public hearings into allegations of corruption and mismanagement on the part of Duarte and her department.

De Villiers said that many of the allegations could be settled without leading evidence, but his investigation was hamstrung without Duarte’s and Sibeko’s co-operation and he called on them to “help him.”

This particularly applied to allegations of mismanagement which needed to be dealt with sensitively, De Villiers said.

“We are airing the dirty linen of the department in public. If it (the department) has to function with integrity and without the impression among the public that it’s a waste of time … then we need to deal with the matter with sensitivity,” De Villiers said.

However, he said the allegations were serious.

“There is evidence that the department was not a happy ship, there are great divisions in the department and allegations of favouritism,” he added.

De Villiers said there were allegations that rules were not uniformly applied.

Edmund Wessels, advocate for Theo Burgers the departmental official who Duarte suspended and later had to reinstate, said this favouritism could be demonstrated by the R76 000 used to attempt “convict” Lerato Maruping last year for making an overpayment, when no disciplinary procedures had been brought against a member of the department who was involved in three accidents using state vehicles, all without having a valid driving licence.

The commission was adjourned until Monday after Duarte’s advocate, Reenef Potgieter, assured the inquiry of his clients’ co-operation.
Angry guards’ dispute set to continue

By ZOLILE NQAYI

THE LABOUR dispute between security industry employers and security guards is set to continue this week after the Labour Court ruled on Friday that the security guards’ strike action was legal.

Security guards have been on strike since Monday and the strike is believed to have cost the industry millions.

Last week the striking guards clashed with the police in the Johannesburg CBD. Six policemen and a number of security guards were injured.

The court’s decision followed an application by security guards demanding a 12 percent wage increase and a number of benefits – including a 4 percent contribution from employers to a provident fund and an annual bonus.

Employers are offering a 10 percent increase across-the-board, but union representatives have rejected the offer.

George Mabula, the general secretary of the South African Security Workers’ Union, said the employers’ offer was “too little in view of the fact that some of the security guards are earning as little as R1,300 a month” without any benefits.

"The strike is still on, but that does not close the door on negotiations with employers," Mabula told City Press.

Meanwhile, the security guards’ strike action has affected most retailers.

Some of the major chain stores in the CBD were forced to use a single entrance manned by casual staff.
Parties optimistic over agreement to end strike by security guards

BY MBANGWA XABA

As the strike by security guards enters its 11th day, workers' unions and employers are optimistic about reaching an agreement today.

Last night, delegates from both parties were in a positive mood as they prepared for today's meeting.

Mick Bartmann, chairman of the South African National Security Employers Association (Sansewa), said: "We shall be making new proposals to the unions and we hope to reach agreement."

Transport and General Workers' Union national coordinator Gerry Ngcobo said: "We are keen to have agreement on this matter."

During the last round of talks between the groups, workers demanded a 12% salary increase, a 4% company contribution to a provident fund and an annual 13th cheque bonus. But a deadlock was reached when employers refused to move on their offer of a 10% salary increase, a 3% provident fund contribution, and no bonus unless it is drawn from the provident fund money.

On Friday an interdict lodged in the Labour Court by Sansea to declare the strike illegal was dismissed with costs by Mr Justice Zondo.

The strikers were expected to gather again this morning at the Workers' Library in Newtown.
Victory for security guards
Labour Court dismisses employers' application against employees' action

By Abdul Milazi

A GROUNDSWELL of anger among security industry workers may reach a crescendo as the one-week strike by security guards intensifies this week after the Labour Court dismissed the employers' application for an interdict against the workers' action at the weekend.

The South African National Security Employers' Association (Sansea) applied for an interdict on Friday to declare the security guards' strike illegal and unprotected in a bid to force workers to return to work.

Judge Raymond Zondo said the issue of wage demands by the unions related to the 1998-99 period, which was not regulated by the previous collective agreement between employers and unions in the sector.

At the centre of the strike, which has been marred by violence, is the workers' demand for better working conditions, including the establishment of a pension-provident fund, medical aid scheme and danger allowance.

These are in addition to a 12 percent wage increase demand, while employers are only prepared to offer 10 percent.

According to the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) the unions have for years only negotiated wage increases and not other benefits.

Employers argue that the other demands were not part of the wage package.

Basic benefits

The eleven unions in the security industry, led by the TGWU, the sector's largest union, say it is time security guards enjoyed certain basic benefits. Currently there are no benefits in the industry.

A number of non-striking security guards have been assaulted by the strikers since the strike began, as black guards gathered at the Library Gardens from Monday to Friday without fail to voice their grievances.
Security strike unresolved

Pearl Sebolaa

A MEETING between security worker's unions and employers failed to reach an agreement yesterday. Union sources said the unions yesterday raised their overall demand from 19% to 17%, to encourage employers to increase their offer.

However, security industry chief negotiator Don Masterson denied this and said the revised 17% package was tabled last week and had been rejected by employers.

Masterson said the unions had lodged an appeal against the Labour Court decision on Friday which dismissed their application for an interdict against the workers to have the strike declared illegal and unprotected. The hearing would be held tomorrow.

He said, however, they would continue negotiating with the unions and were also "looking at their position".

He said the strike, which was marred by incidents of intimidation and violence last week, had cost employers about R30m in lost revenue. The workers were estimated to have lost about R30m in earnings since the strike began.

Transport & General Workers' Union spokesman Jerry Nengo said the unions would intensify strike action this week and workers would continue to gather at the Workers' Library in Newton every day.

Police spokesman Inspector Mark Reynolds said the gathering by about 1,000 striking security workers at the Workers' Library yesterday was without incident. However, the police would continue to monitor the area.

The Pretoria High Court last night granted an urgent interdict in favour of Com Security Group prohibiting certain workers from intimidating management and employees, Masterson said.
Guards’ strike: no end in sight

THE strike by security guards entered its second week yesterday with no end in sight as talks between unions and employers remained deadlocked.

According to South African National Security Employers Association (Sansea) chief negotiator Mr Don Masterson, the strike has so far cost about R70 million. Workers have lost about R16.5 million in earnings.

About 30 000 workers from nine unions embarked on a nationwide strike last Monday, demanding a 12 percent salary increase, a six percent provident fund contribution, a 100 percent annual bonus and double pay on Sundays.

Employers have offered a 10 percent increase, a three percent provident fund contribution and an annual bonus worked into the package. They argued that workers already received double pay on Sundays.

Sansea’s application to the Labour Court to declare the strike illegal and unprotected was dismissed with costs last Friday.

Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) national industry coordinator Mr Jerry Ngcobo said there had been no talks at the weekend. They had asked for a meeting with employers to resolve the dispute.

Sansea will lodge an appeal against the Labour Court ruling tomorrow.

Ngcobo said employers were wasting their money: “I think the appeal is a racist thing because the ruling was made by a black judge.” — Sowetan.
ANC-Aids scandal on the brew

DP wants drug link investigated

The Democratic Party has asked public protector Mr Selby Baqwa to investigate whether the African National Congress had a financial interest in the development of the Aids drug Virodene PD08.

Documents in the party’s possession indicated that the ANC was promised a six percent stake in the company developing the drug, Cryopreservation Technologies (CPT). DP health spokesman Mike Ellis said at a media briefing yesterday.

“We also know that the Minister of Health (Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma) has at least considered taking legislative steps to help Virodene circumvent the problems it faced — particularly with the Medicines Control Council (MCC).”

Ellis said Zuma had told a World Aids Day rally in Pretoria last year that dying Aids patients “willing to take responsibility for their actions” should not be prevented from using Virodene.

She was also quoted as having said she wanted “an enabling law that will allow me to overrule the Medicines Control Council.”

Ellis said the DP also had evidence that Deputy President Thabo Mbeki — during a series of meetings with warning members of CPT between December 6 and 9 last year — brokered an agreement in terms of which the affairs of the company would have been administered by a government appointee, paid out of the public purse.

“There are very strong grounds for suspecting that these interventions by senior members of the Cabinet were made to advance the financial interests of the ANC.” — Sapa

Pick ’n Pay staff down tools

By Abdul Milazi (Sapa)

CLERICAL staff and junior management employees at Pick ’n Pay in Highgate, Johannesburg, downed tools yesterday in protest against written warnings handed out to them by head office for “holding an unauthorised meeting” at the weekend.

A manager, who did not want to be named, said the problem started when head office unilaterally transferred the Highgate branch’s administration responsibilities to the Steeldale branch.

“When the administration was moved to Steeldale, management at head office did not employ more staff to deal with the workload. We held a meeting with our Steeldale colleagues on Friday to ask them what action we should take,” said the manager.

Pick ’n Pay spokesman Mr Frans van der Walt said staff from the Highgate, Boksburg and Steeldale branches had requested a meeting on Friday, but head office had objected because it was the busiest day of the week.
After retirement... no

mercy for security guard
Security unions reject Mboweni involvement

Pule Molebelele

UNIONS representing striking "security guards yesterday reject-
ted employers' moves to request
Labour Minister Tito Mboweni to
intervene in the labour dispute
which looks set to enter its third
week unresolved

Employers and unions failed
to once again reach a settlement
at the Commission for Concilia-
tion, Mediation and Arbitration
yesterday

Workers, who have been on
strike since last week, are de-
manding a revised 17% from 19%
overall package while the employ-
ers are offering a 13% package

Don Masterson, chief negotia-
tor of the SA National Security
Employers' Association, said they
had not reached any agreement at
the commission.

Realising that neither party
could move on its stance, Masters-
son said, the association had then
proposed to involve Mboweni and
request him to refer the matter to
the wage board

Randall Howard, secretary
general of the Transport and Gen-
eral Workers' Union, rejected the
employers' proposal to request
Mboweni to intervene as the
unions believed parties must
demonstrate maturity and the po-
litical will to resolve the matter
themselves "We will take legal
advice, but insist that primary
parties must find a resolution to
this matter," he said

NORWICH HOLDINGS

Norwich Holdings S.A Limited
reg No 95/1026606

Additional disclosures:
Norwich provides the following information in addition to information set out in paragraph 2 ("Holdings") on page 23 of, and on the same basis as, the information set out in the defence document dated and set out on Monday, 2 March 1998;

1. Funds, the investments of which are managed by a subsidiary of Norwich, held 1 120 274 Aflife shares in 1998, being the last practicable date prior to the finalisation of the defence document.

2. Funds, the investments of which are managed by a subsidiary of Norwich, held 10 679 883 Aflife shares in 20 February 1998, being the last practicable date prior to the finalisation of the defence document.

3. Save as set out in the table below there were no dealings by funds, the investments of which are managed by a subsidiary of Norwich, in Aflife and Norwich shares in the period commencing six months prior to being the date on which Aflife's firm intention to make the offer was published in the press, and ending being the last practicable date prior to finalisation of the defence document.

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Sinister syndicate ‘behind Saldanha chaos’

THABO NABASO
BUSINESS REPORTER

A sinister syndicate which preys on construction sites, fomenting labour unrest for profit, has been blamed for violence that halted the multi-million rand Saldanha Steel project last month.

The claim is contained in a confidential report to Labour Minister Tito Mboweni by the provincial director of the Department of Labour, Brian Williams.

The allegation is supported by the powerful National Union of Metal Workers, which says the group will stop at nothing in pursuit of its aims and will simply kill those who stand in its way.

Mr Williams’s report recommends that Mr Mboweni facilitates the establishment of a taskforce, comprising police, intelligence personnel and the ministries of finance and trade and industry, to investigate the activities of the syndicate.

The report alleges the syndicate’s modus operandi is to infiltrate construction sites using artisans who instigate uprisings by exploiting workers’ demands.

In most instances, the workers go on the
Security guards gun for 14% settlement in wage dispute

They are expected to move up to 14% and settle with the unions. Employers have until yesterday stuck to the 13% wage package offer while the unions moved last week from their demand of a 19% wage increase to 17%.

Last week, an application by the employers to have the strike declared illegal was dismissed by the Labour Court. They subsequently lodged an appeal which is scheduled to be heard today.
Textile union backs plan to strike over education cuts

Province slated for teacher crisis

THABO MBASO
Business Reporter

The Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (Sactwu) has thrown its weight behind the planned strike by the Congress of South African Trade Unions in protest against cuts in the provincial education budget.

Sactwu is Cosatu’s largest affiliate in the Western Cape and wields considerable power in the clothing, textile and leather sectors of the provincial economy.

The strike is planned as a protest against teacher cuts in the Western Cape. Cosatu accuses the department of unnecessarily retrenching teachers.

Sactwu national education officer André Kriel said his organisation was not convinced that the provincial budget met the need to transform the lives of working people.

‘Province must accept the financial assistance offered by the Government’

ARG 5/3/98

People The gap between rich and poor was growing, he said.

Cosatu provincial secretary general Tony Ehrenreich said: “The provincial government must accept the financial assistance offered by the Government and use these finances to remedy the funding crisis in education.”

Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has offered grants to cash-strapped provinces on condition that they commit themselves to better financial management and cut down on unnecessary expenses.

The provincial government has rejected the offer.

Meanwhile, Cosatu has given notice to the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) that it intends to strike over the education crisis.

The notice was filed on Tuesday in terms of the Labour Relations Act.

Cosatu can legally strike only if all attempts to resolve its dispute with the provincial Department of Education have been exhausted.

Nedlac executive director Jayendra Naldoo said the body would convene a meetings soon to try to resolve the dispute.

Mr Ehrenreich said Cosatu would decide on the date of the strike at a meeting in two weeks time.
Retrenchments lead to strike

TROYE LUND
EDUCATION WRITER

SOUTH AFRICA'S National Economic and Development Labour Council (Nedlac) has agreed to begin strike proceedings on behalf of 300,000 Western Cape Cosatu members who aim to force the provincial government to end its mass teacher retrenchment and cost-saving campaign.

Cosatu's national secretary-general, Mr Sam Shulowa, has endorsed a notice to Nedlac about the strike, to ensure that workers are protected from pay or job loss.

"Sever education" in working-class areas was being entrenched, Cosatu claimed after Nedlac confirmed that it would set up an urgent meeting next week between the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and Cosatu, including its affiliated South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu).

If the meeting solves nothing, the union will begin a protracted industrial action campaign with a one-day strike.

While business estimates that a Cosatu strike will cost the province nearly R200 million a day, the department appealed to Cosatu not to strike because of the debilitating effect such action would have on an already fragile culture of teaching and learning.

WCED chief Mr Brian O'Connell said "I pray that Cosatu will come and engage with us so that we can share the same knowledge base and arrive at a point where we can empower teachers, pupils and parents to accept finan-

Education department to meet Cosatu

CT 01/3/98

SOUTH AFRICA'S National Economic and Development Labour Council (Nedlac) has agreed to begin strike proceedings on behalf of 300,000 Western Cape Cosatu members who aim to force the provincial government to end its mass teacher retrenchment and cost-saving campaign.

Cosatu's national secretary-general, Mr Tony Ehrenreich said a strike was not the "objective" it was necessary because the province had refused to negotiate alternative ways to cut costs.

So far, Cosatu's Western Cape branch is the only province acting on the national threat of a strike.

Ehrenreich said "Other provinces have entered into good faith bargaining over the issues.

The Western Cape has not.

"We are compelled to highlight education that is falling apart in black working-class areas. The provincial government has ignored requests to negotiate and if they continue to do this Nedlac will force them to meet us. The first price is to resolve the education situation."

The WCED confirmed that it had received an invitation yesterday to discuss the issue and has agreed to meet the union.

Cosatu's demands are:

- The provincial government must accept the government's offer of assistance.
- "Black working-class" areas must be given priority.
- Province must pay schools' municipal bills.
- Teacher retrenchments must be halted and pupil/teacher ratios kept to 32:1.
- Imbalances between historically black and white schools must be addressed.
- Province must stop passing on additional costs to parents.
Security-guard talks deadlocked

Talks between unions representing employers and striking security guards deadlocked again yesterday at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Employers were meeting privately last night to see if they could improve their offer, which represented an effective 13% increase. The unions have revised their demands to a 17% increase.

Employers will today appeal against a Labour Court ruling that the strike is legal.

About 30,000 workers from nine unions are on strike. Yesterday workers assembled again at the Workers' Library in Newtown, Johannesburg, awaiting developments.

Police spokesman Inspector Mark Reynolds said the assembly had been illegal because no permission had been granted. — Staff Reporter and Sapa

Jan 5/3/98
Striking workers sacked

In a statement Jamafo spokesperson Jacky Masuku said Pick 'n Pay acknowledged that the workload at Steeldale increased by 50 percent since the transfer but refused to compensate or allocate more staff to the branch.

Pick 'n Pay group human resources manager Frans van der Walt said the company served notice on the workers because they had decided to go ahead with an unauthorised meeting despite senior management's objection.

He said management had suggested that the meeting be held on Monday because Friday was the busiest day of the week. "They decided to go ahead with the meeting anyway."

Jamafo said on Tuesday that the Highgate, Steeldale and Boksburg branches were on strike, a statement disputed by senior management who said only the Highgate branch was on strike.

Masuku said Pick 'n Pay was not willing to embrace transformation.
Court rules for striking security guards

Elton Sebolao

THE Labour Appeal Court yesterday upheld a Labour Court decision that the SA National Security Employers’ Association (Sansea) to have the security guards’ strike declared illegal, and that the SA National Security Employers’ Association (Sansea) to have the security guards’ strike declared illegal, and that the strike was legal and protected.

Judge JP Myburgh said the unions had complied with all requirements. Employers were notified promptly and had notified employers timely of their intention to strike.

He said the unions were also not precluded from striking as the issues in dispute were not regulated by the collective agreement with employers.

The unions submitted demands on wages and other conditions of employment applicable when the collective agreement expired on April 8. Professional and Transport Workers’ Union spokesman Emily Fourie told workers in Newtown yesterday that employers had increased their offer by 0.5% to 13.5%. This meant a 10% increase for salaries, 3% on provident fund contributions and 0.5% for the yearly bonus, which for Grade E security guards translated into about R70 a year.

Workers rejected the employers’ offer. Transport and General Workers’ Union national co-ordinator Jerry Ncoho said: “The workers instructed the unions to revise their demand to 14.5%.

Sansea chief negotiator Don Masterson would not comment on the unions’ revised demand as employers had not been notified.

The guards will today march to the offices of Springbok Patrol in Johannesburg in support of the strike.

Meanwhile, the SA Footplate Staff Association yesterday wrote to Labour Minister Tito Mboweni asking him to intervene and protect its members from being intimidated and attacked by the striking security guards.

If the safety of its members could not be guaranteed, De Vos said the association would “withdraw them from the work situation.”

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Key Market Movements — 4/3 to 5/3

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More violence feared if guards continue strike

OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG - Police fear that violence will increase if the two-week long strike by security guards continues.

Local police spokesperson Inspector Mark Reynolds said 50 cases relating to the activities of striking guards were being investigated, including possession of firearms, theft, attempted murder, robbery, assault and public violence.

The police warning came as unions threatened to intensify the strike following the Labour Appeal Court upholding last Friday's Labour Court judgment that the strike was legal and protected. It dismissed with costs an appeal by employers against the judgment.

And Metrorail, whose properties and railway stations have been left unprotected over the past two weeks, has experienced violent incidents in the Wits area.

SA Footplate Staff Association (Safsa) spokesperson Mr Chris de Vos said there had been five murders, three attempted murders, seven assaults and eight robberies on Metrorail properties in the area in the past two weeks.

There had also been seven attacks on non-striking guards, 26 incidents of cable theft, 12 incidents in which Metrorail staff and guards were intimidated and 20 break-ins at stations and sidings.

Safsa demanded yesterday that the government deploy soldiers and police along the Metrorail system.

Metrorail operations manager Mr Frikkie Gouws said Metrorail supported the plea for the government to intervene. "We are having discussions with the police."

National co-ordinator for the Transport and General Workers Union, Mr Gerry Ngoboz, said the workers were going to intensify the strike as the employers' revised offer was "a smack in the face."

The South African National Security Employers' Association (Sansea) are now offering an effective 13.5% increase. The unions earlier this week had revised their demands from 19% to 17%.

Sansea's chief negotiator, Mr Don Masterson, said yesterday that if the 13.5% offer was refused, the association would ask Labour Minister Tito Mboweni to instruct the chairperson of the wage board to make a determination.
A WORK stoppage at Saldanha Steel construction site yesterday was directly linked to a syndicate which provoked labour unrest for profit, a union official said.

National Union of Metal Workers’ organiser for the Saldanha region, Mr Karl Cloete, said yesterday the work stoppage was a “last ditch attempt” by the syndicate to gain credibility among workers.

“They move onto the site as part of the workforce, and when they hear of any workers’ problem, they grab it and cause chaos. When the site has been disrupted, a labour broker comes and offers labour at expensive prices so the syndicate can make a profit.”

This bears out the findings of a report to Labour Minister Tito Mboweni, which alleges that the syndicate operates by infiltrating construction sites using artisans who instigate uprisings by exploiting workers’ demands. The workers go on the rampage, as happened at Saldanha Steel last month.

The report outlines exactly the same method — including the labour broker’s role and the higher wage angle — as explained by the union.

Said Cloete: “There is definitely an organised syndicate involved at Saldanha, and these people are known to us. We’re now putting mechanisms in place to deal with the situation.

“We’ve had meetings with key roleplayers like the Department of Labour, Trade and Industry and the unions. Names of the syndicate were shared at these meetings.

“The unions are also ensuring that workers at Saldanha are not intimidated into striking by these guys. Of course there are worker problems on site, but the unions were using the structures available to deal with them,” he said.

It is unclear how many workers downed tools yesterday, but when the Cape Times visited the site in the afternoon, most were back at work. No equipment was damaged.

Police were on standby.

Saldanha Steel spokesperson Mr Bernard Smith said yesterday about 40 workers were holding talks with management late yesterday.

“There are 6500 workers on site, and only 40 are not at work.”

He said there was “a lot of truth” in the report given to Mboweni.

“Two people have been charged after the violence on site last time. One is out on bail.

“There are always workers’ demands. But there are structures which deal with them. If a solution can’t be found, then labour can strike.”

But what happened last month was not a strike, it was a riot,”

Saldanha Steel spokesperson

What happened last month was not a strike, it was a riot —
Saldanha Steel spokesperson

He said the damaged caused when workers had gone on the rampage, burning buildings, destroying vehicles and computers, had come to about R4 million.

“The delay it caused meant we lost about R40m,” Smith said.
Security strike gains momentum

Johannesburg — More than 70,000 security guards are expected to intensify their two-week-old strike today after the Labour Appeal Court yesterday upheld last week’s labour court judgment that the strike was legal and protected in terms of the new Labour Relations Act.

Jerry Ngobo, the president of the Transport and General Workers’ Union, said he expected more guards to join the strike as the court’s ruling had removed any grey areas concerning the legality of the industrial action.

Ngobo said the unions rejected an employers’ final wage offer of 13.5 percent — 10 percent on wages, 3 percent on provident fund contributions, and 0.5 percent as the annual bonus.

He said the unions were demanding a total package of 14.5 percent, which they would divide in terms of “their own understanding.”

He said employers had lost an estimated R30 million during the strike, including wages for “alternative labour,” who were being paid higher rates, and that guards had lost about R6 million in wages.

Ngobo said Tito Mboweni, the labour minister, “would be committing a political blunder” if he heeded the threat by Don Masterson, the chief negotiator of the South African National Security Association (Sansea), to lobby Mboweni to instruct the chairman of the Wage Board to make a determination in the event of the union’s rejecting the employers’ final offer.

Sansea’s appeal against the judgment was dismissed with costs, and the parties must go back to the negotiating table.

Last week, the unions refused to continue talks unless Sansea withdrew the appeal. Sansea said it needed legal opinion before further negotiations could take place.

“It was not disputed that the unions involved complied with the requirements for a strike because they referred the issue in dispute to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and they notified employers timously of their intention to strike,” said JP Myburgh, the labour appeal court judge.
Guard strike results in 50 violent cases

BY MIELANGWA XASA AND RODNEY VICTOR

Police fear that violence will increase if the two-week-long strike by security guards continues any longer.

Johannesburg police spokesman Mark Reynolds said 50 cases relating to the activities of striking guards were being investigated. The cases involved possession of firearms, theft, attempted murder, robbery, assault, and public violence, he said.

The police warning came as unions threatened to intensify the strike after the Labour Appeal Court yesterday upheld last Friday’s Labour Court judgment that the strike was legal and protected. It dismissed with costs an appeal by employers against the judgment.

Labour Appeal Court Judge J.P. Myburgh said the unions involved had complied with the requirements for a strike because they had referred the issue in dispute to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration and had notified employers timely of their intention to strike.

Meanwhile, numerous violent incidents have been reported by Metrorail, whose properties and railway stations in Johannesburg, the East Rand, the West Rand and Vereeniging have been left unprotected for two weeks.

SA Footplate Staff Association (Safsa) spokesman Chris de Vos said there had been five murders, three attempted murders, seven assaults, eight robberies and one attempted theft of a firearm.

There had also been seven attacks on guards, 26 incidents of cable theft, eight incidents in which shots were fired at stations, 12 incidents in which Metrorail staff and guards were intimidated, and 20 break-ins at stations and signal boxes.

Safsa yesterday demanded that the Government deploy soldiers and police to prevent crime and the intimidation of non-strikers.
Security strike gets court’s OK

The Labour Appeal Court in Johannesburg yesterday upheld last Friday’s labour court judgment that the strike by security guards was legal and protected.

The appeal by the SA National Security Employers Association against the judgment was dismissed with costs. The association last week applied to have an urgent appeal after last Friday's judgment.

Labour Appeal Court Judge JP Myburgh said it was not disputed that the unions involved complied with the requirements for a strike because they referred the issue in dispute to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and they notified employers timeously of their intention to strike.

Myburgh said while the parties were bound by the terms of the collective agreement for the period that was operative, and were precluded from resorting to industrial action to change its terms, the unions were not prohibited from embarking on a strike.

The issue in dispute is the wage increase for 1998-1999, which is not regulated by the period between April 7, 1997 to April 8, 1998.

Myburgh said on appeal employers raised a new point that the strike was unprotected because unions demanded wage increases be implemented from March 1, 1998.

He said unions submitted that the demands were “in respect of wages and other terms and conditions of employment which will be applicable after the expiry of the present collective agreement regulating wages and working conditions.”

Security workers began a nationwide strike last Monday, demanding a 12 percent across-the-board salary increase, a six percent company provident fund contribution, a 100 percent annual bonus and double pay on Sundays. – Sapa

Requirements met as unions had referred dispute to CCMA
Settlement ends strike
Security union unhappy about settlement

By TUMO MOKONE and Sapa

SECURITY Officers Civil Rights Union (Socru) has distanced itself from the "compromise" settlement reached on Friday by the employer's organisation and other unions which represented its members in a two-week long strike.

Socru organiser Nketsa Nkadineng yesterday told City Press that his union was presented with the details of the settlement showing that the unions had accepted a 14 percent wage and benefits offer.

"Socru was not present during the Friday negotiations because we knew the other unions would accept only a one percent increase from the employers' initial offer of 13 percent. We refused to sign the agreement but we will not keep our members on the streets to continue with the strike, lest they are victimised when other workers return to work tomorrow," said Nkadineng.

Nkadineng said Socru's demand when they met with SA National Security Employers Association (Sansea) at Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) on February 22 was a 19 percent wage and benefits package.

"After negotiations we backed down to 16 percent which was agreed upon by all unions. But the employers saw red and successfully applied for a court interdict that declared the strike illegal," he said.

He said the Labour Court withdrew the interdict on February 27 and on Wednesday, the union's caucus reiterated their 16 percent standpoint with a fallback of 15.5 percent. Sansea offered 13.5.

"On Thursday the Labour Court dismissed the employers' appeal with costs before entering the Friday 14 percent agreement with other unions. So we urge our members to return to work tomorrow. They cannot suffer for one percent they have seen enough trouble," concluded Nkadineng, alluding to the arrests and harassment the security guards suffered during the strike.

Sapa reports that while Sansea chief negotiator Don Masterson declared the settlement a victory for both parties, the Congress of SA Trade Unions expressed support for the strike and disappointment with the employers "who had no interest in the rights of their own employees."

Sansea and unions (except Socru) agreed on a 14 percent wage and benefits package - 10 percent in wage increases, three percent in provident fund contributions and one percent as an annual bonus - at CCMA's Johannesburg offices.

About 30 000 security workers began a nationwide strike on February 23, demanding a 12 percent across-the-board salary increase, a six percent company provident fund contribution, a 100 percent annual bonus, and double pay on Sundays.

FUTURE IMPERFECT... Nketsa Nkadineng pondering the future. Pic: GIDEON NHLAPO

CP 81/3128
Deal ends security strike

Pearl Sebela

AN agreement on wages and social benefits in the security industry was signed by employers and trade unions at the weekend, finally putting to an end a two-week national strike by security guards.

The SA National Employers’ Association (Sanasa) and unions agreed on a 14% package to be divided between wage increases (10%), provident fund contribution (3%) and an annual bonus of 1%.

Provision was also made for a committee to be formed to deal with the mechanisms of the provident fund and set up the time frame for implementation.

Transport and General Workers’ Union secretary-general Randall Howard said although the agreement was a “compromise settlement”, it took them “one step closer to the type of conditions we would like to see in the industry”.

Sanasa chief negotiator Don Masterson said the settlement was a victory for both parties. However, it was unfortunate that there had been injuries and damage to property, he said.
Low pay, days away from home, that's the life of a trucker.

The long haul... truck drivers Simon Animado's job takes him away from his family for long periods and the threat of injury is a constant concern.
Security guards back on the block

Straw 9/3/98

Security guards across the country returned to work today after their wage dispute with employers was resolved on Friday.

SA National Security Employers' Association spokesman Mick Bartmann warned that certain unions may have had trouble getting the message that guards should return to work to their members at the weekend.

The two parties settled on a 10% increase in wages, a 3% increase in pension fund contribution and a 1% bonus.

The strike by thousands of workers lasted two weeks, during which many guards chose to continue working, but dressed in civilian clothing. Reports of intimidation were rife.

The dispute was eventually settled by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in Johannesburg.

Own Correspondent
Labour broker denies link with sinister syndicate

ART 10/3/98

THABO HABASO
Business Reporter

A labour broker cited in confident reports about a syndicate which instigates violence at construction sites for profit has applied for an urgent court order to stop Saldanha Steel linking him to the syndicate.

ABC Recruitment managing director Gevin Zietsman said in papers in the Cape High Court yesterday that Saldanha Steel industrial relations manager George Kerridge had been spreading rumours about him that stood to harm his business.

Mr Zietsman’s company and black empowerment group, Deluxolo, formed a joint venture, Saldanha Central Services; last year to supply labour to the steel project.

Mr Zietsman told the Cape Argus Mr Kerridge had accused him of being involved in a countrywide syndicate of labour brokers which destabilises sites for profit.

Separate reports compiled by the Western Cape Department of Labour and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa allege that the violence at the Saldanha Steel project in February was perpetrated by agents of the syndicate. The reports recommend the establishment of a task-team to investigate the syndicate.

The syndicate is said to infiltrate construction sites using artisans who instigate uprisings by exploiting workers’ demands. Labour brokers then approach site managers offering them the services of their artisans at fees above the market rate.

Mr Zietsman has denied the allegations. The reports also name Jumbo Solomon, the outspoken self-appointed leader of workers at Saldanha Steel, as one of the instigators.

Mr Zietsman said: “I categorically deny that labour brokers were behind the events of February 3 at Saldanha Steel.”

Lawyers for Mr Kerridge will oppose the application. The hearing has been postponed to June.

Meanwhile, Mr Solomon, whom the Cape Argus tracked to his home in Durban, has denied reports that he is employed by corrupt labour brokers. “To say I work with brokers is silly. Labour brokers have been exploiting workers so I do not work for them,” he said.

Mandela and Herzog sign housing loans

ART 10/3/98

Cape Town – President Mandela and German President Roman Herzog today signed accords including almost DM900-million (R423-m) in low-cost housing loans.

“We are very, very proud to have the German president here,” Mr Mandela told tourists who had gathered at the gate to Tuynhuys to watch a brass band and navy guard formally welcome Mr Herzog.

“Germany was one of our strongest supporters,” he said as the crowd cheered and clapped.

Mr Herzog arrived in South Africa on Sunday on a five-day state visit accompanied by a 100-strong delegation, including prominent business people.

Agreements signed included loans to improve urban housing, a maritime shipping pact and an environmental co-operation accord.

Mr Herzog was due to meet Deputy President Thabo Mbeki later today and address Parliament before a state banquet hosted by Mr Mandela.

Reuters
Strikers tell council to quit

Bitterworth – Municipal workers here vow to continue their strike until the council resigns. About 300 workers, who embarked on the strike after not being paid on February 25, met in the garbage-filled municipal garden in the town centre. A representative of the workers, Luvuyo Centane, said the council was not cooperating and they wanted it to resign immediately. They had informed the provincial government of their grievances.

Another worker told the crowd the problem was no longer about salaries, but about incompetence. “Even if we are paid today or tomorrow, this problem (could) happen again and again. We have families to feed, children to send to school and bills to pay. The council must go!”

Deputy mayor Welcome Tshetu said council funds were exhausted because striking workers had promoted a culture of non-payment among residents and businesses. – Sapa
Truckers strike - but W Cape is not affected

SARITTE ISAACS
Transport Reporter
ARG 16/3/98

Transport unions claimed up to 100% support in most parts of the country for the strike by road and freight industry workers today, but Western Cape operators said the local effect was "not noticeable".

The strike was called by eight unions, including the "Transport and General Workers' Union whose national co-ordinator Thulani Dlamini warned the strike would be open-ended and workers would not return until agreement was reached. "This is a legal strike after negotiations on wages and working conditions broke down," he said.

"I have been up since 4am with telephone calls coming from all over and I would say the strike is at least 90% to 100% effective in Gauteng and most other areas."

He emphasised that employers could not afford not to meet workers' demands and avoid things getting "ugly".

The last time transport workers went on strike there were huge delivery delays and chaos on major roads when drivers blocked highways with their trucks.

In the Western Cape, heavy haulage operators described the strike as "negligible in comparison to the normal daily rate of absenteeism", and one company reported a full turnout today.

Gary Rustow, regional director of Long Distance Transport, reported a 100% turnout today, with all outgoing regional trucks on the road. But he added "It may be too early to say the strike has probably not reached us yet."

To page 2

W Cape truckers keep going

ARG 16/3/98

Meanwhile, road and freight industry workers were due to meet in Johannesburg today after their failure last week to reach agreement with employers. Emily Foure, spokeswoman for the Professional Transport Workers' Union, said air freight, oil tankers and the delivery of furniture, clothes and fresh and frozen food might be affected.

Unions involved in the strike would approach the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration "The gap between workers' demand and the employers' offer is not very wide. I'm confident their differences will be resolved quickly," she said.

Nico Badenhorst, spokesman for the employers' association, said he believed this year's offer was "one of the highest in the country".

From page 1
Transport strike ‘may cost millions’

UP TO half of the 40,000 transport industry workers started a nationwide strike yesterday, sparking fears that major sectors of the economy could be hit if it was not resolved soon.

Sources said it was too early to assess the impact of the strike on other industries. About 90% of companies relied on road transport to distribute their products and a protracted strike was expected to cost millions of rand.

Talks on wages and subsistence allowances between the Road Freight Employers’ Association and unions broke down last week, and seven unions said they would strike.

Professional Transport Workers’ Union spokesman Emily Fourie said there was no great discrepancy between what the workers demanded and what the employers were offering. “On average it was a difference of about R10,” she said.

Fourie said the unions were prepared to settle for a R40 increase on the subsistence allowance instead of the R50 they were demanding, provided that “the other issues are resolved”.

The unions are also demanding the inclusion of “additional categories” of workers, such as office workers, into the transport bargaining council. The Labour Court ruled on Friday that they could strike over this matter.

The association’s labour relations director Neo Badenhorst said the employers’ final offer to the unions was “generous”. Increases ranged from 11.5% to 18% for minimum wages, and an increase on actual wages of 10.5%.

Fourie said the Commission For Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) had contacted both parties to set up a meeting to try to resolve the dispute. This could take place today or tomorrow. Badenhorst said the association was not opposed to the CCMA’s intervention.

In Johannesburg about 3,000 striking workers gathered at the Workers’ Library in Newtown where union leaders addressed them. En route to the library two truck drivers were attacked in an attempt to force them to join the strike. Workers also attacked trucks parked near the Market Theatre with sticks and metal poles.

Transport and General Workers’ Union spokesman Thulani Dlamini appealed for calm, saying some workers were not notified of the strike on time.

Striking workers will today march to the offices of the National Bargaining Council for the road freight industry in Braamfontein. Dlamini said workers would also start gathering in other major cities.

Dlamini said numerous meetings with employers had failed to resolve the issue. The unions gave employers a week’s notice that the strike would start yesterday, but nothing was done to avert it.

Reuter reports that the transport sector could face further disruptions on Thursday if a deadlock in wage talks in the bus sector is not resolved. More than 20,000 workers employed by 18 companies plan to strike.

The SA Bus Employers’ Association said a strike might lead to further job losses in an industry already struggling for financial survival.
75 000 commuters may be stranded
City bus strike looms

Transport Reporter

SHARE

About 75 000 commuters from five communities

OTHERS ARE UNFIT TO CONDUCT
STRIKE

and it is by no means
over with transport
and commuters

The strike is the first since the 1980s
The company would indeed be much
better off with a strike

The strike is the first since the 1980s
but many people living in suburban areas

Other unions have been given 48 hours

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75 000 commuters may be stranded
Truck dispute threatens City booze supplies
Transport strike may cost up to R160m

ROCK, DON’T ROLL. An angry member of the Transport and General Workers’ Union hurled a rock at a truck driver in the Johannesburg CBD who did not support the call of seven transport unions to strike which started yesterday. PHOTO JOHN WOODROOF

Johannesburg — South Africa’s transport industry may lose up to R160 million worth of business a week if the strike started by truckers yesterday continues, according to union estimates.

Unions and industry representatives differed widely on estimates of the disruption caused.

Sources close to the industry, who described the situation as “serious”, conceded that at least 30 percent of the day’s operations had been hit by the strike. Unions, however, said that for “obvious reasons” employers would not admit to an “80 percent to 90 percent disruption in terms of productivity”.

The latter estimate amounts to about R160 million, based on 80 percent of the R200 million weekly average of the industry’s annual turnover of R11 billion. The 30 percent estimate would yield a weekly loss of R60 million.

The seven striking unions include the Transport and General Workers’ Union, the Professional Transport Workers’ Union, the Transport and Allied Workers’ Union, the Turning Wheels’ Workers’ Union, the South African Transport Workers’ Union and the Motor Transport Association.

Thulani Dlamini, the spokesman for the unions, predicted a 100 percent disruption this morning as the strike, which has been marred by some violence, gathers momentum.

A parallel Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration mediation meeting — the first since the parties deadlocked on Friday — is also scheduled for today.

In Johannesburg, about 20 000 workers are expected to march to the industry’s national bargaining council in Braamfontein to hand in a memorandum of their demands.

The unions threatened to pocket companies that employed scab labour and would not rule out the possibility of blockading freeways and byways if their demands were not met.
Bus men may join striking truckers

New March in city today: 'no blockades', but industry could lose R160-m a week

By Milanne-Anne Farris
and Xolisa Yapha

By bus drivers are expected to join truckers this week in the national strike which, it is feared, could cost the transport industry R160-million a week until resolved.

The striking truckers assembled in the Johannesburg city centre today for a march to employer offices, reassuring fears of renewed violence between striking truckers and scab drivers. Striking drivers yesterday attacked at least two trucks in the city centre.

Transport and General Workers' Union national organiser Thulani Dlamini vowed that today's march in the city centre would be peaceful, but warned that employers using scab labour would be targeted for picketing.

The striking truckers are expected to be joined by bus drivers in two days' time.

The truckers were expected to assemble at the Library Gardens in the city before marching to the National Bargaining Council offices in Braamfontein to hand over a memorandum to the Road Freight Employers' Union. Police will monitor the march closely.

The organisers of the strike today dismissed reports that truckers were planning blockades of major roads. Striking truckers had handed their vehicles to their employers, and it would therefore be impossible.

Yesterday, only a small percentage of the more than 26,000 truckers and their assistants registered in Johannesburg attended the rally. The strike got off to a slow start in other parts of the country too.

SAPA reports that strikers met in Vereeniging, Pretoria and Cape Town, while there were unconfirmed mass gatherings in the Eastern Cape and northern KwaZulu-Natal.

The industrial action is poised to peak on Thursday when more than 20,000 bus company employees embark on a strike in major centres around the country. The bus drivers are demanding a 10.5% increase and the employers are offering them 7.5%.

More reports
Truckers take to Jo’burg streets

By Sello Seripe

TRAFFIC came to a standstill in central Johannesburg when hundreds of truck drivers from various freight companies took to the streets on the first day of a national strike over pay demands yesterday.

There was slow traffic movement in the streets around Library Gardens where the workers had gathered and some of the strikers toyi-toyied in the streets.

Light delivery trucks were stopped by some of the strikers and their crews forced to join the strike.

Sowetan witnessed a crew from Vaughan Johnson’s Wine and Spirits being dragged from their light delivery truck and forced to take part.

Strike meetings were also held in Vereeniging, Pretoria and Cape Town. There were reports of meetings in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

The striking workers are members of the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU), Transport and Allied Workers’ Union, Professional Transport Workers’ Union, Turning Wheel Workers’ Union of South Africa, Transport and Workers’ Union and the Motor Transport Workers’ Union.

The strike follows deadlock reached in November wage negotiations between the unions and the Road Freight Employers’ Association (RFEA)

The workers are demanding varied increases for different categories of workers. TGWU national organiser for road freight and maritime sector Mr Thulani Dlamini said the unions were demanding:

- R40 a week across the board increase for grade 1 employees (general workers), against R35 offered by employers;
- R60 across the board increase for grade 4 and 5 employees (long distance drivers). The union said employers were offering R50 to grade 4 employees and R55 to grade 5 employees. The workers view this as an attempt to divide workers;
- Workers are also demanding a subsistence allowance of R50, while employers are offering R35,60.

Dlamini said no agreement was reached at a meeting between the unions and the RFEA held last Friday.

RFEA director for labour relations Mr Nico Badenhorst said yesterday that he was unsure when the next meeting between the parties would be held.

Badenhorst said employers were offering R54 a week for grade 4 and 5 employees, and not R50 and R55 for the two grades as reported by the unions.

He said 30 percent of the industry was affected by the action even though other companies had made contingency plans.
Golden Arrow Lockout Plan

The Union Line Police Officer section provides a crucial role in maintaining order during lockouts. They are responsible for enforcing lockout policies, ensuring that all employees adhering to the lockout procedures. In addition, they monitor and report any violations of lockout guidelines. This role is critical in maintaining a safe and secure workplace environment during lockouts.

City truckers hurt in attack by strikers

Marches and violence around country as mood turns ugly
Bus strike may halt services

ERIC NTABAZALILA

CITY bus commuters should brace themselves for a strike by Golden Arrow employees. The action is likely to continue for days if a solution is not found soon.

Labour representatives in the company yesterday gave notice of the workers' intention to embark on a strike with effect from 3am tomorrow.

Ms Jeanne Welsh, Golden Arrow public relations officer, said the company regretted that labour representatives had decided to take such action despite efforts by company representatives at national level to find a mutually acceptable solution to the workers' demands.

Welsh said the company wished to apologise to commuters who would be inconvenienced by the strike.

Golden Arrow had put contingency arrangements in place to counter the inconvenience. These included arrangements with Metrorail to honour bus clipcards on trains for the duration of the action. Other arrangements had been made with taxi organisations to carry passengers from outlying areas such as Atlantis, where buses are the only public transport.

Welsh said the company advised commuters to board taxis from those areas where taxi owners had agreed to honour clipcards.

She said despite these arrangements, employer representatives would continue their efforts to avert the strike and talks between the parties would continue today.

However, should the talks fail, the company would not run any bus service because of the large numbers of employees involved in the strike.

"In the interest of staff safety, Golden Arrow has decided to impose a lockout for the duration of the strike," she added.

"It is regrettable that some loyal staff members who would have liked to continue working will not be able to do so, but the company has a responsibility to protect its people, property and vehicles," she said.

In Johannesburg yesterday, police fired birdshot to disperse striking transport workers who stoned a non-striking truck driver, Sapa reports.

The driver was slightly injured when all his truck windows were smashed.
Talks put brakes on truckers' strike

BY MUNANGWA XABA
AND CHESSWELL NGOVUYO

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration said yesterday that striking transport workers and the transport companies had accepted an offer by the CCMA to conciliate in the nationwide dispute over pay.

The process is due to start this afternoon.

The strike by transport workers spiralled earlier yesterday, resulting in a blockade near Nelspruit and attacks on non-striking workers in other parts of the country.

Thousands of strikers staged marches in several towns to press home their demands for wage increases. Union leaders estimate that about 40,000 workers are on strike around the country.

In the most serious strike-related disruption so far, about 400 truck drivers blockaded the N4 highway near Nelspruit, forcing motorists to take alternative routes. The blockade ended at about 6pm when the truckers dispersed and several trucks were towed away by the police.

In central Johannesburg, police fired birdshot to disperse striking transport workers who attacked a non-striking truck driver with bricks, stones and other objects.

The driver was slightly injured when his truck's windows were smashed at the corner of Jeppe and West streets, was rescued by police. They moved the man into an armoured vehicle as angry workers threw missiles at police.

The truckers are demanding a R40 increase in the grade 1 category, while employers are offering R35; R60 for grades 4 and 5, while employers are offering R55; and a subsistence increase of R50 a night for long-distance drivers while employers are offering R55.

The industrial action is expected to reach its peak tomorrow, when more than 20,000 employees of private bus companies join the truck drivers. Metropolitan bus services in Johannesburg will not be affected.

Nico Badenhorst, the Road Freight Employers Association's industrial relations director, said strikes were expected all over SA and could bring the country to a halt and damage the economy.

Metro bus drivers not involved in strike

The Johannesburg Metropo
tian Bus Service will not be affected by the threatened bus drivers' strike.

Spokesman Jenny Solomon said some drivers would attend a memorial service for a former trade union organiser tomorrow but metro drivers would not join the strike as they belong to a different union.

Private bus companies will be severely affected, but union officials today expressed optimism that the strike could be averted. About 3.2 million passengers use private bus services every day.

Bus drivers are demanding a 10.5% increase, employers are offering 7.5%. Other demands include changes in night shift allowances, tool allowances and provident fund contributions by the employers.

Thys Heyns, vice-chairman of the South African Bus Employers Association, said employers hoped they could reach a settlement.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mbengeni Mphotha said: "We are very keen to have settlement on this matter and are hopeful an agreement can be reached today" - Staff Reporter
By Selio Serepo

The strike by truck drivers is gradually turning ugly, with incidents of assault and the intimidation of non-striking drivers occurring.

Thus, despite assurances and calls for discipline by the Gauteng leadership of the seven unions whose members are involved in the strike, the workers, mostly long-distance drivers, are demanding better wages. Commuters could find themselves stranded after bus drivers affiliated to the unions threatened to join the strike.

After yesterday's presentation of a memorandum by the unions' leadership to the Bargaining Council for the Road Freight Industry in Braamfontein, the city-bound marchers hailed the driver of an unmarked white light delivery van from his vehicle and assaulted him with sticks.

The incident occurred at the corner of De Korte and Bertha streets in Braamfontein when about 10 000 strikers made their way to the city. The man managed to escape.

Marshals were greatly outnumbered, resulting in unguarded marchers intimidating and even assaulting non-striking truck drivers.

Windows shattered

Johannesburg police spokesman Captain Lungelo Dlamini confirmed the incident, which had occurred in Braamfontein.

He said stones were thrown at a truck at the corner West and Jeppe streets. Captain Dlamini said the windshield and the side windows were shattered and the driver's eyes were injured.

"At the corner of Jeppe and Sauer streets a truck driver was pulled out of his vehicle but police intervened and escorted him out of town," Captain Dlamini said.

Several light delivery van drivers were either intimidated or forced to join the protesters when the strike began on Monday.

Addressing the strikers at the Bargaining Council's offices yesterday, Transport and General Allied Workers' national organiser Mr. Thulani Dlamini said truckers in Gauteng were exposed to more dangers, hence their demand for increased salaries.
Five policemen hurt in transport strike violence

Police fired rounds of rubber bullets to disperse them. Workers, rights groups called on media to cover story. The police fired into the crowd, causing injuries. The incident occurred during a demonstration by transport workers. The strike was called due to salary discrepancies and working conditions.
Truckers shot as violence dogs strike

Johannesburg - Two striking truckers were shot and injured by police here as violence continued to mar the nationwide transport workers strike, which enters its fourth day today.

Seven people, including five policemen, were injured and one person was arrested yesterday when violence erupted at a gathering of the strikers near the Workers' Library in Johannesburg.

Police said rowdy strikers attacked passing trucks while awaiting the outcome of negotiations between union representatives and the employers association.

Police said two strikers were injured when police fired rounds of rubber bullets to disperse the crowd. The injured were rushed to hospital and a man was arrested for assault.

As reported in late editions of yesterday's Cape Argus, four non-striking workers were attacked with iron rods and pieces of wood after they were dragged by their colleagues from the cabs of two delivery vehicles in Salt River.

Police said the strikers dragged Mogamat Barker, Stanley Volkwyn, Deon Manches and an unidentified man from the trucks' cabs after surrouning and stoning the vehicles. Both trucks were badly damaged.

Stones were also hurled at trucks in Vanguard Drive, Epping. A worker was hurt in Sir Lowry Road on Tuesday.

Union negotiators and the employers' association were still in talks overseen by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration late yesterday in a bid to end the strike.

Cape Town truckers were waiting today to hear the outcome of the talks.

The strikers are demanding an increase of R40 for grade one workers instead of the R35 offered by employers; R60 for grade four and five workers instead of the R54 offered by management, and a R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long distance drivers instead of R35,50.
Buses hit the road after 11th-hour wages deal averts national strike

SHARKEY ISAACS
Transport Reporter

Buses in Cape Town operated normally today after trade unions suspended plans to strike after last-minute wage negotiations.

Golden Arrow general manager Hannes Grebe announced last night that an agreement had been reached between employers and unions, but it had yet to be ratified by union members. "In anticipation of the ratification of this agreement, worker unions have suspended their strike action planned for today," he said.

Golden Arrow was delighted at the breakthrough and would continue to provide normal services, he added.

Members of the Western Cape Omnibus Salaried Staff Union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union were set to join a national strike today.

Union sources said employers agreed to a two-phase 10.5% package, with the first phase coming into effect immediately and the remainder in six months. The first increase is understood to be about 8.5%.
Golden Arrow bus strike called off

A STRIKE by hundreds of Golden Arrow employees was called off yesterday after a last-minute agreement between representatives of the company and labour.

The workers' representatives called off the strike pending the ratification of the agreement by the workforce. Details of the agreement were being withheld by both parties last night pending the workers' approval.

Jeanne Welsh, Golden Arrow public relations officer, said the company was "delighted" at the breakthrough and that it would continue to operate normally.

Labour representatives had given Golden Arrow a notice on Tuesday of their intention to embark on a strike with effect from today.
A petite, 51-year-old blonde grandmother – who would expect to find her with raised fists, leading thousands of angry striking truck drivers through the streets of Johannesburg?

This is Emily Fourie, acting general-secretary for the Professional Transport Workers' Union (PTWU), who is at the forefront of wage negotiations between transport workers and employer organisations.

A tough negotiator, she describes how she is driven by the desire to see justice and fairness prevail. To the thousands of workers for whom she fights, she is simply known as "Ma Emily".

As the daughter of a truck driver who spent many days away from his home, Fourie is in a good position to empathise with the plight of the drivers. "I often saw my father fatigued. I remember him being involved in an accident... some of the workers in the truck were injured. I saw him distressed and devastated. It is not easy for a child to see a father cry," she said.

Fourie's father was instrumental in the establishment of the African Transport Workers' Union, the first union to be registered under the former government.

The union's work was not easy and Fourie remembers a time when they were constantly subjected to police raids and threats, and when their members died in police custody.

"I remember when my father was desperately ill in hospital and the police even threatened him there," she says.

"I know about paying the price"

When her father retired from the union as general secretary, Fourie automatically took up the reins.

Five years ago she suffered a personal tragedy when her eldest son committed suicide.

"It was a busy time, we were involved in strikes and engaged with lawyers until late at night. I had to deal with that, and maybe if I had not been so busy I would have handled my son's problems differently. I know about paying the price," she says.

Despite the tough times, she has remained a trade-union activist for 24 years. She works for the PTWU full-time, speaks on behalf of her members in the security industry, and chaired the Bargaining Council last year.

"It is not easy to see your father cry"
No settlement in truckers’ dispute after late-night talks

Revised offer still not enough to ask workers to end industrial action – union boss

Staff Reporter and Own Correspondents

Striking truck drivers and their employers have again failed to reach agreement despite negotiations which lasted into the early hours. Transport Workers Union spokesman Emily Fourie said this morning.

“We negotiated but could not settle. The employers won’t budge on their offer, but at least they have offered to give clerks and receptionists 6% as well. But this is not enough, we can’t tell the workers to go back to work with little results after striking the whole week,” Fourie said.

She said the workers would gather at Library Gardens today for the fourth day in a row after confrontations yesterday in which two striking truckers were shot by police in central Johannesburg.

Seven people, including five policemen, were injured when violence erupted at a gathering of strikers near the Workers’ Library in Johannesburg.

Police said strikers attacked trucks while awaiting the outcome of negotiations between union representatives and the employers’ association.

“Police warned the strikers to stop, but they ignored this warning and started stoning the police, slightly injuring five of our members,” Captain Andy Pieke said.

He said two strikers were injured when police fired rubber bullets to disperse the crowd.

In Cape Town, four non-striking workers were attacked after they were dragged by their colleagues from the cabs of two delivery vehicles in Salt River’s main road.

In Durban, more than 1000 workers and their assistants marched to the bargaining council’s offices to hand over a memorandum.

The strikers are demanding an increase of R40 for grade-one workers instead of the R35 offered by employers; R60 for grade-four and five workers, instead of the R54 offered by management; and an R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long-distance drivers, instead of R35.50.

Late yesterday, union negotiators and the employers’ association were still locked in a meeting overseen by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Meanwhile, the Transport and General Workers’ Union announced that its members at private bus companies would no longer be joining in the strike today.
TODAY's edition of Business Day sees the launch of AfterHours, a new lifestyle supplement that will accompany the newspaper every Friday. Business Day editor Jim Jones said AfterHours was a natural extension of the newspaper's development.

"We are sensitive to the fact that Business Day readers are not simply involved in their professions. They are intelligent, thinking people who lead full and interesting lives and AfterHours will address their interests," Jones said.

"In the past people might have thought Business Day was solely a reliable and credible source of business and financial news. But it is far more than that and we have proved it by providing the finest political and serious news in the country. The next step was to extend our coverage into arts and leisure."

Jones said AfterHours was fortunate to be able to draw on SA's best writers and artists, whose contributions will appear alongside material culled from Business Day's sister newspaper, the Financial Times of London.

A cornerstone of the new publication is YourMoney, an expanded saving and investment guide. It will introduce Standard & Poor's Micropolis, SA's first independent rating of unit trusts.

Transport workers reject employers' new pay offer

TRANSPORT workers yesterday rejected a new pay offer by the Road Freight Employers' Association aimed at resolving the five-day national strike, amid calls by the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) to its affiliates to avoid handling materials due to be freighted.

Cosatu reiterated the workers' demands and called on employers to meet the union as a matter of urgency.

Cosatu also called on company owners to consider reducing out-of-town allowances they gave to managers to put them on a par with those of truck drivers.

A spokesman for the Professional Transport Workers' Union, Emily Gwede, said yesterday that the employers' new pay offer — which included an increase from 6% to 7% for office workers — was unacceptable.

The employers raised the subsistence allowance for long-distance drivers from R36.60 to R38. However, the unions were demanding R40 after coming down from R50.

Management stood by its initial offer for general workers and drivers.

An employers' appeal for the inclusion of additional categories in the road freight national bargaining council was postponed by the labour court to give both parties a chance to settle the matter out of court. The court ruled last Friday that workers could strike over the issue.

Association chairman Johan van der Walt said employers were committed to finding a solution and were exploring various options. The parties met again last night under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.
Truckers say they will march

FREIGHT transport strikers yesterday rejected a new offer by employers and threatened to converge on the offices of the Road Freight Employers’ Association (RFEA) in Johannesburg today in support of their wage demands.

The latest offer, which involved only certain categories of workers and subsistence allowances for long-distance drivers, came several hours after mediation by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration ended in deadlock.

Workers have demanded a R40 increase for grade one workers instead of R35 offered by employers, and R60 for grades four and five instead of R54 offered by employers. On the issue of the R50 subsistence allowance per trip for long-distance drivers, the employers, who earlier offered R60, said their final offer was R38. This was rejected.

Union spokesman Mr Thulani Dlamini told the strikers that the workers’ demand for a 13 percent increase for additional categories of workers was rejected by employers, who offered 6.5 percent.

"We eventually came down to 10 percent and still the employers did not want to move from their position. We came down to eight percent, hoping the employers would also come up to the same level. However, the employers said their final offer was seven percent, and our lawyers warned us that if we lose an appeal we could lose even that."

The RFEA said the industry had already lost more than R40 million since the strike started on Monday.

Sapa.
Costly truckers' strike could have been avoided, says union
Transport unions reach compromise.

The week-long strike by transport workers over wages ended last Friday after the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration brokered a compromise between employers and unions.

The parties agreed to an 11.8% increase for grade 5 workers, 13.7% for grade 4 and 14.3% for general drivers. Subsistence for long-distance drivers was increased 21.4%. Other workers, such as supervisors and clerks, would get 8%.
Golden Arrow bus strike goes ahead

TRANSPORT REPORTER

Golden Arrow bus service workers are set to join a national strike from 3.30pm tomorrow after labour union members declined to ratify a new wage deal between unions and bus employers.

The company's general manager, Hannes Grebe, said today that Golden Arrow intended to lock out strikers from Thursday morning.

"This means that only people who are not part of the strike will be allowed on company property for the duration of the strike."

Last week the strike was averted in anticipation of the ratification of an agreement reached with unions.

It was reliably learnt from union sources that bus service chiefs had offered a two-phase, 10.5% package settlement with the first phase effective immediately and the remainder in six months.

The first increase was understood to be around 8.5%.
Nationwide bus drivers’ strike planned

Bus drivers are set to embark on a nationwide strike at 3.30pm tomorrow following workers’ rejection of a wage increase offer by employers.

Transport and General Workers’ Union spokesman Mbongeni Mphatha said yesterday the strike threat followed a breakdown of wage negotiations with employers three weeks ago.

He said the 48-hour notice to strike was given yesterday after a mandate was received from workers to reject the employers’ offer of an 8.5% increase for the first six months of the year and a further 2% for the rest of the year.

Workers are sticking by their demand for a 10.5% increase.

South African Bus Employers’ Association (Sabea) president Barry Gie said that except for municipal bus services in Durban and Johannesburg, all major commuter bus services in the country would join the strike.

Greyhound and Megabus long-distance coach drivers would also go out on strike.

Gie said, however, that Sabea would do everything in its power to avoid industrial action, which he said would be unnecessary and disruptive.”We will enter discussions with an open mind with regard to a wage increase.” – Sapa

Star 24/3/98
Last attempt to prevent bus drivers' strike
Bus strike averted as drivers accept 10.5%

SHARKEY ISAACS
Township Reporter

The bus strike, which would have added to the traffic chaos expected to be caused by the Clinton visit today, was averted by the last-minute settlement of a wage dispute.

The strike, which was to have begun at midnight, would have compounded congestion in Cape Town because many bus commuters would have had to go to work by car.

Golden Arrow general manager Hannes Grebe said the strike was called off when unions and the South African Bus Employers' Association reached agreement yesterday.

Secretary of the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Union Edgar Doman said their members were delighted that their "no compromise" stand on a 10.5% increase had been vindicated and that settlement had been reached.

Employers' association president Colin Gie said that while negotiations had been tense, there had been compromise by both parties.

"In the interests of everybody, we decided to conclude the negotiations."

Workers gave unions a mandate to reject the employers' offer of an 8.5% increase for the first six months of the year and a further 2% increase for the rest of the year.

Yesterday, representatives of bus services and several labour unions met in 11th-hour discussions in Johannesburg to find a solution and avert the strike.

The strike threat followed the deadlock of wage negotiations with employers three weeks ago.

Drivers and other staff will now receive a 10.5% increase across the board from April which means drivers will earn a minimum of R1,500 a month.
Bus strike called off as bosses agree to 10.5% increases

ERIC NYABAZALI

The bus strike that was scheduled to start a minute after midnight this morning has been called off for the second time since the decision to strike was taken last week.

The threatened strike had been expected to cripple the city's public transport system and force thousands of commuters to use other forms of transport.

Golden Arrow Bus Services general manager Mr Hannes Grebe said yesterday that the negotiations between the employers and union representatives had been conducted in Johannesburg and that the company did not yet have details of the settlement.

But the company was pleased that a settlement had been reached.

Had the bus strike taken place in Cape Town, 870 drivers and support staff and 625 buses would have been idle.

"We apologise to commuters for the inconveniences caused by the strike calls. We hope our customers will have the normal service they are used to today," Grebe said.

Transport and General Workers' Union regional secretary Mr Nkosinathi Mfundisi said their office in Cape Town has been told that a settlement of 10.5% had been reached.

The employees had originally asked for an increase of 16%, but had taken into consideration the fact that other companies could not afford to pay 16%.

"We think we have achieved what we were mandated to do by the workforce," Mfundisi said.

"We know this was not our original demand, but after deliberations, we compromised by asking for 10.5%. But the employers refused to give us that and offered only 8.5%.

That was when the workers called for strike action. We want to inform all our members that the strike has been called off as our demands have been met.

"We would also like to apologise to the public for the inconvenience the strike calls caused them. But the inconveniences were something we could not stop. It's a lesson to the workers and the employers that we need to settle matters on time without causing our people any grief."

The bus strike was first called off last week pending ratification of the employers' offer by the workforce. The workers refused the offer and told their representatives to go back to the negotiating table.

After negotiations became deadlocked, the workers called for a national strike action, which would have started today had a last-minute agreement not been reached.
General
(52)
bus strike
called off

A NATIONWIDE bus strike, due to have come into effect at 3.30pm yesterday, was averted through the last-minute acceptance by the SA Bus Employers Association of workers' demand for a 10.5 percent increase.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Mbangeni Mphatha said there would be no public transport disruptions after successful negotiations at Johannesburg's Protea Gardens Hotel yesterday afternoon.

Auxiliary workers - administrative staff, mechanics and workshop staff - were due to stop work at 3.30pm yesterday, if the wage deadlock had not been broken.

Drivers from all major bus companies, except municipal services in Johannesburg and Durban, were due to have joined the strike after transporting commuters home yesterday evening.

Wage negotiations

Long-distance coach services Greyhound, Megabus and Matstrans also faced strike action if the negotiations had failed.

Mphatha said worker representatives were pleased with the outcome of the negotiations, which he described as tense.

The strike threat followed a breakdown of wage negotiations with employers three weeks ago.

Mphatha said the 48-hour notice to strike was given on 'Monday after a mandate was received from workers to reject the employers' offer of an 8.5 percent increase for the first six months of the year and a further two percent increase for the rest of the year.'

SAPA
Strikes set scene for tough talks
Strikes take their toll early in 1998

THE two large wage strikes in the security and transport sectors and several smaller strikes resulted in 288 000 mandays being lost in the first quarter of 1998.

This brings the figure for January 1 to March 31 to the highest level since 1994, when 295 000 days were lost to strikes in the first quarter.

Andrew Levy and Associates said in their quarterly strike report, the large security and transport sector strikes dominated the first quarter, accounting for 261 000 lost mandays.

A number of other smaller strikes accounted for the remaining 17 000 lost mandays.

The two-week strike over a dispute between the South African National Employers' Association, the Security Service Employers' Organisation and 11 unions in the contract security industry resulted in a 10 percent wage increase.

It was coupled to a three percent employer contribution towards a provident fund and a bonus of one percent of monthly wages.

The five-day strike over a dispute between the Road Freight Employers' Association and seven unions led to a 10.5 percent increase in actual wages with minimum wages increasing between 11.5 percent and 18 percent.

At the same time agreement was reached on a reduction of the working hours and increased paternity and compassionate leave.

"Both these industries operate in previously unorganised sectors, which have traditionally paid lower wages allied to tough and sometimes dangerous working conditions."

"New to national bargaining, the strikes were designed to highlight these aspects, and in some cases were marred by incidents of intimidation and violence."

Ms Jackie Kelly of the industrial relations and labour law consultancy said.

The fact that both disputes were mediated by the Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) at early stages of the strike, was a positive sign that the statutory dispute resolution processes were working, Kelly said.

Increased strike activity can be expected during the middle of the year when the major wage negotiations get underway.

The construction industry has established a forum to monitor and regulate safety and health practices in the workplace, the Building Industries Federation of South Africa said yesterday.

The Construction Occupational Health Safety Environment Forum represents 15 of South Africa's major construction companies and was formed in response to the escalation of disease, injury, loss of life and damage to limbs in the workplace -- Sapa
Cosatu strike plan on hold

THABO MBAKO
BUSINESS REPORTER

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has put on hold plans for a 24-hour strike pending the outcome of a summit next week.

Cosatu was to have called members of affiliate unions out on strike on April 31 to protest against the provincial government's management of the education and health crises. But at a meeting yesterday the federation decided to postpone the strike and convene a summit on that day in a final bid to find solutions.

Cosatu provincial secretary Tony Ehrenreich said teacher organisations, school governing bodies and representatives of provincial government and business would be invited.

Cosatu had not entirely abandoned the strike plan and would revert to it if the provincial government did not heed proposals coming from the summit, he said.

Cosatu and the provincial government are due to meet today.

Cosatu has criticised the government's decision not to take up Finance Minister Trevor Manuel's offer of grants to cash-strapped provinces. Cosatu says the money could have been used to correct imbalances in education and health.
Crippling municipal strike looms for SA

Next round of talks crucial

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – South Africa's municipal unions will decide at the end of this month whether the country's 240 000 workers will embark on industrial action this year in support of better wage increases.

South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) deputy secretary-general Macdissi Nontsele said last week the unions were waiting for the third round of wage talks before deciding whether to submit the negotiations to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). The talks are scheduled for April 22 and 23.

Parties to wage negotiations have to resort to conciliation, mediation and arbitration before they can embark on a legal strike.

Samwu and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Unions (Imatu) have engaged in wage negotiations with the State since March 19, but have not come close to reaching an agreement.

The unions are demanding a 12.5% or R600 increase, whichever is the greater. This is down from the 16% or R450 increase they demanded at the start of wage talks.

The State is offering 2.5% or R60 whichver is greater. This was increased from the initial offer of 2%.

Last year municipal workers received a 7% increase which was phased in over several months.

While Mr Nontsele would not be drawn on whether the municipal workers would strike this year, he indicated the parties were very far apart and that it would take a "lot of bargaining from both sides to bridge the wide gap".

"Our view is that the employer's offer as it stands is far below what we would accept as a fair adjustment, both in terms of the inflation rate and the numbers of our members who are being paid below the breakeven," he said.

Mr Nontsele said the unions were waiting to see what the State offered on April 22 before deciding whether to take the matter to the CCMA.

"According to the arrangements for negotiations, the 22nd and 23rd of April should produce an agreement failing which we will know by April 28 if we will take it to mediation, conciliation or whatever," he said.
Cape Town harbour go-slow hits shipping

Cape Town — Millions of rand have been lost by shipping lines, shippers and customers waiting for cargo because of a two-day go-slow triggered by a pay dispute at the port of Cape Town.

Charles Kingon, the Cape Town chairman of the Association of Shipping Lines (ASL) said yesterday although the go-slow was over, it had a snowball effect and delivery of cargo was still delayed.

The ASL criticized Transnet yesterday for not allowing local port management sufficient autonomy in taking decisions.

"It is the opinion of ASL that local port management is not sufficiently empowered to make effective decisions as to the running of their own ports," ASL said.

"Decisions, particularly those relating to labour, have to be referred to head office where the implications of their effect on the broader group will be considered. Given this restraint it is perhaps understandable that working productivity is still at an unacceptably low level when compared to international norms.”

A Transnet spokesman said national pay negotiations were unavoidable until the ports were transformed into separate entities in competition with each other.

Patrick Dada, the human resources executive manager at Portnet, said a dispute with the labour unions had been declared but the go-slow had been illegal.

Kingon said it cost R200 an hour for a “big white” container ship to remain alongside the quay. “The cost of extra fuel used in sailing faster to make up for lost time as a result of the go-slow is R200 000.”

He said some ships had bypassed Cape Town to avoid delay, so there would be additional costs for transshipping cargo at other ports and transporting it.
Fawu marchers want job security

Chanting Food and Allied Workers' Union members marched on Parliament yesterday demanding the Government take urgent steps to protect jobs in the wine, canning and fishing industries.

A memorandum handed to Environmental Affairs Minister Pallo Jordan urged that in any fishing agreement with the European Union, all boats fishing in South African waters be obliged to fly the South African flag and employ South African crews.

The marchers also handed in a memorandum at the offices of the European Union, urging European countries to open their markets to South African agricultural exports and stop unfair competition from cheap European imports here.

Fawu has criticised the EU for imposing tariffs of up to 21% on imports of South African canned fruit and vegetables, at the same time subsiding European farmers.

The flood of cheap European canned goods on South African markets is threatening jobs, says Fawu.

Langeberg Foods has already laid off 2 000 seasonal workers and 400 permanent workers and up to 4 800 other jobs are under threat, Fawu says.

Fawu has asked the government to keep some tariffs in place to protect the domestic canning industry and to slow the restructuring of the wine industry until measures to protect jobs have been discussed.

Fawu fears that jobs in the wine industry will be lost if the EU succeeds in its attempt to exclude 40% of South African agricultural products from the free trade deal that is under negotiation.
Dockers’ strike brings terminal to standstill

Johannesburg — South Africa’s ports are facing a labour onslaught on two fronts. Dock workers yesterday downed tools at the Durban container terminal over longer working hours, and transport workers vowed to boycott Australian ships and goods in solidarity with sacked Australian dockworkers.

The Durban container terminal, Africa’s largest, which handles 60 percent of South Africa’s seaborne container traffic, has been at a standstill for two days as the port management and seven unions battle over a productivity drive.

Bax Nomvetsa, the port manager, said workers had gone out on strike yesterday morning when management tried to reorganise shift work at the container terminal to save R8 million to R10 million in labour costs. He said container-carrier drivers worked four hours and rested four in an eight-hour shift. The new shift rosters would make drivers work an extra hour on each shift.

He said the strike had already cost the shipping lines about R5 million in delays and created a backlog of 15 ships waiting to be unloaded. If the issue was not resolved by this morning ships and containers would have to be redirected to other ports.

Portnet has applied for an interdict against the strike. A judgment is expected this morning.

Meanwhile, the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU) yesterday said it would boycott all ships owned by Australian companies or carrying goods from Australian ports.

The action was in solidarity with 2600 Australian dockworkers sacked this month by Patrick Stevedores with the support of the Australian government.

Randall Howard, the general secretary of the TGWU, said the sacking was an attempt to replace a unionised workforce with non-unionised workers.

The union has also called on the department of transport to bar Australian-owned vessels from South African ports.

Yesterday the South African Railway and Harbours Workers’ Union said it too would take action to “isolate” Australian ships.

On Sunday the US-based International Longshore and Warehouse Union announced a boycott of Australian products.
Tight Spot: Durban Port's workers have returned to work, but it will take several days to clear container log jams.

Strikers at Durban port return to work

Jonathan Rosenthal
Industrial Editor

Johannesburg — A two-day strike at Durban port's container terminal, Africa's largest, was resolved early yesterday morning when unions agreed to an increase in working hours, Portnet said yesterday.

The two-day strike by about 300 workers cost shipping companies more than R5 million due to delays, and had created a backlog of 15 ships waiting to be unloaded.

Bax Nomvete, Durban Port's manager, said staff had returned to work after agreeing to add an extra hour in their eight-hour shift.

Previously, straddle-carrier drivers had worked for four hours and rested for four hours in a normal eight-hour shift. Nomvete said it would take several days for operations in the terminal to return to normal.

He said the new work system would save the terminal R8 million to R10 million a year and would reduce future staff requirements, but would not result in retrenchments.

He said the terminal was expanding its workforce through the installation of additional cranes.

Under the new shift system the port would only have to hire 15 more staff to operate the new cranes, rather than the more than 90 that would have been required under the old system.

The new deal gives workers seven days before they move onto the new shift system.

Meanwhile, Tuesday's decision by South Africa's dockworker unions to boycott Australian ships in solidarity with sacked Australian dockworkers has strained relations between the two countries.

AP reports that Alexander Downer, the Australian foreign minister, yesterday called on South Africa's ambassador to Canberra to voice his displeasure about the boycott.
Cosatu calls Cape strike over schools

Unions hold crisis summit

ANDREA BOTHA
STAFF REPORTER

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has called on its 300 000 members in the Western Cape to strike on May 11 to draw attention to education problems in the province. Nearly 20 000 teachers of the SA Democratic Teachers Union and other unions are expected to join them.

The education crisis was discussed yesterday at a summit between Cosatu, Sadtu, other teacher unions, the Western Cape Chamber of Commerce, teachers and school governing bodies.

The provincial administration withdrew at the last minute Sadtu spokesman Zwandile Hewu said all the parties agreed to some form of protest and differed only on the form it should take.

"All of the parties agreed on the principle of protest. It was just a matter of deciding whether it should be a march, mass rally or a strike."

He said most participants felt that as nothing much was taking place in schools anyway, the loss of one day to a strike could be regarded as an investment rather than a loss to education.

Mr Hewu criticised the department for not attending the meeting and said they did not have any solutions to the problems.

"They don't even want to listen to other views. This shows their political agenda," he said.

The absence of the provincial government and governing bodies of former Model C schools showed they were not really committed to changing education and wanted to retain the privileges of the past, he said.

But Melvin Joshua, provincial chief director of labour relations, said Cosatu had already indicated on Friday that its 300 000 members would be on a 24-hour strike on May 11.

"The Western Cape government is committed to quality education in the province and to redressing the inequalities, but we find it strange that Cosatu would give notice of their protest action way before the summit was scheduled to look at the options."

Mr Joshua said the administration had written to Cosatu to reaffirm its commitment to finding a solution.
Prisoners escape in court strike

Area correspondent
Durban - A walkout by
orderlies sparked a breakout by
prisoners from the holding cells
as the Durban Magistrate's
Court ground to a halt.

About 270 awaiting-trial prisoners were left virtually unattended.
When the prisoners were unable to have their day in court, they
made a dash for freedom while only a few orderlies were on duty in the
holding cells yesterday.

About 250 prisoners stormed a
gate and police were called in.
Some prisoners escaped into the
main building and underground
tunnels, but teargas was used to
flush them out of their hiding
places. One escapee is still missing.

Area commissioner Mulder van
Eck said the situation was caused
by a lack of manpower after 35
orderlies failed to perform their
duties.

The orderlies, all members of
the Police and Prisons Civil Rights
Union (Poporu), reported for duty
early in the day but decided to leave
the courts.

Earlier, 29 striking Poporu
members were arrested, sparking a
demonstration outside police HQ.

Witnesses said the breakout was
preceded by pandemonium as court
staff processed adjournments.

Prisoners overpower court
orderlies and forced their way
through the gates.
Self initiative the way to make ends meet
Street trading ‘no lasting solution’

YAZED FAHRI

TOWNSHIP traders who sell sweets, clothing, fresh produce and other goods on the streets are merely subsisting, so they cannot be considered to be gainfully employed.

They have little or no prospect of improving the quality of their lives, says Mr Tony Ehrenreich, Cosatu’s regional secretary for the Western Cape.

“The government, to some extent and many other players seem to see such people as being gainfully employed — but it’s nothing more than a survival economy they are involved in,” Ehrenreich said.

Street vendors did not have a sustainable job, nor did they have any prospect of improving their lives. Ehrenreich was responding to the viewpoint that “employment” at such a level was becoming an increasingly popular and viable alternative to unemployment.

The Western Cape has a population of 2.6 million and an unemployment rate of between 22% and 29% compared with the national rate of 30%.

“I think we’re starting off with a problem if we’re saying that this is the kind of employment we want to create when we talk about job creation,” Ehrenreich said.

This was especially problematic in...
Legal battle looms over strike

Linda Ennor

CAPE TOWN — A legal battle is looming between the Western Cape government and Cosatu over the latter's resolve to hold a 24-hour general strike this Monday over the education crisis in the province.

The federation claims a direct membership of about 300,000 workers across all economic sectors in the province, but believes many sympathisers will go on strike as well.

Labour and transport MEC Paul Leyser served Cosatu's Western Cape region with a notice threatening an interdict in the Labour Court to prevent the planned protest action.

The interdict, which Cosatu said it would oppose, was expected to be lodged today and heard tomorrow, a government official said.

Cosatu regional education Anthony Dietrich said the strike was a last resort after months of negotiations with the National Party-controlled provincial government had failed to reach agreement on the need to redress the continued racial imbalances in the provision of education.

The federation believed there had been no material improvement in the education of African and coloured children in the three years of NP rule, while white schools continued to receive higher funding.

The protest action was called in terms of section 77 of the Labour Relations Act, which gave workers the right to highlight their socioeconomic concerns.

"Our members demand quality public education and the redressing of disparities to narrow the gap between the state of public education in working class communities and that in white areas," Cosatu regional secretary Tony Erhenreich said.

"Since the beginning of this year, we have in good faith negotiated with the provincial government around our concerns. It has become abundantly clear that they do not have the political will to address the demands of working people. They even decided to boycott our education summit held on 29 April, which we called in an attempt to explore solutions to the problem."
Kruger’s curio sellers unite and boost income

BERG-EN-DAL — The familiar bands of curio sellers that line the roads to the Kruger National Park have organised themselves into a high-powered alliance earning R40 000 a month from curio sales.

Elisabeth Mhlongo, manager of the Kruger Park’s social ecology department, said at the weekend that the 69 curio sellers initially eked a living on marginal earnings of R2 000 a month. Mhlongo helped form the Skukuza Alliance.

"After a six-month training course in business management and after learning skills other than wood carving, the alliance’s earnings jumped to R40 000 last month," she said.

The training course was sponsored through a R200 000 donation from national liquor wholesalers, Seagram South Africa. It was attended by 12 members of the alliance.

"The artists were taught to not only concentrate on making their famous giraffes and wooden masks, but to use other mediums, such as making high-quality leather shoes, and, instead of bronze casting and weaving," she said.

They were now training their fellow members and the alliance’s success had encouraged membership to increase to 500 people.

Asked whether the increase in membership would mean an increase in competition, Mhlongo said the alliance was made up of three smaller associations who sold products at fixed, competitive prices at specific gates to the park.

The former Mhala woodcarver’s association and Nyongane arts and crafts group, for example, worked the Kruger Gate near Hazyview. The former Lubambawano arts and crafts group worked the Numbi Gate, near White River.

Mhlongo said the Kruger Park was also establishing curio shops at its gates where tourists had easier access to the alliance’s work.

The craftsmen have been encouraged to interact closely with tourists, by explaining the meaning of the arts and crafts on sale.

"For example, the alliance comprises largely Swazi and Tsonga groups, both of which have different weaving techniques and different use of colours, which can be explained to tourists,” Mhlongo said.

"The artists can now present and sell their products with a sense of pride in their own culture," she said.

The alliance’s products are now more diverse, the supply and demand is being professionally monitored and proper accounting and stock control systems have been introduced.

Ten percent of the alliance’s earnings are used to keep it self-sustainable, while the rest is divided among the members.

"The artists are able to participate in this project without fear of exploitation," Mhlongo said. — Sapa.

Conference to focus on cleaner production

Josey Ballenger

CLEANER production, the subject of a regional conference this week in Midrand, would be a goal of 21st century policymakers and managers, but the idea had not yet caught on in Africa, the Industrial Environmental Forum said.

"Pollution and waste have very real financial and social costs, so we must focus on preventative strategies and new products, services and technologies," forum manager Erin Iton said.

"Despite the growing recognition of the importance and benefits of cleaner production, there remains great scope to improve the level of awareness, understanding and implementation of the concept throughout southern Africa."

Environmental Affairs Minister Pello Jordan will open the two-day conference at Ekoms’s conference centre in Midrand tomorrow with “a government perspective”. Jonathan Hohba of the United Nations environment programme in Paris and Bjorn Sigurd, president of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, will lead global and business perspectives. Danish aid agency Dansk will discuss pilot projects in southern Africa.

The Industrial Development Corporation and the Development Bank of Southern Africa will discuss funding and the role of financing bodies. Specialists from Europe and Australia will address information exchange in “overcoming barriers”.

Memorandum on training

Primrose Dilley

THE education department has signed a memorandum of understanding with International Partnerships Worldwide, a joint venture consisting of British Aerospace and Loughborough University.

The memorandum details collaboration on the creation of SA skills academies.

Education department spokesman Bheki Khumalo said the academies would seek to establish centres to provide technical and entrepreneurial skills, vocational training and supervisory and middle-management training.

The academies would also create township and provincial technology centres, establish post-graduate training programmes and develop apprentice-ship programmes for the aerospace industry.
SA News Digest

Shipping

Higher wages and solidarity inspire dockworkers' industrial action.

The Port of Dunlop's container terminal was in the thick of yet another bout of industrial action yesterday, when workers at the terminal switched off their cranes for half the day.

Box News said the port managers met the short strike, which was called to restructure, aimed at improving productivity and creating a more stable work environment. The strike lasted for two hours.

A union source said the strike was related to demands by crane drivers for a $600 wage increase. Meanwhile, the Transport and General Workers Union said the strike was in response to the terminal's decision to reduce the number of hours dockers were expected to work.

Meanwhile, the Transport and General Workers Union yesterday said it would continue to boycott shipments from Australian ships in line with last month's decision to support dockers in Australia. The union said it would maintain its action in light of certain conditions that led to the decision by the Australian dockers.

Jonathan Rozenblit, Johannesburg
Strike by warders at Leeuwkop Prison is over

BY GILL GIFFORD
Crime Reporter

A wildcat strike by union members calling for the removal of Leeuwkop Medium C Prison head Sam Gomba ended yesterday afternoon after warders had blocked food deliveries to the prison for two days.

The strike, which started at about 7am on Tuesday, intensified yesterday when warders took to stoning prison officials' cars and blocked bread and milk deliveries.

Between 25 and 30 members of the Police and Prisoners Civil Rights Union (Popcru) on Tuesday demanded that Gomba be removed from his post, and spontaneously embarked on a work stoppage.

Department of Correctional Services spokesman Rudi Potgieter said Popcru members employed at Leeuwkop, in Midrand, managed to get hold of duplicate keys and locked warders, who refused to join the strike, in a prison yard.

"Later in the day other warders with keys, who were not part of the strike, managed to release the trapped warders, who were set free in time to serve prisoners their breakfast," Potgieter said.

The striking Popcru members were met by area manager Rams Ramabaa on Tuesday afternoon but no resolution was reached. The strikers continued their actions yesterday by blocking the prison entrance. More warders joined the protest and locked the entrance to Leeuwkop.

"Prisoners called us from inside and said the gates are locked, no food is going in, all visits have been stopped, and people needing medical treatment have not been seen to. It is unacceptable to have prisoners suffering because they are caught in the middle of an internal warders' grievance," said South African Prisons Organisation for Human Rights spokesman Golden Milaz Bhudu.

Popcru Gauteng secretary James Makapane said the strike ended late yesterday afternoon after members met with Gauteng correctional services commissioner Patrick Gillingham.

"It was decided that the strike would end, pending the outcome of an investigation into Gomba's appointment. We are happy with this assurance," Makapane said.

Popcru members were not satisfied with Gomba's appointment last year because, they claim, the post was not advertised and Leeuwkop staff were not given a fair chance to apply for the position.
Strikers offer cameras deal

Workers at Epping manufacturing firm Migra Textiles have offered management a compromise as the strike against the installation of security cameras enters its ninth day today.

About 30 workers at the plant downed tools on Monday last week to protest against the installation of surveillance cameras. They claim the cameras invade their privacy. The company employs 85 people.

The management has refused to remove the cameras, saying the company has lost large amounts of stock through theft in recent months.

The strike is legal and the employees may therefore not be fired.

Shop steward Clive Campbell said workers had held several meetings with management and had now revised their demand.

"We now want the cameras installed only in the entrance and exit points of each department," Mr Campbell said.

Management would respond today, he added.
Municipal strike over outsourcing looms

Council says it has to look elsewhere in order to deliver good service, while union says it was not consulted

BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS
City Desk

Johannesburg could come to a virtual standstill next month when the bulk of the city's municipal workers embark on a three-day strike to protest against outsourcing of council functions.

The strike, which is expected to be heeded by more than 20 000 of the city's 29 000-strong workforce, has been called by the South African Municipal Workers Union for June 9, 10 and 11.

The looming protest is the culmination of mounting tensions between the city and trade unions over Johannesburg's planned staff restructuring and the implementation of public/private partnerships (PPPs).

PPPs can refer to either the delegation of functions to private companies or the selling of assets.

Functions up for partnerships include electricity, gas, water and sewerage, airports, buses, the fresh produce market, the zoo, theatres, sports facilities and emergency services.

The council has decided to embark on PPPs because Johannesburg does not have money to fund all the functions on its books.

The council also had to embark on an "organisational review" and is planning to reduce the number of managers and streamline functions.

Union spokesman Caleb Mokoena told The Star yesterday that Samwu wanted the organisational review to be abandoned as the council had not consulted with unions. Samwu also opposed PPPs because "services could be better delivered by the council".

Mokoena also said the PPPs violated an agreement with the Government that municipalities were the preferred option to deliver services.

The union was taking legal advice to see whether a recent provincial government proclamation by Local Government MEC Sicelo Shiceka was valid.

The proclamation ordered Johannesburg to finalise PPPs for various functions. Mokoena said Samwu could also refer the matter for arbitration.

But Shiceka said his proclamation was legal. The organisational review and PPPs were vital for restoring the city's financial viability, he added.

Greater Johannesburg Metro Council spokesman Collin Matjila said the city had an obligation to deliver services that were cost effective and efficient.

Samwu had not raised its concerns with the council, and the council had not been notified about the strike, he said.
Bitter Alberton traffic officers, who say their productivity is measured by how many summonses they issue daily, have embarked on a ticketing go-slow in protest, The Star was told yesterday.

The 39 officers are expected to fine at least 10 people every day, and are threatened with punitive action if they do not.

Morale at the station has hit "rock bottom" and the officers said they had decided to stop writing out tickets in protest.

An officer said the number of summonses issued over a weekend had dropped from about 300 to five or six.

The officers spoke on condition of anonymity.

While all the officers who spoke to The Star said they would not hesitate to fine motorists for dangerous driving, they resented being forced into a quota system.

The officers have on occasion been told to leave an accident scene and "get back to writing summonses".

"They threaten to take our overtime away and they know if they do that we won't be able to support our families," said one officer, who earns just over R3,000 a month.

"The only training we're given is how to fill out a summons," another said.

The men say they have never received training in how to use their firearms and were expected to respond to burglaries in progress and make arrests.

The officers have to make do with old vehicles, some of which have to be push-started, and a control room with outdated equipment which, they are told, are because of the need to cut costs.

Alberton traffic chief Blackie Swart said yesterday that the officers' claims were nonsense and that he was not willing to talk about it.

"If you (the officers) say that, you can carry on. You can come here and speak to them in front of me," he said before slamming down the telephone.
Flea markets jump onto JSE boards

GLOBAL Village Holdings, the first flea market group to list on a stock exchange, plans to make its debut on the beverages, hotels and leisure sector in July.

Deputy chairman and CEO Marc Israelsohn started the company in 1980 when he and brother Gary set up a market in a parking lot in Bruma, Johannesburg.

Flea Market World at Bruma is now the most visited destination in Gauteng as well as Gauteng’s biggest tourist destination, Israelsohn claims.

He says Global Village is now the largest player in the industry, with four flea markets including Bruma, the Hatfield Plaza Festival Market in Pretoria, and two markets in Durban — at the South Plaza and Point.

The four markets cater for 2,300 traders and account for about 42% of SA’s estimated yearly flea market sales of R1.2 billion. The company’s revenues are around R15 million, but it has high margins. Revenues are forecast to grow substantially in the coming year.

Apart from its flea markets, the company also has a festival and exhibitions division which operates the Norwood Mardi Gras in Johannesburg and the Christmas Time Discount Toy Fair at the Bruma market.

The food division has the food and beverage rights for all of the group’s markets. Apart from 18 soft-drink outlets, the division has a video game arcade, two take-away outlets, a coffee shop and a bar and grill restaurant.

Global Village Holdings is negotiating several acquisitions “in areas like markets, festivals, exhibitions and specialist leisure retail niches.”

In June the company opens its first Urban Adventure Lifestyle store — an upmarket theme venue for entrepreneurs to sell unusual wares — in Cape Town’s Cavendish Square.

“It is also looking at an Internet-based virtual market, a quarterly food festival and a megamarket in Cape Town.”

The company has been approached to run markets in Cairo, Tel Aviv, Jakarta, Miami and Disney World in Paris.

Israelsohn says he cannot disclose any financial details until release of the prospectus in the middle of next month. The listing will include a public offer. The private placement has been well received by institutions.

“We are the kind of business that is by its very nature economically empowering and enables entrepreneurs to have an entry for doing business and we make money doing it.”
RETAIL Global Village Holdings seeks listing to spread capital base and credibility

Flea marketeer JSE-bound

MATT GETZ  MARKETS EDITOR

Johannesburg — Old-time JSE hands complain about all the rats and mice that have been hiding libby What will they think of the fleas, coming to the exchange in the guise of Global Village Holdings in July?

The company operates flea markets in Johannesburg (the highly successful Flea Market World in Bruma), Pretoria and Durban, along with a diverse collection of interests including festivals and exhibitions, draught beer distribution and video games arcades. It hopes that a listing will spread and enlarge its capital base, and raise the credibility of flea markets.

Marc Israelsohn, the chief executive and a dedicated flea marketeer, said his business did well in the good times and was also a fine hedge against recession. "We have a lot of traders who also work in traditional shopping centres," he said last week. "In December, they all said trade was down, but less at the market than at the formal centres. The troubles were dampened by the style of trade."

The flea market business nationwide is estimated to be worth R1.2 billion, of which 42 percent is turned over at Global’s flea markets. Global charges flat rates for its stallholders so it is not directly dependent on how well they do. Spending is high, according to the company, the average visitor to the Bruma market spends R26.

Still, Israelsohn said the company was lessening its reliance on the market business, which is expected to be 50 percent in a few years. "We want to be very synergistic and focused on our core of leisure retail," he said.

That means more festival and exhibition business — "we’re looking at the acquisition of a very well-known company in that arena" — Urban Adventure Lifestyle stores in Cape Town and elsewhere and huge new developments at Bruma.

Israelsohn said the company was negotiating to buy 132 000m² in Bruma, to "create a public parks precinct" that would include a permanent exhibition area, a Kids World and, intriguingly, a Museum of Freedom and Liberation, one of the drawbacks in getting zoning permission from the council.

FAR-FLUNG INTERESTS  Mark Israelsohn, the chief executive of Global Village in an expansive mood at Bruma
Thousands strike in Portnet row over bonuses

Thousands of Portnet workers throughout the country went on strike today to protest against moves by the state-owned parastatal to withdraw employees' incentive bonuses. Hardest hit are Richards Bay and Durban, but it's business as usual in Cape Town, Saldanha Bay and Port Elizabeth, according to Portnet spokesman Thami Didiza.

Union leader Linley Sharp told the Cape Argus the three striking unions represented 3,000 workers at Portnet. Portnet could lose as much as R200 million a day in profits.

The workers were protesting against proposals to cut production bonuses to R1,500 a month for what were seen as low-productivity employees. Sharp said the bonus, which was R2,500, was too costly for the company to afford.

The bonuses were devised to encourage employees to work harder. However, Mr. Ditta said the new scheme had not been too successful.

"If we carry on with the bonus as it stands," he said, "we will lose R100 million a year."
Street trading ‘has cost SA economy billions’

DURBAN — The uncontrolled growth of informal street trading has cost the SA economy billions of rand in lost infrastructure, coupled with the need to redevelop business and shopping centres away from downtown areas, Standard Bank chief economist Nic Czyzponka said at the annual SA Property Owners’ Association (Sapoa) convention this week.

Czyzponka said during a panel discussion that had SA had “the political will” to find a workable solution to the street-traders before the situation drove retailers and businesses from the inner cities, the country would not now have billions of rand worth of empty buildings and under-utilised infrastructure.

JHI Real Estate MD Colin Wright said retailers, who had to pay significant amounts in rates and taxes to operate from their premises, were forced to compete with vendors outside their doors. This situation was considered “untenable” by the majority.

The anomaly that developers continued building in the northern suburbs while downtown Johannesburg experienced vacancy rates touching 22% could not continue unabated.

Liberty Life executive chairman Wolf Cezman said the indiscriminate establishment of hawkers’ stands brought about a lack of hygiene and the destruction of “the very fabric of the infra-structure”. However, SA could not wash away this sector and informal traders had to be accommodated in markets on the fringe of the established retail nodes.

US-based Cushman and Wakefield director Janice Stanclon said the US had resolved the issue by accommodating the traders and making the downtown areas more attractive. Although the US had also had problems with people who were unemployable, the welfare department had linked welfare payments to attempts by people to undergo training.

This meant “the unemployable” tried to create their own jobs — often menial, such as cleaning the streets and ensuring the downtown was habitable and attractive — or had accepted training courses to improve their skills.
Portnet workers go on strike to keep R500 bonus

DURBAN — More than 2,500 workers at Portnet in Durban embarked on a strike yesterday to persuade the company to keep a R500 monthly bonus payment.

A memorandum issued by the three unions involved in the strike — Salstaff, the Technical Workers' Union and the Employees' Union of SA — said the strike was a result of Portnet rejecting their demand for a negotiated incentive harbour payment. The company offered a profit-share scheme instead.

The memorandum said the proposed profit-share scheme was unacceptable.

"The unions demand from Portnet retention of the R500 a month payment. This payment shall remain in place until such time as an acceptable harbour incentive scheme is successfully negotiated and agreed upon by the parties to this industrial action."

Portnet spokesman Tam Didiza said the company and the unions agreed last June that the bonus scheme would cease at the end of March this year.

Didiza said Portnet was trying to introduce an interim scheme to be based on the company's profit. "Portnet is prepared to negotiate the scheme with the unions and I am certain proper negotiations will solve the crisis."

Didiza said the striking unions represented only 20% of Portnet workers. "The company has not been affected by the strike and operations are normal," he said.

Portnet workers in Richard's Bay also embarked on the strike yesterday — Sapa.
Public servants in protest over salaries

CAPE TOWN — Hundreds of public servants chanting "We want more" marched in pouring rain to Parliament yesterday to insist that government pay promised salary increases.

The protesters, from three public sector unions under the Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa), wanted to hand over a memorandum to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel personally, but settled for his adviser, Murray Michell.

The memorandum calls on government to honour a three-year wage agreement signed in 1995.

Michell said a copy of their demands would be given to Public Service Minister Zola Skweyiya.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has been approached by the unions to arbitrate in the wage dispute with government.

Skweyiya said yesterday that from July 1, the government would deduct 1% of the salaries of its employees who are not members of public service trade unions.

An agreement was reached earlier this week between govt and the trade unions to set up an agency shop to ensure that employees who received the benefits of collective bargaining also contributed towards its costs. — Sapa
Gauteng municipal strike plans

Pascal Soboloe

The proposed industrial action by the SA Municipal Workers' Union in Gauteng, which coincides with wage negotiations in the national bargaining council today, was expected to cause disruption in service delivery.

Union members from five branches in the province are expected to embark on a protest as part of the campaign against what the union has called "the government's unreasonable approach" to the wage talks.

It would not be confirmed how widespread the disruptions would be, however. Johannesburg residents have been warned by the council that refuse will not be collected today.

Union spokesman Victor Mhlongo said workers would march to the greater Johannesburg council's offices where they would hand over a memorandum to the Gauteng Association of Local Authorities.

Municipal workers in Durban yesterday also went on a one-day strike ahead of wage negotiations between the union and the SA Local Government Association.

The council, however, denied that the strike was a success, preferring to describe it as "sporadic work stoppages in certain departments which were not widespread or well supported".

Durban metropolitan council spokesman Dave Cloete said the council would adopt a "no work, no pay" approach to strikes as it was illegal and unprocedural. Workers who joined the strike would also have to face disciplinary action.

He said the council felt the strike was "totally unnecessary" as negotiations in the bargaining council were going well and there were no deadlocks or disputes between the parties.

Meanwhile, union officials met in Johannesburg yesterday to consolidate their position in preparation for the talks, union secretary-general Roger Ronnie said.

Ronnie would not comment on the union's position, but said a new mandate had been received from the union's branches.

Bill to boost environmental reform
Dock strike woes take a new turn

(152)

Johannesburg - Industrial action by about 3 700 dock workers and Portnet technical staff at six ports is set to continue into next week as workers embarked on a go-slow after a two-day strike.

The protected strike on Tuesday and Wednesday this week centred on Portnet's refusal to continue paying a R500 monthly bonus from April 1, the Federation of Unions of South Africa said in a statement.

"We are demanding that the bonus be restored and will continue with a go-slow until a proper incentive scheme is on the table," said Adrian van Rensburg, spokesman for the Technical Workers' Union.

Dock workers in Durban, Richards Bay, Port Elizabeth, East London, Saldanha and Cape Town embarked on a strike on Tuesday.

Yesterday, the workers returned, but began a go-slow at all six ports.

"This means control tower staff will not guide ships into port and workers will refuse to operate the cranes to unload them," said Mr Van Rensburg. - Sapa

AG 29/5/98
MILLIONS OF PUPILS MAY BE LEFT STRANDED BY TEACHERS STRIKE

BY MOWES SHIMA
Bengu takes hard line on strike

TROYE LUND
EDUCATION WRITER

The government will meet the threatened teachers' strike next week with steely resolve and apply the principle of no work, no pay, Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu told the National Assembly yesterday.

"This is no time to use pupils as pawns in a grand political game," said the minister, who was granted the unscheduled address in Parliament to explain why bargaining in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) had failed to avert a national strike.

The unions demand that Bengu revoke his decision to allow the provinces to determine teacher numbers.

But Bengu argued that constitutional clauses giving discretionary power to provinces prevented him from withdrawing the policy. He said another obstacle was that he controlled just R5.5 billion of the R36bn budget.

He said he had to hand provinces the responsibility to determine teacher numbers according to their budgets.

All major teachers' unions are demanding that Bengu withdraw this policy, which he declared without their agreement.

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) has given notice that it will begin striking next week.

Negotiations in the ELRC had reached deadlock and mediators had been called in to resolve the impasse, but Bengu declared the policy before mediation was complete.

After accusing Sadtu of "flouting" during the negotiations on redeployment, he rejected the union's claim that there had been no consultation.

"There was consultation, but we could not consult until the cows came home. With the new financial year approaching, as the minister, no choice but to proclaim the regulation," Bengu said.

The previous system whereby provinces had to adhere to nationally determined teacher pupil ratios had funded them with staff bills which consumed 100% of their education budgets.

Even if the Constitution was changed and teacher pupil ratios were determined at a national level, schools would still have to be staffed according to available finances, and teachers would still have to be deployed according to school needs, Bengu said.

But the unions said although Bengu was restrained by the Constitution, this did not stop him from setting national norms.

Provinces would not be bound by these but there would be political pressure to adhere to them.

See Page 15
Axed teachers to get pay this month

Process for temps 'takes longer'

Permanent teachers who asked for severance packages will now know by the end of the month whether their applications have been successful. All temporary teachers entitled to payouts will get them by the end of the month.

This is the goal of the Western Cape Education Department whose staff are working round-the-clock to process thousands of payments to permanent and temporary teachers who have left the profession since the end of last year.

By the end of last month only 138 of the 3 303 temporary teachers who were axed without notice in December had received the payments promised to them.

Financial manager of the department Andries van Niekerk said the department had also received about 2 500 new applications for packages from permanent teachers who would leave in July. Of these 1 725 had been evaluated and 288 turned down.

There has been widespread criticism of the department's handling of the severance payments. Some unions have slated the process as a fiasco.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union spokesman Don Pasqualle said six weeks was "a reasonable time" to wait for payment but six months was "ridiculous".

Mr van Niekerk said it was not a simple issue. "We did everything we could - we threw all the money and resources we could into this project. There is a lot of dedication in this department. It is just that we are understaffed."

In spite of half the department's administrative posts being vacant, 10 people had been assigned to work on voluntary severance packages and another 10 to deal with inquiries.

Temporary teachers were promised they would be paid for leave they were due and a week's salary for every year of service.

Mr van Niekerk said it took three times longer to process payments for temporary teachers than for permanent staff as it was much more difficult to trace their employment history. But the most difficult work had been done and the process would now be "very quick."

Strike looms as last-ditch talks fail

Andrea Botha
Staff Reporter

An emergency meeting last night between education authorities and union negotiators failed to avert the nationwide teacher strike planned for next week.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union chief negotiator Thulas Nxesi said after the eight-hour meeting in Pretoria last night that mobilisation for the strike was going ahead as planned.

"We have clarified our demands and heard new proposals from the department but these are still far from meeting our demands," he said.

Further meetings between education officials and unions would take place over the weekend and on Monday, he said.

Meanwhile momentum for the strike is building with the decision by two more teacher unions to join Sadtu's protest against the Department of Education's rationalisation policies.

The SA Onderwysersvorme, representing 34 000 teachers from mainly Afrikaans schools, and the National Professional Teachers' Organisation, representing 66 000 teachers, have said they will take protest action next week but have not indicated what form this will take.
Stationary ... sitting among a sea of teachers, this little boy was unable to keep his eyes open during a meeting of the Soweto branch of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union yesterday, at which members discussed an impending strike.

Last-ditch bid on Monday to keep teachers from striking

Failure expected to mean 250,000 will walk out of classrooms across the country

By Jacqui Reeves and Sapa

A Democratic Teachers' Union and Education Department officials will on Monday make a last-ditch effort to avert a strike which could bring education in the country to a standstill.

If this final attempt to break the deadlock over planned teacher retrenchments fails, more than 250,000 teachers are expected to go on strike on Tuesday. Sadtu's general secretary Thulas Nxesi said today.

And yesterday two other unions, the 34,000-strong South African Teachers' Federation (SAOU) and the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa, have threatened strike action as negotiations broke down.

Nxesi said although yesterday's lengthy meeting with the department had not yielded results, it had been agreed that the two meet again before Tuesday — the day Sadtu has given notice to start the strike — to resolve differences.

"We are going into that meeting with open minds. But it must be made clear that if the meeting fails to resolve the problems, then we have no choice but to go ahead with our strike," he said.

All three unions are demanding the withdrawal of regulations published in April by Education Minister Sulasiso Bengu on the provision of teacher's posts. They contend that the regulations could result in at least 40,000 teachers losing their jobs.

The SAOU is to embark on protest action after a two-week "grace period" allowing for the legally required notice time as well as last-ditch efforts to avert the strike action.

A meeting between the union and Bengu is scheduled for Thursday.

Sadtu plans to begin countrywide protest action on Tuesday when its 170,000 members will abandon classes at 10am to attend branch meetings.

Though the SAOU has abandoned hope of reaching an agreement with the Government's negotiators, it will monitor the status of other discussions. The executive committee will meet after the grace period to decide what form the protest action will take.

The third teacher union, the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa, has given notice of its intention to strike.

Gauteng Education MEC Mary Metcalfe said last night she would be working in close contact with the national department to resolve the crisis. "We are very keen to find some middle ground and will work very hard in the next few days to try and find this," she added.

At a mass meeting of the Soweto branch of Sadtu yesterday, branch chairman Nkosana Kubeka warned teachers to be disciplined during the planned protest and strike action.

"Let us be disciplined, let us honour our actions, let us follow the directions of our leaders," he said.
Municipal workers set to strike tomorrow

Refuse collection, bus transport and other services may be affected if proposed work stoppage goes ahead

By Lee-Ann Alfreces, Bunty West and Melanie-Arn Feins

A three-day SA Municipal Workers Union strike that could leave Johannesburg cluttered with litter and hampered by service chaos seems likely to go ahead tomorrow.

"The workers will be on strike on Tuesday and we will meet them to discuss the plan of action for Wednesday and Thursday," Samwu chairman Christopher Mabaso said yesterday.

But the council has warned that the strike is illegal and it will seek an urgent interdict if workers carry out their threats.

The two parties were to meet today in a last-ditch effort to avert industrial action.

The three-day strike has been called to protest against a planned restructuring of Johannesburg's staff structure and plans to engage in partnerships with the public and private sectors with respect to the administration of certain functions.

If the strike goes ahead, services around the metropole will be severely disrupted.

Richard Spalding, human resources administration spokesman for the metro council, said that as far as his department was concerned, the strike was illegal and an interdict would be sought on behalf of the five councils to prevent the strike from going ahead.

"They must submit a letter to us clearly undertaking not to go ahead (with the strike), in which case we will not have any grounds to seek an interdict," he said.

If negotiations fail, Johannesburg's bus service will be severely affected, while refuse is not likely to be collected over the three days. Technical services, which include electricity, gas and sewage, and traffic departments will also be affected.

A skeleton staff and contract workers will be on hand for emergency services, clinics, electricity and water in Greater Johannesburg.

Samwu spokesman Themba Nxumalo told The Star that more than 20,000 workers were expected to join the three-day strike. He said workers would march to Sandton tomorrow and Wednesday to hand over petitions to Collin Mtjita, executive committee chairman of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council. Workers will march on the Metro Centre in Braamfontein on Thursday.

Metropolitan bus service spokesman Toni van Niekerk said the metro bus service would hold meetings today to set up contingency plans for the days of the strike. "Some buses will be running but it is advisable for passengers to make alternative plans to get to work. They can phone to find out which routes will be running by calling our switchboard on (011) 403-4300," she said.
Strikes ‘cost shipping sector R600m’

Samantha Sharpe
and Pule Molebatsi

CAPE TOWN — Crippling labour unrest at SA’s ports, especially Durban, has cost the shipping industry more than R600m in productivity delays since the start of April, industry sources say.

Portnet technical support staff and dock workers have been on protected strike action since Monday last week, although a general go-slow has been in effect since the Easter holidays.

About 3700 port workers at Saldanha, Durban, Richards Bay, Port Elizabeth, East London and Cape Town are protesting against Portnet’s decision to revoke a R500 bonus with effect from April 1.

Transnet spokesman Thami Dluzo said the group was open to negotiations with the Salaried Staff Association Employees’ Union of SA and the Technical Workers Union.

He said the company tabled a proposal at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in which the bonus system would be given out only after quarterly profits made by the company were declared. A percentage agreed to by both the company and unions would be distributed to the employees.

While industry sources reported excessive and continual delays, especially at Durban and Cape Town harbours, since the start of April, a Portnet spokesman said “all ports are operating normally”.

He said the labour action had no effect on productivity levels and there had been no complaints from any of the shipping lines or agents.

However, Unicorn liner executive Lamm McKenzie said the deep sea container port at Durban harbour was backed up, resulting in delays of up to 150 hours before vessels could berth.

Productivity levels at Durban harbour, which could usually handle between 17 and 18 containers per hour, had been turning about half that amount. Ships were waiting between three and four days to berth, he said.

Other sources said there was a daily backlog of about 10 vessels outside Durban. Early last week there were between 23 and 33 ships waiting outside Cape Town harbour.

SCL southern region CEO Brett Gray said the group had experienced “significant delays and incurred significant losses” as a result of labour-related delays.

While difficult to estimate the actual economic cost of the delays, industry sources said a single day’s delay cost the average ship owner between $15 000 and $20 000.
Union calls off strike by municipal workers

Samwu backs down after court bid to stop illegal action

BY LEE-ANN ALFRED
City Desk

An illegal three-day municipal strike which threatened to halt all services across Greater Johannes- burg was called off at the last minute yesterday.

But bus and other services were still expected to be disrupted this morning while SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) members gather in Sandton to hear why the industrial action had been called off.

Services would return to normal after 1pm, the time staff had been ordered to return to work, Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council spokes-

The strike was called by Samwu a few weeks ago to protest against plans by Greater Johannesburg's municipalities to privatise certain services and to restructure staff.

More than 20,000 municipal workers were expected to heed the call to strike, leaving almost no staff to collect refuse, drive buses and do routine maintenance work over the three days.

A skeleton staff was expected to be on hand for clinics, emergency electrical repairs, traffic and emergency services.

But Samwu backed down yesterday after Greater Johannesburg's five municipalities applied to the Labour Court for an interdict to stop the illegal strike.

In terms of an agreement, the union has promised to call off its industrial action if the councils withdraw their application for an interdict.

An urgent meeting is to be held within the next couple of days between the councils and the unions to discuss the city's planned staff restructuring (which is currently under way) and its privatisation plans.

In terms of the restructuring, the number of senior managers is to be cut by more than half, while scores of employees will be moved from support functions to service delivery.

In the move towards privatisation, the city has developed a framework for public/private partnerships and tabled several functions - including Johannesburg's fresh-produce market, emergency services, gas and Rand Airport - for partnerships or outsourcing.

While Samwu would not be drawn on why they had backed down, a source told The Star they were concerned for their members, who had been threatened with disciplinary action if they participated in the illegal strike.

Workers who last week participated in an illegal strike for better wages are being summoned to disciplinary hearings, the source indicated.
Sadtu, govt strike a deal

SOUTH AFRICA’s most powerful teachers’ union and the National Education Department have struck a deal to end the national teachers strike that began yesterday.

After 36 hours of negotiating, representatives of the 200 000-strong SA Democratic Teachers’ Union (Sadtu) emerged from the talks victorious, shortly before midnight last night.

However, the Education Department is not yet out of the woods. It also faces industrial action by the National Professional Teachers’ Organisation (Naptosa), which it will meet today, and the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwyser-unie, which will meet Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu tomorrow.

Sadtu secretary-general Willie Madisha said: “They have met our demands. We see the proposals now on the table as the basis of an agreement that we will recommend our members accept so that we can sign the agreement on Friday.”

Pivotal to the new agreement, said Madisha, was that norms and standards for schools, which include the number of teachers employed, will be determined at a national level.

However, the department’s director of human resources, Duncan Hindle, said the current agreement was far more nuanced than a simple withdrawal of the regulations the unions objected to.

These regulations handed complete power to provinces to determine, according to the funds available, how many teachers they would employ.

Sadtu said that last night’s breakthrough did not mean that the strike action that began yesterday would stop immediately.

Madisha said: “It is not possible just to call it off. We have 504 branches and over 200 000 members to contact, inform and get a mandate to sign.”

See Page 5
Plastics workers on strike

MOSES MTHEBELELI MACKAY
STAFF REPORTER

SA Chemical Workers Union members at the CIC Packaging plastic-making plant in Epping are on strike over a pay dispute.

Peter Roman, a regional union organiser, said nightshift workers downed tools yesterday and had been joined by dayshift workers today.

Workers were singing and toyoting outside the premises under the watchful eye of the police.

Mr Roman said the workers wanted the minimum wage upped from R1 100 to R2 000 a month. "We reject this (R1 100) because it's too little for our families. We also demand a 15% across-the-board increase. We demand six months' maternity leave, four months on full pay."

The union proposed that should the company retrench an employee with a mortgage, the company would pay 15% of the worker's bond repayment for two years. It demanded a minimum service allowance of R10 a month for each year of service and a minimum housing allowance of 20% of basic wages.

John Watters, acting general manager at the company, said: "We hope to meet the union representatives today and try to address the problem."
Communication union strike looms

Reneé Grawitzky  

TELKOM and the SA Post Office have been threatened with industrial action as a result of wage demands tabled by the Communication Workers’ Union, ahead of a conciliation process of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The union declared a dispute against Telkom and the post office on May 18 over demands for an across-the-board increase of R150 a month and a minimum wage of R2 100.

Other demands related to a commitment to reduce the apartheid wage gap between the lowest- and the highest-paid workers and increases ranging between 10% for supervisors to 16% for auxiliary workers.

The Post Office had offered increases close to 7% while Telkom’s final offer was an 8.5% package.

Telkom said yesterday it had subsequently submitted a revised proposal to the commission and the union.
Little hope for jobless in shrinking labour market

A new study notes that industrial action contributes to unemployment, writes THABO KOBOKOANE

OF ALL the problems the government has to deal with, its biggest headache is rampant unemployment.

Many studies in recent months have pronounced that the government will enter the election period with unemployment at its highest in years. As employment in the formal economy continues to dive.

A recent study by the Development Bank of Southern Africa, "Impediments on the absorption capacity of the South African economy", details the historical factors that have led to the current situation, and notes the labour market and intersectoral rigidities.

The study shows that the average absorption capacity—the percentage of the labour force employed in the formal economy—has decreased rapidly in the period between 1980 and 1994. In this period, the absorption rate decreased from 82.7% to 53.5%.

In the same period the percentage of new labour market entrants able to find employment in the formal economy also took a dive. From 1975 to 1990 it reached 45%, and it declined to 15% in the following decade.

In fact, in the five-year period to 1995, the formal economy was unable to accommodate any new labour market entrants.

Translated into numbers, the picture is bleaker. According to the study, the net increase in formal employment opportunities from 1980 to 1994 was a dismal 142,000 while the labour force increased by about 1.1 million, an annual rate of 365,000.

The situation is probably worse, given the number of jobs lost in recent times. From 1990 to 1996, 365,000 people entered the labour market each year while 82,000 job opportunities were lost annually.

And it could get worse unless a less meaningful plan is implemented soon.

The much-delayed presidential jobs summit could provide a starting point but, judging by the amount of political bickering that accompanied it, the initiative is in danger of achieving little.

The DBSA identifies the historical shift from labour-intensive production to capital-intensive processes as a major reason for unemployment.

For instance, it shows that labour intensity—the number of workers required to produce goods and services worth R1 million—declined from 21 in 1994 to 35 in 1980 across all sectors of the economy.

We want work... Job seekers queue for a diminishing number of positions

Along with manufacturing, all other sectors recorded negative changes, with the hardest hit being agriculture, where the ratio declined from 90 in 1980 to 69 in 1990.

"The continuing drift towards capital-intensive production processes is clearly the result of an attempt by firms to counter the twin problems of rising labour costs and lagging labour productivity," the report says.

So what has led to the substitution of labour with capital-intensive processes?

A number of reasons are suggested and these include an increase in wage pressures since the 1970s which led to employers retrenching workers so they could pay higher salaries to other employees, changes in technology (in particular in agriculture), deepening import substitution to progressively extend protection upstream, relatively capital-intensive sectors of manufacturing, and the rationalisation of the SA economy.

While labour costs—mainly upward movement in wages—have had an effect on employment growth, much of the decline is attributed to other factors, in particular "labour problems.

"A possible interpretation of this is that the industrial conflict widened the margin between perceived cost of employing labour and the wage rate."

In the period between 1969 and 1969, a total of 73 strikes took place involving 4,255 workers, translating into 13,000 man-days lost. Contrast this with the period between 1986 and 1983, where 363 strikes involving 271,383 workers caused the loss of more than 2 million man-days, according to statistics by the Labour Department.

The impact of these factors led to the wage increases of the early 1980s, which have since slowed as a result of sharp decreases in employment

Labour absorption capacity of the SA formal economy
Pick 'n Pay management union to strike today

MORE than 2 500 upper management and supervisory staff at Pick 'n Pay would strike today to protest against the company's refusal to recognise or enter into negotiations with their union, the Joint Affirmative Management Forum, the union said yesterday.

Union spokesman Jacky Masuku blamed the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration for the strike, saying it had failed to set up a meeting between the union and Pick 'n Pay in order to establish whether the union had enough representation to negotiate on behalf of workers.

Masuku accused the commission of "shaking its legislative responsibility", saying that the strike could have been averted by its intervention.

Both Pick 'n Pay and the management union had agreed that the commission would be responsible for verifying the union's membership, as recommended by one of its commissioners at a meeting, Masuku said.

Numerous attempts to contact the commission were unsuccessful. "It's as if they are no longer there," Masuku said.

The union had already notified Pick 'n Pay about the strike action.

The union said the strike was sparked by the company's refusal to engage in negotiations. Masuku said the refusal was a ploy by the company to avoid "the trauma of having its racist policies exposed and challenged".

Pick 'n Pay MD Sean Summers strenuously denied the accusations levelled by the union and said the company was committed to its employees.

Summers said that only a "very small group" was involved in the dispute.

The commission could not be reached for comment.
Thousands in textile industry set to strike tomorrow for higher pay

Bouquet warns it will take time to create work

Job summit not magic formula
Strike notice served on Post Office, Telkom

Johannesburg — The Communication Workers’ Union would today serve a 48-hour notice to strike on Telkom and the Post Office (Sapo) in terms of section 77 of the new Labour Relations Act.

The move follows a meeting by the national working committee, which came out with a "unanimous mandate to embark on industrial action to support our demands that are currently not met by both Telkom and Sapo".

Solebhehlo Khupe, the general secretary of the union, said more than 39,000 workers would take to the streets nationally from Monday to Wednesday to push for a 16 percent wage increase for auxiliary workers, a 12 percent increase for operational staff and a 10 percent increase for supervisory-level workers.

Khupe said the national marches would be followed by provincial marches, go-slow, work-to-rules, sit-ins and stayaways if there was no settlement by the end of this month.

He said the union was prepared to "meet Telkom halfway" by moderating its minimum wage demand from R2,500 a month to R2,550 a month.

Telkom said it has been in substantive negotiations with labour since February and that it declared a dispute on May 18.

The dispute was then referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The company said it had reviewed its negotiating mandate and submitted an "improved offer in a serious attempt to resolve the dispute" after a month-long dispute-resolution process at the commission.

But the union rejected this offer and applied to the commission for a dispute certificate, which was issued on June 22.

The certificate entitles union members to embark on a protected strike after giving the company a notice of 48 hours of their intention.
Wave of industrial action hits public and private sectors as talks intensify.
AN ESTIMATED 30 000 Telkom and post office workers would embark on a three-day protected national strike today in support of their demand for better wages, the Communications Workers' Union said yesterday.

However, union and management negotiating teams were still in talks late last night "to try to avert the strike", Telkom spokesman Amanda Singleton said.

Union spokesman Nathan Bowers said there could be a full-blown strike by next week involving non-unionised workers if there was no progress on wage negotiations. "We are organising other workers in the communication industry and they might go on a sympathy strike with us next week," he said.

The union would be able to draw more than 90 000 into the strike. He also warned that "we could be faced with a cut-off of communications in this country" by next week.

Bowers said the union was, however, still committed to resolving the dispute through negotiations. The decision to go on strike had been taken as a last resort after management's "negative stance and union-bashing tactics".

Bowers said workers had shown their commitment to negotiations and had reduced their demands 32% in real terms.

The union is demanding an across-the-board increase of R150, a minimum wage of R2 200 a month and increases ranging from 10% for supervisors to 16% for auxiliary workers.

Telkom is offering an average salary increase of 11% for auxiliary workers, a minimum wage of R2 150 for the lowest-paid and an 8% increase for operational and supervisory staff.

The union said, "We will continue our action next week with a work-to-rule campaign, a ban on overtime, and sit-ins."

SAPA reports that Telkom and the post office confirmed they had received notice of the strike after conciliation efforts failed.

Three unions are involved in the dispute: the Communication Workers' Union, SA Postal Association, and the Post and Telecommunications Association.
Spate of industrial action seen as normal for this time of the year

BY EDDIE JAYIVA

A wave of labour conflict has hit South Africa as thousands of workers embark on industrial action to pressure managements to pay better wages.

Andrew Levy & Associates research consultant Jackie Kelly has warned that more companies will be affected by strikes and said wages always trigger massive work stoppages at this time of the year.

"This is a busy period for most companies and wages always trigger conflicts," she said. "It is likely that more companies will be hit by labour conflicts."

Yesterday, more than 30,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) in KwaZulu Natal embarked on a legal strike following deadlock with the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa.

Numsa is demanding a guaranteed inflation rate increase, 9% for bottom grades and 7% for artisans, while Sefsa is offering between 5 and 6%.

"Gauteng and other regions will join the strike on Wednesday with the

More conflicts over pay expected

hope to pressure Sefsa into improving its offer," said Numsa information officer Dumisa Nqul. In an unrelated matter, Numsa said the strike will today begin protest action against the proposed retrenchment of 6,000 Iscor workers.

The volatile motor manufacturing industry faces a major strike after Numsa declared a dispute with the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation (Amoe), the umbrella body of all SA motor manufacturers.

Amoe is offering a wage increase of 6.5% while the union is demanding 9.5%.

Tony Kgobe, Numsa's automobile sector national co-ordinator, said: 
"We have referred the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration."

Amoe deputy chairman Doc Seiler said his organisation had asked Numsa for the copy of the dispute. "We will look at it before deciding on the next action."

More than 20,000 workers at Telkom and the South African Post Office (Sapo) will embark on a three-day stayaway starting with a march to Telkom and Sapo headquarters in Pretoria today.
PO strike may stifle deliveries

DON'T be angry if you don't get your mail for the next couple of days.

Thousands of Telkom and Post Office workers are going on a three-day national strike for an increase in wages.

The Communications Workers Unions (CWU) and the South African Postal Association said in a statement that they planned an initial three-day strike.

But, they warned, it would become full blown if there is no positive response from the South African Post Office.

A Cape Town Post Office worker said: "The only thing we will be doing is answering phones to tell callers that we're on strike."

The CWU represents approximately 26,000 Telkom workers who are prepared to go all out, even thinking of possible sit-ins.

Telkom said yesterday that the CWU's intended sit-ins would be illegal and said that they would approach the Labour Court if such plans were not withdrawn.

The cash-strapped Post Office appealed to its workers not to go on strike, saying it was not generating profits and is currently subsidised by the government. It acknowledged that its employees deserved a pay rise, but said that, unfortunately, it was out of its hands.

The CWU countered, saying that the Post Office had "refused to bargain in good faith" and workers were not earning a living wage.

"The strike is protected and will go forward as planned," said Ben Roodman, senior manager for corporate communications of Cape Mail.

"We are expecting a 50% stay-away today and 80% tomorrow and Friday."

Telkom and the South African Post Office said that efforts to resolve the pay dispute are continuing.
Major bid to stave off wave of countrywide strikes

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT (162) 9/9/98

Durban - Intense negotiations are under way between unions and management in various industries throughout the country in an effort to stop the wave of protest action which has threatened nationwide work stoppages.

Representatives of Telkom, the South African Post Office and the Communications Workers' Union struck a deal on Tuesday night, in time to call off a planned strike by more than 20,000 workers scheduled to start yesterday.

In spite of the agreement, at least 160 post offices, more than 50 of them in Gauteng, were closed yesterday after workers demonstrated over an earlier wage dispute, said a Post Office spokesman. The protests were organised before the Post Office and three unions reached agreement.

Meanwhile, employees at 10 Iron and Steel Corporation (Iscor) plants yesterday staged demonstrations in protest against the company's pending retrenchment of 6,000 workers.

The Government, a major stakeholder in Iscor, might be asked to intervene in the conflict between National Union of Metalworkers Association of South Africa (Numsa) and Iscor, according to Numsa information officer Dumisa Ntuli.

Elsewhere, negotiations were also being concluded to call off a strike by more than 30,000 Numsa members in KwaZulu Natal.

The Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (Seifsa) and Numsa both confirmed yesterday that a provisional agreement had been reached.

"We have reached an agreement with Numsa, which is the largest union in the sector," said Seifsa executive director Brian Angus.
A striking leather worker died in custody after allegedly being pointed out in a picket line by a factory manager.

Nathaniel Gelderbloem, a shop steward, was arrested at 115 pm on Tuesday after leaving a picket line at Watson Shoes in the Southern Cape town of Great Brak.

An hour later, he was found dead in his cell. Police claim he hanged himself from the roof with his shirt.

The firm's human resources officer, Ray Oosthuizen, said Mr. Gelderbloem's death was a "terrible tragedy" that had shocked the town. "We all knew him because, besides being an employee of Watson Shoes for 13 years, he was a community worker."

Mr. Oosthuizen said it appeared Mr. Gelderbloem had been under the influence of liquor, which was possibly why he was pointed out to police.

The death has shocked and enraged members and leaders of the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union, who met last night to discuss the incident in the light of the national leather workers' strike which is in its fifth day. The 400 workers at the shoe firm are taking part in the strike.

Mr. Gelderbloem, a father of three, was stopped in front of a church in Great Brak by police who allegedly handcuffed him, shackled his feet, took him to the police station and charged him with drunken driving.

The union claims Mr. Gelderbloem was pointed out in the picket line by a manager of the shoe firm and singled out for intimidation.

"It seems that employers still have the old apartheid attitude," said union regional secretary Wayne van der Rheede. "This death leaves serious questions regarding the police's role in trying to disrupt legitimate trade union activities."

The case has been referred to the Independent Complaints Directorate.
Footwear workers back today

SHIRLEY JONES

Durban -- Footwear workers are expected to return to work today after winning an 8 percent across-the-board wage increase.

But the South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu) warned this did not mean the strike was off.

The union, which was not included in the meeting between the South African Leathey Industries Association (Saflia) and the National Union of Leather and Allied Workers (Nulaw) that produced the agreement in Cape Town on Friday, said it would suspend the strike, but had not accepted the revised settlement.

A jubilant Nulaw said its members would return to work after having achieved a package equivalent to a 9 percent increase, despite short time and lock-outs by manufacturers.

"At the start of this year's negotiations on April 16 and 17 the bosses started with a measly 1.5 percent increase and told the union that we wouldn't get an increase anywhere close to the inflation rate. Comrades, we forced them beyond the inflation rate," the union told its members.

The package includes an 8 percent salary increase and a 1 percent increase, which will cover inclusion of a spouse or child on the Leather Sick Fund.

Marthin Paulsen, Sactwu's national leather co-ordinator, said that given the confusion surrounding the latest wage offer, he could not promise that all plants where Sactwu was represented would return to work today.

The revised offer would be put to members next week. Once the union had been properly mandated by its members, he suggested that all parties meet again in a "properly constituted bargaining council."

In a letter to Saflia, Paulsen voiced more concerns, and said Sactwu might have been "purposely excluded" in the hope that an agreement with Nulaw would divide striking workers.
50 000 more man days lost to strikes

Pearl Sebolao

MAN days lost to strikes increased by 50 000 during the first six months of this year over the 260 000 days lost in the same period last year, a strike report by industrial relations consultants Andrew Levy & Associates said yesterday.

Figures were expected to worsen in the second quarter of this year, the report said.

Two large strikes in the previously unorganised security and transport sectors, which took place in the first quarter of this year, accounted for the bulk — 261 000 — of the lost days.

The report said the two strikes were not typical for the time of year, given that the majority of wage negotiations did not take place until the middle of the year.

The remainder of the strikes in the second quarter were sporadic and not specific to any industry.

Wages were identified as the main trigger and accounted for 85% of the lost days, with retrenchments accounting for 9% and grievances 2.4%.

Although the 1998 figures were considerably higher than last year's, they did not reach the heights of the 1.2-million days lost in 1994 and the 700 000 lost in 1993.

The report said the 1998 half-year total was in line with the trend of a relatively quiet first half of the year.

Current negotiations in the labour sector were expected to increase strike activity during the third quarter of 1998 as both unions and employers tried to reach optimum settlements.

"However, given the current economic constraints, we do not envisage that these strikes will be unnecessarily prolonged," the report said.
Eskom workers power their protest

JOHANNESBURG: Workers at Eskom's headquarters in Megawatt Park went on the rampage last night, burning a section of the main building and destroying several cars.

The 3000 members of the National Union of Mineworkers, who had been protesting in support of wage demands most of the day, also shattered building windows.

The employees — bused in from Mpumalanga, North West and some parts of Gauteng — arrived at the offices to voice their dissatisfaction with the salary increase offered by management.

They protested on the company's lawns while their leaders were negotiating with management.

About 5pm the protest got violent as the workers tried to storm the building and clashed with police and company security.

Police spokesperson Glenton Swift confirmed the damage, but said no injuries had been reported.

Unconfirmed reports said one worker was rushed to hospital after he was hit by a police vehicle, but police denied this.

Union representatives tried to disperse their members about 7pm, but were booed. The toyi-toyi and singing workers said they were going to sleep outside the offices until their demands were met.

A union representative said the violence started when workers became impatient with the lengthy negotiations between the unions and management.

Eskom human resources executive director Bongi Khumalo said they were "greatly disappointed" with the workers' violent action because they were not told of the rejection of the offer by the union.

"We hope that union leaders will get their members to act responsibly so that it may not be necessary for us to get the police to help us to disperse them," he said.

Khumalo added that negotiations will continue today.

Heavily armed police kept a close watch on the situation.
Calm returns to Eskom HQ after pay talks hit a stalemate.

News
NUM must take responsibility for Eskom rampage, say ministers
Eskom to claim for damages

ESKOM said yesterday it would seek compensation for damage at its headquarters in Midrand on Wednesday by workers affiliated to the National Union of Mineworkers.

Hundreds of NUM members involved in a wage dispute with Eskom went on the rampage on Wednesday afternoon, smashing the conference centre's windows and setting cars alight.

In a statement following a meeting between Eskom and the NUM yesterday, Eskom spokesman Mr Peter Adams said the company as a public utility had no option but to seek justice and compensation through legal channels.

"A preliminary investigation will be conducted to decide whether to seek compensation from individuals responsible for the destruction of property or the union," said Adams.

He said disciplinary action would be taken against workers, and video footage from security cameras and eye-witness accounts would be used to identify workers who were involved.

Adams said the incident had damaged the good working relationship between Eskom and the NUM. "The strike was unprocedural and therefore unprotected."

It was particularly disturbing that union shop stewards and officials were unable to intervene when strikers went on the rampage, he said.

Public Enterprises Minister Stella Sigcau and Minerals and Energy Minister Penwell Maduna yesterday condemned the action of NUM members.

Speaking after both had viewed the damage at the Eskom conference centre, Sigcau said a strong message was needed to let the public know that such behaviour would not go unpunished.

"Clearly wanton destruction of national assets cannot be tolerated," she said.

Eskom chairman Mr Reuel Khoza said the union's action had sent a bad message to the international community.

"This intolerable and irresponsible behaviour is not in keeping with the democratic ideals for which South Africans have fought for so long," he said.

The NUM yesterday also condemned the destruction of Eskom's property, blaming it on a small group of agitators.

Eskom was negotiating wage increases and a service gratuity with five trade unions, including NUM, at the time of the protest.

The NUM is seeking a 13 percent across-the-board wage increase for the lowest-paid employee grades and 10 percent for middle grades. Eskom is offering a rise of at least eight percent on both scales. — Sapa
FINGER OF FATE

According to Union of Mineworkers, the 14 professionals who{

are accused of various charges relating to the death of a miner in{

a coal mine} are expected to appear in court next week.

The union says that the professionals were supposed to{

be present at the scene of the accident, but they

failed to show up.

The professionals are accused of negligence and fraud, and

the union is demanding that they be held accountable.

The union representative added that the professionals

were supposed to have been at the scene of the accident,

but they were nowhere to be found.

The union is calling for a full investigation into the

incident and for the professionals to be held responsible.

Eskom has confirmed that the professionals were

supposed to be at the scene of the accident, but they

failed to show up.

Eskom has also announced that it will be

completing an internal investigation into the

incident.

The union has called for Eskom to be held

accountable for the death of the miner.

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Unions and bosses lock horns in month of disputes

Labour researcher expects economic climate to reduce chances of prolonged strikes, writes DON ROBERTSON

There was good news and bad news on the labour front this week as employers and employees challenged each other for higher wages on the one hand and improved productivity on the other.

At Escom's Megawatt Park headquar ters on Wednesday, about 3 000 rampaging members of the National Union of Mine workers (NUM) caused millions of rands worth of damage.

Less dramatic were negotiations in the metal and engineering industry and in motor manufacturing.

July is traditionally fraught with labour disputes as negotiations usually begin in June. But, says Jackie Kelly, research associate at industrial relations group Andrew Levy & Associates, the number of negotiations taking place is no larger than in other years. "Eskom was an exception." There will be more stand-offs in the weeks ahead, but this is normal for this time of the year.

Kelly says strike action increased almost 20% in the first six months of this year to 210 000 lost man days compared with 260 000 in the same period last year. But this was substantially less than the 400 000 in the 1996 half-year.

Strikes at security companies and in the transport sector accounted for the bulk of problems with 261 000 man days lost.

Because of the economic climate, Kelly does not expect prolonged strikes.

Violence at Escom came after Escom's offer of a wage increase of 8%, NUM demands 13%. Three cabinet ministers condemned the damage and said the NUM should bear responsibility for union members' actions. On Thursday, NUM walked out of a meeting with Escom management.

In discussions last week, a proposed final settlement agreement, based on an average 7.2% increase, was reached between the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of SA (Seafsa) and the National Union of Metal Workers (NUMSA), the Steel, Engineering and Allied Workers' Union of SA (Seawusa), and the Radio, Television, Electronics and Allied Workers' Union (Reawu), representing about 270 000 workers.

This brings the annual wage negotiations between employers and trade unions a lot closer. All that is awaited is for other trade unions involved in discussions to respond this week.

In terms of the agreement, artisans will receive a graduated wage increase of 6.5%, while labourers will get 8%. Also agreed to was an increase in subsistence allowances for site workers of between 6% and 10%. Those facing retrenchment will receive the weekly employer contribution to the pension and provident funds, pro rata leave pay and bonus plus severance pay of a week's wages for every year worked.

Industry collective bargaining process and structure will be reviewed. A facilitator will assist in this process, due to be completed by November.

Negotiations between motor manufacturers, represented by the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation (Ameo), and workers, represented by the National Union of Metal Workers of SA (NUMSA), was locked on July 6. This was referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), but talks at the CCMA on Thursday and Friday failed to resolve the dispute.

Ameo obtained a Labour Court interdict on July 10 to restrain NUMSA and its members at the seven manufacturing plants from illegal strike action.

Again, the major area of disagreement is across-the-board wage increases, with NUMSA asking for 9.5% plus certain other benefits relating to leave and bonuses. Ameo offers a "fair" 6.5%.

Employers and workers are trying to renegotiate the three-year agreement signed in 1998 which linked wage increases to the consumer price index.

Also under discussion are wage increases for the more than 1-million public servants. On Thursday, government came up with a revised offer, ranging from 6% to 6.5%, which will be taken back to members.
NUM critics, misdirected
Government's harsh criticism of the Excom not last week shows a possible change in its stance towards Tughlak Sword, Labour Party. The Labour Party's阅览 Note: 

Author: Abour Ramey Craven
Violence mars chemical workers' wage strike
City paint workers join wage strike

The employees, all members of the South African Chemical Workers' Union (Sacwu), joined 80,000 other Plascon Paint workers in the strike.

The strikers gathered yesterday on the factory's premises in Packer Avenue, Epping 2, chanted and sang, and dispersed peacefully after about three hours.

General manager Ian Knight said centralised bargaining negotiations with Sacwu and other unions were under way.
Airport strikes delay City flights

Three flights out of Cape Town International Airport have been affected by three one-hour work stoppages at Johannesburg airport today.

A Swiss Air flight to Cape Town and two domestic departures were delayed for about an hour.

The stoppages were staged by apron service staff over a tendering dispute in connection with the handling agents of all air flights and passenger carrier services. At Cape Town airport, apron service staff staged pickets yesterday and today.
Thousands stranded as strike grips airport

Reenee Grawitzky

DOMESTIC flights were cancelled and international flights delayed by strike action at Johannesburg International Airport yesterday, leaving thousands of passengers stranded.

The strike was part of an intensification of workers' protests against attempts by the Airports Company to invite tenders for some functions.

The strike action was called off last night and after negotiations, a joint statement by the SA Railway and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhwu), Apron Services and the Airports Company said they had reached agreement to proceed with the tender and refused to comment further.

The SA Police Service fired tear gas after hundreds of strikers—employed by Transnet subsidiary Apron Services—blocked a runway with buses, cars and trucks.

Passengers were stranded at airports countrywide and some had to wait for hours on aircraft before they could disembark. Some international travellers were forced to carry their own luggage onto the aircraft. Singapore Airlines said attempts to get its staff to load luggage were halted by threats from striking workers.

Other major domestic airlines such as BA/Comair were not affected as they perform the functions themselves.

The action was sparked by a decision by the Airports Company—which recently acquired Aeroports di Roma as an equity partner—to invite tenders for ramp handling concessions in a bid to enhance its world-class service.

Sarhwu general secretary Derrick Sinoko said if Apron Services did not get one of the tenders issued the company could lose up to 50% of its work and jobs would be on the line.

Apron Services' workers were supported by hundreds of SA Airways (SAA) Cargo employees who threatened to go on a sympathy strike. They gathered at the cargo section carrying sticks, knobbknees and iron bars and presented management with a list of their own grievances. These included a demand for the end to "any attempt to separate SAA Cargo from the rest of SA Airways". Sarhwu said this was an attempt at "piecemeal privatisation".

SAA spokesman Leon Elia said discussions about the airline's privatisation were taking place at national level. There was no decision or separate negotiations to hive off SAA Cargo.

Johannesburg International Airport GM Rory Mackey warned that the "biggest impact" of the industrial action was "the negative impression left with the foreign airlines in terms of the safety and reliability of services at Johannesburg International Airport".

The Airports Company said the issuing of tenders was not a new initiative and was aimed at improving service at its nine airports.

A source said the industrial action, which included a march on Monday by workers on the runway, could play into the hands of the Airports Company to motivate for the winning of tenders. The Airports Company did not have a contractual arrangement with any of the ramp handling operators such as Apron Services—a subsidiary of SAA—which provided 84% of the ramp handling services at the airport—and therefore had no direct control over the level of services provided.

The contractual arrangements were between Apron Services and the individual airlines. The aim of the tender process was to ensure that the Airports Company emerged with a list of approved ramp handlers which could be made available to individual airlines.
Airport strike over after day of worker-police clashes and delayed flights

A strike by Johannesburg International Airport’s baggage handlers was called off yesterday after workers’ representatives, the Apron Services Company, and the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA) agreed to go ahead with an invitation for tenders to run the ramp-handling operations.

The strike, which disrupted a number of flights, started earlier in the day when baggage handlers from Apron Services stopped work over ACSA advertisements inviting tenders to run the ramp-handling operations.

Apron Services is a subsidiary of South African Airways and the striking employees are members of the South African Railway and Harbour Workers’ Union.

Their duties include driving passengers from terminal buildings to the aircraft and handling baggage.

Two police officers, one a woman, were hurt when strikers clashed with police.

Nicky Rose-frines of the ACSA confirmed that the strike had been called off, but said she had been instructed not to elaborate on the agreement brokered by a mediator from Independent Mediation Services of South Africa.

A brief statement issued last night said negotiations between SARS, Apron Services and the ACSA concluded with an agreement to proceed with the tender.

Rose-frines said the purpose of the agreement was to form a contractual agreement between ACSA and service providers at the airport to improve services.

Johannesburg International Airport was brought to a standstill and international and domestic flight schedules were disrupted yesterday when about 500 workers went on the wildcat strike.

Twenty international flights were delayed and SAA was forced to cancel seven international and 14 domestic flights, affecting about 3,000 passengers, before the strike by Apron Services employees was called off at 2.30pm.

Police used a stun grenade and tear gas to disperse strikers after they were attacked.

Sapa and Staff Reporters
Union to act after talks fail

By Mzwakhe Hlangana
Labour Reporter

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) is heading for a showdown with the chemical industry's employers after wage talks this week failed to resolve the protracted strike in the industry, the union warned yesterday.

CWIU deputy general secretary Mr Nelson Mthombeni will today announce the programme of action to be embarked upon by the union's members in protest against employers' "failure to accede to workers' reasonable demands".

Meanwhile, the SA Chemical Workers' Union (Sacwu), also involved in the same interim central bargaining forum, yesterday reported progress in the negotiations with employers.

Sacwu spokesman Mr Masindi Mavhunga expected "possible change of positions by both parties" this week.

The unions are demanding a 12 percent wage increase and a minimum salary of R2 000 a month.

Mavhunga said some employers had indicated they were prepared to meet the R2 000 a month demand.

"Chemical and industrial sector employers' coordinator Ms Christine Randall agreed that talks on resolving the strike continued.

Pocket demonstrations by workers at the Sasol plant in Vanderbijlpark continued for the second day yesterday."
SAA flights grounded by apron strikers

JONATHAN ROSENTHAL

Johannesburg — A strike by baggage-handlers and bus drivers at the Johannesburg International Airport yesterday grounded South African Airways (SAA) domestic flights countrywide and delayed international flights by about two hours.

Three police officers and one striker were injured in scuffles when police moved in to clear protesters who were blocking approaches to the airport, paramedics on the scene said.

Leon Els, the communications manager for SAA, said SAA had suspended its domestic flights countrywide, affecting about 3 000 passengers, before resuming operations later in the day.

Between 100 and 150 employees of Apron Services, a state-owned company blocked approaches to the airport building at 9.45am yesterday morning protesting against moves by the partly privatised Airports Company of South Africa (Acasa) to formalise competitive tendering for baggage-handling and other ramp services.

Striking workers formed picket lines and parked buses and trucks across aircraft parking bays before police moved in. Eugene Opperman, a police spokesman, said strikers threw stones at non-striking workers and police.

The South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union said one of its members was injured by the police when they allegedly assaulted protesters.

Several airport workers said they believed the new tenders could cut employment at Johannesburg International’s Apron Services to half the present 700.

“They are instigating crime by retrenching people,” said one worker, who asked not to be identified.
Airport strike called off

Johannesburg - A strike by Johannesburg International Airport's baggage handlers was called off after workers' representatives, Apron Services and the Airports Company agreed to proceed with an invitation for tenders to run the airport's ramp handling operations.

The strike, which disrupted a number of flights, started early yesterday when baggage handlers from Apron Services downed tools over Airport Company advertisements inviting tenders to run the ramp handling operations. Apron Services is a subsidiary of SAA and the striking employees are members of the SA Railway and Harbour Workers Union.

Two police officers were hurt when strikers clashed with police. An Airports Company spokesman confirmed that the strike had been called off. - Sapa
Chaos as strike hits airport

By Chaffy Shongo

MORE than 200 domestic and international flights were grounded at Johannesburg International Airport yesterday following a strike by members of the South African Railway and Harbours Workers Union.

More than 3,000 passengers were affected.

The action was sparked by a boycott of a new company handling baggage.

South African Airways, as part of its strategy to improve service, had awarded the contract to shrink to 50 percent of the Apron Services workers. They also lost the tender and continued without sufficient consultation.

The action was to be extended to protect the packed terminal building which they had many hours waiting.

The arrival of the local and international flights was also affected as planes were forced to land far from the terminal buildings.

Manuel, a supervisor of flights, said the delay was caused by the new company's non-arrival.

South African Airways' manager Mr Ron Mackay said despite the Apron Services' desire to handle work, they had not notified them of their timing. They arrived on 22nd September, the manager said.

Mr Mackay said the inconvenience could not be measured in terms of the 15.

"It could be possible to try and estimate at this stage how much money the airline had to pay in compensation, but we are not the inconvenience caused to our passenger," he said.

The strike resulted in the cancellations of flights on Monday.

Mackay said the airline also believed the strike on flights consisted of "all hands and efforts only, to enable the normal service of passengers".

The flights had been met on Mondays with a March by off-duty workers.

The police managed to contain the protest yesterday, but two people were prescribed for minor injuries.

The police managed to contain the protest on Tuesday.
Country may be hit by spate of strikes

The country could be hit by further strikes, with a threat of action in the vehicle manufacturing industry from the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) and the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) planning a 24-hour strike in the chemical sector on Thursday.

Thousands of Numsa and National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM) members are expected to march to the Union Buildings today to protest against the Eskom Amendment Bill, which aims to transform the parastatal into a tax-paying company.

NUM workers went on the rampage at Eskom last week. Their action halted wage negotiations which were under way at the time.

Negotiations resumed this week with no resolution in sight. Eskom said it intended implementing its final wage offer of a guaranteed 8% increase for all workers, with 12% for lower categories and 11% for upper categories.

Eskom had tabled a revised offer of 12%, with 8.5% guaranteed on condition that all the unions agreed to it. It withdrew the offer later when four unions rejected it. Numsa spokesman Steven Nhlapo said The NUM and Numsa indicated they might declare a dispute against the company's decision to implement the offer.

Numsa declared a dispute against vehicle manufacturers during a conciliation conducted by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration this week.

The dispute arose during the renegotiation of a three-year agreement covering 20,000 workers. Employers agreed to an 8% across-the-board increase as demanded by the union. The dispute relates to the increases for years two and three of the agreement and the wage differential between grades. Numsa is demanding inflation plus 2% for those years, while employers have offered an inflation increase as provided for in the agreement.

The week-old strike in the chemical industry over a wage dispute is set to intensify when the CWIU outlines its programme of action today. It includes nationwide marches and a strike on Thursday.

There has been no co-ordination on the strike between CWIU and the SA Chemical Workers' Union up to now. The two are the main unions operating in the sector and are party to talks to form a bargaining council.

The strike by Sacwu members has largely affected companies in the pharmaceutical, fast-moving consumer goods and industrial chemicals sector.

Employer spokesman Fanie Ernst said some sectors of the industry had attempted to resolve the dispute through talks, but this had drawn mixed reaction from the unions.
Sactwu workers to embark on pay strike

Ravin Maharaj
c1(MR)7/1/98 (152) (H4L)

Durban — The South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu) had declared a new dispute with the South African Footwear and Leather Industries Association (Safilia) and the National Union of Leather Workers (NULW). Andre Kriel, a Sactwu spokesman said yesterday.

At a meeting yesterday, Sactwu said the wage agreement reached last week between NULW and Safilia, who represent the employers, was invalid and that the matter could go to conciliation.

About 15 000 workers aligned to NULW returned to work last week after winning an 8 percent across-the-board increase, but about 7 000 Sactwu-aligned members, who were not party to the agreement, were still protesting yesterday.

Kriel said the strike would be held early next week. Sactwu was asking for a 12 percent increase against the employer's offer of 8.75 percent.
Crime-plagued, strike-hit Jo'burg
International has woes by the trolleyful

By CHARLENE SMITH

Johannesburg International Airport, battered this week by strikes and passenger complaints, has also become a target of organised crime.

And the object of desire among syndicates is the humble airport trolley. A thousand have been stolen in recent months at a cost of R1 million—and when it is considered that the airport handles 3,500 passengers during peak hours, and has only 1,200 trolleys to convey their baggage, the level of frayed nerves from passengers can be imagined.

To add fuel to their ire, when irate passengers ask staff for assistance, they are either fobbed off with "I don't work for the Airports Company, it's not my problem" from airways or security staff, or a bored "They're coming" from Airports Company of SA (ACSA) staff. And "They're coming" can mean a wait of an hour or more.

Rory McKie, general manager at Johannesburg International Airport, said the airport had stopped broadcasting apologies to passengers for delays with trolleys, and had not put up any signs apologising "because an executive at a car hire company told me it gave a negative impression".

To add to the situation, the airport, which is undergoing extensive ongoing renovations that periodically foul up parking, terminals and temps, this week experienced a one-day strike by baggage handlers that disrupted flights.

Baggage handlers from Apron Services went on strike after seeing advertisements placed by the ACSA calling for tenders for the ramp-handling operations. Mediation by Independent Mediation Services saw the strike called off after just a day.

But for travellers, difficulties in finding trolleys to convey their baggage remain.

McKie said a syndicate appeared to have made two large raids, stealing 500 trolleys at a time, "probably through the basement parking. Although we have found some trolleys at other airports, it seems most are destined for melting. The trolleys are of expensive stainless steel."

He said the ACSA had laid charges and taken additional security measures, including a nightly audit of all trolleys, but no arrests had been made.

"We have placed R2 million in orders for 1,300 new trolleys and will begin receiving 60 new trolleys a day from the middle of August. We have also put out a R2 million international tender for new trolleys that can be safely used on escalators too."

"Our new R150-million multistorey parkade, with 4,000 parking bays, will have escalator access so that trolleys must be able to go on these, but they will be much more expensive."

McKie said that although most business travellers don't need trolleys, international travellers certainly do, and at peak hours on a Sunday at international arrivals, scenes are chaotic, with dejected and angry tourists battling to find trolleys and having their queries met with lack of interest from most staff.

McKie said: "Of the 15,000 people who work at Johannesburg International, only 300 work for the Airports Company."

A berth had been set up to assist passengers.
Union members set to strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani

THE chemical industry is facing nationwide, crippling industrial action. This appears inevitable as the estimated 40,000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union are currently conducting strike ballots, the union has warned.

Its deputy general secretary Mr. Nelson Mthombeni said last week that about 300 plants in the seven sectors of the chemical industry would be affected by the strike. Workers at 25 pharmaceutical, 15 petroleum, 12 industrial, rubber, 10 glass companies, 100 industrial chemicals and plastics companies and Sasol Colloids may strike on August 3. While waiting for ballot results, workers will stage lunch-time pickets, said Mthombeni.

The union is demanding a 10.5 percent across-the-board increase and a minimum R2,000 salary. The employer body offered a 9.5 percent increase.
Million commuters face
Metrorail strike this week

Johannesburg - About 10,000 Metrorail workers will strike from Friday after wage talks broke down, the SA Footplate Staff Association announced.

Conciliation between the company and trade unions failed and deadlock was reached over negotiations.

In a statement on behalf of all unions involved in the dispute, Safsa general secretary Chris de Vos said the strike would leave more than a million commuters stranded if alternative transport was not provided.

"This could also have a ripple effect because of the impact on Spoornet's Blue Train and other freight trains controlled by Metrorail's train control officers."

Since it would be a protected strike, all members of the unions in all regions of Metrorail's operations would participate, the statement said.

A notice of the intended strike was served on Metrorail yesterday, Mr de Vos said.

Train drivers represented by Safsa had already given the union the mandate to force Metrorail to reach an agreement similar to one reached with Spoornet.

Safsa last week reached a two-year agreement with Spoornet for an increase of 7.5% back-dated to March 1, a further 3.5% increase on September 16 and a third rise on March 16 next year.

Mr de Vos said Metrorail was not prepared to meet similar demands. It offered 7.5%, 3.5% short of what the unions were prepared to agree to on a one-year basis. - Sapa
Chemical industry prepares to limit effect of strike

Chemical plant processes throughout the country have been reorganised and fuel supplies stockpiled in a bid to minimise the effect of the 24-hour strike by the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) tomorrow.

Although the whole chemical industry will be affected by tomorrow's action, the petroleum sector was expected to be the hardest hit, with 13 companies being affected.

National Petroleum Employers' Association chairman Chris Clin- cas said yesterday: "We said to the whole the petroleum industry would be able to ride it through as contingency planning had been put in place."

CWIU members would march in all major centres of the country, including Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and East London.

Memorandums would be handed to the employers, demanding that they agree to the union's demands for a 10.5% wage increase, a R2 000 minimum wage and the improvement of other conditions of employment. CWIU general secretary Nelson Mthombeni said: "If the union's demands were rejected members would embark on a full-blown strike next Monday, joining the SA Chemical Workers' Union, which went on strike last week."

Meanwhile, the national stay-away by the National Union of Mineworkers to protest against the Eskom Amendment Bill, which was due to take place yesterday, was called off.
Real power is economic

Petrol firms hoard supplies for strike

The fuel industry has been stockpiling supplies in anticipation of a strike next week by chemical workers demanding a wage increase, Fanie Herbst, negotiator for the employers, said yesterday.

This followed Friday’s announcement by the Chemical and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU) that workers would protest on tomorrow.

If their demands were not met, at least 40,000 chemical workers would strike from next Monday.

“As a contingency, plants have been stockpiling and reorganising their plant processes, making it possible to continue with the remaining workers,” Herbst said.

Shell spokeswoman Koosum Kalyan said the company did not expect any problems but as a contingency, would make sure its customers received fuel supplies before mid-week.

Beverley Benjamin, manager of the Engen garage on Durban’s Esplanade, said she topped up her supplies when she heard about the protest.

Normal trade

By yesterday afternoon filling stations were reporting normal trade.

CIWU general secretary Nelson Mihombeni said yesterday that the union planned marches tomorrow and a memorandum would be handed over to employers asking them to agree to the union’s demand for a 10.5 percent across-the-board wage hike.

Employers are offering between 6.4 and eight percent.

Herbst said the employers would wait until they had received the memorandum before considering the workers’ demands again.

“We don’t know yet if they will come with new demands. We will see if we can resolve it before Monday,” he said.

The industries affected include manufacturers of industrial chemicals and glassware, fast-moving consumer goods such as detergents, soaps and cosmetics, industrial rubber, plastic converters and pharmaceuticals.

Salary negotiations between the affected industries and their unions started in May.

After arbitration with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, a deadlock was declared on July 10. — Sapa.
Eskom strike averted at 11th hour

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — A last-minute deal brokered on Sunday night between the government and Cosatu had led to the cancellation of a planned stayaway by more than 15,000 Eskom workers allied to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa) yesterday to protest against the Eskom amendment bill, the unions said yesterday.

Mbuyiselo Ngwenda, Numsa’s general secretary, said that as a result of the deal, public enterprises minister Stella Sibisi would “run with Cosatu amendment proposals to the National Council of Provinces” (NCOP) for debate in September, while “in between there will be (ANC-Cosatu-SACP) alliance discussions on the issue.”

The amendment bill seeks the corporatisation of the electricity supplier under the Companies Act. It has already been approved by the National Assembly.

Stephen Nhlapo, Numsa’s energy sector co-ordinator, said Cosatu proposals would focus on the legal form of ownership, which in turn was linked to whether Eskom would pay dividends to shareholders and tax.

Whether the alliance discussions will lead to the reversal of the government’s proposed form of legal ownership will only be known after the debate in the NCOP.

Ngwenda conceded “As labour we have no control over government action and can only engage it, using the law to embark on strikes, stayaways and mass action.”

Douglas McClure, the department of public enterprises director of parliamentary affairs, confirmed that an agreement had been reached that would “allow discussions between government and labour on issues of mutual interest, the results of which will be discussed by Cabinet.”

McClure said the tabling of the bill before the NCOP had been provisionally set for August 19, with discussions set for September 7 to 11.

Cosatu argues that the corporatisation of Eskom under the Companies Act would loosen the grip of the state as the owner and put the price of electricity beyond the reach of the poor.

Meanwhile, Nhlapo said Numsa and the NUM had deadlocked with Eskom over wage increases, with only 0.5 percent separating the parties.
Rail strike on track as Metro wage talks fail

RODNEY VICTOR

SOUTH AFRICA faces what could be its most disastrous strike ever as Metro rail workers embark on a strike from Friday.

Four unions representing 10,000 workers yesterday gave Metro rail 48 hours' notice of their intention to strike following the breakdown of talks yesterday.

The strike would leave more than a million train commuters without transport, and would affect other transport sectors, including train and freight services controlled by Metrorail's officers.

General secretary of the SA Footplate Staff Association, Chris de Vos, said last night the deadlock followed Metrorail's refusal to grant its staff the same increases as those given to staff at Spoor-net.

Spoor-net is a division of Spoor-net.

Spoor-net agreed last week that staff would receive an increase of 7.5% backdated to March 1 this year and a further increase of 3.5% on September 16. Metrorail, however, was prepared to grant an increase of 7.5% only.

"We cannot accept an agreement that is less favourable than that agreed to for Spoor-net. We have a strong mandate to go ahead with the strike," De Vos said.

Metrorail spokesperson Fred Randa said he was not in a position to comment.
Rail commuters face strike chaos

The national strike called by Metrorail workers from midnight tomorrow will force more than 600,000 train commuters in Western Cape to find other ways of getting to work.

Four Metrorail trade unions representing 10,000 workers gave 48 hours' notice of their intention to strike after a breakdown in wage talks on Monday.

Negotiations deadlocked again yesterday and if last-minute discussions fail to break the impasse, more than a million rail commuters nationally will have to travel by bus, taxi or private car on Friday.

The strike will also affect Metrorail freight services.

Metrorail said a complete suspension of the suburban train service was expected.

Golden Arrow would be supplying additional buses where possible and would honour tram tickets.

The dispute arose when Spoornet agreed last week to a pay increase of 7.5 percent backdated to March 1 and a further 3.5 percent on September 18. Metrorail offered only 7.5 percent.
Talks may avert strike
Thousands march as wave of industrial action continues

Reneé Gravitzky
and Pearl Sibobo

The wave of industrial action and shop floor demonstrations sweeping the country in recent weeks continued yesterday, with thousands of mineworkers marching on Lonrho’s Western Platinum mines in Rustenburg.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said last night that thousands of members marched on the mines to present a memorandum detailing the union’s demands in the current wage dispute. The dispute stems from a union demand for a 15% increase while the company has offered 6% and a further 1% linked to the provident fund.

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) reported that thousands of its members took part in lunch-hour demonstrations at 12 Nampak plants in support of demands for higher wages after most plant-level negotiations ended in deadlock. The company was offering 7% while the union was demanding 10%.

The Food and Allied Workers’ Union said it planned to march on the offices of Nestlé in Randburg today to protest against retrenchment plans by the company. Nestlé said it was in the process of finding ways to “mutually resolve our differences.”
Chemical Industry faces full-blown strike

Staff Reporter and News Coordinator

Workers last chemical workers meet through Cape Town yesterday in support of demands for 10.5% pay increases and pressure on employers and industries to improve conditions. The demonstration is organized by the Chemical Workers' Union and the Chemical Workers' Association. Demands for better working conditions and salaries have been raised by the workers. The strike is expected to continue until further notice.
Chemical workers warn 24-hour action could lead to longer strike

Thousand of Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) members went on a 24-hour strike with minimal effect on consumers, employers and yesterday.

Despite employers having put in place contingency plans — including stockpiling of fuel supplies to maximise the negative effects of the strike — one SA Airways flight to Miami was delayed by a few hours because it could not refuel in Cape Town as no jet fuel was available.

The strike was intended to put pressure on employers in the chemical industry to revise their wage offers, currently ranging between 6% and 8%, and took place as the strike by the SA Chemical Workers' Union (Sacwa) entered its ninth day.

The CWIU threatened yesterday that a full-blown strike would start on Monday if the disputes in sectors such as petroleum, pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals were not resolved by the weekend.

Both unions want a 10.5% increase, a R2,000 a month minimum wage and other improvements to working conditions.

Employer spokesman Fame Ernst said the strike did not enjoy 100% support but large numbers of CWIU members had supported it and this could result in companies suffering financial and production losses.

The CWIU's national treasurer, Ronald Mofoke, told thousands of members during a march in central Johannesburg yesterday that employers "were declaring war on the union" by refusing to meet the demands.

The union was prepared to take up the challenge, Mofoke said. He threatened to mobilise other Congress of SA Trade Union affiliates to boycott supplying goods to the chemical industry.

Despite moves towards centralised bargaining in recent years, this year's wage talks and the subsequent strikes have been marked by a lack of co-ordination between the unions.

Both unions — Sacwa and CWIU — have denied raising tensions between their respective leaders, but employers have received a growing number of reports of intimidation between the two unions' members and also between strikers and non-strikers.

A long strike may affect key industries dealing with petroleum, explosives and pharmaceuticals.

At least 3,600 Chemical Workers' Industrial Union members yesterday marched to the head office of petroleum company Total in Bramfontein, Johannesburg, in support of their wage demands. Thousands of workers in other parts of the country also took part in similar marches organised by the union.

Picture: TROY PILLAR

20/4/98
In full cry... thousands of protesting members of the Chemical Workers and Industrial Union gathered at the Library Gardens yesterday to demand an increase of 10.5%.

Unlikely that chemical workers' demands will be met in time

Chemical employers' negotiator Fanie Ernst yesterday said he held little hope of meeting all the demands of the Chemical Workers and Industrial Union by Monday's deadline.

The union has said that if its demands were not met, at least 40,000 workers would strike.

In Johannesburg an estimated 3,000 CWIU members marched from the Library Gardens in the city centre to Total House in Braamfontein to present a memorandum to Ernst.

Protests were staged in Cape Town, Durban and Pretoria, where about 10,000 workers marched through the city centres to hand memorandums to representatives for employers.

The memorandum calls for a 10.5%, 'across-the-board increase, a 40-hour working week, six months' maternity leave with four months' full pay and pensions based on salaries and shift allowances combined.

Industries which would be affected by the strike include manufacturers of industrial chemicals, detergents, soaps and cosmetics, industrial rubber, plastic converters, pharmaceuticals and glassware.

The Mynwerkers Ume, SA Workers' Union and the National Engineers' Trade Union were considering joining the strike. - Saga
Train strike off after agreement

By Mzwakhe Hlangani

A potentially crippling nationwide strike planned for tomorrow was averted last night when six trade unions representing about 10 000 workers and management of Metrorail reached a last-minute agreement over wage increases.

"Only one union, the SA Footplate Association (Safa) with a membership of only 1700, including train drivers, technical workers and train guards, rejected Metrorail's final offer," Safa spokesman Mr Chris de Vos said.

The deal followed lengthy talks in Johannesburg yesterday between the SA Railways and Harbours Workers Union, the Black Allied Workers Union, the Technical Allied Workers Union (Tatu) in a bid to resolve the wage dispute.

The signatories said social commitment was the major criterion for reaching consensus among all the parties since the strike would affect the poor communities more than it would Metrorail's management.

Metrorail's executive human resources director Mr Mark Gunstein-Bean pointed out that the deadlock negotiations were reopened after chief executive officer Mr Z. J. Madly and Railway general secretary Mr Derrick Smoko had started informal talks with the aim of "putting out the flames that could be caused by the strike".

He said the talks would be left open for Safa to join the fold as it had reneged in the final minutes.

If the union decided to go on with the strike, minimal disruption could be expected as buses had been hired in anticipation of the strike by some train drivers.

The terms of agreement include 7.5 percent increase backdated to March 16 1998 and 3.5 percent to be effective from November 16 1998.

There would be a further 5 percent from March 16 next year.

Both parties agreed to negotiate a deal on profit-sharing among the workers.

Hospital sets quotas

By Mkeed Kotloko

A CRISIS is gripping the Pretoria Academic Hospital, one of the capital's busiest hospitals, following an acute shortage of pharmacists caused by resignations.

As a result, hospital management has introduced a temporary quota system with a maximum of 150 outpatients accepted each day.

Dr Julius Kunzmann, the Pretoria hospital's director, said yesterday such situations occurred from time to time when pharmacists left to join the private sector which offers lucrative salaries.

Although the Pretoria Academic Hospital has managed to cope with the situation in the past, the recent departure of four pharmacists in a short period had dealt the institution a serious blow, he said.

Kunzmann said the issue of improving hospital salaries was out of their control since it was negotiated at the national level.

The hospital's chief medical superintendent, Dr Zola Njouwwe, said the new quota system came into effect on Monday in an attempt to ease the pharmacy's load.

She said the hospital had 32 approved pharmacist posts, but only nine were filled. Of the remaining nine, three have resigned their posts and would be leaving at the end of the month," Njouwwe added.

"The departure on maternity leave at the end of this week of one of the remaining six pharmacists would worsen the situation," he said.

She appealed to residents, in particular those in the eastern and central suburbs of Pretoria, to take note of the limited number of patients to be admitted a day at the general outpatients clinic.

Njouwwe appealed to qualified pharmacists "who are able and willing to assist us on a full-time or sessional basis (with remuneration)" to urgently contact Mrs A. Engelbrecht on telephone number (012) 354-2235.
SA Trade Unions national treasurer, Ronald Mofokeng, addresses members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union at the Johannesburg Library Gardens yesterday to demand higher salaries and improved worker benefits. Union members also held protests in Durban, Cape Town, East London, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria.

PIC: ANTONIO MUCHAVE

Union workers take to streets

By Mzwakhe Hlangani

MORE than 5,000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) took to the streets nationwide yesterday as part of a campaign by 40,000 workers to demand pay increases.

Demonstrations preceding an “all-out strike” planned for next Monday were held yesterday in Gauteng, Eastern and Western Cape and in KwaZulu-Natal.

High on the list of the union’s demands are a 10.5% increase or a minimum of R2,000 a month, six months’ maternity leave, with four months at full pay, a 40-hour week and annual leave of 20 days.

Addressing marchers at Johannesburg’s Library Gardens, Congress of SA Trade Unions national treasurer Mr Ronald Mofokeng assured the CWIU of the support of 18 Cosatu affiliates next Monday.

Mofokeng also announced that Cosatu would take the lead in campaigning to “resist exploitation” by employers who retrenched workers and then re-engaged some as casual workers and cheap subcontractors.

CWIU secretary Mr John Appolis said the union would not compromise its legitimate demands as it prepared to engage industrial chemical employers in “war”.

He warned shop stewards and local and branch members not to negotiate strike or picket rules with management at plant level, pointing out that strike rules should be negotiated with the union’s national office.

“We call upon chemical industry employers to seriously review their position and get back to the negotiating table with nothing less than a reasonable 10.5% offer before we embark on the full-blown strike next Monday.”

Marchers proceeded to Total House in Braamfontein, where a memorandum was handed to industrial chemical employers’ national coordinator Mr Fanie Ernst, who said he hoped the strike could be averted as the industry and the unions had reached agreement on many issues.
Train services due to be derailed by strikers

Dustin Chick

METROPOLITAN train services around SA were brought to a grinding halt today, leaving about 1 million commuters stranded as the majority of train drivers and other operational staff began their strike against Metrorail, a subsidiary of Transnet.

The SA Footplate Staff Association (Safsa) announced its intention to go ahead with the strike on Wednesday, after refusing to sign a two-year wage agreement with Metrorail that was agreed to by six other unions.

Safsa refused to sign the deal—after allegedly slamming it as "an informal meeting—because of a disagreement over the implementation date for the second increase."

A meeting has been convened today by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

Safsa general secretary Chris de Vos said his union would consider applying for an interdict against this move which indicated that "the fight is on".

The union would attend the OCMA meeting today in an attempt to avoid a protracted strike, but it had not been enough to stop workers from striking.

Metrorail criticised Safsa for barging in bad faith as the union had reneged on an informal agreement made with Metrorail CE Zandile Jakavula on Tuesday over the implementation of the second increase.

De Vos said he had indicated to Jakavula that the November implementation date had been a suggestion and would be mandated by Safsa.
Fawu workers march on Nestlé head office

Johannesburg — Hundreds of workers belonging to the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) marched to the head office of Nestlé South Africa in Randburg yesterday to protest against the company's limited severance package offer for retrenched merchandising employees.

"Our package for compulsory retrenchments is two months' notice pay, pro-rata Christmas bonus, all outstanding leave pay and three weeks' pay for each year of service up to a maximum of 52 weeks," said Jacky du Plessis, the corporate affairs manager at Nestlé.

Du Plessis conceded that the 52 weeks limitation would short-change workers who had given more than 20 years of service, for example. "The dispute is about the maximum severance package being offered on compulsory retrenchments," she said.

"It is unfortunate that Fawu has decided to embark on industrial action as we are in the process of finding ways and means to resolve our differences and to normalise the situation as quickly as possible."

Fawu is demanding at least four weeks' pay for each year of service.

Du Plessis said the decision to cut down on staff followed a market survey which indicated a growing trend for weekend shopping that had created greater customer expectations, and that the company "needed to provide a more flexible service, particularly in terms of how we could cater for the increasing number of retail stores".

In a separate development, thousands of South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union members are expected to march in central Johannesburg today to protest against an Edgars Group wage freeze for the current financial year.
Talks fail to avert railways strike
But thousands of Cape Town commuters pay the price during day of transport chaos

WHAT A SILLY STRIKE
Signs of frustration in strike action

A

NUMBER of high-profile strikes has given the impression of an escalation in the number and intensity of strikes over the past few months. But this is not borne out by statistics, which show that strike action this year to date is not dramatically up on last year. Labour sources say that recent strike action has attracted a fair amount of publicity, notably the burning of a building at the Eskom head office and chaos at the airport.

What these do show, however, is a high level of frustration in an increasingly complex and demanding social and economic environment.

Figures from labour consultants Andrew Levy & Associates show that the 310 000 man days lost in the first six months is a slight increase on the previous year.

Researcher Jackie Kelly expects the number of man days lost this year to be 1 million or a little more. This compares with 650 000 last year, 1.7 million in 1996, 1.6 million in 1995, 3.9 million in 1994, 3.6 million in 1993, 4.2 million in 1992 and 3.8 million in 1991. In 1987, at the height of the state of emergency, an astonishing 9 million man days were lost.

Kelly points out many negotiations are already complete. The steel and engineering sector settled while the mining industry is only negotiating at selected mines because a two-year industry agreement was reached last year.

Andrew Levy & Associates consultant Brian Allen says the high-profile nature of some of the recent strikes is not a reflection of what is happening in general terms.

The strikes have however, raised awareness of what is still clearly a huge divide between some sections of the business community and labour. Recently, the Cape Chamber of Business said it was disturbing 'that the trade union leadership appear to be ignoring the economic realities facing our country and the fact that the economy cannot afford wage increases that exceed inflation'.

This statement seems only partly true.

Allen says 'I would say that while the inflation rate is down, pressure on the disposable income of the low-income earner has increased. This will play a part in negotiations. One of the facets of negotiations is that union members must be better off than they were before.'

Allen adds, however, that 'there is a high level of frustration because the flexibility of employers in terms of what can employers pay is reduced. Another important factor is the high level of retrenchments. There is an awareness of the risk of retrenchments, which has brought a whole new sensitivity into negotiations.'

Cosatu spokesman Ncesi Mphiti agrees, saying retrenchments, linked to economic conditions, the crisis in the gold industry and new technology, have prompted labour to seek an amendment to the Labour Relations Act to include not only consultation but also negotiation around this issue.

"What we are seeking is the full participation of workers in the transformation of companies," Mphiti says. The role of the labour movement has changed from resistance to participation. We are playing more of a participatory role. The priority is to reach agreement, and if employers adopt the same attitude in looking for a solution before a strike, there will be significant savings."

She says while most of the disputes or strikes this year have been around wages, other major issues have been privatisation, deregulation of industries and corporatisation.

Andrew Levy & Associates said this week that unions obtained high wage settlements this year despite a lower inflation rate. An average 9.2% settlement was reached in the first six months compared with 9.7% in 1997. Inflation averaged 5.5% between January 1 and May 30.

According to the consultants, lower inflation saw employers put on the pressure for wage settlements to closely reflect the inflation figure. But this was contrary to a trend in SA collective bargaining where "regardless of the movement in the inflation rate, the benchmark is generally the previous year's settlement."
Motor Industry strikes the wall
Hundreds of Western Cape chemical workers joined their industry's nationwide strike today in support of pay demands. The workers are demanding a 10.5% across-the-board wage increase, a minimum wage of R2,000, six months' maternity leave, a 13th cheque, the recognition of traditional healers and also the inclusion of a prolonged illness under sick-leave entitlement.

The National Petroleum Employers' Association (NPEA) has offered the workers a package that ranges between 7% and 8%.

Chemical and Industrial Workers Union (CIWU) official Fazel Ernest told the Cape Argus that about 4,000 chemical industry workers had joined the strike in the Western Cape, representing about 70%.

The strike also involves workers in the glass, pharmaceutical and industrial rubber sectors.

It follows protracted negotiations between the NPEA, CIWU and the National Union of Mineworkers.
Planned motor industry strike could harm exports
Wage dispute on hold as talks resume

The Metrorail strike, which was on hold, has been suspended with immediate effect pending the outcome of this week's talks between Metrorail and the SA Footplate Association (Safsa).

The suspension was agreed to at a meeting brokered by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration on Friday night.

About 1,700 train drivers, ticket collectors and station staff went on strike last week after a wage dispute between Safsa and Metrorail.

The Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce monitored the strike and said it caused a degree of economic disruption, especially in the first and last hours of the day.

However, because ample warning was given by Metrorail, the effect was contained.

Most employers and employees made alternative arrangements so workers could get to work and the taxi industry had also been prepared for the strike.

Metrorail spokesman Bantu Petersen said Metrorail and Safsa would resume talks on the implementation date of the second increase in the two-year wage agreement, which had already been signed by other trade unions at Metrorail. Safsa wanted the second increase to come into effect in September, while Metrorail has offered the increase from November.

The strike would resume if another deadlock occurred this week, Safsa spokesman Chris de Vos said.
Johannesburg — Major export contracts worth billions of rand could be jeopardised this week if a wage dispute meeting between the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Ameo) tomorrow fails to reach a settlement.

More than 21,000 Ameo workers allied to Numsa will go on a national strike on Thursday if the dispute is not resolved. This could upset Volkswagen's R5 billion contract to the UK, Sumcor's export order of 56,000 Ford engines and BMW's R900 million leather seats export to Germany.

Strikes are also looming in the motor sector, where Numsa represents 60,000 workers at component plants, vehicle dealerships, fitment centres, panel-beaters and service stations.

Hosea Morapedi, the motor sector co-ordinator for Numsa, said a statement had been reached with the South African Motor Industry Employers' Association (Samusa) last week. The union would be embarking on a 24-hour strike on September 1 this year.

Morapeti said this could become "rolling strike action if there was no change in attitude of employers.'

The Motor Industries Staff Association (Missa) and Motor Industries Employers' Union (Mieu), which represented a further 40,000 workers, were also likely to participate in the planned strike action, he said.

Brian Smith, the Ameo chairman, said "National strike action will have dramatic consequences for the industry and the South African economy."

"Unlike in 1994, when we had the first national auto industry strike, all seven OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) now already have or are negotiating extensive export contracts.

"Strike action in South Africa will impact on overseas plants and certain parts produced locally could even stop production overseas."

"Strike action will further strengthen overseas perceptions that South Africa has an inflexible and unstable labour market. Many thousands of jobs in the industry are now dependent on export orders, and these could be placed at risk by strike action," Smith said.

Tony Kgabe, the Numsa auto and tyre sector co-ordinator, and Ameo had requested the meeting with Numsa after a meeting of the chief executives of the motor companies.

Ameo represents BMW, Delta, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Sumcor, Toyota and Volkswagen.
GIANT FUEL STRIKE HITS TOP GEAR

JUST THREE DAYS after a rail strike produced widespread chaos in the city, about 47 000 workers in the chemical industry have embarked on an indefinite nationwide strike, JUDY DAINON reports.

At midnight last night, workers in the chemical industry downed tools and braced themselves for a long wait until their demands are met.

All seven sectors of the chemical industry — glass, petroleum, rubber, plastic, industrial chemicals, consumer goods and pharmaceuticals sectors — are to stage marches and protests in the next week.

The decision to strike came as talks between the unions and employers reached a deadlock.

The unions are the South African Chemical Industrial Workers' Union, Mine Workers' Union and the South African Workers' Union.

Although fuel supplies to airlines and motorists will not be affected for several days, it is feared that the strike could have a severe impact if it lasts longer.

South African Airways has assured passengers that the strike will not interfere with scheduled flights, although problems arose last week.

"The airlines have made contingency plans for fuel and we don't foresee major problems during the strike," said SAA spokesperson Leon Els.

"We have also stocked up at other airports in the country, so if problems arise planes can get fuel there."

About 1 000 workers are planning to demonstrate at Cape Town International Airport at 11am today and at the Caltex refinery in Milnerton later.

"Management refused to give us what we wanted — that is why we are going on this full-blown strike," said Colin Feni, branch manager of the South African Chemical Industrial Workers' Union.

The workers are demanding a 10.5% increase, a minimum salary of R2 000, a 40-hour working week, but without less pay, and paid sick leave.

"It is not as if they cannot afford to pay us," Rau said.

"It is a question of principle. We don't want the economy to be affected by this strike. The only way to avoid this is if they give in to our demands."

Industry chiefs disagree.

Grisa Ciacas, chief negotiator for National Petroleum Employers' Association, said the demands "could not be met."

"What they are asking for is double the inflation rate. We have already made an offer of between 6.4 and eight percent."

If the strike drags on, the workers, industries and the economy will suffer.
47,000 Strike Amid Fuel Supply Fears

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) went on strike at midnight last night, joining the South African Chemical Workers Union (Sacwu), which went on strike a week ago.

The strike by the two unions brings to 47,000 the number of workers in the chemical industry who are on strike.

Industries affected include manufacturers of consumer goods such as detergents, soaps and cosmetics, industrial rubber producers, plastic converters, pharmaceutical plants and glassware manufacturers.

CWIU spokesperson Colin Rani said the strike would affect the availability of supplies of motor and aviation fuel if they lasted for some time, although there was unlikely to be any immediate disruption of supplies.

"We don't want the economy to be affected by this strike, and the only way to avoid it is if they give in to our demands," he added.

Leon Els, South African Airways spokesperson, said the airlines have made contingency plans.

Chief negotiator for the National Petroleum Employers Association, Chris Clucas, said the workers' demands could not be met.

"What they are asking for is double the inflation rate. We have already made an offer of between 6.4 and 8.8," he said.

Clucas spelt out the worst-case scenario if the strike continued longer than expected.

"The employees, the economy and the industry will suffer. Our doors are always open and it is up to them to make the next move," Clucas said.

Negotiator Fanie Ernst, acting for employers in the chemical industry, said alternative plans were being made to counter the effects of the strike while employers continued their efforts to reach a settlement. However, employers would not go as high as 10% and the CWIU was not prepared to accept an increase of less than 10%, he said.

In a memorandum handed to Ernst last week, the CWIU asked, among other demands, for a 10,5% across-the-board increase, a 40-hour working week, and six months' maternity leave, four weeks full pay.

Sacwu met employers' representatives on Friday to explore ways to reach a solution, said spokesperson Sipho Ngozi.

The employers' representatives would go back to their principals and respond by today or tomorrow, he said.

Ernst said he had gained the impression that Sacwu wanted to reach a settlement.
3 hurt as cops fire rubber bullets at chemical strikers

The event did not go without notice. The Cape Daily Mirror in an article carried the following: "The police resorted to a heavy line in rubber bullets. A number of injuries were reported and press coverage of the strike, a copy of a sign to them."
Employers disappointed by violence

Reneé Grawitzky and Bonile Ngqiyaza

EMPLOYERS expressed disappointment about the "level of intimidation and violent incidents" in the chemical industry strike which intensified yesterday with the participation of more than 20 000 Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) members.

The SA Chemical Workers’ Union (Sacw) immediately denied that any of its members were involved in acts of intimidation and violence, saying its members had behaved well since more than 9 000 workers went on strike three weeks ago.

Petroleum companies in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal reported that access roads to refineries were blockaded while Sasol said nonstriking workers were squeezed as they left Emboenhle township outside Secunda.

National Petroleum Employers’ Association chairman Chris Clucas said if the blockades were not removed employers would consider applying for interdicts against the strikers.

He said while the strike was well co-ordinated with large numbers of workers staying away, contingency plans had ensured that production was not affected dramatically. These included the use of stockpiled material and the restructuring of plant operations.

Employers and the union met yesterday to discuss strike and picketing rules as this could not be accomplished ahead of the start of the strike by CWIU members. Employers' spokesman Fanie Ernst said a draft agreement had been negotiated and had been referred back to the respective parties for ratification.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) - in terms of the Labour Relations Act - can be called in to facilitate the conclusion of picketing agreements if both parties agree. If an agreement cannot be reached the commission can impose rules on the parties.

The strike stems from a demand by the unions for a 10,5% increase while employers have offered between 6% and 5% across the board.

Dustin Chick reports that petrol stations in Johannesburg, Midrand and Cape Town said they were confident petrol supplies would remain constant despite the strike. They did not expect a rush of motorists filling up for fear that supplies would run dry. Tomorrow’s fuel price rise of 11c/l was not expected to compound the

Ed 4 18 98
SA News Digest

Labour, 4/8/98

Chemical Industry Strike Not Settled in Spite of Revision of Mandates

Parties to the chemical industry dispute, which has seen thousands of Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) workers embark on a full-blown national strike yesterday, had revised their mandates but a settlement has not yet been reached, the Employers' Association said yesterday.

Frans Erasmus, the employers' spokesman, said that the CWIU was now demanding a 9 percent increase for workers earning above R1 500 a month and 10.5 percent for those earning less, while employers had revised their offers to 8 percent and 8.5 percent for upper and lower categories respectively.

Erasmus said only the plastic converters section was impacted. From the former homelands, was poorly paid, as the industry average was around R2 000 a month. He added that there had been some "holdups" on fuel deliveries yesterday, the industry did not expect petrol shortages unless the strike became a long-term issue by tomorrow. - Frank Nkuna, Johannesburg
Petrol stations run on empty

If your car is low on petrol there is a chance you may have to catch a bus till workers in the chemical industry stop an indefinite nationwide strike. While employers spent yesterday applying for urgent interdicts to remove picketing workers from blocking access to refineries and making contingency plans to distribute petrol, some filling stations said they did not have enough “juice” to last until the end of today.

Petrol station managers were waking up to the 11 cent price increase that comes into effect at midnight tonight.

Members of the Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union are on strike to force employers to agree to their demand for a 10,5% salary increase.

Oil companies said contingency plans to deliver petrol had been made, but warned consumers that they would be affected if the strike action was prolonged or if negotiations with other unions in the industry failed.

One city petrol station manager who, like others, advised motorists to fill up, said: “We will run out of petrol very soon... We are living on mercy. Petrol usually takes two hours to arrive after ordering it. It has now been 24 hours.”

However, a Waterfront petrol station last night said it had plenty of fuel and was not expecting difficulties

By last night some airlines flying between Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg had started diverting to George and Port Elizabeth for refuelling.

South African Airways spokesman Mike Phiefer confirmed that a picket at the aviation fuel depot at Cape Town International Airport had delayed the departure of flight SAA 203 to Miami by over 23 minutes yesterday, and that problems relating to the strike at Johannesburg International had delayed a plane to Zimbabwe.

“Our depots have enough fuel for a long period, but we have a serious manpower problem filling the aircraft,” Phiefer said.

Cape Town International’s information centre advised passengers to double check arrival and departure times should the strike continue throughout the week.

A spokesperson for employers in the petrol industry, Chris Cucus, said: “So far the strike has not impacted on consumers. Manufacturing and distribution is running as normal. We anticipated the strike and made contingency plans...”

Cucus said employers in the industry had moved from their original offer of 6.5% to 8%.

One of the three unions that have not returned to negotiations, the Chemical Workers’ Union (SACWU), is due to meet with employers on Friday.

The Mine Workers Union (MWU), South African Workers’ Union (SAWU) and SA Chemical Workers’ Union (SACWU) are still negotiating. While the MWU and SAWU have not been on strike, SACWU has returned to negotiations after members endured three weeks of strike action.

Though the minimum wage in the chemical and petroleum industry is R2 000 a month, the average starting wage is R4 000. Pension, medical aid, housing and education benefits are included in workers’ packages.

Cosatu, the umbrella organisation for the striking unions, has supported the 10,5% demand.

Spokesperson Nowethu Impalhi said: “This increase is justified under the present socio-economic situation where apartheid’s wage gap has to be narrowed. It is also justifiable considering the risk and skill required to work with petrol and chemicals. Critics who believe the demand is greedy need to look at the reality of the circumstances these workers find themselves in, especially at the time things cost. What can one do with R2 000 a month?”
Motor strike could have interim benefit for trade
47 000 workers embark on strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

More than 47,000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) downed tools yesterday in nearly 300 plants nationwide, adversely affecting petroleum refineries and depot distribution services.

National employers' coordinator Mr Fame Ernst expressed disappointment at reports of alleged intimidation and blockades of petroleum refineries and distribution depots, reportedly by union members in Durban, Secunda, East London and the Western Cape.

He condemned the strikers' reported actions, saying they were against the spirit of strike rules in terms of the framework guidelines agreement. The agreement deals with the code of conduct regarding peaceful demonstrations, non-interference with production activities and delivery.

Other industries affected by the strike, include pharmaceutical, rubber and plastic conversions and consumer goods such as detergents, cosmetics and glassworks manufacturers.

The strikers joined hundreds of South African Chemical Workers Union members who embarked on industrial action two weeks ago.

CWIU deputy general secretary Mr. Nelson Mbombeni refuted the allegations of intimidation and the blockading of petroleum refineries. From reports compiled by plant shop stewards, striking workers at various plants had engaged in peaceful pickets, he said, emphasising that there had been no reports of violence of any nature.

The union is demanding a 10.5 percent across-the-board increase, a 40-hour working week, and six months' notice before retrenchment. The dispute has come to a boil point with the union's leadership calling on their members to prepare for a nationwide strike.

The strike, expected to paralyse the petrochemical sector, is set to begin on Monday, 15th of August. The union is demanding a 10.5 percent across-the-board increase, a 40-hour working week, and six months' notice before retrenchment. The dispute has come to a boil point with the union's leadership calling on their members to prepare for a nationwide strike.

Management and union representatives met in Johannesburg yesterday. Mbombeni said the union had submitted a list of counter-proposals to those made by management on Friday. "There are a few amendments. The employers are consulting on them and will come back to us by this afternoon (Monday)," he said.
Petrol price rise set to hit fares

Mr Findlay said by April 1st next year, petrol prices had risen by 5.18%.

The increase was caused by the rise in the crude oil price. For the petrol price to rise, the crude oil price must rise.

Rob Wealth, the company's spokesman, said the increase was likely to be reflected in the fares of several bus services, including Dublin Services, Dublin Bus, and Dublin Buses. The increase would affect just 5% of passengers.

"The price increase will affect all passengers, but we are hoping that the increase will be reflected in the fares of all services," he said.

Mr Wealth said the company was considering a number of options to offset the increase, including a reduction in the number of staff and a reduction in the number of services.

Petrol prices have risen significantly in recent months, with the price of petrol now at over €1.50 per litre. This has led to protests by motorists, who have formed blockades at petrol stations.

The increase will have a significant impact on the company's finances, and the company is now considering a number of options to offset the increase.

Chairman of the company, Mr. Findlay, said the company was looking at a number of ways to offset the increase, including a reduction in the number of staff and a reduction in the number of services.

He said: "We are looking at a number of options, including a reduction in the number of staff and a reduction in the number of services. We are also looking at a number of ways to offset the increase, including a reduction in the number of staff and a reduction in the number of services."

In a statement, the company said: "We are looking at a number of options, including a reduction in the number of staff and a reduction in the number of services. We are also looking at a number of ways to offset the increase, including a reduction in the number of staff and a reduction in the number of services."
Wave of strikes ‘may be disastrous’

Johannesburg — The present wave of national strikes could result in more man days lost compared with the same period last year (510 000 to last September), with disastrous consequences for the economy, Andrew Levy & Associates, the labour analysts, said yesterday.

"Because we are an export-driven economy and prompt deliveries are one of the prime responsibilities, these strikes would have a serious effect on the economy should they interfere with deliveries to our customers overseas,” said Brian Allen, of Andrew Levy.

Allen said a typical example of this phenomenon was the looming strike in the automobile sector, in which protests by more than 21 000 Numsa members could jeopardise export contracts that had been concluded or were being negotiated.

Thousands of metalworkers' jobs are also dependent on these contracts, which are worth billions of rand.

They include VW's export deal, valued at R5 billion, of 68 000 fourth-generation Volkswagens to the UK, Samcor's export order of 55 000 Ford engines, and BMW's R500 million export of leather seats to Germany.

Jackie Kelly, a researcher with Andrew Levy, said a common characteristic of the present strikes was that both employer and worker parties "wanted to entrench their position.”

In addition, as with the strike by security workers in February this year, the chemical workers now on strike were also negotiating in a bargaining council for the first time ever.

Also, as during the security workers' strike, the chemical workers' strike has become violent, with reports of intimidation, coercion and factory blockades throughout the country.
Strikers, petrol bosses clash

ALL-OUT war has been declared between 47,000 striking chemical workers and their bosses yesterday in clashes outside refineries in Cape Town and Durban.

Contrary to statements by the National Petroleum Employers' Association (NPEA) that fuel distribution had not been affected, petrol station managers across the country had either run out of petrol by last night or were anticipating stockpiles to run out in the course of today.

Werner Nieke, manager of the Wineand One Stop on the N1 out of Cape Town, who had sold about 10,000 litres more than his daily usual, yesterday said: "Things have been easy here today. Other petrol stations have run out and people are coming here. I have petrol to last me until tomorrow morning. I have heard rumours that we will get more delivered. If we do not, I am in big trouble.''

Worried taxi drivers were anxious about chemical industry strikers saying that if they did get any petrol they would take it by force.

Drivers operating from Cape Town to Guguletu, Nyanga and Langa said that if there was no petrol available to them they would look up to R50 for a day's work.

"We need money to survive, everyone is struggling to make ends meet," said taxi owner Simon Mabalingwe.

"Don't misunderstand," said driver Simon Nkosi, "we support the strikers, they are dead right to want a wage increase." He added that the petrol of petrol increases a few times every year but the taxi industry still supports petrol stations. What the tax industry demands, he said, is that if there is a price increase in petrol, everyone else should get wage increases.

Another driver, Christian Mkhize, said that "an injury to one is an injury to all" and even though taxes will wait at a loss, they will stand with strikers.

Meanwhile, at Cape Town International Airport, acting general manager Andre Nicholaidou said the fuel situation at the airport was back to normal yesterday following a day of fuel shortages on Monday which forced two flights to divert to George for refueling.

Nicholaidou said the airport had "making-up" capacity of two days and that this supply had been replenished during the course of the day. The airport has sufficient fuel to last until tomorrow.

"In the short-term we have a tanking up capacity for two days. In the long-term we don't know what the situation will be. It all depends on the production of fuel and the bulk storage of Caltex," he said.

He said that a fuel supplier was providing the specialised manpower needed to refuel passenger aircraft while striking workers picketed outside the airport terminal. The strike is expected to continue today.

Spokesperson for the NPEA, Chris Chrusa, said fuel distribution had not been affected by the strike and contingency plans were in place to ensure fuel was delivered to filling stations.

He believed fears that the fuel supply would dry up were due more to the high petrol price increase, as motorists rushed to fill their tanks ahead of the weekend deadline.

"Irrespective of whether there is a strike or not, our distribution network is capable of keeping filling stations supplied," he said.

Total spokesperson Peter Latta said the company was doing its best to maintain effective contingency plans in the short-term.

Total's ability could be hampered if strikers continued to interfere with company fuel trucks, he said.

While Caltex Oil at Guguletu was delivering fuel to filling stations, no Caltex petrol was being delivered in the Western Cape because workers were blockading access to it.

--- Staff Writer

Contingency plans in place

Caltex spokesman Pierre Mynhardt said the company had made contingency plans its refinery was fully operational and workers not on strike would be doubling up to meet demands.

But Fazal Emaar, spokesperson for the striking Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) in the Western Cape, said: "Even though the refiners have got other non-union members to drive delivery tankers, no trucks are leaving the refinery. We believe if we can't cause enough pressure we can have our strike.

"The CWIU is the only chemical workers' union not at the negotiating table. Although the South African Chemical Workers' Union (SACWU) has been on strike for the past three weeks they have joined the Mine Workers' Union and the South African Worker's Union (SAWU) in negotiations.'

"The strike is demanding a 40.5% wage increase, a 40-hour week, weekend paid sick leave and a minimum of R2000 a month.

Contractors unfortunate enough to fall ill or victim to crime need not fear. Their chances of speedy police or emergency service will be as good - or bad - as usual during the nationwide fuel strike.
Fuel stocks run low as strike hots up

By Mzwakhe Hlungani and Sapa

CHaos erupted in petrol distribution services nationwide as fuel supplies were reportedly running out on the second day of the strike over wages by about 47 000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU).

Reports of violence and intimidation were on the increase yesterday.

Meanwhile, garages countrywide reported that their tanks were running low.

The shortage was made worse by motorists rushing to fill up ahead of the 11c a litre petrol price increase at midnight and in anticipation of fuel supplies running out because of the strike.

Most garages approached said no petrol was delivered on Monday.

"Our tanks will be dry today if petrol is not delivered soon," said Engen garage owner Mr Cobus Coetzee in Pretoria.

Smaller petrol stations might be out of fuel before today because of their limited storage capacity, he said.

By noon yesterday motorists were waiting in long queues to fill up their tanks.

Western Cape police yesterday fired rubber bullets to disperse striking workers outside the Caltex refinery in Midronton. Four strikers were injured in the incident.

Police spokeswoman Sergeant Vivienne Phillips said about 60 workers obstructed traffic and threatened members of the public order policing unit.

Shell and BP SA Petroleum Refineries (Sapref) denied that one of its managers tried to run over a group of strikers in Durban yesterday morning.

Blockades erected

At the Island View complex in Durban, which houses Caltex, Engen, BP and Shell’s central tankers, blockades were erected to prevent tankers leaving and non-strikers from entering.

Sapref spokesman Ms Lora Rossler said stone-throwing and intimidation were reported.

CWIU spokesman Mr Nelson Mthombeni said there was an altercation between workers and management at the Consol factory in Bellville, Cape Town, when non-strikers refused entry.

Employers national coordinator Mr Fanie Ernst said there had been some movement in negotiations with the plastic and rubber sectors.

He said that at Monday’s talks management offered an 8.5 percent increase to workers earning less than R1 500 a month and eight percent to those earning more than R1 500.

Sapa
Pharmacies are running short of lifesaving medicines such as asthma medication as the nationwide chemical workers' strike takes its toll of the pharmaceutical sector.

State hospitals have warned that they, too, may have problems next week if the strike continues.

Strikers yesterday blockaded at least three Cape Town manufacturing and distribution companies, cutting off vital drug supplies to hospitals, doctors and pharmacies.

Pharmacists expressed anger at the strike, warning that loss of life would result if the blockades were not ended in the next few days.

But union officials said yesterday strike action would continue as long as blocked.

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, the Mine Workers' Union and the South African Workers' Union are engaged in bitter wage negotiations with employer organisations in the petroleum, glass, pharmaceutical and industrial rubber sectors.

On Monday 40,000 CWIU members embarked on an indefinite strike for a 10.5% wage increase, a 40-hour working week and paid sick leave.

The Cape Medical Depot in Green Point has been warned by pharmacists manufacturers to expect difficulties with delivery in the next few days, said director of provincial health support services Anne Brand.

The depot stores drugs for all state hospitals in the Western and Northern Cape. It was already short of some medicines because of national or international shortages, she said.

Tygerberg Hospital would run into supply problems within a week if the strike continued, chief pharmacist Elaine Schlanders said. A supplier had warned that epilepsy medicine had already run out.

"We usually lend medication to private hospitals in emergencies, but if there are going to be shortages we won't lend to anyone. Our patients will come first," she said.

"It's a very sad day when things come to this if you cannot get drugs, there would be not be able to fulfil our orders," a supplier; said.

There could be a loss of the order in the pharmaceutical sector, he said.

Motor industry manufacturers say car and component exports worth millions of rand will be threatened by a national strike called by the National Union of Metal Workers for tomorrow.

Industry spokesmen said today that the strike would damage the economy and could cost jobs.

A union spokesman and Numsa was disappointed with the way the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation had conducted itself, and gave notice that more than 21,000 workers would strike.

Two manufacturers, Sanmor and Volkswagen, have been increasing staff to meet high-value export orders from Europe.
Federation rejects linking of wages to inflation

Cosatu declares full support for wave of strikes

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) yesterday said it was “in full support” of the current wave of national strikes by its affiliates, including the national automobile industry strike planned for tomorrow by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), its second biggest affiliate.

Zwelimama Vavi, Cosatu deputy general secretary, said the umbrella union supported in particular the industrial action on which members of the Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) had embarked.

“We are concerned that the intrusiveness of the bosses will soon undermine the economy as a whole as petrol pumps may dry up in the near future.

“We further call on workers to refuse to handle any goods to and from the petrochemical, glass, plastics, rubber, pharmaceutical, industrial chemicals and fast-moving consumer goods,” he said.

Vavi said the labour federation “rejected with contempt the strategy advanced by most bosses to link wage increments to inflation and productivity.”

He said while linking wages to inflation appeared to make economic sense on paper, “it is completely inappropriate in the South African context.”

However, Pentuel Maduna, the minister of minerals and energy, expressed concern about the strike, especially the effect it would have on the supply of fuel to motorists.

Theums Burger, a director in the energy department, said the minister had indicated although he appreciated the fact that this was a labour dispute, the people most affected were consumers.

“(The minister) hereby urges all parties to come to a speedy resolution in the interest of the country,” Burger said.

Fanie Kritz, chief co-ordinator for the chemical and petroleum employers association, said no settlement had been reached by late yesterday except for the signing of an agreement on picketing rules.

“The picketing rules will help alleviate fuel shortages as these have been mainly caused by blockades and intimidation at factory gates,” he said.

CWIU wants a 10,5 percent salary increase across the board, a 40-hour working week and paid sick leave. Employers are currently standing at 8,5 percent.
High Court interdicts release flow of petrol

THE PETROLEUM Employers' Association says deliveries of petrol to service stations around the country will be completed today. TROYE LUND reports.

ELEVEN interdicts have made petrol freely available again, but no end is in sight to the strike that 47,000 workers in the petroleum and chemical industries started on Monday.

High Courts around the country ordered striking members of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) away from chemical manufacturing plant and refinery entrances.

Full tankers have spent the past 24 hours delivering loads to empty and emptying petrol bowers.

Although several petrol stations in other provinces were still waiting for fuel yesterday afternoon, it was business as usual by yesterday morning in most of the Western Cape.

In KwaZulu-Natal, police escorted tankers to service stations.

Cape Town International Airport also stocked up on two million litres of fuel yesterday.

But striking workers are as determined as ever to continue their strike until employers give in to their demands for a 10.5% increase, a 40-hour working week, four months paid maternity leave, a 13th cheque and a minimum salary of R2,000 a month.

CWIU national spokesperson Wuelle Nolingo said: "This is a very profitable industry that requires many workers to be subjected to dangerous chemicals."

"Our membership is determined to continue with this strike even though it is no work, no pay. We will not give in, but our doors are open if our bosses want to negotiate."

He pointed out that the strike did not only affect the petroleum industry, where workers are generally better paid. Some 80% of the union's 47,000 members earned less than R2,000 a month. These were workers from other sectors of the chemical industry, namely pharmaceutical, glass, industrial rubber and chemicals, fast-moving consumer goods and plastic industries.

Nolingo is confident employers will soon "feel the pinch" and offer more than the eight percent that the petroleum industry is offering and the 6.4% other sectors are offering.

"If the strike continues, these industries will be brought to their knees. Petroleum employers will also not be able to continue functioning fully without our members," said Nolingo.

The National Petroleum Employers' Association (NPEA) said it was sticking to its guns on the eight percent offer. Anything higher was unaffordable.

As some filling stations had run dry in the first 24 hours of the strike, before the interdicts were obtained, the NPEA said deliveries would be completed by today and that the situation would "ease" and "return to normal."

Although employers and unions said their doors were open for negotiations, no attempt had been made by either party to resume negotiations.
Taxi chaos looms as petrol supplies dry up

Cosatu calls for solidarity with 47 000 strikers

By Hopewell Radzhe, Simon Zwane and Anno Thom

Fears that taxi services could come to a standstill in Gauteng surfaced yesterday.

And the Congress of South African Trade Unions has called on members to embark on solidarity action in support of the 47 000 striking chemical and petroleum workers.

Cosatu’s call came as high courts throughout the country ordered the striking workers to stop their crippling blockades at refineries, depots and chemical manufacturing plants.

Police in KwaZulu Natal had to be called in to escort 14 tankers from the Engen plant in Isipingo to service stations.

Cosatu’s Nokwethu Mpati said its members should “refuse to handle any goods to and from the petroleum, glass, plastics, rubber, pharmaceuticals and industrial chemicals industries as well as fast-moving consumer goods”.

This came as long-distance taxi drivers in Gauteng expressed concern that they would be “terribly affected” if the strike were not resolved by the weekend as this was normally their busiest time.

“We are able to feed our families because of the migrant labourers who travel to visit their families then,” said Johannes Hiopho.

“I hate to imagine what will become of these people if taxis come to standstill because of lack of petrol,” he added.

Another taxi driver, Sipho Hlongwane, who travels between Soweto and Johannesburg, said he had found the Giant Garage in Nancefield empty and had to drive to Mondeor to fill up.

Filling station owners also felt frustrated by the inability of petroleum companies to maintain supplies.

The Star found Harvey Shole, owner of Afrihotel’s Zhut City Garage in Orlando West, fuming, and claiming that his suppliers had not informed him about the possibility of an irregular supply.

“Just because we are township businessmen, they did not worry about us – we are affected now because trucks will not deliver in our areas. People have not changed,” he said.

Hanif Bhabha, owner of the Shell Garage in Melville, had to drive to the depot to demand his delivery. He said he had tried to contact his supplier but did not get any assurances that petrol would be delivered yesterday.

An Orlando Service Station manager, who wanted to remain anonymous, said he placed more orders yesterday but his supplier, Total, asked him to be patient.

“I ordered petrol on Tuesday, when I realised my stock was dwindling and would not survive Wednesday, but up until now I have not received anything,” he said.

Pharmacies contacted by The Star said although delivery had been delayed, later in the day they managed to get all the medication they had ordered.
Rail workers' talks scuppered

TALKS between Metrorail and the SA Footplate Association (Safsa) broke down yesterday over a refusal by the company to consider arbitration.

Metrorail, at talks in Johannesburg brokered by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, refused to consider arbitration, arguing that there was nothing to be gained by arbitrating on an issue for which no funds were available.

Safsa declared a dispute last week, resulting in a national strike last Friday over the implementation of a 3.5 percent increase. Safsa insisted it come into effect in September, while Metrorail offered the increase from November.

The agreement includes a 7.5 percent increase to be implemented with immediate effect and backdated to March this year, and a five percent increase in March 1999.

Safsa general secretary Mr Chris de Vos said the union would approach Labour Minister Shepard Mdlalana to intervene in the matter rather than resume the nationwide strike.

"Metrorail refused point-blank to consider the arbitration process, which is in line with the requirements of the Labour Relations Act, saying there were no funds available for them to move the implementation date forward," De Vos said.

Last Friday's strike, by 1,700 train drivers, ticket collectors and station staff belonging to Safsa left thousands of commuters stranded or late for work.

Safsa agreed to suspend the strike on Friday night pending talks with Metrorail to be held on Tuesday and yesterday — Sapa.
Motor industry strike may harm exporting

By Mzwakhe Hiangani
Labour Reporter

SOUTH Africa's seven car manufacturers could suffer heavy losses in sales and export deals if the planned strike by about 21,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa goes ahead tomorrow.

Talks between Numsa and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Amec) last another attempt yesterday when the employers failed to influence the union to accept its final offer, Numsa spokesman Mr Dumisa Ntuli said.

Numsa is demanding a guaranteed consumer price index plus a two percent improvement factor on wages for next year and the year 2000. The union gave employers 48 hours notice in terms of the Labour Relations Act to embark on a legal strike.

"The length of the strike will be determined by the employers' seriousness to give an offer that will end the apartheid-dominated labour market," said Tony Kgobe, coordinator for the auto and tyre sector.

"The employers have the opportunist behaviour of wanting to impose the terms of negotiations we are playing a constructive role in reaching agreement and it seems to us that they don't want to find a solution. They can afford to give a better wages because the industry is making a turnover of R30 billion a year and the issue is not the lack of affordability," Kgobe said.

BMW, Nissan, Volkswagen, Delta, Toyota, Mercedes-Benz and Samcor automobile assembly plants would be affected by the strike, which could hurt both their R50 billion export deals and car sales, Ntuli said.

"Agreement had already been reached on an eight percent across-the-board increase and 7.5 percent for artisans," Kgobe said. The national strike would have "dramatic consequences for the industry and the South African economy."

It would impact on overseas plants. Kgobe said thousands of jobs in the industry were dependent on export orders.
Strikers facing a tough battle.

STRIKING chemical workers face an uphill battle if they hope to cause serious disruption to SA petrol and diesel supplies. They will have to blockade no less than 26 distribution depots dotted around the country — many of which are supplied by direct pipeline link to refineries in Durban and on the Highveld. So far there have been some disruptions at some of the depots but the oil companies have a distribution network with substantial flexibility to source and move oil products by alternative routes if necessary.

In the industrial heartland from the Highveld to Mpumalanga, most depots are linked to an extensive clean product pipeline network, extending all the way from the Durban refineries owned by BPX and ExiGen up to the Sasol Total Natref refinery south of Johannesburg, and to Sasol’s synthetic oil facilities near Secunda.

The Free State is also connected. Apart from pipelines, the industry also makes use of railcars to move white oil products from Durban into the interior.

The Cape distribution system is largely reliant on oil product tankers, which fan out from the Milnerton refinery owned by Caltex, and “Mosgas, near Mossel Bay, which supplies the area from around East London to the Mossel Bay region.

The pipeline network is “owned and operated” by Petronet, while the depots belong to the oil companies. A Petronet official said yesterday its network was unaffected.
Chemicals strike may hit mining sector

Reneé Grawitzky

As fears arose yesterday that the strike in the chemicals industry might threaten mines, the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) said it was prepared to enter negotiations.

The CWIU, which represents more than 20 000 workers who have been on strike since Monday, has so far not participated in negotiations that have been taking place between employers and the SA Chemical Workers' Union. SACU members have been on strike for three weeks.

AECI Explosives MD Vernon Liddiard has written to four cabinet ministers and African National Congress secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe advising them of the consequences of the company's inability to provide explosives to the mining industry.

Liddiard said by the end of next week supplies of certain crucial products would be exhausted. The failure of the company to supply these products could slow down, if not stop production on some mines.

Anglogold said it was aware of the situation and had put in place contingency plans. However, it could not speculate how long such plans could keep production going.

While the situation regarding petrol supplies in most of the country appeared to be stabilising yesterday, violence and intimidation continued mainly in the Durban area. The SA Police Service confirmed a number of shootings in Durban where drivers delivering petrol were shot at.

National Petroleum Employers' Association chairman Chris Cucac said intimidation in the area was so high that companies had been unable to use contract labour to deliver petrol while police had to fetch their own. Workers continued to defy interdicts. As a result Durban had the highest percentage of filling stations running dry.

He said the situation in the rest of the country, in terms of deliveries, would stabilise by today.

Buqeke Boqwana reports that the Eastern Cape had hardly been affected while there were some problems in the Western Cape. Workers at the Caltex refinery in Cape Town were locked out.

Employers were notified of impending sympathy and secondary strikes in a number of related sectors.

The CWIU said its move to join the negotiations was not a sign of weakness but was considered in the country's interests and "everyone else who is being affected by the strike".

It denied employer allegations that it had refused to negotiate in order to prolong the strike.

Meetings between SACU and employers have taken place this week. SACU confirmed that the CWIU had chosen not to attend these meetings.

SACU said employers in the fast-moving consumer goods sector had tabled an offer of 9% which was being taken back to workers. Both unions initially demanded a 10.5% increase.

Meanwhile, the strike by more than 20 000 National Union of Metalworkers of SA workers in the vehicle manufacturing sector starts today.
Dunlop Africa must pay R12m to end historic strike

CT(DR) 7/8/98 (152)

SHIRLEY JONES

Durban — Dunlop Africa, the tyre and industrial rubber products manufacturer, would pay nearly R12 million in compensation to settle the longest-standing industrial relations dispute in South African history, it emerged yesterday.

The company and the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (Numsa) said agreement had been reached on the compensation of workers dismissed in 1985 from BTR Sarmac.

In terms of this agreement, 690 workers will each receive about R15,000 in compensation.

Mike Hankinson, the chief executive of Dunlop Africa, said he was pleased that the matter, which had been inherited from BTR in the UK, its previous majority shareholder, had been finalised.

Dunlop Africa was formed after a management buyout at the beginning of the year.

In March, after 13 years of dispute and debate, the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein held in favour of the workers by finding their dismissal during a strike unfair. The matter was referred back to the industrial court to determine compensation.

Soon after the appeal court judgment, the parties agreed to explore other ways to settle the matter. After months of negotiation, the parties arrived at an agreement, which was endorsed at a general meeting of workers in Mphophomeni.

Peter Daantjie, the deputy general secretary of Numsa, said the union was very pleased with the outcome.

Hankinson said wiping the slate clean would allow Dunlop Africa to fine-tune and then meet set targets.
Strike: 'Public not at risk'

TROYE LUND

CHEMICAL industry bosses have dismissed warnings by unions that "society is being placed at risk" because unqualified replacements are being called in to manufacture medicines and drive petrol tankers.

Amid pickets and speculation about a meeting scheduled for today between striking workers and employers, Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) members who downed tools on Monday warned that the implications of their strike were not only being felt in the petrol industry.

"It carried serious implications for the whole industry and consumers, including the pharmaceutical, glass, plastic and fast moving consumer goods sectors, the union said.

CWIU's Fazel Eames said: "We are very concerned that petroleum employers are using drivers who do not have public driver's permits or certificates to carry hazardous chemicals. The quality of medicines also stands to be compromised."

But employers in the petroleum sector said that they would never put a person at the wheel of a tanker unless the person was qualified to be there.

Pharmaceutical manufacturing companies like Intramed in the Eastern Cape said quality would not be compromised. Like the petroleum and plastics and glass sectors, the pharmaceutical industry said contingency plans were working well enough for plants to continue as normal, without the striking workers, for an "extended period."

Reacting to press reports that lifesaving medicines were not getting through to hospitals, clinics and pharmacies in the Western Cape, wholesalers and distributors, Amalgamated Chemists Associated (ACA) and Heynes Mathews - the two largest in the province - said deliveries had not been hampered.

"The strike rules are in place and distribution has been continuing," said ACA's Peter Willig.

Caltex spokesperson Pierre Myburgh said, "One must remember that not all members of the unions are supporting the strike."

The other two unions represented in the chemical industry, the Mine Workers' Union (MWU) and the South African Workers' Association (SAWA), are not on strike. These two unions and SACWU are currently negotiating on wage increase demands.

Employers and the CWIU, which stopped negotiating when a deadlock was declared, were still not talking formally by yesterday, four days into the CWIU strike.

The unions said that their strike would continue "full steam ahead" until their bosses listened to the demands, including a 10.5% increase.

The driver of a Total petroleum tanker was shot near the Tongaat toll plaza north of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal yesterday.

Police agreed with Total's opinion that the shooting was linked to the nationwide strike. The 22-year-old driver continued driving, but when he reached the plaza, he realised that he had been wounded in the leg. The tanker was hit by five bullets.
Hopes high for fuel strike to end today

By Mzwakhe Hlanganani

The wage deadlock in the chemical industry which led to a crippling strike by more than 47,000 workers nationwide may be resolved today.

National Petroleum Employers' Association (NPEA) spokesman Lutz Krantz expressed hope yesterday that progress towards the resolution of the crisis would be made at a planned meeting of all stakeholders today.

Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister PenuellMaduna has also issued a statement encouraging both parties to come to a speedy resolution as the petrol crisis was adversely affecting the country and its economy.

Several petrol stations across the country reported that they had run dry yesterday, despite petrol companies' claims that deliveries had gone ahead as normal.

Most garages said they had not received petrol deliveries this week and were under pressure because other garages in surrounding areas were out of fuel.

The Orlando West Shell garage ran out of fuel on Wednesday morning. The owner said they had been promised delivery since Wednesday.

The strike by members of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union in demand of a 10.5 percent pay increase, a 40-hour working week and paid sick leave, entered its fourth day yesterday.

The NPEA said the association had moved its position on the pay increase from six percent to eight percent.

"Thus far the unions have not moved away from their original demand of 10.5 percent — a demand not borne out by the fundamentals," Krantz said.

With reference to the filling stations affected by the strike, the NPEA said the Durban area was the worst hit with the highest percentage of filling stations running dry.

"This is because of high levels of intimidation and violence that have occurred around the biggest depot in that area.

"A driver was shot in the leg after his vehicle was hit by gunfire," Krantz said.

Yesterday both strikers and police officers ignored the High Court interdicts to prevent workers from blocking access to fuel depots and from intimidating non-striking workers.

Deliveries to the rest of the country would hopefully be back to normal today, Krantz said.

A Johannesburg filling station manager said yesterday that only 15,000 litres of petrol were delivered to her station on Wednesday night, while she normally received more than 41,000 litres a day.

When she asked her fuel wholesaler about further supplies, she was told she could put in an order for more, but she was not guaranteed to get any more before next week.
of South Africa’s strike season economy counts the cost

This week’s strikes show that the understanding required for economic growth is not there. Change starts now.

Rob: 009 to the lucky angler
Thousands of people expected to flock to Hout Bay for the festival

which, apart from snook fishing, includes further rules for children and 30 fish market stalls carrying display of 4 x 4 vehicles, boats and fishing equipment and other vehicles of interest.
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Auto industry wage strike costs millions of rands every day

By QUENTIN WRAY
CP 9/8/98

The auto industry strike that started on Friday will cost the economy about R150 million each day it continues.

The problem lies with wage increases over the past two and three of the agreement being negotiated.

The Auto Manufacturers Employers' Organisations (Amme) has offered an eight percent increase this year and increases equal to inflation as determined by the consumer price index (CPI) in 1999 and 2000.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has accepted this year's increase but wants two percent above CPI in each of the next two years.

Amme has backed down partially in later meetings by offering a deal which would see wage increases higher than inflation being given as long as it fell below seven percent.

Amme's Brian Smith said Numsa had rejected this out of hand.

Smith said it was "strange" and "highly irresponsible" of Numsa to "risk the future of the industry and export contracts" for a wage increase of two percent above inflation which would only be enjoyed in two years' time.

He said workers had to "break the culture of expecting wage and salary increases well above the official inflation" if the country was to get its inflation levels under control.

Smith said other benefits would accrue to workers in addition to the guaranteed inflation-linked increases offered by Amme.

The offer tabled by Amme also gave workers the opportunity to increase their earning power through skills obtained through multi-skilling.

He said the industry had spent "massive sums on education and training programmes to increase the skills and education levels of production workers".

Smith said at least 30,000 workers in the Eastern Cape would suffer because of the strike.

He also criticised the strike decision because "it will have dramatic consequences for the SA motor industry and the South African economy in general".

Smith said although the industry's turnovers seemed enormous it had very low profit margins, and in 1997, industry-wide losses had amounted to about R150 million.

Smith said 1998 looked set to worsen he said the industry was already being squeezed by increasing costs and falling sales.

He said industry costs had increased by more than 20 percent because of the rand's devaluation.

Escalating interest rates had hit motorists' pockets - which would reduce new car sales over the next few months.

Smith said given the high profile enjoyed by the seven car manufacturers, the strike would strengthen "overseas perceptions" that South Africa had an inflexible and unstable labour market.

Smith said the strike was putting thousands of jobs on the line because the industry was increasingly dependent on export orders.

"This certainly is not a good omen for the planned job summit, Numsa spokesperson Dumisa Ntuli denied reports in the local press this week that workers in the Eastern Cape were against striking.

He said "the most militant shop stewards" were from the province and they fully supported the strike.

Ntuli has maintained that the union's position is a legitimate one and that employers earned massive profits none of which have accrued to workers.

He said Numsa would not be swayed by the "employers' propaganda language" and that it was the employer's intransigence that had brought the industry to its knees.

Ntuli said Numsa had complied with the Labour Relations Act before striking.

It waited for the go-ahead from the CCMA before it went on strike and had given employers the required 48 hours notice.

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sector's Tony Kgohe said Amme members had failed to develop human resources in an industry that was "sustainable".

He said training had to offer economic equity in the workplace by improving workers' real incomes and buying power.

He said it was a "fallacy" that strike action would scare away investors and said the right to strike was "entrenched in the Constitution and the LRA,"

Commenting on the fact that a "no work, no pay" policy would be applied, Kgohe said workers were willing to make a short-term wage sacrifice for a long-term improvement in wages.

He claimed Numsa had tried to settle the dispute with employers but employers had behaved opportunistically and "did not want to find a solution.

Ntuli said Numsa had complied with the Labour Relations Act before striking.

It waited for the go-ahead from the CCMA before it went on strike and had given employers the required 48 hours notice.

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Weekend Service
Fears for economy as chemical strike continues

DESPITE fears that the chemicals strike may spread to other sectors of the economy and erupt into open violence, a meeting between workers and employers on Friday failed to resolve the dispute.

The week-old nationwide strike by the 20,000 members of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) is set to continue this week.

Analysts have said that if the strike continues into this week, this would have dire consequences for the economy. By Friday most petrol stations across the country were reportedly running low on fuel, and a few in the Durban area were already dry.

A meeting between employers and the union on Friday failed to resolve the impasse.

Employers are steadfast on their final wage offer - increase of between six and eight percent. The union is still demanding a 12.5 percent increase in wages.

Striking workers are picketing major oil companies' depots and sporadic incidents of violence have been reported by the National Petroleum Employers' Association. Employers have reported intimidation against drivers and non-striking employees.

Some employers said striking workers had stopped black drivers from working, but had allowed white drivers to deliver fuel to petrol stations unhindered.

"I only employ black drivers in my company and this effectively means that I cannot deliver at all. Does this mean that I must now employ white drivers to ensure that petrol is delivered?" asked Goli Mngomezulu of Kahlusa Transport.

On Friday, striking workers prevented tankers transporting fuel from leaving the Caltex/Zenex plant in Alrode on the East Rand.

The South Africa Police Services' Public Order Unit was called to the scene to escort trucks out of the plant. The police had hardly left their vehicle when a truck driver forced his way out of the plant.

The striking workers stoned the tanker but the driver negotiated his way through and in the process collided with the police vehicle. No one was injured.

Deliveries at the nearby Sasol distribution depot, however, continued.

Workers said this was because there were insufficient workers to man all the depots.
Fuel Strike turns into Guerrilla war
About 2,000 workers will form a picket line to stop the Ford River Rouge plant. The strike is the first since the UAW last walked off the job in 1982.

The strike is being led by the United Auto Workers (UAW), which represents about 31,000 workers at Ford.

The UAW has been negotiating a new contract with Ford since September 2021. The current contract expired on September 15, 2021.

The strike is expected to last for up to six weeks, according to the UAW.

The strike is being supported by local union chapters and members, who have been involved in picketing and other protest activities.

The UAW is seeking better working conditions, higher wages, and improved benefits for its members at Ford.

Ford has said it is prepared to negotiate and is confident it can reach an agreement with the UAW.

The strike is the latest in a series of labor disputes affecting the auto industry, which has been experiencing significant supply chain disruptions and production delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The strike is expected to have a significant impact on Ford's operations and could lead to reduced output and supply chain disruptions.

The company has said it will work with the UAW to resolve the dispute and尽快达成协议。
Petrol deliveries staffing as pay talks resume.
Car makers warm up their motors as Numsa members call off their strike

Pretoria — More than 20,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) would return to work at all seven South African vehicle manufacturing plants today. Brian Smith, the chairman of the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation (Ameo), said yesterday.

Tony Kgoobe, the auto and tyre sector co-ordinator for Numasa, confirmed that another three-year agreement had been signed and workers would return to work. "The agreement is an integrated package which aims to overcome the legacy of apartheid wage differentials and improve pay for workers," he said.

The end of the strike, which cost the industry R700 million in lost turnover, follows an agreement in principle reached between Ameo and Numasa at a meeting convened last week by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. — Roy Cokayne
Mdladlana slams union violence

Frank Nxumalo

Johannesburg — Shepherd Mdladlana, the new labour minister, last week condemned unprocedural actions and violence in the rash of industrial disputes sweeping the country, particularly in the chemical industry.

Mdladlana said the “wave of high-profile strikes” in the past few weeks had caused “a great deal of anxiety and concern to the public.”

“We must condemn all unprocedural actions, particularly acts of violence taken by the parties in the course of their disputes,” he said.

“The law provides adequate avenues to deal with disputes and strikes in a procedural way I acknowledge that this is a time when tensions run high, but I call on all parties to exercise restraint.”

Mdladlana instructed the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) to consider either advising the parties involved in the spate of strikes to approach the essential services committee for a determination or invoke Section 150 of the new Labour Relations Act (LRA).

Mdladlana said a determination in terms of Section 73 of the LRA would facilitate an agreement on the supply and distribution of petrol “whether these are essential or not.”

He said his department was considering a series of “urgent amendments” to the LRA which would deal with a number of the current labour issues.

These included the case and management problems of the CCMA caused by the “unexpeceted high volumes of disputes,” the phasing out of the industrial court and the preservation of pension and provident funds and medical aid schemes functioning in terms of collective agreements when bargaining council are dissolved.

The leadership of the Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) is expected to meet industry employers’ associations this morning as its national strike enters the second week.

The CWIU is demanding paid sick leave, a 40-hour working week and a 10.5 percent wage increase. The amount involved is equal to the settlement level of last year, and thus appears to be the main obstacle to a settlement as it is higher than the employers’ offer of a 9.5 percent.

The strike is expected to continue deep into this week even if there is a settlement today because the union first has to report back to its members.
Numsa strike depends on Ameo offer

FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) warned yesterday that the national strike by more than 21 000 of its members would continue unless car manufacturers put "something positive on the table" when they met today.

The union said it would not "sacrifice workers' rights at the altar of profit" when it met the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Ameo) this morning in a dispute resolution meeting called by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

Tony Kgobe, Numsa's auto sector co-ordinator, said there was "little room in terms of our movement, given that our position is close to zero" but he hoped reason would prevail.

"We hope we will emerge out of the CCMA with a short strike. We don't want a long strike — for us it's a sacrifice. We have already lost R4.2 million in wages, but it is a short-term sacrifice for a long-term gain."

Numsa downed tools on Friday to demand a 2 percent improvement factor in the second and third year of a three-year wage agreement.

Sources put Ameo's losses as a direct result of the strike on Friday at R130 million.

The parties had settled at 8 percent across the board, a wage spread of 10 percent between minimum and maximum wages and a 7.5 percent rise for artisans.

But they did not agree on linking the improvement factor to the consumer price index and the inflation rate.
Prized former Donaldson Fleming Oilmen Workers at the Celadon in Fpingo yesterday.

The strikers complained about lack of access to company toilets and protection.

The company offered a 6% raise, but the strike action after talks on pay broke.

Yesterdays deal was rejected.

Stop the Court Case! Strike ended.

Prized former Donaldson Fleming Oilmen Workers at the Celadon in Fpingo yesterday.

The strike ended last night after talks with the company.

The oilmen voted to end the strike after talks with the company.

The strike ended after talks with the company.

The strike ended last night after talks with the company.

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The strike ended after talks with the company.
ACTION AND WORDS Employers and CWIU workers have no date for further negotiations

Employers reject union’s 10% offer

FRANK NXUMALO AND ROY COKAYNE

Johannesburg — The striking Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) last night scaled down its wage increase demand of 10.5 percent to 10 percent, but this was rejected by employers as “still too far away.” “We welcome the movement, but a double-digit figure is still far away,” said Fanie Ernst, the employers’ association chief coordinator.

Ernst said employers had not moved from their wage offers of 8 percent for the petroleum sector and 6.5 percent for other sectors.

He said that no date had been set for further negotiations.

The CWIU and the employers rejected suggestions by Shepherd Mladihana, the new labour minister, that the two parties approach the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) for a determination in terms of section 73 of the new Labour Relations Act. “From the employers’ point of view, we will not go for a determination,” Ernst said.

Nelson Mthombeni, the CWIU spokesman, said the union was “concerned” by what the minister had said “We are not sure why the minister has jumped to that conclusion. He should let the CCMA be involved without invoking section 73 — there is no justifiable reason to say petroleum is an essential sector.”

Meanwhile, the strike by more than 21,000 workers allied to the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) over a 2 percent improvement factor in the second and third year of a three-year wage agreement, would continue today as the employers had not tabled an offer as had been hoped by late last night.

The meeting was adjourned until Friday.
Petroleum industry strike talks make some progress

RODNEY VICTOR and SAPA

JOHANNESBURG: Progress has been made towards a settlement in the nationwide strike by petroleum industry workers that has disrupted petrol distribution and caused shortages in some areas, according to National Petroleum Employers' Association spokesman Lutz Kranz.

The industry tabled an offer of 8.5% in talks yesterday, but the unions had not yet ratified it, he said. The unions have been demanding a 10.5% increase.

Two of the three unions involved — the SA Chemical Workers' Industrial Union and the SA Workers' Union — have settled their strikes in other sectors, Kranz said. He hoped they would also settle soon in the petroleum sector.

The unions announced yesterday that they have accepted increases of 8.5% in the industrial chemicals sector and 9% in the fast-moving consumer goods sector.

Nelson Mtombeni, spokesperson for the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, which has not yet settled, said his union was also hoping to find a solution soon.

Meanwhile, talks were continuing last night to find a solution to the four-day old strike by more than 20 000 workers in the motor industry, South Africa's largest manufacturing sector.

The strike is costing the industry about R135 million a day, said Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation chairperson Brian Smith.

It threatened to jeopardise export contracts held by most of the country's car makers and which were vital to their survival, he said.

It would also further strengthen overseas perceptions that South Africa had an inflexible and unstable labour market.

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA was demanding a 28% above-inflation increase, while employers were offering inflation-pegged increases.

Meanwhile, despite another breakdown in talks between train drivers and Metrorail, the SA Footplate Association has ruled out another rail strike like the 24-hour industrial action last Friday which caused major chaos at stations and road congestion throughout the country.
Workers at BP on strike too

Workers at oil company BP who are attached to the Oil, Chemical, General and Allied Workers' Union joined a week-long strike by chemical workers yesterday, dashinng hopes for an early end to industrial action that has disrupted petrol distribution and caused shortages in some areas.

A statement said the union felt there should be unity. This was in the face of what it termed attacks by employers in the form of low wage offers and "high-handed action" by the state, which included deploying police and army units.

It said the union rejected threats to turn the petroleum sector into an essential service.

The statement came shortly after National Petroleum Employers Association spokesperson Lutz Kranz said progress had been made towards a settlement in the nation-wide strike.

Meanwhile, eleventh-hour talks were continuing last night to find a solution to the four-day-old strike by more than 20,000 workers in the motor industry. The talks will continue on Friday.
Chemical workers settle

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

EFFORTS to end a crippling strike by 47 000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) heightened yesterday as another union reached a settlement in the multi-sectoral industrial action.

CWIU spokesman Mr Nelson Mthombeni said the union was engaged in various strategic committee meetings to resolve the dispute.

The National Petroleum Employers Association (NPEA) negotiators and CWIU rescheduled their meeting before meeting with other unions yesterday to prepare for protracted talks to end the strike, NPEA spokesman Mr Lutz Krantz said.

The SA Chemical Workers Union (Sacwu) has settled at 9 percent across-the-board or a minimum of R2 000 a month with employers in the consumer and industrial chemical sectors, Sacwu spokesman Mr Masindi Mavhunga said yesterday.

Meanwhile, negotiations between the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Amco) and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) resumed in Johannesburg yesterday in a bid to end a nationwide strike by 21 000 workers which started on Friday over a wage dispute.

Numsa spokesman Mr Dumisa Ntuli said the deadlock hunged on a two percent "top-up factor" that the union wanted included in a new three-year wage package. Both parties had agreed to an eight percent increase for the first year, he said.

Numsa wants the inflation rate plus two percent for the following two years. Amco is offering only the inflation rate or the Consumer Price Index rate.
Garages run dry as fuel strike bites

By Mzwakhe Hlangani and Sapa

Diehard fuel supplies across the country are now approaching crisis point as the strike in the chemical industry entered its third day yesterday.

Most petrol stations approached yesterday said no petrol had been delivered since Monday.

"We have to turn away our clients. We can do nothing but wait," one owner said

Engen garage owner Ms Caron Coetzee said the station's unleaded petrol and diesel supplies had dried up on Tuesday.

"Our premium petrol will be gone in an hour I only hope that supplies arrive sometime this week," she said.

Several garages had run out of petrol in Pretoria by noon yesterday, garage owners said.

Willem de Jongh, owner of a garage in the Pretoria city centre, said he was informed by his depot that he was 30th on the waiting list. He said he ran out of premium petrol yesterday morning, but still had some unleaded petrol and diesel left.

More than 47,000 members of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) vowed yesterday to continue their strike until their pay demands were met. The union wants a 10.5 percent pay rise and a basic salary of R2,000 a month. Employers are offering 8.5 percent.

Union spokesman Nelson Mtshembeni said a labour and management meeting had successfully resolved picketing rules yesterday.

A BP depot spokesman said 40 of its 58 permanent staff members were on strike and all nine delivery trucks were idle as a result.

Contract workers stayed at home yesterday after receiving threats from union members, the spokesman said.

"We have managed to smuggle out four delivery trucks at night, but we were still not able to reach all our clients," he said. The depot delivered about 800,000 litres to 65 clients in and around Pretoria daily.

"I know of at least 32 stations that are going to run dry soon."

The Engen and Caltex-depots said administrative staff in possession of truck drivers' licences had pitched in to help deliver petrol.

National Petroleum Employers' Association chairman Chris Clucas claimed that violence and intimidation remained a feature of the striking workers' action.

He confirmed that filling stations had run out of certain fuel grades, but could expect deliveries in 24 hours. The position was worsened by motorists who rushed to fill before the increase in the petrol price yesterday.

There had been no indication that the union has shown any willingness to resolve the dispute, despite repeated open door invitations to do so, Clucas said.
Chemical employers and union agree on bid to end wage strike

Reneé Grawitzky

CHEMICAL employers and the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) agreed yesterday to a request by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration to facilitate a resolution to the continuing wage strike.

The intervention by the commission follows the return to work of almost 9 000 SA Chemical Workers' Union members after a strike of three-and-a-half weeks.

At the same time, the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Amco) are consulting their respective constituencies on a settlement offer proposed by the commission on Tuesday. The parties agreed at the meeting — initiated by the commission — that they would meet again tomorrow.

The settlement offer, crafted by senior commissioner Gavin Hartford, is aimed at addressing some of the union's concerns, which led to the strike. The dispute centres on Numsa's demand that during year two and three of the three-year wage agreement, increases should be inflation plus 2%. The improvement factor of 2% is intended to protect workers in the event inflation falls to low levels.

Amco chairman Brian Smith said employers hoped the strike could be over by Monday.

Reuter reports Smith said the strike could cost the industry R650m in last turnover. "Friday will be the fifth day of the strike and each day we are losing about R130m in turnover," he said.

Numsa attacked those claiming the strike would scare investors, saying such arguments were misplaced because investors based their decisions on a range of issues. Numsa negotiator Tony Kgabe said there were strikes recently in the US's General Motors and South Korea's Hyundai. "This bears testimony to the fact that even in developed countries workers embark on strike action."

Smith said if the strike became protracted, it would become problematic for companies with export contracts and would negatively affect workers. The Volkswagen deal, for example, would create more than 1 000 jobs over the next four months.

Employee spokesman Fane Ernst said employers had agreed to the commission's intervention despite its previous unsuccessful attempts to resolve the dispute.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that Metrorail and the SA Footplate Staff Association (Safa) have reached a wage agreement.

A national strike on July 31 by 1 700 Safa-affiliated train drivers, ticket collectors and station staff left thousands of commuters stranded or late for work.

Safa general secretary Chris de Vos said the package gave employees a 7.5% pensionable increase backdated to March 16, and a 3.5% rise from November 16 this year. A further 5% would be granted from March 16 next year.
Vehicle manufacturers set to lose R650m by Friday

21 000 car workers may end strike soon

ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria — The strike by more than 21 000 workers at South Africa's seven vehicle manufacturing plants, which started last Friday, had so far cost the industry R380 million in lost turnover. Brian Smith, the chairman of the Automobile Manufacturing Employers' Organisation (Ameo), said yesterday:

The strike is set to continue at least until Friday, which means it will have cost the industry about R500 million in lost turnover.

Smith said the strike was expected to continue for the rest of this week, but it was hoped that a final settlement could be reached on Friday.

"If some finality is reached on Friday, Ameo would hope that the strike can be ended on Monday," he said.

A meeting between Ameo and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), which was being chaired by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), reconvenes on Friday. The meeting started on Tuesday but was adjourned.

Smith said certain proposals had been put forward at the meeting, mainly by the CCMA, on how to resolve the dispute.

"The parties undertook to go away and look at these proposals and come back on Friday fully mandated to discuss them. The parties agreed that they wouldn't publicise these proposals until they had a mandate on them," he said.

Smith added that there had not been any violent incidents at any of the plants since the start of the strike.

Tony Kgohe, the auto and tyre sector co-ordinator for Numsa, said that the strike was an attempt by the workers to seek dignity in the workplace and to secure workplace democracy.

"There is a lot of hullaballoo about the strike action. The sad truth is that there was no strike action after 1994, but the automobile employers have retrenched 5 000 workers in the past five years."

Agreement has been reached between Numsa and Ameo on an 8 percent across-the-board wage increase this year and 19 percent for artisans. But the two sides have deadlocked in trying to set increases for the second and third year of the agreement."
Fresh breakthrough in petrol strike

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

The National Petroleum Employers Association and the Chemical Workers Industrial Union are set to go to mediation today on the two-week-old industry pay strike.

Employers' negotiator Finnie Ernst confirmed last night the two sides have agreed to allow the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration to intervene in the impasse.

However, another union, the National Petroleum Workers Association has been reluctant to allow the CCMA to intervene.

Thousands of workers returned to work on Wednesday after agreements were reached in four sectors in the industry between the SA Chemical Workers Union (Sacwu) and employers. But that still left thousands on strike.

Meanwhile, the CCMA is also scheduled to oversee a meeting between the National Union of Metal Workers of SA and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Association.
Misplaced militancy hurts the economy

South Africans must stand up to the bullying tactics of the labour movement, argues Thami Mazwai

IT IS about time something was done about the arrogance and bullying from sectors of the labour movement. Enough is enough, we can no longer be subjected to this tyranny. It appears that some unions are interested only in pushing their agendas. They hardly care a boot for the rest of us and most importantly, the unemployed.

For the record, strikes are a feature of the market economy and there can be no doubt about the worker's right to strike. However, the reasons some unions go on strike and the things they do when on strike, simply make one angry.

Firstly, transparency and consultation do not mean a veto. Some in the union movement have arrogated unto themselves the right to veto government's macro-economic policy. Gear Admittedly, there may be short-term problems with Gear. However, any union leader worth his salt should know that economic transformation is unlike political transformation. You do not sit around a table and come up with a date for the transformation of the economy. It is a drawn-out process in which basics must be put in place. This is what Gear is about.

If people doubt its effectiveness, let them come up with sensible suggestions. The suggestions so far have a suffocating dose of socialism and welfare spending. Let me make it clear, I am not against welfare spending. After all, we are talking about the poorer sections of SA. We need investments in job creation and economic growth. However, unions are killing the creation of jobs with their misplaced militancy.

Now I turn to the strike affecting carmakers. Volkswagen is now able to sell right-hand-drive cars to the world market, thanks to a decision by Volkswagen in Germany. Volkswagen will have to increase its capacity and hire more people. A strike by the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) means Volkswagen will not be able to meet overseas orders.

It goes without saying that customers will then buy other makes of vehicles. Volkswagen in Germany will have to ask another country to produce the cars. This leads to retrenchments. If I have my facts right, Numsa members will then go on strike against the retrenchments and blame Volkswagen.

Lastly, a month ago some hoodlums masquerading as trade union members went wild at Eskom. I do not know if these people were demented, under the influence of drugs, or simply anarchical. What I do know is that no sane person could wreak such havoc. What took the cake was the reaction of their union, the National Union of Mineworkers. It slapped these ruffians on the wrist.

"We agree that our members were wrong but this does not give you the right to slam us in public," it admonished. In other words, I can raise my house to the ground, but your anger must not tread on my toes.

This is the type of bullying and arrogance I am talking about. If you take into account that unions have tens of thousands of members and that some of their leaders are the type described above, who hardly know how the economy works, then the full horror of what we face presents itself. We have to stand up to defend our economy. It must now be this far and no further to this wanton destruction of our economy.
Mediators called in to solve petroleum dispute

CCMA to begin facilitating discussions today

By Hopewell Rabane

The National Petroleum Employers' Association and the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union have agreed to allow the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration to intervene in the impasse which has led to a two-week strike in the industry.

Employers' negotiator Fanie Borns said last night that the mediation process was scheduled to begin today.

However, another union, the National Petroleum Workers' Association, has been reluctant to allow the CCMA to intervene in the dispute.

Thousands of workers returned to work on Wednesday after agreements were reached in four sectors in the industry between the SA Chemical Workers' Union (Sawwu) and employers.

But that still leaves thousands of other workers on strike.

About 47,000 workers went on strike after unions and employers deadlocked over wage increases and working conditions, among other things.

Unions are demanding a 10% rise in wages while employers have made offers ranging between 8% and 8.5%.

Meanwhile, the CCMA is also scheduled to oversee a meeting between the National Union of Metal Workers of SA (Numsa) and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Association (Amea).

Numsa went on strike last weekend after a deadlock with the employers.

The two parties committed themselves to consult their constituencies and to study a settlement proposal tabled by the CCMA and to return today with responses.

Amea spokesperson Brian Smith said the automobile industry has lost at least R650-million.

The workers were losing at least R4,2-million per day.

But Numsa spokesperson Dumisa Ntuli said about 21,000 workers would probably continue with the first stage of the strike.
ONE THEATRE, TWO PLAYS

Failing to bridge the gap

If anything, a series of strikes that intensified over the past week shows employers and labour were caught flat-footed by this year's low inflation rate and cannot agree on ways to balance militant worker demands and reasonable increases.

Labour analysts say the strikes are unlikely to be protracted because both capital and labour realise they will suffer heavy losses if strikes drag on. One of the major stumbling blocks has been lack of consensus on where increases should be pegged.

"With the low average inflation rate, there is pressure from employers for wage settlements to align themselves closely to this figure," say labour consultants Andrew Levy & Associates.

They argue "This, however, runs contrary to a firm convention in SA collective bargaining, which makes major shifts from a previous settlement difficult to achieve."

Cosatu remains wedded to its stance that the apartheid wage gap needs to be narrowed and that increases should not be linked to inflation.

The organisation's assistant general secretary Zwelini Zuma says whereas "linking wages to inflation appears to make economic sense on paper, it is completely inappropriate in the SA context."

He says in some sectors of the economy the ratio between the highest- and lowest-paid workers is 100:1, the federation wants it to be reduced to at least 8:1. The overwhelming number of workers' wages fall well below the minimum living level "A growing number of workers are in the category of 'working poor'," Zuma says.

Independent labour analyst Pat Stone says there are immense pressures on unions to deliver to their members. However, as recent market turmoil has shown, "we are no longer masters of our own universe", but have to abide by some of the dictates of the world marketplace.

This reality was underlined by Daimler-Benz of SA chairman Christoph Kopke, who says traditionally manufacturing has been confined to national borders, but factories now produce for regional markets.

He says for the company's East London plant to survive it is "absolutely essential" that it expands its trade worldwide.

"We cannot become world class with the markets available to us in Africa alone. The volumes are just too small. We have to become part of Daimler-Benz AG's global manufacturing strategy to ensure we build products for markets beyond the African continent," Kopke says.

Analysts are divided on whether this year's spate of strikes marks a departure from the decrease in industrial action over the past three years.

Stone believes the strikes are not the usual symptoms of the annual pay round. They reflect the tensions within the ANC-led tripartite alliance on economic policy, and the economic uncertainty in SA.

Labour analyst Gavin Brown says though the chemical and automobile industries' strikes have attracted attention, "we must not forget that thousands of settlements have been reached without any kind of industrial action."

Levy & Associates found that in 91.6% of surveyed wage negotiations this year, no industrial action was undertaken (see table).
Workers show they are losing patience

As economic pressures increase, trade unions are becoming more militant. CAROL PATON reports

The recent surge in strike activity, which in the past two weeks alone has seen more than 60,000 workers down tools, is part of South Africa's annual strike season — when bargaining over wages reaches a critical point in most sectors across the economy.

But, while the propensity of unions to strike has steadily declined over the past three years, this year more workers are ready to act — a sign, say union leaders, that workers have run out of patience.

In the first half of this year, man days lost to strikes rose by 19% compared to last year and with major strikes in the chemical and motor industries as well as industrial action from teachers, the percentage for the second half of the year is certain to rise further.

The strikes are part of a wave of militancy brought on by growing economic pressures on workers and the realisation that their expectations of the post-1994 period are far from being met, say Cosatu officials.

While inflation so far this year has been low — around 5% — the new business environment of global competition has been responsible for tariff reductions and rationalisation, often resulting in job losses.

This, coupled with government austerity which workers believe is responsible for the poor progress made in addressing apartheid's "social deficit" in black communities are two of the central factors driving strike action, according to Cosatu spokesman Mzweli Mpolwane.

A third important factor propelling the strike action is the drive by unions to equal or better last year's wage settlements when inflation was about 4% higher.

"Workers are making the link between economic policy and their own situation. In a sense, they are subsidising the unemployed and are feeling the pinch as jobs are lost. A strike is the last alternative and embarrassing on one is not an easy decision to take," says Mpolwane.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa's negotiator for the motor industry, Tony Kgobe, says there is a strong link between the preparedness of workers to strike and the perception that in the post-1994 period little has changed on the shopfloor.

"The inequalities are still there. In previous years you could say there was a call, which was not made public, for patience. People sat back and waited to see if things would change. But now they are prepared to heed any call for a strike," says Kgobe.

In the chemical sector, workers have also held back on a number of demands over the past three years, in order to win one overriding demand for centralised bargaining, says Chemical Workers Industrial Union official Nelson Mthombenhle.

Added to these frustrations and pressures has been a call from Cosatu to renew the campaign to close the "apartheid wage gap" — the gap between the highest and lowest paid.

The wage gap campaign throws industrial relations into an impasse. While for unions it is morally unjustifiable, for business it is obvious that market pressures will not allow it to be bargained away.

"Companies are responding to the market for people in managerial positions. The view that you can suppress wages at the top and push them up from the bottom is removed from reality," says AECI executive Bokkie Botha.

"If you freeze wages at the top, the international players will rape you of all your top skills," says Vic van Vuuren of Business SA.

Employers, too, are feeling the heat. "We have come down to the hard-core economic realities of playing in a global field. For business, labour costs are a question of survival at a time when expectations among workers are high. The gap between employers and workers is just too big," says Van Vuuren.

ST PATON 16-8-98
Vehicle industry strike resolved

Reneé Grawitzky

MORE than 20,000 vehicle manufacturing workers return to work tomorrow following a week-long strike as the chemical industry strike enters its third week.

Tony Kgobe, the National Union of Metalworkers of SA's (Numsa's) chief negotiator, said yesterday the union was satisfied that it had achieved what it wanted.

Numsa and employers reached an agreement at a meeting with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) on Friday. They are expected to sign a deal addressing some of the concerns that led to the strike today.

Chemical employers and the Chemical Workers Industrial Union resume talks tomorrow after the CCMA intervened on Friday to try resolve the strike. Employer spokesman Paul Ernst said the parties had moved closer and had explored settlement positions, which they had taken back to their constituencies. The commission said it hoped the parties would settle their dispute by the end of the week.

Meanwhile, Numsa members are expected to march on Nampak offices in Johannesburg today to highlight their wage demands after disputes were declared during plant level negotiations throughout the organisation.
Prices up as motor giants face strike bill

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg – The 11-day motor vehicle workers strike has cost nearly R1-billion in lost turnover, and has been greeted by a flurry of increased prices.

So far new price lists have been issued for Opel, Isuzu, Volvo, Ford, Mazda, Honda and Colt, adding from a few hundred to a few thousand rands to each model.

Examples of increased prices are: Opel Corsa up from R41 915 to R44 957; Honda Encore from R67 300 to R69 800; Ford Laser from R37 215 to R38 190, Volvo S40 from R135 995 to R139 995, Isuzu KB200 SWB from R68 993 to R72 482 and Colt 2000 SWB from R61 600 to R65 500.

Motor vehicle sources forecast that further increases this year were possible to make up for the falling rand.

Meanwhile the 21 000 striking motor vehicle workers yesterday agreed to return to work today after signing an agreement fixing wages for three years.

The agreement gives an 8% increase for workers and 7.5% for artisans while in the second and third year, workers will get increases based on the consumer price index increase.

The strike cast a shadow over export contracts for billions of rands from the seven plants.

VW’s Matt Gennrich said the company lost turnover of R17-million a day during the strike, but the industrial action had not greatly affected a R5-billion export deal to supply 80 000 right-hand drive vehicles over the next 18 months.

Mr Gennrich said South Africa was known internationally to have a volatile labour force and this strike would further damage the industry’s image overseas.

BMW’s Richard Carter said its overseas markets, such as Australia, Britain and Taiwan, were “terribly sensitive” to the timing of delivery orders and the question of reliability.

BMW’s factory near Pretoria has secured orders for its right-hand drive 3-series cars. Other main exporters include Toyota and Nissan.
Refuse removal and council libraries also likely to be affected by today's municipal staff raily in Johannesburg

Bus commuters warned to use other transport

By TRUMAN SEPERANAT

The Rand Daily Mail
Strike confusion as CCMA jumps the gun

Reneé Grawitzky

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) jumped the gun yesterday in announcing that striking chemical workers would return to work tomorrow after claiming that agreements had been reached in five of the seven affected sectors.

The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) denied that the strike was over and said agreements had been reached only in the industrial rubber and plastics converters sectors. CWIU assistant general secretary Nelson Nhombeni said negotiations were still in progress in the other sectors and the union was hopeful that settlements would be achieved. "We cannot say workers are going back to work when there is no finality. Why would workers go back to work if agreements have not been finalised?"

An industry observer said the CCMA's statement could place some delicate proposals intended to end the dispute in jeopardy and could put pressure on the parties. The statement could also result in workers returning to work when the strike had not been officially called off.

The statement was made yesterday by CCMA senior commissioner Kazer Thibedi at a news briefing. Thibedi claimed that agreement had been reached in five sectors, excluding petroleum and glass.

He said parties would report back to their constituencies and that the commission was happy that its intervention had stabilised the industry and resulted in workers returning to work tomorrow.

Employer spokesman Fanie Ernst said caution was needed in how the phrase "in principle agreement" was interpreted.

He said parties had found possible solutions in some sectors which could result in settlements. Ernst said the potential for deals was there, but parties had to take proposals back to their constituencies for consideration.

Parties in the five sectors where agreements have yet to be reached were still in talks last night.
CWIU strike is looking to end

By Michael Fleming
Strike over pay hits city rice mill

Workers at Rice-Tic, a milling and packing company in Paarden Eiland, are on strike over wages and conditions of employment.

The strike has been organised by the Food and Allied Workers Union, which says management is refusing to negotiate with the workers.

Union spokesman Sabatha Ngcai said the strike would continue until management agreed to negotiate.

The workers, who have been picketing the premises, are demanding a wage increase of R50 a week across-the-board, three weeks’ bonus guaranteed and a heavy duty allowance of R20 a week for workers who carry bags weighing more than 50kg.

Rice-Tic management declined to comment.
3 shot in strike violence

Johannesburg - Three petrol tanker drivers have been shot and wounded in KwaZulu Natal amid a continuing petro-chemical workers' strike, an industry official said today.

Lutz Kranz of the National Petroleum Employers' Association (NPEA) said the shootings late yesterday had come just before the resumption of another round of talks to end the three-week-old wage impasse.

He said that while two other chemical workers' unions had reached a wage settlement last week, the 40,000-strong Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) was still out on strike and employers believed its members were responsible for the violence.

"We believe that this is union-inspired thuggery of the worst kind, especially because these violent incidents have happened while we are talking," Mr Kranz said.

He said the drivers were in a satisfactory condition in hospital. Mr Kranz said fuel delivery around the country - severely disrupted when the strike began on August 3 - was "stable but not normal". - Reuters

Fawu strike to continue

RAVIN MAHARAJ

Durban — The Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) would continue a nationwide strike until the resolution of a wage dispute with Rainbow Chicken, the loss-making broiler producer, the union said yesterday.

Thompson Ramalala, Fawu’s national negotiator, said the union, which represented more than a quarter of Rainbow’s workforce, had rejected Rainbow’s offer of 6 percent across the board.

Rainbow has offered a minimum wage package of R1 972.88 a month for factory workers, and R1 778.18 a month at farming facilities.

Four of five recognised unions — the Food and Beverages Workers’ Union, South African Typographical Union, South African Workers’ Union, and the Farm, Food, and Rural Workers’ Support Association — have accepted a Rainbow offer of a 6 percent increase across the board from December 1 and an annual bonus.

Rainbow had two offers on the table, the other being a 7 percent across the board increase, without an annual bonus, effective from April 1.

Rainbow said Fawu had been privy to all financial information and had rejected offers to send its own auditors to study the books.

Both parties said they would try to iron out these problems in Durban this week, to prevent further strikes and loss of production.

In the meantime, Ramalala said the strike at Rainbow’s farming and processing operations across the country would continue for at least another week, if agreement was not reached this week.

Ramalala said in principle the union could accept Rainbow’s offer if it was backdated to April 1. But the company said Fawu was then in fact asking for an 18.53 percent increase, taking into account back-pay.

Rainbow has also offered to negotiate a gainshare scheme outside the present scheme.

Rainbow, which is in the Rembrandt stable, said it could not afford to better its wage offer in the light of substantial losses. Rainbow reported an attributable loss of R288.3 million for the year to March 31, and R229.1 million in the previous year.

Rainbow said that despite its losses, it had been a leader in unproving wages and working conditions for employees during this period.
Airports strike threat grows

Durban - Two unions representing disgruntled airport workers countrywide will today meet management of the Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa) for crisis talks in a bid to avert a full-blown strike.

But a third union yesterday threatened to join the planned strike, which would cause chaos at the Non-Aligned Summit here next week.

The president of the SA Railway and Harbour Workers' Union, Bolakelo Jonas, said a dispute had been declared with three airport services companies -- Acsa, SA Airways and Apron Services.

This follows disputes lodged by the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu)

If it goes ahead, a strike at the country's nine main airports could cripple some essential services and disrupt travel for thousands of international heads of state, cabinet ministers and other VIPs who will begin arriving for the NAM summit in Durban from August 29.

In July Acsa and Apron Services employees caused havoc at international airports when they went on strike to protest against expected job losses.
Car industry faces new strike

Johannesburg - Just two days after ending a six-day strike at South Africa's seven car factories, the industry's main union said it plans to down tools again on September 1. The National Union of Metal Workers of SA (Numsa) yesterday said the new strike by about 60,000 workers would be in the motor sector, which groups workers from spares shops, car dealerships, component manufacturers, service workshops and filling stations.

The new action will exempt the seven motor manufacturers, who settled their dispute with Numsa earlier this week. During that dispute, 21,000 workers downed tools.

"We are planning another strike on September 1 which will be like the one we've just had recently. The strike will involve the motor sector and the issue is about wages," Dumisa Ntsh, a Numsa spokesman, said.

Industry sources said Numsa's wage agreements in the motor sector expired on September 1, making another crippling strike a possibility.

Employers in the motor sector are represented by the Motor Industries Federation, which was not immediately available for comment.

The previous strike had cost the vehicle manufacturing industry an estimated R780-million in lost turnover, industry spokesman Brian Smith said.

The strike also cast a shadow over vehicle export contracts for billions of rand, but Mr Smith said the contracts were "still in line".

Volkswagen SA has secured a R5-billion UK order over the next 18 months, and BMW South Africa has signed export deals for its 3 series cars. - Reuters
Violence hampers strike’s resolution

PETROLEUM employers warned last night that the resurgence of violence and intimidation associated with the chemical workers’ strike was hampering a resolution of the three-week-old dispute.

The warning was made during the resumption of negotiations with the Chemical Workers’ Industrial Union (CWIU) yesterday when employers threatened to walk out of the meeting.

This week workers trashed the offices of a number of companies, including Caltex and Consol, causing losses estimated at more than R2m.

Yesterday a pharmaceutical company in Alrode, east of Johannesburg, was firebombed while a number of truck drivers were shot at, some sustaining serious injuries in the attacks.

The National Petroleum Employers’ Association said deliveries of petrol out of Island View depot in Durban were stopped over the past 24-hours due to shootings and high levels of intimidation.

Employers said: “In a potential catastrophe, a nitrogen tanker on the way back to a company’s premises had its windscreen smashed by a rock, causing the tanker to turn over onto another truck. Three people were injured in the incident and damage exceeded R1m.

Petroleum employers said the union had agreed to address the question of violence after it became evident that this was slowing down the negotiations.

A formal conditional offer of 8.5% was made to the CWIU.

A bilateral agreement was also reached between the union and Sasol, ensuring a return to work of Sasol employees tonight.

The agreement provides for an 8.5% increase now and a further 0.5% from January.

In addition, the union would support Sasol’s application for variation from the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

CWIU assistant general secretary Nelson Nhombeni said Sasol was still committed to centralized bargaining and would remain part of the national employer body, despite the agreement.

Pearl Scholae reports that more than 300 striking workers at Eskom subsidiary, Rootech Industries, yesterday gathered at the company’s Rosherville plant in Cleveland in a bid to force management to agree to their wage demands.

The workers, represented by the National Union of Mineworkers and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA, are demanding a 9.5% wage increase on a sliding scale and have rejected management’s offer of a 7.3% across the board wage increase.

Meanwhile, the Airports Company of SA will today meet the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union and the Transport & General Workers’ Union in a bid to avert the threatened strike by the two unions.
Fawu, Rainbow seek strike resolution

RAVIN MAHARAJ

Durban — The Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) and the management of Rainbow Chicken, the troubled broiler producer, would meet in Durban today to seek a resolution of a 10-day-old wage dispute which had turned violent, both parties said yesterday.

Yannick Lakhnati, Rainbow’s chief executive, said he could not believe the “blatant breach of strike rules and disrespect for property and people” in the light of several violent incidents at Rainbow’s operations in Rustenburg and Hammarsdale.

He said these incidents meant the company would incur unnecessary additional expenses. Rainbow has reported massive attributable losses in the past two years.

Lakhnati and Thompson Ramalala, Fawu’s national negotiator, said more than 13 workers had been injured since the start of the strike last week.

Lakhnati said in Rustenburg buses carrying casual labour had been stoned, the homes of supervisors had been petrol-bombed, and workers had been shot. Property in Hammarsdale had also been damaged. Police investigations were under way and several dockets had been opened.

“This is an unacceptable position. We are trying to do our level best for workers,” he said.

Ramalala said the company’s security guards had shot workers. The matter has been referred to Fawu’s lawyers.

Fawu has rejected Rainbow’s offer of a minimum wage package of R1 972.08 for factory workers, and R1 776.18 at farms.
By Inez Webber

Strikers hold talks as employers and
Claims of violence

Protest action by

COSATU coming up

SOWMIAA PAPER 21 1982

Army redeploys

The tension in the company is high among workers who feel their jobs are threatened. The company has announced a 10% pay cut for all workers. The union has rejected the proposal.

The company has also announced plans to close two of its factories. Workers are protesting the closures and demanding that they be reversed. The union is organizing a strike to demand better wages and conditions.

The government has warned that it will take action if the strike goes ahead. The company has threatened to sue workers who participate in the strike.

Workers have been injured during protests and there are reports of police brutality.

The situation is tense and volatile. Workers are determined to fight for their rights and the union is backed by the majority of workers.

The government is under pressure to act to resolve the crisis. There are concerns about the impact on the economy and the role of the union in the broader context of labor relations in the country.

The union has called for a general strike to be held on the 20th of next month. The government has said it will take action if the strike goes ahead. The union has said it will fight any attempts to disrupt the strike.

The union has also called on the government to negotiate with them on the issues of pay and conditions.

The situation is complex and there are many factors at play. The government, the union, and the workers are all parties to the conflict.

The situation is a test of the strength of the union and the resolve of the workers. The government must act to resolve the crisis and prevent further violence.

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Locked-out workers
picket Stuttafords

WORKERS picketed Stuttafords branches in Tygerberg
and Claremont yesterday in protest against a lockout
imposed on union members, JANET HEARD reports.
The lockout, which affects Stuttafords nationwide, is
the first in the retail sector under the new Labour
Relations Act.

Stuttafords imposed the lockout on Thursday fol-
lowing a dispute over pay increases with the SA Cloth-
ing and Textile Workers' Union and the SA Commer-
cial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union. The company
has called on staff to work an extra Saturday each
month and has offered a monthly raise of R140. Work-
ers want R269 more if they agree to the extra hours.

Sactwu's retail bargaining co-ordinator, Richard
Kawie, said the union would apply on Tuesday for an
interdict against the lockout. The lockout affects nine
stores countrywide and 700 workers, 160 of whom are
in the Western Cape.
Pretoria soap workers slip up on strike

ROY CORRYNE

Pretoria — Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (CWIU) members at Specialty Formulas, the Pretoria-based glycerine soap maker, had been found guilty of embarking on unprotected strike action, Brendan Sayers, the chairman of a disciplinary hearing, said last week.

Sayers, a National Employers' Forum official, said 29 employees at Specialty Formulas, acquired recently by Bege Holdings, the listed pharmaceutical and cosmetics company, had embarked on a work stoppage on August 11 after giving seven days' written notice of intention to go on a sympathy strike.

Specialty Formulas questioned the grounds for a sympathy strike, maintaining they were unaware of who the primary employer was and the nature of the dispute between the primary employer and the union.

Sayers said the union presented no evidence of the relationship between the primary employer and secondary strike, and the strikers were therefore guilty of having embarked on unprotected strike action.
Sympathy strike threat shocks bosses

Pearl Sabolao and Renee Grawitzky

THE National Association of Automobile Manufacturers (Namasa) is considering asking government to intervene in the planned strike by 220,000 National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) members in sympathy with motor industry strikers.

Numsa said at the weekend it would pull out members in all its sectors in support of the strike in the motor sector, due to start on September 1. The sector includes filling stations, panel-beating and spares shops, car dealers and component manufacturers.

Namasa said it was shocked at Numsa's decision to target sectors which had no control over negotiations in the motor sector.

Namasa would consider approaching government to discuss the issue, as such a strike would lead to job losses and undermine investor confidence. Employers have offered a 4.5% increase on minimum levels.
Most employers accept terms of wage deal ranging from 8% to 10%

Mediation wins the day

FRANK NXUMALO
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union yesterday called on all its members to return to work after the terms of a wage deal ranging from 8 percent to 10 percent and proposed by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration had been accepted by employers in five of the seven sectors.

The remaining two sectors are the petroleum and industrial chemical sectors.

More than 47 000 union workers were on a national strike during the past three weeks to press for better conditions of employment and a wage increase of 10.5 percent, which was later moderated to 10 percent across the board.

The strike was characterised by reports of widespread violence and destruction of property, especially during the second week, and led to the PAW 52.198 National Petroleum Employers' Association accusing the union of forcing the parties "to negotiate under rules of thuggery".

The parties settled at 10.6 percent last year, which led many analysts to cite that as an obstacle to a settlement as the previous year's figure was traditionally taken as a benchmark.

At one point, both employers and the union rejected suggestions by the labour department that the chemical industry be regarded as an essential services sector after the strike began to hit consumers.

The earlier settlement by the smaller South African Chemical Workers' Union at a maximum range of 8 percent means a single company will find itself paying different wages to workers of the same grade depending on which union represents them.

Panie Ernst, the employers' chief co-ordinator, said although some companies in the outstanding sectors had rejected the commission's proposals, "mop up operations" were continuing towards a final settlement.

Ernst said he was hopeful that "this whole thing would be settled this week".

The deadline for a final settlement might be extended to tomorrow to accommodate outstanding sectors.

But Nelson Mthombeni, a union spokesman, said that "an agreement in principle" had already been reached with the petroleum and industrial chemical sectors and that the union expected to report back for work today.
Ameo questions legality of new strike

ROY COKayne AND FRANK NXUMALO

Pretoria — The Automobile Manufacturing Employers' Organisation (Ameo), which represents the seven local vehicle manufacturers, is investigating the legality of the threatened secondary strike by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) on September 1 after the breakdown of wage talks with Samisa.

The Steel and Engineering Industry Federation of South Africa (Seisa) said yesterday it too was considering its options.

While it thought the planned national strike in the steel and car industry by more than 220,000 Numsa workers was "generally a protected strike", it had advised its membership to examine whether it was "reasonable."

David Carson, Seisa's industrial relations director, said this meant members had to examine their relations with the motor component sector to determine whether there was a need to challenge the Numsa action.

Dumiya Ntuli, Numsa's spokesman, said the union was expecting "a flood of court interdicts" following the procedural notification.

Smith said: "While a secondary strike can be permitted in terms of the Labour Relations Act, it is absolutely ridiculous because we don't believe we can exert any pressure on Samisa, who have over 20,000 individual members."

Mark Roberts, the chapter three representative in Samisa, said it had complied with the issue that was in dispute with Numsa. It had been negotiating with Numsa on actual wages at plant level and there was recognition and a willingness from Numsa and the chapter to negotiate on actual wages at national level from next year.

But he said this was subject to the terms of such a dispensation being worked out between the two.
Thousands of SA teachers strike action after wage talks fail.
Strike disruption looms for SAA

FRANK NXUMALO
AND THABO LESHILO

Johannesburg — South African Airways (SAA) faces disruptions on its domestic and international schedules tomorrow as more than 9,000 South African Railway and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhwu) workers and other industry unions go on strike.

The company said yesterday "all categories except pilots" would take part in the strike.

The news came as Zukile Nomvete, the former executive director of Transnet in charge of the airline, announced he had left the parastatal. He said his services were ended on August 14.

Thami Didiza, the spokesman for Transnet, refused to divulge reasons, citing a secrecy clause that precluded Transnet and Nomvete from disclosing details.

Didiza said staff would be informed, but denied any sinister motives for not immediately releasing the information.

Coleman Andrews, SAA's chief executive, said the strike "could hamper the airline's fight to regain profitability".

He said 11,000 jobs were at stake if SAA failed.

"I have explained to the unions that SAA will cease to exist if we do not stop the financial losses the airline has suffered. These have amounted to more than R1 billion over a period of five years."

Andrews refuted union claims that he had granted pilots a 17 percent pay rise.

"The truth is that an independent arbitrator awarded pilots an 8.17 percent increase for 1997 and 1998; this decision was binding on the company," he said.

He said SAA passengers would suffer minimum inconvenience as "SAA flights would still operate as normal."

A company spokesman said this was because SAA believed it had "enough non-unionised workers" to minimise
Ameo in court bid to halt strike

PRETORIA — The Automobile Manufacturing Employers' Organisation (Ameo) would apply to the labour court on Monday for an interdict to prevent the sympathy strike by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), Brian Smith, the chairman of Ameo, said yesterday.

Dumisa Ntuli, a spokesman for Numsa, said the union would "definitely defend the application for an interdict" against Numsa.

Smith said Ameo's urgent application followed Numsa's failure to withdraw its notice of a secondary strike by yesterday morning, as demanded by the vehicle manufacturers.

"Ameo contends that the secondary strike threatened by Numsa is unreasonable and unlawful in terms of the Labour Relations Act," he said.

Numsa notified Ameo on Friday that the union planned to embark on a secondary strike from September 1 this year.

Ntuli said Numsa's defence was based on the fact that it wanted Ameo to prove there was no customer relationship with the motor sector.

"Some motor sector companies supply components to the auto sector," he said.

"Ameo also wrote a letter to Numsa stating that in terms of the Labour Relations Act, Numsa was not supposed to issue notice of a secondary strike prior to the commencement of the primary strike. Ameo must also prove that."
Workers to return

MOST of the striking petrol workers are due to return to work today after an agreement was reached between the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union and the National Petroleum Employers' Association, the NPEA said yesterday.

The agreement did not include Calux, as the company and the CWIU were still in dispute.

According to the agreement reached between the union and other employers, CWIU members would receive an 8.5 percent increase on basic salaries retrospective from July 1 this year. Added to that they would get a further 0.5 percent increase on their basic salary as on June 30 this year.

The minimum monthly wage would be R2,000.

The strike by 47,000 CWIU members in the chemical industry started on August 3. Members in all the other sectors of the industry, except for the industrial chemicals sector, returned to work earlier this week after reaching agreements with their employers. — Supa.
‘SAA strike will not affect NAM summit’

Reneé Grawitzky

GOVERNMENT said last night it was determined that the threatened strike by SA Airways staff would not affect the Nonaligned Movement summit, regardless of the outcome of negotiations between labour and management, which continued late into the night.

At the time of going to press the SA Railway and Harbours Workers’ Union (Sarhhu), Saltaff and SAA management were locked in negotiations, with uncertainty over whether the strike would go ahead.

SAA beheld disruptions to passengers would be minimal, as workers were involved in talks with the unions to try to avert the strike.

Fahad said government was hopeful the dispute would be resolved amicably and that the unions realised the summit was in the national interest.

The threatened strike at SAA coincides with a strike by Air Chief employees, the caterers to most airlines operating out of SA airports.

The wage strike, which started last week, turned violent yesterday when two nonstrikers were injured.

The SA Clothing, Commercial and Allied Workers’ Union claimed 52 airlines had their food service supplies disrupted. The company denied this.
Strike chaos on SAA’s flight schedule

FRANK Nxumalo  
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg—Chaos is expected to hit South African Airways’ (SAA) domestic and international schedules today as more than 9 000 ground staff, cabin crew and maintenance workers down tools over wage demands.

The department of foreign affairs was concerned about the strike, by members of the South African Railway and Harbours’ Union (Sarhwu) and the Aviation Industry Workers’ Unit SAA (AIWU SAA), might have a negative effect on the transportation of delegates to the Non-Aligned Summit scheduled to start tomorrow in Durban.

“This summit is a matter of national interest, and we are doing everything possible to make it a success,” Azzah Phahid, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, said yesterday. “Through the ministry of labour, there are ongoing negotiations with the unions involved. We are hopeful that solutions will be found.”

Victor Nosa, an SAA spokesman, said: “The situation hasn’t changed. We are expecting a strike tomorrow (today). Management is still offering between 7.5 percent and 10.5 percent, the unions are still demanding 12 percent.”

“We are going on the strike at 12 noon tomorrow,” Sarhwu spokesman Evan Abrahamse said. Cabin crew on international flights would also go on strike at 12 noon, he said.

He said Sarhwu was also having dispute meetings at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration with the Airports Company of South Africa over wage demands.

The commission talks will continue today after the parties failed to reach agreement yesterday. However, the company has settled separately with Nehawu and T&GWU at an effective 9 percent across the board. The agreement is expected to be signed today.

“The overwhelming outcry from our members stems from the recurring injustice by SAA management in that they continue handsomely rewarding the pilots and flight engineers in their bargaining units while our members have to be satisfied with the crumbs that fall off the table,” said Andre Venter, AIWU SAA general secretary of labour relations.

Venter said that Coleman Andrews, the SAA chief executive, had awarded pilots a 17 percent salary increase, an allegation was denied by Andrews.

“The truth is that an independent arbitrator awarded pilots an 8.17 percent increase for 1997 and 1998, that decision was binding on the company,” Andrews said.
Slump spawns labour unrest

MTG 28/8 - 3/9/98

Ferial Haffajee

Strike action in South Africa is on the increase — but it is fuelled less by party political tension and more by the shrinking economy.

"This is not Cosatu [the Congress of South African Trade Unions] sending warnings to the [African National Congress/South African Communist Party/Cosatu] alliance. But the strikes are political if you use a broader notion of politics," says labour writer Karl von Holdt.

Rising inflation and high interest rates are taking their toll and workers faced with growing numbers of unemployed dependants are protecting their corner.

After two years of remarkable decline, strikes are again on the increase. They jumped by 20% in the first six months of 1998 — compared with same period last year — and could end the year even higher.

Part of the reason for seemingly ubiquitous strike activity is that it is slap in the middle of strike season. But disputes this year have been characterised by greater militance than previous years.

There has been arson at Eskom, clashes at petrol suppliers, teacher strikes and rhetoric less conciliatory than that of the honeymoon years following the election in 1994.

The conflicts come in the sumptuary of tension earlier this year between Cosatu and the ANC over economic policy.

" Strikes are being fuelled by anger over working and living conditions. There is an accumulated exasperation and impatience among workers," says Professor Tom Lodge of the University of the Witwatersrand.

"Workers are seen as an elite simply because they have a job. In fact, they are bearing the brunt of growing unemployment," says Deanne Collins, the editor of the SA Labour Bulletin. Everyone supports about 10 dependants in rural areas, although urban workers have fewer to feed.

The economy is still shedding jobs. In the vital metal and engineering sector 5 000 jobs have been cut this year, miners are still being retrenched and tariff cuts in other industries raise the spectre of further losses.

In this atmosphere, pay demands in more secure sectors of the economy are likely to increase and wage disputes in turn trigger four in five strikes.

In another development this week, Cosatu's two biggest affiliates — metalworkers and miners — gave notice of their intention to go on solidarity strikes.

It is the first time since the passage of the Labour Relations Act that workers will exercise their right to strike in sympathy with colleagues in related sectors.

It is unlikely that strike statistics will ever match the figures notched up in the 1980s, when worker militance was fired up by political struggles.

Institutions like the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration as well as laws like the Labour Relations Act have enshrined conflict resolution and labour rights.

A trend toward centralised bargaining forums could also cut strike activity in the medium term. But posturing at new centralised forums in the security and chemical industries this year led to strike action.

"Industrial action will focus on industrial issues," says Von Holdt, adding that workers are likely to begin pushing against racial gaps in wages and jobs where managers and supervisors are still largely white.
NUM calls strike to back motor workers

The National Union of Metalworkers (NUM) announced that employers in metal and engineering, vehicle and tyre manufacturing will be subjected to a 24-hour sympathy strike tomorrow.

The union has called out its members in these sectors in sympathy with thousands of their counterparts in the motor sector who will begin an "indefinite" wage strike tomorrow.

The decision to embark on a one-day sympathy strike was taken at a union national executive committee meeting late last week and follows threats by employers in metal, engineering and vehicle manufacturing to take legal action. The Automobile Manufacturers' Employers Organisation (Amec) applied for an interdict on Friday with the ruling being handed down today.

The national strike in the motor sector will affect petrol attendants, panel beating shops and auto-component manufacturers.

The dispute centres around a union demand that employers agree to negotiate increases based on the actual rates in the motor industry bargaining council man agreement, rather than the minimum rates. This has been a long-standing union demand.

The SA Motor Employers Association said it was practically impossible to negotiate actual rates for more than 18,000 employers countrywide. Despite this they remained open to continue negotiations.

To heighten its campaign, the union placed a full-page advertisement in the largest weekend newspaper explaining the nature of the dispute, which also involves the Motor Industry Employees' Union of SA and the Motor Industry Staff Association.

The unions said wages paid in the retail motor industry were below the poverty datum line, with a minimum wage of R59 a month.

NUM strike

Meanwhile, a week-long strike by the National Union of Mineworkers at Alakhor, a state-owned diamond mine in the Northern Cape, continues today.

The strike centres on a number of demands relating to government's role in the restructuring process and the daily operation of the mine.
Numsa strike tests new labour laws

Johannesburg — More than 220 000 workers allied to the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) are due to down tools tomorrow morning in a countrywide combined sympathy and primary strike against the car and steel industries.

Marchers will assemble at designated points in Johannesburg, Pietersburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Durban and Witbank at about 10am.

The union has already settled with the Steel and Engineering Industry Federation of South Africa and the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Ameo).

However, it is targeting these associations in a sympathy strike for allegedly colluding with the South African Motor Industry Employers' Association (Samaea), the target of the primary strike.

This will be the first time under the new Labour Relations Act that workers in one industry exercise their right to embark on a solidarity strike in support of aggrieved comrades in another industry.

"We believe that the national secondary strike is going to be the first of its kind under the new Labour Relations Act 19/5," said Dumisa Ntuli, the Numsa spokesman.

"It shall also be a test of the act to allow workers in one trade union to strike in sympathy and solidarity with members in other oppressed companies and sectors."

Employers' organisations, including Ameo, will challenge the legality of the strike today in the Johannesburg Labour Court. Ameo has said the strike would be a disaster for the industry with major consequences for jobs and billion-rand export contracts. It said it had no influence over the Samaea talks and questioned whether Numsa's decision to target other sectors was "reasonable."

Numsa said "The employer organisation will seek to convince the Labour Court to adopt a conservative approach, that a secondary notice cannot be given until a primary strike has actually begun."

"Ameo will also attempt to convince court that the sympathy strike in the auto sector would not have a significant impact upon the motor employers."

The union said its legal department had indicated that "Ameo will not succeed in drawing the court into technicalities with the intention of unreasonably limiting the constitutional right to strike."

The union accused Samaea of "tabling a miserable minimum wage offer of 4.5 percent and of rejecting all Numsa demands.

Ntuli said "Numsa is demanding that all wage increases should be on a guaranteed inflation rate increase. All wage increases ranging from 12 percent to 18 percent, depending on the grade, should be on the actual rates of pay."
Employers warn Numsa they will lock out workers

Renée Gravitzky

MOTOR employers have gone on the offensive as the strike in the industry enters its second week, notifying the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) of their intention to lock out striking workers from today.

This would constitute the first national lockout in terms of the Labour Relations Act.

In response, Numsa has threatened to call on members in the vehicle manufacturing, metal and tyre sectors to embark on another sympathy strike on September 22.

Numsa members in these sectors took part in sporadic sympathy strike action on September 1 even though vehicle and tyre manufacturers applied for a court interdict to halt the action.

The applications for an interdict were rejected because of the failure of employers to give Numsa sufficient notice of their intention to apply for an interdict. As a result the Labour Court failed to hear the merits of the case.

The threat of further strikes followed the release of figures showing that car sales dropped last month to their lowest monthly level this year.

An Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation spokesman said employers would await official notification of the sympathy strike, as required by the Labour Relations Act, before deciding whether to pursue the original interdict application.

Meanwhile, a number of motor industry employers have applied for interdicts because of alleged intimidation. The union claimed there had been a high level of police interference and harassment. The parties have subsequently agreed on picketing rules.

Numsa said the threat by the SA Motor Industry Employers' Association (Siamia) to lock out workers was "an attempt to reduce the militance of workers and try to break them".

Siamia negotiator Vic Fourie said in the same way Numsa had taken up its right to strike, employers were using their right to lock out. It did not mean all employers would follow this route, he said.

Transport strike unresolved

Johannesburg - Talks between the Airports Company of SA and the SA Railway and Harbour Workers' Union resumed today in a bid to resolve a six-day-old strike.

About 3 000 Sarhwu members countrywide went on strike last Wednesday after Acsa offered a 10 percent wage increase against the 12 percent demand of the union.

Airports company spokeswoman Nicky Rose-Innes today said management was optimistic that a settlement would be reached with the union in the next two days.

"We believe 10 percent is more than fair. Other companies, like SAA, have offered between six and eight-and-a-half percent," she said. Management's offer includes transport, a housing subsidy and 13th cheque.

She said contingency plans were put into place immediately to ensure passengers were not inconvenienced.

- Sapa
SA NEWS DIGEST

LABOUR 07/9/98

Trade unions lock horns with Edgars over wage freeze

The South African Commercial and Catering Workers' Union (Saccawu) and the Federal Council of Retail and Allied Workers (Fedcorkw) on Friday threatened to embark on a full-blown strike unless the Edgars Group of stores lifted a wage freeze for the 1998-99 financial year. Hundreds of Saccawu members picketed Edgars stores throughout Johannesburg on Friday. Edgars reportedly posted a 28 percent loss for the financial year ending in March.

But the unions said they had hard evidence that the group had made a R17 million profit in the last financial year. Saccawu is demanding a R240 monthly increase across the board. Nigel Unwin, the human resources director of Edgars, said the wage freeze increases applied to every group employee, including top management.

— Frank Nxumalo, Johannesburg
**IN SOLIDARITY** A Numsa member protests in central Johannesburg. The union says that members will strike if motor workers' actual wages are not increased.

**ET/VR) 7/9/98**

**Numsa names day for second sympathy strike**

**FRANK NXUMALO**

Johannesburg — About 290,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) would embark on a national grasshopper or second sympathy strike on September 22 if there was no breakthrough in the motor components industry dispute, the union said last week.

The strike would affect workers in the auto assembly, metal, tyre and rubber sectors. Numsa said the sympathy action would be "in solidarity with the oppressed motor workers", which included staff at petrol stations, panel beaters, spare parts vendors and big component-producing companies.

About 60,000 workers in this sector have been on a national strike since Tuesday, the first strike in the sector in 50 years.

The union said its real dispute was with the South African Motor Industry Employers Association (Samsea). The dispute was not about differences in wage increase percentages but about the "principle agreement to pay increases on actuals and not minimums".

Hossa Morapedi, the union motor sector co-ordinator, said compared with the car and manufacturing industries, Samsea had been "backward" by refusing to grant increases on actual wages.

"The increases granted on minimums have not kept pace with inflation," Morapedi said.

"Workers have been getting poorer and poorer; their purchasing power has declined.

"Employers in the metal, automotive and tyre (industries) grant their increases on actuals. Workers cannot accept wage roadblocks when the industry is making huge profits and workers are more than prepared to sacrifice their wages for long-term benefit."

Numsa also lashed out at Samsea for threatening to lock out its members if they continued with the strike this morning.

The union said the threatened lock-out would be an attempt to "reduce the militancy of workers" and to try to break them.

"We feel that such a stop-end style of management will not assist in resolving the current deadlock, but will exacerbate the situation further and make workers more angry," Morapedi said.

"Numsa is ready for this challenge because all it means is that workers will still be on strike."

Vic Fourie, the Samsea spokesman, said although strike action was never good for the country, it was a "legal remedy available to trade unions."

He said, "We will just handle it like any strike."
More violence in motor industry strike claimed

Reneé Grawitzky and Sibonelo Radebe

The motor industry strike entered its second week yesterday amid claims by employers and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) of various acts of intimidation and violence.

There was uncertainty over the extent to which employers had instituted lockouts, while the union claimed that a number of small establishments had indicated their willingness to settle on increases in the region of 15%.

SA Motor Industry Employers' Association spokesman Vic Fourie said incidents of violence and intimidation had increased countrywide. However, employers would not seek an interdict at this stage, he said.

In Gauteng there were reports of armed striking workers attempting to intimidate non-striking workers.

Numsa motor sector co-ordinator Hosea Morapedi said employers, in some instances, had taken up arms and threatened strikers with guns and sjamboks.

Morapedi said employers were the "last people to say the strike is getting out of hand as they are fueling the flames" by threatening to implement a lockout and employing replacement labour.

Fourie said it was difficult to evaluate the extent to which employers had instituted lockouts. The notice was merely a "tool in the hands of employers who wished to make use of it", he said.

Morapedi said while employers had the right to lock out, that right was insignificant in this case as workers were already on strike and on the streets.

Meanwhile, a survey of the major motor retail companies has revealed that the effect of the strike has been limited.

McCarthy Human Resource manager Niel Beeman said the company had not been affected as it paid far above the current disputed minimum wage level.

Imperial Motor Holdings said it had experienced mixed worker reactions, with some branches being affected.

Imperial's Pretoria parts manager Sd Nedee said about 15% of the workforce was on strike but that the business was operating normally.

Both parties said negotiations would resume later this week.
Disruptive strike ended

By Mzwakhe Hlungani
Labour Reporter

A FINAL agreement to end a disruptive strike has been reached between the Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa) and the South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union (Sarhwu), management and union officials announced yesterday.

In a joint statement Acsa and Sarhwu described the settlement as progressive and conclusive. It would improve staff pay as a result of a performance-based remuneration structure. The agreement demonstrated the sound relationship between shareholder interests and labour.

Acsa general manager of marketing Ms Chammame Lodewyk said the performance-measurement system would be developed by both parties. Both parties agreed to a 10 percent increase and a substantial move to narrow the wage gap.

The housing assistance scheme has been adjusted to minimise the hardships of families after the recent dramatic mortgage rate shock.

Meanwhile, a five-day industrial action by SA Transnet Allied Workers Union has been settled, SAA chief executive officer Andrew Coleman said.

He said Satawu members had agreed to the company's two-year wage offer.

About 5 000 Edgars Stores employees have embarked on partial work stoppage to demand wage talks with management, spokesmen for the Federation Council of Retail and Allied Workers Union and the SA Clothing and Catering Allied Workers Union said yesterday.
Motor bosses and Numsa to explore strike resolution

Pearl Sebolao and Sibonelo Radebe

MOTOR industry employers will meet the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) today to explore whether a compromise can be reached to resolve the 10-day wage strike in the motor sector.

Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said that if there was no breakthrough in the discussions with the SA Motor Industry Employers Association (Samsea), workers would intensify picketing at key establishments owned by Samsea officials.

The union would also continue canvassing companies to agree on wage increases based on actual rates of pay instead of minimums. A flood of companies had already signed petitions stating that they were prepared to allow industry negotiators to agree on actual rates of pay, Ntuli said.

Samsea spokesman Vic Fourie denied that a substantial number of its members had signed petitions saying the surveys conducted by Numsa were not credible. Samsea had, however, cautioned its members not to respond to the surveys by Numsa.

Samsea was not prepared to negotiate on actual increases, since the decision to negotiate on minimums was supported by its membership.

Picketing Samsea officials' businesses would not change the employers' position, he said.

Meanwhile, retailers Beaz Gona and Smart Centre have instituted a lock-out against SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) members who embarked on a wage strike last week.

Saccawu spokesman Pitso Tshukudu alleged yesterday that the two retailers, who have merged to form the Retail Apparel Group, were intimidating workers into signing forms denying them the right to strike and had threatened them with dismissals.

Workers had demanded a wage increase of R240 a month while management had offered R200.

Management, however, said its wage offer represented a 10% increase which exceeded inflation and compared favourably with other settlements in the retail sector.

The strike by Saccawu members at Stuttafords was finally resolved yesterday.

Management and the union agreed on a wage increase of R140 across the board, effective from this month. They also agreed on a 40-hour week with one additional Saturday a month.
By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE "cash-strapped" Edgars retail group has been hit by nationwide demonstrations involving 5 000 employees since August, culminating in brief work stoppages, group communications manager Mr Nigel Anwin said yesterday.

"During protest actions customers were often barred and intimidated from shopping by jeering demonstrators, which adversely affected business operations," he said.

Anwin was responding to South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu) and Federation of Retailers and Allied Workers Union (Fodcaw) allegations that the group had pleaded poverty and failed to offer any wage increases to its employees while it had posted a reasonable profit for the financial year.

At least 2 000 employees had been retrenched this year in a bid to turn the financial situation around. The unions had also been invited to inspect the audited financial statements, but refused and chose not to believe the company's predicament, Anwin said.

Union officials have walked out of the talks several times, he said, adding that management was disappointed by the immaturity shown by union representatives.

Fodcaw spokesman Nat Ketilele charged that the company was not prepared to allocate more than R300 million in refurbishing some of its stores.

Saccawu spokesman Pitso Tshukudu said the wage freeze would have a further negative effect on employees' salaries and increases in interest rates would impact severely on their spending power.

*The employee lockout at Stuttafords chain store has been resolved after Saccawu agreed to a R140 a month increase and 40-hour working week with one extra Saturday shift a month. Tshukudu said workers resumed their duties yesterday.

*Striking Saccawu members at Smarts Centre and Bee Gees were locked out after a wage dispute.*
Car manufacturing plants forced to close due to component shortages

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RFW 162
Vital car parts
strike halts
assembly lines

HENRI DU PLESSIS
Motorwys Express

Production has stopped on a
number of car assembly lines as
manufacturers wait for parts
from the strike-disrupted
component industry.

Delta Motor Corporation was
forced to close its plant in Port Eliza-
beth and send workers home when
the supply of vital parts like car seats
was cut by the strike action.

A Delta spokesman said the corpora-
tion would review the situation on
Monday.

South African Motor Corporation
(Sancor), Volkswagen and Nissan
are also reported to be affected.

A Toyota spokesman said they
were having supply problems, but
had been able to continue production.

Manufacturers, who use a "just in
time" supply system for efficiency,
may be hit hard if the strike continues
for much longer, say industry
sources.

The system allows the industry to
wait until the moment components
are needed before ordering them
from the independent manufacturers.
Strike by workers hits hard on motor industry

THE strike in the motor industry was having a major impact on the seven South African motor manufacturing plants, the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Ameo) said yesterday.

Some plants had been closed for most of the week while others had to send workers home after abridged production periods because of a critical shortage of components.

Moreover, said Ameo chairman Mr Brian Smith yesterday, some manufacturers were importing parts from abroad and could be forced to make this a permanent arrangement, with dire consequences for workers in the industry.

"Although the strike in the industry does not have wide support, it appears that the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has targeted certain key component suppliers. This is having a major impact on the motor manufacturers," said Smith.

"It appears that Numsa believes the seven motor manufacturers can apply pressure on the SA Motor Industry Employers' Association (Samica) to accept Numsa's demands." It was impossible for Ameo to influence the motor industry negotiations or the more than 18 000 employers who were a party to the negotiations, he said.

The strike by more than 60 000 workers started last week after Samica offered a 4.3 percent pay increase. Numsa, the Motor Industry Employees' Union and the Motor Industry Staff Association, are demanding a national increase of between 12 and 18 percent. -- Sapa
Car production grinds to a halt as crippling strike takes its toll

Johannesburg – A devastating strike by about 50,000 motor industry workers has forced three of South Africa’s seven car-makers to halt production amid a shortage of vehicle parts, officials said.

The workers, members of the National Union of Metal Workers of SA (Numsa), are employed at about 18,000 South African spare shops, panelbeating outlets, component-making firms, petrol stations and car dealerships.

They have been on strike since September 1, demanding wage increases of 12-18%, against employers’ offers of about 4.5%.

Among car-makers hit by the 11-day old action are Delta Motor Corp, in which General Motors has a controlling interest, and Nissan SA, in which Japan’s Nissan Motor Company holds a 50% stake. Delta said yesterday it had temporarily shut its two South African car assembly plants because of a lack of critical components.

“We will be able to reassess the situation only (next week), to establish whether the supply of critical components is sufficient to warrant recommencement of vehicle production,” Delta spokesman Mark Derry said.

He said Delta was now considering sourcing some of the parts, including seats, from abroad.

Mr Derry said Delta was losing production of more than 2,000 units, valued at R2.5 million, a day. Delta assembles Isuzu bakkies, and Opel Astras andCorsas.

The strike also shut South African Motor Corporation (Samcor), which assembles Fords and Mazdas.

Meanwhile, Nissan said it expected its plant near Pretoria – which employs 4,200 workers – to resume production by Tuesday if wage talks succeeded.

Volkswagen SA and Toyota SA said they had not been severely affected by the latest component shortage.

Volkswagen has secured a R5-billion order to supply 68,000 vehicles to Britain over the next 10 months.

Mercedes-Benz SA’s subsidiary Daimler-Benz, which also assembles Hondas, said it had slightly scaled down its production schedules while the strike continued unresolved. – Reuters
Critical shortage of car parts

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

By DON ROBERTSON

The strike by National Union of Metal Workers of SA (Numsa) in the retail motor and component industries has left the motor manufacturing sector facing a shortage of critical parts.

Car makers are now threatening to import parts, which could result in huge job losses in the component industry.

Some of the seven manufacturing plants have been closed for a week, while others are having to cut short the working day as they are unable to meet daily production schedules.

The strike by Numsa members working for the 18,000 employers represented by the SA Motor Industry Employers’ Association (Samdea) enters its third week tomorrow, with the union demanding increases in actual wages of 12%-18%, while Samdea is offering increases of 4.5% on minimum wages.
'Members of Fawu at Rothmans not on a go-slow'

Renee Grawitzky

THE Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) has denied allegations that its members at Rothmans International's Heidelberg plant had embarked on a go-slow and committed acts of sabotage by mixing different cigarette brands to pressures management to meet demands.

Management has refused to comment, but confirmed that parties have been engaged in wage negotiations since June and were meeting today.

Fawu said the situation at the plant was tense and the relationship with management had broken down. Workers were disillusioned and demoralised as negotiations had dragged on from June while they had been expecting increases from July.

Management was attempting to intimidate and provoke workers, it said. Ten workers had allegedly been dismissed for 'minor issues'.

The dispute takes place amid heightened tension around the Tobacco Products Amendment Bill. Rothmans said that there was no link between the dispute and the fact that the union was campaigning against the bill.

At the outset of negotiations the union was demanding a 10% increase and a 15% housing allowance.

Workers in the tobacco industry are among the highest paid in the country.

The bill will bring an end to the advertising and promotion of tobacco products, prohibit their free distribution, limit smoking in public places and allow for the regulation of tobacco products' nicotine and tar-levels.
Numsa proposes package to end motor-sector strike

Pearl  Sebolao and Renee Grawitzky

THE National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) would consider suspending the motor sector strike — which enters its third week — if employers agreed a package proposal tabled to break the impasse, Numsa spokesman Hosen Morapedi said at the weekend.

At the same time, vehicle manufacturers braced themselves for another week of irregular supplies of auto-components which had forced the closure of some plants while others had to send their employees home early.

Volkswagen denied earlier reports that its plant was forced to close. The company also denied reports that the strike would negatively affect a multi-billion rand export contract.

The Delta Motor Corporation, which was forced to close down its Kearspron Road and Stranderdale plants because of a shortage of certain components last week, would decide today whether the supply of critical components was sufficient for the vehicle production to resume.

The proposal tabled by Numsa to bring an end to the motor strike was made at a meeting with the SA Motor Industry Employers’ Association (Samwu) late last week.

It required employers to give an undertaking that from next year wage negotiations would be based on actual rates of pay instead of the minimum.

The proposal also called for parties to speed up the establishment of an industry policy forum to discuss the issue of actual wage increases, industry restructuring and transformation.

Numsa would then convert its wage demands — which ranged from 12% to 18% on actual rates of pay — for 1998 to be on minimum rates, Morapedi said. Samwu was given till Wednesday to sell the proposal to its members.

Samwu has in turn recommended that the Industry Policy Forum be set up and that it begins debating the unions’ demand of actual increases. Samwu also proposed the appointment of a mediator between the parties. This was rejected by Numsa.

Numsa meanwhile said it would intensify the strike by 60 000 motor sector workers. It would also target key establishments where senior Samwu officials had businesses. The sympathy strike at car manufacturing plants on September 22 would go ahead.
Refuse workers back on the job

STAFF REPORTER

Thousands of homes in the South Peninsula did not have their rubbish removed during an illegal day-long strike by refuse removal staff.

The strike, which lasted part of the working day, meant that yesterday's removals could not be completed. This had placed the service a day behind schedule.

Mohamed Kriel said staff were back on the job today and the refuse removal schedule should be back to normal by early next week.

Mr Kriel said the strike was over a Metro-wide dispute involving union organisational rights.

The South Peninsula had been made a victim of this dispute, he said.
Numsa gives word today on new strike

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) will announce this morning its decision on the nature of a second national "grasshopper" or sympathy strike by its 220 000 members planned for September 22.

Numsa's first sympathy strike, which set a precedent under the new Labour Relations Act, took place on September 1.

Dumisa Ntuli, the union's spokesman, said the decision would be based on an assessment of the impact of the two-week-old primary strike by 50 000 Numsa workers in the motor components industry.

This action has led to erratic production and the temporary closures of manufacturing plants by Samcor, Delta, Nissan and Volkswagen.

Reuters reported Mercedes-Benz had begun importing vehicle components by air to compensate for the shortage created by the strike, Annelise van der Laan, spokesman for Mercedes, said yesterday.

The South African Motor Corporation (Samcor), which assembles Ford and Mazda vehicles, and Delta, which makes Isuzu pickup trucks, had not ruled out the option if the strike was prolonged.

Volkswagen and Toyota said they were not experiencing problems with parts supplies.

Ntuli said the union's impact study would also take into consideration the behaviour and attitude of the police during the prolonged industrial action.

He said Numsa had written a letter to the minister of safety and security to complain about the harassment and arrest of workers on the picket lines.

The union's motor sector includes spares shops, car dealers, component manufacturers, petrol stations, car service workshops and component manufacturing companies.

Ntuli said over 8 000 workers from the union's Gauteng region had marched yesterday to the South African Motor Industry Employers' Association offices in Alberton. They handed over a memorandum of demands including wage increases ranging from 12 to 18 percent on minimum and actual rates of pay.

"We employees in the motor industry wish to express our great dismay and disappointment at the manner in which you conduct wage negotiations," the memorandum said.
Strike negotiators look to '99 wages

FRANK NXUMALO
AND ROY CORKAYNE

Johannesburg — Today's negotiations to end the two-week-old motor component industry strike were likely to focus on drawing up guidelines for next year's negotiations on actual rates of pay, management and union leaders said yesterday.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) warned employers that the strike by its 50,000 members in the sector would be strengthened with a second sympathy, or "grasshopper", strike by its 220,000 members if it did not get a written agreement on actual rates of pay for next year.

Mbuyiselo Ngwenda, the general secretary of Numsa, said the union's national executive had decided to prolong the strike if in-principle agreements were not clinched on actuals and "substantial increases on minimums in the lower grades".

Numsa said it would like to see a unitary bargaining council for the industry that took in the South African Motor Industry Employers Association (Samea).

Vic Fourie, the chief executive of Samea, said meaningful progress would probably be made at today's meeting, but progress depended on the trade unions not casting their package deal "in concrete".

He said there had not been any meeting between Samea and the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of SA or the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Association.

He said Samea's resistance to negotiations on actuals was not cast in concrete and it was prepared to discuss Numsa's wage negotiations suggestion with unions at the Industry Policy Forum, but it would be impossible to determine the outcome of those discussions this year.

Fourie said a lot had been made of Samea's opening offer of 4 percent on minimum prescribed wages and Numsa needed to "engage us in negotiations".

Motor manufacturers said there had been an improvement at some plants following the disruption of production at many plants last week.
Gallagher Estate accused of racism

Gallagher Estate management was accused of racism yesterday for allegedly ordering its security personnel to set police dogs on toy-toting black workers. The workers were demanding their severance pay by the Federation Commercial and Retail Workers Union (FEDCRWU).

Duncan Mamogone, the union spokesman, said security, cleaning, theatre, banqueting and switchboard operations had been totally outsourced, leaving a total of 115 workers without work. Mamogone said workers were toy-toting because they had not received the retrenchment packages they had been promised by management.

Mamogone said although the union understood that the company was restructuring, not a single white worker had been affected. A management spokesman said “there was no truth” in the allegations and refused to comment any further. — Frank Nxumalo, Johannesburg
Municipal protest action suspended

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Congress of SA Trade Unions has suspended its protest action against the privatisation of municipal services, planned for Tuesday, after sufficient progress was made during bilateral meetings with Provincial Affairs minister Vallie Moosa this week.

The federation’s executive meeting this week also adopted a range of resolutions on next month’s presidential job summit and the accountability of federation officials entering Parliament.

The SA Municipal and Allied Workers Union said while progress had been made in talks with Moosa, it did not believe that the whole anti-privatisation campaign should be put on hold. The meeting with Moosa on Saturday was called after labour and government failed in the National Economic Development and Labour Council to resolve their differences on the issue of privatisation of municipal services.

The federation said the minister and the munic-
Meeting fails to break strike

Reneé Stawicki

A MARATHON meeting between the National Union of Metal Workers of SA and the SA Motor Industry Employers' Association failed on Wednesday night to end the impasse over the three-week motor strike.

The union said it was disappointed that the association did not respond to its proposals for an agreement on wages for next year, industry transformation, and substantial increases on minimum wages for lower-grade workers this year.

Another meeting will be held on Sunday.
New unit to crack down on Cape gangs

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — Government announced the establishment yesterday of a “gang-buster” unit in the Western Cape, made up of 30 top prosecutors, police investigators, lawyers, tax collectors and chartered accountants.

The “investigating directorate on organised crime and public safety” is the first major anticrime initiative of the new national director of public prosecutions, Buile Shilobedi.

Justice Minister Dullah Omar told a media briefing the unit would remain outside the normal chain of command to ensure it remained “untainted by the stigma” attached to other police units working on gang-related activity in the Western Cape.

It would be led by Western Cape deputy attorney-general advocate Percy Sonn. Omar said Sonn had monitored gang activity in the province for the past year and had visited the US to study responses to illicit drug trafficking and gang violence there.

Omar said the team would have access to all legal resources at its disposal to hit the gangs “where it hurts most” — their financial transactions.

Individual high-profile gangsters would be targeted in a sustained manner. Every breach of the law, no matter how minor, will be followed up.

Omar said: “The time has come to adopt extraordinary measures.”

He said he and national police commis- sioner George Fiyaz, who was also at the briefing, “accept that the buck stops with us”. Fiyaz said the unit was an appropriate response to the ever-increasing global “sophistication of crime. If we do not react in kind we will not break its back.”

Omar said tax collectors seconded from the SA Revenue Service, together with chartered accountants, were available by Business Against Crime, would focus on the financial transactions of gangs. “The asset seizure provisions of the Drug Trafficking Act and the Proceeds of Crime Act will be extensively employed to cripple the gangs financially,” he said.

Deputy Justice Minister Joe Matthews pointed to the imprisonment of notorious US gangster Al Capone in 1931 for tax evasion as an example of how the unit would operate.

Omar said cases would be “fast-tracked” through the courts. A source said that cases would be prosecution-driven to ensure success. Sloppy police work had previously resulted in gangsters walking free would end.

The unit’s work would be monitored at a national level by a “control board” comprising the national police commissioner, the commissioner of the revenue service and the director-general of the National Intelligence Agency.

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Eskom to sue union for damages to office

René Grawitzky

ESKOM is to sue the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) for R6m in compensation and loss of earnings resulting from damage to its head office in Johannesburg caused when striking workers went on a rampage in July and burned the building down.

The union met Public Enterprises Minister Stella Sigcau earlier this week to discuss its concerns over Eskom’s plans.

NUM sources said Eskom’s plans could damage relationships between the two parties and were seen as an attempt to destroy the union.

It is believed the union is being sued for R6m in damages and an additional R4m for lost profit and income.

At the time of the incident, Sigcau and Minerals and Energy Minister Fenewell Maduna warned that government would not tolerate anarchy and criminal acts. They said the union should take responsibility for the actions of their members. “Gone are the days when people can trash property and get away with it,” Sigcau said.

Union sources said that during yesterday’s meeting Sigcau requested another meeting today to discuss the possible appointment of two deputy CEOs at Eskom, a move which has led to tension within the organisation.

Eskom management confirmed that it would meet Sigcau before the meeting and organisational labour.

Speculation has surrounded these appointments, which were supposed to have been announced some time ago. Union sources said the speculation had resulted in a power struggle between candidates. At the same time, the appointment had raised racial tensions, with white employees claiming black candidates were being sidelined.

There are said to be two internal candidates — Bongam Khumalo, Eskom’s human resource director, and Dolly Mokgale, who heads the corporate affairs division.

Eskom had also approached a number of outside candidates.
Numsa agrees to more talks

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

IN a final bid to resolve the current strike by 50,000 workers in the motor industry, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has agreed to hold further talks on Sunday.

The decision comes after abortive attempts last Wednesday to resolve the situation.

Numsa sector coordinator Mr Hoseni Morapedi said yesterday the employers again failed to respond to Numsa's set of proposals around an agreement in principle on actual rate of pay increases for next year.

The union is extremely disappointed with the South African Motor Industry Employers Association (Sama) negotiators for not showing a sense of urgency in resolving the three-week-old strike, he said.

He charged that employers had shown a lack of commitment to genuine negotiations.

Samaa chief executive Mr Vic Fourie maintained that the industry was "too diverse" and some employers could not pay actual rates. After a series of meetings, the association pleaded for further adjournment until next Sunday.

A solidarity strike scheduled for next week by the entire 220,000-strong membership of Numsa will continue on Tuesday if the weekend talks fail to find a resolution.

The strike was not about the differences in percentages between employers' offers and unions' demands, but the method of granting increases, Morapedi said.
Striking petrol attendants kidnap 'scab'
Pay increase method still the sticking point in strike

EMPLOYERS and trade union representatives will meet again today in a bid to end the three-week strike in the motor industry, which has affected 18 300 businesses including filling stations, panel beaters and components manufacturers.

However, both parties remained adamant on Friday they would not compromise over the key issue in the dispute, which is the union demand to negotiate wage increases on actual rates of pay rather than prescribed industry minimums.

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) also threatened to raise the stakes in the strike by continuing sympathy strikes by its 220 000 members.

At present, wage talks between the SA Motor Industry Employers’ Association (Samibia) and Numsa are conducted under minimum rates, while most employees are paid far above these. In practice, this translates into increases either not being granted or being granted at employers’ discretion.

Numsa negotiator Hosea Morapedi said the method of granting increases was the main point of contention.

“It is the key issue and central to the strike. We want to make it a point that in future everybody gets a wage increase,” said Morapedi.

Samibia negotiator Vic Fourie said employers could not concede to the union demand because of the large and diverse number of employers in the industry.

“It becomes impossible to negotiate on actual wages. Employers are spread throughout the country and vary from those who have 100 employees to those with only one. We believe you cannot create one wage model,” said Fourie.

Fourie said most establishments had not been detrimentally affected by the strike. “We are making use of scab labour and have used students, family and friends. There are very few establishments that have had to close. The loss cannot be calculated. It may be insignificant,” he said.

However, component manufacturers bore greater costs as some vehicle manufacturers had begun to import parts, although Fourie said, not on an extensive scale.

A meeting today on the motor industry dispute will try to resolve how wages are negotiated, writes CAROL PATON

Greater pressure on the components sector could lead to a compromise deal today, where the employers agree to negotiate wages on actual rates of pay.

However, Numsa is determined to win substantial gains across the board, having in previous years postponed strike action.

“People who have joined the union expect gains. This time we have complied with all the technicalities for a protected strike and it’s do or die,” said Morapedi.

Wages in the industry are low. Morapedi said prescribed minimums were R129 a week and the average pay of petrol attendants about R250 a week.

He accused employers of dragging their feet in resolving the dispute. “We were very disappointed by the pace of the employers in these negotiations. On Wednesday they once again asked for more time — even though the same issues have been on the table since the start of the dispute.”
Motor industry strike set to continue

Pearl Sebolae

THE motor industry strike, which enters its fourth week today, was set to continue indefinitely after wage talks between the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) and employers did not yield any results.

The parties failed to reach agreement after five hours of negotiations last night.

Numsa spokesman Hoesa Morapedi said the SA Motor Industry Employers' Association (Sumea) rejected proposals made by the union last week in order to break the impasse.

Morapedi said the main sticking point was the issue of granting the workers increases based on actual rates instead of minimum wages.

He said there was no way Numsa would back down on the strike if employers did not agree to the framework — which included an “in principle agreement” on actual rates of pay for the year ahead.

Sumea also rejected proposals for an adjustment of the minimum wage for petrol pump attendants to R5-an-hour, he said.

Meanwhile, the second sympathy strike by Numsa members in vehicle manufacturing and engineering industries go ahead tomorrow. More than 170 000 workers were expected to participate in the strike.
Thousands of municipal workers marched to the provincial government offices in Wale Street today to ask local government MEC Patrick McKenzie to intervene in an 18-month wrangle with the Cape Metropolitan Council.

Officials from the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) handed a memorandum to provincial government officials at the Provincial Legislature in Wale Street, as well as council officials from the Cape Metropolitan Council and Cape Town City Council.

They asked for intervention in the impasse between the union and their employers.

Thousands of municipal employees from all Cape Town's six municipalities as well as the CMC, downed tools today in support of the union's one-day strike. Among those who did not take part were people in "essential" posts such as ambulance workers, firemen and traffic officers.

The union called the strike to protest the "unilateral withdrawal of Samwu's organisational rights" after unsuccessful attempts to resolve the dispute.

Union spokesman Majdzie Abrahams said the dispute followed months of talks about what constitutes a union constituency and how the union should deploy its full-time shop stewards.

In terms of the Labour Relations Act, a full-time shop steward can be employed for every 1,000 signed-up members.

Mr Abrahams said since the restructuring of the local government they had been having problems with the Cape Metropolitan Council and some of the six municipalities about the deployment of shop stewards.

"In the Oostenberg Municipality, for example, where we have fewer than 1,000 workers, only because of the size of the municipality, the local government refuses to allow us to employ one of our shop stewards. This we find completely unacceptable as they want to determine how we should constitute ourselves."

The issue is to be referred to the Labour Court late this afternoon.
Breakdown in wage talks

The strike by thousands of motor industry workers will continue this week after talks yesterday between employers and the union failed to yield a settlement, the National Union of Metalworkers of SA said.

Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said no further negotiations between the union and the SA Motor Industry Employers’ Association (Samaea) were planned.

The breakdown of the talks yesterday after nearly five hours follows the failed negotiations last week when Numsa vowed to intensify the action if a settlement was not reached soon in the wage dispute.

Ntuli said in addition to the ongoing strike by up to 60 000 motor industry workers, a second one-day sympathy strike by other Numsa members would go ahead tomorrow.

This would involve up to 170 000 Numsa members working in the car and tyre manufacturing, steel, and engineering industries. Other sympathy strikes may follow.

Last week Samaea raised its initial offer of a 4,5 percent increase on minimum wages to between 8 and 10 percent.

Numsa is demanding a 14 to 18 percent increase, but said the main sticking point was still the issue of how increases were granted.

Ntuli said Samaea did not respond positively yesterday to Numsa’s proposals on basing increases on actual wages earned for a minimum wage of R5-an-hour for petrol attendants, and to close the wage differentials.

Samaea had “a fixed mandate” to give increases on minimum wages only. It refused to sign an in-principle agreement to pay increases on actual wages and to agree to implement the pay system next year, he said.

Samaea spokesman Vic Fourie was not immediately available for comment.

Motor industry workers have been on strike since September 1, affecting petrol stations, panelbeating shops, spare parts firms and car component manufacturers – Sapa.
NUMSA strike talks deadlocked

More than 320,000 workers will go on strike tomorrow
NOT ALL WORKERS BELONG TO NUMSA

Petrol station owners fear strikers’ attacks

AS THE wage dispute between NUMSA and employers continues, working petrol attendants have become the target of attacks by striking colleagues. \text{GASANT ABARDER reports.}

Petrol attendants on duty around the Cape Peninsula have become the targets of their striking colleagues and petrol station owners fear violent attacks on their employees will continue this week.

Members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) have been striking since September 1 for an 18\% wage increase for petrol attendants and a 12\% increase for mechanics and panelbeaters. Employers are offering 4.5\%.

A mob of more than 150 NUMSA members attacked Salt River petrol attendant Johan Moston, 23, of Bothasig on Thursday afternoon after they had attended a meeting at their offices nearby.

"I was filling up a car when I noticed the men approaching the forecourt," Moston said. "The customer paid with a card and one of the men demanded it from me. That's when the trouble started."

Moston said the group began beating him over the head and neck with a petrol pump and a watering can and ripped his shirt off. However, they did not use their sticks and sjamboks.

The men then tried to drain petrol from the pumps, but these were locked.

The attack did not deter Moston from going to work — an hour early — at the petrol station on the Salt River Circle yesterday.

"We don't mind the strike, but they must not intimidate people who want to work," said Moston.

"We don't mind the strike, but they must not intimidate people who want to work," said Moston.

The owner of a Wynberg petrol station, who did not wish to be named for fear of reprisals, said armed NUMSA members had swooped down on to his station's forecourt and severely beaten three petrol attendants with sjamboks on Tuesday morning.

"I find it strange that NUMSA could allow their members to employ these methods which they fought so strongly against in the apartheid days," he said.

"My workers are members of an independent union."

The owner said that only half of his staff members were on duty and that those at work were tense. "It is difficult to trade under these conditions," he said.

In Voorstreek Road, Maitland, petrol attendants were threatened on their forecourts last week. The owner of one petrol station said some of his workers had not arrived for work because they were afraid of being attacked.

"I have no problem with NUMSA's striking, but its members have to understand that not all workers belong to their union," he said. "They are being intolerant."

The Maitland owner said he heard that at a petrol station in Observatory, a petrol attendant who was not taking part in the strike had been the victim of a racial attack.

In the Strand, striking petrol attendants abducted casual and non-striking workers on Thursday and Friday before police intervened.

Police and traffic officials blocked off roads to prevent the striking petrol attendants from entering petrol stations.

A spokesman for the Strand police station said the situation, although tense, was quiet and that there had been no incidents of violence since Friday.

She said that private security guards were on duty at petrol stations in Maitland.

"It is difficult to counter the attacks because they are taking place sporadically across the Peninsula," Western Cape police spokesperson Vivienne Phillips said.

She said the Public Order Policing Unit was deployed on routes like Voorstreek Road where the attacks had taken place.

No incidents had been reported since Friday, she said. She urged owners of petrol stations to report all threats and attacks.

NUMSA officials were not available for comment.

Strike revs up as car industry talks sputter

The strike by thousands of motor industry workers would continue this week as talks between employers and the union had failed to yield a settlement, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) said yesterday.

NUMSA spokesperson Dumi Ntuli said no further negotiations between the union and the SA Motor Industry Employers Association (SAME) were planned.

The talks broke down after nearly five hours yesterday.

They followed failed negotiations last week, when NUMSA vowed to intensify the action if a settlement in the wage dispute was not reached soon.

Ntuli said that in addition to the strike by up to 60 000 motor industry workers, a second one day sympathy strike by other NUMSA members would go ahead tomorrow.

This would involve up to 170 000 NUMSA members working in the car, tyre, steel and engineering industries.

Ntuli said other sympathy strikes could follow.

Last week, NUMSA said it had initially offered a 4.5\% increase on minimum wages to between 8\% and 10\%.

NUMSA is demanding a 12\% to 18\% increase, but says the main sticking point is how the increases will be applied.

Ntuli said SAME had not responded positively yesterday to NUMSA's proposal to be applied to actual wages earned, for a minimum wage of R5 an hour for petrol attendants and for the wage differentials to be closed.

SAME had "a fixed mandate" to give increases on minimum wages only.

It refused to sign an in principal agreement to pay increases on actual wages and to agree to implement the pay system next week, Ntuli said.

SAME spokesperson Vic Feurme was not available for comment.

Motor industry workers have been on strike since September 1. The strike has affected petrol stations, panelbeating workshops, some parts firms and manufacturers of car components.

The country's seven car manufacturers have been seriously affected by the lack of supplies of car components. They may also be affected by this week's sympathy strike — Saga.
Intervention sought in 22-day-old car industry dispute

Numsa calls on CCMA to intervene in motor strike

FRANK NXUMALO
AND ROY COKAYNE

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) had called on the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) to intervene in the 22-day-old motor industry national strike by 50,000 of its members, Hosea Morapedi, the union’s motor sector co-ordinator, said yesterday.

The 220,000 Numsa members will down tools today in a second sympathy strike with their colleagues in the motor components sector.

The first sympathy strike by Numsa, which set a precedent under the new Labour Relations Act, took place on September 1.

Delta Motor and Samcor have decided to close their assembly plants today, but other local manufacturers will keep their plants open for production despite the planned secondary strike.

Doc Seiler, the executive director of human resources at Samcor, said there was dissatisfaction among its engine plant workforce about the decision because employees would rather be working than having to take time off.

Seiler said the plants would reopen for production on Wednesday.

Ed Emmett, the corporate communications manager for Delta Motor, said Delta’s Kempton Road and Strandel assembly plants in Port Elizabeth would be closed today because of the lack of critical components as a result of the ongoing industrial action in the motor retail sector.

Emmett said the plants would re-open on Wednesday but would be closed for the public holiday on Thursday.

“Production is planned to resume on Friday but this will depend on the availability of components, which is being assessed on a day-to-day basis,” Emmett said.

Matt Gemrich, the general manager of public affairs for Volkswagen SA, said its plant in Uitenhage would be open today.

Gemrich said the company would “try to run production as far as we can.”

He added “This is dependent on what tomorrow brings.”

The CCMA will intervene in terms of section 126 of the new Labour Relations Act, which means it can only propose mutually acceptable terms but cannot impose these as a solution on any of the parties to the dispute.

Numsa accused the South African Motor Industry Employers’ Association (Samaxes) of failing to reciprocate its proposals on a signed agreement on actual rates of pay, which would be effective next year; guaranteed personal increases for members already earning above industry minimum wages, implementation of a policy forum to deal with the industry’s transformation and a minimum rate of R5 an hour for petrol attendants.

The union said that it believed the intervention of the CCMA would end the “ostrich approach of employers.”

Morapedi said “The point of contention is about the proposed framework and the method of granting increases in the industry.

“Our real battle with Samuses is on the principle agreement to pay increases on actuals.”
Tygerberg hit hard by stoppage

DAN SIMON

SEVERAL thousand municipal workers did not turn up for work on the first day of an SA Municipal Workers' Union-led strike in the Cape Metropolitan region yesterday, with the Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) and six local authorities reporting some disruption to service delivery.

About 2 000 striking workers later converged on the provincial administration offices in Wale Street where they listened to speeches and where a memorandum was handed over to a representative of Local Government MEC Patric McKenzie. They then marched to the offices of the CMC and the Cape Town City Council.

Worst hit by the strike was the City of Tygerberg, the only municipality to experience strike action in its essential services despite an urgent temporary Labour Court interdict prohibiting strike action by essential services workers.

Details of the full extent of service disruptions, including refuse removal and bulk water supply at Tygerberg and the other municipalities, were not available by late yesterday.

Samwu on Friday announced its intention to lead the 18 000-strong Cape Metro branch of the union on strike in response to what it says was the "unilateral withdrawal" of Samwu's organisational rights.

But Weclogo, a body made up of the CMC and six local authorities, on Sunday obtained a temporary interdict restraining essential services workers from taking part in the strike. Non-essential services workers are not bound by the provisions of the interdict.

The strike essentially revolves around the number of full-time union shop stewards that should be deployed in the workforce.

Weclogo and Samwu are deadlocked in negotiating the region's quota of full-time shop stewards, with Weclogo saying the number should be set at 18 (at an annual cost of R1.5 million to levy payers) while the Samwu proposes 31, at a cost of R3.1m to levy payers.

Under the Labour Relations Act, a full-time shop steward can be employed for every 1 000 signed-up members.

Natie Engelbrecht, legal adviser and organiser for Weclogo, said the CMC and the six local authorities would find it "extremely expensive" to maintain the large wage bill for 18 full-time shop stewards, who each earned more than R100 000 a year.

Despite full-time shop stewards in local authority structures, there were also some 520 ordinary shop stewards in the CMC and the six substructures, he said.

Engelbrecht said the CMC and local authorities had been negotiating for more than two years for a "new dispensation" with less full-time shop steward numbers.

He said that full-time shop stewards in the CMC area enjoyed a "better deal" than those in other cities.
Union asks for help in 'injecting sense of urgency into talks'

THE Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has been asked to intervene in the 22-day-old motor industry strike following the breakdown of wage talks at the weekend.

National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said the union approached the commission yesterday in a bid "to instil a sense of urgency" into the talks with the SA Motor Industry Employers' Association (Samsea).

He said Numsa would wait for the commission's intervention to take its course before taking a decision on whether to withdraw the compromise proposal, which was rejected by the employers on Sunday, in favour of its initial demand for increases ranging from 12% to 15%.

The proposal included an "in principle agreement" on actual rates of pay for next year and the speedy establishment of an industry policy forum. Numsa in turn would settle for increases in minimums for this year.

The employers' negotiating team was to meet last night to consider whether to agree to the involvement of a third party in the talks.

CEO Vic Fourie said Samsea would meet Numsa today for informal discussions "to search for possible areas where a compromise can be reached".

Meanwhile, the second sympathy strike by more than 170 000 Numsa members in vehicle manufacturing and engineering industries will be intensified today.

There will be marches and rallies around the country.
Numsa sympathy strike today

JOHANNESBURG: More than 220 000 workers allied to the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and other motor industry trade unions will take part in a national sympathy strike today.

The action follows the failure of talks held on Sunday to resolve the dispute between 50 000 motor workers and the South African Motor Industry Employers' Association (SAMEA).

Motor industry workers have been on strike since September 1.

The walkout has affected petrol stations, panelbeating shops, spare parts firms and car component manufacturers.

Numsa spokesperson Dumisa Ntuli said the union wants the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration to intervene in the 21-day strike to force the employers to "negotiate in good faith".

He said the main sticking point is the issue of granting workers increases based on actual rates of pay rather than minimum wages.

SAMEA says it cannot agree to negotiate increases on actual wages, and adds minimum levels should be negotiated at a central level, with actual wages a matter to be decided locally. — Sapa

et 22/9/98
Seifsa claims union had little backing in sympathy strike for motor workers

Numsa claims huge support

FRANK NXUMALO
AND ROY COKEyne

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) said yesterday there had been overwhelming backing for its sympathy strike by more than 200,000 members in support of colleagues in the motor industry sector.

About 50,000 Numsa motor sector workers have been on strike since the beginning of this month.

Three of the four main tyre makers were paralysed yesterday, with at least 3,300 workers absent from work in support of the motor sector’s wage dispute.

The vehicle sector was also affected. Two vehicle assembly plants were closed and a third had no production. Production was disrupted at two more plants.

Numsa accused officials of the South African Motor Industry Employers’ Association of failing to “approach the whole negotiation this year with maximum wit and maturity,” said Dumisa Nhul, Numsa’s spokesman.

“The 100 percent support displayed the commitment of workers to improve the buying power of motor workers,”

However, the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (Seifsa), from whom the majority of workers on the sympathy strike were drawn, said it appeared the secondary strike had had “very little support among Numsa membership in the metal and engineering industry.”

“The results of a Seifsa survey indicate a very small number of companies in Mpumalanga and Gauteng were affected by (yesterday’s) action,” Seifsa said.

“Apart from a small number of companies in the Port Elizabeth area, none of the companies surveyed in the Free State, KwaZulu Natal, Western Cape and Eastern Cape were affected.”

Numsa accused the police of “brutally assaulting” its members “in cahoots with employers.” It said at least 40 strikers were arrested.

“The majority of those assaulted were deliberately provoked by employers to act violently.” The union said “Numsa believes the police must be taken on a course on how to conduct themselves during legal strikes.”

Toyota South Africa and Nissan South Africa both reported production as normal. But Toyota said production was slow because of a shortage of key component supplies.

Mike London, the public relations manager of tyre maker Goodyear, said two shifts at the Port Elizabeth plants had failed to report for work.

London said assuming the third shift, which was due to start work at 11pm last night also failed to report for work, the strike would have involved about 1,200 workers at Goodyear.

Mike Hankinson, the chief executive of tyre maker Dunlop Africa, said some of its plants were working at 100 percent and others were not working at all, but the impact of the secondary strike had been “negligible.”

Richard Carter, the general manager communications and public affairs at BMW South Africa, said only about 50 percent of its workforce had reported for work yesterday and no production was possible.

Carter said BMW had not been affected by key component shortages, and prior to yesterday its plant had been operating at scheduled capacity.

“BMW SA, as a result of a R1 billion injection of cash and technology by BMW AG, is moving on to a major export footing. We have been encouraged by the government, ministers and MIDP (motor industry development programme) to do that.

“But the trade unions, which are separate from our workforce, with whom our relationship is the best in industry, are at odds with government policy and certainly not supportive of major companies moving into primary exports contracts abroad.

“If this is the environment in which major companies have to try to enter export markets abroad, those attempts are going to fail, together with the concomitant benefits that go with it, such as job creation and foreign exchange earnings,” Carter said.
Strike forces motor assembly plant to close
FIRST STRIKE IN 50 YEARS BATTERING ALL IN MOTOR INDUSTRY

desperation zone, bosses face huge losses
industrial action drags on; workers near smaller businesses in danger of closing as

CHRISTINE RASCHEL

Fourth week enters in strike
the three strikes in this round of the motor industry

THE ESB polish Workers Union

 webinar September 23, 1998
New openness in motor strike

ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria — The SA Motor Industry Employers’ Association (Samea) would co-operate with any action that could lead to the settlement of the motor sector strike, including the involvement of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), said Vic Fourie, the chief executive of Samea, yesterday.

However, Fourie said Samea and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) had agreed during their informal meeting on Tuesday that the timing was not yet right for the CCMA to become involved.

Fourie said Samea and Numsa would possibly look at involving the CCMA next week if the wage negotiation dispute had still not been resolved.

He said another informal meeting with Numsa would be held on Friday.

Fourie said Samea and Numsa had ignored mandates at these informal meetings, endeavouring instead to identify possible common ground and ways of resolving the dispute.

He said certain common areas had been identified at Tuesday’s meeting which both Samea and Numsa had to take back to their structures for a mandate.

"The pursuit of these issues has the potential of allowing us to have a reasonable chance of resolving the dispute. But I cannot say at this stage that we are going to be successful," he said.

Fourie was not prepared to provide any details about the offers and compromises by Samea and Numsa, stating that they were "too sensitive at this time."

The motor sector strike is now in its fourth week. Numsa has been demanding wage negotiations on actual rates of pay rather than minimum pay levels.

Samea has resisted wage negotiations on actual wages at central level, maintaining that actual wages should be negotiated at plant level because of the diversity of the industry.
Motor sector employers, union to resume talks

Dustin Chick

TALKS to resolve the four-week-old wage dispute between the SA Motor Industries Employers' Association and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) are expected to continue this morning, with the association "cautiously optimistic" about a potential breakthrough.

Yesterday, association CE Vic Fourie said today's discussions would pick up from informal talks which took place on Tuesday where a "possible area of settlement" may have been found. He said the informal talks were a bid to move away from "rigid mandates" and identify areas for possible settlements.

Fourie would not disclose details of the possible agreement because of the sensitivity of the matter.

He said workers would be entering their fourth week without pay and there would be pressure on the union to settle.

Fourie said the financial cost to employers was "negligible" because they had been able to hire temporary labour.

Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said the union hoped for a settlement "soon".

However, Ntuli said it was difficult to predict when the dispute would be resolved.

On Wednesday motor manufacturers bore the brunt of a one-day sympathy strike by about 220 000 Numsa members, as absenteeism forced the closure of several motor assembly plants already crippled by component shortages caused by the primary strike in the motor retail industry.

Numsa's demands are a framework on principle rates of pay, to be implemented next year; a minimum wage of R5/hour for petrol attendants; personal guarantees for all workers of an increase above the minimum wage and the introduction of an industry policy forum as a tool for the transformation and restructuring of the industry.
Car makers fly overseas as strike takes its toll

ANDRÉ JURGENS

MERCEDES-Benz has taken to the skies—literally—in a bid to offset the crippling effects of a four-week strike in the motor industry.

The luxury car manufacturer, based in East London, is flying vital parts in from overseas suppliers because it cannot get them locally. "We've been operating under trying circumstances for two weeks and have not met 50 percent of our production target," said spokesman Wilfred Porth.

The strike is inflicting a heavy toll on the Eastern Cape's already fragile economy. The province is home to four of South Africa's biggest vehicle and engine manufacturing plants and production has at times slowed to a trickle because of the critical shortage of parts.

About 60,000 workers employed countrywide by vehicle parts manufacturers, panel beaters, distributors and spares outlets are taking part in the strike.

"The region's economy hinges on the auto industry—we can ill afford the effects of a long strike," said Alfred da Costa, head of Port Elizabeth's regional chamber of commerce and industry.

He said up to 70 percent of the region's smaller businesses were somehow linked to the vehicle-manufacturing trade. "Investor confidence is based largely on the smooth running of the motor industry. "We have a history of militant workforces and the strike is creating the perception that the region cannot deliver the goods," he said.

Harry Gazenbam, a spokesman for the organisation representing the seven major car makers in the country, the Automobile Manufacturers' Association, said: "Forcing manufacturers to look overseas means cutting their reliance on local suppliers, leading to job losses in that sector."

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, which was unavailable for comment, is demanding a pay increase of between 12 and 18 percent, while the South African Motor Industry Employers' Association is offering 8 to 10 percent.
Edgars clarifies basis for suing union for R746 000

Dustin Chick

EDGARS yesterday denied weekend reports that it was suing the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) for R760m for loss of income as a result of an illegal strike by the union.

However, the company said it was suing the union for R746 000 for losses incurred due to the running of a second shift at its distribution centre, after Saccawu members went on an illegal strike in an attempt to force the company to drop its wage freeze. Edgars human resources director Nigel Unwn said at the weekend.

The second shift has been in place for the past month.

More than 10 000 company employees belonging to Saccawu are expected to embark on national strike action this morning in protest against the implementation of a wage freeze for the current financial year.

Unwn said the freeze was implemented in April because of a 26% drop in profit for the period to March and was accepted by all employees except those belonging to Saccawu. He said 1 500 people had been retrenched for the company to cut costs and improve its finances.

The union had not taken up an offer to appoint its own auditors to check the figures supplied by the company and had instead accused the company of lying, Unwn said.

Saccawu assistant general secretary Herbert Mkhize announced at the weekend that the union would go on strike to put pressure on the company to lift the wage freeze.

Mkhize said that the action was precipitated by Edgars's "arrogance and intransigence" shown towards the bargaining process.

The union said its intention to table a proposed 15% to 20% wage increase was shot down by the introduction of the wage freeze. The union had explored all avenues, including go-slows, picketing and mediation by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, Mkhize said.

Meanwhile, the Food and Allied Workers' Union said at the weekend that its members at Dairy Belle would embark on an "indefinite" strike following a deadlock in wage talks.
Edgars workers to go on strike

EMPLOYEES of the Edgars group of companies are set to go on a nationwide strike today to pressure their management to lift a proposed wage freeze for the 1998-99 financial year.

South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Saccawu) assistant general secretary Herbert Mkhize said the industrial action was precipitated by the "arrogance and intransigence" of the company towards the bargaining process.

The Edgars group has proposed a wage freeze, citing a fall in profits of 28 percent and the current economic hardships.

Saccawu said its intention to table a wage proposal of between 15 and 20 percent was torpedoed by the proposed freeze.

"Edgars has always been difficult to negotiate with and this stance has come as no surprise to us if the profits have fallen by 28 percent then what has happened to the other 72 percent?"

"We are not dealing with a company that is in the red here," Mkhize told a media briefing in Johannesburg on Saturday.

He said a typical example of the company's intransigence was the R733 000 lawsuit it had slapped on the union on Friday evening — for loss of earnings.

He said the union had explored all avenues at its disposal, including go-slow, picketing and mediation by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, but to no avail.

Mkhize said that despite the lawsuit, his members were going ahead with the strike today.

"We suspect there is a conspiracy by captains of the retail sector — using Edgars as a guinea pig — to hold back the advances made in the Labour Relations Act and we are contemplating the possibility of a sympathy strike as a union should the current efforts fail," Sapa
Conciliation bid in motor sector strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

A N ATTEMPT will be made today to end the five-week-long strike in the motor industry by 50,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa.

The union and the employers' organisation will meet in an attempt to conciliate under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

Numsa coordinator Mr. Nosipho Morapedi said yesterday the union and the South African Motor Industry and Employers Association (Samsea) had agreed to refer their long-standing dispute to the CCMA after having failed repeatedly to come to a settlement.

A series of unsuccessful mediation forums had been initiated by Numsa, he added.

Meanwhile, in an incident related to the ongoing strike, about five people were reportedly injured in attacks by rampaging mobs over the weekend.

Morapedi could give no details about the attacks or whether they were directed at scab labourers or striking Numsa members. He referred further enquiries to the union's legal officer, who could not be contacted.

The union had originally demanded 12 to 18 percent on actual rate of payment and Samsea's counter-offer was a minimum of 4.5 percent, which was raised in the last talks to eight percent.

Harry Gazeondo of the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation said the strike had had a negative impact on the country's seven major car manufacturing assembly plants.

Import car parts

The strike has affected motor dealers, component manufacturers, including Dobyl and other engineering companies, spare parts dealers, and filling stations. The Mercedes-Benz assembly plant in East London has had to import car parts from overseas suppliers.

Morapedi said employers had rejected the union's proposal to make guaranteed concessions for those employees who would not benefit from the minimum wage increase offered by the employers.
New talks on strike planned

(Pearl Sebolae)

FRESH attempts to resolve the long-standing motor industry wage strike by about 60,000 National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) members will be made today, when the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration hosts a meeting between employers and employees.

The talks between Numsa and the SA Motor Industries Employers' Association were initially scheduled to take place yesterday.

However, the meeting had to be postponed to today after the employers indicated that they were not ready, Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said.

The association warned that retrenchments were likely to take place when the dispute was resolved.

Association CE Vic Fourie said the motor industry employed an excessive number of workers.

He welcomed the intervention of the commission in the dispute.

He said Numsa and the association had, at a previous meeting, agreed on all issues except guaranteed increases for all workers, irrespective of how much they earned.

Labour Minister Shepherd Mdladlana also said he would be available to meet with both parties over the five-week-old strike, if either party requested a meeting.

Mdladlana's office said he had so far not been asked to intervene, as reported in the media over the weekend.

However, he was monitoring the dispute, and had been briefed by the commission and the labour department.
Strikers force store closures

THE nationwide wage strike by members of the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union forced the Edgars group to close some of its branches and subsidiaries yesterday.

Edgars human resources director Nigel Unwin said the group closed its store in central Johannesburg, as well as the Cutlbers and Jet stores in Eloff Street.

"We have closed down our distribution centres in Johannesburg and Durban. We have also closed our mailing operation, Edmal," Unwin said.

The group said, only a handful of workers had participated in the strike—a claim denied by Saccawu.

The union and management also made conflicting statements on violence accompanying the strike.

Said Unwin: "About 300 out of the 8 000 workforce are on strike.

"The other 94 percent have reported for work, and in most of the provinces it is business as usual."

"There is no strike in KwaZulu-Natal, the Cape area, Northern Province and in North West. There is a little bit of it in the Free State, Witbank and Gauteng," he said.

"The major problem we have had thus far is of striking workers attacking customers and staff who have ignored the strike. One of the strikers attacked a customer and was arrested."

Saccawu assistant general-secretary Herbert Mkhize claimed Unwin's statements were inaccurate.

"About 3 000 workers took to the streets today. Shops were shut down and the strike is set to continue until management is prepared to come to the table with genuine proposals," Mkhize said.

"The workers are demanding that management lift the wage freeze for the 1998/99 financial year."

Citing a 28 percent drop in profits in the last financial year, the Edgars group said it would not grant any increases—Sapa.
Violence erupts as Edgars strikers protest

Several stores shut in standoff over wage freeze

Staff Reporter and Sapa

Police fired rubber bullets at striking workers outside Edgars' headquarters in Johannesburg yesterday when protesters began to throw stones at them on the first day of a wage-related strike called at branches throughout the country.

Police said one man was arrested for public violence and then also charged with armed robbery when he tried to grab a policeman's firearm.

The strike forced the clothing group to close some of its branches and subsidiaries yesterday, including its flagship store in central Johannesburg, where workers were toyi-toying and carrying sticks and stones.

Sixty strikers were arrested at the Cresta branch, said Pet Manjela, a shop steward coordinator in the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu). He said the landlord called police after complaints from other tenants.

Strikers were also arrested at the Kempton Park branch, although there was confusion about the numbers involved.

One union official said 25 people were arrested, another said 55, but local police spokesperson Ina Middel said only seven people were arrested and were expected to be charged with intimidation, failure to comply with a court order and refusal to give their names to the police.

The workers went on strike to demand that Edgars lift a wage freeze announced for the 1998/1999 financial year after posting a 28% drop in profits in the last financial year. Workers said the remaining 72% profit was sufficient to warrant an above-inflation wage increase.

The group's subsidiaries include Jet, Cuthberts and ABC. Some branches of Cuthberts and Jet were also closed yesterday, including those in Eloff Street in central Johannesburg.

Edgars group human resources director Nigel Unwin said only 300 of the 8,000-stong workforce was on strike. "The other 94% have reported for work - and in most parts of the country it is business as usual. "The major problem we have had is of striking workers attacking customers and staff who have ignored the strike; one of the strikers attacked a customer and was arrested," he said.

Unwin said the group had obtained a court order a few weeks ago against the unions, barring them from harassing customers or workers who refused to join the strike.

The Edgars group had also begun a R738,000 suit against the unions for loss of earnings at the group's distribution centre, he said.

Saccawu assistant general secretary Herbert Mkhize said Unwin's estimate of those on strike was inaccurate.

"About 3,000 workers took to the street today. Unwin forgot to add another zero to his 300 estimate. Shops were shut down and the strike is set to continue until management is prepared to come to the table with genuine proposals," Mkhize said.
Minister offers to help end dispute

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

Attempts to resolve the long-standing dispute between the motor retail sector and 50,000 striking National Union of Metal-workers of SA (Numsa) members gained impetus yesterday when Labour Minister Mr Shepherd Mdladlana offered to intervene.

Mdladlana said he had been monitoring the dispute involving the SA Motor Industries Employers' Association and Numsa after a briefing by the Commission of Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) and his ministry. The strike is now entering its fifth week.

Numsa general secretary Mr Mbuyiselo Ngwenda contacted Mdladlana's office last week "but did not indicate the purpose of his request", the ministry said. It said the minister had no objection to meeting the union and the employers to hear their views.

Meanwhile, yesterday's conciliation meeting convened by the CCMA was rescheduled for today because some of the members of the employers' body could not attend. Numsa spokesman Mr Dumisa Ntuli said.

He said the union was concerned about the strike degenerating into violence and claimed scab labourers had attacked Numsa members.

The union was gathering substantial evidence that some employers were involved in the attacks. About 200 Numsa members were arrested in Springs and Mpumalanga for participating in the illegal demonstrations.

Key points of disagreement in the talks centred around the union's proposal for a guaranteed concession on personal increases for those workers earning beyond the minimum wage offer. The union had demanded an increase of between 12 and 18 percent, while the employers offered 4.5 percent, which went up to eight percent in the last round of negotiations.

A week-old strike by about 8,000 members of the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) at 27 depots of Clover Danies countrywide continued yesterday, according to Fawu chief negotiator Mr Lazo Mazdane.

The union had demanded R300 a month across-the-board increase or eight percent. The management made two offers of R190 a month or a seven percent increase and another one of R260 a month on condition that the union accepted the latest offer until 2000.

In another wage deadlock involving Fawu and DairyBelle, workers embarked on a national strike. The union demanded eight percent while the company offered increases ranging between three and seven percent.

There has been confusion among striking Edgars workers after the Federal Council of Retailers and Allied Workers Union (Fedcaw) told its members to go back to work.

The workers went on strike with members of the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union Fedcaw spokesman Mr Jimmy Raphole accused Saccawu of derailed terms to it.

Fifty-two of its members were arrested in Kempton Park yesterday, Saccawu assistant general secretary Mr Hebert Mkhize said.
Saccawu and Edgars still at odds

Johannesburg – The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers’ Union (Saccawu) said yesterday it believed Edgars’ financial situation and strategic plans did not justify a wage freeze for the period 1998 to 1999.

Edgars said it had incurred a loss of 28 percent in earnings and a 10 percent loss in market share. It had been forced to retrench 1,500 workers since February as a result of its financial difficulties.

Nigel Unwin, the Edgars spokesman, accused the unions of turning down the company’s offer of having its books inspected by union auditors.

Unwin said as a public company, Edgars’ financial situation was a matter of public knowledge and that “the only people who think we are deceiving them are Saccawu and Fedcruw (Federated Commercial and Retail Workers’ Union).”

Saccawu said Edgars was going for offshore investment, had set aside R3 billion for a stores renovation project and had “overstocked” from R380 million last year to R1.18 billion this year.

Edgars could therefore not be “in the red at all”, the union said.

Lee Modiga, the Saccawu national negotiations co-ordinator, said although Edgars had incurred a fall in profit margins, directors had been paid dividends for the financial year just ended.

Unwin said shareholders, not company directors, had been paid dividends. He confirmed the group had “overstocked” but that was written off as lost money.

He said it was “necessary” to have stores renovations because “if you don’t renovate, you lose market share.” He denied the group was going offshore.

He said Edgars was not in a position to grant wage increases as retrenchments would escalate.
Strike costs stores

R2-m

THE Johannesburg central branches of the Edgars group of companies lost more than R1.5 million in profits and damages on the first day of a national strike by employees.

Edgars group human resources director Mr Nigel Unwin said between R500 000 and R750 000 was lost on the first day to the company in profits for all CBD branches.

He said it was not yet possible to quantify total losses.

"The losses pertain to those shops that we closed down. The rest are trading, although at a lower level," he said.

"We can only compare them to the figures attained the same time last year."

Intimidation

A further R700 000 was lost as a result of damages to Jet stores in the city centre, he said.

"It was relatively quiet today but there have been reports of intimidation in Pretoria, Benoni and Durban."

Unwin said Edgars had been forced to close its West Street branch in Durban because of intimidation.

Earlier yesterday the company said the strikers had started to go slow, picketing and blockading on August 14.

The group had incurred up to R2 million in lost profits and an additional shift at the Johannesburg distribution centre, since then.

The group last Friday instituted a R733 500 claim against the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union for the additional costs of running the distribution centre - incurred because of the "unprotected" industrial action - Sapa.
Edgars outlets close as wage strike spreads

Pearl Sebolao

The two-day strike by the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) at Edgars Stores intensified yesterday, with more outlets closing as it spread to other parts of the country.

The fashion retailer's human resources director Nigel Unwin said the group's central Johannesburg branches suffered losses and damages amounting to R700 000 in profit when several stores were closed on the first day of the strike on Monday.

The figures for the financial losses arising out of yesterday's "temporary closure" of stores in Durban and Pretoria as a result of a high level of intimidation by strikers were not available, Unwin said.

He said Edgars outlets in the Johannesburg central business district — which includes Sales House, Jet, Outhberts and Edgars — opened for business in the morning, but were later closed when intimidation by union members picketing in front of the stores got worse.

The union confirmed that workers in all the nine provinces had joined in the strike.

It denied allegations that its members were involved in any acts of intimidation.

Saccawu went on a full-blown national strike on Monday to protest against a wage freeze for this financial year.

The union wants wage increases which range from 15% to 20%, while Edgars says it cannot afford the increases because of a 23% drop in profit.

The union has been involved in sporadic industrial action against the company since early August, resulting in disruptions and financial losses which could exacerbate the company's already tenuous financial position.

Edgars retrenched more than 1 000 workers earlier this year following the group's poor performance last year.

The group has also brought a R703 000 lawsuit against the union for the loss of earnings stemming from these actions.

Meanwhile, 32 union members who were arrested at the Cresta branch in Johannesburg on Monday appeared at the Randburg Magistrates Court yesterday.

They were charged with violating a strike-rule court order.

The police have also opened a case of attempted robbery against a union member who tried to disarm a policeman in Edgardale on Monday.

Edgars also indicated that it would bring an application against Saccawu for violating the order on picketing and strike rules which was issued by the Labour Court three weeks ago.

This was despite "a number of cases" that Edgars had opened against individual employees who were involved in intimidation and criminal behaviour, Unwin said.
Edgars says it has lost R1.5m on first day of CBD strike

The Johannesburg central branches of the Edgars group of companies lost more than R1.5-million in profit and damages on the first day of a national strike which began on Monday.

Human resources director Nigel Unwin said yesterday between R500 000 and R750 000 were lost on the first day to the company in profit for all CBD branches. He said it was not yet possible to quantify total losses.

"The losses pertain to those shops that we closed down. The rest of the stores were trading, although at a lower level." A further R700 000 was lost as a result of damages to Jet stores in the city centre, he said. "It was relatively quiet today but there have been reports of intimidation in Pretoria, Benoni and Durban."

Edgars was forced to close its West Street branch in Durban because of intimidation. The company said yesterday strikers began go-slow, picketing and blockades on August 14.

The group said yesterday that it had incurred up to R2-million in lost profit and an additional shift at the Johannesburg distribution centre since then. Last Friday it instituted a R238 500 claim against the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union for the additional costs of running the distribution centre, incurred because of the "unprotected" industrial action.

Labour action started when Edgars, citing a 26% drop in profit in the last financial year, refused to grant wage increases. The mood seemed less confrontational yesterday compared with Monday, when four people were injured by rubber bullets in a tussle with police in Johannesburg. Yesterday strikers sang, danced and posed for photographs.

There was also a larger police presence at flashpoints.

Twenty-five strikers were said to have been arrested at Cresta, Randburg, on Monday for violating a court order barring them from intimidating shoppers and workers who refuse to join the action. - Sapa
Bosses and striking union talk late into the night

TALKS between the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) and the SA Motor Industry Employers' Association to resolve the five-week motor industry strike continued last night. There was optimism that the parties would reach a settlement during this round of talks, Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntsh and yesterday Ntsh said there was only one issue remaining that needed to be resolved. The employers' association and the union reached agreement at a previous meeting on all issues except the union's demand for guaranteed increases for all workers, irrespective of how much they earned.

The parties met in Johannesburg under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration and talks were expected to go on until the early hours today.

Meanwhile, the SA Police Service was unable to say whether four workers had been killed during the five-week old strike, as Numsa had been told.

Sapa reports that Ntsh said the strike was costing about R150m a day.
Strikes worry foreign investors, warns SA envoy
200 000 strike claim – but car production ‘normal’

Johannesburg – More than 200 000 motor vehicle workers have gone on strike today, the National Union of Metal Workers of SA has claimed.

But this has been denied by the Automobile Manufacturers' Employers' Organisation, which says production is normal today.

Union members in the motor vehicle industry had ignored Numsa's call for secondary strike action, Ameo said.

Production had begun as usual at all seven vehicle plants today, said Ameo chairman Brian Smith.

He said Ameo had advised Numsa that should the union plan further secondary strike action beyond the one-day action planned for today, it would be required to give renewal notice of seven days, as required by the Labour Relations Act.

Meanwhile, Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said 90% of motor vehicle industry workers were staging a 24-hour strike, in support of wage demands by about 60 000 workers in motor spares shops, car dealerships, component makers, service workshops and filling stations.

Meanwhile 3 000 SA Airways ground workers have walked out on an indefinite strike after rejecting an 8,5% wage offer.

The striking members of the SA Railways and Harbours Workers' Union, who want a 12% increase, comprise about a third of the airline's unionised staff. But all flights were reportedly running as scheduled. – Staff Reporter and Reuters
Sarawu Surprises SAA management with strike

BUSINESS DAY Tuesday September 1 1998

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Sarhwu protest fails to disrupt SAA flights, says airline

SA AIRWAYS' operations were running normally and flights were on schedule despite a strike by more than 2,000 SA Railway and Harbour Workers' Union (Sarhwu) members that started on Monday, an SAA spokesman said yesterday.

Leon Els said a contingency plan was in place to minimise inconvenience to passengers.

He would not disclose details.

SAA said on Monday that workers who were not on strike — these included Salstaff members who accepted a wage settlement last week — were giving 100% to ensure things continued to run smoothly.

Sarhwu, and two other unions with which it has merged to form the SA Transport and Allied Workers' Union, went on strike after rejecting the two-year wage agreement that makes provision for an 8.5% increase, a productivity increase of 2.5% and an extra bonus of R150 a month as an incentive for maintaining 95% efficiency in 1998.

The agreement says also workers will receive a 6.5% increase plus a potential 4.5% productivity bonus and the R150 a month bonus next year.

Sarhwu spokesman Evan Abrahamse said the strike would continue today. No meeting had been arranged to resolve the dispute.

However, the union and SAA had resolved at a meeting last night to keep each other abreast of any new developments.

He would not be drawn on why Sarhwu had notified SAA management about the strike only minutes before it was due to start.

Abrahamse confirmed that notices of a sympathy strike had been served on Apron Services and the Airports Company of SA (Acosa). No date had been set yet for the start of the secondary strike action.

At the same time, last-minute talks have been scheduled to resolve the wage dispute between Sarhwu and Apron Services.

The parties would meet at the CCMA today.

Meanwhile, the strike by the National Union of Mineworkers at Goldfields Security Limited was suspended after agreement with management that there would be no retrenchments until negotiations on the issue had been exhausted.

The parties agreed to meet on September 15.
Effect of motor sector strike not serious — Employers

BUSINESS DAY Wednesday, September 7, 1999
Numsa considers more sympathy strikes

The union said the NEC would consider calling a sympathy strike in other sectors if it organises and warned that it should not be seen as a "once-off" event.

But Brian Smith, the chairman of the Automobile Manufacturers Employers' Organisation (Ameco), said yesterday it would apply for an interdict to prevent further secondary strikes.

Ameco had advised Numusa that if it planned further secondary strikes beyond the one-day action on Tuesday this week, it was required in terms of the Labour Relations Act to give a renewal notice of seven days.

To date Ameco had not received any renewal notice from Numusa, he said, adding that Ameco failed in its interdict bid against the sympathy strike this week on a technicality.

Hosea Morapedi, the union motor sector co-ordinator, said: "In the last NEC, a suggestion for grasshopper strikes was made." The union proposed that if there was no breakthrough in the dispute, it would "call for a series of solidarity strikes by Numusa members in metal, auto-assembling, tyre and rubber sectors of the union."
SAA feels pinch as unions go on full-blown strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani

HOPES of settling the wage dispute between South African Airways and three trade unions were dashed yesterday when the unions embarked on a full-blown strike that has affected the airline’s domestic flight operations.

South African Railways and Harbours Workers Union (Sarhwa) spokesman Johnson Gamede said about 3,000 members downed tools after a weekend meeting rejected the management’s two-year package of an 8.5 percent increase, effective from June, and 6.5 percent for next year.

The unions had demanded 12 percent instead, management threatened to retrench 400 workers.

The striking employees include cabin crew attendants, ticket reservations, cargo, transportation, personnel and technical staff from Sarhwa, the Black Transnet Union (Blatu) and Transnet and the Allied Trade Union (Tatu).

Union members argued that the airline had spent about R4 million on the house of its chief executive.

Gamede also charged that the management put the lives of passengers at risk by engaging sub labourers in operations that required technically trained staff.

Agreement was reached in principle between SAA management and negotiating teams from South African Staff and Footplate Association (Salstaff), Sarhwa, Blatu and Tatu last Friday.

As a result, Salstaff had withdrawn its previously filed notice of industrial action.

SAA chief executive Coleman Andrews said more than 800 staff members not participating in the strike kept the airline flying with minimal inconvenience to passengers.

“The strike action by the unions is a complete reversal of the position it had stated to management moments earlier.

“In the light of the airline’s financial situation we consider our offer to be fair and reasonable. Given the deepening recession, it is dangerous for the unions to embark on a strike,” Andrews said.

Meanwhile, the national strike by about 60,000 motor industry workers entered its second day yesterday with the unions assessing the success of the country’s first sympathy strike in support of the workers’ wage claim.

The workers, represented by the National Union of Metalworkers of SA, the Motor Industry Employees’ Union and the Motor Industry Staff Association, are demanding a wage increase of between 12 and 18 percent.
Airport, motor industry union members clash with police

Renee Cawitzky
Pearl Sebolae and Percy Mthimkulu

Attempts to intensify the strike by thousands of motor industry workers and those at the Airports Company yesterday turned violent following clashes with the police.

More than 60 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) were arrested in Mmopane for an illegal march while police confirmed that a senior SA Railway and Harbours Workers’ Union (Sarhwa) official was arrested at Johannesburg International Airport.

The strike action at the Airports Company of SA began after last-ditch wage talks between management and Sarhwa ended in deadlock. Management said it was prepared for the strike and contingency plans, including maintenance teams maintaining essential services including shopfloor work and security checks in airports, had been put in place to minimise its effect.

In the motor industry strike, SA Motor Industry Employers Association (Samuel) spokesman Vic Frouie said intimidation increased when workers picketed outside petrol stations and panelbeating shops. Police used teargas in some instances to remove workers involved in “illegal” sit-ins.

The union believed the strike was intensifying while employers downplayed its effect and said there was minimal disruption. Frouie said there were definitely not 60 000 workers on strike as alleged by the union. The parties meet today to draft picketing rules.

Meanwhile, SAA said more than 1 000 SA Transport and Allied Workers’ Union members defied their union and returned to work after signing declarations accepting management’s wage offer.

The airline also said a number of workers had resigned from Satawu — which consists of a merger between Sarhwa and two other SAA unions.

The union did not deny that some of its members had accepted the offer, which was agreed to by Sataff last week.

Sarhwa general secretary Derrick Smoko alleged that some striking workers were coerced into accepting the settlement and said their return to work did not weaken Satawu’s bargaining position.
As strikers locked out
City airport picketed

NEWS
Union and Acsa still in wage talks

JOHANNESBURG — The South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union and the Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa) were still locked in wage negotiations by late yesterday.

An estimated 5,000 workers allied to the union are on strike to press for a 12 percent wage increase across the board. This is against a company offer of 10 percent.

Charmaine Lodewyk, an Acsa spokesman, said apart from Johannesburg Airport, where workers scuffled briefly with the police after abandoning designated picketing areas, the strike was generally peaceful in other parts of the country.

She said the company had contingency plans in place so "services, operations and everything has been running smoothly."

Lodewyk said the company was committed to a settlement with the union.

"We will keep striving to find a solution to this problem."

Meanwhile, about 100 members of the Unemployed Masses of South Africa marched to the labour department's Pretoria head office to hand over a memorandum on the forthcoming presidential jobs summit. The summit is scheduled for October 30.

The department said the government was gravely concerned about the high levels of unemployment.

"An interdepartmental process was started to prepare a strategy to address the problem... The government produced a framework entitled Creating Jobs, Fighting Poverty. It was published for public comment on July 3," the department said.
Nusa to decide if it will continue striking
Sacob concerned at wave of strikes

Pearl Sebotae

THE strike by SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) members at Edgars Stores entered its third day yesterday, amid allegations of intimidation and provocation by Saccawu and Edgars.

At the same time, the SA Chamber of Business (Sacob) expressed concern at the wave of strikes sweeping the country and said this was deterring foreign investment, Sapa reported.

Sacob president Humphrey Khoza said yesterday business had been divided about the duration of the strikes, and their tendency to become violent. He was speaking ahead of the chamber's annual convention in Durban which begins on October 11.

The strike by Edgars employees has been characterised by acts of intimidation and arrests, with unions and employers pointing accusing fingers at each other.

Fashion retailer Edgars, which suffered a R2m loss in turnover due to the partial closure of some outlets for three consecutive days, said intimidation had got worse.

At least 10 Saccawu members "bullying customers with samboks" were arrested at an Edgars branch in Rustenburg. There were other incidents of intimidation at other outlets, Edgars human resources director Nigel Unwin said.

Saccawu has alleged that management is using devious tactics to provoke union members so as to get them arrested. The union said this would not dissuade it from continuing with the strike.

Meanwhile, Impala Platinum Refineries (Implats) denied access to members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) to its Springs-based complex yesterday for the second time in as many weeks. The NUM members were due to "officially" begin industrial action against the refineries in the afternoon, but when they reported for duty at the complex in the morning they were refused entry, NUM shop steward Lekhotla Maboa said.

The union's demands include a 9.99% basic wage increase, while Implats has offered 8%.

At the time of going to press, Implats and the NUM were still discussing the issues.

The Impalal Platinum Refineries complex refines about a million ounces of platinum, 550 000oz of palladium, as well as other precious metals for the Impalal mine in Rustenburg.
Motor industry dispute headed to arbiter

By Mzwakhe Hlanganipage

THE dispute between strike-hit motor industry employers and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa), representing about 50 000 striking workers, will most likely go to arbitration after industry employers reportedly reneged on an agreement.

Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said yesterday the other alternative to end the protracted strike was for an independent arbiter to find out whether “party is dragging its feet”.

Talks deadlocked at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in Randburg yesterday.

Another option was for Labour Minister Shepherd Mvududu to intervene in his personal capacity to try and resolve the five-week-old deadlock, Ntuli added.

Ntuli said employers had held back from their offer of a wage increase on actual rate of pay next year.

Downed tools

The dispute, which has crippled the country’s major motor vehicle manufacturers, involves employees at about 18 000 auto spare shops, panel beating outlets, component manufacturing firms, petrol stations and dealerships.

The workers had downed tools at the beginning of the month, demanding wage increases of between 12 and 18 percent.

The South African Motor Industry Employers Association chief executive Vic Fourie was not available for comment.

The strike has led to a shortage of key automotive components around the country, forcing Mercedes-Benz South Africa to import parts from overseas, executive director Christoph Koppke said.

Koppke advised that both parties should negotiate until the strike was resolved.

Vehicle manufacturers could lose export contracts worth billions of rands if the dispute dragged on unresolved, he said.

BMW SA recently secured export orders for its right-hand drive 3-series vehicles to Britain.

Volkswagen AG’s local unit also secured a multi-billion rand order to supply 68 000 vehicles in the next 18 months to Great Britain.

A march by an expected 8 000 Numsa members will be held today at Brakpan Station Road to present a memorandum to the town’s chief magistrate to demand an end to harassment of striking Numsa members by the police.

The South African Chamber of Business (Sacab) yesterday expressed concern at the wave of strikes bedeviling the industry, saying this was deterring foreign investment.

Speaking at a news conference in Johannesburg, ahead of the chamber’s annual convention in Durban from October 11 to 13, Sacab president Humphrey Khoza said business was also worried about the length of strikes and their tendency to turn violent.

Of further concern to the chamber was the fact that there was a pending general election, a situation that Sacab feared could result in political parties taking advantage of the situation, Khoza said.
Sectoral bargaining in motor sector possible

ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria — Sectoral bargaining in the motor sector was possible from next year as a result of the wage dispute between the South African Motor Industry Employers' Association (Samtea) and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa).

Mark Roberts, the chapter three (component industry) representative for the negotiations, said, "There are certainly going to be some post-strike changes. What component manufacturers need to change is that when we go into negotiations next year we negotiate a dispensation for ourselves in terms of our agreed rules with Numisa and the outcome is confined to our sector."

Roberts said component manufacturers who were members of Samtea were prepared to negotiate wage increases on actual pay levels subject to certain conditions such as not being targeted for sympathy action "if others did not come to the party".

The strike in the motor sector, which includes component manufacturers, service stations, dealerships and parts retailers, this week entered its fifth week.

Numsa has demanded rises on actual pay levels while Samtea has a mandate to only negotiate minimum wage increases with actual wage increases negotiated at plant level because of the diversity of the industry.

Roberts said Numsa had acknowledged there was room for sectoral bargaining.
Outlaw sympathy action, Leon tells ANC

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — The African National Congress should recognise the economic wreckage caused by strike action and outlaw sympathy and secondary strikes, Democratic Party (DP) leader Tony Leon said yesterday.

The wave of recent strike action, which had crippled key sectors of the economy, had demonstrated the high cost of such “legislative excesses” as allowing sympathy strikes, Leon said in an address at a business breakfast at the Roodepoort Country Club.

He cited the sympathy strike by 290 000 National Union of Metalworkers of SA members in the car and tyre manufacturing, and steel and engineering industries. It had led to some vehicle-making plants’ closure, and was estimated to be costing the industry more than R2m a day in lost revenue.

Leon said that by supporting sympathy strikes government gave greater protection to the right to strike than the US, the UK, Netherlands and many other countries in Africa. There were numerous other channels for settling labour disputes, and strike action should be the last resort.

“The only way to start fighting SA’s unemployment crisis is to curb the excessive powers of trade unions, not to do as the government has done by bowing and scraping to the demands of the unions, but to take a stand against its old tripartite alliance partner, Cosatu,” Leon said.

He said the problem was two-fold: a trade union movement that acted with little regard for property or human life, and a Labour Relations Act that not only protected legal strikes but allowed sympathy and secondary strikes.

The DP believed government should ban secondary strikes and picketing, require secret ballots of workers at their homes before strikes commence, hold unions liable for profit losses and for the actions of their members in cases of assault and vandalism, and ensure the safety of “scab” workers.
Motor strikers and employers reach first stage of agreement

By Carley Peters

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA and the SA Motor Industry Employers’ Association reached an agreement in principle yesterday, the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration said.

The commission’s Themba Tshwete said the agreement would be taken back to the various constituents for ratification.

The agreement could mean the end of the strike which started on September 1, if members of Numsa and Sampla agree on the terms.

If Numsa members did not accept the agreement, Numsa spokesperson Dumisa Ntuli said, the union would look at other alternatives, such as independent arbitration or the intervention of Labour Minister Shepherd Mdlalose, in an attempt to resolve the wage dispute.

One of the central issues in the strike, affecting 50,000 workers in the panelbeating, car component and petrol sectors, was guaranteed wage increases irrespective of the amount workers earned, Ntuli said.

Numsa regional secretary Bheki Magagula said a few cases of employers intimidating striking workers had been reported.

According to SAPS Captains Lungelo Dlamini, police were called in to a Benrose, Gauteng, company after company owner Russell Malcolm drew a gun on a stone-throwing Numsa worker.

Malcolm fired shots after being hit on the head by a brick.

Meanwhile, the nationwide strike by Edgars workers entered its fourth day yesterday with scuffles between police and strikers at the group’s Kempton Park, Sandton City and Edgardale branches, Dlamini said.

SAPA reports the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union assistant secretary-general Herbert Mkhize hit out yesterday at white policemen whom he accused of complicity with the Edgars management.

"White policemen at the branch wereliterally pulling people through the protest lines telling them to ‘ignore the lunatics’,” Mkhize said.

Cosatu objected to what it called scab labour.

\( \text{Equation} \)
motor strike by Monday
New deal likely to end

By Andrew Hamilton
Unions heading for record year of strikes

MANDAYS lost to strikes look set to reach the highest level since 1994 this year following a wave of protracted public and private-sector strikes

The expected 2-million mandays lost is significantly higher than in 1997, when only 850 000 days were lost, and compares with the 1.7-million days lost in 1996.

Further protracted and intense strikes, which have characterised much of this year, could lead to the number of days lost far exceeding 2-million (About 1.6-million days were lost in 1995, 2.5-million in 1994, 2.4-million in 1993, 1.4-million in 1992 and 2.2-million in 1990).

Andrew Levy & Associates research consultant Jacque Kelly estimates that mandays lost during the first nine months of the year are heading towards 2-million, compared with 510 000 for the corresponding period last year and 1.35-million in 1996.

Although there are no final figures available for the third quarter (the report is due to be released this week), there has been a spate of strike activity during the quarter.

Most notable is the five-week-old motor industry strike by the National Union of Mineworkers, and strikes by the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union and SA Chemical Workers' Union.

Unions currently on strike include the National Union of Mineworkers at the Impala refinery complex in Springs, the Food and Allied Workers' Union at Clover and the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union at Edgars.

Talks to end the three-day strike by NUM at Impala broke down on Friday after the union's rejection of Impala's latest offer.

Increased strike activity has led to Cosatu expressing concern about "long-drawn-out" strikes, which make speedy settlement very difficult. In a statement, Cosatu called on its affiliate unions and employers to "embark on a settlement with vigour". Cosatu's concerns tie in with those of business, which said the strikes were diverting investment.
I T USED to be fashionable to shop in the House of Edgars, where one was greeted by stylish cosmetic counters and the waft of designer perfumes. But behind the chrome and glass lies a host of problems which have left the national chain in crisis.

It has gone to war with its staff while battling with a 28 percent drop in profits.

This week more than 1 200 staff members, among the best-dressed employees in the clothing business, went on strike, causing the embattled company to lose R1.5-million a day.

More than 100 members of the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers’ Union have been arrested, and four employees were injured when rubber bullets were fired during a police clash with angry strikers on Monday at the company’s flagship store in Johannesburg’s city centre.

Strikers have been forced to close their doors to protect customers as violence erupted in Gauteng and Durban.

About 33 workers from a branch at the Cresta mall, northern Johannesburg, were locked in a container for about five hours after a scuffle with police.

One of them, pregnant Orelia Molele, has worked for Edgars for seven and a half years. She started as a security guard in the fitting rooms before becoming a sales assistant, earning a monthly salary of R1 400.

This week she found herself thrown in prison in her fight for better wages.

She and 23 other women were locked up in a cell, with no toilets, meant for eight people while union and family members struggled to raise their bail of R40 000.

The landlords of shopping centres have gone to court for interdicts against striking workers, while Edgars has issued lock-out notices to the Federated Council of Retail and Allied Workers.

By yesterday, the battle was still being fought on the pavements outside barricaded shop fronts, and further strike action is threatened.

The strike was triggered by a wage freeze announced by the SA Breweries-controlled chain of Edgars, Sales House and Jet following a 28 percent drop in profits in the year to March.

The decline in profits signals threatened times for the store where shoppers can find everything from underwear and bed linen to cosmetics and sports shoes.

Last Christmas, stock rumoured to be worth R300-million went unsold.

Business analysts agree that a host of problems have left Edgars in a crisis.

The company, which introduced credit 70 years ago, has been hit hard by rising interest rates. It also faces tough competition from value stores like Mr Price, which records annual sales of R20 000 per square metre of shop floor space compared with Edgars’ S0E Securites of R8 000/m², which is a measure of profitability.

Edgar’s styling and fashionability has gone backwards. Customers are running away because of prices and a lack of fashionableness.

He said value retailers and specialist stores had grabbed a considerable share of the clothing market. “There is nothing special about Edgars anymore.”

Vianello said results were made worse by the poor performance of Sales House and Jet stores.

Jet has made a profit only once since 1993, while Sales House, a chain aimed at black market for classic fashion, experienced an eight percent drop in sales in the past financial year as customers moved into a more modern world.

Vianello said customers were moving away from what was seen as an outdated look.

The assistant general secretary of the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers’ Union, Herbert Mikhize, said the union had demanded a 15 to 20 percent wage increase.

While the union acknowledged Edgar’s drop in profits was 28 percent, it wanted to negotiate on the remaining 72 percent.

“If they can’t afford real wage increases, let’s talk about wage adjustments. Give us 10 percent now and let’s look at the other five percent if there are improvements in the company’s results,” Mikhize said.

Mikhize accused Edgar’s management of colluding with the police. He said Cosatu branches would look at week’s work taking part in solidarity action, and this could include blocking supplies to the chain.

“If Edgars gets away with a wage freeze, it will set a bad precedent,” he said.

Nigel Unwin, the company’s human resources director, said the violence had been caused by “thuggish people who’d intimidated and abused staff and customers.

He said workers had been arrested because they had defied police instructions. “I have no sympathy for them. We are extremely unhappy about what we have seen. It is nonsense to allege collusion with the police.”

Unwin said industrial action at the company had begun in August and wage negotiations had reached a stalemate.

“We have already retrenched 1 500 workers. Should we give increases or retrench more people?”

The group’s financial director, Mark Bower, said, “People used to go to Edgars for quality. But now customers are strapped for cash and quality is not as important.”

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Economists count cost to country as motor industry strike is called off.
Workers return as 5-week strike ends

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE five-week-long strike in the motor industry ended at the weekend after the majority of members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa endorsed a wage package offer from the employers.

NUMSA announced yesterday that a final settlement in the strike by about 50 000 workers in the motor retail industry was reached after the proposed integrated package was ratified by eight of its nine regions.

The settlement package, aimed at overcoming "the legacy of apartheid wage differentials", was described by union officials as a historical achievement for the motor retail sector.

Numsa deputy general secretary Peter Dantjie said that based on the majority resolution, it was agreed that the protracted strike should be called off with immediate effect.

Workers would resume work today.

South African Motor Industry Employers' Association spokesman Vic Poure said the package had been proposed two weeks ago, and "I'm very happy that the union has finally agreed to it".

Smooth return to work

The union will have further discussions with the Saama to ensure that the return to work proceeds smoothly without harassment or victimisation of vulnerable workers who had been on strike.

Both parties agreed in principle that future wage negotiations would be considered on actual rate of payments and not on minimum wages.

They agreed to a minimum of R5 an hour for petrol attendants and part-time workers, and a further eight to 10 percent wage increase on grades one to eight.

The immediate establishment of a policy forum to discuss transformation and the restructuring of the motor industry in order to deal with levels of bargaining, form, structure and affirmative action, was part of the long-awaited integrated package agreement.

The dispute, which severely crippled the country's motor manufacturing assembly plants, involved workers in more than 18 000 motor service spare shops, panelbeating shops, component manufacturing firms including Durby, petrol service stations and motor dealerships.
Workers return as motor strike ends

Primarshni Pillay

ABOUT 50 000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) will start returning to work today, bringing an end to a five-week strike that cost them more than R32m in salaries and caused the motor industry severe losses.

Numsa went on strike after failing to reach agreements with employers over its demand that wage negotiations be based on actual rates of pay instead of minimum stipulated rates. The union also demanded that workers be given an increase of between 12% to 18% on actual rates this year.

Numsa deputy general secretary Peter Dantjie said yesterday that both parties agreed in principle that in future years annual pay negotiations would be based on actual rates.

However, as a compromise it was agreed this year's pay rises be based on the minimum and range from 4,5% to 10%, with those workers on lower grades getting a higher increase.

The minimum rate for petrol attendants has been increased from R5.83 an hour to R5.86 an hour. This agreement will be phased in over the next 12 months. The union's executive members agreed the increase for petrol attendants was a definite improvement.

Other agreements reached included the formation of a policy forum to discuss transformation and restructuring in the industry.

Dantjie appealed to employers not to intimidate or harass workers who were returning to work. He said the union had not been in a position to inform all its members about the strike's suspension and the return of workers would be phased in.

The strike affected petrol pump attendants to panelbeaters and artisans. About 100 people were assaulted and three Numsa members killed when scuffles broke out between striking workers and replacement labour.

Numsa

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Continued on Page 2
Striking car-sector workers return, but exporters 'lost face'

**Losses may be R150-m a day**

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Thousands of workers in the motor industry returned to work this morning after the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa called off its five-week strike.

Union spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said Numsa decided to call off the strike yesterday and would meet employers today to finalise the implementation of new agreements.

Mr Ntuli said the new agreement would mean petrol attendants who were the least paid in the industry - as little as R560 a month - would now get a minimum monthly salary of R800.

An economist said the strike had left incalculable losses and a poorer perception of South Africa as an exporter.

Although the export losses were unknown, Econometrix economist Tony Twine said they were possibly more damaging than the value of retail sales lost, because it led to the perception that South Africa was an unreliable supplier, thus battering a country already in its fifth month of a currency crisis.

At worst, the strike could have cost R150-million a day, based on the value of retail sales, said Mr Twine.

SA Motor Industry Employers' Association (Samaea) spokesman Vic Fourie said it was impossible to calculate the monetary losses of the strike.

Few companies had been forced to close down and scab labour had been employed, he added.

Numsa announced the breakthrough yesterday after negotiations with the employers' association at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration last week.

About 5 000 Numse members in the motor industry have been on strike since September 1.

One of the central issues was guaranteed wage increases, irrespective of the amount workers earned.

Numsa and Samaea agreed that petrol attendants would get an immediate increase of 4.5% of the prescribed minimum wage.

Depending on talks with Minerals and Energy Minister F. P. Maduna about poor profit margins in the petrol sector, petrol attendants could qualify for a further increase of up to 8.5%, said Mr Fourie.

The strike affected petrol stations, panelbeating shops, spare parts firms and car component manufacturers.

Numsa took the SA Police Service to task over its apparent taking sides with employers. Numsa said police had arrested about 1 000 of its members and assaulted about 300.

Sapa reports that about 14 000 Numsa members at Iscor's Vanderbijlpark plant downed tools today. Mr Ntuli said the strike followed news that management members were to share an R8.4-million bonus.

The strike by Edgars employees, who downed tools last Monday to protest against a decision by the group not to award salary increases in the 1998-99 financial year, looks set to continue.
Vigilance, intimidation mark strikes across SA
Work time lost trebles as strikes increase — report

Pearl Sebolao

DAYS lost because of strike activity trebled to 1,88-million man days in the first three-quarters of this year, against 310 000 in the same period last year, according to a report released by industrial relations consultancy Andrew Levy & Associates.

The figure, which has already surpassed last year’s year-end figure of 650 000 man days lost by a huge margin, is also the highest for the first three-quarters of the year since 1994.

The sharp rise in strike activity was attributed to protracted and intense centralised wage negotiations in the security, transport, chemical and motor sectors.

According to Andrew Levy & Associates, strikes in these sectors, as well as the two sympathy strikes by members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA in support of the motor strike, accounted for 77,3% of strike activity during this period.

The major strike trigger was wages at 98,2% — the highest level in eight years — followed by grievances at 1,4% and retrenchments at 0,3%.

The labour consultancy said industrial action was on a steady increase. Some of the factors which could be contributing to this phenomenon were rising inflation which was expected to continue into next year, employers’ increasing resistance to centralised bargaining, the upcoming general election, as well as the potential for disputes that may follow the passing of the Employment Equity Bill.

The increase in strike action across all sectors at a time when employment levels had dropped and retrenchments were on the rise was particularly disturbing, Andrew Levy & Associates said.

The consultancy also said the trade unions’ aim to maximise earnings and employers’ striving to minimise costs had led to a volatile climate which saw strikes marred by violence and intimidation.

"The strikes reflect the heightened expectations and tensions existing in the workforce as the economic belt is tightened."

The consultancy, however, cautioned against ascribing too much political significance to events...
Edgars invites union to meet

The meeting was proposed by the Edgars Group management in a letter to the union yesterday.

Tshukudu said the union was still considering the invitation from Edgars to hold a meeting.

"We will give management a response today to set a date for the meeting and to thrash out the details," he said.

A second union, the Independent Federal Council of Retail Workers (Fedcraw), gave notice of joining the nationwide Edgars strike over a wage freeze yesterday, said its spokesperson, Net Ketela.

Ketela said his union gave management 48 hours' notice that its 2 500 members would join the strike started by Saccawu last Monday.

However, by late yesterday, Fedcraw had not yet been invited to the meeting.

Edgars group human resources manager Nigel Unwin said all Edgars shops were open yesterday, but would close if trouble started.

The nationwide strike follows an announcement of a wage freeze by the Edgars group after suffering a 28% fall in profits and having its long-term domestic currency rating downgraded from A+ to A by an international rating agency.

Saccawu has proposed a 20% negotiable increase for its members employed at Edgars, Sales House, Jet Stores and their distributors, while Fedcraw is aiming for a R450 across-the-board increase and a minimum wage of R1 800 a month — Staff Reporter, Sapa
Strikes misconduct highlighted

RONNIE MORRIS

Cape Town — Misconduct during strikes was a becoming a concern for the labour courts, Justice John Myburgh, the labour court judge president, said at the South African Society for Labour Law conference in Stellenbosch last week.

Myburgh said the labour court had been inundated with urgent applications concerning misconduct associated with strikes.

He said during the recent Chemical and Industrial Workers’ Union strike in the Western Cape, employers brought 15 urgent applications to interdict misconduct.

“It is a matter of real concern to me that having passed this sophisticated legislation and created these new institutions at enormous cost, there should still be so much misconduct associated with protected strikes.”

Professor Bob Hepple, of Cambridge University, said the Labour Relations Act was attracting interest from all over the world. “It is seen as a ‘state of the art’ model of collective labour law experimenting with some original solutions to problems which commonly beset industrialised economies.”

But he said critics claimed the law had added new rigidities into the labour market which would make it more difficult for enterprises to adjust to the intense pressure of global competition. This could scare off foreign investment.
Almost 250 workers arrested in Edgars strike, says union

Thembile Hlungani

ALMOST 250 members of the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union were arrested since the nationwide strike against Edgars shops started last week, union spokesman Pitsi Tshukudu said yesterday.

He said 20 workers were still in detention. This was disputed by police spokesman Martin Aylward who said only 80 workers were arrested between Monday and Friday last week.

By late yesterday, the union's lawyers were negotiating for the release of two members arrested on Saturday outside the Johannesburg city centre branch of Edgars on charges of intimidation. Most of those arrested last week were charged with intimidation and contravening picketing rules.

Tshukudu said the arrests were the result of collaboration between the police and traffic officers who were harassing union members. He said the situation was quiet yesterday despite reports that workers picketing outside the Johannesburg city centre shop asked customers not to enter.

The strike was prompted by Edgars' announcement of a wage freeze after its 25% fall in profit. The fall was followed by an announcement that Edgars' long-term domestic currency rating had been downgraded from A+ to A by an international rating agency.

The union said about 7,500 workers were on strike at the Edgars group of shops, which includes Sales House, Jet and ABC. Tshukudu said the union had received a letter from Edgars' management requesting a meeting today. If the meeting goes ahead, it will be the first meeting of the two parties since the start of the dispute.

Another Edgars union, the Independent Federal Council of Retail Workers announced yesterday that it would join the strike action.

Dustin Chick reports that Edgars Group human resources director Nigel Unwin said it was regrettable that no end to the strike appeared to be near.

Demands by the union for increases of between 15% and 20% came at a time when the firm was undergoing extensive restructuring to ensure its long-term success. The process had already involved the retrenchment of 1,800 people with further retrenchments being avoided through the implementation of a wage freeze.
The agreement made it clear that the main issue of how to divide the profit from the strikes was not to be settled by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ). In view of the deal struck at the strike's conclusion, the NUJ agreed to accept the proposed solution without further discussion. The strike was declared over, but the conflict lingered on.

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Sacob explains strikes

Pearl Sebolao

THE disturbing phenomenon of heightened strike activity, which was threatening to reach pre-election levels, was a manifestation of the tough economic conditions facing the country, the SA Chamber of Business (Sacomb) said yesterday.

Responding to a strike report released on Monday by industrial relations consultancy Andrew Levy & Associates, Sacomb’s labour affairs director Gerrie Bezuidenhout said workers were feeling the pinch in their pay packets while companies were feeling the pressure of global competition.

According to the Andrew Levy & Associates report, days lost due to strike activity had trebled to 1,85-million man days, compared with 510 000 in the same period last year.

Bezuidenhout said the strikes tended to drag on for long periods because of the low wage settlement levels, with employers finding it difficult to give higher increases because of the pressures they faced.

The chamber was concerned also about rising levels of intimidation and violence that accompanied these strikes, Bezuidenhout said.

These were damaging international perceptions about the country.

Labour director-general Sipho Pityana called on organised labour yesterday to take a firm stand against the violence that accompanied strikes.

He said government had put in place legislation that enabled people to pursue their rights within the law. “Government has taken an approach which de-criminalises labour issues and the introduction of violence is adding a criminal element,” he said.
Strikers may lose their jobs

By Mzwakhe Hlangani

THE Edgars group of companies has warned that further retrenchments cannot be avoided if the disruptive strike by thousands of its workers is not resolved soon.

Group human resources director Mr Nigel Unwin said yesterday that the restructuring process had entailed the retrenchment of more than 1,500 employees so far. Further retrenchments had been avoided by the adoption of a wage freeze policy for all, and the current strike threatened the effectiveness of this strategy, thus the "jobs of thousands are in severe jeopardy."

He said realistic means of achieving the restructuring objectives without necessitating further large-scale retrenchments were in great danger as there was no sign of an end to the strike.

Unwin said 20 out of more than 70 stores were affected by the strike. "The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Sacawu) has chosen an unfortunate and inappropriate time to make its demands while the group is not well placed to accede to these demands," he said.

The Federal Council of Retailers and Allied Workers Union (Fedcaw) yesterday threatened that its 2,500 members would go on strike in support of the Edgars strikers.

Fedcaw spokesman Mr Nat Kekela said members from the Free State, Northern Province, Mpumalanga, North West and the Eastern Cape would embark on a strike to join Sacawu members.

Sacawu is demanding increases ranging between 15 and 20 percent, while Fedcaw wants a R450 a month increase for their members.

Meanwhile, a report by the South African Chamber of Commerce has revealed that an upsurge in strikes in the third quarter of this year had swelled the number of work days lost to 1,85 million man days in September.
Man killed, woman shot as dairy strike talks bog down
Johannesburg – Workers at Iscor's Vanderbijlpark plant downed tools today after management declined to meet their demand for a 30% bonus.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, the National Union of Mineworkers, the Mineworkers Union and an alliance of small unions are pressing their demand after revelations that senior Iscor managers are to share a R9-million bonus.

The unions threatened a strike if they did not get a share of the bonus. Iscor spokeswoman Mitzi Schutte denied that workers had downed tools at Vanderbijlpark.

"There is no strike at Iscor. Union leaders are talking to management about the issue and whether or not there is a strike will depend on the outcome of the meeting," she said.

However, both NUMSA and the MWU said production had come to a halt at the plant as from 6am today. The unions also said there were no negotiations taking place on the issue.

NUMSA spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said workers had demanded that the 30% bonus be reflected in their accounts by today. When this did not happen, workers downed tools.

The almost R9-million in management bonuses coincided with a severe retrenchment programme which could see 6000 workers being axed at Iscor's Vanderbijlpark plant alone, Mr Ntuli said.

Iscor said that the bonus formed part of the company's remuneration policy for senior management. – Sapa
Strike in offing at Iscor

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

A MAJOR showdown looms between Iscor management and trade unions representing 14 000 workers at the Vanderbijlpark steel plant following the rejection by management of demands by the unions for a 30 percent bonus.

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA, the National Union of Mineworkers and an alliance of small unions have declared a dispute and issued a 48-hour notice to embark on a legal strike tomorrow, spokesman Mr Dumisa Ntuli said yesterday. He said unions were pressing their demand following revelations that senior management had allocated themselves bonuses amounting to about R9 million, but refused to offer a share of the bonus to workers.

Ntuli said Iscor management's decision to pay senior managers "inflated salaries in pursuit of excessive personal rewards, while they continued to slam our demands for reduction of apartheid wage gap differentials, is unacceptable.

The almost R9 million in management bonuses coincides with a severe retrenchment programme which could see 6 000 workers being axed at the Vanderbijlpark plant alone, he added.
Lost days close to 1990 record

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

AN UPRURGE in strike action in the third quarter of this year has swelled the number of working days lost to 1.85 million in September, reflecting heightened tensions in the workforce as the economic belt tightens, a strike report has revealed.

The report, compiled by Andrew Levy and Associates, further anticipated, based on current levels, that the year-end figure could be the highest ever, close to the 1990 level of 2.2 million.

It showed the working days lost due to industrial action rose sharply from 310 000 from June to 1.85 million man days at the end of September overtaking the overall year-end figure for 1997 by a considerable margin.

Labour laws research consultant Ms Jackie Kelly intimated that centralised wage bargaining disputes in the security, transport, chemical and auto assembly and component sectors were largely responsible for the sharp rise—accounting for 77.3 percent.

South African Chamber of Business labour economist Mr Harry Bezuidenhout cited wage deadlocks and conditions of employment as common triggers for lengthy industrial action.

Bezuidenhout said the length of a strike was a reflection of economic recession.

Employers resisted higher wage increases and centralised bargaining due to economic depression. As a result of this, below-inflation settlements were achieved after lengthy strikes, he said.

For a number of reasons, industrial action would continue to increase. Kelly warned, and these included rising inflationary pressures, expected to be steep next year.

The huge potential for dispute would follow the Employment Equity Bill and the fact that employer resistance to centralised bargaining could be expected to increase next year, she said.

It should be noted that the majority of the strikes that took place this year were procedural and a culmination of months of intense negotiation between parties concerned.

The main triggers in terms of man-days lost were wages (98.2 percent), grievances (1.4 percent) and retrenchment (0.2 percent).
Strike at Dairy Belle remains violent

Reneé Grawitzky
and Pearl Sebola

VIOLENCE continues to mar the two-week-old Dairy Belle strike, with another worker being shot earlier this week and the company being forced to hire security guards for all its trucks.

At the same time, the strike by hundreds of National Education Health and Allied Workers Union members at the University of Western Cape entered its second week, with a number of academics joining the strike.

The strike revolves around wages, the retrenchment of 41 academics and indications of the possible retrenchment of non-academic staff. The union is demanding a 12% increase while the university has offered a wage freeze this year and a 5% increase for the next financial year.

The union said the university had argued that it could not afford increases this year, but the union was not satisfied with the limited extent of financial disclosure.

Dairy Belle said yesterday the shooting of a female van assistant earlier this week had prompted the hiring of security guards for all its trucks to protect replacement workers.

The company said it had notified the Food and Allied Workers' Union of its intention to suspend the recognition agreement due to the union's failure to adhere to picketing rules and a labour court interdict.

Negotiations were expected to continue between the union and Clover SA in an attempt to resolve a three-week-old strike.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) claimed yesterday that Hillside Aluminium Smelter intended bringing a R4.5m lawsuit against the union for loss of earnings incurred during last month's sympathy strike at the company's Richards Bay plant.

However, the company has denied knowledge of litigation, saying it is still in discussion with Numsa about the financial losses incurred.

The Edgars group has agreed to consider a proposal by the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union and the Federal Council of Retail Workers to bring in a third party to mediate in their dispute.

Thousands of workers at Iscor's Vanderbij plant downed tools yesterday after it failed to accede to a demand for a 30% bonus payment. The action was suspended before noon after unions declared a formal dispute against the company.

The matter, sparked by the payment of a R8.9m bonus to senior management, will be referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.
Edgars and unions opt for mediation

By Mazi Mkhwanazi

THE Edgars group agreed yesterday that the current wage dispute with two unions representing 5,000 workers nationwide be referred for mediation.

Edgars had agreed to a proposal by the SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) and the Federal Council of Retailers and Allied Workers Union (Fedcaw) that the wage dispute be referred to a third party for mediation.

The agreement follows a meeting yesterday between the two parties. Edgars further proposed that the mediating party be the Independent Services of South Africa and that both parties share the costs of the intervention.

Edgars group human resources director Mr Nigel Unwin said the company had lost between R500,000 and R750,000 in the Johannesburg central business district alone on the first day of the strike.
Dairy strike turns sour

Dairybelle's wage offer to its striking workers in the Western Cape expires today.

The company has offered a 6% increase and a further 2% in April.

But the strikers, members of the Food and Allied Workers' Union, are demanding an 8% across-the-board increase or a minimum wage of R1 600.

The dairy's human resources director, Braam Gerber, said the company had lost about R35 million as a result of the strike.

Senior union shop steward Hubert Matshoba claimed that Dairybelle had threatened to retrench 300 workers in Cape Town.

Management is trying to divide the striking workers by threatening to cancel the recognition agreement. "In doing this, they are making private offers to employees."

Mr Gerber said striking workers had been given a notice in terms of the Labour Relations Act on Monday that the company might consider relieving them of their jobs.

Dairybelle had already suspended its recognition agreement with the union, he said.

A High Court order granted on September 23 would be in force indefinitely to prohibit strikers from entering or damaging company property.

Security guards are keeping a watch on plants in the Western Cape and escorting trucks taking products to outlets across the Peninsula.
Edgars’ bosses ‘got pay rise’

By PITSO TSHUKUDU

EDGARS executives voted themselves a 20 percent increase, equivalent to R164 000 in the group’s 1993 financial year, yet the company pleaded poverty when its employees asked for an annual wage increase this year, says the Labour Research Service (LRS).

The research group found that in the 12 months to March 1998, each of the group’s five executive directors earned R690 000.

The data was released in the wake of the two-week wildcard strike by members of the SA Commercial and Catering Workers Union (Saccawu) over wage negotiations with the Edgars Group.

According to Herbert Mkhize, the union’s assistant general secretary, Edgars proposed a wage freeze for the next financial year on the grounds that its earnings have declined this year.

But Mkhize believes the wage freeze is as a result of the group’s inability to reach the profit target the company set itself for last year.

“We disagree that there is no more money for wage increases of about 15-20 percent in the current financial year,” said Edward Cottle, a researcher at Saccawu.

The research group noted that Edgars’ cash reserves improved from a negative R48.5 million at the end of March 1997 to a positive R382.1 million at March end 1998.

Although there has been a nominal drop in profit in the company over the last few years, it remains economically viable, the research groups says.

“The company seems to have been able to cut back some of the costs. Year-on-year growth in cost of sales declined from 9.9 percent in 1997 to 4.99 percent in 1998,” the report says.

This most likely included the re-trenchment of 793 workers.

“The company is also moving towards being a retailer of branded goods to increase competitiveness and reduce costs,” the report says.

“This may lead to further reductions among manufacturing workers in the group,” the report adds.

“Already Edgars’ Pretoria division has been able to increase sales by 40 percent through the changes,” the report says.

This weeks’ negotiations between the union and Edgars ended in deadlock when the company contended that union members had been provocative, had ignored provisions relating to their right to strike and had been threatening customers.

The parties have however agreed on the appointment of a mediator, but have disagreed on whether to choose the CCMA (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration) or the IMSA (Independent Mediation Services of SA).
HOMOSEXUAL LIVING

Johnny Stimpson

"May motivate illegals"

Time to Resign

Says Suzman

We can represent the people, the workers, the great majority of the people of this country, and we can continue our fight for the rights of the people, the workers in this country."
Unions ‘unlikely’ to be sued for loss

By Cathy Powers

The wave of strikes in the past few months has left both unions and companies battered, but it is unlikely that employers would “tick off” the courts to sue unions for losses. “Companies today are the biggest losers of all times,” said these, but labour analysts said although employers had successfully sued unions for damages in the past, they are reluctant to do so now.

Brian Greenslade, labour consultant at Andrew Levy and Associates, said: “Employers are loath to sue the unions because they have an ongoing relationship with the unions and workers. Both parties are bruised after the strike.”

In an unprotected strike, employers have the law on their side, said Greenslade. The employer can sue for losses and the labour court has jurisdiction to order the payment of “just and equitable” compensation for any losses.

The court will take into account whether the action was premeditated, the financial position of the parties, the duration of the strike, and the response to unjustified conduct by the other party, he said.

But in a protected strike, the employer could not sue a union for loss of production or profit. Legal action could, however, be launched if there was damage to property.

Sympathy strikes are a new and complicating feature in our labour environment.

Resources group Billiton reportedly intended to sue Numsa for a R4 million loss of production because of a sympathy strike by workers at its Hillside Aluminium smelter in Richards Bay.

Billiton has reportedly denied this, but said it was in discussions with the union over the legality of the strike.
Numsa's strike ultimatum

FRANK NUXUMALO
AND ROY COCKAYNE

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) warned yesterday that about 14 000 of its members at Iscor Vanderbijlpark would embark on industrial action if there was no resolution of the bonus dispute at a meeting scheduled for October 19 at the steel sector's industrial council.

Last week Numsa declared a dispute after management told workers no bonus would be paid to them "in view of the fact that there is already a profit-sharing scheme in operation" Iscor said the remuneration scheme of senior management formed part of their conditions of service.

However, Numsa insisted that, as creators of wealth, workers deserved to be paid a bonus.

"Any performance-based bonus must take into account those who make the wheels of production turn every day — the workers," said Dumsa Ntuli, the Numsa spokesman.

Numsa is demanding that a 50 percent bonus be paid to workers.
Dairybelle staff weigh deal to end strike

STAFF REPORTER

The three-week-old strike by workers at Dairybelle’s Epping processing plant could end soon after an agreement between the company and the Food and Allied Workers' Union.

Now it is up to the workers to decide whether to ratify the deal their union struck at the weekend.

However we have heard that they don't want to accept it and are pressing for 9%.

The striking workers demanded an across-the-board increase of 6% or a minimum wage of R1 000.

The strike has cost Dairybelle about R5-million in lost profits, according to management.

Mr Gerber said the plant was operating at 50% of capacity.
Saccawu workers want police probed

EMPLOYEES of the Edgars Group, who have been on a wage strike for two weeks, yesterday marched to protest against Edgars' refusal to meet their wage demands and over the arrest of their members during the strike.

At least 2,000 SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) members marched through the Johannesburg city centre to the Johannesburg Central Prison and to the retail group's flagship city store. The march passed without incident.

The marchers condemned alleged harassment of, assaults on, and unfair charges against strikers. The union has demanded that police conduct during the strike be investigated and that those found guilty be punished.

Memorandums demanding the resolution of the dispute between Saccawu and Edgars were also handed over at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and to Edgars' management.

The parties have agreed on the terms of the mediation process Edgars' human resources director, Nigel Unwin, and they would meet for mediation tomorrow.

Meanwhile, there were fears that the strike at Lonrho's Westvaal mine, which ended last Thursday, could resume if the National Union of Mineworkers' (NUM's) appeal against company disciplinary action against the 10 union officials is unsuccessful.

The officials were implicated in a hostage-taking incident at the mine last month.

NUM spokesman Eric Geletshana said the outcome of the appeal hearing would be announced by tomorrow.

Sapa reported that the NUM said it would boycott a "peace summit" organized by Anglo American Platinum Corporation and challenged the mining company to a public debate on the "systematic killing" of NUM leaders.

The union was reacting to the murder of NUM shop steward Missionary Mphem, 28, who was shot dead on Monday on his way to Amplats' Townlands shaft.

Mphem was also an official of the African National Congress and the SA Communist Party.

There have been about 10 such killings since 1986.

Meanwhile, the two-week strike at Impala Platinum Refineries (Implats) in Springs continued as talks between Implats and Springs and the NUM yielded no results.

Parties could not find a mutually acceptable implementation date for a 9.5% salary increase on which they had agreed.

The NUM wants the increase backdated to July 1, while Implats favours the implementation of the increase on August 1.
Dairy strikers return to work

Dairybelle strikers have accepted a deal struck by the Food and Allied Workers' Union and the company, and returned to work.

They will get a 6% wage increase now and another 1% in April. And if the company exceeds its targets, they will get another 2% from March 1.

During the strike by about 1,000 employees, a dairy truck assistant was shot dead and the driver wounded in an attack at an intersection in Philippa. Another employee was shot and wounded in a drive-by shooting.

Dairybelle said the strike had cost about $15-million. — Staff Reporter
DEFINITELY A DAMP SQUIB

Strike's effects minimal

If ever there was a badly timed strike, it appears the National Union of Metalworkers (Numsa)’s recent wage action must take the cake.

Seemingly targeting the motor manufacturing and component industries, the union struck just as these sectors were virtually hitting a record high with wall-to-wall inventory, most manufacturers were able to take strategic action to minimise the strike’s effects.

National Association of Automobile Manufacturers (Naama) director Nico Vermeulen says the six-day strike in August obviously had some effects, but they have been overstated. “Stock availability was not a problem.”

Vermeulen says the “other” strike (petrol attendants and so on) had nothing to do with the assembly side of the industry. “There were a number of sympathy strikes which had a knock-on effect into component manufacturing and into assembly.”

But Vermeulen isn’t crowing. “It only takes one critical part to be unavailable to stop a production line. Most of the motor manufacturers managed to avoid cuts but had to take strategic action and managed to keep running. Tactics varied from company to company, with some companies more affected than others.”

But by and large the impact was not all that material and full production will no doubt be made up now that the industrial relations situation is back to normal.”

Steel & Engineering Industries Federation (Seifsa) executive director Brian Angus says the effects of the strike were imperceptible.

“There wasn’t any great impact on the metal and engineering industry. Some companies experienced sympathy strike action, but it was limited.” The first sympathy strike in early September saw a few companies in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and, surprisingly, the Free State shut down. Overall it was very limited.

Numsa’s Hosea Morapedi says the strike was prolonged because “we were dealing with right wing employers.”

It may or may not be news to Numsa, but its claim of victory in the dispute rings a little hollow. Literally thousands of service station employees turned up for work every day of the strike — sans uniform. No names, no pack drill.

\* \* \*

Nick Dallies
Day of destiny draws near for UWC students

Row with striking workers a threat to examinations

YVETTE VAN BREDA

UNIVERSITY of the Western Cape students will find out tomorrow if there is any chance of them salvaging the academic year after exams were postponed because of a strike by 500 workers on campus.

If management and the employees resolve their differences, the students will write exams, which have been postponed for two weeks, and the academic year should be successfully concluded.

"A UWC spokesman said there was no way they would allow striking workers, whom he described as disruptive and violent, to scuttle the year's academic programme. "The students will write exams, no matter what," he said.

During the third week of their strike, workers disrupted classes before also stopping a national squash tournament by throwing objects onto the court and being aggressive on Friday, he said.

"As UWC had applied for an interdict to stop disruptions, these actions were in violation of the court order, said the spokesman. "It's sad when workers, in an attempt to settle a wage dispute, have to resort to this type of action," he said.

Lewus blamed the university's management for the crisis. "There is a climate of uncertainty and dishonesty here which management has created." As tension mounted between management and staff this week, the university's senate voted to censure rector Cecil Abrahams in the strongest terms, for the shortsighted, inhuman and mechanical manner around the process which led to recent retrenchments (of 41 academic staff members).

The senate resolved to form a task force of seven senators to investigate UWC's financial crisis which has led to cost-cutting due to a projected budget deficit of R16-million for this year.

They will also look into the retrenchment of staff, and other problems on the campus.

The senate conceded that it had neglected its primary function - to protect the university's academic programme, "the core business" of the university - and asked for recommendations to help members become more directly involved in the day-to-day running of UWC.

The National Education, Health, and Allied Workers Union secretary on the campus, Suraya Jawoodeen, said, "While Rome is burning, Abrahams, who has been so widely discredited on this campus, is still getting some doctorate in America." Abrahams is in the US to raise funds for a new life sciences building.

Negotiations between the management and the union will continue today.

Last month, after academic staff told the UWC management that none of the 15 proposals they suggested to reduce the deficit were feasible, management retrenched 41 academic staff, Lewus said.

Fearing similar action - fuelled by rumours that a retrenchment list of 329 workers existed (management has denied this) - the union has steered clear of engaging in any of the 15 options.

The union was demanding a clear financial plan from the university and a six-month moratorium on retrenchments to examine that plan. Jawoodeen said, "staff should not be made to feel they are responsible for the financial crisis at the university and should not be faced with salary cuts, retrenchments, or any of the other contractual benefits they suggest we give up.

"There was a disconcerting lack of transparency around plans to cut the budget deficit, the retrenchment process and the wage negotiations, said Jawoodeen. The strike started after management and the union could not agree on wage increases three weeks ago. Originally management came to the negotiating table rejecting an increase for the workers. The union wanted 13 percent but dropped to 12 percent.

On Friday management offered five percent backdated to October 1 but refused to grant a six-month moratorium on retrenchments.

"Management needs to come up with creative ways to break this deadlock," said Jawoodeen.

The UWC spokesman said the striking workers had accepted the principle of no work, no pay, and now wanted to have that waived. "This is one of the main contentions over which there is a deadlock. The workers must be responsible when they don't work."

ST(CN) 18/10/98
Progress can be made, says Clover

Dustin Chick

MANAGEMENT at Clover SA had indicated that progress could be made at a meeting today between the company's management and striking members of the Food and Allied Workers' Union, Fawu, regional secretary Philly Magagula said yesterday.

Magagula said hopes were high that the six-week strike by Fawu members could be resolved before the end of the week.

More than 5,000 Fawu members marched to the Clover SA head office in Johannesburg yesterday to hand over a memorandum calling on management to stop planned retrenchments as well as place a moratorium on all retrenchments.

Other demands included a request that management stop "intimidating" workers, and that all charges laid against striking workers be dropped. The union also requested that the national negotiating team be provided with transport to meetings.

Fawu had also insisted that management respond to its wage demands, which included an 8% or R300 across the board increase, six months' paid maternity leave, a night shift allowance and guarantees on working conditions for workers who had been transferred, within the next 14 days.

Clover management could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile, striking employees at Edgars continued to return to work yesterday. The number on strike dropped to 1,750. Edgars Human Resources director Nigel Unwin said during the last week about 400 workers had returned to work.

Unwin said that of the 11,600 people employed by the Edgars Group, unions only represented about 15% of the total workforce and only 37% of union members were actively engaged in strikes.

He said a proposal made by Edgars last week during an unsuccessful mediation process was the "best the company could do" while operating "under extremely difficult business circumstances."

Edgars offered employees a once-off bonus of R250 payable next month, a once-off incentive bonus of R250 linked to the achievement of the group's combined sales budget for November and December, and increases to minimum wages.

SAPA reports that SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union national negotiator Lee Modiga said unions would meet with Congress of SA Trade Union affiliates later this week to discuss the possibility of sympathy strikes. The union has called for a consumer boycott against Edgars.

Bene Gravitzky reports that the three-week old strike at Darry Belle was resolved last week after agreement was reached with Fawu on an 8% increase. The union has declared a dispute against the company for its policy of "no work, no pay" adopted during the strike.
Wage strike dying out, says HR boss

By Mzwakhe Hlangana
Labour Reporter

THE long-running wage strike by about 3 000 members of the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (Sacaww) is reportedly fizzling out after mediation talks failed last weekend.

Edgars group human resources director Nigel Unwin said yesterday only 37 percent of the striking Sacaww and Federated Council Retail and Allied Workers Union (Fedcaww) members were still on the strike.

Out of 605 group stores throughout the country, about 20 stores constitute 33 percent of the total store base, have been affected periodically, by the strike action.

Major distribution centres in Johannesburg, Durban and central stores have since been closed, Unwin also said.

The Sacaww executive could not be contacted yesterday for comment on the outcome of going to press.

Fedcaww spokesman Mr Nkelele said union members who were still out of work were those who were affected by the company lockout.

The union had suspended its strike pending the outcome of the current mediation.

Kellele said a review of the situation would be conducted at a meeting scheduled for Sunday.

The company's proposals at the mediation, which were rejected by the unions, included a guaranteed once-off bonus or R250 payable at the end of November in addition to the Christmas bonus.

Also tabled by the company is a once-off incentive bonus of R250 linked to the group achieving its combined sales budget for the months of November and December.

The man should be doing his job in the office while being investigated.

He said the delay for disciplinary action against government officials should be addressed because of the loss incurred in taxpayers' money.

Former transport MEC Mr Johan Kneek said the investigation should have been finalised within two months of his suspension.

Director's suspension investigated

NORTHERN Province transport MEC Aaron Motsoaledi said yesterday that he would investigate why no further action has been taken against his chief director, Mr Michael Machabaphala, who was suspended from work with full pay 15 months ago.

He was suspended on July 8 last year after he was implicated in corruption involving a video duplication company and has since been receiving a R22 285 monthly salary.

He said: "The suspension has cost the government thousands of rand. The man should be doing his job in the office while being investigated.

He said the delay for disciplinary action against government officials should be addressed because of the loss incurred in taxpayers' money.

Former transport MEC Mr Johan Kneek said the investigation should have been finalised within two months of his suspension."
UWC strike ends – but now trouble brews at UCT

Wage talks stalled

ANDREA BOTHA AND CAROL CAMPBELL
Staff Reporters

The crippling strike at the University of the Western Cape is over, but now trouble looms at the University of Cape Town.

UWC lectures will resume on Monday, while National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union members go back to work today after their four-week strike.

Meanwhile UCT management and representatives of the same union were in emergency talks today to stop a strike on Monday.

Union members on the campus voted this week to strike when wage negotiations with management stalled.

End-of-year exams are due to begin on Monday and there are fears of disruptions.

In this week’s edition of the university newspaper The Monday Paper, the union’s administrator on campus, Thembinkosi Qondela, said the primary concerns of union members were wage increases and job security.

While management had offered a 6% increase, the union wanted a R200 a month, across-the-board hike, irrespective of wage level, he said.

“Nehawu wants to put its demands more strongly following the collapse of negotiations,” he said, adding that the union was concerned over the extent of the wage differential between the highest- and lowest-paid employees.

“Nehawu also wanted a guarantee of jobs for two years, when management would offer only one year,” he said.

Paul Abrams, employee relations manager, said: “UCT has severe financial constraints. We are offering Nehawu 6%. Nehawu is asking for a lot more than we can offer. We greatly regret the fact that we haven’t been able to reach agreement.”

Meanwhile at UCT yesterday the atmosphere on campus was jubilant as workers braaied and played music.

Negotiators were last night still finalising an agreement reached in all-night discussions on Wednesday.

University management promised to give union members a salary increase of 6.5% from October 1.

This adjustment was to be reviewed in April, 1999, subject to confirmation of income from state subsidies and student enrolment.

An additional R1 000 would be handed to workers as a once-off payment at the end of next month.

The university also undertook not to retrench any non-academic staff before the end of January.

Both parties committed themselves to an exercise to restore relationships and ensure the enhancement of the academic project.

“This is a resolution of a temporary crisis, but the problems of the UWC are far from over,” said Sean Lewis, spokesman for the University of the Western Cape Academic Staff Association.
Court vetoes UCT strike

A STRIKE planned by workers at the University of Cape Town has been declared illegal by the labour court, writes JANET HEARD.

The UCT management won the interdict late on Friday.

While uncertainty hangs over UCT, classes are due to resume at the University of the Western Cape tomorrow following weeks of conflict when the workers' union and management reached a settlement.

UCT shop steward Leonard Maluka said yesterday that the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union strike committee was looking at options in light of the court ruling. The union's options ranged from appealing to holding the strike.

"If there is a strike, it will be illegal and workers face possible dismissal," said UCT's director of Communications, Helen Zille.
VWSA chief hits out at SA labour ructions

The Volkswagen boss says a government turnabout and strike action almost killed a R30bn deal, writes DON ROBERTSON

ST(BT) 26/10/98

An attack on government and labour at this week's Auto Africa car show, Volkswagen SA MD Hans-Christian Maergner suggested that unfulfilled commitments and industrial action could have upset a R30-billion export deal won from the German parent.

Proposed changes to the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP), lack of assistance from government and the recent spate of strikes by motor employees might well have scuppered the deal.

While pleased at securing the contract, Maergner expressed disappointment. "Quite frankly, I believe we could have gotten more. Unfortunately, but understandably, our parent company has lost some confidence in us in South Africa due to a variety of reasons."

But he added: "The extension of this order will secure VWSA's survival into the next millennium."

Maergner's comments probably represent the views of other manufacturers who extended themselves through substantial investment and commitment to secure export orders.

Announcing an expanded export order for VWSA to produce 60 000 fourth-generation Golfs a year worth R5.5-billion for the UK, Maergner said that in spite of initial positive indications, government had not been able to provide concrete financial assistance for this project.

In April, VWSA won a contract to provide 68 000 new Golfs over 18 months. The company invested R180-million in the project and in training 1 000 new employees plus 400 saved from retrenchment.

The new contract, which continues for the vehicle's life span, perhaps five to six years, will be worth over R30-billion. Next year's intended launch of the car locally will result in increased local content.

Maergner says that in law no provision is made for incentives for major investments not based on a greenfields plant. Manufacturing and retail motor sector strikes had affected delivery of new Golfs.

"What has transpired in South Africa over the last few months is beyond comprehension to me, never mind our parent company. The volatility of the labour situation as reflected in the recent series of direct and indirect strikes has sent the wrong message."

"Government's turnabout regarding changes to the MIDP at the mid-term review has not been well received. This has compounded the loss of confidence by our parent in VWSA. We are right now fighting for our long-term strategy and ultimately our long-term survival."

Maergner says SA is not a logical manufacturing base because of the high cost of shipping material, relatively high cost of labour, its volatility and the rand decline's impact on costs. "Without substantial export business, a relatively high degree of local content and a growing local market, as well as a government that is credible in its commitments, it will be very difficult to be successful in this country."

See Page 7
Hospital union in conflict after walkout

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Hospital Personnel Trade Union of SA faces a possible split after five of nine regions walked out of its national congress on the weekend amid claims of racism and a leadership battle.

Union sources said the congress was disrupted after a vote of no confidence was taken against the current union leadership. The leadership disputed this and said the congress was disrupted by four, mainly black, regions which had lost a vote by a wide margin.

"This minority faction originates from the Lebowa Action Committee and favours radicalism."

The sources said tensions had been building up ahead of the congress after the union's former vice-president David Tsheela was forced to resign. He had gained support from the four mainly black regions.

The union said the four regions had tried to create the erroneous impression the leadership was still white.

The union said the congress was forced to close after the five regions walked out as the constitution required that a quorum include six regions. The union will have to reconvene a congress within eight weeks.
Strikes bring losses and hit consumers too

Unions and management in talks over Edgars and Clover disputes

By Eddie Janiya

While union leaders and management are negotiating to resolve the protracted Clover and Edgars strikes, workers and employers are experiencing financial losses as the industrial action begins to hit consumers and retailers.

Edgars and the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (SScawu) are meeting today at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in an effort to end the five-week-old strike.

Behind closed doors yesterday, Clover and the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) met in a bid to reach an agreement on the seven-week-long strike. The Clover strike has resulted in irregular supplies to leading retailers.

A Hyperama spokesperson said the stores had received intermittent supplies from Clover. "It is one of our major suppliers and we hope the strike will end. It has been a trying period for us."

The latest figures from Edgars show that the company has lost R65-million in sales since the strike began, and workers have lost R4-million in wages.

According to the group's latest annual report, out of every R1.00 spent within the group, R73.80 is paid to vendors outside the group who supply materials, merchandise and services.

Of the balance (R36.20), R16.25 is spent on employee remuneration, R5.76 on leases and rentals for stores; R2.69 on direct taxation to the Government; R1.05 on interest payments to the providers of finance; and R0.24 on dividends allocated to shareholders.

The Edgars strike, which is in its fifth week, was triggered by the company's decision to freeze wage increases because of a 2% drop in profits.

To avoid further retrenchments, Edgars decided against pay increases. The union has demanded a 15% increase.

"We felt that the 28% loss in profits didn't mean that the company had no money. We could not accept their reasoning. After protracted negotiations we embarked on a full-blown strike," said Leo Modiga, SScawu national negotiations co-ordinator.

Fawu and Clover were locked in negotiations yesterday to resolve their wage dispute. The union was demanding an 8% or R300 increase across the board, which has been reduced to R250, and the company is offering 8% across the board or a R200 increase.

Commenting on irregular supplies from Clover, a Shoprite Checkers spokesperson said, "We have used small suppliers to keep stocks on the shelves and the fridges. Obviously, our company will welcome the speedy resolution of the strike so that our consumers can once more have a wide range of Clover products in our stores."

At 945, Score stores and franchises, the supply has been "on and off", according to marketing manager Fred David.

Spar southern division purchasing manager Andrew Stefanou said "Stocks are short at the moment."
Ballotposer could sideline strike by disgruntled UCT staff
Edgars wage meeting drags on

A MEETING to resolve the month-long wage dispute between clothing retail group Edgars and two unions representing almost 20 000 workers went on until late last night, with one union official saying it might take the whole night before a decision was reached.

The SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union and the Federated Council of Retail and Allied Workers met Edgars group management for the third round of negotiations mediated by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The two unions and Edgars management failed to resolve the dispute during a similar meeting last week.

After more than five hours of talks yesterday, one official said that there was no sign of progress.

Earlier, a spokesman from Edgars said she also expected the meeting to go on until late last night.

The month-long dispute began when Edgars rejected the unions' demand for a 15%-20% wage increase. The demand, later reduced to 10% by the unions, came after Edgars announced a wage freeze after reporting a 28% drop in profit.

Edgars rejected it, saying it was "excessive" and "could lead to the company's demise".

It proposed a one-off payment of R250 next month plus its usual Christmas bonus, followed by another bonus in January subject to the company keeping within the budget in the next two months.

In the meantime, workers affiliated to the two unions continued with their demonstrations yesterday.

So far, the strike action has cost Edgars millions in lost revenue.
It's a just cause, says striking father of 3.

Edgars workers strike dirty from Johannesburg shops as one-week-long strike begins so that

Hedendaal: Edgars workers strike dirty from Johannesburg shops as one-week-long strike begins so that

The trimmer at the back of the garden is

In the city

Club contest

Join the

by Dave Arnlie

Wage strike

Edgars back Edgars

200,000 may

strike.
‘MANAGEMENT DRAGGED FEET’

UCT strike likely to affect exam schedules

EXAM SCHEDULES at UCT stand to be upset if Nehawu strike goes ahead on Monday, Education writer PRISCILLA SINGH reports.

Staff belonging to the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) will embark on full strike action at the University of Cape Town on Monday after a breakdown in wage negotiations last week.

Nehawu’s main demands are a R200 across-the-board raise amounting to an average 8.7% increase, a guarantee from UCT management that it will not retrench anyone in pay classes 1-4 in the next two years; more time off work for shop stewards to meet; an increase in the housing subsidy for a R60 000 bond, and for the housing allowance — for those who do not receive a subsidy — to be increased to R300 a month.

UCT is offering Nehawu members a 6% salary increase — which would be back-dated to July 1, 1998 — and has agreed that there will be no involuntary retrenchment until the end of June 1999. It has offered more time for shop stewards, but not as much as Nehawu has asked for. No increase in either the housing subsidy or housing allowance is being considered for this year.

Nehawu represents workers in pay classes 1-4, making up a total of 680 staff.

Each pay class has several salary notches but most staff are on the maximum notch for their pay class, according to UCT.

UCT’s offer to Nehawu would bring the average cash salary to R2 439 in pay classes 1-4 and the average package to R4 673. Recent salary surveys show that this is higher than the wages earned by 90% of service workers in other sectors of the economy. In cash terms alone, UCT remains a market leader.

Helen Zille, director of communications at UCT, said this week that management had reservations about whether Nehawu had conducted the strike ballot properly.

Andrew Madella, provincial secretary of Nehawu, disagreed.

“We complied with all the conditions in the recognition agreement and with all procedures needed to conduct a strike ballot.

“When the results were given to management, they showed no indication that they were unhappy. Management have still not communicated this to us yet.

“Nehawu workers are committed to going ahead with a strike. However, we are prepared to negotiate with management at any time, but they have not indicated that they would like to meet with us,” Madella said.

He added that most Nehawu members at UCT were administrative support staffers and that a strike would definitely affect the exam schedules.

He said the wage matter should have been settled in July, but “management dragged their feet and now that strike action is threatened Nehawu is seen as the bad influence wanting to disrupt the exams.”

“Management should shoulder the blame if exams are affected in any way.”

UCT management has issued a stern warning to Nehawu that disrupting an exam will be a dismissable offence.
Action could hit varsity as exams start

UCT workers set to strike
Golding warns of strike consequences

Renee Grawitzky

CAPE TOWN — Marcel Golding, the trade unionist turned businessman, called on workers yesterday to consider the possible negative consequences their strike actions could have on benefits such as pension funds.

Golding, the chairman of Hosken Consolidated Investment, said at the Industrial Relations Association of SA conference in Cape Town that trade unions had been a major force for social justice and equity before 1994. However in a democratic SA they had to reconsider how they operated.

The argument of force should be replaced by the force of argument.

Unions had to find a way of improving the material benefits of their members while guaranteeing the security of post-employment benefits. Strikes could affect company profit and hence the share value. Ultimately, pension fund benefits could be affected and prejudice workers.

He suggested that unions consider more innovative techniques in dealing with conflict.

Golding was assistant general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) until 1994 when he became an African National Congress MP.

The Mineworkers’ Investment Union and Sactwu Investment Company, the respective investment arms of the NUM and the SA Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union, have a large stake in Hosken.
UCT acts to stop strikers disrupting its exams

ANDREA BOTHA
Education Reporter

The University of Cape Town has been granted an interdict restraining striking workers from going to the upper campus and disrupting exams.

This follows the arrest of two National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union members yesterday when workers and police clashed.

Director of communications at UCT Helen Zille said the majority of Nehawu workers were at work yesterday, the first day of the strike over a wage dispute.

She claimed that as support for the strike was so low, Nehawu had brought supporters from outside the campus to join their demonstrations.

About 700 Nehawu members are on strike in support of a demand for a R200 across-the-board pay rise, the equivalent of about 8%. The university is offering 6%.

A UCT spokesman said a group of Nehawu workers had marched around the campus yesterday, upsetting rubbish bins, turning on taps and disrupting exams by banging on windows. Police were called and violence broke out when they tried to drive the marchers back.

Two men were arrested on charges of assault.

Ms Zille said: "This is outrageous behaviour and it is illegal. It is also in bad faith, given the fact that both parties had agreed to continue negotiations on Monday on picketing rules."

She said that outside sympathisers had joined about 60 Nehawu workers on the march.

Students in two exam halls were given extra time to finish their papers after the disturbance. "Exams are sacrosanct at UCT," said Ms Zille.

Nehawu provincial secretary Andrew Madella denied that their members had been disruptive or violent. "They were moving in an orderly way towards the hall when police blocked their way."

He said violence broke out when police tried to push workers, who pushed back. The two men arrested had, in fact, been defending themselves, said Mr Madella.
Protesters bused in to back UCT strike

While Nehawu abided by the terms of the interdict, it is believed the union brought in more than 300 people from the University of Western Cape to support about 80 workers protesting on the middle campus.

UCT's director of communications, Helen Zille, said yesterday that three or four buses had arrived on the middle campus and that workers, believed to be from UWC, had joined in the marching and shouting "for a while."

"Nehawu knows they cannot get enough support from here and that's why they have to rely on sympathisers from the outside. This is not recognised in terms of the picketing rules, and the legality of the strike is also in question."

"I want to reiterate our concern about putting outsiders on the campus, and I think our concerns are entirely justified in this regard," Zille said.

The strike on Monday came after a wage deadlock in which Nehawu is demanding an 8.7% across-the-board increase, while management's final offer is 6%.

On Friday the Labour Court granted an interdict preventing Nehawu workers from striking this week on the grounds that the union's strike ballot was invalid.

In last week's ballot 420 Nehawu members rejected management's offer, and 135 accepted it. Management has claimed this was not a valid strike ballot because Nehawu members were not asked to vote specifically for a strike.

George Daniels, chairperson of the UCT Nehawu Shop Stewards' Council, said the union had a committee to manage the strike.

"I don't want to see the situation at UWC developing at UCT, but the ball is now in management's court," Daniels said.
Nehawu strikers assaulted me on campus, says photographer

A freelance photographer said he was assaulted on the campus of the University of Cape Town today by striking National Education Health Allied Workers’ Union workers.

Selwyn Marks, 36, of Muizenberg went to the campus to get the name of a woman he had photographed. “I saw the workers protesting, so I started taking pictures - and they attacked me.”

Mr Marks claimed workers had pulled his ponytail, kicked him in the side and broken his flash, causing R300 damage. Police had escorted him into a building but workers had run after him to try to remove his film, he said.

Nehawu workers at UCT have been striking since Monday in support of a wage demand.

Mr Marks said he had been told by the workers they were unhappy with media coverage of the strike and felt newspapers were prejudiced towards them.

“I’m a photographer. This is how I make a living.”

UCT spokeswoman Helen Zille said: “We greatly regret that a person was assaulted and intimidated in this way in the normal course of his duty. Though the people were wearing balaclavas and scarves and we are unable to tell if UCT workers were involved or not, irrespective of who were responsible, this is the sort of deplorable intimidation which has characterised this strike from the beginning.”

Ms Zille said students - who are writing exams - were getting fed up with the strike.

By early afternoon Nehawu had indicated that they wanted to negotiate. Talks were to begin later today. Ms Zille said the university was prepared to repackage the wage increase offer of 6% - but not to increase the amount. Nehawu is demanding an effective 8%
Striking UCT staff slash tyres

LYNNE DIMPFENGER
ARIC 31/11/98

University of Cape Town workers slashed car tyres in a march across the campus yesterday, as the strike for better wages continued.

Negotiations between Nehawu members and UCT management ended with workers rejecting UCT’s settlement offer.

Management offered workers a once-off back payment, effective from July to the beginning of November, and an increase of 6% according to their different pay classes.

But Nehawu members are demanding a R200 increase across the board.

About 250 strikers marched across the campus from the Brenner building to the Protea building on lower campus. During the protest seven vehicles’ tyres were slashed and some cars scratched.

Police suspect the damage was caused by workers because they were the only group that passed the building.

However, George Daniels, the chairperson of the Shopstewards Council, said he knew nothing of the incident or of Nehawu members’ involvement.

Mr Daniels said they would discuss the offer made by management with the other members and that strikes would continue next week if a settlement was not reached.

He also alleged that management had decreased the initial offer given to members during mediation.
UCT strike is bad timing, say students
Exams disrupted

"It's just sad. So sad," sighs softly-spoken Odwa Zotongo.

The 19-year-old social sciences student shakes her head as she comments on the strike by the National Education Health and Allied Workers' Union at the University of Cape Town.

She has just finished writing an exam and is waiting for her bus to go back to her residence.

"I don't know a lot about what's happening, but there are two sides to every story. It is sad that it should have had to come to this," she says.

Union members on the campus went on strike last week demanding a R200 across the board pay increase, effectively 9%. UCT management has offered only 5% and says it will not increase the offer.

Negotiations broke down at the weekend and the strike is continuing. Meanwhile, students are writing exams under difficult conditions.

Demonstrators have disrupted exams and broken windows. They have also disturbed students trying to study at the library and at residences with noisy singing and dancing.

Medical student Gill Jacobs, 23, said she understood the workers' demands, but felt it was "terrible timing."

Trying to disrupt the exams was ineffective because students were unable to do anything.

"I don't see how that can make a difference. We are not involved."

But Khotsi Sekhobo, 19, and Siwelele Radebe, 19, recognised the workers' timing as a ploy to get more attention.

"Management has to solve its problem with Nehawu. Students are being disturbed," said Mr Sekhobo.

Other students claimed not to know much about the strike and said they were too focused on their exams to care.

Others like Marlene Ngwenya, 20, said she felt some of union's demands were justified, but a strike was not the right way to go about things. Other options should have been explored before strike action was taken.
Clover, Fawu settle after 7-week strike

Johannesburg - Clover SA and the Food and Allied Workers' Union have settled the wage dispute which gave rise to a seven week strike.

Company spokesman Marius du Plooy said both parties agreed to a wage increase of 7% or R200.

At the beginning of the strike Fawu demanded an increase of 9% with a minimum increment of R300 per month.

Clover SA then offered, subject to certain conditions, a wage increase of 7% or R200 a month. However, this was rejected by the union.

The parties eventually reached an agreement on Monday and settled on a wage increase of 7% or R200 per month. - Sapa
Striking dairy employees agree to return to work

Workers at Clover SA have called off their long-term wage dispute with the company.

Clover SA and the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) yesterday settled their wage dispute, which gave rise to a seven-week strike.

Clover spokesperson Marius du Plooy said both parties had agreed to a wage increase of 7%, or R200.

Fawu members were due to return to work today.

At the beginning of the strike, Fawu demanded an increase of 9% with a minimum increment of R300 a month. Clover offered, subject to certain conditions, a wage increase of 7% or R260 a month. This was rejected by the union.

Sapa

Fran 10/11/98
lost and SA's economy shrinks

Stikes backfire as more jobs are

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SA unions told to shift away from strikes

...
Labour group warns of rise in violent strike action

Reneé Grawitzky

WAGE settlements were adapting to changed economic circumstances and were moving more in line with the inflation rate, it said in a report commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) released yesterday.

There was also a significant rise in protracted and often violent strikes in which more than 14 people died this year.

However, the report, compiled by Jeremy Baskin, found that “there is little if any indication that non-strike settlements were on average lower than strike-linked settlements.” In view of this, the report warned that “we are in danger of entering a vicious circle, especially if protracted industrial action leads to only marginal differences in settlement levels.”

Baskin estimated that more than 2.5-million man days were lost during the first 10 months of this year — four times more than last year and the highest level since the 1994 election year. By the end of this year, more than 3.5-million man days would have been lost to strikes, the report said.

These figures are higher than those released by Andrew Levy & Associates.

Baskin cautioned against viewing the rise in strikes as a reversal of the downward trend evident since 1994. Most sectors, he said, experienced little or no strike action while the majority of man days lost were a result of strikes in four main sectors — metal (motor and automobile manufacturing), retail and services (security), chemical and transport.

The report, released by the labour department, coincided with the second anniversary of the implementation of the Labour Relations Act. It aimed to establish reasons for the upsurge in strikes.

It found that while strikes were lasting longer, they were almost all procedural.

This suggested “respect for the act, notwithstanding problems regarding respect for the picketing provisions and the rights of non-strikers and of employers to use replacement labour.”

In addition, Baskin found that in the major strikes, union members were not balloted. Sources said Labour Minister Shepherd Mchiruwa and the Zimbabwe People’s Democratic Movement courted unity by using unionists to ballot before going on strike in order to gauge the extent of support.

There was “little substantial evidence” to support the argument that strikes were politically motivated.

The strikes, Baskin said, were caused largely by economic factors. Inflation fell faster in the early part of the year than workers’ expectations while employers were prevented by global and competitive pressures from offering significant real increases.

Average settlements were in the region of 8% wage increases against August’s inflation figure of 7.6%.

One killed in Zimbabwe riots

HARARE — At least one man was shot dead in Mutare yesterday where Zimbabwean security forces clashed with thousands of rioters as the first of a series of stayaways called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions took place.

A petrol station was looted in response to last week’s 67% increase in the price of petrol and diesel, and traffic lights were vandalised.

In the northern town of Chinhoyi people tried to organise a march against alleged government mismanagement of the economy, but obeyed orders to disperse.

In Harare, sporadic violence was reported from the southern suburbs. Banks and supermarkets opened belatedly, with skeleton staff for the few customers on the streets, and schools closed in other towns.

The stayaway was 75%-90% effective, with few reports of violence.

The congress, which plans similar strikes every Wednesday until its demands are met, wants fuel price increases shelved at least until the publication of a report into alleged corruption at the national oil monopoly. It is also demanding further talks on a “triumvirate agreement,” including government and employers, on root causes of the 60% slide in the value of the Zimbabwean dollar.

Although a meeting was convened with employers for today to discuss 20% cost of living pay awards, congress’s calls for a wider forum had been ignored, said secretary-general Morgan Tsvangirai.
Johannesburg — More than 2.8 million man-days — the highest figure since the 1994 elections — had been lost to a wave of industrial action in the first 10 months of this year, according to a department of labour report released yesterday.

The report was commissioned by the International Labour Organization and the Swiss Project.

The report also noted high levels of violence with at least 11 people losing their lives and extensive damage caused to property in strike-related incidents.

Jeremy Baskin, the author of the report and former adviser to the former minister of labour, Trevor Manuel, said this was expected to rise to about 3 million man-days by the end of this year.

Baskin said these figures were at least four times higher than last year but "strike levels remain lower than those found in the late 1980s and early 1990s."

However, there was little evidence of the strikes being political, he said.

"Inflation fell faster in the early part of this year than workers' inflationary expectations, while employers were constrained by global and competitive pressures from offering significant real increases."

"Other contributory factors included powerplay between unions and employers in some sectors, an imitation effect among unionists after the transport and security strikes and correspondingly, employers' determination to resist double-digit settlements," Baskin said.

The year was also characterised by employers taking a hardline approach to union demands with wages being almost the only issue undermining the decision to go on strike and only a few instances of grievance-linked strikes being registered.
Attitudes to strike-related violence ‘are changing’

Renee Grawitzky

THE report commissioned by the International Labour Organisation/SSwiss Project on strikes and collective bargaining in SA raises two crucial questions whether there has been a rise in strike-related violence or if undue prominence has been given to it.

The report suggests there has been a change in attitude by political leaders towards strike-related violence in SA, on the one hand, and a very gradual acceptance by workers, on the other, that democratic legislation implemented since 1994 can work without strikes.

It highlights the extent of the violence and damage to company property which occurred. A number of major strikes as a key feature of collective bargaining this year.

In some strikes there were few incidents of violence, alleged or otherwise. However, in sectors such as the security, motor, transport and the chemical sector, strike-related violence and damage to property were extensive.

During these strikes more than 14 non-striking workers and replacement labourers were killed, while others were intimidated or kidnapped. A number of companies lost millions as a result of extensive damage to property.

Factors contributing to the violence included the limited movement by employers during negotiations, the use of replacement labour and, therefore, the ability of employers to continue operations. However, a far more critical factor was the "culture of violence or the tolerance of violence that still exists in SA."

Durban-based consultant Pat Stone acknowledged that violence was still an inherent part of SA society, however, "society in general is now seeing violence as less legitimate than in the past because of the new democratic system."

Labour Minister Shepherd Mdlalana said this week that violence during strikes was condemned, "particularly now that workers' rights to strike are enshrined in the constitution and the law."

An observer said perhaps government had more faith in the democratic process than workers who had yet to accept that the new laws would work.

Stone said there was a higher propensity for violence when strikes began to have a limited effect on workers' economic leverage. It was difficult to estimate whether violence was on the increase as there was insufficient data available in this regard.

This was a major concern of the report, which said: "We are in danger of entering a vicious circle, especially if protracted industrial action leads to only marginal differences in settlements."

Jeremy Baskin, who compiled the report, said if the "vicious circle analysis is correct, then a sense of powerlessness can only grow, especially if industrial action reaps diminishing returns."

Project director Charles Nuppen said it was unfortunate that undue prominence was given to the violence which occurred during strikes this year. The report instead highlighted that there was a significantly higher commitment to procedure.
Employees of one of South Africa's major banking groups, Nedcor, have threatened to strike if the bank does not meet their unions' demands in pay negotiations.

Representatives of the SA Society of Bank Officials (Sasbo) and the Insurance and Banking Staff Association (Ibsa) confirmed that most members had voted yesterday to strike if the bank did not meet their demands.

However, Ashley Sutton-Pryce, the human resources director of Nedcor, said the ballots were "testing the water" and that the bank had not put its final offer on the table. There was no question of industrial action. Negotiations would continue on Monday.

He said he was quite sure that the unions' final offer was not on the table. The unions had "jumped the gun".

The unions could not be reached for comment late yesterday.

The unions objected to the bank's offer being linked to a risk element: a 24% growth in the bank's earnings per Nedcor Group share and a 28% increase in profits after tax for 1998.

Sasbo told its members yesterday that its final demand was for an 11.5% increase for lower-grade employees, an increase of 10.5% on guaranteed pay for higher grades and a two-week productivity bonus.

The bank's final offer was 4.5% on lower grades and 3.5% for higher grades, said Sasbo. In addition, the bank was prepared to make a further 2.5% available in July 1999 on the risk element.

The 2.5% would be back-dated to January 1, 1999, it said.

Ibsa said the bank had effectively split the increase due to its members. It said the bank had moved "the goalposts" by demanding that "future targets should be met".

Nedcor's attributable income rose 28% last year to R1.820-million. Earnings per share went up 24% and return on equity to 23.4%.
Fewer days lost to strikes this year than in early 90s

By ZOLILE NGAYI

A REPORT aimed at establishing reasons for the upsurge in strikes this year has found that although four times more days were lost in the first 10 months of the year as compared to last year, this is lower than in the early 90s.

The report commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)/Swiss Project for the Department of Labour, was released on the second anniversary of the Labour Relations Act in Johannesburg last week.

Compiled by Jeremy Baskin, the report said although the increased industrial action this year involved mainly around wage considerations, powerplay between employers and unions also contributed significantly.

Most sectors experienced little if any strike action. The report said 2.6 million man days were lost as a result of strikes in the chemical, transport, retail and services sectors.

The metal sector (motor and automobile manufacturing) accounted for 32 percent of the days lost with the retail and services sector a close second at 31 percent.

The report found that “Many strikes were especially protracted this year – major strikes lasting up to five weeks – and the strike ‘season’ lasted longer than usual, almost all strikes were procedural, only taking place after the provisions of the Labour Relations Act had been complied with. In cases where industrial action was unprocedural, the union usually took steps to suspend the action and after that followed procedures.”

Baskin noted that the majority of strikes involved wage issues.

“Rights-based strikes were notably absent, unlike in previous years,” he said.

“There was little evidence of the strikes being ‘political’. It was argued that unions were expressing dissatisfaction with government non-delivery and that Cosatu unions knew they would find it politically difficult to strike next year (an election year) and so would have to take action this year.”

The report said strikes in the main were almost entirely caused by economic factors.

“Inflation fell faster in the early part of this year than workers’ inflationary expectations, while employers were constrained by global and competitive pressures from offering significant real increases. These factors tightened the range in which settlements were possible, narrowing the window of settlement and the room to manoeuvre.”

Baskin said the hardline attitude adopted by employers when faced with industrial action was also the result of globalisation. Fiscal discipline has meant that most employers were not willing to offer more to their employees.

“In part this explains why the key sectoral strikers were so protracted. Employers were relatively immovable, for economic rather than conspiratorial reasons.”

The report warned that the recent bargaining indicated that South Africa was in “danger of entering a vicious circle.” While the unemployed were increasingly taking any employment on offer irrespective of conditions, the employed and unionised resorted to their bargaining power to improve their wages in order to support the increasing numbers in their households.

As a result of the bargaining power of unionised workers, Baskin said, employers were likely to reduce their workforce and subcontract and outsource more.
Police probe shooting during strike

Thembela Hengani

POLICE are investigating an attempted murder case after a worker was shot and injured by security guards at a condom and surgical glove manufacturing plant, Latex Surgical Products, south of Johannesburg, during a strike earlier this week.

Anna Sehlako was taken to South Rand Hospital after she was shot in the ankle by a Metro Security employee. The Chemical Workers' Industrial Union claims the shooting was unprovoked.

CWU spokesman Bongani Magqaza said the workers had been demonstrating since Monday because of a wages and working conditions dispute with the company.

On Tuesday, two security guards who were transporting nonstriking workers in a truck, suddenly started shooting randomly at striking workers, he said. Magqaza said Sehlako was discharged later that afternoon after being treated. He said other workers also suffered minor injuries during the shooting but did not need medical attention.

A Latex Surgical Products spokesman said yesterday the shooting occurred after strikers "attacked the vehicle transporting temporary workers to the premises."

Booyens police captain Ian Coetzee said police were investigating an attempted murder case against the security guards.

A Metro Security spokesman said the company was aware of the incident but would not comment as it did not have all the facts.

The union has demanded a 12% across-the-board increase and a minimum wage of R1 800, while management is offering a 2.5% increase and a minimum wage of R1 100.

Magqaza said the union rejected the company's offer because it translated into a meagre R30 increase, while the minimum pay offer was what most workers were receiving at the moment.

PH 20/11/98
Toyota workers on strike over cutbacks

Pearl Sebolao

The dispute between the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) and Toyota over planned retrenchments took a turn for the worse yesterday when workers downed tools demanding that the retrenchments be halted.

Meanwhile, forced retrenchments at Nissan were put on hold until January next year after Numsa reached an out-of-court settlement with the company. However, the process of voluntary separation packages would be allowed to continue. Numsa spokesman Dumisa Nhili said yesterday.

The union had applied for an interdict in the Labour Court against Nissan alleging that the company had failed to disclose information on its financial accounts, its strategic plans and why it was necessary to retrench as required by the industry’s bargaining forum agreement, Nhili said.

The case has been postponed to January to give both parties enough time to prepare their arguments.

He said that about 6 000 workers downed tools at Toyota’s manufacturing plant in Isipingo, Durban, after it became clear that only hourly paid black workers had been targeted for forced retrenchments.

Nhili said the workers saw this as “naked and brutal discrimination.”

Toyota group human resources director Harry Gazendam described the work stoppage as “a minor problem” involving only 200 employees.

He said the company would take appropriate action against the workers as their action was illegal. Gazendam denied that only hourly paid workers were targeted for retrenchment, saying 150 salaried staff would also be affected, including 25 to 30 in management positions.

Demonstrations and work stoppages were expected to continue today with the company’s Johannesburg employees joining the protests. Nissan could not be reached for comment.
Toyota workers on strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

AT LEAST 6 000 workers at Toyota’s main lupengo car assembly plant went on strike yesterday, demanding a moratorium on retrenchments.

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said workers protested at alleged workforce retrenchment discrimination, which reportedly affected only hourly-paid black employees.

South Africa’s major car manufacturers, adversely affected by a severe decline in car sales, were reportedly pushing for a reduction in manning levels, while representative trade unions disagreed with retrenchment plans saying these made a mockery of the recent Presidential Jobs Summit.

Ntuli said workers objected to the retrenchments since hourly-paid black workers were singled out on the list of an involuntary package of about 400 identified with effect from December 11 1998.

About 230 workers were offered voluntary severance packages this month in addition to 400 who were to be retrenched forcefully in December. The company reportedly plans to retrench about 400 workers next March, explained Ntuli.

The union maintained its broad view that the car manufacturing industry could be revitalised to ensure job retention and the creation of new jobs.

The industry had a potential for economic growth, job creation and human resource development unless the role of trade unions was undermined in strategic plans aimed at the reconstruction of the economy.

Toyota group human resources director Mr Harry Gazendam was reportedly locked in meetings yesterday and failed to return repeated calls for comment.
Workers ‘could face axe in violent strikes’

Reneé Grawitzky

VIOLENT strikes could be declared “unprotected” if government went ahead and amended the Labour Relations Act, the head of the act’s drafting team, Halton Cheadle, said yesterday.

The implication is that workers could be dismissed if strikes are marred by violence.

Speaking at Juta’s labour law seminar yesterday, Cheadle said strikes this year were characterised by high levels of violence. Unions should “get their house in order” or face possible amendments to the act.

He said government might consider following the example of other countries and remove the protection afforded to strikers if government decided on this route, the Labour Court could be given the power to declare strikes unprotected as a result of violence. This could then allow employers to dismiss striking workers.

A report by the International Labour Organisation for the labour department highlighted the extent of the violence and damage to company property which marred some strikes this year. More than 14 nonstriking workers and replacement labourers were killed, while others were intimidated or kidnapped.

Speaking at the same seminar, Andre van Niekerk, also part of the act’s drafting team, warned that “something must be done soon” to deal with the capacity problems at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

If mechanisms were not put in place the commission would “speedily deteriorate” and this had major implications for industrial peace and social justice.

Van Niekerk said more than 20% of cases referred to the commission “should not be there”.

His warnings follow renewed reports that the commission continues to face major internal problems over the resignation of a number of senior commissioners and claims of mismanagement.

Van Niekerk said the passage of the Labour Relations Amendment Bill through Parliament last month ensured that the labour minister could transfer the outstanding cases before the Industrial Court to the commission for resolution. He questioned whether the commission had sufficient capacity to deal with these cases as well as disputes which could arise as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act came into operation.

Labour lawyer Pakie Roux said a number of disputes could arise over the definition of remuneration in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. “There is a lot of uncertainty about what forms of benefits fall under the definition.”

There could be major cost implications for employers, depending on the type of benefits included in the definition. This was especially pertinent in determining accrued annual leave.
Toyota grinds to a halt as workers strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

PRODUCTION lines ground to a halt at Toyota's Prospecton car manufacturing plant in Durban yesterday after members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) embarked on a work stoppage.

Toyota human resources director Mr Harry Gazendam said yesterday that production was affected by a group of about 200 Numsa members who downed tools and engaged in "illegal demonstrations".

"The entire workforce had to be sent home and the plant was closed down for the safety of the majority of non-striking workers and to protect property," Gazendam said, also claiming that the strikers broke down the gates to the plant.

Union claims

He pointed out that the plant would remain closed unless the union stopped the demonstrations.

Gazendam also rejected union claims that retrenchments were discriminatory and aimed only at hourly-paid African, Indian and coloured workers, saying the list handed to Numsa representatives had names of their union members on it who were hourly-paid workers too.

He said names of salaried staff members, managers and technical staffers to be retrenched were represented to the representative staff association.

"We have been in consultation with the trade unions for almost 12 months about the recessionary economic state of the industry.

"We have followed labour relations legislation and national bargaining forum processes to the letter," he said.

Strongly opposed

Numsa spokesman Mr Dumisa Ntuli said the union was strongly opposed to the retrenchments because the company failed to disclose financial information for all Toyota divisions.

"Workers are being used as scapegoats for the inefficiencies of the company. The management failed to consider other alternatives, like job sharing arrangements, reduction of working hours and termination of the services of sub-contractors."

The union demanded a moratorium on retrenchments and full disclosure of information on all retrenchments.

Ntuli maintained that the company should be "revitalised" for Toyota to reduce its "high reliance on Japanese models's design and research"
Teachers face salary cuts for striking

By Theo Mathemile

Thousands of teachers countrywide are to have their salaries docked next year for embarking on an unprotected strike against the rationalisation process in June.

Education Ministry spokesperson Bheki Khumalo said yesterday that they were determined not to back down on applying the no-work, no-pay rule: "We are governed by the law and do not have a mandate to deviate from it."

He said the matter could be referred to the Education Labour Relations Council for debate.

South African Democratic Teachers' Union general secretary Thomas Nxesi said they had no grounds to oppose the decision.

Nxesi said it would be difficult to determine which teachers participated in the action and which did not.

He said his organisation was disappointed because the Government would not consider ways for teachers to make up the four days they were absent from work.

"For instance, our view was that the days teachers were going to assist in the voter registration process would compensate for the hours they were on strike. We also feel that teachers can be asked to put in extra hours to offset the deficit."
Car maker threatens to take action against ‘intimidators’

Numsa denies responsibility for damage to Toyota plant

FRANK NKUMALO  
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) would not take responsibility for any damage that might have been caused to Toyota’s property during an indus-
trial action by its members at the Durban plant on Friday, the union said yesterday.

About 6 000 Numsa members embarked on a protest on Friday morning over a retrenchment programme in which 380 of their colleagues would be retrenched after 250 had already accepted voluntary retrenchment packages.

Dumisa Ntuli, the spokesman for Numsa, said Toyota had threatened to take disciplinary action against union members suspected of “provocation and intimidation”.

He warned that if the company decided to proceed with such action it would be a “pyrrhic victory that would ricochet and boomerang” back to the union.

Ntuli said workers had been frustrated and angry in any event, he said, their right to protest action was enshrined in the Labour Relations Act.

However, Harry Gazendam, Toyota’s human resources director, said the right to protest was obviously only protected if it was legally and procedurally correct.

He said no conclusions had been reached yet on what disciplinary measures to take.

Numsa said it was not “taking part in disciplining our members”.

Ntuli also slammed Toyota for refusing to “reciprocate or consider” alternatives to retrenchments that had been proposed by the union. Such proposals included job sharing arrangements, reduction of working hours and replacement of contract workers by permanent members of staff.

Gazendam said “all realistic alternatives” to retrenchments had been considered in great detail.

Ntuli said the union’s labour relations with Toyota were “very sour”. He accused the employer of “not negotiating in good faith”.

Toyota said its industrial relations with Numsa were “generally fine”, save for a problem with a small number of about 50 to 100 employees who had “behaved unprocedurally”.

Union says it won’t take part in disciplining members who were ‘angry and frustrated’
Workers go back after lockout

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour reporter

NORMAL operations resumed at Toyota's Prospecton car manufacturing plant in Durban as more than 6000 workers returned to work yesterday after a three-day lockout.

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said management had agreed to reopen the plant following protest action by union members demanding a moratorium on retrenchments.

The union believed continued closure of the plant fuelled tensions and exacerbated the situation, he said. He added that the union would press for the company to reverse its plans for disciplinary proceedings against protesters.

Ntuli said the Numsa delegation had requested a meeting with the group's executive directors, claiming current company negotiators were incompetent and unilaterally dictated terms on union shop stewards and failed to consider the union proposals regarding retrenchments.

The union said it was not going to accept a situation where the company would take any form of disciplinary action against its members.

Group human resources director Harry Gazendam was not available for comment as he was reported to be in meetings.

The plant was closed for three days last week after workers embarked on a series of one-hour demonstrations at the Isipingo, Durban, plant in a move to stop the company from retrenching 607 workers. They claimed only hourly-paid union members were singled out for involuntary retrenchments.

Meanwhile, Reuters reports that unions in Zimbabwe said yesterday they would challenge President Robert Mugabe's order banning national strikes for six months and that they were ready to defy the rule "any time."

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) also announced it was calling off one-day strikes for now because the government had accepted its proposals to convene urgent talks.
COMPANIES

Toyota strikes cost company more than R25m

Disciplinary action is being taken in consultation with Numsa

Stan Maphoolanga 00 212 98 (152)

RECENT strikes at Toyota SA's Durban plant cost the company more than R25m in cumulative turnover, with employees forgoing more than R1.5m in salaries and wages, spokesman Joe Thompson said this week.

In a demonstration last week, which the company said was illegal and unprocedural, National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) members damaged property and threatened other employees and contractors.

As a result Toyota management had decided to close the main production plant in Isipingo until Numsa leaders were prepared to control union members. The decision was reversed at the weekend and workers resumed production on Monday.

The company said disciplinary action against the individuals involved was being initiated in consultation with Numsa. The plant is producing between 300 and 350 vehicles a day, and the company said last Thursday and Friday's production shortfalls would be made up.

"Given the state of the motor industry where demand is highly depressed and were less production volumes are required, the impact of last week's labour action could be gradually recovered," Thompson said.

Due to cost pressures and prevailing economic circumstances in SA, the company recently announced the possibility of retrenchment with the aim of aligning its business strategies with the problems in the industry.

Toyota group human resources director Harry Garen-dam said the company had been consulting for several months with the employee representatives and unions active in Toyota.

This process culminated in a voluntary separation exercise in October and last month.

"Unfortunately retrenchments per se will have to be effected in December 1998. Both the voluntary separations and the scheduled retrenchments affect employees of all levels and race in the organisation," he said.

"The whole process is being conducted strictly in terms of agreed procedures and the requirements of the Labour Relations Act," he said.
‘Let’s see an end to labour unrest’

By Mzwakhe Hlanganani
Labour Reporter

LABOUR Minister Mmbathu Mdladlana has challenged the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration to be better prepared for cooperative labour relations to ensure a decrease in the number of strikes.

The CCMA began its two-day annual convention at Kalfontein, outside Johannesburg, yesterday to evaluate, among other issues, the impact of the Labour Relations Act on industrial relations and the effectiveness of collective bargaining.

“It would be in the interests of the country to see a further decline in strikes and a move towards more cooperative labour relations,” Mdladlana said in his address.

He said with the impressive settlement rate of labour dispute cases, a foundation for more cooperative labour relations had been laid, enabling the country to move away from the adversarialism of the past.

United States ambassador to South Africa James Joseph commended CCMA director Thandi Orleyn for settlements achieved in major disputes in transport, the hospitality, security, motor and chemical industries.

Joseph said the US community was gratified for the part it had played in supporting the CCMA in its initial stages, through conflict resolution and mediation training and funding.

“I have heard pessimists railing at South Africa’s crime, brain-drain, labour unrest and what is sometimes described as labour inflexibility, but Americans are investing here at a phenomenal rate,” he said.

Joseph said since the advent of democracy in South Africa, an average of six US companies a month had been making new investments or expanded their operations. They had assets valued at R60 billion and provided employment for about 100,000 people.

Mdladlana urged the commissioners to deal with the root causes of labour unrest.

Resources should be ploughed into dispute prevention, education, training and promotion of internal procedures.

“Our challenge is to develop a holistic approach in respect of the implementation of these labour laws, including the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act,” he said.
Strikes at Netcare likely to 'escalate'

ADELE SHEVEL

Johannesburg — Strikes at Netcare, South Africa’s largest private hospital group, would “escalate next week when we continue the pressure”, Albert Wocke, the assistant general secretary at the Hospital Personnel Union of South Africa (Hospersa), said yesterday.

But discrepancies abounded as Peter Warrener, Netcare’s human resources director, said what was touted as a national strike ended up being “isolated events”, with only 15 administrative staff taking an active role.

The dispute revolved around yearly wage increases. Netcare had put forward an increase of 6.5 percent, while union members were demanding a 9.5 percent rise.

“We believe the offer is good given the economic climate,” Warrener said.

Wocke said the action had been boiling for the past three years. Yesterday it ranged from a series of short work stoppages such as “grasshopper strikes” to go-slow to general disobedience.

Wocke said the union had to build confidence of members, some of whom had been intimidated.

Warrener said the dispute could not extend to other hospitals because the union represented administrative staff of only seven of the 35 hospitals within the group.

The union claimed they had been “recruiting like mad”, and sympathy had been expressed from the nursing staff in one of the hospitals.

Wocke said 300 union members had been involved nationally through six hospitals in four provinces.

“The irony is that the union negotiated with us recently over the same increase with regard to the nursing staff, which they settled,” Warrener said.

Wocke said the increases in this regard included an adjustment in the nurses’ minimum salaries.

“This was not the case with regard to the administrative staff, who have been given a raw deal,” Wocke said.

“The effect has been minimal, and there has been no negative effect on any of the hospitals,” Warrener said.

Although Wocke said replacement labour had been taken on board, this was refused by Netcare.

Hospersa is the biggest union in Netcare, with about 3 000 members. It represents about 76 000 hospital staff, mainly within the public services sector.

Netcare closed up 1c at 72c on the JSE yesterday.
Prosecutors protest over salary increases

COURT prosecutors around the country stopped work yesterday calling for salary increases.

Magistrates at Johannesburg's regional and magistrate's courts in West Street remained in their offices while members of the public thronged the passages.

Last Thursday prosecutors received their salary slips in advance and found they had not received an expected increase.

A ban on overtime pay saw prosecutors start court later than usual on Thursday and Friday as they prepared their cases during court time.

In section one of the regional court, one court dealt with bail applications, another with postponements and new cases, and a third took the overflow.

Many of the prosecutors sat on the steps at the court's Bezuidenhout Street entrance, displaying placards bearing slogans such as "Stop Tippage. Start Paying" and "Crime should be treated with more conviction."

Similar action occurred in Durban, Pretoria and Soweto.

Neither the president of the National Union of Prosecutors of South Africa, Mr Eduard van der Spuy, nor a Justice Ministry spokesman immediately available for comment.

The prosecutors embarked on a strike despite national director of prosecutions Mr Bulclau Ngekwa's assurances that increases would be included in their Christmas salaries.

Ngekwa's spokesman, Mr Sipho Ngema, said efforts were being made to get the deal tied up.

The Society of State Advocates accused the Justice Ministry of being inept, saying it had not budgeted for a pay rise for prosecutors.

SAPA
Promise of increase fails to halt strike

By Gabi Khumalo and Mbongeni Hlophe

STRIKE action by prosecutors throughout the country continued yesterday despite an announcement by national director of public prosecutions Mr Balelani Ngcuka that prosecutors' salaries will be increased.

Thousands of prosecutors in Durban, Johannesburg and Pretoria courts engaged in strike action this week demanding salary increases to replace the overtime payment suspended by the justice department at the beginning of December.

Department of Justice spokesman Mr Paul Setsetse said yesterday the minister Mr Dullah Omar was still holding discussions with Minister of Finance Mr Trevor Manuel for funds to pay state advocates.

However, Setsetse could not say what contingency plans were put in place for prosecutors to return to work before they received any increases.

Prosecutors' salaries

The announcement of how much would be added on to the prosecutors' salaries would be made before the end of this week.

The strike began after the prosecutors discovered from their pay slips that the increases that were due yesterday had not been included in the payment.

Spokesman for the National Union of Prosecutors in South Africa Mr Mike Vebbi said yesterday that they would continue the strike until Ngcuka make a formal announcement directly to the prosecutors.

"Yesterday prosecutors explained to state witnesses and informed them of the current situation and postponed all cases that were due for yesterday's sitting," he said.

Vebbi said they had not received any announcement from Ngcuka's office but were promised a report-back after they had written a letter to Ngcuka.

"Sipho Ngwema, (spokesman for Ngcuka's office) made an announcement through the media, saying that they were sorry and that they had problems but the prosecutors didn't receive that report," said Vebbi.

Baila Sihle
Wheels of justice turn even more slowly as prosecutors slack off

Government departments pass the buck on money question

By Cathy Powers

As government departments passed the buck yesterday, cash-strapped prosecutors around the country embarked on a work-to-rule after Monday's strike action.

Cases started between an hour and an hour-and-a-half late at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court because prosecutors were preparing their cases during office hours, according to acting senior public prosecutor George Thirth.

Only four of the 14 regional courts were in operation.

A similar situation prevailed in Durban. Prosecutor Mike Yehhi said the Durban regional and district courts were operating in a "crippled fashion".

Durban prosecutors were following the work-to-rule strategy of their Johannesburg counterparts.

"We think it is the most appropriate action and it is the least disruptive," he said.

Courts started up to two-and-a-half hours late yesterday. Yehhi added that there would be "precious little time" for trials to be heard after case preparation, remands and bail applications were heard.

Prosecutors were disillusioned after a promised pay rise failed to materialise when they received their Christmas pay slips last week.

Over-time payment was suspended at the end of last month and National Director of Public Prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka has made repeated assurances of an announcement regarding increases.

Meanwhile, government departments could not say who was ultimately responsible for the delayed announcement of a salary increase for prosecutors.

The finance department referred The Star to the public service and administration department, which referred the matter to the justice department.

Justice ministry spokesperson Paul Sethese said he could not comment and referred The Star to the office of the national director of public prosecutions.

Ngcuka said there were bureaucratic problems but he was "not at liberty" to specify them.

He was trying to get all concerned parties of the finance, justice and public service and administration ministers to agree on a settlement, he said.

"I am really frustrated about this matter - I've had enough," he said.

Logan Wort, spokesperson for the finance department, confirmed that the department was involved in re-structuring prosecutors' salaries. He said money had been set aside for the increase but would not divulge the amount.

"Our role is to ensure that increments can be financed within the justice budget and that increases are sustainable over three years.

The negotiated increase had to be agreed by the cabinet's mandate committee, Wort said, adding that the delay was in the bargaining chamber.
Prosecutors to persist with their strike action

By ZOLILE NGAYI

Prosecutors’ strike action is set to continue this week, despite an announcement by the national Director of Public Prosecutions, Bulelani Ngcuka, that they would receive salary increases.

Ngcuka apologised for the delay to implement increases for prosecutors and promised the matter will be resolved before the end of the year.

“The director met some of the prosecutors this week and they were informed an increase was imminent,” said Christo Roberts, a senior public prosecutor at the Pretoria Magistrates’ Courts.

About 2,000 prosecutors embarked on a go-slow last week, after the 30 percent increase they expected was not reflected in their December salaries.

This followed a decision by Justice Minister Dullah Omar to ban overtime payment from the end of last month, because of budget constraints in the department.

A ban on overtime payments was shelved last year, when prosecutors refused to work any overtime without pay.

Earlier, Ngcuka’s spokesperson, Sipho Ngwema, said the delay was caused by technical hitches. Ngwema added that an announcement pertaining to the increases would be made before the end of the year.

Since the cut in overtime pay, which prosecutors claim reduced their income by about 30 percent, many prosecutors started preparing cases in the morning instead of at home.

“This resulted in some cases, which were scheduled to be heard at 8am, being heard about two hours later. It caused serious disruptions,” Roberts said.

The strike is expected to again have an adverse effect on the backlog of cases that courts around the country are facing.

Because of the strike action last Monday, a number of courts had to be closed and cases postponed until next year...
Prosecutors on go slow despite increase

PRETORIA — Hundreds of prosecutors countrywide were still engaged in a go slow in protest against poor salaries yesterday in spite of a 6% increase announced on Tuesday.

National Union of Prosecutors of SA president Eduard van der Spuy said the refusal by prosecutors to work overtime was a response to the justice department's refusal to treat them as professionals.

The problem of low salaries was recently compounded by a ban on overtime. "This is of the department's own doing," Van der Spuy said. "They themselves said if they didn't pay overtime they wouldn't expect us to work overtime."

Prosecutors were demanding salaries comparable to those of magistrates, which would mean increases of between 30% and nearly 100%. Van der Spuy said the union would advise its members to resume working overtime only once they received appropriate pay rises.

About 30 prosecutors at the Pretoria Magistrate's Court took part in the go slow. Senior public prosecutor Christo Roberts said labour action would continue "until they do something about our salaries." Some prosecutors earned less than half the salaries of magistrates. Before the ban on overtime came into effect, prosecutors could earn up to a third of their monthly salaries extra by working longer hours, he said.

Roberts said the go-slow was having no real impact on the court's functioning, but would definitely slow down proceedings as soon as the festive season was over.

Justice Minister Dullah Omar on Tuesday announced a 6% pay rise for public prosecutors and state advocates, saying this was all the country "could afford." — Sapa
Fawu to extend strike against Earlybird

Thembelihle Hlengani
and Taryn Lambert

THE Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) intensified its month-old strike against Earlybird yesterday by giving notice of a secondary strike against all business units of the poultry company.

The intensified action is expected to cripple the company's production, as more than 1500 workers will be involved. The strike was previously concentrated at the company's Olfantsfontein slaughterhouse only.

Fawu spokesman Nzizho Kalipa said the union decided to call for a secondary strike after an attempt to break the deadlock with employers on Tuesday night was unsuccessful.

He expected the company's Standeroton works to join the action today.

Arnold Prinsloo, Earlybird's human resource manager, said the union's notice was in contravention of the Labour Relations Act, and the company was waiting for the union to talk to them before taking action against the expansion of the strike.

Workers and management deadlocked a month ago after they failed to reach a settlement on a wage increase.

The company is offering an 8% increase while the union is demanding 10.5%. Kalipa said the union was prepared to compromise at 9.6%, but the company had not agreed.

"We reduced our demand according to inflation. The 8% the company is offering is far less than the inflation figure which is above 9%," Kalipa said.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration and an independent mediator have failed to break the deadlock.

Kalipa said the company had agreed to increase Christmas bonuses from R300 to R500. He said workers had not yet received their bonuses for 1998.

Prinsloo denied this, saying workers had all received their 13th cheque.

Meanwhile, striking National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) members and Anglo American Platinum (Amplats) again failed to reach agreement yesterday over a wage dispute. The dispute has resulted in 5 000 workers downing tools over the Christmas season at four mines and a smelter in the North West and Northern provinces. Amplats spokesman Steve Calladine said yesterday the parties will meet again on Monday with an independent mediator in a bid to settle the dispute.
NUM strike at Amplats mines continues

Renée Grawlitzky

The wage strike by thousands of members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at Anglo American Platinum (Amplats) mines enters its second day today, with the parties unable to reach final agreement on the referral of the dispute to arbitration.

At the same time, the union's regional leadership said it was difficult to estimate the effectiveness of the strike as many miners had already gone on leave for the Christmas long weekend.

Amplats claimed that 3,000 miners were on strike while the union estimated there were about 10,000 strikers.

It is believed that a tentative understanding was reached on the terms of reference on arbitration and the identity of the arbitrator and that arbitration would be held on Monday.

Amplats said late last night that the union had departed from the agreed process. A NUM spokesman could not be reached for comment.

There have been no reported incidents of violence between NUM members and those of the rival Metal and Platinum Workers' Union.

The NUM's deputy general secretary, Archie Fakane, said that the union's national executive committee endorsed its support for the strike yesterday on the basis that the company's wage offer was unreasonable in the context of its profit.

Amplats posted a record net profit of R1,64bn for the year to June. Its interim results for the half year to end December would be reported in February.

The company's share was trading at R82 before the start of the strike. The share price closed at R77.50 yesterday.

Platinum analysts warned that the drop in share price might not necessarily be linked to the strike but to the overall drop in precious metal prices.

The wage strike centred on an 8% wage increase.

The union claimed the company had offered an effective 4.5%
I.R. Strikes

1999
Prosecutors step up work-to-rule action

By Mbongeni Hlophe

STATE prosecutors at Durban and Pretoria courts yesterday intensified their work-to-rule action in protest against a six percent salary increase announced last December.

Their action began in mid-December last year after they discovered that salary increases promised by Justice Minister Dullah Omar were not effected.

Omar had earlier promised to grant prosecutors salary increases as a substitution for the recently terminated overtime pay.

Overtime payment was terminated from December when the department said it was running out of cash.

However, the work-to-rule action continued yesterday despite the six percent salary increase announced by Omar.

From Monday this week, prosecutors at the Durban Regional and District courts started work two and half hours later than the scheduled 9am starting time.

KwaZulu-Natal spokesman for the National Union of Prosecutors in South Africa (Nupa) Mr Michael Vehbi said it was unfortunate that members of the public were the victims of the situation.

"We do not believe that we are to blame. The public can judge who is failing to do the job between us and the department," Vehbi said.

Yesterday prosecutors started work at 11.30am after they were told that Omar was not available for negotiations as he was on a "working holiday" in India.

"We have no one to speak to Omar can't be reached and Bulelani Ngcuka (national director of public prosecutions) is also nowhere to be found," said Vehbi.

"Why is the minister out of the country when there is such a crisis," said Vehbi.

He said prosecutors were left with two options: either to embark on an unprotected strike or to embark on a "blue flu." Blue flu refers to obtaining a false medical certificate to justify being on paid leave.

Vehbi claimed that salaries deposited into their accounts did not reflect a six percent increase, only four percent.
Unions flex muscles with strikes

TRADE unions flexed their muscles in the industrial sector last year with strikes, some violent, accounting for 2.33-million lost man-days — the highest since 1994.

Days lost to work stoppages, which took place mainly in the security, road transport, chemical and motor industries, were significantly above the 650 000 man-days lost during 1997.

With most wage negotiations starting in June, the bulk of the strikes occurred in the second half of the year. In the first six months of the year, the number of days lost rose by 20% to 310 000 days from 260 000 days in the first half of 1997.

Jackie Kelly, research associate at industrial relations group Andrew Levy & Associates, says wage demands represented the major stumbling block in 98% of all disputes between unions and employers.

The tough economic climate and the reduction in disposable income was used by unions to demand substantially increased wages, while employers, subject to similar economic constraints, were compelled to offer reduced wage hikes, says Kelly.

Significantly, the trend towards central bargaining, whereby unions negotiate on behalf of an entire industry sector, rather than at individual company level, gained momentum.

It is estimated about 65% of strikes involved more than 1 000 workers with 90% of the strikes undertaken on a national basis, adds Kelly. This compares with only 43% involving more than 1 000 workers in 1997.

An example of this trend was evident in the extended dispute between the Automobile Manufacturers Employers Organisation (Aneo), representing the retail motors division, and workers represented mainly by the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa). Aneo insisted unions negotiate directly with the 18 000 different companies involved on an individual basis, but Numsa insisted on a national bargaining strategy.

The new year, however, has not got off to a good start. A two-week strike by 8 000 miners at Anglo American Platinum was resolved only this week, while hundreds of workers at the Earlybird Poultry farm in Ophunts-

fontein are continuing with a six-week work stoppage.

An Andrew Levy & Associates survey shows the average wage settlement was 9.2% in the first half of the year compared with 9.7% in the first six months of 1997. Second-half figures have yet to be finalised.
SA loses 2,8-m days to strikes

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

SOUTH Africa's track record as one of the world leaders in strike action is being exacerbated by labour legislation's protection of sympathy strikes, a leading labour relations consultancy warned yesterday.

The group said that civil society needed to examine whether the right to strike was balanced with the country's economic imperatives.

Webber Wentzel Bowens human resources consultancy partner Mr Rod Harper deemed the new Labour Relations Act's definition of a strike which he said encompassed primary and secondary industrial actions and "is broad enough to cover a strike involving employees of the same employer who are not directly affected by the dispute".

**Major impact**

The increase in secondary strikes last year played a major role in the 2,8 million mandays lost to strikes, he said.

Harper cited recent major strike actions in the chemical, motor, auto and metal industries where the Labour Appeal Court upheld the protection of secondary strikers.

"It is a major defeat for employers with far-reaching economic and strategic implications," a worried Harper added.

The LRA's definition of a strike only required that the striking employees share the purpose of wanting to remedy a grievance or resolve a dispute, he said.

- Harper argued that the recent Labour Court ruling on secondary strikes could encourage unions which did not exercise "self-responsibility to engage in more industrial action than might otherwise have been the case".
Confusion over Earlybird strike

Frank Nxumalo

Johannesburg — Earlybird, the poultry farms management company, yesterday denied claims by the Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu) that more than 2 000 workers in Standerton had resolved to strike in sympathy with colleagues at Olifantsfontein.

"The information we have received from Standerton management is that workers there have declined to go on a sympathy strike," said Arnold Prinsloo, Earlybird's human resources manager.

Prinsloo said his company had also not received any notice of a strike action, which is a stringent requirement of the new Labour Relations Act.

However, Khalapha Nqapho, Fawu's spokesman, said the sympathy strike was on for next week after Standerton workers had "endorsed" a weekend meeting's resolution on the issue.

Hundreds of workers allied to Fawu at the Olifantsfontein works have been on strike since early last month to press their demands of wage increases of 10.5 percent against management offers of 8 percent.

Fawu also demanded substantial improvements on night shift and colthroom allowances.

Mike Maloba, the union campaign organiser for the Gauteng region, said over 650 Olifantsfontein workers and other Fawu members from the surrounding industrial area would march on the works on Tuesday or Wednesday next week.

Prinsloo said the way forward was to try to resolve the matter. "We are willing to engage in talks at any time (and to) look at a restructured package," he said.
Key cases at risk as court staff work to rule

Western Cape prosecutors and State advocates embark on a work-to-rule action today -- and warned it could mean important cases being ditched.

By preparing their cases and consult with witnesses only during their prescribed 8½-hour working day, they expect to further cripple the justice system's ability to deal with crime in the province

Court officials are expected to start their working day at 7.45am and courts will sit only after the officials have prepared their cases. Courts will rise punctually at 4.15pm.

The work-to-rule was agreed at a meeting of Western Cape prosecutors in Wynberg at the weekend.

Prosecutors in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal started similar action after Justice Minister Dullah Omar last month announced they would get a 6% pay increase, an amount described as a joke by angry staff.

The justice department also suspended overtime pay in November after funds apparently dried up. Simon Meyer, spokesman for the 60 court officials who met at the weekend, said the work-to-rule action would mean that State witnesses could expect to sit at court all day without being called.

They would then have to be subpoenaed again, he said.

"If also could happen that magistrates refused to grant further postponements and that important cases then could be scrapped from the roll, "

Prosecutors said they were sick and tired of losing experienced court officials to the private sector simply because they were not being paid enough.

Many prosecutors have said they were finding it hard to survive in the present economic climate and that the private sector appeared to be their only remaining option.
Fedusa threatens to go on strike

By Mzwakhe Hlungani
Labour Reporter

THE Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) has filed a notice of intended protest action in the National Economic Development and Labour Council to pressure the Government to address demands for pay increases by public prosecutors.

Fedusa general secretary Chez Milami warned yesterday that should the matter not receive satisfactory attention of Nedlac, then protest action across the country would follow.

"If the Government is serious about tackling the high level of crime in South Africa it must pay attention to the plight of public prosecutors and the functioning of the criminal justice system. "

"Failing to do so will have a negative impact on the socio-economic interest of all workers and the country at large," Milami said.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Mineworkers general secretary Gwede Mantashe presented a cheque for R50,000 yesterday to aid the victims of the tornado that devastated Umtata in the Eastern Cape last month.

The presentation was made at the Umtata mayoral office.
Increase in strikes set to continue

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

A rise upturn in strike activity this year and next year as an unpredictable wage bargaining environment will cause major confrontations and growing resistance from employers, a leading labour law consultancy warned yesterday.

Andrew Levy and Associates research consultant Mr Jackie Kelly also anticipated "a degree of instability" into this year's bargaining due to the elections.

The Employment Equity Act's wage differentials clause would certainly result into bargaining confrontations, she said, adding that employers would continue to resist wage demands that cannot be funded from productivity gains or improved work flexibility.

"There will also be a growing resistance from employers to centralised bargaining arrangements which have previously proved not to be attractive to employers," she said.

The sharp upturn from 1997's total of 650 000 man days lost due to strikes (the lowest figure recorded since 1983) to 2.3 million man days lost at the end of 1998, could be attributed to a number of strikes which took place at the centralised level where new agreements were being thrashed out.

Kelly said the fact that there was an increase in strike actions when employment levels continued to drop and retrenchments were still rife was a cause for concern. These strikes reflected heightened expectations and existing tensions in the workplace as the economic belt was being tightened.

She also pointed out that different interests were at play since unions were pushing to the limit to maximise earnings for their members while employers sought to minimise costs.

And this exacerbated the already volatile situation which saw some strikes, notably chemical, motor industry, security and transport sectors being marred by incidents of intimidation and violence.
Prosecutors join go-slow talks, said Mr. Meyer.

Western Cape prosecutors yesterday joined colleagues in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal in working to rule, which means they will prepare cases during office hours and work a strict 8½-hour day.

Mr. Meyer said prosecutors were demanding salary parity with magistrates and that the 6% increase offered by the justice department had angered many colleagues.

Mr. Meyer said prosecutors would work overtime without extra pay if their salaries were raised to almost the levels earned by magistrates.

Western Cape prosecutors say they will know only next week how long their work-to-rule action will last.

Simon Meyer, spokesman for the local prosecutors, said today the office of the national Director of Public Prosecutions, the Department of Justice and prosecutor unions would meet in KwaZulu Natal today to discuss the crisis.

Local prosecutors will meet next week for feedback about today’s crisis.
Andrew Levy report says elections will create instability in bargaining

Strike action on ‘upward trend’

FRANK NELUMA
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — A volatile bargaining environment could be expected in the next few years as strike action was once again moving on an upward trend, labour analyst Andrew Levy & Associates said yesterday.

The Andrew Levy overview report for the past 12 months showed that strike action — which recorded a marked increase from 630,000 man days lost in 1999 to 2,2 million man-days lost at the end of last year — was set to continue, increasing in 1999 and the year 2000.

Chief among the reasons contributing to this trend was that an election year would introduce a degree of instability into bargaining.

Resistance from employers to centralised bargaining — a process that had never been attractive to them — was also expected to grow.

"In addition, the wage differential clause in the Employment Equity Act will translate into bargaining confrontations. Employers will continue to resist wage demands that cannot be funded from productivity gains or improved work flexibility."

"Finally, the economic environment itself, as well as the lack of depth and experience in the labour movement's leadership, will contribute to what will become a volatile bargaining environment in the next few years at least," said Jackie Kelly, the consultancy's researcher.

Contrary to a view held by many observers that there was a strong political motive behind the strikes, Kelly said wages were the major strike trigger in 1999.

"The majority of strikes that took place this year (1999) were wage-related, procedural and the culmination of months of intense negotiation between the parties concerned."

"Strike action is a weapon of last resort and when the stakes are high, it reflects the resolve of both sides to hold out for maximum benefits," she said.

As strike triggers, wages stood at 95.8 percent (its highest level in eight years), followed by grievances at 12 percent, dismissal/discipline at 1.1 percent, retrenchment at 0.7 percent and recognition agreement disputes at 0.1 percent.

By far the majority of strikes took place at national level and accounted for 99.9 percent, followed by Gauteng at 4.6 percent, Western Cape at 2.6 percent, KwaZulu Natal at 1.1 percent and others at 0.8 percent.

"There was also a significant increase in the number of workers involved in strike action, which directly relates to the increase in the number of nationwide strikes. 95.8 percent of strikes involved more than 1,000 workers, compared with 49.7 percent in 1997. Strikes involving 20 or less workers (fell) to 2.6 percent compared with 22.9 percent in 1997.

"The most active unions in terms of man days lost were CWU (29.2 percent), NUMSA (28.9 percent), TGWU (10 percent), Fawu (6.4 percent), Sacwma (6.3 percent) and NUM (4.9 percent)," Kelly said.

The year also saw more than 200,000 engineering and automobile NUMSA workers embark on the first-ever sympathy strike under the new Labour Relations Act with colleagues in the motor component sector on September 1 and 22.

CP317/14/11/99
WESTERN CAPE prosecutors, "fed up" with what they consider pathetic salary increases, yesterday embarked on a work-to-rule protest — and sparked off similar protests around the country. JUDY DAMON reports.

The decision by 95% of Western Cape prosecutors to start a work-to-rule protest and further slow down the justice system came after the Justice Department last month awarded them a 6% salary increase over and above the last general civil service increase.

But this was below the 20%-30% raise they had hoped for.

After a two-year "paper war" between prosecutors and the Justice Department, promises made over increases and overtime pay were never kept, according to Simon Meyer, spokesperson for the prosecutors.

He said when they first voiced their dissatisfaction over their income early last year, overtime pay was given "to tide them over" until proper salaries could be paid.

Then suddenly they stopped paying us overtime and we thought we could expect the great salaries they had promised us. But instead they gave us a 6% raise. And that is why this new discontent has started."

Prosecutors also say that the next budget excludes scope for further increases.

Meyer said experienced prosecutors had been abandoning their posts for more lucrative positions on the bench, as well as defecting to the private sector. This left newer prosecutors with the burden of large caseloads and difficult-to-handle cases.

Yesterday, another experienced Wynberg prosecutor, who earned his maximum salary of R5 000 a year, was lured away by the R140 000 annual income of a magistrate.

The protest action was agreed to at a prosecutors' meeting in Wynberg last Saturday, Meyer said.

Prosecutors would work only in their normal working hours between 7.45am and 4pm. Preparation of cases, often done outside of these hours, would only be undertaken within working hours and no work would be done at home.

"The negotiation process is over. We will consider going back to work once they come up with something concrete and we are satisfied with what we see," Meyer said.

The repercussions for the entire justice system could be "serious", including the pile-up of cases and awaiting-trial prisoners having to spend more time in jail.

The Justice Department had threatened the striking prosecutors with misconduct charges, Meyer said. "If all the prosecutors in the Western Cape go on strike, of course courts won't start on time. These are the kind of things that they have to face."

However, the Justice Department could compel prosecutors to work overtime and their action was not illegal, he insisted.

Paul Setsetse, spokesperson for Justice Minister Dullah Omar, confirmed this and said the department was relying on the goodwill of prosecutors: "They must put the interest of the country first."

He added that on Omar's return from a trip to India, the minister would set up a forum with representatives of prosecutors and advocates to discuss salaries.

National Director of Public Prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka's spokesperson, Sipho Ngwema, said his department was also pursuing the re-introduction of overtime despite Western Cape prosecutors saying they would not take work home.

According to reports last night, most Johannesburg courts were operating normally, with some of the prosecutors taking cases home to prepare them after hours, while in Pretoria and Soweto delays of two to three hours to the start of each day's proceedings were becoming more common.

Prosecutors also embarked on protest actions in Durban and Bloemfontein.
Labour militancy sees increase in strikes
Prosecutors warn of sacrifice.
Johannesburg — Mediation talks between the Food and Allied Workers’ Union (Fawu) and Earlybird broke down yesterday after the company failed to accede to workers’ demands, the union said.

Sam Mashilwane, branch organiser for Fawu’s greater PWV region, said the union demanded a 9 percent wage increase back-dated to September 1 1998.

Mashilwane said Earlybird also rejected union demands for increased night shift and cold-room allowances and the inclusion in the negotiation process of other categories of workers who were still not part of the central bargaining unit.

He said the company refused to consider the case of 10 workers who were dismissed for striking at the poultry works’ Olifantsfontein factory.

However, Earlybird accused the union of adding new items to the list of demands, using the wrong forum for some of their grievances and leaving the negotiation table too early when management was prepared to talk as long as necessary.

"We are a bit disappointed in their attitude and unwillingness to sit down and talk," Arnold Prinsloo, the Earlybird human resources manager, said.

Prinsloo said his company was offering a total package of 5 percent and not an 8 percent increase on each individual union demand.

He said the other category of workers the union wanted included in the bargaining unit were supervisory staff. Earlybird opposed this as it regarded supervisors as part of management.

Prinsloo said the matter of the 10 dismissed workers should be "pursued through the right channel.

"They must take the dismissals to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration if they are not happy with them," he said.

Fawu also served Earlybird with a sympathy strike notice by about 2,500 Earlybird’s Standerton workers. The strike is scheduled for next week.

The Standerton workers will be striking in solidarity with their colleagues at Olifantsfontein who have been on strike since early December.

At the same time about 800 Olifantsfontein workers will march to their factory on Tuesday or Wednesday next week.
Prosecutors slammed for obstructing justice

By Wilson Ramotono

Jo’burg prosecutors protest

ABOUT 120 public prosecutors carrying placards calling for salary increases held a lunchtime protest outside the Johannesburg Magistrate’s Court yesterday.

The prosecutors said the country’s justice system would come to a halt if salary problems were not resolved.

They called on President Nelson Mandela to instruct Justice Minister Mr Dullah Omar to pay them full salaries instead of “peanuts.”

“We are disheartened by the fact that magistrates with the same qualifications as ours earn double our salaries,” a spokesman for the prosecutors said.

Prosecutors throughout the country began a work-to-rule after the justice ministry stopped overtime pay last year and awarded them a six percent salary increase in December, which they said was less than what they had been promised.

Many prosecutors are refusing to work overtime and cases are being delayed, clogging the court roll and the criminal justice system.

The Federation of Unions of South Africa, of which the Union of State Prosecutors is a member, last Thursday informed the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) that it was planning protests over the poor state of the country’s justice system.

The law requires that Nedlac attempts to resolve the problem and that it must convene a meeting within 14 days to do so.

Nedlac spokeswoman Jennifer Wilson said yesterday Omar had not yet responded to the request for a meeting. — Sapa
SAB forced to reinstate 52 workers

RONNIE MORKS

Cape Town — SAB was required to reinstate and pay several months' backpay to 52 workers it had sacked in December 1997 following a strike when wage talks broke down earlier that year, the labour court ruled last week.

The workers, all members of the Food and Allied Workers' Union, went on strike in August when wage talks deadlocked.

The company then launched a labour court action to interdict and restrain the workers from engaging in alleged misconduct and breaching strike rules.

The strike was settled the following month and the workers returned to work, but after a disciplinary hearing 18 were suspended and 34 later dismissed.

The union and SAB agreed to private arbitration. David Woolfrey, the arbitrator, found the dismissals were unfair. Instead of dismissal, he ruled, the company should have issued the workers with final written warnings.

He reinstated them retroactively but imposed suspensions without pay for three and four months, respectively.

SAB took the matter on review to the labour court, on the grounds that Woolfrey did not have the power to impose the sanction of disciplinary suspension without pay and that the sanction would be in breach of the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

Judge D Mlambo said the imposition of suspension without pay as a disciplinary penalty was for an employee who had committed some form of disciplinary breach.

An employer was entitled to take action against an employee who misconducted, he said. Once the employer had decided that instead of terminating the contract of employment it would simply suspend it for a period, it was not acting unlawfully.

Mlambo said he found nothing reproachable in Woolfrey's award and SAB's application was dismissed with costs.
Unions suspend planned strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

FOUR trade unions in the building construction industry have suspended a planned industrial action by 15 000 construction workers to force the Gauteng Master Builders Association (GMBA), not to withdraw from the industry's bargaining council.

GMBA executive director Mr Chris de Kok yesterday congratulated the trade unions for agreeing to review their position. He said the unions had conditionally withdrawn their dispute lodged with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration. The GMBA was delighted at the re-opening of debate around the statutory affirmative procurement requirements for the building industry.

"Though we are not against the political implications, we feel certain issues needed to be debated and changed because a lot of emerging builders won tenders without having the capacity to render satisfactory work," De Kok said.

"Most were not registered and did not pay income tax, VAT, or for the unemployment fund," he added.

Spokesman for the Building Construction and Allied Workers Union, Amalgamated Union of Building Workers Trade, Construction and Allied Workers Union and Bouwerwerk-Vakbond Mr Narous Moloto confirmed they had decided to suspend the strike pending industry-wide debate on the restructuring of the bargaining council.

The union had rejected the association's reasons for withdrawing from the council and claimed the association was trying to resist change."
Union sides with justice minister in wage row

Taryn Lamberti

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union — which represents about a quarter of the public prosecutors in SA has sided with Justice Minister Dullah Omar in a wage dispute, saying the court action by other unions was misguided.

Union president Vusi Nhlapo said the National Union of Prosecutors of SA (Nupsa) — which represents about half the prosecutors in the country — and the Society of State Advocates, were mistaken in their decision to take Omar to court to force him to reinstate overtime payments for prosecutors and state advocates.

Nhlapo said employees could not force their employers to pay them for overtime, a sentiment expressed by Omar earlier this week.

He said his union would meet National Director of Public Prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka this afternoon to discuss a long-term solution to the salary crisis, which has resulted in prosecutors and state advocates embarking on work-to-rule action.

The "go-slow" action followed the minister's announcement in November last year that prosecutors and state advocates would no longer receive overtime payment. Omar said prosecutors would be compensated for the overtime cut with an increase. However, his announcement of a 6% pay rise last month was met with widespread dissatisfaction.

In December 1997, a similar cut in overtime payment resulted in work-to-rule action and Omar finally reinstating the overtime payments.

Nupsa and the Society of State Advocates are likely to seek an urgent interdict in the Labour Court next week to force Omar to reinstate the payments.

Nhlapo said prosecutors were the only public servants he knew of who did not have bargaining powers because, in terms of legislation, the justice minister determined what they should earn.

Prosecutors have complained that they earn far higher salaries than they do, despite the fact that they have the same qualifications. Nhlapo said, in countries such as the US and Germany, prosecutors were paid more than magistrates because they had heavier workloads.

"The work of prosecutors is critical because they are the ones that have to bring the criminals to book," Nhlapo said.
Chaos in court as prosecutors work to rule

The Andrew T. Corcoran, Superior Court of New Jersey, Camden County
Prosecutors take wage dispute a step further

PREPARED: Hishaam Mohamed of the regional Department of Justice.

OVER TO YOU: National Director of Prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka.

"The Department of Justice and all the role players have not been effective at all in addressing this salary question," Meyer said.

"And we are hoping that today's march will formally make the department aware of the urgency of the matter."

Meyer argued that the Justice Department's claim that there was not enough money to give prosecutors more than a 6% salary increase or to pay them overtime was unacceptable.

"This sentiment does not go well with us because the salary issue has been going on since 1996," he said.

He said the matter could have been resolved sooner.

He added that the Justice Department said it was going to form consultative forums that would address the issue but that prosecutors were not consulted on this.

Meyer also added that the work-to-rule action has meant that most cases were remanded because prosecutors had been working only 8 1/2-hour days and not outside their working hours.

He acknowledged that the action had a negative effect on the courts.

"It has meant that awaiting trial prisoners have had to wait longer to get their cases heard, but we had to go on a go-slow because we are tired of promises," Meyer said.

The prosecutors will be marching from 1 pm from the Grand Parade to the regional head's office or the steps of Parliament.

Prosecutors were requested to dress in their court cloaks and to carry placards.

Mohamed confirmed yesterday that he would be presented with the memorandum.

He said the document would be forwarded to the office of the National Director of Prosecutions, Bulelani Ngcuka.
CCMA to hear prosecutors’ case

Taryn Lamberli

UNIONS representing public prosecutors and state advocates are to take the justice department to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) on Friday this week, despite yesterday’s agreement between the parties.

Society of State Advocates of SA chairman Retha Mentijs said the unions’ case would still be heard at the CCMA, although Justice Minister Dullah Omar guaranteed cash-strapped prosecutors yesterday that he would “make every effort” to provide them with interim financial relief.

Omar’s guarantee follows his announcement in November last year that prosecutors would no longer be paid for overtime work.

Although no figures were mentioned yesterday, Omar said he would speak to the relevant ministers in an effort to secure more money for the prosecutors.

He said their salaries would not be formally reviewed until June.

In return, the prosecutors agreed to recommend that their members suspend their work to rule.

Four unions agreed to recommend this to their members, but the National Union of Prosecutors of SA (Nupsa) said it could not undertake to do this without consulting its membership.

The agreement was reached at a meeting called by Omar in Pretoria attended by the five unions representing prosecutors and state advocates and national director of public prosecutions Bulani Ncuka.

At issue was the wage dispute which has resulted in almost two months of working to rule, with prosecutors refusing to prepare cases after hours because they were not being paid for overtime work.

The prosecutors were dissatisfied with Omar’s announcement of a 6% salary increase in December and are demanding parity with magistrates.

Mentijs said the meeting was long overdue.

“While everybody agreed the salary announcement of 23 December was totally inadequate, it is a pity that a month of chaos had to occur before such a meeting was called,” she said.

State advocates had still not received their 6% salary increases yesterday because of a computer glitch at the justice department.

Mentijs said vacancies in Ncuka’s division amounted to 30% — a situation which called for “desperate measures.”

The society and Nupsa were still “seriously considering” taking Omar to the Labour Court for suspending overtime payment, despite yesterday’s meeting, Mentijs said.

Justice Minister Dullah Omar, right, and national director of public prosecutions Bulani Ncuka at a meeting in which Omar announced interim relief would be sought for prosecutors. Picture: TREvor Samson
Promise of relief, but details left in the air

Prosecutors work-to-rule

BURNS LANDMARK TO THE COURTS

OVERTIME PAY

WHY THEY'RE

ASKING FOR

2010

Metalworkers' strike hits all MTD production units

MTD's management and workers are still at the bargaining table, trying to reach a settlement that will end the 10-week strike. But the company is not ready to offer any major concessions.

Protesters outside the company's headquarters in Wood Dale, Illinois, are demanding better wages and benefits for MTD workers. The strike has caused production delays and economic losses for the company.

MTD's CEO, John Smith, said in a statement that the company is willing to make some small concessions, but not enough to end the strike. He added that the company is looking for a solution that will be fair to both sides.

The strike has attracted support from other unions and community groups, who are calling for MTD to make more concessions to the workers. They believe that the company is exploiting the workers and that it should be held accountable for its actions.

The dispute has been exacerbated by the company's decision to lay off 200 workers in the past year, as part of efforts to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

The workers' union is calling for a meeting with the company to discuss the issues and work towards a resolution. They are also calling for the union to be allowed to represent all MTD workers, as they believe that this is the only way to ensure fair treatment for all workers.

Protests have continued outside the company's headquarters, with workers and supporters chanting slogans and holding signs in support of the workers. The company's management has been criticized for its treatment of workers and its lack of commitment to the community.

Protests have been met with a heavy police presence, as the company has tried to prevent workers from entering the plant. However, the workers have continued to gather in support of their cause.

The strike has been a major blow to the company, as its production has been disrupted and its reputation has been damaged. It is unclear how long the strike will continue, but the workers are determined to get the best possible deal for themselves and their families.
Frustrated prosecutors near breaking point

Eve Fox

Enlightenment: Focuses on the findings in a recent study about various adverse factors which are hampering the prosecution of crimes.
More than 400 members of the Paper, Print, Wood and Allied Workers Union have been locked out at National Magazine Printers in Cape Town after the union staged a go-slow after what it termed futile wage negotiations.

The go-slow began yesterday, SABC Radio reported this morning.

A management spokesman said they informed workers the go-slow would be considered industrial action. A spokesman for National Magazine Printers said it was business as usual at the printing house. Sapa
Naspers locks out workers at Die Burger

Themba Hlengani (152)

THE publishers of the Western Cape daily, Die Burger, locked out more than 500 union members from their Cape Town plants yesterday following a wage dispute.

National Magazine Printers and Nasionale Pers (Naspers) said they had exercised their lock-out privilege after the Paper, Pulp, Wood and Allied Workers' Union embarked on a go-slow on Wednesday.

However, the union said the go-slow was called after the companies called armed security personnel to their premises to intimidate union members. The union served the companies with a 48-hour strike notice on Tuesday, following a breakdown in wage talks.

The union is demanding a 10% or R53 increase, whichever is greater, for members employed by National Magazine Printers and a 20% or R53 increase for workers at the Die Burger. The companies are offering 8%.

Naspers GM Freddie Steyn said the company was prepared to resolve the dispute. It had signed agreements with the SA Typographical and the Communication Workers unions, which had accepted Naspers's offer.

Meanwhile, Renée Grawitzky reports that the wage dispute between Times Media and the SA Union of Journalists has been referred to the Independent Mediation Services of SA. The union is demanding a guaranteed 8.4% increase while the company is offering a guaranteed 5.3% plus an additional 2.3% linked to merit.

[Signature]

DD 31/11/99
Security industry row is referred to arbitration

Johannesburg — The planned security industry strike by more than 70,000 workers belonging to eight unions was put on hold and referred for arbitration by the Labour Court yesterday after employers successfully challenged the Committee for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration's jurisdiction over the dispute.

The parties are deadlocked over whether the unions' demands for a reduction in working hours from 60 to 55 hours a week, as provided for by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, should be accompanied by a reduction in wages.

The dispute is an acid test for the Act, which was promulgated on December 1. The settlement, whether by arbitration or agreement, will be a vital barometer of the unions' ability to defend hard-won labour rights.

Just as important, the outcome of the dispute will also be a measure of how far employer organisations are prepared to go in defending shareholder value at the expense of good working conditions for employees.

The Labour department said wage determination 481 would still apply to the security industry until investigations into sectoral determinations were completed.

Jerry Ngeobo, the spokesman for the Transport and General Workers' Union, said the unions were awaiting the date for the arbitration hearing at the Labour Court. They would then chart a way forward.

The employers' organisations did not mention the arbitration hearing. They talked instead of a planned boseraad for February 16 and 17.

The organisations said they were disturbed and shocked at the irresponsible and inflammatory statements the unions had made about the strike.

"Employers are concerned that these statements are misleading the workforce and public in general, which could lead to uncontrollable conflict," they said.

"Labour's position at the declaration of the dispute in December 1998 was an increase in cost to employers of 19.9 percent. "This position has moved twice since then and now sits at some 25 percent in costs. "This constant moving of the goal posts by labour is hampering the negotiations. The employers trust that the proposed boseraad will pave the way to reaching a suitable settlement without any need for industrial action."
Nehawu plans solidarity strike against job losses

FRANK NKUMALO

Johannesburg — The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) has notified the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) of its intention to embark on a national strike.

The strike is expected to bring 250,000 Nehawu members out in solidarity with 30,000 members in the tertiary education sector, who face retrenchment. Joe Lekota, the Nehawu spokesman, said tertiary institutions blame budgetary constraints and heavy government subsidy cuts for the intended layoffs.

Lekota said inflated salaries for managers were the real reason for shortages of money in the public sector. He said some managers were "earning more than R1 million a year, while workers are paid little more than R1 000 a month."

In addition, he said, the government was losing millions of rands to ghost workers, said to number almost 20,000 in the Eastern Cape alone. The problem is believed to be equally serious in the Northern Province.

The government believes it is overstaffed by about 55,000 employees.

Relations between the government and public sector unions have been uneasy since President Nelson Mandela said the public service was not an employment agency early last year.

Meanwhile, more than 3,000 Nehawu members marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria yesterday to launch a membership drive to ensure Nehawu has 400,000 members by 2002.
Airport strike hits planes

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg - Thousands of passengers were stranded at the Johannesburg International Airport this morning when Swissport workers, who handle baggage for British Airways, prevented several planes from taking off.

One passenger, who was on a flight to Durban, said his plane was stranded for almost an hour before passengers were told to get off because it was unlikely that any planes could take off.

The passenger said demonstrators parked vehicles in front of and behind several planes.

It was impossible to get comment on the situation from airport, British Airways or union officials.

Airports Company spokesperson Nicky Rose-Innes said: "I am going to our crisis centre and I cannot comment. We will issue a statement later.

SAA spokesperson Victor Nos1 said: "I am waiting for information from our crew on the ground."
GROUNDED: The picture shows a view of the plane parked at the International Airport.

Cops Disperse Strikers at John Airport

By Paul Eskin

NEWS
Strikers cause chaos at airports

IAN SHIFMAN

Industrial action by the employees of a company providing ramp services at Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban airports delayed dozens of flights yesterday.

Swissport staff staged a march at Cape Town International Airport to highlight their grievances.

At Johannesburg International they blocked the apron, preventing aircraft from landing and taking off and causing chaos in overcrowded terminals. International and domestic flights were delayed for about three hours while negotiations took place.

Their strike action followed a request to President Nelson Mandela to intervene in what they allege has been the unfair issuing of licences for ramp handling services at South African airports.

In their appeal to Mr. Mandela, the workers wrote, "It cannot be disputed that there is an unfair ruling against Swissport in the case of acquiring the licence, there will be an increase in the number of unemployed people in South Africa."

Ramp handling licences were awarded to Apron Services and newcomer Gatwick Handling International Swissport, which has been operating at Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town for some years and has 350 employees, lost its licence.

Swissport has appealed against the Airports Company's decision to award the licences to new companies. The dispute will go to arbitration this weekend. Should Swissport win its appeal, the Airports Company will have to start the licensing process again.

Seatbelt missing: SAA accused

IAN SHIFMAN

Cape Town travel agents have expressed dismay at declining safety standards, the deteriorating condition of aircraft and poor staff training at South African Airways.

Dermont Swanepoel, editor of Inside Travel, questioned how SAA could allow an aircraft to depart with a passenger seatbelts missing.

Travel agents asked whether SAA had cut expenditure on training, maintenance and aircraft checks, with its new, aggressive pricing policies to regain lost market share.

SAA chief Coleman Andrews said the airline had made a financial turnaround and hoped to make a profit of R50-million, or at least break even, in the six months to March 31.

He said the improvement had been achieved through extensive training and the development of new alliances with other carriers. Earlier, he launched a campaign to cut costs and improve customer service.

A prominent city travel agent, who asked not to be identified, as he feared reprisals from SAA, asked how aircraft could be fully examined and safety checks carried out with such fast turnaround times.

Mr. Swanepoel said he was flying on SAA flight SAA504 from Cape Town to Johannesburg, when he experienced what he described as "new" standards in SAA's "cost cutting" policy.

Mr. Swanepoel said seated in 50D's, the right side seatbelt had no cushion. My arm and elbow leaned on an open aluminum with a hole that added to the discomfort. Not very comfortable. But forget comfort, at least I had a working seatbelt."

An official visitor across the aisle in seat 29C had no seatbelt. He alerted the flight attendant, who searched in vain for the missing seat belt, but did nothing about it. It was up to the tour group leader, doing his head count, to hear the concerns of the unfortunate passenger and move him to a free seat with the required seat belts intact.

"The flight attendant had no idea what to do. Surely he, not the tour leader, should have moved the passenger to a "safe" seat," said Mr. Swanepoel.

He asked what would have happened if the plane had hit bad turbulence and the passenger had been injured or if the flight had been fully booked with no spare seat.

If a flight attendant could not handle this type of problem efficiently, he asked. He was also concerned that SAA was seeking to become a "wining" airline at the cost of lowering standards.

Last year an SAA aircraft had serious wing damage after an engine blowout.
accused of drop in standards

“The flight attendant had no idea what to do. Surely he, not the tour leader, should have moved the passenger to a ‘safe seat,’” said Mr Swanepoel.

He asked what would have happened if the plane had hit bad turbulence and the passenger had been injured or if the flight had been fully booked with no spare seat.

If a flight attendant could not handle this type of problem efficiently, how safe would passengers be in a real emergency, he asked. He was also concerned that SAA was seeking to become a ‘winning’ airline at the cost of lowering standards.

Last year an SAA aircraft had serious wing damage after an engine blew on a flight to Johannesburg. In another incident, an engine on a Boeing 747 flying from Sydney caught fire due to a faulty fuel line.

Several travel agents said service standards had dropped and it was quite obvious the airline had cabin attendant problems.

They said attendants were not on duty all the time and ignored passengers’ call bells.

Toilets were dirty and blocked and paper and tissues not replaced.

Although passengers had special meals confirmed on the ground, they were informed on the flights that no special meals had been requested.

They also complained that SAA had closed its Cape Town “ops” office and it was almost impossible to get through to Johannesburg on the telephone.

Victor Nosli, SAA’s corporate communications spokesman, said the airline had 710 flights a week and isolated incidents did occur.

Mr Nosli said Mr Swane’s seatbelt and armrest had been investigated but no report could be found.

Mr Swanepoel said the cabin attendant or her superior should have reported the incident.

If SAA had no record of the complaint, there was even more suspicion that staff could be neglecting or covering up faults, he said.

Although SAA does maintenance on several foreign airlines at its Johannesburg headquarters and is recognised for a high standard of work as demanded by foreign carriers, travel agents are asking whether SAA cares as much about its own passengers and aircraft.
Police and troops called in to quell protest over tender process.
Stoppage knocks Toyota SA

Labour: Company refuses to pay bonuses, workers down tools

NEWS
Workers on illegal strike face the sack

By Mbongeni Hiophe

MANAGEMENT at Toyota's Prospecton plant have threatened to dismiss all 300 striking workers if they do not return to work today.

The workers — most of whom are members of the National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa (Numsa) — went on an illegal strike last month and refused to return to work despite a court interdict obtained by management instructing them to do so.

The strike was triggered by Toyota management's announcement that incentive bonuses which the workers were hoping to get from the company's 1998 profit would not be paid.

Management refused to pay the incentive bonuses saying that last year's profit was far below the target profit enabling them to pay the bonuses.

"We are not prepared to pay incentive bonuses. The agreement signed between the union and management states clearly that we would not pay if we did not reach the target profit," Toyota spokesman Mr Harry Hezendam said.

He said if workers did not return to work today, management would resort to the expulsion of some, if not all the striking workers.

"There are numerous procedures the workers should have used before engaging in an illegal strike," Hezendam said.

Numsa spokesman Mr Magapes Hlatshwayo said the workers would not return to work until management furnished them with an audited financial statement proving management's claims that the company had failed to reach the profit target last year.

"Workers say they do not care about the interdict and will remain on strike until they see the audited statement," said Hlatshwayo.

Sapa reports that the Congress of SA Trade Unions has disclosed that there has been an overwhelming response to the call for donations to labour's Job Creation fund.

Spokesman Mukoni Ratshilanga said on Friday that tens of thousands of employed people throughout South Africa had donated one day's pay to the Job Creation Trust aimed at alleviating the country's high unemployment rate.
Nehawu suspends planned strike

Agreement for a summit on restructuring of tertiary education holds off April 28 action

NEWS

FRANK NUNUADO

(April 1979)
Why I must fight for my money, by bus driver

Strike set to hit 150,000 in city

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

Being a bus driver is a difficult, stressful and badly paid job.

Yet Toyer Abrahams, 53, likes it. He likes the people he sees every day and he likes having a job – although he would like to get at least a 10% wage increase as he has to support a wife and seven children.

So, tomorrow morning, he will not be getting up at 4:30am as he has for the past 23 years.

From midnight tonight, he and other members of the Transport & Omnibus Workers' Union (Town) will be on strike after a deadlock in wage negotiations between the unions and the South African Bus Employers Association, of which local bus company Golden Arrow is a member.

The company is offering a 6.5% wage increase and wants employees to work a spread-over shift of 14-15 hours instead of the present 12-hour shift.

Spread-over duties allow bus drivers to work during both traffic peaks with several hours off in the middle of the day. The unions want the 12-hour spread-over shifts to remain, and an 11% wage increase.

As a senior employee, Mr Abrahams is fortunate – he does not have to work the 12-hour spread-overs that exhaust the company's younger men.

Driving the Manenberg-Claremont route, he works from just before 6am until just after noon on Mondays to Fridays, and a slightly longer shift on Saturdays.

After deductions for tax, medical and pension, he takes home about R500 a week out of a R550 wage, and he struggles to pay his bills, especially with increases in school fees.

His car is broken and he lives in a council house in Hanover Park, yet he does not believe in complaining.

"To me, money isn't everything." Of course, earning a living is important, and the possible consequences of a strike weigh heavily on his mind.

"I must work for my family and now I must fight for my money."

Sometimes it is extremely dangerous to be on the road in Manenberg, especially when gang violence flares up. Yet most bus drivers have to deal with gangsterism, violence and crime.

Many have been mugged or held up, like Mr Abrahams, who lost his watch in a robbery.

"You work in fear, but you can't refuse to come to work or they will dismiss you," says Mr Abrahams.

He wants his children to stay in school and to matriculate so that they can have a better future.

The nationwide strike, which will leave 150,000 Peninsula bus commuters scrambling for alternative ways to get to work, is likely to cripple bus services in many parts of the country.

A Metrorail spokesman today confirmed that people with weekly and monthly bus clipcards would be allowed to travel on suburban trains for the duration of the strike.

She could not yet confirm whether extra trains would be laid on to cope with Golden Arrow's passengers.
18,000 transport workers set to strike over wage impasse
Union wants late talks in bid to avert bus strike

The Transport and General Workers' Union was hoping to set up an eleventh-hour meeting with the SA Bus Employers' Association last night to settle their wage dispute and head off a nationwide bus workers' strike today.

The union said earlier that short and long-distance passengers could be inconvenienced today if 18,000 bus workers around the country go on strike.

Union spokesman Zakhele Sibego said yesterday he had asked the union's general secretary to look at the possibility of meeting the employers' association. Its president, Barry Gie, said he was willing to consider a compromise "We are keeping our doors wide open."

The strike will affect 17 private bus companies — including Putco, Greyhound, Translux and Golden Arrow — but not municipal buses.

"Everything is on track," Sibego said. "We are expecting services to be disrupted all over the country. I don't expect any long-distance trips to be carried out by our members."

Gie says the employers' association offered a 6.5% increase, but the union "steadfastly maintained" its demand for 11%. Sibego said the association had not offered more than 4.5% — Sapa.
Thousands stranded as city suffers bus strike

(12/14/19)
Anger as bus strike starts.
Bid to end bus strike as the big squeeze goes on

SHARKEY ISAACS
Senior Correspondent

A meeting aimed at ending a national strike by 18,000 workers at 17 bus companies will be hosted by the Department of Labour on Monday.

The announcement came as Cape Town commuters this morning again braced themselves for another big squeeze in trains and taxis as the strike entered its second day. Unions and employers are at odds over wage increases.

In high-density residential areas of the Cape Flats, train passengers crowded into third-class coaches.

Other commuters in cars and taxis caused traffic jams as Cape Town's chief traffic inspector Malcolm Little confirmed a significant increase in the volume of peak hour traffic for the second day.

However, he said traffic officers were doing well to iron out bottlenecks.

On Monday the Department of Labour will meet the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), says Mogamotso Secker of the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu).

Zakhele Sibego, of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said there was no question of calling off the strike until a settlement had been reached.

"We don't like it and we are very sorry about the inconvenience we have caused to the commuters, but we are fighting for the rights of workers."

Mr Sibego said the union was prepared to move from its original demand for a 13% wage increase.

"We are going to move drastically and we are hoping employers will do the same."

Arbitration under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration meeting will be attended by representatives of Towu, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union.

Mr Secker of the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union said four trade unions would again meet in Athlone today to decide on a strike strategy.

Barry Gie, president of the SA Bus Employers' Association, said: "We have already indicated that there is still some scope for movement from our offer of 6.5%, but the unions will have to base their expectations in reality."

As many as three million bus commuters and their employers are affected countrywide by the strike.

Metrorail's Riana Jacobs said Cape Flats trains were filled to capacity, especially those from Mitchell's Plain and Khayelitsha.

Unions meet in bid to end bus strike

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Unions to reconsider bus strike

Mounting pressure from commuters yesterday prompted transport unions to consider calling off their nationwide bus strike, but for now it will continue.

Cape Town's 150 000 bus commuters were left stranded yesterday, and trains and roads were crammed as thousands of commuters were forced to make alternative arrangements to get to work.

People streamed to railway stations and taxi ranks, while others used their own cars, causing major congestion on the roads.

Some firms provided transport to ferry workers to work.

About 2 500 bus commuters made use of trains.

Riana Jacobs of Metrorail said it had a deal with Golden Arrow to assist, and additional trains will be made available. However, only commuters with weekly and monthly coupons, will be allowed on trains.

The Cape Town traffic department said there was an increase in traffic on the N2, N3 and M5.

The worse affected area was Atlantis, where there is no train service and commuters had to rely on taxis.

The unions' decision to reconsider their strike has come as a surprise to the industry, because the unions had claimed a major victory.

They had vowed to continue with the strike until their wage demands were met.

Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) national coordinator, Zakhele Sibeke, said commuters had asked the strikers to reconsider their action because they were suffering.

"We come from the communities and if they ask us to reconsider, then we don't have a choice," he said.

Sibeke said the unions would ask the Independent Mediation Services of South Africa to convene a meeting involving employers, unions, the Department of Labour and possibly the Department of Transport.

"We are trying to set up the meeting with the employers because we are willing to settle. We will be happy if the meeting can take place today. We are prepared to meet throughout the night in order to resolve the impasse," he said.

Barry Gie, president of the South African Bus Employers' Association (SABEA), said he had been informed by Sibeke that the unions were willing to resume talks. "We could not hold the talks on Wednesday because officials are scattered all over the country. He told me that he would talk to his colleagues and inform me when the meeting will take place," he said.

The TGWU, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union, represent about 18 000 workers.

The unions are demanding an 11% increase while SABEA, which represents private bus companies in the nine provinces, is offering 6.5%.

Gie said employers in Cape Town locked out employees to protect staff and property and no buses were running. — Staff Writers and Own Correspondents
Union's new look at strike

COMMUNITY protests may result in the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) calling off its bus strike.

The strike, in which the unions have claimed major success, is being reconsidered "because the people are suffering," says Zakhile Sibeko, TGWU national coordinator.

In the Cape, roads have been jammed with the extra private cars and railway carriages have been crammed.

The national strike was called by the TGWU and allied unions, representing about 18,000 workers.

The unions demand a 11% increase, while employers have offered 6.5%.

See Page 3
Bus strike brings minimal disruption

By Mzwakhe Hiangani
Labour Reporter

The nationwide strike involving more than 18 000 drivers in the bus passenger transport industry reportedly caused minimal disruption in many centres.

South African Bus Employers Association president Mr Barry Geys said the work stoppage by employees in 18 bus companies "did not receive universal support" and had only a limited effect in certain areas.

He said the reciprocal arrangements between the association and Metrorail ensured that affected bus commuters could use their monthly clippard bus tickets on trains during the strike.

Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association spokesman Mr Ashley Juru said the strike received 100 percent support in the Western Cape.

He agreed it had not shown a major impact since commuters flocked to minibus taxis, trains and private cars.

Metrorail spokeswoman Ms Nokundu Rawana said there was slight pressure early in the morning as trains, especially those on Vereeniging and Johannesburg lines, were running at more than 40 percent their normal capacities.

Alternative transport

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Zakhele Sibeko said the strike had a major impact in the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Province and Gauteng.

Workers demonstrated outside bus depots in Dobsonville, Greater Soweto Putco depot and Commuter depot in Sibby, Johannesburg.

He said Nelspruit in Mpumalanga and Mayibuye Bus Services in Eastern Cape were not affected as workers reported for duty.

Municipal buses in Johannesburg and Durban were not affected as they were not part of the SA Passenger Transport Bargaining Council.

Chamber of Commerce spokesman Charl Adams said commuters had made alternative arrangements to get to work after notices were placed in newspapers warning of the strike.

"The unions have tabled a proposal of an 11 percent wage increase plus improvements to other employee benefits. The SA Bus Employees Association has offered a 6.5 percent increase," he said.

"The association's doors were always open if striking bus drivers wanted to pursue a negotiated settlement. Sibea's offer to submit the dispute to independent arbitration was rejected by the unions."
No description provided.
End of bus industry strike in sight

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

PROSPECTS of resolving the nationwide passenger bus industry strike, which has cost millions of rands, improved yesterday when the trade unions and employers' representatives agreed to reopen talks.

Putco bus company human resources general manager Mr Thys Heyns confirmed that all parties in the bus passenger transport bargaining council met under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Major bus service companies have been hardest hit by the ongoing work stoppage by 18 000 workers since last Thursday in support of wage demands.

Heyns said the companies had lost millions of rands in revenue, while workers had also lost millions of rands in wages. He could not give exact figures.

"Hopefully the four trade unions have seen how important it is that we all come to a negotiated settlement because of the realities of our situation," Heyns said.

Spokesmen for both the Greyhound and North West bus companies said that their companies were severely affected by the strike, although they could not disclose the financial losses.

Transport and General Workers Union spokesman Mr Zakhele Sibeke said the unions were keen that talks with the South African Bus Employers Association would find a solution to the impasse.
Back to arbitration after bus-strike deadlock
Bus strike rolls on as talks stall between union, bosses

COMMUTERS affected by the countrywide bus strike will have to make alternate transport arrangements again today after wage talks between labour and management representatives from the transport sector deadlocked late last night. Talks will resume at 11am today.

The talks, facilitated by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, faltered after the union rejected the employers' offer of a seven percent hike — 0.5% up from their previous offer. The union lowered its demand from 11% to 10%.

The strike will go on until the unions and the employers reach an agreement, "even if it is going to last for three or four weeks," a Transport and General Workers' Union official warned.

A city radio-taxi service reported an 80% increase in passengers yesterday, and though Metro Rail trains were more congested than usual, no overcrowding was reported. — Staff Writer, Sapa
Hopes fade for solution as bus strike continues

BY EDDIE ZAVIYA AND

MOSEVELLA RADEBE

Chances of ending the nation-wide bus strike at a meeting last night were dashed when the meeting ended without any resolution in sight.

Transport and General Workers' Union national co-ordinator Zakhele Sibeko said no agreement had been reached and the meeting was adjourned to 11am today.

The employers last night offered the union a 7% increase, half a percentage point up on their previous offer, and the union moved from 11 to 10%.

Sibeko said the union had made considerable concessions over the increase and by lowering its figure had taken a chance which would probably have surprised and angered its members.

"We are slowly losing hope because we are failing to establish common ground," he said.

Workers warned that failure to reach agreement could lead to protracted industrial action.

About 18 000 workers embarked on a legal strike on Thursday, leaving millions of commuters stranded throughout the country.

Four transport unions - the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union - are involved in the strike.
Maharaj steps in to stop collapse of bus drivers’ wage talks

Simphiwe Xako (1970)

A TIMELY intervention by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj yesterday rescued the mediation process from collapsing after bus drivers represented by four unions threatened to abandon negotiations and continue with their six-day wage strike.

SA Bus Employers’ Association president, Barry Gie, said Maharaj’s intervention was “a blessing” as the drivers’ withdrawal from the wage negotiations would further jeopardise the already financially depressed bus industry.

“Although we cannot specifically give individual companies’ revenue losses at this stage, we can certainly confirm that millions of rand have already been lost as we normally ferry more than 6-million passengers a week,” Gie said.

Maharaj was called in after negotiations, under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, deadlocked once more at yesterday morning’s meeting. Bus drivers threatened to continue with the strike.

By late last night mediation parties and management waited patiently outside the commission’s offices while unions caucused further negotiation strategies and a possible compromise. The two parties locked horns over a wage increase, with unions demanding a 10% hike against management’s offer of a 7% increase in the pay package.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that according to a report released by a Johannesburg-based industrial relations and labour law consultancy yesterday, the first quarter saw a sharp drop in strike action compared with previous years.

Andrew Levy & Associates said 25 000 man days were lost in the first quarter of this year — a marked decrease compared to figures for the same period during the past eight years.

About 288 000 man days were lost last year, 78 000 in 1997, 175 000 in 1996 and 60 000 in 1995. The highest loss in man days recorded in the first quarter was in 1994 with 295 000.

Company spokesman Jackie Kelly said the first quarter of the year was generally quiet as most wage talks did not get under way until the middle of the year. Several strikes in the mining sector and a lengthy strike at Toyota contributed to this year’s figures.
Johannesburg - Strike activity in the first quarter of this year was much lower than in the same period for the past eight years, Andrew Levy & Associates, the industrial relations consultancy said yesterday.

But the first quarter was generally quiet as most wage negotiations did not get under way until the middle of the year.

A number of strikes in the mining sector and a protracted strike at Toyota, the car maker, meant that 25,000 man-days had been lost during the quarter, well down on the 288,000 man days lost in the period last year.

But Andrew Levy expected “increased activity when the major round of wage negotiations gets under way during the second half of the year.”

A repeat of last year’s devastating prolonged strike in the petroleum sector is looming.

The main bargaining season this year coincides with the national elections. Andrew Levy believes this might have the effect of raising worker expectations and intensifying the negotiating climate.

But the workplace could be used as a rallying point so some negotiations might be delayed until after the elections.

“We anticipate that wages will again form the major strike trigger in 1999,” the consultancy said. “There is additional pressure on wage earners as formal sector job losses continue at alarming rates and inflation and high interest rates erode workers’ purchasing power.”

“Employers on the other hand are expected to push for lower increases based on trading figures for the previous 12 months. This scenario is likely to produce some hard bargaining during 1999, which will test the resolve of both sides.”

Viewed against this background, wage settlements continued to fall from an average of 8.6 percent in 1998 to 6 percent by the end of March.

The consultancy said with inflation expected to average 7 to 8 percent, it was predicted that wage settlements across most sectors of the economy would fall within this range.

© Cepwawu, Page 7
End in sight for bus strike

JOHANNESBURG: The wage dispute that has seen bus workers around the country out on strike and left thousands of commuters stranded was expected to be resolved last night.

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesperson Zakhele Sibeko said in Johannesburg that a meeting with the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) might go on all night, but the dispute would be resolved before morning.

The unions have lowered their demand from 11% to 10% and Sabea has offered a seven percent increase — 5% up from their previous offer.

Sabea president Barry Gie was unavailable for comment. — Sapa

CT 21/4/99
Minister at wage talks

Sowetan Reporter

TRANSPORT Minister Mr Maharaj, who is embroiled in the stand-off between four trade unions representing 18 000 strikers in the passenger bus industry and employers, yesterday paid a surprise visit to the conciliation talks in a bid to end the strike.

Maharaj agreed to join the talks after a high-powered trade union delegation, negotiating with 18 bus companies under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration, appealed to the minister to intervene.

Department of Transport spokesperson Ms Didi Moyle said Maharaj had decided to intervene as the talks were "falling apart". She said the minister had urged both parties to continue negotiations in the interests of the country.

The department was positive the impasse would be resolved, she said.

Transport and Allied Workers Union spokesman Mr Qupa Mbele said yesterday union delegates had felt the minister should be called in after talks had delivered only disagreements, accusations and counter-accusations from both parties.

Tawu and three other unions have revised their demands from 11 percent to 10 percent, while the SA Bus Employers Association had raised its offer from 4.5 percent to seven percent.

Members of the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union, the Transport and General Workers Union, the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Association and Tawu have been on strike for more than a week over wage grievances. The talks will recommence tomorrow.

Employers Association president Mr Harry Gic has blamed the unions for the protracted strike, which has cost the industry millions of rands in lost revenue.

He has also blamed them for causing distress to millions of black township commuters and schoolchildren who have been stranded by the strike.
Bus drivers' strike hits industry where it hurts

Simphiwe Xako (172) (2)

FIFTEEN bus companies have been seriously affected by the national bus drivers' strike, say industry officials, who are worried that the walkout may result in a loss of passengers over the long term.

Thys Heyns, SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) vice-president, declined to report individual companies' revenue losses due to the current strike, but alluded to a loss of millions of rands. About 1.6 million passengers ride the buses every week.

Heyns said 15 bus companies around the country were seriously affected by the strike and that commuters were looking for trains and taxis. "This is sad for the bus industry as passengers are never fully recovered once they decide to use other forms of transport," he said.

A series of wage negotiations ended in deadlock over the past six days as both workers, represented by four unions, and management locked horns over a wage increase. Management has stuck to an offer of a 7% hike against the unions' call for a 10% raise.

Sabea president Barry Gie said the latest talks continued until early yesterday morning and that management and unions would meet once again tomorrow.

Transport and General Workers' Union spokesman Zakhele Sabiya said the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act gave workers the right to strike.

"The fact that many workers end up losing their jobs does not mean that we should stop striking and accept working under unacceptable conditions. It is the right of workers to ensure that they are satisfied with their working environment," he said.

Sabea estimates that 3,000 jobs have been lost in the industry over the past four years as a result of economic contraction, passenger trends and strikes.
New move to settle bus strike

EDDIE JAYYA
OWN CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG - While it appears likely that the week-long strike in the bus industry will end tomorrow, one of the companies affected said it would be prepared to consider offering a revised, higher wage offer.

The national co-ordinator of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Zakhule Sibeko, said the union did not want to prolong the strike beyond Friday.

The strike by about 18 000 workers enters its seventh day today and has affected millions of commuters, who have resorted to taxis, trains and private vehicles to get to work.

Great North Transport, one of the 18 companies in the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), has written to Sabea president Barry Gie informing him of the board's decision to propose a fresh mandate.

Great North's acting human resources manager Bogoshi Malala, stressed that the new mandate was for centralised bargaining and not for plant-level negotiations.

"It must be noted that while we respect the constitution of the Bargaining Council, we would like to stress that the needs of the traveling community must be respected."

Sabea vice-president Thys Heyns said: "Our constitution precludes individual members from engaging in talks with unions outside the Bargaining Council. Appropriate action will be taken if the company is found guilty."
Work stoppage delays five airline flights

A two-hour work stoppage at Johannesburg airport yesterday caused a delay for five local SAA flights. Victor Noghi, the vice-president for SAA communications, said yesterday that sabotage carried out by employees of Apcon Services, who had got a slow-down in sympathy with SAA employees who had received voluntary severance packages that had been negotiated with the unions Andrew Maswanganje, the aviation secretary of South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union, said no agreement had been reached on the handling of those who had not been absorbed by the new structure when SAA "unilaterally and unprocedurally went ahead with retrenchments on Friday last week effective immediately" - Zindzi Pillane, Johannesburg
Employer breaks ranks in bus strike

By Eddie Javiva

One of the companies affected by the week-long strike in the bus industry indicated yesterday that it would be prepared to consider offering a revised, higher wage offer.

Great North Transport, one of the 18 companies which constitute the SA Bus Employers' Association (Sabea), has written a letter to association president Barry Gie informing him of the directors' decision to propose a fresh mandate.

In its letter, signed by acting human resources manager Bogoshi Matlala, it stressed that the mandate was for the centralised bargaining process and not for plant-level negotiations.

Sabea vice-president Thys Heyns said: "We are investigating whether the company has acted outside the constitution, which prohibits individual members from engaging in talks with unions outside the bargaining council."

"We have told the unions that the company's position will not influence Sabea's mandate."

The national coordinator of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Zakhele Sibeko, said: "We will see what employers bring to the table on Friday. We have reported to our members and so far we have received a mixed response. We don't want the strike to be prolonged beyond Friday."

Sabea president Barry Gie said: "Discussions aimed at resolving the current wage dispute continue into the early hours yesterday."

"In the interest of commuters, the industry, business and the public, we requested labour to suspend the strike pending the outcome of ongoing negotiations. This request was regrettably rejected by labour, who indicated that the strike action would continue."

"The unions also rejected our proposal that outstanding issues be submitted to arbitration. We regret the inconvenience to commuters because of the continued industrial action."
Hundreds of schoolkids stranded by bus strike

SIPHOOKAZI MBUDWA
AND SHARKEY ISAACS
STAFF REPORTERS

Hundreds of children have been unable to get to school since the national bus strike started nine days ago.

The strike has disrupted Zola Secondary School in Maitland, which has a contract with Golden Arrow to transport pupils from Khayelitsha.

Siphooshile Ngwane, a Grade 8 pupil at Zola Senior Secondary in Maitland, has not been to school since the strike started.

"I decided to stay at home until the strike was over, because I did not have money to buy a train ticket," said Siphooshile.

Principal Xolela Mjonondwana said the school had not been functioning since the strike started last week.

"Since Thursday last week, we have not had any classes and only a few pupils have shown up since then," said Mr Mjonondwana.

The staff had distributed letters with the school stamp and letterhead which would allow students to use trains.

"But, up to now only 20% of the pupils have shown up and I think most of them still think we are waiting for the strike to finish," said Mr Mjonondwana.

Tony Eaton, of the Western Cape Education Department, said Golden Arrow had a contract to transport 220 pupils from Khayelitsha.

If Golden Arrow had not provided transport to the school by today, the department would bring in another contractor.

Unions and employees were meeting in Johannesburg today to consider a new management offer of a 7% pay rise.
Transport pay dispute remains deadlocked

Employers and unions blame each other for impasse

By Eddie Javvya

Trade unions and employers in the transport industry traded harsh words yesterday, blaming each other for the failure to reach a wage settlement to end the ongoing strike by thousands of transport workers.

On Friday, employers and unions met at the headquarters of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), but again talks deadlocked. Unionists have now

"Bosses were arrogant and labour will intensify demands"

ruled out further talks with employers.

The four unions - Transport and General Workers' Union, Transport and Allied Workers' Union, Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union and Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union - are demanding a 10% increase, while employers are offering 7%.

Initially, the unions demanded 13% while companies offered 4.5%. The CCMA has been trying to help the two sides reach a settlement.

"Intervention by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj last week failed to resolve the impasse."

A last-ditch effort to end the strike on Friday failed, and unions later accused the big companies of arrogance and an unwillingness to offer workers the 10% increase.

"Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union general-secretary Gary Wilson said Friday's negotiation with employers was a waste of time.

"The employers were arrogant and they just sat in their room, sending commissioners with their response to our demands."

"We will intensify the strike and it will be difficult for them to get us around the negotiation table again. We will not back down on our demands," he said.

Wilson claimed that certain employers with the South African Bus Employers' Association (Sabea) were privately offering workers 10%.

"We conveyed the latest overtures from the companies to Sabea through the commissioners."

"This makes a mockery of the bargaining system and it appears that big companies want the strike to go on so that small employers will be forced to close down."

"When the small companies fold, the big ones will take over their routes."

"We wanted to warn them that their big brothers had ulterior motives. But they did not want to talk to us," he said.

Sabea vice-president Thys Heyns dismissed the claim by unions that some companies - including Putco - had secretly made offers of up to 10% as a tactic to labour leaders to stall commuters and the public.

"He said all companies wanted a speedy resolution to the strike and denied allegations that big companies wanted to elbow small employers out of the market.

"Heyns is Putco's senior human resources executive and Sabea's chief negotiator."

"Employers want strike so that small companies have to close"

"I reject claims that my company secretly promised unions a higher percentage."

"We fully supported the position of Sabea. The unions' demands do not take cognisance of the situation. We have the backing of all the 16 principals in the bus industry," he said.

"We are disappointed by their tactics. While still prepared to negotiate with them, we will not make any further concessions until they lower their demands," Heyns added.
Striking waste workers could lose jobs

Council says they provide an essential service, and as such should not have downed tools

BY THEMBE SEPOTOKILE

Waste workers from Greater Johannesburg’s Southern Council could find themselves without jobs after they downed tools demanding a wage increase last week.

Pat Nhlapo, spokesperson for Southern Council mayor Nandi Mayathula-Khoeza, said yesterday that 313 contract workers, responsible for sweeping the streets and collecting refuse in Soweto, went on what was an illegal strike.

Nhlapo said the workers embarked on a work stoppage without following proper procedures by not collecting refuse they were creating a health hazard, he said.

"The council is now considering terminating their contracts. It’s been days without refuse being picked up and this is having a serious impact on residents," he said.

"The council unfortunately has a financial problem (insufficient payment for services from ratepayers) and cannot afford the increase. It’s unfortunate that they decided to down tools without consulting," he added.

Each waste worker presently earned R15 a day, he added.

Council adviser Jimmy Oliver said striking workers provided essential services and were thus not supposed to have embarked on a work stoppage. "It is of course sad that they have not received an increase for the past 15 months. However, they are not supposed to strike because of their essential work," Oliver explained.

Meanwhile, Nhlapo said the council was in a dilemma because there were 330 former waste workers whose contracts were terminated last year and who were now demanding to be reinstated.

And on the other hand there were the present crews who had embarked on an illegal strike.

The workers, who had been hired by Wade Refuse and Wykom Waste companies contracted to the council, lost their jobs when the council terminated their contracts.

However, the council and former workers had reached an agreement that only six people of the original group would be rehired.

Nhlapo said some of the remaining 344 workers could be placed in other departments when and if any vacancies occurred.

Victor Sibilya, a representative of former council employees, said they would adhere to the council’s decision.
Strike goes on as bus companies are hit by divisions

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

BUS commuters were dealt a severe blow at the weekend when the protracted strike involving more than 18,000 drivers could not be resolved as a result of divisions among bus companies.

Senior managers of some of the 18 bus companies were reported to have secretly offered employees a 10 percent wage increase in an effort to break the strike.

Talks stalled on Friday as a result of the altercations among employers at the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration.

Transport and Allied Workers Union spokesman Mr Oupa Mbele decried the fact yesterday that senior managers had promised union members at Putco, Greyhound, Great North and Megabus in KwaZulu-Natal a 10 percent wage increase should they return to work.

He said this had created problems for trade unions and other bus companies, since workers would never agree to settle for anything less than 10 percent. Bus companies were forced to go and resolve the dissent among themselves first.

South African Bus Employers Association president Mr Barry Gie denied that Putco, Greyhound and Megabus had approached workers with 10 percent promises, asserting that it was a "shabby tactic" to forestall proper negotiations.

Gie did say, however, that the association would be dealing with Great North Bus company at a separate meeting about the allegations linked to wage offers allegedly made to employees outside the passenger bus bargaining council.

Dejected bus commuters also voiced dissatisfaction with both parties for failing to reach an agreement.

Miss Esther Ndebele was upset because she was forced to spend a lot on taxi fares from Meadowlands, Soweto, to Sandton, while she kept her unused weekly bus clip-card coupon.

Gie said they would do everything possible to resolve the wage dispute "once and for all." He indicated that parties broke to report back and seek mandates from their constituencies.

Three other unions, Western Cape Omnibus Staff, Transport and Omnibus Workers Union and Transport and General Workers Union, had revised their offer from 11 to 10 percent while employers raised their offer to seven percent.
Thousands of weary bus commuters face another week of disruption today after talks to resolve the five-day-old Transport Strike collapsed on Friday. The strike was called by the public transport unions, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, the Omnibus Workers' Union, and the Transport and General Workers Union. The intention was to force the government to accept their demands for a 10% increase in wages and an end to the deadlocks in the transport and public service sectors.

According to the strikers, the government has refused to negotiate in good faith, leading to the deadlock. The unions have called for a continued strike until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.

In the meantime, the public transport strike continued unabated, causing massive congestion and delays on the roads. The strikers are calling on the public to consider alternative modes of transport to avoid the suffering caused by the strike.
children facing education "teed up."

A federal judge has ordered the state to provide

the children with proper education. The judge

ordered the state to ensure that children in

need receive a proper education. The judge

ruled that the state is not providing enough

resources to ensure that children are receiving

a proper education.

Western Cape Education Department

The Western Cape Education Department

announced that they will be taking steps to

ensure that children receive a proper education.

The department will be providing additional

resources to classrooms to help improve the

quality of education.

Knysna children are affected by school bus cuts

As drivers protest, the Knysna municipality is

looking into the issue of school bus cuts.

The municipality has been informed that

drivers are protesting against the cuts.

The drivers have been demanding better

conditions and higher wages.

Job losses loom as strike

TheKnysna municipality is facing a

strike from drivers who are demanding better

conditions and higher wages.

The drivers have stated that they will not

work if their demands are not met.

The municipality has been in talks with

the drivers to try and come to a solution.

The strike is expected to cause delays in

school transport.

The municipality has urged parents to plan

alternative ways to transport their children.

News
Bus unions, employers in new bid to end 15-day strike

SHARKEY ISAACS
Special correspondent

Further efforts will be made today to end the bus strike, which has now lasted 15 days.

Three of the four trade unions involved are prepared to talk again with employers, but the Cape Town-based Transport and Omnibus Workers’ Union (Towu) will boycott what members have described as “an informal meeting to explore ways of ending the strike”.

Towu general secretary Gary Wilson said his union would not attend the meeting at the offices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration in Johannesburg, because union delegates attending the talks would not be able to sign a binding agreement with the employers.

“It is just an informal meeting to explore ways of ending the strike. We will attend the meeting only if the employers are prepared to sign. We have informed the commission of our position, but we won’t stop other unions from meeting the employers,” he said.

South African Bus Employers’ Association (Saba) president Barry Gle said there was “always hope” for a settlement in any talks.

“We must now commit ourselves to the process and find ways of managing it. We are optimistic we will make progress this time around.

“Towu has decided to stay away from the talks. It would have been ideal to have all the stakeholders there,” he said.

Saba will meet representatives of the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU), the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union (WCOSU) and the Transport and Allied Workers’ Union (Tawu).

The unions, representing 18 000 strikers, want a written undertaking from employers that they will grant a 10% pay increase and drop their demands for longer working hours.

The union demand has come down from 18%, while the employers have gone up from 4.5% to 7%.

WCOSU’s Christopher Fredericks said he was confident a settlement would be reached.

He said: “We have new proposals we will discuss with other unions to come out with a unified mandate. I am optimistic we will resolve the impasse.

“I suspect that the talks will be lengthy, but we will reach a settlement by Saturday.

“If the parties are committed to finding a solution to the strike, we might make a breakthrough today.”

TGWU national co-ordinator Zakhele Sibeko said his union wanted a speedy resolution to the problem, adding: “We cannot prolong the strike unnecessarily. We must find a way forward, and it is a pity that Towu is not attending the talks.

Meanwhile, bus workers yesterday marched to the Golden Arrow Bus Service head office in Bofors Circle in Bophal Industra to protest at the deadlocked wage negotiations between unions and employers.

The strike has hit 150 000 commuters who use buses to get to work daily, and has worsened congestion on the city’s roads.
Bus unions reject bid for longer working hours

By Eddie Janiva

Transport trade unions and the bus industry, locked in a crippling nationwide strike, are not only deadlocked on wages increases—two of the 18 companies involved also want to increase employees’ working hours, claim the unions.

The strike by more than 18,000 workers enters its 12th day today, and unions have ruled out any further talks with the employers.

The unions are demanding a 10% across-the-board increase down from their original 13% demand, and the employers are offering 7%, up from an original 4.5%.

The unions yesterday launched a scathing attack on two of the 18 bus companies involved, accusing them of holding the transport industry to ransom by demanding that bus drivers work two hours more per shift.

At the moment, drivers work 12 hours. Now, claim the unions, Golden Arrow in Cape Town and Algoa in Port Elizabeth want drivers to work 14-hour shifts.

Three of the four striking unions—the Transport and Omnibus Workers’ Union (TOWN), the Transport and General Workers’ Union, and the Western Cape Omnibus and Salaried Staff Union—planned to march to the headquarters of Golden Arrow today to present a memorandum.

Speaking from Cape Town, TOWN general secretary Gary Wilson said the unions rejected any change in working conditions.

“We will not allow Golden Arrow and Algoa to hold the industry to ransom. They have been arrogant throughout the negotiations and it is amazing that the other 16 companies can allow Golden Arrow and Algoa to derail the process.”

“We will not give away the benefits we have fought for over the years. We have made it clear to the employers that a 14-hour shift is out of the question. We are not going to back down on this issue,” Wilson said.

“Our members have warned us against making any concessions to the employers. The strike goes on, and if the employers don’t want to improve their offer, then they must face the consequences of their stubbornness. They are in for a rough ride. We are more than determined to continue with the industrial action.”

SA Bus Employers Association president Barry Gie denied that Golden Arrow and Algoa were holding the industry to ransom. He said all the bus companies wanted the shift to be increased to 14 hours.

“It is not an issue for Golden Arrow and Algoa only, but an issue for all the companies. We totally reject the unions’ claims that only two companies favour the 14-hour shift. It appears the unions are targeting certain companies to create confusion.”

“We have repeatedly told employers that employers are united in their demands,” Gie said.
Talks spur hope for end to bus strike

BY EDDIE JAYIVA

Prospects for an end to the crippling national bus strike – in its 13th day today – improved yesterday with an announcement by three of the four unions that they would enter into fresh talks with employers.

The Transport and General Workers' Union, the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union (WCOSU) and the Transport and Allied Workers' Union told The Star yesterday that they would meet the SA Bus Employers Association (Sabea) at the headquarters of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The fourth union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu), said it would not attend the meeting. It had called it an informal meeting to explore ways of ending the strike.

The unions want a written undertaking from the employers that they will pay workers a 10% increase and drop demands for longer working hours.

The unions, representing 18,000 strikers, are demanding a 10% across-the-board increase, down from their original 13% demand, and the employers are offering 7%, up from an original 4.5%.

Towu general-secretary Gary Wilson said his union would not attend the meeting. He added that unions at the meeting would not be able to sign a binding agreement with the employers.

But WCOSU president Christopher Fredericks was confident a settlement would be reached.

Sabea president Barry Gie said there was always hope for a settlement in any talks, and expressed regret that Towu has decided to stay away from the talks.
Unions meet to assess bus strike

THE Transport and General Workers Union met yesterday to assess the 12-day-old national bus workers strike and to consolidate its position on a wage increase.

Speaking during a break from the meeting, TGWU spokesman Zakhele Sibego told reporters the union may decide today to end the strike. The TGWU and three other unions were due to meet the SA Bus Employers Association (Sabea) in Johannesburg today.

The meeting would be facilitated by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

The other three unions are the Transport and Allied Workers Union, the Western Cape Omnibus Staff Union and the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union.

Thousands of bus workers from 18 private bus companies have been on strike for 12 days in demand of a wage increase.

The unions and Sabea are deadlocked, with workers demanding 10 percent and the bus companies offering seven percent.

Sabea denied yesterday that the recent decision by two private bus companies to increase workers' hours from 12 to 14-hour shifts had been taken in retaliation for workers' demands for wage increases.

Association president Barry Gie said the Golden Arrow Bus Company and Algoa Bus Company decided in January this year to officially change their working day to 14 hours.

He said most private bus companies had wage determination schemes which allowed for 14-hour shifts. Gie said these were "spread over" the shift, with workers being given breaks of six or seven hours between early morning and late afternoon work.

Sibego said the unions would not agree to the companies' proposal as the union had previously fought the matter in court and won.

Sapa (152) (276)
Bus strike hits hardest at Atlantis commuters

Rhoda Davids

ATLANTIS is probably one of the areas worst affected by the city's bus strike.

If it were not for the local minibus taxis, residents would have been stranded for almost two weeks. But using taxis has also doubled commuters' normal travelling expenses.

Carol Weyers from Atlantis says the bus strike took Atlantis commuters by surprise. “I bought my weekly clip card on the Tuesday (April 14). It costs R56.30 and then on Wednesday we heard about the strike and from the Thursday I had to travel by taxi.”

“I wasted that money. I also need R20 daily for the taxi. It is R10 for a one-way trip. I now spend almost double on transport.”

Weyers leaves her home just after 6am and arrives in central Cape Town at 7.45am, 15 minutes before she has clock in.

She says it takes a while longer to get to work in the morning because, instead of taxis taking the freeway route without stops, like the buses, the taxis have to stop in Paarden Island and Woodstock to drop off commuters.

This mother of three, along with her husband, who also works in Cape Town, has been commuting by bus for nearly seven years. This is the first time she has experienced a bus strike.

She added: “Thank God my husband is on leave, because I don’t think we can afford R200 a week on taxi fare.”

Weyers says that since the bus strike, over 50 taxis leave Atlantis in the morning for the city. In two weeks the strike has affected over 150,000 local commuters.

New talks between the employer and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) are set for this morning.

Schools say the strike is affecting pupils' education. One said 10% of 1,200 pupils had not been attending since the strike started.

Trade unions representing 18,000 strikers are demanding a 10% across-the-board increase, down from 13%.

Employers are offering seven percent, up from 4.5%.

NOT FARE: Carol Weyers is among many Atlantis residents forced to use minibus taxis because of the bus strike.

Picture: Jack LeStrade
Mediators close to ending bus strike

BY EDWIN JNYVA

Mediators yesterday presented proposals separately to employers and three of the four striking transport unions in a bid to find a solution to the crippling national bus strike.

Unions at yesterday's mediation were the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union and the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union.

The Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union boycotted the mediation.

Both sides were tight-lipped about the proposals last night, but the unions were cautiously optimistic that the strike could be resolved.

The two-week industrial action by about 18,000 bus workers has forced millions of commuters to use trains and taxis.

Before negotiations began, unions were initially demanding a 10% increase - a 3% compromise from their original 13% - while the employers had improved their offer from 4.5% to 7.5%.

Employers want to increase shifts from 12 to 14 hours - a plan the unions strenuously oppose.

Union sources said the mediators had proposed a wage or salary increase of between 8% and 8.5%, as well as possible solutions to shift lengths.
Forum pleads for an end to bus strike

By McKeed Kotolo

THE North West Transport Forum, concerned about the ongoing national bus strike and its negative impact on commuters, called for its immediate end yesterday.

The Botha area branch of the forum expressed its concern at the continuing bus strike and the effect it has had on thousands of commuters in the past two weeks.

Forum vice chairman Mr Aaron Maphosa has called on all the parties, including trade unions and employers, to reach a settlement before the weekend, "failing which, the forum will approach Metrorail to provide trains on the Hammanskraal, Radium and Pretoria route, as a relief measure," he said.

Maphosa said they were not calling for an end to "undermine the strike action by the unions". The forum had a duty to serve the interests of commuters and, in a situation like this, alternatives had to be sought because the strike had been protracted and there was no indication that it might even be solved this week, he said.

According to the forum, the majority of Botha area commuters served by the North West Star bus company were living in rural areas where buses were the only affordable means of commuting.

The forum said since the strike started, people commuting to their workplaces in Pretoria and the Babeljag industrial area daily, were forced to use taxis which, "apart from being very expensive, cannot cope with the volume of people, especially at Hammanskraal's Kopanong Centre".

Legal positions

While the forum expressed its recognition of and respect for the legal positions and the rights of parties involved in the dispute, in terms of the applicable labour legislation, it also highlighted the daily hardships experienced by thousands of commuters left stranded by the strike.

"We therefore say that the people have suffered and it is now enough. Please, reach a settlement for the sake of your brothers and sisters who are caught in the middle of this dispute.

"If you cannot agree (on the increment) why not settle for a compromise and bring this to an end," the forum pleaded.
Bus strike called off as unions reach settlement

Good news for bus commuters is that the two-week long nationwide bus workers' strike has finally been called off after a wage settlement between the unions and the SA Bus Employers Association.

In a statement yesterday, the Golden Arrow Bus company said a wage increase of 8.5% had been agreed upon nationwide.

A Golden Arrow spokesman said buses were expected to start running again by Monday.

But late last night Moganat Sooker, president of the Transport and Omnibus Workers Union, said this union did not have a mandate to accept an 8.5 percent increase and its members would not be working on Monday. This means bus services in Cape Town may still be disrupted.

Commuters whose clipcards expired during the strike will be able to use them until all their unclipped rides have been used up.

Scholars' term passes will be refunded on a pro rata basis for the period of the strike if scholars submit them to the company at the end of term.

Financial losses as a result of the strike have forced the bus company to cancel a contract for 20 new buses.
Striking bus workers back in the saddle

By EDDIE JAYIYA

The two-week-long national bus strike is over and more than 18,000 striking workers will return to work on Monday.

At the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration headquarters yesterday, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the Transport and Allied Workers' Union, the Western Cape Omnibus and Staff Union, and the SA Bus Employers' Association reached an agreement on an 8.5% increase across-the-board which would be backdated to April 1 this year. The fourth union, the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union, boycotted the talks.

Compromise

The unions had demanded a 10% increase – a compromise from the initial 13% – while employers improved their offer from 4.5% to 7%.

The contentious issue of shift work for bus drivers is to be referred to binding arbitration, in terms of the Bargaining Council's constitution.

The parties will draft separate terms of reference for the arbitration, which will take place within two to four weeks.

The signed agreement will be taken to the Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana, and the parties will apply for it to be extended to any non-parties to the collective agreement that are within the registered scope of the Bargaining Council in terms of section 32(1) of the Labour Relations Act.

The unions have agreed to suspend the strike action, pending the signing of this agreement, after reporting back to their constituencies and members. All employees are expected to return to work by the first shift on Monday.

Putco senior human resources executive Thys Heyns said commuters who did not use their coupons during the strike would get a discount when buying new tickets. "Only commuters with old tickets will get the discount," he said.
Cape Town buses back on road

BEAUREGARD TROMP AND SHARKEY ISAACS

The city's biggest union has called off the 19-day bus strike, which has affected thousands of commuters.

This morning a few buses were back on the streets, driven by members of the three unions that settled with the South African Bus Employers' Association on Friday.

But the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu), which represents more than 900 workers, held out until a meeting in Guguletu today, where members unanimously decided to end the strike.

They will return to work at midnight tonight.

Towu general-secretary Gary Wilson said the union had been unwilling to accept Friday's settlement until it had consulted its members.

"The agreement is there in principal but it is still up to those unions to ask their people if they accept," he said.

The workers had accepted "under duress" the agreement for an increase of 8.5% - and only as part of a larger bargaining body.
Bus strike is over at last – at a cost of millions

Sacrifice worth it, say drivers

SHARKEY ISAACS
Special Correspondent

Bus workers claim their 19-day work stoppage for higher wages has emphasised the value of the bargaining council in the transport industry.

They said the strike, which caused their families hardship and may have severely damaged the bus industry, was worth the sacrifice because it had forced the SA Bus Employers Association to double its initial wage offer.

They believed that in spite of the loss of nearly three weeks’ pay, they would ultimately benefit. Tracing salary negotiations, they said their bosses had been pushed to increase their offer from 3.5% to 6%, 7% and then finally to a 6.5% across the board.

Golden Arrow bus driver Vuyani Kedasana, a shop steward with the Transport and General Workers Union, said he, like many others, were satisfied with the end result. He has been a bus driver for 12 years and his present earnings before tax are R679 a week.

"Although the final settlement was not the 10% increase initially demanded by the four trade unions it is still above the current inflation of 5%.

He said he was lucky in that he was married to a teacher on whose income the family was dependent.

"Without her money there would have been no food for our children.

Naturally we also had to make sacrifices and budget and it was difficult to make ends meet."

Fadu Inglis, 52, a bus driver for 30 years and father of two, said the financial side of the strike had called for sacrifices from everyone. “Every worker had different concerns and this was how we knew the strike was worth it, otherwise we would have lost our dignity and principles.”

He has been a shop steward for the Transport and Omnibus Workers’ Union for 10 years.

Yesterday Town, which represents more than 300 workers, decided at a meeting in Guguletu to accept Sabea’s 8.5% offer and end the strike. The other three unions involved in the strike had voted to settle on Friday.

Town president Mokamat Soeker said members of the city’s biggest bus driver union had been forced to accept the settlement only “under duress” as part of the larger bargaining body.

“This was first ever legal bus worker strike under the ANC government in the previous pro-apartheid regime bus operators were regarded as an essential service and its workers were forbidden to strike under the old Labour Act."

The strike cost Golden Arrow millions of rands and the company also had to cancel two contracts amounting to more than R50 million.
Municipal dispute goes to arbitration

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

The SA Local Government Association and trade unions representing 230,000 municipal workers have agreed on a minimum salary of R1 335 but have failed to break a stalemate on other wage-related demands. Salga, the employers' body, said yesterday that its offer was insufficient to meet the unions' demands for an increase of R2 000 or a 10 percent rise.

Salga chief negotiator Mr Patrick J. said the employers' offer was "completely unaffordable" since the 7.9 percent increase was a "once-off" offer. But they could not reach a settlement on the 7.9 percent wage increase and the current municipal wage bill amounted to R8 billion a year, which meant that if the demands were accepted, it would translate to a national bill of R9 billion.

The SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union had originally demanded a 10 percent wage increase, which was later reduced to 7.9 percent, or an increase of R2 500.

Salga had improved its offer from a 9.5 percent rise to 5 percent or a R2 000 increase, Samwu negotiator Mr Dols said yesterday. The matter has been referred to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration for a formal hearing next Thursday.

"We have made a lot of sacrifices," he said. "It is up to the unions to decide whether to accept the employers' offer or refer the matter to arbitration."

The employers' body, he said, was "offering a once-off" increase and the current municipal wage bill amounted to R8 billion a year, which meant that if the demands were accepted, it would translate to a national bill of R9 billion.

"We have made a lot of sacrifices," he said. "It is up to the unions to decide whether to accept the employers' offer or refer the matter to arbitration."

The employers' body, he said, was "offering a once-off" increase and the current municipal wage bill amounted to R8 billion a year, which meant that if the demands were accepted, it would translate to a national bill of R9 billion.
The two-week bus strike, which affected millions of commuters throughout the country, cost bus companies and employees R1.85 million. The strike, which began on 15 July, was called by the National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU) after negotiations with the employers failed to produce an agreement.

The NTWU, represented by its General Secretary, said the workers had suffered enough from the employers' policies. "We are not asking for unreasonable demands," he said. "We just want a fair and just wage." The strike ended on 25 July after the companies agreed to a 15% pay increase.

The strike had a major impact on the transportation sector, with thousands of commuters affected daily. The companies had to pay out millions of rands in replacement services, while the workers lost wages. The strike is a reminder of the ongoing struggle between workers and employers in South Africa.
Lockout at Mondipak continues

FRANK NXUMALO
LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg – The three-week lock-out of hundreds of workers allied to the Chemical Energy Paper Printing Wood and Allied Workers Union (Cepwawa) and the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (Mwasa) at the Mondipak Alrode plant continued yesterday with demonstrations outside the factory.

Mondipak was adamant it would not accede to union demands.

At issue is the introduction of a three-shift system that means staff work until 6am.

The unions wanted the company to provide their members working from 6pm with transport, in line with the new Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

Investigations by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) had shown that transport was broadly available at three hours. This interpretation has made the task of breaking the deadlock difficult.

It would seem the CCMA read the provision to mean that while transport had to be available, it did not necessarily mean that the company had to provide it. Available transport could mean available public transport.

Mondipak has held to that interpretation and said it offered several permutations of shift hours to address "perceptions" by employees that transport difficulties would occur.

Vernon Morton, Mondipak's human resources manager, said, "Throughout the discussions and negotiations, the unions and their members have demanded a transport subsidy in addition to the several improvements in pay and conditions of service offered by the company."

He said Mondipak had not acceded to the demand for transport subsidies. Research showed that transport was available at all proposed shift changes. The onus was not on the company to provide transport.

Morton said the company had offered a 3.2 percent reduction in working time and introduced a 15 percent shift allowance for the three shifts, an arrangement that had exceeded the requirements of the act. This had resulted in a 3.6 percent increase in basic salaries.

Mondipak has employed scab labour and applied the principle of no work no pay but workers have vowed to continue the strike until their demands were met.

"We won't go back to work without transport," said Johnson Mkhuze, a Mwasa shop steward.
Seven guilty of public violence over strike clash

Ngedani was slightly injured. Mr Ngcula was recently appointed Western Cape Reconstruction and Development Project manager for the Post Office last year.

The clash between the authorities and workers, who were refuse collectors, erupted after a disagreement over services to the Khayelitsha area.

Fifteen people were arrested, but eight of them were discharged.

Michael Makana, Alton Mcamazana, Nolitsho Thungana, Gcobani Mliindi and Gillypn Bottman were found guilty of public violence while Vusumzi Mbola and Zalisile Joyisa were convicted of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

All had pleaded not guilty. They will be sentenced on Thursday.
Metalworkers plan to strike at Delta today

Port Elizabeth – More than 3 500 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA will go on strike at Delta Motor Corporation’s Port Elizabeth plant today because of a disagreement over the company’s restructuring process.

Numsa spokesman Dumisa Ntuli said 350 workers were put up in a labour pool and had not been relocated to the new Struandale plant because the company said they did not have the skills required to perform work there.

Delta said the issue of manpower use and the deployment of employees was governed by a collective agreement entered into between the union and the car manufacturers. – Sapa
Numsa suspends strike against steel producers

ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria - The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) said yesterday it had suspended its proposed industrial action at Ferrometals and Columbus Stainless, the joint venture between Highveld Steel, Samancor and the Industrial Development Corporation, following a meeting with the management of the companies.

Wilhelm Prinsloo, the general manager human resources at Columbus, confirmed that the threat of strike action had been withdrawn after management and Numsa had agreed to refer allegations of unfair practices to arbitration.

"We feel that it is extremely irresponsible of Numsa to threaten industrial action with total disregard for the Labour Relations Act and the financial position of Columbus," he said.

Columbus Stainless, South Africa's only stainless steel producer, had made a loss of R333 million in 1998 and was projecting another loss in 1999.

On Monday Numsa said over 2,500 workers intended to embark on industrial action following the refusal by Ferrometals and Columbus Stainless to address racism, their failure to prepare for the implementation of the Employment Equity Act and the announced intention to close the furnaces divisions.

Stephen Nhlapo, Numsa's national sector co-ordinator for light engineering, said yesterday that an independent commission would look at issues such as racism and the different treatment in disciplinary hearings of white and black workers.

A spokesman for Samancor, the owner of the Ferrometals plant and a joint venture partner in Columbus Stainless, said that two furnaces would be closed for maintenance but no retrenchments were foreseen.
Talks continue as Delta strikes are called off

ROB COKAYNE

Pretoria - The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) had agreed to withdraw the threat of a strike at Delta Motor Corporation's two manufacturing plants in Port Elizabeth, said Ed Emmett, the communications manager for Delta, the motor manufacturer. Yesterday Emmett said Numsa had also undertaken to follow a facilitation process in an effort to resolve the matter.

"Therefore, no strike will be entered into, and in the event of failure of the process, the matter will revert to the Labour Court for a ruling," he said.

More than 3,600 Numsa members at Delta were preparing to embark on a strike at 2pm yesterday. Dumisa Ntuli, a spokesman for Numsa, said on Tuesday the proposed strike followed Delta's failure to resolve "an impasse" in discussions over a company restructuring process called the Delta Production System.

Ntuli said in terms of the process, 350 workers were to be put into the labour pool and not relocated to Delta's Strandale plant.

Delta sought an urgent interdict from the Labour Court to declare the strike unlawful, but Numsa said it would contest the interdict application.

Yesterday Emmett said the court interdict was warranted "by an approach by Numsa to secure an alternative arrangement." He said, as far as he knew, Numsa had obtained a certificate from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), but he indicated he was unsure what it would enable.

Numsa had claimed the certificate would enable its members at the Delta plants to go on strike.

Emmett said there was some confusion at Delta's plant yesterday because the avoidance of the strike was finalised "pretty close to the intended commencement time."

However, he said Numsa shop stewards had helped convey to their members the outcome of the meeting between management and the union.

Emmett said the confusion had not lasted long and he did not believe it had had a significant impact on production.

He said earlier yesterday that the issue of manpower utilisation, and the deployment of employees within Delta's production facilities, was governed by a collective agreement entered into between Numsa and all car manufacturers, including Delta.

"Acting in accordance with this agreement, Delta has held numerous discussions with shop stewards over the past few months during which matters pertaining to the company's staffing plan have been extensively discussed and dealt with," he said.

"In these meetings, Delta has indicated its anticipated manpower requirements. In addition, numerous communications have been issued to both the union and to employees, confirming our intent that no employees will be displaced from the company solely as a result of changes in work organisation and efficiency improvements."

Emmett added Delta had expressly pointed out to Numsa that, provided Numsa gave effect to the flexibility provisions of the agreement, no threat to job security was envisaged.

He said it was also emphasised that no employee's grade or rate of pay would be adversely affected as a result of any alternative assignment.

"The services of all employees at Delta's two factories are currently fully utilised. Numsa has refused to acknowledge this," he said.

Emmett said Numsa had instead planned to initiate a strike, which not only had the effect of placing job security under threat but was also unlawful in terms of the Labour Relations Act.

It was also contrary to the commitments that were made by Numsa under the agreement with motor car manufacturers.

He said Delta had invited Numsa to withdraw the threat of a strike and comply responsibly with the provisions of the agreement while again confirming the undertakings given by the company about job security.

Emmett said Delta also confirmed that, if there were a legitimate dispute which Numsa wished to pursue, the company was willing at all times to deal with the dispute in terms of the procedures agreed upon by the parties, which specifically excluded strikes.

Numsa had again ignored this invitation.
Threat by road workers

Almost 1,000 striking labourers threatened to dig trenches across the R2-bilion Maputo Corridor toll road on Friday after their demands for higher salaries were rebuffed.

The labourers — contracted to a Stocks & Stocks, Basil Read and Bouygues construction consortium — are threatening to rip up portions of the new superhighway between Kaapmuiden and Komatipoort in Mpumalanga.

The workers embarked on an illegal strike on Friday after the consortium refused to increase their minimum wage from R4.15 to R5.58 an hour.

A spokesman for the workers, Zacharia Silawula, said the consortium had also failed to provide safety equipment — such as boots and overalls — for workers on the road and failed to pay bonuses even when construction moved ahead of schedule.

Silawula said: “We work right through public holidays and weekends to ensure that this road stays on target, but we are not protected from injury or paid a decent wage. Who can live on R4.15 an hour? That’s about R336 for two weeks of back-breaking work.”

The consortium’s site manager for the affected portion of road, Marius Nel, confirmed the strike and sabotage threats, but said the consortium could not increase the minimum wage without affecting the entire country’s construction industry.

Nel also confirmed that the consortium employed Mandla Mtshali as a public relations consultant to handle worker dissatisfaction, but refuted allegations by strikers that Mtshali had represented himself as an ANC official and had ordered them back to work.
Strikers torch equipment

CONSTRUCTION workers at the Maputo Corridor toll road torched a large grader and an excavator on Tuesday, the third day of their illegal strike.

This occurred shortly after an agreement was reached that workers would be paid R4.15 an hour. The workers were demanding R5.68, the News Service reported.

Project manager Luc Messina said the strikers agreed to the terms late on Tuesday afternoon. Police spokesman Thabiso Gama said the agreement may not have been communicated to all strikers. — Saps
Suicide in man-days lost

Huge's formulating and releasing the man figures

FRANK NISHIZUMI

MARCH 1st, 1949
Man days lost to SA wage strikes grow

Renee Grawitzky

MAN days lost to strikes increased by 100,000, or 32%, during the first six months of this year over the 310,000 days lost in the same period last year, says a strike report compiled by Andrew Levy & Associates.

Wage demands continued to act as the major trigger of strikes during the period under review. The report warned that this trigger had reached its highest point ever with 98.8% of strikes linked to wages.

The rise in pay-related strikes could be attributed to the continued downward pressure on wages due to reduced production demand across the major sectors in the economy.

At the same time wage settlements were averaging at 8.1%, indicating that double-digit increases could be a thing of the past.

Andrew Levy & Associates research associate Jackie Kelly said the steady decline in inflation in turn was affecting settlement levels.

Kelly cautioned, however, that the rise in wage-related strikes was not necessarily an indication of an increase in the number of wage strikes but rather a change in the distribution of strike triggers generally.

This was largely as a result of the new Labour Relations Act which had "codified issues such as dismissals, retrenchments etc."

Hence, workers could no longer strike over these issues or if they did strike, such action would not be protected.

The strikes contributing to man days lost during the first six months included the bus strike involving 18,000 workers, the strike at Southern Sun and various small strikes in mining and vehicle manufacture.

Progress

Meanwhile, wage negotiations are continuing between the National Union of Mineworkers and the Chamber of Mines with indications that some progress is being made.

Talks are also continuing today between the union and Impala Platinum mines and refinery.

The union indicated that the company had tabled a 9% increase for the majority of workers and 10% for those in the lowest job grade.
Increase in lost mandays

By Mzwakhe Hlangani, Labour Reporter

A recent protracted strike in the transport industry has pushed the number of mandays lost from 25,000 - the lowest level in eight years - to 410,000 days in June, a mid-year strike report revealed yesterday.

According to labour law and industrial relations consultants Andrew Levy and Associates, the strike action by 18,000 workers in the passenger bus service accounted for 81 percent, while the current nationwide strike involving Southern Sun Hotels and the South African Commercial Catering and Allied workers Union has already accounted for 42 percent.

An upward slope slightly up from 310,000 days reported in June 1998, has been pushed up by the number of strikes in the mining sector, including a one-day strike at Anglo American Platinum Mines by 18,000 workers, research consultant Ms Jackie Kelly said.

The strikes at the Toyota and Delta motor manufacturers also propelled the rise of the industrial action during the last six months, with wage disputes and large-scale retrenchments reported to be main triggers of the action.

This could be attributed, she said, to continued downward pressure on wages due to reduced production demand across the major industries.

"Linked to this is the steady decline in inflation, which in turn impacts on settlement levels."

"This should not be construed to indicate an increase in the number of wage strikes, but rather a change in the distribution of strikes generally," she said.

Increased strike activity could be expected in the third quarter, Kelly pointed out, as the bulk of negotiations were finalised in various sectors of the economy.
Half a million public sector workers to go on strike

A critical component of ensuring a healthy and educated workforce is education. The National Education Health and Allied Workers Union is planning a national strike on Monday, May 23, 2022, to demand a 12% wage increase for all 720,000 members. The strike is in response to the lack of adequate funding for education and health care, as well as the increasing cost of living. The union is demanding a 12% wage increase to address these issues. The strike is expected to affect millions of students and patients. The union is calling on all workers to join the strike and demand a better deal for the nation's education and health care workers.
GOVT ACCUSED OF 'BAD FAITH'

500 000 public servants to strike

A DEADLOCK in salary negotiations will see more than 500 000 public servants from three major unions aligned to the Congress of South African Trade Unions embarking on mass action from next week. PRISCILLA SINGH reports.

PROTEST action called for by three key Cosatu affiliates — the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) and the Police and Prisoners Civil Rights Union (Popcu) — has been instigated in a bid to end the government's stone silence on salary negotiations.

And Cosatu president Zwelini Zuma says his organisation will throw its full weight behind Sadtu, Nehawu and Popcu.

There will be lunchtime protests over three days, beginning on Monday, reinforced by a day-long work stoppage on July 23, which could cost the country millions and affect key services within the police services, prisons, hospitals and schools.

If the government does not budge from its offer of 5.7% towards the unions' demand of a 10% across-the-board increase, a full-blown strike will be called on July 29.

In a joint statement, the unions said there had been six months of "bad-faith bargaining" on the part of the government.

This was compounded by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration declaring a deadlock in terms of the Labour Relations Act, paving the way for the unions to embark on a legal strike.

Despite this, the government has maintained its silence and the deadline for wage increases by July 1 has been ignored, the statement said.

Sadtu president Willy Madsha said: "This has caused anger and distress. Members do not know whether they will be paid at the end of July."

Nehawu president Vusi Nhlapo said he hopes the protests will be enough to galvanise the government into negotiating further.

"We understand the climate in which we operate. However, as public servants we are working under serious conditions.

"The public service, through natural attrition, shed 180 000 posts last year. There is still a moratorium on employment, so the remaining public servants are carrying the extra load.

"You can see it in the hospitals and clinics, where doctors-and nurses are overworked. The police are also not without their problems," Nhlapo said.

Finance Minister Trevor Manuel, in his budget allocations for the public service, set aside R3 billion for salary increases. The unions are demanding that this be upped to R3.75bn.

Nhlapo continued: "There is a lot of anger among members. We put off mass action because of the election and many members worked hard for an ANC victory.

"The least the government can do is meet our demands.

"Since the days of the National Party, there has been a dispute over salary negotiations every year. There is no wage policy and we negotiate out of a vacuum. There is also no fair assessment of employees," Nhlapo said.

Popcu's Jafasa Sayavuya said at least 71 000 members representing police, correctional services and traffic officers would take part in the mass action.

On July 23, marches are set to take place in the major centres. A march planned for Pretoria will give seven days' notice of a full-scale strike from July 29 unless the government responds positively.

The demands of the unions are:

- That the government stops using Parliament to announce salary increases before the start of negotiations.
- That the government resolves the wage dispute by instituting a graduated wage increase of 10%.
Civil servants strike

Action by 500 000 workers after talks with government fail

By Mzwakhe Mbongeni
Labour Reporter

More than 500 000 public sector workers start their strike today after wage talks between their unions and government collapsed.

Speaking for the three Congress of South Africa Trade Unions affiliates which started their strike today, Mr Makokelo Lekoa, the former leadership of the National Education, Heath and Allied Workers' Union, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union and the Public and Private Civil Right Union were still in discussion but last night it was said the strike would go ahead.

The Government yesterday expressed a firm position that it could not be pressured by the unions to increase its latest offer saying fixed and conditions would reduce service delivery possibilities.

The Government yesterday explained a firm position that it could not be pressured by the unions to increase its latest offer saying fixed and conditions would reduce service delivery possibilities.

On the other hand, the unions and essential services would be available during the strike as provided for in the collective bargaining framework.

The announcement comes as the country prepares to mourn Nelson Mandela.

Cops ready to monitor public workers’ strike

By Justice Mkhize, Bhebhe and Sapa

POLICE yesterday said they had contingency plans in place to deal with any violent and that might arise during the strike by thousands of civil servants.

Police spokesman, Mr Poneko said police had met with the relevant trade unions about routes to follow if their members decided to converge on Pretoria.

He said that although some of the police officers would participate in the strike, there was enough manpower to deal with any eventualities.

The Giyani health department said the strike was against the spirit of national unity.

The union said it was against the spirit of national unity.

Meanwhile, the municipality said it would not be affected by the possible strike by public sector workers.

Transformation manager for the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, Mr Fesulwana, said the council had a separate bargaining council to deal with issues such as conditions of employment and wage negotiations.

"We are giving the people an assurance that municipal services will be rendered effectively and uninterrupted because our workers are not involved in the pending strike," Mola said.

He said the council had justomen agreed on a new wage negotiations with the unions representing the municipal workers and it was not worried about the threat of a strike.
Strikes mount as retrenchments loom

A WAVE of strikes hit SA this week, and look set to continue, as more than 40 000 workers faced up to joining the unemployment queue and adding to SA's high jobless rate.

About 40 000 SA rail workers began mass protests on Friday against planned Spoornet retrenchments, following the example of public sector workers striking against layoffs.

Minister of Public Enterprises Jeff Radebe is expected to announce a massive retrenchment of 27 000 workers from Spoornet, a decision insiders say has been on hold since 1996. This is likely to be SA's single biggest retrenchment.

Spoornet's announcement comes just days after the provisional liquidation of East Rand Proprietary Mines, a decision that puts about 5 000 jobs on the line. About 11 700 jobs are set to go in the mining sector as the gold crisis intensifies. Telkom has announced layoff plans, and government is also expected to announce more public sector retrenchments.

Labour Minister Membathst Mdladlana appealed for every effort to explore alternatives to ensure the prevention of further losses. Mdladlana says business has a particular obligation in preventing further job cuts and called on employers to abide by the decisions of the Presidential jobs summit.

See Page 8 and Appointments, Page 1.
SA News Digest

Labour Relations

Numsa starts rolling mass action at Columbus following wage dispute

More than 1,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) will embark on a rolling mass action today at the Columbus Steel Company in Isipingo after the union gave the company a 48-hour notice to talk industrial relations.

Numsa said the Numsa members had in the previous week attempted to negotiate with the company management, and had been refused.

The union said the strike followed a dispute resolution meeting that ended in dispute at the height of a retrenchment浪潮 caused by a drop in metal prices.

Numsa demands a guaranteed inflation-linked increase of 7% plus a 9% percent per annum increase of the present constant wage rate and a performance-based increase of 5% per annum - further escalating calculations.

Technology

Y3K makes first IT acquisition for R9m

Y3K, the recently listed technology company, has confirmed an acquisition of an information technology (IT) solutions company, called Nextgen, for R9 million.

The acquisition is expected to add about 11 percent to its revenue and is not expected to have any impact on earnings per share. The company also said the acquisition would not have any impact on its balance sheet.

The acquisition was subject to price protection, subject to price protection, subject to price protection.

Timothy Goldin, the chair of Y3K, said the company's board decided to buy the company after the listing on the Johannesburg stock exchange.

The acquisition is expected to add about 11 percent to its revenue and is not expected to have any impact on earnings per share. The company also said the acquisition would not have any impact on its balance sheet.

Baron Benesch, the interim chairman, said the acquisition will enhance the company's business and will also increase its market share.
Unions gear up for wage strike
Efforts continuing at EMPL to save the jobs of its 5,000 workers.

**Faculty Stay:**

**Industry News:**

Private sector and public sector strikes hit public and private sector.
Public Service Workers in Nationwide Protests

Some 13,000 workers in 12 provinces gather on Monday to demand a 25% raise from employers. The workers are calling on the government to introduce measures to improve their working conditions and salaries.

The protesters are demanding better wages, improved benefits, and better working conditions. They are also calling for the government to take action to address the growing socio-economic gap in the country.

The protest is part of a nationwide campaign, with similar demonstrations planned in other provinces. The workers are fed up with the low wages and poor working conditions in the public sector.

The government has so far refused to address the workers' demands, saying that the country is facing economic challenges and cannot afford to increase wages.

The workers are determined to continue their protests until their demands are met.

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Survey

A survey conducted among the workers revealed that the majority are dissatisfied with their current working conditions.

The survey also showed that the majority of workers are considering quitting their jobs if their demands are not met.

The workers are calling on the government to take action to address their concerns and improve their working conditions.

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The government has so far refused to address the workers' demands, saying that the country is facing economic challenges and cannot afford to increase wages.

The workers are determined to continue their protests until their demands are met.
Thousands strike for 10% hike

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Johannesburg: Thousands of public servants yesterday took to the streets across South Africa in lunchtime demonstrations to pressure government into giving them a 10% salary increase.

Toy-toying members of three public service unions — the SA Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) and the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Unions (Popcru) — disrupted midday traffic.

Sadtu president Willie Madisha said the protesters were left with no option but to “down tools” to drive their point home, that they would not accept the government’s 5.7% increase offer.

“So far the government has shown that they are not interested in resolving the dispute,” he said.

“The fact that we have had so many teachers out in the streets when they are supposed to be enjoying their holidays at home tells us that the people are not happy,” he added.

Madisha said if the government did not revise its offer, the unions were ready to go on a full-blown strike at the end of the month.

“Since we announced our mass action programme (last week) we have not had any word from the government and that means they simply have no interest in seeing this matter sorted out,” he said.

The wage dispute had been referred to Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration but ended in a deadlock.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said earlier that the unions’ demand was “inappropriate”, considering the limited funding available for social services.

She urged unions to return to the negotiating table, saying a solution could still be found which would satisfy state employees without undermining social spending.

Madisha said the three unions’ members were expected to converge at Pretoria today for another round of demonstrations.

Sadtu members are to meet outside the National Education Department’s offices, Popcru members at the Safety and Security Department and Nehawu at the Public Service and Administration Department offices.

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2000 footwear workers go on strike

RAVIN MAHARAJ

Durban — About 2 000 footwear workers aligned to the South African Clothing and Textile Workers’ Union (Sactwu) embarked on a strike in Pietermaritzburg yesterday after rejecting management’s new wage offer.

Martin Poulsen, the national leather coordinator of Sactwu, said the shop floor had rejected the “poverty wage” offer because it was below the inflation rate “If we accept management’s offer our workers will be poorer than before,” he said.

Sactwu still wanted a wage increase of 10 percent, but was prepared to be flexible if settlement was reached closer to the inflation rate of 7.7 percent.

Poulsen said management and Sactwu would meet again next week to try to renegotiate a wage settlement. In the meantime, the strike would continue in “stratego” locations.

But the National Union of Leather and Allied Workers, the majority voice in the footwear sector, confirmed that it had accepted a two-year wage deal.

The Southern African Footwear and Leather Industries’ Association (Saflia), which represents employers in the sector, last week offered a 5.5 percent increase with an extra 0.5 percent from January 2000.
Strike suffers major setback

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE week-old strike by National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa members at Columbus Stainless in Mpumalanga suffered a major setback when the Labour Court ordered the union to stop its members from picketing near the company premises.

Columbus Stainless communications manager Mr Lamog Goldenhuys had charged that striking Numsa members disrupted access at the main gate and prevented people from going to work. Several strikers were arrested for engaging in illegal activities.

The court ruled last week that union members should not picket within 50 metres of the company premises and should stop engaging in unlawful activities during the legal strike. The union was also ordered to pay costs.

Numsa spokesman Mr Dumisa Ntuli denounced the arrest of eight unionists who were protesting for wage increases. Numsa is demanding 7.7 percent plus a two percent improvement factor, while management has offered 7.1 with a further 0.5 percent based on individual performance.

An estimated 4,000 workers at Highveld Steel, also in Mpumalanga, have reportedly embarked on a legal strike after a deadlock over wage talks was referred to the bargaining council.

Ntuli said they were infuriated by the management's insistence on giving a R700 housing subsidy to whites, while blacks received R237. The union also demanded that the company implement the Employment Equity Act.

Meanwhile, the strike at Gold Fields' Oryx mine in Welkom continued after attempts to persuade the National Union of Mineworkers to find a solution failed at the weekend.

Oryx managing director Mr Brendan Walker said it was not in the interest of employees or the company that the strike continues. He believed there is sufficient common ground for an agreement to be reached.

The dispute centres on the contents of a proposed retrenchment agreement for the mine. Oryx has notified the Gold Crisis Committee of its intention to reduce the workforce by 900 people.
Strike action - two hurt

TWO striking workers were hospitalised and at least 150 others arrested after a clash with police at a Columbus Stainless plant in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, yesterday.

The workers, who have been on strike over a wage dispute since last week Monday, allegedly defied an interdict banning them from the premises of Columbus Stainless.

Police spokesman Captain Izak van Zyl said the workers appeared in the Middelburg Magistrate’s Court on charges of public violence and failing to comply with the interdict. Eight were also charged with malicious damage to property.

The National Union of Metal-workers of SA accused police of provoking its members while they awaited the arrival of picketing rules. It labelled the police action “barbaric”.

But Van Zyl said police had fired rubber bullets only after the strikers became “aggressive” and began hurling stones at policemen and their vehicles.

One of the injured workers sustained a fractured skull and was in a serious but stable condition, a spokesman at Middelburg Hospital said. The other had a blue eye and lacerations to the head.

Van Zyl said the two sustained head injuries after being hit by stones.

The union, however, which claims a total of 200 strikers were arrested, said they had been shot with rubber bullets by police.

Van Zyl said the arrested workers were due to appear in court again on Friday. They did not apply for bail and remained in police custody.

Columbus Stainless backed the police version of events. “The NUMSA members were asked to leave the premises. They refused to do so in the allotted time and the police arrested them,” the company said.

“Some of the strikers attacked the policemen. Stones were thrown and vehicles were damaged,” the company said.

“The police retaliated — under the Regulation of Gatherings Act 205 of 1993 and in terms of the interdict — with rubber bullets,” the company said.

Sowetan 20/7/99
Unions vow to cripple labour market in national strike

The unions are demanding a 10% increase in wages, but the government has offered a 6% increase. The government is cutting public service staff and there is no way we can stand up to the government and the unions. The public service will be disrupted. The unions have declared a strike for 14 days. The unions have failed to reach a deal. The government has imposed its own terms. The strikes are due to be called on February 14th.
DANGER

Fresh Water

The court is armed with a firearm and
all persons on the premises are
not allowed to enter the
area

NUMSA members arrested

Over 200 striking NUMSA members arrested

Frank Vandenwinkel 189 (149) 30/7/99
Row among workers leads to VW strike

VOLKSWAGEN has been caught in the middle of an internal dispute within the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa).

Workers went on strike yesterday, allegedly demanding that the union reinstate eight shop stewards who had been expelled from the union. It is not clear why the shop stewards were expelled.

The union said its national leadership would go to Volkswagen today to try to resolve the matter.

Numsa acknowledged that the union had been approached by the company in recent weeks to intervene in the matter.

Volkswagen's communications GM, Matt Genrich, said the company had appealed to the union to resolve the problem as deep divisions had developed between Numsa officials at local level and a group of shop stewards. He said the company had appealed to the union to intervene before it led to a conflict on the shop floor.

After the expulsion of the eight shop stewards the company asked that they resume their normal duties.

After a meeting yesterday supporters of the eight shop stewards embarked on an unprotected strike. As a result the company had to close its plant.

Volkswagen will consider applying for an interdict if workers do not return to work today. Various attempts are being made to resolve the conflict.

Columbus strike turns violent

THE week-long wage strike at Columbus Stainless Steel in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, turned violent yesterday when police used rubber bullets to disperse strikers.

Two strikers were admitted to hospital and at least 150 were arrested. Police spokesmen Capt Izak van Zyl said those arrested had appeared in court on charges of public violence, failing to comply with the interdict and malicious damage to property.

Marches and demonstrations by private and public sector workers continued across the country in protest against wage disputes, retrenchments and the lowering of trade tariffs.

Columbus said 150 strikers were arrested after members of the SA Police Service tried to disperse workers who occupied a building, contrary to a Labour Court interdict obtained last week prohibiting workers from picketing on the premises.

The company said strikers attacked police, who reacted by firing rubber bullets. Two workers were injured during this incident.

The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) said close to 200 workers were arrested and two were admitted to intensive care after being shot.

The union launched a scathing attack against police, saying they had provoked workers who were awaiting picketing rules from the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Numsa said police had been intent on breaking the legitimate and legal strike from the outset.

The union did not believe workers had engaged in unlawful conduct.

The company said there had been several incidents of stone-throwing and attempts to break down the gate to the premises since the strike began.

At Oryx gold mine in the Free State another strike went ahead despite Gold Fields' attempts to obtain an interdict declaring the action unprotected.

The company applied for an urgent interdict yesterday, arguing that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had failed to comply with the requirements of the Labour Relations Act and did not act in the best interests of employees or the long-term survival of the mine.

The strike was sparked by the mine's decision to retrench 300 workers.

Oryx is one of six mines which have notified the gold mine committee of its intention to retrench.

The NUM said yesterday the company had argued that the union was causing the real intent of the strike, which was to stop the retrenchments.

The strike was triggered by the company's failure to negotiate a retrenchment agreement, the union said.

Gold Fields said it had acted in good faith, offering a fair and reasonable package under the circumstances. "Our offer aims to balance the needs of potentially retrenched employees with the long-term survival of the mine and almost 4,000 associated jobs," it said.

The law provided for one week's severance pay, while the union was demanding 16 weeks' severance pay plus a six-month notice period.

Gold Fields said the union's demands were unreasonable and inconsistent with concerns about the mine's future and workers' job security.

NUM general secretary Gwede Mantashe said yesterday that the union was willing to engage management to resolve the misunderstanding.

As gold closed at a fresh 20-year low of $252.15 in New York yesterday against Friday's $253.65, there were indications that the parties could meet to continue negotiations.

Meanwhile, thousands of members of the SA Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu) marched in major centres around the country to protest against continued job losses in the clothing, textile and footwear sectors.

Job losses have been attributed to the lowering of tariffs and the subsequent increase in cheaper imports.

The union is demanding that government freezes tariff reductions on clothing and textiles. The union said the national agreement on tariffs and trade gave SA 12 years to phase in tariffs, but government had decided to phase them in over eight years.

In the public sector, protest action is expected to continue to put pressure on government this week to reverse its wage offer. The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union denied reports that it had suspended its protest action. A one-day strike is planned for Friday, with workers participating in nationwide marches.

VW caught in dispute: Page 3
Comment: Page 11
Court Interdicts Terminates VWKwagen Strike
WORK RESOURCES AT WWSA AS NUMSA STEWARDS' SELECT
Strike threat first big test for Thabo

ADRIAN HADLAND
Political Editor

President Thabo Mbeki faces his first major test as more than a million public servants prepare for a national strike tomorrow.

Many of the strikers belong to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), one of the major National Congress coalition partners in government.

The strike, which follows six months of negotiations and escalating protests, was called yesterday after finance and public service unions, including the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union, the SA Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) and the Police, Prisons and Civil Rights Union, rejected the latest wage offer.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldo Fraser-Moleketi, who is facing a baptism of fire in her second month in office, announced yesterday the state had raised its earlier offer of a 5.7% pay rise across the board to 6% for most public servants. But the offer was laughed off by the unions, who called it "pathetic" and argued Ms Fraser-Moleketi was simply re-arranging the figures.

"There is nothing new about (the) offer," Sadtu general secretary Thulas Nxesi said after a deadlock meeting in the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council this week.

The unions, which are demanding a 10% increase across the board, have warned they are bracing themselves for "protracted industrial action."

ANC officials played down the impact of the strike on the relationship between them and their Cosatu ally.

"This is not the first time the public service unions have taken this kind of action against the Government," said a high-ranking party official. "There is no reason for us to believe there won't be a solution."

A Cosatu spokesman said yesterday a "full-blown strike" would begin next Thursday if the Government did not "come up with anything serious"
Rising oil costs push up consumer price index

(142)
Talks over cop's actions

UNION officials will meet Mountaineers

management this week to
discuss concerns that police monitoring the
879
10-day-old strike at Columbus Stainless in
Middleburg acted in a heavy-handed manner
National Union of Metalworkers of SA

representative Mr Dumisa Ntuli said yesterday.
"Our members in Middleburg are treated
harshly whenever there is a strike ... there is
no element of racism in this."

The provincial safety and security depart-

ment confirmed that its head, Advocate
Stanley Sokol, would meet union president
Mr Mntuzel Tom and assistant general sec-
tary, Peter Dantjie, on Friday.

Two people were hospitalised with head
injuries on Monday when workers on a legal
strike over a wage dispute clashed with
members of the public order policing unit at
the Columbus plant in Middleburg.

Police fired rubber bullets and teargas at
the group of strikers, allegedly after they
refused to leave company premises in line
with an interdict obtained last week, and
started throwing stones.

Police arrested 151 Numsa members on
charges of public violence, failing to comply
with the interdict and malicious damage to
property. The workers remain in custody
preliminary a court appearance on Friday.

A meeting has been scheduled for
Thursday between Columbus Steel manage-
ment and the union under the guidance of the
Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and
Arbitration.

Ntuli was not optimistic about the out-

come of the talks.

"They must release workers before we
can have amicable talks. The company also
wants the 900 workers on strike to go back to
work first, which is not acceptable," he said.

Highveld police commissioner Ben
Groenewald dismissed the charges of racism
levelled against police.

The Sapa that the Middleburg Magis-
trate's Court granted bail of R10,000 each to
the strikers.

However, it had not come into effect
because they refused to provide their names
and addresses, he said.

Ntuli insisted that bail had not been
granted.

He also alleged that Columbus had
instructed Midmed, a private hospital to
which the two injured strikers were admitted,
to transfer the patients to a hospital in
Middleburg.

"They (Columbus Stainless) hate these
workers," he charged. He said the two were
transferred back to Midmed after the union's
intervention.

The company's communications

manager, Mr Laing Geldenhuys, said Columbus
told the workers to Midmed but that the hos-
pital management had referred them to the
provincial hospital.

The union is demanding a 9.3 percent
wage increase, while Columbus is offering
7.1 percent plus 0.6 percent based on indi-
vidual performance — Sapa.
Strike may be averted

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

A CRIPPLING nationwide strike by more than 500 000 public service employees planned for Thursday is likely to be averted at the crucial public service bargaining council meeting in Pretoria today.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi expressed confidence earlier that a settlement would soon be reached.

She said yesterday she was engaged in meetings in preparation for today's talks and that the unions should avoid disruptions to services.

The leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions' three public sector unions indicated that nothing less than an inflation-related salary offer would persuade public servants to suspend strike action.

Police Prisons and Civil Rights Union president Zizamele Cebekhulu said he was positive that a settlement was imminent, but insisted that they expect nothing less than inflation rate, which stood at 7.4 percent.

"Today's meeting will give the Government a last chance to avert the disruptive strike by public servants," National Education Health and Allied Workers spokesman Joe Lekola said.

Despite a 13 percent decline in the number of public servants from 1.27 million to 1.1 million, personnel spending rose from 37 percent in 1994 to 52 percent today, the minister said.

"Record payment for pensions, homeowner allowance and medical aid rose by over 60 percent, while over the past four years government had substantially improved the conditions of service, to be enhanced further by the new wage policy that addressed pay progression, the structure of negotiations on salaries and overtime.

Meanwhile, the Council of Education Ministers yesterday condemned the threats of a teachers' strike, saying the state had done much to meet their salary demands.

The council, comprising Education Minister Kader Asmal and his provincial counterparts, reiterated a policy of no work no pay would apply for teachers who had taken part in a mass march in Pretoria last Friday.
Within a week, the strike was not resolved. The three-week Columbia Steel strike in Seattle ended with a tentative agreement that was accepted by the union. The union has agreed that the "..."
It's still no deal

By Nizakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

A way to avoid the planned nationwide strike by more than 500 000 public service workers had still to be found, this less than 24 hours before the mass action was due to kick-off. The impasse was confirmed by Government and union wage negotiators yesterday.

The Government had offered an additional R200 million in addition to the R4 billion already on the table, in a show of commitment to getting the long-standing dispute, but this was rejected out of hand by all 12 public sector trade unions.

The latest offer amounted to 6.3 percent for the majority of public service workers currently earning a minimum wage of R1 363 a month and 6.8 percent for teachers.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi indicated earlier that a media briefing would be convened later today after the weekly Cabinet meeting had discussed the unions' rejection of the latest offer.

Fraser-Moleketi said the latest offer had once again demonstrated the Government's commitment to resolve the impasse amicably. She expressed disappointment with the unions' rejection and urged them to review their positions.

A strike in the current climate, would be counter-productive and impact on services offered, Fraser-Moleketi said, pointing out that the latest offer, with automatic increases provided in 'rank and file promotions', would enhance health workers and police personnel remuneration to well above the inflation rate.

South African Democratic Teachers Union president Mr Willie Madisa, on behalf of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union and the Police Prisons and Civil Rights Unions urged the Government to reconsider seriously, their offer before tomorrow since the unions were keen to see negotiations continue and thereby avert the planned strike.

He said the decision to embark on a strike was taken three weeks ago and, as responsible unions, they would 'be happy to call off the strike' before it started. "It is clear that an urgent resolution of this matter will be in the interest of the country as a whole and not as unilaterally projected by the delay to the pockets of the public servants,' Madisa said.

Police union president Mr Zizamele Cebekhulu emphasised the unions' interest in 'unlocking the deadlocked' through preparations to provide skeleton staff in various essential services, if the strike began tomorrow. "That's why we give them 24 hours to come with a reasonable offer," he added.

Two independent unions, the National Public Servants and Allied Workers' Union and the Institute of Public Servants had staged a walkout earlier, objecting to the Government's proposal to replace the rank and file promotions system with a comprehensive new wage policy, the unions' spokesman Mr Mike Tshipane said.
Teachers and health workers among thousands taking action

80% need strike call
Strike affects 400 W Cape schools

The strike affecting teachers and support staff at 400 Western Cape schools has led to the closure of these schools. The Education Department confirmed that the strike, which started on 5 October 2019, has resulted in the closure of schools until further notice. The strike is ongoing and the situation is being monitored closely. The Department has urged parents and students to plan accordingly and to check local school websites or contact the schools directly for updates.

Close the gap

The Education Department is working closely with the Western Cape Government to address the impact of the strike on learners. The Department has put in place contingency plans to ensure that learners continue to receive education during the strike. These plans include the use of distance learning platforms and the provision of study materials to learners who are unable to attend school.

The Department has also called on parents to support the strike and ensure that their children do not attend school during the period of the strike. The Department has urged parents to plan for alternatives such as private tuition, homeschooling, or engaging in other educational activities.

The Education Department has also urged schools to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged by the strike. The Department has asked schools to provide learners with access to study materials and to ensure that learners receive support during the strike.

The strike is expected to continue until a resolution is reached. The Department has urged all parties to engage in productive dialogue to resolve the issues that led to the strike. The Department has called on all stakeholders to work towards a solution that benefits all learners.

Teachers are also encouraged to continue to engage with the Department and to voice their concerns. The Department has assured teachers that their concerns will be taken into account in the resolution process.

Overall, the Education Department is committed to ensuring that learners continue to receive quality education during the strike.
Schools the most affected by civil sector strike

By Sovietan Reporturce

EDUCATION was the main casualty when many teachers refused to go to work on a strike held yesterday after their wage talks with the Government deadlocked this week.

As one of the public sector affected by the strike included hospitals, schools, courts, police stations, prisons, and home affairs.

The strike has been called by the National Union of Teacher and Unions Workers Union (Nahews) and the Police and Postal Service Unions (Popore).

The strike started slowly yesterday morning with teachers reporting to their schools and then later shunting classes.

In Soweto teachers pocketed and held meetings in Mponjane and Northern Province teachers did not even expect to work as was the case with teachers in Lenasia, the Vaal and the East Rand.

However, teachers in mostly white schools reported for work.

But there was confusion among civil servants across Johannesburg where the strike started with some workers still on duty while others were boycotting the strike.

The Home Affairs offices in Johannes burg were shut down with notices saying that the industrial action had stopped services until further notice.

However, at the Home Affairs offices in Newlands, outside Soweto workers were off-duty as there was expected attendance.

The pay strike system took a knock as well as the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court almost ground to a halt yesterday as none of the judges reported on a picket.

A group of court officials who are also members of the National Union of Teachers and Workers Union gave notice of their intention to strike.

The strike was well documented as many of the protests were mounted.

At the busy casualty department, all the staff turned up for work, according to chief professional nurse, Ms. Thobekile Matheka.

During his visit to Soweto, Minister of Health Mr. Segawe, said yesterday that the strike was an issue that had to be addressed.

The strike is expected to last for two weeks and it is expected that the strike will continue until a resolution is reached.

Meanwhile, the strike affected many hospitals in Pretoria to limit the intake of patients.
Low turnout for strike
Public service strike ‘not over’

PUBLIC service workers could continue to strike next week if union leaders are not satisfied by government movement on their pay demands.

Initially planned for two days, the strike could resume on Tuesday if government refused to move on its R3.2bn allocation, or increases ranging between 4% and 6.8%, union leaders said yesterday.

As the strike entered its second day, the three public service unions aligned with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and involved in the strike have demanded a meeting with President Thabo Mbeki in his capacity as African National Congress (ANC) president.

The call comes ahead of an ANC national executive committee meeting this weekend at which the strike is likely to be discussed.

The three unions – the National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union, the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) and the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union – said workers had responded to the call to strike.

While it was slow to start, by afternoon about 300 000 workers had taken part in demonstrations and pickets, union leaders said.

“Today is a clear message that the workers are angered by the present average government offer of 6.15%,” the unions said. They expected support for the strike to grow as it entered its second day.

Reports indicated that schools were the most affected, with up to 80% of teachers around the country heeding the strike call.

The effectiveness of the strike in essential services such as health was more difficult to assess. Workers in essential services could go on strike only if hospitals agreed on minimum service arrangements ensuring that some staff were at work to ensure continued and effective delivery of services. By yesterday few hospitals had reached such agreements.

There were sporadic reports of disruption of hospital services. The health department said all indications were that most facilities around the country were operational. Lunch-time pickets took place at a number of hospitals.

Clarity has yet to be obtained on whether police and correctional services staff may strike, even if minimum service arrangements are agreed to, because the Police Act prohibits strikes.

Popcru said its members were on strike but groups of policemen wandering around the centre of Johannesburg denied they were on strike, saying they were on duty. “Observing the pickets” outside the offices of the Gauteng Finance MEC Jabu Moloele.

A similar response was received from police who put up a roadblock on a route into Soweto. Asked why the roadblock had been set up, they responded “We are working”.

The COSATU-aligned public service unions said they were still open to negotiations. Members are expected to report back to work on Monday to assess the strike and possible further action.

Meanwhile, unions aligned to the Federation of Unions of South Africa plan to hold nationwide marches today, starting strike action on Tuesday.

COSATU plans to march in Pretoria tomorrow to protest against continued job losses throughout the economy.
Strike deadlock not over yet
New law could limit right to strike

By MALOSE MONAMA

A LANDMARK decision with serious ramifications for workers has been made in the Labour Appeal Court recently. The court was considering the constitutionality of the unfair dismissal of a worker who exercised her right to strike.

The unprecedented decision limits the right to strike and empowers employers to dismiss workers involved in a legally protected strike subject to certain conditions.

The finding of the court that operational requirements may justify dismissal of employees participating in a legally protected strike, even if the strike itself was lawful, has profound implications for the balance of power between employers and employees.

The court further held that the right to strike is not an absolute right and that employers can discharge employees for misconduct or incompetence. This decision has significant implications for trade unions and workers' rights.

In the case at hand, the Labour Relations Act (LRA) was found to be constitutional, as it does not allow for a blanket dismissal of employees who strike. However, the court ruled that the LRA could be interpreted to allow for the dismissal of employees who participate in a strike that is not protected.

The court held that the LRA also seeks to safeguard the interests of commerce and the viability of enterprises, even in strike situations. This balance of interests is one of the key issues in determining the constitutionality of the LRA.

The decision is a significant victory for employers, who have long sought to limit the right to strike. It is a setback for trade unions, which will now have to navigate the legal landscape to protect workers' rights.

'These teachers' rights to strike'

By MALOSE MONAMA and SIMBA MAKUNKE

THE FACT that education in traditionally black areas of the country is one of the key issues facing the country was highlighted in a recent report by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA).

The report, titled 'The State of Education in South Africa', found that education in these areas is far lower than in other parts of the country. This is despite the fact that the government has invested heavily in education in recent years.

The report called for the government to address the disparities in education, including the lack of resources and qualified teachers, in order to ensure that all South Africans have access to quality education.

Teacher + Decent Salary = Good Idea

TEACHER + DECENT SALARY = GOOD IDEA

Protecting teachers march on the Gauteng Department of Education offices to demand a 10 percent salary increase for public servants.

Picture Sipho Makaka

The march was supported by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), which has been fighting for better wages and conditions for teachers for many years.

The government has been slow to respond to the demands of the teachers, who have been on strike for several months. The strike has caused disruptions in the education system, with many schools closed.

The teachers argue that their demand for a salary increase is justified by the increase in the cost of living and the lack of progress in the education system. They believe that better salaries will help to retain teachers and improve the quality of education.

The government has said that it is committed to improving the education system, but has so far been unable to address the teachers' demands.

The strike has attracted widespread support, with many parents and students joining the march to demand better education for their children.

If it sticks to its latest offer and the strike continues, the government may have to take action to ensure that the country's schools remain open. The government has already threatened to sack teachers who refuse to return to work.

The strike has also highlighted the challenges facing the education system in South Africa, including the lack of resources and qualified teachers. The government has vowed to address these issues in the long term, but the teachers' demands have put pressure on the government to act now.
Nestle faces strike on agency shop agreement

Simphiwe Xako

NESTLE SA faces a one-day national strike by Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) members today in support of their demand for the introduction of an agency shop agreement.

Meanwhile, a wage strike by members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) at Columbus Stainless in Middelburg enters its third week.

Fawu spokesman, Dumisani Yoyo, accused Nestle of opposing transformation. The agency shop agreement would require all employees, irrespective of whether they are union members, to pay a levy into a special fund administered by the union.

The company said last night it was prepared to introduce an agency shop, with the exception of employees belonging to another union. Fawu's demands include those belonging to minority unions.

Members of the Transport and General Workers Union are to embark on countrywide marches today to protest against job losses. This is part of the Congress of SA Trade Union's programme to defend existing jobs and ensure the creation of new jobs.

Cosatu was due to hold countrywide marches on Saturday, but some did not take place.

BD 06/99
‘Racism’ at Nestlé sparks march today

Johannesburg - The Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) said on Friday it would lead about 3,000 of its members through the streets of Johannesburg today to demonstrate against racism at Nestlé South Africa.

At issue was the deadlock over an agency shop agreement which was an instrument of the new Labour Relations Act of 1995 aimed at preventing non-unionised workers from freely benefiting from the struggles of trade unions with management at the collective bargaining unit.

The shop agency agreement achieved this largely by forcing non-unionised employees to pay a levy to a special fund administered by the union.

Fawu said a compromise had been reached in 1997 in the bargaining unit, which consisted of job categories 10 to 19 using the Pycommes grading system. 

Lazo Mzendane, Fawu’s national organising secretary, said following the compromise that the union had insisted the agency shop agreement cover all job categories in the bargaining unit. “Nestlé refused to do so, arguing that management was prepared to apply the agreement only from job grades 14 to 19 because most whites were in grades 10 to 13.

“The company claimed white employees in these categories had skills and could strike and therefore put the company in a difficult position,” Mzendane said. “We reject with contempt the naked protection of white privilege at the expense of our members.”

However Nestlé said the majority of employees in grades 10 to 13 were “not white.”

The company said there was a strong moral argument against an agency shop agreement as a limit to individual choice.

“Fawu’s claim does not recognise the choice of workers to belong to a minority trade union,” said Dave Jelley, the director of Nestlé South Africa.

“The objective of the agency shop agreement is to discourage free riders benefiting from union negotiations. Workers who choose to join minority small unions are not free riders.”
Strike postponed for more talks
National strike called off

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

THE countrywide public sector strike by three Congress of South African Trade Unions-affiliated unions has been suspended and 500 000 members will report for work today, union officials announced yesterday.

While other unions engaged in the wage dispute vowed to intensify the strike and protest actions this week, National Education Health and Allied Workers Union, Police Prison and Civil Rights Union and the SA Democratic Teachers Union took a respite to assess the situation.

Nehawu deputy general secretary Mr David Makhura, speaking on behalf of the three unions, said it was decided that the action be suspended after union leaders had conducted a series of round-table meetings countrywide at the weekend.

Union members were urged to wait for a directive from the three unions as they were locked in meetings last night to decide on the effectiveness of their strategy, he said.

It is understood that Government negotiators and the unions have held informal talks since the strike started last Thursday, but this was vehemently denied yesterday by the leaders of the three unions.

Institute of Public Servants and Public Union of Servants and Allied Workers spokesman Mr Ivan Bhati said their members would go out on strike today, but insisted the call to heed the strike was “a voluntary one” on its 69 000 membership.

Federation of South African Unions also announced it would mount its protest demonstration today.
Strike hits courts, cases postponed

Court proceedings in several major cities continued to be disrupted today as a strike by court interpreters and prosecutors entered its second day.

Several hearings had to be postponed in centres such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Durban and Cape Town, said Justice department spokesman Heinrich Augustyn in Pretoria.

"I won't say that courts are being crippled as only one union is continuing with the industrial action," he said.

The strike is being organised by the National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers (Nupsaw) to press for a 10% pay raise.

Nupsaw joined 11 other public service unions last week in rejecting the State's latest offer of a 6.3% raise for most employees.

The Nupsaw strike, which started yesterday, continued despite the resumption of pay talks between the State and the unions today.

Centres such as Welkom in the Free State and Wynberg in the Western Cape were also affected by Nupsaw's stoppage.

A senior official at Wynberg Magistrate's Court reported that only three interpreters were on duty, leading to a substantial number of cases not proceeding. Twenty-five interpreters, some clerks and five prosecutors had joined in the strike.

"We are not seriously affected as we have planned ahead," said chief magistrate Bertus Jooste.

Nupsaw claimed support services had been disrupted at Groote Schuur Hospital and the Odi Hospital in Mabopane in the North West Province.

Groote Schuur Hospital spokeswoman Phillippa Johnson said a small group of workers had picketed the hospital, but services were running normally and no patients had been compromised.

About 150 members of the Public and Allied Workers Union of South Africa (Pawusa) protested outside the main entrance to the parliamentary complex in Cape Town.

The protesters chanted slogans and some carried placards bearing the words "Geraldine you liar, analysts confirm that there's money for us", referring to Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

The Pawusa members plan to march through the streets of the city in support of their demands for a 10% wage increase.

Pawusa spokesman William Hoffmeester said depending on the outcome of the meeting between unions and the government later today, the union was likely to declare its programme of action for the week.

The protest proceeded peacefully and police monitored the situation from a distance - Sapa

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Wage talks resume as Fedusa members strike

Renée Grawitzky
and Sapa

THE resumption of wage talks between government and public service unions today conceals within it a series of weekend meetings aimed at ending the deadlock over wages.

Public service unions aligned to the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) met on Sunday night to discuss last week's two-day strike and to explore options for a settlement.

At the same time, the African National Congress (ANC) national executive committee met on the floor of the house.

The ANC did not comment on the substance of the dispute.

A special Cosatu executive committee meeting today is expected to discuss the issue. The Cosatu unions said consideration should be given to ensuring that future negotiations are concluded ahead of the budget so that proper negotiations can take place.

The Cosatu unions have suspended their programme of action pending further talks in the public service coordinating bargaining council.

The unions said yesterday that depending on the outcome of talks, further strike action could be contemplated from next Monday.

National Education Health and Allied Workers Union president Vava Nhlapo declined to comment on whether the unions had revised their demand for a 10% increase implemented on a sliding scale "We know where we are going to settle," he said.

Government's current offer is 6.8% for teachers and between 4% and 6.3% for other public servants, with an average of 6.3%.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi said government believed "there is room for discussion" on the R3.2bn allocation currently on the table.

The Fedusa-aligned Hospital Personnel Trade Union of SA said ahead of today's strike that government had refused in most provinces to ensure minimum service agreements were in place so that some workers classified as essential could participate.

Meanwhile, some magistrate and regional courts were affected by yesterday's strike by the National Union of Public Service and Allied Workers.

The union claimed that courts in Pretoria, Bloemfontein and Welkom were affected. "It said the action would continue indefinitely unless the state improved its pay offer."
There has been speculation that the union leaders have been working in the background to promote a settlement for the past several months. If the union leaders are able to secure a tentative agreement, the strike could be avoided.

The union leaders have also been in talks with the company about increasing the wages and benefits for the workers. The union leaders have stated that the current wages are not enough to support the workers and their families.

The company has stated that they are willing to negotiate but only if the union leaders are willing to make some concessions. The union leaders have stated that they are not willing to make any concessions without the company agreeing to increase the wages and benefits for the workers.

The strike has been a significant event for the workers and the community. The workers have been without work for several weeks, and the community has been affected by the lack of economic activity.

The union leaders have stated that they will continue to negotiate with the company until a settlement is reached.
Making the Kids Pay

Nigeria's new approach - a moral economy

When parents go after the working class - the car giant pays

Strike hits the tummy

Strike hits the tummy

at Groote Schuur

(32)

1999
Strikers bring halt to

Daimler Chrysler SA

Anime does not condone the unprovoked action.
SA may face more strike disruption

Disgruntled workers consider mass action

Renée Grawitzky

The country could face further disruption as Telkom unions consider mass action in support of their wage demands, mine workers on some gold and coal mines start balloting for strike action today and public service unions consider further protest action.

Public service unions representing close to 1.5 million members meet tomorrow to decide whether to embark on further mass action to put pressure on government to review its final wage offer of R3,28bn. This follows Friday's meeting where unions revised their wage demand from 10% to 7.3%, with 8% for teachers.

Government's mandating committee meets today to consider various options to resolve the dispute and to decide whether to implement its final offer.

If government went ahead and implemented the final wage offer, it could negatively affect its plans to continue restructuring the public service. Agreement would have to be reached with the unions to pursue its plans to implement a new wage policy which would include changing current employment conditions and revising its pay progression system.

Unions might prove to be less than co-operative in such plans as well as the further rationalisation of the public service if government implemented the final offer, union sources said.

Meanwhile, the Communication Workers' Union plans to notify Telkom and the SA Post Office today of its intention to embark on a programme of mass action from August 16 after the parties failed to resolve a wage dispute in the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

This comes in the wake of Telkom's announcement last month that, as part of its plans to streamline operations, as many as 11,000 jobs could be shed.

The union is demanding an increase ranging between 10% and 13% while Telkom has offered 5% and 2% linked to gainsharing.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said yesterday that members on collieries and gold mines, except for those on Anglogold mines, would begin balloting for strike action today. The union and Anglogold signed a wage deal on Friday, providing for an increase of 10% for the lowest grade and 9% for other workers.

The dispute, however, continues between the union and other mining houses where increases offered range between 9% and 9% while offers on marginal mines range between 5% and 7%. The parties plan to meet on Thursday.

Last night the NUM also criticised plans by Western Areasmine — a joint venture between Western Areas and Canada's Placer Dome — to retrench as many as 2,900 miners and said it would challenge such moves. The mine announced on Friday that it had notified the gold crisis committee of its intention to cut its workforce by as much as 40%.

NUM general secretary Gwede Mantashe said it was expecting such moves as Placer Dome's reputation in terms of its approach to labour was known internationally.

"They cut labour to the bone and as a Canadian company they do not care for the biggest crisis facing this country, which is joblessness and unemployment."
Production resumes at Daimler (9A), Chrysler (9A), Daimler Chrysler South Africa (9A). The return to work today after a five-day strike has resulted in the resumption of production at the plants today.

Strikes continue at Nehawu, Telkom, Post Office.

Nehawu strike continued at the Nelspruit office.

Strike notice served on Telkom, Post Office.
Strike plans for major parastatals

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

FRANTIC contingency plans have begun in the major parastatals—the South African Post Office and Telkom—to lessen the impact of a major disruptive strike by 14 000 postal workers and 27 000 telecommunication service employees from Monday, August 16.

Post Office senior human resources general manager, Reverend Vukile Mqithana, said yesterday they were geared to continue rendering service when the planned strike by almost 14 000 Communication Workers Union members begins next week.

Mqithana believed the union's rejection of the offer ranging between 7.5 and 10 percent was not "reasonable and realistic" in view of the current financial position of the organisation. The offer meant an increase to the basic minimum salary of R2 350 which also entailed an increase of nearly R80 million to the salary bill.

CWU deputy general secretary Mike Seroba described the "sliding scale offer" by the management to be less than an average 7.5 percent increase when translated in real terms for the majority of employees.

The union demanded a 14 percent increase for the lowest paid support staff and 10 percent for supervisors.

Postal workers would be joining at least 27 000 Telkom employees who will also embark on a major strike next Monday.

Other areas of deadlock included gain-sharing bonuses, long service awards and increased housing allowances.

Post Office group communications manager Sandle Madolo assured customers that postal services will continue to operate smoothly despite the strike.

Telkom group corporate communications manager Ms Amanda Singleton said the demands inflated staff costs to about R1.8 billion a year.
'Marathon strike' at Columbus ends with two-year Numsa agreement

Johannesburg - The union representing striking workers at Columbus Stainless said yesterday it had reached a two-year agreement with the company and employees would return to work today. Workers will receive a 7.3 percent wage rise in each year of the deal, which is effective from July 1 1999. The agreement put an end to the one-month marathon strike," said the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa). About 500 Numsa members employed at the Columbus Middleburg plant went on strike on July 12 to demand a wage increase of 9.7 percent. Columbus had initially offered a 7.1 percent increase with 0.5 percent based on individual performance. Under the new agreement, workers will get an additional individual merit increase of up to 0.3 percent. Another 0.5 percent increase is possible if the company meets its targets by June 2000. Numsa said the company would not pursue charges against the 149 workers arrested last month.

Three die in Driefontein quake: An earthquake measuring three on the Richter scale killed three mine workers and injured five others yesterday at the Driefontein mine owned by Gold Fields and would cut the mine's gold production by slightly less than a day, the group said. Willie Jacobsz, a Gold Fields spokesman, said the rest of the shaft infrastructure was intact and appeared as if only about 18 percent of production from the mine's No. 4 shaft would be affected. The shaft produces about 1,000 ounces of gold a month.

800 000 PUBLIC SERVANTS COULD MARCH IN MASS PROTESTS ON AUGUST 24

Johannesburg - Unified labour action by public servants could result in up to 800,000 workers joining in nationwide protest marches later this month to press for better pay. All 12 unions in the public service central bargaining chamber agreed in a joint caucus in Centurion outside Pretoria yesterday to mobilise their members for the planned action, scheduled to take place in major cities on August 24. They said after the meeting: "This march will serve as a message to government that public servants are serious regarding their demands." The unions, which claim a combined membership of about 800,000, would also seek an urgent meeting with President Thabo Mbeki (pictured) to ask for his intervention in their continuing pay dispute with the state. - Sapa

Sympathy strike ends: Hourly paid workers at the East London plant of DaimlerChrysler South Africa (D-CSA) yesterday after they had been on strike for five-and-a-half days, had returned to work. Annibus van der Laan, a spokesman for D-CSA, said yesterday production at the plant was suspended on Monday last week when workers embarked on a sympathy strike following the dismissal of five employees.
Public servants postpone launch of strike action

by Renee Grawitzky
and Sapa

THE public service wage dispute seems set to drag on as unions emerged from a joint meeting yesterday with a decision not to immediately launch full-scale strike action but to hold a joint march on August 24.

The unions have yet again called for the intervention of President Thabo Mbeke in the dispute.

Government's mandating committee was also scheduled to meet yesterday to decide on its future strategy to resolve the dispute.

The meeting was still under way late last night.

Public service unions affiliated to both the Congress of SA Trade Unions and the Federation of Unions of SA met to decide on a joint programme of action yesterday. The unions agreed to the joint march and to meet again on August 27 to reassess the situation.

It was unclear yesterday whether any more formal meetings between the unions and government would take place.

Meanwhile, a number of Gauteng teachers carried out a threat to boycott classes yesterday in a bid to force government to meet their wage demands. The education department said simultaneously, 12 unions — including the SA Democratic Teachers' Union — who were locked in a seven-month wage dispute with government, were meeting in Pretoria to plan strategy on the stalemate on a pay rise.

Gauteng education department spokesman Sybilla Holzinger-Maas said: "We are aware of the situation. Various districts informed us that classes were suspended this morning (yesterday)."

She said the decision by the teachers to strike had not been communicated formally to the department and the policy of "no work no pay" would apply.

She said the department expected teaching to go back to normal today as there still was no communication between it and the union. The department would try to negotiate with the union representing the striking teachers.

The Star newspaper reported that Soweto teachers suspended lessons on Tuesday morning and picketed outside the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital. The protest later moved to Wits University.
Widespread labour tension gripped the country this week as it drew to a close ahead of what could culminate in one of SA's biggest strikes in recent years. Post and telecommunications workers, mostly Communications Workers Union members (CWU), are gearing up for a nationwide strike on Monday.

This follows two days of wage protests by teachers. Unless the dispute with the Government is resolved within the next week, these protests could spill over into a national strike involving close to a million public sector workers.

Meanwhile Cosatu submitted a notice to the National Economic, Development and Labour Council earlier this month of its intention to embark on national protest action over job losses. The Labour Relations Act requires that the notice be discussed by the Government, business and trades unions first. If Cosatu's submissions are accepted, workers will be able to embark on legal protest.

These developments come days before Cosatu gathers for a special national congress of all its affiliates, where current tensions between its members and employers will be discussed.

The congress starts on Wednesday next week and ends on August 20, four days before the federation's public sector affiliates say they will launch national protests in support of their pay demands.

Operational contingency plans have been put in place by the South African Post Office and Telkom to ensure mail gets through during the strike by 14 000 workers starting Monday, Telkom general manager Mr Sundile Madolo said yesterday.

"Obviously the strike is going to affect us. It will create some disturbance in service delivery, but we hope we can lessen the disruption," he added.

CWU members are on strike after they rejected a salary increase of 10.01 percent for lower ranks and seven percent for higher ranks. The union is demanding 14 percent increase for the lowest paid support staff and 10 percent for supervisors.

The workers going on strike represent 56 percent of the total Post Office staff complement.

SA Broadcasting Corporation spokeswoman Ms Thandaza Shope felt the corporation would be affected by the strike as members of the public would not be able to pay for services.

Stabilend Bank spokesman Mr Erik Larsen said the Post Office had reassured them that contingency plans had been put in place "and which we will have to call our clients to collect their statements and from their branches".

Telkom group communication manager Ms Amanda Singleton said operational emergency plans were in place in the event of a well-supported strike. She said staff shortages could be experienced and delays should be expected in the installation of new services as well as the repair of faults, but working lines would not be affected

The Cabinet was locked in discussions late yesterday on the public sector unions' pay demands and a statement was expected to be released late last night.
Telkom, Post Office workers to go on strike

Siphumwe Xako

MORE than 40 000 members of the Communications Workers Union (CWU) are expected to embark on a national strike today following a wage dispute with the SA Post Office and Telkom last week.

Union deputy general secretary Mike Seroba said all the affected parties had reached an agreement on the rules and the conduct of the strike at a meeting hosted by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration on Saturday.

"The Labour Relations Act specifies clearly the conditions, rules and regulations to be followed during a strike. We had an agreement with management regarding the time, form and place of the industrial action," he said.

Meantime, a strike planned for today by the Alliance of Telkom Unions was postponed after management complained that a notice by the alliance was "vague and ambiguous and therefore not in compliance with the Labour Relations Act."

Telkom spokesman Amanda Singleton said the management did not specify the time and place.

"Against this background the company advised the alliance to postpone any industrial action until proper notice has been served and agreement reached on strike and picketing rules," Singleton said.

Alliance spokesman Dick Heyns confirmed yesterday that its members would not go on strike until proper procedures had been followed.

"The alliance will meet management this morning to finalise the rules and regulations before continuing with the wage strike," Heyns said.

Seroba said the postponement would not affect his union as the two organisations planned different initiatives.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said it would give notice of a strike starting tomorrow if no agreement was reached with certain mines.

The parties are expected to meet today in a final bid to avert the strike, which will exclude AngloGold mines and Duka collieries which have already reached a deal with the NUM.

Groups such as Avzgold, Harmony and Western Areas are offering between 8% and 8.5%, while the NUM is demanding 9%.

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15 000 Telkom staff out on strike

MURRAY WILLIAMS and SAPA

About 15 000 of Telkom’s 90 000 workers countrywide heeded calls for a pay strike, the company announced today.

In the Western Cape, 1 100 of the province’s 3 200 Communications Workers Union members did not turn up for work, amounting to 13% of the province’s 8 600 Telkom employees.

Call centres around the country were the worst affected by the strike, where only between 20 and 30% of staff were present.

Telkom spokeswoman Amanda Singleton said from Johannesburg that the Western Cape’s call centres were the least affected, although service times had suffered.

Ms Singleton said earlier that normal phone services were electronic, and would not be affected. Customers who needed to make phone calls could do so from the internet.

In Pretoria, Telkom and SA Post Office workers promised to bring mail and telephone services to a halt if their demands were not met. The union’s deputy general secretary Mike Seroba said: "It will be in the interests of the companies concerned and of the public if this matter is resolved quickly. If not we will have no choice but to continue with industrial action."

Striking union workers said they planned marches in Cape Town, Pretoria, the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern and Northern Cape.

The union is demanding increases ranging from 10 to 14% for staff in different categories, both the Post Office and Telkom.

Mr Seroba has offered a 5% general increase while the Post Office has offered an average 7% rise.
Labour crisis spreads

...
Few problems in postal services as 40 000 strike

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

MINIMAL disruption of postal and telecommunication services were reported yesterday as thousands of Communication Workers Union members participated in a strike over a wage dispute.

CWU deputy general secretary Mr Mike Seroba said yesterday that about 40 000 of their members took to the streets and marched on regional head offices of Telkom and the Post Office in Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, Durban, Cape Town, Kimberley and Pretoria.

Telkom corporate communication executive Ms Amanda Singleton said contingency plans had been activated, though staff shortages might lead to delays in fixing faults and the installation of new services.

Other affected areas included directory information, fault reporting, call centres for accounts and international inquiries.

"Telephone and Internet services were not affected since they were technologically driven and require very little, if any, human intervention to operate," she said.

Post Office senior communication manager Mr Sandile Madolo said the strike had no major effect on postal services.

He said only 130 post offices were closed out of more than 2 000 around the country.

Some problems were experienced at mail depots in the region.

"At the Post Office’s largest mail centre, Witpoort in Johannesburg, a full shift was completed last night with most mail volumes processed. Post offices in Kleredorp, Benoni, Excom and Vanderbijlpark were closed in the morning," he said.

Police and Prisoners Civil Rights Union spokesman Mr Siyavuya Jafa said after a special executive meeting that 60 000 POPCORN members decided to join 11 other public sector unions for the August 24 strike.

The SA Police Service, however, warned that the Constitution regarded police as members of an essential service and they were forbidden in terms of police regulations to take part in work stoppages.

Twelve public sector unions representing more than 800 000 workers are preparing for an "historic" joint national strike on August 24, with no sign that wage talks between them and the state will resume.

Members of the 12 unions, which represent all categories of public servants from nurses, teachers and police officers to administrative and auxiliary staff, will take part in marches through Pretoria, Cape Town and other centres on August 24.

Some unions said they would press ahead with low-intensity industrial action such as go-slow and overtime bans in selected areas in the week leading up to the strike.

Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi announced last Thursday that the Government had decided to implement its latest offer with effect from July 1.
effect of telecoms strike
Unions rally to strike call

STAFF REPORTER AND SAPA

Pretoria – Twelve public sector unions, representing more than 800,000 workers, meet here today to prepare for "a historic" national strike next week.

With no sign that pay talks between the unions and the Government will resume, the workers' joint action committee will go ahead with planning for the strike.

Members of the 12 unions, which represent all categories of public servants, will also take part in marches in Durban, Pretoria, Cape Town and other centres next Tuesday.

Yesterday, the first effects of threatened mass labour unrest were felt when hundreds of Telkom employees in Durban joined their counterparts nationwide in protest marches. A total of 133 post offices did not open.

Hans van der Groenendaal, Telkom's spokesman in Durban, said disruption was minimal.

Among public sector unions, the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union confirmed its 61,000 members would take part in the strike next week, despite the fact that the police and prison officials were barred from striking.
Telkom strikers warned of disciplinary action

FRANK KUNAMBA

L40471899

Union plans to respond to Telkom’s action to fire any worker who does not return to work

ON THE MARCH
Tellkom Strike Has Two Faces

ACTION LOSING IMPACT

STRIKE
Joins... PopCU

(19) 87/18/11

By Ismail Abubakar
SA faces a wave of sectoral industrial action.
Massive strike on Tuesday as govt, unions clash

By SEKOLA SELLO

An estimated one million public sector workers called right across the country on Thursday in what could be an unprecedented war of attrition between the Labour Department and government over salary increases.

This industrial dispute is spearheaded by four unions affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The action is expected to spread to other unions and sectors, with some private sector employers threatening to follow suit.

The strike was called in response to the government's failure to match the 3.5% increase in the Basic Salary Index (BSI) with a commensurate pay rise for public sector workers.

The unions have been at loggerheads with the government over the issue for several weeks, with strikes and protests becoming more frequent as the dispute拖延.

"We are demanding a minimum wage of R4,500 per month to address the cost of living crisis," said general secretary of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu), Teboho Mashile. "The current minimum wage is inadequate and does not reflect the current inflation levels.

The government has so far refused to budge on its stance, arguing that it cannot afford to increase salaries at the current stage.

Meanwhile, the private sector has also been hit by a series of strikes and protests, with workers demanding better pay and working conditions. The latest strike was called by the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and is expected to disrupt services in the mining and manufacturing sectors.

"We will continue to negotiate with the government until we get a fair deal," said Numsa's general secretary, Zizamele Cebekhetha. "We are determined to ensure that workers are fairly compensated for their hard work.

This strike is another example of the growing divide between the government and workers, with both sides seemingly unwilling to compromise.

Will the strike lead to a resolution or will it escalate further? Only time will tell.

To Page 2
Public servants, govt fail to settle dispute

Unions expected to embark on a national pay strike tomorrow

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) yesterday called for a national pay strike on September 23 to protest against the government's refusal to meet demands for increased wages.

Cosatu's national industrial relations department said the strike would affect public sector workers, including teachers, police, and medical staff.

The union said the government had not been responsive to its demands for a 7% wage increase, which was below the rate of inflation.

Cosatu also called for the restoration of the full cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) that was cut in 2021.

The union said it had tried to negotiate a settlement with the government, but these efforts had been unsuccessful.

The strike will be the first national pay strike in the public sector since 2019.

Protests to continue until demands are met

We want action now, says Cosatu

Cosatu said it would continue to protest until its demands were met, including a 7% wage increase, restoration of the COLA, and improved working conditions.

The union said it would file a formal notice of strike on September 23, and it expected the strike to last for several days.

Cosatu also called on other unions to join the strike, and it said it would consider further action if the government did not respond to its demands.

Finds no solution

The government said it had already offered a 4.5% wage increase, which it said was in line with the rate of inflation.

The government also said it had offered an additional 0.5% increase for those workers in the lowest 20% of the wage scale.

But Cosatu said the offer was not enough, and it called for a 7% increase.

Cosatu also said it had met with government representatives, but these talks had been unsuccessful.

The union said it would continue to negotiate with the government, but it would also be prepared to take further action if necessary.

Cosatu called on workers to join the strike, and it said it would also call for a nationwide general strike if the government did not meet its demands.

Public-service wage demands part of a bigger picture, says unionist

Cosatu said the wage demands were part of a broader struggle for better working conditions and social rights.

Cosatu said it was not just about wages, but also about issues such as healthcare, education, and housing.

Cosatu said it would continue to fight for these issues, and it called on government to meet its demands.

Cosatu said it was not just about public servants, but also about workers in the private sector.

Cosatu said it would continue to negotiate with the government, but it was also prepared to take further action if necessary.

Cosatu called on workers to join the strike, and it said it would also call for a nationwide general strike if the government did not meet its demands.
GOVT ACTION CONDEMNED

Public servants plan national day of protest

Johannesburg: Public servants will embark on protest action tomorrow that could lead to a shutdown in services.

Eddie Jaiya reports.

More than one million public servants will take part in marches nation-wide tomorrow in a show of anger at the government's unilateral implementation of its final wage offer to 12 public sector unions.
The action is also a challenge to the government to return to the public sector co-ordinating bargaining chamber.

Unions have demanded an average of 7.3% and an additional 1% pay progression for teachers.

Before breaking off negotiations and unilaterally implementing its final wage offer, the government offered a 3.9% increase to 50,000 teachers.

While the action today will likely trigger strikes at the Numsa union, the National Union of Metalworkers (NUM), and the Chamber of Mines in a bid to resolve the wage dispute.

Approximately 12,000 coal miners are on strike. They are demanding a 9% increase across the board, while the chamber is offering 7%.

NUM general secretary Glenda Mawela said the strike would continue until negotiations are suspended.

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The intention was to ensure the employer was not absolved of the blame that the unions were being put in the position of being at odds with each other.

Cosatu is the only union in the private sector to hold lunchtime demonstrations today.

Teachers unions in the province are calling on parents to help out at schools, especially primary schools.

Nawha Khan, spokesperson for the Department of Education, said they asked parents to come and help out at schools.

It's all-out strike next - unions

 Cavusoglu goes on march

STAFF REPORTERS AND SAVVA

The government is set to introduce a new round of wage negotiations, with the unions demanding a 7.2% increase and a 1.1% pay progression for teachers.

The government has walked away from the bargaining table and has implemented across-the-board 0.5% increase.

Tony Eversib, Cosatu's general secretary, said that he was not prepared to offer this.

If the government does not return to the bargaining table, it will lead to a strike.

Negotiations there is no option other than a strike.

The unions have urged public servants, especially teachers and medical workers, to stay away from work.

The predicted disruption to schools, and other services, has angered parents and students.

The Congress of South African Students (Cosas) will hold a national protest tomorrow and has threatened to embark on its own mass action if the government does not respond.

The latest to call off the strike are Tekkom and the Alliance of Tekkom Unions reached wage agreement on Friday.

The strike today will likely trigger strikes at the Numsa union, the National Union of Metalworkers (NUM), and the Chamber of Mines in a bid to resolve the wage dispute.

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South Africa Human Rights Commission will probe strike

SAHRC to probe teachers' strike

By Charity Phene (c21)

Liberia called on to respect the rights of children and to

ensure the rights of children are respected. He said: "The

inability of children to go to school is unacceptable. It

is a violation of their basic human rights, and we will

not allow this to continue."

The South African Human Rights

Commission (SAHRC) will make an

inquiry into the rights of children in

Liberia. It will look into the situation

of children who are being denied

education.

SAHRC is determined to ensure

that children have access to

education.
Unions hold last ditch talks with Government over national pay protest strike

Pension funds in Canada are mulling a strike this week, as a dispute over pension rights escalates. The Canadian Association of Pension Plans (CAP), which represents over 100 pension funds, said in a statement that negotiations with government representatives broke down last week. The funds represent over $700 billion in assets and have been pushing for better pension protection in the face of rising costs and increased demands on government budgets. The strike would affect over 1 million workers, including teachers and public sector employees.

The pension funds' concerns are not limited to their own members. They are also raising concerns about the wider impact of cuts to public services and the potential for further cuts in the future. The funds have been working with unions and other organizations to coordinate a national protest in support of their demands.

The CAP's statement said that the funds are prepared to continue negotiations but that the government's proposals so far have not been sufficient to meet their needs. The funds are calling for a meaningful dialogue with workers and their representatives to address their concerns.

The situation is particularly sensitive as Canada is currently in the middle of an election campaign. The government is under pressure to respond to the concerns of workers and to demonstrate its commitment to improving the lives of its citizens.

Meanwhile, unions are standing firm in their demands, saying that the pension funds have a clear message to deliver: that the government must take action to protect the hard-won pension rights of workers and their families.

The unions have also called for a national day of action to be held on October 15th. The day will involve a series of marches and rallies across the country, with workers coming together to demand a fair deal on their pensions. The unions say that the government must take action now to avoid a costly and disruptive strike.
570 000 WORKERS MARCH

Govt firm on wage offers

JOHANNESBURG: Unionists were buoyant after yesterday's stayaway, saying their hand had been strengthened. But the government remained adamant that it would not budge. 

Yesterday's show of strength by civil servants in marches throughout South Africa and the government's hardline stance on the wage dispute could change the country into an inward-looking state.

Reported by the success of the marches which unionists said attracted about 570,000 workers, the 12 unions are set to enter the next round of talks with the government confident that they will be able to force the state to bow to their demands.

The government is offering 6.3% to most workers plus an extra 6.7% for teachers and the lowest paid workers, while the unions are demanding an average 7.3% increase, plus one percent for teachers.

The government reiterated its non-negotiable attitude. The government and unions were engaged in a collective bargaining process "to determine the conditions of service of all employees in the public service. It will take into account conditions of service of all employees in the public service. It will take into account a system of pay progression for all public servants that will be fair to everyone," she said.

SA Democratic Teachers Union president Willie Madlala addressed marchers at the Union Buildings yesterday, saying "the biggest turnout ever in Pretoria" would send a strong message to the government that public servants would fight for better salaries. The government's last cabinet meeting had been inconclusive and co-operation between them would continue.

"The march is driven by the need for a positive response," said Madlala.

We have the power to act on this, and we are not going to allow the issue to continue. We want a speedy return to the negotiation table. We want our teachers to have a fair deal. We are determined to fight for a better future for all.

SA Council of Churches president Bishop Mpho Mmabatho appealed to the government and the unions to break the deadlock. He said the involvement of teachers indicated "it is a community issue, and the government should listen to them."

The government should explore ways in which the country's resources could be used more effectively.
Unions Issue Government Ultimatum over Wage Talks

Unions threaten further strikes in face of Court Stands

more disruptions
Minister called to account on costs

1,500 public service protesters march to Parliament in support of demands for higher wages.
Promise of regions within days

While the promise of regions within days is not quite as the public, the potential for growth and development is still promising. The region is poised for significant growth, with a focus on infrastructure and economic development. The potential for job creation and business expansion is evident, and the region is attracting investment from both domestic and international sources. The region is expected to see a surge in tourism, with new attractions and activities planned to cater to the growing demand. The region is also investing in education and healthcare, ensuring that the quality of life for its residents continues to improve. With the right strategies and investments, the region has the potential to become a hub of innovation and economic growth.
First 'class action' in South Africa

Howard Barrett

When hundreds of thousands of state and civil servants join marches and work stoppages next Tuesday the country could witness the hottest coalition of labor hardliners ever to join the anti-apartheid drive on South Africa's soil.

Public servants of all races from government and postal sectors are expected to be involved in the protest, which will culminate on Wednesday in Pretoria's Union Buildings. The Pretoria Euro Norm Union, of which has 300,000 members is calling the main march that had been tied up because of strike action by different sectors of the labor movement earlier.

But today the union achievements are in dispute. The strike is a work stoppage as far as the rural and poor areas are concerned while the industrial and private sectors have paid undertakers to come through and pick up some of the slack. A few unions have broken down while the rest have been imposed.

In some respects it's the class action wherein the country has seen one

The two union groups in the country are the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the Federation of Unions South Africa (Fedusa) represent different union traditions.

Cosatu, a union of mostly political, and more unionist local government, has overwhelmingly black membership and more recent to strike action. Fedusa unions are determinedlyapolitical, unless it is eating up the lion's share of the population's time and money in the absence of collective bargaining.

Cosatu has about 1.7 million members and Fedusa 650,000. The 12 unions involved in the public sector apology with the government represent between 500,000 and one million workers.

They have revised their wage claim down to 7% due to lower increases in the public sector pay diploma with the government's requirement that between 60-80% of all public servants with an additional 14.4 teachers. This government - a final offer, which representatives have said the parties have not fully agreed. They are now implementing and will not increase, by 10.5% without a new 14 for teachers.

Senior state officials say they believe the public will not understand or sympathize with civil ser

Guess whose Daddy didn't buy a Compaq Server!

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Postal workers go on strike for second time

The post office plans lock-out of striking employees

The union and management are at loggerheads over the "right" to strike.
Johannesburg - The 12 united public sector unions agreed at the weekend to suspend a planned national strike involving about 800 000 members until they have met the government later this week at the Public Service Bargaining Co-ordinating Chamber.

"We will consult and mobilise our members for possible indefinite strike action, everything hinges on the outcome of the talks," Paddy Padayachee, the joint unions' spokesman, said at the weekend. The government will unilaterally implement its final wage offer of 8.3 percent for the majority of public servants and 7 percent for teachers.

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, the minister of public service and administration, said the government did not have the additional money estimated at R700 million, to improve on its final offer.

She welcomed the unions' offer to return to the talks but only to discuss a new wage policy and substantive conditions of employment issues, not wages.

"The return of the public service unions will mean discussions on issues with long- and short-term implications can begin," Fraser-Moleketi said.

Padayachee said: "The unions will withdraw from all other bargaining councils until the wage dispute is resolved."

The unions said they were disappointed their request for a meeting with President Thabo Mbeki had not materialised nor had he acknowledged receipt of their memorandum handed to his representative last week when 350 000 of their members marched on to the the Unica Buildings in Pretoria.

"Fraser-Moleketi has only responded to some issues raised in the memorandum via the media, and has failed to communicate directly with the unions. We see these actions as a delaying tactic and an unwillingness of government to resolve the dispute."
Union ends Post Office strike action

By Khangale Makhado and Sapa

A strike by SA Post Office workers was called off yesterday after a salary agreement was reached between the para-
statals and the Communication Workers' Union.

The two parties agreed at a meeting on a pay rise of between 11.41 percent and 7.5 percent for different staff levels, with a minimum monthly salary of R2,380, the SA Post Office said in a state-
ment in Pretoria.

"Part of the settlement is that striking CWU members return to work immediately, and that the Post Office recalls the
lockout announced on Wednesday last week."

The company has increased its offer from 10.01 percent for lower ranks and seven percent for higher ranks, and a mini-
imum salary of R2,350.

The CWU's initial demands included a minimum R2,450 salary, and increases of between 10 and 14 percent.

After meeting for more than seven hours at the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration, Telkom and CWU failed to reach an agreement.

Telkom spokeswoman Amanda Singleton said the union had agreed to suspend all forms of industrial action and
would call on their members "back to work on full productivity as of today."

"In an attempt to resolve the dispute the company has improved its offer to employees on the support level by half a
percent to 7 percent. The offer is now made up of a 2 percent performance based increase, a 1.1 percent gain sharing bonus and differentiated salary increases per level," Singleton said.

She said CWU was to consult its members on the latest offer and had undertaken to respond by Thursday and "in the meantime the union will suspend all forms of industrial action."

SOWETAN Tuesday August 31 1999
Post Office strike abandoned

FROM SAPA

Pretoria - A strike by Post Office workers was called off yesterday after the company and the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) reached a salary agreement, the Post Office said yesterday.

The parties agreed on a pay rise of between 7.5 percent and 11.41 percent for different staff levels, as well as a minimum salary of R2,380 a month.

"Part of the settlement is that striking CWU members return to work immediately and that the Post Office recalls the lockout announced on Wednesday last week," the Post Office said.

The company said everything possible would be done to bring mail delivery back to normal within the week.

The CWU's initial demands included a minimum salary of R3,450 and increases of between 10 and 14 percent.

But the union's pay dispute with Telkom had not been resolved by late yesterday. A meeting under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration was still under way last night, said Amanda Singleton, Telkom's spokesman.

CWU members went on strike on August 19. Most of the strikers returned to work on Monday last week, but Post Office staff embarked on go-slow and work-to-rule actions.

Disruptions prompted the company to give the CWU notice that those taking part in the go-slow would be locked out.

Telkom has since raised its initial offer to a 5.5 percent rise in the total pay package of supervisors, 8 percent for workers on operational level, and 6.5 percent for support staff.
Columbus strikers' court day postponed

Nathi Sukazi

Middelburg—The court hearing for the 149 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) arrested for trespassing and public violence at Columbus Stainless Steel while on a legal strike for wage increases, was postponed yesterday until October 29.

The hearing was postponed after the defence lawyer, Tayob Kamdar, failed to arrive on time. The workers were arrested on July 19 and were later given bail of R300 each, which was paid by Numsa.

This was followed by the suspension of 17 Numsa members who had pledged solidarity with those who were arrested. They are facing the company's internal disciplinary action.

Numsa Niuli, the Numsa spokesman, said the union welcomed the postponement because it would give the company time to rethink its stance and drop the charges.

The two parties had agreed on August 11 to a wage increase of 7.3 percent, plus an additional individual merit increase of 0.3 percent for this year.

“Numsa would also qualify for a full-time shop steward, provided there was a reduction of part-time shop stewards. Also, they had agreed Columbus would not pursue criminal prosecutions of the 149 Numsa members on charges of trespassing, but would comply with whatever requirements stipulated by the state.

Niuli, however, accused Columbus management of “playing double standards” by pursuing an internal disciplinary action on the 17 suspended workers, and for threatening to dismiss other Numsa members for embarking on the strike.

“Those are union-bashing strategies by the company intent on demonising the union on the latest of late yesterday, Solly Raaphisa, the Mpumalanga regional chairman for Numsa, who is also a shop steward at Columbus, said. The union had decided to challenge the suspension internally.

“Six shop stewards are among those suspended and workers are frustrated by not having a representation,” he said.
Lock-out 'may lead to violence'

Johannesburg: Telkom's plan to lock out more than 16,000 Communication Workers' Union (CWU) members on Wednesday could lead to violence, the union has warned.

The union is to begin a four-day mass protest tomorrow.

Telkom told the union on Friday that it would use the lock-out option to stop workers from demonstrating on the premises, embarking on work-to-rule and go-slow and banning overtime.

Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton said yesterday the company had reached this decision reluctantly after realising that the union was interested only in mass protests and not in giving negotiations another chance.

"We cannot allow the union to disrupt our business by demonstrating on the premises," she said. "We will allow workers to protest on the premises tomorrow, but we will lock them out from Wednesday. Workers will be asked if they accept our offer and will be required to sign.

"Those who refuse to sign will be asked to leave the premises. Lock-out, like a strike, is part of the negotiations process to compel the other party to accept the offer. We are within our rights, as unions are with strike action.

"We are aware that the lock-out could lead to violence and we hope the union will discourage its members from intimidating non-strikers."

Singleton expected that disruption of services would be minimal as 16,000 of the 26,000 CWU members would be on strike. "We are confident that non-striking workers will deliver services. We are ready to meet the union at any time."

CWU general secretary Selebogile Kiti said a lock-out would be "intimidation" and could lead to violence.

"The company is refusing to negotiate with the union and is using the lock-out to engage in direct talks with the workers," he said. "We will demonstrate outside the premises with placards and banners highlighting our plight."

- The government and the public sector unions are to resume their wage negotiations in Pretoria today — Own Correspondent
Telkom set to lock out striking staff

TELKOM said yesterday it would lock out striking workers from its premises tomorrow as the strike by members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) enters its fourth week.

Telkom spokeswoman Ms Amanda Singleton said the lockout was a "last resort measure" aimed at compelling strikers to return to work.

"Although Telkom has weathered the disruptions of the last three weeks without any serious impact on customer service or business operations, the CWU clearly has no intention of reaching a realistic settlement on salaries," she said.

"Under these circumstances, we cannot allow the CWU to continue with its disruptive programme of action in the form of demonstrations, work-to-rule and overtime bans."

From yesterday, CWU members were given the option of accepting, in writing, Telkom's final offer or of declining it, being locked out.

The principle of "no work, no pay" would apply to employees who choose to continue with industrial action.

The CWU rejected Telkom's latest offer at a meeting last Thursday.

The company's offer amounts to a 6.5 percent pay rise for support staff, six percent for operational staff, and 5.5 percent for supervisors.

The CWU is demanding increases ranging from seven percent to 10 percent for support, operational and supervisory staff respectively.

Reacting to reports that union leaders had warned a lockout could lead to violence, Singleton said Telkom expected union leaders would "disourage" its members from damaging property or intimidating non-strikers.

Security arrangements had been made to ensure no pickets were held on Telkom premises.

The CWU yesterday called on its members to report for work tomorrow and to stage demonstrations outside Telkom premises if they were turned away.

CWU general secretary Mr Selebopo Kuti denied the union had warned that the lockout could lead to violence.

"We are proud of our history of a union not engaging in violent industrial action, and have no plans to instigate violence because of the lockout," he said.

Kuti sharply criticised Telkom's intention to deploy security staff to enforce the lockout.

"Their Gestapo approach to collective bargaining will solve nothing. They are now focussing on measures that will not promote sound labour relations," he said. - Sapa
Strikers lost Ram in wages

The number of man days lost reached 8.6 million.

Strikers last resort in pay dispute

Telkom plans to use lock-out

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PETER BRADLEY

(Reuters) 14/09/98 (149)
Lockout by Telkom

TELKOM will lock out any of its nearly 60 000 workers who embark on strike action today.

Telkom yesterday threatened its workers with severe disciplinary action if they do not accept — as individuals — pay increases that their unions are rejecting.

Telkom's final wage offer is 6.5% for support staff, 6% for operational staff and 5.5% for supervisors. The Communications Workers' Union (CWU) is demanding increases ranging from 7% to 10%.

Yesterday Telkom sent a memo to all its staff that read in part:

"CWU members will be locked out of work at 7.30 on Wednesday (today). Sign the company's salary offer and you will be allowed to work and get your back pay.

"Refuse to sign — you will be locked out, no work, no pay will apply."

"Acts of intimidation will not be tolerated; those who intimidate others will be disciplined and criminally charged.

"After three weeks of stop-start industrial action and no indication that a wage agreement with the CWU is in sight, Telkom has decided to protect its business interests by commencing with a protected lockout of striking CWU members on Wednesday September 8," said Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton.

"Our intention is to compel our staff — not the CWU — to accept our final offer."

— Staff Writer
Telkom Lockout Puts it at Odds with Union

Staff Meeting

The proposed of the Company that the Company and the Union are the parties to a collective agreement.

We are writing to you to express our concern regarding the proposed lockout notice issued by the Company.

We understand that the lockout is in response to the Union's refusal to enter into negotiations in good faith to resolve the outstanding issues.

We urge both parties to engage in meaningful negotiations to avoid this unnecessary disruption to the working relationship.

We are available to facilitate any discussions that may lead to a resolution.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Lockout campaign ends in violence

We are discreetly informing

[Redacted text]
Barlows workers on strike

Johannesburg — About 200 workers allied to the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) at Barlows Equipment Company in Isando on the East Rand had embarked on a protected strike, the union said yesterday.

This follows a rejection by the company's wage increase offer of 7.5% across the board against the union's demands of 10.5%.

Numsa said the workers were also demanding a 40-hour week and a moratorium on retrenchments.

Dumisa Ntuli, a spokesman for Numsa, said, "Workers are utterly disgruntled that the management of the company has negotiated in bad faith and believes that the current deadlock will result in serious hostilities and plant instability."

But the company said it was taking negotiations with Numsa seriously. It said it had repeatedly called on the union to come back to the negotiation table.

Jackie le Roux, the human resources director at Barlows, said, "We went through mediation but it was not successful."

Le Roux was hopeful that an amicable solution would be found soon.

"We are still having discussions. There could be some movement."

Cosatu committed to strike action

THE Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) has vowed to throw its full weight behind the proposed public service unions strike next month after government reaffirmed that it would not reopen this year's wage negotiations.

The public service and administration department implemented government's final offer of 6.5% yesterday after closing the door on negotiations last month. Cosatu is demanding 7.3%.

Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi said the federation would call a meeting of public service unions to "see how far they are prepared to go."

"We have to see if they have the commitment, we have the commitment," he said.

The 12 public service unions announced on Monday that they would embark on a month-long strike next month which will lead to a "total shutdown of all major government services."

Presidential spokesman Parks Makahalana poured cold water earlier yesterday on Cosatu's hopes to resume wage talks. When he denied that President Thabo Mbeki had reopened the door for further negotiations, Mbeki reportedly told journalists at a diplomatic function on Tuesday that if discussions between government and the unions took place, a solution would be found.

He said Mbeki was speaking "in general terms" when he said wage disputes should be resolved through negotiations. He was referring to current wage negotiations and upcoming wage negotiations in 2000 and 2001.

"Cosatu conveniently misinterpreted the president's statement. The negotiations are closed. It is not something that we can go back to," he said.

Last week asked Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi to clarify what he meant when he refused to resume wage talks in the public service co-ordinating bargaining council.

Vavi said the "clarity" the federation was seeking had come from Mbeki. "We are very satisfied. The president's statement can only be interpreted to say that the parties currently in dispute must negotiate," he said.

He hailed Mbeki's statement as "a very progressive step."

He denied that Cosatu had softened its stance toward government over the wage dispute in an effort to save face and said if Mbeki had had meant to "reopen" the wage negotiations then the federation would have wholeheartedly thrown its weight behind the public service unions.

He believed there was still hope for a settlement in the dispute despite the fact that Mbeki said there was no money to meet the unions' demands. He said the unions had put forward 10 proposals on where extra money could be found.
No-work-no-pay rule to be applied to strike teachers

By Victor Mecoamere
Education Correspondent

THOUSANDS of teachers are facing salary cuts of at least R200 each after the education authorities confirmed yesterday that the no-work-no-pay rule would be implemented from next month.

Gauteng education MEC Ignatius Jacobs' spokesman, Mr Lebela Maloka, said yesterday the cuts would affect teachers who were on strike over salaries on July 23, 29 and 30 and on August 24.

North West education department deputy director-general Dr Amos Karodia and Mpuulangana education department spokesman Mr Peter Mamunza confirmed they would also implement the rule.

"We are definitely going ahead with the implementation of the rule. We are invoking the law. This is also in line with a Council of Education Ministers' decision," Karodia said.

All nine provincial education MECs are in the council, which implies that the rule is due to be applied countrywide.

Gauteng spokesman for the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu) Mr Sipho Mthethwa said indications that thousands of teachers – most of whom earn about R200 a day – were facing salary cuts emerged this week when principals received instructions to collect the names of teachers who went out on strike.

"We believe that this action of collecting names and threatening to dock the pay of teachers who were not at school on those dates is both premature and provocative," Mthethwa said.

"This is because the unions have suspended the strike, negotiations are still in progress, the no-work-no-pay rule is subject to ongoing negotiations, and it is an unfair labour practice," said Mthethwa.

National Professional Teachers Organisation of SA (Naptosa) executive director Mr Henry Hendricks said his organisation had asked the national Department of Education to avoid deductions from the salaries of teachers who were not on strike because this would lead to a legal challenge.

Maloka, Mamunza and Karodia confirmed that principals were currently collecting the names of teachers who were not at work on the four days.

"The current negotiations in progress have nothing to do with the application of the principle of no-work-no-pay. This is a national process and will not only be applied by the Gauteng government," Maloka said.
2m man-days lost to strikes so far this year
Report shows strikes are at highest level in five years

STRIKES for the year to date surged to their highest level since 1994, largely due to disruptions in the public service, a report released yesterday by Andrew Levy & Associates shows.

It estimated 2.5 million man days were lost during the first nine months of the year, compared with 1.85 million for the same period last year.

Wage settlements for the same period averaged 8.2%, while agreements reached at central level and covering 1.6 million workers averaged 7.3% — in line with the average rate of inflation for the year to date.

Jackie Kelly, research consultant for Andrew Levy & Associates, predicted that average settlements for the year would drop to 6%, in line with reduced interest rates and inflation. She estimated that man days lost for the year would be about 3 million, compared with 2.3 million last year.

There have been discrepancies over strike statistics. The labour department has estimated that 3.8 million man days were lost to strikes last year and a study commissioned by the International Labour Organisation estimated a loss of 3 million man days in the same period.

Kelly said the sharp rise in man days lost from June to September this year was the result of strikes in the public service, post and telecommunications, mining and retail. The public service strike accounted for 64.2% of the total number of man days lost.

She said the wage survey revealed that the hard-fought gains achieved by unions over the years no longer appeared to be as easily realised. Economic conditions had made it imperative for employers to tighten their belts, and the approach taken by government in relation to the public service "could serve as a precursor for employers to take a tougher stance" during talks.

The decline in wage gains by unions is reflected in the survey of total employment and earnings released by Statistics SA this week. It found that total gross salaries and wages paid to employees in the second quarter of the year rose by 5.6% on the previous year.
Man day losses up because of strikes

Sowetan Reporter

A SHARP increase in strike activity in the third quarter of this year has pushed the estimated number of man days lost to 2.5 million at the end of September 1999, overtaking last year's overall figure of 2.3 million man days lost, according to a strike report released yesterday.

With the bulk of wage negotiations still not concluded after large-scale strikes in the public sector, post and telecommunications, mining and retail sectors, it is anticipated that the year-end figure will reach almost 3 million man days lost.

The report, compiled by leading industrial relations and labour law consultancy Andrew Levy and Associates, attributed the increases to ongoing and protracted wage disputes in the public sector which culminated in national protest demonstrations and strikes in July and August. This accounted for 64 percent of the total man days lost.

Research consultant Ms Jackie Kelly said wages were the main trigger of the conflict, while strikes over retrenchments accounted for only two percent followed by dismissal and grievance, less than one percent.

Evaluating with any accuracy the actual cost to the economy was impossible, she said, because of the broad variables involved.

"An employer is seldom caught by surprise where procedural strikes are concerned, and invariably some form of stock or inventory adjustment are exercised prior to a procedural strike," she said.

The current recessionary economic cycle had made it imperative for employers to be restrictive on spending and expanding investment. And, coupled with the Government's approach towards the public sector unions, could "serve as a precursor for employers to take a tougher stance during wage negotiations", Kelly said.

"What is clear is that hard fought gains that the unions have achieved over the years do not appear to be as easy to realise in the present day," she said, pointing to centralised bargaining agreements covering approximately 1.6 million workers which had resulted in an average increase of 7.5 percent.
Civil engineering body seeks interdict on strike

With wage talks deadlocked, construction workers put down tools

Siphiwe Xako
and Reneé Gravitzky

THE Building Construction and Allied Workers' Union (Bcawu) claims more than 40 000 civil engineering construction workers embarked on a wage strike yesterday.

Nanous Moloto of Bcawu said workers reported for work as usual and held protest meetings outside construction sites in some areas. Workers went on with the strike despite company notices saying that it was illegal.

A spokesman for the SA Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (Sacce), Henne Botha, said, however, the strike had a minimal effect as it was joined by only 5 200 workers — just 8% of the entire staff.

Botha said Sacce had applied for an interdict against the strike and the Labour Court would hear the matter today. He said management had agreed to intervention by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, set for next Monday.

Bcawu and the Construction and Allied Workers' Union called the strike after wage negotiations deadlocked. The unions are demanding a 9% across-the-board increase while management is offering 7%.

Moloto said management also refused to implement overtime at one-and-a-half times the normal rate as prescribed by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

He said workers would continue with the industrial action until management met their demands. Botha said management was committed to finding a solution to the dispute.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) has threatened to declare a dispute if the Mpumalanga-based Highbird Steel company proceeds with retrenchment of 600 workers this month.

Numsa spokesman Steven Nhlapo said management recently informed the union of its intention to retrench the workers. He said the company also rejected Numsa's suggestion that overtime be banned, as an alternative to retrenchments.

Nhlapo said this would allow more teams to work different shifts.

He said workers and the company's legal teams were handling the matter in a bid to find a solution. He said should no agreement be reached the union would declare a dispute.

The firm has declined to comment.

In another development, the retrenchment of more than 2 800 miners at Placer Dome Western Areas Joint Venture is expected to be completed by next Friday.

Earlier this week, the National Union of Mineworkers attempted for the second time to prevent the retrenchments from going ahead, by applying for a final interdict in the Labour Court.

However, the court ruled that the union was unable to support with evidence its application to prevent the retrenchments from going ahead.

The union's application was thus turned down.

Company spokesman Patrick Evans said the situation on the mine remained calm yesterday.

Forced retrenchment was started last Friday, while the majority of the miners who opted for voluntary retrenchment packages have already left the mine.
Construction bosses lose court appeal

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

AN APPEAL by building and construction industry employers to declare the nationwide strike in the sector "unprotected" was dismissed by the Johannesburg Labour Court yesterday.

The SA Federation for Civil Engineering Contractors (Safecce) applied for an interdict on the basis that the Building Construction and Allied Workers Union (BCAWU) and the Construction and Allied Workers Union (Cawu) had not complied with all legal requirements before going on strike.

Safecce spokesman Mr Henne Botha said the federation felt the unions had not complied with the provisions of the Labour Relations Act.

BCAWU spokesman Mr Narius Moloto said the industry had been brought to a standstill as more workers, including non-union construction clerks and truck and loader drivers, had joined the strike which entered its third day today.

Cawu general-secretary Mr Thabo Morale said both unions had contested the court application since all wage-dispute related issues were known to all parties.

"We believe we have followed all the procedures stipulated in the Labour Relations Act," Morale said, adding that 80 percent of the 60,000 workers in the industry supported the strike.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that a strike by 200 members of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) at Universal Enamel Ware in Rustenburg, North West, has entered its fifth week with no end in sight to the action, the union said yesterday.

Numsa spokesman Mr Dumisa Nolut said workers were demanding R5 an hour minimum for the bottom grade and an increase of 8.75 percent for all other grades. The company was offering seven percent across the board.
Violent attacks will "kill investment" war's besieged dairy giant

Strike hung up threat to SA
Behind the picture postrade facade, a traditional Cape Way of life is fading run

Westcoast Fishing Villages on Rocks

Jacaré
Shut fish
Strikers

NEWS 3
Week-long Strike Fizzles Out

By Nancy diez

The union's call to action failed to sway the workers at the Western Cape and Free State's main metal and engineering plants, as negotiations broke down over weekend.

A 2% pay hike was offered by the management, but the workers rejected it, saying it was not sufficient.

The Western Cape and Free State employers' association said it would continue negotiations with the unions.

In the meantime, the three main unions in the metal and engineering sector, the South African Trades and Labour Union, the National Metal and Engineering Workers' Union, and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, have called for a boycott of Western Cape and Free State products.

The unions say the employers' offer is not enough to compensate for inflation and rising living costs.

The Western Cape and Free State employers' association said it would continue negotiations with the unions.
Export deadlines threatened as 2,000 fishing industry workers strike in pay dispute.
Union calls for boycott in dairy dispute

from page 1

Cosatu said Parmalat had refused to recognise labour legislation pertaining to public holidays refused to recognize Fawu's organizational rights, refused to stop attacks on work places, and viciously attacked workers through unilateral restructurings.

But Parmalat has reported that since the strike by a quarter of South African workforce began seven weeks ago, its non striking workers, replaced workers and property has been the target of wave of violent attacks.

There has not been one single incident of violence during the current strike in which a labour law provision has been transgressed the company said yesterday.

John Lea, the company's human resources executive, said "Fawu had the right to refer such transgressions to the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration and to the Labour Court for intervention which they have not done"

Fawu's claim that its members were being forced to work on public holidays was "partially unfounded" as even the Basic Conditions of Employment Act provides for work on such days: at special remuneration.

"Parmalat has never indicated refusal of such payments, but merely wants a commitment by workers that they will work on public holidays when so requested. After all, the cows do not stop giving milk on public holidays and all factories have limited storage capacity."

"By making allegations such as these Cosatu and Fawu give a clear signal to investors that they are not prepared to address problems within the parameters of the labour legislation they have been part of writing, nor within the economic realities of this country," he said.

Provincial Democratic Party leader Benito Baxter said what the laws of the country, including its labour laws, had to be obeyed. "It is clear that the trade unions have a vital role to play in protecting and nurturing outside investment in South Africa"

Mr Baxter appealed to Fawu to do everything in its power to stop the attacks against Parmalat. "By taking an active stance in favour of a negotiated settlement, Fawu will be serving its constituency in the best possible way,' he said. " Anything less is a cop out, which serves neither the interests of its members nor South Africa."

Cosatu calls for boycott in dairy dispute

WILLIAM WILLIAMS
Star Business

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has called the first product boycott in the Western Cape this decade - accusing one of the world's biggest dairy conglomerates, Parmalat, of deliberately undermining the rights of its South African workers.

But Parmalat denied breaking the law, saying the union could have taken it to court but did not. The province's last major boycott was in the early 1980s.

Now Cosatu and its member union the Food and Allied Workers' Union have urged their members not to buy Parmalat products.

Parmalat invested more than R1 billion in South Africa 10 months ago when it bought out Bonita, Tzwerock and three smaller dairies.

At least half of Parmalat's Fawu members are on strike.

Cosatu yesterday attacked Parmalat for "entering the country's labour market with a view to South African labour legislation and good industrial relations were being ignored, undermined and swept away."

"Cosatu wants to pass a clear message to foreign investors - we welcome direct foreign investment in productive sectors of the economy. What we will not accept is unlawful acts by any investor. Parmalat must respect the laws of this country."
“ Strikes must not close schools”

THE COUNCIL of Education Ministers (CEM) reached several strategic decisions at a meeting in the city yesterday, including a new labour policy for principals.

Education Writer PRISCILLA SINGH reports.

PRINCIPALS and education managers belonging to a trade union will in future have to give the education department at least 48 hours’ notice of intent to embark on strike action.

The CEM decided specifically to conduct a review of labour relations legislation and regulations on the role and responsibility of principals and other education managers during negotiations and industrial action.

At the same time, the CEM acknowledged principals’ rights to participate fully in the collective bargaining process.

During times of strike, some schools have been closed by principals. Principals are the principal’s messenger key to the school and the school must remain open at all times.

“The principal is paid to ensure the smooth functioning of the school, and if he or she wants to go on strike then a minimum of 48 hours must be given to the provincial head of department so that other arrangements can be made to keep the school open,” he said.

Also, during strike action a register must be kept by the school of any violence and intimidation, with names of individuals involved.

“At all times the principal must keep a register of attendance of teachers, from the time they come to school until they leave and this must be available to the governing body and inspectors.”

At the meeting yesterday it was also decided that provinces would adopt the national age admissions policy for public schools, which states that a child entering Grade 1 must be seven in the year of admission.

Asmal tightens strike rules for principals, managers

Linda Ensor

CAPE TOWN — School principals and school managers wishing to participate in strike action would have to give 48 hours’ notice to their heads of departments, Education Minister Kader Asmal announced yesterday.

He said the Labour Relations Act would be reviewed with a view to possibly creating a discrete sector for principals and education managers who would be subject to different rules.

Trade unions representing teachers said they were not consulted about the new policy. The SA Democratic Teachers Union said it would regard the strikes as covering all its members until persuaded otherwise.

Asmal stressed that the new rules would not impinge on the right of principals to job action, nor to go on strike, but would ensure that they observe professional obligations to keep schools running smoothly at all times.

During strikes a register would have to be kept of non-delivery of education, incidents of violence and the number of students attending school.

Guidelines would also be drawn up by the department for pupil discipline. This alternative to corporal punishment could include community service, detention school work or special projects.

Asmal also announced that the Council of Education Ministers had decided at their meeting yesterday to introduce an outcomes-based education programme in grades three and seven next year. A religious policy would also be introduced to schools in January.
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Courts in crisis as orderlies stop work

The Wynberg Magistrate's Court was in crisis early today after orderlies refused to escort prisoners from the cells into the courtrooms for their appearances.

A spokesman for the court confirmed that the orderlies, who are police staff members, had taken strike action and that courts were not sitting.

She said that the orderlies had indicated that they wanted to work in pairs in the courtrooms, to have "better cover" if prisoners tried to escape.

The orderlies have also reportedly been threatened by gangsters, who attend court cases in support of their members who are on trial.

At mid-morning the orderlies were meeting the chief magistrate in an attempt to resolve the issue.

A further meeting, one between the Prisons, Police Civil Rights Union, the South African Police Union and senior justice officials, is scheduled to be held later today.

Earlier this year two prisoners awaiting trial disarmed a court orderly sent to fetch them for their court appearances.

They locked him in their cell before escaping.
Courts face disruption by orderlies

Public orderlies are threatening to take matters into their own hands unless their shortage of orderlies at the Wynberg Magistrate's Court is resolved.

Yesterday the court stopped functioning after orderlies launched industrial action in support of their demands refusing to escort prisoners from the cells to the courtrooms.

They say they will continue protests unless they are allowed to work in pairs.

Billy Daniels, provincial organiser of the SA Police Union, said most Wynberg courts had only one orderly on duty at any time. If additional orderlies were not provided soon, they would double up anyway, leaving some courts without orderlies at all.

Members of Sapu and the Police and Prisoner Civil Rights Union met to discuss the issue.

Superintendent Martin Swanepoel, station commander at the Wynberg police station, said he had discussed sympathetically with the court orderlies.

But the problem was widespread at once and had to be dealt with at a provincial or national level.

Numsa issues strike threat at Billiton

(JOHANESBURG - The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) yesterday served notice on Billiton Alcan SA, a mining plant in Richards Bay, about its intention to strike over wages.

Numsa said the company had applied for an interdict in the Durban Labour Court to restrain about 1,000 employees from embarking on the strike.

The deadlock arose out of management's decision to unilaterally change the wage policy in 1999 and offer other workers an increase in 1999.

Numsa said, "The company has changed the wage policy without consult ing with workers. The new workers were given R19 less per annum than the previously employed workers."

The interdict hearing is scheduled for Monday. Alcan management said contingency plans had been put in place "to keep production going."

Supervisor Mark van Rensburg said, "Numsa has filed an application to oppose the interdict because the union believes the refusal of the company to access to the wage demand in these circumstances was unfair."

Numsa is greatly disappointed that the company changed the conditions of employment unilaterally. Even the small steps the union has taken to democratise the company has produced a backlash. "Employers continue to refuse."

Numsa's workers hold the right to dock dignity via collective bargaining, the union said, and Numsa's commitment to fight for full recognition at the plant is "The fundamental role of the company is to be instrumental in developing good relations with the workers. The company cannot disregard its responsibilities to set standards to protect its workers, Numsa said."
The program education of public servants is designed to improve the quality of public service. The education is focused on providing information on how to perform the duties of a public servant. The program is delivered through workshops, seminars, and online courses. The program is mandatory for all public servants and is designed to improve their skills and knowledge. The program also includes a section on ethical behavior and professional conduct. The program is evaluated regularly to ensure its effectiveness.

There is difficulty in determining the number of public servants who took part in protests.

Government policy hits snag

Govt. strike policy hits snag

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End of marathon dairy strike spells relief for hungry kids
Decline in workdays lost in 1999

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

Despite protracted wage disputes in the public sector, 1999 is expected to end with a significant drop in the number of workdays lost because of strikes.

This is according to the labour-market policy research division of the Department of Labour. The number of workdays lost this year could total 2.6 million, this is 1.2 million down on the 1998 figure.

Mr Thomas Mafela of the policy research division said the national protest by public servants had made a substantial contribution to the total number of workdays lost.

Strikes at Telkom and the Post Office and in the construction, mining and transport industries, and in isolated manufacturing industries, also contributed.

A five-month strike by farmworkers in Mpumalanga and a strike at Southern Sun hotels for more than three months, had pushed up workdays lost in the last quarter.

Mafela said although 90 percent of the major disputes were related to wage increases, a significant proportion were associated with retrenchment and dismissals. Some unrest was also sparked off by disputes over downsizing in the manufacturing sector.

He said indications were that wage settlements in most sectors, including transport, manufacturing, wholesale, retail and financial services, rose by 10 percent. This is much higher than last year's average of eight percent.

The research division also established that wage settlements were not attached to higher productivity levels. Gains in productivity appeared not to be an issue.

According to the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (Naledi) high productivity levels experienced this year were linked to massive job losses in most sectors. Naledi director Ravi Naidoo said it seemed that "employees worked themselves out of work" as most firms chose to embark on downsizing programmes though they were not under pressure to do so.

Despite a reported improvement in productivity, retrenchments were much higher this year, corroborating the fact that when productivity rises, workers in many instances lose jobs, Naidoo said.

Mafela disagreed with the Naledi view that increased productivity levels often lead to large-scale retrenchments. He blamed overtime work as being responsible for lay-offs.

Naidoo decried employer non-adherence to the Presidential Job Summit agreement, which sparked off major conflicts.

Unlike 1998, when employer-union relationships were adversarial, he said the prebargaining conferences where information was shared had enhanced emerging relationships.
Industrial strikes cost workers millions of rands

Barry Steenk

Industrial strikes have cost workers R149-million in salaries during the first eight months of this year compared to R48,3-million they lost last year and this could in the long run negatively affect social expenditure, Minister of Labour Membathu Mdlalana disclosed in Parliament this week.

While it was difficult to come up with an assessment of the impact of labour unrest on the economic growth in just two months of this year's available figures, Mdlalana said it was important to note that strikes in general will "deter foreign investors from putting their money in the country."

The labour minister was responding to a question tabled in the National Assembly by Kobus Dowry of the New National Party.

"Each and every industrial action has a cost attached to it," observed Mdlalana to another question, tabled this time by the NP's Dirk Bakker.

"The cost to the economy will be in the form of wages and salaries lost by workers, revenue lost in the form of taxes to the state and production lost to producers as a result of workers downing tools," he said.

"The revenue lost to the state in the form of taxes and production lost during strikes was not available to his department. But his ministry did generate data on total wages lost during industrial action."

This year, 2 131 902 workdays had been lost in strike actions in the public service, posts and telecommunications and mining sector, the minister said.

The public sector strike, involving the South African Democratic Teachers Union, the National Education and Health Workers Union and the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union in July and August, accounted for 64,2% of the workdays lost.

"Within the eight-month period, workers have lost more than R149-million in wages."

"This is really significant as it also reflects lost revenue to the government and this might in the long run affect social expenditure negatively," said Mdlalana.

In 1999, the manufacturing industry incurred the highest cost (R29,9-million) followed by wholesale and retail (R7,4-million), mining and quarrying (R4,8-million), and community, social and personal service (R3,9-million).

Mdlalana said next in line was the agriculture sector (R1,1-million), transport, storage and communication (R800 000), financial services (R600 000); electricity, gas and water supply (R300 000) and construction (R100 000)."
Island strike tour blow

Tour guides, drivers, secretaries and administrators staged a protest last week at the island's harbour.

The strike comes just two days after Robben Island was declared a World Heritage Site.

A meeting with management and the union to discuss salary scales was held today but no agreement had been reached. Further talks are scheduled for this weekend.

It is uncertain when tours to the island will resume.

Museum director André Odendaal said the strike was illegal. Action would be taken if workers did not return to their jobs, he said.

The union refused to comment.

Hundreds of visitors to the Robben Island Museum were left stranded today as ferries were cancelled when most of the island workers went on strike.

The workers, members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union, are accusing management of wage discrepancies as well as corruption within management.

This is the second time the almost 100 island workers have downed tools about salary scales. Last year, tours to the island were also disrupted by strikes.

TAARIQ HAILA
STAFF REPORTER

ARQ 3/12/99