

South Africa

Go-slow at port hits SA car and commodity exports

Workers were suspended for engaging in illegal industrial action is affecting port operations.

Wendell Roelf, Reuters / 11 July 2019 16:29  One comment so far



Transnet suspended a number of employees at its Ngqura Container Terminal for engaging in an illegal industrial action. Picture: Waldo Swiegers, Bloomberg

A go-slow by workers at a major South African port is hitting exports of cars and other commodities, the country's public enterprises minister Pravin Gordhan said on Thursday.

State-owned rail operator Transnet said it had suspended a number of employees at its Ngqura Container Terminal for engaging in what it said was an illegal industrial action.

"We are getting reports of a go-slow at some of our ports which is beginning to (have an) impact on the export of vehicles from South Africa in particular but perhaps other commodities as well," Gordhan, whose portfolio includes Transnet, said.

Carmakers including Ford, BMW and Nissan have invested billions of dollars to upgrade assembly plants and boost exports from Africa's top automotive hub.

The action was also beginning to hit other sectors, with the chief executive of South Africa's Citrus Growers Association Justin Chadwick saying it had cost the industry around R100 million (\$7.2 million) so far.

"If you miss a week's sales you don't get that week back. Then the other thing is the quality of the fruit, its been held back in the port for longer than usual and as a result the quality is impacted when it arrives in the market," he said.

Chadwick adding that around 25% of the country's citrus fruit exports are moved through the port.

Transnet said in a statement that operations at the Durban container port had also been hit by equipment failure and high rates of absenteeism.

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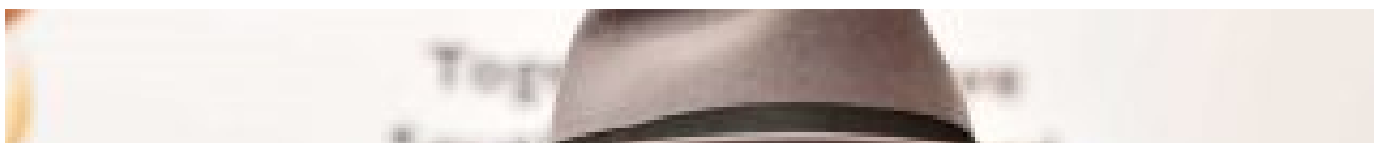


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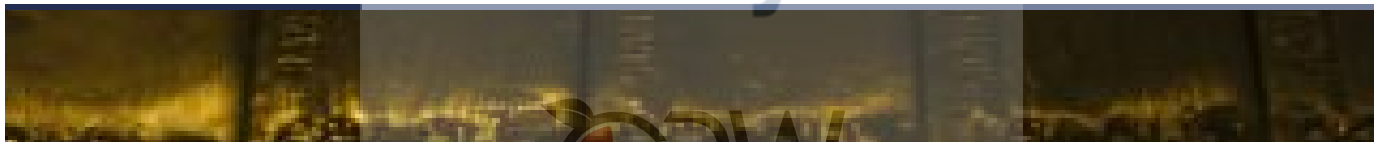


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