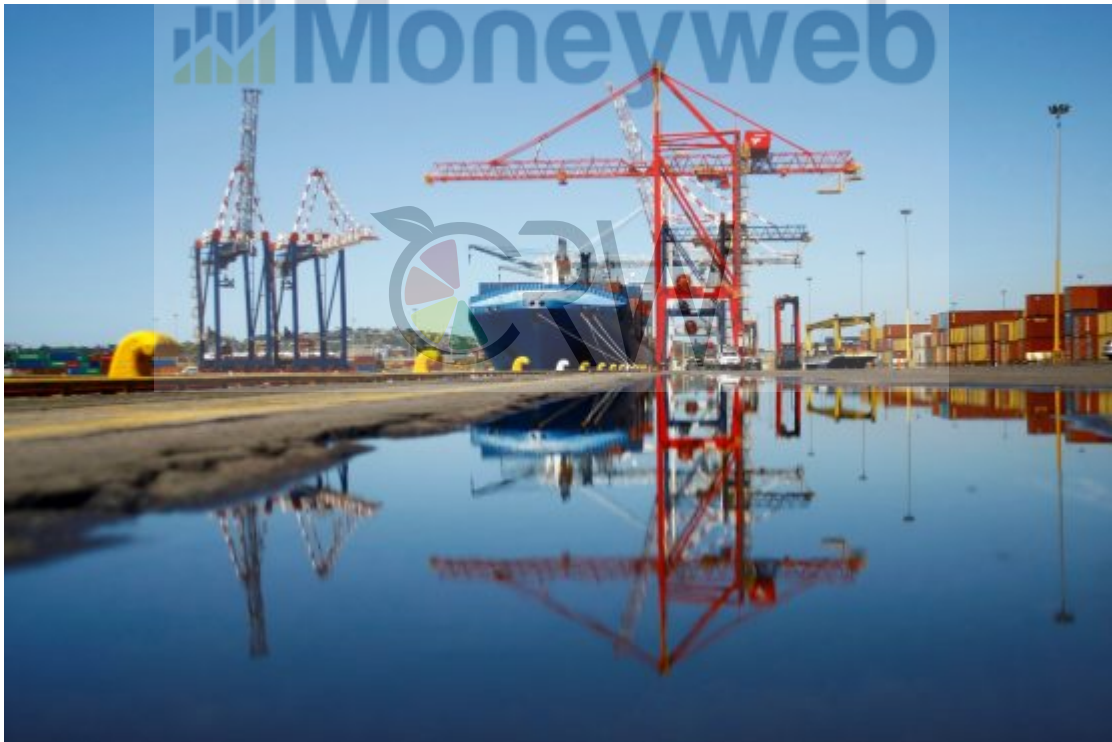


Industry 

Durban making good on promise to get off world's worst port list

A nearly R1bn investment in new cranes was unveiled this week, while container terminal volumes are up 28.8% over the year.

By Terri-Ann Brouwers and Ciaran Ryan · 24 Oct 2025 ⌚ 04:04



Durban Container Terminal 2 at the Port of Durban, the busiest container terminal in the country. Image: Kevin Sutherland/Bloomberg

Durban's container port is making good on its promise to restore some of its lost glory after recently being ranked dead last in the World Bank's 2024 global port rankings.

This week, Transnet unveiled four new Liebherr ship-to-shore cranes, valued at R967 million, to replace older equipment at Durban Container Terminal (DCT) Pier 2. Two of the cranes are

currently undergoing commissioning and are scheduled for operational handover by the end of October 2025. The remaining two are being assembled, with handover expected by the end of November 2025.

Read:

[Durban comes dead last in 2024 World Bank port rankings](#)

[Turnarounds at Eskom and Transnet not yet showing in GDP figures](#)

[Backlash against World Bank's ranking of Durban as the world's worst port](#)

The new cranes will improve operational efficiency and cargo-handling capacity.

In more good news for the port, Transnet announced a 28.8% year-on-year increase in volumes handled by the container port during the recent citrus season.

This follows the March 2025 commissioning of 20 new straddle carriers at DCT Pier 2 and nine rubber-tyred gantries at Pier 1.

Transnet Port Terminals says it is investing R4 billion on equipment across the business during the current financial year.



The promised turnaround at the port was held up by a legal wrangle over who gets to operate and manage it.

Transnet chose as its [preferred bidder](#) Philippines-based International Container Terminal Services Inc (ICTSI), which has undertaken to invest more than R11 billion in refurbishing and upgrading the port as part of a plan to vastly improve efficiency.

The decision was challenged by losing bidder Maersk, which claimed irregularities in the tender process, but the case was thrown out by the Durban High Court earlier this month. One of the reasons for the court decision was the "undue delay" caused by Maersk's court challenge.

Read/listen:

[Maersk challenges Transnet Durban Pier 2 port contract \[Apr 2024\]](#)

[Transnet opens bidding for Durban multi-purpose terminal concession](#)

[Durban port gets container handling boost](#)

[Filipino ports giant ICTSI fights for its Durban port deal \[Dec 2024\]](#)

This now enables ICTSI to assume 49% control over a new entity that will own the port, with Transnet retaining 51%.

ICTSI plans to increase the terminal's annual capacity from two million to 2.8 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units).

Transnet Group CEO Michelle Phillips welcomed the court ruling, saying "it removes a major hurdle to the implementation of the transaction – we can now focus all our energy on executing our plan to modernise and expand DCT Pier 2". The ICTSI contract is for 25 years.

DCT Pier 2 is the largest and busiest container facility in southern Africa, handling approximately 60% of South Africa's container volumes.

The commissioning of the new Liebherr cranes at Pier 2 forms part of a broader plan to revive the port, which has long been a critical bottleneck for economic growth.

Speaking at the launch event on Thursday, Phillips said the new cranes will increase the port's lifting capacity while reducing energy consumption.

This means faster vessel turnaround times and an ability to operate in higher wind conditions.

"Faster processing of cargo at our terminals directly supports South Africa's export-led growth strategy, boosting global trade competitiveness and economic prosperity," she added.

Read: [Maersk fails to halt ICTSI-Transnet Durban Container Terminal deal](#)

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