

BMW, Ford exports affected by motor industry strike

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3 Sep 2013

As industrial action in the vehicle manufacturing sector continues, the latest National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of SA (Naamsa) data shows that BMW and Ford Motor's export operations have been negatively affected by the labour unrest.



The operations at the companies were affected by strikes that preceeded the current industry strike, now in its third week. The full negative effect of this strike would be reflected in this month's domestic sales and, particularly, on industry export numbers, Naamsa said.

The strikes saw vehicle sales drop unexpectedly last month, the first decline since March, and exports also fell. Sales decreased 0.3% from a year earlier to 56,112 vehicles, Naamsa said.

A wage agreement is still eluding the sector, with the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) saying it was still awaiting feedback from employers on its amended wage demands.

The union had presented demands for improvements at the weekend, having not rejected - but not fully accepted either - a 10% multi-year wage deal tabled by employers last week.

Numsa deputy general secretary Karl Cloete said that it would continue a series of protest marches in Pretoria on Tuesday (3 September), and in KwaZulu-Natal on Thursday (5 September).

"Picketing and work stoppages are still planned at Eskom, with the union meeting management this week to discuss picketing rules," Cloete said. Eskom was unable to comment.

Strike action

Numsa has delayed a strike by 72,000 members in the motor retail industry until next Monday (9 September), pending a meeting with employers, the Fuel Retailers Association and Retail Motor Industry Organisation on Tuesday (3 September) and Thursday (5 September), to discuss the workers' demands.

Strikes are continuing in the construction sector, with the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) rejecting a revised wage offer tabled by employer body, the South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors.

The body offered a 10% increase for category 1 to 4 workers, and an 8% increase for workers in other grades.

The NUM demanded a change in minimum salary structures, a 13% wage increase for this year and a 14% increase for next year, and steadfast on this demand.

A strike in the gold sector by 90,000 NUM workers is set to begin on Tuesday evening (3 September). Gold producers continued to maintain they were not planning a pre-emptive lock out of the miners and would await the start of any industrial action according to the gold producers' spokesman Charmane Russell.

The strike at the South African Airways technical division is also unresolved, with a meeting between management and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu), not yielding any results so far according to spokesman Vincent Masoga.

Masonga said Satawu was in the process of consulting its members in other sectors, saying it was possible that the union would issue 48-hour strike notices this week to proclaim the union's solidarity with striking workers in other sectors.

Source: Business Day via I-Net Bridge

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