

PS - Telecommunication - LABOUR

1998

Postal workers to launch protests over privatisation

Star 8/1/96 (268) ~~Star~~

The Posts and Telecommunications Workers Association will march through Johannesburg on Thursday to launch a rolling mass action campaign against the privatisation of state assets

The march will start outside Darragh House in Plein Street at 10am and proceed to the Gauteng provincial legislature offices in Market Street, where a memorandum will be handed to Telkom representatives and Premier Tokyo Sexwale

Union representative Mavi Panyane said the "selfish intention of the Government to privatise state assets will lead to a massive loss of jobs" - Staff Reporter

Union protest begins

MEMBERS of the SA Telecommunications Association began striking yesterday at Telkom's Roseville repair workshop in Pretoria, in protest against unsafe working conditions. The union said continuous demands for the provision of sufficient air cleaning and cooling systems had been ignored.

(268) (15) (15)
REPORTS Business Day Reporters Sapa

50 19/11/96

Govt and labour 'close to agreement'

Renee Grawitzky

(232) (268)

COSATU general secretary Sam Shilowa told about 1 000 protesting Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association members in Durban yesterday that labour and government were "very close" to agreement on the process for restructuring state assets

Sources indicated both parties were carefully reviewing the revised document to ensure that it reflected accurately the demands of both parties. They have agreed to meet again in the last week of this month

Shilowa told Potwa members that negotiations would continue to finalise an agreement, but that mass action and protests against privatisation should nevertheless continue.

Cosatu's KwaZulu-Natal regional secretary Paulos Ngcobo said the end product of restructuring should not be job losses, and if government "has a proposal which will not lead to job losses we will consider it"

Meanwhile, the committee made up of union and management representatives established to oversee the restructuring of Safcol — the state owned forestry company which employs over 5 000 people — met yesterday for the first time

SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) members will embark on a strike from Monday after a conciliation board with the North West Development Corporation failed to settle a dispute on the restructuring of the organisation

BD 19/1/96

Union call to cap managers' pay

(268) (728)
Renee Grawitzky

BD 4/3/96

THE Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association would demand higher increases for the lowest paid workers, and that Telkom and SA Post Office management staff not receive increases higher than those granted to the highest paid workers

Potwa president Lefty Monyokolo, speaking yesterday after the union's national bargaining conference, said the union had uncovered a number of anomalies in both companies regarding the overlapping of salaries, horizontal differentiation in the same grades and the wage gap between the lowest and highest paid workers.

He said the grading systems already in place would have to be reviewed to make them skill- rather than task-related, and that increases should be above the rate of inflation.

Telkom workers in protest action

ABOUT 7 000 telecommunications workers countrywide demonstrated yesterday against Telkom's alleged refusal to recognise the role of trade unions in labour talks, union spokesman Shuayb Patel said in Pretoria

Patel warned that protest actions would continue until the company abandoned plans to side-step union leaders and consult its employees on new service conditions

"The message is only getting through to our members today," Patel said "The protests will spread later today and tomorrow and full-blown action can be expected on Monday if

Sowetan 15/3/96 (152) (268)
Six unions accuse management of trying to intimidate their members

Telkom management doesn't reconsider its position"

Patel said management had yesterday morning indicated a meeting with the unions might be held on Monday

"We will, however, not reconsider our mass action before the issue has been resolved."

Six unions, claiming a joint membership of 81 percent of Telkom employees, accused management of trying to intimidate their members and union leaders

into accepting the company's service conditions They said the new conditions would reduce employees' leave and overtime concessions

In a statement in Pretoria yesterday, Telkom reiterated it had the right to discuss issues concerning service conditions with all its employees

"The unions insist management does not have the right or duty to communicate Telkom's current reality and the challenges employees face." - Sapa

POLITICAL BRIEFS

15% PO pay hike 'modest'

THE projected 15% increase in Post Office salaries was "extremely modest" considering the Public Service Commission had negotiated a 29% increase in salaries, the Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting, Dr Pallo Jordan, said yesterday. *ET 18/3/96*

He also released the Post Office's response to the report of Parliament's Joint Standing Committee which called for a review of its budget. *(268)*

The Post Office confirmed its operating and capital expenditure would increase by 46,03% in the 1996/7 financial year, but said this was mostly due to an increase of 51,74% in operating expenditure to R77,499 million

"Although the increases seem excessive, the department is being confronted with inevitable circumstances beyond its control and it would be irresponsible not to budget for such expenditure"

The wage and salary increase of R4,5m to R18,6m included provision for 14 extra posts after the take-over of functions from the former TBVC states, a 5% salary increase not budgeted for in the previous financial year and R2,48m for anticipated salary increases

Workers' union to challenge Telkom

b1 22/3/96 (268) (23)

Lukanyo Mnyanda

POSTS and Telecommunications Workers Association (Potwa) will challenge Telkom's plan to appoint advisers on restructuring

Potwa claimed this week that the advisers would only rubber-stamp decisions already made

Telkom, which appointed US merchant bank Goldman Sachs to help it find a foreign partner in January, recently advertised for "specialist advisers" to guide its transformation in the months ahead. According to the advertisement the parastatal was looking for local specialists to provide advice in the fields of equity ownership and human resource development to allow for the "economic

empowerment of previously disadvantaged South Africans".

Potwa general secretary Sikhumbuzo Tyibilika said the union had not been consulted on the proposed appointments which it said was aimed at "beefing up" the team set up with Goldman Sachs's appointment

The appointment of the bank sparked a row between Telkom and unions who accused the parastatal of forging ahead with plans without adequately consulting government and labour

"They (Telkom) have not explored all alternatives and they want to use this team to project the view that Telkom needs an equity partner," Tyibilika said

Potwa would appoint its own

team of experts and would challenge Telkom's latest move at next month's National Framework Agreement meeting. Telkom Public Affairs group executive Victor Moche said management had not made any decisions, but was looking for specialists to examine the best ways in which Telkom could transform itself. The broadening of equity ownership was just one of many alternatives being considered by Telkom

Responding to concerns that the planned appointments might not have been approved by government which was supposed to oversee restructuring of state assets, Moche said: "We are only seeking knowledge. We haven't made any decisions."

Postal workers protest over host of demands

Cape Town - Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potwa) members held picket demonstrations in Guguletu, Goodwood and the Cape Town city centre yesterday to protest against alleged unfair practices and apparent racism by Telkom and Post Office management

Potwa Cape Flats branch

secretary Mzi Nomgqokwana, who was at the picket in Guguletu, said workers' demands were for the dismissal of two senior managers - one in the Post Office and the other in Telkom - an end to racism, visible affirmative action, an end to unfair dismissals, and the employment of casual workers as permanent staff

Other demands include the retention of the RDP section of the Post Office as a separate section to focus on postal delivery to informal residential areas such as squatter camps and the reinstatement of a camp allowance Telkom had recently withdrawn. Nomgqokwana said the protests were only the first stage of planned action.

Telkom slated for lack of affirmative action

(268) (268) BD 24/4/96

Renee Grawitzky

TELKOM top management continued to pay lip service to affirmative action while the "old guard" was still empowered and formulated the rules, Telkom's senior manager for affirmative action Nono Mohutsioa-Makhudu said yesterday.

Speaking at a Telecommunications and Broadcasting summit in Johannesburg, she said Telkom was far from achieving its affirmative action objectives, with the majority of blacks still being recruited to lower positions.

Figures for last year showed that 92,7% of management positions were occupied by whites, with the remainder split between blacks, coloureds and Asians.

Mohutsioa-Makhudu dismissed the use of quotas as it increased the risk of "window dressing", while targets ensured that "we have clearly concretised deliverables and action plans with time frames".

She said: "It should be emphasised that what gets measured gets done, and what does not get measured does not get done."

The Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potwa) she

said, had ensured some progress on affirmative action. In support of a call by Potwa president Lefty Monyokolo that Telkom's board should include labour representation, Mohutsioa-Makhudu said having a "sprinkling" of black faces on the board did not necessarily ensure they protected their constituency's interests, as opposed to worrying about their pockets.

Monyokolo warned that the National Framework Agreement on state asset restructuring remained under threat two months after its signing.

He said labour was being prevented from formulating an informed response on necessary changes to the telecommunications industry as companies, including Telkom, had failed to give information to the union.

Monyokolo said the nature of the industry demanded a highly skilled workforce, which necessitated a direct investment in human resources by Telkom. However, an estimated 49% (or 16 497 employees) of the workforce were almost illiterate with an education below standard 6. Most of these workers, who had received on-the-job experience, really needed an integrated education and training programme relevant to the industry.

Pay offer: Six unions to picket Telkom's offices

ARG 2/5/96 (268)

ESTELLE RANDALL

Labour Reporter

HARD on the heels of this week's national strike, six trade unions have now threatened to shut down South Africa's telephone system, run by Telkom, if the company does not improve its wage offer.

Members of the unions, which comprise 83 percent of Telkom's total staff, today embarked on a campaign to picket Telkom's premises throughout the country.

In the Western Cape, Telkom premises in Bellville, Montague Gardens, Vasco, Maitland, the city centre, Wynberg, Claremont and Steenberg were among those targeted.

The unions involved include the Congress of South African Trade

Unions-affiliated Posts and Telecommunications Workers Unions, the all-white Mine Workers Union and the South African Telecommunications Association.

The unions said they were in dispute with Telkom, who wanted to "slash" their conditions of service and had offered a "pathetic" salary increase. Issues at stake were a housing subsidy, overtime rates and the unions' demand for a salary increase of between 12 percent and 13 percent.

The picket demonstrations would be followed by more drastic action depending on the company's response in negotiations, the unions said.

They said an industrial co-ordinating committee had been established, comprising the national leadership from all six unions.

Sit-in demo by postal workers

268
102

ARC 7/5/96

PORT ELIZABETH - A delegation from the Post and Telecommunication Workers' Association has staged a sit-in demonstration at Telkom's regional offices in Port Elizabeth

Telkom's regional communications manager, Gill Burrows, said five Potwa representatives arrived at the office yesterday to demand a meeting with management

The Potwa members wished to discuss "internal matters" relating to the Eastern Cape region

Ms Burrows said the delegation was told it could not be accommodated at short notice and the meeting would have to take place today

"The proposal was rejected by the Potwa members who indicated that they would embark on a sit-in demonstration in the regional general manager's office until the meeting had been granted," she said

The delegation then refused to leave the building - Sapa

F
E
S
T
a
a
r
e
t
t
t
t

Telkom's dispute with six unions

(268)

Sawetan
TELKOM announced yesterday that it had declared a dispute with six unions representing its workers

The company said this had become necessary after a meeting on Monday during which some unions had been unable to review their position on deadlocked issues, while others had reneged on agreements already reached in principle

Telkom said it had been involved in substantive negotiations with the unions since February and had put forward a total package of service conditions and benefits

There was a need to standardise and transform workers' packages to make them more customer-focused and performance-driven, the company said

Among systems needing streamlining was the payroll, which consisted of 28 different service benefit categories and 21 different allowances

Telkom had proposed doing away with 14 of the allowances, as well as automatic notch increases, and with outmoded practices such as allowing workers to go home at 10am on paydays

It said the main areas of disagreement encountered with the unions related to sick pay provisions, the buy-off period for allowances, the buying-off of notch increases, capping of Telkom's home-owners' allowance, and what percentage salary increases to apply

Telkom proposed a conditional offer tabled on May 7 be translated to a

22/5/96
final position

Should this final offer not be accepted, the company would confirm the declaration of a dispute

Meanwhile, the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union announced yesterday that its members would embark on a national strike tomorrow.

CWIU general-secretary Mr Muzi Buthelezi said the strike was in support of the reinstatement of workers dismissed after 46 000 of its members took part in a mass action demonstration on April 16

The action was in support of the establishment of a bargaining council with over-riding powers on sectoral chambers in the whole chemical industry - Sapa

Telkom switchboard operators go on strike

ARG 27/5/96

(268)

ESTELLE RANDALL
Labour Reporter

TELKOM switchboard operators on the international exchange and local directory inquiries stopped work today to stage a placard demonstration outside the company's Bellville offices.

Tia Hugo, Telkom Western Cape communications manager, said about half the staff on the international exchange and 60 percent of those responsible for local inquiries had stopped work over national wage negotiations, which went into dispute on May 20.

Ms Hugo said that the strike did not affect direct-dialled international calls, but international phone inquiries and the booking of international collect calls were delayed.

Local calls to the 1023 directory inquiries number were seriously affected, she said, but added that Telkom was bringing in off-duty operators.

It was also possible to put some of the local telephone directory inquiry load onto one of the other five directory inquiry centres, which were unaffected by industrial action.

These were located in Port Elizabeth, Durban, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria, Ms Hugo said.

Today's strike in Bellville was initiated

by the all-white Mine Workers' Union, one of the unions involved in the wage dispute with Telkom.

But other workers are believed to have joined in sympathy.

Stanford Smith, a spokesman for the newly-formed Communication Workers' Union (CWU), said the CWU was not part of today's action.

But the union was planning a march to Telkom's head office in Cape Town's city centre on Friday, he added.

Further action would be considered after the march, Mr Smith said.

The CWU, with about 10 000 members in the Western Cape, is the product of a merger between the Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association, which was affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the unaffiliated SA Postal and Telecommunications Employees' Association and Postal Employees' Association of SA.

Telkom is in dispute with five trade unions over wages, proposed changes to sick leave provisions, a Telkom proposal to scrap automatic salary rises and company allowances and that a ceiling be placed on allowances for home owners.

Telkom said it wanted to streamline its payroll system and review outdated practices it considered no longer relevant in a competitive, market-driven environment.

BRITS

Strike threat at Telkom

(268)

27/5/96

WORKERS at Telkom's international switchboard in Bellville have threatened to go on strike from 8am this morning over a salary dispute with management

The planned strike would bring to a halt communication between South Africa and other countries.

The switchboard workers are mostly Mine Workers' Union members. A union spokesman said the planned strike was prompted by Telkom's "continued unwillingness to agree to sufficient salary increases" and the possible reduction of benefits.

Telkom spokesmen could not be reached yesterday

Telkom workers set to strike on Friday

Labour Reporter

ARG 29/5/96

(92) (268)

TELKOM is bracing itself for another strike on Friday, the second to hit the company in the Western Cape this week

The new Communication Workers Union (CWU) is planning a march to Telkom's head office in Cape Town's city centre on Friday to protest over wages and working conditions

Telkom is in dispute with five trade unions over wages, proposed changes to sick leave provisions, a proposal that the company buy out salary notch increases and company allowances, and plans for a ceiling on homeowners' allowances

The planned march follows a strike on Monday of switchboard operators on the international exchange and local directory inquiries

That strike, initiated by the all-white Mineworkers' Union (MWU), did not affect directly-dialled international calls, but international phone inquiries and the booking of international collect calls were delayed, and local inquiries were seriously affected

Despite being initiated by the MWU, Monday's strike also drew support from other workers. The strike planned for Friday may do the same. About 81 percent of Telkom employees are unionised and the CWU has the lion's share of about 10 000 members

Tia Hugo, Telkom Western Cape communications manager, said management was making contingency plans although discussions with union leadership had indicated that Friday's strike may not proceed

She said that all dispute resolution mechanisms had not yet been exhausted and the union had been told this

National wage negotiations went into dispute on May 20

Strike delays mail nationwide

(268) Star 1/6/96

Mail delivery would be delayed because of a strike by post office employees yesterday, the Post Office said.

The strike, at the Witspos mail centre in Johannesburg, would affect mail distribution nationally, but arrangements were being made to eliminate the backlog over the weekend.

More than 2 000 Communication Workers' Union members marched to the headquarters of Telkom and the Post Office in Braamfontein yesterday to present a memorandum listing their grievances, including a claim that Telkom was ignoring workers' "legitimate demands for job security", and demanding pay increases of up to 13%.

Union spokesman Sizwe Matshikiza said members marched in seven provinces. In the eighth, North West, members were picketing. No action was taken in KwaZulu Natal - Sapa

Telkom slams strike as unwarranted

(268)

(~~268~~)

Beuletan 3/5/96
By Themba Sepotokele

THE strike action by members of the Communications Workers' Union on Friday was unwarranted because the union had not exhausted procedures contained in the Labour Relations Act, Telkom said at the weekend.

Telkom spokesperson Mrs Ingrid Krige said several attempts by the company to resolve the matter and reach a negotiated settlement were fruitless.

She said the parties had been in dispute since last month because management could not accept the union's response in terms of unprocedural disruptive industrial action.

More than 2 000 members of the Communications Workers' Union downed tools on Friday and marched on Telkom and post offices in Johannesburg and Braamfontein to hand over memorandums.

Strikers claim that Telkom was ignoring workers' demands for job security and a 13 percent increase.

The strike hampered the delivery and distribution of mail in affected provinces such as North West and Gauteng.

The union's regional chairman Mr Oupa Mopalai said they had deadlocked on salary issues and marched on the post office because of racist management.

CWU takes a stand on privatisation

(268) Sowetan 8/9/96 (268)
By Coudjoe Amankwaa

THE Communication Workers Union has lodged its protest against privatisation of state assets in the communications sector

Privatisation would affect entities like Telkom SA, the South African Post Office and the SABC

Union spokesperson Sizwe Matshikiza said the union's anti-privatisation stance "is a position that acknowledges that the bloated top hierarchy must be trimmed down instead of cutting down the workforce on the lower ranks

"Our stance is aimed at job security, job creation and deepening of provision of ser-

vices, especially to disadvantaged communities"

The CWU alternative to privatisation include

- The build, operate and transfer option – external sources manage components of the parastatals which revert to the parastatal after a period

- Joint ventures with external sources to build infrastructure

- Hire-purchase option – parastatals buy necessary technology on hire purchase

Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Minister Mr Jay Naidoo was quoted as saying his goal was the creation of a "strategic equity partnership" between stakeholders

CWU may pull out of talks

Union threat to Telkom restructuring

CT (BR) 23/7/96

By Jabulani Sikhakhane

BUSINESS EDITOR

Johannesburg — The restructuring of Telkom's non-core businesses is under threat because the Communications Workers' Union (CWU) is considering withdrawing from the process to evaluate alternatives.

Any unilateral decision by Telkom would not be binding on the union and could lead to massive labour unrest.

The union, which has a total membership of 40 000 in the telecommunications industry, represents about 40 percent of Telkom's 58 878 employees.

Telkom has identified seven business units as not being core to its operations. The businesses are estimated to be worth several billion rands and have a combined staff of 14 000, or 24 percent of its total workforce.

These non-core operations were to be outsourced by March, but the plan was shelved after opposition from trade unions.

Project teams representing management and labour were established to evaluate alternative restructuring vehicles for the non-core businesses.

"The national congress of the CWU took a decision to withdraw from the project teams if the process unfolded in a way we do not agree with," Seleboho Kiti, the secretary-general of the union, said yesterday. "We are now considering doing so. Telkom management was, and is, still not taking unions seriously."

Telkom defines its core business as operating national and international telecommunications networks and information systems, and providing its customers with

communications solutions

Non-core businesses are construction services such as the installation, repair and maintenance of equipment, Iuvatek (workshops); FastFleet (transport); Genprint (printing services), restaurants; security, and Omaramba, a convention centre and holiday resort near Rustenburg.

These services are estimated to cost Telkom more than R1 billion a year.

Kiti said the management "consults and then takes decisions unilaterally".

"We support the restructuring of non-core business to make them profitable and thus secure jobs. But we are opposed to outsourcing."

"Buyers of these businesses will not guarantee jobs and employee benefits," he said.

"Outsourcing runs counter to the principle of transforming Telkom to reflect South Africa's demographics. The majority of the employees in these non-core businesses are black. Outsourcing will only entrench white domination at Telkom," he said.

Kiti suggested that the non-core businesses should be turned into Telkom subsidiaries. They should render services to parties outside of Telkom to improve profitability.

"Its restaurants, for instance, can serve meals to non-Telkom employees," he said.

Jannie Zaaiman, the Telkom group executive in charge of non-core businesses, said outsourcing was only one of the options the project teams were evaluating. He said other options included management and employee buy-outs; the creation of joint ventures and turning the entities into subsidiaries or partially owned businesses.

THE CAPE

PO Worker alleges intimidation

ANDREW SMITH

Staff Reporter
8/8/96

Normal procedures followed, says spokesman

A POST office worker says a special investigations team intimidated her by threatening criminal action if she did not admit to stealing money. Elize Smerdon, an employee at the Delft Post Office, was told to "pack her bags" and go with the investigating officers to an undisclosed destination where she was grilled over the disappearance of several hundred rands from the post office.

Ms Smerdon said she was forced to sign a declaration of guilt. "The more I said I didn't do it, the more they told me I did. They kept on saying if I didn't admit to stealing, I would go to jail for fraud and theft," she said. "They said I would go to jail if I didn't sign a declaration," she added. "I eventually screamed to them that I did it. I just want-

ed it to be over." She said she was "dumped off" at home, where she fainted. Her mother called The Faith Welfare Organisation for help. Albert Martins of the Faith Welfare Organisation said Ms Smerdon had not been given the option of legal representation at the questioning session. "She did not even know where she was being taken," he said, adding that a charge

of intimidation would be laid against the Post Office. Post Office spokesman Judy Windel said legal representation would only have been provided had Ms Smerdon not admitted guilt and had gone onto the next step of an internal investigation. According to Ms Windel, the investigating team was following procedures "Ms Smerdon was given the option of admitting guilt or staying at

home awaiting an internal disciplinary hearing". Mr Martins said the Faith Welfare Organisation would take action "When the Delft Post Office opens, we will take Ms Smerdon to the post office and put her back in her position," said Mr Martins. He said that if she was not reinstated, his organisation would force the post office to close until the matter was cleared up. Mr Martins said he would have no problem with the police laying a charge against Ms Smerdon.

Telkom to favour blacks

Robyn Chalmers

(268) (96)
TELKOM is seeking to increase black empowerment ventures which can benefit from its contract allocations — a move in line with other public sector initiatives

The parastatal said yesterday the plan would seek to widen participation by such ventures, without waiving requirements

Mike Nkosi, responsible for the formulation and implementation of the policy and its guidelines, said he was studying ways to overcome obstacles for black-owned companies wanting to supply Telkom

"When evaluating future bids of our traditional suppliers, we will be considering issues such as black shareholding and the size of the stakes held by black shareholders," he said "Subcontracting and outsourcing to black-owned companies and professionals, affirmative action and community upliftment plans will also be considered"

BD 14/8/96

Telkom strikers demand implementation of affirmative action

(268) Star 16/8/96

By Goba Mdhlovu

Telkom was hit by three wildcat strikes in central Gauteng yesterday by workers demanding the implementation of affirmative action and an end to racial discrimination.

The strikers threatened more

drastic action next week if Telkom did not take their demands - to be discussed extensively in a meeting with Telkom management today - seriously

"We can no longer stand by and watch blacks with matric being controlled by whites, some with only Standard 7," said Nel-

son Sadike, chief shop steward at Telkom's Boksburg yard, where about 240 workers downed tools

A total of 300 employees at Telkom's Queenspark yard in Braamfontein stopped work at 7am, demanding to know why Chris van Niekerk, who was sacked in May for assaulting

and calling a black colleague a "kaffir", had been reinstated.

At Telkom's Kensington yard about 140 angry workers removed files, books and furniture from the office of Tommy Oosthuizen, who they accused of racial discrimination against union members

Customs says it loses R100m a month in Northern Province

PIETERSBURG — Hundreds of millions of rands were being lost through evasion of taxes and excise duties at border posts in Northern Province due to corruption and maladministration, customs law enforcement task group co-ordinator Daan van der Linde said on Saturday.

The task group, which is investigating malpractice at Beit Bridge border post involving an estimated R100m loss of state revenue each month, believes its own estimate could be way below reality.

Northern Province has eight border posts and Van der Linde said all were used regularly to evade excise duties and taxes.

Corruption and maladministration were the principal causes, he said.

Nine people have already been arrested on more than 520 charges, including tax evasion on a wide variety of imports and exports.

The income lost to the state in these investigations alone amounted to more than R85m, Van der Linde said.

"However, that is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg and it is estimated that income losses in reality amount to

more hundreds of millions of rands in evasions of VAT, import taxes and excise taxes."

Van der Linde said the task group could have uncovered many more incidents and transgressions had it not been for lack of manpower.

SA's economy was threatened by malpractice at border posts as local manufacturers were unable to compete with the prices of goods entering the country illegally.

In addition, it was practically impossible to inspect the thousands of goods containers offloaded at SA's harbours every month.

Goods brought into SA untaxed and illegally included textiles, vehicle tyres, electronic equipment, food, luxury motor cars and even umbrellas, axes and numerous other "seemingly unimportant products for everyday use", Van der Linde said.

He said goods in transit were not taxable, and many agents were claiming goods were in transit and then selling them locally, avoiding taxation. Agents would also claim they were importing second-hand goods when they were bringing in new goods. — Sapa.

Unions split on Telkom strategic equity partner

Reneé Grawitzky

ONE of the two Telkom unions has yet to finalise its position on whether it would agree to the plan by the post and telecommunications ministry to approve a Telkom strategic equity partner in the near future.

In the wake of the telecommunications sector meeting in terms of the national framework agreement on state asset restructuring tomorrow, elements within labour appear divided on whether to agree to such a route.

Labour sources said indications were strong that government, instead of appointing one strategic equity partner, was considering either two or a combination of a US interest (South Western Bell) and two European interests.

Union sources who participated in the overseas visit to assess potential partners indicated that no consideration was given to exploring alternatives to privatisation, as indicated earlier by the Ministry.

The Communication Workers' Union indicated that a labour task team was developing a labour position and was considering all options available. This report was expected to be completed by the end of August. This could delay the process slightly as indications were that the ministry was intent on reporting back to the Cabinet early in September on progress made towards agreeing on a partner.

Labour sources indicated that the leadership of the union were divided on this issue while other unions, including the SA Telkom Association, did not appear to be opposed to a partner.

Unions, including the SA Telkom Association, were concerned that discussions revolved more around the customer than the future of employees.

The Mineworkers' Union which was not party to the national agreement process but had representation within Telkom, indicated that it was not opposed to a partner.

Flood of applications

Ingrid Salgado

THE Central Statistical Service will start recruiting about 80 000 enumerators this week before October's national population count.

There had already been "an unprecedented response" from the public to a radio and print campaign launched last week, census publicity manager Theresa Pretorius said at the weekend. Census regional offices had been swamped with people wishing to assist.

Applications would be accepted from the beginning of this week.

People wishing to apply would require at least a matric qualification, should write legibly, have knowledge of their local community's language, be able to read maps and follow verbal descriptions of locations.

Senior personnel including chief enumerators and controllers should have supervisory experience, valid drivers' licences and transport Controllers should also have tertiary education and training experience.

Unions split on Telkom strategic equity partner

Reneé Grawitzky

(268)

ONE of the two Telkom unions has yet to finalise its position on whether it would agree to the plan by the post and telecommunications ministry to approve a Telkom strategic equity partner in the near future

In the wake of the telecommunications sector meeting in terms of the national framework agreement on state asset restructuring tomorrow, elements within labour appear divided on whether to agree to such a route

BB 19/8/96
Labour sources said indications were strong that government, instead of appointing one strategic equity partner, was considering either two or a combination of a US interest (South Western Bell) and two European interests.

Union sources who participated in the overseas visit to assess potential partners indicated that no consideration was given to exploring alternatives to privatisation, as indicated earlier by the Ministry

The Communication Workers' Union indicated that a labour task team was developing a labour position and was considering all options available. This report was expected to be completed by the end of August. This could delay the process slightly as indications were that the ministry was intent on reporting back to the Cabinet early in September on progress made towards agreeing on a partner.

Labour sources indicated that the leadership of the union were divided on this issue while other unions, including the SA Telkom Association, did not appear to be opposed to a partner

Unions, including the SA Telkom Association, were concerned that discussions revolved more around the customer than the future of employees

The Mineworkers' Union which was not party to the national agreement process but had representation within Telkom, indicated that it was not opposed to a partner

Soweto post offices to reopen after stayaway

By **STUART KELLY**

Ten Soweto post offices will reopen today after a two-day stay-away by about 80 employees who were protesting against the lack of security at work.

Their protest followed the killing of Dobsonville post office's postmaster during a robbery last month. Several other post offices have been robbed since then.

Post Office spokesman Phillip Eksteen said the post offices were closed on Tuesday and yesterday, but workers had agreed to return

(268) Eksteen 29/8/96
to work today after a meeting with management.

"After the shooting last month, the post offices increased the security complement by recruiting outside companies to help. In response to the protest, management has agreed to a task force which will address the issues further," said Eksteen.

The post offices which were closed, effectively leaving Soweto without postal services, were Dobsonville, Dube, KwaXuma, Orlando, Diepkloof, Kliptown, Eldorado Park, Meadowlands, Pinville and Chiawelo.

Telkom, labour continue talks on an equity

Reneé Grawitzky
and Robyn Chalmers

(268)

BD 3/9/96

DISCUSSIONS with labour representatives on Telkom's plans for a strategic equity partner were continuing in the hope that the posts, telecommunications and broadcasting ministry can submit a short list of potential partners to Cabinet within two to four weeks.

Ministry spokesman Connie Molusi said yesterday the short list of partners for Telkom would go to Cabinet before the end of September.

This followed an extensive world tour in July to Europe, Eastern Europe, the US and Latin America to hold discussions with potential partners interested in buying a stake of up to 30% in Telkom.

It is understood that a labour task team — established to develop a labour position on whether to accept a strategic equity partner or consider alternatives — would finalise its report this week ahead of a labour caucus meeting on Thursday.

Last week, all Cosatu affiliates came under fire in a discussion document. The document highlighted the failure of most

unions to participate in sectoral meetings called by Cosatu to develop positions on privatisation. Unions were warned to respond effectively without undue delays.

A union source said it was all very well for union leaders to develop positions on privatisation and equity partners, but such processes depended on the leaders being able to take its members along and that required time.

Telkom chairman Dikgang Mosenke said after the four-eight potential partners had been identified. Of these, a short list of two or three partners or consortiums of

partners would go to Cabinet.

Those understood to be frontrunners include Deutsche Telekom and the US companies Bell Atlantic and Southwestern Bell Corporation, but there were indications that government could favour a consortium of foreign companies.

Others tipped to be in the running included France Telecom and a consortium of European partners called the Unisource Alliance made up of Holland's KNP, Sweden's Telia, Spain's Telefonica and Switzerland's PTT. Italy's Stet, British Telecom and Malaysia Telekom were also being con-

sidered by government.

Meanwhile, discussions were continuing between the transport unions and various government ministries on Transnet privatisation. A union source said discussions currently revolved around Transnet's motivation for a strategic equity partner for the Airports Company.

Both the Transport and General Workers Union and the SA Railway and Harbour Workers Union indicated they had not agreed in principle to an equity partner, but such an acceptance would depend on a number of factors.

Partner

Unions lag as Telkom goes ahead with privatisation

(268) (267) (262)

STATE ASSETS

ST (BT) 15/9/96 BY SVEN LUNSCHÉ

TRADE unions have not yet agreed to the partial privatisation of Telkom, Dikgang Moseneke, the parastatal's chairman, said on Friday.

Posts and Telecommunications Minister Jay Naidoo is expected to announce a shortlist of three to four potential equity partners for Telkom this week after the Cabinet backed his proposals on Wednesday.

Naidoo told parliament last month that an equity partner, holding 30% of Telkom's equity, would be in place by March next year.

In an interview Moseneke said negotiations were continuing with Telkom's unions on the role of a future equity partner and that labour's concerns would be addressed, where possible. "However, our plans as regards the equity partner are firm. We need the technology, management and funding such a partner can provide in order to achieve universal access to telephony."

He said negotiations on the financial details of accommodating an equity partner were continuing. As the sole shareholder, government has to decide whether to sell its stake or enlarge Telkom's capital base.

Telkom has an authorised share capital of 5-billion shares at 100c each, but only 3,9-billion shares have been issued to date. The 25 to 30% stake that is to be sold is expected to be valued at well over R5-billion.

Moseneke also disclosed "a possible public flotation of Telkom in the distant future" as part of a restructuring of its capital base.

The allocation of funds from Telkom's privatisation appears to be a bone of contention between the parastatal and the government. Telkom is keen to have the money allocated to a special fund which will be used to finance its 4-million telephone line expansion programme. Moseneke said this would prevent the money from being absorbed for day-to-day state expenses. Naidoo has indicated that the funds will flow to the central revenue account, administered by the Department of Finance.

The government has been tight-lipped about its favoured equity partner, but Naidoo has indicated it is likely to be a consortium of two to three telecommunications operators. Deutsche Telekom and SBC Communications have been tipped as two of the more likely successful candidates.

Controversy rages over phase two of Lesotho water project

Bonile Ngqiyaza

THE Southern African Rivers Association (Sara) has come out against the proposed Mohale Dam being built on the Singunyane River in Lesotho's Maluti Mountains, suggesting the area be declared a heritage site instead.

The organisation represents the river tourism industry and professional river guides of southern Africa.

It said the project — which forms the second phase of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project — was likely to be detrimental to Lesotho's rural communities.

"The valley of the Singunyane River, lying below the proposed Mohale Dam site, is one of the few pristine sandstone gorges left anywhere in the subcontinent. Build-

ing the dam upstream would destroy this wilderness area forever," Sara executive member Graeme Addison said.

He recommended that the whole project be rethought before further blunders were committed. "There is no good reason why SA's democratic government should carry the responsibility for deals negotiated during the apartheid past."

Recently, Sara said, the World Bank — acting on advice from numerous non-governmental organisations, including the International Rivers Network — warned both SA and Lesotho that they had failed to make good their promises to villagers.

The promises, made before dam building started, included providing alternative livelihoods and compensating the villagers for the loss of their heritage.

The next phase of the project would not go ahead with World Bank funding unless all the promises made to the villagers in the past were met, the organisation said.

The first phase of the project — the building of the Katse Dam — hit the headlines earlier this year when mini earthquakes occurred, causing cracks in the mountains, as the weight of water settled into the valley of the Malibamatso River.

It was reported last week that five project workers were killed and 13 others wounded by police fire more than a week ago while they were on strike.

Sapa reports that more than 1 000 students of the National University of Lesotho toyi-toyed along Maseru's streets yesterday to protest against the killings. A delegation led by student union pres-

ident Pitso Pitso handed a petition to the offices of the prime minister, the speaker of the national assembly and the ministers of home affairs and natural resources.

The petition urged the government to ensure that those responsible for the deaths be brought before the courts. The students also demanded that affected families be adequately compensated.

Meanwhile, Patrick Wadula reports that the project's northern delivery tunnel will be completed this month, three months ahead of schedule.

Tunnel contractors Hochtief, Marti and Concor, acting in a R385m joint venture, said the first stage of pressure tests had been completed and the final stage, the flow test, would be carried out next year once water was available from the dam.

Union to challenge Telkom decision

Reneé Grawitzky

BO 9/10/96 (267) (268)
THE National Union of Metalworkers of SA's (Numsa) national shop steward council resolved at the weekend to challenge Telkom's decision to postpone the delivery of telephones until the finalisation of a strategic equity partner.

Numsa spokesman Elias Monage said yesterday the union would launch a campaign this weekend to focus on the delivery of telephones and to defend the jobs of the union's 20 000 members in the telecommunications supply industry. He said other unions, civics and community organisations would be approached to participate in the campaign to ensure the delivery of telephones to the broader society.

The national shop steward council debated the formulation of a manufac-

turing strategy for Telkom and its suppliers in view of the restructuring of telecommunications. But discussions revolved around the possibility of job losses in the equipment supply industry in the wake of the postponement of the first phase of Vision 2000.

Monage said delays in implementation could result in job losses and the council resolved to meet employers in the equipment supply industry to obtain an undertaking that no one would lose their jobs.

The council resolved to establish a task team to formulate a manufacturing strategy, with a view to finalising a position by end-November so it could negotiate with government.

The union also intended meeting Telkom to discuss its linking telephone delivery with the finalisation of a strategic equity partner.

Star 14/11/96

Post will be delayed after strike

(268)

There will be "some form of delays" in delivery of post to the East Rand, the Far East Rand and as far north as Midrand following an illegal strike in the Germiston mail-sorting hub this week.

SA Post Office public relations officer Flip Eksteen said the hub sorted up to a million items a day.

Work returned to normal yesterday morning following late-night negotiations. But, said Eksteen, "it will take some time to catch up, as workers have to sort today's load of 800 000 items in addition to the backlog".

The strike by 60 members of the Communications Workers' Union started at 8pm on Monday over a dispute about a worker spotted tampering with a magazine. The worker was reported, but authorities could find no evidence to back the suspicions and could take no action, Eksteen said.

Toyi-toying strikers threw potplants, damaged computer printout papers and threw out previously sorted mail.

"We apologise to the public for any inconvenience," Eksteen said -
Staff Reporter

Western Cape postal workers
on strike over unpaid wages

(268)

STAFF REPORTER

About 30 night-shift workers at the Government's Cape Mail Postal Service in Goodwood went on strike last night

Cape Mail Postal Service is "the heart" of the Western Cape service and workers handle local and international mail.

Strikers said they were not paid their weekly wages and alleged they earned less than their white and coloured colleagues. They presented their demands to management last night

Cape Mail media co-ordinator Paul Jafta said management was prepared to discuss the problems through the night.

ARC 23/1/96

LABOUR *Industrial action likely 'if relationship is not repaired'*

Union storms out of Telkom talks

FRANÇOISE BOTHA

Johannesburg — The Communications Workers' Union walked out of wage talks with Telkom on Friday and threatened to strike in a bid to discourage a multibillion-rand investment by a foreign strategic equity partner

Shu'ayb Patel, the deputy president of the union, said on Saturday that the relationship between Telkom and the union was at an all-time low because Telkom had ignored the spirit of the new Labour Relations Act, making a sound relationship between the parties impossible

"If the relationship is not repaired, the union is going to take action. I assume that a strike could very well happen," Patel said

He said the union's proposed action could force a potential strategic equity partner to re-

consider its investment

Bidders shortlisted for the 30 percent stake, to be announced in April, include Southwestern Bell and Telecom Malaysia, which have formed an alliance, Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom

The union walked out of the talks before the company could table its offer. The union said it could not prepare a realistic demand because Telkom had not given it sufficient information. Representatives of the Alliance of Telkom Unions remained in the discussions

In terms of a collective agreement between Telkom and the unions about substantive negotiations, the company has to supply financial information before wage negotiations begin

Patel also claimed that Telkom was unable to provide its budget for the coming year or details of transformation costs

"If they cannot provide a budget and actual costs for transformation the government should be very worried because the company still belongs to the state," he said

The union also stalled talks at the January 22 meeting, declaring a dispute over a procedural issue. The union also demanded hard copies of the company's slide presentation

A Telkom spokesman said the company had provided organised labour with all the information they required

Telkom offered workers a salary increase of 7 percent, flexible working hours, long service awards, housing and transport subsidies

Patel said the offer was unacceptable because the company had reported a 25 percent increase in productivity and a 23 percent increase in operating income over the past year

er (BR) 24/2/97

(268)

Telkom wants union to rejoin the wage talks (268)

THABO LESHILO

CT(BR) 25/2/97

Johannesburg — Telkom is determined to resolve its differences with the Communications Workers' Union (CWU), its main union, and have it rejoin the wage talks it boycotted on Friday, a Telkom spokesman said yesterday.

The union walked out of wage talks, accusing the management of withholding information it deemed pertinent to the discussions in terms of the Labour Relations Act. The protest came before Telkom could table its offer of a 7 percent increase.

The spokesman said though Telkom believed it had made available all relevant information to the bargaining unit, it was

busy compiling the information CWU accused it of withholding.

Shu 'yab Patel, the CWU deputy president, emphatically rejected the company's proposed wage increase yesterday. "We will certainly reject that. There is no way we can accept that offer." The offer was tabled before the Alliance of Telkom Unions.

Patel said his union might consider declaring a dispute or holding demonstrations to force Telkom to provide it with all the information it deemed necessary to enable it to determine a reasonable increase for its members.

The union mainly demands to know the portion of the salaries bill that goes to managers.

CWU threaten to strike over pay

(268) *Sowetan 18/3/97*
By Abdul Milazi

THE Communication Workers Union goes into this year's annual wage negotiations brandishing strike action as a weapon to scare employers at Telkom and Postal Services into acceding to their demands

The CWU is demanding a minimum salary of R2 000 a month and 17, 19 and 21 percent wage increases for supervisors, semi-skilled and skilled workers, respectively

The union is also demanding that

no worker should be retrenched to the current transformation of parastatals

CWU spokesman Shakes Gonyane said workers were also demanding working hours to be reduced from 48 to 40 hours a week as requested by Cosatu at Nedlac

They are also demanding an overtime ban to create jobs for the unemployed, six months paid maternity leave and 10 days paternity leave

Training and development of

workers also constitute core demands

A six percent increase in the budget for training and development for 1997-98 financial year is asked

This is to be increased annually until it reaches 10 percent

"Post Offices workers are demanding a minimum salary of R2 000 a month, a minimum increment of 16 percent for workers in the lower ranks and a minimum of 14 percent for semi-skilled workers," said Gonyane

Skills plan to target women

(268) CT(BE) 27/3/97

MPHO MANTJUI

Johannesburg — Telkom will spend an additional R1,38 billion on skills development and training of the previously disadvantaged, with emphasis on preparing women for managerial positions in line with its new look and development strategy, Jay Naidoo, the telecommunications and broadcasting minister, said this week.

Telkom's human resources development division would engage in intensive skills training to achieve the intended 35 percent black employees at management level by the year 2002. The fund brings the total budget of human resources development to R2,3 billion spanning five years, a 150 percent rise over the present planned expenditure.

The money will come from the estimated R5 billion proceeds of the sale of Telkom's 30 percent equity to a US-Malaysian consortium. More than R4 billion of the proceeds would be allocated to the infrastructure expansion programme. The injection would create about 50 000 jobs in the telecommunications sector.

Naidoo said Telkom hoped to improve its technology to become

independent and to have developed technical standards for the industry in South Africa similar to International Standards Organisation 9000 — the highest quality international standard to date.

Naidoo said programmes to implement that objective had been identified and would be used as an integral part of the larger training programme. He said Telkom had a commitment from stakeholders to intensify the programmes in pioneering

well planned mentoring programme for key executive and middle management positions. It would also upgrade lower-level managers and supervisors and introduce well designed external education programmes.

The executive development training, which familiarises existing and future executives with development programmes such as mentoring, would be a priority on the new system's programme. The consortium would raise funds for the development and

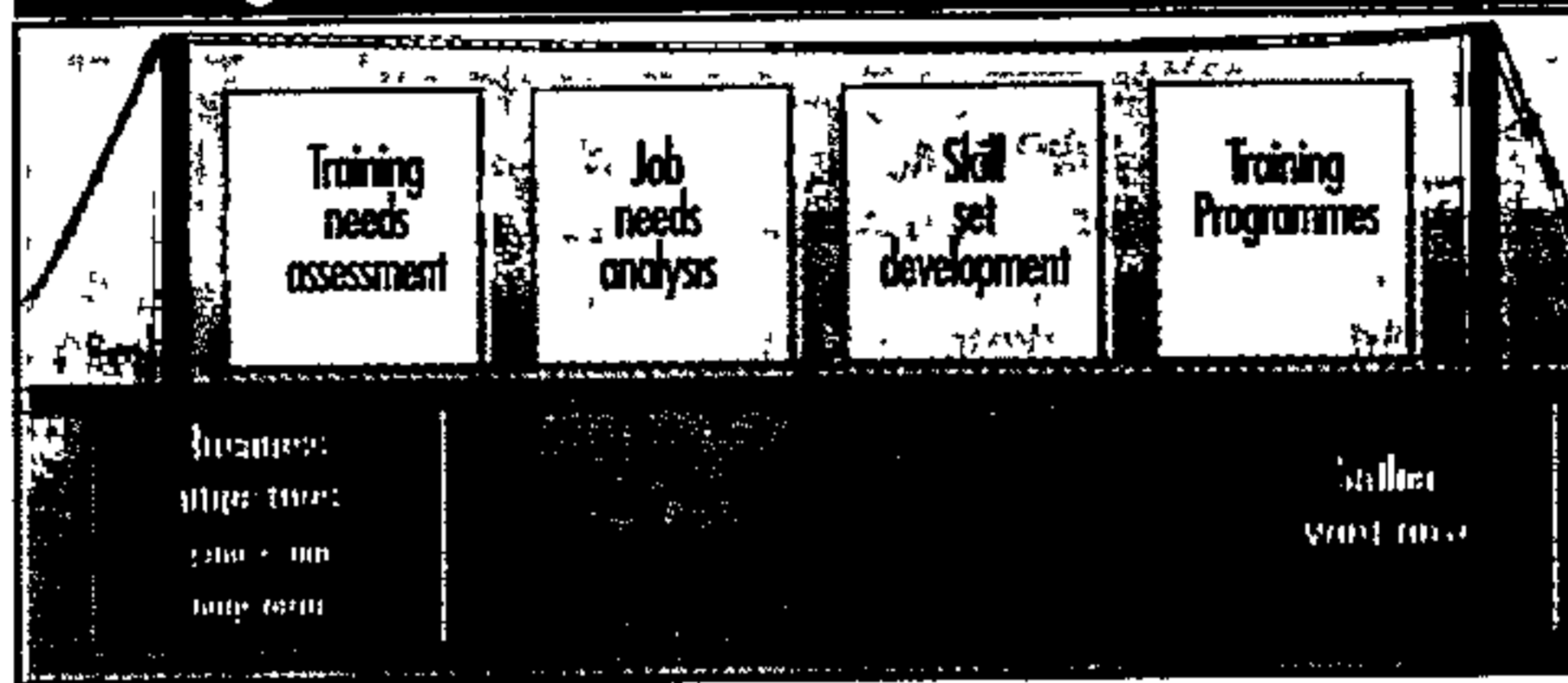
training with emphasis on women through, for instance, the US Trade and Development Agency and the Malaysian government's funding for developing countries.

These changes, how-

ever, left room for the new partner to conduct a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analysis to develop an accurate and realistic assessment of training needs.

The announcement by Tito Mboweni, the labour minister, on the department's green paper on a skills development strategy, came hot on the heels of the announcement of the fund. Naidoo said the country needed such mechanisms for employment and growth.

The bridge to a skilled workforce



transformation in the sector and consequently the rest of the country. "Telkom's objective is to become a world-class player within a short period of time," Naidoo said. He said they would work towards achieving the goal in the context of achieving the national quality framework by creating a multiskilled labour force.

The consortium planned to improve existing programmes to quicken the pace of the transfer of skills and to bring about significant changes by introducing a

Call for explanation rejected

Lukanyo Mnyanda

(268)

bb 5/5/97

THE posts and telecommunications ministry has rejected calls from the Democratic Party (DP) to explain the sudden resignation of Telkom MD and CEO Brian Clark, saying the matter should not be politicised.

Spokesman Connie Molusi said at the weekend that Clark's departure did not involve the

ministry.

This follows calls from DP public enterprises spokesman Kobus Jordaan for Posts and Telecommunications minister Jay Naidoo to publicly explain the reasons for Clark's departure, which he said was "very shocking".

Clark said last week he had decided to leave the parastatal after the successful search of a strategic equity partner.

Telkom unions give nod to board election

(268)
Reneé Grawitzky

BD 13/5/97

LABOUR yesterday welcomed the appointment of Elias Khabisi Mosunkutu, a former president of the Post and Telecommunications Workers' Union and Colin Smith of the Alliance of Telkom Unions to Telkom's reconstituted board of directors.

Telecommunication Workers' Union general secretary Seleboho Kiti said it was important for labour to have board representation as it meant labour would have a person presenting its interests at the highest level. He said he hoped such a representative would go some way to resolving potential conflicts which could arise.

Alliance of Telkom Unions spokesman Colin Smith said the unions welcomed the move, pushed for by labour since the signing of the National Framework Agreement which made provision for labour representation on company boards.

Sapa reports that Telkom chairman Dikgang Moseneke also announced that five representatives from Telkom's foreign equity partners had been appointed to the company's new board. They are: Telekom Malaysia Service Company CEO Nor Hizam Hashim, Telekom Malaysia company secretary Nor Zainal Rahman, SBC president John Atterbury, SBC Communications comptroller Randall Stephenson and SBC International president Russel McRae Geschwind.

Moseneke said the new board members would assume their positions on May 15, immediately after the closure of an equity partnership deal with Thintana, a consortium consisting of SBC Communications of the US and Telekom Malaysia.

Four members of the board were reappointed. Eskom financial manager Fatima Jakoet, Bridging the Gap managing partner Wendy Luhabe, Kagiso Trust executive chairman Eric Molobi and Vodacom executive chairman Alwyn Martin.

A Telkom spokesman emphasised that no executive committee member had been asked to leave and that all had been assured of a future position in the parastatal. However, she could not say what the new structure would look like, other than that some existing executive committee members "could in future report to managers appointed by the strategic-equity partners".

This comes after the resignation of three committee members at the weekend following discussions on their future with Moseneke.

After much delay, the CWU show is back on the road

In June last year, amid considerable fanfare, the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) was launched in Johannesburg. It brought together the major post office and Telkom unions, Potwa and Peasa, and the largely KwaZulu Natal-based Saptea At 47 000-strong it was not one of the larger unions, but it organised in a critical area — information technology.

The coming together of these three unions was also heavy with the symbolism of the new South Africa. Potwa was a largely black union, Peasa organised mainly coloured workers, while Saptea had the image of an Indian organisation. Before the inaugural conference, talks had also been held with the Media Workers' Association of South Africa (Mwasa) and the South African Union of Journalists (SAUJ). The organisation trumpeted the prospect of a union of all workers in the communications field.

The message hit home in a tiny but significant way: several Mwasa members resigned and joined the CWU as

word spread that the two were to merge. No merger took place and the interest the CWU expressed in wider recruitment seemed to evaporate.

"We had talks with the CWU and they sent us their draft constitution for us to comment on," said Motsomi Mokhele, the general secretary of the 3000-strong SAUJ. The SAUJ made their comments and returned the draft "since then we have heard nothing. But we are still open to discussions."

Other industries also heard little or nothing from what had promised to be a major initiative within the labour movement. The reason was kept closely under wraps, but it was simple: the CWU was not registered. The union had ploughed ahead with its amalgamation plans without noticing that a small group of members of the former



TERRY BELL

telecommunications and post office unions in Port Shepstone had registered themselves as the CWU.

This technical problem meant that the CWU did not have the legal rights of unions in the workplace. This could have had major repercussions had it been known. "So we had to take it easy, mark time, while we sorted the matter out," said Mavi Panyani, the national co-ordinator for allied industries.

Talks with the Port Shepstone CWU petered out. "The union there just folded and disappeared," said Panyani. The major CWU was finally registered in March. "Now we have started to do what we originally intended."

This will mean opening talks again with unions like the SAUJ and Mwasa, which has always argued for a single media union. Since last year, the SAUJ has also been committed to either a single union or to closer co-operation with "other, fraternal organisations." The main reservation it had in its submission on the CWU constitution was that it did not allow for organisational

representation of journalists

But the CWU allied industries' net has been cast much wider than the print and television media, where Mwasa and the SAUJ have most of their members. The union has made inroads into the paging, cellular network and data tabling sectors and most of the staff at the crisis-wracked Independent Broadcasting Authority are members.

Allegations of "poaching" from trade unions affiliated to Cosatu are unlikely since most of these sectors have had little or no union organisation. Where there are unions they are either unaffiliated or aligned with the National Council of Trade Unions.

"We hope to continue talks with other unions where they exist," said Panyani. "In the meantime, we are launching a big recruiting drive." However diplomatically this is handled, it is likely to cause some ripples as the CWU targets everyone from television technicians to actors and musicians.

As Panyani said, after a long delay, the CWU show is finally on the road.

Telecoms workers get backdated pay increase

Telecoms workers have secured a pay increase for the first time in three years. The deal, which includes a 3% pay rise, was agreed after a series of negotiations between the union and employers. The new agreement covers all employees and includes a commitment to improve working conditions. The union also secured a commitment to provide training opportunities for its members. The deal is a significant victory for the industry's workforce.

CT(BR) 2/6/97 (268)

Telkom, CWU talks break down

(268) Sowetan 3/6/97

By Coudjoe Amankwaa

TELKOM's offer on wage and service conditions will now be implemented for all employees except members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) who have not yet accepted the offer

Telkom's spokesperson Amanda Singleton said the company has been engaged in discussions with its recognised unions since January 22 1997

Singleton said over the past four months the company had moved substantially on its original offer in order to accommodate certain union demands and reach agreement

On Friday the company reached agreement with the Alliance of Telkom Unions (ATU) which represents the South African Telecommunications Association (SATA), the Mineworkers Union (MWU) and the Postal and Telecommunication Association (PTA)

The agreement includes

- a 9 percent increase, backdated from April 1 1997,
- minimum salary of R1 800,

- Married women will qualify for housing subsidies,

- increase in standby allowance,

- 5 percent of basic salary as an allowance for people acting in vacant positions,

- increase in long service awards

Meanwhile, a discussion was held on Friday with the CWU in an attempt to reach settlement with them on a few outstanding issues

Declare a dispute

The meeting failed to reach settlement on the issue of salary increases and CWU indicated that they will formally declare a dispute with the company this week

"Telkom management is pleased with the responsible manner in which negotiations were conducted thus far

"We believe that the outcome will facilitate the building of strong foundations between management and employees to enable us to meet the challenges of the 21st century," said Eugene Martin, Telkom's Executive Director on labour relations

Union stalls merger of directories

(268)
SHERILEE BRIDGE

Johannesburg — The Communication Workers Union had rejected the Telkom-Maister Directories offer of a 5 percent stake in the month-old merger, delaying the finalisation by a month, the parties revealed yesterday.

The merger of the directory department of Telkom with Maister Directories' operations — creating a new subsidiary in which the telecommunications utility will hold 61 percent — will, for the first time, give organised labour a say in the running of a utility-controlled company.

Phalefung Sekane, the president of the union, said the union had valued the 5 percent offer at R50 million.

However, he refused to divulge the percentage stake it would request at the negotiating table later this month.

The new subsidiary's start of operations has been shifted to October 1 to accommodate further negotiations and the completion of legal formalities.

A further issue hanging over the formation of the merger was the investigation launched by the Competition Board.

Maister Directories, which was formerly privately owned by the Maister family and ITT World Directories, held the exclusive rights to manage the advertising in Telkom's telephone directories until 2000.

The contract, which is believed to be worth R40 million in pre-tax profit a year, was renewed three years ago, reportedly without any public tender.

Wouter Meyer, chief director of the board, said yesterday the board was collecting information about the merger's effect on the market.

If the informal investigation proved the merger could restrict competition, a formal inquiry would be undertaken after submission to Jay Naidoo, the post and telecommunications minister, Meyer said.

Managers declare a dispute with Telkom

BD 10/11/97

(268)

Reneé Grawitzky

TELKOM is being taken to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) by 49 training managers who have opposed the manner in which they have to reapply for positions in the restructured training department

The managers represented by the SA Telecommunications Association (Sata) declared a dispute against Telkom last week after it claimed the company had unilaterally changed their employment conditions

The training division has been restructured and changed into a Centre for Learning in line with the new strategic equity partners' commitment to training and their contribution of R2,3bn for training over the next five years

Telkom spokesman Amanda Singelton said the process of transformation included the redefinition of objectives such as job portfolios and included the centre for learning Restructuring, she said, was happening in other areas of the business. The unions had been consulted throughout the process and

had endorsed the restructuring, she said.

Sata president Colin Smith said that Telkom had been reluctant to initially state how the new structure would be populated, with management being under the impression they would automatically be redeployed in the new structure. Sata said Telkom used the excuse of transformation in the "wrong context when all jobs in the management structures were declared redundant"

The training managers were given the option of applying for positions within the new structure and if they did not get jobs there they were guaranteed jobs in other sections of Telkom with no drop in salary or status, the company said

It is understood some of the senior training managers presumed they would automatically get senior jobs in the new structure, which failed to materialise

Industry sources claimed that one of the underlying causes of the dispute was that the managers were opposing the method of selection where they were required to present a case study

Telkom offers rewards to staff who find disadvantaged boffins

Anxious over its affirmative action recruitment operation

ANDREA WEISS

Telkom is so anxious to appoint affirmative-action computer boffins that it has put a price on their heads.

The national telecommunications company has offered its staff a reward of R6 500 for every computer expert they find who is placed with Telkom. For every white expert Telkom staffers find the reward is R5 000.

The move is aimed at saving Telkom money and offering employees an "opportunity to earn extra cash".

According to Telkom the higher reward will be offered only until Telkom has met its affirmative action targets. After that it will continue to offer rewards for successful referral placements at the rate of R5 000 an appointment.

The system has generated huge interest among staff, with about 600 calls having been received in the past month. To date, about 40 referrals have been received and three of the candidates have been successfully placed. Jobs are advertised in internal vacancy bulletins, with a special note indicating that the positions qualify for referrals.

Telkom's rationale is that because of the scarcity of information technology skills in South Africa, qualified people tend to be expensive to recruit.

Generally, they market themselves through recruitment agencies, which charge recruitment fees of up to 20% of basic annual salary.

"Telkom's information technology group sees the new recruitment referral system as an innovative way to recruit quality candidates and address past skills imbalances while improving the cost-effectiveness of recruitment," they say.

The system applies to all technical and managerial positions in the

group, but excludes administrative, financial, human resources and security positions.

Telkom said that through the referral system it hopes to tap into the extensive "contact networks" of its own employees.

"With a workforce of 57 000 people all over the country it stands to reason that many of our own staff will have attended courses or studied with people in the information technology industry."

"Because Telkom is in the industry, many of our people know the market and know of people with the right skills and experience for a

career in Telkom. And because they work for Telkom, our own staff are well-equipped to market the company and what it has to offer to potential candidates."

Telkom says that the referral system has clear ground rules and is regularly audited to ensure no irregularities take place.

Only referrals from outside Telkom will be considered. Each referral will have to be recorded before interviews are held.

Referrals did not mean automatic appointment and candidates will be screened and interviewed with any other applicants.

Line managers who do the interviewing will not qualify for rewards for vacancies in their sections.

Rewards will be paid only for appointments and in two instalments when the appointee has been with Telkom for six months.

Before the first payment is made, each case is individually audited to ensure that proper procedure has been followed.

Telkom's information technology group believes this is "a unique plan and says it is not aware of any other company in South Africa with a similar system."

(2168)

(2168)

AKG 22/11/97

Post Office moves to stamp out theft

PRETORIA — The SA Post Office had dismissed 222 employees for fraud or theft since April this year, MD Frank Touwen said yesterday.

The post office's anticrime campaign was bearing fruit, he said. "While only a small percentage of employees are guilty of such offences, they will be fired and will not be allowed to tarnish the company's image."

Regarding Christmas mail, Touwen said the post office had maintained a delivery standard of more than 90%

during December. Mail volumes peaked on December 13, although volumes from abroad had not eased yet.

Touwen said key post offices would remain open on the afternoons of December 24, 27 and 31. However, post offices in mining and industrial areas where surrounding businesses were closed would be closed on December 27.

He urged customers who were aware of any illegal practice to call the post office's 24-hour crime-buster hotline on 0800-033554 — Sapa.

(268) (217) BD 23/12/97

sts provoke union action

CP 4/1/98

(218)

Security guards need better protection

THE MOTOR Transport Union has threatened that its members will block roads in main centres if the security companies transporting scores of millions of rands do not improve safety measures to prevent their members being massacred.

This follows a threat by SASBO, the Finance Union, to take industrial action unless the banking industry acts urgently to ensure personnel safety.

The attacks have netted gangsters about R100 million in a year, and have cost the lives of more than a score of security guards.

Despite their recent breakthrough and arrests in the latest of the robberies which resulted in the killing of six security guards and R10 million being stolen, both Director Bushue Engelbrecht and Superintendent Poempie Van Roooyen of SAPS Special Services criticised the methods and vehicles used by the security firms.

But a spokesman for two of the security firms most seriously affected, SBV Security Services and Fidelity Guards, said they were doing everything possible to protect both the lives of the guards and the cash.

"Not so," says the SA representative of a leading British armoured vehicle manufacturer.

He said that both Fidelity Guards and SBV had consulted his company in the UK but that negotiations had broken down.

At least one of the companies had felt that the cost of the overseas vehicles was too much.

"They have taken normal vehicles and partly armoured-plated them. They have several vulnerable sections, for instance the roof and the lights. Also, they are unbalanced and become cumbersome and heavy."

He said Roy McFarland, former CEO of Fidelity Guards, had approached his company a few years ago with a view to buying the British vehicle because he had correctly forecast that there would be sophisticated attacks on Fidelity Guard vehicles in the future.

After McFarland left Fidelity Guards, negotiations broke down. A spokesperson for Fidelity Guards said they had negotiated with a company, Manor Armour in the UK, but denied cost was the reason for the breakdown in negotiations.

He said the problem was the unavailability of spares in South Africa for the British armoured vehicles. He said however that the com-

pany was continually seeking ways to improve their vehicles and the safety of their personnel.

SBV Operations Manager, Gert Prinsloo said criticisms that the company's vehicles were vulnerable were unjustified.

He said that the company continually countered the actions of gangsters but that the gangs were sophisticated and kept seeking new methods to rob the vehicles.

He said that the company had introduced a method to stop spiked chains puncturing the wheels of the armoured vehicles, but that the gangsters had predicted this. When the chains failed to stop the armoured vehicle in the recent Marble Hall robbery they had crashed a 10-ton truck into the vehicle.

"The guards were protected from the bullets but the crash destroyed the vehicles and killed the six guards," he said.

Two more security guards were killed this week in a gunfight with armed robbers who stole R30 000 in a cash-in-transit robbery in Mpumalanga.

The Maths security guards' van

was ambushed by three armed men on the Barberton-Badplaas road last Tuesday.

One guard died at the scene and the second was certified dead on arrival at the Barberton Hospital.

Meanwhile the SAPS National Special Investigation team have kept up round the clock investigations into the heists, including Christmas Day, and arrested two more suspects, Oupa Chupane and Jackson Mkgomele in Hillbrow. They recovered some money from the R10 million Marble Hall heist.

This brings to five the number of suspects arrested for the robbery. They appeared on Friday with the other three, East Rand policeman Sgt Absalon Molefe, Paul Mkwape of Mabopane and Bongani Mobena (23) of Springs. They were charged with the murder of six security guards, and the attempted murder of four others, as well as hi-jacking of vehicles and robbery.

The five arrested were among the 22 publicly identified on December 23 as being able to assist the police with investigations into the Marble Hall robbery.

These arrests bring to 14 the number of suspects arrested last year for security van heists.

An attorney, Jacques Penaar, told the court that one of the 22 being sought was on holiday but that he would turn himself over to the police when he returned the following week.

Telkom enforces affirmative action on suppliers

GRAHAMSTOWN — Rennies

Travel and American Express Travel, which were awarded the contracts to supply Telkom's travel needs, have been told to enter meaningful joint venture partnerships with black businesses if they are to keep the contracts.

In terms of Telkom's procurement procedures, suppliers of goods and services are selected according to strict affirmative action and black empowerment criteria.

Zeona Motshabi, Telkom's senior manager of corporate communications, said there were, however, no suitable major black players in the travel industry and therefore Rennies Travel and American Express Travel were awarded the contracts on condition they entered into meaningful joint venture partnerships with black businesses.

According to industry sources, Telkom spends about R2m a month on travel.

BD 2/4/98

Motshabi said American Express had already entered into a joint venture with Phulana Travel Services.

While the identity of Rennies' proposed partner was still confidential, Rennies CEO Lilian Boyle said her company was "extremely excited about the joint venture".

She said it was unique as it promoted black entrepreneurs from within their ranks and the move would "structurally change the industry" as it would introduce a new player.

Boyle said the move had to be

seen in the context of their black advancement strategy which included "black equity, joint ventures with black entrepreneurs and black advancement within the company".

In terms of Telkom's black economic empowerment programme, potential suppliers were selected after assessing:

- The company's black shareholding;
- The nature and extent of use of black subcontractors or joint ventures;
- Work outsourced to black businesses;

- Community involvement; and
- The company's affirmative action policy.

Telkom supply management executive Bob Schlutow said his company was "transforming its interactions with suppliers over the entire spectrum of the procurement process".

He said that Telkom wanted to "advance the involvement of disadvantaged communities in the economic mainstream" as this would contribute to the establishment and support of a viable base of local suppliers — ECNbusiness.

Numsa threatens to take Ericsson to CCMA

(268) CT(BR) 9/4/98

FRANK NXUMALO

LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg — The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) threatened yesterday to drag Ericsson South Africa to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) for allegedly reneging on a recognition agreement signed last year

A recognition agreement gives a union the right to organise among company employees and access subscription fees

Sipho Sithole, the company human resources director, said Ericsson had not been aware of the existence of the agreement until yesterday and that it had

“serious implications”

Christer Hohenphal, the managing director of Ericsson, said. “Numsa has insufficient representation at Ericsson even after the company granted the union complete access to the workplace in order to increase its membership”

Sithole said Numsa’s demands included a 30 percent wage increase, a 100 percent transport subsidy and a R15 000 home improvement allowance

Elias Monage, the union’s national co-ordinator for the engineering sector, said denying knowledge of the recognition agreement was “a deliberate and concerted attack by the company to erode the gains that the workers have achieved last year”

PO seals anti-theft drive

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

(268)

ARG 9/4/98

Durban - "Open the mail - go to jail" is the hard-hitting message from the Post Office's crimebusters as they set the seal on the joint effort today.

Top officials and Post Office labour unions signed an anti-crime charter at Durban's Durmail Centre

Communications Minister Jay Naidoo, chairman of the Post Office board Max Maisela, PO managing director Frank Touwen and the presidents of four labour unions jointly signed the pact

PO spokesman Jabulani Kubheka said the charter would commit the communications ministry,

the management and labour unions to eradication of all crime and mail violations

He said this was the second campaign of its kind and would reaffirm the Post Office's zero tolerance of mail violation

"Many employees have come to understand the meaning of the slogan 'open the mail - go to jail'," he said "Since April last year more than 330 employees have been dismissed and 62 members of the public arrested in connection with mail violations"

The manager of security and investigation services, Shaun Powell, said a majority of internal cases were related to financial fraud

Dispute over agreement stalls Ericsson SA, union wage talks

Pearl Sebolao

(268)

WAGE negotiations between Ericsson SA and the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) failed to get off the ground yesterday, following the cellular network company's refusal to comply with the terms of a recognition agreement signed with the union last year.

Numsa spokesman Elias Monage said the company initially denied any knowledge of the agreement — which entailed 20 days' paid training, time off for workers attending union meetings and annual wage negotiations — but sent someone over to the union offices to collect a copy of the agreement.

Monage said Ericsson was disrespecting and violating the worker rights entrenched in the recognition agreement.

As a result the union was considering taking the matter to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration "because the agreement is legally binding on all parties", he said.

Ericsson human resources director Sipho Sithole, however, rejected the claims that they had denied knowledge of the agreement.

He said the company was not refusing recognition of Numsa, but wanted to clarify certain issues in the agreement that would guide the way the two parties engaged each other.

These included the rights Numsa sought to exercise, the manner in which it sought to exercise such rights, and the workplace in respect of which the union sought to exercise those rights, Sithole said.

DD 9/4/98

The firm also questioned the representativeness of the union at Ericsson. According to Sithole, Numsa only had 15 signed-up members out of 170 employees directly employed — less than 10% of total staff.

MEDIA SPOT

Strike might harm 'jolly postmen' image

Jacqueline Zaina

POSTMEN who recently started in the post office's public image campaign launch advertisement might well take part in tomorrow's proposed communications workers' strike over wages, possibly undermining the service's effort to create a more likeable public persona.

The scheduled three-day strike, by post office and Telkom workers, is scheduled for three days.

Ironically, the above-the-line advertising campaign, which communicates the post office's willingness to smile at itself, is barely into its second week.

Post office MD Frank Touwen says "The campaign is designed to improve the post office's public image and move away from perceptions of the ailing old post office that never gets anything right."

The television launch commercial, shot in a beautiful rural environment, was created by Ogilvy & Mather RS-TM. It shows thousands of postal workers, most of them real-life employees, looking proudly at the camera. Their attention is broken by a dog running over a hill towards them. Next thing, they are chased out of the frame by hundreds of dogs, one of which marks its ter-

ritory against the only thing remaining—a huge red post box.

"The campaign, which includes television, print and radio advertisements scheduled to appear over the year, is designed to show that although we take our work very seriously, we do not take ourselves too seriously," says Touwen.

Ogilvy & Mather RS-TM creative director Greg Burke says the agency was challenged to change people's attitudes towards the post office.

"The advertisements basically had to be likeable, for people to respond emotionally."

He says this was achieved by giving the post office a level of humanity and an ability to smile at itself that the public probably would not have expected.

Touwen says the campaign, while tackling the commonly held, negative perceptions of the post office, is designed also to communicate the progress that has been made on an operational level.

"The reality is changing, but the country still has to buy into our vision of a new post office. Many people believe we are carrying baggage from the old SA, but the days of the *poskantoor* are long gone," he says. Three 20-second follow-up com-

(268) (268) BD 2/7/98



Postmen on the run in the humorous television campaign

mercials will address perceptions of inherent weaknesses in the post office's services, from slow delivery to lack of security.

Burke says the issues are treated in similar, humorous vein as the launch commercial, but communicate the audited facts on a range of

issues like delivery speed, as measured independently.

Touwen says many of the goals set in terms of the post office's three-year action plan—the time allowed by government for the organisation to be turned around—have been met.

"We have worked very hard to improve our service levels. Mail is now delivered on time and we are rapidly approaching a financial break-even situation.

"We are ready to communicate our successes."

Among these, he says, is the establishment of a security division, the outcome of which has been the dismissal for theft of 400 employees since the beginning of April last year—almost one a day over the period.

Burke says the campaign demonstrates new products and services, and highlights the provision of facilities to people who previously lacked access to postal services.

The next phase of the campaign—a below-the-line initiative based on direct marketing—is intended to position the post office as a reliable, fast and flexible business partner in the context of private sector competition and the alternative of electronic mail.

Communication workers on strike today

Pearl Sebolao

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 Communication 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 60 000 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.

BB 8/7/98 (268) (1/2)

PO strike may stifle deliveries

CT 8/7/98

RHODA DAVIDS

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 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 communication 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.

110 110 110 110 110

Telkom, unions close deal on wage increases

(268) 267 268

Agreement to call off protest action after Post Office workers march.

SAPA AND EDDIE JAVIYA

Telkom last night reached agreement on wage increases with the Alliance of Telkom Unions and the Communication Workers' Union, following a protest march through the streets of Pretoria earlier in the day.

Telkom said employees in the auxiliary levels would receive a salary increase of 11%, while those in the operational and supervisory levels would get 10%. The increases would be effective from April 1.

The minimum wage would be increased from R1 800 per month to R2 150 per month.

Telkom labour relations executive Eugene Martin said Telkom and the unions agreed to implement a performance-related remuneration system from this month.

Yesterday morning, the Post Office announced a last-minute settlement of its salary dispute with three labour unions, while Telkom workers undertook to suspend their strike pending last night's negotiations.

The Post Office said it had improved its initial offer of an average 8% pay rise to an 11% increase for workers at lower levels and 9% for those in

Star 9/7/98
higher ranks. Another 1% raise would be granted in October, while the minimum wage was upped to R2 115 a month. Union leaders confirmed the agreement.

Meanwhile, employees at 10 Iscor plants staged demonstrations yesterday 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 dispute between the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and Iscor, according to Numsa information officer Dumisa Ntuli.

"We are lobbying the Government to intervene in the dispute," said Ntuli. "We believe the Government can persuade the company to reverse its decision. We cannot afford to lose our members. The company has asked for a meeting with the union."

Elsewhere, negotiations were 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 and Numsa both confirmed yesterday that a provisional agreement had been reached.

SAA strike ends, but further labour action could follow

René Grawitzky, Dustin Chick
Pearl Sebolao and

THE week-old strike at SA Airways was finally resolved on Friday when the airline signed a wage agreement with the SA Transport and Allied Workers' Union.

The parties agreed on a 10% split increase, with 5% backdated to June and the remaining 5% increase implemented in December this year. Workers would also get a 13th cheque based on the 10% increase.

At the same time, talks at the Airports Company of SA (Acsa) resume this morning. Union spokesman Evan

Abrahamse said he hoped for a settlement as soon as possible, but the outcome depended on what was agreed to at the bargaining table.

He said unions were demanding a 12% increase to be implemented as from September 1, and were discussing the "possibility" of implementing a two-year wage agreement. Although the union position still remained at 12%, they were looking towards a settlement, Abrahamse said. It is believed that the two parties differ over 1%.

However, SAA could still be faced by a secondary strike action by SA Railways and Harbours Workers' Union members in support of workers at Acsa

Rift between farmers grows

Louise Cook

THE threatening split between the SA Agricultural Union (SAAU) and the Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU) has spilled over into the Northern Province — the TAU's last remaining stronghold.

Farmers there say they are "awaiting the natural death of the TAU" before setting up their own union.

At the TAU's congress last week the union attacked the SAAU for being African National Congress-orientated and selling out the TAU.

Two of the four provinces the TAU represents — North West and Mpumalanga — have set up separate unions in the past three years. A group of Gauteng farmers is due to set up a Gauteng union on Wednesday.

Bertie van Zyl, a former Northern Province TAU member, said TAU support in the province had dwindled considerably. Many former members preferred to farm without any union affiliation. They would join another union if it were free of politics and had a strong provincial focus. The Northern Province's Letaba district said it had disaffiliated from the TAU.

In Gauteng, former TAU regional chairman Alf Becker, who is starting up a new union, said he distanced himself "on behalf of a string of farmers in the region" from statements at the congress. TAU president Gert Ehlers dismissed his claims, saying the union retained majority support in Gauteng.

The SAAU has refused to comment on last week's TAU congress. It is to decide next month on its position on the TAU's decision to break away from the SAAU if it does not change its affiliation to make the TAU the sole affiliated union for its four provinces.

Comment: page 11

if the union fails to settle. Acsa said management and other staff would continue to work in areas operated by striking workers to ensure airports were disrupted as little as possible.

Meanwhile, SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) and Federated Retail and Allied Workers members disrupted operations at a number of Edgars stores on Friday. Pickets were held at a number of stores with claims that workers defied a Labour Court interdict by preventing customers' access to the premises.

In addition, there were sporadic reports of assaults on customers.

This action is in line with a decision taken by the unions at the end of July to embark on sporadic action against the company. Such action began in early August and has caused disruption and financial losses which could further exacerbate the company's already tenuous financial position.

The two-week old strike by Saccawu members at Stuttafords continues with attempts by the union to get the company back to the bargaining table.

The company instituted a lockout after negotiations deadlocked with the union demanding R200 across the board. Stuttafords' final offer was R140, plus extended working hours.

Union tunes in to change

Robyn Chalmers

THE Pan-African Telecommunications Union (Patu) will be restructured and a new union established by the end of next year to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing telecoms sector in Africa, it was decided at the recent conference in Lusaka. Patu has 44 members on the continent.

A document was drawn up indicating that the restructuring was driven by developments, including globalisation, privatisation and regulation trends and the convergence of the telecommunications, broadcasting and the information sectors.

A number of African countries have gone the privatisation route. Guinea led the way with the sale of 60% of its

telecoms utility in 1996 to Telekom Malaysia for \$45m. Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, SA and Senegal have also partially privatised their utilities.

The document said there was a need to increase the number of telephones in Africa and to facilitate access to telecommunications services.

Conditions had to be created that would attract investment for the development of infrastructure and for Africa to adapt to the rapid technological changes under way.

The conference approved a restructuring implementation team for the new Patu.

Income generating activities approved included exhibitions, symposiums, on-line services via a dedicated website and publications.

12/2/98 5p 18

PS- TELECOMMUNICATIONS - LABOUR
1999

Post office fires 240

'mis-sorts'
(268) CP 3/11/99

SINCE April this year the post office has dismissed more than 240 employees found guilty of mail theft and fraud.

More than 90 members of the public have been arrested for similar crimes

Post office senior general manager for human resources, Rev Vukile Mehana, says the post office's anti-crime campaign was bearing fruit

He said at the public sector anti-corruption conference that the post office would apply zero tolerance for postal corruption and crime

The Post Office had adopted the apt slogan "Open the mail, go to jail"

Furthermore, the 24-hour tollfree Crimebuster Hotline was a channel well frequented by the public and post office employees to assist in the war against criminals

At present 457 cases are being investigated based on information received on the hotline. Callers may remain anonymous and all information was followed up

In cases where information leads to an arrest and conviction, financial rewards are given

With 30 000 employees distributing over eight million mail items every day through more than 2 000 outlets and 5 500 service points, the post office is hard hit by lawlessness

Mehana says "drastic action has to be taken"

Telkom offers early retirements

(268) Sowetan 8/3/99

By Dan Fuphe

TELKOM chief executive officer Mr Sizwe Nxasana announced at the weekend that the parastatal was in the process of offering voluntary retirement packages to all its employees who have reached the age of 50

Nxasana said the company was offering early retirement packages to those of its employees who were close to retirement age, while starting a consultative process on the possible outsourcing of certain non-core functions

Negative growth

"Telkom, like everyone else in the country, has been affected by the general economic downturn. The South African economy has shown negative

growth for the past two quarters

"This makes it a real challenge for us to meet our licence commitments – which were made when the economy was much healthier – while staying within our budget

"We remain, however, committed to meeting the challenge," Nxasana said

He added that Telkom needed to achieve more with less over the same period

Drive to contain costs

Nxasana said as part of the company's continuous drive to find more and better ways to contain costs and improve efficiency and productivity, it has embarked on a whole range of activities

These included more focused and accelerated training for its workforce

as well as the modernisation of its network and business process to improve efficiency

In terms of cost containment, Telkom has already implemented measures to cut down on certain unnecessary expenses

According to Nxasana, these include scaling down on travel and subsistence allowances and more controlled use of company vehicles and other equipment

"Over the next four weeks all employees aged 50 and older will be able to apply for early retirement

"In the interest of retaining skills critical for the continued performance, customer service and efficiency of Telkom, management will have the prerogative to approve or decline applications," said Nxasana

Board orders the post office to overhaul its English-only policy

ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria — The Pan South African Language Board ordered the post office on Friday to amend its English-only language policy for employees

The board said the post office had violated the language rights of its employees and would have to amend its language policy to make it more accommodating of the multilingual objective of the Constitution Act and Pan South African Language Board Act

The decision of the board, following an investigation, was published in the government gazette on Friday

Any such amendment is likely to burden the loss-making parastatal with substantial printing costs, officials said

The post office's English language policy applies to all signage at new or renovated post office buildings, post points, postal agencies and any other physical struc-

tures where signage is required

Ben Rootman, the senior manager of corporate communications at the post office, said many other companies in South Africa had adopted a similar policy, and that English was an international business language

He said the post office had received few complaints from within the company about its language policy

He said the company was still making losses

"You can imagine what the cost will be of printing everything in the 11 official languages," he said

In the year to March 31 last year, the post office lost R271 million, from a R700 million loss in 1997

It is still receiving a subsidy of R450 million, but has to reach breakeven by 2003

Rootman said the post office had 2 400 outlets around the country and could not replace

signage overnight

"Spacewise, where can we accommodate all 11 languages on our buildings?"

He said printing everything in the 11 official languages was also not conducive to good communication

He said the post office would talk to the board to see how it could accommodate the findings and decisions of the investigation in a feasible and cost-effective way

The board said the post office's language policy ignored the constitutional objective to elevate the status and advance the use of official languages, particularly the historically diminished indigenous official languages

It said financial constraints would be taken into account, but they had to be considered within the context of the Constitution's main objectives, one of which was to promote multilingualism

Agency staff's threat to strike over 'fraud'

ET (BR) 6/4/99
NCABA FLOPHE

(268)

Johannesburg — Staff at the Universal Service Agency, the universal access body in the telecommunications industry, have threatened a go-slow strike in protest against alleged acts of corruption by senior officials, Fikile Khumalo, the agency's acting head, said last week.

He said he had received a letter from employees calling for the immediate suspension of two senior officials pending an investigation into the allegations, which include corruption and fraud.

He said he had asked his staff not to withdraw their labour because he was seeking legal advice on the matter. "The documents are presently being assessed by lawyers who will then advise whether or not these allegations are founded," he said.

The agency, like the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (Satra), was set up under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to focus on the roll-out of telecommunications services to under-serviced areas.

Allegations against the two officials include undermining the act by sabotaging delivery and frustrating the deployment of field workers.

The agency embarked on rolling out telecentres throughout the country to boost access to

telecommunications facilities. There are now 17 telecentres in six provinces.

Khumalo said the agency wanted to establish more than 200 telecentres by the end of this year. He said the agency would conclude a long-term plan for telecentres within the next two weeks.

In terms of the act, the agency, in conjunction with Satra, is responsible for the R20 million Universal Service Fund, which will be financed through communications operators' licence fees.

So far, R13 million has been poured into the fund through an advance contribution by Telkom of R10 million and a R3 million appropriation by parliament.

Other licensees have been waiting for Satra to release a formula for the contributions.

Busi Moloele, a Satra spokesman, said Satra had completed the formula and had submitted its recommendation to the communications minister last year.

"These will be published once the state law adviser is satisfied with the contents," she said.

Legal imperfections in the act had forced the agency to consult more with Satra and the government on many issues, Khumalo said.

He said that was compromising the agency's stature as an autonomous body.

Telecommunications growth boosts jobs

By Isaac Moleli

THE remarkable growth of the African communications market over the past few years is a positive indication of the bright future awaiting the industry on this continent, says Roger Nye of Trident Exhibitions, organisers of Cell-expo Africa '99 to take place in Johannesburg on May 6

According to Nye the "talk" industry in South Africa is growing 10 times faster than envisaged and predictions are that by 2001 there will be more than 10 million local subscribers

The industry's stakeholders believe that in the near future the telecommunications industry could overtake the automotive industry as the largest

global employer

Nye says the three-day Cellexpo Africa '99, to take place at the MTN Sundome in Randburg, will be Africa's first mobile voice and data technology show and will boost job creation

Less than six years ago the telecom market was a second cousin to the growing information technology industry but this is changing "Students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds are benefiting from the local telecom growth," says Stuart Melara of the Personnel Concept

Melara specialises in telecom placements and has seen the explosion of job opportunities in the marketplace "Local service providers Vodacom and MTN have been instrumental in cre-

(268) *Saverio Bar* 20/4/99

ating opportunities," he says

Transfer of skills is also a positive rub-off from the industry Melara says a number of local engineers are benefiting from training abroad with international cutting edge technology grants

"Unfortunately, with a market that is growing globally, we also lose a number of engineers to overseas companies but the skills development of South Africa outweighs this loss," Melara says

Research shows that engineering graduates' entry level salaries in telecommunications can be anything between R130 000 to R170 000 a year "The salaries for engineers in this field have increased by about 70 percent in the past 24 months This makes technical

specialists, with an engineering or electronics background, a very marketable commodity"

The job opportunity market goes beyond engineers and technicians to encompass salespeople, installers of car kits and accessory suppliers - giving great opportunity to those with entrepreneurial spirit

"We believe that the cellular communications technology is going to be bigger than the PC industry," Nye says

"That's why Cellexpo Africa '99 is an important event on the African calendar, it will be the ideal forum to make the right connections This platform will provide industry movers and shakers with a unique opportunity to meet and exchange cutting edge infor-

mation and to view the very latest communications products and services technology has to offer"

Cellexpo Africa '99 will be open from 9 30am to 5pm

It will be open to the public on Saturday and Sunday from 9 30 am to 7pm

Entrance is free

For those who are unable to be able to visit the show you can surf the exhibition website for additional information on the industry on www.cell-expo.co.za or call the hotline number on 082-233-6000

Alternatively, for more information about job opportunities within the telecoms industry call the Personnel Concept on (011) 484-3920

Union backs NextCom for cellular network bid

Lesley Stones

THE Communications Workers' Union has confirmed that it is backing the NextCom consortium in its bid for SA's third cellular network licence, rather than rival consortium Khuluma 084 Cellular

Union president Tlhalefang Sekano said yesterday that the union was committed to NextCom

"Khuluma had been talking to us like every other player and at one time we were prepared to join them, but we

feel that with NextCom our chance of winning the licence is greater"

The size of the stake the union will take in NextCom is still being negotiated

The latest bidder to emerge, Khoroni Telecoms, says it is negotiating with three foreign telephone network operators as potential partners

Khoroni is led by SA Communications (Sacom), a black-owned multimedia company, and 21 empowerment organisations

Sacom chairman George Maphwanya said financial backers were in place but he declined to name them

"Money is not a problem," he said

Khoroni will request a licence for GSM 1800 technology and would then cooperate with existing operators MTN and Vodacom to share their base station infrastructure, he said

BD 5/5/99

Post Office to suspend 5 top officials

BD 11/5/99 (268)
'Blatant abuse of perks' and tax avoidance were
among practices uncovered by forensic auditors

Robyn Chalmers

A COUNTRYWIDE Post Office investigation of alleged fraud and corruption by 104 senior employees will lead to the suspension of five senior postal officials by the end of this week, the company says.

It accuses the five senior officials of "blatantly defrauding" the postal service by abusing flexible remuneration packages, including perks such as entertainment, car and other allowances.

The move comes amid sensitive negotiations between government and four international postal consortiums bidding for a strategic management contract to restructure and develop the Post Office.

Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Minister Jay Naidoo said yesterday that external forensic auditors were called in last year after discrepancies were discovered in the flexible remuneration scheme. "This was a delicate issue as a number of the people being investigated are in very key positions."

Action had been taken against alleged offenders in line with a government pledge to act "ruthlessly and decisively against anyone involved in mail violation", he said.

A campaign to combat crime at the Post Office was started last year. Naidoo last week also ordered a national audit by the Post Office of all problem areas, including customer complaints.

Post Office officials declined to name the alleged offenders or give their positions at the company yesterday. In terms of the Post Office's structure, however, senior officials include senior GMs, GMs, senior managers and divisional heads. Seven senior GMs make up the manage-

ment board, which falls under the MD. Post Office chairman Max Maisela is acting MD in the wake of Frank Touwen's departure last year.

Post Office communications GM Sandile Madolo said an internal investigation launched last July into the remuneration packages led to the appointment of forensic auditors Gobodo & Associates in December. The auditing firm found that alleged offenders fell into four categories. Some had complied with the system but had not declared tax on various allocations. The recommendation was that they repaid this tax. Others had found loopholes to defraud the system intentionally, and the Post Office was advised to take internal disciplinary steps.

Officials who had defrauded the system by allocating private purchases to avoid tax, among other things, were viewed more seriously and would be dealt with "appropriately". The final group comprised people responsible for processing fraudulent documentation.

Madolo said the Post Office was determined to bring those involved in postal fraud and corruption to book. A total of 345 postal employees had been dismissed over the past year for fraud, mail theft and pilfering. Some have been prosecuted and more prosecutions are expected.

Post Office media liaison head Brian Dean said the company was also investigating allegations of an embezzlement scheme in the Eastern Cape and alleged misuse of a pension scheme in Gauteng.

The Post Office posted a sharp reduction in its operating loss to R271m for the year to end-March from more than R700m the previous year, due mainly to increased revenue and reduced expenses.

Post Office cracks down on 'criminal activities'

(268) Sowetan 12/5/99

By Ndivhuwo Khangale and Mokgadi Pela

THE looming suspension of five senior Post Office employees will show the organisation's resolve to stamp out crime within its ranks

Post Office media liaison officer head Mr Brian Dean said yesterday "We will stop at nothing to deal ruthlessly with anyone involved in criminal activities within our ranks, be it blue collar or white collar crime"

Dean's comment followed reports that a countrywide investigation of alleged fraud and corruption by 104 senior employees would lead to the suspension of five senior officials this week

They are accused of "blatantly defrauding" the postal service by abusing flexible remuneration packages, including perks such as enter-

tainment, car and other allowances"

He said 345 employees were dismissed last year for crimes ranging from fraud to opening and stealing mail

Dean said a campaign to combat crime started last year

National audit

Last week Post Telecommunications and Broadcasting Minister Mr Jay Naidoo ordered a national audit by the Post Office

Naidoo urged customers with complaints to phone 0800-044-553

Post Office communications general manager Mr Sandile Madolo said an internal investigation into remuneration packages was launched last July by the forensic auditors, Gobodo and Associates

The findings were handed to the company's Security and Investiga-

tion division headed by Mr Reggie Marimuthu.

In February, the auditors found that the offenders fell into four categories

- Those who have blatantly defrauded the system by among other things, allocating private purchases and costs in a manner to avoid taxation were viewed more seriously and would be dealt with appropriately,

- Those who found loopholes to defraud the system intentionally and would be subjected to internal disciplinary steps,

- Those who fully complied with the system but had not declared tax on their various purchases, and

- Persons in various divisions of the Post Office who were responsible for the processing of fraudulent documentation

Probe into Post Office fraud is intensified

(268)
MZILIKAZI WA AFRIKA

ST 23/5/99

FRESH allegations of corruption and fraud in the Post Office are being investigated.

The Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Broadcasting, Jay Naidoo, said the scope of a national probe which has resulted in five senior managers being suspended was being widened.

The probe into the new allegations would be completed in six to eight weeks, he said.

Among the allegations presented to Naidoo are claims by the Communication Workers' Union.

The union's national co-ordinator, Macvicar Dyasopu, said the allegations included claims that:

● Management awarded contracts worth millions of rands to certain companies without tenders;

● A senior manager has an interest in a company which was awarded millions of rands in contracts;

● An official had awarded himself a R75 000 bonus after being with the Post Office for a short while;

● A senior manager has a labour broker company which supplies the Post Office with new labourers; and

● The property division of the Post Office had sold buildings and plots at below market value.

The list of allegations was also sent to Deputy President Thabo Mbeki on Thursday.

The allegations — which could implicate more than 150 officials countrywide — come in the wake of a "salary sacrifice" abuse scandal which rocked the Post Office.

Naidoo said the union had failed to back their allegations with evidence, but the purpose of the audit was to verify and substantiate them. He said he had requested that an independent labour relations consultant be appointed to analyse labour relationships in the Post Office.

Claims of Post Office

corruption

(268) ARG 24/5/99

Johannesburg - The Communication Workers' Union (CWU) has asked Posts and Telecommunications Minister Jay Naidoo to investigate allegations of corruption in the Post Office.

CWU Post Office sector co-ordinator Macvicar Dyasopu said allegations of graft in the Post Office had been sent to Mr Naidoo.

The union alleges that management "awarded multimillion-rand contracts to certain companies without calling for tenders, a senior manager has interests in one of the companies which was awarded the tenders, an official awarded himself a R75 000 bonus after being with the Post Office for a short period, a senior manager had a labour brokerage company which supplied new labourers to the Post Office; and the property division of the Post Office had sold buildings and plots at prices below market value.

Mr Dyasopu denied claims that there was no evidence to back up the allegations, saying the security department of the Post Office was in possession of such evidence.

"Minister Naidoo should launch an investigation based on the allegations, without looking for evidence to back them. We believe that there is corruption in the Post Office, from top to lower management."

CWU, (4) Telkom (11) wage (268) dispute

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

SALARY increments will cost Telkom about R1 billion this year if management accedes to the wage demands by the Communication Workers Union (CWU)

The union is currently demanding wage increases ranging from 12 percent to 16 percent and has declared a dispute which will be referred to the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration

CWU deputy general secretary Mr Mike Seroba said the union declared a dispute after the management refused to budge from their offer of four percent

Telkom chief negotiator Mr Eugene Martin said the union demands were tantamount to R1 billion and that a counter offer of four percent, supplemented by 1,8 percent management performance and 1,1 percent profit gain related increases

Agreement on outsourcing certain services was reached, but was subsequently violated by a person who has since been suspended, he said

The Post Office has raised its final offer to 10,1 percent for the lowest-paid, 8 percent for middle income and 6,5 percent for the highest-paid categories, Seroba said

Post Office communications manager Mr Ben Rootman would not comment yesterday until he had consulted with the negotiations team

14/6/1999

Unions worried over loss of 12 000 jobs

(268)

bauekhan 5/7/99

**By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter**

TRADE unions in the post and telecommunications sector warned at the weekend that more than 12 000 employees were being threatened with retrenchment in Telkom and the post office Workers Communications

Union general secretary general Mr Seleboho Kiti said the post office was ignoring the labour movement's ultimatum for a moratorium on retrenchments, adding that it was rendering 2 000 jobs redundant in the process of identifying the so-called supernumeraries in the postal service

The union also believed that Telkom was in the process of shedding more jobs by offering volun-

tary packages and outsourcing operations

Kiti denounced "unilateral restructuring by employers", saying these exercises brought difficulties instead of benefits for employees

He said the union would fight these retrenchments to the end through its newly adopted "save jobs campaign".

Contracted out

The Mine Workers Union, which represented technicians at Telkom, also claimed that more than 10 000 employees would be retrenched through voluntary and compulsory separation packages, while certain job categories would be contracted out in the process

Telkom chief executive Mr

Sizwe Nxasana had earlier indicated that initiatives to restructure the company for competition would be accelerated and the company had embarked on a widening efficiency and cost containment drives in a bid to clamp down on unnecessary expenses

Nxasana could not, however, be contacted yesterday to confirm the number of employees said to be facing retrenchment

Since April this year Telkom had shed about 2 000 of its 61 000 jobs through early retirement

It reportedly sought to outsource work where possible and exit from non-core business

Kiti charged that large-scale retrenchments were planned by the management under the guise of accelerated restructuring

at
ha
m:
pr



TELKOM (267)

GLOBBERING THE COMPETITION

FM 23/7/99

Telkom is attempting to claw back lost ground from the multibillion rand IT sector by threatening private-sector players with closure.

The telecoms giant has written hard-hitting letters to competitors in the value-added network (VAN) sector. This includes Internet service providers as well as specialist network outsourcing providers such as FirstRand's FirstNet, IBM Global Network (now owned by AT&T), Perseel Networks and the Dimension Data/Nedcor/Old Mutual joint venture, Omnilink.

These companies allow clients to share state-of-the-art network facilities. They offer bandwidth capacity on demand guaranteed service levels and high security — vital for electronic commerce.

These closed networks are used by large companies ranging from MasterCard, First National Bank, Old Mutual, Grincor, Simba, the Automobile Association, Deloitte & Touche and Nedcor.

In what is seen as a concerted attack on the sector, Telkom senior manager for special projects John Joseph has written to Omnilink and FirstNet asking them to con-

firm within two weeks that they are not providing private network services to customers reselling spare capacity, offering switched services, carrying voice for customers, or by-passing Telkom's public switched telecommunications network.

"We know Telkom has been using bully-boy tactics telling our customers that we will be shut down," says FirstNet MD Mike van den Bergh, chairman of the SA VAN Association.

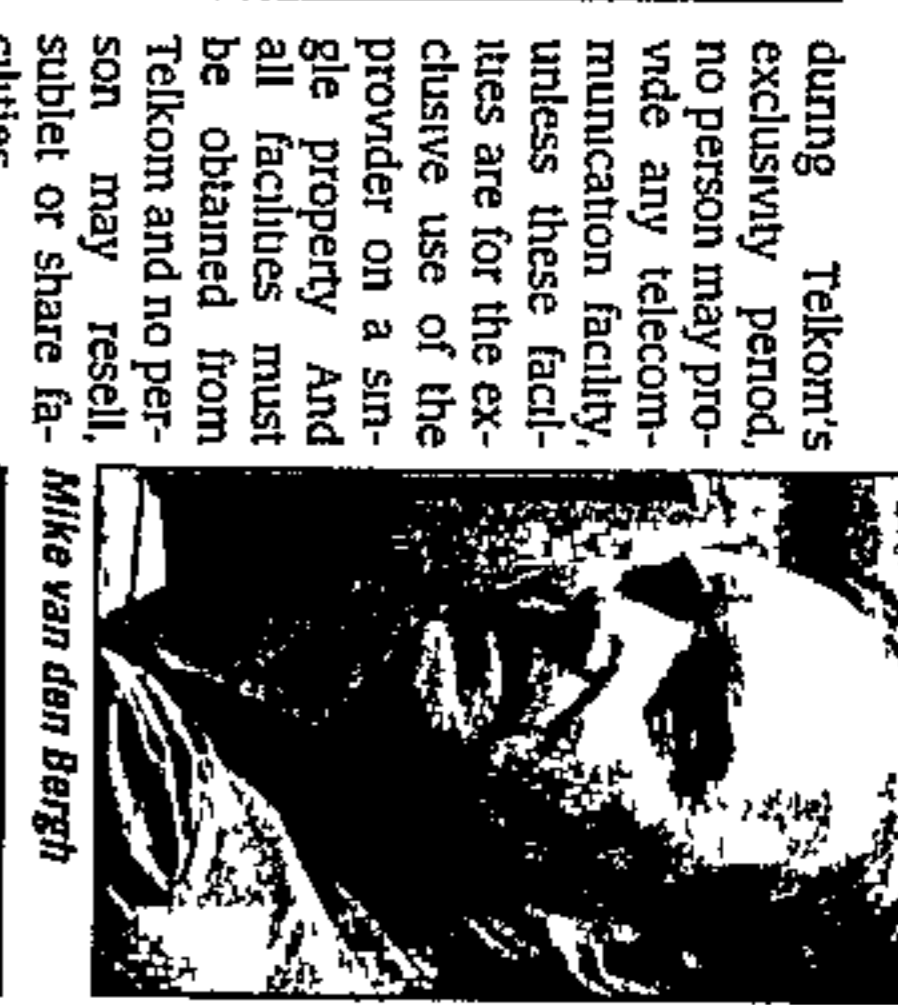
"We have had the same experience," confirms Peter Hurd, MD of Omnilink parent company, Linx.

"The letter is a part of a wider attack on an industry which employs thousands of people and has invested billions in its networks. We are taking legal advice."

Telkom is able to flex its muscles because the VANS sector operates in a policy vacuum. Though Telkom has a government-sanctioned monopoly on core fixed-line voice services until May 2002 (to be extended another year if Telkom meets its obligations), industry regulator Satra has still to come up with regulatory guidelines for VANS. Meanwhile, Satra has issued more than 40 interim VANS licences.

"Telkom is interpreting the already vague Telecommunications Act in its favour," says Van den Bergh.

In his July 15 letter to Van den Bergh, Joseph points out,



Mike van den Bergh

during Telkom's exclusivity period, no person may provide any telecommunications facility, unless these facilities are for the exclusive use of the provider on a single property. And all facilities must be obtained from Telkom and no person may resell, sublet or share facilities.

Yet the Act makes provisions for VANS. "Shared network facilities is the very nature of what VANS do. We carry third party traffic," says Van den Bergh. That Telkom wants a chunk of this business is no surprise.

But its heavy-handed approach to competitors will do little to endear it to corporates. A recent survey by market research firm BML-TechKnowledge shows that corporate customers do not perceive Telkom as a quality provider of value-added services. Telkom scores well below the traditional VAN and Internet providers. Satra councillor Tshudi Mayimle-Hashaise says Satra will issue its response soon.

Martha Bishi

STOCKBROKING

SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE

Executives from Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia (CLSA), a stockbroker specialising in emerging markets, are in SA to set up a southern African operation based in Johannesburg.

CLSA is the latest in a spate of offshore-based brokers to establish a presence in SA. In the past two years, foreign players have poured into SA, among them Merrill Lynch, HSBC and Société Générale.

CLSA is majority owned by French banking group Credit Lyonnais Management and staff also have a stake.

The niche group is in a hurry to start operating in SA. Management is acting fast to get in at the start of what it expects to be a strong commodities run.

Terry Friedrichs, director of institutional sales in emerging Europe, the Middle East and Africa, also says the pessimism about SA's future among local and offshore fund managers is keeping SA prices lower than their fundamentals warrant. As a result, he believes his firm can make money for its clients out of investing in the country.

CSLA's strength has been its ability to exploit a gap in emerging markets, abandoned in large part by the bigger players after the Asian crisis last year.

The group would prefer to buy a small local operation, but will establish a new business if it finds no suitable acquisition. MD Jonathan Compton declines to comment on which are likely contenders to join his group. Local market watchers agree most of the independently owned smaller brokers could be for sale at the right price. The operation will be staffed by a team of six analysts and five sales people, managed initially out of London by Friedrichs.

Michelle Joubert

POST OFFICE

NOT MUCH OF A QUEUE TO STAMP OUT INEFFICIENCY

FM 23/7/99

Many challenges for new strategic management partner

Unbelievable though it seems, there was a time when people trusted the SA Post Office with high-value goods. The Cullinan Diamond, discovered in 1905, was sent to London as a normal postal article.

But in recent years the Post Office has become notorious for dishonest staff and a sporadic delivery record.

While internal restructuring and a crack-down on theft have helped over the past year, the PO's performance is still nowhere near that of leading postal providers.

Years of financial losses and continuing problems with crime and unreliable delivery led to government's decision last year to stop the rot with radical surgery and a transfusion of international skills.

After a year-long search for a management partner, it has announced that a consortium headed by New Zealand Post International and Royal Mail of the UK has been appointed the preferred bidder for the "strategic management partnership".

Other partners in the consortium include British Post Consulting Services, SAM Sisonke Postal Consortium, Deloitte & Touche and Cobodo Corporate Finance.

Government is negotiating the management contract with this consortium. What will happen if it is found to be "unsuitable" is unclear. Government cannot afford to be too picky, there was hardly a flood of interest from bidders. Canada Post made the shortlist, Deutsche Post and France's Le Post fell out in the early stages.

Government is not saying how much it will pay for the management service. "The negotiations are confidential," says Department of Communications postal policy GM Mongqazi Mngqibisa. "We're not selling

any equity in the Post Office."

He says the consortium was chosen for its technical competence and that about 70 experienced overseas managers will be brought in to transfer and upgrade skills. "There will be no layoffs," says Mngqibisa. The contract will be renewed after three years.

This may open up the market further. The Post Office White Paper released last May set the scene for change. This includes reducing the monopoly on letter delivery, introducing an industry regulator (which should happen by September) and private-sector participation in subsidiaries like Post Bank.

At present the Post Office has a monopoly on delivery of letters up to 1 kg. But de facto competition from electronic mail, courier companies and even moonlighting numbus taxis is fierce.

New Zealand Post is undergoing a similar transition, with the deregulation of the postal services under way. Though still government-owned, Royal Mail, on the other hand, wants to become a global distributor. It recently acquired German Parcel, the third-largest private carrier in Germany. The Royal Mail/New Zealand consortium must help establish more retail points and extend postal services to about

4m households, mostly in black townships and rural villages.

"The partnership heralds the beginning of a new era in postal services in SA. An ambitious programme is planned, including the goal of giving every citizen an address," says Communications Minister Ivy Masepe-Casaburi.

Other tasks include the elimination of the postal subsidy of about R500m/year. Ultimately, the plan is to make post offices a one-stop communications shop as customers switch to more convenient Internet communication.

It plans to introduce "hybrid" mail — businesses will provide bulk mailing material on floppy disk or on magnetic tape and later through the Internet. This material will be sent electronically to mailing centres, where it will be printed and mailed through the traditional postal stream.

The Post Office has also begun a pilot rollout of touchscreen "public Internet terminals." Communications director-general Ardie Ngcaba wants these at every post office eventually. Another goal is to break even by 2001. Last year the Post Office reported losses of R270m, an improvement from the R700m loss the previous year. Mostly as a result of higher postal tariffs, turnover increased 25% to R2,450m (Postal tariffs increased by about 40% in 1997, 10% last year and 9% this year). A new revenue source will be the Post Office's stake in lottery bid winner Ultrugo.

The strategic management partners should be able to consolidate recent gains. Corruption is being rooted out. There have also been improvements in service provision. A recent study by Independent Service Quality Measurement finds more than 98% of all mail is delivered on time.

The Post Office has also started looking for a new head. Since former MD Frank Tower's sudden resignation last July, the top position has remained empty. A CE will be appointed in consultation with the new partners, says Mngqibisa. New chairman Max Masepe has also been acting CE.

THE POST OFFICE

Government goals: Seeking a management partner to ensure a rapid roll-out of new post offices and expansion of addresses to 4m households over three years.

The management partner will also assist in repositioning the post office, including working towards the elimination of postal subsidy, the improvement of productivity and the introduction of new technologies even within 3 years.

This new partnership will give the post office access to global alliances, exposure to international best practices and position SA as a regional postal hub.



Martha Bishi

DEREGULATION AND MOBILE COMMUNICATION

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS GOOD FOR THE GANDER (167)

Tanzania has five networks, why are three the limit for SA?

There is rich irony in Vodacom winning the fifth cellular licence in Tanzania in much wealthier SA. It forms part of a cosy duopoly. Yet, government has decided that, at this stage, SA can sustain only one more competitor.

Though it's a late entrant into the east African country, there is no question that Vodacom — half owned by fixed-line monopoly Telkom — expects to make money from its new licence. The Tanzanian government, in turn, expects more competition to result in lower prices, better service and improved tele-density.

Another example of liberalisation is lagging behind less-developed northern countries is that even war-torn Angola has given satellite operator Indium a licence. For reasons that are still unclear SA has not yet done so. Astonishingly, the Department of Communications recently stated that issuing a temporary licence to Indium is not in the public interest.

Yet foreign investors claim to have faith in SA and continue to show keen interest in the third cellular licence, which after two years of studies and talks has still to be issued. The process has been plagued with delays and political infighting. Former Telecoms Minister Jay Naidoo's resigna-

tion — and his replacement by Ivy Matsepe-Casaburn — will not have helped. Less than two months ago, Naidoo said that, barring disaster, the new cellular licence would be issued before the end of August. Don't hold your breath. The process has once again been delayed as a result of two bidding consortia wanting to keep their bids confidential. Regulator Satra says it will make all eight bids (minus confidential financial and business information) available for public scrutiny this week.

Distacom director Bruce Hicks says "it was always apparent that this would be a complicated process if the licence is awarded by December, we could be up and running by April." Hong-Kong-based Distacom has a 40% stake in the NextCom bid. NextCom chairman Sello Matsabu says "Peak funding of this project is R5bn."

Hicks says Satra must ensure that the process remains transparent. Commenting on the possibility of black empowerment group Afrozone merging its bid with that of Scandinavian operators Tella and Telenor (the two groups fell out just prior to the June 14 tender deadline but their bid carry clauses that they are working towards a joint application), he says this is unacceptable. "So far it's been a legitimate

Information Technology

process. If this is tampered with, SA will suffer." His sentiment is echoed by Thozama Botha chairman of rival bidder Khuluma 084. "Anything that changes the composition of the consortiums is unfair. Satra should then offer the same opportunity to all the bidders. This would open the floodgates."

Colin Woodridge, business development director of Netherlands-based MSI Cellular Investments, which owns and operates networks in Africa and the Middle East, adds "it would be a disaster SA would lose credibility among international investors". MSI has a 36% stake in Khuluma African operator Telecel International. Another 15% stake and the remaining 49% is held by a broad grouping of black shareholders. "We've spread the risk. We did not want a repeat of eTV," says Botha, who adds that Khuluma must be a sustainable operation. Khuluma puts its peak funding at US\$500m.

"Our key market is small business and consumers," says Woodridge. He points out that the threat of new competition has already prompted MTN to announce new, cheaper packages.

Meanwhile MTN and Vodacom are frantically boosting their market share and offering new services. The eight bidders (with the exception of Five Mobile Networks) will want a chunk of this high-end market. They have the



Robert Tshabalala

Hicks and Matsabu prices will plummet. advantage of new technologies, offering improved coverage and services like high-speed data. To win, however, they must provide services to the underserved areas. "We are no strangers at breaking

duopolies," says Hicks. A successful third and fourth cellular licence holder, Distacom has broken into the Hong Kong, Japanese, Indian and Madagascan markets with innovative marketing and distribution channels. Hicks expects pricing to drop by 30%-50% in the next year. "We will drive down costs and shake up SA's cosy environment," he says.

A recent Yankee Group study — "Competitive Wireless Pricing Around the World" — shows that, with call charges adjusted for purchasing power parity, SA — together with Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and India — are the most expensive countries. NextCom expects to employ 3,610 people by 2006. This excludes indirect jobs in the software, distribution and support sectors, says Hicks.

With the SA economy shedding tens of thousands of jobs, government could quickly reverse some of these losses by licensing a new cellular operator. In fact, with telecoms a key driver of economies, it should consider opening up the market to more competitors.

Martha Bitch

Action to halt postal services

By Mizwakhé Hlangani
Labour Reporter 11/8/99

TELECOMMUNICATIONS and postal service operations will grind to a halt next Monday when about 27 000 members of the Communication Workers Union take part in a nationwide strike after conciliatory talks deadlocked.

CWU president Mf Mkhle Seroba said yesterday notification of the strike had been served on Telkom and Post Office management after the three parties had failed to reach a compromise under the auspices of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration.

Telkom corporate communications manager Ms Amanda Singleton confirmed the strike.

She said both CWU and Alliance of Telkom Unions had tabled a total of 39 demands and negotiations which started last February were stalled when the unions rejected the company's 6,9 percent final offer.

"It now stands at an effective 8,1 percent in terms of the actual cost to the company. Some of the 3,1 percent of this had already been paid out in the form of 2 percent performance-based increases, with a further 1,1 percent gain-sharing bonuses which amounted to a total of R133,6 million."

The remaining 5 percent constituted a general salary increase that would cost Telkom R220,5 million a year in additional staff costs. Singleton added

CWU demanded 10 percent for auxiliary support staff for operators and 14 percent for minimum wage of R2 600 month which translated to a minimum wage of R2 600 month.

Strike notice served on Telkom, post office

FRANK NYUMALO

Johannesburg - The Communication Workers' Union (CWU) said yesterday it had served a 48-hour notice on Telkom and the post office to embark on a nationwide strike over a wage deadlock and the planned restructurings of more than 11 000 workers.

Telkom confirmed receipt of the notice. "A copy of the CWU's notification has been forwarded to the CCMA (Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration) with a view to reaching an agreement on strike/picketing rules."

"Telkom will adopt a policy of no work no pay during the proposed industrial action and has made contingency plans to minimise the impact on customer service," said Amanda Singleton of Telkom.

She said Telkom had already paid R133 million in performance-based increases and gain sharing bonuses. Additional staff expenses would cost R220,5 million.

"Telkom's offer would also raise the minimum wage paid to support staff at entry level, rising by 7 percent from R2 150 to R2 300," she said.

Mike Seroba, the deputy general secretary of CWU, said about 41 000 members were expected to take part in the strike planned for August 16.

The CWU is demanding wage increases of 10 percent, 12 percent and 14 percent for communication workers in categories C (auxiliary), B (operational) and A (supervisory), respectively.

Seroba said Telkom had tabled a final offer of 5 percent, while the post office was offering 10 percent on a sliding scale. "We are not accepting what has been placed on the table," Seroba said.

He said the CWU would remain open to negotiations as long as these resulted in the improvement of workers' living conditions.

Seroba accused Telkom of undermining and ignoring internal transformation and restructuring agreements by making public announcements on restructuring plans that would affect up to 11 000 workers without consulting the union.

In terms of section 189 of the new Labour Relations Act, unions have to be consulted when staff is to be reduced for operational reasons.

Telkom, union fail to resolve wage dispute

Simpliwe Xako

All negotiation avenues were exhausted and there was no hope for an amicable settlement in the wage dispute between Telkom and the Communication Workers' Union (CWU), Telkom spokesman Eugene Martin said yesterday.

This followed the union's delivery to Telkom and the SA Post Office of a 48-hour notification on its intention to embark on mass action from Monday as a result of the dispute. The union has demanded increases ranging from 11% to 13% against Telkom's 5%, with 2% linked to gainsharing.

"The copy of CWU's notification has been forwarded to the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, with a view to the reaching of an agreement on strike/picket rules," Martin said.

Meanwhile, Southern Sun hotel management and the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) were expected last night to enter another round of negotiations in an attempt to settle on re-employment packages and job security.

Saccawu's Sila Mosa said more than 2 000 Southern Sun hotel employees had gone on strike from June 17 after the hotel group announced restructuring plans.

"Workers want management to provide them with a two-year job security guarantee or at least offer acceptable and sufficient re-employment packages," Mosa said.

A wage strike by employees at Columbus Stainless in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, entered its fourth week yesterday.

In the DaimlerChrysler strike, management expressed disappointment after some of its employees failed to turn up for work despite an agreement with union leadership last week. Company spokesman Annelise van der Laan said yesterday most hourly paid workers failed to turn up for work after they had gone on a strike last Monday in support of five workers who were dismissed.

Van der Laan said management and union leaders had subsequently reached an agreement on an independent arbitrator and workers would return to work. Union leaders said poor communication was the reason workers had not returned to their posts.

Police on the verge of busting arc

Ienny Steinberg

"Just the tip of a massive iceberg"

Phone, mail staff on brink of 3-day strike

But 'post will get through'

STAFF REPORTERS

Johannesburg - Repairs and installation of new telephone services as well as delivery of the mail could be severely disrupted when thousands of telecommunication and postal workers stage a nation-wide pay strike from Monday, unless stalled wage talks are revived.

In a dramatic move yesterday, public service unions decided to ask President Mbeki to intervene in the protracted wage dispute with the Government to help reach a compromise agreement.

The 12 unions involved in the labour dispute met for the first time yesterday to seek an urgent meeting with the president.

"We are seeking a meeting with the President as soon possible to raise our concerns and seek his intervention," the unions said in a joint statement.

The unions also decided to embark on a joint march on August 24 in all major centres nationwide.

Telkom said yesterday that it would re-allocate responsibilities among non-striking employees.

But the unions hit back, saying "We are mobilising the communities not to take out jobs while we are on strike."

The process of scab labour will be nullified by meetings with community-based organisations to support the strike.

"We are mobilising for 100% walkout," said Mac Vicar Dyasopu, national postal co-ordinator for the Communications Workers' Union (CWU).

The CWU's top leadership swept

into Qwaqwa yesterday on its trail to ensure support for the industrial action strike.

Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton conceded the impending three-day warning strike would cause staff shortages and delay installation of new telephone services and repair work to existing services.

However, she said contingency plans had been put in place "to ensure that mail gets through" during the strike.

At least 26 000 workers are set to down tools from Monday to back demands by the CWU for a minimum wage of R2 600.

Wage talks which began earlier this year have deadlocked, with Telkom offering a 5% increase across-the board, and the Post Office offering between 10,1% to lower ranks and 7% to higher ranks.

Telkom says the union's demands would add R1,08-billion a year to staff costs.

The Post Office says its salary bill would increase by R80-million.

Labour analyst Gavin Brown said yesterday that a widely supported strike "will inconvenience just everybody," but added that high levels of technology at Telkom would lessen disruptions.

Public service unions will stage marches on August 24 to highlight their concerns and demands.

The unions are demanding an average 7,3% and an additional 1% for teachers - a compromise from an initial 10% increase demand.

But the Government has refused to budge, and is offering 6,3% to the majority of the workers and 7% to the lowest-paid and teachers.

ARC 12/8/99

(268)

Strike may hit mail delivery

ET 16 18 1999 (268 X152)

JOHANNESBURG: Telephone repairs and mail deliveries could be affected as more than 40 000 Communications Workers' Union (CWU) members embark on a national strike today.

The general secretary of the CWU, Seleboho Kiti, said it was expected that non-union members would also take part in the strike affecting Telkom and the Post Office.

The union had given employers notice that workers were planning a month-long strike, Kiti said.

However, he was confident that the wage deadlock could be broken within the first week.

The union is demanding a 14% increase for auxiliary workers, which are the lowest-paid of Telkom and Post Office staff members.

It is demanding a 13% rise for operational workers — technicians, clerks and other trained workers in central positions.

The CWU is also demanding an increase of 11% for supervisors. Telkom has offered its staff 5%, and the Post Office its staff, 7%.

Kiti said the union hoped the strike would bring the employers to the negotiating table. However, the union was not prepared to negotiate interminably.

"We want to settle the dispute and the onus is on employers to table a better offer," Kiti said.

"Failure to come out and resume the talks with an improved offer will provoke a month-long strike."

"We are optimistic that the deadlock will be broken within a week."

"For the moment, we are going ahead with the strike and nothing will stop us from disrupting Post Office and Telkom services."

Kiti said workers would stay away from work today, tomorrow and on Wednesday. Pickets at Telkom offices had been planned for Thursday and Friday.

The 17,000 members of the Alliance of Telkom Unions (ATU) who intend going on strike today have been warned by Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton that they risk being disciplined and fired.

The industrial action planned by ATU was not protected, she said.

Also, the notice given to the company's negotiators by the union on Friday had been "vague and ambiguous."

"The strike notice did not comply with the Labour Relations Act because it did not outline the starting time and place of the planned industrial action," Singleton said.

"The ATU was unable to provide the company with information on the strike and it was unable to agree on strike and picketing rules."

"The company subsequently informed (ATU representatives) that should the union embark on industrial action on Monday, such action would be unprotected."

Telkom has urged the ATU to postpone its action.

"Should ATU members engage in any form of industrial action under these circumstances, they would be subject to possible disciplinary action that could lead to dismissal," Singleton said — Own Correspondent and Sapa

Telkom, Post Office workers to go on strike

Simphiwe 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 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

Meanwhile, 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 notice did not specify the time and place

"Against this background the

(268) (152)
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 actions

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 Duiker collieries which have already reached a deal with the NUM

Groups such as Avgold, Harmony and Western Areas are offering between 8% and 8,5%, while the NUM is demanding 9%

15 000 Telkom staff out on strike

ARLT 16/8/99
MURRAY WILLIAMS and SAPA

About 15 000 of Telkom's 59 000 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 response times had suffered.

Ms Singleton said earlier that normal phone services were electronic, and would not be affected. Customers who needed

(268) (152)
repairs and those waiting for new services could face a long wait.

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 in both the Post Office and Telkom. Telkom has offered a 5% general increase while the Post Office has offered an average 7% rise.

PRESIDENT ENTERS FRAY

SA faces more

Strike conflict

ET 17/8/99

(268) (152)

FULL SHUTDOWNS are predicted for today and tomorrow by the Communications Workers' Union, although the strike by Post Office and Telkom workers had little effect on services in the Western Cape yesterday **EDDIE JAVIYA** reports

RESTRICTING, fear of retrenchments and job insecurity are the major causes underlying the current spate of industrial actions, labour analyst Gavin Brown said yesterday. He said Telkom and Post Office unions were facing the same tensions as the public sector unions that were pitted against the government.

On the surface it appeared that the conflict in Telkom and Post Office was over wages.

"The scenarios are the same in both sectors," Brown said.

"It is not coincidental that the Telkom and the Post Office strike is taking place while the public sector unions are involved in industrial action.

"These unions, which have diverse memberships, are facing restructuring and retrenchments — there is no job security."

President Thabo Mbeki's address at the Cosatu special

congress tomorrow would be crucial, Brown said. It could shed light on the government's views of the tensions between the state and the public sector unions.

The Communications Workers' Union (CWU) is demanding increases of 14% for auxiliary workers (low-est-paid), 13% for operational staff (technicians, clerks and trained workers in key positions) and 11% for supervisors. Telkom has offered 5%, while the Post Office has offered 7%.

Telkom and the Post Office said yesterday that the CWU strike had had little effect on the delivery of services. However, services that entailed direct contact with customers had been affected. 133 post offices did not open.

The CWU described the effects of the strike as "a major victory" and predicted that services would be shut down today and tomorrow.

Its national postal co-ordinator, Macvicar Dyasopu, said Telkom and Post Office workers had marched to their companies' regional offices in Port Elizabeth.

"There will be complete stayaways on both days and we expect shutdown of services," he said.

Telkom's group corporate communications executive, Amanda Singleton, said the facilities affected were the installation of new services, fault repairs and operation of assisted services such as directory information (1023), fault report lines (10212), account inquiries (10210) and telephonic orders (10219).

By midday, 28% or just over 15 000 of Telkom's employees had not reported for work in Pretoria and surrounding areas, Northern Province, parts of North West, Mpumalanga and Johannesburg and surrounding areas, Singleton said.

Strike has 'little impact'

ZINE GEORGE (268) (152)

THE Communication Worker's Union (CWU) strike yesterday had little impact on Telkom's operations in the Western Cape, according to Eddie Makuchan, its regional communications manager.

About 13% of Telkom's 8 830 workers did not turn up for work yesterday, the start of an expected week-long action.

Calls to Telkom's 1023 inquiry number yesterday were answered in 50 seconds — no longer than usual.

However, it remains unclear if services will remain unaffected by the strike.

Telkom warned yesterday in a press release that some services could eventually be affected.

Should the strike continue, Telkom's directory information (1023), fault report line (10212), account inquiries (10210), as well as telephonic orders (10219) could be affected. All these lines are staffed by union members.

CWU's strike — a union membership includes Telkom and Post Office workers — has affected eight post offices in the Western Cape Region.

Three post offices were closed yesterday morning — Gugulethu, Grassy Park and Khayelitsha — although only 10% of the province's 4 768 post office employees did not pitch up for work yesterday.

Almost all the workers at the affected offices are members of the CWU, according to the Western Cape regional public relations officer of the Post Office, Rima Tshis-

hongwa. She said that this explained the closures.

Another five post offices affected, although not closed, were Somerset West, Milberton, Berse River, Durbanville and Beaufort West.

Tshisongwa said temporary employees would be hired if things became worse during the week.

The union has deadlocked with management in wage negotiations that started during February this year.

According to Telkom, the union is demanding a 24,5% increase and a housing allowance of R1 000 a month for all employees, including those who rent.

Telkom has offered 8,1%.

CWU deputy president Ruben Machneli says "Telkom is lying" by saying workers are demanding 24,5%. "We are demanding 14%, 13%, and 11% respectively for the best paid, operational and supervisory staff, a R2 300 (minimum) salary and a R175 across-the-board increase."

Machneli blames Telkom for abandoning negotiations, and says his union is willing to negotiate. "The Post Office is at least walking along with us," he said.

The differences between the union and the post office were small, Machneli said. Workers were demanding 14%, 12% and 10%, against 10,01% for the lowest paid and 7% for supervisors offered by the Post Office.

Early this morning, union and management representatives were still locked in negotiations.

"In Kwazulu-Natal, most people turned up for work at the mail centre, Durmal. Five post offices were closed.

"In the central province region — serving the Free State, Northern Cape and North West Province — most employees turned up for work at the mail centre. Fifty-one post offices closed."

Madolo said mail had not been delivered in the northern region serving Pretoria, Northern Province and Mpumalanga. The areas affected included Rietgat, Pretoria North, Silverton, Rethabile, Menlo Park, Waterkloof, Lyttelton, Pretoria West, Hercules, Atteridgeville, Tembisa, Garankuwa and Mabopane. Seventy-five post offices were closed.

● See Page 3

Few problems in postal services as 40 000 strike

(268)(152) Sowetan 17/8/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

MINIMAL disruption of postal and telecommunication services were reported yesterday as thousands of Communication Workers Union members participated in demonstrations to mark the first day of the 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 reported 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,

Witspos in Johannesburg, a full shift was completed last night with most mail volumes processed. Post offices in Katlehong, Benrose, Excom and Vanderbijlpark were closed in the morning," he said

Police and Prisoners Civil Rights Union spokesman Mr Siyavuya Jafta said after a special executive meeting that 60 000 Popcru 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-slows 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 final offer with effect from July 1

was
that a
mutue
Johnn
nce
Re
Assem
could
obtain
assets
non pr
CRUCI
over
of the
with
pndo-
later
or for-
tz had
prgive-
of their
Marble
of about
some of
that they

LABOUR Union alliance's notice called vague, ambiguous and procedurally insufficient to make the action legal

Telkom strikers warned of disciplinary action

OT (MR) 17/8/99

(268) (152)

FRANK NXUMALO

LABOUR EDITOR

Johannesburg - Telkom yesterday warned the Alliance of Telkom Unions (ATU) that its estimated 17 000 members faced disciplinary action, including dismissal, if they participated in the current wage strike by the Cosatu-affiliated Communication Workers' Union (CWU)

Armanda Singleton, the Telkom group executive corporation communications manager, said the alliance's notice on Friday informing the company of the intention to strike on Thursday was procedurally insufficient to make the strike legal

"The notice was vague and ambiguous (because it gave) no specific starting time and place," she said "Telkom informed ATU that their notice was not according to

requirements of the Act. Any industrial action is thus unprotected until they serve proper notice."

Dirk Herman, the spokesman for the Mine Workers Union (MWU), one of the ATU's major partners, said "Telkom is trying to avert the strike by intimidating workers. The fact is that for the first time in history, Telkom is facing a full-scale strike that includes the technical workers"

He said the union had redrafted the initial notice even though it still believed it to have been procedurally sufficient. He said last-ditch efforts by the union to reach an amicable solution and to avoid large-scale disruptions had proved fruitless

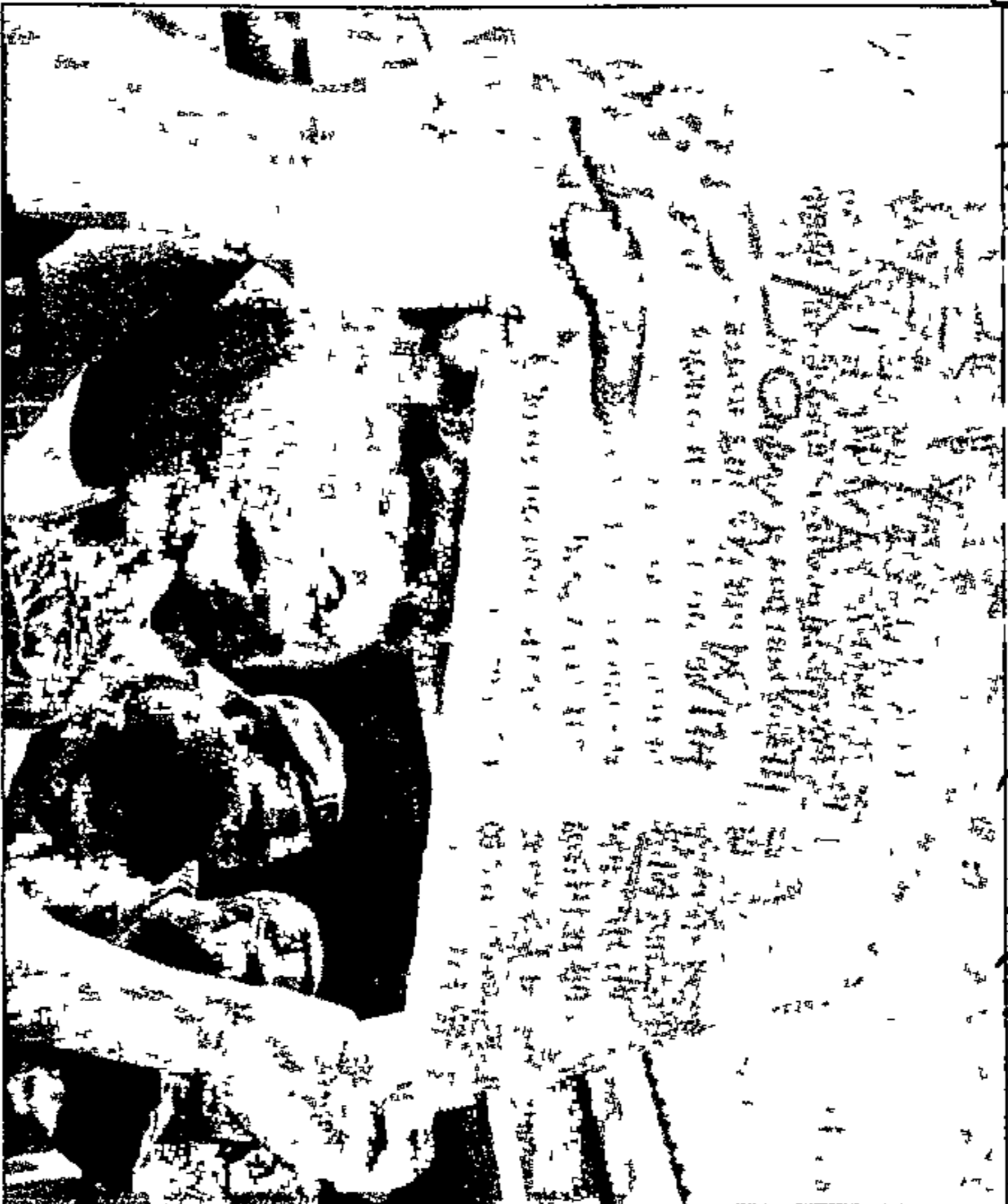
"They said they were prepared to face the strike and did not want to talk to us anymore," Herman said. CWU members downed tools yesterday and marched on Telkom's

head office in Pretoria to support their demands for wage increases ranging from 10 to 14 percent at Telkom and the Post Office

Telkom had offered a general increase of 5 percent and the Post Office 7 percent. CWU is not part of the Alliance of Telkom Unions

Singleton said the memorandum the marchers had handed to the company's head office contained "vague" demands "In the memorandum, the CWU makes no mention of the R175 per person per month or the minimum wage demand of R2 600 per month (basic salary)," she said

She said the union's demands, together with those it omitted from the memorandum, would amount to an effective 24,5 percent increase. Singleton said the only services to be affected were those where there was direct interaction with customers



ON THE MARCH

A Telkom worker carries his message outside the company's headquarters yesterday. Union leaders claim Telkom is intimidating workers to try to avert its first full-scale strike

RHOJO LEFTY SHANAN/BU

Management downplays effect of telecoms strike (268)

BD 17/8/99 (142)

Simpthiwe Xako

CONFLICTING claims over the success of industrial action by communications and postal workers yesterday emerged with unions saying it was a success but management saying it did not significantly affect their operations.

Mike Seroba, acting general secretary of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) which organises in Telkom and the SA Post Office, said just more than 43 000 members had joined the strike.

But Telkom spokesman Amanda Singleton said 17 000 of the company's employees nationwide were not at work. She said this resulted in service delays at call centres, where customers report faults, order new services and inquire about telephone accounts.

She said Telkom was limiting the effect of staff shortages by reallocating job responsibilities among nonstriking employees and management.

YebonNet MD Raven Naidoo said the Telkom problem affected most internet service providers.

"As many of our customers access the internet through Telkom's Johannesburg exchanges we have been inundated with calls from subscribers who have not been able to access the internet."

Singleton confirmed a complaint had been received from YebonNet yesterday.

The strike follows a deadlock between Telkom and SA Post Office management and the CWU over a 14% pay demand, with management prepared to offer 8,1%. It also coincides with Telkom's plans to outsource its fleet management, electronic workshop and property services which would affect more than 11 000 employees.

Sandile Madolo, SA Post Office communication GM, said 5 000 out of 26 000 post office employees went on strike.

"Some post offices around the country had to close because employees had to join the strike. Some returned to work. In all, 95% of employees turned up for work as we are applying the policy of no work, no pay," Madolo said.

He said the post office could not

meet its workers' demands as the parastatal was running at a loss.

The union said yesterday its members would participate in a work stayaways today and tomorrow followed by workplace demonstrations on Thursday and marches in SA city centres on Friday.

Seroba said the CWU was optimistic that a settlement would be reached but emphasised that "the balls in management's court."

We are also concerned about management's no-work no-pay policy as it is intimidatory," he said. Sapa reports that the newly appointed chairman of the National Assembly's communications committee, Nat Kekana, said he regarded the Telkom strike as a normal industrial feature of employer/employee relations.

Kekana called on all parties involved in the dispute to find a common solution speedily because the delivery of telephone services and other services that were provided by Telkom could not be compromised.

Comment: Page 13



Finance Minister Trevor Marlowe.

'ACTION LOSING IMPACT'

Telkom strike has two faces

BT 18/8/99

(162) (218)

JOHANNESBURG: Striking Telkom workers expect a resolution by the end of the week, while hampered services chug along. The Post Office says its share of the strike is waning.

A TELKOM voice-mail inadvertently summed up the impact of the striking Communication Workers' Union (CWU) members yesterday. "We are experiencing an unusually large number of calls, and, as a result, there will be delays," the voice said. "Please bear with us. We will be able to offer an efficient service between 6pm and 8pm and we advise you to phone during this period, or otherwise stay on the line."

The 10219 centre handles new telephone applications and is usually manned by 80 workers between 7.30am and 4.30pm, while 30 workers man the night-shift lines until 8pm.

The Star tested all the call centres, and 1023, which handles telephone inquiries on residential and

business numbers, answered the call after 60 seconds, during the day. After-hours calls to 10212 (faults), 10210 (telephone accounts) and 10219 took between two minutes and five minutes to answer.

An operator said CWU had given temporary workers permission to work during the strike.

"We have been allowed to work because we are part-timers. There is a skeleton staff and we are battling to cope with the calls. All the full-time operators are on strike. We receive more than 100 calls per second," he said.

Last night Telkom and the union were still locked in talks to end the strike.

Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton said yesterday's meeting followed a three-hour meeting

between the two parties on Monday night. About 17 000 CWU members working for Telkom were not at work on Monday, slowing down some of the company's services. The union, which has a membership of more than 50 000 at Telkom and the Post Office, plans to continue with the industrial action for a month. But general secretary Seleboho Kiri said the wage dispute could be settled before the end of the week.

The strike could be resolved if Telkom and the Post Office compromised on their offer of 5% and 7% respectively, or if the union backed down on its 14% demand for lowest-paid workers, 13% for operational staff (technicians, trained workers in key positions and clerks) and 11% for supervisors.

The Post Office, which has not resumed talks with the union, claimed yesterday the strike was losing impact, with only 4 200 employees out of the total workforce of 26 000 not at work.

It added that 5 400 took part in the industrial action on Monday, causing the closure of 133 post offices nationwide. Only 95 offices did not open yesterday.

The Post Office's general manager for communication, Sandile Madofo, said the company would ensure that the mail went through, and, with high morale among and the assistance of employees not on strike, the negative impact on customer service was being minimised.

Meanwhile, the Alliance of Telkom Unions — representing the South African Communications Union, the Mineworkers' Union and the Postal and Telkom Association — will embark on industrial action tomorrow and Friday.

The action will consist of mass stayaways, picketing at company premises, working to rule and a ban on overtime. The alliance is made up of highly skilled technicians, administrative staff and a large number of management staff. Own Correspondent

23 000 Telkom workers stay away

- ◆ Pretoria – The number of Telkom workers downing tools appeared to have grown to about 23 000 as three more labour unions joined the pay strike today.

◆ Union leaders claimed some call centres handling directory inquiries and reports of faulty telephones were grinding to a halt because of the action

◆ “Our strike is a major success. Our members in strategic jobs are staying away,” said Dirk Hermann, spokesman for the Alliance of Telkom Unions. He said early indications were that about 30% of the ATU’s combined membership had heeded the strike call.

◆ Telkom’s largest staff body, the

Communication Workers’ Union, has been on strike since Monday. About 17 000 of its 26 000 members have not been at work for the past three days. Telkom spokeswoman Amanda Singleton said the same number of CWU members was expected to stay away today.

◆ Both the ATU and CWU have rejected Telkom’s pay offer of a 5% raise across the board, a performance-based increase of 2% and a 1,1% gain share bonus.

◆ The ATU comprises the Mine-workers’ Union, the SA Post and Telecommunications Union, and the SA Communication Workers’ Union.

◆ A Telkom manager handling

(152) (268)
calls related to repairs, orders for new telephone services and account inquiries at a centre in Pretoria said only about a third of staff were on duty. “We are very badly affected, but are trying our best,” he said.

◆ Directory inquiries did not appear to be as badly disrupted. Callers had to wait less than two minutes before being helped.

◆ Mr Hermann said an initial ATU survey indicated that centres in Bloemfontein, the Western Cape, Johannesburg and Witbank were suffering because of the strike.

◆ At Telkom’s Pretoria head office, Ms Singleton said, between 30 and 50 ATU members had not turned up for work – Sapa

APR 19/8/99

Columbus suspends

17 Numsa members

(189) (152) AT (PR) 20/8/99
FRANK NIXIMATO

Johannesburg - Columbus Steel yesterday suspended 17 members of the National Union of Metallworkers of South Africa (Numsa) on full pay until disciplinary hearings for allegedly engaging in "unacceptable behaviour" during the recently resolved month long strike.

The company threatened to dismiss other Numsa members who would strike in solidarity with their comrades facing disciplinary action.

"Industrial action of any sort as a result of the disciplinary process will be a breach of the state prosecutors' bail conditions, will be unprocedural and therefore unprotected and could lead to dismissals," the company said.

"We have taken legal and security steps to deal with any

unprotected action by Numsa members."

Columbus Steel said the suspension was aimed at "minimising conflict and potential interference with witnesses."

"The disciplinary charges range from carrying of (fighting) sticks and knives to (the) intimidation of other employees," it said.

"We have repeatedly stated that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated by management and will result in disciplinary action against offenders."

Numsa accused Columbus Steel of reneging on an agreement reached in negotiations that disciplinary action would be rescinded in the interest of good labour relations.

Dumisani Ntuli, Numsa's spokesman said the matter was now in the hands of the union's lawyers.

Strike hits post offices

AT (PR) 20/8/99

(152) (152)

STAFF REPORTER

Four township post offices have been forced to close since Monday, due to the four-day strike by communication workers.

Three of the post offices are in Khayelitsha and the fourth is Guguletu's only post office.

South African Post Office spokeswoman Ruma Tshishon said 253 Communication Workers Union (CWU) members had worked tools in the province, out of a total of 4,959.

She said mobile post offices would deal with backlogs that had resulted from the strike.

Post Office and Telkom employees embarked on industrial action for higher wages on Monday.

Post office workers want increases of between 10% and 14%. The Post Office has offered 7% for supervisors and 10% for lower paid workers.

Telkom employees have rejected an offer of a 5% across-the-board increase, a performance-based raise of 2%, and a 1.1% gain share bonus. They want increases of between 11% and 14%.

The strike at Telkom was given fresh impetus yesterday when the 17 000 Alliance of Telkom Unions members joined their CWU counterparts in industrial action.

The Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration is to chair talks between Telkom and the CWU today in a bid to break the deadlock.

'5 post offices affected'

(152) (152) AT (PR) 20/8/99

FIVE post offices in townships on the Cape Peninsula have been closed since Monday due to a strike by members of the Communication Workers' Union (CWU), a spokesperson for the SA Post Office, Rhema Tshishon, said yesterday.

The workers embarked on strike action on Monday to press home their demands for increases ranging between 10 and 14%.

"They are also demanding a housing subsidy, employment of part time workers on a permanent basis and an improvement in family leave, including maternity leave."

Those (five) were the only post offices that closed in the Western Cape, Tshishonga said. She did not name the post offices.

"We experienced some delivery problems in the Stellenbosch area but contingency plans were put into place and today (Thursday) everything is fine."

She said only about six percent of

Telkom, unionists meet today

(152) (152) AT (PR) 20/8/99

PRETORIA Telkom and some labour leaders are to meet in Johannesburg today in a renewed bid to resolve a pay dispute that has prompted thousands of workers to down tools since Monday.

The talks have been arranged by the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton said yesterday.

The CCMA offered on Wednesday to help reach an agreement between Telkom and the Communication Workers' Union (CWU), which has been on strike since Monday.

No new talks are on the cards with a grouping of three other unions — the Alliance of Telkom Unions (ATU) — which

joined the CWU strike yesterday. The four unions embarked on the action after rejecting a pay offer of a 5% raise across the board, a performance-based increase of 2% and a 1.1% gain share bonus.

The CWU's Mike Seroba said yesterday: "We are ready to enter into discussions at any time."

He said the union's strike action would continue until the matter is resolved, adding that a go-slow is being planned for next week.

Singleton said Telkom had also invited the ATU to enter into a new round of talks, but was still awaiting a response.

ATU president Colin Smith said the alliance would consider

resuming talks only if there is an indication that Telkom is prepared to improve its offer. "We have received no such indication and will not be going into talks at this stage," Smith said.

Meanwhile, Telkom played down the impact of yesterday's stoppage, saying fewer workers stayed away than on Wednesday.

Singleton said the company is able to maintain sufficient service levels in vital areas by redeploying available employees. About 16 600 workers were absent compared to 17 000 on Wednesday, she said.

ATU officials rejected Telkom's claims as "ridiculous", saying the shutdown had brought technical depots throughout the country to

a halt. Call centres handling the reporting of faulty lines were also suffering, they said.

"Our strike is a success. Our members in strategic jobs are staying away," said ATU spokesperson Dick Hermann. The ATU estimated that more than a third of its combined membership of 17 000 heeded yesterday's strike call.

According to Singleton, however, about 15 700 CWU and 900 ATU members had not reported for work by noon.

"Call centres as well as installation and repair services are still being affected, but management is able to maintain sufficient levels of service to the most critical customers," Singleton said. — Sapa

20/8/99

Telkom to meet CWU as ATU joins in strike

(152) (152)

AT (PR) 20/8/99

STAFF REPORTER

Telkom and the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) are expected to meet today in an attempt to resolve a wage dispute which has led to a week of industrial action.

Telkom spokeswoman Amanda Singleton said yesterday's workplace demonstrations and stay-aways were supported by more than 18 000 of Telkom's employees.

"Customer service such as call centre responses time the rate of installations and repairs were affected by the strike," she said.

The situation by placing employees who were most critical customer interfacing functions. Singleton said the

CWU informed management yesterday that its members would embark on go-slows, overtime bans and a work to rule.

Meanwhile more than 20 000 members of the Alliance of Telkom Unions (ATU) also implemented industrial action yesterday.

ATU spokesman Dick Heyns said the union notified management yesterday of its intention to continue with strikes next week.

Singleton said Telkom had received no response from the ATU after management had invited the union to join today's talks.

At the same time the National Union of Mineworkers served notice on yesterday of its intention to go on strike over a 9% wage demand today after a Labour Court ruling found its initial notice was inadequate.

Anglocoal and Ingeve colliers have offered 7% but indicated they would give 7.5% if the union was prepared to settle.

The strike comes at a time when the coal price is \$20 a ton its lowest level since 1994.

An industry source said there appeared to be mixed support for the strike.

16)

Strikes end at Ingwe and Telkom

Simpfiwe Xako

(213)

(268)

(152)

PD 25/8/99

ABOUT 4 000 Ingwe Coal Corporation miners in Mpumalanga are expected to return to work today after management agreed to offer them an 8% increase.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had demanded a 9% increase against management's 7,5% offer. Another 7 000 coal miners in the province, however, are continuing their strike to demand a 9% increase while their employer, Anglocoal, continues to offer 7%, said NUM secretary-general Gwede Mantashe. He said management had asked to meet the union this afternoon.

NUM and Ingwe agreed that their two-year deal would be backdated to July.

They also agreed on a 1% increase in line with the consumer index price for two years.

Meanwhile, Telkom's employees who had been striking last week returned to work yesterday, said Telkom spokesman Amanda Singleton.

This follows a week-long pay strike by about 40 000 members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU). They returned to work but continued with their go-slow, work-to-rule and an overtime ban to put pressure on management. Singleton said management

would meet the CWU next Monday to continue discussions after the company tabled a 9,1% offer to the union. She said the CWU would consult with its members regarding the offer.

CWU acting general-secretary, Mike Seroba, said the union was also scheduled to meet the Post Office tomorrow.

He said that although the union still demanded 14% against the post office's 7% offer, the union was still "willing to engage".

Post Office plans lock-out of striking employees

Siphhiwe Xako

THE SA Post Office has given the Communication Workers' Union 48 hours' notice of its intention to lock out employees on strike over pay

Post Office spokesman Sandile Maddolo said yesterday that the decision was aimed at preventing the deterioration of services, as the strike had affect-

ed the company "negatively"

Union members employed at the Post Office and Telkom embarked on the strike last Monday after the two parties' wage talks deadlocked. The union demanded a 14% increase against management's 7% offer for higher-level employees and 10,1% for those on lower levels.

The two parties will meet today for a second round of talks

Telkom spokesman Amanda Singleton said the company and union would meet on Monday for further wage talks. Telkom offered the union a revised 9,1%, while the union demanded 14%.

Meanwhile, Anglocoal tabled a revised 8% wage increase offer during talks with the National Union of Mineworkers, last night. Anglocoal said NUM would report on the offer to its members

(153)

(268)

2026/8/99

Post Office and union sign pay deal

Simphiwe Xako

(268) HD 31/8/99

THE SA Post Office and the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) signed a pay deal yesterday ranging between 11,41% and 7,5% — bringing an end to a two-week strike

Meanwhile, Telkom and the CWU failed once more to reach a settlement on their wage dispute

Post Office spokesman Ben Rootman said the deal included a basic minimum pay of R2 380 per month

Before the settlement, management had offered an increase of between 10,01% for lower ranks, 7% for higher levels and a R2 350 basic minimum salary. The union demanded a differentiated increase of between 10% and 14% with a minimum wage of R2 450 a month

Telkom spokesman Amanda Singleton said management last night increased the 6,5% offer for support level staff to 7%. The union asked to consult with its members and would return to talks on Thursday

The CWU went on strike on August 16 demanding increases of between 10% and 14%

Meanwhile, the National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) said it planned to notify the management of Ericsson of its intention to embark on a strike

Numsa spokesman Elias Monage said the union had declared a dispute with management around working conditions, transformation and wages

Sipho Sithole, the company's human resources director, said management had held several meetings with Numsa since the beginning of the year

He dismissed the union's claims, saying Ericsson had done its best to meet Numsa's demands

"Besides, Ericsson is not legally obliged to meet the union's demands as they represent only 18 workers out of 220 employees — which does not qualify for the 10% required by the labour law," Sithole said

He said the union's strike would be unprocedural and legally unprotected

Union ends Post Office strike action

(268)
152
Sowetran 31/8/99

By Khangale Makhado and Sapa

A STRIKE by SA Post Office workers was called off yesterday after a salary agreement was reached between the parastatal 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 statement 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 minimum 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".

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 R2 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 16. 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



POST PROTEST CWU workers celebrate a salary agreement reached with the Post Office yesterday

PHOTO JOHN WOODROOF

initial offer to a 5,5 percent rise in the total pay package of supervisors, 6 percent for

workers on operational level, and 6,5 percent for support staff

Telkom plans to use lock-out as 'last resort' in pay dispute

Simphiwe Xako
and René Grawitzky

THOUSANDS of Telkom workers face a lock-out tomorrow if they go ahead with their strike threat while the ailing construction industry could be hit by a strike involving more than 70 000 workers after wage negotiations deadlocked.

At the same time government and public service unions met again yesterday in a further attempt to find solutions to end the continuing wage dispute. A failure to achieve this could derail the development and adoption of a new wage policy for the public service.

Sources close to the process said that a possible solution lay in trying to link a resolution to the dispute with the new wage model.

The Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) public service affiliates said a new wage model would be rejected out of hand if

it in any way reduced current benefits, allowances or promotion opportunities.

The meeting ended yesterday following an intervention by Edwin Molahlehi, the chairman of the public service co-ordinating bargaining council, who decided to postpone the meeting pending separate talks with the respective parties.

He said the intention was to engage in separate talks with government and the unions with the intention of seeking a solution to the "problem".

Government agreed to resume talks in the council with the intention of talking about a new wage policy but the unions refused to discuss this until the current dispute was resolved.

Meanwhile, Telkom said yesterday it would lock out striking employees as a last resort to force members of the Communication Workers' Union to accept the company's final offer. Workers were given the op-

tion from yesterday to accept the final offer or face a lock-out.

At the same time, Construction and Allied Workers' Union general-secretary Thabo Morale said the union and SA Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors management had deadlocked on wage increases.

The unions rejected a 6% offer while Morale claimed the construction industry was the lowest paid. The lowest-grade worker earned R700 a month. He said Cawu and the Building Construction and Allied Workers' Union demanded a minimum wage of R1 200 a month.

Management spokesman Muller Uys said there was no possibility of the matter being resolved as long as the unions stood by their demands.

The construction industry was in its worst period, with very low production. "If you add up all the unions' demands they add up to 30% — something we cannot afford," Uys said.

208 (152)

Telkom set to lock out striking staff

(268)
(152)
sowetan 7/9/99

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.

No settlement to the dispute was in sight, she said.

"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 discourage 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 Seleboho Kiti 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.

Kiti 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 focusing on measures that will not promote sound labour relations," he said - Sapa

Telkom to lock out workers

(268)

Sowetan 8/9/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

TELKOM is set to commence locking out an estimated 26 000 striking members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) at 7 30am today, the company announced yesterday

The company will also seal off entrances to the premises with heavy security nationwide in a bid to compel employees to accept its final offer

The lock-out came amid reported isolated incidents of "wilful damage to company property, including network infrastructure" and the company took a firm decision to bar union members from participating in the go-slow and work-to-rule protest action

Group corporate executive Ms Amanda Singleton also threatened to institute criminal charges against those responsible for damage to property as the incidents had been reported and investigated by the police

However, CWU deputy president Mr Carthy Pillay described the actions of the company as tantamount to "union bashing reminiscent of the dirty apartheid tactics of the past"

The union took strong exception to the intransigence shown by management in going ahead with lock-out

plans, instead of making genuine attempts to resolve the wage dispute

Pillay alleged that the company had banned CWU shop stewards from holding meetings in the workplace, while union members were being threatened with retrenchment if they refuse to accept the company's offer

He said management had reneged on a current agreement by rejecting workplace demonstrations, warning that the decision would exacerbate the situation and "was a recipe for chaos"

The management had withdrawn half a percent increase for the support staff, amounting to 6,5 percent, six percent for operational staff and 5,5 percent for supervisors

The company also decried the disruptions about overtime bans, work to rule now entering its fourth week and resulting in serious backlogs in the installation of and repair of residential services. Contingency plans have been effected over the past three weeks to limit the impact of the strike on customer service, Singleton said

These plans include the reallocation of job responsibilities in areas involving direct customer interfaces, call centres where faults were being reported and account and directory information inquiries

(172)
(268)

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%

CT 9/9/99
Yesterday Telkom sent a memo to all its staff that read in part "CWU members will be locked out from 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 CWU — to accept our final offer" — Staff Writer

Lockout campaign ends in violence

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

(152)
(268)

TELKOM'S lockout campaign to compel about 26 000 striking members of the Communications Workers Union to accept its final wage increase has reportedly backslid into violence, intimidation and sabotage attempts

Placard-wielding workers picketing around Telkom premises nationwide were allegedly intimidated by management and forced to sign an average salary offer of 5.5 percent or face disciplinary action or retrenchment, CWU general secretary Mr

Seleboho Kiri said yesterday

But Telkom corporate communication executive Ms Amanda Singleton said a number of incidents of sabotage, damage to property and intimidation of co-workers had been reported

"In one incident a CWU member was caught cutting telecommunication cables and was charged," she said

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has also slammed the lockout, describing it as a clear indication that Telkom had reached "a cul-de-sac of ideas" and was desperate to take any possible short cut even when this has severe consequences

"We are disturbed by intimidation reports of workers by management in several provinces, particularly in the Western Cape," Cosatu spokesman Mr

Mukoni Ratshtanga said

Telkom has maintained that management presented all CWU members with an option to accept the company's wage offer and return to work

Singleton said acceptance forms were being faxed through at "a steady pace" and the management was verifying the particulars of individuals who had sent in acceptance forms

Those who chose not to accept the company's offer were directed to designated picketing areas, she added

seveltan

919799

Telkom lockout puts it at odds with union

ARLT 9/9/99

(268) (152)

STAFF REPORTER

Durban - A bitter war of words erupted yesterday between Telkom and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) as tensions mounted following the company's tough action in locking out striking workers.

Telkom accused the CWU of damaging company property while the union charged the parastatal with intimidating its members, who were on the second day of a four-day strike.

Telkom spokesperson Amanda Singleton claimed the company had received reports of "sabotage, willful damage to property and intimidation". "We are investigating these reports and disciplinary action will be taken against the perpetrators. We will also institute criminal charges," she said.

Telkom and the union are due to meet today in a last-ditch effort to find a solution to their wage talks stand-off. Management presented CWU members with the option of accepting the company's final offer - of a 6,5% increase to auxiliary (lowest-paid) staff, 6% to operational staff (technicians, trained workers and clerks) and 5,5% to supervisors - and returning to work, or remaining on strike.

Those who rejected our offer were not allowed in our premises. They were directed to designated picketing areas. Acceptance forms of our offer were faxed through at a steady pace and management was verifying the particulars of the individuals who had sent in acceptance forms," Ms Singleton said.

But CWU spokesperson Karthu Pillay accused Telkom of intimidating striking members into accepting the company's pay offer.

The union is demanding an increase of 10% for auxiliary staff, 8% for operational staff and 7% for supervisors.

Shopstewards were banned from holding meetings on Telkom premises during office hours. These tactics are tantamount to union-bashing, and we are consulting our lawyers," he said.

Cosatru said Telkom's lockout was a clear indication that the company had reached a cul-de-sac of ideas and was desperate to take any possible short cut, even if it had severe consequences.

Ms Singleton said the call centres (where customers phone in to report services out of order, make enquiries on directory information, accounts and order new services) were most affected by the strike.

She added that customers calling in to these services experienced delays, but emergency and essential services were attended to immediately.

■ About 300 CWU workers protested outside the All Africa Games Village in Alexandra, north of Johannesburg, amid tight security. Telkom is one of the sponsors of the Games.

Telkom, union set to thrash out pay dispute

(268)

SAWUTOM 13/9/99

By Mzwakhe Hlangani
Labour Reporter

TELKOM management and labour union delegations are set to continue the extended bargaining process over a pay dispute today while the lockout of 26 000 striking union members will be maintained, the company said yesterday

The company's corporate communication executive Ms Amanda Singleton said their continued disagreements were based solely on the inaffordability of the Communication Workers Union's demands

Telkom's final offer stood at 6,5 percent for support staff, 6 percent for operational staff and 5,5 percent for supervisors, while the union demanded 10 percent for support staff, 8 percent for operational and 7 percent for supervisory level

CWU general secretary Mr Seleboho Kiti said the Thursday and Friday talks had been deferred until today to allow parties to consider areas where con-

sensus could be reached

The parties had agreed that they should continue discussions until they found immediate solutions

Kiti said the union would intensify protest demonstrations until a final settlement was reached, but this would be conducted in compliance with agreements between both parties

He further denied that the lockout had succeeded in breaking the morale of the union membership, also pointing out that management claims that a significant number of striking workers had signed forms indicating their acceptance of the final offer were without substance and malicious

Bullying tactics

Kiti said "Despite the bullying tactics by the management, the union leadership has reported throughout the country that workers have overwhelmingly rejected the management's offer"

Singleton said the lockout intended to compel workers to return to work and accept the final wage offer

Thousands of Telkom staff face lay-offs

(268)
ARG 2/10/99
FRANK NXUMALO

Johannesburg - Up to 5 000 Telkom workers were at risk of losing their jobs as the company entered the third stage of its programme of improving competitiveness and efficiency, the Communications Workers Union (CWU) said yesterday

Seleboho Kiti, the secretary general of CWU, said labour would not support retrenchments, especially when viewed against the background of rampant job losses throughout the economy

The union would be studying the details of the process as presented by Telkom yesterday and respond in due course

Telkom said it had far more support and administrative staff than was the international norm for a communications company

"Illiteracy levels are high and the company has a scarcity of technical and business skills

"Although reskilling has been ongoing for the past two years - where the company has increased its learner days by over 400 per cent - it must be noted that the process cannot be completed overnight

"In the meantime not only does Telkom's current staff profile have an impact on overall productivity as reflected in the number of lines per employee, but it contributes significantly to high operating costs with 47 cents of every rand in value created spent on staff costs," Amanda Singleton, the Telkom spokesman, said

Singleton said owing to ongoing re-organisation, there was substantial duplication in certain areas and job functions

"Therefore, in managing staff numbers to more competitive levels, the company is now entering the third major stage and is meeting with organised labour today to discuss its proposed approach and reasons for moving forward with this programme," she said

Telkom gives unions details of its retrenchment plans

DD 25/10/99

(268)

Unions claim that by March about 11 000 jobs will have been cut

Reneé Grawitzky

TELKOM has identified about 5 700 employees who face forced retrenchments and a further 2 600 jobs that could be outsourced as part of overall plans to increase efficiency and productivity in preparation for the deregulation of the local telephone market

Talks between the company and unions started earlier this month without clarity on how many employees faced retrenchment, despite earlier speculation of about 11 000 job cuts

The company has subsequently informed the unions as part of its consultation process where jobs could be cut

The Alliance of Telkom Unions (ATU) said that by March the company will have cut about 11 000 jobs either as a result of natural attrition, voluntary retrenchment packages, outsourcing or forced retrenchments

Unions have been informed that 5 699 employees have been identified for forced retrenchments — the majority being among the lowest paid workers

Through outsourcing the company will be able to lose a further 2 600 jobs. These workers will have the option of moving to new companies that will be set up to do contract work for Telkom or taking voluntary early retirement packages

At this stage it is unclear whether employees who move to the contract companies will be employed on lesser conditions than they receive currently. The unions are demanding a separation package for those employees who are employed by contract companies

In addition to the 8 299 jobs that could be lost either through outsourcing or forced retrenchments, a further 2 000 employees have accepted voluntary retrenchment packages since March this year

To bring the number of job cuts

up to the speculated figure of 11 000, the company has estimated that it could lose about 200 employees a month through natural attrition, or through dismissals

A further 85 employees in middle management positions have been informed that their jobs have become redundant. They have been given two months in which to find alternative positions in the company. If they are unable to be "redeployed", they will be offered severance packages

Telkom said at the start of the consultation process that it wanted to complete the retrenchment exercise within the next two months. It is unclear what the retrenchment exercise will cost

The unions have requested such information as well as the savings on a month-to-month basis. Telkom's wage bill is estimated at between R5bn and R6bn a year including benefits. Telkom was not available for comment.

NATIONAL

Union urges activation of social plan structures

BO 29/10/99 (268)

'Telkom not complying with law in event of retrenchments'

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa) approached Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana to activate the required social plan structures as retrenchment talks continued between Telkom and the Alliance of Telkom Unions yesterday.

Telkom said the union responded to the company's rationale for "managing staff numbers". Labour said this process could lead to job cuts of up to 11 000. The union's concerns related mainly to staff costs, overtime, the use of contractors and temporary staff as well as the continuation of recruiting new staff.

As these talks continue, Fedusa has informed Mdladlana that it believed that Telkom was

not correctly complying with the provisions of section 189 of the Labour Relations Act which relates to procedures to be followed in the event of retrenchments. Fedusa general secretary Chez Milani said labour was also not being given the necessary information.

He requested that Mdladlana "activate the required social plan structures" as provided for in the social plan agreement at last year's presidential job summit.

At a previous meeting, Telkom informed labour of the breakdown in the number of jobs to be lost either through forced retrenchments, outsourcing or natural attrition.

An estimated 8 299 jobs could either be lost through outsourcing or forced retrench-

ments. A further 2 000 employees have accepted voluntary retrenchment packages since March this year.

In response to a union request for the total cost of the retrenchment exercise, the company allegedly said it could not calculate this now as it was not talking about retrenchments at this stage, but redeployment. Telkom said the union also responded to its proposals on severance packages, redeployment and a social plan.

The union proposed an alternative severance package providing for six months pay for the first 10 years service and thereafter two weeks for every year up to 20 years. Telkom's current package provides for a minimum of 10 weeks to a maximum of 18 weeks.