

Economy's supply lines throttled by truck driver strike

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A NATIONWIDE strike by about 20,000 truck and freight drivers enters its second week today and threatens to further choke SA's fragile economy.

Fuel, medical and food supplies are under pressure as contingency measures, such as temporary labourers and reserve fleets, are used nationwide.

The South African Petroleum Industry Association warned the public to refrain from panic buying, saying it could handle demand for the week if buying patterns remain normal.

Workers in the industry have been on strike, demanding a 12% pay hike. The Road Freight Employers Association has been offering 6%.

The unions with members on strike are the Transport and Allied Workers Union, the Motor Transport Workers Union, the Professional Transport and Allied Workers Union of SA, and the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union (Satawu).

Respite was promised with a separate wage deal being placed on the table for cash-in-transit workers. Consumers would have been able to withdraw money under reliable circumstances and buying decisions would not be affected. But the Road Freight Employers Association yesterday distanced itself from such an agreement.

"The three cash-in-transit member companies last night signed an agreement with the Motor Transport Workers Union members. This agreement was not sanctioned by the (association) or any of the unions," said the association's spokeswoman, Magretia

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