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On April 22, the Acindar steelworks plant in Villa Constitucion, Santa Fe province, dismissed most of its 3,600 employees. Acindar is Argentina's largest steel producer, and wholly owned by Argentines. Company president Alcides Lopez Aufranc said the mass layoff was necessary due to declining exports and domestic recession. According to Lopez, the plant closing is not permanent, since the company plans to reopen after modernization and restructuring. In normal times, the plant produced about 94,000 metric tons of steel per month, 80% for export. Over the past few months, output dropped to 35,000 tons per month. In addition, Argentina began importing 40,000 tons of steel per month from Brazil. Later in the day, Lopez said that the decision to dismiss the workforce was also motivated by the "irrational conduct of metalworkers union leaders." At least 1,000 of the laid off workers will not be rehired once the restructuring is complete. In February, the company dismissed 27 employees and suspended 300. Since the beginning of April, 450 employees were dismissed. (Basic data from AFP, EFE, 04/22/91)

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