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BRIEF

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Government proposes levies to fund Universal Health Coverage

MONDAY 24 MARCH 2025

MAIN STORY



Government proposes levies to fund Universal Health Coverage

The Ministry of Health and Social Services has proposed the introduction of levies as a revenue-generating mechanism for the recently approved Universal Health Coverage (UHC) policy.

The proposal follows Cabinet's approval of the UHC policy, which identified funding mechanisms as a key aspect of its implementation.

Crucial Dates

- Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement date:
 - * 16 April 2025
 - * 18 June 2025
 - * 13 August 2025
 - * 15 October 2025
 - * 3 December 2025

“As the ministry that spearheaded the policy framework, we proposed a number of things, including levies, once consensus has been reached, as well as specific sin taxes on alcohol and tobacco products,” Executive Director in the Health Ministry Ben Nangombe told The Brief.

Funds raised through these levies would be ring-fenced and placed in the National Health Equity Fund, which aims to bolster healthcare financing.

“Some have proposed levies on SMSes, but Namibians are already complaining about data charges, and you don’t want to burden the people more,” Nangombe said.

Following the policy’s approval, Cabinet has tasked the office of the Deputy Prime Minister with convening various stakeholders, including government offices and agencies, to explore strategies for capitalizing the Equity Fund.

“It is something being worked on. The experts will put their heads together and advise government on the best way forward,” Nangombe added.

The first meeting on the Equity Fund’s financing is scheduled for April 2025 during a planned health symposium on national health financing. Nangombe indicated that by 2026, further deliberations would lead to the drafting of a framework to establish the Fund, with initial capital injections paving

the way for the intensified implementation of UHC.

“The policy is in place. We know its objectives and the trajectory we want to follow. Other countries have implemented National Health Insurance and similar tools,” he said.

Currently, Namibia’s Fiscus allocates N\$3 billion to the Public Service Employee Medical Aid Scheme (PSEMAS) and N\$11 billion to the public health sector annually. This has resulted in Namibia achieving a UHC service coverage index score of 62-64%, one of the highest in Africa. However, Nangombe stressed that additional funding is needed to improve healthcare access.

With approximately 85% of Namibia’s population relying on public healthcare services and only 200,000 citizens covered by private healthcare, the proposed Equity Fund seeks to bridge financial gaps in the system.

Former Health Minister Kalumbi Shangula emphasized the Equity Fund’s role in strengthening the healthcare system.

“The Ministry will increase health worker availability through strategic recruitment and retention, invest in health infrastructure by building and upgrading facilities, and eliminate structural barriers that hinder access to care for vulnerable groups of the population,” Shangula said.

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NIDA eyes financial turnaround within two years after N\$102 million loss

The Namibian Industrial Development Agency (NIDA) has projected that it will take one to two years to achieve a financial turnaround and fully leverage its assets, following an operating loss of N\$102 million for the 2024 financial year.

According to NIDA's latest annual report, the agency has remained in an operating loss position for the past six years, despite holding total assets worth N\$3 billion.

NIDA Chief Executive Officer Richwell Lukonga acknowledged the financial struggles but expressed optimism about the agency's strategic recovery plan.

"The fact of the matter is for any company, it requires at least one to two years to turn around, and in terms of our developed strategy, we expect to see some light in the second year of implementation," Lukonga said.

Julius Nghikevali, Executive Consultant for the CFO Portfolio at NIDA, emphasized that immediate profitability remains unlikely as the agency implements new



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business models.

“We have remained in an operating loss position over the last six years. Based on our strategic business plan and business models going forward, we cannot expect to see profits as soon as possible because we need to turn the ship around significantly,” Nghikevali explained.

He stressed that NIDA cannot continue to operate at a loss indefinitely, saying, “We need to play our part as an organization, especially given our mandate, and ensure this ship is turned around.”

To support its recovery, NIDA is relying on its integrated strategic business plan, turnaround strategy, and revised business model. Nghikevali also pointed to potential capitalization from principal stakeholders as a key factor in achieving financial sustainability.

The report highlighted a rise in total costs from N\$181 million to N\$231 million in 2024, while revenue increased by 20% over the same period, reaching N\$165 million. NIDA’s last recorded profit was in 2020, when it reported a N\$33 million surplus.

Looking ahead, Nghikevali indicated that financial recovery would take time.

“Our plan will be published, and I’m sure many will have the opportunity to review it. Given the necessary efforts and strategic implementations, we foresee continued losses in the near future before achieving a full turnaround,” he said.

Founded in 2018, NIDA is tasked with advancing Namibia’s industrialization agenda in line with national policies such as the Growth at Home Strategy, the Harambee Prosperity Plan, and the Fifth National Development Plan.

Reconnaissance Energy Namibia (ReconNamibia), its Board of Directors, CEO, management, and personnel extend their congratulations to

HER EXCELLENCY

Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

on her inauguration as the 5th President of the Republic of Namibia.

We appreciate Her Excellency’s dedication to the Namibian nation and visionary leadership for the nation’s future.

ReconNamibia is committed to sustainable development and local content. We look forward to seeing the energy sector make a positive difference in Namibia’s future under Her Excellency’s government.

May your tenure be marked with unity and success.



Digital health in Namibia: Beyond the punchlines and into reality

By Tuwilika Nafuka

A recent viral tweet bantered, “For Headache, Press 1. For Flu, continue to hold!” a lighthearted take on Namibia’s mushrooming focus on digital health under the new administration.

The appointment of Dr. Esperance Luvindao, an advocate for digital health, as the Minister of Health and Social Services has ignited discussions nationwide. While the humor is relatable, it stresses a pressing issue: for many Namibians, digital health remains an abstract concept.

Clarifying Digital Health

Digital health refers to the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into healthcare to enhance the quality and accessibility of services. Key components include:

- Electronic Health Records (EHRs): Digitized patient records that allow for seamless access and management.
- Telemedicine: Remote consultations between patients and healthcare providers, bridging geographical gaps.
- Mobile Health (mHealth): Utilization



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Digital health refers to the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) into healthcare to enhance the quality and accessibility of services.

of mobile devices to deliver health services and disseminate information.

- Health Information Systems: Systems that collect, analyze, and utilize health data to inform decision-making.

Namibia’s Digital Health Landscape

Namibia has demonstrated a commitment to digital health through the launch of the National eHealth Strategy for 2021-2025. This strategy aligns with the WHO Global



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Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025 and envisions “a healthy nation enjoying a high standard of living and quality health and social services welfare enabled by eHealth.”

However, several challenges hinder the full realization of this vision:

- Connectivity Issues: Many rural areas lack reliable internet access, impeding the implementation of digital health solutions.
- Paper-Based Systems: A significant number of healthcare facilities continue to rely on manual record-keeping, leading to inefficiencies.
- Workforce Training: There’s a pressing need to equip healthcare workers with digital competencies to effectively utilize new technologies.

Insights from the Digital Health Skills for Africa (DHSA) Program

As a participant in the DHSA program, I gained valuable insights into how other African nations are navigating the digital health landscape:

- Ghana: Dr. Edward Agyemang, a digital informatics specialist, discussed Ghana’s plans to implement nationwide EHRs, aiming to streamline patient information management and enhance healthcare delivery.
- Kenya: Sylvia Mwelu, a digital health technical lead at the Kenya Health Informatics Association (KeHIA), shed light on Kenya’s decade-long journey to develop a Digital Health Act and related policies. The inclusion of digital health in the current Kenyan president’s manifesto underscores the nation’s commitment to integrating technology into healthcare.
- Nigeria: Obinna Ezeani, a digital health specialist, emphasized the importance

Balancing Growth and Social Upliftment:

The National Budget in a New Dispensation

25 March 2025 | 09h00-11h00 | Hilton Windhoek



Salomo Hei
MD: High Economic
Intelligence (Presenter)



Jason Kasuto
EAN Chairperson
(Panelist)



**Prof Teresia
Kaulihowa**
Associate Dean:
NUST (Panelist)



Floris Bergh
Chief Economist:
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of interoperability, the ability of different systems to work together seamlessly. This aspect is crucial for ensuring that various digital health tools can communicate effectively, a lesson pertinent to Namibia's context.

Charting the Path Forward for Namibia

To harness the potential of digital health, Namibia should consider the following steps:

1. **Develop Comprehensive Policies:** Drawing from Kenya's experience, formulating robust digital health policies can provide a clear framework for implementation.

2. **Invest in Infrastructure:** Addressing connectivity challenges by expanding internet access, particularly in rural areas, is essential to support digital health initiatives.

3. **Capacity Building:** Implementing training programs to equip healthcare workers with the necessary digital skills ensures they can effectively utilize new technologies.

4. **Foster Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborating with international organizations, private sector players, and other African nations can facilitate knowledge and resource sharing.

5. **Ensure Interoperability:** Adopting standards that allow different digital health systems to work together facilitates seamless data exchange and improves patient care.

Achieving digital transformation in healthcare requires dedicated leadership and a collective effort. It's not a task for a single individual but a collaborative endeavor involving various stakeholders.

By learning from the experiences of other African countries and tailoring strategies to its unique context, Namibia can make significant strides toward a digitally empowered healthcare system that benefits all its citizens.

** Tuwilika Nafuka is a Medical Doctor, Africa CDC Bingwa PLUS and DHSA fellow, digital health transformation champion and social justice advocate. She is passionate about leveraging technology to revolutionize health care systems.*



Windhoek approves building plans worth N\$2.16 billion

The Windhoek municipality approved 1,929 building plans worth N\$2.16 billion between February 2024 and February 2025, reflecting a 4% year-on-year (y/y) increase in number and a 31.6% y/y rise



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in value.

In February alone, 142 building plans valued at N\$133.8 million were approved, marking a 13.9% y/y decline in the number of approvals and a 28.9% y/y drop in value compared to the same period last year.

According to IJG, however, monthly data shows a significant rise in approvals.

“During the month, 27 building plans worth N\$26.0 million were completed, which represents a decline of 6.9% y/y in the number of building plans, but a 16.5% y/y increase in the value,” IJG stated.

On a month-on-month (m/m) basis, the number of approvals surged by 91.9%, while the total value of approved plans soared by 184.4%.

Despite minimal activity in approvals or completions for commercial and residential units in February, analysts believe that lower interest rates could support continued growth in approvals throughout the year. “The twelve-month cumulative data further reinforces this positive outlook, with the value of approved building plans steadily increasing since 2023,” IJG noted.

The Bank of Namibia reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.75% in February, a move expected to stimulate construction activity.

Meanwhile, 116 building plan additions were approved in February, an 8.2% y/y increase.

“Despite the twelve-month cumulative rise in the number of approved property additions, the value of these additions declined by 4.7% y/y over the twelve-month period,” IJG said.

Thirteen additions to properties were completed during the month, reflecting an 18.2% y/y increase in the number of completions and a 61.1% y/y rise in value.

Although residential unit approvals declined by 27.8% y/y, their total value increased by 45.5% y/y. A total of 26 residential units, valued at N\$54.0 million, were approved in February.

No commercial or industrial plans have been approved by the City in 2025, and no commercial or industrial units were completed in February.

“On a twelve-month cumulative basis, the number of approved units declined by 14.3% y/y but saw a 56.0% y/y uptick in the value of approved units,” IJG said.

Redefining Boundaries: A new era of leadership and possibility

By Ipupa Fadeyi

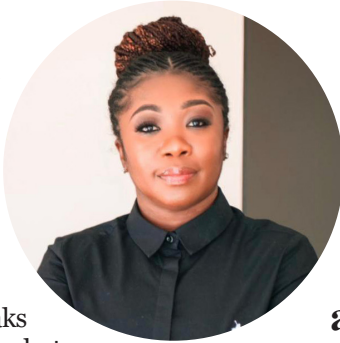
As the Nation inaugurates its First Female President, this moment is more than a milestone—it is a testament to the power of perseverance, resilience and redefining boundaries.

It is a moment that speaks not only to women and girls but to the entire nation, reminding us all that leadership is not defined by gender but by vision, courage and the ability to inspire change.

This occasion aligns beautifully with the celebration of Women’s Month, reinforcing the importance of empowerment, self-belief and the willingness to step into new opportunities. The significance of this moment extends beyond politics; it is about possibility. It is about a young girl in a classroom somewhere in Namibia daring to dream bigger, a woman in business stepping forward with renewed confidence and a nation embracing a broader definition of leadership.

The Power of Representation

For centuries, leadership in many sectors has been viewed through a limited lens. Seeing a woman rise to the highest office in the land challenges outdated perceptions



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True leadership is not about titles; it is about influence, impact and integrity.

and opens doors for others to walk through. It tells the girl child that she is not confined to predefined roles; she can lead, innovate and shape the future. It tells women that their ambitions are valid, that their voices matter and that their contributions are indispensable.

Representation is not just about visibility—it is about responsibility. When someone redefines boundaries, they do not do so just for themselves but for those who will come after them. It is a call for every woman and girl to step forward with boldness, knowing that their dreams are possible and their aspirations are worth pursuing.

Rising Above Limiting Beliefs

Throughout history, many have been conditioned to believe in limitations—some self-imposed, others reinforced by society. How often have we heard the words, “This is not for you,” “You are not ready,” or



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“People like you don’t do this”? But each time someone defies these words, they pave the way for others to do the same.

Leadership is not reserved for a select few; it is cultivated in those who dare to believe in themselves. Whether in business, education, entrepreneurship, or the creative arts, every step taken beyond fear is a step toward transformation. We must teach the girl child that her potential is limitless, that she is not defined by societal expectations but by the dreams she dares to chase.

The Responsibility of Leadership

True leadership is not about titles; it is about influence, impact and integrity.

It is about the ability to lift others as we climb, ensuring that we create opportunities for those who follow. Namibia’s historic moment is a reminder that leadership is an ever-expanding platform—it is not about reaching the top alone but about bringing others along on the journey.

This applies to every sphere of life. A teacher who inspires students to think beyond textbooks is a leader. A businesswoman who mentors others to succeed is a leader. A young girl who refuses to shrink her dreams because of fear is a leader. Leadership is about stepping forward with authenticity, about serving with purpose and about building a legacy that others can build upon.

Embracing Growth and Continuous Learning

One of the greatest boundaries to success is the belief that we are not ready or not good enough. But growth is a continuous journey, not a destination. Those who succeed are not those who know it all, but those who are willing to learn, evolve and adapt.

Every woman who aspires to leadership—whether in her career, community, or personal life—must embrace a mindset of lifelong learning.

Challenges will come, but they are not stop signs; they are stepping stones. Setbacks will occur, but they are not failures; they are lessons. As we mark this moment in history,

let it be a reminder that we must never stop growing, never stop striving and never stop believing in what is possible.

A Collective Call to Action

This historic moment is not just for women; it is for the entire nation. Growth, innovation and progress happen when people of all backgrounds work together toward a shared vision. It is a call to action for men and women alike—to support, uplift and create environments where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive.

To business leaders: mentor and invest in the next generation. To educators: encourage young minds to dream beyond limitations. To parents: teach both your daughters and sons that leadership is not about gender but about courage and character. To individuals: take bold steps in your own journey, knowing that every step forward is a step toward progress.

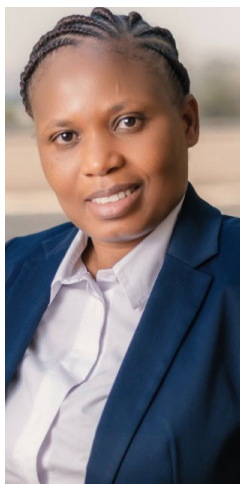
Final Thoughts

As we celebrate Women’s Month and this defining moment in Namibia’s history, let it serve as an inspiration for all of us—women, men and the generations to come.

May we all continue to step forward with confidence, knowing that leadership is not about who we are expected to be, but about who we choose to become.

Congratulations to Her Excellency Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah on this historic milestone—may her leadership inspire generations to rise above limitations, embrace their potential and shape a future of limitless possibilities!

****Ipupa Fadeyi is the founder of IpupaK Grow You, a career mentorship and leadership coaching firm dedicated to Raising a Generation of Young Professional Leaders. Through the CEO of Your Career initiative, her mission is to empower young professionals and emerging leaders to take charge of their growth, unlock their potential and achieve lasting career success.***



EAN to host public discussion on 2025 National Budget

The Economic Association of Namibia (EAN) will host a public discussion on March 25 at the Hilton Hotel under the theme, Balancing Growth and Social Upliftment: The National Budget in a New Dispensation.

The event will provide a platform for stakeholders to analyze the 2025 National Budget and its alignment with the development goals of the incoming administration. It is expected to bring together 60 participants, including policymakers, government officials, economists, financial experts, business representatives, academics, and civil society organizations.

Key discussion points will include social sector expenditure in education, health, and social welfare, as well as the prioritization of infrastructure development, a key promise of the new President. Additionally, the dialogue will examine fiscal policy measures required to stimulate job creation

and explore how the newly appointed Minister of Finance will balance increased government spending with fiscal discipline and macroeconomic stability.

The panel will include Jason Kasuto, Chairperson of EAN; Prof. Teresia Kaulihowa, Associate Dean at the Namibia University of Science and Technology; and Floris Bergh, Chief Economist at Capricorn Asset Management. Salomo Hei, Managing Director of High Economic Intelligence, will present at the event.

The event, held in collaboration with Capricorn Group, the Hanns Seidel Foundation, and High Economic Intelligence, aims to foster an informed debate on the national budget's role in addressing Namibia's economic challenges. The discussion will also assess how the budget aligns with the new administration's development agenda while ensuring a balance between economic growth, social upliftment, and fiscal sustainability.

Empowering Namibians through local content in the oil and gas industry

By Laimi N. Shigwedha

The discovery and development of oil and gas resources in Namibia present a significant opportunity for economic transformation.

However, for these benefits to be widely shared, local content policies must be prioritized and effectively implemented. As someone deeply involved in the offshore and oil and gas industry, I am passionate about ensuring that young Namibians are included in this sector, especially given the high unemployment rate in the country.

Maximizing Local Participation in Namibia's Energy Sector

Local content refers to the participation of Namibian businesses, workforce, and supply chains in the oil and gas industry. This means prioritizing the hiring of Namibians, procuring goods and services from local businesses, and ensuring skills transfer and capacity building within the country. A strong local content framework helps maximize economic benefits, build local expertise, and create sustainable employment opportunities.

With Namibia's oil and gas sector still in its early stages, we have a critical window to put in place policies and practices that ensure that Namibians benefit meaningfully from these resources. Without a deliberate effort, we risk foreign companies dominating the industry while local businesses and professionals struggle to participate.

Overcoming Barriers to Local Content Implementation

Despite the growing recognition of local content's importance, several challenges



True leadership is not about titles; it is about influence, impact and integrity.

hinder its full implementation in Namibia:

1. Bridging the Skills Gap

Many technical and specialized jobs in the oil and gas industry require expertise that Namibia is still developing. While international experience is crucial, it is equally important to train and upskill Namibians to take up these roles in the near future.

2. Creating Opportunities for Local Businesses

Many Namibian businesses, particularly SMEs, struggle to secure contracts in the oil and gas sector due to stringent requirements, lack of financial capacity, and limited experience with large-scale energy projects.

3. Increasing Youth Awareness and Industry Exposure

Many young Namibians are not aware of the opportunities available in the oil and gas industry, nor do they have access to mentorship, training, and career pathways in this field.

Empowering Namibians Through Local Content in the Oil and Gas Industry Continues Strategies for Enhancing Local Content and Youth Involvement

To address these challenges, I strongly believe that Namibia must focus on the following:

1. Investing in Education and Skills Development
Strengthening technical and vocational training programs to equip Namibians with the skills required for oil and gas operations.

Expanding apprenticeships and on-the-job training to expose young Namibians to the realities of working in the energy sector.

2. Supporting Local Businesses and Entrepreneurs
Providing financial and mentorship support to Namibian companies to help them meet the industry's requirements.

Encouraging joint ventures between international and local companies to facilitate knowledge transfer and business growth.

3. Implementing and Enforcing Local Content Policies
Establishing clear regulatory frameworks with measurable targets for employment, training, and local procurement.

Regularly monitoring and reporting on local content compliance to ensure meaningful participation of Namibians in the sector.

4. Empowering Youth with Knowledge and Opportunities

Creating platforms such as energy forums, mentorship programs, and industry engagement sessions to connect young professionals with key stakeholders.

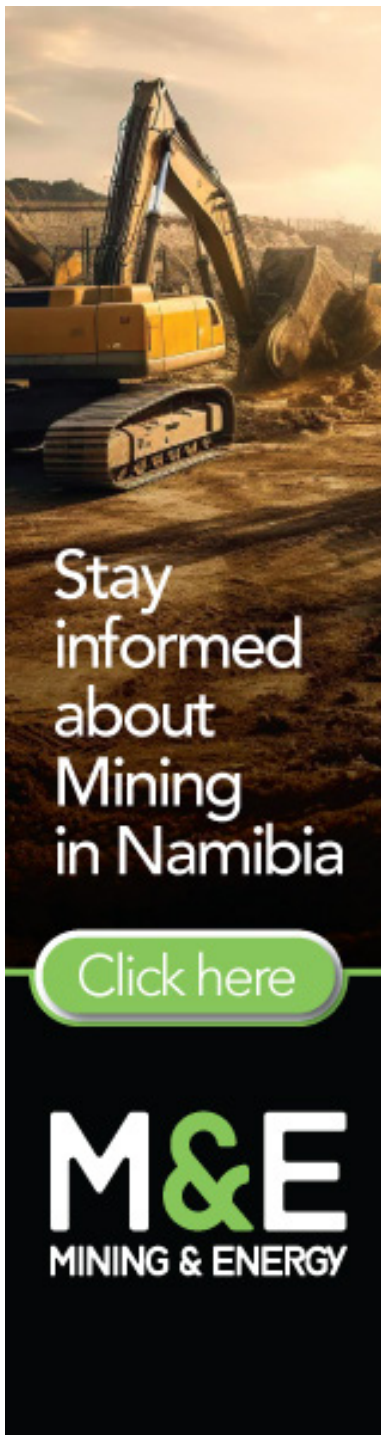
Introducing career awareness initiatives in schools and universities to encourage students to explore opportunities in energy.

The Road Ahead: Building a Sustainable Future for Namibians

If Namibia is to fully benefit from its oil and gas discoveries, local content must be at the center of all industry activities. Young people, in particular, should be given the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to play a key role in the country's energy sector. As someone who has worked both offshore and in business development within the oil and gas industry, I am committed to advocating for policies and programs that will ensure Namibians are not left behind.

By prioritizing local content, we can turn Namibia's energy potential into a driver of economic inclusion, job creation, and national prosperity. The time to act is now.

****Laimi N. Shigwedha is an experienced offshore and marine professional passionate about local content development and youth empowerment in Namibia's oil and gas industry.***



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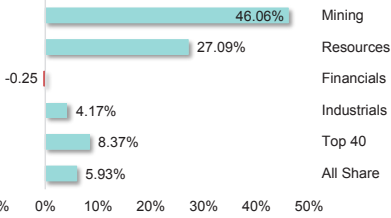
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Platinum	973.27
Palladium	951.50
Silver	30.95
Uranium	63.45
Brent Crude	72.79
Iron Ore	94.37
Copper	9842.15
Natural Gas	3.95
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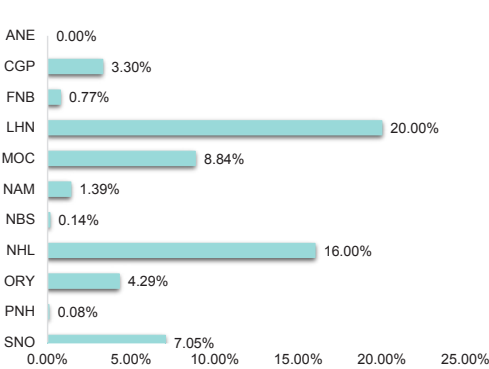
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GBP/ZAR	23.4884
USD/CNY	7.2577
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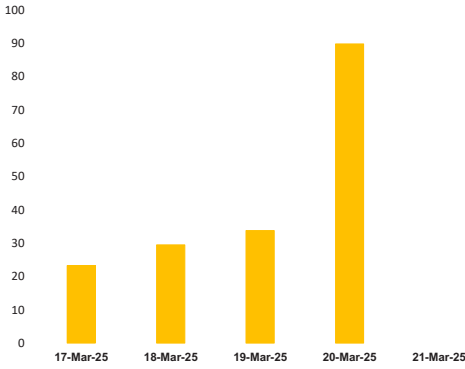
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NSX Local Stocks: Year to Date in %



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Global Indices: Year to Date in %

