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THE

BRIEF

News Worth Knowing

Public service leave payouts costing government millions

A close-up photograph of a white document titled 'LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST' in large, bold, black capital letters. The document is placed on a dark, textured desk surface. In the background, a white computer keyboard is visible. In the foreground, a silver and gold pen lies on the left side of the document.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
REQUEST

FRIDAY 16 MAY 2025

MAIN STORY

Public service leave payouts costing government millions

The Namibian government is spending millions of dollars each quarter on paying out leave days to civil servants, with a significant portion of these claims suspected to be fraudulent.

This was revealed by the Chairperson of the Public Service Commission (PSC), Salmaan Jacobs, who is calling for urgent reforms to curb the growing financial losses.

Jacobs told The Brief that the PSC recently conducted a study covering the months of July, August and September 2024, which showed that more than N\$11 million was paid out in leave day claims during that three-month period alone.

“Government is spending a lot of money on paying out leave days. We are concerned about it. And we wanted to tell all the offices, ministries and agencies (OMAs) to manage their leave days,” he said.

“More than N\$11 million was claimed during that time, which is alarming.”

He explained that the bulk of the problem stems from the absence of an automated system to monitor and manage public servants’ attendance and leave records.

“Government is spending a lot of money on unbudgeted issues like leave, for example; where people stay away from



Crucial Dates

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

work and claim leave,” Jacobs said.

“If these things are properly recorded, such as entry and exit into the public service, leave days – everything will be on the system. Therefore, someone would not be on leave and later claim that they were not on leave.”

Jacobs noted that some employees exploit the manual system by failing to report leave properly, only to later demand payment for unused days.

“That is why we are saying, if the process had been automated, this would not be taking place, because we currently don't have the information that would enable us to control the entire system,” he said.

There are currently over 107,000 civil servants on government’s payroll, with the public wage bill standing at around N\$35.4 billion in the previous financial year. This figure includes benefits and a recent 5% salary increment.

Jacobs also pointed to challenges posed by existing labour legislation, which obliges government to pay out unused

leave days when employees exit the public service, regardless of whether the leave was recorded or has lapsed.

“The Labour Act requires government to pay out someone’s unused leave days when they leave the public service. Whether they lapsed or not, I must pay them. We are busy with that dilemma currently and we are trying to get out of it by suggesting amendments to the Labour Act,” he said.

“Some people capitalise on that and then come up with all kinds of excuses not to record their leave days and in that way, government is losing.”

Jacobs previously indicated that the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology is in the process of drafting legislation aimed at digitalising several public service processes, including recruitment and leave day management.

He stressed that digitisation would bring accountability and efficiency, helping to prevent abuse and close existing loopholes in the system.

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MEDIA RELEASE



PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

ECB APPROVES 3.8% NAMPOWER BULK ELECTRICITY TARIFF FOR THE 2025/2026 FINANCIAL PERIOD

1. BULK TARIFF APPLICATION

In accordance with the existing legal provisions, NamPower submitted a tariff application for an effective bulk tariff increase of 17.44% for both generation and transmission tariff. NamPower submitted their bulk tariff application on 17 February 2025. The requested adjustment would have resulted in a bulk tariff increase from N\$ 1.9856 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to N\$ 2.3319 per kWh for the financial period 2025/2026.

The Board of Directors of the Electricity Control Board (ECB) met on 16 April 2025 and 12 May 2025, to deliberate on the NamPower bulk tariff application submitted, which will be effective 01 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

2. ECB BULK TARIFF REVIEW PROCESS

2.1. ECB Internal Review Process

- In accordance with the tariff regulatory tools, the ECB conducted a comprehensive review process that included:
- a. Detailed analysis of the submitted tariff application;
 - b. Financial impact analysis on NamPower;
 - c. Economic impact analysis of the application; and
 - d. Optimal dispatch of the local generation versus contracted imports of electricity.

Based on the detailed analysis, NamPower's revenue requirement was adjusted from N\$8.8 billion to N\$8.1 billion.

2.2. Bulk Tariff Review Process Stakeholder Consultations

As part of the bulk tariff review process, the ECB facilitated stakeholder consultation meetings where NamPower presented its tariff application to various stakeholders. These stakeholders included members of the public, ratepayers' associations, business and employer federations and associations, agricultural unions, independent power producers (IPPs), the renewable energy association, Government Ministries and agencies, and electricity distributors. Stakeholders were invited to engage and interrogate NamPower's application and to provide verbal and/or written comments and inputs for ECB's deliberation. The ECB indeed considered the comments and inputs provided, in determining the final tariff.

3. BULK TARIFF REVIEW OUTCOME

After due consideration, especially the impact on affordability of electricity, and in accordance with the ECB tariff review methodology, the ECB Board resolved to approve a 3.8% for NamPower instead of the 17.44% initially requested by NamPower. However, the 3.8% will be supported with a financial support of N\$263 million by the shareholder (Namibian Government), equivalent to 3.8%. This adjustment changes the average tariff from the current approved rate of N\$1.9856 per kWh to N\$ 2.0511 per kWh for the financial period 2025/2026.

Regarding the impact of the approved bulk tariff on the economy, with the tariff increasing at 3.8%, below the current inflation rate of 4.2% (March 2025), it is expected that the tariff adjustment will have minimal impact on future inflation as well as on prices of goods and services. But it will slightly negatively impact the GDP growth as electricity cost is a component of the inflation calculation.

4. PRIMARY FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE BULK TARIFF ADJUSTMENT

The primary factors influencing the tariff adjustment include:

- i. An increase in the return on assets and depreciation due to the revaluation of the transmission regulatory asset base, which rose from N\$14.55 billion to N\$21.1 billion.
- ii. The cost of electricity generation, particularly the expenses associated with imported electricity. Approximately 29% of the generation cost is denominated in US dollar, making it susceptible to currency exchange fluctuations.

Further, NamPower's revenue is based on the approved budgeted costs, volumes (energy and capacity), and tariffs. The 2023/2024 period saw an over-recovery of N\$963 million, attributed to higher-than-projected generation from the Ruacana Hydropower Plant. This over-recovery was considered, to reduce the revenue requirement, and therefore providing relief to customers.

We wish to highlight that the ECB assessed the various factors of the financial impact of the tariff increase of 3.8% and Government financial support of N\$263 million on NamPower's financial sustainability, and we confirm that NamPower will remain financially sustainable.

5. AVERAGE GENERATION AND TRANSMISSION TARIFF PER SOURCE

The following table indicates the average generation and transmission tariffs per source, to give an indication of the current tariff and projected tariff path.

Table 1: Average Generation and Transmission Tariff per source:

Generation Source	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27*	2027/28*	2028/29*	2029/30*
NamPower	0.5051	0.5645	0.4070	0.4083	0.4106	0.4135
IPPs	1.4338	1.3685	1.2974	1.3518	1.4086	1.4678
Imports	1.7507	2.1210	2.2101	2.3029	2.3996	2.5004
Average Generation Tariff	1.3356	1.1526	1.3750	1.3340	1.1889	1.2483
Transmission Tariff	0.5228	0.6075	0.7202	0.7562	0.7941	0.8338
Reliability Tariff	0.1258	0.1429	0.1688	0.1772	0.1861	0.1954
Losses	0.1349	0.1582	0.1514	0.1590	0.1669	0.1753
Total bulk tariff	1.9856	2.0611	2.2855	2.4454	2.5188	2.5944
Tariff Increases	0%	3.8%	11%	7%	3%	3%

*Italics: Forecasted (the asterisk serves to provide clarity in the event a photocopy isn't clear or some persons can't distinguish between plain and italicized text)

6. DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES TARIFF APPLICATION PROCESS

The approved bulk electricity tariff will be applicable to NamPower bulk customers such as Regional Electricity Distributors (REDs), Local Authorities, Regional Councils and large industrial transmission customers (e.g. mines). All distribution licensees will individually apply to the ECB for a review of their distribution tariffs, which, when applied timely, will be applicable to end consumers effective from 01 July 2025.

To enhance end-consumers' involvement in the determination of end-consumer tariff, all major distribution utilities will

continue to present their tariff applications directly to end-consumers in their designated areas. These engagements will be facilitated by the ECB, and we believe it will give licensees the opportunity to clarify and explain their tariff applications to their customers. The engagements have been scheduled to take place as follows:

Table 2: Licensee - End Consumer Consultative Engagement:

Date	Licensee	Town	Venue	Starting Time
2 June	Keetmanshoop Municipality	Keetmanshoop	Westdene Moth Hall	14:00 – 16:00
4 June	ERONGO RED	Walvis Bay	Municipality Hall	10:00 – 12:00
6 June	City of Windhoek	Windhoek	Khomas Regional Council Hall	14:00 – 16:00
9 June	CENORED	Tsambie	Namtsombi Community Hall	17:00 – 19:00
11 June	Oshakati Premier Electric (OPE)	Oshakati	Oshandira Lodge	09:00 – 11:00
	NORED	Ongwediva	Ongwediva Trade Fair Centre Conference Hall	17:00 – 19:00
12 June	NORED	Rundu	Regional Council Auditorium	17:00 – 19:00

NB: Please note that the presentation dates will be published in the local media outlets and on social media platforms of the ECB and the distribution utilities.

In addition, all distribution utilities are urged to apply for their annual tariff reviews before the end of May 2025. Utilities that do not apply for tariff adjustments in time to coincide with the implementation of the bulk tariffs, which is effective 01 July 2025, will lose revenue because they will be selling electricity based on outdated tariffs while purchasing on new tariffs, especially pre-paid revenue that is collected through pre-paid sales. We wish to reiterate that this non-constructive practice by some distribution utilities is not financially sustainable, and it affects their financial ability to honour NamPower's bills, and it further affects service delivery. This causes insecurity or instability in electricity supply to end consumers.

7. OVERALL ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SITUATION

For the 2025/2026 period, it is projected that 53% of the national demand will be supplied by local generation, with the remaining 47% to be met with regional imports. The Ruacana Hydropower Plant remains the primary source of local generation, with performance dependent on the water flow of the Kunene River. Compared to other generation sources, electricity is generated relatively cheaply at the Ruacana Hydropower Plant. However, less generation at Ruacana results in increased generation of power from expensive alternatives or imports at higher costs. Electricity is generally considered a low-cost source of electricity.

It is important to note that during the period 2023/2024, Ruacana generation achieved one of its best productions in years, generating 2.067 GWh (Gigawatt-hour or one billion watt-hour) due to favourable water management and water flow conditions.

Notably, there has been an increase in local generation from renewable energy plants over the period. To complement local generation, two plants have been added to the national grid in the 2024/2025 period:

- i. Anxos II – 58MW (Megawatt or one million watts) (Heavy Fuel Oil)
- ii. Khan Solar PV – 20MW

The two aforementioned plants are part of the 79 electricity generation licenses (excluding standby generators) that the ECB has issued, out of which 41 are operational and 38 are still under development. We hope that those licensees that have not yet commissioned their plants will do so soon; this will have a positive impact on end-consumer prices.

To further improve the electricity supply situation, Government introduced the Modified Single Buyer (MSB) Market model, a unique Namibian market platform which allows private generators and contestable customers to transact electricity directly. There are seven (7) operational solar PV plants with a combined installed capacity of 28MW established under the MSB Model. It is anticipated that about 83MW will be commissioned during 2025/2026 financial period, meaning that more electricity will be generated locally, hence reducing imports and overall cost of electricity.

8. ELECTRICITY CONTROL BOARD'S POSITION ON FUTURE SECURITY OF SUPPLY THROUGH A BASELOAD POWER PLANT OPTION

The Electricity Control Board is concerned about the country's reliance on imports and supports efforts to address security of supply. Namibia thus needs to urgently develop a Base Load Power Plant that will stabilize and enhance security of supply and result in cheaper local generated electricity than imports. Base-load power is reliable minimum amount of electricity supplied, or consistently required, to meet demand over a long period, typically 24 hours.

Government's financial support towards capital investments, for such a plant, as opposed to funding operational activities of licensees, will thus be a sustainable way of addressing reliability and affordability in the long run. Investments towards a base-load plant must be accompanied by other investments in strengthening transmission infrastructure, to unlock local generation capacity and export potential.

9. CONCLUSION

Overall, a modern economy cannot function properly without secure and stable electricity supply. Much less without electricity. The stable supply of electricity is critical for economic growth and development. Electricity generation, transmission and distribution costs at variable costs, which must be reviewed regularly in order to provide predictability, availability and stability in the market.

While we are cognizant of the impact of any tariff increase on the end consumers, a zero tariff increase has unintended consequences: deterioration of infrastructure without the necessary and continual refurbishment and renewal, which will lead to an unstable grid, damage to equipment and blackouts. These, in turn, will lead to financial and economic losses, and poor economic performance, thus an unfavourable investment environment for citizens and other interested parties.

Consequently, we wish to assure the public that the ECB takes a measured judgement in every step of the electricity tariff review process, thereby ensuring electricity affordability, reliability and security of supply, and sustained economic industry performance.

END/

Issued by:


Rubeen N. Kahraman,
Chief Executive Officer






Namibia imports N\$136 million citrus planting materials annually

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) has revealed that the country imports over N\$136 million worth of citrus planting materials annually, despite being the third most consumed fruit nationally. NAB highlighted that 96% of citrus fruits available in Namibia are imported, amounting to an annual expenditure of over N\$57.6 million. According to NAB, citrus exports generated N\$23.9 million in 2024, with primary

markets being South Africa and Angola. The Board further reported that 1,783 tonnes of citrus are expected to be harvested in 2025, sourced from over 150,000 citrus trees planted across the country. “Approximately 70% of this harvest is projected to be distributed through formal markets, while the remaining 30% is expected to circulate via informal channels,” the board said. Additionally, Namibia enforces a national



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citrus quality standard (NAMS 0023:2022), which governs the classification, grading, and marketing of citrus fruits.

Commercial citrus farming is concentrated in the Karst, Central, Southern, and Orange River production zones, which are considered optimal for citrus cultivation due to favourable climatic and soil conditions.

This comes as NAB has committed to investing N\$250 million over a five-year period, equating to N\$50 million per year towards the enhancement of agronomic and horticultural production.

This strategic investment is expected to address import substitution, promote export

competitiveness, and facilitate sustainable job creation within the agricultural sector.

Delivering keynote remarks during the launch of the NAB’s updated strategic direction, Chief Executive Officer Fidelis N. Mwazi unveiled the Board’s revised vision and mission statements, which align with its new Integrated Strategic Business Plan (ISBP) and the 5-Year Crop Value Chain Development Strategy (CVCDS) (2025-2030).

Mwazi highlighted that the updated mission emphasises effective legislation, facilitation, and research to ensure the advancement of Namibia’s agronomic sector.

“When we talk about the citrus industry, we are talking about potential, about jobs, about foreign exchange earnings, and most importantly, about transforming the sector to benefit our farmers and the national economy,” Mwazi stated.

The NAB’s renewed strategic focus aims to reduce import dependency, enhance domestic value addition, and contribute to national food security.

The NAB, established under the Agronomic Industry Act (Act No. 20 of 1992), is mandated to regulate, promote, and coordinate the production, processing, storage, and marketing of controlled agronomic crops in Namibia. Citrus fruits are among the products gazetted as controlled under this legislation.



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CPE	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded
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Internet usage	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
CPE	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded
Monthly charge (N\$) (12-month)	749	879	1,199	1,919
Monthly charge (N\$) (24-month)	679	789	1,039	1,779
Monthly charge (N\$) (36-month)	639	749	979	1,679

Speedlink liteplus (Symmetric)				
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Download Speed (up to)	10Mbps	15Mbps	25Mbps	50Mbps
Upload Speed (up to)	10Mbps	15Mbps	25Mbps	50Mbps
Internet usage	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
CPE	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded	Excluded
Monthly charge (N\$) (12-month)	799	889	1,299	1,979
Monthly charge (N\$) (24-month)	719	809	1,169	1,779
Monthly charge (N\$) (36-month)	679	849	1,109	1,679

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The struggle of unemployed Namibian graduates

By Junias Erasmus

In the past few weeks, universities in Namibia have awarded degrees to thousands of students. Graduation ceremonies were full of joy, with families cheering, students shedding tears of happiness, and graduation caps flying in the air.



Parents did not sell kapana under the scorching sun so their children could sit at home in despair.

These events marked the end of years of academic hard work. But behind the celebrations is a painful truth: many of these new graduates are now stepping into an uncertain future, in a country where jobs are hard to find and the economy is not growing fast enough. Parents came from all over the country to celebrate with their children.

Many of them struggled for years just to pay for their children's education. Some sold kapana in the hot sun, others borrowed money they could barely pay back, and many gave up their own needs, just to send their children to university with the hope that education will unlock the gates of prosperity.

They fight tooth and nail to cover expensive tuition fees, accommodation costs, textbooks, and meals, believing in the sacred promise that a degree is a ticket out of poverty.

But for many graduates, the dream they held onto for years fades quickly in the face of a stagnant job market, limited

opportunities, and a system that appears to reward connections over competence.

The university journey ends with applause, gowns, and pictures, but what follows is a silent, private battle filled with rejection emails, unanswered applications, and the growing weight of hopelessness. It's not a walk in the park. It's a walk through a maze with no clear exit.

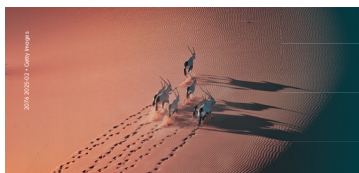
The truth is painful: the education system produces more graduates than the economy can absorb.

Year after year, thousands enter a world that has not been adequately prepared for them.

They are told to "go look for work" as if jobs grow on trees or wait on every corner.

This expectation is deeply unfair. It ignores the structural and economic challenges facing our country.

It dismisses the emotional and psychological toll that prolonged



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unemployment can have on a young mind that once brimmed with confidence and aspiration.

Yet, the narrative must not end here. Yes, the struggle is real, but so is the potential of Namibian youth.

Every graduate walking the streets with a CV in hand is not just another jobseeker; they are a leader in waiting, an entrepreneur in hiding, a solution to a national problem.

What they need is not just sympathy but a system that believes in them beyond the classroom setup. We need reforms that link education to real-world application,

mentorship programmes that guide them, funding for startups, and national policies that prioritize youth employment as a cornerstone of development.

Parents did not sell kapana under the scorching sun so their children could sit at home in despair.

They did it because they believed in a better tomorrow. That belief must be matched by national commitment. Government, private sector, academic institutions, and communities must all come to the table with solutions, not slogans. We must build an economy that

values its graduates, not only when they enter university, but long after they leave it.

The struggle of unemployed Namibian graduates is not just an individual burden, it is a national crisis and a test of our collective will to build an inclusive and empowering society.

These young minds carry the seeds of innovation, growth, and transformation. Let us not waste them. Let us strategically water them with opportunities, and one day, this nation will harvest greatness.

****Junias Erasmus works in the Financial Sector. He is a Management Scientist, a Strategic Scholar & a Motivational Speaker. This article is written in his personal capacity. For inquiries, contact him at Junias99@gmail.com***



Namibian Ports Authority (Namport) hereby invites bids through Open National Bidding (ONB) procedures for the Construction of a Road Over Rail Bridge in the Port of Walvis Bay.

Bid Reference Number	Brief Description	Pre-bid Conference	Last Day for Clarification Requests	Closing Date
W/ONB/NAMPORT-3670/2025	Construction of a Road Over Rail Bridge in the Port of Walvis Bay	Non-Compulsory Pre-bid/Site Visit meeting on 19/05/2025 @10h00 AM	06/06/2025	26/06/2025@ 12h00 PM (Virtual Bid Opening Link available on website)

1. Bids are invited through the Open National Bidding (ONB) procedure and the invitation is open to all eligible bidders. All Bidders must comply with the requirements outlined in the bidding document.
2. Interested eligible bidders are requested to visit the Namport website at <https://www.namport.com.na/procurement> for details of the bidding requirements. Bidders must register as suppliers, express interest in a specific bid, make a payment of the (non-refundable) bid levy of **NS600.00** and submit the proof of payment in order to be granted access to the bidding documents. The Namport Banking Details are available on the link: <https://www.namport.com.na/procurement/banking-details/558/>
3. A Non-compulsory **Pre-Bid/Site Visit meeting** is scheduled for **19 May 2025 AT 10H00 AM**. The meeting will be held at **Executive Boardroom, Namport Head Office, Walvis Bay**. Bidders should take note that the virtual meeting link is also available on the website for bidders that would like to join the meeting virtually.
4. Bids must be delivered to: **The Tender Box, Namibian Ports Authority (Namport) Reception, No. 17 Rikumbi Kandanga Road, Walvis Bay**

ALL enquiries related to these bids must be directed in writing by email to the following contact details:

Procurement Manager Melani de Klerk Tel: +264 208 2319 Email: m.deklerk@namport.com.na or procurement@namport.com.na	Tender and Contracts Administrator Owiike Amunkete Tel: +264 208 2217 Email: o.amunkete@namport.com.na or procurement@namport.com.na
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HANDBOOK



Namibia's hospitality sector sees 41.7% rise in room occupancy in March 2025

Namibia's hospitality industry showed strong signs of recovery in March 2025 as the Rooms Occupancy Rate Index surged by 41.7%, on a monthly basis, rebounding from a contraction of 14.9% in February.

According to the Namibia Statistics

Agency (NSA), however, on an annual basis, the index reflected a decline of 10.1%.

The NSA attributed the monthly recovery to increased room occupancy across all regions. The northern region led with a 47.9% increase, followed closely by the southern region at 47.1%. The central and



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coastal regions recorded increases of 44.6% and 14.9%, respectively.

"A total of 60,369 rooms were available nationwide in March, of which 26,725 rooms (44.3%) were sold. In contrast, only 15,546 rooms (31.2%) were sold out of 49,772 available in February," said NSA.

In regional performance, the northern region recorded 25,644 available rooms in March 2025, up from 20,412 in February and 21,700 in March 2024.

"The region sold 10,584 rooms, a significant increase from 5,698 in February and 9,938 in March the previous year," said NSA.

In the southern region, 19,962 rooms were available, with 9,584 sold, leaving a surplus of 10,378 unsold rooms during the reporting period.

Meanwhile, accommodation types also saw notable increases in occupancy rates as Guest houses recorded a 56.1% occupancy rate in March, up from 36.6% in February.

"Hotels followed with an increase to 47.9% from 42.1%. Lodges saw occupancy improve to 42.4%, up from 27.1%, while tented lodges rose to 42.1% from 35.8%. Rest camps also reported gains, with occupancy rising to 36.7% from 12.2% in the previous month," noted NSA.

The Bed Occupancy Rate Index reflected similar trends, registering a 38.7% increase in March, recovering from a 21.1% decline in February. Year-on-year, however, the index declined by 17.6%.


The central region recorded the highest growth in bed occupancy at 54.1%, followed by the southern region at 47.1%. The northern and coastal regions recorded increases of 36.0% and 17.4%, respectively.

"In total, 47,488 beds were sold out of 130,833 available in March, an improvement from 27,585 beds sold out of 105,439 available in February," said the agency.

Regionally, the northern region reported 56,163 available beds in March, compared to 42,140 in February and 42,842 in March 2024.

The southern region followed with 44,369 beds available, up from 36,699 in February and 40,300 in March 2024. The coastal and central regions had 19,995 and 10,306 beds available, respectively.

"Across all accommodation types, bed occupancy increased compared to February. Guest houses led with 49.3%, followed by lodges at 39.2%, tented lodges at 36.2%, hotels at 33.0%, and rest camps at 20.0%," said NSA.




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EU pledges continued investment in Namibia's economy and green transition

Namibia and the European Union on Thursday marked 35 years of formal diplomatic and economic cooperation, with both parties reaffirming commitments to trade, development finance, and green industrialisation.

At the Europe Day celebration in Windhoek, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Trade, Jenelly Matundu, described the EU as a consistent and trusted partner since Namibia's independence.

"This cordial relationship has been maintained since 1990, and the EU has become a major trading partner for Namibia," she said.

Matundu highlighted EU financial support across multiple sectors, including infrastructure, education, and clean energy. Key funding has come through the European Development Fund (EDF).

She noted several flagship projects, including N\$320 million for early childhood development and N\$45 million



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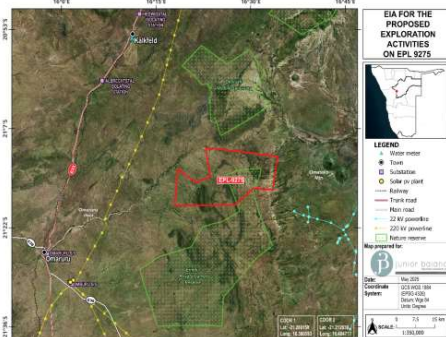


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“This partnership is already yielding tangible

“We look forward to further elevating AU-EU cooperation and strengthening Namibia’s role within it,” said Martins.

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The AI dilemma: Walking the tightrope of innovation and humanity

By Stantin Siebritz

Artificial Intelligence is advancing at a remarkable pace, delivering innovations once confined to science fiction. From early disease detection to seamless speech interpretation, AI is reshaping industries and redefining human capabilities. Yet, as this technological momentum accelerates, a critical question arises: how can we leverage these tools without compromising ethical standards or diminishing our humanity?

AI's Expanding Role in Medicine and Communication

AI's impact on healthcare is particularly noteworthy. Recent developments include the identification of a gene linked to Alzheimer's disease—previously dismissed as a mere biomarker. By decoding complex protein interactions, AI has opened new avenues for targeted treatment, offering renewed hope for medical research.

Equally transformative is AI's role in bridging the gap between human cognition and machine processing. Companies such as Neuralink are pioneering brain-computer interfaces that enable individuals with conditions like ALS to communicate via implants that convert neural signals into speech. These innovations exemplify AI's potential to restore essential human functions.

The Imperative of Ethical Oversight

Despite these breakthroughs, the risks associated with AI must not be overlooked. AI systems are only as reliable as the data



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AI's impact on healthcare is particularly noteworthy.

they are trained on. When datasets are biased or incomplete, the resulting algorithms can reinforce discrimination, particularly in areas such as recruitment and financial services. Unlike humans, AI lacks moral judgement and contextual understanding, necessitating rigorous oversight to ensure fairness and accountability.

A more subtle concern is the phenomenon of “cognitive offloading,” where overreliance on AI tools may erode critical thinking skills. While media portrayals—such as those by the YouTube channel ColdFusion—may exaggerate this risk, they underscore the importance of maintaining intellectual engagement in an increasingly automated world.

Transhumanism: Promise and Peril

The integration of AI with human biology, often referred to as transhumanism, raises profound ethical and societal questions. While technological enhancements can restore sight or mobility, they also challenge notions of identity, equity, and what it means to be human. The cautionary tale of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* remains relevant, reminding us of the dangers of unchecked innovation.

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There is also the risk of deepening inequality if such enhancements are accessible only to the affluent. To prevent this, policies must ensure that AI-human integration is governed by medical necessity rather than financial means, prioritising those with verifiable health conditions.

Opportunities and Responsibilities in Africa

For Namibia and the broader African continent, AI presents both significant opportunities and complex challenges. With the potential to bypass outdated technologies, African nations are uniquely positioned to adopt AI in a way that is inclusive and culturally attuned.

Key policy recommendations include:

- **Human oversight in critical sectors:** Establish robust review mechanisms to ensure human accountability in areas such as healthcare, justice, and public administration.
- **AI literacy and education:** Promote widespread understanding of AI among policymakers, educators, and the public to support informed decision-making.
- **Ethical integration of AI enhancements:** Limit physical AI augmentations to individuals with demonstrable medical needs, avoiding misuse or inequitable access.

Furthermore, African AI strategies should reflect the continent's values, such as ubuntu—emphasising shared humanity—to ensure that technological progress supports inclusive development.

Conclusion: Ethics as a Strategic Imperative

The AI revolution requires a proactive ethical framework. Rather than reacting to crises, stakeholders must anticipate challenges and embed ethical considerations into the foundation of AI development. For Namibia and Africa, this is a chance to lead by example, setting global standards that prioritise human dignity, equitable access, and responsible innovation.

By placing ethics at the heart of AI policy, the continent can harness the full potential of this transformative technology while safeguarding the values that define our shared humanity.

**Stantin Siebritz is Managing Director of New Creation Solutions, and a Namibian Artificial Intelligence Specialist*



Namibia called to leverage resources, infrastructure to advance circular economy

Namibia is uniquely positioned to become a leader in Africa's circular economy and green transition by building on its strong infrastructure, young workforce, and natural resources.

According to Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Finland Sakarias Rantala, Namibia's advantages include an entrepreneurial and educated workforce, vast natural resources like minerals, sunlight, wind and progressive environmental legislation.

During the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF) 2025 Studio event held in Windhoek, he said these factors provide significant potential for producing green energy and synthetic fuels.

He also noted that Namibia has some strong legislation concerning the environment and waste management, and it has adopted an innovative approach to attract investment into sectors with the potential to diversify the economy and create more jobs.

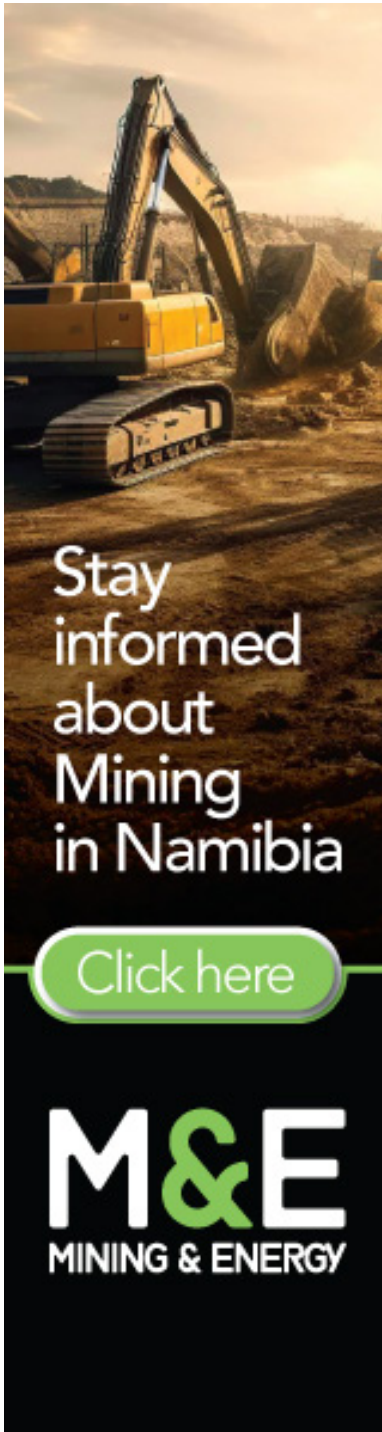
"The green and circular economy is definitely among these sectors where there are great opportunities in Namibia. What is needed now is connection, collaboration, and the space to experiment," he said.

The WCEF2025 Studio forms part of a global network of events complementing the main World Circular Economy Forum, fostering regional perspectives and practical dialogue.

Rantala also shared Finland's experience as the first country to adopt a national circular economy roadmap in 2016, which has accelerated its path toward carbon neutrality by 2035.

"This journey has also given Finnish companies a competitive edge. Today, many of them are global leaders in fields like bio-based packaging, renewable energy solutions, and sustainable materials. Circularity, in other words, has not held us back. It has pushed us forward," he said.

From the local government perspective,



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The green and circular economy is definitely among these sectors where there are great opportunities in Namibia. What is needed now is connection, collaboration, and the space to experiment.

the City of Windhoek’s Section Head for Solid Waste Management, Gideon Hengari, spoke about the City’s commitment to environmental sustainability and waste management innovation.

“Windhoek held the title of Africa’s cleanest city for many years. While we may not be number one anymore, I truly appreciate the cleanliness of our city and country. Kudos to all of us,” Hengari said.

He detailed how the City’s approved waste management policy and international partnerships have supported circular economy initiatives.

“Through a €14 million grant from the EU, we supported six waste-focused startups that recycle plastics, tyres, paper, and other materials. These small enterprises are transforming waste into valuable products and creating jobs,” Hengari explained.

A key project highlighted was the development of Windhoek’s Biodiversity Centre, which encourages residents to view waste as a resource and supports innovative waste conversion methods.

“Our Biodiversity Centre encourages residents to view waste as a resource. Materials that cannot be sorted are converted into fuel for cement production. These initiatives reflect our commitment to innovation, sustainability, and livelihoods,” said Hengari.

The WCEF 2025 is scheduled to take place in São Paulo, Brazil, from 13 to 16 May 2025.



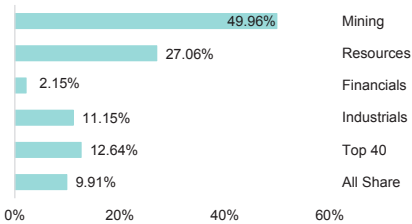
Commodities

Spot Gold	3170.84
Platinum	987.00
Palladium	965.49
Silver	32.17
Uranium	70.50
Brent Crude	64.68
Iron Ore	95.31
Copper	9618.34
Natural Gas	3.39
Lithium	8.15

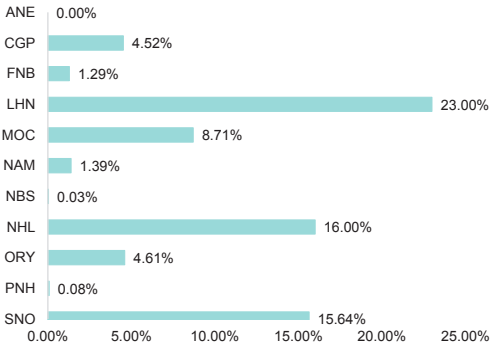
Currencies

USD/ZAR	18.1256
EUR/ZAR	19.2300
GBP/ZAR	24.0449
USD/CNY	7.2093
EUR/USD	1.1161
GBP/USD	1.3265
USD/RUB	80.7809
CPI	3.60%
Repo Rate	6.75%
Prime Rate	10.50%

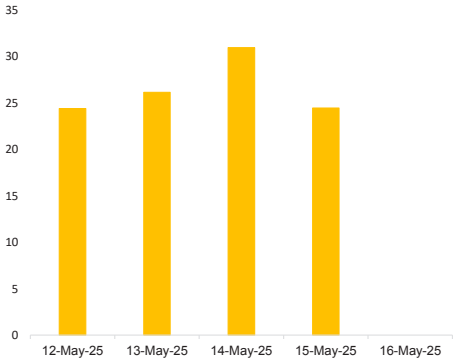
JSE Sectors: Year to Date in %



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