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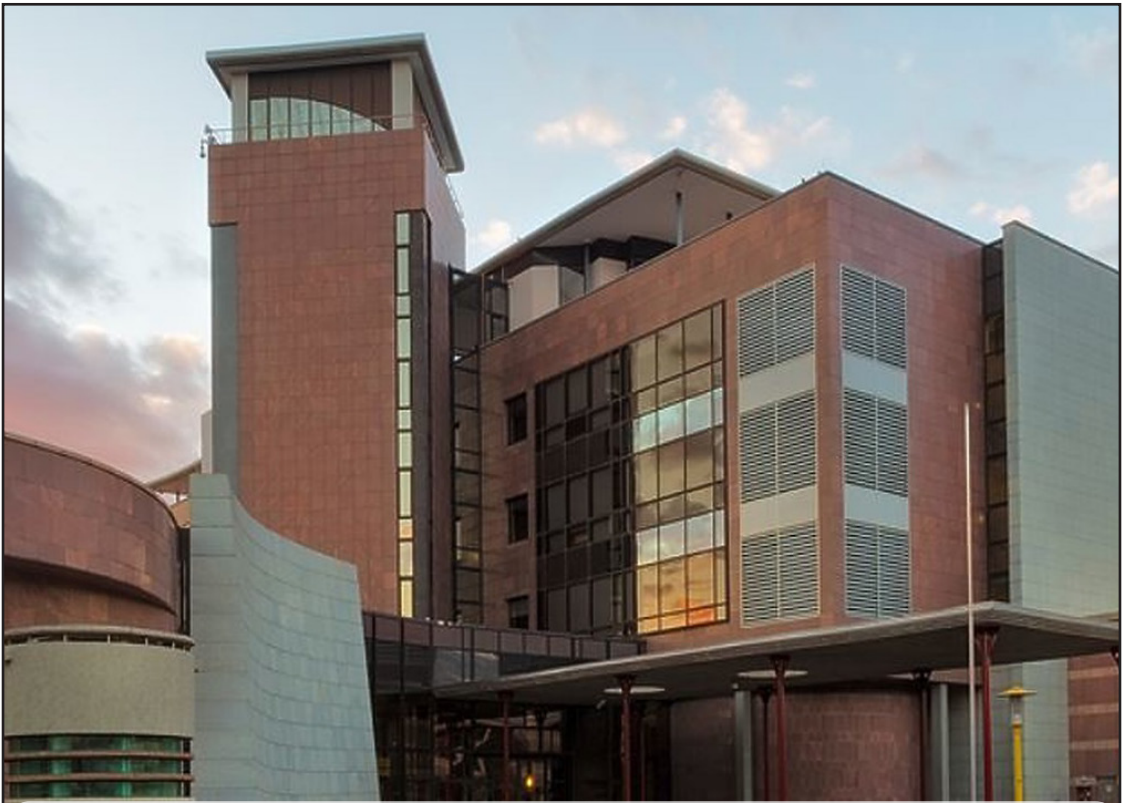
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News Worth Knowing



Namibia's Sovereign Wealth Fund grows to N\$479 million

WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2025

MAIN STORY

category resulted mainly from increases in the price levels of Bread, cake flour (from -2.4% to 21.5%); bread (from -3.8% to 14.0%); and Cakes (from 6.0% to 12.0 %).

The price levels of Sugar, jam, honey, syrups, chocolate, and confectionary increased by 9.7 percent



Namibia's Sovereign Wealth Fund grows to N\$479 million

Namibia's Welwitschia Sovereign Wealth Fund has grown by N\$219 million since its launch in 2022, bringing its total balance to N\$479 million, according to the Bank of Namibia.

The central bank said the fund, created to support intergenerational wealth and

Crucial Dates

- Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement date:
* 3 December 2025

Namibia's Sovereign Wealth Fund, seeded with N\$260 million in 2022, has grown substantially through investment returns alone, reaching US\$ 27.7 million, or approximately N\$479 million, by September 2025.

economic stability, has expanded solely through investment returns since its establishment.

"Namibia's Sovereign Wealth Fund, seeded with N\$260 million in 2022, has grown substantially through investment returns alone, reaching US\$ 27.7 million, or approximately N\$479 million, by September 2025," the Bank of Namibia noted.

The fund is structured into short- and long-term portfolios, with 70% of assets allocated to equities, while the remainder is invested in fixed-income instruments, real estate and private equity.

The central bank said the diversified allocation is designed to improve returns

while managing risk effectively.

Established in May 2022, the Welwitschia Fund was created to safeguard the economy against volatility and ensure that future generations benefit from Namibia's natural resources.

The Bank of Namibia manages the fund and says it is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability.

The bank further noted that about 2.5% of the intergenerational fund is set aside for infrastructure projects aimed at socio-economic growth, including improvements to public services and job creation, which it says contribute to national development and long-term stability.

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Johannes !Gawaxab to step down as BoN Governor in December

The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has announced that Governor Dr Johannes !Gawaxab will leave office on 31 December 2025 after more than five years at the helm of the central bank.

The BoN Board said Dr !Gawaxab guided the institution through the COVID-19 pandemic, global economic volatility and major domestic reforms, strengthening monetary stability and modernising the financial system.

According to the Board, Dr !Gawaxab's leadership during the pandemic included front-loading interest rate cuts, providing regulatory relief and easing capital requirements to support liquidity.

The Bank said these measures helped protect households, businesses and the broader economy from deeper contraction.

The Board credited him for championing governance reforms under the Banking Institutions Act of 2023, including minimum 25% Namibian ownership in banking institutions and ensuring lending decisions are made locally to protect national interests.

The Bank said inflation remained well contained during his tenure, averaging 3.6% in the first eight months of 2025 compared to 4.6% in the same period in 2024.

It said disciplined monetary policy, including a cumulative 400-basis-point rate hike between February 2022 and June 2023, laid

the groundwork for rate cuts introduced this year.

The apex bank also highlighted !Gawaxab's role in supporting Namibia's full and timely repayment of its US\$750 million Eurobond in October 2025, calling it a strong signal of financial credibility to global markets.

The BoN said the Welwitschia Fund, launched in 2022 with N\$270 million, has grown to US\$27.7 million (about N\$479 million) through investment returns alone, supporting long-term wealth creation and stability.

The central bank further credited Dr !Gawaxab for promoting financial inclusion and digital transformation through the Financial Sector Transformation Strategy and the upcoming Fast Payment System aimed at broadening access to digital services, especially in rural areas.

The Board said he also oversaw diversification of reserves into gold, banknote and coin upgrades, and modernisation of bonds and securities infrastructure, while improving financial performance and delivering record dividends to government.

"The Board extends its deepest appreciation to Dr Johannes !Gawaxab for his unwavering dedication and exemplary service. We wish him every success in his future endeavours," it said.

The Bank did not announce his successor.



When cities do not see their citizens

By Vivian !Nou-/Gawaseb

The woman pointed to a narrow footpath behind the houses in Area 7, the largest informal settlement in Lüderitz, "Here we go home," she said. "This is where we feel most insecure." Around her, a small group of neighbours nodded.

Others added their own markers to the large map spread out on the ground: a playground that is unsafe; a street where children refuse to walk alone. None of these risks were recorded on any official city map.

Here they were made visible for the first time - not by satellite images or consultants, but by the people who experienced them. Lüderitz, a once quiet coastal town in southern Namibia, is undergoing transformation, driven by emerging industries such as green hydrogen.

The world is urbanizing at a pace that far exceeds institutional capacity of many cities. More than half of humanity - 55% - already lives in cities.

By 2050, this number will rise to 70% or about 7 in every 10 people. According to United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), most of this growth is happening in smaller cities and secondary cities, where infrastructure is least resilient and data systems are weakest.

Meanwhile, 70% of cities around the world are already struggling with the effects of climate change. Roughly the equivalent of saying every major city you



“

Cities are expected to build resilience while lacking the very resources that make smart planning possible — not only predictable funding.

can name, bar a handful, is now dealing with extreme heat, rising sea levels, and persistent droughts. Vulnerabilities are gender specific. They are emotional.

They change with the seasons, the time of day and mobility. Without mapping them, cities build on blind trust. Lüderitz shows what happens when cities decide otherwise.

The vulnerability mapping assessments conducted recently in Lüderitz was not a technical ticking box. It was an act of democratic visibility.

Residents identified footpaths, unsafe hot spots, safe playgrounds, and preferred locations for streetlights and floodlights — not as passive informants, but as experts in their own living environment.

The maps generated are not just documents that are filed in a filing cabinet, they are dialogue and negotiation tools that build trust between municipal authorities, local decision-makers, and residents.

Who have had difficulty understanding each other in the past. This is exactly the

kind of sound intelligence that modern urban development needs.

Vulnerability mapping, when done correctly, follows multi-layered principles. It shows exactly where risks exist — whether they come from the way neighbourhoods are built or from natural features like steep slopes, fierce winds or rising water.

It looks at vulnerability from different angles — how people live, how they move, how they earn a living, and whether their neighbourhoods have the basic services they need.

It also works at different scales, showing how something as small as a single footpath can reveal wider patterns of safety, access, and opportunity across the whole town. And, most importantly, it looks ahead.

It helps communities and leaders understand how new industries, rising populations or shifts in climate might reshape everyday risks in the years to come. Lüderitz is hardly alone in needing this kind of clarity.

Around the world, when cities do not fully understand the everyday risks faced by their residents, the consequences become painfully visible. The issue is never just the absence of vulnerability mapping — but its absence removes a crucial layer of insight that could have prevented or reduced harm.

The irony is that the global community already recognises the importance of localised, data-driven adaptation — at least in rhetoric. Yet less than 10% of global climate finance goes to local efforts, and only 29% of climate finance supports adaptation, even though developing countries will need \$140 billion to \$300 billion annually by 2030 to cope with escalating climate impacts.

Cities are expected to build resilience while lacking the very resources that make smart planning possible — not only predictable funding, but also technical capacity, granular disaggregated data, enabling legislation, and the institutional



stability required to safeguard communities.

This is precisely where vulnerability mapping proves its worth. It plugs the gaps left by outdated datasets, distant decision-making and planning systems that overlook the lived realities of ordinary people.

By revealing where risks cluster, who is most affected, and how daily life actually unfolds on the ground, vulnerability mapping gives cities the intelligence they need before they design policies, spend scarce resources or commit to long-term infrastructure.

Critics often argue that mapping vulnerability is slow, expensive, or too participatory — that small communities lack the time or technical capacity to do it. But that misses the point.

The cost of mapping vulnerabilities is trivial compared to the cost of rebuilding homes lost to flooding, retrofitting poorly located infrastructure, or treating vulnerabilities until they become headlines. Ignoring risks does not save money, it just shifts the bill — often to the poorest residents who can least afford it.

The truth is simple, cities cannot respond to risks they do not see, and they can see the risks well if they ask the people who live with them. Lüderitz, which stands at the cusp of the green-industrial future, offers an important lesson for cities throughout the Global South.

Industrial progress without social intelligence is a recipe for deepening inequality. Mapping

vulnerability is not a luxury. It is the basis for integrated urban development that is safe, fair, and future oriented.

If cities are serious about building resilience, protecting women and children, and ensuring that new industries do not replicate old damage, then they need to put vulnerability mapping at the heart of every planning decision.

Urban transformation should not start with blueprints designed in far-flung offices. It should start with a walkable map on the ground, a circle of residents gathering around it, and the courage to ask a simple question: Where do you feel unsafe, and why?

****Vivian !Nou-/Gawaseb is an adviser to the GIZ Integrated Urban Development Project, which supports the Lüderitz Town Council and the Aus Settlement Office in strengthening urban management capacities, integrated spatial planning and a just transition.***

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New SA inflation band may ease rates for Namibia - BoN

The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has welcomed South Africa's decision to reduce its inflation target to 3%, with a 1% tolerance band, saying it will support Namibia's price and interest rate outlook over the long term.

BoN Governor Johannes !Gawaxab said the lower target is expected to gradually result in reduced interest rates in both countries.

"By committing to tighter price stability, the new target will help entrench disinflationary discipline across the economy, reduce long-term borrowing costs, and strengthen investor confidence over the medium to long term," he said. He said the move is consistent with Namibia's long-standing commitment to price stability as a member of the Common Monetary Area, which also provides benefits such as reduced transaction

costs and access to deeper financial markets.

!Gawaxab cautioned that the full impact may be limited by Namibia's high share of administered prices, including utilities and regulated services. He said the Bank will continue engaging key players involved in wage and price setting to protect monetary stability.

"This, in turn, supports household purchasing power, eases financing conditions for firms, and reinforces the foundation for stronger, more durable economic growth," he said.

South Africa announced the revised inflation target on 12 November 2025, replacing the previous 3–6 percent range.

The BoN said the stricter target should help strengthen domestic price stability, supported by the one-to-one peg between the Namibian dollar and the rand.

The future of banking is embedded: Lifestyle, experience, and relevance

By Karen van der Merwe

In an era defined by convenience, speed, and personalization, the banking industry is undergoing a quiet revolution.

No longer confined to branches or apps, banking is becoming embedded in the everyday lives of customers - woven into the experiences they value most.

This shift from banking-as-a-product to banking-as-a-lifestyle marks a strategic transformation in how financial institutions must operate to remain relevant.

For decades, banks focused on offering products - accounts, loans, cards - designed around internal capabilities. But as technology reshapes consumer expectations, the competitive edge now lies in curating experiences, not just selling services.

Customers expect their banks to be intuitive, responsive, and seamlessly integrated into their daily routines. They want banking that moves with them, not banking that requires them to move.

This is where platformification becomes critical. By building ecosystems of partners; retailers, mobility providers, healthcare services, and more, banks can embed themselves into the customer journey.

Whether it's accessing cash while shopping, sending money instantly, or managing household expenses, banking becomes a quiet enabler of life, not a separate task.

Cash at till, also known as Purchase



Whether it's accessing cash while shopping, sending money instantly, or managing household expenses, banking becomes a quiet enabler of life, not a separate task.

with Cash Back, is a perfect example of this transformation. By partnering with retailers across Namibia, Standard Bank is turning everyday shopping into an opportunity to access cash - no queues, no extra stops, just one smooth transaction.

Anyone with a Standard Bank debit card or any other bank debit card can withdraw cash at any Standard Bank point of sale when paying for groceries, it's banking that fits into your lifestyle, not the other way around.

Similarly, PayPulse, Standard Bank's electronic money payment platform, is redefining how customers send, receive, and manage money. From paying merchants to topping up airtime or even performing cash-in and cash-out transactions at participating merchants without visiting a branch or ATM.

PayPulse makes everyday banking

effortless. You can deposit or withdraw cash as part of your shopping experience, turning routine errands into convenient financial moments. It's more than just a payment solution; it's a lifestyle enabler.

The advantage banks hold in this transformation is twofold: trust and data. Banks remain among the most trusted institutions when it comes to handling personal information.

This trust, combined with rich customer data, positions banks to deliver highly personalized, context-aware services that anticipate needs rather than react to them.

But to unlock this potential, banks must rethink their operating models. Legacy systems, siloed departments, and product-centric thinking must give way to agile, experience-first strategies.

This means investing in cloud-native platforms, expanding partner networks, and designing services that are modular,

scalable, and emotionally resonant.

The festive season offers a timely lens through which to view this shift. As consumers engage in travel, gifting, and retail activity, banks that have embedded themselves into these moments - through partnerships, convenience features, and lifestyle-aligned services - will not only serve their customers better but also deepen loyalty and unlock new revenue streams.

Ultimately, the future of banking is not about being everywhere - it's about being in the right place at the right time, with the right experience.

Banks that embrace this embedded, lifestyle-driven approach will not just survive the next wave of disruption - they'll lead it.

****Karen van der Merwe is Head: Personal & Private Banking, Standard Bank Namibia***



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Namibia urges global trade reforms to support low-carbon growth at COP30

Namibia has urged world leaders to reshape global trade and investment systems to support low-carbon development, calling for economic frameworks that align with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C target.

Speaking at a COP30 side event, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism Indileni Daniel said trade policy must become a driver of climate-resilient and

sustainable economic growth rather than a barrier for developing nations.

Daniel said the world must “transform how it produces, trades and invests”, shifting from extractive models to regenerative and climate-aligned economies.

She noted that Namibia is pursuing this agenda with clear intent under its Green Industrialisation Blueprint, which aims to position the country as a regional hub



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for renewable-powered, low-emission industries.

“Namibia approaches this challenge with clarity of purpose. Our Green Industrialisation Blueprint lays the foundation for a new growth model, one that embeds climate ambition within trade and industrial policy,” she said.

A key element of this strategy is the country’s Green Hydrogen Programme, which Daniel said is opening new export opportunities while strengthening regional energy security.

She also highlighted the Oshivela (HyIron) Project as a flagship initiative demonstrating the feasibility of zero-

emission iron production powered entirely by renewable energy.

Daniel added that Namibia is working with the Climate Investment Funds through the Industry Decarbonisation Programme to support cleaner mining, sustainable manufacturing and the adoption of green technologies.

She said these efforts align with Namibia’s Nationally Determined Contribution, its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy and its National Adaptation Plan.

“This project proves that industrial decarbonisation is not a distant aspiration, but a viable, investable opportunity,” she said.

The minister stressed the importance of regional cooperation through the AfCFTA, SADC and the African Union’s Green Industrialisation Strategy to harmonise climate standards, build green supply chains and expand intra-African trade in sustainable goods and services.

However, Daniel cautioned that developing countries cannot carry the transition alone. She called for fair market access, predictable carbon border policies and stronger capacity-building support to ensure green transitions do not become new forms of trade restriction.

“Namibia stands ready, ready to lead, ready to partner, and ready to demonstrate that green industrialisation is both possible and profitable,” she said.

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Over 9,000 Namibians to gain 4G access in USF phase one rollout

Over 9,000 Namibians are set to gain 4G access, many for the first time, with about 10,277 customers expected to enjoy improved connectivity through 4G and Spectra services when phase one of the Universal Service Fund (USF) is completed.

This follows MTC's handover of the first network tower built under the programme, after being appointed technical

implementer by the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN).

The tower was officially commissioned at Epinga village in the Ohangwena Region by Minister of Information and Communications Technology, Emma Theofelus.

Speaking at the commissioning, MTC Managing Director Licky Erastus confirmed that the Epinga site forms part of a wider

rollout to improve network coverage in rural communities.

“Additional to Epinga, we have completed sites in Hedimbi, Ehomba and Ongongo. Pending completions are Naimanya, Kudumbu/Mupapama, Owiwi in the Kavango West, Gwatjinga and Shinyashi in the Kavango East Region. Civil works have already been completed, and currently we are simply awaiting finalisation of the electrical connection from the power utility,” Erastus said.

He added that the rollout will deliver high-speed internet to underserved communities.

“The completion of phase one of the USF will see over 9,000 Namibians gain 4G access, many for the first time,” Erastus said. To ensure long-term performance, MTC is deploying different tower types depending on network requirements.

“In implementing Phase 1, we are deploying several tower types, including 60m lattice towers, 80m guyed masts and 120m guyed masts, all of which have robust loading capacities. This ensures these sites will remain structurally sound and technologically adaptable for future innovations,” he said.

Erastus said MTC accepted the task because the USF rollout supports national connectivity goals.

“MTC embraced the opportunity because the USF vision aligns perfectly with our mission to provide connectivity to every corner of our country,” he said.

The USF was established by the Ministry

of ICT and is administered by CRAN to support operators in expanding coverage in rural areas where commercial investment is not viable.

Phase one targets underserved communities in Kavango West, Kavango East, Kunene, Oshikoto and Ohangwena, with the aim of achieving at least 80% broadband coverage in those regions.

Minister Theofelus said government has already committed further investment to advance the programme into its next phase.

“As we advance into Phase two of the Universal Service Fund rollout, government has already committed N\$145 million to ensure that no community is left behind. This allocation forms part of the national commitment under capital projects for the period 2024 to 2027,” she said.

“With the USF, government is ensuring that rural communities, often the most in need of digital access, are not left behind in the broader national development agenda,” Theofelus added.

The project is expected to significantly benefit schools and local economies, with reliable internet speeds of up to 35 Mbps enabling access to e-learning platforms, digital services, online commerce and mobile payments.

CRAN Board Chairperson Tulimevava Mufeti praised MTC’s implementation progress.

“We are pleased with the delivery of work by MTC and have no doubt that phase one will be completed within the set timeline,” she said.

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Visa/Permit days in Namibia:

Why precision matters

By Ian Coffee

In Namibia, foreign nationals are permitted a total of 180 visa days per calendar year on a Short Term Employment Visa.

This allowance is typically split into two separate 90-day periods, granted through short-term employment or visitor visas.

However, the system is not cumulative. If you apply for 90 days and only use 5, the entire 90-day allocation is considered spent. There is no carry-over or refund of unused days.

This has practical implications. If your intended stay is short, applying for the full 90 days is inefficient and potentially damaging to your long-term visa strategy.

For example, if you only need 10 days in-country, apply for 14. If you need 5, apply for 7. Always round up slightly, but never default to the full 90 unless you genuinely require it. The goal is to preserve your total annual allowance and avoid premature exhaustion of your visa days.

Equally important is the specificity of your visa application. The Ministry of Home Affairs expects a clear and accurate description of your activities during your stay. Vague or generic justifications increase the risk of rejection or scrutiny.

Be precise. If you are attending meetings, say so. If you are conducting training, specify the dates, locations, and nature of the sessions.



In times of transformation, preserving and transferring knowledge becomes an act of leadership.

Once you reach the 180-day threshold, your options narrow significantly. You must either exit Namibia or apply for a long-term work permit, typically valid for two years. This process is not immediate.

It takes approximately three months from initiation to approval, assuming no delays. Therefore, once your second 90-day visa is approved, you must begin the long-term permit application process without delay.

Your visa will clearly state “no further renewals possible” once the 180-day limit is reached. This is not negotiable. The 180 days are calculated on a calendar year basis, resetting on 1 January. There is no flexibility or grace period beyond this structure.

Timing is critical. The Ministry operates on skeleton staff during the festive season, typically from mid-December through early January. During this period, visa and permit processing slows dramatically.

Applications submitted during this window may face extended delays. To mitigate this, initiate your long-term

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If you reach the end of your 180-day allowance without an approved long-term permit, you must leave Namibia.

permit process well before December. Factor in the time required for medicals, radiological reports, police clearances, and mandatory advertisements. These components are time-consuming and often subject to third-party delays.

If you reach the end of your 180-day allowance without an approved long-term permit, you must leave Namibia. Remaining in the country without legal status is a violation of immigration law. Attempting to re-enter on a holiday visa to circumvent the system is a serious offence and will result in legal consequences, including possible bans and reputational damage.

The solution is not improvisation. It is proactive planning. The earlier you apply, the smoother the process. Use a verified and reputable immigration consultancy to ensure compliance, accuracy, and strategic foresight. The system is rigid, but navigable — if approached with precision and respect for its structure.

**** Ian Coffee, a Namibia Immigration Expert at IBN Immigration Solutions***