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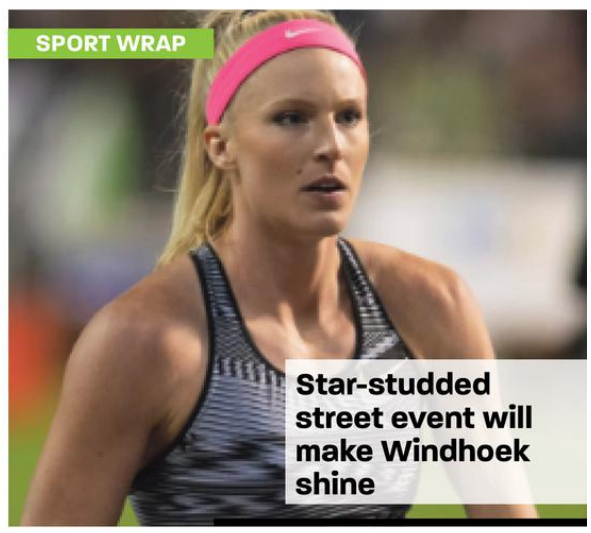



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## Namibia risks losing control of mines, Amutse warns

PHILLIPUS JOSEF
WINDHOEK

**Namibia risks losing control over critical industries if state-owned enterprises and local investors do not act decisively, industry, mines and energy minister Modestus Amutse warned yesterday in Windhoek.**

Speaking at the rollout of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) overseen by his ministry, Amutse highlighted the growing influence of foreign investors in the mining sector and the urgent need to increase local participation and value addition.

Amutse said international investors are "seeing the opportunity while we are sleeping", warning that without proactive governance and localisation measures, key sectors such as electricity and minerals could fall under foreign influence. This would limit Namibia's ability to control pricing and industry decisions, he warned.

He specifically stressed the importance of small processing plants, arguing that raw minerals should not leave the country without being refined to create jobs, promote industrialisation, and add value locally.

"Why should these minerals leave the country the way they are?" he asked. "Why can't we establish small processing plants so that when they leave, they have added value to many lives already?"

Continued on page 2

**• TEMPORARY MEASURE AS GOVT BUILDS MORE SCHOOLS, CLASSROOMS**

# Tent classrooms are back as enrolments surge

As schools grapple with classroom shortages, the ministry is also troubled **by assessments showing that most 10-year-olds in Namibia are struggling with basic reading and numeracy.**

ELIZABETH KHEIBES
WINDHOEK

Tent classrooms are being reintroduced in some schools to accommodate growing enrolments driven by urban migration, the education ministry has confirmed.

Speaking during a back-to-school briefing ahead of the new academic year, education minister Sanet Steenkamp said the tents are a temporary measure while permanent classrooms are constructed.

"Just this morning, they're busy delivering tents to some schools in Khomas because Khomas does not want to do the platoon system," the minister said.

The platoon system is a stopgap measure to ease school overcrowding by rotating groups of learners through shared classrooms in morning and afternoon sessions.

Steenkamp said the use of tents allows the ministry to manage immediate pressure while ensuring that ongoing projects are completed.

Continued on page 2



**PLAN B:** Education minister, Sanet Steenkamp.
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

## NIP CEO's contract expires amid silence from board and ministries

SONJA SMITH
WINDHOEK

The contract of Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP) chief executive officer Kapena Tjombonde expired on Tuesday, with no public confirmation from the board or the line ministries on whether it has been renewed, extended or allowed to lapse.

As of yesterday, neither the NIP board nor the ministries of finance and health had issued an official statement clarifying Tjombonde's status, leaving leadership at the state-owned diagnostic services provider uncertain.



**NO ANSWERS:** Kapena Tjombonde.
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Tjombonde was appointed on 1 February 2021, succeeding Augustinus Katiti, who had led the institution from April 2014 until his dismissal in August 2018.

Stakeholders welcomed her appointment as an opportunity to strengthen governance, oversight and strategic direction at the laboratory institution.

Sources familiar with developments at NIP told Namibian Sun that Tjombonde's contract had not been formally extended before it expired.

The same sources claimed that no official communication had been circulated internally to staff or externally to stakeholders regarding interim leadership arrangements.

Continued on page 2



Sun

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## EDITORIAL

The government's decision to make tertiary education free is a bold and commendable investment in the nation's future. It sends a powerful message that talent, not wealth, should determine who advances to university or college. In the long term, this policy promises a more skilled workforce, greater innovation and broader social mobility. Yet, as enrolments surge upward, a worrying picture is emerging at the base of the education system.

The return of tent classrooms in towns is a visible sign that the foundation is under strain. While access to higher education expands, the conditions in which many children begin their learning journey appear to be deteriorating. Education is a ladder, and its strength depends on its lowest rungs.

If primary and secondary schools are overcrowded, under-resourced or temporary in nature, the country risks producing students who reach tertiary institutions unprepared. Free university education alone cannot compensate for gaps formed much earlier. For the government to truly reap the fruits of free tertiary education, it must reinforce the entire system. Investing in classrooms, teachers and learning materials at the foundational levels is not a competing priority—it is a necessary one.

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# Education

Continued from page 1

"So now the tent option has become one that we can explore while we also ensure that the construction that we are busy with is completed in a given time frame," she said.

The minister said government continues to invest in permanent school infrastructure through annual capital budget allocations to regions, supported by an accelerated development plan prioritising sanitation, water, electricity and classroom construction.

"That is when you send the money for basic construction of toilets, classrooms and renovations to the regions," she said. "Across the regions, schools are being constructed."

### Progress underlined

She cited the newly built Cuba Primary School in the Khomas region as an example, saying it is already accommodating about 800 learners, with teachers and principals appointed.

"You can't also appoint teachers if we do not have the facilities to teach," she noted.

The minister said several regions have opted to consolidate infrastructure funding to build complete schools rather than scattered classrooms.

"There are deliberate efforts by government to ensure that the gap between makeshift classrooms and permanent classrooms is reduced so that we have more accessible permanent classrooms for our learners," she added.

### Bribery, gifts not an option

Steenkamp noted that infrastructure constraints have been compounded by continued pressure on school admissions, particularly in urban areas.

She reiterated that admissions are planned well in advance and warned against attempts to influence placements through bribery.

"As an education sector, you plan on an annual basis. By June or July, the parents must know where my child will be attending school. In September of the previous year, parents were already supposed to know where their child had a place," she said.

The minister added that admission committees operate at regional, circuit and school levels to ensure fair placement based on available space and language requirements, especially for Grade 1 learners.

However, Steenkamp said the ministry is aware of cases in which parents offer gifts or money due to anxiety over securing a place at school for their child.

"My message to the education fraternity is unambiguous. Nobody should take any form of bribe or a gift to return that with a favour to find a child a school," she said.

She added that while the government has a responsibility to place learners, parents also have a duty to apply on time.

"We still have parents that put tremendous pressure on the regional directorates and admission committees simply because many parents are moving from one town to another," she said.

### Learning poverty at the core

Beyond infrastructure and admissions, Steenkamp said the ministry's central concern remains learning outcomes, particularly in the early grades.

"We've made a Grade 3 assessment, and we know now that across the 14 regions, the situation does not look good in terms of reading and basic numeracy," she confirmed.

"At least seven out of 10 children in Namibia, 10 years old, cannot read a comprehensive English text or do basic mathematics."

She said the ministry has rolled out interventions to address learning poverty, including continuous professional development for teachers from pre-grade to Grade 3.

"We've started with capacitating and enhancing the learning, the monitoring and evaluation of our heads of departments," she said.

"There are Jolly Phonics, there are specific courses, there's teaching at the right level, early grade reading and early grade mathematics measures."

Steenkamp said these interventions are being implemented in both mother tongues and English.

"Our focus is to address the end of learning poverty, where children cannot read or write. If we build that foundation and invest correctly in our teachers and encourage parents to expose children to reading material at home, we can go quite far," she noted.

### Shared responsibility

Steenkamp said improving education outcomes requires discipline and accountability across the system, from school leadership to parents and learners.

"The principal fulfils a critical role. A principal has authority and must use that authority in the best way possible, enforcing policies and ensuring a culture of discipline, care, and proper communication," she said.

Teachers, she said, remain central to the education system and are expected to be present physically and psychologically, well prepared and to ensure discipline is enforced with the greatest respect.

Parents, she said, are the first educators, and that discipline must already be fostered at home.

She called for improved planning, faster execution and sustained stakeholder engagement throughout the academic year.

Moreover, the minister urged parents, communities, the private sector and public servants to remain engaged.

# Amushe

Continued from page 1

### Key driver

According to a recent report by Namibian Sun, at least 11 of the 15 major mining companies operating locally are 80% or more foreign-owned. This is in stark contrast with government's target under the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6) to increase Namibian equity in mining ventures to 60% by 2030.

The report noted that the mining sector contributes over 13% to GDP and has been earmarked in NDP6 (2025–2030) as a key driver of economic transformation, job creation and industrial development.

The plan emphasises the need to move beyond primary extraction toward value addition, beneficiation and increased local participation.

Yet, as the Namibian Sun report noted, local equity remains alarmingly low, and the roadmap to reverse this trend is unclear, with ambitious targets but limited mechanisms to ensure meaningful Namibian stakes without scaring away investors.



**LOCAL FIRST: Execution, not paper reports, will decide development success, mines minister Modestus Amutse says.**
PHOTO: PHILLIPUS JOSEF

### Reporting inconsistencies

Amutse also framed these challenges as a matter of governance and accountability.

He repeatedly emphasised that execution on the ground, not paper reports, is the true measure of performance. Warning against inflated figures, he described visiting sites where reported 85–95% completion rates did not reflect actual progress.

"When we arrived at the actual site, there were very, very few people," he said, noting that such discrepancies undermine trust and public confidence.

He pledged to personally visit projects and facilities under his ministry, with or without notice, to verify the reality on the ground – not to expose individuals but to strengthen systems.

The minister said leaders at all levels must take responsibility and assist one another rather than shift blame.

"Let's assist each other. Let's be honest. We are a big force; everyone of us has a role to play," Amutse said, stressing that good governance, transparency and tangible execution are central to building confidence among the public and safeguarding Namibia's industrial and economic future.

The minister concluded that restoring trust in public institutions, protecting Namibia's strategic industries and ensuring meaningful local participation require leaders to act decisively today.

Execution, he said, is the measure that will determine whether Namibia's youth and future generations inherit a strong, equitable and industrially vibrant economy.

phillipus@nmh-hub.com.na

# NIP

Continued from page 1

Finance minister Ericah Shafudah referred questions on the matter to the health ministry, noting that CEO appointments at NIP fall under that ministry's mandate.

"The relevant sector ministries are addressing issues related to boards and appointments of CEOs under their purview. This specific one is under the health ministry," Shafudah said.

### Private matter

Health ministry spokesperson Walter Kamaya said matters relating to executive contracts are not made public.

"Matters regarding contracts such as this are confidential and may not be easily discussed in public. Whether it will be renewed or not cannot be discussed at this stage. I do not have information on it, but you may try speaking to the minister," Kamaya said.

During Tjombonde's tenure, questions have been raised publicly about certain management decisions.

These include the acquisition of vehicles for senior executives, which documents seen by Namibian Sun indicate amounted to approximately N$5.3 million for five vehicles.

The vehicles included a Mercedes-Benz valued at about N$1.1 million allocated to the CEO, a Ford Ranger worth about N$1 million for the chief technical officer, a Nissan valued at roughly N$987 000 for the chief operations officer, a Toyota Fortuner costing about N$1.1 million for the chief human capital officer, and a Volkswagen Amarok worth around N$1 million for the chief financial officer.

At the same time, NIP employees, through the Namibian Public Workers Union, publicly called for performance bonuses ranging between N$50 000 and N$100 000, citing a lack of meaningful financial recognition over several years.

The union's demands were not met.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the appointment of a branding service provider last year.

According to documents, Vybrand Advertising CC was contracted to provide branding services for approximately N$520 000. Stakeholders raised questions about whether standard procurement processes were followed.

Melisia Mutilifa owns the company.

No official finding of wrongdoing has been made public regarding the concerns raised around the procurement or vehicle acquisitions.

Sources further indicated that some employees at NIP oppose Tjombonde's return, citing dissatisfaction with leadership and governance decisions made during her tenure.

These views could not be independently verified.

Sources also indicated that the NIP board may have recommended Tjombonde for contract renewal, but that the final decision rests with the health minister, who is legally empowered to approve or decline executive appointments.

Questions sent to NIP board chairperson Ingah Ekandjo had not been responded to by the time of publication. Attempts to reach Tjombonde for comment were unsuccessful, and questions sent to her remained unanswered.

NIP is a state-owned entity established to manage and expand diagnostic laboratory services and disease research across Namibia.

# IShowSpeed wraps up African tour in Namibia

**Popular American YouTuber IShowSpeed concluded his month-long African tour in Namibia, exploring local culture, engaging with communities and giving the country global online exposure.**

JORGE DOS SANTOS
WINDHOEK

Popular American YouTuber and online streamer Darren Jason Watkins Jr, better known as IShowSpeed, has concluded his 28-day African tour in Namibia, the Land of the Brave.

The influencer arrived in the country on Tuesday and spent his visit exploring different parts of Namibia. Highlights included trips to the Himba and San communities and sampling local Namibian cuisine, which he shared with his global online audience.

The Namibian Tourism Board (NTB) organised IShowSpeed's visit to the country.

NTB spokesperson Flora Quest confirmed that the board engaged with the YouTuber after he approached them for guidance on what to see and do in Namibia.

"The board worked jointly with other Namibian government entities to coordinate and facilitate the requested experiences," she said.

Quest added that NTB played an active role in shaping the programme, suggesting cultural and tourism activities, connecting the team with relevant stakeholders and communities, and ensuring the itinerary was both enjoyable and practical.

## Interactive

The American YouTuber streamed many of his activities, including a visit to Oshetu Community Market in Katutura's Single Quarters, where he sampled Namibian kapana sold by street vendors.

He also tasted salsa and traditional Ovambo bread, commenting on stream: "This beef meat slaps."

IShowSpeed later visited Independence Avenue in Windhoek's city centre, accompanied by bodyguards. While there, he met supporters who gifted him artwork and posed for photos.

He also shared a memorable moment on stream with a fan, John Deon, a photographer and athlete, as they raced along the street, much to the delight of viewers.

NTB said IShowSpeed's visit has given Namibia significant international exposure, particularly among younger, digital-first audiences, Quest stated.

"This type of exposure complements traditional marketing efforts and positions Namibia as a destination of cultural richness and authenticity," she added.

She noted that the visit reinforced the importance of early engagement, thorough preparation and inter-agency coordination when hosting high-profile digital creators.

"This was seen as a valuable learning experience that will enhance its ability to manage similar opportunities in the future, ensuring smoother execution and stronger outcomes for destination marketing and community participation," she said.



**YUM:** IShowSpeed tries Oshiwambo bread with a meaty treat at Single Quarters, Katutura. PHOTOS: EMERITA SHIKESHO




**SAMPLING LOCAL FLAVOURS:** IShowSpeed enjoys Namibian kapana at Single Quarters, Katutura.



**NEXT STAGE:** Tessany Esterhuizen (2nd runner-up, 2025), Linda Jesaya (Miss Petite Global Namibia 2025), and Janet Kaindume (1st runner-up, 2025).

# PETITE POWER: BIGGER, BOLDER SHOW FOR MISS PETITE GLOBAL NAMIBIA 2026




**NEXT CHAPTER:** Miss Petite Global Namibia 2025, Linda Jesaya.
PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

JORGE DOS SANTOS
WINDHOEK

**The Miss Petite Global Namibia pageant kicks off on Saturday, 31 January, at the Protea Hotel Thuringerhof in Windhoek.**

The beauty competition is part of an international pageant founded in Malaysia that celebrates the beauty of petite women by offering them the same opportunities as other models in the fashion industry.

The winner will jet off in May to represent Namibia at the international finals in Kuala Lumpur.

Bobby Kaanjosa, the national director of Miss Petite Global Namibia, told tjil that this year marks the fifth anniversary of the international pageant.

Asked about the significance of the milestone for Namibia, Kaanjosa said the anniversary reflects growing opportunities for the country, including the continued chance to showcase Namibian talent on the international stage.

Kaanjosa said hosting the pageant for the third consecutive year locally reflects persistence and resilience, noting that since the brand's inception in Namibia, it has not always been easy.

He said despite facing "struggles, trials and tribulations" as an organisation, the pageant has gone from strength to strength.

Kaanjosa added that it has helped empower not only contestants but also women who use the platform to change narratives and positively impact their communities.

## Growth

Susanna Gawachas, a contestant in this year's pageant, said her experience has challenged her beyond the stage, fostering personal growth, discipline and self-awareness.

She said the standards of the competition have pushed her to build confidence while remaining grounded in her values and sense of purpose.

Gawachas, a cancer survivor and youth advocate, added that she is learning to use her story with intention and impact.

Reigning queen Linda Jesaya also said preparing to hand over her crown has been tough, but she also feels grateful for the opportunity.

"Letting go of my crown is not easy, but I do so with gratitude and pride. Being Miss Petite Global Namibia 2025 allowed me to represent queens from all corners of the world and to grow into the woman this title describes," she said.

Kaanjosa said audiences and supporters can expect a bigger and more exciting show at Saturday's 2026 pageant.

"We are working with new faces in the music industry who are already superstars. The audience can look forward to a fun-packed show, as the contestants are currently rehearsing to ensure a spectacular performance," he said.

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**NEW APPOINTMENT**

*FAN's new programme leader is excited about the future of Namibia's film sector, particularly the potential to shape an industry rooted in authentic local stories while remaining globally relevant.*

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ED PROFILE | NANGULA UAANDJA

*From boardrooms to nation-building*

# Nangula Nelulu Uaandja: A career built on skill and purpose

**With a career spanning both the private and public sectors, Nangula Nelulu Uaandja has consistently paired expertise with a deep commitment to Namibia's economic growth.**

**FRANCOUIS PRETORIU**

Nangula Nelulu Uaandja has built a career defined by service, leadership and a steadfast commitment to Namibia's economic development.

She brings a rare blend of private and public sector experience. Uaandja spent 24 years at PwC, rising from trainee to managing partner, before moving into public service as the founding CEO of the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB), a position she held for five years. Along the way, she was named Namibia's Businesswoman of the Year in 2011, a milestone that also sharpened her focus on the country's economic challenges.

Initially, Uaandja envisioned a career in science. Strong in mathematics and the sciences, she imagined working in a laboratory. But after returning from school in exile in Sierra Leone shortly before independence, she saw her father's business struggling, particularly with tax matters. That experience redirected her toward economics and accounting, ultimately leading her to qualify as a chartered accountant.

## Growth

Her long career at PwC gave her exposure to multiple sectors of the economy and progressively greater leadership responsibilities.

"Each step required a completely different skill set," she reflects, noting that this constant growth kept her engaged and prepared her for more complex leadership roles.



ACCOMPLISHED: Nangula Uaandja.
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

Over time, her attention shifted beyond corporate success toward the broader health of Namibia's economy. Concerned about weak collaboration between government and the private sector, Uaandja returned to academia, completing a master's degree and later beginning doctoral research focused on public-private collaboration. In 2019, she was appointed to President Hage Geingob's high-level panel on the Namibian economy, an experience that further strengthened her resolve to work at the intersection of policy, business and development.

This experience eventually led her to NIPDB, where she transitioned from auditing into investment promotion, marketing and economic development. "It was a big change," she admits, "but it was exactly where my heart had moved."

## Impact

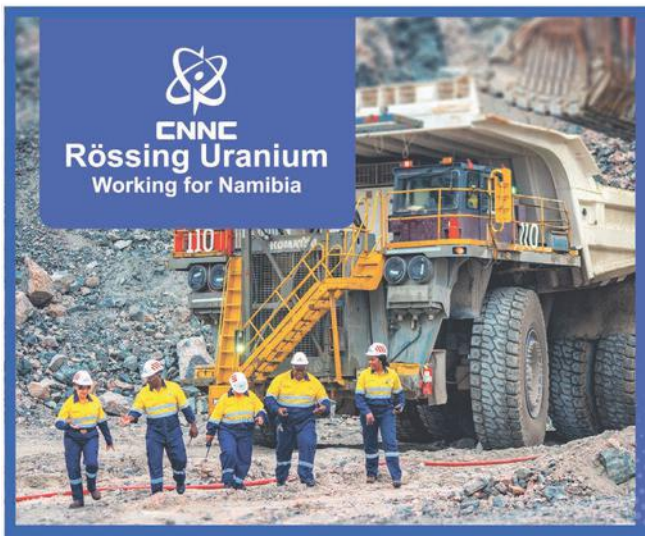
At the core of Uaandja's leadership philosophy is a strong belief in attitude before skill.

She emphasises responsibility, service and a willingness to learn as the foundation of meaningful success. She is particularly passionate about job creation, especially for young Namibians, and believes the services sector holds significant potential to absorb both school leavers and graduates.

For Uaandja, leadership is ultimately about impact. "If we collaborate deliberately and focus on the right sectors," she believes, "Namibia can do far more than it is doing today."

Earlier this month, Emeraldsand Platforms announced a key leadership transition with the appointment of Nangula Nelulu Uaandja as executive director, effective 1 July 2026. She will succeed Albe Botha, who has led the company for the past 13 years.




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# Uranium slump widens deficit

**OGONE TLHAGE**

Namibia's trade deficit widened to N$4.4 billion in November 2025, largely driven by a sharp slowdown in uranium and copper exports, which together fell by N$3.3 billion and weighed heavily on export earnings.

This is according to the International Merchandise Trade Statistics released this week by the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA).

"Namibia's export revenue for November 2025 stood at N$10 billion, reflecting a decrease of 24.5% when compared to the export value recorded in October 2025. Whereas the country's expenditure on imports stood at N$14.4 billion, reflecting a decrease of 10.4% from N$16.1 billion recorded in the preceding month. The export and import positions translated into a trade deficit of N$4.4 billion, due to imports that outpaced exports," the NSA said.

According to the agency, uranium exports declined by N$2.4 billion, while copper ores and concentrates fell by N$903 million. Fish exports were down by N$392 million, copper and articles of copper declined by N$128 million, and fuel wood exports dropped by N$63 million.

## Export performance

On the export side, the NSA said the manufacturing sector remained the largest contributor to total exports in November 2025, recording export earnings of N$5 billion and accounting for a 50.2% share of total export revenue. However, exports from the sector declined by N$453 million compared to the previous month.

"The mining and quarrying sector occupied the second position, accounting for 42.3% of total exports in November 2025, with the exports value of goods from this sector decreasing by N$3.1 billion when compared to the previous month. Furthermore, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector ranked third, with a share contribution of 7% to the country's total export basket," the NSA said.

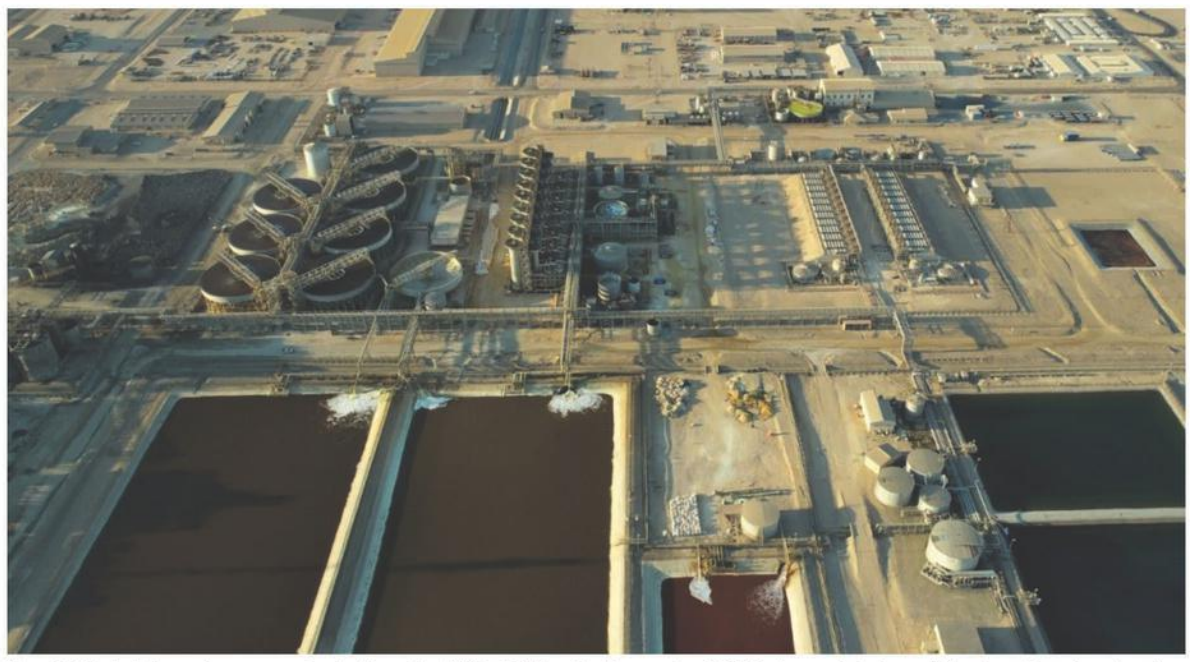
## Import trends

On the import side, the cumulative import value for the period under review amounted to N$139.6 billion, which was N$6.8 billion lower than the N$146.4 billion recorded over the same period in 2024, according to the NSA.

"The November 2025 data show the import value amounting to N$14.4 billion, reflecting a decrease in both month-on-month and year-on-year comparisons of 10.4% and 16.7%, respectively," the agency said.

Imports during the month were mainly driven by mining support service activities, which amounted to N$2.27 billion, while food product imports totalled N$1.25 billion.

"Between November 2024 and November 2025, the country mainly experienced persistent trade deficits," the NSA said.



Namibia's total uranium exports declined by N$2.4 billion in November 2025. An aerial view of Swakop Uranium's mine appears. PHOTO: FILE

# EAN backs draft Investment Bill

*Balance*

**Warns approval-heavy framework may deter investors**

**OGONE TLHAGE**

The Economic Association of Namibia (EAN) has welcomed the draft Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bill, saying it has the potential to streamline investment policy while improving coordination across government institutions.

The comments follow the release of the draft bill for public consultation in November last year.

"The Bill represents an important step towards consolidating investment policy, improving coordination across institutions, and aligning investment decisions with Namibia's long-term development objectives," the EAN said.

According to the think tank, the inclusion of provisions on investor rights, dispute resolution, performance agreements and transparency reflects an intention to enhance predictability and accountability within Namibia's investment regime.

## Promote investment, limit regulation

However, the EAN cautioned that the draft legislation places a stronger emphasis on approval and control mechanisms than on actively promoting investment.

"At the same time, the Bill would benefit from a stronger emphasis on investment attraction and facilitation, in line with its stated title and objectives. While regulation is an important part of any investment framework, the overall balance of the Bill currently leans more heavily towards approval, control and compliance mechanisms than towards actively encouraging investment," the EAN said.

"This may create perceptions of complexity or uncertainty for prospective investors, particularly in a competitive global environment. Namibia is a member of several regional and continental integration initiatives, including the Southern African Customs Union, the Southern African Development Community and the African Continental Free Trade Area, all of which aim to promote cross-border trade, regional value chains and investment flows," it added.

The EAN said it would be preferable for the Bill to draw on best practice from existing regional and continental investment frameworks.

"It is therefore important that the Bill is aligned with these broader commitments and supports Namibia's ambition to position itself as an open, competitive and attractive investment destination within the region."

## Key considerations

Despite welcoming the Bill's overall intent, the EAN identified several areas requiring refinement. It noted that Section 3 limits the application of the Act largely to investors seeking incentives or operating in designated sectors.

"This raises questions regarding the regulatory framework applicable to investments that fall outside these categories and may benefit from clarification," the EAN said.

Concerns were also raised around the designation of economic sectors and business activities.

"The designation framework is an important policy tool. However, additional clarity on classification criteria, review periods and transition arrangements could help reduce uncertainty for existing and prospective investors, particularly in relation to long-term planning and reinvestment decisions," the EAN said.

The think tank further questioned the treatment of expansions of existing investments, warning that classifying expansions as new investments could undermine reinvestment incentives.

"Consideration should be given to clearer safeguards to ensure that expansions that strengthen existing operations are not unduly constrained," it said.

## Ministerial powers in the spotlight

The EAN also highlighted the level of discretion embedded in the investment approval process.

"The approval framework places significant discretion with the Minister or sectoral minister. Additional guidance on the weighting or prioritisation of the criteria listed in Section 35 could enhance transparency, predictability and consistency in decision-making, thus impacting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises," the EAN said.

"Consideration should also be given to the practical impact of the proposed approval and assessment requirements on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. While the intention to ensure investments deliver net benefits to Namibia is understandable, extensive information and approval requirements may disproportionately affect smaller investors, both domestic and foreign, who often lack the administrative capacity to navigate complex processes," it added.

The draft Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bill is expected to be tabled in the National Assembly in March.

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*EU market Namibia's strategic advantage*

# LPO explores sheep value chain integration in SA



A five-member committee, together with LPO management and the organisation's chairperson, Jako van Wyk, undertook the visit to Cavalier Foods. PHOTO NAU

**The LPO is advancing efforts to integrate small sheep producers into the sheep value chain after a strategic study visit to Cavalier Foods in South Africa.**

**JACQUES DU TOIT**

The Livestock Producers Organisation (LPO) has taken a key step towards strengthening producer participation in the sheep value chain following a study tour to Cavalier Foods in South Africa.

According to the LPO, the initiative stems from a mandate adopted at its 2023 Annual Congress, which called for a comprehensive value chain study to assess how producers – particularly small livestock producers – can become more involved in, and gain greater control over, the sheep value chain.

The LPO appointed independent facilitators to guide the process. The first phase of the study has been completed, after which the LPO appointed a committee to support the second phase. This phase focused on gaining deeper insight into the challenges facing small livestock producers and the importance of their direct participation in value chain activities.

Following input from Dr Nicolette Hall, Executive Head of Quality and Product Development at the Cavalier Group, and discussions with Cavalier Foods on product development, the LPO determined that an on-site visit would provide valuable practical insight. Cavalier Foods, based in Cullinan, Gauteng, has grown from a small enterprise into a major fresh meat producer and distributor supplying leading retailers across Southern Africa.

A five-member committee, together with LPO management and the organisation's chairperson, Jako van Wyk, undertook the visit. The delegation was given full exposure to Cavalier Foods' integrated operations, which slaughter approximately 600 000 sheep annually and supply about 4 500 lambs per week to Woolworths in processed form. All operations are housed within a single facility, with holding pens accommodating around 30 000 lambs.

According to the LPO, the visit highlighted the importance of economies of scale, operational efficiency, and producer involvement beyond primary production. Emphasis was also placed on Namibia's access to the European market as a strategic advantage that should be maximised.

Currently, Farmers Meat Market in Mariental remains the only sheep abattoir in Africa approved to export to Europe – a status the LPO described as a significant opportunity for the country's sheep producers.

# February imports changes: Cabbage and green peppers closed

**JACQUES DU TOIT**

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) has released February's import controls, announcing that watermelon and sweet melon imports are open fully in February after being banned throughout January. Beetroot also moves to unrestricted status from January's 50% limitation.

Cabbage shifts from 30% permitted imports to completely closed, while green peppers follow the same pattern, moving from 30% to closed. Both products will have no imports allowed in February.

Round tomatoes change from closed to 50% permitted imports. Carrots also shift from closed to 50% allowance.

Lettuce (iceberg) increases from 15% to 50% permitted imports, while spinach moves from 30% to 50%.

Sweet potato allowances increase from 30% to 40%. Gem squash changes from 30% throughout January to 50% for February 1-15 only, then closes for the remainder of the month.

## NO CHANGE

Products remaining closed in both months include butternut, English cucumber, pumpkin, jam tomato, and sweetcorn. Coloured peppers stay at 15% restriction.

Onions, washed potatoes and cocktail tomatoes remain unrestricted in both months, subject to the 47% Market Share Promotion requirement.

The February restrictions run from 1 to 28 February 2026. The NAB notice was signed by chief executive Fidelis Mwazi.



Imports of watermelons, sweet melons and beetroot will be unrestricted in February 2026. PHOTO AI (GEMINI)

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# Star-studded street event will make Windhoek shine

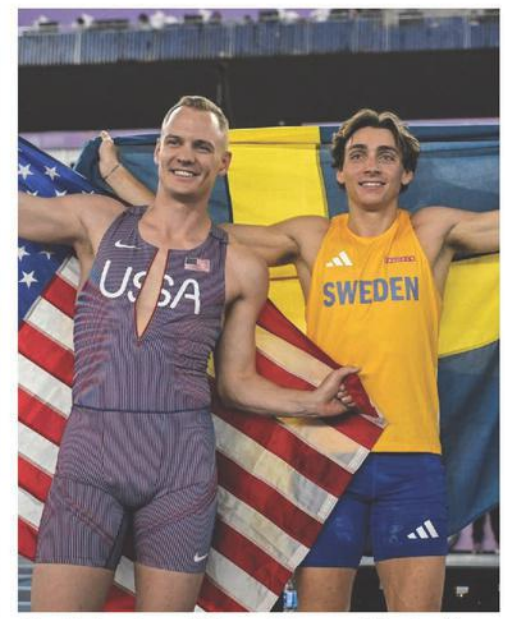
## *Athletics*

**A historic and world-class athletics event is coming to the Namibian capital.**

**BRIAN MUNANGO**



USA's pole vaulter Sandi Morris.




Swedish pole vault legend Armand Duplantis (right) and Sam Kendricks of USA, when they took gold and bronze at the 2025 world championship in Nanjing.

Windhoek is preparing to make sporting history with the hosting of a World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze street meeting – an unprecedented international athletics event set to take place in the heart of the city on 27 and 28 March.

Speaking in an exclusive interview, Namibian athletics coach Henk Botha revealed some of the plans for what promises to be one of the biggest track and field spectacles Southern Africa has ever seen, bringing a string of high-profile world-class athletes to compete on a purpose-built track constructed along Robert Mugabe Avenue, with the city's iconic Christuskirche and Independence Memorial Museum as a backdrop.

Invitations have been extended to the likes of Armand "Mondo" Duplantis – multiple World Athletics Athlete of the Year (2025, 2023 and 2022) and world record holder in pole vault at 6.30 metres. The 26-year-old Swedish legend is also a two-time Olympic champion (2020 and 2024) and a three-time World outdoor (2022, 2023 and 2025) title holder.

Sam Kendricks, 33, of USA will be another former world champion pole vaulter (2017 and 2019) boasting Olympic medals (2016 bronze and 2024 silver).

USA's Sandi Morris is among the listed invitees for women's pole vault. With silver medals at the 2016 Olympics, as well as the 2017 and 2019 World Championships, the 33-year-old will bring a lot of international class and experience – and a personal best of 5.00 metres in Brussels in 2019.

"We are reintroducing pole vault to Namibia," Botha said. "Last year we held a clinic for young athletes, and now we're bringing it back properly.

"Pole vault is something special. We'll probably see men jumping close to six metres and women near five metres."

Botha confirmed that Namibia will also be represented in most events, including by the female pole vaulter Talaya Vorster, living in New Zealand, who will return home to compete. Talaya's mother Michelle represented Namibia as a mountain biker at the 2016 and 2021 Olympic Games.

### Shot put record attempt

America's Joe Kovacs is currently the number one ranked shot put athlete in the world and has stated his intention of coming to Windhoek to break the world record.

Kovacs, 36, has a personal record of 23.23 meters outdoors – the second-best of all time behind his countryman Ryan Crouser. Kovacs has won gold medals at the 2015 and 2019 World Championships, and silver medals at the last three Olympic Games (2016, 2020 and 2024).

Furthermore, a field of entries worthy of an Olympic men's shot put final is envisioned by the organisers – including Tom Walsh (33, New Zealand) who has won medals at every major event and whose personal best of 22.90 m (set in Doha in 2019) makes him the seventh best shot putter in history.

Of the younger generation, Italy's Leonardo Fabbri (age 28) could bring his PB of 22.98 metres to the table, along with South Africa's Kyle Blignaut, 26, a two-time Olympian (PB 21.26m).

Botha says the programme will also include the 60m sprint, hurdles, long jump, shot put, and high jump.

### HOW IT STARTED

Botha, who grew his contacts and standing as coach of Olympic finalist sprinters Christine Mboma and Beatrice Masilingi, said the vision has been years in the making, driven by a belief that Namibia is capable of hosting elite global sporting events.

"I've had this dream for quite some time," Botha explained. "For instance, in the last week we've seen Namibia co-hosting the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup—so why not athletics?

"This will be something we've never done before in Namibia, and possibly not even in Africa in this format."

Instead of a traditional stadium setting, organisers will transform the city centre into a competition arena. A temporary 80-metre track will be built, allowing for 60-metre sprint races, while a range of field events will also be staged.

### Involving the youth and community

Beyond elite competition, the two-day event is designed as a full celebration of athletics and community sport. There will be youth athletics for children aged seven to 19, a street mile featuring Kenyan runners who have won world cross-country titles, and a celebrity 60m sprint, with even a deputy minister already confirmed.

"We decided on two days, so that events don't clash," Botha said. "From morning until evening there will be kids' athletics, entertainment and activities for everyone. It's really about involving the whole community."

For spectators, the grass bank and a specially constructed pavilion will offer a premium viewing experience in the festive atmosphere.

Botha says the occasion will a belated birthday celebration for the country after Independence Day celebrations.

"It started as my dream, but now it's a shared dream," he said. "We want people to come in numbers. We'll make as much space as possible so everyone can be part of these two special days."

With world-class athletes, street racing, youth participation and entertainment all rolled into one, Windhoek's first World Athletics Continental Tour event promises to be a landmark moment for Namibian sport.




Shot put rivals Tom Walsh of New Zealand and Joe Kovacs of USA. PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES