Transport sector rises from lockdown ashes

The effects of the lockdown on the public transport sector linger on, as businesses barely hang on.

**CHARLOTTE NAMBADJA**

THE public transport sector has been barely surviving, as restrictions on the movement of people continue to hit the sector hard.

This is the view of various players in the industry, who noted that the financial shortfall currently being experienced will be hard to recoup.

Long-distance transport operators have been hit the hardest, as the lockdown of the Khomas and Erongo regions under the state of emergency regulations in April virtually brought the sector to a standstill.

There also remain some of the busiest routes for this mode of public transport, the operators said.

In addition, the number of passengers were limited to half the normal carrying capacity of vehicles in other states of the country.

Sisal Ndapuka Transport employs around 98 people, of whom 66 are drivers and others and office administrators, security officials and farmworkers.

The owner, Silas Ndapuka, said The Namibian that only 32 employees have fixed salaries, as most of the drivers are paid on commission.

Ndapuka said it has been difficult to do business, as there are many expenses the business has to bear like paying monthly instalments for its buses since not all them have been fully paid for.

The company owns 17 conventional buses and 16 Iveco minibuses.

During stage 2 of the lockdown, the Namibia Bus and Taxi Association (Nahta) announced that taxi fares would go back to the pre-lockdown fare of N$12 per trip. However, he said this only lasted two to three days because the police started to fine taxi drivers for carrying the full capacity of four passengers.

Taxi drivers reverted to carrying a maximum of three passengers and charging N$14 a trip, he said.

“We understand it caused confusion among members of the public, but as we speak the taxi fare remains N$14. This is just the Covid-19 fare since taxis can only carry three passengers as per social distancing. Taxis can only change as per directives of Nahta or the government and we have not approved the N$15.40 taxi fare as proposed on social media,” Nakathingo said.

**TRANSPORT BLUES**

Sanny Auto Repairs staff pictured at one of Windhoek’s loading terminals.

**The Namibian**

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