

BASKETBALL

Kenya Ports Authority, Equity Bank renew rivalry in Game One of the national women's league play-offs final that begins today. **PAGE 47**



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Funds > Draft regulations provide for voluntary membership for the self-employed

Atwoli reads scam in low-cost housing plan

Cotu boss says unless State clarifies how plan will run, workers won't contribute

BY KENNEDY KIMANTHI
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The Central Organisation of Trade Unions (Cotu) has poked holes in the government's National Housing Development Fund, opposing deduction from employees' salaries before the necessary regulations and structures are in place.

Secretary-General Francis Atwoli yesterday said the fund meant for building low-cost houses has the makings of a scam. It is not clear what role employers and workers would play in the management of the fund, he says.

The governance structure of the fund, its implementation modalities and how companies with housing plans for their employees will be treated are also not clear,

Mr Atwoli said yesterday.

The fund was introduced in implementation of the government's affordable housing agenda.

Kenyans will now have to contribute to this fund beginning January 2019 after the 2018 Finance Act introduced a mandatory 1.5 per cent levy on workers' gross salaries.

The new levy is expected to come into effect upon gazette of the regulations prescribing the requirements for qualification to the scheme.

"We have been pushing for the constitution of a tripartite board of government, employers and workers to ensure transparency and accountability of these funds. But the government has been reluctant.

"Until we know the rules of

the game that will affect our 2.5 million workers, we will not allow any deductions. This will be the only way to hold the Executive accountable for their actions and or omissions in the housing plan," Mr Atwoli said at a press conference at Cotu offices in Nairobi's Gikomba area.

The fund risks being abused since the government has "resolved to eject workers and employers' representatives from the National Social Security Fund and National Hospital Insurance Fund," he asserted.

Avoid embezzlement

The Draft Housing Fund Regulations 2018 provide for voluntary membership for self-employed people. They also set out penalties for non-compliance on both the employers and employees.

The contributions are to be remitted on or before the ninth day of the following month. "Such funds require supervision to ensure workers benefit and to avoid embezzlement," Mr Atwoli said.

Currently, Kenya needs at least 250,000 housing units every year

250,000
Number of housing units Kenya needs every year to meet demand. So far, only 50,000 are provided yearly



Cotu Secretary-General Francis Atwoli addresses journalists at Solidarity House in Nairobi yesterday.

EVANS HABIL | NATION

Over 90pc of roads are not tarmacked, report shows

BY PATRICK LANG'AT

Less than six per cent of Kenyan roads are tarmacked, with only 4,300 of the total 12,950km of paved roads in good condition, statistics by the Kenya Roads Board has shown.

At least 6,212km of tarmacked roads are classified as being in a fair condition, with 2,429km classified as poor. A total of 122km are currently under construction.

"A bigger percentage of the unpaved country network is either poor or very poor, indicating the need for more resource allocation to upgrade the standards," the board's report showed.

Improved network

Overall, however, the road network condition in the country has improved, with 57 per cent of roads now classified as either good or fair, up from 44 per cent in 2009.

Kenya has a total of 226,033km of road, but with only 161,451 having been classified. A total of 39,995 kilometres of classified roads are categorised as national trunk roads, with 121,456km classified as county roads. Of the total 226,033km, 82,132 are gravelled, with 71 per cent of them classified as being in either a fair or good condition.

The vast majority of roads in Kenya are earthen, with about half of them (52 per cent) classified as poor.

Maintenance backlog

Jubilee had identified construction of roads as a leading campaign promise in 2013 and 2017, promising a total of 10,000km of new tarmac roads by 2022.

In its annual report, the board did not say how many kilometres they have done so far, but Transport Cabinet Secretary James Macharia was optimistic about the progress so far.

He, however, said the funds to maintain and construct the roads were inadequate, given the Sh400 billion "huge maintenance backlog".

In its budget this year, the board has allocated Sh23.6 billion to highways, Sh12.4 billion to national rural roads, Sh8.2 billion to county roads, and Sh5.8 billion to national urban roads. A total of Sh5.7 billion will be used for emergency, while Sh570 million has been allocated to the national park roads. "The ministry is pursuing alternative funding sources," Mr Macharia said.

Similarly, the CS said, the ministry is looking to adopt performance-based contracting for road maintenance, and the adaptation of cheaper construction materials.

Seven perish as matatu collides with truck

BY NATION TEAM

At least seven people died yesterday in a grisly road accident involving a matatu and a truck at Mlango Tatu, on the Nakuru-Eldoret highway.

Acting Koibatek OCPD Amos Namasaka said at least four men and three women died in the afternoon crash.

He noted that the drivers of the two vehicles were among those who died.

The police boss said the matatu was heading to Eldoret when it collided head-on with the truck belonging to Raiply Company.

Eyewitnesses said the driver of the truck, which was carrying maize, was trying to overtake at a sharp bend when it collided with the matatu.

Mr Namasaka said initial investigations had established that the acci-



LUCAS BARASA | NATION

The scene of the accident in which a matatu collided head-on with a truck at Mlango Tatu on the busy Eldoret-Nakuru highway yesterday.

dent was caused by poor driving.

Serious injuries

"The driver of the truck was overtaking when the accident occurred," said the police boss.

He noted that the matatu belongs to Classic Sacco.

The accident caused a huge traffic snarl-up on both sides of the busy road.

"This area has become a black spot from Makutano to Timboroa and I

urge motorists to be very careful as many people have died along the stretch particularly during the festive season," said Mr Namasaka.

Three passengers who suffered serious injuries

are recuperating at Nakuru Level Five Hospital.

Three other men received treatment at Timboroa Hospital before they were transferred to Nakuru Level Five for specialised treatment.

The bodies were moved to the Eldama Ravine Sub-County mortuary while the wreckage of the two vehicles was towed to the Timboroa Police Station.

The accident came a day after two people died at the Total Junction in another accident involving a matatu.

On Saturday, a 14-year-old girl was killed while her sister and two cousins suffered serious injuries when they were hit by a motorist at Sachangwan, on the Nakuru-Eldoret highway.

Reported by John Njoroge, Lucas Barasa and Joseph Openda

This area has become a black spot and I urge motorists to be careful as many people have died here" Amos Namasaka, police boss