

FEES REVIEW

Cost of ID cards to go up

Registration board says documents cost five times what people pay

By MWAKERA MWAJEFA

The cost of acquiring national identity cards is likely to go up by 500 per cent if a proposal to increase the charges is approved, the *Nation* has learnt.

The current charges were way below the cost of production, according to the Coast coordinator of the National Registration Board (NRB), Mr George Opiyo.

Citing the replacement of identity cards as an example, Mr Opiyo said it costs the Immigration ministry Sh500 to replace one but the applicant pays only Sh100.

"We are operating at a loss when replacing either lost or mutilated ID cards as the material used is imported from Britain," said Mr Opiyo. He was speaking during the just-ended Public Service Week.

The NRB proposes that the Government charges Sh500 for issuing duplicate ID cards and replacing old ones with the second generation type and Sh1,000, up from Sh300, to change information on ID cards. The only free service would be for new registrations.

Change image

"Right now, we are accused of not raising revenue and we would like to change that image," Mr Opiyo said.

Reacting to calls for exemption of children of civil servants and teachers who come from areas close to international borders from being vetted before being issued with ID cards, Mr Opiyo said this was beyond his department's docket.

The law requires people living near in-

ternational borders such as Kwale, Taveta, Tana River and Lamu to be vetted before they are issued with ID cards.

"The role of NRB is to process applications only while the role of identification lies elsewhere," he said, adding that fingers had been pointed at the board for the "mistakes" of other departments.

SMS service

To achieve its target of issuing 8.6 million ID cards by 2012, Mr Opiyo said the board had proposed the computerisation of the department.

"This will enable people to use the SMS service to monitor progress in the processing of their ID cards," he said.

He said that the department planned to set up a network of 110 registration centres, replace 1.5 million ID cards with second generation ones, purchase 151 digital cameras and renovate 71 registration offices countrywide.

**It costs
Sh500 to
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yet applicant
pays Sh100**

CK official gives evidence in camera

By NATION Correspondents

A senior Electoral Commission of Kenya official yesterday gave her evidence in private before the Independent Review Commission investigating last year's election.

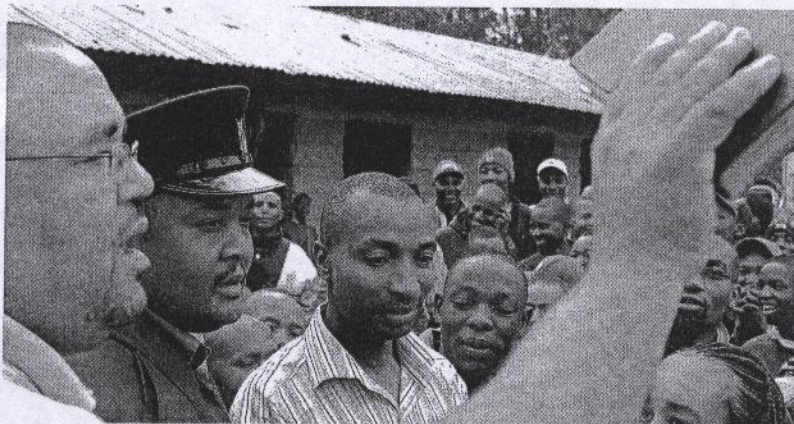
Ms Agnes Kisero asked the commission to allow her to give her evidence behind closed doors. She made the request through assisting counsel Cecil Miller.

After consulting with his team, Mr Justice Johann Krieger consulted his team and agreed to the request. Journalists and the audience were then asked to leave.

"We have decided to make an exception... we will ask the public to excuse us," Mr Justice Krieger said, noting that private hearings were rare since the commission ought to be open to the public.

Ms Kisero was in charge of coordinating elections in 21 constituencies in Central Province last year.

MATATU PROTESTS



Mr Simon Kimutai, the chairman of the Matatu Owners Association addresses drivers and tourists operating on route 23 after they went on strike to protest over police harassment yesterday. The strike paralysed transport on the Kangemi-Nairobi route. > Story on Page 4. Photo: JOSEPH MATHENGE

Ministry set to reclaim illegally acquired land

By SAMWEL KUMBA

The Government will repossess all illegally allocated land at the Coast, Lands minister James Orengo has said.

"We intend to reclaim the illegally dished out land. We will do that within the provisions in the law," said Mr Orengo who is accompanying President Kibaki in his tour of Coast Province.

The minister, who was speaking after opening a two-day workshop on the role of geo-information in national development, also disclosed that most of the country's northern boundaries were not clearly marked out.

Agricultural show

President Kibaki will later open the region's Agricultural Show of Kenya. He is expected to address among other issues the growing calls by area MPs for coastals to be appointed to head key institutions including the Mombasa port.

On the country's mapping, the minister cited Eastern and North Eastern as areas that were not clearly mapped out. This could jeopardise the border locations with the neighbours.

The principal of the College of Architecture and Engineering at the University of Nairobi, Prof Francis Aduol, said the use of artificial reference surfaces to mapping could lead to border point crisis.

Boundary

A case in point is the Kenya-Somalia border which is taken to coincide with the 41 degree longitude. "Where exactly the boundary falls will depend on which reference surface one uses. This is because the heights taken with such reference surfaces are not the same as heights above sea level," said Prof Aduol.

It is based on the potential crisis. The minister called for common standards and reference system in mapping.

The workshop, at the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development, drew policy makers and managers of ministries of lands and environment from Botswana, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and the host Kenya.

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CONTACT:
JOHN WARD
P O BOX 230

BURY ST. EDMUNDS
SUFFOLK, ENGLAND

Tel. (44) 1284 830 916

Email: marainquiry@aol.com

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