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Message From the Group MD

Welcome to the Q1 Edition of Autonews

Welcome, esteemed readers to a vibrant and first edition of Autonews Magazine for 2026.

The automotive industry is at a pivotal moment, where innovation, safety, motorsport, and global fuel economics converge to redefine mobility.

As we end Q1, the theme, Shifting Gears, captures the dynamic transformation shaping the sector AA Kenya has been prepared for moments like this to define a purposeful action that serves today's motorist while preparing for tomorrow's demands.

Launch of International Driving Permit

I am happy to announce the launch of the International Driving Permit (IDP). A permit to a world of opportunities for Kenyans, especially those travelling abroad. An opportunity for the youth looking for jobs outside Kenya. An opportunity for Kenyan tourists travelling to different countries. This is an opportunity for over 5 million licensed drivers in Kenya to upgrade from a local license to the international one, unlocking numerous opportunities in the global market.

In recent years, several Kenyans have been arrested abroad for possessing fake IDPs, which Interpol treats as forgery. With the support of FIA, AA Dubai, and the United Kingdom, AA Kenya has redesigned the IDP to be more customer-friendly, passport-like, and equipped with enhanced security features. Travellers can now benefit from digital verification, allowing police anywhere in the world to authenticate the IDP without having to contact AA Kenya directly.

We welcome you to become part of the international community of Drivers by converting your local Driving license to International. Simply visit our website for more information (www.aakenya.co.ke) or visit any of our branches country-wide.

Insider eye of the Edition

I am honored to present this comprehensive and curated guide that is designed to empower you with the knowledge, insights, and tools necessary to thrive in our rapidly evolving mobility landscape.

Within these pages, you'll discover:

- Practical, everyday motoring, with insights on proper Autocare, safe use of climbing lanes, navigating NTSA service processes, essential first aid knowledge, the role of PSVs in advancing green mobility, and key road safety guidance for all road users.

- Infrastructure projects such as the SGR extension to Malaba and the dualling of the Nairobi-Mau Summit highway further demonstrate Kenya's shift toward efficient, sustainable, and modern transport solutions.

Global Fuel Trends and Kenyan realities

The world economy of fuel remains a critical factor influencing automotive progress. Global oil price fluctuations, driven by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and energy transitions, directly affect nations like Kenya. The ripple effect for a Kenyan household mean increases in transport expenses, an impact on inflation, and a challenge to household budgets, Increase in food and fertilizer costs, and overall fear of fuel shortages.

For Kenyan motorists, higher pump prices mean rethinking mobility choices, with many turning toward fuel-efficient cars, hybrid vehicles, and public transport alternatives. At the same time, Kenya's push for renewable energy and regional oil exploration highlights the country's resilience and ambition to reduce dependency on volatile global markets.

Ultimately, mobility is about people. It is about the commuter who leaves home before dawn, the entrepreneur moving goods across counties, the family travelling for school holidays, and the young driver taking the wheel for the first time. Every service we deliver is designed to make those journeys safer and more reliable.

In conclusion, Innovation, safety, motorsport, and fuel economics are not separate paths but interconnected forces driving the automotive industry forward. The journey ahead is one of transformation, and the road promises endless possibilities.

Happy Reading

Francis Theuri
Group Managing Director - AA Kenya

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AA Kenya Launches New Look International Driving Permit, Allowing Motorists to Convert their Local Licenses to International Permits

AA Kenya has launched a new look International Driving Permit (IDP) at an event attended by industry stakeholders, travel partners, and media. The launch is part of a nationwide campaign encouraging Kenyan drivers to convert their local driving licences to international permits and highlights AA Kenya's commitment to supporting motorists in accessing global mobility opportunities.

The campaign, themed Convert Local to International Driving License, calls on more than five million licensed drivers in Kenya to upgrade their credentials. With the government promoting overseas travel and work, AA Kenya emphasises the advantages of holding a globally recognised driving licence, particularly for young people seeking employment, study, or traveling abroad for leisure.

The IDP, issued exclusively by AA Kenya, allows Kenyan drivers to legally operate vehicles in over 150 countries without the need to take local driving tests. It acts as an official translation of a valid Kenyan driving licence into an internationally recognised format, ensuring smooth interactions with traffic authorities, rental agencies, and insurers abroad.

Tourists and business travellers also benefit from the IDP, as it streamlines car rentals and provides legal certainty when driving in countries & regions such as the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. For families, students, and professionals relocating overseas, the permit reduces the time and cost of retraining or obtaining foreign licences, enabling them to drive immediately upon arrival.

At the launch, attention turns to the new design. The IDP now comes in a passport-like format with enhanced security features and digital verification. Authorities anywhere in the world can authenticate the document without contacting Kenya. It also serves as a supplementary form of identification and supports insurance compliance, making it essential for anyone driving outside Kenya.

AA Kenya highlights that the permit is more than a travel document, as it is a tool for global mobility, providing legal authorisation, confidence in car rentals, smooth border and police interactions, and reduced risk of misunderstandings with authorities. Motorists also save time and money by avoiding retraining abroad.

TThe event was graced by AA Kenya Group Managing Director- Francis Theuri, Director Mobility Services- Timothy Keli, CEO KATA- Nicolar Sabula, and FKE MAnager- Eric Munyobi. The launch reaffirms AA Kenya's leadership in mobility solutions, combining quality driver training with internationally compliant certification. Drivers can apply for the IDP online via https://aakidp.aakenya.co.ke, at any of the 95+ branches nationwide, via mobile services, or through the 24-hour call centre.

With the new look International Driving Permit, AA Kenya urges Kenyan motorists to convert local licences to international, unlock global opportunities, and drive the world with confidence.

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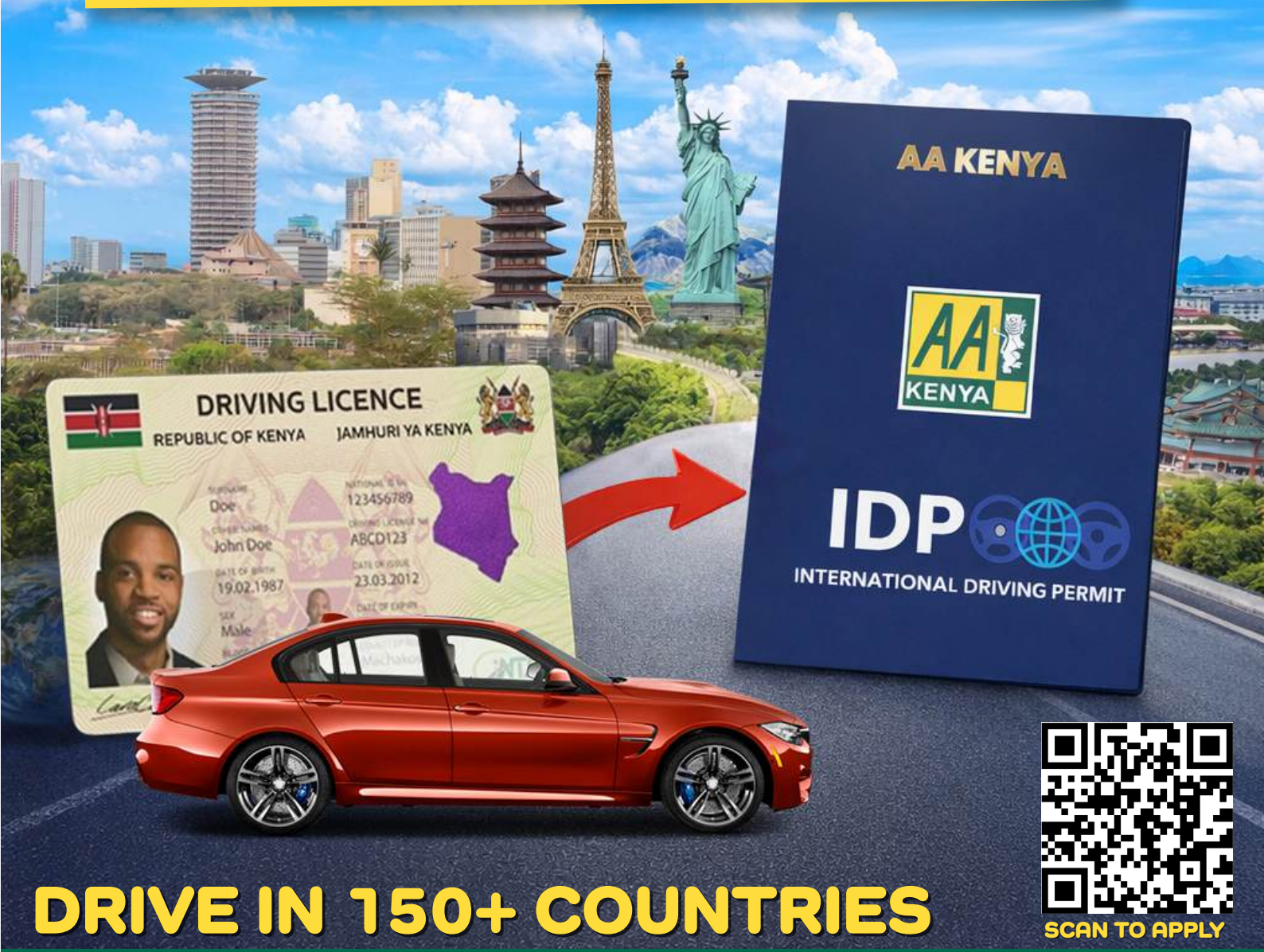
CONVERT YOUR LOCAL DRIVING LICENSE TO AN INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT



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Auto care

By Baraza JM

Helming what was once a widely read automotive newspaper column (Car Clinic, Daily Nation: 2010 – 2022) taught me one thing: precious few of us understand the motor vehicle, and even fewer know what it takes to keep one running faultlessly for any extended period of time.

From uncertainty over service intervals and recommended sundries, to falling prey to conniving mechanics to penny-pinching via corner-cutting either by buying cheap knockoff parts or forgoing preventative maintenance altogether; the most accurate description one can accord to the average Kenyan motorist is also the most brutal, but the truth is uncomfortable.

They can only be described as "toxic".

Granted, a very small subset of the motoring public has received any kind of automotive training, formal or informal; but you don't need special training to manage a regular vehicle.

Watch any premier league football match broadcast and observe the pundits discuss at length the finer intricacies of player deployment, attack and defence strategies, resource management, substitutions, team cohesion and psychology; and you'd be forgiven to assume they belong to the ranks of overpaid and unnecessarily famous managers.

It takes a lot of arcane knowledge to spew that kind of tactical drivel with the confidence these barflies exude, and yet some of these armchair tacticians have grounded or mechanically unsound vehicles stashed away out of sight as they dismissively tell anyone who cares to listen that "gari yangu iko na shida ya sensor" (my car has a sensor problem).

Oddly enough, unlike the world of football with its myriad rules about offsides, corner kicks, red cards and penalties, the rules of motor vehicle maintenance boil down to only three simple things

1. **Routine:** perform maintenance on your car and replace the sundries on schedule and/or on demand.

2. **Fidelity:** perform this maintenance using tried and tested resources.

3. **Deflation:** put aside your pride and admit to what you don't know. A corollary to this is: if unsure about something, ask.

I have seen all three rules broken with oftentimes spectacular, sometimes heartbreaking and occasionally hilarious results.

I have seen a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X with a twin-clutch SST gearbox so neglected that when the vehicle eventually packed it in and refused to budge, it was brought in only for us to discover the transmission fluid had never been changed so it was no longer a fluid, it had become a gel or a

paste. We had to scoop it out using sticks.

I have seen what happens when one buys fake parts or goes to a sham of a mechanic. Not only have I seen this, but I have been in the thick of it too, myself. I once had a twin-turbo BH5 Subaru Legacy GT-B E Tune II Revision D that blew a gasket. What should have been a simple heads off-gasket off- gasket on-heads on operation turned into a very expensive engine replacement after the operation went sideways as a result of incompetence. I should have paid closer attention when the mechanic kept referring to his own twin-turbo in the past tense just before accepting my contract…

I have also seen what happens when people trust their own ill-informed judgement against the word of the experts.

I will not go into details but let's just say, a steadfast refusal to service the braking system in the belief that the owner could "drive around the problem" led to an incomplete journey complete with fatalities. It still haunts me to this day.

There has been a proliferation of digital forums and the creation of a variety of owner's clubs most of which are brand and/or model-specific.

Some go further into era and/or genre specificity. These coalitions are treasure troves of information and advice, more so pertaining to points 2 and 3 above: they provide contact addresses and recommendations of what to get and where to get them, and they are a repository of informative detail should you run into problems or simply want information.

There is also the consumption of media. It behoves you to be circumspect about what you absorb and what you disregard.

With the spread of social media comes the spread of what I once referred to a "Propshaft Prophets", purveyors of misinformation and agents of disinformation. They disseminate wrong or unverified claims in the name of fact.

Choose your influencer wisely; and if unable to, avoid them altogether.

*****

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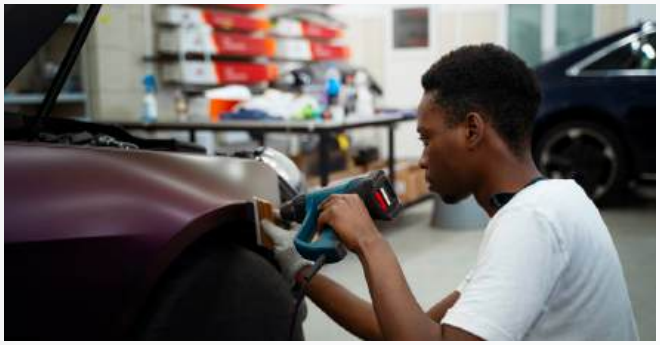
How to maintain your car:



1. Establish useful networks
2. Buy the right car
3. Prevention is better than cure, timeliness means everything
4. Empower yourself

Establishing Networks

Start with a bit of due diligence. Word of mouth is the most powerful form of advertising, so watch out for the mechanics, garages and parts suppliers who are always being given as references either in general or in forums specific to your car make and/or model; or you could ask outright and quietly run your own poll. That of course means you should join the right forums. Social media is full of them.

The other alternative is to acquire membership of a convenience service such as the one offered by AA Kenya. They will do all the heavy lifting for you; all you need to do is sign up and at your moment of need, dial a number and state your needs or predicament.

(This is not plugging, the service actually works; more so for those who lack the time or inclination to visit the digital space on the regular)

Buying the Right Vehicle

There is a reason motoring journalism exists. It serves as a portal of news and information about every single aspect of the automotive industry; but of course our claim to fame and notoriety comes from the car reviews we do every now and then. Some are first impressions, some involve collection of vital statistics and some are drawn out long term tests. It is this third lot that you should pay particular attention to.

We test motor vehicles so that you don't have to. We push them hard, we strip them down and we comb them through to get all the information we can out of them and send this information to you so that come decision time, you are not starting from a position of complete darkness.

These car reviews unveil enough information to guide your next purchase and sometimes this information contains a reliability index. Is the vehicle dependable or will it spend more time on jack-stands than on marked roads?

Prevention Is The Mother of All Cures

It beggars belief that such an obvious thing would warrant repeating or reminding but as earlier stated, we have... seen things. Economic times may be tough but there is what you can get away with when fudging your maintenance schedule and there is what you can't.

Spark plug replacement? You can skip it. Braking system? Death awaits.

While it may seem thrifty and financially savvy to squeeze as much life out of a component before sending it to the dugout, try not to. Extending a service interval could lead to a seized engine which means an expensive rebuild or even more expensive replacement. Overstretching tyre life could lead to a blowout with outcomes that are both painful and expensive. If you can't afford some maintenance steps, sometimes it's best to just park your car until such a time as when you can replace it comes around

Empower Yourself

Acquire a little knowledge about cars and their systems. Don't be completely clueless to the point of being at the mercy of any joker who can correctly spell the words "crankshaft position sensor".

But Why Even Bother?

Strangely enough, all this could be for nothing, particularly the fourth entry. Technology is changing at an alarming rate. We grew up with carburettors which have since been superseded by electronic fuel injection. Now we have hybrid cars and we have EVs which were touted as the future but some upstart car companies now claim hydrogen is the way. Let's not forget cars have advanced safety systems, a lot of them are self-parking and many others seek self-driving (autonomous) capability. Who is supposed to memorize all this technology?

Not you, as it turns out. Over the years a lot of car manufacturers are taking repair capability away from the common man and limiting it to approved forecourts only. Ferrari has done this for the longest time, machining their hardware to be accessible by proprietary tooling only available at approved dealerships. Given that something as “simple” as a clutch replacement on a mid-engine V8 involves excising half the bodywork and dropping both the engine and gearbox, you will not find many people outside of Ferrari willing to undertake such an operation.

It’s not just in the upper levels of car strata. Toyota uses proprietary software in their ECUs that you cannot hack, it’s simply locked. John Deere in America did it with their on-board diagnostics system, a decision that drew the ire of their clients and led to a drawn-out lawsuit over something called the Right to Repair.

As more and more incidences like this come to light, and as cars continue increasing in complexity, it will become ultimately pointless trying to learn anything beyond the bare minimum. Once upon a time, we could open the backs of our Nokia 3310s and Compaq desktops to replace the batteries and clean the fans respectively. But now? Smartphones come with non-detachable batteries; some even have permanent rear covers that cannot be opened by anyone except the trained repairman at the brand outlet. The same thing applies to laptops: they are sealed shut with screws that are barely visible to the naked eye. For both devices, once they act up you either discard it and replace; or take it to a specialist. The same thing will apply to vehicles very soon

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How AA Kenya Brought the Safari Rally to Life

When AA Kenya first proved that cars could survive the Kenyan & East African road conditions, the next challenge became how fast could they conquer it. That sparked the birth of one of the most legendary events in motorsport, the Safari Rally.

The year was 1953. AA Kenya organized the East African Coronation Safari. Unlike any race seen before, it was designed as a gruelling, multi-day journey through East Africa's vast wilderness. Covering thousands of kilometers of open public roads, the rally was as much a battle of survival as it was a contest of speed.

Drivers faced an unforgiving course across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The rally threw everything at them: swollen rivers that swallowed cars whole, rocky escarpments that shredded tires, endless stretches of choking dust, and sudden encounters with wildlife. Mechanical breakdowns were routine, and only a fraction of the starters ever reached the finish line. Victory required more than driving skill, it demanded mechanical knowledge, flawless navigation, endurance, and a dose of good luck.

As the years rolled on, the rally evolved beyond its beginnings. After independence, it became a source of national pride, a stage where local drivers could prove themselves against international stars. No figure captured the spirit of the event more than Joginder Singh, affectionately known as "The Flying Sikh." Singh made history in 1965 when he became the first Kenyan to win the Safari Rally.

He went on to secure two more wins, including a famous victory in 1974 behind the wheel of a Mitsubishi Lancer. His fearless driving and consistency turned him into a national hero and a global symbol of Kenya's motorsport talent.

The rally's reputation soon extended beyond sport. It became part of Kenya's cultural identity, showcasing African ingenuity and resilience to the world. Manufacturers like Peugeot, Toyota, Datsun, and Mitsubishi used the Safari Rally to prove their cars' toughness. The vehicles that conquered the Safari often became best-sellers in Kenya, trusted by ordinary drivers to survive the country's demanding roads.

In 1973, the rally's prestige soared when it was included in the inaugural World Rally Championship (WRC). For three decades, it was widely regarded as the toughest event on the WRC calendar. Unlike rallies in Europe that followed short, closed stages, the Safari stretched over thousands of kilometers of open roads, with unpredictable weather adding to the drama. Sudden downpours could turn dry plains into

quagmires within minutes.

But by 2002, logistical and safety challenges forced the Safari off the WRC calendar. For nearly two decades, Kenyans clung to memories of the golden years, when the world's best drivers wrestled their machines across the Rift Valley dust.

The dream of revival came true in 2021 when, after years of lobbying, the Safari Rally made its triumphant return to the WRC. While modern rules required it to adopt the closed-road special stage format, organizers ensured it kept its soul. Centred around Naivasha in the Rift Valley, the rally still delivers the extremes that made it famous: deep mud, fesh-fesh sand, treacherous river crossings, and high-speed jumps that punish both cars and drivers.

Today, the Safari Rally is once again a jewel in the WRC crown, unpredictable, spectacular, and uniquely Kenyan. Its journey, from a coronation celebration in 1953 to a world-class motorsport event, is a story of endurance and vision. Above all, it remains a testament to AA Kenya's role in shaping not just the rally, but also Kenya's place on the global motorsport map.

Overtaking on Climbing Lanes: When Safety Turns into a Trap

By Timothy Albrite

Climbing lanes, also known as truck lanes, are intended to improve safety and traffic flow on steep roads. Slow-moving vehicles, usually heavy trucks, stay in the left lane, allowing faster vehicles to pass safely. In theory, this reduces congestion and accidents. In practice, Kenyan roads show a different reality.

Drivers often misinterpret climbing lanes as racing lanes. Instead of using them for controlled passing, some accelerate aggressively, overtaking multiple vehicles at once. Others fail to merge back safely when the lane ends, forcing sudden braking or swerving, which can result in collisions.

Common dangers include:

- Tailgating slow trucks
- Dangerous overtakes at sharp bends
- Accelerating to beat the end of the lane
- Head-on collisions when lanes merge

Poor signage worsens the situation. Drivers rarely know where the lane will end or how long it is, especially in rural sections or on older highways. Truck drivers, meanwhile, face pressure to keep left even when road conditions or load distribution make it difficult to rejoin traffic safely.

Driver education is critical. A climbing lane is not a license to speed. It is a controlled zone designed to reduce risk, not reward aggression. Fast drivers must remain patient and merge carefully, while trucks must maintain predictable speeds to allow safe overtaking.

Road designers also bear responsibility. Lanes must be long enough, clearly marked, and well signposted. Kenya is gradually improving this, especially on the Thika Superhighway and Nakuru–Eldoret corridor, but inconsistent standards remain.

Climbing lanes illustrate that infrastructure alone does not ensure safety. It must be paired with predictable driver behaviour, clear markings, and enforcement. Without these, even well-intentioned safety features can become traps.

The lesson for Kenyan motorists: Use climbing lanes as they are intended, respect truck drivers, and anticipate merges. Speeding and impatience will turn the safety solution into another accident risk.

NTSA Motor Vehicle Transfer & Ownership Services

Here's a breakdown of how to perform the following NTSA Motor Vehicle Transfer Services:

1. Obtaining a vehicle Copy of Records
2. Transferring a vehicle over a succession case
3. Previous vehicle Owner Missing or A sent
4.Distress for Rent Auction
5.Parastatals GK or County governments
6.All vehicle re-registration

Copy of Records
A Copy of Records provides detailed information about a motor vehicle. It includes:

- Chassis and engine numbers
- Registered owner's details
- Make and model of the vehicle
- Year of manufacture and date of registration

How to apply:

1. Log in to your E-Citizen account
2. Select the NTSA Service Portal (New)
3. Go to Services - Motor Vehicle - Copy of Records
4. Enter the registration or chassis number, search, then submit
5. Select your payment mode and complete the payment
6. Go to Application History - View to download the document
7. Charges: KSh 550 Timeline: Immediate

Succession Case
When transferring a vehicle after an owner's death, the following are required:

- Certified copy of the Certificate of Grants and schedule of properties
- Letter appointing administrators of the state
- Original logbook or Police Abstract
- Official transfer request letter
- Certified death certificate (CRS)
- DCI tape lift
- Form C (transfer form)
- Sworn affidavit from the successor
- KRA PIN and ID of the new owner

Previous Vehicle Owner Missing or Absent
For cases where the previous owner cannot be located:

- Copy of ID or Certificate of Incorporation of registered and new owner
- Sworn affidavit from the applicant
- DCI tape lift
- Seller agreement with completed Form C
- Official transfer request letter
- Original logbook or Police Abstract
- KRA PIN certificate of registered and new owner
- Court Order

Alternative / Forced Transfer
To apply:

1. Visit serviceportal.ntsa.go.ke - Services - Alternative/Forced Transfer
2. Fill in required information and select the type of transfer
3. Attach original scanned documents in one PDF
4. Indicate collection centre and ID of authorised person
5. Submit and pay for transfer and inspection
6. Wait seven days; the system will prompt inspection booking
7. Present the vehicle for inspection and submit original documents
8. Upon approval, an SMS notification will be sent to the new owner

Charges: Varies by engine capacity and inspection fee Timeline: 3 working days

Distress for Rent Auction

Requirements for vehicles sold through distress or rental auctions:

- Alternative transfer request letter
- Original logbook or Police Abstract
- Form C stamped by auctioneer
- DCI tape lift
- Sworn affidavit from magistrate/ advocate
- IDs & KRA PINs of new and previous owners
- Certificate of Registration and KRA PIN for companies
- Auctioneer's license and registration certificate
- Certificate of sale
- Newspaper advertisement
- Court order authorising auction
- Vehicle must not be under caveat

Note: Police auction vehicles require completion of an Alternative/Forced Transfer to secure legal ownership.

Parastatals, GK & County Governments

Vehicles from government or defence institutions require:

- Authorisation letter from the Principal Secretary or department
- Prescribed Application Form "A" and Form "C"
- GK number plates or retention letter
- Registration certificate or letter if lo book is unavailable
- Auction documents if applicable
- KRA PIN and ID copies of buyer
- DCI tape lift of chassis and engine numbers
- New Entry form if duty unpaid

Note: Ex-military vehicles do not require number plates or registration certificates.

All Re-Registration Applications

Steps:

1. Log in to serviceportal.ntsa.go.ke - Motor Vehicle Services - Re-Registration
2. Fill required information, search using KRA PIN and entry
3. Select number plate type
4. Attach all required documents
5. Submit declaration and payment
6. Buyer accepts/declines consent via account notification
7. Book inspection at preferred centre
8. Submit original physical documents for verification
9. Wait for approval and number plate allocation

Civilian Vehicle Re-Registration Requirements:

- Request letter explaining reason for re-registration
- DCI report on the owner
- Original certificate of registration/log book
- DCI tape lift of chassis and engine numbers
- KRA PIN and National ID of owner

Note: Civilian-to-civilian re-registration requires submission of physical originals at NTSA office.

What's in a VIN Number: The Secret Code Every Kenyan Motorist Should Know

By Moses Gichohi

Every vehicle on Kenyan roads carries a hidden signature: a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).

For most motorists, it's a line of 17 characters on the dashboard or inside the door frame that seems meaningless. But in reality, this code is your car's digital fingerprint, and learning to read it can save thousands of shillings, prevent fraud, and even protect lives.

VINs were standardized internationally in 1981 and contain crucial information about a vehicle's origin, make, model, and production history. The VIN is divided into three key sections:

1. World Manufacturer Identifier (WMI)
The first three characters show the country of origin and manufacturer. For example:

"J" = Japan
"K" = Korea
"W" = Germany
"VF" = France

2. Vehicle Descriptor Section (VDS)
Characters 4–9 describe the car's model, body type, engine type, and safety features. This part helps differentiate between similar models produced in different factories.

3. Vehicle Identifier Section (VIS)
The final characters indicate the production year, assembly plant, and serial number. This uniquely identifies your specific car, making it possible to track recalls, accident histories, and ownership records.

In Kenya, VINs are more than technical trivia, they are vital for anyone buying a used car. Mitumba vehicles imported from Japan, the UAE, or Europe can have altered logbooks or inaccurate mileage claims. A VIN check can reveal:

True mileage: Some sellers roll back odometers to inflate resale value.

Accident history: VIN tracking can show whether the vehicle has been in serious collisions or flood damage.

Theft records: Authorities can flag stolen vehicles before registration.

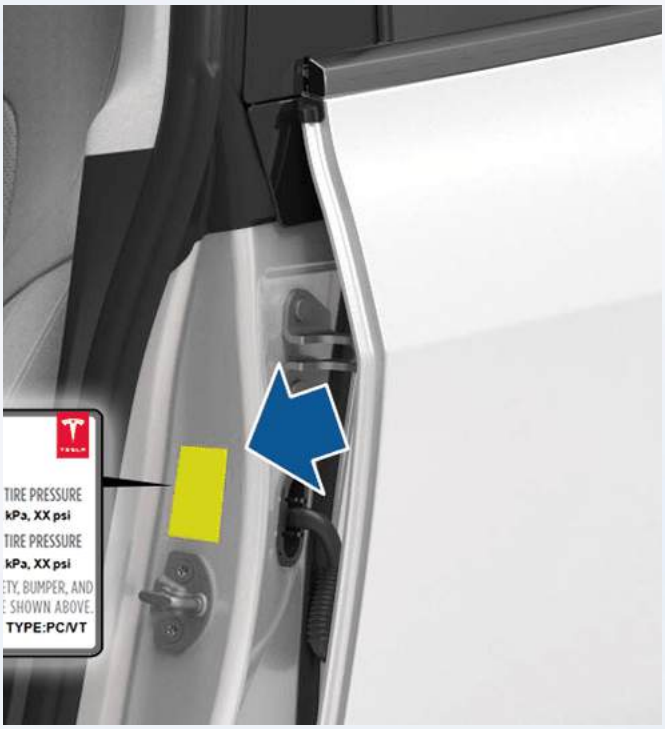
Matching registration: Ensures the physical VIN aligns with logbook records.

VINs are also critical for warranty and insurance purposes. Insurers may reject claims if VINs are tampered with, and manufacturers often require them for recall notifications.
For Kenyan motorists, learning to read a VIN is simple yet powerful. Tools like online VIN decoders, import databases, or manufacturer websites can instantly verify a car's history. Even dealerships increasingly rely on VIN verification to assure buyers and protect their reputations.
Beyond protection, VINs have a strategic use in resale. A car with a verifiable VIN history commands a higher price, giving peace of mind to buyers and sellers alike. It turns an abstract code into a tangible value tool.

Authorities also use VINs for road safety and crime prevention. Stolen or illegally imported vehicles often have altered or missing VINs, and tracing these cars helps enforce the law and reduce insurance fraud.

The bottom line: **treat your VIN like your car's DNA.** It's permanent, tamper-proof, and tells the story your eyes can't see. Whether you are buying a brand-new locally assembled vehicle or a second-hand import, checking the VIN should be the first step — before handing over cash or signing documents.

Ignoring it is like buying land without checking the title deed — risky, expensive, and unnecessary. In a market where imported vehicles dominate, a little VIN knowledge goes a long way toward protecting your wallet and safety



BasiGo Hits 100 Elect
Matatus Spread Beyo

Kenya's electric bus pioneer BasiGo has rolled out its 100th electric bus, a milestone that signals how fast zero-emission public transport is moving from pilot project to everyday reality.

What began as a Nairobi-focused experiment has now spread to other towns, with electric buses operating in Kisumu and Nakuru, expanding the footprint of the "green matatu" revolution.

The company says the 100-bus mark reflects rising confidence among operators that electric buses can survive the harsh economics of Kenyan public transport.

For matatu owners, the calculation is simple. Electric buses cost more upfront than diesel models, but their running costs are dramatically lower. Electricity is cheaper and more stable than fuel, and electric drivetrains require less frequent servicing because they lack oil systems, gearboxes and complex exhaust components.

Operators using the buses report savings of up to 60 per cent on daily energy costs compared with diesel.

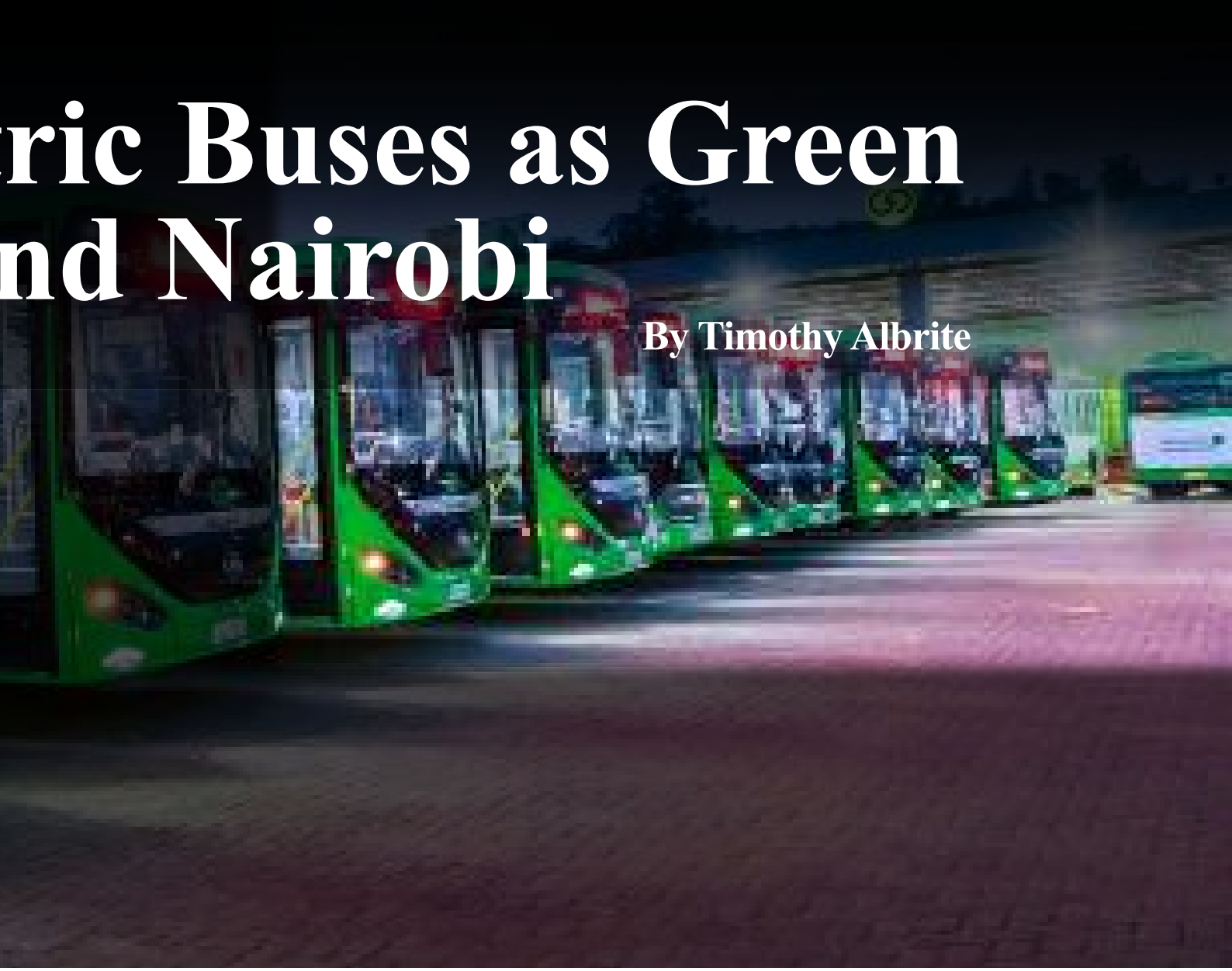
That difference is reshaping route economics. High-frequency urban corridors, where buses stop and start repeatedly in traffic, are proving ideal for electric operation. Regenerative braking recovers energy, while predictable daily distances make charging schedules easier to manage.

The expansion to Kisumu and Nakuru is strategically important. These cities face many of the same challenges as Nairobi: rising fuel costs, worsening air quality and growing commuter populations. Electric buses offer a way to increase capacity without adding to urban pollution or noise.

County transport officials say the buses have also changed public perception. Passengers are responding positively to quieter rides, cleaner interiors and more consistent service. For many commuters, it is their first experience of electric mobility, making public transport the gateway technology for Kenya's energy transition.

ric Buses as Green nd Nairobi

By Timothy Albrite



Infrastructure remains the main constraint. Charging depots must be built close to bus routes, and grid reliability is essential to keep fleets running on schedule. BasiGo has invested in private charging stations at key terminals, but further growth will depend on partnerships with power utilities and city authorities.

There are also policy implications. As electric buses multiply, regulators are being forced to rethink licensing, safety inspections and fare structures designed for diesel vehicles. New standards are emerging for battery safety, fire response and high-voltage systems.

From an environmental standpoint, the impact is already visible.

Transport is one of the largest sources of urban air pollution in Kenya. Replacing a single diesel bus with an electric one cuts tailpipe emissions entirely and reduces noise levels along busy routes.

Scaled up across hundreds of vehicles, the effect on city air quality could be substantial.

The business model is also evolving.

Rather than selling buses outright, BasiGo offers lease-style arrangements that bundle vehicles, maintenance and charging into a single package. This lowers the barrier to entry for matatu owners who would otherwise struggle with the upfront cost of electric vehicles.

For the wider motor industry, the milestone sends a clear signal that electrification in Kenya is not being driven by luxury cars or private buyers. It is being led by buses and the matatu sector, the backbone of daily mobility for millions of people.0

With 100 electric buses now on the road, the experiment phase is over.The question for 2026 is no longer whether electric public transport can work in Kenya, but how fast it can scale and how many diesel engines it can replace.

AA Kenya Kicks Off the 2026 Best Driver Challenge

By Daniel Kiprono

AA Kenya is set to host the fourth edition of the Best Driver Challenge in 2026, a drivers' contest held in collaboration with the FIA (Federation Internationale de l'Automobile), that puts driving talent to the test while promoting road safety across the country. The challenge first hit Kenyan roads in 2023, giving winners the chance to represent Kenya on the global stage in Austria, with 2024's finals taking place in Belgium.

In 2025 the landscape shifted again when FIA Region I launched the African Best Young Driver contest, a first-of-its-kind Africa-only championship. Kenya hosted the debut finals in Naivasha and brought together young drivers from across the continent. Competitors were tested on skills that matter most for safe driving from emergency manoeuvres to traffic rule awareness, and Kenya's own Victor Maina Kabura stood tall as champion.

This year the Best Driver Challenge opens its doors wider. The 2026 contest welcomes drivers of all ages and offers three categories: Best Young Driver for ages 18 to 26, The Masters for those 27 and older, and a Lady Drivers category for women 18 and above. Drivers must hold a valid Kenyan driving licence and a Kenyan ID to take part.

Drivers ready to put their skills to the test are invited to register and sit the online theory test at the official portal: bestdriver.aakenya.co.ke. From there the season of regional driving tests begins.

Regional practical events will roll out across the country with heats in

-Eldoret on April 18th,
-Mombasa on 23rd May,
-Nakuru on June 13th,
-Meru on July 18th,
-Nairobi on August 15th
-Kisumu on September 26th.

The best from each region will compete in Nairobi on October 17th for the national finals.

The rewards go beyond pride and bragging rights. Finalists will chase a chance to represent Kenya at the African finals in Tanzania. They will also earn trips to top Kenyan destinations, shopping and dinner vouchers, trophies, certificates, defensive driving classes, merchandise and more.

The Best Driver Challenge has grown over the years to become a platform for road safety, for recognising skill and discipline at the wheel, and for reminding every motorist that good driving matters on every road in Kenya and across Africa.

AA KENYA

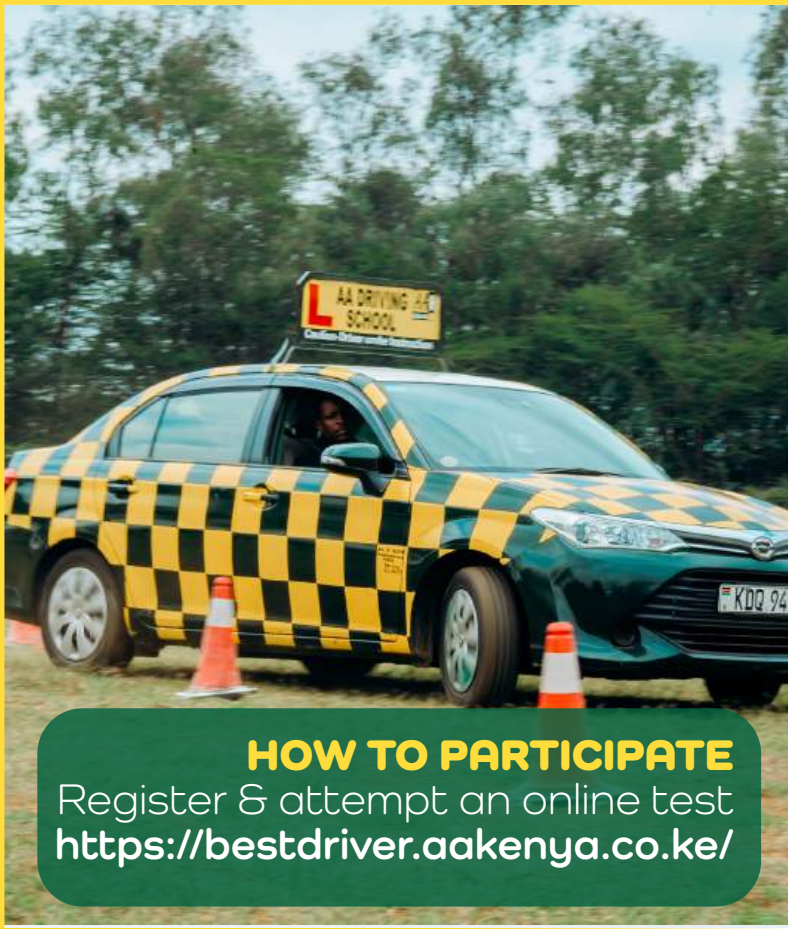
2026 BEST DRIVER CHALLENGE

3 STAGES. TOP DRIVERS. ONE CHAMPION.

CATEGORIES

THE MASTERS	BEST YOUNG DRIVER	LADIES
27+ yrs	18-26 yrs	18+ yrs

REQUIREMENTS
Kenyan ID
Valid Driving License



HOW TO PARTICIPATE
Register & attempt an online test
https://bestdriver.aakenya.co.ke/

Inspiring Mobility

Supporting the Break: How to Fix a Broken Bone with What's in Your Car

A broken bone (fracture) is incredibly painful and can lead to permanent damage if the person is moved wrongly. Your goal isn't to "fix" the bone - it's to stop it from moving until the ambulance arrives.

Scene Safety: The "Don't Touch" Rule
In a bad hit, sometimes the bone pokes through the skin. This is an open fracture.

The Danger: Your hands have germs. If you touch that bone or try to "push it back in," you could cause a deadly infection.

What to do: If it's bleeding, put a clean cloth around the bone to stop the soak, but never press on the bone itself. Use a plastic shopping bag as a glove if you don't have medical ones.

QuickFix Tip: The "Kenyan Toolkit" Splint
A splint is just anything stiff that prevents a limb from bending. Here is how to use everyday items found in a typical Kenyan car:

1. The "Gazeti" or Magazine Method
Take a thick stack of AA Autonews or a Saturday newspaper. Wrap it tightly around the arm or leg. It acts like a temporary "cast."

2. The Umbrella or Leso Technique
If it's a leg injury, place a sturdy umbrella (closed) or a straight branch along the side of the leg. Use a Maasai shuka, a leso, or even a torn-up t-shirt to tie the umbrella to the leg.

3. The Golden Rule of Tying:
- Tie the cloth above the break and below the break.
- Never tie directly on top of the wound.
- Make sure it's firm, but not so tight that the person's pulse disappears.

Remember: "Splint them as they lie." If the leg looks crooked or bent like a "V," do not try to straighten it. You might cut an artery inside. Just wrap your splint around it exactly how you found it.

Learn the Skills

Don't wait for an accident to happen to learn how to save a life. Get certified today!
- AA Roadside Assistance: Call 0709 933 000 or 0709 933 999.
- First Aid Tips & Training: Call The QuickFix Learning Hub at 0707 079 192.

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How Boda Bodas Are Driving Kenya's Green Transition

By Moses Gichohi

Kenya's clean transport revolution is not being led by luxury electric cars or government fleets. It is being driven by boda bodas.

Two rival players, Spiro and ARC Ride, have now rolled out more than 300 battery swap stations across Nairobi and its commuter belt. Their rapid expansion marks the start of what industry insiders are calling the battery swapping war.

Instead of waiting hours to charge, riders swap depleted batteries for fully charged ones in under two minutes. This model has solved the single biggest barrier to electric motorcycle adoption: downtime.

For boda boda riders, time is money. A charging-based system simply does not work when daily earnings depend on constant movement. Battery swapping allows riders to operate almost exactly as they would with petrol.

The impact is already visible. Electric motorcycles are becoming a common sight in parts of Nairobi, Kiambu, and Machakos. Riders report lower daily running costs, fewer mechanical breakdowns, and more predictable expenses.

This is where the shift becomes strategic rather than symbolic. Transport accounts for a significant share of Kenya's carbon emissions, and boda bodas make up a huge portion of daily urban traffic. By electrifying this sector first, Kenya is cutting emissions.

The rivalry between Spiro and ARC Ride has accelerated deployment. Each company is racing to secure prime swap station locations along busy corridors and rider hubs. Their competition has also pushed innovation, with improved battery life, smarter tracking systems, and flexible subscription plans for riders.

What makes this movement uniquely Kenyan is its grassroots nature. Unlike in Europe or China, where electric mobility began with private cars and public buses, Kenya's transition is being led by informal transport workers.

The boda boda industry, often criticised for safety and congestion, is now emerging as a climate solution.

Challenges remain. Battery disposal, electricity supply, and grid sustainability will need careful management as numbers grow. Regulation will also have to catch up with technology, especially in areas such as battery standards and safety certification.

The boda boda is no longer just a means of survival. It is becoming a vehicle of transformation.

In the race to decarbonise transport, Kenya's green revolution is wearing a reflector jacket and a helmet.

The Birth of the Kenyan Driving School

By Daniel Kiprono

AA Kenya had built roads, tested vehicles, mapped routes and now, it was time to teach the people how to drive them.

By the early 1960s, Kenya's roads were growing busier by the day. The number of vehicles was rising, yet the systems for training and licensing drivers were still informal at best. Road safety was a growing concern, with untrained motorists creating chaos. In this gap, many learners picked up the basics informally, sometimes in ways that have since become part of local folklore.

One enduring image is that of aspiring drivers balancing stones on their heads while practising behind the wheel, a curious yet ingenious method to prevent them from looking down when changing gears. These makeshift lessons may raise smiles today, but they tell a deeper story about a time when driver education was improvised.

For AA Kenya, whose mission was and remains road safety, the situation demanded urgent intervention. In 1962, AA Kenya introduced a ground-breaking solution: the country's first formal driving school. It was not only the first of its kind in Kenya, it became the blueprint upon which all future driving schools would be built.

The school began modestly, with just one training vehicle, a Ford Anglia, yet against the backdrop of unregulated driving, that single car became the foundation of Kenya's driver education system. It represented a new era where learning to drive would no longer be a matter of trial and error but a structured journey built on knowledge, confidence, and respect for the road.

Building a System for Safer Roads

AA Driving School immediately set itself apart. At a time when most driver training was informal and inconsistent, lessons given by friends, relatives or mechanics on back roads and open fields AA Kenya offered something radically different. It introduced a structured curriculum that blended classroom learning with supervised practical sessions. Learners followed a programme through both theory and hands-on driving, and instructors insisted upon strict adherence to traffic rules, discipline and responsibility. Rigorous testing became the hallmark of the school: only those who demonstrated competence earned their driving licenses. Within a short time, the Driving School gained its reputation as the gold standard

The school's dual controlled car.

in driver training.

But AA Kenya did more than just impose order. It introduced innovation. The school's classrooms became places of transformation, complete with Model Town Boards, miniature road networks, scaled traffic signs, junctions and roundabouts that helped learners visualise real-life driving scenarios long before they touched a steering wheel. Before students ever sat behind a vehicle, they learned how to interpret road signs, understand right of way, anticipate hazards and make sound decisions even in a simulated environment.

From this theoretical foundation they then moved into practical training and herein lies one of AA Kenya's most significant innovations. Recognising the anxiety of first-time learners, AA introduced vehicles fitted with dual-control systems (an extra set of pedals for instructors). This was not just a mechanical adaptation: it was psychological. The knowledge that an instructor could instantly take control gave learners the confidence to focus on developing skill, rather than fear making mistakes. Instructors, meanwhile, could intervene immediately turning potential errors into teaching moments and preventing mistakes from becoming crashes. The dual-control vehicle became the unseen guardian of trust on the road.

What happened in a typical class? Learners began in the classroom studying theory: traffic law, road signs, basic vehicle mechanics, hazard perception and driver ethics. They might spend hours with the Model Town Board visualising traffic flow and decision points. Then came supervised practical sessions: controlled driving within quiet areas evolving into urban conditions and real-road scenarios junctions, curves, hills, unexpected obstacles, different road surfaces. Instructors used dual-control cars, enabling live feedback while maintaining safety. Students repeated manoeuvres until the skill, judgment and calm response became second nature. Only when a learner showed both technical competence and ethical awareness knowing when to yield, how to anticipate danger, how to respond calmly would they proceed to the licensing test.

This process reflected AA Kenya's belief: that a driving school is not simply a place to earn a licence is where responsibility is taught, confidence is built and a culture of safe motoring takes root. And by embedding both structure and innovation, AA ensured that its graduates were not just vehicle handlers, but road users who understood the broader implication of mobility in a nation.

Why Driving Schools Matter

Driving is far more than a mechanical act; it is a public responsibility. A professional driving school is designed to transform ordinary citizens into capable, safety-conscious road users. Learners are not merely taught to move a vehicle from one point to another they are trained to think critically, observe patiently, and act responsibly.

In class, students are introduced to the Highway Code, road signs, and driving theory that explain not just how to drive, but why each rule exists. They learn about vehicle maintenance, defensive driving, environmental awareness, and ethical conduct on the road. On the track, under the watchful guidance of certified instructors, they put theory into practice, mastering everything from clutch control and mirror checks to emergency braking and lane discipline.

This holistic approach pioneered by AA Kenya, is what transformed driving from a learned habit into a respected skill. It built the foundation for the country's licensing system and shaped the character of generations of Kenyan drivers.

AA Driving School today

More than six decades later, AA Driving School continues to evolve blending its legacy with innovation for the modern road user. Today's learner encounters a system as structured and disciplined as ever, yet powered by digital convenience and real-world relevance.

From the very first interaction, everything can be done online through the e-Dereva platform; registration, class booking, payment, and even scheduling of lessons. Learners can access online theory classes, allowing flexibility for students, professionals, and busy adults to study anywhere, anytime.

Complementing this digital experience is the AA Test App, a mobile learning tool aligned with the NTSA driver training curriculum, featuring practice questions and explanations that prepare learners for their government tests while also refreshing experienced drivers on road rules and signs.

AA has also expanded its training portfolio to serve Kenya's diverse driving needs. Beyond the standard driver's licence, the institution now offers Defensive Driving Courses, Professional Driver Training, School Bus Driver Certification, Oil & gas transporters course, Emergency vehicle operators' course and even Driver Recruitment and Driver Assessment Services for clients looking

to hire drivers among others. Through these programs, AA ensures that drivers across sectors, meet the highest safety and ethical standards on the road.

For learners seeking a premium, personalized experience, AA Premier Driving School represents the executive arm of AA Kenya's driver education. Premier offers flexible scheduling, one-on-one instruction, and modern facilities that include simulators and advanced learning aids. Its condensed curriculum is completed in about a month and integrates a mandatory two-day defensive driving module preparing students not just to pass a test but to drive smartly and safely in all conditions. Graduates are guided to obtain their Smart Driving Licence, symbolizing modern competence in motion.

In addition, AA equips drivers with practical life skills through its Basic Autocare Course, a hands-on programme that teaches essential vehicle maintenance, troubleshooting, and roadside assistance. Students learn how to check fluids, maintain tires, jump-start a car, and handle emergencies empowering them to be self-reliant motorists.

AA Driving School also upholds international standards through its role as the only authorised issuer of International Driving Permits (IDP) in Kenya; a gateway for licensed drivers to drive legally across the world. It also facilitates the Carnet de Passage, the car passport that enables cross-border motoring for adventurous travellers.

AA's influence extends even further into shaping the next generation of responsible motorists. Through initiatives like the Best Young Driver (BYD) contest and this year's milestone African Best Young Driver (A-BYD) Championship, which AA Kenya will host for the first time on the continent young drivers are being inspired to combine skill, safety, and sportsmanship behind the wheel.

AA Driving School's Legacy

Over the decades, AA Kenya's Driving School became synonymous with quality and trust. For more than 60 years, it has shaped generations of Kenyan drivers, instilling not only technical skills but also respect for road safety. Even today, the school remains the benchmark. Many institutions may offer driver training, but they all owe a debt to the foundations laid by AA Kenya in 1962.

To this day, the phrase "I learnt at AA" carries weight. It signifies not just competence, but credibility. It's a statement of skill, safety, and standards that have defined responsible driving in Kenya for more than six decades.

It is often said that the quality of training determines the quality of drivers. In 1962, AA Kenya set the bar high, and in doing so, transformed the way Kenyans learned to drive.

AA KENYA

Ready to learn how to drive? Train with professionals. Enroll at AA today and enjoy these benefits.

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- Access to 170+ professionally trained Instructors
- Comprehensive theory & practical training
- Basic mechanics & vehicle care lessons
- Train at any of our 100+ branches
- Job opportunities through AA Driver Recruitment Bureau
- Learner Handbook & training manual provided
- Eligibility for International Best Young Driver Competition
- Easy access to an International Driving Permit
- Alumni membership & community access

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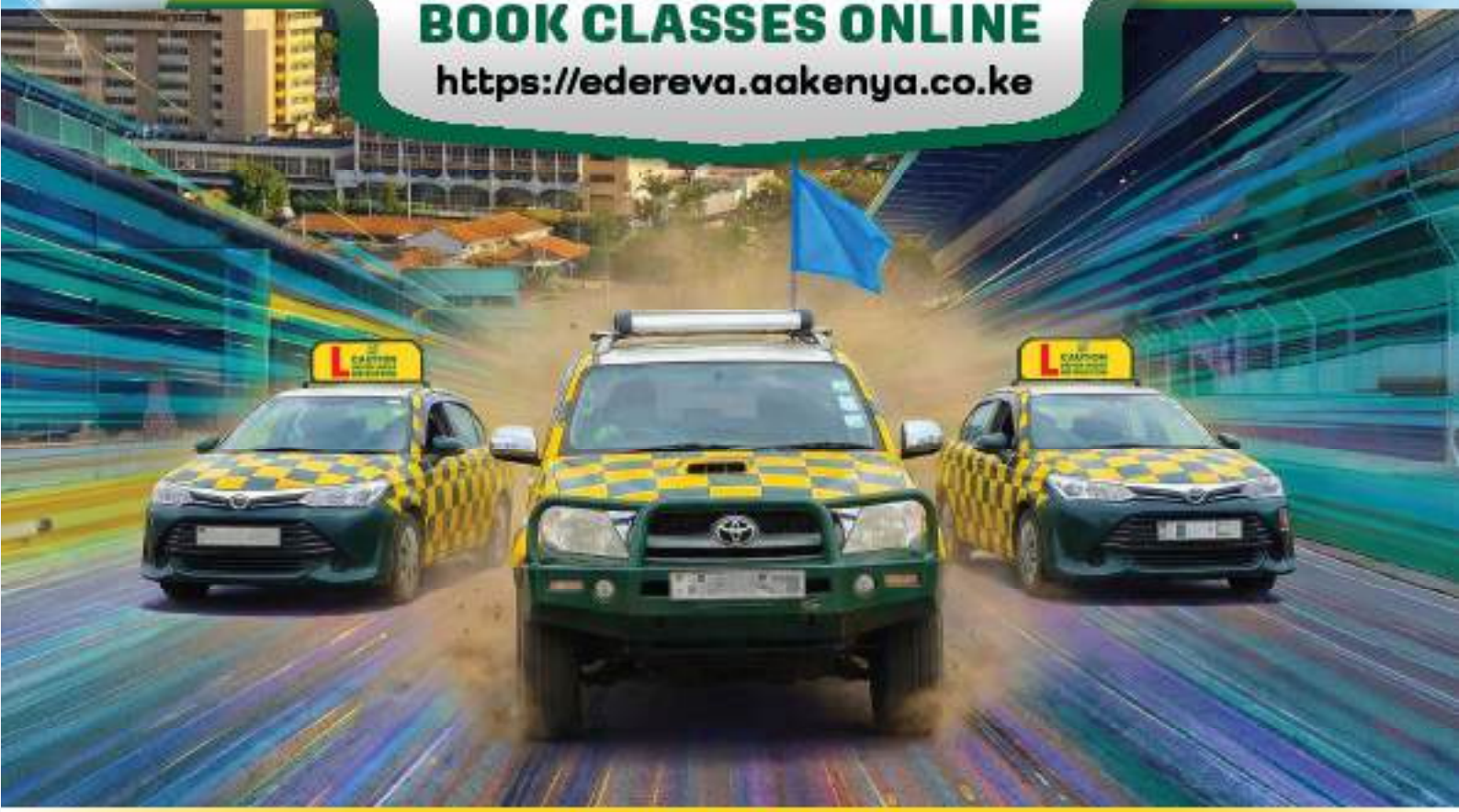

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Why Kenya's Bidirectional Roads Pose High Risks. And Immediate Actions We Must Take

Paul Karuga Njuguna Executive Director, Road Safety Awareness Initiative @RSAIKenya

Each month hundreds of Kenyans perish on our roads. According to NTSA there were 3,581 fatalities, from June 2024 to March 2025. Averaging 12 fatalities daily. A significant portion of these incidents happen on two-lane roads: extended intercity routes where vehicles traveling in opposing directions use the same lane of pavement.

Why two-way highways are so dangerous
When two cars crash frontally at velocity the impact force is immense. Frequently comparable to one vehicle hitting a barrier at, over 110 km/h. The likelihood of surviving decreases. These streets also experience a combination of speedy and slow vehicles. Large trucks, buses, motorcycles and personal cars. All stopping, passing and joining traffic unexpectedly. This results in conflict zones.

NTSA's fatality data repeatedly identify the offenders: Head-on collisions, Loss of control, Dangerous overtaking, Failure to keep near side

Why certain hallways are distinctive
The Northern Corridor linking Mombasa to Nairobi along with the segment from Nairobi to Malava continues to be some of the hazardous roads in the country. Extensive distances, travel times, substantial freight loads and numerous two-way sections contribute to the danger and severity of these routes. Local news outlets and safety assessments frequently place them at the positions on the list of national accident hotspots.

On the other hand the Nairobi–Thika highway leading to Marua provides an example of the potential benefits of improved road safety design. Features like carriageways, physical dividers, restricted access and enhanced lane discipline greatly diminish the risk of head-on collisions. Although the Marua segment is still under construction NTSA fatality statistics indicate fewer fatalities than those seen on older two-lane highways of comparable distance and traffic volume.

Reasons why dual carriageways reduce fatalities
They prevent collisions, which are the most lethal type of accident.
They enable passing minimizing rash maneuvers into opposing lanes.
Regulated entry and adequate shoulders reduce turning, merging or halting.

Traffic composed of vehicles moves more smoothly experiencing less interaction between slow trucks and speedy cars.

Insights, from NTSA data. The 2024/25 statistics highlight a reality: undivided roads continue to account for the majority of road fatalities, in Kenya. In comparison contemporary dual carriageways such as the Thika Superhighway show fatalities, per kilometre driven, emphasizing the benefit of traffic segregation.
What must occur next:

Phase in dual carriageways on the highest-risk corridors starting with Nairobi–Mombasa and Nairobi–Malava. On existing two-way highways, roll out median barriers, passing lanes, climbing lanes, strict speed enforcement, heavy-vehicle controls, stronger shoulders and better signage. Utilize NTSA data proactively: pinpoint segments with fatalities, per km and give them priority. Draw lessons from triumphs such as Salgaa, where average obstacles significantly lowered accidents.

The final word through a Safe System Approach lens. Every day fatalities occur on two-way streets where traffic, from opposite directions moves directly toward one another without any physical barrier. These deaths are avoidable. They result from a system design that fails to consider mistakes. A Safe System Approach acknowledges that individuals will err, get fatigued, miscalculate distances or respond belatedly. Consequently the road should be constructed to stop errors from resulting in deadly outcomes. This implies speeds, enhanced road safety, safer automobiles and improved post-accident measures. All functioning collectively.

Transforming two-way roads into dual carriageways with adequate separation isn't about ease or luxury but about establishing a road setting that safeguards Kenyans even if an error occurs.

Policymakers, road agencies and civil society must champion road designs that forgive human error and put survivability first. When roads are engineered to be safe, people get to live.

Opinion: Beyond Speed Cameras: A Holistic Approach to Reducing Road Fatalities in Kenya

By Paul Karuga Njuguna

Speed cameras and vehicle inspections serve as basic tools for road safety control. However, these measures alone cannot address the full scale of fatalities. Factors such as drunk driving, fatigue, speeding, overloading, and failure to respect pedestrian crossings contribute to many crashes. Temporary enforcement actions do not resolve underlying systemic issues. Road safety represents a broad system problem that demands integrated, multi layered solutions.

The Global Shift: Adopting the Safe Systems Approach

Nations that have achieved substantial reductions in road deaths have implemented the Safe Systems approach. This framework, supported by the World Health Organization and connected to United Nations targets for halving road traffic deaths and injuries, operates on the principle that human error is inevitable, human bodies have limited tolerance to impact forces, and safety responsibility is distributed across users, designers, policymakers, and enforcement entities. The model creates protective layers through improved roads, vehicles, speed management, user behaviour, and post-crash response to minimise severe outcomes despite errors.Countries including Sweden (Vision Zero), the Netherlands (Sustainable Safety), and Australia have recorded major fatality declines by integrating safer infrastructure, enhanced licensing processes, data based targeting, and coordinated institutional efforts. Kenya can adopt similar methods to transition from reactive measures to preventive, outcome focused strategies.

Redesigning Roads to Accommodate Error

Poor infrastructure often amplifies crash risks rather than mitigating them. Problematic elements include hazardous road layouts with potholes, substandard speed bumps, insufficient lighting, absent sidewalks, unsafe crossing points, and persistent blackspots. Effective road design incorporates traffic calming elements, physical separation of vulnerable users from motorised traffic, and minimisation of conflict zones.

Examples of effective features include roads designed with clear visual guidance to promote appropriate speeds, median barriers to avoid head on impacts, rumble strips on rural routes, and refuge islands for pedestrians in urban settings. Crossings should be accessible and adequately lit as standard practice. Infrastructure design functions as a critical complement to enforcement in fatality prevention.

Reforming Driver Training and Licensing Systems

Driver behaviour remains a primary crash contributor, making standardised, high quality training and assessment essential. Issues include inconsistent driving school standards, superficial testing procedures, and limited ongoing development for public service vehicle operators, particularly in fatigue management. Inadequate

systems result in drivers operating without sufficient competence.
Global examples feature structured learner programmes with required supervised hours and hazard recognition assessments, mandatory education on risks such as alcohol, fatigue, and excessive speed, and regular refresher training for professional drivers. Graduated licensing restrictions on night driving and passenger limits have reduced novice driver incidents. Implementing uniform curricula, digital hazard testing, introduction of driving licence points/demerits and compulsory refresher programmes for public service vehicle drivers would address key deficiencies in Kenya.

Smart Enforcement: Consistent, Transparent, Data-Oriented

Enforcement requires consistency, transparency, and resistance to corruption beyond sporadic penalties. Speed cameras and inspections provide value, but additional measures such as sobriety checkpoints where labour laws and NTSA Act is enforced, digital monitoring of commercial fleets, and rigorous public service vehicle audits are necessary. Balanced programmes combine enforcement with education to foster compliance and reduce resistance.
Techniques such as random breath testing, automated speed detection, in vehicle speed limitation systems, and fatigue monitoring in heavy vehicles have produced measurable reductions elsewhere. Incorporating real-time reporting mechanisms and tools to promote fairness, including officer worn cameras, would enhance enforcement effectiveness in Kenya.

Fostering Behavioural and Normative Change

Road use patterns in Kenya reflect widespread acceptance of hazardous practices: pedestrians bypassing designated crossings, drivers ignoring yield obligations at zebra crossings, overloaded public service vehicles, routine speed limit violations, continued operation by fatigued drivers, and ongoing drunk driving. Altering these patterns demands prolonged, multi-channel intervention.Strategies include early integration of road safety education in schools, broad national campaigns via broadcast media, employer responsibility for driver conduct in fleets, and consistent application of penalties for violations. Community driven efforts and reinforcement of positive behaviours contribute to gradual norm shifts.

Enhancing Institutional Coordination and Accountability

Road safety spans multiple sectors, including transport bodies, law enforcement, health services, county administrations, education systems, and civil society organisations. Kenya's National Road Safety Action Plan 2024-2028 outlines multi sector collaboration, data utilisation, enforcement updates, infrastructure enhancements, and behaviour modification approaches. Effective execution remains the primary obstacle.
High performing systems establish specialised oversight structures with defined performance metrics, periodic audits, and transparent reporting to ensure sustained accountability.

Leveraging Data for Targeted Interventions and Blackspot Management

Accurate crash data enables identification of high risk locations, prioritisation of vulnerable groups, assessment of interventions, and policy refinement. Centralised digital reporting platforms with geographic mapping support prompt analysis and corrective action. Reliable, open data systems shift decision making from estimation to evidence based processes.

Strengthening Post-Crash Response

Comprehensive safety frameworks incorporate optimised response following incidents. Efficient emergency services, skilled first responders, adequately equipped ambulances, and integrated trauma care networks increase survival probabilities. Upgrading these components reduces the severity of crash outcomes.

From Policy to Action: Moving to Implementation

Speed cameras and inspections indicate forward movement, but unresolved challenges such as training deficiencies, corrupt practices, substandard road design, normalised fatigue, limited awareness, and fragmented institutions limit impact. Surface level actions or dealing with symptoms differ from genuine life saving results without understanding the root cause.The required direction encompasses forgiving road designs, stringent vehicle standards, managed speeds through technology-supported enforcement, improved user competence via training, and enhanced post-crash systems. Where behaviour significantly influences crashes, both personal accountability and structural changes are required.

Road safety constitutes a core public health concern. With established global models, an existing national framework, and pressing requirements, implementation must now replace documentation. Full adoption of the Safe Systems approach offers the potential to substantially reduce fatalities and establish safer road environments for all users.

Opinion: Why "Mitumba" Is Losing Its Grip on Kenyan Car Buyers

By Timothy Albrite

For decades, the phrase "Ex-Japan" has been shorthand for value in Kenya's car market. A used import was and is still seen as smarter, cheaper, and more reliable than anything sold locally. But that thinking is now being challenge

A growing mix of policy changes, local assembly incentives, and shifting consumer priorities is quietly weakening the grip of mitumba on Kenyan buyers.

At the centre of this shift is cost. Government incentives for locally assembled vehicles including duty exemptions on parts and preferential taxation have narrowed the price gap between brand-new locally built cars and older high-end imports. In some segments, a new locally assembled saloon or crossover now costs almost the same as an eight-year-old luxury import.

That is changing buyer psychology.
Instead of asking, "Which used import can I afford?" more Kenyans are asking, "Why should I buy a used car when I can get a new one for similar money?"
Local assembly has also improved in quality and perception. Modern assembly plants are no longer producing bare-bones fleet vehicles alone. Buyers now see competitively specced models with warranties, service plans, and manufacturer-backed support. This offers something used imports cannot: certainty.

With mitumba, uncertainty remains the biggest hidden cost. Mileage tampering, accident damage, flood exposure, and inconsistent servicing histories still plague the import market. Even with strict inspection regimes, buyers remain vulnerable to surprises after registration.

Financing is another factor reshaping the market. Banks and SACCOs are more willing to finance new or locally assembled vehicles because they retain value better and come with predictable maintenance costs. Used imports, by contrast, often attract higher interest rates or shorter repayment terms.

There is also a generational shift underway. Younger buyers prioritise features such as fuel efficiency, safety tech, smartphone integration, and warranty coverage. Many are less attached to badge prestige and more concerned with total ownership cost. For them, a brand-new locally assembled hybrid or small SUV makes more sense

That does not mean mitumba will disappear. Kenya's income structure still favours affordability, and used imports remain the most accessible path into car ownership for many households. But its dominance is no longer unquestioned.

The bigger change is symbolic. For the first time in decades, Kenyan buyers are openly weighing new against used not by defaulting to imports, but by comparing value.

Mitumba is not dying. But it is losing its monopoly on aspiration. The future of Kenya's car market


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How Rain Affects Electric Cars in Kenya

As electric cars slowly make their way onto Kenyan roads, one question keeps coming up whenever the skies open up: are they safe to drive in the rain?

They are.

Electric vehicles are built with sealed battery packs and protected electrical systems. The parts that carry high voltage are insulated and positioned so that water cannot easily reach them. Driving in the rain, through puddles, or leaving the car parked outside during a storm does not damage the battery or the motor.

On wet roads, an electric car behaves much like any other vehicle. Tyres still lose grip when the surface is slippery. Brakes still need a longer distance to stop. Visibility still drops in heavy rain. One small advantage EVs have is their low centre of gravity, because the battery sits under the floor. This can help the car feel more stable on wet tarmac compared to taller vehicles.

Charging in rainy weather is also safe. Public chargers and home charging units are designed for outdoor use. Power only flows once the plug is properly connected, so rain alone will not cause a shock or harm the car. What drivers should avoid are makeshift charging arrangements, such as using extension cables or unprotected sockets outdoors.

Rain can affect driving range slightly. Wet roads create more resistance, and bad weather usually means heavier traffic, lights switched on, and more use of wipers and air conditioning. All of these draw power from the battery. The difference is usually small, but it can be noticeable on long trips.

Flood water is where caution is needed. Deep water is risky for any vehicle. It can damage brakes, bearings, and interior electronics. If water rises high enough to reach the underside of the car, it can also affect the battery housing. The safest rule is the same one drivers already know: if the road looks flooded, it is better to turn back.

In normal rain, electric cars are not at a disadvantage. They handle wet conditions much like petrol and diesel vehicles. The bigger issues

Safari Rally Cuts Nairobi Out as WRC Moves Fully to Naivasha

By Timothy Albrite

For the first time since the Safari Rally returned to the World Rally Championship, Nairobi was off the map. The 2026 edition, held from March 12 to 15, ran entirely in the Rift Valley, with all competitive stages, ceremonial starts, and fan zones centered around Naivasha.

There was no flag-off at KICC and no Super Special Stage at Kasarani, marking a clear shift in the rally's format.

Organisers say the change was driven by logistics and safety considerations. Running stages in Nairobi has grown increasingly complex, with traffic congestion, high security requirements, and the costs of road closures creating major challenges. By concentrating the rally in Naivasha, officials were able to streamline operations, improve spectator control, and focus on delivering a safer, more efficient event.

Naivasha has effectively become the home of the Safari Rally since its WRC comeback in 2021. The town now hosts service parks, team headquarters, and most of the iconic gravel stages that define the event. In the lead-up to the rally, hotels, camps, and private lodges fill with teams, turning the area into a temporary motorsport hub buzzing with activity.

The economic impact is significant. According to Nakuru County tourism officials, the rally injects billions of shillings into the local economy through accommodation, transport, food supply, and casual labour. With Nairobi removed from the route, that spending is now concentrated in Naivasha and surrounding towns, giving the region an even bigger boost.

Of course, some fans in the capital felt the loss. Nairobi stages were historically the most accessible for spectators, allowing thousands to enjoy world-class rallying without the long drive to Naivasha. For 2026, anyone wanting the full live experience had to make the journey to the Rift Valley.

Rally promoters insist the trade-off is worthwhile. Keeping the rally in one region reduces delays, enhances safety planning, and maximizes competitive kilometres on the gravel that defines the Safari's identity. In effect, the Safari Rally is now a purpose-built motorsport spectacle set entirely in Kenya's natural rally theatre — and in 2026, that stage belongs to Naivasha.

Takamoto Katsuta Wins Maiden Safari Rally

In a rally where speed alone is never enough, Takamoto Katsuta finally claimed the result he has chased for years, a first career win at the legendary Safari Rally Kenya. And what a place to do it. At the 2026 Safari Rally Kenya, widely regarded as the toughest round on the FIA World Rally Championship calendar, the Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT driver produced a performance as daring as it was disciplined to clinch his maiden WRC victory.

Set against the unforgiving landscapes around Naivasha, this year's Safari was a classic test of grit as much as speed.

Katsuta, alongside co-driver and navigator Aaron Johnston, didn't try to blow the field away with blistering stage times. Instead, he struck that delicate balance rally fans know all too well: push hard enough to stay in contention, but avoid the mistakes and mechanical damage that ended so many rivals' hopes. That masterclass in controlled aggression kept his Toyota intact while others faltered.

"This rally is so special," Katsuta said after sealing the win. "To win here for the first time means so much to me and the team."

Toyota's strategic depth proved invaluable. Team-mates filled the top positions early on and helped keep the pressure on, ensuring the Japanese manufacturer stayed in control even as conditions deteriorated. That kind of teamwork has long been a Safari hallmark, and 2026 was no exception.

Meanwhile, the rally's unforgiving nature lived up to its fearsome reputation. Punctures, suspension failures and off-road excursions took their toll on several front-running crews. Legends and title contenders alike found themselves battling the terrain more than their rivals, illustrating just how easily fortunes can shift in Kenya's Rift Valley.

By the final leg, Katsuta's steady approach had carved out a healthy advantage, giving him the breathing room to manage pace and protect his car to the finish, no small feat on roads that punish

until the very last kilometre.

Behind him, the fight for remaining podium positions was equally intense. Across the four days, Hyundai crews and other Toyota drivers pushed through setbacks and chaos to collect valuable championship points.

Top Finishers Safari Rally Kenya 2026

1. Takamoto Katsuta / Aaron Johnston — Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT
2. Adrien Fourmaux — Hyundai
3. Sami Pajari — Toyota
4. Elfyn Evans — Toyota
5. Thierry Neuville — Hyundai

For Toyota, the result reinforces the brand's legacy of building cars that can handle Kenya's brutal roads. For Katsuta personally, it's a breakthrough moment that transforms him from a perennial contender into a rally winner on one of the sport's biggest stages.

Here's what they had to say following the conclusion of the four-day gravel rally in East Africa.
Takamoto KATSUTA- Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) WRT- Winner WRC Safari Rally 2026
"I don't know what to say. We have had so many difficulties and moments. Aaron (Johnston) worked very hard and the team has always believed in me, even when I was failing many times.
Thanks to the whole team. We are finally here because of them and Aaron (Navigator)."

Adrien FOURMAUX-Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT/Runner-up WRC Safari Rally 2026
I'm really happy for the podium in Kenya, and I wish to thank our engineers for a great job that enabled us to reach the end of this tough rally.
"It's a good result for the team, good points for the championship and I'm happy to have closed the gap on Toyota."

Oliver SOLBERG-TGR WRT/Winner Wolf Power Stage
"It's been a great day, I think up to yesterday, I was so sad but coming into the last day we ended up winning the Super Sunday and the Power Stage.
Ten points from Super Sunday and Power Stage feels great, and a point for the position is good for the championship.

So I think we did our very best to recover.
It's an incredible win for Taka, the passion he has had through and through, he really deserved it.
First win is always very special. It was nice seeing incredible fans in Kenya, the people here are so passionate, welcoming and loving, it's been an incredible adventure.

Karan Patel Powers Kenyan Top-Four Sweep in ARC at Safari Rally Kenya

Two-time Africa Rally Champion Karan Patel led an all-Kenyan charge in the FIA Africa Rally Championship (ARC) class at this year's WRC Safari Rally Kenya, wrapping up a memorable first round with a clean top-four sweep.

Driving his Skoda Octavia R5 for the KCB Rally Team, Patel finished 17th overall and comfortably fastest among ARC competitors despite tackling one of the toughest off-road rallies on the international calendar.

His Octavia was also entered in the WRC2 supplementary class, giving him even more to manage across the punishing Kenyan stages.

Patel described his approach as cautious but calculated.
"The aim was to bring the car back home and we've done that," he said after clinching the ARC victory. "It was a slow and steady run for us this weekend. Safari isn't known for being smooth or trouble-free, so we focused on preserving the car and finishing strong."

The result sets Patel up well as he bids to reclaim the ARC title he lost last year to Uganda's Yasin Nasser. Collecting valuable championship points on home soil gives him strong momentum as the season unfolds.

Kenyan Sweep in ARC

Following Patel to the finish line were compatriots Aakif Virani (18th), Samman Vohra (19th) and Jasmeet Chana (20th) a clean Kenyan lockout of the ARC top four.

Virani, fresh off his own strong run, reflected on the challenge of keeping pace while managing penalties and the tough terrain:

"The car felt good on the last day. We had to push a bit because the gap to Karan was big, and the penalty we picked up yesterday brought Samman closer. I'm happy to finish second in ARC, first in ARC Masters, second in KNRC, and 8th in WRC2, not bad at all! I think I might give ARC a proper go this year."

Meanwhile, Oscar Ntambi also representing KCB Rally Team in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X completed the top five in the ARC standings, bringing even more competitive depth to the leaderboard.

Patel's winning margin was decisive: he finished some 16 minutes ahead of Virani and nearly 20 minutes ahead of Vohra, underscoring both his pace and consistency over the unforgiving Kenyan terrain.

Reigning champion Yasin Nasser of Uganda endured a challenging weekend, ultimately finishing 9th overall in the ARC class, a result well off his usual standard.

For Patel, the Safari result doesn't just deliver early championship points, it rekindles his bid for a third continental crown, and sends a strong message that Kenyan drivers are a force to be reckoned with in ARC competition.

Kenya's commanding top-four sweep in the ARC class also highlights the depth of local talent and sets the tone for an exciting season ahead.

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SGR Extension to Malaba Signals Shift of Cargo from Road to Rail

Construction has officially begun on the extension of the Standard Gauge Railway to Malaba, setting the stage for a major change in how goods move between the Port of Mombasa and western Kenya.

The project will link Naivasha to the border town of Malaba, creating a continuous rail corridor from the coast to Uganda and beyond. Transport economists predict that by 2027, as much as 20 per cent of heavy truck traffic on the Northern Corridor could shift from highways to rail.

For Kenya's road network, the implications are significant.
Long-haul trucks account for a disproportionate share of road damage and serious crashes, especially on heavily used routes such as the Nairobi–Nakuru–Eldoret highway. A sustained move of freight to rail could ease congestion, reduce maintenance costs and improve safety for private motorists and public transport vehicles.

The extension is being implemented under the oversight of Kenya Railways, which says the Malaba link will allow cargo trains to run directly to the Ugandan border without the need for road haulage between Naivasha and western Kenya.

Currently, most cargo leaving Naivasha must still be loaded onto trucks for the final leg of the journey. The new line is designed to remove that bottleneck.

From an economic perspective, the project is about more than transport. Lower freight costs are expected to benefit manufacturers and traders in the Rift Valley and western Kenya, where road transport accounts for a large share of final product prices. Industries such as cement, grain milling and fuel distribution are likely to be among the first to shift to rail once the line becomes operational. Logistics firms are already preparing.

Some fleet operators are exploring hybrid models, where trucks handle only short-distance delivery from rail depots to factories and warehouses. This could change the structure of the trucking industry, with fewer long-haul journeys and more regional distribution work.

For motorists, the effect could be felt on the road. Heavy trucks dominate sections of the Northern Corridor, often moving at low speeds on steep gradients and contributing to risky overtaking behaviour. A reduction in their numbers could improve traffic flow and cut accident rates on some of Kenya's most dangerous highways.

Environmental considerations also feature prominently. Rail transport produces significantly lower carbon emissions per tonne of cargo compared to road haulage. With Kenya under pressure to meet climate targets, shifting freight from diesel trucks to trains offers a practical way to cut transport-related emissions without limiting economic growth.
However, challenges remain.

The success of the Malaba extension will depend on seamless coordination with Uganda's rail system and efficient operations at border facilities. Delays in cargo handling or customs clearance could undermine the cost and time advantages of rail transport.

There is also the question of affordability. Rail tariffs must remain competitive with road freight to persuade logistics companies to commit large volumes of cargo to trains. Past experience shows that shippers will only switch if reliability and turnaround times match or exceed trucking.

Despite these hurdles, the direction of travel is clear. Kenya is betting that rail will reclaim a central role in long-distance freight movement, freeing highways for passenger vehicles and regional trade.

If projections hold, the SGR extension to Malaba could mark the beginning of a quieter, safer and less congested Northern Corridor, with fewer trailers grinding uphill and more goods gliding across the country on steel rails.

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