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First Spinal Surgery Performed At Kerugoya County Referral Hospital Hailed As Medical Milestone

By: Our Reporter
@themtkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- Waiguru said this is the first time a spinal surgery has successfully been conducted in a public hospital in Kirinyaga and attributed the success to dedication by medics and acquisition of modern equipment at the new medical complex at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital.
- “The spinal surgery at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital is a great milestone and testament that indeed elevation of the facility Kerugoya General hospital from a Level Four to Level Five Hospital, offering services similar to those found at the high-end medical facilities was a well thought out idea. This facility is now able to undertake such delicate medical surgery,” Waiguru said.



Dr Alex Kariuki addressing journalists after the exercise.

Surgeons at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital in Kirinyaga have performed the first spinal surgery at the hospital, registering a medical milestone in the area.

The surgeons carried out the delicate surgery on a 30-year-old man who had suffered spinal injury with lumbar vertebrae 1 & 2 fracture after falling from height while working.

The surgical operation was led by Dr. Robert Oluoch, Orthopedic Surgeon. The team of 10 specialists included an Orthopedic and Spine Technician, general surgeons, medical officers, an anesthesiologist and nurses.

Governor Anne Waiguru hailed the surgical operation as a big milestone toward full realisation of her vision for accessing, quality and affordable healthcare for the county residents.

Waiguru said this is the first time a spinal surgery has successfully been conducted in a public hospital in Kirinyaga and attributed the success to dedication by medics and acquisition of modern equipment at the new medical complex at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital.

“The spinal surgery at Kerugoya County Referral Hospital is a great milestone and testament that indeed elevation of the facility Kerugoya General hospital from

a Level Four to Level Five Hospital, offering services similar to those found at the high-end medical facilities was a well thought out idea. This facility is now able to undertake such delicate medical surgery,” Waiguru said.

She said the success of the surgery affirms the purpose for which the facility

was built; to bring specialized medical services to the people and save residents from endless referrals for specialized medical treatment.

Waiguru further thanked the surgical team for the milestone that she said gives hope to patients. She also wished full and speedy recovery to the patient.

The team also got congratulatory message from the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Susan Nakumicha, who termed the medical stride as statement to the gains of devolution.

She said that the national government was committed to supporting counties in delivery of health services.

Dr. Alex Kariuki, one of the surgeons who conducted the surgery said that the delicate surgery, that took the specialists five hours to accomplish, involved instrumentation and stabilization of the spine involving decompressive laminectomy of lumbar spine 1 and 2.

Kariuki added that since the vertebrae is crucial in protecting the spinal cord, such a complex surgery required a multi-disciplinary approach.

He confirmed that the patient is in stable condition currently recovering in the general ward.

The surgeon said with the new modern and well equipped theaters, there will be no need to refer patients to other medical facilities because doctors have the capacity and skills to perform even more delicate surgical operations.

Chief Officer for Health Stanley Muriithi said that the county’s capacity to undertake complex procedures had been improved with employment of an experienced Orthopedic Surgeon, and enthusiastic surgical team led by Dr. Oluoch and the construction and equipping of the new state-of-the-art medical complex by Governor Waiguru..

He added that with the operationalization of the new Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the medical complex, the county has been elevated to a point where it can perform similar and more delicate surgeries.

“Previous, we would not be able to handle such complex surgeries and we used to refer patients to other hospital but with the new medical facility and modern equipment, we will be able to handle even more delicate surgical cases than this,” he said.



Medical personnel during the exercise

The Mt. Kenya Times



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Group Executive Chairman
M. Danson

Our Contacts

P. O. Box 101 675 - 00101 Nairobi, Cell: 0700 161 866, 0705 215 262

Editorial Desk: editorial@mountkenyentimes.co.ke, **Adverts:** ads@mountkenyentimes.co.ke,

News Desk: news@mountkenyentimes.co.ke, **Web:** www.mountkenyentimes.co.ke

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Mining Principal Secretary Elijah Mwangi has revealed that the government is keen on promoting sustainable exploitation of minerals as a heritage for posterity and is keen on the successful formation of marketing cooperatives that would allow members to earn increased revenues from their labor. Investors must first acknowledge and formalise their relations with the Community Development Agreement Committee to avoid future wrangles and delays over remitting the one-percent monies of gross sales.

Taita Taveta Governor Andrew Mwadime supported the initiative, saying the county government is ready to partner with the State Department for Mining to allow regulated mining activities in the park, allowing for proper screening and vetting of those miners who have complied with the law.



Laikipia residents are encouraged to register for affordable housing units before the completion of houses mid-next year. Residents interested in the units must enrol and contribute 10% of the total cost. The construction is about 35% complete, with groundwork completed. The project has created job opportunities for the youth and reduced the crime rate in Nanyuki. The DCC noted that about 100 youth have benefited from jobs each day from 200 units under construction in Nanyuki, and plans are underway to upscale to a total of 500. The government's consideration of the project has allowed the residents to support their families and move forward. Alex Mutuma, a youth from Nanyuki, and Ann Wanjiru, a forelady at the construction site, expressed gratitude for the government's consideration and the reduction in idleness among the youth following the affordable housing project.

The government has requested small-scale tea farmers to increase fertiliser application due to subsidised prices to double production. The Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) received a second consignment of 45,000 metric tonnes of fertiliser for distribution to over 650,000 smallholder tea farmers. Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development, Mithika Linturi, said that the government aims to increase harvests and reduce the cost of living by providing fertiliser to farmers. The government is working on tea reforms, aiming to create legal policies and administrative mechanisms to support farmers. In 2024, the government plans to distribute 7 million bags of fertiliser during the long and short rainy periods. The Ministry is also evaluating tenders for other types of fertilisers for maize and potatoes, aiming for enough fertiliser for the second planting season by mid-February next year. The government is also prioritising supporting KTDA and farmers' factories to install processing lines for producing orthodox tea, which fetches high premium prices worldwide.



Mining, Blue Economy, and Maritime Affairs, Cabinet Secretary, Salim Mvurya, has announced that the government has allocated Sh2.9 billion for disbursement as mining royalties in 2023/24. The funds will be distributed to counties rich in minerals to supplement what they receive from the exchequer as an equitable share of revenue. Taita-Taveta County is set to receive Sh55 million, with a portion going to development activities in communities in and around mining zones.

The Mining Act 2016 stipulates that royalties from mining activities will be shared in a tripartite formula, with the national government receiving 70%, the county government receiving 20%, and the community around the mining areas getting 10%. Additionally, one percent of the gross revenue from sales by an investor is supposed to be given back to the community as CSR to support development projects.

Mvurya stated that no miner would be allowed to engage in mining without a mining permit, and the government will close down operations to enforce compliance. He also warned that 1,546 licenses are set to be cancelled after owners failed to comply with regulations.



Narok County Commissioner Isaac Masinde has announced improved security measures in the county during the Christmas festival season. Over 253 people have been arrested in the past week due to enhanced security measures. The security team has divided Narok town into five sectors, each headed by an inspector of police. People are not allowed to be outside their homes after 11 p.m. unless they are providing essential services. Bar owners, wine and spirit shops, and entertainment clubs have been asked to close their premises by 10:30 p.m. to give customers time to go home by 11 p.m. The enhanced operation will continue until mid-January to curb crime during the festival season. The commissioner also called on church leaders to liaise with the security team to provide adequate security. He also assured tourists visiting the Maasai Mara Game Reserve of enhanced security.





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The Mt. Kenya Times



I Will Not Fail You, MP Wambugu Wainaina Assures Othaya Residents

By: William Muchiri
@themkenyaintimes

Worth Noting:

- The United Democratic Alliance (UDA) MP spoke during a GTN TV morning show, "Ime Ria Ruciini" where he was hosted by Waithaka Kinyua.
- He articulated various initiatives that he has undertaken in his capacity as area MP, as the area NG-CDF patron and in his individual capacity.
- As the MP, he disclosed his efforts in lobbying and sourcing for funds for Roads, Energy, Health and other sectors through his parliamentary duties as well as through the national government.



Othaya MP Wambugu Wainaina with his GTN TV host Waithaka Kinyua.

Othaya constituency Member of Parliament Wambugu Wainaina yesterday assured area residents that he was right on the track as far as pledges he made to them during the electioneering period are concerned.

The MP said he was fulfilled promises he made to the local electorate and residents and was optimistic he would fulfill all of them before his first term as a lawmaker is over.

"I will not fail you. I will ensure I fulfill all my pledges," the MP who is locally known as MountKenya or Kirima averred.

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He articulated various initiatives that he has undertaken in his capacity as area MP, as the area NG-CDF patron and in his individual capacity.

As the MP, he disclosed his efforts in lobbying and sourcing for funds for Roads, Energy, Health and other sectors through his parliamentary

duties as well as through the national government.

In his capacity as the patron of the area NG-CDF team, Wainaina noted that he had initiated a new concept of awarding contracts. Under this new

initiative, which is Labour Based, contractors awarded various tenders are compelled to use locally supplied materials and labour. Further, he noted that he had initiated several other activities like training coaches, riders and supporting pupils as well as students in various stages of learning.

Through Wambugu Wainaina Foundation, the MP noted that he has for more than three decades been assisting needy Othaya residents with funds for health and education bills. He said he has been doing this even to people from other parts of the country who he interacts with in Nairobi.

Since he assumed office as the area MP, his Foundation with assistance from well-wishers has upgraded dozens of houses for disadvantaged families in the area.

He called on his constituents to continue supporting the Kenya Kwanza

administration saying better things will soon be realized.

He disclosed that several roads were lined up for rehabilitation from next year and that Mwai Kibaki Hospital will soon be equipped with essential equipment to ease cost of treatment to the locals and those from the surrounding areas.

Further, he noted that water projects were on course and once completed, locals will be food deficient through irrigation.

He called on youth and other residents interested in earning through digital platforms to make use of the Digital Hub at the Othaya CDF offices.

He further said he will soon be convening a meeting of youth leaders from all parts of the constituency to chart a way forward.



Othaya MP Wambugu Wainaina articulating some issues during yesterday's morning show.

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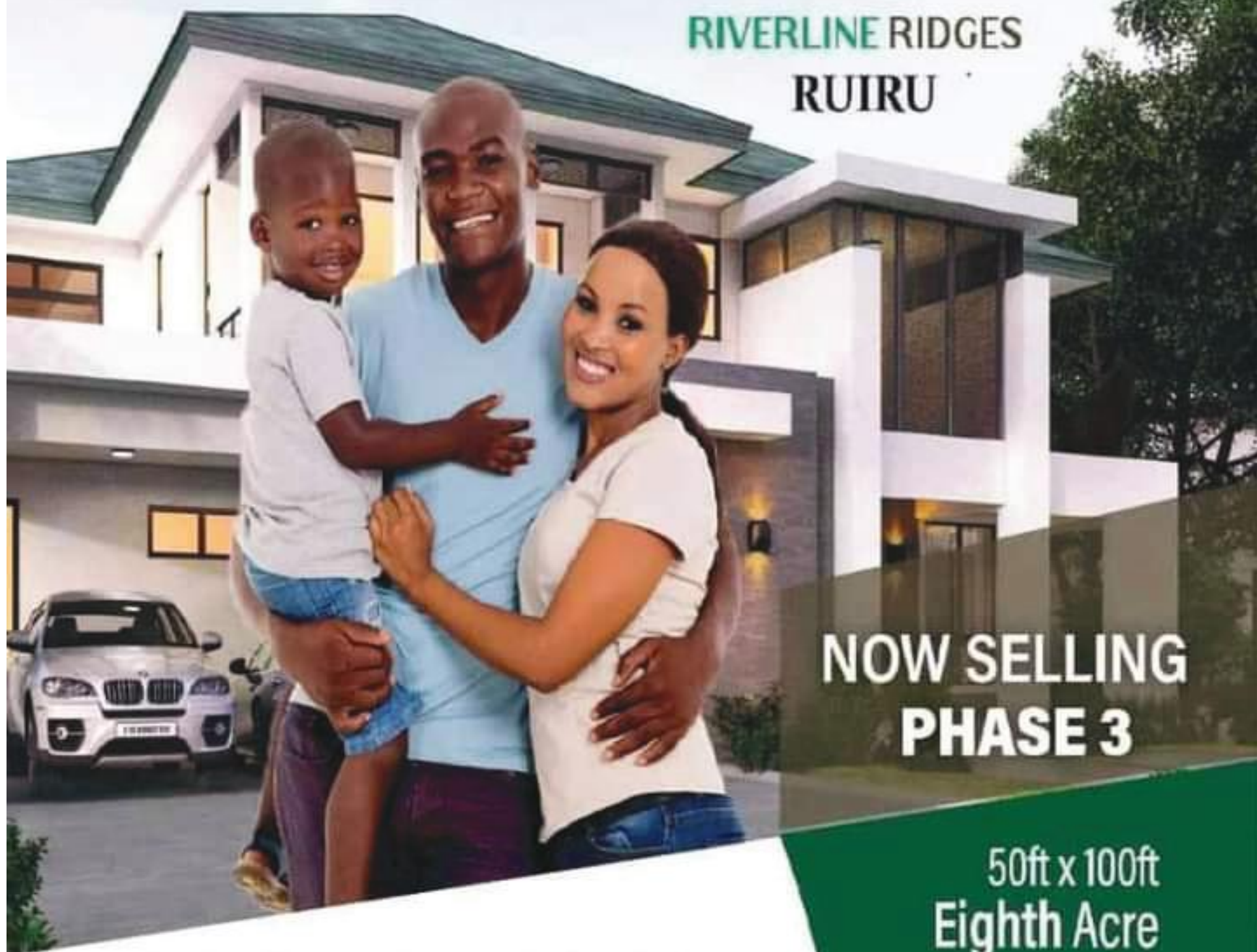
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Diaspora Inflows For November Up 2.8pc To Ksh 54B

By: Ronald Owili

Kenyan living in foreign countries sent home Ksh 54.3 billion (\$355m) in November this year, latest data by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) shows.

This was a 2.8pc increase when compared to the same period last year when Kenya received a total of Ksh 52.8 billion (\$345.4m).

The country also received a significantly higher diaspora remittances in twelve months to November when compared to the same period last year.

“The cumulative inflows for the 12 months to November 2023 totaled Ksh 638.8 billion (\$4.18b) compared to Ksh 615.2 billion (\$4.02b) in the same period in 2022, an increase of 3.8pc,” said CBK.

North America remains the largest

source of remittance with inflows totaling Ksh 31.1 billion (\$203.5m) out of which inflows from the United States amounted to Ksh 30.1 billion (\$196.8m).

“The US remained the largest source of remittances into Kenya, accounting for 55pc in November 2023,” added the bank.

Inflows from Europe grew to reach Ksh 9.3b (\$60.7m) led by the United Kingdom with inflows totaling Ksh 4.3 billion (\$28.1m).

Asian inflows rose in November to reach Ksh 7.3 billion (\$47.5m) with Saudi Arabia leading with Ksh 4.9 billion (\$31.9m).

On the other hand, diaspora remittance from Africa rose to reach Ksh 4.8 billion \$31.300 while that of Australian, Ocean and other sources reached Ksh 1.8 billion (\$11.9m).



Private Sector Key In Delivering Affordable Housing Project – IQSK

By: Nduta Mukami

The government should work with private institutions in the implementation of the Affordable Housing Programme.

The Institute of Quantity Surveyors of Kenya (IQSK) President Jennifer Musyimi says the association in conjunction with other professional services in the Affordable Housing Programme across the country will work to enhance building standards and streamline building approvals for the project’s integrity.

The government targets to construct over one million housing units annually. Given that Kenya grapples with an annual housing deficit of over 200,000 units, the government is also banking on the support of the private sector to deliver the units.

The institute says the project will ensure that Kenya’s human settlement landscape is properly planned.

Additionally, the surveyors say the

housing levy will enable private sector developers to invest in housing due to the availability of the ready market.

IQSK is further calling on the public to participate in the ongoing public participation exercise on the Housing Bill set to be tabled in Parliament next year.

Affordable Housing Programme



President: Reforms At NHIF Aimed At Ensuring UHC For All

By: Muraya Kamunde

Worth Noting:

- The President and First Lady Rachel Ruto gave food items, which included maize flour, cooking oil, wheat flour, rice and sugar, among others.
- “We have reduced monthly payments to NHIF to make it easy for most people. The Government will pay for those who do not have the means to pay,” he said.
- The President said it was wrong for some people to rush to court to stop projects aimed at improving the lives of Kenyans, including affordable housing.
- “Under the affordable housing programme, 200,000 houses will be built every year. So far, more than 120,000 people have been employed in the programme,” said President Ruto.



President William Ruto.

President William Ruto has assured Kenyans that reforms in the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) are aimed at ensuring universal healthcare for all.

He told off critics of the reforms, saying they were up to no good and were opposed to the transformation of the country.

President Ruto noted that majority of Kenyans who are not in formal employment will now be expected to pay Ksh 300 monthly NHIF contributions down from Ksh 500.

Speaking when he distributed Christmas gifts to residents of Turbo Constituency and neighbouring areas at his Sugoi home, Uasin Gishu County, President Ruto said the Government was keen to ensure Kenyans do not sell their property to access healthcare.

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ments to NHIF to make it easy for most people. The Government will pay for those who do not have the means to pay,” he said.

The President said it was wrong for some people to rush to court to stop projects aimed at improving the lives of Kenyans, including affordable housing.

“Under the affordable housing programme, 200,000 houses will be built every year. So far, more than 120,000 people have been employed in the programme,” said President Ruto.

He added: “It’s our responsibility to make Kenya greater and not to destroy.”

At the same time, the Head of State asked Kenyans to take advantage of the Hustler Fund to start and support viable income-generating activities.

He said the fund has transformed the lives of many Kenyans at the bottom of the economic pyramid, especially in the rural areas.

“As you borrow from the Hustler Fund, also remember to pay to help

others get access to the funds,” he said.

President Ruto asked parents to take advantage of the government’s commitment to invest in education by taking their children to school.

He said the recruitment of 56,000 teachers this year was a clear demonstration that the government gives priority to the education sector.

“Education remains an equaliser. This is why we are investing more resources in the sector,” said President Ruto.

On agriculture, the President said his administration would continue to reform the sector to increase food production.

He said reforms in the sector have seen a 40 per cent increase in food production this year compared to last year.

“I want to thank farmers for taking advantage of reforms, including the reduction of fertiliser prices from Ksh 7,000 to Ksh 2,500. We will continue to reform the sector to further improve production,” he said.

President Ruto also took the opportunity to wish Kenyans a merry Christmas and prosperous 2024.

Nairobi Governor Johnson Saka-ja urged Kenyans to be patient as President Ruto works hard to fix the country’s economy.

“Our economy was in ICU when we took over. But the President is doing everything possible to improve it. Let’s be patient and give him time to fix our economy,” said Mr Sakaja.

Uasin Governor Chelilim Bii and Turbo MP Janet Sitienei accompanied the present at the event.

How To Safeguard Your Well-being, Wallet This December – Nazir Jinnah

By: Capital Correspondent

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In the words of the Chairperson of the presidential Council of Economic Advisors Dr David Ndii, Kenya's economy is not out of the woods yet, amidst a series of incidents triggering global inflation.

Ndii in a post on X formerly Twitter painted a bleak future for Kenyans and more so those in business in 2024. "This economy is going to shrink. The other day someone who deals in high-end cars asked me when I think economy would turn around. I gave him my honest opinion, told him his line of business was unlikely to recover and he might want to look into a production-oriented sector," Ndii said.

Financial expert and investor Nazir Jinnah has delved into the topic and says every Kenyan has a capacity to shield themselves from adverse effects of a slowed economy, by spending responsibly this festive season.

In an interview, Jinnah said there is

a need for people to safeguard both their finances and well-being as they navigate the month of December.

"With economic struggles persisting, the allure of extravagant spending can quickly transform into a harsh January reality," he cautioned.

"Allocate funds for essential expenses such as bills, groceries, and any outstanding debts. Be honest with yourself about what you can afford, ensuring that your festive spirit doesn't come at the expense of financial stability."

In an era of Instagram filters and Facebook highlights, he pointed out that it's easy for people to fall prey to the pressure of portraying an idyllic holiday season.

But his advice is one should, "resist the urge to overspend just to keep up appearances on social media. Remember, true joy doesn't come wrapped in expensive gifts or extravagant parties but in the genuine moments spent with loved ones."

Further, he has urged Kenyans to also prioritize their well-being, even as they go along with merrymaking.

"Don't sacrifice sleep, neglect ex-



Nazir Jinnah.

.....

ercise, or ignore signs of stress. Remember, a healthy body and mind are the most precious gifts you can give yourself and your family," he said.

"Overspending during the holiday season can lead to financial stress and

anxiety in the new year."

To avoid overspending, he suggests people should not shy away from discussing with their loved ones, "about an alternative format to holiday spending and gift-giving this year that

takes the pressure off of everyone."

"You should reduce spending by setting spending limits," he added.

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As The Year Come To An End, I'm Happy To Have Met One Of My Key Wishes



By: Joseph Mutua Ndonga
mutuandonga@yahoo.com



Worth Noting:

- These were my observations. The visit came hot on the heels of the bilateral talks he had held with the President of Germany here in Nairobi.
- He had also met the President of France and two of their meetings took place on the sidelines of Global Conference of Parties on Climate change and United Nation General Assembly (UNGA).
- The problem of unemployment in Kenya featured prominently in all these meetings.
- Dr Ruto would mince no word in drawing the attention of these leaders to this issue.
- In response, the President of Germany President assured him that his country will offer Kenya 200,000 jobs opportunities. I'm going to sit down with my government so that we draft the agreement.

I'm a writer and political analyst. As the year 2023 come to a close, I'm happy to have realized one of my key wishes: Championing and highlighting the achievements of President William Ruto and his administration.

My position would be based on a well-researched analysis and hence well informed.

His numerous foreign travels is one of the issues that dominated public discourse.

Azimio leadership wanted Kenyans to believe these trips were not bearing any fruits.

The ruling Kenya Kwanza coalition would counter this and accuse Azimio of being envious of President's achievements.

We know their (opposition) game plan. They want the president to fail so that they can use this card during the 2027 electioneering period. This is by portraying him as a weak leader who deserved not to be re-elected.

But Dr Ruto is ahead of them. He is clever than them.

For me, a political analyst, I would always echo their sentiments. I would not do this blindly. I would first do a thorough research.

I wrote several articles/opinion pieces. I wrote one of them when President William Ruto was making a state visit to Germany.

These were my observations. The visit came hot on the heels of the bilateral talks he had held with the President of Germany here in Nairobi.

He had also met the President of France and two of their meetings took place on the sidelines of Global Conference of Parties on Climate change and United Nation General Assembly (UNGA).

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In response, the President of Germany President assured him that his country will offer Kenya 200,000 jobs opportunities. I'm going to sit down with my government so that we draft the agreement.

Thereafter, we will invite President

William Ruto to make a state visit to Germany during which we will sign the final agreements which will pave the way for Kenyans to start working in Germany.

Before flying out, President Ruto informed Kenyans that this is one of issues taking him there.

Many people have no jobs. I promised to address this problem which I inherited from the previous administration. I'm committed to walk the talk.

President Ruto had a few days earlier visited Saudi Arabia where he managed to secure 350,000 job opportunities for Kenyans.

The noise being made by my critics that the visits are not bearing any fruits is hollow, totally misleading and being made in bad faith. I'm not a tourist. I mean business. The business is to return our economy back on track and consequently elevate your leaving standards.

You know these critics. They want me to fail and capitalize on this that I never kept my words during the campaigns for next General Election.

Githima TV and Weega TV, Kikuyu stations, had been hosting me for political shows. When the latter invited me a few days later, this question came up.

This was my response: Kenya is reaping big from these visits and they were within the mandate bestowed on the President by the constitution.

I noted. Dr Ruto has made great strides in terms of tackling the problem of unemployment. He has also secured hundreds of thousands of jobs for Kenyans in Qatar and Israel.

As the CEO of this nation, the President had no option but to honor the invitations from the heads of states of the developed and rich nations.

After the bilateral talks with his host, he would witness members of his delegation append signatures to various agreements and deals worth billions of shillings. The host will witness members of his team do the same.

This will not happen if the Kenyan President opted to skip the visits.

It is worth noting when President Uhuru Kenyatta ascended to power, he also made similar trips.

Those faulting Dr Ruto today did not

raise a finger at the time. This is because Uhuru was their buddy.

Recently, President Ruto made a high profile official visit to China where he stayed for three days. It was the first since he assumed office.

Just like his previous visits to European countries, he managed to secure lucrative deals worth Sh63 billion.

Under this arrangement, China will buy our avocados, tea and other farm produce.

He also convinced Chinese companies to rollout investments worth Sh644 billions in Kenya.

This trip came at a time when speculations were rife that he had shunned the East in favor of the West, a narrative peddled by those who cited his numerous visits to the Western capitals.

To me, it is too early to judge him. Dr Ruto is a democrat and a strong believer in the Kenyan constitution and the rule of law. So, he cannot make such a decision without seeking concurrence of the relevant arms of the Kenyan government.

It is worth noting that former President Mwai Kibaki laid the foundation that saw Kenya turning East and sought to strengthen ties with China.

As a result, China was awarded contracts worth billions of shillings.

Thika Superhighway, Lamu Port and Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) were among the major projects clinched by the Asian giant.

Kibaki's successor President Uhuru Kenyatta followed the suit.

On SGR, he managed to negotiate for a whopping contractual loan totalling to Sh370 billion.

The monies were used to construct the new modern line from Mombasa to Nairobi and to buy the rolling stocks.

For President Ruto, my considered view is that his wish is to maintain cordial relationship with all development partners.

In this maiden visit, President Ruto joined more than 100 heads of state and government invited by the President of China to attend the Belt and Road Forum.

During his tenure, President Uhuru used to attend these forums.

In one of them, he was accompanied

by ODM leader Raila Odinga. This was during the reign of the 'Handshake' government.

Dr Ruto had a busy schedule during this visit. On the sidelines, he held talks with chief executives of the big companies.

Other deals he witnessed being signed covered strategic areas of mutual interest including energy and technology.

One of the firms agreed to help Kenya generate more energy at a lower cost. With this, hustlers in Kenya have a reason to smile as this would lead to lowering of the cost of electricity.

On technology, Ruto's interventions were equally fruitful. The cost of the communication gadgets and internet services was bound to come down.

On SGR, I'm sure many recalls that this was a government-to-government deal. It follows that some of the key contents of agreement were not made the public.

The content became the top secret of Uhuru's administration.

We recall that during this period the relationship between Uhuru his deputy Ruto had begun to worsen. It did not take long before the implosion preceded by the 'handshake' between the President Uhuru and his arch rival Raila Odinga occurred.

From then, Dr Ruto was kept in darkness. Uhuru would not share critical information with him.

This is despite these mega projects having generated a public debate.

As Kenyans, this is a big burden being placed on our shoulders. The big question was. Are we going to get value for our money?

Ruto's visit was therefore long overdue.

It gave him an opportunity to get to know the secrets.

It is worth noting that during the era of President Daniel Arap Moi, the West stood as Kenya's key development partners.

I have been listening to the powerful speeches Dr Ruto had been making when the Presidents of Western countries invited him. He would boldly champion the course of Kenyans and that of Pan Africanism.

Given this scenerio, the President would not shy working with the partners who gave us better deals.

For the contracts, the government would always consider the firms that offer better terms. The cost of the project. But the quality of the work would surpass all the considerations.

President Ruto has been visiting rich countries and he has so far secured goodies worth billions of shillings for all of us, Kenyans. This shows that he means well for Kenya. Let us continue supporting him.

Joseph Mutua Ndonga is a writer and political analyst based in Nairobi

Balala, Gwiyo Freed On Sh1mn Bail Ahead Of Mention On Thursday

By: Capital News

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Former Tourism Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala has been freed on a Sh1 million cash bail with a Sh5 million bond alternative in an abuse of office case.

The Public Prosecutor presented Balala before a Malindi court on Friday following his arrest Thursday night over his decision to engage private consultants against a Cabinet decision.

The court freed former Tourism Principal Secretary Leah Gwiyo, charged alongside Balala, on similar terms setting a mention on Thursday, December 28.

EACC said the two committed Sh3.4 billion for consultancy services in 2010 at the initial stages of the construction of Utalii College, Kilifi campus.

A Malindi court, set to rule heard that Balala and his co-accused jointly used their offices to improperly confer a benefit to private consultants against a Cabinet decision on December 13,

2010.

Private consultants at the center of the scandal include; Baseline architects Ltd, Ujenzi Consultants, Armitex Consulting Engineering and West consult Consulting Engineers.

EACC detectives arrested Balala and Gwiyo alongside Joseph Odera, an engineer from West Consult Engineers.

Flawed procurement

EACC Spokesperson Eric Ngumbi said the agency flew Balala to Mombasa and before taking him to Malindi by road.

Also lined up for prosecution are officials from the Procurement and Finance departments.

Balala and his accomplices face up to 10 charges related to irregular payment of Sh8.5 billion from the Tourism Fund to put up the Coast branch of the Kenya Utalii College later renamed Ronald Ngala Utalii College.

EACC said investigations established that there were numerous procurement fraud that shot up the approved cost of putting up the college from Sh1.95 billion to 10.4 billion.



Former Tourism Cabinet Secretary Najib Balala/FILE

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Pakistan Ex-PM Imran Khan Granted Bail But Remains Jailed

By: AFP

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Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan was granted bail Friday in a case alleging he leaked state secrets, lawyers said, but he remained jailed on other charges ahead of an election due in February.

Khan -- detained since August -- alleges the powerful military is colluding with dynastic parties that have long dominated Pakistan to crush his populist movement and prevent him from standing for office.

The 71-year-old has been pummeled by a barrage of legal cases since being ousted in April 2022 after falling out with the top brass, and has twice been jailed.

“The case has completely collapsed, and Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi have finally been granted bail,” lawyer Salman Safdar told reporters outside court, referring to Khan’s former foreign minister who is being held over the same case.

Prosecutors allege the pair mis-



Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan pauses as he speaks with Reuters during an interview, in Lahore, Pakistan March 17, 2023. REUTERS/Akhtar Soomro/File Photo.

.....

handled a diplomatic cable sent by Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States.

Prosecution for the alleged offence took place inside jail and the trial began in private, until a legal challenge forced the court to restart proceedings with observers present.

The top court in its short order

said that “there are not reasonable grounds for believing” that an offence under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act, which carries a possible 14-year prison term or death sentence, was committed by Khan.

“There are sufficient grounds for further inquiry into their guilt of said offence, which is to be finally

decided by the learned trial court,” the court said.

Khan’s Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party said he remains incarcerated over numerous separate graft cases, with scant chance he will leave prison to contest elections due February 8.

“The prospect of him obtaining

relief in the near future appears to be very slim,” party lawyer Khalid Yousaf Chaudry told AFP.

The fate of politicians in Pakistan has historically ridden on their relationship to the military establishment, which has directly ruled the country on several occasions.

Hugely popular Khan rose to power in 2018 with the backing of the army. But when he was ousted by a parliamentary no-confidence vote he claimed generals had conspired with Washington to end his term.

He publically touted diplomatic documents as supposed evidence for his claims.

In the months after he was ousted, Khan was able to draw vast crowds at rallies, where he waged an unprecedented campaign of defiance against the military.

He was briefly arrested for the first time in May sparking days of deadly unrest resulting in a huge crackdown on PTI which saw most senior figures defect, be arrested or driven underground.

Court To Rule On Ownership Of Ksh.400M Firm Claimed By Kenyan And Rwandese Investors

By: Citizen Digital

Justice Alfred Mabeya is on December 27 expected to deliver a ruling on who owns Ksh.400 million worth Techfirm - Stay Online Limited.

In the case, Rwandese investor Desire Muhinyuza and Kenyan businessman Kirimi Koome are in court over the ownership of the company.

Parties in the case have testified before Justice Mabeya both claiming ownership of the business.

On Thursday, December 21, Muhinyuza narrated to the court how he trusted Koome and went ahead to invest his business with him.

He testified that at the time, he couldn't register the company in Kenya because he lacked pre-requisite papers, therefore trusted Koome who he alleges that he betrayed him later.

On cross examination, Koome who also says that he is the owner of the company said that although money channelled for the business came from

Rwanda, Stay online limited was his company since he registered it.

During the hearing, a former DCI officer Daniel Guru told the court that he used a stereo microscope nexus zoom 190 to examine signature specimen provided by Koome Kirimi's lawyer.

However lawyer representing Muhinyuza, Danstan Omari, put him to task to explain why he used the said machine when he knows that it's a Video spectra comparita 6000 that's used for it.



Rwandese investor Desire Muhinyuza with his lawyer Danstan Omari. Photo/Dzuya Walter..

Alarm Over Naivasha Church Where Children Are Denied Medication, Buried In Church Compound

By: Citizen Digital

Residents of Maella in Naivasha have raised alarm over the deaths of over five minors from one of the controversial sects in the area in the last year.

The residents want the Church of God investigated and their leaders arrested over failure to take minors to hospital, leading to the deaths.

This came as police and members of the public rescued four ailing minors and arrested their parents for neglect.

Already, the church leader has fled the area with details emerging that some of the dead minors were buried in the church compound in unclear circumstances.

One of the elders, Gilbert Njuguna, whose wife is a member of the church, says one of his children died and was buried within one day while he was away.

Njuguna who is a Community

Health Promoter says that members of the church do not believe in taking medication based on their religious beliefs.

He fell out with his wife after she joined the church, and wants it investigated and closed down if possible.

One of his children died and was buried in the church compound while members camped in the church from Friday to Sunday conducting unknown business.

Another resident Bernard Kamau said that members of the sect were rising gradually leading to more suffering for tens of children.

A member of the sect, Ann Njeri, vowed that they would not abandon their beliefs noting that their treatment and medication lay in heaven and not on earth.

An emotional Njeri confirmed the death of one of her children who was buried in the church compound terming this as normal in their day-to-day life.

The area assistant Chief Mary Njeri confirmed the arrest of the parents



and the existence of the church adding that her seniors had been informed about the same.

The representative of area MP Stephen Muthua revisited what happened in Shakahola in Kilifi adding that the Maella issue should be investigated before more lives were lost.

Bonds Beyond Borders: Chronicles from Jinnah University



Written by
Zainab Mustafa
Misbah Waqar
Neha Ibrahim
(TrioBliss 🍌)

Jinnah University for Women served as the stage for our collective odyssey—a realm where connections were woven amidst towering structures and academic companions. We, diverse faces in a vibrant mosaic, sculpted by time against a backdrop of ambitions. Found mentors who became guiding stars, nurturing growth with unwavering belief. Friendships blossomed in classrooms and corridors, some fleeting, others destined, culminating in TrioBliss—a union born of shared experiences. Seniors illuminated our path; in time, we guided juniors, honoring the continuum of learning. Academic challenges—pressures, assignments, exams—balanced by joyous moments: cultural festivities, carefree escapades, etching memories into each passing day. Amidst this whirlwind, lessons emerged, reprimands softened by understanding mentors.

As this chapter nears its close, the tapestry of memories enriches our collective narrative. TrioBliss, burgeoning writers, leave an indelible mark. Enriched by this journey, we await forthcoming chapters, cherishing fleeting moments and nurturing bonds within these cherished halls. The B block corridor stands as our haven—an ecosystem fostering comfort and aspiration. At Jinnah University for Women, the empowerment of women takes root. It's where I discovered the potential of women to achieve greatness on their own.

Teachers here are motivators, offering unwavering support. They are kind, helpful, and cheer us on, surpassing my prior expectations.

In our first year, amidst joys and experiences, we faced embarrassing yet memorable moments. The prayer area, a serene space, doubles as a place for combined study and meetups, fostering blissful memories.

In this microcosm, we encountered judgmental individuals alongside those offering courage and hope. The owner's effort in establishing a separate women's university allows for freedom in education. This sanctuary is cherished, surpassing the allure of larger, renowned institutions.

From my apprehensive first day to today, Jinnah University for Women remains a safe haven, fostering education amidst the intensity of academic pressures. The supportive and caring nature of the teachers defines this institution, making it the ideal start to a new journey.

A Fake Friend



Navoi laughed.
In the country where the school is opened,
Avloni taught.

Happiness of the country

I'm the one who says I have a friend.
I have forgiven my sins.
A king's carpet for his feet,
Dear Friends, who are waiting for the bed.

I traveled the world, I saw the world,
I saw all the damage in the world.
When I say homeland, it burns,
I saw loyalty in my heart.

Who is that friend of yours?
You will know if you try.
Your wealth is your friend,
You see a fake friend.

My motherland is the motherland,
The light that is the heart is bright.
The light that is the heart is bright.

The light of the heart is a light.

Our pride

Sacrifice his life for the country,
A great country built.
Respected country,
I have ancestors.

A person who blossoms in his arms,
The country is a symbol of happiness.

Yakshilikova Mukhlisa was born on
December 30, 2005 in Saykhunabad
district, Syrdarya region of the Republic
of Uzbekistan.

Write "Khamsa" to the world

To The Wind



Our sins have increased
Maybe you couldn't stand it
And the world from evil
Have you come to clean up?

The sky is sad
Free the earth from blacks
Someone who is black inside
Put dust in your eyes and fly away

Just do no harm please
To the produce of mother earth
Even so, he endures
To the capricious human race

Howling wind
You worry a person
Why are you so upset?
You are destroying the world

Like a mother who has lost her child
You make my heart tremble a lot
To take revenge on this world
Did you feel so angry

Intizor Samandarova Ikrom qizi
Young poetess and writer
From Uzbekistan

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BUSINESS

Good News For Tea Farmers

By: John Kariuki
 @themtkenyatimes

Worth Noting:

- “We are pleased to be flagging off the second fertilizer consignment of the year for distribution to our farmers. This follows the successful importation and distribution of the first batch of fertilizer in October this year, which farmers received and applied to their tea ahead of the short rain season.
- “The delivery of this consignment comes against the backdrop of global challenges in the shipping and logistics space that has been occasioned by various challenges. These include disruptions caused by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as the ongoing Israel-Hamas war which has led to the re-routing of shipping lines away from the Suez Canal.



KTDA National Chairman Enos Njeru.

The second consignment of fertilizer for Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) farmers has been flagged off at the Mombasa Port for onward distribution via the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) to Nairobi and subsequently to factories.

The consignment comprises over 900,000 bags totaling 45,232 tonnes of fertilizer that KTDA has imported for its farmers as part of total fertilizer order which totals 92,737 metric tonnes for the 2023/2024 year.

The ship carrying the second consignment docked at the Mombasa Port on Monday, December 18, 2023, and follows the successful delivery of the first consignment of 956,000 bags of 50kgs (47,800 tonnes) which was received at the Port, and distributed to farmers, in October this year.

Speaking while flagging off the consignment, Agriculture and Livestock Development Cabinet Secretary, Mithuka Linturi, said:

“We have flagged off over 45,00 metric tonnes of fertilizer which translates to over 900,000 bags that we want our farmers to use to apply to their tea. This is as a result of the

commitment that the government has made to continually support our farmers. Since we have made it clear that we want to increase productivity so that we can get more yield, the Government has stepped in to subsidize the cost of fertilizer, farmers are now buying fertilizer at KES 2,500 per bag.”

Speaking at the same event, KTDA Holdings Chairman, Enos Njeru, said:

“We are pleased to be flagging off the second fertilizer consignment of the year for distribution to our farmers. This follows the successful importation and distribution of the first batch of fertilizer in October this year, which farmers received and applied to their tea ahead of the short rain season.

“The delivery of this consignment comes against the backdrop of global challenges in the shipping and logistics space that has been occasioned by various challenges. These include disruptions caused by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as the ongoing Israel-Hamas war which has led to the re-routing of shipping lines

away from the Suez Canal.

“I am also happy to note that, this year, we have introduced packages of 25 kgs bags instead of the traditional 50kgs to ease the carrying of heavy weights while applying fertiliser in the farms.

“Moving forward, and to ensure that we do not experience lengthy delays in fertilizer delivery for our farmers, we have embarked on early procurement of next year’s fertilizer so that it reaches our farmers in good time.

“We thank President William Ruto and his Government, led by the Agriculture Cabinet Secretary, for the continued support in ensuring that smallholder tea farmers under the KTDA ambit are getting fertilizer at subsidized rates thus cushioning them against high fertilizer prices that have characterized the market.”

The NPK 26:5:5 chemically compounded fertilizer was procured directly from Russia and will be bagged at the port before distribution to the farmers. This arrangement allows smooth and efficient delivery to farmers up to the closest tea buying centers. Farmers do not incur extra cost

transporting the fertilizer from the factory stores.

The cost of fertilizer has been negatively impacted by rising cost of natural gas (a key component in the manufacture of NPK chemically compounded fertilizer), unfavorable exchange rates, global supply constraints, high crude oil costs and the cost of shipment among other factors.

KTDA procures fertilizer in bulk for more than 650,000 small scale tea farmers, who are the shareholders of its managed factories, through competitive international bidding. The fertilizer is then distributed to the farmers through their respective factory companies. This arrangement enables small scale tea farmers to access high quality fertilizer at the most competitive price and in a reliable manner.

The KTDA fertilizer credit scheme enables farmers to pay in installments for the fertilizer they have ordered for use on their farm. These payments are made over several months to ease the farmer’s burden on the purchase of fertilizer which is a major input cost in tea farming.



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Detroit News: Trump Recorded Pressuring Michigan Canvassers Not To Certify 2020 Vote

By: CNN

The Detroit News obtained a recording of a call former President Donald Trump made to two Michigan county officials in 2020, urging them not to certify the election results from Detroit.

The call was previously known and reported by CNN – and condemned at the time by election experts and Michigan Democrats, who said it was a stunning attempt by a sitting president to pressure local officials to interfere with an election.

For the first time, we are learning exactly what Trump said, according to the Detroit News. CNN has not independently obtained or verified the recording.

RNC chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, who was also on the call told the officials, regarding the certification: “Do not sign it. ... We will get you attorneys.”

Then, Trump added, “We’ll take

care of that.”

The GOP officials from the Wayne County Board of Canvassers, Monica Palmer and William Hartmann, did later try to rescind their votes to certify the results. But it was too late. The Michigan state canvassing board later certified the results as well, despite public pressure from Trump and other Republicans.

McDaniel said in a statement Thursday, “What I said publicly and repeatedly at the time, as referenced in my letter on Nov. 21, 2020, is that there was ample evidence that warranted an audit.”

CNN is currently attempting to reach Monica Palmer for comment on the recording.

According to the Detroit News, Trump also told the officials on the call that Republicans had been “cheated on this election” and “everybody knows Detroit is crooked as hell,” according to the Detroit News. He asked, “How can anybody sign” the election certification “when you have more votes than people,” referring to his false claim that large



Former President Donald Trump greets supporters as he arrives at a commit to caucus rally in Waterloo, Iowa on Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023.

numbers of dead people voted in Michigan.

“We’ve got to fight for our country,” Trump said. “We can’t let these people take our country away from us.”

In response to the Detroit News’ reporting on the recording, Trump campaign spokesperson Steven Cheung said in a statement that “all of President Trump’s actions were taken in furtherance of his duty as President of the United States to faithfully take care of the laws and ensure election integrity, including investigating the rigged and stolen 2020 Presidential Election.”

Somalia, U.S. Forces Kill Al Shabaab Leader Behind Numerous Attacks In Region - Official

By: Reuters

Somali and U.S. forces have killed a senior leader of the militant Islamist al Shabaab group who had planned numerous attacks in Somalia and Kenya, Somalia’s information minister said.

“Maalim Ayman ... was confirmed to have been killed in a joint operation by the Somali National Army with assistance from US forces on December 17th,” Daud Aweis said on his X account late on Thursday.

“Ayman was accountable for planning multiple lethal terrorist attacks in Somalia and nearby countries,” he said.

The U.S. military’s Africa Command (AFRICOM) had conducted an air strike, an AFRICOM spokesperson said, but added that the strike’s target was yet to be con-

firmed. The strike was conducted against the militant group near Jilib town in southern Somalia, AFRICOM and the Somali Information Ministry said.

Ayman was on a U.S. State Department Rewards for Justice wanted list, with a \$10 million reward offered for information leading to his arrest or conviction.

The department said he was responsible for preparing an attack on a military base in Kenya in January 2020 in which three Americans - one U.S. military service member and two contractors - were killed.



The remains of a police car following an explosion provoked by Al-Shabaab militants’ during an attack to a police station on the outskirts of Mogadishu, Somalia, on February 16, 2022..

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Government Should Protect Natural Forests From Deforestation



By: Tonny O. Blair
@themkenyentimes

In accordance with the provisions of Act of parliament No. 34 of 2016 of Forest Conservation and Management; which gives effects to Article 69 of The Kenyan Constitution with regard to forest resources; to provide for development and sustainable management, including conservation and rational utilization of all forest resources for socioeconomic development of the country and for connected purposes. This Act of parliament aims at conserving Kenya's forests and managing them sustainably. This includes fighting deforestation and increasing carbon sequestration.

Furthermore, the act of parliament goes a notch higher to provide for the formation of a cooperate body that will be responsible for the well-being of the forest cover nation wide, that is Kenya Forest Service - KFS. The body was formed on a strategic fundamental factors in order to mitigate on the achievement and maintenance of the required forest cover, not forgetting the Education and training aspect of it; to which I must acknowledge they have done best based on their capabilities.

On the contrary, do the parliament in its own capacity do a keen follow up? The act again provides on the allocations of funds and resources to ensure that this particular objectives are executed effectively and to the brim. If in case they do so, they do it at "river bank level" they assume the deepest end of it. The welfare of individuals taking care of our forests should be looked into, since things might seem normal on top of the pyramid but worse below the pyramid. When this is not looked into and a swift interventions made, the aspect of corruption will not end in this particular sector. One of the zonal forest department or rather office in Homa-bay County, needs to be looked in to. It has poor power supply, the officers squatters have poor structure "a mu-



Deforested Area.

seum like in nature", with poor water supply, not forgetting the protective gears, emergency kits, roads leading to those particular offices and other relevant resources that are essential in this case.

Why do I say so? Supposed their general welfare is not guaranteed, they will participate in the illegal logging and issuing of illegal permit for Forest encroachment practices in favor of some cash 'bribe' for their individual and familial sustainability. In line with the same, this offices are situated in the midst of the forest where there are Presence of dangerous wild animals if by bad luck any of them is attack, how will this case be handled remember the power supply is also inadequate.

If we can prevent corruption at grassroots level by providing the essential necessities that can make an individual think of bribery then we will be good to go; not issuing them with threats. It came to my realization that threats triggers the occurrence of some malicious practices, this is evident in cigarettes smoking despite a drawing of "a coffin" on the packet people still smoke, surprisingly studies have shown that the increment in smoking is about 30%, despite the warning and threats on the cigarette packets.

In 2018, Kenya had a ban on logging, which was a response to rampant illegal activities and high degradation of our ecosystem; thereby, becoming an environmental concern. Again, we are one nation which is good at formulating good and pleasant policies and laws on the contrary we are also good at not following the

same laws and policies that we formulated or rather suggested.

Although one part of the loss of trees and forest cover is due to wild-fires, shifting agriculture, and forestry, which provokes only temporary deforestation, a larger part of the loss of trees and forest cover is driven by urbanization and commodity-driven logging, resulting in permanent deforestation. Apparently, these practices are done illegally since a greater percentage cut down trees without permits or rather if they happen to have one they take advantage and over-cut even those that are not yet mature. Such practices should stop.

According to the Green Africa Foundation, over five million trees are cut down every day for charcoals, firewood or other uses thereby enhancing environmental degradation, negative climatic changes and weather patterns which lead to global warming. In early September 2021, Former President Uhuru Kenyatta officially declared drought in parts of Kenya a national disaster.

The Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) regions of Kenya has endured three severe drought in the decade {2010 – 2011, 2016 – 2017 and 2020 – 2022}, which was alarming and needed swift interventions. The recent drought {2020 – 2022} has been the most severe and longest with widespread livelihood loss and massive displacement of population, due to massive environmental pollution, ignorance and illegal logging.

Of late, there are probability of lifting the ban on logging once again just a year after declaring drought a menace. I am in the business of

struggling to understand; what changed? Do we have enough trees and forest cover that can sustain the ecosystem? Have we plated enough to replace those that we had cut down? Should we just focus on the short-term logging advantages to the economy? Remember, it takes about 20 – 30 years for a single tree to mature then we cut it down for Kshs6000 only which can't be equivalent to the time in which the tree took to mature. Why can't we have the bigger picture of this? Remember these trees we are cutting down shelter to some animals for instance birds.

Furthermore, it creates long-term climatic changes and negative impacts on various sectors for instance agriculture or others. Therefore, causing long-term suffering of innocent people. Others may reason that agriculture for instance can be irrigation-based. The question is; where are the water catchments and sources? Aren't they the natural forests and tree covers that we normally interfere with year in and year out?

The availability of trees plays a vital role in environmental conservation and positive climatic changes. Science has proven that human beings for instance take in oxygen (O₂) while plants take in carbon (IV) oxide during the day. In conjunction with the same, there is a lot of pollution caused by the burning of polythene-related materials and plastics that leads to massive emission of carbon (IV) oxide (CO₂) to the atmosphere. If the gas is absorbed by the Ozone (O₃) layer it results in global warming, therefore, causing negative climatic changes and weather patterns.

If we have enough trees and forest coverage, the emitted carbon (IV) oxide will be absorbed by the trees hence bringing a positive impact to the ecosystem since the plants will be taking in carbon (VI) oxide (CO₂) and releasing oxygen (O₂) which in turn taken in by living organism and reduction of global warming which also causes skin cancer which is untreatable if severe. Therefore, prevention is better than cure.

Finally, Let us encourage one another to plant trees to solve these manageable disasters thereafter upgrading various sectors not only agriculture but also the general economy.

You can
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The forestry department should deploy trained officers to ensure that such illegal practices are ended, on the same, the same officers themselves should not contribute toward deforestation since that would be against the laws of the land.

Various communities that are privileged to possess land close to the forest, work hand in hand with the department and relevant agencies to ensure that the norm has come to an end. It's all about us. The government should give this a priority not leaving behind various Environmental Agencies across the nation. Let us love nature, protect nature and promote nature. All for One, One for All.

Caring for their wellbeing also forms part of climate action and environmental justice. Moreover, the parliament should uphold it's mandates effectively as expected of them, by ensuring that the formulated acts are re-enforced and adhered to as expected. Let us value the existence of everything that includes the resources that we are privileged to have and possess in our country. Take care and preserve them for a better future for the current and coming generations

Tonny O. Blair - Environmental Activist,
Student at Rongo University.
(tonnyblairomondi908@gmail.com)

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Bulawayo The City Of Kings And Queens



By: Memory Phiri
@themkenyatimes



Worth Noting:

- This was a treat indeed for Bulawayo is the gateway to Manapools which is a staggering waterhole that deserves to be exploited to the fullest. Undoubtedly, the whole province was in the palm of my hands. In relation to the concrete jungle, the town has the Natural History Museum and National Arts Gallery under its belt.
- Not forgetting the Nesbitt Castle that has an enviable antique collection and the City Hall which screams of Victorian Architecture.
- As if this is not enough, the city of Kings and Queens is dripping with royalty and we are literally brushing shoulders with Shaka Ilembe’s descendants. History was left behind for all to witness at the Matobo Hills and heritage is depicted by the Bushmen Safaris.



Bulawayo The City Of Kings And Queens.

Bulawayo is a wonder that should not be taken for granted or at face value. Most importantly, it is the second largest city after the capital Harare. Thus, the Matebeleland province is an intriguing destination that is very rich in tourism cynosures like the Matopos National Park.

When I was growing up I always wanted to learn the Ndebele language and fate threw me a bone on my attachment year at university. Who would have thought that I would see the venerable headquarters of the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ)?

Moreso, the Shongololo trains from South Africa went on to enrich my travel and recreation dossier. From time to time, they hired the (NRZ) Rail Leisure coaches for excursions to Hwange up to Victoria Falls.

This was a treat indeed for Bulawayo is the gateway to Manapools which is a staggering waterhole that deserves to be exploited to the fullest. Undoubtedly, the whole province was in the palm of my hands. In relation to the concrete jungle, the town has the Natural History Museum and National Arts Gallery under its belt.

Not forgetting the Nesbitt Castle that has an enviable antique collection and the City Hall which screams of Victorian Architecture.

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Kings and Queens is dripping with royalty and we are literally brushing shoulders with Shaka Ilembe’s descendants. History was left behind for all to witness at the Matobo Hills and heritage is depicted by the Bushmen Safaris.

On one of my escapades, I had the liberty to go all the way to the Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo International Airport. Consequently, that same year I also witnessed the unveiling of his statue which stands in the heart of Bulawayo.

It is not fair to take a tour around this city without appreciating the show-

grounds alias the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF). The same applies to the Barbourfields Stadium which is a site for sore eyes. Needless to mention, that this town had me at hello.

Moving on to law and order, the High Court was opened in 1938 and it overlooks the 8th Avenue which is ostentatiously lined with the colorful Jacaranda trees.

For the love of buying and selling, Egodini will forever remain a potent hive of activity. Walking around in circles is generally part of the whole experience

therefore tourists can always take a breather in the famous Centenary Park which is one kilometre from the central business district along the Leopold Takawira Avenue.

Before I knew it retrospectively, my time was then up as I had to go back to school. If anything, I would have stayed put in this beautiful city which is close to the Khami World Heritage Site. Bulawayo, you were a learning curve and I miss you.



SPORTS
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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *The Gunners head to Liverpool on Saturday knowing victory would leave them top of the table at Christmas

Arteta Challenges Arsenal To End Winless Run At Anfield



Soccer Football - Premier League - Arsenal v Manchester City - Emirates Stadium, London, Britain - October 8, 2023 Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta REUTERS/David Klein.

Mikel Arteta has challenged Arsenal to win in the Premier League at Anfield for the first time in 11 years, saying they can learn from last year's bitter disappointment of throwing away a 2-0 lead.

The Gunners head to Liverpool on Saturday knowing victory would leave them top of the table at Christmas.

But the visitors would have to end a run of league results stretching back to September 2012 if they are to achieve that -- winning 2-0 when Arteta was in the Arsenal midfield.

The Spaniard toasted four years as Arsenal manager this week and during that time he has overseen wins at Manchester United,

Chelsea and Tottenham, while this season they beat Manchester City at the Emirates.

"We have done it at Old Trafford, we have done it at Stamford Bridge and many other places where we haven't done it for years," he said on Friday.

"This is the next challenge -- go there and win. If you want to be at the top you have to go to those places and be dominant. That's what we're going to try to do."

Arsenal took a 2-0 lead at Anfield last year before they were pinned back and had to settle for a draw.

It was the start of a damaging spell of four games without a win that cost the Gunners vital points in their chase for a first Premier

League title since 2004 and they were eventually overhauled by Manchester City.

"It's going to be a great atmosphere," said Arteta.

"The two teams are in a really good moment, really good position, really strong position. They are going to be well placed to win it and to go for it. It's going to be an intense match.

"You have to play better than them. You will silence the crowd if you are dominant and better than them."

Arteta admitted there were aspects of last year's game that could be improved upon.

"The way we allowed them to run especially, that we need to correct and be much better be-

cause when they have that momentum and space they are a really dangerous team.

"But we had some big, big situations when we could have killed the game and we didn't -- when you have the opportunity to do that, you have to do it.

"They have experienced that for many years now. For this group of players now this is the third, fourth time that they have been there (Anfield).

"A few years ago, it was the first time for most of them and maybe you have to clarify and explain certain things. I don't think that is necessary now."

AFP

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Sports >>> *Two-time Olympic 1500m champion Faith Kipyegon has implored on the County Government of Nakuru to complete construction of the Keringet Sports Academy.

Kipyegon Pleads For Completion Of Keringet Sports Academy



Nakuru Governor Susan Kihika when she hosted Olympic 1500m champion Faith Kipyegon on December 22, 2023/ photo/ Nakuru County Government.

Two-time Olympic 1500m champion Faith Kipyegon has implored on the County Government of Nakuru to complete construction of the Keringet Sports Academy.

Kipyegon urged the county to prioritise laying track at the facility to benefit athletes training in the region.

The 1500m world record holder who hails from Keringet, Kuresoi South, was speaking on Friday when she was hosted by Nakuru County Governor Susan Kihika at the county headquarters.

"I really have one request for you madam Governor and that is about the track in Keringet. I think

for these young boys and girls to develop in their careers, we need track. Even if we have the structure and it is not usable then it will not help young athletes develop and nurture their talents," said Kipyegon.

Kihika inspected the high-altitude facility earlier this year where she promised her government will set aside enough funds to complete its construction.

The phase one construction works include the construction of an 8-lane running track, standard pitch for field events, generator house, ancillary facilities, borehole drilling and equipping, and

frontage perimeter wall, among other facilities.

At the same time, Kihika requested the Nakuru County Assembly to consider naming the facility after Kipyegon who had a blistering 2023 season.

"It would be my humble request to you (members of the County Assembly) to do whatever it takes and name the stadium after Faith because that is where she started and that is why we want to have such a big stadium in this county," Kihika said.

Kipyegon had an unforgettable season where she broke three world records over 1500m, 5000m

and one mile before heading to World Championships where she claimed two gold medals in 1500m and 5000m.

Her achievements were recognised both locally and globally as she was awarded with the Elder of the Order of the Golden Heart (EGH) during the 60th Jamhuri Day celebrations.

She also bagged the World Athletics Female Athlete of the year award and was recently crowned the best Female African athlete of the year by the Confederation of African Athletics.

Citizen Sport

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SPORTS AS THEY HAPPEN



The Confident South African Poet Evans Nkambule



By: Abigirl Phiri
@themkenyaintimes

Confidence in one's abilities is a rare trait. This is because many are trapped in the clutches of skepticism. Yet when you decide on a certain quest you have to believe in yourself first before listening to other people's say. Other people in life are there to pull individuals down. Thus, you should sift what they advise you. The formula to success is characterised by pure determination and consistency. As Gagane rightfully highlighted, do not seek validation from people. Provided you are content with your work then you are good to go. In fact, this will ensure your growth. Like fine wine, poetry gets better with time as you refine your way of putting across your ideas. South Africa is known for having poets who are richly endowed in doing spoken word in their native language. Similarly, Gagane is one of their own making waves on Facebook. His writing will tug your heart strings one way or the other.

Please tell us your name and how your journey started in poetry?

My name is Evans Nkambule, also known as "Gagane." My journey in poetry began with a desire to express my thoughts and feelings in a unique and creative way. I was a curious person, interested in many things, including poetry, philosophy, and quantum physics. I had a deep appreciation for language, and I was fascinated by the power of words. As my journey began, I found that traditional forms of expressions were not quite sufficient to capture the complexity of my inner world, so I turned to poetry as a means of communication. I remember, I started with simple verses, perhaps short, haiku-like poems, before I begun to experiment with more complex forms and structures. As my confidence and skill grew,

I began to explore the possibilities of language, playing with rhythm, rhyme and imagery. And now, I find myself in a place, where I can express myself.

Have you won any major accolades in poetry? Are you a published poet?

I don't have accolades because I'm new on this journey but according to the person I am, accolades are not the true measure of my success as a poet. My success is found in the connections I make with others through my words, and the emotions and ideas that I am able to communicate.

Accolades are external validations, and while they can be nice, they are not necessary for my art to be meaningful. The real accomplishment is in the impact my poetry has on the people who read it, and the way it allows them to understand themselves and the world around them more deeply. Well although I'm not a published poet, but I'm going to be one on the near future.

Who is your inspiration?

Kendrick Lamar has been a source of inspiration for me as a poet, as he has shown the power of words to address complex issues of identity, race, and social justice. His ability to weave together personal stories, history, and social commentary is truly masterful.

His use of metaphor and imagery is deeply moving, and his lyrics often have a visceral, emotional impact on listeners. His work is a testament to the power of poetry to express the human experience in all its complexities, and it has inspired me to continue to push the boundaries of my own work.

I admire his willingness to be vulnerable and honest in his writing, and music.

Where do you see yourself in the near future?

I hope to continue to grow and evolve as a writer, to develop my craft and deepen my understanding of language. I want to be able to express myself more fully, and to

connect with more people through my work.

I hope to have the courage to take risks, to experiment with new forms and styles, and to challenge myself as a poet. I also hope to be able to inspire others to find their own voices through poetry, and to use their words to change the world for the better.

What problems have you faced as a poet?

The biggest challenge I have faced as a poet is the fear of not being good enough. It is easy to compare myself to other poets, and to feel like my work is not up to par. It can be difficult to silence the inner critic and just allow myself to create freely.

I have learned that it is important to remember that all art is subjective, and that there is no one "right" way to be a poet. I have also learned that the more I practice, the more confident I become in my own abilities. The key is to just keep writing, no matter what. Another challenge I have faced as a poet is the difficulty of getting my work out into the world. It can be difficult to find opportunities to publish my work, and to get my voice heard. I have learned that it is important to be persistent and to not give up. I have also learned that it is important to build a community of other poets and writers, to support and encourage each other. By doing this, I have been able to find more opportunities and build a network of people who understand the challenges of being a poet.

It is also difficult to balance the need to make a living with the desire to create art.

Share with us one of your best poetry piece
REINCARNATION OF SOULS
~ gagane

We've lived and loved and fought across the ages,
From ancient times to present stages.

We've battled foes in distant lands,
Felt love's tenderness and cruel demands.

From wars and conquests to tri-

umphs and woes,

We've seen the rise and fall of empires, of heroes and foes.

In different worlds, we learned to think,

To reason, to ponder, and to seek.
Through space and time, my soul has wandered,

Our memories are vast, our experiences have spanned beyond measure.

We've traversed through portals, into realms unknown,

Our wisdom has grown, our understanding has flown.

We've battled inner demons, faced our darkest fears,

Conquered our doubts, shed our tears.

From ancient battles to modern trials,

Our stories are ones of strength, resilience, and guiles.

Kindly share your social media handles

Facebook - Concious Nkambule.
Email@; evansnkambule@gmail.com

Any word of advice to individuals who would want to venture into poetry

If I were to give advice to someone who wants to start writing poetry, I would tell them to just start writing. It doesn't matter if the words are perfect, or if they have a specific goal in mind. The important thing is to get the words out on the page. Over time, the words will begin to flow more easily, and the process will become more enjoyable.

I would also encourage new poets to read as much poetry as possible. By reading the work of others, you can learn new techniques and find inspiration for your own work. The more you read, the more your own voice will develop and strengthen.

