



2023 Through The Eyes Of A Kenyan Investor And Hopes For 2024

From wars, to a prolonged drought and then el-nino rains, to a falling shilling and rising global inflation, 2023 has been a year of a kind. It will be the year that will go down in history as being marked by two big wars – an ongoing conflict in Ukraine as it fights off a Russian invasion and Israel-Gaza war

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News>>The Costly Reality Of Airline Tickets In Africa: Will It Should Change In 2024 And Beyond

P. 8. I have always used my pen to advocate for solutions that support Africa.



News>>Trans Nzoia County Resident Access To Clean Water In 2023 Raises To 75 % From 47% In 2023

P. 12. Among his agenda for the people of Trans Nzoia County was ensuring access to clean water and environment protection.

We Have Laid Firm Foundation For Economic Growth — Ruto

⚡ Kenya is out of danger and on the path to sustainable economic growth.

President William Ruto said the government has put in place robust measures to take the country back to its glorious days. He said the country has made undeniable progress, noting that inflation has eased to 6.8 per cent.



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How DP Gachagua And Pastor Dorcas Spent The First Year 2024 Day With King'ong'o Inmates

The Second Lady Led The Services By Preaching To Inmates, Prison Staff And Guests To Usher In The New Year

By: OSDP and RODGERS
WAGURA @themtkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- The prisoners sang songs, danced and shared a meal with their leaders, which aligns with the Kenya Kwanza Government of uplifting all in the society, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid, and 'forgotten'.
- The DP encouraged the prison management to use the 98-acre land area under the prison for agriculture through irrigation, and produce food that would feed the inmates, other institutions and other Kenyans.



Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua with his Spouse, Pastor Dorcas, PS Salome Beacco, Nyeri County governor Mutahi Kahiga and Nyeri Senator Wahome Wamatinga serving prisoners at King'ong'o Prison yesterday. Photo/PAUL WANJIRU.

The Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and his spouse, Pastor Dorcas, yesterday celebrated the New Year at the Nyeri (King'ong'o) Maximum Security Prison. They donated blankets, mattresses, and also shared a meal with the about 2,000 inmates from the Maximum Prison and the neighbouring Nyeri Women Prison, and Medium Prison that hosts those with a lesser sentences.

This is the fourth Prison in the country Pastor Dorcas is visiting in fulfilment of her vision of A Dignified Future for Vulnerable Populations' that include the boy child and men.

She has visited the Kiambu Prison, Chuka Prison, and Rumuruti Prison, in efforts to transform the lives of men in the country. In Kenya, the male gender

comprises the highest numbers in correctional facilities.

The prisoners sang songs, danced and shared a meal with their leaders, which aligns with the Kenya Kwanza Government of uplifting all in the society, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid, and 'forgotten'.

The DP encouraged the prison management to use the 98-acre land area under the prison for agriculture through irrigation, and produce food that would feed the inmates, other institutions and other Kenyans.

He also assured the inmates of the government's full support in their rehabilitation journey, encouraging them to take up courses that would redefine their lives outside the prison walls.

The DP also noted the challenges faced by the prison warders in terms of salary, allowances and housing, saying that the government would progressively increase their salary over a period of time.

Pastor Dorcas urged Kenyans not to condemn those behind prison walls, but support them through the rehabilitation journey.

"We do not condemn you, and God is also with you. The Government is working to see that your conditions are changing and you become productive, responsible and impactful citizens," said Pastor Dorcas.

Also present were Principal Secretary State Department Correctional Services, Dr. Salome Beacco, Commissioner General of Prisons, Brigadier Rtd. John

Warioba, Assistant Commander Central, Ali Athuman, Nyeri Governor, Mwalimu Mutahi Kahiga, Nyeri Senator, Wamatinga Wahome, Officer in charge of the facility Japheth Onchiri, and other leaders, among them Tana Water Works Development Agency Chairman Wanyaga Gathaka as well Nyeri based lawyer and UDA party stalwart Gacheru Wabandi.

Brigadier Warioba said the choice of the second family in the Republic to spend time in the prison was a sign of the value the government attaches to all Kenyans.

"Thank you for choosing to spend the New Year with us (prisoners), which shows your value for those in prison," said Brigadier Warioba.

Editor's Desk

The Mt Kenya Times is a Kenyan Newspaper that provides a unified view of Kenyan news, entrepreneurship, events, opinions, analysis, and a historical background to current affairs in a way that is both creative and innovative. It is published by **Exponential International Limited**, a Private Limited Liability company incorporated in Kenya to provide Communications and Media services.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Individuals involved in grabbing government land for the affordable housing project in Isiolo County have been put on notice. Isiolo County Commissioner Geoffrey Omoding urged those who had grabbed land to vacate it before being forced to move for the construction of more affordable houses. The government program will not spare land grabbers, especially in Wabera Ward, where most government houses and land were grabbed by influential individuals. The programme will be extended to all 10 wards in the county, and residents are urged to start paying by saving little installments for the new houses. The government intends to build 10,000 units across the county, with 200 units and eight blocks currently under construction at LMD in Isiolo town. About 400 skilled and unskilled labourers are already working on the site, and the government will also build social amenities such as healthcare clinics and early childhood education classes for residents. The County Executive for Lands and Physical Planning, Mr. Yusuf Dahir, revealed that land for the construction of affordable houses in the 10 wards of Isiolo is available and is optimistic that the project will benefit area residents with employment opportunities and decent housing for the less privileged.

Pope Francis’ call for Catholic priests to support same-sex marriage has been met with criticism, with one priest arguing that it could lead to church splits. Father Emmanuel Bungei of St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church questioned the confusion, particularly for African Christians who believe marriage is meant between a man and a woman. He argued that blessing such a couple would condone the practice but is against the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Bible. Fr. John Muindi of St. Charles Lwanga Catholic Church argued that blessing such a couple is the same as blessing sin,terming it a foreign concept which is not acceptable as it is against the beliefs of the African people. Fr. Bungei also argued that marriage can be complete without children, citing Abraham and Sarah, who lived until God blessed them with their son Isaac in old age. He called on Christians to guard the family, urging each member to adhere to their roles and respect their parents. He stressed the importance of families putting Christ at the centre of their lives through prayer and seeking the Lord’s counsel.



A section of Lake Victoria has been covered by water hyacinth, affecting boat travel and tourists. This is the first time the weed has resurfaced since 2018, and stakeholders are calling on the government to act swiftly before the situation gets out of hand. The establishments affected by weed include popular Dunga Beach, Hill Camp, Hideout Resort, Milimani Beach Resort, Kisumu Gold Club, Yacht Club, Le Pearl, Locco Beach, Bingo Beach, and Hippo Point Public Beach. Government establishments like the Port of Kisumu, Kenya Shipyards Limited (KSL), and Kenya Pipeline Corporation (KPC) oil jetty have not been spared. Boat operators at Dunga Beach have reported adverse effects on their operations, with the number of visitors dropping significantly due to the prevailing lake conditions. Fishermen have also reported poor harvests during the festive season, leading to a fish price hike.

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The Path To Sustainability: Green Eco Solutions Climate Action Initiatives

By: Our Reporter
 @themkenyentimes

Worth Noting:

- Our dedication to innovation has led to the development of cutting-edge technologies and solutions that address pressing environmental challenges. These advancements have set us apart in the industry and position us as leaders in pursuing a more sustainable world.
- Furthermore, our community engagement initiatives have created lasting partnerships and positive relationships. Whether through educational programs, tree-planting initiatives, advocating for the implementation of ESG practices in businesses, or supporting local environmental projects, we have demonstrated our commitment to being a responsible corporate citizen.



Ms. Grace Githa – Green Eco Solutions CEO.

As we reflect on the achievements of Green Eco Solutions over the past year, it's truly remarkable to see the positive impact we have had on both the environment and our community. Our commitment to sustainable practices and eco-friendly solutions has strengthened our brand and contributed to a greener, more sustainable future.

One of our significant achievements is implementing several eco-friendly initiatives; from adopting various biomass waste sources to promoting waste reduction and recycling programs. These efforts have reduced our carbon footprint and inspired others to follow suit, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. Our dedication to innovation has led

to the development of cutting-edge technologies and solutions that address pressing environmental challenges. These advancements have set us apart in the industry and position us as leaders in pursuing a more sustainable world.

Furthermore, our community engagement initiatives have created lasting partnerships and positive relationships.

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As we celebrate these achievements, we recognize that much work still needs to be done. The challenges facing our planet require ongoing commitment and collaboration. We express our heartfelt appreciation for the honour bestowed upon us recognizing our hummingbird efforts in enhancing the adoption of clean cooking by the Africa Queen of Energy Awards.

Green Eco Solutions Ltd. was also ranked top 50 in the Small Business Awards 2023 – Small Business Sustainability Award Category. As such we aim to build on these accomplishments in the coming year, striving for an even greater sustainable circular economy, innovation, and positive community impact.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, we express our gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey — our dedicated team, supportive partners, and the communities that have embraced our vision. The training forums, exhibitions and empowerment programs by the Clean Cooking Association of Kenya, Energy Enterprise Coach, E4Impact Entrepreneurship Center, GIZ Kenya, UNIDO ITPO Italy, WWF-Kenya, The Charcoal Project and Graca Machel of Women creating Wealth. Together, we look forward to another year of making a meaningful difference in the world and contributing to a brighter, more sustainable future.

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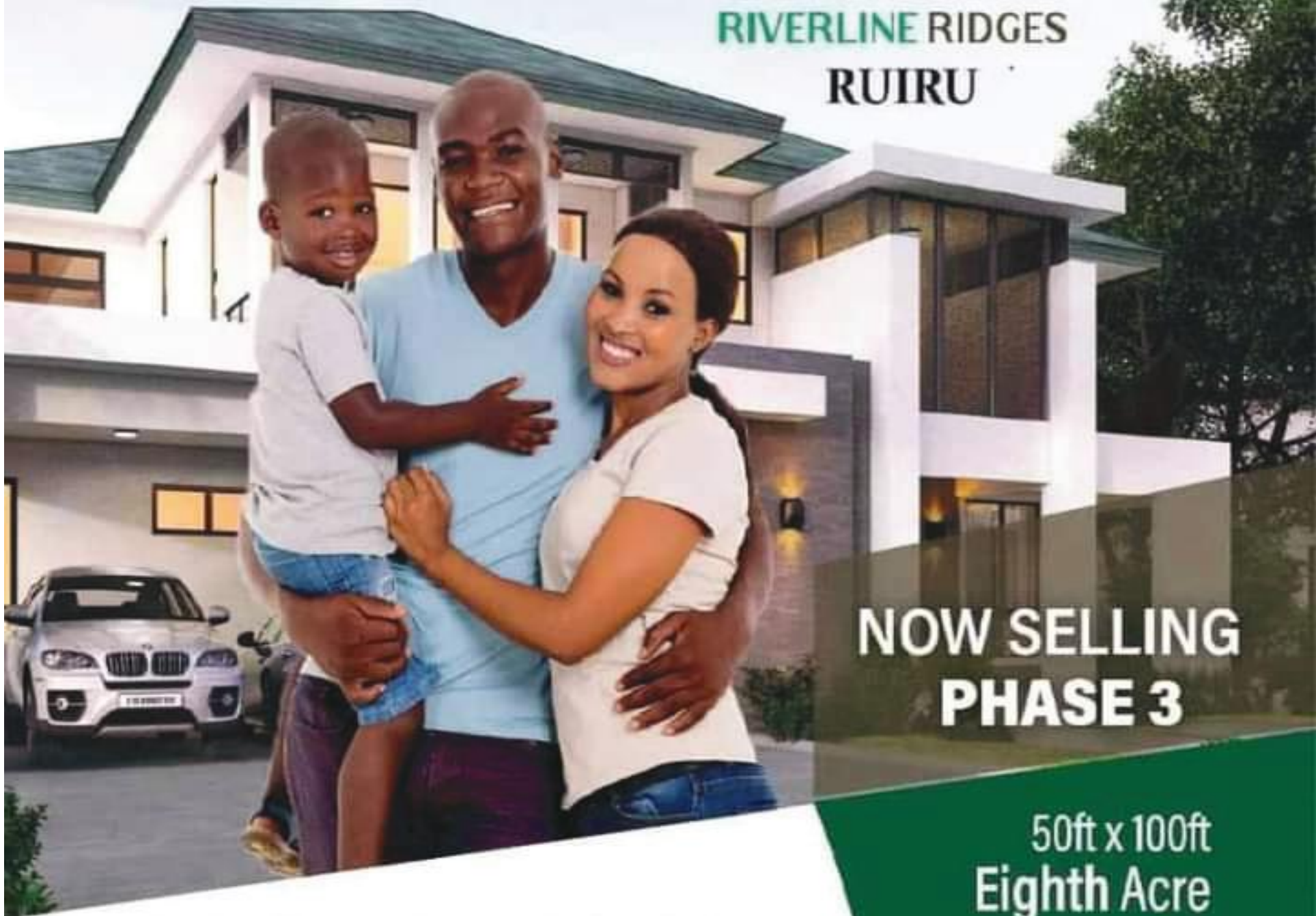
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The Costly Reality Of Airline Tickets In Africa: Will It Should Change In 2024 And Beyond

By: David Matsanga
@themtkenyatimes



David Matsanga is the Chairman of the Pan African Forum.

Worth Noting:

- To address this question, I had to gather my thoughts and respond to my daughter, who holds a Master of Law degree from King’s College London. Despite always defending Africa, even in situations where I know that certain actions, like wars, are not justified, I realized that this was an issue that needed a careful and honest examination.
- I told my inner self that to cool the anxiety of my tormentor seated across, I had to use political science to what is called in Swahili “zima motto ” (extinguish fire) because the Christmas season is dangerous in these hard times of Hamas/Israel war.

I have always used my pen to advocate for solutions that support Africa. However, this time, I found myself challenged by one of the representatives of the dot com generation – my own youngest daughter. We sat in a hotel lobby, accompanied by one of my legal-political-minded daughters, awaiting a dear friend whom I had invited to meet with us.

As I fumbled through my documents to find my phone and make an inquiry about our friend’s journey, my used airline ticket slipped from the pile and fell to the floor. My daughter noticed and posed a rather tough question: “Why is travelling in Africa and to Africa so much more expensive than travelling to the USA?”

I felt ambushed by my own 24-year-old daughter, who is deeply passionate about defending Africa. She wasn’t joking; she wanted answers.

To address this question, I had to gather my thoughts and respond to my daughter, who holds a Master of Law degree from King’s College London. Despite always defending Africa, even in situations where I know that certain actions, like wars, are not justified, I realized that this was an issue that needed a careful and honest examination.

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to what is called in Swahili “zima motto ” (extinguish fire) because the Christmas season is dangerous in these hard times of Hamas/Israel war.

I began by borrowing a famous Hamas/Israel conflict slogan to set the stage. I acknowledged that as the world prepares for the peak of the festive season, it’s impossible to ignore the many contradictions and paradoxes that exist in Africa.

Using some Shakespearean language, I tried to calm the waters and started by addressing the most glaring issue at hand – the cost of airfare flights within Africa. It’s often more economical to fly outside of Africa than within some African countries using our airlines. Sometimes, it’s even easier for foreigners to enter an African country than it is for Africans themselves. Africa, like any continent, has its contradictions, but ours seem more pronounced.

Let me be brutally honest today. Beyond the high costs of plane tickets and international travel, I want to narrow the conversation to highlight a more critical point. Africa is one of the world’s largest producers of mineral resources, yet the African people benefit little, if at all, from these resources. Instead, we often find ourselves beholden to lenders like the IMF and World Bank, institutions created by the USA after World War

II.

For instance, the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a leading producer of cobalt, a key component in smart devices like iPhones and MacBooks. However, many people in the region have never seen, let alone used, such devices. Instead, they are trapped in a cycle of never-ending conflict, abject poverty, and heart-wrenching devastation.

In a different part of Africa, Nigeria, despite being one of the largest oil producers globally, experiences frequent power outages, fuel shortages, and infrastructural deficiencies. Ironically, there are more generators in most Nigerian cities than anywhere else in Africa.

Moving further west into Africa, we encounter countries like Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Kenya, which produce significant amounts of cocoa and coffee, exported to the Western world. Paradoxically, many people in these countries cannot afford the finished products made from their own produce, products that Europe exports. This represents a significant missed opportunity for value addition in Africa.

Lastly, Africa is undeniably a hub for culture, arts, and incredible talent. We produce world-class footballers, musicians, doctors, scholars, and artists. The world’s very first modern uni-

versity was located in Africa, around Timbuktu.

However, it’s astonishing that Africans often have an overwhelming appetite for foreign goods and experiences. With limited resources, many Africans strive to demonstrate their social status by embracing Western clothes, cars, and lifestyles. Even some African leaders, after embezzling public funds, prefer to invest in the West rather than their continent.

What has led to this situation? When will Africa turn its focus inward, prioritize itself, and enrich its people before others?

I wrote this article while flying over Africa, avoiding conflict hotspots on the ground, to reach Europe. These are my thoughts during this festive season. Africa must address these systemic paradoxes and contradictions that persist.

In conclusion, my Shakespearean English from the 1960s and 1970s may have initially threatened my daughter, but she had a valid point. I pray that Africa takes the necessary steps to remove the obstacles that make air travel within Africa and to Africa expensive.

We Have Laid Firm Foundation For Economic Growth — Ruto

By: PSCU

Kenya is out of danger and on the path to sustainable economic growth. President William Ruto said the government has put in place robust measures to take the country back to its glorious days.

He said the country has made undeniable progress, noting that inflation has eased to 6.8 per cent.

The country’s economy, he observed, is growing, thanks to the sacrifices made by Kenyans.

“We take pride in the strides we have made. We have triumphed over the threat of economic stagnation. We are now secure to our sovereign debts,” he said.

He made the remarks on Sunday night at State House, Nakuru, where he delivered his New Year message.

The President explained that the government has cut expenditure by up to KSh400 billion to reduce borrowing.

President Ruto assured Kenyans

that the government is committed to delivering its Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda.

He said the subsidised fertiliser programme, which sought to support farmers to increase agricultural productivity, has resulted in increased food production by more than 40 per cent.

“Working with farmers, we will double our efforts in 2024 until we reduce our KSh500 billion food import bill to zero,” he maintained.

The Head of State said the government is rolling an economic growth model that is deliberately inclusive and designed to expand economic opportunities.

“This model seeks to create millions of jobs,” he added.

President Ruto said the country has made immense progress in promoting financial inclusion and the dignity of Kenyans at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

“The Hustler Fund and the new NSSF contribution model exemplify our dedication to inclusive economic growth, financial well-being and social security for all,” he added.

The government, he added, will step



President William Ruto joins some of the entertainers at State House, Nakuru on Sunday night after delivering his new year message.

up efforts geared towards the realisation of universal healthcare. At the same time, President Ruto asked public servants to execute their mandate diligently. The President was accompanied by almost the entire cabinet led by his deputy Rigathi Gachagua.

Mudavadi: Our Decisions Not Aimed At Hurting Citizens

By: Eric Biegon

Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi now says tough measures taken by the government targeting the economy are not meant to hurt Kenyans but benefit them in the long run.

Mudavadi says it took courage and strategy for President William Ruto’s administration to undertake policy reforms to put the country on the path to prosperity.

The PCS insists that though some of the measures are painful to implement, it is for the good of Kenyans. He says some of the choices made were neither easy, populist nor convenient but meaningful, appropriate, and necessary.

“I want to assure Kenyans that no government makes decisions knowingly to hurt its citizens. With the current economic situation in the coun-

try, which has also affected our social livelihoods, we had to explore what might be in the short-term painful, but in the long-term will be gainful,” said Mudavadi

In his New Year’s message to the country, Mudavadi, also Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary, gave an assurance to Kenyans that the government is working towards investing in alternative approaches to address challenges facing the country, especially as far as Kenya’s debt obligations are concerned.

“Let us collectively turn the tide. We can no longer continue digging the hole but look for ways of getting out of the hole,” he explained.

The Prime CS reiterated Kenya Kwanza’s commitment to fulfill promises made to Kenyans during campaigns leading to the August 2022 elections.

“Together, we should take advantage of emerging opportunities to build a more inclusive and prosperous Kenya,” said Mudavadi.



Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi ..

Raila Congratulates President-Elect Of DRC, Felix Tshisekedi

By: Eric Biegon

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Opposition leader Raila Odinga has conveyed his message of congratulations to Felix Tshisekedi on his re-election as President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tshisekedi was declared the winner of December 20, 2023 election, with a win of about 73% of the vote. His nearest challenger, Moise Katumbi got 18% of the vote according to the country's electoral agency, CENI. "Congratulations to President Felix Tshisekedi on his re-election and to the Congolese voters for aspirations peacefully expressed and realized," said Raila

In his message, the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya Coalition leader said he wishes Tshisekedi the very best as he continues with the crucial mission of steering the DRC back on course. "May his leadership bring about positive change and prosperity for the nation. Wishing the people of

DRC all the best in their determination to reclaim, steady, and steer their country," said Odinga

President of the United Republic of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan also welcomed President Tshisekedi's re-election as the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. "I am looking forward to continuing working together in fostering the relations between our two countries and our Jumuiya," she said

Her Burundian counterpart, Evariste Ndayishimiye, said; "I warmly congratulate my Counterpart and Brother H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi for his re-election at the head of DRC following the publication of the provisional results,"

He went on to indicate that in the event of a possible electoral dispute, he hoped for a peaceful resolution through legal channels.

South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa strongly commended the people of the DRC for exhibiting maturity, a sense of calm and unity during the period of elections. Through the elections, President Ramaphosa



Opposition leader Raila Odinga .

.....

said: "the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo have taken a solid step towards consolidating democracy in their country, and have

expressed their desire for a peaceful, secure, and prosperous future". Following the declaration by the Independent Electoral Commission

(CENI), President Félix Tshisekedi is expected to be sworn in for a second term on 20 January.

Maina Njenga Condemns Arrest Of Suspected Mungiki Members, Insists They're Innocent

By: Citizen Reporter

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Former Mungiki leader Maina Njenga has condemned the government for what he termed as harassing and arresting innocent Kikuyu youths who were reportedly attending a rally held by a section of Mt. Kenya leaders in Kabiru-Ini, Nyeri County.

According to Njenga, there was no such meeting scheduled as no notice had been issued to members of the public and the youth arrested were going about their businesses in preparation for the New Year.

Njenga, who outrightly pointed blaming fingers at Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, accused the latter of political witch hunt which he said was spilling over to innocent youths.

"It bothers me that a Kikuyu leader is using the State machinery to criminalise the same people who supported him during the 2022 general election. By la-

belling our innocent youths as members of Mungiki, Mr Rigathi is not only setting them up against the notorious police brutality, but he is also setting up the entire community for extinction," he said.

"When did the jobless, hopeless and disgruntled hustlers become Mungiki? Kweli asante ya punda ni mateke. Let the regime of the day stop, cease and desist from criminalising innocent Kikuyu youths, and embark on addressing the underlying problem of the skyrocketing cost of living."

He has demanded that the regime stop criminalising Kikuyu youth and instead address the skyrocketing cost of living.

"We urge the police or those who have arrested innocent youths to release them immediately. If the arrested youths will not be released on bail or bond by the police pending their arraignment in court, we urge the state to observe the 24-hour rule," he said.

About 200 individuals were arrested in Nyeri town and its environs in a crackdown on supporters of the former Mungiki leader on Sunday.

The operation followed Nyeri County Police Commissioner Pius Murugu's

ban on a planned rally that was slated to be held and attended by a section of Mt. Kenya leaders, at the Kabiru-ini grounds stating that it was unlawful.

A contingent of security officers stationed along the Nyeri - Nairobi, Nyeri - Nyahururu and Nyeri - Nanyuki highways erected security checks to prevent Njenga's supporters from attending the planned meeting at the grounds.

File image of former Mungiki leader Maina Njenga. PHOTO | COURTESY



Ruto's New Year Message Gave Hopes For Better Tidings In 2024

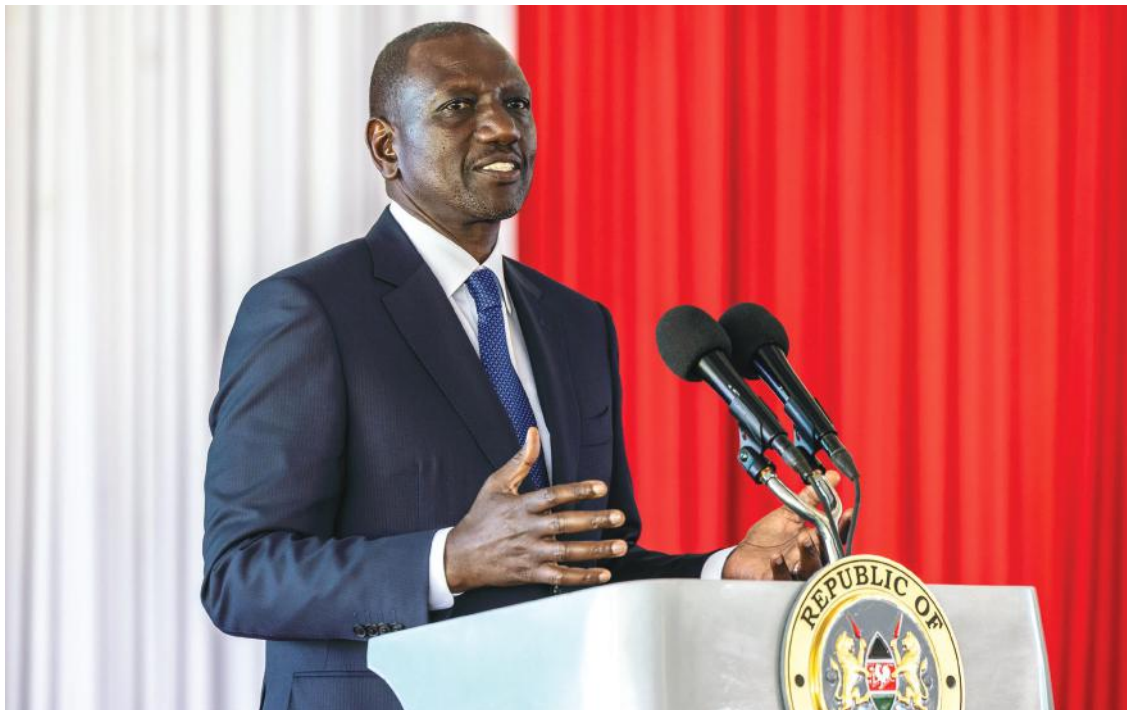


By: Joseph Mutua Ndonga
mutuandonga@yahoo.com



Worth Noting:

- President Ruto was however optimistic that everything will go on as planned. The judges are also Kenyans. So, I'm sure they will look at the bigger picture, put the interests of Kenyans first when delivering their rulings.
- Apart from creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for 'Hustlers', the affordable housing project is designed to ensure they get decent houses. For now, we have created 120,000 jobs. In this New Year, the number will increase to 500,000 jobs. As we all know, these 'hustlers' have been living in deplorable, unhygienic and poor conditions in the filthy slums. This project is meant to address the problem of inequality and indignity.



President William Ruto .

I followed President William Ruto keenly as he delivered his New Year Message from State House in Nakuru.

The speech covered a wide of issues ranging from achievements, the work in progress and challenges that his administration was facing.

As I promised you my fellow Kenyans during the campaigns, I have made great strides. My administration could have achieved more were it not for the opposition leaders who were undermining and sabotaging our efforts.

The opposition has been running a campaign of divisions, hatred and anarchy in the country.

In recent past, you have seen them filing lawsuits seeking to overturn my administration's policy issues meant to transform your lives.

He cited the affordable housing plan and Universal Healthcare delivery. These are some of the noble initiatives that they were trying to kill.

President Ruto was however optimistic that everything will go on as planned. The judges are also Kenyans. So, I'm sure they will look at the bigger picture, put the interests of Kenyans first when delivering their rulings.

Apart from creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for 'Hustlers', the affordable housing project is designed to ensure they get decent houses. For now, we have created 120,000 jobs. In this New Year, the number will increase to 500,000 jobs. As we all know, these 'hustlers' have been living in deplorable, unhygienic and poor conditions in the filthy slums. This project is meant to address the problem of inequality and indignity.

This has happened in other countries across the world including Malaysia and Singapore. This is one of the strategies the leadership of the two nations used to boost the growth of their respective economies.

At independence, they were in the same league with Kenya. Today, Kenya is begging and borrowing monies for development from them.

For the healthcare plan, President Ruto stated. I look forward to see all Kenyans, no matter one's economic and social status, accessing quality and affordable medical care.

For the whole of last year, I kept my faith in terms of championing and articulating the vision and agenda of President William Ruto.

Here is one of the opinion pieces I had written. President Ruto took the reigns of power at a time when our economy was ailing and the disease was at advanced stage.

In medical terms, the medics would tell you. This is now an emergency case. The patient needs to be immediately wheeled to Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The ailment of our economy would be attributed to four main causes: The dilapidated economy; drought and famine; Russia-Ukraine war and undergoing recovery from devastating effects of Covid-19 pandemic.

Contrary to impression created by his critics, Dr William Ruto meant his word during the campaign period.

But upon taking the office, it dawned on him the situation was so bad than he anticipated.

One can understand why. He had fallen out with his boss, President Uhuru Kenyatta, and as such he remained in darkness. He would not get proper briefings from the state agencies touching on these matters.

Therefore, it is self-explanatory why he failed to fulfill some of the promises within the timelines he had set out.

Though Dr Ruto's initial plan was to fix the economy within 6 months, he has since called on Kenyans to give him more time.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua

while enumerating the strides his boss has taken in these endeavors, stated. My boss will only need one year to return the economy back on track.

For Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi, this was likely to take a bit longer. He talked of two years.

The President knows the buck stops with him. So for him, he is committed to address this matter in shortest time possible.

Mudavadi urged Kenyans to be patient. Fixing an economy that had been run down is not a cup of instant coffee. We are here for a long haul.

The leadership of Azimio La Umoja One Kenya Coalition has since advantage of this to launch a new battle front against President Ruto.

You can now see Dr Ruto took you for a ride. He had promised to fix the economy with six months.

Azimio would turn deaf ear to the projects and programmes he had rolled out within that period.

Besides, the coalition leaders would not tell us the miracles they would have used to turn around the economy if they won polls.

The high cost of Unga is one of the main issues that the Azimio leader Raila would use mobilize Kenyans to participate in his demonstrations that always turned chaotic, bloody and destructive. With due respect to him, this smacked of hypocrisy and dishonesty.

We know Raila was one of the core-principals of the 'handshake government' alongside President Uhuru Kenyatta.

During this period, the price of 2kg packet of Unga had shot to Sh230. This is while noting that the Unga, fuel, electricity subsidies were in place.

Since he assumed power, the cost of Unga has been dropping.

If you go to a shop or supermarket, you will find the prices for some brands ranging between Sh165 and Sh170.

Recently, President Ruto assured Kenyans the price is poised to come down to Sh150 and below in coming days.

God has blessed us with rain and as we know this is a planting season.

Our farmers have already planted maize and other food crops and are currently tilling their land.

So, God willing, we are expecting a bumper harvest in the next few weeks.

The prices will come down automatically.

Raila is also capitalizing in what he terms as skewed and ethnized appointments of the civil servants and state officers.

This government is only employing people from one or two communities yet Kenya has 45 tribes.

Politics aside, if you look at the list of those employed it represented the face of Kenya.

None of the community has been left out.

However, I agree that certain tribe has more employees than others.

To me, this seems to a standard script read by all successive governments of independent Kenya.

Get me right. I'm not saying two wrongs can make a right.

But in my view Dr Ruto has tried to remedy this challenge.

However, allow me to say this. Raila should be the last person to fault Dr Ruto for this problem.

Before I explain, I hope many would agree. It is not possible to actualize this equality.

One example. The cabinet is comprised of 22 members. Kenya has 45 tribes.

Back to Raila, I was working with a Youth NGO when he was a prime minister in the grand coalition government.

Given the nature of my job, I visited his office several times.

I was also among those picked to attend meetings in office.

These meetings had been organized by top officials. He had instructed them to do so this after we registered reservations regarding the distribution of the funds allocated to support the youth.

There were fears these funds were being misappropriated and allocated to the old people.

This led to coining of a kiswahili mantra: Kazi kwa vijana, pesa kwa Wezee.

During these visits, one thing was clear. Majority of those employed there hailed from his community.

Ever since, many believe he has been reading the same script.

If you want to confirm this, just visit his Capitol Hills Office and ODM secretariat.

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

Trans Nzoia County Resident Access To Clean Water In 2023 Raises To 75 % From 47% In 2023



By: Sefu Sabila
@themkenyetimes

Worth Noting:

- The 10,000 litres capacity tank will benefit the locals who have never had access to clean piped water. The governor assured residents of plans by his team to ensure all the households in the five sub counties have access to clean water.
- Tuwan ward, with the largest number of slums including Mitume,Mau Mau, Miti Moja and Machinjoni are among the wards with dire need of water. The area Member of County Assembly Hon. Obingo Were during the revamping of the ward and the newly constructed market in the ward at Mitume, reconstructed the Mrefu water point, including cleanliness and reconstruction of the pipes and provision of water purification agents.



Governor George Nitembeya during the launch of a borehole project in Kapomboi Ward in Kwanza sub-county..

Among his agenda for the people of Trans Nzoia County was ensuring access to clean water and environment protection. According to the county governor George Nitembeya, water coverage in the county has increased from previously 47% to 75% in 2023. Speaking during the launch of a borehole project in Kwanza Constituency in Kwanza sub- county, the county boss said the project is aimed at increasing water supply to the local residents. The Kshs 3.2 million project at the Namanjalala Trading Centre in Kapomboi Ward is part of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) for the year 2022/2023. The county has sunk 20 boreholes across the county.

“We have sunk and equipped 20boreholes across the county. We plan to sink two more boreholes per ward during our next financial year 2023/2024. It’s my assurance that more households will be connected with clean water.” Stated the Governor.

The 10,000 litres capacity tank will benefit the locals who have never had access to clean piped water. The governor assured residents of plans by

his team to ensure all the households in the five sub counties have access to clean water.

Tuwan ward, with the largest number of slums including Mitume,Mau Mau, Miti Moja and Machinjoni are among the wards with dire need of water. The area Member of County Assembly Hon. Obingo Were during the revamping of the ward and the newly constructed market in the ward at Mitume, reconstructed the Mrefu water point, including cleanliness and reconstruction of the pipes and provision of water purification agents.

However, calls have been made by residents of Wawa majorly occupied by students from the Kitale National Polytechnic and residents of Site and Service for county to control the dumping of waste near the water point. According to the residents the undirected and unprotected dumping of the towns waste is a threat to the water point that serves residents from both Tuwan and Matisi Wards.

“There has been improvement of water supply in the county, but this water point here is very crucial for the people of Kipsongo and Machinjoni Slaughter house. The jam had

reduced because we don’t witness the long days without water like before, but that does not mean this place is neglected as we still depend on this water. But the waste damping is scaring and it’s even spreading as far as the county slaughter house. This is a direct stare to waterborne and dirt diseases like cholera and typhoid.” A resident lamented.

“We urge governor to fence the damping site and also repair the footbridge which carries sewer water from Kitale town. It’s encroaching and spreading to where we fetch water. This is hazardous.” He added.

Earlier the former CEC water and environment Patrick Gacheru has stated that the county intends to rehabilitate the faulty sewer lines and draining sewerage system, including moving the town’s garbage collection centers. The current damping site opposite the county slaughter house and the Tongolo water point is not restricted.

“This place is between two wards; however, neither of the MCAs has shown interest in improving the state of the water point. The situation becomes even worse during rainy sea-

sons as the wastes are carried and moved close to the pipes, the footbridge overflows water moving close to where women and children are washing and fetching water. Even as the governor is planning on increasing water points, we hope this one will be worked on, improved and proper mechanism for maintenance set before getting a new one.” He added.

With fast growing population of Kitale town, main water supplier Nzoia Water and Sewerage Company (NZOWASCO) had said the two water treatment points at Bidii Ward and Machinjoni Area had not been extended to meet the rapidly growing population.

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja Unveils Unified Business Permit

By: Citizen Reporter

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja has unveiled the electronic Unified Business Permit (UBP) to ease doing business and collection of revenue. UBP combines the business, fire, food, health, and advertising licenses into one and will be accessed online via the county's NairobiPay Revenue service. Governor Sakaja termed the move as part of his campaign promises saying it will bolster service delivery and streamline the process of acquiring permits by entrepreneurs. "We continue to make Nairobi Work, and I am glad that the UBP has now been activated as part of a deliberate effort to improve the ease of doing business parameters in this city. This electronic solution eliminates the issuance of multiple business permits in



various service points, which has also been a key revenue leakage risk," he said. Sakaja underscored that UBP would be instrumental in revenue collection and thus would help the county meet its Ksh.20 billion target. "With the activation of the UBP issuance on the NairobiPay portal, the county government is now on course to generate and reach its target of Ksh.20 billion in Own Source Revenues to fund development projects in the city," the Governor said. He further extended the land rates waiver until January 31, 2024 allowing customers to pay for their land rates using the NairobiPay portal.



Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja during a past meeting. PHOTO | COURTESY.

Gov't Increases Charges For Using The Nairobi Expressway

By: Citizen Digital

The government has increased the charges for using the Nairobi Expressway from the current range of Ksh.100 to Ksh.310 to a new range of Ksh. 170 to Ksh.500 across all the stations along the Mlolongo-Westlands route. Roads and Transport Cabinet Secretary Kipchumba Murkomen announced the new charges in a gazette notice dated December 31, 2023, saying the new rates take effect immediately. CS Murkomen attributed the increase to the global dollar variation rates. "In exercise of the powers conferred by section 4B (3) of the Public Roads Toll Act, the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport approves the toll rates for the Nairobi Express Way as set out in the Schedule," stated the notice. "The Base Toll Rates may be ad-

justed as per the CPI and Exchange Rate on and after the Commercial Operation Date." In the new rates, motorists entering the Expressway on Mlolongo and exiting at the SGR station and the Eastern Bypass will be required to pay Ksh.250 up from the current Ksh.100, while those exiting at the Southern Bypass will pay Ksh.330 up from Ksh.210. On the same route, vehicles exiting at Capital Hill and Haile Selassie stations will pay Ksh.410 up from Ksh.210. Exits at Museum Hill, The Mall and Nairobi Westland's terminus will attract Ksh.500 rate up from Ksh.310. The same rates will also be applicable for motorists travelling through the opposite route from the Nairobi Westlands entry terminus to the Mlolongo exit terminus. The shorter routes from Syokimau to the SGR station and those from SGR and the JKIA stations to the Eastern Bypass will cost motorists Ksh.170 up from Ksh.100. The same applies for the reverse routes.



Roads and Transport cs Kipchumba Murkomen during a past address. PHOTO | FILE

Time Passes



World, I heard your speed,
All who would slaughter your
transience?
Even then in our rebellious servants:
Everyone thought that the year would
not pass quickly.
Anovi toy..... my childhood room,
The day was yesterday, I look at it
thoughtfully.

Let the four mulching be healthy Dardic
mommy,
If you look at playing four flies.
That toy-la ovundekman,
The joy of grief is like a night.
I understand the "five days" world:
It turns out that Muchal, too, is actually
like a day.
Beautiful puzzle from life without finds,
When I say bridge, now your lust.
Look around you like you have a day left,
Long Live he solve now!

Yuldushova Charos Kamoliddin's daughter.
I 04.01.2005 was born. I am a student of
Tashkent State Agrarian University

My Dear Teacher



By: Otaeva Laylo

Teacher is a special gift given to us
by the Creator. It is they who lead the
nation to greatness. They mature a
person and change the world for the
better. There is a saying in our people
that the teacher is greater than
your father. This saying has a very big
meaning. My teachers are very kind
and polite people. My teacher's name
is Otaeva Laylo they are very good
people. In the decoration he has been
teaching me how to knit perfectly for 5
years. I love them very much. Learned
everything from my teacher Ruzmetova
Zuhra her student. My teacher
perfectly teaches the students in the
weaving direction. I would like to thank
my teacher Laylo Otaeva for teaching
me this skill perfectly. They can be a
role model for us to be good teachers.
They want us to be good situation. They
teach us many things. Don't get tired of

training more students in the future.
My dear and kind teacher Otaeva
Laylo.

Ruzmetova Zuhra

Ruzmetova Zuhra Vyacheslavovna
November 30, 2006 I was born in the
city of Urgench Khorezm region. There
are 6 of us in the family my father, my
mother, my brother, my twin and me.
I am currently a student of the 11th
grade of school no 14 in Urgench city. I
am very interested in poetry. Currently
I write poems and stories. My poems
have been published in America, Great
Britain, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Germany,
Azerbaijan and other countries I attend
the Barkamol avlod children's school
of Urgench District studying the art
of public speaking. Every week, I am a
guest on Khorezm TV channel. I was
awarded with a set of certificates and
a badge in the biographical competition
held by Uzbekistan and international
organizations. India Argentina and
Georgia are members of international
organizations. I am the holder of the
badge "For International Services" by
the bi wing poets writers association.
I have been taking pride of place in
national and international public speaking
competitions. I am the winner of
competitions of more than 100 national
and international organizations. I have
many future dream goals.

I Will Give Haven To My Father



Don't let his heart beat Good luck
The proud pillar of my life
I will give haven to my father
My his eyes shine with happiness
Rejoice that this is my daughter
I ask God to see my happiness
I will give haven to my father

I am proud of my father
I have a crown on my head
Ointment for every on my head
God bless my father Haji

I will give haven to my father

I am lucky to have my father
Every word is law, my Lord
The presence of my sick soul
I will give haven to my father

Let them stand next to me
I don't have a son, let my daughter s say
I'm lucky
Let them come and see Makkah
I will give haven to my father

Memorize the blessed word of God
I justify their fame, that's all
I will definitely get an old name
I will give haven to my father.

Gulimova Umida
11th grade student of the 27th generate
secondary school, Qiyot neighborhood,
Bagholan village, Yangibozor district,
Khorezm region.

I Love You Indefinitely, Without Language



Tahiril is like me who doesn't love Zuhra's in.
Even Madnun Laylisin is not like me,
The moon is like me, not knowing the
value of the sun.
I love you indescribably, without language.
If you know that a mother loves her child,
If you know that God loves his servant,
If you know that the gravity of the earth
is not enough,
I love you indescribably, without language.
After all, a swan cannot live without its

mate.
After all, life is wasted without air,
After all, Mashrab also lived with love.
I love you indescribably, without language.
It's okay to call yourself a braggart, a
genius,
It's okay if you say you hate it;
It's okay if you're angry
I love you indescribably, without language.
QAYUMOV SARDOR was born in Bakhmal
district of Jizzakh region. Currently, he
is a student of the Faculty of Uzbek
Language and Literature of Jizzakh State
Pedagogical University. Awarded with
a first-class diploma at the "SUPER
STAR" festival held in Moscow in 2023.
Participant of the III issue of "Hilol"
publication. 2023 "Zomin Seminar" regional
stage participant and 2023 Republican
"Youth Forum" participant.

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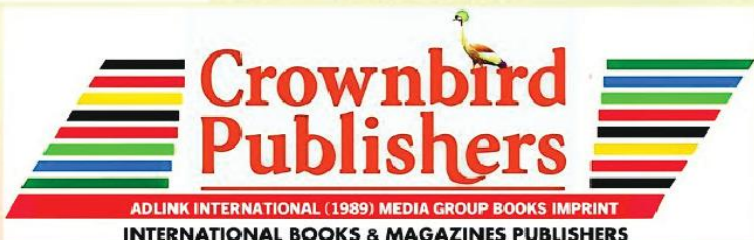
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CJ Koome: Judiciary firm In Mission To Deliver Justice To Kenyans

She asked judges to continue to champion a justice system that is rooted in utu, fairness and compassion

By: KBC

.....

Chief Justice Martha Koome has reiterated the Judiciary’s commitment to deliver justice and protect the rights of all Kenyan citizens. In her New Year’s message, the Chief Justice and president of the Supreme Court said new interventions have been made to ensure that the country’s justice system is accessible, efficient, and responsive to the needs of every Kenyan. The CJ committed that the Judiciary will “continue to champion a justice system that is rooted in utu, fairness and compassion.”. She said this is especially important to the vulnerable and marginalized in the society for whom justice often seems a distant

dream. “Our Journey at the Judiciary has been marked by a steadfast commitment to people-centered justice. We have shaped our interventions to ensure that we have a justice system that is accessible, efficient, and responsive to the justice needs of every Kenyan,” She commended efforts by judges, judicial officers, and judiciary staff in the drive to attain the goal of excellence in service delivery. “Let us work together to shape a Kenyan society where justice is not just an ideal, but a lived experience for every citizen,” said Koome



Chief Justice Martha Koome .

.....

Ruto Decries Hurdles Erected To Frustrate Delivery Of Bottom-Up Agenda

By: Eric Biegon

.....

President William Ruto has expressed his frustration with actions that he claimed are standing in the way of the implementation of his development agenda for the country. In an apparent reference to lawsuits launched in the courts against some of his policies, the head of state particularly accused the opposition and the judiciary of allegedly obstructing the Bottom-Up Transformation Agenda, BETA. “It is the case when a politician neglects the boundaries of democratic competition: that opposing policy does not permit undermining the nation or sabotaging the national interest or the welfare of the people,” he said while hitting out at the efforts by the opposition. According to Ruto, institutional independence ought not to “mutate into impunity and avoidance of accountability.” “We must be cautious, lest our pro-



President William Ruto.

.....

fessed pursuit of constitutionalism and obedience to the law, turns into an empty ritual and hollow vanity for the majority of citizens,” he said “We must take abundant care that our claim to protecting or advancing the people’s rights does not deny them legitimate opportunities, or make a mockery of their struggles and aspirations,” he added The President said frustrating the housing program, for instance, is robbing millions of youth of employment prospects and denying millions of Kenyans the chance to own a home like them. “This is also the case when a public officer, who benefits from unlimited medical insurance, invokes the law to derail the universal healthcare delivery, denying millions of vulnerable

Kenyans a health cover like them,” he charged Ruto says leaders in various institutions and levels such as members of the cabinet, the civil service, the security services, parliament, county governments, the judiciary, or in the commissions and independent offices, must recognize the extraordinary privilege bestowed upon them to serve the nation. He said all leaders are under solemn obligation to dedicate their time, energy, and abilities to the advancement of the people’s aspirations and the improvement of their well-being. “In other words, the very best of our professional, moral, and intellectual capacities must be summoned in the service of the nation, and as trustees of the people, we are duty-bound to exercise public authority and deploy public resources to the best of our judgment and discretion, and with the public interest in mind,” he stressed Public interest, he insists, must be aligned with the imperative to enhance the social contract and be connected with an urgent need to increase opportunities for Kenyans



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2023 Through The Eyes Of A Kenyan Investor And Hopes For 2024

By: Capital Correspondent



Worth Noting:

- “From the crisis in Ukraine to the strained relations between major powers, we’ve seen a cascade of challenges that have left many communities in a state of despair.”
- Jinnah pointed out the interconnect- edness of these global issues, emphasizing that the financial crisis and economic turmoil have further widened the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged.
- “The financial fallout has been partic- ularly severe, deepening existing inequalities and pushing vulnerable pop- ulations to the brink. As we take stock of 2023, it is evident that the reper- cussions will be felt for years to come,” he said.



Kenyan investor Nazir Jinnah.

From wars, to a prolonged drought and then el-nino rains, to a falling shilling and rising global inflation, 2023 has been a year of a kind. It will be the year that will go down in history as being marked by two big wars – an ongoing conflict in Ukraine as it fights off a Russian invasion and Israel-Gaza war, both that have left devastating destruction and led to massive loss of lives.

In an interview, Kenyan investor Nazir Jinnah said that the consequences of these geopolitical tensions, coupled with the enduring financial crisis and global economic turmoil, have exacerbated existing inequalities and inflicted widespread hardship.

“The effects of governance failures and economic ruin resulting from geopolitical conflicts have been acutely felt across the globe,” Jinnah, a director of Conrad Law LLP and English Point Marina, said.

“From the crisis in Ukraine to the strained relations between major powers, we’ve seen a cascade of chal-

lenges that have left many communities in a state of despair.”

Jinnah pointed out the interconnect- edness of these global issues, emphasizing that the financial crisis and economic turmoil have further widened the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged.

“The financial fallout has been particularly severe, deepening existing inequalities and pushing vulnerable populations to the brink. As we take stock of 2023, it is evident that the repercussions will be felt for years to come,” he said.

Amid the gloom, Jinnah urges a forward-looking perspective in 2024.

“In the face of adversity, there are lessons to be learned. As we navigate the complexities of a world grappling with inequality and suffering, it is imperative that we prioritize empathy, collaboration, and international cooperation,” he said.

He called for a collective effort to address the root causes of global challenges.

“We must use the experiences of 2023 as a catalyst for positive change. Whether in governance, economic policies, or international relations, the choices we make in the coming year can shape a more equitable and compassionate world,” he said.

As the world anticipates the uncertainties of the year ahead, Nazir Jinnah’s reflections on the year of inequality and hardship serve as a call to action, inspiring individuals, communities, and nations to strive for a future where humanity prevails over adversity.

In his New Year’s address to the nation delivered from State House Nakuru, Ruto admitted that he made some choices that, in the short term, were painful but beneficial in the long term.

These, he said, included cutting expenditure by up to Sh400 billion to reduce borrowing and introduction of new tax measures to enhance tax revenues by Sh600 billion.

“The choices we have made over the

last year were neither easy, populist, nor convenient; they were however meaningful, appropriate, and necessary,” the President said.

As a result, Ruto said the country has taken commendable strides, triumphed over the threat of economic stagnation, and is now in a secure position with regard to its sovereign debt obligations.

“Inflation has reduced to 6.8 percent and our GDP is growing at the rate of 5.4 per cent, placing Kenya as the 29th fastest-growing economy globally,” he added.

The President further pointed out that the decision to scrap subsidies saw food production soar by 40 per cent at a fraction of the previous cost while millions of Kenyans secured jobs under the housing programme as well as entrepreneurial opportunities, both locally and abroad.

Kenyans Hopeful For Economic Recovery In New Year After Tough 2023

By: WANGECHI PURITY and
CORRESPONDENT

Worth Noting:

- Philomena Atieno, a fish vendor in Siaya, urged the government to fulfil its promise to improve the economy, saying, “We have heard enough promises. It’s time for the government to deliver because things are very tough for us.”
- Sospeter Ngugi called upon the Kenya Kwanza government to focus on creating employment opportunities for young people in 2024. He emphasized that addressing youth unemployment is crucial for the nation’s economic growth, as many young individuals currently work part-time jobs to finance their education.
- “This year, I would urge the government to take a serious look at the issue of youth unemployment in our nation because if we don’t take care of our young people, our nation will fail,” said Ngugi.



New Year fireworks at UAP Old Mutual Tower on January 1, 2024. /BM.

As the new year dawns, majority of Kenyans are expressing optimism and hope for better times ahead despite the challenges they faced in 2023 due to a tough economic climate.

Some of those interviewed by Capital FM shared their expectations for a promising 2024, believing that persistent issues such as the high cost of living and heavy tax burdens will soon be addressed, paving the way for economic growth.

There has been uproar across the country as Kenyans pleaded for the government to bring down the cost of living that shot up in 2023.

Denis Momanyi, a resident of Ruaka, expressed his hopes for 2024, stating, “I’m hoping that the government will reduce the high cost of living and the heavy tax burden that Kenyans have had to endure, especially the housing levy.”

Philomena Atieno, a fish vendor in Siaya, urged the government to fulfil its promise to improve the economy, saying, “We have heard enough promises. It’s time for the government to deliver because things are

very tough for us.”

Sospeter Ngugi called upon the Kenya Kwanza government to focus on creating employment opportunities for young people in 2024. He emphasized that addressing youth unemployment is crucial for the nation’s economic growth, as many young individuals currently work part-time jobs to finance their education.

“This year, I would urge the government to take a serious look at the issue of youth unemployment in our nation because if we don’t take care of our young people, our nation will fail,” said Ngugi.

Allan Kirwa from Kitale had a straightforward request for President William Ruto, stating, “Please, reduce the cost of living.”

Jecinta Kimani, a fruit vendor, expressed her optimism that the government would fulfil its commitments to Kenyans in 2024. She urged individuals to take initiative and work hard, stating, “We cannot keep on blaming the government for what it has not delivered. No matter how many times you blame the

economy, no one will bring food to your house, so you have to work hard to put food on your table.”

Kimani also highlighted concerns about unfair and punitive taxes imposed by the government, noting that these taxes have forced many businesses to switch from digital transactions to cash payments.

Fatuma Abdalla from Mombasa expressed how the high cost of living had made life unbearable, saying, “Prices are increasing for everything. Every day in newspapers, on the radio, and on television, we hear about rising commodity prices.”

Robert Kariuki, a Bodaboda rider, expects the government to take steps to stabilize the economy in 2024. He specifically called for President William Ruto to address the soaring cost of living and fuel prices, emphasizing the pivotal role of the fuel sector in driving the economy.

Naomy Moraa, a Nairobi resident, expressed disappointment over the increase in Expressway toll charges and appealed to the government, saying, “I urge the government to consider lowering fuel prices. Nev-

ertheless, I remain optimistic that life will improve in 2024 if the president keeps his promises.”

In his New Year’s address, President William Ruto expressed optimism for positive developments in Kenya in 2024. He acknowledged the challenges faced by the nation but emphasized that the government’s efforts to streamline processes would yield long-term benefits.

President Ruto outlined initiatives to reduce government expenditures by up to Sh400 billion to minimize the need for borrowing. He stressed the importance of addressing debt issues and promoting economic independence for Kenya.

While acknowledging the short-term challenges posed by certain government decisions, President Ruto emphasized that opportunities in the new year would enable Kenya to achieve more and improve the lives of its citizens.

Additional reporting by Capital FM Correspondents.

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Kenya’s Promising Path Forward With China: A Partnership Shaping The Future

By: ELIJAH MWANGI



Entertainment by Kenyas and Chinese artists during a gala dinner marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Kenya in Nairobi, Kenya, Dec. 14, 2023. The event was organised by the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi..

Worth Noting:

- Another partnership with Energy International Group from China aims to enhance the reliability, efficiency, and modernization of Kenya’s power system, addressing the nation’s energy needs comprehensively.
- The culmination of this fruitful partnership was celebrated on December 14 when China and Kenya marked 60 years of bilateral relations in a grand ceremony organized by the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi. The event attended by Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and a host of other top government and diplomatic dignitaries, provided an opportunity to reflect on the immense benefits reaped from this enduring friendship, solidifying China’s position as Kenya’s largest trading partner and source market. It was hosted by Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Dr. Zhou Pingjian.

As 2024 opens, Kenya has reason to celebrate, for it has solidified a remarkable friendship and partnership with China, spanning over six decades. This enduring relationship has ushered in new hope and prospects for development in Kenya, making China one of Kenya’s most valuable and trusted allies.

In his first year in office, President William Ruto has taken significant steps to strengthen Kenya’s bilateral ties with China, recognizing the pivotal role it plays as Africa’s foremost partner. China’s unwavering support for critical development projects is reshaping the narrative of modernity across the continent, which had been predominantly influenced by the West.

China’s presence is palpable and transformative in many African countries, exemplifying a commitment to mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. In Kenya, President Ruto’s October visit to China yielded several multi-billion-dollar agreements with Chinese-based companies, propelling the nation towards a brighter future.

One notable project is the Konza Medical City, which received pledges totaling Ksh 24.2 billion (\$161.7 million) from 11 Chinese companies. This investment aligns with Kenya’s Universal Healthcare Coverage agenda, promising significant advancements in healthcare infrastructure.

Zhende Medical, a Chinese company, committed Ksh 18.7 billion (\$125 mil-

lion) to Tatu City, bolstering Kenya’s real estate and urban development sector. In a show of confidence in Kenya’s economic potential, four additional Chinese companies expressed their intent to invest a staggering Ksh 646.3 billion (\$4.32 billion) across various sectors, providing a significant boost to the Kenyan economy.

President Ruto’s visit to China in saw the signing of deals worth Ksh 63 billion, encompassing the technology, healthcare, and engineering sectors. These agreements, including a memorandum of understanding with ICT stakeholders, outline substantial Chinese investment in Kenya’s digital transformation, promising to revamp the nation’s ICT infrastructure.

Another partnership with Energy International Group from China aims to enhance the reliability, efficiency, and modernization of Kenya’s power system, addressing the nation’s energy needs comprehensively.

The culmination of this fruitful partnership was celebrated on December 14 when China and Kenya marked 60 years of bilateral relations in a grand ceremony organized by the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi. The event attended by Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and a host of other top government and diplomatic dignitaries, provided an opportunity to reflect on the immense benefits reaped from this enduring friendship, solidifying China’s position as Kenya’s largest trading

partner and source market. It was hosted by Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Dr. Zhou Pingjian.

Kenyan government officials present emphasized that the foundation of China-Kenya relations rests on dignity, solidarity, and mutual respect, setting it apart from its interactions with Western nations. Unlike the conditional support often tied to human rights issues, democracy, and political interference from the West, China’s approach to Kenya has been characterized by equality, not subordination.

China’s infrastructure development projects in Kenya have received acclaim even in the most remote regions of the country. Villagers in Kenya, when given the choice of contractors for a road project, including British, Indian, Chinese, and Kenyan providers, often recommend Chinese contractors based on their impressive track record and completion timelines while maintaining quality.

The Thika Superhighway, the first major project constructed by Chinese contractors in Kenya, stands as a testament to the quality of Chinese workmanship. A decade after its inauguration, the road remains in excellent condition without the need for significant repairs. This 50-kilometer stretch has enhanced transportation between Nairobi and Thika, bolstering economic activities.

But then there is the Chinese-built Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) which remains Kenya’s most significant proj-

ects to date, playing a pivotal role in the Belt and Road Initiative in Kenya. China has also undertaken extensive road infrastructure development in Nairobi, including the Nairobi Expressway, the Lamu-Garissa Road, and various informal settlement roads, totaling approximately 115 kilometers.

Beyond infrastructure, China has made substantial contributions to Kenya’s economy by providing affordable and high-quality goods. The Kenyan tourism sector has been actively seeking to attract more visitors from China, recognizing the vast market potential offered by its sizable population.

As Kenya forges ahead into the future, the partnership with China continues to be a beacon of hope and opportunity. The unwavering support and commitment of both nations to mutual growth and development promise a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow for Kenya and its people.

The journey that began six decades ago is a testament to the enduring strength of this partnership, and as Kenya takes further strides towards progress, it does so with a trusted friend at its side – the People’s Republic of China. Together, they are shaping a future filled with promise and possibilities for the Kenyan people.

Elijah Mwangi is a scholar based in Nairobi; he comments on local and global matters.

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BREAKING NEWS

Sports >> *French President Emmanuel Macron called for unity in the country in his New Year's Eve address Sunday as it prepares for the 2024 Olympic Games, after a difficult year for his government.

Macron Calls For Unity As France Prepares To Host Olympics



French President Emmanuel Macron attends a press conference, on the second day of the G20 summit in New Delhi, India, September 10, 2023. REUTERS/ Amit Dave/File photo

French President Emmanuel Macron called for unity in the country in his New Year's Eve address Sunday as it prepares for the 2024 Olympic Games, after a difficult year for his government.

Speaking from the gardens of the Elysee Palace, with the flags of the Olympic nations behind him, he promised a civic and economic "rearmament" for the country.

And evoking the memory of former European Union leader Jacques Delors, who died on Wednesday, he said voters would

have a decisive choice to make in June's European elections.

They would have choose between "continuing Europe or blocking it", he said.

"We will have to make the choice of a stronger, more sovereign Europe in the light of the legacy of Jacques Delors."

Macron was speaking at the end of a troubled year in which his government forced through deeply unpopular pensions reforms and faced summer riots over the police killing of youths. More recently, the government

passed a controversial immigration bill with the backing of the far right, creating divisions within its own ranks.

And Macron himself came under fire earlier this month for comments he made supporting film icon Gerard Depardieu, who is charged with rape and facing a litany of sexual assault claims.

He has also faced criticism for his handling of the crisis in the Middle East that followed Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel and the subsequent Israeli response.

France would not forget the hostages held by Hamas, he said Sunday, or the 41 French citizens killed during their attack.

But his call last week for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza during a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has so far fallen on deaf ears.

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Sports >>> *The future of Kylian Mbappe and his protracted courtship by Real Madrid is expected to be the key theme of the transfer window that opened in Europe yesterday.

Kylian Mbappe's Future To Dominate Transfer Window



Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe grimaces after a shock during the French L1 football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Olympique de Marseille (OM) at The Parc des Princes Stadium in Paris on September 24, 2023. (Photo by Bertrand GUAY / AFP).

The future of Kylian Mbappe and his protracted courtship by Real Madrid is expected to be the key theme of the transfer window that opened in Europe yesterday.

Arsenal's search for a proven goalscorer to spearhead their challenge for a first Premier League title since 2004 could also loom large.

Manchester City meanwhile are widely expected to let Kalvin Phillips leave the club, ending a disappointing stay for the former Leeds midfielder who has failed to make his mark at the world champions.

Much attention though will again focus on Mbappe, Paris Saint-Germain's lethal finisher and the man who a year ago scored a hat-trick for France in the World Cup final only to finish on the losing side.

Real Madrid are again the main suitor for the 25-year-old whose contract at PSG expires in June -- will the 14-time European champions finally get a commitment from the player they have been pursuing for years?

It is far from certain though as

Mbappe triggers an extraordinary reaction in France, illustrated when President Emmanuel Macron intervened to persuade him to stay at PSG in June 2022 when a move to Real seemed almost cut and dried.

Real are not sitting on their hands though. Endrick, the latest Brazilian starlet, will join the club from Palmeiras when he turns 18 in July 2024 for a fee reported to be 72 million euros.

- Toney to the Gunners? -

Arsenal's lack of a goalscoring edge could lead them to plunge into the market. For weeks, their rumoured target has been Ivan Toney, the Brentford forward whose ban for over 200 breaches of the Football Association's gambling rules ends in mid-January.

However, Brentford's decline in form which has seen them drop to within four points of the relegation places could persuade the club to hang onto 27-year-old Toney, even in the face of a big offer from the Gunners.

Kalvin Phillips was riding high

when the midfielder joined City on the back of England's run to the Euro 2022 final, but he has played barely a handful of games for the club and Pep Guardiola has admitted the move never worked out.

Juventus have reportedly been keen to sign Phillips, who is desperate to force himself into England's plans for Euro 2024, but reports from Italy say the club are cooling on the idea.

A move to Newcastle looks a more realistic possibility as the Magpies look to bolster a squad seriously depleted by injuries and the 10-month ban handed down to Italian midfielder Sandro Tonali, also for gambling.

Eddie Howe's men have slumped down the Premier League table in recent weeks and the Saudi-owned club look badly in need of reinforcements if they are to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Serhou Guirassy, the prolific Guinea international who has scored 17 Bundesliga goals so far this season for Stuttgart, has also

been linked with a move to Tyne-side.

Newcastle could also turn to their connections in the Saudi Pro League. They are allowed to sign players on loan from sides also controlled by their Saudi owners, after a vote by Premier League clubs on a temporary ban on related-party loans failed to receive the required support.

However, one target, Ruben Neves, said in early December he would not accept a move to Newcastle because his family was happy in Saudi Arabia.

Liverpool forward Roberto Firmino also headed to the Saudi league in the summer, but is reportedly unsettled at Al Ahli.

The Brazilian, 32, could now be heading to their rivals Al Ettifaq, the club coached by former Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard, although Premier League strugglers Sheffield United are also said to be interested in his services.

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Why Is It Necessary To Learn Foreign Languages?



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Worth Noting:

- Learning foreign languages is also important for brain development. Playing sports helps to train the human body, and learning foreign languages helps to train the brain. That is, learning foreign languages is a good sport for the brain.
- A person who knows many languages has a flexible brain, a good memory, and can easily find solutions to problems. Learning a language is like a treasure hunt. You will search for hours and not find, but each attempt will bring you closer to your goal. If you don't give up on this perfect job, you will find the treasure.



I was born on September 20, 2004 in Fergana district of Fergana region. After graduating from the 49th general secondary school here, I continued my studies at the academic lyceum of the Fergana branch of TATU. During my school and lyceum education, I won the 1st place in the "Tuhfa" beauty pageant organized among girls, and the "Most Beautiful Girl" nomination in the "Hayat Jilgalari" beauty pageant. In 2023, I was recommended to a higher education institution as a student on the basis of a state grant, and now I am a student of the first stage. Today's developing times require young people to learn more foreign languages. A lot of opportunities are created for students and young people who know foreign languages.

And now, "why do you need to learn foreign languages?" we will find the answer to the question. This can be easily explained by several exam-

ples. One simple example is travel. In other words, knowing foreign languages plays a big role in order to travel and travel the world.

Learning foreign languages is also important for brain development. Playing sports helps to train the human body, and learning foreign languages helps to train the brain. That is, learning foreign languages is a good sport for the brain.

A person who knows many languages has a flexible brain, a good memory, and can easily find solutions to problems. Learning a language is like a treasure hunt. You will search for hours and not find, but each attempt will bring you closer to your goal. If you don't give up on this perfect job, you will find the treasure.

One day, when you are able to speak the language that you are struggling to understand, you will realize that the time and effort spent on learning

the language was not wasted. At that time, it is not out of the question to even feel proud of yourself.

In the modern life we live in, knowing foreign languages is as important as air. Foreign languages have made fundamental changes in the field of education in our country as well. It even reached the level of politics, and several laws were signed in this regard.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasizes a lot about the place and role of foreign languages in the field of education. Most of the work in this field is aimed at the development of foreign languages. The role of our youth and the foreign languages they learn is extremely important for Uzbekistan to gain its significant place among the nations of the world.

In conclusion, we can say this: learning foreign languages develops a person, society, state, and humanity in every way. Our country also

needs personnel who know foreign languages, and they can become leading specialists in any field.

Khakimjonova Hilolakhon Rustamjonovna.

I was born on September 20, 2004 in Fergana district of Fergana region. After graduating from the 49th general secondary school here, I continued my studies at the academic lyceum of the Fergana branch of TATU. During my school and lyceum education, I won the 1st place in the "Tuhfa" beauty pageant organized among girls, and the "Most Beautiful Girl" nomination in the "Hayat Jilgalari" beauty pageant. In 2023, I was recommended to a higher education institution as a student on the basis of a state grant, and now I am a student of the first stage.