Inside Tumusiime's 213,000km Fortuner

With disciplined servicing and careful driving, Davis Tumusiime has kept his 2016 Toyota Fortuner mechanically sound and visually pristine after covering 213,000 kilometres.

BY ROLAND D NASASIRA

A look at the dashboard of Davis Tumusiime's Toyota Fortuner reveals that it has covered 213,000 kilometres since its manufacture in 2016. Assuming it was produced at the end of that year, this means since January 2017, Tumusiime's car has been averaging about 1,972 kilometres annually.

The secret to achieving such high mileage while keeping the vehicle's body in pristine condition, despite sporting a UAZ number plate series, lies in timely servicing. Tumusiime says his car is serviced at the Corporation for Africa and Overseas dealership, previously known as Toyota Uganda, typically 400 to 500 kilometres before reaching the scheduled service mileage of 5,000 kilometres.

"I pay very close attention to everything in the car, from the interior to the exterior. Whenever it develops scratches on the body or the interior leather, I have them repaired immediately. I am a careful driver, and my car's service history is well documented by the dealership. This allows me to easily understand what needs to be serviced or replaced," Tumusiime explains.

Servicing before schedule

He explains that servicing the car 400 to 500 kilometres early helps to avoid overworking the ageing engine. During each service, special attention is paid to performance-critical components such as the gearbox, engine, and transmission system, among others. This is followed by a thorough diagnosis to determine what needs to be addressed next.

"Sometimes there is a component that needs to be serviced or replaced at every mileage interval. The most important aspect is to follow the technical advice from the mechanics. When driving, I pay close attention to the sounds the car makes. I do not allow complex mechanical faults to develop," he adds.

On average, he spends about Shs400,000 on minor service. Tumusiime says since 2016, he has only repaired the bumper once and replaced the right-side headlight, both of which were damaged by motorcyclists. These incidents remain the only major occurrences he has faced with reckless road users.

Driving experience

Powered by a 2,800cc engine, the 2016 Fortuner accelerates from zero to 100km/hr in eight seconds. Although he prefers driving in automatic transmission mode, the nearly 10-year-old vehicle can also be driven manually, with paddle controls positioned on the steering wheel. It is in manual mode that the Fortuner exhibits stronger performance, particularly at higher speeds.

The only downside Tumusiime notes is the basic factory radio system, whose sound output he feels is not as powerful as that found in newer vehicles.

"It is the original radio system that came with the car, but it does not have good stereo output. When you have driven a car whose sound system feels like a disco hall and then enter this Fortuner, you will not enjoy the music," he argues.

Advice to motorists

Tumusiime believes most motorists in Kampala are poorly trained to drive in the city. Many, he says, do not know how to read or interpret road signs, while those who do often ignore them out of impatience or impunity.

"Take a keen interest in understanding the difference between operating a vehicle and actually driving it. Read extensively about safe driving practices, as there is a wealth of useful information available online and in various places. A lot has changed since the 1990s, when many people learnt how to drive, compared to the 2000s. Driving skills from the 1990s differ significantly from those in the 2000s because there were fewer vehicles on the road, and both road designs and vehicle technology were less advanced. Any serious driver who wants to maintain a car for a long time and keep it in good condition should commit to reading and updating their knowledge regularly," Tumusiime advises.

Not for sale

Over the years, he has received several offers from admirers interested in purchasing his Fortuner. At one point, a dealer suggested that he switches from the old number plate series to a digital type and offered to buy the vehicle for Shs 120m. However, given its excellent mechanical condition, Tumusiime states that the minimum price he would accept is significantly higher than this offer.

With its current mileage at 213,000km and still going strong, the Toyota Fortuner has the potential to reach the one-million-kilometre mark if well maintained.

Additional information

The Fortuner was originally built in Thailand. It debuted in 2004 and went on sale in Thailand in early 2005 before expanding to Southeast Asia. Australia only received the Fortuner with its second generation, about ten years later.

"It was initially offered with two petrol and two diesel engine options. Transmissions included a five-speed manual or a four- or five-speed automatic. Interestingly, customers could choose between 2WD and 4WD across variants. Like the Prado, the Fortuner 4WD was full-time," the portal notes.

The Fortuner's muscular appearance projects stability and capability. In many ways, it mirrors the strong lines of the Prado and continues to do so. It also incorporates styling cues from the Hilux and the street-wise Kluger, resulting in a distinctive and recognisable look that fits well within Toyota's family of iconic off-road vehicles.

TIPS

Watch suspension wear
High-mileage SUVs such as the Fortuner often show suspension fatigue before engine problems. Regular checks on shock absorbers, bushings, ball joints and stabiliser links help maintain ride comfort and protect tyres from uneven wear.

Cooling system matters
In warm conditions, a healthy radiator, thermostat and cooling fan are critical. Flushing coolant at recommended intervals and replacing ageing hoses can prevent overheating and costly engine damage.

Transmission oil
Many drivers service engines regularly but forget transmission fluid. Changing transmission oil at the correct mileage helps preserve smooth gear shifts and reduces long-term wear, especially for vehicles frequently driven in traffic.

Wheel alignment
Poor alignment increases tyre wear and fuel consumption. Periodic wheel alignment, especially after driving on rough roads or hitting potholes, improves handling and extends tyre life.





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