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World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

April 2024 Monthly Publication - Subscription Available Pages 60 Volume: 234

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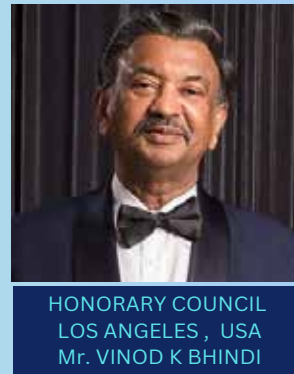
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THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

The US Fiji Times is ranked as the top newspaper being published outside of Fiji for the Fiji American community and all over the world. The paper's popularity has grown immensely in recent years due to its critical approach in impressing the need for charitable organizations to rise up in all occasions to help Fiji and the people back home. Visitors from around the world have commended the paper on its stand to serve the community. The US Fiji Times understands that like in any other field, there is competition and competing with "The largest newspaper out of Fiji" has been a difficult task for newer publications. This is not because of its magnitude and coverage, but because of its stability and growth capabilities. The writers of the paper comprise some of Fiji's best. Even though they are not too visible in social functions, they are taking up their challenges very effectively. The marketing strategy handles by our CEO/Publisher Mr. Rocky Ali is the hallmark of the papers current strength. Despite lacking the front line journalist experience, he makes up for the deficiency with the sheer ability to jeep the media wagon rolling. His insatiable love to be involved with the community to cherish in this very noble cause is worthy of higher recommendation. We have a very vibrant community, so despite the paper being issued free, the expectation of the community is very high. The coverage of all the major events is a mist for the paper and we feel very proud to be associated with major organizations to see that their events are properly covered with pictures, stories and awareness via our social media platforms. The paper is being also sent to countries like Fiji, NZ, Australia, Canada, England and Sweden for Fijians abroad to also get the feel of the luxuries of USA. The feedback has been overwhelming in this regard and it has become a trend for many organizations to rely on US Fiji Times in reaching the desired success with adequate coverage. The paper will strive to serve the community with the best of its ability and assures the community that there will be quality reporting at all times.

Vinaka – Rocky Buksh



EID MUBARAK



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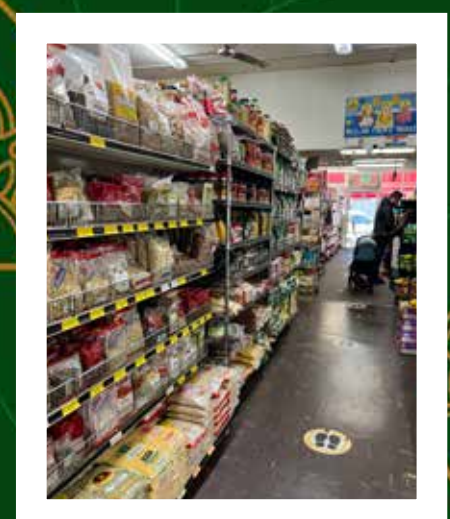
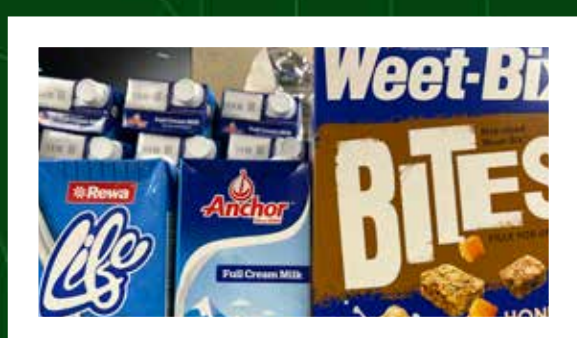
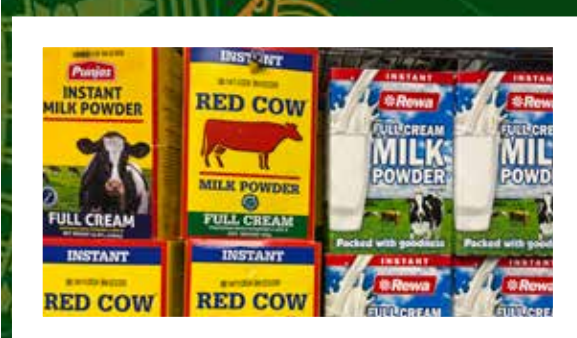
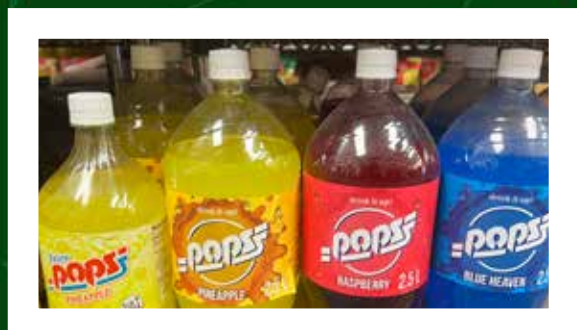
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Education Ministry Considers AI for Fijian Schools



The Ministry of Education is contemplating incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into the nation's educational system to improve teaching and learning experiences in schools. Permanent Secretary Selina Kuruleca stated that this concept emerged from recommendations provided by stakeholders during last year's Education Summit. She underlined the necessity of performing an assessment to comprehend the current state of AI and its impact on students.

our students in Fijian schools," said Kuruleca. "If we permit them to employ it, what would it resemble?"

Furthermore, she highlighted the significance of examining ideal methods and selecting the most appropriate AI technology for students. "Will it serve as a tool for delivering instructional materials? We must perform an audit first. Following the audit, we can establish guidelines and procedures regarding AI implementation in classrooms since its usage is inevitable."

In addition, Kuruleca underscored the vital role of dealing with practical issues associated with introducing these innovations.

"It is crucial that we conduct an audit initially to determine the kind of AI available and the AI currently utilized by

Fiji Poised to Capitalize on Booming Medicinal Cannabis Market

Fiji's Ministry of Trade recognizes a global shift in cannabis perception, with growing acceptance of its medical benefits and economic potential. Permanent Secretary Shaheen Ali, speaking at a Suva medicinal cannabis training course, emphasized this point.

Ali highlighted the projected significant growth of the global medicinal cannabis market. He specifically cited the Oceania region, including Australia, where the market is expected to reach a staggering \$19.1 billion USD by 2024. Fiji, he stressed, has a chance to contribute significantly to this figure.

The Permanent Secretary commended the government's foresight in proposing a medicinal cannabis industry. He elaborated on their proactive approach, which includes col-

laboration with international and technical partners. This collaboration aims to not only develop the medicinal cannabis sector but also explore its positive impact on the nutraceutical industry, leveraging traditional medicines for economic growth.

Ali emphasized the potential of this new industry to achieve several key government goals: economic diversification, job creation, and the generation of new export opportunities. To ensure long-term success, the government is committed to establishing appropriate policies, strategies, and a robust legal framework.

The two-day training program focused on equipping participants with the knowledge to navigate this promising new industry.



Kilikali Recycling Champions Earn Prestigious Award

Kilikali Informal Settlement's recycling advocates are celebrating a well-deserved victory! They have been recognized with the 2023 Advocates Influencing Mindsets & Mentoring Agents Award by the Pacific Recycling Foundation (PRF).

This award honors individuals and groups who champion recycling with exceptional dedication. Kilikali holds a special distinction as the first

informal settlement to implement PRF's successful "I Recycle Hub" program. This program provides a crucial platform for residents to actively participate in recycling efforts.

Launched in June 2023 alongside Pacific Energy and Nasinu Town Council, the initiative has seen tremendous success. Kilikali's recycling heroes led the collection of over 900 kilograms of recy-

clables between June and December 2023. These efforts diverted significant waste from polluting the environment.

The settlement, home to over 268 residents who migrated seeking job opportunities, exemplifies the power of community in environmental action. PRF Founder Amitesh Deo expressed immense pride in honoring Kilikali's recycling advocates for their unwavering commitment.



Eid Mubarak

عيد مبارك



Bobby Naicker
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Dear friends'

I hope this letter finds you well and in good spirits. As we approach the joyous occasion of Eid, I wanted to take a moment to send you warm wishes for a blessed and peaceful celebration.

Eid is a time of reflection, gratitude, and unity for Muslims around the world. It is a time when families and friends come together to share festive meals, exchange gifts, and pray together in celebration of the end of Ramadan.

The sights and sounds of Eid are truly a sight to behold. Streets are adorned with colorful decorations, homes are filled with the aroma of delicious traditional dishes, and children's laughter fills the air as they run around in new clothes received as gifts. But most importantly, Eid is a time to strengthen our bonds with loved ones, show kindness and compassion to those in need, and spread joy and happiness to all those around us. As we celebrate this special day, let us remember the true spirit of Eid and the values it represents – forgiveness, generosity, and love for all. May this Eid bring you peace, happiness, and prosperity. Wishing you and your family a joyous Eid filled with love and laughter.

Warm regards,

Eid Mubarak

STATEMENT BY
Narendra Narayan
President, America Fiji Sports Commission
& America Fiji Golf Club

عيد مبارك



I am pleased to send you my warm greetings and best wishes on the auspicious occasion of Eid.

The Holy Month of Ramadan carries the message of self-restraint, sacrifice, love, kindness and deep reverence and abiding faith in the Creator. The Eid festival, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, is a great

day of happiness and joy for Muslims. But it also has important religious and spiritual significance. It is a time for giving and sharing and introspection about our existence as human beings.

In a world caught up in disputes, selfishness and inequalities, the message of the Holy Month of Ramadan and Eid reminds us of our temporal exist-

tence, the interdependence of all people and the duty placed on us to respect all beings and care for the less fortunate and needy people in our society.

May the spirit and essence of the Eid Festivities touch all hearts and bring joy and peace to everyone.

To our Muslim brothers and sisters and friends, we wish

you abundant joy, happiness and prosperity in your lives !

Eid Mubarak!



Eid Mubarak from Mr & Mrs Pramesh Sharma

Eid bring the message of peace , love and happiness.
 I would like to wish everyone a very joyful EID. The kids and elders look forward to this very great occasion when everyone gets together to show the gratitude to the all mighty for giving a wonderful world to thank him for everything.
 My best wishes to the sick and those not so privileged so that their life gets better and the god gives them strength for a great life as well.
 May you all enjoy this great day.

Message From Rocky Buksh CEO / Publisher US Fiji Times

Eid Mubarak



I would like to extend my hearty greeting to all the sponsors and readers on this Years Ramzan and Eid.

This period reminds me of the wonderful ways Eid is celebrated in Fiji. This is by far the most looked religious enactment for all our fellow brothers and sisters of Islam. Family gathering and tea sessions are held with neighbors, families and friends. The business communities in taking full advantage of the heavy pockets provides all that goodies to see that every festive season become a memorable one.

The USFijiitmes in serving the community shares the feeling we are accustomed to. Naturally we Fijians have a totally different way in bonding with each other when it comes to sharing and enjoying religious festivals. Our feelings and flash-backs send us back to our mood irrespective of our current habitat. So let us feel free to enjoy this wonderful occasion with friends and families and not to forget to send our share of love and gifts to our families back home and to donate generously to the needy so that we feel the blessings of the almighty during this happy period also.

It is hope that in seeing this paper you do have get a true feeling of Fiji style celebration being carried out at your back yard and send us pictures to give it memorable make over with the compliments of your largest abroad Fiji- THE US FIJI TIMES.

On behalf of the Executive staff and all reporters I would like to extend a very Happy Ramzan and Eid to all our reads here and all over the world.

Shameer Buksh President - FMSEA OF USA



Eid Mubarak from the Fiji Muslim Sports Association of USA! San Francisco, CA – On behalf of the Fiji Muslim Sports Association of USA (FMSEAOFUSA), I, Shameer Buksh, President, extend our warmest wishes to all our Fijian Muslim brothers and sisters in the United States and around the world as we celebrate Eid al-Fitr. Eid marks the culmination of the holy month of Ramadan, a time of spiritual reflection, fasting, and charity.

May the joy of Eid fill your homes with laughter, blessings, and renewed strength. We at the FMSEA of USA take this joyous occasion to celebrate the spirit of community and togetherness that lies at the heart of our faith. Eid is a time to strengthen bonds with family and friends, share delicious meals, and give thanks for the blessings bestowed upon us. To all those celebrating, Eid Mubarak! May this Eid bring you peace, prosperity, and happiness. Shameer Buksh President - FMSEA of USA

Eid Mubarak
Eid reminds us to be grateful for the love in our lives
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Eid Mubarak

Eid Message From Haji Mohammed Iqbal Khan



Haji Mohammed Iqbal Khan

As we start the blessed month of Ramadan we pray for peace and harmony around the globe. On behalf of my team members at American Muslim Association ('AMA'), I would like to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt Ramadan Mubarak to the entire community and to all fasting brothers and sisters around the world. As you are reading this article Ramadan has already started and really looking forward to having an amazing atmosphere all around the globe. My special prayer's for my brothers and sisters in Palestine and Gaza, that may Allah make it easy on them and may he protect their lives and belongings. May Allah elevate the status of those who were martyred and healings for those injured. May

he give them victory in their cause for an independent state Ameen. The beauty of this month is the blessings are in abundance. The month of Ramadan is a time for spiritual reflection. The fasting is intended to help teach Muslims self-discipline, self-restraint, and generosity. It is the month to appreciate all the blessings our Creator Allah Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala has bestowed upon us and it also reminds us of the suffering of the poor, who may rarely get to eat well. Charity (Zakat) giving is another one of the 5 pillars in Islam and the reward for giving charity is increased in the month of Ramadan. Rewards for any good deeds done during the month of Ramadan are multiplied by seventy at the minimum but there is no limit to what Allah Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala rewards. Let's pray for all brothers and sisters who have departed this world before us that may Allah Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala be pleased with them and grant them all the highest level in paradise, not forgetting our brothers and sisters in Libya and Morocco

who were martyred in the recent floodings may Allah Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala increase their status. Many brother and sister were injured in the flooding, may Allah Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala give them quick healing and those who lost their homes may Allah Subhana Hu Wa Ta'ala provide them with a new and better house...Ameen! With the help of our community our Welfare team was able to raise more than \$9,000 to help our brothers and sisters who were impacted by the devastating floods. Gading Jame Masjid is having Iftaar daily, and Taraweeh prayers. As in previous year, we are planning to complete the Quran in Taraweeh, Insha Allah! As the saying goes, time goes by very fast...this Ramadan will also fly by, please don't lose the opportunity to be at your local Masjid for daily and Taraweeh prayers, and iftar with the community. This is the month to share and care, contribute what you can! American Muslim Association provides suite of services to its community members. Gading Masjid offers 5 daily prayers, Friday Jummah

prayers, and a facility that provides for Islamic functions such as weddings, funerals services, prayer gatherings.. etc. Every Tuesday we have Quran Tafseer, Every Thursday we have Halqa-e-Zikar and every Saturday we have adult classes. AMA Education team launched their education program last year with great success. There will be a school break during the month of Ramadan and we will resume after Ramadan Inshah Allah. Please reach out to our AMA Education team to register your child for the Islamic Classes. We have great teachers and a very Islamic education curriculum. I would like to conclude by praying that may we end this blessed month of Ramadan with peace, harmony, happiness, and with a great celebration of Eid-ul Fitr all around the globe and praying for a beautiful Eid for our brothers and sisters in Palestine and Gaza with Victory and Independent news Inshah Allah.

"Dunya Se Dil Laga Kar Dunya Se Kiya Milega Yade Khuda Kiyeja Tuj Ko Khuda Milega"

A Greeting Poem for Ramadan, the Blessed Month

*Marhaba, Marhaba, Marhaba Oh Ramadan!
the month of blessing,
the month that all Muslims are anxiously awaiting to fast,
the month that elevates the faith of Muslims,
the month that brings good and bad Muslims together,
the month in which Qur'an is recited more than all the other months combined,
Oh the loving Ramadan, here you are with us again,
the month of piety in which all doubtful hobbies are avoided,
Oh Ramadan, Marhaban, Marhaba, Marhaba!
the only month that has a Night of Power,
the only month in which Angels descend in troops,
the month in which the poor and the rich get their past sins forgiven,
Oh Ramadan, the lessons you taught us will not be forgotten,
Oh Ramadan, we look forward to seeing more of you in fettle.
Marhaba, Marhaba, Marhaba Oh Ramadan!*

Eid Mubarak

Asaf Ali



February 4 th. 2023 will go in the history of Fiji Muslim Sports Association as a day of celebration. For 3 long years our Association was split up into 2 factions, each claiming to be the legitimate body representing Muslims in California. Nobody was making any effort to unite these bodies.

Master Asaf Ali took this initiative about 6 months ago and convinced both sides that it was in the interest of our younger generation and keeping in mind the importance in Islam about unity that both sides met in an historic meeting in Tracy, California and good sportsmanship was shown by both sides and we agreed on being united. I would like to thank Mukhtar Buksh , Shameer Buksh and Java

Saheb for their efforts in bringing these 2 sides together. This unity has resulted in the Association having 8 teams and strengthens our All Star team to a very competitive level. Let us all pray that we stay united.

Asaf Ali

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Eid

Eid-ul-Fitr: 5 unique Eid traditions that are followed around the world

Eid-ul-Fitr, across the globe, is about spending time with family and friends. This festival, however, is celebrated in different ways in various parts of the world. Read on to find out the specific traditions that are followed in different regions. Eid-ul-Fitr, which translates to "festival of breaking the fast" is a time of rejoicing with family and friends. It's a blissful celebration that marks the end of the holy month of Ramzan when millions of Muslims enthusiastically wait for the new moon sighting to be confirmed, to celebrate the end of their fasting journey. Muslims around the world mark the day by taking part in a host of activities. Depending on where you are, the festival may have a more localised name. In Turkic countries, it is often referred to as Bayram, whereas some North African cultures refer to it as Eid Seghir or the little Eid. Under usual circumstances, the day starts with prayers, and a big meal is usually the main event, but there are lots of ways and traditions by which people celebrate the special occasion. The process of ghusl, morning prayers, zakat al-Fitr, and visiting is common practice for Muslims

everywhere. Apart from these practices, unique traditions and customs are present amongst individual Muslim communities all around the world. From Turkey to Iceland, check out some Eid traditions around the world that differ by region but encompass the same feelings of joy across the globe: Turkey In Turkey, Eid-ul-Fitr is known as Ramazan Bayrami (Ramadan festival) or Seker Bayrami (festivals of sweets). People wear their new clothes referred to as bayramlik and wish each other Bayraminiz Mubarek Olsun that translates to 'May your Bayram (Eid) be blessed'. It is a public holiday, where government offices and schools are generally closed for the whole three-day period of the festivities. It is of utmost importance to honour elderly citizens by kissing their right hand and placing it on one's forehead all the while conveying the Bayram greetings. It is also important for young children to go from door to door around their neighbourhood, wishing everyone a "Happy Bayram," for which they are rewarded with candy, traditional sweets such as baklava and Turkish Delight, chocolates, or a small amount of



money at every door, similar to

the custom of Halloween in the United States. Indonesia Eid-ul-Fitr is locally known as Lebaran in Indonesia and it is the most important holiday for Indonesians. Similar to other Muslim nations, Indonesians also celebrate with prayers, gatherings, and family reunions. One of the foremost traditions is Mudik (homecoming) where those who leave their hometowns to work in the big cities travel back to their places to spend Eid with their families. A ritual called the Halal Bihalal is also performed during or after Eid which involves seeking forgiveness from everyone including friends, colleagues, neighbours, and relatives. Kids are gifted with colourful envelopes of money by their elders when they visit

them. Most Indonesian Muslims wear cultural clothing on Eid day, differing for both men and women in style. Relatives also visit graves of their loved ones during the festival of Eid. Malaysia Eid in Malaysia is a joyous occasion like anywhere else, and most people travel to their hometowns to be with their families. People decorate their homes with oil lamps known as Pelita and cook traditional foods for Eid, including Ketupat or rice dumplings, and Rendang, a popular meat dish to honour guests in South East Asian countries. Locally known as Hari Raya Aidilfitri, meaning the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr, it is a day when traditional dresses are worn by all.

Eid

Eid-ul-Fitr: 5 unique Eid traditions that are followed around the world

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations have always been like an open house in Malaysia, with everyone being welcomed in every home and an open door festive atmosphere that greets people to enjoy the meals and have a good time, without differentiating between them based on economic status, religion, or caste. Families usually take turns in opening their homes to guests for the day. Africa African countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Somalia, South Africa, Nigeria, and several others, celebrate Eid in a similar fashion with prayers in the morning at the local mosques before the grand family get-together, where local food items play a dominant role. In Morocco, traditional dresses are worn by men and women, and Moroccan pancakes are a breakfast staple, along with their famous mint tea, while in Somalia, Halvo is the dessert of the day. In Mombasa, Muslims



mark the last ten days of Ramzan (known as Kumi la mwisho) with street festivals and socialising. The festival, which is open in the evening when the daily fast ends, offer people a chance to buy presents for friends and family. Storytellers also roam the streets in some places during Eid, entertaining kids with folktales. Iceland Leading up to the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr, Muslims in Iceland also partake in the dusk-to-dawn fast during Ramzan. In the peak of summer, the sun remains up in the sky for a longer time than usual, the sun setting at midnight and returning two hours later. This means that Muslims living in Iceland are required to fast up to 22 hours a day. While this sounds like a very challenging feat, Islamic scholars and experts have offered an alternative to those who live in the land of the midnight sun. Icelandic Muslims can choose to break their fast based on the timings of sunrise and sunset from the nearest country or observe Saudi Arabia's timezone. The auspicious day is celebrated in one

of the few mosques in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. Guests who visit the mosque come armed with an international buffet of mouth-watering foods, including foods from Indonesian, Egyptian and Eritrean cuisines to celebrate this holy and joyous occasion. Much to the delight of the children, the little ones wear their best clothes and exchange gifts with fellow friends and family members. The whole idea of the festival is that whoever you meet, you try and create a feeling of goodwill with them. Any feeling of animosity is put aside, at least for one day. While there are lots of things that everyone will do on Eid, with approximately 2 billion Muslims across the globe, it's not surprising that people can have some different ways of celebrating this holy festival. Most Muslims celebrate Eid in the same traditional sense but of course, cultural traditions and practices for the occasion differ from East to West and from one country to another.

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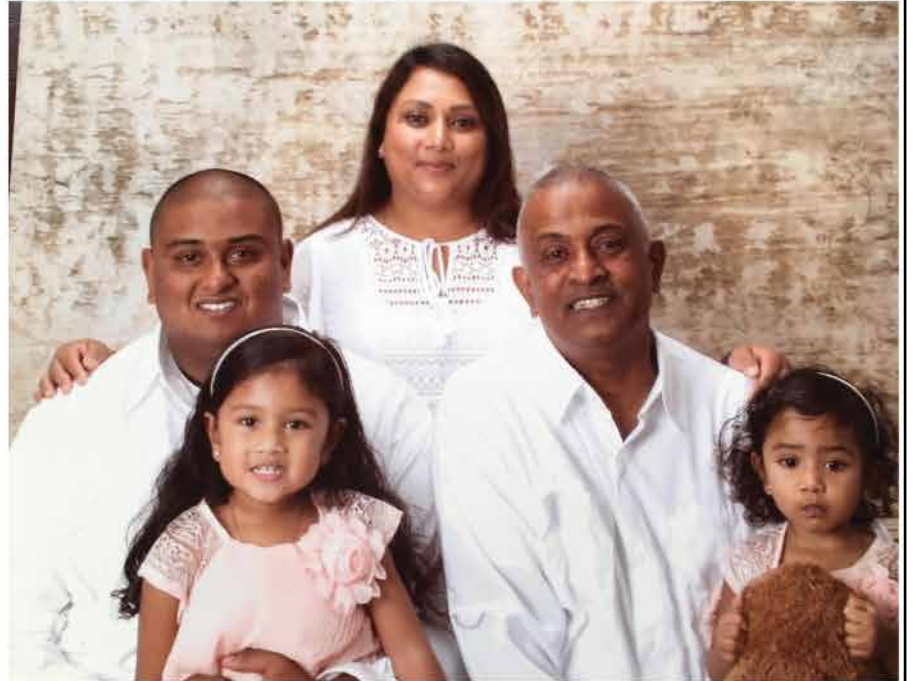
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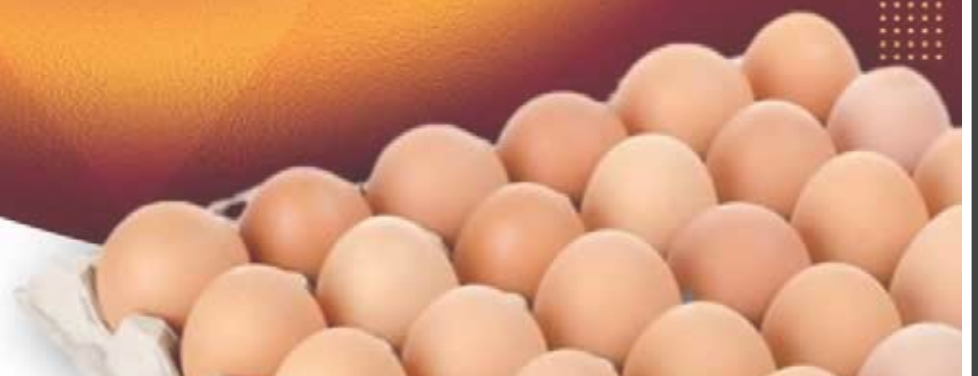
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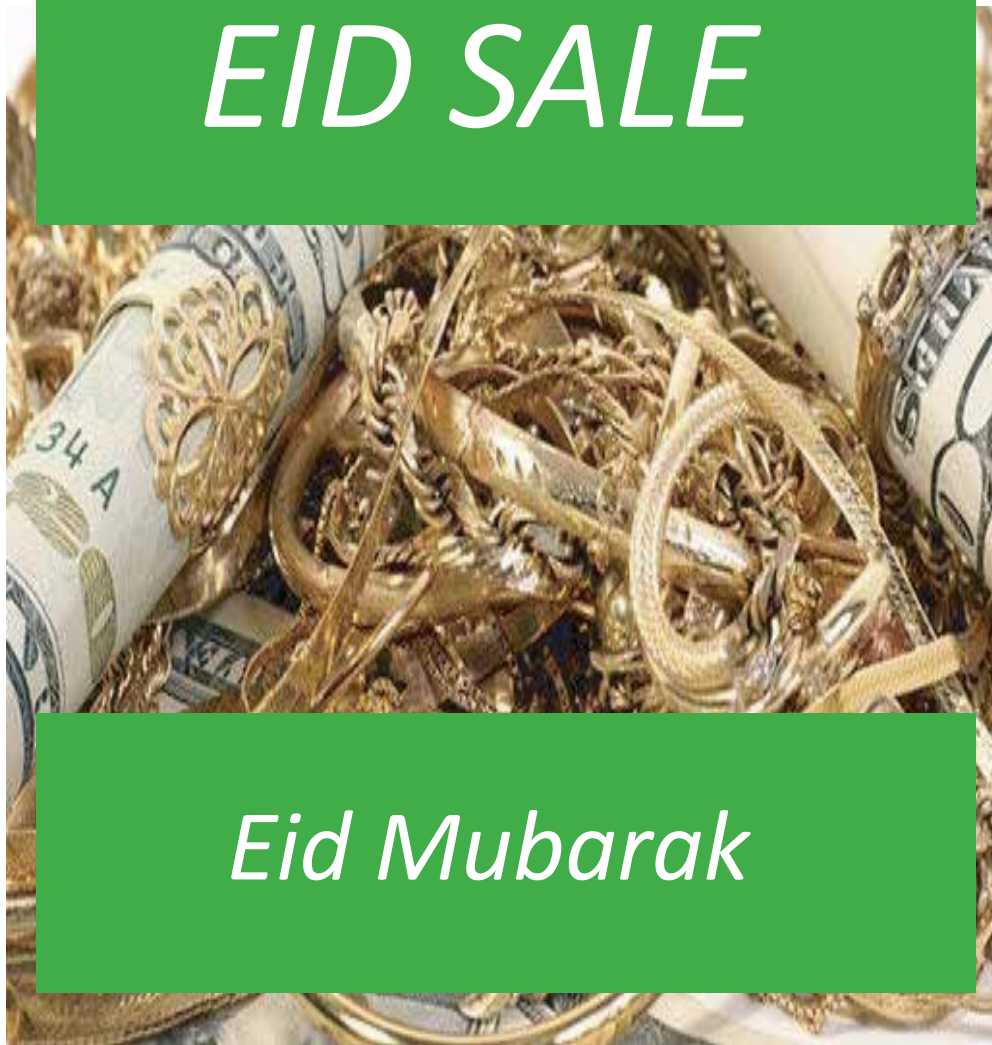
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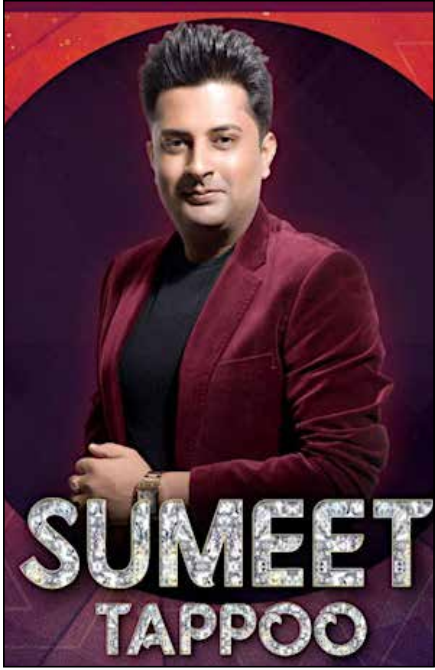
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News

Fijian Hearts Beat Strong: Community Raises Over \$100,000 for Children's Heart Surgeries



Though distance may separate them, Fiji holds a special place in the hearts of its people. This dedication was on display recently when the Fijian community in the Bay Area rallied to raise an incredible \$102,428 for the Fijian Children's Heart Foundation. Following in the footsteps of his father, renowned singer Sumeet Tappoo captivated audiences at a charity concert held at the Logan Center for Performing Arts. The event, aimed at raising funds for vital heart surgeries in Fiji, showcased Sumeet's talent while supporting a worthy cause.

The community's generosity didn't stop there. Vinay Nair and Narend Narayan, two pillars of the Bay Area Fijian community, played a pivotal role in mobilizing support. Their efforts propelled the fundraising drive to new heights, resulting in the impressive sum of \$102,428.

Both Vinay and Narend expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the community for recognizing the importance of the event and the cause it served.

The night held another reason to celebrate. Sumeet was honored with the prestigious US Presidential Volunteer Service Award. The funds raised will directly benefit the life-saving work of the Sai Prema Foundation Children's Hospital. The hospital has already performed over 200 critical heart surgeries and countless echocardiograms for Fijian children, offering them a brighter and healthier future.



Left: Vinay Nair and Naren Narayan



News





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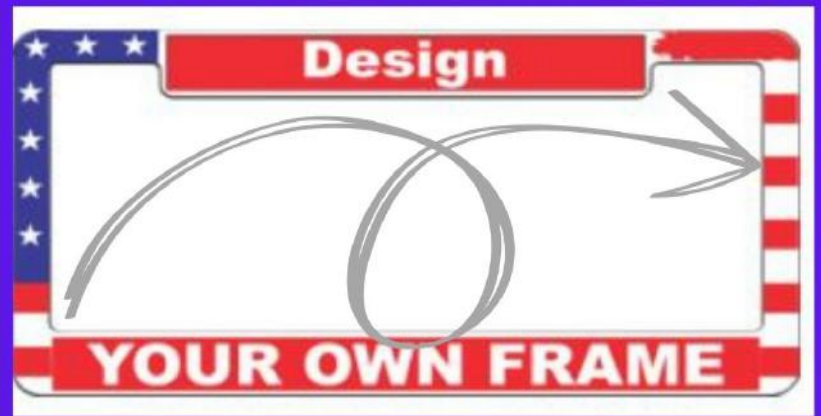
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Fiji News

FNU Helps Fulfil Dream of Tongan National

The Fiji National University (FNU) provides opportunities to individuals, not just in Fiji but in the region, through various courses and easy enrolment benchmarks for students to up-skill themselves. This was acknowledged by an elated young Tongan national, Hepisipa Matekitonga, who graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical) with Honours (Lower Second Class) from FNU's College of Engineering, Science and Technology last week. "I started studying at Auckland University, New Zealand in 2015 through a scholarship. Unfortunately, my scholarship got terminated and the courses at FNU were much cheaper so I enrolled here in 2019 with my two years of study also being cross-credited," Ms Matekitonga highlighted. "I waited two years to resume study due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the Pacific and the world, and I was lucky to get an attachment at an organisation last year for

six-months - a core requirement to graduate," she added. "In my childhood I used to take apart radios and electrical equipment to see how it worked and to also find faults and try repairing them. So, when I finished high school, I was naturally driven to take up electrical engineering as a career choice." "After eight-years of hard work and dedication all this has been worth the wait and I thank FNU for giving me this opportunity to fulfil my dream and my parents and God for always guiding me in the right path," she added. Ms Matekitonga adds that "electrical engineering is a male dominated area and as a female, know that nothing can stop you from dreaming big - just have a lot of patience and commitment". Minister for Education, Aseri Radrodru, while officiating the graduation ceremony, applauded the students for their hard work and determination to reach this far. "I commend the 572 graduates for their tenac-



ity, commitment, and sacrifice," Minister Radrodru said. He encouraged the students to pursue opportunities with a goal-oriented ambition and to remain steadfast in their commitment to serving others. The College has about 15 active higher degree research students with 11 enrolled in Masters by Research

programme and four students in PhD programmes. FNU Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba said that "it is worth recalling that a diamond can only be formed through the application of immense heat and pressure, and once polished, it becomes a precious gem". "Today, you are that precious gem

that FNU has polished, and you are now ready to shine bright in your chosen field of work," Prof. Nabobo-Baba added. In the 2022-2023 National Budget under the allocation for Higher Education Institutions, the Fiji Government has provided FNU funding of \$45.35 million.

Tubuna Urges Fijians To Respect Each Others Culture And Religion

The coalition Government will continue to uphold the Constitution which provides the freedom and right for everyone to practise their religion and celebrate special occasions such as the Ram Naumi. This was the reassurance made by the Assistant Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Sakiusa Tubuna while officiating at the Ram Naumi celebration at Muanikoso Housing in Nasinu on Monday. "We will respect the rights and freedom of every individual and we encourage everyone to be proud of which religion and culture they belong to," he highlighted.



Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay Observes Earth Hour

A total of 120,000 watt hours were saved by Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay during the Earth Hour celebration event last Saturday. The property actively participated in Earth Hour by joining in solidarity

with millions of people worldwide from 190 countries and territories to give an hour for earth. General manager Silvano Dressino said the event was attended by 150 guests during the one hour event.



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Fiji News

Young Tailor Perseveres With Government Assistance

The secret to success is to start from scratch and for Navneet Shivakaran, the proud owner of Navneet's Tailoring business in Labasa, the dictum rings true for him. In 2020, Mr Shivakaran attended a Mobile Skills Training on sewing which was organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The 24-year old lad from Dreketi began his journey operating a tailoring business of his own from his residence in Malawai, Dreketi where much of his craftsmanship includes sewing of wedding attires, school uniforms, kids wear, women's and men's wear among many other styles. Navneet's Tailoring began to take a turning point as it gained traction from the public but he did not rest on his laurels and sought out the Youth

Grant under the Ministry. The Dreketi lad was handed over an industrial heavy duty sewing machine worth approximately \$3000 last October. Like all of the Government's initiatives and programmes, the assistance has a monitoring mechanism. Upon careful monitoring conducted by the Ministry, an increase was noted in the number of customer orders. On a weekly average, Mr Shivakaran generates an income of \$295- \$465 and was able to tailor at least three blouses, three wedding lahenga's, three school uniforms, five shirts and five bula dresses per week. The Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru, during his official visit to the Northern Division earlier recently, said that appropriate guidance and training was



vital for young people to make knowledgeable decisions, avoid crime and use their abilities and potential for a sustainable liveli-

hood and success. He said that the Government wanted to unearth and develop the best in the youth, empowering them

to become agents of change, development and sustainable livelihood in communities.

FSC Pays Out Third Cane Payment For 2022 Harvest

The Fiji Sugar Corporation Ltd (FSC) paid a third cane payment to sugarcane farmers for the 2022 harvest season. According to FSC's Chief Executive Officer, Bhan Pratap Singh, this year's third cane payment of \$24.62 per tonne is one of the highest in the last two decades. The Sugar Industry Tribunal has certified that the nett share of the sugarcane growers' cane proceeds received as of February 28th 2022, is \$185,454,314, equivalent to \$78.15 per tonne of cane, in accordance with the Sugar Industry Master Award. FSC has paid out to date a total of \$53.53 per tonne of cane to farmers, which includes a \$40.15 per tonne delivery payment and \$13.38 per tonne second cane payment. The third cane payment of \$24.62 per tonne of cane was paid on Wednesday, March 29th, 2023, bringing the total amount paid to farmers for the 2022 cane payment to \$78.15 per tonne of cane. A sum of approximately \$40m has been paid to the growers as a third cane payment. "This better third cane payment is a result of the hard work and dedication of our sugarcane farmers, the factory



workers and all other stakeholders. The demand for sugar in the world markets has continued to be better in the last season, and FSC was able to secure better prices for the sugar that was sold for the last season's crop," said Mr Singh. "FSC is committed to supporting our farmers and ensuring the sustainability of the sugarcane industry in Fiji. We will continue to work closely with our stakeholders to address our farmers' challenges and pro-

vide them with the support they need to succeed." In addition, FSC would like to advise all sugarcane farmers to use the third cane payment wisely and prepare for the next crushing season. The sugarcane industry is vital to Fiji's economy, and its sustainability depends on its farmers' success. FSC encourages all farmers to use the funds to invest in equipment, infrastructure, and practices that will improve their yields

and increase the quality of their sugarcane. By doing so, farmers can help ensure the long-term viability of their farms and the industry as a whole. FSC is also committed to assisting farmers in access to inputs such as technical support and training to improve the quality and yield of their crops. The Corporation is also working on initiatives to increase the efficiency of the harvesting and transportation processes, which will benefit

farmers by reducing costs and increasing profits. FSC would like to thank all the sugarcane farmers for their hard work and dedication towards the industry. The Corporation looks forward to continuing its partnership with the farmers and stakeholders and wishes all farmers success in the next harvesting season, and looks forward to working with them to build a brighter future for Fiji's sugarcane industry.



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Fiji News

Only 40% Of Fijian Women Are Employed

Only 40 per cent of Fijian women are employed and earn an average one third less than men. This was highlighted by the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Lynda Tabuya in her ministerial statement in Parliament on Wednesday. Speaking on the newly-launched Fiji Country Gender Assessment (FCGA), Ms Tabuya highlighted that women in Fiji shouldered three quarters of unpaid care work at home.



Fiji hosts discussions on GBV training

Members of the Pacific Women's Network Against Violence Against Women (PWNAAVW) from 13 crisis centres are in Lautoka, Fiji to discuss the roll-out of the Gender-Based Violence Counsellor Training Package for the Pacific. The event is organised in partnership with the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) and the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO), through the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women (Pacific Partnership). The meeting is funded primarily by the European Union, UN Women and the Australia and New Zealand governments. In a joint statement by FWCC and UN Women MCO, the three-day meeting of Pacific experts will see the continuation of decades long progress led by the crisis centres towards standardising best practice approaches to gender-based violence counselling in the Pacific. FWCC co-ordinator and PWNAAVW chair Shamima Ali said Fiji was pleased to host network members from around the Pacific. "We are pleased to be hosting and to discuss how we will adapt and roll-out the gender-based counsellor training package in each of our countries," Ms Ali said. "It's a good opportunity for us to also discuss the next big step in this process which is the regional counsellor training-of-trainer's workshop coming up in April." She said the aim of the workshop was for all women and girl survivors across the Pacific to access uniform and consistent survivor-centred counselling



from trained counsellors at the centres. The package, adapted from training materials previously developed and used by FWCC across the region over the past three decades, would be used by new and experienced trainers from Pacific Island countries working on vio-

lence against women, girls and women's human rights. Representative for UN Women Delphine Serumaga said they were pleased to continue supporting the PWNAAVW in responding to violence against women and girls. "This will further enhance the accessibility and quality of

services for women and girls across the region for years to come," she said. Following the three-day meeting, representatives of the PWNAAVW and UN Women will join the Pacific Community and the counselling sub-committee of the Regional Working Group

on the implementation of family protection and domestic violence legislation. The two-day regional stakeholder dialogue will discuss, among other key issues, the development of a regional gender-based violence and domestic violence counselling framework.

Fiji News

Tarakinikini commissioned as Fiji's PRUN

Former senior military officer Filipo Tarakinikini was recently commissioned by the President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, as Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (PRUN). Mr Tarakinikini who served the Republic of Fiji Military Forces for 22 years before retiring at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 2002 takes over the duties of PRUN from Dr Satyendra Prasad. He will be based in New York. He became the Chief of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Section at the UNDSS, in the Headquarters in New York in 2018 where he led UN inter-agency assessment missions to countries like Iraq, and Syria; facilitated the establishment of the UN monitoring missions in Yemen, Iraq and Libya and led numerous field assistance missions. And he was part of the strategic assessment team for the UNSMIL mission in Libya in 2022.



Prof Biman attacks FijiFirst for its reckless spending

Development partners like Australia, New Zealand and Japan wrote us large cheques for hundreds of millions of dollars to help us pay bills because they knew we needed help. Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Professor Biman Prasad said this in his ministerial statement in Parliament yesterday where he attacked the FijiFirst government for its reckless spending that resulted in Fijians living in a "debt-driven economic fantasy land". He said Fiji survived the COVID-19 crisis because of the numerous aid packages provided by Australia, New Zealand and Japan but now that the pandemic was over, the country had to find its own footing. "Governments like Australia and New Zealand wrote us large cheques, for hundreds of millions of dollars to help us pay the bills. Japan lent us \$200m at almost zero interest for the next 40 years," he said. "All of these lenders and governments recognised that simple humanity demanded that we be given help. "But now the pandemic is over and we must once again stand on our own two feet. And this, is where our past will come



back to haunt us. "In the new post-COVID world, we cannot expect to simply borrow money at will. Our current debt position will come under scrutiny." Prof Prasad said while optimism was always good, Government also recognised the hard facts. "The optimistic scenario assumes

'business as usual'. And the Government cannot continue with 'business as usual'. And let me talk about why. "For the last 10 years we have been living in a debt-driven economic fantasy land. We have been pretending that we can just carry on as usual and everything will be all right.

That is not true. "For the last 10 years we have neglected basic infrastructure, the basic physical fabric that underpins the way many of us live and work. "We all assume, every day, that there will be water in our taps, that our roads and bridges will work, that our natural environ-

ment will remain unspoiled, that our hospitals will look after us when we get sick and that our children will get a decent education. "But every one of those assumptions is now at risk. And that is why I emphasise, we cannot just continue with business as usual."

Fiji News

Tourism leakages in Fiji

Tourism industry leakage is a big factor in national development and there is a need to understand what leakages are taking place from which sectors or the industry. This was highlighted by Professor Paresh Narayan of Monash University and the president of the Asia-Pacific Applied Economics Association (APAEA) at a public lecture held at the Reserve Bank of Fiji on Wednesday. Speaking on the issue 'Global tourism industry's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and policy implications for Fiji's tourism industry', Prof Narayan said understanding the revenue leakages would enable the government to make informed taxation and investment policies. According to Prof Narayan, Fiji's tourism industry has done well but that is no reason to be complacent. "We need to continue to search for innovation and uniqueness of our tourism product. We need to embrace and market an identity for Fiji tourism that ensures that we become shock (like the pandemic or other extreme events) resistant," he said. "Fiji has not been able to achieve a global tourism identity that is shock resistant." Prof Narayan said Fiji



needed to develop its tourism identity that could stand the tide of global shocks. "I am suggesting Fiji enhance its ecotourism component. Green tourism that blends climate change will be an idea Fiji tourism product." He

said while ecotourism had been in Fiji for ages, it had not grown to the extent that it could benefit the locals, including indigenous people and villages. "It has not been sufficiently developed to enhance the livelihood of the

indigenous populations that are at the forefront of village based ecotourism. "We need to see this grow to become a truly global model of success. "Ecotourism — village based tourism- should be enhanced while

retaining the green tourism aspects. This when done will make Fiji tourism sustainable, socially beneficial and environmentally friendly."

Fiji broadcaster ordered to pay doctor \$50k

Fijian Broadcasting Corporation Ltd has been ordered to pay \$50,000 to a doctor who was labelled as "fake" in a news story published in September 2016. Shanjivan Padarath claimed damages for cyber libel loss and damage to his fame, profession, dignity, prospect of promotion, employment abroad, mental distress, anxiety, pain and suffering. Mr Padarath claimed the representations were false, untrue, inaccurate and misleading and that the use of his photograph was malicious, deliberate and recklessness. FBC removed the photograph without any public apology and compensation after seven days. FBC Ltd said the publication was done in good faith without malice. "I note that the impugned publication does not name the plaintiff, neither in the caption nor in the body.

"The photograph published is a side view picture of the seated plaintiff with two people seated in front of him," stated Justice A.L.B. Brito-Mutunayagam in his March 16 ruling. "The reader is told that a man pretending to be a doctor with no medical qualifications has been exposed as a fraud and the so-called fake doctor had been operating for the last three months. "In my judgment, the natural and ordinary meaning which would have been conveyed to the ordinary reasonable reader by the article and the photograph is that the plaintiff was the fake doctor with no medical qualifications. Any reasonable man would come to this conclusion. "Why else was the plaintiff's picture used and not an animated picture?" FBC Ltd also has to pay Dr Padarath \$4000 in costs.



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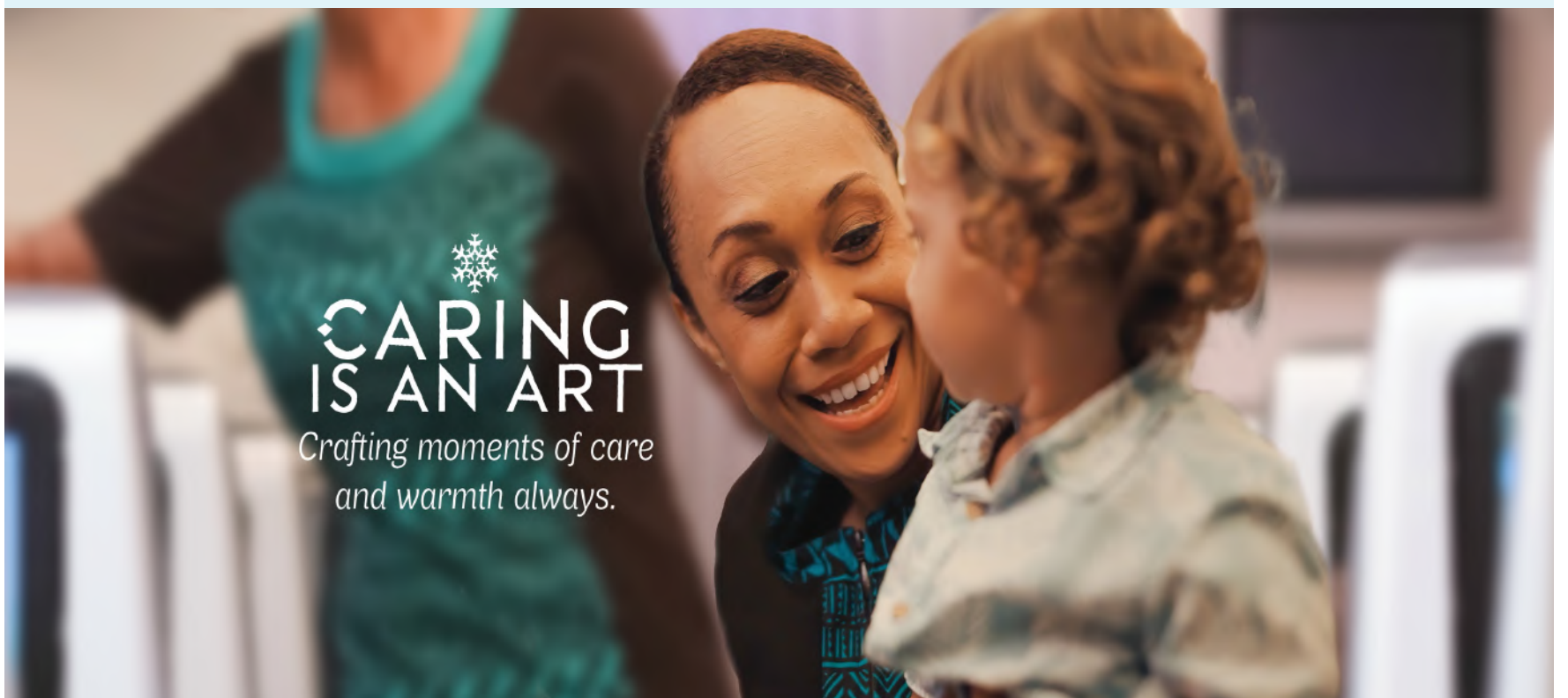
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World News

CIVICUS Report Exposes a Civil Society Under Attack

NAIROBI, Mar 31 (IPS) - As conflict and crises escalate to create human emergencies that have displaced over 100 million people worldwide, civil society's vital role of advocating for victims and monitoring human rights cannot be over-emphasised. The 2022 Nobel Peace Prize award to activists and organisations in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine for working to uphold human rights in the thick of conflict underpins this role. Yet this has not stopped gross violations of civic space as exposed by the State of Civil Society report from CIVICUS, the global civil society alliance, which was officially launched on March 30, 2023. "This year's report is the 12th in its annual published series, and it is a critical look back on 2022. Exploring trends in civil society action, at every level and in every arena, from struggles for democracy, inclusion, and climate justice to demands for global governance reform," said Ines Pousadela from CIVICUS. The report particularly highlights the many ways civil society comes under attack, caught in the crossfire and or deliberately targeted. For instance, the Russian award winner, the human rights organisation Memorial, was ordered to close in the run-up to the war. The laureate from Belarus, Ales Bialiatski, received a 10-year jail sentence. Mandeep Tiwana stressed that the repression of civic voices and actions is far from unique. In Ethiopia, "activists have been detained by the state. In Mali, the ruling military junta has banned activities of CSOs that receive funding from France, hampering humanitarian support to those affected by conflict. In Italy, civil society groups face trial for rescuing migrants at sea." Spanning over six chapters titled responding to conflict and crisis, mobilising for economic justice, defending democracy, advancing women's and LGBTQI+ rights, sounding the alarm on the climate emergency and urging global governance reform, the analysis presented by the report draws from an ongoing analysis initiative, CIVICUS Lens. On responding to conflict and crisis, Oleksandra



Matviichuk from the Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine spoke about the Russian invasion and the subsequent "unprecedented levels of war crimes against civilians such as torture and rape. And, a lack of accountability despite documented evidence of crimes against civilians." Bhavani Fonseka, from the Centre for Policy Alternatives, Sri Lanka, addressed the issue of mobilising for economic justice and how Sri Lanka captured the world's attention one year ago through protests that start small in neighbourhoods and ultimately led to the President fleeing the country. Launched in January 2022, CIVICUS Lens is directly informed by the voices of civil society affected by and responding to the major issues and challenges of the day. Through this lens, a civil society perspective of the world as it stands in early 2023 has emerged: one plagued by conflict and crises, including democratic values and institutions, but in which civil society continues to strive to make a

crucial difference in people's lives. On defending democracy, Amine Ghali of the Al Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center in Tunisia spoke about the challenge of removing authoritarian regimes, making significant progress in levels of democracy only for the country to regress to authoritarianism. "It starts with the narrative that democracy is not delivering; let me have all the power so that I can deliver for you. But they do not deliver. All they do is consolidate power. A government with democratic legitimacy demolishing democracy is where we are in Tunisia," he said. Erika Venadero from the National Network of Diverse Youth, Mexico, spoke about the country's journey that started in the 1960s towards egalitarian marriages. Today, same-sex marriages are provided for in the law. On global governance reforms, Ben Donaldson from UNA-UK spoke about global governance institutional failure and the need to improve what is working and reform what

is not, with a special focus on the UN Security Council. "It is useful to talk about Ukraine and the shortcomings of the UN Security Council. A member of the UN State Council is unable to hold one of its members accountable. There are, therefore, tensions at the heart of the UN. The President of Ukraine and many others ask, what is the UN for if it cannot stop the Ukraine invasion?" Baraka, a youthful climate activist and sustainability consultant in Uganda, spoke about ongoing efforts to stop a planned major pipeline project which will exacerbate the ongoing climate crisis, affecting lives and livelihoods. His concerns and actions are in line with the report findings that "civil society continues to be the force sounding the alarm on the triple threat of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. Urging action using every tactic available, from street protest and direct action to litigation and advocacy in national and global arenas." But in the con-

text of pressures on civic space and huge challenges, the report further finds that "civil society is growing, diversifying and widening its repertoire of tactics." Moving forward, the report highlights 10 ideas, including an urgent need for a broad-based campaign to win recognition of civil society's vital role in conflict and crisis response as well as greater emphasis by civil society and supportive states on protecting freedom of peaceful assembly. Additionally, the need for civil society to work with supportive states to take forward plans for UN Security Council reform and proposals to open up the UN and other international institutions to much greater public participation and scrutiny. In all, strengthening and enhancing the membership and reach of transnational civil society networks to enable the rapid deployment of solidarity and support when rights come under attack was also strongly encouraged.

Health News

Migraine and Cluster Headaches are Linked to Your Body's Internal Clock

If it feels like you're always getting headaches at the exact same time of day, you're hardly alone. New research shows a sound biological reason for this phenomenon — and it all has to do with the body's internal clock, the circadian system. Researchers published a meta-analysis, along with an accompanying editorial, today in the online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Data on migraine and cluster headaches shows a strong correlation between these headaches and the time of day, with a circadian pattern present in 71 percent of cluster headache patients and 50 percent of migraine patients. The study's author says the findings help illuminate why headaches happen at consistent times and potentially open the door to new circadian-based treatment options.

Headaches can be like clockwork. "We had noticed that a lot of cluster headache patients have headaches at the same time each day," study author Mark Joseph Burish, MD, Ph.D., of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston in Texas and a member of the American Academy of Neurology. "I had one patient that was getting a little bit irritated with how long it was taking to ask all the questions, and they said, 'If you can just wait for 15 minutes, you'll see what my headache looks like,'" Burish continued. "That's how confident they were of the timing to the headaches, and that really struck me." The meta-analysis confirmed what Burish and others already suspected: headaches often follow



the body's circadian rhythms. However, cluster headaches and migraine followed different patterns. Cluster headaches were found to be more likely in the spring and fall, with attacks generally occurring between late night and early morning. Migraine, on the other hand, showed a consistent low ebb with few attacks late at night and a broad peak ranging from late morning to early evening. Burish says that this understanding of how and when headaches occur could lead to new ways to mitigate the effects of these headaches. The role of genetics and hormones Both cluster headaches and migraine were associated with circadian genes. Further, levels of hormones related to the circadian system, such as cortisol and melatonin,

were altered in people with these headache disorders compared to those without them. Individuals with cluster headache had higher cortisol and lower melatonin while people with migraine had lower levels of melatonin. "Maybe there are other genes or other medications that alter some of these core genes or alter their circadian rhythms," he explained. "That's a brand new type of treatment that we could use to help these patients." These potential new treatment forms could utilize compounds already well understood: steroids and melatonin, which both affect the body's circadian rhythms. "Both of these are actually already treatments for cluster headache and migraine," Burish said. "If you take steroids at the right doses, that can

prevent both cluster headaches and migraine, and same for melatonin. They're not perfect treatments, but it's still promising data to show that altering circadian rhythms really could help the patient." While it's still too early to apply these findings to actionable treatment options, Burish says that the data can help people better understand why headaches can occur like clockwork throughout the day. "There are stories of patients who think that they're allergic to math class, or things like that, because the headaches are happening every time they're in that class," he said. "So this kind of explains that it's not about trying to get out of the class every day at 10 a.m. This is just how the headache works." Setting your internal clock Maintaining a healthy sleep schedule — and, in turn, healthy circadian rhythms — won't magically make your headaches go away. That said, it's still worth understanding how this process works and how a healthy schedule can benefit your body. Azizi Seixas, associate director of the Center for Translational Sleep and Circadian Sciences at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, told Healthline that the body's internal biological clock controls the process, which repeats itself approximately every 24 hours. "Circadian

rhythms play a crucial role in regulating many physiological processes, including sleep-wake cycles, hormone secretion, metabolism, immune function, and cognitive performance," he explained. "When circadian rhythms are disrupted, it can have negative impacts on these processes, leading to fatigue, mood disturbances, and health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease." For people who feel like their internal clock is out of sync, the best advice to follow is to set — and maintain — a consistent sleep schedule. "Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends," Seixas advised. Another thing to keep in mind is how light can affect circadian rhythms. Bright light in the morning can help reset the circadian clock and promote alertness, while avoiding bright light in the evening can help the body feel more restful. "Avoid stimulating activities before bedtime, like watching TV, using electronic devices, and exercising," said Seixas. "Creating a relaxing sleep environment and limiting caffeine and alcohol intake, especially in the evening, [also helps]. By following these best practices, it's possible to establish and maintain a healthy sleep and circadian schedule, which can lead to improved overall health and well-being."



Health News

Scientists See Anti-Aging Potential in This Invasive Weed

Research presented on Tuesday reports that the fruit of the cocklebur plant – considered by many to be a weed – might have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory components that could be used to protect skin. The study also found that the spiky plant could influence the production of collagen, a protein helping skin elasticity, and preventing wrinkles. Researchers from Myongji University in South Korea say compounds in the plant's fruit reduced damage from UVB exposure and sped healing in tests using cells and tissues. The study's findings were presented March 25-28 at Discover BMB, the annual meeting of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, in Seattle. The results of this study have yet to be published in a peer-reviewed journal. "We found that cocklebur fruit has the potential to protect the skin and help enhance production of collagen," said Eunsu Song, a doctoral candidate who did the research with Myongji professor Jinah Hwang, in a statement.

"In this regard, it could be an attractive ingredient for creams or other cosmetic forms," Song said. "It will likely show a synergistic effect if it is mixed with other effective compounds, such as hyaluronic acid or retinoic acid, against aging." What is the cocklebur? Cocklebur is a plant native to China, Central Asia, and Southern Europe that eventually spread worldwide. It's often found in moist or sandy areas such as riverbanks and roadside ditches. Its distinctive fruit is covered in stiff husks and burrs, which people have used for centuries in medicines for headache, stuffy nose, skin pigmentation disorders, and tuberculosis-related illness. In recent years, scientists have explored its possible use in treatments for cancer and rheumatoid arthritis. The authors of the new study say their work is the first examining the fruit's abilities as a skin protectant and wound-healing agent. What the researchers found They studied the molecular properties of the plant's fruit



and isolated compounds they said can contribute antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. They then used cell cultures and a 3D tissue model similar to human skin to discover the fruit extracts encouraged collagen production, sped wound healing, and offered protection against UVB radiation. The team said fruit grown in South Korea had slightly higher antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and more wound-healing activity than those from China. But they cautioned high doses of cocklebur fruit extract could be harmful and further research is needed before using it safely in cosmetic or pharmaceutical applications. "In its burrs, cocklebur fruit also has a toxic constituent, carboxyatractyloside, which can damage the liver," Song said. "Cocklebur showed a potential as a cosmetic agent by increasing collagen synthesis. However, it showed negative results with higher concentrations. Therefore, finding the proper concentration seems very

important and would be key to commercializing cocklebur fruit extracts in cosmetics." To that end, the researchers said they will study the biological mechanisms involved and conduct experiments in animal alternatives. What other experts think

Medical experts told there's real potential in researching benefits of cocklebur fruit. But they said there's just as much potential for harm if not done correctly. "Traditionally, this herb is used for fevers, rabies, chronic lumbago, headaches, and allergic rhinitis," Dr. Noor Hanif Said, a U.K.-trained dermatologist for Renaissance Dermatology Specialist Clinic, told Healthline. "The extract is also believed to treat epilepsy, poisonous insect bites, inflammation, and rheumatism. The Chinese and Native Americans utilize this herb as tea to get relief for rheumatism, kidney diseases, colds, diarrhea, tuberculosis, and other nasal ailments." "However, the seeds of this plant contain carboxyatractyloside that can be toxic," Said

told Healthline. "It can lead to experiencing unpleasant taste, abdominal pain, nausea, seizures, vomiting, and in worse cases, liver problems. Further tests and studies must be made." Ginger King is a cosmetic chemist and the President and CEO of Grace Kingdom Beauty. She told Healthline cocklebur seeds can be used as a dye, but cosmetic colorants are regulated in the U.S. "However, this plant is also highly poisonous so (people) should avoid mucous membranes like the eye or lips area," King told Healthline. "Being poisonous, there is potential to be used as a preservative but need to be tested out via micro challenge test." Dr. Kelly Johnson-Arbor, a medical toxicology physician and medical director at National Capital Poison Center, told Healthline cocklebur's anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties are "intriguing." "It's important to know that the fruits of the plant can also be poisonous,"

Johnson-Arbor said. "Cocklebur is poisonous when consumed by pigs, cows, and other animals. Humans can also be poisoned after eating cocklebur seeds, which are contained within the fruit of the plant. Consumption of as little as ten cocklebur seeds can lead to liver damage in children. Death has also been reported in people who have eaten cocklebur." Johnson-Arbor said people have traditionally put the plant "through a special baking process designed to reduce toxicity." "Because of the plant's poisonous potential, people should not consume cocklebur fruit, and should only use cocklebur under the close supervision of a physician," Johnson-Arbor. The bottom line Researchers in South Korea say compounds in the cocklebur's fruit may help protect skin. In tests using cells and tissues, these compounds promoted collagen production, reduced damage from UVB exposure, and sped wound healing. However, further testing is still needed.

Health News

Experimental Obesity Treatment Could Produce Weight Loss Without Surgery or Nausea

A new drug might potentially treat obesity without surgery and without the side effects of current medications, according to new research presented at the spring meeting of the American Chemical Society. In rats, the peptides tested dramatically reduced weight and lowered blood sugar. Researchers used rats to test a new peptide for weight loss. What the researchers found

In the study, rats on the experimental drug liraglutide ate up to 80% less than they would typically eat and, by day 16, had lost an average of 12% of their weight. There was no indication of nausea or vomiting. Injectable compounds typically reduce the side effects of nausea and vomiting, common in other weight loss medications. The weight loss was an effect of decreased eating and higher energy expenditure. The researchers noted that the rats showed increased movement, heart rate, or body temperature. A research team led by Robert Doyle, PhD, a professor of chemistry at Syracuse University and Dr. Christian Roth, a physician specializing in Endocrinology and Diabetes at Seattle Children's Hospital, created the peptide. The rats received the medication by injection a few times a week. The scientists noted that this schedule kept the weight off and lowered blood sugar levels



by pulling glucose into muscle tissue, where it could potentially turn into fuel. It also converts some cells in the pancreas into insulin-producing cells, helping to replace those damaged by diabetes. While the research is still in the early stages, the researchers think that the experimental drug has potential. The researchers note that between 80% and 90% of people taking weight-loss medications that are currently available discontinue use within a year. "The study shows an interesting potential for a drug that may be better tolerated

than currently available drugs," says Dr. Mir Ali, bariatric surgeon and medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA. Ali pointed out there are few concerns about this early research: First, these are only early results in a rodent model; it will take some years before it gets to the point of human trials. Second, side effects are not necessarily the only reason patients stop medication: cost is a significant factor in many of these medications. And finally,

most studies have shown that when a patient stops a weight loss medication, they regain significant weight. Surgery, by far, has significantly more effective long-term outcomes." Another unexpected result that surfaced in the study is a reduced craving for opioids such as fentanyl. If it works the same way in humans, it can help people addicted to opioids quit or fend off relapses. The scientists have filed for a patent and plan to test the peptide in primates. "Overall, this is a promising new development in the treatment of obesity," says Dr. Minisha Sood, an endocrinologist at Lenox Hill Hospital. "Activating brain regions that might have a profound appetite suppressant effect which would be yet another option in persons with obesity and upregulated appetite centers in the brain, especially those who do not respond to Diabetes medications, such as Trulicity or Ozempic, alone." "Given it appears to have dual agnostic properties, I would expect it to be even more effective than Ozempic, a single agonist, in appetite suppression," Dr. Sood said. What You Need to Know About Obesity Overweight and obesity are chronic, common conditions in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health Trusted Source.

to heart disease, diabetes, and cancer and can aggravate many other health conditions. The causes of obesity include: Eating patterns, such as eating high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and beverages Lack of sleep Lack of physical activity Some medications, such as those for diabetes, depression, or high blood pressure Genetics and family history

Around three-fourths of adults in the US older than age 20 have either overweight or obesity. About 20% of children between ages 2 and 19 years have obesity. Medical professionals use body mass index (BMI) to screen for overweight and obesity. The calculation is the weight (in kilograms) divided by the square of height (in meters.) There are several BMI calculators online, including one from the CDC Trusted Source. "For any further studies on weight reduction I'd like further study to evaluate not only weight loss but body composition," Sood told Healthline. "We simply do not have enough insight into whether patients on gut hormone agonists for weight loss are primarily losing fat or a combination of muscle and fat (the latter is more likely). Losing muscle would be antithetical to the goal of aging well and maintaining a robust metabolism in the aging process."

These conditions are linked



Tech News

Fortune 500 company buys San Antonio IT firm Sirius Computer Solutions for \$2.5B in cash

San Antonio-based Sirius Computer Solutions has been acquired for \$2.5 billion in cash by CDW Corp., an Illinois-based Fortune 500 company. The deal is the second significant acquisition of a San Antonio tech company this month. Earlier in October, San Antonio email technology company Pathwire was acquired by an out-of-state firm for \$1.9 billion. Sirius, founded in 1980 by Harvey Najim as Star Data Systems, is “one of the largest and most well-regarded IT solutions integrators in North America,” CDW President and CEO Christine Leahy said in a call with investors. She said the acquisition of Sirius “accelerates our services and solutions capabilities” and would help to scale and balance CDW’s customer portfolio. Sirius provides information technology support, consultation, and management for approximately 3,900 large and mid-sized customers across the country. It specialties in-

cludes digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, and cloud systems. Its offices are in North San Antonio, right next to San Antonio International Airport. Sirius employs over 2,600 individuals in the United States, Canada, and India. It generated \$2.04 billion in net sales in 2020, according to CDW. The company has grown rapidly in recent years. Annual revenue generated by the company grew from \$817 million in 2010 to \$3 billion in 2018, according to its website. The company has long been an important partner for IBM, for which the legacy computer giant has given it many awards of recognition. In recent years it has added to its list of partners Dell, Citrix, Cisco, Adobe, Amazon Web Services, and more. CDW provides technology products and solutions to businesses, governments, education, and health care customers in the United States. It employs over 10,500 people across the country, and in its fiscal year ending



in June generated net sales of approximately \$20 billion.

CDW bought Sirius from Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, a private equity firm that invested in the company in 2019. The transaction is expected to close in December. Sirius President

and CEO Joe Mertens said in a prepared statement that the company welcomes “the opportunity to bring our complementary services and solutions capabilities to serve a broader market of customers as a combined company.” Najim has re-

mained chairman emeritus of the company, which he renamed from Star Data Systems in 1993 as it began expanding with offices in Chicago and Dallas. He retired in 2011 to concentrate on philanthropic efforts and Mertens became CEO.

San Antonio startup Betty’s Co. wins TechFuel pitch competition

A San Antonio startup focused on women’s health won a pitch competition funded by Bexar County on Thursday night, taking home the grand prize of a \$50,000 check. Betty’s Co., the winning startup, is a virtual care platform for young women in Texas that seeks to expand into an online health store and mobile clinic. It aims to reach women at a stage in life when they’re not getting regular health care and uses marketing replete with millennial language like “favs” and “OMG.” TechFuel, a pitch contest for early-stage startups funded from Bexar County’s innovation fund and organized by tech industry advocate group Tech Bloc, saw a sold out audience of roughly 300 pack into the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts. Betty’s Co. and the four other finalists at the event had advanced through brackets against 58 other start-

ups from San Antonio and across Texas. The five startups made final pitches at the event. Dax Moreno, the organizing lead for the event on Tech Bloc’s board, said he was thrilled at the turnout. “Not only did we bring community together,” as COVID-19 cases continue to decline, “but we were also able to celebrate startups and entrepreneurs who view San Antonio as a place they can grow and thrive.” TechFuel coincided with the 2021 iteration of Startup Week, a two week-long event series spotlighting the local startup scene. The founder of Betty’s Co., Jennifer Newell, said she wanted to expand in San Antonio out of its office in Geekdom and create more high-paying tech jobs for women. She said they plan to stay in the city because its demographics will allow the company to grow — and because San Antonio

has been her home for the past 10 years, since her move from Nashville. Event judge Luis Martinez, one of five judges and the director for Trinity University’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, said he and other judges were impressed by Newell’s “top-notch” pitch and her materials submitted in advance. The runner-up to Betty’s Co. was Alt-Bionics, a startup from a recent University of Texas at San Antonio graduate which seeks to develop motorized prosthetic limbs at an affordable rate for amputees. Contest organizers handed Alt-Bionics founder Ryan Saavedra a check for \$20,000. The next three finalists’ order was chosen by an audience vote. The second runner-up was EmGenisys, which aims to improve assisted reproduction in livestock with the use of artificial intelligence. The company received \$10,000.

An honorable mention went to IncentiFind, which is compiling government incentives for real estate and home improvement projects. It won \$7,500. The fifth finalist, Astroport Space Technologies, Inc., seeks to convert moon dust into bricks and materials for construction on a lunar base. It won \$2,500 for getting to the finals, as did the other four. At an afterparty held outside the Tobin Center, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce President Richard Perez said the night’s winners would receive membership in the chamber. Providing the \$100,000 cash prize pool was the Bexar County Innovation Fund, a \$1 million cache aimed at bolstering the local tech industry. “The County has worked closely with TechBloc since 2016 to develop the highly successful TechFuel pitch competition to help invigorate our San Antonio startup

scene,” Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff said in a prepared statement. “We continue to be impressed by TechFuel’s impact in drawing state-wide attention to our startup community and increasing local and regional participation in our startup ecosystem,” he continued, adding that it was important to bring TechFuel back in a live format. The co-founder of last year’s winner, Grain4Grain, a low-carb spent barley flour company, told the San Antonio Report earlier this year that the \$50,000 grand prize helped the company through the height of the pandemic last year. Yoni Medhin said winning also gave his venture legitimacy among investors and paved the way for a fundraising round this year to expand its facilities in San Antonio.

Tech News

Cybersecurity firm Jungle Disk ventures



Jungle Disk, a cybersecurity services firm, will move its offices to a former restaurant in Southtown, which it is redeveloping to feature dozens of solar panels. The company, which spun off from Rackspace in 2016, became what is thought to be San Antonio's second largest privately held tech company by revenue last year when it made several acquisitions. Bret Piatt, the company's CEO, said the renovations to the space have been designed with pandemic-era sensibilities, seeking to entice wary workers

to come back to a collaborative, in-person environment.

"What does the next office space look like?" Piatt said the conversation at the company began. "Even with COVID dying down and access to vaccines, folks still don't want to be packed in a conference room with no windows for two hours." The design by architects Able City places a heavy emphasis on an outdoor patio, connected to the interior by doors that will stay open during good weather. Piatt said the outdoor space could be active for nine

months out of the year. Even the summer heat could be tamed with shade cover and fans. Piatt also said the building designs fits "as much solar [panels] as we could." The panels, which will cover the outdoor patio as well as the building's roof, go alongside high ceilings, natural window placement, landscaping, and other energy-efficient designs. "We thought about how to make the building energy sustainable and appropriate for this piece of land," he said. The property, at the corner of West Drexel Avenue and South Presa

Street, was formerly a Mexican restaurant and sits next to an auto shop and a floral shop. It's also near two coffee shops and a brewery, the proximity to which Piatt said would be a plus for Jungle Disk employees. "Our folks want the office to be part of a community," he said. U.S. Census Bureau demographic figures from 2019 for the zip code, 78210, show that 83% of residents are Hispanic and nearly 20% of families are living in poverty. County records show the property was purchased in February last year by Porthcawl Holdings, the private equity firm that bought Jungle Disk from Rackspace in 2016, and which last year powered its expansion. The property is zoned as a general industrial district. Jungle Disk, which Piatt said employs 30-40 individuals in San Antonio and 120 globally, is currently headquartered out of an office space on Soledad Street downtown, roughly within the city's nascent tech district, a cluster of tech ventures along Houston Street that is home to the Geekdom co-working space, Scaleworks, and other enterprises. Last year a partner at Dry Line, one of Jungle Disk's

private equity backers, said the cybersecurity firm would likely move into another office in the tech district. The planned office is about a 2-mile drive south of that corridor. "Our tech district is growing," Piatt said. "While this feels far south for San Antonio, it's a mile from South Presa to Hemisfair Park." David Heard, the CEO of Tech Bloc, an advocacy group for the city's tech sector who has long pushed for the development of a dense tech corridor, said the real value of that downtown district is as an incubator for companies to start. But as those ventures grow, he said, the desire to own property would naturally push them into Southtown and beyond. Heard praised the new office design as a beautiful example of the "varied developments we're going to get as tech companies grow and mature." He said it was a win for the city's tech sector, and could help attract and retain industry talent in the city. Piatt said that if construction happens on schedule, employees could begin working at the office by the end of the year or early next year.



Health News

These Common Medications May be Silently Damage Your Kidneys

Everyday medications that you have stashed in your cabinet could harm your kidneys if taken too often or at high doses. In fact, 20% of kidney damage that is caused by medications applies to both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians. “Most people don’t give their kidneys a second thought, but in reality, 1 in 3 people in the U.S. are at risk for kidney disease. Drug-induced kidney disease is arguably the most preventable,” HaVy Ngo-Hamilton, PharmD, clinical consultant at BuzzRx. Which common medications could silently damage kidneys? While there are many medications that can cause kidney damage, below are common ones to keep in mind.

NSAIDs Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) treat pain and inflammation. They include aspirin (Bayer, Ecotrin), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). These medications are among the most common culprits of drug-induced kidney disease in which long-term use can lead to chronic kidney disease (CKD). “These medicines should never be taken every day or often without consultation with your healthcare provider first,” Emily Beckman, APRN, nurse practitioner at Norton Community Medical Associates, told Healthline. **Antibiotics** Antibiotics, such as penicillin and cephalosporins, are given to fight infections caused by bacteria. While they are typically prescribed with the intention of finishing the entire prescription, many people don’t finish them and keep extras in their cabinets. “Many people will try



to self-medicate with ‘leftover’ antibiotics when they feel a cold coming on. Not only is this ineffective for a viral-induced cold, but may also cause acute kidney issues,” said Ngo-Hamilton. **Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)** PPIs, such as omeprazole (Prilosec) and lansoprazole (Prevacid), help reduce stomach acid and are among the most commonly prescribed medications. “While they have a low overall risk for kidney injury, long-term use and sustained higher doses have been found to increase the chance of kidney disease,” said Ngo-Hamilton. **Blood pressure medications** Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACEIs) and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs) are effective at controlling blood pressure and reducing the risk of stroke and other cardiovascular diseases. Some common ACEIs include bena-

zepiril (Lotensin), enalapril (Vasotec), and lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril). Common ARBs include azilsartan (Edarbi), candesartan (Atacand), and irbesartan (Avapro). “You should not stop taking these medications unless your doctor tells you to,” said Ngo-Hamilton. “However, while on these medications, you should be vigilant of other medications that can be harmful for your kidneys to prevent increasing the risk of kidney injury.” **Supplements** Supplements can also affect kidney function. While not all supplements are unhealthy, Beckman suggested talking to your healthcare provider for guidance on the best way to take supplements as part of an overall health plan. “Medicine is truly lifesaving, but we always have to be mindful of how our food intake and lifestyle make a huge difference in our overall well-being, in-

cluding protecting our kidneys,” Beckman said. Ngo-Hamilton agreed. She said the biggest concern with herbal supplements is their interaction with prescription and OTC products, and their ability to cause kidney injury. “A common Chinese medicine containing aristolochic acid has been linked to chronic kidney injury. These herbal supplements are used to alleviate symptoms of arthritis, menstrual pain, and weight loss,” she said. **Psychiatric medications** Medications used to treat mental health conditions can also cause kidney problems, such as Prozac (fluoxetine), which is a commonly prescribed antidepressant. “Lithium and Elavil (amitriptyline), two mood stabilizers, are also potentially harmful for the kidneys. These psychiatric medications can cause muscle breakdown, leading to the release of myoglobin into the bloodstream. Since the kidneys work to filter myoglobin, kidney damage happens as a result,” said Ngo-Hamilton. How much of these medications is too much? Knowing how much medication is too much or what a “hard-stop” is before certain medications can cause harm to your kidneys is difficult to answer, said Ngo-Hamilton. “Unfortunately, there is no cut-and-dried answer to that question,” she said. Generally, for OTC products, if you

take more than what’s instructed on the product label, or for an extended period of time, it may be dangerous to kidney health, she added. For prescription medications, she said taking more than what your doctor prescribed or using leftover antibiotics, antivirals, and pain relievers, can all be harmful to the kidneys. Who’s at the highest risk of kidney damage from medication? Some people are at a higher risk of drug-induced nephrotoxicity (kidney damage) than others. Ngo-Hamilton said risk factors include: Being over 60 years old Having an underlying renal insufficiency that is caused by other diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and lupus nephritis Living with medical conditions, such as intravascular volume depletion (seen in vomiting, diarrhea, and bleeding), diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases like high blood pressure, liver dysfunction, electrolyte imbalances, and sepsis If you are at high risk, talk with your doctor about assessing your baseline renal function before taking any medication. “Also, ask questions about nephrotoxic drug combinations (taking more than one medication that can cause renal injury) to find out if your current medications put you at higher risk for kidney injury,” said Ngo-Hamilton.



World News

Our Wonderful Differences Enriches Societies

DHAKA, Bangladesh, Mar 31 (IPS) - On the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day on 2 April 2023, IPS is republishing 'When Is Too Much Autism Awareness Still Not Enough?' When is too much Autism awareness still not enough? This thought recurs every April as we near World Autism Day on April 2, and parents reach out to me after reading enthusiastic and well-meaning news and journal articles – which are actually harmful and hurtful. In 2008, along with a few dedicated parents and professionals, we began our effort to raise awareness around Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We eventually came together to form an advocacy, capacity-building, and research-based not-for-profit organization (Shuchona Foundation) established in 2014. Today, we feel our work in Bangladesh, through effective national and international partnerships with equally dedicated parents and professionals, has impacted the country.

Professional training, extensive awareness activities, and inclusion in social situations are demonstrable. The best part is that parents no longer view themselves as victims punished by fate for having a child with a disability. Despite all the efforts in educating people in the many sectors of our country, including the formulation of a detailed National Strategic Plan, it is shocking to still find blatant disregard for the truth. I have, therefore, requested a parent, a former Shuchona Foundation head of operations and now a member of our executive board, to share her thoughts. Nothing

speaks the truth louder and stronger than the person who has been on the receiving end of the discriminatory, hurtful, and unethical behaviour than the parent who hears it over and over again. Here below excerpts of what I learned from Zain Bari Rizvi If I had a Taka (Bangladesh currency) for each time someone said: 'But he looks so normal,' when I share that my son is on the Autism Spectrum, I would have been able to take early retirement at a villa in the Maldives! I do not blame these mostly well-meaning people and their lack of awareness when widely read, and circulated dailies choose to use photos of children with Downs Syndrome to illustrate what children with Autism look like.

Autistic traits cannot be captured with a still photograph, and most individuals with ASD look just like any other typical peer. This sort of misrepresentation is not innocent and borders on dangerously harmful. Deliberately associating a congenital genetic condition with a neurodevelopmental one will confuse the readers into thinking they are the same. This may also prevent parents and caregivers of children with Autism from seeking early intervention services that could potentially improve outcomes because they will have the false sense of comfort that their child 'looks normal', aka neurotypical. There is no one true face of Autism because it is a not-one-size-fits-all spectrum disorder. It stays true to this famous quote by an Autism Advocate and Autistic person, Dr Stephen Shore: "If you've met one individual with autism,

you've met one individual with autism." I am not a psychologist nor an expert, but as a parent who had the privilege to be educated and used my spare time and resources to do research, this incorrect and harmful visual misrepresentation enrages and upsets me. Bangladesh has made considerable strides in Autism advocacy and policy changes due to extraordinary efforts by the leadership team at Shuchona Foundation. The Foundation has selflessly spearheaded the job of educating and opening the minds and hearts of people about what it entails to be on the Autism Spectrum. Because of their single minded dedication to this cause, we, in Bangladesh, are finally having a discourse on what Autism is and acknowledge and accept the differences in our children with Autism.

We also have access to world-class services like early interventions such as ABA therapy and parent/caregiver engagement without shame or guilt. And if there is one thing I learnt working closely with Shuchona Foundation, the key to making a difference is "to acknowledge that people will not always get it right but to look out for whether they want to learn to make it right".

As World Autism Day on April 2 nears, my humble request to journalists and mainstream media is to do your duty of imparting factual and medically sound knowledge and information. Learn from your mistakes and ensure your stories and visual representations are accurate because media has the power to help or harm. As



I watch my feisty, opinionated and uber affectionate ASD child thrive in a typical school and social setting thanks to early childhood interventions and therapy, I shudder at the thought of what could have been our reality if I had paid heed to the photos of what Autism looks like in Bangladesh media. I hope those reading this will take heed. Autism is a complex state of being, and no two autistics are alike. Every time I meet and spend time with someone with Autism, I am amazed at how unique, creative, and what a gift they are to the world. I want to change how we treat those we deem to be different, not change who they are. For centuries all we have done is find creative ways to separate the majority from the minority. I hope the two years of the global pandemic will finally make us realize that when one group of people mistreat another, be it

through military, financial or social power, we all suffer, not just the ones we discriminate against. Saima Wazed Hossain is Advisor to the Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), on Mental Health and Autism. She is Chairperson, National Advisory Committee for Autism and NDDs, Bangladesh and Chairperson, Shuchona Foundation. She is a specialist in Clinical Psychology and an expert on Neurodevelopment disorders and mental health. Her efforts have led to international awareness, policy and program changes, and the adoption of three international resolutions at the United Nations and WHO. Zain Bari Rizvi is a Board Member of Shuchona Foundation, an Operations and Finance professional who is a passionate advocate for people with Autism and a mother of two children.

Farmers in Fiji 'shortchanged' in cane payments; lost \$13.8m

Sugarcane farmers in Fiji lost \$13.87 million after being "shortchanged" in their cane payments from 2019 to 2021. Sugar Minister Charan Jeeth Singh said this in Parliament this week.

Yes, there was a shortchange but let me go beyond 2019. Let us start with 2017," Mr Singh said. "In 2017, the previous gov-

ernment gave \$85 per tonne. In 2018, they also gave \$85 per tonne. "What happened in 2019? What the former minister for economy said, and I quote: 'What's new in this budget is that we will be setting up a stabilisation fund, funded in partnership with Fiji Sugar Corporation of \$85 a tonne for all cane payment for the next three

years'. "That was what the former minister for economy said.

Now come 2019, instead of paying \$85, they paid \$82.21, a shortfall of \$2.79."

Mr Singh said in 2020, farmers were paid \$82.41, a shortfall of \$2.59 and in 2021, they were paid \$81.93, a shortfall of \$3.07. "In that case, the farmers lost \$13.87 million and you fooled

the cane farmers. "I am a cane farmer. I lost \$8500 in the short-change.

"There is a saying that goes that you can fool someone sometimes but you cannot fool someone all the time. And that is why they fooled the farmers." His comments were met with jeers from the Opposition side, with FijiFirst MP

Parveen Kumar responding to the claims. "I just want to inform the honourable minister that the short change that he has been talking about, which he has not revealed, was for the industry cost," Mr Kumar said. "That was paid on behalf of the farmers. Please go and do some research."

Food

Date and Walnut Pie Recipe

Date and Walnut Pie Recipe

Total Time: 1hr 10min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 1 hr

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. For the Pastry:
2. 1 cup refined flour
3. 1 tsp powdered sugar
4. 1/3 cup butter
5. Cold water - to mix
6. For the Filling:
7. 80 gm walnuts - chopped fine
8. 40 gm dates - chopped fine
9. 1 cup milk - mixed with 2 tsp cornflour
10. 1/4 cup butter
11. 1/4 cup sugar
12. 1/4 brown sugar
13. A 6-7 inch pie dish - for

baking

How to

1. Mix the pastry ingredients to a dough and line the pie dish.
2. Prick the shell with a fork and bake in a pre-heated oven at 160 C-325 F for 15-20 minutes.
3. Remove from oven and cool.
4. Mix milk mixture, butter, sugar, brown sugar and blend well.
5. Cook on a slow fire till well blended.
6. Stir in walnut and dates and place mixture in the baked pie shell.
7. Bake at 160 C-325 F for 45 minutes or till set.



Filled Cucumber Cases Recipe



Filled Cucumber Cases

Total Time: 30 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 20 min

Serves: 8 Servings

Ingredients

1. 6 Cucumbers (cut into 1" slices), peeled
2. 1 Tbsp Sweet chutney
3. 250 Gram Shellfish (shelled, prepared and cooked)
4. 125 Ml Home made Mayonnaise
5. 2 tsp Lemon juice
6. 2 Tbsp Thick yogurt
7. 1 Tbsp White radish, grated
8. 1/2 tsp Garlic paste

9. 1 Tbsp Coriander, chopped
10. 1 Green chilli, chopped
11. 1 Tbsp Gherkins, finely chopped
12. 1 Tbsp Tomato puree
13. For the Garnish:
14. 1 Rind of orange, shredded
15. Chilli powder (mild)

4. Boil orange shreds for 3 minutes in water. Drain, refresh and dry.
5. Spoon the sweet chutney into the center of each cucumber case.
6. Mix all other ingredients with the shellfish (Substitute it with butter sauteed mushrooms if you are a vegetarian), season well and pile into the center of the cucumber.
7. Garnish with orange peel and dust on some chilli powder. Serve.

How to

1. Blanch cucumbers in boiling water for 30 seconds.
2. Drain and refresh with cold water, and pat dry with a cloth.
3. Using a teaspoon, remove the seeds from the center of the cucumber to create

- an indent.
4. Boil orange shreds for 3 minutes in water. Drain, refresh and dry.
5. Spoon the sweet chutney into the center of each cucumber case.
6. Mix all other ingredients with the shellfish (Substitute it with butter sauteed mushrooms if you are a vegetarian), season well and pile into the center of the cucumber.
7. Garnish with orange peel and dust on some chilli powder. Serve.

Grilled Vegetable Capachio Recipe

Grilled Vegetable Capachio

Total Time: 25 min

Prep Time : 05 min

Cook Time : 20 min

Serves: 4 Servings

Ingredients

1. 50 Gram Lettuce (cleaned, washed & broken)
2. 15 Gram Onion rings, grilled
3. 25 Gram Tomatoes (sliced), grilled
4. 15 Gram Green Capsicum rings, grilled
5. 15 Gram Yellow Capsicum rings, grilled
6. 15 Gram Red Capsicum rings, grilled

7. 30 Gram Aubergine (sliced), grilled
8. 30 Gram Cheddar Cheese, sliced
9. 25 Ml Olive oil
10. 15 Gram Basil leaves
11. 2 Gram Milled Pepper powder
12. To taste Salt
13. 1 1/2 Juice of Lemons
14. 20 Gram Walnuts (crushed), roasted

How to

1. In a bowl, add olive oil, lemon juice, salt, pepper and roasted walnut.
2. Mix well, season to taste. On a platter, pile crisp let-

3. Layer the grilled vegetables around it.

4. Place cheese slices next.
5. Drizzle the dressing over the top of the grilled veg-

- etables.
6. Serve the vegetables garnished with milled pepper.



Fly Travel

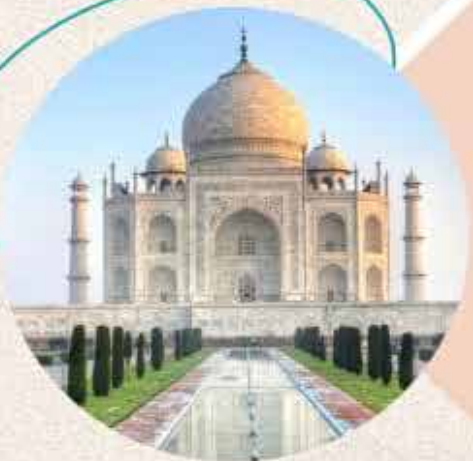
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Sports News

Tamani scores in extra time as Fiji reaches final

Replacement halfback Terio Tamani scored an extra time winner as Fiji defeated Great Britain 19-14 to book its place in the grand final of the 2023 Hong Kong 7s against arch rivals New Zealand. The winner had to be decided by golden point after the teams were locked 14-14 at fulltime. A long pass from Ponipate Loganimesi found Iowane Teba who drew two defenders before offloading the ball to Tamani who raced his way to the try-line and dived to touch-down just a few centimeters from the dead-ball line. The match referee had to use the Technical Match Official

(TMO) to award the try. Robbie Ferguson scored first in the match but a Waisea Nacuqu try leveled things at 7-7 just before halftime. Winger Vuiviawa Nacuqu scored Fiji's second try which was converted by Nacuqu but a Tom Williams try in the 11th minute tied up the scores and despite all efforts, neither of the sides could score as the match entered extra time with Tamani proving to be the hero for Fiji. Meanwhile New Zealand defeated France 12-7 in the first Cup semifinal. The final will kick off at 12.15am tomorrow.



Byrne impressed with Drua's performance

Fijian Drua coach Mick Byrne says the side put on a much improved performance against the Melbourne Rebels in Round 6 of Super Rugby Pacific in Suva on Saturday and he is impressed with the outing. Byrne said the Fijians showed a lot of promise and played like a well-oiled machine in their 38-28 win compared to the disappointing 57-24 loss to the Highlanders last weekend. "Really pleased the way we started and as we talked about it as a team that over the last couple of weeks, we were slow out at the blocks. We know we can go over the 80, we can play but we just needed to start well." "I'm really proud of the way every single player went out of the way and we got the points on the board which

helps in the performance we did." "We had a week at home and got our prep time in the heat. It was more about our desire to carry hard at the game at the start of the game." "Cross the ball, everyone did well and Masi a couple of times made crucial line breaks. The whole team got him behind and it wasn't a one thing moment. There was constant 15 man rugby that we kept pushing across the line." He also acknowledged the hard work and effort displayed by debutants Micheal Naitokani and Philip Baselala, who gave their all in the match. "Full credits to the tight five, there was a massive put on them during the week and they really stepped up today." "First great touch for Micheal. He showed us why we



brought him in and he's a good young player. He moves well, he's just finding his way in the training, he's learning how to

become a professional rugby player and he has improved every week." "Philip had great touches, feeding the ball and

getting on as well. I'm really happy for those two young guys and I'm sure they have a long career up front."

Drua teams dedicate wins to children of Fiji

Rooster Chicken Fijiana Drua and the Swire Shipping Fijian Drua dedicated their Super W and Super Rugby Pacific wins against the Rebels on Saturday to the children of Fiji. Fijiana Drua skipper Bitila Tawake said their 39-12 win over the Melbourne Rebels women was for the aspiring girls and women in Fiji. "Tomorrow (Today) is Palm Sunday so this was a

must-win for the children of Fiji. This one's for them." Fijian Drua defeated Melbourne Rebels 38-28 and skipper Meli Derenalagi said they wanted to gift this win to the young rugby lovers in Fiji. "A lot of children come to watch our match whenever we play at home and their support inspires us. We really wanted to win this for them to make their palm Sunday special.



BAY FC 2024 SCHEDULE









HOME

 MAR 30 SAT / 7 PM ★	 MAY 17 FRI / 7:30 PM +♦	 JULY 6 SAT / 7 PM +♦
 APR 14 SUN / 5 PM +♦	 MAY 24 FRI / 7 PM ▲	 SEPT 7 SAT / 7 PM ★
 MAY 1 WED / 7 PM ○♦	 JUNE 16 SUN / 7 PM ○♦	 SEPT 20 FRI / 7:30 PM +♦
 MAY 5 SUN / 5 PM +♦	 JUNE 22 SAT / 7 PM ★	 OCT 12 SAT / 7 PM ★
		 OCT 19 SAT / 7 PM ★

AWAY

 MAR 16 SAT / 7 PM ★	 MAY 11 SAT / 4:30 PM ★	 AUG 30 FRI / 7 PM ▲
 MAR 23 SAT / 4:30 PM ★	 JUNE 9 SUN / 1 PM +♦	 SEPT 13 FRI / 5 PM ▲
 APR 20 SAT / 4:30 PM ★	 JUNE 29 SAT / 1 PM ■	 SEPT 29 SUN / 3 PM +♦
 APR 27 SAT / 7 PM ★	 AUG 23 FRI / 6:30 PM +♦	 OCT 5 SAT / 4:30 PM ★
		 NOV 2 SAT / 6:30 PM ★

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Seven's Legend Waisale Serevi Honored in New Pasifika Rugby Hall of Fame



WAISALE SEREVI

The world of rugby was abuzz with excitement as the inaugural class of the Pasifika Rugby Hall of Fame was unveiled last weekend at Auck-

land's iconic Eden Park. Among those enshrined is none other than the legendary Fijian seven-a-side star, Waisale Tikoisolomoni Serevi. Known affection-

ately by fans around the globe as "the king of seven's rugby," this esteemed honor further solidifies Serevi's standing as one of the sport's all-time greats.

As a boy growing up in the village of Qarani, Gau, young Waisale honed his skills playing barefoot with makeshift balls made out of banana leaves or old socks stuffed with grass. His natural talent for running, evading opponents, and scoring tries soon caught the attention of local coaches who encouraged him to pursue the game more seriously. Little did they know that their small island nation would produce not just an exceptional player but also a global ambassador for the sport of rugby.

Throughout his storied career, Serevi amassed numerous accolades both domestically and internationally. He led the Fiji national team to victory in several major tournaments including two Commonwealth Games gold medals (1998 & 2006) and a World Cup title (1997). In addition, he captained the first professional sevens team, the Fiji Barbarians, which dominated competitions during its brief existence from 1995 to 2000. Individually, Serevi claimed multiple awards such as IRB International Sevens Player of the Year (2005), Hong Kong Sevens MVP (1994 & 2003), and Melrose Cup winner (1997 & 2005).

But it wasn't only on the field where Serevi left an indelible mark; off the pitch, he became synonymous with promoting goodwill through sportsmanship and fostering unity among

diverse cultures. Often referred to as 'the smiling assassin,' Serevi used his infectious grin and charisma to win over hearts and minds wherever he traveled. As part of his legacy, he established the Waisale Serevi Rugby Academy back home in Fiji to nurture aspiring players and provide them with opportunities to excel beyond their humble beginnings.

In accepting his place in the newly minted Pasifika Rugby Hall of Fame, Serevi expressed gratitude towards his family, friends, mentors, and supporters who have helped shape his journey thus far. With characteristic modesty, he stated, "I am deeply honored to be included among these giants of our beloved sport. I accept this recognition on behalf of every child who dreams big, works hard, and believes in themselves."

Indeed, Waisale Serevi serves as an inspiration not just for Fijians but also for anyone striving to overcome adversity and achieve greatness despite limited resources or seemingly insurmountable odds. This latest accolade cements his status as a true living legend within the realm of international rugby – one whose influence transcends borders and continues to inspire generations of athletes long after hanging up his boots.



HSBC SVNS SERIES - HONG KONG 2024

The World Comes to Hong Kong for a Historic Sevens Send-Off

Get ready for a celebration of epic proportions! The 2024 Hong Kong Sevens promises to be a tournament unlike any other. This year marks the final curtain call for the iconic Hong Kong Stadium, the beloved host of the tournament for the past three decades.

A Legendary Farewell
Before the Sevens find a new home at the Kai Tak Sports Park in 2025, this is your chance to relive the HK7s greatest hits on and off the pitch. Expect a vibrant atmosphere filled with passionate fans,

world-class rugby, and unforgettable memories.

A Global Rugby Extravaganza

The Hong Kong Sevens has always been a magnet for the world's best rugby players. Witness them battle it out for glory in a fast-paced, action-packed tournament. The stands will be a kaleidoscope of colors and chants, as fans from across the globe come together to celebrate their love for the sport.

More Than Just Rugby
The HK7s is more than just a rugby tournament; it's a festival of fun. Expect lively entertainment, delicious food and drinks, and a contagious party atmo-

sphere. Whether you're a die-hard rugby fan or simply looking for a unique and exciting experience, the HK7s has something for everyone. Don't Miss Your Chance to Be Part of History

This is your last chance to experience the magic of the HK7s at the iconic Hong Kong Stadium. Be part of the historic send-off and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Brace yourselves, Fiji fans! This weekend, the Fiji Airways Fijian 7s and Fijiana 7s are ready to light up the pitch at the HSBC Sevens Series' most anticipated tournament! Don't miss the action!

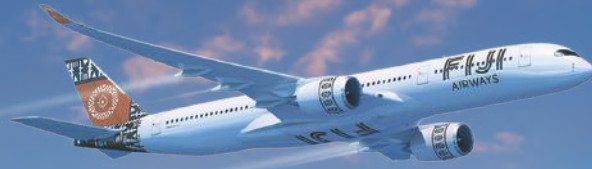


Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s Gear Up for Hong Kong with Ambassadorial Boost!



Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s Gear Up for Hong Kong with Ambassadorial Boost!

The Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s team received a morale-boosting visit from His Excellency Mr. Robert Lee, Fiji's Ambassador to China. Mr. Lee presented the team with their jerseys and offered encouraging words ahead of their crucial matches at the HSBC Hong Kong 7s. The Fijiana players are no doubt grateful for Mr. Lee's time and support as they chase victory in Hong Kong.



Happy new year

Wishing you a year filled with boundless adventures, incredible destinations, and unforgettable moments. Let the winds of 2024 carry you to new heights.



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