



# THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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## France crowned men's rugby sevens Olympic champions in Paris

France defeat Fiji 28-7 to claim Olympic gold and send Stade de France wild in celebration. A sensational Antoine Dupont scored twice and set up another to inspire France to victory.

South Africa beat Australia 26-19 to win thrilling bronze after qualifying for Paris 2024 last via the Repechage.

Rugby Sevens has ignited the Olympic Games Paris 2024 with a record breaking 550,000 fans creating an incredible atmosphere across six days of competition.

The three-day women's competition kicks off at 15:30 (GMT+2) on Sunday, culminating in the finals on Tuesday 30 July.

At the end of three scintillating days of Olympic men's rugby sevens action, played out in front of captivated, capacity crowds of 69,000 at the iconic Stade de France, it was hosts France who took Paris 2024 gold amid euphoric scenes of celebration.

A sensational Antoine Dupont scored

twice and set up another as he inspired France to claim the first team gold medal of the Paris Games with a 28-7 defeat of Fiji in the final. Beating the two-time defending champions, who had never before lost a game of Olympic rugby sevens, the host nation dominated the second half as they scored three unanswered tries to claim their place on top of the podium.

Dupont entered the fray after the break and made an immediate impact, setting up a score for Aaron Grandidier Nkanang to nudge France ahead before scoring a brace of his own to secure gold and consign Fiji to silver.

South Africa joined France and Fiji on the podium, beating Australia 26-19 in a thrilling bronze medal match to repeat their finish at Rio 2016. South Africa were the last team to qualify for the 2024 Games, making their journey to the podium in Paris all the more impressive.



## Fiji Sevens Rugby Team Settles For Silver Medal At 2024 Paris Olympics



## US Fiji Times CEO Rocky Ali Buksh Applauds Fiji 7s Team and Coach Osea Kolinisau for Olympic Performance

See Page P54

On behalf of the US Fiji Times, CEO Rocky Ali Buksh, along with the entire staff, extends heartfelt congratulations to Osea Kolinisau, head coach of the Fiji 7s rugby team, and the entire Fijian 7s squad for their outstanding performance during the Olympic Rugby 7s tournament. The Fijian 7s team showcased remarkable skill, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the competition, embodying the true spirit of rugby. Despite falling short to the host nation, France, the team's overall performance was nothing short of spectacular, earning them admiration and respect from fans around the world. "Coach Kolinisau and the Fijian 7s team have made us immensely proud," said Mr. Buksh. "Their dedication and hard work have not only brought joy to the Fijian community but also highlighted the incredible talent and spirit that Fiji brings to the global rugby stage. The team's efforts .

SOME TRADITIONS SHOULD BE KEPT INTACT

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## FIJIAN GOVERNMENT



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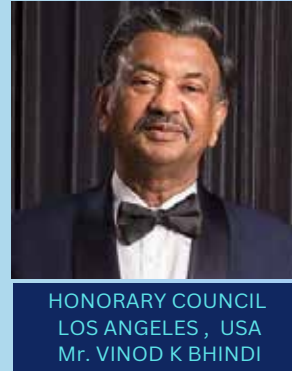
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### THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

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

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As this occasion is such a blissful and a happier one, below are affectionate heartstouching messages, wishes and quotes which you can send to your brother with Rakhi online on Raksha Bandhan 2023.



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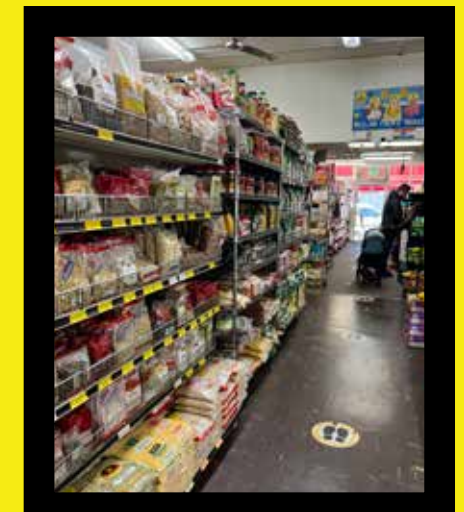
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Natasha Syed from San Bruno spots desserts as she shops at Neelam Pacific





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## Fiji News

# I will remain as an independent and focus on the role of the Opposition - Seruiratu

Former FijiFirst MP and now an independent, Inia Seruiratu says each of the 26 Members of Parliament of the former FijiFirst Party are free to make their own choices. While speaking to fjiivillage News, Seruiratu says this can be done by the 26 MPs as the party is already de-registered. When asked on whether he and others from the former FijiFirst have been approached by the People's Alliance Party, National Federation Party or SODELPA to join them, Seruiratu says he has not been approached by the three parties in government. He stresses that his intention is to remain as an independent Member of Parliament and to focus on the role of the Opposition. fjiivillage News has received information from inside sources that Seruiratu was trying to keep the former FijiFirst alive by rectifying the

breaches in the party constitution however he was not supported in this by majority of the MPs before the de-registration. This

was also made difficult after the mass resignation by all the executives of FijiFirst including the Leadership Committee, and

the party having unpaid debts of more than \$700,000. Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka has not made any comments on the

approaches been made by the People's Alliance for the former FijiFirst MPs to join them. Stay with us for developments.



# Minimum wage increase may raise prices if productivity and sales are down – Patel

Businesses will try to absorb the additional cost of doing business after the national minimum wage rate going up to \$5 an hour, however if employee productivity and sales do not increase, the cost of goods will go up. This has been highlighted by Suva Retailers Association President Jitesh Patel in an interview with fjiivillage News, where he says it will be a wait-and-see situation. He says if employee productivity increases when they come to work every day and show commitment, and if businesses can sustain the extra cost through increased sales, then they will always try to maintain prices. Patel says as the minimum wage and civil servants' pay rise, they hope consumer spending will increase too, which will stimulate the economy.

He says if this happens and the flow-on effects are evident, most retailers and businesses would try to reduce the current cost of goods sold. The Association President further says that investment in the country is increasing because interest rates for lending is still low. He adds that the continuity of policies and incentives for hotel

investment should give confidence to investors as well. Patel says they are looking forward to seeing more investments in the construction sector, but ul-

timately, they need workers in those fields too. He adds that investment will also increase if the Immigration Department allows more workers to

be brought in, especially in the construction and manufacturing industries, where there are significant shortages. Effective from 1st August 2024, the na-

tional minimum wage will be increased to \$4.50 an hour with a further increase to \$5.00 an hour effective from 1st April 2025.





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Philip Toogood  
 +679 999 1449  
[philip.toogood@bayleysfiji.com.fj](mailto:philip.toogood@bayleysfiji.com.fj)

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Philip Toogood  
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**FIJI UNDER 20 WOMENS SOCCER TEAM**  
 as they prepare for the world cup in Colombia



**AUGUST 10, 2024  
 6:30PM - 11:00PM**

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News

# Dr VJ Speaks @ The Graduation

America is The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. There's No Discrimination In America No Matter Who You Are.

24 Fijians Graduate from Stanford Medicine: A Celebratory Event Highlighting Cultural Pride and Academic Excellence

In a momentous event, 24 Fijians graduated from Stanford Medicine today, marking a significant milestone for the Fijian community. The ceremony, held at Stanford Medicine's prestigious Longevity and Healthy Aging Consortium, was a blend of academic rigor and rich cul-

tural heritage.

The agenda began with a warm welcome from Dr. VJ Periyakoil, Associate Dean of Research, who introduced the consortium's mission and the importance of longevity and healthy aging in medical research. Dr. Periyakoil's address set the tone for an event that celebrated both academic achievement and cultural pride.

Following the dean's welcome, a traditional Fijian ceremony was conducted by the Fijian American Community to honor Dr. Periyakoil. This ceremony included traditional chants, dances, and the presen-

tation of traditional artifacts, symbolizing respect and gratitude.

The Guest of Honor, His Excellency Ratu Ilisoni Vuidreketi, Fiji's Ambassador to the United States of America, delivered inspiring remarks. He congratulated the graduates on their hard work and dedication, emphasizing the importance of their achievements for the Fijian community and the broader field of medicine. "Your success is a testament to the strength and potential of our people," he said. "You are the torchbearers of our future."

The ceremony also featured

presentations by several graduates, highlighting their research and contributions to the field of medicine. These presentations underscored the diverse and impactful work being done by Fijian scholars in areas such as public health, biomedical research, and clinical practice.

Concluding the event, the Fijian graduates joined together to sing a traditional Fijian hymn, a poignant moment that encapsulated the pride and unity of the Fijian community. The hymn echoed through the hall, leaving a lasting impression on all attendees.

This graduation ceremony

was not only a celebration of academic excellence but also a demonstration of the vibrant cultural heritage that the Fijian graduates brought with them. It was a proud moment for the Fijian community, showcasing their contributions to the global medical field and their commitment to preserving their cultural identity.

The US Fiji Times congratulates all the graduates and looks forward to their future contributions to medicine and their communities.





## Fiji News

**\$32.3 million allocated to increase affordable housing**

To provide affordable housing to thousands of people in Fiji who do not have their own house, a total of \$32.3 million has been allocated to the Ministry of Housing in the 2024/2025 National Budget. While announcing the budget, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Professor Biman Prasad says as a country there is a serious lag in meeting the increased demand for housing in urban areas.

Professor Prasad says there has been progress in additional housing supply for the middle and high income earners and they haven't had any major breakthrough in providing affordable housing to the low income households. He says this led to the increase in informal settlements across our urban areas.

The Deputy Prime Minister says to increase the supply of affordable housing units, government had called for a tender for the private sector to develop and build around 3,000 housing units in 5 Housing Authority sites, including Nepani,



Raiwaqa, Davuilevu, Wainibuku and Tavakubu. Professor Prasad says this is a public private sector partnership project that has been designed with the support of International Finance Cooperation, the private sector arm of the World Bank. He says

they are currently assessing the tender bids and a final decision will be made soon. He further says \$13.5 million is provided for the formalization of informal settlements, this will cater for ongoing projects in Sakoca, Tavela, Field 4, Tore and com-

mencement of work in Valewaquyaya in Ba and Vunika in Labasa. Professor Prasad adds to continue with the first home buyers grants, a budget of \$5.5 million is provided and a total of \$7.9 million is provided for capital grants which will cater

for development of the Veikoba bridge to support Housing Authority's residential lot development in Valelevu, subsidy for Public Rental Board, expansion of the Koropita model town development and grant to Habitat for Humanity.

**\$2 million allocated to Narcotics Bureau, Govt sets tax holiday for drug rehab centre setup**

To fight drugs, \$2 million has been allocated in the 2024/2025 National Budget to establish a Narcotics Bureau within the Ministry of Home Affairs. Minister for Finance, Professor Biman Prasad says the Narcotics Bureau will focus on law enforcement; investigations; prosecution; intelligence gathering; and conducting awareness in collaboration with key agencies. Professor Prasad says the Ministry of Home Affairs has also launched the Counter Narcotics Strategy 2023-2028 with a focus on seven strategic areas, including demand reduction, supply reduction, harm reduction, legal reform, data collection, establishment of a Drug Court, and partnership and international cooperation. For the set up of drug rehabilitation centres in Fiji, the government has introduced a tax holiday of 13 years, including duty free importation of capital goods required for the establishment of the centre. They are also going to provide a full tax deduction

for businesses that donate to any drug rehabilitation centre. Professor Prasad says whilst they encourage non-governmental organisations, the government is also exploring options for the setup of such centres. \$226.8 million is provided to our Police Force, an increase of \$41.7 million. He says the government is initiating a 'full reset' of the Fiji Police Force towards law

enforcement. The Police Reset Strategy would broadly include: development of a new overarching strategy for the Fiji Police Force aimed to modernize the Force through right-sizing and stirring a shift in culture. Professor Prasad says they are grateful for the support from the Australian Government to help build capacity. A new MOU will be established between the Fiji

Police Force and the Australian Federal Police which will see Australian Federal Police Officers embedded within the Fiji Police Force, and appointment of a mentor to support the new Police Commissioner. He says through this Police Reset Strategy, the coalition government is committed towards building a police force that serves and protects all members of the soci-

ety with efficiency, fairness, reasonableness, courtesy, respect and without discrimination or harassment. Meanwhile Professor Prasad says the Republic of Fiji Military Forces plays an important role in ensuring the safety and security of our nation and supports international peacekeeping. RFMF is allocated \$169.6 million in the new budget.





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as they prepare for the world cup in Colombia



**AUGUST 10, 2024**



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Fiji News

# 11 Corrections Officers suspended for receiving free meals and groceries from Grace Road businesses

11 Fiji Corrections Service officers at the Suva Remand Centre have been suspended as they and their families were receiving free meals and groceries from Grace Road businesses located in and around the Suva area. The Corrections Service says they conducted a thorough investigation into allegations of misconduct involving officers at the Suva Remand Centre. They say the investigation was initiated following reports that certain officers had been receiving favours from detainee Jung Young Kim, who is currently held at the Suva Remand Centre on the order of the Immigration Department. Jung Young Kim, better known as Daniel Kim is the President of Grace Road Fiji. The Corrections Service says such actions are in direct violation of the ethical standards and regulations that govern the conduct of their personnel and these officers will face disciplinary action in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Fiji Corrections Service. Commissioner of the Fiji Cor-



rections Service, Dr Jalesi Nakarawa says the integrity and professionalism of the officers are paramount to the operation of the Fiji Corrections Service. He says they do not tolerate any form of misconduct or unethical

behaviour. Dr Nakarawa says the actions of a few should not overshadow the hard work and dedication of the majority of their staff who perform their duties with the highest level of integrity. He says the FCS

remains committed to upholding the law and ensuring that all officers adhere to the highest standards of conduct. The Commissioner says measures are being put in place to prevent any recurrence of such incidents

and to reinforce the importance of ethical behaviour among all personnel. Dr Nakarawa has assured the public that they will continue to operate with transparency and accountability.

# Fiji Navy confirms the successful salvage of RFNS Puamau

The Fiji Navy has confirmed the successful recovery of the RFNS Puamau after its grounding three weeks ago in Fulaga. They have confirmed that after two weeks of salvage operations, which focused on minimising environmental impact and preventing further damage, RFNS Puamau was salvaged and tugged by vessel Ratu Rabici, with the support from RFNS Savenaca. According to the Navy, in observance of traditional protocols in Fulaga and with the consent of the Vanua of Ogea, RFNS Puamau has been towed to the safe waters of Ogea Island where a thorough damage assessment will be conducted prior to the next phase. The Republic of Fiji Navy acknowledges the tireless dedication of the salvage teams including contracted subject-matter experts locally and abroad from Australia, Captain and crew of Ratu Rabici, RFNS Savenaca ships, Navy divers and Navy engineers, who worked under challenging circumstances, as well as the continued support of partners and stakeholders

who contributed to a safe recovery operation. Furthermore,

the Board of Inquiry continues with their deliberations on the

grounding incident, to ascertain the facts surrounding the inci-

dent and make recommendations from their finding.





## Fiji News

## FijiFirst Party de-registered



The FijiFirst Party has been de-registered by the Registrar of Political Parties, Ana Mataciwa. This is the end of the party that led government after the 2014 and 2018 general elections following non-democratic rule after the 2006 coup to 2014. Mataciwa de-registered FijiFirst in accordance with section 12(4) of the Political Parties (Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures) Act. This was prompted by a complaint lodged by former FijiFirst MP and now an independent, Mosese Bulitavu who alleged that

FijiFirst had breached its own constitution by not allowing its Parliamentary Leader to participate in the Leadership Committee meetings. In trying to refer Bulitavu to an internal party dispute resolution in the FijiFirst Constitution, Mataciwa noted that FijiFirst did not have any such provision. As a requirement of the Political Parties Act, the contents of a Party Constitution must comply with Schedule 2 of the Act. On Thursday 30th May 2024, FijiFirst was notified to amend its constitution to include provisions required

under Schedule 2 of the Act. The party was given until 4pm on Friday 28th June 2024, to make the necessary amendments. Mataciwa says as the party has not complied with this requirement, FijiFirst has been de-registered effective immediately, in accordance with section 12(4) of the Act. Following the de-registration, section 20(1) of the Act stipulates that no person shall summon a meeting of members or officers of the political party other than for the purposes of winding up the political party or for the purposes of challenging

the deregistration of the political party; attend or make a person attend a meeting in the capacity of a member or officer of the political party; and publish a notice or advertisement relating to a meeting of the political party except for the purposes of a meeting to wind up the party. Mataciwa adds that pursuant to section 30(1) of the Act, any person aggrieved by the decision to de-register FijiFirst may appeal to the Electoral Commission within 14 days from the date of this decision. If no appeal is lodged with the com-

mission by the end of the 14-day appeal period, the Registrar will commence the winding-up process. The Registrar of Political Parties has notified all 26 FijiFirst Members of Parliament and the Speaker of Parliament of this decision. The Speaker had already indicated that should the FijiFirst Party not rectify the breaches with the result that the party is deregistered, he has asked that the FijiFirst MPs notify him promptly as to whether they will become an independent Member or whether they will join an existing party.

## Leadership Fiji and Kontiki Finance Limited announce continued partnership

Leadership Fiji and Kontiki Finance Limited today signed a continuation partnership for the 2025 financial year. Leadership Fiji Board Chair William Parkinson says these partnerships are critical for their survival, as well as their ongoing development in the delivery of various leadership programmes. He says they have a range of other leadership initiatives, which are underway, both in terms of training and community outreach, as well as various other roles. Parkinson says Kontiki Finance and other partners sup-

port Leadership Fiji in carrying out these projects as they are actively working towards the construction and development of a Leadership Centre for Fiji and the Pacific. Kontiki Finance Board Chair Barry Whiteside says they are delighted to partner again with Leadership Fiji for the 2025 financial year. Whiteside says the company's focus on leadership is essential for guiding and inspiring team members towards shared goals, which drives productivity and sustainable growth.



# SAUDAGAR CASH AND CARRY

28700 Mission Blvd, Hayward CA - 510-885-0430



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# SAUDAGAR CASH AND CARRY

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## PHONE: 510-885-0430

## Fiji News

## FTUC welcomes \$5 minimum wage increase, calls for further raises and civil servant pay increase

As the national minimum wage is being increased to \$5 per hour, the Fiji Trades Union Congress says they welcome the adjustment and they would have preferred it to be effective immediately but we can understand that employers do need time to readjust to the new wage rates. In an interview with fiji village News, FTUC General Secretary, Felix Anthony says they also look forward to the Government reconsidering in the next budget a further increase to \$6 as they claimed and hopefully not too far in the future, workers in this country will enjoy a living wage. When questioned on his opinion with regards to a 7 to 20 percent pay rise for civil servants, Anthony

says they welcome that pay increase and believes that for the first time, any Government has given such a big increase. He says the civil servants' demands are much more than that and he believes that that is something for further negotiations with the Public Service Commission and probably a job evaluation exercise to ensure that they achieve what they are demanding. When questioned on the FTUC's stand on the increase in pay for MPs, the Speaker and the President, Anthony says Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Professor Biman Prasad did clarify that the overall increase is around \$4 million and not \$8 million or whatever was claimed before.



## Increase in meth cases in schools with 4 last year and 3 already in Term 1 this year

There is an increase of methamphetamine in schools with four cases last year and 3 cases already in Term 1 this year. This was revealed by Assistant Minister for Education Iliesa Vanawalu while opening the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking at Suva Grammar School. Vanawalu says according to the data provided, 8000 people were referred to St Giles Hos-

pital in 2023 due to mental health related issues. He says recently, students were found to be using and abusing drugs in schools from tobacco, alcohol, marijuana while methamphetamine is now infiltrating schools. Vanawalu says that the Substance Abuse Advisory Council reported 2900 cases of other drugs in schools in 2022 and 3700 cases in 2023. The Assistant Minister says in

all cases the Substance Abuse Advisory Council provided intervention through counseling and mentoring hence the risks are minimized. Vanawalu says Police are arresting drug dealers and users nearly every day on either green or white drugs where marijuana related cases in 2022 was 1193 and increased to 1483 cases in 2023. He says methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin cases have increased to

1615 in 2023 from 1236 in 2022. According to reports, drugs is a contributing factor in violence and criminal activities. Reports from police and media indicated that people who committed crime are at times under the influence of drugs. Research has proven that people who use or abuse drugs and illicit substances suffer from chronic health problems which affects lungs, heart, liver, kidney and

the brain. He says the Ministry of Health also highlighted the relationship of Drugs and HIV adding in 2022 there were 275 HIV cases reported and in 2023 the cases increased to 415. Vanawalu says this alarming increase was suspected due to the use of bluetoothing where 4 to 5 people were sharing one needle and the chances of infecting others with HIV is higher.



## Fiji News

# 104 booths set up for Fiji Showcase at Vodafone Arena

The setting up of the internal booths and external stage for Fiji Showcase is underway at the Vodafone Arena. Event Co-ordinator for Total Event Company, Mahjabeen Khan says the 104 internal booths have already been set up and divided into three categories. Khan says the team is expected to complete the set up by Tuesday. Insert: Khan on setting up IB 30th June. She says there are 17 food booths as well. Khan also says that on Wednesday, all the clients will be called in to visit their booths. The country's biggest trade and entertainment show, Fiji Showcase starts at 12pm Friday and will run until next Saturday at the Vodafone Arena.



## FijiFirst expected to be deregistered next week

The Registrar of Political Parties is yet to make a statement on the FijiFirst Party after their 4pm deadline passed today to rectify their constitution as certain clauses breach the electoral laws of Fiji.

The party is expected to be deregistered next week as the 26 party MPs have not made any attempts to keep the party alive that won the 2014 and 2018 general elections. As earlier highlighted by fji village News, it was already clear that

after all the office bearers including Voreqe Bainimarama and Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum resigned from the party, anyone who even tried to keep the party going will inherit a significant amount of unpaid debts. According to the party's audited financial accounts as at 31st December 2023 assessed by fji village News, the FijiFirst had a net liability position of \$701,180 and a working capital deficiency of \$855,938. Anyone owed money by the FijiF-

irst Party will lose out after the deregistration as individuals are not liable to pay off the huge debt of the party. The financial report stated the party was also negotiating with certain suppliers for further time for settlement of overdue balances, and the party was confident that extended time at normal commercial terms will be allowed by the suppliers.

According to the financial position of the FijiFirst, the current liabilities listed as Trade

and Other Payables stand at \$907,664 at the end of last year and the total liabilities is \$910,422. The total party funds deficit is \$701,680 as at the end of 2023. Mataciwa has confirmed to fji village News that if a party is deregistered, the MPs remain in parliament as independents and do not lose their seats. Speaker of Parliament, Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu has already made it clear that should the FijiFirst Party not rectify the breaches with the result that

the party is deregistered, he has asked that the FijiFirst MPs notify him promptly as to whether they will become an independent Member or whether they will join an existing party. FijiFirst MP, Jone Usamate has said that he will continue to perform his role as a Parliamentarian, to the best of his abilities, and in keeping with FijiFirst values of integrity, meritocracy, diversity and self reliance as a nation. They are expected to make further comments next week.





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## Health News

# ‘Stresslaxing’: Why Trying to Relax Can Stress You Out

Recognizing you are stressed and need to relax is a good step toward helping yourself. However, when finding ways to de-stress adds more stress to your life, you may end up feeling “stresslaxed,” a counterproductive effect that can lead to a vicious cycle of increased anxiety and worry. “This term refers to the phenomena or experience of people who are in an anxious or stressed state trying to calm down and feel more relaxed by forcing themselves to take a break or unwind,” Dr. Michael Schirripa, psychiatrist, podcast host, and author of the upcoming novel *Mindhunt*, told Healthline. When people force themselves to relax, they can become more anxious, and they may worry more about how well or efficiently they are actually able to relax. The clinical term for “stresslaxed” is relaxation-induced anxiety, said Deborah Serani, Psy.D., professor at Adelphi University and author of the award-winning book, “Living with Depression.” “Research suggests that if you already struggle with generalized anxiety or overthinking, you may be more prone to stresslaxing. Other evidence says individuals with stresslaxing struggles may also experience panic attacks in addition to their stress and anxiety. And then there are others who may become depressed because they can’t relax freely,” she told Healthline. Does the brain resist forced relaxation? In many ways, the brain resists forced relaxation, particularly the part of the brain called the amygdala, which is always searching for danger. “We need to remember that our brains are always ‘on’ and are actually designed to be worried. After all, that anxiety can keep us alive as we are always aware of potential dangers that may threaten us,” Schirripa said. People who live with anxiety, worry, and ruminations have difficulties with cognitive control, meaning they find it hard to put certain thoughts “on hold,” said Serani. “Along a different line, there are some people who may need to stay busy because subconsciously, being calm, having space, and experiencing ease may give rise

to negative thoughts or memories of traumatic experiences,” she added. Why is it hard for some people to relax? Schirripa said people find it difficult to relax due to external pressures and internal dynamics. External pressures, such as work, study, family, and other commitments, can make people feel like they are constantly “switched on” to the outside world and are at the beck and call of others. “They can then feel obligated to meet the demands of these outside influences, and as such, this can lead to a perception that they are not allowed to actually have any downtime or a space to relax that is just for themselves,” Schirripa said. Serani noted that work time and leisure time no longer have definitive boundaries. “Long ago, the workday ended at 5 pm and the weekends were for rest and relaxation, and on Sundays, stores were closed, which helped to make home time and relaxation easier to do. These predictable guidelines just don’t exist anymore,” she said. Furthermore, technology, access, and other modern conveniences have blurred the lines of work and play, leading to what sociologist Dalton Conley of Princeton University coined “Weisure” (the merging of work and leisure activities). “So, it becomes very hard to carve out relaxation time,” Serani said. Internal dynamics that affect the ability to relax include

feeling the drive to keep active and not giving oneself permission to slow down and relax. “Sometimes people worry that if they are relaxed, that they will be bored or, alternatively, by slowing down and relaxing, there can be a fear that they will need to focus too much on the thoughts or feelings going on inside them,” said Schirripa. Are there long-term consequences of not being able to properly relax? Chronic stress has been connected to high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, fatigue, ulcers, headaches, backaches, difficulty concentrating, and irritability. “Depression and anxiety can surge, as can social, relational, and interpersonal difficulties when you don’t stop and smell the roses,” said Serani. Not being able to properly switch off and relax can “reset” the nervous system to function at an overly stimulated level, added Natalie Christine Dattilo, PhD, clinical psychologist, founder of Priority Wellness, and instructor at Harvard Medical School.

“Over time, this can make it more difficult to elicit a relaxation response,” she told Healthline. “I meet with people who tell me they feel agitated, on edge, and anxious ‘from the neck down,’ but don’t describe feeling mentally anxious at all...which for me is an indication that we need to actively

reset their default activation state through intentional relaxation practice.” Strategies to help you relax When trying to relax, Dattilo said first realize that relaxation is not as passive an activity as people have been led to believe, and it doesn’t come naturally to some people. “I think one of the main reasons some people find it hard to relax is because it’s actually a skill we need to practice on a regular basis in order to fully experience its beneficial effects,” said Dattilo. Often, people confuse relaxation with “zoning out.” “This can certainly give our brain a break, but the real goal of relaxation is to ‘downshift’ our nervous system,” Dattilo said. Downshifting happens through an active process. Dattilo designed to elicit the “relaxation response,” the physiological opposite of the fight-or-flight response. “It counteracts the negative effects of stress and returns our nervous system to a homeostatic balance,” she said. Triggering the relaxation response can be done through visualization, muscle relaxation, massage, breathing techniques, meditation, prayer, and yoga. Try the following tips to set relaxation in motion. Set boundaries between work and home life. “Also, consider powering down from technology early each night. Make self-care a priority and learn how to manage this every day,” said Serani.

Practice the Benson Relaxation Method, which involves Trusted Source sitting in a comfortable position, closing your eyes, intentionally relaxing all the muscles, beginning at your feet and working up to your head, breathing slowly, for 20 minutes. “This will likely feel a little challenging or forced at first, so maybe start with 5 minutes and gradually work your way up,” said Dattilo. Focus on a “done” list to recall what you’ve already accomplished.

“Thinking about the to-do list perches you in the future, keeping you from being in the moment,” said Serani. “Highlighting your done list will aid in celebrating your finished chores and encourage relaxation. A done list helps you linger in the past.” Engage in 5-minute meditation. “Studies show Trusted Source that even 5 minutes of deep breathing, silence, and restfulness can enhance mental and physical functioning,” Serani said. If you can go for more time meditating, consider a guided meditation with an app, or simply rest, nap, or enjoy some solitude, she said. Feed your senses and ground yourself by using the “5,4,3,2,1 Technique” to reduce anxiety so you can relax more readily. “Ask yourself to find 5 things you can see, 3 things you can hear, 4 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste,” said Serani.



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## Health News

# Taking a Daily Multivitamin May Not Help You Live Longer



Daily multivitamins are some of the most popular supplements in the United States, but they may not actually make you healthier. An estimated one-third of US adults Trusted Source Erikka Loftfield, PhD, Trusted Source a researcher in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology & Genetics at the National Cancer Institute, and first author of the study, told Healthline, “To date, there has been insufficient evidence to determine the benefits and harms of MV use...Leveraging data from three large and geographically diverse US cohorts with repeat assessments of MV use and extended follow-up for mortality outcomes, we aimed to evaluate the association of MV use with leading causes of chronic disease-related death.” No mortality benefit from multivitamin Loftfield and her team utilized three separate cohorts for their study, totaling 390,124 generally healthy US adults, with follow-up data of about 20 years. The study’s size and length are two of its greatest strengths. However, it is observational in nature, meaning that, unlike a controlled trial, it does not demonstrate causality between two events — in this case, taking a multivitamin and death. Instead, it helps to form a picture of any associations at a large

tality risk. The average age of participants was 61.5. The findings, from researchers at the National Cancer Institute, were published in JAMA Network Open. Trusted Source Erikka Loftfield, PhD, Trusted Source a researcher in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology & Genetics at the National Cancer Institute, and first author of the study, told Healthline, “To date, there has been insufficient evidence to determine the benefits and harms of MV use...Leveraging data from three large and geographically diverse US cohorts with repeat assessments of MV use and extended follow-up for mortality outcomes, we aimed to evaluate the association of MV use with leading causes of chronic disease-related death.” No mortality benefit from multivitamin Loftfield and her team utilized three separate cohorts for their study, totaling 390,124 generally healthy US adults, with follow-up data of about 20 years. The study’s size and length are two of its greatest strengths. However, it is observational in nature, meaning that, unlike a controlled trial, it does not demonstrate causality between two events — in this case, taking a multivitamin and death. Instead, it helps to form a picture of any associations at a large

scale in the real world. Part of the difficulty of conducting a study of this nature is the sheer volume of data to sort through and the potential for confounding. For example, the study discusses two distinct problems they had to control for in their data: the “sick user effect” and the “healthy user effect.” There is a concern that health outcomes related to multivitamin use are misleading because of the demographics using them. The “sick user effect” refers to the possibility that individuals who are sick may more frequently use multivitamins due to their health condition. On the other hand, the “healthy user effect” is the opposite: individuals who already live a healthy lifestyle may be more inclined to use a multivitamin as part of their routine than those who are less health conscious. Without proper controls in place, these effects could lead a researcher to two opposing conclusions about the effects of multivitamins on mortality risk. Loftfield told Healthline that they were able to control for these distinct effects, by adjusting for lifestyle factors like smoking, diet, and physical activity. They also excluded individuals with major chronic diseases, including cancer, at baseline to account for the “sick user effect.” Ultimately, after

controlling for all these factors, they found that those taking a multivitamin did not have a lower risk of all-cause mortality than those who did not. Nor did they observe any benefits related to specific health outcomes, including cancer, heart disease, and stroke. The findings are in line with prior research, including recommendations made by the US Preventive Services Task Force in 2022 and 2014 Trusted Source, which said there was little to no benefit in taking them. Dr. Parul M. Goyal, MD, an Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of Medicine for Seniors at Vanderbilt University Medical Center who wasn’t affiliated with the study, told Healthline the results were not surprising. “The patients that they enrolled are all patients without any chronic medical conditions. Essentially, they’re all healthy patients. Typically, if you are a healthy individual, and you are exercising, you’re eating a regular diet, you’re consuming your fruits and vegetables, you are getting your regular intake of vitamins and supplements,” she said. Goyal notes that there are some individuals who would likely benefit from a multivitamin supplement, including those with anemia, diabetes, and postmenopausal women. She

encourages patients to speak with their healthcare professional before taking a multivitamin. Do dietitians recommend taking a multivitamin supplement? Healthline spoke to two registered dietitians to hear their recommendations about eating a healthy diet and taking multivitamin supplements. “My recommendations for patients are always personalized. In my practice at the Cleveland Clinic, a recommendation to take or skip a multivitamin is based on many factors, including the patient’s current health, dietary pattern, other supplements being taken, and personal health goals. An MVI is not insurance [from] an unhealthy dietary pattern,” said Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS RD, a registered dietitian at the Cleveland Clinic and co-author of Regenerative Health. Alyssa Kwan, MS, RD, a Clinical Dietitian in Cardiology at Stanford Medicine, told Healthline, “I do not generally recommend a multivitamin for those following a healthy diet and eating well-balanced meals...I will only recommend one if patients are not nutritionally meeting their nutrient needs or have a poor diet at baseline. Maybe their appetite is really poor or they are just not able to meet everything via diet alone, then I would recommend supplementing with a multivitamin.” Like Kirkpatrick, Kwan also cautions that a multivitamin should not be taken to cover unhealthy “choices of foods that are not nutritionally dense.” The bottom line In a large observational study involving nearly 400,000 US adults over 20 years, taking a daily multivitamin did not lower mortality risk overall, nor for specific chronic conditions like cardiovascular disease and cancer. Multivitamins are among the most popular supplements on the market, taken by roughly one in three US adults. Despite their popularity, their health benefits are not well established. Experts interviewed by Healthline say that if you eat a healthy diet, taking a multivitamin is not recommended. Always speak with your healthcare provider before starting or stopping taking a nutritional supplement.

## Health News

# Taking Regular Walks May Help Reduce Lower Back Pain

Low back pain is incredibly common and notoriously difficult to treat. A new study, however, finds that a simple, cost-effective, highly accessible intervention can make a real difference: walking. A new paper, which was published in *The Lancet* Trusted Source on June 19, found that people with low back pain who walked regularly were significantly less likely to experience pain that limited their activity. They also reported improved quality of life. Participants who walked regularly were half as likely to need time off work or require medical treatment than people in the control group. Low back pain is incredibly common. Healthline contacted Dr. Tash Pocovi, lead author of the study and a postdoctoral fellow at Macquarie University, Australia. “Working in physiotherapy, it’s incredible to see just how prevalent low back pain is,” she said, “with reports that 620 million people globally reported experiencing low back pain in 2020.” She explained that, while most scientists focus on treatment, fewer are focusing on prevention. This is important because “7 in 10 people who recover from an episode of low back pain will have a new episode in the next 12 months.” “While it’s not considered a life-threatening disease, we can see the very serious impacts it can have on people’s lifestyle, ability to work, and overall quality of life,” Pocovi said. For their study, the scientists recruited 701 people who had recently experienced an episode of low back pain. Split into two groups, one acted as the control, and the other embarked on a personalized walking program with six education sessions with a physiotherapist over 6 months. The scientists followed up the participants for 1–3 years. They found that those in the walking group experienced pain that limited their activity less often than those in the control group. Also, there was a longer gap before they had a recurrence: an average of 208 days compared with 112 days. Pocovi told Healthline that she was not surprised that walking benefited these



people because the intervention “helped get people moving, reduced their fear, and gave them strategies and confidence to self-manage their condition — all of which we know are important.” However, she was surprised “how much the intervention could impact people’s lives aside from improving their low back pain management.” “While we were able to reduce the recurrence of low back pain requiring care-seeking by over 40%, we also had patients who reported improved sleep, mood, positive lifestyle changes, and improved management of other chronic health conditions,” she explained. “It was very pleasing to see the positive, overall health implications of this intervention,” Pocovi said. How people with back pain can benefit from walking We asked Pocovi how much walking might benefit people who experience low back pain. In their study, the walking plan was individualized based on factors including age, physical ability, preferences, and available time. “We gave them a rough guide of gradually

building up to 30 minutes, five times a week,” she told us. “After 3 months, most of the people who took part were walking 3 to 5 days each week for an average of 130 minutes per week.” “We want to see the public walking more, even if this is done independently. However, if you are struggling to get started, you may consider reaching out to a health professional to help.” Healthline spoke with Neel Anand, MD, an orthopedic spine surgeon and director of the Cedars-Sinai Spine Center in Los Angeles, CA, who was not involved in the study. He added a note of caution: “While walking is a great total-body cardiovascular exercise that can be especially helpful for people experiencing back pain episodes, be sure not to go too far or for too long if you’re in moderate to severe pain, and make sure that the walking surface is even, without too much uphill or downhill variation to start.” Why is low back pain so common? To help make sense of the high prevalence of low back pain, Healthline

spoke with Thomas Pontinen, MD. Pontinen, who was not involved in the study, is a double board-certified anesthesiologist, interventional pain management specialist, and chronic pain expert. Our evolutionary past, he explained, is one of the reasons. “Human beings evolved from animals with horizontal spines.” As we evolved to walk on two legs, “the spine had to adapt.” “It is incredibly likely that a lifetime spent using a vertical spine, as we do, will eventually come with drawbacks since the spine has to support most of our weight and all the pressures of movement through life,” Pontinen said. Other factors, Pontinen told us, include general wear and tear of the discs between the vertebrae with age, injuries, poor posture, a sedentary lifestyle, and obesity. How to reduce the risk of back pain Healthline asked Dr. Joel S. Beckett, a board-certified neurological spine surgeon how individuals can reduce their risk of experiencing low back pain. Beckett, who was not involved in the recent study, practices at

DISC Sports & Spine Center in Marina del Rey, CA. He provided these tips: Maintain a healthy weight. Engage in regular physical activity that includes strengthening and stretching exercises to maintain good core strength. Practice good posture. Use proper techniques when lifting heavy objects. Avoid prolonged sitting. In line with the results of the recent study, he told us that “standing and walking is the best activity for our back.” Takeaway According to a recent study, walking regularly can reduce the risk of low back pain returning, improve quality of life, and reduce the need to visit healthcare specialists. Taking regular walks also improved sleep and mood, and improved the management of other chronic health conditions. However, as Anand told us, it’s important to wait for the “green light” from your doctor, but “contrary to what some might think, staying immobile or being on ‘bed rest’ after the acute phase of a back pain episode might do more harm than good.”

## Health News

# Healthcare innovation to double at \$60 bn opportunity by FY28 in India

Healthcare innovation in India, currently valued at \$30 billion, is expected to double by FY28, according to a recent report by Bain & Company and HealthQuad. Pegged at \$180 billion in FY23, India's overall healthcare market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12 per cent to \$320 billion by the same time, it said. The report titled 'Healthcare Innovation in India' said that healthcare innovation accounts for about 15 per cent (\$30 billion) of the overall healthcare market in India, of which around 55 per cent is export-led. Aarthi Rao, partner at Bain & Company, anticipates a significant expansion. "We see the \$30 billion healthcare innovation market reaching \$60 billion by 2028," she said. She emphasises that this growth will not only stem from value-engineering but also from business innovation, particularly in biotech, vaccines, and med-tech sectors. She also predicts substantial growth in health-tech and pharma services, which would contribute to this expansion. Healthcare



innovation has almost doubled over the past three years from a baseline of \$17 billion in FY20. There are four key segments in the healthcare innovation space — pharma services, which includes contract development and manufacturing organisation (CDMO), contract research organisation (CRO),

pharma IT (apart from health-tech, vaccines and biotech), and medtech. Speaking to Business Standard, Charles-Antoine Janssen, managing partner of healthcare-focused venture capital fund HealthQuad said, "Ten years ago, India was particularly strong in chemistry and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API)

production of new chemical entities (NCEs).

But it was not present at all in the biologics space." Expansion of capacities Janssen added that during the pandemic, India became the world's second-largest exporter of Covid vaccines and nearly 50 per cent of the global vaccine exports came

out of India. "This led to two capacities that India did not historically have — discovery abilities on the biological side in order to develop and scale up these vaccines. Also, high quality and low-cost biological manufacturing skill sets to serve gigantic volumes," he said.

## Sleep Apnea Hard on the Brain

Symptoms of sleep apnea, including snoring, gasping, or paused breathing during sleep, are associated with a significantly greater risk for problems with cognitive and memory problems, results from a large study showed. Data from a representative sample of US adults show that those who reported sleep apnea symptoms were about 50% more likely to also report cognitive issues vs their counterparts without such symptoms. "For clinicians, these findings suggest a potential benefit of considering sleep apnea as a possible contributing or exacerbating factor in individuals experiencing memory or cognitive problems. This could prompt further evaluation for sleep apnea, particularly in at-risk individuals," study investigator Dominique Low, MD, MPH, Department of Neurology, Boston Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts, told Medscape Medical News. The findings will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology

(AAN) 2024 Annual Meeting on April 17, 2024. Need to Raise Awareness The findings are based on 4257 adults who participated in the 2017-2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and completed questionnaires covering sleep, memory, cognition, and decision-making abilities. Those who reported snoring, gasping, or breathing pauses during sleep were categorized as experiencing sleep apnea symptoms. Those who reported memory trouble, periods of confusion, difficulty concentrating, or decision-making problems were classified as having memory or cognitive symptoms. Overall, 1079 participants reported symptoms of sleep apnea. Compared with people without sleep apnea, those with symptoms were more likely to have cognitive problems (33% vs 20%) and have greater odds of having memory or cognitive symptoms, even after adjusting for age, gender, race, and education (adjusted odds ratio, 2.02;

$P < .001$ ). "While the study did not establish a cause-and-effect relationship, the findings suggest the importance of raising awareness about the potential link between sleep and cognitive function. Early identification and treatment may improve overall health and potentially lead to a better quality of life," Low said. Limitations of the study include self-reported data on sleep apnea symptoms and cognitive issues sourced from one survey. Consistent Data Reached for comment, Matthew Pase, PhD, with the

Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, said the results are similar to earlier work that found a link between obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and cognition. For example, in a recent study, the presence of mild to severe OSA, identified using overnight polysomnography in five community-based cohorts with more than 5900 adults, was associated with poorer cognitive test performance, Pase told Medscape Medical News. "These and other results under-

score the importance of healthy sleep for optimal brain health. Future research is needed to test if treating OSA and other sleep disorders can reduce the risk of cognitive impairment," Pase said. Yet, in their latest statement on the topic, reported by Medscape Medical News, the US Preventive Services Task Force concluded there remains insufficient evidence to weigh the balance of benefits and harms of screening for OSA among asymptomatic adults and those with unrecognized symptoms.





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## Health News

# Researchers Identified 6 'Biotypes' Of Depression



Researchers say that thanks to new imaging they have discovered six “biotypes” of depression. The new study was published in Nature Medicine- Trusted Source and found that brain imaging could be used to better understand treatment-resistant depression and anxiety. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) they compared activity and connectivity between different brain regions. Using this data, the researchers identified the six “biotypes” of depression. According to the researchers, understanding an individual’s biotype may help guide treatment and increase the chances of better outcomes. Healthline spoke with Mirela Loftus, MD, who was not involved in the study. Loftus is a psychiatrist and medical director of Newport Healthcare in Hartford, CT. She described the results of the study as “revolutionary.” How many people have depression? Globally, depression affects an estimated 322 million people- Trusted Source — 4.4% of the entire population. Similarly, anxiety disorders affect around 260 million people, which is

3.6% of people. Despite their prevalence, mental health conditions and the mechanisms that underpin them are still fairly mysterious. Currently, treatment consists of medication, talking therapies, or both. For some, these can effectively relieve depression. But for many others, they simply do not work. Experts call this treatment-resistant depression. Healthline spoke with Manish Jha, MD, an associate professor of psychiatry at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, TX. We asked how common treatment-resistant depression is. “A study led by researchers at UT Southwestern suggests that as many as 1 in 3 treatment-seeking outpatients may have treatment-resistant depression,” Jha said. “Given that 1 in 5 adults in the United States may experience major depressive disorder during their lifetime and the past-year prevalence of major depressive disorder in the US may vary between 5–7%, it is likely that several millions of adults in the US experience treatment-resistant depression,” explained Jha, who was not involved in the study. The authors of the

new study set out to identify subtypes, or biotypes of depression and anxiety. By identifying differences in brain connectivity, they hope to personalize treatment plans, getting better results more quickly. Figuring out the 6 types of depression For the study, the authors recruited 801 participants with depression and anxiety who underwent fMRI. The scientists conducted these scans twice: once while the participants were at rest, and once while carrying out cognitive and emotional functioning tests. The scientists focused on brain regions and circuits, which experts already know are important in depression. These brain circuits were: The default mode (D): A circuit that is activated when the individual is focusing on nothing in particular. Salience (S): This network helps individuals focus on the most important stimuli in their field of view. Attention (A) Negative mood circuit activated by sad stimuli (NS) Negative mood circuit activated by conscious threat stimuli (NTS) Negative mood circuit activated by nonconscious threat stimuli (NTC) Positive mood circuit

(P) Cognitive circuit (C) Using a machine learning technique, they were able to categorize the participants’ brain activity into six distinct biotypes. In the six subtypes below, the subscript C stands for connectivity within the brain region, whereas the subscript A denotes activity. The plus and minus symbols indicate whether the dysfunction in the circuit caused increased or decreased activity. So, in type 1, the scientists measured increased connectivity within the default mode circuit, salience, and attention circuits. In type 2, there was reduction in connectivity in the attention circuit. DC+SC+AC+ AC–NSA+PA+ CA+ NTCC–CA–DXSXAXNXPXCX According to the authors, subtype DXSX–AXNXPXCX “was not differentiated by a substantial circuit dysfunction relative to other biotypes” or healthy participants, so they used an x rather than a + or –. Treating the types Next, the scientists focused on a subset of 250 participants. They randomly assigned them either one of three antidepressants or talking therapy. In this way, they could determine how

different biotypes responded to treatment. As theorized, they found that different biotypes responded differently to treatments. For instance, one biotype characterized by high levels of activity between three brain regions linked to problem-solving and depression responded best to talking therapy. Conversely, another biotype characterized by overactivity in cognitive regions of the brain responded best to venlafaxine, a common antidepressant. “To our knowledge, this is the first time we’ve been able to demonstrate that depression can be explained by different disruptions to the functioning of the brain. In essence, it’s a demonstration of a personalized medicine approach for mental health based on objective measures of brain function,” explained Leanne Williams, PhD, the study’s senior author. Williams is the Vincent V.C. Woo Professor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine, as well as founding director of the Center for Precision Mental Health and Wellness.



## Bollywood News

# From Baazigar's Anti-Hero To Jawan's Record Breaker: Locarno Celebrates Shah Rukh Khan's 30-Year Journey



Bollywood's reigning king, Shah Rukh Khan, is adding another prestigious feather to his cap. The Locarno Film Festival, a renowned international event, announced that Khan will receive the Pardo alla Carriera award at its 77th edition. This coveted honour recognizes Khan's remarkable career spanning over three decades, encompassing a diverse filmography of more than 100 films. Khan's journey began on television in the late 1980s. However, it was his transition to feature films in the early 1990s that catapulted him to superstardom. From the anti-hero charm of Baazigar (1993) to the timeless romance of Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995) and the innovative storytelling of Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998), Khan established himself as a force to be reckoned with. But his brilliance extended beyond the realm of the conventional. He wasn't afraid to take on challenging roles, like the obsessive lover in Darr (1993) or the conflicted journalist in Dil Se.. (1998). Shah Rukh Khan's influence transcended borders. He became a global icon, representing Indian cinema at numer-

ous international film festivals. His career continued to flourish in the following decades, with high-profile collaborations with leading Indian directors and actors. This not only cemented his place in Bollywood but also garnered him international recognition. Notably, he was awarded the prestigious Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and Légion d'honneur by the French government. The recent years have seen Khan maintain his box-office dominance. His 2023 releases – Pathaan, and Jawan – all made massive business at the box office, further solidifying his connection with audiences worldwide. In fact, Jawan, produced by his own Red Chillies Entertainment, shattered records to become the highest-grossing Hindi film ever. Giona A. Nazzaro, the Artistic Director of the Locarno Film Festival, expressed his delight at honoring Khan. He called him “a living legend” and lauded his unwavering connection with his fans, his willingness to experiment with roles, and his enduring popularity. Nazzaro rightly described Khan as a “true people's hero” and a legend of our times.

The tribute to Shah Rukh Khan at Locarno will encompass several events. On August 10th, he will be formally presented with the Pardo alla Carriera award during a ceremony in the iconic Piazza Grande. The festival will also showcase a key film from his career, Devdas (2002) by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. To further connect with the audience,

Khan will participate in a public conversation held at the Forum @Spazio Cinema on August 11th. The Locarno Film Festival, held amidst the breathtaking scenery of Lake Maggiore and the surrounding mountains, offers a unique experience for cinephiles. This year, the festival celebrates not only cinema but also Shah Rukh Khan's

remarkable journey, a journey that has captivated audiences worldwide for over 30 years. The 77th Locarno Film Festival takes place from August 7th to 17th, 2024. Shah Rukh Khan's presence and recognition solidify the growing global influence of Indian cinema and celebrate the enduring legacy of a true Bollywood superstar.





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## Fiji News

## Inflation forecast to remain around 4 to 5% by the end of this year - RBF

The annual headline inflation rate picked up from 5.8 percent in May to 6.7 percent in June, and was underpinned by higher prices in the food and non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages, tobacco and narcotics, transport, housing utilities, and restaurants categories. The Reserve Bank of Fiji says while inflation is expected to moderate from this month after the impact of the VAT increase drops-out from the base effect, it is forecast to remain around 4 to 5 percent by the end of this year. RBF Governor and Board Chairman, Ariff Ali highlighted that the Fijian economy has been largely driven by consumption activity supported by the higher tourist demand, personal remittances and improved disposable incomes resulting from current tight labour market conditions. Ali says investment activity is slow paced but recent forward-looking indicators point to a gradual improvement. He adds going forward, the initiatives announced in the fiscal year 2024-25 National Budget is expected to stimulate economic activity. Ali says while sectoral outcomes



varied through to June, the tourism sector sustained its positive momentum into its peak season. Visitor arrivals in the first half of the year grew annually by 7 percent to 447,155 visitors, driven by more visitors from New Zealand, the United States, China, Australia and the Pacific Island

Countries. On the sectoral front, annual gains were recorded for gold and electricity output, however, timber and mineral water production remain muted in the year to June. The RBF Governor says the financial sector remains conducive for growth with the low interest rates supporting pri-

private sector credit growth which accelerated to 11.3 percent in June, the highest since July 2017 (15.6 percent). As of last week, foreign reserves stood at \$3.5 billion, sufficient to cover 5.8 months of retained import of goods and services, and are projected to remain adequate

over the medium term. Ali indicated that after weighing in the current economic conditions and risks, the medium-term outlook for inflation and foreign reserves was stable. The current monetary policy setting will be maintained for now to support economic growth.

## Ratu Sukuna Park to open on the 19th of August and will not be a venue for Hibiscus Festival

Ratu Sukuna Park will officially open on the 19th of this month, but it will not be used for the upcoming Hibiscus Festival, which is scheduled to take place from August 31st to September 7th at the Suva Foreshore. Festival Chairman Opetai Ravai shared this information with fiji village News following the signing of a three-year sponsorship agreement between the Suva City Council and Vodafone Fiji. During the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, Ravai emphasised that the festival aims to promote diversity and togetherness among the people of Fiji. He says the opening of Ratu Sukuna Park was delayed because they were waiting for the chief guest's availability, but it has now been confirmed for the 19th. The main events of the festival will be held at the foreshore, while all sports activities will take place at Albert Park. Although Ratu Su-

kuna Park will not host festival activities, it will still be open for families during the event. Ravai also announced a new partnership with Vodafone as the Gold Sponsor for the 2024

Hibiscus Festival. He says this year marks the 68th anniversary of the festival, and it promises to bring back the glamour of Fiji's most iconic celebration, featuring music and cultural activities

every night. He encouraged all Fijians to attend the Hibiscus Festival, noting that there will be many exciting events and activities to enjoy. Meanwhile, Head of Recharge & Distribu-

tion of Vodafone Fiji, Nilesh Singh shared their enthusiasm for the collaboration, underscoring the company's commitment to supporting community events that bring people together.





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## World News

# French election candidates withdraw in bid to block far right

French voters are waiting to see the full line-up for the second round of parliamentary elections, as scores of candidates stood aside in order to help defeat the far-right National Rally (RN). Parties have until 18:00 (17:00 BST) Tuesday evening to register contenders for Sunday. Only then will it be clear how many from the left and centre have abandoned the race in the hope of unifying the anti-RN vote. Last Sunday's first round produced a big victory for the party of Marine Le Pen, which - with allies - won around 33% of the vote. A broad left-wing alliance came second, and President Emmanuel Macron's centrists third. But Ms Le Pen's chances of winning an outright majority in the 577-seat National Assembly have been dented by the blocking tactics of her party's enemies. In more than half of constituencies - around 300 - three candidates qualified from the first round of voting (nearly everywhere else it was just two). If in these constituencies one of the two non-RN runners stands aside, this increases the chances of the RN candidate being defeated. By midday Tuesday around 200 candidates from the left and centre were understood to have taken the step. The left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) - which comprises everyone from centre-left social democrats to far-left anti-capitalists - issued instructions to all of its third-placed candidates to step down and let a centrist reap the anti-RN vote. The NPF is thus helping two senior pro-Macron MPs - former prime minister Elisabeth Borne and Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin - to win in their constituencies in Normandy and the north. Conversely a pro-Macron candidate has stood down in order to help radical left-winger François Ruffin defeat the RN candidate in the northern city of Amiens. The RN's 28 year-old president - and hopeful for prime minister - Jordan Bardella condemned these arrangements as the fruit of an "alliance of dishonour" between parties that until now have been at each other's throats. Instructions to candidates from Mr Macron's centrist bloc have been more ambiguous than the



NPF's. Though Mr Macron himself and Prime Minister Gabriel Attal have called for "no vote for the RN", some in his camp believe its far-left component makes the NPF equally unpalatable. Senior figures like Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire and former Prime Minister Edouard Philippe - both originally from the centre-right - are refusing to issue instructions to vote systematically against the RN. RN insiders told Le Figaro newspaper that its opponents' tactics did not bother them. "On the contrary, it's good news. The overall message they're giving out is that it's the entire system which is against us... It's another big stitch-up and our voters are tired of it," one said. Analysis: Le Pen's party now dominant force in France French elections: How do they work and why are they so significant? Macron's election gamble puts French democracy on the table RN leaders have said they will not attempt to form a government unless they are given an outright majority in the parliament in Sunday's vote. They say they do not want to be given the appearance of power, if the reality is they cannot pass laws. However on Tuesday Marine Le Pen qualified this, when she said that a lower majority would be good enough - if it does not fall too far short of the 289 member threshold. Speaking on French radio she said that

winning around 270 deputies would allow her party to open talks with individual MPs from other groups in the hope of persuading them into an accord. "We are going to say to them: 'Are you ready to participate with us in a new majority? Are you ready to vote a confidence motion? Are you ready to vote for the budget?'" she said. She cited as possible targets independent MPs of right and left, and part of the conservative Republicans party which won 10% of the vote on Sunday. If the RN wins an absolute majority on Sunday, Mr Bardella

would be asked by President Macron to form a government - and there would then begin a tense period of "cohabitation" between two political enemies. Under the French Fifth Republic constitution, power would flow away from Mr Macron to the prime minister's office because "the government determines and conducts the policy of the nation". However Mr Macron would probably seek to retain powers in the areas of foreign policy and defence, which from precedent - and not from the actual wording of the constitution - have remained the preserve

of the Elysée in past cohabitations. Marine Le Pen also accused the president Tuesday of carrying out an "administrative coup d'état" because she had heard he was preparing a number of key appointments in the police and army just days ahead of the vote. "When you want to counter the results of an election by nominating your people to jobs, and when that stops [the government] from being able to carry out policies which the French people have asked for... I call that an administrative coup d'état." "I hope it is only rumour," she added.





## World News

## US pays Moderna \$176m to develop bird-flu jab

The US government has given Moderna \$176m (£139m) to develop a messenger-ribonucleic-acid-based (mRNA) pandemic influenza vaccine that would work against bird flu. It says it wants to be "better prepared" for public-health crises, having learned lessons from Covid. Bird flu is not a big threat to people, despite outbreaks in poultry and cattle. But experts want a working vaccine that could be quickly rolled out, in case the virus mutates and becomes a problem. Vaccines using mRNA technology - which the Moderna's Covid jab is also based on - can be produced more quickly. And the US government says adding this technology to its pandemic-flu toolkit enhances its ability to be "nimble and quick" against bird flu. The \$176m, from the US Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, will be used to complete late-stage development and testing of Moderna's vaccine against H5N1 avian influenza. Potentially fatal This strain has been



around for years in birds - but some other animals, including cattle, have become infected in recent outbreaks. Some believe the virus might one day change and start spreading easily among

humans, with potentially serious consequences. So far, there is no sign of this. There have been some rare cases of people catching it after coming into contact with sick animals. In people, the

virus can cause symptoms ranging from mild illness, such as upper-respiratory and eye infections, to potentially fatal disease such as pneumonia, according to the US Centers for Disease

Control. Moderna began early tests of its mRNA bird-flu vaccine in 2023, with healthy adult volunteers. The results, expected later this year, will inform the next steps, it says.

## Fake online therapist tricked hundreds of patients

Authorities in Florida and Tennessee have accused a social worker of helping her wife impersonate her in online therapy sessions for nearly two years. Peggy Randolph, who was licensed to provide therapy in both states through the platform Brightside Health, is said to have knowingly defrauded hundreds of patients. Ms Randolph has denied the accusation, saying she did not know her wife, Tammy Heath-Randolph, who was not licensed or trained, had treated clients under her account. The ruse was uncovered after Ms Heath-Randolph died in February 2023. At that time, Brightside Health received a complaint from a client who had discovered through social media that Ms Randolph's wife was the one treating them, according to documents from the Tennessee Department of Health. While Ms Randolph denied knowing that her wife was treating patients on her behalf, authorities said the wife was getting paid for sessions she conducted. The therapist voluntarily retired her license in August 2023 after an internal investigation by Bright-

side, which found she had shared her log-in credentials with her wife. During that investigation, it became apparent Tammy Heath-Randolph was seeing all of Peggy Randolph's patients on-line, "and had been for a long time", said an investigative report by the Florida Department of Health. Ms Randolph worked for Brightside Health from January 2021 to February 2023 and was supposedly pro-

viding therapy to "hundreds of clients" in that timeframe, Tennessee health authorities said. She is said to have carried out the ruse so that she had time to see other patients in person. In addition to losing her license to practice, Ms Randolph was also ordered to pay a \$1,000 (£788) penalty. Because Ms Randolph voluntarily surrendered her license, the investigation against her was dropped and no further

information was provided by either authorities on the nature of evidence against Ms Randolph or her now-deceased wife. The case only became public recently after Florida and Tennessee released documents related to Ms Randolph's conduct in May. Hannah Changi, a spokesperson for Brightside Health, told that as soon as the company learned of the allegations, it fired Ms Randolph and reported her to state licens-

ing authorities. She did not provide a firm number on how many patients were impacted "due to the nature of the incident and ongoing legal proceedings," but said the company had refunded all impacted patients. "We're extremely disappointed that a single provider was willing to violate the trust that Brightside and, most importantly, her patients had placed in her," Ms Changi said in a statement.





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## World News

# Hungary's Orban urges ceasefire on Kyiv visit

Viktor Orban arrived in Ukraine on Tuesday for an unannounced visit having just taken over as rotating president of the European Union. While in Kyiv, the Hungarian prime minister said a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine could speed up negotiations to end the war that followed Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Mr Orban has been a critic of Western support for Ukraine and is seen as the European leader closest to Russian President Vladimir Putin. This was his first visit to Ukraine in 12 years, although he has met Mr Putin repeatedly during that time. During his joint appearance with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky the body language between them was not warm and neither took questions from the media after they gave their statements. Mr Orban previously slowed agreement on a €50bn (\$54bn; £42bn) EU aid package designed to support Ukraine in its defence against Russia. But for the next six months his position as head of the European Council means he has an influential role as a

figurehead for Europe. He came to Ukraine on his second day in that role for discussions, saying there was a need to solve previous disagreements and focus on the future. In his statement following their meeting, Mr Zelensky said it was "very important to have Europe's support for Ukraine maintained at sufficient level... it's important for co-operation between all the neighbours in Europe to become more meaningful and mutually beneficial". In his own statement, Mr Orban stressed the need to work together but also said he had raised the idea of a ceasefire to hasten negotiations with Russia. "I have asked the president to consider whether... a quick ceasefire could be used to speed up peace negotiations... I am grateful for his frank dialogue and his answers." Mr Orban also said: "My first trip has taken me here because the issue of peace is important not only for Ukraine, but for the whole of Europe. This war that you are suffering is deeply impacting European security." President Zelensky did not publicly re-



spond to those comments. Later, in a post on X, the Ukrainian leader said Mr Orban's visit to Ukraine was a "clear signal to all of us of the importance of unity in Europe and taking collective steps". "We discussed the path to a just, lasting, and fair peace." Many Ukrainians believe a ceasefire would simply cement Russia's hold over territory it has taken from Ukraine and, if negotiations were to take place, they would prefer them to be conducted from a posi-

tion of strength rather than on the back foot. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said his country was open to "work with everyone and solve problems". "This work is difficult and time-consuming, but it eventually yields tangible results," he told the BBC. "During the visit, President Zelensky had a candid but constructive discussion with Prime Minister Orban about ways to achieve a just peace, not simply a ceasefire or peace talks." The two

leaders also discussed bilateral issues including the 100,000 ethnic Hungarians who reside in Ukraine. Mr Orban said the two countries were determined to put past disagreements behind them, and that he was reassured progress was being made on the rights of the ethnic Hungarians. He also wished Ukraine "every success". The EU opened membership talks for Ukraine the week before Hungary assumed the EU Council Presidency.

## Brazil blocks Meta from using social media posts to train AI

Brazil has blocked Meta from using Brazilians' Instagram and Facebook posts to train its artificial intelligence (AI) models. It comes weeks after the company abandoned similar plans to use UK and European users' posts for the same purpose. On Tuesday, Brazil's national data protection agency (ANPD) said it would immediately suspend Meta's latest privacy policy, which allows it to train generative AI models such as chatbots based on posts from its users. A Meta spokesperson told the BBC the company was "disappointed by the decision", adding that their approach complied with local privacy laws. "This is a step backwards for innovation, competition in AI development and further delays bringing the benefits of AI to people in Brazil," the company added. Meta has a significant market in Brazil. There are 102 million Facebook users and more than 113 million Instagram users in the country. The ANPD said it had acted over the "imminent risk of serious and irreparable damage, or difficulty repairing

fundamental rights of the affected [account] holders". Meta was given five working days from ANPD's decision to show it has amended its privacy policy to exclude the use of personal information found in public posts to train generative AI. If it fails to comply it will face a daily fine of R\$50,000 (£6,935). The company's updated policy was also the focus of scrutiny in the UK and the European Union (EU). Under its privacy policy changes, which were due to take effect in the region on 26 June, Meta users' information would be used to "develop and improve" its AI products. In Europe, the policy change would include posts, images, image captions, comments and Stories that users over the age of 18 had shared with a public audience on Facebook and Instagram, but not private messages. But that was put on hold after Meta said it had received a request from the Irish Data Protection Commission (DPC) on behalf of other European stakeholders to delay its training of large language models

(LLMs). LLMs are a type of artificial intelligence that powers chatbots, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini. On 14 June, when it announced the delay, Meta said this was a "step backwards" for AI in Europe. However Meta decided to press ahead with the policy change in Brazil. Pedro Martins, from Data Privacy Brasil, welcomed the ANPD's decision. He told the BBC there was a discrepancy between Meta's data protection measures for its Bra-

zilian and European users. Meta had planned to use posts from Brazilian children and teenagers to train its AI models, he said, while in Europe nobody under 18 would have their posts used. Brazil's data protection regulator also found that personal data found in children and teenagers' posts could be collected and used to train Meta's AI systems, which could be in breach of the country's data protection law. In addition, Mr Martins said, in Europe the steps users can

take to prevent Meta from using personal information are more straightforward than in Brazil, where he said it can take as many as eight steps for users to block the company from using their posts. The BBC has asked Meta to respond to the claim that it had planned to use posts from Brazilian children and teenagers to train its AI models, and whether it imposed more onerous steps for opting out on users in Brazil.



## Local

# 'Is she Indian or..': Kamala Harris hits back at Trump after remarks on her racial identity

US Vice President Kamala Harris responded strongly to former President Donald Trump's remarks challenging her racial identity, stating that the American people "deserve better." As reported by ANI, Harris emphasized that the country faced a critical choice between two contrasting visions and accused Trump and his campaign of attempting to push the nation "backwards." Harris was speaking at a Houston fundraiser on Wednesday (local time), hours after Trump claimed that Harris, after being of "Indian heritage" for years, "turned black" a few years ago. "In this moment, we face a choice, between two very different visions for our nation. One focused on the future, the other focused on the past. And we in this room, are fighting for the future," she told the donors. "As we work to move our nation forward...there are those who are trying to take us backward. You might have seen their agenda, they call it Project 2025 and it is a 900-page agenda of extremism," Harris added. Speaking on Project 2025, Harris claimed that it would raise taxes on the middle class, and cut taxes on billionaires, and would end the Department of Education. Attacking Trump further, the Vice President said, "We are not going back. We all remember what those four years were like, and today we got yet another reminder. This afternoon, Donald Trump spoke at the annual meeting of the National Association of Black Journalists, and it was the same old show, the divisiveness and the disrespect. Let me just say, the American people deserve better." She added, "The American people deserve a leader who does tell the truth, who does not respond with hostility and anger when confronted with the facts. We deserve a leader who understands that differences don't divide us, they are an essential source of our strength." Trump made these remarks at a gathering of Black journalists in Chicago when asked why Black voters should support him despite his history of making racist attacks on political rivals. In response, he questioned Kamala Harris' heritage. "She was al-



ways of Indian heritage, and she was only promoting Indian heritage. I didn't know she was black until a number of years ago, when she happened to turn black, and now she wants to be known as black. So I don't know, is she Indian or is she black?" "I respect either one, but she obviously doesn't, because she was Indian all the way, and then all of a sudden she made a turn and she went - she became a Black person," he said. "I think somebody should look into that too." Speaking further, Kamala Harris said that "we are the un-

derdogs in this race," reiterating that there are under 100 days until the November election. "Let's level set," she said. "We are the underdogs in this race. We have work to do ... good hard work." "We are not fighting against something. We are fighting for something," Harris said. "We know how much is at stake." Kamala Harris has Indian heritage through her mother and Jamaican heritage through her father, both of whom immigrated to the United States. Born in Oakland, California, she attended Howard University, a

historically Black university in Washington. Trump has previously made similar comments regarding Harris and perpetuated the "birther" conspiracy theory against former President Barack Obama, as reported by CNN. Harris made history as the first female, first Black, and first Asian American Vice President of the United States. If she wins upcoming elections, she would also be the first woman president in the country's history. The White House was quick to denounce Trump's comments, calling it "insulting" and said

only VP Kamala Harris can speak for herself on the matter. Kamala Harris' husband and the Second Gentleman of the US, Doug Emhoff, also reacted to Trump's remarks, saying that the former president was "a worse version of an already horrible person" with his remarks, The Washington Post reported. "The insults, the BS - it's horrible, it's terrible, it shows a lack of character - but it's a distraction," Emhoff said at a campaign fundraiser in Maine. "It's about what's at stake in this election."



## Local

# JD Vance introduces himself as Trump's running mate and makes direct appeal to his native Rust Belt

JD Vance introduced himself to a national audience Wednesday after being chosen as Donald Trump's running mate, sharing the story of his hardscrabble upbringing and making the case that his party best understands the challenges facing struggling Americans. Speaking to a packed arena at the Republican National Convention, the Ohio senator cast himself as fighter for a forgotten working class, making a direct appeal to the Rust Belt voters who helped drive Trump's surprise 2016 victory and voicing their anger and frustration. "In small towns like mine in Ohio, or next door in Pennsylvania, or in Michigan, in states all across our country, jobs were sent overseas and children were sent to war," he said. "To the people of Middletown, Ohio, and all the forgotten communities in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Ohio, and every corner of our nation, I promise you this," he said. "I will be a vice president who never forgets where he came from." The 39-year-old Ohio senator is a relative political unknown, having served in the Senate for less than two years. He rapidly morphed in recent years from a bitter critic of the former president to an aggressive defender and is now positioned to become the future leader of the party and the torchbearer of Trump's "Make America Great Again" political movement. The first millennial to join the top of a major party ticket, Vance enters the race as questions about the age of the men at the top — 78-year-old Trump and 81-year-old President Joe Biden — have been high on the list of voters' concerns. He also joins Trump after an assassination attempt against the former president — in which Trump came perhaps millimeters from death or serious injury — underscoring the importance of a potential successor. But Trump's decision to choose Vance wasn't about picking a running mate or the next vice president, said Indiana Rep. Jim Banks, who introduced the senator at a fundraiser earlier Wednesday. "Donald Trump picked a man in JD Vance that is the future of the country, the future of the

Republican Party, the future of the America First movement," he said. Vance shared his story and introduced his family. In his speech, Vance shared his story of growing up poor in Kentucky and Ohio, his mother addicted to drugs and his father absent. He later joined the Marines, graduated from Yale Law School, and went on to the highest levels of U.S. politics — an embodiment of an American dream he said is in now in short supply. "Never in my wildest imagination could I have believed that I'd be standing here tonight," he said. Vance gained prominence following the publication of his bestselling 2016 memoir "Hillbilly Elegy," which tells the story of his blue-collar roots. The book became a must-read for those seeking to understand the cultural forces that propelled Trump to the White House that year. Vance spent years as a Trump critic, assailing the former president with insults, before he changed his mind. Vance, who had never attended, let alone spoken at a previous Republican convention, spent much of his speech talking up Trump and going after Biden, using his relative youth to draw a contrast with the 81-year-old president. Vance says he was in fourth grade when "a career politician by the name of Joe Biden supported NAFTA, a bad trade deal that sent countless good American manufacturing jobs to Mexico." "Joe Biden has been a politician in Washington as long as I've been alive," he added. "For half a century, he's been a champion of every single policy initiative to make America weaker and poorer."

The crowd inside the convention hall welcomed Vance warmly. They erupted into chants of "Mamaw!" in honor of his grandmother, and chanted "JD's Mom!" after he introduced his mother, a former addict who has been sober for 10 years. Vance was introduced Wednesday night by his wife, Usha Chilukuri Vance, who talked of the stark difference between how she and her husband grew up — she a middle-class immigrant from San Diego, and he from a low-income Appalachian family. She called him "a



meat and potatoes kind of guy" who respected her vegetarian diet and learned to cook Indian food for her mother. Trump, again wearing a bandage over his injured ear, watched Vance speak from his family box and was often seen smiling. Most Americans — and Republicans — didn't know much about Vance before Wednesday night. According to a new poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which was conducted before Trump selected the freshman senator as his choice, 6 in 10 Americans don't know enough about him to have formed an opinion. That includes 61% of Republicans. Democrats have attacked Vance for his past support for a national abortion ban, his criticism of U.S. involvement in Ukraine, and his eagerness to blame Democrats for Trump's assassination attempt. But the young senator steered clear of such controversies in his remarks, which were light on the red-meat conservative attacks that convention audience typically expect. Biden's campaign responded with a blistering statement calling Vance "unprepared, unqualified, and willing to do anything Donald Trump demands." "Tonight, J.D. Vance, the poster boy for Project 2025, took center stage. But it's working families and the middle class who will suffer

if he's allowed to stay there," said Michael Tyler, Biden campaign communication director. A Trump aide just released from prison electrified the crowd. Convention organizers had stressed a theme of unity, even before Trump survived an attempted assassination at a rally in Pennsylvania Saturday. Trump's refusal to accept the results of the 2020 election and the subsequent attack on the U.S. Capitol, officials said, would be absent from the stage. But that changed with former White House official Peter Navarro, who was greeted with a standing ovation hours after being released from a Miami prison where he served four months for defying a subpoena from the congressional committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by a mob of the former president's supporter. "If they can come for me, if they can come for Donald Trump, be careful. They will come for you," he said in a fiery speech, comparing his legal troubles to those faced by Trump, who earlier this year was convicted on 34 felony charges in his criminal hush money trial. Also spotted on the floor of the convention: Paul Manafort, Trump's 2016 campaign chair, and Roger Stone, who were both convicted as part of the investigation into Russia's meddling in that election. Trump pardoned both

Manafort and Stone. Families blamed Biden for the losses of their loved ones. Beyond Vance's primetime speech, the Republican Party focused Wednesday on a theme of American global strength.

In a particularly powerful moment, the relatives of service members killed during Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan took the stage, holding photographs of their loved ones. Christy Shamblin, whose daughter-in-law Marine Sgt. Nicole Gee died in the attack, spoke of the six hours she said Trump spent with her family in Bedminster, New Jersey and "spoke to us in a way that made us feel understood." "Donald Trump carried the weight for a few hours with me. And for the first time since Nicole's death I felt I wasn't alone in my grief," she said. Herman Lopez, whose son, Marine Cpl. Hunter Lopez, was among those killed, read aloud the names of all 13 U.S. service members who died in the Aug. 26, 2021, attack. Also featured were the parents of Omer Neutra, one of eight Americans still being held hostage in Gaza after the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. His parents, Ronen and Orna, said Trump called them after their son, a soldier in the Israeli army, was captured, and offered support. As they spoke, the crowd chanted "Bring them home!"

Fiji News

# Students under Govt scholarship urged to utilise taxpayers' money properly

Utilise the taxpayers' money properly. This is the message from Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Professor Biman Prasad when questioned on fjiivillage Straight Talk With Vijay Narayan on students receiving scholarships from the government. He says the coalition government has written off the \$650 million student debt, but \$160 million of that taxpayers' money went down the drain because some students did not complete their program or left the country for a lucrative deal. Professor Prasad says what they have done is replaced the previous scholarship system with a merit-based scholarship because the previous system was dumbing down the students. He adds that the students actually went into programs to get admitted into a University, get the allowance and build up their debt. The Deputy Prime Minister says if scholarship students do not complete their programs or



move overseas without clearing up their bond, they will have to pay for leftover bond years and a 50 percent penalty. Professor Prasad says the government is using a lot of taxpayers' money to fund the education of children, and if a student goes overseas for a 4-year degree study, they will have to pay around \$400,000 for that particular student. When asked if this move is harsh to students, the Deputy Prime Minister says it's not that harsh on the students but on the taxpayers.

# Most of the missing persons are being found at their relatives' homes – ACP Raikaci

With the increasing concerns regarding people reported missing, the Acting Commissioner of Police Sakeo Raikaci says when they conducted their investigations, most of these people were with their relatives. ACP Raikaci says they receive missing reports daily, and they work hard to locate these missing people within 24 to 48 hours. He says when they suspect an element of human trafficking, they investigate it thoroughly.

However none of the cases found had any element of human trafficking. The Acting Commissioner also confirms that once a report is received, officers are mandated to conduct an investigation.

Meanwhile, Police are calling for assistance locating 17-year-old Merewalesi Tinaibukadrau, who was reported missing at the Namaka Police Station on Sunday. Police say the report received last Saturday was Tinaibukadrau had asked to go



to the opening of the Bula Festival but was told she could not go alone and to be accompanied by her mother. Tinaibukadrau then went to her room and was only discovered missing the next morning. Police say all attempts made by her family to locate her whereabouts have been futile, and a report was lodged on Sunday night. Police have managed to gather some information that she was seen on Sunday evening with another individual at a shop. If you have any information regarding Tinaibukadrau's whereabouts, please call the Namaka Police Station on 9905748 or Crimestoppers on 919.

## Civil servants recognized for their service to the country

Fifty-eight civil servants were today recognized for their service to the country by President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere. The 58 recipients include Pita Wise, Yogesh Jitendra Karan, Salaseini Daunabuna, Shiri Goundar, Isoa Talemaibua, Susan Kiran, Samuela Moce, Timoci Bure, Kelera Dilakawa Kolivuso, Ana Vautua Waqanisau, Emi Bainimarama, Uraia Rainima, Vitale Varo, Alumita Lagicere, Jacqueline Helena Low, Ajesh Atish Prasad, Yabaki Gade, Alipate Naulivou, Seremaia Seru Tokaduadua, Atin Vikash Chand, Alfred Anthony, Aliti Joana, Marily Lagi, Atonio Ravai, Laisa Bolalevu, Josefa Tuima, Luke Ravusoni, Senitiki Ravuso, Rohit Kumar Sharma, Venina Duvuduvukula, Amelia Senileba, Ratish Singh, Elia Sevutisa, Tomasi Vakatawa Volau, Rosalina Salawaqa Cavu, Meline Mua Teleca, Sharmila Devi, Raimaoe George Katonivualiku, Jean Fong, Inise Rokotina Bale, Om Prakash, Ilisoni Uganidavui, Tara Mati Naresh, Raijieli Tawakevou, Litia Kaitabu, Mereilisoni Letevou, Anaseini Raderua, Wakanisi



Waidamu Waqanibete, Karalo Sila, Frances Buadromo, Leba Coroi Laliqavoka, Pravin Goundar, Sakimi Saverio, Sosiceni Manulevu, Rafeale Balewai, and Emosi Saumaka.

While officiating at the investiture ceremony, Ratu Wiliame says the government remains steadfast in its commitment to

fostering an environment conducive to the holistic development of our people, and it can do it more so with its dedication. He says the first investiture for the Civil Service Medal award was held 29 years ago, and since then, there has been a sporadic number of awards given in this award category throughout the

years to date. He adds that he sincerely expects this trend to gradually change in the subsequent years.

Ratu Wiliame says all members of the Civil Service across the nation, who may not have qualified for the Civil Service Medal award for any number of reasons, they value themselves

as an individual and contributors to nation-building. He adds they equally value their service, however large or small. A total of 112 nominations were approved for recommendation into the order and another ceremony will be held at the State House tomorrow.

## Govt needs to fix work visa issue in Immigration Dept immediately – Halabe

Leading garment manufacturer, Mark One Apparel's Managing Director Mark Halabe is pleading with the government to fix the visa section in the Immigration Department as soon as possible. While speaking during the Dialogue Fiji Post Budget Forum that was held at Tanoa Hotel in Suva, Halabe says recently, he has come across people saying that we are in a crisis and in various meanings. Halabe mentioned that one example he has come across is the five-star project in the Yasawas in which the developers have made it clear that they will not start the project until the government fixes the visa problem in Fiji. He says there are hundreds of millions of dollars in the Yasawas that are badly needed for the economy. He adds this is a lesson upfront and he understands that



the government has mentioned that they are going to focus on this issue and make sure it's fixed, but it is more than that as

it is critical. While responding to this, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Professor Biman Prasad agreed with

Halabe and said it could have been done yesterday, and the government should have sorted that out by now. He says there

is a lot more focus in this area which a reset group is looking at and hopefully, this issue will be a thing of the past.

## World News

## Israeli strike kills senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon

Hezbollah says one of its senior commanders has been killed in an Israeli air strike in southern Lebanon. Mohammed Nimah Nasser is the latest senior member of the Iran-backed Lebanese armed group to be targeted by Israel during almost nine months of cross-border violence which have raised fears of an all-out war. Hezbollah said it had launched 100 rockets and missiles at Israeli military positions "as part of the response to the assassination". No injuries were reported. The Israeli military said Nasser commanded a unit responsible for launching rockets from south-western Lebanon and accused him of directing a "large number of terror attacks". It also described him as "the counterpart" of Taleb Sami Abdullah, the commander of another unit whose killing last month prompted Hezbollah to launch more than 200 rockets and missiles into northern Israel in a single day. Since then, there has been a flurry of diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions,



with the UN and US warning of the potentially catastrophic consequences of a war that could also draw in Iran and other allied groups. There have been almost daily exchanges of fire

across the Israel-Lebanon border since the day after the start of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza on 7 October. Hezbollah has said it is acting in support of the Palestinian group

that is also backed by Iran. Both are proscribed as terrorist organisations by Israel, the UK and other countries. So far, more than 400 people have been reported killed in Lebanon, the

vast majority of them Hezbollah fighters, and 25 people in Israel, mostly soldiers. Tens of thousands from communities on both sides of the border have also been displaced.

## Biden campaign works to calm Democrats' nerves as pressure mounts

President Joe Biden and his team remain in damage control mode nearly a week after a disastrous debate performance sparked fears among Democrats that his age and mental acuity could make re-election impossible. His leadership team in the White House and the campaign called meetings and sent internal memos to staff members on Wednesday. The next several days will determine whether Mr Biden can ride out panic over his mental fitness or if political headwinds following the 27 June debate will prove too strong. Top Democrats like Vice President Kamala Harris and California governor Gavin Newsom, appear to be backing the president, and Mr Biden's campaign maintains publicly that he will stay in the race. "He is absolutely not dropping out," spokeswoman Mia Ehrenberg told the BBC on Tuesday. Mr Biden plans to lunch privately with Ms Harris in the White

House Wednesday, according to his public schedule. He also plans to meet with Democratic governors this evening. White House chief of staff Jeff Zients will hold an all-staff call on Wednesday at 12:30 local time, the Washington Post reported. California Governor Gavin Newsom, a top Biden surrogate who fielded questions immediately after the debate about whether he would be the party's nominee, planned to visit Washington to "stand with Joe Biden" and other top Democrats, a spokesman announced on X. The governor will campaign for Mr Biden in key swing states Michigan and Pennsylvania later this week, according to spokesman Brandon Richards. But Democratic lawmakers are voicing concerns about the president's ability to take on former president Donald Trump in November. Congressman Lloyd Doggett, a 77-year-old Democrat from

Texas, said Tuesday he was "hopeful" Biden would make the "difficult decision to withdraw." But former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was more circumspect in an MSNBC appearance this week. "It's going to be up to Joe Biden," she said. One top Democratic donor told the BBC he felt it

was time to move on from Mr Biden. "I think it's time for him to pass the torch," said Ramesh Kapur, a Massachusetts-based Indian-American industrialist who has organised fundraisers since 1988. "I know he has the drive, but you can't fight Mother Nature". "What I know of him, he will decide what's

good for the country." Another mega donor the BBC spoke to, who refused to be named, said he planned to go ahead with a fundraiser for the president scheduled for later this month at his Virginia home. He said he got a call from the White House Tuesday that the president will "stay in the race".





## Fiji News

## Tower's Open Day at USP draws strong student turnout

Tower's Open Day at the University of the South Pacific drew strong student turnout. The Tower Insurance Vunilagi Scholarship was launched in June as part of a year celebration, commemorating 150 years of operation in Fiji for the insurer.

It covers a full year of tuition fees for three USP students in their final year of a bachelor's degree study. Successful applicants will have to complete paid internships, and graduate from USP with the opportunity to accept a permanent role at Tower. The winners from the caliber of entries will be announced after Tower goes through the selection process.

Tower Suva Hub Co-Chair Jajeena Bhan says it was successful day with an amazing turnout from the students, and many were keen to know more about what Tower has to offer. Bhan says the team provided valuable insights about exciting



career opportunities at Tower whether students were interested in data analysis, marketing, sustainability, or human

resources and some were keen to know how tower provides for its employees and what opportunities are available for students

in the future. She says strong interest was seen from young women at USP. Bhan adds as a business their main focus is to

funnel diverse voices into financial services which will encourage the future of the financial services sector.

## Fiji Govt to get US\$70M loan from ADB for climate resilience and sustainable growth

The Fiji Government and the Asian Development Bank today signed a US\$70 million loan agreement to support Fiji in building resilience against disasters and help spur sustainable growth in the country. During the signing, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Professor Biman Prasad acknowledged ADB for co-leading the first joint budget support operation for the fiscal year 2023/2024 that involved other partners.

He says the Government over the past six fiscal years (2019-2024) had undertaken a comprehensive reform program with development partners to improve Fiji's governance and management of public finances, enhance the State Owned Enterprises and Government agencies, improve trade, public investments, fiscal sustainability and management, promote private sector-led growth and strengthen community and climate resilience. Professor Prasad says the reforms are pegged to blended financing from development partners in the form of concessional loans and grants with over \$2 billion



received over the past six fiscal years. He adds over the last six years including the current financial year, Fiji has received a total of US\$500 million in direct budget support financing from the ADB and under various programs.

ABD Director General for the Pacific Leah Gutierrez says

they are pleased to be able to support the Fiji Government's ambitious reform agenda. She says the program will enable Fiji to access highly concessional financing under ADB's new lending terms for small island developing states.

Gutierrez says this will help reduce Fiji's future debt service

obligations and create more fiscal space for the government to finance development spending. The Director General adds that this program reflects the close partnership between the Government of Fiji and its development partners to support new policies and regulations that strengthen climate adaptation

and mitigation, reduce barriers to private sector growth and improve the transparency and quality of public financial management. According to the Finance Ministry, the loan agreement is a concessional loan of 40 years, with a 10-year grace period and a 1 percent interest rate.

## Health News

# Dengue Fever: CDC Issues Alert Amid US and Global Spike in Cases

As cases of dengue fever rise worldwide, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an advisory for physicians, public health authorities, and the public in the United States to be alert to the trend. So far in 2024, cases of dengue fever in countries in the Americas have reached record-breaking levels, with more than 9.7 million reported cases — twice the number for the entire year in 2023 (4.6 million). Puerto Rico declared a public health emergency in March after the World Health Organization declared one in December 2023. In the mainland U.S., 745 cases have been identified in travelers in the first six months of the year, which is higher than normal. There are no vaccines for anyone who has not previously had a dengue infection, and there is one vaccine for children between the ages of 9 and 16 who have been infected, but the manufacturer has discontinued production due to a lack of demand. In Puerto Rico, for example, available doses are expected to expire in 2026. There are four strains of dengue, all carried by the Aedes mosquito, which generally lives in tropical and subtropical regions. The hotter and wetter months of the year are typically when cases of den-

gue peak, but as global temperatures rise, the CDC says, cases will most likely increase each year. What does dengue fever look like? Symptoms depend on the severity of the disease. Around 75% of people with dengue fever will not experience symptoms. Mild symptoms may include a sudden fever of around 104°F (40°C) and one or more of the following: aching muscles and joints, rash, pain behind the eyes, nausea and vomiting, facial flushing, sore throat, headache, red eyes. Symptoms usually last between 2–7 days and most people feel better after one week. The fever typically persists for at least 24 hours and may spike again. Between 0.5% and 5% of cases become severe and can be life threatening. In this instance, the fever typically falls to 99.5 to 100.4°F (37.5 to 38°C). Anywhere between a day and a week later, additional symptoms include: abdominal pain or tenderness, vomiting at least three times in 24 hours, bleeding from the nose or gums, vomiting blood, blood in the stool, fatigue, feeling restless or irritable, changes in temperature from very hot to very cold, clammy skin, a weak and rapid pulse, a reduced dif-

ference between systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Who is at risk for dengue fever? There are currently four known strains of the Dengue virus, and there is no cure, so essentially, anyone bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus could catch it. Dr. David Cutler, MD, board certified family medicine physician at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, told Healthline that those at highest risk of severe dengue, which can result in death, are infants under 1, pregnant people, adults over 65, or those with underlying medical conditions like hypertension, diabetes, asthma, chronic kidney disease, chronic liver disease, peptic ulcer disease or other gastritis, obesity, or anyone receiving anticoagulation medications. "Treating dengue requires supportive care as there is no cure for this disease. Monitoring fever, hydration status and blood tests are important for detecting any signs of the disease becoming critical. Controlling fever, preventing dehydration and restricting disease spread through mosquito control are the most important measures to managing dengue," said Dr. Cutler. "Preventing [the] spread of disease, especially in young children, requires that everyone sleep under a mos-

quito net. Insect repellents are also an important preventive measure. Emptying and cleaning standing water containers deprives mosquitoes of places to breed. Screens on windows and doors will help prevent mosquitoes from entering the home," Dr. Cutler explained. Dr. Jessica Tuan, MD, an infectious diseases specialist at Yale Medicine, told Healthline that traveling to areas where dengue is most prominent also puts people at risk for exposure. "Those who have traveled to dengue-endemic areas are at highest risk for acquiring dengue. Dengue is endemic in tropical areas including Africa, the Americas, Southeast Asia, Eastern Mediterranean region, and the Western Pacific. Areas with frequent or continuous dengue transmission include Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau," Dr. Tuan said. "Take measures to prevent mosquito bites, including using mosquito repellent, for those traveling to or living in dengue-endemic areas. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends the dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia, for children 9–16 years old with prior laboratory-confirmed dengue virus infec-

tion and living in areas with frequent or continuous dengue transmission," she added. Can dengue mutate like the coronavirus? Dr. James Shepherd, MD, an infectious diseases specialist at Yale Medicine, told Healthline that the dengue virus cannot mutate the way the COVID-19 virus has simply because there's no cure for it. "As there is no treatment there is no selection for treatment resistance. Is that a possibility in the near future? Not without development of new treatments to select resistance. There may be selection by human and mosquito host factors and evolution of viral pathogens is a natural process but there are no significant changes in the virus correlating with human disease that I am aware of," Dr. Shepherd said. Dr. Shepherd added that as the CDC expects more cases of dengue due to rising global temperatures, finding some sort of antiviral medication might be possible. "As Aedes mosquitoes spread northwards with rising global temperatures dengue outbreaks are becoming more common in more temperate, richer countries and this presents a greater incentive for drug companies to spend on new antiviral drug development," Dr. Shepherd said.



## Health News

# Eating a Healthy Diet Now May Reduce Your Risk of Cognitive Decline Later

Diet is an important part of keeping your brain sharp as you age. New research indicates that the earlier you start eating healthy, the better. In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers tracked the diet and eating habits of more than 3,000 individuals living in the UK and correlated it with their cognitive ability for seven decades. Those who had the highest-quality diets tended to have better cognitive ability over time compared to their peers who ate unhealthy diets. “Cognitive decline can begin at age 65. But, there’s this long latency period, maybe 10 to 15 years prior to symptoms showing up, that those brain changes can already be happening. So our thinking was that diet much earlier than age 65 might be an important factor in what’s happening in our later life cognition. And our preliminary findings suggest that may be the case,” Kelly Cara, PhD, a recent graduate of the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University and author of the research, told Healthline. Cara presented her findings this week at NUTRITION 2024, the annual meet-

ing of the American Society for Nutrition. The findings have not yet been published in a scientific journal and are considered preliminary. Nonetheless, they are compelling and have practical implications for anyone concerned about maintaining brain health through diet. Experts say eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, fish, and whole grains — such as the Mediterranean diet — is a good place to start. “The findings are consistent with similar studies and truly exemplify the importance that diet plays early in life to impact health (in this case, cognitive health) later in life,” said Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS RD, a nutritionist at the Cleveland Clinic, and co-author of Regenerative Health. She was not affiliated with the study. Seven decades of research suggests healthy diets boost brain health. Cara’s work is based on data from the Medical Research Council’s National Survey of Health and Development, which has collected health and medical information from British citizens for nearly 100 years. The research looked at one specific cohort of 3,059 individuals born in 1946 and

evenly split between men and women. Those alive today are 78 years old and are still involved in the study. Members of the cohort reported their dietary information at five separate points (age 4, 36, 43, 53, and 63). They also recorded cognitive ability, based on standard testing, seven times during that time span, between age 8 and 69. “I have never seen any cohort that has dietary measures as early as this cohort, where diet was first assessed at age four, and then again throughout middle adulthood and now into the later life years,” said Cara. Diet was assessed using a standard measure known as the Healthy Eating Index (HEI), which factors in 13 different components, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, added sugars, and more to create a composite score of an individual’s diet. The assessments also used diaries and took place over several days rather than just a single day, creating a more detailed picture of an individual’s diet quality. “We have a better indication of what that person’s habitual diet was at that time, instead of just a single measure taken, we’re able to kind

of average across those multiple days, essentially to represent their diet in that decade,” said Cara. Those who ate healthier diets, particularly in mid-life (during the survey at age 43), were associated with better cognitive ability through age 69. Specifically, 47% of those with the lowest quality diets also had the worst cognitive outcomes. On the other hand, 48% of individuals with the highest quality diet also had the best cognitive outcomes. “This means general ability across language and memory and reaction time and visual processing, all of those things,” said Cara. Foods and diet types that support a healthy brain The right foods can support your brain health by reducing oxidative stress and slowing age-related mental decline. “Brain” foods are often high in antioxidants and healthy fats, such as berries, nuts, and fatty fish, including: Pumpkin seeds Coffee Salmon Herring Sardines Walnuts “Focus on colorful fruits and vegetables in the diet (aim for at least 6 colors every single day), a serving of leafy greens daily, and limit alcohol and ultra-processed foods. If you do not

enjoy fatty fish, then consider omega-3 supplementation as well,” said Kirkpatrick. Both Cara and Kirkpatrick emphasize the importance of diet as a whole rather than thinking about specific individual components.

Eating healthy over a lifetime is about consistency and finding the right balance of what works for you. “The idea here is that if I can be inspired by knowing that what I eat today actually does have an impact on how my future might look in terms of my cognition, that might be one more reason that I can say this is worth doing,” said Cara. The bottom line: A first-of-its-kind study tracked dietary information and cognitive ability in more than 3,000 individuals across seven decades. Researchers found that those who tended to have higher-quality diets also showed better cognitive ability across time compared to those with an unhealthy diet. Experts say that thinking about diet holistically and eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fish, such as the Mediterranean diet, is important for brain health.



Sports

# 33 goals scored at group stages

A total of 33 goals were scored during the Group stages of the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream Battle of the Giants Tournament at the HFC Bank Stadium in Suva last weekend.

Extra Supermarket Rewa FC striker John Orobulu leads the race for the Golden Boot Award with six goals.

Orobulu netted four goals in Rewa's 8-1 win against RPA Group/Nadroga Auto Marine Upholstery Works Nadroga FC and two goals in Delta Tigers' 5-0 win over Dayals Sawmillers Ba FC.

6  
(7) John OROBULU (Rewa FC)

3  
(15) Saula WAQA (Lautoka FC)

(10) Christopher WASASALA (Labasa FC)

2  
(6) Thomas DUNN (Navua FC)

(18) Samu KAUTOGA (Rewa FC)

(13) Epeli VALEVOU (Rewa FC)

1  
(11) Tuiba BATIRATU (Nadi FC)

(16) Etonia DOGALAU (Ba FC)

(5) Rusiate MATAREREGA (Nadroga FC)

(13) Eneriko MATAU (Nadi FC)

(10) Ali NASERI (Nadi FC)

(7) Dave RADRIGAI (Suva FC)

(1) Isikeli SEVANAIA (Rewa FC)

(15) Delon SHANKAR (Rewa FC)

(13) Penisoni TIRAU (Ba FC)

(14) Tomasi TUICAKAU (Nadroga FC)

(16) Atonio TUIVUNA (Lautoka FC)

(7) William VALENTINE (Nadi FC)

(12) Tevita WARANAIVALU (Rewa FC)

1  
Own goal

(13) Muni Shivam NAIDU (Lautoka FC)

(22) Sakeo TAGANECA (Nadroga FC)



## Jetsetters determined to tame hosts

The Nadi Football team is ready to face Suva in the Battle of the Giants semifinal this weekend. Head coach Raj Dayal revealed that he was closely observing Suva's performance in the pool games and has a clear strategy for what to expect from them. He adds that the hosts have been in good spirits lately, supported by their home crowd and they'll all they can to stop Suva from making it to the final.

Dayal also says that they have been focusing on areas of concern identified during the pool games. "Our team had some weak points like ball work, fitness, and playing together as a team," Dayal said. "We've been working hard to correct these issues this week. The team has regrouped well and is focused on dominating the game. Let's hope for the best."

Nadi is yet to win the BOG tournament in 27 years. Smart & Efficient Security Services/Calgary Nadi FC will face Flick Hygiene Suva FC in the second semifinal at 4:30 pm, following Flick Hygiene Lautoka FC against Extra Supermarket Rewa FC at 2 pm in the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream BOG.

## Rewa eyeing BOG win: Singh

The Rewa FC head coach, Rodeck Singh, is expecting his team to win the Battle of the Giants tournament. According to Singh, every effort has been made to ensure that the players are prepared for this outing. He confidently asserts that they have been working on their weak areas this week and should be ready to win their semifinal clash against Lautoka.

While acknowledging the strength of the Sugar City side, Singh emphasized that they are ready for it.

"We had two days of recovery and then we had a good training yesterday. We're looking forward to building on it today, sharpening all the edges, and preparing everything we could—the little mistakes we made in the pool games."

Singh also emphasized his strong focus on the team's discipline, stressing that maintaining discipline is vital for winning the tournament. Extra Supermarket Rewa will face Flick Hygiene Lautoka in the first Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream semifinal at 2 pm, followed by the Flick Hygiene Suva FC and Smart & Efficient Security Services/Calgary Nadi FC game at 4:30 pm at the HFC Bank Stadium in Suva.

## Passion drives players to compete

A total of eight teams are competing in the Veterans Tournament, with the finals to be held at the HFC Bank Stadium in Suva on Sunday, as the curtain raiser to the finals of the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream Battle of the Giants tournament.

Day two of the Tournament will be held tomorrow at the FFA Grounds in Suva, with

the first match to start at 8.30 am. Former Suva and national rep Intiaz Khan says passion is what drives him and other senior football players to compete and take part in the RC Manubhai/Apco Coatings International Veterans Tournament which got underway yesterday. Khan, who is also the former Suva FC president, says the only reason people come out to compete

and put other commitments on hold is their passion for the sport. "They're all busy people, but for the love of sport, love of football, we'll be there."

So, we just have to balance, my point is we just have to balance. If we don't balance its a problem." The tournament features a total of eight teams from the 45+ division. He says that being able to play football with

former teammates and opponents is a blessing. He also says balancing work, family life and football should not be an issue for anyone.

He says balancing all these commitments, other than football will allow people to enjoy life more.

Sports

# Team USA wins first rowing gold medal in men's four since 1960 Rome Olympics



Paris 2024 Olympics - Rowing - Men's Four Victory Ceremony - Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium - Flatwater, Vaires-sur-Marne, France - August 01, 2024. Gold medalists Nick Mead of United States, Justin Best of United States, Michael Grady of United States and Liam Corrigan of United States pose on the podium after winning.

The United States took home a rowing gold medal in a thrilling men's four race at the 2024 Paris Olympics on Thursday, the first time Americans have been Olympic champions in the event in 64 years. By contrast, Team USA hadn't earned first place in the men's four — a race where each team's boat is steered by a team of four rowers — since taking gold at the Rome Olympics in 1960. The British team were the reigning world champions in this heat and favored to win at the Olympics, but they got off to a slow start. Returning U.S. Olympians Nick Mead, Justin Best, Michael Grady and Liam

Corrigan led from start to finish to capture the gold. Only Grady was part of the men's four rowing team that took fifth place in the same competition at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, while the other three athletes competed in the men's eight, a similar competition involving an eight-person rowing team. Mead, Best, Grady and Corrigan have now been rowing together for a little over a year, according to Team USA, after they were selected to the Olympic team in March 2023.

The men's four at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium was a nerve-wracking race that saw Team USA dominate

from the outset, although the Americans were challenged by New Zealand's team, which ultimately caught up to deliver a tight race in the final stretch. A dramatic surge in the final 200 meters was enough to secure gold for the Americans.

Britain's crew kicked off the race with a shaky start but recovered toward the end. Ollie Maclean, Logan Ullrich, Tom Murray and Matt Macdonald rowed for New Zealand, and Oliver Wilkes, David Ambler, Matt Aldridge and Freddie Davidson rowed for Britain.

## Current medal count of the Paris Summer Olympic Games

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
China	11	7	6	24
United States	9	15	13	37
France	8	11	8	27
Australia	8	6	4	18
Japan	8	3	5	16
Great Britain	6	7	7	20
South Korea	6	3	3	12
Italy	5	7	4	16
Canada	3	2	3	8
Germany	2	2	2	6
Netherlands	2	2	2	6
New Zealand	2	2	1	5
Romania	2	1	1	4
Hong Kong	2	0	2	4
Azerbaijan	2	0	0	2
Hungary	1	2	1	4
Georgia	1	2	0	3
South Africa	1	1	2	4
Sweden	1	1	2	4
Belgium	1	0	2	3

Last updated at 08:01:30 PM 10-12-2024 EST

Sports News

# Fiji Sevens Rugby Team Settles For Silver Medal At 2024 Paris Olympics

France Sevens Rugby team came out strong against Fiji Rugby Sevens team to win the Gold Medal and End Fiji's Gold Medal 3rd time run with an impressive 28- 7 victory. We thank the entire team including officials. Vinaka Vakalevu Viti.



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## Sports News

# Cakau brings stability and discipline to players preparing for the Olympics



Setefano Cakau is no stranger to the 7s circuit and his inclusion in the Fiji 7s men's management team has brought the team members together in terms of discipline on and off the field. Cakau told fivillage News that

he is reminding the players that their body is their biggest asset going into this tournament, and they should look after it well to defend the gold medal. According to him, he has seen major improvements in how the team

has changed in terms of training and mental preparation ever since he joined the team. He adds it was tough to pick the final 15 players for Paris and encouraged those who got dropped to continue to train. According

to the Fiji Rugby Union, the past few days have been all about family who have been the main supporters who played a crucial role in preparing the team for this journey both on and off the field. The Fiji 7s team left Suva

for their flight to Paris today. Fiji is in a tough pool with hosts France, USA and Uruguay. The Men's 7s competition will be held from the 25th to the 28th of this month.

## Spain beats Georgia 4-1 to set up Germany quarter - final

Spain set up a blockbuster quarter-final tie with Euro 2024 hosts Germany by surviving an early 4-1 win against Georgia at Cologne Stadium. Both teams were locked 1-1 at halftime. Rodri, Fabián Ruiz, Nico Williams and Dani Olmo scored for Spain while Robin Le Normand scored for Georgia. In the other matches today England beat Slovakia 2-1. France will face Belgium at 4am tomorrow and Portugal will face Slovenia at 7am. In the quarter finals, Spain takes on Germany at 4am this Saturday and England will face Switzerland at 4am on Sunday.



## Sports News

## Former Broncos star Teui Robati to stand trial on two counts of rape

Former Brisbane Broncos star Teui Robati will stand trial this month on two counts of rape. The charges relate to an alleged assault of a woman in a Fortitude Valley bar in Brisbane on December 21, 2022. The 22-year-old is yet to enter any formal plea before the court but has previously denied the allegations. Robati is set to appear before a four-day trial on the 22nd of this month. In February, Judge Paul Smith granted an application for the alleged victim to be treated as a special witness. The woman will pre-record her evidence and be cross-examined by Robati's barrister ahead of the trial. A special witness can be declared by the court if a person due to give evidence is likely to suffer severe emotional trauma or be so intimidated as to be disadvantaged as a witness. The New Zealand-born rugby league player was axed by the Broncos in February 2023 before the NRL season started after he was charged for the alleged incident. Robati made his NRL debut in 2021 and has appeared in 17 NRL games. He also represented the Maori All-Stars in 2022.



## Reinforcement arrives for Flying Fijians ahead of Georgia and All Blacks test

Reinforcement has arrived at the Fiji Water Flying Fijians camp in Batumi, Georgia, as they prepare for their test match this Saturday. The arrival of the Europe based players will be an added boost to the morale of the boys. The Flying Fijians had their first training session at Batumi which included players such as Bristol Bears sensation Viliame Mata, Toulon players Waisea Nayacalevu and Jiuta Wainiqolo, Gloucester back row Albert Tuisue, Lekima Tagitagivalu, Temo Mayanavanua and Reds prop Peni Ravai. Coach Mick Byrne had earlier confirmed the inclusion of Europe-based players for their test match against Georgia this Saturday and the All Blacks later this month in San Diego, USA. He also assured fans that this week will be a different story. The Flying Fijians will take on Georgia at 4am Saturday in Georgia.





## Sports News

# Paris 2024: PV Sindhu's, Satwik-Chirag's badminton dreams dashed

Lakshya Sen was left as India's only badminton medal hope, after the double Olympic medallist's loss to He Bing Jiao lost in the last 16. After PV Sindhu embraced He Bing Jiao at the net, she walked a few heavy steps towards Prakash Padukone and Agus Dwi Santoso with her head down. On the same courts of the Porte de la Chapelle Arena earlier on Thursday, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy smiled while congratulating the opponents across alongside Chirag Shetty. Within a few hours of each other, India's biggest medal hope from badminton, and the only two-time Olympic medallist going for her third, had been knocked out of the 2024 Paris Olympics. For the second time in an Olympics, Satwik and Chirag have nothing to show after losing to Malaysians Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik 21-13, 14-21, 16-21 in the men's doubles quarter-finals. For the first time in an Olympics, Sindhu, the 2016 Rio Games silver medallist and 2020 Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist, will return without a medal after losing to He Bing Jiao 21-19, 21-14 in the pre-quarters. The only Indian alive, and truly kicking, in the badminton draw is a debutant. Lakshya Sen knocked out a physically exhausted HS Prannoy in an all-Indian singles pre-quarters 21-12, 21-6 to march on. Sindhu would know how that feels — young and deep into an Olympics draw. She was there in Rio, and so was her fellow finalist Carolina Marin. She was also there in Tokyo, beating He for the bronze. To paint a picture of Sindhu's physical and mental struggles coming into Paris eight years on, Marin, playing on the adjacent court the same time as Sindhu, rallied from a game down to advance into the quarters. And across the net, He ensured Tokyo seemed a long time ago. "It's sad," Sindhu said, pausing. "The result which I couldn't give. But that's how the journey goes." Still smiling in it, Sindhu said Paris wasn't meant to be for her, even though she tried everything she could to peak for it. On the day of her first real test here, however,



He would scale well and over the Indian. The last time they played, the Chinese swept the Indian away in straight games at the Hangzhou Asian Games last year. A starting statement of intent from Sindhu would've gone a long way here. It was He instead who was off to a 5-1 lead, keeping Sindhu to the back court. Sindhu won a couple of good points closer to the net and narrowed the gap, but a swift He smash kept her ahead at 11-8 in the first break. Sindhu kept pegging back, and the Chinese kept feeling it. A service error by her made it 14-14 before a moment of hesitancy on the back line that had Sindhu pounce with a smash winner took it to 19-19. That's when the world No. 9 showed her class and cranked it up. The next point, a smash, had Sindhu challenging from the floor and then the Chinese was up a game after an incredible rally and pick up shot. The Chinese jumped turning around, and there was no looking back for her. So flattened was Sindhu after the first game that she hit a high, slow, straightforward smash long for 6-2 on the scoreboard. Soon, it stopped ticking. And so did Sindhu's Olympic medal count with it. For Satwik and Chirag, a weak netted return was how it all ended. At a stage where few saw coming, notwithstanding the unpredict-

ability of men's doubles badminton. At the Tokyo Games three years ago where they exited in the group stage, they were still a building pair. At the Paris Games, they were the former world No. 1 third seeds who had graduated to lofty heights and carved an unparalleled path for Indian badminton. They had a lot going for them coming into Paris too — big titles over the last couple of years; the feel of winning at this arena at this year's BWF French Open; a rich two-title winning form this year even though it tailed off a bit towards the last couple of months with Satwik's shoulder injury. And, after sailing through their

group here, a rather favourable quarter-final draw in terms of recent match-up. The world No. 3 Malaysian pair has a sizeable edge in the overall head-to-head record (8-3), but the Indians had their measure in the last three outings. Each of those three victories, including at the Asian Games in which Satwik and Chirag went all the way, were wrapped up in straight games. The quarter-final began much the same way with Satwik and Chirag winning the first game 21-13, before it all unravelled for them. Up in the second game, they quickly went down 14-21 as the Malaysians did something they hadn't in

more than a year — take a game off the Indians. The decider was neck and neck around the change of ends, and the Indians also nudged ahead 14-11 as Chirag gestured animatedly towards coach Mathias Boe. But they were soon levelled, silenced and shown the door. "They kept on playing really good in the 1-2-3-4 strokes, which we couldn't handle well today," Chirag said. Especially in the crunch points at the business end, when the kind of shots they were making earlier were now errors. "When we are leading, when we are playing really confidently," Chirag said. "It was a pressure mistake."



Sports News

# Nadi to take on Suva and Rewa to face Lautoka in BOG semi final

Smart & Efficient Security Services/Calgary Nadi will take on Flick Hygiene Suva in the semi final of the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream Battle of the Giants Tournament after beating defending champion Extra Supermarket Labasa 3-nil in the final pool match at HFC Bank Stadium. Extra Supermarket Rewa will face Flick Hygiene Lautoka in the first semi-final. Labasa played with 10 players after keeper Simone Tamanisau was given a red card for tackling a Nadi player inside

the goal mouth. William Valentine scored the first goal through a penalty in the first half. Ali Nasier and Tuiba Batiatu scored a goal each in the second half. An emotional Nadi coach Raj Dayal says he is proud of the players as they did what was told. He says they were confident they would beat Labasa. In the semi finals on Saturday at HFC Bank Stadium, Rewa takes on Lautoka at 2pm while Nadi faces Suva at 4.30pm. The final is at 3pm on Sunday.



# Ba beats Nadroga 3-1 in BOG opener

Dayal's Sawmillers Ba has beaten RPA Group/Nadroga Auto Marine Upholstery Works Nadroga 3-1 in the opening match of the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream Battle of the Giants at the HFC Bank Stadium. Ilaisa Vulimainavuso and Antonia Dogalau scored a goal each for Ba while Nadroga scored an own goal. Nadroga's

only goal was scored by Rusiate Matarerega. Meanwhile, Smart & Efficient Security Services/Calgary Nadi is leading Flick Hygiene Lautoka by 1-0. In other matches today, Flick Hygiene Suva takes on Extra Supermarket Rewa at 5.30pm while Extra Supermarket Labasa takes on Flowserve Engineering Navua at 7.30pm.



# Labasa aims for victory in BOG tournament opener

As the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream Battle of the Giants tournament starts today, defending champion Labasa will be focusing on winning their pool matches. Coach Ravneel Pratap says all teams in their pool are tough. Labasa is pooled with Navua, Lautoka and Nadi. Solomon Islands imports Junior Fordney, and Tigi Molel will boost Labasa's chance of

retaining the prestigious title. Pratap says they have a different lineup of players for the BOG, where Navua's Melvin Mani has also joined their camp. Labasa takes on Navua at 7 this evening. The BOG kicks off at the HFC Bank Stadium, where Ba takes on Nadroga at 1pm, Lautoka takes on Nadi at 3pm, and Suva hosts Rewa at 5pm.



# Lautoka first to qualify for BOG semis after 1-nil win over Navua

Flick Hygiene Lautoka is the first team to qualify for the semi final of the Rooster Chicken/Scoops Ice Cream Battle of the Giants Tournament after beating Flowserve Engineering Navua 1-nil in their final group match at the HFC Bank Stadium. Navua is out of the tournament. They were tied nil all at half time. Saula Waqa scored for Lautoka in the 50th minute.

Lautoka's Sitiveni Cavuilagi was red carded in the second half for stomping on a Navua player who was down on the ground. Coach Shivam Raj says they will regroup, rectify their mistakes and come back stronger. He says they will work on their finishing, defence for the semi final. The match between Flick Hygiene Suva and RPA

Group/Nadroga Auto Marine Upholstery Works Nadroga is underway where Suva only needs a draw to qualify for the semi final while Nadroga is out. Extra Supermarket Rewa takes on Dayal's Sawmillers Ba at 2pm while Extra Supermarket Labasa faces Smart & Efficient Security Services/Calgary Nadi at 4pm.



## Sports News

## Paris Games: Jerry Tuwai reflects on 'misunderstanding' with Ben Gollings



Two-time Olympic gold medallist Jerry Tuwai is back on the world's biggest sporting stage. Only a few months ago, it seemed the rugby sevens legend wouldn't take part in the Paris Olympics after missing out on another Fiji squad. Tuwai didn't take part in the SVNS Series until the Grand Final in Madrid. Former coach Ben Gollings had overlooked the 35-year-old earlier in the season, with the Englishman reportedly putting that non-selection down to fitness. New boss Osea Kolinisau, who won Olympic gold at the 2016 Rio Games with Tuwai, came into the head coach role a matter of weeks before the prestigious Hong Kong Sevens. Kolinisau didn't pick his old teammate for that tournament or the next one in Singapore. But when Fiji named their playing squad for the Grand Final event at Civitas Metropolitano, the inclusion of Tuwai was by far the biggest talking point. Fiji were uncharacteristically poor during the regular season and were desperate to turn their fortunes around. Tuwai was an unused substitute in Fiji's thrilling win over traditional rivals New Zealand in their first match, but

by the end of the tournament, the sevens veteran was starting. Almost two months on, Tuwai is Fiji's sevens captain at the Olympic Games in Paris. "A lot of things that happened a few months ago, it hurts me, it hurts me to my core that I was not able to compete on the SVNS Series," Tuwai said on the Olympics broadcast. "But I never lost hope. I always believed that I could make another Olympics. "A few months later, I'm here. I just played my first game so it's a blessing. "He's not a bad man, he's not a bad coach – he's a very good man. I respect him. He's a good coach too, a very good coach," Tuwai explained when asked about Ben Gollings. "There's a lot of misunderstanding between us, between the media, between the people that have caused a lot of drama, unnecessary drama, that I think carried onto my boys on the Series. "But as I said, he's a good man, he's a good coach. It is all misunderstanding that caused a lot of drama." With Tuwai leading the way, Fiji have gotten off to a perfect start as they look to become the first nation to win three Olympic gold medals in rugby sevens. The

Fijians opened their account with a blistering 40-12 win newly-promoted SVNS Series side Uruguay before backing that up with a 38-12 triumph over the USA.

Those results were the second and third biggest winning margins on the opening day in Saint-Denis. With 80,000 fans watching on at Stade de France, the two-time defending Olympic gold medallists shot out of the blocks in a crunch

clash with the USA by piling on 33 points in the first half alone. That match was practically over then and there. Waisea Nacuqu scored one more for Fiji in the second term before USA sevens great Perry Baker had the final say with a runaway try. But the match was well and truly over before that point, and Fiji will take plenty of confidence out of that result. They take on Antoine Dupont's Fance in the early hours of Friday morning

(Fiji time). But for now, putting the results aside, it's time to admire the efforts of Jerry Tuwai who has clearly worked hard to get back for the Games. "It was never my dream. Rugby was not in the Olympics," he added. "After the first Olympics, I thought to myself, 'I can do it again.' And after the second, 'I can do it again.' "Now in my third, I don't know if I'm going to go again after this but it's all in God's hands."





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