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World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

December 2023 Monthly Publication - Subscription Available Pages 60 Volume: 230

NZFFI Auckland All-Stars Crowned Pacific Community Cup 2023 Champions



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SOME TRADITIONS SHOULD BE KEPT INTACT

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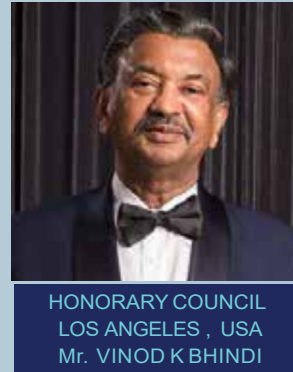
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THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

The USFiji 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 USFiji 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 paper's current strength. Despite lacking the front line journalist experience, he makes up for the deficiency with the sheer ability to keep 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 must 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 USFiji Times in reaching the desired success with adequate coverage. The paper will strive to serve the community with the best of its ability and assure the community that there will be quality reporting at all times.

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Fiji News

Fiji Takes Center Stage at COP28 in Dubai

Fiji, a small island developing state (SIDS) located in the South Pacific Ocean, is playing a vital role at the ongoing 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Conven-

Enhancing adaptation and resilience: Fiji is advocating for increased financial support for developing countries to adapt to climate change and build resilience to its impacts. Addressing loss and damage:

events and initiatives, including:

The High-Level Dialogue on Climate Finance: Fiji is urging developed countries to fulfill their financial commitments to

The Fijian government is optimistic that COP28 will be a turning point in the global effort to address climate change. They believe that with strong leadership and collective action, the world can still achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and build a more sustainable future for all. Here are some additional ways Fiji is impacting COP28:

on climate action. Overall, Fiji's presence and leadership at COP28 are crucial to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable countries are heard and that the climate crisis remains a top priority for the international community.

Here are some resources where you can learn more about Fiji's role at COP28:



Championing the voices of SIDS: Fiji is representing the interests of other SIDS at COP28, ensuring that their unique needs and perspectives are considered in the negotiations.

Fiji's official COP28 website: <https://fijiclimatechangeportal.gov.fj/category/cop28/>
The Fijian government's website: <https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Home>
The UNFCCC website:

tion on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

As a nation particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Fiji is using this global platform to advocate for urgent and ambitious action to address the climate crisis. Their priorities at COP28 include:

Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius: Fiji is urging all countries to strengthen their emission reduction targets and implement policies to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Fiji is calling for the establishment of a comprehensive financial mechanism to address the loss and damage caused by climate change, particularly in vulnerable countries.

Fiji's leadership on climate change is well-established. The country was one of the first to ratify the Paris Agreement and has been actively engaged in international negotiations to address climate change. Notably, Fiji hosted COP23 in 2015, the first COP to be held in a SIDS.

At COP28, Fiji is actively participating in various key

support climate action in developing countries.

The Global Stocktake: Fiji is participating in this comprehensive review of progress towards the goals of the Paris Agreement, ensuring the voices of SIDS are heard.

The Global Climate Action Event: Fiji is showcasing its own climate action efforts and sharing best practices with other countries.

Beyond these official events, Fiji is also engaging with other stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, to build momentum for climate action.



Promoting youth engagement: Fiji is actively engaging young people in the climate change conversation, recognizing their critical role in shaping the future.

Fostering partnerships and collaboration: Fiji is working with other countries and organizations to build stronger partnerships and collaboration

<https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>



EMPLOYMENT MINISTRY AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE ABROAD, NEW ZEALAND FORMALISE AGREEMENT



The Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations and Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA), New Zealand have formalised their partnership in an agreement aimed at assisting Pacific developing countries in addressing their development needs across many sectors.

The Memorandum of

Agreement was signed by the Ministry permanent secretary, Maritino Nemani, and the VSA Council chair, Dana Mac Diarmid.

Through this agreement, which was facilitated through the New Zealand High Commission, the VSA will provide support for workforce development through partnerships with

the public sector, civil society and the private sector. VSA is a New Zealand registered charity organisation and is the largest and most experienced volunteer agency that is non-religious, non-political and non-governmental organisation.

It facilitates a national volunteering development program, funded by the New Zealand Ministry of

Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) as part of the Aotearoa New Zealand Aid Programme.

VSA operates under five broad thematic areas and these are Business and Economic Growth; Health and Well-being; Education; Environment and Climate Change; and Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Security.

Pacific Island countries and

organisations that are currently partners with VSA are Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Bougainville, the United Nations, and Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific agencies operating in Fiji.

VSA brings people together from New Zealand and the wider Pacific to share skills and experience, working to

transform lives and create a fair future for all.

VSA New Zealand and Fiji had strong bonds over the years and their contribution and assistance towards each other whether it's natural disasters, military support and other areas of support were really welcomed and appreciated.

Mr Nemani expressed the Coalition Government's sincere gratitude to the

VSA as an important partner for the Government in supporting regional development aspirations and giving New Zealanders an opportunity to share their skills.

He also extended his appreciation to all relevant stakeholders involved in the finalisation of the agreement.

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN TECH - FIJI CELEBRATES DIGITAL EXCELLENCE

The Grand Pacific Hotel witnessed a momentous event as the Acting Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-Operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica, addressed a distinguished audience at the "Women in Tech Award" ceremony on Friday night.

In his address, he emphasised the importance of events like "Women in Tech" in bridging the digital divide and encouraging women's active participation in technology-driven environments.

DPM Kamikamica referred to the recently released "Assessing Digital and Financial Literacy In Fiji" report, highlighting Fiji's score on the Digital and Financial Literacy Index and the need for comprehensive digital programs in the country.

He stressed the three key components of Fiji's digital ecosystem, focusing on narrowing the digital divide, building secure ICT infrastructure, and developing a robust and skilled workforce. He celebrated the success of initiatives like digitalFIJI

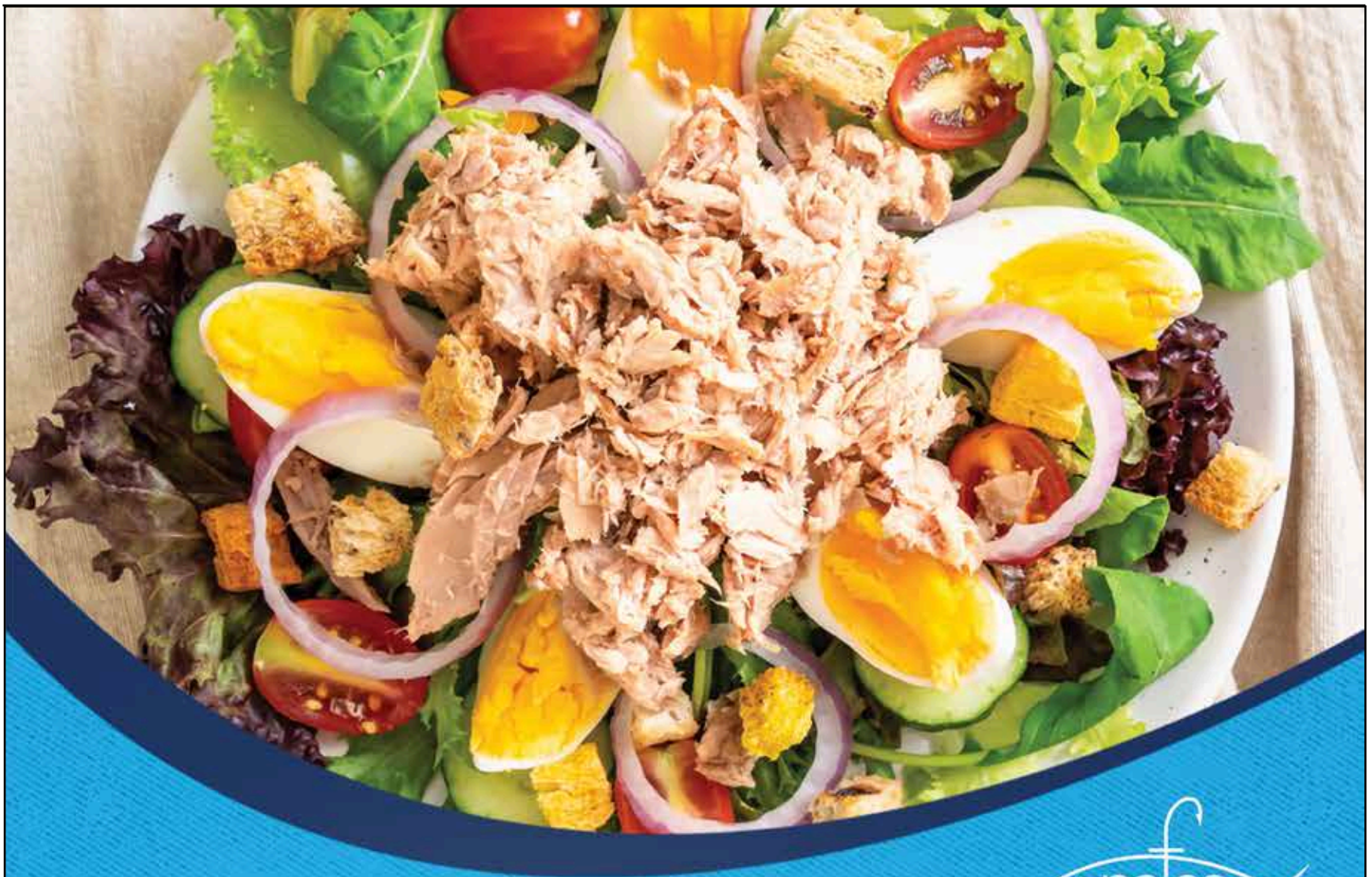


and the recent partnership with Google, emphasizing the significant role these projects play in Fiji's digital transformation.

Highlighting the achievements of the Girls in ICT Programme, the commitment to empowering women in technology and fostering a digital landscape that promotes equality and inclusivity was also reiterated.

DPM Kamikamica concluded the address by celebrating the resilience and innovation of women in tech, acknowledging their pivotal role in shaping Fiji's future in the digital era. He proposed the continuation and growth of programs like "Women in Tech" and called for collective efforts to address challenges raised during panel discussions.

Also present at the event was the Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, Hon. Sashi Kiran, members of the diplomatic corps, private sector representatives, and esteemed guests.



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The Golden Boy Karan Soars High: Chosen as Fiji's Flag Bearer at the Pacific Games Closing Ceremony



Yeshnil Karan, the “Golden Boy” of Fijian athletics, has soared to yet another incredible height. After claiming three gold medals in the 3,000m steeplechase, 5,000m, and the 10,000m races, Karan has been bestowed with the immense honor of being Team Fiji’s flag bearer at the Pacific Games closing ceremony.

This prestigious selection, made by Team Fiji itself, is a resounding testament to Karan’s exceptional talent, unwavering dedication, and exemplary sportsmanship. The 22-year-old champion has described this moment as the most memorable of his career, stating, “I’m so

honored to be leading my fellow athletes in for the 2023 Pacific Games closing ceremony. It’s a dream come true.” Karan’s journey to becoming Fiji’s flag bearer is nothing short of inspirational. His relentless commitment to training, coupled with his natural athletic prowess, propelled him to dominate the long-distance races, leaving his competitors in the dust. His three gold medals stand as a symbol of Fijian athletic excellence on the regional stage.

But Karan’s impact extends far beyond his personal achievements. He has become a beacon of hope and motivation for

aspiring athletes across Fiji and the Pacific. His story serves as a powerful reminder that through hard work and unwavering belief, even the most ambitious dreams can be realized.

As Karan prepares to lead Team Fiji out at the closing ceremony, we can expect to witness a moment filled with pride, emotion, and a collective celebration of Fijian athletic brilliance. It will be a scene etched forever in the memories of not just Karan and his fellow athletes, but the entire nation.

Furthermore, Team Fiji’s performance at the Pacific Games was nothing short

of remarkable. Finishing sixth on the medal tally, with 21 gold, 30 silver, and 40 bronze medals, they solidified their position as a force to be reckoned with in the Pacific sporting arena. This achievement is a testament to the depth and breadth of talent within the Fijian sporting community.

While New Caledonia and Tahiti claimed the top two spots on the medal tally, Fiji’s performance was nothing to be sniffed at. They stood tall among much larger and more populous nations, proving that heart, determination, and a touch of Fijian magic can go a long way.

As the curtain closes on

the 2023 Pacific Games, Fijians can look back with immense pride at the incredible feats achieved by their athletes. They can also look forward to the next edition of the Games in Pirae, Tahiti, in 2027, where, undoubtedly, the Golden Boy Karan and his fellow Fijian athletes will once again take center stage, ready to weave more golden chapters into the nation’s sporting tapestry.

Congratulations to Karan on this well-deserved honor, and to Team Fiji for their outstanding performance at the Pacific Games! May their journeys continue to inspire generations to come.



Fiji National Provident Fund Achieves Remarkable Financial Turnaround

The Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) has announced a remarkable financial turnaround in its 2023 Annual Report. The report revealed a positive net contribution of \$100.3 million, a significant improvement from the \$15.2 million deficit recorded in the previous year.

Fiji National Provident Fund



Achieves Remarkable Financial Turnaround

The Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) has announced a remarkable financial turnaround in its

2023 Annual Report. The report revealed a positive net contribution of \$100.3 million, a significant improvement from the \$15.2 million deficit recorded in the previous year.

This turnaround is attributed to several factors, including:

Strong investment performance: FNPF's investment portfolio generated a return of 12.7%, exceeding its benchmark and contributing significantly to the positive financial outcome.

Reduced operating expenses: FNPF successfully implemented cost-cutting measures, resulting in a 7.4% reduction in operating expenses.

Improved member contributions: Member contributions increased by 5.6%, reflecting a strong Fijian economy and increased formal employment.

This positive financial performance is a testament to the FNPF's

commitment to its members and its strong financial management. It also provides a solid foundation for future growth and investment in member benefits and services.

Key Highlights of the FNPF's 2023 Financial Performance:

Total assets: \$9.4 billion

Total liabilities: \$8.3 billion

Net assets: \$1.1 billion

Investment income: \$1.2 billion

Member contributions: \$734 million

Member benefits paid: \$631 million.

The FNPF's positive financial performance is expected to benefit its members in several ways, including:

Increased member benefits: The FNPF plans to increase interest rates credited to members' accounts and expand its range of member benefits and services. Improved fi-

financial security: The strong financial position of the FNPF provides members with greater financial security and peace of mind.

Enhanced investment opportunities: The FNPF will be able to invest in more diverse and potentially higher-yielding assets, which will ultimately benefit members' retirement savings.

The turnaround is a significant development for the FNPF and its members. It demonstrates the FNPF's ability to navigate challenging economic conditions and emerge stronger. It also shows the FNPF's commitment to its members and its mission to provide them with a secure financial future.

This news should be well received by FNPF members, as it indicates that their retirement savings are in good hands. It also sends a positive message to the Fijian economy and demonstrates the potential for further growth and development.

Highly qualified pediatric nurses depart Fiji

The Health Ministry has observed a significant surge in the departure of highly qualified nurses with specialized pediatric training.

Head of the Pediatric Department Doctor Ilisapeci Vereti stresses the impact of this exodus on the healthcare system, particularly in children's hospitals where specialized care is of utmost importance.

She emphasizes that the ongoing departure of these essential healthcare professionals has imposed an additional strain on the existing workforce. Despite the challenges, the pediatric department is persevering with the resources at hand, leading

health professionals to take on additional responsibilities and go above and beyond their regular duties. Addressing the situation, Dr Vereti assures that the hospital remains committed to providing quality care for every child, even in the face of this global shift in healthcare personnel.

She highlights the department's determination to explore innovative solutions to ensure that every child receives the specialized attention they rightfully deserve. This commitment, Dr Vereti adds reflects the hospital's resilience amid the evolving landscape of healthcare personnel worldwide.



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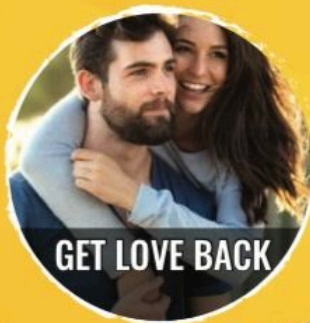
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World News

7.6 magnitude earthquake hits off coast of southern Philippines

MANILA, Philippines — A powerful earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.6 struck Saturday off the coast of the southern Philippines island of Mindanao and Philippine authorities issued a tsunami warning.

The quake struck at 10:37 p.m. and was measured at a depth of 20 miles. There are no immediate reports of damage or casualties.

A US State Department said it is aware of the earthquake and was working with local authorities to determine if any U.S. citizens were affected.

The agency said it stands “ready to provide consular assistance.”

“The U.S. Department of State has no higher priority than the safety and security



of U.S. citizens overseas,” the agency said. “We urge U.S. citizens in the affected areas who are safe to contact their loved ones directly and, or update their status on

social media. If you are in the affected area and need immediate emergency services, please contact local authorities.”

The Pacific Tsunami Warn-

ing Center said based on the magnitude and location it expected tsunami waves to hit the southern Philippines and parts of Indonesia, Palau and Malaysia. But the cen-

ter later dropped its tsunami warning. In Japan, authorities issued evacuation orders in various parts of Okinawa Prefecture, including for the entire coastal area, affecting thousands of people.

Teresito Bacolcol of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology Seismology told The Associated Press his agency advised residents along the coast of southern Surigao del Sur and Davao Oriental provinces to evacuate immediately to higher grounds.

The Philippines experiences regular earthquakes and volcanic eruptions due to its location on the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” an arc of seismic faults around the ocean.

China’s Respiratory Illness Rise: Official Points to Known Pathogens

Chinese health officials have attributed the recent surge in respiratory illnesses across the country to known pathogens, dispelling concerns about a novel virus. This comes as the World Health Organization (WHO) sought more information from China about the clusters of pneumonia, particularly affecting children.

An official statement confirmed that the rise is linked to the circulation of common respiratory viruses, including influenza, Mycoplasma pneumoniae, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). These pathogens typically see increased activity during the colder months, coinciding with the current spike in cases.

While reassuring, the official acknowledged the challenges posed by lifting COVID-19 restrictions. This shift, coupled with the

colder weather, has created a more favorable environment for these viruses to spread.

The Chinese government is taking steps to address the situation, including:

Strengthening surveillance and monitoring: Officials are closely tracking the spread of the viruses and identifying any potential clusters or outbreaks.

Enhancing public awareness: Campaigns are educating the public about hygiene practices, early symptom recognition, and the importance of seeking medical attention if needed. Boosting vaccination coverage: Efforts are underway to ensure high vaccination rates for influenza and other relevant vaccines, especially among children.

The WHO remains engaged with Chinese health authorities and stands ready to provide further support if needed. Their primary



focus is ensuring transparency and timely information sharing to prevent the spread of misinformation and potential panic.

This situation underscores the importance of global cooperation and preparedness in managing respiratory illnesses, especially during seasonal transitions. By working together, we can mitigate the impact of these viruses and protect public health.



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Israel-Gaza war: Residents of Khan Younis say Israeli strikes heaviest since start of war

Israel has carried out intense air strikes on Khan Younis in southern Gaza, with residents describing it as the heaviest bombing of the war.

People in eastern areas of the city have been told by the Israeli military to evacuate further to the south.

Israel believes some Hamas leaders are in the city, where many civilians are sheltering after fleeing the north.

Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says at least 193 people have been killed in the latest wave of Israeli attacks.

On Friday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) resumed its offensive against Hamas in Gaza, launched in response to the 7 October attacks in Israel which killed around 1,200 people.

The Hamas-run health ministry says the number of people killed in Gaza has now exceeded 15,200 people.

Israel's bombardment of Gaza resumed after a temporary ceasefire ended on Friday. The IDF said it had hit more than 400 Hamas "terror targets" on the first day of the renewed operation.

Rockets have also been regularly fired at Israel from Gaza since fighting resumed, including a barrage aimed at Tel Aviv and the surrounding area of central Israel on Saturday evening.

Following this attack, Israel's ambulance service said it treated a 22-year-old man for "minor shrapnel injuries" to the head in Holon - a city just south of Tel Aviv.

At a briefing on Saturday eve-

ning, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to continue with the Israeli military operation until "we achieve all the goals" in eliminating Hamas and securing the release of the hostages.

He acknowledged that "a tough war is ahead of us".

Khan Younis and the city of Rafah, on the border with Egypt, were some of the places hit with heavy air strikes, with the next phase of the offensive likely to focus on southern Gaza.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have sought shelter in the area, after being told to flee the north of the territory, which was Israel's main target in the early stages of the war. The IDF's Arabic-language spokesman posted maps on social media indicating which areas civilians should leave, directing people in areas east of Khan Younis to evacuate further south to shelters in Rafah, an indication that a ground offensive could be imminent.

Hospitals, operating with limited resources after weeks of fighting, were overwhelmed with casualties, and at the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, some patients were treated on the floor.

"A night of horror," Samira, a mother of four, told the Reuters news agency. "It was one of the worst nights we spent in Khan Younis in the past six weeks since we arrived here... We are so afraid they will enter Khan Younis."

Unicef spokesman James Elder, who was in Khan Younis



on Saturday, told the BBC that hospitals were already "saturated" with casualties before the strikes resumed.

"There is literally blood in the corridors, there are mothers yet again holding babies who look like they've been killed", he said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent charity confirmed 100 lorries with aid were allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt on Saturday. On Friday, no humanitarian supplies were delivered to the territory.

Talks to reach a deal for another temporary ceasefire and to secure the release of the people kidnapped on 7 October who remain in Gaza collapsed on Saturday.

A Palestinian official familiar with the talks told the BBC that the negotiations were completely stalled, with no contacts or attempts to reach a fresh truce.

On Saturday, Israel announced

it was pulling its negotiators from the Mossad intelligence service out of talks in Qatar, which has been acting as a mediator, following an "impasse in the negotiations".

Saleh al-Aroui, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, told Al Jazeera on Saturday that "there are no negotiations now" and there would be no more prisoners exchanged with Israel until the war is over. US Vice President Kamala Harris, in a meeting with the president of Egypt, said "under no circumstances [would] the United States permit the forced relocation of Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank, the besiegement of Gaza, or the redrawing of the borders of Gaza".

She also reiterated the US position that Israel had the right to defend itself.

During their meeting in Dubai

on the sidelines of the UN's COP28 climate conference, she told Abdul Fattah al-Sisi that peace efforts could only succeed if "pursued in the context of a clear political horizon for the Palestinian people towards a state of their own led by a revitalized Palestinian Authority".

At Saturday's briefing, Mr Netanyahu praised the release of 110 Israeli hostages - women and children - as well as some foreigners.

"Welcome back from hell," Mr Netanyahu said.

The hostages were released in exchange for the freeing of 240 Palestinian prisoners - women and teenagers.

Most of the about 140 captives remaining in Gaza are men and military personnel.

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel pounded targets in crowded southern Gaza on Saturday and ordered more neighborhoods designated for attack to evacuate, driving up the death toll as the United States and others urged it to do more to protect civilians a day after a truce collapsed.

The prospect of further cease-fires in Gaza appeared bleak, as Israel recalled its negotiators and Hamas' deputy leader said any further swap of Gaza-held hostages for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel would only happen as part of ending the war.

"We will continue the war until we achieve all its goals, and it's impossible to achieve those goals without the ground operation," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in an address Saturday night. At least 200 Pal-

estinians were killed after the fighting resumed Friday morning following the weeklong truce with the territory's ruling militant group Hamas, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. Several multi-story residential buildings were hit on Saturday, engulfing neighborhoods in huge clouds of smoke.

The military also dropped leaflets ordering the evacuation of areas that make up about one-quarter of the Gaza Strip, with hundreds of thousands of residents, U.N. monitors said. Ahead of a resumption of fighting, the United States had warned Israel to avoid significant new mass displacement. Separately, the ministry said the overall death toll in Gaza since the Oct. 7 start of the war had surpassed 15,200, a sharp jump from the previous count of more than 13,300 on Nov. 20. The

ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but it said 70% of the dead were women and children. It said more than 40,000 people had been wounded since the war began. "Too many innocent Palestinians have been killed. Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering and the images and videos coming from Gaza are devastating," U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris told reporters during the COP28 climate conference in Dubai. Appeals from the U.S., Israel's closest ally, to protect civilians came after an offensive in the first weeks of the war devastated large areas of northern Gaza. Some 2 million Palestinians, almost Gaza's entire population, are now crammed into the territory's southern half.

Israel's military said it had hit more

than 400 Hamas targets across Gaza over the past day, including more than 50 in Khan Younis city and surrounding areas in the south.

Bombardments on Saturday destroyed a block of about 50 residential buildings in the Shijaiyah neighborhood of Gaza City and a six-story building in the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya on the northern edge of the city, said the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

More than 60 people were killed in the Shijaiyah strikes and more than 300 buried under the rubble, the monitors said, citing the Palestinian Red Crescent. Israel's military said it killed a Hamas battalion commander in the area but gave no details on the operation. Residents could not be reached.

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Fiji News

\$1.7b turnover | Airline tops foreign exchange earnings

Fiji's national carrier Fiji Airways is expecting a turnover of close to \$1.7 billion this year, said chief executive officer André Viljoen.

"We will have a turnover this year of nearly \$1.7 billion and we also generate the biggest level of foreign currency into the country which is at \$1.7b."

He highlighted the airline's strategic importance to the economy.

"Seventy per cent of the people arriving in this country come on Fiji Airways," Mr Viljoen said.

"And we also have, over the



last six years, elevated ourselves from being 100th in the world – a two and half star airline, to being number 15 in the world – an APEX Five Star major airline with only 21 aircraft. And we were rated better than Qantas and Air New Zealand."

Mr Viljoen said the biggest constraint to the airline's

growth was the shortage of rooms and welcomed more investment in that area.

The company is 30.02 per cent owned by the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) and was a star equity performer in the fund's 2023 investment portfolio.

In its 2023 annual report released this week, FNPF said in just a year, its investment in Fiji Airways had "surged to an astounding \$168 million, representing a remarkable 80 per cent increase from the initial acquisition cost of \$93.1 million."

Mr Viljoen attributed success to all staff and their commitment to the airline's single purpose – to fly for Fiji.

"We wake up every morning as a strategic asset of the country with one purpose – We Fly for Fiji. We connect Fiji to and from the world. And we're here to stay. And we've created an organisation with modern aircraft, high quality service that we can be very proud of. So we fly for Fiji. That's our purpose."

Mr Viljoen was speaking to The Fiji Times after last week's Prime Minister's Awards in Nadi.

BSP Life raises \$35,000 to support WOWS



In support of the vital work of the Walk On Walk Strong (WOWS) Kids Foundation,

the BSP Life Group and its partners completed 200 million steps over a span of 70 days, raising \$35,000.

The handover of the cheque took place, following a Zumba session at Albert Park at 6am this morning.

The event was marked by a sense of accomplishment and shared purpose, as the organizations expressed their gratitude to all those who contributed to this meaningful cause. BSP Life Group Managing Director Michael Nacola is deeply thankful for the collaborative spirit shown by the staff of BSP Life, Rooster,

Oceania Hospitals, customers and social media followers that supported the campaign.

"The donation assists the lives of our little angels battling childhood cancer on a daily basis. They are heroes, and we are honored to support them in a small way, and what better way to do this than through a Wellness initiative where everybody wins," he said.

The funds raised will contribute towards providing essential resources, medical assistance, and emotional support to children and families affected by childhood cancer.

Year 10 Student Wows Judges

Zeeshan Ali, 15, never imagined he would one day receive an award from a high-ranking Government official.

The Lautoka Muslim College Year 10 student yesterday received the second prize in the secondary school category for a competition to commemorate World GIS (Geographical Information System) Day 2023 at the Civic Centre in Suva.

He thanked the teachers and his family for their support.

"I dedicate this win to



my parents and teachers because they always encourage me," Zeeshan said.

He said ideas used on his project came from his teachers and some were researched on the internet through

Google. He completed the project in a fortnight.

"My friends helped me in painting, joining boards and setting up the concrete. The materials I used were from school, for ex-

ample, old desks that were no longer in use. I took out the inside parts from these desks and assembled it to a box so I could make three layers which are to show how Fiji can move from our current

state to a developed country."

His project was named 'The Future of Fiji.'

GIS Day

Meanwhile, landowners and commercial farmers still face the problem of land mapping, says the interim chief executive officer for the iTaukei Lands Trust Board (iTTLTB) Solomon Nata.

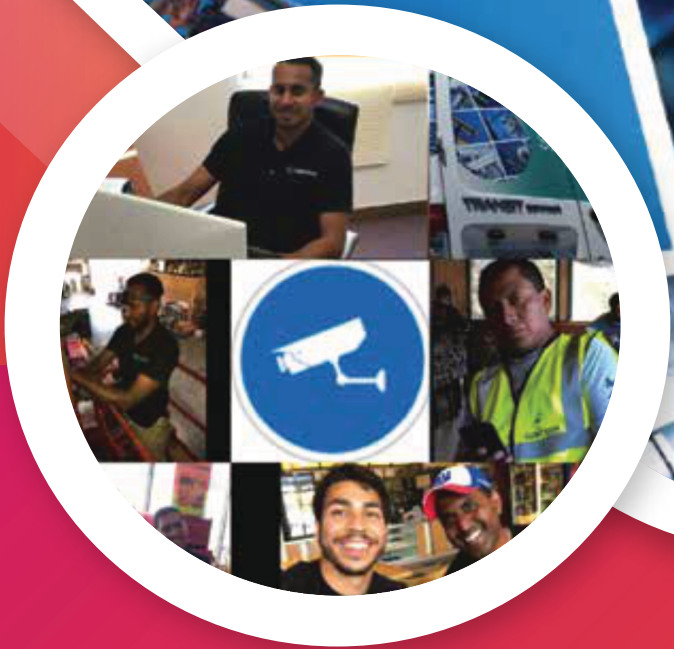
Land mapping involves the use of technology to create detailed maps so they could indicate changes in the use of the land

over a period of time. In his keynote address, Mr Nata admitted that even if GIS had done wonders for Fiji, iTTLTB still had its share of setbacks.

It uses data that is attached to a unique location.

"There is still a long way to go and many more improvements needed from our Geospatial officers to thoroughly carry out their work," Mr Nata said. However, he said GIS was very beneficial for iTTLTB.

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Australia's Albanese heads to China touting 'consistent, steady' engagement



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese will travel to Beijing on Saturday, a little over 50 years since his predecessor Gough Whitlam's historic journey to China.

But while Albanese may be following in the steps of Whitlam, who forged ties with China in 1972, he was careful first to travel to the United States, Australia's so-called "forever friend". Albanese confirmed the exact dates of his long-planned China visit – November 4 to 7 – just hours before he got on the plane to Washington, DC, and also announced some policy initiatives – including for Australian wine growers – indicating a potential thawing of Australia's relationship with Beijing.

"Consistent, steady engagement with our international partners gets results for Australia," the prime minister wrote on X last week.

At the White House, Albanese and his partner enjoyed a lavish state dinner, amid Canberra's deepening security ties with the US, and initiatives such as the Quad and the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal that have caused upset in Beijing. Emma Shortis, a senior researcher in International and Security Affairs at the Australia Institute told Al Jazeera that Albanese's government was "very clearly

... doubling down on the US alliance" while also being "intent" on "stabilising the relationship with China and particularly the trade relationship."

China is Australia's largest trading partner.

"That's an incredibly difficult line to walk and I think we'll just need to wait and see how they handle it," Shortis said. Albanese's China visit – the first by an Australian leader in seven years – comes after a bridge-building trip by Foreign Minister Penny Wong in December 2022.

One group that will be banking on his diplomatic skills will be Australian wine growers. Matthew Rimmer, Professor of Intellectual Property and Innovation Law, at the Queensland University of Technology, noted that with the dispute over wine tariffs now suspended at the World Trade Organization, there was a chance of progress.

"Perhaps this dispute can be resolved altogether during the visit," he told Al Jazeera.

China was once the biggest buyer of Australian wine and Beijing's imposition of duties in 2020 has left vineyards with a massive oversupply.

But Rimmer notes, trade negotiations will not be clear-cut given the complexity of the two countries' relationship.

Australian intelligence agencies have raised "concerns that China has been targeting the confidential information and trade secrets of Australian research institutions," he said. "No doubt intellectual property and trade will be a touchy subject."

'Starting point'

Albanese came to power in 2022 amid hopes for a reset of Chinese relations, which under the conservative government of predecessor Scott Morrison had deteriorated over a range of issues from trade disputes, to COVID-19, accusations of political interference and spying, as well as human rights.

The return of Australian journalist Cheng Lei to Australia earlier this month after three years in Chinese detention has helped raise hopes for a potential thawing of the bilateral relationship. Still, Kevin Yam, a Hong Kong lawyer and democracy activist now living in Australia, told Al Jazeera while Albanese's visit could be a good "starting point", it is also important for Albanese to "raise things and push for things that need to be pushed for".

Yam is one of the eight Hong Kong exiles "wanted" by Hong Kong police after Beijing imposed a National Security Law in 2020 that Amnesty has said has "deci-

dated" the territory's freedoms.

He points out there are also two other Australians – democracy blogger Yang Hengjun and Hong Kong democracy activist Gordon Ng – whose cases "should be vigorously raised at any meetings with the Chinese authorities".

On Wednesday, Albanese confirmed he would use his visit to raise the case of Yang, who has been detained in China since 2019.

Yam hopes the Australian leader will also raise the case of Ng, a democracy activist from Sydney "languishing in a Hong Kong jail for his role in the democracy movement in Hong Kong".

Speaking in relation to Hong Kong specifically, Yam noted that 100,000 Australians are living in the Chinese territory, meaning that it was in "Australia's national interest" for the "freedoms that Hong Kong has enjoyed" to return. Meanwhile, Albanese also quietly raised the case of one other Australian journalist languishing in prison overseas – Julian Assange – during his visit to Washington, DC. Shortis says this was probably due to increasing pressure from supporters of Assange, including a growing number of representatives in the Australian parliament who are vocally advocating for his freedom.

Assange is currently in prison in the United Kingdom pending extradition to the US where he is wanted on criminal charges over the release of confidential military records and diplomatic cables in 2010.

"People should be asking questions about why Assange isn't being allowed to come home when we are supposedly the United States' best friend in the world," said Shortis. It is a contrast to Australia's relationship with Beijing where Yam notes there are "a lot of differences" between the two sides.

Still, despite also having his own personal differences with the China government, Yam sees the visit to China as a "good thing" as long as Albanese raises issues beyond "trade impediments" and "[holds] firm on our bottom lines".

Albanese will arrive in China a few weeks after Xi hosted Russian President Putin and other world leaders for the Belt and Road (BRI) forum.

While China has been "industriously pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative," Australia has, to date, been "reluctant to join", said Rimmer.

The Australian state of Victoria, then under the leadership of another Labor government, had signed a preliminary agreement to join the initiative in 2018, but it was vetoed by Morrison's government amid concerns about overseas deals that were said to be "inconsistent" with Australia's foreign policy.

The decision came at a time when ties between Beijing and Canberra were at an all-time low.

But even as Australia seeks to mend fences, it is moving carefully. With China extending its influence in the Pacific, the Albanese government has been renewing ties with countries there.

As the BRI forum took place in Beijing, Canberra hosted Fiji's Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, while Rabuka's deputy went to China.

Australia also took the opportunity to announce a new pathway to permanent residency for citizens of Pacific Island countries and East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, a policy that Pacific Island countries have long been calling for amid the climate crisis.

Whitlam's visit to China was a notable first among Western leaders.

Decades on, Albanese is seeking not to make waves but to calm the sometimes choppy seas.

Fiji Sports

TEAM FIJI TOUCHES DOWN TO A HERO'S WELCOME

The roar of the Fijian crowd echoed across Nadi International Airport as Team Fiji touched down, draped in the nation's pride and clutching their glittering medals. After their phenomenal performance at the Pacific Games, our heroes had returned home, and the country was ready to shower them with love.

Minister for Youth & Sports, Jese Saukuru, beamed with pride as he greeted the athletes, shaking hands and offering words of praise. "You have brought immense joy and honor to Fiji," he declared, "Your achievements have united us, inspired us, and proven that our island nation is a force to be reckoned with on the sporting stage."

FASANOC President, Makarita Lenoa, echoed the Minister's sentiments, her eyes glistening with emotion. "You've written your names in the Fijian sporting history books," she said, her voice filled with admiration. "Every medal, every personal best, every moment of sportsmanship – you've etched them onto our hearts."

But the official greetings were just the beginning. As Team Fiji emerged from the airport, a sea of Fijian faces awaited them, their smiles as bright as the tropical sun. Families, friends, and even complete strangers erupted in cheers, waving flags and chanting Fijian victory anthems.



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Auto Show

Los Angeles Auto Show

After a strong opening weekend for the 2023 Los Angeles Auto Show® there's still plenty of time for visitors to catch the major attractions, a seemingly endless array of new cars, special exhibits and driving opportunities as the show continues to welcome Southern California every day until November 26 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. With hours of things to see and do, organizers have released a convenient must-see list of experiences, with something to appeal to everyone.

Hundreds of new car, SUV and Truck models on display spanning gas, hybrid and electric options. The 116th Los Angeles Auto Show features displays and brand showcases for Acura, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Ford, Genesis, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Land Rover, Lexus, Lincoln, Lotus, Lucid, Nissan, Polestar, Porsche, Subaru, Toyota and Volkswagen. Additionally, there are driving and demo opportunities offered to visitors in vehicles from Cadillac, Chevrolet, Ford, Hyundai, Kia, Lucid, Mazda, Nissan, Polestar, Porsche, Subaru, Tesla, Volkswagen, and Volvo.

features. Visitors can see more than 50 all-electric models (as well as hybrids) during a visit to the LA Auto Show, and drive or ride in dozens of the latest models.



Lucid Gravity was launched on media day at the 2023 LA Auto Show with the new three-row SUV drawing crowds since the show opened its doors. With a projected range in excess of 440 miles and intelligent design that can accommodate up to seven adults with their luggage, the brand-new electric SUV features the next generation of Lucid's award-winning, proprietary powertrain. Sitting alongside the Lucid Air, the Gravity with its extraordinary

Corvette E-ray and Z06 Carbon plus customized vehicles from Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lotus, McLaren, Mercedes, Audi, BMW, and more. The ultra-rare Pagani Huayra from Drive It Forward Foundation in the West

Atrium makes a strong claim to be the star of this category at the 2023 show.

Notable Concepts: The Kia EV3 and EV4 concept cars were introduced at the LA Auto Show and are expected to become additions to the company's future electric lineup. Originally teased at a Kia EV Day in its home market, the presence of both cars in Los Angeles is recognition of the important role the Californian

wondering when the brand will announce more details on the next generation of this popular model.

OVRLand OutPost is a brand-new attraction at the 2023 LA Auto Show and is the ultimate destination for Outdoor Vehicle Recreation enthusiasts. Presented by ovrmag.com, the display



features more than 30 curated vehicles built for those with a passion for venturing off the beaten path. Visitors can receive a one-year digital subscription to the magazine while admiring the diverse collection of vehicles and the latest camping equipment from leading suppliers for off-grid adventures. Featuring everything from the latest Jeeps to accessorized Rivians, classic Land Cruisers and fullsize camper conversions, the exhibit showcases the endless possibilities to push your own vehicle to extremes.

Electric Avenue Test Drives! Get behind the wheel and experience firsthand the latest electric vehicles from Cadillac, Chevrolet, Ford, Kia, Lucid, Mazda, Polestar, Porsche, Volkswagen, and Volvo on a nearly one-mile course around South Hall at the LA Convention Center.

Other in-vehicle opportunities are also available, with demo rides available from Hyundai, Nissan and VW on indoor EV test tracks inside South, street drives with Ford, Subaru and Tesla, and for adventurous riders, the Ford Bronco Off-Road Ride Experience is a thrill ride for the entire family.

Subaru's National Parks Exhibit was the perfect setting to host the brand's unveiling of

the 2025 Forester. In addition to its completely redesigned exterior, the Forester is packed with updated technology and new features plus the all-important all-weather capability of the Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive, 8.7" of ground clearance, and upgraded EyeSight Driver Assist Technology. In addition to showcasing each Subaru model,

the National Parks theme highlights the brand's dedication to preservation through an immersive 180-degree LED wall and floor, wilderness-inspired sights, sounds and smells and two levels of viewing.

The Aftermarket Garage is where visitors will find a stunning array of modified cars, trucks and motorcycles. This year's star attractions include South Bay Pop Ups Lowrider & Motorcycle show, Al & Ed's Exclusive, SS Motorsports, Genesis 1 Auto Concepts, Yamaha, Black Classics Car Club, and more. With 30 jaw-dropping lowriders on display as well as a host of ultra-luxurious exotics, supercars and premium sports cars, The Aftermarket Garage is an essential part of the LA Auto Show experience.

Kevin Hart Kollection: The superstar's showcase represents the first time his custom-built muscle cars have been seen together in public. Each one is built to the precise specifications of the world-famous comedian, actor and entrepreneur. With a stunning Ferrari showcased alongside his favorite American muscle, the collection represents the pinnacle of Hart's prized collection.

In addition to the mind-blowing muscle cars, Kevin's touring DJ, Joey Wells, is performing every day except Thanksgiving.



All-Electric at LA Auto Show: For the first time in the show's 116-year history, every vehicle manufacturer participating has at least one all-electric model as part of its exhibit. These vehicles represent the industry's future, showcasing cutting edge technology, modern powertrains, charging innovation, interior comfort and enhanced entertainment

design will be available in 2024.

Exotics on Display: Fans of exotic sports cars will find plenty to see and snap throughout the show, with enthusiasts specifically directed to Galpin Hall of Customs, Renovation Motorsports, Kevin Hart Kollection, as well as all the plenty of eye candy in The Aftermarket Garage. Stars of the show include the new Chevrolet

market plays in EV adoption and sales. Both the EV3 and EV4 are material-driven concepts designed to promote sustainable materials like bioplastic and leather substitutes, recycled fabrics, and BTX-free paint.

In a surprise appearance, the Honda Prelude hybrid concept also arrived on the show floor this year and has had eager fans

Auto Show

And for Hart fans, an interactive photobooth has been located inside the Kollection as well as the Gran Coramino VIP lounge featuring drinks from Hart's signature Tequila. His 100% plant-based restaurant concept Hart House provides treats to visitors, while his premium nutrition brand VitaHustle offers Hydration Sticks to keep everybody's energy up for their day of automotive exploration.

From the Max series Downey's Dream Cars, Robert Downey Jr chose the LA Auto Show to bring together publicly for the very first time the six classic cars he modified into eco-friendly vehicles. The RDJ Dream Car Sweepstakes offers participants a chance to win one of the custom vehicles, with proceeds benefiting Downey's FootPrint Coalition. The diverse collection includes a 1965 Chevrolet Corvette which has had the original 327 Small Block V8 engine replaced with two Hyper 9 electric motors, and the movie star installed a mushroom-based interior fab-



ric from Ecovative to carry the positive message even further.

Well known to the Southern California car cultural scene and a global art icon, Mister Cartoon came to prominence in the Netflix documentary series LA Originals. Show visitors will discover one of Cartoon's most

famous creations displayed in the South Atrium. His 1963 International Ice Cream Truck is rarely seen but widely regarded as one of the best examples of lowrider art in the world. Officially finished in 2006 after being painted in Candy Tangerine and emblazoned with images of LA street culture, Mister Cartoon's ten-year passion project



will leave visitors spellbound. The same creative talent, which frequently tattoos the world's biggest stars, created the Official Commemorative Print of the 2023 LA Auto Show. Finished as a high-quality fine art

piece in limited numbers, the signed print is available for sale at the show.

Subaru WRX Rally Car: As part of its display area, Subaru presented its latest rally car created by Vermont Sports Car. The vehicle is the next-generation Subaru WRX rally car, which

won on its debut at the 2023 Ojibwe Forests Rally in August. Driver Brandon Semenuk and co-driver Keaton Williams were also able to secure their second straight American Rally Association (ARA) Championship win in the process. Codenamed VT23r, the all-new WRX rally car has been built for competition in the Open 4WD class of

the ARA series. The team will include Travis Pastrana, who will drive a second car during the 2024 season. It is powered by a 2.0L turbo boxer engine, which produces 320hp and 380 lb-ft of torque and uses a SADEV six-speed close-ratio transmission to send power to all four wheels.

Kia Connected Home: As recent emergency situations



have shown, the ability for your electric vehicle to power your home (V2H) can provide peace of mind during challenging situ-

ations. At the 2023 LA Auto Show, Kia has teamed with up Wallbox to demonstrate that its EV9 can be capable of V2H with an external unit. Capable of providing more than 4kW, owners could potentially power their home for multiple days from the car's generous batteries. It's one way in which the increasing adoption of electric vehicles can transform our lives as we discover new applications for the technology.

Galpin Hall of Customs is located in the Concourse Hall and Foyer between the South and West Halls at LA Auto Show, so you're never more than a few yards from one of the most exciting exhibition areas at the convention center. As always, it features an incredible collection of vehicles from both the Galpin Museum, Galpin Auto Sports and its dealer group. Fan favorites include a recreation of the Scooby Doo Mystery Machine, an original Batmobile, an original Herbie Beetle, and a 1954 Ford Crestline Victoria with a Kompak trailer and roof that can be removed and used as a boat. There's also a spectacular display of Porsches, some special vehicles from Zenvo, Lotus and Aston Martin, plus much more.

Toyota Sports Fair promotes an active mind and healthy body thanks to a number of sports challenges alongside its

sprawling exhibit of current vehicle models. With instructors on hand to guide participants through each challenge, it's a great way to keep the blood flowing and have fun with the entire family while exploring the LA Auto Show

Ford has created a remarkable experience with the Ford Mustang GT California Special, which was revealed at the show. There's also the public debut of the Street-legal, track-ready supercar Mustang GTD and the Ford "Gamer Van" – a custom collaboration with Full Gaming Squad based on the Transit Trail. Visitors interested in off-road adventures can check out the Bronco Off-Road Ride Experience with its thrilling climb up and down the 38-degree slopes of Bronco Mountain as well as a number of challenging obstacles.

Nissan Thrill Street challenge is a themed display that includes the Nissan Z Tour, trivia challenges, scavenger hunts, Z/Tokyo Scene photo ops and the ARIYA ride along. Visitors who participate in four out of five Nissan activities will have the opportunity to step up to the high-energy THRILL MACHINE and spin the wheel for a chance at special prizes.

Interactive Racing is available from Hyundai, Kia, Subaru and VW. Each offers visitors an opportunity to jump into a driving simulator to experience a different level of excitement and performance. At Hyundai's booth in the South Lobby there's an opportunity to pilot one of the company's race cars, while VW allows you to race a friend sitting in its South Hall exhibit while steering a radio-controlled car located in the South Lobby.



Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff starrer *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan* to be shot in Europe

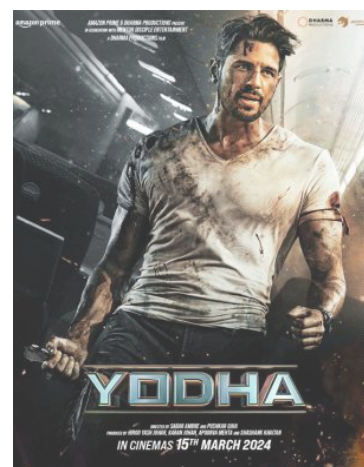


Akshay Kumar and Tiger Shroff are teaming up for Ali Abbas Zafar's actioner *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*. Interestingly, it has the same name as Amitabh Bachchan and Govinda's 1998 film but it is not a remake. It will be an out-n-out action entertainer and is expected to be mounted on a huge scale. For the same, the filmmaker has begun the preparation. According to a report in a publication, the filmmaker is currently giving finishing touches to the script

before he leaves for Europe for reece. Since the project will be a mega-scale actioner, the action team from Los Angeles will be joining the team for the reece to design the action scenes. Ali Abbas Zafar will spend a month in Europe to finalise locations in order to shoot elaborate scenes at new places. It is also being said that by the end of July, the makers will finalise the two female leads as well.

Ram Pothineni and director Puri Jagannadh's project *Double iSmart*, a sequel to *iSmart Shankar*, went on floors a few days ago in Mumbai. The shoot of the movie began with the team canning a breathtaking action sequence. Ram underwent a stylish makeover for the movie being produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmme Kaur under the banner of Puri Connects. Vish Reddy is the CEO. The makers came up with a big update today. Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt is playing a full-length role in *Double iSmart*. The actor joined the shoot in the very first schedule. Today, the makers introducing Sanjay Dutt's character as Big Bull

have unveiled his first look poster. Sporting a funky hairdo and a beard, Sanjay Dutt looks ultra stylish in the poster in a suit with earrings, rings, an expensive watch, and a tattoo on his face and fingers. Looks fierce, Sanjay Dutt is seen smoking a cigar in the first look poster, though all the guns are pointed towards him. It's apparent through the poster that Sanjay Dutt is playing a powerful character. Hollywood cinematographer Gianni Giannelli is working for this high-voltage action entertainer. *Double iSmart* is being made on a high budget with technically high in standards. The makers will reveal the other cast and crew of the movie soon. *Double iSmart* will release in on March 8, 2024.



Receipe Corner

Tomato Cucumber & Avocado Salad

Ingredients

The Vegetables:

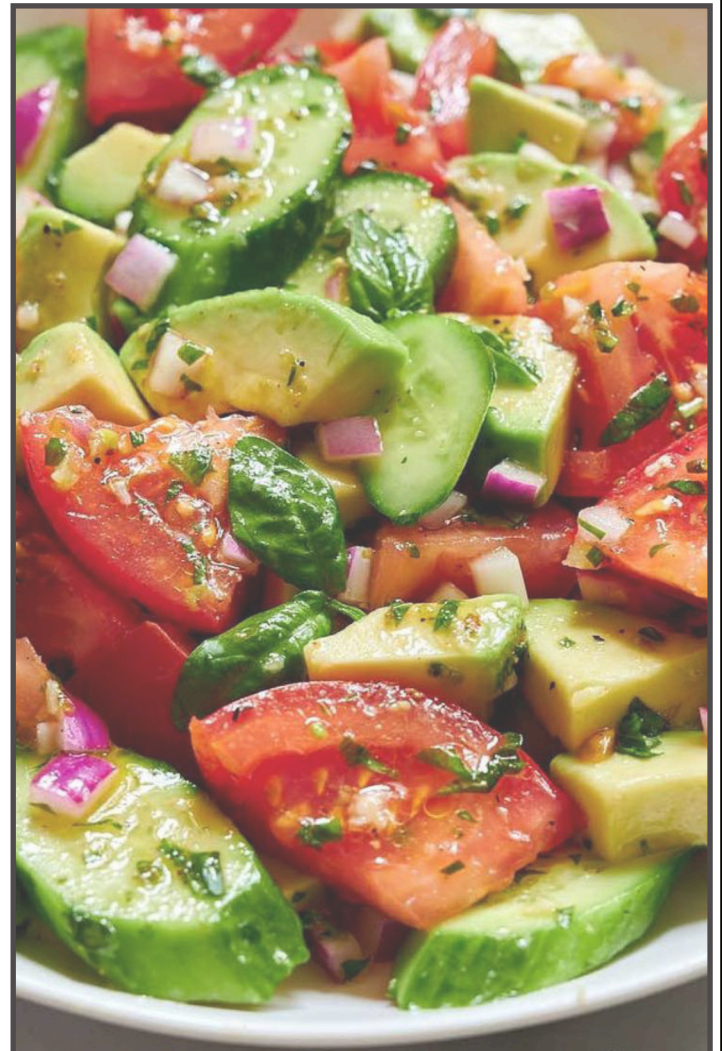
- 4 tomatoes (medium size, fresh and ripe)
- 4 baby cucumbers (fresh and firm)
- 1 Hass avocado (ripe and slightly soft)
- 1/2 red onion (medium size, peeled and diced)
- 1/2 bunch fresh basil (rinsed, dried and finely chopped)
- 1 pinch granulated sugar

The dressing:

- 6 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil (good quality)
- 3 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 3/4 tsp kosher salt
- 3/4 tsp granulated sugar
- 1 garlic clove (pressed)
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 pinch black pepper (freshly ground)

Instructions

- 1- Core the tomatoes, cut in half, then cut each half lengthwise into 3 wedges. Then cut each wedge in half crosswise. Place the tomatoes in a large bowl, sprinkle with a pinch of sugar and give them a quick toss.
- 2- Cut off the ends of the cucumbers. Using a vegetable peeler, make long stripes going top down. Slice into 1/4" thick slices slightly on the diagonal. Transfer to the bowl with the tomatoes.
- 3- Cut the avocado in 4 quarters lengthwise and remove the pit. Gently remove the skin, then slice into 3/8" thick slices on the diagonal and add to tomatoes and cucumbers, along with the diced onion and chopped basil.
- 4- To prepare the dressing, throw all of the dressing ingredients into a small bowl and whisk together vigorously, until well blended.
- 5- Pour the dressing over the vegetables and toss gently using both hands. You can serve immediately or cover the bowl with a plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature until ready to serve. This salad only gets better with time.



**avocado, tomato
& cucumber salad**



Chicken Lentil Soup

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb ground chicken
- 1 cup dried red lentils
- 1 onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 medium potatoes
- 1 medium tomato
- 2 qt low salt chicken broth
- salt to taste
- black pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp olive oil

Instructions

- 1- Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the onion and the garlic and saute over medium-low heat for about 10 minutes.
- 2- While sauteing the onions and garlic, in a large pot, bring the broth to a boil. Add the lentils and the diced potatoes, wait until the liquid in the pot begins to boil again, turn the heat down to medium and cook for 10-15 minutes.
- 3- Meanwhile, add the ground chicken to the onions and garlic and cook over medium heat for 8-10 minutes, breaking up large clumps of chicken meat.
- 4- Transfer the onion, garlic and chicken mixture to the pot.
- 5- Add the tomato and stir. Then, add salt and pepper to taste.
- 6- Continue cooking over medium heat for another 10-15 minutes.
- 7- Serve hot, garnished with chopped fresh parsley or cilantro and slices of sourdough bread.



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7 crew members remain missing in US Osprey crash that killed 1: Japan Coast Guard



The search for the seven crew members missing after a U.S. military Osprey crashed off the shore of Yakushima Island in southern Japan has yielded no new clues, the Japanese Coast Guard said Saturday.

Dive searches were conducted in areas identified by side-scan sonar, both in the morning and afternoon, yet no new information has surfaced after the CV-22 Osprey aircraft crashed on Wednesday, the 10th Regional Coast Guard told ABC News. At least one U.S. airman who had been onboard the air-

craft was recovered from the ocean and later died, Japanese officials said. The airman was identified by the Air Force on Friday as Staff Sgt. Jacob "Jake" M. Galliher, 24, a direct support operator assigned to the 43rd Intelligence Squadron. The crash took place during a "routine training mission," according to the U.S. Air Force, which added that the cause is currently unknown. The Osprey, a vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, or VTOL, is manufactured by Bell Boeing.

Militants open fire at a bus in northern Pakistan, killing 9, including 2 soldiers



Local police say that militants have opened fire at a bus in northern Pakistan, killing nine people including two soldiers

PESHAWAR, Pakistan -- Militants opened fire at a bus in northern Pakistan, killing nine people including two soldiers, local police said.

The shooting occurred on Saturday night in the Chilas area of the north-

ern Gilgit Baltistan region, police officer Azmat Shah said. The bus was carrying passengers from Gilgit to Rawalpindi. The driver lost control of the bus when it was hit by the gunfire and crashed into a truck. The truck caught fire, killing the

drivers of both vehicles. At least 26 people were injured in the incident and transferred to local hospitals. The home minister of Gilgit Baltistan, Shams Lone, told journalists the incident was an "act of terrorism" and said that two

soldiers from Pakistan's army were among those killed. A local Islamic cleric, Mufti Sher Zaman, was also injured, he said. After the incident, the location was cordoned off and police helped move traffic through the area in

convoys, said senior police official Sardar Shehryar. The chief minister of Gilgit Baltistan, Gulbar Khan, said a special investigation team was formed to investigate the incident. Law enforcement agencies were ordered to identify and ar-

rest the culprits, he said. Muhammad Khorasani, a spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP, denied in a statement any link with the shooting, saying it was not carried out by their group.

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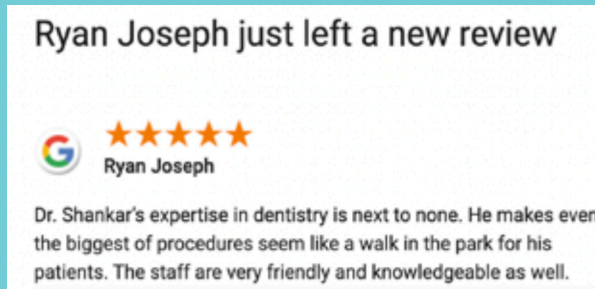
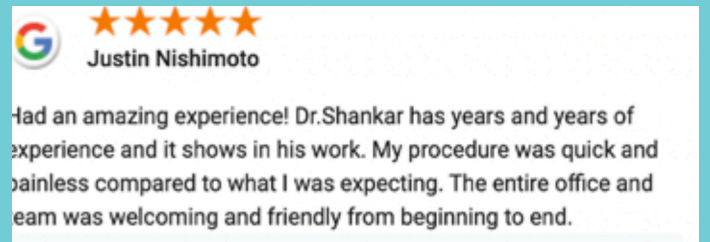
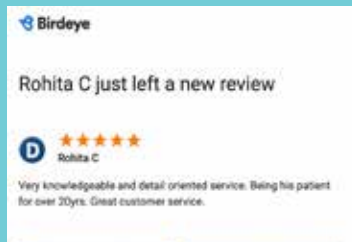
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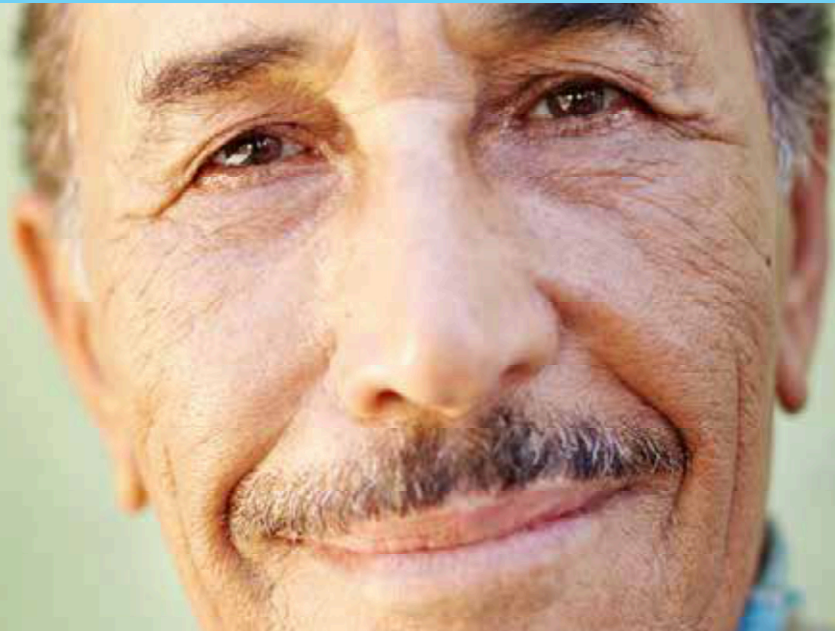
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Navotu youths lead the way



Navotu Youth Club members with advisors and future club members. Picture: SUPPLIED

On paper, the ambitious, youth-led project called Maroroi Dreketi says it would focus on implementing four key project components including flood mitigation, food security, planting native trees and creating a disaster risk reduction plan.

But Navotu Youth president Kinijoji and his youth club of 28 young men and women from a small mataqali in Rewa had more ambitious goals in mind. Their vision was to help create an active and vibrant youth community and remove lethargic attitudes and behaviours.

“When the turaga ni koro (village headman) calls for cakacaka vakoro (village communal activities), only three or four people would turn up and the rest would go their own way,” said Kinijoji. “We are always hearing our elders reminiscing how clean their villages used to be, so we are wondering what went wrong that has brought it down to the standard it’s in today.”

The youths belong to the mataqali Navotu in Vunisinu village, in the tikina of Dreketi in Rewa. For some time they had been concerned about the attitude slowly seeping into village life as many lose interest in their traditional obligations to the vanua and disrespect elders and traditional leaders. So, the project was designed

to help youths and their peers take ownership of their obligations to the vanua, which would last beyond the project funding. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP), but implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

It focuses on implementing a climate-smart adaptation initiative focused on improving drainage to address flooding, exacerbated by climate change in recent years. Flooding is where they started. The tikina is always at the brunt of flooding and seawater intrusion, particularly during storms.

“We live close to the sea and have seen our crops affected by salt water, especially via (giant taro), which is our staple food,” Kinijoji said. But climate change is only one aspect of the issue. As the call by the vanua is ignored, the villagers are neglecting the maintenance of government-built drains and the channels within the mangroves that were once crucial for boat travel.

So the waterways gets blocked and floods the village, particularly, at high tide.

“We cannot relocate because our tikina does not own much land and whatever happens in one village affects the rest of the villages within the tikina. So, we targeted trying to mitigate the flooding in all five villages. We started

first with consultations in the five villages to hear firsthand what causes the flooding and what they think can be done,” said Kinijoji. “We had also set aside some funding for the digging of the drains and waterways, so at the consultation, when we asked whether to pay a contractor to clear the drains or give it to the villagers, they said they wanted to be paid to do it,” he said, laughing.

“We then bought a brush cutter, knives and files for each village and they were also paid for the work done. We found out that what caused the high tide flooding was overgrown para grass in the drains and all they did was to cut them and clear the drains. So today there is basically no more flooding in Vunisinu, Nabuli all the way to Nakorovou. However, the villagers were forewarned by the turaga ni vanua of the leading village of Vunisinu in Dreketi that the funding would run out.

“Are they doing this because they are being paid? Yes, but on the last day of the consultation, they were asked by the turaga ni vanua of the leading village: What will replace the head of the king (money); what will replace money when funding runs out?” explained Kinijoji.

“The turaga ni vanua said we need to create a spark in people so that they take ownership as we cannot expect outsiders or government to



come and clean it for us because it has been a few years now since the government came and cleared the drains, so we have to deal with it, ourselves.

“And this is what our youth group is trying to do – getting our youths in the district together – because we are trying to get people of these villages to take ownership of what they are supposed to do,” Kinijoji said.

“Especially the cakacaka vakoro (communal work) and we have now seen a change when the turaga ni koro calls, 30 to 40 people turn up unlike the 3 or 4 who used to heed his call before.”

UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme national coordinator, Akisi Bolabola said the Maroroi Dreketi project is an exemplary youth initiative that’s taken a holistic approach to implement climate



Dubai 7s : South Africa claim 5th Dubai 7s title

Selvyn Davids pulled the strings as defending champions South Africa beat Argentina 12-7 in a thumping encounter to claim their fifth straight Emirates Dubai 7s title and kick off their HSBC SVNS 2024 campaign in emphatic style.

Impi Visser had already crossed for the Blitzboks when Shilton van Wyk, player of the final in 2022, went over in the fifth minute to take the score to 12-0.

Argentina's Matías Osadczuk cut the deficit to five points early in the second half, after Ryan Oosthuizen was yellow carded for a dangerous tackle. Rosko Specman came within inches of a spectacular score, but lost the ball – and ploughed into a steward – in the corner, as South Africa held off the Argentinian fightback.

With the series heading to South Africa next week, their run to the title in Dubai could not have come at a better time. Fans will be hoping they can go back to back in Cape Town next weekend. South Africa's acting head coach Philip Snyman hailed his squad's "amazing performances throughout the weekend". "We said we wanted to leave everything on

the field," he said. "It doesn't matter what happens with the result – we want to look each other in the eye and have smiles on our faces. Even with the yellow card tonight, they really played each other, they played for their jersey and they restored the pride in the Springbok Sevens jersey." Winning difficult matches is a defining characteristic of champions – and South Africa set up a shot at a fifth straight title with a high-intensity 14-7 win over Fiji in the Cup semi-finals.

The defending Dubai champions had kicked off finals day – after that remarkable comeback win over New Zealand on day one – with a comfortable 24-7 quarter-final win over Australia.

"We told ourselves that yesterday didn't count," Davids said after that opening victory. "We didn't achieve anything. We knew that the first game of day two was the most difficult one and the most important one."

Marcos Moneta – who else? – scored twice as Argentina came from 14-0 down to win their quarter-final against Samoa 21-14, and set up a semi-final with New Zealand.

In the semi-final, evergreen



37-year-old Gastón Revol, in his 99th sevens tournament, was the try hero for Argentina as they came from behind to beat New Zealand 21-19 to reach their first-ever final in Dubai.

BRONZE FINAL: ALL BLACKS LEAVE IT LATE TO BAG BRONZE

Fehi Fineanganofa stepped and burst through two defenders to score the bronze final-winning touchdown as New Zealand beat Fiji 17-12 at the

end of a tense encounter that would have graced the final.

It was another tight encounter for the All Blacks Sevens – five of their six matches decided by a margin of five points or fewer.

The match looked to be heading into golden point territory, with the clock ticking down the final seconds as the All Blacks Sevens spun the ball wide to Fineanganofa, who still had some work to do to get the ball down.

A slow-burn of a first-half had

burst into life just before half-time, as Fiji captain Joseva Talacolo and New Zealand's Akuila Rokolisoa traded tries. Cody Vai and Manueli Maisamoa then traded second-half scores, with the decisive touchdown coming on the cusp of full time.

Fineanganofa said immediately afterwards: "The boys were a bit disappointed with the semi-final. We just wanted to pick up. I think we did – and the boys will be happy for the rest of the night."

Australia win 4th straight women's title in Dubai



They defeated the Black Ferns 24-22 in a rollicking final in Cape Town

Australia's women's rugby sevens team has won their fourth consecutive Dubai 7s title, defeating New Zealand 21-17 in a thrilling final. The Aussies were down 10-7 at halftime, but they came out firing in the second half, scoring two tries to take the lead. New Zealand fought back with a try of their own, but it was too little too late, as Australia held on to secure victory.

This is Australia's 16th Dubai 7s title, and their fourth in a row. They have

now won more Dubai 7s titles than any other team.

The Aussies were dominant throughout the tournament, winning all of their six matches. They were particularly impressive in their attacking play, scoring 157 points in their six matches.

Australia's victory is a testament to their hard work and dedication. They have been the dominant team in women's rugby sevens for many years, and they show no signs of slowing down.



PACIFIC GAMES 2023 HIGHLIGHTS





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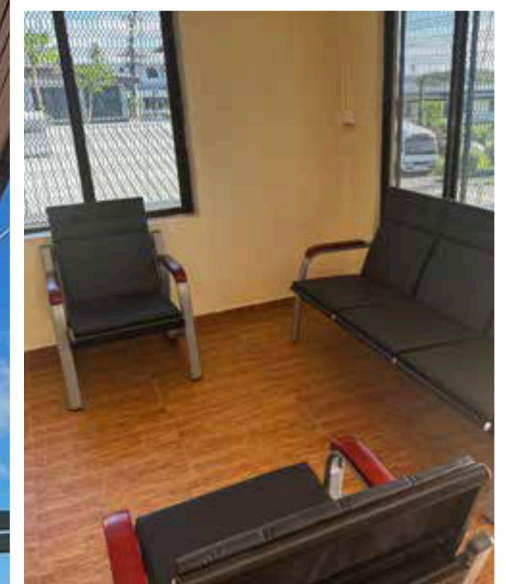
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Fiji News

New dates for Fiji Tourism Convention

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Viliame Gavoka has announced the rescheduled dates for the 'Fiji Tourism Convention,' which is now booked for 15 December 2023 at the Shangri-La Yanuca Island, Fiji. This Convention stands as a pivotal milestone in the tourism industry of Fiji, bringing together leaders, experts, and stakeholders in constructive dialogue on the latest trends, challenges, and opportunities within the sector. Participants will include representatives from various tourism businesses, government agencies, and industry associations. DPM Gavoka emphasised the significance of continued dialogue, stating, "We are reinstating the Fiji Tourism Convention as a shared commitment of the industry. We hope that this platform provides an opportunity for collaborative engagement and idea exchange towards the sustainable development



of our tourism sector. We are enthusiastic about hosting the Convention and making it an annual event." The program will encompass a wide array of key-

note addresses and panel discussions, addressing critical topics, including hospitality dynamics, transport infrastructure expansion, tourism policy and regula-

tion, and sustainable investment strategies for emerging markets. The forthcoming Fiji Tourism Convention is expected to foster productive discussions and so-

lutions for the advancement of Fiji's tourism industry, all while further establishing the nation as a premier tourist destination.

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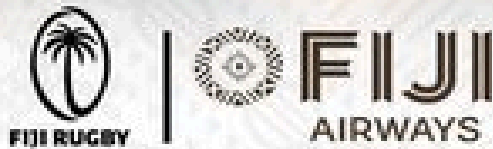
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News

Bus involved in deadly Ohio crash had emergency exit-related violations: Inspection report



Roadside emergency reflective triangles were also reportedly missing from the bus. In an email to ABC News on Saturday, Pioneer Trails attorney Brad Barmen said, "This bus was in excellent working order and fully compliant with all local, state, and federal regulations at all times prior to this accident." "This accident was a terrible tragedy that occurred for reasons currently unknown and unrelated to Pioneer," Barmen added. "The company's thoughts and prayers are with all the victims and their families."

The collision occurred on Nov. 14 in Licking County, east of Columbus. The Ohio State Highway Patrol says that the bus, which had been transporting students from Tuscarawas Valley High School to a conference in Columbus, was "slowing for traffic" alongside other vehicles when it and a car were hit from behind by a Mid State Systems truck. This is believed to have caused the bus to hit another car and another truck. A massive fire broke out and six people died, including three students.

Although the inspection of the bus that resulted in these violations being found occurred after the collision, state officials believe the violations in question were not caused by the incident, while other issues like a missing emergency exit on the rear roof of the bus are believed to be the result of the crash itself. It is not yet clear whether fines will be issued in connection with the alleged violations, according to the commission. Another report released Friday by the commission said that the Mid State

Systems truck, which was traveling from Tipton, Pennsylvania to East Liberty, Ohio, was transporting lead-acid batteries and that "acid from batteries was released as a result of the crash." "The truck and trailer are a total loss," the report added. "The axle 2 and axle 3 brake chambers on the truck were melted away. All remaining brakes were unable to be measured." Trucks owned by Mid State Systems were cited prior to the collision by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for issues such as

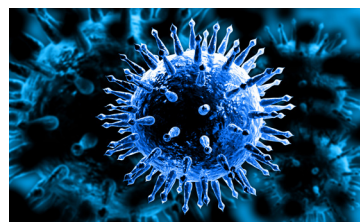
defective brakes, according to documents obtained earlier this week by ABC News. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families [affected] by this tragic accident," Lee Zazworsky of Mid State Systems told ABC News by email on Thursday. "Since this matter is still under investigation, we will reserve further comment at this time." The National Transportation Safety Board and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration are conducting investigations into the crash.

Respiratory illnesses are on the rise

Respiratory illnesses are indeed on the rise in the USA. This is a cause for concern, as it's putting a strain on hospitals and healthcare workers. Let's take a look at the three main culprits: RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is a common respiratory virus that typically causes mild, cold-like symptoms. However, in infants and young children, RSV can cause serious illness, including pneu-

monia and bronchiolitis. RSV cases have been spiking in recent weeks, and some hospitals are reporting being overwhelmed with young patients. The flu is also on the rise, and experts are concerned that we could see a particularly bad flu season this year. The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and in some cases, can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated every year.

COVID-19 is still circulating, and there have been an uptick in cases in recent weeks. While not as severe as previous waves, COVID-19 can still cause serious illness, es-





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Get to Know More about
RSV in Children!

Respiratory Syncytial Virus
is a viral infection virus that can spread quickly through respiratory droplets when an infected person sneezes or coughs.

The common symptoms of RSV include:
Fever, Dry or Wet Cough, Sneezing, Runny nose, Loss of appetite or Refuse when breastfed or bottle-feed, Breathing difficulty or Wheezing.

RSV can be prevented by
Breastfeeding to increase the immunity naturally and avoid taking children to crowded areas or visiting respiratory patients.

Sore, Scratchy Throat?

Soothing Pain From Illness or Allergy

It's a familiar sensation as the days grow shorter and colder: a scratchy, painful feeling when you swallow, talk, or even just breathe. Sometimes, a sore throat is little more than a nuisance. But it can also be a sign of serious infection. So how do you know which is which? And what can you do to soothe a sore throat?

Many things can trigger a sore throat, explains Dr. Alison Han, an infectious disease expert at the NIH Clinical Center. "It can be an allergen. It can be an infection, like a virus or bacteria. Sometimes, it's even just dry air," she says.

So, when should you call your health care provider? That depends on how bad the sore throat is and what symptoms come with it, Han explains. "If it's a mild sore throat and a runny nose, some congestion, that's probably a typical cold," she says. But severe pain plus symptoms like a high fever and a loss of interest in eating or drinking may

be serious.

How long a sore throat lasts also matters. "If it's been more than three days, then you might want to seek medical advice," Han says. "But at any time, it's always reasonable to call your doctor and get an opinion."

A very contagious bacterial infection called strep can cause a sore throat, high fever, and swollen glands. Children may also have nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain. Strep can cause other serious health problems. So it's important to see a doctor as soon as possible if you think someone in your household has strep.

If test results confirm strep, your doctor will prescribe antibiotics. Even if you feel better after a few days, it's important to finish the entire prescription. Most causes of a sore throat, though, don't need antibiotics. These include allergies as well as colds, flu, COVID-19, and RSV, which are all caused by vi-

ruses. Antibiotics only work against bacteria. Doctors can sometimes prescribe antiviral medication for certain viruses, like flu or COVID-19.

There is no treatment for the common cold, but over-the-counter products for symptom relief may help. For example, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or aspirin (not for kids) can reduce pain. Mild allergies can be treated using over-the-counter antihistamines, decongestants, or nasal sprays. But you may need prescription medication or allergy shots for severe allergies.

A sore throat is a common symptom for the current variants of COVID-19. "If you have a sore throat and some other cold-like symptoms, it's reasonable to do a COVID-19 test," Han says. This can help you stop spreading the disease to others.

For most causes of a sore throat, time is the best healer. Lozenges, lollipops, or other hard



candies can help soothe your throat. Experts now recommend that children under the age of 4 don't use any over-the-counter cold and cough medications.

For young kids who might choke on candy, cold liquids or popsicles can help numb the pain. See the Wise Choices box for other tips. The best way to prevent a sore throat is to avoid the

germs that cause them. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer often. Steer clear of other people who are sick. And stay up to date with the vaccines recommended for your age group, including flu, COVID-19, and RSV. "These shots can help protect ourselves and our loved ones," Han says.



teers. You might need to be of a certain age or live in a specific region. Some projects are designed for people who have certain health conditions. But others are open to everyone.

Be a Citizen Scientist

Help Researchers Solve Puzzling Problems

Did you know that you can team up with scientists to help medical research? You don't need an advanced degree or special knowledge of science. You can become a "citizen scientist" by simply devoting some of your free time to ongoing research projects. Your efforts can help to increase medical knowledge and might lead to new treatments.

Your role could be as simple as playing an online

game or sharing a blood sample. Or you could help collect data in your community. You might even help guide the types of questions researchers are investigating by sharing your ideas or concerns.

"People are creative and innovative. They have all sorts of skills and contextual knowledge," says Dr. Jennifer Couch, who heads NIH's citizen science working group. "Citizen science in its broadest

sense draws on the insights and talents individuals have to offer."

Citizen science can go by different names. Each can have slightly different meanings. It may be called participatory or contributory science. It's sometimes called crowdsourcing, community-engaged research, or public-partnered research.

Some projects are limited to specific types of volun-



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Jessica Sami creates history: Leading Women's Rugby 7s to historic ranking at Sol2023

Jessica Vanessa Sami has made history as the captain of the Solomon Islands Women's Rugby 7s team, leading them to a historic 5th place finish at the Pacific Games 2023 Rugby Sevens competition.



The win came in the 5th and 6th playoffs against American Samoa, where the Solomon Islands team secured a convincing 19-5 victory at the National Stadium in Honiara, on Saturday 25th November, 2023. This achievement marks the best position ever reached by a women's rugby team in the history of Rugby Sevens.

In an exclusive post-match interview with SIBC, Sami said she is happy with her team's 5th place finish, at the 17th Pacific Games 2023. "I'm very happy with the girls finishing fifth. We basically created history at home. So, I'm just really proud of the girls and everything that we put in through – the struggles, bus fares, and everything.

"It's really nice to finish where we finished," the 28-year-old said. She said the fifth-place finish is a remarkable turnaround considering that the team had only finished 7th in the Oceania Rugby Sevens 2022, and a 9th place finish at the recent Championship in Brisbane, Australia.

That said, she wanted to thank their Coach, Chris Nay for the training programs they had undertaken with the Solomon Islands Rugby Union Federation (SIRUF) through Rugby Australia and also the Solomon Islands National Institute of Sports (SINIS).

Mr Nay was engaged to assist in the Solomon Islands Rugby 7s preparation for the Oceania Sevens, which serves as an Olympic qualifier for Paris, as well as the Pacific Games 2023 in Honiara.

The Women's Rugby 7s Captain said, the recent engagement of Mr Nay has proved to be worth it, at the end. She said as part of their preparations for the two main events, "they met an amazing man, Chris, from Australia.

"Chris was sent to coach us, basically made our program for us. Going to the Oceania Rugby 7s this year has really exposed us to more Rugby, as we don't really get that (opportunity) here.

"Coming back home, the girls played with confidence and I'm really happy with my team," said Sami, who is from Langalanga and Australia and a member of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Sami also expressed her gratitude to the Australian Defence Force (ADF), friends and families for supporting her since joining the Solomon Islands Women's Rugby.



"I just want to give a shout out to everyone in the Australian Defence Force, who's had my back and the army. To Brad Foster, thank you for everything that you've done for me, to come help me chase my dreams here.

"To my amazing family back at home (Australia), mum and dad for letting me stay here four months, and those that have helped me financially to come and do this for our country."

She also made a special appreciation to her mum's family in Langalanga, Malaita Province.

"Thanks to mum's family, some of them also came out here to Honiara, to support and cheer for me. And for those that let me stay at their house, when I had nowhere to stay, you guys know who you are, thank you," an emotional Sami said. –ENDS//

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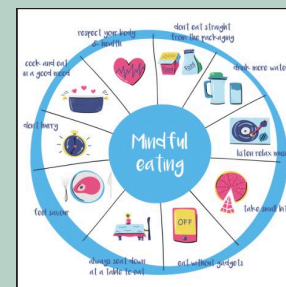
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"Unlocking the Secrets to a Healthier You: Essential Tips and Tricks"

In our fast-paced lives, prioritizing health often takes a back seat. However, incorporating simple yet effective health tips and tricks into our daily routines can pave the way for a healthier, more vibrant life. In this article, we explore key strategies to help you achieve and maintain optimal well-being.

1. Mindful Eating:

Embracing mindful eating practices involves paying full attention to the sensory experience of eating. By savoring flavors and eating slowly, you not only enjoy your meals more but also give your body the time it needs to signal when it's full.

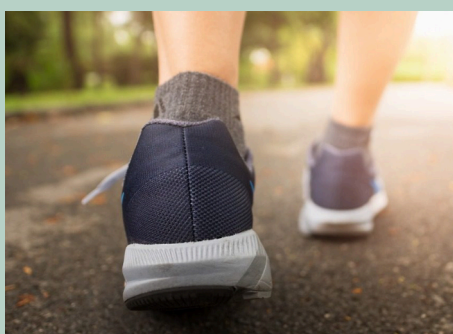


2. Stay Hydrated:

Water is the elixir of life, supporting digestion, regulating body temperature, and promoting healthy skin. Make it a habit to carry a water bottle with you throughout the day, ensuring you stay adequately hydrated.

3. Prioritize Sleep:

Quality sleep is essential for physical and mental rejuvenation. Establish a bedtime routine that signals to your body that it's time to wind down and create a comfortable sleep environment to enhance the quality of your rest.



4. Incorporate Physical Activity:

You don't need a gym membership to stay active. Find enjoyable activities, whether it's a brisk walk in the park, cycling, or dancing at home. Consistent movement not only boosts physical health but also enhances mood and reduces stress.

5. Manage Stress:

Chronic stress can take a toll on both physical and mental health. Integrate stress-relief practices into your daily routine, whether it's a few minutes of deep breathing, a short meditation session, or pursuing hobbies that bring joy.



In Conclusion- By adopting these simple yet powerful health tips and tricks, you can embark on a journey towards a healthier and more fulfilling life. Remember, it's the small, consistent efforts that make a lasting impact on your well-being. True wealth lies not merely in material possessions but in the ability to embrace each day with a body and mind in harmony. When we prioritize our health, we invest in a currency that transcends the boundaries of affluence, offering a wealth that cannot be measured in gold or silver. So, let us cherish and safeguard this invaluable treasure, recognizing that in the robust beats of a healthy heart and the resilient strength of our bodies, we find the truest form of prosperity.

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Yeshnil Karan celebrating a victory at the Pacific Games

Fiji's Yeshnil Karan has solidified his status as the "Pacific long-distance king" with a phenomenal performance at the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Karan achieved a remarkable feat by securing three gold medals, cementing his dominance in the long-distance category and captivating the entire region.

A Golden Triple Crown

Karan's journey to the top began with the 10,000m race, where he crossed the finish line first with a commanding lead. He then went on to conquer the 5,000m competition, showcasing his exceptional endurance and strategic pacing. In a thrilling finale, Karan completed his golden triple crown with a victory in the 3,000m steeplechase, overcoming intense heat and fierce competition.

A First-Time Steeplechase Triumph

The 3,000m steeplechase win was particularly noteworthy, as it marked Karan's first-ever competitive race in this challenging event. He not only adapted to the unfamiliar obstacles but also clocked a time just 11 seconds shy of the Pacific Games record, showcasing his natural athletic talent and adaptability.

Inspiring a Nation

Karan's success has resonated throughout Fiji, inspiring countless young athletes and igniting a passion for long-distance running. He has become a national hero, proving that hard work, dedication, and unwavering belief can lead to unimaginable achievements.

A Beacon of Hope and Potential

Beyond inspiring his home nation, Karan's performance



has captured the attention of the entire Pacific region. He has established himself as a rising star in the long-distance running world, demonstrating the potential for Pacific Island athletes to compete at the highest levels.

Future Endeavors and Global Aspirations

Karan's goals extend far beyond the Pacific Games. He has set his sights on

competing in future international events, including the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics. With his unwavering determination and incredible talent, Karan has the potential to become a global sporting icon, inspiring future generations and rewriting the record books.

Yeshnil Karan's journey to the top is a testament to the power of passion, dedication, and unwavering belief. His

remarkable achievements have not only brought immense joy and pride to Fiji but have also served as an inspiration for athletes across the Pacific region. With his sights set on global aspirations, the future for Yeshnil Karan is undeniably bright, leaving the world eager to witness his next chapter in the long-distance running world.

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Fiji Kulas celebrates silver medal at the Pacific Games



The Fiji Kulas, the national women's football team, have secured a silver medal at the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Despite falling 4-1 to Papua New Guinea in the final on December 2nd, the Kulas delivered a valiant effort throughout the tournament, solidifying their position as a force to be reckoned with in the Pacific region.

A Hard-Fought Final

The final match was a nail-biter, with both teams showcasing their determination and skill. Papua New Guinea took the lead just before halftime, but the Kulas fought back bravely in the second half. Trina Davis finally found the net for Fiji deep into injury time, but unfortunately, it wasn't enough to overcome the deficit.

A Historic Achievement

While the silver medal may not have been the desired outcome, it still represents a historic achievement for the



Fiji Kulas. This is their best-ever finish at the Pacific Games, surpassing their previous record of bronze medals in previous editions.

Coach Angeline Chua Praises Her Team

Head coach Angeline Chua expressed her immense pride in the team's performance. "I'm incredibly



proud of the girls," she said. "They played with passion, heart, and determination throughout the tournament. We may not have won gold, but we have shown the world that we are a force to be reckoned with. This silver medal is a testament to their hard work and dedication."

A Bright Future for the Fiji Kulas

The Pacific Games performance has further cemented the Fiji Kulas' place as one of the top women's football teams in Oceania. With a young and talented squad, the future looks bright for the Kulas. They will undoubtedly continue to challenge for titles and raise the bar for women's football in the region.

Looking Ahead to the FIFA Women's World Cup

The Kulas will now focus their attention on the upcoming FIFA Women's

World Cup, where they will make their debut on the global stage. The World Cup will be a significant opportunity for the team to showcase their skills and gain valuable experience against the best teams in the world.

Fiji Celebrates the Kulas' Success

The people of Fiji are overjoyed with the Kulas' success at the Pacific Games. The team's achievement has brought pride and joy to the nation, and their story has inspired countless young girls across the country. The Kulas are now role models for young athletes, demonstrating the power of hard work, dedication, and teamwork.

The future of Fijian women's football is bright, and the Kulas are poised to continue their rise on the international stage.

Fiji Secures Bronze in Thrilling Pacific Games Football Match



Fiji emerged victorious in the Pacific Games Bronze Medal Playoffs, defeating Vanuatu with a thrilling 4-2 scoreline at Lawson Tama Stadium in Honiara. This remarkable win cemented their place on the podium and left a lasting mark on the tournament.

A Comeback to Remember

The match started with Fiji taking an early lead thanks to a goal by Thomas Dunn in the 21st minute. However, Vanuatu responded quickly, scoring two goals before halftime through Azariah Soroman, giving them a 2-1 advantage.

The Fijian team refused to give up and mounted a stunning comeback in the sec-

ond half. Dunn equalized for Fiji, and Nabil Begg and Merrill Nand added two more goals to seal the victory.

Stellar Performance Earns Bronze

This win was a testament to the dedication and skill of the Fijian players. They displayed remarkable resilience and determination throughout the match, especially after trailing at halftime. Their attacking prowess shone through in the second half, with three goals showcasing their offensive prowess.

A Lasting Mark on the Tournament

Fiji's bronze medal victory will remain a memorable moment in the Pacific Games history. Their performance was not only about winning but also about inspiring future generations of athletes. The team demonstrated the power of teamwork, sportsmanship, and never giving up,

even in the face of adversity.

Looking Ahead to the Future

This triumph marks a significant achievement for Fijian football. It highlights the team's growing potential and strengthens their position as a force to be reckoned with in the Pacific region. The future looks bright for the Fijian football team, and this bronze medal win is a stepping stone towards further success on the international stage.

Celebrating the Fijian Heroes

The people of Fiji are celebrating the bronze medal victory with immense pride. The team's success has brought joy and inspiration to the nation, and their story has served as an inspiration for young athletes across the country. The Fijian football team has become role models, demonstrating the power of hard work, dedication, and teamwork.

Sports

Roy Krishna's Strike Powers Odisha FC To Fifth Successive Win

Roy Krishna, the Fijian striker fondly nicknamed "The Fiji Flash," continues his red-hot form, powering Odisha FC to their third consecutive win in the Indian Super League (ISL)! His clinical goal in the 56th minute was enough to secure a crucial 1-0 victory over Jamshedpur FC, sending the Odisha faithful into raptures. Krishna, known for his pace, agility, and finishing prowess, met a corner kick from Ahmed Jahouh with precision, heading the ball past the Jamshedpur goalkeeper to silence the home crowd. This goal not only seals three vital points for Odisha but also extends Krishna's impressive scoring streak. He has now found the net in four of his last five appearances, establishing himself as a genuine threat in the ISL.

Fijian Wonderboy Roy Krishna Strikes Again,



Secures Odisha FC's Third Straight Victory!

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Roy Krishna celebrating his goal for Odisha FC opens in a new window www.espn.in

Roy Krishna celebrating his goal for Odisha FC Krishna, known for his pace, agility, and finishing prowess, met a corner kick from Ahmed Jahouh with precision, heading the ball past the Jamshedpur goalkeeper to silence the home crowd.

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Roy Krishna and his Odisha FC teammates celebrating the win Opens in a new window theawayend.co

Roy Krishna and his Odisha FC teammates celebrating the win

Odisha's defense held firm throughout the match, thwarting Jamshedpur's attempts to equalize. The win sees Odisha climb to third place in the ISL table, firmly in the hunt for a playoff spot. The team's newfound confidence and Krishna's lethal presence are proving to be a potent combination.

Krishna's goal has gar-

nered widespread attention, not just for its importance to Odisha but also for its significance for Fijian football. He is a role model for aspiring athletes across the Pacific nation, proving that Fijian talent can shine on the international stage.

This win marks another chapter in Krishna's remarkable journey. From his humble beginnings in Fiji to becoming a fan favorite in India, his dedication and passion continue to inspire. As Odisha FC sets their sights on even greater heights, one thing is certain: Roy Krishna will be at the forefront of their charge, his Fijian magic leaving a lasting impression on the ISL.

Congratulations to Roy Krishna and Odisha FC on their well-deserved victory! Here's to many more goals and triumphs to come!

Fijian Drua launch 2024 playing kit and merch

The Swire Shipping Fijian Drua have launched their 2024 kit at their Drua shop in Denarau and it is also available online at www.shop.drua.rugby.

Fijian Drua Head Of Commercial and Marketing, Shane Hussein says it is one of the days their fans look forward to the most as they did not just launch the jersey but also an associated range of merchandise. The Head of Marketing says they have also got a new set of merchandise from their training t-shirts, vests and training jerseys with a new lime coloured option which really pops.

Jacks of Fiji Procurement Manager, Nikul Khatri says they are very happy to be a sponsor of the Drua and push the merchandise into the market with the festive season now here.

Khatri says there was a lot of interest surrounding the jersey and they are glad they have managed to keep it under wraps till now, in terms of what has changed and what's new.

The Fijian Drua kick off their 2024 Shop N Save Super Rugby Pacific campaign against the Blues on 24th February next year in Auckland.



USA All-Stars Team's Remarkable performance in Pacific Community Cup 2023



I take this opportunity to thank everyone for your support and encouragement in making 2023 Pacific Community Cup a memorable event for America Fiji Sports Commission. A very special thank you to all our sponsors for their generous support in enabling us to make this trip. It is no small task to take a team to an overseas country given the amount of work involved in raising funds, preparing the team, logistics and coordination. Our successful participation would not be possible without the relentless efforts, dedication and determination of the Commission members. I commend you all for this. I wish to thank the team coach, Imone Mohanta, and the players. Imone, you and the team have made us proud and I acknowledge with appreciation the time and efforts you made in assembling a formidable soccer team. I am extremely proud of our team's performance. While it was disappointing not to have made it to the finals, it

was not for lack of skills and talents. Indeed, our team showed excellent soccer skills and great potential in all the games it played. Credit goes to each and every player (and also our coach) for an exemplary performance despite some injuries sustained by the players.

In its first game, USA All-Stars defeated Fiji's Labasa team and finished with a draw against Australia's All Stars and the Local favorites Auckland All Stars. Our team became the crowd favorites after defeating the defending Champion and Fiji's IDC winner BA. This was a marvelous achievement considering that our team had beaten the topmost Fiji team. USA All-Stars team finished as the top team in the 'pool of death' and qualified to play in the semifinals. It was a hard-fought battle between USA All-Stars team and Manukau All Stars. This game ended up in a 2-2 draw after two; 10 minutes of overtime match and had to be decided by penalty

kicks. Unfortunately, the penalty kicks did not go in our favor and that ended our chances of playing the final game. Congratulations to our team manager, Mr. Vinay Nair, for winning the manager of the tournament award. We can justly be proud that in our participations in the Pacific Cup so far, we have established a track record of consistency and solid performance. It is also pleasing to note that the Pacific Cup soccer leaders recognize that our team is a force to reckon with and it has the potentials to win the Pacific Community Cup.

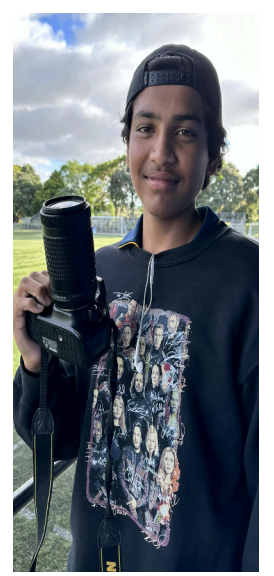
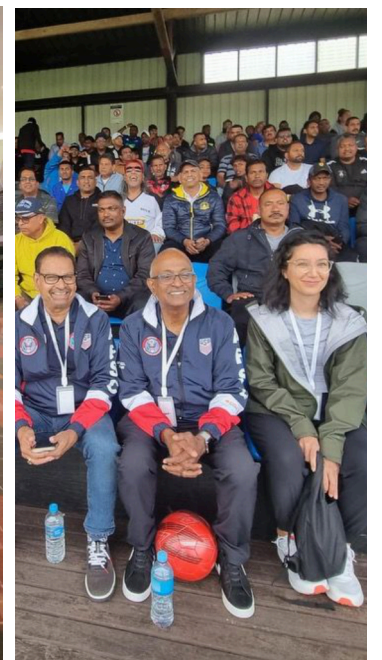
Once again, thanks to everyone that rallied behind us and we look forward to your support in 2024 Pacific Community Cup that will be held in Fiji. Let us continue striving for the top prize! I wish you all a joyful holiday season and a Prosperous New Year.

Narendra Narayan,
President

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Sports



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