



# THE US FIJI TIMES



World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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**Fiji claimed the first title of the new HSBC SVNS season in Dubai after a dramatic final against Spain at the end of a pulsating weekend of sevens rugby.**



The Flying Fijians ended a 22-tournament drought dating back to Toulouse in 2022 to claim the crown, after Argentina had showed all their street smarts to shut out New Zealand in the bronze final.

Final: Flying Fijians end brave Spain's title hopes

Fiji claimed a first title on the international sevens circuit since finishing top of the pile in Toulouse in 2022 as they beat a brave Spain 19-5 in the show-piece match.

But, at the end of a weekend of surprises in the men's competition in Dubai, Spain gave Fiji a real scare in their first-ever HSBC SVNS final.

**Continued P58**

## AUCKLAND ALL STARS CROWNED CHAMPIONS AGAIN!

The NZFFI Auckland All Stars have successfully defended their title, clinching the Flick Hygiene Pacific Community Cup 2024 with a commanding 2-0 victory over the NZFFI Manukau All Stars in the final at Churchill Park, Lautoka.

Goals from Eber Ramirez and Nicolas Bobadilla secured the win, showcasing Auckland's dominance and resilience throughout the tournament. The defending champions once again proved why they are a powerhouse in the Pacific Community Cup.

Congratulations to the Auckland All Stars on their back-to-back championship triumph!



## SINGH INDUCTED INTO FIJI FA LEGENDS CLUB



Former Fijian football coach Gurjit Singh, now residing in the USA, was inducted into the Fiji FA Legends Club during the Extra Supermarket Fiji FA Awards Night at Crowne Plaza in Nadi.

**Continued P09**





# THE US FIJI TIMES

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## FIJIAN GOVERNMENT



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HONORARY COUNCIL  
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Mr. BOBBY NAICKER

### THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

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

Vinaka – Rocky Buksh





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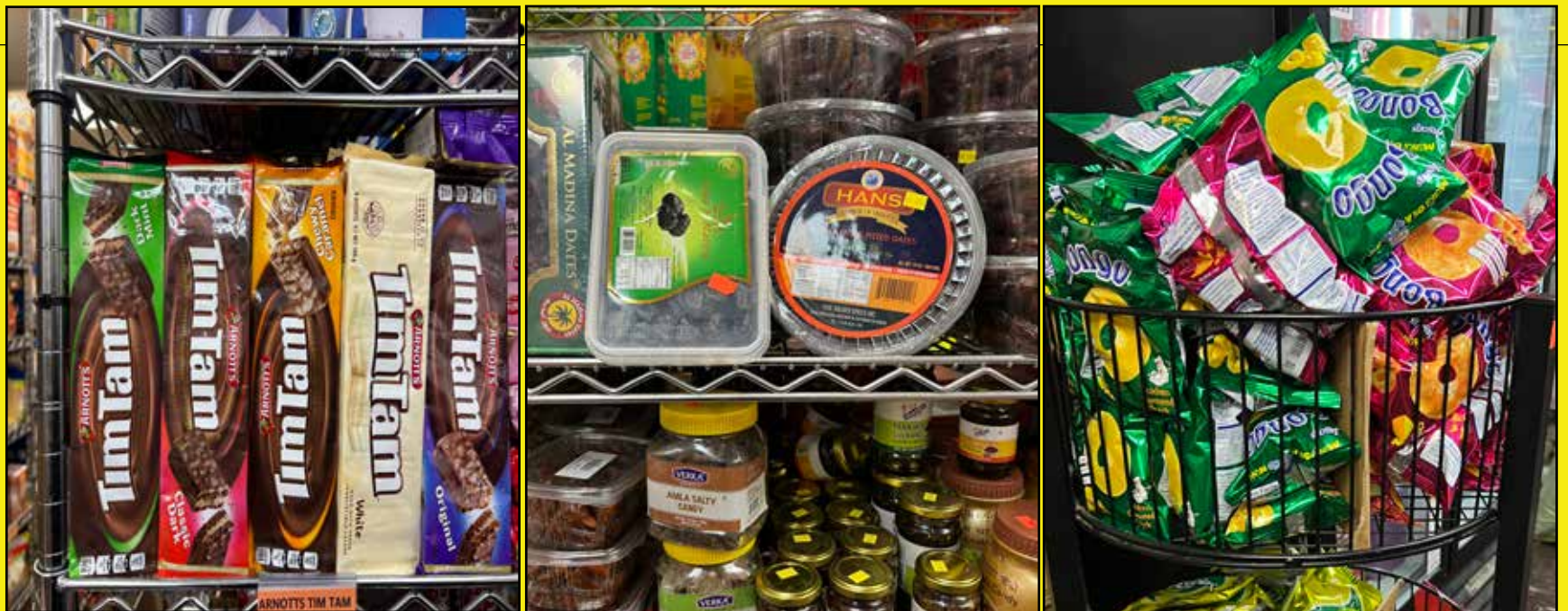
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From Neelam Supermarket of San Bruno California Happy Raksha Bandhan To All.

Raksha Bandhan is an auspicious festival that celebrates the beautiful bond of brothers and sisters. It is a pledge taken by the brothers to protect and safeguard their sisters in all stages of life. Their precious relationship of love, care, affection, admiration, and adoration is symbolized by a decorative thread called 'rakhi'. A rakhi is tied by the sisters on her brother's wrist to ask for his lifelong love and support which he happily accepts and shower his sister with amazing Rakhi gifts.

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





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







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## News

## AMERICA FIJI SPORTS COMMISSION DONATES \$5,000 TO WOW KIDS FIJI

Former Fijian football coach Gurjit Singh, now residing in the USA, was inducted into the Fiji FA Legends Club during the Extra Supermarket Fiji FA Awards Night at Crowne Plaza in Nadi.

Singh's coaching career spans several decades and includes success with top-tier Fijian

teams such as Suva, Rewa, Navua, Lautoka, Labasa, and the Fiji national team. Known for his exceptional tactical knowledge and leadership, Singh played a significant role in shaping the trajectory of Fijian football. His work has left a lasting imprint on the development of the sport in Fiji, making him one

of the most respected coaches in the country's football history.

Singh's induction as the 83rd member of the Fiji FA Legends Club celebrates his outstanding achievements and immeasurable contributions to Fijian football. In recognition of his legacy, Singh was awarded the prestigious Fiji FA Gold Card,

granting him lifetime access to all Fiji FA events free of charge.

The Fiji FA Legends Club was established to honor those who have made extraordinary contributions to football, both on and off the field. The induction highlights the importance of recognizing individuals whose dedication, passion, and

leadership have played an integral role in the development of the sport.

This recognition not only honors their achievements but also ensures that their stories and legacies will continue to inspire future generations of footballers and fans in Fiji and beyond.



## GOOGLE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY IN FIJI

The US Fiji Chamber of Commerce was honored to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for Google's \$250 million ICT facility in Natadola, Fiji! Representing the Chamber were President Narendra Narayan and Vice President Vinay Nair, who joined leaders and dignitaries to witness this transformative project.

This state-of-the-art facility will enhance internet connectivity across the Pacific, create over 3,600 jobs, and contribute significantly to Fiji's economic growth. A proud moment for Fiji as it steps into the future of digital innovation!





## News

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## Dolphin Island, the Definition of Exclusivity, Fiji

Alex van Heeren, of Huka Lodge fame, designed Dolphin Island to be like no other. A concept of luxury in deliberate isolation, complemented by unspoiled natural beauty and true privacy, surrounded by gin clear waters. The large main bure enjoys an elevated position above the infinity pool, and the four guest bure suites featuring heart timber floors, plaster walls, stone tiles, wooden shutters, high ceilings and the latest in air-conditioned comfort. A hilltop honeymoon bure, private beach, jetty and substantial back-of-house facilities complete the picture. There is ample room to increase the accommodation inventory. Dolphin Island can be purchased in its entirety, by negotiation, OR Register interest to purchase one or more of only 12 shares in a yet to be formed NewZealand, company which will own the island outright, for US\$1 million per 1/12 th share and secure exclusive use of freehold Dolphin Island for a month each year of ownership. Dolphin Island, is just 20 minutes by boat from shore, on the tip of Viti Levu, Fiji, 2.5 hours by private car from Nadi International Airport. Float planes and helicopters offer an alternative connection.

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## Fiji News

## COALITION GOVERNMENT CHAMPIONS CLEANER ENERGY TRANSITION WITH HYDROGEN DUAL-FUEL GENERATOR TRIAL

Advancing Fiji's sustainable energy ambitions towards cleaner energy and decreased reliance on imported fossil fuels, Fiji Gas, in collaboration with the Obayashi Corporation of Japan, and Halcyon Power of New Zealand recently demonstrated a hydrogen dual-fuel generator at the Lautoka Depot. This was highlighted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica during parliament this morning.

The Minister said this project represents a significant leap in our efforts to transition towards cleaner energy sources and reduce dependency on imported fossil fuels. He added, this project is about testing on how Fiji can use a cleaner fuel, in this case, hydrogen, to produce electricity. "This generator at the Lautoka Depot is a trial run, helping us learn what works and what needs to improve before we adopt this technology on a larger scale. More importantly, it will help

us understand the infrastructure and policies we need to support hydrogen use, making it easier for us to adopt this clean energy technology on a larger scale." "Hydrogen is seen as a game changer. It can replace fossil fuels in many areas, from powering generators to fuelling vehicles and vessels." The Minister said this achievement traces back to the New Zealand Trade Mission in 2023, in which the Coalition Government reinforced the strong relationship between Fiji and New Zealand under the Dua-vata Partnership.

As part of the mission, The Coalition Government engaged in productive discussions with the New Zealand Government, which laid the foundation for what has now become the process of how green hydrogen energy is produced.

Through the Taupō Hydrogen Partnership, Halcyon Power Limited oversees the production of green hydrogen and facilitates its transportation from New Zealand to Fiji, where it is utilised for the



hydrogen dual-fuel generator installed by Fiji Gas. The Minister stressed that this a pilot project but is part of a broader initiative supported by the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) Financing Support Programme administered by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan.

He noted through the JCM Financing Support Programme,

the Japanese Government has played a pivotal role in making this project a reality. "Japan, represented by Obayashi Corporation, has contributed technical expertise and financial backing, while New Zealand, a global leader in renewable energy, has supplied the green hydrogen and shared its vast experience in developing hy-

drogen-powered solutions. "Concluding his remarks, the Minister commended Fiji Gas for their vision and commitment to this initiative highlighting that this project sets the stage for Fiji to lead by example in the Pacific, demonstrating how renewable energy solutions can create a greener, more resilient future for all.

## EXPLORING PROMISING DEVELOPMENT SITES IN VANUA LEVU

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Hon. Viliame Gavoka, visited Vanua Levu to explore several promising development sites and projects aimed at enhancing the region's tourism infrastructure. The visit also included an assessment of potential sites for a proposed international airport. These site visits underscore the Coalition Government's strong commitment to improving tourism facilities in Vanua Levu and boosting its role as a key destination in Fiji's tourism strategy. The inclusion of local communities in such milestones is a vital part of the Government's efforts to ensure that these initiatives align with the needs and aspirations of the people they aim to serve. The site inspections also featured a review of a potential development location that could mirror the success of Denarau, aimed at further expanding tourism

infrastructure and services in the region. Additionally, DPM Gavoka and the team visited the new Nawi Mariner, a key project that promises to play an integral role in the growth of tourism, especially by attracting luxury vessels and super yachts and creating new opportunities for marine-based activities. These projects are expected to significantly contribute to the economic development of Cakaudrove and neighbouring provinces, providing fresh avenues for job creation, investment, and local business growth. The Ministry's strategic focus is to leverage these developments to transform Vanua Levu into a premier tourism destination, driving long-term economic prosperity while creating sustainable opportunities for the local community. These efforts are aligned with the Government's broader vision for inclusive growth and regional



development through tourism. The Permanent Secretary for Tourism and Civil Aviation Ms. Salaseini Daunabuna, Director

of Civil Aviation Ms. Alumita Lagicere, and Principal Tourism Officer Ms. Salote Waiwalu and representatives from the

Commissioner Northern's Office were part of the visiting team.



## Fiji News

# GOOGLE ICT FACILITY TO USHER IN A NEW ERA OF DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Today marked a historic occasion as the Prime Minister Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka officiated the groundbreaking ceremony for Google's state-of-the-art ICT facility at Natadola in the Nadroga Province.

This significant infrastructure project presents a giant leap forward for Fiji, in our shared aspirations for a more connected and prosperous future. Prime Minister Rabuka, in his official remarks, revealed that the facility will hold a new cable landing station and will house vital infrastructure, including data transmission servers and racks, and power generating equipment to support international fiber optic cables that Google will lay into and in Fiji.

"This infrastructure will promote Fiji as a hub for digital connectivity within the Pacific," he said.

"The ICT facility will house the second cable landing station in Viti Levu, and one which will strengthen Fiji's internet connectivity, and make it more resilient, with two landings stations, one in the Central Division and one here in the West." Google is investing in four new international sub-sea cables which will also connect to Fiji. These sub-sea cables will connect Fiji to the United States, Australia, Japan, and Chile, positioning Fiji as a strategic hub for digital connectivity within the Pacific.



## MINISTER SINGH MEETS FIJIAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY IN LONDON

The Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, Hon. Charan Jeeth Singh, met with the Fijian diaspora community in London to share the government's plans and vision for creating equal development opportunities for all communities and enduring connections between Fiji and its diaspora. Minister Singh took the opportunity to provide an update and plans, sharing valuable insights into his ministerial responsibilities and outlining future plans for Fiji's sugar industry. He expressed his appreciation to Fijians living abroad for their contributions towards Fiji's development. "In the year 2022, the remittances reached a remarkable \$1 billion, and that has been a support for many families back home, as well as vital support for Fiji's economy. The continued growth in remittances reflects not only

your hard work but also your unwavering commitment to Fiji." The discussions during the meeting were centered on the importance of collaboration to create opportunities that benefit Fiji's commitment and contribute to national progress. He further alluded to the Coalition Government's commitment to the re-establishment of the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs, which is focused on fostering inclusivity and equality and creating a socially cohesive society amongst all ethnic communities. Minister Singh further invited the Fijian community in the United Kingdom to continue engaging with the Fiji Government to share experiences to develop policies that reflect the needs of all Fijians, as their contributions are vital for the nation's future in building prosperous Fiji.





## Fiji News

## DPM PRASAD URGES SHIFT TO FOSSIL-FREE FUTURE

A fossil fuel-free future must be a short-term goal, not just a long-term ambition, says Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Hon. Biman Prasad. Speaking at the closing of the 2024 Global Development Conference at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Professor Prasad called for urgent global action to address climate change. Professor Prasad highlighted the severe impacts of this year's record-breaking climate disasters, with economic losses exceeding \$1 trillion. He emphasised that Fiji is taking bold steps, including launching its National Carbon Market Strategy, to transition away from fossil fuels and

build resilience. "The Pacific cannot be the dumping ground for the world's plastic and fossil fuel waste. We must act now to protect our oceans and our future," he said. With over 750 participants from more than 60 countries, the conference underscored the need for collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and communities. Professor Prasad urged attendees to connect evidence with action, saying, "Your research must disrupt conventional approaches and inspire solutions for a better tomorrow." Fiji's leadership on climate action continues to set an example for the global community.



## "NOTHING CAN REPLACE DEDICATION, EFFORT & DISCIPLINE" - HON. TUBUNA

The Assistant Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon. Sakiusa Tubuna, officiated at the Nakasi High School prize-giving ceremony yesterday and stressed the importance of education, dedication, and perseverance in shaping the future of our youths. Addressing the guests, teachers, and students, Assistant Minister Tubuna highlighted the Coalition Government's ongoing commitment to education. "This is also the stance of your Government and is evident in the current 2024-2025 budget, which allocates \$784.1 million to the Ministry of Education—an additional \$16 million compared to the 2023-2024 budget," he said.

"The government's investment in the education sector

is an investment in the future of our nation, and it is through these allocations and initiatives the government is ensuring that young people are equipped with the tools they need to succeed and thrive in an increasingly competitive world." The Assistant Minister praised Nakasi High School for its academic and extracurricular achievements, especially given its size. Describing the school as a 'gem' amongst larger institutions, Hon. Tubuna said their achievements were the result of the hard work and dedication of both students and staff, further acknowledging the academic awards and personal triumphs of the students and encouraging them to continue striving for excellence. "To all students who are being awarded prizes,



congratulations. Your being here is the result of your perseverance and dedication, and I firmly believe that you will continue to shine in your future endeavours."

"You all have the potential to achieve great things. Focus on your abilities, work on your weaknesses and most of all, maximise your God-given potential. Nothing can replace dedication, effort and discipline. Track your progress and reflect on your journey so you stay true to your goals." "For those of you who may not receive awards today, don't be

disheartened.

Your time will come. Be motivated, tell yourselves that you have the potential to do great things; set your goals, dream big, and work hard towards your goals." Teachers, parents and guardians were also recognised for their contributions towards the students' academic achievements for this year. "Together, we are shaping the future of Fiji, and with the hard work and dedication of students, teachers, and families, we will continue to build a brighter tomorrow," he said.



## Fiji News

# TRADITIONAL WELCOMING CEREMONY ACCORDED TO THE FIRST EVER U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO VISIT FIJI

A traditional ceremony was accorded this afternoon to welcome the United States Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, upon his arrival in Nadi for a 2-day visit from Friday 22nd to Saturday 23rd November 2024. Secretary Austin's visit marks the first-ever visit by a U.S. Secretary of Defense to Fiji to meet with the Fiji Government leaders to deepen the bilateral defense cooperation. As he arrived at the Black Rock Camp, Secretary Austin inspected the guard of honour, followed by the traditional welcoming ceremony. In attendance at the welcoming ceremony was the Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, Hon. Filimoni Vosarogo, the U.S. delegation and staff at the Black Rock Camp. In his remarks, Secretary Austin acknowledged the Government and the people

of Fiji for the warm welcome and kind hospitality. The visit further reaffirms the U.S. and Fiji's ongoing commitment to regional peace and security and stronger bilateral relations in the development priorities including defence and security, economy, trade and investment, amongst others. Following the welcoming ceremony, Secretary Austin proceeded to the rugby match organised at the Black Rock Camp. As part of the program tomorrow, Secretary Austin will meet with the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka. The bilateral meeting will be an avenue to discuss key areas of cooperation in defence and security and other issues of importance to both Fiji and the U.S. and the broader Pacific region.



## EMPLOYMENT MINISTRY CONDUCTS INSPECTIONS ON GRACE ROAD COMPANY

The Ministry recently conducted inspections on the minimum terms and conditions of employment and occupational health and safety issues for the Grace Road Company (GRC) throughout Viti Levu. The Minister for Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations, Honourable Agni Deo Singh highlighted that the inspection report revealed breaches under the Employment Relations Act 2007 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1996. Upon receiving

the findings, he stated that the Ministry would conduct further investigations on the issues raised during inspections. "The Fiji law applies equally to both local and migrant workers, and the Ministry is committed to ensuring that all employers adhere to the provisions of the employment law." The Employment Minister calls on GRC to comply with the provisions of the law and ensure that workers are remunerated with their rightful dues accordingly.



## FIJI CONTINUES COLLABORATION WITH UNESCAP



The Minister for Women, Children, and Social Protection, Hon. Lynda Tabuya, met with the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, to discuss Fiji's ongoing collaboration with UNESCAP. The meeting focused on raising awareness about climate finance and developing financial solutions to address social protection issues caused by climate change. Minister Tabuya shared ideas

about the "Care Economy" in the Pacific and proposed a "Village-Integrated Care Initiative" for Fiji, inspired by a similar project in Tonga supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). She also emphasised the need to empower women by supporting small and medium-sized businesses for women entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of providing capital, investment opportunities, and savings programs to help women succeed.



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## FROM CANE TO RICE: A COOPERATIVE'S JOURNEY OF GROWTH

A Labasa-based farmers' co-operative this week received a brand-new rice harvester from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communication, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica. Founded in 2017, the Wailevu Cane Farmers' Co-operative Limited (WCFCL) began as a small initiative by the 13 members united by a common goal: to alleviate the financial strain brought about by traditional cane harvesting. While sugarcane remains the backbone of their operations, the cooperative members have seen to it that they embrace diversification. Utilising land that was once exclusively adorned with sugarcane, the farmers now boast wetlands home to flourishing rice fields. This transition, however, brought about new challenges. Harvesting ripe rice requires timely action, as delays



Human Resource Development Programme, contributed to the

proving the cooperative's efficiency. With the new machinery,

indirectly. Sharing his thoughts with the farmers, DPM Kamika-

"We hope that that will change in years to come as we try and



can result in significant losses. Recognising this, WCFCL has continued to invest in solutions that support efficient farming practices. The cooperative's efforts received a major boost in the 2023/2024 financial year when the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Integrated

procurement of new machinery. The total project cost of \$99,500 was shared between the Ministry and the cooperative, with \$66,333.33 provided by the government and \$33,166.67 from the farmers themselves. This investment introduced a Paddy Master Harvester and its implements, significantly im-

proving the cooperative's efficiency. With the new machinery, WCFCL has set its sights on enhancing service delivery, reducing costs, and increasing its harvesting capacity. The initiative is also creating employment opportunities as the cooperative expands its operations, benefiting not only its 13 members but also close to 30 neighbouring farmers who rely on its services



mica said the Coalition Government has continued its efforts to intensify the cooperative movement and also the micro, small and medium enterprise movement. "Your efforts are an encouragement not only to yourselves but to the whole of Fiji to look at business opportunities, and where the cooperative model makes sense, we encourage our people to participate." "As a Ministry, we have noted an increase in the request for mechanisation, which makes sense when you explain some of the challenges that are now being faced by industry, and one is an ageing farming population..." said DPM Kamikamica.

make farming more interesting but more importantly, you have shown something that the Government is currently looking at, which is how to continue to deal with the sugar industry but also look at other ways of developing other crops." "You already have a diversified model when it comes to cropping, which is excellent to see and it's good that you have looked at diversification as a means to continue to remain in farming generally." "The handover of this machine, I'm sure will assist with the quick harvest of the rice crop and ensure that your challenges as you quite well articulated are addressed."



## Fiji News

# 2024 health sector report calls for broader tax reforms on unhealthy food

Fiji taxes food rich in sugar, sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy snacks but the tax system could do more to promote healthier foods and drinks. 80 percent of the deaths in Fiji are attributed to Non-Communicable Diseases. In Fiji, a diabetes-related amputation occurs every 8.5 hours. Many diabetics who are not taking the necessary preventative steps also end up having kidney problems and need dialysis. With many unable to afford this, they end up dying. Questions are now being raised on why sugar and sugary products are not being highly taxed to ensure people do not consume this in high amounts. The Fiji Health Sector Review 2024 also states that locally produced non-alcoholic beverages containing added sugar or artificial sweeteners, excluding milk-based drinks, are taxed. Imported sugar and sugar-sweetened beverages are also subject to a 15 percent import excise duty. The review highlighted that these taxes were extended to four unhealthy food product categories in the 2023–24 budget: ice cream and other edible ice, sweet biscuits



(including waffles and wafers), sugar confectioneries (excluding traditional Indian sweets), and snack foods. They recommend that taxes should also apply to unsweetened (100 percent) juices and sweetened milk-based drinks, which pose similar health

risks to sugar-sweetened beverages. The review further highlights that Fiji could transition to a single excise tax system for local and imported sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy food products, with tiered rates based on nutrient content. The

report also states that Fiji raised its standard VAT rate from 9 percent to 15 percent in the 2023–24 budget. They add salt and sugar should be subject to the standard VAT, while a limited group of healthy foods—including vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds—

could be added to the zero-rated list. The report proposes that Fiji consider allocating a portion of the revenue generated from sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy food taxes to subsidize healthier alternatives such as fruits and vegetables.

## ABC book: A touch of home for Fijians near and far, launched today

Fijian children, both in Fiji and abroad now have access to a new resource that brings the beauty of their culture into their learning. The co-founders of Baka Books, Adarshini Vikash, Samantha Magick and Akanisi Vakawaletabua opened their doors just two months ago with the goal of creating a space where local children could have easy access to books. Speaking to fiji.village News, Vikash says they wanted to offer a place where children could access books easily, especially in a community where reading is not always prioritized due to the cost of books. She says the bookstore's mission is to encourage a reading culture in Fiji by offering a mix of new and pre-loved books, puzzles, and games for children. Vikash says at Baka Books, they want to make sure that all children, no matter their background, have the opportu-

nity to read and experience the joy of books. She says the bookstore has a dedicated children's room where kids can come in and read for free and purchase as well. Meanwhile, Jane Ricketts and Jo Vosailagi, the authors of the newly launched ABC book, shared their inspiration and the significance of this project. Ricketts, who has lived in Fiji for many years, says Baka Books is a local bookstore that highlights the work of Fijian artists and features books that celebrate Fiji's culture, giving children and families the chance to connect with their roots in a fun and meaningful way. She says she has been very aware for a long time that a lot of children in Fiji do not have books and for many families, books are expensive and she wanted to help fill that gap. Ricketts says it is nice for all children to see themselves in a book

sometimes. She says this book allows children to identify with the characters and images and will inspire them. Jo Vosailagi, also one of the contributors to the book says this book aims to connect with the beauty of Fiji and the importance of their heritage. She says the results of the Year 8 exams, were recently found to be shockingly low

which highlights that children need to start with the basics and build from there. When asked about their goals, the founders of Baka Books say their focus is not on making money but on giving back to the community. They say however, due to financial constraints, many stories are still in the works. They say many parents, often busy with their

phones, unintentionally set the same pattern for their children and urges parents to bring their children in to discover the joy of reading and help them develop valuable skills. Baka Books at McGregor Road in Suva is open Monday to Saturday, offering a space to nurture children's love for reading and learning.







# Christmas Day

CHRISTMAS is a joyful holiday that is celebrated by most people in the United States. Even though its origins are Christian, it has become a holiday season that is celebrated in various ways by people of many faiths. The Christmas story comes from the Bible. In the story an angel appeared to shepherds and told them that a savior had been born to Mary and Joseph in a stable in Bethlehem. Three Wise Men from the East (the Magi) followed a wondrous star, which led them to the baby Jesus. The Wise Men paid homage to the new child, and presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Christmas has been associated with gift giving since the Wise Men brought these gifts to welcome the newborn baby. On Christmas Eve, December 24, many people attend evening church services, often at midnight. Attention is focused on the nativity scene, the story of the birth of Jesus, and on the spirit of Christmas. Christmas Eve services often include the singing of Christmas carols. On Christmas morning some families also attend church services, but many families spend the morning at home, opening gifts and sharing a special meal. Some people visit friends and neighbors on Christmas Day. Because many American families are spread out throughout the country, the Christmas season brings

a lot of travel. Going home for Christmas is a most cherished tradition so the days before Christmas are some of the busiest times of the year at airports, train stations, and bus depots with people on their way to spend the holidays with their loved ones. Houses may be full of cousins, aunts, and uncles who might not see each other at other times during the year. Family members help in the preparation of the festivities, including of course, making a lot of food! The Christmas dinner table looks much like a Thanksgiving feast, with turkey or ham, cranberry sauce, potatoes, and pie. No Christmas is complete without lots of desserts, like spicy fruitcake and cookies hot from the oven. A popular drink during the holiday parties and gatherings is eggnog, a beverage made of beaten eggs, cream, milk, sugar, spices, and maybe brandy or rum. Plenty of eggnog and hot chocolate are often on hand for family and visitors alike. Christmas Traditions and Symbols Decorations PREVIOUS PAGE: A decorated Christmas tree towers over presents waiting to be opened on Christmas morning. ABOVE: During the Christmas season, many people decorate their houses with poinsettia plants. In preparation for Christmas, many people decorate their houses with colored lights and hang a wreath of evergreen

branches, or other Christmas decorations on the door. Inside the house people often decorate with bright red poinsettia plants. Most families also put up Christmas trees. In some parts of the USA there are Christmas tree farms where people can cut down their own trees. Most people, FEDERAL HOLIDAYS CHRISTMAS DAY 53 however, buy trees that have already been cut and are sold from Christmas tree lots on street corners or in shopping areas. The trees are brought home, set up in the living room, and decorated with lights, ornaments, tinsel, and a star or angel at the top. Under this tree, family members and "Santa" will leave gifts. Santa Claus Santa Claus' origin goes back to Norse and pre-Christian mythological characters who were also associated with gift giving. The Norse God, Odin, rode on a magical flying horse across the sky in the winter to reward people with gifts. In Scandinavian and other European countries, Father Christmas, or Saint Nicholas, comes into houses in the night and leaves gifts for the children, to bring happiness in the coldest months of the year. The legend of Saint Nicholas may have developed from stories of a real Saint Nicholas, a priest who lived in the 300s AD, and reportedly gave money to a poor family. Saint Nicholas became a symbol for gift giving among

Christians. Later, Saint Nicholas was substituted with a non-religious figure, Father Christmas, who was represented as a kindly man with a red cloak and long white beard. Immigrants brought the idea of Father Christmas to the United States. His name was eventually changed to Santa Claus, from the Dutch "Sinter Claas," which means Father Christmas. Santa Claus took shape in the United States, and Americans made him a cheery old gentleman with red cheeks and a twinkle in his eye. American children believe that Santa Claus lives at the North Pole with his wife, Mrs. Claus, and his helpers, the elves. All year he keeps a list of the names of children in the world, and notes whether they have been good or bad. He decides what presents to give to the good children. He oversees the manufacturing and wrapping of the presents by his helpers. Santa Claus supposedly gets his ideas for the toys from the millions of children who write to him at the North Pole, explaining what they would like for Christmas. Children also find Santa Claus at shopping malls across the country. They sit on his lap and tell him what they want. Of course, their parents are probably nearby listening in as well. On December 24, Christmas Eve, Santa hitches his eight reindeer to a sleigh, and loads it with presents CHRISTMAS DAY

ents. The reindeer pull him and his sleigh through the sky to deliver presents to children all around the world, that is, if they have been good all year. On Christmas morning, children can't wait to open their eyes and see what Santa left for them under the Christmas tree. In many families, on Christmas Eve children prepare a glass of milk and cookies as a snack for Santa. Of course, in the morning the snack is gone, and they know that Santa was there. Santa Claus exists only in our imaginations. But he, Saint Nicholas, and Father Christmas all represent the spirit of giving. Gift-Giving Giving gifts is a major Christmas tradition. Gifts are bought or made for all people. Often school children will make gifts in their classrooms for their parents or grandparents. The gifts are wrapped and placed under the Christmas tree to be opened on Christmas morning. Some children are so excited on Christmas Day that they wake up at the crack of dawn to peek into the living room. It is hard for them to wait until after breakfast before opening the gifts. Nowadays people often complain that Christmas has become too "commercialized," especially in large cities. Shop owners begin advertising and decorating for Christmas as early as October in hopes of selling more goods. Children demand more



from Santa Claus because manufacturers and retailers saturate the media with advertising. Children's toys have become more complex and expensive. Many kids ask for pricey electronic or sports equipment, while the trend for adults is also for larger, more expensive gifts. Some people believe that the origin and spirit of Christmas has been lost. Every year human-interest stories appear in the media reminding readers of the origin of Christmas. Shelters for the homeless and hungry appeal for money or gifts for those who are in need. Members of organizations like the Salvation Army dress up as Santa Claus and stand on the sidewalks collecting money for their soup kitchens. City police and other groups supervise a "Toys for Tots" drive, in which people donate new toys for needy children. Company employees may take up a collection for a special

charity or a family in need. All of these efforts are meant to emphasize the importance of giving—rather than receiving—during this holiday season. Christmas Stockings Long ago, children hung their own stockings, or socks, over the fireplace mantel. Santa entered down the chimney and left candy and presents inside the socks for good children. Bad children received a lump of coal. Today the tradition of hanging up a stocking is carried on, but now many of the stockings are large sock-shaped fabric bags decorated in Christmas red and green and holiday designs. Stockings are often personalized with the owner's name. In some households all family members, young and old, have Christmas stockings. In others, only the children hang up their stockings. On Christmas morning, everyone eagerly opens their stock-

ings to find small items bringing Christmas cheer. Christmas Cards often listen to this poem before they go to bed on Christmas Eve, in anticipation of Santa's visit. Another important custom of Christmas is to send and receive Christmas cards that express the sentiment of the season. Some cards are religious in nature; others are non-religious, or even humorous. Often the cards—or letters and photos—give information about family events from the previous year. Americans send Christmas cards throughout December to friends, family, co-workers, and even business clients. Christmas cards often include a greeting for the New Year, wishing the recipient, "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year." Today many people choose cards that say simply, "Happy Holidays" or "Season's Greetings," which are inclusive of all faiths. Christmas Entertainment Songs, poems,

stories, and performances are a regular part of the Christmas season for many families. One well-known poem is "The Night Before Christmas" written by Clement Moore in 1823. American children A favorite Christmas story is "A Christmas Carol" written by British author Charles Dickens in 1854. Dickens' story spreads the idea of sharing and compassion. It tells about a poor family with little money to live or eat well, and no money to pay for a doctor for their son, Tiny Tim, who is disabled and walks with crutches. Yet they consider themselves lucky for what they do have—a close, happy family and generous friends. Reading excerpts from "A Christmas Carol" is an important Christmas tradition for many American families. Theater and television productions of "A Christmas Carol" are popular entertainment at Christmas time. Another popu-

lar Christmas production is "The Nutcracker," a ballet by Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky which tells the story of a child's dream. "The Nutcracker" is a holiday favorite for people of all ages, as many children dance in the cast. Special Christmas songs, or carols, are sung and heard throughout the holiday season. Carolers from community groups or churches may go from door to door through neighborhoods singing Christmas carols. There are different types of carols: old traditional songs such as "Good King Wenceslaus" and "Deck the Halls;" there are religious songs like "Joy to the World" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem;" and modern American songs like "I'll Be Home for Christmas." Christmas carols, both religious and secular, capture the spirit and excitement of the season.





## Fiji News

# Climate crisis not just for our environment, it is crucial for protecting the lives of Fijian people – DPM Prasad

Deputy Prime Minister Professor Biman Prasad says addressing the climate crisis is not just crucial for our environment, it is crucial for protecting the lives and livelihoods of Fijian people and protecting the stability and growth of our economy. Professor Prasad says COP29 in Baku was dubbed the Finance COP because all Parties were mandated to agree to deploy USD\$100 billion per year as climate finance. He says the new target – referred to as the new collective quantified goal (NCQG) has been under negotiation for over two years and was required to be agreed to at COP29. The Deputy Prime Minister says given the slow progress to date to reduce global emissions and support resilience building, developing countries urgently require financing to implement both their mitigation commitments and adaptation plans. He says at COP29 our negotiation teams worked diligently to secure the best possible outcome across the negotiation streams and in many cases, Ministers and negotia-



tors started their day at 6am to attend coordination meetings often finishing in the early hours of the next morning, sometimes as far as 3am. Professor Prasad says in the final days of COP29, Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries

were left with no choice but to walk out of the negotiation room as our priorities had not been properly accounted for. Together Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries represented the majority of developing countries,

and we used our weight as a joint block to push for progress and ambition. Leader of Opposition, Inia Seruiratu asks do we really need to send a big delegation but he will leave that to government to answer as we need our voices in COP. Seru-

iratu says they need to prepare now for the next COP, and not wait for the next few months. He asks the Prime Minister to sort out the issue between the Minister of Sugar and the rest of the delegation.

## IHG Fiji Hotels raise \$5,000 for Lifeline Fiji during Movember campaign

Lifeline Fiji has been given a boost in helping people with mental health issues as FNPF-owned IHG Fiji Hotels raised \$5,000 during their Movember campaign. The FNPF-owned IHG Fiji Hotels, including InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, Grand Pacific Hotel, and Holiday Inn Suva say the month-long initiative shone a light on critical men's health issues, including mental health, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer, while opening conversations and meaningful community engagement. They say Movember, a globally recognised symbol of men's health advocacy, inspires participants to grow moustaches and encourage discussions about health issues often left unspoken. They say FNPF-owned IHG Fiji Hotels embraced this global tradition through bespoke offerings and thought-

fully curated events, creating unique opportunities for both guests and colleagues to support the cause. IHG Fiji Hotels says a highlight of the campaign was the Mental Health Awareness Sessions, facilitated by Lifeline Fiji which was open to their staff to attend at all three hotels last month.

They say these sessions provided a safe and supportive environment for discussions about mental well-being, offering access to essential resources and professional guidance. IHG Fiji Hotels says guests were also treated to a variety of Movember-themed experiences across all three hotels in November. They say the campaign's wellness element was elevated by the Movember Spa Retreat, featuring Himalayan Salt Back Scrubs, with 10 percent of sales of this treatment donated to Lifeline



Fiji. IHG Hotels and Resorts Portfolio General Manager Lachlan Walker says Movember is about starting conversations and breaking the stigma

around men's health issues. He says throughout the month of November, they have created awareness, inspired action, and contributed to the well-being

of our community by donating to Lifeline Fiji to support their critical services across the country.



## Fiji News

## Wai Fiji donates water for mothers at CWM Maternity Ward

As hundreds of mothers at the CWM Maternity Ward were left without access to clean drinking water this morning following a water disruption, Wai Fiji donated several days' worth of drinking water to support pre and postnatal mothers during this challenging time. Wai Fiji CEO Arnold Chanel says when they heard about the situation, they couldn't stand by as no mother or baby should endure such hardship. He says ensuring they have access to clean, safe drinking water is their way of showing that they care. Chanel says these mothers are raising the future of our nation, and they deserve all the support we can offer. He also called for a collective approach to addressing such challenges because as a community, it is our duty to come together and respond to crises like this, particularly when the well-being of mothers and newborns is at stake. He



also pledged ongoing support, ensuring that Wai Fiji would continue to assist mothers in

need at the maternity ward. He says this initiative reinforces Wai Fiji's commitment to stand-

ing by its community in times of crisis, helping to make a tangible difference in the lives of

those who need it most. Meanwhile water supply was restored to the hospital earlier today.

## Fijian diaspora invest over \$1M in US-Fiji Drive – Kamikamica

Fijians living in Northern America have invested over a million dollars during the US-Fiji Investment and Savings Drive in October this year but it does not take into account for the long-term impact of the relationships and the accounts established. This has been highlighted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Manoa Kamikamica in his ministerial statement where he says services of some key agencies and financial institutions were made available for the diaspora in Seattle, San Francisco, Sacramento and Santa Rosa. He also highlighted a major difficulty for the diaspora in opening bank accounts in Fiji remotely. Kamikamica says many diaspora members, particularly those unable to travel to Fiji, are excluded from accessing banking services due to stringent in-person verification processes and to address this, HFC Bank in partnership with the Fiji Trade Commission, is looking at a way to allow diaspora members to open bank

accounts remotely. He says the teams have registered a few new bank accounts as part of this, and a formal announcement will be made as soon as everything is worked out logistically. The Deputy Prime Minister says this will mean that we will witness an increase in deposits and investments from our diaspora community. While commending Kamikamica for this initiative, Opposition Bloc of 16 MP Faiyaz Koya highlighted a successful Fiji born Canadian businessman who wants to come and invest in Fiji. He says the businessman has highlighted that concerns on the stability of government policies and the overall investment climate. Koya says incentives and policy stability in different sectors need to be looked at where the the businessman raised issues relating to land lease and whether different sorts of land was affordable and whether government would provide incentives. Meanwhile, Opposition Bloc of 9 MP Penioni Ravunawa has also applauded



the initiative and is urging the government to ensure that this initiative does not only attract financial investment, but also translate to real social, econom-

ic development, job creation, and ultimately a better standard of living for our people. He adds it is also important to ensure that the interests of lo-

cal communities and their environment are protected in any development strategies, and to be in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.



## Fiji News

# Daniel Kim's bail condition to prohibit him from leaving Fiji

After being held in immigration custody for about a year and three months, Grace Road Fiji President Daniel Kim and Sun Jin Lee have been granted bail by the Lautoka High Court under the condition that they are not to leave the country. They were declared prohibited immigrants by the Fijian Government and it has been made clear through government statements released that the government acted after the decisions by the South Korean Government and the request by Interpol. Kim and Lee are two of 6 applicants who have sought judicial review of this decision of Minister for Immigration and of the Permanent Secretary of Immigration on the 31st of August last year. The decision on their application for a judicial review will be delivered on the 28th of January, next year.

Their bail conditions state that a stop departure order be issued and be prohibited from leaving from any port of entry or exit, surrendering any travel documents, attend court as and when required and abide by the laws of Fiji. They are prohibited from making press conferences and interviews in relation to this specific case



in hand. Other conditions are that they remain resided at the Grace Farm in Navua, provide two common sureties (Aca Rayawa and Bobby Raniga). It was noted in the Lautoka High Court that neither Kim nor Lee have ever been charged or convicted of any crime in Fiji and to the best to the knowledge of the presiding Judge, elsewhere in the world. The Court also noted that the stay on the

decision of the Minister and and the Permanent Secretary does not quash or set aside the Minister's decision and if it did, the Court would be usurping that executive power. The bail ruling states that for the time being, the Court accepts that Lee and Kim are, technically, still prohibited immigrants. It also states that the stay restrains the Permanent Secretary from actually affecting their removal

and together with the fact that their court cases are likely to be appealed right up to the Supreme Court, would thereby remove any element of immediacy. It states that as such, in the Court's view, the Permanent Secretary can no longer justify Kim and Lee's continuing detention under the Constitution and they are not alleged to be involved in any terrorist activity in Fiji or elsewhere in

the world. The Court is also of the view that the purported security threat which Kim and Lee pose does not justify their continued detention and nor are they facing or have been convicted of any serious charge in Fiji or abroad so accordingly, there should be no reason why they should be continued to be detained. The matter has been adjourned to next Thursday.

## Google to build \$200 million Data Centre in Fiji

More business opportunities are expected for the country as Google will be building a \$200 million Data Centre in Fiji. While highlighting some of the Government's achievements in the past 19 months on fivillage Straight Talk with Vijay Narayan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives and Small Medium Enterprises, Manoa Kamikamica says Google connectivity brings a serious opportunity for Fiji to become a really genuine ICT player and become more of a regional hub for the Pacific. Kamikamica says he cannot comment on where exactly the Centre will be built, but it is going to be definitely in Fiji. The Deputy Prime Minister also highlighted

that Google is not only investing in the country but is also bringing four Subsea cable connections into Fiji. He says before Google came to see them late last year, Fiji had only had one Subsea Cable. Kamikamica says the four connections are US, Hawaii, and Fiji. He says one cable runs from Fiji to Australia, and another cable is going to run from Australia to French Polynesia, Tahiti, South America, and Chile. The Deputy Prime Minister says another cable will run from Fiji to Guam and then to Japan. He adds that what they have created, through Google, is an opportunity to be quite resilient when it comes to data centres, and we can also start creating other industries.





Food

Black Forest Chicken Recipe

- Black Forest Chicken**  
**Total Time: 30 min**  
**Prep Time : 05 min**  
**Cook Time : 25 min**  
**Serves: 2 Servings**  
**Ingredients**

  1. 2 Chicken breasts
  2. 2 tbsp Black pepper powder
  3. 1 tbsp Ginger garlic paste
  4. 1 tsp Roughly chopped garlic
  5. 1 small Onion (roughly chopped)
  6. Onion (Sliced)
  7. 1 cup Red wine/grape juice
  8. 2 tbsp Tomato sauce
  9. Salt as required

**How to**

  1. Wash and pat dry the chicken breasts, marinate with salt and half of the black pepper and ginger garlic paste. Keep aside for some time.
  2. In a pan, heat some oil and sear the chicken breast from both sides until golden brown.
  3. Remove the chicken breast and lightly sauté sliced onions in the same pan. Once the onions are slightly soft, add some water to deglaze.



4. Now add half of the wine to the onions and place the chicken breast on top. Cover with lid and let it cook in low flame.
5. Tilt the pan and use a spoon to put the wine on the chicken at regular intervals.
6. In another pan, heat some oil and add chopped garlic and onions. Add the remaining wine and pepper. Add salt to season.
7. To this wine mix, add some tomato sauce and mix for some time. Once everything has been cooked, strain the mix if you want a smooth and creamy sauce or use it as if you don't mind some chunks in your sauce.
8. On a plate serve the chicken breasts on a bed of onions and drizzle a generous amount of sauce on top. Serve with a tall glass of wine and enjoy.

Mother Christmas Cake Recipe

- Mother Christmas Cake**  
**Total Time: 1hr 45min**  
**Prep Time : 15 min**  
**Cook Time : 1hr 30min**  
**Serves: 4 Servings**  
**Ingredients**

  1. 3 Cups Tart Apples (2 large), peeled
  2. 2 cups Sugar
  3. 1/2 cup Apple juice
  4. 3 Eggs
  5. 3/4 cup Vegetable oil
  6. 1 tsp Vanilla extracts
  7. 3 cups All-purpose flour
  8. 2 tsp Apple pie spice (cinnamon)
  9. 1 tsp Salt
  10. 2 cups Pecans, finely chopped
  11. 1/2 pound Candied red cherries (halved)
  12. 1/2 pound Candied green cherried (halved)
  13. 1/2 pound Candied pineapple (diced)
  14. Cashews (optional), salty
  - 15.

**How to**

  1. Line three 8x4-inch loaf pans with waxed paper
  2. Grease the paper and set aside.
  3. In a large bowl, combine



4. In a bowl, combine the apples, sugar and apple juice; let stand for 15 minutes.
5. Add to apple mixture; mix well.
6. Combine the flour, apple pie spice, baking soda and salt; add to apple mixture and mix well.
7. Fold in pecans, cherries and pineapple.
8. Pour into prepared pans.
9. Bake at 350° for 55-65 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
10. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks.
11. Remove waxed paper.
12. Cool completely.





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## Health News

# ‘Dry Yogurt’ Food Hack Goes Viral on TikTok. Is It Worth the Hype?

Dry yogurt is the latest viral food trend taking over TikTok. As the name suggests, the trend involves removing the liquid from regular yogurt to create a drier, powdery snack inspired by Middle Eastern cuisine. To make it, creators typically put yogurt inside a paper towel, press out the moisture, and refrigerate the mixture for 48 hours. Many people have also been putting their own stamp on the trend by adding colors or flavors and sculpting their yogurt snacks into different shapes. But dry yogurt isn't simply another viral food trend, it can be a healthy snack, too. We spoke with experts who explained why this trend is one that's delicious and nutritious. Nutritional benefits of dry yogurt Catherine Gervacio, a registered nutritionist and diet consultant for WOWMD, isn't surprised dry yogurt is trending. "It's easy to pack and carry, which makes it ideal for on-the-go snacking, especially when stored correctly," she said. Gervacio said dry yogurt's nutrient quality will largely depend on how it's prepared but notes that there's a lot to love about it. "Yogurt is high in protein, which both supports muscle repair and aids satiety, so you stay fuller for longer," she explained. Yogurt is also known for its gut health benefits due to the live probiotics it contains.



Emma Shafqat, pediatric dietitian RD, says they can contribute to a healthy gut by supporting the balance of beneficial bacteria in the digestive system. "This can potentially enhance digestion, boost immune function, and improve overall gut health," she explained. Shafqat said yogurt is also an excellent source of calcium, which is essential for maintaining strong bones and teeth, supporting bone density, and reducing the risk of osteoporosis. Is there a downside to eating dry yogurt? Both experts agreed that

the quality of the dry yogurt depends on the type of yogurt used in its preparation. If flavored or sweetened yogurts are chosen, they may contain high levels of added sugar, which can contribute to excess calorie intake and reduce the overall health benefits of the snack," Shafqat said. Gervacio added, "If you're using sweetened yogurt, it can contribute to increased blood sugar and weight gain." Another consideration is the caloric density. "Drying yogurt removes water content, which naturally concentrates

the calories in a smaller portion," Shafqat said. "While this makes it convenient and portable, it's important to be mindful of portion sizes, especially if you're concerned about weight gain." However, beyond a potential choking risk due to its dry texture, Shafqat doesn't believe dry yogurt carries any major health risks, provided it's made with natural yogurt and consumed in moderation. Ways you can make dry yogurt snacks healthier If dry yogurt has piqued your curiosity, there are a few simple ways you can

enjoy the trend in a healthy way. "Always choose unsweetened, high protein yogurt options like plain Greek or Icelandic yogurt," Gervacio said. If you're unsure what you're looking for, be sure to check the protein content and ingredients on the yogurt's label. To enhance your dry yogurt snack, you can pair it with other healthy foods. "Use nutrient-dense toppings such as fresh or freeze-dried fruits, nuts, and seeds," Gervacio said. It's also a good idea to be mindful of your portions. As the water content of yogurt is lost in the drying process, dry yogurt can be easy to overconsume. Gervacio advises spreading the yogurt thinly to make single-serving pieces. "If probiotic benefits are important for you, focus on freezing instead of baking or dehydrating," Gervacio advised. Takeaway Dry yogurt is the latest foodie trend proving popular on TikTok. The dehydrated food involves removing the liquid from regular yogurt to make a portable snack. Experts say dry yogurt is high in protein, calcium, and probiotics, which are great for gut health. However, they warn that using sweetened yogurt can contribute to blood sugar spikes and weight gain. Experts recommend using plain, unflavored yogurt and being mindful of portion size to truly make this a healthy snack.





## Food

# Stuffed Jacket Potatoes Recipe

## Stuffed Jacket Potatoes

**Total Time: 50 min**

**Prep Time : 10 min**

**Cook Time : 40 min**

**Serves: 4 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. 8 Medium potatoes
2. Oil (for frying)
3. For the stuffing:
4. 1 large onion
5. 1 tbsp garlic paste
6. 2 Tomatoes
7. 350 gms mushrooms
8. 125 ml thick yogurt
9. 2 tbsp ginger paste
10. 1 tbsp garlic paste
11. 2 Green chillies
12. 1 tbsp fresh coriander
13. 1 tbsp kasoori methi

### How to

1. Deep fry whole potatoes in oil for 8-10 minutes or coat each potato with little oil.
2. Rub with salt and bake until tender. Set aside to cool.
3. Mix the onions, garlic, tomatoes and mushrooms. Add yoghurt, ginger, garlic, chillies, coriander, garam masala and methi leaves. Set aside for 1 hour.
4. Cook mushroom mixture with marinade over a slow fire.
5. Cut off a small circle from the narrow top of the potato.



6. Scoop out the flesh to within an inch of the skin.
7. Fill the cavity with the mushroom filling.
8. Replace the potato caps and hold in place with a string.
9. Place in an oven and bake for 20 minutes.

# Chilli Paneer Frankie Recipe

## Chilli Paneer Frankie

**Total Time: 30 min**

**Prep Time : 05 min**

**Cook Time : 25 min**

**Serves: 4 Servings**

### Ingredients

#### For Paratha:

1. 1 cup Maida
2. 1 cup whole wheat Flour
3. 1/2 cup Curd
4. 1 tbsp Oil

#### For Frankie Masala

1. 2 tbsp Red chilli powder
2. 2 tbsp Coriander Powder
3. 1 tbsp Garam masala
4. 1/2 tsp Turmeric
5. 1 tbsp Black Salt

#### For chilli paneer

1. 250 gram Paneer
2. 1/2 cup Capsicum, chopped
3. 1 cup Onion, chopped
4. 1/2 cups Spring Onion
5. 1 tbsp Soy Sauce
6. 1 tbsp Red Chilli Sauce
7. 1/2 tsp Green Chilli Sauce
8. 1 tbsp Garlic, finely



9. 1/2 tbsp Ginger, finely chopped
10. 2 tsp Green Chillies, finely

11. 1 cup Onion, finely chopped
12. to taste Salt
13. 1/2 tsp Black pepper
14. As Required Oil for frying
15. 1 cup Cornflour
16. 1/2 cup Maida
17. 1/2 tsp Ginger garlic past

### How to

1. For prepare frankie masala put all the ingredients in a bowl and mix it well.
2. Take a big bowl and put maida, whole wheat flour, salt, curd and oil. Mix well and kneading a dough with the water.
3. The dough should be like chapati dough. Keep it aside for few minutes.
4. Now take a dough and divide into for 6 equal parts.

Rolled out these ball like chapati and heat a tawa and make parathas.

5. Now, take a bowl and put cornflour and maida in it. Add ginger garlic paste and salt, add water and make a slurry.
6. Cut the paneer into the cubes and add into the slurry, coated well. Heat the oil and frying them for light brown.
7. Set a kadhai on the gas stove and put some oil in it, When the oil gets hot, put choppes garic, ginger, green chillies and saute for few minutes.
8. Add choppes onion and capsicum, saute them for 2 minutes. Now, add black pepper, red sauce, soy

sauce, chilli sauce, vinger and salt to taste.

9. Mix all the Ingredients and again make a slurry with 1 tbsp cornflour and water. add this slurry into the kadhai and it give a thicken texture to the mixture.
10. After that add fried paneer cubes in it and mix them. Cook for 2 minutes and switch off the gas.
11. It's the time of assembling. Take one paratha sprinkle some frankie masala and put chilli paneer on it. Sprinkle raw chopped onion.
12. Take foil papper put paratha on it and from the half and make a roll of paratha. Enjoy your chilli paneer frankie.





THE US FIJI TIMES December 2024 Vol. 242





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## Health News

# Daily Walks Could Help You Live Over a Decade Longer

According to a study published online on November 14, 2024, in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, getting less physical activity is linked with premature death. However, the researchers found that increasing physical activity — for example, taking daily walks — could extend how long people live. If people were as active as the top one-quarter of Americans, they could live around 5 years longer. Additionally, if people who are among the least active brought their activity up to this level, they might add an additional 11 years to their lives. The authors further speculated that infrastructure changes like walkable neighborhoods and green spaces, which help promote activities like biking and walking, could lead to greater longevity within the general population. Greater physical activity linked to living longer To conduct their study, the researchers gathered data from people older than age 40, which was collected via activity trackers for the 2003-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). They also used 2019 U.S. Census data as well as 2017 death data gleaned from the National Center for Health Statistics. The team then created a mathematical model to predict how different levels of physical activity could influence how long people lived. They found that the 25%



of individuals who were most active engaged in activity levels equivalent to walking 160 minutes every day at a pace of 3 mph. Based on this, they estimated that if all people boosted their activity to this level, they could increase their life expectancy from 78.6 to 84 years — an increase of over 5 years. However, being in the lowest 25% of activity was associated with a decrease in life expectancy of around 6 years. If these less active individuals logged an additional 111 minutes of walking each day, though, they could conceivably experience even

greater benefits, living nearly 11 years longer. How walking might increase longevity John Lowe, MD, a physician at Restore Care specializing in preventive health and lifestyle medicine, who was not involved in the study, explained that regular walking has several beneficial effects that contribute to a longer life. It can help you decrease your resting heart rate, manage cholesterol, and reduce your chances of heart attack or stroke. “Walking ... can be useful for glucose metabolism,” he added, “because [it is] known to enhance insu-

lin actions, which would enable better blood sugar management and reduce the chances of type 2 diabetes. A walk after meals is particularly effective for blood glucose control.” Regular walking can also protect the body from systemic inflammation, according to Lowe.

Systemic inflammation has been associated with several chronic diseases in epidemiological studies. “Maintaining a walking routine helps down-regulate inflammatory markers, including C-reactive protein (CRP), which helps improve immune system responsiveness and maintain cellular health,” he concluded. How to get started walking more daily steps Dr. Sean Ormond, a pain management doctor with Atlas Pain Specialists, who was also not a part of the study, said that walking doesn’t have to take a large commitment to make a difference for you. “Start with small, doable changes that fit into your daily life,” he said. “For example, instead of finding the closest parking spot, park farther away and enjoy the walk. Swap the elevator for the stairs when you can. Take five- or ten-minute walking breaks during your workday — maybe a quick lap around your house, office, or even your yard.” Ormond added that taking a gentle walk after meals can be beneficial because it helps you digest your food

and doesn’t feel like exercise. “If you have kids or pets, make walking a family affair,” he suggested. “[I]t’s a great way to bond while staying active.” If you’d like to take a more structured approach, Ormond said step-counting apps and fitness trackers can make walking more fun. “Set small, realistic goals, like an extra 500 steps a day, and build from there,” he said. Also, he said that people shouldn’t become discouraged if the 160 minutes of activity mentioned in the study seems like a daunting goal. “Every step you take is a step toward better health,” said Ormond. “What matters most is consistency.” “So, lace up your shoes and see where a walk can take you — physically, mentally, and emotionally. It’s one of the easiest ways to nurture your body and mind for years to come,” he said. Takeaway A new study has found that greater amounts of physical activity are associated with living longer. Setting a goal to walk 160 minutes per day could increase people’s lifespan by around 5 years. Also, those people who are least active could increase their longevity by as much as 11 years. Walking helps you live longer because it has beneficial effects on your cardiometabolic health. To get started with walking, make small, realistic changes, keep things fun, and build up slowly.





## Fiji News

# AMBASSADOR KOYA PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO THE PRESIDENT OF UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)



Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), His Excellency Siddiq Faizal Riyad Koya, presented his credentials to the President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Ambassador Koya conveyed the best wishes of the President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, and the people of Fiji to the UAE President and the people of the UAE for their

continued success and prosperity. The UAE is an important development partner for Fiji, with cooperation in key areas such as trade, economic development, climate change, and disaster rehabilitation. Ambassador Koya underscored Fiji's commitment to deepening relations with the UAE in strategic areas of interest to both nations. He expressed optimism that Fiji's mission based in Abu Dhabi, UAE, will scale new heights in our collaboration with the UAE as with development part-

ners across the globe. As part of its role, the Mission provides consular services to the Fijian nationals residing in or visiting the Middle East. During the ceremony held at Qasr Al Watan in Abu Dhabi, UAE President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed welcomed Ambassador Koya and other newly appointed envoys from various countries and wished them well as they work to strengthen the

diplomatic relations and cooperation of their respective countries with the UAE. Further, the President assured them of the full support of the UAE authorities to facilitate their work and ensure their missions operate effectively. As articulated in our Foreign Policy White Paper, Fiji aims to strengthen its regional and international partnerships as a way to navigate through existing multidimensional

challenges. Conversely, Fiji's position in the region provides opportunities for stewardship of regional investment, environmental conservation, connectivity, and support systems that enable us to optimise new trade opportunities and promote sustainable socio-economic growth through strengthened relations and partnerships with important development partners such as the UAE.





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# 10 Holiday Health & Fitness Tips



**1** Meal plan and prepare healthy, balanced, and regular meals of protein, vegetables, smart carbohydrates, and healthy fats.



**2** Plan your workouts and schedule them into your day and week. Commit to at least 20 minutes a day of movement, whether that's a structured workout or a family walk around the neighborhood.



**3** Prior to a holiday party, do not skip earlier meals to be hungrier for the party. Eat a protein-rich snack before the meal to help you pace yourself.

**4** At a holiday party, fill half your plate with vegetables, 25% with protein, and 25% with whole grains and fiber-rich carbohydrates. Limit excessive alcohol intake.



**5** Get enough sleep as it enhances your mood, increases memory, boosts your immunity, and decreases weight gain.



**6** When lifting heavy objects, like boxes of holiday decor, use proper lifting technique, bending at the knees, using your legs to lift, and keeping your back straight.

**7** Keep your core engaged and tight when cooking in the kitchen, lifting boxes, and decorating your home to reduce strain on the body and support your body's movements.



**8** When shopping, wear comfortable, supportive shoes to decrease stress on your feet and back.

**9** When traveling, make a point to move and stretch frequently even if it's in short spurts, taking walk breaks during your drive or in the airport.



**10** Keep up with your physical therapy home exercise program to maintain strength, flexibility, and mobility.

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## Health News

# Surgeon General: Health Disparities Remain as US Smoking Rates Decline

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. Cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke exposure are responsible for about 1 in 5 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Trusted Source. While cigarette smoking has declined more than 70% in the U.S. since 1965, a new advisory from U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy highlights ongoing health disparities in tobacco use. The November 19 report cites unequal progress in smoking cessation, showing disparities among racial and ethnic groups, income, education, gender identity and sexual orientation, occupation, geography, and health status, among other factors. Despite the concerning data, Dr. Murthy appears optimistic, envisioning a tobacco-free future with reduced death and disease burden in these population groups. The report outlines various factors affecting tobacco-related disparities and proposes actions to promote smoking cessation and improve health equity in the U.S. "Tobacco use imposes a heavy toll on families across generations. Now is the time to accelerate our efforts to create a world in which zero lives are harmed by or lost to tobacco," Dr. Murthy said in the advisory. "This report offers a vision for a tobacco-free future, focused on those who bear the greatest burden, and serves as a call to action for all people to play a role in realizing that vision." Quitting smoking can have immediate, short- and long-term benefits on human



health. The American Cancer Society's annual Great American Smokeout Trusted Source on November 21 is one of many resources available to begin a smoke-free journey. Factors affecting disparities in tobacco use The Surgeon General's advisory sheds light on multiple health disparities related to tobacco use, such as: Poverty, racism, discrimination, and other social determinants of health. Marketing tactics by the tobacco industry targeting Black and Hispanic people and those with low-income status. Gaps in prevention protections and barriers to treatments to help with smoking cessation. Social and environmental influences. Poverty is a major driving force in tobacco-related health disparities, the report found. Cigarette smoking is twice as com-

mon among people who live in poverty compared to those who do not. The report also shows that disparities in secondhand smoke exposure, particularly among children, Black people, and those living in low socioeconomic status, have increased since 2000. Additionally, people who live in rural areas or reside in the Midwest or South are more likely to use tobacco, as are those who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and those who live with a mental health condition or substance use disorder. "Progress, in the form of improvements in tobacco-related policies, regulations, programs, research, clinical care, and other areas, has not resulted in the same outcomes for everyone," said Adm. Rachel L. Levine, HHS Assistant Secretary for Health,

in the advisory. "We have not made progress unless we have all made progress." Quitting smoking reaps immediate health benefits Smoking is associated with many negative health outcomes Trusted Source, such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and heart disease. When you quit smoking, you immediately reap health benefits, such as a reduced risk of a cardiovascular event. While some benefits can be seen from cutting back, health experts recommend quitting smoking entirely. "Cutting down on smoking can potentially be useful if it puts someone on the path to eventually quit," Dr. Cheng-Han Chen, an interventional cardiologist and medical director of the Structural Heart Program at MemorialCare Saddleback Medical Center in California, told Healthline in a recent interview. "Quitting smoking is essential to minimize the risk of a future cardiovascular event and can potentially be lifesaving," Chen said. There is value in calling coaching quitlines like 1-800-QUIT-NOW. The CDC notes these resources are often key to success Trusted Source in quitting smoking. Other resources include websites such as: Smokefree.gov We Are Truth Become an Ex Additionally, the Great American Smokeout Trusted Source

from the ACS is an email-based program offering support for quitting smoking. To quit smoking, experts recommend starting your smoke-free journey by making a concrete plan. "Set a target quit date, preferably within 2 weeks, and support your quit attempt with medication and counseling. This combination of support — rather than relying on one or neither — is key and leads to higher success rates," Hilary Tindle, MD, PhD, the founding director of ViTAL, the Vanderbilt Center for Tobacco, Addiction, and Lifestyle at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, told Healthline in a recent interview. "If someone does not succeed on the first quit attempt, keep trying," Tindle said. "In the U.S., more than 50% of all people who ever smoked have now quit." Takeaway U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a new advisory highlighting health disparities in tobacco use despite a decline in cigarette smoking in recent decades. Cutting back on smoking can be beneficial, but experts recommend quitting altogether. Doing so can immediately improve your health and reduce your risk of death. There are many resources available to help you quit smoking. Try the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout and 1-800-QUIT-NOW to learn more.





## Health News

# E. Coli Outbreak Linked to Carrots: Symptoms, Risks, and Recalled Brands

A multi-state E. coli outbreak linked to organic carrots has resulted in 15 hospitalizations and one death so far, according to the CDC. In a food safety alert Trusted Source issued this week, the CDC warned that E. coli infections have been reported from 18 states, with nearly 40 sickened. The outbreak has been traced to organic carrots sold by Grimmway Farms, which are available in a wide variety of grocery stores under brand names including Cal-Organic, Trader Joe's, Wegmans, and 365. The outbreak is still considered active by the CDC, although the products are no longer on store shelves. Consumers are urged to check their homes and refrigerators for any affected carrots and discard them immediately. Escherichia coli, or E. coli, is a bacterium that can live in human intestines and is one of the most common causes of foodborne illness in the United States. There are multiple species of E. coli, some of which are harmless. Others can result in mild symptoms, including nausea, fatigue, and diarrhea, and even more serious, potentially life threatening symptoms. "This is definitely a recall that consumers should take very seriously to protect themselves and their loved ones," Joseph Lambson, PharmD, Director of the New Mexico Poison and Drug Information Center, and an Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico College of Pharmacy. Which states

and products are affected by the outbreak? The E. coli outbreak has been linked to infections in 18 states across the US, from California to New York. Affected states include Texas, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Colorado, and many more. Currently, Washington, Minnesota, and New York are reporting the highest number of cases, followed by California and Oregon. Grimmway Farms organic carrots and baby carrots are sold under many different brand names, including: 365 Bunny Luv Cal-Organic Raley's Sprouts Trader Joe's Wegmans President's Choice A full list of states and products affected by the recall can be found here. Trusted Source The contaminated products can be identified through their best-if-used-by dates. Baby organic carrots with best-if-used-by dates are approximately between 9/11/2024 and 11/12/2024, and whole organic carrots between 8/14/2024 and 10/23/24. However, not all brands will carry a best-if-used-by date on their packaging. Consumers should check their households for affected products and discard them immediately. Any surfaces that the carrots have come into contact with should be cleaned immediately with hot soapy water. Signs and symptoms of E. coli infection "E. coli is not a new toxin. It's something that we've known about for a long time in medicine. And the good news is that we know what symptoms



to look for. We're pretty good at detecting and treating the infection. Most people recover, although some of the more severe cases are very tragic," said Rais Vohra, MD, a professor of Clinical Emergency medicine at UCSF Medical and director of the California Poison Control System Fresno-Madera Division. The symptoms of E. coli generally manifest within 3 to 4 days after infection. Mild symptoms are nonspecific and can feel like general "food poisoning": Nausea Diarrhea Fever Loss of appetite Vomiting, in rare cases In some cases, the symptoms are more severe, particularly when the variety of E. coli produces shiga toxin. Shiga toxin producing E. coli (STEC) can result in severe, bloody diarrhea (dysentery), and other serious complications like hemolytic uremic syndrome Trusted Source, which

can lead to kidney failure and death. "STEC actually gets into the lining of the gut, and the whole gut starts to kind of just peel off, which is where you get bloody diarrhea; it's a much more invasive disease. Then the bacteria can actually get into your bloodstream, and then you can even get blood poisoning, also known as sepsis," said Vohra. Healthy adults will likely survive an E. coli infection with supportive care, but some groups are at increased risk of severe illness. "If you happen to be immunocompromised, if you happen to have some condition that makes you more vulnerable to dehydration, such as diabetes, you could be at increased risk," said Vohra. Elderly individuals and young children are also at increased risk of dehydration and severe symptoms from E. coli infection. What to do if you think you are experiencing symptoms of E. coli infection The best medicine for foodborne illness is prevention. That means basic hygiene and food safety practices Trusted Source like hand washing and disinfecting surfaces. However, if you think you've consumed a contaminated product or already have symptoms, the best course of action is supportive care at home: make sure to rest and hydrate. Replenishing fluids and electrolytes that are lost through vomiting and diarrhea is the most important facet of care at this stage. However, in some instances, supportive care may be insufficient. "If the symptoms are more severe, such as having a fever that's

above 102 degrees Fahrenheit, or having diarrhea that's occurring for longer than three days, or bloody diarrhea, any of the symptoms that the CDC on their website lists Trusted Source as more severe, in that situation, it would be recommended to then reach out to a healthcare profession," said Lambson. Vohra also recommends that everyone pay special attention to hygiene and food safety heading into the holiday season. "Everyone's getting ready to cook their best dishes and share them with families. Please, please be hygienic when you do that. If you're going to be cooking meat, know how to prepare it. Clean your vegetables. Double check your list of groceries to make sure that they're not being recalled at the national or at the state level, wherever you happen to be. The bottom line A multistate E. coli outbreak linked to organic carrots has resulted in nearly 40 reported illnesses, including 15 hospitalizations and one death. Grimmway Farms sold the contaminated carrots under various brand names, including Trader Joe's, Cal-Organic, and Bunny Luv. The affected products are no longer on store shelves but may be in your refrigerator. Consumers are urged to check for contaminated products and discard them immediately. E. coli infection is a common foodborne illness that may result in mild symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting) or more severe complications, including dysentery (bloody diarrhea) and hemolytic uremic syndrome.





## World News

# Biden gives son Hunter 'unconditional' pardon

US President Joe Biden has issued an official pardon for his son Hunter, who was facing sentencing for two criminal cases, despite previously ruling it out. In a statement, the president said his son had been "singled out" and called his cases "a miscarriage of justice". Hunter Biden pleaded guilty to tax charges earlier in September, and was found guilty of being an illegal drug user in possession of a gun in June - becoming the first child of a sitting president to be a convicted of a crime. Reacting to the pardon, President-elect Donald Trump said: "Does the Pardon given by Joe to Hunter include the [6 January] Hostages, who have now been imprisoned for years? Such an abuse and miscarriage of Justice!" Trump was referring to his supporters who stormed the US Capitol on 6 January 2021 in a bid to overturn Trump's defeat in the 2020 election. Joe Biden's full and unconditional pardon for his son comes after the president had repeatedly said he would not give him clemency. Just a couple of months ago, in September, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said that Biden would not issue a pardon for his son. She repeated that stance last month in another briefing, saying: "We've been asked that question multiple times. Our answer stands, which is no." Before that, in June, on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Italy, Biden had said he



would neither pardon his son nor commute his sentence. "I said I'd abide by the jury decision, and I will do that. And I will not pardon him," he told reporters covering the summit. But on Sunday evening, President Biden said although he believed in the justice system, "politics has infected this process and it led to a miscarriage of justice". "From the day I took office, I said I would not interfere with the Justice Department's decision-making, and I kept my word even as I have watched my son being selectively, and unfairly, prosecuted," he said. Biden said he

wrestled with the decision, and added: "Once I made this decision this weekend, there was no sense in delaying it further." "I hope Americans will understand why a father and a President would come to this decision," he said. The announcement comes after the president gathered his family together to spend the Thanksgiving weekend in Nantucket. Reporters spotted Biden out for a walk on Friday with Hunter and his four-year-old son Beau, as well as Biden's daughter Ashley. Senior Republicans in Washington reacted furiously to news of the pardon, with House Oversight Commit-

tee Chairman James Comer saying the president "lied from start to finish" about the circumstances surrounding his son's case. But there were signs of unease among Democrats too. Representative Greg Stanton of Arizona became the first politician in his party to disagree publicly with the decision, saying on X: "I respect President Biden, but I think he got this one wrong." In a statement, Hunter Biden said mistakes he made during the darkest days of his addiction had been "exploited to publicly humiliate and shame" his family for political sport. "I will never take the clemency I have been

given today for granted and will devote the life I have rebuilt to helping those who are still sick and suffering," the 54-year-old added. The younger Biden has been sober for five-and-a-half years, his father said. This is not the first time a US president has pardoned a member of their family. Bill Clinton pardoned his younger half-brother, Roger Clinton, for a 1985 cocaine-related offence in 2001. In 2020, Donald Trump pardoned Charles Kushner, the father-in-law of his daughter Ivanka. President-elect Trump has recently announced that Kushner will be the new ambassador to France. Hunter Biden pleaded guilty to nine counts of federal tax fraud in September, for which he had been facing up to 17 years in prison. He was also convicted of three felonies in connection with a gun purchase in June, for which he had been facing up to 25 years in prison. Sentencing for these cases had been scheduled for 12 and 16 December. His legal troubles had been a dark cloud over his father's presidential campaign, which came to an end in July after Biden pulled out of the election race. Biden endorsed Vice-President Kamala Harris to succeed him as the Democratic candidate, who lost the election to Republican Donald Trump in November. Trump is set to take over the Oval Office from Biden on 20 January 2025 - Inauguration Day.





## World News

## French PM faces no confidence vote after forcing through budget

French Prime Minister Michel Barnier faces a vote of no confidence in his minority government after using special powers to push through a social security budget bill without a vote by MPs. The government is unlikely to survive the vote, which was triggered this afternoon by the radical left France Unbowed (LFI) opposition party and Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN). It is likely to take place on Wednesday. Despite last-minute concessions, Barnier clearly did not think he would be able to get his budget bill over the line. The New Popular Front, an alliance of several left-wing parties, came out top against Macron's supporters and the far right following early elections in July. The alliance was left furious by Macron's decision to veer to the centre right by picking Barnier as his new prime minister, and promised to vote against the government. This has meant that Barnier has until now had to rely on the RN for his government's survival. The budget bill sought to rein in France's spiralling deficit through €60bn (£49bn) in tax rises and spending cuts. Because he lacked a majority, Barnier was forced to make concessions to critics. These included scrapping a previously planned hike in electricity tax, as well as plans for a less generous prescription drug reimbursement policy from



next year. But the new version of the social security budget remained unacceptable to the opposition. He used article 49.3 of the French constitution, which allows the text of a bill to be passed without a vote, to push through his 2025 budget after the RN joined the left in opposing it.

"I don't think French people will forgive us for choosing party interests over the future of the country," Barnier told MPs on Tuesday as he explained the reasons for his decision. "Now, everybody will need to assume their own responsibility as I

have assumed mine." Marine Le Pen explained the RN position prior to the motion being tabled. "Barnier didn't listen to the 11 million voters of the RN... He said everyone should assume their own responsibility, and that's what we will do," she said. Barnier has warned of the financial and political effects of unseating him, but Mathilde Panot, president of the LFI, said on Monday that "there will not be chaos once Mr Barnier and his government have gone". "We are now experiencing political chaos as a result of both Mr Barnier's

government and Emmanuel Macron's presidency." Barnier was invited to form a government by President Emmanuel Macron in September. RN lawmakers and the left combined have enough votes to topple Barnier. If Barnier doesn't survive Wednesday's vote, he will remain in place as a caretaker prime minister until Macron announces a new government. That could be a new majority government - unlikely given the splintering of the French parliament - or a technocratic government, to steer the country until new elections can be held next

summer. The process could take weeks, as it did after a snap general election delivered a hung parliament in summer. Several parties are also clamouring for new presidential elections. As it stands, Macron is due to stay in post until 2027. Meanwhile, if parliament has not adopted the budget by 20 December, the caretaker government could invoke constitutional powers to pass it by ordinance. It could also propose emergency legislation to roll out spending limits and tax provisions from this year.

## Australian police seize \$500m of cocaine after boat breaks down

Australian Police have seized 2.3 tonnes of cocaine from a broken-down boat off the coast of Queensland, authorities said on Monday. Eleven men and two juveniles were arrested, including the vessel's crew and others waiting on the shore to collect the illegal shipment. The drugs had an estimated street value of A\$760m (\$490m; £388m), with the potential to be distributed across 11.7 million separate street deals - making it the largest cocaine bust in Australian history. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) alleged one of the men arrested on Saturday night was vice-president of the Comanchero

outlaw motorcycle club's Brisbane chapter. Biker gangs are notorious in Australia for their drug violence, with more than 1,000 shootings recorded since the 1980s. This recent cocaine bust came as part of a wider investigation into the Comanchero gang, codenamed Operation Tyrrendor, which began last month. Authorities said they received intelligence suggesting a criminal syndicate with links to the gang was planning to import illegal drugs into Australia. This comes after reports last week that the Colombian navy intercepted a semi-submersible carrying cocaine to Australia. Investigators told reporters in

Brisbane the record cocaine shipment had come from an unidentified South American country. The AFP worked with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Australian Border Force (ABF) to track a fishing boat, recently purchased by a 35-year-old man. On Saturday night, it was being used to transport the cocaine delivery from a larger mothership to the Queensland coast when it suffered a mechanical fault, police said. Stranded about 18km from the north-eastern tip of K'gari, it was intercepted by the AFP and QPS, who found 51 bales tied with rope netting. Each bale contained 40kg of cocaine, to-

talling 2.34 tonnes. Two men were arrested on the boat and two others were arrested on the coast while waiting for the shipment. A further three arrests were made at a nearby fast-food restaurant, with five others at a traffic stop. The final arrest

was made in Brisbane after the AFP and QPS executed a search warrant. All 11 men and two juveniles were charged with conspiracy to import a commercial quantity of cocaine, which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.





## Bollywood News

# Bollywood's highest-paid star made ₹275 crore from one film; has no hit in years, yet ahead of Shah Rukh, Salman, Ranbir

₹275 crore is a big figure. It is enough to be a decent-sized Indian film's box office collection or a big Bollywood action flick's budget. But what if we were to say this is also the amount earned by an actor for one film? What's more, the film still managed to turn a profit. This is the story of Bollywood's highest-paid star, who ruled the box office at his peak. Who is Bollywood's highest-paid star? It is a Khan who rules this list, but not the one most folks would guess today. Aamir Khan tops the list of Bollywood's highest-paid actors, having earned a staggering ₹275 crore from a single film—Dangal. This happened back in 2017, after the film's ₹1300-crore windfall from China, which earned Aamir a substantial amount in profits. According to a Bollywood Hungama report from 2017, Aamir charged ₹35 crore as upfront fees for Dangal. In addition, he also entered into a profit-sharing agreement with the makers of the sports biopic. Dangal was released in December 2016 and became a massive success, earn-



ing over ₹500 crore gross from India and over ₹100 crore overseas in its initial run. This, along with the sale of satellite and digital rights, netted the film a profit of ₹420 crore, per reports. Aamir took home ₹140 crore from that, bringing his earnings from the film to ₹175 crore. But there was more to come. Dangal was released in China the following year, becoming one of the biggest hits ever. The film earned \$200 million

in the country. Forbes reported that this earned Aamir another \$15 million ( ₹100 crore) in profit share. This took his total earnings from the movie to a whopping ₹275 crore. This was the highest by any Indian actor ever and has since been reportedly surpassed by Allu Arjun, who is set to earn ₹300 crore from Pushpa 2. However, Aamir reigns supreme in Bollywood, given that both Shah Rukh and Salman earn some-

where between ₹120-200 crore per film, depending on the box office returns. Aamir's career post-Dangal Aamir had been the king of Bollywood box office for several years before Dangal. His film, Ghajini, had established the ₹100-crore club in 2008. He was the one who broke the ₹400-crore and ₹600-crore barriers with hits like 3 Idiots, PK, and Dhoom 3. Dangal was the zenith of this spectacular run of form. His next appearance on

screen was in Secret Superstar, where he did a cameo. Since then, Aamir has done two films in lead, and both have been massive box office bombs. Thugs of Hindostan remains one of the worst flops in Bollywood history, and Laal Singh Chaddha, too, bombed upon release in 2022. Even as other stars rebounded (Shah Rukh most notably), Aamir remains Bollywood's highest-paid star.

## Aamir Khan's daughter Ira says parents 'blamed themselves' for her mental health issues: Their divorce changed our lives

Ira Khan has been open and upfront about her mental health battles, even posting about it on social media in the past. Actor Aamir Khan's daughter, Ira Khan, has opened up on her mental health struggles and how managing them during her parents' divorce was a challenge for her. In a rare interview, the theatre artist spoke about managing her mental health and why her parents probably blamed themselves for it. Ira Khan on mental health battles Ira has been open and upfront about her mental health struggles, even posting about it on social media at times. In an interview with Pinkvilla, Ira spoke about the time when she began medication for it and how her parents dealt with it. "I don't think I told him (father, Aamir) that I was putting it on Instagram. When I told both my parents, they were worried. I started my medication when I came home in 2018. During that time, I could tell that both

of them were extremely worried because they were going on their own fears and tangents. And I was like, 'I am the child, I need help right now, we can deal with your fears later'. They never said that or openly blamed themselves, but I am sure they

felt those things. Even though they know that it's not in their control, it's a culmination of many things. I hope they don't blame themselves," she said. Ira Khan on parents' divorce Ira is the daughter of Aamir Khan and his first wife, Reena Dutta.

The couple was married from 1986-2002. Talking about their divorce, Ira said, "My parents' divorce wasn't one day, it was something that changed all our lives since that day. Many good and not good things happened since that day, many things hap-

pened that we maybe even didn't know happened." Apart from Ira, Aamir and Reena have a son, Junaid, who made his acting debut in the Netflix film Maharaj this year. Aamir has another son - Aazad - with his second wife, filmmaker Kiran Rao.





## Bollywood News

# Abhishek Bachchan's advice to married men goes viral amid his divorce rumours with Aishwarya Rai: 'Do as your wife says'

Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan sparked divorce rumours after their separate appearances at Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding. Abhishek Bachchan recently attended an award show wherein, while talking about his performances in recent films, the actor shared advice for married men which is now going viral on social media amid separation rumours with Aishwarya Rai. During his appearance at Filmfare OTT Awards 2024, Abhishek Bachchan was questioned about how he manages to deliver back-to-back stellar performances. Replying to this, the actor said, "It's very simple. It's got nothing to do with us. We just do what the director tells us to do. Chup chap kaam karke ghar aajate hai (We quietly work and return home)." When the host humorously compared his comment to following wife's instructions, Abhishek Bachchan shrugged his shoulders in agreement and quipped, "Yes. All married men have to do that... do as your wife says." This statement comes amid his divorce rumours with Aishwarya Rai. Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan sparked divorce ru-



mours after their separate appearances at Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding. While the rest of the Bachchan family - Amitabh Bachchan, his wife Jaya Bachchan, son Abhishek, daughter Shweta, grandson Agastya Nanda, and granddaughter Navya Naveli made an appearance together, posed for a family photo for

the paps, Aishwarya was seen arriving at the venue with her daughter Aaradhya separately. Recently, Abhishek's 'absence' from daughter Aaradhya Bachchan's birthday bash fueled these rumours. However, the birthday party organisers took to Instagram to share a video of Abhishek from the party, wherein the actor was heard

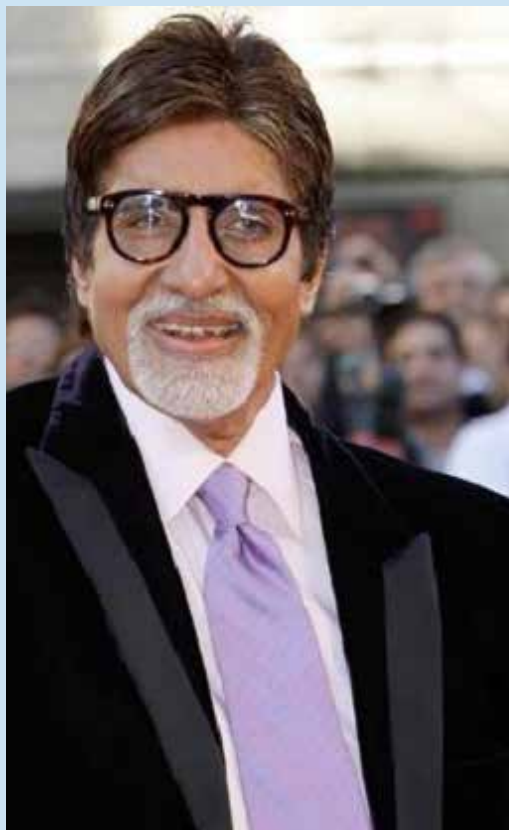
thanking them for making the day special for Aaradhya. The video ended speculations of Abhishek skipping his daughter's birthday bash. Abhishek Bachchan work front Abhishek Bachchan recently essayed the role of a father who is a cancer survivor facing life-altering surgery as well as navigating a complex relationship with his daughter

since her childhood in Shoojit Sircar's *I Want To Talk*. While the film failed to perform well at the box office, Abhishek's performance impressed the critics as well as the audience. He will next be seen in the movie *Be Happy* and also has Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *King* and Akshay Kumar-starrer *Housefull 5* in the pipeline.

## Rekha reacts as Kapil Sharma mimics Amitabh Bachchan from KBC, says she watches regularly: 'Ek ek dialogue yaad hai'

Rekha revealed that she watches Amitabh Bachchan's *Kaun Banega Crorepati* regularly during her recent visit on Kapil Sharma's show. Actor Rekha has hinted that like millions of other Indians, she is a fan of Amitabh Bachchan's *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (KBC) too. During her recent appearance on *The Great Indian Kapil Show*, she told the host, comedian Kapil Sharma, that she remembers each and every line from the show. Rekha reacts to Kapil's Amitabh mimicry. Rekha appeared on *The Great Indian Kapil Show*, discussing her life and career. In one segment, Kapil spoke about his time on KBC as a guest. He said, "While we were playing KBC with Bachchan sahab, my mother was seated in the front row." Kapil then mimicked Am-

itabh and continued, "He asked her, 'Devi ji, kya kha ke paida kiya (What did you eat before giving birth to him)?'" Before Kapil could continue, Rekha interrupted with revealed his mother's reply: "Daal-roti." Kapil confirmed that this what she had said. Rekha smiled and added, "Mujhse puchiye na, ek ek dialogue yaad hai (Ask me, I remember each and every line of dialogue)." Rekha and Amitabh worked in nine films together in the 1970s and 1980s. They were rumoured to be involved in an affair even as Amitabh was married to Jaya Bachchan. However, reports claim that the actors ended the affair in the early 1980s. Amitabh, Rekha, and Jaya acted together in Yash Chopra's *Silsila*, which was then called the 'casting coup of the century'.





## Sports News

## Sweet debut for Tanivanuakula in Dubai 7s

Not only was it a dream come true for Fiji Airways National Men's 7s player Kavekini Tanivanuakula after making his international 7s debut over the weekend in the HSBC Dubai 7s, but it was a sweet moment as well for him as he helped the side win their first ever Dubai 7s after 9 years and also break their 22 tournament losing streak. The 27-year-old scored a total of 3 tries in 6 matches and hopes to get more points this weekend in the HSBC Cape Town 7s. Tanivanuakula says he has finally achieved his goal and his dream of representing Fiji in the international arena and he acknowledged his faith in God

which helped him get to where he is today. Tanivanuakula further acknowledged coach Osea Kolinisau and his coaching staff for selecting him into the squad and adds he was not going to let them down.

He says his favourite moment was when he was holding on to the Dubai 7s trophy after the final. He is looking ahead to the Cape Town 7s, and he just wants to take his game to another level and work on improving on the areas that he lacked in Dubai. Tanivanuakula says he is also looking forward to setting foot in Cape Town as it will be his first time there. Fiji is in Pool A for the Cape Town 7s along-



side Uruguay and Great Britain. Meanwhile, the Fiji Airways Fi-

jiana 7s side is in Pool D along- side Great Britain and the USA.

The Cape Town 7s will kick off this Saturday.

## Matana thankful for the opportunity to Captain Fiji 7s

Captaining the Fiji Airways Fiji Men's 7s side was far from Jeremaia Matana's thoughts, but when he was named by coach Osea Kolinisau to lead the team over the weekend in the HSBC Dubai 7s, the 26-year-old could only pinch himself and accept the huge task being handed to him. Matana says he was thankful to Kolinisau for having faith in him and trusting in his capabilities to captain the team. Matana is the first captain since Kolinisau to win the Dubai 7s again after 9 long years. He says before they headed into

the final against Spain, he kept stressing one thing to the team and that is not to underestimate their opponent because Spain is an unpredictable side and they had a great run to the final. Fiji finally broke their 22-tournament losing streak after that win in Dubai this morning. They have been drawn in Pool A for the Cape Town 7s this weekend alongside Uruguay and Great Britain. Meanwhile, the Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s side is in Pool D alongside Great Britain and the USA. The Cape Town 7s will kick off this Saturday.



## Maqala impresses in Bayonne's 21-13 win over Stade Francais this morning

Apart from receiving a yellow card in the 77th minute for a foul play, Fiji Water Flying Fijians outside back Sireli Maqala played an instrumental role for his Bayonne side to help them secure a 21-13 win over Stade Francais in round 11 of the French Top 14 competition this morning. Maqala started at outside centre and ran a total of 54 metres in 12 carries over a span of 77 minutes. He also made 1 line break, beat 6 defenders and made 3 offloads on attack. The 24-year-old also had a 100 percent tackle rate in the match. Meanwhile, Peniasi Dakuwaqa started on the wing for Stade Francais. In other Top 14 matches played in round 11, Toulouse defeated Racing 92 21-17, Vannes beat La Rochelle 23-14, Clermont thrashed Cas-

tres 54-10, Bordeaux edged Montpellier 9-6, Pau defeated Lyon 29-15 and Toulon beat Perpignan 22-13.





## Sports News

# Our goal was to qualify top of the group - Kolinisau

Fiji Airways National 7s coach Osea Kolinisau says coming into the HSBC Dubai SVNS their goal was to qualify top of the group. Kolinisau says they have done that thanks to the hard work put in by the team. He says their game was not perfect as they made a lot of mistakes against New Zealand. The coach says they did not capitalise on a lot of opportunities that they had. Fiji beat USA 42-20 in their final pool match, before that they thumped New Zealand 21-12 and edged Spain 21-15. Fiji will play France at 7.32 tonight in the third quarter final. In other men's quarter finals today, Great Britain will take on Spain in the first quarter final at 6.48pm, South Africa will take on NZ at 7.10pm and Argentina will take on Australia at 7.54pm.

The men's cup semi finals will kick off at 10.06 tonight and

the cup final will be at 4.11am tomorrow. Meanwhile, the Fiji

Airways Fijiana 7s side will take on China in the 9th place

playoff at 9 tonight.



## Jerry Matana aims to restore lost glory as captain for the Dubai tournament

Former Olympian and robust forward for the Fiji Airways Men's National 7s team Jerry Matana will lead the team in Dubai as the captain, and he will try and restore the lost glory at the Exile Stadium. Matana says they have prepared well for this tournament and he is confident that the players will step up and produce the winning result needed for this leg of the World Series. The former Wairiki College Student says it's a dream come true to captain the 7s side and says that hard work pays off if you sacrifice and show commitment during training.

Matana says he is grateful to have the support from his team mates as he takes on the new role. He further says that the atmosphere in camp is positive and the players are fully prepared for the challenge, ready to face whatever comes their way. Fiji last won the Dubai 7s title in 2015 when current coach Osea Kolinisau was a player.

Fiji will take on Spain at 6.06pm today in their first match, they will then take on the USA at 9.52pm the same evening before they play NZ at 3.16am tomorrow in their final pool match. Meanwhile,



the Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s side will take on Ireland at 5.44pm

today in their first pool match, they will then face Australia

at 9.05pm the same evening and then play China at 1.13am

tomorrow in their final pool match.



## Sports News

### Dubai 7s: Fijiana 7s lost 10-0 to Spain in 11th-place playoff

The Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s side finished in 12th place at the HSBC Dubai 7s after losing to Spain 10-0 in the 11th-place playoffs this morning. A lot of mistakes and handling errors cost the girls the match. Abril Camacho Ruiz and Juana Stella scored a try each for Spain. Meanwhile, Australia will take on New Zealand at 3.35am today in the women's final. In the men's final, the Fiji Men's 7s will take on Spain at 4.11am today.



### Dubai 7s: Fijiana 7s goes down 24-7 to China in 9th place semi finals

The Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s side lost to China 24-7 in the 9th-place semi-final playoff at the HSBC Dubai 7s. China scored four tries, where Dou Xinrong scored a double, and Gao Xiaoyang and Yan Meiling scored a try each. Lavina Cavuru scored the Fijiana's only try. China led Fiji 19-0 at half-time. Meanwhile, Australia is leading Great Britain 14-0 in the women's Cup semi final match. New Zealand will face France at 9.22 tonight in the second semi final. The final will be at 3.35am tomorrow.



### Papakura Sisters and Vusu Raiders win Fijian Cup League 9s



In the Fijian Cup League 9s competition Papakura Sisters beat TTT Natives 16-13. In the 9s Men's final Vusu Raiders thumped Navy Albatross 19-4. For the Oz Tag Opens Mix Final, Kava Carvers beat the Warriors 8-2 while Eastern Saints edged Realones 6-3 in the Men's final.



## Sports News

## Fiji and Argentina only unbeaten teams through to quarter finals

The Fiji Airways Men's 7s team and Argentina are the only teams to make it through to the quarter finals unbeaten. Fiji will face reigning Olympic and SVNS Champions France in the third quarter-final at 7.23pm while Argentina's reward is a quarter-final tie with Australia at 7.54pm. Great Britain will take on an impressive Spain at 6.48pm. South Africa have won five consecutive Dubai titles and seven of the last eight tournaments there and they remain in with a chance of securing a sixth straight title after a thrilling golden-point victory over Olympic champions France in the last match of an epic first day. The Blitzboks will face old foes New Zealand to complete a mouth-watering quarter-finals line-up. It was a positive day for Spanish rugby as both men's and women's teams made it to the



quarter-finals for the first time since 1919. The women ended

a 22 game losing streak against France while the men beat New

Zealand for only the third time in Series history to reach the Dubai

quarter-finals for the first time.

## Tafaga crowned 2024 Fiji Outrigger Champions

The Tafaga Outrigger Canoe Club have won the 2024 Fiji Outrigger Canoe Racing Season with 16,340 points, ahead of Nadi Bay with 13,375 points and Takia in third place with 9,785 points. They say this victory marks a momentous achievement for Tafaga, showcasing

the club's unwavering spirit, resilience, and commitment to excellence despite numerous challenges throughout the season. They add the win was attributed to a collective effort, with a special emphasis on youth development within the club. They also highlighted

that a key factor in this success has been Tafaga's Elite Training and Skills Program, which has consistently focused on refining techniques, improving physical endurance, and fostering mental resilience. The program's proven results were evident throughout the season,

as athletes displayed exceptional performance in both individual and team categories. They add this initiative highlights Tafaga's forward-thinking approach to building competitive athletes while maintaining a strong focus on community and personal growth. They say this incredible

season would not have been possible without the unwavering support of parents, families, and the wider Tafaga community. They add this remarkable accomplishment stands as a testament to the club's dedication to nurturing and empowering young athletes.



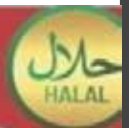


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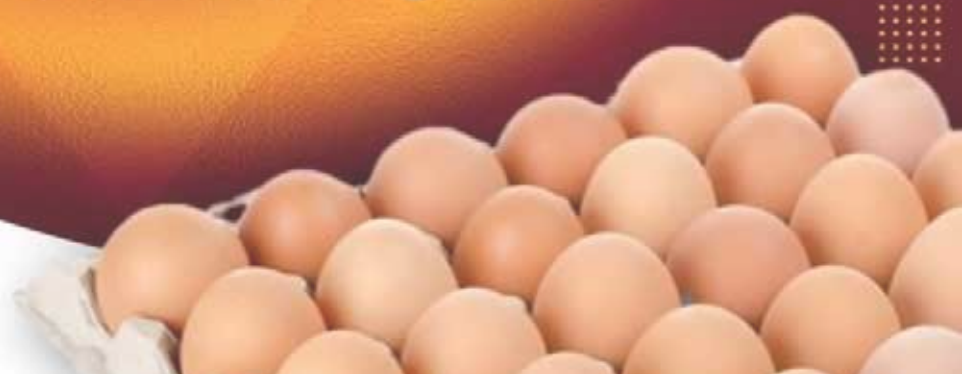
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<p><b>\$12/each</b> <b>\$30 /for 3</b> Old Fowls Gallina Viejas 老紅雞</p>	<p><b>\$30 /each</b> Guinea Hens Gallina De Guinea 珍珠雞</p>	<p><b>\$25 /each</b> Pheasant Faisan 雉雞</p>	<p><b>\$7 /flat   \$15 /3 flats</b> Eggs Huevos 雞蛋</p>	<p><b>Monday &amp; Tuesday Special</b> <b>Buy 5 Get ONE FREE</b> Especial De Lunes y Martes Compra cinco y llevate uno gratis 周一及周二特價 買五送一</p>	



## Sports

# U16 Teams Included in Pacific Community Cup

The Pacific Community Cup is set to undergo a transformative change with the inclusion of U16 teams in next year's tournament, a decision hailed as a significant boost for youth football development in the region.

Australian Fiji Football Incorporate (AuFFI) President and Fiji FA Executive in Australia, Nick Sharma, expressed strong support for the initiative.

Sharma described the move as a strategic step towards fostering grassroots development and creating competitive opportunities for emerging players.

"This decision reflects a commitment to nurturing young talent and providing a competitive platform for aspiring players," Sharma said.

"It's a great initiative by the Pacific Community Cup ex-

ecutives to foster grassroots development and encourage participation from emerging footballers.

It's an opportunity for young footballers to gain valuable experience on an international stage, showcasing their skills while building their careers."

Sharma also announced plans to align AuFFI's tournaments with this vision by incorporat-

ing U16 participation in marquee competitions such as the Fiji FACT, Battle of the Giants (BOG), and Inter-District Championship (IDC) held in Australia.

The announcement of the U16 inclusion was made during the Extra Supermarket Fiji FA Awards Night at the Crowne Plaza in Nadi.

Fiji FA President Rajesh

Patel commended the initiative, highlighting its potential to strengthen the development pipeline for Fijian football.

"This will give our Fijian players and players with Fijian heritage the chance to participate and get selected for the Fiji National U16 team," Patel stated.

Source Fiji Football Association.

## Nakasi Police FC Set for National Regional Club Championship



Rewa's Nakasi Police FC is gearing up for the Cecil's National Regional Club Championship (NCC) this week in Suva.

The team, led by president and player Peter Cecil, is determined to leave a mark in one of Fiji's most prestigious

grassroots football tournaments. "I am fully confident my boys will do their best on the field," said Cecil.

"This is an incredible opportunity for some of our players to test their skills and gain invaluable experience at a national level. The team has been working hard, and we are ready

to compete with determination and pride."

Cecil highlighted that the team's preparation has been thorough, focusing on resilience and teamwork.

"The NCC provides a platform for clubs to showcase their talent and earn recognition nationally, and we are proud to

represent Rewa FC," he added.

The Nakasi Police FC squad boasts a mix of experienced senior players and promising youth talent. Key players include seasoned campaigners like Tevita Warainivalu, Madhwan Goundar, Ivan Kumar, and John Orobulu, alongside rising stars such as Fiji U16

players Avishaan Chand and Ratu Apenisa.

The NCC will kick off on Thursday, December 5, at Ratu Cakobau Park and continue at the Fiji FA Academy Ground in Vatuwaqa from December 6-8.

The side takes on Tailevu Naitasiri's Buiduna FC in the opening match tomorrow



## Sports

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## Sports

# Seven Home Games for Drua in 2025 DRUA

The Swire Shipping Fijian Drua will host seven games in the 2025 Super Rugby Pacific season. The Glen Jackson coached side will open next year's season hosting the Brumbies at the HFC Stadium in Suva on Saturday February 15 2025.

The Drua will also host the Crusaders, the Reds and current SRP champions, the Blues in Suva. Matches at the Lautoka 'fortress' in Churchill Park will begin against the Chiefs on March 8 2025. The Waratahs and the Western Force will also hold their away matches in Lautoka next year.

2025 SEASON FIXTURES	
<b>ROUND 1   SAT 15 FEB</b> <b>VS BRUMBIES   3:35PM</b> HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA	<b>ROUND 9   SAT 12 APR</b> <b>VS HIGHLANDERS   7:05PM</b> FORSYTH BARR STADIUM, DUNEDIN
<b>ROUND 2   SAT 22 FEB</b> <b>VS HURRICANES   3:35PM</b> TBC	<b>ROUND 10   SAT 19 APR</b> <b>VS WARATAHS   3:35PM</b> CHURCHILL PARK, LAUTOKA
<b>ROUND 3   FRI 28 FEB   CULTURE ROUND</b> <b>VS WARATAHS   8:35PM</b> ALLIANZ STADIUM, SYDNEY	<b>ROUND 11   SAT 26 APR   ANZAC ROUND</b> <b>VS MOANA PASIFIKA   4:35PM</b> NORTH HARBOUR STADIUM, AUCKLAND
<b>ROUND 4   SAT 8 MAR</b> <b>VS CHIEFS   3:35PM</b> CHURCHILL PARK, LAUTOKA	<b>ROUND 12   SAT 3 MAY</b> <b>VS REDS   2:05PM</b> HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA
<b>ROUND 5   FRI 14 MAR   KIDS ROUND</b> <b>VS BRUMBIES   8:35PM</b> GIO STADIUM, CANBERRA	<b>ROUND 13   FRI 9 MAY</b> <b>VS BLUES   7:05PM</b> HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA
<b>ROUND 6   SUN 23 MAR</b> <b>VS WESTERN FORCE   6:05PM</b> HBF PARK, PERTH	<b>ROUND 14   SAT 17 MAY</b> <b>VS WESTERN FORCE   3:35PM</b> CHURCHILL PARK, LAUTOKA
<b>ROUND 7</b> <b>BYE WEEK</b>	<b>ROUND 15</b> <b>BYE WEEK</b>
<b>ROUND 8   SAT 5 APR</b> <b>VS CRUSADERS   3:35PM</b> HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA	<b>ROUND 16   SAT 31 MAY</b> <b>VS REDS   9:35PM</b> SUNCORP STADIUM, BRISBANE

**2025 FIXTURES**  
7 HOME GAMES | 7 AWAY GAMES

DRUA SWIRE SHIPPING

**LAUTOKA GAMES**  
CHURCHILL PARK

ROUND 4 **SAT 8 MAR | 3:35PM**  
CHIEFS

EASTER WEEKEND

ROUND 10 **SAT 19 APR | 3:35PM**  
WARATAHS

ROUND 14 **SAT 17 MAY | 3:35PM**  
WESTERN FORCE

SWIRE SHIPPING SUPER RUGBY PACIFIC

**SUVA GAMES**  
HFC BANK STADIUM

ROUND 1 **SAT 15 FEB | 3:35PM**  
BRUMBIES

ROUND 8 **SAT 5 APR | 3:35PM**  
CRUSADERS

ROUND 12 **SAT 3 MAY | 2:05PM**  
REDS

GERMIT DAY WEEKEND

ROUND 13 **FRI 9 MAY | 7:05PM**  
BLUES

SWIRE SHIPPING SUPER RUGBY PACIFIC



## Sports

# HSBC SVNS season in Dubai





## Sports

# Fiji claimed the first title of the new HSBC SVNS season in Dubai after a dramatic final against Spain at the end of a pulsating weekend of sevens rugby.



Continued From P1

The great Pol Pla had scored his 100th international sevens try to give Spain the lead in the semi-final. He added try number 101 to give them an early advantage in the showpiece match.

But a dream result for the underdogs wasn't in the stars.

HSBC Player of the Final Filipe Sauturaga levelled just before the break, before Jeremaia Matana and Ilikimi Vunaki crossed in the second half to give the Flying Fijians an insurmountable lead as they claimed the crown – their first after a drought lasting 22 tournaments, and their first in Dubai since 2015.

Fiji coach Osea Kolinisau was delighted his side had broken their long run without a title: "It's been a long time coming," he said. "I'm so happy for the boys. I'm so happy that we've got the monkey off our back now."

And he added that he wanted his side to challenge for more titles this season. "We want to be consistent. We've worked really hard this last six months. We were disappointed at the

Olympics. I told the boys hard work pays off and it paid off here."

Bronze final: Clever Argentina shut out All Blacks Sevens Argentina demonstrated their high sevens rugby IQ in a tight, hard-fought bronze final to shut out New Zealand, scoring once in each half to claim third place 14-0.

Matías Osadczuk scored the only try in the first half of an intense encounter, going under the posts to give the South American side a 7-0 advantage.

Sofai Maka looked certain to reduce arrears with a long-range breakout run – but he was thrillingly hunted down by Marcos Moneta, a player better known for his attacking ability, but who personified Argentina's defensive effort on the night.

Agustin Fraga darted over with a minute left on the clock to put the result – the third time in a row they have beaten New Zealand in Dubai – beyond doubt.

Semi-finals: Spain make it two against New Zealand, Fiji

overwhelm Argentina

New Zealand missed out on a first Dubai final since 2019 as the remarkable Pol Pla became the first Spanish player to score a century of international sevens tries, as their remarkable Dubai run continued with a second victory over New Zealand in as many days.

The veteran's touchdown, early in the second half, gave Spain a lead they would not give up, after Manu Moreno had erased the All Blacks Sevens' advantage, courtesy of future star Oli Mathis. Jeremy Trevithick gave Spain a vital cushion late on – meaning Dylan Collier's touchdown – taking the score to 19-17 after the conversion when the clock already was in the red – was only ever going to be a consolation.

Fiji overwhelmed last season's HSBC SVNS league winners and Grand Final runners-up Argentina in the second semi-final.

Joji Nasova scored two of their eight tries as they won 43-21.

Quarter finals: Five-time

champions South Africa crash out

South Africa's proud run as champions at Dubai, which dated back to 2019, ended in a 24-17 loss against New Zealand – who pulled away at the end of a pulsating end-to-end quarter-final courtesy of a late double from Sofai Maka.

Anton Legorburu Anso was the hero as Spain scored the decisive try on the last play of the game to beat Great Britain 19-14.

Fiji avenged their 2024 Olympic Games final loss beating France 19-17 in a thriller that lived up to the billing. The result was decided by a break-away Viwa Naduvalo try with the clock in the red.

A Harry Paterson hat-trick was not enough for Australia, who came up short against Argentina, losing 22-20.

Play-offs: Young France finish on a positive

Denied a shot at a sixth Dubai title in a row, South Africa set off like a train in their fifth-place play-off against France. They led 10-0 at halftime – but were

quickly pegged back early in the second.

But Zain Davids gave the Blitzboks back the advantage with two minutes left. It looked to be enough – but Varian Pasquet dived over by the posts with the clock in the red, and Stephen Perez Edo Martin converted to settle the match 17-15.

With vital series points up for grabs, Australia finished their Dubai campaign on a high to take into Cape Town next week with a 17-12 win over Great Britain, Henry Paterson scoring the crucial try 90 seconds from time.

Uruguay beat fellow promoted side Kenya 15-7 in the ninth-place play-off, after the two sides had beaten USA (15-12) and Ireland (21-7) respectively.

Ireland got the better of USA 19-12 to claim 11th place with a morale-boosting win to make the long-haul flight to Cape Town pass more pleasantly.



Sports







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