



THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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U.S. Fiji Times Celebrates 20 Years of Connecting the Community

California's U.S. Fiji Times marks a remarkable 20th anniversary in 2024. Founded in 2004 by friends Arif Khan and Rocky Ali Buksh, the paper emerged from a desire to serve the Fijian community in the Bay Area. Starting with just five clients and a humble 12-page format, the paper quickly gained traction. It resonated with readers by

capturing local buzz, featuring community events like weddings, soccer games, and cultural gatherings.

Over the years, the U.S. Fiji Times flourished. Circulation surpassed thousands, reaching a dedicated subscriber base of 5,000 reaching beyond Bay Area and attracting over 100 advertisers. Notably, the paper maintained a neutral stance

on politics and controversies. This strategic decision stemmed from two key principles:

Swiftly serving the Fijian community here in the USA for all news, entertainment and also during major events: The paper aimed to be a reliable source of information and a liaison for the local population. Preserving community cohesion:

In a close-knit community, political leanings could potentially divide readers.

However, the U.S. Fiji Times wasn't afraid to raise its voice on critical issues through editorials. This balanced approach earned it respect and ensured it wasn't "silent when a strong voice was needed." As it enters its third decade, the U.S. Fiji Times has successfully

transitioned to a thriving online platform, reaching readers worldwide. Publisher Rocky Ali Buksh remains committed to the paper's core values: serving the community and showcasing its vibrant spirit. He expressed gratitude for the global support received on this momentous occasion.

By: Jayant Singh, CA



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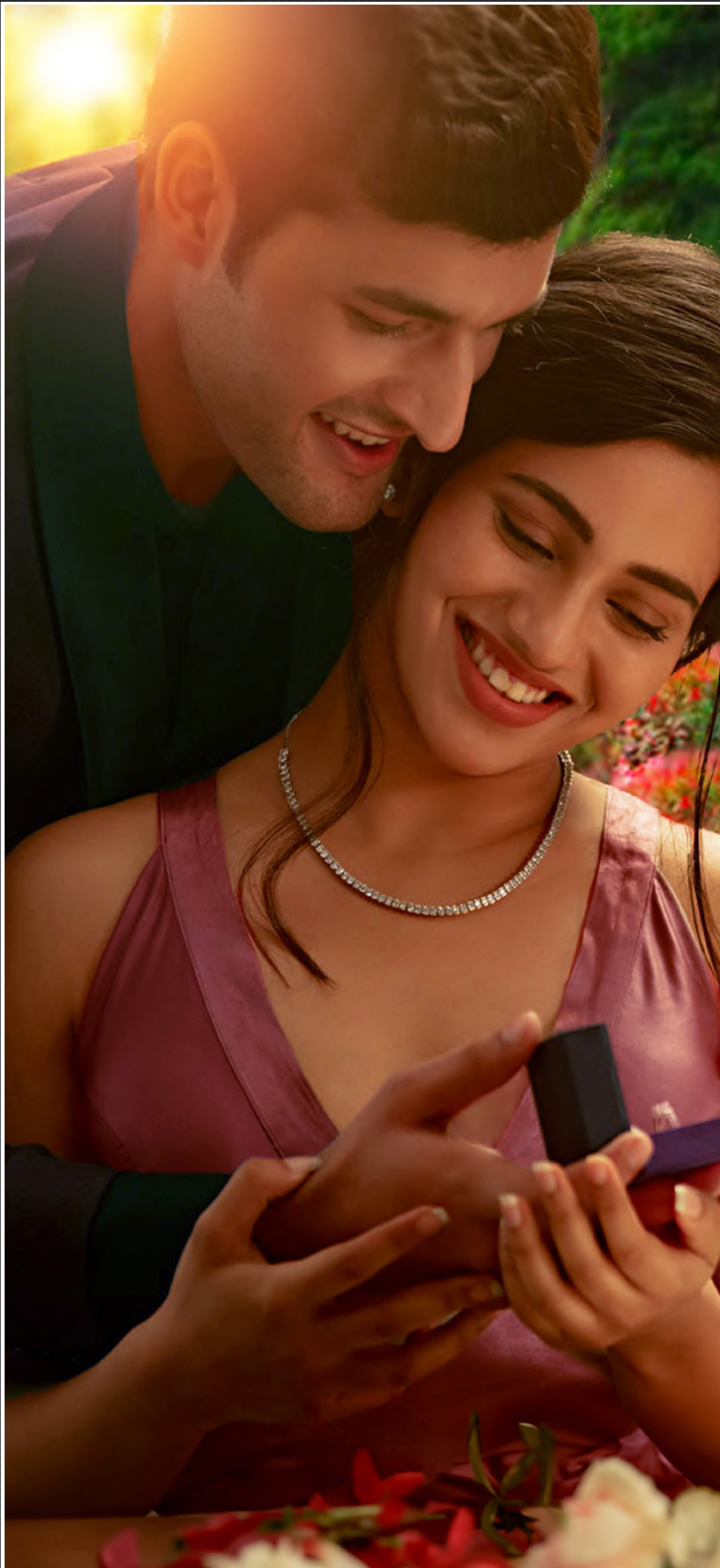


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THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

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

Vinaka – Rocky Buksh



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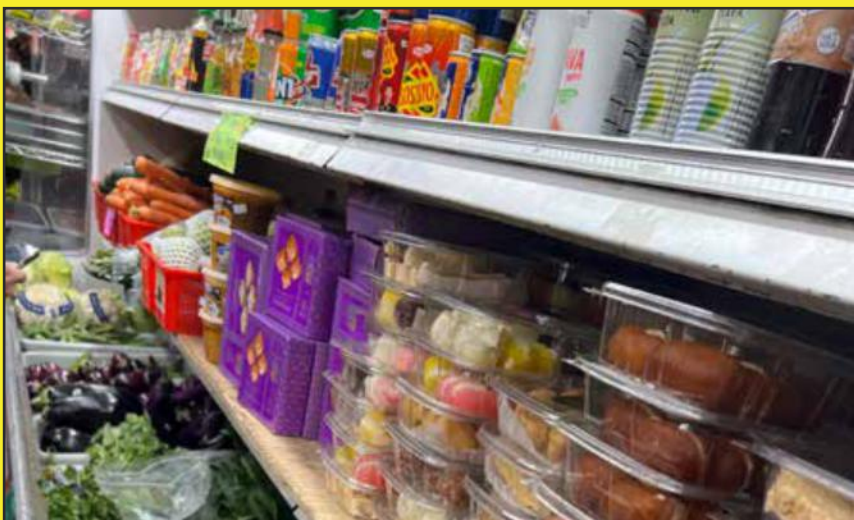
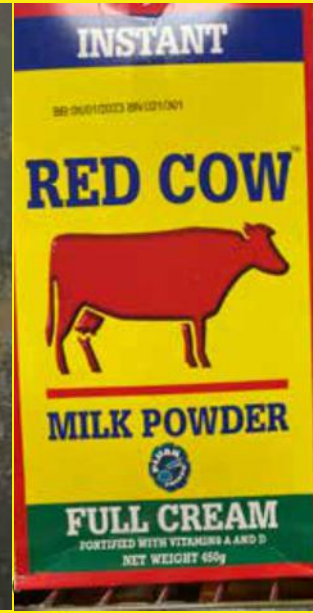


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Bridging Generations: New Hope Flows with the Toga River



Ro Litiana Divavesi, a 79-year-old resident of Vunisei village, remembers all too well the struggles of her youth - crossing a treacherous river, swollen by rain, just to reach basic necessities. Her voice, heavy with emotion, carries the weight of generations past as she describes the hardship endured by her community. "It was always a struggle," she shares, "but to see our children and grandchildren face the same challenges..."

her voice trails off, the pain evident. Yet, a new day has dawned for Vunisei and its neighboring villages: Muana and Navatuyaba. The \$4 million Toga Bridge, a testament to progress and hope, now spans the once-daunting river.

This bridge is more than just concrete and steel. It's a lifeline, woven with the prayers and aspirations of countless villagers. As Ro Litiana beams, she expresses her heartfelt gratitude: "This

bridge will ensure the safety of our children, open doors to education, and unlock economic opportunities for our farmers. It's a dream come true."

Minister for Public Works, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, echoes this sentiment, highlighting the bridge's transformative power. "Sustainable infrastructure development like this," he emphasizes, "is a catalyst for progress in our rural communities, paving the way for a

brighter future."

The Toga Bridge is not just an investment; it's a promise kept. From groundbreaking ceremonies to its triumphant completion, the bridge stands as a symbol of dedication and collaboration. The Vanua Naqavoka, the contractor, China Railway First Group, Fiji Roads Authority, and the Government joined hands to make this dream a reality.

With the Toga

Bridge as their companion, the people of Vunisei, Muana, and Navatuyaba now look forward to a new era. No longer bound by the river's whims, they step into a future brimming with hope, education, and prosperity. Ro Litiana's emotional journey paints a poignant picture: the past etched in memories, the present a bridge to a brighter tomorrow, and the future flowing onwards, as vibrant as the Toga River itself.

Fiji Airways Denies Allegations Regarding Israel Charter Flights

Fiji Airways has issued a strong rebuttal to allegations of wrongdoing surrounding charter flights operated between Fiji and Israel in September and October 2023. The airline maintains that the flights were conducted lawfully and ethically, despite claims raised in a complaint to the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC).

Responding to concerns about the legality of a Deed of Forbearance and guarantee, Fiji Airways emphasizes that the agreement was drafted by their legal team and serves as a "prudent and lawful measure" to protect their interests and secure a viable payment plan from the charterer who faced financial difficulties.

Contrary to accusations, the airline clarifies that the agreement doesn't reduce the overall cost of the flights; instead, it structures payments into installments. Although a December 2023 payment was missed, they are actively communicating with the charterer and expect full payment of the outstanding balance soon.

Fiji Airways concludes by reiterating that the decision to operate the Israel flights was motivated purely by commercial considerations, further dismissing allegations of improper actions.



An Inspiring Journey from Fiji to the Hollywood



Born into the lush landscapes and spiritual environs of Labasa, Fiji, Sheetal Deo's life has been a mosaic of challenge, change, and triumph. Her story isn't just about breaking into the glitz and glamour of the entertainment world; it's a narrative of a young girl holding onto her dreams amidst a clash of cultural expectations and personal aspirations.

Early Life and Challenges

In the tranquility of Fiji, Sheetal's childhood was steeped in spirituality. Her father, a police officer, and her mother, a homemaker, provided a nurturing yet traditional family environment. Sheetal's passion for the performing arts blossomed early. However, her father's dismissal of acting as a viable career path and the lack of a local acting industry in

Fiji posed significant hurdles. Despite these challenges, her mother's quiet encouragement became the bedrock of her aspirations.

The Turning Point

Sheetal's life took a poignant turn with the loss of her mother in 2015. This loss, though deeply painful, seemed to strengthen her resolve to pursue her dreams. With the blessings she felt from her mother, Sheetal, at the age of 18, embarked on a life-altering journey to the United States. This move was a leap into the unknown, filled with both opportunity and uncertainty.

Rise to Recognition

The cultural shift from Fiji to America was immense, but Sheetal's adaptability and resilience shone through.

Her unique appearance and talent caught the attention of a photographer who described her as having a "National Geographic face". A photograph from this encounter went viral, paving the way for her entry into modeling and acting. However, this journey was not without its share of personal struggles. Sheetal had to navigate through an abusive relationship, finding solace and support in her mother-in-law.

A New Chapter in New York

New York City marked a new chapter in Sheetal's life. The city's vibrant energy and diverse opportunities in the entertainment industry aligned perfectly with her aspirations. Her acting and modeling career flourished, leading to roles in various projects and her inclusion in SAG-

AFTRA. Her lack of formal training in acting did not hinder her; instead, it highlighted her natural talent. Sheetal also expanded her skill set, delving into dance and mixed martial arts.

Embracing Heritage and Breaking Stereotypes

Sheetal's journey is also one of embracing her roots. Proud of her Fijian heritage, she stands against conventional beauty standards and advocates for natural beauty. Her ability to speak multiple languages, including Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Fijian, Russian, and some French, adds to her versatility as an actor. Sheetal's belief in appreciating the gifts of one's ancestors and the natural beauty bestowed by one's heritage is a refreshing stance in an industry often criticized for its unrealistic beauty standards.

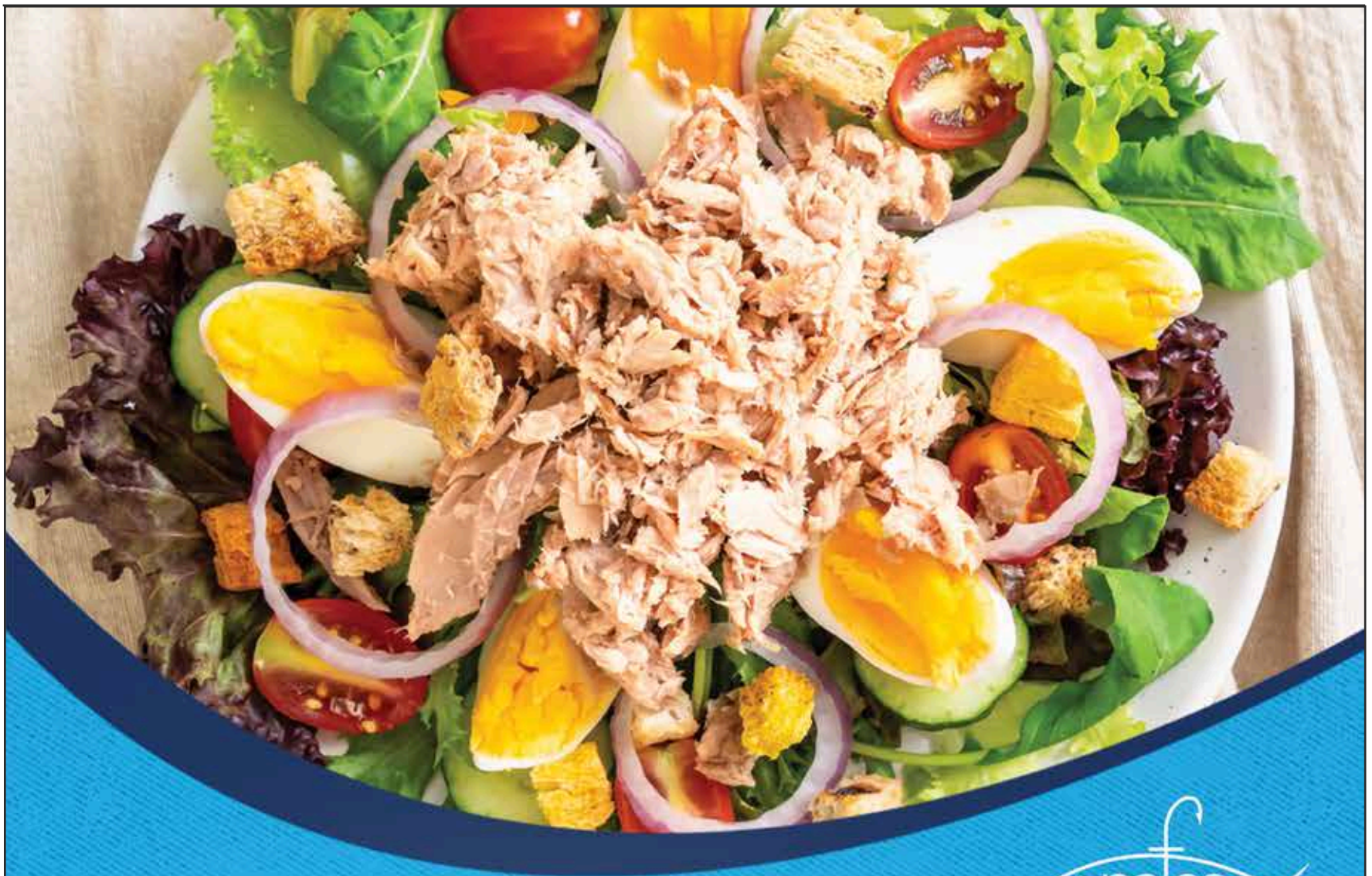
Looking Ahead

Currently signed with Stefanie Talent, a full-service SAG-AFTRA agency, Sheetal is poised for greater heights in the entertainment industry. Her significant works are a testament to her versatility and talent, and she continues to work on new and exciting projects.

Sheetal Deo's journey from the serene islands of Fiji to the bustling streets of New York is a narrative of persistence, resilience, and the undying spirit to pursue one's dreams. Her story is a source of inspiration, showcasing that with faith, hard work, and a little support, dreams can indeed become realities.

Stay updated with Sheetal's journey and her upcoming projects by following her on Instagram @sheetaldeo1.

Source: Forbes Los Angeles



Made by Fijians for Fijians



13 Face Court Over Record Fiji Meth Bust: Bail Sought

Thirteen individuals, including Justin Ho, David Heritage, and Jale Aukerea, stood before the Nadi Magistrates Court today, charged in connection with the staggering seizure of over four tonnes of methamphetamine in Nadi. This haul, estimated to hold a street value exceeding two billion dollars, represents the largest meth bust in Fijian history.

their arrest, argued for bail, citing extended detention without trial. The court's decision on bail applications is currently pending.

This case promises to be a landmark one, raising crucial questions about Fiji's drug trade and the fight against illegal narcotics. Stay tuned for further updates as the case unfolds. Former Fiji Squash rep Jus-



The accused face a multitude of charges, including unlawful importation and possession of illicit drugs, as well as suspicion of using proceeds of crime for importation and transportation. While details remain under wraps, the sheer size of the seizure throws the spotlight on Fiji's battle against drug trafficking. Defense lawyers for the accused, held in custody since

tin Steven Masih Ho is among 13 people facing charges in connection with the Nadi meth seizure case alongside David Otto Heritage, Louie Frank Logaivau, Issac Lesiyanawai, Ratu Aporosa Davelevu, Sakiusa Tuva, Iosefo Roqica, Maika Yabakivou, Ratu Osea Levula, Cathy Tuirabe, Nancy Mateyawa, Jale Aukerea, and Keanie Mcpherson.

The 13 accused per-

sons are charged with unlawful possession of illicit drugs. Of the 13 accused persons, two are also charged with unlawful importation of illicit drugs. It is alleged that the accused persons without lawful authority, facilitated the importation and were found in possession of 4.8 tonnes of methamphetamines.

Three of the 13 accused persons are charged with possession of property suspected of being proceeds of crime. It is alleged that the three were found in possession of cash (local and overseas currency) suspected of being proceeds of crime. The 13 accused persons were produced at the Nadi Magistrates' Court this afternoon.



Fiji Police Dig Deeper: Foreign National Linked to Drug Bust, More Arrests Expected

Fiji Police Dig Deeper: Foreign National Linked to Drug Bust, More Arrests Expected
Fiji Police investigations into the record-breaking drug busts are far from over, with Assistant Commissioner of Police - Crime Mesake Waqa revealing a foreign national linked to

a known syndicate is now in their sights. "We're working closely with international partners, expecting more arrests," ACP Waqa stated. Their focus is two-fold: following the money trail and uncovering potential local accomplices. "Investigations have identi-

fied a foreign national tied to a syndicate," he confirmed, "and we're pursuing them with international assistance." He expressed gratitude for information sharing that led to the arrest of three key suspects in the Northern Division attempting to flee the country. Additionally, he acknowl-

edged individuals who volunteered crucial information about suspected illegal activities. Thirteen individuals already faced court on charges related to the seized drugs, valued at over two billion dollars. However, ACP Waqa emphasized that police will remain tight-

lipped until significant developments emerge. "Our commitment is unwavering: bringing those involved in the drug trade to justice," he declared. "With international support, we are confident in disrupting these syndicates. No one is above the law."



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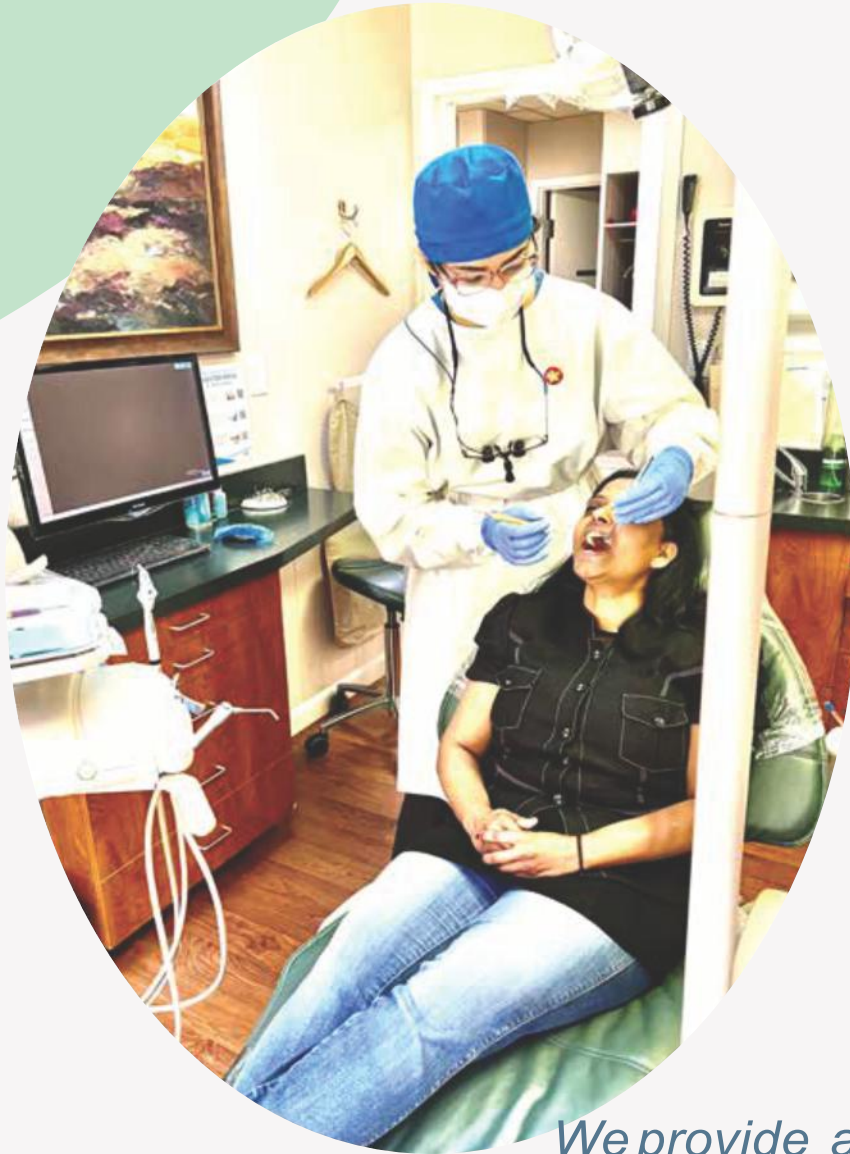
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Moemoana Schwenke Makes History at Miss Pacific Islands Pageant



History unfolded once again at the Miss Pacific Islands pageant in Nauru, as Moemoana Schwenke, Miss Samoa, was crowned the new queen. This momentous victory marked a first in the pageant's 35-year history, etching a remarkable legacy for Schwenke and her family.

Following in the footsteps of her mother, Mary-Jane Mckibbin, who held the title in 1997, Schwenke

becomes the 8th Miss Samoa to win the prestigious crown. This victory ties Samoa with the Cook Islands for the most wins in the pageant's history.

Beyond the crown, Schwenke also stood out for her powerful stance on environmental protection. During the sarong competition, she donned a stunning design embodying the theme "Sustainable Beauty Beyond the Reef." The vibrant purple and pink canvas served as a poignant reminder of the Pa-

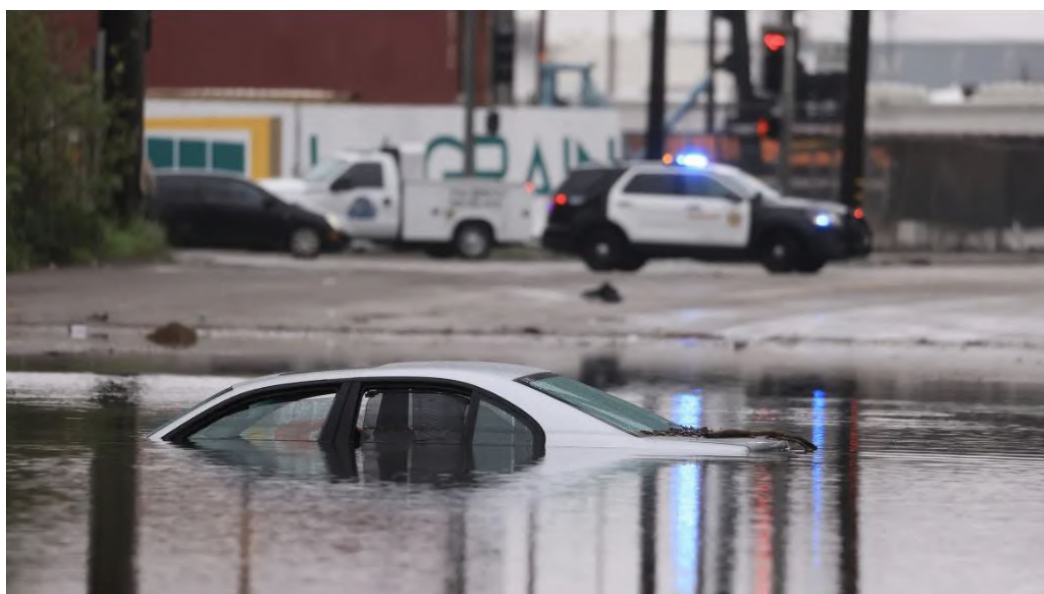
cific's fragile ecosystem and the urgent need for action against climate change.

When asked about the importance of preserving Pacific cultural heritage, Schwenke delivered a passionate response. She emphasized the role of culture in shaping identity, values, and beliefs, highlighting its expression through language, dance, music, and storytelling. Recognizing the challenges of the modern world, she urged every Pacific Islander to ac-

tively safeguard their heritage through educational programs, ensuring its survival for future generations.

Moemoana Schwenke's victory resonates far beyond the pageant stage. It's a testament to the power of family legacy, cultural pride, and environmental awareness. Her reign promises to be an inspiration for young Pacific Islanders, encouraging them to embrace their heritage while advocating for a sustainable future.

California braces for a stronger atmospheric river this weekend



California is bracing for a stronger and longer-lasting atmospheric river event this weekend, which is expected to bring mudslides, damaging winds, and heavy mountain snow and has already triggered flood watches for nearly 40 million people.

The Weather Prediction Center has issued a rare Level 4 of 4 risk of excessive rainfall for Santa Barbara and Oxnard on Sunday. A more widespread Level 3 risk exists for much of coastal California, including San Francisco down through Los Angeles.

It's hard to emphasize how big of a deal and how rare a Level 4 "high risk" area is. They are issued on fewer than 4% of days per year on average, but are responsible for more than 80% of all flood-related damage and 39% of all flood-related deaths.

As of Saturday after-

noon, more than 8,500 members of multiple public safety organizations have been mobilized in preparation for the extreme weather, Nancy Ward, director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, said in a news conference on Saturday.

More than 7 million sandbags have been prepared and plenty of rescue equipment is on standby, Ward added. Parts of the central and southern coastline of the state are expected to see the most significant amounts of rain and flooding, according to Eric Schoening with the National Weather Service. This includes the Los Angeles and San Diego metro areas. "This damaging flooding will be a threat to lives and property," Schoening said.

The worst of the storm will fall between Sunday and Tuesday, according to

the service.

Governor Gavin Newsom activated the state's emergency operation center, which will be running 24 hours a day, according to Ward.

Rainfall is expected to begin as early as late Saturday night for central portions of coastal California where a few inches of rain by early Sunday morning may lead to flooding. The prediction center cautioned at least 8 inches of rain is possible in less than 24 hours for portions of the Transverse Ranges in Southern California, with maximum totals just over 10 inches possible in locations where storms repeatedly occur in a short period of time.

In central and southern California, widespread rainfall totals of 3 to 6 inches are expected – more than a month's worth of rain for most. Los Angeles averages

2.99 inches of rain in February – their wettest month of the year on average. In the mountains and foothills of Southern California the weather service is forecasting up to a foot of rain. And some parts of Long Beach, California could potentially see more rain this weekend than they typically see in a year, according to Mayor Rex Richardson. The city is anticipating anywhere from 5 to 7 inches, causing flooding and power outages. On Saturday morning, the Ventura County Sheriff's Office issued evacuation orders for some communities, along with warnings and advisories about the incoming weather.

anticipated rain.

Later in the day, the Santa Barbara Office of Emergency Management also issued mandatory evacuation orders for parts of the city, citing "life-threatening" floods. The orders will be in place until further notice.

There are indications the storm may be as strong as Tropical Storm Hilary from last August, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass said during a news conference Friday, and encouraged residents to take "common sense precautions." She urged people to stay at home and off the roads, keep up to date with the latest information, and make sure they



The orders, which are in place in anticipation of impacts related to the rain forecast for the weekend, will be in place from 5 p.m. local time Saturday until 5 p.m. Sunday, according to a release from the sheriff's office. The sheriff's office also warned residents of the potential for landslides or debris flows, which may be caused by the amount of an-

are prepared with emergency supplies.

And the severe weather prompted NASCAR to reschedule its Busch Light Clash Los Angeles from Sunday to Saturday night. The organization urged fans "to make decisions in the best interest of safety."

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Artificial Intelligence and Your Health

How Computers are Helping Medicine



There's a lot of talk about artificial intelligence, or AI, these days. AI is everywhere—from virtual assistants to facial recognition software. The technology is even assisting doctors and scientists. So what exactly is AI? And how is it helping advance scientific research?

"AI is basically trying to teach computers to 'think' in the same way as the human brain," says

Dr. Despina Kontos, an AI researcher at Columbia University. One approach to AI uses a process called machine learning. In machine learning, a computer model is built to predict what may happen in the real world. The model is taught to analyze and recognize patterns in a data set. This training enables the model to then make predictions about new data. Some AI programs can also teach themselves to ask new questions and make novel connections between pieces of information.

"Computer models and humans can really work well together to improve human health," explains Dr. Grace C.Y. Peng, an NIH expert on AI in medicine. "Computers are very good at doing calculations at a large scale, but they don't have the intuitive capability that we have. They're powerful, but how helpful

they're going to be lies in our hands."

Researchers are exploring ways to harness the power of AI to improve health care. These include assisting with diagnosing and treating medical conditions and delivering care.

Mining Medical Images

One area that AI is already being used daily is medical imaging. Computers help doctors comb through CT and MRI scans for signs of problems like heart disease and cancer.

"AI can look at images very closely, in a way that's much more detailed than we can do with the human eye," Kontos says. That means that the computer may be able to pick up on subtleties that a person might miss.

In medicine, catching early signs of certain diseases can be the difference between life and death. Kontos and her team are testing ways AI can be used to identify women who are at high risk for developing breast cancer. They're using AI to analyze different features in mammograms—X-ray pictures of the breast—such as breast density. Women who have a higher risk of breast cancer can take preventative steps, like more frequent screenings. This approach could help lead to earlier diagnosis and more successful

treatment.

The team is also testing whether they can use AI to individualize breast cancer treatment based on imaging results that show how breast tumors are responding. AI may better reveal who needs more intensive treatment, like chemotherapy, and who can safely skip it.

"That way, we could spare women who don't need intensive treatment from unnecessary side effects," Kontos explains.

Connecting People With Care
Over the last year, advanced "chatbots," like ChatGPT, have burst on the scene. These AI programs are designed to have realistic conversations with people. People are starting to use the technology to find health information.

Many chatbots are a form of "generative AI." This type of AI can create new content based on what it learns from analyzing existing data. Such chatbots use what's called large language models, which are trained on huge data sets that are gathered from across the internet. The training teaches them to predict what words are most likely to appear after another.

It may be tempting to ask these tools to answer medical questions. "But these chatbots don't actually understand what you're asking," Peng says.

"They're just looking at the phrases and making predictions about what comes next." So it's important to use caution if you're using them to seek health advice.

"These tools also don't have a lot of context," explains Dr. Ellen Fitzsimmons-Craft, a mental health researcher at Washington University in St. Louis. "They may be able to state something that's the right medical advice in a general sense. But that may not be the right medical advice for you personally."

"We don't always know what information these tools like ChatGPT are trained on," Fitzsimmons-Craft adds. "We don't know if they're getting information from reputable sources or not."

Still, the idea of using chatbots in medicine has promise, explains Fitzsimmons-Craft. Right now, there is a shortage of health care providers in many fields, including mental health. Chatbots may be able to fill in some gaps.

"Not many people follow through with recommendations provided after a mental health screening," Fitzsimmons-Craft says. "And we don't have enough providers to connect with every one of those people."

Fitzsimmons-Craft and her team are developing a chatbot

to help guide people with eating disorders toward seeking care. Their chatbot is made using a rule-based model, with limited AI. Rule-based means that human experts write entire conversations beforehand. Then, the chatbot picks what to say based on the responses of the person using it.

"Nothing this chatbot says should come as a surprise," Fitzsimmons-Craft explains. "That's in contrast to generative AI, where you have to work a lot harder to build in guardrails."

Her team is now testing their chatbot to see which conversation pieces are the most effective. They'll then test whether it can increase the number of people seeking help after a screening for eating disorders.

Other NIH-funded researchers are studying whether chatbots can help in additional areas, like suicide prevention and encouraging heart-healthy diet changes.

Looking Toward the Future

As AI moves into more areas of health care, many ethical issues will need to be addressed, explains Kontos. "These systems learn from human data, so they may learn our biases," she says.

For example, in the past, research studies have included far more men than women. This means that the resulting data may not be as accurate for guiding women's health care. So, if this information is fed into AI models, that bias will follow.

Recognizing biases before they reach the machines may provide a chance to break this cycle. "Can we end up training the machines better because we learned from the mistakes that we have in our own society about training people?" Peng asks.

NIH-funded researchers are working on these issues, as well as many other ways to use AI in medicine. These include modeling the ways a virus might spread between countries and predicting if new drugs will be safe. All of these projects need human imagination and computing power.

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Fiji News

Rakiraki's Son Reaches for the Sky: From Cane Fields to Civil Engineering

Beneath the relentless sun of Fiji's sunshine coast, amidst the endless rows of Rakiraki's famed sugar cane fields, toiled a young boy named Netani Vuatalevu. His hands, rough and calloused, wielded a machete, but his heart held a different dream - one of towering structures and intricate designs. While others saw only fields, Netani saw bridges, buildings, and a future carved from concrete and steel.

His journey began far from grand halls, in the humble classrooms of Penang Sangam High School. Yet, amidst the swaying stalks and the harsh demands of life, his dream refused to be silenced. Fuelled by his own determination and the unwavering support of his father, who instilled in him the value of hard work and striving for one's dreams, Netani persevered.

Then, a momentous day arrived. Under the vibrant buzz of the 2024 FNU Roadshow in Rakiraki's old market,

a beacon of hope materialized - an offer letter for the prestigious Bachelor of Civil Engineering program at Fiji National University. This wasn't just a piece of paper; it was a bridge, a testament to his resilience and ambition.

Netani's story doesn't end here. It's just the beginning. The challenges ahead are many, but the sun that kisses the cane fields now illuminates not just a field worker, but a future engineer. His tale is not just of personal triumph, but a beacon of inspiration for others, especially those from rural areas, to dare to dream and chase them with unwavering determination. Netani's journey is a testament to the power of dreams, hard work, and the unwavering support of family and community. It's a story that reminds us that even amidst the humblest beginnings, *the sky is never the limit.*



From Village to Avionics: Tukuwasa Takes Flight at FNU



Emanuel Tukuwasa, a young man with dreams soaring as high as airplanes, became the first applicant at the Fiji National University's (FNU) Sigatoka Roadshow today. This 19-year-old from Nakalavo Village, a former Queen Victoria School student, isn't just signing up for a program; he's taking a pioneering step towards his ambition of becoming an aircraft engineer.

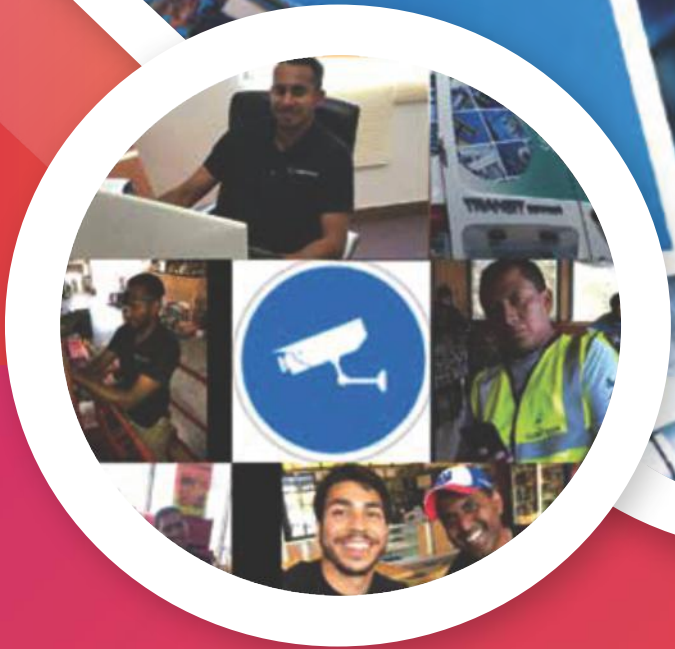
With boundless enthusiasm, Tukuwasa enrolled in the Certificate in Aircraft Maintenance (Avionics) pro-

gram offered by FNU's College of Science and Technology (CEST). This program equips students with the technical skills and knowledge to maintain and troubleshoot the complex avionics systems that are the brains behind modern aircraft.

Tukuwasa's story embodies the transformative power of education and the aspirations of Fijian youth. From his village roots, he takes flight with FNU, fueled by a passion for aviation and a determination to carve his own path in the skies.



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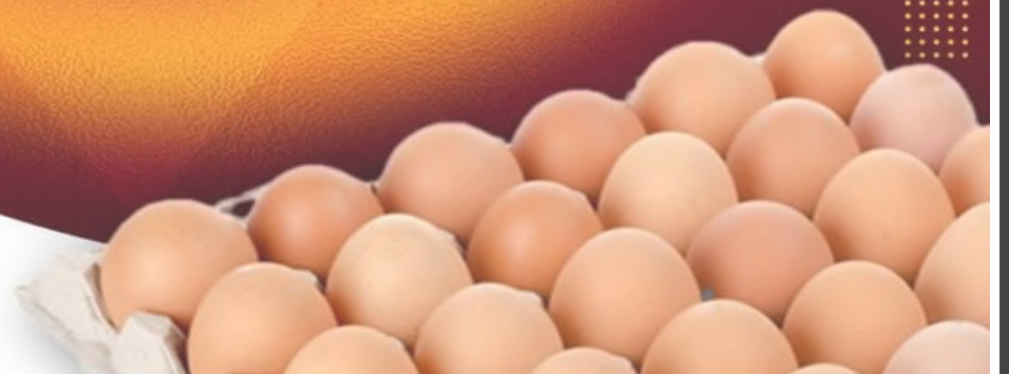
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DESIGN BY SAMEER DHAWAN

Here's what to know about the Boeing 737 Max 9, the jet that suffered an inflight blowout

The inflight blowout on an Alaska Airlines' plane on Friday night is prompting scrutiny of the aircraft involved, the Boeing 737 Max 9. The incident comes after other safety issues have been linked to Boeing's Max line of aircraft, heightening concerns about the jet's safety.

erate about two-thirds of the 215 Max 9 aircraft in service around the world, according to aviation analytics firm Cirium.

Both Alaska and United have grounded their Max 9s as the Alaska accident is investigated, leading to hundreds of

tem on the Max in dry conditions because of concern that inlets around the engines could overheat and break away, possibly striking the plane. And in December, Boeing told airlines to inspect the planes for a possible loose bolt in the rudder-control system.

The piece weighs about 63 pounds and is 48 inches tall and about two feet wide, Van Cleave noted.

Was anyone injured on the Alaska Airlines flight? None of the 171 passengers or six crew were seriously injured but the rapid loss of cabin pressure caused oxygen masks to drop from the ceiling. National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy said the two seats next to the part that tore off were unoccupied.

The missing door plug has been found. Why is that important?

The missing door plug was found near Portland in the backyard of a schoolteacher, with the National Transportation Safety Board saying that the discovery could be a vital piece of evidence in the investigation into the cause of the blowout.

"At the opposite end of the aisle is another door plug, so they will also be able to compare the door plug that was blown off with the one that remains on the plane," Mark Walker, a reporter with the New York Times, told CBS News. "They can compare if there were missing pieces, if they were damaged."

Since the blowout, what issues have emerged about the door plugs?

United Airlines and Alaska Airlines say they found loose bolts on door plugs on several of their grounded Boeing 737 Max 9 planes.

Specifically, United Airlines said Monday it has found "instances that appear to relate to installation issues in the door plug – for example, bolts that needed additional tightening" during its preliminary inspections on Saturday. Loose bolts and other parts were found on at least five aircraft, according to trade publication Air Current. Assembly, installation and quality control of the door plugs is the responsibility of Boeing and Spirit AeroSys-

tems, which makes the door plug, the publication added.

Spirit AeroSystems also worked on the installation of the door plug that suffered the blowout, according to Reuters. In a statement on Monday, Spirit AeroSystems said it is working with Boeing on the issue and that it would share more information "when appropriate."

Alaska Airlines said Monday night that "Initial reports from our technicians indicate some loose hardware was visible on some aircraft" when the technicians were preparing the airline's Max 9 fleet for formal inspection.

Were there signs of problems with the Boeing 737 Max 9? The NTSB's Homendy told reporters that pilots reported that the same plane experienced three pressurization warnings, from cockpit dashboard lights, between December 7 and January 4. At least one occurred in-flight.

Because of that, Alaska Airlines had decided that that particular jet shouldn't fly long routes over water.

"They even flagged the plane for additional maintenance. What maintenance never had a chance to be done because of the fateful flight on Friday," he noted.

For how long will the Boeing 737 Max 9s be grounded?

The length of time is unclear, but the FAA on Monday said the aircraft "will remain grounded until operators complete enhanced inspections which include both left and right cabin door exit plugs, door components and fasteners."

It added, "Operators must also complete corrective action requirements based on findings from the inspections prior to bringing any aircraft back into service."

—With reporting by the Associated Press.



Here's what we know so far.

What is the Boeing 737 Max 9?

The Boeing 737 Max 9 is part of the aircraft manufacturer's Max line of jets, introduced with the 737 Max 8 jets, which first took to the air in 2016, according to Airways Magazine. The Max line is designed to be more fuel efficient than earlier 737s, making them more economical for airlines to operate.

The Max 9 jets, certified by the Federal Aviation Administration in 2018, can seat up to 220 passengers and have a range of 3,300 miles, according to Boeing.

Which U.S. airlines fly the Boeing 737 Max 9?

Currently, there are only two airlines in the U.S. that fly the Boeing 737 Max 9: Alaska Airlines and United Airlines. United is the biggest operator of Max 9s in the world. The two airlines together op-

flight cancellations as of Monday afternoon.

What is the safety history of Boeing 737 Max jets?

The Boeing 737 Max line has a troubled history, with two fatal crashes of the Max 8 model within five months of each other, in 2018 and 2019.

The first crash, in October 2018, involved a 737 Max 8 operated by Indonesia's Lion Air that killed 189. The second incident was in March 2019, when an Ethiopian Airlines flight, also a 737 Max 8, crashed minutes after take off, killing 157 passengers.

In response to those crashes, the FAA in 2019 grounded the 737 Max 8 and Max 9 while it investigated. Boeing changed an automated flight control system implicated in the crashes.

Last year, the FAA told pilots to limit use of an anti-ice sys-

tem, those past issues are unrelated to Friday's blowout, which is an exceedingly rare event in air travel.

What is the "door plug" that flew off in mid-flight?

The "door plug" that flew off during Friday's flight was in use because the Alaska Airlines' jet was configured to hold fewer than the maximum 220 passengers that could be packed onto a 737 Max 9.

According to CBS News' Kris Van Cleave, airlines that reconfigure jets frequently use panels that cover unneeded exit doors, essentially turning the unused exit door into another window.

"For the most part they come with those exit doors plugged with this piece, and if you are a passenger you wouldn't even know there is a door there," Van Cleave told CBS News. "It would look like a normal window."

BOLLYWOOD NEW MOVIES



A Tapestry of Valentine's Day, Interwoven with Love, History, and Culture



February 14th arrives, cloaked in rose petals and whispers of romance. In the streets, heart-shaped balloons bob merrily, vying for attention amidst an explosion of pink and red. Shop windows, adorned with teddy bears and chocolate boxes, beckon passersby to declare their affection. It's Valentine's Day, a global fiesta of love, yet its origins, like Cupid's arrow, fly through a labyrinth of history, shrouded in intrigue and shrouded in myth.

At the heart of this intricate tapestry lies the enigmatic figure of Saint Valentine. Two tales vie for his legacy, each weaving a unique thread into the Valentine's Day narrative. One Valentine, a Roman priest, defied Emperor Claudius II's ban on marriage, secretly performing ceremonies for young couples. The other, a martyr executed on February 14th, became associated with lovers through a later romanticized interpretation. Regardless of the

truth, these legends sowed the seeds of a day dedicated to love, blossoming in the fertile ground of ancient Roman customs.

Lupercalia, a pagan fertility festival held in mid-February, served as Valentine's Day's distant ancestor. Young men drew names from a box, pairing up with women for the duration of the festival, sometimes leading to marriage. Later, the Roman Catholic Church replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day, attempting to Christianize the pagan celebration. Yet, whispers of the old customs lingered, intertwining with Christian traditions of love and martyrdom.

Valentine's Day truly bloomed in the late Middle Ages, when courtly love poetry flourished. Knights wrote sonnets to their ladies fair, extolling their beauty and virtue. Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, written in 1382, cemented February 14th as a day for lovers, with playful

birds pairing off in a celestial mating game. Valentine's Day cards, initially handwritten tokens of affection, emerged in the 15th century, further solidifying the day's romantic association.

As centuries passed, Valentine's Day spread its wings, crossing continents and cultures. In Japan, couples celebrate with chocolate, with men traditionally gifting it to women on February 14th and women reciprocating with white chocolate on March 14th. In Brazil, "Dia dos Namorados" is a day for grand gestures, with lavish dinners and elaborate gifts taking center stage. Across the globe, local customs intertwine with the universal thread of celebrating love, showcasing the multifaceted nature of this holiday.

Yet, Valentine's Day is not without its thorns. Critics scoff at its commercialization, the exorbitant prices of red roses and inflated dinner bills

seen as crass distortions of genuine affection. Some advocate for self-love and platonic connection, urging us to celebrate all forms of love, not just romantic. Others point to the pressure of conformity, the societal expectation to be paired off on this day, which can exacerbate loneliness and insecurity.

These critiques spark a vital conversation about the meaning of Valentine's Day. Is it truly just a day for extravagant gestures and commercialized affection? Or can it be a canvas on which we paint a broader, more inclusive celebration of love in all its forms? Perhaps it's time to reclaim this day, to strip away the forced expectations and rediscover its core.

Let's celebrate the love between parents and children, the unbreakable bond of friendship, the unwavering loyalty of pets, the quiet camaraderie of colleagues. Let's shower ourselves with self-love,

acknowledging our own worth and treating ourselves with kindness. Let's extend our generosity to the less fortunate, spreading love's warmth beyond the confines of romantic partnerships.

Valentine's Day can be more than just a day of heart-shaped chocolates and overpriced dinners. It can be a beacon of inclusivity, a platform to appreciate the diverse tapestry of love woven through our lives. It can be a reminder that love, in all its myriad forms, is the lifeblood of our communities, the invisible thread that binds us together.

So, this February 14th, let's shed the pressure and embrace the possibilities. Let's open our hearts, not just to romantic partners, but to the symphony of love that plays around us. Let's celebrate Eros in all its complexity, weaving a brighter, more inclusive tapestry of Valentine's Day, where love, in all its shades, finds its rightful place.



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- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Cooking spray

Directions:

1. Peel and cut the top off the onion, then cut it vertically into 16 segments without cutting through the bottom, creating a blooming effect.
2. Soak the onion in buttermilk for at least 30 minutes to loosen the petals.
3. In a bowl, combine flour, paprika, garlic powder, cayenne pepper (if using), salt, and black pepper.
4. Preheat the air fryer to 375°F (190°C).
5. Remove the onion from the buttermilk, allowing excess liquid to drain off.
6. Dredge the onion in the seasoned flour mixture, ensuring each petal is well coated.
7. Place the onion in the air fryer basket and spray with cooking spray.
8. Air fry for 15-20 minutes or until the onion is golden brown and crispy.
9. Serve the Air Fryer Bloomin Onion with your favorite dipping sauce.



Prep Time: 40 minutes (including soaking time) | Cooking Time: 15-20 minutes | Total Time: 55-60 minutes
 Serves: 4-6 as an appetizer

Blueberry Breakfast Cake



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour (for coating blueberries)

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.
2. In a bowl, cream together the softened butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla extract.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
5. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, mixing until just combined.
6. In another bowl, toss the fresh blueberries with 2 tablespoons of flour to coat them.
7. Gently fold the coated blueberries into the batter.
8. Spread the batter evenly in the prepared baking pan.
9. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
10. Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 15 minutes before transferring it to a wire rack to cool completely.



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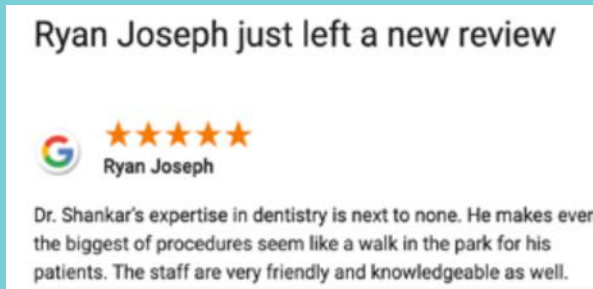
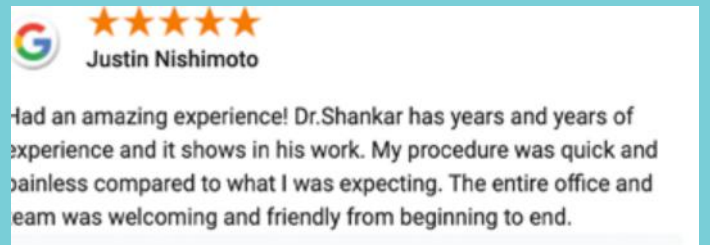
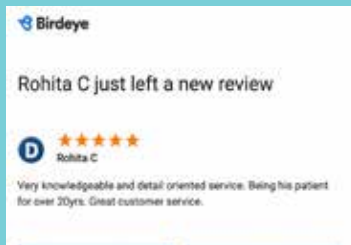
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World News

At least 64 killed as wildfires rage in Chile with fears toll could rise further



At least 64 people have been killed in Chile as forest fires rage throughout the country, with authorities warning the death toll is likely to rise.

A state of emergency has been declared as coastal cities are choked in smoke and people living in central regions are forced to leave their homes.

In a press conference Sunday held after he visited the affected areas, President Gabriel Boric said the death toll “will increase significantly” and declared Monday and Tuesday as days of national mourning for fire victims.

Rodrigo Mundaca, the governor of the Valparaíso region, said Sunday that authorities were upholding a curfew in the towns of Viña del Mar, Quilpué, Villa Alemana and Limache to allow authorities to focus on battling the blazes.

The mayor of Quilpué, Valeria Melipillán, told CNN Chile

that the fire was “probably the largest ever” in the region and that nearly 1,400 houses in the municipality had been damaged. Melipillán added that while evacuation efforts had been efficient, some people in the affected areas did not want to leave their homes.

Pope Francis in a post on ‘X’ called upon people to “pray for the deceased and injured victims of the devastating fires that have affected central Chile.”

In a televised statement on Saturday, Boric said that the defense ministry would deploy more military units to affected areas, with all necessary resources made available. About 92 active fires are burning in various parts of the country and have so far affected roughly 43,000 hectares, Interior Minister Carolina Tohá said. Firefighters have controlled 40 fires and are still battling 29, she added.

The fires come as the country is hit by a summer heatwave, with Chile’s capital Santiago sweltering through consecutive days of hot, dry temperatures climbing above 33 degrees Celsius (91.4°F).

Scientists say climate change and the El Niño weather phenomenon are driving forces behind an increasingly warm planet, making events such as heatwaves and fires more likely.

At least one person has been detained so far in connection to the wildfires, CNN affiliate CNN Chile reported.

According to police, the man was at his home in the city of Talca in central Chile doing welding work when a fire ac-

ecutor’s Office.

Emergency crews are prioritizing the fires in the port city of Valparaíso on Chile’s coast because of their proximity to urban areas and around 372 residents have been reported missing, according to its mayor.

One of those fires has consumed some 6,800 hectares, Tohá said. “The biggest concern is that some of the fires are in zones very close to urban areas, at the interface of urban areas, and therefore have a very high potential to affect people, homes and installations,” she added.

Tohá told reporters that the death toll could rise in the coming hours as authorities try to confirm information from areas they haven’t been able to



Earlier, Chile’s Finance Minister Mario Marcel told reporters that a preliminary estimate for damages in the Valparaíso region would reach the “hundreds of millions of dollars.”

identally started and spread to nearby grasslands, CNN Chile reported. The suspect will be arraigned on Sunday in Talca, according to the Maule Pros-

enter yet.

At least six of those who died did so while being treated in hospitals for burns, according to authorities.

China hands Australian writer a suspended death penalty

A Chinese-Australian writer has received a suspended death penalty in China, five years after he was first detained, according to Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong. Yang Hengjun, an Australian

citizen and democracy activist born in China, was sentenced Monday by a court in Beijing, Wong said in a statement, adding that the Australian government was “appalled” by the sentence.

“We understand this can be commuted to life imprisonment after two years if the individual does not commit any serious crimes in the two-year period,” Wang said.

“This is harrowing news for Dr Yang, his family and all who have supported him. Our thoughts are with them.”

Yang was detained in 2019 during a visit to see family in China and charged with es-

spionage – accusations he has denied.

A Beijing court held his trial in secret in 2021 but a verdict has been repeatedly delayed.

HOROSCOPE FEBRUARY 2024



Aries

Mar 21 - Apr 19

Can you hear a rumbling sound in the distance? It's the cavalry coming to save you, so embrace this support with open arms! During February, much activity surrounds teamwork and group efforts. Your ruling planet, Mars, gets in on the action, too. So, expect abundant support where you may have grown used to tackling - or struggling with - something on your own. Prepare to experience a warm glow from those who want to - and can - support you.

Love & Romance

A New Moon on the 9th has love knocking on your door! Romantic goals may resemble puzzle pieces, but your friends could be the key to assembling them. Mars, your personal cheerleader, boosts passion levels from the 13th to March 22, while love planet Venus warms your social life and friendships until March 11.



Taurus

Apr 20 - May 20

We often need to see proof of our abilities before we believe in them. Several planets push you to accomplish more this month in a particular area. Your first reaction might be to believe you're out of your depth. But where you may have grown used to taking small, ambitious steps, these could become strides. Sometimes, the best surprise we can experience involves discovering what we're capable of. That surprise awaits you, possibly more than once.

Love & Romance

A New Moon on the 9th helps you plant relationship 'seeds' that could sprout around the Full Moon in August. Mars pushes you to reach new romantic heights, but you'll need to say goodbye to outdated love notions. Love planet Venus shifts your focus to your romantic future - where or with whom is it heading? A Full Moon on the 24th illuminates passion and excitement, so take Cupid's advice -



Gemini

May 21 - Jun 20

If an electrical device doesn't work, is it necessary to take it apart to assess the wiring or contact the manufacturer to explain why it's faulty? It's often worth checking to see if it's plugged in! This month, you could go to excessive lengths to get to the bottom of particular issues. But answers might stare you straight in the face. So, start at Square One to explore obvious possibilities before going over the top with complex, unnecessary effort.

Love & Romance

A New Moon on the 9th illuminates foreign experiences, pushing you out of any romantic comfort zones. Mars makes love more adventurous from the 13th, and faraway places or faces could feature. Venus fully supports bold love moves and letting your guard down this month, too. The Full Moon on the 24th spotlights your deep, inner needs.



Cancer

Jun 21 - Jul 22

'What your mind conceives and believes, it can achieve.' Write those words on a large piece of paper and post it where you'll see it constantly. There is one more thing you must do. Underline the word, 'believes.' Your mind could create incredible visions of what you'd like to accomplish, but your belief in these may need boosting. Fortunately, you have superb cosmic support with this. So, aim high, and if any aspiration fires you up, keep stoking that belief!

Love & Romance

The New Moon on the 9th hits the refresh button on sexy, deep bonding! From the 13th, Mars cranks up passion, adding extra spicy energy to your emotional world. You're helped to connect or reconnect with a partner who not only rocks your world in the boudoir but also gives you A+ feedback!



Leo

Jul 23 - Aug 22

Who is your most trusted confidant or 'sounding board'? As a Leo, I'd be amazed if you had only one! However, with so much activity impacting partnerships this month, you could be surprised at who steps forward or comes out of the woodwork to lend a hand in some way. You can also benefit from running certain ideas past those whose opinions you trust. Even if you think there's the tiniest possibility of somebody being able to assist you, reach out to them.

Love & Romance

The New Moon on the 9th spotlights commitments, so grab your Wish List and decide which goals you're going to achieve! Mars turns up the heat from the 13th, adding serious spice to one-to-one connections. Single? Mars could provide a courage boost to ask out that attractive stranger!



Virgo

Aug 23 - Sep 22

Have you heard the saying, 'despite what happens today, you'll do tomorrow what you did yesterday'? Much planetary activity impacts your service to others and your methods to get things done. However, you'll need to shake up predictable, comfortable routines, so don't be daunted by the need to do something differently. The time has come to 'up your game' in a particular area, and outdated habits and patterns are the first to go.

Love & Romance

The New Moon on the 9th urges you to try new routines or a hobby with your paramour or crush to spark things up! From the 13th, Mars is on a mission to turn your love life into a lust-filled adventure! The Full Moon on the 24th in your sign could highlight if you and someone special are vibing on the same future frequency.



Libra

Sep 23 - Oct 22

You could look at a situation or an arrangement and say, 'it is what it is.' But you must not accept certain circumstances as they are and believe you're powerless to change them. To bring a change or an improvement, you will need to be armed with information you may not have as February commences. However, as that finds you during the coming weeks, you'll soon see whatever-it-is in a less submissive, more proactive, positive light.

Love & Romance

A New Moon on the 9th waits for your instruction, so whatever you want, believe you're entitled to it! From the 13th, Venus urges you to spill romantic beans in the most creative, memorable ways. Mars turns up the heat until March 22, so if any lover's quarrels arise, solve them like a pro - in bed!



Scorpio

Oct 23 - Nov 21

Until September, your ruling planet, Pluto, the one that destroys and rebuilds, targets your emotional foundations and sense of security. So, during February, you'll likely receive potent glimpses into what must transform to bring more stability to your world. Changes to your abode - its appearance and location - could feature prominently, too. But should you experience any insecurity, welcome it. It means the improvement process has begun!

Love & Romance

The New Moon on the 9th gives your home or wherever you call your 'safe and snug place' a fresh makeover. A boost of security and stability could help make talking about tough stuff easier. Mars is keen to turn your dwelling into a passion hotspot from the 13th to March 22.



Sagittarius

Many people believe our lives are simulated; video games others beyond our cosmic realms enjoy playing. Also, have you ever wondered what it would feel like to be on the Moon, looking at Earth, thinking about the importance of your overdraft or a presentation you must give? During February, it's crucial to see situations from the right perspective. So, don't sweat the small stuff because it's all small stuff in the grand scheme of things!

Love & Romance

A New Moon on the 9th targets your love vocabulary, helping you unleash amorous thoughts. Exchanges become more interesting when Mars joins chats from the 13th. Mars wants to be a cosmic cheerleader for your passions, so shout them from the rooftops! And in the unlikely event that things get too spicy?



Capricorn

Dec 22 - Jan 19

Let's imagine you're at an airline check-in desk and are told there's been a change to your booking. Your first thoughts surround why you must accept a change beyond your control and the implications of this to what you had your heart set on. But what if the change is an upgrade to first class? It wasn't worth getting upset and angry, was it? An important ambition heads on a different trajectory this month. Welcome it, don't resent it!

Love & Romance

The New Moon on the 9th suggests it may be time for a 'past relationships clear-out.' Do nostalgic relics like old gifts, letters or photos create awkward vibes? If they do, send them packing! But beware from the 16th to March 22 - standing up for relationship values is great as long as aggression plays no part.



Aquarius

Jan 20 - Feb 18

This month - and beyond - Aquarius is where it's happening! You benefit from Mercury, a New Moon, Mars, Venus and of course, Pluto, visiting your sign briefly for the first time in 226 years. Put all these together, and you don't deal so much with 'winds of change', but a full-blown gale. However, don't - I repeat, don't - fear this! Welcome and embrace the awesome make-things-happen, transformational planetary support you have!

Love & Romance

Get ready for a New Moon ego boost on the 9th! Project your awesome self out there, and you might snag a love connection or level up an existing one. However, be careful from the 13th to March 22. Mars turns you into a love superhero, but remember that confidence is sexy; aggression is not. Then, Venus, the love VIP, enters your sign on the 16th.



Pisces

Feb 19 - Mar 20

OK, I need to be careful what I say because I risk making an unfair, sweeping statement about Pisceans. However, in my experience, Pisces folk will sometimes ask ten people for input or advice, receive similar, helpful responses and then merrily go and do the opposite of what was advised. This month, your heart knows what you must do in a particular area. But if you seek second opinions and these support your heart's message, there's your crystal-clear answer!

Love & Romance

A New Moon on the 9th helps you face unresolved Issues and deal with emotional wounds you've suppressed. From the 13th, Mars swaps aggression for compassion. However, a Full Moon on the 24th illuminates partnerships. Rather than wish for a relationship solution, you're helped to find or create one



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Hearts of Hope: Raising Awareness for Congenital Heart Defects in Fiji



200 lives in Fiji and 2,500 across the South Pacific are touched by congenital heart defects every year. This sobering statistic was highlighted by Dr. Atonio Lalabalavu, Minister of Health, at the launch of Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week at the Sai Sanjeevani Children's Heart Hospital.

Recognizing the urgency, the Fijian government, through the Ministry of Health, has donated \$4 million to the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji. This

vital support aims to improve the lives of children with congenital heart defects.

Dr. Lalabalavu emphasized the global nature of the issue: "Congenital heart defects are the most common type of birth defect, affecting roughly 1 in 100 babies worldwide." He called for increased research, funding, and early detection, highlighting the need for accessible treatment options and long-term care for individuals living with these conditions.

Inclusivity and support are

crucial, and Dr. Lalabalavu urged the creation of a "more inclusive and supportive environment" for those with congenital heart defects.

Dr. Krupali Tappoo, Director of the Sai Sanjeevani Children's Heart Hospital, elaborated on the complexity of these defects, ranging from subtle to life-threatening. She stressed the importance of raising awareness: "This awareness week is not just a calendar event; it's an opportunity to shed light on a silent

yet significant health issue impacting countless lives worldwide."

Introducing Loloma the heart legend, their new mascot, Dr. Tappoo emphasized hope and love: "It represents the compassion, strength, and resilience that define our commitment to providing exceptional care to young hearts."

A new awareness ribbon signifies support for the cause. Dr. Tappoo announced: "We will conduct awareness campaigns

in the coming months and years, with the ribbon serving as a symbol in our fight against this disease."

This initiative by the Fijian government and the Sai Sanjeevani Children's Heart Hospital serves as a beacon of hope for children with congenital heart defects. By raising awareness, advocating for resources, and fostering inclusivity, we can build a brighter future for all hearts in Fiji and beyond.

Alarming Number of Exercise Books Sparks Concern Among Fiji Parents

Parents in Fiji's Central Division are questioning the unusually high number of exercise books required for their primary school children. The issue came to light when Sisilia Rabitu, whose daughter in Year 5 was asked to purchase 18 books, discovered her nephew in the same grade at another school was only required to buy 11.

Rabitu expressed confusion and concern, stating, "Buying books for my children is not a problem, but we want to

understand why they need so many." She further mentioned contacting the Ministry of Education, who were reportedly "alarmed" by the quantity reported.

This inconsistency and lack of explanation have created unease among parents, with many questioning the standard book list issued by the Ministry. As of now, the Ministry of Education has not responded to inquiries regarding this matter.



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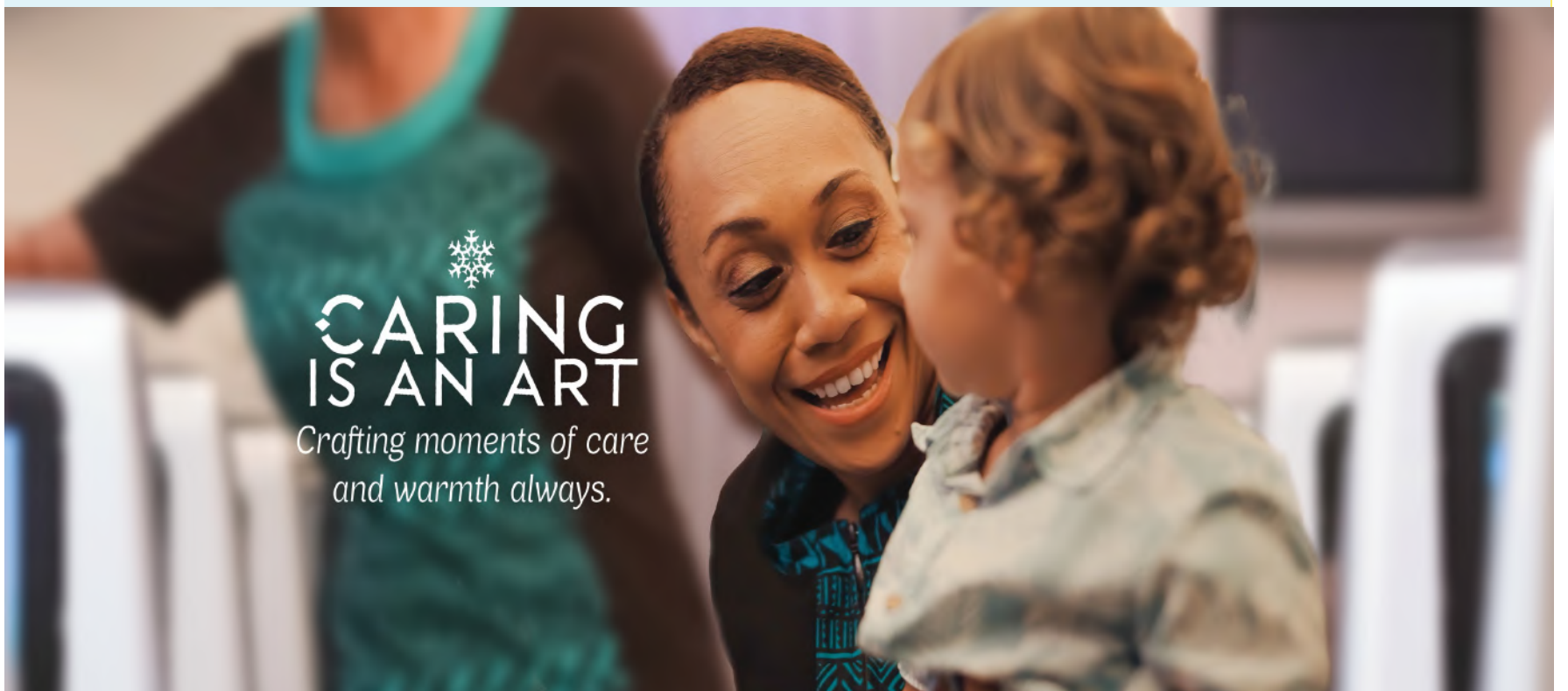
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
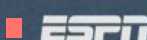


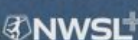
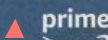


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 MAR 30 SAT / 7 PM ★	 MAY 17 FRI / 7:30 PM +♦	 JULY 6 SAT / 7 PM +♦
 APR 14 SUN / 5 PM +♦	 MAY 24 FRI / 7 PM ▲	 SEPT 7 SAT / 7 PM ★
 MAY 1 WED / 7 PM ○♦	 JUNE 16 SUN / 7 PM ○♦	 SEPT 20 FRI / 7:30 PM +♦
 MAY 5 SUN / 5 PM +♦	 JUNE 22 SAT / 7 PM ★	 OCT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

AWAY

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

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2024 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am leaderboard, scores: Scottie Scheffler among three tied for lead after Round 2

The former athletes and business executives may be exiting stage left, but the stars are here to stay for the weekend at the 2024 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler headlines the first page of the leaderboard on the Monterey Coast at 11 under, where he is joined in the lead position by Thomas Detry and Ludvig Åberg.

Scheffler signed for the round of the day with an 8-under 64 at Pebble Beach and climbed from an overnight share of 15th into a share of first along the way. The ball-striking maestro was his usual self, hitting 17 greens in regulation and ranking third from tee to green and third from approach, but it was his putting which propelled him to low honors.

Carding eight birdies in total, Scheffler saw four of his par breakers come from outside 8 feet. It began on No. 1 with a birdie conversion from 40 feet and continued around the turn with confident strokes on putts from 8 feet and 11 feet. A hefty diet of pars saw Scheffler arrive at the par-3 17th 9 under for the tournament before the putter once again took over.

After pulling his tee shot to the left side of the green, the Texan rolled in another one from distance with his 35-foot bomb to get to 10 under. A birdie on the par-5 finisher just inside 8 feet completed Scheffler's summit to the top as he holds a share of the 36-hole lead for already the second time in this young season. Scheffler looks for his first win on the PGA Tour since the 2023 Players Championship and will have to deal with a field of similar caliber. Åberg looks as ready as ever to nab another trophy, as do other winners from the 2023 season like Emiliano Grillo (-9), Keegan Bradley (-8), Matt Fitzpatrick (-7), Si Woo Kim (-7), Sam Burns (-7) and Collin Morikawa (-7).

A bit closer to the action are a couple of Scheffler's Ryder Cup teammates who have failed to enter the winner's circle in recent memory. Patrick Cantlay continued



his love affair with his home state of California with a solid second round to get to 10 under while Justin Thomas sits just one more back after two rounds of solid play.

The leaders

T1. Scottie Scheffler, Ludvig Åberg, Thomas Detry (-11) We must give Detry his flowers since this marks the second straight week he heads into the weekend in contention, but eyes inevitably are drawn to the other two names. Åberg did not have his best stuff around Pebble Beach Friday; he struggled with his iron play and lost nearly a stroke on approach. The Swede more than made up for it with his short game, as evidenced by an opening birdie from north of 40 feet and a making a putt from off the green for eagle on his following hole. Åberg tacked on four more birdies across his final 16 holes, converting efforts from 29 feet, 13

feet and 9 feet.

Other contenders

4. Patrick Cantlay (-10)
T5. Justin Thomas, Emiliano Grillo, Matthieu Pavon (-9)
T8. Keegan Bradley, Beau Hossler (-8)
T10. Collin Morikawa, Tom Hoge, Matt Fitzpatrick, Si Woo Kim, Peter Malnati, Sam Burns (-7)

There's a murderers' row behind the leaders, with major champions like Morikawa, Fitzpatrick, Bradley and Thomas who may prove to be the most dangerous. The 15-time PGA Tour winner is finding his form with four straight top-five finishes ahead of this week, and it could all materialize into his first victory since the 2022 PGA Championship. Thomas led the field in strokes gained tee to green among those who played Pebble Beach Friday and has proven to be up to the task if

the weather turns sour.

"I'm plenty comfortable enough and playing well enough to win," said Thomas. "I feel like I am. It's just about doing it and getting myself in contention more often and kind of feeling those feelings again. I mean, at AmEx it was unfamiliar, I hadn't been in a final group for a while. It's just continue to keep playing well and just keep working on the things I'm working on and just trying to not make the game any harder than it is really."

A tale of two days

Between the talent disparity and conditions easing at Pebble Beach Friday, the scoring difference between the two waves is notable. Those who played Spyglass Hill in Round 1 and Pebble Beach in Round 2 averaged nearly three strokes less than their counterparts on the other rotation in the first 36 holes. Last week's winner, Pavon, is the

lone player on the opposite end of the draw to be inside the top five with Morikawa, Fitzpatrick, Burns and Kim rounding out the top 10.

Round 1 scoring average —
Pebble Beach: -1.00 | Spyglass Hill: -1.68

Round 2 scoring average —
Pebble Beach: -2.66 | Spyglass Hill: -1.09

Weather update

According to the PGA Tour, this is how the rest of the tournament will play out with dodgy weather expected to come into play Sunday: Competitors will play 18 holes Saturday no matter what as a competitive advantage could be achieved by half the field if they were to play as many holes as possible. If Sunday is a wash due to rain and 60 mph winds, then they will play the final round Monday. If more than half the field completes their final round on Monday, players will come back Tuesday to finish whatever needs to be completed. If half the field does not finish the final round Monday, the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am will be shortened to 54 holes.

2024 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am updated odds and picks

Scottie Scheffler: 2-1
Ludvig Åberg: 4-1
Patrick Cantlay: 11/2
Justin Thomas: 9-1
Thomas Detry: 11-1
Matthieu Pavon: 28-1
Emiliano Grillo: 30-1
Collin Morikawa: 30-1
I think there is some value in Morikawa at 30-1 if this thing goes 72 holes, but if the third round does prove to be the final round due to weather and subsequent delays then Thomas at 9-1 might be the best option. He led the field from tee to green on Friday and left plenty of strokes out there. If the putter heats up ever so slightly, Thomas is capable of posting a third round in the mid 60s to make up a two-stroke deficit quickly.

By Patrick McDonald-CBS

Health News

CWM Hospital Overwhelmed, Urgently Needs Expansion and Upgrades



Fiji's Colonial War Memorial Hospital (CWM Hospital) is struggling to meet the growing demand for its services, according to Dr. Josese Turagava, General and Chief Pediatric Surgeon. He highlighted this following a World Cancer Day event, urging immediate action for expansion and infrastructure improvements.

Key challenges facing CWM Hospital:

Insufficient bed capacity:

The 500 beds are inadequate to serve the rapidly expanding population in the Lami, Suva,

and Nausori corridor. Patients with suspected appendicitis in Navua, for example, may wait 2-3 days for a bed at CWM.

Limited functioning operating theatres:

Only 3-4 of the hospital's 8 operating theatres are operational, hindering surgical capacity. Additionally, a recent incident of a ceiling collapse during surgery underscores the need for urgent maintenance and upgrades.

Long waiting lists for cancer patients:

The increasing number of cancer patients seeking treat-

ment, combined with limited resources, leads to extensive waiting lists. Many patients can only be seen after hours, further impacting efficiency.

Outdated equipment and infrastructure:

Essential equipment like the sterilizing machine, boiler, and laundry facilities are in dire need of replacement or repair. The burnt laundry room, outsourced for over two years, highlights the systemic infrastructure issues.

Dr. Turagava emphasizes the need for a long-term solution:

Expansion:

The hospital's current capacity cannot sustain the growing population. Expansion is crucial to meet the ever-increasing demand for healthcare services.

Infrastructure upgrade:

Renovations, maintenance, and replacement of outdated equipment are essential to ensure patient safety and improve service quality.

Sustainable solution:

Investing in long-term infrastructure and equipment upgrades will ensure the hospital's continued functionality and ability to adapt to future

needs.

Urgent action needed:

The increasing awareness of health issues, particularly cancer, is leading to more people seeking treatment, further straining the already overwhelmed CWM Hospital.

Dr. Turagava's call for immediate action highlights the critical need for government and healthcare leaders to address these challenges and invest in expanding and upgrading CWM Hospital to ensure it can effectively serve the growing population of Fiji.

Fiji Cancer Society Demands Equitable Access to Healthcare on World Cancer Day



The Fiji Cancer Society is calling on the government to ensure there is no cancer equity and everyone is provided easy access to their treatment, management and affiliated services regardless of anyone's age, gender and ethnicity.

CEO Belinda Chan made this statement to fji village News this morning as we celebrate World Cancer Day.

Chan says where any Fijians live does not determine

whether they have access to their treatment or not, and it's the responsibility of the government and Medical Services to ensure that our cancer patients are well looked after.

She says a lot of money is spent on treating cancer, and the Fiji Cancer Society believes collaboration between the public and private sectors is critical.

The CEO says the society has been raising awareness for

years on how to prevent cancer from being the third leading cause of death in the country, but now people need to take ownership of their health.

Fiji Cancer Society will be having a World Cancer Day Landmark Lighting at the Grand Pacific Hotel this afternoon.



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Lautoka FC Clinch Pillay Garments Champion vs Champion Title



Lautoka’s Churchill Park erupted in cheers on February 2nd, 2024, as the Tigers of Lautoka FC secured their victory in the prestigious Pillay Garments Champion vs Champion tournament. Despite a 2-2 draw in the second leg against Ba FC, their 2-1 win in the first leg sealed their fate as champions. This triumph marks a significant achievement for the team, solidifying their dominance in Fijian football.

The tournament, contested between the Digicel Fiji

Premier League winners (Lautoka FC) and the Courts IDC champions (Ba FC), witnessed two fiercely contested matches. The first leg, held on January 28th, saw Lautoka take the lead thanks to a well-placed strike by striker Mohammed ‘Bula’ Wasqa. While Ba fought back to equalize, their efforts were ultimately futile as Lautoka held on for a crucial win.

The second leg, played on home soil for Lautoka, promised another thrilling encounter. Ba came out strong, determined

to overturn the deficit. They found the net twice, raising hopes for a comeback. However, Lautoka’s resolute defense and unwavering resilience ensured they weathered the storm. The final whistle blew with the score locked at 2-2, confirming Lautoka’s overall victory and sparking jubilant celebrations among players and fans.

Head Coach Robbie Ferrer expressed his pride in his team’s performance, commending their fighting spirit and tactical discipline. “We knew Ba

wouldn’t make it easy, but we stuck to our plan and displayed incredible character,” he remarked. “This victory is a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved.” Meanwhile, Lautoka FC captain Sanele Tokotagi hailed the collective effort that led them to victory. “We are a team, and this win belongs to everyone – the players, the coaching staff, and most importantly, our loyal fans,” he declared. “Lifting this trophy is a special moment, and we are determined to build on

this success.”

The Tigers’ triumph in the Pillay Garments Champion vs Champion tournament solidifies their position as a powerhouse in Fijian football. Their dedication, strategic prowess, and unwavering determination have paved the way for this well-deserved victory. As they celebrate their achievement, all eyes will be on Lautoka FC to see what further heights they can reach in the upcoming season.



Dejunking Your Diet

The Drawbacks of Ultra-Processed Foods

Eating healthy isn't always easy. Expert-recommended diets often emphasize fresh, whole foods and home-cooked meals. But that can be expensive and time-consuming. Highly processed foods are often cheap and convenient. But they also tend to be high in calories, added sugar, saturated fat, and salt, and low in fiber.

Scientists are starting to learn that highly processed foods can have certain effects on your body that may make sticking to your healthy eating goals even harder. Eating too much of them may lead to weight gain and increase your risk for certain diseases, like cancer, diabetes, and obesity. What Are Ultra-Processed Foods?

Most foods that we eat are processed to some extent—they're modified from how they exist in nature. Chopping, grinding, drying, cooking, and freezing are all forms of food processing. Some forms of processing are good for your health. For example, cooking meat and pasteurizing milk can help prevent foodborne diseases. But if your food is processed too much, it may be harmful to your health.

Ultra-processed foods are those that have undergone the greatest level of processing. As a general rule, ultra-processed foods are those that have been made using additives, ingredients that you wouldn't likely have in your home kitchen. These include things like hydrogenated oils, isolated proteins, and high-fructose corn syrup. Ultra-processed foods are often made using industrial processes that you can't easily do at home.

"If you're standing in the grocery store, in one of the middle aisles, and the thing that you're holding is in a crinkly package, you're probably holding an ultra-processed food," says Dr. Alexandra DiFeliceantonio, a neuroscientist who studies health behaviors at Virginia Tech.

Ultra-processed foods are designed to be low cost and have long shelf lives. They're tasty, convenient, and ready to eat.

Examples include carbonated soft drinks, chips, chicken nuggets, and sausages. Having too much of these in your diet may result in overeating and can be harmful to your health.

Understanding Overeating
It's difficult for scientists to study exactly how ultra-processed foods affect overeating. That requires carefully controlling people's diets for weeks at a time.

But NIH metabolism researcher Dr. Kevin Hall has done just that. In a recent study, he compared calorie intake and weight gain in participants who ate a highly processed diet with those who ate a minimally processed diet. Study participants stayed at NIH's Metabolic Clinical Research Unit for four weeks, spending two weeks on each diet. Both diets offered the same amount of calories, sugar, fiber, fat, sodium, and carbohydrates on a daily basis. Participants could eat as much or as little as they wanted.

When people were on the diet with ultra-processed foods, they ate about 500 more calories each day. They also gained about 2 pounds on average. In contrast, when they were on the less-processed diet, they lost about 2 pounds.

The differences weren't due to different nutrients in the overall diet. And, the participants rated the meals on both diets as equally pleasant. So why did people eat more of the diet filled with ultra-processed foods? The researchers aren't sure.

Hall's team is now looking at what else might be in ultra-processed foods that leads people to overeat. The brain may react differently to those foods, he says, or the gut may send out different signals after they're digested.

The tendency for ultra-processed foods to lead to overeating may partly explain the recent rise in obesity. "But we rely on ultra-processed foods too much to get rid of them," Hall says. "They're tasty, they're convenient, and



it doesn't take much time or effort or skill to prepare them."

Hall hopes that a better understanding of what's causing increased calorie consumption can help guide how such foods are made, or which ones people choose to eat.

"If we had ways to target problematic foods by understanding how they cause overeating, that might help manufacturers reformulate those foods so that they no longer cause problems," says Hall. "Or it might help policymakers come up with ways to regulate potentially problematic foods."

Changing the Brain

One way that ultra-processed foods might lead to overeating is by altering the brain. DiFeliceantonio's team is using MRI scans to see how ultra-processed foods affect the brain's reward system. These are the parts of the brain that are activated by pleasure and drive us to seek it out. DiFeliceantonio is studying whether a diet high in ultra-processed foods affect this system, and

if the changes lead to people eating more when they're not hungry.

If consuming ultra-processed foods and drinks might make you want more, does that mean you can get addicted to them? Right now, it's not clear whether ultra-processed foods are addictive. But some studies suggest they might be.

"These ultra-processed, highly rewarding foods have way more in common with a cigarette than they do with an apple or an orange or black beans," says Dr. Ashley Gearhardt, a clinical psychologist who studies overeating behaviors at the University of Michigan. "Some of the same brain circuitry turns on when we're craving drugs as when we're craving these ultra-processed foods."

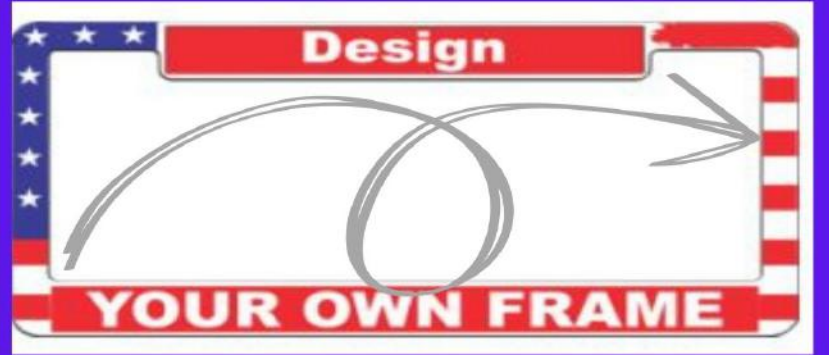
Gearhardt says that eating ultra-processed foods may lead to a compulsive habit. This means you have difficulty cutting back even when you want to. This is similar to what happens with addictive substanc-

es. Addictive substances can also cause withdrawal symptoms when you stop taking them. Symptoms can include irritability, agitation, depression, and strong cravings for the substance. Gearhardt and others are studying whether cutting back on ultra-processed foods can cause similar withdrawal symptoms. This research may help explain why eating healthier can be harder for some people.

"Right now, we tell people they should feel better if they're eating healthier," Gearhardt says. "But we hear a lot of people say: 'When I start to eat healthier, I feel so irritable and agitated. My cravings are so strong that I don't feel better. I feel worse.'"

If we recognize that these symptoms can occur, we could give people strategies to manage them, says Gearhardt. That might make it easier for people to change their eating habits. If you're looking for ways to start eating healthier, see the Wise Choices Box for tips.

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SUPER BOWL LVIII!



NFL owners today awarded Super Bowl LVIII to Las Vegas. Slated for February 11, 2024, the Super Bowl will take place at the recently opened Allegiant Stadium and marks the first time Las Vegas and the state of Nevada will welcome the Super Bowl, further solidifying the destination as the Greatest Arena on Earth™.

The Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) and Las Vegas Raiders were invited by the National Football League to collaborate on a bid to host Super Bowl LVIII. After a nearly one-year process, the bid was presented to and approved by the 32 clubs earlier today in Dallas. “Being named a Super Bowl host city is a defining moment in the history of Las Vegas,” said Steve Hill, CEO and president of the LVCVA. “An event of this magnitude

combined with the energy of Las Vegas is going to be unmatched. Our entire city is committed to making Super Bowl LVIII the most electrifying sports spectacle ever. The NFL has been an incredible partner, and we look forward to working with their team, the Host Committee and our partners across our destination to showcase Las Vegas as ‘The Greatest Arena on Earth.’”

Responsible for the destination’s collective hosting effort, the Las Vegas Super Bowl Host Committee is comprised of community leaders in business, tourism, gaming, sports, entertainment and government. The executive committee includes Chair Maury Gallagher, CEO of Allegiant Travel Company; Vice Chair Sandra Douglass Morgan, Of Counsel at Covington & Burling LLP; and committee members Jeremy Aguero, Chief

Operations and Analytics Officer for the Las Vegas Raiders; Anthony Carano, President/COO of Caesars Entertainment; Clark County Commissioner Jim Gibson; Steve Hill, CEO/President of the LVCVA; Virginia Valentine, President of the Nevada Resort Association; Dan Ventrelle, President of the Las Vegas Raiders; and Steve Zanella, Chief Commercial Officer of MGM Resorts International. As planning begins for the event, additional entities will be asked to join the host committee to expand its reach and representation in the community.

“From the moment Allegiant Stadium was approved, we knew it was only a matter of time until Las Vegas welcomed the Super Bowl. We couldn’t be happier about today’s announcement,” said Maury Gallagher, chairman of the Las Vegas Super Bowl

Host Committee. “Las Vegas does everything bigger and brighter, and this committee is looking forward to creating a uniquely thrilling experience for fans, players and staff.”

As a proven and unparalleled location for large-scale sports and special events, Las Vegas is an ideal destination for the Super Bowl. Only in Vegas can fans enjoy over-the-top sporting events, an unrivaled lineup of entertainment, world-class culinary offerings and much more in one weekend. With an estimated total economic impact of more than \$500 million based on previous Super Bowls, Super Bowl LVIII will significantly benefit the greater Las Vegas area and the entire State of Nevada—through direct spending, additional tax dollar generation, increased room occupancy and job creation. In addition to the total eco-

nommic impact, the Super Bowl will deliver an unprecedented amount of positive media exposure for the destination and ensure a lasting legacy for the region through a variety of NFL and Host Committee community initiatives over the next two years. In addition to hosting Super Bowl LVIII, Las Vegas is home to the upcoming 2022 NFL Pro Bowl presented by Verizon and the 2022 NFL Draft.

Las Vegas will celebrate the momentous announcement with a marquee takeover at 5 p.m. PST on Wednesday, Dec. 15. Marquees along the Las Vegas Strip, the Fremont Street Experience and throughout the destination will participate in the celebration.

Super Bowl 2024: The underrated matchup that may decide whether the Chiefs or 49ers hoist the Lombardi Trophy

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Sports

The poster features a central image of rugby players from the All Blacks and Fiji. The All Blacks players are in their iconic all-black kit, while the Fiji players are in their white and blue kit. One Fiji player is prominently shown holding a rugby ball. Above the players is a shield-shaped logo for the Steinlager Ultra Low Carb Series, featuring a silver fern. The background includes an American flag on the left and a tropical beach scene with palm trees on the right.

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Kulas Soar with Renewed Hope in Quest for Olympic Qualification



The Fiji Women's Football team, nicknamed the Kulas, are ready to take flight in the upcoming OFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers in Samoa. Fueled by the sting of their 2020 final defeat to New Zealand, they aim to reach new heights this year.

Experienced Blend and Renewed Energy:

Head Coach Angeline Chua expresses her faith in the 23-member squad, featuring a potent mix of:

Proven leaders: Top senior players who shone at the South Pacific

Games.

Rising stars: Young talents from the Young Kulas team.

Returning veterans: Koleta Likuculacula, Seruwaia Vasutoga, and Adi Anasimeci Volitikoro bring experience after a year playing in Australia.

International firepower: US-based Preeya Singh adds her attacking prowess.

Teamwork Makes the Dream Work:

Chua emphasizes the positive team spirit, where senior play-

ers mentor their younger counterparts, fostering a strong cultural foundation within the camp.

Strategic Ambition:

The Kulas aim to dominate their group, aiming for wins and high goal margins. This strategy positions them strategically for potential later clashes with defending champions New Zealand.

Squad Powerhouse:

The rewrite condenses the player list while highlighting key individual strengths and positions:

Goalkeepers: Filomena Racea, Luisa Tamani Tamanitoakula

Defenders: Adi Litia Bacaniceva, Asela Cokansiga, Adi Anasimeci Manutawake, Kasanita Taufu, Angeline Rekha, Selai Grace Tikoisuva, Sisilia Kuladina

Midfielders: Cema Nasau, Koleta Matamanitvuto, Preeya Singh, Elesi Tabunase, Pijila Kaliwaca, Evivi Buka, Unaisi Tuberi, Mereseni Waqali

Forwards: Seruwaia Laulaba, Sofi Diyalowai, Narieta Leba, Ema Mareia, Sonia Alfred



Sports

HISTORIC WINS FOR IRELAND WOMEN AND ARGENTINA MEN AT HSBC SVNS PERTH



Argentina are the 2024 champions of the Perth 7's. Los Pumas 7's won the tournament by convincingly defeating the hosts, Australia in the final. A sell-out crowd of 18,000 made sure that the event was memorable and sees Western Australia successfully becoming the new home of Australia's stop on the world circuit. In what was a repeat from the Cape Town Sevens Final, Argentina defeated Australia to secure the title. It was a convince 45-12 win in the final in South Africa in December while it was 31-5 this time around in Perth.

The final in Perth saw Marcos Moneta opening the scoring. From there the South Americans took total control as veteran German Schultz showed his strength to burst through the defense. Matteo Graziano added two further Argentine tries and Moneta added his second too.

Australia's wait for some points was ended late in the contest. Matthew Gonzalez got the home side on the scoreboard. It was Argentina's match, and tournament, though. The victory marked Argentina's first ever tournament triumph in the Australian edition of the World Sevens Circuit. Earlier on in the day, Argentina booked their spot in

the final by defeating Ireland 24-5. Australia downed Fiji in the other Semi Final. In earlier tournament action,

Argentina overcame Spain 28-17 to secure a place in the final four.

Argentina's group stage was also impressive. Los Pumas 7's were unbeaten. The South Americans opened with a 28-5 win over Spain and also defeated Canada 29-5 on day one in Perth. Argentina secured top spot in the pool with a 19-5 win over South Africa. A sell-out crowd amid a party atmosphere in Perth witness Ireland's women make history and end Australia's winning run.

Ireland won the third event of the women's HSBC SVNS 2024 in Perth on Sunday, beating Australia 19-14 in the final to spark jubilant scenes at the final whistle.

In front of the biggest rugby crowd in the Western Australia capital since the Wallabies drew with the Springboks in a men's 15s Tri Nations Series match in 2017, Ireland claimed their first series win in only their second final, ending a 29-game losing streak to Australia in the process.

The sell-out crowd at HBF Park, hosting a SVNS event for the first time, were treated to near-perfect weather condi-

tions as both Australia teams made the final against the odds, but they didn't get the perfect ending, with Ireland ultimately spoiling the party – and sparking one their own.

Ireland's first victory "a long time coming"

Australia and Ireland both lost a game in the pool stage, including Australia's first defeat of the season (against Great Britain), while Teagan Levi (AUS), missing through suspension since the first game of the tournament, made an eventful return to action.

She put the kick-off into touch on the full, then immediately forced the turnover that led to Charlotte Caslick's opening score.

Amee-Leigh Murphy-Crowe (IRE) hit back immediately as concerted Ireland pressure began to force Australia into mistakes. Levi again put the kick-off out on the full before Caslick saw yellow after a series of Australia infringements. Lucy Mulhall put Ireland in front from the ensuing passage of play.

It was all Australia at the start of the second half, with Levi – who else? – drawing them level after a switch pass from Caslick, seconds after she'd returned to the field. But Ireland weren't to be denied. Eve Higgins scored from their only

sustained attack of the half and they held out to make history. Ireland coach Alan Temple-Jones was almost speechless: "Playing Australia in Australia is an unbelievable opportunity for the girls," he said. "We're extremely chuffed ... lost for words. We've had a good focus these last two weeks. We had a lot to improve on after Dubai and Cape Town ... unreal."

Captain Mulhall said the win had been "a long time coming". She said: "It means a lot and we've been on a long journey. This is massive for women's Irish rugby; we'll be sure to celebrate.

Resurgent Great Britain boosted by bronze Great Britain claimed the bronze medal – just their second in HSBC Sevens history – with a maiden series victory over USA.

Playing without injured captain Abbie Brown, GB ran in four tries, including a stunning kick-and-chase effort from Isla Norman-Bell. The New Zealand-raised flyer is fast becoming the star of an improving British team.

Earlier, Ireland had put a poor semi-final record of just one win from seven behind them to overpower Great Britain 31-7, themselves competing in just their second HSBC

SVNS semi-final. Mulhall was the difference with two of Ireland's five tries in an individual display of pace, power and experience. Norman-Bell gave Great Britain some consolation with a stunning solo effort from inside her own half.

Australia, without the other Levi sister Maddison for the entire tournament through suspension, were too good for USA in the other semi-final. The Aussies had won both women's SVNS 2024 events so far after closely fought finals in Dubai and Cape Town, but hadn't reached a series final on home soil for five years before this weekend.

Despite suffering another setback early on when they lost Bienne Terita to injury, Australia eventually overwhelmed a resolute USA defence to win 24-7, the pick of the tries a 60-metre solo effort from Dominique du Toit.

Ireland leap to fourth in the overall SVNS standings, with Australia still well clear at the top. Great Britain are the other big winners from the weekend, moving out of the relegation zone for the first time this season.

The HSBC SVNS 2024 is in Vancouver, Canada for the next event in the series, on the weekend of 23-25 February 2024.

Sports

AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am Shortened to 54 Holes, Wyndham Clark Wins

The AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am has officially been shortened to 54 holes due to extreme weather, making Wyndham Clark the winner of the PGA Tour's second signature event of 2024.

A statement released by PGA Tour officials Sunday evening cited safety concerns and a "Shelter in Place" order for Monterey County as the reasons for the tournament's early conclusion.

"The storm affecting the Monterey Peninsula throughout the day Sunday is forecast to continue into the early hours of Monday with very strong winds. Although conditions are forecast to improve through the morning Monday, after consultation with Monterey County emergency authorities, who have implemented a Shelter in Place order until early tomorrow morning for the greater Pebble Beach community, and out of an abundance of caution for the safety of all constituents, there will be no play on Monday. Therefore, in accordance with the PGA Tour Regulations the tour-

nament results will be final through the conclusion of 54 holes," the statement read.

Although one round shorter, the event marks Clark's third victory on the PGA Tour. During the 2023 season, the Denver, Colo., native won the Wells Fargo Championship followed by his maiden major championship, the U.S. Open at LACC. "This tournament is very special to me and my caddie, John, mainly because it's both of ours favorite place in the world," Clark said Sunday night in a call with media after being declared the winner. "My caddie grew up in San Jose ... he has always told me 'Wyndham, if there's one thing you do in your career, I don't care if you win a hundred times or one time, I just hope one of them is at Pebble Beach.'"

During Saturday's round at the iconic oceanside venue, Clark shot a course-record 60 that included two eagles, one bogey and eight birdies. Although Clark knew a 54-hole finish was possible,



he said he "wasn't banking on it" and simply kept in the zone during his record-breaking tear.

"I really wasn't thinking much until you kind of get to that back nine where those last few holes, I was just, you know, see ball, hit ball, try to hit it where I wanted to. I really had a

good feel on the greens. So in my mind I was like, all right, let's just get us to where we're putting because the hole seemed like a bucket today," Clark said after turning in his 60. Ludvig Åberg, the 24-year-old Swedish star rising in the pro ranks, finished in solo second place at 16 under par, with France's Matthieu

Pavon at 15 under in solo third.

Wind gusts reached 60 mph on Sunday, causing the entire final round to be initially postponed and then cancelled. The PGA Tour season continues next with the WM Phoenix Open, where Scottie Scheffler will look to three-peat.

Wyndham Clark earns \$3.6M, 700 FedExCup Points at AT&T Pebble Beach



The finale of the scheduled 72-hole competition already was washed out earlier in the day due to severe weather that promised to linger. It had been rescheduled for Monday.

Instead, it's the latest tournament to be reduced to 54 holes since the 2016 Zurich Classic of New Orleans when the annual stop in the bayou was an individual competition.

Having been declared final and official after being shortened to 54 holes, Wyndham Clark earns 700 FedExCup points and \$3.6 million. His three-round aggregate of 17-under 199 included only 60 strokes for a course record in the third and what was ultimately the final round on Saturday.

Although Clark wasn't as long of a shot to prevail at Pebble Beach as the first four winners of 2024, he still was available pre-tournament at +8000 at BetMGM.

The 30-year-old now has three PGA TOUR victories in the last nine months. He was +6600 to win when

he broke through at the Wells Fargo Championship last May and +8000 when he answered with his title at the U.S. Open a little over a month later.

Ludvig Åberg goes into the annals as the runner-up on the Monterey Peninsula. The Swede finished one back. After sitting at or near the top of the betting board just about every time he pegs it, he was stretched to +2800 for the second Signature Event of the season. And the week after Matthieu Pavon was a first-time TOUR winner at the Farmers Insurance Open, the Frenchman checked up in third at Pebble Beach. He was +9000 to go back-to-back.

Elsewhere, defending champion Justin Rose (+6600) finished in a three-way share of 11th place. Tournament co-favorites Scottie Scheffler and Rory McIlroy (both at +850) placed T6 and T66, respectively.

Newly minted professional Nick Dunlap (+9000), who qualified for the AT&T Pebble Beach when he won The American Express and, as an amateur, finished alone in last in the 80-man field.

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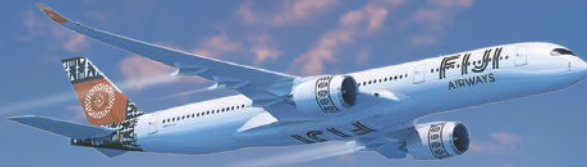
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