



# THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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## Nav Purewal Wins Mesquite Amateur Championship 2023



Continued P54

Nav Purewal from Aldergrove BC who Played for Canada in 2010 2012 2014 Can Am Fiji Cup won the Mesquite Amateur Championship 2023 in a three-way playoff. Winning on the 6th playoff hole. This is the first time in its history that an international player has won the tournament. The tournament had 340 Golfers ranging from 21 to 88 years in age.



## Independence Cup 2023 Champions Combine Bros Sacramento



DENTAL OFFICE OF DR. VISHNU SHANKAR

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# Fijian Government



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**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**  
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**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**  
VILIAME GAVOKA

## 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 to all over the world.

The paper's popularity has grown immensely in recent years due to its critical approach in impressing the need for charitable organizations to rise up in all occasions to help Fiji and the people back home. Visitors from around the world have commended the paper on its stand to serve the community. The US Fiji Times understands that like in any other field, there is competition and competing with "The largest newspaper out of Fiji" has been a difficult task for newer publications. This is not because of its magnitude and coverage, but because of its stability and growth

capabilities.

The writers of the paper comprise some of Fiji's best. Even though they are not too visible in social functions, they are taking up their challenges very effectively. The marketing strategy handles by our CEO/Publisher Mr. Rocky Ali is the hallmark of the papers current strength. Despite lacking the front line journalist experience, he makes up for the deficiency with the sheer ability to jeep the media wagon rolling.

His insatiable love to be involved with the community to cherish in this very noble cause is worthy of higher recommendation. We have a very vibrant community, so despite the paper being issued free, the expectation of the

community is very high. The coverage of all the major events is a mist for the paper and we feel very proud to be associated with major organizations to see that their events are properly covered with pictures, stories and awareness via our social media platforms.

The paper is being also sent to countries like Fiji, NZ, Australia, Canada, England and Sweden for Fijians abroad to also get the feel of the luxuries of USA. The feedback has been overwhelming in this regard and it has become a trend for many organizations to rely on US Fiji Times in reaching the desired success with adequate coverage.

The paper will strive to serve the community with the best of its ability and assures the community that there will be quality reporting at all times. Vinaka – Rocky Buksh

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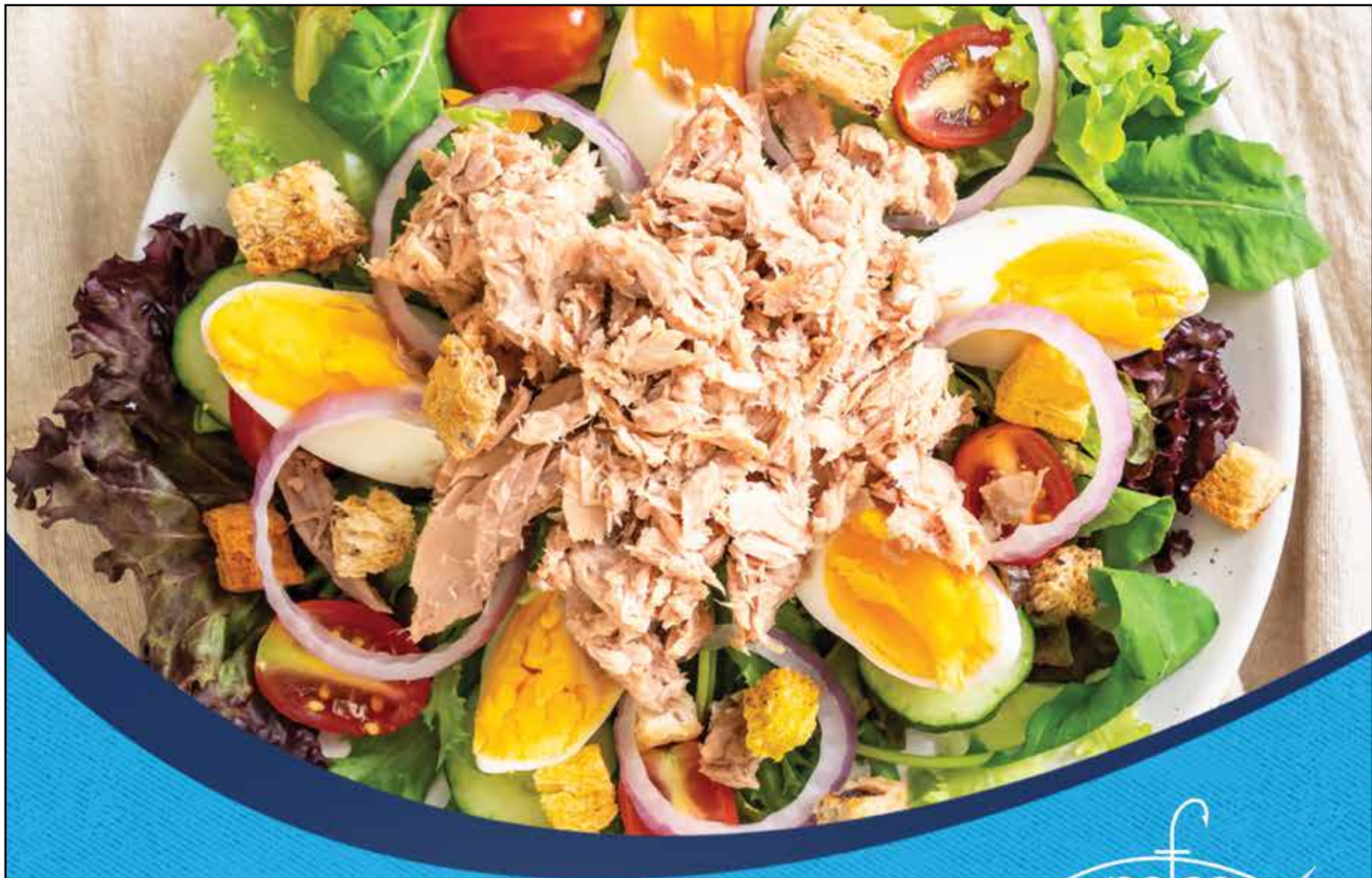
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## Fiji News

# FRA gets \$387.6 million PWD to be re-established to improve the state of rural roads

The Fiji Roads Authority is allocated a budget of \$387.6 million while the coalition government has also re-established the Public Works Department (PWD) to improve the state of rural roads around the country with an initial setup cost of \$5 million. While delivering the 2023/2024 National Budget, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Professor Biman Prasad says they are going to change the approach towards the planning, construction and maintenance of our roads. He says in the last eight years, a total of around \$3.1 billion was spent by FRA without any strategic plan, without much priority and without proper costing. Prof. Prasad further says this compromised the standard of infrastructure including roads and led to significant wastage of public funds. He says they need to do more with less money. The Deputy Prime Minister further says they need to improve the value for money as there has been a lot of wastage and funding of "novelty type" over designed expensive roads in Fiji.



He says the new FRA Board is fully in sync with this and they have been working closely with the Government to rethink some of the scoping and design works, rethink about the modalities of awarding road contracts, including closer monitoring and supervision of contractors. The Finance Minister further says there is also a need to open up

and encourage the participation of local contractors through direct contracting for smaller contracts. Prof. Prasad further says major emphasis is being placed on the need to ensure adequate maintenance of Fiji's road network and as such an increased allocation of \$100.6 million is allocated for road maintenance, \$42.0 million

for completed maintenance and emergency works, \$60 million is provided for the renewal and resurfacing of roads, \$35.4 million is allocated for completion of the ongoing bridge projects, \$18.3 million for the rural roads programme, \$13.2 million for the upgrade of Queen Elizabeth Drive, and \$82.2 million for the Transport Infrastructure.

He says the Investment Sector Project is financed through the Asian Development Bank and World Bank loans of US\$100 million and US\$50 million, respectively. The Finance Minister further says the Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Service and Transport is allocated a sum of \$98.3 million.

## FNU is part of the 2023 Fiji Showcase

Good news as Fiji National University will also have a booth at the Fiji Showcase in the Vodafone Arena, Suva from today to next week Saturday. FNU Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba says their booth would provide the public with a convenient location to apply for Semester 2, 2023. Professor Nabobo-Baba says the University is excited to be part of one of the biggest events in the city's calendar and looks forward to providing awareness and service to the public on their programmes and course offerings. She encourages everyone to have an opportunity to visit their booth and apply and they can receive an instant offer later, and also that is a great initiative to be connected to the communities and the people from different demographics, locations, backgrounds, and ages. She says their programmes include industry relevant with practical components that provide



their graduates with the skills and knowledge to be workforce ready, and they recognize as well that quality education is an inherent right and it stands as the cornerstone for personal

development, social progress, and sustainable advancement. She adds interested students can apply now for Semester 2 studies via the FNU website at <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/studentor>

[emailtoadmission@fnu.ac.fj](mailto:emailtoadmission@fnu.ac.fj) For further information or queries, students can also Text (Toll-Free) 857 Vodafone and Ink users. Alternatively, applicants can visit any of the FNU cam-

puses to submit applications. The campuses are located in Koronivia, Nasinu, Samabula, Ba, Natabua, Namaka and Labasa. Classes for Semester 2 begin on July 17th 2023.



## Fiji News

# This budget will build a strong economy and society – Consumer Council of Fiji

This is a budget that will build a stronger economy and an equitable society. This was stated by the Consumer Council of Fiji as they welcomed the significant measures announced in the 2023-2024 national budget that was aimed at bolstering social welfare assistance and alleviating the burden on consumers' everyday expenses, especially in times of global economic uncertainties. Council Chief Executive Officer Seema Shandil stated that the new budget has allocated substantial resources to expand and enhance social welfare assistance programs across the nation. Shandil says the 15 percent increase in social welfare assistance and 25 percent increase in allowance for those over 70 years of age will increase the purchasing power of the needy population and will have a cushioning effect on the vulnerable and the lower and middle-income earners. She says the budget introduces substantial funding for social welfare programs, ensures affordability of essentials and reaffirms the government's commitment to ensuring the well-being and prosperity of Fijian consumers. Shandil adds the social assistance mentioned above has been further complemented with the continuation of VAT exemption on 22 essential items – this will enhance the standard of living and address the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. She also mentioned that the exemption of VAT on prescribed medication is a resolute step toward ensuring that individuals have affordable access to essential healthcare resources. She says this is a key announcement in the national budget that would ensure consumers have adequate and appropriate medical care. She adds this will actively promote public health and well-being, especially for those who depend on medication to manage chronic conditions or address acute medical needs. Shandil says this policy announcement also demonstrates a deep understanding of the challenges faced by individuals requiring regular access to vital healthcare treatments. The



CEO says they also welcome the continuation of the public private partnership whereby Fijians with combined family income of less than \$30,000 will be able to access health services in selected private. Furthermore, Shandil says the back-to-school support of \$45 million, continuation of free education for and secondary school students and the introduction of the Fijian scholarship scheme is another good news for consumers as it means they will not have to fork over money from their already constrained wallets and will be able to use this money for other necessities. She says the provision of free education is a transformative measure that ensures every student has the opportunity to pursue their academic goals, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Shandil says by removing financial barriers to education, the government is fostering a more inclusive society, where talent and potential can flourish unimpeded. The Council also stated that while the VAT rate has increased to 15 percent, they note there has been significant reductions in fiscal duties from 32 percent to 15 percent on a range of food products (canned mackerel,

corned mutton, corned beef, prawns and duck) as well as imported lamb/sheep. They say this will ensure that consumers are able to enjoy a variety of meals apart from the locally grown fresh produce. Shandil says the Council is emphasizing that these reductions in the excise duties must be passed down to the consumers, to ensure that consumers reap the benefits of it. She adds traders are cautioned to recognize their

responsibilities towards consumers and play a proactive role in easing the burden on them. The CEO went on to say they will also be closely monitoring the market to ensure the benefits actually trickle down to consumers. She says given the health and socioeconomic havoc which NCDs is dishing out, the Council also welcomes the imposition of higher excise duty on alcohol and tobacco products, as well as the carbon-

ated sweetened beverages, ice cream, snacks, sweet biscuits, and confectionaries. She also says the new elevated prices for the above mentioned products would encourage consumers to rethink consuming unhealthy foods, and opt for healthier foods and consumption habits. Shandil says the fact that these were considered and announced in the budget reinforces that the voice of consumers has been reflected in the national budget.



## Fiji News

# FLP describes 2023/2024 budget as a flat budget

The Fiji Labour Party has described the 2023/2024 National Budget as a flat budget as it says it is devoid of any innovative measures to grow the economy and address poverty. Reacting to the budget announcement by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Professor Biman Prasad, FLP Leader Mahendra Chaudhry says the budget is structured largely along the lines of the World Bank and the Fiscal Review Committee reports, except for the retention of the zero-rated VAT on basic food and other household items - under strong pressure from the people. He says the rich seem to have done pretty well, seeing that the Minister has not deemed it necessary to tax dividend income. Chaudhry further says the top personal tax rate has been reduced from 44 percent to 39 percent, and the social responsibility tax for those earning over \$270,000 annually, has been scrapped. He adds a glaring omission in the Finance Minister's address was any mention of the government's plans on employment creation and the retention of skilled workforce migrating abroad by the hundreds for a



more secure future. The FLP Leader says Professor Prasad has let the workers down by deferring consideration of a much-expected increase in the minimum basic wage, contrary to his campaign promises of 2018 and 2022. Chaudhry says the restoration of the FNPF contribution rate to 18 percent is welcome, but the grouping of the fund's pensioners with

the recipients of social welfare benefits is deplorable. He says the right thing to do was to have restored their pre-2012 annuity rates, and to simultaneously revert the unlawfully reduced current rate of 8 percent to the pre-2012 rate of 15 percent. The former Prime Minister adds the budget has let down our cash crop farmers by restricting farm input subsidies

to those planting export crops. He says sugarcane farmers are equally disturbed that promises of an increase in the minimum guaranteed price of cane have not been kept. Chaudhry further says the Minister's announcement that a new strategic plan is to be prepared to boost cane production to restore viability to the flagging industry sounds like the failed promises of the

FijiFirst government. He adds another promise not kept is doubling the welfare payment rates. He says the two-tier increase from \$100 per month to \$115 and \$125 per month for those between 60-69 years and over 70 years, respectively, is not only inadequate, bearing in mind the high cost of living but it's also discriminatory.

## Fiji needs to expand its economy to help pay the national debt - Kamikamica

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica says Fiji needs to expand its economy and help in paying the debt of the nation. Kamikamica highlighted this after the announcement of the 2023/2024 National Budget. He says the ministry will work together in rebuilding the nation. He says there is an allocation of money for the Small and Medium Enterprises in the budget that will help the ministry to continue providing the assistance that they require as their contribution to the economy is significant. Kamikamica says they will continue to push and encourage MSME's as they have many opportunities in shaping the lives of the people and the country. He further says they will coordinate

and collaborate with the Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation as they are also given MSME's allocation. The Deputy Prime Minister says the fiscal duty on sheep and lamb meats is reduced to

zero while the beef meat duty reduced from 32% to 22% due to the demand for consumption. He says with the perspective of keeping promises the youths are supposed to be very happy with the TELS debt being written off which was possible with

the cooperation of all three parties. The Deputy Prime Minister says he is also happy with the allocations given to the Ministry of Health, Education, Women, Agriculture and I-taukei as required those amounts to efficiently run their respective

Ministries. He says they will be spending the allocate in an organized way. The Ministry Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises & Communications is allocated \$116.5 million for the next 12 months.



Fiji News

# Gates open for 2023 Fiji Showcase

Gates to 2023 Fiji Showcase have opened and you can expect amazing deals at the Vodafone Arena as there are more than 100 booths for people to visit and also enjoy awesome entertainment from local and international performers as well. Autocare Executive Laukesh Lal says they have 10 booths and the main reason for them to be at Fiji Showcase is to see that people benefit. He says they will have great deals on their TVs and sofas and they also have a wide range of products such as plastic ware, kids toys, homeware, kitchenware and other furniture. Lal says there are a lot of companies at Fiji Showcase this year and the arena is competitive but it depends on the people and the deals the exhibitors offer. Motibhai Group Marketing and Business Development Manager, Abraham Gomes says they have been coming to Fiji Showcase every year and this year, they will exhibit international brands such as Pepsodent and Huggies and Kotex. He says every customer who comes to

their booths and purchases any product will walk away with a surprise gift. Gomes is urging people to come and experience the new feel of Fiji Showcase and see the exhibits at not only

their booths but the other booths as well. 2023 Fiji Showcase will be held from today to next Saturday July 8th at the Vodafone Arena. Laisa Vulakoro and Paw Patrol mascots will perform at

12.30pm today on the Vodafone Entertainment Stage. The Paw Patrol mascots will also perform at 2.30pm, 4.30pm and 6.30pm. Australian entertainers Dauntless Movement Dance

Crew will perform at 1.30pm and 5.30pm today. Tua will perform at 4pm while Vegas 6 will perform at 7 tonight. Tickets for adults are \$4 and \$3 for a child under the age of 12.



# Court allows Voss to travel to London

Retired Fiji Link CEO Shaenaz Voss who is charged with a count of failure to comply with the requirements of the operator's airline security programme has been allowed by the Nausori Magistrates Court visit her terminally ill brother. Voss is charged in relation to unlawful carriage of firearms on board a flight from Nausori to Labasa Airport on 8th October, 2018. She pleaded not guilty to the charge.

This case is in relation to the bodyguards of the former Attorney General, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum allegedly carrying firearms on the Fiji Link flight. According to the particulars in her charge sheet, Voss on the 8th of October in 2018 at Nausori Airport, being the Chief Executive Officer of Fiji Link allegedly failed to comply with the requirements of Fiji Link Operation Airline Security programme on board domestic Flight FJ32. The court was told that Voss wants to travel this Saturday. She applied for a variation to her bail conditions



yesterday.

The court says she can go to London to visit her brother who has suffered a stroke and also

suffers from a heart condition. Voss is to deposit \$5,000 as personal surety and surrender her passport upon her return.

The Magistrate says as an added precaution, a surety, Voss' other brother is to surrender his travel documents as well and get it

back when Voss returns. The matter will be called in the Nausori Magistrates Court on the 7th of August.

## Fiji News

# UniFiji calls on Fiji Higher Education Commission chairperson to clean the mess in the Commission

The University of Fiji's Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem is calling on the new chairperson of the Fiji Higher Education Commission to clean up the mess in the Commission as they did not know what it was doing, or its officers were being deliberately unfair when they advised the Minister of Economy annually on how higher education institutions should be funded. Professor Shameem says the funding model used by the Commission was based on a draft formula that was not even approved by Parliament. She says the higher education institutions were being funded in an ad hoc and arbitrary manner leading the University of Fiji to believe that the funding was not allocated to fairness and service to young people who should be supported in their education instead, it was based on cronyism, favoritism and a misapplication of the funding criteria contained in the FHEC Act. The Vice Chancellor says Commission's fallback position when explanations were sought by the University was that, due to the funding model not being approved by Parliament, FHEC advised the Minister on the amount that each institution should be given annually and the Minister made the final decision. She says however, when the University



asked the Ministry of Finance about the formula applied for the University, its officers, who came from the Minister himself, pointed back to the Commission for determining the funding criteria for each higher education institution, particularly universities, and the Ministry just followed the Commission. She says such passing of the buck from the Commission to the Ministry of Finance and then back to the Commission like a yo-yo, does not augur well for those

involved. Professor Shameem further says when they consider the vast difference in the funding of the three universities in Fiji it lends itself to the question of why there is such favoritism in the Commissions' governance decisions when the University of Fiji is the only university out of the three institutions that has achieved international accreditation for quality in every aspect of its work. She says the university calls on the new Chairperson of the Commission to look into the

composition of his Commission to identify conflict of interest, a matter that has already been conveyed by them in writing to the Minister of Education and the Prime Minister and should their request be ignored they appeal to the Prime Minister to conduct an inquiry into a conflict of interest within the Commission which disadvantages the University of Fiji compared to the other universities. The Vice-Chancellor also says that the University of Fiji has solid evidence of the

undeclared conflict of interest within the Commission stemming from appointments that looked like cronyism which they were willing to share with the government and anyone else who had a stake in having the higher education governance structure in Fiji reformed and made more transparent as there is a rot in the system which needs to be exorcised since it affects good governance and due diligence, as well as justice.

## We have the right man to lead the tourism industry – Prof. Prasad

We have increased the grant for the tourism industry this year from the previous years and I feel we have the right man to lead the tourism industry at this moment. This was stated by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Professor Biman Prasad when asked about the \$30 million budget allocated to Tourism Fiji to promote Fiji to the world. A participant asked if this would be done in conjunction with a tourism validation meaning hotels, adventures, transportation,

activities, etc who can buy into this and contribute more via the private sector. Prof. Prasad says the Minister for Tourism Viliame Gavoka is working on it and he is determined to be involved as widely as possible with all the stakeholders in the marketing of Fiji as a destination for tourism. He says part of the coalition government's strategy is to consult as widely as possible and to ensure that we use that \$30 million in a way that can be effective.



## Health News

# A Better Ozempic? Eli Lilly Drug Leads to 24% Weight Loss in Study

A new drug being developed by Eli Lilly & Co. helped people lose an average of about 24% of their body weight over 48 weeks while on the highest dose, surpassing results seen in trials of other anti-obesity drugs. “This amount of weight loss from a single medication is truly mind-blowing,” said obesity expert Dr. Katherine H. Saunders, co-founder of Intellihealth and a faculty member at Weill Cornell Medicine. She was not involved in the research. The results of the phase 2 clinical trial for the once-weekly injected medicine, retatrutide, were published June 26 in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, and presented this month at the American Diabetes Association scientific conference in San Diego. Phase 2 trials are done in a small group of participants, and provide data on how well a drug works and the ideal dosage. Larger trials are needed before the drug can be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for clinical use. Researchers also found that the most common side effects of retatrutide were nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and constipation — similar to what occurs with approved drugs in this class, including Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro. Drug mimics action of three hormones Retatrutide mimics the action of three hormones — GLP-1, GIP and glucagon — which earned it the nickname “triple G.” These hormones help regulate blood sugar, slow the emptying of the stomach (to increase a sense of fullness) and decrease appetite. Dr. Dan Skovronsky, Eli Lilly’s chief scientific and medical officer, said in a statement that this triple action of the drug “may be one of the reasons retatrutide showed this level of weight reduction.” Novo Nordisk’s semaglutide (FDA-approved for weight loss as Wegovy) mimics just one hormone, GLP-1; half of participants in a phase 3 clinical trial of this drug experienced weight loss of 15% or more. Lilly’s tirzepatide (FDA-approved for diabetes as Mounjaro, and awaiting approval for treatment of obesity) mimics both GLP-1 and GIP, and produced weight loss in a



phase 3 trial of up to 23%. In the retatrutide trial, researchers enrolled 338 people with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater; or a BMI between 27 and 30, with at least one weight-related health condition. BMI is a measurement to assess whether someone has obesity (30 or higher), overweight (25-29.9), or underweight (less than 18.5). It is not always an accurate assessment of body fat, especially for certain racial/ethnic or other groups. In addition to people on the highest dose of retatrutide averaging 24% weight loss over 48 weeks, over one-quarter of those participants experienced weight loss of at least 30%. “This is an unusually high magnitude of efficacy as compared with findings in clinical trials of other anti-obesity agents,” the researchers wrote. However, they pointed out that this amount of weight loss has been seen with bariatric-metabolic surgery. Everyone in the highest-dose group experienced at least 5% weight loss, which was a higher rate than seen in the phase 3 trial for semaglutide — 86% of participants in that trial lost this amount of weight. “We used to consider 5-10% total body weight loss a big success,” Saunders told Healthline, “because this amount of weight loss

is associated with significant improvements in weight-related health complications.” However, “weight loss greater than 15% is now achievable, so it’s the new benchmark,” she said. Side effects and other benefits The most common side effects experienced by people taking retatrutide were nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and constipation, which were more common at higher doses of the drug. These were partially reduced “by the use of a lower starting dose,” the researchers wrote. Researchers also saw increases in heart rate in people taking retatrutide, which occurred up to week 24, followed by a decline after that point. Some people also experienced “altered or enhanced skin sensation,” although not severe enough for them to stop taking the drug. In addition to the weight loss, people taking retatrutide experienced other benefits, including a decrease in blood pressure — with some people able to stop taking a blood pressure-lowering medication. Almost three-quarters of people who had prediabetes at the start of the trial returned to normal blood sugar levels after 48 weeks — compared to one-fifth of people taking the inactive placebo. By the end of the trial, participants taking re-

tatrutide were continuing to lose weight, the researchers wrote, which suggests that people might lose even more in Eli Lilly’s longer-duration phase 3 trial that is currently underway. This trial will examine the safety of retatrutide, and its effectiveness for chronic weight management, obstructive sleep apnea and knee osteoarthritis. “[The] phase 2 data have given us confidence to further explore the potential of retatrutide in phase 3 trials that will look beyond weight reduction and focus on treating obesity and its complications comprehensively,” Skovronsky said in the statement. Saunders said based on the results of the phase 2 trial, she anticipates that retatrutide will outperform tirzepatide in the phase 3 trial. Additional support needed alongside medications In spite of the success of these newer anti-obesity medications, Saunders cautions against people using the drugs without additional support from a healthcare team. “Obesity isn’t a simple disease with a simple solution,” she said. “Effective treatment of obesity must include a comprehensive evaluation, a personalized treatment plan, and education and support to maximize weight loss, minimize potential side effects and

ensure long-term weight maintenance.” Rachel Goldman, PhD, a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at the NYU Grossman School of Medicine and advisor for online health company Ro, agrees that people losing weight should get the support they need, including nutrition and psychological counseling before they start treatments. “Drastic weight loss, regardless of how you lose the weight, can be quite overwhelming,” she told Healthline. “For some, it could impact their body image, relationships, mood, etc.” She also thinks it is important for people to be properly assessed by a doctor before being prescribed an anti-obesity medication. “I would be concerned about someone with a history of an eating disorder being prescribed these medications without proper counseling and a plan in place,” she said. While anti-obesity medications can help people lose weight over the course of a year or two, lifestyle changes such as eating healthier, being more physically active and managing stress can also support long-term health. “Individuals will be healthier, and more successful [with weight loss], if they start implementing health behavior changes as early as possible,” said Goldman.

Health News

# Gastric Bypass Surgery Can Help People Achieve Long-Term Diabetes Remission

Study provides further evidence gastric bypass surgery is effective. Dr. Mir Ali, bariatric surgeon and medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA tells Healthline this particular study reaffirms the many benefits of gastric bypass. “The metabolic change induced by the gastric bypass shows lasting benefit in the treatment of diabetes based on this study,” says Ali. Registered dietitian and diabetes educator Julie Cunningham tells Healthline the evidence is clear that bariatric surgery helps people with type 2 diabetes improve their blood sugars, and in some cases it may actually help patients reverse diabetes. “Patients who are in the earlier stages of type 2 diabetes — meaning they are not yet insulin-dependent, they’ve had diabetes for fewer years, or they have HbA1c levels at the lower end of the spectrum — have a greater chance of experiencing diabetes remission,” she says. “So people living with diabetes who qualify for the surgery based on their body size may want to explore this option sooner rather than later if the potential for diabetes remission is one of their reasons for undergoing surgery,” says Cunningham. Tips for diabetes management after bariatric surgery The researchers suggest close monitoring of diabetes post-surgery,

and experts agree. “Managing diabetes after bariatric surgery requires close monitoring,” says Ali. “Initially, the patient’s medications will need to be adjusted relatively quickly after surgery,” he tells Healthline. “Then, the patient is monitored closely to hopefully remain off medication or a greatly reduced dose.” “If you live with diabetes and you have side effects from your medication, talk with your doctor or pharmacist about alternative options,” says Cunningham. “Stopping a medication without an alternative plan means you run the risk of high blood sugars, which may damage your eyes, kidneys, and other organs.” Cunningham adds that you may find that you need to monitor less often as your blood sugar levels come down post-surgery, but says to always consult with your healthcare team before making this decision. More tips for managing diabetes after weight loss surgery Go moderate- to low-carb Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS, RDN, a nutritionist and the author of “Skinny Liver,” says low carbohydrate protocols help in the management of blood sugar and insulin. “To maintain weight loss, and manage diabetes, a lower to moderate carbohydrate plan can be useful,” she says. “One way to follow such a plan is to increase fiber-rich foods in the diet that are naturally lower in carbohydrates such as non-

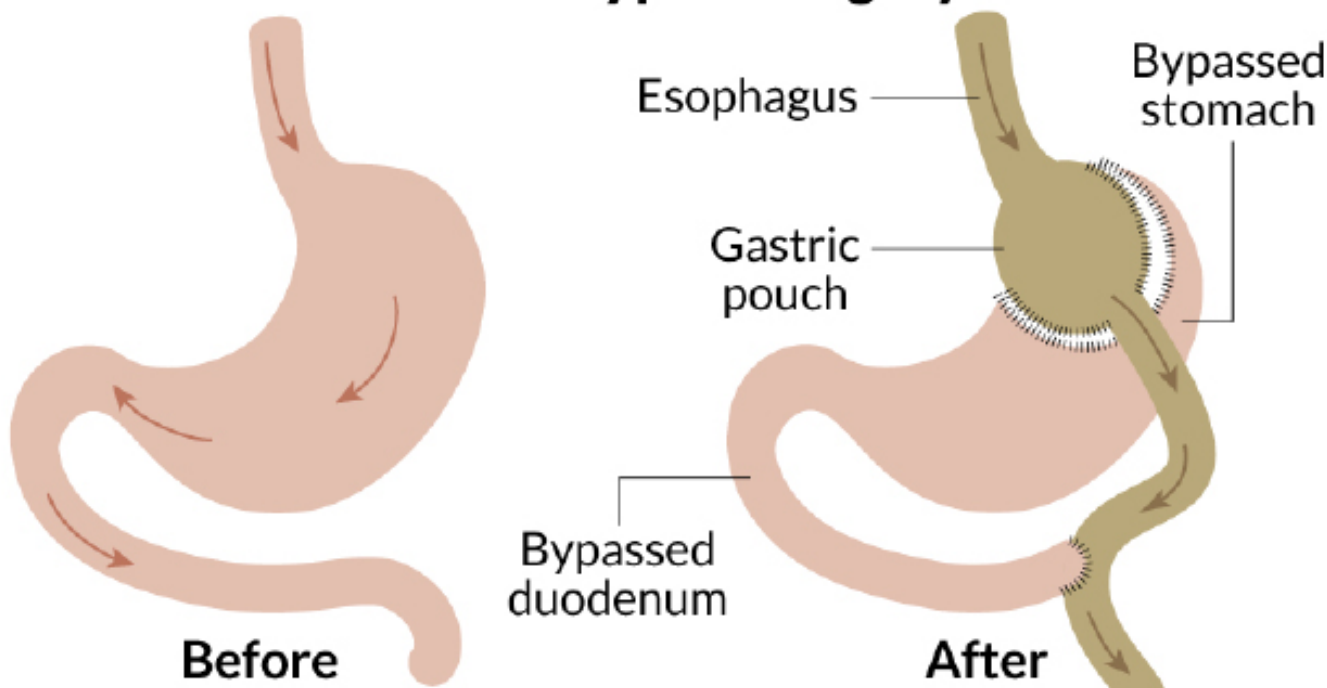


starchy vegetables. Fiber may help to reduce digestible or net carbs in the diet,” Kirkpatrick tells Healthline. Cunningham agrees, saying anyone with diabetes, whether they have had bariatric surgery or not, will benefit from managing their blood sugars by learning to count carbohydrates. “Those who are not using insulin can consume a consistent amount of carbohydrate at each meal. This keeps blood sugar levels on an even keel,” she says. “People

who do use insulin can learn to use an insulin-to-carbohydrate ratio, which means that the amount of insulin injected varies according to the amount of carbs consumed on a meal-by-meal basis,” adds Cunningham. If you’re not sure where to start, Cunningham says reaching out to a diabetes specialist is a good idea. Focus on protein Kirkpatrick points to a series of studies on protein that show that intake can help increase fullness and even minimize cravings. Trust-

ed Source throughout the day. “Further, adequate protein can help maintain muscle mass through weight loss efforts after surgery,” she says. “In turn, weight loss may increase insulin sensitivity. Trust- ed Source, which may help with the management of type 2 diabetes.” Don’t skimp on sleep “Inadequate sleep has been shown to be a risk factor for obesity. Trust- ed Source as well as an increase in caloric intake. Trust- ed Source,” says Kirkpatrick. “To give yourself the best chance of taking weight off, and keeping it off, pay attention to your sleep health as an overall critical step towards better health,” she says. Get some physical activity “Regular exercise is important for blood sugar management,” says Cunningham. “When we exercise, our bodies use the sugar in our cells and our bloodstream as a source of fuel. This helps lower blood glucose levels in the short term, and it helps with weight management in the longer term.” How much exercise should you aim for? A minimum of 150 minutes of cardiovascular exercise per week is recommended, says Cunningham, “but those who were not exercising before surgery should get cleared by their physician first,” she adds.

## Gastric bypass surgery



## Health News

# Heavy Metals are Still a Problem in Baby Food

A concerning amount of heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium, and lead can still be found in many baby foods including rice and rice products, sweet potatoes, and carrots, according to latest testing from Consumer Reports. This report is a follow-up from 2018 testing that found 33 of the 50 foods were associated with potential health risks for children due to combined exposures from those three heavy metals. The latest test included 14 products including a mix of fruits and vegetables, meals, and snacks such as bars, puffs, and teething wafers. While some baby foods and products now show lower levels of heavy metals, others are showing higher levels. Overall, the risk of heavy metal exposure has stayed fairly consistent over the years, according to the report. This new finding comes despite ongoing pressure on food manufacturers to reduce heavy metals in food crops and make “safer” products or food products with lower levels of heavy metals. What experts have to say Eric Boring, PhD, a Consumer Reports chemist who oversaw the testing explains in the report that because heavy metals are so pervasive in foods, and because they tend to accumulate in the body, small exposures from multiple foods can add



up. “And feeding your child amounts close to the daily serving limits leaves little room for exposure to heavy metals from other foods,” he adds. Maya Deysenroth, DrPH, an assistant professor of environmental health sciences at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health says in the report that the health risks associated with long-term heavy metal exposure include increased risk of a variety of health and developmental problems in young children, including a lower IQ

and behavioral issues, as well as ADHD, autism, and other issues. The risk, though, should not be a cause for panic, according to Boring. The pediatrician-dietitian perspective Dr. Daniel Ganjian, a pediatrician at Providence Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, California tells Healthline parents can reduce risk by learning more about heavy metals and becoming more educated consumers. “There are very helpful websites for parents to explore,” he says. Ganjian points to the

Consumer Reports site, but also suggests the Healthy Babies Bright Futures and the Clean Label Project. Practical tips for parents Ganjian tells Healthline that some ways to reduce risk of exposure to heavy metals in baby foods include: Choosing foods with lower levels of heavy metals Changing the consumption quantity or frequency of certain products (less often or limited amounts) Providing a wide variety of foods daily What this looks like in everyday life will vary from household to household. In any case, Ganjian suggests avoiding rice and rice products as much as possible. Rice tends to absorb more arsenic than other grains, according to the FDA, but can still be considered a part of a healthy diet. “Rice or rice products once a week is fine,” says Ganjian. Cynthia Scott, RD, IBCLC, is a pediatric dietitian, lactation counselor, and owner of the Baby Dietitian. Scott tells Healthline she encourages parents to avoid rice-based snacks if they want to decrease the risk of heavy metal exposure. “Organic snacks from Little Bellies are non-rice based and great for babies 7 months and older,” she says. Other options exist, too. Brown basmati from California, India, or Pakistan has about a third less inorganic arsenic than other brown rices, Scott pointed out. For households where rice is a staple food, the FDA suggests cooking the rice like

pasta. This means boiling the rice in a large amount of water (6 to 10 parts water to 1 part rice) and then draining the excess water. The FDA adds that using this rice cooking method can reduce arsenic levels by some 40-60% but also results in reduced nutritional content of enriched or parboiled rice. Nutrients lost include folate, iron, niacin, and thiamine. Ganjian also suggests parents limit the total amount of sweet potatoes and carrots. Instead, opt for vegetables with lower levels of heavy metals. Ganjian says the following foods are considered “low heavy metal” foods: Fruit (fresh or frozen, but not canned) Baby food brand fruits Green beans Peas Butternut squash Cucumber, chilled and peeled Frozen bananas Meat (either baby food brand, or soft or pureed and home-cooked) Beans Eggs Infant formula Unsweetened applesauce Grapes, cut into smaller pieces Yogurt Consumer Reports also advises parents limit apple juice and grape juice in their children’s diet as they are also known to have high levels of heavy metals and are considered non-essential food items. “The great news is that our heavy metal detectors are becoming much more sensitive at detecting low levels of toxins,” says Ganjian. “Companies see that parents are concerned, so they are actively searching for ways to decrease the levels of heavy metals.”



## Health News

# Dutasteride is Being Offered Off-Label To Treat Hair Loss. Does It Work?

No matter your age, hair loss can be an unwelcome change and it's not always easy to know how to treat it. Direct-to-consumer brands are now marketing both oral and topical dutasteride formulas for hair loss, in a move that could offer fresh hope to those with the condition. The treatment which is primarily used to treat benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) in men with an enlarged prostate, is sometimes prescribed off-label as a treatment for hair loss as well. In fact, some brands are now making dutasteride capsules, shampoos, and topical solutions available directly to customers. But when it comes to treating hair loss, how effective and safe are these dutasteride formulas? How does dutasteride help prevent hair loss? "Dutasteride is a medication that blocks an enzyme known as 5-alpha reductase (5-AR)," explains Dr. Simon Pimstone, founder, and director, at XYON Health Inc. "This enzyme is responsible for the production of dihydrotestosterone (or DHT), which is the androgen hormone that plays a key role in prostate development and male pattern hair loss." Dutasteride is often used in situations where hair loss is extensive or not responsive to another treatment known as finasteride. Both of these treatments block 5-AR, however, Pimstone points out that dutasteride inhibits two forms of the enzyme known as isoforms I and II, whereas finasteride only acts on isoform II. Finasteride also only blocks about 70% of the conversion of testosterone into DHT. Dutasteride can block more than 90%. Taking dutasteride orally works by stopping the conversion of testosterone to DHT in the body so that the DHT doesn't have the chance to reach the hair follicles. When applied topically, it works by stopping DHT conversion in the hair follicles. How effective is dutasteride for hair loss? So, just how effective is dutasteride when used as an off-label treatment for hair loss? When compared to finasteride, Pimstone says dutasteride is a far more active inhibitor of the 5-AR enzyme and hence has



a more potent effect in lowering DHT levels. In particular, he says when used topically, dutasteride can have a strong clinical effect as it delivers a higher amount of the medication to the target hair follicle. "A number of well-controlled and observational clinical studies have now shown clear clinical benefit of dutasteride over finasteride," Pimstone surmises. "The clinical benefit of dutasteride appears as a result of its potent effect on the 5-AR enzyme and DHT." In one meta-analysis conducted in 2019, dutasteride showed a significant increase in the total hair count compared with finasteride. Meanwhile, the results of an older randomized placebo-controlled study of dutasteride versus finasteride, found that the former was more effective in increasing target area hair count. While there is some research supporting the effectiveness of dutasteride for hair loss, it may be best to manage your expectations. Using dutasteride can be an effective tool for stopping hair loss, but experts say to keep in mind that it isn't going to grow hair. However, there are combinations of finasteride and minoxidil that have been shown to be effective treatments to stop hair loss and promote hair growth at the same time. What are the potential risks of using dutasteride to treat hair loss? As with all medications,

particularly off-label treatments, there are risks and side effects to consider. It's also important to note that dutasteride is not FDA-approved as a hair loss treatment so you'll need to exercise extra caution if using it for this purpose. Some potential side effects include skin and scalp irritation, cold sweats, and dizziness. "In some cases, you might experience depression, chest pains, swelling, sexual dysfunction, and suicidal thoughts," says Abdullah. Generally though, Pimstone believes that topical formulations — provided the ingredients are used at concentrations where they are known to be safe — should be safe to use, "as these topical forms generally deliver less dutasteride into the systemic circulation than oral forms." He also notes that oral and topical dutasteride for male pattern hair loss has been studied clinically for years. "With this extensive clinical experience, we are not aware of any serious adverse reactions that have highlighted significant risks with oral formulations," he concludes. Other effective ways to prevent and treat hair loss Whether you decide to use dutasteride or not, Pimstone says one of the most important things when it comes to preventing hair loss is treating it early. "Typically men want to get ahead of their hair loss as early intervention and early treatment

will allow for best results," he explains. "If the risk for hair loss is high, or if you are noticing thinning (including areas where you often can't see such as the crown or top of your head), it is worth speaking to a doctor about the options," he adds. Dr. Michele Green, a board-certified cosmetic dermatologist, says she recommends a treatment called HydraFacial Keravive as a great option for maintaining scalp health. "Keravive treatment utilizes a three-step process using patented vortex technology to deeply cleanse and exfoliate, reduce flakiness, itchiness, and irritation, and nourish and moisturize the scalp," she says. It can be done on a monthly basis. Green says that the two primary medications that are currently FDA-approved for treating hair loss are finasteride and minoxidil. Finasteride, as mentioned previously, is similar to dutasteride. Minoxidil, on the other hand, works by restoring inactive hair follicles and elongating the growth phase of the hair growth cycle. "Low-dose minoxidil is a safe and effective hair loss treatment that strengthens hair follicles and promotes hair retention and growth," says Green. In some cases, a drug called spironolactone is also appropriate. "Spironolactone is an anti-androgen oral medication that regulates hormones and is particularly useful for female

patients with PCOS," she notes. It aids in hair growth because it can reduce the production of male hormones. "Hormone replacement therapy can also be an option for those experiencing hair loss due to menopause, PCOS, or hormonal irregularities," she adds. Finally, Green points to platelet-rich plasma (PRP) as a non-surgical approach for both male and female-pattern hair loss. Platelet-rich plasma contains growth factors that can stimulate the dermal papilla cells in hair follicles, she explains. The platelets also contain proteins that encourage tissue healing and regeneration in inactive hair follicles. "In short," she says, "PRP maintains the health of the hair follicle, improving the blood supply to the area and stimulating reparative cells." There are also other natural methods that studies indicate may prevent hair loss and, in some cases, stimulate hair growth. However, these tend to be much slower. Hair products that contain essential oils of peppermint, rosemary, and lavender may also help to rejuvenate the hair follicles. For some people though, these solutions simply won't be enough. The good news is, when it comes to hair loss, dutasteride has shown promising clinical effectiveness, is generally safe for use, and is now more accessible than ever.



## Bollywood News

## Ranveer Singh teases exciting collaboration with Deepika Padukone, featuring Ram Charan and Trisha Krishnan; watch

Readers may recall that Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani is set to release on July 4. Meanwhile, there are speculations about Ranveer Singh playing the lead in Don 3, with an official announcement expected on his 38th birthday on July 6. Adding to the excitement, Ranveer has hinted at another thrilling project in his birthday week, involving his wife and actress Deepika Padukone and South stars Ram Charan and Trisha Krishnan. On Sunday afternoon, Ranveer took to his verified social media handle and shared a video clip with their followers. The clip features Deepika Padukone as a woman, who is looking for his missing husband while Ranveer seems to be a detective. Besides them, the intense promo also features glimpses of Ram Charan and Trisha Krishnan without revealing much about their characters.

Instagramming the video, Ranveer wrote, "Unveil the secret," and tagged a page by the name of "The Secret." Meanwhile, the mentioned IG page also shared an identical video clip along with a caption reading, "Brace yourselves for a mind-blowing revelation!" The caption further read, "The countdown begins as The Secret is set to be unveiled on July 5th!" As it is not yet confirmed if the upcoming project is a film or a show, a section of netizens are speculating it to be an advertisement. However, till then, fans have to wait for the announcement. Readers may recall that Ranveer and Deepika were last seen together in a dance number of Rohit Shetty's last directorial venture, Cirkus. Besides this, Deepika also played a cameo in Kabir Khan's '83, headlined by Ranveer.



## Parineeti Chopra-Raghav Chadha doing seva at Golden Temple grabs attention; Netizens REACT

Parineeti Chopra and Raghav Chadha have been the talk of the town ever since the two of them were spotted stealing dinner and lunch dates around the town a couple of months ago. In May, Parineeti and Raghav got engaged in front of their families and close friends. Priyanka Chopra flew down specially to be by Parineeti's side during her special moment. The duo have been spotted out and about. Recently, they were spotted at the Golden Temple. And now, a video of them performing seva is going viral. Parineeti Chopra and Raghav Chadha perform Seva at Golden Temple Parineeti Chopra and Raghav Chadha visited the Golden Temple in Amritsar a couple of days ago. The duo's visit has made headlines in entertainment news ever since. A new video from inside the temple is going viral. Parineeti and Raghav are seen washing dishes at the temple, which is an act of performing seva. They are all

surrounded by loads of people and also security. Parineeti is also seen interacting with someone in the video and smiling. The two of them don't look into the camera at all. Netizens react to Parineeti and Raghav's seva at Golden Temple Well these days, netizens have to have a say on everything. While the two recently engaged people are performing seva quietly, they have to talk them down even then. Some netizens claim that they invited the media inside and are showing it off. And therefore, it cannot be called seva, say netizens. While there are naysayers, there are also some who have supported Parineeti and Raghav in their spiritualism. Some netizens are praising them saying that's how a celeb should be. Parineeti Chopra-Raghav Chadha wedding Well, a couple of weeks ago, it was reported that Parineeti has been scouting locations in Rajasthan for her wedding. It was hinted that Pari



is following Priyanka Chopra's footsteps and wants to get married in Udaipur. If reports are

anything to go by, Parineeti and Raghav might get married in October this year. Just a cou-

ple of days ago, Parineeti and Raghav returned to Delhi from their recce in Udaipur.

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## Fiji News

# \$650 million TELS debt to be forgiven, bond service to be implemented and a new Fijian Scholarship Scheme to be announced

The \$650 million TELS debt will be forgiven and graduates will have to enter into a bond service which will be years of study multiplied by 1.5. While announcing this in the 2023/2024 National Budget, Finance Minister, Professor Biman Prasad says those who choose not to serve the bond will have to pay the equivalent cost amount. Moving forward, the government will provide all eligible students with scholarships under the rebranded Fijian Scholarship Scheme with a total budget of \$148.2 million in this Budget. The Fijian Scholarship Scheme funds will be used to sponsor 10,920 new students (inclusive of study grants), and fund 9,148 existing students. The new scholarship schemes will replace study loans. The Scholarship for Higher Education – Level 7 Local Scheme with Minimum Cut Off Mark Scheme will phase out TELS for degree Scheme. The cut-off mark will be 250, while 245 will be for rural and maritime students. The cut-off mark for Commerce will be 280, and for Engineering at 300. These cut-off marks have been set based on the labour market needs, university enrolment capacities and the need to maintain tertiary education quality. The Skills Qualification Based on Offer Letter Scheme will phase out TELS for Skills Qualification Scheme at the Fiji National University. Government will offer funding



for Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to other providers in areas of national priority. The bonding arrangement will be same as scholarships for Higher Education - Level 7 Scheme. The Tuition Only Hardship Assistance Scheme for Private Students is a new scheme aimed to assist students enrolled in degree programmes from the second year onwards with a Grade Point Average of 65 percent. Students qualifying for this scheme will be bonded and should not have

a combined parental income or business net-worth of more than \$100,000, unless allowed via means testing. The Scheme will have 2,600 awards, while 250 awards is ringfenced for MBBS. The National Toppers Scholarships will be renamed to Merit-based Scholarships. Given the challenges faced by rural and maritime schools, Government intends to build equity through merit-based Higher Education Level 7 Local Scholarship Scheme; merit-based Skills Qualification Scholarship

Scheme; and Higher Education Level 7 with Minimum Cut-Off Mark Scheme. Students in schools classified as rural and maritime will have a lower cut-off mark of 320 compared to the cut-off mark of 330 for non-rural and non-maritime schools. The bonding for the new students under this scheme will be years of study multiplied by 1.5 times if tuition only and years of study multiplied by 2 times if tuition and allowance is paid. Effective from 1st January 2024, all students under

scholarships other than merit-based will receive \$2,500 per semester if they study at campus away from home, \$1,500 for home-based campuses. In terms of allowances, students under merit-based scholarships will be eligible for \$3,400 per semester. The full details and eligibility and the selection criteria handbook will be published by TELS soon. A new initiative by the Coalition Government will set aside 3 PhDs, and 5 Masters by Research awards for study at New Zealand Universities.

## 7 percent interest for FNPF members for the 2023 financial year

Good news for Fiji National Provident Fund members as they will receive a 7 percent interest for the 2023 financial year. This will be credited into members' accounts tonight. While making the announcement, FNPF CEO Viliame Vodonaivalu says the financial position continues on a positive trajectory, which is reflected in the annual interest that will be credited to members' accounts. Vodonaivalu says in

the past six years the Fund has now paid over \$2.06 billion to members and they are proud to offer this rate to the members as it has been 24 years since they last declared a similar crediting rate. Vodonaivalu says this is an anticipated time for the members and more so, for FNPF. He says coming out of the health pandemic of 2020 and 2021, the Fund's focus has been on repositioning and resetting our

approach to ensure that we continue to grow members' savings in line with our vision to help them achieve a financially secure future.

He adds before they determine the interest rate, they are required by law to prove that it will not place undue stress on the Fund's solvency requirement. Vodonaivalu says this is their ability to meet the financial obligations, which are members'

funds or savings and the Fund Actuary has issued a certificate to confirm our ability to pay our liabilities.

He says this means that an estimated total of \$449 million will be credited to around 405 thousand members of FNPF's accounts tonight. The CEO says the amount of interest that each member earns depends on their average daily balance. He adds an increase in crediting

rate this year is a reflection of FNPF's commitment to delivering value to their members. Earlier today, the coalition government announced in the National Budget that they will restore FNPF contribution rates to 18% which is 8% for the Employee and 10% for Employers. Vodonaivalu says this restoration will grow member balances towards the retirement income they want.

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## Bollywood News

# Avika Gor opens up if the nepotism debate has benefited outsiders like her

Avika Gor made her Bollywood debut with 1920 Horrors of the Heart, and the film has done a decent number at the box office. Ahead of the release of the film, we met Avika Gor and spoke about the infamous nepotism debate in the industry and how that debate has benefited the outsiders or not, as there are many outsiders who claim that after this debate has come out in the open, they have gotten their recognition. This debate was started by Kangana Ranaut on Karan Johar's show Koffee With Karan, where she called the filmmaker a 'flag bearer of nepotism' and a movie mafia. Addressing the fact that the nepotism debate has benefited her as an outsider, she said, "I think talent prevails, and I am not talking about now but also the time when I started, which

was 10 to 15 years ago. Even at that time, I didn't have a surname, and the popularity that I had got was only on the basis of my talent and the type of show it was (Balika Vadhu). I also believe that it's writers and filmmakers whom we give the credit for making us the actors we are, and whether it's a person with a surname or an outsider, it totally depends on your talent". Avika Gor made headlines back then with her drastic transformation, and she once revealed how she cried and went on a weight loss journey, and today she has upped her game. Avika has been doing some good work in the south, and recently in her conversation she said that the south's industry is all about nepotism and where only the insiders are favoured.



## The Crew: Kareena Kapoor, Tabu, Kriti Sanon starrer to RELEASE on THIS date

Here's an interesting update on a dull Sunday morning. The release date of Kareena Kapoor Khan, Tabu and Kriti Sanon starrer The Crew has been announced. The film is produced by Ekta R Kapoor and Rhea Kapoor. While the fans are pretty excited to see three leading and critically acclaimed actresses coming together, the wait for the film is pretty long. The Crew will only release next year in March. The makers have locked March 22, 2024 to release The Crew in theatres. The Crew cast, storyline and more For the unversed, Diljit Dosanjh and Kapil Sharma are also a part of the film. Kareena Kapoor Khan and Diljit Dosanjh have shared screen space in films like Uda Punjab and Good Newws. Both the films were a hit at the box office. It is for the first time that Kareena Kapoor Khan, Tabu and Kriti Sanon are going to be seen in a film together.

Kapil Sharma made his Bollywood debut with the film Kis Kis Ko Pyaar Karun in 2015. The film did not do pretty well at the box office. His second film Firangi also flopped at box office. However, his latest release, Zwigato received thumbs



up from the audience and the critics.

Talking about The Crew, the film has been extensively shot in Mumbai and Abu Dhabi. Recently, the team had also flown

off to Goa to shoot some portions of the film.

The makers are staying tight lipped on the storyline of the film and barely any details are available. But it is reported that

the film revolves around three characters associated with airline industry. Meanwhile, Kareena Kapoor Khan was last seen in Laal Singh Chaddha. The film tanked at the box of-

fice. Kriti Sanon was seen in Adipurush. We all know the fate it met. Tabu was last seen in Bhoola along with Ajay Devgn. The film did not do wonders at the box office.

## World News

# Mourners bury slain teen in France as 45,000 police are deployed and 5th night of unrest is quieter

Hushed and visibly anguished, hundreds of mourners from France's Islamic community formed a solemn procession from a mosque to a hillside cemetery on Saturday to bury a 17-year-old whose killing by police has triggered days of rioting and looting across the nation. Underscoring the gravity of the crisis, President Emmanuel Macron scrapped an official trip to Germany after nights of unrest across France. The government deployed 45,000 police to city streets across the nation to head off a fifth night of violence. Overnight, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin tweeted that the night had been calmer than previous ones, thanks to "the resolute action of security forces." He put the night's arrest toll at 427. Some 2,800 people have been arrested overall since the teen's death on Tuesday. Darmanin tweeted late Saturday that 200 riot police had been mobilized in the port city of Marseille, where TV

showed footage of police using tear gas as night fell. Near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, hundreds of police with batons and shields stood restlessly along the Champs-Élysées, several in front of the shuttered Cartier boutique. Posts on social media had called for protests on the grand boulevard but the police presence appeared to discourage any large gatherings. Earlier in the day at a hilltop cemetery in Nanterre, the Paris suburb where the teen identified only as Nahel was killed, hundreds stood along the road to pay tribute as mourners carried his white casket from a mosque to the burial site.

Journalists were barred from the ceremony and in some cases even chased away. Some of the men carried folded prayer rugs. "Men first," an official told dozens of women waiting to enter the cemetery. But Nahel's mother, dressed in white, walked inside to applause and headed toward the grave. Many of the men were young and Arab or Black, coming to mourn a boy who could have been them. Inside the cemetery gate, the casket was lifted above the crowd and carried toward the grave. The men followed,



some holding little boys by the hand. As they left, some wiped their eyes. Police were nowhere to be seen. The unrest was taking a toll on Macron's diplomatic profile. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier's office said Macron phoned Saturday to request a postponement of what would have been the first state visit by a French president to Germany in 23 years. Macron had been scheduled to fly to Germany on Sunday evening for the visit to Berlin and two other German cities.

Macron's office said he spoke with Steinmeier and, "given the internal security situation, the president (Macron) said he wishes to stay in France over the coming days." Nahel was shot during a traffic stop. Video showed two officers at the window of the car, one with his gun pointed at the driver. As the teenager pulled forward, the officer fired once through the windshield. This week, Nahel's mother told France 5 television that she was angry at the officer who shot her son, but not at the police in general. "He saw a little Arab-looking kid, he wanted to take his life," she said. Nahel's family has roots in Algeria. Race was a taboo

topic for decades in France, which is officially committed to a doctrine of colorblind universalism. Critics say that doctrine has masked generations of systemic racism. The officer accused of killing Nahel was given a preliminary charge of voluntary homicide, meaning that investigating magistrates strongly suspect wrongdoing, but need to investigate more before sending a case to trial. Nanterre prosecutor Pascal Prache said his initial investigation led him to conclude that the officer's use of his weapon wasn't legally justified. Hundreds of police and firefighters have been injured in the violence that erupted after the killing. Authorities haven't released injury tallies for protesters. In French Guiana, an overseas territory, a 54-year-old died after being hit by a stray bullet. The reaction to the killing was a potent reminder of the persistent poverty, discrimination, unemployment and other lack of opportunity in neighborhoods around France where many residents trace their roots to former French colonies — like where Nahel grew up. "Nahel's story is the lighter that ignited the gas. Hopeless young people were waiting for

it. We lack housing and jobs, and when we have (jobs), our wages are too low," said Samba Seck, a 39-year-old transportation worker in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. Clichy was the birthplace of weeks of riots in 2005 that shook France, prompted by the deaths of two teenagers electrocuted in a power substation while fleeing from police. One of the boys lived in the same housing project as Seck.

Like many Clichy residents, he lamented the violence targeting his town, where the remains of a burned car stood beneath his apartment building, and the town hall entrance was set alight in rioting this week. "Young people break everything, but we are already poor, we have nothing," he said, adding that "young people are afraid to die at the hands of police." Despite the escalating crisis, Macron held off on declaring a state of emergency, an option used in 2005. But government ratcheted up its law enforcement response, with the mass deployment of police officers, including some who were called back from vacation. France's justice minister, Dupond-Moretti, on Saturday warned that young people who

share calls for violence on Snapchat or other apps could face legal prosecution. Macron has blamed social media for fueling violence. Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire promised government support for shop owners. "There is no nation without order, without common rules," he said. Darmanin has ordered a nationwide nighttime shutdown of all public buses and trams, which have been among rioters' targets. He also said he warned social networks not to allow themselves to be used as channels for calls to violence. The violence comes just over a year before Paris and other French cities are due to host Olympic athletes and millions of visitors for the summer Olympics, whose organizers were closely monitoring the situation as preparations for the competition continue. Thirteen people who didn't comply with traffic stops were fatally shot by French police last year. This year, three more people, including Nahel, died under similar circumstances. The deaths have prompted demands for more accountability in France, which also saw racial justice protests after George Floyd's killing by police in Minnesota.



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## World News

# Israel's air force attacks Syria and Syrian air defense missile explodes over northern Israel

Israel carried out airstrikes on areas near the central Syrian city of Homs early Sunday causing material damage but no casualties, the Syrian military said in a statement. A Syrian anti-aircraft missile exploded over Israeli territory, the Israeli military said, prompting another round of strikes. Syrian state media quoted an unnamed military official as saying the air defenses shot down some of the missiles fired by Israeli warplanes flying over neighboring Lebanon. Israeli authorities did not comment on the airstrike on Homs. But the military said one of the Syrian air defense missiles exploded over Israeli territory without causing any damage. Israeli police said the rocket's remains landed in the southern Israeli city of Rahat.



In response to the rocket, Israeli jets struck the air defense battery from where the anti-aircraft rocket was launched. The military said it also struck other targets, without elaborat-

ing. Israel, which has vowed to stop Iranian entrenchment next door, has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets in government-controlled parts of neighboring Syria in recent years, but

it rarely acknowledges them. The last suspected Israeli airstrike on Syria was on June 14, near the capital Damascus that left one soldier wounded. Israel has also targeted the in-

ternational airports in Damascus and the northern Syrian city of Aleppo several times over the past few years, often putting it out of commission.

## A mission aiming to unravel the universe's biggest mysteries has begun

A mission designed to unravel some of the greatest mysteries of the universe has taken off. The European Space Agency's Euclid space telescope launched at 11:12 a.m. ET Saturday aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Florida's Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. Mission control received a signal from the telescope around 11:57 a.m. ET. The 1.2-meter-diameter (4-foot-diameter) telescope has set off on a monthlong journey to its orbital destination of the sun-Earth Lagrange point L2, which is nearly 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away from Earth and also home to NASA's James Webb Space Telescope. Euclid will keep pace with Earth as our planet orbits the sun. After arriving at orbit, Euclid will spend two months testing and calibrating its instruments — a visible light camera and a near-infrared camera/spectrometer — before surveying one-third of the sky for the next six years. Investigating cosmic mysteries Euclid's primary goal is to observe the "dark side" of the universe, including dark matter and dark energy. While dark matter has never actually been detected, it is believed to make up 85% of the total matter in

the universe. Meanwhile, dark energy is a mysterious force thought to play a role in the accelerating expansion of the universe. In the 1920s, astronomers Georges Lemaître and Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe has been expanding since its birth 13.8 billion years ago. But research that began in the 1990s has shown that something sparked an acceleration of the universe's expansion about 6 billion years ago, and the cause remains a mystery. Unlocking the true nature of dark energy and dark matter could help astronomers understand what the universe is made of, how its expansion has changed over time, and if there is more to understanding gravity than meets the eye. Both dark matter and dark energy also play a role in the distribution and movement of objects, such as galaxies and stars, across the cosmos. Euclid is designed to create the largest and most accurate three-dimensional map of the universe, observing billions of galaxies that stretch 10 billion light-years away to reveal how matter may have been stretched and pulled apart by dark energy over time. These observations will effectively allow Euclid

to see how the universe has evolved over the past 10 billion years. The telescope was named in honor of Euclid of Alexandria, the Greek mathematician who lived around 300 BC and is considered the father of geometry. While primarily an ESA mission, the telescope includes contributions from NASA and more than 2,000 scientists across 13 European countries, the United States, Canada and Japan. The telescope's image quality will be four times sharper than those of ground-based sky surveys. Euclid's wide perspective can also record data from a part of the sky 100 times bigger than what Webb's camera can capture. During its observations, the telescope will create a catalog of 1.5 billion galaxies and the stars within them, creating a treasure trove of data for astronomers that includes each galaxy's shape, mass and number of stars created per year. Euclid's ability to see in near-infrared light could also reveal previously unseen objects in our own Milky Way galaxy, such as brown dwarfs and ultra-cool stars. A dynamic duo In May 2027, Euclid will be joined in orbit by the Nancy Grace Roman Telescope. The two mis-

sions will overlap in their study of cosmic acceleration as they both create three-dimensional maps of the universe. "Twenty-five years after its discovery, the universe's accelerated expansion remains one of the most pressing mysteries in astrophysics," said Jason Rhodes, a senior research scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, in a statement. "With these upcoming telescopes, we will measure dark energy in different ways and with far more precision than previously achievable, opening up a new era of exploration into this mystery," said Rhodes, who serves as the deputy project scientist for Roman and the US science lead for Euclid. Roman will study one-

twentieth of the sky in infrared light, allowing for much more depth and precision. The Roman telescope will peer back to when the universe was just 2 billion years old, picking out fainter galaxies than Euclid can see. Roman also has the ability to hunt down rogue planets that aren't attached to stars, search for exoplanets across our galaxy and study objects on the outskirts of our solar system. "Together, Euclid and Roman will add up to much more than the sum of their parts," said Yun Wang, a senior research scientist at the California Institute of Technology, in a statement. "Combining their observations will give astronomers a better sense of what's actually going on in the universe."



## World News

# Grandmother of teen killed in police stop calls for calm, as France prepares for sixth night of violence



The grandmother of the 17-year-old boy who was fatally shot by a police officer in a Paris suburb has called for an end to the violence that erupted in the aftermath of his death, as French authorities gear up for a sixth night of rioting. Victim Nahel Merzouk's grandmother appealed to protesters on Sunday, telling CNN's affiliate BFMTV: "They should not damage the schools, not break the buses, it was the moms who take the buses." "I'm tired," the grandmother, identified by BMFTV as Nadia, said, adding that Nahel's mother, "doesn't have a life anymore." Meanwhile, security forces will again have more than 45,000 police and gendarmes deployed across France on Sunday night following the violent public unrest, the government said. Many of the people detained since the protests began on Tuesday are minors, Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin said Saturday, adding that the average age of the more than 2,000 detainees is 17 years old. The situation across France so far on Sunday has been less tense than Saturday, with only sporadic protests reported, but the violence normally kicks off

after sunset, according to CNN producers in France. French President Emmanuel Macron will meet the country's prime minister, interior minister and justice minister at 7 p.m. local time (1 p.m. ET) to take an update on the latest on the nationwide protests, the Elysee Palace said in a statement. 'Assassination attempt' Early Sunday morning, the mayor of a Paris suburb said his home was attacked, calling it "an assassination attempt" on his family. "At 1:30 a.m., while I was at the city hall like the past three nights, individuals rammed their car upon my residence before setting fire to it to burn my house, inside which my wife and my two young children slept," said mayor

Vincent Jeanbrun of L'Haÿ-les-Roses, a commune in the southern suburbs of Paris, in a statement. "While trying to protect the children and escape the attackers, my wife and one of my children were injured." Jeanbrun said that he had "no words strong enough to describe his emotion towards the horror of this night" and thanked police and rescue services for their help. The Créteil prosecutor's

office has classified the incident as an "attempted murder," prosecutor Stéphane Hardouin told reporters Sunday. Hardouin said the initial findings of a police investigation suggest that a flaming car "was launched to burn down the pavilion," entering Jeanbrun's property at around 1:30am local time. "Hitting a low wall, the vehicle stopped... before it could reach the veranda of the house. Only the front gate was hit, along with the family's vehicle," the prosecutor said in a news conference outside the mayor's home. He said the mayor's wife and two children, aged 5 and 7, fled through the back garden. While running away, the mayor's wife hurt her shin which "appears to be broken," according to the prosecutor. Hardouin also said forensic police have found a fire accelerant in a bottle of Coke. He didn't specify which substance the accelerant was. "Every effort will be made to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice," the prosecutor concluded. France has been rocked by a wave of protests following the death of Nahel, a 17-year-old of Algerian descent who was shot by a police officer in Nanterre

earlier in the week and whose funeral took place on Saturday at a mosque in the Paris suburb amid a heavy security presence. The youth's death has reignited a debate on policing in France's marginalized communities and raised questions over whether race was a factor in his death. A GoFundMe page in support of the family of the police officer accused of fatally shooting the teenager had reached almost €650,000 (\$710,000) on Sunday afternoon. The page was started by a far-right TV pundit and claims the policeman "only did his job and is now paying a hard price for it." The officer has been charged with voluntary homicide and placed in preliminary detention, the prosecutor of Nanterre said earlier in the week.

In comparison, another crowdfunding page in support of Nahel's mother had raised over €97,000 (\$105,000) at the time of writing. The page reads Nahel "leaves behind a mother torn apart by the loss of her only son. She needs our support to face the long trials that lie ahead." Hundreds detained While the French government has deployed security

forces and riot police across the country, the unrest continued with another night of protests on Saturday. More than 700 people were detained across France overnight, according to a provisional tally from the Interior Ministry. The statement added 45 police officers and gendarmes had been injured overnight, while 74 buildings including 26 police and gendarmes stations were damaged and 577 vehicles set on fire. The previous night, more than 1,300 people were detained and 2,560 fires reported on public roads. Meanwhile, China has warned its citizens in France to remain vigilant after a bus carrying a Chinese tour group in the southern city of Marseille had its windows smashed, resulting in multiple minor injuries, the country's foreign ministry said in a statement Sunday. China's Consulate General in Marseille has lodged an official complaint and urged French authorities to ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and property amid the unrest. The ministry did not say when the incident took place or how many people were injured. It said all the tourists on the group have since left France.

**Food**

# Soya Dal Paratha Recipe

**Soya Dal Paratha Recipe**

**Total Time: 20 min**

**Prep Time : 05 min**

**Cook Time : 15 min**

**Serves: 2 Servings**

**Ingredients**

1. 1 Cup Atta
2. 1/2 cup mong dal, soaked for 2 hours
3. soaked soya chunks
4. A pinch of hing
5. 2 tsp Ghee 1 tsp cumin
6. Salt, as per taste
7. 1 tsp Red Chilli Powder
8. 1 tsp haldi
9. 1/2 tsp Ajwain
10. Water, to knead dough

**How to**

1. Knead a soft dough with atta, ajwain, salt, some ghee and water.
2. Cover with a cheese cloth and let it rest.
3. Put the soaked moong dal, soaked soya chunks in a blender and make a smooth paste. Add some water if needed.
4. Heat ghee and add a pinch



- of hing and cumin.
5. Add the blended paste and mix well.
6. Add salt, turmeric powder and red chilli powder
- and mix until the water is soaked.
7. Now, cut small roundels from the dough, and stuff some soya-dal puree at the
- centre.
8. Tuck the edges and roll flat.
9. Heat griddle and toast the paratha with ghee.
10. And you have soya-dal
- paratha ready to be relished.
11. Serve hot with achar and white butter.

# Palak Paneer Uttapam Recipe

**Palak Paneer Uttapam Recipe**

**Total Time: 25 min**

**Prep Time : 10 min**

**Cook Time : 15 min**

**Serves: 4 Servings**

**Ingredients**

1. 1 Cup Palak Puree
2. 1 cup Sooji
3. 1/2 cup Dahi
4. 1 Pack Fruit Salt to taste Salt
5. 1/2 cup Paneer, grated
6. 1/2 Onion, finely chopped
7. 1/2 Tomato, finely chopped
8. 1 tsp Green Chillies, finely chopped
9. 1 tbsp Coriander, finely chopped

**How to**

1. Take semolina in a bowl, add curd, salt and spinach puree to it.
2. Adjust the consistency of the batter by adding water as required and keep it aside.
3. To make the topping, add onion, tomato, green chili, green coriander, paneer and salt in a bowl and mix well.
4. Now mix fruit salt and a



- little water in the batter, this will make the batter swell.
5. Heat some oil in a pan, now pour a ladleful of batter
- and spread it and put some topping on it and press it lightly.
6. After roasting from one
- side, roast the uttapam from the other side as well. Pair the uttapam with chutney.
7. Similarly, repeat the process to make rest of the uttapam.



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## Food

# Mixed Sprouts Poha Recipe

## Mixed Sprouts Poha Recipe

**Total Time: 20 min**

**Prep Time : 05 min**

**Cook Time : 15 min**

**Serves: 2 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. 2 Cups poha
2. ½ cup boiled sprouted matki/ mixed sprouts
3. 1 boiled potato, cut into small cubes
4. 2 onions
5. 1 tbsp roasted peanuts
6. 1 tsp mustard seeds
7. 5 green chillies, roughly chopped
8. 2 sprigs of curry leaves
9. 1 tsp turmeric powder
10. 1/2 tsp chaat masala
11. 1 tbsp sugar
12. 1 tbsp lemon juice
13. ¼ cup coriander leaves
14. 2 tbsp grated coconut (for garnish)
15. 2 tbsp oil

16. Salt to taste

### How to

1. Wash and drain the poha in a colander. Keep aside.
2. Mix the boiled sprouts with the boiled potato and chaat masala. Keep ready.
3. In a kadhai, heat oil and add mustard seeds, curry leaves and green chillies. Then add the chopped onion and saute for a minute or two.
4. Now add the salt, turmeric and sugar. Next, add the sprouts mixture kept ready to the kadhai and mix.
5. Add the poha and peanuts. Combine well. Sprinkle a handful of water on top. Cover and cook for a minute.
6. Then add lemon juice, coriander and grated coconut. Mix lightly and serve hot.



# Peri Peri Paneer Sandwich Recipe

## Peri Peri Paneer Sandwich Recipe

### Recipe

**Total Time: 25 min**

**Prep Time : 10 min**

**Cook Time : 15 min**

**Serves: 2 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. For Peri Peri Masala
2. 2 tbsp Red Chilli Powder
3. 1/2 tsp Black Salt
4. 1/4 tsp Cinnamon Powder
5. 1 tsp Garlic Powder
6. 1 tsp Ginger Powder
7. 1 tsp Oregano
8. 1 tsp Powdered Sugar
9. 1/2 tsp Salt
10. For Sandwich Stuffing
11. 200 gram Paneer
12. 1/4 cup Capsicum, finely chopped
13. 1/2 cup Onion, chopped
14. 1/4 cup Tomato, chopped
15. 2 tbsp Mayonnaise
16. 1/2 tsp Chilli Flakes
17. 1/2 tsp Black Pepper (optional)
18. to taste Salt
19. 4 Bread Slice

### How to

For Peri Peri Masala

20. Put all the things in the jar, close the lid, Shake well. Your homemade peri peri masala is ready.

For Sandwich

1. Put capsicum, onion, tomato and mayonnaise in a bowl.

2. Add chilli flakes, salt as per taste and add peri peri masala and mix everything well.

3. Cut the paneer into small pieces and add it to the mixture. If you want, you can also add some cheese

4. Apply butter on a bread slice and spread the stuffing on it and cover it with

another bread slice. 5. Grill the sandwich and serve hot.





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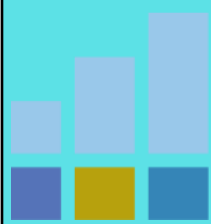
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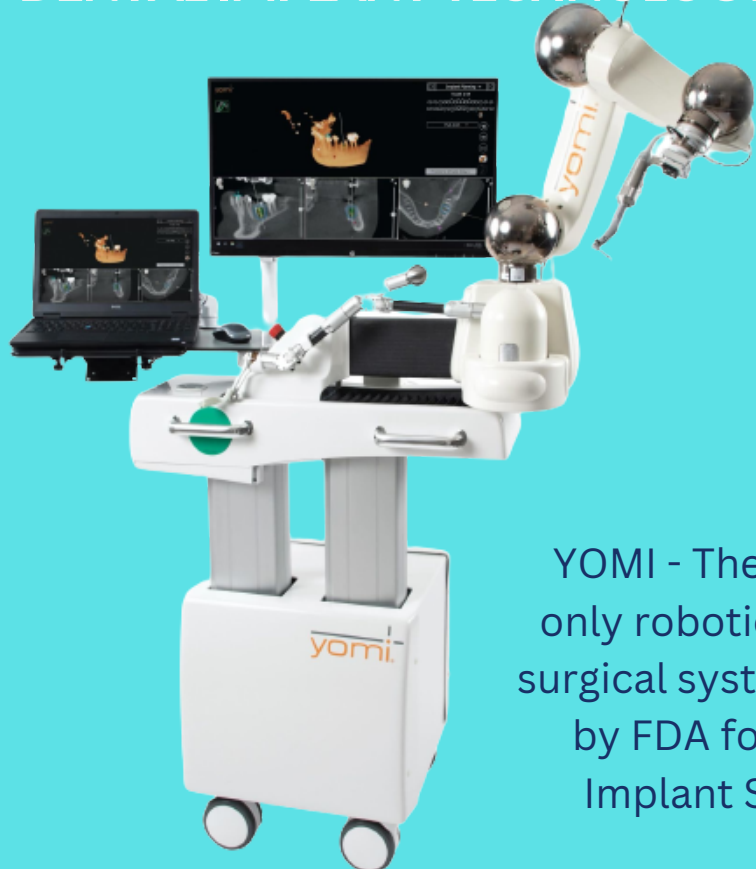
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# Truckers flooded the market during Covid. Now they struggle to pay their bills.

After supply chain problems offered an incentive for new truckers, demand has dropped, and now drivers struggle to find work.



WASHINGTON — In the midst of the Covid pandemic, with consumers buying up goods for their lockdown lifestyles and supply chains snarled, Arnesha Barron saw a moment to make her dream of starting her own trucking company come true.

The 39-year-old single mother of three teenagers had worked for six years driving a semitruck across the country as an employee of a trucking company. But in 2021, as shipping rates surged, she decided to strike out on her own. She took out a loan for a new \$175,000 truck and was soon taking home as much as \$20,000 a month in profit.

“It was amazing. I was a teen parent. I had my first child at 15 and all the odds were against me,” Barron said. “I had all three of my children graduate from high school while I was in a truck and I still made it happen.”

But like thousands of other truck drivers across the country, Barron’s fortunes didn’t last long. Over the past year, shipping rates have tumbled, leaving her and other drivers who bet big on the trucking boom struggling to make a living.

The number of trucking companies, many consisting of just a single truck and driver, increased by 50% between the

start of the pandemic and the end of last year, with workers lured to the industry by record pay from companies desperate to move their goods and social media influencers promoting trucking as a way to get rich quick, said Todd Spencer, president of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association. But as consumer spending has eased over the past year and the volume of goods needing to be shipped has returned to pre-pandemic levels, there is less demand for all those drivers — creating competition that has driven down shipping rates.

“Basically, the good times have come and gone,” said Spencer. “There’s a shakeout

in the works right now, and it’s more than likely going to continue throughout this year.”

As shipping rates have fallen, a growing number of drivers have found themselves unable to keep operating, with 15,000 trucking companies shutting down their operations since October 2022, the majority being owner-operators with just one truck, said Dean Croke, principal analyst for DAT, a trucking logistics and analytics firm. He estimates another 2,000 carriers may have to leave the market before the supply of drivers meets the demand.

Barron said she went from making \$20,000 a month in profits in March 2022 to just over \$3,300 a few months later in July after fuel prices surged and demand slowed. That wasn’t enough money to keep up with her family’s expenses back home, which included \$2,600 in rent, along with a \$1,400-a-month loan payment for her truck. In August, she surrendered her truck to the lender, losing her \$4,000 down payment and having to pay a \$7,000 penalty for returning the vehicle.

“Everything was good, but once the pandemic slowed down, there wasn’t a high demand anymore. So I couldn’t make the money that I needed to make to be able to live and then the fuel prices went up too,” said Barron.

Demand for drivers surged in late 2020 and throughout 2021 as Americans, flush with stimulus checks and unable to spend as much on travel and dining out, started ordering more goods online, from daily necessities to large items, like sofas and patio furniture. A booming housing market meant even more demand for construction materials and appliances. At the same time, logistical bottlenecks at ports and warehouses slowed down how efficiently the drivers who were on the road could

move.

With the prospect of quickly making six-figure salaries, a wave of workers shifted into trucking careers during the pandemic, either as employees for a trucking company or by purchasing a truck and starting their own operation, said Rico Muhammad, who has been in the trucking industry for 20 years and hosts a podcast on the industry.

They were spurred on by TikTok and YouTube videos touting the ease of starting a trucking company and the big profits that could follow. One YouTube video posted in August 2022 with more than 3 million views features a 19-year-old who started his own trucking company and says he made \$159,000 in the first three months.

“A lot of people jumped in because of all of the hype and everything that was pushed on social media making people think that they could make some quick money,” said Muhammad. “You had a ton of people jumping into the industry, and now you have a mass exodus out of the industry of people going out of the business. It’s kind of like a culling of the herd.” Even President Joe Biden urged Americans to consider careers in trucking, with the White House unveiling a “trucking action plan” in December 2021 to strengthen the trucking workforce and help relieve supply chain bottlenecks. Last April, Biden invited a group of truckers to the White House, with big rigs parked on the White House lawn, where he touted the more than 35,000 trucking jobs added since the start of the pandemic.

But as the number of drivers increased, the demand for them soon slowed. Consumer spending cooled as inflation squeezed household budgets and people shifted their spending to travel, entertainment and dining out rather than purchasing goods. At the same time, demand has slowed for building materials as

higher interest rates have stifled new housing construction, and logjams at the ports that left drivers stuck waiting for hours for shipments have eased.

“There’s definitely more trucks than loads. It’s a simple supply and demand equation,” said Croke. “They’re hanging in there right now. But for a lot of carriers they are a major breakdown away from going out of business. This is a perilous time for a lot of carriers.”

**'Praying and hoping'**

Gitonna Smith, 32, was one of those who made the leap into trucking during the pandemic. Smith had been working in Atlanta nightclubs for more than four years when the pandemic hit and the club where she was working shut down. Feeling burned out from the nightclub industry and in need of work, she spent \$4,000 for a three-week commercial driver course.

She immediately got a job with a trucking company and started making \$2,500 a week. She said she enjoyed the travel and independence of the job and started a Facebook page and YouTube channel with videos of her truck in which she talked about the new places she

had visited and chronicled her struggles, like trying to back her truck into a loading dock.

But over the past year, she saw her weekly pay drop to \$1,200 as the rate she gets paid per mile by her employer has decreased and the number of jobs she is given has slowed to the point where she can go days or weeks without work.

“When I first started they’d book me for loads back to back to back to back. I’d always be running,” said Smith from her home in Atlanta, where she was waiting for her truck to get repaired — time off the road that she wasn’t getting paid for. “But now it’s to the point where they might book one load, and then I have to sit for hours until they find something else for me. It’s really bad.”

Smith said she’s planning to stick with the job at least through the end of the year because she’s able to meet her monthly expenses but is uncertain what the future holds.

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“I’m praying and hoping that it gets better because I love trucking, it’s easy for me, I love to travel. So I’m just going to

hang in there,” Smith said. “I’ll give it maybe to the end of the year, and we’ll go from there.”

Monica Garcia said she has given up on the industry altogether after she closed her trucking company last year and sold her trucks. She started the business in 2016 with the \$30,000 pension she got when she retired as a teacher. Over time, her business grew to have three trucks with a rotation of seven to 10 drivers.

But the pressures on her company started to build with backlogs at the ports, rising fuel prices and increasing competition from a flood of new drivers in the market, along with Amazon building up its own fleet.

“When the fuel went to \$5.50 a gallon that was the nail in the coffin for me. I had to shut my doors,” said Garcia, who is now working in real estate. “Between that and truck repairs, I didn’t have enough cushion. My profitability went down with the drop in rates. Then when the fuel went up and I needed to put my truck in the shop, that was it.”

**'Trials and tribulations'**

Many drivers get their shipments from the spot market,

which is dominated by solo drivers or small firms that bid on individual jobs. But rates have plummeted, from around \$1 a mile in profit in 2021 to about 3 cents a mile today, said Croke. Typically, a driver needs at least 40 cents a mile in profit to be able to build up a cash reserve for vehicle maintenance and repairs that can range in the tens of thousands of dollars, he said.

Larger trucking firms that have contracts with retailers and shippers have also seen their rates go down, though not as dramatically, and some have had to scale back the size of their fleets as demand has slowed, said Bob Costello, chief economist for the American Trucking Associations, which represents the major trucking carriers. Those companies are still having trouble finding and retaining workers though it has eased, especially as truckers who started their own companies have been forced to shut down and look for work as company drivers, said Costello.

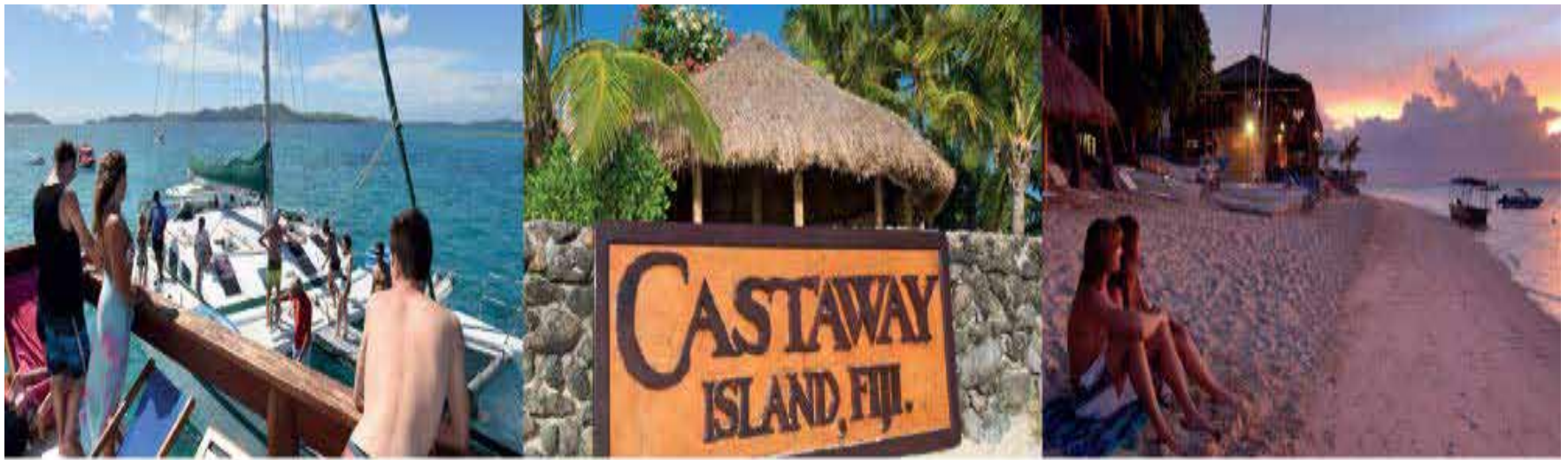
For those who purchased equipment in the past two years and now need to sell it, they could be out tens of thousands of dollars. Prices for trucks and trailers nearly doubled in 2021 as everyone from major ship-

pers, like Amazon and FedEx, to individual drivers started buying up more vehicles to keep up with demand, said Croke. Prices have started to come back to their pre-pandemic levels, leaving drivers underwater on their loans.

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HISTORICAL STRATEGY GAME

What if WW1 had split the U.S. into independent states? Game simulates alternative history





Arriving by catamaran

Also known as Monuriki

Sunset at Castaway Island

## MAMANUCA ISLANDS

*There's no better way to get a feel for Fiji than by hitching a lift on a short cruise or light plane flight from Nadi to the nearby Mamanuca Islands, to rinse away your jetlag on the beaches of this scattering of idyllic South Pacific jewels.*

**DISTANCE:** 25 miles (40km) by ferry  
**TIME:** 3 days (or more)  
**START/END:** Denarau  
**POINTS TO NOTE:** There are various ways of getting out to the islands, from cheap and cheerful multi-stop ferries, to bespoke itinerary cruises aboard luxury yachts, and scenic flights in light aircraft (to Mana). Most boats depart from Denarau Island, which is connected to the main island and is easily reached by bus or taxi from Nadi. Organised trips almost always include hotel pick-up from the city. Some boats leave from Lautoka.

Fiji is not a place to be in a rush, but the quickest and easiest way to get a taste of the sun-splattered desert-island destination you're almost certainly expecting to encounter, is to leave Nadi quick smart and head towards the Mamanuca Islands, just off the mainland of Viti Levu.

There are 20 islands in this group (although some disappear at high tide), where around 18 resorts and myriad tour

companies cater for a range of tastes and budgets. But regardless of whether you're travelling on a shoestring or a yacht, everything revolves around three common denominators: sun, sea and sand – all of which are available on tap here.

The Mamanucas have starred in films (Monuriki Island was Tom Hanks' lonely paradise in *Cast Away*) and on TV (*Survivor – Fiji*), and they are exactly what you imagine when you hear the words 'tropical' and 'island' used in the same sentence. In between these South Pacific punctuation points, brilliant scuba diving can be enjoyed at such famous sites as Gotham City (named after the batfish that frequent it) and Big W, and there's even a world-class surf break (Fiji's best).

Buses pick up guests from hotels all around Nadi and from the various resorts on the Coral Coast, and deliver them to the port on Denarau Island, which is connected to the mainland, ready for transfer onto the bustling boats. Once loaded, various vessels skim across the waters of the South Pacific – generally quite calm within the protective embrace of Malolo Barrier Reef – out to the islands.

### DAY TRIPPING

Many visitors spend their entire holiday in one resort, but day cruises are popular with travellers who want to see a bit more of Fiji. Day trips leave each morning (usually 9–10am) and return late in the afternoon (about 5–6pm), and your options are manifold.

With **Captain Cook Cruises** (tel: 670 1823; www.captaincookcruises-fiji.com) you can sail to sand-fringed, reef-ringed **Tivua Island** aboard a tall ship (the *Ra Marama*) or a sailing catamaran (*Fiji One*). **South Sea Cruises** (tel: 675 0500; www.ssc.com.fj) offer

half-day and full-day trips to **South Sea Island**, and full-day trips to the Fijian family-owned and lagoon-blessed **Malolo**, and exclusive **Castaway Island** (real name Qalito, just off Malolo), where there are only 10 day-trippers at a time.

One interesting option, which is competitively priced (considering the sybaritic feel of the experience), is a trip on the **Whale's Tale** (www.whalestale.com.fj), a beautiful schooner-rigged motor yacht, which sails past Malamala, Vunavadra, Bounty and Treasure Islands within the Mamanuca group, en route to uninhabited

Schooner Island, with a champagne breakfast to enjoy on the way.

Prices vary, but most cruises cost around F\$200–250 per adult per day, which should include lunch, use of snorkelling equipment and some water activities (scuba diving always costs extra). Travellers who wish to head out on their own can pay more to hire a water taxi from **Mamanuca Express** (tel: 675 0151; www.mamanucaexpress.com) for a full day of completely independent island-hopping and exploration.







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# 15 INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HUMAN BODY



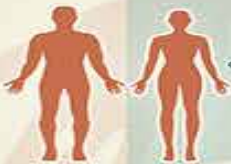
## YOUR BONES

You're born with 300 bones. But as you age and grow taller, your bones fuse, leaving you with 206 total.<sup>1</sup>



## YOUR STRONGEST MUSCLE

Your jaw muscle is the strongest muscle in your body. The jaw's hinge-like features create more power as you bite down and clench your teeth.<sup>2</sup>



## YOUR BODY GLOWS

Your body produces a glimmer of light caused by bioluminescence. It's, however, invisible to the naked eye.<sup>3</sup>



## YOUR SPIT

In an average lifetime, you'll produce around 21,000 liters of spit. That's enough saliva to fill at least one small swimming pool.<sup>4</sup>



## YOUR LIVER

Your liver is the only organ that can completely regenerate itself. It can grow back to its original size within a few weeks.<sup>5</sup>



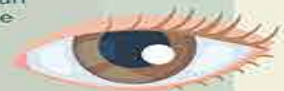
## YOUR SMALLEST BONES

The smallest bones in your body are inside your ear. They're so small that they could all fit on a penny, and you wouldn't be able to hear anything without them.<sup>6</sup>



## YOUR EAR

Your ear is self-cleaning because of one thing: ear wax. It keeps your ears tidy and protects you from bacteria.<sup>7</sup>



## YOUR EYES

Your eyes are powerful. They can detect light from a candle flame over 1.7 miles away.<sup>8</sup>



## YOUR NOSE

Your sense of smell is closely linked with your memories and can trigger strong emotions and memories almost instantaneously.<sup>9</sup> Women tend to have a stronger sense of smell than men.<sup>10</sup>



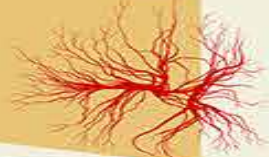
## YOUR TONGUE

Forget fingerprints. Your tongue print is unique to you, making it difficult to forge.<sup>11</sup>



## YOUR SNEEZING

Scientists have recently discovered sneezing might be your nose's way of rebooting itself to get rid of any bad particles that have been inhaled.<sup>12</sup>



## YOUR BLOOD VESSELS

There are over 100,000 miles of blood vessels inside your body.<sup>13</sup>



## YOUR STOMACH

The acid in your stomach is so strong that it could dissolve metal.<sup>14</sup>



## YOUR PINKY FINGER

Without your pinky finger, you would lose about 50% of your hand strength.<sup>15</sup>



## YOUR BODY

Your body sheds about eight pounds of dead skin a year. Most of those cells settle as the dust in your home.<sup>16</sup>



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# Sports News



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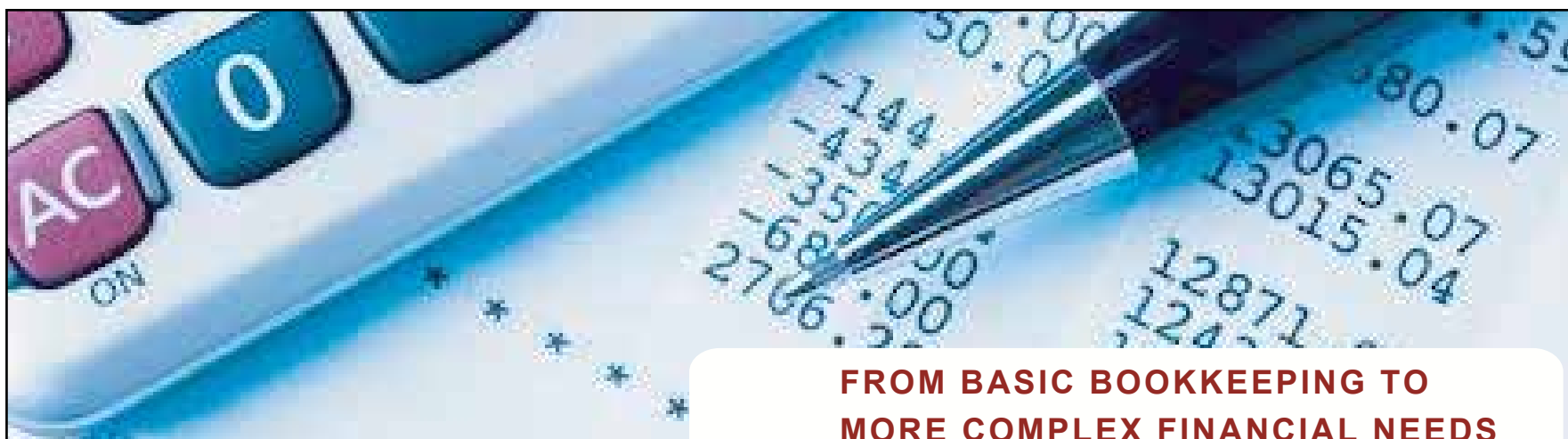
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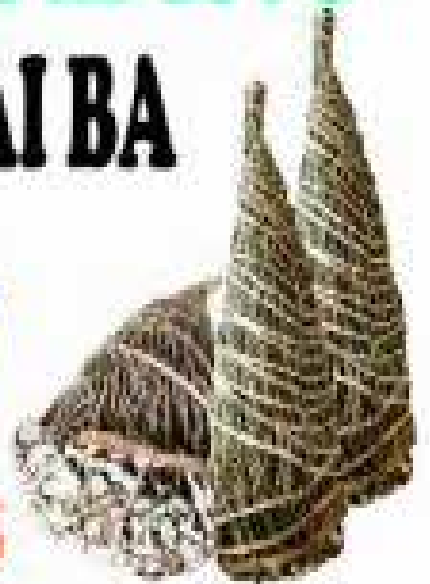
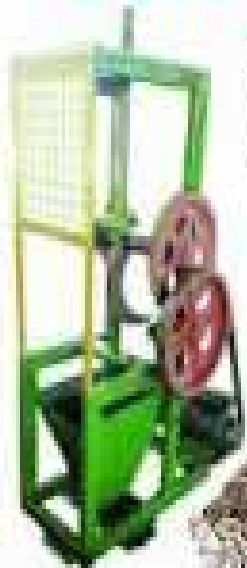


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## Horoscope July 2023

### Aries

- March 21 - April 20

Talking to those you trust and respect will help you sort out any problems. Problems with skin, bones, or teeth may mess up your schedule. Try to curb overindulgence this month. Your uncanny insight will help you make the right choices.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Sunday.

### Taurus Information

- April 21 - May 20

Your outgoing nature will surprise others this month. Friendships will be ruined if you let too many people get involved in any disputes. You need an outlet that will not only stimulate you but also challenge your intelligence as well. You must not let others talk you into doing things that will probably limit you financially at a later date.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

### Gemini Information

- May 21 - June 21

Jealous attitudes may lead you astray. Female colleagues may be able to help you get the job done. Put your efforts into making constructive improvements to your environment and to your state of mind. Socializing will be more than just entertaining.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

### Gemini Information

- May 21 - June 21

You will make new friends through physical activities. If you can include them in your plans, do so. Your home may be in an uproar and you are best to stay out of the line of fire if at all possible. Someone may try to damage your reputation.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Monday.

### Leo Information

- July 23 - August 22

Your moneymaking opportunities will flourish. Romance will be on your mind, and chances for ideal connections are in the works. Put your time and energy into travel, philosophy, and soul-searching. Direct your energy into physical exertion. Residential moves will be

favorable.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Tuesday.

### Virgo Information

- August 23 - September 22

Your lover may cost you financially. You can make rewarding connections through the organized groups you associate with. You may have a hard time relating to children this month. Secret affairs will eventually backfire on you.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

### Libra Information

- September 23 - October 22

You will find that social activities will be enjoyable and will promote new connections. You have to believe in yourself and your talents. You can meet a new romantic partner or secure the love connection you already have by going out and entertaining yourself. It may not be the best time to socialize with clients or colleagues this month.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

### scorpio Information

- October 23 - November 21

Try not to make waves. Your talents are likely to be discovered. Someone you least expect could be trying to make you look bad. You can make changes to your living quarters, but not everyone will be pleased with your efforts.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Friday.

### Sagittarius Information

- November 22 - December 20

Expect to experience a sudden reversal of fortune. You need a break from your daily routine. This is a wonderful day to look into courses or hobbies that interest you. Knowledge can be acquired if you listen.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Wednesday.

### Capricorn Information

- December 21 - January 19

Voice your opinions and

contribute to the debate. Be prepared to make changes to your personal documents. Your temper may get the better of you if a colleague has tried to ruin your reputation. Changes in your domestic scene are evident.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

### Aquarius Information

- January 20 - February 18

Opportunities for romance will develop through activities with large groups. You will be in a high cycle regarding work. You should be looking into making changes around the house. Advancement can be yours if you are assertive in your approach.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Saturday.

### Pisces Information

- February 19 - March 20

Be prepared to make changes to your personal documents. You may have major blowups with someone you love if you don't back down. Look into any educational activities involving the whole family. You can pick up wonderful buys if you really look hard this month.

Your luckiest events this month will occur on a Thursday.

## ZODIAC SIGN FACTS

### Aries :

As the first sign of the Zodiac, Aries generally want to be in charge and in positions of leadership.

### Taurus :

Taurus do not want to live scattered lives. They prefer to keep their life and actions in a slow and steady pace.

### Gemini :

Gemini are very fond of words and communication. Most people will never be able to outwit a Gemini.

### Cancer :

Cancers are sensitive and kind. They are natural caregivers.

### Leo :

Leos have a naturally joyous and generous personality. They draw people to them magnetically.

### Virgo :

Virgos often prefer to keep their lives on a strict schedule. Disorder and chaos can be very stressful for them.

### Libra :

The main focus of a Libras life is often harmony. They want everything and everyone to be fair and balanced.

### Scorpio :

More than any other sign, Scorpios want to find the depth in people. They do not enjoy looking at life from a surface level.

### Sagittarius :

Sagittarius prefer to keep life fun and lighthearted. They are interested more in spiritual learning than academic.

### Capricorn :

Capricorns look at life from an analytical perspective. They are not controlled by their emotions.

### Aquarius :

As the Zodiac's eccentric, Aquarius tends to think the weirder something is, the better.

### Pisces :

As the last sign of the Zodiac, Pisces carry a little bit of all the other zodiac signs within them; therefore, they can relate and sympathize with almost anyone.

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## TOP 10 RULES OF CANCER

1. Give respect / Get respect
2. Be real or leave
3. Actions speak louder than words
4. I suck at apologies
5. You should have listened to me
6. Whatever you do, I'll find out
7. Don't let my honesty offend you
8. Chill and accept the crazy
9. I make my own rules
10. Sarcasm because beating people up is illegal

Sports News

# Nasinu Touch Rugby teams up with R.C Manubhai

The Nasinu Touch Rugby Association has received a timely sponsorship of \$23,000 from R.C Manubhai & Co.Pte Ltd for their upcoming touch rugby competition, set to be one of the largest in the country.

The tournament, which is expected to attract significant attention from touch rugby enthusiasts across Fiji and beyond, will showcase 16 teams in the men's, women's, mixed and mixed Masters. This sponsorship demonstrates R.C Manubhai's ongoing commitment to supporting sports and community engagement initiatives. The tournament is expected to attract a wide range of participants, including local clubs from across Fiji and overseas.

The international participation will contribute to the tournament's vibrant atmosphere and provide opportunities for players to showcase their skills on a larger stage. In addition to the thrilling matches, attendees can look forward to a range of exciting activities and entertainment options throughout the tournament.



# Companies extend support for Netball Fiji

Netball Fiji's development efforts will continue after Digicel Fiji and Punjas and Sons Ltd extended their sponsorship with a cash sponsorship of \$40,000. Also included is a further in-kind support of \$14,000, solidifying the two companies position as the naming rights sponsors for three of Netball Fiji's national competitions. This means Digicel and Punjas are official sponsors for the National Championship, the Vanua Cup, and the Fiji Secondary School Championship. For the past nine years, these two companies have been staunch supporters of Netball Fiji, their unwavering assistance playing a significant role in the sport's growth at both community and grassroots levels. Netball Fiji chief executive Vivian Koster says the support has been instrumental in empowering young women across communities in Fiji, providing them with



a platform to showcase their talents in the sport they love. Digicel Fiji CEO, Farid Mohammed says they're happy to

continue their support towards Netball Fiji after and they've been great partners with Punjas Group since 2014. Mohammed

also says they're honoured to provide \$20,000 in cash and telecommunications services for a year, ensuring the success

of the National Championship, Vanua Cup, and the Fiji Secondary Schools Championship.

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Sports

# US FIJI OPEN 2023



**Wasu Naiker** won the open title @ the 18<sup>th</sup> annual US FIJI OPEN GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP held @ Loomis Trail GC in Blaine WA. Mr. Naiker shot an 82 and 79 in the 36 Hole event. He won

by 8 shots. **Rafiq Mohammed** won the net with score of 77 74. Division II was won by **Aman Krishna** with a very consistent rounds of 88 & 82 gross. He won by 12 shots. He also had the only Eagle on # 11.

The net was won by **Azad Khan** with scores of 70 & 72 Net. On Saturday NTP winners: Satish Ram # 3 Kamal Gounder on # 5 Joseph San on # 12 Graham Venkataya on # 16. Division II # 3 Ajit

Singh. # 5 Sanjay Sharma. # 12 & 16 Navinesh Pillai. On Sunday NTP winners: # 3 Graham Venkataya. # 5 Aamir Coaker. Krish Pillai 12 & # 16. Division II: # 3 Jamal Azad # 5 Nav Purewal

#12 Bijou Nath # 16 Salesh Karan. A total of 39 Players played in the event. Players came from Edmonton, Vancouver, Portland, Seattle and Los Angeles. Krish Pillai was the Youngest @ 15 Years.







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Sports News

# Some of the clicks from Digicel Young Kulas 2-0 win over Papua New Guinea in the final Group B fixture of the OFC U19 Women's Championship at the HFC Bank Stadium in Suva



Sports News



## Former CONMEBOL president Napout to be released from U.S. jail

Former South American soccer boss Juan Angel Napout, who was sentenced to nine years in prison in 2018 for his role in the FIFA corruption scandal, could be released next week. Napout, the former head of South American soccer's governing body CONMEBOL, was found guilty by a jury in the U.S. of racketeering conspiracy and wire fraud conspiracy, crimes stemming from the corruption scandal that engulfed global soccer body FIFA in 2015. Napout's lawyer Juan Ignacio Gonzalez Macchi told a radio station in Paraguay that Judge Pamela Chen had reduced Napout's sentence and he would be released on compassionate grounds on July 5. Napout suffers from cataracts in both eyes and his family alleges that he has not received adequate medical attention from prison authorities in Miami. "He is released but there is some paperwork for him to be able to take a flight



and return to Paraguay," said Gonzalez. Napout served as the head of the national soccer fed-

eration in his native Paraguay from 2007 to 2014 and then of South American soccer's gov-

erning body CONMEBOL for one year until he was arrested in Zurich in December 2015 and

extradited. He was banned from soccer for life by FIFA in 2019.



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