



THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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First Fiji Chamber of Commerce Launches in San Francisco

First Fiji Chamber of Commerce Launches in San Francisco, Uniting Fijians, and Businesses in the USA San Francisco witnessed a momentous occasion today with the launch of the first-ever Fiji

Chamber of Commerce in the United States. Spearheaded by successful Fijian entrepreneurs Narendra Narayan and Vinay Nair, the Chamber aims to create a vital bridge for Fijians and Fiji businesses back home

and in the USA. The inaugural event drew a large and enthusiastic crowd from the Fijian community in San Francisco. Fiji's Trade Commissioner to the USA, Mr. Alika Cooper, and the Fijian Consul in San Fran-

cisco, Mr. Jay Singh, graced the occasion with their presence, underscoring the significance of this initiative. Uniting Fijians Through Commerce The core vision of the Fiji Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco is

to foster unity and collaboration among Fijians and businesses operating in the USA. This platform will provide a channel for entrepreneurs to connect and share resources.



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cup event. Mr. Narendra Narayan, President of the American Fiji Golf Club, spoke with the CEO of The US Fiji Times, highlighting that the Association organizes 7-8 golf tournaments annually, culminating in a

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CEO, Mr. Vinay Nair, a major sponsor, with other sponsors, Saudagar Cash and Carry Director Mr Nilesh Chand and Elite real-states Director Raj Singh were all present at the tee-off to demonstrate his support. In the

closing remarks Mr. Narayan expressed his gratitude to all participants and sponsors for making this a successful memorial event, and looks forward to hosting many more in the future.

SOME TRADITIONS SHOULD BE KEPT INTACT

FROM POPS

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LOS ANGELES , USA
Mr. VINOD K BHINDI



HONORARY COUNCIL
VANCOUVER CANADA
Mr. BOBBY NAICKER

THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

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

Vinaka – Rocky Buksh



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

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

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



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





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News

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Nair, the Chamber aims to create a vital bridge for Fijians and Fiji businesses back home and in the USA.

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Jay Singh, graced the occasion with their presence, underscoring the significance of this initiative.

Uniting Fijians Through Commerce

The core vision of the Fiji Chamber of Commerce in San Francisco is to foster unity and collaboration among Fijians and businesses operating in the

USA. This platform will provide a channel for entrepreneurs to connect, share resources, and navigate the complexities of doing business in the American market.

The launch event marked an exciting beginning for the Chamber, and the positive energy of the Fijian community was palpable. With this initia-

tive taking root, Fijians, Fijian businesses in the USA can look forward to a strong support system and a brighter future.

A big Vinaka from the Fijian Media in USA, The US Fiji Times for covering this successfully launch.



From Left, Vinay Nair CEO/ Owner of Stone Universe, Nilesh Chand Owner of Saudagar Supermarket, Rocky Buksh Publisher of USFIJITIMES & Naren Narayan Owner of Innovative Circuit Company in Silicon Valley San Jose.



News

First Fiji Chamber of Commerce Launches in San Francisco



Fijiana 7s visit women at Corrections centre

According to the Fiji Corrections Service Facebook page, the half-day visit aimed to lift the spirits of inmates, make a donation, and see the workplace of team captain COA Rajieli Daveua, who works at the center. The players were moved to tears when inmates sang an original song for their favorite warden, COA Daveua.

Manager Luse Kotobalavu says she wanted the players to understand why their captain is the way she is. She explained that Daveua's humility and resilience come from working at Corrections and thanked the Commissioner for allowing the visit before the team departs. The team was humbled to learn that inmates and staff regularly watch and cheer for their games on TV to support their captain. Kotobalavu says the visit is an experience they will never forget and hopes their small gestures will bring smiles to the women at the correction center.



Resilient Solomon Islands earn opening day victory against Vanuatu

Solomon Islands open their campaign with a hard-fought 1-0 victory against Vanuatu at the OFC U-19 Men's Championship 2024 in Apia. Despite the disruption getting to Samoa, the Solomon Islands showed none of it phased them, after going up one-nil inside the opening 20 minutes. Solomon Islands captain Paul Francis's through ball cut the Vanuatu defence, which James Laena latched on to before powering his shot past goalkeeper Joseph Nakou.

Laena was a constant threat down Vanuatu's left-hand side and almost created a second when he crossed it to the back post, but the defence managed to clear the danger in time. A wild shot from distance from

Sergio Waoute summed up Vanuatu's frustrations in the first half as the Solomon Islands dominated possession and shots on target. They almost added another on the stroke of half-time, but Laena who was in acres of space lifted his over the crossbar, leaving the score one-nil at the break. The flow of the second-half was impacted by multiple injuries and players succumbing to cramp under the hot conditions in Apia.

Vanuatu grew into the contest towards the end of the second period, utilising the pace of substitute Jacky Numake, who just couldn't find the target. Solomon Islands pushed to add to their one goal advantage and came within inches of doubling it,

Sergio Waoute's curling effort just drifting wide of the top left-hand corner. With time nearly expired Manuel Lorren was handed a second yellow card, leaving Vanuatu with 10 men for the remainder of added time. Lorren will now miss their next match on Monday. The victory gives the Solomon Islands the perfect start to their campaign, whilst Vanuatu will look to rebound on match day two, when they face Tahiti.

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closing remarks Mr. Narayan expressed his gratitude to all participants and sponsors for making this a successful memorial event, and looks forward to hosting many more in the future.





American Fiji Golf Club Concludes Successful 3rd Annual Memorial Tournament The American Fiji Golf Club wrapped up a successful day at the Monarch Bay Golf Course in San Leandro, California, followed by a celebratory banquet at the Holiday Inn and Suites in Oakland. The event was graciously sponsored by Mr. Vinay Nair, CEO of Stone Universe INC, whose steadfast support has been instrumental in the series' success. Highlights from the Green: After a day of spirited competition, golfers, sponsors, and guests gathered for an evening of camaraderie. The banquet featured a delightful dinner and beverages, with the highlight being the trophy presentation for the 3rd Annual Memorial Golf Tournament. President's Gratitude: Narendra Narayan, President of the American Fiji Golf Club, expressed profound gratitude to Mr. Vinay Nair and all contributors who made the tournament a triumph. He praised the dedication of participants and the invaluable backing from sponsors, golfers, and supporters



NEWS

The American Fiji Golf Club Hosts 3rd Annual Memorial



**AMERICA FIJI GOLF CLUB
3RD MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
MONARCH BAY GC. JUNE 29TH 2024.**

NTP HOLE # 4 - JUNIOR SARMIENTO
NTP HOLE # 7 – SATISH PRASAD
NTP HOLE # 10 – JAGDISH SINGH
NTP HOLE # 17 – SATISH PRASAD

LONG DRIVE – WHITE TEE – JASBIR CHAHAL
- GOLD TEE – PREM CHAHAL

CHARITY FLIGHT

LOW NET – RESHAM CHAHAL
LOW GROSS – HARBAKSH RANDHAWA

CHALLENGERS FLIGHT

LOW NET – RAJ SINGH
LOW GROSS – HARJIT CHAHAL

DIRECTORS FLIGHT

LOW NET - MUNI RAJ
LOW GROSS – KARAN SINGH

PRESIDENTS FLIGHT

LOW NET – VINAY NAIKER
LOW GROSS – VIJAY PRASAD

CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT

LOW NET – PREM CHAHAL
LOW GROSS – SUKHPREET SANDHU

OVERALL LOW GROSS CHAMPION – (UT) UTHI-
RA
GANAPRAKASAM

Fiji News

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Fiji News

Drugs is not for Kadavu and Fiji Kadavu Provincial Chairman

Kadavu Provincial Council Chair Isikeli Vuniwaqa is sending a strong message to the people of Kadavu that they need to step away from drugs because drugs is not for Kadavu and Fiji. Vuniwaqa says the impact of drugs on the island is bad, but it is manageable. He revealed that the island has been affected mainly because of the downward spiral of the cultural and traditional setting and its protocols. He adds this has caused some villages to break up. When asked about the Provincial Council's plans to tackle the issue of drugs in Kadavu, the Chair says they are working hand in hand with the government, the Police, and donors such as UNESCO, UNDP and UN Office on Drugs and Crime. Vuniwaqa says they are also engaging youths in sporting activities. He says they are also hoping that religious organisations can come together to chart a way forward in their fight against drugs.



FICAC signs MOU with Solomon Islands counterpart SIICAC

FICAC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption with the overall objective of mutual and collaborative understanding and sharing common knowledge and continuous capacity building between the two agencies in the fight against corruption. Acting Deputy Commissioner FICAC Francis Pulewai highlighted this at the signing at the Grand Pacific Hotel, saying this signing expresses the understanding where the two agencies can identify areas where they can foster cooperation to advance anti-corruption vision of the Pacific. Pulewai says this is in relation to anti-corruption and legislative institution frameworks, anti-corruption capacities at scale including in relation to detection, investigation and prosecution of cases. She says strengthening public awareness and cross-sectoral cooperation for improved anti-corruption results and enhancing global recognition for anti-corruption

institutions from the Pacific while nurturing anti-corruption champions. Vice Chairperson for Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption Anika Kingmele says this auspicious day marks the begin-

ning of a milestone for SIICAC. She says it is the beginning of an optimistic and testament of a bilateral relationship and cooperation between not only the two agencies but countries as well. UNDP Team Leader Ef-

fective Governance and Inclusive Growth Rustam Pulatov says through this partnership, they expect to see significant improvements in the way corruption is addressed. Pulatov says the exchange of knowledge

and training session will help SIICAC adopt best practices in complaints handling, leading to stronger investigations and prosecutions, and foster a culture of transparency and integrity within both institutions.



Fiji News

Rabuka urges the people of Kadavu to utilize their resources to the full potential



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka has urged the leaders and the people of Kadavu to inform the government if a budgeted project has not started as yet because he has been informed by the Ministry for Finance that the funds are still left for provincial development. While opening the 2-day Kadavu Provincial Council meeting at Suva Civic

Centre, Rabuka apologized to the people of Kadavu that some of the Government Ministries are facing challenges in the disbursement of funds to complete some ongoing projects that are supposed to be completed this financial year. He says he had talks with the Ministry for Finance a few weeks ago, who told him that there are still a lot

of funds left. The Prime Minister also called on the people of Kadavu to fully utilize the resources around them because one thing they see is that landowners are not fully making use of their God-given resources. Rabuka adds the main connection between the government and the Vanua is the utilization of resources. The Prime Min-

ister also highlighted the need to ensure that each province is setting up businesses, not only for development purposes nowadays but for the security of the next generation. Rabuka also urges the Kadavu people and district reps to take advantage of the initiatives announced within the national budget, such as the pine subsidy. Talking about the

drug issues affecting the country, Rabuka highlighted the need for the people to work hand in hand with the government. He says this week is an important week as the nation is creating awareness of the deadly impact of drugs on people's lives. He adds through family support and God's help, a drug-addicted person can be saved.

Alleged Flagstaff home burglar charged almost 4 months after incident

Police have managed to charge and produce a man in court who was involved in a case of burglary in Bau Street, Flagstaff in Suva, which became viral on social media from 18th March this year.

The report was received from the family living on Bau Street, after they woke up to find they had become victims of a burglary, where a significant amount of their belongings were stolen.

Police say through the gathering of information by the Criminal Investigations Department, operations and Intelligence

teams, a raid was conducted at the accused's home in Saivou in Ra where they arrested the 34 year old alleged to have been involved. He has been charged with one count of burglary and one count of theft. The man appeared in the Suva Magistrates Court yesterday.

The joint investigation team managed to also recover several items alleged to have been stolen worth approximately \$1,500.

He has been remanded in custody at the Totogo Police Station due to other pending investigations.



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Fiji News

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

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



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

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

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

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

Fiji Navy confirms the successful salvage of RFNS Puamau

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

who contributed to a safe recovery operation. Furthermore,

the Board of Inquiry continues with their deliberations on the

grounding incident, to ascertain the facts surrounding the inci-

dent and make recommendations from their finding.



FijiFirst Party de-registered



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

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

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

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

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

Leadership Fiji and Kontiki Finance Limited announce continued partnership

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

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





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Fiji News

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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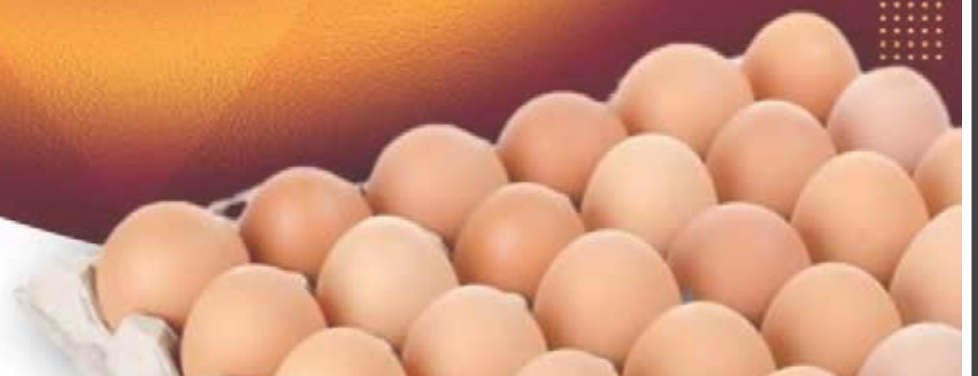
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Fiji News

104 booths set up for Fiji Showcase at Vodafone Arena

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



FijiFirst expected to be deregistered next week

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Fiji News

\$32.3 million allocated to increase affordable housing

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Fiji News

Students under Govt scholarship urged to utilise taxpayers' money properly

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



move overseas without clearing up their bond, they will have to pay for leftover bond years and a 50 percent penalty. Professor

Prasad says the government is using a lot of taxpayers' money to fund the education of children, and if a student goes over-

seas for a 4-year degree study, they will have to pay around \$400,000 for that particular student. When asked if this move

is harsh to students, the Deputy Prime Minister says it's not that harsh on the students but on the taxpayers.

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

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

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

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



to the opening of the Bula Festival but was told she could not go alone and to be accompanied by her mother. Tinaibukadrau then went to her room and

was only discovered missing the next morning. Police say all attempts made by her family to locate her whereabouts have been futile, and a report

was lodged on Sunday night. Police have managed to gather some information that she was seen on Sunday evening with another individual at a shop. If

you have any information regarding Tinaibukadrau's whereabouts, please call the Namaka Police Station on 9905748 or Crimestoppers on 919.

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Fiji News

Civil servants recognized for their service to the country

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Health News

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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Health News

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

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

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

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

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

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





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Health News

Taking a Daily Multivitamin May Not Help You Live Longer



Daily multivitamins are some of the most popular supplements in the United States, but they may not actually make you healthier. An estimated one-third of US adults Trusted Source Erikka Souretake a multivitamin. Consumer spending on them amounts to about 8 billion dollars annually, roughly one-seventh of all dollars that go towards supplements. Of course, the appeal of getting all your necessary vitamins and minerals in one pill per day is alluring. Adults report taking multivitamins to maintain health and fitness and to prevent chronic disease. However, evidence, or, more accurately, a lack of evidence, has been mounting for some time that daily multivitamins may not provide consumers with any real protective benefit when it comes to chronic conditions like heart disease and cancer. In fact, for healthy individuals, a multivitamin may provide no benefit at all. In a large study involving nearly 400,000 US adults without a history of chronic diseases over a follow-up period of more than 20 years, those taking a daily multivitamin showed no improvement in mortality risk compared to those who did not. In fact, those who were taking the supplement demonstrated a slightly increased (4%) mor-

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

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

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

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

Health News

Taking Regular Walks May Help Reduce Lower Back Pain

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



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

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

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

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



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Researchers Identified 6 'Biotypes' Of Depression



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

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

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

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

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

World News

French election candidates withdraw in bid to block far right

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



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

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

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

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



World News

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

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



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

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

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

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

Fake online therapist tricked hundreds of patients

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

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

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

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

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



World News

Israeli strike kills senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon

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



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

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

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

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

Biden campaign works to calm Democrats' nerves as pressure mounts

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

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

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

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

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



World News

Hungary's Orban urges ceasefire on Kyiv visit

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

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



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

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

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

Brazil blocks Meta from using social media posts to train AI

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

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

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

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

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



Health News

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Bollywood News

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



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

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

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

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

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



Food

Anjeer Badam Milkshake Recipe

Anjeer Badam Milkshake

Total Time: 15 min

Prep Time : 05 min

Cook Time : 10 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 2 Cups anjeer (figs)
2. 10-12 almonds
3. 1 banana
4. 2 Cups milk
5. Honey/Sugar (as per desired sweetness levels)
6. Salt
7. Ice Cubes (optional)

How to

1. Take figs and cut them into small pieces. The quantity of the chopped figs should be equivalent to two cups.
2. Chop one banana into small pieces.
3. Now, take 10 to 12 almonds (you can also take soaked almonds) and put them in a blender along with figs, bananas, almonds, milk, and honey/sugar.
4. Blend the shake, and after two spins, add a pinch of salt to enhance its taste.
5. Keeping blending the shake until it's smooth and lump free. And voila, your anjeer badam milkshake is ready to serve! Top it off with ice and wow your guests.



Atta Vegetable Khichdi Recipe

Atta Vegetable Khichdi

Total Time: 25 min

Prep Time : 05 min

Cook Time : 20 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 Cup whole wheat flour
- Assorted vegetables (carrots, peas, beans, etc.)
2. 2 tbsp ghee (clarified butter)
3. 1 tsp cumin seeds
4. 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
5. 1/2 tsp cumin powder
6. 1/2 tsp coriander powder
7. Salt to taste
8. Water

How to

1. In a mixing bowl, add the whole wheat flour (atta).
2. Gradually add water while kneading the flour until you achieve a smooth and consistent paste. Set this aside.
3. Heat ghee in a deep, heavy-bottomed pan. Add cumin seeds and let them sizzle.
4. Saute the vegetables until they turn slightly tender.

5. Add the spices. Stir well to coat the vegetables with these flavourful spices.

6. Now, add the atta paste you prepared earlier to the sautéed vegetables.

7. Mix everything thoroughly

to ensure the paste blends well with the vegetables and spices.

8. Pour enough water into the pan to cover the mixture. The water-to-atta ratio is usually 2:1.

9. Season with salt to taste. Allow the mixture to come to a gentle boil.

10. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan, and let it simmer for about 15-20 minutes. Stir occasionally

to prevent sticking.

11. Once your Atta Vegetable Khichdi is cooked to perfection, drizzle it with a little ghee for added flavour and richness.

12. Serve it hot.



Food

Oats and Moong Dal Dahi Vada Recipe

Oats and Moong Dal Dahi Vada Recipe

Total Time: 30 min
Prep Time : 10 min
Cook Time : 20 min
Serves: 4 Servings

Ingredients

For the vadas:

1. 1 cups split moong dal (yellow lentils)
2. 1/2 cup rolled oats
3. 1 small onion, finely chopped
4. 2 green chillies, finely chopped
5. 1/2 inch ginger, grated
6. A pinch of asafoetida (hing)
7. 1/2 tsp cumin seeds
8. Salt to taste
9. Oil for greasing

For assembling:

1. 2 cups yoghurt (curd), beaten
2. Tamarind chutney (store-bought or homemade)
3. Roasted cumin powder
4. Red chili powder
5. Coriander Leaves, chopped

How to

For the vadas:

6. Soak 1 cup split moong dal in water for 3-4 hours, then drain.
7. Grind the dal along with 1/2 cup rolled oats to form a smooth batter.
8. Mix in chopped onions, green chillies, ginger, asafoetida, cumin seeds, and salt.
9. Cook spoonfuls of batter in a greased appe pan until golden brown.

For chaat:

1. Whisk 2 cups of beaten yoghurt with a pinch of salt.
2. Soak the vadas in lukewarm water, then gently squeeze out excess water.
3. Arrange vadas in a dish, pour yogurt over them.
4. Drizzle tamarind chutney, roasted cumin powder, red chilli powder, and chopped coriander leaves.



Macaroni Hot Pot Recipe

Macaroni Hot Pot
Total Time: 25 min
Prep Time : 05 min
Cook Time : 20 min
Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 2 Cups macaroni
2. 1 Can baked beans, drained and rinsed
3. 2 cups mozzarella cheese
4. 1 cup mixed veggies (bell peppers, corn, onions), chopped
5. 1 cup milk
6. 2 tbsp butter
7. 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
8. Salt and pepper to taste
9. Herbs for garnishing

How to

1. In a pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for a minute or two.
2. Gradually pour in the milk while whisking to create a smooth sauce. Cook until it thickens and coats the back of a spoon.
3. Reduce the heat to low and add the cheese. Stir until melted.
4. Toss in the cooked macaroni, baked beans, and mixed veggies. Gently fold everything together until well coated in the cheese



5. Season with salt, pepper, and herbs. Let the flavours
6. Transfer the macaroni and beans mixture to a baking
7. Place the dish in the pre-
8. heated oven and bake for about 15-20 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly.

Bollywood News

Dharma Productions & Sikhya Entertainment's Kill Scores Hollywood Remake Deal; John Wick's Director Takes The Helm!

Bollywood action film Kill scores Hollywood remake by John Wick director before it even hits theaters in India! In a landmark moment for Indian cinema, Dharma Productions and Sikhya Entertainment's upcoming action film Kill is set to be remade in Hollywood. Lionsgate, the studio behind the blockbuster John Wick franchise, announced that 87Eleven Entertainment, the production company led by John Wick director Chad Stahelski, will be producing the English-language version of Kill. The announcement, made by Lionsgate Motion Picture Group Chair Adam Fogelson, highlights Kill's immense potential. Stahelski expressed his enthusiasm for the project, calling Kill one of the most vivid, wild, and creative action movies he's seen recently. He emphasized the importance of bringing Nikhil Nagesh Bhat's relentless action sequences to a wider audience. He also looks forward to collaborating with the original team to create a worthy English adaptation. The official synopsis of the film reads, "During a train trip to New Delhi, a pair of commandos face an army of invading



bandits." The original producers of Kill – Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, Guneet Monga Kapoor, and Achin Jain – echoed this sentiment in a joint statement. They expressed their delight at seeing their vision for global recognition come to life and their honour at partnering with Lionsgate. They see the pre-release remake announcement as a significant win for Indian cinema, underscoring its poten-

tial for international acclaim. "When we made Kill with Nikhil Nagesh Bhat, we dreamed of global love and seeing North American theatres chant 'Kill! Kill! Kill!' was like seeing that vision come alive. As we approach our global release, we are thrilled that 87Eleven Entertainment will produce a remake of our film in English. Partnering with Lionsgate, the award-winning studio behind



genre-defining action movies, has been incredibly gratifying. This announcement before the original film's release is unprecedented and a big win for Indian cinema. We are truly honoured," said the makers. This collaboration between Dharma Productions and Sikhya Entertainment marks their second project together, following the success of their critically acclaimed film The Lunchbox. Kill is poised

to be a turning point for Indian action cinema, showcasing its ability to captivate a global audience. With the involvement of Hollywood heavyweights like Lionsgate and 87Eleven Entertainment, expectations are high for this upcoming action spectacle. Starring newcomer Lakshya alongside Raghav Juyal and Tanya Maniktala, Kill is arriving in the theatres on July 5.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui Worked as Watchman Despite Wealth: 'Main Gareeb Toh Nahi Tha'

Bollywood actors who have made it and become successful often serve as inspiration for thousands who want to join the glamorous industry. Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui is one such actor. He has achieved critical acclaim and praise, becoming one of the most prolific actors in Hindi cinema. Nawaz has often shared the stories of his debut in the industry; in one such story, he revealed that he worked as a watchman before becoming an actor. But now, Nawazuddin reveals that he did the job for a particular reason, and people often think that he comes from a poor background. Nawazuddin said in an interview with Shubhankar Mishra that his employment as a watchman does not imply that his family is unstable financially. "Meri shakal soorat aisi thi, main gareeb toh nahi tha," he continued.

Siddiqui claimed that he chose to work as a watchman to avoid taking money from his family. The actor said that his parents were always willing to support him. Nawazuddin Siddiqui said, "That's because I would not take money from home. There was money at home always, thoda bohot paisa tha...but I didn't want to take money from my family because I was doing a job of my choice without even telling them. My parents were always ready to give me money; they'd say, 'Kuch problem ho toh le. You aren't asking for any money, and we don't even know what you are doing.'" The actor, who has been doing a string of multiple OTT projects of all budgets, spoke to The Indian Express behind the intention of it. Nawazuddin Siddiqui said, "I do 'small films' because I have come here to do that only. Yes,

at times I also do big films and play small roles in them, woh paise ke liye karte hai (I do that for the money). Paise milte hai acchhe usmein, taaki hum hummaari chhoti filmein bana sake (you get paid well so then you can do small films)." He added, "I make sure I am balanced that way. Periodically, I review the kinds of films I am doing. If I have done one big film, budget-wise, then I make sure I do a couple of small films. There is not very good money in small films, so one needs to balance it out. I have been doing this from the very beginning of my career." On the work front, Nawazuddin is currently seen in Rautu Ka Raaz. The film, which takes place in the sleepy little village of Rautu Ki Beli, centers on a dull murder investigation that takes some unexpected turns.



Player ratings: Martínez excels on penalties in Argentina win



HOUSTON, Texas -- On America's Independence Day, Lionel Messi and Argentina wanted to set off the fireworks for their fans with a quarterfinal win, but once again, just like the 2022 World Cup final, it was their goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez, who took the role of hero as his two massive saves helped his team beat Ecuador in a dramatic penalty shootout, securing a place in the semifinals of the Copa América on Thursday night.

After missing Argentina's final group stage match against Perú due to a muscle injury, Messi returned to the starting lineup and led the defending World Cup and Copa América champions to a win over their South American rivals in a physical game in Houston. It was not an easy match for Ar-

gentina, however, and despite their possession, there were countless moments when Ecuador really should have taken more advantage.

The start of the game was dominated by La Tricolor as their left-hand side pushed Argentina's backline, constantly catching full-back Nahuel Molina off guard. In fact, on one occasion, it took a very good save at the start from Martínez (from Jeremy Sarmiento) to keep it scoreless. Aside from one good drive and cross in the first 20 minutes, Messi was also relatively quiet in the first 30 minutes. Argentina, as usual, took a little time to get going but the longer the first half developed, the more accustomed they got to Ecuador's midblock, and even higher up, when Ecuador went man-to-man, Argentina

caught on.

Enzo Fernández's blocked attempt after a counter-attacking play ended in a corner and that's how the opener introduced itself. Messi's cross found Liverpool's Alexis Mac Allister in the box, who flicked it towards the far post, where he found an open Lisandro Martínez and the Manchester United defender was ready to pounce. Argentina took the lead as they headed into the break.

The second half came with drama as Ecuador earned a penalty after Rodrigo De Paul's hand in the box. It was finally a chance for Félix Sánchez Bas's men to equalize. However, Enner Valencia's poor penalty ensured Argentina's and Martínez's continued quest for a clean sheet throughout the entire

campaign. That changed pretty rapidly as Ecuador equalized in stoppage time thanks to Kevin Rodríguez, forcing a dramatic penalty shootout.

But that's where Dibu, once again, stood for his team, especially after Messi missed his panenka attempt. The Aston Villa stopper, who has been so important in these situations in the past -- both Copa América and the World Cup -- produced two huge attempts. His teammates did the rest with their spot kicks, and in the end, Argentina came out victorious.

There is no doubt that manager Lionel Scaloni will probably leave this game with a feeling of caution because he knew his team allowed way too many opportunities and were not imposing going forward. In fact,

Ecuador should have won it in 90 minutes. A lot for Scaloni to ponder.

But alas, that's for another day as another final four spot beckons for La Albiceleste. They will now face the winner of Venezuela and Canada.

MANAGER RATING (1-10)

Lionel Scaloni, 5 -- Made changes a little too late and even after they entered the game, he struggled to encourage his team to deal with a very physical, fast and forward-thinking Ecuadorian midfield, especially Moisés Caicedo, who was everywhere. Argentina won the game, but it was not an easy task, and it was certainly not because of Scaloni's decisions.

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Sports

Hurricane Beryl delays Team India's departure from Barbados

The Indian men's cricket team is stuck in Barbados and their arrival has been delayed due to hurricane Beryl. Hurricane Beryl (Category 4) is expected to pass by Barbados on Sunday night local time with the centre of the storm approximately 80 miles off the south coast. According to a report in the Washington Post, Beryl is anticipated to hit the Windward Islands with winds exceeding 130 mph. Hurricane Warnings are in effect for Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Grenada, and Tobago island. The World Cup winning Indian team was initially planning a charter straight home but the airport has been closed since Sunday evening. "Like you we are also stuck here. After the travel plans are clear, we will think about the felicitation," BCCI secretary Jay Shah told reporters in Barbados. On Sunday, India broke the shackles of a tormenting 11-year run during which the



side failed to win a single ICC title. After losing two ICC finals over the last 12 months, the trophy drought finally ended here and Shah hoped

the winning run will continue. "I would want India to win all the titles. We have the biggest bench strength, only three players from this team are going to

Zimbabwe. We can field three teams if the need arises," he said. A few of the players like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shivam Dube, Sanju Samson, Rinku Singh and

Khaleel Ahmed are also scheduled to travel to Zimbabwe for a 5-match T20I series, beginning on July 6.

Dinesh Karthik named RCB men's team batting coach and mentor

A month after announcing his retirement from all form of cricket, former India wicket-keeper-batter Dinesh Karthik on Monday has joined Royal

Challengers Bengaluru as batting coach and mentor. "Welcome our keeper in every sense, Dinesh Karthik back into RCB in an all new avatar. DK will be

the batting coach and mentor of RCB Men's team," RCB posted on X. The wicketkeeper-batter made 257 appearances in IPL, scoring 4,842 runs at an aver-

age of 26.32. Karthik played for Kolkata Knight Riders, Mumbai Indians, Delhi Daredevils, and Kings XI Punjab apart from RCB. "Coaching at a professional level is incredibly exciting for me and is something I'm truly passionate about as a new chapter in my life. Hopefully, the breadth of my experiences as a player can contribute to the development of the group and bring added value," Karthik said. "I believe that cricket success hinges not only on technical proficiency but also on match intelligence and composure. I am eager to coach and mentor our batting group, helping them to not only refine their method but also to develop the keen match awareness needed to excel under pressure. It's also great that I can continue my association with RCB as the franchise continues to move from strength to strength," he added. Karthik has announced his retirement on his 39th birthday. "Having given it plenty of thought for sometime now, I have decided

to move on from playing competitive cricket. I officially announce my retirement and put my playing days behind me as I square up for the new challenges that lie ahead," Karthik announced in a social media post. "I'd like to thank all my coaches, captains, selectors, teammates, and members of the support staff who have made this long journey pleasant and enjoyable. Among the millions that play the sport in our country, I consider among the lucky few to have had the chance to represent the nation," Karthik added in his statement. Dinesh Karthik scored 1,792 runs and nine half-centuries in 94 ODI matches. In Tests, Karthik has 1,025 runs to his name, which include a century against Bangladesh, from 42 innings. In T20Is, he scored 686 runs in 60 games. Karthik represented Tamil Nadu in domestic cricket and won the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the T20 competition, twice as captain — in 2006/07 and 2020-21.



Sports News

Hardik Pandya becomes first India player to be ranked No.1 in ICC allrounders list

After his consistent performances, Hardik Pandya became the first Indian player to become No.1 in the ICC men's T20I all-rounder rankings. He is now tied with Sri Lanka skipper Wanindu Hasaranga. The 30-year-old Pandya played a pivotal part in India's T20 World Cup triumph when he picked up the wickets of Heinrich Klaasen and David Miller in the final. He finished the tournament with 144 runs at a batting strike-rate of over 150 and 11 wickets.

After a tumultuous Indian Premier League campaign where he was booed relentlessly when he replaced Rohit Sharma as the captain of the Mumbai Indians franchise, the performances in the T20 World Cup have turned the tide back again in Pandya's favour. "It means a lot. Very emotional, we've been working very hard and something was not clicking. But today we got what the whole nation wanted. Special for me after my six months, I haven't spoken a word, things have been unfair, but I knew



there'd be a time I could shine. An opportunity like this makes it all the more special," Pandya had reacted after the T20 WC final match.

Meanwhile, Jasprit Bumrah, who won the Player of the Tour-

namment award at the T20 World Cup for his 15 wickets, moved up 12 spots to be just outside the top-10 in the bowlers' rankings. He's at 12th, his highest position since the end of 2020. There were other movements in the

top 10 of the T20I all-rounders' rankings, with Marcus Stoinis, Sikandar Raza, Shakib Al Hasan and Liam Livingstone rising by one spot each.

Mohammad Nabi moved down four spots to go out of

the top five. In the T20I bowling rankings, South Africa's Anrich Nortje rose seven places to a career-best second spot to be just behind top-ranked Adil Rashid with 675 rating points.

Cristiano Ronaldo confirms Euro 2024 will be his 'last European Championship without doubt'

Portugal talisman Cristiano Ronaldo confirmed to Portuguese public broadcaster RTP on Monday that this was going to be his last European Championship. "It is, without doubt, my last European Championship. But I'm not emotional about that. I'm moved by all that football means — by the enthusiasm I have for the game, the enthusiasm for seeing my supporters, my family, the affection people have for me," Ronaldo said after Portugal scraped past Slovenia to the quarterfinal after a 3-0 win on penalties. Ronaldo hasn't had the best tournament with the 39-year-old failing to find the net in the 4 matches he has played thus far. He had a golden chance to break his duck against Slovenia in the Round of 16 encounter when Portugal were awarded a penalty in Extra Time but Jan Oblak made a terrific save to deny the Al Nassr

player. Shortly after, the Portuguese captain was seen in tears as the team huddled ahead of the second half of the extra time. Opening up on his emotions, Ronaldo conceded afterwards, "Even the strongest people have their bad days. I was at rock bottom when the team needed me most. I was sad at first but now I'm happy. That's what football is. Moments, inexplicable moments. "I didn't make a single mistake this year and when I was needed the most, Oblak saved it. At this moment I missed it, but the most important thing is that the team won. I lost twice on penalties this season and won the third time. Sometimes football is fair and sometimes just, but we deserved to qualify. I will always give my best for this shirt, whether I fail or not, but you have to take responsibility. I have never been afraid to face things head



on. Sometimes I do things right, sometimes I don't, but giving up is something you will never hear from me," Ronaldo added. Ronaldo, who is one of the most

prolific scorers in football history and has a record 14 goals at European Championships, said his main motivation now was "making people happy." "It's

not about leaving the world of football," he said. "What else is there for me to do or win? It's not going to come down to one point more or one point less."

Sports News

Cakau brings stability and discipline to players preparing for the Olympics



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Sports News

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

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



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

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





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