



THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

March 2024 Monthly Publication - Subscription Available Pages 60 Volume: 233

France Men End 19-Year Drought, New Zealand Women Repeat at LA Sevens!

The Los Angeles edition of the HSBC SVNS Series witnessed a historic triumph and a dominant display!



French Men Rewrite History with Dupont's Magic Touch

France's men's team, led by the inspirational Antoine Dupont (who joined the squad just last week!), finally clinched their first HSBC SVNS title in 19 years. They dominated

the final against Great Britain with a convincing 21-0 victory, scoring three unanswered tries. This win marks a significant comeback for France, who last tasted victory on home soil in Paris back in 2005. Notably, they had lost all six finals they contested since then. Dupont's

arrival proved to be a game-changer, propelling France to consecutive bronze and gold medals in Vancouver and Los Angeles respectively.

This impressive performance pushes them up to fourth place in the current SVNS standings.

New Zealand Women Main-

tain Dominance with Blyde's Hatrick Heroics

The New Zealand women solidified their status as the leading force in the women's Sevens circuit. Building on their victory in Vancouver last week, they secured a resounding 29-14 win over arch-rivals Australia in

the Los Angeles final.

Michaela Blyde emerged as the star player, contributing a brilliant hat-trick to secure the Black Ferns Sevens their second consecutive HSBC SVNS title of 2024.

NUR CENTER
EID AL FITR FESTIVAL

See Page P9

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SIROMI TURAGA



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
PROF. BIMAN PRASAD



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MANOA KAMIKAMICA



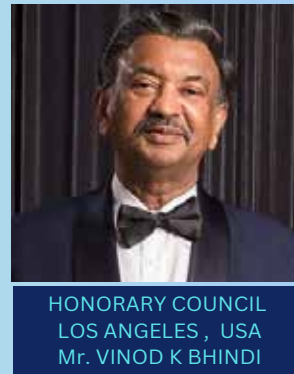
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THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

The US Fiji Times is ranked as the top newspaper being published outside of Fiji for the Fiji American community and all over the world. The paper's popularity has grown immensely in recent years due to its critical approach in impressing the need for charitable organizations to rise up in all occasions to help Fiji and the people back home. Visitors from around the world have commended the paper on its stand to serve the community. The US Fiji Times understands that like in any other field, there is competition and competing with "The largest newspaper out of Fiji" has been a difficult task for newer publications. This is not because of its magnitude and coverage, but because of its stability and growth capabilities. The writers of the paper comprise some of Fiji's best. Even though they are not too visible in social functions, they are taking up their challenges very effectively. The marketing strategy handles by our CEO/Publisher Mr. Rocky Ali is the hallmark of the 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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2024/1445 Ramadan Timetable

Ramadan Hijri- 1445	Gregorian 2024		Imsaq	Fajr	Shoroq	Zuhr	Asr	Maghrib	*Isha
	Day	Date	Stop Eating	Dawn	Sunrise	Noon	Afternoon	Sunset	Evening
1	Mon	11 - Mar	5:48	5:58	7:25	1:18	5:29	7:16	8:40
2	Tue	12	5:46	5:56	7:23	1:18	5:29	7:17	8:41
3	Wed	13	5:44	5:54	7:22	1:18	5:30	7:17	8:42
4	Thu	14	5:43	5:53	7:20	1:17	5:31	7:18	8:43
5	Fri	15	5:41	5:51	7:19	1:17	5:32	7:19	8:44
6	Sat	16	5:40	5:50	7:17	1:17	5:32	7:20	8:45
7	Sun	17	5:38	5:48	7:16	1:17	5:33	7:21	8:46
8	Mon	18	5:37	5:47	7:14	1:16	5:34	7:22	8:47
9	Tue	19	5:35	5:45	7:13	1:16	5:34	7:23	8:48
10	Wed	20	5:33	5:43	7:11	1:16	5:35	7:24	8:49
11	Thu	21	5:32	5:42	7:09	1:15	5:36	7:25	8:50
12	Fri	22	5:30	5:40	7:08	1:15	5:36	7:26	8:51
13	Sat	23	5:28	5:38	7:06	1:15	5:37	7:27	8:52
14	Sun	24	5:27	5:37	7:05	1:14	5:38	7:28	8:53
15	Mon	25	5:25	5:35	7:03	1:14	5:38	7:29	8:54
16	Tue	26	5:23	5:33	7:02	1:14	5:39	7:30	8:55
17	Wed	27	5:22	5:32	7:00	1:14	5:40	7:30	8:56
18	Thu	28	5:20	5:30	6:59	1:13	5:40	7:31	8:57
19	Fri	29	5:18	5:28	6:57	1:13	5:41	7:32	8:58
20	Sat	30	5:17	5:27	6:56	1:13	5:41	7:33	9:00
21	Sun	31	5:15	5:25	6:54	1:12	5:42	7:34	9:01
22	Mon	1 - Apr	5:13	5:23	6:53	1:12	5:43	7:35	9:02
23	Tue	2	5:12	5:22	6:51	1:12	5:43	7:36	9:03
24	Wed	3	5:10	5:20	6:50	1:12	5:44	7:37	9:04
25	Thu	4	5:08	5:18	6:48	1:11	5:44	7:38	9:05
26	Fri	5	5:07	5:17	6:47	1:11	5:45	7:39	9:06
27	Sat	6	5:05	5:15	6:45	1:11	5:45	7:40	9:07
28	Sun	7	5:03	5:13	6:44	1:10	5:46	7:40	9:09
29	Mon	8	5:01	5:11	6:43	1:10	5:46	7:41	9:10
30	Tue	9	5:00	5:10	6:41	1:10	5:47	7:42	9:11
31	Wed	10	4:58	5:08	6:40	1:10	5:48	7:43	9:12

Niyat for Fasting (Keeping Fast)

*Wa bisawmi ghadinn nawaiytu
min shayre Ramadan*



*Allahuma Inni laka sumtu wa beka
amanatu wa alaika tawwakkaltu
wa ala rizkika oftartu fata-khabbal
min ni*



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What is 'the sacred month' of Ramadan all about? Fasting, Eid al-Fitr and more explained

Ramadan is the ninth and holiest month of the Islamic calendar. According to tradition, the holy book of the Quran was revealed to the prophet Muhammad during Ramadan. Muslims also believe that during this month the gates to Heaven are open and the doors to Hell are closed. Muslims use the month of Ramadan to focus on their connection to God, reflect on their lives and spend quality time with friends and family.

What are the rules of fasting during Ramadan?



During Ramadan, Muslims fast every day from dawn to sunset. Everyone is expected to participate, although there are some exceptions for those who are ill, pregnant, nursing or traveling, as well as for young children and the elderly. Drinking liquids, smoking and engaging in sexual activity are all prohibited during the fast, as well. In the Islam faith, the fast teaches discipline, sacrifice, mindfulness, reflection and empathy for those who are less fortunate. If unable to fast, Muslims can give to charity or fast outside of Ramadan.

How do Muslims celebrate Ramadan?

In addition to fasting from dawn to sunset every day of Ramadan, Muslims will mark the end of the daily fast with iftar, a meal often shared with family and friends, after gathering for evening prayers. Some will also have a pre-dawn meal of milk and dates, both fast-breaking foods. An important but optional practice is to gather after nightfall for Tarawih, an additional night prayer after the communal evening prayers.

The last 10 days of Ramadan are particularly important and some will increase their nightly prayers. On the evening of the 27th day of Ramadan, Muslims observe Layat al-Qadr, or "Night of Power." This special night is believed to be when Muhammad first received the Holy Qur'an.

When is Ramadan?

In 2023, Ramadan begins on Wednesday, March 22 and ends on Friday, April 21. Ramadan is a floating holiday that shifts by approximately 10 days each year. For example, in 2024, it will begin on March 10; in 2025, it will begin on February 28 and so on. That is because the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar calendar, which is around 10 days shorter than the solar year. That means Ramadan can take place in any season.

Its official start is subject to the sighting of the first new moon over Mecca, and so Ramadan begins and ends at different times around the world.

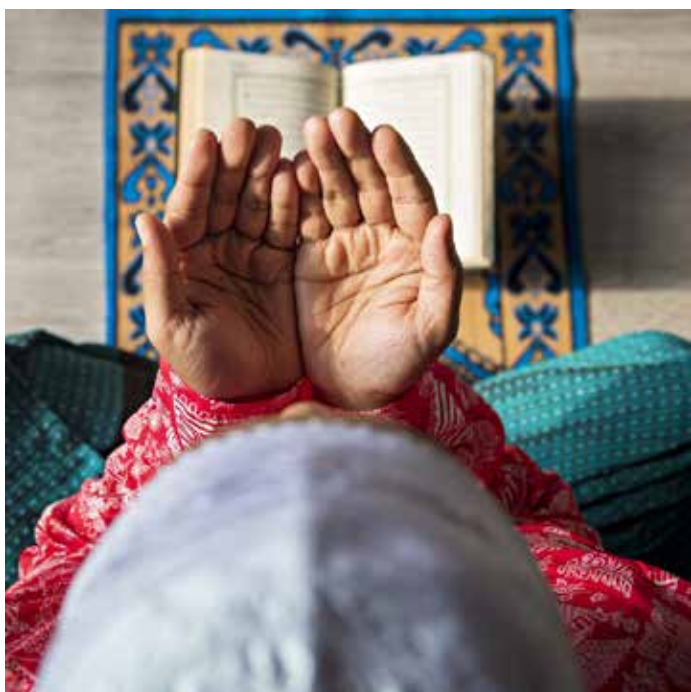
How long is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and lasts approximately 30 days. Islamic holidays begin and end at sundown, so Ramadan begins at sundown on March 22 and ends at sundown on April 21 in 2023.

What is Eid al-Fitr?

In the evening on April 21, and for the next three days, Muslims celebrate Eid al-Fitr, or the "Festival of Breaking the Fast." Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and is the second major Islamic holiday. It's celebrated through communal prayer, gifts and a lavish feast.

The day begins with a special prayer service known as salat al-eid followed by a sermon from the imam. Muslims dress in their best clothing for these services and attend with friends and family. Afterward, mosques host festivals with food, games, rides, bazaars and vendors. Those celebrating also pay zakat al-fitr, an alms-tax that goes towards those in need. Some will also donate to charities in addition to the zakat al-fitr.



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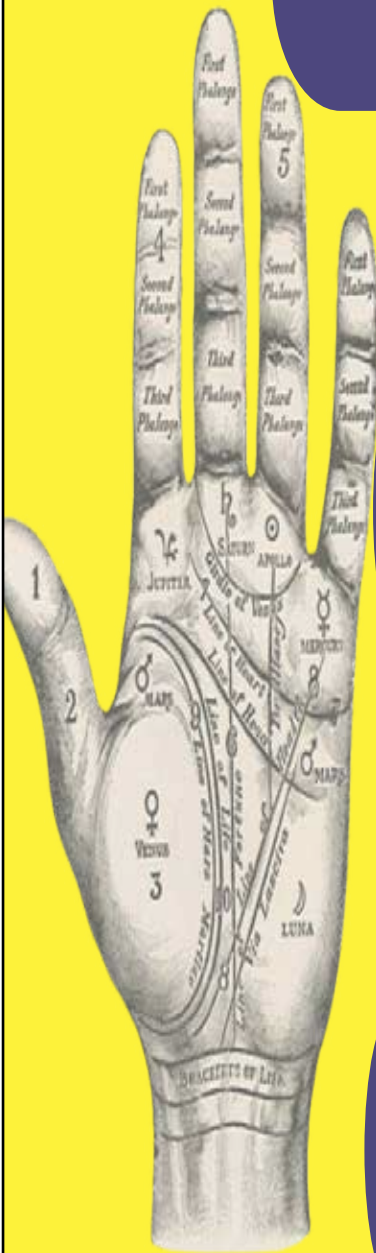
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Fiji News

Recipient acknowledges Government grant

By NANISE NEIMILA IN the vibrant town of Nausori, Kalesi Baleula, a skilled artisan renowned for her ability to craft exquisite freshwater pearl necklaces, earrings, and bracelets, has successfully translated her passion into a thriving enterprise. What started as a simple hobby has blossomed into a prosperous venture. With the support of her loving family, Ms Baleula not only excels as an artist but also serves as an inspiration for women who wish to turn their passions into a successful business. Initially engaged in crafting items like pillowcases, crochet bedspreads and table covers she extended her skills to fulfilling orders on a personalised scale. However, upon discovering the art of pearl jewellerymaking, she decided to shift her focus entirely. "I used to cater to orders for crafted items, but after venturing into pearl jewellery, I had to let go of my previous business and concentrate more on this one. Whilst the business does have its slow periods, passion makes overcoming challenges possible." "I have custom-made orders and the response from my customers has been overwhelming and to see your handiwork being worn by prominent people is so satisfying. Thesev wins a little for us because indirectly we are contributing to their

appearance." "Deliveries are done within Nausori and Suva area but normally I post their orders. It can be challenging at times but I'm thankful that with what I earn I'm able to support my family." Ms Baleula encourages women to pursue their chosen business paths, expressing her plans to secure a dedicated space in Nausori for her enterprise. Despite being 65 years old, she emphasises that age should not deter anyone from pursuing their dreams. Dealing with specific design requests from customers, she navigates challenges in the supply chain by suggesting alternative designs when necessary. Ms Baleula acknowledges occasional supply chain hurdles but emphasises the importance of seizing opportunities as and when it presents itself. Some MSMEs were assisted by the Government under the Trade Enhancement Programme, including Kalesi. This initiative supports businesses in the micro category that need capital injection to grow their businesses. The entire TEP process is digital, meaning applying and uploading their documents on the application portal. Since inception in 2022, the TEP portal has received 4,170 applications online out of which 71 per cent were women applicants. The Deputy Prime Minister and



Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small, Medium, and Business Enterprises, Manoa Kamikamica, highlighted the Government's commitment to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), citing an investment of over \$100 million. This commitment has resulted in documented success across three key programs, providing both economic growth and employment opportunities.

DPM Kamikamica acknowledges existing achievements while expressing the ongoing commitment to enhance the MSME landscape. Government initiatives include integrating MSME networks and ecosystems, streamlining business processes, improving regulations, enhancing access to information, reducing financing gaps, and fortifying business development services. Looking

ahead, the Government aims to formulate a comprehensive national MSME Strategic Plan, focusing on strengthening various aspects of the sector. In a show of continued support, the Government has allocated nearly \$280,000 in grants to a group of entrepreneurs, reinforcing its commitment to nurturing innovative concepts and transforming them into sustainable businesses.

PARLIAMENT OF FIJI REFURBISHED

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka officially commissioned the newly refurbished Parliament of Fiji, including its upgraded IT Conference System. The \$ 4.4 million project commenced in November 2023, soon after the sitting of Parliament. Present at the event were the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji, Hon. Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation and Education Hon. Viliame Gavoka, Assistant Minister for Agriculture Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna and Leader of Opposition Hon. Inia Seruiratu. In her remarks, Secretary-General to Parliament, Mrs. Jeanette Emberson emphasised that this new upgrade intends to create a global body that is driven by

excellence and passion to serve all Fijians and acknowledged the Coalition government. The deployment of the project was to be 5-fold and consisted of the following targets: 1. Procurement of a new conferencing system; 2. Refurbishment of the Parliament Chambers; 3. Procurement of the Uninterrupted Power Supply equipment; 4. Upgrading of the Audio-Visual Distribution System from Analog to Digital; and 5. The Multi-language Translations and Captioning. Additionally, ongoing work includes evaluating Vosa Vakaviti, Hindi and English captioning on the Walesi platform, as well as testing the voting system and For the Record (FTR) system with Hansard.



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Fiji News

2024 FIJI PARLIAMENT SESSION OPENS

His Excellency the President of Fiji, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere today opened the 2024 session of Fiji's Parliament. A 100-strong guard of honour of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces greeted the President on his arrival at Parliament House. As Head of State and Commander in Chief, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere took the salute before he inspected the guard of honour, accompanied by the Commander of the RFMF, Major-General Ro Jone Kalouniwai. He was later escorted into the parliamentary chambers by the Speaker of Parliament, Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu and the Leader of Government, Minister for Public Works Ro Filipe Tuisawau. In keeping with tradition, members of the judiciary led by Acting Chief Justice, Justice Salesi Temo joined our 55-elected Members of Parlia-

ment inside the "new look" and recently refurbished parliamentary chambers. Diplomats and leaders in public and the private sector filled up the public gallery. In his address, the President urged parliamentarians to "listen to the voices of our people" and to "embrace with resolve the principles of democracy and humanity as enshrined in our constitution." "We must acknowledge and recognize our differences, however, we must be united with one common goal to ensure that we live in a progressive and prosperous nation." The head of state went onto outline the work programme of the Coalition Government for 2024, specifying some of the key policies and initiatives of the government. Parliament adjourned to Monday next week when debates on His Excellency's address will begin.



NEW CLASSROOMS FOR DREKETI PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MACUATA

Learning under make shift tents for the past three years has come to an end for students of Dreketi Primary School in Macuata, following the commissioning of their state-of-the-art classrooms today (20.02.24). It was an emotional moment for parents as they watched their children being escorted from the tents to their new learning center. Dreketi Primary School's head teacher Shalendra Vijay said the commissioning of the

new classrooms would go down in history as a day to celebrate the dreams and aspirations of students. Despite experiencing difficulties while learning in tents, Vijay said that the students did not let it deter them from pursuing their studies, as reflected in their academic achievements. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, National Development, Strategic Planning and Statistics Hon. Biman Prasad while offici-



ating at the event highlighted the substantial assistance rendered by the Australian Government through the Vuvale Partnership, which funded the construction of the classrooms. DPM Prasad said Fiji has benefitted from this bilateral relationship, providing much-needed aid during some of the major challenges that hit the country like COVID-19, and the rehabilitation programs implemented in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Winston and Yasa. Australia's High Commissioner to Fiji His Excellency Ewen McDonald said education was the cornerstone of development, power to education enables us

to transform our lives, empower community and creates a world of possibilities. "We know that investing in you is the best investment we can make to the

future of Fiji," Mr McDonald said. The six classrooms and two abolition blocks were constructed at a cost of \$2.9million.



Fiji News

ATTORNEY-GENERAL HON. SIROMI TURAGA'S KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE FIJI HUMAN RIGHTS & ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMISSION'S WESTERN-REGIONAL OFFICE

The Chairperson of the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, Pravesh Sharma The Director of the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission, Loukinikini Lewaravu Members of the Diplomatic Corps Representatives from the Pacific Community's Human Rights and Social Development Division Representatives from Civil Society Organisations Invited Guests Ladies and Gentlemen Bula vinaka and a very good morning to you all On behalf of the People's Coalition Government, it is my pleasure to welcome you all this morning to the opening of the Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission's regional office here in the Western Division. This is a milestone, given that this new office is the first-ever regional office of the Commission, branching out of Suva, since its inception in 1999. Indeed, a remarkable stepping stone towards advancing human rights work in Fiji. I would like to congratulate the Commission's Board, the Director and the staff for their vision to decentralise its services here in the Western- Division. With this new office, the public including the vulnerable groups, will now be able to reach out to the Commission, in person, to seek advice or lodge their complaints on discrimination or violation of their rights and freedoms under the Constitution. This new office also means greater accessibility for not just members of the public but also for civil

servants working at sub-national levels, statutory bodies, civil-society and community-based organizations, having access to the Commission's services. This initiative by the Commission fundamentally aligns well with the vision of the People's Coalition Government's approach to leaving no one behind through social inclusion and rights-based development, focusing on increased awareness of rights, access to basic social protection services and ensuring state-based institutions build capacity to better understand and promote human rights as they dispense their mandate. In Fiji, there is still a need to create more awareness on human rights values, particularly in the remote, rural and maritime areas. Our traditional and religious leaders are vital in the dissemination and instilling human rights values in people, particularly, our children and the youths. Human Rights education can begin in the homes, in our own communities, in villages, schools, workplace and of course, through robust debates in the Parliament and through public discourses in media. We cannot ignore the fact that we are living in a highly competitive world, today, with extraordinary technological progress, globalization, which have contributed to growing social injustices and economic inequalities amongst our people, particularly, putting our island nation at high risk. Just recently, we have unveiled one of the biggest drug seizures ever, which

is becoming widespread and affecting many families and sadly, our children. Drugs and substance abuse leads to violation of a Child's rights. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) stands alone among the core UN human rights treaties in setting out a human right to protection from drugs. In particular, Article 33 of the CRC states that 'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.' Accordingly, I would like to use this opportunity to once again appeal to our traditional leaders, our community leaders and our inter-faith based organizations to join the Government efforts in its war against drugs. We have to save our children from this problem. While Government is focused on ensuring that our children, the women, the elderly and the diverse vulnerable groups which includes persons with disabilities, have access to basic social protection and are safe in their homes, schools and at workplace, I call on our key stakeholders – the community leaders to assist us in identifying the most vulnerable who may be experiencing human rights violations in their homes, schools or any other place – to report those violations to the

right agency so help can be afforded to the victims and the perpetrators brought to justice. Another critical area of concern is climate change and its impact on human life. In Fiji and the Pacific at large, climate change is threatening the health of our people, as well as our economic and social development. Extreme weather events, especially cyclones and floods are displacing communities, causing injuries and psychological trauma, and are increasing the risks of infection and malnutrition. I am glad that the Commission has also been working in the area of climate change. I am informed that the Commission had engaged in a public consultation last year, scoping study across 8 of Fiji's 14 provinces, visiting 27 villages, interviewing 185 residents. This study provided valuable insights into the pressing challenges faced by these communities in the context of climate change and its impact on their human rights. The public consultation also provided the Commission an educational opportunity to advocate greater awareness on rights to a healthy environment, safe home and sanitation, clean drinking water and food, education, economic independence, and access to transportation. This project was funded by the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. This work will continue through state-funding. Some funds were allocated in the last national budget for the Commission to continue with its work in the area of climate

change. The People's Coalition Government is committed to embracing human rights values of unity, equality, human dignity and respect for each other in our multi-religious and multicultural country. I would like to reiterate the Honorable Prime Minister's statement delivered at the UN General Assembly in New York last September, where he made a commitment to implement human rights covenants and conventions, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO Convention 169 on the Rights of Tribal and Indigenous People. It is in this spirit that we encourage collaboration from all key stakeholders including the civil society organisations, the non-governmental organisations, youth groups, religious bodies, women's organisations and our community leaders to collaborate with the Government in building, promoting and sustaining human rights culture in Fiji. We need to strengthen linkages between the communities, the Government and our National Human Rights Institution, to address stigma and any form discrimination. With these words, I once again congratulate the Commission for their vision for decentralising human rights with the opening of the first-ever office here in the Western Division. I envisage the opening of an office in the Northern Division. Of course, the Government will be happy to support any such initiative. Thank you and vinaka vakalevu.

MINISTER VASU ENGAGES IN BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS IN NZ

The Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage & Arts, Hon. Ifereimi Vasu engaged in separate bilateral discussions with New Zealand's Minister for Māori Development, the Hon. Tama Potaka, and the Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, the Hon. Shane Jones. In these meetings, Minister Vasu emphasised the significance of Fiji's bilateral ties with New Zealand and highlighted the necessity

of enhancing these relations through various proposed initiatives that were brought up for discussion. The discussions led to tangible outcomes, which will be pursued further under arrangements that are beneficial for both parties. Following these meetings, Minister Vasu and his delegation held consultations with the Waitangi Tribunal, the Māori Land Court, and the office of Māori Crown Relations.



Fiji News

Remembering Dr. Mohammed Ali Sahu Khan:



A Fiji Soccer Legend The Fiji

football community mourns the loss of Dr. M.A. Sahu Khan, a true icon of the sport. A household name in the '60s, '70s, and 1980s, Dr. Mohammed Ali Sahu Khan's contributions to Fijian soccer development remain significant. Born in Namoli, Lautoka, Dr. Mohammed Ali Sahu Khan displayed exceptional talent throughout his career. Excelling as a multi-sport athlete during his school days and at Sydney University, he thrived in cricket, rugby league, and

of course, soccer. Returning to Fiji in 1964, his skills remained sharp. He earned a place among Suva's elite footballers, joining the prestigious Civic Club team alongside legends like John Monday, Krishna Chetty, and Chotka (Rocky Ali Buksh, Publisher of the US Fiji Times based in San Francisco). Dr. Mohammed Sahu Khan's influence extended beyond the field. He was a founding member and president of the Fiji Diabetic Association, president of Suva's

vibrant Hibiscus Festival, and a three-term councilor for Suva City. Following his predecessor Suva John Lal, Dr. Mohammed Sahu Khan took the helm as the highly respected national team coach. He possessed a distinct coaching philosophy, emphasizing a strong grasp of player selection. This approach propelled him to the pinnacle of coaching the national team. His unwavering dedication across his endeavors solidified his reputation as a remarkable

statesman and sporting figure. Dr. Mohammed Ali Sahu Khan embodied the spirit of achievement despite facing challenges in various fields. He set an unprecedented standard: achieving success while maintaining an untarnished career, a feat rarely replicated in modern times. Fiji, and all who had the privilege of working alongside this exceptional coach, player, doctor, and inspirational leader, will forever cherish his memory.



Civic team in 1978 When Dr Sahu Khan pictured 2nd from right Civic Coach, Suva Team Coach & National Team Coach, 2nd From Left is Pratap Singh (Fatty) of Famous Fatties Shop in Laucala Bay, Civic Team Manager, Suva Team, & National Team Manager, Also in the Picture 1st raw from left sitting Rocky Buksh, & Former National Team Players, Terio Vakatawa, John Monday & Raphel Tuilawa.



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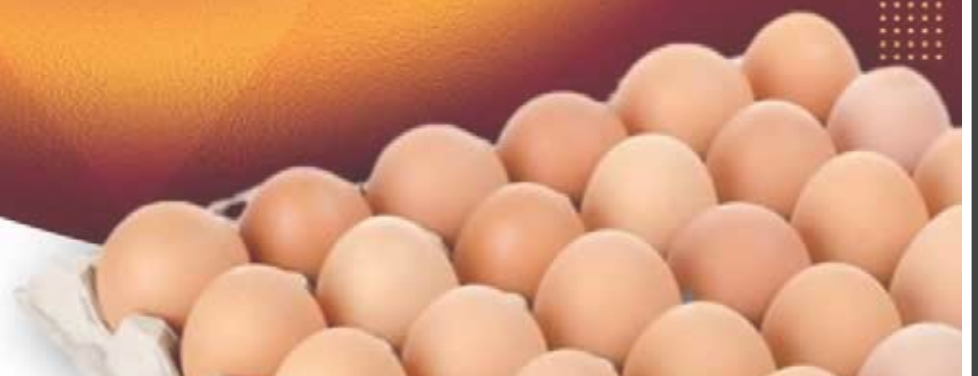
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Fiji News

“FIJI WILL CONTINUE TO STAND FOR WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE DIGNITY OF HUMANKIND”

Fiji’s intended presentation at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague specifically responds to the December 2022 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 77/247 entitled “Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.” The resolution was adopted well before the Hamas assault on Israel on 7th October 2023. Among other countries, Fiji also made a written submission in 2023. Of the 57 countries that opted to make oral presentations, 11 countries including Fiji, are concerned with the abuse of the ICJ on matters that should follow already established legally binding agreements and processes that were agreed to by the parties and endorsed at the international level. In the same vein, there are legally binding agreements and agreed processes for the Israel-Palestinian issue. On the question before the ICJ, Fiji’s main concerns are: 1)

Fiji underscores the importance of maintaining and upholding existing and binding legal framework including those established specifically to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. 2) That an Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences of the alleged infringements of international law touches the core of the ongoing conflict and requires the Court to settle law in relation to the whole conflict. Fiji is therefore concerned that the current case sets a precedence, for other ongoing conflicts that maybe referred to the Court, thereby undermining the Courts integrity. That the Court must not be used as a political playground to assert long-held presumptions and biases, and in the course of doing so, misusing international law, against its intended purpose. In upholding its principled positions on matters that impact our core values, Fiji will continue to stand for what is right for the dignity of humankind.



FIJI GOVERNMENT

MORE THAN 10,000 CITIZENS TO BENEFIT FROM NEW KEIYASI TOWN

Keiyasi was filled with smiles today after the Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka presided over the groundbreaking ceremony for the new town project of Keiyasi. The new town after its completion will benefit more than 10,000 Fijians in the provinces of Nadroga, Navosa and in the Highlands of Ba. Turagani Koro from Keiyasi village, Viliame Naliva could not contain his emotions as he spoke about the difficulties faced by those living in the Highlands as they travel in the wee hours in the morning to try to get to

the nearest town. "This has been a long time coming and we thank the Government of the day for this new project." "Villagers travel for hours with their vegetables and crops trying to get to the nearest town in order to sell their goods." "With the new town opening soon we will not be having this issue and we have been dreaming about this for a long time." PM Rabuka highlighted such new towns like Keiyasi will open up jobs for the people of Navosa, ultimately leading to the improvement of their living standards. "This



welcome development speaks of the foresight and generosity of the chiefs and people of Keiyasi, tikina o Namataku, and the

landowning unit of Namoilevu, who have offered the support for this project by their decision to give up little more than 9 hect-

ares of their land to be leased as the site of the new Keiyasi Town."

Fiji News

WAINILOTULEVU AND NASOQO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS COMMISSIONED

It was an emotional day for the Villagers of Wainilotulevu and Nasoqo today (15.02.24) as the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and National Disaster Management, Hon. Sakiasi Ditoka handed over 4 completed projects to the villagers. These projects, ranging from footpaths to ecological purification systems as well as sanitary infrastructure were all praised and welcomed by the people of Wainilotulevu and Nasoqo as it was a big progress towards uplifting their livelihoods. The highlight of the day was the official opening of the cement footpath linking both Wainilotulevu and Nasoqo providing convenient access for children from both villagers that attend Venuqa Primary School. Minister Ditoka emphasized the positive impact this footpath would have on the daily lives of the villagers, particularly children who previously travelled through heavy mud to reach their school. "With this project, children will have the opportunity to attend school regularly, and our teachers are pleased to take on the responsibility of educating our youth." Recognizing the importance of clean water, the Minister introduced the



Ecological Purification System (EPS) designed to provide safe drinking water to the residents of both villages. "This initiative is an important move towards ensuring a healthy and sustainable environment for the communities." Addressing sanitary concerns, Minister Ditoka emphasized the installation of five flush toilets as a crucial infrastructure of improving village

hygiene standards. He stressed the importance of maintaining these facilities and urged the villagers to develop a village development plan to safeguard their newly commissioned infrastructures. In addition, Minister Ditoka emphasized the importance of utilizing land resources effectively. Encouraging villagers to engage in agricultural activities and explore investment

opportunities, he highlighted the potential for economic and self-empowerment. Recognizing the vulnerability of these communities to natural disasters, the Minister underscored the importance of disaster preparedness and urged villagers to remain vigilant and responsive to early warnings. Following the official commissioning, Minister Ditoka engaged in Talanoa ses-

sions with the villagers, through open dialogue to address their concerns and hopes for future development initiatives. The commissioning of these projects was a collaborative effort between the Ministry and the local communities, showing the government's commitment to improving the quality of life for all Fijians, particularly those in rural areas.

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Fiji News

MINISTER VASU MEETS WITH COMMANDER OF MILITARY FORCE MAJOR GENERAL JONE KALOUNIWAI

In his pursuit of strengthening traditional governance, the Minister for iTaukei Affairs Culture, Heritage and Arts, Hon Ifereimi Vasu met with Commander of Military Force Major General Jone Kalouniwai to discuss training young traditional leaders (sausavou) in the areas of leadership. The Minister proposed to the Commander RRMF a joint training programme to prepare the sausavou for future leadership. Mr Vasu also outlined the shared vision of the solesolevaki framework within the iTaukei Institutions

to economically empower the iTaukei through wealth creation to alleviate poverty. He added that the iTaukei Institutions intend to continue cooperation and collaboration with other Ministries and stakeholders to transform iTaukei communities. Mr. Kalouniwai thanked the Minister for the proposed training partnership and assured him that the RRMF was ready to assist. He also acknowledged the work of the iTaukei Institutions and the direction they are taking. The meeting was held at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks.



iVOLAVOSA APP IS AVAILABLE ON GOOGLE PLAY STORE

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2022 – 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032), to draw global attention on the critical status of the world's indigenous language. In the region, almost a quarter of the world's 7,000 language is spoken in the Pacific; however there is a growing concern on the reduction of native language speakers, including Fiji. With this concern, the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage & Arts in collaboration with the iTaukei Trust Fund Board developed the iVolavosa

App to assist with the safeguarding of the vosavakaviti. With less than 2% of indigenous language having an online presence, the iVolavosa App aims to be interactive and engaging. It is designed for educational purposes to cater to the needs of language users locally but most importantly the iTaukei diaspora communities and other interested learners. The iVolavosa App contains a glossary of 25,000-word dictionary, 18,979 audio, headwords, and images. Now, it is available on Google Play Store.



AQUATIC CENTRE & NATIONAL HOCKEY GROUND RE-OPENS FOR PUBLIC

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka delivered a powerful reopening address at the Damodar City Aquatic Centre and National Hockey Ground, expressing gratitude and optimism for the enduring partnership between Fiji and the People's Republic of China. (12.01.24) In his speech, Prime Minister Rabuka acknowledged the presence of His Excellency, Ambassador Zhou Jian, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Minister of Youth and Sports, CEO & Chair of Fiji Sports Council, members of Fiji's business industries, sporting communities, and invited guests. The Prime Minister began by emphasising the honor he felt as a former athlete reopening these iconic sporting facilities. He stated, "The Damodar City Aquatic Centre and the National Hockey

Centre transcend their physical structures; they represent our shared history and steadfast dedication." Reflecting on the two-decade evolution of these venues, PM Rabuka highlighted their significance beyond sports, symbolising Fiji's enduring spirit and extraordinary sporting achievements. He added, "In an age characterized by global interconnection, these venues play a pivotal role in enhancing Fiji's diplomatic and economic relationships." The Prime Minister also underscored the economic impact of these venues, serving as beacons of global sporting excellence, attracting international events and championships, and positioning Fiji as a prominent global sporting destination. He noted, "These endeavors significantly contribute to our economic growth,

invigorating our tourism, hospitality, and employment sectors." The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of these venues in youth development, providing a platform for budding athletes to nurture their dreams and instill virtues of discipline, leadership, and collaboration. He said, "These venues serve as crucibles for the leaders of our future." Furthermore, PM Rabuka highlighted the role of these facilities in cultural exchange and people-to-people connections, fostering mutual respect, appreciating each other's cultures, and projecting a positive image of Fiji and China on the international stage. In terms of sustainability, the Prime Minister emphasised the redevelopment of these venues as part of Fiji's commitment to a greener, more environmen-

tally responsible future. He mentioned, "They are designed and operated in alignment with modern sustainability standards, underscoring our dedication to responsible growth and environmental stewardship." Looking ahead, PM Rabuka expressed profound optimism about the future of the partnership with the People's Republic of China, envisioning deeper collaborations in sports education and

technology. He concluded by expressing gratitude for the steadfast support of China and anticipating the continued growth of the partnership. The reopening ceremony was attended by dignitaries, members of the diplomatic community, and representatives from various sectors, marking a significant moment in Fiji-China relations and the development of sports infrastructure in the region.





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Fiji News

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT PAID TO OVER 200,000 STUDENTS

The Ministry of Finance has paid \$40.2 million to 200,760 students as part of the \$200 Back-to-School Support payment. This first round of payment is made to all eligible students enrolled from early childhood education (ECE) to Year-12 in the upcoming 2024 school year. Parents and guardians of these ECE to Year-12 students can now access the \$200 per child payment through their MPAiSA or MyCASH accounts and those in the maritime areas can obtain the funds from their nearest Post Fiji agency by showing their child's student ID as proof of identity.

The second round of payment will include around 8,200 applications which are currently on hold for students yet to be enrolled in Year-13 as they await their Year-12 exam results. This payment would be released once the exam results are out and students get enrolled in Year-13. The \$200 Back-to-School Support is an initiative of the Coalition Government to assist parents and guardians purchase proper school uniforms, school bags, shoes, lunch boxes, stationery and other necessities for their children before school



starts on 29 January 2024.

Similar support was also provided to over 223,000 students in the 2023 school year and parents and other stakeholders in the education sector had acknowledged the great impact and success of this noble initiative to assist our students. As we modernise Government service delivery, digital

payments have become a key feature of our payment system with almost 98 percent of the Back-to-School Support payment made through MPAiSA or MyCASH. Payment through these digital wallets is efficient, transparent and secure and funds can be either withdrawn or used directly at authorized retail outlets with QR codes. However, to

ensure the safety of your funds, please do not disclose your PIN or one-time-password of your mobile wallets to anyone and do not send money to any unknown person who may try to lure and trick you into stealing your money. The Ministry of Finance would like to thank the Ministry of Education, all the heads of schools, teachers,

school admin officers, students, parents and guardians for their hard work, due diligence and assistance with the entire application process. I wish success to all our students gearing up for the 2024 school year. -Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Hon. Professor Biman Prasad

Students of Natabua High School overjoyed Drua players visit

Students of Natabua High School were overjoyed after welcoming the two Swire Shipping Fijian Drua players to their school. Natabua High School principal Virendra Sharma says they are fortunate that the man of the moment for the Drua rugby side, Selestino Ravutau-mada and Sailosi Vukalokalo, were part of the contingent that visited their school.

The school's U-18 girls and boys rugby teams were motivated by seeing and listening to the two players, followed by a fun-packed questions and answers session where students also received prizes. The Principal welcomed the visitors and conveyed the school's heartfelt gratitude for their performances over the past years, which brought all Fijians great happiness and pride. The school wishes the Fijian Drua rugby team the very best for their clash

against the defending Shop N Save Super Rugby champion, the Crusaders, at 1.05pm Saturday at Churchill Park, Lautoka.

In other matches this weekend, Moana Pasifika will take on the Rebels at 6.05pm tomorrow, the Waratahs will play the High-

landers at 8.35pm tomorrow, the Brumbies will host the Western Force at 3.35pm Saturday, the Hurricanes will play the Blues

at 6.05pm Saturday and the Reds will take on the Chiefs at 8.35pm Saturday.



Fiji News

THE WELFARE GRADUATION PROGRAM WILL NOT CREATE MORE POVERTY BUT MORE PRODUCTIVITY

The Minister of Women, Children and Social Protection Hon Lynda Tabuya in response to criticisms from civil society and politicians about the welfare graduation program wishes to clarify misinterpretation and misinformation spread by the media and several individuals. The Minister stated that the Ministry for Women, Children and Social Protection (MWCSP) is in the process of social protection reform and is strengthening its Welfare Graduation Program to support the social assistance beneficiaries to diversify into sustainable livelihoods and graduate from the program within an agreed timeline. "Our aim to reduce welfare is to graduate social welfare recipients who are able bodied men and women between the ages of 18 to 45 that will be provided appropriate skills training and education and then placed in places of employment. It is not a new concept in the social protection sector to work together with the selected recipients and relevant stakeholders in providing them with appropriate coaching, mentoring, skills training towards successful work strategies," Minister Tabuya said. This is the 'welfare to workfare' strategy that the Ministry has and is strengthening its implementation to ensure that every recipient will be assessed and ascertain that they are able to

commit to the pathway that the ministry will create for them. The ministry is setting up a Welfare Graduation Unit working with our development partners. With the technical support provided from the World Bank, it is also working closely with the Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics for a stronger linkage with new employment programs including Jobs for Nature and in the development of Economic Inclusion framework that consist of a strategy, program components, institutional arrangement, training and linkage to services that could provide systematic support to these recipients. It will be these very same recipients who will be given an expiry date for their allowances which not only sets a timeline for them but for the ministry as well. This graduation program only applies to those on the Family Assistance Scheme, previously known as the Poverty Benefit Scheme and will be carefully assessed to ensure they are able to be trained and employed. The Welfare Graduation Program will be monitored and successful implementation will be measured according the recipient's capacity to earn a decent income and be in a position to be Graduated from Government assistance. The Ministry in collaboration with the Australian Government through its flagship



social protection program, the Partnerships for Social Protection Program (P4SP) continues to work on the social protection reform agenda to strengthen its program efficiency and effectiveness, in alignment with the national Social Assistance Policy, across its six major social assistance benefits. With P4SP's expertise in social protection, gender, economics, and information systems, it has conducted extensive consultations with relevant agencies and done a technical review on all its social assistance program last year. In phase 2 of the project, the team are working closely with the ministry professionals

in implementing the approved recommendations that includes capacity building, improved case management, processes and robust information system to flag benefit timelines and to identify recipients for Welfare Graduation program. As Government takes concrete steps to move away from handing out assistance to employment building, entrepreneurial skills and capacity, NGOs and politicians should be encouraging and supporting this program that sees our able-bodied men and women be graduated from welfare to workfare and wellbeing, to discourage the dependency syndrome and the welfare state

that the previous government had perpetuated for 16 years. It challenges all employment sectors to be a model by providing training, recruiting, hiring, and supporting welfare recipients. We need to strengthen our workforce since thousands have left in the last 9 months. We need to put our people to work, progress together towards inclusive recovery from pandemic and natural disasters and need to explore ways that have been proven worldwide and working hand in hand with our development partners in a holistic manner to ensure dignity and self respect as well as productive citizens contributing to the economy.

Malaysian High Commissioner host MTCP alumni to lunch at his residence

It was a great moment for the Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme alumni as they were hosted today to a luncheon by the High Commissioner of Malaysia to Fiji Nor'Azam Mohd Idrus at his residence in Tamavua. While speaking at the luncheon, Idrus says since 1981, Malaysia has shared its development experience with over 955 participants from Pacific Island Member States. He says among them are 544 Fijians who have experienced training and Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme courses. The Malaysian High Commissioner says those programmes include

handling hazardous materials, land administration, national development, corruption measures, property evaluation, narcotic identification and law enforcement. He adds they are very confident that their experiences and insight from those courses would have been invaluable in furthering their shared goals of progress and prosperity. Attending the luncheon were the Minister for iTaukei Affairs Ifereimi Vasu, the Home Affairs Permanent Secretary Mason Smith, and leaders from the private sectors, business communities, academia and civil society organisations





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Health News

German patient vaccinated against Covid 217 times

A 62-year-old man from Germany has, against medical advice, been vaccinated 217 times against Covid, doctors report. The bizarre case is documented in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal. The shots were bought and given privately within the space of 29 months. The man appears to have suffered no ill effects, researchers from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg say. 'Very interested' "We learned about his case via newspaper articles," Dr Kilian Schober, from the university's microbiology department, said. "We then contacted him and invited him to undergo various tests in Erlangen. He was very interested in doing so." The man provided fresh blood and saliva samples. The researchers also tested some frozen blood samples of his that had been stored in recent years. About Covid vaccination - NHS Dr Schober said: "We were able to take blood samples ourselves when the man received a further vaccination during the study at his own insistence. "We were able to use these samples to determine exactly how the immune system reacts to the vaccination." Evidence for 130 of the jabs was collected by the public prosecutor of the city



of Magdeburg, who opened an investigation with the allegation of fraud, but no criminal charges were brought. Covid vaccines cannot cause infection but can teach the body how to fight the disease. Immune system Messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines work by showing the body's cells a bit of genetic code from the virus. The immune system should then recognise and know how

to fight Covid should they encounter it for real. Dr Schober worried hyper-stimulating the immune system with repeated doses might have fatigued certain cells. But the researchers found no evidence of this in the 62-year-old. And there was no sign that he had ever been infected with Covid. 'Favoured approach' The researchers said: "Importantly, we do not endorse hyper-vaccination as a strategy

to enhance adaptive immunity." And the results of their tests on the 62-year-old were insufficient for making far-reaching conclusions, let alone recommendations for the general public. "Current research indicates that a three-dose vaccination, coupled with regular top-up vaccines for vulnerable groups, remains the favoured approach," they say on the university's website. "There is no indication that

more vaccines are required." The NHS says Covid vaccines are normally given seasonally but some people with a severely weakened immune system may need additional protection at other times - and it will contact those whose NHS record suggests may be eligible. Covid vaccines can have side effects. A common one is a sore arm from the injection.

Flu Vaccines to Change After COVID Kills Off One Strain of Virus

An FDA advisory committee has recommended that the United States switch from a quadrivalent to trivalent influenza vaccine for the next flu season. The flu vaccine currently in use targets two A strains and two B strains. But the Yamagata/B subtype, which was already in decline, has not been detected worldwide since March 2020, the FDA said. Social distancing and other precautions used to avoid COVID apparently finished it off. In response to that change, the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) voted Tuesday to recommend the three-strain flu shot. VRBPAC recommended the egg-based flu vaccines contain an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1)

pdm09-like virus, an A/Thailand/8/2022 (H3N2)-like virus; and a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus. The committee recommended the cell- or recombinant-based flu vaccines contain an A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus; an A/Massachusetts/18/2022 (H3N2)-like virus; and a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus. The move is no surprise. The World Health Organization and FDA experts had been recommending the change since last year. Jerry Weir, MD, director of the FDA's Division of Viral Products, said companies that make flu vaccines should have the trivalent shot ready for the 2024-2025 flu season. "Each of the U.S. influenza vaccine

manufacturers have submitted updated regulatory files related to a trivalent influenza vaccine, and approval of all the necessary regulatory submissions is on track for 2024-25," he said

during the advisory committee's meeting. "FDA anticipates that there will be an adequate and diverse supply of approved trivalent seasonal influenza vaccines for the United States in the com-

ing season," the agency said. U.S. flu vaccine manufacturers will still make a four-strain vaccine for distribution to overseas markets.



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Health News

Healthcare innovation to double at \$60 bn opportunity by FY28 in India

Healthcare innovation in India, currently valued at \$30 billion, is expected to double by FY28, according to a recent report by Bain & Company and HealthQuad. Pegged at \$180 billion in FY23, India's overall healthcare market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12 per cent to \$320 billion by the same time, it said. The report titled 'Healthcare Innovation in India' said that healthcare innovation accounts for about 15 per cent (\$30 billion) of the overall healthcare market in India, of which around 55 per cent is export-led. Aarthi Rao, partner at Bain & Company, anticipates a significant expansion. "We see the \$30 billion healthcare innovation market reaching \$60 billion by 2028," she said. She emphasises that this growth will not only stem from value-engineering but also from business innovation, particularly in biotech, vaccines, and med-tech sectors. She also predicts substantial growth in health-tech and pharma services, which would contribute to this expansion. Healthcare



innovation has almost doubled over the past three years from a baseline of \$17 billion in FY20. There are four key segments in the healthcare innovation space — pharma services, which includes contract development and manufacturing organisation (CDMO), contract research organisation (CRO),

pharma IT (apart from health-tech, vaccines and biotech), and medtech. Speaking to Business Standard, Charles-Antoine Janssen, managing partner of healthcare-focused venture capital fund HealthQuad said, "Ten years ago, India was particularly strong in chemistry and active pharmaceutical ingredient (API)

production of new chemical entities (NCEs).

But it was not present at all in the biologics space." Expansion of capacities Janssen added that during the pandemic, India became the world's second-largest exporter of Covid vaccines and nearly 50 per cent of the global vaccine exports came

out of India. "This led to two capacities that India did not historically have — discovery abilities on the biological side in order to develop and scale up these vaccines. Also, high quality and low-cost biological manufacturing skill sets to serve gigantic volumes," he said.

Sleep Apnea Hard on the Brain

Symptoms of sleep apnea, including snoring, gasping, or paused breathing during sleep, are associated with a significantly greater risk for problems with cognitive and memory problems, results from a large study showed. Data from a representative sample of US adults show that those who reported sleep apnea symptoms were about 50% more likely to also report cognitive issues vs their counterparts without such symptoms. "For clinicians, these findings suggest a potential benefit of considering sleep apnea as a possible contributing or exacerbating factor in individuals experiencing memory or cognitive problems. This could prompt further evaluation for sleep apnea, particularly in at-risk individuals," study investigator Dominique Low, MD, MPH, Department of Neurology, Boston Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts, told Medscape Medical News. The findings will be presented at the American Academy of Neuro-

logy (AAN) 2024 Annual Meeting on April 17, 2024. Need to Raise Awareness The findings are based on 4257 adults who participated in the 2017-2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and completed questionnaires covering sleep, memory, cognition, and decision-making abilities. Those who reported snoring, gasping, or breathing pauses during sleep were categorized as experiencing sleep apnea symptoms. Those who reported memory trouble, periods of confusion, difficulty concentrating, or decision-making problems were classified as having memory or cognitive symptoms. Overall, 1079 participants reported symptoms of sleep apnea. Compared with people without sleep apnea, those with symptoms were more likely to have cognitive problems (33% vs 20%) and have greater odds of having memory or cognitive symptoms, even after adjusting for age, gender, race, and education (adjusted odds ratio, 2.02;

$P < .001$). "While the study did not establish a cause-and-effect relationship, the findings suggest the importance of raising awareness about the potential link between sleep and cognitive function. Early identification and treatment may improve overall health and potentially lead to a better quality of life," Low said. Limitations of the study include self-reported data on sleep apnea symptoms and cognitive issues sourced from one survey. Consistent Data Reached for comment, Matthew Pase, PhD, with the

Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, said the results are similar to earlier work that found a link between obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and cognition. For example, in a recent study, the presence of mild to severe OSA, identified using overnight polysomnography in five community-based cohorts with more than 5900 adults, was associated with poorer cognitive test performance, Pase told Medscape Medical News. "These and other results under-

score the importance of healthy sleep for optimal brain health. Future research is needed to test if treating OSA and other sleep disorders can reduce the risk of cognitive impairment," Pase said. Yet, in their latest statement on the topic, reported by Medscape Medical News, the US Preventive Services Task Force concluded there remains insufficient evidence to weigh the balance of benefits and harms of screening for OSA among asymptomatic adults and those with unrecognized symptoms.



Health News

Daily walking can lower cardiovascular disease risk, even in people who sit most of the day

A new study has some encouraging news for people who have trouble finding time to exercise. Researchers say every step you take toward the goal of 10,000 steps per day reduces the risk of death and cardiovascular disease. In addition, they say you get these health benefits, even if you are sedentary most of the rest of the day. The researchers published their findings today in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. The researchers, led by scientists at the University of Sydney/Charles Perkins Centre in Australia, accessed data on 72,174 individuals, with an average age 61. About 58% of the subjects were female. The individuals were enrolled in the UK Biobank study – a major biomedical database – and wore an accelerometer device on their wrist for 7 days to measure physical activity and time spent sedentary (sitting or lying down while awake).

The study authors said in a release that previous studies have shown higher daily step counts are associated with lower levels of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and death while others have linked high levels of sedentary behavior with increased risks of death and CVD. However, none of the studies looked at whether high levels of physical activity can offset, or lessen, the higher risk of death and CVD associated with time spent sedentary. Details from the daily steps and heart disease study The researchers looked at median step count for the study subjects who logged 6,222 steps per day and those who tallied 2,200 steps per day, which was the lowest 5% of daily steps among participants. They used those measurements as the reference point to assess the impact on death and CVD events with increasing step count.

The study participants' median sedentary time was 10.6 hours per day. Subjects sedentary for 10.5 hours per day or more were considered to have high sedentary time while those spending less than 10.5 hours per day sedentary were considered having low sedentary time. Researchers said during the average of nearly 7 years of

follow up, 1,633 subjects died and 6,190 experienced CVD events. After considering other potentially influential factors, the study authors concluded that between 9,000 and 10,500 steps per day was the optimal number of daily steps to counteract high sedentary time. That amount of steps lowered mortality risk by

establish cause and effect. The authors added that although the large sample size and long follow-up period allowed the risk of bias to be reduced, it was possible other unmeasured factors could have affected results. They said the fact that steps and sedentary time were obtained in a single time point could have

ity and incident CVD among highly sedentary participants," the study authors wrote. "The minimal threshold associated with substantially lower mortality and CVD risk was between 4,000 and 4,500 steps/day."

"Our prospective results provide relevant findings that can be used to augment public

cular Institute at Orange Coast Medical Center in California who was not involved in the study, told Medical News Today that doctors have known for decades that daily routine physical activity have cardiovascular benefits. However, he noted this study is different. "This study is interesting in that it addresses a



39% and CVD risk by 21%. In both scenarios, 50% of the benefit came between 4,000 and 4,500 steps per day. How many steps per day provide heart health benefits? The authors noted their research involved an observational study and therefore was unable to

led to reporting bias. However, they concluded any daily steps above 2,200 steps per day was associated with lower mortality and CVD risk for those with low and high sedentary time.

"Accruing between 9,000 and 10,000 steps/day optimally lowered the risk of mortal-

health messaging and inform the first generation of device-based physical activity and sedentary behavior guidelines, which will likely include specific recommendations on daily stepping," they added. Dr. Hoang Nguyen, an interventional cardiologist at the MemorialCare Heart & Vas-

higher level of activity can compensate for a sedentary lifestyle in terms of CVD and mortality benefits," Nguyen said. "The study benefits from a large data pool, but it is limited by being an observational study with possible unidentified confounding factors."





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Health News

Can You Really Lose Weight With Two Workouts a Week?

It turns out there may be something to the "weekend warrior" mentality after all. A recent study suggested that concentrating all your exercise into just 1 or 2 days could work as well for fat loss as spreading it throughout the week. The research builds on growing evidence that the weekend warrior exercise pattern can aid your health. A 2023 study of nearly 90,000 people found that weekend warriors were less likely to have a heart attack, stroke, or heart failure than inactive people. Another study of nearly 351,000 adults found no difference in risk of early death between weekend warriors and those who exercised three or more times a week. The new study was the first to examine the weekend warrior pattern and body fat, which was measured using dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA scan). "In [our] fast-paced society, we are interested in exploring alternatives to stay fit for individuals who cannot meet the recommended frequency," said study author Lihua Zhang, MD, PhD, a health care scientist at Fuwai Hospital's National Center for Cardiovascular Diseases in Beijing. Using the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), Zhang and colleagues analyzed data from 9,600 people. About 4,000 reported exercising for at least 150 minutes a week – the minimum amount of exercise recommended for adults. Most spread it out over 3 or more days, but 772 people, the weekend warriors, crammed it all into just 1 or 2 days. Both groups – the weekend warriors and the more frequent movers – had less belly fat, a smaller waist, a lower body mass index, and less body fat than people who did not exercise regularly. And both groups were roughly the same on those measures, despite differences in exercise frequency. The results held regardless of diet. "No matter if someone had a healthy diet or not, the weekend warrior still was associated with lower adiposity," or body fat, said Zhang. Exercise and Weight Loss That may be surprising, given that most research

indicates that exercise alone plays a relatively small role in weight loss. (Though evidence does suggest that exercise may be important for maintaining body weight.) In studies that show weight loss resulting from exercise, the activity amount is usually substantial and the intensity high. RELATED: HGH Uses and Abuses In general, public health guidelines advise at least 300 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a week for weight loss. Even then, results may not be dramatic: A 2022 analysis of 25 trials concluded that at least 3 months of regular aerobic exercise resulted in "modest" waist size reductions of a little more than 1 inch in adults who were overweight or obese. The weekend warriors in the recent study did indeed work out harder and longer than those exercising throughout the week. In fact, they worked out for 147.6 minutes, on average, per session – well over 2 hours at a time. That part is key. In this and other studies, weekend warriors are, by definition, meeting or exceeding recommended exercise levels. They just happen to do it over fewer days. "We don't know that it's the weekend pattern per se that is responsible for the findings rather than simply comparing 150 minutes accumulated in two versus three or more bouts of exercise with the same weekly total," said Peter

Hall, PhD, a professor of public health at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. Another caveat is the study design. "This is a cross-sectional study, and the researchers looked at associations between type of exercise patterns and obesity outcomes," said Alexandra van den Berg, PhD, a professor of health promotion and behavioral sciences at the University of Texas. "This study design does not allow for the testing of causal relationships." That is, exercise was linked to lower body weight – but we can't say for sure that exercise caused a lower body weight. What's more, the NHANES data surveyed people only once and did not track them over time. The study authors acknowledge this limitation in their paper, stating they "cannot account for changes over time or the causal relationship between physical activity patterns and body fat reduction." Consider, too, that the weekend warriors tended to be younger than the other groups. Their average age was 35.9, while those who exercised throughout the week had an average age of 37.5, and those in the inactive group averaged 40.5 years old. RELATED: Tips for Working Out When You're Over 50 The weekend warriors "may have been healthier than the traditional exercise group and the control group to start," said Kimberley

Dawson, PhD, a professor of sport and exercise psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. "Therefore, they didn't need as much activity to make a difference." Still, the study authors suggest there could be more to it than that, saying that long weekend workouts may affect the body differently than more traditional exercise patterns. Previous studies have shown that short-term exercise may increase blood levels of stress hormones called catecholamines and boost blood flow through fat tissue, which could help the body burn more fat. But not everyone agrees. "It's not the movement that will improve our health but rather the sedentariness that will decrease it," Dawson said. "Sitting for five days and moving for two does not adequately decrease the lack of movement to gain physiological effects of movement." At the same time, exercising less often might increase the risk of injury, Zhang warned. A 2014 study found that out of 351 adults who had a severe injury, 55% got hurt on the weekend, while 45% were injured between Monday and Friday. The authors suggested lack of experience and low fitness could be to blame, or it could be that more people take part in riskier sports on days they don't have work. What This Means for You If you want to make exercise

work for weight loss, aim for 60 to 90 minutes of moderate physical activity most days – the amount recommended for weight loss. Keep in mind that doesn't need to be done all at one time; you could do 20- to 30-minute bouts three times a day, for instance. Consider monitoring your diet as well. The weight loss plans that work the best combine better nutrition with an increase in physical activity, research shows. If you only have weekends available to work out, expect to exercise long and hard during those sessions if you want to lose weight. (They're called "warriors" for a reason!) RELATED: Video: How to Walk With Good Posture "I would rather see individuals move as much as they can during the week and enjoy longer durations of exercise on weekends when their schedules permit it," Dawson said. "From a behavior modification perspective, this approach will lead to sustained activity change." And regardless of when you choose to exercise, it may be wise to measure your expectations about weight. People tend to become discouraged when their true weight loss falls short of their hopes. Instead, focus on improving your quality of life and the health benefits – you'll get those and a more capable body even if the scale doesn't budge.



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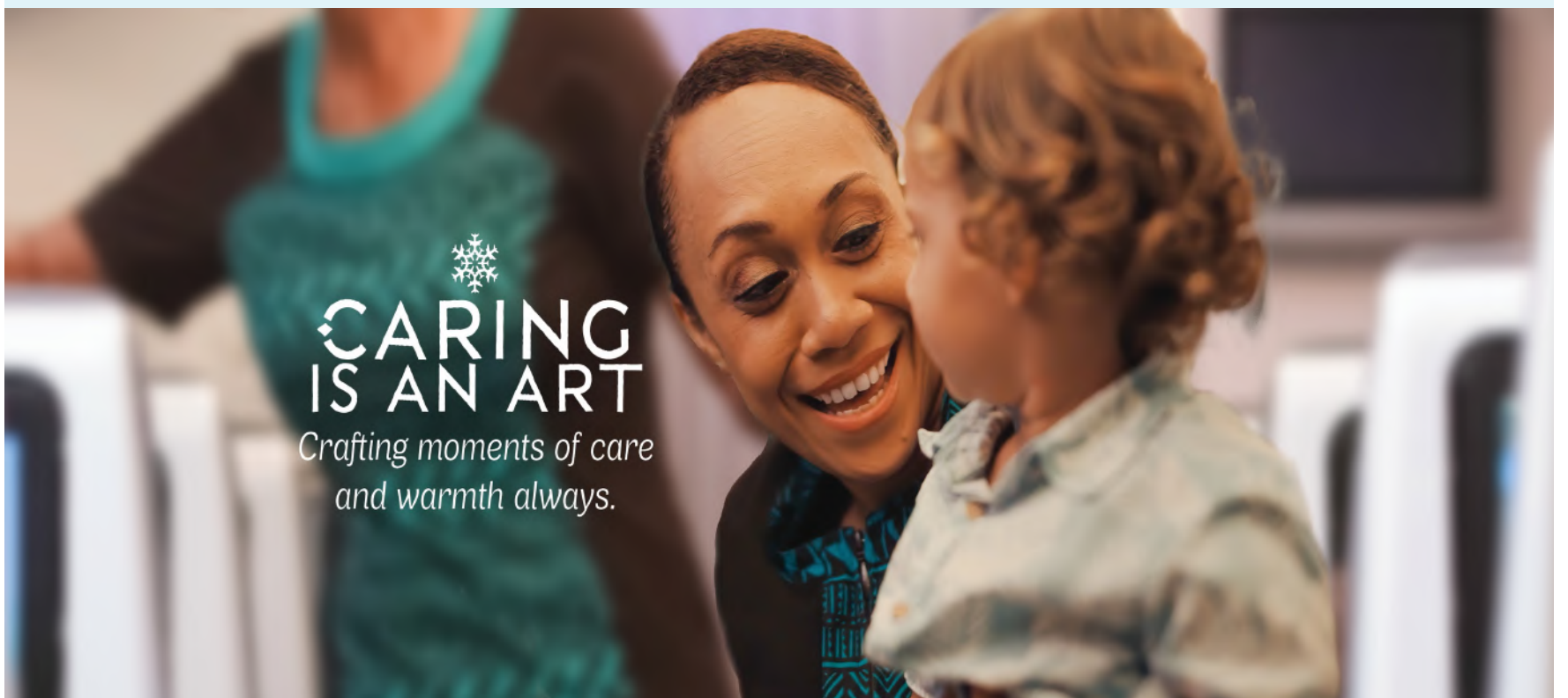
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Bollywood News

Pushpa 2: THIS Bollywood actor to play an 'influential character' in Allu Arjun film?

Who isn't excited for Pushpa 2? The first instalment of Allu Arjun starrer Pushpa - The Rise released in 2021. Since then the fans are desperately waiting for Pushpa 2: The Rule. In the first part, we saw Pushpa played by Allu Arjun calling for a war with SP Bhanwar Singh played by Fahadh Faasil.

In the second instalment, fans are looking forward to see the massive clash between the two. There is a lot of anticipation around the film and all the updates are only adding to it. A latest report suggests that a top Bollywood star is going to have a cameo in Pushpa 2. We are talking about Sanjay Dutt. As per a report in Siasat.com, Sanjay Dutt is going to play a key role in Pushpa 2.

His character has been described as 'influential' and his character will add an extra layer to the storyline. Earlier, there were reports stating that director Sukumar plans to rope in a Bollywood star for the film. However, there is still no confirmation whether Sanjay Dutt is a part of Pushpa 2 or not.

Pushpa 2 is slated to release on August 15, 2024. Sanjay Dutt's stint in South film industry Sanjay Dutt has now become a popular name even



down South. The actor played the villain in KGF 2 and left fans thoroughly impressed with his powerful performance. He was the Viking style villain and he managed to get into the skin of the character quite well. He

also played a key role in Tamil film Leo that starred Thalapathy Vijay in the lead. If one looks at his filmography, Sanjay Dutt has massive South film projects in his kitty.

He has a Telugu film named

Double iSmart in which he is going to play the character of the Big Bull. He also has a Kannada film titled KD - The Devil in his kitty. In Bollywood, Sanjay Dutt will be next seen in Welcome To The Jungle along

with Akshay Kumar, Shreyas Talpade, Arshad Warsi, Disha Patani, Raveena Tandon, Lara Dutta and many more. Last he was seen in Shah Rukh Khan's Jawan in a cameo as STF Officer Madhavan Naik.

Sara Tendulkar and Shubman Gill shippers have a field day courtesy the former's pet dog

Sara Tendulkar made one mesmerizing appearance at the pre-wedding soiree of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant. The young lady wore a deep red lehenga with diamonds at the do. As we know, Sachin Tendulkar is a part of the Mumbai Indians family. He is very close to the Ambani parivaar. Now, Sara Tendulkar has shared some pics on her Instagram handle. In one of them we can see her posing with her pet dog. It looks like it is a Chow Chow. The sight of the fur baby has brought happiness to everyone who ships Sara Tendulkar and Shubman Gill. As we know the two are rumoured to be love birds. They were seen together at an event some time back. Sara Tendulkar is also good friends with his sister Shahneel Gill.

Reports of the two being close are doing the rounds since lockdown. Sara Tendulkar was in the stands cheering his every achievement during the World Cup 2023. Their fans are always looking at connecting the dots. Shubman Gill was linked to Sara Ali Khan as well. But the actress has denied that she is dating him. Netizens are happy to see pics where Shubman Gill can be seen with a similar dog. Sachin Tendulkar had gone with his family to Kashmir. Crazy shippers even speculated that he had gone with the family. Shubman Gill is good friends with Agni Dev Chopra who is also a good friend of Sara Tendulkar and her brother Arjun. Arjun Tendulkar is a player for the Mumbai Indians. Shubman Gill will be playing for the Gujarat



team this IPL 2024. Netizens have reacted with amusement to the post.

Bollywood News

Aryan Khan and Shah Rukh Khan join hands for 1st web series

Aryan Khan, the young entrepreneur and son of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan, candidly shared his experiences in his recent interview with GQ India on working closely with his father. The duo collaborated not only on their high-end streetwear brand, D'yavol X but also on an exciting new project. Aryan Khan's first directing project has been kept secret for almost two years – but now he's ready to spill. Taking to GQ India, Shah Rukh Khan's lad revealed that his maiden directorial venture is a web series titled "Stardom". The exciting bit: It revolves around the movie business. Six episodes down, and Red Chillies Entertainment is producing it. Witnessing Shah Rukh Khan's Work Ethic Aryan Khan also shared his thoughts on the opportunity to work with his father, not only in show business but also as they collaborate

on clothing collections for their brand. Shah Rukh Khan has long been respected both by fans and those within the industry because he never seems tired from promoting movies tirelessly or shooting commercials day after day; this dedication is something Aryan appreciates deeply too "It's always a pleasure and a learning experience. People talk about his work ethic, but experiencing it first-hand was really exciting." More Than Just Star Quality Shah Rukh Khan brings added value to the brand beyond being a star. Aryan recognizes that his father's vast knowledge makes his job easier. But it's not just about getting things done quickly- there needs to be balance too! Aryan describes their brand as "edgy," but also says there is some "sanity" and "maturity" mixed in. A Collective Vision D'yavol X stands out because it combines modern



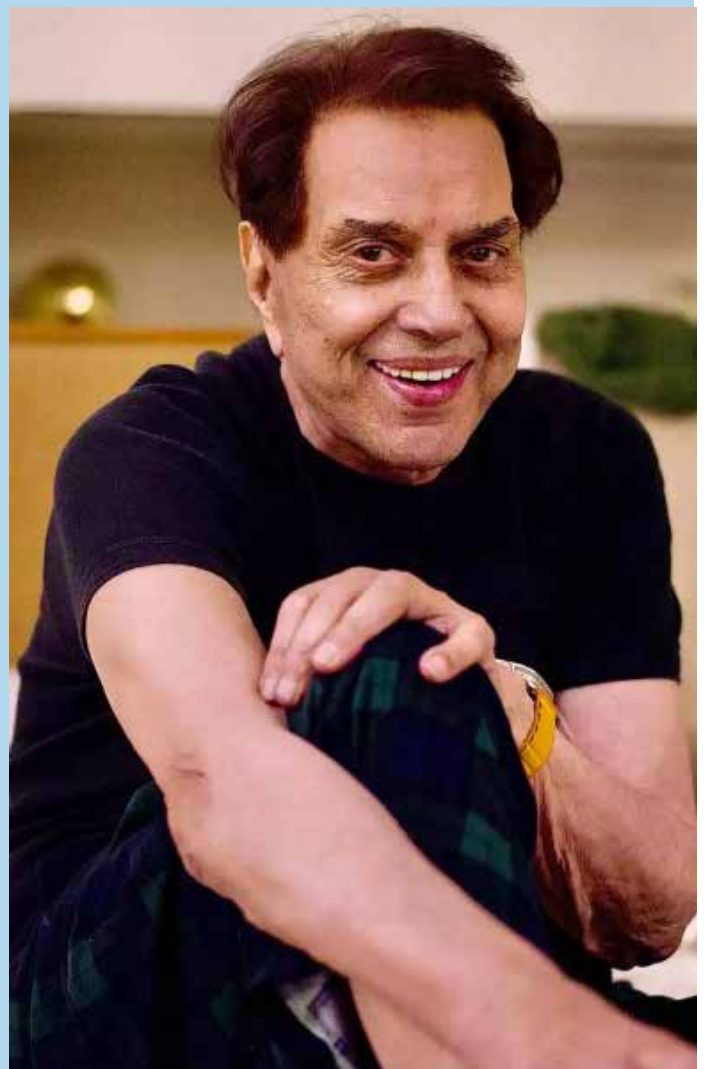
ideas with experienced insights. Aryan Khan puts it nicely when he says, "By having viewpoints from both sides we can connect with what all of us have in mind." The brand wants to appeal to people of all ages – whether they're 10 or 70.

Dharmendra recovering from injuries, was unwell for past two weeks: Report

Fans of veteran actor Dharmendra were left concerned after he shared his photo on Twitter. In the now-deleted post, Dharmendra looked visibly weak and wrote that he was unable to sleep. Now, as per the Hindustan Times report, Dharmendra was injured and was unwell for the past two weeks. Thankfully, he is recovering. Last Friday, Dharmendra posted

a picture of himself indulging in a late-night food craving and wrote, "Aadhi raat ho gayi... neend aati nahin... bhook lag jaati hai. Baasi roti makhan ka saath bahut sawad lagta hai." After he posted the photos, several of his fans wrote in comments, "Sir, what happened to your leg?" The portal quoted a source who shared insight into Dharmendra's health and

said, "He has been under the weather for the past two weeks, and that was visible on his face in the picture." The source further explained that the senior Deol recently attended a family wedding, and he hurt himself while dancing, "He went to a family wedding with his family including, Sunny Deol and Bobby Deol, recently in Udaipur. That's where he got injured, and his health took a toll. He hurt his back and leg while dancing. And his health also suffered because of exertion and old age." Speaking about recovering the source stated that he was exhausted because of the exertion, and it got worse because of his injury. "However, he is doing fine now and is on the road to recovery. In fact, he is taking it slow now, and focusing on his health completely," confirmed the source. On the work front, Dharmendra was seen in Shahid Kapoor, Kriti Sanon's Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya. Before that, the 88-year-old actor was seen in Karan Johar's Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani.



Dharmendra Deol @aapkadharam · 7h
Aadhi raat ho gai ... neend aati nahin bhook lag jaati hai. Dosto baasi roti makhan ke saath badi swaad lagti hai. 🤔 haha.



World News

Neil Wagner's retirement was forced: Ross Taylor

Former New Zealand's star batter Ross Taylor has raised speculation about fast bowler Neil Wagner's retirement, implying that it might have been compelled, indicating potential discord within the New Zealand cricket team. Despite being informed that he wouldn't feature in the playing XI for the series against Australia, Wagner emotionally declared his retirement in a press conference ahead of the first Test. Interestingly, the 37-year-old Wagner did participate in the first Test as a substitute fielder and occasionally served as a drinks carrier. "I think it all makes sense a little bit now. There's no sugarcoating it. I think it's a forced retirement. If you listen to Wagner's press conference, he was retiring, but it was after this last Test match. So he did make himself available," Taylor said while speaking on ESPN's Around the Wicket podcast. "And to see that he isn't selected ... I think I do like and you do need to plan for the future, but a one-off Test against Australia in a must-win



situation, I wouldn't be looking much further than Neil Wagner. And I'm sure the Australian batters are sleeping easy that he's not in the side," Taylor added. Just last week, Wagner concluded his illustrious 64-Test

career, exiting the cricket scene as New Zealand's fifth highest wicket-taker, having claimed an impressive total of 260 victims. Wagner was picked in the squad for the two home Tests against Pat Cummins's Australia

but was told by head coach Gary Stead that he would not play in either match. He fought back tears as he confirmed his retirement from international cricket alongside Stead. Born and raised in Pretoria, South Af-

rica, Wagner migrated to New Zealand in 2008 and played a key role in his adopted nation's rise to the world No 1 ranking and the inaugural World Test Championship title win in 2021.

Chess legend Garry Kasparov added by Russia to list of 'terrorists and extremists'

Former world champion Garry Kasparov has been added by Russia to a state list of "terrorists and extremists", according to media reports. Kasparov's name was added to the list by Rosfinmonitoring, a Russian watchdog that is responsible for combatting money laundering and terror financing. Those designated by the watchdog as "terrorists and extremists" can have their bank accounts seized. Agence-France Presse said that the Rosfinmonitoring added Soviet-born Kasparov to

its database without giving any reason. The Russian chess legend, who is the 13th world chess champion, is one of the most vocal critics of the current Russian regime and President Vladimir Putin. He had once notably called Putin "the world's most dangerous man." Kasparov was born in Baku (present day capital of Azerbaijan) back when it was in the Soviet Union. When he became the world champion for the first time in 1985, he was just 22, thereby becoming the youngest in the world to as-



cent to the throne. He was the world no 1 chess player from 1984 till he retired: a record 255 months. Kasparov, who retired from playing chess in 2005 to focus on politics and activism, played an active role in protests demanding fair elections in Russia in 2012 and 2013. He consequently left the country and has

been in exile from the country ever since, making the USA his base. In May 2022, Russia had added Kasparov to its list of "foreign agents". According to a report on The Moscow Times back then, "The infamous label, reminiscent of the 'enemies of the people' of the Soviet period, is used extensively against op-

ponents, journalists and human rights activists accused of conducting foreign-funded political activities." Kasparov was also one of the faces of an 'anti-war committee' which was formed in 2022 to protest Russia's invasion of Ukraine.





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World News

Pak elections this year were less fair than two previous polls: Report

A Pakistan independent organisation on Wednesday stated that the latest general elections were less fair than the two previous polls and demanded an independent probe into the allegation of electoral fraud. The Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) issued a report detailing its assessment of the recently concluded general election, expressing deep concerns over a decline in fairness. Overall, the quality of General Election 2024 has scored 49% which is not only below 50% score but is also lower than the overall score of the past two elections 52% for GE-2018 and 57% for GE-2013 indicating greater concerns about the quality of the most recent General Election, PILDAT said in its report titled 'General Election 2024 Records Lowest Fairness Score Since 2013'. These overall scores, particularly the

steady decline in them since 2013, are emblematic of the weakening of the democratic processes in general and electoral system in particular in Pakistan and they underscore the urgent need to restore public confidence in the electoral system. It said that within the 2024 election process, both part two of the polling day operations i.e. counting, compiling, transmission, consolidation, announcement of provisional results and the post-election process received the lowest scores of 40% indicating that these two areas were the weakest links in the electoral chain in General Election 2024. PILDAT recommends that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) conducts a thorough and impartial investigation into delays in the transmission, consolidation, and announcement of provisional results, the lack of contingency planning for the



Election Management System (EMS) inoperability, and the failure to publish signed copies of forms within the stipulated time frame. The institute also calls for election tribunals to resolve disputes on a case-by-case basis within the legal deadline of 180 days, expressing concern over the insufficient

number of election tribunals in Punjab. The think tank demands an increase in the number of election tribunals to ensure the timely resolution of all election petitions. PILDAT also proposed the establishment of a commission of inquiry, similar to the one formed after the 2013 elections, to comprehensively

investigate the concerns raised during the February 8 polls. The comprehensive report, based on independent analysis and questionnaires scored by a diverse cross-section of civil society, highlights several issues that have adversely impacted the quality and credibility of the electoral process.

Sinking of Rubymar in Red Sea poses grave environmental risks, experts warn

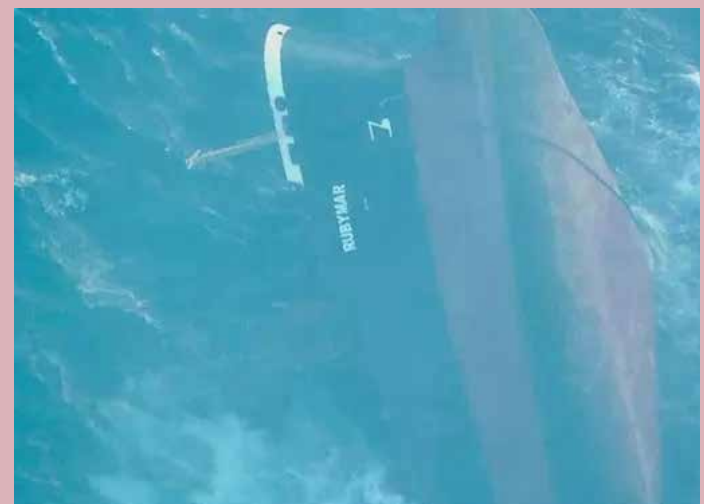
The sinking of a bulk carrier off the coast of Yemen after a Houthi missile attack poses grave environmental risks as thousands of tonnes of fertiliser threaten to spill into the Red Sea, officials and experts have warned. Leaking fuel and the chemical pollutant could harm marine life, including coral reefs, and affect coastal communities that rely on fishing for their livelihoods, they said. The Belize-flagged, Lebanese-operated Rubymar sank on Saturday with 21,000 metric tonnes of ammonium phosphate sulphate fertiliser on board, according to US Central Command (Centcom). It had been taking on water since a Houthi missile strike on 18 February damaged its hull, marking the most significant impact on a commercial ship since the rebels started targeting vessels in November. After already leaving a slick from leaking fuel while it was afloat, the Rubymar now poses a new set of environmental threats under water. Abdulsalam al-Jaabi, of the Yemeni government's en-

vironmental protection agency, warned of "double pollution" that could affect 78,000 fishers and their families – up to half a million people. "The first pollution is oil pollution resulting from the large amount of fuel oil on board," he said, estimating the quantity to be more than 200 tonnes. The second risk is posed by the fertiliser, which is highly soluble and could harm "fish and living organisms such as coral reefs and seaweed" if released into the sea, al-Jaabi added. The overall contamination could incur "significant economic costs", especially on coastal communities that depend on fishing for survival, he said. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized the capital, Sana'a, in 2014, pushing the internationally recognised government south to Aden and prompting Saudi Arabia to lead a military coalition to help prop it up the following year. A ceasefire since April 2022 has largely held. The Rubymar is the first ship to sink since the Houthis started their Red Sea campaign which they say is in

solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza amid the Israel-Gaza war. Plans to tow the vessel failed after port authorities in Aden, Djibouti and Saudi Arabia refused to receive the ship, according to Roy Khoury, the chief executive of Blue Fleet Group, the ship's Lebanese operator. The Yemeni government's transport minister, Abdulsalam Humaid, said Aden's "refusal comes out of fear of an environmental disaster". Djibouti also refused the ship over "environmental risks", said an official close to the country's presidency. Saudi authorities were not immediately available for comment. "Without immediate action, this situation could escalate into a major environmental crisis," warned Julien Jreissati, the Middle East and North Africa programme director at Greenpeace. "The sinking of the vessel could further breach the hull, allowing water to contact with the thousands of tonnes of fertiliser," he added. This would "disrupt the balance of the marine ecosystems, triggering cascading effects throughout

the food web", Jreissati said. The UN special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, said five experts from the UN environment programme were due in Yemen this week to conduct an assessment in coordination with the Yemeni environment ministry. George Wikoff, the head of the US navy's Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet, warned that the "tonnes of chemicals carried on the sinking vessel Rubymar presents environmental risk to the Red Sea in the form of algae blooms and damaged coral". Speaking during a conference in

Doha on Tuesday, Wikoff said the ship also posed a threat to Red Sea navigation as it "presents a subsurface impact risk" to other ships transiting the critical waterway, which normally carries around 12% of global trade. It remains unclear who is ultimately responsible for the Rubymar, which was sailing from the United Arab Emirates to Bulgaria. Centcom and the maritime security firm Ambrey said the vessel is registered in Britain but its Lebanese operator said the ship is registered in the Marshall Islands.



Food

Beetroot Idli Fry Recipe

Beetroot Idli Fry Recipe

Total Time: 40 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 30 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

For idlis -

1. 2 Cups rice
2. 1 Cups urad dal
3. 1 medium-sized beetroot, chopped
4. Oil for greasing idli plates

For frying -

5. 1 Medium onion, finely chopped
6. 2 green chillies, slit from middle
7. 1 tsp cumin seeds
8. 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
9. 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
10. Garam masala (optional)
11. Red chilli powder (as per taste levels)
12. Hing
13. 2-3 Tbsp ghee/oil
14. 5-6 curry leaves

How to

1. In two separate bowls, rinse and soak rice and dal. Set it aside for 6-7 hours. After they are soaked, grind them in a blender till they are smooth as a paste. You can use a little water in intervals to make sure the dal and rice blend is lump-free. Let them ferment overnight.
2. In a blender, put the chopped beetroot and make



a fine paste out of it. You can add 1-2 teaspoons of water to ensure the paste is smooth.

3. After the idli batter gets fermented overnight, add the beetroot paste along with some salt. Make sure that you mix it well so that the batter has a beautiful pink colour. If the batter seems too thick, add ¼ cup of water in it and mix well.
4. Grease the idli plates with

ghee or oil and pour the beetroot batter into it. Place the mould in the steamer and steam-cook the idlis for 15-20 minutes. Allow the idlis to cool down a bit before removing them from the mould.

5. In a pan, heat some oil or ghee. To this, add mustard and cumin seeds and allow them to splutter. Then add chopped onion and curry leaves, and mix well.

6. Add the rest of the spices, turmeric powder, red chilli powder, salt and slit green chillies. Cook until the onions lose their rawness and become translucent. At this point, you can also raise the spice levels by adding a bit of garam masala. Mix well.

7. In the meantime, take out the beetroot idlis from the mould and cut each into four pieces. Toss the beetroot idli pieces in the pan

and give it a good mix so that it's well coated with the masala.

8. Cook the idlis till they are golden brown and slightly crispy on the edges. Garnish them with coriander leaves and voila! your beetroot idli fry is ready to serve! You can serve these idlis with peanut or coconut chutney!

Millet Curd Rice Recipe

Millet Curd Rice Recipe

Total Time: 30 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 20 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 Cup foxtail millet (kangni)
2. 2 ½ cup water
3. 1/2 cup milk
4. 3 cups whisked curd
5. 1 cup grated cucumber
6. 1 cup grated carrot
7. 3 tbsp onion, chopped
8. 3 tbsp capsicum
9. 2 tbsp coriander leaves, chopped
10. to taste salt
11. For tempering:
12. 2 1/2 tsp Oil 1 tsp mustard seeds
13. 2 tsp urad dal
14. 2 tsp chana dal

15. 2 red chillies
16. 1/2 tsp hing
17. 2 tbsp peanuts
18. 2 green chillies, finely sliced
19. 6-7 curry leaves

How to

1. In a pot, take rinsed millet with 2 ½ cups of water and cook it for 15-20 minutes. Make sure to keep checking the millets from time to time. Cook the millets on medium-low heat, and once cooked, set it aside to cool.
2. After the millets have cooled down, mash them a little with the back of your spoon or your hand. Now add whisked yoghurt, along with other veggies – grated cucumbers, carrots, onions, coriander leaves, and cap-

sicum. Mix it well.

3. Then add milk and salt to the curd mixture and mix it well. You can also add buttermilk instead of normal milk if you want a healthier version of the dish. Keep it aside.

4. In a pan, take some oil and add mustard seeds. Let them splutter. Then add urad dal, chana dal, hing, peanuts, red chillies, green chillies, and curry leaves in it. Saute for a few seconds so that the ingredients lose

their rawness and are crisp.

5. Pour the hot tempering into the millet curd rice mixture set aside previously. Mix it well. And voila! your millet curd rice is ready to serve!



Food

Low Calorie Teen Ratna Dal Recipe

Low Calorie Teen Ratna Dal Recipe

Total Time: 35 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 25 min

Serves: 3 Servings

Ingredients

- 1 Cup Mix of chana, green moong and toovar dal
- 1 tsp Turmeric powder
- 3-4 Green chilli, slited
- To taste Salt
- 2 Tbsp Onion, chopped
- 1/2 tsp Ginger, chopped
- 1/2 tsp Garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp Cumin seeds
- 2 Whole red chillies-
- 1 tsp Hing
- 1/2 tsp Garam masala powder
- 1 Tbsp Mustard oil
- 1 tsp Ghee
- Freshly chopped coriander - to garnish

How to

- Boil dal with turmeric, green chilli and salt. Keep aside.
- Heat oil in a kadhai and add red chilli and cumin seeds. ion and let them cook until they turn golden brown in colour. Add some salt.
- Add some hing and let it all splutter.
- Add ginger, garlic and onion and let them cook until they turn golden brown in colour. Add some salt.
- Pour the boiled dal in the mix and let it simmer.
- Sprinkle soe garam masala powder and ghee on the top.
- Garnish with coriander leaves, switch off the flame and cover the lid.
- Once the flavours are infused, serve hot.



Non Fried Masala Banana Chips Recipe

Non Fried Masala Banana Chips Recipe

Total Time: 15 min

Prep Time : 05 min

Cook Time : 10 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

- 2 Raw Bananas, peeled
- 1/4 tsp Red Chili Powder
- 1/4 tsp Black Pepper
- 1/4 tsp Chaat Masala
- to taste Salt
- 2 tsp Oil
- A pinch of Roasted cumin powder

How to

- First peel the bananas, then make slices of them with the help of chips cutter.
- Now put some oil, turmeric and salt on these slices and mix.
- Spread them in a single layer in the air fryer basket and sprinkle a little oil and air fry at 160 degree Celsius.
- When the chips are lightly hot, sprinkle red chili, chaat masala and black pepper on them and mix and enjoy this guilt free snack.



Sports

Hideki Matsuyama wins the 2024 Genesis Invitational

@The Riviera Country Club Pacific Palisades, California



Following Provided by PGA Tour

- Ninth career PGA TOUR title in his 250th start at the age of 31 years, 11 months, 24 days (turns 32 on Sunday, February 25)

- PGA TOUR wins (9): 2014 Memorial Tournament presented by Workday, 2016 WM

Phoenix Open, 2016 WGC-

HSBC Champions, 2017 WM Phoenix Open, 2017 WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, 2021 Masters Tournament, 2021 ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP, 2022 Sony Open in Hawaii, 2024 Genesis Invitational

- Breaks a tie with K.J. Choi (8, South Korea) for the most

wins by an Asian player on the PGA TOUR

- Trailed by six strokes enter-

ing the final round, the largest deficit faced through 54 holes by a winner on TOUR since Jon

- Stood T7 entering the final round, the lowest 54-hole position by a winner on TOUR since Sepp Straka at the 2023 John Deere Classic (T14)

- Sets the tournament record for low final-round score at The Riviera Country Club (Phil Rodgers: 62 at Rancho Municipal GC

in 1962)

- Lowest final-round score by a winner of a 72-hole event since Ludvig Åberg at the 2023 RSM Classic (61); note: Wyndham

Clark carded a 60 in the third round of the 2024 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and won when the event was shortened to 54 holes (weather and safety concerns)

- Gained 8.471 strokes on the field in the final round, the highest Strokes Gained: Total mark in the final round by a TOUR winner (72-hole events) since Rory McIlroy at the 2019 RBC Canadian Open (8.676)

- Earns 700 FedExCup points and moves from No. 57 to No. 3 in the FedExCup standings

- Moves from No. 55 to No. 20 in the Official World Golf Ranking

- First player from Japan to win The Genesis Invitational

Miscellaneous notes

- Will Zalatoris (T2/-14) finishes runner-up for the fifth time in his 69th career start and earns his second consecutive top-five finish at The Genesis Invitational (4th/2023); Zalatoris also finished runner-up to Mat-

suayama at the 2021 Masters Tournament

- Luke List (T2/-14) earns his first top-10 finish in nine starts at The Genesis Invitational

- Patrick Cantlay (T4/-13) updated records with the lead/co-lead in individual stroke-play events on TOUR (not including FedExCup Starting Strokes

- o 18 holes: 0-for-5 (led by one stroke)

- o 36 holes: 0-for-8 (led by five strokes)

- o 54 holes: 2-for-5 (led by two strokes

Final Leaderboard

Pos. Player R1 R2 R3 R4 Total

1 Hideki Matsuyama 69 68 68 62 267 (-17)

T2 Will Zalatoris 66 70 65 69 270 (-14)

T2 Luke List 65 69 68 68 270 (-14)

T4 Adam Hadwin 69 70 67 65 271 (-13)

T4 Patrick Cantlay 64 65 70 72 271 (-13)

T4 Xander Schauffele 70 66 65 70 271 (-13)

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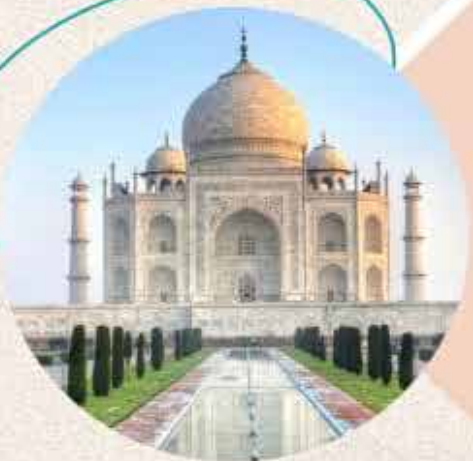
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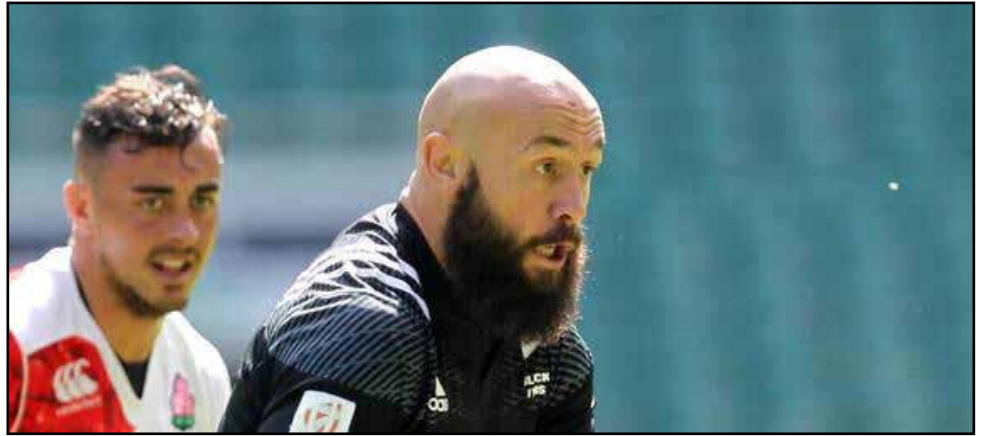
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MEET THE STARS AT THE HONG KONG SEVENS 2024

As the excitement reaches fever pitch in the run-up to this year's tournament, we're thrilled to introduce the legendary rugby figures set to make the Hong Kong Sevens 2024 an unforgettable experience. Get your autograph books ready and prepare to be starstruck – time to meet the ambassadors of the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens 2024!



DJ FORBES

Let's kick things off with DJ Forbes, the former captain of the New Zealand Sevens side. With an astonishing 512 games in 89 tournaments under his belt, DJ Forbes has etched his name in the annals of rugby history. He's won an incredible six Sevens World Series titles, and every year his presence at the tournament inspires the next generation of rugby stars.

CHRISTY CHENG

Next up, we have Christy Cheng, one of Hong Kong rugby's most beloved icons. Christy has had a long and distinguished career, representing Hong Kong at World Cup and Series level. But what sets her apart is her tireless efforts to introduce rugby to young members of the community. Her passion for the sport is infectious, and she'll undoubtedly capture the hearts of fans at the tournament.

DAVID CAMPESE

Joining the ambassa-

dor lineup is none other than David Campese, a true legend of Australian rugby. Capped 101 times by the Wallabies, Campo retired in 1996 but continues to inspire rugby enthusiasts worldwide. Awarded the Order of Australia in 2002 for his immense contribution to the sport, his presence in Hong Kong is sure to add buzz to the tournament.

HURIANA MANUEL

Prepare to be dazzled by the brilliance of Huriana Manuel, a dual international who left her mark on both sevens and 15s rugby for New Zealand. As captain, she led her team to the inaugural HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series title and Rugby World Cup Sevens glory in 2013.

WAISALE SEREVI

We can't talk about rugby sevens without mentioning Waisale Serevi, the Fijian superstar and member of the World Rugby Hall of Fame. Known as "The Wizard," Serevi's achievements on

the field are nothing short of legendary. Widely regarded as the greatest rugby sevens player in history, his presence at the tournament will add a touch of magic and excitement that only he can bring.

MAGGIE ALPHONSI

Maggie Alphonsi MBE, an icon of the game, will also be gracing the tournament with her presence. With 76 caps for England, she has left an indelible mark on the sport. Her formidable skills as a backrower and numerous accolades, including being named Sunday Times Sportswoman of the Year in 2010 and induction into the World Rugby Hall of Fame, make her a true inspiration for aspiring athletes.

JAMIE ROBERTS

Jamie Roberts, a true force in the rugby world, is set to make his mark as an ambassador at the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens. With three Six Nations titles, two Grand

Slams, and 94 test caps for Wales, Roberts has proven time and again his prowess on the field.

BENJAMIN KAYSER

Adding his expertise to the ambassador team is Benjamin Kayser. With 47 caps for France as a 'hooker,' Kayser has experienced the highest levels of the game. His dynamic playing style and exciting presence on the pitch make him an enthralling addition to the ambassador lineup.

JOHN BARCLAY

John Barclay, a former Scotland rugby player and captain, is no stranger to the demands of the game. With 76 international appearances under his belt and three World Cup campaigns, Barclay's experience and leadership qualities will undoubtedly captivate fans and players alike.

JAMES HASKELL

Last but certainly not least, we have James Haskell, a stalwart of

English rugby. With 77 caps for England and a British and Irish Lions tour of New Zealand, Haskell's impressive career has taken him around the world. This year, he'll also be showcasing his DJ skills as he takes the stage on the opening night of the 7s!

There you have it, folks — the star-studded lineup gracing this year's Hong Kong Sevens tournament.

We know what these icons mean to us – but what does the Hong Kong Sevens mean to them? Check out #HK7sGreatestHits on social media, where they reveal their all-time favourite tournament memories.

Don't miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime to meet these legends, get a picture, or even snag an autograph. Buy your tickets now and secure your place in the stands!



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Sports

Double Delight at the HSBC SVNS in Vancouver!



February 23rd-25th of 2024 in Vancouver witnessed a thrilling weekend of HSBC Sevens action, culminating in double championship glory! Argentina's men and New Zealand's women emerged victorious, etching their names in the history books of the tournament.

Argentina's Men: A Three-peat Triumph

The Pumas continued their dominance on Canadian soil, securing their third consecutive HSBC SVNS Vancouver title. Their clinical performance in the final was a masterclass in attacking rugby. Matias Osadczuk's hat-trick spearheaded Argentina's 36-12 victory over a valiant New Zealand side.

This win further solidifies Argentina's position as the world's leading men's Sevens team.

New Zealand Women: Woodman-Wickliffe leads Black Ferns to Gold

The New Zealand women, led by the unstoppable Portia

Woodman-Wickliffe, displayed phenomenal resilience throughout the tournament. Woodman-Wickliffe's dazzling display, including a hat-trick in the final, propelled the Black Ferns Sevens to a convincing 35-19 win against France. This victory marks their first gold medal of the 2024 season and serves as a strong statement of their intent for the remainder of the Series.

Canada Celebrates Bronze on Home Soil

The home crowd erupted in celebration as Canada's women's team secured a well-deserved bronze medal. In a nail-biting encounter, they edged past pre-tournament favorites Australia 19-14. This podium finish is a testament to the grit and determination of the Canadian squad and a moment of

immense pride for the nation.

The 2024 HSBC SVNS Vancouver was a weekend of captivating Sevens rugby, showcasing exceptional athleticism, strategic brilliance, and unwavering team spirit. Congratulations to Argentina's men, New Zealand's women, and Canada's women for their incredible victories!



Sports

Double Delight at the HSBC SVNS in Vancouver!



Sports

France Men End 19-Year Drought, New Zealand Women Repeat at LA Sevens!

The Los Angeles edition of the HSBC SVNS Series witnessed a historic triumph and a dominant display!



French Men Rewrite History with Dupont's Magic Touch

France's men's team, led by the inspirational Antoine Dupont (who joined the squad just last week!), finally clinched their first HSBC SVNS title in 19 years. They dominated

the final against Great Britain with a convincing 21-0 victory, scoring three unanswered tries. This win marks a significant comeback for France, who last tasted victory on home soil in Paris back in 2005. Notably, they had lost all six finals they contested since then. Dupont's

arrival proved to be a game-changer, propelling France to consecutive bronze and gold medals in Vancouver and Los Angeles respectively.

This impressive performance pushes them up to fourth place in the current SVNS standings. New Zealand Women Main-

tain Dominance with Blyde's Hatrick Heroics

The New Zealand women solidified their status as the leading force in the women's Sevens circuit. Building on their victory in Vancouver last week, they secured a resounding 29-14 win over arch-rivals Australia in

the Los Angeles final.

Michaela Blyde emerged as the star player, contributing a brilliant hat-trick to secure the Black Ferns Sevens their second consecutive HSBC SVNS title of 2024.



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	IRELAND
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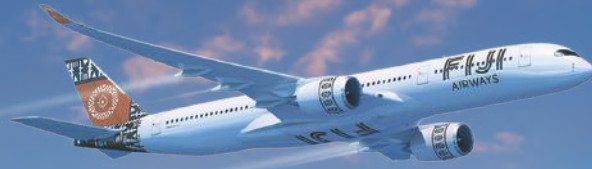
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