



# THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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## Fiji's New Prime Minister Visits Bay Area

Fiji's new Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka made his maiden trip to USA after the Oceans meeting in Panama. The PM and his officials were accorded a grace welcome by his ardent followers and wells wishers. The PM thanked the attendees of their deep interest and love for Fiji and promised to see that the welfare of the people is well met by him and his coalition partners.



## Drua magic – Ruggers stun Crusaders in historic victory

Continue Page 50



## Ramadan Mubarak

### Naatu Naatu wins best original song at Oscars



This year's Oscars Awards becomes special for Indians as SS Rajamouli's, RRR song Naatu Naatu has won the Best Original Song category.

Naatu Naatu is the only Indian song to be nominated in Best Original Song category.

RRR stands for Rise, Roar, Revolt – it missed out on any film nominations, but is a historical fantasy that tells the story of two revolutionaries who fight against British rule in India.

The live performance was performed at the Oscars by singers Rahul Sipligunj and Kaala Bhairava however, Junior NTR and Ram Charan will not be dancing to it.

DENTAL OFFICE OF DR. VISHNU SHANKAR

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# Fijian Government



**PRIME MINISTER OF FIJI**  
SITIVENI RABUKA



**ATTORNEY GENERAL OF FIJI**  
SIROMI TURAGA



**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**  
Prof BIMAN PRASAD



**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**  
MANOA KAMIKAMICA



**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**  
VILIAME GAVOKA

## THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

The US Fiji Times is ranked as the top newspaper being published outside of Fiji for the Fiji American community and to all over the world.

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

capabilities.

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

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

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

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

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

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# War of words – Biman claims Chaudhry ‘jumping the gun’



Finance Minister Professor Biman Prasad has labelled the Fiji Labour Party leader Mahendra Chaudhry's claims as "jumping the gun". In a press statement released on Thursday, Mr Chaudhry expressed concern at the warning from Finance Minister that tax increases are "inevitable".

He said this was disturbing as any increase in taxes, more so an increase in VAT and Customs Duty, would affect the lower to middle income families as it would push up prices. Mr Chaudhry said the poor and

low income families simply do not have the capacity to sustain any further increases in the cost of living.

In response, Prof Prasad said Mr Chaudhry has made stories and exaggerated his claim. "I think he's jumping the gun," Prof Prasad said.

"He has obviously made more stories and exaggerated his claim more than he should. But I leave him there. All I can say is that this is a government which is determined to address the fundamental problems within the economy. "One of course

includes the high levels of debt. So, we will have a two-pronged approach. "One is to ensure that there is fiscal consolidation, but also we want to make sure that there is a balance between fiscal consolidation and looking after our people. "People who are jumping the gun should know that this government is about working together. So I will leave the critics at this stage."

Mr Chaudhry said he pointed on the impact tax increases would have on the lives of poor particularly with increases in VAT and Customs Duty.

"There is no question of my jumping the gun as the minister claims," he said. "It is, in fact, he who has jumped the gun by announcing there will be tax increases even before the Fiscal Review Committee had commenced its work." Prof Prasad said he had not announced which taxes would go up.

"We didn't say which tax we are going to increase or which tax will increase. All we said is that the review of the expenditure by the World Bank, and what we see is that we have to address the expenditure side

and the revenue side. "And when you look at the expenditure and revenue obviously you look at the tax system, the tax rates. So the committee right now is just saying all that. "So I would just say, leave the Fiscal Review Committee to do the work. "We have the economic summit and in that summit, we will invite him (Mr Chaudhry). We will invite all the opposition members as well to come and join us in the summit."

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# The life of a counsellor



She been living in Naduna, Labasa for the past 14 years.

She is married with two children. On a personal note, Ms Indal, who holds a Bachelor of Counselling from the Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors (AIPC), says her mother has always been her inspiration. “She always gives me the directive to face something and gives me the spirit to look ahead and always be optimistic in trying to realise my dreams,” she said.

“She always tells me to give my utmost best at work. She is my angel. My family is my spirit and I’m blessed with the best and most supportive life partner.” Ms Indal says as far as juggling things between her work and family life is concerned, having family dynamics is important. Elaborating on her profession as a counsellor, she said, “Those ‘aha’ moments are incredible and I speak from both a client and counsellor’s perspective here.” “It’s a moment when as a client you feel as though, quite literally, someone

has just turned the lights on in a dark room. “As a counsellor, it’s a privilege to help a client obtain a new perspective in such a profound manner.

“Those revelations open our eyes to so many things, whether it be our thoughts or behaviour or that of others who impact our lives.”

Ms Indal believes that humanitarian workers are always recognised by people for their courage and passion to serve. She has many fond memories of working for Empower Pacific for the past 14 years.

She remembers braving through floodwaters to serve the community, who appreciated her and her team’s service with smiles, and tears of happiness.

Other memories include: reuniting children with parents and witnessing the profound impact on the lives of individuals, families and communities.

training volunteers for disaster preparedness and then witnessing them pass that knowl-

edge to the communities. conducting professional development sessions for medical professionals to motivate and empower them.

Apart from being a qualified therapeutic counsellor, Ms Indal is also an entrepreneur.

“Life to me means friends and family whom you can trust and who trust you. I’m pretty much on the happy side of life but like all adults, I do have my days off”. “That means I do have some sad days or depressed days. But I have my immediate family and colleagues who look out for me when I’m having a bad day.”

Empower Pacific is a Non-Government Organisation that focuses on providing counselling and social services to vulnerable people in society.

People who need counselling or information on the services provided by Empower Pacific can call our 24/7 toll free helpline 5626 and talk to a counsellor.

Shobana Kiran Indal did not choose to become a counsellor. Instead, she said, the field of counselling chose her. She says becoming a counsellor was something that happened by accident and prompted her to study for a diploma in counselling. “After the completion of my diploma, I started my practice and discovered that the most rewarding part of being a counsellor is knowing that you have a part in affecting the life of another human being,” she

said.

“It’s by giving hope when people feel hopeless, inspiring them to be all that they are capable of being so that they can go out into the world and help others, thus I continued my education journey.”

She is the senior counsellor and team leader at Empower Pacific’s Northern Division branch based in Labasa. Ms Indal grew up with her siblings in a small neighbourhood in Bulileka, a few kilometres outside town.

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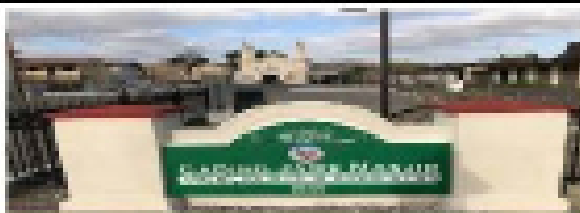
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## 2023/1444 Ramadan Timetable

Ramadan Hijri-1444	Gregorian 2023		Imsaq	Fajr	Shoroq	Zuhr	Asr	Maghrib	*Isha
	Day	Date	Stop Eating	Dawn	Sunrise	Noon	Afternoon	Sunset	Evening
1	Thu	23-Mar	5:45	5:55	7:08	1:15	5:37	7:26	8:36
2	Fri	24	5:44	5:54	7:06	1:15	5:37	7:27	8:37
3	Sat	25	5:42	5:52	7:05	1:14	5:38	7:28	8:38
4	Sun	26	5:40	5:50	7:03	1:14	5:38	7:29	8:39
5	Mon	27	5:39	5:49	7:02	1:14	5:39	7:30	8:40
6	Tue	28	5:37	5:47	7:00	1:14	5:40	7:31	8:41
7	Wed	29	5:36	5:46	6:58	1:13	5:40	7:32	8:42
8	Thu	30	5:34	5:44	6:57	1:13	5:41	7:32	8:43
9	Fri	31	5:33	5:43	6:55	1:13	5:41	7:33	8:44
10	Sat	1-Apr	5:32	5:42	6:54	1:12	5:42	7:34	8:45
11	Sun	2	5:31	5:41	6:52	1:12	5:43	7:35	8:46
12	Mon	3	5:30	5:40	6:51	1:12	5:43	7:36	8:47
13	Tue	4	5:29	5:39	6:49	1:11	5:44	7:37	8:48
14	Wed	5	5:28	5:38	6:48	1:11	5:44	7:38	8:49
15	Thu	6	5:27	5:37	6:47	1:11	5:45	7:39	8:50
16	Fri	7	5:26	5:36	6:45	1:11	5:45	7:40	8:51
17	Sat	8	5:25	5:35	6:44	1:10	5:46	7:41	8:52
18	Sun	9	5:24	5:34	6:42	1:10	5:47	7:42	8:53
19	Mon	10	5:23	5:33	6:41	1:10	5:47	7:42	8:54
20	Tue	11	5:22	5:32	6:39	1:09	5:48	7:43	8:55
21	Wed	12	5:21	5:31	6:38	1:09	5:48	7:44	8:56
22	Thu	13	5:20	5:30	6:36	1:09	5:49	7:45	8:57
23	Fri	14	5:19	5:29	6:35	1:09	5:49	7:46	8:58
24	Sat	15	5:18	5:28	6:34	1:08	5:50	7:47	8:59
25	Sun	16	5:17	5:27	6:32	1:08	5:50	7:48	9:00
26	Mon	17	5:16	5:26	6:31	1:08	5:51	7:49	9:01
27	Tue	18	5:15	5:25	6:29	1:08	5:51	7:50	9:02
28	Wed	19	5:14	5:24	6:28	1:08	5:52	7:51	9:03
29	Thu	20	5:13	5:23	6:27	1:07	5:52	7:52	9:04
30	Fri	21	5:12	5:22	6:25	1:07	5:53	7:52	9:05
31	Sat	22	5:11	5:21	6:24	1:07	5:53	7:53	9:06

**Niyat for Fasting (Keeping Fast)**

Wa bisawwal ghadim nowaiyту  
min shayri Ramadan



**Dua for Iftar (Breaking Fast):**

Allahuma inni laka sumatu wa beka  
amanatu wa alaka tawakkaltu  
wa ala rizhika aftartu fata-khabbal  
min ai

# 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-aid 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.





News



Fiji News

# Fiji's Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka Visit's Santa Rosa California.





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## Fiji News

# WORLD BANK AIMS TO ASSIST FIJI'S DEVELOPMENT

A high-level World Bank mission team is currently in Fiji to undertake a mission centred around the Fiji Government's request for support in sustainably strengthening the health sector. Today's meeting explored options to support the Fiji Government to improve its health sector including prevention of non-communicable diseases, pharmaceutical supply, infrastructure and human resource. The meeting was held with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Prof Biman Prasad, Assistant Minister for Finance Hon. Esrom Immanuel, Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Lynda Tabuya, Permanent Secretary for Health and

Medical Services Dr James Fong, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance Shiri Gounder, Acting Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Josefa Koroivueta. The delegation from the World Bank consisted of Regional Director for Human Development East Asia and the Pacific Daniel Dulitzky, Country Manager for the South Pacific, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu Stefano Mocci, Practice Manager Health, Nutrition and Population Aparnaa Somanathan, Program Leader Human Development Thomas Walker, Senior Economist Mehwish Ashraf and Senior Health Specialist Margareta Norris-Harrit.



## NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY MEETS WITH THE HEAD OF STATE

The Non-Resident Ambassador of Germany to Fiji, Her Excellency Ms. Nicole Menzenbach presented her credentials to Fiji's Head of State, His Excellency the President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere at the State House this morning (27.02.23). Ambassador Menzenbach is based in Wellington and has had an active diplomatic career, having served in Lisbon, Portugal, New Delhi, India, and Berlin, Germany. She was the German Head of Division for Higher Education, Science and Academic Relations Policy, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2014-2017 and was the Consul General of Germany to the New England States from 2018 – 2022, before becoming the German Ambassador to New Zealand from October 2022 to date.



## FINANCE MINISTER DISCUSSES GOVERNMENT'S PLAN AT FCEF MEETING

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Prof Biman Prasad today discussed the People's Coalition Government's plans and expectations for the private sector for 2023 and beyond at the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) meeting. The Minister highlighted key areas

of focus including, promoting private sector-led growth, economic diversification, raising national productivity, inclusive socio-economic development and improving Government service delivery. The meeting was also attended by the Assistant Minister for Finance, Hon. Esrom Immanuel, Board Members

of FCEF, Government representatives and Executives from the private sector. The participants were also given the opportunity to ask questions to Minister Prasad on Government's plans. The Minister also encouraged them to contribute to the upcoming National Economic Summit.





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## Fiji News

## GOVT WOULD LIKE TO HELP REVIVE THE SPORT OF AMATEUR BOXING - PS NAYACALEVU

The Permanent Secretary for Youth and Sports Mr. Rovereto Nayacalevu officially opened the National Amateur Boxing Championships held at the CDR Stan Brown Boxing Gym, Walu Bay in Suva last Saturday (25.02.23). PS Nayacalevu said the Government through the Ministry of Youth and Sports would like to continue working with the National Sports Commission and Fiji Amateur Boxing Association in taking Fiji Amateur boxing back to its glory days where we stood tall as a boxing region. "Boxing was a popular sport in Fiji in the past but had lost its momentum along the way," he said. He also announced that the International Boxing Association (IBA) had appointed Mr. Seru Whippy as Referee and Judge for the IBA Women's World Boxing

Championship in New Delhi, India from March 14th-26th, 2023. "Australia has been home to Mr. Whippy and family for the last 20 years; however, he remains registered with FABA under IBA with the rest of our officials and boxers," PS Nayacalevu said. He further said that he does not need to convince the audience of the many merit of the sport of boxing, saying that not only is it perhaps the best sport to develop overall fitness, but it also one that instills such valuable qualities of character in those undertake it such as tactical awareness, endurance, discipline and self-control. He also urged the boxers to continue supporting the sport and assisting those who are helping it to expand. The Permanent Secretary for Youth and Sports said that the Ministry of Youth

and Sports is ready to render assistance to the great work being carried out by the participants and stakeholders. He wishes Fiji Amateur Boxing and the boxers the best and hopes to win gold medals at the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands this year. He also acknowledged the effort of the organisers who, like many other organisers and promoters, are trying their best to revive the sport in our country. He also thanked the work being done by the Boxing Commission of Fiji in leading the revival of professional boxing in the country after a long period where there was very little activity. "I ask you to support the commission as they work with the stakeholders to ensure quality and safe boxing bouts take place around the country."



## OUR FIREFIGHTERS ARE OUR UNSUNG HEROES – PRESIDENT KATONIVERE

Fiji's Fire Service celebrated 100 years of service in Fiji. Officiating at the historic event yesterday (27.02.23), His Excellency, President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere congratulated the NFA for this milestone achievement and acknowledged past and present firefighters and officers that dedicated their lives to serving and saving lives in Fiji. "These anniversary celebrations are a time of acknowledging and remembering the founding members of Fiji's Fire Service who established the force from very humble beginnings. I would like to acknowledge

those who have worked over the years to ensure the longevity of and fulfil the vision for a strong legacy".

"The NFA has come a long way to reach this milestone achievement and with its many stakeholders remain devoted to its responsibility to establish and maintain an efficient and effective fire rescue service in Fiji that will protect lives, property and economic activities as legally mandated under the National Fire Service Act, 1994," President Katonivere shared. The National Fire Authority was established in February 1995,

prior to that, fire services were handled by the respective town councils. With 21 fire stations operating around the country now, the Head of State said that Fiji's Fire Service community has come a long way since its humble beginnings 100 years ago. To date, the NFA has included the provision of emergency ambulance services in 2010 and had acquired land spaces and plans to establish more fire stations in Namelimeli (Navua), Navua CBD, Pacific Harbor (Deuba), Korovisilou (Serua), Nasaibitu (Wainibuka), Kabisi (Natadola), Keiyasi

(Navosa), Navakai (Nadi) and in Tavua with plans underway to acquire some land in Matei (Taveuni) and also in Vanua Levu.

"The fire stations will cater to the growing population and development in these areas and most importantly improve coverage and allow accessibility of such essential services to all citizens of our beloved Fiji, both in the rural and urban areas," President Katonivere stated. There are plans in place to construct the country's first ever state-of-the-art Fire Academy at Navakai, Nadi. This will serve

as a hub to facilitate regular specialised training for local firefighters.

"Our firefighters are truly our unsung heroes who go about their daily duties ready to face any risk that may arise during their duty roster. For them it is all in a day's work, but for Fiji, we acknowledge with much gratitude their loyalty and courage to face whatever may come their way. A big vinaka vakalevu to all our firefighters and their families both here and around Fiji," President Katonivere stated.



## Fiji News

## Saiasi Fuli Explains Vancouver 7s Selection

Fiji Airways Fijiana rugby sevens coach, Saiasi Fuli, has selected his best 12 players for this weekend's Vancouver Sevens tournament in Canada. He told SUNports yesterday that they lost a few players to the Rooster Chicken Fijiana Drua side who is preparing to defend the Super W title. "It's good for Fiji Rugby to have that cross over to the Fijiana 15s side," Fuli said. "We have also lost some players like Younis Bese to injury but provided us an opportunity to expose new players like Meredani Qoro from Namaka in Nadi."



## It's about time women work together and positively build their own character – Col Vananalagi

Republic of Fiji Military Forces Officers Training School Commandant Colonel Silipa Vananalagi says it is about time for women to work together and positively build their own character. While sharing her experience during the RFMF Servicewomen International Women's Day Celebration, Col Vananalagi says they did things that they did not experience in life in the RFMF, and they were pushed to the extreme. She says they fought against many brick walls, but they picked up the pieces and continue to be better. She stresses they wanted to be recognized, appreciated, and wanted to be seen as a woman, and they never gave up. Col Vananalagi says they are still the silent minority and will remain like that if they do not hold hands together to voice their concerns. She says being in the RFMF is

about bravery, commitment, and standards, and it is about passion. She adds they must take on the challenges and consider the positive benefits that will build their character to be resilient in all their circumstances. Col Vananalagi thanked the organizing committee for running the event and also paid tribute to those servicewomen that have passed. While officiating at the event at the Tuvasu Hall, the Commander Land Force (CLF) Brigadier-General (Brig-Gen) Onisivoro Covunisaqa says the RFMF has evolved in terms of women's participation in every aspect. He says each woman played a critical role not only in the RFMF but also as cornerstones of each family they belong to. The IWD programme will continue today with sports and conclude with a dinner to round off the celebration in the RFMF.



## The Fiji Police Force encourages equality and equity - Acting COMPOL

Acting Commissioner of Police Juki Fong Chew has highlighted that the Fiji Police Force is an organisation that encourages equality and equity. While speaking at the Pacific Faculty of Policing International Women's Day Leadership Workshop at Holiday Inn this morning, Chew says women have excelled and set benchmarks in the Force that does not only challenge the notion of being a male-dominated

organisation but has redefined the term completely. He says the Pacific Faculty of Policing is supporting the participation and representation of Pacific women in policing with the support of institutions such as the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Policing Women's Advisory Network. He adds the senior hierarchy is committed to the spirit of ensuring equity in the workplace.



## Fiji News

# Steven Andrews to cycle from Nadi to Suva to support his nephew's treatment

General Manager for Castaway Fiji, Steven Andrews has committed to cycle over 200 kilometers from Nadi to Suva to create awareness on cancer and also raise funds to support the medical treatment of his nephew. Andrews says he is currently undergoing treatment at St Luke's Hospital, Manila, Philippines. He says that cancer is one of the main concerning non-communicable diseases around the world and the number of new cases is drastically increasing in Fiji as a result cancer is the third

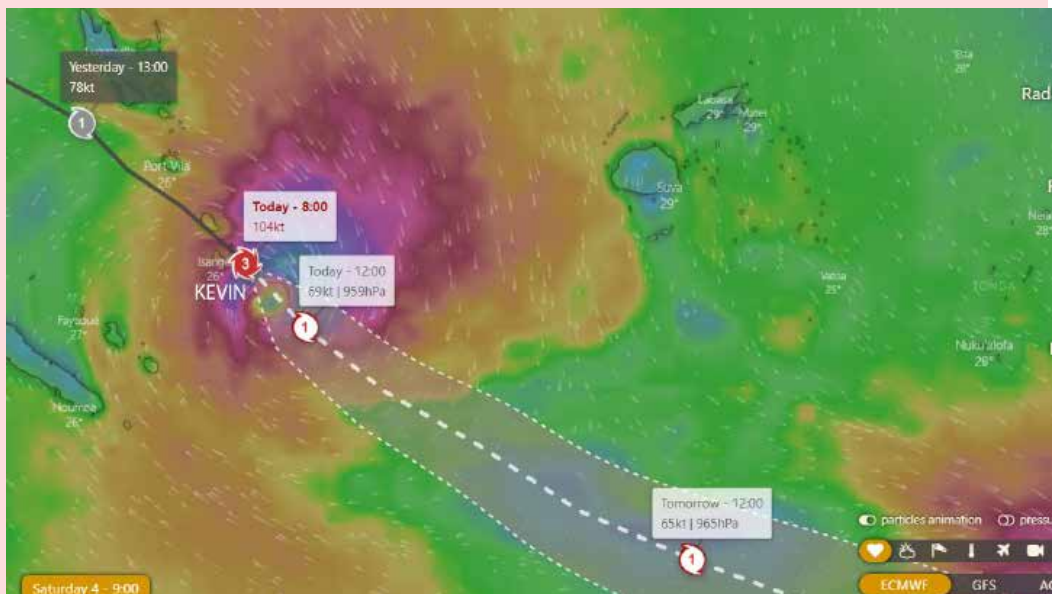
most common cause of death in Fiji. Andrews says through this cycling event, the Fiji Cancer Society will be involved in creating cancer awareness sessions at 3 stop off points and will be highlighting on some of the preventable cancers, its signs and symptoms. He requests if all sponsorship support and donations could be sent to BSP account number 84489060 under the account name Nadi We. Part of the funds collected will also be donated to the Fiji Cancer Society.



## TC Kevin: Heavy rain warning remains for parts of Fiji

A heavy rain warning remains in force for Yasawa and Mamanuca Groups, Northern Ba and Ra, greater Nadi/Lautoka/Ba area, Sigatoka, interior Ba and Nadroga/Navosa, Kadavu and nearby smaller islands, Lau and Lomaiviti Groups while Tropical Cyclone Kevin has intensified into a category 4 system. TC Kevin is located about 820 kilometres West Southwest of Nadi and 860 kilometres West of Kadavu at about 8.30am today and it is not expected to track directly over Fiji. A heavy rain alert is now in force for the rest of Fiji. The associated active trough of low pressure with

cloud and rain is expected to affect the group from later today. The Weather Office says expect rain, heavy at times from tonight in the Western Division, Yasawa and Mamanuca Group and Kadavu. TC Kevin is gradually moving Southeast and expected to track to the South of the group by midnight tonight. A gale warning remains in force open waters of Southwest Viti Levu, far Southern Koro Sea and Southern Lau. Meanwhile, TC Judy lies to the far South of Fiji however, associated rain bands and strong winds continues to affect the country.



## Affordable access to housing for people after the groundbreaking ceremony in Pacific Harbour

More Fijians will now be able to access affordable housing after the groundbreaking ceremony for Housing Authority's Mokosoi Subdivision development in Pacific Harbour. With a total cost of \$3 million, the subdivision will see the development of 34 residential lots and 1 commercial space, together with a green space that will be used for sports or leisure. This will be made possible in the next six months by Housing Authority. While officiating at the event, Minister for Housing and Local Government, Maciu Katamotu says developments that will be conducted in the coming months is the result of a more holistic

approach, as they not only focus on how many lots they can develop but also on building communities to have a more secure and better future. Nalumisa also reassured the community that the Housing Authority will continue to work towards enhancing the government's efforts to provide access to affordable housing for low and middle-income families and also meet housing demands in Fiji. Chief Executive Officer of the Housing Authority, Ritesh Singh emphasized that the Housing Authority will work with the Government on its five-year Land Development Plan to ensure that they go into more sites and provide a higher

number of lots yields. He says with the support of the Board and their line minister he has

reassured the people that the team at Housing Authority will get into many more projects and

even bigger ones in the near future.





## Fiji News

## Litiana Loabuka chooses not to renew her CEO contract

Fiji Sports Council CEO, Litiana Loabuka has announced that she will not seek to renew her contract, scheduled to end on March 5th 2023. Loabuka thanked her dedicated team for all their hard work, particularly through the challenging times created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and says she is proud to have worked with passionate people at the Fiji Sports Council for the last 12 years. She says given the growth of the organization, she is confident that the Sports Council team will be able to manage this change in their stride. Loabuka says she has been blessed to have had the opportunity to serve out her term at the council and to have been part of the many changes in her work journey at the organisation. She says it was a blessing to be able to deliver on so many opportunities for all stakeholders and events including Fiji's first Super Rugby match hosting teams of such great calibre here at our very own National Stadium. Loabuka says she had the opportunity to welcome in, and farewell various sports executives along the way, as well as witnessing Fiji's first Olympic medal during her



term, in addition to the sterling sports and recreational performances and events.

She wishes the Sports Council family the very best and looks forward to seeing the wonderful things that will be achieved in this space in the future. Past Chairman, Peter Mazey says Loabuka's decision is a major loss for the Fiji Sports Council and for venue management

and sports administration in Fiji. Mazey says her contribution over the past 12 years as CEO has been outstanding and they are sorry to see her go.

The Fiji Sports Council says in her 12 years as Sports Council's CEO, Loabuka is noted for her contribution towards rebuilding the sports infrastructure in Fiji to international standards, highlighted

by the upgrading of the HFC Bank Stadium, the FMF Gymnasium, Damodar City Aquatic Centre, Vodafone Arena and Lawaqa Park, and implementing efficiencies in the business operations. The council says Loabuka has also been recognized for the reorganization of the council services in the new complexes completed under her watch, as well as maintaining

key relationships with major stakeholders, HFC Bank, Vodafone Fiji, FMF Food Group, and Damodar City. Outgoing Fiji Sports Council Chairman Peter Mazey says he is proud to have worked with CEO Litiana Loabuka in her 12-year term as CEO. Mazey says Loabuka is a capable worker with brilliant negotiation skills.

## Flares in the sky, not aliens

They are neither aliens trying to land in Fiji in unidentified flying objects nor a meteorological event. The Fiji Meteorological Office confirms that the lights that the people in Nadi have seen on Tuesday and last night are flares fired by the Republic of Fiji Military Forces Black Rock Camp. The Weather Office says that has been confirmed by their tower. Many people on social media have been raising concerns about the lights in the sky. RFMF Commander, Major General Jone Kalouniwai says the flares are part of the pre-deployment training for their troops earmarked for their Syrian deployment. The flares will be used again at around 5am tomorrow. He says the Civil Aviation Authority of Fiji and other relevant authorities have been notified accordingly.



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## MSP to reach out in Waidina District for International Women's Day celebration

The Medical Services Pacific (MSP) will celebrate the International Women's Day (IWD) through an outreach program in the Waidina District in Naitasiri today. MSP say this has been made possible with the funding support of the European Union (EU) through the project preventing COVID-19, protecting rights, and supporting survivors. The project has been supporting survivors of sexual gender-based violence, women and girls, men and boys, people living with disabilities and marginalised groups, police officers, and family members since 2021. The International Women's Day Outreach will not only recognise the effort of women in Waidina who have become breadwinners and taken up roles of running and organising their household and community, but also recognise the success of their high chief who is a lecturer at the University of Fiji. Furthermore, the celebration will highlight the success of women in service within the Naitasiri



Province such as Sub-Divisional Medical Officer (SDMO) Dr. Ilisapeci Lasaro and Station Officer Vunidawa (SO Police) Alisi Wainakoula. The MSP Outreach Team will work in

partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Fiji Police Force, Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Pacific Eye Institute, Diabetes Fiji, Fiji Cancer Society and Project Heaven rep-

resentatives to deliver awareness and services on family planning, sexual reproductive health, eye-care services, ear-care services, non-communicable diseases (NCD) screening, general medi-

cal consultation, gender-based violence, child protection, counseling, group therapies, specialized post-rape care services, and legal advice and assistance for women and youth at no cost.

## Significance of Holi celebration in Fiji is of far greater importance to all the people this year – Prof. Prasad

The significance of celebration of Holi is of far greater importance to all the people of Fiji this year as we rebuild our lives and our nation as well as overcome social and economic deprivation after 16 years of unaccountable and bad governance presided over by a two-man rule. That is the message from National Federation Party Leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Professor Biman Prasad as people celebrate the Hindu Festival of Colours today. Professor Prasad, who is also the Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, says the "My Way or the Highway" style of leadership plus the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic seriously impacted the livelihood of all our citizens.

He says Holi this year is being celebrated in an environment of freedom and in conformity to all mythological, cultural, social and religious significance of this important Hindu religious festival, which is triumph of truth

over evil. Professor Prasad says as Hindus throughout the country celebrate Holi, marked with victorious singing and showering a vibrancy of colours upon each other, the NFP Leader and Deputy Prime Minister says like Diwali, Holi teaches us an important message. He adds the triumph of good over evil, victory of truth and righteousness over injustice, and the upholding at

all times of equality, dignity and social justice for all our people are the core principles of Holi. The Deputy Prime Minister says Holi signifies the vanquishing of demons, despots, dictators and tyrants, that is symbolised by the burning of Holika. He says despite her boon not to be destroyed in a fire, Holika was burnt to death while the young child she tried to burn alive,

emerged unscathed because he had refused to succumb to tyranny.

He says just like other religious festivals of the Indo-Fijian community, Holi has been celebrated for more than 143 years since the arrival of Girmitya in May 1879.

Professor Prasad says festivals like Holi promote good virtues and are an indelible part

in the social and economic advancement of all our people as Fiji evolved into a genuinely multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious nation. He says the vibrancy of colours used during Holi celebrations is the true portrait of our nation under the Coalition government of the People's Alliance, NFP and SODELPA.



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# GIFT OF LIFE FIJI

## NEWSLETTER

Statistic as at January 2023

**176** children given FREE heart surgeries in Fiji

**7,726** children given FREE echocardiograms in Fiji



Prime Minister of Fiji Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka & Mrs. Sulueti Rabuka celebrate with children who received a new "Gift of LIFE"

### Sanjeevani Fiji & Prime Minister Celebrate 100 FREE Heart Surgeries

The Prime Minister of Fiji Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka was the chief guest at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital to celebrate a milestone achievement of the completion of one-hundredth life-saving heart surgery at the hospital since its opening in April 2022.

The 100th surgery was performed by Dr. Shyamadeep Borgohain (Head Surgeon), Dr. Kikesh Patel (Surgeon), Dr. Madhu Mahadeva (Anesthetist/Intensivist) and Dr. Ashishkumar Banpurkar (Cardiologist) and their team from Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital Mumbai. A total of 22 children were given a new 'Gift of Life' during this round of free heart surgeries.

A total of 103 children have received life-saving heart surgeries since the opening of the Hospital.

Dr. Krupali Tappoo, Director of the

Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital Fiji said she was pleased about the achievement. "For a young Hospital to make such a significant impact upon our beloved nation is truly remarkable. Tremendous amounts of hard work, dedication and sacrifice has been made by medical and non-medical individuals in Fiji and around the world to enable this Hospital to carry out this monumental task. This has set a new benchmark in the field of cardiac care for our nation and a solid platform upon which many more feats will be achieved for the benefit of the children and people of Fiji and the Pacific", said Dr. Krupali Tappoo.

Joining the Prime Minister were Mrs. Sulueti Rabuka, the Minister for Health and Medical Services, Hon. Atonio Lalabalavu and the Assistant Minister for Local Government, Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua.



Prime Minister of Fiji Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka

“

*It would be difficult for any of us to imagine a Fiji without the Sai Prema Foundation and the Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital.*

*The Foundation has built and established a state-of-the-art specialist children's heart hospital, which has been recognised by internationally renowned Pediatric Cardiac Surgeons as a facility on par with hospitals in the United States of America, Europe or any other of highly developed countries in the world.*

*Sai Prema Foundation intent to build a hospital dedicated to saving the lives of children who live with congenital heart disease is nothing short of a blessing to many families who would never have been able to afford open heart surgery abroad.*

”

*Excerpts from the speech delivered at the 100th surgery celebration on 2nd February 2023*



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## Health News

# The Benefits of Starting Your Day with a Walk

When you wake up in the morning, movement might not be your first priority. But starting your day with a walk — whether it's around your neighborhood or part of your commute to work or school — can offer your body a number of health benefits. Here are 10 reasons why you may want to start your day by getting in some steps. There are also a few tips to seamlessly work it into your daily routine.

1. Boost your energy Starting out your day with a walk may give you more energy throughout the day. If you walk outdoors, that's especially true. Studies show that adults who walked for 20 minutes outdoors experienced more vitality and energy than those who walked for 20 minutes indoors. A small study found that 10 minutes of stair walking was more energizing than a cup of coffee for 18 women who felt sleep-deprived. The next time you need a morning energy boost or feel tired when you wake up, you may want to try a walk.
2. Improve your mood There are physiological benefits to walking in the morning, too. A walk may help: improve self-esteem boost mood reduce stress reduce anxiety reduce fatigue ease depression symptoms or reduce your risk for depression For best results, try walking for 20 to 30 minutes at least 5 days a week.
3. Complete your physical activity for the day One benefit of walking in the morning is that you'll complete your physical activity for the day — before any other

family, work, or school obligations derail you. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that healthy adults should complete at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week. Try to complete a 30-minute walk 5 mornings a week to meet these requirements.

4. It may help you lose weight Walking in the morning may help you meet your weight loss goals. Walking at a moderate pace for 30 minutes can burn up to 150 calories. Combined with a healthy diet and strength training, you may find you lose weight.
5. Prevent or manage health conditions Walking can offer numerous benefits for your health, including boosting your immunity, as well as preventing and helping you manage various health conditions. Studies Trusted Source show that walking for 30 minutes per day can reduce your risk for heart disease by 19 percent. If you live with diabetes, walking may also help lower your blood sugar levels. It can even help increase your life span and reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease and certain cancers.
6. Strengthen muscles Walking may help strengthen the muscles in your legs. For best results, walk at a moderate to brisk pace. Try to change up your routine and climb stairs, walk up and down hills, or walk at an incline on the treadmill. Add in leg-strengthening exercises like squats and lunges several times a week for more muscle tone.
7. Improve



mental clarity A morning walk may help improve your mental clarity and ability to focus throughout the day. A recent study Trusted Source found that amongst older adults, those who started their days with a morning walk improved their cognitive function, compared to those who remained sedentary. Walking may also help you think more creatively. Research shows that walking opens up a free flow of ideas, which may help you problem-solve better than if you're sitting or remaining sedentary. This is especially the case if you walk outdoors. The next time you have a morning meeting or brainstorming session, suggest that your co-workers join you on a walk, if possible.

8. Sleep better at night Walking first thing may help you sleep better at night later. A small 2017 study Trusted Source observed older adults

aged 55 to 65 who were experiencing difficulty falling asleep at night or were living with mild insomnia. Those who exercised in the morning versus the evening experienced better sleep quality at night. More research is needed to determine why exercising in the morning may be better for sleep than exercising at night, though.

9. Beat the heat One benefit of walking in the morning in the summertime — or if you live in a climate where it's warm year-round — is that you'll be able to fit in exercise before it gets too hot outside. Be sure to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated before and after your workout. Bring a water bottle with you, if needed. Or, plan to walk along a route with water fountains.
10. Make healthier choices throughout the day Starting your day with a walk may set you up to make healthier choices throughout the day. After your walk, you may feel more energized and less sleep-deprived. When your energy drops or you're tired, you're more likely to reach for comfort snacks or energy boosters. Walking in the morning may inspire you to choose a healthy lunch and snacks in the afternoon. Make it part of your routine Set out clothing for your walk the night before. Leave your socks and sneakers by the door so you don't have to look for them in the morning. Try to set your alarm for 30 minutes earlier so you can get in at least a 20-minute walk in the morning. Look for a nature trail nearby or just walk around the neighborhood. Find a friend or co-worker to walk

with in the morning. Chatting and working together can help keep you motivated. If you don't have a lot of time in the morning, consider making walking part of your commute. If you can't walk all the way to work, try getting off the bus a stop or two early to get a walk in. Or, park farther away from your office so you can walk from your car. Should you walk before or after breakfast? If you walk in the mornings, you may wonder if walking before or after breakfast matters and if it'll help if you have weight loss goals. Research is mixed on whether or not skipping breakfast will increase your metabolism or help you lose weight faster. Some research shows that exercising in the fasting state (before breakfast) helps your body burn more fat. But more studies are needed. In the meantime, it depends on your body. If you feel fine taking a walk before eating, or if your stomach feels better if you don't eat, that's OK. Or, you may find that you feel better eating a small snack like a banana or a fruit smoothie before heading out on your walk. Either way, after you exercise, make sure you eat a healthy breakfast and drink plenty of water. The takeaway Starting your day with a short walk can offer a number of health benefits. You may feel more energized throughout the day, see your mood and mental clarity improve, and sleep better at night. Be sure to stretch before and after your walk and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. If you have more questions, talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



## Health News

# How the COVID-19 Pandemic Changed Our Personalities

The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone in different ways. According to a new study Trusted Source published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE, it may have even changed your personality. In their study, researchers used what's called the five-factor model (FFM)—sometimes called the “big five”—of personality traits. Dr. Timothy Sullivan, the chair of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Staten Island University Hospital, part of Northwell Health in New York, told Healthline that the FFM is the most frequently used model for assessing personality. “There exists a significant body of research validating its reliability,” said Sullivan. The FFM describes personality as a collection of ratings (from high to low) across five different dimensions: Neuroticism: a tendency to feel negative emotions and stress Extraversion: a tendency to be energetic and outgoing Openness (to experience): a tendency to be curious and creative Agreeableness: a tendency to be trusting and compassionate Conscientiousness: a tendency to be organized and goal-driven Experts say our personalities, measured across these traits, are generally pretty stable. Your score in any one of these dimensions can change over time, but for most people it happens at a glacial pace, often moving little over a period of decades. When someone's personality changes rapidly, it's usually in response to a traumatic event of personal signifi-



cance. Previous research Trusted Source has shown that personality traits don't tend to change in response to things such as natural disasters. That's what makes this study so interesting. Across the United States, more than 7,000 adults had their personalities measured during three time periods: Pre-pandemic: May 2014 through February 2020 Acute phase: March 2020 through December 2020 Adaptation phase: January 2021 through February 2022 As the COVID-19 pandemic wore on into the adaptation phase, researchers reported, some people experienced more than a decade's worth of personality change. In particular, adults

under the age of 30 experienced a substantial drop in conscientiousness as a group, whereas adults over the age of 65 became less neurotic compared to before their pre-pandemic baseline. Hispanic/Latino participants also experienced an especially large drop in extraversion. The researchers also reported slight overall declines in extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness during the pandemic. What effects might these personality changes have on your health? And what can be done about it? Profound implications “These findings demonstrate just how different life became because of the pandemic and in many ways

we continue in this ‘new normal’ now that our pandemic has become an endemic state,” Dr. David A. Merrill, Ph.D., a psychiatrist and the director of the Pacific Neuroscience Institute's Pacific Brain Health Center at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California, told Healthline.

Experts highlighted the personality changes measured in younger adults, particularly the decrease in conscientiousness. “Higher levels of conscientiousness generally result in more successful aging, defined not only by the absolute number of years lived but also by the quality of those years. More conscientious individuals may take better care of their own health, and those around them, which may promote healthy aging,” said Merrill. Sullivan agreed, saying the study's results represent “a striking disruption of young adult maturational patterns, which, if sustained, could have profound implications for that generation.” Pieces of a larger puzzle The study authors point out that the pandemic, while significant, may not be the only factor at play here. “This study was conducted in the United States during a period of unusual, even unprecedented, political and social division. It's impossible to control for the ef-

fects of those forces, and the events associated with them, on the personality measures we are discussing here,” said Sullivan. “While we all know that the pandemic has been a life-altering event for all of us, scientists are still trying to understand the ways in which that array of stressors has affected us and what the implications are for our health and for the functioning of our society,” Sullivan added. Even though personality traits are generally inflexible, they're only a starting point.

You can still exert some control over how you react to individual stressors from one moment to the next. “Approaching stressful circumstances with intent to have an open mind and work through things together, rather than taking an automatically adversarial stance, may significantly improve not only the outcome of the conflict but may benefit our collective health and well-being as well,” said Merrill. “As the pandemic evolves into a chronic endemic, it's important that we all be aware of what impact this added stressor is having on our personalities. Staying aware of the need for compassion toward ourselves and each other in the face of chronic stress can help maintain a positive outlook,” Merrill added.



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## World News

# The Case For Criminalizing Ecocide

Genocide, war crimes, aggression, ecocide, crimes against humanity – which is the odd one out? The right answer is ecocide - destroying, polluting or damaging the natural living world on a large scale is not among the crimes that can be prosecuted at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. So ecocide, which literally means to “kill one’s home”, can take place constantly in much of the world at the moment and no one is held responsible. Deforestation, oil spills, air contamination – the corporations behind episodes of severe environmental harm like this may sometimes be sued, and occasionally fined, but they can simply budget for this. No one gets arrested, so there is no real disincentive. A growing global network of lawyers, diplomats and activists are campaigning to rectify this and have ecocide join this exclusive club of ‘crimes against peace’ that the International Criminal Court can punish in order to make the perpetrators liable to prosecution. “We call ecocide the missing crime,” Sue Miller, the Head of Global Networks for the Stop Ecocide campaign, told IPS. “Right now, corporations are causing serious environmental damage in pursuit of profits. Mostly they get away with it. “If they are called to account, they may end up paying

a fine, some civil damages or even possibly a bribe to make the problem go away. “Whatever the penalty, it is monetary and can sit on the company’s balance sheet as a business expense”. One of the key virtues of criminalizing ecocide is that it would give a means of redress for the peoples of the Global South who are the biggest victims of it. “At the moment, it is predominantly corporations based in the Global North that are causing environmental damage in the Global South, where the rule of law is often not as strong,” said Miller. “An International law of ecocide will not only strengthen national laws, but will also provide a court of last resort for those affected by ecocide who cannot obtain justice in their own countries”. But, above all, it would also create a deterrent to trashing the environment that currently does not



exist. Miller believes that this would be a game-changer when it comes to business practices. “A new crime of ecocide would place personal criminal liability on the key decision makers - the controlling minds - in most cases the company directors,” she said.

“As such, an ecocide law will reach into the boardrooms where the decisions are made and act as a brake on the projects which cause the worst environmental harms. “Faced with prosecution and possible imprisonment, company directors are likely to be far more circumspect about the projects they approve. “Funding and insurance for potentially ecocidal projects will dry up and funds, effort and talent will be diverted into healthier, more sustainable practices. “Whilst it will enable justice to be pursued if damage is done, more importantly,

an ecocide law has the power to stop the damage happening in the first place”. Rather than being hostile to the law, Miller argues that many CEOs actually want legislation that would forbid them from making profit at the expense of the natural world. “There is no business on a dead planet and many businesses are coming to that realisation now,” she said. “They are also realising that there are advantages to working with, rather than against, nature. “These include: unlocking innovation; stimulating investment in new, regenerative business models; levelling the playing field for sustainable enterprise; stabilising operational and reputational risk; and providing a steer towards more sustainable business practices”.

These are among the reasons that make Miller confident the drive to have ecocide criminal-

ized will ultimately be successful, despite the power of lobbies who oppose it. The campaign has won the backing of figures including United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Pope Francis, Greta Thunberg and Paul McCartney. In June 2021 an independent expert panel presented its formal definition of the proposed crime of ecocide as “unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts”.

When discussions were taking place for the creation of the International Criminal Court at the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s, ecocide was one of the crimes which was going to be included alongside genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – aggression, the use

of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, integrity or independence of another State, did not come under its jurisdiction until 2018. In the end, ecocide was dropped during a closed doors meeting for reasons that remain unclear. The world today would likely be a better place if it had been in there from the start.

“If it had been in place, so many events since might not only have been punished but might not have happened at all,” Miller said. “Had ecocide law been in place it is unlikely, for example, that (former Brazilian president) Jair Bolsonaro would have been so keen to encourage destruction of the Amazon in Brazil. “It is unlikely that corporations would now be prospecting for deep sea mining sites. “So much of the damage we are now seeing could have been avoided”.

## World News

# Children and women among 64 dead as migrant boat hits rocks near Italy

At least 64 people including children and women died after a wooden boat carrying migrants from Turkey broke apart on rocks off the coast of Calabria on Sunday, Italian authorities said. More bodies were being pulled from the Mediterranean Sea on Monday, where bad weather hampered search efforts and made the field of debris larger. More than two dozen of the dead were Pakistani nationals, the country's prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif, said Monday. Sharif described the news as "deeply concerning and worrisome" and directed Pakistan's foreign ministry to investigate. At least 82 passengers survived the shipwreck, an official from Italy's Crotona prefecture said Monday. Among those on board were people from Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, according to rescuers. The vessel left the Turkish city of Izmir three or four days before the wreck, with 140 to 150 people on board, Reuters reported. The first three bodies washed up on the beach near Staccato di Cutro in southern Italy around 4:40 a.m. local time Sunday. The full breakdown of migrants by gender and ages who have died were set to be released soon and the total number of people missing had not yet been established, Manuela Curra, prefect of Crotona, told CNN on Monday. Italian



Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni blamed human traffickers. "It is criminal to launch a boat just 20 meters long with 200 people on board in adverse weather," she said in a statement. "It is inhumane to exchange the lives of men, women and children for the price of a ticket under the false perspective of a safe journey." Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi added that new measures must be instituted to reduce such perilous journeys. "It is essential to continue with

every possible initiative to stop departures and discourage crossings in any way which takes advantage of the illusory mirage of a better life," he said in a statement. Meloni made stopping migrant boats a priority of her hard-right government. This week parliament approved new laws making it more difficult for NGOs to carry out rescues. In Vatican City on Sunday, in reference to the victims of the shipwreck, Pope Francis said: "I pray for each of them, for

the missing, and for the other migrants who survived. I thank those who are helping them and those who are giving them assistance. May the Virgin Mary help these brothers and sisters." UNHCR records show that 11,874 people have arrived in Italy so far in 2023 by sea, with 678 of them arriving at Calabria. Typically, arrivals are from African countries, rather than the Middle East and Asia, with the majority of boats setting off from Libya. Only 8.3% of arrivals are from

Pakistan, 6.7% from Afghanistan and 0.7% from Iran. The rest are primarily from Africa, with 17.3% of arrivals from Ivory Coast alone, 13.1% from Guinea. Other African nations, including North African countries, make up most of the rest. The most deadly migration route is the Central Mediterranean route, where at least 20,334 people have died since 2014, according to the International Organization for Migration's Missing Migrants Project.



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## Holi

# Holi the Festival of Colors

Holi, also known as the Festival of Colors, is a Hindu festival that is celebrated annually in India and other parts of the world. The festival is typically held in late February or early March and is a celebration of the arrival of spring. The festival is characterized by the throwing of colored powders and water, singing, dancing, and feasting. It is a time for people to come together, forget their differences, and celebrate the joy of life. The origins of Holi can be traced back to ancient Hindu mythology.

One of the most popular stories is that of the demon king Hiranyakashipu and his son Prahlada. Hiranyakashipu was an evil king who wanted everyone to worship him instead of the gods. However, his son Prahlada was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, one of the most important gods in Hinduism. Hiranyakashipu tried to kill his son several times, but each time Prahlada was saved by divine intervention. Finally, Hiranyakashipu's sister Holika came up with a plan to kill Prahlada. She had a magic cloak that would protect her from fire, so she convinced Prahlada to sit with her in a bonfire. However, the cloak flew off Holika and protected Prahlada instead. From that day on, Hindus have celebrated Holi as a victory of good over evil. The festival is celebrated in many different ways depending on the region of India. In the northern part of India, people light bonfires on the



night before Holi to symbolize the burning of evil spirits. On the day of Holi, people gather together and throw colored powders and water at each other. It is also traditional to drink a special drink made with milk, nuts, and spices called thandai. In the southern part of India, the festival is known as Kamudu Pyre and is celebrated with the lighting of a large bonfire. People also cook special foods and offer them to the gods. Holi is also celebrated by Hindus out-

side of India, and has become popular in many other parts of the world as well. In recent years, the festival has become more commercialized, with companies selling colored powders and water guns for people to use during the celebrations. However, there are also concerns about the environmental impact of the festival. The use of synthetic colors and plastic water guns can lead to pollution and harm the environment. As a result, many people are now

choosing to celebrate Holi in more eco-friendly ways, using natural colors and avoiding plastic. Overall, Holi is a joyful and colorful celebration that brings people together to celebrate the arrival of spring and the triumph of good over evil. As the festival continues to evolve and change, it is important to remember its origins and celebrate in ways that are respectful of both the environment and the traditions of Hinduism. Holi is a festival that is celebrated with great enthusiasm in India and other parts of the world. It is a spring festival that usually falls in late February or early March. The festival is also known as the "Festival of Colors" or the "Festival of Love" and is celebrated over two days. On the first day, people light bonfires to symbolize the victory of good over evil. This is known as Holika Dahan or Chhoti Holi. The next day is the main day of the festival, known as Rangwali Holi or Dhulandi.

On this day, people throw colored powder and water at each other, sing and dance, and celebrate the arrival of spring. The origin of Holi can be traced back to Hindu mythology. The festival is believed to have

started as a celebration of the victory of good over evil, when the demon king Hiranyakashipu was defeated by Lord Vishnu. The festival also celebrates the love between Lord Krishna and Radha. According to legend, Krishna would playfully throw colored powder on Radha and other gopis (cow-herding girls) and they would respond in kind. This is why Holi is also known as the "Festival of Love". Holi is a time for people to come together and celebrate, regardless of their caste, religion, or social status. It is a time to forgive and forget, and to make new friends. People exchange sweets and greetings, and visit friends and family. However, Holi celebrations have also led to some negative consequences, such as the use of harmful chemicals in the colored powder and water, leading to skin irritation and other health issues. It is important for people to use natural, organic colors and to celebrate the festival in a safe and responsible manner. Overall, Holi is a vibrant and joyful festival that brings people together and celebrates the arrival of spring. It is a time to forget differences and to celebrate love and togetherness.





## Food

# Bhang Gujiya Recipe

## Bhang Gujiya

**Total Time: 21 min**

**Prep Time : 20 min**

**Cook Time : 01 min**

**Serves: 8 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. For Gujiya:
2. 4 cups All Purpose Flour
3. 1½ cup Ghee
4. ¼ cup Water
5. For Filling:
5. 1 cup Sugar
6. 200 gram Khoya
7. 1 tbsp Bhang Seed Powder
8. 1 tbsp Almonds ,
9. chopped ¼ cup Semolina
10. ¼ tsp Green Cardamom
11. 1 tsp Chaat masala (optional)

### How to

1. Prepare the Soft Dough
2. For making this easy and popular recipe, make the dough by mixing ghee and flour in a bowl. Add water and knead well to a soft dough. Once done, cover it with a wet muslin cloth and keep aside for 60 minutes.

3. Prepare the Gujiya Filling
4. In the meantime, saute khoya and semolina till slightly golden in colour and keep aside to cool. Add sugar, bhang powder, green cardamom and almonds to the cooled khoya and mix well.
5. Shape Gujiya and Add Filling
6. Make balls of the dough and roll them into thick rounds. Place 1 1/2 tsp of the filling and fold. Seal the edges with wet fingers in the desired shape.
7. Deep Fry and Serve Hot
8. Now, take a deep frying pan and add enough ghee to deep fry the gujiyas. Once the oil reaches smoking point, add gujiyas and deep fry on a medium flame. Fry the gujiyas till golden brown on all sides and serve hot.



# Dahi Bhalla Recipe

## Dahi Bhalla

**Total Time: 3 hrs**

**Cook Time : 3 hr**

**Serves: 4 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. 2/3 Cup Urad Dal
2. 1/3 cup Moong Dal
3. 8 Raisins
4. 2 Green Chillies, chopped
5. 1 piece Ginger , chopped
6. 1/4 tsp Asafoetida
7. Oil for Frying
8. 300 gram Yoghurt
9. Powdered Sugar - 1 tbsp
10. 1/2 tsp Roasted Cumin Seeds
11. 1/4 tsp Black Salt
12. 1/4 tsp Pepper Powder
13. 1 tbsp Sweet Chutney
14. 1 tbsp Green Chutney

### How to

1. First of all, soak urad and moong dal separately for about 5 hours. Now drain water completely from urad dal and grind finely in a mixer jar. In the same way, drain water from moong dal and grind it finely.
2. Now mix urad and moong dal paste and beat it well. While whisking the dal, make sure to do so in just one direction. That is, either from left to right or

3. To check if the batter is well beaten, drop it in water and check. If the batter starts floating up in the water, it means it has been whisked well. Now add raisins, green chillies, ginger

4. Heat the oil in a pan and drop the bhallas in the oil. Now pour oil on the bhallas with the spatula and fry till it fluffs up well. When

5. Now put all the bhallas in water immediately and let them stay for half an hour. Now prepare yoghurt mix for the bhallas. For this, add powdered sugar to the curd. Now to serve, lightly

6. press the bhallas and remove them from the water. Now place the bhallas in the bowl, add yoghurt, cumin powder, black pepper powder, black salt, sweet and green chutney on the top.



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# Dry Fruit Malai Recipe

## Dry Fruit Malai Recipe

**Total Time: 35 min**

**Prep Time : 20 min**

**Cook Time : 15 min**

**Serves: 2 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. 2 Bowls Malai/fresh cream
2. 1/2 cup Powdered sugar
3. 2 tbsp Milk
4. 1 small Apple, finely chopped
5. 1 small Banana, finely chopped
6. 1 tsp Cardamom powder
7. 1 tsp Almond, Slit
8. 1 tsp Cashew, Slit
9. 1 tsp Pistachio, Slit

### How to

1. Take a bowl and add malai. Now whisk malai for a few seconds.
2. Mix in powdered sugar until it dissolves.
3. Now, add the milk and stir well.
4. Combine the apple, ba-



nana, cardamom powder, almond, cashew, and pis-

tachio in a food processor. Combine it.

5. The delectable Fruit Malai Dessert is prepared and

ready to serve.

# Shahi Gulaab & Thandai Bon Bons Recipe

**Total Time: 45 min**

**Prep Time : 25 min**

**Cook Time : 20 min**

**Serves: 2 Servings**

### Ingredients

1. For Ganache
2. 165 gram Cream
3. 10 gram Rose water
4. 15 gram Butter
5. 20 gram Cocoa butter
6. 190 gms White chocolate
7. 30 gram ThandaiFor Shells
8. 500 gms White chocolate
9. 150 gms Cocoa butter

### How to

For Ganache

10. Heat the cream, rose water, thandai and butter. Pour over white chocolate & cocoa butter.
11. At 30°C emulsify using a hand blender.

For Shells

1. Heat cocoa butter in 30 second intervals in the microwave until melted. Pour into 5 small bowls. Add a few drops of oil based food coloring to each bowl until you reach a desired colour.
2. Paint the colours into the bon bons mould using a small brush. You can add layers of paint for more colour, just allow the first coat to harden before add-



ing the next.

3. Place 300 grams of chocolate in a heat proof bowl. Transfer to a bain-marie with simmering water or microwave in 30 second intervals. Melt the chocolate to 45C.
4. Add in the 200 grams of chopped chocolate part - by - part and stir until all the chocolate has melted. Your chocolate is now tempered and ready to use.

5. Transfer back to the bain-marie to a low simmer or use a heat gun or hair dryer to warm to bring it back to a workable consistency if needed. Workable temp is about 29C-30C.

For the Assembly

1. Pour tempered chocolate into each mould. Tap the mold until all the air bubbles are out. Give the mould a wipe. Invert over the bowl, let the chocolate

drizzle out.

2. Let the chocolate sit in the mould for a minute, then invert the mould onto a wire rack so that the chocolate coats the upper edge of the mould. Allow the shells to crystallize.
3. Transfer ganache into a piping bags.
4. Pipe into each well. Don't overfill or get ganache on the edges of the mold. You need to seal the bob bons

with more White chocolate so the filling can't ooze out.

5. Allow ganache to crystallize and fill the mould with another layer of chocolate. Tap to get any air bubbles out. Transfer to the fridge.
6. The chocolate will pull away from the mould once it has set.
7. Tap it onto the counter and you're done. Beautiful & delicious!

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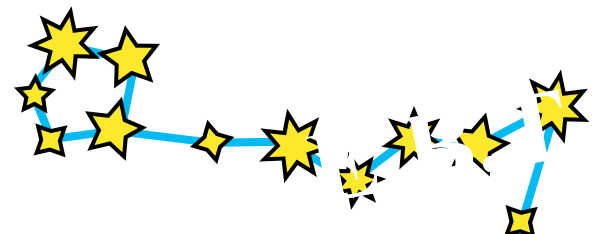
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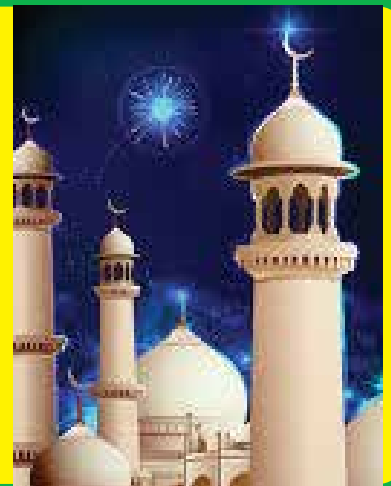


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## Health News

# Dementia: How Regular Use of Laxatives May Increase the Risk



People who regularly use over-the-counter laxatives may have more than a 50% increase in the risk of developing dementia. That's according to a study published today in the online issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Researchers looked at the medical data of more than 500,000 people in the UK Biobank database with an average follow-up of 10 years. The participants had an average age of 57 and none had dementia at the start of the study. Of the participants, 18,235 people reported regular use of over-the-counter laxatives. The scientists defined regular use as using laxatives most days of the week in the month before the study. The findings included: 218 participants (1.3%) who regularly used laxatives developed dementia. 1,969 participants (0.4%) who did not regularly use laxatives developed dementia. The risk of developing dementia increased with the use of two or more types of laxatives. The use of osmotic laxatives resulted in an even higher risk. After adjusting for age, sex, education, other illnesses, medication use, and family history, the scientists found that frequent laxatives increased the risk of developing all-cause dementia by 51%.

The researchers found that the type and amount of variation of laxative use influenced the risk: People who used one kind of laxative had a 28% increase in risk. People who used two or more types of laxatives had a 90% increase in risk. The type of laxative matters. The most significant increase in risk occurred in people who used osmotic laxatives. "Osmotic laxatives, such as PEG 3350 (Miralax), attract water and draw it into the stool, gently resulting in softer stools and more frequent bowel movements," explained Elena Ivanina, DO, MPH, the director of neuro-integrative gastroenterology at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York. "Stimulant laxatives such as senna are harsher laxatives that irritate your gut, stimulating the muscles to move contents forward," she told Healthline. "They often cause cramping as a side effect. Osmotic laxatives are usually the first-line laxative and are gentle with minimal side effects but could take two or three days to work.

On the other hand, stimulant laxatives are much more effective and fast acting, often taking 6 to 12 hours to work but have more significant side effects. Neither should be used chronically

without the guidance of a gastroenterologist." The effects of laxatives can have

Constipation and laxative use is common among middle-aged and older adults, pointed out Feng Sha, Ph.D., a study author from the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Guangdong, China. "However, regular laxative use may change the gut microbiome, possibly affecting nerve signaling from the gut to the brain or increasing the production of intestinal toxins that may affect the brain," he said. The scientists note that laxative use is a modifiable risk factor.

"It's never a good idea to use laxatives on a regular, long-term basis," said Anne Danahy, MS, RDN, a dietician and owner of the food and nutrition blog *Craving Something Healthy*.

"They can worsen constipation problems and you can become dependent on them. Long-term laxative use can also damage your large intestine," she told Healthline. Caring for constipation naturally "Constipation can be an uncomfortable issue, but there are natural ways to help," said Dr. Mahmud Kara, an internist with Kara MD. "Dietary fiber is one way to help with new onset

constipation or constipation that has only been occurring for a few days and is not the result of narcotic pain medication use," Kara told Healthline. The different types of fiber include: • Soluble fiber absorbs water and creates a gel-like substance that helps create smoother stools. In contrast, insoluble fiber "bulks" food and waste together to keep them moving through the digestive tract. You can find this type of fiber in foods like oats, peas, citrus fruits, leafy green vegetables, and beans. • When it comes to constipation, cellulose (a type of insoluble fiber) is often considered "nature's laxative." It is found naturally in nuts, whole grains, wheat bran, seeds, and brown rice. Step-by-step approach for constipation treatment Danahy provides a step-by-step approach to treating constipation: Gradually increase fiber to about 30 grams daily by eating more fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Oatmeal, barley, and kiwis are some of my favorite foods for constipation. They act like natural stool softeners. Check the nutrition facts label on bread and cereals because fiber content can vary widely. Choose those with at least 4-5 grams of fiber per serving. Note: if your diet is low in

these foods, add them slowly to avoid gas, bloating, or other digestive side effects. Increase your fluids throughout the day. Aim for at least 64 ounces of liquid, ideally from water, unsweetened seltzer, or herbal tea. Many people find a cup of warm water with lemon, tea, or coffee (regular or decaf) has a mild laxative effect in the morning. Staying hydrated is even more critical when increasing fiber because the fluid helps soften your stool and move it through your gut.

Ask your healthcare provider about using an over-the-counter stool softener. This is often a safer alternative to laxatives — but Danahy recommends trying fiber and fluid first. Probiotics may also help promote regular bowel movements. These also support the gut microbiome and the gut-brain axis. Ask your healthcare provider for brands designed to help with constipation. Finally, if you have chronic constipation, looking for the root cause is essential. It may be related to certain medications you're taking or to a functional bowel disorder such as irritable bowel syndrome. Ask for a referral to a gastroenterologist who can help you address the root of the problem.



# 10 Ways to Move More in Everyday Life



1. Take the stairs I know. This is so boring, and you've heard it a bajillion times. Yet, it's one of the best tips for a reason. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator increases your heart rate, helps with balance, and improves lower-extremity strength. If you're feeling saucy and have a few minutes, you can even do some heel raises off the edge of a step for calf strength, or take the stairs two at a time. Skip the elevator, your body and heart will thank you.

2. Incorporate walking meetings If you work from home or have transitioned to virtual conference calls, schedule a walk during one call per day. If you don't need to be staring at a screen looking at spreadsheets, plug in your headphones, slip your phone in your pocket, and solve the world's problems on a walk. It's a great way to mix up your daily routine. And if you work in an office, take your one-on-one meetings to go. Walking together enhances team bonding, and you may even come up with better ideas. Research shows walking boosts creativity and enhances mental acuity (1, 2Trusted Source, 3Trusted Source). 3. Lunge it up I do

this a lot, and I get funny looks sometimes, but hey — I'm a busy woman, and my time is precious! When you're shopping, try walking lunges down the supermarket aisles while holding onto the cart. The cart offers a good balance point, and you can get about 10–20 lunges in a single pass, depending on how long your supermarket's aisles are. Go for it, it's surprisingly fun! 4. Sit on an exercise ball Swap out your office chair for a stability ball. This can help with back pain and help improve posture, and while sitting on the ball, you can do some gentle mobility stretches for your neck, pelvis, and spine. Try a hula-hoop motion and tucking and untuck your pelvis to help fire up your core stabilizers. If you want to add in some abdominal work, you can also try seated marches or other exercises on the ball — all while sitting at your desk! 5. Park far away While we need to be safe and alert to our surroundings, if you're in a safe and well-lit area, consider parking further from the entrance of wherever you're going. Adding in a few minutes of walking time here and there adds up over time

and can increase your daily step count! 6. Have more sex Yup, you're welcome. Some older research states that sex burns calories at a rate of about 3.1 calories per minute for women and about 4.2 calories for men (4Trusted Source). So although it's not the same as a vigorous jog, you can (for sure) work up a sweat during sex. Have fun, try new positions and techniques, and bond with your partner all while moving more.

7. Foster a pet Our local shelter and other adoption agencies are always looking for volunteers to help. Take the family to the shelter and volunteer to take a few dogs for a walk. You get to increase your time outside, help a dog and your community, teach your kids about caring for others, and spend some quality family time being active and moving your body. It's a win-win-win for all involved. 8. Have a dance party Clear the furniture from the room and put on some tunes. You can do this while cooking dinner, folding laundry, or vacuuming. Dancing is a fabulous way to burn calories and work on your balance and coordination. Plus, you can make it a game or contest

with your kids. They need to learn about 80s rock, right? Put on some ACDC (or whatever makes you tap your feet) and get shakin'.

9. Switch up your game night During your next family game night, swap out cards or board games for active games. Here's a list to jog your memory: hide and seek, kick the can, scavenger hunts, Twister, freeze dance, potato sack races, pin the tail on the donkey, musical chairs, hopscotch, jump rope, hula hoop contests, limbo... the games you once played as a kid are just as fun to play now. Games like these can be played with people of any age, as well as indoors or outdoors. My family has a blast playing Pin the Tail on the Donkey and Freeze Frame Dance Party, and we all are sweaty and tired afterward. 10. Exercise or stretch during TV time I know this goes beyond all tenets of "binge and chill," but hear me out. Walk on the treadmill, use a stationary bike, stretch on the floor, use weights for upper- and full-body strengthening, or do Pilates during your next Netflix sesh. If you watch a 30-minute show and move the whole time, that's 30 minutes of exercise

you didn't have before! You can even limit it to when the commercials come on if that feels like a good place to start. Keep your exercise stuff near your "binge-watching" place, and do some bodyweight exercises or even foam rolling during your show.

Just a few reps of bicep curls, tricep presses, or arm raises with light hand weights will make a huge difference in your arm strength, posture, and well-being. This is especially true for women, who are at a higher risk of osteoporosis. Incorporate weight training into your routine to keep your bones healthy and strong (5Trusted Source). The bottom line I hope these ideas will motivate and inspire you to get up and move a bit more throughout your day. I know how difficult it is to maintain a good routine. It can seem overwhelming when you first start to exercise, but trying a few of these things will help. Start small by adding in a few lunges here and there, a walking meeting once a week, or stairs a few times, and before you know it, you'll be movin' and groovin' much more than you were before.

## Sports

# Drua magic – Ruggers stun Crusaders in historic victory

The Swire Shipping Fijian Drua created the biggest upset in Super Rugby history since the competition started in 1996 by beating the champion Crusaders at Churchill Park in Lautoka yesterday. The 25-24 win on a hot humid Saturday afternoon was a script from the David and Goliath story – a second-year Shop N Save Super Rugby team beat the 11-time champions. Drua coach Mick Byrne put it down to the belief of the players to topple teams that have stamped their mark in the competition. “(It) shows the growth that we’ve had over the last 12 months, our ability to absorb, come again and then win the game. So I’m really proud of the way they played,” Byrne said. Crusaders coach Scott Robinson says teams will now start to take notice of the Drua. “I think a few people will be looking at this fixture when they get it,” he said. “There’ll be a new respect for the Drua.”



**On debut, Eroni "The Sledgehammer" Sau has been voted by YOU as Round 3's Fiji Village Fan Player of the Match.**



Sports

# Jon Rahm wins The Genesis Invitational

Jon Rahm wins The Genesis Invitational, earning his 10th PGA TOUR title and third of the season and returns to No. 1 in the Official World Golf Ranking and extends his lead in the FedExCup standings to 426 points. Rahm records the most wins on TOUR in California since the start of the 2016-17 season (5) Becomes the first player to reach three TOUR wins in calendar year before March 1st (since 1960) since

Johnny Miller in 1975 (WM Phoenix Open, Tucson Open, The American Express)

“I’m having the best season of my life and hopefully I can keep it going,” Rahm said after his victory. 2021 Genesis Invitational winner Max Homa earns first runner-up finish on TOUR and fourth consecutive top-10 at the event. 82-time PGA TOUR winner Tiger Woods finishes T45 in his first TOUR start since the Open

Championship in 2022.

Final Leaderboard Jon Rahm 65-68-65-69—267(-17) Max Homa 64-68-69-68—269(-15) Patrick Cantlay 68-67-68-67—270(-14) Will Zalatoris 69-68-70-64—271(-13) Keith Mitchell 64-69-69-70—272(-12) In search of his seventh PGA TOUR title and fifth in his native state of California, 2021 Genesis Invitational winner Max Homa(2nd/-15) earns fourth consecutive

top-10 at the event(T5/2020, Won/2021, T10/2022, 2nd/2023)•California native Patrick Cantlay (3rd/-14)posts his best finish in seven previous starts at The Genesis Invitational (previous: T4/2018) and earns his second top 10 in his fifth start this season (T2/Shriners Children’s Open) Scottie Scheffler (T12/-8) falls to No.2in the Official World Golf Ranking and Rory McIlroy(T29/-4) to No. 3 following the week• In

first PGA TOUR start since the 2022 Open Championship, 82-time PGA TOUR winner Tiger Woods finishes T45in his 15th start at The Genesis Invitational (best: 2nd/1998, T2/1999); has not finished in the top-10 on TOUR since the 2020 Farmers. Notes was provided by 2023 The Genesis Invitational and PGA TOUR



Sports

# Justin Rose ends four-year drought wins at Pebble Beach AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am



England had not won since Torrey Pines in 2019, when he was No. 1 in the world. He had fallen well out of the top 50. The Tournament was played at Spyglass Hill Golf Course is rated one of the toughest courses in the world from the championship tees, boasting a course rating of 75.5 and a slope rating of 144, MONTEREY PENINSULA COUNTRY CLUB SHORE COURSE The Shore Course is a naturally contoured, gently flowing seaside course playing through coastal grasslands and rolling sand dunes and PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS Since 1919, the exquisite beauty and unique challenge of Pebble Beach Golf Links have thrilled golfers and spectators alike.



Justin Rose with three quick birdies that sent him to a three-shot victory in the wind-delayed AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am on Monday over Todd Brendon and Brandon Wu. Justin went home with 1st prize of \$1,620,000. "An incredible week from start

to finish with so much happening in my favor," Rose said during his post victory Media interview.

By winning he ended a four-year streak without winning and making him eligible for the Masters. The 42-year-old from

The tournament now known as the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am started out in Rancho Sante Fe, California when Bing Crosby invited some friends to play golf, enjoy a clambake, and a raise a little money for charity. Monterey Peninsula Foundation hosted the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. In the last fiscal year, the Foundation donated \$14.5 million to support local nonprofits in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties.



**Sports**

**Rylan Singh**

Rylan Singh, a 16 year old student from St. George's School for Boys, made a commitment and a difference with his hard work. Rylan lead an initiative to collect rugby cleats, uniforms, apparel and mouth guards for the Fiji Rugby team and youth back home. He reached out to some pretty amazing people and the donations poured in. Jason Hartley, former Canada rugby player, responded to Rylan's request to help spread the news. Rylan said, 'Mr. Hartley and Mr. Akiko Tyler were incredibly generous. Rylan grins shyly while reading their messages to him saying how proud they were of him and made him want to continue collecting'. Near the end, Rylan was gifted brand new apparel from JUNKwear apparel owned by Kevin and Anita Sengara, whose mom is also from Fiji. A donation maybe over \$1700 alone. O'Neills Athletic wear sent over bags of shorts, jersey and other items. Welcom-



ing some players from team Fiji to his school, Rylan hung the Fijian flag proudly in the main entrance and played Bula Melaya as they walked in. One of the Fijian players recognized

the song playing and let out a huge "Oye" with a smile. Very well spoken, confident, Rylan definitely showed leadership, compassion, and a heart of gold. The students were treated to a

dance by the Fijian players in the fitness centre and then it was time to load the players up with their items and say BULA Rylan is still being contacted by companies to see how they can get

their product to team Fiji and he will work with someone to get it over to the islands.



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Sports

# FNRL gets \$104,000 sponsorship to host Melanesian Cup



A \$104,000 sponsorship was handed over by the Fiji National Sports Commission to the Fiji National Rugby League today to host the Melanesian Cup.

Chief Executive Officer for the Commission, Peter Mazey

says this tournament will be between Papua New Guinea's top team and Fiji's top team.

Mazey says Melanesia sports have become more important to them, and they realize that Fiji and other Melanesian countries

have set a bar of supporting each other.

Acting CEO of FNRL Don Natabe says they are excited to announce the return of the Melanesian Cup after a lapse of 2 years.

Natabe says this year's Melanesian Cup will be a special one as well as they welcome the Silktails for their round 2 matches against Canterbury Bulldogs Club in Lautoka, and Fiji's top team Western State

Maroons will meet PNG's top team Hela Wigmen.

The games will be held next week Saturday at Churchill Park in Lautoka.

## Roy Krishna's Bengaluru in Finals !



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