



THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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Celebrating of 2 Years of LOVE in Action



Local organizer for Fiji Children's Heart Hospital fundraiser meets Fijian Prime Minister at the 2nd Anniversary Celebration of Children's Heart Hospital in Fiji. Naren Narayan, a resident of Pleasanton California, and one of the organizers behind a fundraising effort for the Fiji Children's Heart Hospital, had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister of Fiji alongside his family. Narayan also acknowledged the contributions of Vinay Nair, another key organizer who played a

vital role in the fundraiser's success. Their collaborative efforts helped raise funds for the important medical facility in Fiji. April 24, 2024 - A fully packed Suva Civic Center saw the public come together to celebrate the lives of our Future Generation, not only for Fiji but for the South Pacific through life changing surgeries performed at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital since the hospital's inauguration on April 24, 2022. What an emotional exper.

MOHAMMED HAKEEM ALWAYS HAD A DEEP PASSION FOR AVIATION



As a child, he would often make the trek from Los Angeles to Fiji aboard a Boeing 747-400. Those trips with his family led him to fall in love with flying, and he quickly knew it was something he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

In 2017, Mohammed took his first step into the realm of air travel and joined Alaska Airlines as a customer service agent (CSA) at San Francisco International Airport. Following a quick promotion, he became a lead CSA across the bay in Oakland, then eventually transitioned to a flight attendant in 2019. But even after attaining two different roles in the airline industry, he still dreamed of becoming a pilot. He wanted to recognize his parents' sacrifices and make them proud by achieving his ambition. As a Fijian American, he also recognized the importance of seeing skilled individuals who looked like him in the captain's chair and wanted to be a part of that change.

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ASHIM OF STOCKTON WAS THE MAN OF THE SHOW WHO WORKED WITH HIS ENTIRE COMMUNITY TO LEAD AND MAKE THIS INTO A SUCCESSFUL EVENT.

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Fiji to commemorate 145th Girmit anniversary

SOME TRADITIONS SHOULD BE KEPT INTACT

AYESHA HALAL CERTIFICATION

POPST BLUE HEAVEN 2.0L

HAPPY FIJI DAY

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SINCE THE SEVENTIES



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FIJIAN GOVERNMENT



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PRESIDENT OF FIJI
WILIAME KATONIVERE



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF FIJI
SIROMI TURAGA



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
PROF. BIMAN PRASAD



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MANOA KAMIKAMICA



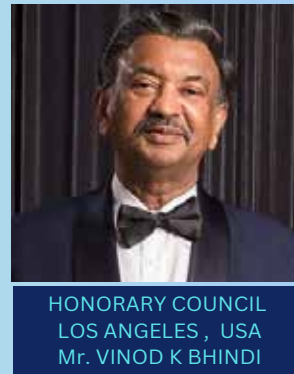
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
VILIAME GAVOKA



FIJI TRADE COMMISSION
NORTH AMERICA
Mr. ALIKA COOPER



HONORARY COUNCIL
SAN FRANCISCO , USA
Mr. JAY SINGH



HONORARY COUNCIL
LOS ANGELES , USA
Mr. VINOD K BHINDI



HONORARY COUNCIL
VANCOUVER CANADA
Mr. BOBBY NAICKER

THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

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

Vinaka – Rocky Buksh

Mothers, prepare to be spoiled



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

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

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



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News

MOHAMMED HAKEEM ALWAYS HAD A DEEP PASSION FOR AVIATION

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" I have always dreamt of becoming a pilot. Growing up, I was told by adults that my dream was too ambitious and that it wasn't practical. But I held onto that dream, and it eventually became a reality for

me," said Mohammed. "Being a part of the industry which I've loved all my life helped me realize that my dream was indeed attainable."

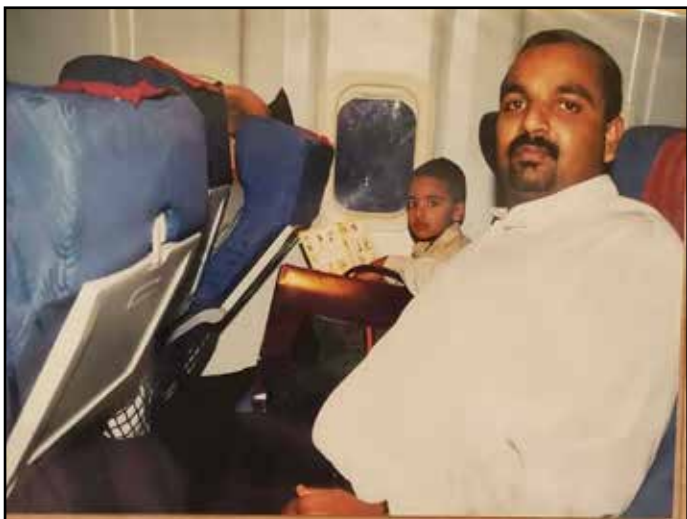
Following some research and a push from a friend, in early 2023, Mohammed applied to

Alaska Airlines' Ascend Academy, a multi-year program with Hillsboro Aero Academy in Hillsboro, Oregon, that takes prospective pilots from zero experience to commercial flight. He is now working toward graduation, where he will tran-

sition into working as a pilot for Horizon Air.

"Trust the process, move at your own pace, and always believe in yourself! You will make mistakes, but you will learn and grow from them. Trusting the process can be grueling espe-

cially when we compare our progress amongst our peers. It is not a race but a journey—one we cannot complete if we do not truly believe in ourselves the entire way."



Fiji News

FHL COMPLETES FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR NEW INVESTMENT BANK TARGETING RESOURCE OWNERS AND MSMES IN FIJI

Fijian Holdings Limited (FHL), in collaboration with the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, has successfully completed a comprehensive feasibility study concerning the establishment of a dedicated Resource Owners' and MSME Investment Fund in Fiji. This initiative, strongly supported by the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), the iTaukei Resource Owners Forum, and the Government, aims to enhance financial inclusivity and economic empowerment for iTaukei resource owners and local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The feasibility study, conducted by Inveva Business Solutions Ltd and partly funded by the government through the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, has determined a robust business case for establishing a bank that caters specifically to the unique needs of resource owners and MSMEs. As a result of the findings, the report amongst others, recommends

transforming Merchant Finance Limited to provide tailored lending facilities to this segment. The Honourable Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts, Mr. Vasu, expressed his satisfaction with the outcomes of the study. "When I assumed office, my primary concern addressed to FHL was about devising ways to lower the barriers for resource owners to access financial services. I am delighted to announce that the feasibility study supports the viability of such an initiative and outlines the strategic steps to implement it effectively," said Minister Vasu. During the handover of the report, Mr. Jaoji Koroi, Group Chief Executive Officer of FHL, highlighted the significance of the Solesolevaki Framework in enabling this important study. Mr. Koroi stated, "FHL is committed to supporting the government's efforts in boosting the economic potential of our resource owners and enhancing



the growth of MSMEs through accessible financial services. This initiative is linked directly to the purpose for the establishment of FHL, which is to accelerate iTaukei's participation in business." Minister Vasu has assured that the key recommendations of the feasibility study will be presented to the Cabinet for further deliberation and ac-

tion. The Report also pointed out that there are areas that the Government needs to address including setting up of a robust credit-enhancement scheme and incubator/accelerator training facilities. Minister Vasu emphasized, "Resource owners now have another viable option in Merchant Finance Ltd. This initiative answers my initial query

to FHL and also paves the way for significant economic advancement for our communities." This development promises to mark a transformative step in the financial landscape of Fiji, fostering greater economic resilience and prosperity among iTaukei communities and entrepreneurs.

LEADERS CALL FOR GREATER ACTION AND COMMITMENT

The Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, H.E. Filipo Tarakinikini joined fellow SIDS leaders and development partners at the Blue Prosperity Leaders Roundtable to deliberate on the strategies required to achieve the protection of at least 30% of the world's ocean by 2030, as well as the recovery of our coastal ecosystems. The roundtable hosted by the Waitt Institute and the U.S. State Department created an opportunity for like-minded ocean leaders to share successes and challenges to marine protection, Marine Spatial Planning, Blue Economy development, and sustainable finance. While delivering the national remarks, H.E. Ambassador Tarakinikini reflected on Fiji's journey towards development of its National Ocean Policy, including the government's efforts in surveying marine ecosystems through the Blue Prosperity Fiji Ocean Science Expedition last year, which was jointly implemented with NGO partners. Ambassador Tarakinikini detailed

"the findings from the expedition will greatly improve our understanding of the current condition of our coral reefs and provide us with the tools to better manage our ocean, and also provide communities, including qoliqoli owners with concrete information to understand what lies below our waters". Ambassador also referenced the proud history of active engagements that Fiji has had in the global arena aimed at protecting and preserving the oceans. "Our leadership in the development of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and having been the first country to sign and ratify it in 1982 was the beginnings of our journey in global ocean governance" stated Ambassador. While acknowledging that climate change poses significant threats to the health of our oceans, he underscored, that the ocean has the largest potential for economic growth for maritime states like Fiji. Ambassador Tarakinikini also emphasized the issues of dealing with fragmented financing architec-

tures and scaling ocean related initiatives as a result of limited science and robust governance frameworks. He also admitted the need to augment the capacity to engage with the present enthusiasm of global partners to help the Pacific. Adding to the call for greater ambition, the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Hon. Secretary John Kerry stated, "When we protect and restore the oceans, we're preserving waters that are literally essential for life on earth". Secretary Kerry indicated that the Our Ocean Conference movement was a galvanizing force for ambition. "Today, gov-

ernments, philanthropies, storytellers, and NGOs are doing more than ever before, proven by 2,100 pledges valued at \$128 billion. But there's no time to rest because the scale and scope of the challenge has grown, and our commitment must keep growing just to meet the moment", said Secretary Kerry. Mr. Ted Waitt, Founder & Chairman of the Waitt Institute and Waitt Foundation also asserted that the ocean continues to face compounding threats as 2030 draws near. He called upon leaders to step-up, be bold and take urgent actions to implement marine protection through designation

and enforcement. Mr. Waitt mentioned "we all need to work together to make these commitments a reality." Contributions were also made by representatives from National Geographic Pristine Seas, Oceano Azul Foundation, Blue Nature Alliance, Oceans 5, Dynamic Planet, Conservation International, and youth delegates from the Federated States of Micronesia and Portugal. H.E. Tarakinikini was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change Dr. Sivendra Michael, and Technical Advisor, Mr. Andrew Paris.



Fiji to commemorate 145th Girit anniversary

Fiji will commemorate the 145th anniversary of the arrival of Girit indentured laborers from India with a three-day celebration from May 11th to 13th. The official event will

be held at the Lautoka Girit Multicultural Centre, with additional commemorations taking place in Labasa on May 11th. The People's Coalition Cabinet made the decision during

its sixth meeting.

It says this year's theme, "Journey of Girit Descendants in Building a New Fiji," reflects the government's commitment to social cohesion and

recognizing the contributions of diverse ethnic communities to Fiji's development. A dedicated subcommittee will oversee the organization and execution of all official activities and events.

Their responsibility is to ensure the celebrations stay true to the spirit of Girit Day while operating within the allocated budget.



Sharma Overcomes All Odds to Successfully Graduate

Shivneel Sharma, aged 25, overcame significant challenges stemming from his hearing and speech impairments to achieve a remarkable milestone: earning his degree in Professional Accounting from the University of the South Pacific. Despite encountering numerous hurdles along the way, Sharma's determination, coupled with unwavering support from his friends, university resources, and, most notably, his parents, propelled him to success. Reflecting on his university journey, Sharma acknowledges the pivotal role his friends played in his achievements, emphasizing their indispensable support. He credits the University of the

South Pacific for its exceptional accommodation of his needs, particularly highlighting the Disability Resource Center's provision of a sign language interpreter, which greatly facilitated his participation in classes.

Expressing heartfelt gratitude towards his parents, Sharma recognizes their unwavering support throughout his life. Their constant encouragement and willingness to provide whatever assistance he required significantly contributed to his academic accomplishments.

Beyond his personal triumphs, Sharma is a passionate advocate for inclusivity and against discrimination. Through

his internship at APTC, he actively promotes the teaching of sign language and fosters environments that embrace diversity. Addressing businesses and stakeholders, Sharma vehemently denounces discriminatory practices and urges them to prioritize inclusivity, not only as a moral imperative but also as a means to enhance their own experiences and perspectives.

In Shivneel Sharma's journey, we witness the power of resilience, friendship, and familial support, serving as a testament to the potential for individuals with disabilities to thrive when given the opportunity and necessary resources.



Fiji News

DPM Kamikamica calls for International Co-operative Alliance office in Fiji

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-Operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, Manoa Kamikamica aims to forge new partnerships and has requested the International Co-operative Alliance Asia Pacific to establish an office in the Pacific, preferably in Fiji.

While officiating at the 11th International Co-operative Alliance Ministerial Conference in Jordan, the Deputy PM says as policymakers, it is their responsibility to create an enabling policy and regulatory environment that is conducive to cooperative development. Kamikamica says it is great to be participating in the Ministerial Conference for the first time, given the significance the Fiji Government places on Co-operative development.

He says the conference will provide an opportunity for co-



operatives and Governments to discuss current and emerging issues and set a common agenda

towards the establishment of new forms of cooperation between Governments and coop-

eratives.

He urges the leaders that due to Fiji's strategic location as the

regional hub, the committee needs to establish an office in the Pacific.

Telecom Fiji advances fibre optics project in Vanua Levu

Telecom Fiji Limited celebrated the expansion of fibre optic cables between Seaqaqa and Savusavu phase 2 that aims to enhance connectivity and support economic growth in Fiji. While officiating at the groundbreaking ceremony Telecom Fiji Limited CEO Charles Goundar says the project signifies their commitment to advancing connectivity across the region. He says it is a significant milestone in their journey towards building a more connecting nation as they have completed the first phase of this project from Labasa to Seaqaqa.

Goundar says the deployment of Telecom's underground fibre optic infrastructure between Seaqaqa and Savusavu, is a plan to build a more resilient communication backbone for the Northern Division. He says the segment is about 90km long representing more than just physical infrastructure and symbolises a permanent and long-term solution to the growing demand for data in the main commercial center in Vanua Levu. Goundar further says after the completion of this project, it will grant them access to submarine cable



capacities already available at Savusavu Cable Landing Station, and this extension aligns with the government's plan to expand internet and data access in the Northern Division. He adds this will allow them to roll

out services to their customers directly and more efficiently and enhance the quality of service. Commissioner Northern Uraia Rainima says the extension of fibre optic cables between Seaqaqa and Savusavu

is a commendable initiative that will greatly benefit the Northern region.

He says enhanced connectivity is essential for driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and improving ac-

cess to essential services. He acknowledges Telecom Fiji for their commitment to bridging the digital divide and look forward to the positive impact this project will have on our communities.

Fiji News

High Commission of India to Fiji donates \$282,481 worth of medical consignment for children



More than 1,400 cancer cases are diagnosed in Fiji each year – Min for Health

The cases of cancer continue to increase in Fiji as more than 1,400 cases of cancer are diagnosed in Fiji each year and it remains one of the top five causes of death. This was revealed by the Minister for Health Doctor Atonio Lalabalavu during the Bushells Fiji's Biggest Morning Tea held at the Motibhai Company this morning. Dr Lalabalavu says cancer is a Non-communicable disease and affects all ages, groups, children and the elderly.

He says the common types of cancers are Prostate, Liver, Lung cancer, Leukemia, Breast, Cervical, Uterus, and Thyroid cancers. The Minister says breast cancer is the common cancer in Fiji which affects both males and females and makes up to 20 percent of all cancers in Fiji. He also says breast cancer was estimated to be responsible for 2.43% of all deaths in 2020. Dr Lalabalavu says for breast cancer, early diagnosis is crucial as we must self-examine by symptoms such as abnormal painless lump or thickening in

the breast, alterations in size, shape or skin, change in nipple appearance and nipple discharge. However, the Minister says this can be treated through surgery, chemotherapy, and radiology.

He urges everyone to be aware, get medical checks regularly, and seek medical advice as treatment for cancer is early diagnosis and early treatment. Meanwhile, Motibhai Group Marketing and Business Development Manager Abraham Gomes says looking at the alarming statistics on deaths caused by NCDs, fundraising events as such are the longest-running and biggest cancer fundraising initiative in the country which plays an important role in spreading cancer awareness, advocacy and patient support. He says while NCDs are responsible for eighty percent of the deaths in the country, cancer is the third largest killer. While sharing similar sentiments, Fiji Cancer Society CEO Belinda Chan says it is a sad reality that most Fijian families are being



impacted by cancer either directly or indirectly at some stage in life. She says the impact includes financial and emotional stress on patients, caregivers, children, and families while disrupting home life as even after treatment, patients would be subjected to adapt to the "new

normal". Chan says that holding a Bushells Fiji's Biggest Morning Tea fundraiser helps to reach out to more Fijians with cancer awareness, advocacy and patient support as they receive no direct government funding and everything they do is possible through the generosity of

people and organisations. The CEO says that cases of cancer are increasing each year as in 2022 there were 470 new cases reported, 503 cases reported last year and this year there have been 78 and 23 new cases in the Central and Northern Divisions respectively.

Fiji News

Average of 6 women killed every year for the past 10 years in Fiji - Ali

An average of 6 women have been killed every year for the past 10 years in Fiji, and this is from ongoing cases of domestic violence. This has been revealed by Fiji Women's Crisis Centre Coordinator Shamima Ali after a research on domestic violence in the country. She says these are just the murders of women which are documented either by the media or police apart from the cases that we only hear about and are not reported.

Ali says there is no understanding of the actual numbers but femicide or the murder of women is a growing concern in Fiji, and it needs to be addressed urgently. Ali says men who use violence are our neighbours, our family members, our partners – and we must start treating this as a systemic problem, instead of seeing this as an issue caused by a few bad men. Ali says Fiji has one of the highest rates of domestic violence where 64 percent of women go through sexual, physical, and emotional violence and says this is a gross violation of women's human rights.

Ali mentioned this following the recent case of the murder that occurred at an apartment complex along Robertson Road



in Suva last Thursday where a 27-year-old man allegedly stabbed his 25-year-old wife to death. Ali is making a call that there is a need to examine male behaviour and the society's responsibility. She says FWCC is shocked about the recent incident and asks how many more women need to die in this way for us all as Fijians to say enough is enough and

all get on the same page and recognise and agree that patriarchy embedded in society is the cause of violence against women and girls.

She says we need to stop treating gender equality and gender discrimination as "sensitive" issues and pussyfooting around leaders especially male leaders so that they don't get offended. Ali says there is

a National Prevention Plan, but it will take time to take effect, especially when a lot of effort is being put into getting various community settings to agree to the concept of equality between men and women, respecting women's and girls' human rights.

She further says using religion and culture as excuses for men's terrible behaviour and

violence towards women and girls needs to stop and prevention can start within our own homes and wherever we are. If you know of anyone who is undergoing domestic violence, please encourage them to seek help by calling the National Domestic Violence toll-free helpline 1560 which is available on any network for 24 hours.

Fiji's first ever automatic rollover car wash opens in Nadi

Fiji's first-ever automatic rollover car wash, which is an eco-friendly and utilizes water recycling systems and biodegradable wash chemicals has been launched by TotalEnergies in Namaka, Nadi.

TotalEnergies Managing Director Dennis Michael Cuaycong says they have incorporated modern amenities to ensure customer visits are smooth, efficient, and enjoyable. Cuaycong says the station will cater to their customers' needs and offer convenience for the greater Nadi, Lautoka, and Western parts of the country. They have the provision of the first EV charging point in the TotalEnergies Fiji network, and Cuaycong says this will prepare them for the future to embrace the exciting possibilities of electric vehicles in Fiji.

He says the station is solarized with 60 photovoltaic panels allowing their customers to



make sustainable choices of filling up with the sunlight. Cuaycong indicated that plans are in

place to install a fast direct EV charger, making it the first of its kind within the TotalEnergies

Network.

He reiterates that they are committed to exceeding cus-

tomers' expectations and contributing to a more sustainable future for Fiji.

Fiji News

6 people arrested in separate drug raids around Viti Levu and Vanua Levu

Joint raids conducted by the Fiji Detector Dog Unit over the weekend led to the arrest of six men in separate drug raids in Lami, Nadi and Labasa. Assistant Commissioner of Police – Operations (ACP) Livai Driu says the first raid was conducted in Suvavou which led to the arrest of a 53-year-old man after he was found with white crystal substances believed to be methamphetamine and more than \$1300 believed to be from proceeds of crime. He says the second raid was conducted in Lami which led to the arrest of a 29-year-old

man following the discovery of white crystal substances believed to be methamphetamine. ACP Driu says three men were arrested along Sanasana Road in Nadi following the discovery of white substances believed to be methamphetamine and green drugs believed to be marijuana. He says a 29-year-old man was arrested in Nabekavu, Labasa for a case of alleged unlawful cultivation of illicit drugs following the discovery of plants believed to be marijuana. ACP Driu confirms that all seized substances have been sent for analysis.



Media must be extra vigilant in upholding its responsibilities as the people's watchdog - Chaudhry

The media must be extra vigilant in upholding its responsibilities as the people's watchdog. Those are the words of former Prime Minister and Fiji Labour Party Leader, Mahendra Chaudhry as we observe World Media Freedom Day today. Chaudhry says this may be an opportune time to remember that while an unfettered media is vital for the proper functioning of a democratic society, this freedom comes with onerous responsibilities. He says in a

democratic society, it plays the crucial role of a watchdog by keeping governments accountable, and fearlessly upholding the public's right to know. Chaudhry says this is the yardstick by which to judge the effectiveness of any media organisation.

He says let us not just pay lip service to this important freedom, and our media organisations need to look critically at their performance and make an honest assessment of

how effectively and honestly they are meeting their role as the people's watchdog. The Labour Leader says for 14 years the Fiji media industry suffered under draconian laws decreed or enacted by the Bainimarama administration. Chaudhry says the media operated under constant fear and threat of imprisonment or hefty fines. He says this often meant compromising on free, fair and independent reporting, and standards of journalism declined as a result. The former

Prime Minister says having been through such a traumatic experience over 14 years, we ought to cherish and exercise our new-found freedom in the best interests of journalistic ethics.

He says it may take years to rebuild journalistic skills lost as a result of these repressive years. Chaudhry says this is all too evident in the type of coverage we are still getting from our news media – almost 70 percent of all content tend to be either

government releases, coverage of workshops and conferences or events staged by diplomatic missions.

He says there is a notable lack of investigative and in-depth journalism. Chaudhry also questions how zealously are we guarding the media code of ethics which requires honest, balanced and impartial news coverage at all times. He also asks are commercial interests being allowed to dictate a partisan approach to news coverage.



Fiji News

Radrodro's return is a testament to his exemplary leadership – FTU General Secretary

Fiji Teachers Union General Secretary, Muniappa Goundar says Aseri Radrodro's timely return to the Minister for Education's position is a testament to his unparalleled dedication, exemplary leadership, and unwavering commitment to the advancement of education in our beloved nation. While congratulating Radrodro, Goundar says Radrodro's previous tenure showcased an unparalleled dedication to the enhancement of our educational system, characterized by a steadfast pursuit of excellence and innovation. He adds under his astute guidance, the Ministry of Education witnessed a remarkable trajectory of progress, marked by transformative initiatives and substantial improvements in various facets of education. Goundar says as the General Secretary of FTU, he has had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the positive impact of Radrodro's visionary leadership on their esteemed fraternity of educators. He says Radrodro's advocacy for better terms and conditions



for teachers resonates deeply with their collective aspirations, and they eagerly anticipate the opportunity to collaborate with him once again to actualize their noble objectives. The General Secretary says he wishes to express their profound gratitude

to the Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka for his discerning decision to reinstate Radrodro to this pivotal role. He says Radrodro's reinstatement not only reaffirms the government's commitment to fostering excellence in education but also heralds a new

era of progress and prosperity for the educational landscape. Goundar says as they embark on this journey together, lets remain steadfast in their resolve to elevate the status of education, empower educators, and nurture the intellectual capital of

the nation. He says Radrodro's visionary leadership, coupled with the collective efforts of the Fiji Teachers Union, promises to mitigate the challenges faced by the educators and pave the way for a brighter future for generations to come.

Seabourn Pursuit Cruise returns to Fiji after 16 years

The Seabourn Pursuit Cruise Liner has returned to Yasawa-i-rara village after 16 years with 210 tourists - bringing joy and economic opportunities to the local community. The tranquil shores of Yasawa-i-rara Village were bustling with excitement on Friday as the majestic cruise liner berthed in the village. In a statement by iTaukei Trust Fund Board, the long-awaited arrival is a new era of prosperity and opportunity for the local community, whose primary livelihood, until now, had been fishing. They say with the village's economy is heavily reliant on fishing conducted by their men and the return of the cruise liner opens up a myriad of new possibilities for sustainable economic growth and development. The iTaukei Trust Fund Board in collaboration with the Australian Government's Market Development Facility had been diligently working with the villagers in the weeks leading up, providing them with comprehensive training in essential



skills to ensure they are well-prepared to welcome and cater to the needs of the cruise liner guests. They say the training programs included tour guiding, first aid and CPR, food prepara-

tion skills, equipping the villagers with the necessary expertise to offer an unforgettable and authentic experience to visitors. 62-year-old Ikineshi Lewaseni of the village Women's Group says

it is a momentous occasion for their village as it not only brings economic opportunities but also fosters cultural exchange and mutual understanding between the villagers and visitors from

around the world. Lewaseni is grateful for the support in preparing the villagers for this moment as they look forward to welcoming more of cruise ships in the coming months.

Fiji News

Vodafone enables international money transfer from Cook Islands to Fiji through M-PAiSA

Great news for Fijians who have their loved ones in the Cook Islands as they can now send and receive money through the Vodafone M-PAiSA platform. The service has been enabled by integrating the E-Moni Mobile Wallet in the Cook Islands and M-PAiSA in Fiji, and this will make it very easy for over 3,000 Fijians who are working in the Cook Islands mostly in the tourism sector, to be able to send money to their loved ones back home in Fiji. Head of Vodafone eCommerce and Digital Financial Services Shailendra Prasad says Vodafone Cook Islands, which is part of the ATH Group is the E-Moni platform provider in the Cook Islands, and it has been possible for the two entities to be able to collaborate to make this service available for both their customers. He says last year, Vodafone enabled cross-border remittance between Vanuatu and Fiji and vice-versa by integrating M-VATU and M-PAiSA mobile money platforms.

Prasad says with the addition of the Cook Islands to Fiji's



international money transfer service, another market where Vodafone is a mobile network and mobile money operator has been connected as part of interconnecting the regional markets for cross-border remittances. He adds Vodafone Fiji is pleased

to add the Cook Islands to the growing list of countries from where remittances can be received directly into M-PAiSA. He says M-PAiSA currently brings into Fiji around \$48 million every month in personal remittances, and the addition

of the Cook Islands will further boost IMT inwards. Vodafone Cook Islands CEO Phillip Henderson says they are proud to introduce this service, further solidifying their dedication to providing solutions that meet the evolving needs of our com-

munity.

Vodafone Fiji operates its award-winning M-PAiSA platform as M-Vatu in Vanuatu, M-Tala in Samoa, E-Moni in the Cook Islands and M-PAiSA in Kiribati.

FRU apologizes for Fijiana 7s treatment in Sydney

The Fiji Rugby Union has made a public apology to the management of the Fiji Airways Fijiana 7s side for staying outside Sydney Airport for four hours during their travel from Fiji to Dubai. Fiji Rugby Football Union Trust Board Interim Chair, Peter Mazey says the welfare, safety and well-being of all the players and staff is very important and they don't take that lightly.

He says they let the Fijiana 7s team down. Mazey also confirmed that the photos of the girls sleeping on the benches that is being widely circulated, are true. He says the men's team had pre-booked their accommodation but when Fijiana 7s coach Saiasi Fuli tried to get rooms in nearby hotels on arrival in Sydney, none were available. He adds that the rooms should have been pre-booked like the men's team because it was known before hand. The Chair says as it is usual practice, all travel and layover accommodation are organized by the

World Rugby HSBC Tournament team and apparently, they were not aware of Sydney Airport closing at 11pm, hence they didn't book accommodation in Sydney. He says they thought it was a normal layover and the team could rest between flights within the airport. Mazey says Emirates Airlines, the sponsors of the Dubai 7s, ensured that all teams could have a well-earned rest and sleep on the 15-hour flight from Sydney to Dubai as they upgraded the Fijiana 7s team and the staff to Business Class. He adds the FRU General Manager High-Performance and the Women's High-Performance have started meeting with the team managers prior to them leaving for all tournaments. He further adds that this will ensure the team has everything covered, and managers are now communicating and working together so there is no doubling up and everyone is supporting each other. Mazey also assured everyone that this incident will not happen again.



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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 expanses 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 i-Taukei Affairs Ifereimi Vasu, the Home Affairs Permanent Secretary Mason Smith, and leaders from the private sectors, business communities, academia and civil society organisations



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.





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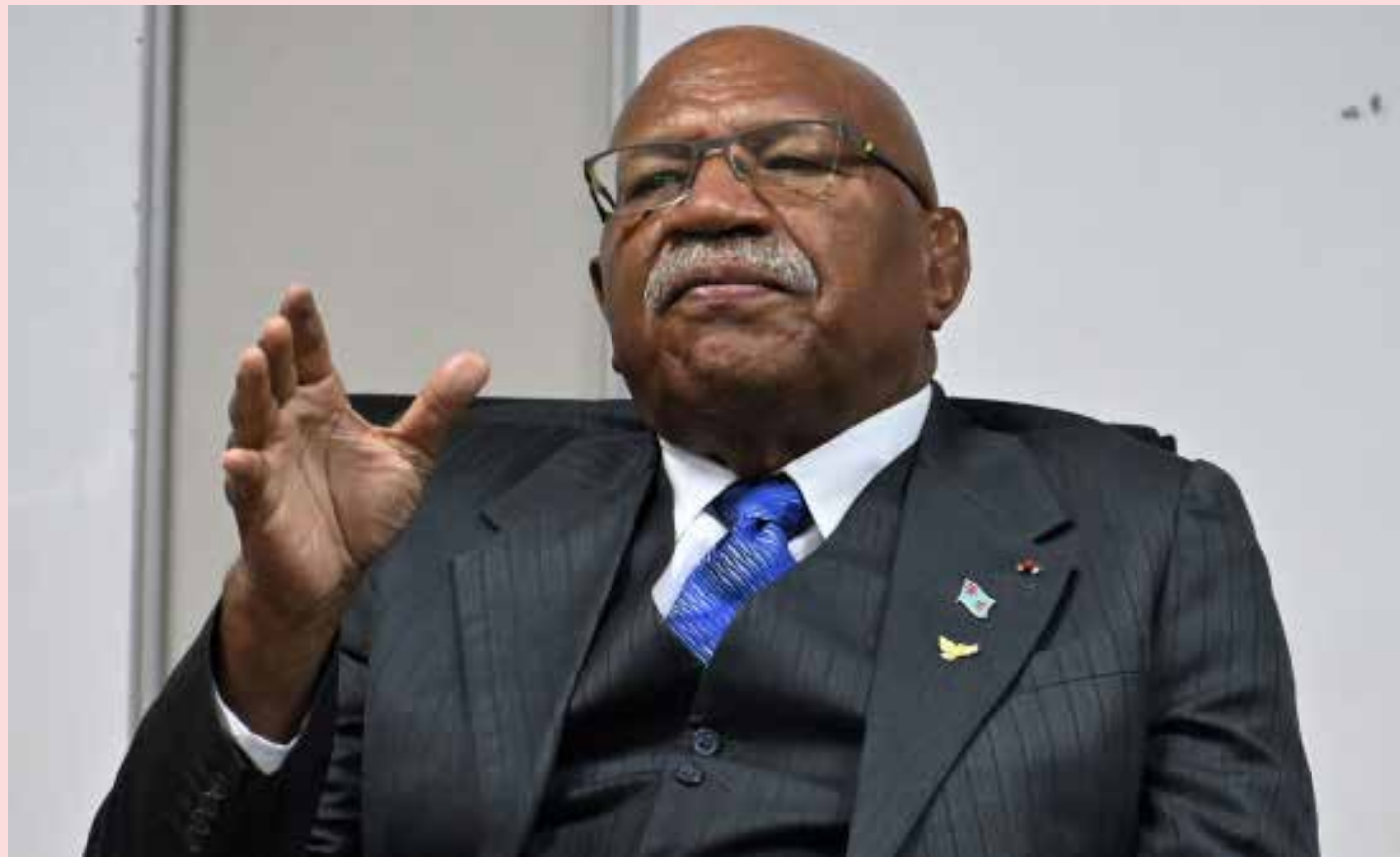
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Fiji News

COC advises President on SoE, Fiji Corrections Commissioner and Auditor General appointment

The Constitutional Offices Commission has resolved to advise the President regarding the appointments for the positions of Supervisor of Elections, Commissioner of the Fiji Corrections Service, and the Auditor General. The Commission held their meeting yesterday. Following advice from an independent committee pursuant to section 136(1) of the Constitution, the Commission has resolved to advise the President on remuneration and allowances of these officers. They say this advice will be forwarded shortly to the President. The Commission also addressed procedural matters, including the adoption of draft Standard Operating Procedures as a live document. The Commission says their meeting signifies its continued commitment to ensuring transparent and efficient processes in fulfilling its responsibilities.



Work Health and Safety Institute to be revived

Fiji Work Health and Safety Institute is being revived to open doors of opportunity for health and safety professionals in Fiji. NTPC Manager Productivity and Innovation, Amrish Narayan made the announcement during the 2024 Fiji Occupational Health and Safety Conference which was hosted by Fiji National University's National Training and Productivity Centre. Narayan says they will work closely with the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management to get their team membership and certification to kick-start the local institution and open doors of opportunity for health and safety professionals in Fiji. The third Fiji OHS Conference, which happened after a lapse of four years, on the theme "Impact of Climate Change on OHS," brought together 150 delegates, experts, practitioners, and stakeholders from various sectors. Narayan commended the impactful presentations by the guest speakers at the conference. He says the presentations by the different speakers were very impactful, and he is sure the 150 participants will have at least one action item and takeaway for themselves and their organ-

isations. Fire and Safety Australia Founder and CEO, Steve McLeod commended FNU for taking the lead role as part of academia to create awareness on emerging issues related to workplace health and safety. He says they have partnered with FNU for more than 10 years in the delivery of Occupational Health and Safety training for Certificate IV and Diploma of Occupational Health and Safety. McLeod acknowledged FNU

for taking the lead role as part of academia to create awareness on the emerging issues related to workplace health and safety. FNU Pro-Vice-Chancellor TVET, Dr Isimeli Tagicakiverata says the conference serves as a platform for collaboration, learning, and knowledge exchange. He says it is an opportunity for them to harness the collective wisdom and expertise present to inspire action, drive change, and make meaningful

strides towards creating safer and healthier workplaces for all. The guest speakers at the conference, held at the Peal Resort, Pacific Harbour last week, included Ministry of Health and Medical Services Head of Wellness, Dr Devina Nand, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Principal Environment Officer, Senivasa Waqairamasi, Fire and Safety Australia Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Steve McLeod, Fiji Hotel and

Tourism Association Chief Executive Officer, Fantasha Lockington, New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (NZISM) Senior Leader, Deborah Cameron, ILO Office International Labour Standards and Labour Law Specialist, Anna Olsen, and Fiji Public Service Association General Secretary, Judith Kotalavu. The next Fiji OHS Conference is scheduled for April 25th, 2025.



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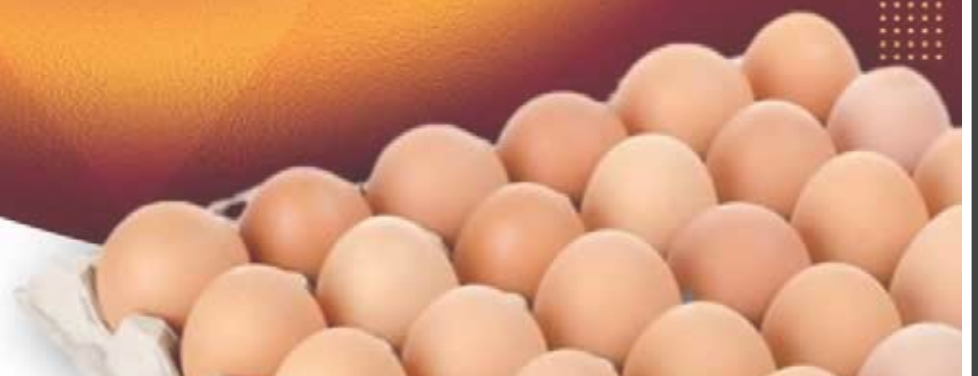
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Food

Indian Style Kachumber Salad Recipe

Indian Style Kachumber Salad Recipe

Total Time: 10 min

Prep Time : 05 min

Cook Time : 05 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 Onion (diced)
2. 1 tomato (diced)
3. 1 cucumber (diced)
4. 2 green chillis
5. 1 fresh lemon
6. 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
7. fresh coriander leaves, chopped
8. 1/2 tsp black pepper and red chili powder
9. Salt as per taste

How to

1. Begin this recipe by washing all the vegetable.
2. Finely chop onion, tomatoes, cucumber, fresh coriander and chillis.
3. Ensure to remove tomato seeds before adding it into the bowl.



4. Take a medium size bowl, and add the chopped veggies.
5. Now add pomegranate, salt, black pepper, and red chili powder.
6. Squeeze in fresh lemon juice and mix the ingredients well.
7. Your 10-minute kachumber salad is ready to eat .

Jowar Upma Recipe

Jowar Upma Recipe

Total Time: 15 min

Prep Time : 05 min

Cook Time : 10 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 Cups jowar
2. 1 tsp mustard seeds
3. 1 tsp urad dal
4. 1 Onion, finely chopped
5. 1/4 cup boiled green peas
6. 2 green chillies (slit or chopped)
7. Pinch of asafoetida (heeng)
8. 1 inch ginger , finely chopped
9. Coriander leaves (for garnish)
10. 6 curry leaves
11. 1 tbsp Lemon juice
12. Salt to taste
13. 2 tbsp oil

How to

1. Rinse and soak jowar overnight (or for around 8 hours). Later, drain the water from it and cook it in a pressure cooker along with 2-3 cups of water and salt. After 3 whistles, turn off the heat and allow the pressure to get released on its own.
2. In a kadhai, heat oil and add mustard seeds. Once the seeds crackle, add urad

dal, chopped green chillies, curry leaves, asafoetida, and ginger. Stir-fry lightly.

3. Add the chopped onion and continue to saute till it turns

translucent.

4. Add green peas and other veggies of your choice such as carrot and capsicum (should be finely chopped).

Add salt to taste, mix well and cover with a lid for a few minutes.

5. Later, add the cooked jowar and saute for around

3 minutes.

6. Squeeze a little lemon juice on top, garnish with coriander leaves and serve hot.



Food

Millet Curd Rice Recipe

Millet Curd Rice

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 tbsps onion, chopped
 8. 3 tbsps capsicum
 9. 2 tbsps coriander leaves, chopped
 10. to taste salt
- For tempering:**
11. 2 1/2 tsp Oil
 12. 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 tbsps 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 check-



ing 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 capsicum. 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!

Green Moong Cutlet Recipe

Green Moong Cutlet

Total Time: 30 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 20 min

Serves: 3 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 Cup green moong, soaked
2. 1 cup poha | onion, finely chopped
3. 4 green chillies, finely chopped
4. 1-inch ginger, finely chopped
5. 1/2 cup coriander leaves, finely chopped
6. 2 tbsps besan
7. 1 tsp jeera (cumin) powder
8. 1 tsp dhania (coriander) powder
9. 1 tsp red chilli powder
10. Salt to taste
11. Oil for pan-frying

How to

1. Soak the green moong dal (mung beans) overnight or for 5-6 hours. Drain the water and coarsely grind the moong to form a thick paste.
2. Wash the poha once under

running water and drain. Keep aside.

3. Roast the besan on low flame until it turns light brown and emits aroma.

4. In a large bowl, mix the green moong paste, poha, besan, onion, chillies, ginger and coriander.

5. Next, add the masala pow-

ders mentioned above. Combine all the ingredients well. Taste to adjust salt.

6. Form circular shapes (like patties or tikkis) of the

mixture and pan-fry them on both sides on medium flame. Serve the cutlets hot with green chutney and/or ketchup.



World News

Could the answer to 100% renewable energy in Dominica be under the ground?

A small but growing number of countries are well on their way to producing all of their electricity from renewable sources. Dominica, in the eastern Caribbean, is planning to join these pioneers and become the first small island developing State (SIDS) to stop using fossil fuels for energy generation. It's called geothermal energy, and it's an exciting prospect for the country. Geothermal has none of the intermittency issues of wind and solar – in other words, it provides stable energy day and night – and doesn't take up any surface real estate, keeping the Roseau Valley in its pristine state. Most SIDS are dependent on imported fossil fuels for electricity generation and transport, putting a major strain on their resources and jeopardising their energy security by exposing them to the vagaries of the international fuel markets. Dominica, however, has a powerful clean power source lying in wait below the Roseau Valley, a popular tourist destination a short drive from the capital, Roseau, that is clean, completely renewable and could provide so much energy that the government could even sell excess electricity to neighbouring islands. A high pressure project Pipes are drilled deep underground until they hit a "geothermal reservoir", an accumulation of water warmed by the Earth's subter-



anean heat to approximately 250° Celsius. Because Dominica lies atop a volcanic ridge, this heat is relatively close to the surface. When the pipes reach the reservoir, the high pressure drives it to the surface, where it is converted to steam to drive turbines that produce electricity. "We've found an excellent geothermal reservoir in Roseau Valley, around a thousand metres down," said Fred John, the head of the government-owned Dominica Geothermal Development Corporation. "We've built two wells – one to bring up the hot water and another to return it back down to the reservoir – so it's a closed loop system. We have chosen the technology that is the most environmentally friendly and best in class." The

Government of Dominica has been convinced for decades that geothermal could be transformative for livelihoods, slashing the cost of electricity in a country which is currently reliant primarily on expensive imported diesel as a power source and supplemented by hydropower and a small amount of wind and solar. A transformation decades in the making "Dominica has been pursuing this energy source as long ago as 1969," says Vince Henderson, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business, Trade and Energy. "Studies carried out with the assistance of the United Nations determined that we have the potential to power the island. We've had the ambition to realise that potential since 1974, when we created

the Geothermal Development Corporation." It took the government almost four decades to secure the funding needed to drill test wells, which confirmed that geothermal would be commercially viable, allowing them to sell to neighbouring Martinique and Guadeloupe. "Developing geothermal power is very expensive, particularly for remote island States. We were fortunate because we received a combination of grants and concessional loans in order to get to where we are," said Mr. Henderson, pointing to funding that has come from a variety of sources, including the Caribbean Development Bank, American Development Bank and the World Bank as well as the governments of New Zea-

land, United Kingdom and the United States. "However," he added, "if the international community is serious, there has to be some upfront investment by way of grant funding." The Government of Dominica is confident that geothermal energy from the plant could be powering the island within the next two years, a small time to wait given the decades-long struggle to get the project off the ground. "I think this gives the country a real shot to transform itself economically," Mr. John said. "The first step will be cheaper electricity for everybody, which will make a huge difference. But then we go on to sell it, bringing revenue to Dominica and allowing the entire island economy to rise."

Canadian police charge three over alleged assassination of Sikh activist

Canadian police have charged three members of an alleged hit team for their role in the assassination of the Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the first arrests in a high-profile killing which officials believe was masterminded by India. The arrest, first reported by CBC News, comes nearly a year after the prominent activist was killed in the parking lot of his gurdwara in the city of Surrey, British Columbia. According to court documents, Karanpreet Singh, Kamalpreet Singh and Karan Brar have been charged with first-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to com-

mit murder in Nijjar's death. In September, the prime minister, Justin Trudeau, told parliament his government had "credible allegations" that India was behind the killing, calling the death of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil an "unacceptable violation of our sovereignty". India has denied direct involvement in the killing of Nijjar and suggested "rogue" operatives were behind a separate attempted assassination of a prominent Sikh figure in the United States. But the fallout from Nijjar's murder has chilled relations between Canada and India – and exposed what officials say is a transna-

tional campaign of violence by India, meant to target dissidents abroad. The men arrested on Friday are reportedly Indian citizens who came to Canada after 2021 and some used student visas. None pursued education while in the country and none have permanent residency, according to the CBC. Investigators say the group could also be tied to three other murders in Canada, including the "sick and twisted" killing of an 11-year-old boy in the city of Edmonton. Members of the group, alleged to be the gunmen and drivers responsible for the brazen 18 June killing of Nijjar, were arrested in police

raids in at least two provinces. The British Columbia RCMP and the integrated homicide

investigation team expected to provide an update on the arrests update later on Friday.





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World News

Gaza protests: UN rights chief flags 'disproportionate' police action on US campuses



The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Tuesday said he was troubled by “a series of heavy-handed steps” taken by some universities in the United States to disperse and dismantle Gaza war protests. In recent days, demonstrations unfolding through tented encampments on school grounds – sparked by students at New York’s prestigious Columbia University who are demanding authorities divest from Israel due to its occupation and military assault on Gaza – have spread nationwide. University authorities from the west to east coast have taken different approaches, ranging from

Columbia’s initial response to authorise police to clear protests by force to continuing negotiations and allowing the encampments to remain.

Columbia protests intensify Columbia’s protesters ignored an ultimatum from the university to leave the camp or risk suspension on Monday. Early on Tuesday morning, students took over historic Hamilton Hall on campus, barricading themselves inside. The building was one of those occupied in civil rights and Viet Nam war protests by students in 1968. The university president announced earlier on Monday that dialogue with protesters had failed, and

the institution would not bow to demands to divest from Israel. Universities should ‘properly manage’ protest response: Guterres Speaking to reporters in New York on the Gaza crisis, UN Secretary-General António Guterres was asked about the US protests. “First of all I think it is essential in all circumstances to guarantee the freedom of expression and the freedom of peaceful demonstration but at the same time it is obvious that hate speech is unacceptable”, he said. It should be left up to university authorities themselves to “properly manage” the situation and decide on the appropriate response to

the protests, he added. Right to protest is ‘fundamental’ In his statement on Tuesday, UN rights chief Volker Türk said that freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly were “fundamental to society”, particularly when there is sharp disagreement on major issues as there is in relation to the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

He noted that in recent weeks, thousands of university students in the US have been protesting the war, and many demonstrations have taken place without incident. But, there have also been hundreds of arrests following interventions on some campuses by security forces. Many have subsequently been released while others still face charges or academic sanctions. Action taken by authorities and law enforcement officials to restrict such expression needs to be carefully scrutinised to ensure they do not go beyond what is demonstrably necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others or for another legitimate aim, such as the maintenance of public health or order, Mr. Türk said. Incitement to violence ‘must be strongly repudiated’ “I am concerned that some of law enforcement actions across a series of universities appear disproportionate in their impacts,” he stressed. The rights chief em-

phasised that any clearly anti-Semitic conduct and speech was totally unacceptable and deeply disturbing. Anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian conduct and speech are equally reprehensible, he said. “Incitement to violence or hatred on grounds of identity or viewpoints – whether real or assumed – must be strongly repudiated,” he continued. “We have already seen such dangerous rhetoric can quickly lead to real violence.” He said any violent conduct should be addressed on a case-by-case basis rather than through sweeping measures “that impute to all members of a protest the unacceptable viewpoints of a few”. Human rights law “Here, as elsewhere, responses by universities and law enforcement need to be guided by human rights law, allowing vibrant debate and protecting safe spaces for all.” The High Commissioner emphasised that any restrictions to fundamental freedoms of expression must be guided by “legality, necessity and proportionality” and applied without discrimination. “US universities have a strong, historic tradition of student activism, strident debate and freedom of expression and peaceful assembly,” Mr. Türk said. “It must be clear that legitimate exercises of the freedom of expression cannot be conflated with incitement to violence and hatred.”



Health News

Ozempic Breath: How Weight Loss Drugs Can Affect Your Oral Health

Ozempic and drugs like it, including Wegovy, Monjouro, and Zepbound, have been praised as game-changing medications for weight loss in qualified patients. Patients lost an average of 15% Trusted Source of their body weight in clinical trials for semaglutide (Wegovy and Ozempic) and about 21% Trusted Source on tirzepatide (Monjouro and Zepbound). Side effects, primarily GI discomfort, have also been reported. However, some have taken on buzzy terms – “Ozempic face,” “Ozempic butt,” and now, “Ozempic breath.” “Ozempic breath refers to a fishy smell in burps or bad breath,” says Neha Lalani, MD. It’s not a clinical diagnosis, nor is it discussed with the same frequency as GI discomfort. Yet, the two can be intertwined, and doctors and dentists agree that it’s important to understand all the potential side effects of taking a GLP-1 medication. “All medications have side effects, and the anti-obesity drugs are no exception,” says Christopher McGowan, MD, a gastroenterologist, obesity medicine specialist, and founder of True You Weight Loss. “Bad breath, or halitosis, almost universally arises from oral hygiene. Therefore, it’s crucial to differentiate where odors are arising so that they can be treated at the source.” What causes Ozempic breath? Notably, halitosis, or bad breath, is not listed as a side effect for Ozempic, Wegovy, Monjouro, or Zepbound. Additionally, there is no peer-reviewed data on whether these drugs cause bad breath or why they might. “However, people are studying it,” says Fatima Khan, DMD, a dentist and co-founder of Riven Oral Care. And that’s important, as Khan stresses, as it’s essential to gather more long-term data before drawing any conclusions as to why people may experience oral hygiene issues like bad breath while taking these medications. However, Khan pointed out that clinical trials indicated that “eructation” (or burping) was a side effect that participants experienced, which is often referred to as “Ozempic burp.” In one study run by Novo Nordisk, nearly 9% of

people taking semaglutide reported belching. Again, more research is needed before linking foul-smelling breath (or a bad taste in a person’s mouth) with GLP-1 medications. However, experts say it’s plausible belching is one potential reason GLP-1 drugs may trigger oral odor — keyword: one. “The three most common causes of GLP-1-related oral odor are belching, bad breath (halitosis), and ketosis,” McGowan says. Burping-related oral odor isn’t bad breath, though it can feel that way and prompt mental health side effects. “This is stomach odor venting through the mouth,” McGowan says. “Patients report that these odors can ‘clear out a room’ and may be a source of anxiety in social situations.” Why does “Ozempic burp” happen? “This is a direct result of the mechanism of action of GLP-1 medications,” McGowan explains. “All drugs within this medication class lead to a delay in gastric emptying, which means it takes significantly longer for food to exit the stomach. This is one way in which the medications assist with portion control.” The downside is that food can break down and ferment in the stomach. “The stomach is normally

designed to empty within four hours after eating,” McGowan says. “However, GLP-1 medications like Ozempic cause food to remain in the stomach for many more hours, even days. At that point, your stomach is functionally a compost bin, and if you burp, it won’t be pleasant.” McGowan adds that patients who experience GI-related side effects like vomiting and diarrhea can become dehydrated and experience dry mouth, a common trigger for bad breath. Finally, the medication’s ability to decrease food noise is a benefit but, in rare cases, can cause severely reduced nutrition intake that prompts ketosis. “Ketosis occurs when the body burns fat for energy, commonly leading to a sweet, acetone-like odor in the breath,” McGowan says. “Maintaining a balanced nutrition plan, replete with all macronutrients, will prevent this.” Other oral hygiene issues you may experience while taking weight loss drugs like Ozempic Besides the potential for oral odor, Khan says people taking GLP-1 medications may experience: Acidic tastes in their mouth Enamel erosion Sensitive teeth Gingivitis Tooth decay Khan notes that people with gastro-esophageal (GERD) may

experience frequent heartburn as well as a bitter and acidic taste in their GERD. Vomiting, a potential side effect, can erode enamel. “Enamel... is the hard and mineralized outermost layer of your tooth,” Khan says. “Dental erosion results from the dissolution of enamel due to acidic substances. GERD further exacerbates erosion.” Khan says this erosion can have a ripple effect, triggering oral sensitivity, discolored teeth, and teeth that look smaller. Khan adds that dry mouth also increases the risk of tooth decay, and people with diabetes have a higher chance of developing dental disease. How to reduce your risk of “Ozempic breath” “The good news is that most of these symptoms will improve over time as the body adjusts to the medication,” McGowan says. However, there are a few steps you can take in the meantime. The first are common-sense measures recommended to people, regardless of what medications they take, such as brushing and flossing daily and seeing a dentist at least twice annually, McGowan says. Other tips include remaining hydrated (especially if experiencing dry mouth, nausea, or vomiting) and eating a well-balanced

diet. “Fatty, greasy, and heavier foods are slower to digest and exit the stomach, leading to increased belching and odors,” McGowan says. “Stick to lean proteins, fruits and vegetables, and healthy fats in moderation. Fast foods, saturated fats, cheeses, and greasy meats should be limited.” The time of day you eat may also help. “Finish your last meal three to four hours before bedtime,” Lalani says. Finally, if you’re still experiencing poor oral health, experts advise speaking with your team. Registered dietitians can assist with food choices, and a dentist can give insights on oral health issues and advice. Takeaway Ozempic breath is not a clinical diagnosis, but people are experiencing poor oral odors while taking GLP-1 medications. Experts say this can be because of belching (and therefore not bad breath), halitosis, or ketosis. Additionally, side effects of GLP-1 medications, like nausea and vomiting, can prompt dehydration (and dry mouth), enamel erosion, tooth sensitivity, and discoloration. Following general guidelines about brushing and flossing and visiting a dentist can help ward off these side effects, which generally resolve over time.





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Health News

Eating Avocado May Lower Diabetes Risk, Especially for Females

Avocado may be your first choice food at brunch thanks to its creamy texture and documented benefits on heart health. Now, new research has found that this popular food may lower your risk of diabetes. A cross-sectional study published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* investigated the relationship between avocado consumption and diabetes in adults.

This study examined a large sample of more than 28,000 adults of varying ages included in the Mexican National Health and Nutrition Survey. The researchers found that compared to those who did not consume avocados, avocado-consuming females showed a lower risk of diabetes. Females who ate avocados (30-38 grams/day) had significantly lower odds of diabetes, even after adjusting for various factors such as age, education level, body weight, physical activity, and more. However, while the study revealed a lower risk of diabetes for females who ate avocados, no significant association was observed in males. Avocados and diabetes risk. What's the link? Registered dietitian and doctor of public health Wendy Bazilian, who was not involved

in the study, said this study has important implications for the population included in it. "Given what we know about the nutritional profile of avocados — they have good unsaturated fats, a good source of fiber, and a multitude of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, I'm not surprised to see these findings suggesting that eating avocados may play a role in lower diabetes risk," she said. When it comes to the exact mechanisms at play, Bazilian said avocados offer an "ideal trifecta" for diabetes risk reduction. Firstly, they're rich in fiber. "Eating foods with fiber helps with blood sugar management and satiety," Bazilian explained. "As fiber makes its way through the digestive system, it slows down digestion which does two things: it makes us feel fuller for longer and also prevents rapid rises in blood glucose after we eat a meal." Both are important for reducing your risk of diabetes. Secondly, avocados are high in unsaturated fat. "Like fiber, fat slows digestion which can help promote blood sugar management and satiety," Bazilian noted. Another important aspect of the duo of unsaturated fats and fiber is that both these nutrients support heart health.

"Diabetes and heart disease are closely linked because their risk factors are similar," Bazilian explained. "Avocados are a heart-healthy food, and the unsaturated fat and fiber found in avocados can help to maintain healthy LDL cholesterol levels, which can help reduce the risk of heart disease." According to Bazilian, "what's good for the heart is good for diabetes risk, blood sugar, and metabolic function and control." Finally, you might be surprised to learn that avocados are actually fruits. "A healthy eating pattern that is predominantly plant foods, including fruits and vegetables, is associated with a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes and related CVD risk factors," Bazilian pointed out. "It's also important to recognize that, unlike most other fruits, avocados contain no naturally occurring sugars and do not affect the glycemic response," she added. Why avocados may help lower diabetes risk in females and not males. Interestingly, while the study found that eating avocados seems to reduce the risk of diabetes for females, no significant observations were shown in males.

Why might that be? "The researchers point out that the

difference in findings in men vs women may be attributed to the different lifestyle factors between men and women," Bazilian noted. "Specifically, more men in the study tended to be smokers (~38%) compared to women (~12%), and smoking can increase the risk of developing diabetes." Registered dietitian nutritionist Kristen White agreed that differing lifestyle factors could be at play. Additionally, she said it's possible that hormonal differences between males and females could contribute to variations in how avocados affect metabolic health.

While this particular finding is intriguing — maybe even confusing — Bazilian said it's important to remember that sometimes we can't always explain the results we see in nutrition research. "This is why it's important to both continue doing research and looking at the body of evidence on a topic and what other studies have shown," she said. Simple ways to include more avocado in your diet. If the findings of this study have inspired you to eat more avocado, Bazilian said there are some swaps you can make that are "very doable." She believes that slightly less than one

serving of avocado per day is a healthy amount that's achievable for most people. "One way to include more avocado in your diet is to swap mayo or butter on sandwiches with mashed avocado for a creamy, nutrient-rich spread," White suggested. "You could also replace store-bought salad dressings with a homemade avocado dressing. Simply combine avocado, lemon juice, olive oil, and herbs." Another suggestion? "Instead of using sour cream or cheese as toppings, use sliced avocado to add creaminess and flavor to tacos, burritos, or salads," White advised. Avocados are also a great addition to smoothies. "Blend avocado into smoothies for a creamy texture and added nutrients, or use it as a base for desserts like avocado chocolate pudding," White suggested. Takeaway Avocados have many proven health benefits, and new research suggests they can reduce your risk of diabetes, too. The results suggest you don't have to eat a lot of avocados to experience the benefits. You can make simple swaps, like using it as a spread, dressing, or smoothie ingredient to increase the amount of avocados in your diet.



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Health News

FDA Finds Traces of Bird Flu Virus in Grocery Store Milk But Says It's Still Safe

Avian influenza, or bird flu, has been detected in dairy milk in the United States, but the FDA has indicated that the disease has a low likelihood of causing illness in humans. In an advisory Trusted Source issued this week, the Food and Drug Administration announced that they — along with the CDC and the USDA — are investigating the presence of H5N1 avian influenza in dairy cows and their milk. The disease, known as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), is very contagious and often deadly in poultry, but, despite its name, is not readily transmissible to humans, though some infections have occurred. The FDA has stated that despite identifying bird flu in raw milk, as well as traces of the H5N1 virus in milk sold at grocery stores, commercial dairy products are still safe to consume because almost all of them (99%) have undergone pasteurization Trusted Source. However, the virus may be present in raw milk products, which the organization has continuously warned Trusted Source consumers about. William Schaffner, MD, a Professor of Infectious Diseases at the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, concurred with the FDA's assessment that transmission of the disease is unlikely, especially from milk. "This is a virus that does not have the genetic capacity to be transmitted from person to person. And this virus has been around in the world, in bird populations for a decade, and it still has not acquired this capacity," he told Healthline. "I have in my hand a cup of coffee with milk in it. I put milk into



my oatmeal. I had no concern about it," he added. How did bird flu get into the milk supply? According to the latest information Trusted Source, the FDA has confirmed the detection of HPAI in dairy cow herds in several states, including Idaho, Kansas, New Mexico, Texas, and more. In an announcement yesterday, regulators issued a federal order requiring testing for and reporting of HPAI in livestock. Despite being found in dairy cows, to date, regulators and public health entities are only aware of two cases of HPAI transmission to humans. At the beginning of April, the CDC announced Trusted Source that an individual in Texas was confirmed to carry the disease. The patient had been exposed to dairy cattle, but the report wasn't more specific. The exposure resulted in symptoms of

conjunctivitis ("pink eye"), and the individual was subsequently treated with antiviral medication for flu. A previous case Trusted Source of transmission occurred in Colorado in 2022 when an individual known to be working around HPAI-infected poultry tested positive for the disease. The individual reported symptoms of fatigue and was again treated with an antiviral. Diseases transmitted between animals and humans, known as zoonotic diseases Trusted Source, are very common. According to the CDC, more than 60% of infectious diseases in humans can be spread from animals, and 75% of emerging diseases in people come from animals. Transmission can also occur between different species of animals, such as birds and cows. "When wild birds set down to drink water and feed along their migratory path, they can actually excrete the virus out of their saliva and their urine and their poop, and put it into the environment in such a way that it can occasionally get into mammals," said Schaffner. From there, it can easily spread across feedlots and, in this case, the milk supply. "Not surprisingly, in a herd that's jammed close together, where there's a lot of cow saliva and urine and poop, it can be transmitted among the cows," he said. Why commercial dairy products are

still considered safe for people? Though virus particles of HPAI have been detected in pasteurized milk, the risk of transmission of HPAI is extremely unlikely, but it may be possible in raw milk. "The FDA does not have any concerns that our milk supply is contaminated and see no health threat or concerns for consumers at this time," Joseph Lambson, PharmD, Director of the New Mexico Poison and Drug Information Center, and an Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico College of Pharmacy, told Healthline. "They still highly urge against using raw milk or products that utilize raw milk for the same concerns that they've been saying for years and years, which is you're just at increased risk of infection. And so you can definitely include this highly virulent form of avian flu to that list," said Lambson. The FDA warns that raw milk can carry dangerous pathogens, including salmonella, listeria, and campylobacter. Commercially available milk undergoes pasteurization, which is a process in which milk is heated and then cooled in order to destroy pathogens. The process has been used on milk for public health purposes for over one hundred years in the United States. "Pasteurization is required by the FDA if you're moving milk products from one

state to another. They have to follow a specific temperature and time. That should kill the virus. So the inactive virus may be in the milk, but it's not going to be able to replicate, so you can drink it safely," said Sylvia Ley, PhD, an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Viral fragments may remain in milk after pasteurization but are not considered to pose a risk to consumer health. Additionally, the FDA and USDA have stated that milk from sick cows is actively being diverted from the food supply. Lambson encourages anyone concerned that they have consumed a contaminated product to contact their poison control center, where they can get medical advice about symptoms to look for and whether or not they should seek medical treatment. "Additionally, it also helps from a surveillance purpose to see if we're having an increase of exposures," he said. The bottom line The FDA has discovered the presence of avian influenza in dairy milk. Regulators have cautioned that there is little to no risk of infection in commercial milk due to pasteurization. However, the virus may be present in raw milk. Only two known cases of transmission of the virus are known to have occurred recently in humans.





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Health News

Antacids May Increase Your Risk of Migraine Attacks or Severe Headaches

People who take antacids may be at greater risk for migraine attacks and severe headaches, a new study using data from more than 11,000 people suggests. The study, published in *Neurology Clinical Practice*, [EMBARGOED UNTIL 4PM EST], identified the potential link between proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) like esomeprazole (Nexium) and omeprazole (Prilosec), antacid supplements, and histamine H2-receptor antagonists (H2RAs) like famotidine (Pepcid AC) or cimetidine. The risk of migraine and severe headache, when compared with people who used no acid-suppression therapy, was 70% higher for those using PPIs, 40% higher for those using H2RAs, and 30% higher for those taking generic antacids. All drugs examined in the study were prescription only. The data did not look at most over-the-counter medications. Some of them were made available at nonprescription strength during the study, but those were not included.



Acid reflux, a condition in which stomach acids and contents can return to the esophagus, causing irritation, burping, and burning pain, is an aspect of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases Trusted Source, about 20% of Americans have GERD. Those who are overweight or obese, pregnant, or either smoke or are exposed to secondhand smoke regularly are at the highest risk for GERD, but anyone can develop it. The study used data from adults in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey-Trusted Source from the years 1999 to 2004. That survey is a cross-sectional analysis that has been continuously conducted since 1999, but only in those first five years did it contain a question about headaches and migraine attacks. The study results are associative, so the results do not suggest that antacids are causing migraine episodes or severe headaches. How are acid reflux and migraine episodes connected? Dr. Medhat Mikhael, MD, pain management

specialist and medical director of the non-operative program at the Spine Health Center at MemorialCare Orange Coast Medical Center in Fountain Valley, CA, who was not involved in the study, told Healthline that there's not one known connection between acid reflux and migraine episodes, but all PPI drugs, H2 blockers, and antacids are known to produce side effects like headache, nausea, and fatigue. "One theory is that it is a problem with the person's central nervous system or glutamate level, which is one of the pain pathway facilitators, and that might link acid reflux disease and headaches," Mikhael said. "When acid is overproduced and retained, it causes an inflammatory cascade in the mucosa of the stomach and esophagus." He noted that several mechanisms could be behind the triggering of the headache or migraine. The first would be the use of PPI, as the class of drugs can interfere with the absorption of magnesium and other vitamins, which then can trigger headaches and worsen migraine episodes. "Another theory is the inflammatory

cascade reaction that starts at the GI level can trigger the central nervous system to facilitate the release of the calcitonin gene-related peptides that would trigger migraine," Mikhael added. Dr. Clifford Segil, DO, a neurologist at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, who was also not involved in the study, told Healthline that, in general, high levels of stress could create conditions for GERD or migraine. "In my clinical practice, I see countless patients with increased life stress causing disabling headaches, and many of these patients' increased life stress also causes disabling GERD," Segil said. "It is challenging as a neurologist to explain why any stomach acid level-changing medications would cause a change in a patient's brain to increase or decrease the frequency of headaches or migraines, but it is not as easy as a neurologist to blame increased life stress on causing patients to have migraine headaches and GERD." Why are proton pump inhibitors so associated with migraine episodes? PPIs are a widely used

treatment for GERD that can halt the production of acid and relieve heartburn. They take longer to take effect than H2RAs but tend to have more lasting results, with the intended use being between four and 12 weeks. Mikhael pointed out that PPIs' effect on magnesium absorption in the body could have a strong role in the development of migraine episodes or severe headaches, and the fact that this class of drug is so often used could be a possible connection. Segil again pointed to stress as a significant factor but noted the connection between strong GERD and headaches. "Proton pump inhibitors are the most potent acid-decreasing medications available and are newer and work better than old H2(histamine) blocking medications and antacids," Segil said. "Patients with increased life stress would be expected to produce more acid as a stress response, which is what I see in clinical practice. Patients with increased life stress would also be expected to have more frequent headaches," Segil said. He added, "I am not surprised

to see the treatment group requiring the strongest acid-decreasing family of medications, PPIs, to have the most frequent headaches as a comorbidity. I was surprised to see the placebo group in the weakest of the stomach acid-producing medications to have the highest number of migraines, which was 20% of the placebo group versus 22% of the patients taking antacid supplements."

Takeaway A study of more than 11,000 adults suggests an association between migraine attacks or severe headaches and proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) like esomeprazole (Nexium) and omeprazole (Prilosec), antacid supplements, and histamine H2-receptor antagonists (H2RAs) like famotidine (Pepcid AC) or cimetidine. An estimated 20% of adults in the U.S. have GERD, which can cause heartburn and acid reflux; these drugs are widely used to treat them. The study does not state that these classes of acid-suppressing medications cause migraine episodes or severe headaches; it's an associative finding from existing data.

Bollywood News

Shah Rukh Khan says first years of KKR were challenging, thought of himself as the 12th man

Shah Rukh Khan is a superstar on screen, but for his cricket team KKR, he considers himself the 12th man. The actor recently opened up about his journey with Kolkata Knight Riders, his team in IPL. Shah Rukh, in an interview with Star Sports, said when the team was going through a “challenging” phase—before it won the championship, he wanted to explain to his players and the staff that patience will be hugely rewarding. Also Read | ‘Shah Rukh Khan didn’t abuse’: KKR staff from 2012 recalls SRK’s Wankhede stadium outburst, claims Suhana Khan was catcalled “The first five-six years were very challenging. I am not a cricketer... But I was the 12th man in KKR. As the 12th man, how to go field, serve the water, give the towel, and be able to explain that it is ok, give it time. Everything should be allowed to breathe,” he said during the interview. KKR won its first championship in the fifth season of IPL in 2012, followed by another win in 2014. The



team hasn’t won the championship since then. In another segment, Shah Rukh Khan spoke about his connection with Eden Gardens, and said he has a “corner” there, just like he has one at his Mumbai residence, Mannat.

“There’s no nervousness. It is there for the first few matches, for everyone.

In Eden Gardens, there is a left side corner that is mine. I feel more than at home, more at family here,” he added. Shah

Rukh Khan’s KKR has had a good run so far this season and is in the top three on the points table. On the work front, Shah Rukh is set to team up with his daughter Suhana Khan for the first time in the actioner The

King.

The film, directed by Sujoy Ghosh with action pieces overlooked by Pathaan helmer Siddharth Anand, will release in 2025.

Vaani Kapoor to star in Badtameez Gill with Aparshakti Khurrana, Paresh Rawal

Bollywood star Vaani Kapoor will play the lead role in Badtameez Gill, an upcoming movie from filmmaker Navjot Gulati. Described as a “coming of modern-age dramedy”, the film is about a girl (Kapoor) and her family set in Bareilly and London, a press release said.

The project, which will soon start shooting in Bareilly, will also feature Jubilee star Aparshakti Khurrana in the role of Kapoor’s brother and veteran actor Paresh Rawal as her father. “We needed a gorgeous, confident girl who can be a riot for her family & her friends. Vaani is this person in real life. So, when we met her, we knew we had found our lead! She will light up the screen with her presence and hopefully we will entertain a lot of people with our film,” producers Nicky Bhagnani and Viicky Bhagnani said in a statement. “Badtameez Gill” is produced by Nicky Bhagnani and Viicky



Bhagnani, Ankur Takrani and Akshad Ghone.

Gulati is best known for writing movies such as “Run-

ning Shaadi” and “Ginny Weds Sunny”.

His directorial credits include “Jai Mummy Di” and

the upcoming movie “Pooja Meri Jaan”. Besides “Badtameez Gill”, Kapoor will also feature in “Khel Khel Mein”,

co-starring Akshay Kumar, Tapsee Pannu, Ammy Virk, Aditya Seal, Pragya Jaiswal and Fardeen Khan.

Bollywood News

Hrithik Roshan gives shout-out to girlfriend Saba Azad as her film *Minimum* premieres at 26th UK Asian Film Festival



Janhvi Kapoor reveals guests can stay for free in Sridevi's Chennai mansion: 'People have to apply to get access'

Before she passed away in 2018, Bollywood star Sridevi wanted to turn her Chennai home by the sea into a fancy hotel. Now, Airbnb is making her wish come true with their new 'Icons' category and daughter Janhvi Kapoor is letting guests stay there through the rental company. Sridevi purchased the Chennai mansion after marrying producer Boney Kapoor. At the launch of Airbnb 2024, Janhvi opened up about the house and how the whole family spent some quality time there. She said, "I remember we've spent a lot of mom's birthdays there, my birthday, dad's birthday. Towards the end of it, we couldn't really spend as much time there because we had to refurbish the house. So mom was thinking of doing a lot of things. She wanted to make it a hotel." Janhvi said that Boney renovated the mansion and redid the house after Sridevi's death. "I remember he

kept saying, 'I need to do it for her. I need to do it for her.' And then when he did up the whole house, and I think we brought in his birthday there, and it was the first time, I think, he tried celebrating his birthday after she passed. I have this vivid memory that after 2-3 years, it was the first time I saw my dad allowing himself to start enjoying himself again."

The Airbnb General Manager of India Amanpreet Bajaj explained that all icon homes are priced under \$100, with some even available for free. To stay in these homes, people need to apply and may receive a golden ticket based on certain criteria. There are 4,000 golden tickets available for all icons this year, allowing many to access these unique homes at a very low price.

"This (Sridevi) home is not available for any price; it's available for free. People have to apply to get access. In

terms of being a guest, based on certain inputs, we would then decide, and they get a golden ticket," he said at the event. When asked about security and dealing with situations like stealing and destruction of

property, Janhvi said, "Please don't steal anything. See I trust my fans a lot and honestly, I trust Airbnb a lot more, they are known for their credibility. I think as far as it comes to letting people in, like I said be-

fore, I think we as a family for a very long time were always exploring the idea of sharing this property with people." On the work front, Janhvi will be next seen in Mr. & Mrs. Mahi and Ulajh.



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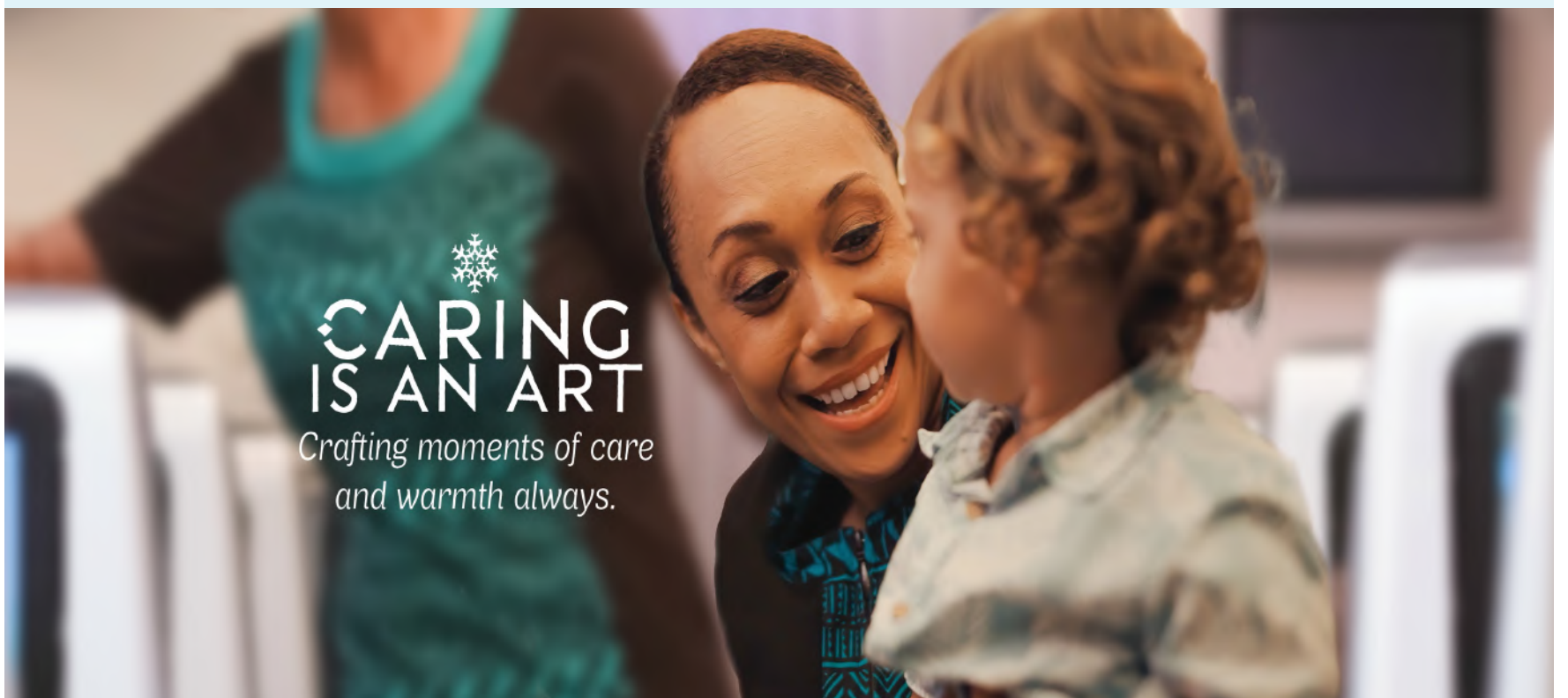
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Sports News

Hurricanes will be hungry when they take on the Tahs tonight

Hurricanes will be hungry when they take on the Tahs tonight. The Hurricanes are in the midst of an injury crisis at hooker but they will be hungry to atone for their first loss of the season, as they get ready to take on the Waratahs tonight. The big theme coming out of their camp this week was that they didn't match up physically against the Brumbies so watch out Waratahs. The Sydneysiders have only won two games this season, both against the battling Crusaders. stuff.co.nz says it's hard to see a team that lost to the Highlanders causing any troubles for a fired-up Hurricanes team. Hurricanes coach, Clark Laidlaw says the Brumbies were embarrassed with how they played against the Blues and they came out fizzing and they beat the Canes to the jump physically and the Canes lost. Hurricanes flanker, Du'Plessis Kirifi says the loss almost relieves the pressure that



was building around being unbeaten and that's potentially a good thing. The Hurricanes host the

Waratahs at 7.05 tonight while the Blues meet the Rebels at 9.35pm. In other games, Moana Pasifika play the Highlanders

in Tonga at 2.05pm tomorrow, the Crusaders play the Reds at 4.35pm, the Chiefs meet the Force at 7.05pm tomorrow,

while the Swire Shipping Fijian Drua play the Brumbies at 9.35pm in Canberra.

Ravutaumada starts at fullback, Ikanivere returns to starting XV

Swire Shipping Fijian Drua speedster Selestino Ravutaumada will start at fullback for the first time this year in one of the interesting positional changes that coach Mick Byrne has made in the match day 23 squad that will take on the Brumbies in Round 11 of the Shop N Save Super Rugby Pacific this weekend. The change sees veteran fullback Ilaisa Droasese moving to the bench. Hooker Tevita Ikanivere has also made his way back into the starting lineup while Haereiti Hetet and Mesake Doge retain their positions in the prop. Mesake Vocevoce returns to the starting line-up and will partner with Isoa Nasilasila at locks. Vilive Miramira returns to blindside flanker, Kitione Salawa remains at openside flanker with captain Ratu Meli Derenalagi starting at number 8. Ratu Peni Matawalu will again partner with Isaiah Armstrong-Ravula at the halves while Michael Naitokani comes in at inside centre and



Iosefo Masi outside him. Taniela Rakuro retains his spot on the left wing with Junior Ratuva starting on the right. The Fijian Drua will meet the Brumbies at 9.35pm on Saturday in Can-

berra. First 15 1. Haereiti Hetet, 2. Tevita Ikanivere, 3. Mesake Doge, 4. Mesake Vocece, 5. Isoa Nasilasila, 6. Vilive Miramira, 7. Kitione Salawa 8. Meli Derenalagi (c), 9. Peni Matawalu,

10. Isaiah Armstrong-Ravula, 11. Taniela Rakuro, 12. Michael Naitokani, 13. Iosefo Masi 14. Junior Ratuva, 15. Selestino Ravutaumada Impact 16. Mesulame Dolokoto, 17. Livai

Natave, 18. Samu Tawake, 19. Leone Rotuisolia, 20. Motikiai Murray, 21. Simi Kuruvoli, 22. Kemu Valetini, 23. Ilaisa Droasese

Sports News

Marist leads boys division while MGM maintains lead in girls



Defending boys champions, Marist Brothers High School lead the 2024 Coca Cola Games boys division medal tally with 7 gold, 5 silver and 5 bronze after day 2 of competition. Suva Grammar School is in second place with 5 gold, 4 silver and 3 bronze.

Holy Cross College from Taveuni is in third place with 2 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze. Queen Victoria School is in fourth place with 2 gold, 1 sil-

ver and 2 bronze. Fiji Secondary School's Athletics Association Acting General Secretary Biu Colati says due process has to be followed in relation to any protest regarding a race. fiji village News has been informed that Suva Grammar School filed a protest that Marist 400 metres runner, Solomone Muakibau stepped onto the inside lane and ran for twenty metres. Colati says he will have a meeting with the jury tomorrow morn-

ing. Based on the fiji village medal tally Marist had 8 gold while Grammar had 4 gold medals after the 400 metres senior boys final.

However, the official medal tally is showing Marist with 7 gold and Grammar with 5 gold medals. In the girls division, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School is leading with 5 gold, 6 silver and 6 bronze medals. Suva Grammar School is in second place with 5 gold,

2 silver and 3 bronze. Ratu Sukuna Memorial School is in third place with 3 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze. Saint Joseph's Secondary School is in fourth place with 3 gold and 1 bronze medals.

The 4x100 metres heats start at 8am tomorrow, the 800 metres finals start at 9.27am, the 200 metres finals start at 10.12am, the 4x100 metres finals start at 11.06am and the 4x400 metres finals start at

12.05pm tomorrow. You can follow our coverage on our website and app, fiji village. We have selected commentaries on our sister station, Viti FM. You can also relive all the events from the Coke Games by watching our fiji village Re-Live videos on our website. Stay with fiji village for the running medal tally updates, all the results from the tracks and the field events, and all the interviews with the winning athletes.

Fiji teams in Singapore 7s out to produce strong results before the Olympics

The Fiji Airways Fiji Men's and Fijiana 7s teams will take the field later this afternoon in the HSBC Singapore 7s carrying the nation's hopes of producing strong results as we approach the Paris Olympics in July. Both teams have to focus on their discipline, defence, and perseverance, and get their basics right while increasing the intensity of the game. The Fiji Men 7s team

will play the USA at 5.14 this afternoon in their first pool match before facing Great Britain at 10.30 tonight. They will meet Ireland at 5.37pm tomorrow in their final pool match. The Cup quarter-finals will start at 11 tomorrow night, the semi-finals will start at 5.48pm Sunday and the final will kick off at 10.21pm Sunday. Meanwhile, the Fijiana 7s will open their Singapore 7s

campaign against Great Britain at 4.28pm today, then they will take on Brazil at 9.43 tonight in their second match and play Australia at 4.50pm tomorrow in their last pool match. The Women's quarter-finals will start at 8.27pm tomorrow, the semi-finals will begin at 5.02pm Sunday, and the final will be held at 9.41pm Sunday.



Sports

New Zealand wins women's and men's Singapore 7s finals; Argentina takes men's regular season title

SINGAPORE (AP) — New Zealand won back-to-back doubles to close out the regular season in the world rugby sevens series, adding the men's and women's Singapore titles on Sunday to their dual successes last month in Hong Kong.

Michaela Blyde scored a hat-trick in the 31-21 win over Australia in the women's final, giving the New Zealanders a fourth consecutive title in the series and top spot in the regular season standings — two points clear of their trans-Tasman rivals.

Dylan Collier's All Blacks Sevens held off Ireland 17-14 in the men's final to move into third place in the season standings. Argentina, despite placing fifth in Singapore, held on to clinch its first regular-season

title in the global sevens series. The top eight teams after the regular season have secured places in the 2025 series and will head to the season finals starting May 31 in Madrid to play off for gold. The teams ranked 9th to 12th will go into

playoffs in Madrid for core places in the 2025 series. After the season finale in Madrid, the Olympic sevens tournament in Paris takes priority. The New Zealand teams are going to the Olympics in July in hot form.





2024 MEN'S SVNS SERIES EXPLAINER

MADRID MAY 31ST - JUNE 2ND

SERIES STANDINGS

1	ARGENTINA (Q)
2	IRELAND (Q)
3	NEW ZEALAND (Q)
4	AUSTRALIA (Q)
5	FRANCE (Q)
6	FIJI
7	SOUTH AFRICA (Q)
8	GREAT BRITAIN (Q)
<hr/>	
9	USA (PO)
10	SPAIN (PO)
11	SAMOA (PO)
12	CANADA (PO)

SVNS GRAND FINAL

TOP 8 TEAMS RETAIN 2025 CORE STATUS AND COMPETE TO BECOME HSBC SVNS CHAMPIONS

1	ARGENTINA (Q)
2	IRELAND (Q)
3	NEW ZEALAND (Q)
4	AUSTRALIA (Q)
5	FRANCE (Q)
6	FIJI
7	SOUTH AFRICA (Q)
8	GREAT BRITAIN (Q)

PLAY-OFF TOURNAMENT

BOTTOM 4 TEAMS ARE JOINED BY TOP 4 CHALLENGER TEAMS TO COMPETE FOR 4 REMAINING CORE STATUS PLACES

9	USA (PO)
10	SPAIN (PO)
11	SAMOA (PO)
12	CANADA (PO)
<hr/>	
1	URUGUAY
2	KENYA
3	CHILE
4	GERMANY



2024 WOMEN'S SVNS SERIES EXPLAINER

MADRID MAY 31ST - JUNE 2ND

SERIES STANDINGS

1	NEW ZEALAND (Q)
2	AUSTRALIA (Q)
3	FRANCE (Q)
4	USA (Q)
5	CANADA (Q)
6	FIJI (Q)
7	IRELAND (Q)
8	GREAT BRITAIN (Q)
<hr/>	
9	JAPAN (PO)
10	BRAZIL (PO)
11	SOUTH AFRICA (PO)
12	SPAIN (PO)

SVNS GRAND FINAL

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BOTTOM 4 TEAMS ARE JOINED BY TOP 4 CHALLENGER TEAMS TO COMPETE FOR 4 REMAINING CORE STATUS PLACES

9	JAPAN (PO)
10	BRAZIL (PO)
11	SOUTH AFRICA (PO)
12	SPAIN (PO)
<hr/>	
1	CHINA
2	ARGENTINA
3	BELGIUM
4	USANDA

Health News

Why Eating Fried Foods May Increase Your Risk of Depression and Anxiety

You've likely heard the phrase "You are what you eat." And perhaps, as the phrase suggests, you've noticed that you feel bloated, sluggish, and fatigued when you aren't eating well. New research suggests that what we eat may not only affect us physically but mentally too. More specifically, a new study conducted at the St. Louis School of Medicine at Washington University has linked a diet high in the consumption of fried foods – especially fried potatoes – with increased instances of anxiety and depression. The connection between fried foods and mental health The study involved 140,728 people and revealed that regular consumption of fried foods carries a 12% and 7% higher risk of anxiety and depression, respectively. The researchers conclude that frequent fried food consumption is "strongly associated" with a higher risk of anxiety and depression due to a contaminant in fried foods known as acrylamide Trusted Source. This contaminant was shown to trigger neuroinflammation and lipid metabolism disturbance, which can affect mental health.

While these findings may be disappointing to lovers of fried foods, they also offer a silver lining. By paying closer attention to what we eat, we may be able to help reduce our risk of some mood disorders. The link between food and mood "The connection between food and mood is far more complex than is sometimes reported. However, there are certainly dietary patterns that appear to be protective," says Rohini Bajekal, a nutritionist and a board-certified lifestyle medicine professional at Plant Based Health Professionals. "The results of this study are in line with what we would expect to see and are further confirmation of decades of research showing that fried and unhealthy foods in the standard Western diet increase the risk of common chronic diseases and mental health conditions," Rohini explains. One of the reasons that fried foods are associated with higher instances of anxiety and depression is that they cause inflammation in the body which



is correlated with anxious and depressive symptoms. Megan Hilbert, a registered dietitian at Top Nutrition Coaching, cites a 2017 study Trusted Source called the SMILES Trial that notes that mental health outcomes were greatly improved when a control group followed a diet high in anti-inflammatory foods for 12 weeks. Inflammation can wreak havoc on the body and disrupt the brain "A diet high in fried foods contributes to neuroinflammation, or inflammation in the brain, since fried foods produce compounds known as advanced glycation end productions which adhere to tissue, damage them, and cause inflammation," Hilbert says. Hilbert notes that research is still being done on this topic, but, she says, it's hypothesized that inflammation may decrease the release of dopamine and also blunt the areas of the brain that are associated with reward. In addition, fried foods are typically lacking in fiber, phytonutrients, and healthy fats which are shown to positively impact brain health. In turn, this can have an impact on your gut. "A lack of these compounds can cause a breakdown in how the gut and the brain communicate with each other," Hilbert says. "Upwards of 90 to 95% of our serotonin is made in the gut,

and so it's hypothesized that imbalances in our gut microbiota influence the production of these neurotransmitters, which in turn, impacts our mood negatively." According to the study authors, acrylamide may be the main chemical that is doing the damage when it comes to mental health. "Acrylamide is a chemical that can naturally form in certain starchy foods when roasted, fried, or baked at high temperatures," Hilbert explains. "Studies have shown that acrylamide is carcinogenic in animals and may be carcinogenic to humans." However, Hilbert says it's important to note that in animal studies, concentrations of acrylamide used were at very high doses. "We currently don't have solid evidence that acrylamide poses this same threat to humans even after 20 years of research into the topic," she says. Then there's lipid metabolism, the process by which fats are broken down and stored as energy. The authors of the study say high consumption of fried foods disrupts this process. "The lipid composition in the brain has been recognized as something that plays a role in neuron function, and these neurons play an important role in how the brain communicates," Hilbert explains. "When this communication is disturbed we can see

functional behavior adaptations like anxiety and/or depression." Making small healthy swaps can make a big difference The relationship between frequent fried food consumption and mental health is certainly complicated and complex. But one thing is clear: Reducing your intake of fried foods is a wise and healthy choice. So what healthy swaps should you be making? The first approach you should try is changing your method of cooking. "Choose cooking methods like poaching, stewing, steaming, and boiling rather than dry, high-temperature cooking," Bajekal suggests. "Oven-frying or air-frying can be great options as well because you use far less oil." Another tip is to be wary of using certain cooking oils. "Tropical oils (such as coconut oil and palm oil) are high in saturated fats and it's better to replace these with extra-virgin olive oil, avocado oil, or rapeseed oil," says Bajekal. As for what to eat, Hilbert recommends swapping fried items with baked or grilled products (like baked potatoes and grilled chicken) and adding in more whole foods like nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. "Even spices can positively impact the gut microbiota, reduce inflammation, and improve mitochondrial function,"

she notes. If in doubt, Bajekal says to use the six pillars of a healthy lifestyle as a rule of thumb: Eating a variety of whole plant foods with plenty of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds Engaging in regular movement Managing stress Getting restful, quality sleep Avoiding risky substances such as tobacco and alcohol Prioritizing relationships However you decide to reduce your consumption of fried foods, both experts agree that a slow, steady, and sustainable approach is best. "If you regularly consume fried food, keep it simple and find one goal you can tackle first. Maybe that's swapping out fries when you go out to eat for another side you enjoy, or switching from a fried chicken sandwich to a grilled one," says Hilbert. "It's also really important to create an environment where you're not as tempted to eat fried foods," she adds. "Willpower is a muscle that can only go so far, so decreasing how often you eat out and surrounding yourself with other people who are also looking to change their habits is an important step to lasting change." Fried foods are tasty, comforting, and likely to provide a few moments of pleasure. However, if you consume them too frequently, you might find your good mood is short-lived.

Off the field growth as Drua surpass top clubs

The Swire Shipping Fijian Drua is not only making waves on the field in just its third year in the Shop N Save Super Rugby Pacific, but their brand is gaining traction off the field and off shore as well.

While there is no doubt about the club's popularity in Fiji, the Drua is gaining traction on social media overseas, particularly in Australia and New Zealand.

A recent analysis by Engage Digital Partners on the growth and performance of teams in the leading sports competitions across Australia and New Zealand showed that in the past two months the Drua has had the higher percentage in follower growth.

The analysis was based on the measuring metrics on Instagram with the Drua having a 14.5 per cent increase in follower percentage over the past two months.

This surpasses teams such as the Greater Western Sydney Giants in the Australian Football League (Aussie Rules, the Penrith Panthers and Canberra Raiders in the National Rugby League, and Wellington Phoenix in the A-League.

"This is a very significant result for a new and small club like ours. It's good to get this kind of independent validation that we're on the right track in terms of connecting with our fans. We are still very much a

new club and to be compared to big clubs in the NRL and AFL is huge for us.

"An advantage we have is that our fans have waited for years to have a professional club to call their own, so they do seek and crave content, always looking for something new," Drua marketing and communications manager Angie Lal stated.

The Drua is growing as a brand and business, and it takes a creative team to push for its public presence and relevance.

"Planning during the off-season is key. For the 2024 season, Drua marketing reached out to fans via an online survey on what fans would like to see more

of in terms of content. The Drua social pages exist for the fans. Our marketing team also get the opportunity to share plans with the playing squads during the pre-season. Buy-in from the players is important, ensuring they are comfortable, and their ideas are heard.

"The marketing team has also been given free reign by Shane Hussein (head of commercial and marketing) to be bold and try new things," Lal added.

It has taken a more inclusive route especially with the Fijian Drua Women's team joining this season.

"The women's team joined the Fijian Drua officially from December 2023 and we started

sharing women's content from late January once they started training in Nadi. We recruited an additional creative person to ensure we give equal prominence to the women once their pre-season began."

The Drua's objective is to ensure that there's equal coverage for the men and women's teams going behind the scenes to give fans insights on the players, coaches, staff and everyone else involved with the club. Factors such as unpolished videos of sideline reactions, fans, vertical shooting and the authentic integration of sponsor content has worked well for the Drua's social media presence.

SWIRE SHIPPING FIJIAN DRUA 2024

<p>LOOSEHEAD PROPS EMOSI TUQIRI HAEREITI HETET LIVAI NATAVE</p> <p>HOOKERS MESULAME DOLOKOTO TEVITA IKANIVERE ZURIEL TOGIATAMA</p> <p>TIGHTHEAD PROPS JONE KOROIDUADUA MESAKE DOGE SAMUELA TAWAKE</p>	<p>UTILITY PROP MELI TUNI</p> <p>LOCKS ETONIA WAQA ISOA NASILASILA LEONE ROTUISOLIA SAIOSI VUKALOKALO * TE CIRIKIDAVETA</p> <p>BACKROWERS ELIA CANAKAIVATA KITIONE SALAWA MELI DERENALAGI MOTIKIAI MURRAY VILIVE MIRAMIRA</p>	<p>HALF BACKS FRANK LOMANI PENI MATAWALU PHILIP BASELALA SIMIONE KURUVOLI</p> <p>FIRST FIVES KEMU VALETINI ISAIAH ARMSTRONG-RAVULA * ISIKELI RABITU * CALEB MUNTZ</p> <p>CENTRES APISALOME VOTA IOSEFO MASI MICHAEL NAITOKANI WAQA NALAGA *</p>	<p>BACK 3 ILAISA DROASESE SELESTINO RAVUTAUMADA TANIELA RAKURO EPELI MOMO *</p> <p>UTILITY TUIDRAKI SAMUSAMUVODRE</p>
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SWIRE SHIPPING

* ROOKIE

Girmit History: Looking back at what our Forefathers had sacrificed for us as an Indentured generation in 1879

“Pain from the wounds of Girmit resided in the hearts and minds of its victims and their families, but it failed to find expression publicly or in history books”.

Indo-Fijians, were a significant part of Fiji and had made an enormous contribution towards its economic, social, cultural and political development in the 1800’s during the British Colonial era.

Captain James Cook, Captain William Bligh, Vasco da Gama, who ventured out to seek new lands, the history of British royal family, contributions of British in developing the earth, the vir-

tues of Commonwealth, the penal history of Australia, and so on about the glory of white men’s contributions in carving out the destiny of the world.

However, as far as Fiji’s development history is concerned, apart from a few sentences about indentured labourers from India brought to work on cane farms, there is no account of what went on in the whipping, punching, kicking, suiciding and raping in the cane fields of early Fiji.

They were completely missed from the radar of Fiji’s history books, written by the British and the Europeans.

“History is almost always written by victors and conquerors and gives their viewpoint; or, at any rate, the victor’s version is given prominence and holds the field.”

Therefore, in case of Indo-Fijians, history was deliberately concealed to cover up the crimes of British and the Australian Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR). Since the British were the colonial rulers of Fiji for around a century, they had a distinct advantage in manipulating history.

That is why, as already stated, all we learned in history lessons in schools was

about British or indigenous Fijian history.

The little history of India that we learned in schools covered the perspective from the British side, missing out the real treachery of the coloniser, in India and Fiji.

In some opinions, writers have likened indenture or Girmit to slavery. In fact, some have dubbed slavery as being better, because, at least in slavery, people got better food and shelter.

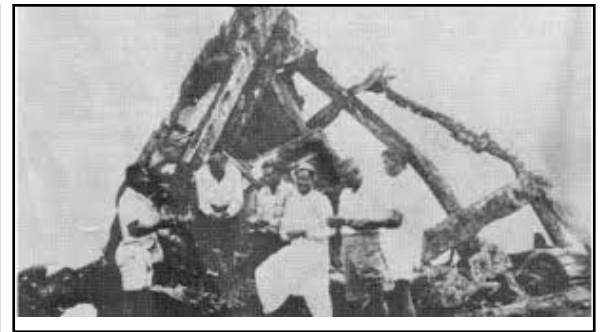
On 15 May (some claim it to be 14th), 1879 the first batch of 497 Girmitiyas (indentured labourers) were brought to Fiji by the British

on board the vessel Leonidas. This trend continued till 1920 by when some 60,357 Girmitiyas were brought to Fiji.

2021 marks the 142 years of the first arrival of Indians. We just hope that the next generation will somehow learn about the sacrifices of the Girmit era and pay homage to those who delivered us to the comforts of USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other developed nations.

May the soul of our departed Girmitiyas, our forbears, rest in peace!

Excerpts from Thakur Ranjit Singh- Auckland, NZ





WEBINAR

Indian Emigration Passes to Fiji 1879-1916

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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

Sports News

Kane Williamson declines New Zealand 'forced' Neil Wagner to retire

Kane Williamson on Wednesday dismissed the claim made by former batsman Ross Taylor that suggested New Zealand's star pacer Neil Wagner was "forced to retire" before the commencement of the two Test series against Australia at home. Wagner, in an emotional announcement, declared his international retirement on the eve of the first Test in Wellington. This decision came after selectors informed him that he would not be considered for the playing XI at any point during the Test series. Despite the retirement announcement, the 37-year-old Wagner participated as a substitute fielder in the first Test, which New Zealand lost by 172 runs. He was also seen carrying drinks on several occasions during the match. Williamson's refutation contradicts the notion that Wagner's retirement was a result of external pressure or coercion.

Addressing a media conference alongside incumbent captain Tim Southee, since the pair will be appearing in their 100th Test together, Williamson said he has not seen the comments made by Taylor. "I don't think anybody is forced to retire. Last



week, (Wagner) had a fantastic week reflecting on what was an incredible career, and we had some amazing moments in the dressing room and, you know, it didn't all go perfectly obviously, an on-field performance would have helped," Williamson was quoted as saying by NZ Herald. "But it was so much more than that and he's just done such in-

credible things for this team and we've seen the skill that he has and the numbers that everybody sees. "But, you know, the heart and soul and effort that he's brought to the side and largely led through that for so long," he added.

"It's been incredible and it was quite a special week for that reason. I think he had a re-

ally amazing time," Williamson said. Taylor suggested in a podcast on ESPNcricinfo that by the look of it, Wagner seems to have been forced into retirement.

"I think it all makes sense a little bit now. There's no sugar-coating 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 (against Australia). So he did make himself available," Taylor said. Williamson, meanwhile, declined being part of such discussions in the Kiwi camp. "I'm not involved in those discussions, but from what I gather, he's now retired," Williamson added.

Mitchell Starc aims to dismiss Kane Williamson quickly in his 100th Test

Australian seamer Mitchell Starc has expressed his team's determination to dismiss New Zealand's world-class batsman Kane Williamson quickly in his 100th Test appearance. The second Test between the two teams will take place in Christchurch on Friday, with Australia leading the twomatch series 1-0 following a convincing 172-run victory in the opening Test. Both Williamson and New Zealand Test captain Tim Southee will be playing their 100th Test at Hagley Park. Starc emphasized the Australians' desire to remove Williamson from the crease as soon as possible. Starc told reporters on Wednesday, "Our aim during the game is to make Williamson's time at the crease as short as possible. It is always satisfying to dismiss one of the

best batsmen in the world, and the sooner we achieve it, the better." In the first test, Williamson struggle against the Australian bowlers. He was run out for a duck in the first innings after colliding with opener Will Young and managed only nine runs in the second innings before being caught by Steve Smith. Starc revealed that Lyon has a plan to tackle Williamson and joked that they might hand him the ball and let him take charge. Starc also praised the long and successful careers of both Williamson and Southee, acknowledging their milestones and the physical demands faced by fast bowlers like Southee. "For Kane and Tim, reaching the 100-Test milestone is a tremendous achievement," Starc said. "Especially for Tim, as we all



know the toll it takes on a fast bowler's body. We will certainly

celebrate with them, but our primary focus is on winning the

Test match."

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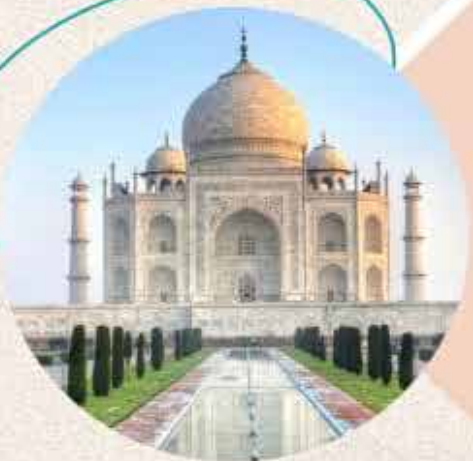
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Sports News

Tiger Woods accepts special exemption into 124th U.S. Open

Tiger Woods has accepted a special exemption to play the 124th U.S. Open, the United States Golf Association (USGA) announced Thursday.

Woods will make his 23rd start at the U.S. Open, third at Pinehurst No. 2 and first since 2020 at Winged Foot Golf Club. It's the first time in Woods' career that he didn't qualify for the U.S. Open on his own merit. Woods' five-year major championship exemption for winning the 2019 Masters ran out earlier this year.

Woods, 48, has won the 2000, 2002 and 2008 U.S. Open Championships in addition to 12 other major championships and 82 total PGA TOUR victories in his Hall of Fame career. His nine USGA titles, matched only by Bobby Jones, include three consecutive U.S. Junior Amateurs (1991-1993) followed by three straight U.S. Amateurs (1994-1996) and an overall USGA match play record of 42-3. "The U.S. Open, our national championship, is a truly special event for our game and one that has helped define my career," said Woods. "I'm honored to receive this exemption and could not be more excited for the opportunity



to compete in this year's U.S. Open, especially at Pinehurst, a venue that means so much to the game."

One of golf's five Grand Slam winners, Woods' incredible 15 major championship victories are second all-time to only Jack Nicklaus (18) and include three wins at The Open, four at the PGA Championship and five at the Masters. Most recently, he

triumphed at Augusta National in 2019 to bookend an 11-year stretch between major championships.

"The story of the U.S. Open could not be written without Tiger Woods," said USGA Chief Championships Officer John Bodenhamer. "From his 15-stroke victory at Pebble Beach in 2000 to his inspiring win on a broken leg at Torrey

Pines in 2008, this championship is simply better when Tiger is in the field, and his accomplishments in the game undoubtedly made this an easy decision for our special exemption committee."

As an amateur, Woods was a member of the 1995 USA Walker Cup Team and 1994 USA World Amateur Team. A seven-time member of the U.S.

Ryder Cup Team, he served as assistant captain for the 2016 matches, and he has competed in nine Presidents Cups, including as a playing captain in 2019.

The U.S. Open will be contested June 13-16 on Pinehurst Resort & Country Club's Course No. 2, in the village of Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Power Rankings: Wells Fargo Championship

Try as he might, but Scottie Scheffler can't win everything. That theory becomes a fact when he doesn't play. The winner of the fourth and fifth Signature Events of 2024 is sitting out the sixth in advance of the second major of the season – the PGA Championship. Of course, as the Masters champion, he's the only who can convert the single-season grand slam, so that narrative will rise into focus in earnest next week.

In the meantime, 69 commitments at this week's Wells Fargo Championship aren't complaining about Scheffler's decision to rest. Details of what the field is chasing at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, North Carolina, how the course has changed and more is below. Scheffler is one of two qualifiers for the Wells Fargo who has opted not to peg it at Quail Hollow, but he can absorb it. His margin of 2,022.629 FedExCup points over Wells Fargo defending champion Wyndham

Clark in second is greater than Clark's season total (1,892.371). This week's winner will bank 700 FedExCup points (and \$3.6 million), so any impact on Scheffler is, well, there isn't one.

The other qualifier who's out is Ludvig Åberg. The Swede is resting a sore knee.

Wells Fargo is one of five Signature Events without a cut, so all 69 are poised to gain. Quality of the competition is one thing, but advances in the ranks will be especially well-earned on a discerning track.

Quail Hollow is a par 71 that's hosted the array of top-shelf tournaments over time. Its reputation speaks for itself. Now it's even longer and in the most challenging of stretches.

Despite its self-description and seemingly constant measurement, the heralded three-hole conclusion that is the

"Green Mile" has grown by 20 yards. Course modifications since last year's edition yielded a reconfigured tee area that now allows the par-4 16th to play up to 529 yards.

A similar change at the par-3 13th has reduced that hole by three yards on the scorecard, so Quail Hollow officially tips at 7,558 yards.

The old Champion Bermudagrass greens also have been replaced by TifEagle Bermuda. They are overseeded and historically can touch 13 feet on the Stimpmeter. The thickest of the rough flanking fairways typically is 2 1/2 inches tall.

Last year's full field of 156 averaged 71.230, easily the lowest since the course was transformed from a par 72 to its current par for the 2017 PGA Championship. With a smaller and stronger field overall, scoring could dip even lower this

week. However, it might be frontloaded thanks to the potential for softer turf due to recent and the persistent threat for rain through Thursday.

The opening round also forecasts the strongest of the prevailing gusts from a southwesterly direction, but they should be moderate at worst. It then trades calmer air with cooler and drier conditions for the remainder. This will give Quail Hollow a tremendous opportunity to present its best self by Sunday's conclusion when par projects to be a fine score.



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	T. Pendrith POS 1 R4 -4	-23
	B. Kohles POS 2 R4 -5	-22
	A. Noren POS 3 R4 -6	-21
	S.H. Kim POS T4 R4 -7	-20
	A. Rai POS T4 R4 -7	-20
	B. An POS T4 R4 -6	-20
	M. Wallace POS T4 R4 -3	-20
	J. Knapp POS 8 R4 -1	-19

BAY FC 2024 SCHEDULE









HOME

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

AWAY

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

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Sports



America Fiji Sports Commission In USA Confirmed USFIJI-TIMES Digital Young Kulas Will Travel USA In August 2024

As the countdown to the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup intensifies, the Digicel Fiji U20 Young Kulas are gearing up for a pivotal stage in their journey. Before they set foot on the global stage in Colombia, the Young Kulas will embark on a crucial leg of their preparation – friendly matches in the United States.

In a strategic move to fine-tune their skills and acclimatize to international competition, the Young Kulas will travel to the United States in August for a series of friendly matches. This overseas stint will not only provide the team with invaluable match experience but

also offer them the opportunity to test their strategies and tactics against diverse opponents. During their time in the USA, the Young Kulas will face off against local college teams that will challenge their abilities and foster team cohesion. Additionally, there are plans for a match against a combined Fijian-US Team, adding an extra layer of excitement to their pre-World Cup preparations.

Coach Angeline Chua says that the significance of these friendly matches cannot be overstated. They serve as a crucial platform for the Young Kulas to assess their strengths and weaknesses, identify areas

for improvement, and fine-tune their game plan ahead of the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup.

"These friendly matches in the USA are an invaluable opportunity for our team to fine-tune our skills and gel as a unit before the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup. We are excited to face diverse opponents and test our strategies on the international stage," says Chua.

With the support of the Fiji Football Liaison Executive in North America Narendra Narayan, America Fiji Sports Commission (AFGC), the USA Fijian community and sponsors Digicel Fiji, the Young Kulas are fully committed to making the

most of this opportunity. "Each match, each training session, is a stepping stone towards their ultimate goal – to make a mark on the global stage and showcase the best of Fijian women's football". As they prepare to embark on this final leg of their journey before the World Cup, anticipation and excitement are running high among players, coaches, and fans alike.

"The Young Kulas are ready to seize the moment, leaving no stone unturned in their quest for success." With the friendly matches in the USA serving as a crucial stepping stone, the Digicel Fiji U20 Young Kulas are already working hard with

regular camps at home to make their mark on the FIFA U20 Women's World Cup, kicking off at the end of August.

However, the preparations do not end there. Prior to their US venture, the team will be participating in a Tri-Nation tournament during the FIFA window in July. This tournament, slated to occur during the final five weeks of the camp at the Suva Academy, will serve as a platform for the Young Kulas to further hone their skills and cohesion as a team.



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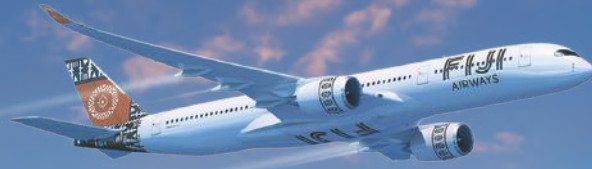
Sports

Stockton Celebrates Eid Mela with Fun and Festivities!

The Nur Center of Stockton hosted a hugely successful Eid Mela event, bringing the community together for a joyous celebration. The well-organized festivities offered something for everyone, with engaging activities for kids, exciting volleyball matches, and a thrilling soccer tournament. Our brother Ashim of Stockton was the man of the show who worked with his entire community to lead and make this into a successful event. In the tournament's nail-biting final, Natomas emerged victorious over Hayward's Flying Fijians with a decisive 4-1 score. A huge thank you to everyone who joined the Nur Center in this fantastic celebration. We appreciate your time and participation that made it such a success! Special thanks to the Nur Center for organizing yet another amazing event. We can't wait to see you all again next year!







Happy new year

Wishing you a year filled with boundless adventures, incredible destinations, and unforgettable moments. Let the winds of 2024 carry you to new heights.



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