



THE US FIJI TIMES

World's Largest Fiji Newspaper Out Of Republic of Fiji

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Happy Diwali



USFT CEO Rocky Ali Buksh Praises Sanatan Organising Team For a Job Well Done.



Australian Sanatan Sports deserve best commendations for hosting a very successful Sanatan World Cup this year.

Every aspect of this grand tourney was very well coordinated and had the praise of both the teams and the public for its

grandeur display of hospitality.

The overseeing elements of the event, particularly the media representatives expressed similar sentiment on this precise execution. A rare unified conclusive sentiment was over-heard amongst them.

The hallmark of the achievement is the total absence of any kind disagreement or confusion on and off the field and this has to be attributed to the level of expectation set for everyone to see this event only as a good sporting event inviting Fijian

comradeship. The event has no doubt has set the bar high and to serve as a standard for others to follow through.

USFT CEO Rocky Ali Buksh a 20-year media veteran who has covered many tournaments all over the world by local Fi-

jian organizations expressed a very sincere congratulation to the organizing team for a work well done and wishes them very best in their endeavor to deliver with excellence.



Sydney Suva crowned World Cup champions

2024 SYDNEY AUST Sydney Suva beat Labasa 2-0 in a thrilling final to win the Rams Group of Companies 10th Sanatan World Cup. Youngster Marcus Lal opened Suva's account early in the match before missing a penalty. Brothers Anish Khem and Ashnil Raju toiled hard to propel the Babasiga Lions back into the match but Sydney's defence ably led by goalkeeper Jerome Narayan, Krishneel Dutt and Kishan Sami. Former Nadi marksman Shivneel Pillay sealed the deal for the hosts with a superb finish midway in the second spell before Labasa was reduced to ten players following the sending off of Melvin Mani. Meanwhile, Narayan won the Golden Glove, Lal walked away with the Golden Boot after netting seven goals in the tournament while Pranit Singh was named the Most Valuable Player of the World Cup and Sydney Suva was named the Best Disciplined Team. TAGS Shivneel Pillay 10th Sanatan World Cup Sydney Suva Labasa Sanatan Marcus Lal



THE US FIJI TIMES

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FIJIAN GOVERNMENT



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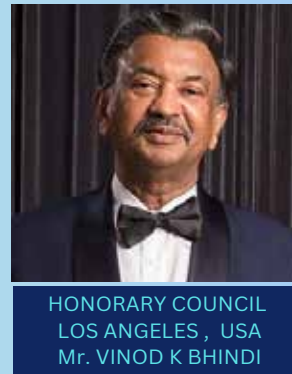
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THE US FIJI TIMES PROUD OF ITS SERVICE

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

Vinaka – Rocky Buksh

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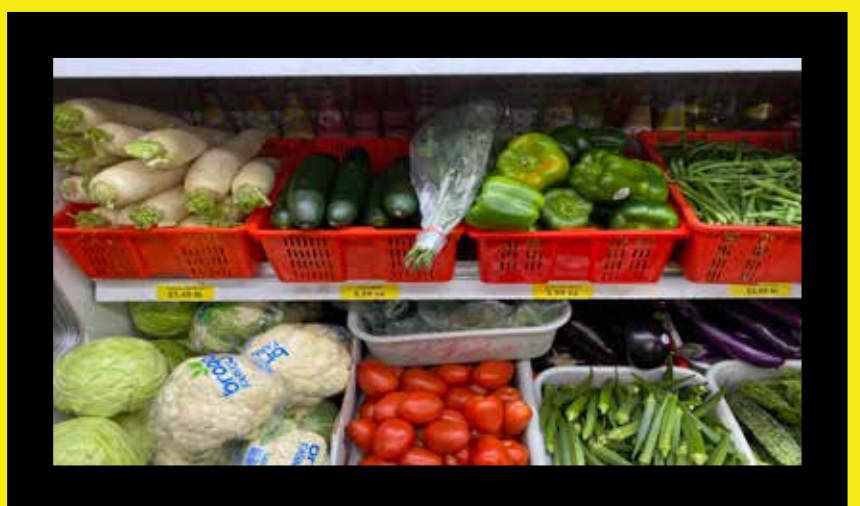
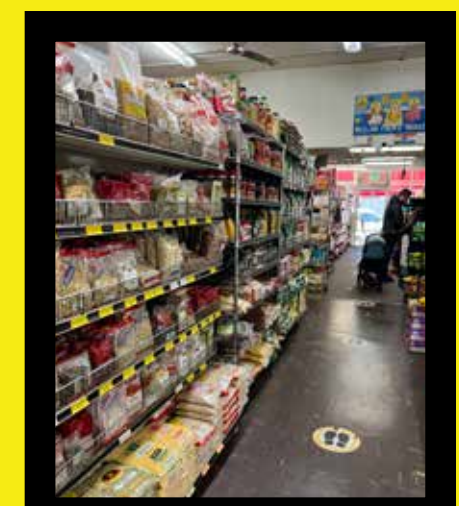
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Fiji News

COALITION GOVERNMENT STRENGTHENS EFFORTS TO COMBAT CIGUATERA FISH POISONING

The Minister for Fisheries and Forestry, Hon. Alitia Bainivalu highlighted the Coalition Governments efforts in managing ciguatera fish poisoning (CFP) or Damu or red snapper in the country, during parliament yesterday. (01.10.24) Hon. Bainivalu stated that ciguatera fish poisoning is prevalent from the consumption of reef fish that have accumulated toxins, especially during warmer months or cyclones seasons, from November to April. The Minister added, to strengthen its efforts to combat Ciguatera Fish Poisoning, the Ministry of Fisheries has established 24 fisheries service centres across the country. "These centres supply ice to fishers to preserve

fish, maintain freshness, and prevent the release of enzymes from fish, which speeds up the fish's spoilage rate and causes fish poisoning." Additionally, the Minister stressed that the Ministry's Advisory Divisions, serving in the four divisions continue to provide post-harvest training to licensed fishers on how to maintain seafood freshness and quality. "The training includes the proper use of ice and adequate hygiene during harvesting, processing, distribution, and marketing of the fish product." The Minister also commended the tremendous support the Government of Japan have provided through the Overseas Fishery Cooperation Foundation in installing and



monitoring ice machines in the 24 stations, including ongoing training and capacity building of our Technical Services staff in operating and servicing the machines.

NES PROGRAMME DRIVES GROWTH FOR FIJI

The success rate of the National Export Strategy (NES) programme has surged from 55% in the 2022/2023 financial year to 85% in 2023/2024. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Micro and Small Medium Enterprises, and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica made these remarks in parliament this week. "On average, each NES recipient supports at least nine jobs and achieves an annual turnover of \$58,000," Minister Kamikamica noted. "In the last financial year, the Monitoring and Evaluation Team found that 11 of the 13 recipients are highly active, with some even advancing to large business status." Since its inception, the NES programme has invested over \$16 million in 120 micro, small, and medium

enterprises (MSMEs) across sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. "The National Export Strategy Programme is designed to foster a dynamic export environment, driving sustainable economic growth and ensuring Fijian products succeed in global markets." DPM Kamikamica emphasized that the programme aims to enhance Fiji's export capacity and competitiveness, with a strong focus on economic diversification. "Exports are essential for driving diversification by providing our MSMEs with financial support to access international markets. A diversified export base creates jobs across sectors, increases foreign exchange earnings, and strengthens our overall economic stability." Through the National Export



Strategy, Minister Kamikamica added, the government is laying the foundation for a more vibrant, diverse economy that delivers real benefits for all Fijians. DPM Kamikamica was responding to questions about how the NES promotes export and economic diversification.

FOCUS IS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE: DPM PRASAD

The government is firmly focused on delivering on the services to people and to improve quality of life including health, education, roads, water supply, electricity, cemeteries and agriculture. This was reiterated by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Hon. Professor Biman Prasad in a stakeholder meeting with Seaqaqa residents, farmers and landowners during his North tour last week. He was joined by

the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Workplace Relations, Hon. Agni Deo Singh and other respective stakeholders. The farmers thanked the Government for various assistance towards the agriculture sector focusing on the needs of farmers both in Sugar and non-Sugar sector. Professor Prasad also advised the residents on the developments that are planned and in particular on Vanua Levu Tourism Development Project.

The projects objectives, he said, are to strengthen targeted infrastructure and essential services, increase coordination and private sector participation in tourism, and enhance environmental sustainability of tourism assets. With this objective, the livelihood of people will be positively impacted with new opportunities created in the employment sector and demand in the agriculture sector.



Fiji News

NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY TO ADDRESS COMPLEXITIES OF HOUSING ISSUES & URBANISATION IN FIJI

A review of the 2011 Housing Policy by the Coalition Government is important in addressing the complexities of housing issues and urbanisation, which continues to increase worldwide and in Fiji. The Minister for Housing Local Government Hon. Maciu Nalumisa while speaking on the update on Phase 2 of the National Housing Policy Review, said that a consolidated engagement is needed to drive transformative change in Fiji's housing sector and to enhance the effectiveness of our policies. "Urbanisation is rising both globally and within our country. By 2050, it is projected that 70 percent of the global population will reside in urban areas, while locally an additional 30 percent of the population is expected to live in urban areas by 2030." Minister Nalumisa added that rapid urban growth necessitates the adoption of sustainable practices that integrate land development and promote legislative reforms in enhancing urban planning. "The Coalition Government's commitment is to transform the housing sector, which is in alignment with



Sustainable Development Goal (DSG) 11 and stands to create sustainable, safe, inclusive, and resilient citizen communities." The Ministry of Housing was allocated \$32.4 million in the 2024-25 Budget, of which \$63,000 is for the implementation of a National Housing Policy Plan. The Budget stated in light of the current housing

shortage, addressing housing issues and policies is critical not only from a social perspective but also as a part of Fiji's economic development strategy. This commitment reflects the government's priority to improve every Fijian's quality of life by enhancing access to essential services and infrastructure and by developing a

housing sector that is resilient to climate change impacts. "The revised Housing Policy integrated sites generated from thorough background research and stable consultations, ensuring strong alignment with Fiji's Strategic Framework, such as the three-year National Development Plan (NDP) 2025-2027 and the 5-year NDP 2025-2029

that was launched recently." "The Ministry of Housing will meticulously analyse all public submissions and comments, providing a comprehensive summary of consultation's outcome to Cabinet alongside a final draft of the National Housing Policy for consideration and endorsement," Minister Nalumisa said.

CRITICAL ROLE OF NALEBA YOUTH TRAINING CENTER

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Hon. Professor Biman Prasad was briefed on the important role that the Naleba Youth Training Centre is playing. The Centre is providing much needed training to the youths of nine clusters of communities from the three provinces of Vanua Levu. It currently has 32 youths enrolled who are undertaking Certificate Level 4 in Organic Agriculture. This Certificate Qualification provides the youths hands on training on vegetable farming, nursery management, liquid organic manure bi-product, bio-gas

generation, composting along with livestock farming of Tilapia, layer birds and piggery. The training centre also supports in facilitating trainings under its short courses for in the following areas: • Weaving and Screen Painting • Sports Development - Referring Level 1 • Financial Literacy • Cadet; and • Drug awareness Professor Prasad while acknowledging the Centre for delivering the much-needed trainings was also delighted to witness the determination of the students hailing from far rural and remote villages and communities. He empathised Govern-



ments focus referencing the New National Development Plan under 'Chapter 1: Cross cutting priorities with the focus: People and Community Empowerment' where NDP encourages, and supports plans and programs conceptualised at community level including

areas of poverty eradication, provision of basic amenities, creation of economic opportunities, social enterprises, women, youth, and child development, and those relating to improving their livelihood and quality of life. He also had the opportunity to hear about

the challenges the Centre faces in terms of transportation, aged infrastructure and equipment, need for boarding facilities and transport to enable the Centre deliver trainings to the current and many other youths from the rural and remote communities and villages.



Dolphin Island, the Definition of Exclusivity, Fiji

Alex van Heeren, of Huka Lodge fame, designed Dolphin Island to be like no other. A concept of luxury in deliberate isolation, complemented by unspoiled natural beauty and true privacy, surrounded by gin clear waters. The large main bure enjoys an elevated position above the infinity pool, and the four guest bure suites featuring heart timber floors, plaster walls, stone tiles, wooden shutters, high ceilings and the latest in air-conditioned comfort. A hilltop honeymoon bure, private beach, jetty and substantial back-of-house facilities complete the picture. There is ample room to increase the accommodation inventory. Dolphin Island can be purchased in its entirety, by negotiation, OR Register interest to purchase one or more of only 12 shares in a yet to be formed NewZealand, company which will own the island outright, for US\$1 million per 1/12 th share and secure exclusive use of freehold Dolphin Island for a month each year of ownership. Dolphin Island, is just 20 minutes by boat from shore, on the tip of Viti Levu, Fiji, 2.5 hours by private car from Nadi International Airport. Float planes and helicopters offer an alternative connection.

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News

US Fiji Chamber of Commerce Mixer at South San Francisco Library a Huge Success



South San Francisco, CA — The US Fiji Chamber of Commerce hosted a vibrant and successful mixer on Saturday, September 21st at the South San Francisco Library Parks and Recreation Center. Over 120 guests, traveling from as far as Santa Rosa, Sacramento, Fairfield, Roseville, and throughout the Bay Area, came together for an afternoon of networking, business exchanges, and cultural celebration.

Notable attendees included South San Francisco Mayor James Coleman, Vice Mayor Eddie Flores, San Carlos City Council Member Pranita Ven-

katesh, and Fiji Trade Commissioner to North America, Alika Cooper. The event was co-hosted by the South San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and drew together a dynamic crowd of business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals eager to connect and explore opportunities within the growing Fijian business community.

Attendees were treated to Fijian food, cocktails, and traditional kava, while exchanging business cards and engaging in lively discussions. The event showcased the creativity and business acumen of the Fijian community, which spans vari-

ous industries, including senior care, real estate, restaurants, consulting, skincare, investments, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

Prominent US Fiji Chamber of Commerce members in attendance included President Narendra Narayan, Vinay Nair, Raj Prasad, Mary Prem, Mukhtar Ali, and Ukesh Chand. Their leadership and commitment to fostering Fijian business success were on full display throughout the event.

The US Fiji Chamber of Commerce continues to grow as a vital platform for Fijian

associated businesses and professionals, offering networking opportunities, resources, and support to help them thrive in the competitive Bay Area marketplace. With events like this mixer, the Chamber is dedicated to promoting collaboration, innovation, and economic growth among Fijians and their allies.

For those interested in joining the US Fiji Chamber of Commerce and becoming part of this dynamic network of professionals, please visit:

<https://usfijichamberofcommerce.com/first-fiji-chamber-of-commerce-launches-in-san-fran->

cisco-uniting-fijians-and-businesses-in-the-usa/ for more information. About the US Fiji Chamber of Commerce: The US Fiji Chamber of Commerce is committed to advancing the interests of Fijian entrepreneurs, businesses, and professionals in North America. With a rich history of connecting members across industries, the Chamber provides a forum for networking, business development, and cultural exchange, helping to foster growth and success among the Fijian diaspora and their business allies.

Wish very one Happy Diwali from all of at US Fiji Chamber of Commerce.

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Fiji News

COALITION GOVT COMMITTED TO DELIVERING THE BEST

The Coalition government is committed to delivering the best of service to the elderly in the country. These sentiments echoed across the parliament as Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, spoke on government’s social pension scheme. “Our Social Pension Scheme is one of the best in the Asia-Pacific Region,” says Minister Tabuya. In parliament, Minister Tabuya said Fiji’s status was recently acknowledged during a Regional Conference on Population Ageing in Bali Indonesia whereby Director Social Protection was asked to be part of the panel discussion on how social pensions can enhance old age financial security in emerging Asia Pacific using Fiji as an example. “Recognizing the ongoing evolution of Fiji’s social assistance towards a comprehensive life cycle approach, the programs

are reviewed and managed accordingly. “Over the years the benefit amount are adjusted, the age eligibility is reduced. We started off in 2013 with elderly citizens at the age of 70 and above with a benefit of \$30 per month.

It was reduced to 68 years in 2016, further down to 66 and down to 65 in 2018 till now. The allowance was increased from \$30.00 to \$50 and later to \$100 per month.

With the inception of the Coalition Government the allowance is now \$115.00 for those aged 65-69 years old. For those that are 70 years and above, they are now receiving \$125.00 plus their \$25 Transport Assistance Cash top up to subsidize the diverse transport needs of older persons in Fiji. We currently have a total of more than 52,000 individuals benefiting from this scheme. Minister Tabuya said



the department is committed in the review of all existing Social Protection Programs including the Social Pension Scheme under our reform agenda to ensure improve targeting, ad-

equacy and efficiency. “One of the focus area is to digitize records and automate all our processes since we are doing it manually for the past years. We are also looking at integrat-

ing our system to other existing pensions, superannuation and BDM system to allow validation of pension status of applicants and life status of beneficiaries respectively”.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM; POPPY APPEAL LAUNCHED IN SUVA

The annual poppy appeal was launched today at the Stanley Brown Naval Base in Suva to support the selfless sacrifice of past and present servicemen and women who have served their country and their people. Originating from the poem in Flanders Fields during World War I, the ‘Red Poppy’ flower has become a universal emblem of remembrance and symbolises both the pain and horrors of war and the courage and sacrifice of those who served. Hon. Sakiaisi Ditoka, the Minister for Rural and Maritime Develop-

ment and Disaster Management, while launching the appeal, said the ‘Poppy Appeal’ is our collective act of remembrance. “It unites us as we honour the legacies of the fallen, paying homage to their bravery, resilience and hope even amidst adversity. The Red Poppy is a symbol that not only reminds us to appreciate the sacrifices made but also serves as a lesson for future generations to strive for a world where peace prevails,” said Minister Ditoka. “It teaches us to be appreciative of the sacrifices of those before

us and warrants virtuous lessons to those of us in the present so that we may pass those lessons on to those who will come after us in a world where humanity yearns for everlasting peace and serenity.” “As we come together to launch the month-long Poppy Appeal today, let’s take a moment to honour the lessons of the past and reflect on the deep symbolic values and virtues embodied by the red poppy.” Elaborating further, Minister Ditoka said that it is important to remind ourselves that in times of war and conflict, we face the heartbreaking prospect of losing our loved ones, our connections, and the very peace that binds us together.

For the fallen, the Minister said no word can express the extent of their loss, and the sacrifice they made will never be forgotten. “Let us also keep in mind the impact our actions may have on future generations. They will be responsible for rebuilding, reconciling, and reigniting the flames of hope and prosperity,” adds Minister Ditoka. In today’s interconnected world, the impacts of war transcend borders. “We must stand strong, upholding the values of peace and unity,



ensuring that the lessons from past conflicts guide our strategies and policies and remembering those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom,” Minister Ditoka stated. “The Coalition Government is dedicated to promoting the values of peace, unity, and prosperity across the Pacific. Our vision of an ocean of peace reflects our desire for a region where tolerance and harmony prevail.” “This path gives us hope for a better future and motivates us to embrace the values represented by the poppy as we navigate the uncertain waters of tomorrow.” The

Poppy Appeal will culminate on Remembrance Day which falls on the 11th of November every year. Remembrance Day, also known as Poppy Day, is observed in Commonwealth member states to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty since the end of the First World War. The day is marked by war remembrances in many non-Commonwealth countries. Remembrance Day is observed on 11 November to recall the end of First World War hostilities, which ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918.



Fiji News

FIJI STRENGTHENS GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS TO COMBAT CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ONLINE

The Coalition Government is committed in keeping our people safe both in offline and online spaces. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica highlighted this as he updated parliament on the efforts undertaken by the National Taskforce to address Pornography in Fiji (1.10.24) Hon. Kamikamica said this taskforce was approved by the Cabinet earlier this year to better understand the societal risks of pornography in Fiji and to provide recommendations to effectively address those risks. “The taskforce held an introductory meeting earlier this year, with active participation and contributions from the Opposition, various Government Ministries and agencies, telecommunications companies, NGOs, civil society organisations, academia, as well as religious and community organisations, each of them providing a unique and important perspective during the discussions.” Hon. Kamikamica added as the taskforce delves into the realities of these issues, it is confronted with alarming statistics that



highlight its pervasive nature and the profound impact it has on our society. He highlighted how, in one case, a network provider reported that over three months, 626.13 terabytes of data

were used for adult content. He explained that this was the equal to storing data from 100 million books or watching movies non-stop for 150 years. The taskforce has also forged partnerships with

international bodies such as the U.S. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NC-MEC) and has started training law enforcement in Fiji on how to handle reports of child sexual

exploitation material. Hon. Kamikamica concluded that the fight against child sexual abuse online and pornography requires a collective responsibility from all sectors of the society.

COALITION GOVERNMENT FOCUSES ON WATER-ENERGY NEXUS FOR CLIMATE FINANCING

The Coalition Government plans to expand international efforts to improve water services in the country, given the limitations of Fiji’s national coffers. The Minister for Public Works, Transport and Meteorological Services, Ro Filipe Tuisawau stated that water cannot be delivered without energy, so when discussing climate financing, the water-energy nexus is crucial. In this regard, opportunities must be efficiently utilised. “We must remember that for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Fiji, the availability and accessibility of basic utilities such as energy and water are of paramount importance for daily survival, particularly for our grassroots communities. This includes not only water and energy but also roads.” Minister Tuisawau emphasised the need to champion water-energy annexes

at the grassroots level as a means to alleviate poverty, serving as a catalyst for transformational impact on daily lives. “We must target this nexus when considering climate financing, especially in the scope of assessing natural spring or groundwater resources using the latest solar voltaic technology, such as solar-powered borehole pumps or solar-powered desalination plants.” This can be addressed through innovative programmes using smart national-level frameworks, which can serve as a transformational catalyst, especially for maritime communities. “The Coalition Government has taken a significant step in its relationship with catchment landowners, with Cabinet approval for the development of a framework and policy for compensation for standing trees in catchment areas.” “As a gov-



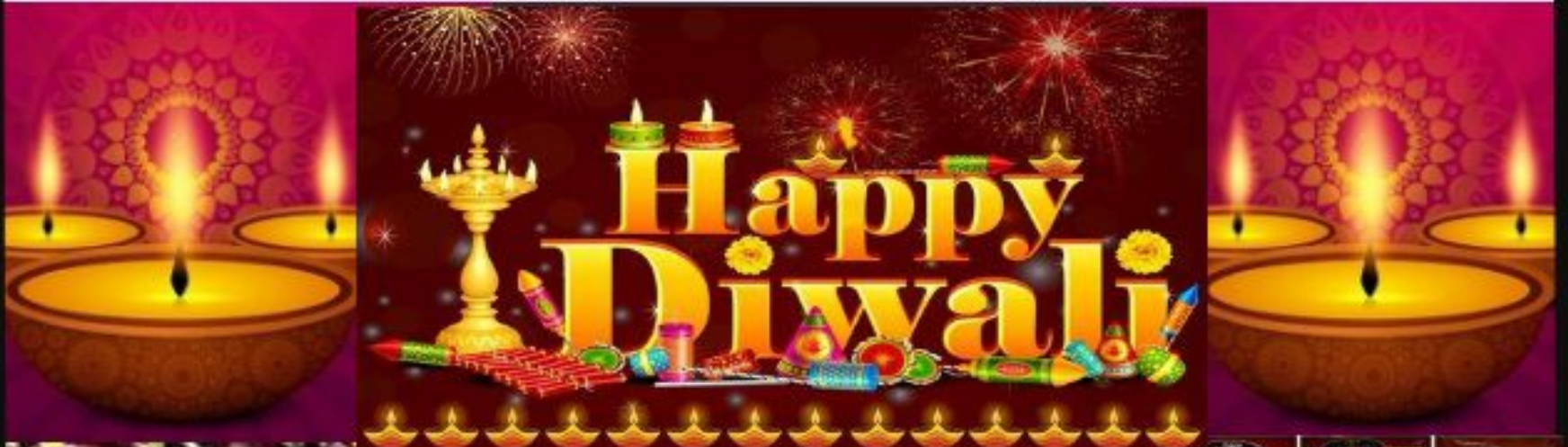
ernment, we will continue to listen to all stakeholders, especially

landowners, and address their issues within our current legal

frameworks.”

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Fiji News

REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON PACIFIC REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE MOBILITY UNDERWAY

The regional consultation on the Implementation Plan of the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility was convened at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) headquarters in Suva. It brought together Forum member states and Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies to discuss the Implementation Plan of the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility that was endorsed at the 52nd Pacific

soon as practicable. Fiji and Tuvalu are Co-Chairs of the Joint Working Group on the Regional Framework. The Joint Working Group has been overseeing the process of putting together a Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility since 2019. It is supported by technical partners: International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Inter-



(PDD), and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). In opening the consultations yesterday, the Fiji Co-Chair of the Joint Working Group, Ms. Keleni Seruvatu, who is the Director of the Multilateral Affairs Bureau at the Fiji Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated, "Let us not forget the trust our Pacific peoples have placed in us. This is not merely a policy workshop—it is an opportunity to safeguard our future. The Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility gives us the chance to shape a future where climate mobility is managed with care, compassion, and foresight." "As you engage in discussions, think beyond the present. Think about the people who will be affected

if we surpass 1.5 to 2 degrees of warming. Think about the innovation required to address their needs. The work we do today will define the future of our region and the generations to come," Ms. Seruvatu stated. In the call for action, Ms. Seruvatu said that, "incorporating traditional knowledge into the Implementation Plan of the Pacific Regional Framework on Climate Mobility is essential and that by blending the traditional wisdom with modern science and policy, we can create innovative, culturally grounded solutions." "The success of this Framework hinges on how effectively we implement it. The work over the next day and a half will set the tone for years

to come. We must ensure that the Implementation Plan is not just comprehensive but actionable and grounded in inclusivity. Women, youth, people with disabilities, indigenous communities — their voices must guide our efforts. We need partnerships that bring the resources and expertise necessary for meaningful progress," Ms. Seruvatu urged. Ms. Leba Gaunavinaka from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change presented Fiji's national efforts on planned relocation. The Regional Framework and Implementation Plan contributes towards Fiji's Foreign Policy White Paper priorities on Climate Change.



Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Forum leaders further mandated that the Framework's Implementation Plan be finalised as

national Labour Organization (ILO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Platform on Disaster Displacement





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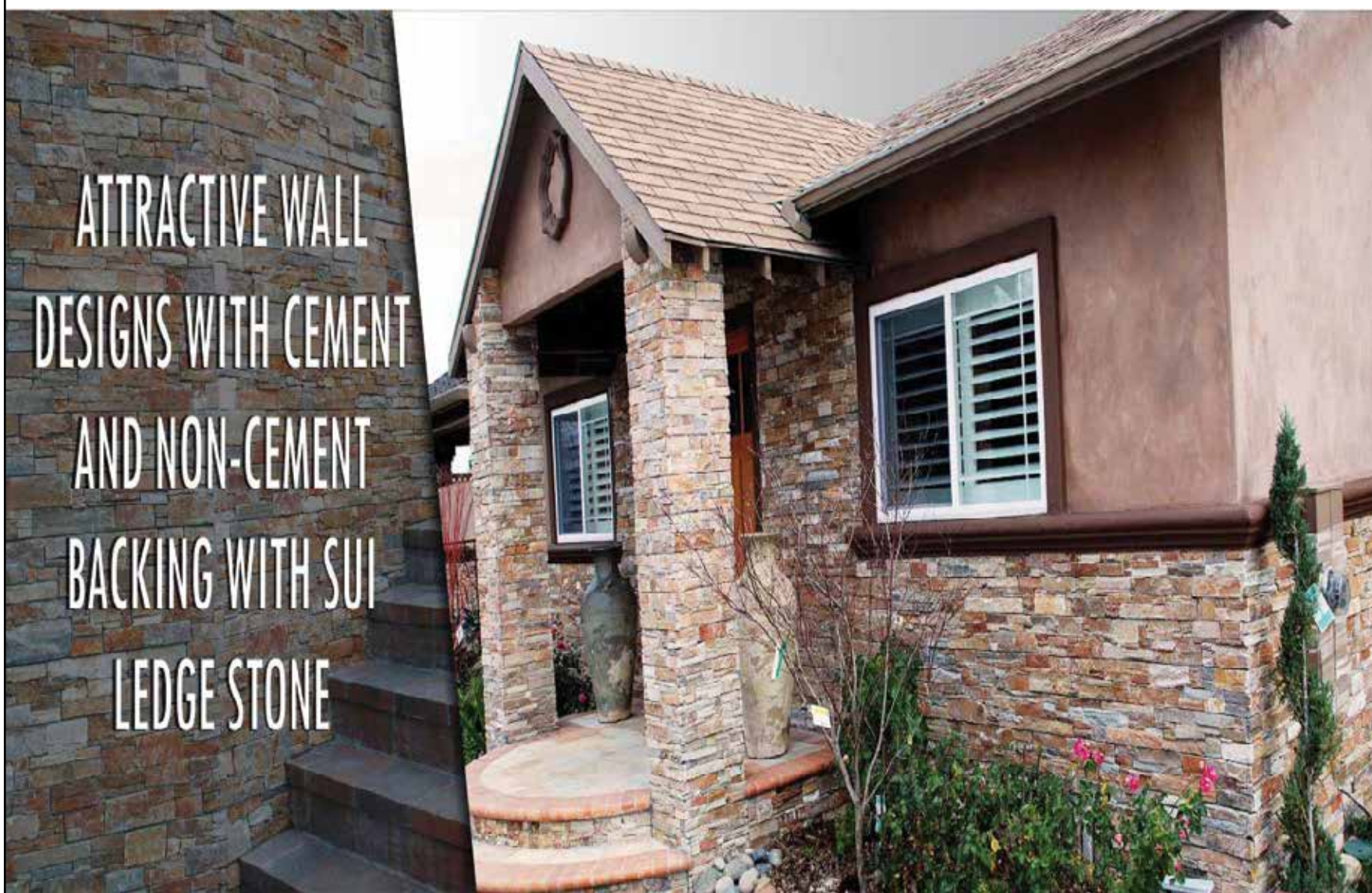
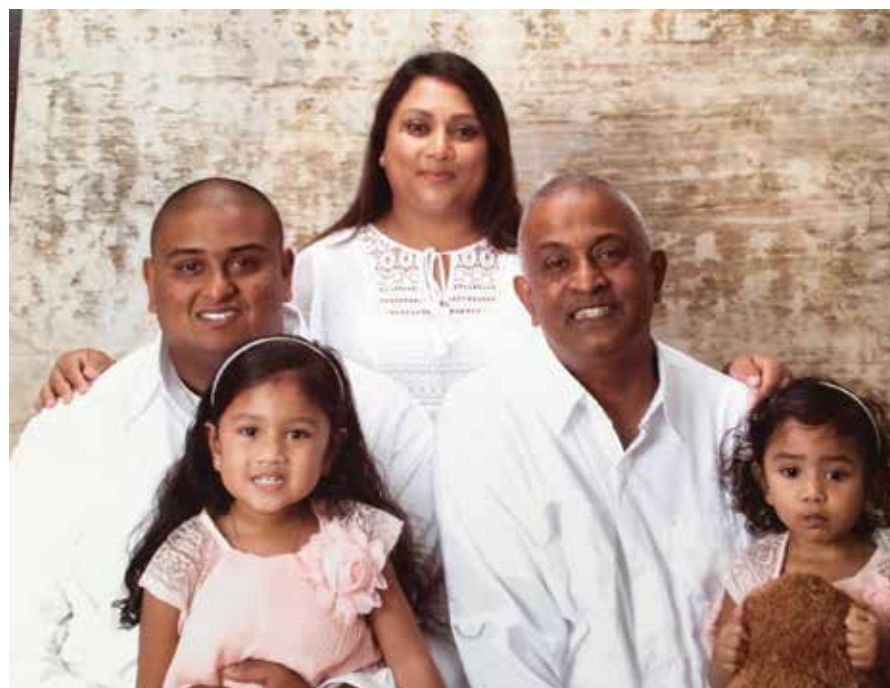




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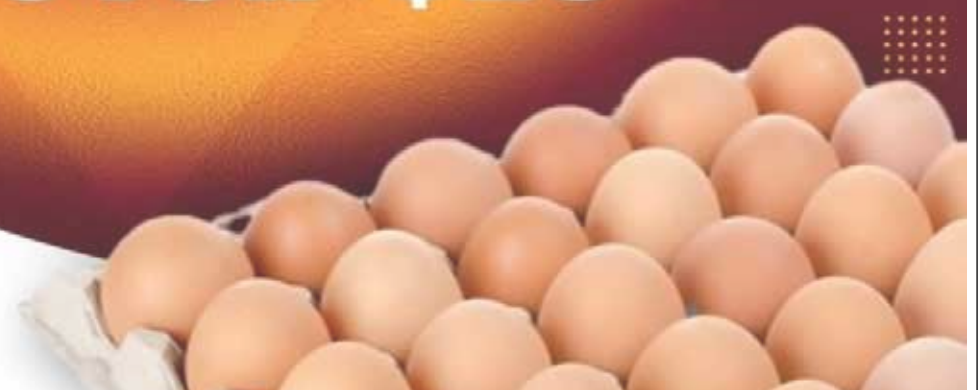
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Diwali

Diwali: Spreading the Lights of Happiness

It's a Festival that illuminates the Earth as well as the Skies and brings joy abound on this world. It is a festival when the whole of India transcends into a land of myriad lamps. Deepavali, the Festival of Lights has all the charm, grandeur and splendour that can even illuminate our minds and hearts while also promoting the much needed peace, harmony and brotherhood in the society. It is a Festival that unifies every religion, every home and every heart. The festival of Deepavali has a deep spiritual meaning, it essentially means the Awareness of the Inner Light. In a way it is the celebration of the awakening and awareness of the Inner Light which has the power to outshine darkness and clear all obstacles in life. Deepavali literally means a row or array of lights. Celebrated on the thirteenth/ fourteenth day in the dark half of the Kartika Masa (October – November), it is a celebration of light despite being the darkest night of the darkest period. As every festival in India even the Festival of Deepavali has its own inner significance than mere lighting diyas, wearing new clothes, exchanging sweets and bursting crackers. Diwali's essence lies in the sloka, 'Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya' which means "Lead me from darkness to light." Similarly, we have to light the lamp of happiness, the lamp of prosperity and the lamp



of knowledge to dispel sorrow, poverty as well as disease. As per the Vedanta, every devout Hindu has to fill his heart with the oil of love, light the wick with the knowledge of Truth and ward off ignorance. It further states that we can kindle light in many hearts just like a Diya which can light many Diyas. One of the legends associated with Diwali that Lord Krishna killed demon Narakasura to free the Gopikas, in a way signifies that we have to fight the evil or demonic forces within us by following the path of righteousness. The festival of

Diwali reminds each one of us to understand that life is much more than a mere journey and it's a continuous quest for truth and knowledge. Unity in Diversity: The legends regarding Diwali also highlight the philosophical truth of the Vedas. The Festival of Diwali binds people and is a synthesis of spirituality, religion, culture and social values. In Northern India, people celebrate the Festival of Lights to mark the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya along with Seeta and brother Lakshman after a 14 year exile. While in South India it signifies the victory of

Lord Krishna over demon Narakasura. Ultimately both remind us of the necessity to destroy evil forces and strengthen divine forces. In Western India, Diwali is associated with the legend which states that on this day Lord Vishnu in his 5th incarnation as Vamana, had rescued Lakshmi from the prison of King Bali. This is another reason behind worshipping and invoking Goddess Lakshmi during Diwali. As per a legend from the epic Mahabharata, it was Karthik Amavasya when the Pancha Pandavas returned from their 12 years of exile. It is said the people who loved the Pandavas celebrated the day by lighting thousands of earthen lamps and distributing sweets. History says the greatest Hindu king Vikramaditya was coronated on the day of Diwali, which also makes the festival historic and not merely mythological. The Festival of Diwali is also of great significance to Jains as it is said it was on this day that Lord Mahaveera attained Nirvana or eternal bliss.

The Sikhs too have a reason to celebrate Diwali. History says that it was on this auspicious day that Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Sikh Guru was freed from captivity of Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor. Sikhs also celebrate Diwali to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone for the Golden Temple in 1577. Sweet Temptations: Diwali is that Festival when

sweets continue to tempt us throughout. If there is one festival which boasts of loads and loads of sweets, then it is undoubtedly Deepavali which is just incomplete with sweets. Sweet boxes are generously exchanged among friends and relatives, in a way contributing towards harmonious co-existence. In the modern day world, Diwali celebrations are not just confined to India, but is celebrated by Indians across the globe with the same festive spirit. It helps in fostering a sense of brotherhood as it encourages people to come together and celebrate the festival regardless of their background. The Divine light burns within us and all around us. Let this Diwali bring joy and happiness abound for humanity by dispelling the darkness of ignorance and many more evils that are creating havoc on mankind. Let the Lights of Happiness spread across the globe. It is all about discovering the knowledge of our infinite potential and dispelling ignorance. Diwali is also resplendent of the dawn of knowledge through the inner light, that is the enlightenment of the soul. The Spiritual Factor: As per the Vedanta, every devout Hindu has to fill his heart with the oil of love, light the wick with the knowledge of Truth and ward off ignorance. It further states that we can kindle light in many hearts just like a Diya which can light many Diyas.





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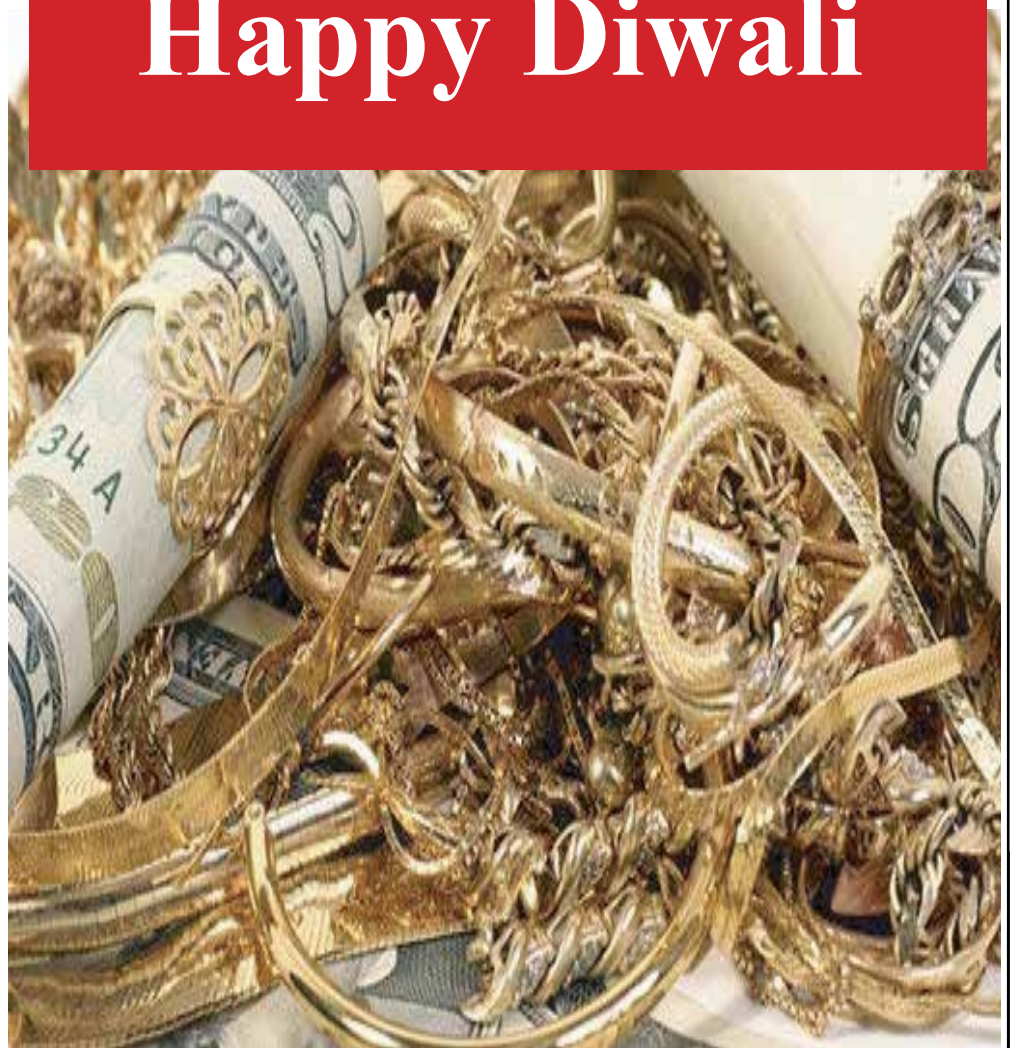
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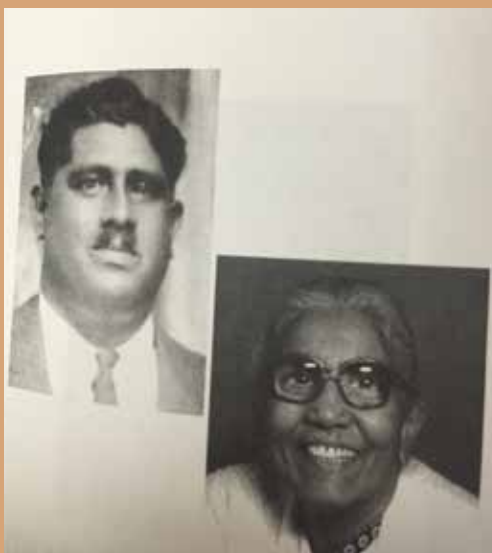
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Fiji News

PACIFIC LEADERS DISCUSS PEACE & SECURITY

(New York, 28.9.24) Pacific leaders convened in New York today for the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting where they discussed matters of peace and security with United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, highlighted that our security and that of our future generations is threatened by geopolitical divides, the increasing intensity of climatic impacts, and transnational crimes, including cyber security. “Concerningly, we look around our Pacific region, and we see the rise of transnational crimes such as drug trafficking and production. We continue to contend with the threats of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing of the one common resource that sustains our economies across the Pacific Ocean.” President Katonivere highlighted that security for us in the Pacific region encompasses human security, environmental and resource



security, transnational crime, and cybersecurity, to name a few. “It is a holistic and necessary view of security, given our unique circumstances.” “With foresight, our Forum Leaders have endorsed the development

of a Declaration on the Ocean of Peace.” The Ocean of Peace is first and foremost a peace concept that reflects the Pacific Way, as first defined by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara in 1970 at the United Nations. “The Ocean

of Peace concept is a signal to the world that we are a region where strategic competition is managed and where stability is the cornerstone of regional relationships. “We are a region where differences, when they

arise, are resolved peacefully. It is a concept that upholds the key tenets of our 2050 Strategy, which recognises that our aspirations and priorities drive partner engagement in the region.”

TARAKINIKINI AND VANANALAGI RECOGNISED FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO FIJI AND HUMANITY

His Excellency the President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere awarded medals to Fiji’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mr Filipino Tarakinikini and Fiji’s Military and Police Advisor (MPA) Colonel Siliva Vananalagi during an investiture ceremony held today at the Fiji Mission Office in New York. The medal is awarded to honour and acknowledge citizens and non-citizens for their contribution

towards Fiji’s development and to humanity at large within the 50 years. Most importantly, the medal encourages His Excellency’s philosophy of fostering a ‘culture of appreciation and inclusivity’.

With an outstanding service in Fiji and the United Nations, Mr Tarakinikini was chief of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) section at the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in

the UN headquarters in New York. Colonel Vananalagi had served at various roles from

administrator, trainer, planner, financial controller, logistician and leadership at different com-

mand levels locally and abroad within her 35 years of service.



Fiji News

DPM PRASAD ACKNOWLEDGES TIRELESS EFFORTS OF FARMERS

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics Hon. Professor Biman Prasad visited the Anuve community in Bulileka, Labasa as part of his North tour. Professor Prasad was accompanied by the delegates from Provincial Administrators Office, Fiji Sugar Cane Growers Fund, Fiji Sugar Corporation, Fiji Rice, Fiji Roads Authority and Water Authority of Fiji. He expressed his gratitude to the residents, especially the farmers for their tireless contribution towards the Sugar Industry. The residents and the farmers had an opportunity to

share their concerns in farm access roads, aging bridges and a swinging bridge in the area including access to water supply during drought. Other concerns brought to light are the termite infestation which is an emerging concern for communities such as Valebasoga, Bulileka and Anuve. Professor Prasad informed the residents on the successful Pilot of Termite Assistance Program in Lautoka where our allocations are made for the first time. This is to assist the households severely affected with grant to rebuilt and baiting of those houses where infestation is minimal.



DPM PRASAD ELABORATES ON GOVERNMENT'S VISION IN NALEBA

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics Hon. Professor Biman Prasad in his visit to the community of Naleba elaborated on Governments vision on getting the basics right. Professor Prasad in the stakeholders meeting highlighted the works are ongoing in the Health and Infrastructure sector in terms of upgrading the health care facilities, road and drainage works in the rural areas. The residents and farmers raised concerns of the land leases that are nearing renewal, access to water supply and most importantly the aging infrastructure under Fiji Sugar

Corporation (FSC) requiring urgent attention. The farmers also requested for attention by FSC to allocate cane carts for the farmers in the hilly terrain for timely harvesting and transportation of cane to the Labasa Mill. Professor Prasad highlighted the land issue consultations that was undertaken in 2023 following which Government made a decision in assisting 218 farmers with the payment of premium for renewal of leases. Further to this, he advised the farmers on the new allocations made under Ministry of Sugar to assist farmers with the payment of premiums. Professor Prasad reassured farmers that consultations will



be undertaken by iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB) with farmers and landowners to address the renewal of expiring leases which are not part of the land use plan of the TLTB.

PRESIDENT KATONIVERE CONCLUDES OFFICIAL DUTIES WITH VISIT TO 9/11 MEMORIAL

In a solemn gesture of remembrance and solidarity, His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, President of the Republic of Fiji, concluded his official duties in New York by visiting the hallowed grounds of the 9/11 Memorial.

This poignant moment underscored the global impact of the September 11 attacks and the shared grief that resonates far beyond American borders.

President Katonivere's visit provided an opportunity to honor and pay his respects to the nearly 3,000 men and women who tragically lost their lives on that fateful day. Accompanied by key Fijian dignitaries, including Permanent Representative to the United Nations Filipino Tarakinikini, Ambassador Vuidreketi, Leader of the Opposition Inia Seruiratu, and Member of Parliament Iowane

Naivalurua, the President laid a wreath at the memorial, a solemn tribute on behalf of the people of Fiji.

His presence at the site not only honored the victims but also symbolized the enduring bonds between Fiji and the United States, reaffirming the values of resilience, unity, and remembrance in the face of global tragedies.





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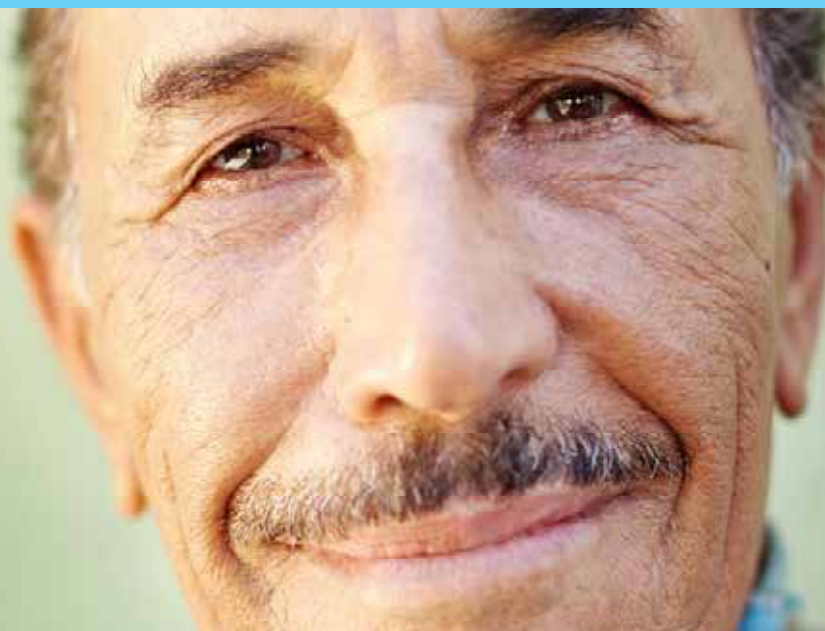
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World News

7 killed by Russian attacks as Moscow pushes ahead in Ukraine's east

Russian shelling in the town of Chasiv Yar on Saturday killed five people, as Moscow's troops pushed ahead in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region. The attack struck a high-rise building and a private home, said regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin, who said the victims were men aged 24 to 38. He urged the last remaining residents to leave the front-line town, which had a pre-war population of 12,000. Normal life has been impossible in Chasiv Yar for more than two years, Filashkin wrote on social media. Do not become a Russian target evacuate. A further two people were killed by Russian shelling in the Kharkiv region. One victim was pulled from the rubble of a house in the village of Cherkaska Lozova, said Gov. Oleh Syniehubov, while a second woman died of her wounds while being transported to a hospital. Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said it captured the town of Pivnichne, also in Ukraine's Donetsk region. The Associated Press could not independently verify the claim. Russian forces have been driving deeper into the partly oc-

cupied eastern region, the total capture of which is one of the Kremlin's primary ambitions. Russia's army is closing in on Pokrovsk, a critical logistics hub for the Ukrainian defense in the area. At the same time, Ukraine has sent its forces into Russia's Kursk region in recent weeks in the largest incursion onto Russian soil since World War II. The move is partly an effort to force Russia to draw troops away from the Donetsk front. Elsewhere, the number of wounded following a Russian attack on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv on Friday continued to rise. Six people were killed, including a 14-year-old girl, when glide bombs struck five locations across the city, said regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov. Writing on social media Saturday, he said that the number of injured had risen from 47 to 96. Syniehubov also confirmed that the 12-story apartment block that was hit by one bomb strike, setting the building ablaze and trapping at least one person on an upper floor, would be partly demolished. Ukrainian officials have previously pointed



to the Kharkiv strikes as further evidence that Western partners should scrap restrictions on what the Ukrainian military can target with donated weapons. In an interview with CNN on Friday, Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said that Kyiv had presented Washington with a list of potential long-range targets within Russia for its approval. I hope we were heard, he said. He also denied speculation that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

's decision to dismiss the commander of the country's air force Friday was directly linked to the destruction of an F-16 warplane that Ukraine received from its Western partners four days earlier. The order to dismiss Lt. Gen. Mykola Oleshchuk was published on the presidential website minutes before an address which saw Zelenskyy stress the need to take care of all our soldiers. This is two separate issues, said Umerov. At this stage, I would not connect

them. The number of injured also continued to rise in the Russian border region of Belgorod, where five people were killed Friday by Ukrainian shelling, said Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov. He said Sunday that 46 people had been injured, of whom 37 were in the hospital, including seven children. Writing on social media, Gladkov also said that two others had been injured in Ukrainian shelling across the region.

Doctor charged in actor Matthew Perry's death expected to plead guilty

One of the two California doctors involved in the investigation into the overdose death of actor Matthew Perry is expected to plead guilty to charges related to the surgical anaesthetic ketamine, as per the Hollywood Reporter. The information was confirmed by a Department of Justice official on Friday, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Mark Chavez, 54, appeared in a Los Angeles federal court on Friday for a bond hearing and arraignment. According to Ciaran McEvoy from the United States Attorneys' Office, Chavez is expected to enter a guilty plea in the coming weeks. His plea will be the third in the ongoing investigation into Perry's death. The 'Friends' actor was found dead in October in the hot tub at his Pacific Palisades home. According to The Hollywood

Reporter, the investigation into Perry's death has led to the arrest of five people. These include Chavez, Perry's assistant Kenneth Iwamasa, another doctor named Salvador Plasencia, a drug dealer, and a woman known as the "ketamine queen." Jasveen Sangha, the woman dubbed the "ketamine queen," and Salvador were identified as the lead defendants in this case. The Los Angeles County Medical Examiner's Office reported that Perry died from the acute effects of ketamine, which led to cardiovascular overstimulation and respiratory depression. The amount of ketamine found in Perry's blood was comparable to what is used during general anaesthesia. The medical examiner also noted that drowning, coronary artery disease, and the effects of buprenorphine, a drug used to treat opioid ad-

diction, were contributing factors in Perry's death. Chavez

is also accused of using a fake prescription and making false

statements to a wholesale ketamine distributor.





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Fiji News

GOVERNMENT BUY-BACK INITIATIVE RETURNS 2,465 ACRES TO NATIVE OWNERS

Under the leadership of the Coalition Government, four freehold titles have been successfully handed over to the landowners, namely Tuvumaca, Weilagi/Yavusa Wairuku, Waivunia, Yavusa Waidau (Ovalau), Mataqali Bitolevu (Serua) and Yavusa Vugalei of Kasavu Village (Naitasiri). The latest to benefit from the initiative was the Yavusa Vugalei of Kasavu Village in Naitasiri, who paid \$148,000.00 for 74 acres of land in Waidra and received their title on Friday, 27th September, from the Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, Hon Filimone Vosarogo, during a handover ceremony held at Waidra in the lower Naitasiri region. Government started the Buy-Back Scheme in 1989 to allow native landowners who had little or no cultivable agricultural land buy back ancestral land that had been alienated as freehold lands. Minister Vosarogo urged the Yavusa Vugalei members to consider making

use of the various Government initiatives announced in the 2024-2025 Budget. "There are 15 programmes under various Ministries that you can make use of to develop your land here in Waidra. Programmes that can assist you with land clearing, drainage, land preparation and cultivation of various crops. These are programmes that are there to assist every citizen of this nation, and the onus is on you to knock at the government door," said the Minister. "Do understand the importance of using the land efficiently and sustainably and ensure that you are aware of the many opportunities the Coalition Government has made available to you. It's important to keep your eyes open to new possibilities." "Keep knocking and be persistent until you get assistance. Persistence shapes your path, ensuring that your determination echoes louder. The world responds to those who refuse to be ignored. Keep pushing for-



ward," adds Minister Vosarogo. Naitasiri High Chief, Turaga na Qaranivalu Ratu Inoke Takiveikata, while echoing the Minister's remarks, also cautioned the male members of the Yavusa on the burden of womenfolk to fend for their families. "This is a disturbing issue in our communities nowadays, and it must stop," said Ratu Inoke. "Stop

the overconsumption of yaqona and use that time to plan ways you can move forward, and one is how you can utilise the land returned today for the benefit of our children." The "Turaga na Qanivalu" has also invited the Minister Vosarogo to visit Waidra again next year and witness the progress that Yavusa Vugalei has made on the land.

The Buy-Back Scheme successfully led to the return of 2,465 acres to traditional owners, benefiting four landowning units over three decades. Notably, out of the total landowning units assisted by the Government, four have successfully cleared their dues amounting to \$806,770.80, contributing 18.3% of the total amount recovered.

NUKULOVA RESIDENTS SHOW INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Hon. Professor Biman Prasad was accorded with a warm welcome by the Turaga-ni-Yavusa Solove and the residents of Nukuloa Settlement in Cakaudrove. Professor Prasad in the stakeholders meeting appreciated the interests of the Yavusa for participating in agriculture and development simultaneously. He elaborated Governments plan and the National Development Plans focus of getting the basics right along with three year, five year and 20 year plans.

The residents and the Turaga-ni-Yavusa thanked Government for various assistance provided particularly assisting grassroots families with \$200 Back-to-School assistance and the various new assistance such as fertilizer and weedicide subsidies. The residents also shared on lack of drainage and development in rural water supply for the communities over past many years. Professor Prasad assured the works has commenced and there are various allocations made in this Finan-



cial Year to address these.

He said one such allocation is the Ground Water Assistance Program under Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources

whereby more than \$5M is allocated to drill boreholes around Fiji. There are other allocations made under Ministry of Sugar and Multi-Ethnic Affairs for

small scale community projects for the communities.

Professor Prasad also highlighted the support via increased allocation made for the

first time to Ministry of iTaukei Affairs for assisting the indigenous communities in various ways.

Health News

Too Much Coffee, Soda May Raise Your Risk of Stroke, but Tea May Lower It

What you eat and drink can have a big impact on your blood vessels when it comes to cardiovascular health. Two new studies provide insight into how to make healthy beverage choices, with tea and water appearing to lead the pack ahead of coffee and soda — at least when it comes to the risk of stroke. Frequent consumption of carbonated beverages and fruit juice increased the risk of stroke, one analysis found. Another showed that drinking more than four cups of coffee a day also increased the risk of stroke, while tea lowered the risk. “As a doctor and as someone who has researched the risk of stroke, we would encourage people to avoid or minimize their consumption of fizzy and fruit drinks and to consider switching to water instead,” Andrew Smyth, PhD, Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the University of Galway in Ireland, who was the lead researcher for both studies, said in a release. Stroke is the leading cause of death in the United States. A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries blood to the brain is either blocked by a clot or ruptures. As a result, part of the brain can’t get the blood and oxygen it needs, which leads to brain cells dying. In the United States, stroke is a leading cause of death for Americans. Each year, more than 795,000 Americans Trusted Source have a stroke, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The findings for both studies come from an analysis of data from the INTERSTROKE Trusted Source research project. They were published in the *Journal of Stroke* Trusted Source and the *International Journal of Stroke*. The project involved almost 27,000 people in 27 countries, including almost 13,500 people who experienced their first stroke. The link between fruit juice, soda, and stroke risk In one analysis Trusted Source, researchers found that drinking up to one carbonated beverage a day — either sugar-sweetened or artificially sweetened — was linked to a 22% increased overall risk of stroke. The risk increased sharply for people who



consumed two or more of these drinks a day. Consuming up to one fruit juice or drink a day was linked to a 37% increased risk of a stroke. For two fruit juices or drinks a day, this stroke risk tripled. Females had the highest risk of stroke linked to fruit juice or drinks, researchers found. They also pointed out that while fruit juice can contain compounds such as polyphenols that offer heart-related benefits, “some fruit drinks contain added sweeteners or preservatives, which may offset these potential benefits.” In addition, this analysis showed that drinking seven or more cups of water a day was linked to a lower overall risk of stroke, as well as a lower risk of stroke due to a clot or bleeding. The link between coffee, tea, and stroke risk The other analysis showed that drinking more than four cups of coffee a day was linked to a 37% higher overall risk of stroke and a 32% higher risk of stroke due to a clot. There was no increased stroke risk for lower levels of coffee consumption. In contrast, drinking more than four cups of tea a day was linked to a 19% lower risk of all types of stroke and stroke due to a clot, as well as

a 22% lower risk of stroke due to bleeding. The benefits varied slightly for different types of tea. Drinking three to four cups a day of black tea — such as Earl Grey or Breakfast teas — was linked to a 29% overall lower risk of stroke. Green tea, consumed three to four cups a day, was linked to a 27% lower overall risk of stroke. Other types of tea were linked to a smaller overall reduced risk of stroke. These stroke-related benefits of tea went away when people added milk, researchers found. The study did differentiate between cow’s milk and milk alternatives such as soy, oat, or almond beverages. However, Smyth told Healthline that because the study included people in regions with a high prevalence of lactose tolerance, some participants likely used non-dairy milks in their coffee or tea. New studies are limited, but water and tea remain healthier choices. The studies are observational and cannot prove that drinking coffee, tea, or soda causes a lower or higher risk of stroke. In addition, “these are case-control studies using questionnaires, which can be prone to bias and have other limitations,” said José Morales,

MD, vascular neurologist and neuro-interventional surgeon at Providence Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, Calif. “Nevertheless, there is a basis from prior independent research that is in agreement with these studies to support the overall healthiness of water consumption over any other beverage type,” he told Healthline. Michelle Routhenstein, MS, RD, a preventive cardiology dietitian at EntirelyNourished, agrees. Overall, “these studies highlight the importance of choosing water and tea as your primary beverages to help reduce your risk of stroke,” said Routhenstein. Neither Morales nor Routhenstein were involved in the studies. There is also another upside to this research. “For those who thrive on caffeine, it is reassuring that tea and moderate coffee (fewer than 4 cups a day) consumption are not associated with an increased risk of stroke,” said Morales. “Unfortunately, drinking soda increases your risk of stroke, and daily consumption of sugary drinks (such as soda, fruit juice, etc.) may increase your risk of a brain bleed,” he said. Whatever you choose to drink, balance is key. “Even drinking too much water

can lead to health issues,” said Morales. Similarly, “the occasional fruit juice may not impact your stroke risk and can be a source of essential vitamins. And if you’re a coffee person, avoid drinking more than four cups of it per day.” Takeaway In an analysis of data from a large, multi-country study, researchers found that drinking up to one carbonated beverage a day increased the overall risk of stroke by 22%. The risk increased sharply for higher levels of consumption. Drinking up to one fruit juice or drink a day was linked to a 37% increased risk of stroke. The stroke risk tripled for the consumption of two fruit juices or drinks per day. A separate analysis showed that drinking more than four cups of coffee a day was linked to a 37% higher overall risk of stroke. There was no increased stroke risk at lower levels of coffee consumption. Drinking more than four cups of tea a day lowered the overall risk of stroke by 19%. Drinking three to four cups of black tea a day reduced the stroke risk by 29%, compared to three to four cups of green tea a day, which reduced the risk by 27%.

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Food

Oats and Moong Dal Dahi Vada Recipe

Oats and Moong Dal Dahi Vada Recipe

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

Ingredients

For the vadas:

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

For assembling:

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

How to

For the vadas:

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

For chaat:

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



Health News

Excessive Alcohol Use Linked with Higher Risk for 6 Types of Cancer



The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) published its 2024 Cancer Progress Report on Sept. 18, highlighting a strong link between alcohol use and six types of cancer. This comes as the rates for some of these cancers are increasing among younger adults. However, in many cases, people can take steps to greatly reduce their risk of developing certain types of cancer. According to the AACR, 40% of all cancers in the United States are associated with modifiable risk factors, including excessive alcohol consumption, tobacco use, physical inactivity, and unhealthy diet. By lowering their alcohol intake, people can reduce their chances of developing certain cancers. "Increased alcohol consumption was associated with higher risks for alcohol-related and all cancers," wrote the authors of a 2022 study. Trusted Source cited by the new cancer report, "whereas sustained quitting and reduced drinking were associated with lower risks of alcohol-related and all cancers." Based on this research, people

who reduce alcohol consumption or stop drinking entirely can decrease their risk of developing alcohol-related cancers by 8% and their risk of all cancer by 4%, according to the AACR report. This was compared to those who continued to drink at their current level or increased their drinking. Several cancers linked to alcohol use Excessive consumption of alcohol increases the risk for six different types of cancer: certain types of head and neck cancer breast cancer colorectal cancer esophageal squamous cell carcinoma liver cancer stomach cancers In the United States, 5.4% of cancers were attributed to alcohol consumption in 2019, according to the report. Drinking at an early age can also increase the risk of developing cancer later in life. In addition, research shows that moderate and high levels of drinking during pregnancy can increase the chance of the child developing leukemia after birth, the AACR said. While the report shows that overall cancer death rate in the United States declined between 1991 and

2021 — translating to roughly 4.1 million fewer lives lost to cancer — some cancers are still on the rise. Certain types of early-onset cancers — occurring in adults younger than 50 — are increasing, including breast, colorectal and other cancer, the report found. Many people are unaware of the cancer risks associated with alcohol use Although cutting back on alcohol consumption can help lower a person's chances of developing cancer, many people are unaware that alcohol is a cancer risk factor.

One survey by researchers at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center found that 51% of people did not associate alcohol use with colon cancer. In contrast, most people identified family history as a risk factor for this cancer. Nilesh Vora, MD, hematologist, medical oncologist, and medical director of the MemorialCare Todd Cancer Institute at Long Beach Medical Center in Long Beach, CA., pointed out that the association between alcohol and certain types of cancer is

not new, with earlier research showing the same connection. "It's surprising to me that a lot of people, as was documented in this report, aren't aware of that," he said.

Part of the solution, the AACR said, is to improve public health messaging, similar to the campaigns that educated people about the dangers of tobacco, and helped drive down lung cancer deaths. "Public messaging campaigns (such as cancer-specific warning labels displayed on alcoholic beverages) along with effective clinical strategies that reduce or eliminate alcohol consumption must be considered to reduce the burden of alcohol-related cancers," the report said. "This [education] starts at the primary care physician's office," Vora told Healthline, "where we can work on making sure patients are aware of the risks of alcohol, and as a result, make better choices for themselves." How to consume alcohol without increasing your cancer risk In its report, the AACR includes recommendations for how much

alcohol you can safely consume, based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 Trusted Source.

If you consume alcohol, it is best to do so in moderation. For women, this means one or fewer drinks per day, and two or fewer drinks per day for men. "It's really excessive levels of alcohol consumption that increase the risk of cancer," said Vora, "so you want to stay under the moderate level." Takeaway Excessive consumption of alcohol increases the risk for six different types of cancer: certain types of head and neck cancer, breast, colorectal, esophageal squamous cell carcinoma, liver and stomach cancers. In 2019, 5.4% of cancer in the United States were attributed to alcohol consumption. Alcohol consumption at an early age can also increase the risk of developing cancer later in life. People can reduce their risk of cancer by lowering their alcohol intake. The American Association for Cancer Research calls for public health messaging about the cancer-related risks of alcohol.

Health News

These 4 Factors Can Impact How Many Pounds You'll Lose on Weight Loss Drugs Like Ozempic

Millions of Americans have taken Ozempic or similar GLP-1 drugs to lose weight, but sustaining that weight loss long-term has proved difficult for many of them. However, new research suggests there are four factors that could be key to improving these outcomes. Researchers from the Cleveland Clinic looked at electronic health records of nearly 3,400 patients prescribed one of two different GLP-1 drugs — semaglutide (sold under the brand names Ozempic and Wegovy) and liraglutide (sold under the brand names Saxenda and Victoza) — to see how various factors like dosage, indication, and biological sex affected weight loss at one year. Their findings were published this month in *Jama Network Open Trusted Source*. Researchers looked at how these factors affected weight loss in two ways: total percentage change in body weight and whether an individual lost 10% or more of their body weight. The 10% mark is clinically significant, as hitting that benchmark is known to improve other comorbidities—Trusted Source like high blood pressure and chronic disease risk. They identified four factors that appear to be the most significant for long-term weight loss, some of them obvious and others more complex: The type of medication (active ingredient) — Did the patient use semaglutide or liraglutide? The dosage — Was the patient using a high or low-maintenance dose? Treatment indication — Was the medicine prescribed for type 2 diabetes or obesity? Medication persistence — Did the patient have any gaps in access to their medication? “Our findings provide timely data on longer-term weight outcomes in patients receiving treatment with injectable semaglutide or liraglutide for obesity or type 2 diabetes, as well as identify key characteristics that could inform the probability of achieving sustained weight loss of a magnitude large enough to provide clinically significant health benefits,” Hamlet Gasoyan, PhD, lead author of the study and a researcher with Cleveland Clinic’s Center for



Value-Based Care Research. How the four key factors impacted sustained weight loss Gasoyan and his team used the Cleveland Clinic electronic health records for 3,389 patients who were prescribed either semaglutide or liraglutide from July 2015 through June 2022. In order to be included, patients had to have a BMI of at least 30, Trusted Source indicating the person had obesity. More than half the patients were female (54%) and had an average age of 50. The cohort was predominantly white (68%) but included significant Black (20%) and Hispanic (7%) populations. At the one-year mark, four factors appeared to have the largest influence on sustained weight loss. Here’s how they affected whether or not patients would achieve 10% or greater weight loss: Active agent: Patients who took semaglutide were more than twice as likely compared to those taking liraglutide. Indication: Those prescribed their medication for obesity were also more than twice as likely than those with type 2 diabetes. Dosage: Patients taking a higher maintenance dose of their medication were 1.5 times more likely than those taking a lower dose. Persistence: patients with persistent coverage (access to their medication) were more than three times as

likely as those who had the least access. Patient sex was also an important factor. Females in the study were 1.5 times as likely to hit the 10% benchmark as males. Two of the factors may seem obvious: active agent and dosage. Basically, the kind of medication prescribed and dosage affected the weight loss outcome. Semaglutide resulted in more than double the average weight loss of liraglutide (5.1% versus 2.2%). However, that’s nothing new: prior studies Trusted Source have shown that semaglutide is simply more effective for weight loss than liraglutide. Evidence has also pointed Trusted Source to higher maintenance doses of semaglutide being more effective for weight loss than lower doses. Indication is complicated. The evidence is clear that patients prescribed a GLP-1 for obesity tend to lose more weight than those with type 2 diabetes, but why that’s the case isn’t so obvious. Caroline Apovian MD, a Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and the co-director of the Center for Weight Management and Wellness at Brigham and Women’s Hospital, told Healthline that these findings are essentially confirmatory of prior research. It’s the fourth factor — persistence — that has grabbed the attention of Apovian and other

obesity experts. Persistence is the biggest key “What this study adds is really diving into that persistence question. Nowadays, the conversation tends to focus on the idea that these are really great medications, but are patients actually taking them?” Beverly Tchang, MD, an endocrinologist, Spokesperson for the Obesity Society, and Assistant Professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, told Healthline. “This creates a very clear relationship between that persistence and the degree of weight loss,” she said. As effective as GLP-1 drugs are, access has proven to be a major roadblock for many Americans. With the soaring popularity of these drugs, patients across the United States have faced shortages, with manufacturers unable to keep up with demand. Cost and insurance coverage have also been problematic for many patients. The monthly cost for GLP-1 drugs can easily reach \$1,000 or more before any insurance coverage or rebates are applied. If patients can’t afford their medication or can’t access it, they won’t take it. It’s as simple as that. This latest research helps to illustrate that dilemma. Gasoyan and his team found that at the one-year mark, only 40% of patients had persistent medication coverage, which they defined as

a cumulative lapse in coverage of less than 90 days. But those that did have persistent coverage demonstrated significantly more weight loss (5.5%) compared to those with the least (1.8%) — less than 90 days of coverage for the year. The data “reinforces that persistence is key to achieving meaningful weight outcomes with these medications,” said Gasoyan. “If we avoid therapeutic interruptions with these medications, whether that be due to shortages or insurance coverage, then we will have better persistence with these medications and more weight loss,” added Tchang. The bottom line GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy are powerful weight-loss tools. However, long-term weight loss outcomes can be affected by a variety of factors. In a new study, researchers identified four of the most important factors for long-term weight loss in patients taking a GLP-1 drug. These include the kind of medication, the dosage, the indication, and medication persistence (how long the patient continuously took the medication). Medication persistence is essential to long-term weight loss, however access and cost related to GLP-1 drugs continue to be roadblocks for many Americans.

Health News

'Liquid Gold': Bovine Colostrum Is TikTok's Latest Supplement Trend. Does It Work?

Wellness influencers, celebrities, and social media content creators are touting the benefits of bovine colostrum supplements. Nicknamed "liquid gold," these supplements are made from the first milk a cow produces after giving birth. "It's filled with antibodies, proteins, carbohydrates, and fats that help newborn calves strengthen their immune system, grow, and stay healthy," explains Maddie Pasquariello, MS, RDN. Humans also produce colostrum after giving birth, with the first thick breast milk also containing nutrients and antibodies that nourish and protect newborns from infections. Yet bovine colostrum and human colostrum are not the same. "To put it simply, human colostrum has evolved to benefit a human infant, and bovine colostrum to benefit a bovine animal," Pasquariello says. "Bovine colostrum contains IgG... as the dominant immunoglobulin, while in human colostrum, IgA is the most prevalent. Bovine colostrum is overall higher Trusted Source in immunoglobulins, lactoferrin, and total protein content." Nevertheless, bovine colostrum supplements are growing in popularity. The substance is claimed to provide several health benefits, including strengthening immunity, improving gut health, boosting athletic performance, and aiding recovery. However, unlike the benefits of human colostrum for human newborns, the data and evolutionary evidence supporting bovine colostrum for human adults are mixed, limited, or non-existent, according to dietitians and researchers. Here's what we know about the evidence supporting the most commonly touted health benefits of bovine colostrum. Strengthen immunity Bovine colostrum



contains immuno-active compounds, explains Lacy Puttuck, MS, RDN, a registered dietitian with Top Nutrition Coaching. Puttuck says these include: Enzymes Cytokines Immunoglobulins Puttuck points to a narrative review from 2024 Trusted Source that included data on newborns through adults aged 69, suggesting that bovine colostrum supplementation might increase the ability to fight respiratory and gastrointestinal infections. Much older research Trusted Source from 2006 on 35 male distance runners suggested participants who were supplemented with bovine colostrum had more immune biomarkers and reported fewer upper respiratory symptoms. However, the study was small, involved one population and sex, and relied on self-reported symptom data. Additionally, improved biomarkers (collected using saliva samples) don't necessarily mean fewer days of illness. "Bovine colostrum

is rich in immune-boosting elements like IgG, but its effect on human immunity needs more research to confirm whether it boosts immunity in adults," says Chris Mohr, Ph.D., RD, a fitness and nutrition advisor at Fortune Recommends Health. Pasquariello agrees. "This is different from saying that maternal colostrum from a human enhances immune response in a human infant, which is true, but as a supplement, there's no real evidence here," Pasquariello says. Pasquariello adds that the oft-cited research doesn't randomize the population or account for other potential factors for immune health, making it hard to apply them to a general population. Athletic recovery and performance Puttuck explains that the theory behind this one stems from the fact that bovine colostrum contains insulin-like growth factors (IGF-1 and IGF-2) that might improve muscle recovery, performance, and growth. However, more studies are needed to support this claim, too, says Sheri Gaw, RDN, CDCES, a registered dietitian and spokesperson for Dietitian Insights. Gaw points to a 2018 six-week study Trusted Source of soccer players that indicated that 3.5-gram daily doses of bovine colostrum reduced muscle soreness and boosted performance. More recently, a 2021 narrative review

Trusted Source indicated that some studies suggested that bovine colostrum might help with body composition and recovery. However, the research was limited, and study designs didn't account for other variables. Gut health Improved gut health is considered a benefit of nursing a human newborn in the first days of life. However, bovine colostrum is also being touted as a gut-health booster. A 2021 review Trusted Source indicated that research on bovine colostrum's effectiveness in treating and preventing gastrointestinal diseases was "building." However, a 2022 systematic review Trusted Source suggested that bovine colostrum might help counteract gut permeability in high-performance athletes but that more, better-designed research was needed to assess safety and effectiveness. Mohr and Pasquariello say there simply isn't enough evidence at this time to support the claims of improved gut health. Health risks associated with bovine colostrum supplements Mohr cautions that it's possible to experience negative side effects from bovine colostrum supplements. Among the most common are: Nausea Diarrhea Bloating Mohr recommends that people with lactose intolerance or milk allergies steer clear and people with heart and autoimmune disorders or who are on medications

speak with a healthcare professional before they begin taking any supplement. Gaw agrees. "Always discuss your interest in taking a new supplement with your doctor, pharmacist, or dietitian first, as it may interfere with other supplements or medications or just might not be needed," Gaw says. "Getting to know a supplement before taking it is important because if you understand what you're using, you can balance its benefits against any potential risks," Pasquariello adds. "This prevents unnecessary spending and protects against possible negative reactions or conflicts with other medications or existing health conditions." Takeaway Bovine colostrum supplements, also known as "liquid gold," are growing in popularity, in part due to promotion from wellness influencers on social media platforms like TikTok. Bovine colostrum is the first milk produced by cows in the days after giving birth. Proponents of bovine colostrum claim the supplement can provide several health benefits, including improved gut health, athletic performance, and recovery. Experts say quality research to support these claims is limited and recommend proceeding with caution and managed expectations, especially if you have specific conditions.



Bollywood News

Police 'not convinced' by Govinda's version after questioning in shooting incident but rule out foul play

Mumbai Police questioned Govinda regarding him accidentally shooting himself with his revolver but are reportedly not convinced with his version of events. Mumbai Police is currently investigating the incident involving actor Govinda, who sustained leg injuries after his revolver accidentally went off. But the Crime Branch has also launched a parallel enquiry into the incident. Officials of the Crime Branch met the actor at the hospital on Wednesday and as per reports, were not convinced by his version of events. Police doubt Govinda's version of events. News agency PTI has reported that a crime branch team, led by senior police inspector Daya Nayak, visited the hospital on Tuesday and spoke to the actor about the incident. The actor maintains that the gun fell and accidentally discharged a round that hit him in the leg. Govinda was alone when the incident took place at his residence in the early hours of Tuesday. A report cited unnamed sources, who said that while the police have ruled out



any foul play in the incident, "they are not fully convinced by Govinda's story". The report states that they may record Govinda's statement again. No one has lodged any complaint in this matter so far, police said. What is Govinda's version? The actor has a licensed revolver of

Webley company and the bullet hit him near his left knee. A police official told PTI that the revolver, which is an old one, was not locked and misfired, as per the actor. After the incident, Govinda, who was one of the leading stars of Bollywood in the 90s, issued a statement in-

forming his fans he was doing better. A ruling star of Hindi cinema in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Govinda has appeared in more than 165 films in his career spanning four decades. In March, a month before the Lok Sabha elections, Govinda joined the Eknath Shinde-led

Shiv Sena. This marked Govinda's re-entry into the political landscape after nearly two decades. The actor won the 2004 poll battle from the Mumbai North Lok Sabha constituency on a Congress ticket before stepping away from politics in 2008.

Mahima Chaudhry says she begged Ajay Devgn, Prakash Jha to keep her car accident a secret as she feared...

Mahima Chaudhry recently revealed about her near-fatal car accident. She will be next seen in Anupam Kher starrer *The Signature*. Mahima Chaudhry is geared up for her comeback film *The Signature*, after a gap of eight years. The actor recently spoke about her near-fatal car accident during the shoot of *Dil Kya Kare* in 1999. Mahima, in an interview with Radio Nasha recalled how she requested Ajay Devgn and Prakash Jha to keep it a secret as she feared boycott from film industry. Mahima Chaudhry recalls her near-fatal car accident while speaking about the incident stated that, "When my accident happened, I didn't realise that I have these many cuts on my face.

I found later when I went to the bathroom and saw the mirror. Before that, I was telling Prakash ji (Prakash Jha, director) that if nothing has

happened, let's shoot. Because doctors were done with the scans etc. He said, 'No no, let's wait, we'll just go out and talk about dates.' When I saw my face, I realised that my face is injured. When Ajay and Prakash ji came back, my first thing was 'please don't tell anyone that I have gone through this. Let me at least try and see what I can salvage my career with.' It is just immense that no one from the production never told anyone. 20 years later, I told the story and that's when people got to know. It is commendable. I used to go on set and everyone could see it." She further said, "That was tough because I was very young when I went through that. Ajay used to say that after surgeries, it would all be fine but I didn't believe it.

I was thinking of other career options. Even today, my one eye is smaller than the other. Back then, it was very stressful. I



never faced the camera straight. I would always angle my face a bit." Mahima Chaudhry's acting career Mahima made her acting debut with Subhash Ghai's romantic-drama *Pardes*

opposite Shah Rukh Khan. She also featured movies such as in *Daag: The Fire*, *Dhadkan*, *Saaya*, *Baghban*, *LOC: Kargil* and others. Mahima will be next seen in Gajendra Ahire's *The*

Signature, featuring Anupam Kher, Ranvir Shorey, Manoj Joshi, Annu Kapoor and others in pivotal roles. She also has a supporting role in Kangana Ranaut's *Emergency*.

Bollywood News

Anupam Kher shares his resume on social media, calls himself a struggling actor

Anupam Kher's post has garnered widespread appreciation and positive feedback online. The resume gave a peek into his life philosophy as well. Actor Anupam Kher, with an impressive repertoire of over 500 projects, continues to strive for greater heights. In a display of determination, Anupam recently shared his updated resume on social media, referring to himself as a "struggling actor". The post has garnered widespread appreciation and positive feedback online. The resume not only gave a peek into his career but also his life philosophy and the hurdles he had to overcome. CV on social media Sometime back, he took to social media: Instagram and X, to post his updated resume. "After every five years, I update my resume! Luckily in my profession, there is no age limit. Hope you like my bio data !!! Jai Ho," he wrote while sharing the resume. If one goes through the CV, Anupam has mentioned his films. After working on 500 characters, Anupam revealed that his biggest role is still to come. In the introduction section, the actor wrote, "If life is a movie, I've been blessed with a

blockbuster. From a small-town boy in Shimla to walking the red carpet at global film festivals, I've journeyed through over 500 films, countless roles, and a lifetime of learning. My career is a testimony to resilience, passion, and the unshakable belief that failure is an event, never a person." Calling himself a struggling actor, Anupam said, "Landed in Mumbai with just 37 in my pocket and a head full of dreams. Juggled small roles while learning the art of patience and perseverance." He also touched on his debut film, Saransh (1984), where at the age of 28 he portrayed a 65-year-old retired man, a role which shaped his career. He shared, "My next role is always my favourite one."

In the skills section of his CV, he listed adaptability, humour and positivity, public speaking, and resilience. He shared his life philosophy, highlighting his commitment to lifelong learning and growth. His post has garnered over 20,000 likes on Instagram, with his fans expressing their love for him. "Simply loved it... How in one pager it tell a comprehensives story of once life," wrote one



fan. "Awards and accolades bhi mention karte, at least the most prestigious ones. Chahr Chand lag jaate....," shared another fan. "We all are witness of you cv and so proud of you . to whom so ever it may concern facts are verified and cv is approved and highly recommend by this fan girl," shared one, with another writing, "My words have left the chat after reading this extremely rich resume. Legend for a reason". "Sir you are true genius sir... Blessed to have you among us... Your presence really makes a mere

difference to bridge the gap between art and reality," one read. Another comment read, "One page resume with such rich experience is rare but good one". On the work front Anupam recently finished shooting for his upcoming movie Vijay 69. He got injured while shooting for the film. He hurt his shoulder and informed his fans of the same by posting an image in which his injured right hand was in a sling. Created under the banner YRF Entertainment, Vijay 69 will narrate the life of a sexagenarian man, played by

Anupam, who decides to compete in a triathlon contest at the age of 69. The film is being directed by Akshay Roy. Maneesh Sharma is producing the film. Apart from these projects, Anupam also has Emergency and Signature in the pipeline. Anupam was recently seen in web series The Freelancer alongside Mohit Raina. The series is based on the book - A Ticket to Syria by Shirish Thorat. Directed by Bhav Dhulia, The Freelancer: The Conclusion also stars Kashmiri Pardeshi and Sushant Singh.

Vicky Kaushal shares emotional post after hosting IIFA 2024 with Shah Rukh Khan: 'I lived many dreams!'

Overwhelmed with gratitude, Vicky Kaushal took to social media to pen a heartfelt note, expressing his admiration for Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan. It was a dream come true moment for Vicky Kaushal to get on stage with Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan to host award gala, IIFA 2024. And it is one memory which he will cherish for life. Gratitude note Overwhelmed with gratitude, Vicky on Sunday took to social media to pen a heartfelt note, expressing his admiration for the superstar. He also posted some candid moments with Shah Rukh on stage. "From growing up watching him create magic with his hosting and performances on stage... to last night, sharing the stage and being part of the same magic... I lived many dreams! Thank

you @iamsrk Sir. There's no one like you, there never will be," he wrote alongside the pictures. Since sharing his dream-come-true moment with Shah Rukh Khan at IIFA 2024, Vicky Kaushal's post has generated immense excitement. His comment section has been inundated with heartfelt messages from fans and well-wishers. "2 favourites," read one comment, with another reading, "Always humble man respect". One user wrote, "Both are looking handsome", with another sharing, "You Deserve it... our SUPERSTAR". "It was magical and so full of everything love," posted one. SRK and Vicky at IIFA Apart from hosting, Vicky and Shah Rukh performed on many songs. They danced to Oo Antava from Pushpa: The Rise, with Shah Rukh taking



on Samantha Ruth Prabhu's role and Vicky playing Allu Arjun. Vicky and Shah Rukh also grooved to Tauba Tauba from Bad Newz. They wrapped

up the party with a performance set to Mere Mehboob Mere Sanam's revamped version from Vicky's movie Bad Newz. And it was Shah Rukh who stole the

spotlight. At the end of the night, Shah Rukh took home the Best Actor trophy for Jawan. Vicky also starred with him last year in Dunki.

World News

US discusses strikes on Iran oil sites as Israel presses Lebanon offensive

The U.S. is discussing strikes on Iran's oil facilities as retaliation for Tehran's missile attack on Israel, President Joe Biden said on Thursday, while Israel's military pressed ahead with its campaign against Iran-backed armed group Hezbollah in Lebanon. As Israel weighs its options after its arch-foe Iran launched its largest ever assault on Tuesday, Biden was asked whether he would support Israel striking Iran's oil facilities. "We're discussing that," Biden told reporters. His comments contributed to a surge in global oil prices, and rising Middle East tensions have made traders worry about potential supply disruptions. "There is nothing going to happen today," Biden said. On Wednesday, the president said he would not support any Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear sites. Israel's U.N. Ambassador Danny Danon told CNN on Thursday his country has "a lot of options" for retaliation and would show Tehran its strength "soon". A U.S. official said Washington does not believe Israel has decided yet how to respond to Iran. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed Iran will pay for Tuesday's missile attack, and Washington said it would work with its longtime ally to ensure Iran faced "severe consequences." Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, speaking in Doha, said on Thursday that Tehran would be ready to respond. "Any type of military attack, terrorist act or crossing our red lines will be met with a decisive response by our armed forces," he said. **G7 CALLS FOR RESTRAINT** Israel's military told residents of more than 20 towns in south Lebanon to evacuate their homes immediately on Thursday as it pressed on with a cross-border incursion and struck Hezbollah targets in a suburb of Beirut. The latest warnings took the number of southern towns subject to evacuation calls to 70 and included the provincial capital Nabatieh, suggesting another Israeli military operation was imminent against the Iran-backed armed group. Hezbollah also carried out new strikes, targeting what it called Israel's "Sakhnin base" for military industries in Hai-



fa Bay on the Mediterranean coast of northern Israel with a salvo of rockets. Warning sirens sounded there again late on Thursday, as well as in the northern Israeli area of Galilee, and 10 projectiles crossed into Israel from Lebanon, Israel's military said. They were either intercepted or allowed to fall in open areas. Israel, which has been fighting Hamas in the Palestinian territory of Gaza for almost a year, sent troops into southern Lebanon on Tuesday after two weeks of intense airstrikes in a worsening conflict that has drawn in Iran and risks involving the United States. The Group of Seven nations, which includes the U.S., Britain and allies, on Thursday condemned Iran's missile attack and reaffirmed a commitment to Israel's security. But the group also called for restraint, a ceasefire in Gaza and halt to hostilities in Lebanon. "A dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliation risks fuelling uncontrollable escalation in the Middle East, which is in no one's interest," the group said in a statement. Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani also urged serious ceasefire efforts to stop what he called Israel's aggression. **HEZBOLLAH CLAIMS TO KILL 17 ISRAELI TROOPS** Israel says its operations in Lebanon seek

to allow tens of thousands of its citizens to return home after evacuating from northern Israel by Hezbollah bombardments during the Gaza war. More than 1.2 million Lebanese have been displaced by Israeli attacks, and nearly 2,000 people have been killed since the start of the Israeli attacks on Lebanon over the last year, most of them in the past two weeks, Lebanese authorities said. Hezbollah says it has repelled several land operations by Israeli troops, including with ambushes and in direct clashes. The group said it killed 17 Israeli military personnel in combat in southern Lebanon on Thursday, citing its field and security sources. Israeli forces did not comment on the claim. Israel's military on Thursday reported the death of

one soldier. On Wednesday it announced its deadliest day in a year of clashes with Hezbollah with the deaths of eight soldiers. The Lebanese army said two soldiers were killed by Israeli strikes in separate incidents in south Lebanon on Thursday, one in an attack on a military post and another in a strike on a rescue mission with the Lebanese Red Cross. The army said it returned fire when the military post was struck, a rare development for a force that has historically stayed on the sidelines of major conflict with Israel. **BEIRUT UNDER ATTACK** In Beirut's southern suburb known as Dahiye, a dense neighbourhood where Hezbollah holds sway, several explosions were heard on Thursday and large plumes of smoke were rising

after heavy Israeli strikes. Israel's military said it struck 15 Hezbollah targets in Beirut on Thursday, including weapons sites and intelligence targets. Overnight, Israel bombed central Beirut in an attack the Lebanese health ministry said killed nine people. Reuters journalists reported a heavy blast after a building was targeted a few hundred meters from parliament, the closest an Israeli strike has come to the central downtown district. The Lebanese border front opened after Hezbollah fired missiles at Israel a year ago in support of Hamas in its war with Israel in Gaza. Iran's other regional allies - Yemen's Houthis and armed groups in Iraq - have also launched attacks in the region in support of Hamas.





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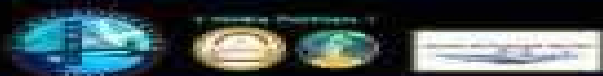
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World News

Mexico's first woman president announces reforms to battle gender discrimination

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who took office this week as her country's first woman leader, announced a package of reforms on Thursday aimed at bolstering women's rights in a country with some of the world's highest levels of gender violence. On her second full day in office, Sheinbaum said her government had proposed reforms that aim to articulate and broaden women's rights, including a constitutional guarantee of equal pay for equal work. In Mexico, women make 65 pesos for every 100 pesos a man earns, according to the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness think tank, citing data from the national statistics agency. The reforms also seek to guarantee freedom from violence and to require gender parity in government cabinets at the state and federal levels. The plan involves modifying six articles of the Constitution and seven secondary laws, changes that will likely be approved in both

houses of Congress, where the governing party Morena and its allies enjoy large majorities. Sheinbaum, the former mayor of Mexico City and a protege of former President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, took office on Tuesday and vowed that it was "time for women." The president on Thursday said the proposed reforms were part of an effort to ensure women knew their rights and could identify gender-based discrimination. Toward that end, her government promised to create a type of women's bill of rights. "The difference in wages, even violence against women, comes from discrimination," Sheinbaum said. Sheinbaum's cabinet includes Mexico's first women's minister, who outlined the proposals at the president's morning press conference on Thursday. Mexico has made recent strides in the representation of women in government and public positions, not only with Sheinbaum's election, but also



by installing the first woman to lead the country's Supreme Court, the first female governor of the central bank, and gender parity in Congress. Violence against women, however, remains a national problem. A survey by the country's statis-

tics agency in 2022 found that more than 70% of 50.5 million women and girls age 15 and older had experienced some kind of violence, up four percentage points from the previous survey in 2016. High rates of murder against women and related

impunity have also sparked waves of protests. On average, between 9 and 10 women are killed every day, according to government data, and tens of thousands are missing.

Russia launches major drone attack on Ukraine, damages energy infrastructure

Russian forces launched a major drone attack overnight on 15 Ukrainian regions, causing damage to energy infrastructure and residential buildings, authorities said on Thursday. The Ukrainian air force said it had shot down 78 out of 105 Russian drones during the assault, with 23 more likely impacted by active electronic jamming. The drones damaged power lines and substations' equipment in the Kyiv, Odesa and Ivano-Frankivsk regions in the past 24 hours, Ukraine's energy ministry said on the Telegram messaging app. The attacks caused temporary disruption of railway services in the southern Odesa region as well as power cuts for households, it said. Odesa regional governor Oleh Kiper said power had been restored to more than 3,000 consumers in his region following the overnight attack, though a further 2,000 people remained without power. Authorities said they

had downed around 15 drones over Kyiv and its surroundings during an air alert that lasted over five hours. The central Ukrainian regions of Poltava, Cherkasy and Kirovohrad all reported minor damage to property. Russia's defence ministry said its forces had hit Ukrainian energy facilities that were providing power to Ukraine's armed forces' operations, Russian state news agency TASS reported. Moscow denies targeting civilians but has regularly struck towns and cities behind the front lines. A Russian guided bomb struck an apartment block in the eastern city of Kharkiv on Wednesday, starting fires and injuring at least 10 people. More than 2-1/2 years into its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has been pummeling the country's energy infrastructure with drone and missile attacks while its forces continue to make steady progress on the eastern front. The strikes, which have



intensified with the approach of winter, have prompted Kyiv to repeatedly call on its allies to lift restrictions on its use of Western long-range weapons to strike deep into Russia to curb its abil-

ity to launch attacks. The Ukrainian military said on Thursday it had used ATACMS ballistic missiles provided by the U.S. to strike a Russian radar station to reduce Moscow's ability

to "detect, track and intercept" ballistic targets. It did not say when the strike took place or give the venue of the 'Nebo-M' radar station.

Food

Air Fryer Spring Rolls Recipe

Air Fryer Spring Rolls

Total Time: 25 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 15 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 3-4 spring roll sheets
2. 1 cups sliced mushrooms
3. 1 cup shredded cabbage
4. 1 cup julienned carrots
5. 2 minced garlic cloves
6. 1 tsp grated ginger
7. 2 soy sauce
8. 1 tsp sesame oil
9. Oil, as required

How to

1. To make these spring rolls, all you have to do is combine all the ingredients in a large bowl. Mix well.
2. Now take a spring roll sheet and place the prepared vegetable filling in the centre of the sheet. Roll it nicely and seal the edges to form a cylindrical shape. Repeat the process with the remaining sheets.
3. Preheat your air fryer to 190 degrees C for 10 minutes. Gently brush the



spring rolls with a little bit of oil and air fry them for around 8 to 10 minutes,

or until golden brown and crispy. 4. Avoid overcrowding them

in the air fryer, and this will not result in even cooking. Once done, serve hot and

enjoy with your favourite dipping sauce.

Quick Salted Caramel Pie Recipe

Quick Salted Caramel Pie

Total Time: 2 hr

Prep Time : 1 hr

Cook Time : 1 hr

Serves: 4 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 1/2 Cups Marie Biscuits (crushed)
2. 5 tbsp Butter, unsalted
3. 2 tsp Sugar, powdered
4. 3 cups Cream Cheese
5. 2 1/4 cups Heavy Cream
6. 1/2 cup Brown Sugar

For Salted Caramel:

7. 1 1/2 cups Brown Sugar
8. 110 gram Butter, unsalted
9. 1/2 cup Double Cream
10. A pinch of Salt

How to

1. Mix the first three ingredients together and flatten into your serving dish. There, that's your super-fast crust done. Cover and keep in the fridge while you work on your filling.
2. Now, for the salted caramel. Pour in 1/3 cup of water into a saucepan, bring to the boil and add in the sugar, stirring gently until



it melts and starts bubbling. Carefully pour in the butter, and whisk until everything is fully mixed.

thoroughly. Add the salt, and you're done! Now let the mixture cool.

4. Mix in the cream cheese, brown sugar and cream

thoroughly, until they make a thick creamy paste.

5. Add in your cooled caramel mixture, mixing well, pour into your crust and refrigerate

ate overnight, at least 12-14 hours.

6. Your pie would be set and ready to eat the next day.

Food

Roast Turkey with Cranberry Sauce

Roast Turkey with Cranberry Sauce Recipe

Total Time: 2 hr 45 min

Prep Time : 15 min

Cook Time : 2 hr 30 min

Serves: 2 Servings

Ingredients

1. 1 whole turkey
2. 100 gms butter
3. 100 gms onion, chopped
4. 100 gms celery, chopped
5. 10 gms crumbled sage and thyme
6. to taste salt and pepper
7. 10 gms garlic minced
8. balsamic vinegar
9. 20 gms sugar
10. 150 gms cranberry

How to

1. In skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in onions, celery, sage, thyme and pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until browned.
2. Remove giblets and neck from the turkey cavity, keep for gravy. Rinse turkey inside and out with running water.
3. Stir together butter, sage, salt and pepper; rub over turkey, inside and out. Loosely pack stuffing into neck and body cavities, fold over and skewer neck



4. flap closed over stuffing. Tie legs together.
5. Place turkey, breast side up on rack in roasting pan.
6. Cover with foil and roast in 325°F oven for about 1.5 hours, basting with pan juices every 30 minutes.
7. Remove foil and continue to roast or 1 3/4 hours, basting every half hour, or until instant-meat thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh reads 185°F. Keep it under lamp for carving.
8. Meanwhile, in saucepan, bring chicken stock turkey neck, giblets, onion and bay leaf to boil, reduce heat and simmer.
9. While cooked turkey rests, skim excess fat from roasting pan whisk in flour until well combined.
10. Gradually whisk in reserved giblet stock; Bring to boil and cook, Season to taste with salt and pepper. Strain and serve alongside turkey.
11. For cranberry sauce in small saucepan, heat oil over medium heat; stir in onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until softened.
12. Put balsamic vinegar; boil for 5 minutes or until reduced now mix together cranberries, sugar, salt and pepper.
13. Mix into onion mixture; bring to boil and cook, until cranberries are tender and sauce is thick.
14. Garnish the turkey with fresh herbs and serve with your favorite sides.

Chocolate Chip Cheesecake Recipe

Chocolate Chip Cheesecake

Total Time: 50 min

Prep Time : 10 min

Cook Time : 40 min

Serves: 7 Servings

Ingredients

For the base:

1. 18 Butter biscuits (broken into pieces)
2. 75 gram Butter (softened)

For the cheesecake:

3. 226 gram Cream cheese (softened)
4. 5 tbsp Sugar, powdered
5. 1 Egg
6. 2 drops Rose essence or Vanilla essence
7. 5 tbsp Chocolate chips

How to

Prepare the base:

8. In a mixie/blender add the broken pieces of butter biscuits. Give it a whiz. The texture should be grainy.
9. Add softened butter to it and give it another whiz. Bring the whole mixture

together with the help of a flat spoon or spatula.

10. In a baking dish, evenly spread this mixture. Pat it down with the spatula/ flat spoon. Refrigerate for 5-7 minutes.

Prepare the cheesecake:

11. Pre-heat the oven at 200 degrees C.
12. In a bowl whisk the softened cream cheese. Whisk till it's smooth and no lumps are left.
13. Add the rose or vanilla essence and powdered sugar. Mix it well.
14. Now add the egg. Fold it in the cream cheese till well amalgamated.
15. Throw in 4 Tbsp chocolate chips. Give it a mix.
16. Now pour this mixture over the refrigerated base.
17. Sprinkle the rest of the chocolate chips over this.
18. Bake at 150 degrees for 25

19. minutes. Take it out of the oven and let it cool for 10 minutes.

20. Cover it with some cling/ aluminum foil and refrigerate for 2-3 hours.

21. Cut it into bars, squares or wedges. Serve.



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Diwali

Diwali: Spreading the Lights of Happiness

It's a Festival that illuminates the Earth as well as the Skies and brings joy abound on this world. It is a festival when the whole of India transcends into a land of myriad lamps. Deepavali, the Festival of Lights has all the charm, grandeur and splendour that can even illuminate our minds and hearts while also promoting the much needed peace, harmony and brotherhood in the society. It is a Festival that unifies every religion, every home and every heart. The festival of Deepavali has a deep spiritual meaning, it essentially means the Awareness of the Inner Light. In a way it is the celebration of the awakening and awareness of the Inner Light which has the power to outshine darkness and clear all obstacles in life. Deepavali literally means a row or array of lights. Celebrated on the thirteenth/ fourteenth day in the dark half of the Kartika Masa (October – November), it is a celebration of light despite being the darkest night of the darkest period. As every festival in India even the Festival of Deepavali has its own inner significance than mere lighting diyas, wearing new clothes, exchanging sweets and bursting crackers. Diwali's essence lies in the sloka, 'Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya' which means "Lead me from darkness to light." Similarly, we have to light the lamp of happiness, the lamp of prosperity and the lamp



of knowledge to dispel sorrow, poverty as well as disease. As per the Vedanta, every devout Hindu has to fill his heart with the oil of love, light the wick with the knowledge of Truth and ward off ignorance. It further states that we can kindle light in many hearts just like a Diya which can light many Diyas. One of the legends associated with Diwali that Lord Krishna killed demon Narakasura to free the Gopikas, in a way signifies that we have to fight the evil or demonic forces within us by following the path of righteousness. The festival of

Diwali reminds each one of us to understand that life is much more than a mere journey and it's a continuous quest for truth and knowledge. Unity in Diversity: The legends regarding Diwali also highlight the philosophical truth of the Vedas. The Festival of Diwali binds people and is a synthesis of spirituality, religion, culture and social values. In Northern India, people celebrate the Festival of Lights to mark the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya along with Seeta and brother Lakshman after a 14 year exile. While in South India it signifies the victory of

Lord Krishna over demon Narakasura. Ultimately both remind us of the necessity to destroy evil forces and strengthen divine forces. In Western India, Diwali is associated with the legend which states that on this day Lord Vishnu in his 5th incarnation as Vamana, had rescued Lakshmi from the prison of King Bali. This is another reason behind worshipping and invoking Goddess Lakshmi during Diwali. As per a legend from the epic Mahabharata, it was Karthik Amavasya when the Pancha Pandavas returned from their 12 years of exile. It is said the people who loved the Pandavas celebrated the day by lighting thousands of earthen lamps and distributing sweets. History says the greatest Hindu king Vikramaditya was coronated on the day of Diwali, which also makes the festival historic and not merely mythological. The Festival of Diwali is also of great significance to Jains as it is said it was on this day that Lord Mahaveera attained Nirvana or eternal bliss.

The Sikhs too have a reason to celebrate Diwali. History says that it was on this auspicious day that Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Sikh Guru was freed from captivity of Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor. Sikhs also celebrate Diwali to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone for the Golden Temple in 1577. Sweet Temptations: Diwali is that Festival when

sweets continue to tempt us throughout. If there is one festival which boasts of loads and loads of sweets, then it is undoubtedly Deepavali which is just incomplete with sweets. Sweet boxes are generously exchanged among friends and relatives, in a way contributing towards harmonious co-existence. In the modern day world, Diwali celebrations are not just confined to India, but is celebrated by Indians across the globe with the same festive spirit. It helps in fostering a sense of brotherhood as it encourages people to come together and celebrate the festival regardless of their background. The Divine light burns within us and all around us. Let this Diwali bring joy and happiness abound for humanity by dispelling the darkness of ignorance and many more evils that are creating havoc on mankind. Let the Lights of Happiness spread across the globe. It is all about discovering the knowledge of our infinite potential and dispelling ignorance. Diwali is also resplendent of the dawn of knowledge through the inner light, that is the enlightenment of the soul. The Spiritual Factor: As per the Vedanta, every devout Hindu has to fill his heart with the oil of love, light the wick with the knowledge of Truth and ward off ignorance. It further states that we can kindle light in many hearts just like A Diya which can light many Diyas.



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Sports



Rhea Shines in Men's Tournament -Grabs MVP award

15 year old Rhea Prakash of Sacramento beats the odds as she was awarded MVP award in tournament that was a predominantly men's competition.

With support of her proud parent Ron and Poonam Prakash she had the men running for cover with her classic skill that resulted in her getting the prestigious MVP award.

Her team Pyare Sydney has a group of equally talented players viz; Her teammates were Kamal Adip Chand (Sydney), Ron Prakash, Poonam Prakash, Nivaan Verma, Ronil Dayal, Daisy Kumar, Sanah Ram, Salvin Verma, Praneel Chand, Yogesh Lal and Vinny Nand (Canada). Everyone else was from Sacramento CA. The Kamal Adip Chand's team from Sydney is setting an example of women empowerment and Rea is taking the leading on this grand initiative.

USFT CEO applauds her achievement and endorses Rhea's commitment to serve as an example for all young women to follow.

2024 Rams Sanatan World Cup INC Sydney Australia

South East Melbourne Divas Fiji Netball Club SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE DIVAS NETBALL CLUB (S.E.M DIVAS)



Sports

Seven Home Games for Drua in 2025 DRUA

The Swire Shipping Fijian Drua will host seven games in the 2025 Super Rugby Pacific season. The Glen Jackson coached side will open next year's season hosting the Brumbies at the HFC Stadium in Suva on Saturday February 15 2025.

The Drua will also host the Crusaders, the Reds and current SRP champions, the Blues in Suva. Matches at the Lautoka 'fortress' in Churchill Park will begin against the Chiefs on March 8 2025. The Waratahs and the Western Force will also hold their away matches in Lautoka next year.

2025 SEASON FIXTURES

ROUND 1 SAT 15 FEB VS BRUMBIES 3:35PM HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA	ROUND 9 SAT 12 APR VS HIGHLANDERS 7:05PM FORSYTH BARR STADIUM, DUNEDIN
ROUND 2 SAT 22 FEB VS HURRICANES 3:35PM TBC	ROUND 10 SAT 19 APR VS WARATAHS 3:35PM CHURCHILL PARK, LAUTOKA
ROUND 3 FRI 28 FEB CULTURE ROUND VS WARATAHS 8:35PM ALLIANZ STADIUM, SYDNEY	ROUND 11 SAT 26 APR ANZAC ROUND VS MOANA PASIFIKA 4:35PM NORTH HARBOUR STADIUM, AUCKLAND
ROUND 4 SAT 8 MAR VS CHIEFS 3:35PM CHURCHILL PARK, LAUTOKA	ROUND 12 SAT 3 MAY VS REDS 2:05PM HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA
ROUND 5 FRI 14 MAR KIDS ROUND VS BRUMBIES 8:35PM GIO STADIUM, CANBERRA	ROUND 13 FRI 9 MAY VS BLUES 7:05PM HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA
ROUND 6 SUN 23 MAR VS WESTERN FORCE 6:05PM HBF PARK, PERTH	ROUND 14 SAT 17 MAY VS WESTERN FORCE 3:35PM CHURCHILL PARK, LAUTOKA
ROUND 7 BYE WEEK	ROUND 15 BYE WEEK
ROUND 8 SAT 5 APR VS CRUSADERS 3:35PM HFC BANK STADIUM, SUVA	ROUND 16 SAT 31 MAY VS REDS 9:35PM SUNCORP STADIUM, BRISBANE

HOME
 AWAY
 LOCAL FJT

2025 FIXTURES

7 HOME GAMES | 7 AWAY GAMES

LAUTOKA GAMES

CHURCHILL PARK

ROUND 4 	SAT 8 MAR 3:35PM
EASTER WEEKEND	
ROUND 10 	SAT 19 APR 3:35PM
ROUND 14 	SAT 17 MAY 3:35PM

SUVA GAMES

HFC BANK STADIUM

ROUND 1 	SAT 15 FEB 3:35PM
ROUND 8 	SAT 5 APR 3:35PM
ROUND 12 	SAT 3 MAY 2:05PM
GERMITS DAY WEEKEND	
ROUND 13 	FRI 9 MAY 7:05PM

Sports News

Images of Sydney Suva striker Praneet Singh poses after winning the Golden Ball at the 10th Sanatan World Cup



Sports News

**Golden Glove: Jerome Narayan
(Syd Suva Sanatan)**

Rams 10th Sanatan World Cup 2024



**Golden Boot: Marcus Lal
(7 Goals)**

Rams 10th Sanatan World Cup 2024



**Golden Ball: Praneet Singh (Sydney Suva Sanatan)
Rams 10th Sanatan World Cup 2024**





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