

Wansolwara

An independent student newspaper and online publication



Extra yards pay off



Trust in the media



Athletics pictorial & stories

Pageant scrutiny

by EDWARD TAVANANUA and PARIJATA GURDAYAL

THE Miss World Fiji 2012 Pageant is under scrutiny following a plethora of allegations, including that the winner was pre-determined well before the judging panel deliberated.

Although the pageant concluded about two weeks ago, the Miss World Organisation has yet to add the winner of the Fiji franchise, Torika Watters, to the list of winners on its official website. The organisation has yet to respond to queries e-mailed to it last week.

Fiji franchise director Andhy Blake refused requests for an in-person interview. When asked over the phone whether Watters had been accepted into the international competition, he said "it's a surprise".

He also declined to comment on whether the funds raised from a charity ball, which was held to create awareness on mental health, had been given to St Giles Hospital. The Miss World pageant is reputed for its charity work. Each country chapter is required to raise money for charity. Blake said the press statement he issued earlier was sufficient and that he would no longer give any other telephone interviews.

Meanwhile in an earlier interview, Pacific fashion designer Hupfeld Hoerder broke his silence to confirm that the six-member judging panel, on which former supermodel Rachel Hunter was chief judge, had no input in selecting Miss World Fiji.

The panel was required to select the best three from the 13 contestants before Miss World Fiji is selected. Hoerder said Watters was not among the panel's final three. He also pointed out that Watters will not turn 17 until next year. The international contest stipulates 17 years as the minimum age for entry.

Hoerder said the Fiji contest was decided from the start.

He said weeks before the crowning, Blake repeatedly declared his preference for Watters to win the pageant. Hoerder also listed several other irregularities, like the absence of a judging criteria and the lack of showings

scheduled for the panel to view and assess the contestants. Hoerder, who has experience as a Miss Hibiscus judge, said the fact that they only had one meeting with the contestants was extremely irregular. The assessment also was confined to their life story or experiences.

Blake has since confirmed in a press statement that no judging criteria or points system was used to judge the contestants.

"If you are asked to be a judge for Miss World, then you should come with the mindset of hearing genuine stories and not with the expectations of age, point's tabulation," he said.

He added that based on this fact that no judging or points system was employed, any allegations of judging being rigged are false.

"I gave my own personal opinions on whoever I saw fitting for the title without influencing the judges as to who should be the rightful winner," Blake said.

Watters has refused to talk to *Wansolwara* without Blake's approval.

However, she was interviewed by Television New Zealand's (TVNZ) Mark Sainsbury on Wednesday. She told TVNZ that she had chosen to ignore the negative criticism and to focus on the Miss World contest in Mongolia.

She was referring to criticism that she was unsuitable because she did not look 'native' enough.

Watters said she took the criticisms as a challenge to showcase what she was capable of.



Torika Watters is crowned Miss World Fiji in Suva on April 21.

PICTURE: Supplied

Is Fiji ready for a free press

by KALESI MELE

FIJI is not ready for a free media, says Ranjit Singh, a former Fiji newspaper publisher.

Singh, a former newspaper publisher who recently published his thesis, said his research on *The Fiji Times'* style of journalism, which was largely grounded in the First World or free press model, confirms that it is not suitable.

"As a multiracial country with lopsided composition of media gatekeepers, Fiji was not ready for the First World media principles," he said.

He said a development model of media may better serve the nation.

Singh was responding in an e-mail to queries on his research which analysed the news reports published by *The Fiji Times* during Mahendra Chaudhry's one year as the Prime Minister. The research examines whether the newspaper indulged in biased reporting and if so, whether it

was partly to blame for the 2000 coup.

"What Fiji, as a multiracial country rife with racial conflict, needs is a form of development journalism that reports on positive news regarding people and stories on issues that unite us rather than what divided us," he said.

The system of development journalism focuses on conditions in developing nations and ways to improve them and Singh, highly supports this.

However, USP Journalism head Dr Marc Edge disagrees. He said Fiji is ready for a First World model of a free press.

"If it is not ready now, after the reforms of the past years, it never will be," he said.

He said the development model, which is adopted by countries like Singapore and Malaysia, was not a solution.

"I would be surprised if Fijians wanted the kind of political repression and media intimidation that have in Singapore, where I taught for sev-

eral years," he said in his address at the school's World Press Freedom Day event on Friday.

"As a result of the government's tight control of the press there, the same political party has held power continually for more than 50 years," he said. "I think that is all you need to know about the press system in Singapore."

He added that the development model did not encourage the kind of investigative reporting required to account for the expenditure of public funds.

"I urge journalists in Fiji to push for press freedom to the fullest extent possible," he said.

"They can be assured that, in doing so, they will have the full support of us here at USP Journalism. US Ambassador to Fiji Frankie A Reed was the chief guest at the WPFD event.

More media stories on page 3, 10, 11

Expert help for students short

by BIUTOKA KACIMAIWAI

THE University of the South Pacific's Counselling Centre, which is tasked with helping the university's 11,000 students resolve their issues, employs two counsellors.

One of the trainee counsellors, Asinate Savu-Korocawiri, said action has been taken to recruit two more counsellors.

The news comes almost two weeks after a regional student jumped off a two-storey building on a USP campus.

Savu-Korocawiri said the stu-

dent was still in hospital.

She said it was understood that the student was trying to manage a stressful phase when the incident occurred.

She said there was a need to create more awareness among students that they could seek help from the centre.

Savu-Korocawiri said at the moment, the students they counselled either sought their help or were referred to them by the disciplinary committee, residential assistants or lecturers.

An average of 10 students per

day sought counseling, she said.

"There's a lot of pressure for our team that is made up of just two people serving 11,000 students over different campuses," said Korocawiri.

"On other campuses there are no counsellors there and now Vanuatu has requested to do their counselling via online counselling and by telephone."

She added that the centre's proactive measures include the dispatch of emails to raise students' awareness on the type of help offered at the centre.

School ponders education fund in Fr Bonato's honour

by KALPANA KAAJAL

AN academic has called on USP to establish an award in memory of the late Chaplain Father Bonato.

Science lecturer Bhaskar Rao said Fr Bonato, who died on April 18, would be missed.

He said the invaluable service rendered by Fr Bonato, who was also a senior lecturer, warranted such an honour.

But Vice Chancellor Rajesh Chandra said the proposal would need to be carefully considered given that many members of the university who contributed a lot have also died.

Deputy Vice Chancellor Esther Williams suggested that USPSA set up a Father Bonato Scholarship.

The association said it would check the possibility of this.

USPSA Vice President Layson Leve said they would be glad to work with the university to fund a scholarship in Fr Bonato's honour.

Williams spoke highly of Fr Bonato. "I have not had the privilege elsewhere to see the impact of man who was so multi-talented, selflessly committed to service, quality and particularly, student and staff welfare. Fr Bonato was an educator, administrator, guide and mentor," she said.

Williams said in many ways, he was the living connecting thread between the academic, spiritual, community and social lives of people at USP.

Fr Bonato served the university for more than 35 years.

Fiji's only maple tree at USP

by RONISH KUMAR

THE only maple tree in Fiji stands tall and green at the USP Laucala campus.

The tree is believed to have been planted in the 1980s, following the completion of Faculty of Sciences, Technology and Engineering (FSTE) building. The leaf of the maple tree is of significant value to Canada, in that it is the symbol on the country's national flag.

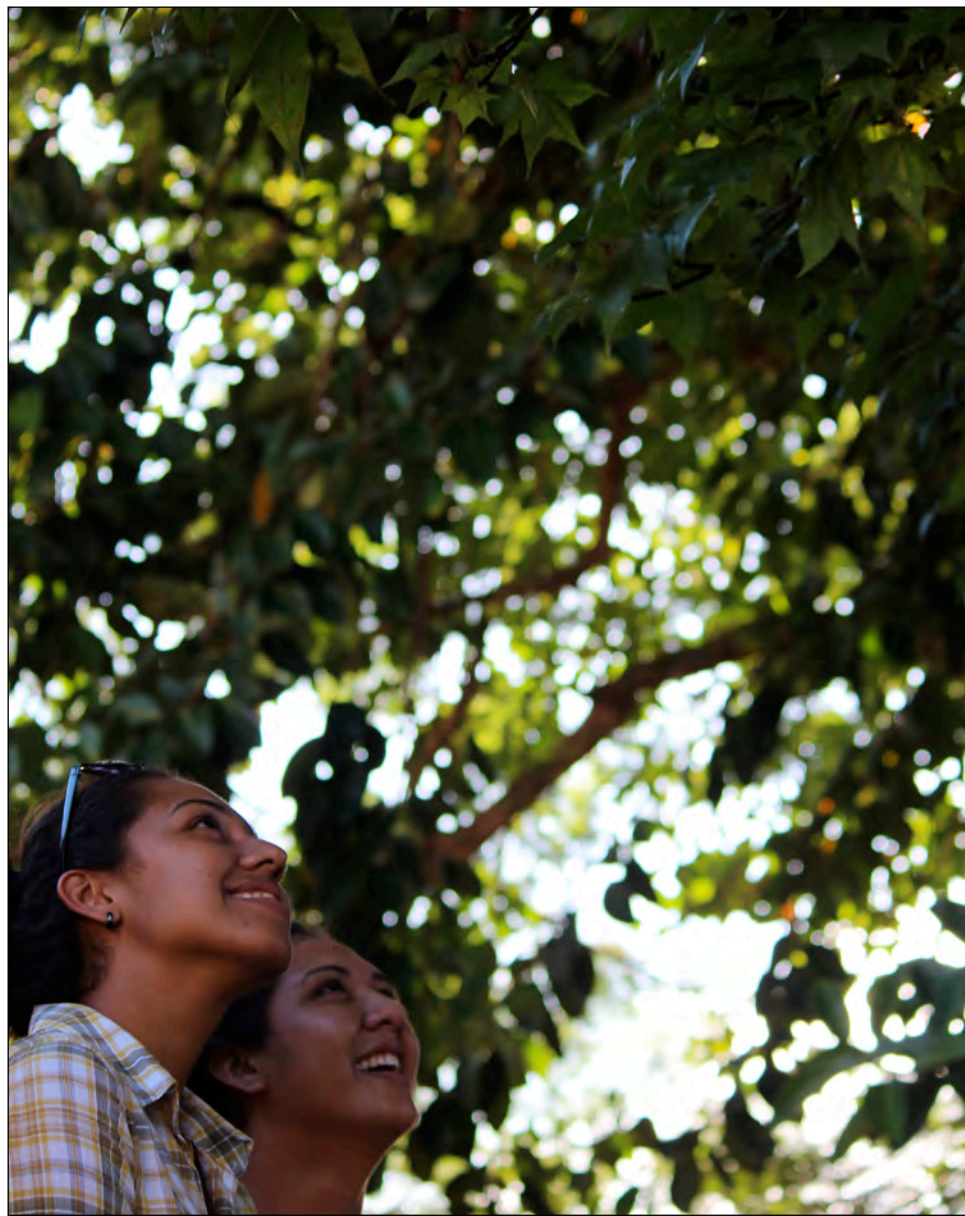
According to the Fiji Silviculture Research office, there are no recorded sightings of any other tree of its kind in Fiji.

"We do not have it," said forestry officer Aisake Vucago.

"We want to know who brought this in because it is not indigenous to Fiji and that is how we will track it down," he said.

Professor Randy Thaman, a professor of Geography at USP, has confirmed that the tree belongs to the maple tree species.

"It is maple specie but it does not change its colour," he said. He also added the tree is unable to produce maple syrup, because the weather was too hot for it to do so. The tree is located along the path that runs from the ANZ bank to the Communications building.



USP students study the country's only maple tree after learning of its significance.

PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu

Foreign students want 'typical' treatment

by KATHERINE STREFF

MORE international students are seeking a cultural and an academic experience at the University of the South Pacific.

Head of the USP's International Office Michael Shaver said local students needed to reach out to their international comrades to help them experience the local culture in a meaningful way.

He said the international students want to be treated like locals, not as foreigners.

"My advice for USP students is don't be shy. The international students want to meet you.

"They want to know your language and be emerged in your culture so be open with them," said Shaver.

Emily Van Blaricom is an international student from the United States who described feelings of isolation she sometimes gets on campus.

"I feel like an outcast, like I'm being watched over.

"I want them [the students] to be friendly like I was any typical Fijian not an international student," she said.

Steph Numata is another international student from the United States.

She found it hard to get to know the locals, so she decided to join the USP basketball team.

"I joined a sports team because I didn't want to just go to class and just come back home to hang out with other Americans.

"I actually wanted to form friendships with the people here," she said.

Shaver said there has been an almost 10 percent increase in international students since 2009.

The students come from all over the world. Shaver said the majority of students come from the United States.

However, there has also been a large increase in Indian, Chinese, and German students.

"My goal for international students is to Study, Enjoy, and Explore (SEE) the South Pacific," Shaver said.

He also wants international students to take advantage of classes that are offered at USP that are not available back home such as climate studies and marine biology.

BRIEFLY ...

USP's Got Talent

ESETA Cokanasiga, moved the judges to tears with her rendition of *Listen* by Beyonce. She won USP's Got Talent show, which was held at the National Gymnasium.

Fiji fashion

Fiji Fashion Limited is working with USP and the Fiji National University to establish a fashion school. Fiji Fashion's Ellen Whippy-Knight said the school could open by the end of the year.

droMO event

The Drodrolagi Movement (droMo) will mark International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) on May 17 with a panel discussion at USP.

Uni bans man

USP has banned Joshua Nalatu Natakuru from the Laucala Campus following complaints of harassment of staff and students. Flyers to alert the public were circulated on campus.

Uni pays \$300,000 for ads

by YVETTE D'UNIENVILLE

THE University of the South Pacific spends close to \$300,000 every year on advertising, according to a study conducted last year.

The study by postgraduate students from the university's School of Government, Development and International Affairs, also found that USP's advertising expenditure exceeded that of the University of Fiji and the Fiji National University.

USP Vice Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra said the annual expenditure was appropriate.

"The total budget for marketing for USP is much below what other modern universities spend," he said in an e-mail response to queries sent to his office.

"We feel that although people know that USP is the premier university, it needs constant reminding."

"At this stage of our development, we need to both increase expenditure on student services as well as on effective marketing.

"We think that we can enhance the value we get from this by better co-ordination in the future and this is being addressed in the new Marketing and Communications Policy

and Plan that is being finalised," said Professor Chandra. The research by Anawaite Matadradra and Parishka Sharma also found that media advertisements were one of several factors that influenced students' choice of preferred institution of higher education.

Most of the first year students who were interviewed through an online questionnaire said they enrolled at USP because of the quality and standard of education.

Other reasons listed were USP's international recognition, better learning facilities and different modes of learning.

Network of sirens needed: Principal

by ARNOLD CHANEL

FIJI needs a network of tsunami warning sirens because it is the fastest way to warn people of a tsunami threat.

This is according to Veiuoto Primary School principal Mohammad Hanif.

"We really appreciate the tsunami siren which the University of the South Pacific is currently installing," said Hanif.

"This is because teachers don't usually check their phones or listen to the radio while teaching and can't react immediately if there is a tsunami warning."

"Veiuoto Primary School carried out three tsunami drills last year and one so far this year," he added.

The drills were conducted with other primary schools around the area and students moved to higher ground along Ratu Sukuna Road.

"People need to know what the siren is about so that they head to higher ground as soon as it goes off," said Hanif.

Draiba Primary School Principal Terasia Suka also welcomed the new siren.

"We are the first to be affected by a tsunami so a siren to warn us would be good so we can evacuate immediately," said Suka.

"We have had combined drills with schools in the area and there are plans for another in the new term."

Suka said a tsunami warning siren system was necessary for the country because it would help save lives.

Question always: Perrottet

by VILISITE TAMANI

JOURNALISTS should not take information given to them at face value, but instead thoroughly investigate them to ensure it is free of bias and agendas.

This remark was made by Alex Perrottet from the Pacific Media Center at Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, at the opening of

World Media Freedom Day celebrations at USP.

"Even NGOs and others who fund activities and projects in countries such as Fiji, need to be analysed and queried. All of them have good basic information, but often the information comes packaged in their own spin, which can include condescending dictates about how people

here need to behave, or conclusions derived from their information that need more objective scrutiny," he said.

He said the *Pacific Media Freedom 2011: A Status Report* identified limited access to information, lack of internet coverage and the prevalence of mostly government-owned media outlets, as some of the media related

issues facing Pacific islands. As a result, it was important for journalists be vigilant about their sources of information.

"We need to ask the questions, do the background reading, do some background interviews. We can't just pass on information that is fed to us, even from laudable organisations," he said.



PINA manager Matai Akauola, left, and Head of USP Journalism Dr Marc Edge after the meeting with Deputy Vice Chancellor' Dr Esther Williams on Wednesday.

PICTURE: Sarah Vamarasi

Friends again: PINA and journalism head

by SARAH VAMARASI

FRAYED relations between the Pacific Islands News Association and the head of USP's Journalism Programme were resolved on Wednesday following the intervention of Deputy Vice Chancellor Esther Williams.

"The meeting was very constructive and fruitful with very positive out-

comes," said Williams in a statement after the meeting.

The meeting resolved that USP and PINA would work together for the benefit of the institutions and the industry. Relations soured a month after the PINA summit when Edge gave an interview to *Radio Australia* on the summit. The meeting also agreed on the urgent need to revive a jour-

nalism advisory group to strengthening USP's Journalism Program.

The group is to help advance professional education and improve the training of students in the region. PINA is to be the industry member of the proposed group.

Meanwhile, 14 USP journalism students were sponsored by PINA and its partners to attend the summit.

Vernacular challenges trigger exodus

by YVETTE D'UNENVILLE

FIJI's English speaking curriculum has led many Tuvalu families to enrol their children, and even uproot their families to settle in Fiji.

Tuese Latasi, a Tuvaluan who enrolled two of her children into Fiji schools three years ago, said her children's progress has markedly improved.

She said her children are expected to master the Tuvaluan language too, but "English is the key to everything (because) if one knows how to read, write and speak English properly and with confidence, then one can excel in school".

Her children are at the Form Three and Class Eight level. Her husband stayed in Tuvalu because of work.

"We believe that a change is possible if they come to schools in Fiji because they will be bound to speak Tuvaluan less and more of the English language with students of other races in their new schools," said Latasi.

She added that Tuvaluans pay a regional fee. However, she feels it is all worthwhile.

Tuvalu's Director of Education Katalina Taloka said she was aware of the exodus.

She said the country's education policy was similar to Fiji's in that English is the language of instruction from the third grade to the end of secondary school.

In Fiji, English is taught from the start.

Taloka said Tuvaluan was only used in the classroom to explain when students found it hard to understand earlier explanations.

"No matter how good a language teacher can and may be and if an ESL (English Second Language) learner is not ready, learning will be difficult," she said.

She said Fiji had the advantage of English being spoken everywhere, allowing the child sufficient exposure to practise use of the language.

See Cartoon on Page 4

Journos to form association

by KOILA VALEMEI

FIJI'S journalists must find their voice and speak as one on the issues that concern their profession, says regional media advocate Matai Akauola.

Without a collective voice on issues that affect their practice, the local media will be unable to fulfill its full potential, said the former journalist and manager of the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA).

"Before we can transform societies, as is the theme for this year, we should be able to speak out on issues that concern our own work," he said.

He was speaking to more than 60 journalists from private and government organisations at an informal discussion to mark World Press Freedom Day on Thursday at the Fiji Television headquarters in Suva.

"We want to form an association that will look after our interests, fight for our pay, help us get our jobs if we've been unreasonably sacked and generally help us as journalists."

He also noted the irony that the media was always highlighting the plight of other professions and not their own.

Former award-winning journalist-turned public relations executive

Stanley Simpson said talks to form a media association have been ongoing for years but could not get off the ground because of lack of support. He urged all in attendance to commit to the cause.

"Let's get an association going, set broad guidelines and keep it simple. We've never had these numbers, now it'll work," he said.

Netani Rika, a former editor of *The Fiji Times* who is now a researcher Citizens Constitution Forum, said journalists need to abandon the "us and them" attitude for the proposed association to succeed. Akauola said two resolutions of the PINA Summit

were better addressed by a journalism association body, Akauola said.

"One was the need for a minimum wage rate and the second, was for a Postgraduate or Masters in Journalism degree to be offered to journalists who have been in the field for a long time," he said.

He said PINA and the University of the South Pacific are in talks about offering such a programme.

A task force, with representatives from most media and Fiji's two journalism education institutions, was appointed to draft the detailed objectives of the proposed association.

Hang on to the RAIL



SARAH VAMARASI
EDITOR

“ The most basic journalism principles are to ensure that journalists **Report** newsworthy stories, **Accuracy**, **Identify** credible sources and be **Liabe** for your story. ”

PUBLIC trust is the most fundamental part of the media, because without trust doubt will arise and take the place of being informed.

Everyone knows the saying that once trust is broken it can never be recovered, not entirely.

This applies to the media. Mislead the public and they will question the news presented to them.

It is amazing how many young students do not really know what press freedom really means, especially during a time where it is essential for the media to operate efficiently.

It's been a long week of analysing media issues.

At one point we wondered how much did our students know, and to what extent did they value a free press. Two of our journalism first years were tasked with finding out

just that. They asked 50 random USP students what media freedom meant and how valuable did they consider it to be.

The results were disappointing to say the least. If anything, it shows us that something is amiss somewhere. Is the media failing in explaining its role? How can the media educate the people so that they are interested in the policies and decisions that will impact their lives?

The issue of public trust in the media was raised at the Pacific Media Summit. Does the public trust us? How is this measured?

Can you really measure that through the response you get in the Letters to the Editor columns? This does not represent the majority of the population and we cannot say these responses truly represent public trust.

Janet Kwahlu, editor of NBC, said the public's trust can only be gained if journalists do their jobs faithfully.

If journalists do this, nothing will go wrong. Fiji Broadcasting Corporation CEO Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum shares the same views.

He says if journalists stick to the basic journalistic principles, no one can say anything about them. But does this really gain the public trust? This may be where journalism students can step in. This is the avenue where students can make a difference out there in the work force.

Our commitment as aspiring journalists must start now. We have to recognise that we must not squander this opportunity. We must ensure that when we are attached to media companies, we have the professional mindset to do our best and

not waste their time. We are most fortunate that our field affords us invaluable experience even to students. We must learn from our texts, our mentors and the practitioners we meet, all that we can. That's to ensure quality reports that are fair and balanced. That's how we can uphold the public's trust.

Those of us who attended the recent summit have been galvanised even more to excel and get on the ground to do our bit for our people.

We are very grateful to PINA and its partners for giving us the privilege to attend and to meet the many heroes who work to advance our region.

An old saying applies here. "Actions speak louder than words."

The only way people will learn to trust journalists is through the quality of our stories.

A little acronym was made up that may help journalists remember the important things needed to produce a good stories.

The most basic journalism principles are to ensure that journalists **Report** newsworthy stories, **Accuracy**, **Identify** credible sources and be **Liabe** for your story.

The easy way to remember this is R.A.I.L. Just like a bar that runs across horizontally to form a barrier or guard. This will be a guideline for stories.

There are other facts that can be considered for writing stories but these are the important the basic ones.

Be a good journalist and write good stories and journalists will get a good reputation with the public.

And if there may be any difficulties, remember, hang on to the rail.

Talanoa

Referendum on chiefs' council

PLEASE allow me to respond to Alumita Durutalo's views on her interview with Nandni Vandhana (*Wansolwara*, Volume 17, Issue 1) in March about the abolition of the Great Council of Chiefs.

I fully understand Durutalo's comments in *Wansolwara* in regard to the abolition of the GCC and I agree with some of her opinions.

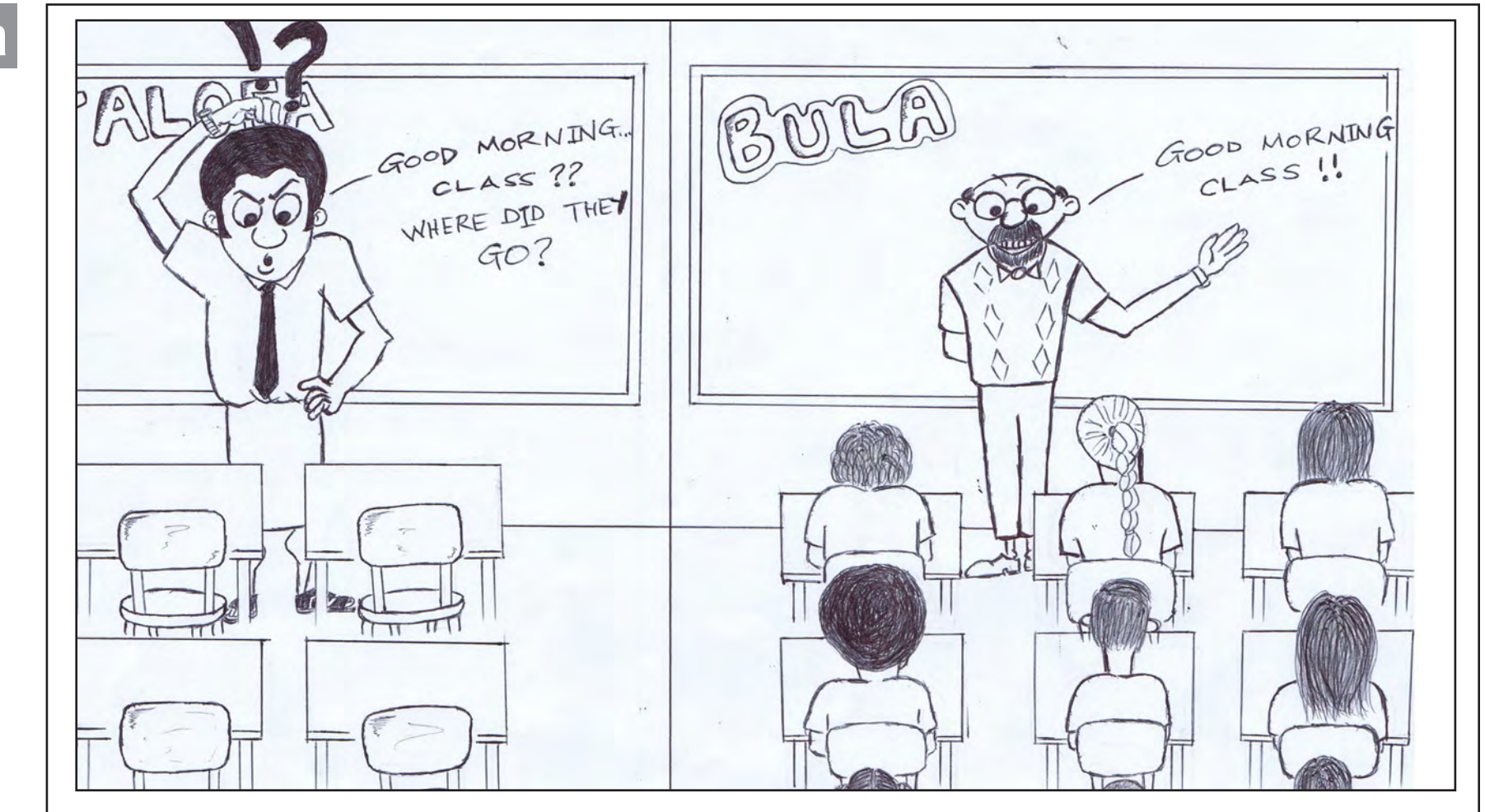
She said the council's demise was expected because of its failure to keep abreast with the times and she urged chiefs to try and educate themselves and added that "an uneducated chief is like someone who is impaired".

However, I disagree with her suggestion to have a referendum among indigenous Fijians to decide whether we want to retain the GCC.

I am curious as to why a referendum is proposed for only indigenous Fijians when the millions of dollars used for running the GCC was paid in taxes by citizens of all races?

We don't get only half of the population to decide on an institution that is funded by everyone.

If only indigenous Fijians participate in such a referendum, then I



suggest that the total budget of running the GCC, if voted "yes", be extracted from the itaukei Land Trust Board leases.

That is the only money that belongs exclusively to indigenous Fijians. But before that can happen,

all registered *mataqali* members are to vote and only those who vote in favor should have their lease money deducted and given to the GCC.

That will be a more fair, transparent, democratic and fun to watch. It

reminds me of the saying "Put your money where your mouth is".

TIMOCI GAUNAVINAKA
Waila, Nausori.

CORRECTION

In the last issue, it was incorrectly stated that Dialogue Fiji organised the public lecture given by constitution expert Yash Ghai early this year. The lecture was organised by Dialogue Pacific. Tom Roberts, who was quoted in the article, is also employed by Dialogue Pacific. The error is greatly regretted.

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Family shares home with 30

by NANDNI VANDHANA

FOR almost a month, 30 people of Semo Village were forced to seek shelter in the home of Laiseyani Drodra.

Drodra, whose home is in Nabau, said the people had nowhere to go and she did not have the heart to send them away.

She said the villagers only came with the clothes on their back and were transported by boat to the Nabau Village as water levels in Semo began to rise very fast.

Semo is a farming community. Most of the villagers' crops were destroyed in the flood.

Daylight saves the day during disaster

by NANDNI VANDHANA

ABOUT 200 villagers who fled their homes when floodwaters caught them by surprise said they were thankful the emergency occurred before nightfall.

The residents of Semo Village in Sigatoka sought refuge at the evacuation center in a nearby village after the Sigatoka River burst its banks.

The villagers stayed in the center for a month before returning to their village last weekend.

When *Wansolwara* visited Semo last Saturday, villagers were busy cleaning their houses and drying their beddings.

They told of their relief that the floods hit during daylight because it made it easier to reach safety.

Many also expressed their gratitude for the help they received from the government, locals and overseas donors.

They said the assistance has Semo villager Sanaila Vitau said they were touched by the gifts and donations they have continued to receive.

He said on the first day of the floods, they received 10 cartons of canned tuna and mutton, 25 kg of flour and oil from Food Hall in Sigatoka.

"We were happy that we had food and clothing donated by the people from other communities," he said.

He described the March floods as the worst to hit his village.

Development to blame

by MERVIN SINGH

THE development of agriculture, real estate and the logging industry are among the causes for the recent flooding in Nadi, says Lieutenant-Colonel Inia Seruiratu.

"While developments are good, there are also consequences that we need to be mindful of," said the permanent secretary for Natural Disaster Management. He said the Government was considering the proposal to relocate Nadi town to prevent further

disasters. Other measures being explored include river diversion and desilting, which is basically the emptying of the Nadi River of mud, bridge design, the construction of floodgates and retention dams.

The construction of retention dams is touted as a sure safeguard against a repeat of the floods that ravaged Nadi in March. He said collaboration between stakeholders, communities and local councils is vital in reducing the impact of natural disasters.

Lieutenant-Colonel Seruiratu said training and communication was also

important. "Awareness and training is also important as local councils and communities need to be prepared," he said.

"Major challenge during the disaster is to get people to adhere to the warning and advises.

Another challenge is the capability in terms of communication," he said.

He said there also a need for proper gear in order to complete rescue operations effectively.

"Short term solutions are currently being undertaken by the various agencies, such as the Ministry of Ag-

riculture which is working on various assessments, Forestry and Environment as well as the local government."

He said that another major concern was securing funding for the various agencies involved in the rebuilding process.

He assured that the efforts in rebuilding the town would continue.

He said man-made factors that contribute to the increased impact of natural disasters need to be addresses at the same time as addressing disaster risks.



Mosese Kubuiqela surveys what's left of his home.

■ PICTURE: Nandni Vandhana

Granddad to relocate after home lost to floodwaters

by NANDNI VANDHANA

MOSESE Kubuiqela, 74, counts himself lucky to be alive after he lost part his home to raging flood waters.

"Everything is gone except our lives," he said.

The father of six said this

was the worst natural disaster he had experienced after Cyclone Oscar in 1983.

Kubuiqela, who celebrated his birthday a day before the floods said they were lucky the floods hit during day

light so everyone could escape.

"The washroom, kitchen and one of the bedrooms is totally damaged and now we are using a temporary built toilet. All the bedding and everything in the house was destroyed by the waters and it is all ruined," he said.

When *Wansolwara* visited

his home, he was helping his children put new carpets in the house.

"We have to start all over again," he said.

"We just want to thank the lord that no lives were lost".

Kubuiqela, who has 20 grandchildren, is now con-

fidant that relocating is the only solution.

"I have land on the other side of the bridge and now I want to move there," he said.

"I live near the river and if this happens again, I don't want to go through all of this again."

DISMAC revises plans after 'worst' flood

by NANDNI VANDHANA

THE March flood was bigger than any other flood the country has ever experienced, says Director for Disaster Management in Fiji (DISMAC), Pajilai Dobui.

"In terms of the rainfall, this flood was much worse," he said.

"During the 2009 floods, there were about 11,000 evacuees recorded but for these floods, 14,900 evacuees were recorded," he said.

He said this number did not account for people who stayed with friends and relatives. Many were caught off guard because there was no warning before the floods.

He said at 4am on March 30th, the Nadi River water level was more than a meter high. By 5.30am, the river burst its banks.

"When Vaturu Dam overflowed, all the water came back into the river," he said.

DISMAC officials are now surveying evacuation centers to ensure it is accessible to people. He said their surveys will help them to be better prepared when the next flood occurs.

DISMAC officials were challenged with not being able to visit all the evacuation centers at the height of the floods as they did not have the right transportation resources.

Another major challenge was access to clean water as all the main pipes were damaged so evacuees

had to resort to bottled water.

"We are now considering getting ourselves dingys to be able to travel in flood waters".

He said even though there were challenges, after the January floods, DISMAC had a fair idea on how to operate during these times.

When asked about the people who were still living in flood prone areas, he said that this was their choice.

He said that from now onwards, before constructing a house, a risk survey will be done around the area to determine if it is safe for building a house.

He said that this flood has cost the government millions of dollars in damage and the exact figures will be released once it is official.

Sharks more valuable alive

by DRUE SLATTER

SHARKS are more valuable alive than dead, concludes a recent scientific study.

This is a boost to efforts by the Fiji Shark Campaign to ban the commercial fishing of sharks.

The study, titled *Socio-Economic Value of the Shark Diving Industry in Fiji*, was conducted by the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) and the University of Western Australia (UWA).

It was done in August and September last year.

Coral Reef Alliance Fiji Shark Campaign's Helen Sykes said the research found that income generated from shark tourism was more sustainable than commercial shark fishing.

"Sharks and SCUBA diving is a significant part of the reason why visitors come to Fiji, with 60-80 per cent taking part in one of these activities," said Sykes, a marine ecologist.

The study determined that shark tourism contributed \$FJ75.4 million to Fiji's economy in 2010. Of this, about \$FJ7.1 million benefited the local communities.

This financial gain is expected to increase if Fiji's international reputation for diving grows in popularity.

The report states that over-fishing is threatening the survival of sharks in Fiji. This species is extremely vulnerable because of its slow growth rate and late maturity.

Sykes acknowledged that laws for the ban were useless if it is not enforced.

"The passing of a decree to ban commercial shark fishing is not the final stage," Sykes said.

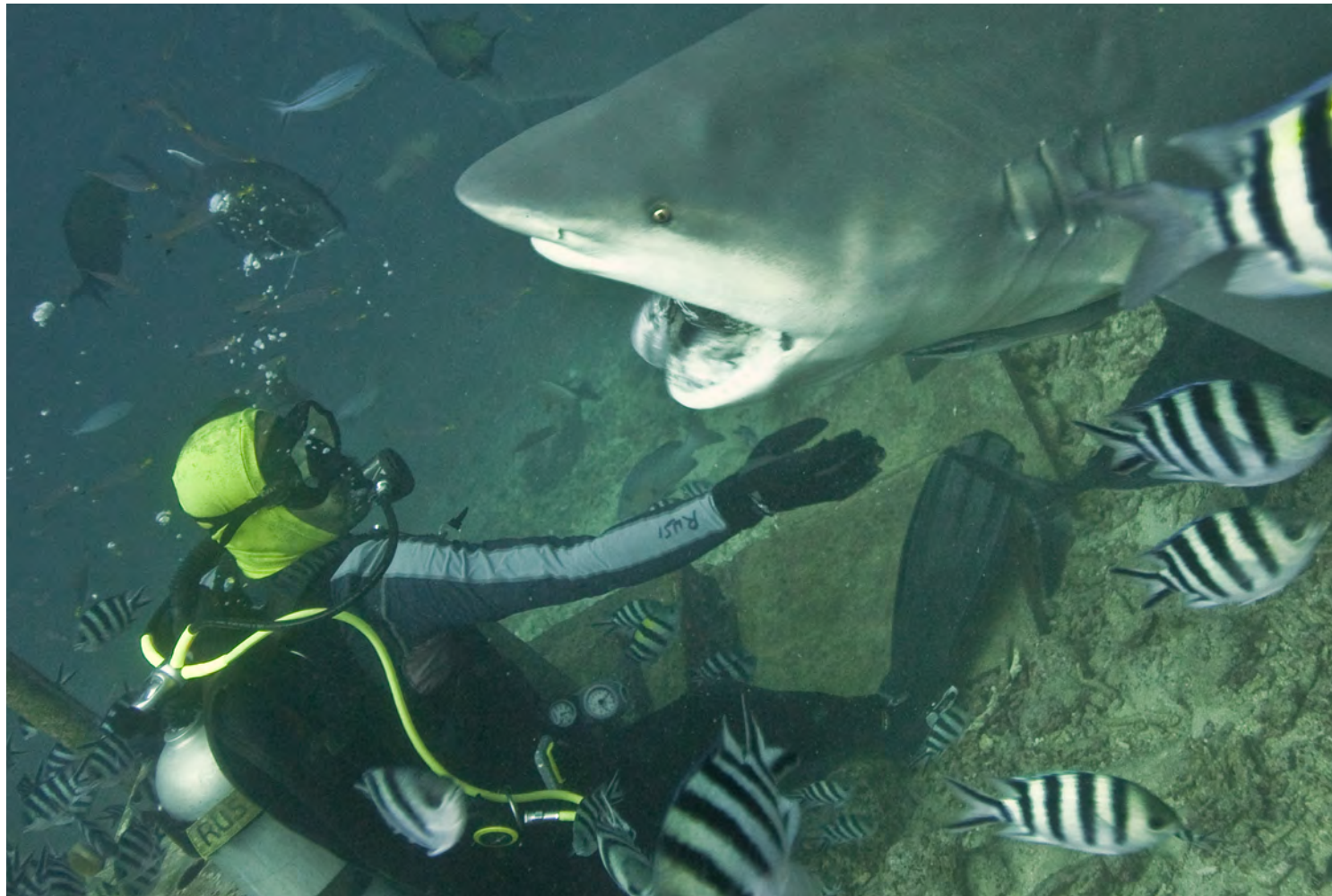
She added that shark conservation needs to be integrated into the Fijian society.

This includes stressing the ties between shark conservation and local traditions, with the help of educational institutions.

Sykes said that if the government passes a law against commercial shark fishing, there would be more room for further dialogue.

Passing such a law would make Fiji one of the first nations in the South Pacific to protect sharks, she said.

Countries such as Palau, Guam, Tokelau and the Northern Marianas have incorporated such laws.



Shark feeding in waters off Beqa Island

PICTURE: Malcolm Nobbs

No EIA yet in sea minerals project

by BIUTOKA KACIMAIWAI

NO environment assessment report has been conducted in the areas identified for Fiji's Deep Sea Minerals (DSM) project.

This was confirmed yesterday by the Pacific Islands Applied GeoScience Commission, the regional body of expertise tasked with helping island nations develop the necessary tools required to protect its mineral resources.

However, the Department of Environment said an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) would only be conducted if interest for mining was confirmed following the exploration phase of the demarcated areas.

The Government recently issued a prospecting licence to the Korean Ocean and Development Institute (KORDI).

KORDI has committed to invest \$FJ55.5million in the project. It is unclear how long KORDI needs to complete the first phase of exploration.

Concern has been raised over the lack of details on the project.

"We really need to get our acts together as far as the assessment of the possible impacts in our environment is concerned," said Kiniviliame Keteca, a University of the South Pacific lecturer on marine studies.

Keteca's comments echo the sentiments of New Zealand scientist Dr Malcolm Clark.

Clark warned that further research into how the various seabeds should be mined was needed because of the varying structures of the seabed.

"These differences in the structure and content of the sea would call for different exploration and mining techniques," said Clark, who is the

Principal Scientist at the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research.

"These mining operations in turn would have a correspondingly different effect on the surrounding fauna, and require different management responses", he added.

The three main seabed deposits that are mined are Seafloor Massive Sulfides (SMS), Cobalt Crusts, and Manganese Nodules.

The SMS are formed along mid-ocean ridges and associated with volcanic activity. Clark said if there is volcanic activity caused by the disruption from the mining, the organisms living there will die out unless they find the exact same conditions in a nearby vent field.

"This is why the protection of areas close to the mined one is important," he said.

Web tools for green advocates

by BIUTOKA KACIMAIWAI

THERE are many websites that are helping individuals and organisations forge ahead in protecting the environment.

To help those of you sift through the many resources, below are five of the most popular environment blogs. The list was compiled by *Environmental Graffiti.com*, an environment website that compiles stories from top environment blogs and shares it on their website.

1. TREEHUGGER.COM

Treehugger is one of the most read blogs on any subject. It covers mostly from everything environmental, from green news to eco-design and green products. Treehugger has been bought by the Discovery Channel for \$10million.

2. INHABITAT.COM

Inhabitat is one of the foremost blogs on green agriculture and design. It frequently covers articles on sustainable architecture, green living, and green design.

3. ECOGEEK.ORG

EcoGeek specializes in writing about environmentally-friendly technology. It covers information on anything from solar iPods to electric cars.

4. REALCLIMATE.ORG

Real Climate specializes in climate science news with a twist. Most of its content is written by actively working climate scientists. If you need scientific commentary on climate change, this is the place.

5. WORLDCHANGING.COM

World Changing's articles cover tools and ideas to help build a better future. Their content is very future oriented, and runs the gamut from eco and future friendly housing to urban planning.

Pacific needs 'hybrid' leaders: Nailatikau

by PARIJATA GURDAYAL

YOUNG people should become hybrid Pacific leaders who are able to draw the best from traditional and modern knowledge systems.

At the launch of the Honor Fiji Journey, the President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau challenged youths to become hybrid Pacific leaders and to value the blend of traditional knowledge and modern-day technology in preserving and conserving the natural resources at stake.

"The challenge is to develop and engage in both the formal education criteria and the non-formal activities and programs for young people and to provide them a catalyst and an enabling opportunity for them instilling a sense of values and cultural identity," he said.

He said indigenous knowledge had sustained island lifestyles for many generations and had proven to be better than many development models.

The journey initiative is the brain-

child of USP's Econesian Society.

It aims to promote stewardship to environmental issues and to deepen the relationship between indigenous knowledge and modern-day conservation practices.

Meanwhile, Professor of Pacific Education and UNESCO Chair (Education and Culture), Professor Konai Helu Thaman said convincing people that traditional knowledge is important is one of the most challenging tasks.

"Pacific indigenous knowledge is important for validating and legitimising modern development activities in the region, including those aimed at sustainable development, especially in the eyes of indigenous people themselves," she said.

She said there was an urgent need to integrate indigenous knowledge in the curricular of formal education to make learning more relevant and culturally democratic.

'Right attitude' tops criteria

by MERVIN SINGH

YOU can never find the perfect employee. You find one you like and train them to do the job.

That's the word from the Chief Executive Officer of Flour Mills of Fiji Limited, Ram Bajeklal and Fijian Holdings Limited Acting CEO Nouzab Fareed, during a recent

address to MBA students at the University of the South Pacific.

Both CEO's spoke at length on the importance of human resources and finding the right people for the right job. With close to 2,000 employees, Bhajekal and Fareed agreed that the most important ingredient for any employee is

attitude. If a potential employee displayed the right attitude in an interview, then both would readily give that employee a chance.

With large companies to look after and shareholders to keep happy, training is a very important part of both company's success. Both men have also identified USP

as the best place to start when it comes to finding the right employee, and in order for employees to grow with any company, further training is a must.

FHL went as far as sending their best and brightest to Harvard Business School to prepare them for the challenges of being part of

the managerial team at the company. The two CEOs also said they had not encountered any employee challenge that couldn't be dealt with in a simple, open discussion.

Finally, they said their respective companies have big plans for expansion. More employment opportunities are thus expected.

Bajeklal charts own course

by SIAN ROLLS

RAM Bajeklal did not foresee a career in management while growing up in Gujerat, India.

He said this was because he was from a family of professionals and as such, was expected to study medicine or engineering.

It did not take him long though to realise that neither option appealed to him. His passion instead was management.

Bajeklal, who is today the chief executive officer of the Flour Mills of Fiji Group, said this was difficult because he did not enjoy formal learning, and there were no management schools.

This meant he studied to be a chartered accountant instead and put in extra hours to learn what it meant to be a manager.

Bajeklal said to be successful, one needs to put in a certain amount of work.

"What differs is the rate of work," he said.

"You could do everything in 10 years and be comfortable not to do anything for the rest of your life or you could spend 30 years doing the same amount of work."

Bajeklal has grown to love reading. He finds interactive learning an easier alternative to the traditional textbook. He said the consultative nature of interactive learning has also become a part of his managerial style.

Sharing with one another, in the right setting as well as acknowledging the culture of the organisation, is a way forward for a company, said Bajeklal.

He said it was important to listen to what one's workers have to say.

This, he said, was vital in order for a leader to understand and make an informed decision after considering all the risks.

Among all the sports stars he had once aspired to be like, he held one of this classmates in high regard because he excelled in sports and in academia.



Ram Bajeklal, his wife Amy and their dog Basanti

PICTURE: Supplied

FNPF makes first payment under new scheme

ABOUT 8,300 pensioners have been paid SFJ95 million by the Fiji National Provident Fund under its new age-based pension scheme. In a press statement issued this week, FNPF said half of the recipients were new pensioners receiving their first pension payment.

About 63 per cent of those who had been paid have also opted to return to the new pension scheme, said FNPF.

This is being interpreted as an acceptance of the new scheme, said FNPF chief executive officer Aisake Taito. This last payment was processed under the new Pension Ad-

ministration System, an online pension payment platform designed to facilitate pension payments on schedule. This latest payment processed was for pensioners who had been validated, chose an option and complied with the requirements after March 1 this year.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

EU FUNDS

THE European Union (EU) withdrew K4 million from the Department of Rural Development and Implementation after it failed to set up District Information Monitoring Systems (DIMS) last month after failing to comply with procurement processes. The DIMS was established to help improve efficiency and accountability of public spending at the district level.

The National

RECORD PALM OIL PRICES

NEW Britain Palm Oil Ltd (NBPOL) Group has recorded highest ever revenues of \$US780.1 million (K1.6 billion), an increase of 69 per cent over 2010, stemming from increased fruit and oil production, record sales volumes and higher oil prices.

In its 2011 Annual Report released this week, NBPOL Group Chairman Antonio Monteiro de Castro said "on the back of record production and consistent palm oil prices, I am very pleased to report that the Group has posted its highest ever profit. This overall effect of increased oil volumes and prices drove the Group's revenues to a record \$US780.1 million compared to \$US461.2 million (K95 million) in 2010.

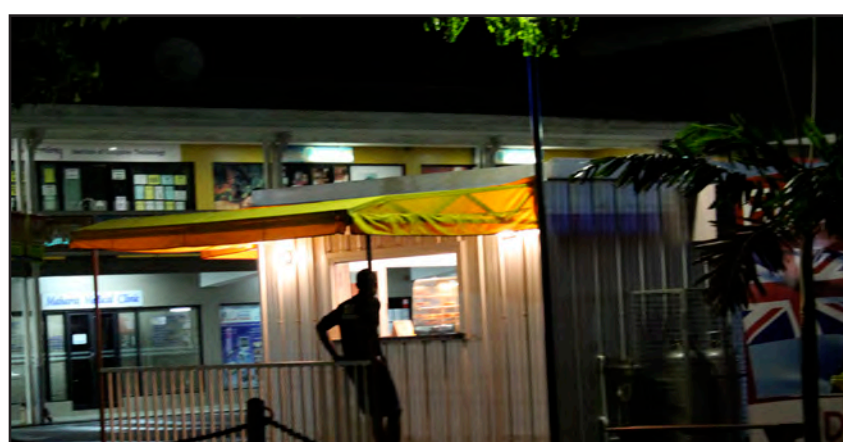
Islands Business

FISH LEVY COSTLY

THE reintroduction of a fish levy tax has forced foreign boats off Fiji's shores and tarnished Fiji's international image, the Fiji Tuna Association of Stakeholders said.

The association, representing the interest of service providers to the tuna industry, said the levy of \$350/tonne imposed on foreign fish exported directly from Fiji cost locals their jobs.

The Fiji Times



A patron waits for his hot dog from the new eatery at Sports City, Laucala

New hot dog stand a hit

by PRIYA CHAND

A NEW union stand at Sports City complex Laucala Bay has attracted many USP students since it opened last month.

Roshni Hamid, the owner of Hungry Dog said this is her first operation and she is happy with the response she is getting from every-

one especially the University of the South Pacific Students.

"It is a challenge to meet the demand as it is very high," she said.

Hamid's husband also runs the Redox shop at the Sports city complex.

"While running the Redox business from eight years, we have witnessed the complex buzzing with students in and out throughout the day.

Compared to other restaurants, our prices are affordable for an ordinary student to have a decent meal, and quickly made," Hamid said.

Several students expressed their delight with the new outlet.

"The food is great. And it is affordable especially for us students," said Kelvin Kishore, a third-year accounting student.

Support training: Khaiyum

by PARIJATA GURDAYAL

THE media industry needs to support more training, says Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Limited's chief executive Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum.

"Training is perhaps one of the most important," he said. "The proper use of grammar, getting the comprehension right, correct pronunciation, and spelling is essential. Media organisations fail to realise that children read and watch

news; the public reads, watches and listens to news and you don't want to create an impression that it's okay to have grammatical mistakes, comprehension, pronunciation and wrong spellings. It's not okay.

"We have to get it right because we don't want our children to learn the wrong things," he said.

He said the poor salaries of media practitioners was also another issue.

The former television journalist said it was high time journalists re-

ceived better pay and good working conditions.

"I believe that we should start giving media personnel more respect and when we do find good journalists, to have incentives to keep them," he said. He added that the responsibility of reporters was to appreciate the value of hard work.

"The journalists need to realise that the organisations they work for are businesses which need to make a profit," he said. He said he has

shared the hardships of business to make all his staff understand the importance of running a business and how hard it is to increase revenue.

He said the better the workforce understood the situation, the better "the workers would appreciate how hard it is to make money".

Khaiyum said many media houses make the fundamental mistake of not communicating with employees on such issues openly.

"I would like to see a lot less suspi-

cion between media organisations," he said. "There's too much of that. How different media organisations treat each other."

He said some management have even banned their staff from talking to other media. He said the camaraderie of old has been replaced by suspicion and fear and he hopes this will change soon.

Khaiyum said he believed reviving the monthly press clubs to allow media to socialise would help solve this.

Diplomat stresses accuracy, balance

by SARAH VAMARASI

IT is important for journalists to remember that to maintain or gain the public's trust, they must ensure their work is accurate and balanced, said US Ambassador to Fiji Frankie A Reed.

She made the comment in an interview following her keynote speech at USP Journalism's World Press Freedom event on Friday.

"Every time journalists do their work they need to keep in mind that they are informing the public and need to report responsibly," she said.

Reed said it was only right to honour the role of free and independent media in "creating sustainable democracies and open, healthy societies".

Reed encouraged USP student journalists to continue to persevere in journalism despite the challenges they may face.

"All people have the right to freely express their views, let us continue to champion those who stand for media freedom and educate and lobby those who don't respect this fundamental right," she said.

"The press should be free."

She said WPFDF was also a day to remember that journalism is a calling of everyday heroes.



Veena Bhatnagar is the trusted FBCL radio host of *Ainaa*.

PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu

Build the trust: Bhatnagar

Reports by PARIJATA GURDAYAL

BUILDING a reputation of trust is not easy but it is essential and worth the effort, says radio personality Veena Bhatnagar of the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation.

Better known as *Ainaa*, Bhatnagar has spent 22 years on the airwaves doing what she hopes has helped many cope with life.

"I know I have built strong trust with my listeners over the years—just walking on street and I have noticed people slowing down to smile and I feel I have a duty towards them," she said.

"I host the current affairs talk-back show *Aaina* meaning 'The Mirror' every Wednesday on Radio Fiji Two from 12pm to 1pm and the program is aired on FBC TV the same night at 10.30pm and replayed on Thursday at 11 am," she said.

She said her listeners often contact her for advice on a variety of problems, from religious and marital concerns to reproductive health and law.

"I am here for the people to inform

them, educate and of course entertain them and they do look up to me as their guide, mentor or somebody they can rely on," she said.

Ms Bhatnagar, who is also Radio Fiji Two's program director, feels entrusted by her listeners and even takes an extra mile to help in solving her audience's problems.

"There was once a case where a woman couldn't conceive for 16 years and I actually, after researched went on air stating some ways and tips of how to have babies."

She said despite her target audience being a very conservative society, there were no complaints against her talking about reproductive health and sex positions that aid in conceiving.

"Nobody found it vulgar because of the way I present my information and I do it in an educational way with a medical point of view," Bhatnagar said. "Not in a cheap way."

She said now with her show being televised, the need to be responsible is even greater.

Accurate reports vital: Khaiyum

JOURNALISTS must not only get their facts right, but they must present their news in an appropriate manner, says Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Limited chief executive officer Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum.

"We make sure that the grammar and comprehension is correct and even spelling mistakes are avoided because we do not want to send the wrong message to the public," said

Khaiyum. He said every reporter must always be mindful that anyone can be reading the newspaper or watching television or listening to the radio, and as such, it was important that they hold themselves well.

Furthermore, he said FBCL supports a common identity to build a nationhood during these critical times.

Investigate corruption: Kivia

by SHERITA SHARMA

THE media need to become more involved in covering corruption stories and have investigative reporters, said an award-winning Papua New Guinea journalist.

Speaking at the anti-corruption workshop at the 21st Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) summit in Pacific Harbour, *Post Courier's* Haiveta Kivia said very



KIVIA

few newspapers ever follow up on corruption stories worth investigating.

"The role of media is critical in promoting good govern-

ance and accountability and exposing corruption," Kivia said.

Kivia scooped the inaugural UNDP 2011 Excellence in

Anti-Corruption Reporting Media Award for his investigations of embezzlement in Bugandi Primary School in Morobe province.

"The school which is one of the top 20 in PNG, lost more than K\$370 000 in one year," Kivia said.

"The management had been trying to get a title for the land the school was sitting on, and was dealing with an unregistered land consult-

ant," he added. In a series of news reports, Haiveta exposed that the consultant had been paid money before the school board hired him for consultations.

His investigations into the scandal led to the suspension of its then principal Ben Yana and financial powers of the school board was taken away.

Kivia found that the a provincial lands Cabinet minister was also involved in the

scandal.

"But the money was never recovered. The school till today is without the land title," Kivia said.

"Students were unable to graduate from the school in 2010 and 2011 because of the scandal," Kivia said.

Kivia said investigative journalists must never give up, adding 'persistence is the key'. "People want to know the actual story. An investiga-

tive reporter puts everything on the line to get the real story out to the people," Kivia said.

He added that an investigative reporter has to endure many challenges during hard-core investigating.

"At times your family's safety may be at risk, and then you get to thinking, is the story really worth pursuing," said Kivia, whose family was threatened.

The unclear line

HERE in Fiji, press freedom is not taken for granted. From the time of the military coup in 2006 until only recently, there was strict censorship of the press, and other basic freedoms of association and speech were curbed.

Since the lifting of the Public Emergency Regulations (PER), which had included uniformed military in some newsrooms, press freedom is slowly being opened up again.

However, the Media Industry Development Decree is in place and it provides for tough fines and even jail sentences for journalists that step over the line.

Figuring out just where that line is will be the challenge for media in the following months and in the lead-up to the promised elections of September 2014.

The Fiji Government has commenced a public consultation process for its new constitution, and has promised regional leaders that there will be no press censorship as part of that process.

The forming of the consultation body was the trigger for Australia to re-engage with Fiji, according to Foreign Minister Bob Carr.

He and New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully told journalists in Fiji on Tuesday that even critics of the Fiji administration had joined others to make "bold statements" ensuring that democracy was well on its way.

But even in a democracy, like Australia and New Zealand, whose respective foreign ministers were here this week, press freedom is never a *fait accompli*.

As long as there are people in power with important information, there will be efforts to suppress it and re-package the truth to suit their purposes.

In New Zealand, where quality reporting is done on a shoestring, thanks to ever-decreasing government funding for public broadcasting, investigative journalist Jon Stephenson is busy reporting on Afghanistan.

He is also slowly but surely rebuilding his reputation after the Prime Minister publicly derided his record following a revealing report on the New Zealand military actions in Metro magazine.

Thanks to Russell Brown and Media7 (TVNZ's media-focused programme), Stephenson has been able to get some air time in his own country. But alas, by the middle of the year, funding will run out for Brown's programme and the informative public digital TV channel.

ANOTHER FORM OF CENSORSHIP

You could argue it's censorship of a different sort.

In Australia, media inquiries and reports are falling from the sky like torrential Fijian rains, and there's more than one Chicken Little run-



ALEX PERROTET



Local journalists at the historic meeting on Monday to discuss the formation of a professional body. This writer commends Fiji's journalists for being able to deliver quality reports despite the trying circumstances.

PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu

ning around saying the sky is falling.

The Convergence Review report has been released by the government and it recommends a more powerful statutory body to regulate the media, specifically in the areas of media ownership, content standards and the production of local content.

The previous attempt was the Finkelstein Report, which recommended government involvement.

A bitter war of words broke out between media personnel of the News Limited variety and media academics who had found encouragement in the findings of the Finkelstein Report and argued that the free market could not ensure a free press.

The argument in favour of more regulation came from those who have had some distance from the coalface of the profession; the shrill argument against from those who fear curbs on their own reporting.

But like a case of defamation, a journalist need not worry if they have all the facts, and can argue that a story was fair, balanced and accurate.

In New Zealand, the Broadcasting Standards Authority (BSA) is a respected body that has issued fines in the past on very revealing investigative stories, such as Barbara Dreaver's controversial report from Samoa on "Guns and Drugs".

Most New Zealand journalists would not see that action as all that threatening.

REMARKABLE NEW PRECEDENT

However, even if a journalist is able to defend themselves, a remarkable new precedent against free speech was set in Australia recently.

Controversial blogger and broadcaster Andrew Bolt was forced to apologise for remarks of opinion based on fact when the Racial Discrimination Act was wielded against him by a class action of fair-skinned indigenous Australians.

The article has been suppressed. The precedent has set a new frontier in the war on "hate media" as the now retired Greens senator Bob Brown dubbed the Murdoch press (owners of *The Fiji Times* until 2010).

But the right to be offended is not just a matter for journalists to take care about. Company executives throw their weight around just as much as politicians and judges.

A young employee of Qantas was recently dragged over the coals for remarks made on a personal Twitter account that offended a member of the public. The offended person had presumably used the Twitter name to search for the employee online, tracked down the personal Facebook account and ascertained the full name and employer.

Although the employee's direct managers sided with the right to publish personal views on Twitter, the human resources department disagreed and attached a report to

the employee's file, prompting the employee to immediately delete the Twitter account.

Perhaps Qantas should focus on pitching its own social media efforts better rather than worry about its employees. After last year's industrial dispute, Qantas launched its #qantasluxury promotion on Twitter which promptly fell out of the sky, crashed and burned.

In New Zealand, in the lead-up to the Rugby World Cup last year, major sponsor ANZ issued a number of reminders and warnings to its employees about what could and could not be said on personal social media accounts. Stringent directives banning any criticism of any person, team, player or event were issued.

It brought a whole new meaning to ANZ's RWC marketing campaign of "welcome to losing your voice".

UNPREDICTABLE MILITARY REGIME

Back in Fiji, media personnel are in sharp disagreement about what is the best approach to take with an unpredictable military regime supposedly rolling towards a new democracy.

'Development journalism' has been called for, and is a much wider-respected media approach in other developing countries in the Asia-Pacific regime.

More cautious voices usually from Western media approaches see the developmental approach as simply a tool to be appropriated by govern-

'...not all journalism is 'horse-race' politics ... that's a lesson the Pacific can teach its two big brothers many times over'

ments to broadcast their agenda, as dictator Ferdinand Marcos did in the Philippines decades ago.

The Philippines incidentally gives us a bit of perspective about media freedom.

In 2009, there were 34 journalists in the group of 57 people brutally murdered while following a political event in Maguindanao, or Ampatuan province. Justice is still waiting to be served in a worryingly slow trial.

Indeed journalists in developing countries have it tough and many do an amazing job toeing the unclear line to bring information to the public.

Trawling through editions of *The Fiji Times* as part of my research here, there is more quality journalism on issues that affect the everyday person than I have ever seen in a newspaper in Australia or New Zealand.

And that is an often-forgotten aspect of media freedom – the right of the public to be informed, not just the right for journalists to be heard.

Sure there are difficulties here in the Pacific with holding power to account.

Tradition and custom, as special as they are, can often be a stumbling block for getting answers. But not all journalism is 'horse-race' politics and in fact a great deal of it isn't. That's a lesson the Pacific can teach its two big brothers many times over.

□ Alex Perrotet is a contributing editor at the Pacific Media Watch. He is pursuing his Masters Degree in Communications Studies and Journalism, at the Auckland University of Technology. Perrotet was in Fiji for the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD) events organised by USP Journalism. He was assisted by the AUT Pacific Media Centre and USP. This article is adapted from his speech.

USP kid scoops Peakie

by RONISH KUMAR

SIMON Fraser University in Canada was where I was for the better half of last year. I was selected by the USP's International office as the lone ambassador to Canada in the fall semester.

From the time I landed in Canada on August 27, it took me four weeks to get myself adjusted to life there especially travelling in trains and the 19 hour time difference.

I stayed at the residential halls on campus and found the community advisors very helpful or as we know them in Fiji as Residential assistants.

My classes began on September 6 and like all first timers to something new, I also struggled and then things started to smooth up a little bit.

As time went by, I realized the different mannerisms. In Canada, there is a queue for everything; while waiting for a bus, cashing goods in the mall or even going to a pub for drinks.

Everyone stands in an orderly manner at an arm's length. Canadians cough in their arms and not in palms because they believe that they will spread germs while shaking hands. They are always hugging each other every time they meet but they won't hug a person on their first encounter.



USP Journalism student Ronish Kumar, middle, poses with Austrian skii stars at Lake Louise in Calgary, Canada.

Friendship is something that develops organically in Canada and it takes a lot of time to be good friends with someone.

Guys do not stand up to offer seats to girls nor to the mature aged people. Firstly they ask "do you want sit", most of the time the reply is "no". I asked my friend why this was

so and she told me: "it is rude to just stand up because it would mean the females or aged population is weak".

Food is expensive in Canada as 14 per cent is charged on everything. Ironically, no one fancies going to MacDonald's for lunch or dinner which is so huge in Fiji.

However, this did not stop me

from eating at MacDonald's. I was surprised to find a different menu compared to Fiji so I requested for a chicken burger and the attendant replied said they could make it with a buffalo sauce.

I was scared and replied: "no! I do not want to have something that is made out of a buffalo" and they all

laughed and said "It is not made out of buffalo but that is the name of a hot sauce". While on campus, I started to write sports stories for the student newspaper, *The Peak*, and my first assignment was to cover women's soccer on campus because they were having a dreadful season. I also had the opportunity to cover stories like "Occupy Vancouver", "Bear on campus", "Potential Olympic swimmer" and so forth.

I was over the moon when my editor commended me saying "I am glad you have grasped our style. This is the best piece" referring to the story on potential Olympic swimmer.

I was also awarded the prize for the best sports writer for that semester which was like the icing on the cake.

With experiences came winter, and I pestered my colleagues to go out with me to play in the snow. Snowball fights, snowmen and skating were all part of winter. With all good things coming to an end, the final exams loomed and went with the blink of the eye.

The experience has taught me how to interact with people from other places in the world and this is a huge boost to my Journalism career as we deal with people all the time.

I will certainly miss the sandwiches from Subway and the snow in winter.



Viral video fizzles out

by NEISAU TUIDRAKI

ALMOST a month ago social media websites like Twitter and Facebook exploded overnight with the viral video "Kony 2012".

People across the globe were asking the question, who is Kony? If you had access to the Internet, that question was quickly answered.

So the question is, what has the penetration of the Kony campaign been like in the Pacific? According to Alex Perrottet and David Robbie's Pacific Media Freedom 2011 report, Pacific Island nations have limited Internet access. If one stops a wheelbarrow boy at the market and asks, "Who is Kony?" it's a blank look followed by the sheepish response of "Ocei Ya" (Who is that?).

It is evident that the Kony Campaign, though brilliant, failed to make any sort of mark in the Pacific.

If you watched the video, the end game that co-founder of Invisible Children Organisation, Jason Russell is selling is the 'Cover the night' event. Hundreds and thousands of supporters were to cover cities across the globe with 'Stop Kony' posters on the 20th of April.

The weekend after the coverage on the so called 'big event' has been dismal.

Newstalk650.com reports that in Saskatoon, over 1,000 people were expected only six showed up.

They chalked "Kony 2012" in front of City Hall. In Hamilton, Ontario, over 4,800 committed to join, only 20 came. There were an equal number of police officers. In Sydney, Australia, 19,000 said on Facebook they would participate, in the end, only 25 people were there.

In Fiji, there no were planned events to mark the event.

According to Megan Garber, a staff writer at *The Atlantic*, the hyped event's meagre turnout could have a number of causes: our fleeting digital attention spans, or viral content's fireworks-to-fizzle trajectories, or the challenges of translating online activism to real-world change, or Invisible Children's failure to capitalise on the attention it had once it still had it.

The end result for the Stop Kony campaign may have been dismal and Jason Russell's public meltdown may have contributed to that.

However, Russell has proved that the power of an evocative video can create awareness and get people talking about social issues that matter.

Life in all its frailties

AMMA, the frail wooden door. The untold story is a short novel which tells the story of a Fijian family that goes through the hardships of life that many of the families in our society face but never feel the urge to talk about.

This book is written by Amitesh Deo, a young author originally from Suva but who resides in Lautoka.

The book, which is his first, took him three months to complete and is his way of creating awareness about the abuse that exists in Fiji.

The author, pictured right, associates himself with one of the characters in the book, Somu, who is teased and assaulted by his own brother for being different.

He had to take abuse from his family and also from his peers at school.

"I am still scared to go to the public conveniences to this day because of the abuse I received when I was young," said Deo.

Writing has provided him an avenue through which to work through some of the experiences and issues that continue to haunt him.



by NANDNI VANDHANA

He feels his book addresses issues that should be talked about more so that abuse of the sort is not suffered by

others.

The book is entitled *Amma* after one of the main characters.

Amma faces issues prevalent in a patriarchic society such as abuse and neglect from her grog obsessed husband. She commits suicide and life becomes different for her children.

The eldest leaves school to upbringing her siblings and faces the same hardships that Amma faced, she falls victim to incest and this makes her understand what Amma went through.

The neglect results in murder and abuse.

The community ignored the issues that the family was facing which is similar to modern communities where such issues are one's own business.

Deo said that it was typical in an Indian family for the women to look after the males

or the head of the house.

This is a great read and shows a closer look into the problems that families face but we never get to hear about it. It is sure to make you cry and if you really understand the book, you will not feel bad for the fact that Amma died and left her children so helpless and vulnerable, you feel good that Amma at least finds some peace and rest and found her light at the end of the tunnel by taking her own life.



PICTURE: Supplied



Film explores the role of teachers



A screengrab from the movie *Stanley Ka Dabba*.

PICTURE: ultimaterreview.com

TEACHING is a gift and only a few can motivate and inspire students.

The movie *Stanley Ka Dabba* clearly portrays this idea.

The movie is about the school life of a young Indian boy who cannot afford to have lunch at school and is constantly bullied and ill-treated by his teacher.

The movie shows how the profession of teaching should be done by those who have the heart and soul for children.

The lead character, Stanley (Partho Gupte) is a four-year-old boy who is a pupil at a school in Mumbai.

For certain reasons, Stanley goes with an empty belly for lunch and makes up by drinking lots of water to stay full. His friends try to come to his help by offering their lunch however their ignorant teacher Khadoos (Amol Gupte) steps in and forbids this, leaving Stanley all the more lonely and hungry.

Abhishek (as himself) is one of Stanley's friends who manages to uncover the reasons to why his



by PRATISH RAJ

friend cannot have lunch each day and together with their other friend Aman (Nuuman Sheik) they help Stanley by getting him food. Unfortunately, cunning Khadoos finds out about the secret food deals and steps in once more and manages to stop Stanley from getting free food from his friends. This impacts on Stanley's school work and he stops coming to school.

Fortunately, the movie ends well with Stanley returning to school, this time with food for lunch break and Khadoos quits teaching.

Partho Gupte plays the character of Stanley so well and it was easy to connect with the way he feels in the movie.

As a child actor, he portrays the various elements of innocence, his imaginary world and his versatility to adapt to situations.

His co-actors also seem very professional.

The children display friendship with no barrier or judgment.

They display true friendship, kindness and how pure their hearts are.

Teachers at school play an important role, not only in providing knowledge but also to provide care while children are away from home.

Tabete fulfills dream

by ROSEMARY MASITABUA

JACINTHE Tabete has achieved her childhood dream of representing her country at the international level.

Former Westlake High School netballer Adi Kulamailagi Jacinthe Tabete saw the trials for the Netball Championships as an opportunity to be a part of the Fiji U21 team to Scotland.

Tabete, 19, is no stranger to the sport and has been playing since the

age of nine. Her mother, Alice Tabete, was the former chief executive of Fiji Sports Council and a prominent figure in Fiji Netball. Her sister, Kalesi, was one of the top umpires and won the Kiwi Umpire Award in 2008.

Tabete described her netball days in Fiji as a stepping stone to developing her technique and skills.

"Playing netball in Fiji would have had to be the most enjoyable days because everyone was so relaxed and we all had fun but were still competitive,"

she said. Tabete said her favorite moment was being the youngest player in the Saint Joseph Secondary School's open grade team in 2008, in which the team won the Millennium Shield beating Adi Cakobau Secondary School.

"The experience was great and that season really boosted my confidence before I left for New Zealand and that helped me heaps as confidence is a key factor in netball," she said.

Tabete said trials were mentally

challenging but she was able to overcome the strain.

"The day started off a bit nervy for me as I felt quite pressured, but as the day went on and when I got on court I just played my own game whilst trying to adjust to the girls' style of play around me," she said.

Tabete fulfilled her childhood dream by making it into the final team to the Netball Championships in Glasgow, Scotland in August next year.

Currently taking a gap year Tabete

QUICK TRACKS

Compiled by:

RONISH KUMAR,
WALTER GERARD and
SHIVNEEL NARAYAN

TRUE FAN

SAINIMILI Naivalu, 26, who is disabled since birth, loves watching the Coca-Cola Games. She was at the tfl National Stadium to watch the games last week. She said her presence also helped to raise awareness that "we are normal".

MEDAL GIRLS

NOTHING matches lovely red *sulu-jaba* with beautiful buniga. A group of girls from Gospel High School were part of the medal presentation after every event. Six girls and two teachers had a long two days.

AWE-STRUCK MEDIA

POLICE officers had to remind media officials to stay away from the tracks. This was after the cheerleaders fascinated them so much that they ended breaching the perimeters.

HIDDEN IN NUMBERS

THIEVES made use of the crowded environment to walk away with three bags, containing track shoes, from the Labasa Sangam College tent during the 400m finals on Day 1 of competition.

CLUB SEEKS HELP

THE USP Islanders Canoe Club seeks financial support for upcoming tournament at Leleuvia later this semester.

The Club has 30 members.

This year the club is preparing for 21 tournaments.

Rain hampers soccer meet

by SHIVNEEL NARAYAN

THE USP Indian Students' Association's soccer tournament last weekend was rescheduled because of the poor ground conditions caused by the heavy downpour.

Play was disrupted by heavy rain which affected ground conditions and general play.

Organisers were not able to finish the tournament proper because of the closure of one of the grounds and the time constraint.

All pool games could not finish on Saturday as planned. The final round of pool games had to be played on Sunday morning.

The tournament was originally scheduled for April 21 and April 22. The semifinals and finals will now be played at a later date.

ISA Sports Chair Ranveer Singh confirmed that one of the two grounds was closed on Sunday by grounds men due to unplayable conditions.

Touch club aims to enjoy first

by GREGORY RAVOI

USP'S Touch Rugby Club is more focused on enjoying the sport rather than winning.

"I cannot be strict on the team to be focused on winning, mainly because they are students first then touch rugby players," said coach Trevor Cleary.

The club has a men's team and a mixed team in the Saturday competitions at the Dudley grounds in Toorak.

The competition features teams such as the Roosters, Raiwaqa Flyers, Sixers, First touch and the P.C Barbarians to name a few.

Cleary said he hoped students' interest in the sport would increase.

He believes their stand on ensuring it's not all about winning, will allow students to enjoy themselves and learn the sport.



Kitone Kama smiles as he looks after the BBQ at the Games.

PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu

Game's growth is significant, says vendor

by WALTER GERARD

KITONE Kama, a father of four, was busy mixing dough for roti in the chaotic bustle of the Coca-Cola Games.

The native of Yale, in Kadavu, said he has been selling food at the Games for the past ten years and business has been very good.

"The money I earn every year from selling food at the games increases because the event grows every year also," he said.

Kama works as a machine operator at Star Printery but keeps this particular weekend every year free to sell food.

He said he would keep returning every year to sell food as long as the Games were held.

Advocates warn against teenage pregnancies

THE Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji had a stall set up at this year's games to make known the issue of teenage pregnancies as a result of the major sporting event.

Amini Tudrau, a volunteer, said that the purpose of the organisation was to empower young women and inform them of the reality of teenage pregnancies.

"We have recruited student athletes and other sporting personalities to act as ambassadors for our association," he said.

Tudrau also said that once these volunteers were trained, they were sent out to schools to speak to their peers. A two-year research on large events, such as the Coca-Cola Games and the Hibiscus festival, found a sharp increase in teenage pregnancies after such events.



Surfers to tussle for wildcard entry

by TROY SCOTT

LOCAL Fijian surfers are set to compete this weekend, Saturday 5th of May, in a bid to win a coveted wildcard spot into an international surfing competition being held in Fiji, in June.

The first of two local competitions will decide a final four who will then get the chance to compete in a pre-heat before the June competition, the Volcom Pro-to be held at Cloudbreak.

The winner of that pre-heat will get the chance to compete in the main event. One surfer hoping for a good result is Sigatoka's Paul Chong Sue.

Paul, pictured, has 20 years of surfing ex-

perience under his belt and as a regular foot surfer, names his local right hand reef break 'beachhouse' as one of his favorite waves. Paul also enjoys his backhand and has no problems with competing at Cloudbreak, a famous left hand reef break.

With wins there in the past, Paul says he is always comfortable at Cloudbreak and is hoping for a good result.

I asked Paul about dream destinations and he said he'd love to travel to Peru one day to surf the mythical Chicama, one of the longest waves in the world. He'd also love to come to New Zealand too for some surf, even though the water is cold, and would love to get some snowboarding in.

Minnow schools raise the bar

by RONISH KUMAR

MINNOW schools are gaining confidence to compete neck-to-neck with other dominant schools and win medals, say the experts present during the 2012 Coke games.

Athletics Fiji coach Albert Miller said smaller schools winning medals was one thing that has caught his attention during the two day meet.

"I have always been glad to see smaller schools picking up medals and that is what this championship is about," Miller said.

He said there was too much focus on bigger schools which deprived the newcomers but now it was fascinating to watch the games.

Track referee and life member of Athletics Fiji, Paul Yee also said other schools were taking the "challenge head on".

"The games are not dominated by a few schools. There are smaller schools winning medals," Yee said.

He said all the athletes were enjoying themselves on the track and they were performing well.

In the boys division, 57 medals went to top three finishers (Marist Broth-

ers High School, 25, Suva Grammar, 22, Xavier College, 10) while 85 medals were won by other schools combined.

In the girls division, top three finishers shared 41 medals only (Adi Cakobau, 12, Suva Grammar, 14, Jasper Williams 15) while others combined grabbed a total of 94 medals.

Another expert and official, Gabrielli Qoro says the game has moved to another level with the coaches doing their homework well.

"We can see that with the unknown schools winning medals which show the level of competition and it is good job from the coaches. Whoever is mentally and physically prepared, will win on the day when it matters the most," he said.

Former national 7's coach and games official, Alifereti Cawanibuka said championship has become more efficient with development of athletics reaching to all schools.

"My observation is that things are shared now, and potentials are everywhere," he said.

"Outside schools have greatly improved and medals are spread out."



Nadarivatu import... Mereseini Naidau (right) of Jasper High School during the junior girls 4x400m relay. ■ PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu

Banz on Olympics dream

by RONISH KUMAR

TRACK star Banuve Tabakucoro remains keen to take part in the Olympics.

Speaking to *Wansolwara* at the Games, Tabakucoro said he has chosen to focus on studies because he did not think his chances at the London Olympics were good.

"...With the times that I was running, I wouldn't

have made it past the second round," said Tabakucoro.

He said he wants to clock better times before trying for the Olympics.

"The Olympics will always be an aim," said Tabakucoro, who pulled a hamstring just before the Coke Games.

However, Athletics Fiji President Albert Miller believes otherwise.

He says Tabakucoro's

chances for the Olympics were good.

Miller said what the athlete needed was to be in constant high-level competition.

"He is a special athlete but he needs to see what his priorities are and making it to the Olympics is not his priority right now," said Miller.

Tabakucoro reiterated that his top priority was his education.

Jump record falls after 12 years

by SHIVNEEL NARAYAN

A 17-YEAR-old from the soccer-crazy town of Ba smashed a 12-year-old record in the Coca-Cola Games at the weekend.

Form Seven student, Malakai Kaiwalu of Xavier College, set a new intermediate boy's high jump record of 2.01m. The old record of 1.96m was held by Antonio Rahiman and was set back in 2000 when Rahiman was representing Saint Thomas High School.

"I was very excited when I cleared the bar at 2.01m," Kaiwalu said.

The lad from Vatulele already broke the Games record at the Ba Zone when he jumped 1.97m.

"When I realised that I had jumped 1.97m at our Zone meet, I was confident that I would break the national record so I just concentrated on improving my jump here," he added.

Kaiwalu dedicated his record-breaking feat to God, his mother, who is a medical doctor by profession, his relatives, staff of Xavier College and all his mates back home.

"The recent flooding in Ba disrupted my training but I tried maintaining my fitness by doing other types of training."

Apart from athletics, he also likes playing soccer and rugby with friends.

"I hope to continue with my athletics career if I am given an opportunity. I am just really happy that I got to finish my athletics career on such a high note," he added.

Kaiwalu said believing in God and doing our best in everything we do brings out the best in everyone.

Everyone should always try to strive for excellence, he said.



Relief ... an elated student at the end of the relay. ■ PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu



A cheerleader executes the choreography with ease. ■ PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu

Poor vision's no barrier

by RONISH KUMAR

MARIST Brothers High School's trackstar Roy Ravana's impaired vision forces him to run with one eye closed.

The 400m record holder and member of the victorious 4x400 meters relay team says he closes his left eye to help him focus.

"There are problems when I run

because sometimes I cannot see the tracks properly. However, I close my left eye to focus," he said.

He said it was the hunger for a win and the spirit to work hard that kept him going as he also pushed team mate Ratutira Narara to the limit in the 400m finals.

Narara won gold in 47.74s while Ravana settled for silver clocking 47.79. The two broke the record of 47.84 s.

Narara said he could not have broken the record if Ravana did not test his limits and that he was "really dedicated in training".

"I thank him (Ravana) for giving me good competition. If he did not push me in last 100 meters then we could not have broken the record," Narara said.

Ravana said he had been training from the beginning of the year with

guidance from his school teachers.

After the two medals, he was delighted and felt "great". Ravana now wants to concentrate on Seventh Form Examination to live his dream of being a pilot.

The 18-year-old from Kadavu said he gets his motivation from 400 meters champion Michael Johnson, and "wants to be running his time one day".

Mum weeps as son beats the odds

by RONISH KUMAR

DESPITE the overwhelming hardships that came his way, Ashneel Nand vowed to succeed. He did just that at the Coke Games last Saturday when he won the Open Boy's 3000m race.

His mother, Meena Wati, was at home, watching the special moment on live television.

She said she wept as she watched her only child make her proud.

"I am so happy. It is like God coming directly. I was praying all throughout his race," Wati said.

She said Ashneel was so focused that he wanted nothing else but to win gold to make her proud.

The win, she said, was extra special because the family has been through much hardship since her husband died.

Ashneel was in Class 2 then. "We are very poor and I have brought him up with great difficulty," she said.

There were times too when they had nothing to eat.

"Ashneel always comforts me, saying he would make a difference," Wati said.

Ashneel started the race on a slow but steady pace. At one point he was among the last chasing the pack. He made his move in the second lap and steadily passed other athletes to set him at fourth place.

In the second last lap, he picked up his pace to secure the win.

"This gold goes to my mom, teachers and whole of Tavua community but especially to my dad who is not with me.," said Ashneel.

"When I was on the track I thought of him and he would have been so happy if he were alive today."

He said his mum was his biggest supporter and he could not have achieved anything without her.

"I knew that I would win because I trained very hard with sand bags, hill running and walking to home from school for endurance," said Ashneel.

"My coach, Ajesh Gosai, helped me with my training as well.

In the senior boys 1500m event, Ashneel won a bronze medal.

Tavua College won gold, a silver and bronze medal at the Games.

Verekauta hopes to emulate Niko

by RONISH KUMAR

EPARAMA Verekauta wants to follow his cousin's footsteps but was disappointed to have lost out on the gold in the 100m junior boys final at the Coca-Cola Fiji Secondary Athletics Championship last weekend.

Eparama, of Queen Victoria School, clinched the bronze instead.

He is the first cousin of the Digicel Fiji national 7's team's newest member, Niko Verekauta.

Niko, who is the former national blue ribbon champion, was named in the Fiji 7's side to take part in the final leg of the HSBC World Sevens Series in Glasgow and London.

Verekauta finished with a time of 12.03 seconds behind Simon Lilicama (11.73s) and Samuela Dakunivosa (11.79s).

"I spoke with Niko during their pool session before the meet proper and he gave me helpful tips as to how to plan my race," said Eparama.

"He told me to give my 100 per cent effort in the first 30m, then maintain the lead for the next 70m."

Eparama said he looked up to Niko because of his humble nature and his willingness to help others.

He said he aims to repeat his cousin's feat and be a blue ribbon champ.

"I want to win the blue ribbon when I am in the senior grade then go on to represent the Fiji national sevens side, just like Niko did. I want to follow his footsteps," he said.

"I tripped when I started the race which slowed my start a bit and I am not happy at all, however, this bronze is for my parents and Niko."

Eparama said he wished his cousin all the best and hoped the sevens team returns with the world sevens series crown.



High flyer... Ratutira Narara tapes the senior boys 4x400 meters relay final for Marist at the Coca-Cola Games 2012.

PICTURE: Maseikula Niumataiwalu