



TOMORROW

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Weather

TODAY: Some showers over the eastern parts and interior of the larger islands. Elsewhere, fine apart from afternoon or evening showers. Isolated thunderstorms with heavy falls likely especially in the afternoon or evening. Localised heavy falls may lead to flash flooding of low lying areas. Moderate easterly winds, fresh at times. Moderate seas.

Details: PAGE 35

Commission makes recommendations

By REPEKA NASIKO

THE Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission has prioritised Fiji's impending Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that is going to be held in November this year.

Commission director Ashwin Raj said as they prepared for the UPR, the commission had made its recommendations to Government before the review was set to take place.

He said a national mechanism for human rights' recommendations was an important tool for the country and could assist in its efforts to being an

effective member of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

"In its alternative report on Fiji's universal periodic review which is going to be in November this year, the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission has prioritised the national mechanism and implementation framework and so I am very pleased that the Fijian Government has taken solid steps into materialising that because it is consistent with the recommendation that the National Human Rights Commission has made," he said.

"The national mechanism

is important because it helps in the preventative agenda in terms of preventing human rights violations and also it helps with the implementation agenda."

He said strengthening of these human rights mechanisms was also important for Fiji.

"You can only do those things if you are working towards strengthening human rights safeguards on the ground."

"Which means it is not just about implementing, reporting and monitoring, it also means actually doing the human rights work in the country.

"What are you going to report if you are not working towards human rights on the ground. You know this mechanism is not just a reporting mechanism."

"It invariably will strengthen our human rights safeguards. It will help us work towards making sure that we do good by our human rights commitments because if you do not do that what are you going to report?"

Mr Raj attended the inaugural Pacific high level regional human rights implementation, co-ordination and monitoring of human rights mechanisms workshop in Nadi.



Australia's Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji Anna Dorney (right) with PHAMA Plus team members and stakeholders during the program's launch at the Novotel Suva last night.

Picture: SUPPLIED

PHAMA Plus launched

By LITIA CAVA

A NEW phase of the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access or PHAMA program was launched in Suva, last night to be known as PHAMA Plus.

Australian Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Anna Dorney officiated at the launch of the Australia-New Zealand funded program.

"PHAMA Plus will be country-led with the recognition that exporters, processors and farming households are the drivers of economic growth and export supply chains with discrete, multi-year, export-market oriented interventions," Ms Dorney said.

"It will use a purposeful blend of market systems facilitation and direct engagement, to ensure local market relevance and responsiveness with an increased emphasis on export commodity quality and productivity to enhance Pacific supply chain reliability."

Under the new phase, the program will also provide technical export and market access support for small island states that have ratified the PACER Plus trade agreement.

PHAMA Plus is a \$58 million program spanning four years until 2022 with resources from New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Government.

Teacher contracts

Akbar clears air on expiry of work term

By LITIA CAVA

THE contract for teachers who signed one-year contracts last year will be automatically renewed, says Minister for Education Rosy Akbar.

Ms Akbar has given this assurance to teachers whose employment contracts would be expiring in the next school term.

"The one-year contracts were given to teachers who lacked teacher training but some even have that," Ms Akbar said.

Ms Akbar said the ministry was working on clean-

ing up the ministry's human resource department's information system.

"For the information that we currently have, we are undergoing a verification process but any trained teacher is guaranteed a five-year contract and this is automatically renewed."

Ms Akbar said proper arrangements would be made

by the ministry for those teachers whose contracts would be expiring soon.

Meanwhile, a circular from the Education Ministry dated December 24, 2018, stated that all contracts due to expire this month will be automatically renewed for one year.



Akbar
Picture: FILE

The circular stated the Ministry of Education had been working hard to ensure all new contracts must reflect the teacher remuneration setting policy. This means that all individual qualifications must be verified and a review of the salary band must also be conducted.

... We are undergoing a verification process but any trained teacher is guaranteed a five-year contract and this is automatically renewed.

ROSY AKBAR

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