

Uncounted ballots and disputed Election Commission cast doubt on Chuuk State election results

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 16, 2025

Chuuk— On March 4, 2025, Chuuk State conducted its state election simultaneously with the successful FSM National election for the two-year seats in the FSM Congress. Though one purported “election commission” had previously announced that the election would be delayed—a decision many felt was unconstitutional according to Chuuk’s constitution—the election proceeded as planned.

Despite numerous legal challenges, information on Chuuk’s gubernatorial election remains scarce. However, several reliable sources have indicated that the main issue centers on which Election Commission currently holds authority in Chuuk: the old commission, whose members’ terms had expired, or the new commission, nominated by the Governor but unconfirmed by the Chuuk Senate.

There are also conflicting legal opinions between the recently deceased Chuuk State Attorney General and the Chuuk State Senate, the legal

body with the constitutional authority to accept or reject gubernatorial nominations to the commission. The Senate had not confirmed any of the Governor’s nominees to the Election Commission and, to date, still has not. Their legal stance is that the “old commission” should continue to function until the Senate confirms new nominations, thereby maintaining its legal

Click here for continuation on page 5



FSM Supreme Court convicts Silvia Edward in \$213K embezzlement case

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 12, 2025

Pohnpei—The FSM Supreme Court has convicted Silvia Edward of nearly all of the 414 charges filed against her related to the embezzlement of FSM funds, totaling \$213,362.41. The crimes occurred over three years, from 2020 to 2023. Though initially charged with theft and related offenses involving \$215,977.70, the judgment of conviction determined that the proven amount was \$213,362.41.

The court found Edward guilty of multiple counts of theft, money laundering, and unauthorized possession or removal of property.

“According to the internal investigation, Silvia Edward manipulated standard operating procedures to create checks by generating her own requests for unauthorized checks, which resulted in numerous fraudulent payments issued to the following individuals and businesses,” stated the probable cause affidavit accompanying the criminal charges filed in March 2023.

The court issued its judgment of conviction on January 27, 2025, sentencing Edward to concurrent prison terms at the Pohnpei State Jail:

- 10 years for theft of amounts over \$5,000.
- Five years each for multiple counts of theft of amounts between \$1,000 and \$5,000, to be served concurrently.
- One year each for theft of amounts between \$100 and \$1,000, also to be served concurrently.

“It is further adjudged that the sentences for each group of thefts above shall run consecutively, so that the defendant, Silvia Edward, is committed to the custody of the Pohnpei State Jail for 16 years for theft counts,” the judgment stated.

Additionally, Edward was sentenced to 16 years each for money laundering and unauthorized possession or removal

Click here for continuation on page 4



Ramp & Mida
Law Firm



Century Insurance Co., Ltd.
A TanHoldings Company

by OIC Insurance Agency
www.oicmicronesia.fm

FSM CONGRESSIONAL GENERAL ELECTION
MARCH 4, 2025

OFFICIAL RESULTS

STATE OF CHUUK	RESULTS
ELECTION DISTRICT 1	
Julio M. Marar	2,192
Alfred Ansin	1,924
ELECTION DISTRICT 2	
Victor Gouland	3,238
Curtis K. Sos	607
ELECTION DISTRICT 3	
Perpetua S. Konman	4,573
ELECTION DISTRICT 4	
Tiwiter Aritos	4,015
ELECTION DISTRICT 5	
Robson U. Romolow	974

ED#1 - Incumbent Julio M. Marar retained his seat
 ED#2 - Incumbent Victor Gouland retained his seat
 ED#3, ED#4, & ED#5 - Incumbents ran unopposed and retained their seats

OVERALL TURNOUT	
Total registered voters	55,939
Total votes cast	17,768
Percentage of actual voters	32%

STATE OF KOSRAE	RESULTS
ELECTION DISTRICT 1	
Johnson A. Asher	1,292

Incumbent Johnson A. Asher ran unopposed and received 1,292 votes.

OVERALL TURNOUT	
Total registered voters	7,807
Total votes cast	1,292
Percentage of actual voters	17%

STATE OF POHNPEI	RESULTS
ELECTION DISTRICT 1	
Merlynn A. Alfonso	1,766
Jayson Walter	709
Marcelo K. Peterson	709
ELECTION DISTRICT 2	
Jermy W. Mudong	1,514
Quincy Lawrence	1,436
Welson Panuel	1,064
ELECTION DISTRICT 3	
Esmond B. Moses	1,537

ED#1 - Incumbent Merlynn A. Alfonso retained her seat
 ED#2 - Candidate Jermy W. Mudong won with 1,514 votes
 ED#3 - Incumbent ran unopposed and retained his seat

OVERALL TURNOUT	
Total registered voters	34,207
Total votes cast	8,813
Percentage of actual voters	26%

STATE OF YAP	RESULTS
ELECTION DISTRICT 1	
Andy P. Choor	2,438
Victor Nabeyan	536
Alexander Tretnoff	216
Fidelis Thiyer-Fanoway	45

Candidate Andy P. Choor has won the two-year seat with 2,438 votes

OVERALL TURNOUT	
Total registered voters	10,615
Total votes cast	3,249
Percentage of actual voters	31%

FSM National Election Commission Certifies two-year seat results amid low turnout

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 17, 2025

FSM— The FSM National Election Commission has certified the results of the election for the two-year seats in the FSM Congress.

Though Chuuk's election remains in disarray, the National Election was successfully completed. Incumbents retained all five of Chuuk's two-year seats. Perpetua S. Konman in Election District 3, Tiwiter Arritos in Election District 3, and Robson U. Romolow in Election District 5 each ran unopposed. In Election District 1, incumbent Julio M. Marar retained his seat with 2,192 votes, defeating challenger Alfred Ansin, who received 1,924 votes.

In Election District 2, incumbent Victor Gouland secured 3,328 votes, while challenger Curtis K. Sos received 607 votes.

In Pohnpei, incumbents retained two of the three two-year seats. Speaker Esmond Moses ran unopposed in Election District 3. Three candidates contested the seat for Election District 1, with incumbent Merlynn Alfonso receiving 1,766 votes. Challengers Jayson Walter and Marcelo Peterson each received 709 votes. In Election District 2, incumbent Quincy Lawrence was unseated by challenger Jermy W. Mudong, who won with 1,514 votes. Lawrence received 1,436 votes, while Welson Panuel garnered 1,064 votes.

Incumbent Johnson A. Asher ran unopposed for Kosrae's two-year seat.

In Yap, incumbent Isaac Figir did not seek re-election. Four candidates contested the seat, with Andy P. Choor emerging as the clear winner with 2,438 votes. Victor Nabeyan received 536 votes, Alexander Tretnoff had 235 votes, and Fidelia Thiyer-Fanoway received 45 votes.

As expected, with so many candidates running unopposed, voter turnout was low. In Chuuk, where there are 55,939 registered voters, only 32 percent cast a ballot—17,768 voters in total. Pohnpei had a 26 percent turnout, with 8,813 ballots cast out of 34,207 registered voters. Kosrae had the lowest voter turnout, with only 17 percent participation—1,292 of 7,807 registered voters. In Yap, 3,249 ballots were cast out of 10,615 registered voters, resulting in a 31 percent turnout.



the Village Travel

Serving the Islands and abroad since 1980!

Providing your domestic and international flight arrangements

Call us now for your next trip

Tel: (691) 320-2777
921-2777

Fax: (691) 320-5375

email: villagetravel@mail.fm
Villagetravel2@gmail.com

P.O Box 339
Pohnpei, FM 96941

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

The Kaselehlie Press

Your Newspaper for Today and Tomorrow

P.O. Box 2222 Pohnpei, FM 96941
phone: (691) 320-6547
email: Kpress@mail.fm

Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

THE NEXT ISSUE OF
THE KASELEHLIE PRESS
WILL BE RELEASED ON:
April 2, 2025

Deadline for submission of articles or advertisements for this issue is the end of working hours on:
Monday, March 31, 2025

Central Union for Young Adults of Kolonia Town:



CUYA



STOP UNDERAGE DRINKING AND TOBACCO USE

We, the young people, our advisors, allied supporters and advocates of the young citizens of Kolonia Town hereby unite into this organization to foster and promote the physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual growth of the young adult's population of Kolonia Town by 1) Planning, organizing and monitoring activities designed to foster cohesion amongst our members. 2) Educate our members in correct Pohnpeian culture and manners and prepare them for interaction with other cultures abroad. 3) Organizing and unifying our members to have a voice in the political process and to be productive citizens of Kolonia, Pohnpei and the Federated States of Micronesia. 4) Identify those within our demographic with difficulties in performing acceptable citizenship responsibilities and steering them towards rehabilitation programs that may stabilize or change their adopted bad habits that hinders with positive productivity that will enhance and promote progression of our society.

FSM's health network under siege: Cyberattack disrupts services nationwide

By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 16, 2025

FSM—On March 11, 2025, the entire network of FSM Health Services was hit by a major cyberattack—a ransomware attack. Ransomware is a type of malicious software (malware) that encrypts a victim's files or locks them out of their system, demanding a ransom payment (usually in cryptocurrency) to restore access. Cybercriminals often spread ransomware through phishing emails, malicious links, or software vulnerabilities. Paying the ransom does not guarantee that the files will be recovered, and experts usually advise against it.

The Yap State information technology team was the first to discover the cyberattack on their computer network.

Upon further investigation, the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs (DHSA) determined that the attack was system-wide, affecting health information systems across the FSM.

"All four states' health services networks and health information systems have been affected by this attack," said a March 12 letter to the state directors of health from FSM DHSA Secretary Marcus Samo.

The Yap State government made a public announcement about the attack on March 12, detailing its impact on the public and the steps being taken to resolve it. However, we could find no evidence that any of the other state governments or the FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs had made a similar public announcement.

According to a source who has worked on the issue since it was first detected but wished to remain anonymous, the various health departments responded appropriately by immediately shutting down the network. As a result, health services have reverted to paper record-keeping and manual filing. While this has caused delays, health services remain operational.

Since the network was swiftly and wisely shut down, health officials did not initially see any ransom demand messages. However, a cyber-consultant working from Australia, who is now investigating the incident, may have encountered such a message but has not commented.

"While the technical staff and cybersecurity team work to secure

and recover the network and health information systems, all operations utilizing these services will revert to paper/manual intervention," Samo's letter stated. "Active directory, email, file sharing, EHR systems, timing, and all other network-based services have been affected and will need to be recovered. We will continue to update you as recovery progresses, which at the moment may take up to three to five days. Your IT team will work on securing existing systems and preparing your state for the network and health information systems rollback."

Sources indicate that FSM DHSA has a strong data backup regimen, and while cautious, officials remain hopeful that very little data has been lost.

At the time of this writing, the system had not yet been restored.

Governor Joseph presents strategic development vision to Mwoalen Wahu

Pohnpei Public Information

March 5, 2025

Peilapalap, Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph met with the Mwoalen Wahu, Pohnpei's Traditional Leaders Council, to present the government's Strategic Development vision, "Healthy and Vibrant Pohnpei – Kairoir en Ieiasamwahu."

The presentation reflected the outcomes of the recent Executive Retreat and Strategic Development consultations, emphasizing a path forward for a stronger, healthier Pohnpei. Governor Joseph highlighted key priorities for progress while reaffirming the

government's commitment to working alongside traditional leaders.

Discussions also covered various government matters, with the Governor seeking wisdom and guidance from Pohnpei's esteemed traditional leaders. The meeting underscored a shared commitment to unity, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

Governor Joseph expressed deep gratitude to the Mwoalen Wahu for their continued support and counsel, reaffirming that collaboration between government and traditional leadership remains vital to Pohnpei's future.



...Conviction

Continued from front page

of property, with these sentences to be served concurrently with the 16-year theft sentence.

However, the court suspended all prison terms and placed Edward

under house arrest, with limited work release privileges, under the following conditions:

- She must obey all laws.
- She cannot leave Pohnpei without court permission.
- She may not apply for a new passport under any name.
- She must report to State Justice Ombudsman Brensen Penias once a month or as directed.

- She may leave home only for work at her family store (up to seven days a week), church services at the Protestant church in Kitti on Sundays, visits to the ombudsman, and medical treatment in the Kolonia/Nett area.
- She must pay restitution of \$213,362.41 to the FSM National Government, making minimum monthly payments of \$300 to the State Justice Ombudsman, with the

- possibility of increased payments if her financial situation improves.
- Two government-impounded vehicles will be sold, with proceeds (minus sale costs) credited toward her restitution.
- All funds in her Bank of Guam account(s) will be remitted to the FSM National Government.
- If she fully repays the restitution amount after 10 years, her sentence will be reduced to time served.

...Chuuk Election

Continued from front page

authority. The Senate has filed a lawsuit supporting this position, though no ruling has been issued yet. Meanwhile, the Attorney General's legal opinion was that the "new commission" had the authority to prepare for and conduct the state election, which they then proceeded to do.

It has been alleged that eleven ballot boxes were taken to the Governor's conference room, where access was restricted under the pretense of security. Only members of the "new" commission, the Lieutenant Governor, and State Police officers were permitted access. Reports suggest that poll watchers were not allowed to observe. On March 8, after being in the possession of the Lieutenant Governor and the "new" commission members for two days, the boxes were allegedly brought down one by one for tabulation.

Two ballot boxes from Neauo and Wichap, each reportedly containing 400 votes, were never counted.

Candidates Mailo and Enlet, through

their attorneys, filed a request for a temporary restraining order (TRO) regarding the uncounted boxes. The court issued the TRO, mandating that the boxes be counted immediately. Two days later, the court found the Director of Public Safety in contempt for failing to comply with the order and fined him \$250.

On March 13, the "new" commission certified the election results, even though the two missing ballot boxes had not been counted. The certification was submitted to the Election Executive Director and Deputy Director, both of whom refused to sign it, allegedly due to election irregularities and misconduct.

On March 14, the Chuuk Senate rejected three of the Governor's nominations for the "new" commission members. Before the election, the Senate had already recalled one of the nominations it had previously made. It also did not take up the nomination of another "new" commission member.

Nonetheless, the day after the certification of the election results was rejected, the certification was served on candidate Mailo that evening.

On March 15, Mark Mailo and Joe

Enlet filed an election complaint with the Chuuk Election Office. They served the members of the "old" commission, asserting that, since the Senate had not approved the new commission's nominations, the "old" commission remained legally in place. They also served the members of the "new" commission, as they were named as defendants in the complaint.

Their complaint requests that a re-vote be conducted on the island of Weno.

Chuuk attorney Sabino Asor has personally accused members of the "new" commission of actively campaigning for the incumbents, an alleged violation of election law. However, this is his personal observation and is not currently the subject of a legal investigation.

Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the number of legally registered voters at the 11 Weno polling places compared to the number of ballots issued. Allegedly, while there were 10,342 registered voters, the "new" commission provided only 4,500 ballots.

As of today, the Chuuk State election remains unresolved and may continue to be in question for some time.

Part-Time Logistics and Administration Assistant (Pohnpei)

JVK Pacific is seeking a part-time Freight, Logistics, and Administration Assistant for its soon to open branch in Pohnpei. Initially, it is expected to that approx. 10 hours per week would be needed but this could be extended to full-time for the right candidate.

The role will involve liaising with local customers and logistics partners in Pohnpei, JVK overseas offices, aiding JVK staff when they visit Pohnpei and various routine administrative tasks.

Applicants must have 3-5 years of similar experience in Pohnpei. Training will be provided as required. Applicants must have access to their own transport for running errands in town and a valid passport, as travel to overseas branches might be required.

Please send resume to: micronesia@jvcpacific.com

FSM/TC
We Are You

MARCH MADNESS SALE

March 17 - 31, 2025

UP TO 50% OFF ON SELECT ITEMS

Package Deal Included!
FREE SIM CARD & \$10 PREPAID CARD WITH ANY CELL-PHONE PURCHASE

FSMTCeLL Recharge Card
This card can be used for ALL calls and texts on the network. Funds expire 12 months after activation.

\$10

www.fsmtc.fm FSM/TC

android 12

“We Saved the Best for Last”—Israeli Ambassador on presenting credentials in FSM

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

March 6, 2025

FSM— On March 5, 2025, Israel’s Roving Ambassador to the Pacific region, Ambassador Roi Rosenblit, presented his Letter of Credence to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) after three years in the region. Before his arrival in the FSM, he requested that the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs arrange an interview with local media. On March 6, we met at One World Plaza Café.

Ambassador Rosenblit, who is stationed at Israel’s foreign affairs headquarters in Jerusalem, said that he represents Israel in 10 Pacific Island nations: the five Micronesian nations, four Melanesian nations—Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and the Solomon Islands—and the Polynesian nation of Tuvalu. He noted that his presentation of credentials in the FSM, immediately following his presentation in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, marked the completion of his credential presentations in all 10 countries under his purview. Prior to this, he served as Ambassador-designate to the FSM.

“I saved the best for last,” he said. “I mean, I came here just at the end of my campaign of presenting credentials in all countries. But really, I mean, our relations with the FSM are really good, really marvelous.”

KP: “What is Israel’s main priority in the Pacific region?”

Rosenblit: “Look, we basically, you know, we are a little bit different from other countries because we make a lot of noise. So people sometimes think that we are a power or a superpower or something like this.

“Sometimes we ourselves tend to mistake ourselves for a power, but we are a small country of 10 million people. And certainly, I mean, we barely get our very close neighborhood in the Middle East or the Mediterranean to be friendly and cooperative enough. So certainly, I

mean, so far away, we don’t have any.

“I mean, we are not Australia. We are not Japan. We are not the PRC.

“We are not the U.S. I mean, we don’t have any geopolitical interests here, and we do not take part in any rivalry or competition. On the other hand, we do feel, even though we are geographically far away, that we are very close to the Pacific Islanders in our hearts. And somehow, you know, whether here, in Fiji, or elsewhere in the Pacific, in many countries, you would hear that our relations did not start in 1988 when FSM gained independence.

“Our relations started 160, 200, or even 250 years ago when American missionaries or priests introduced the Gospel and the Book to these countries. And this is where our relations began because the people here feel very close to Israel, and we cherish that. We think that this is one of the places where we do feel very close.

“I mean, where else in the world can you find a country named after a king of Israel? Like the Solomon Islands, named after King Solomon. So, basically, what I’m seeking here in FSM—and I’m very happy to say that it’s 100% there, as it is in other parts of the Pacific—is translating this very deep affection and historical bond into diplomatic relations and practical cooperation. And here in FSM, over the years, again, I do not try even to compare myself or my country to the U.S., Japan, Australia, PRC, or New Zealand because we are not operating on such a large scale.

“But we have sent several medical missions from Israel, including doctors performing cataract surgeries and treating diabetes. We have provided medical equipment such as insulin, syringes, and dialysis machines. We have also conducted water consultancy, and the Israeli private sector is actively engaged in water treatment projects, particularly for drinking water.

“Our next focus may include training seminars on gender equality, which we hope to collaborate on with FSM.”

KP: “What is Israel’s stance on climate change, and how can Israel support climate change efforts?”

Rosenblit: “We are very supportive. Our former president, Reuven Rivlin, was in Fiji in February 2020 and, together with many Pacific leaders, announced the Israel-Pacific Islands Food Security Alliance to address aspects of climate change. Unfortunately, that was just before COVID-19, which put the initiative on hold for two or three years. Later, we revived some of the budget and hosted a seminar for Pacific Islanders on food security in Israel.

“We also co-sponsored Vanuatu’s UN General Assembly resolution seeking an International Court of Justice opinion on climate change and sea level rise. Additionally, we support many Pacific Island initiatives related to climate.

“Climate change is a challenge for all of us. We have participated in all COP meetings and UN discussions on climate change. I personally represented Israel at the Ocean Conference in Palau two years ago. We believe Israel has expertise that can contribute to addressing these challenges, and we seek to work alongside our Pacific friends.”

KP: “Has FSM and Israel discussed educational or people-to-people exchanges?”

Rosenblit: “I just met with the Japanese ambassador, and they have a very robust volunteer initiative in education here. Unfortunately, we don’t have such a system, so any exchange would likely be on a private basis.

“Before COVID, we hosted education ministers from around the world every



two to three years in Israel to discuss important topics like inclusion in education. We also organized women’s leadership conferences with Pacific representatives.

“We will see what is feasible, depending on budget and policy priorities. But I can say that Mashav, our development aid agency, founded in 1958 by then-Foreign Minister Golda Meir, is still active. I’m returning home with some practical ideas on how we can collaborate more with FSM and the broader Pacific region.”

KP: “Is there anything else you’d like to add?”

Rosenblit: “We are very grateful to FSM for standing by us. I cannot recall a time when FSM did not stand with Israel. And during these particularly difficult times for Israel over the past year and a half, we cherish our friends even more.

“I wanted to personally thank President Simina. Many of his predecessors have visited Israel, and I hope he will also find the time to visit. It would be an opportunity for some people from FSM to see Israel firsthand. I know it is very far away, but I hope it happens.”

The official conversation with the personable Ambassador Rosenblit concluded at that point, and further discussions continued off the record.



COM-FSM presents at Women's Day Festivities

The College of Micronesia-FSM (COMFSM) proudly participated in Pwihn en Lih en Pohnpei (Pohnpei Women's groups) week-long festivities, commemorating International Women's Day. The college showcased its commitment to empowering women through education and opportunity in a dynamic presentation delivered to the Pohnpei Women's Council.

Led by Professor Pearl Habuchmai Olter-Pelep, the presentation highlighted four key areas:

- **COMFSM's Support for Women in Education:** The college emphasized its dedication to providing accessible and inclusive educational pathways for women.
- **Positive Alumni Outcomes:** Inspiring stories of successful

female COMFSM alumni demonstrated the transformative power of education.

- **Diverse Opportunities:** Information on various academic programs, vocational training, and student support services illustrated the breadth of opportunities available at COMFSM.
 - **Strong Partnerships:** The college underscored the importance of collaboration with community partners, like the Pohnpei Women's Council, to enhance educational opportunities for women.
- The presentation resonated with the theme of "Accessible, Innovative, and Resilient," reflecting COMFSM's strategic directions. Marcy Lorrin



(College Nurse), Kathy Tobin Kostka (Alumni), and Delihna M. Ehmes (VPIA) joined Professor Olter-Pelep in delivering this impactful message. "COMFSM is deeply grateful to our motivational speakers and to the Pohnpei



Women's Council for providing this platform to showcase the importance of education and training for women," said VPIA Delihna Ehmes. "We are committed to continuing our work in empowering women across Micronesia."

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Maintenance Program Specialist (Yap)

Responsible for the Campus' building and grounds maintenance program and supervises a group of several buildings, grounds, and allied maintenance workers under the supervision of the Campus Dean and the Director of Maintenance.

Manage and supervise the facilities maintenance and security and safety operations at the campus. Plan, lay, and inspect the work of a group of maintenance workers and/or other relevant workers engaged in the maintenance and repair of the Campus' building, grounds, paved and unpaved areas, and other structures; Inspects buildings, structures, equipments and grounds to locate conditions needing maintenance and schedules a preventive maintenance program; Receives work orders for needed repairs and assigns personnel to perform repairs; Inspect work in progress for proper workmanship and compliance with practices; Estimate labor; materials and equipments required for maintenance and repair jobs; Requisition equipment and materials; trains, supervises and evaluates work of subordinates; Prepares operational reports on activities; Participate in planned and in-progress capital improvement projects; Read, interpret, and implement blueprints and technical specifications; Maintain fiscal and other administrative records; Coordinate with technicians to assist in maintenance and repair of the generators; Monitor power usage for the campus and implements necessary actions to reduce energy use; Coordinate with other maintenance offices at other campuses as necessary; serve on committee and perform other related duties.

LRC Director (Pohnpei)

Under the supervision of the Vice President for Instructional Affairs, the Director of the Learning Resources Center is responsible for the development, planning, and supervision of the Learning Resource Center and the Media Instructional Technology Center at the National Campus, and provides support and supervision for all state campus libraries.

Serious inquiries can be made to the Human Resources Office at email address hro@comfsm.fm and telephone number (691) 320-2482 extension numbers 179, 180, 181

VISIT US AT:

<http://www.comfsm.fm>

<http://www.comfsm.fm/?q=hr-jobs>

National Campus
P.O. Box 159
Kolonias Pohnpei, FM 96941
Phone: (691)320-2480
Fax: (691)320-2479
E-Mail: national@comfsm.fm

Chuuk Campus
P.O. Box 879
Chuuk, FM 96942
Phone: (691)330-2689
Fax: (691)330-2740
E-Mail: chuuk@comfsm.fm

FSM-FMI
P.O. Box 1056
Colonia Yap, FM 96943
Phone: (691)350-5244
Fax: (691)350-5245
E-Mail: fmi@comfsm.fm

Kosrae Campus
P.O. Box 37
Tofol Kosrae, FM 96944
Phone: (691)370-3191
Fax: (691)370-3193
E-Mail: kosrae@comfsm.fm

CTEC Campus
P.O. Box 614
Kolonias Pohnpei, FM 96941
Phone: (691)320-3795
Fax: (691)320-3799
E-Mail: pohnpei@comfsm.fm

Yap Campus
P.O. Box 286
Colonia Yap, FM 96943
Phone: (691)350-2296/5149
Fax: (691)350-5150
E-Mail: yap@comfsm.fm

OLMCHS gym revamp secured through Japan's Grassroots Grant



By **Bill Jaynes**
The Kaselehlie Press

March 4, 2025

Pohnpei—The students and faculty of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School (OLMCHS) joined Japanese Ambassador Kagomiya today as he signed documents alongside Principal Russell Figueras to renovate their gymnasium. Built by the government of Japan, the gymnasium has deteriorated over time. The funding will be used to restore and improve the facility.

“This partnership is more than just a renovation,” said Principal Figueras in his opening remarks. “It is an investment in our students' future. With this grant, our gymnasium will become a safer and more functional space where students can grow not only in physical wellness but also in community spirit and values.”

Before Ambassador Kagomiya spoke, OLMCHS provided entertainment, including a vocal solo performed by one of the students and an impressive hula dance demonstration by two sisters who are seniors at the school. Following these performances, a pictorial video showcasing the history of the gymnasium and the numerous events it has hosted over the years for both students and the community was presented.

“The beautiful video we have just seen provides great insight into how effectively you have been using this gymnasium,” said Ambassador Kagomiya during his remarks. “I was very pleased to watch the videos. I hope that this gymnasium will continue to promote the physical and mental well-being of students and the local community and will be used for many years with proper maintenance.

“Japan’s cooperation with the FSM is not limited to economic development and infrastructure but also extends to social development, particularly in education and health. I believe education is one of the most important sectors because young people have infinite potential, and the future of this country depends on your shoulders. So, I strongly encourage you to be ambitious in your studies and to learn as much as possible. But more importantly, enjoy your life—cherish your friendships and spend quality time with your family. I sincerely hope this gymnasium will foster such meaningful relationships. I deeply appreciate your warm welcome.”

Former FSM President Emanuel Mori, who serves as the OLMCHS Board Chair, was the next to speak.

“I want to thank you, and I want to thank the Japanese government—not only for this project but for all the projects, both visible and unseen, throughout our nation,” he said. “I am especially grateful because this project is for a school. Departing from your primary focus on developing docks and airports, you are now supporting schools through the Grassroots Human Security Projects grant.

“This facility is not only for the school. I fully recognize that it is also used for various community activities. So, your gift is not just for the school but for the entire community.”

After the speeches, Principal Figueras and Ambassador Kagomiya signed the documents to officially commence the renovation project.

Perhaps the most meaningful speech of the afternoon—at least for the student body—was

delivered by Marikai Oliver in closing the ceremony.

“Members of the OLMCHS Board of Directors, our dedicated faculty and staff, fellow students, and honored guests, good afternoon. On behalf of the student body of Our Lady of Mercy Catholic High School, I extend our deepest gratitude to the Embassy of Japan and the Government of Japan for your generosity and support through the Grassroots Human Security Projects grant. This grant means so much to us.

“The renovation of our gymnasium will provide a safer, more welcoming space where we can gather not just for sports but also for school events, celebrations, and activities that bring us together as a community. It will be a place where we learn important values—teamwork, discipline, and perseverance—lessons that will stay with us long after we leave these halls.

“To Ambassador Kagomiya and the people of Japan, thank you for investing in our future. Your kindness will leave a lasting impact on our school and our lives. We promise to honor this gift by using this space to grow as students and as future leaders dedicated to serving others. We are truly grateful and will always remember this day as a symbol of friendship and opportunity.”



Kaboom Bronze	\$49 monthly	up to 10Mbps ↓ 10Mbps ↓ / 3Mbps ↑ CONDITIONS APPLY
Kaboom Silver	\$75 monthly	up to 15Mbps ↓ 15Mbps ↓ / 4Mbps ↑ CONDITIONS APPLY
Kaboom Gold	\$99 monthly	up to 20Mbps ↓ 20Mbps ↓ / 5Mbps ↑ CONDITIONS APPLY
Kaboom Sapphire	\$198 monthly	up to 40Mbps ↓ 40Mbps ↓ / 10Mbps ↑ CONDITIONS APPLY
Kaboom Diamond	\$297 monthly	up to 60Mbps ↓ 60Mbps ↓ / 10Mbps ↑ CONDITIONS APPLY

FSM *We Are You* **TC**
FSM Telecommunications Corporation
 Kaselehlie Street, P.O. Box 1210, Pohnpei FM 96941
 p: 691-320-2740 | e: customerservice@fsmtc.fm

***FREE installation for existing and eligible returning internet customers.**



LET'S CONNECT!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT VITAL ENERGY



Vital Energy *Energy for life*

@VITALENERGYMICRONESIA 

@VITAL_ENERGY_MICRONESIA 

@VITAL ENERGY MICRONESIA 

@VITALENERGY2 

Vital Energy *Energy for life*

TRADE MARK CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Henan Yeesain Health Technology Co., Ltd. DONGPOZHAI, SIJAMEN VILLAGE, YUECUN TOWN, XINMI, ZHENGZHOU CITY, HENAN, CHINA, is the sole owner and proprietor in the Federated States of Micronesia and elsewhere of the trade mark below:

Deeyeo

which is used in connection with the following goods:

Class 3: baby wipes impregnated with cleaning preparations; tissues impregnated with a skin cleanser; wipes impregnated with a skin cleanser; pre-moistened towelettes impregnated with a detergent for cleaning; cotton wool for cosmetic purposes; cotton sticks for cosmetic purposes; cotton wool impregnated with make-up removing preparations; tissues impregnated with cosmetic lotions; tissues impregnated with make-up removing preparations; cotton swabs impregnated with make-up removing preparations; laundry balls filled with laundry detergents; laundry detergents; color run prevention laundry sheets; dry-cleaning preparations; antistatic drier sheets; Pre-moistened towelettes impregnated with dishwashing detergent; pre-impregnated cleansing tissues; wipes impregnated with a cleaning preparation; cloths impregnated with a detergent for cleaning; carpet cleaning preparations.

Class 5: Wipes impregnated with disinfectants for hygiene purposes; incontinence pads; diapers for incontinence; pants, absorbent, for incontinence; Disposable diapers for incontinence; adult diapers; babies' diapers; Disposable baby diapers; diaper changing mats, disposable, for babies; tissues impregnated with antibacterial preparations; menstruation knickers; sanitary tampons; sanitary pads; sanitary towels; disposable sanitizing wipes; breast-nursing pads; babies' diaper-pants; cotton sticks for medical purposes; cotton for medical purposes; disposable absorbent mats for lining pet crates.

Class 16: Pre-moistened toilet paper; hygienic paper; towels of paper; face towels of paper; paper wipes for cleaning; paper wipes; facial tissues of paper; tissues of paper for removing make-up; paper tissues for removing make-up; fiber paper; wood pulp paper; paper; Paper toilet seat covers; Place mats of paper; handkerchiefs of paper; table napkins of paper; Kitchen paper; bibs of paper; paper for medical examination tables; baking paper.

Class 24: Non-woven textile fabrics; face towels of textile; bath towels; cloth napkins for removing make-up; face cloths of towelling; cloths for removing make-up; bathroom towels of textile; towels of textile; hand towels; children's towels; household linen; bedsheets; Pillowcases; quilt covers; fitted toilet lid covers of fabric; cotton fabrics; adhesive fabric for application by heat; textile hair drying towels; ticks [mattress covers]; sleeping bags for babies.

Class 25: Disposable underwear; underpants; bibs, not of paper; spats; disposable slippers; insoles; boot gaiters; caps being headwear; headwear; ear muffs; shower caps; sleep masks; clothing; paper clothing; children's clothing; shoes; socks; gloves [clothing]; face coverings [clothing], not for medical or sanitary purposes; belts [clothing].

Henan Yeesain Health Technology Co., Ltd. claims all rights in respect to the above trade mark and will take all necessary legal steps against any person, firm or corporation counterfeiting, imitating, violating or otherwise infringing its rights in the Federated States of Micronesia.

MUNRO LEYS

Lawyers & Notaries Public, Pacific House, Butt Street, PO Box 149, Suva, Fiji

Email: trademarks@munroleyslaw.com.fj
www.munroleyslaw.com

MUNRO LEYS

Strengthening Ties: Israel's New Ambassador to the FSM presents credentials to President Simina

FSM Information Services

March 6, 2025

PALIKIR, Pohnpei – His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), officially welcomed Ambassador-designate Roi Rosenblit of the State of Israel during a formal ceremony held at the capital on March 5, 2025. Ambassador Rosenblit presented his Letter of Credence, signifying his appointment as Israel's Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), with residence in Israel.



In his remarks, President Simina expressed deep appreciation for Israel's longstanding diplomatic relations with FSM, which have been in place since November 23, 1988. He reaffirmed the FSM's commitment to strengthening cooperation with Israel across various sectors.

"At the bilateral level, the FSM is keen on re-engaging with Israel to explore a more progressive and productive partnership. There are many areas where our two countries can work together, including coastal fisheries, environmental conservation, youth development, sports exchanges, scholarships, and most importantly, water management," President Simina stated.

Recognizing Israel's expertise in water management, the President highlighted the FSM's interest in learning from Israel's experience to address the growing challenges of climate change, particularly in mitigating drought conditions affecting the islands.

On global matters, including global peace and security, President Simina reiterated the FSM's commitment to seeking solutions to the Israel-Gaza conflict, advocating for a peaceful resolution through a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can coexist in peace, security, and dignity within mutually recognized borders.

confident that our shared values and commitment to deepening cooperation will lead to a more robust partnership between FSM and Israel," President Simina told Ambassador Rosenblit.

The FSM government looks forward to working closely with Ambassador Rosenblit to further enhance cooperation between the two nations.

TRADE MARK CAUTIONARY NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that MIDO AG (MIDO SA) (MIDO LTD) of Chemin des Tourelles, 17, 2400, LE LOCLE, SWITZERLAND, is the sole owner and proprietor in the Federated States of Micronesia and elsewhere of the trade mark below:

MIDO

which is used in connection with the following goods:

Class 14: Precious metals and their alloys; jewellery, precious stones; horological and chronometric instruments

MIDO AG (MIDO SA) (MIDO LTD) claims all rights in respect to the above trade mark and will take all necessary legal steps against any person, firm or corporation counterfeiting, imitating, violating or otherwise infringing its rights in the Federated States of Micronesia.

MUNRO LEYS

Lawyers & Notaries Public, Pacific House, Butt Street, PO Box 149, Suva, Fiji
Email: trademarks@munroleyslaw.com.fj
www.munroleyslaw.com

MUNRO LEYS

"As you begin your tenure, I am

SAVINGS WITH A

BOOST

Looking for a smarter way
to grow your money?

4.01%
APY*

With a minimum balance of just \$10,000, you can enjoy higher earnings and even keep adding to your account throughout the year to grow your savings even more.

No complicated steps, no hassle—just a straightforward way to build a brighter financial future.

Open your Boost Savings account today and see the difference!

OPEN AN ACCOUNT** TODAY

bankofguam.com



*Annual Percentage Yield. **This account must be funded within 5 banking days of opening or April 30, 2025, whichever comes first. The annual percentage yield (APY) listed is accurate as of 2/1/2025 and is subject to change at any time without notice. There is a minimum of \$10,000 to open the account and obtain the APY. An early closure charge may be assessed, and forfeiture of all interest may be imposed if withdrawal occurs before maturity. Interest will be credited at maturity on March 31, 2026. Fees could reduce earnings on the account. Rate may change at any time after account opening. A new or existing Bank of Guam deposit account is required for this promotional savings account. Restrictions apply. Offer valid for a limited time.

Pohnpei celebrates Pohnpei State-International Women's Day 2025



[Return to front page](#)

Pohnpei Women's Council

March 18, 2025

Pohnpei—The Pohnpei Women Council (PWC) in collaboration and partnership with the Pohnpei State Government, organized the celebration of Pohnpei-International Women's Day (IWD), March 4-8, 2025. This year's theme is: **FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS: RIGHTS, EQUALITY, EMPOWERMENT. CAMPAIGN: ACCELERATE ACTION.**

From March 4-7, the PWC organized workshops that were attended by hundreds of Pohnpei residents. The workshops were held at the Governor's Conference Room in Kolonia.

The workshop agendas included topics on gender equality and equity, gender-based violence, access to justice, health, environment, impact of climate change, educational and employment opportunities, human trafficking, child protection, funding/grant

availabilities, banking services, digital technologies, traditional weaving, and many others. Member organizations of the PWC, shared the successes and challenges of projects they are currently administering. Some of these projects include: The U Women Organization started an aquaculture project on sea cucumber, Lien Kitti Ononleng started a small-scale plastic recycling project, Lien Pwihn Keieu Madolenihmw launched a food security project by planting local crops, Lien Peidie Soheks started an aquaculture sea cucumber project, Lien Lohd Pah, started a beautification project and Lien Dolonier with TASK, taught weaving and traditional knowledge.

The Pohnpei State Governor, Honorable Stevenson Joseph, delivered the opening and welcoming remarks. Governor Joseph expressed gratitude to the PWC for leading and organizing this year's IWD events and highlighted the State's recognition and respect for women, exhibited by the State's endorsement of March 8 as Pohnpei State International Women's Day legal

holiday.

An inspirational message was delivered by one of Pohnpei's traditional women's leaders, Nahnkeniei of U, who acknowledged the great work and congratulated the PWC for organizing such important event. Nahnkeniei U expressed the importance of such event, and urged the cooperation and collaboration of the government and PWC to continue such trainings and workshops. Nahnkeniei U stated that she has gained knowledge and benefited from the presentations. Nahnkeniei U reiterated the importance of peace and security within the family structure. "It is our fundamental roles as mothers, to protect and preserve our custom and tradition. We have to teach our children the importance of our culture and language. We need to teach our children the value of respecting one another. As families, we need to love and respect each other."

On the morning of March 7, the PWC joined the Lien Alem of Pohnpei in rejoicing International Day of Prayer

at the Protestant Church in Kolonia. After the church service, the PWC delivered food items to the Pohnpei State Hospital, Genesis Hospital and the Pohnpei State Corrections and Rehabilitation - donations by the different women organizations.

The March 8 celebration was held at the Kolonia Town Gymnasium and garnered over hundreds of residents, traditional leaders, government officials, Embassies, UN organizations, Inter-governmental organizations, local banks, businesses, faith-based organizations, youth organizations, NGOs, persons with disabilities, women organizations, visitors to the island and the general public. Kolonia Town Council member, Mr. Rickson Higgins, delivered the welcoming remarks on behalf of Kolonia Town Mayor, Henry Biza. Higgins congratulated all participants, stating, "this is a day dedicated for all women. We, men, honor and support you". The festivities included dance performances, songs, prayers by different women groups, in their beautiful costumes, celebrating



their achievements. There were tents set up outside the gymnasium with arts and crafts, local crops, handicrafts and delicious food for sale. Pohnpei residents were blessed by the word of wisdom and sanctifications by Iso Nahniken of U, representing the traditional leaders of Pohnpei, that concluded the 2025 Pohnpei International Women's Day, with great success.

Secretary of PWC, Mrs. Bernolihna Hedson, expressed delight in the engagements and interests shown by the participants at the events. "Everyone is smiling, they are dancing, they are happy. There are new groups that joined the PWC", says Hedson.

Vice President of PWC, Mrs. Maria Donre, affirmed that the PWC has achieved its goals and objectives in delivering an informative and successful four-days of workshops, leading to the celebration on March 8, Pohnpei International Women's Day.

The President of the PWC, Emeliana

Musrasrik-Carl reported that the 2025 IWD theme calls for action that can unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all where no one is left behind. Musrasrik-Carl stated that, central to this vision is empowering the next generation, youth, predominantly young women and young girls, as catalysts for lasting change. The 2025 IWD is a pivotal moment in the global quest of gender equality and women's empowerment, as it marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Beijing Platform, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing, China, by 189 governments, remains the most progressive and widely endorsed blueprint for women's and girls' rights worldwide. It guides policies, programs and investment that impact critical areas of our lives, such as: education, health, peace, media, political participation, economic empowerment, and the elimination of violence against women and girls. "Addressing these issues, along with emerging priorities around climate justice and the power of digital

technologies, is urgent in order to achieve the nation's sustainable development goals. The PWC is honored to have been given the privilege and opportunity to once again, organize this year's IWD. Every year, we see the improvement in terms of participation. It is our responsibility to identify topics that are in alignment with the nation's sustainable development goals. We have to engage the community, with our people, our youth, by providing awareness raising on important issues affecting our islands and offer opportunities to better our livelihoods. With the blessings and support of the Mwoalen Wahu en Pohnpei (traditional leaders of Pohnpei, this year's IWD was a great success", stated Musrasrik-Carl.

The PWC would like to thank every persons, offices and organizations that made this year's IWD possible. Special thanks and recognition is given to the Mwoalen Wahu en Pohnpei, the Office of the Pohnpei State Governor, the 11th Pohnpei State Legislature, Kolonia Town Government, FSM

National Government, Office of the FSM President, FSM Congress, FSM Supreme Court, Pohnpei State Department of Health and Social Services, Pohnpei State Department of Public Safety, NCD Program, FSM Department of Health, FSM DOJ, FSM/ State R&D the Embassy of Australia in Pohnpei, International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, COM-FSM, FSM Development Bank, FSM Bank, PREL, SEA/SH – funded by World Bank, Micronesian Conservation Trust, Christian Mission Fellowship Youth, V6AH Radio, UN Women, NCD Surveyors, TASK, Sr. Christina Elias, KPress, Chris Johnson, Darsy Augustine, J Suldan, all women's organizations, TASK, CUYA, and everyone who contributed, participated in this year's IWD. Your dedication and support made this year's IWD a great success.

Officers of the PWC are Emeliana Musrasrik-Carl, President, Maria Donre, Vice President, Bernolihna Hedson, Secretary and Sensilyn Kanichy, Treasurer.

Micronesian Productions expands media opportunities for FSM youth with new internship program

By Micronesian Productions

March 13, 2025

Kolonia, Pohnpei — Micronesian Productions (MP) is proud to announce the launch of its Media Internship Program, an exciting new initiative in collaboration with the PICS Media Club. As a leading media organization in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), MP continues to shape the future of digital storytelling in the Pacific, bridging the gap between education and real-world experience for the next generation of media professionals.

Empowering Future Media Leaders

Recognizing the immense talent and dedication within the PICS Media Club, MP has created this internship to provide students with hands-on training in video production, storytelling, and digital media skills. The program aims to prepare young creatives for future careers in media, offering real-world exposure to professional production environments.

“One of the biggest challenges we face as a growing media organization is finding individuals who are both interested in and experienced in media work. The PICS Media Club is doing an incredible job in fostering talent, and we want to support and guide these students toward real career opportunities,” said Nigel Jaynes, Executive Director of Micronesian Productions.



Through this internship, students will receive training in: Video shooting, editing, camera operation, lighting & sound recording, scriptwriting & storytelling, digital media organization & project management, and hands-on experience with real MP productions. Interns will work alongside MP's professional team, gaining valuable industry experience, and the most outstanding participant may be considered for future employment after graduation.

A unique collaboration with PICS Media Club

The PICS Media Club has become a powerhouse for young creatives in Pohnpei. They recently received training from ABC Australia and are consistently producing student-led content for social media. MP is proud to collaborate with and invest in the club, ensuring that students have an outlet for their creativity



and a direct path to professional opportunities.

As part of MP's Digital Democracy Initiative, funded by UNDP, the internship will also include a special Cybersecurity Awareness Project. MP has commissioned the PICS Media Club to produce a series of engaging social media videos on cybersecurity, helping to educate the community on online safety, scams, and digital threats.

“Young people are already shaping the digital world—our role is to give them the tools and opportunities to thrive in it,” Nigel added.

Showcasing the talent: Cybersecurity Awareness Event

In early April 2025, MP and PICS Media Club will host a Cybersecurity Awareness Event, where the student-produced cybersecurity videos will be showcased. The event will highlight the importance of digital safety while celebrating the creativity and hard work of these young



media professionals. As a gesture of support, MP will also be donating to the PICS Media Club, ensuring they have the resources to continue their incredible work and further expand their media program.

A vision for the future

This internship program represents MP's ongoing commitment to fostering local media talent and expanding career opportunities for FSM youth. By integrating education, media, and digital awareness, this initiative is not only shaping future professionals but also strengthening media literacy and cybersecurity awareness in the region. For more information or to follow the progress of this internship, visit Micronesian Productions on Facebook or contact us at micronesianproductions@gmail.com.

Government tribute to the late Honorable Mohammed Kutty

FSM Department of Justice

March 17, 2025

FSM—Today, we pay respect to the remarkable life and service of the Honorable Mohammed Kutty, Attorney General of the State of Chuuk, who departed this world on March 14, 2025, in his homeland of Fiji, surrounded by loved ones.

The Narruhn-William Administration holds his memory in high esteem, recognizing his substantial contributions to the realm of law and justice advocacy for the people of Chuuk.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Kutty demonstrated unwavering dedication to advancing legal support and promoting

human rights in collaboration with local NGOs, Government, the Private Sector and intergovernmental agencies. He was also the former Assistant Attorney General for the FSM National Government. His commitment to justice was matched only by his relatable understanding of the local culture, fostering friendships that transcended formal boundaries and strengthening Justice-stakeholder engagements with the people of Chuuk.

With a Master's Degree in Law from Savitribhai Phule Pune University and admissions to both the Fiji and FSM Bars, his expertise enriched not only the Government of Chuuk but also inspired young colleagues of his, aspiring to emulate his legacy. His exceptional performance and

leadership at the Attorney General's Office left a profound impact that will resonate for years to come.

Our heartfelt gratitude extends to his family and friends, who shared in his journey. Though he may now rest in a land overseas, the memories of his unique personality, intelligence and humor will forever remain alive in the hearts of his colleagues and the people of Chuuk.

In honor of his life and service, a state of mourning has been declared for the State of Chuuk for a period of three (3) days beginning from March 16 to 19, 2025 and that all Chuuk State flags will be flown half-mast during that period.

May the late Honorable Mohammed Kutty rest in peace, and may his legacy continue to inspire as a guiding light for his family, friends and the young generation.



President Simina joins the people of Yap in celebrating the 55th Yap Day

FSM Information Services

March 5, 2025

COLONIA, Yap – His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), joined the people of Yap in commemorating the 55th Yap Day, celebrating the deep roots of Yapese culture and traditions. In his keynote address, delivered in the presence of Yap’s traditional leaders, government officials, diplomatic partners, and the community, President Simina reaffirmed the national government’s commitment to supporting Yap and ensuring that its priorities remain a priority for the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Reflecting on the significance of the celebration, President Simina remarked, “Yap Day isn’t just an event—it is a living testament to the strength of our culture and our people. It is a reminder that no matter how the world around us changes, our roots remain deep and strong.” He further emphasized that

cultural traditions, values, and unity remain central to the strength of the nation, adding that “while unity binds us as a nation, culture binds us as a people.”

During his time in Yap, President Simina engaged in a series of activities, including a visit to St. Mary’s Elementary School and Yap Faith Christian Academy, where he pledged \$5,000 to each school to support their students’ educational needs. He also participated in the launch ceremony of the traditional canoe that sailed into the harbor for Yap Day, joining Yap’s traditional chiefs and community members in honoring the maritime heritage that continues to be a vital part of Yapese identity.

President Simina’s visit also included a meeting with Yap State leadership, where he provided updates on key development projects being implemented by the national government to benefit the state. These discussions reaffirmed the FSM administration’s

commitment to ensuring that Yap receives the necessary support to address its development needs.

President Simina delivered special remarks at the Yap Day official ceremony, where Lt. Governor Francis Itimai represented the Yap State Government alongside other state and traditional leaders. In his address, President Simina acknowledged the importance of leadership that upholds the spirit of reciprocity and unity, noting that these values have long guided FSM’s national identity. He honored the legacy of distinguished Yapese statesmen like Luke Taman, Petrus Tun, and John Mangefel, who championed the vision of a united Micronesia, ensuring that “our cultural diversity and geographic configurations would not divide us, but unite and strengthen us.”

President Simina further reflected on the remarks delivered by Governor Chieng the day prior.

“As I listened to the words of

Governor Chieng yesterday, I was particularly moved by his emphasis on reciprocity—a concept deeply rooted in our Micronesian values. Reciprocity is not just about give and take; it is about the unspoken understanding that we take care of each other, that we move forward together, and that the well-being of one is linked to the well-being of all. Just like our 4 states, that make up our Federated States of Micronesia.

In that spirit, I stand before you today to affirm that Yap’s priorities are the FSM’s priorities. What affects one state affects us all. We are one nation, bound by history, by family and by the shared Micronesian cultural values that we are honoring today.”

The President and First Lady Ancelly Simina, along with their delegation, expressed appreciation for the warm hospitality of the Yapese people, and look forward to participating in more Yap Day celebrations in the future.



Governor Stevenson A. Joseph's Second State of the State Message

March 13, 2025

Pohnpei State Legislature Chamber—Traditional leaders, Honorable Speaker, Vice Speaker, Members of the Eleventh Pohnpei Legislature, esteemed leaders of our state, members of the diplomatic corps, our international partners, and my fellow people of Pohnpei:

It is with great humility and responsibility that I stand before you today to present the state of our State and the collective journey we are undertaking as a people. We gather at a critical juncture, facing both significant dangers and unprecedented opportunities. Today, I address not only the challenges we face but also the resilience, progress, and vision that will guide us into the next two decades.

The Challenges We Face

Our beloved Pohnpei faces serious risks that threaten our stability and prosperity. Out Migration continues to deplete our human resources, weakening both the public and private sectors.

Economic development remains slow, and government spending is unsustainable in the long term. Our private sector remains fragile, and for years, our plans and funding priorities have not been fully aligned. We must summon the political will to make difficult but necessary decisions to change course and set our island on a sustainable path.

These dangers are compounded by everyday challenges that our people experience—land disputes that hinder development, an overreliance on external funding, with over 52% of our government budget sourced from Compact funds, a lack of regulations to guide responsible growth, and insufficient monitoring and tracking of progress. Our government institutions are stretched thin, and outmigration has further reduced our capacity to train and retain skilled professionals.

A New Path Forward: The Strategic Development Plan

Despite these challenges, we are taking decisive action. I am pleased to announce that Pohnpei State, in collaboration with the FSM National Government and international partners, is finalizing a Strategic Development Plan that will serve as our roadmap for the next 20 years. This plan is not just another document—it is a commitment to action, accountability, and meaningful change. It focuses on economic diversification, human capacity

development, infrastructure resilience, and sustainable governance. Through this plan, we will work to create a “healthy and vibrant Pohnpei” that will not only ensure a more stable and prosperous future for our people but will also advance and promote progress and development in conformity to our way of living.

This plan is driven by nine (9) thematic areas:

1. Sustainable Economic Development
2. Health and Well Being
3. Education and Well Being
4. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience
5. Governance and Institutional Strengthening
6. Infrastructure Development and Sustainability
7. Cultural Heritage and Indigenous Identity
8. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
9. Peace and Security

Government Services: Continuing Our Commitment

Even as we confront these challenges, our government remains committed to delivering essential services to our people. Before I highlight some of our achievements, let me first extend my deepest gratitude to our National Government and international partners, including the embassies of the United States, Japan, China, and Australia, the resident United Nations mission, and our donor partners—SPC, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. Their support has been invaluable.

As part of my administration's commitment to efficiency and transparency, I recently held an Executive Retreat at which each Department, Office, and Agency presented its achievements, challenges, and plans for the future. I am proud to report that, with the support of the Legislature, we now have a fully functioning cabinet. While we continue to fill important board positions, including the Board of Land Trust and Personnel Review Board, our state's leadership is stronger than ever.

Addressing Immediate Challenges

During my first year in office, we faced multiple crises, including drought, the Dekehtik dump fire and saltwater inundation. Thanks to swift action and collaboration with the National Government and international partners,

funding was secured to address these urgent needs. Today, additional funding is being allocated to repair wells in the Outer Islands, purchase reverse osmosis units, and install filtration systems for our Outer Islands.

One of the most pressing concerns remains transportation to our Outer Islands. I acknowledge that we have not yet fully resolved the issue of securing a state-owned vessel. However, I have submitted a proposed plan, developed by the Administrator of Transportation and Infrastructure, Mr. Daniel Isaac, to His Excellency, President Simina. This plan outlines regular service to the Outer Islands to ensure consistent contact and emergency preparedness.

Progress in Key Sectors

Education

Our Education Department continues to be largely funded by Compact Funds. Under the leadership of Director Stanley Etse, the Department of Education has made progress in curriculum reform, teacher training, and infrastructure improvements. All our schools are now accredited, with 28 schools reaching Level 3, 7 schools reaching Level 4 (the top) and 4 schools

at Level 2, and one at Level 1. There are 40 public and non-public schools, 561 teachers of which 352 are certified and 209 are not certified, a total of 832 staff supporting 8,302 students. Many accomplishments were made, here are a few noteworthy achievements in the past year:

- 40% of students are at the high honor level and 18% are at risk.
- 17 Pohnpei State Scholarship recipients graduated from college
- 29 personnel at PDOE completed the Pacific Master of Education program
- 3 brand new 30-seater buses were acquired and 2 smaller ones donated by Yoshie Enterprises and 1 by the Pohnpei Rotary Club.
- Indigenous Learning Recovery (ILR) continues to expand into other schools to teach Pohnpeian traditional skills, practices, and language
- 85% of school land surveyed and designated for school purposes

Healthcare



Likewise, our Healthcare System continues to be funded with Compact Funds. Director Stuard Penias and the Department of Health and Social Services continue to provide critical patient care despite staff shortages. I am pleased to announce the hiring of key positions, including a Chief of Primary Care Services and an Anesthetist. Two of three or our local physicians have returned to the employment of our hospital, while one continues to avail his services at the Pohnpei Community Health Center.

We express our gratitude to the FSM National Government and the China Medical Team for their contributions. Aside from strengthening our healthcare system with specialized services by the latter, together they donated a combined total of more than \$100,000.00 worth of medications and medical equipment. Furthermore, donations were also received from WHO and IOM valued at more than \$30,000.00. Thank you WHO and IOM.

106 staff with 16 vacancies unfilled (Nurses and Lab techs).
16,500 lab tests run, 170 surgeries - major and minor, over 33,000 X-rays performed and 7 patients currently on hemodialysis
Live births: 140 reported in last quarter of FY 24
Deaths reported: 20 deaths reported in the last quarter of FY 24.

Public Safety

The Department of Public Safety continues to uphold its mission of ensuring the safety and security of our citizens. In partnership with the College of Micronesia-FSM CTEC, we have strengthened our law enforcement

Continued on next page

...State of the State

Continued from previous page

capacity through specialized courses and an apprenticeship program. Our 2024 Junior Police Program successfully engaged 124 students from nine elementary schools, fostering the next generation of responsible citizens. Public Safety Week was a resounding success, culminating in the lighting of the Christmas Tree in collaboration with the Governor’s Office.

This year, our officers registered 1,210 cases, including 213 felonies, with eight out of ten cases linked to alcohol-related offenses. The reassignment of the Kitti and Madolenihmw substations ensures better service to our communities. Meanwhile, the Traffic Division processed 11,184 vehicle registrations—1,242 new and 9,942 renewals—and issued 5,969 driver’s licenses. We identified 69 deportees who had returned to Pohnpei in FY 2024.

At Corrections, we completed a \$125,000 renovation of administrative rooms, alongside minor improvements in the general population and infirmary facilities. Fire and Rescue responded to over 25 fire incidents—21 wildfires, two structural fires, and two vehicle fires—and handled 1,349 medical emergency calls, including 20 CPR cases, with one successful resuscitation. The Division of Fish and Wildlife welcomed nine new personnel and strengthened collaborations with NGOs, ensuring better conservation efforts. Through daily market inspections, we continue to enforce fish size and species regulations, working closely with market owners to prevent the sale of illegal catches. These collective efforts reflect our administration’s unwavering commitment to public safety, security, and the well-being of our people.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Transportation and Infrastructure remains a top priority, and we have identified and submitted key infrastructure projects to the National Government for funding consideration under the Infrastructure Compact Funds. The submitted projects include: Submitted Infrastructure Projects under Compact II funding:

- Kinakapw to Lehn Diadi Water Line – \$13,743,437.00
- Ohmine Elementary School – \$11,743,749.00
- Airport Terminal Building Design – \$7,880,867.90
- Airport Runway Extension

Design – \$11,971,017.84
 ● PICS New Classroom Building - \$25,760,000.00

These projects reflect our commitment to addressing critical infrastructure needs, from improving access to clean water and modernizing our schools to enhancing our transportation network.

However, we recognize that the available funding under Compact II may not be sufficient to cover all these projects as initially planned. As such, we may need to reprioritize our focus, ensuring that the most urgent and impactful projects move forward while continuing to seek additional funding sources for others. Our administration remains committed to working closely with our partners at the National Government, as well as exploring alternative funding avenues, to fulfill our infrastructure goals and build a stronger, more resilient Pohnpei.

To ensure better coordination and prioritization of infrastructure projects, I issued an Executive Order forming the Infrastructure Planning and Implementation Committee (IPIC). This committee, chaired by the Office of Infrastructure and Transportation, is responsible for aligning infrastructure development with state priorities through an Infrastructure Development Plan. Proposed projects for the State are first reviewed by the IPIC before submission to the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure and my Office, ensuring a structured and strategic approach to our infrastructure development efforts.

We will continue to develop additional projects to address our growing infrastructure needs while responding to urgent concerns. A recent example is the Kapingamarangi bridge collapse, where we acted swiftly by deploying Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) officials for an initial assessment of the necessary repairs. We remain committed to ensuring the safety and reliability of our infrastructure for all Pohnpeians.

Completed projects as reported by our T&I Administrator, Mr. Daniel Isaac include:

1. Primary Road Repair & Improvements of 17 road segments, patching of circumferential road, kolonia town patching, green bay to Luhke, Nanpailong culvert, ROHI PRM and improvement - \$1,000,000.00
2. Pohnpei State Administration Building courtesy of the Government of China
3. Attorney General’s Office

Land

Our administration remains committed to ensuring efficient and effective land management for the benefit of our people. Under the leadership of Director Luciano Abraham, the Department of Land has made significant progress in improving land surveying services across our state.

One of the most notable achievements over the past year has been the dramatic increase in the number of land surveys conducted. Previously, our surveyors were completing an average of four surveys per month. Today, that number has risen to over fifteen surveys per month—a nearly fourfold increase, over 133 backlog surveys were completed in FY24. This improvement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team, as well as the strategic efforts to streamline processes and deploy better technology.

Recognizing the need for continued capacity building, we have also prioritized the training of our surveyors. This includes specialized training programs that have enhanced their skills and knowledge in modern surveying techniques. Most significantly, our team has undergone training in the use of drone technology for land surveying. By integrating drones into our surveying processes, we are improving efficiency, accuracy, and coverage, ensuring that we can better serve the landowners and residents of Pohnpei.

These advancements reflect our commitment to modernizing land management and making it more accessible and responsive to the needs of our people. As we move forward, we will continue to seek innovative solutions and invest in the capacity of our workforce to meet the demands of our growing communities.

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Our fisheries sector can potentially become a major economic driver, and we are working to enhance sustainable fishing practices. With the support of international partners, we are

investing in aquaculture projects that will create jobs, improve food security, and promote marine conservation. I recently signed an executive order establishing an Aquatic Conservation Unit under the direction and supervision of the Administrator of OFA, this moved certain responsibilities under the Department of R&D to the Office to

ensure that plans and policies are in line for future development of this sector.

Some highlights of their achievements include:

- Development of a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Management Plan
- Deployment of 2 FADS (Laiap and Pehleng sites)
- FAD Socio-economic enumerator training
- Hatchery operations target three marine species
- Island-wide survey on pelagic fish species with Dr. Kevin Rhodes
- Training course on coral taxonomy with Dr. Fenner
- Ongoing training course on fisheries management with SPC
- Photosomatic coral reef monitoring training with One Reef
- Outreach and awareness on aquaculture promotion in the outer-islands of Pohnpei
- FY24 revenue of \$400k through local collections

Environmental Protection

Mr. Speaker and the people of Pohnpei, I am pleased to highlight the achievements of our Environmental Protection Agency, reflecting our ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship. Our EPA laboratory and technicians have successfully undergone recertification, ensuring that our testing and analysis meet the highest standards for effective environmental monitoring. This certification program, conducted every two years, is a testament to our dedication to maintaining quality and precision in environmental oversight. Additionally, our efforts in removing junk cars from our island have made significant progress, with 59 abandoned vehicles cleared from the main circumferential road. This initiative not only enhances the beauty of our communities but also mitigates potential environmental hazards. Although we recognize that there is much to be done in cleaning up junk cars around the island.

Further reinforcing our commitment to public health and sustainability, our EPA personnel and FSM Health staff participated in essential Vector Control and Response training. Led by Dr. Limb from PIHOA and the U.S. Navy in November, eight EPA staff members and four FSM Health personnel completed certification, strengthening our capacity

Continued on next page

...State of the State (2)

Continued from previous page

to respond effectively to environmental health concerns. Furthermore, our strategic partnerships with USAID, Clean City Blue Ocean, and Catholic Relief Services have been instrumental in the establishment of a new plastic recycling facility. This initiative marks a crucial step toward reducing plastic waste and fostering sustainable practices for a cleaner and healthier Pohnpei.

One of the most pressing environmental challenges we face is solid waste management. The current dumpsite at Dekehtik has long exceeded its capacity, posing environmental and health risks to our communities. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, I signed an Executive Order establishing the Solid Waste Management Task Force, with EPA and the Office of T&I chairing this Task Force, bringing together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and sustainable solution.

Through the invaluable support of USAID and JICA, Pohnpei State has taken the necessary steps toward the proper closure of the existing dumpsite and the identification of a suitable location for a new waste management facility—whether nearby or elsewhere on the island. This partnership underscores our commitment to responsible waste management, ensuring that future generations inherit a cleaner and healthier Pohnpei.

Additionally, we will continue working on improved waste collection, recycling initiatives, and community engagement to promote sustainable waste management practices across the state.

These efforts align with our broader vision for environmental sustainability and climate resilience, reinforcing our duty as stewards of this land and ocean.

Housing

The Pohnpei State Housing Authority (PSHA) has made significant strides in providing housing and financial support to our people. Over the past year, the Loan Division has successfully booked 59 loans amounting to \$904,124.78, with an additional 36 approved loans worth \$676,000 awaiting disbursement. In the Construction Division, 47 projects have been completed, totaling \$833,690.92, while 31 ongoing projects represent an investment of

\$360,279.

On the financial side, the Accounting Division has collected \$1,140,627.90 in loan repayments, with disbursements amounting to \$1,363,023.23. However, there are challenges, including limited loan funds, high demand, and delinquent loans requiring Attorney General assistance.

To address these issues, PSHA is implementing measures to improve customer service, expand loan availability, promote financial literacy, and create better collection strategies. Key legislative actions, including Board Member nominations and supplemental budget approvals, will further support these efforts.

Resources and Development

Mr. Speaker, in our ongoing efforts to improve sustainability and food security, the Department of Resources and Development has initiated key projects that will greatly benefit our communities.

On January 13, 2025, we installed a Portable BioGas System at the Nett ECE Center, marking the beginning of an expansion plan that will see seven additional systems installed in Kolonia, Sekere, Palikir, Pehleing, Wenik, Sapwalap, and Saladak. These systems will provide sustainable energy solutions, reduce waste, and promote environmental responsibility across our communities.

Additionally, the Division of Agriculture is taking significant steps to enhance poultry farming in Pohnpei. Our team has secured a small number of purebred Rhode Island Red chickens, which

are crucial for food security. Once these chickens begin laying fertile eggs, we will incubate them to increase our flock for affordable distribution to local farmers.

Furthermore, through an FAO-supported poultry project, we have established 15 chicken pens and introduced 450 chickens with a steady supply of feed to support their growth. This initiative will directly benefit our key poultry farmers, enabling them to expand their production and provide a reliable local source of eggs and poultry meat.

These efforts underscore our commitment to sustainable development and agricultural self-sufficiency in Pohnpei. We will continue to implement programs that empower our people and enhance our resilience as a community.

Food Security and Non-Communicable

Diseases

One of my top priorities has been food security, which is closely tied to addressing non-communicable diseases. I am pleased to announce that the 11th Pohnpei Legislature recently endorsed Pohnpei's Food Security Policy. This landmark policy, developed through collaboration between our Department of Resources and Development and scientists from Rutgers University, aims to increase local food production by 50% over the next five years, strengthening our local food systems through local food production and processing for our own consumption and potentially for commercial uses.

Finance and Budget

Fiscal responsibility and transparency are essential to the progress of our state. I am pleased to report on the financial status of our government for Fiscal Year 2024.

From Compact Sector Funds, a total of \$24,279,814 was approved and allotted for this fiscal year. Of this amount, we have expended \$19,460,197, ensuring that these funds are directed toward essential services, infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

From our General Fund, a total of \$28,200,819 was approved and allotted. To date, \$24,219,382 has been expended. These funds have been strategically utilized to support our government operations, public services, and key development initiatives aimed at improving the lives of our people.

These figures reflect our commitment to prudent financial management and responsible governance. We will continue to ensure that every dollar is spent wisely and that our financial resources contribute to the long-term prosperity of Pohnpei.

Moving forward, we remain dedicated to strengthening our fiscal policies, improving revenue generation, and prioritizing sustainable economic growth for the benefit of all
Energy Security and Infrastructure

Energy security remains a priority. After declaring a state of emergency for power generation, we took immediate action. Thanks to the expertise of our Pohnpei Utilities Corporation (PUC) technicians, an aging backup generator has been overhauled, and a new generator, valued at \$1,000,000, was purchased through Public Infrastructure Funds with support from the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs. Furthermore, we anticipate the arrival of brand-new generator sets through a World Bank project, which will increase

our power generation capacity beyond previous levels by the end of the year.

We should also mention, Mr. Speaker, that the Pohnpei Port Authority, with the assistance of JICA, is expecting a major improvement to port infrastructure with an approximately \$28 million port expansion, that will meet international and compliance standards, increase and sustain finances through expanded service, boosting economic growth.

Water Security

Our recent drought has been a stark reminder that while Pohnpei is blessed with abundant rainfall and natural water sources, our challenge is not scarcity—it is management. We must ensure that our water infrastructure is resilient, our wells are properly identified and maintained, and our distribution systems are efficient and sustainable. Water is the foundation of life, and as our population grows and our climate changes, we must take proactive measures to safeguard this critical resource.

In response, our administration is committed to improving water resource management through better mapping and monitoring of our wells, upgrading distribution networks, and investing in modern technologies to enhance water conservation. We will work with our traditional leaders, our municipal governments, and experts in the field to develop a comprehensive water security plan that ensures every household and community has reliable access to clean water. Through careful planning, investment, and community engagement, we will turn Pohnpei's natural abundance into lasting security for our people.

A Call for Unity and Action

Fellow citizens, I do not stand before you today to paint an unrealistic picture of our circumstances. The truth is, we face great challenges. However, we also have the determination, talent, and resources to overcome them. Our future will not be decided by outside forces alone, but by our willingness to act together. This is our time to rebuild, reform, and build a stronger, healthier and vibrant Pohnpei.

I call upon our leaders in the Legislature, our traditional leaders, our business community, and every citizen of Pohnpei to join me in this mission. Let us stand together with a renewed spirit of cooperation and a shared vision of prosperity.

May God bless Pohnpei and its people.

Sophia-APIC-BRMC Scholarship applications now open

The Sophia-APIC-BRMC Scholarship is a prestigious, fully funded program now accepting applications for the Fall 2025 semester. Established in 2017 through a collaboration between Sophia University, the Association for Promotion of International Cooperation (APIC), and the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), this scholarship is awarded annually to two Micronesian students who wish to pursue their Master's degree at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. Since its inception, it has supported over ten Micronesian students, playing a vital role in advancing graduate education in the region.

This scholarship offers comprehensive

financial support, including coverage for travel, tuition, living expenses, accommodations, and field research costs for a two-year Master's Program in Global Environmental Studies. All courses are taught in English, providing students with a world-class education focused on addressing critical environmental challenges relevant to Micronesia.

Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants must meet the following qualifications:

Citizenship: Must be a citizen of the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), or the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Education: Hold a bachelor's degree,

preferably in an environmental-related field.

Research Ability: Demonstrate the ability to conduct field research and write a thesis on environmental topics such as climate change, waste management, or natural resource management relevant to Micronesia.

Commitment: Pledge to return to their home country and work for at least two years after graduation.

The application deadline is March 12, 2025. Interested candidates must submit their applications and supporting documents to Ms. Bertha Reyuw at breyuw@ourmicronesia.org for initial screening. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview before

submitting their official documents directly to APIC/Sophia University.

For detailed application requirements and a list of required documents, please visit:

<http://www.ourmicronesia.org/scholarships/sophia-apic-brmc-scholarship>

For further inquiries, please contact:
Ms. Bertha Reyuw

Capacity Building Program Manager, Micronesia Conservation Trust (breyuw@ourmicronesia.org)

Ms. Moeko Kita
Student Counselor, Association for Promotion of International Cooperation (m_kita@apic.or.jp)

Japan Coast Guard Mobile Cooperation Team visits Ambassador Kagomiya

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

March 4, 2025

Pohnpei—On March 4, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya received the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) Mobile Cooperation Team (MCT).

The JCG MCT conducted this fiscal year's capacity building program mainly in Chuuk State Maritime Police from February 24 to March 1. Ambassador Kagomiya exchanged views with the team on future programs.



Ambassador Kagomiya and Japan Coast Guard Capt. MIURA

Ambassador Kagomiya attends JOCV reception

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

March 6, 2025

Pohnpei—On March 6, 2025, Ambassador Kagomiya attended a reception celebrating the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers' (JOCV) activities. Last year marked the 35th Anniversary of JOCV in the FSM and this year marks the 60th

Anniversary since the start of the JOCV Program.

In his remarks, Ambassador Kagomiya stated the importance of the 17 JOCVs currently living and active throughout various regions of the FSM supporting fields such as in health and education, and shared his appreciation for the understanding of JOCV activities. The

17 JOCVs each presented about their daily activities, and attendees listened enthusiastically to their presentations.

At the reception, Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs Salvador gave remarks on behalf of the Government of the FSM, and the reception was attended by Governor Joseph of Pohnpei State and distinguished guests.



Search for missing sea ambulance in the Marshall Islands suspended after exhaustive efforts

by Chief Warrant Officer Sara Muir
U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia / Sector Guam

March 10, 2025

RMI—U.S. Coast Guard and Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) responders suspended active search efforts just before 5 a.m. Chamorro Standard Time (ChST) on March 10, 2025, for a 37-foot sea ambulance and its four crew—a captain, nurse practitioner, health assistant, and community health outreach worker—missing since March 3 after departing Majuro for Mili Atoll in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI).

Over 16 searches by U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and RMI asset crews logged nearly 82 hours, covering 52,931 square nautical miles with no sightings.

A U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon and crew from Kadena Air Base, Japan, a U.S. Coast Guard HC-130 Hercules airplane and crew from Air Station Barbers Point, Hawai'i, and RMI Sea Patrol vessel RMIS Lomor 03 and the motor vessel LiWeton Mour crews searched tirelessly.

“We stand with the families and the Republic of the Marshall Islands community in their grief,” said Chief Warrant Officer Sara Muir, public affairs officer of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. “Our Navy and Marshallese partners poured extraordinary skill and resolve into this search across a vast Pacific expanse. Suspending active efforts doesn’t diminish our respect for these mariners’



conditions, including a Small Craft Advisory with east winds of 20 knots and swells up to 9 feet through March 10. The sea ambulance crew, last heard from on March 3, carried 10 life jackets, a signal kit with flares, a torch, and reflector mirrors, over 200 gallons of fuel, a VHF radio, radar, GPS, and a satellite phone, but lacked an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) aboard the vessel.

lives or the hope that answers may still come.”

The Joint Rescue Coordination Center (JRCC) Honolulu team coordinated the operation, adapting to challenging

The case is suspended pending any new developments. Anyone with information or sightings is urged to contact the JRCC Honolulu watch toll-free at 1-800-331-6176.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang attend International Women’s Day opening ceremony

Pohnpei Public Information

March 4, 2025

Peilapalap, Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang attended the opening ceremony for this year’s International Women’s Day celebrations, held at the Governor’s Conference Room.

In his remarks, Governor Joseph expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the event and emphasized the importance of recognizing and supporting women’s wellness. He extended his appreciation to international donors for their contributions to the program and underscored that the observance of International Women’s Day aligns with Pohnpeian cultural values. He noted that if any concerns arose, they should

be addressed through dialogue with traditional leaders.

Governor Joseph also reflected on the passage of Pohnpei Women’s Day during his tenure in the Legislature, recalling a debate on whether only women should receive the day off. Ultimately, consensus was reached that Women’s Day serves the collective good of the entire community.

This year’s celebration, themed “For all women and girls: Rights, Equality, Empowerment” with the campaign “Accelerate Action,” will continue for the next four days with a series of presentations and workshops. The event will culminate on March 8, Pohnpei State International Women’s Day, with activities held at the Kolonia Town Gymnasium.

In closing, Governor Joseph reaffirmed his commitment to supporting initiatives and projects that empower women, with a particular focus on creating opportunities for young and aspiring girls.



Bold plans unveiled for a 200-room high-end hotel in Pohnpei

Pohnpei Public Information

March 6, 2025

Peilapalap, Pohnpei—In a groundbreaking step toward boosting Pohnpei’s economic growth, a newly formed development company led by Attorney Kembo Mida, a successful hotelier, and Ryan S. Roque, a longtime businessman and former architect for Pohnpei State, has presented bold plans to construct a 200-room high-end hotel in Pohnpei.

In a meeting with Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, key State Senators from Sokehs—Hon. Tandy Liwy, Hon. Francisco Simram, and Hon. Aisek Artui—and other government leaders, the developers outlined their ambitious vision for what could become a game-changer for Pohnpei’s economy. The proposed location for this major development

is the Sokehs Technical Park, a site with strategic potential for tourism, business, and job creation.

Also present at the meeting were Sokehs Municipal Chief Magistrate Stanley Ernest, Director of the Department of Land Luciano Abraham, and Mr. Walberg Hadley from the State Attorney General’s Office. Key discussions focused on land rights, responsibilities, and next steps, including land surveys and securing the necessary approvals from both Sokehs Municipal and State Government authorities.

Governor Joseph expressed his full support for this transformative project, recognizing its potential to boost local employment, stimulate investment, and expand the island’s tourism industry. “This project represents an exciting step forward in Pohnpei’s development,” said

Governor Joseph. “A world-class hotel will not only bring jobs but also showcase Pohnpei as a premier destination for visitors and investors.”

Both Mr. Mida and Mr. Roque emphasized their commitment to helping the local economy and uplifting the people of Pohnpei through sustainable development and job creation. Both men bring years of relevant experience between them, including the running of a successful hotel, L5, in Chuuk by Mr. Mida, and several innovative and successful construction projects by Mr. Roque, across Pohnpei.

The next steps in the project include conducting a comprehensive land survey, securing the necessary government

approvals, and engaging local stakeholders to ensure that the development is both economically beneficial and environmentally responsible.

This ambitious initiative signals a new era for Pohnpei’s economy—one that embraces innovation, investment, and opportunity for its people.



Governor Joseph discusses next phase of Pilot Farm Project with Hunan International Engineering Construction Company, Ltd.



Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph met with Mr. Liu Xiaofeng, General Manager of Hunan International Engineering Construction Company, Ltd., and Project Manager Xia Nan to discuss the latest developments in the Pilot Farm Project. The company has submitted a request for the next phase and looks forward to further discussions. Governor Joseph emphasized the need for a more community-engaged approach, incorporating hands-on training programs and ensuring that the initiative directly benefits the

people of Pohnpei. He also proposed designating plots for agricultural use by the general public to promote sustainable food production.

Additionally, Governor Joseph highlighted the importance of expanding the initiative to support the Pohnpei State Hospital by providing fresh vegetables and fruits for inpatients. The company representatives expressed their commitment to collaborating with the state to enhance the project’s impact. Further discussions will



refine the project’s objectives and implementation strategies to align with the Governor’s vision and the needs of the community.

Pohnpei Public Information

March 17, 2025

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph honors 35 years of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) in Pohnpei

Pohnpei Public Information

March 6, 2025

Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph, alongside First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang, delivered a keynote address at the 35th Anniversary Dinner Reception at Hideaway Bar & Grill, of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program. The event, held in Pohnpei, was attended by esteemed guests, including His Excellency Nobuo Kagomiya, Japanese Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Her Excellency Jennifer L. Johnson, U.S. Ambassador to FSM, and Assistant Secretary Kenmore Salvador, representing the FSM National Government.

In his address, Governor Joseph expressed deep appreciation for the invaluable contributions of JOCV volunteers, who have served in FSM since 1989. He highlighted that 468 volunteers have dedicated their time and expertise to improving key sectors such as education, health, agriculture, aquaculture, industry, and environmental protection.

"One of the most profound impacts of JOCV has been in the education sector," said Governor Joseph. "More than 150 volunteers have strengthened our students' mathematical skills and enhanced our educators' teaching methods, ensuring a lasting and sustainable impact on our nation's future."

Governor Joseph also praised JICA Micronesia under the leadership of Mr. Kunihiro Yamauchi, recognizing its efforts in addressing pressing health concerns, particularly the fight against non-communicable diseases (NCDs). He acknowledged JICA's contributions to food security, economic sustainability, and environmental preservation in Pohnpei and across FSM.

Reflecting on the long-standing relationship between Japan and Micronesia, Governor Joseph emphasized that the JOCV Program embodies the essence of international cooperation—not only through development assistance but also through cultural exchange and lasting

friendships. He reaffirmed Pohnpei's commitment to strengthening this partnership and looked forward to future projects, including the highly anticipated Port Expansion project and ongoing solid waste management initiatives.

Governor Joseph also took a moment to recognize another fine volunteer organization, the Peace Corps, expressing hope that it may one day return to assist FSM, just as JOCV has for the past 35 years.

"As we celebrate this milestone, let us reaffirm our dedication to this partnership, ensuring that the next decades bring even more opportunities for collaboration, growth, and shared prosperity," he concluded. "May the spirit of volunteerism continue to shine, and may the friendship between Japan and Pohnpei remain steadfast and strong."

The event served as a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of volunteerism and international cooperation in shaping the future of FSM.



Saladak Elementary School seventh graders visit Governor Joseph

Pohnpei Public Information

March 14, 2025

Pohnpei—The Office of the Governor welcomed a special visit from the 7th-grade students of Saladak Elementary School, providing them with an opportunity to engage with Governor Stevenson A. Joseph and gain valuable insights into leadership, culture, and personal growth.

During the visit, Governor Joseph shared words of encouragement and wisdom, emphasizing the importance of cultural identity and respect. He urged the students to embrace and uphold their Pohnpeian heritage, reminding them that the values of respect and unity are deeply embedded in their traditions and should guide them throughout their lives.

The Governor also spoke about the importance of planning for the future, advising the students to start thinking about their goals and aspirations early. He encouraged them to prepare themselves for the next steps in their academic and personal journeys, highlighting the importance of hard work, dedication, and self-belief in achieving success.

In his message to the students, Governor Joseph reassured them that mistakes are a natural part of learning and personal development. He advised them not to be afraid of

making mistakes as they are part of learning. He also noted that none of us can achieve success alone; we all need others to help us along the way. He shared that even as Governor, he relies on his staff every day, from cleaners and maintenance personnel to senior advisors and cabinet members to ensure the government operates effectively.

First Lady Dr. Aina Garstang accompanied the Governor during the visit and joined him in distributing Pohnpei State seals as a token of encouragement for the students.

The visit provided an enriching experience for the students, inspiring them to take pride in their identity, plan for their futures, and understand the importance of teamwork and perseverance. The Office of the Governor remains committed to supporting the education and development of Pohnpei's youth and looks forward to welcoming more student groups in the future.



Pohnpei State government holds executive retreat to strengthen governance and collaboration

Pohnpei Public Information

March 5, 2025

Pohnpei--The Executive Branch of the Pohnpei State Government recently convened for an Executive Retreat aimed at fostering stronger collaboration, enhancing governance, and aligning strategic priorities for the continued development of Pohnpei State. The retreat brought together key leaders, department heads, and advisors to engage in in-depth discussions on policy implementation, service delivery, and interdepartmental cooperation.

Governor Stevenson A. Joseph led the retreat, emphasizing the administration's commitment to good governance, accountability, and improved public service. He underscored the importance of teamwork, transparency, and data-driven decision-making in addressing the needs of Pohnpei's citizens.

"This retreat provides an opportunity for us to assess our progress, address challenges, and ensure that our policies are aligned with the best interests of the people of Pohnpei," Governor Joseph stated. "By working together, we strengthen our ability to serve with efficiency and integrity."

The Executive Retreat was facilitated

by Strategic Development Plan Consultant, Churchill Edward, and Governor's Chief of Staff, Mr. Benjamin Rodriguez. The retreat allowed all Department, Office, and Agency Heads in the Executive Branch of the Pohnpei State Government to present their respective organization's accomplishments, challenges, and ways forward using the State's Strategic Development Plan as a tool to implement and execute their way forward. The retreat took place over several days, providing ample time for thorough discussions and strategic planning.

Discussions during the retreat focused on key areas, including economic development, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and environmental sustainability. Special attention was given to streamlining government operations, enhancing coordination between departments, and identifying innovative solutions to address pressing issues facing the state.

Overviews were provided with opportunities for questions and answers from fellow Department, Office, and Agency Heads, fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and unity. Under the theme A Healthy and Vibrant Pohnpei, information was presented and discussed, including strategic activities, descriptions of activities, lead departments, and support departments responsible for implementation. A timeline for expected inception and completion was also outlined to ensure accountability and efficiency in execution.

The retreat concluded with a reaffirmed commitment by all attendees to work together in fulfilling the administration's vision for a prosperous and resilient Pohnpei.

The Pohnpei State Government remains dedicated to transparency, accountability, and the well-being of its citizens. The insights gained from the Executive Retreat will be instrumental in shaping policies and initiatives that drive progress and positive change in the state. More on this and Pohnpei's Strategic Development Plan will be shared by Governor Joseph during his second State of the State message, scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2025 in the Pohnpei State Legislature Chamber.



Governor Joseph presents strategic development vision to local leaders

Pohnpei Public Information

March 6, 2026

Peilapalap, Pohnpei—Governor Stevenson A. Joseph met with Pohnpei's local chief executives and speakers of the local legislative councils to present the government's Strategic Development vision, "Healthy and Vibrant Pohnpei – Kairoir en Ieiasamwahu."

Joined by Chief of Staff Benjamin Rodriguez and Consultant Churchill B. Edward, Governor Joseph shared key insights from the recent Executive Retreat and Strategic Development consultations, outlining priorities for economic growth, public health, and sustainable development.

The Governor emphasized that these plans

serve as general frameworks for local governments to use and align with their own development priorities, ensuring a coordinated approach to progress across Pohnpei.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for open discussion on local government matters, strengthening collaboration between state and municipal leadership. Governor Joseph

encouraged local leaders to work together in building a stronger future for Pohnpei.

He thanked the local leaders for their dedication to their communities, reaffirming the state government's commitment to supporting their efforts.



UOG, College of Micronesia-FSM establish 2+2 transfer pathway for agriculture students

University of Guam

March 15, 2025

Guam—A new transfer student agreement has been established between the University of Guam and the College of Micronesia – Federated States of Micronesia. The “COM-FSM to UOG 2+2 Pathway in Agriculture” allows students who have earned a two-year associate degree in Agriculture & Natural Resources Management at the COM-FSM to transfer directly into their junior year of UOG’s Agriculture & Life Sciences bachelor’s program under the Tropical Agriculture Production track.

The program became official on Dec. 10, 2024, when COM-FSM President and CEO Theresa Koroivulaono and UOG President Anita Borja Enriquez signed a Memorandum of Agreement.

“We are proud to strengthen our ties with the College of Micronesia and expand educational opportunities for students across the Federated States of Micronesia,” Enriquez said. “This partnership reflects our commitment to building the next generation of agricultural leaders in our island communities. This pathway ensures that the dreams of students with a passion for agricultural innovation can take root and flourish.”

The two institutions worked together to identify courses at COM-FSM that satisfy the general education requirements needed for a bachelor’s at UOG. The result is a more efficient pathway to a four-year degree that avoids any potential duplication of credits.

“Partnerships like this one underscore the critical importance of collaborating meaningfully and affordably,” Koroivulaono said. “The University of Guam continues to offer innovative and relevant solutions to scale our educational opportunities with four-year institutions so that our students do not have to travel too far from home. The College of Micronesia-FSM champions access, innovation, and sustainability for students

through securing high-impact transfer agreements like the 2+2 Pathway in Agriculture with the University of Guam.”

Students seeking to transfer from COM-FSM to UOG on the 2+2 pathway must have a cumulative grade-point average of 2.8 and a minimum GPA of 3.0 in core STEM courses. Their associate degree will satisfy a minimum of 64 credit hours toward their bachelor’s degree at UOG. Upon completion of their associates, the students must apply to UOG by the admission deadline and must enroll full-time — a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester.

“We are very excited to start welcoming more FSM students into our tropical ag track,” said Rachael T. Leon Guerrero, dean of UOG’s College of Natural & Applied Sciences. “As a Land Grant university, one of our core goals is to deliver academic instruction and degree programs that will build capacity and expertise in agriculture. This pathway ensures that we’re able to do that not just in Guam, but now more efficiently in the FSM as well.”

The agreement states it will be reviewed for renewal every five years. Maika Vuki, interim associate dean at UOG’s College of Natural & Applied Sciences, said a next step is to explore the same agreement with other colleges in the region.



World Bank supports FSM in strengthening public financial management and service delivery

World Bank

March 6, 2025

POHNPEI—The World Bank today approved its support to a transformative initiative led by the government of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to strengthen the country’s public financial management systems and practices. Through the US\$13 million FSM Strengthening Public Financial Management II project, the World Bank assists FSM in its efforts to spend public resources more effectively, ultimately enhancing service delivery to communities across the nation and increasing the transparency of public finances.

The initiative will expand FSM’s fiscal management information systems, allowing government agencies to allocate, spend, and track resources more efficiently. It will also enhance procurement processes and establish an internal audit function, strengthening controls and reducing inefficiencies.

“This support will contribute to FSM’s broader efforts to improve governance and deliver services to its citizens more effectively,” said Rose Nakanaga, Secretary of Finance for FSM. “By reinforcing financial accountability, this work will help create a stronger, more resilient future for all Micronesians.”

The project will improve public access to financial information and increase citizen engagement on public finances. Making government financial records more accessible will help build trust in public institutions and help ensure that government programs align with the needs of the people. Efforts to streamline procurement will enhance access to opportunities for local businesses, fostering economic growth and job creation.

“For the people of FSM, this project is about more than financial management. It’s about ensuring that spending better serves people throughout the country,” said Omar Lyasse, World Bank Resident Representative for FSM. “Stronger public financial systems mean that resources for the country are allocated and spent efficiently, transparently, and accountably, which contributes to the improved delivery of essential services such as healthcare, education and infrastructure.”

To ensure that improvements last, the project will train local finance staff on financial reporting, accounting, budgeting, internal auditing, and procurement.

President of the Federated States of Micronesia to visit Japan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

March 10, 2025

Japan--H.E. Mr. Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) will pay an official working visit to Japan from March 16 to 20, 2025.

During his stay in Japan, Mr. ISHIBA Shigeru, the Prime Minister of Japan, will hold a summit meeting with the President and host a working dinner in his honor.

Japan and the FSM share a long history

of exchange and are partners who share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. It is expected that this visit by President Simina will further strengthen bilateral relations and enhance cooperation between our two countries toward the realization of a vision of “free and open Indo-Pacific”.

Furthermore, during his stay in Japan, the President will visit Fukushima in addition to Tokyo. His visit to Fukushima is expected to further promote regional exchange between the two countries.

Opinion Editorial

Embracing digital transformation: A path to strengthening National Security Framework and the future of the Federated States of Micronesia

Hon. Leonito Bacalando Jr. - Secretary, FSM Department of Justice
Mr. Kevin Petrini - Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP North Pacific Office

In today's rapidly evolving world, digital transformation is no longer just an option—it is a necessity.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), has the opportunity to embrace technology as a key component to building a resilient, equitable, and prosperous future. Digitalization can unlock new opportunities for addressing key national security issues, which in the FSM context are a primary responsibility of the national government upon its own initiative and in collaboration with allies and international partners across the Pacific Region and beyond. Numerous opportunities and challenges touch upon priority areas on economic growth, improving governance, and enhancing connectivity across the islands. Achieving these benefits requires strategic, realistic, bold, practical and coordinated steps that truly reflect FSM's unique cultural, geographical and structural context.

Building an Inclusive, Citizen-Centered Digital Future

FSM's federal system of government, with its four states—Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae—offers both challenges and opportunities for digital transformation. While it requires balancing of national and state strategies and priorities, it also enables localized, community-driven solutions. By placing citizens at the center of digitalization efforts, FSM

can leverage its collective values to create systems that are inclusive, resilient, and reflective of its diverse society.

A key principle of this transformation is ensuring that citizens are safe, not just passive recipients of digital services but active participants of meaningful development. Successful digitalization begins with understanding citizens' needs and empowering them with digital literacy and tools to co-create solutions. Such participation fosters ownership and trust, ensuring that digital initiatives align with real-world priorities.

The Pacific Digital Democracy Initiative (PDDI), funded by the European Union and implemented by UNDP in four countries including the FSM, exemplifies the "Citizens, Not Customers" principle. By fostering collaboration among governments, civil society, academia, media, and the private sector, PDDI strengthens state-society relations and promotes human-centered digital development. Its Whole of Society (WOS) approach ensures that digitalization aligns with national security priorities, respects human rights, promotes gender-sensitive democracy, and empowers communities.

A highlight of PDDI activities in the FSM was partnering with civil society organizations such as Micronesian Productions, Care Micronesia Foundation, and Ulithi Falalop Community Action Program in Yap to enhance digital literacy and amplify community voices. These partnerships, facilitated through targeted low-value grants, enabled these organizations to implement their visions and contribute meaningfully to digital transformation efforts.

Strengthening Digital Resilience and National Security

Addressing cybersecurity

in digital transformation emphasizes the shift from a technocentric focus to a WOS approach. While technology remains crucial, sustainable cybersecurity depends on community awareness, education, and partnerships. As we build digital systems, we must ensure they protect privacy, promote freedom of expression, and uphold democratic values that are central to FSM's society.

In 2024, the first of its kind symposium on "Strengthening FSM National Security in the Digital Age", an initiative by the FSM Department of Justice with technical support from UNDP, brought together policymakers, technical experts, and stakeholders to address cybersecurity threats and build resilience—one that addresses, among important priorities, national security risks and challenges facing the FSM as a whole. Key to this initiative is organizing the human resource capacity of the nation in the areas of IT and ICT that can be instrumental in developing a Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) in the event of cybersecurity attacks and challenges. This was a significant step for the country, potentially paving the way for a regional cooperation and fostering knowledge-sharing and strategic collaboration with its North Pacific neighbors to address common challenges in the future.

Digital transformation also supports FSM's efforts to address climate change. By integrating technology into disaster risk management, early warning systems, and climate monitoring, FSM can enhance its ability to adapt to and mitigate climate impacts. Digital platforms enable better data sharing, streamline response coordination, and empower communities with timely information to protect lives and livelihoods.

Fostering a Digital-Ready FSM

While digital transformation offers immense opportunities, we must ensure these benefits reach all citizens. This means addressing affordability of services, improving access in remote areas, and ensuring no one is left behind in our digital journey. Its success hinges on the readiness of government agencies, civil servants, and citizens to adapt and thrive in a digital environment.

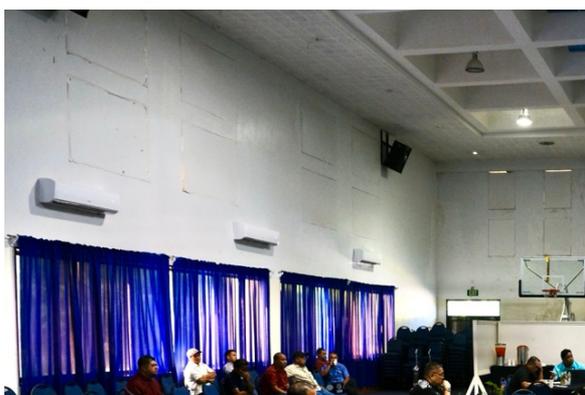
To support this, a leadership training to enhance digital readiness was recently conducted in Pohnpei to equip civil servants with the tools and skills needed to implement sustainable and citizen-focused digital solutions. Such efforts must be expanded to ensure widespread digital literacy and inclusion.

Moving forward, FSM must prioritize the following steps to ensure that digital transformation is sustainable and impactful:

1. Developing a National Digital Strategy, a roadmap that balances national goals with state priorities and ensures inclusivity.
2. Engaging communities to co-create digital solutions that reflect their needs and values.
3. Enhancing National Security through effective cybersecurity measures and building resilience through education, partnerships, and technology while fostering trust.
4. Leveraging digital tools for Climate Resilience where technology is used to monitor, adapt to, and mitigate climate risks.
5. Promoting regional cooperation and collaborate with North Pacific neighbors to share resources, knowledge, and best practices.

By taking these steps, FSM can establish a secure, inclusive, and innovative digital foundation. With strong leadership, strategic investments, and collaboration, FSM can harness technology to improve lives, strengthen governance, and enhance resilience to global challenges. Furthermore, as we embrace digital tools, we must also protect our communities from emerging digital risks - from online misinformation to cyberbullying. Building digital resilience means equipping citizens with both tools and knowledge to navigate these challenges safely.

The path to digital transformation may seem daunting, but FSM's unique cultural strengths, combined with regional partnerships and citizen engagement, position it to lead the Pacific into a digitally empowered future. Together, we can ensure that digitalization serves as a tool for progress, equity, and resilience.



Opinion Editorial

Power of Fasting: A Divine Prescription for Health Challenges

We are currently passing through a blessed month for Muslims. The month of Ramadhan, a month of devotion to God, self-discipline, and fostering compassion for others.



With this, I would like to talk about some challenges faced by the people on this great island of Pohnpei and how we can remedy ourselves away from it.

The current health landscape of Pohnpei is that there are growing health concerns that demands urgent attention. According to recent statistics, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity are on the rise, with over 50% of the adult population in Micronesia, including Pohnpei, suffering from obesity, and nearly 20% diagnosed with diabetes. These alarming figures highlight the need for transformative lifestyle changes to combat this epidemic. One of the most effective, yet often overlooked, solutions lies in a practice that different faiths especially Islam have adopted: fasting.

Fasting, particularly the Islamic practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan in which food and water is abstained from dawn till dusk, offers profound health benefits that can help address Pohnpei's health challenges. As Muslims around the world, including those in Pohnpei, observe this sacred month, they are not only fulfilling a spiritual obligation but also reaping the physical rewards of this divine practice.

Fasting in Islam can be understood as a means of purifying both the body and the soul. From a physical standpoint, fasting allows the body to naturally rest and repair itself. When we abstain from food for a period, our digestive system gets a much-needed break, allowing the body to focus its energies on other vital processes, including the elimination of harmful substances.

Scientific research has shed light on the cellular mechanisms involved in this process, one of which is called autophagy. During fasting, the body initiates this process where it breaks down and recycles damaged cellular components, effectively clearing out waste and toxins at a cellular level.

Fasting is one of the most effective ways to rid the body of toxins and promote overall

well-being. When we fast, our body enters a state of ketosis, where it begins to burn stored fat for energy. This process not only aids in weight loss but also helps cleanse the liver, kidneys, and other vital organs. Studies have shown that fasting can improve insulin sensitivity, lower blood pressure, and reduce inflammation—key factors in preventing and managing chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

The discipline of fasting aligns perfectly with other Islamic principles that emphasize moderation in all aspects of life, particularly in eating and drinking. Our faith encourages us to consume wholesome foods in appropriate quantities, avoiding both extravagance and deprivation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated that we should fill only one-third of our stomach with food, one-third with drink, and leave one-third empty. This principle of balance is crucial for maintaining good health.

Moreover, fasting cultivates empathy and gratitude, as it reminds us of the struggles of those who go without food and water daily. This spiritual reflection can inspire individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles and contribute to community efforts to address Pohnpei's health crisis.

To the people of Pohnpei, I invite you to reflect on the wisdom of fasting as a means of achieving physical and spiritual well-being. This act of fasting can help you take control of your health, detoxify your body, and cultivate a sense of discipline and gratitude. While Islamic fasting is observed during Ramadan, its principles can be adopted by anyone seeking to improve their health. Intermittent fasting, for example, is a popular health trend that mirrors the Islamic practice and has been shown to yield similar benefits.

In the words of the Holy Quran, "And fast, it is better for you, if only you knew" (2:184). Indeed, fasting is a divine prescription for a healthier life—one that Pohnpei can also find great benefits considering the challenges it is currently facing.

I pray that God can bless the people of this Island with prosperous and healthy lives. Ameen.

By: Faheem Arshad
Imam of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
FSM

Pacific Resilience Facility receives first capitalization contribution from Japan

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Tokyo, Japan--The Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF) received a further significant boost today with the announcement of an initial contribution of 417,000,000 Japanese Yen (approximately 3 million USD), from the Government of Japan.

The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Baron Divavesi Waqa, made this joint announcement with Japan's Foreign Minister, Hon. Iwaya Takeshi in Tokyo to mark the historic milestone for the PRF as a Pacific-owned and Pacific-led regional resilience financing facility for Pacific communities.

The Foreign Minister and Secretary General also discussed a proposed dialogue mechanism between the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enhance joint partnerships for the successful delivery of the PALM commitments.

This initial capitalization contribution by Japan to the PRF demonstrates Japan's ongoing commitment and support to strengthening the climate and disaster resilience of vulnerable grassroots communities across Forum Island Countries.

"The PRF is a critical initiative, designed by the Pacific for the Pacific, to address the exacerbated challenges of climate change and natural disasters for our communities," said Secretary General Waqa. Japan's support recognizes the importance of community-centered and locally led solutions to build sustainable, resilient communities that ensure no one is left behind.

"The capitalization contribution from Japan will also be the first to be paid to the PRF and demonstrates the strength of our partnership. It also sends a strong signal to our long-standing development partners to respond to the call from Pacific Islands Forum Leaders to support the capitalization of the PRF", he said.

The PRF is the first international financial institution to be collectively owned by Pacific Islands Forum member governments, dedicated to providing small-scale grant financing for Pacific communities. The PRF aims to collaborate with the Pacific Islands Forum's partners, multilateral development institutions and global climate funds to deliver for Pacific communities at the last mile of the development dollar.

"Natural disasters are becoming more intense and frequent. Our communities need to access financing to be able to respond to these challenges in a dignified way. I look forward to visiting communities in Japan to learn how Japan's communities also respond to disasters," said SG Waqa.

The PRF Treaty is earmarked to be signed at the 54th Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting in the Solomon Islands in September 2025, be legally established by the end of 2025, and aims to commence granting by the end of 2026.

The Pacific Islands Forum and the Government of Japan continue to strengthen their cooperation through shared commitments to regional resilience, sustainable development, and climate action. Today's funding milestone marks a step forward in advancing the Forum's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and the collective vision for a secure and resilient Pacific.

The Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Community & United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction establish strategic partnership to strengthen Pacific Disaster Resilience

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

March 5, 2025

Suva, Fiji—Pacific Island nations are increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, including rising sea levels, stronger cyclones and destructive cyclones, and unpredictable weather patterns.

In a step towards improving regional coordination on disaster resilience, three prominent organizations have formalized a partnership to better support Pacific communities.

This week, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Pacific Community (SPC), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) signed a Letter of Cooperation (LoC) combining political leadership, scientific expertise, and global coordination.

This partnership agreement strengthens existing partnerships between the organizations and aligns with regional and global frameworks, including the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, the Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific (FRDP) 2016–2030, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

It also draws on the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP)-United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Pacific Principles for Dialogue and Engagement, which provide a high-level framework for cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations in the Pacific.

"This partnership represents our shared commitment to building resilience in our region," said Ms. Rhonda Robinson, the Director of the SPC Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division.

She added, "By combining the scientific and technical expertise of SPC, the political leadership of PIF, and the global coordination capabilities of UNDRR, we are building and strengthening an alliance to support our members in managing disaster risks and building sustainable resilience."

The cooperation will focus on four key

areas. Firstly, to strengthen technical assistance and capacity building for Pacific governments, including support for risk management and disaster financing strategies. Secondly, prioritize early warning systems and anticipatory action, aligning with other regional initiatives to help communities prepare for disasters. Thirdly, to enhance collaboration on loss and damage by improving tracking systems and leveraging the Santiago Network to catalyze technical assistance for averting and minimizing loss and damage. Finally, the agreement emphasizes using scientific data and risk assessments to inform evidence-based policies and actions for disaster risk reduction.

"This partnership reflects our collective commitment to deepening regionalism and solidarity, as envisioned in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent," said Ms. Desna Solofa, Acting Secretary General of PIFS.

She added, "By joining forces with SPC and UNDRR, we are leveraging global expertise while staying rooted in our Pacific values and traditional knowledge. This collaboration strengthens our ability to support people-centered development, build resilience, and ensure that our region is better prepared to face the increasing challenges of climate change and disasters."

The partnership will be strengthened through key regional convenings, including the Pacific DRM Ministers Meeting, the Pacific Disaster Risk Managers Meeting, the Pacific Resilience Partnership, and the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Geneva this year.

Additionally, the partnership will provide technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and capacity-building support for Pacific governments and stakeholders to address disaster resilience challenges effectively.

Mr. Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for DRR and Head of UNDRR, emphasized the importance of this cooperation: "Small Island Developing States contribute minimally to the underlying causes of climate change but bear its impacts most acutely. That is why UNDRR has long supported strengthening the capacity of the Pacific to address climate and disaster risks. This new agreement allows us to expand this work through enhanced collaboration, which is critical to achieving the targets of the Sendai Framework in the remaining five years and to deliver on the promises of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States."

The Letter of Cooperation will remain valid until 2030, with the possibility of extension, ensuring long-term commitment to regional coordination and shared responsibility for disaster risk reduction and resilience in the Pacific.

PICRC Researchers collect valuable reproductive and age information on commercially-important reef fish

PICRC

March 13, 2025

Palau—Over the past two years, the research team at the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) have been sampling melangmud (longnose emperor) as part of a larger project, which looks at the reproductive activity of this species. More recently, this project has expanded to include other key reef species, such as grouper (tiau, mokas, temekai), parrotfish (otord, ngesngis, mesekelat, mellemau), rabbitfish (meyas, kelsebuul, reked), snapper (keremlal), emperor (mechur), and unicornfish/surgeonfish (um, mesekuuk, chesengel).

Fish are purchased from the JR5 fish market, Surangel, BOFI, or independent fishers and brought to PICRC for sampling. The researchers then collect the gonads (reproductive organs) and otoliths (ear bones) and note down the length and weight of the fish. PICRC is also collaborating with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Coral Reef Research Foundation (CRRF) to gather the otolith samples and to sample species with limited or no information. Samples are sent to the University of Hawai'i and Poseidon Fisheries Research in Hawai'i for processing, with some otolith samples being processed at PICRC.

By looking at the gonads it is possible to tell if the fish is mature enough to spawn or still immature, while the otoliths provide information on the age of the fish. This information is then combined with fish length data collected during fish market surveys to assess whether the species is being fished sustainably. Sampling of gonads has previously been carried out in Palau in the northern reefs, from 2012 to 2016, and in Koror, from 2017 to 2019, which provided the size of maturity for some important reef fish species. However, valuable information is still lacking for many reef fish.

"The results of this study will help to inform fisheries managers about whether minimum size limits should be implemented to protect immature fish, or if a species should be protected during its spawning period," stated Geraldine Rengiil, Director of PICRC's Research Department.

"This project will allow for more accurate assessments of Palau's reef fish stocks in the future," added PICRC's Chief Executive Officer, Roxanne Sial Blesam.

PICRC is grateful to the CRRF and TNC for contributing samples to this effort and the Marine Institute in Galway/Irish Aid's Our Shared Ocean Programme and the University of Guam Sea Grant for their support with funding this project.

