

Pohnpei Legislature asks court to dismiss Panuel lawsuit over oath dispute



By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

February 21, 2026

Pohnpei, FSM - The Pohnpei State Legislature has asked the FSM Supreme Court to reject Welson Panuel's request for emergency relief and dismiss his lawsuit stemming from a dispute over whether he was lawfully sworn into office.

Panuel argues that an oath administered to him in November 2025 legally seated him as a member of the Legislature and that the Legislature's refusal to recognize that oath unlawfully prevented him from assuming his seat.

In response, the Legislature has filed two motions opposing Panuel's request for a temporary restraining order and asking the court to dismiss the case or rule in its favor without trial.

The filings — submitted on behalf of Speaker Marvin Yamaguchi, Chief Clerk Charles Johnson, and the Eleventh Pohnpei Legislature — contend Panuel was never expelled or excluded from office and instead declined to take the oath during a formal legislative session.

According to the Legislature, members had previously agreed to delay the oath

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FSM Executive Branch lawsuit challenges Independent Prosecutor's authority and subpoena

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

February 21, 2026

FSM — A lawsuit filed by the President's Chief of Staff asks the FSM Supreme Court to determine whether the nation's Independent Prosecutor has legally assumed office and whether a subpoena issued to the national government is valid.

In Civil Action No. 2026-005, Chief of Staff Yolanda Joab Mori seeks a declaratory judgment that a subpoena duces tecum issued by Independent Prosecutor Lucas M. Cupps is invalid

and unenforceable, and that Cupps may not exercise the powers of the Office of the Independent Prosecutor unless he has taken a valid oath of office.

The petition arose after Mori received a subpoena issued by Cupps requesting documents related to a government project, with a deadline for production and potential penalties for non-compliance.

The filing questions whether the subpoena is enforceable because it was issued outside the FSM, seeks production of documents beyond the court's jurisdiction, and was served

electronically. The petition also raises broader concerns about whether Cupps has legally assumed the duties of the office.

A central issue in the lawsuit is the validity of an oath of office dated December 1, 2025 that was notarized in the State of Kansas.

Mori's petition argues that an oath taken before a foreign notary does not satisfy FSM legal requirements and that, without a valid oath administered by a person authorized within the FSM, Cupps lacks authority to exercise the functions of the Independent

Prosecutor.

The lawsuit asks the court to declare the subpoena invalid and to prohibit Cupps from acting in the role unless and until a valid oath is taken.

Cupps has responded by asking the court to strike portions of the filing, dismiss the case, and deny Mori's request for emergency relief.

In his response, Cupps argues the lawsuit was not properly commenced under the FSM Rules of Civil Procedure

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Independent Prosecutor asks court to block enforcement of rules he says undermine office

By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

February 21, 2026

Pohnpei — The Federated States of Micronesia’s newly appointed Independent Prosecutor has asked the FSM Supreme Court to issue emergency relief to prevent national government agencies from enforcing financial and personnel requirements that he argues threaten the independence of the constitutional office.

In filings submitted to the court’s trial division in Pohnpei, Independent Prosecutor Lucas M. Cupps requested a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against the FSM Government, including the Department of Finance and Administration, the Office of Personnel, and the Department of Justice.

The case centers on whether existing laws and administrative requirements may be applied to the Office of the Independent Prosecutor (OIP), an office created through a constitutional amendment approved by voters in 2023.

According to the application, the OIP was

established to investigate and prosecute government officials and must remain independent of administrative control that could affect its functions. Cupps argues that requiring the office to comply with certain personnel and financial procedures — including project control documentation and personnel action forms — would interfere with that constitutional independence.

The filing says that the constitutional amendment creating the office requires that “no statute, regulation, or directive shall be enacted or enforced which has the effect of reducing or eliminating the independence, power, or capability” of the Independent Prosecutor.

The legal action follows months of disagreement between the Independent Prosecutor and executive branch officials over how funds appropriated by Congress for the office should be administered and when those funds should be released.

As previously reported, Congress appropriated funding for the Office of the Independent Prosecutor after confirming Cupps as the nation’s first Independent Prosecutor, but transmission of those funds and implementation procedures became the subject of dispute between the office and the Executive.

Court filings indicate that government agencies required completion of financial and personnel documentation before funds could be accessed, a requirement Cupps argues risks delaying or preventing the office from becoming operational.

The application asserts that allowing agencies to enforce those requirements would cause irreparable harm by effectively rendering the constitutional office unable to function.

The filings also describe escalating tensions surrounding the dispute.

According to the verified petition, disagreements with government officials occurred alongside concerns expressed by Cupps about personal safety and pressure related to the establishment of the office. The petition states that FSM National Police contacted former employers of the Independent Prosecutor as part of inquiries about him, developments the filing presents as part of the broader conflict surrounding the office’s implementation.

Those claims are included in the petition as part of the factual background supporting the request for urgent court intervention.

Although the present case focuses primarily on administrative control and funding, the filings acknowledge a related dispute over the validity of the Independent Prosecutor’s oath of office.

Cupps took an oath dated December 1, 2025 that was notarized in the State of Kansas. Questions from executive branch officials about whether that oath satisfies FSM legal requirements have become part of the broader disagreement over whether the Independent Prosecutor may fully exercise the powers of the office.

The issue of the oath’s validity is the subject of separate litigation now before the court.

The application relies on Rule 65 of the FSM Rules of Civil Procedure, which governs temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions.

The filing argues that the court should intervene because the case raises constitutional questions, the likelihood of success on the merits favors the Independent Prosecutor, and the public interest supports allowing the office to operate as intended by voters.

It also argues that denying relief could “render such office and its powers meaningless,” eroding public confidence in the constitutional amendment that created the OIP.

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Bill Jaynes
Managing Editor

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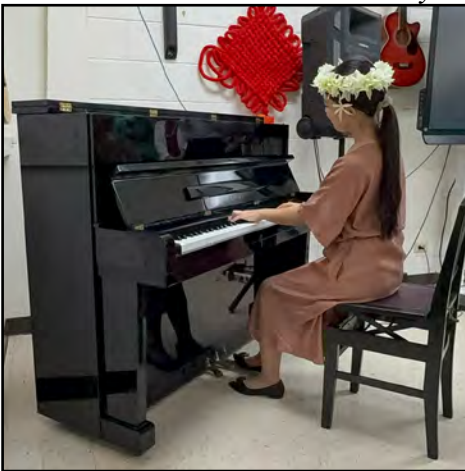
Deadline for submission of articles or advertisements for this issue is the end of working hours on:

Monday, March 9, 2026

Private Japanese donors provide upright acoustic pianos to four Pohnpei schools



Photos by Embassy of Japan



Photos by Bill Jaynes



By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press

February 14, 2026

Pohnpei - A handover ceremony held February 13 at the College of Micronesia-FSM National Campus marked the donation of four upright pianos to educational institutions in Pohnpei.

Though the ceremony was held at the College of Micronesia FSM, the College was only one of the recipients. The other donated pianos went to Pohnpei Seventh Day Adventist School, Ohmine Elementary School, and Pohnpei Catholic School.

The ceremony opened with musical performances by student choirs, including the COM-FSM Student Choir and students from the Seventh Day Adventist School. Their performances set the tone for an event focused on music, education, and international friendship.

Following the ceremony, participants moved across the campus to the music room where the newly donated piano was

demonstrated in a recital. Performers included Ayuka Komatsu, a JICA Overseas Cooperation Volunteer teaching music at Pohnpei Catholic School, a PCS student performer, and COM-FSM music instructor Dr. Michael Müller.

Unlike many handover ceremonies attended by Japan's Ambassador to the FSM, Nobuo Kagomiya, the donation did not come from the Japanese government. Instead, the pianos were provided by two private Japanese companies — Kyowa Shipping Co. Ltd. and Takeda Gakki, a musical instrument manufacturer — with logistical support enabling delivery to the islands.

In welcome remarks delivered on behalf of the college, Acting President Steven Young-Uhk described the instrument as more than a classroom resource.

“This instrument is not just a piece of furniture,” he said. “It is a bridge of friendship between our nations and a lasting investment in the artistic development of our students.”

Young-Uhk said the piano would support students' creativity, cultural expression, and personal growth while serving as a reminder of the relationship between the FSM and Japan.

Ambassador Kagomiya emphasized that the donation reflected people-to-people friendship rather than official development assistance.

He said the partnership between Kyowa Shipping and Takeda Musical Instrument Company grew from shared enthusiasm for music, with Kyowa transporting the instruments and Takeda providing the pianos.

The ambassador noted that Kyowa Shipping maintains regular shipping routes connecting Japan with Micronesian countries and described the donation as part of the companies' broader commitment to social responsibility and cultural exchange.

Ambassador Kagomiya also explained that the Embassy of Japan consulted FSM education officials and national leadership when selecting recipient institutions, including the College of Micronesia-FSM, SDA School, Ohmine Elementary, and Pohnpei Catholic School, where a Japanese volunteer currently teaches music.

He thanked local partners, including Pohnpei Rock Products, for assisting with delivery of the instruments and encouraged schools to maintain the

pianos carefully due to the challenges posed by humidity and termites.

Miyai Keller, Acting Secretary of the FSM Department of Education, conveyed appreciation on behalf of national leadership and education officials.

Keller said student performances during the ceremony demonstrated how the instruments would help young people develop musical skills and pursue their passion for singing.

He described the donations as another example of the close friendship between the peoples of the FSM and Japan and expressed confidence that the instruments would be widely used by students.

The ceremony concluded with optimism that the pianos will support music education across the four institutions while strengthening cultural connections built through shared appreciation of music.

The FSM officially launches Strategic Development Plan 2024–2043 at CEC

FSM Information Services

February 18, 2026

Kosrae, FSM – The FSM Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2024–2043 was formally launched during the 4th Chief Executive Council (CEC) Meeting held in Kosrae. The event brought together national and state executive leadership, marking a significant milestone in advancing the nation's long-term development agenda.

In his welcome remarks, Vice President Aren B. Palik underscored that the SDP is a living and guiding framework, intentionally broad in scope, to provide overarching national direction while enabling State Development Plans and sector policies to align under a unified national vision.

Delivering the keynote address, President Wesley W. Simina emphasized that the future of the Federated States of Micronesia requires a whole-of-nation approach. He noted that meaningful progress will depend on active partnerships among government, civil society, development partners, and the private sector, while recognizing that government bears the primary responsibility for creating an enabling environment in which these partnerships can thrive.



The President further stressed the importance of leadership in establishing clear policies, strengthening governance systems, and removing barriers that hinder opportunity, innovation, and investment. He reaffirmed the need to create conditions that empower the private sector, enable civil society participation, and ensure that development efforts reach communities across all islands.

Highlighting implementation as a central priority, President Simina called for strengthened monitoring and performance evaluation mechanisms. He emphasized continued support for the development of a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework to track progress, enhance accountability, and promote evidence-based policymaking.

Concluding his address, the President called upon executive leadership at both national and state levels to take full

ownership of the SDP's implementation.

The Governors of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae delivered remarks affirming their support for the FSM SDP 2024–2043 and noted that their respective State Development Plans

have been completed and aligned with the national framework. Their statements reinforced a shared commitment to coordinated implementation through state-level planning under a national vision and development initiatives.

Both national and state leaders acknowledged that the launch signals the continuation of strengthened collaboration across all sectors of government and society.

The FSM SDP 2024–2043 charts a course toward a resilient, inclusive, and self-reliant Federated States of Micronesia. It reflects our determination to strengthen governance, expand economic opportunities, and ensure that development reaches every community. Guided by shared responsibility and grounded in our collective values, we move forward with clarity of purpose—committed to building a nation where future generations can thrive with dignity and confidence.

...Pohnpei Legislature

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ceremony until a delegation returned so the administration of oaths could occur collectively in open session. While the delegation was away, an oath was administered to Panuel outside formal session, which the Legislature later determined it would not recognize.

Court filings state that the Legislature subsequently notified Panuel that his oath would be administered during session on January 21, 2026. The notice was personally served, and legislative leaders say they also met with Panuel and encouraged him to attend.

The Legislature says Panuel did not appear for the scheduled ceremony.

A PSL resolution adopted January 26, 2026 confirmed Panuel as the election winner, reaffirmed that his oath date had been set, and concluded that because he failed to appear, the seat remained vacant.

In opposing Panuel's request for a temporary restraining order, the Legislature argues he cannot show immediate or irreparable harm because a lawful path to assuming office was available.

The filings characterize any alleged injury as self-inflicted and argue that granting emergency relief would improperly require the court to interfere in the internal procedures of a co-equal branch of government.

In a separate motion, the Legislature asks the court to dismiss Panuel's verified petition, arguing his claims rely on constitutional provisions that do not

govern legislative oath recognition or membership procedures.

The Legislature maintains the Pohnpei Constitution does not give a senator-elect unilateral authority to compel recognition of an oath administered outside legislative proceedings.

Respondents also argue the dispute presents a political question reserved to the Legislature, which the Constitution assigns authority to judge the qualifications and status of its members.

Panuel previously asked the court to declare that the November oath was legally binding and to order recognition of his membership.

The court has not yet ruled on the pending motions, and a response from Panuel's attorney to the Legislature's latest filings had not been filed at the time of publication. A hearing on the case is scheduled for February 26, 2026.

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Kosrae marks a milestone with handover of newly renovated Biosecurity Facility

FSM Information Services

February 16, 2026

Okat, Kosrae — The Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the Federated States of Micronesia, formally handed over the newly renovated Kosrae State Biosecurity Facility, reinforcing the nation’s commitment to protecting its borders, natural resources, and communities.



State and national leaders gathered for the ceremony in a shared demonstration of partnership and purpose. More than a building, the facility represents protection of land, ocean, livelihoods and future generations.

In his welcoming remarks, Governor Tulensa W. Palik reminded those in attendance that the moment carried deeper meaning. “Today marks more than the opening of a building. It marks a strengthening of our borders, the protection of our natural resources

and an investment in the safety and prosperity of our people. As one of the gateways to the FSM, Kosrae carries an important responsibility. Our island’s pristine environment, rich marine ecosystems and fertile lands are not only sources of pride. They are the foundation of our food security, our economy and our cultural heritage,” he said.

Vice President Aren B. Palik emphasized the shared responsibility behind the investment saying, “Biosecurity is not just a technical function. It is a safeguard for our people and our future,” the Vice President stated. “In a nation of islands connected by air and sea, prevention is our strongest line of defense. This

facility strengthens Kosrae’s ability to protect not only the state, but the entire Federated States of Micronesia.”

The upgraded facility provides a dedicated space for inspection, monitoring and early response activities, strengthening Kosrae’s operational readiness and contributing to the resilience of the national biosecurity system.

The renovation was made possible through the GEF-6 FSM Invasive Alien Species Project, implemented by the Agriculture Division of the FSM Department of Resources and Development, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project supports efforts across the country to prevent, detect and manage invasive species before they cause lasting environmental, economic, and public health harm.

The ceremony concluded with the handover



of the key and ribbon cutting, a symbolic but meaningful gesture of cooperation between national and state governments.

For Kosrae, the facility stands as a visible commitment to protecting what makes the island unique: its environment, its food systems, and its way of life. For the FSM, it reinforces a broader national promise to act early, work together and safeguard the natural heritage that sustains the nation.

...FSM Lawsuit

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and that the petition improperly combines a complaint with requests for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction. The filing also challenges whether service of process was valid, arguing that service by email through counsel does not satisfy procedural requirements, particularly where the respondent is outside the FSM.

The response asks the court to dismiss the matter for improper service and failure to comply with pleading rules.

Cupps disputes the claim that his oath is invalid, stating that he executed an oath dated December 1, 2025 and that no FSM statute requires the oath to be taken within the country or before a specific official.

The response argues that an affirmation before a notary public is legally sufficient and asserts that executive branch actions treated him as having already assumed office.

The case also raises questions about the scope of the Independent Prosecutor’s

subpoena power.

Mori’s petition challenges the validity and enforceability of the subpoena, while Cupps argues that the Constitution and the law establishing the office grant authority to issue investigative subpoenas without prior court approval.

His response says that the enabling statute outlines subpoena authority and that Congress did not restrict the method of service.

The lawsuit is closely connected to a separate case filed by Cupps that seeks court intervention over funding, administrative control, and the operational independence of the Office of the Independent Prosecutor.

Together, the cases represent the first major legal tests of the constitutional amendment establishing the office and may determine both whether the Independent Prosecutor may act and how the office will function in practice.

The matter remains pending before the FSM Supreme Court. The court has not yet ruled on Mori’s request for relief or on Cupps’ motions seeking dismissal.

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By: Carlson D. Apis
Title: Secretary, DTCI
Date: February 9th 2026

END OF ITEM C-111

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
C-111-3

Joseph-Movick administration at 4th Chief Executive Council meeting in Kosrae

Pohnpei Public Information

February 17, 2026

Tofol, Kosrae - Governor Stevenson A. Joseph delivers welcoming remarks at the Governor's conference hall in Tofol, Kosrae.



In his opening remarks at the 4th CEC in Kosrae, Governor Stevenson A. Joseph of Pohnpei emphasized the critical need for intergovernmental unity and the follow-through of resolutions from the previous Chuuk meeting, particularly regarding Vital Petroleum and energy security. He highlighted a balanced approach to economic resilience, calling for equitable dialogue on corporate tax frameworks while stressing the importance of the new 20-year Strategic Development Plan. Most notably, the Governor pointed to the essential role of Compact financing in addressing the state's infrastructure and development needs, urging his fellow leaders to ensure these funds are effectively leveraged creatively to the benefit of our goals for our people.



Japan, FSM discuss defense cooperation during Tokyo meeting

*By Bill Jaynes
The Kaselehlie Press*

February 23, 2026

Tokyo - Japan's State Minister of Defense Miyazaki Masahisa met with Federated States of Micronesia Secretary of Justice Leonito Baccalando Jr. on February 22 during Baccalando's visit to Japan for the 3rd Japan-Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue.

law. He said Japan looks forward to continuing close cooperation with the FSM.

Both sides welcomed what the ministry called the steady expansion of defense cooperation, particularly in maritime security, and agreed to continue strengthening collaboration in that area.

The two officials also affirmed the importance of deepening defense exchanges between Japan and the FSM, including through frameworks such as the Japan-Pacific Islands Defense Dialogue

According to a press release issued by Japan's Ministry of Defense, Miyazaki described Japan and the FSM as "valuable friends" connected by the Pacific Ocean and partners sharing principles including freedom, democracy, and the rule of

...OIP

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The petition further asks the court to declare that efforts to apply certain statutes, rules, and regulations to the OIP are unconstitutional if they interfere with the office's independence.

including its relationship with the executive branch and control over its budget and personnel.

A decision by the court may determine whether the office functions as a fully independent constitutional entity or remains subject to some existing administrative oversight.

The litigation is ongoing. No ruling has been issued, and court records indicate that the respondents had not yet filed a formal response to the legal challenge at the time of reporting.

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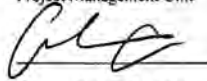
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Owner: Federated States of Micronesia Department of Transportation, Communications & Infrastructure, Project Management Unit



By: Carlson D. Apis
Title: Secretary, DTCl
Date: February 9th 2026

END OF ITEM C-111

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C-111-3

Designations of Palau’s Senate President and Marshall Islands’ former Mayor for involvement in significant corruption

*U.S. Department of State
Statement by Thomas "Tommy"
Pigott, Principal Deputy
Spokesperson*

February 10, 2026
Washington D.C. - The Department of State is publicly designating Palau Senate President Hokkons Baules for his involvement in significant corruption on behalf of China-based actors. In addition, the Department is publicly designating Anderson Jibas, former mayor of the Kili/Bikini/Ejit community in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, for his involvement in significant corruption and misappropriation of U.S. provided funds during his time in public office. These actions render Baules, Jibas, and their immediate family members generally ineligible for entry into United States.

Baules abused his public position by accepting bribes in exchange for providing advocacy and support for government, business, and criminal interests from China. His actions

constituted significant corruption and adversely affected U.S. interests in Palau.

Jibas abused his public position by orchestrating and financially benefitting from multiple misappropriation schemes involving theft, misuse, and abuse of funds from the U.S.-provided Bikini Resettlement Trust, resulting in most of the funds being stolen from the Kili/Bikini/Ejit people who are survivors and descendants of survivors of nuclear bomb testing in the 1940s and 1950s. The theft, misuse, and abuse of the U.S.-provided money for the fund wasted U.S. taxpayer money and contributed to a loss of jobs, food insecurity, migration to the United States, and lack of reliable electricity for the Kili/Bikini/Ejit people. The lack of accountability for Jibas’ acts of corruption has eroded public trust in the government of the Marshall Islands, creating an opportunity for malign foreign influence from China and others.

The United States will continue to promote accountability for those who abuse public power for personal gain and steal from our citizens to enrich themselves. These designations reaffirm the United States’ commitment to countering global corruption affecting U.S. interests.

These public designations are made under the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. F, P.L. 118-47), as carried forward by the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2026 (Div. A, P.L. 119-37) (“Section 7031(c)”). Section 7031(c) requires the Secretary of State to publicly or privately designate foreign officials and their immediate family members about whom the Secretary has credible information of involvement in significant corruption or a gross violation of human rights.



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President Simina administers oath of office to Yap State appointees

FSM Information Service

February 11, 2026

Colonia, Yap — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), administered the Oath of Office to two presidential appointees representing the State of Yap during a ceremony held at the Yap State Governor’s Office in Colonia on February 10, 2026.

The appointees sworn in were Mr. John Chugen, appointed as FSM National Election Commissioner for the State of Yap, and Mr. Sebastian Anefal, appointed as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Micronesia Insurance Corporation (MiCare).

In administering the oath, President Simina emphasized the solemn responsibility inherent in public service and underscored the importance of upholding the Constitution, the rule of law, and the trust placed

in public officials by the people of the FSM. President Simina noted the high value he places on personally administering the Oath of Office, recognizing it as a fundamental and

meaningful commitment to service and accountability.

Following the ceremony, Mr. Anefal delivered brief remarks, reiterating the significance of the Oath of Office and emphasizing that it is not a mere formality, but a vital and integral part of one’s duties in government.

President Simina congratulated the appointees and expressed confidence in their ability to faithfully discharge their responsibilities and contribute to effective governance and institutional accountability at the national level.

The Simina-Palik administration extends its appreciation to the FSM Congress for confirming the appointments, noting the importance of cooperation among the branches of government in strengthening national institutions and ensuring balanced state representation.



Fourth Chief Executive Council convenes in Kosrae



FSM Information Services

February 17, 2026

Tofol, Kosrae — The Fourth Chief Executive Council (CEC) officially opened in Kosrae with His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), joining the Honorable Tulensa W. Palik, Governor of Kosrae State in welcoming state leaders and delegations from across the Federated States of Micronesia.

The ceremony began with an opening prayer, setting a respectful and reflective tone for the gathering. The presentation and raising of the national and state flags followed, formally marking the start of the Council session.

Governor Palik delivered welcoming remarks, highlighting Kosrae's pride in hosting the CEC and reaffirming the importance of unity and collaboration among the states. President Simina expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Kosrae for their warm hospitality. Fellow governors also offered remarks, demonstrating their active engagement and shared commitment to advancing practical, coordinated solutions through the CEC.

Reconvening since their last meeting in Chuuk, leaders emphasized a collective sense of urgency in addressing key national priorities.

Key discussions this week include:

- Population and Diaspora: With population on the decline

throughout the FSM, leaders will examine strategies to retain citizens and create meaningful incentives for their return.

Education and Workforce Development: Reforms are underway to better align education and training systems with labor market demands, recognizing that citizens are the primary drivers of development.

Trade, Investment, and Financing: The Council will review investment frameworks and explore blended financing approaches with development partners and private investors to ensure sustainable, nationally aligned growth.

- **Seabed Resources:** Leaders will consider the Operationalization Framework for the FSM Seabed Resources Authority, reaffirming alignment with the precautionary approach upheld by the International Seabed Authority and a commitment to the highest environmental standards.

- **Infrastructure Implementation:** Members will address project delays and coordination challenges to strengthen delivery across sectors and jurisdictions.



“This week is not merely an opportunity to deliberate. It is an opportunity to commit,” President Simina said, calling for clear, actionable outcomes from the session.

The Fourth Chief Executive Council continues throughout the week in Kosrae State.

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Chief Executive Council concludes fourth meeting in Kosrae

FSM Information Services

February 19, 2026

Kosrae, FSM — The Fourth Meeting of the Chief Executive Council (CEC) of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) formally concluded in Kosrae State following productive deliberations among national and state leadership on priority issues affecting the nation.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and brought together the Governors of Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. The Council provided a platform for collaborative dialogue, coordination, and decision-making on matters of shared national importance.

Over the course of the meeting, Council members engaged in substantive discussions on economic development, infrastructure implementation, health and education priorities, climate resilience, fiscal coordination, and ongoing Compact-related

matters. The dialogue reflected a shared commitment to strengthening intergovernmental cooperation and advancing the nation's long-term strategic objectives.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chief Executive Council formally adopted and endorsed a Joint Communiqué and accompanying resolutions covering priority national matters such as the FSM Census, the operationalization of the National Seabed Resources Authority (NSRA), preparations for the upcoming FSM Games, and other areas of shared concern among the National and State Governments.

The Council reaffirmed its collective commitment to unity, transparency, and collaborative governance in addressing both immediate challenges and long-term development goals. Leaders emphasized that continued coordination through the CEC remains vital to ensuring effective implementation of national policies and equitable progress across all states.

On behalf of the Simina-Palik Administration, Vice President Palik expressed appreciation to the Government and people of Kosrae for hosting the Fourth CEC Meeting and acknowledged the active participation and constructive contributions of all Governors and their delegations.

The Chief Executive Council remains a central mechanism for strengthening partnership between the National

and State Governments and ensuring that national development efforts are aligned, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the people of the FSM.



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Pacific shapes historic COP31 partnership as region prepares to host Pre-COP talks

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

20 February 2026

Nadi, Fiji: The COP31 Türkiye – Australia partnership that includes the Pacific is a first in the history of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Türkiye holds the COP31 Presidency, upon which Australia is the President of Negotiations and COP31 pre-COP will be hosted in the Pacific.

“The COP31 partnership modality is unique and unprecedented in the UNFCCC history, the world is watching closely how the Australia – Pacific partnership, together with Türkiye, reshape collaboration and partnerships going forward including catalysing urgent and ambitious global climate change actions,” said the Deputy Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) at the opening of the fourth COP31 Pacific Senior Officials Taskforce (PSOT) meeting.

The Pacific is making the most of this opportunity with the COP31 Pacific Senior Officials Taskforce holding their fourth meeting in Nadi, Fiji. This gathering is to discuss and strategise ways forward including through hosting of UNFCCC pre-COP in the Pacific and Australia’s role as COP31 President of Negotiations. Australia in partnership with the Pacific Islands will set the agenda and preside over the pre-COP.

“As we look toward COP31, these

discussions remind us of a simple truth, the Pacific must not only be present – we must be heard. The Türkiye – Australia Partnership strengthens our visibility, ensures alignment with our priorities, and opens doors for meaningful participation throughout the pre-COP and the COP processes,” said Ms Tagaloa Cooper, Director of Climate Change Resilience of SPREP.

“Together, let us step forward with unity and purpose, ensuring COP31 delivers the ambitious, just, and durable outcomes our Blue Pacific Continent deserves,” said Ms Cooper.

PIF Secretariat, along with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and the Government of Australia make up the Secretariat for the COP31 Task Force supporting Pacific Islands as it moves towards COP31 under this partnership arrangement.

The pre-COP will see the world coming to our corner of the globe for the climate change negotiations – a corner that is home to the world’s most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite contributing less than 0.03% to the world’s total greenhouse gas emissions.

Building on the efforts of the COP30 Brazilian Presidency, Türkiye and



Australia, in consultation with the Pacific will collaborate to strengthen and elevate the action agenda. Australia and Türkiye will work together to identify additional envoys for the action agenda for thematic priorities, including envoys from Pacific Island countries.

“This is an uncharted pathway that we’re walking – the issue of climate change is a matter of life and death for us all. We’re working to come together and collaborate in this spirit of trust and partnership for a successful outcome ahead,” said Ms Esther O’Brien of Solomon Islands, co-chair of the COP31 PSOT Meeting.

“COP31 is our opportunity for the voices of the unheard to be heard. We will work in unity to make sure this happens.”

Also to take place is a session at COP31 focused on climate finance needs of

Small Island Developing States which will provide a platform for pledges to the Pacific Resilience Facility.

The next meeting to be held on this journey is the COP31 Climate Ministers Meeting to be held in Brisbane, Australia to finalise the way forward under the Australia-Pacific partnership. This will cement steps to build momentum for global outcomes on the climate change stage.

“The innovative COP31 partnership between Türkiye, Australia and the Pacific will bring Pacific perspectives and ideas into the centre of the global climate dialogue this year — I’m really excited to be working with colleagues from across the region to make the most of this opportunity,” said Dr Sally Box of Australia, co-chair of the COP31 PSOT Meeting.

Emergency assistance to the FSM in response to the Chuuk oil leak

Embassy of Japan to the FSM

February 19, 2026

Chuuk - On February 11, the Handover Ceremony for the Emergency Assistance to the Federated States of Micronesia in Response to the Oil Leak was held at the Chuuk State Government Auditorium. The emergency assistance, including emergency relief goods (oil absorbent mats, oil fences, etc.) was provided by the Government of Japan upon the request of the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Japan

provided the emergency assistance to the FSM to support the people affected by the oil leak, in light of the humanitarian perspective and the close relations between Japan and the FSM.



H.E. Ambassador Wu Wei attends 2026 Chinese Spring Festival reception



Embassy of China to the FSM

February 10, 2026

Pohnpei - On February 10, 2026, H.E. Wu Wei, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the FSM, attended 2026 Chinese Spring Festival Reception. Overseas Chinese in Pohnpei were cordially invited to the Chinese Embassy to celebrate the upcoming Year of the Horse.

Ambassador Wu Wei warmly welcomed the guests and extended Spring Festival greetings. He highlighted the outcomes of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, outlined

the major achievements of Chinese modernization and fruitful outcomes of China-FSM cooperation in various fields in 2025, and encouraged everyone to make new contributions to China's development and the China-FSM friendship. He stressed that the Embassy would, as always, actively practice diplomacy for the people, wholeheartedly protecting the safety and the lawful rights of Chinese citizens and institutions in the FSM, and bringing the motherland's care and warmth to all Chinese in the FSM.

With a joyous and harmonious atmosphere at the event, the guests enjoyed impressive performances. Ambassador Wu Wei distributed Spring Festival Care Package on site, expressing best wishes. All guests stressed that they will continue to play an active role as a bridge and contribute to developing relations between China and the FSM.



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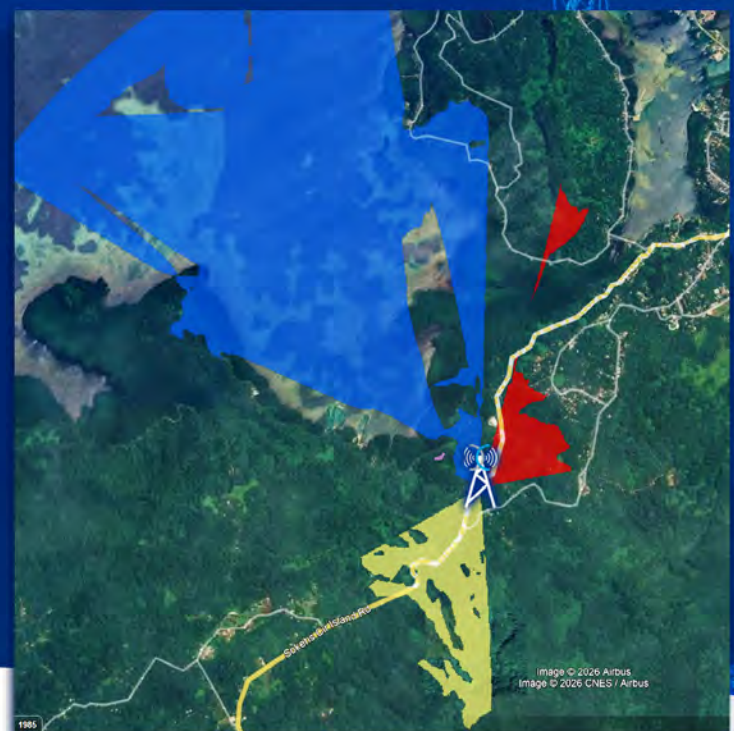


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Image © 2026 CNES / Airbus

Kiribati joins expanded regional partnership to strengthen water security in Pacific outer islands

Secretariat of the Pacific Community

February 22, 2026

Kiribati - Pacific outer island communities facing severe water insecurity will benefit from an expanded regional effort to strengthen access to safe and reliable drinking water, supported by new funding from New Zealand that brings total investment to NZD20.55 million. The initiative now covers all eight atoll and low-lying countries most at risk from drought, limited freshwater sources and the growing impacts of climate change.

The expansion brings Kiribati into the current phase of the project, restoring participation across all eight atoll and low-lying countries. These countries include the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu. Many outer island communities within these nations depend almost entirely on rainwater or limited groundwater supplies, leaving them highly vulnerable as climate change increases the frequency and duration of dry periods.

This regional effort builds on progress made since the launch of the Strengthening Water Resilience of Pacific Outer Island Communities project in April 2025. The additional funding will enable further upgrades to community and household water systems, the installation of new rainwater harvesting infrastructure, groundwater assessments and capacity building for local technicians. The partnership also strengthens community engagement approaches that draw on traditional knowledge and promote inclusion of women, persons with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.

Central to the initiative is the Pacific Partnership for Atoll Water Security, which supports countries to develop investment plans tailored to their national priorities. The programme also draws on regional technical expertise to improve coordination and long-term planning. New innovations, including remote sensing tools for water tank monitoring in outer islands, are helping countries track water availability more accurately and respond more effectively to shortages.

The additional funding from New



Zealand reflects its commitment to climate resilience in the Pacific and builds on renewed cooperation with Kiribati. In a recent statement, New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters, noted that high level political dialogue throughout 2025 with Kiribati's President Taneti Maamau contributed to the signing of a Statement of Partnership with Kiribati that recognises the shared history and long-standing cooperation between the two countries.

SPC Water Security and Governance Coordinator Dave Hebblethwaite welcomed the expanded support, noting that Kiribati's participation strengthens the initiative as a whole. He said Kiribati brings deep experience as one of the most climate vulnerable atoll nations, contributing valuable knowledge and practical insights that benefit other countries facing similar challenges.

About the Project

The Pacific Partnership for Atoll Water Security is implemented through the Pacific Community's Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division and contributes to the Division's 2023 to 2027 Business Plan, which guides efforts to support resilient development across Pacific Island countries and territories. SPC is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region. It has supported development since 1947 and provides integrated expertise in areas including geoscience, energy, maritime governance, climate change and water resources management to its 27 member countries and territories.

New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade oversees the International Development Cooperation programme, which supports sustainable development, climate resilience and strong partnerships in the Pacific.

Pacific Islands Forum and Asian Development Bank sign Blue Pacific partnership agreement



Pacific Islands Forum

Waqa.

20 February 2026

Suva, Fiji - The Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) today signed a Partnership Agreement to deepen collaboration across key regional priorities aligned to the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and its Implementation Plan.

The Partnership Agreement establishes a strategic framework for cooperation aligned to shared regional commitments on economic resilience, climate and disaster preparedness, social inclusion, and sustainable growth across the Blue Pacific region.

The signing was done today in Suva by PIF Secretary General Baron Divavesi Waqa and ADB President, Masato Kanda.

"The ADB's relationship with our Blue Pacific region is long-standing, and well established. The Partnership Agreement between the ADB and the Pacific Islands Forum formalises our cooperation and firm commitment to continue to work together to deliver Pacific-led solutions that build resilience and connectivity, expand opportunity, and mobilise climate and development finance in line with the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent," said Secretary General

Through this partnership, PIF and ADB will advance cooperation on trade and economic competitiveness; public finance management and fiscal resilience; regional trade policy and investment harmonization; private sector and MSME development; economic diversification in agriculture, fisheries, tourism and the blue economy; correspondent banking relationships and regional financial systems; financial literacy and inclusion; social protection; community resilience; climate finance; and disaster risk financing.

"The remote and geographically dispersed nations of the Pacific stand to benefit immensely from regional cooperation and integration," said Mr. Kanda. "The strength of the Pacific lies in its unity. By standing together, we can achieve common objectives—from protecting shared ocean resources to building economic resilience—far more effectively than any country could alone. This agreement is our foundation to think bigger and move faster."

The agreement underscores the shared commitment by both institutions to supporting a peaceful, secure, inclusive and prosperous region, ensuring that all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives.

Kolonia, Ohmine remain title contenders in Matson Kids Champions League

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

February 22, 2026

Pohnpei — Kolonia and Ohmine continue to separate themselves at the top of the Pohnpei Soccer Association Kids Club Matson Champions League standings following another busy stretch of matches focused on development, teamwork and sportsmanship.

Ohmine and SDA produced one of the most entertaining fixtures of the period at the Track and Field, with Ohmine taking a 4–2 aggregate victory. By agreement of the coaches, each half was recorded as a standalone match — a format designed to reinforce learning.

Ohmine led 2–0 in the first half before SDA responded in the second half, which finished 2–2. SDA’s second goal came after Will struck the crossbar and forced the ball home, a moment that reflected persistence rather than polish. Kenoi Mori delivered a strong performance in goal for SDA, while Ohmine, guided by coach Paul Cantero, showed growing tactical flexibility, using width and winger play to stretch opponents.

Parents and supporters again filled the stands showing the strong community support behind the league.

Kolonia’s matchup with PCS illustrated both competitive reality and league values. PCS arrived short-handed, forcing its starting seven to play the entire match while Kolonia rotated substitutes. Although Kolonia scored well beyond a six-goal margin on the field, the official result was recorded as 3–2 in accordance with league regulations designed to preserve fairness and respect for opponents.

Sekere and PCS later battled to a 1–1 draw under hot conditions in front of a large crowd. Sekere opened the scoring and controlled much of possession, but PCS equalized in the second half through Kai-min. Several Ohmine coaches assisted

TEAM	Points	Matches	W:D:L	Goals
Kolonia	18	7	6:0:1	37/19
Ohmine	16	7	5:1:1	29/19
PCS	8	7	2:2:3	19/13
SDA	7	6	2:1:3	17/24
Sekere	5	5	1:2:3	16/23
St Paul	0	5	0:0:5	3:20

Sekere during the match, reflecting the collaborative approach that has become a defining feature of the youth competition.

Ohmine’s 5–2 win over Kolonia further demonstrated its progress. Kolonia, again limited in numbers, faced sustained pressure, though goalkeeper Kieren Mauricio produced a series of stops. The match also showed improving goalkeeping standards, with Mauricio and Ohmine’s Dylan both delivering strong performances.

Ohmine displayed improved positional discipline, avoiding clustering around the ball and moving collectively — signs of growing tactical maturity across the squad.

After recent results, Kolonia leads the standings with 18 points, followed closely by Ohmine with 16. PCS sits on eight points, while SDA (seven) and Sekere (five) remain in contention for third place. St. Paul is still searching for its first points.

Kolonia and Ohmine each have two matches remaining, while SDA and Sekere have three fixtures left and PCS has two, leaving the race open.

Two matches are scheduled this week:

- Feb. 25: Sekere vs SDA, Track and Field, 3:30 p.m.
- Feb. 26: Ohmine vs PCS, Spanish Wall Park, 3:30 p.m.

As the season enters its closing phase, the Matson Kids Champions League continues to focus not only on results but on player growth, teamwork and the shared spirit of youth football in Pohnpei.

U.S. awards \$3 million grant for Pohnpei water storage rehabilitation

By *Bill Jaynes*
The Kaselehlie Press

February 18, 2026

Kolonia, Pohnpei — The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia has received a grant of \$3,042,748 from the United States to support the rehabilitation of water storage tanks serving Pohnpei.

The funding was formally transmitted in a diplomatic note dated February 17, 2026, from the U.S. Embassy in Kolonia to the FSM Department of Foreign Affairs. The note states that the grant is provided for the Fiscal Year 2026 infrastructure sector and is specifically intended for the PUC Water Storage Tanks Rehabilitation project

Award documentation shows the grant is funded through the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs under Compact of Free Association assistance. The project period runs from February 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027, during which funds will be available for implementation.

The project is expected to support improvements to water storage infrastructure managed by the Pohnpei Utilities Corporation, an area considered critical for water reliability, public health, and climate resilience. Aging storage tanks have been a long-standing concern in

Pohnpei, particularly as population growth and extreme weather events place increased pressure on water systems.

According to the award terms, the FSM national government is responsible for ensuring the funds are used in accordance with Compact procedures and U.S. federal grant requirements, including procurement standards, financial reporting, and project status reporting.

The grant requires regular financial and narrative reports and allows funds to be drawn down through established federal payment systems as project work progresses.

The assistance forms part of ongoing U.S. infrastructure support under the Compact of Free Association, which has historically funded water, energy, transportation, and other public infrastructure projects across the FSM.

While project-level details such as construction timelines and specific tank sites were not included in the diplomatic note, the funding shows continued investment in strengthening Pohnpei’s water system — an issue frequently raised by local officials and communities.

FSM officials have not yet publicly announced an implementation schedule for the rehabilitation work.

President Simina administers oath of office to Kosrae State appointees

FSM Information Services

February 23, 2026

Tofol, Kosrae — On February 19, 2026 His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), administered the Oath of Office to two distinguished appointees from Kosrae State during a ceremony held in Kosrae.



Sworn in were Lt. Governor of Kosrae, the Honorable Arthy G. Nena, appointed to serve as Board Member of the Board of Directors of MiCare, and Mr. Steven L. George, appointed to the Board of Regents of the College of Micronesia-FSM.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the Simina-Palik administration, the Honorable Aren B. Palik, Vice President of the FSM, congratulated the appointees and underscored the

significant responsibilities entrusted to them. He emphasized that strong leadership in healthcare and education remains central to safeguarding the well-being of FSM citizens and advancing the nation's long-term development goals. The Vice President expressed confidence that both appointees would faithfully discharge their duties and serve with the highest standards of accountability and public service.

The Honorable Tulensa W. Palik, Governor of Kosrae State, also delivered



remarks, congratulating the appointees and expressing full confidence in their ability to represent Kosrae and serve the nation with dedication. The Governor encouraged both nominees to carry out their mandates with integrity and diligence and acknowledged President Simina for his continued trust in Kosrae's leaders and for strengthening collaboration between the National and State Governments.

In separate remarks, Lt. Governor Nena and Mr. George conveyed their sincere gratitude for the trust and confidence placed in them by the Government of the FSM and the Government of Kosrae

State. Both affirmed their readiness to uphold that trust and pledged to carry out their responsibilities with integrity, professionalism, and a steadfast commitment to serving the people of the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Simina-Palik Administration extends its continued appreciation to the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia for its support and for confirming the appointments. The Administration looks forward to continued collaboration in strengthening national institutions and advancing priorities that benefit all FSM citizens.

President Simina encourages people-centered planning during visit to defense site working group in Yap

FSM Information Services

February 11, 2026

Colonia, Yap — While in Yap State, His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), visited the joint U.S., FSM, and Yap State Defense Site Working Group meeting to express appreciation for the team's ongoing work and coordination efforts.

The Defense Site Working Group was established to facilitate intergovernmental coordination and technical collaboration related to the planned defense site project in Yap. The group is currently advancing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process and related assessments to ensure that environmental, social, cultural, and community considerations are carefully evaluated. Bringing together representatives from the National Government, Yap State Government, and U.S. partners, the working group supports informed decision-making grounded in scientific analysis, community engagement, and respect for Yapese heritage.

The defense site project comes under the framework of the Compact of Free Association (COFA), which underpins the FSM's enduring partnership with the United States.

During the visit, President Simina underscored the importance of ensuring that the people of Yap and the FSM remain at the center of all decision-making processes, particularly in matters involving environmental considerations, community well-being, and national security. He encouraged continued collaboration grounded in transparency, sustainability, and responsible planning.

The President reaffirmed the National Government's commitment to working closely with Yap State and the United States to ensure that development initiatives advance in a manner that safeguards the environment, strengthens security, and promotes long-term stability for the FSM.



New FSM funded Woleiai airport officially opened and dedicated to late President Urusemal

FSM Information Services

February 10, 2026

Woleai, Yap — His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), officially opened and formally turned over the completed Woleai Airport Runway Project to the Yap State Government and the people of Woleai on February 9, 2026.

The Woleai Airport project is a national initiative of the Federated States of Micronesia, funded by the FSM Congress to improve connectivity and essential services for the outer islands. The project is the largest Congress-funded infrastructure investment to date, valued at approximately \$6.5 million.

President Simina underscored the national importance of the investment, stating that it is “a powerful statement that our outer islands matter, that connectivity matters, and that development must reach every corner of our nation—no matter how remote.”

Addressing traditional leaders, national and state officials, and the Woleai community, President Simina described the occasion as “a proud, historic, and deeply meaningful day for Woleai, for Yap State, and for the Federated States of Micronesia,” emphasizing that the project represents more than infrastructure, but the fulfillment of a long-standing commitment to outer island communities.

For years, residents of Woleai and neighboring islands experienced frequent disruptions due to runway flooding, affecting flights, medical evacuations, and the delivery of essential supplies. President Simina noted that with the completion of the new runway, “that chapter is closed,” restoring “safe, reliable, and dignified air access—a lifeline for the people of Woleai.”

Beyond the runway, the project also includes a newly constructed terminal building that will serve as a shelter during travel disruptions and emergencies, provide office space for local airlines PMA and CIA, and house a Post Office. President Simina further emphasized its importance in strengthening communication, access to services, and connectivity for Woleai and surrounding islands. Following the announcement of the Post Office, President Simina presented the first mail as a gift to the Chief of Falalop Woleai,

Mr. Francis Yarofalpiy.

Placing the project within a broader national context, President Simina stressed that air transportation is essential for a geographically dispersed island nation. “As a nation of islands spread across a vast ocean, air transportation is not a luxury—it is a lifeline,” he said, underscoring its critical role in connecting communities to healthcare, education, markets, and emergency response.

The Honorable Francis Itimai, Governor of the State of Yap, underscored the importance of the Woleai Airport, describing it as “it connects families across the islands,” while also “opening doors for education, healthcare, and commerce.” Governor Itimai concluded by emphasizing that the airport “strengthens our unity as one people across Yap State and the Federated States of Micronesia.”

President Simina expressed his sincere appreciation to the FSM Congress for funding the project and paid special tribute to the late Senator Joe Urusemal and former Senator Isaac Figir for their leadership and advocacy. He also acknowledged the Yap State Government, traditional leaders, the people of Woleai, and the late Chief Francisco Mairal for their unity and support throughout the project’s implementation.

The President further recognized the contractor, Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co., Ltd., noting that the company was the only firm willing to take on the Woleai Airport project, as well as the engineers and project teams, for their professionalism and dedication in successfully delivering the project.

Senator and former President, the Honorable Peter M. Christian, also extended his appreciation to Shandong Hengyue Municipal Engineering Co., Ltd. for its commitment to completing the project, and to the people of Woleai for their cooperation, patience, and support throughout the construction period.

The company’s engagement extends beyond this project, demonstrating a strong commitment to supporting infrastructure development in the FSM. The same firm is also serving as the contractor for the Ganir Bridge project, funded by the Asian Development Bank, and has previously partnered on the successful completion of two projects in Pohnpei: The Kammar Bridge in Nett and the Lukop Road in Madolenimw.

Concluding his remarks, President Simina reaffirmed the National Government’s commitment to outer island development and called for continued collaboration to expand similar investments across the FSM. He also proposed to the Yap and Woleai communities that the airport be named Joseph J. Urusemal Airport, in honor of the late leader’s enduring contributions and service to the nation. The announcement was met with enthusiastic cheers, as community members shouted with joy in a strong show of support and appreciation.

Joining the President were Madame First Lady Mrs. Ancelly Simina; the Honorable Peter M. Christian, Member of the 24th FSM Congress; and Secretary Carl D. Apis of the FSM Department of Transportation, Communications, and Infrastructure (TC&I). Also present were the Honorable Francis Itimai, Governor of the State of Yap; Members of the 24th FSM Congress, the Honorable Andy Choor and the Honorable Andrew R. Yatilman; representatives of the Councils of Pilung and Tamol; members of the Yap State Legislature; traditional leaders; and community members.

The ceremony was followed by traditional performances and island songs by the Woleai community, adding a rich cultural dimension to the event.



Ambassador of Türkiye visits Ambassador Kagomiya



Embassy of Japan to the FSM

February 13, 2026

Pohnpei - On February 5, 2026, Ambassador Kagomiya received a courtesy call from His Excellency Oğuzhan ERTUĞRUL, Ambassador of Türkiye, newly accredited to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Ambassador ERTUĞRUL is a non-resident Ambassador with residence in Tokyo, Japan.

The Ambassadors discussed the friendly bilateral relations between Japan and Türkiye, and the friendly relations between their own countries and the FSM. They also discussed the economy and development cooperation, and how Japan and Türkiye can cooperate with each other and with the FSM.



Furthermore, on February 6, Ambassador Kagomiya and the diplomatic corps attended the Presentation of Credential Ceremony for H.E. Oğuzhan ERTUĞRUL, who presented his Credentials to His Excellency Wesley W. Simina, President of the FSM.

Australia strengthening maritime cooperation with NORMA

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

February 17, 2026

Pohnpei - Australian Ambassador Jenny Grant met with Mrs. Camille Inatio, the newly appointed Executive Director of the National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA), to discuss Australia's ongoing partnership with the Federated States of Micronesia in sustainable fisheries management and maritime security.

Australia's commitment to working closely with NORMA and regional partners to strengthen ocean surveillance, protect valuable fisheries resources, and promote a secure and sustainable Blue Pacific.

The Embassy congratulates Mrs. Inatio on her recent appointment. As an Australia Awards alumni she reflects the strength and lasting impact of the Australia Awards program in developing future leaders for the FSM.

Ambassador Grant reaffirmed



Seek the Ways: Empowering boys and young men in the FSM

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

February 10, 2026

Pohnpei - Ambassador Grant was pleased to join today's "Seek the Ways" event, an initiative that empowers Pacific boys and young men to build confidence, strengthen life skills, and promote respect within their families

and communities.

Delivered in partnership with UNICEF and ItsEvident local stakeholders, the programme provides a safe space for young people to reflect, learn, and grow - helping shape positive role models for the future.

"Young men are critical as future

partners and fathers. It is important that we help their passage to manhood and support positive behaviour and leadership. This will help girls and women too," said Ambassador Grant.

A group of 40 teenage boys from FSM, Fiji, Vanuatu and Tonga participated in the program as Wayfinders, to create

an online resource that reflects the diversity of Pacific cultures and values. Australia remains committed to supporting programmes that uplift youth, promote inclusion, and contribute to a safe and healthier FSM.

Learn more about this on: www.seektheways.org



Pacific Trade Invest Independent Advisory Board reaffirms strategic oversight role at annual meeting

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

February 11, 2026

Auckland, NZ - The Pacific Trade Invest (PTI) Independent Advisory Board convened its Annual Board Meeting in Auckland on 11 February 2026, reaffirming its commitment to strong governance, accountability, and strategic leadership across the PTI Network.

The meeting was chaired by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Baron Divavesi Waqa, who also formally welcomed two new members to the Independent Advisory Board; Bethany Bessi Graham and Julienne LekaMaliaki.

The Board’s principal mandate is to provide independent oversight of Pacific Trade Invest, enhance accountability, and strengthen the operational effectiveness of the Network. Operating in an advisory capacity to the Secretary General and Forum Officials Committee (FOC), the Board ensures that PTI Network’s activities and operations are conducted in a prudent, ethical, and strategically aligned manner.

During the meeting, members received comprehensive updates on the programmes and activities of the PTI Network. The Board noted that PTI Network has continued to evolve into a cornerstone of the Pacific’s economic architecture, empowering exporters, investors, and enterprises through robust, evidence-based market intelligence and targeted commercial facilitation.

““Through Pacific Trade Invest, Forum Leaders have established a trusted mechanism to advance the economic pillars of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. PTI strengthens regional cooperation, mobilises investment, and ensures Pacific economies engage global markets on our own terms and in line with our shared development priorities,” said Secretary General Waqa.

These achievements have been underpinned by enduring partnerships with national trade and investment

promotion agencies, government ministries, tourism authorities, multilateral development partners, international donors, and a broad community of regional stakeholders.

Pacific Trade Invest operates offices in Australia, China, Europe, and New Zealand, alongside a partner office delivering similar services in Japan. As the trade and investment promotion arm of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

(PIFS), the PTI Network is mandated by Forum Leaders to facilitate trade, investment, and tourism opportunities between Pacific Island Countries and Territories and global markets.

Through its work, PTI continues to support business growth across the Blue Pacific, building the capacity of export-ready and investment-ready enterprises and connecting them with importers and investors worldwide.



BGHC board declares first quarter 2026 common stock dividend

Bank of Guam Holding Company

February 13, 2026,

Hagåtña, Guam - BankGuam Holding Company (“BGHC”) announced today that its Board of Directors has authorized the payment of a quarterly cash dividend on its common stock.

At its meeting held on January 26, 2026, the BGHC Board approved a common stock dividend of \$70.00 per share for the first quarter ending March 31, 2026. This dividend represents an increase of \$7.50 per share, or 12%, compared to the prior quarter’s dividend of \$62.50 per share.

The dividend will be payable on March 31, 2026, to common stock shareholders of record as of the close of business on March 13, 2026.

The Board’s action reflects confidence in the Company’s financial strength and ongoing commitment to delivering

value to its shareholders. For more information, please contact: Maria Eugenia H. Leon Guerrero Treasurer Phone: (671) 472-5750 | Email: maria.leonguerrero@bankofguam.com

Australia and FSM-Pohnpei: Strengthening tourism partnerships

Embassy of Australia to the FSM

February 12, 2026

Pohnpei - Ambassador Grant handed over 1,000 Pohnpei Adventure pamphlets to KukuLynn Gallen, Chief of the Pohnpei Tourism Office, reaffirming Australia’s commitment to supporting sustainable and inclusive tourism in Pohnpei.

to the stunning hiking trails and ocean adventures around this beautiful island,” said Ambassador Grant.

This contribution supports ongoing efforts to promote Pohnpei’s unique natural and cultural heritage to domestic and international visitors.

We appreciate our continued partnership with Pohnpei Tourism and look forward to further collaboration that benefits

local communities and the wider FSM tourism sector.

Australia is pleased to be working with FSM Tourism and Pacific Trade Invest on the upcoming Digital Tourism Workshops later this month.



“These pamphlets are a useful guide

Tuvalu and Solomon Islands ratify the Pacific Resilience Facility Treaty

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

February 14, 2026

Brisbane - Tuvalu and Solomon Islands have formally deposited their instruments of ratification of the Agreement to Establish the Pacific Resilience Facility (PRF Treaty), moving the Blue Pacific region closer to operationalising its first Pacific-led, member owned and managed, and people-centred climate and disaster resilience financing institution.

At the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on 13 February, the Prime Minister of Tuvalu, Hon. Feleti Teo formally deposited Tuvalu's instrument of ratification with Secretary General Baron Divavesi Waqa.

This follows the recent deposit by the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands and Forum Chair, Hon. Jeremiah Manele,

of Solomon Islands' instrument of ratification with the Secretary General in the margins of the Forum Troika Leaders Meeting in Brisbane, Australia.

"I offer warm congratulations to Tuvalu and Solomon Islands on depositing their respective instruments of ratification of the Pacific Resilience Facility Treaty. The PRF is a landmark achievement for our region, and I am greatly encouraged by the growing number of our members' ratification of the Treaty. It is a clear reflection of our Leaders shared resolve to secure a safer, resilient, and more inclusive future for our Blue Pacific through a Pacific-designed and governed institution that puts our communities at the centre of resilience financing," said Secretary General Waqa.

The PRF was endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders through the

Declaration on the Establishment of the Pacific Resilience Facility at the 52nd PIF Leaders Meeting held in Cook Islands in 2023. At their meeting in 2024, Forum Leaders endorsed the Kingdom of Tonga as the Host Country of the PRF, reinforcing regional ownership and solidarity. In 2025, the PRF Treaty was signed by 15 Forum Leaders at their meeting held in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The PRF Treaty requires eight signatories to enter into force. Tuvalu and Solomon Islands' ratifications brings to five (5) the number of Forum Member countries that have ratified the Treaty, signalling a strong regional commitment to the PRF.

The PRF is designed to directly empower communities to access

grant financing for locally identified resilience priorities. It represents a strategic shift toward proactive, community-driven investment in climate adaptation, disaster preparedness, and long-term resilience aligned to the Forum Leaders' Vision of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.



FSM launches drought response plan through multi-agency partnership

International Agency for Migration

February 16, 2026

Palikir - The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Emergency Management (DECEM), in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), held a national consultation workshop Friday (6 February 2026) to address drought management in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The event brought together key frontline responder agencies and development partners to strengthen the nation's preparedness and capacity to respond to drought conditions.

The consultations focused on FSM's vulnerability to drought and the far-reaching impacts on island communities. Key officials examined the availability and sufficiency of existing water sources and discussed the effects of prolonged and recurrent dry spells on community livelihoods, particularly in remote outer islands. They emphasized the critical need to strengthen early warning systems through improved information sharing and forecasts.

During the session, Landon Aydlett, Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office in Guam, emphasized that while drought is not currently forecasted for 2026, the outlook could change if an El Niño pattern develops later this year, underlining

the importance of preparedness and coordinated response efforts.

Friday's national workshop follows a series of state level consultations held in Yap, Chuuk, Kosrae and Pohnpei States over the last two months. It aimed to improve coordination to prevent crises from escalating into emergencies and introduced proactive approaches to managing risks and strengthening contingency planning.

The consultation comes as part of efforts to develop a National Drought Preparedness and Response Plan (NDPRP), a key output of the Japan-funded Climate Resilient Community Water Services in the North Pacific Project.

"Once operational, the NDPRP will help reduce FSM's exposure to drought risks and strengthen communities' resilience and capacities to manage their water sources, crops, household health and much more during dry spells," said Michael Yarofaitoar, DECEM Deputy Assistant Secretary for Response and Recovery.

"Through ongoing collaboration between government, international partners, traditional leaders, and communities, FSM is committed to strengthening its resilience and safeguarding its people against the adverse impacts of drought," he added.

Teshager Tefera, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist at IOM, affirmed, "We will continue collaborating with relevant officials and stakeholders to assess risks on the ground and identify effective mitigation strategies."

He expressed appreciation for the community leaders, who play a

critical role in local preparedness and response, and who shared valuable local knowledge on hazards, vulnerabilities, and community capacities.

DECEM, IOM and partners will continue to work collaboratively to finalize the NDPRP is expected to be completed in April and will be submitted for endorsement in the coming months.



Opinion Editorial

Open letter to Kolonia Mayor on clarification of garbage collection fees

Dear Mayor Bisa,

Kaselehlie!

I am writing to seek your advice regarding the job duties of the Kolonia Town Government garbage collection team, specifically the mandates of their responsibilities in picking up trash within Kolonia Town public places and from Kolonia Town citizens' households.

On Thursday, February 19, 2026, our cleaning crew of five young men, including myself was working at the Kolonia Tennis Courts. We conducted high-pressure water washing, lawn trimming, and tree branch cutting. The debris was stockpiled in and around the trash bin for later removal. During this time, Mr. Soram, a garbage collector, approached us and instructed that we were responsible for removing our trash or paying \$10.00 for someone from Kolonia Town Government to haul it away. Shortly after, two other employees, including Aldan, repeated the same instruction, citing Master Halbert.

Altogether, three employees advised us that we must remove our trash or pay \$10.00 for removal.

In another past occasion, I requested assistance from the garbage collectors at my residence. Mr. Soram and his crew refused to pick up loose trash, stating that they only collect garbage that is sacked in containers or bags.

Given these experiences, I respectfully request clarification on the official job description and duties of Kolonia Town Government garbage collectors. Are they

mandated to collect only bagged trash, or are they also responsible for removing loose debris such as tree branches? Clear guidance would help ease confusion among Kolonia Town households and ensure everyone understands the responsibilities of the garbage collection service.

Thank you very much for your attention to this pressing issue. I look forward to your advice.

*Sincerely,
Ringlen Wolphagen*

Specialist medical team from the Philippines to visit Pohnpei

Pohnpei State Department of Health and Social Services

February 20, 2026

Pohnpei - The Pohnpei State Hospital is pleased to announce the upcoming visit of a distinguished Medical Team from the Philippines, scheduled to arrive in Pohnpei on March 9. The team will be serving our community from March 9 through March 21.

This highly skilled team of doctors includes specialists in the following areas:

- Otolaryngology (Ear, nose and throat conditions)
- Laryngology (Throat and voice conditions)
- Pediatrics (Children's health)
- Ophthalmology (Eye care and vision)
- Internal Medicine
- Anesthesiology
- Radiology (Doctor for Imaging and Scan)
- Rhinologist (Nose Doctor)

This visit presents a valuable opportunity for our people to receive specialized consultations and care locally, reducing the need for off-island referrals and ensuring timely medical attention.

We encourage individuals who may benefit from these services to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

To make an appointment, please call: 320-3805

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