



**Children escape**

MELBOURNE, AAP - Two children escaped possible abduction by a man who attempted to snatch them from a Victorian primary school, police say. A seven-year-old boy was leaving a toilet block when the man grabbed his arm and tried to lure him away. The boy got away and alerted others.



**Casino project**

SAIPAN, RNZI - A Hong Kong casino business is considering a protest in the Northern Marianas after missing out on a licence for a new casino. Marianas Stars Entertainment was rejected by the Lottery Commission for an exclusive licence to develop a minimum \$US2billion (\$F3.679b) casino resort on Saipan.



**Bingle avoids jail**

SYDNEY, AAP - Lara Bingle has avoided a jail sentence for driving offences, which her lawyer says she racked up due to her "unworldly" approach to licensing and administrative affairs. But the magistrate who handed the model a six-month suspended sentence told the celebrity no one was above the law.



# Women shouldn't die giving birth

SUVA - Whatever you've decided will fill your current 24 hours, 800 women will die within that same hour from pregnancy or childbirth complications; that's 33 women dying every hour from conditions that could be prevented.

The absence of a global outcry at this aspect of maternal health or reproductive health is deafening — perhaps it is indeed one of the hazards of pregnancy but what should irk you as a fellow human being is the fact that 289,000 maternal deaths occurred in 2013, in this age of advanced technology, when it is almost the norm to conduct surgeries via the internet.

The status of maternal mortality in the 15 Pacific island countries including Papua New Guinea (PNG) is a mixed bag — most Polynesian countries will achieve MDG5a (eliminate maternal mortality) while most Melanesian countries won't, though compared to 1990,

reported skilled birth attendant rates have increased in all countries except Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), PNG and Vanuatu.

The Pacific regional review in 2013 of how countries had performed in the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development's (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA) reports that while countries have contributed in various ways towards the improved delivery of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, no Pacific country had specifically allocated SRH in their annual national budgets and very few had opted out of donor partner support for the purchase of their contraceptives.

Contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) remained below 50 per cent, the review found and while most remained static, only the Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji and the Republic of

the Marshall Islands (RMI) would occasionally record a high of 40 per cent.

If countries were to meet unmet needs (women who desire to delay or stop childbearing but cannot access contraceptives for various reasons), this could reduce the maternal mortality ratio between 25 to 40 per cent. In the Pacific, unmet need vary from 1 per cent to 40 per cent and in most countries, unmet need rates are similar in both rural and urban areas.

"Some Pacific island nations do not record maternal mortality anymore while some are continuing to work towards its elimination, but we should join our efforts to ensure that no woman dies at the moment of delivery in the Pacific," Dr Laurent Zessler, UNFPA Pacific Director and Representative said.

■ UNFPA/PACNEWS

## Pregnant woman stabbed

APIA - A pregnant woman was stabbed last week by her husband, according to unconfirmed reports from Samoa's island of Savai'i.

Acting Police Commissioner, Fauono Talalelei Tapu told the *Samoa Observer* the attack allegedly happened on Tuesday night in Lano.

"The stabbing has affected the unborn baby of the victim," said Fauono, but was unable to confirm the current condition of the baby.

Mr Fauono wasn't able to confirm if the woman survived the attack.

"The police officers have brought in the husband of the victim for questioning and he is said to have confessed to the crime."

Police could not confirm the age of the victim or whether she is still alive as the investigation was still ongoing.

■ SAMOA OBSERVER

## FBI indicts agent

APIA - A Samoan living in the United States of America, Calliope Rocky Saaga, has been charged with theft of more than \$800,000 from a school saving money to travel to Hawaii.

Tammy Dickinson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri said last Friday that the travel agent was indicted by a federal grand jury for stealing \$US360,000 (\$F655,628).

The money is from the Willard High School Band Boosters, which forced the cancellation of a trip to Hawaii for more than 300 students and chaperones.

Saaga, 39, of Saratoga Springs, Utah, was charged in a 15-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield, Missouri.

According to the indictment, Saaga, doing business as Present America Tours L.L.C., contracted with the Willard High School Band Boosters in January 2011 to provide travel arrangements for a June 2012 band trip to Hawaii.

■ SAMOA OBSERVER



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# Hazardous dam

BRUSSELS - A United Nations assessment team has recommended close monitoring and immediate action for a controlled lowering of water levels of a gold mine tailings dam in the Solomon Islands following recent flash floods.

The dam was found to be currently stable despite the extremely high water levels, but in acute need of monitoring and management. Only by continuous monitoring and controlled lowering of water levels can the threat that an overspill or breach posed to downstream communities and the environment be minimised.

In early April, flash floods and heavy rains elevated water levels in the Gold Ridge Mine tailings dam 30km southeast of the capital Honiara, potentially affect-

ing around 8000 people in downstream communities.

A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team was deployed on 23 April in response to a request by the Solomon Islands Government to assess the risk of contaminated tailings water breaching the dam as well as to formulate recommendations to safely prevent such an event.

The independent team of technical experts, in close cooperation with national ministries and community representatives, conducted several site visits and chemical analyses to assess the tailing dam's stability and the potential risks posed by the tailings water.

■ UNEP/OCHA/PACNEWS



An aerial view of Gold Ridge Mine in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Picture: CONCRETE EVIDENCE