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Loss became his strength

By SERAFINA SILAITOGA

WHEN he lost his dad two months ago, Ratu Josefa Rabici Antonio Lalabalavu channeled his grief into motivation that yesterday saw him scoop the 'Best All Around' recruit award at the Republic of Fiji Military Forces last passing-out parade for the year.

"My dad is not here with me but I know he is smiling from heaven and is proud of me," he said.

"When I got news of his death, I was already in camp training but I didn't allow that to affect me and it has all paid off.

"One thing I learnt from my training is the importance of obedience and discipline, and these are two elements I will live by."

He was among 97 other cadets who successfully completed a three-months military training program.

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Newly-recruited Republic of the Fiji Military Forces soldiers perform a live exercise demonstration after their passing-out parade at the Forces Training Group drill square at Nasinu yesterday. INSET: Ratu Josefa Rabici Lalabalavu makes his way to receive the 'Best All Round' recruit award. Pictures: JONACANI LALAKOBAU

Village shaken by double loss

By VILIAME QOMATE

JUST two days after the tragic death of 15-year-old Salote Sikiti, the man who raised her from childhood has also died.

A Naqali Village spokesman in Naitasiri said the late Mosese Vosabeci died of "heart break".

He became a father figure to Salote when she was eight, was said to be overwhelmed by grief and unable to cope with the sudden loss.

Their deaths have shaken family, friends and the wider community, who will lay both to rest today.

Yesterday, Salote's classmates and teachers from Dilkusha Methodist High School travelled to Naqali to present their *i-reguregu*, remembering her as a bright and compassionate student.

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Mosese Vosabeci.
Picture: SUPPLIED

BUSES GO FULLY CASHLESS NATIONWIDE

'No card, no ride'

By CHEERIEANN WILSON

THE Fiji Bus Operators Association will enforce a strict 'no card - no ride' policy from Monday, shutting the door on cash payments and requiring all passengers, including schoolchildren to board only with a topped-up eTicketing card.

The move marks Fiji's full transition to a cashless bus system, with operators saying they have accommodated passengers long enough during the upgrade period.

With 520,000 new cards issued, the association says the industry is ready to tighten enforcement and is urging parents and travelers to ensure their cards are loaded before leaving home.

The system already handles more than 1.7 million trips a week, but operators warn that illegal transport services continue to undermine revenue and strain an industry operating on razor-thin margins.

Full report
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