

Rare necklace made of bat jaws

By ANA MADIGIBULI

A NECKLACE made from fruit bat jaws is among the rare Fijian treasures recently brought into public view in France, offering a fascinating glimpse into the lives and traditions of our ancestors.

The unusual necklace, a piece of *masi* believed to be 200 years old and two spears were displayed at the Fiji 1838: Face to Face exhibition in Chartres, alongside historic drawings capturing a defining period when Fiji was engaging with Europeans while maintaining its own traditions, leadership and identity.

Co-curator Samson Verma hopes the collection will deepen appreciation of Fiji's rich cultural heritage, the craftsmanship of its early artisans and the stories these remarkable objects continue to tell nearly two centuries later.

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Sleep under the stars, wake up by the sea

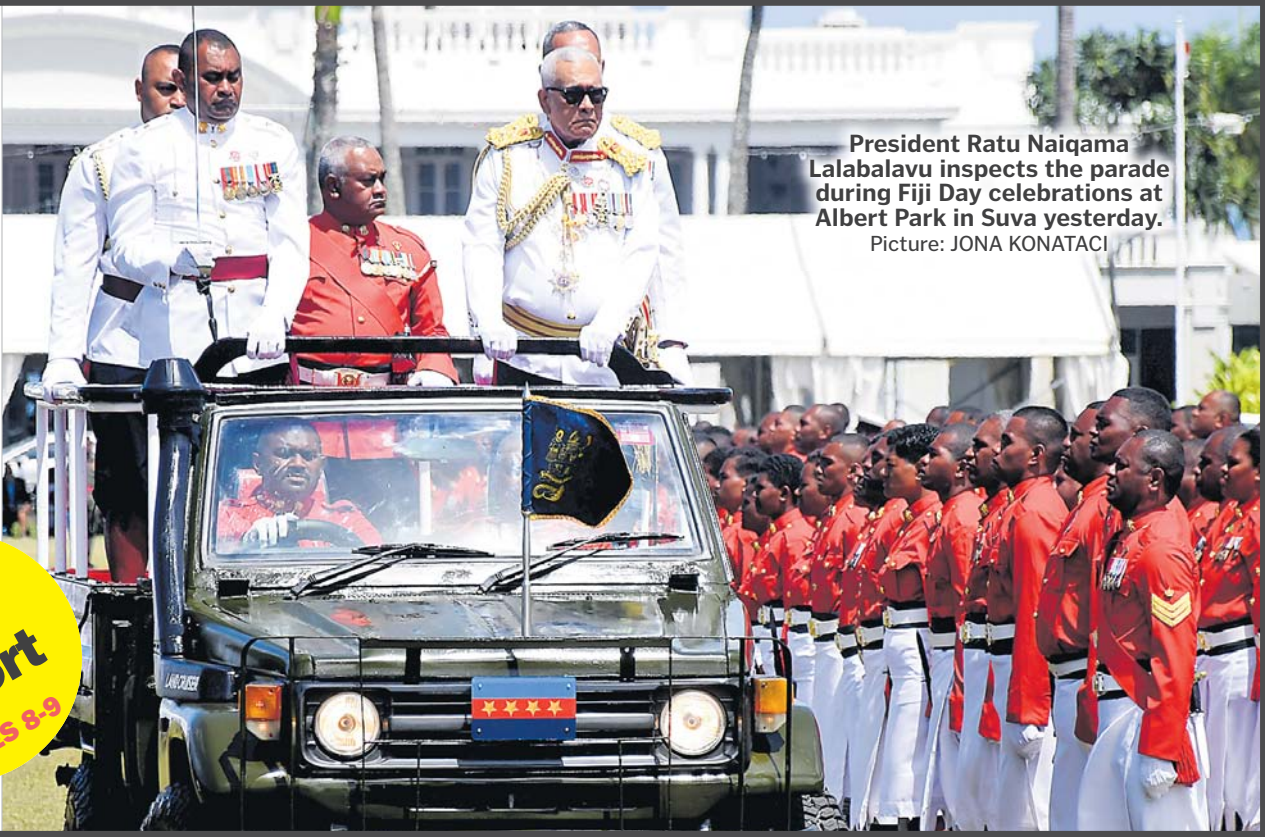
By ANA MADIGIBULI

Fiji marks 56 years

By PHYLLIS SIMPSON

A FIRE of joy and national pride swept through Albert Park in Suva yesterday as 376 soldiers from four detachments paraded on the ground to mark Fiji's 56th anniversary of Independence.

President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu led the official celebrations, attended by Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, Cabinet Ministers, the Chief Justice, diplomats and members of the public.



President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu inspects the parade during Fiji Day celebrations at Albert Park in Suva yesterday.
Picture: JONA KONATACI

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LOOKING for a Fiji getaway that offers more than a resort room and seaside view?

At Nanumi Au Eco-Village in Navatulevu, Ra, visitors can sleep beneath the stars, share meals prepared by local women, explore hidden natural attractions and experience the warmth of village hospitality.

Locally owned and operated, the retreat brings travellers closer to Fiji's natural beauty, culture and community, with stays ranging from rustic villas to glamping tents and eco hammocks.

Director Kolinio Qarau Samuta wants guests to put their phones aside, slow down and reconnect with what matters. It is an invitation to discover another side of Fiji, not many know about.

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'He's their superhero'

KEILANI ON LIFE WITH RUGBY STAR BITUNIYATA

By JOHN KAMEA

BEHIND Setareki Bituniyata's rise in international rugby is a family few people get to see.

In an exclusive interview with *The Sunday Times*, his wife, Keilani, opens up about raising their two boys in France, coping with injuries and challenges far from home, keeping their Fijian roots alive and supporting

her husband through the demands of professional rugby.

She also shares the emotion of watching Setareki named France's Pro D2 Player of the Year and the pride of seeing their sons look up to their father

as a hero.

Away from the spotlight, Keilani reveals the Bituniyatas' sacrifices, challenges and candid family moments.

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