

# Fiji contestants set sights on Miss World



Aishwarya Sukhdeo at the Miss World Contest in 2004.

By NEISAU TUIDRAKI

**T**HIS year Fiji will make history by holding the first Miss World Fiji pageant to select an ambassador to represent Fiji at the Miss World pageant in Ordos, Mongolia.

The dream became a reality after the Miss World Fiji National Pageant director Andhy Blake secured the franchise for the pageant in December last year.

He says: "I think that the Miss World Organisation has shown us tremendous support by endorsing our franchise."

Although this will be the first time for Fiji to hold a national qualifying competition for the franchise, we have already had our first representative to the Miss World pageant in 2004. Aishwarya Sukhdeo was the first Miss Fiji.

Recalling her experience, Aishwarya told me: "Throughout all these years, the Miss World pageant and the people I met through it have remained in my heart and mind."

"The pageant broadened my outlook in life, gave me the opportunity to witness and appreciate people from other cultures and walks of life, and made me realise that deep down people the world over strive for the same things as me like love, friendship, peace and understanding. And this made me realise that innately we are really all the same."

The Miss World contest is one of the oldest and most prestigious beauty pageants in the world. The pageant was founded by the late Eric Morley in 1951, his wife Julia Morley now co-chairs the pageant which is why this year is going to be special because Ms Morley is accompanying reigning Miss World, Ivian Lunasol Sarcos Colmenares to Fiji to attend the inaugural Miss World Fiji pageant.

International celebrities such as Aishwarya Rai Bachan, Priyanka Chopra and Halle Berry have made their debut at the Miss World contest. It goes without saying that this beauty pageant is a



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platform that can open doors for the young women of the Fiji.

Casting has wrapped up and the Miss World Fiji team is proud to present 13 young, beautiful and intelligent Fijian women who are the semi-finalists for the inaugural Miss World Fiji pageant which is going to be held in Suva, Fiji at the Civic Centre on April 21.

The theme of "Beauty with a Purpose" is at the heart of Miss World, working tirelessly to raise funds for many good causes over the years. Millions of dollars have been raised and donated to local and international organisations in aid of disadvantaged children the world over and as such the Miss World Fiji pageant has embraced the same charity cause.

In its humanitarian efforts to raise awareness on issues that concern Fiji, the Miss World Fiji pageant has announced its cause for this year "No Stigma, Not Mental" with the St. Giles Hospital.

Each contestant has to champion or advocate a charity or a cause close to their heart as a requirement for the pageant. Blake says: "This year's charity chest is going towards helping build respite centres around Fiji and I feel that this cause is something that needs highlighting in Fiji".

On April 20, the Miss World Fiji Organisation will be holding their fund-raising event, the "Fire & Ice" black tie cocktail. Tickets to the event cost \$100 and you can check Facebook for the dates they go on sale.

These 13 beautiful young Fijian women are on a journey of self-discovery and are a part of Fiji history as they become the first participants in what is hoped will be a national event each year.