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'US-RMI relations go down' PAGE 2



The Marshall Islands

\$1 on Majuro



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Commanders cruise lagoon



Kwajalein Commander Col. Joseph Gaines joined Kwajalein Senator and Iroij Mike Kabua for an outrigger canoe sail the other day. Meanwhile, Kabua is supporting a canoe building training for 25 youth on Ebeye scheduled to start shortly. See story on page 5.

PII wins big India contract

Pacific International Inc.'s Waffle-Crete precast concrete system has won a contract for building 1,216 apartments in India. This follows on the heels of the building of six warehouses with Waffle-Crete in Kenya.

PII CEO Jerry Kramer, who departs Majuro later this week for meetings in India to finalize details on the new project, said the company "is looking at other projects in India and East Africa." The contract is valued at \$8 million.

PII is the largest construction company in the RMI and in recent years has expanded to Guam and has taken on construction work in Chuuk and Pohnpei in the FSM.

Kramer said the India and Kenya projects are the result of a new marketing plan under the direction of Hays, Kansas-based Waffle-Crete General Manager Larry Lightman. "In the past, we sold molds," Kramer said. "Now, we are joint venturing with companies and producing the concrete panels."

The new contract is in the Gandhinagar area of India in joint venture with an Indian company, Shlip Properties of Ahmadabad. The joint venture company, Waffle Rapid Construction, aims to complete the 1,216 apartments in 16 buildings of three-story

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\$16m Japan deal signed



Foreign Minister Phillip Muller.

SUZANNE CHUTARO
Reporting from Japan

Marshall Islands President Christopher Loeak was on hand last Wednesday in Japan to witness the signing ceremony between Japan Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba and Marshall Islands Foreign Minister Phillip Muller for a grant that will gift the Marshall Islands with two ships.

This grant to the Marshall Islands is valued at 1,288,000,000 yen — \$16,209,148 — and it will provide one landing craft and one passenger-cargo ship to the Marshall Islands Shipping Corporation in an effort to improve the domestic shipping service in RMI.

Highlighting the value the Marshall

\$500m pledge at Pacific Summit: P16

Islands places on Japan's Overseas Development Assistance, President Loeak thanked Gemba and told him the ships have been "a great need for a long time. We have waited four years."

Initially the two governments were going to exchange notes last year on this grant to the Marshall Islands but this was delayed due to the Great East Japan Earthquake-Tsunami in March 2011.

Gemba used the opportunity to reinforce the government of Japan's commitment to cooperate with the Marshall

Islands to strengthen the two countries' bilateral relations with a key focus to be placed on the fisheries industry.

Loeak told Gemba he too would like to strengthen RMI's cooperation with Japan on fisheries issues adding that it is a topic planned to discuss with Japan Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda during his bilateral meeting which was scheduled for Thursday last week as part of the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting that has brought most heads of state from the region to Japan and Okinawa for the every-three-year summit.

Japan officials say that if the procurement process moves smoothly, it is expected to take about 16 months to complete the building of the vessels and transport them to RMI.