Fill Focus

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Let's live within our means: PM Rabuka

By PRASHILA DEVI

ET'S live within our means and manage our finances prudently.

This is the advice emanating from Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, after the announcement of the \$4.55 billion 2024-2025 National Budget.

Speaking on the pay increment announced in the budget for civil servants ranging from seven to 20 per cent, the Head of Government said that while this would assist as a living wage, it was important to be prudent with their finances.

The Government, he said, has a similar balancing act of its finances which was reflected in the allocations that have been made.

The Head of Government assured that the budget, which was passed in Parliament this week, "is what we can afford".

Many of the allocations have been made to provide relief from a possible economic crunch in the post pandemic era.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, while announcing the budget on June 28, prefaced that the challenges that have caused the rise of cost of living and seeing the current economic climate "are not expected to fall quickly".

DPM Prasad said these issues cannot be dealt with in one budget cycle and that many of these challenges might require inter-generational solutions.

Attending to the social sector, aside from the pay increment for civil servants costing the Government around \$85 million includes the increase in the minimum wage which will be implemented in two trenches.

In the first trench, the minimum wage will go up by 50 cents from August 1, 2024 and then another increase of 50 cents which would take the increase by \$1 from April 1, 2025.

For the aging population, DPM Prasad outlined assistance through the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection with an allocation of "\$200 million to continue the increased social welfare allowances for around 104,000 beneficiaries under the family assistance scheme, social pension scheme, care and protection allowance, disability allowance, rural pregnant mother food allowance and transport assistance scheme".

"Pensioners over the age of 70 will now receive a monthly cash allowance of \$150, an increase from the current \$125 per month."

On the bus fare assistance, he highlighted the restruc-



Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, following the announcement of the 2024-2025 National Budget. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

turing of the allowance for elderly and people with disabilities to allow for flexibility for the 48,000 beneficiaries.

"Effective from 1st August 2024, we will convert the bus fare allowance into a cash allowance of \$25 per month. All our social pensioners above the age of 70 years and those on disability allowance will now receive a \$25 per month cash allowance instead of the current bus card top-up," DPM Prasad explained.

On superannuation, DPM Prasad highlighted that the Coalition Government will be reversing an earlier decision taken by the previous administration of reducing the pension rates for many Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) pensioners by restoring it effective from August 1, 2024.

"The cost of reinstatement will be fully borne by the Government and we have agreed to provide a funding of \$4 million for this year. The full cost is estimated to be around \$57 million over the next two decades," he added.

DPM Prasad also announced that following a remarkable financial performance by FNPF, the Board has declared an eight percent interest payout to its members for the financial year ending 30 June 2024. "This is the highest interest paid in the past two decades and on 1st July, \$562.2 million will be added to the FNPF balances of over 417,000 members," he added.

Another programme aimed at lifting living standards, the first home buyer initiative, will be continued with a budget of \$5.5 million provided for this.

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Budget answer to our needs: PM



Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, in the Parliament complex following the announcement of the 2024-2025 National Budget. **Photo: AZARIA FAREEN**

N most developing countries, the annual national budget sets the tone of the nation's development priorities.

As Fiji's Parliament this week debated the appropriation bill as the precursor to the implementation of the 2024-2025 National Budget for the next financial year, Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, shared his views with the Department of Information on certain aspects of the Government's financial intent.

Department of Information: This is the second budget under the Coalition Government. What are your views on the priority areas such as education, health and national security with the allocation given to them.

Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka: Those social services issues of health and education have always been a major feature in development budgets of developing nations and they broke it down in accordance with the importance Government places on the the Sustainable Development Goals that have those issues.

For example, in education, the provision of accessibility of quality education for all

and in order to do that, the Fiji Government in its part as an international player, must contribute, however much it can afford for that social development for the people of Fiji in education.

We need to improve the schools, we may even have to build some more schools or build the capacity of those schools and with the rural population or the population growth, we might also grow the education infrastructure in accordance with those growth.

The number of teachers that have to be trained and provided will have to increase and that is why we see an increasing amount allocated to education.

The same with health, we must develop our health infrastructure as well as increase the manpower of the Ministry particularly the doctors and nurses and practitioners who carry out their roles as custodians of good health in the country.

Security and law and order are always very important. There is always that allocation given to the police.

When we talk about security, we're not really talking about military security because we only have very limited capacity in our military force in Fiji and mostly at the moment, geared towards our role as international peacekeepers to the United

Nations and the MFO (Multinational Force and Observers) in Sinai.

DINFO: An issue of concern regarding the rising cost of living and while global factors do contribute to this, some have also attributed it to domestic taxation policies and lack of increments to a living wage. What's your view on this and how much of this will be addressed by the increments announced in the budget.

PM Rabuka: The increase announced for salaries and wages will go towards addressing those issues, it may not be total or it would still call for prudent governance of our own finances, personally and as a nation. The rise in cost of living, we are not causing that.

The cost of the supply chain and that is the cost of transportation of our imports from their shores to Fiji.

They are affected by security of supply, the length of the supply route. The security of supply with the war. So the effect of war increases the insurance paid by the shipping companies. So the transportation of what we need increases and that the customer pays so we pay for those increases when they're landed here and theduty and so on.

So our pay rise may be 7 per cent or 5 per cent which will address the increase also in the cost of imports that we get. It will not be enough but we must be prudent with the management of our own personal finances as the Government is expected to be prudent in the management of government finances.

DINFO: The disciplined forces have been given increased budgets, how important it is to have a well funded, especially in the case of the Fiji Police Force, to maintain law and order situation while addressing more serious crimes like that transnational and drug trafficking racket we're facing right now.

PM Rabuka: Yes, they are important. Some of that will help, the increase in the military budget is really the acquisition of the protected mobility vehicles that we recently acquired from Australia. That is part of the requirements for the nations to provide secure or safe vehicles for their troops participating in the United Nations peacekeeping.

It will be reimbursed eventually but first of all the the expenditure has to be incurred by Government but the big increase that people are crying out about is brought about by the fact that the peacekeeping budget that used to be separate is now all covered under the military budget. So not a real increase, just two heads brought under the same budget.

DINFO: Encouraging greater participation of iTaukei businesses has seen certain positive provisions in the budget. What would be your advice to those who have the ideas and the skills but still hesitate due to the lack iTaukei participation in entrepreneurial activities?

PM Rabuka: It has been a cultural problem for us because as one very prominent politician used to say bisinisi iTaukei duri ga mai daro (iTaukei

businesses run for a short duration and collapses)

That doesn't have to be, we can ensure that iTaukei businesses can thrive, not only survive but thrive.

So all about adapting our culture of vei kerekerei (borrowing), dinau sega ni saumi (not asking for the return of the borrowed funds) which is part of the dinau kerekerei (asking for credit). We must see that as a development of businesses in totally different way. Businesses do not rely on relationship, they rely on on the exchange of goods and money and they must continue to be that. Not to go into a shop and say "oh belongs to my uncle and we can take this".

We must change our attitude to businesses and cooperatives are coming up again. They came up in the past but a lot of them flopped. We need a whole new attitudinal change to businesses.

The Fiji Indigenous Business Council has now been revived and hopefully they can hook up with bigger business houses like Fijian Holdings etc. and have good business acumen made available for those that will be running those businesses.

DINFO: Upskilling and retention of human capital is very important. Do you feel the budget has managed to address this to an extent?

PM Rabuka: To some extent we incentive given in the increase of salaries and the change in the band system. Hopefully this will incentivise the workers to stay and improve our retention numbers. But when we lose some and they go overseas, we get remittances from them. They work out there, maybe they get better pay and they can afford to send some money home for those that stay back to make our life better.

And there have been some unfortunate cases where those that have been remitting money to Fiji come back with nothing and there is also nothing here because that's already gone to consumables they spent on day to day living.

There is nothing for them when they come back. So, what we're trying to do now is to encourage them to save, of all the money they remit some of it should go to their Fiji National Provident Fund or in their savings so when come back at least there's something for them.

While they have looked after their families while they were away, there is something for them when they come back.

So losing manpower, we call it brain drain is not really losing, we are getting others and we're also replacing them from lower down the age groups.

DINFO: Broadly, your view on the budget?

PM Rabuka: My view is that it (the budget) is what we can afford and it answers is our needs and also it helps us play our part in the global awareness of the development goals that we have set ourselves, on education, on health, on infrastructure development, on good governance, international peace we contribute to are all funded by the taxpayer of Fiji.

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Budget supports tourism efforts: DPM Gavoka



Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Viliame Gavoka, speaks to members of the Fiji media after the 2024-2025 National Budget announcement in Parliament. Photo: AZARIA FAREEN

By FELIX LESINAIVALU

he 2024-2025 National Budget supports the Tourism and Civil Aviation Ministry's efforts to ensure its continued growth."

This was highlighted by Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Viliame Gavoka, during the recent 2024-2025 National Budget announcement in Parliament recently.

"The increase from \$52.3 million in the 2023-2024 budget to \$68.8 million, would further the growth of tourism this year."

"Tourism Fiji received a grant of \$44million while \$13.6million goes to the Fiji Tourism Development Program in Vanua Levu."

DPM Gavoka added that the Government had launched a sustainable framework for tourism going forward and also allocated resources for supporting MSMEs in tourism, further highlighting the budget's overall support for the industry.

While delivering the 2024-2025 Budget Address in Parliament recently, Deputy Prime Minister and Minster for Finance, Biman Prasad, said the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation has been allocated \$68.8 million in this budget including the Tourism Fiji grant of \$44 million and \$13.6 million for the Fiji Tourism Development Program in Vanua Levu.

"To support and empower tourism MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) we are setting up a Pilot Tourism MSME fund that will provide assistance up to \$15,000 to rural communities to assist in creating an enabling environment for investment, decent employment and sustainable tourism activities," DPM Prasad said.

He also stated that the tourism industry flourished with a record of 929,000 visitors last year.

"Our national airline, hoteliers and other industry players had a year of record profits. This had a major flow on effect on other sectors, fueling increased domestic spending, employment opportunities and increased tax collections."

Investment in law and order



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, met with residents of Mamas Place in Caubati and other nearby areas last month with the Fiji Police Force officers. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

By PRASHILA DEVI

AINTENANCE of law and order is the cornerstone of a thriving democracy and equipping law enforcement officials with the necessary resources is crucial. Therefore, the allocation of \$226.8 million to the Fiji Police Force sits well with the police re-set agenda that was announced by the Minister for Home Affairs and Immigration, Pio Tikoduadua recently.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, while delivering the 2024-2025 National Budget on June 28, said the force has received an increase of \$41.7m which would help with the full re-set towards law enforcement.

"The Police Reset Strategy would broadly include: development of a new overarching strategy for the Fiji Police Force aimed to modernise the Force through right-sizing and stirring a shift in culture," DPM Prasad said.

He added that through this Police Reset Strategy, the Coalition Government was committed towards building a police force that serves and protects all members of the society with efficiency, fairness, reasonableness, courtesy, respect and without discrimination or harassment.

"By enhancing intelligence capabilities, human resources, and strategic operational planning, we are committed to making our police force more responsive, accountable, and effective in combating crime. We are embracing modern technologies such as advanced forensic tools, digitising criminal records, and deploying drones for surveillance," Minister Tikoduadua emphasised.

"These advancements will enable our police force to effectively combat sophisticated crimes and ensure public safety. Furthermore, we are dedicated to the continuous professional development of our police personnel, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle the evolving landscape of criminal activities."

Another allocation of \$2m has been set aside to fund the establishment of the Narcotics Bureau within the Ministry of Home Affairs with to focus on law enforcement; investigations; prosecution; intelligence gathering; and conducting awareness in collaboration with key agencies.

DPM Prasad elaborated that the ministry has also launched the Counter Narcotics Strategy 2023-2028 with a focus on seven strategic areas, including demand reduction, supply reduction, harm reduction, legal reform, data collection, establishment of a Drug Court and partnership and international cooperation.

He also announced a tax holiday of 13 years for the set-up of drug rehabilitation centres in Fiji.

The tax holiday includes duty free importation of capital goods required for the establishment of the centre and this concession would be extended to businesses that donate to any drug rehabilitation centre.

Govt's revenue measures fair and efficient: Finance Minister

By PRASHILA DEVI

HE Government coffers expects to have an injection of \$3.9 billion in revenue in the 2024-2025 financial period to meet the expenditures laid out in the national budget.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, while delivering the budget, explained the need to rebuild "fiscal buffers" through adequate revenues to not only to catch-up on "to fix our deteriorating infrastructure" but also to respond to "any future shocks".

"We should have a tax system that is simple, efficient and fair and, as I have consistently maintained, with no surprises," DPM Prasad said.

He explained that the critical tax reforms that were announced in the last budget helped raise additional revenue of \$600 million.

"As a pandemic measure, the departure tax was reduced from \$200 to \$100 while specific tourism taxes like STT (service turnover tax) and ECAL (environment and

climate adaptation levy) were abolished."

"In the last Budget, departure tax was increased from \$100 to \$140. Given the industry is in a much better position now, the departure tax will increase from \$140 to \$170, effective from 1st August 2024 and will return to the pre-pandemic rate of \$200 from 1st August 2025," DPM Prasad announced.

Other measures include extending SLIP tax holiday to investors who acquire existing hotels and undertake renovations and refurbishments of more than \$50m, fiscal duty on prefabricated buildings to be reduced from 32 percent to five percent while fiscal duty on steel structures or articles of iron will be maintained at five percent.

DPM Prasad highlighted that excise taxes on alcohol and tobacco products will increase by five percent while the water resource tax rate will increase from one cent per litre to five cents per litre, for producers who extract between 0 to less than 10 million litres per month.

"The rate for producers extracting over 10 million litres per month remains unchanged



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, with the Assistant Minister at the Office of the Prime Minister, Sakiusa Tubuna at the Parliament complex. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

at 19.5 cents per litre which was increased from 18 cents per litre in the last budget."

"A 200 percent deduction will be allowable for donations over \$10,000 towards the 2031 Pacific Games. Similar

to the tax incentive provided to Fijian Drua, a 13-year tax holiday, duty concessions on imported sports equipment and 200 percent tax deduction will be extended to Fiji National Rugby League."

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Ministry takes up more projects post budget

By AZARIA FAREEN

he 2024-2025 National Budget has been highly commended by the Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, Filimoni Vosarogo, as it directly benefits those who have been deprived of some basic necessities.

The ministry received \$5.7 million to establish a taskforce in partnership with the Ministry of Rural and Maritime Development, Water Authority of Fiji, the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Finance to provide access to clean water in rural and maritime areas.

"We have received more than what we asked for simply because of the challenge of getting 1700 boreholes constructed and reticulated in mostly areas where water has not reached," Minister Vosarogo said.

"This is the biggest challenge we have and we have a responsibility

to deliver and we intend to do just that."

"As Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, had announced in Parliament, you are trying to be prudent about your ability to earn and also spend and the last decade or so that has not been exercised prudently," he added.

This project will see 1,000 boreholes built in Viti Levu, 500 in Vanua Levu and 200 in the maritime islands.

He stated that "this budget is giving us what we want, giving the people of Fiji what they want, but at the same time have some of the constraints that would allow us to work within the fiscal space more prudently and more effectively".

Minister Vosarogo said that they have an open-door policy and have been very transparent about that.

"One of the targets we have at the Ministry of Lands is to provide electronic platforms for all of our services and while part of that is being achieved, more of it will be achieved in the next financial year," he highlighted.

"This is so that everything that people need from the ministry can be done online. It makes our services more transparent, more accountable and a lot more people will be benefiting when they lodge applications and do lease renewals."

"I am sure that those incentives that this Government has already announced is going to help a lot of our communities and at the same time the civil service get what they want," Minister Vosarogo added.

He also mentioned the improvement on minimum wage among other announcements that the public will appreciate.

The Ministry received a total of \$36.5 million in this financial year in comparison to receiving \$30.1 million in the last national budget.



Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, Filimoni Vosarogo with Member of the Parliament, Aliki Bia, following the 2024-2025 National Budget announcement in the Parliament complex. **Photo: AZARIA FAREEN**

Ministry to continue with initiatives



Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, Sashi Kiran, with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lenora Qereqeretabua in the Parliament complex. **Photo: AZARIA FAREEN**

By AZARIA FAREEN

HE Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications will continue to strengthen Fiji's place as the economic and international trade hub of the Pacific with a budget allocation of \$106.6 million in the 2024-2025 Budget.

This will enable the ministry to continue to fund new and outstanding film tax rebates, investment in ease of doing business, digitalfiji, integrated human resource management, trade enhancement program and the northern development program.

In commending the budget allocation, line Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Manoa Kamikamica, highlighted that "this is a really good budget in terms of what we had set out to achieve and we will continue to do that".

"In terms of building up the country, it is a very well-crafted budget which continues to put emphasis on key areas that we need to focus on and there is still a lot of work that needs to be done."

"As the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, has stated – our debt to GDP is still high but we are on the right track," he added.

DPM Kamikamica said that the key was to remain focused with the monetary allocation to the respective ministries which they welcome.

"I think the business owners will be very happy because there hasn't been any change in the tax system, so there is stability and predictability," he said.

"There are a few grants allocated towards the Tourism

SME's especially for co-operatives with a few increases here and there so it will all help with what we are trying to do in terms of the overall economy," he added.

In this financial year, the Ministry will continue to work with its stakeholders to achieve a wellcoordinated and collaborative response towards socio-economic recovery and accelerated solutions.

The Ministry is currently spearheading several initiatives that will drive economic diversification with positive spillover effects of job creation and livelihood support, such as the Ease of Doing Business Programme, commonly known as BusinessNOW, the development of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and ICT.

BusinessNow is a national strategic initiative that forms part of Fiji's Digital Government Transformation agenda to provide a single digital portal for Government services for business and investments.

In announcing the budgetary allocation, DPM Prasad also announced a new corperative grant which will provide \$100,000 maximum, to registered cooperatives within 15 sectors to diversify their business into multiple income generating activities.

"In the 2024-2025 financial year, extensive work will be undertaken towards the digitalisation of the Building Permits and Approvals processes."

"Ultimately, such reforms are to create an enabling and streamlined environment for businesses in Fiji such as the MSMEs, including co-operative businesses," DPM Prasad added.

Agriculture Minister satisfied with budget allocation

By FELIX LESINAIVALU

HE Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Vatimi Rayalu, has expressed satisfaction with their Budget allocation after the 2024-2025 Budget announcement recently.

"Understandably, the Minister of Finance does not have much room to maneuver finance, so I'm happy with what we received."

The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways had an increased by \$6 million from

increased by \$6 million from \$95.2million in the 2023-2024 budget, to a total of \$101.2m in the 2024-2025 Budget.

"We are looking forward to executing major projects in the

new financial year."

"That should be enough for us to implement our programs for the next financial year."

Minister Rayalu added his ministry would be addressing the issue of aging infrastructure, such as waterways, in the upcoming fiscal year because some of them were around 50 to 60 years old.

"We need the re-design, and we need to design our waterways infrastructure that will be able to take on the onslaught of floods as a result of climate change," he said.

In delivering the 2024-2025 Budget Address in Parliament recently, Deputy Prime Minister and Minster for Finance, Biman Prasad, announced that a total of \$3million was allocated to fund the Agricultural Marketing Authority and commercial agriculture development.

"A total of more than \$53 million is provided for the crops and livestock research and extension services to strengthen agricultural productivity."

"Aging farmers is also a critical issue which needs attention now. We need to find avenues to train and educate the younger generation to take up farming."

DPM Prasad added that to address this issue and provide a platform for agricultural education and training, Government was providing \$3.1 million capital grant to Navuso Agriculture Technical Institute to construct a new facility that can train an additional 160 young agriculture.



Waterways, Vatimi Rayalu, at the Parliament Complex in Suva. Photo: AZARIA FAREEN

Health Ministry target key areas

By AZARIA FAREEN

HE Ministry of Health and Medical Services in this financial year has been allocated a sum of \$451.8 million to deliver quality health care services to Fijians.

This includes a separate funding of \$90 million for the ongoing operations and maintenance cost to Health Care (Fiji) Pte Ltd for the Lautoka and Ba hospitals under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement.

In commending the budget, line Minister, Doctor Atonio Lalabalavu, said that "like any budget, we had asked for more but we are grateful to the Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, for the ministry's allocation in the 2024-2025 National Budget".

are looking at improving infrastructure, ensuring that the working conditions for our staff improve plus getting in that new equipment while ensuring that medicines and other perishables are readily available as well," Minister Lalabalavu highlighted.

"We are also focusing on primary health care and ensuring centralisation of funds to respective divisions."

"We are also focusing on improving our main hospital, Colonial War Memorial Hospital, and we are grateful for the partnership of DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade) for assisting us with \$ 15 million towards the hospital's masterplan of a well-equipped state-of-theart tertiary hospital," he added.



Minister for Health and Medical Services, Doctor Atonio Lalabalavu with other Cabinet Ministers, Assistant Ministers and members of the diplomatic corps following the 2024-2025 National Budget announcement in the Parliament complex. Photo: AZARIA FAREEN.

Minister Lalabalavu expressed his contentment with the overall budget and stated that it deals with important matters such as social issues, security, health, education and infrastructure and believes this budget is a budget for all.

"However, the onus is on how the ministry will be able to fully utilise the funds so that the impact is felt on the ground," he said.

"We look forward to the next financial year and how we can fully maximise the use of our budgetary allocation so that it has an impact on the ground so our citizens can feel that we are delivering quality healthcare," Minister Lalabalavu stressed.

A total of \$96 million has been provided in the 2024-2025 Budget for the procurement of drugs and medical equipment while \$15m has been allocated for the procurement of bio-medical equipment.

In a bid to assist the kidney dialysis patients, an allocation of \$3m has been made to continue with the \$180 per session subsidy which was increased from \$150 to \$180 in the last financial year.

\$12 million has been provided for capital construction and maintenance works at the Labasa Hospital, refurbishment and upgrade

of urban and sub-divisional hospitals, health centres and nursing stations together with the refurbishment of the Savusavu health facility and the construction of a new rehabilitation centre in Tamavua.

For minor maintenance works and upgrades, an additional \$3.8m has been provided for all the health facilities around the country.

Furthermore, the Fiji Government has also contributed towards the construction of a 100 bed Super Specialty Hospital in Nasinu.

We will prioritise: Minister Radrodro

By AZARIA FAREEN The line Minister, Aseri Radrodro, in applauding the increase of \$18.9 reshaping million allocated to the ministry in the education sector, the Fiji Government increased the funding for Ministry of Education to the tune of \$627.6 million in the 2024-2025 National Budget.

comparison to last financial year, thanked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, for providing a fair budget. "We assure the minister that we will continue to prioritise our commitment towards the Sustainable Development Goals in making sure that we provide quality education and lifelong learnings,"

Minister Radrodro said.

"Our priority Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) Education and Early Childhood Education (ECE), which is something we have to ensure that the budget allocation allowing us to implement what we set out to do in this twospecific area."

"We really have to prioritise our key areas so that we can continue providing quality education

Minister for Education, Aseri Radrodro, commends the Government on the to the children increase in budgetary allocations to the ministry which will strengthen its key of Fiji," Minister commitments. Photo: AZARIA FAREEN

Radrodro stressed.

The Government has continued with the Free Education Grant (Year 1-13) with allocation to transport assistance for those with households with a combined income of \$16,000 or less together with the tuition grant for TVET, the Tuition Subsidy Grant for Early Childhood Care & Education, provision of food and supplies for boarding schools, and the printing and distribution of textbooks.

This also includes the initiative for menstrual hygiene for girls in Year 6 to 13 with a budget of \$1 million to improve access to basic hygiene products in schools.

"The theme of the budget is "An **Economically** Stable, Secure and Sustainable Fiji" and I am happy with all the initiatives highlighted in the 2024-2025 **National Budget** which complements the theme," Minister Radrodro said.

"We will continue to work diligently and put in the effort to ensure that we lift up the standard and quality of education in Fiji,"

The ECE plays an important role in the country and therefore received an increase in the allocation by \$2.5 million to \$22.3 million in this financial year.

A total of \$408.3 million has been allocated for primary and secondary education which signifies Government's commitment towards achieving greater investment and increasing our human capital capacity.

The Back-to-School support for all ECE to Year 13 students has also received the backing for the 2025 school year which adds up to \$40 million.

In the 2023-2024 financial year, a total of 212,740 students were assisted under this programme, with a total pay-out of \$42.5

Meanwhile, a sum of \$150.5 million was allocated to the Tertiary School Loan Scheme to fund 9,940 continuing students and 10,830 new students.

A total of \$1.4 million has also been allocated to fund 20 students to pursue PhD and masters in priority research areas at selected universities in Australia.

The tuition cost will be borne by the Australian University while the Government will provide partial support to cover for airfares, stipend and any other

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Coalition Government resolves 33 years old dispute

By DIPESH KUMAR

FTER three decades of turmoil in the fight for their rights, the Vatukoula mining strike has reached a historic resolution, marking a significant achievement in labour relations and justice for the workers and their families.

Standing as one of the longest strikes in the world, the strike lasted 33 years starting on the of February 1991.

Around 368 mining workers in Vatukoula went on strike following all due processes as there was no other way out for them.

These mine workers walked off their jobs after their concerns over poor pay and employment conditions were not met.

Fiji Mine Workers Union president, Joseva Sadreau, said he tried his best to fight for the miners' rights which was not an easy task.

"In 1991 there was a court case in Lautoka which was in favour of the mine workers. The outcome was that we were allowed to stay in the company house until everything was solved."

"From there all miners had to find odd jobs like fishing to feed their families. There were struggles to also educate our children. They couldn't finish their school because we had no income. We worked in the sugarcane field to cater for our families."

"We went through 11 governments, seven presidents, 11 permanents secretaries and 11 ministers for labour and nothing was done about his issue. We also reached out to the previous government but they only made promises."

"We kept on fighting because we had solidarity among the union members. We conducted meetings every week. We are happy that the Coalition Government came down to Vatukoula and said that this would be the last year for the strike."

"We also put through our proposals,

however, this is what the Government came down to, but at least it's something. We thank the Government for this \$9.2 million, at least it's from zero to hero, from nothing to something."

"Thirty-three (33) years of struggling, no income, in poverty level, separations, some died, so it's a painful story to tell."

In a joint effort between the Coalition Government, the Fiji Trades Union Congress and the Fiji Mine Workers Union, a resolution has been achieved to compensate the affected miners.

The Coalition Government will payout a total of \$9.2 million which will be distributed over a period of two years to address their long-standing grievances.

Signing of the agreement

The union signed the final agreement on the Vatukoula Strike Payout on the July 5, 2024.

Presented by the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Agni Deo Singh, the settlement will compensate 368 miners who have long awaited justice for 33 years.

At the signing, Minister Singh shared that the strike took a toll on the lives of many miners, however, under this agreement, each miner will receive \$10,000 as compensation by August 2024 and an additional payment of \$15,000 reserved for next year.

Mr Sadreau shared the turmoil of the 368 miners over the three decades.

"I would like to thank the Coalition Government for coming down for the signing because at least we are getting something from nothing."

Mineworker Varauni Qarusa who started work at the Vatukoula Mine in 1984 was delighted during the signing as he shared that they had been looking forward to this

"We appreciate what the Government has done and request them to relook at the



Fiji Mine Workers Union president, Joseva Sadreu, with union members. Photo: DIPESH KUMAR

amount.

"We had been praying to God for a resolution and the dispute to be resolved. The Government has shown full support in trying to solve the issue wholly."

Out of the 368 miners who went on strike, only 185 now remain as many have passed on.

Minister Singh has shared that for the deceased members, the ministry will identify their families for the payment handout.

Hardship and challenges

Among the challenges presented to these workers, Mr Sadreau shared that broken families were one of the major concerns for them.

He shared that due to financial problems many families were left disheartened and broken.

Gable Beckham, 59, shared that every member of the union has a story to tell of their hardship during the 33 years.

He shared that even his own family lost hope in him, however, he believed in himself and had faith in God.

"My family, they sometimes lost trust in me. Some said you won't make it. But I still had faith."

"For the last 33 years we have suffered a lot. It was not an easy task waiting all these year for someone to respond to us."

"My wife and I as well as my two daughters went through a lot of pain. We undertook farming to survive and also tried to run a business but it never went well for us."

Sharing similar sentiments, Mariana Seiniucirokonai, 47, speaking on behalf of her late father wished that she could share her joy with him when she heard the news.

"I speak for the kids for the Fiji Mine Workers Union. Some of us didn't fully complete our education. Some of us had to go without lunch. The struggle that we went through was really hard."

"I only wish that my dad was here to celebrate with us. Both my parents have passed away. We had to go to school with one pair of uniform from Monday to Friday. We had to share everything and it was hard."

Ms Seiniucirokonai shared that when she got the news about the settlement, their hopes were rekindled and they could fulfil their future plans.

Future plans

As the workers have settled on an agreement, they are now required to vacate the quarters occupied by them in Vatukoula.

Mr Sadreau shared that this poses a significant challenge to the workers as they need time to build their houses back in their villages.

He said that they have requested the Government to resolve the matter whereby they are not vacated until their houses are complete.

"Many of these families would want to move back to their villages and build their homes. We hope the Government relooks at this issue about the figures because these miners want to come out of Vatukoula, they want to buy a land and build a new house."



(L-R- Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Agni Deo Singh, President of the Fiji Mine Workers Union, Joseva Sadreu, Permanent Secretary for Ministry of Employment, Maritino Nemani, Felix Anthony, FTUC National Secretary, Jemesa Davetanivalu-Office of the Prime Minister. **Photo: DIPESH KUMAR**

Nine water projects completed for households around Fiji

By NANISE NEIMILA

HE Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) have completed and commissioned nine rural water projects benefiting a total of over 1,000 households.

These nine rural water projects include the Naqaqa SDA School in Ra, Nakani Village in Naitasiri, Nailega Primary School in Wainibuka Tailevu, Nasaibitu in Wainibuka Tailevu, Momi Village in Nadroga, Mavua Nadroga, Tubairata in Nadroga, Malake Village in Ra and Vunisei Village in Ra.

This was highlighted by the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, during a press conference recently.

Minister Tuisawau highlighted that the Department of Water & Sewerage in collaboration with United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) convened the first ever National Water Committee Stakeholders Workshop.

"This is a preparatory workshop for the rolling out of the first ever Water Committee Training nationwide. This training will empower water committees in all villages around Fiji on basic plumbing skills. They will also be provided with tool boxes which has plumbing tools. This is an effort to enhance capacity building for water committees and also sustainability of village rural water systems."

"The Viria Water Treatment Plant Project is operational. This includes the construction of a

new 40-megalitre water treatment plant, new river intake, pumping stations, 10-megalitre reservoir, pipelines and gravity main works."

Minister Tuisawau added that the project was envisaged to benefit more than 360,000 people along the Suva-Nausori corridor.

The Vunidawa Packaged Plant has also been commissioned.

Meanwhile, in the shipping sector the Government's shipping franchise scheme, designed to support maritime islands with uneconomical routes, has completed 150 trips between August 2023 and May 2024.

Furthermore, Minister Tuisawau added that the scheme was aimed at enhancing connectivity and accessibility t maritime island communities, has seen significant usage and positive impact.

"During this period, a total of \$1.12m of subsidy has been paid to vessel operators during the same period to ensure continuation of services. For the same period, there has been transportation of 6,628 passengers inbound and 6,828 passengers outbound, which shows steady flow of travellers who rely on these services for their commute, access to essential services, and economic activities."

"The scheme has also supported significant cargo movement, reflecting its role in local economic development. The inward cargo totalled 1,096.4 tons, while the outward cargo reached 2,041 tons, indicating robust trade and supply chain activities facilitated by the subsidized routes."



Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, with staff of Water Authority of Fiji. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

WAF looks to end water woes in elevated parts of Nasinu-Suva areas

HE Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) has announced an upgrade to the water infrastructure in the high elevated areas within the Tamavua and Coloi-Suva corridor.

Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, while announcing the "critical and historical" \$35million project, said that the project aims to enhance water services, addressing the challenges faced by residents and ensuring a consistent supply of clean water

Minister Tuisawau highlighted the importance of investing in modern water supply infrastructure to support Fiji's growing population and to ensure the health and well-being of its residents.

WAF, the sole provider of quality drinking water and wastewater collection services across Fiji, has initiated the design and construction of new water infrastructure, specifically tailored to meet the needs of the high elevated areas within the Tamavua and Colo-i-Suva corridor.

This project will improve water services and ensure a reliable supply to the residents in these regions.

Currently, the water supply in these elevated areas is inconsistent, affecting the quality of life and the operational efficiency of businesses and homes sometimes.

With the planned upgrade, WAF aims to provide a consistent and clear water supply, benefiting the entire community and supporting future growth in the area.

Minister Tuisawau has also extended his gratitude to WAF staff for their dedication to providing safe and clean drinking water to Fijians.

He acknowledged their vital role in maintaining public health and wished them well for the new year.

Meanwhile, WAF has sought proposals from suitably qualified contractors to design and construct the Elevated Princes Road Water Infrastructure Project.

The project will be executed under the "Conditions of Contract for Plant and Design-Build," FIDIC Yellow Book 2017.

Contractors with expertise in water infrastructure are invited to submit their proposals, demonstrating their capability to deliver high-quality and sustainable solutions. Call for Proposals was released on May 31, 2024, and closes on July 26, 2024.

(Source: Water Authority of Fiji)



Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services & Transport, Ro Filipe Tuisawau launched the Water Committee Training Consultation Workshop at the Pearl Resort, Pacific Harbor earlier. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

We need to build climate-resilient infrastructure – Minister Tuisawau



Building climate resilient infrastructure...Australian High Commissioner to Fiji and Special Envoy for the Pacific and Regional Affairs, Ewen McDonald together with the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services & Transport, Ro Filipe Tuisawau officiating the commissioning of the new Navuniyasi/Navo Bridge in Nadi earlier this year.

Photo: SUPPLIED

By Nanise Neimila

he Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) through the Transport Infrastructure Investment Sector project has rehabilitated and upgraded the major arterial roads to climate-resilient standards. This was highlighted by the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport Ro Filipe Tusawau during a press conference recently.

Minister Tuisawau highlighted that the are the Queens and Kings Road, much needed road reseals in the Central, Western and Northern Divisions, a major facelift of Foster Road, Walu Bay and QE Drive.

"The Cabinet has also just approved the Amendment to the Grant Agreement on the Reconstruction of the Tamavua-I-Wai Bridge. The Japanese government, through JICA, is supporting the reconstruction of the Tamavua-Wai Bridge in Suva, Fiji, with a two-phased grant approach."

"Phase I focused on in-depth evaluation of the site with relevant engineering and construction information to ensure that the bridge will serve Fijian communities and businesses as a resilient infrastructure against natural disaster."

"The second phase will ensure the progression and financial backing for completing the bridge construction, reflecting ongoing bilateral cooperation between Fiji and Japan, project cost FJ\$57million."

Minister Tuisawau further added that with the changing weather patterns coupled with the climate change impacts, there is a need to build resilient infrastructure.

"Speaking of resilient infrastructure, Fiji is grappling with three (3) critical issues, climate change, aging infrastructure and rapid increase in development and population."

"In this regard, it is very critical to build back better and build to last. For roads, in an effort to build back better, FRA has completed nine (9) critical bridges under the Bridge Replacement Programme namely:

- Bulu Bridge near Sigatoka;
- Korovou Bridge near Tavua;
- Matewale Bridge in Keyasi, Navosa;
- Tavualevu Bridge in Tavua;
- Velovelo Bridge near Lautoka;
- Yaqara Bridge, Kings Road, Rakiraki;
- Wainawi Bridge on Kings Road, Nausori;
- Vuniyasi Bridge near Nadi; and
- Waidamu Bridge near Nausori.







2024-2025 NATIONAL BUDGET RIGHT OF REPLY

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development & Statistics

HONOURABLE PROFESSOR BIMAN C PRASAD

WEDNESDAY, 10 JULY 2024

Introduction

Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to provide my right of reply to the 2024-2025 Budget.

Mr Speaker Sir, for the last 2 days I have listened carefully. I did not interject as much as I wanted to but I have listened carefully to to all the contributions coming from both sides of the house. I wish to thank the Hon Prime Minister, all my colleagues on the government side for their contribution and I also want to thank the Hon Leader of the Opposition and all the independent members that came out in support of the budget and the many others who were more balanced, showed some creativity. I can't say the same thing about a few of the loyalists on the other side Mr Speaker, but it does show Mr Speaker that when we have the freedom to speak, we unleash creativity thinking and we don think in a more honest way, if there is no compulsion, and if there is no fear.

As a government, we are very proud that we have provided that environment in the country, in the confidence of our people, for our investors, for everyone to speak their mind, to criticise the Government and to more the government forward.

There was an interesting observation Mr Speaker sir made by Hon Sanjay Kirpal in his contribution. He said in effect in the previous government, cabinet ministers get to see the budget an hour before the budget address.

Mr Speaker Sir, as a government and again I would like to thank the Hon Prime Minister for his leadership where our budget formulation takes a very thorough process at the Permanent Secretaries level, at individual Ministerial level with the Minister of Finance, the cabinet sub-committee culminating in the whole budget being approved by cabinet before the budget address in Parliament. That Mr Speaker sir is a very transparent, open, engaging process that we have formulated in both our budgets, the first one and the second one and I have no doubt that this will be the case as we move into the

Mr Speaker Sir, formulating a national budget is not an easy task, especially when you have inherited a large public debt which constrains your ability to fix infrastructure and public services that have been neglected for years. That gets even tougher if you also inherit an economy that is recovering from a major economic setback like COVID-19 with the need for fiscal support to protect that fragile recovery.

But, Mr Speaker Sir, governments can only spend what it collects from taxes and what it can borrow. Both taxes and borrowed money don't come cheap. Therefore, it is important that governments make the best use of these taxpayer resources where it gives the highest return. That involves making tough decisions and policy tradeoffs and at most times choosing what is economically correct and fiscally responsible rather than for short term political survival.

At the same time, given the critical role of the Government to provide essential public services, it is important that the Government is funded well. Otherwise, what we had seen over the last many years, was that Government didn't have enough money to fix our hospitals, improve our roads, solve our water woes, clean our drainage, rescue our deteriorating public assets and pay our civil servants well. We may well have this situation into the future until we fix these and until we have growth and we are able to build more fiscal

This is exactly what we have done in our 2 budgets Mr Speaker Sir. We ensured that Government is well funded, to not only fix public infrastructure and services, but to contain our fiscal deficits and put our public debt on a downward trajectory.

Government Debt

Mr Speaker Sir, I know a lot has been said about government debt and the Hon Leader of the Opposition tried to weave a positive picture of what might have happened before but the fact of the matter is that Fiji's debt to GDP ratio peaked at around 90 percent of GDP in July 2022, rising from around 53 percent in 2006.

By the end of July 2024, we would have brought down the debt to GDP ratio to 78 percent - a reduction of 12 percentage points in just around 18 months. They talked about what we have done in 18 months, and the Hon Minister for Lands in his very excellent contribution said that in 18 months, we can only do so much and he actually said that we have done so much in 18 months. So this was not an easy feat but a great achievement for us as a nation, putting it in a path, a foundation for a downward trajectory in our debt to GDP ratio.

Even more importantly, with the fiscal reforms in the last budget we have fixed our revenue problem and brought fiscal deficits under control from the double digit levels prior to us getting into Government. That means, as the economy grows, our debt to GDP ratio will continue on a downward path. That's why we need to continue on this course as this is not a problem that can not be fixed in a year or two. We need to be committed to our fiscal plan for at least the next decade.

What we are doing Mr Speaker sir is that we are not thinking that we are going to be in government for the next one or two decades that some people used to think. We are setting honestly, clearly the path for the next decade for whoever will be in government.

Mr Speaker Sir, the political will and national commitment to get our debt problem under control has been commended by the international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank, our credit rating agencies and all our development partners. This provides the confidence to our local investors, our foreign investors and everybody else that is looking at Fiji.

Reducing VAT is not an option

However, Mr Speaker Sir, a lot have talked about VAT and I heard the Honourable Opposition members, some of them more so the loyalists saying why we are not reducing VAT. However Mr Speaker sir, we are worried when opposition members like Hon. Premila Kumar, Hon. Hem Chand and others are proposing that we should reduce the VAT rate from 15 to 9 percent.

Mr Speaker, they are forgetting conveniently that they were part of a leadership where the VAT rate was 15% with no exemption. It was the push by the Opposition which is now in government Mr Speaker that forced them after the 2014 elections to reduce VAT. They reduced VAT and they didn't apply zero VAT on basic items, and then Mr Speaker they changed it to 3 rates, they had 15, 9 and 0.

None of them in their contributions on VAT talked about what was there before. Plus Mr Speaker, none of them mentioned that this government kept the zero rate on VAT on food items and we added prescribed medicine, 22 items VAT free Mr Speaker Sir.

Let me tell me Hon Premila Kumar that if we reduce VAT from 15 percent to 9 percent, we will lose \$600 million in revenues. For every 1 percent reduction in VAT we lose around \$100 million in tax revenues. The questions is, how are you going to compensate for this Hon. Kumar? Are you going to increase the fiscal deficit to double digit and add additional \$600 million in debt? But technically you cannot

borrow this additional \$600 million given the availability of financing. Or are you going to reduce expenditures by \$600 million which none of you talked about.

In fact Mr Speaker you will recall that when we were in the opposition, they were saying where is the opposition's alternative budget? For 8 years, they hounded me and say 'where's your alternative budget?' I kept telling them that it is not easy for an opposition to bring an alternative budget given the difficulty that we had to get information. Now they are free Mr Speaker, so where's your alternative budget? Where

Mr Speaker Sir, the public should note that a lot of information that came from the opposition members were half the information, and half information can be dangerous and misleading. It is easy for them to come here and say we should reduce VAT without saying how to fix the revenue.

Mr Speaker Sir, I would like to reiterate that when we increased the VAT rate from 9 to 15 percent in the last Budget, we had done a thorough analysis, explored different options, consulted with various experts, discussed with our multilateral lenders and even brought it for public discussion. We didn't hide it.

We knew it was not an easy call, so we had to make sure that we get it right. We just didn't pluck out the 15 percent from thin air, but it was based on a thorough analysis and our real revenue needs that will ensure Government is adequately funded and we are also able to put our debt to GDP on a downward path.

If we had not done that, we would have been in a major debt distress by now and most of our lenders would have stopped lending to the Government.

I will talk more about VAT when I talk about cost of living.

Comparison of per capita debt

But let me shed some light on the nominal debt and the debt per capita/person which a number of the opposition members had talked about. Let me put this into perspective:

Coalition Government The inherited a total debt of around \$9.5 billion at the end of December 2022;

In terms of debt per capita, this was around \$10,700;

By the end of this Budget in July 2025, our total debt is projected at \$10.9 billion, or \$12,300 per person.

BUDGET

This means that in terms of debt per capita, the Coalition Government in 3 years would have added around \$1,600 debt per person.

On the contrary, Mr Speaker Sir, the previous Government inherited a total debt of around \$2.9 billion in 2006 or \$3,400 per person.

During their term, they increased the total debt levels to \$9.5 billion or \$10,700 per person. That is an additional debt of \$6.6 billion or in per capita terms an additional per capita debt of \$7,300 per person.

So, Hon. Leader of Opposition and Hon. Sachida Nand, this is reality if you talk about debt per capita. By July 2025, we would have added \$1,600 in additional debt per person, while you added \$7,300 additional debt to every person.

Debt trends

	Debt		Debt per Capita
Year	(\$billion)	Population	(\$)
2006	2.9	837,271	3,400
2013	3.8	837,271	4,580
Dec-22	9.5	884,887	10,700
Jul-23	9.7	884,887	11,000
Jul-25	10.9	884,887	12,300

Cost of living

Mr Speaker Sir, let me now provide some clarifications on prices and cost of living. This is a sensitive issue and is always subject to political point scoring. But let me put through some basic economic facts:

First, prices are generally set through market forces based on demand and supply. Sellers or producers decide the price of their product based on the cost of production, including labor, raw materials, transportation, storage, taxes and other associated costs.

Based on the level of demand and competition from other supplies, they decide on a mark up and the final price for the product. But the basic principle remains that no one will ever sell their product at a price below the cost of production.

Secondly, governments can only influence the price of any product only to a certain extent and it can do so in 3 ways. Either through price controls, or by changing the level of taxes it applies on these products or by producing the product itself and selling it at a loss (like most Government services, including water).

Even with price controls and changing the level of taxes, there is only so much that can be done and there are trade offs for these decisions. Mr Speaker Sir, as a government we had looked at all these options and the Hon DPM and Minister for Trade under which FCCC comes under is constantly lloking at how we can use some of these tools, some of these policies to provide relief to our people. That is being done and I'm sure the Hon DPM will be making some of those decisions soon.

Mr Speaker Sir, the point that I am trying to make is, that it is not easy to bring down prices as those in the opposition seem to suggest. Even for some of the zero rated VAT items and quite conveniently none of them talked about the fact that 22 items have zero VAT, 21 essential food items and prescribed medicine. So despite the fact that there is no VAT on these items, the price had increased due to the increase in either the production costs, or other associated costs like freight, insurance, storage, etc, which is completely beyond our control.

They know that. It happened during COVID. The freight cost went 3 or 4 times higher and some of these stayed up for a long time. So even when you reduce the duty, even when you have zero VAT, the prices Mr Speaker Sir still went up.

Even, we saw prices for local producelike dalo, cassava and vegetables rising, although it does not attract any taxes or VAT. It basically means that when supply is disrupted due to bad weather or when enough people are not planting, or when suddenly we have a pick up in exports of these products, the price will rise. That means we need to increase production to bring down the price, but again that cannot be done immediately.

Also, Mr Speaker Sir, we import most of the products that we consume here in Fiji and as such it is difficult to control the import prices which are determined in the global markets.

Our major trading partner countries including Australia, New Zealand, and the US have all been experiencing the high inflation rates due to global supply chain disruptions associated with the pandemic. Australia's inflation was 6.6 percent in 2022 (highest in 31 years), while NZ was 7.2 percent (highest in 34 years) and US was 8.0 percent (highest in 40 years).

Given Fiji's trade links with these countries, it's natural that the prices of imports from these countries would be higher and have a bigger impact since around 50 percent of our consumption basket is made up of imported items.

Looking at comparable countries such as Mauritius, inflation was 10.8% in 2022, 7.0 percent in 2023 and 5.9 percent in 2024. In our neighboring Pacific Island Countries, Vanuatu recorded inflation of 6.7% in 2022, 12.0% in 2023 and 6.7% forecast for 2024, while Tonga noted inflation of 8.5% in 2022, 10.2% in 2023 and 5.4% expected in 2024.

Mr Speaker Sir, our inflation rate in Fiji stood at 5.1 percent at the end of last year and had peaked around 7.1 percent in April this year. Our current inflation rate in June 2024 stood at 6.7 percent and is projected to stabilize around 3 to 4 percent by year end.

Hon Usumate said that never in history have we had high inflation rate. But if you look at the inflation rate

during their time, 2009 it was 6.8%, 2011 7.7%, 2018 6.6%.

Mr Speaker Sir, in the last 2 budgets to help our people with the cost of living challenges, we have;

We maintained zero VAT on 21 items and also added prescribed medicines to make it 22 items. So, we now have sugar, Flour, Rice, Dhal, Tea, Potatoes, Onions, Garlic, Canned Fish, Cooking Oil, Salt, Liquid Milk, Powdered Milk, Baby Milk, Sanitary Pads, Soap, Soap Powder, Toilet Paper, Toothpaste, Cooking Gas, Kerosene and Prescribed Medicines on zero VAT. These are basically the first things we buy when we go to supermarkets. In fact Mr Speaker, this list is what we proposed before the 2018 elections and they copied the same list and included it, and we were happy they did that, just ahead of the 2022 elections.

In the last budget, we also increased the social welfare allowances by 25 percent for those above the age of 70 and by 15 percent for those below 70

We increased the government pensions and aftercare allowances by 15 percent.

We had increased the allowances for our Turaga-ni-koros, Mata-ni-tikinas, Turaga-ni-Yavusa. Provincial administrators and district advisory councilors.

We introduced the \$200 per child back to school support for all families below an annual income of \$50,000 assisting over 200,000 students.

Mr Speaker Sir they lied when they said that this was a FijiFirst initiative. What FijiFirst had was an inflation mitigation measure. From August 2022 and up to January 2023 and it was \$1 a day for 6 months, so \$180.

That was an election gimmick Mr Speaker Sir. A \$1 a day for 6 months of \$180 and this was paid to the school. They lied when they say this was Back to School support.

We as a government when the Hon Prime Minister announced it last year was not thinking about the next election. As soon as we came into government, we realised that our children, our rural children needed our support. That is why we did it. It was not an election gimmick. It was a new measure, a flagship measure of the People's Coalition Government to help our students.

We wrote off \$650 million in TELS debt for 53,000 tertiary students, freeing them from the shackles of debt when they start working, so they can use that repayment money to support themselves and their families.

In this budget, we are providing over \$85 million in pay increases for over 38,000 civil servants who were deprived of a salary increase since 2017.

We have taken a bold step to increase the minimum wage rate to \$5 an hour, an increase of 25 percent. Mr. Speaker Sir, Hon. Bala and others claimed that the minimum wage increase is too slow. They should go and look at themselves in the mirror. When they were in Government, it took them almost 8 long years to just introduce the minimum wage rate in 2014 and that too at only \$2.00 an hour. Then, they increased it to \$2.32 and later to \$2.68 per hour in September 2017. Only before the elections did they announce a 4 phase increase from \$2.68 to \$4.00 an hour.

Before the 2018 elections, we were campaigning for \$5 an hour and they went around threatening garment factory workers saying government cannot afford it when the economy at that time was better. That was the time to raise minimum wages.

We are increasing the minimum wage rate to \$5.00 based on a comprehensive review by a panel of experts that have undertaken a thorough analysis and consultation with employers, unions and other stakeholders. We are doing it in 2 phases as we need to be also mindful of some of the employers who need time to adjust.

The other point Mr Speaker which you can see happening in the last 18 months already. The unions are negotiating better conditions and internationally including organisations like the IMF all evidence show that in countries where you suppress the unions, where you suppressed their union leaders, where you restrict employees, the workers of those countries will suffer in terms of their pay and all that this is exactly what happened in this country in the past 16 years.

Mr Speaker if workers were allowed over the years, we would not have to see this problem we are seeing today, that is what this government is trying to correct.

We are paying our sugar farmers around \$102 per tonne of cane for the 2023 season. For the 2022 season, we paid \$91.38 per tonne. Both were higher than the \$85 guaranteed price.

We are paying our rice farmers \$1,000 per tonne of rice paddy. And most of our cash crop farmers, including our dalo and cassava farmers are receiving much higher prices for their crops.

We are also continuing with other social support measures like provision of free education, transport assistance, free water and subsidized electricity for households earning less than \$30,000, free medical service through private GPs, subsidized dialysis treatment, first home buyers initiative, scholarships, free legal services, amongst others.

All this support from the Government will cost us almost \$750 million this year alone. So this is how much we are providing directly to the people to help

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them. This includes:

Zero VAT on 22 items - \$250 million Back to School Support - \$40 million

Social Pensions Scheme - \$78 million

Family Assistance Scheme - \$44 million Disability allowance - \$17 million

Child Protection Allowance - \$17 million
million

Electricity Subsidy - \$10 million Water Subsidy for around 40,000 households \$4million

Transport Assistance for 90,000 students - \$37 million

Scholarships - \$150 million PPP Free health scheme - \$5 million Kidney Dialysis subsidy - \$3 million First home buyers grant - \$5 million Civil service salaries - \$85 million TELS write off - \$10 million

Economy

Mr Speaker Sir, let me talk about the economy because a lot of comments have been made that the economy is slowing down, that there is confidence, investment is not taking place and so on.

Mr Speaker Sir, the economy is not declining.

Let that be clear.

The economy is growing.

While we are facing some economic headwinds from the slowdown in Australia and New Zealand and challenges with our declining population which is putting pressure on domestic demand and labor supply, the economy is still projected to grow by 2.8 percent this year.

Although this was a slight downward revision from 3.4 percent, our growth remains positive which means that the economy is still growing and not contracting as misunderstood by some members.

Nonetheless, with the fiscal stimulus and economic optimism provided in this Budget, there is a likelihood that this growth may be later revised upwards. That is what ANZ has now come out to say - that the growth may be much higher than 2.8 percent.

Obviously, they are taking into account the positive impact of the budget and some major progress made with a number of private sector investments that are now getting expedited with shovels on ground.

We have over \$2 billion in private sector investments. We are fixing the issues with our immigration. The banks are ready with the financing for these projects. Our approval agencies have been put on high alert to make sure that there are no further delays. So, we will soon see a major pick-up in investment and economic activities.

Some of the major investments in the hotels will add to the room inventory which has become a bottleneck for our tourism industry in the peak months. This is also important to help make our

room rates and tourism industry more competitive.

We are also working with some of our key entities to increase capacity in terms of our airports, port infrastructure and renewable energy. This should also see some major investments moving forward.

Mr Speaker Sir, we are also seeing new private sector interest in commercial agriculture, outsourcing, ICT and few other new industries which should help grow our economy, support economic diversification, job creation and export growth.

All this, and our efforts at a whole of government level is aimed at raising our growth rate to 4 and 5 percent from the current trend growth of 3 percent.

Expenditure utilization

Mr Speaker Sir, the opposition had made a big "hoo haa" about the expenditure utilization of the Coalition Government and the execution of capital projects.

I wish to clarify that for the FY 2023-2024 Budget, we are projecting overall expenditure utilisation to be around 94 percent.

This includes a 97 percent utilisation of the operating budget and an 85 percent implementation of the capital budget. I agree that we can improve further on the execution of the capital projects.

But Mr Speaker Sir, let me share the expenditure utilisation during their time in Government.

For the 2016-2017 Budget, capital budget utilisation was only 70.5 percent while total expenditure utilisation was 84 percent:

For the 2017-2018 Budget capital budget utilisation was only 77.7 percent while total expenditure utilised was 85.9 percent;

For the 2018-2019 Budget capital budget utilisation was only 61.2 percent while total expenditure utilised was 77.4 percent;

Now Mr Speaker, let me bring up this very important point. It was not the ineffective or the inefficiency of the people executing the projects at that time. It was because government was running into cash flow problems before the 2018 elections. That is why before the 2018 elections, they announced so many things and their execution was capital projects 62% and 74% overall. That is why Mr Speaker in 2019, they had negative growth. The economy contracted.

Mr Speaker Sir. We are not trying to justify our expenditure execution rate. In fact we are working amongst government agencies to further improve the utilization.

But it's important for our opposition members to understand what was happening during their time. Operating capital mix

Mr Speaker Sir, some also claimed that our operating to capital mix of 73:27 is low.

Because governments are the major providers of social services like education, health, security, judicial services which are labour intensive, you would generally require around 70 percent expenditures towards operating spending.

Similarly, capital expenditure is around 30 percent as we can only budget what we can execute which is based on the absorption capacity of the Government.

But we agree that we can do more to beef up our spending on capital projects.

Revenue Projections are realistic

Mr Speaker Sir, I would like to also clarify the revenue projections for FY 2024-2025 is not too optimistic or is not simplistic.

No, Mr Speaker Sir, I would like to assure everyone that the revenue numbers are being set as realistic as possible. The question is why would Government overstate its revenue projections – because if you do that, you will ultimately get caught and struggle with serious cash flow problems that the FijiFirst Government brought upon themselves in FY2018/2019 before the elections.

So, there is no real incentive for us to be too optimistic with our revenue numbers.

Mr Speaker Sir, given our successful revenue reforms in the last Budget, we are projecting total revenues at \$3.9 billion, of which \$3.3 billion is tax collections, while \$0.6 billion will be collected from non-tax revenues. We are not making any major changes to the taxes apart from departure taxes and other small changes here and there.

Mr Speaker Sir, in the current Fiscal Year 2023-2024, we are very much confident now that we will be collecting slightly over \$3.0 billion in taxes – the highest ever in Fiji's history. Therefore, it should not be a struggle to increase our tax collections from \$3 billion this year to \$3.3 billion next year.

Out of the additional \$300 million in taxes that we project to collect, around \$45 million is additional collection from departure taxes while the major chunk will be due to the bigger economic pie as the Fijian economy will continue to grow at around 3 percent.

In terms non-tax revenues, as I have already stated, we will be receiving around \$162 million in dividends out of which \$130 million will be from the Reserve Bank profits, \$170 million in fees fines and charges from entities such as LTA (\$60 million), Water tariffs (\$49 million) Immigration and other agencies and over \$150 million in budget support grants from our

development partners.

Lack of Consultations on the Budget

Mr Speaker Sir, some of the opposition members including Hon. Ketan Lal claimed that there were no consultations on this Budget, how absurd is this?

We have done numerous consultations starting from the National Economic Summit, Fiscal Review Committee discussions, multiple meetings with the private sector institutions, industry groups, civil society organisations, academia, students, faith-based organisations, disciplined forces, and targeted focused group discussions.

Just in February 2024, we concluded the nationwide consultation on the National Development Plan and this is where more than 22,000 people from across all 4 divisions including our elderly, our youths, farmers, cane growers, working people and people in rural remote areas openly shared with us what they wanted, both in the development plan and in the national budget.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that consultation of such extent was never carried out by the previous government, yet the Honorable members on the other side continue to raise such misleading remarks.

I am confident Mr Speaker that these consultations, and a lot of these have been reflected in the Budget. A good example are the boreholes. The 1700 boreholes that we are going to do in the next 1 or 2 years Mr Speaker Sir came from the people.

Taxing of Property Income of Non-Profit Organisation

Mr Speaker Sir, I wish to also clarify the issue around the taxing of business income for non for profit organizations.

Firstly, all donations and fundraising activities for charitable organizations are exempt from tax. Apart from this, businesses making cash donations to any registered charitable organization can claim it as a deductible expense.

Following the amendment to the Income Tax Act in 2016, not for profit organizations engaging in profit-oriented activities were subject to tax only for their business income component. This policy ensures fairness within the tax system, as individuals or businesses conducting similar business activities are also subjected to taxes. Otherwise, we would create an unlevel playing field.

Prior to 2016, FRCS also picked up that there were a number of NPOs starting their commercial arms, some with good intentions and some as a means of tax avoidance.

To close this loophole, NPOs conducting commercial activities such as supermarket businesses, retail stores etc. were taxed since 2016. The amendment in the current budget was

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intended to bring clarity in the law that property income earned by NPOs will be treated as business income and subject to tax similar to property income of individuals.

Another important factor influencing this change was the formation of NPOs by various commercial entities to shelter properties. The intent behind these businesses forming NPOs could be questioned regarding whether it was genuinely for charitable or nonprofit purposes or simply to obtain tax exemptions on property income. This loophole has been addressed in the current budget.

Donations and income from fundraising etc will continue to be tax free.

Drugs and Crime

Mr. Speaker Sir, I was surprised with some of the opposition members raising fingers on the Coalition Government on the drug problem. Mr. Speaker Sir, Fiji has been plagued with the drug problem which is not of our making. This had been brewing up for the last many years with no decisive action from the previous Government which was in denial mode for reasons better known to them.

We are taking some concrete steps now to address this with the establishment of the Narcotics Bureau, launch of the Counter Narcotics Bureau Strategy 2023-2028, a major RESET of our Police Force and closer collaboration and intelligence sharing with our key security partners. Our intelligence sharing and active surveillance has led to some of the major drug busts in the previous months.

I have a number of quick points Mr Speaker that I would like to respond to before I conclude.

On the point raised by Hon Sachida Nand on Hon DPM and Minister for Tourism's reference to tourism receipts, he confused himself. He was talking about a \$2.9b figure and Hon Nand said with the \$2.9b in tourism receipts, the contribution of tourism to GDP is much lower. This is not true. This is bad economics. Because receipts is just one part of the tourism industry. There are a lot of spin-offs; hotels, transport and so on, and the total contribution of the tourism industry is close to 40% of GDP.

The point that Hon Nand raised and again I would urge the Hon member to refrain from talking on this subject because Mr Speaker, when we come into this parliament as an MP, you have to make sure that what you say is correct.

Hon Nand also talked Revaluation. Mr Speaker Sir, when you talked about Revaluation and Devaluation is a very sensitive issue. It is a very, very sensitive issue because it can ignite a lot of activities which can be damaging to the country.

Mr Speaker Sir, already our dollar has appreciated against the currencies of some of our trading partners and it will be silly to suggest any kind of revaluation of the dollar or devaluation. You know when we had devaluation in 2009, there was a major increase in prices, and it set a train of activities that took years for us to deal with. Without understanding the impacts of revaluation and devaluation, he should refrain from talking about it.

On the reference by Hon Bala about the Exim Bank loan, I thought it was unbecoming of Hon Bala, in fact an insult to our Prime Minister and insult to the Indian Prime Minister because that decision for a 100-bed Super Speciality Hospital was announced by the Hon Prime Minister of India together with the Hon Prime Minister of Fiji as a grant to build a 100-bed Super Speciality Hospital in this country. For him to then come and say, oh this was traded with the Exim Bank loan, I think Hon Bala should correct that outside parliament. That information is wrong Mr Speaker.

On the point made by Hon Usumate about the FNPF Pension and the Vatukoula strike. You know they promised in 2015 and somebody said 'oh, they wanted millions of dollars. I don't think they were negotiating with the union in good faith. This is a government that has solved this problem because we provided that platform for the unions to talk to the government to understand the imperative of resolving this. Mr Speaker that is the leadership that the Hon Prime Minister provided because he visited them before the elections and this is a promise we made to them before we came into government and we have been able to settle this.

We actually trust the union leaders. If you look at the history of union in this country, they have been responsible leaders. We have not had the kind of disruptions they were thinking when they brought those draconian laws. We have taken all those laws away, we have provided a platform, and I don't think this will be used as a pretext, or as a platform to settle other disputes.

On the FNPF pensions, all I want to say is that some of the things that the military government did without consultation, without empathy, without explaining to the people why it was going to do caused a lot of pain to a lot of people in the last 16 years Mr Speaker in this country.

This is a government that is not promising to right every wrong that were done, but where it has the means, where it can show leadership, we are correcting those Mr Speaker Sir.

I think this is the message that our investors and our people in this country are getting. This is a government that is not vindicative, that is not creating fear and which is determined to resolve issues that have been pending for years. The Vatukoula strike and the FNPF Pension are very clear indication of

what we want to do.

On the contribution of what I can say the leader of the loyalist group on the other side, Hon Koya, you know we accept criticisms when the intentions are sincere, when there are clean hands.

On Hon Naupoto's contributions on the quality of education, I agree with him that the quality of education is very important. But he was insuniating that the new scholarship scheme based on merit was going to deprive students with lower marks.

This is not correct. When we talked about quality of education, we are talking about improving the quality of learning and the teaching environment. For the last 16 years in the Suva-Nausori area, and the Hon Minister for Education knows this very well for as soon as we got into government, he realised this and he picked up about the quality of education, that the staff-student ratio in our primary schools, in our secondary schools is overflowing. In some cases, there are 50 to 60 students in primary school classrooms.

We have started as a Government, working with the Australian Government. We have signed an agreement already and there's an audit being done in terms of the number of classrooms and schools we need in the Suva-Nausori area. That is a very, very clear target for us in the next one or two years to build more classrooms so that we reduce and improve the staff to student ratio.

I want to assure all the students who are coming out of form 6 or form 7 that the current scholarship scheme has a place for each one of them. If they can't get to university, if they can't get to medicine, engineering or pursue a degree, there are things that they can do, qualifications that they can get and they will get scholarships.

On to the matter of Pacific Polytech, Mr Speaker, the way they are talking it as if Biman Prasad has something to do with Polytech. I mean Hon Hem Chand was in the Ministry of Education, he knows the process. All higher education institutions are registered and approved by an independent Fiji Higher Education Commission. They registered Pacific Polytech in 2021, and they are doing a good job by replacing the defunct technical colleges that they set up and they wasted \$30m Mr. Speaker Sir. That went down the drain.

Hon Usumate talked about funding for FNU. Let me explain how funding is determined for all higher education institutions including the smaller ones like Sangam Nursing School, etc.

The submissions by these institutions don't come to the Ministry of Finance. It goes to the Ministry of Education through the Minister for Education to the Higher Education Commission. The Higher Education Commission does its analysis, they make a recommendation, they have a formula then it comes to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance can only in a limited space,

can't even increase it, we can only reduce it.

We reduced the funding allocation, the recovery, the amount they didn't pay USP, so we've paid \$10m last year, \$20m in the last budget, this budget they wanted to recover a bit more so we've reduced it to \$5m only. Polytech wanted \$9m, that was reduced to \$5m.

So Mr Speaker, the Higher Education Commission funding model, Hon Usumate spoke about reductions in funding for FNU, there has been reductions in funding in the past, there has been increases in funding, it doesn't mean next year FNU is not getting more or Polytech is going to get its budget increased or reduced just like for Sangam Nursing School. They didn't ask for more last year but we as a government gave them more because we wanted them to train more nurses.

On investor confidence, let me say this. For the first time, I think after so many years that the confidence of investors Mr. Speaker is unprecedented, to use their own words. There is a leading global commercial real estate investment company JLL, this is what they said: "When compared with most other markets, Fiji's investment fundamentals have remained and are growing strong and highly attractive in the current environment."

One last point before I conclude Mr Speaker.

They make a big deal about this '18 months what have you done'? 18 months is a long time. The Hon Prime Minister during the campaign I remember didn't use these words but I am going to use them, you cannot, no government in 18 months can deal with every mess that were left for them to deal with. This is the fact, Mr. Speaker.

The Hon Prime Minister was being very polite. I am not going to be that polite. That in 18 months and all my colleagues this side pointed it out very clearly what this government has done in 18 months. We have set this country on a path to stability, security and prosperity Mr. Speaker with our policies.

I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka for his trust and confidence bestowed upon me as the Coalition Government's Finance Minister. I thank him for his visionary leadership and I assure him of my unwavering support.

I also thank all my Cabinet colleagues for their support during the entire budget process.

I also take this opportunity to thank all our staff that worked on the Budget from the Ministry of Finance, Fiji Revenue and Customs Service and the legal support provided by the office of the Solicitor General.

Thank you Mr Speaker, Sir.

30 years of wait and sacrifice finally pays off for Namaqumaqua Villagers

By DIPESH KUMAR

HE Bitolevu clan of the Naculava tribe in the village of Namaqumaqua in Serua achieved a significant milestone after 30 years as they reclaimed 34 acres of land under the Coalition Government's Buy-Back Scheme.

The 34 acres of Namaqumaqua Freehold land was purchased by Government in 1995 after the approval of the then Cabinet. Since then, the Mataqali Bitolevu embarked on a 30-year bold and steadfast course to repay the Government that was now bearing fruits of collective effort and perseverance.

Upon receiving the land title recently, mataqali member Solomoni Seruitamana, expressed his gratitude and thanked the Government for their continued support.

Sharing future plans for the land, Mr Seruitamana said that without the Government's help the repayment of \$250,000 would not have been possible.

He shared that the repayment was not easy as they went through several challenges.

"There was a lot of sacrifices made in regards to the repayment. Within those 30 years, all mataqali members had to try and find a way in doing the repayments."

"There were lots of activities organised. At the end of every year our mataqali had a day called Bitolevu Day whereby all members including the vasu who have maternal links to the village came together to do soli just to ensure that we continue to pay the Lands Department."

"Sometimes there were quarrels. People had no money to even try and put in their

contribution. So sometimes when the payment was done, it was not full payment as required in the agreement of payment between the mataqali and the Ministry of Lands. Sometimes our end of the bargain was not fulfilled. There was a big struggle

money, using some system that they have put in place."

"I am really happy and I believe all the struggles that was made 25 to 30 years ago have today been fulfilled. It was quite a struggle. Sometimes we had lost hope that

She shared that their sacrifice will not go in vain as they will utilise the land to its maximum potential and redirect the income for the better of the Namaqumaqua village.

"I would like to thank the elders for buying the land back. We are blessed as



Minister for Lands, Filimoni Vosarogo, with Bitolevu Mataqali members. Photo: DIPESH KUMAR

on our side, in terms of mataqali paying for the land."

Mr Seruitamana shared that many a times in hardships, the Government was willing to extend the timeline of the repayments so that the villagers can fulfil their end of the bargain.

"The Government officials came several times to sit with the mataqali members, especially the Ministry of Lands and the land use unit. They came most of the time to try and have sessions with the mataqali. There was discussion with regards to ways and means of how we can better pay the this land might never be given to us because of the struggle that we had to face."

Mr Seruitamana emphasised that mataqali Bitolevu already has plans with reclaimed land to utilise and derive income from it which was located just meters away from the village.

He shared that as three generations of the Bitolevu clan struggled to attain the land, it was the future generations that will benefit from it.

Sorani Divuya, 28, resident of Bitolevu, shared her gratitude to her ancestors and thanked them for their sacrifice.

the future generation. We are thankful for them."

"We plan to use the land the land for agriculture mostly, however our elders already have plans in place for the land."

Along with the mataqali Bitolevu, around eight land-owning units are part of the Freehold Land Buyback scheme.

The scheme was established in 1989 with the vision to revert land and assist iTaukei land owning units who had little to no cultivatable agricultural land that was purchased in the colonial days through barter and trade.

Tourism industry thank DPM for consistency in budget



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, speaks at the post budget consultation in Nadi last week. **Photo: DIPESH KUMAR**

By DIPESH KUMAR

HE tourism industry has thanked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, for delivering a budget that was consistent.

Vuda Marina general manager, Adam Wade, while speaking at the Nadi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NCCI) post budget consultation held last week, emphasised on this feature of the budget.

Mr Wade shared that over the years businesses have had a looming threat over them due to inconsistency in the budget making it hard for businesses to undertake future corporate decisions.

"Being a business owner, one of the important things that we came across this budget was consistency. With the previous government it was always very scary."

Mr Wade highlighted that businesses like his will now be able to focus on operating and bringing in more tourists in the country.

"One year it was 10 per cent VAT (value added tax) and then 15 per cent VAT and then it goes down to nine per cent so it becomes very hard to run a business and very hard to foresee on where we are going."

"This is sort of the perfect budget for us."

Speaking at the post budget consultation, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, shared that the Coalition Government was working towards building public trust.

He shared that business such as these create economic growth and the Coalition Government will take constructive criticism on board as this will benefit both stakeholders.

"It is our people, people in the private sectors, farmers, doctors, nurses and everyone that you can think of, they make the country productive and they contribute to its growth."

He emphasised that tourism industry has been at the forefront for Fiji and that the Ministry of Finance had taken their suggestions on major policy changes.

"You may agree with some and you may not agree with anything in terms of polices, but one thing we will have to agree on is that we now have a very open political environment where people are free."

DPM Prasad stated that the Coalition Government will continue to engage with stakeholders in constructive dialogue for better implementation of the budget.

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Govt allocates funding to address aging issue in agriculture sector

By JOSAIA RALAGO

N Government's bid to address the issue of aging farmers in the country, it has allocated over \$3 million to two agricultural institutions responsible for the training of young farmers.

While delivering the 2024-2025 National Budget, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, said the aging issue which was affecting farming communities across the country needed to be addressed urgently.

"We need to find avenues to train and educate the younger generation to take up farming," DPM Prasad said.

"To address this issue and provide a platform for agricultural education and training, we are providing \$3.1 million capital grant to Navuso Agriculture Technical Institute to construct a new facility that can train an additional 160 young agriculture farmers.

"We are also providing \$330,000 to Tutu Training Centre for infrastructural development of existing facilities."

The Head of the Navuso Agricultural Technical Institute, Uraia Waibuta, said they welcomed the investment by Government towards the institution of \$3.1 million, which was an increase of \$2Million from

"Last year, our allocation through the Ministry of Agriculture was \$1.1 million, and this was because we had lost our administration block and two classrooms in a fire last year," Mr Waibuta said.

"In addition to this, the Government has entrusted the institution to not only help address agricultural issues but to also be an avenue for school dropouts and unemployed youths interested in farming to develop their skills.

"We are truly grateful for this assistance as it would mean rebuilding the blocks and would allow the institution to increase its



Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO

intake."

Tutu Rural Training Centre in Taveuni director, Father Petero Matairatu, shared similar sentiments and' commended the Government for allocating \$330,000 towards their institution.

"This is much needed as it would help

the school provide a better learning environment for our students," Father Matairatu said.

The school offers a range of agricultural programmes with the young farmers three course as its core programme.

Continuation of free education hailed



Villagers of Valovoni in the interior of Cakaudrove have thanked the Government for its education assistance scheme. Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO

By JOSAIA RALAGO

HE continuation of the free education scheme is much needed amidst the high cost of living that we are

This was the statement from Jone Waimoka, a 64 villager of Valovoni in the interior of Cakaudrove, in reaction to the 2024-2025 National Budget announced on June 28, 2024.

Mr Waimoka said in the past they not only struggled to pay for the school fees but had to relocate their families to urban areas to access

"As farmers, with limited access to basic services like road, health centres and even a school, we toiled hard to put our children into the formal education system, with some dropping out because of the financial hardships faced," he

"The priority Government has placed in the education system is commended greatly, as it not only addresses one of the major difficulties we face, but it has allowed our children to pursue

higher education and ultimately get a job.

"This budget is one that looks at the welfare of the people, and for that I would like to thank the Coalition Government."

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, while delivering the 2024-2025 National Budget said, "We are providing \$66 million in the 2024-2025 Budget to support the provision of free education for our early childhood care education, primary and secondary students".

"For the continuation of the transport assistance for about 90,000 students, we have allocated \$37 million in this Budget.

"The \$200 back to school support for our children from families with household income of less than \$50,000 has become one of the flagship initiatives of the Coalition Government.

"We introduced this as soon as we came into Government and extended it again in the last budget assisting over 200,000 students in both rounds."

The Ministry of Education has been allocated a budget of \$627.6 million.

Senior citizens grateful for restructure of transport assistance



Sixty-eight year old Esiteri Samunidawa of Valovoni, Village in Cakaudrove thanks Government for the continuous assistance. Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO

By JOSAIA RALAGO

E are blessed to have a government that continues to take care of us in our old age." These were the words of 88-year-old Kalara Visako of Vuinqalutu Village, Dreketi in Macuata in reaction

to the restructure of the social pensioner's scheme.

While delivering the 2024-2025 National Budget, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, highlighted that from the August 1, 2024 senior citizens who are 70 years and above would be receiving \$150 monthly, as compared to the \$125 they are currently getting.

DPM Prasad said the additional \$25 was from the monthly transport allowance that would now be directed to their cash assistance.

Mrs Visako commended the initiative saying that at her age, it was difficult for her to use the bus and the \$25 would be put into good use this way.

"This is more reasonable and I would like to thank the Government for heeding to our complaints and for considering us in this budget," the mother

"While three of my children live next to me in the village, I live in my own house and this assistance has helped greatly in my day to day living."

Sixty-eight-year-old Esiteri Samunidawa of Valovoni, Saqani in Cakaudrove shared similar sentiments saying that she has been able to live independently with the allowance she has been getting.

"Imagine being at home and expecting your monthly allowance from Government, and as an elderly person this means a lot," Ms Samunidawa

"This is because we do not have the energy to continue with income generating activities like we did when we were young, we do what we can and the Government is there to help us."

"The restructure means that they continue to hear our voice and that we are cared for," she said.

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Prime Minister Rabuka meets with FSM Ambassador

RIME Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka met with the Ambassador of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), H.E Carson K. Sigrah.

The meeting looked at cooperation opportunities ahead of the 53rd Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting (53 PIFLM) scheduled next month in Tonga.

Ambassador Sigrah conveyed his appreciation on Fiji's role in reuniting the Pacific Islands Forum especially Prime Minister Rabuka and his reconciliatory efforts with the Micronesian sub-region.

It was also an opportunity to renew Fiji and FSM's commitment and cooperation to advance the bilateral relations that has spanned over 36 years.

In this respect, Fiji and FSM look forward to reviewing the Development Cooperation Agreement (DCA) to realign engagements on the key priorities such as connectivity,

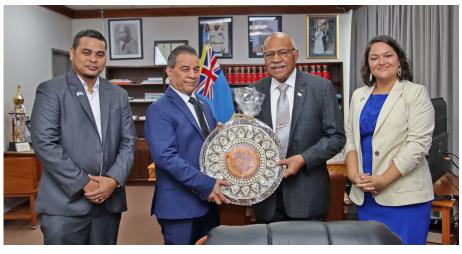
climate resilience and financing, Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) Fishing, defence and security to mention a few.

Prime Minister Rabuka thanked Ambassador Sigrah for the exchange of views to strengthen cooperation in the Pacific and beyond.

Prime Minister Rabuka affirmed Fiji's commitment to regional solidarity while citing the importance of Ocean of Peace Concept, to promote and uphold peace and prosperity in the Pacific and to the greater global community.

Additionally, Prime Minister welcomed the prospects for cooperation opportunities with police forces for both countries noting the increase in transnational organised crime in the region.

This was highly welcomed by Ambassador Sigrah as beneficial to both countries as well as the region. Connectivity, both air and maritime connections, was also discussed.



Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka and the Ambassador of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Carson K. Sigrah with his delegation. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

Ambassador Sigrah commended Prime Minister Rabuka for his exceptional leadership and vision for the region.

He expressed his support for the Oceans of Peace concept while also conveying FSM's commitment to work closely with Fiji to promote initiatives for the benefit of the two nations, and the Pacific peoples.

Ambassador Sigrah said, "The meeting today was an opportunity for us all to become more mindful of our relationship between the Federated States of Micronesia and the People of Fiji, rekindling the close ties between our two nations, and affirming FSM's core values of peace, unity, and liberty".

Fiji and FSM will commemorate with 36th anniversary of its bilateral relations on August 5, 2024.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Ministry congratulates staff for being awarded with Civil Service Medal



(centre) President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere and Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka, and Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lenora Qereqeretabua, and Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs Dr Lesikimacuata Korovavala with the recipients of the Civil Service Medals 2024 (CSM) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) at the CSM Investiture ceremony held at the State House. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

IVIL servants have been recognised for their outstanding services and invaluable contributions for nation building. These civil servants were bestowed with the Civil Service Medal Awards during the investiture ceremony hosted at the State House as part of the Civil Service Day 2024 celebrations. In a highly anticipated ceremony, the President, Wiliame Katonivere, conferred medals the civil servants representing ministries and government departments. Head of State congratulated all awardees and thanked them for their unwavering commitment and dedication to the civil service. President Katonivere spoke on the importance of the Civil Service Day to recognise the contributions of civil servants who consistently go above and beyond in delivering exceptional service to the people they serve as well as towards nation building. The ceremony was also attended by Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Viliame Gavoka, cabinet ministers, diplomatic corps and families and friends of the medal recipients. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Team was delighted that 11 of its longest serving staff were recognised for their exemplary service and distinguished devotion to duty. On behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka and the Assistant Minister Lenora Qereqeretabua, the Ministry congratulated all the staff who have been awarded with the Civil Service Medal. As the Civil Service Day was marked for the first time, the Ministry acknowledged and commended this unique initiative introduced by the Coalition Government which commends and recognises the remarkable contributions of the Fijian Civil Service towards nation building and the advancement of Fiji's interests at the regional and global stage.

The Ministry congratulates the following

recipients of the 2024 Civil Service Medal; Kubuabola, Fiji's High Ratu Inoke Commissioner New Permanent Luke Daunivalu, Fiji's Representative to the United Nations Office International Other and Organizations Ravai Antonio, Director Planning, Policy, Development - Om Prakash, Senior Foreign Services Officer - Luke Ravusoni, Director Finance Division - Ilisoni U. Tokalaulevu, Senior Asset Officer Josefa Tuima, Director for Asia Bureau Manjula Division Resources Human Ratish Singh, Counsellor for Fiji **Embassy** Beijing, China Elia Sevutia, Second Secretary at Fiji High Commission in New Delhi India Ateca Mocenakete, Second Secretary at Fiji High Commission in Papua New Guinea

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Ministry awarded with the Civil Service Customer Service Excellence Award for innovation



Prime Minister and Minister for Civil Service, Sitiveni Rabuka with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff at the commemoration of the Civil Service Day 2024 celebrations at the Albert Park in Suva on July 5, 2024.

Photo: SUPPLIED

RIME Minister Sitiveni Rabuka has encouraged civil servants to continue serving the nation to the best of their abilities.

In his remarks on the last day of the Civil Service Week

In his remarks on the last day of the Civil Service Week event, Prime Minister Rabuka in his keynote address thanked all the civil servants for their unwavering commitment to service, their sacrifices and contributions towards nation building.

He also spelt out the Government's expectations of civil servants and what it means for the nation and the people that they serve.

The Prime Minister acknowledged the important role played by the civil servants in their call of duty to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the Government's policy goals for a better quality of life for the people, for national development and prosperity.

PM Rabuka encouraged civil servants to continue serving our nation to the best of their abilities.

Further, he reaffirmed the Government's continued efforts to reform the service, streamline processes and improve services.

On the same note, the Prime Minister said that the celebrations provided the civil servants the opportunity to review themselves and renew their commitment to better serve the people Fiji.

A major highlight of the civil service celebrations was also the presentation of Customer Service Awards to recognise the outstanding achievements of the various ministries.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs team was pleased to be awarded with the Customer Service Excellence Award for Innovation at the Civil Service Day 2024 Celebrations.

At the occasion, the school students had the opportunity to access first-hand information regarding government services through the information and awareness booths displayed by the government ministries and departments.

As part of the week-long celebration, the Civil Service Medals (CSM) investiture ceremonies were held to honour civil servants who have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

The celebrations commenced with the RoC market event to support SMEs, and included the tree-planting and clean-up campaign as well as the wellness programme on Wednesday.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Team was proud to join in the celebrations, which is a commendable initiative to recognise civil servants and their contributions towards the development of our nation.

The Ministry also participated in the Civil Service Day celebrations which began with a march and float procession in the streets of Suva, followed by an official program held at the Albert Park on Friday 5th July 2024.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Rewa province looks at sustainable development

By JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA

HE Rewa Provincial Council has been commended for being among the first provinces to develop a sustainable development plan.

Rewa high chief and Minister for Public Works, Transport, and Meteorological Services, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, in opening the Rewa Provincial Council Meeting in Lami recently, has asked the council to align the plan to the National Development Plan.

He said this, however, does not prevent the province from seeking support from financial backers, including other governments or non-governmental organisations, to assist with development initiatives.

In his address, Minister Tuisawau briefly discussed various government initiatives aimed at empowering the people, with a particular focus on those in rural areas.

On climate change, he said the province, located in the Rewa River delta, faces significant challenges from rising sea levels.

This has led to numerous requests for seawalls and other mitigation measures but the Minister has emphasised that established protocols must be followed for such requests.

This process involves initiating requests at village meetings, progressing them to the Tikina level, and then advancing them to the Provincial level, where they will be prioritised and presented to the Government.

On infrastructure, Minister Tusawau said the Fiji Roads Authority will work with Public Works Department to address roads that have been neglected for a long time.

He updated the council on the Rewa-Vutia road, highlighting that the technical and engineering works were progressing and

Rewa high chief and Minister for Public Works, Transport, and Meteorological Services, Ro Filipe Tuisawau, with the women of Rewa who were at the opening of the Rewa Provincial Council Meeting. Photo: **JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA**

once completed, the costing will be worked out before the call for tender.

On health, Minister Tuisawau, while encouraging a healthy lifestyle to combat non-communicable diseases, raised concern regarding the rise in HIV cases, calling on youths to be more responsible and support

government efforts to curb its rapid rise.

The Government has, on its part, approved the establishment of the Anti-Narcotic Bureau, which was envisioned to address the drug-related challenges being facing, which was also a contributing factor to the rise in HIV cases.

You are here for a purpose: PM



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka with invited guests and members of the Kadavu Provincial Council.

Photo: JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA

By JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA

MPOWER the people of Fiji through unity."
This was the message of the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, while opening Kadavu Provincial Council, he stated that this vision drives everything the Government undertakes including the recent announcement of the National Budget 2024-2025.

He said that rural development was ongoing and some villages have been relocated due to climate change impacts, and others earmarked for future relocation.

The Prime Minister highlighted that the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) has restructured its operations to align with the plans of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs.

"I am thankful for the revitalisation of the Indigenous Business Council, and I have urged them to dispel the misconception that iTaukei businesses are destined for failure."

"As of today, all iTaukei businesses are expected to rise and thrive, with the assistance of the FDB's interest-free loans for the first three years."

"It is imperative to discuss matters beyond the administration of the province. This should include a robust focus on economic empowerment and income generation. The Ministry of Trade is committed to supporting Micro, Medium, and Small Enterprises (MSMEs)."

PM Rabuka also urged the people of Kadavu to actively engage with the Government's economic empowerment initiatives and to participate in these programs including the 'Rural and Outer

Development Program' or ROI.

He mentioned that the Government was also addressing communication difficulties faced in many areas around the country such as some areas in Kadavu which are without cellular networks.

On the 2024-2025 National Budget, PM Rabuka said the focus will be to prioritise utilisation.

"You will be aware that certain allocations have been made in the Budget for various developments but implementation has been slow in the current financial year as many Ministries did not utilise their capital allocations.

"As Mata-ni-Tikina (District representatives) to the Provincial Council, you must be vigilant and raise these hard questions when capital implementation delays happen for developments in your province which have been approved for implementation with an allocation in the Budget."

He said that holding the government departments accountable for fulfilling their commitments was crucial and if they fail, it should be reported through the iTaukei Administration channels.

On the war on drugs, PM Rabuka said this battle requires all hands-on deck approach, as it falls on everyone to do their bit to fight this drug epidemic which was destroying individual addicts, families and threatens communities and the nation.

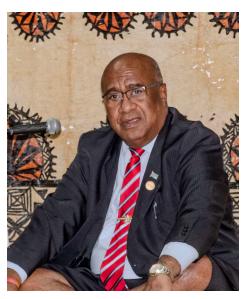
"At the same time, we must support those affected by drug use. It's never too late to rehabilitate someone, whether they have been addicted for decades or have just started. They need our love and support to free themselves from drugs," he said.

Govt pledges support for iTaukei empowerment at Lau Provincial Council meeting

By JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA

HE restoration of the Great Council of Chiefs is envisioned to assist us iTaukei's in generating dialogue on facing challenges and bringing new ideas for business, education, and development."

This was highlighted by the Deputy Prime Minister and MinisterforTrade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica, during the Lau Provincial Council meeting held in Suva recently, where he also assured the Vanua o Lau of the Government's commitment to assist in the installation of the Tui Nayau in July of next year.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises, and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica, during the Lau Provincial Council meeting held in Suva recently. **Photo: JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA**

The DPM stated that it is only right for the Government to fund the 14 provincial councils, relieving the people of provincial levies.

He added that the current review of the iTaukei Administration will include the iTaukei Affairs Board, provincial councils, Tikina councils, and the position of Roko.

"The purpose is to develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses the iTaukei people's needs and ambitions while also encouraging community unity and resilience," DPM Kamikamica told the council.

On national development, he said the road upgrades and construction on some islands will bolster economic activities and enable farmers to venture into commercial agriculture.

"In support of that, my Ministry is steadfast in our efforts to introduce cooperative businesses in our villages and rural communities, enhance existing ones, and revive those that have succumbed over the years."

DPM Kamikamica announced that Fiji Water was expanding into commercial agriculture and that this new business activity will benefit rural communities, supporting many farmers by including them in their network of suppliers and ensuring a stable market for their produce.

Citing an example of a steady market, he said the West Coast of the United States has about 400 Kava Bars, with an average of 10 new bars opening each week.

"That is a very lucrative business opportunity for our yaqona farmers, and I implore farmers in the islands that grow yaqona to plant more and tap into that market."

"The Government is here to support you and ensure the economic empowerment of our communities. This empowerment will, in turn, enable the Government to bring development to our rural areas."

DPM Kamikamica added that while the Government was in the rebuilding process, there were challenges that must be faced and will require the support of the people.

Sunday July 14, 2024

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OFiji Government

Team Fiji presents iTatau to the Head of State ahead of 2024 Paris Summer Olympics



President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere with members of the Fiji Rugby Men's 7s team at the State House recently. Photo: NANISE NEIMILA

By NANISE NEILMILA

EMBERS of the Fiji team that will be representing Fiji at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympic Games, including officials, presented their itatau to the President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, at the State House

Leading the delegation was the Team

Fiji Chef de Mission to the 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games, Sale Sorovaki, extended his heartfelt thanks to the Head of State for receiving the

President Katonivere, on behalf of his wife and the people of Fiji, extended his well wishes to every athlete that will be participating at the upcoming 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games held next month.

"When you depart our shores to

represent our beloved nation, you take with you the hopes of every Fijian back home. Whether it be rugby, swimming, or any sport, remember that you are ambassadors of Fiji."

"Listen to your coaches and officials, enjoy yourself, and do your best. Always remember where you began this Olympic dream and ensure that you will all participate in your individual sport to the best of your ability."

Katonivere President thanked the officials and coaches for their commitment and dedication to nurturing the athletes that will be representing our country.

Team Fiji will be represented in the sports of rugby 7s men's and women's, sailing men's and women's, taekwondo, swimming, athletics, and judo.

The 2024 Paris Summer Olympics will take place from July 26-August 11th, 2024.



Noda Viti

Sigatabu, 14 ni Jiulai 2024

8 Drauniveva, 10 Tabana 15 ni Lavelave ni Ivola

VAKAVINAVI-NAKATAKA O HON SAUKURU NAI VOTAVOTA KINA NONA TABANA

iTalanoa ena Drauniveva 3

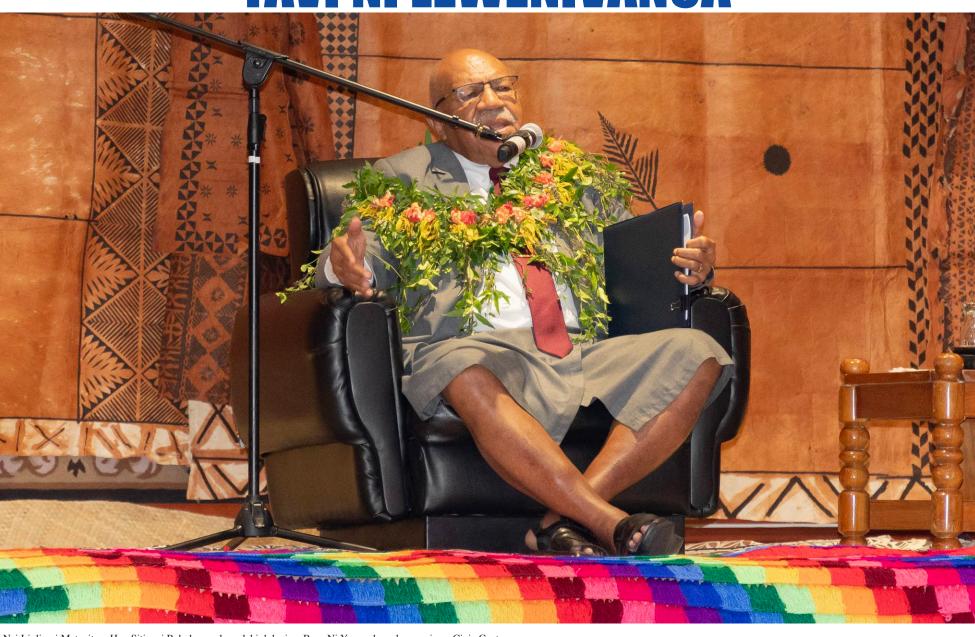


VAKAMACALA ME BALETA NAI TUVATUVA VAKAILAVO.

iTalanoa ena Drauniveva 6



VEIVAKADEITAKI O PM RABUKA NA BIBI NI TAVI NI LEWENIVANUA



Nai Liuliu ni Matanitu o Hon Sitiveni Rabuka ena kena laki dolavi na Bose Ni Yasana ka vakayacori ena Civic Center

laki vulagi dokai nai liuliu ni Matanitu o Hon Sitiveni Rabuka ena kena laki dolavi na Bose Ni Yasana o Kadavu.

E vica sara nai ulutaga e vakabibitaka tiko o Hon Rabuka ena vuku ni kena gadrevi na veivakatoroicaketaki ka vaka kina na kena gadrevi na Duavata ena vanua o Viti.

"Onisa kila nisa toso tiko na veivosaki me baleta na tuvatuva veivakatoroicaketaki ni Matanitu, ena vuku nin vica na yabaki sa tu e matada, nai tuvatuva ni veivakatoroicaketaki ni Matanitu ena dau rogoci e liu na nomuni nanuma na lewenivanua".

E vakaraitaka o Hon Rabuka na bibi ni Matabose vakoro, nina dau rogoci kina na domodra na lewenikoro, kau cake ena Bose Ni Tikina, ka laveti cake sara kina Bose Ni Yasana, ni bera ni biu yani kina Tabana se na matabose e qarava na vakatabakidua na kena sokomuni mai na veitukutuku ni bera ni biu ki nai tuvatuva ni Matanitu.

E kuria o Hon Rabuka nisa toso sara tiko

na cakacaka ni kena valuti na waigaga ni veivakamatenitaki, ka sa vakavuna sara tiko ga vakalevu na kavoro ni vuvale, ka vaka kina na veivakasaurarataki vei ira na lewenivanua e Viti.E sa gadrevi na Duavata kei na Cakacaka Vata ena vuku ni kena tovolei mena valuti na kena vakayagataki na Waigaga. E na sega ni rawa ni galala o Viti enai valu oqo esa dodonu meda taqomaki ira nai Tabagone kei na gone.

"Au. vakavinavinaka vakalevu ena vuku ni noqu mai tiko ni Bose Ni Yasana na siga nikua , na veika kece sara eda cakava , se Valenivolavola Ni Yasana se Bose Yaco , se Matabose Cecere , eda na dau raici ira na ena loloma ni Turaga. Sa dodonu meda tucake , ka vakaukauwataki keda".

Sa vakanuinui vinaka tu na Paraiminisita o Hon Rabuka nina dua na yabakai vinaka ni veiqaravi ena Yasana o Kadavu ka veitauriligataki na sasaga ni veivakatoroicaketaki ena noda vei vanua kece sara.

VAKAMATATATAKI NA TUVATUVA VOU VAKAILAVO NI MATANITU

sa vakamatatataka na Minisita ni Lavo o Hon Biman Prasad nai tuvatuva vou vakailavo ni Matanitu Cokovata ni oti na kena mai kacivaki ena Mua ni Macawa sa oti eda sa vakanadakuya. E laurai ni veika vakailavo ena vanua o Viti esa tubu kina 2.8 na pasede ena yabaki. E vica sara na vanua bibi esa tuvana na matanitu ena kena tubu eso nai votavota kina duidui Tabana Ni Veiqaravi.

- Tubu cake na kedra I sau na Cakacaka Vaka matanitu kei na Veikabani, ka vaka talega kina na oira na veiqaravi ena vanua ni Veivakadodonutaki.
- Vagolei e 9.2 na milioni ki vei ira na Tamata Caka caka ena Vatukoula Gold Mine.
- 57 na Milioni kina Fiji National Provident Fund me baleta na Penisini ena lomani 20 na yabaki mai qo,ka 4 na milioni ena saumi ena loma ni yabaki oqo.
- Veisautaki na \$25 nai vodovodo ka na rawa ni solia na cash vei ira na lewe 48,000 na lewenivanua ka ra vukei ena Social Welfare era yabaki 70 ka lako cake.
- Tosoi cake na nodra I lavo na peniseni mai na \$125 kina \$150 vei ira na yabaki 70 ka lako cake.
- Vagolei e \$10 na Milioni kina veivakalivalivataki ka rawa ni okati kina e 55,000 na veivuvale.
- Vagolei e \$4 na milioni kina kena vakavinakataki na veiqaravai ni Tabana ni Wai ka rawa ni qaravi kina e 40,000 na vuvale.
- \$66 na milioni kina Tabana ni Vuli ena Free Edu cation Scheme (Sova ni vuli, Primary ka vaka kina

na Secondary)

- Vagolei e \$37 na milioni kina veivuke ni vodovodo vei ira na gonevuli ka rawa ni okati kina e 90,000 na ginevuli.
- \$40 na Milioni kina veivuke ni lesu ki vuli(Back to School) ena 2025.
- \$3 na milioni kina veivuke ni porokaramu ni "Ter mite Control Assistance Programme".
- \$24 na milioni ena veivuke ni Free Medical Check vei ira na General Practitioners.\$30,000 vei ira na lailai na rawaka vakailavo, ka vaka kina oira na ruku ni social welfare schemes, kei ira na vakale qai na nodra Ivi (kidney dialysis).
- \$96 na milioni kina ena veivuke I wanimate kei nai yaya ena veivalenibula.
- \$150.50 na miliuoni e vagolei kina sikolasivi vei ira na 9,9940 na gonevuli era vuli tiko mai ka vaka kina na 10,830 vei ira na vakalewe fomu vou.
- \$13.5 na milioni ena kena vakavinakataki na vei vakavaletaki enai tikotiko e Sakoca, Tavle, Field 40, Tore, Valewaquyaya(Ba) kei na Vunika Labasa.
- \$7.9 na Milioni na kena vakavinkataki na wavu e Veikoba(Valelevu)vakatoroicaketaki na Public Rental Board Subsidy, na taoni lailai e Koroipita ka vaka kina na Tabana ni Habitat for Humanity.
- \$5.8 na Milioni ena kena vakatoroicaketaki na Vei kau ena noda vanua, ka vaka kina na Paini ena vei yanuyanu kei na REDD+.
- \$5.7 na milioni ena vagolei kina 1,7000 ena poro karamu ni Borehole e Vitilevu , Vanulaevu ka vaka



O Hon Biman Prasad na Minisita Ni Lavo ena kena kacivaki ena Bose Lawa nai Tuvatuva Vou Vakailavo ni Matanitu

kina na Veiyanuyanu.

- \$5.5 na milioni na grant e vagolei vei ira na voli vale(1st Home Buyers Grant.)
- \$4 na milioni na vei ira nai taukei ni Bisinisi ka va ka kina na Provincial Holding Companies na baqe ni Veivakatoroicaketaki(FDB) ka vaka kina na Merchant Finance)
- \$5000,000 mme baleta na Womens Expo
- Veivuke me baleta na veisinisi ena Tuadaku ni Koro Lelevu(MSME).
- \$100,000 e vagolei ena Co- Operative grant ka vaka kina na Veibisinisi.

TOSOI CAKE NA POROKARAMU NI VEIVAKAVALETAKI



ni vale ena 24*16 na kena balavu kei na

Raba ia ena yabaki vou vakailavo, keitou

sana tuvatuva ka tiko mena veisautaki

nai tuvatuva ena kena sa biu yani na vale

E na kena ciqomi nai vola kerekere

, na cakacaka oqo e gadrevi mena

Oqo sa neitou tuvatuva tiko ena yabaki

vakailavo vou, e bibi mena kilai ni sega

ni veiraurau na wasewase ni lavon e ciqo-

mi, ena sega ni rawa nira na vukei kece

E sa matata vakavinaka ni porokaramu

ni RHA e dua na veika e ratou sa tuta-

ka na Matanitu Cokovata, ena vinakati

mena vakadrodroi vakalevu vei ira na

veiyanuyanu kei na Taudaku ni Koro Le-

levu, nisa tu vakarau na Tabana ena kena

raici mera vukei na lewenivanua, ena

kena muri na veilawa ena va nai wase-

wase ni veivuke ena veivakavaletaki.

na lewenivanua era vola kerekere mai"

vakaukauwataki na RHA Programme.

e rua na kena rumu.

a Tabana ni Veivakatoroicaketaki ena Taudaku ni Veikorolelevu, Veiyanuyanu kei na Leqa Tubukoso esa cavu I kalawa saraa ena kena vakavoui na Porokaramu ni Veivuke ni Vevakavaletaki(Rural Housing Assistance Programme)ena yabaki vou vakailavo oqo.E mai raicilesu nai tuvatuva oqo ena Tuvatuva Vakailavo ena yabaki oqo ka rauta ni 3 na milioni na dola e votai taumada kina Tabana ni Veivakavaletaki.

"E na yabaki vakailavo 2023-2024 keitou marautaka na kena raici nisa rawa mena vakayacori e 155 na porokaramu ena va nai wasewase e Viti.Na Porokaramu oqo e oka kina na na kena tara na vale vou, vakacavari na veicakacaka, semati tale eso ka tara talega na nodra vale na vakaleqai tu na tiki ni yagodra".

E na gauna oqo e tiko ga na tuvatuva

MAI NI GUNU ENA KOROTURAGA

noda vanua.

E ratou sa biuta cake talega na Tabana
Ni Wai na nodratou vakatutu mena dua

GADREVI ME TAROVI NA LEQA NI



Hon Ro Filipe Tuisawau ena kena laki sikovi nai Vakaso ni Wai e Colo I Suva.

sa mai vakaraitaka na Tabana Ni Wai ena noda vanua nisa tiko nai tuvatuva mena vakavinakataki na veiqaravi ni Tabana ni Wai ena veivanua e Tacirua ka vaka kina e Colo I Suva. Na usutu levu ni sasaga oqo sai koya na kena laurai na veiqaravi ni tabana , na veidredre e na vei mataitikotiko ka vaka kina na kena vakadrodroi na wainigunu savasa.

Na Tabana ni Wai e vakarautraka na wainigunu savasava taudua ena noda veivanua kece sara e Viti. E vakatekivu mai ena kena tarai cake nai yaya ni veiqaravi mena rawa ni veisotavi kei na veigagadre ena loma ni vanua e Tamavua kei Colo I Suva. Na veiqaravi oqo ena laveta cake tale na vakadrodri ni wai ena veivanua oqo.E na gauna saraga oqo e dua na leqa levu e sotavi sai koya na kena sotava na leqa. ni wai oira na veibisinisinisi ka vaka kina na veivuvale.Sai tuvativa ni Tabana Ni Wai na kena sagai mena wai savasava kei na tokoni ni ni toos na

Ni Wai na nodratou vakatutu mena dua na Kabani mena rawa ni konitaraki taki ena vuku ni veiqaravi mena rawa ni tara na porokaramu ni Elevated Princess Road Infrastructure. Na porokaramu oqo ena vakarurugi ena "Conditions of Contract for Plant and Design Build", FIDIC Yellow Book 2017.Na konitaraki ena dodonu mena kila vinaka na veiyaya kece ka vaka kina na vakatutu mena rawa ni walia ka dei talega na veiqaravi.E biu na veivosaki oqo enai ka 31 ni vula o Me, 2024ka na sogo talega ena siga Vakaraubuka nai ka 26 ni Jiulai, 2024.

E vakaraitaka na Minisita ni Veiqaravi ena Tabana ni Wai ka vaka kina na draki o Hon Ro Filipe Tuisawau na nona tokona na cakacaka oqo. E ra kuria ena nodra vakaraitaka na bibi ni kena vakavinakataki na veiqaravi ni Tabana Ni Wai mena veisotavi kei na tiko bulabula ni lewenivanua e Viti.

E vakaraitaka talega o Hon Tuisawau na vakavinavinaka levu vei ira nai vakalesilesi ni Tabana Ni Wai ena vuku ni veiqaravi yalodina ena kena vakarautaki na wainigunu savasava vei ira na lewenivanua. E vakavinavinakataki talega ena vuku ni tavi bibi ni kena maroroi tiko bulabula ena yabaki oqo.

Esa tu vakarau na Tabana Ni Wai mena vakacavari na cakacaka oqo ka tomani tiko ga na veiqaravi ni wai vinaka ena veivanua e Tamavua kei Colo I Suva.



VA VA

VOTAI E 2 NA BILIONI NA DOLA KINA TABANA NI SARAVANUA



E vakaraitaka na Minisita Ni Saravanua o Hon Viliame Gavoka na kena marautaki nai Tuvatuva Vou Vakailavo ni Yabaki 2024-2025. Ni oti na kena votai kina nodratou tabana e \$2 na bilioni mena laveta cake tale kina na veiqaravi ka vaka na nodra gole mai vakalewelevu na saravanua ena noda vanua.

"E marautaki vakalevu na Budget oqo ni saravanua, na 40% GDP ni Matanitu e lako tiko mai na Saravanua , ia nai tuvatuva qo ena vukea sara vakalevu na kena cakacakataki na saravanua.

E vakaraitaka talega na Minisita ni Lavo o Hon Biman Prasad nisa tu nai tuvatuva ena kena tosoi cake nai vakatagedegede ni veiqaravi. E vica sara na vanua esa navuci mena vakavinakataki ka vaka talega kina na kena tara tale e vica na Otela mena rawa ni tasova tiko ga mai vakalevu na Saravanua ena Noda Vanua.

E vica na vanua esa nanumi taumada mena tara vou kina e so na otela me vaka taka

- Rydges mai vei ratou na Flour Mills of Fiji
- Days Inn by Whyndham
- Radisson Blu Mirage
- One n Only ena Yatu Yasawa Balaba lavu
- Namuka Bay Resort
- Nalagi Apartments ka vaka kina na
- Yatu Lau kei na Damodar Investment e Pacific Harbour.

E so talega na vanua ni saravanua e sa vakavinakataki tiko ena gauna nikua me vaka na

- Vatu Talei ena Sofitel Fiji
- Crowne Plaza
- Westin
- Hilton Garden Inn ena Koroturaga
- Cathay Hotel e Lautoka
- Paramount Hotel e Nadi ka vaka kina na
- Wyndham Graden e Wailoaloa Nadi.

Sa vakanuinui vnk tu na. Minisita nina tubu levu sara na veiqaravi ni Saravanua ena noda Vanua.

VAKAVINAVINAKATAKA O HON SAUKURU NAI VOTAVOTA KINA NONA TABANA



Na Minista ni Veivakatoroicaketaki ena Noda Vei Taoni o Hon Maciu kei ira na Mata ni Veitaoni ena Noda Vanua

vakaraitaka na Minisita ni Tabagone kei na Qito o Hon Jese Saukuru na nona marautaka enai votavota e ratou sa votai kina na nodratou tabana ni veiqaravi ena kena mai kacivaki nai tuvatuva vou vakailavo ni Matanitu 2024-2025.

"Keitou marautaka na tuvatuva vou vakailavo, me vaka nisa tubu mai na 20%, esa tomani tiko ga na kena tubu mai na gauna tekivu kina na veiqaravi 2022, esa

dua nai vakaraitaki vinaka vei keuitou, e vakaraitaki talelga ni Matanitu esa to-kona vakalevu na bibi ni qito ena noda vanua".

E kuria o Hon Saukuru nai tuvatuva esa biu tu me baleta na veivakatoroicaketaki ni Tabagone ka vaka kina na Qito. Na qito edua na sala ena rawa ni nodra rawa ni gole yani Taikadua na Tabagone ena vuku ni sasaga vakaqito, mera na laki vakaraitaka na nodra taledi ka sala talega ni nodra rawa ni laki konitaraki ki vanua tani.

"Nai tuvatuva esa biu tiko oya na kena gadrevi mena vakavinakataki na veirara ni qito ena noda vanua, mena rawa ni vakayacori na qito ena veivanua mena rawa 'ni tadola na nodra rai kei na gaunisala mera na muria".

E tomana o Hon Saukuru na kena tomani tiko na vanua ni sisili e Lautoka(Swimmimg Pool) ni sa tu talega e levu na cakacaka mena qaravi , nisa t enai tuvatuva ni Matanitu.

"E sa tu talega nai tuvatuva ena yabaki vou vakailavo oqo ena kena sagai na cakacaka vakavoleka kei ratou na Tabana Ni Lawa, me vaka sa tubu cake sara tiko na kisi ni basu lawa vei ira nai Tabagone, edua na tuvatuva mena rawa nira vakaitavi taki ira nai Tabagone ena qito kaq vakalailai na Basulawa".







2024 -2025 National Budget Nona Vosa

Vukevuke ni Prime Minister ka Minister ni Lavo, Navunavuci, Veivakatorocaketaki kei na Tabana ni Wiliwili Honourable Professor Biman C Prasad

Turaga Sivika, Au tucake meu sauma na veika kece sa mai rogo tiko me baleta na ituvatuva vakailavo ni 2024-2025.

Rua na siga sa oti qo Turaga Speaker, au a vakarorogo sara toka vakavinaka. Sega ni levu sara noqu via vosa lesu ena vakatutu ka rogo toka mai na ito e rua ena loma ni vale ni boselawa. Au via vakaraitaka na noqu vakavinavinaka vua na Turaga Prime Minister, kei iratou na noqu itokani ena matanitu ena nodra vakatutu me baleta na ituvatuva vakailavo. Gole talega na noqu vakavinavinaka vua na Turaga na iLiuliu ni To ni Veisaqa kei ira kece na mata tu vakataki ira, ni so vei ira era tokona na ituvatuva vakailavo, eso tale era vakatura eso na vakasama momona. Eratou sega ni okati eke o iratou kau rawa ni vakatoka me ratou itokani yalodina Turaga Speaker, ia sa vakaraitaka tikoga na kena sa lesu tale mai na bula galala ki na noda vanua. Sa oti na bula rerere, sa rawa nida vakaraitaka na lomada ena doudou.

E ka dokai dina vei keitou na matanitu na neitou vakasuka lesu tale ki na noda vanua na bula sereki, na bula galala meda vosa vakadodonu, meda vosataka sara beka na matanitu ena inaki ga me toso tikoga kina ki liu na noda vanua.

Turaga Sivika, e dua na ka a vakaraitaka o Honourable Sanjay Kirpal. E kaya nira dau raica vata na ituvatuva vakailavo na lewe ni Bose Yaco ena matanitu sa oti ni vo e dua na aua me kacivaki ena loma ni vale ni Bose Lawa.

Ia **Turaga Speaker**, au vakavinavinaka vua na Turaga Prime Minister ena maqosa ni nodra veiliutaki ena kena vakarautaki na ituvatuva vakailavo ni matanitu. Na ituvatuva oqo e vakadeuci sara ga kina vakavinaka mai vei ira na vakailesilesi vakamatanitu, ki vei ira na Vunivola Tudei, tarai ira sara yani na vei Minister yadudua, kau cake sara ki na sub-committee ni Bose Yaco, mai na sub-committee sa na qai soli na ituvatuva vakailavo ki na lewe ni Bose Yaco taucoko me vakadonuya, ni bera ni qai mai kacivaki ena Vale ni Bose Lawa.

E matata qai savasava vinaka na ituvatuva oqo Turaga Speaker, ka sa ikoya oqo na iwalewale e vakamuria tiko na matanitu ena kena vakarautaki na ituvatuva vakailavo, kau nuitaka ni sa vakaoqo tiko na kena ivalavala ena veiyabaki tubu mai na 53 na pasede ena 2006. sa tu oqo e matada.

Turaga Sivika, e sega ni rawarawa na kena dau vakarautaki na ituvatuva vakailavo, vakauasivi ena levu ni dinau ka biuta tu mai na matanitu sa oti. E drakidrakita kina na kena vagarai na ilavo mera qaravi vinaka kina na lewenivanua, me vakavinakataki talega kina e levu na ka. Sa qai kuri ga ni leqa na dredre ka kauta mai na matetaka levu na COV-ID-19.

Turaga Sivika na ilavo ni matanitu e rawati ga mai na vakaicavacava e kumuna, kei na ilavo e dinautaka. Sega ni cakacaka rawarawa, ka sa bibi kina me raica na matanitu me vakayagataki sara vakavinaka na kena ilavo kei na kena iyau. Ena gadrevi kina na vakatulewa vakayalomatua, kei na kena vakabibitaki na veika ena rawati kina na bula vinaka vakailavo, ka sega soti ni bibi na vakadedetaki ni veiqaravi vakapolitiki.

Ena yasana kadua, sa ka bibi dina me vakailavotaki vinaka na matanitu, baleta qo ga na sala ena rawa nira qaravi sara kina vakavinaka na lewenivanua. Ke sega, ia sa na yaco ga kina na veika sa da mai raica tu nikua. Sa takiveiyaga na ilavo ni noda matanitu me vakavoutaka na noda valenibula, vakavinakataki na gaunisala, vakadrodroi vinaka na paipo ni wai, samaki na ivakata, veisautaki na iyau makawa ni cakacaka, ka ra saumi vakavinaka na vakailesilesi. Ena qai oti ga na lega kece ogo kevaka me tubu ka vakabulabulataki sara vakavinaka na bula vakailavo ena noda vanua.

Turaga Speaker, qo sara ga na ka sa mai cakava na matanitu ena ikarua ni tuvatuva vakailavo me vakarautaka. Keitou garauna me vakailavotaki vakavinaka na matanitu, me rawa ni qaravi vinaka kina na cakacaka levu ni veivakavoui ka me rawa talega ni saumi lesu ka vakalailaitaki sobu na dinau.

Dinau ni Matanitu

Levu sara na ka sa mai vakaraitaki tiko me baleta na dinau ni matanitu Turaga Speaker. A boroya na Turaga iLiuliu ni To ni Veisaqa e dua na iyaloyalo rairai vinaka ena nodratou gauna. Ia oqo na kena dina, ni lai yacova sara e 90 na pasede ni GDP na dinau nei Viti ena Julai 2022, ka

Ni mai cava na vula o Julai 2024, sa keitou vakalailaitaka kina na dinau ni matanitu ki na 78 na pasede ni GDP - lutu ena 12 na pasede ena loma ni 18 na vula. Levu dina na ka eratou kaya na ito ni veisaqa me baleta na veika e yaco ena loma ni 18 na vula. Dina kina na ka e vakaraitaka na Turaga Minister ni Qele ni vakaitamera dina na veika keitou sa mai rawata ena dela ni neitou veiqaravi. E sega ni cakacaka rawa, ia sa dua dina na sasaga vinaka sa mai rawati ena kena vakalailaitaki sobu tiko na dinau ni noda vanua.

Ena veiveisau keitou vakayacora ena tuvatuva vakailavo sa oti, sa mai bonati kina na leqa ka tara tiko na kumuni lavo ni noda matanitu, ka mai tarovi talega kina na tubu sivia ni dinau. Sa kena ibalebale kina, na totolo ga ni tubu vakailavo ni noda vanua, na totolo talega ni kena lutu na pasede ni noda dinau ki na GDP. Sa ka bibi kina me na tomani tikoga na sasaga oqo, ni na sega ni wali na leqa oqo ena loma ga ni 1 se 2 na yabaki. Oqo na cakacaka balavu, ena rairai tara sara tiko yani e 10 vakacaca na yabaki. Sa bibi kina meda na toka dei ena sasaga yaga oqo.

Turaga Sivika, e sega ni tiko ena neitou vakanananu me keitou na veiliutaki tikoga me 10 se 20 sara na yabaki na kena balavu. E dau vaqo beka na nodra nanuma eso tale beka na matanitu. Na ka ga keitou saga tiko, oya me davo vakavinaka ka davo vakasavasava na tosotoso ogo me na yaga ki na matanitu era na muri

Na gagadre kei na sasaga oqo Turaga Speaker era sarava na veimatabose lelevu ena noda vuravura, me vaka na IMF kei na World Bank, veimatabose ni dinau kei ira na isoqosoqo dauveitokoni tale eso. Oqo e vakatubura na bula nuidei ena noda vanua vei ira na daunibisinisi e Viti ka vaka kina vei ira mai vanua tani.

Sega ni Veisau na VAT

Turaga Sivika levu sara tiko na kena veitalanoataki na veika me baleta na VAT. Eratou taroga e so na lewe ni ito ni veisaqa na vuna e sega ni musuki tale kina na VAT. Au ririko vakalevu Turaga Speaker ena nodra vakatutu e so na mata me vakataki Hon Premila Kumar kei Hon Hem Chand me lutu na VAT mai na 15 na pasede ki na 9 na pasede.

Sa totolo sara nodratou guilecava Turaga Speaker ni nodratou matanitu a vakataqara ena iyaya volitaki kecega na VAT me 15 na pasede. Eratou qai vakalutuma ga Turaga Speaker ena veika kedatou a vakatura ena gauna kedatou se tiko kina ena ito ni veisaqa ni oti na veidigidigi ena yabaki 2014. Ratou vakalutuma na VAT, ka ratou sega ni vakua na ivakacavacava oqo ena so na kakana, ka qai duidui na pasede ni VAT ratou lavaka. E 15 na pasede, 9 kei na 0.

Sega vakadua ni ratou bau kauta cake mai na tikina oqo. Sega talega ni ratou bau tukuna Turaga Speaker ni matanitu ena gauna oqo, e vakarota me kua ni taqa na VAT ena 21 na kakana dau voli vakalevu, ka kena ika22 tiko na wainimate (prescribed medicine).

Au via vakaraitaka vei Hon Premila Kumar ni kevaka kedatou vakalutuma na VAT ki na 9 na pasede mai na 15 na pasede, ena vakayalia kina na matanitu na ivakacavacava e \$600 na milioni. Dua na pasede na VAT e rawata tiko na ivakacavacava e \$100 na milioni. Na taro me tarogi, ena qai kau mai vei na ivakacavacava kece qo Hon Kumar? Me na dinautaki tale beka e \$600 na milioni? Ke da raica vakavinaka, ena sega talega ni dua ena rawa ni dinautaka vei Viti na ilavo levu ogo. Se me sa na musu beka ena \$600 na milioni na veiqaravi ni matanitu? Sega sara ni dua vei kemudou e via vakatura cake mai na tikina oqo.

Turaga Sivika, oni na nanuma lesu ni gauna kedatou se tiko kina ena to ni veisaga, ratou dau weroka voli se evei na nodatou ituvatuva vakailavo. Walu na yabaki nodratou dau vakasosataki au toka me ratou taroga, evei na nomu ituvatuva vakailavo? Au dau sauma lesu ni dredre vei kedatou na ito ni veisaqa ena gauna oya na vakasokumuna na itukutuku me buli kina e dua na ituvatuva vakailavo. Ia eratou sa galala vakalevu ena gauna oqo Turaga Speaker, evei gona na nomudou ituvatuva vakailavo? Evei sara?

E dodonu me matata tiko vei ira na lewenivanua Turaga Speaker ni levu na itukutuku eratou mai wasea tiko na ito ni veisaqa e sega soti sara ni dina taucoko. E vakarerevaki na mataqali tukutuku vakaoqo. Rawarawa sara nodratou mai



tukuna e ke ni dodonu me musu na VAT, ka ratou sega ni vakaraitaka na vanua me vakaisosomitaki mai kina na ivakacavacava sa mai musu oqo.

Au gadreva meu vakadeitaka **Turaga Speaker** ni keitou a vakasamataka ka vakadeuca sara vakavinaka na veika kece oqo ni bera ni keitou vakatubura ena ituvatuva vakailavo ni yabaki sa oti na VAT mai na 9 ki na 15 na pasede. Keitou taro ivakasala, veivosakitaka kei ira na kenadau, ka keitou taroga talega na nodra nanuma na lewenivanua. Keitou a sega ni cakava vuni.

Sega ni vakatulewa rawarawa, oya na vuna keitou vinakata me caka vakavinaka ka vakadodonu. Sega talega ni tauri vakacalaka na matanifika na 15 na pasede. Keitou vakasamataka, vakadeuca sara vakavinaka, ena kena gadrevi me vakailavotaki vakavinaka na veiqaravi ni matanitu, ka me vakalutuki talega kina na noda dinau.

Ke a sega ni keitou cakava ya, ia sa na dua na vanua dredre sara sa da na mai toka kina baleta ni sa na qai tubu ga ki lagi na levu ni dinau, sa ra na bese talega ni via soli dinau ki na matanitu e levu na kabani kei na mataisoqosoqo ena noda vuravura.

Au na qai vosa tale tiko ena veika me baleta na VAT niu tara yani na ulutaga ni Sau ni Bula ni Veisiga.

Vakatautauvata na Levu ni Dinau ki na Dua na Tamata

E so vei iratou na ito ni veisaqa a vosa tiko ena levu ni dinau ni matanitu, kei na kena vakatauvatani ki na tamata yadua e Viti. Meu vakamatata taka mada na tikina oqo:

E \$9.5 na bilioni na dinau ena gauna e mai veiliutaki kina na Matanitu Cokovata ena mua ni vula o Tiseba 2022;

Qo e tautauvata ni \$10,700 dua na tamata;

Me qai Julai 2025, na levu ni dinau e nanumi me na tiko ena \$10.9 na bilioni, rauta ni \$12,300 dua na tamata.

Kena ibalebale, ena loma ni 3 na yabaki ni veiliutaki ni Matanitu Cokovata, ena tiko na ivakatautauvata ni dinau ena \$1,600 dua na tamata.

Ena yasana kadua Turaga Speaker, a tiko na dinau ena \$2.9 na bilioni, se \$3,400 dua na tamata ena gauna eratou mai veiliutaki kina na matanitu sa oti ena 2006

Tubu na dinau ki na \$9.5 na bilioni, se \$10,700 dua na tamata ena dela ni nodratou veiliutaki. Ratou mai vakatubura kina na dinau ena \$6.6 na bilioni, ka vakatubura na ivakatautauvata ni dinau ki na dua na tamata ena \$7,300.

Turaga iLiuliu ni To ni Veisaqa, kei Hon Sachida Nand, qo na veika dina me baleta na ivakatautauvata ni dinau ki na dua na tamata. Me qai Julai 2025, sa na tiko ena \$1,600 dua na tamata na ivakatautauvata ni dinau ena dela ni neitou veiliutaki, ka \$7,300 dua na tamata ena gauna ni nomudou veiliutaki.

Debt trends

			Dinau dua
	Dinau	Wiliwili ni	Tamata
Yabaki	(\$billion)	Lewenivanua	(\$)
2006	2.9	837,271	3,400
2013	3.8	837,271	4,580
Dec-22	9.5	884,887	10,700
Jul-23	9.7	884,887	11,000
Jul-25	10.9	884,887	12,300

Na noda Matanitu Lelevu ni Veivoli e oka kina o Ositerelia, Niusiladi kei Amerika era sa sotava kece tiko e levu nai wiliwili ni tubu vakailavo ena vuku ni veileqa . Na matanitu o Ositerelia e 6.6 na pasede ena yabaki 2022(cecere taudua ena loma ni 31 na yabaki), Matanitu o Niusiladi e 7.2 na pas(

levu taudua ena 34 na yabaki) kei na Matanitu o Merika e 8.0 na pasede (levu taudua ena 40 na yabaki).

Nai sema ni gaunisala ni veivoli vei ira na veimatanitu ki vei Viti, e ka bula baleta nai sau ni kena vakau ena veimatanitu ena levu cake sara na kena rivarivabitaki ena loma ni 50% na pasede ena veika e umani ena vakau I yaya.

Nida veidutaitaka na veimatanitu me vaka taki Mauritius, na tubu e 10.8 %na pasede ena 2022, 7.0% ena 2023 kei na 5.9 na pasede ena 2024. Ena veimatanitu ena Pasivika ,na Matanitu o Vanuatau, e biuta e 6.7% ena 2022 , 12.0% ena 2023 kei na 6.7% ena 2024, na Matanitu o Tonga e tubu ena 8.5% ena 2022, 10.2% ena 2023 ka namaki tiko mena 5.4% ena 2024.

Turaga Na Sivika na levu ni tubu e Viti e tiko ena 5.1% ni mai cava na yabaki sa oti ka toso cake sara kina 7.1 % ena Evereli ni yabaki oqo. Na levu ni tubu ena Jiune ni 2024 e tu ena 6.7 %ka namaki mena vakadeitaki ena 3 kina 4 na pasede ni cava na yabaki oqo.

E vakaraitaka o Hon Usamate ni sega nise bau yaco na tubu levu vaka oqo, kevaka meda raica lesu na yabaki sa sivi, 2009 e 6.8%, 2011 e 7.7% kei na 2028 e 6.6%. 6.8%, 2011 7.7%, 2018 6.6%.

Na cava eda sa cakava ena 2 na yabaki vakailavo me vukei ira na noda tamata ena sau ni bula?

Keitou sa vakadeitaka tiko ga na 21 yaya ka sega nai vakacavacava ka sa biu talega kina na wainimate me na rawa ni toso cake nai wiliwili kina 22.Na veika oqo e oka kina na Pateta, Falawa, Raisi, Dhal, Ti, Varasa, Garlic, Kakana Tawaitini, Waiwai ni Vakasaqa, Masima, Sucu, Sucu Mamaca , Medra Sucu na gone, Sanitary Pads, Sovu ni savasava , Veva Ni Valelailai, Wainimate Ni Bati, Kasi ni Vakasaqa, Karisini ka vaka kina na Wainimate.Turaga na Sivika , keitou a biuta mai ena neitou tuvatuva (Manifesto)ni bera na veidigidigi ni 2022.

Ena tuvatuva vakailavo sa oti keitou sa vakatubura talega na ilavo vei ira na taura nai votavota ni social welfare, e tubu na 25 %vei ira na yabaki 70 ka 15% vei ira na se bera ni yabaki 70.

Esa tosoi cake nai votavota ni peniseni ni matanitu ka vaka kina na i lavo ni veiqaravi ni bula raraba kina 15% na pasodo Esa tosoi cake talega nai votavota vei ira na Turaga Ni Koro ,Mata Ni Tikina, Turaga Ni Yavusa ka vaka kina na Veiqaravi ena Valenivolavola Ni Yasana kei na Mata Ni Tikina.

Esa soli talega mai na \$ 200 na veivuke ni lesu ki vuli vei ira na gonevuli vaka uasivi vei ira na vuvale e lailai mai na \$50,000 na nodra rawaka vakailavo.

Turaga Na Sivika, e ratou lasu ena vuku ni ratou vakaraitaka ni tuvatuva ni Fiji First na veivuke vakavuli .Na Fiji First esa cakava mai na Okosita, 2022 kina Janueri 2023 e tubu ga kina \$1 ena loman ni 6 na vula, ka sa \$180.Na \$1 ena lomani 6 na vula e \$180 esa vakatabakidua kina lesu ki vuli.E ratou lasu ni veivuke ni lesu ki vuli.

Esa kacivakan talega nai liuliu ni Matanitu ena yabaki sa oti ni gauna keitou sana gole mai kina ena Matanitu, na bibi vei keitou oira na gonevuli, ka vaka kina na veitokoni.Sai koya oya nai tuvatuva levu ni Matanitu Cokovata.

E sa mai bokoci tani na \$650 na milioni na dinau ka vakatokai na TELS mai vei ira na 53,000 na gonevuli, esa vakamamadataka mai vei ira ena gauna era sa tekivu cakacaka kina, sana rawa nira vakayagataka nai lavo oya me vukei ira ka vaka kina na nodra matavuvale.

Ena tuvatuva vou vakailavo oqo, keitou sa vakarautaka kina e \$85 na milioni mena tubu kina na kedra I sau na 38,000 na cakacaka vakamatanitu kara se gadreva tu mai na 2017.

Esa toso kina dua ni kalawa ena kena sa na tubu nai sau ni Tamata Cakacaka kina \$5 dua na yaua, ka tubu mai na 25%. Turaga na Sivika o Hon Bala kei ira tale so era vakaraitaka tiko na tubu ni sau esa rui berabera. Esa dodonu me ratou na liaci ratou tale ena gauna ni nodratou veiqaravi ena Matanitu . E na gauna ni nodratou veiqaravi e taura e 8 na yabaki na kena biu mai na sau n I tamata cakacaka ena 2014 ena \$2 dua na aua. E ratou mani tosoya cake kina \$2.32 ka laki \$2.68 dua na yaua ena Seviteba ni 2017. Nise bera na veidigidigi ratou sa mai kaburaka e va nai wasewase mai na \$2.68 kina \$4.00 dua na aua.

- Keitou sa vakalevutaka nai sau ni tamata cakacaka kina \$5 ka yavutaki mai ena kena railesuvi mai vei ira na kena dau ka vakacakulea kei na vakadidike mai vei ira na taukeni cakacaka, unioni, kei ira na veikabani. Keitou sa cakava ena rua nai wasewase nina gadrevi talega me nanumi eso vei ira na veitabana ni cakacaka a ra gadreva na gauna mera veisautaka kina.
- Esa saumi oira na Dauteidovu ena \$102 dua na tani na dovu ena 2023.Ena yabaki 2022 e saumi ena \$91.38 dua na tani. E rau levu ruarua mai na kena a vakadeitaki mada ena \$85 na kena isau.

Keitou sa saumi ira talega na Dau Tei Raisi ena \$1,000 dua na tani. E vuqa vei ira na Dauteitei , oka talega kina oira na Dautei Dalo kei na Tavioka era sa ciqoma talega nai sau vinaka me baleta na nodra I voli.

Esa tomani tiko ga na kena tokoni me baleta na kena vakarautaki na vuli sega ni saumi, veivuke me baleta na vodovodo, na wai ka vaka kina na veivakalivalivataki ena veivuvale ka lailai na nodra rawaka vakailavo ena \$30,000, veiqaravi vakavuniwai sega ni saumi ena GP, na veivoli me baleta na vale, na sikolasivi, veiqaravi vakalawa ka vaka kina na so tale.

Na veitokoni mai na Matanitu ena rawa ni yacova tiko yani na \$750 na milioni ena loma ga ni yabaki oqo. Nai wasewase oqo ena vakaraitaki kina na kena vidavidai vakamatailalai na kena vagolei ena nodra vukei na lewenivanua.

Zero VAT on 22 items - \$250 na Milioni

Veivuke Ni lesu Ki Vuli - \$40 na Milioni Social Pensions Scheme - \$78 na Milioni

Family Assistance Scheme - \$44 na Milioni

Disability allowance - \$17 na Milioni Child Protection Allowance - \$17 na Milioni

Electricity Subsidy - \$10 na Milioni Water Subsidy for around 40,000 households \$4 na milioni

Transport Assistance for 90,000 students - \$37 na millioni

Scholarships - \$150 na milioni PPP Free health scheme - \$5 na milioni Kidney Dialysis subsidy - \$3 na milioni First home buyers grant - \$5 na milioni Civil service salaries - \$85 na milioni TELS write off - \$10 na milioni

VEIKAVAKAILAVO.

- Turaga Na Sivika, au na vosa walega me baleta na veika e ratou kauta cake mai na To Ni Veisaqa me baleta na kena sa malumu sobu tiko na veika vakailavo ,esa tiko na yalo dei.
- Turaga Na Sivika na noda veika vakailavo e sega ni lutu me vakamatatataki ga ni sa tubu tiko ena gauna oqo.
- Me vaka nida sotava tiko eso na cagitokavuki ni bula vakailavo mai na Matanitu o Ositerelia kei Niusiladi ka vaka kina na bolebole ena kena lutu sobu tiko nai wiliwili ni lewenivanua ka biuita e dua na dredre ena veika e gadrevi e vale, kei na kena veiqaravi, ia na bula vakailavo e se tubu tiko ga ena 2.8% na pasede ena yabaki oqo.

E dina ga ni railesuvi vakallailai mai na 3.4% na pasede , na noda tubu ese vinaka tiko ga, ka kena I balebale ni veika vakailavo e tubu tiko ga ka sega n I vakatao taka na nodra rai tale eso.

Esa tiko e sivia ni \$2 na bilioni ena kena vakayagataki ena vei kabani. E da sa vakavinakataka kina na leqa me baleta na Tabana Ni Curuvanua.Sa tu vakarau na baqe ena kena vakailavotaki na cakacaka oqo. E sa tu talega oira na noda veitabana ena kena sagai mena kua ni bera na kena cakacakataki . Eda na raica e dua na kalawa levu kei na tubu ka vaka kina na veivoli.

Eso na vanua ni rawa I lavo lelevu ena Otela e sana umani ena veirumu me vaka nisa dua tale ga na vakauos ni domo kina Tabana Ni Saravanua ena veivula. Oqo e dua talega naka bibi mena vukea cake na kena vakavinakataki na rumu ka vaka kina na kena tabana.



Keitou sa raica tale tiko ga eso na yavu bibi mena vakalevutaka na rawa ka me vaka na rara ni waqavuka, kelekele ni waqa ka vaka kina na vakavure kaukauwa vakalivaliva.

Turaga na Sivika, keitou sa raica talega na tubu ena Tabana ni Teitei, Bisinisi, tabana vaka mona livaliva(ITC) kei na so tale na vei tabana kana vukea na kena tubu na noda rawaka vakailavo, tokona na duidui vakailavo, vakavure cakacaka ka vakalevu na vakai yaya ki vanua tani.

Na veika , na noda sasaga ena Matanitu Taucoko esa navuca me na tubu kina 5% na pasede na veika vakailavo mai na 3% na pasede.

VAKAYAGATAKI ILAVO

Turaga na Sivika,e ratou dredrevaka na To ni Veisaqa na vakayagataki lavo ni matanitu cokovata kei na kena qaravai na veivakatorocaketaki raraba.

Au via vakamatata taka ni na tiko sara ena 94 na pasede na ivotavota ni qaravi ni yau tudei ena yabaki vakailavo 2023 – 2024

E okati eke na kena vakayagataki e 97 na pasede na ivotavoya ni veiqaravi kei na 85 na pasede na ivotavota ni qaravi ni yau tudei. Au duavata ena rai ni rawa ni vakavinakataki na kena vakayagataki na ivotavota ni qaravi ni yau tudei.

Ia, **Turaga na Sivika,** au tuvanaka mada ga yani na kena vakayagataki na ivotavota ni qaravi ni yau tudei ni matanitu sa oti.

• Ena yabaki vakailavo 2016 – 2017 na ivotavota vakailavo ni qaravi ni yau tudei e 70.5 na pasede kei na na ivotavoya ni veiqaravi ni matanitu e 85.9 na pasede.

Ena yabaki vakailavo 2017-2018 na ivotavota vakailavo ni qaravi ni yau tudei e 77.7 na pasede kei na na ivotavoya ni veiqaravi ni matanitu e 85.9 na pasede;

Au sa na sega ni tara na Tuvatuva Vakailavo ni yabaki ka tarava ni a veitauvi kina na mate dewa na COVID 19.

Ia e mata na na ni veidutaitaki Turaga na Sivika. Keitou sega ni tukuna qo me keitou vakadonui keitou kina vakataki keitou na vakayagataki ni yau vakailavo ni matanitu. Keitou sa cakacaka vata tiko kina kei ira na veitaba vaka matanaitu ena kena vakavinakataki.

E gadrevi kina na nodraou raica vakayalomatua na To ni Veisaqa na veika e yaco ena gauna ni nodratou veiliutaki.

Veidutaitaki ni yau Vakailavo kei na Veika e Qaravi

Turaga na Sivika, eso e ra tukuna ni lailai 73:27 ni rau veidutaitaki na ilavo e vakayagataki kei na itavi e qaravi.

Me baleta ni Matanitu e vakaitavi vakalevu ena kena qaravi na vuli, na bula kei na veiqaravi vakavuniwai, kei na lawa e levu kina na liga ni cakacaka ena gadrevi ka umana e 70 na pasede ni yau vakailavo e vakayagataki kina ena vuku ni veiqaravi.

E vaka kina na ivotavota ni qaravi ni yau tudei me vaka ni rawa ga ni okati ena tuvatuva vakailavo e 30 na pasede ni vakatau tiko ena vakayagataki lavo ni matanitu.

Ia e keitou tokona ni sa dodonu me vakalevutaki na kena vakayagataki na iyau vakailvo ena vakatororaceki taki ni yau tudei.

Kakavaki ni Rawa Ka Vakailavo

Turaga na Sivika, au via vakamatata taka tale ga na kakavaki ni rawa ka vakailavo ena Yabaki Vakailavo 2024-205 ka ratou tukuna na lewe ni To ni Veisaqa ni keitou sa rui yalodei sivia kina.

Turaga na Sivika, au vakacala na nodratou vakasama ka'u via vakadeitaka ki vei keda kece sara ni veika e sa kakavaki kina na Tuvatuva Vakailavo e koto volekata sara ga na veika e na rawati dina. Na taro e tiko se cava na vuna me na veivakalaboci kina na Matanitu ena kakavaki ni rawa ka vakailavo – baleta ke vakayacori oya ena veivakaleqai ka na boleya vakalevu na bula vakailavo ni Matanitu me vaka e ratou sotava na soqosoqo vaka politiki na FIJI FIRST ena Tuvatuva Vakailavo ni Yabaki 2018/2019 ni bera na veidigidigi.

E sega kina ni dua na vuna e tiko me keitou yalodei sivia kina ena neitou kakavaki ni rawa ka vakailavo ni Matanitu. Turaga na Sivika, me vaka ni rawati vaka vinaka na veiveisau ni tuvatuva ni rawa ka vakailavo ena Tuvatuva Vakailavo sa oti, e sa namaki kina na rawaka vakailavo me na tiko ena \$3.9 na Bilioni. Ena uma ilavo qori e okati kina e \$3.3 na Bilioni ka rawa mai na ivakacavacava ka \$0.6 na Bilioni ena rawati mai na rawaka ka sega ni lavaki kina na ivakacavacava.

E sega ni dua na veisau levu ena ivakacavacava ka dua ga ena Vakacavacava Lavaki ni biu vanua kei na vica tale na veiveisau eso.

Turaga na Sivika ena iTuvatuva Vakailavo ni yabaki 2023-2024 e keitou yalo dei ni keitou na rawa ni kumuma e sivia toka vakalailai na \$3.0 na Bilioni ena ivakacavacava – na kena e levu taudua ena tukutuku ni veigauna kei Viti. Kena I balebale ya ni na sega ni dredre me na vakalevu taki na rawa ka vakailavo mai na \$3 na Bilioni ena yabaki qo ni na \$3.3 na Bilioni ena yabaki mai qo.

Mai na \$300 na Milioni na ikuri ni vaka-cavacava e namaki me na ciqomi, e rauta e \$45 na Miliioni ena ciqomi mai na Vaka-cava ni biu vanua, ka dua tale ga na kena I wase levu ena kumuni mai na veivanua ni rawa ka ni bula vakailavo ni sa namaki tiko me na rawati na tubu vakailavo e na 3 na pasede.

Na veika e na rawati mai na iyau ka sega ni lavaki kina na ivakacavacava, me vaka au sa tukuna oti e na rawati mai kina e rauta e \$162 na Milioni ena dividend ka rauta ni \$130 na Milioni mai na rawaka ni Baqe ni Lavo Maroroi, \$170 na Milioni mai na rawa ka ni vetabana vaka na Matabose ni Veilakoyaki e Vanua Mamaca, Tabana ni Curu Vanua kei na veitabana tale eso. E sivia toka e \$150 na milioni era dodoliga mai kina na veimatanitu tani.

Lailai ni Veivakasalataki ena Tuvatuva Vakailavo

Turaga na Sivika, eso veira na lewe ni to ni veisaqa, oka kina o Hon Ketana Lal era kaya ni sega na veitalanoa kei na veivakasalataki ena tuvatuva vakailavo, sa dua na ka vakalialia qo!

E qaravi e vica vata na na veitalanoa kei na veivakasalataki ka vakatekivu mai veitalanoa ena National Economic Summit, Fiscal Review Committee, vica tale na bose kei ira na Taukei ni bisinisi, vei wasewase ni veiqaravi vaka bisinisi, daubuliyaya, soqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu, gonevuli, soqosoqo vaka lotu, tabana ni veitaqomaki keina veisoqosoqo digitaki me vakayacori vata kei ira na veitalanoa.

Mai qaravi oti na veitalanoa kei na veivakasalataki baleta na Tuvatuva Levu ni Veivakatorocaketaki ena vula ko Veverueri ka ra vakaitavi kina e 22,000 na lewe ni vanua mai na 4 na Wasewase ni noda vanua. E ra oka kina o irasa matua na nodra bula, na tabagone, dauteitei, dauteidovu, na tamata cakacaka, kei ira na tu ena taudaku ni veikoro lelevu kei na veiyanuyanu ka ra wasea mai na veika era gadreva ena veivakatorocaketaki kei na tuvatuva vakailavo.

Turaga na Sivika, au kila ka rawa ni vakadeitaka ni veitalanoa kei na veivakasalataki rabailevu vaka koya e sega ni dau vakayacora na matanitu sa oti ia era tomana tiko ga na na lewe ni to ni veisaqa.

Au yalodei **Turaga na Sivika**, ni vuqa na veika e vasokumuni mai ena veitalanoa kei na veivakasalataki oqo, era sa oka ka laurai ena tuvatuva vakailavo. E dua na kena ivakaraitaki vinaka ni qiva ni wai. Na 1700 qaraqivati ni wai eda na caka ena loma ni 1 se 2 na yabaki mai qo e gole sara ga mai vei ira na lewe ni vanua, Turaga na Sivika.

Lavaki ni Vakacavacava ni iYauqaqa kei na Soqosoqo ena Taudaku ni Matanitu

Turaga na Sivika, Au gadreva talega me'u vakamatatataka na kena lavaki na vakacava vei ira na soqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu me vaka edau vakayacori vei ira na vo ni bisinisi.

Kena imatai, na ilavo isoli vakaloloma kei na kumuni ilavo me baleta na mataisoqosoqo ni loloma e sega ni dau lavaki vei ira na ivakacavacava. Me kena ikuri, na bisinisi era cau ilavo ki na dua na isoqosoqo ni loloma e volai tu e rawa ni ra tabaka me deductible expense.

Ni oti na veisau ni Lawasau ni iVakacavacava ni Rawaka Vakailvo ni 2016, e sega ni oka kina na isoqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu ka ra qarava na itavi me ra rawa tubu e lavaki ga vei ra na ivakacava ena tikina e ra qarava vaka bisinisi

Na lawasau oqo ena vakadeitaka na veiqaravi vakatautauvata ena loma ni iveiqaravi ni kumuni ivakacavacava, ni o ira na tamata yadua se bisinisi era qaravi bisinisi vata ga oqori era na saumi ivakacavacava talega. Kevaka e sega, keitou na bulia e dua na buturara ni qito sega ni tautauvata.

Ni bera na 2016, a kila tale ga na FRCS ni tiko e vica na isoqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu era tekivuna na nodra tabana vakabisinisi, eso era inaki vinaka ka so tale me sala ni kena levei na ivakacavacava.

Me sogota na veilecayaki oqo, na isoqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu era tekivuna na nodra tabana vakabisinisi me vaka na bisinisi ni sitoa ni volivolitaki, sitoa ni volivolitaki Umauma kei na so tale esa lavaki vei ira na ivakaicavacava me vakatekivu mai na 2016. Na veisau e vitikotori ena Tuvatuva Vakailavo qo e nakiti me vakamatatataki kina na lawa ni ilavo e rawati mai na iyauqaqa mai vei ira na isoqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu me vaka na kena ivakarau vei ira na vei bisinisi kei na tamata yadua.

E dua tale na ka bibi e vakauqeta na veisau oqo oya na kena tauyavutaki na isoqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu ka ra qarava na itavi ka sega ni kena inaki na rawa tubu mai mei ira na vakabisinisi me ivakaruru ni iyauqaqa. Na nodrai inaki na bisinisi ka ra tauyavutaka na isoqosoqo ena taudaku ni matanitu ka ra qarava na itavi ka sega ni kena inaki na rawa tubu e rawa ni tarogi me baleta na kena dina me e inaki beka ni loloma se veiqaravi ka sega ni rawa tubu kina se sa dua na sala me levei kina ivakacavacava ni iyauqaqa. Na veivakayawaki oqo e sa vakamacalataki ena Tuvatuva Vakailavo qo.

Na ilavo isoli vakaloloma kei na kumuni ilavo me baleta na mataisoqosoqo ni loloma ena sega ni lavaki vei ira na ivaka-

Waigaga ni Veivakamatenitaki kei na Basu Lawa

Turaga na Sivika, au kurabuitaka ira eso na lewe ni to ni veisaqa nira dusia na Matanitu Cokovata ena bolebole e tara tiko na noda vanua me baleta na waigaga ni veikamatenitaki. Turaga na Sivika, e sa tarai Viti tu qo na leqa ni waigaga ni veivakamatenitaki ka sega ni keitou vakavuna. Na leqa oqo e se tekivu mai ena veiyabaki sa oti ka sega ni vakatulewata vinaka kina na Matanitu sa oti ka dau cakitaki voli ga.

E sa cavuikalawa kina qo na Matanitu Cokovata ena kena tauyavutaki na Narcotics Bureau, tavoci ni Lawasau ni Counter Narcotics Bureau 2023-2028, ka VAKAVOUI na veiqaravi ni Tabana ni Ovisa kei na cakacakavata ena vuku ni veiwaseitaki ni tukutuku vata kei na noda itokani ni veitaqomaki. Na noda veiwaseitaka na itukutuku kei na vadidike vuni e yaco kina na me vesu e so na iusausa lelevu ni waigaga ni veivakamateni taki ena vica na vula sa sivi.

E tiko vei au e vica na tikina totolo o Turaga na Sivika au na via sauma ni bera ni'u tinia.

Ena gauna a laveta cake kina o Hon Sachida Nand na veika me baleta na Saravanua ki vua na Hon DPM Ka Minisita ni Saravanua me baleta na risiti ni sara-



vanua, ea vakacali koya tale kina vakai koya. A tukuna tiko o koya na \$2.9b ka rawati mai na saravanua ena risiti ka kaya o Hon Nand ena \$2.9b, ni lailai sara na cau ni saravanua ki na bula vakailavo ni noda vanua. E sega ni dina oqo. E vakamacala cala. Baleta ni dua ga na tiki ni tabana ni saravanua na risiti. E levu tu na veibisinisi e kotai kina; otela, veilakoyaki kei na so tale, kei na levu taucoko ni cau ni tabana ni saravanua e voleka ki

Na inaki ni nona laveta cake mai kina o Hon Nand au veivakauqeti kina vei keda na lewe ni Bose Lawa me dau vakadeitaka na tukutuku eda dau mai cauraka ena loma ni vale oqo.

na 40 na pasede ni GDP.

A vakaraitaka talega o Hon Nand na me vakaukauwa tgaki na ilavo ni noda vanua. **Turaga na Sivika**, ni da veivosakitaka na Vakaukauwataki keina Vakamalumalumutaki ni lavo, e sa dua dina na ka bibi. E bibi baleta ni rawa ni lai vakavuna e vuqa na cakacaka tale eso ka na rawa ni vakaleqa na bula vakailavo ni noda vanua.

Turaga na Sivika, sa tubu vakavinaka oti tu na noda ilavo ni veivadutai taki kei na ilavo ni so tale na matanitu tani ka ra na noda itokani ni veivoli ka dina ni veivakasesei na vakasama me Vakaukauwataki kei na Vakamalumalumutaki ni noda lavo. O ni kila na gauna e vakamalumalumutaki kina na noda ilavo ena 2009, a tubu sara vakalevu na isau ni yaya, ka taura e vica vata na yabaki na noda sotava tiko.

Kevaka eda sega ni kila na revurevu ni na Vakaukauwataki keina Vakamalumalumutaki ni lavo, e dodonu me kua ni vosa kina.

Ena vuku ni veika e cauraka o Hon Bala me baleta na dinau ena Baqe na Exim, au nanuma ni sega ni kilikili vei Hon Bala, e dua dina na veivakacacani vua na noda Liu ni Matanitu kei na Paraiminisita ni vanua ko Idia baleta na vakatulewa oqori me baleta na valenibula ni Super Speciality Hospital ka 100 na kena idavodavo a kacivaka na Matanitu Levu ni Idia vata kei na na Matanitu ni Viti me tara e dua na Valenibula Ni e 100 na kena idavodavo e Viti. Me qai lako mai ka kaya, oi oqo a veisautaki ena dinau ni Baqe ni Exim, au nanuma ni dodonu me vakadodonutaka o Hon Bala na ka oqori ena taudaku ni palimedi. E cala na itukutuku oqori Turaga na Sivika.

Na veika e vakaraitaka o Hon Usumate me baleta na FNPF Pension kei na kudru mai Vatukoula.

Oni kila ni ratou a yalataka ena 2015 ka dua e kaya ' Oi, era vinakata e vicasagavulu na milioni na dola. Au sega ni vakabauta ni ra a veivosaki tiko kei na duavata ena dina. Na matanitu oqo e walia na leqa oqo baleta ni vakarautaka na vatavata ni veitalanoa me ra vosa kina na isoqosoqo ki na matanitu me kilai kina na bibi ni kena wali na ka oqo.

Turaga na Sivika oqori na roko ni na nodra veiliutaki na Liuliu ni Matanitu baleta ni a sikovi ira ni bera na veidigidigi ka ra yalayala kina ni ra saga me wali na nodra leqa.

Keitou a nuitaki ira na Liuliu ni Unioni. Kevaka eda raica lesu na itukutuku ni Unioni ena vanua oqo, era sa iliuliu dau lewa vakamatau. E sega ni yaco na tiko yavavala ena nodratou kauta mai na lawa ka vauci ira na soqosoqo ni tamata cakacaka. E sa kau tani kece na lawa oqori, e sa vakarautaki e dua na vatavata, kau sega ni vakabauta ni oqo ena vakayagataki me iulubale, se me vatavata me wali kina na veileti tale eso.

Ena peniseni ni FNPF, na ka ga au via tukuna o ya eso na ka e cakava na matanitu vakaivalu e vakayacori ka sega kina na veitalanoa, ka sega ka sega kina na loloma, ka sega ni vakamacalataka vei ira na lewe ni vanua na vuna e vakayacori kina ka kauta mai na mosi kei na yaluma vei ira na lewe ni vanua ena loma ni 16 na yabaki sa oti Turaga na Sivika.

Na matanitu cockovata e sega ni yalataka me vakadodonutaka na cala kece sara a vakayacori, ia na vanua e tiko kina na kena sala, me rawa ni vakaraitaka kina na veiliutaki, era sa vakadodonutaki tiko Turaga na Sivika.

Au vakabauta ni oqo na itukutuku era sa ciqoma tiko na noda dauveivakarautaki vaka bisinisi kei ira na lewe ni vanua oqo. Na matanitu qo e sega ni ivakarere ia e sa bucina me walia na veileqa e so e ra se dodonu me ra wali ena vei yabaki sa sivi. Na vakabesebese mai Vatukoula kei na Peniseni ni Lavo Musuki e ivakaraitaki matata ni veika keitou sa vakayacora tiko.

Ena cau nei Hon Koya, e kila o koya ni keitou ciqoma na veivakadiloi ni keitou cakacaka tiko ena dina.

Ena nona cau o Hon Naupoto ena ivakarau ni vuli, au duavata kei koya ni sa ka bibi sara na ivakarau ni vuli. Ia a dusia tiko o koya ni sikolasivi vou e yavutaki ena rawaka vaka vuli e na vakuwai ira na gonevuli era sega ni rawa ka vakavinaka ena vuli.

E sega ni dodonu na veika e vakaraitaki oya. Ni da veivosakitaka na ivakarau ni vuli, eda sa veivosakitaka tiko na kena vakavinakataki cake na ivakarau ni vuli kei na ituvaki ni veivakavulici. Ena loma ni 16 na yabaki sa oti e Suva-Nausori, ka kila vinaka tu oqo na Minisita ni vuli ena gauna ga keitou curu mai kina ena matanitu, e Tomika rawa na Minista na ivakarau ni vuli, ni ni sega ni veirauraua na levu ni qasenivuli kei na levu ni gonevuli ena loma ni noda veikoronivuli. Ena so na vanua, e 50 ki na 60 na gonevuli ena dua kalasi.

Keitou a tekivu me dua na Matanitu, ka cakacaka vata kei na Matanitu o Ositerelia. Keitou sa toqa oti e dua na veidinadinati ka sa vakayacori tiko e dua na vadidikevi ena iwiliwili ni vale ni vuli kei na koronivuli ena gadrevi ena vanua vaka Suva kei Nausori. Oqori e dua na takete matata ena loma ni dua se rua na yabaki mei qo oya me tara eso tale na rumu ni vuli me rawa ni da vakalailaitaka ka vakavinakataka cake na kedra iwiliwili na vakailesilesi ki na gonevuli.

Au vinakata me'u vakadeitaka vei ira kece na gonevuli era varaua vacakavara na Fomu 6 se fomu 7 ni tiko na tauyavu me baleti ira yadudua ena ituvatuva ni sikolasivi oqo. Kevaka era sega ni rawa ni yaco ki na univesiti, kevaka era sega ni rawa ni laki veiqaravi vakavuniwai, idinia se vakasaqara e dua na koroi, e tiko na veika e rawa ni ra cakava, na kila ka e rawa ka ra na rawata na kena sikolasivi.

Me baleta na Pacific Polytech, Turaga na Sivika, na ivakarau ni nodra vosa tiko me vaka sara ga e tiko e dua na ka vei Biman Prasad kei Polytech. Au kaya ni o Hon Hem Chand ea cakacaka mai na Tabacakacak ni Vuli, e kila o koya na kena icakacaka. Era sa vakaivolataki ka vakadonui na isoqosoqo kece ni vuli torocake mai na dua na Matabose ni Vuli Torocake e Viti. Era a volayaca kina Pacific Polytech ena yabaki 2021, ka ra sa cakava tiko e dua na cakacaka vinaka ena nodra vakaisosomitaka na vei Koroni vuli ni Vuli Cakacaka kara a tauyavutaki ena matanotu sa oti ka ra sa vakalusi kina e \$30m Turaga na Sivika. A lusi wale na sasaga oya.

E tukuna o Hon Usumate na vakailavotaki ni FNU. Me'u vakamacalataka mada na sala e vakadeitaki kina na vakailavotaki me baleta na isoqosoqo ni vuli torocake taucoko oka kina o ira na ka lalai me vakataka na Sangam Nursing School, kei na so tale

Na nodra vakatutu na isoqosoqo oqo era sega ni lako mai ki na Tabacakacaka ni Veika Vakailavo. E lako ki na Tabacakacaka ni Vuli ka lako curuma na nondra Valenivolavola na Minista ni Vuli ki na Matabose ni Vuli Torocake. Na Matabose ni Vuli Torocake e dau vakadikeva, vakatututaka, sa tiko na kena iwalewale ka na qai yaco mai ki na Minisitiri ni Veikavakailavo. Na Minisitiri ni Vakailavo e sega mada ga ni rawa ni vakalevutaka, e na rawa walega ni vakalailaitaka ni ivotavoita vakailavo.

Keitou a vakalailaitaka na ivotavota vaka ilavo, na kena sa vakalesui mai, na levu ni ilavo eratou a sega ni sauma kina USP, ka keitou sa sauma oti e \$10m ena yabaki sa oti, \$20m ena iTuvatuva Vakailavo sa oti, ena iTuvatuva Vakailavo oqo era vinakata me ra toso cake ia e vakalailaitaki ki na \$5m walega. E vinakata o Polytech e \$9m, oqori e vakalailaitaki ki na \$5m.

O koya gona ya Turaga na Sivika, na ivakaraitaki ni votai ni lavo mai vei ratou na Matabose ni Vuli Torocake, a vosa kina o Hon Usumate me baleta na vakalailaitaki ni votavota kina FNU, ea vakalailaitaki na ivotavoya vakailavo ena veigauna sa oti, ena so na gauna e toso cake na ivotavota vakailavo, e sega ni kena ibalebale ni yabaki mai oqo sa na sega na ivotavota nei FNU se Polytech me na vakalevutaki se vakalailaitaki na kena ivotavota me vaka na Sangam Nursing School. Ea sega ni kerea me levu cake na yabaki sa oti ia keitou a tosoya cake baleta ni gadrevi me levu na nasi ena noda vanua.

Era yalodei na dauveivakarautaki vakabisini, kau gadreva me'u tukuna mada eso na ka oqo. Ena imatai ni gauna qo, au nanuma ni oti e vuqa na yabaki ni nodra yalodei tale na dauveivakarautaki vakabisini **Turaga na Sivika** e sega ni bau vakatauvatani keina dua tale na gauna rawa, me ra vakayagataka ga na nodra vosa. E dua na kabani ni vakatubuilavo ena Veivoli ni ni Qele kei na Vale e vuravura na JLL, e kaya: "Ni vakatau-

vatani kei na vuqa tale na makete, sa tu ga na yavu ni kena vakayagataki o Viti ka sa tubu cake tikoga na kaukauwa ni tubu vakailavo ka rairai totoka sara ena ituvaki ni bula ni vakatubuilavo."

Na ika otioti ga ni ka au via vakaraitaka ni bera ni'u tinia o **Turaga na Sivika**.

E ratou kailavaka ena domoilevu se cava e keitou sab au rawata ena loma ni '18 na vula sa oti? Na 18 na vula e gauna balavu. Na Liuliu ni Matanitu ena gauna ni vunau vaka politiki au nanuma ni a sega ni vakayagataka na veivosa oqo ia au na vakayagataka, e sega ni rawa, e sega ni rawa, kina na dua na matanitu mena vakavinakataka na veika ka e leqa tu se ena loma ga ni 18 na vula. Oya na ka dina, Turaga na Sivika.

Era veidokai vakalevu ena nodra vosa na Liuliu ni Matanitu. O au ena sega soti sara vei au na veidokai vaka o ya. Ni oti e 18 na vula ka ra vakaraitaka kece na noqu itokani ena yasana ni vale oqo ka ra vakamacalataka vakamatata sara na veika sa cakava na matanitu oqo ena loma ni 18 na vula oya. Keitou sa vakotora na matanitu oqo ena dua na sala ki na bula tudei, bula vinaka kei na bula sautu o Turaga na Sivika ena vei lawatu keitou sa biuta vata mai.

Au taura na gauna oqo me'u tauca edua na vakavinavinaka ki vua na Paraiminista Honourable Sitiveni rabuka ena nona veivakabauti ka ra lesi au kina qarava na Minisitirib ni Veikavakailavo ena loma ni Matanitu Cokovata. Au vakavinavinakataki koya ena nona veiliutaki raiyawa kau vakadeitaka vua na noqu veitokoni ni dei ka sega ni na yavalati rawa.

Au vakavinavinaka talega vei ira kece na noqu itokani ena Bose Yaco ena nodra veitokoni ena gauna taucoko e vakarautaki tiko kina na iTuvatuva Vakailavo oqo.

Au dau taura talega na gaunaoqo me'u vakavinavinakataki ira kece na ivakailesilesi era cakacakataka na iTuvatuva Vakailavo oqo ena loma ni Minisitiri ni Veika Vakailavo, Na Tabana ni Kasitaba keina iVakacavacava kei na veitokoni vakalawa e vakarautaka na valenivolavola ni Daunivakasala Vakalawa ni Matanitu.

Vinaka vakalevu Turaga na Sivika.

Noda Viti

Sigatabu, 14 ni Jiulai 2024, 8 Drauniveva, 10 ni Tabana, 15 ni Lavelave ni Ivola | www.fiji.gov.fj (3 @FijiGovt OFiji Government

GADREVI NA VAKATUBU BISINISI ENA NODA VANUA



Na Minisita ni Veivoli, Vakatubu Bisinisi kei na vakau iTukutuku, Hon Manoa Kamikamica ena kena laki vakananumi na siga ni Bisinisi ena Noda Vanua (MSME Day) ena Loma ni Yasana o Namosi.

sa navuca tiko na Matanitu na kena biu nai tuvatuva mena tokoni kina na vakaduri Bisinisi ena noda vanua. Oqo na veika e vakaraitaka na iVukevuke ni iliuliu ni Matanitu ka Minisita talega ni Veivoli, Vakatubu Bisinisi kei na vakau iTukutuku, Hon Manoa Kamikamica ena nodra laki vakaitavi ena siga ka vakananumi kina na me baleta na vei Bisinisi ena noda vanua ka laki vakayacori enai sevu ni gauna kina Yasana o Namosi.

Ena loma ni 6 na vula sa sivi , na Matanitu Cokovata esa vakanamata ena kena vakadeitaki nai tuvatuva ni kena tuvani na veivakatoroicaketaki kina veitabana mena rawa ni matata ni Tabana ni Veibisinisi Lalai(MSME) sa tosoya tiko ga na rawaka ena tabana vakailavo kece sara.

"Nikua e dua na siga namaki ena kena vakararamataki mai nai tavi bibi ni kena tubu na rawaka vakailavo ena veibisinisi.E vakarautaki e dua nai tuvatuva ena kena vakarautaki ka vakaraitaki talega na yalo ni dau caka Bisinisi, ena kena sotavi eso na dredre ka tomani tiko ga na rawaka ena noda tuvatuva vakailavo".

"Na ulutaga ni MSME e vakamacalataki talega kina na SDG 1. Na MSME ena rawa ni vakarautaka na cakacaka ka vaka kina na kena vakatoroicaketaki na vakatubu I lavo ena noda vanua. E na noda vuravura, na MSME e rawta e 90% na bisinisi, 60% na veivakacakacakataki, kei na 50 % na GDP".

E vakabibi taka talega o Hon Kamikamica ni gauna oqo sa tiko ena 18% na GDP, ka vakanuinui tiko nina 10 na yabaki mai oqo sana tubu cake kina 30%. E na rawarawa kevaka meda tadolava e levu na veigaunisala ni veisemati kina vei bisinisi. Mai na Tabana

ni Veivoli, Vakatubu Bisinisi kei na vakau iTukutuku esa rauta ni 75 kina 80 na milioni e votai kina veiqaravi ni MSME.

E vakaraitaka talega na nona vakavinavinaka o Hon Kamikamica ki vei ratou na Fiji Commerce kei na Employers Federation kei na MSME Council ena vuku ni kena tutaki tiko na sasgaa yaga oqo ka nuitaka ni rabailevu sara na nodratou veiqravi ena nodra vukei na lewenivanua e Viti.



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टूरिज़म व्यवसाय से जुड़े लोग रिकोड तोड़ मुनाफा कमा रहें हैं जबिक फीजी इस साल एक बिलियन टुरिस्टों का स्वागत करेगा

पूरी कहानी पृष्ठ 3 पर



चीनी व्यवसाय को सक्षम बनाना, चीनी, मल्टी एथनिक अफेयस मंत्री माननीय चरण जित सिंह की प्रथम प्राथमिकता है

पूरी कहानी पृष्ठ 6 पर



सरकार ने इस राष्ट्रीय बजट में सबसे ज़्यादा शिक्षा क्षेत्र के लिए सात सौ मिलियन डोलर से ज़्यादा अलग किया है

पूरी कहानी पृष्ठ 7 पर



सरकारी कर्मचारियों की वेतन वृद्धि



उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद हालही संसद में जवाब देते हुए चित्र: संसद भवन

रोनल देव

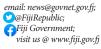
सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए खुश खबरी है क्योंकि उनके वेतन में भारी वृद्धि करने की घोषणा की गई है। उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद ने 2024-2025 राष्ट्रीय बजट, जो कि गठबंधन सरकार का दुसरा बजट है की घोषणा करते हुए आम किया कि लगभग बयालिस (42) हजार सरकारी कर्मचारियों की जेब में पचासी (85) मिलियन डोलर जाएगा जहाँ सेलेरी बेन्ड के आधार पर उनके वेतन में सात प्रतिशत से लेकर बीस प्रतिशत तक की वृद्धि की जाएगी। इस साल के राष्ट्रीय बजट का मुख्य विषय है, आर्थिक रूप से स्थिर, सुरक्षित और टिकाउ फीजी। मंत्री प्रसाद ने कहा कि एक स्वतंत्र, पेशेवर और अच्छी तरह से सुसज्जित सरकारी सेवा महत्वपूर्ण

है। मंत्री प्रसाद ने कहा कि यह दुख की बात थी कि पिछले कुछ सालों से सरकारी कर्मचारियों का वेतन बढ़ाया नहीं गया था जिससे उन्हें बिगडती रोजगार स्थितियों का सामना करना पड़ा। उन्होंने कहा कि सरकारी कर्मचारियों ने पर्याप्त द्रैनिंग, क्षमता निर्माण में पूँजी लगाने की कमी तथा खराब उत्तराधिकार योजना का भी सामना किया। ओ.एम.आर.एस नियम के चलते कई सरकारी कर्मचारी पद उन्नित से वंचित रह गए जबिक सरकारी सेवा में जिनके पास कोई अनुभव नहीं था को उँचे पद देने के लिए प्राथमिक्ता दी गई थी। इस साल पहली अगस्त से सरकारी कर्मचारियों का सालाना वेतन सात से दस प्रतिशत तक बढ़ाया जाएगा जबिक सप्ताहिक वेतन पाने वाले सरकारी कर्मचारियों का वेतन दस

से बीस प्रतिशत तक बढ़ाया जाएगा। सरकारी कर्मचारियों के वेतन में वृद्धि से सरकार को अतिरिक्त छियासठ (66) मिलियन डोलर का खर्च बैठेगा। सरकार चाहती है कि देश में सभी मजदुरों को न्यायपूर्ण ढंग से वेतन मिले। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि अच्छी तरह विचार करने के बाद सरकार ने मिनिमम वईज दर को पाँच डोलर प्रति घण्टा करने की घोषणा की है। लेकिन यह वृद्धि दो भागों में होगी जहाँ इस साल पहली अगस्त से मिनिमम वईज बढ़ाकर चार डोलर पचास सेन्ट्स किया जाएगा और अगले साल पहली अप्रेल को मिनिमम वईज फिर बढ़ाकर पाँच डोलर प्रति घण्टा कर दिया जाएगा। ऐसा इसलिए होगा ताकि मजदूर मालिक इस वृद्धि से होने वाले असर को सह सके। मंत्री प्रसाद ने कहा कि

रोज़गार मंत्रालय निगरानी रखेगा कि मजदूरों को उनके हक का वेतन मिलें।

"हम सरकारी कर्मचारियों के लिए मेडिकल इंश्रन्स स्कीम शुरू करने पर विचार कर रहे है। सबसे बड़े मजदूर मालिक होने के नाते, इस स्कीम से सरकार को काफी खर्च बैठेगा इसलिए हमें सावधानी से विचार करना पड़ेगा कि यह कैसे काम करेगा और शुरूआत करने के लिए सही समय कब होगा। हम जेनरल ओडस पर पुन: विचार कर रहे है ताकि सरकारी कर्मचारियों को मिल रहे अलावन्स तथा काम करने की शर्तों पर फिर से विचार किया जा सके। मंत्री प्रसाद ने कहा कि सही दिशा में एक बड़ा कदम उठाया गया है लेकिन सब कुछ एक या दो बजट में नहीं हो सकता है।



देश में मज़दूरों का वेतन बढ़ाने की घोषणा की गई

रोनल देव

सरकार चाहती है कि देश में हमारे सभी मजदूरों को उचित वेतन मिले। राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि 'राष्ट्रीय मिनिमम वईज' को बढ़ाकर पाँच डोलर प्रति घण्टा करने का फैसला किया गया जब विशेषयज्ञों का स्वतंत्र पेनल ने इसपर पुन:विचार किया, मजदूर मालिकों, युनियन, सरकार तथा अन्य साझेदारों के साथ कई वार्ताए हुई। इसे दो भागों में लागू किया जाएगा जहाँ इस साल पहली अगस्त से 'राष्ट्रीय मिनिमम वईज' को चार डोलर से बढ़ाकर चार डोलर पचास सेंन्ट्स किया जाएगा और अगले साल

पहली अगस्त से इसमें पचास सेंन्ट्स की और वृद्धि होगी जहाँ ये पाँच डोलर प्रति घण्टा हो जाएगा। उदाहरण के तौर पर एक केशियर जिन्हें अभी \$4.44 प्रति घण्टा का वेतन मिल रहा है, पहली अगस्त से उनका वेतन \$4.94 प्रति घण्टा हो जाएगा और अगले साल पहली अप्रेल से उनका वेतन बढ़ाकर \$5.44 प्रति घण्टा कर दिया जाएगा। घरों तथा इमारतों का निर्माण करने वाले व्यवसाय में काम करने वाले फोमन का वेतन अगर \$6.54 प्रति घण्टा है तो अगले साल पहली एप्रेल से इसे बढ़ाकर \$7.54 प्रति घण्टा कर दिया जाएगा। मंत्री प्रसाद ने सभी मजदूर मालिकों से माँग की है कि वे ध्यान में रखें कि उनके मजदूरों को सही मिनिमम वईज मिले तथा रोज़गार मंत्रालय कड़ी निगरानी रखेगा कि इसका

पालन हो। 'हमें पता है कि कुछ मजदूर मालिकों पर अतिरिक्त आर्थिक बोज पड़ेगा तथा हम उन मजदूर मालिकों द्वारा सामना की जा रही चुनौतियों का समाधान ढूँढने में ज़रूर सहायता करेंगे। लेकिन हमारा यह भी इरादा है कि नया मिनिमम वईज से उत्पादकता में सुधार होगा और कम वेतन वाले कर्मचारियों को उनकी उपस्थिति में सुधार करने और अधिक उत्पादक बनने के लिए अधिक कौशल और अनुभव प्राप्त करके उच्च आमदनी की आकांक्षा करने के लिए अधिक प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करके कर्मचारी नौकरी पर अनुपस्थिति को कम करेंगे। कई सरकारें आई और गई लेकिन बिना किसी सामाधान के वतुकउला गोल्ड माईन के मज़दूरों की हड़ताल जारी रही। गठबंधन सरकार, फीजी दुईड्स युनियन कोन्ग्रेस

तथा फीजी माईन वोर्कस युनियन आखिर में इस नतीजे पर पहुँचे कि मजदुरों को 9.2 मिलियन डोलर का हरजाना दिया जाए। हड़ताल पर गए तीन सौ अड़सठ 368 मजदूरों में से हर एक को पचीस हज़ार डोलर भरा जाएगा, पहला दस हज़ार डोलर इसी बजट से दिया जाएगा और बाकी पंदाह हज़ार डोलर अगले साल 2025-2026 बजट से भरा जाएगा। उप प्रधान मंत्री प्रसाद ने एफ टी यू सी के जेनरल सकेटरी फिलिक्स एन्थनी को धन्यवाद दिया है जिन्होंने खान के मजदूरों पर कई सालों से हो रहे अत्याचार को खत्म करने के लिए सरकार को अपना पूरा समर्थन दिया। सरकार, वोटा अथोरिटी ओफ फीजी तथा उनके कर्मचारियों के बीच चल रहे विवाद को भी सुलझाने के लिए सहमत हुई है।

फीजी नेशनल प्रोविडन्ड फन्ड का दर सामान्य हुआ



फीजी नेशनल प्रोविडन्ड फन्ड के सदस्य, सेवा हासिल करते हुए 🛮 चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

रोनल देव

देश में मजदूरों का भविष्य सुरक्षित करने के लिए सरकार ने फीजी नेशनल प्रोविडन्ड फन्ड में जमा होने वाले दरों को वापस अट्ठारह प्रतिशत कर दिया है। ''गठबंधन सरकार ने ऐसा वादा किया था और वादा पूरा हुआ है।" फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने बजट में घोषणा की कि बेहतरीन आर्थिक प्रदर्शन के कारण, एफ एन पी एफ बोड ने तय किया कि इस साल तीस जून को बन्द होने वाले आर्थिक वर्ष पर फन्ड के सदस्यों के खाते में आठ प्रतिशत ब्याज जोड़ा जाएगा। पहली जुलाई को फन्ड के चार लाख सत्राह हज़ार 417,000 सदस्यों के खाते में पिछले बीस सालों के मिलान में सबसे ज्यादा ब्याज के रूप में 562.2 मिलियन डोलर जमा किया गया है। उप प्रधान मंत्री और फायनेन्स मंत्री

उपलब्धि के लिए बधाई दी। उन्होंने कहा कि एफ एन पी एफ एक्ट में बदलाव किया जा रहा है ताकि बोर्ड में त्रिपक्षीय भावना लाई जा सके। ये कानून असर में आने के बाद बोर्ड में मजदूरों का एक प्रतिनिधी और मजदूर मालिकों का भी एक प्रतिनिधी शामिल करने की ज़रूरत होगी। इससे इस बात का ध्यान रखा जाएगा कि एफ एन पी एफ के शासन और रणनीतिक मामलों में मजदूरों और मजदूर मालिकों को बोलने का ज़्यादा अधिकार होगा। एफ.एन.पी.एफ देश की सबसे बड़ी आर्थिक संस्था है जो सदस्यों के खून-पसीने की कमाई की देखभाल करती है। कुछ मजदूरों के लिए उनकी यही एकमात्र बचत है। इसीलिए हमारे सदस्यों के बचत की देखभाल सही लोगों के हाथ में जाना चाहिए। ऐसा इसलिए होगा जब हम सही समय पर, सही जगह पर पूँजी लगाऐंगे जिससे ब्याज के तौर पर लौटने वाले पैसे से फन्ड के सदस्यों का लगातार फायदा हो।

संसद सदस्यों के वेतन वृद्धि से पहले स्पष्टीकरण दी गई



संसद सदस्य हाल में संसदीय बैठक में हिस्सा लेते हुए चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

रोनल देव

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा के बाद यह स्पष्ट किया कि संसद सदस्यों के वेतन वृद्धि से सरकार को 4.2 मिलियन डोलर का खर्च बैठेगा न कि 8.1 मिलियन डोलर जैसा कि समाचार माध्यमों में रिपोट की गई थी। अगर कोविड-19 महामारी के दौरान संसद सदस्यों के वेतन में जो बीस प्रतिशत कटौती की थी, उसी ठीक की जाए जो सरकारी खजाने को 1.4 का झटका लगेगा। पिछले आठ सालों में यह पहली वृद्धि रही है जबिक माना जा रहा है कि मंत्री मण्डल के कई सदस्यों को प्रति साल के लिए एक प्रतिशत की वेतन वृद्धि मिली। उधर प्रधान मंत्री का वेतन तीन प्रतिशत से घटाया जाएगा और फायनेन्स मंत्री का वेतन सत्राह प्रतिशत से घटाया जाएगा। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि हाल ही संसद में संसद सदस्यों का वेतन

बढ़ाने पर जो मत लिया गया था से कई लोग खुश नहीं है। हम समाचार माध्यम, सौशल मिडिया, विरोध

द्र्शाने की योजना तथा पेटिशन के द्वारा उठाई गई आवाज़ को अनदेखा नहीं कर रहे है।उनके अनुसार सच बात तो यह है कि अगर वेतन वृद्धि की बात अच्छी तरह की गई होती तो आम जनता से इसका समर्थन जरूर मिलता।

उप प्रधान मंत्री प्रसाद इस बात से राज़ी हुए कि संसद सदस्यों के वेतन वृद्धि का फैसला खुद संसद सदस्यों को नहीं लेना चाहिए बिल्क यह काम किसी योग्य और स्वतंत्र उपिंक्लिधियाँ किमटी द्वारा होनी

एक गठबंधन सरकार होने के नाते हम इस बात से सहमत है कि भविष्य में जरूर एक योग्य और स्वतंत्र किमटी होगी तथा आम जनता से सलाह मशवरह किया जाएगा। इस स्वतंत्र किमटी के द्वारा संसद सदस्यों का वेतन तय करने का यह सबसे पारदर्शी तरीका है।

Sunday July 14, 2024

ने एफ एन पी एफ बोर्ड, मेनेजमन्ट तथा

उनके मेहनती कर्मचारियों को इस भारी





देश में पूँजी लगाने की दिलचस्पी दिखाने वालों को धन्यवाद

रोनल देव

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए कहा कि फीजी में पुँजी लगाने के लिए सरकार स्थानीय पूँजीपितयों तथा फीजी के भृतपुर्व नागरिकों की दिलचस्पी को देखकर बहुत खुश है। कई पुँजीपितयों ने देश में होटल की योजना में पुँजी लगाने में दिलचस्पी दिखाई है। इन योजनाओं का मूल्य कम से कम दो बिलियन डोलर है। 'हम सभी को बढ़ती अर्थ-व्यवस्था पर अपना ध्यान केन्द्रित करना चाहिए क्यों कि भारी आर्थिक विकास के द्वारा ही हम अच्छे वेतन वाली नौकरियाँ पैदा कर पाऐंगे, लोगों का जीवनस्तर सुधारेंगे, रास्तें, बिजली तथा पानी की सेवाएं सुधारेंगे तथा आखिरकार देश पर लदा कर्ज़ चुकाएंगे। उधर, व्यक्तिगत रिमिटन्स पिछले साल

बढ़कर 1.25 बिलियन डोलर हो गया जिसमें बीस प्रतिशत की वृद्धि देखी गई। ये वो पैसा है जो विदेश में नौकरी कर रहे या बसे लोग फीजी में अपने चाहने वालों को पैसे भेजते है। अपने चाहने वालों को सहारा देने के लिए सरकार ने इन लोगों को धन्यवाद दिया है। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि रिमिटन्स, देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था में मुख्य योगदान देता है, जिससे हज़ारों परिवारों की जिन्दगी चलती है तथा अनुमान है कि रिमिटन्स में वृद्धि होती रहेगी।

उन्होंने कहा कि हमारी विदेशी भंडार स्थित लगभग 3.3 बिलियन डोलर पर मजबूत बनी हुई है, जो पाँच महीने से ज़्यादा समय के लिए आयात करने के बराबर है। एक्सचईन्ज रैट स्थिर है। व्यापार प्रवाह बढ़ रहा है। लिक्वीडिटी का स्थर लगभग 1.9 बिलियन डोलर है। जिससे ब्याज का दर कम रखा गया है।

टूरिज़म व्यवसाय से जुड़ने वाले रिकोड तोड़ मुनाफा कमा रहें है-इस साल फीजी एक बिलियन टुरिस्टों का स्वागत करेगा



टूरिज़म व्यवसाय से जुड़े साझेदार रिकोर्ड तोड़ मुनाफा कमा रहे है

चित्रः दूरिज़म फीजी

रोनल देव

दूरिज़म व्यवसाय फल फूल रहा है जहाँ पिछ्ले साल नौ लाख उनतीस हज़ार (929,000) ट्रिस्ट फीजी घूमने आए थे। हमारी अंतराष्ट्रीय हवाई कम्पनी, होटल मालिक तथा टूरिज़म व्यवसाय के अन्य साझेदार रिकोर्ड तोड़ मुनाफा कमा रहे है। इससे अन्य क्षेत्रों पर सकरात्मक असर पड़ा जहाँ घरेलू खरीदबीन में वृद्धि हुई, नौकरियाँ पैदा हुई तथा कर बटोरने में वृद्धि देखी गई। व्यवसाय उसी गति से आगे बढ़ रहा है जबकि इस साल के प्रथम पाँच महीनों में टूरिस्टों की संख्या में सात प्रतिशत की वृद्धि देखी गई है। इसके चलते कई नई होटल योजनाओं की घोषणा की गई है जैसे कि एफ एम एफ ग्रुप द्वारा रायजस, विंडम द्वारा डैस इन, रेडिसन ब्लू मिरज, यसावा ग्रुप में वन एन्ड ओनली, नमूका बए रिज़ोट, नलाँगी अपाटमन्ट्स और यातू लाउ तथा पेसिफिक हाबा में दामोदर इंवेस्टमन्ट। जिन होटल का निर्माणकार्य जारी है में, सोफिटेल फीजी द्वारा वातू तलेई, क्राउन प्लाज़ा, वेस्ट इन तथा सुवा में हिल्टन

गार्डन, राकीराकी में वानानावू बीच रिज़ेट, लौतोका स्थित कथै होटल को फिर से विकसित करना, नान्दी में पारामाउन्ट होटल तथा वाईलोआलोआ नान्दी में विंडम गार्डन।

टूरिज़म तथा सिविल अविएशन मंत्रालय को राष्ट्रीय बजट में 68.8 मिलियन डोलर दिया गया है। इसमें से टूरिज़म फीजी ग्रान्ट के रूप में चौवालिस (44) मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है तथा वनुआ लेवू में फीजी टूरिज़म डिवेलोपमन्ट प्रोग्रेम के लिए 13.6 मिलियन डोलर निकाला गया है।

फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि सरकार, इन पुँजीपतियों की योजनाओं को स्वीकृति दिलाने के लिए स्वीकृति वाली अईजिन्सयों के साथ मिलकर काम कर रही है जबिक मौसम ठीक होने से अन्य योजनाएं तेज़ी से आगे बड़ रही है।

वर्तमान में कम ब्याज वाला वातावरण भी इन भारी योजनाओं का समर्थन करने के लिए अनुकूल है। इमिग्रेशन सेवाओं में सुधार लाने तथा हुनर निखारने वाली दूईनिंग प्रदान करने में पुँजी लगाने से वे मजदूरों की समस्याएं सुलझाने की कोशिश कर रहे है।

स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के बजट में वृद्धि करने से लोगों को बेहतर सेवा मिलने की उम्मीद

रोनल देव

सरकार ने स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र के लिए पाँच सौ चालिस मिलियन डोलर अलग किया है ताकि देश में बिगड़ती स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं तथा स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को सुधारा जा सके। पिछले साल के बजट में पाँच सौ मिलियन डोलर निकाला गया था जिसमें एक सौ मिलियन की वृद्धि हुई थी लेकिन इस साल इसमें चालिस मिलियन डोलर और जोड़ा गया है। इस पाँच सौ चालिस मिलियन डोलर में से चार सौ पचास मिलियन डोलर, स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय को दिया गया है और नब्बे मिलियन डोलर बा और लौतोका अस्पतालों के संचालन के लिए निकाला गया है।

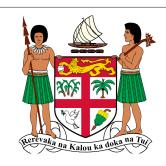
फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि पिछले कई सालों से स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र को नज़्रअँदाज़ किया गया था इसलिए हमें इस क्षेत्र में लगातार पुँजी लगाने और ध्यान देने की ज़रूरत है। इसमें समय लगेगा लेकिन हम धीरे-धीरे प्रगति कर रहे है। उन्होंने स्वास्थ्य सेवा प्रदान करने वाले पेशेवरों को धन्यवाद दिया जिन्होंने चीजों को ठीक करने में लगनशीलता दिखाई। उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार इस दिशा में और भी संसाधन लगाने के लिए तैयार है तथा सरकार के विकास साझेदारों ने इस याता के लिए अपने सर्वोच्च समर्थन का आशवासन दिया है। ओस्ट्रैलिया की सरकार के साथ मिलकर, सरकार सूवा के सी डबलू एम अस्पताल को फिर से विकसित करने या खिस्काने की योजना पर काम करेगी। लम्बे समय की योजना में एक अत्याधुनिक राष्ट्रीय रेफरल अस्पताल का निमार्ण शामिल है जो आधुनिक, मजबूत तथा मरीज़ों पर केंद्रित होगा।इस साल मार्च में ओस्ट्रेलियन सरकार ने सी डबलु एम अस्पताल के संसाधन योजना के लिए पंद्राह मिलियन डोलर प्रदान किया था। सरकार अब अपने अन्य साझेदार जैसे कि अईशियन डिवेलोपमन्ट बेन्क तथा वोल्ड बेन्क से भी इस योजना में आर्थिक सहायता के लिए बातें कर रही है। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने सूवा में सौ खाट वाले

अस्पताल के निमार्ण में संहयोग करने के

लिए भारतीय सरकार को धन्यवाद दिया। इस बारे में भारी प्रगति हुई है जहाँ हमने फीजी नेशनल युनिवेसिटी के पीछे एक ज़मीन देखी है। इसका निमाणे से पहले वाले कार्य भिल प्रकार से जारी है। कुछ निजि स्वास्थ्य संसाधन जैसे कि पेसिफिक स्पेशलिस्ट हेल्थ केयर तथा श्री सत्य साई संजीविनी चिल्रन्स अस्पताल में भारी पूँजी लगाई गई है, जिसके लिए सरकार इस बजट में चार मिलियन डोलर का योगदान दे रही है। स्वास्थ्य सेवा में सुधार लाने के लिए निजि और सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र साथ मिलकर काम कर रहे है। पिछले बजट में इसकी शुरूआत हुई थी कि जिन लोगों की सालाना आमदनी तीस हज़ार डोलर से कम है वे जेनरल प्रेकटीशनस से मुफ्त में सेवा हासिल कर सकते है। जो लोग सौशल वेल्फेयर स्कीम के नीचे है, मुफ्त दवा वाली स्कीम तथा जिन्हें किडनी डायलीसीस के लिए सब्सिडी मिलती है को यह सहायता मिलती रहेगी। सरकार ने अभी तक इन सेवाओं के लिए उन्नीस मिलियन डोलर भर दिया है तथा अनुमान है कि इसमें पाँच मिलियन डोलर की वृद्धि होगी। जो लोग किडनी डायलीसिस पर है के लिए सरकार ने तीन मिलियन डोलर अलग किया है ताकि डायलीसिस के मरीज़ एक वक्त के लिए एक सौ अस्सी डोलर की सहायता ले सके। पिछले बजट में इसे एक सौ पचास डोलर से बढ़ाकर एक सौ अस्सी डोलर किया गया था। दवा तथा चिकित्सा उपकरण खरीदने के लिए सरकार ने बजट में छियान्बे 96 मिलियन डोलर निकाला है। हमारे अस्पतालों में उपकरण, सुँईयाँ तथा चिकित्सा उपकरणों की समय पर सप्लाई करने के लिए लगातार सुधार की ज़रूरत है।निमार्णकार्य तथा सुधारकार्य के लिए बारह मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है जिससे लम्बासा अस्पताल के अन्दर काम किया जाएगा, शहरी और ग्रामीण अस्पताल, हेल्थ सेन्टस तथा नेसिंग स्टेशन पर सुधारकार्य, सावूसावू स्वास्थ्य सुविधा पर मरम्मत तथा तामावूआ में नया रिहेबिलिटेशन सेन्टर बनाया जाएगा। इसके अलावा 3.8 मिलियन डोलर खास रूप से देश भर के स्वास्थ्य स्विधाओं पर छोटे-मोटे मरम्मत के लिए निकाला गया है।







2024 -2025 राष्ट्रीय बजट जवाब

उप प्रधान मंत्री, फायनेन्स मंत्री, स्ट्रेटिजिक प्लेनिंग, राष्ट्रीय विकास और आकड़ा मंत्री माननीय प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद उत्तर देने का अधिकार बुद्धवार दस जुलाई 2024

परिचय में

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, मैं 2024-2025 राष्ट्रीय बजट पर उत्तर देने के अधिकार के निर्मित उठ खड़ा हुआ हूँ।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, पिछले दो दिनों से मैं सरकार और विपक्ष की ओर से बजट पर योगदान ध्यान से सुन रहा था। मैं एका-एक बीच में जितना बोलना चाहता था उतना बोला नहीं। मैं माननीय प्रधान

मंत्री, सरकारी पक्ष में अपने सभी साथियों को उनके योगदान के लिए धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ। मैं विपक्ष के नेता तथा सभी स्वतंत्र संसद सदस्यों को बजट का

समर्थन करने के लिए धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ तथा कई अन्य सदस्यों ने संतुलित बयान दिया और कुछ ने अपनी कला दिखाई। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय विपक्ष में कुछ वफादारों के लिए मैं ऐसा नहीं कह सकता लेकिन श्रीमान स्पीकर यह ज़रूर दिख रहा है कि जब हमें बोलने की आज़ादी मिलती है, अगर कोई डर या कोई मजबूरी न हो तो हम रचनात्मकता की सोचक को उजागर करते हैं और हम अधिक ईमानदार तरीके से सोचते है।

एक सरकार होने के नाते हमें बहुत गर्व है कि हमने देश में ऐसे वातावरण की व्यवस्था की है, लोगों में भरोसा पैदा किया है, अपने पूँजीपतियों के लिए, सभी के लिए कि वे अपने मन की बात खुलकर करें, सरकार की आलोचना करें तथा आगे बढ़ने में सहयोग करें।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, माननीय संजय किरपाल ने अपने भाषण में एक दिलचस्प बात कहीं कि पिछली सरकार में मंत्रीमण्डल के सदस्यों को बजट भाषण से एक घण्टे पहले बजट देखने का अवसर मिलता था। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, मैं एक बार फिर माननीय प्रधान मंत्री को उनकी नेतागिरी के लिए धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ जहाँ बजट तैयार करने में पेमनन्ट सकेटरी के स्तर, मंत्रियों के स्तर, तक फायनेन्स मंत्री, मंत्रीमण्डल की सब-किमटी संपूर्ण प्रकिया पूरी करके मंत्रीमण्डल बजट को स्वीकृति देता है जिसके बाद बजट भाषण, संसद में पेश किया जाता है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, यह एक बहुत ही पारदर्शी, खुली, आकर्षक प्रक्रिया है जिसे हमने अपने दोनों बजट में तैयार किया है, पहले और दूसरे बजट में और मुझे इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है कि भविष्य में आगे बढ़ने पर ऐसा ही होगा।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, एक राष्ट्रीय बजट तैयार करना आसान काम नहीं है, खास करके जब सर पर भारी कर्ज़ लदा हो जिससे आप संसाधनों और सेवाओं को सुधार नहीं पा रहे हो जिन्हें कई सालों

से नज़रआदाज़ किया गया है। ये और भी कठिन हो जाता है जब आपकी अर्थ-व्यवस्था, कोविड-19 जैसी महामारी की मार से उभरने की कोशिश कर रही हो तथा आपको उस नाजुक सुधार की रक्षा के लिए राजकोषीय सहायता की ज़रूरत है।

लेकिन, श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, सरकार सिर्फ वही पैसे खर्च कर सकती है जो वो टेक्स द्वारा बटोरती है या कर्ज़ लेती है। दोनों टेक्स बटोरना और कर्ज़ लेना सस्ता नहीं है। इसीलिए यह ज़रूरी है कि सरकार करदाताओं के संसाधनों का सही उपयोग करें जिससे सबसे ज़्यादा फायदा हो। इनमें शामिल है कठिन तथा नीतिगत फैसले करना और ज़्यादातर समय यह चुनना कि आर्थिक रूप से क्या सही है, छोटे समय के राजनीतिक आस्तित्व के बजाए राजकोषीय रूप से क्या कुछ ज़िम्मेदार है इसपर विचार करना चाहिए।

साथ ही साथ, सरकार को सार्वजनिक सेवाएं प्रदान करने की जो ज़रूरी भुमिका मिली है, यह ज़रूरी है कि सरकार के पास पर्याप्त धन हो। नहीं तो जैसा पिछले कई सालों से देखा गया था कि सरकार के पास हमारे अस्पतालों को ठीक करने, रास्ते सुधारने, हमारी पानी वाली समस्या हल करने, नालों को साफ करने, हमारी बिगड़ती सार्वजनिक संपत्तियों को बचाने तथा हमारे सरकारी कर्मचारियों को अच्छा वेतन देने के लिए पर्याप्त धन नहीं था।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, यही हमने अपने दो बजट में किया है। हमने ध्यान में रखा कि सार्वजनिक संसाधन तथा सेवाओं को सुधारने के लिए सरकार के पास केवल पर्याप्त न धन हो बल्कि हमारे राजकोषीय घाटे को काबू में करें और हमारे सार्वजनिक कर्ज़ को नीचे की ओर ले जाए।

सरकार का कर्ज़

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, मुझे पता है कि सरकार के कर्ज़ के बारे में बहुत कुछ कहा गया है तथा विपक्षी नेता ने पहले जो हो सकता था उसकी एक सकारात्मक तस्वीर बुनने की कोशिश की थी, लेकिन मामले की सच्चाई यह है कि फीजी का कर्ज़-जीडीपी अनुपात जुलाई 2022 में सकल घरेलू उत्पाद के लगभग नब्बे प्रतिशत पर पहुँच गया, जो 2006 में लगभग तिरपन 53 प्रतिशत से बढ़ रहा था।

इस साल जुलाई के अंत तक अनुमान है कि हम फीजी का कर्ज़ गिराकर जी डी पी के लगभग अठहत्तर (78) प्रतिशत तक पहुँचाएंगे - पिछले अट्ठारह महीने में यह बारह प्रतिशत गिरेगा। उन्होंने बातें की कि हमने अट्ठारह महीने में क्या किया तथा माननीय लेन्ड्स मंत्री ने अपने लाजवाब

योगदान में कहा कि अट्ठारह महीने में हमसे जो बन सका वो हमने किया जबिक उनका मतलब था कि अट्ठारह महीने में हमने बहुत कुछ किया। यह कमाल आसानी से नहीं हुआ लेकिन एक राष्ट्र के तौर पर यह एक भारी उपलब्धि है, जहाँ इसे एक ऐसे रास्ते पर लाया गया जो हमारे कर्ज़-जी.डी.पी अनुपात में गिरावट की नींव रखता हो।

इससे भी ज़रूरी बात यह है कि पिछले बजट में हमने राजकोषीय सुधार किया जिससे आमदनी वाली समस्या सुलझाई गई, हमपर लदा दो अंकों का कर्ज़ काबू में किया गया जबिक हमारी सरकार आने से पहले स्थिति बहुत ही खराब थी। इसका मतलब है कि जैसे अर्थ-व्यवस्था में सुधार होगा फीजी का जी डी पी कर्ज़ नीचे की ओर जाएगा। इसी वजह से हमें इसी राह पर रहना ज़रूरी है क्योंकि इस समस्या का सामाधान एक या दो साल में नहीं हो सकता। हमें लगभग अगले दस सालों तक अपनी योजना पर अटल रहना है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, हम यह नहीं सोच रहे है कि हम दस से बीस सालों तक सरकार में रहेंगे जैसा कुछ लोग सोचा करते थे। जो भी सरकार में होगा हम ईमानदारी से, स्पष्ट रूप से अगले दशक के लिए रास्ता तय कर रहे हैं।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, अंतराष्ट्रीय आर्थिक संस्थाएं जैसे कि आए एम एफ और वोल्ड बेन्क, कर्ज़ देने वाली अईजेन्सी तथा हमारे विकास भागीदार, हमारी कर्ज़ समस्या को काबू में लाने के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति और राष्ट्रीय प्रतिबद्धता की सराहना कर रहें है।

वेट कम करना कोई विकल्प नहीं है

लेकिन श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, वेट के बारे में बहुत बातें की गई तथा मैंने सुना कि माननीय विपक्षी सदस्य जिनमें से कुछ वफादारों ने कहा कि हम वेट में गिरावट क्यों नहीं कर रहे है।

लेकिन श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, हम चिन्तित हे जब विपक्ष के संसद सदस्य जैसे माननीय प्रेमिला कुमार, माननीय हेम चन्द तथा अन्य सदस्यों ने प्रस्ताव रखा है हमे वेट का दर पंदाह प्रतिशत से घटाकर नौ प्रतिशत कर देना चाहिए। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय ये लोग आसानी से भूल रहे है कि वे उस नेतागिरी का हिस्सा थे जहाँ वेट का दर पंदाह प्रतिशत था और कोई छूट नहीं थी। उस समय विपक्षी दल जो अभी सरकार में है ने बहुत दबाव डाला और 2014 आम चुनाव से पहले वेट का दर घटाने के लिए मजबूर किया गया था। उन्होंने वेट घटाया लेकिन किसी भी ज़रूरी उत्पादन पर से वेट पूरी तरह नहीं हटाया था और फिर स्पीकर मोहुद्य उन्होंने वेट का तीन दर लागू किया, एक था पंदाह प्रतिशत, नौ प्रतिशत तथा कुछ सामानों पर वेट लागू नहीं होता था।

वेट पर किसी ने भी अपने भाषण में यह नहीं कहा था कि पहले क्या व्यवस्था थी। इसके अलावा श्रीमान स्पीकर, किसी ने भी अपने भाषण में यह नहीं कहा था कि इस सरकार ने ज़रूरी भोजन सामानों पर वेट बिलकुल भी लागू नहीं किया तथा इस सूची में डाक्टरों द्वारा लिखी गई दवा शामिल की। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोगुदय बाईस सामानों पर वेट बिलकुल नहीं लागू होता है।

में माननीय प्रेमिला कुमार को बताना चाहता हूँ कि अगर हम वेट को पंदाह प्रतिशत से घटाकर नौ प्रतिशत करते है तो हम छ: सौ मिलियन डोलर आमदनी खो देंगे। वेट में एक प्रतिशत कटौती करने से कर से होने वाली आमदनी एक सौ मिलियन डोलर से कम होगी। सवाल यह है कि हम इसकी भरपाई कैसे करेंगे माननीय कुमार? क्या आप कर्ज़ को छ सौ मिलियन डोलर से बढ़ाकर दोबारा दो अंकों तक पहुँचाना चाहते हो? लेकिन आप छ: सौ मिलियन डोलर का उधार नहीं ले सकते या आप खर्च को छ: सौ मिलियन डोलर से घटाना चाहते है जिसपर आपमें से किसी ने बातें नहीं की।

सच तो यह है श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, आपको याद होगा कि जब हम विपक्ष में थे, तब यही लोग कह रहे थे कि विपक्ष का विकल्प बजट कहाँ है? आठ सालों तक इन लोगों ने मुझे बोली मारी कि मेरा विकल्प बजट कहाँ है? मैं उनसे कहता रहा कि विपक्ष को एक विकल्प बजट तैयार करना आसान नहीं है क्योंकि हमें जानकारियाँ हासिल करना बहुत ही कठिन था। लेकिन ये लोग आज़ाद है श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, तो आपका विकल्प बजट कहाँ है? यह अब कहाँ है?

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, आम जनता को इस बात पर गौर करना चाहिए कि ये लोग संसद में आधी-अधूरी जानकारी दे रहे है। और आधी-अधूरी जानकारी खतरनाक और धोखे से भरी हुई हो सकती है। यह उनके लिए बहुत आसान था कि वे आकर कहे कि वेट घटाओं लेकिन ये नहीं कहा कि आमदनी कैसे सुधारी जाएगी।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, मैं इस बात पर ज़ोर देना चाहता हूँ कि पिछले बजट में जब हमने वेट का दर नौ प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर पंदाह प्रतिशत किया था तो इससे पहले हमने अच्छी तरह विश्लेषण किया, विभिन्न विकल्पों की खोज की, विभिन्न विशेषज्ञों से

परामर्श किया, अपने बहुपक्षीय कर्ज़दाताओं के साथ चर्चा की और यहाँ तक कि इसे सार्वजनिक चर्चा के लिए भी रखा था। हमने कुछ छुपाया नहीं।

हम जानते थे कि ये कोई आसान फैसला नहीं था, इसलिए हमने यह ध्यान में रखा कि हम सही फैसला करें। यह पंदाह प्रतिशत हम हवा में से लेकर नहीं आए है लेकिन यह एक भारी विश्लेषण और हमारी ज़रूरतों पर आधारित था जो यह ध्यान में रखेगा कि सरकार पर्याप्त रूप से आर्थिक पोषित हो और हम सकल घरेलू उत्पाद के मुकाबले अपने कर्ज़ को नीचे की ओर लेजाने में सक्षम हो।

अगर हमने ऐसा नहीं किया होता तो देश और भी कर्ज़ में डूब जाता तथा हमें कर्ज़ देने वाली कई संस्थाएं सरकार को कर्ज़ देना बन्द कर देती।

जीवन जीने के खर्च पर बातें करने के दौरान मैं वेट पर और बातें करूँगा।

प्रति व्यक्ति कर्ज़ की तुलना

लेकिन इससे पहले श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, मैं नाममात कर्ज़ और प्रति व्यक्ति कर्ज़ पर कुछ प्रकाश डालूं जिसके बारे में कई विपक्षी सदस्यों ने बात की थी, मुझे इसे और स्पष्ट रूप से समझाने दीजिए:

- डिसम्बर 2022 में गठबंधन सरकार ने \$9.5 बिलियन डोलर का कर्ज़ अपनाया;
- प्रति व्यक्ति के कर्ज़ के संदर्भ में, यह लगभग दस हजार सात सौ डोलर था;
- इस बजट के अंत तक अगले साल जुलाई तक, अनुमान है कि हमारा कर्ज़ 10.9 बिलियन डोलर तक पहुँच जाएगा या प्रति व्यक्ति के उपर बारह हज़ार तीन सौ डोलर का कर्ज़ होगा।
- इसका मतलब है कि अगले तीन सालों में गठबंधन सरकार प्रति व्यक्ति के उपर एक हज़ार छ: सौ डोलर जोड़ देगी
- इसके विपरीत श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, पिछली सरकार ने 2006 में 2.9 बिलियन डोलर का कर्ज़ विरासत में लिया था जो प्रति व्यक्ति के उपर तीन हज़ार चार सौ डोलर का कर्ज़ था।
- उनकी अवधि के दौरान, उन्होंने कुल कर्ज़ के स्तर को 9.5 बिलियन डोलर या प्रति व्यक्ति पर दस हज़ार सात सौ डोलर का कर्ज़ लादा था। कर्ज़ 6.6 बिलियन डोलर से बढ़ा जो प्रति व्यक्ति के लिए कर्ज़ सात हज़ार तीन सौ डोलर से बढ़ा।
- इसीलिए माननीय विपक्षी नेता और माननीय सचीदा नन्द यही सच्चाई है जब आप प्रति व्यक्ति पर लदा कर्ज़ की बात करते है। अनुमान है कि अगले साल जुलाई तक सरकार प्रति व्यक्ति पर अतिरिक्त एक हज़ार छ: सौ डोलर का कर्ज़ बढ़ाएगी जबकि आप लोगों ने प्रति व्यक्ति पर अतिरिक्त सात हज़ार तीन सौ डोलर का कर्ज़ जोड़ा था।

कर्ज का दौर

साल	कर्ज़ (बिलियन डोलर)	आबादी	प्रति व्यक्ति कर्ज़ के संद्रभ में (\$)
2006	2.9	837,271	3,400
2013	3.8	837,271	4,580
डिसम्बर 2022	9.5	884,887	10,700
जुलाई 2023	9.7	884,887	11,000
जुलाई 2025	10.9	884,887	12,300

जीवन निर्वाह खर्च

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, कृपया मुझे चीज़ों

के दामों तथा जीवन निर्वाह खर्च के बारे में स्पष्टीकरण करने का मौका दें। यह बहुत ही नाजुक विषय है जिससे लोग हमेशा अपनी राजनीतिक चाल चलते है। लेकिन मुझे कुछ बुनियादी आर्थिक तथ्यों के बारे में बताने का मौका दें:

- पहली बात, बाज़ार में किसी भी चीज़ का दाम माँग और सप्लाए के आधार पर होता है। बेचने वाला या उत्पादनकर्ता, अपने सामान का दाम, उत्पादन खर्च, मज़दूर खर्च, कच्चा माल, यातायात का खर्च, माल रखने, टेक्स और जुड़े हुए अन्य खर्च के आधार पर तय करते है।
- सामान की माँग तथा अन्य सप्लाएयर से होड़बाज़ी के स्तर को देखते हुए उत्पादन का मार्क अप और आखरी दाम तय किया जाता है। लेकिन ये मूल सिद्धान्त अटल रहता है कि कोई भी अपना सामान उत्पादन खर्च से कम दाम में कभी नहीं बेचेगा।
- दूसरी बात, सरकार किसी एक उत्पादन का दाम तीन तरीकों से कुछ हद तक तय कर सकती है। ये प्राईस कोन्ट्रोल से, उत्पादन पर लागू कर के दर को बदलने से या उत्पादन खुद निमार्ण करके उसे घाटे में बेचने से (जैसे कि बहुत सी सरकारी सेवाएं जिनमें पानी भी शामिल है)।
- प्राईस कोन्ट्रोल तथा कर के दर को बदलने के बावजूद बहुत कुछ नहीं किया जा सकता है तथा इन फैसलों के लिए व्यापार बन्द किया जाता है। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय एक सरकार होने के नाते हम हर एक पहलू पर गौर कर रहे है तथा उप प्रधान मंत्री जो कि व्यवसाय मंत्री भी है जिनके नीचे फीजियन कोम्पेटिशन और कोनजुमा किमशन आती है लगातार गौर कर रहे है कि कैसे हम कुछ औजार तथा नितियों की मदद से लोगों को कुछ राहत दे सकते है। यह सब काम हो रहा है तथा मुझे पूरी उम्मीद है कि माननीय उप प्रधान मंत्री बहुत जल्द कुछ फैसलें करेंगे।
- श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य मैं यह बात स्पष्ट कर देना चाहता हूँ कि सामानों का दाम नीचे करना इतना आसान नहीं है जिस तरह से विपक्षी सदस्य सुझाव दे रहे है। ये उन सामानों के लिए भी है जिनपर कुछ भी वेट लागू नहीं है। किसी ने भी ये बात नहीं उठाई कि बाईस सामानों पर वेट नहीं है, इक्कीस ज़रूरी सामानों तथा डाक्टरों द्वारा लिखी दवा पर भी कोई वेट नहीं है। यहाँ तक कि जिन सामानों पर वेट लागू नहीं है, उनका भी दाम उपर गया क्योंकि उत्पादन का खर्च बढ़ा या अन्य संबंधित खर्च जैसे कि सामान पहुँचाने का खर्च, विमा तथा सामान रखने के खर्च में वृद्ध हुई जो हमारे काबू से बाहर है।
- वे जानते है। कोविड के दौरान ऐसा हुआ था। फईट का खर्च तीन से चार गुना बढ़ गया था और कुछ खर्च कई दिनों तक ऐसा ही था। तो सामानों पर डूटी कम करने, वेट हटाने के बावजूद श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय सामानों का दाम फिर भी उपर
- ये भी देखा गया कि स्थानीय उत्पादन जैसे कि डालो, कसेरा तथा शाख-भाजी के दाम उपर गए हालांकि इनपर कोई टेक्स या वेट लागू नहीं है। इसका मतलब यही है कि जब खराब मौसम की वजह से सप्लाई पर असर पड़ता है या जब लोग यह उत्पादन पर्याप्त मात्रा में बोते नहीं है या जब ये उत्पादन भारी मात्रा में विदेश भेजा जाता है तो इसके दाम यहाँ बढ़ जाते है। इसका मतलब है कि हमें उत्पादनों का दाम नीचे करने के लिए उत्पादन बढ़ाना पड़ेगा जो तुरन्त नहीं हो सकता।
- इसके अलावा श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, हम यहाँ फीजी में ज़्यादातर जिन सामानों

का प्रयोग करते है, वो बाहर देश से आते है, इसलिए आयात वाले दाम पर काबू रखना बहुत ही मुश्किल है जो विश्व बाज़ार पर आधारित होते है।

- कुछ प्रमुख देश जिनके साथ हम ज्यादा व्यापार करते है जैसे कि ओस्ट्रेलिया, न्यू जीलैन्ड तथा अमेरिका, सभी महँगाई के दर का सामना कर रहे है, क्योंकि महामारी के चलते विश्व भर में सप्लाई चैन को लेकर बाधाएं पहुँची है। पिछले साल ओस्ट्रेलिया में महँगाई का दर 6.6 प्रतिशत था (जो इक्तीस 31 सालों में सबसे ज़्यादा था), न्यू जीलेन्ड में महँगाई का दर 7.2 प्रतिशत था (जो चौतीस 34 सालों में सबसे ज़्यादा था), जबिक अमेरिका में महँगाई का दर आठ प्रतिशत था जो कि पिछले चालिस सालों के मिलान में सबसे ज़्यादा था।
- इन देशों का फीजी के साथ जबकि व्यापारिक संबंध है तो ऐसे में यह स्वाभाविक है कि इन देशों से सामान मँगाने में ज़्यादा महँगा और भारी असर पड़ेगा क्योंकि जो सामान हम देश में उपयोग करते है उनमें से पचास प्रतिशत विदेशी सामान है।
- अगर हम अन्य देश जैसे कि मोरिशस की तूलना करें तो, दो साल पहले उनके महँगाई का दर 10.8% था, पिछले साल यह दर सात प्रतिशत था और इस साल लगभग 5.9 प्रतिशत होने का अनुमान है। हमारे पड़ोसी देश वनुआतू ने दो साल पहले महँगाई का दर 6.7% रिकोर्ड किया था, पिछले साल यह दर बारह प्रतिशत था और इस साल लगभग 6.7 प्रतिशत होने का अनुमान है जबिक तोन्गा ने दो साल पहले महँगाई का दर 8.5% रिकोर्ड किया था, पिछले साल यह दर 10.2% प्रतिशत था और इस साल लगभग 5.4 प्रतिशत होने का अनुमान है।
- श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, पिछले साल के अंत तक फीजी में महँगाई का दर 5.1 पितशत तक था और इस साल बढ़कर 7.1 प्रतिशत हो गया। जून महीने में हमारे वर्तमान महँगाई का दर 6.7 प्रतिशत था जबिक अनुमान है कि इस साल के अंत तक या दर तीन से चार प्रतिशत तक हो जाएगा। माननीय उसामाते ने कहा था कि देश के

इतिहास में महँगाई का दर इतना उपर कभी नहीं गया था। लेकिन अगर आप उनके समय में महँगाई का दर देखे तो, 2009 में वो 6.8 प्रतिशत था, 2011 में 7.7 प्रतिशत था जबिक 2018 में 6.6 प्रतिशत था।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, पिछले दो बजट में हमने जीवन निर्वाह खर्च में चुनौतियों का सामना कर रहे लोगों की मदद के लिए:

• हमने इक्कीस सामानों पर वेट नहीं रखा है तथा उस सूची में डाक्टर द्वारा लिखी गई दवा भी जोड़ी गई है जो अब बाई स सामान हो गए है। इसलिए अब चीनी, आटा, चावल, दाल, चाय, आलू, प्याज़, लेहसुन, टिन वाली मछली, भोजन पकाने वाला तेल, नमक, दूध, शिशुओं का दूध, सेनाद्री पेड, साबुन, कपड़े धोने का पाउडर, टोईलट पेपर, टुथपेस्ट, खाना बनाने का गेस, करोसीन तथा डाक्टरों द्वारा लिखी गई दवा पर वेट नहीं है। यही कुछ खास चीज़ें है जो लोग सबसे पहले सुपरमार्केट से खरीदते है। सच तो यह है श्रीमान स्पी-कर मोहुद्य, 2018 वाले आम चुनाव से पहले हमने इस सूची का प्रस्ताव रखा था, तथा इन लोगों ने इसी सूची की नकल करके शामिल की, तथा हमें खुशी है कि उन्होंने 2022 वाले आम चुनाव से ठीक पहले ऐसा किया था।

 पिछले बजट में हमने सत्तर साल से उपर के लोगों के लिए सौशल वेल्फेयर अलावन्स पचीस प्रतिशत तथा सत्तर साल से कम उम्र के लोगों के लिए पंदाह प्रतिशत से बढ़ाया था।

- हमने सरकारी पेंशन तथा आफ्टा केयर अलावन्स को पंदाह प्रतिशत से बढ़ाया
- हमने तुराँगा-नि-कोरो, माता-नि-तिकिना, तुराँगा-नि-यवूसा, प्रोविंशल एडमिनिस्ट्रेटस तथा डिस्ट्रिक एडवाएज्री काउन्सलस के अलावन्स को बढ़ाया।
- हमने स्कूल वापस जाने के लिए दो सौ डोलर सहायता की शुरूआत की जो उन परिवारों के लिए है जिनकी सालाना आमदनी पचास हज़ार डोलर से कम है जिससे दो लाख 200,000 बच्चों की सहायता की गई है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, पहले तो उन्होंने झूठ कहा कि यह फीजीफेस्ट की पहल थी। जो फीजीफेस्ट ने किया था वो महँगाई को सहने का उपाय था। अगस्त 2022 से जनवरी 2023 तक छ: महीने के लिए एक डोलर प्रति दिन जो एक सौ अस्सी डोलर हुआ।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य यह आम चुनाव के लिए एक नौटंकी थी। छ: महीने के लिए एक डोलर प्रति दिन जो एक सौ अस्सी डोलर था वो स्कूल को भरा गया। उन्होंने झूठ कहा था कि ये स्कूल वापस जाने के लिए कोई मदद थी। सरकार होने

के नाते, जब माननीय प्रधान मंत्री ने पिछले

साल इसकी घोषणा की थी तब हम आम

चुनाव के बारे में नहीं सोच रहे थे। जैसे ही हम सरकार में आए, हमें अहसास हुआ कि हमारे बच्चे, ग्रामीण इलाकों में हमारे बच्चों को सहायता की ज़रूरत है। इसीलिए हमने ऐसा किया। यह आम चुनाव की कोई नौटंकी नहीं थी। यह एक नई पहल थी,

बच्चों को सहारा देने के लिए गठबंधन सरकार की एक प्रमुख उपाय था। • हमने 53,000 टेशरी छात्रों के लिए

- हमन 53,000 टशरी छाता क लिए छ: सौ पचास मिलियन डोलर का टेल्स कर्ज़ माफ कर दिया, जिससे जब भी वे नौकरी शुरू करते तो उन्हें कर्ज़ की बेड़ियों से आज़ाद कर दिया है। यही पैसे वे अपने आप पर और अपने परिवार को सहारा देने में लगा सकते है।क
- इस बजट में हम अड़तीस हज़ार से ज़्यादा सरकारी कर्मचारियों को वेतन वृद्धि देने के लिए 85 मिलियन डोलर अलग कर रहे है जिन्हें 2017 से वेतन वृद्धि मिलने से वंचित रखा गया था।
- हमने मिनिमम वईज दर को पाँच डोलर प्रति घण्टा तक बढ़ाकर साहसिक कदम उठाया है जिसमें पचीस प्रतिशत की वृद्धि हुई है। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय माननीय प्रवीन बाला तथा अन्य संसद सदस्य दावा कर रहे है कि मिनिमम वईज दर में हुई वृद्धि बहुत कम है। उन्हें अपने आप को आईने में देखना चाहिए। जब वे सरकार में थे तो उन्हें 2014 में मिनिमम वईज रईट लागू करने में आठ लम्बे साल लगे। और वो सिर्फ दो डोलर प्रति घण्टा। फिर बाद में इसे बढ़ाकर 2.32 प्रति घण्टा किया गया तथा सितम्बर 2017 में यह 2.68 प्रति घण्टा हुआ। आम चुनाव से पहले इसमें चार चरण वृद्धि की घोषणा हुई, जो कि 2.68 प्रति घण्टा से चार डोलर प्रति घण्टा करना। 2018 आम चुनाव से पहले हम पाँच
- 2018 आम चुनाव स पहल हम पाच डोलर प्रति घण्टा को लेकर अभियान कर रहे थे और ये लोग गामेन्ट फेक्टरी मजदूरों को धमकी दे रहे थे कि सरकार यह वृद्धि देने के हाल में नहीं थी जबिक सच तो यह है कि उस समय देश की अर्थव्यवस्था बेहतर थी। वेतन बढ़ाने का वो सही समय
- हम विशेषज्ञों के एक पैनल द्वारा व्यापक

समीक्षा के आधार पर मिनिमम वईज दर को बढ़ाकर पाँच डोलर कर रहे है जिसने मज-दूर मालिकों, यूनियन और अन्य हितधारको के साथ गहन विश्लेषण और परामर्श किया है। हम दो चरणों में ऐसा

करेंगे क्योंकि इस बात को ध्यान में रखना है कि मजदूर मालिकों को भी बदलाव करने के लिए समय चाहिए।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, एक और बात मैं कहना चाहता हूँ जो आप देख रहे होंगे कि पिछले अट्ठारह महीने हो रहे है। युनियन अच्छी शर्ती पर बातचित कर रहे है।

युनयन अच्छा शता पर बाताचत कर रह हा अंतराष्ट्रीय मानयता प्राप्त संस्थाएं जैसे कि आए.एम एफ के सुबुत दिखाते है कि जिन देशों में मजदूर मालिकों को दबाकर रखा जाता है, मजदूरो पर पाबन्दी लगाई जाती है, उन देशों के मजदूरों के वेतन पर असर पड़ता है जैसा कि पिछले सोलह सालों में इस देश में हुआ।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, अगर बीते सालों में मजदूरों को मौका मिलता तो हमें आज ये समस्या देखने को नहीं मिलता तथा सरकार वहीं सुधारने की कोशिश कर रही है।

- हम अपने गन्ने के किसानों को पिछले साल के गन्ने के मौसम के लिए एक सौ दो डोलर प्रति टन के हिसाब से पैसा दे रहे है। दो साल पहले वाले गन्ने के लिए हमने किसानों को \$91.38 प्रति टन के हिसाब से पैसा दिया। दोनों पईमन्ट निर्धारित दाम पचासी \$85 प्रति टन से काफी ज्यादा है।
- हम अपने धान के किसानों को धान के लिए एक हज़ार डोलर प्रति टन के हिसाब से पैसे दे रहे है। इसके अलावा हमारे नकदी फसल वाले किसान जिनमें डालो और कसेरा के किसान शामिल है को भी अपने उत्पादनों के लिए भारी दाम मिल रहा है।
- हम सहायता देने वाले अन्य पहलों को जारी रखे हुए है जिनमें मुफ्त शिक्षा, यातायात की सहायता, तीस हज़ार डोलर से कम कमाने वाले परिवारों के लिए मुफ्त पानी तथा बिजली के खर्च में छूट, प्राईवट जी.पी के द्वारा मुफ्त चिकित्सा सेवा, डायलीसीस खर्च में छूट, पहली बार घर बनाने और खरीदने वालों को सहायता, छात्रवृति, कानूनी सलाह की मुफ्त सेवा तथा अन्य सेवाएं।

सरकार द्वारा इस तरह की सहायता से हमें इस साल अकेले सात सौ पचास डोलर का खर्च बैठेगा। तो हम लोगों को सीधी सहायता देने में इस तरह से खर्च कर रहे है। इनमें शामिल है:

- बाईस सामानों पर कुछ भी वेट नहीं-दो सौ पचास 250 मिलियन डोलर
- स्कूल वापस जाने की सहायता में -चालिस 40 मिलियन डोलर
- सौशल पेंशन स्कीम अठ्हत्तर 78 मिलियन डोलर
- फेमली सहायता वाली स्कीम के लिए चौवालिस 44 मिलियन डोलर
- विकलाँग वाले अलावन्स सत्राह 17
 मिलियन डोलर
 बच्चों की सुरक्षा वाले अलावन्स सत्राह
- 17 मिलियन डोलरबिजली की सब्सिडी के लिए दस
- मिलियन डोलर ● चालिस हज़ार परिवारों को पानी की
- सब्सिडी चार मिलियन डोलर
- नब्बे हज़ार छात्रों को यातायात की सहायता के लिए – सैतीस 37 मिलियन डोलर
- छात्रवृति के लिए एक सौ पचास

 मिलियन डोलर

 गिरिंगि गाइन खाउँ स्टीप गाँच
- पी.पी.पी. मुफ्त स्वास्थ्य स्कीम पाँच मिलियन डोलर
- किडनी डायलीसीस सिब्सडी के लिए

तीन मिलियन डोलर

- पहला घर खरीदने के ग्रान्ट के लिए -पाँच मिलियन डोलर
- सरकारी कर्मचारियों के वेतन के लिए पचासी यथ मिलियन डोलर
- टेल्स माफ करने के लिए दस मिलियन डोलर

अर्थव्यवस्था

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, मुझे अर्थव्यवस्था के बारे में बोलने का मौका दें क्योंकि बहुत सारी टिप्पणियाँ की गई हैं कि अर्थव्यवस्था धीमी हो सही है, आत्मविश्वास है, पूँजी नहीं हो रही है वगैराह।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, अर्थव्यवसथा में गिरावट नहीं हो रही है, मुझे यह स्पष्ट करने दीजिए कि अर्थव्यवस्था बढ़ रही है।

ओस्ट्रेलिया और न्यूज़ीलैंड में कुछ आर्थिक परिस्थितियों का सामना किया जा रहा हैं और हमारी घटती आबादी के कारण चुनौं तियां हैं जो घरेलू माँग और मज़दूर पर दबाव डाल रही हैं, फिर भी इस वर्ष अर्थ व्यवस्था में 2.8 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि होने का अनुमान है।

हालाँकि यह 3.4 प्रतिशत से थोड़ा नीचे की ओर था, हमारी वृद्धि सकारात्मक बनी हुई है जिसका अर्थ है कि अर्थव्यवस्था अभी भी बढ़ रही है और इसमें गलतफेमी नहीं है जैसा कि कुछ सदस्यों ने गलत समझा है।

इस बजट में राजस्व प्रोतसाहन और आर्थिक आशावाद शामिल है तथा आगे चल कर सफलता की उम्मीद की जा सकती हैं। ए एन ज़ेड दूारा यह कहा गया है कि बढ़न्ती 2.8 प्रतिशत से ज़्यादा हो सकती है।

ज़िहर है कि वे बजट के सकारात्मक प्रभाव और कुछ मुख्य प्रगति जो प्राईवट सेक्टर दूरा की गई है वो अब ज़मीन पर तेज़ी से आगे बढ़ रहा है

प्राईवट सेक्टर दो बिलियन डोलर से भी ज़्यादा लागत पुँजी लगाना चाहते है। हम अपने इमीग्रेशन सेवाओं से संबंधित मामलो को भी ठीक कर रहे हैं। बैंक इन योजनाओं में पैसे लगाने के लिए बिलकुल तैयार है। हमारी एजेंसियों को सावधान रहने को कहा गया है ताकि कोई देरी न हो। इसलिए, हम जल्द ही पुँजी और आर्थिक गतिविधियों में एक बड़ी सफलता देखेंगे।

हमारे कुछ मुख्य पुँजी होटलों में लगाए जाऐं गे जिसमे नए कमरे शामिल है जो व्यस्त महीनों में हमारे टूरिज़म क्षेत्र के लिए प्रगति लाएगी। यह हमारे कमरे के रेट और टूरिज़म क्षेत्र को और भी मज़बूत बनाने में मदद करेंगा।

हम अपने हवाई अडड्ों, बंदरगाह बुनियादी ढाँचे और रिन्यूअबल एनर्जी को बढ़ाने के विषय में काम कर रहें हैं। भविष्य में इस में कुछ मुख्य पुँजी लगाए जाने की उम्मीद है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, हम देख रहे है कि कुछ नए प्राईवट सेक्टर कृषि, आउटसोसिंग, आई सी टी और कुछ अन्य क्षेत्रों में दिलचस्पी दिखा रहे हैं, जिससे हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ाने, अर्थव्यवस्था को सहायता, बेरोज़गारी में मदद तथा प्रगति के अवसर में वृद्धि होगी। यह सब, और संपूर्ण सरकारी स्तर पर हमारे प्रयासों का उदेद्श्य हमारी विकास दर को तीन से पाँच प्रतिशत तक बढ़ाना है।

खर्च का उपयोग

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, विपक्ष ने गठबंधन सरकार के खपत उपयोग और पूँजी लगाने वाली योजनाओं के बारे में एक बड़ी आवाज़ उठाई थी।

में इस बात को स्पष्ट करना चाहता हूँ कि अनुमान है कि टज्ञटड-टज्ञटण बजट में लगभग शण प्रतिशत पैसे जो अलग किए गए थे, उपयोग किए जाएंगे।

इसमें शभ प्रतिशत संचालन बजट और यथ प्रतिशत केपिटल बजट शामिल है। मैं इस बात से सहमत हूँ कि हम पूँजी वाले योजनाओं में और सुधार कर सकते हैं, लेकिन श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय मुझे उनकी सरकार के समय, खपत उपयोग के बारे में बताने दीजिए।

टज्ञधध-टज्ञधभ बजट में पूँजी बजट का केवल भज्ञ.थ प्रतिशत उपयोग हुआ था जबकि कुल खपत उपयोग यण प्रतिशत था।

टज्ञधभ-टज्ञधय के बजट में पूँजी बजट का उपयोग केवल भभ.भ प्रतिशत था जबिक कुल यथ.श प्रतिशत खपत का उपयोग किया गया था।

टज्ञधय-टज्ञधश के बजट में पूँजी बजट केवल धघ.ट प्रतिशत था जबकि भभ.ण प्रतिशत का उपयोग किया गया था।

अब श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, मैं यह महत्वपूर्ण बात को उठाने जा रहा हूँ। यह उस समय योजनाओं के बारे में हैं जो उस समय असर में नहीं लाया गया था। ऐसा इसिलए था क्योंकि सरकार टज्ञधय चुनाव से पहले पैसों की समस्याओं से जूझ रही थी। टज्ञधय के चुनाव से पहले, उन्होंने इतनी सारी चीज़ों की घोषणा की और उनका कुल मिलाकर धट प्रतिशन और भण प्रतिशन परियोजनाएं थी। इसीलिए श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, टज्ञधश में उनकी प्रगति नहीं हुई।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, हम अपनी खपत के दर के बारे में सफाई देने का प्रयास नहीं कर रहे हैं बिल्क हम उपयोग को और बेहतर बनाने के लिए सरकारी एजेंसियों के बीच काम कर रहे हैं।

पर यह बहुत ज़रूरी है कि विपक्ष इस बात को समझे कि उनके समय क्या हो रहा था।

संचालन केपिटल मिश्रण

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, कुछ लोगो ने यह भी कहा कि हमारा संचालन केपटिल मिश्रण जो भड:टभ है बहुत कम है। क्योंकि सरकारों के मुख्य रूप से शिक्षा, स्वास्थय, और सुरक्षा की सेवा प्रदान करने पर ज़्यादा ध्यान देती है, इसलिए आपको आमतौर पर खपत के लिए लगभग भज्ञ प्रतिशत खपत की ज़रूरत होगीं।

इसी प्रकार, पूँजी खपत लगभग तीस श्डज्ञत्त प्रतिशत है क्योंकि हम केवल वही बजट बना सकते हैं जितनी सरकार की क्षमता है।

हम इस को मानते है कि हम केपिटल योजनाओं के खर्च को और बढ़ा सकते है।

आमदनी योजना वास्ताविक है श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, मैं इस बात को स्षट करना चाहता हूँ कि 2024-2025 के आमदनी योजनाओं के बारे में विपक्ष के सदस्य बहुत ही गलत सोचते है।

नहीं, श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, मैं सभी लोगों को यह आश्वासन देना चाहता हुँ कि आमदनी के आंकड़े जितना हो सके वास्तविक ही होते है। यह सवाल जिसमें यह पूछा जा रहा है कि क्यों एक सरकार आमदनी योजना को ज़्यादा बताऐगी, यह इसलिए है क्योंकि यदि आप ऐसा करते हैं तो फस जाएंगे और गंभीर समस्याओं से जूझेंगे जो फीजीफर्स्ट सरकार ने चुनाव से पहले 2018-2019 में सामना किया था।

तो, इसलिए हमारे आमदनी के आंकड़ों को लेकर बहुत अधिक गलत होने का कोई वास्तविक प्रोत्साहन नहीं हैं।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, पिछले दिनों हमारे सफल आमदनी सुधार को देखते हुए बजट में, हमारी कुल आमदनी 3.9 बिलियन का अनुमान लगा रहे हैं, जिसमें से 3.3 बिलियन टेक्स आमदनी हैं, जबिक 0.6 बिलियन नोन टेक्स आमदनी हैं। हम टेक्स में कुछ बदलाव नहीं कर रहे हैं, यहां-वहां और अन्य छोटे-मोटे बदलाव के अलावा।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, वर्तमान आर्थिक वर्ष 2023-2024 में हमें अब पूरा विश्वास है कि हम टेक्स के रूप में तीन बिलियन से थोड़ा अधिक बटोरेंगे, जो फीजी के इतिहास में अब तक सबसे अधिक है तथा हमारे इस साल के तीन बिलियन डोलर तक बढ़ाने के लिए संघर्ष नहीं करना चाहिए।

हम जो 300 मिलियन डोलर को जमा करने का अनुमान लगा रहे हैं, उनमें से लगभग णथ मिलियन डोलर टेक्स विभाग से जमा किया गया है, जबिक बड़ा हिस्सा बड़ी आर्थिक हिस्सेदोरी के कारण होगा क्योंकि फीजी की अर्थव्यवस्था लगभग तीन प्रतियत की दर से बढ़ती रहेगी।

बिना टेक्स की आमदनी की अगर हम बात करे, जैसा कि मैंने पहले ही कहा है कि हमें लगभग 162 मिलियन डोलर रिज़र्व बैंक के मुनाफे से, 170 मिलियन डोलर जुर्माना और एल टी ए जैसी संस्थाओं को धज्ञ मिलियन तक भरना पड़ता है, पानी के जुर्माने के लिए 49 मिलियन और इमीग्रेशन तथा अन्य एजेंसियों को 150 मिलियन तक बजट समर्थन देना पड़ता है।

बजट पर परामर्श की कमी

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, विपक्ष के कुछ सदस्य जिसमें माननीय केतन लाल भी शामिल है ने कहा कि इस साल के बजट पर परामर्श नहीं किया गया था, यह कितना बेतुका है?

हमने राष्ट्रीय आर्थिक सम्मेलन, फिस्कल समीक्षा समिति से चर्चा, निजी क्षेत्र की सं स्थाओं, समाजिक संगठनों, छात्रों, धार्मिक संगठनों, सुरक्षा बल के लोग और कई अन्य लोगों के साथ बैठक से लेकर कई परामर्श किए गए थे।

अभी फरवरी 2024 में, हमने राष्ट्रीय विकास योजना पर परामर्श किया और यही पर हमारे बुजुर्गों, हमारे युवाओं, किसानों, गन्ने के किसान, कामकाजी लोगों और ग्रामीण दूरदराज़ के क्षेत्रों के लोगो सहित सभी भागों के 22,000 से अधिक लोगों ने खुलकर बातें की हमारे साथ कि वे क्या चाहते थे. विकास योजना और राष्ट्रीय बजट दोनों में।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, मुझे विश्वास है कि पिछली सरकार ने इस हद तक परामर्श कभी नहीं किया गया था, फिर भी दूसरी तरफ के माननीय सदस्य ज्ञान की कमी के कारण इस तरह की टिप्पणियाँ देते रहते है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, इस परामर्श का असर हमारे बजट पर पड़ा है। बोरहोल इसका एक अच्छा उदाहरण हैं। अगले एक या दो वर्षों में हम जो 1700 बोरहोल खोदने जा रहे हैं।

गैर-लाभकारी संगठन की संपत्ति आमदनी टेक्स

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, गैर-लाभकारी संगठनों के लिए व्यावसायिक आमदनी पर टेक्स लगाने के मामले को भी मैं स्पष्ट करना चाहता हुँ।

सबसे पहले, धार्मिक संगठनों के लिए सभी दान और धन उगाहने वाली गतिविधियाँ टेक्स से मुक्त हैं। इसके अलावा, किसी पूँजी वाले धार्मिक संगठन को दान देने वाले व्यवसाय इसे कटौती योग्य के रूप में दावा कर सकते हैं।

2016 आमदनी टेक्स एक्ट के तहत सभी गैर-लाभकारी संगठन केवल अपने व्यावसायिक आमदनी के लिए टेक्स का इस्तेमाल करेंगे। यह नीति टेक्स प्रणाली के भीतर सुनिष्चित करती है, क्योंकि समान व्यावसायिक गतिविधियों का संचालन करने वाले व्यक्तियों या व्यवसायों पर भी टेक्स लगाया जाता है। अन्यता, हम एक असमान खेल का मैदान तैयार कर देंगे।

टज्ञघध से पहले, एफ आर सी एस ने यह भी पाया कि कई एन पी ओ अपनी को-मेशल आमस शरू कर रहे थे, कुछ अच्छे इरादों के साथ और कछ टेक्स से बचने के लिए साधन के रूप में।

इस खामी को बंद करने के लिए, 2016 से सुपरमार्केट व्यवसाय, दुकानदार आदि जैसी गतिविधियों का संचालन करने वाले एन पी ओ पर टेक्स लगाया गया था। इस बजट में एन पी ओ दूारा संपत्ति आमदनी टेक्स को स्पष्ट किया जाएगा।

इस परिवर्तन को प्रभावित करने वाला एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण कारण है। एन पी ओ बानाने वाले इन व्यवसायों के पीछे की मंशा पर सवाल उठाया जा सकता हैकि क्या यह वास्वत में धार्मिक या गैर-लाभकारी संस्थाओं के लिए था या केवल संपत्ति आमदनी पर टेक्स प्राप्त करने के लिए था।

चंदा और आमदनी पर कोई भी टेक्स लागू नहीं किया जाएगा।

नशीले पदार्थ और अपराध श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, मैं कुछ विपक्षी सदस्यों दूरा नशीली दवाओं की समस्या पर गठबंधन सरकार पर उंगली उठाने से आश्चर्य-चिकत था। श्रीमान स्पीकर मो-हुद्य, फीजी नशीली दवाओं की समस्या से अनजान नहीं हैं। यह पिछले कई वर्षों से चल रहा था, लेकिन पिछली सरकार की ओर से कोई कार्रवाई नहीं की गई थी।

हम नारकोटिक्स ब्यूरो की स्थापना, काउटर नारकोटिक्स ब्यूरो रणनीति 2023-2028 की शुरूआत कर रहे है जो हमारे पुलिस बल का एक प्रमुख रीसेट जो प्रमुख सुरक्षा और सहयोग के साथ काम करेंगी। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, अपनी बात समाप्त करने से पहले मैं कुछ बातों का जवाब देना चाहूंगा। माननीय सचिदा नंद दूारा उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा दूरिज़म मंत्री पर उठाए गए विवाद कि अगर हम बात करे तो माननीय नंद खुद ही भ्रमित हो रहे थे। वे 2.9 बिलियन डोलर के आंकड़े के बारे में बात कर रहे थे और माननीय नंद ने कहा कि दूरिज़म क्षेत्र के लिए यह बहुत कम योगदान हैं, जो कि सच नहीं है। बहुत सारे होटल और यातायत के योगदान को मिला कर दूरिज़म क्षेत्र का योगदान जी डी पी के प्रति करबिन 40 प्रतिशत है।

मैं माननीय नंद और सभी माननीय सदस्यों से ये आग्रह करता हुँ कि वे सोच समझ कर विषयों को उठाए और यह सुनिश्चित करें कि आप जो कहते हैं वह सच हो।

मननीय नंद ने रिवेलुएशन यानि पुन:मल्यां कन के विषय में भी बाते की थी, यह बहुत ही नाजुक विषय है क्योंकि यह कई गतिविधियों को भड़का सकता है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, पहले ही मुद्रा के बदलाव के कारण हमारे व्यापारिक साझेदारों को तकलीफ हो रही है तथा किसी भी तरह के बदलाव करना गलत होगा। 2009 में देश के मुद्रा का मूल्य गिराया गया था जब कई सामानों के दाम उपर चले गए थे तथा स्थित समान्य होने में कई साल लग गए थे।

मननीय बाला दूरा एकिज़म बैंक कर्ज़ के विचार पर, मुझे लगा कि यह माननीय बाला दूरा हमारे प्रधान मंत्री को अपमान किया जा रहा हैं और भारत के प्रधान मंत्री का भी क्योंकि 100 बिस्तरों वाले अस्पताल की घोषणा साथ मिल कर की गई थी। मुझे यह लग रहा है कि माननीय बाला को संसद के बाहर इसे सही करना चाहिए क्योंकि यह जानकारी गलत है।

एक एन पी एफ पेंशन और वतुकौला हड़ताल के बारे में माननीय उसुमाते दूरा उठाई गई बात पर मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने 2015 में वादा किया था और किसी ने "ओह" कह कर यह जवाब दिया था कि वे बहुत पैसा चाहते है। मुझे नहीं लगता कि वे अच्छे विश्वास के साथ बातचीत कर रहे थे। यह एक एसी सरकार है जिसने इस समस्या का समाधान किया है क्योंकि हमने यूनियनों को समझाने के लिए एक मंश प्रदान किया था तथा यह वादा किया कि अगर हम सरकार में आए तो इस मामले को सुलझा देंगे।

हम वास्तव में यूनियन नेताओं पर भरोसा करते हैं। इस देश के इतिहास पर नज़र डाले तो वे जिम्मेदार नेता रहें हैं। हमने उन सभी कानूनों को हटा दिया है. हमने एक मंच प्रदान किया है, और मुझे नहीं लगता है कि इसका उपयोग किसी बहाने के रूप में, या अन्य विवादों से निपटने के लिए एक मंच के रूप में किया जाएगा।

एफ एन पी एफ पेंशन पर, मैं बस इतना कहना चाहता हूँ कि कुछ चीज़े जो सैनिक सरकार ने बिना सहानुभूति के, लोगों को यह समझाए बिना किया कि वह ऐसा क्यों करने जा रहे है, इससे बहुत से लोगों को बहुत पीड़ा हुई पिछले सोलह वर्षों से।

यह एसी सरकार है जो हर गलत काम को सही करने का वादा नहीं कर रही है, लेकिन जहां उसके पास साधन हैं, हम उसे सही कर रहे है श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य। यही संदेश हमारे पूँजीपतियों तथा लोगों को मिल रहा है। यह एक एसी सरकार है जो प्रतिशोध नहीं लेती है, जो डर पैदा नहीं कर रही है। वतुकौला हड़ताल और एफ एन पी एफ पेंशन इस बात को स्पष्ट करना चाहते है। मैं विपक्ष के वफादार नेता माननीय खोया

म विपक्ष के विफादार नेता माननाय खाया के योगदान के बारे में कह सकता हूँ, आप जानते है कि जब इरादे साफ होते हैं, जब हाथ साफ होते हैं तो हम समीक्षा भी स्वीकार करते हैं।

मननीय नौपोतो के यौगदान पर, मैं उनसे सहमत हूँ कि योग्य शिक्षा बहुत ही ज़रूरी है। लेकिन वह इस बात पर ज़ोर दे रहे थे कि योगदान के आधार पर नई छातों को उनके काब्लियत पर सहयोग देना चाहिए।

यह सही नहीं है, जब हमने योग्य शिक्षा के बारे में बात की, तो हम शिक्षा महौल में सुधार के बारे में बात कर रहे है। सुवा नौसोरी क्षेत्र में पिछले सोलह वर्षों से, और माननीय शिक्षा मंत्री इस बात को अच्छी तरह से जानते हैं, जैसे ही हम सरकार में आए, उन्हें इसका एहसास हुआ। हमारे प्राई मरी और सेकेंड्री स्कूल की अगर हम बातें करे तो सेकेड्री स्कूल में ज्यादा बच्चे हैं। तथा प्राईमरी स्कूल में 50 से 60 बच्चे हैं।

हमने ओस्ट्रेलियन सरकार के साथ काम करते हुए एक सरकार के रूप में शुरूआत की है। हमने पहले ही एक समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किया है और सुवा-नौसोरी क्षेत्र में हमें आवश्यक कक्षाओं और स्कूलों की सं ख्या में एक ओडिट किया जा रहा है।

मैं उन सभी बच्चों को आश्वस्त करना चाहता हूँ जो फोर्म छ: या सात में है कि वर्तमान योजना में उनमें से प्रत्यक के लिए जगह है। वो बच्चें जो मेडिसन, इंजीनियरिंग या इन में से किसी में भी डिग्री हासिल नहीं कर सकते, तो एसी चीज़े हैं जो कर सकते है कि उनके लिए भी उन्हें सहायता मिलेंगी।

मिलेंगी।

पेसिफिक पोलीटेक के मामले में, श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, जिस तरह से वे इस बात को कह रहे हैं जैसे बिमान प्रसाद का पोलीटेक से कुछ लेना-देना है। मेरा मतलब है कि माननीय हेम चंद्र शिक्षा मं त्रालय में थे, वे प्रक्रिया जानते हैं। सभी उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान एक स्वतंत्र फीजी उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान एक स्वतंत्र फीजी उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान एक स्वतंत्र फीजी उच्च शिक्षा संस्थान एक के साथ रेजिस्टर है। उन्होंने तीन साल पहले टेकनीकल कोलजस की जगह पेसिफिक पोलिटेक को रेजिस्टर किया जिससे तीस मिलियन डोलर पानी में चला गया।

मननीय उसूमाते ने एफ एन यू के लिए पैसे देने के वारे में बात की। मैं उस बात को समझाना चाहता हूँ कि संगम नर्सिंग स्कूल आदि जैसे छोटे संस्थाओं के लिए फंडिंग कैसे निर्धारित की जाती है।

इन संस्थानों दूारा प्रस्तुतियाँ फाईनेन्स मं तालय के पास आती हैं। यह शिक्षा मंत्री के माध्यम से उच्च शिक्षा दफतर के दूारा दिया जाता है। फिर उसकी जाँच की जाती है और फिर मंत्रालय के पास भेजी जाती है।

हम पैसे अलग करने, वसूली, और जो पैसे यू एस पी को नहीं चुकाए गए थे, इसलिए हमने पिछले साल 10 मिलियन का भुगतान किया था, पिछले बजट में 20 मिलियन का और इस बजट में हमने केवल थ मिलियन तक किया है। पोलीटेक 9 मिलियन डोलर चाहता था, जिसे घटाकर 5 मिलियन कर दिया गया था।

तो, श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, उच्च शिक्षा किमिशन के फंडिंग माँडेल, माननीय उसूमाते ने एफ एन यू के लिए फंडिंग में कटौती के बारे में बात की, पहले फंडिंग में कटौती हुई है, फंडिंग में वृद्धि भी हुई है। इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि अगले साल एफ एन यू को अधिक नहीं मिलेगा, या जैसे संगम नेसिंग स्कूल को मिला, पोलिटेक को ज़्यादा या कम मिलेगा रहा है। उन्होंने पिछले साल ज़्यादा पैसों की माँग नहीं की थी लेकिन एक सरकार होने के नाते उन्हें ज़्यादा पैसा इसलिए दिया गया क्योंकि हम चाहते थे कि और भी नेर्सस को टूईनिंग मिले।

पूँजी लगाने वाले लोगों के विश्वास पर, पहली बार मुझे यह कहना चाहिए । श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय मुझे लगता हैिक इतने वर्षों के बाद पहली बार पूँजी लगाने वाले लोगों पर विश्वास है तथा फीजी कि अर्थ-व्यवस्था में सुधार लाया जा सकता है। विश्व में कोमेशल रियल एस्टेट इंवेस्टमन्ट कम्पनी जै.एल.एल ने कहा कि अन्य बाजारो की तूलना में फीजी का बाज़ार बहुत ही मजबूत तथा वर्तमान वातावरण में काफी आर्कषक है।

श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुद्य, अपनी बात समाप्त करने से पहले एक आखिरी बात।

वे इस बारे में बड़ी-बड़ी बातें करते है कि अट्ठारह महीने में आपने क्या किया? उट्ठारह महीने एक लंबा समय है। मुझे याद है कि अभियान के दौरान माननीय प्रधान मंत्री ने इन शब्दों का उपयोग नहीं किया था, लेकिन मैं उनका उपयोग करने जा रहा हूँ, 18 महीनों में कोई भी सरकार उतना नहीं सकती है जिस तरह से इस सरकार ने कर दिखाया है।

माननीय प्रधान मंत्री बहुत विनम्र थे। मैं इतना विनम्र नहीं बनूंगा। 18 महीने में और मेरे सभी साथियों ने बहुत स्पष्ट रूप से बाताया कि इस सरकार ने घय महीने में क्या है। श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय, हमने अपनी नीतियों से इस देश को स्थिरता, सुरक्षा और समृद्धि के मार्ग पर स्थापित किया हैं।

मैं इस अवसर पर गठबंधन सरकार के फाईनेन्स मंत्री होने के नाते तथा मुझे विश्वास और भरोसे के लिए मैं प्रधान

मंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका को धन्यवाद देता हूँ। मैं उन के सहयोग के लिए उन्हें धन्यवाद देता हूँ और उन्हें अपने अटूट समर्थन का आश्वासन देता हूँ।

मैं संपूर्ण बजट प्रिक्या के दौरान अपने सभी केबिनेट सदस्यों को उनके समर्थन के लिए भी धन्यवाद देता हूँ।

मैं इस अवसर पर फाईनेन्स मंत्रालय, फीजी रेवेन्यू और कस्टम्स सेवा के बजट पर काम करने वाले हमारे सभी कर्मचारियों और सोलिसिटर जेनरल के दफ्तर दूारा प्रदान किए गए कानूनी समर्थन को भी धन्यवाद देता हाँ।

धन्यवाद श्रीमान स्पीकर मोहुदय



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प्रधान मंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका, सरकारी सेवा दिवस के मौके पर एलबेर्ट पार्क सूवा में सरकारी कर्मचारियों को संबोधित करते हुए 🛮 चित्र: प्रधान मंत्री दफ्तर

सरकारी सेवा दिवस

रोनल देव

प्रधान मंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका ने देश की जनता को सेवा प्रदान करने के लिए सरकारी कर्मचारियों को धन्यवाद दिया।

"आपका काम ही सरकार को चलाए रखता है फिर चाहे वो पेटरोलिंग हो और हमारी सड़कें और लोगों को सुरक्षित रखना हो, नितियाँ बनाना हो तथा सरकार की पहेलुओं का समर्थन करना हो।" सूवा में सरकारी सेवा दिवस के समापन समारोह में बोलते हुए प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि सरकारी कर्मचारी अपने नेताओं की दृष्टि में जान फूँकते है। उन्होंने इस समारोह में भाग ले रहे सरकारी कर्मचारियों से कहा कि सरकार उनके द्वारा देश भर में पहुँचाई गई सेवा की सराहना करती है जिससे कि देशवासी

एक अच्छी ज़िन्दगी जी सके। कुछ सरकारी कर्मचारी जो ग्रामीण इलाकों या बाहरी द्वीपों में देश की सेवा करते है, दिन भर, देर रात तक तथा सप्ताहअंत भी काम करते हैं।

"मेरा मानना है कि सरकारी सेवा, कमज़ोर दिल वालों के लिए नहीं है। आप हमारे लोगों के बहतर जीवन के लिए अपनी हद को पार करते हुए सेवा प्रदान करते है जिसके लिए आपकी सराहना की जाती है। मैं सरकार तथा फीजी के लोगों की ओर से आप सभी को अपने बलिदान तथा सेवा के लिए धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ। प्रधान मंत्री रम्बुका ने कहा कि इस तरह के समारोह ने सरकारी कर्मचारियों को यह अवसर प्रदान किया है कि वे नए जोश के साथ देश के लोगों को और बेहतर सेवा प्रदान करें। प्रधान मंत्री तथा सरकारी सेवा मंत्री होने के नाते माननीय रम्बूका ने प्रकाश डाला कि सेवा में

सुधार, प्रक्रियाओं को फिर से व्यवस्थित करने और लोगों के लिए सरकार की सेवाओं को बेहतर बनाने के सरकार के प्रयासों पर प्रकाश डाला जो कि एक सतत प्रयास है।

"इसके लिए सरकार को समग्र रूप से देखने, हमारे प्रक्रिया, हमारी सबसे बड़ी सम्पति हमारे लोगों की समीक्षा करने और यह देखने की ज़रूरत है कि हम कामकाजी परिस्थितियों में सुधार करने, प्रोत्साहन प्रदान करने, प्रक्रियाओं को फिर से व्यवस्थित करने, सेवा प्रदान करने में सुधार करने और उत्पादकता को पुरस्कृत करने के लिए कैसे बदलाव कर सकते हैं," उन्होंने कहा। "मैं यह आशवासन देना चाहता हूँ कि यह सरकार आपको उचित संसाधन प्रदान करना जारी रखेगी ताकि

आपको अपनी भुमिका निभाने में

सहायता मिल सके। इसे सफल बनाने

के लिए सरकार के मुखिया होने के नाते मैं आपसे माँग करता हूँ कि बदलाव की प्रक्रिया के दौरान आप अपना विचार या सुझाव खुलकर दें, बिना डर के, उपकार या गुस्सा के होना चाहिए। प्रधान मंत्री रम्बूका ने सरकारी कर्मचारियों को याद दिलाया कि आम जनता को सेवा प्रदान करना ही उनकी भुमिका है। "सरकारी कर्मचारी होने के नाते आपको

देश की जनता के प्रति वफादार होना चाहिए, राजनितिक तौर पर किसी का पक्ष नहीं लेना चाहिए और अपना काम बिना डर के, उपकार के और बिना गुस्सा के करना चाहिए।

''हम जबकि तेज़ी से आगे बढ़ रहे है तो ऐसे में मुझे पूरा भरोसा है कि राष्ट्रीय विकास योजना के लक्ष्यों को ज़रूर हासिल किया जाएगा।