

Move Fiji forward with acceptance and gratitude

PRASHILA DEVI

“WE confess our wrongdoings, we confess that we have hurt so many of our people in Fiji, particularly those of the Indo-Fijian community.”

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, while seeking forgiveness at the Thanksgiving and Reconciliation Church Service held at the Vodafone Arena in Suva recently, made his confession for the wrong doings in 1987.

“I admit our wrongdoings, you are correct to have blamed us, you have every right to blame us for the difficulties you went through, we do not blame you for being angry with us or even hate us, you are justified in your anger and your hate. I stand here to confess and to ask for your forgiveness.”

PM Rabuka said reconciliation can never be successful if the two party to reconcile do not agree.

He said the power to for-

give was divine and prayed to God for serenity and courage to forgive.

In turn, former Prime Minister and Fiji Labour Party leader, Mahendra Chaudhry accepted the apology and articulated that the spirit was there for all to work together.

Mr Chaudhry also pointed out that ultimately the coups have been detrimental for all, including the iTaukei community, and all apology was owed to all the people of Fiji and not just the Indo Fijians.

“While misguided nationalists and extremists claiming to protect indigenous interests did play a role in instigating destabilisation, it is also known that the key elements behind the coup were

failed politicians, unscrupulous businesses, and opportunists, with greed for money and grab for power were the main factors,” he said.

“Strategists show that despite the lofty motives given for the coups, the majority of our indigenous people today are far worse off than they were in 1987. Many of them barely surviving.”

He said the latest statistics show that the iTaukei community comprise 75 per cent of those living in poverty which was a shocking statistic but it also reveals “how these simple people were used and misled”.

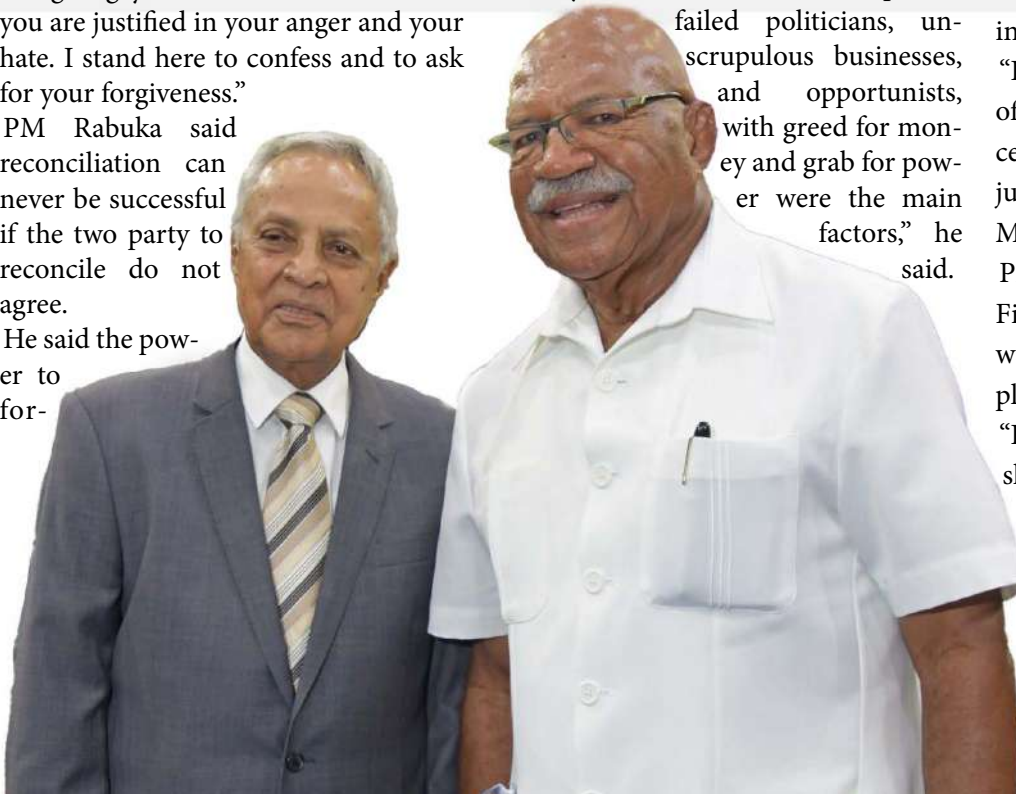
“We are a multiracial country. There will always be elements that will seek to upset the equilibrium in the pursuit of their own vested interests by playing on the fears and emotions of the vulnerable in society.”

“I accept that apologies and utterances of remorse are part of the healing process and thus necessary. But it must not just end there with a one-off ceremony,” Mr Chaudhry said.

President of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma, Reverend Ili Vunisuwai apologised for the role the church played in the 1987 and 2000 coups.

“I stand here today to acknowledge and show gratitude for the acceptance of our apology, the sons of the grimitiyas who are here in Fiji and those living overseas,” Reverend Vunisuwai.

“I pray and believe that our nation will go forward from here with courage, peace and harmony. For the grimitiyas, this is your home- you were born here and will die here, and from here you will go to heaven.”



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka with former Prime Minister and Fiji Labour Party leader, Mahendra Chaudhry, at the Thanksgiving and Reconciliation Church Service in suva.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Embracing multiculturalism: President



President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere with students and teachers of Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School at the University of the South Pacific during the International Conference on celebrating Girmitiya Lives held recently.

PHOTO: NANISE NEIMILA

NANISE NEIMILA

“Fiji has a long history of multiculturalism, and it is a source of great pride for us. We have a diverse population, with Girmitiyas making up a significant portion of our community.”

This was shared by the President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, while speaking at the International Conference on celebrating Girmitiya Lives held at the University of the South Pacific ICT Centre in Suva recently.

President Katonivere said with Fiji commemorating the arrival of the Indian indentured labourers, “we are reminded of the rich cultural heritage that they brought

with them to Fiji”.

“Their unique culture, traditions, and religions have greatly enriched our nation’s cultural landscape, and it is essential to acknowledge and celebrate this diversity.”

“Cultural diversity should not just be recognised, it needs to be embraced and respected. Our society needs to continuously foster an environment of inclusivity where everyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, or cultural background, feels valued and appreciated.”

President Katonivere emphasised as Head of State, his vision was to be the ‘Pillar of National Unity’.

“In this capacity I remind us all of our responsibility as citizens to promote diversity

and cultural exchange; and encourage us to reject any form of discrimination or prejudice.”

“It is paramount that we work together to create a society that recognises and celebrates our differences; and encourages mutual understanding and respect. Only then can we fully appreciate the beauty of our nation’s cultural tapestry and realise its potential for growth and prosperity.”

President

Katonivere had urged the participants to embrace cultural differences and learn from each other’s customs and beliefs. During the two-day conference speakers from countries that have Persons of Indian Origin (POI) with an indentured labourer past were invited to share their struggles and experiences.

The conference had seven sessions held simultaneously and faculty members from the three universities in Fiji, University of the South Pacific (USP), University of Fiji (UniFiji) and Fiji National University (FNU), amongst others contributed to the sessions.



President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere with Kesaia Boletakanakadavu of Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School at the University of the South Pacific during the International Conference on celebrating Girmitiya Lives held recently. PHOTO: NANISE NEIMILA



Indentured labourers commemorated at Nukulau Island



Minister for Health, Dr Ratu Atonio Lalabalavu with the Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Sashi Kiran and Assistant Minister for Finance, Esrom Immanuel members of the diplomatic corp. and guests during a visit to Nukulau Island which was used as the quarantine base for more than 60,000 girmitiyas. **PHOTO: AZARIA FAREEN**

AZARIA FAREEN

NUKULAU Island being used as a quarantine base for more than 60,000 Girmitiyas holds immense historical and heritage value to the country.

This was relayed by the Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Sashi Kiran during the unveiling of a billboard to commemorate the indentured labourers and the 40 ships that brought the Girmitiyas to the island.

“This is a very significant moment for us with Girmit Day being acknowledged for the first time through the declaration of a public holiday,” Asst. Minister Kiran said.

“I want to thank the vanua and the people of Navilaca, Rewa, for their rescue mission and for burying the Girmitiyas who didn’t make it to shore while on board the ship Syria which wrecked on Nasilai Reef in 1884.”

“The first boat Leonidas came to Fiji on May 14th, 1879 which was full of disease and the Acting Governor of Fiji at that time wanted to turn the boat away so instead it was offloaded on the 25th of May on Yanuca Lailai near Levuka,” she relayed.

“From the second boat onwards, about 40 voyages were made to this island with about 60,000 indentured labourers being quarantined here between four to six weeks before they were allocated to farms or the Co-

lonial Sugar Refinery,” Asst. Minister Kiran said.

She further highlighted that those who did not make it were buried on this island.

“My grandfather Jagan Nath came from the North part of India – Kanpur, from a small village named Parvat Khera which we couldn’t even find on the google map,” she said.

“With the assistance of the former Indian High Commissioner, someone was able to look for the area, researched and eventually found the house. We discovered that my uncle who passed away at the age of 95-years was writing letters to the elders in India.”

“They scanned the letters and sent them to us and we had our elders connect with the elders there via social me-

dia. I traveled with my sister in 2020 and being there was quite a different feeling in seeing where my grandfather came from and connecting to the land,” she added.

Asst. Minister Kiran explained that she was first taken to a 200-year-old temple and then to her grandfather’s house to meet the family.

“The elder who used to write from India and the elder writing from here have passed away now,” she said.

“My grandfather came in the second last boat – SS Chenab on 1 September, 1916. And to remember him, I am wearing a 100-year-old Mohar (Indian sovereign coin) passed on to me by my paternal grandfather.”



Let us develop a collective memory for Fiji: PM Rabuka



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka acknowledges the contribution of the various groups/organisations and individuals during the Girmitya Day celebration at Albert Park as India's Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr Rajkumar Singh, looks on. A float and various performances were part of the whole celebrations in Suva. **PHOTOS AND ARTICLE: NANISE NEIMILA**

FIJIANS from all works of life flocked to the Albert Park to be part of the historic Girmitya Day celebration recently.

Speaking at the national celebrations for Girmitya Day, Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka called for greater awareness on the Girmitya history and on their sacrifices, especially in the younger age demographic.

"In particular, young people from all our communities need a greater awareness of the Girmitya experience and other seminal events in our past."

PM Rabuka said it was well known that the Girmityas were exploited, abused and as a result they suffered in many

ways in mind, body and spirit.

"When they came ashore, Fiji's future slowly began to take shape. The country began a complex journey leading to ethnic diversity and multi-culturalism."

"The Girmitya laboured under shocking and cruel conditions akin to slavery. It was a living nightmare, a kind of "narak", or hell."

Sharing similar sentiments, India's Minister of State for External Affairs Dr Rajkumar Singh highlighted Girmitya Day was a very special day in the relationship between India and Fiji.

"It was on 14 May 1879, on-board the ship MV LEONIDAS, the first group of In-

dentured workers or Girmityas, arrived in Fiji."

"Our shared heritage and kinship is strongly rooted to this day. To celebrate the journey of Girmityas and their descendants along with our brothers and sisters in Fiji, is a special feeling."

Minister Singh reassured the Fiji Government as a trusted

development partner of Fiji, India reaffirmed its strong commitment to working closely and partnering with Fiji in its development journey.

The delegation also had the opportunity to visit the booths at Albert Park that displayed the history of the arrival of Girmityas.



Lives of indentured Labourers re-enacted



PRIME Minister Sitiveni Rabuka has emphasised the need for the nation to work hard and move on from things that kept the people apart.

Officiating at the Girmit celebration in Lautoka recently, PM Rabuka said that this was a very special time for Fiji as it comes together as a nation to observe the first public holiday to recognise and honour the Girmitiyas from India who came to Fiji between 1879 and 1916.

Prime Minister Rabuka said the five-day commemoration was not just about the original indentured labourers who came to labour in the cane fields but also a tribute for the descendants who make up a significant part of the population today.

“They contribute immeasurably to the life of the nation socially and economically.”

“I do want to emphasise that your Coalition Government, in consultation and cooperation with all the people of Fiji, wishes to build a country based on respect and love of neighbour.”

“I am very confident that if we commit to finding this new way forward, Fiji will become a truly united home for us all.”

“When I say all, I mean the descendants of the Girmitiyas, the indigenous people and the other cultural groups that live here.”

“To me the underlying theme of the new Girmit holiday is about unity and how we can achieve this.”

Photos and article:
Dipesh Kumar

People in the Western Division took a step back in history as a float depicting the lives and attire of the Girmitiyas was on display.



President joins Seaqqa celebration



Emotions were running high at the Seaqqa Sanatan Centre during the Girmityas Day celebrations. This as the descendants of indentured labourers performed cultural dances, dramas and songs depicting the injustices their ancestors went through in commemoration of the Girmityas Day Celebrations. The President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, while officiating at the Seaqqa Girmityas Remembrance Day recently, said it was of paramount importance that people work together to create a society that recognises and celebrates different cultures. The Head of State said this further encourages mutual understanding and respect. “Girmityas is a very significant event for all of us, and will remain so well into the future of Fiji,” he said. “As President, I wear many hats of responsibility, one of which is to be the ‘Pillar of National Unity’ where I wish to remind us all of our responsibility as citizens to promote diversity and cultural exchange. President Katonivere highlighted that in 1920 all indenture in Fiji was abolished and 103 years on, Fiji continues to learn of the injustices that the Girmityas endured. He commended the Government for taking the lead in providing people the platform to commemorate and remember the Girmityas, and their contributions to Fiji’s development.



The President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, while officiating at the Seaqqa Girmityas Remembrance Day recently.

Photos and article: JOSAIA RALAGO

Girmitiya descendant reminisces hardship of Girit era



Second-generation descendant of a Girmitiya, Sheo Balak, a well-known devotional singer, shares his own life experiences and that of his ancestors who came to Fiji with high hopes. PHOTO: AZARIA FAREEN

AZARIA FAREEN

THE high hopes with which our ancestors left India for Fiji turned into turmoil, sacrifice, abuse and broken dreams as they were absorbed into the Girit era between 1879 and 1916.

This was relayed by a second-generation descendant of a Girmitiya, Sheo Balak, a well-known devotional singer who resides in Nasinu with his family.

“My father’s name was Ram Asre and mothers name was Ram Kali while my grandfather was named Umrao and grandmother was Suruj Kali,” Mr Balak said.

“When our ancestors came to Fiji, the women were tricked into changing their name so that the Indian Government could not locate them. My maternal grandmother’s name was changed to Ojhiran, while my paternal grandmother’s name changed

from Suruj Mati to Jahuran.”

“When my grandfather came to Fiji, the overseers had brought only one ploughing machine and one horse,” he added.

Mr Balak said that there was no road from Suva to Nausori back then and that the indentured labourers dug the land with the help of a plough to make the roads and the area in 10 miles was very swampy.

“I was about six to seven years old and I recall my grandfather had three boats in Naselai which had the name Jamai, Sukhai and Ram Harak,” he said.

“My grandmother told me that they used to get beaten by whips and they lived in a very strict environment during the Girit days,” Mr Balak added.

“They were not allowed to eat Indian food. They used to hide under the bed and eat roti (flatbread). The women also had their hair cut short and were banned from wearing saris

and were told to wear a skirt and go to church.”

“One time, they all got together and beat up the overseers in retaliation and told them that they will not leave their Indian way of living,” an emotional Mr Balak said.

The 90-year-old veteran artist was in tears as he relayed that “the Britishers also used to kidnap our women and rape them – a very horrifying and sickening time of our history”.

“On my trip to India in 1967, I stayed in a hotel in Calcutta and a hotel worker would ask me about my origins,” he said.

“When I mentioned that I am from Fiji, he exclaimed “Oh, you are from Tapu. A lot of people here left for Tapu and their wives are still crying for them.”

“The worker took me to Bihar and I witnessed first-hand the many women who were in distress asking about the whereabouts of their husbands. The women asked me when their husbands would return while crying, and they then sang a folk song “Bidesiya” which is closely associated with the Giritiyas.”

Mr Balak said that he has been to India about 15 times to provide music classes in different cities and was always asked how he spoke and wrote good Hindi.

“I said it’s broken Hindi because there are more than 300 languages spoken in India and the Giritiyas came from many parts of India and spoke in different dialects which then made-up Fiji Hindi,” he said.

Mr Balak also sang a song he had written on how the indentured labourers were duped to work in Fiji and their life during the Girit era.

Luvedra Na Ratu always welcome in Naivilaca



Na Gone Marama Bale na Roko Tui Dreketi, Ro Teimumu Kepa with senior Government Ministers, invited guests and villagers at the launch of the commemorative sign post for the descendants of the ill-fated ship Syria that got shipwrecked at the Nasilai reef in 1884. **PHOTO: SHEENAL CHARAN**

AZARIA FAREEN

It was Sunday night on 11 May 1884 when a ship named “Syria” wrecked at the Nasilai reef, and my great grandfather saw the indentured labourers early on Monday morning as he was heading out for traditional fishing.”

This was the story narrated by Joeli Mateka, whose great grandfather was part of a team responsible for rescuing the indentured labourers travelling in “Syria” from India.

Mr Mateka works as a Fiji Corrections Service officer and resides in the village of Naivilaca in Noco, Rewa.

“All our archives are through stories and songs passed on from my dad, uncle and aunt who told me about the Girmitya-

yas. My dad has passed away and my aunt is over 80-years-old and doesn’t recall much,” Mr Mateka said.

“My great grandfather – Ilisavani Jemesa - left the village early on Monday morning for the sea. It was low tide and he heard a commotion and people talking near the beach. It is then that the survivors from Syria saw him and ran to him. My great grandfather was taken back at the scene before him and he ran away in shock. When he regained his composure, he went back to the site and saw them again.”

“There was a language barrier so through signalling, they told the chief about the shipwreck and the men led a rescue mission and got the survivors to safety before any other

help came,” he added.

Mr Mateka said that the villagers also provided a resting place to those who lost their lives due to the shipwreck.

“The men were rescuing from Monday morning and throughout the night. By Tuesday morning the place was full of people. It is noted that those injured recuperated at the village for a month before they were taken to the depot,” he said.

“I am so proud and happy for what my ancestors did during the rescue mission and for the Government to acknowledge the importance of the arrival of the indentured labourers through a public holiday.”

“I hope we continue to celebrate Girmitya Day and let all the descendants of the Girmityas know that they are always welcome to the village of Navilaca - we will welcome you with open arms,” Mr Mateka said.

“The people of Rewa recognised the descendants of these Indian indentured labourers as “Luvedra Na Ratu” (offspring of chiefly lineage) in 2017 and I say it’s because “you are part of us and we are part of you.”

It was a historical moment because a girmitya was then formally recognised in the Fijian custom for the

first time.

“We took some descendants of the Girmityas - Krishna Datt and his daughter - to the burial site and the wreck of the Syria ship five years ago and showed them the village where the indentured labourers stayed,” Mr Mateka said.

“The ancestors used to say that when you go out to the sea you can hear wailing sounds and someone yelling out and talking in Hindi. We still hear that sometimes and it is believed to be the cries of those departed at the shipwreck.”

“I have been to the burial site many times and as you know it is more than 100 years old and being adversely affected by climate change,” he added.

Na Gone Marama Bale na Roko Tui Dreketi, Ro Teimumu Kepa acknowledged and thanked the Government in declaring Navilaca Village a peace village.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Viliame Gavoka and Assistant Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Sashi Kiran were also present at the function.

Noda Viti

Sega ni tekiteki me saravi na itutu



Ko Peresitedi Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere ena nodra a laki vulagi dokai ka dolava talega kina na Bose Levu Vakaturaga ena yanuyanu ko Bau ena macawa oqo.



Era vakananumi ira na turaga bale kei Viti ka ra sota yani ena Bose Levu Vakaturaga mai na yanuyanu ko Bau na Peresitedi ni noda vanua, Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere ni 'itutu e sega ni tekiteki me saravi'

"Au sa veivakananumi tikoga ena nodra mala ni vosa ne Turaga nai Talai sa bale, ena nodraa kaya, "Na itutu e sega ni I tekiteki", kaya ko Ratu Wiliame

"Na I tekiteki e dau tokari ga me saravi, se me I ukuuku, ia, na I tutu e tu vata kei na kena I tavi kei na I colacola me na qaravi."

Vosa vakabibi ko Peresitedi Ratu Wiliame ni oti e 16 na yabaki qai vakayacori tale na bose.

"Ena cavuikalawa vou oqo, e sa na ka bibi na noda raica lesu na noda veiwekani vakavanua, kei na veiwekani ni vanua kina lotu, kei na matanitu."

"E sa dodonu me sa tomani na kena cokonaki na Bose Levu Vakaturaga me sotava na kena I naki taumada, o ya na kena dikevi, ka vakatulewataki vakavinaka na noda I yau bula, noda qele kei na noda i qoliqoli."

"Na Bose Levu Vakaturaga e sa nona itavi me maroroya, me taqomaka, me tutaka na tiko vinaka ni lewenivanua kei na kena rokovi na Yavu ni Vakavulewa ni Matanitu o Viti."

Vakaqacacotaki tikoga na veiqaravi kei Ositerelia



Ko Paraiminisita Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka ena nodra sotavi Pat Conroy, na Minisita ni Veivakatorocaketaki ena Pasivika mai Ositerelia. Taba era rau sota kei na Taneti Maamau na Peresitedi ena matanitu ko Kiribati

Na veiwekani nei Viti kei Ositerelia esa vakaqacacotaki cake ena veimaliwai ena tabana ni veiqaravi eso me vaka na vakatubuilavo, vakautamata kina na cakacaka, qito, bula kei na vuli, veitaqomaki vakamatanotu, kei na valuti ni draki veisau.

Oqori e vica na tikina ni veitalanoa nodra na liuliu ni matanitu Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka ena nodra sotava na Minisita ni Veivakatorocaketaki ena Pasivika mai na matanitu ko Ositerelia, Pat Conroy. Erau mai sota ena loma ni bai

ni boseka ni veimatanitu ena Pasivika kei Idi aka vakayacori mai Papua New Guinea.

Vakavinakataka kina o PM Rabuka na veivuke levu ni \$10milioni me baleta na leqa tubukoso me baleti Viti ena Vualiku nu noda vanua.

Kuria okoya na vakavinaka levu me baleta na matanitu ko Ositerelia ena sasaga ena Pasivika se 2050 Pacific Strategy. Vakavinaka ko Minisita Conroy vei PM Rabuka ni solia edua na gauna merau mai veitalanoa ena gauna ni boseka oqo.



Okati ko PM Modi medua na itokani nei Viti



Ko Paraiminisita Sireni Ligamamada Rabuka kei Paraiminisita Narendra Modi ena nodrau sota mai Papua New Guinea, na liuliu ni matanitu e rua ko Viti kei India.

SA okati ko Paraiminisita Narendra Modi na liuliu ni matanitu mai India me dua na itokani voleka kei Viti. Oqo ni oti nona mai solia vua na itutu oqo na noda Paraiminisita Sireni Rabuka ena nodrau

a sota mai Papua New Guinea ena vuku ni boseseka ni India kei na veimatanitu ena Pasivika. Vakadewata na itutu oqori na PM Rabuka ena vuku nei Peresitedi kei Viti, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere me doka kina na veiqaravi cecekia sa

vakayacora ko PM Modi ena bula ni lewenivanua e vuravura.

Na companion of the Order of Fiji edua na tutu levu se toka ena veta ecake ni matanitu ko Viti ka tiko kina na vakaraitaki ni matanitu na nona taleitaka na veiqaravi ena

veirokovi kei na doka. Vakaraitaka ko PM Modi na nodra vakavinavinaka cecekia vua na nona PM kei na vanua ko Viti me vaka ni rua na matanitu veimaliwai makawa ka sa balavu talega na veiwekani vinaka.

HIS EXCELLENCY

RATU WILIAME MAIVALILI KATONIVERE CF, MSD

President of the Republic of Fiji

ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF THE GREAT COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

Wednesday, 24th May, 2023 1200hrs
Bau Island TAILEVU

Ni sa Tiko Talega na Turaga, Marama, Tabagone kei kemuni na gonevuli vaka talega kina o kemuni na sarasara tiko mai ena Monalivaliva.

Miau sa bula re!

Au nanuma meu tekivuna na noqu vosa ena nodra mala ni vosa Na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale, ena nodra dolava na koronivuli o Vulinitu, ka vaqo ne: "Ia ni ra sa na takali na I tini ni vanua, kei na sau ni vanua kece ga, na soqoni lagilagi e daidai sa vakaraitaki ni cavu ikalawa na kawa iTaukei"

E a kunekunetaki na Mata Bose Vakaturaga oqo e na nodra rai yawa na matai ni Kovana ena gauna ko ya, ko Sir Arthur Gordon. E na bosa oqori e mai tauyavu taki kina na Bose Levu Vakaturaga e na 1875.

Na I naki ni kena tauyavu na mata bosa oqo me domo ni vanua kina matanitu, ka me ciqoma talega na matanitu ki na vanua. Oqo na matabose ka dau tutaka na veika me baleti keda na kawa itaukei.

E na 1904, a mai vakarubeca na Bose Levu Vakaturaga na kovana ena yabaki o ya, o Sir Everard Ferdinand Inthurn, ni bera ni qai vakatikori tale ni oti e

6 na yabaki na Matabose cecere oqo.

Ia ni kua eda sa kidavaka tale na cadra ni dua na matanisiga vou, ka e ra sa bau okati talega kina o ira na wekada eda sa mai bula veimaliwai tu ena noda vanua.

2 O keda eda Turaga Bale, Marama Bale ni noda vanua, eda Turaga iTaukei, eda vaka tamata, eda taukei ni qele kei na I yau bula, ka, eda sa nuitaki mai na vanua e na noda vakatulewataka vakavinaka ka vakamatau na veika eda taukena ka vakamareqeta.

Na matabose oqo e sa dodonu me vei qaravi e na yavu e rua oqo: • (Matai) Me da na namaki ira e ra dau tutaka na yavu ni veisau eso ka rawa ni bole kina na noda yavu ni bula vakaitaukei; na kena I karua • Me da veivakauqeti vei ira na noda lewenivanua me da na dau veivakatatakicake e na noda toso vata ki liu.

Au sa veivakananumi tiko ga ena nodra mala ni vosa na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale, e na nodra a kaya, "Na I tutu e sega ni I tekiteki".

Na I tekiteki e dau tokari ga me saravi, se me I ukuuku, ia, na I tutu e tu vata kei na kena I tavi kei



na I colacola me na qaravi. Ena cavuikalawa vou oqo, e sa na ka bibi na noda raica lesu na noda veiwekani vakavanua, kei na veiwekani ni vanua kina lotu, kei na matanitu.

E sa dodonu me sa tomani na kena cokonaki na Bose Levu Vakaturaga me sota va na kena I naki taumada, o ya na kena dikevi, ka vakatulewataka vakavinaka na noda I yau bula, noda qele kei na noda i qoliqoli. Na Bose Levu Vakaturaga e sa nona itavi me maroroya, me taqomaka, me tutaka na tiko vinaka ni lewenivanua kei na kena rokovi na Yavu ni Vakavulewa ni Matanitu o Viti. Au nanuma meu vakananumi keda ena nodra bula Na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale

Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna.

E dua ka i takele ka duruvesi ni yavutu ni veisau vei keda na iTaukei. Era sucu ga ena loma ni yanuyanu vakaturaga ena yabaki 1888, ka ra tuberi voli ga e ke, ni bera ni ra qai dewa ki na Wairuku Indian School, e na gauna ni nodra vei qaravi e na yasana o Ra, na nodra Turaga itubutubu ko Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, lai tomani sara na vuli e Whaiganui, Niusiladi, ni bera ni lai vakacavari e na koronivuli toro cake mai Okosifote.

Na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale, e ra a lako curuma e so na I tuvatuva ni veivakarautaki ki na bula ni veiliutaki me vakataka na nodra lai lewena na



mataivalu ni vanua ka lai rawati mai kina na koroi ni qaqā cecere duadua, ena imatai ni valu levu;. Na veivakaraautaki oqori e bucina ka susuga cake na I vakarau ni nodra veiqaravi ki na veiliutaki ena vanua, na lotu kei na matanitu. Oqori eso na I vakarau era a kilai tani kina na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale.

Era Turaga raiyawa, ka maqosa na nodra vakatulewa ena veika kece, ka me dusia tikoga ni Turaga e sa mai vua na Kalou.

Na maqosa ni I tuvatuva era rawata kina na veika lelevu, me vaka na salusalu era tokara:

- Era a vakatura ka tutaka na lawa vakaturi na Native Lands Trust Bill ena 1940. A qai ciqomi ena Bose Lawa ena yabaki ga o ya. Oqo koya sa tu kina na iTaukei Lands Trust Board, se Native Lands Trust Board;

- Era a cakacaka taka na kena maroroi na iwase ni qele boro damudamu, me kakua ni lisitaki me baleti ira na noda kawa iTaukei;

- 3 • Era a cakacaka taka na

lawā me vaqacacotaki ira era lisitaka na qele me ra teitei;

- Era a cakacaka taka na kena maroroi na I tuku-tuku ni vanua me baleti keda na kawa iTaukei, qori na Valenivolavola ni Veitarogivanua; kei na

- Era a cakacaka taka na kena vakalawataki na veikoro vakaitaukei kei na kena buli na lawa ni bose vakoro, tikina kei na yasana. Na Bose Levu Vakaturaga e sa dodonu me vakataudeitaki koya ena veitavi sa qaravi rawa ka tuvatuva ka me wali kina na veibolebole sa tu e matada. Sa dodonu me da na tutaka talega vakabibi na kena maroroi, ka taqomaki na noda I yau bula ena vanua mamaca kei na kena qoliqoli, ka vakauasivi na kena valuti na draki veisau eda sa vakila ka lakocuruma tiko na kena revurevu ena gauna oqo.

Me ra sa vakauqeti na kawa itaukei me ra vakaitavi taki ira talega ena cicivaki bisinisi kei na vakatubuilavo ka me rawa ni vukea na tubucake rawa ka vakaiyau,

vakailavo.

Kevaka e da vinakata me dua na Viti vinaka ni mataka, e sa dodonu me da sa vakabibi taka na nodra tuberi kei na nodra vakaraautaki vinaka na noda I sausauvou kei ira na leweni vanua, e na bula ni veiliutaki vinaka ka vaka ivakarau. Sa bole kina na noda vakatulewa, kei na noda I tuvatuva na I liliu vakavanua ena noda yadrayadravaki, kei na noda na solevaka, ka tutaka na veivakaduavatataki ena kena tokoni cake na tarai ni noda Viti vou . Ena rarama ni rai oqo, e sa vakadeitaka na matanitu, me sa mai dabe tale na Bose Levu Vakaturaga kei na nodra vakananumi na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale.

Sa vakavinavinakataki na nodra vakanananu na Matanitu veiliutaki tiko oqo e na kena mai vakavutukanataki tale ena siga nikua na noda mai tiko e na dola ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga kei nai vakananumi ni Talai sa Bale.

Eda vakadinadina taka na tikina oqo ena loma ni ma-

cawa sa oti, ena nodra nanumi na wekada na Qirimiti, dina ga ni duidui na noda yavutu, Ia e duabulu ga na noda tatadra.

Sa noqu I tavi dokai, meu cavuta na vakavinavinaka levu kivei kemuni na Turaga Bale na Vunivalu Na Tui Kaba kei na vanua o Kubuna, ena vukudra na matabose kei na matanitu ena nomuni yalosavu ena kena mai qaravi na Bose Levu Vakaturaga e Bau.

Sa cavuti talega na vakavinavinaka levu kivei kemudou na Komiti digitaki ka dou qarava na cakacaka levu ni kena railesuvi na veiqaravi ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga. Keimami sa vakanuinui ka vakanamata me keimami rogoca na nomudou vakatutu kei na veika e vakasokumuni mai vei ira na lewenivanua e Viti.

Au taura talega na gauna oqo meu vakavinavinaka vei kemuni na Minisita ni Tabacakacaka iTaukei kei ira na nomuni vakaillesile-si ena kena vakarautaki na soqo lagilagi oqo.

Sa noqu masu, ni na cagidonu na I lakolako eda sa mua yani kina oqo.

E sa ka dokai vei yau me sa dola na Bose Levu Vakaturaga kei na macawa dua ni veivakananumi na nodra bula na Turaga Nai Talai sa bale.

Me noda vata na nona vei vakalougata taki na Kalou Na Tamada sa cecere sara, ka me cecebuya tiko ga na drotini ni Matanitu lomani o Viti. Vinaka Saka Vakalevu

Cavuikalawa vou ena tabana ni posi kei na vakauiyaya ena Pasivika



NA kena mai dolava na so-qosoqo ni Universal

Postal Union (UPU) edua na nona valenivolavola ena nona vanua esa dua na cavuikalawa levu ena kabani ni Post Fiji Pte Ltd.

Vakairataka na Minisita ni Veivoli, Binisini Lalai kei na Vakauitukutuku ka Vukevuke talega ni Paraiminisita, Manoa Kamikamica ni cavuikalawa vou oqo ena vakaukauwataka saraga na veiqaravi ena

tabana ni posi ena noda vanua ka vakakina ena kena dewa yani ena Pasivika.

Kuria ko koya ni kaya ni dodonu me sa vakavoui na itovo ni veiqaravi baleta na posi ia san a veivuke kina vakalevu na valenivolavola ni UPU.

Nanumi mera na veiqaravi takoso ena pasivika ena veimatanitu wilikina ko Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.



Ko Minisita ni Veivoli, Bisini Lalai kei na Vakauitukutuku Manoa Kamikamica kei ira ivakalesilesi ni veiqaravi ena tabana ni posi mai na Universal Postal Union.

Visiko na Minisita ni l'tabagone e koronivuli e Naleba



Ko Minisita ni Itabagone kei na Qito, Jese Saukuru ena nodra veisiko voli ena koronivuli ni veivakarautaki mai Naleba Labasa.

E RA visiko ena koronivuli ni tabagone e Naleba e Labasa na Minisita ni Itabagone kei na Qito, Jese Saukuru. Era laki uqeti ira talega na itabagone era vuli tiko kina mera qarava vinaka nodra vuli ka mera tauca na vuni

nodra laki tiko ekeya. Vakaraitaka na qasenivuli ena koronivuli Colati Dacacaka nira marautaka na visiko nei Minisita kivei

ira. Vakadreta na Minisita, ni matanitu esa qarava tikoga nodra itavi me baleta na nodra qaravi na itabagone.



Veitokoni mai na Matanitu Pasivika ko Amerika



ERA sa baci vakadeitaka tale na matanitu levu ko Amerika na nona veitokoni vei ira na veimatanitu ena Pasivika.

Na Vunivola levu ni Matanitu ko Amerika Antony Blinken era vakadeitaki ira na lewenibose ni matanitu ena Pasivika era sota mai Papua Niu Guinea ni na raica na tabana ni bula, drake veisau, vakatubuilavo kei na vica tale a tabana niutaki.

Era a tiko talega ena boseka oqori na noda liuliu ni Matanitu, Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka. Ko Amerika esa tokona mai na kena tekivu edua na Pacific resilience facility me vukea na kena vakatubuilavo.

Ena tomana talega na 10 na yabaki ni veivuke ni vakatubuilavo ena pasivika me vukei ira na veimatanitu.

Tomana okoya ni sat u vakarau na matanitu ko Amerika me rogoca na domo ni lewenivanua ena matanitu ena Pasivika.

Era lewena na soqosoqo ni matanitu ena Pasivika ko Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu kei Vanuatu.



Ko Paraiminisita Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka kei na Vunivola Levu ni Matanitu ko Amerika Antony Blinken ena nodrau sota mai Papua New Guinea donua na bose ni liuliu ni veimatanitu ena Pasivika ka visiko mai kina ko Amerika.

फ़ीजी दर्पण

प्रधान मंत्री ने माफी माँगी



प्रधान मंत्री सितिवेनी रम्बूका, भुतपूर्व प्रधान मंत्री तथा फीजी लईवा पार्टी के नेता महेन्द्र चौधरी से माफी माँगते हुए चित्र: सूचना मंत्रालय

रोनल देव

फीजी के लिए एक नए युग का जन्म हुआ जब हाल ही में फोवड फीजी के एक घोषणापत्र पर हस्ताक्षर हुआ।

यह अतीत के ज़ख्मों को भरने के लिए एक साथ काम करने और एक दूसरे के मतभेदों की परवाह किए बिना प्यार, सम्मान और समझ में एक दूसरे का समर्थन करके फीजी के लिए उज्ज्वल भविष्य का निर्माण करने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है। इस घोषणापत्र पर प्रधानमंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका, उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद,

मेथिडिस्ट चर्च के प्रधान रेवरन्ड इलि वुनिसुवाई, भुतपूर्व प्रधान मंत्री तथा फीजी लईवा पार्टी के नेता महेन्द्र चौधरी, विभिन्न धार्मिक संस्थाओं के नेताओं ने भी हस्ताक्षर किया जिसके संराश में कहा गया है कि देश में कोई सत्ता पल्टाव नहीं होगा बल्कि प्रजातंत्र तथा कानून व्यवस्था का पालन किया जाएगा, कोई मतभेद नहीं होगा बल्कि प्रेम और समझदारी होगी, कोई जातीय भेदभाव नहीं बल्कि एक दूसरे का आदर सम्मान और आपसी जागरूकता, किसी धर्म पर कोई हमला नहीं बल्कि सभी के लिए सामान्य अच्छाई होगी।

वोडाफोन अरेना में धन्यवाद और सुलह करने के लिए आयोजित

जत एक प्रार्थना सभा में माफी माँगते हुए प्रधान मंत्री सितिवेनी रम्बूका ने कुबुल किया कि 1987 में एक चुनी हुई सरकार को सत्ता से हटाने तथा उसके बाद जो काम उन्होंने किया वो सभी गलत थे।

“मैं अपनी तथा जिन लोगों ने चौदह मई 1987 में हुए

सत्ता पल्टाव में हिस्सा लिया था की ओर से माफी माँगता हूँ। हमें अपनी गलतियाँ स्वीकार हैं, हम मानते हैं कि हमने देश के कई लोगों को चोट पहुँचाई खास करके भारतीय समाज के लोगों को,” प्रधान मंत्री रम्बूका ने कहा।

“हम स्वीकार करते हैं कि हमने जो किया वो गलत था,

आपने हमें दोष दिया इसके लिए आप सही है तथा जिन तक-लीफों से आप गुज़रे उसके लिए आपका हमपर दोष लगाना एक दम सही है, हमपर गुस्सा करने या नफरत करने के लिए हम आपको दोषी नहीं मानते क्यों कि गुस्सा और नफरत करना न्यायसंगत है। हम यहाँ पर गलती स्वीकार करने और आपसे माँफी माँगने आए हैं। प्रधान मंत्री रम्बूका ने कहा कि सुलह कभी सफल नहीं हो सकती अगर सुलह करने के लिए दोनों पक्ष सहमत नहीं होते हैं। उनके अनुसार क्षमा करने की शक्ति दैवीय है और क्षमा करने के लिए शान्ति और साहस के लिए ईश्वर से प्रार्थना की।

गिरमिटियो के बारे में और जानकारी उपलब्ध करने की ज़रूरत है-प्रधान मंत्री रम्बूका

रोनल देव

गिरमिट दिवस मनाने के लिए सोमवार पंद्रह मई 2023 को सार्वजनिक छुट्टी के दिन कई सौ की संख्या में लोग एलबर्ट पार्क पर उपस्थित हुए।

यह समारोह एक फ्लोट और पैरेड से शुरू हुआ।

अपने औपचारिक समारोह के भाषण में प्रधान मंत्री सितिवेनी रम्बूका ने प्रकाश डाला कि यह बेहद ज़रूरी है कि हम सब फीजी के लिए एक सामूहिक यादगारी विकसित करें ताकि गिरमिटिया और उनके साथ आए परिवर्तनों के बारे में अधिक जानकारी उपलब्ध हो सके।

“खास करके हमारे समाज में युवा पीढ़ी को गिरमिटियो के

अनुभव तथा हमारे अतीत की अन्य महत्वपूर्ण घटनाओं के बारे में बताना ज़रूरी है। हम जानते हैं कि गिरमिटिया मज़दूरों के साथ बुरा भला किया गया था। उन्होंने मन, शरीर तथा आत्मा के अलावा कई तरह से कष्ट सहे।

जब उन्होंने फीजी में अपना कदम रखा, फीजी का भविष्य धीरे-धीरे आकार लेने लगा। देश ने एक जटिल यात्रा शुरू की जो बहु-जातीय तथा बहु-संस्कृति-वाद की ओर ले गई। गिरमिटिया मज़दूर गुलामी जैसी भयानक और कुर परिस्थितियों में काम करते थे। यह एक जीता-जागता बुरा सपना के अलावा एक प्रकार के नरक जैसा था।

उन्हें नाम से नहीं नम्बर से

जाना जाता था वो तड़के सुबह से रात तक काम करते थे जिसके लिए उन्हें बहुत कम मज़दूरी मिलती थी। आत्महत्याएं आम बात थी।

प्रधान मंत्री रम्बूका ने कहा कि इससे एक राष्ट्रीय विषयवस्तु जुड़ी हुई है जो कि है ज़ख्म भरना, फिर से बनाना तथा सुधारना। गिरमिटिया स्मृति इसी से जुड़ी हुई है। हमने जो देखा है वह उनके वंशजों द्वारा सराहना की गई है कि गिरमिट गाथा अब व्यापक समाज द्वारा बेहतर समझी जाती है।

यही बातें दोहराते हुए भारत के राज्य मंत्री डाक्टर राजकुमार रंजन सिंह ने प्रकाश डाला कि भारत और फीजी के संबंधों में गिरमिट दिवस एक बहुत ही

खास दिन है। चौदह मई 1879 को लियोनिदास नामक जहाज़ में भारतीय या गिरमिटिया मज़दूर का पहला दल फीजी आया था।

हमारी विरासत और रिश्तेदारी आज भी मजबूती से जुड़ी हुई है। फीजी में हमारे भाईयों और बहनों के साथ गिरमिटियों और उनके वंशजों की यात्रा का जश्न मनाना एक खास एहसास है।

मंत्री रंजन ने फीजी के साथ एक भरोसेमंद विकासशील साझेदार होने के नाते फीजी की सरकार को आशवासन दिया कि भारत, फीजी की विकास यात्रा में नज़दीकी से काम करने और उसके साथ साझेदारी करने की अपनी मजबूत प्रतिबद्धता की फिर से पुष्टि कर रहा है।



गिरमिट दिवस के मौके पर करते हुए प्रधान मंत्री सितिवेनी रम्बूका धार्मिक संस्थाओं को उनके योगदान के लिए सम्मानित करते हुए चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

पश्चिमी विभाग में गिरमिट दिवस



लौतोका में आयोजित गिरमिट दिवस के अवसर पर प्रधान मंत्री सितिवेनी रम्बूका गिरमितियों के वंशजों को सम्मानित करते हुए चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

रोनल देव

प्रधान मंत्री सितिवेनी रम्बूका ने जोर दिया है कि हमें कड़ी मेहनत करने के अलावा उन सब बातों को भूलकर आगे बढ़ना है जिसने लोगों के बीच दीवार खड़ी कर दी थी।

लौतोका में आयोजित गिरमिट समारोह के दौरान प्रधान मंत्री

मुख्य मेहमान थे जिन्होंने कहा कि फीजी के लिए यह खास समय है जहाँ हमने एक राष्ट्र के रूप में 1879 और 1916 के बीच भारत से फीजी आए गिरमितियों के सम्मान में पहली सार्वजनिक छुट्टी का मज़ा लिया।

प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि यह समारोह न केवल गन्ने के खेत में काम करने के लिए लाए गए

गिरमितिया मज़दूरों की याद में आयोजित किया गया था बल्कि यह उन वंशजों के लिए भी श्रद्धांजली है जो आज आबादी का एक महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है।

उनका देश के प्रति सामाजिक और आर्थिक तौर से भारी योगदान है जिसका अंदाज़ा नहीं लगाया जा सकता।

“मैं इस बात पर जोर देना चाहता हूँ कि आपकी कोलिज़न

सरकार, देश की आम जनता से सलाह मशवरा करके एक ऐसा देश बनाना चाहते हैं जो पड़ोसी के सम्मान और प्रेम पर आधारित हो।”

हमें भरोसा है कि अगर हम इस नई दिशा से आगे बढ़ेंगे तो फीजी वास्तव में गिरमितिया के वंशजों, आदिवासी समाज तथा अन्य लोगों के लिए एक संयुक्त घर बन जाएगा।



सूवा फ्ली मार्केट से एलबर्ट पार्क तक गिरमिट का मार्च हुआ फिर एलबर्ट पार्क और फीजी मिउज़ियम में मुफ्त प्रर्शनी हुई

चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

राष्ट्रपति ने सेंगाँगाँ समुदाय के साथ मनाया गिरमिट दिवस



रोनल देव

गिरमिट दिवस समारोह के मौके पर सेंगाँगाँ सनातन सेन्टर का वातावरण भावनाओं से भर गया था जब गिरमिटिया मज़दूरों के वंशजों ने सांस्कृतिक नृत्य, नाटक और गीतों का प्रदर्शन किया जहाँ उन्होंने अपने पूर्वजों के साथ हुए अन्याय को प्रस्तुत किया। इस मौके पर राष्ट्रपति महामहिम रातु विलियामे कातोनिवरे मुख्य मेहमान थे जिन्होंने कहा कि इस बात को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए कि लोग एक ऐसे समाज का निर्माण करने के लिए एक साथ काम करते हैं जो सांस्कृतिक अंतरों को पहचानता है, उनका जश्न मनाता है और आपसी समझ और सम्मान को प्रोत्साहित करता है।

“गिरमिट हम सब के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है और भविष्य में भी रहेगा” राष्ट्रपति ने कहा।

एक राष्ट्रपति होने के नाते मेरे ऊपर बहुत सी ज़िम्मेदारियाँ हैं तथा मैं सभी उनकी ज़िम्मेदारियाँ याद दिलाना चाहता हूँ कि देश के एक नागरिक होने के नाते आपका कर्तव्य है सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान को बढ़ावा देना। उन्होंने प्रकाश डाला कि उन्नीस सौ बीस में गिरमिट प्रथा रद्द कर दी गई थी तथा एक सौ तीन साल बाद भी फीजी लगातार गिरमिटियों द्वारा सामना किए अन्याय के बारे में सीखने का प्रयास कर रहा है।

राष्ट्रपति ने गिरमिटियों को याद करने और फीजी के विकास में उनके योगदान को भी याद करने की क्षमता प्रदान करने में मुख्य भूमिका निभाने के लिए सरकार की प्रशंसा की।



सेंगाँगाँ सनातन सेन्टर पर गिरमिटिया मज़दूरों के वंशजों ने सांस्कृतिक नृत्य, नाटक और गीतों का प्रदर्शन किया

चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

नुकुलाउ द्वीप पर भारतीयों का पहला कदम

रोनल देव

नुकुलाउ द्वीप एक विशेष स्थान के लिए जाना जाता है जहाँ 1882 से 1916 के बीच भारत से फीजी आए लगभग साठ हजार गिरमिटिया मज़दूरों ने वहाँ अपना पहला कदम रखा था।

वहाँ पर गिरमिटियो तथा जिन चालिस जहाज़ों में उन्हें फीजी लाया गया था की याद में हालमें एक बिलबोर्ड का भी विमोचन हुआ।

द्वीप पर दो से छः हफ्ते के लिए भारतीयों का क्वारंटीन होता था जिसके बाद उन्हें देश के विभिन्न खेतों या कोलोनीयल शुगा रिफाईनिंग

कम्पनी के लिए काम करने के लिए भेजा जाता था। बिलबोर्ड का विमोचन करते हुए, स्वास्थ्य मंत्री एन्टोनियो लालाबलावू ने गिरमिटि समारोह को स्वीकार किया तथा इसके लिए सोमवार पंदाह मई को एक सार्वजनिक छुट्टी देने के लिए सरकार को धन्यवाद दिया।

“हम इससे बहुत कुछ सीखेंगे तथा गिरमिटिया मज़दूरों के वंशजों, ई-तउकई समाज तथा बाकी लोग जिन्होंने फीजी को अपना घर माना है के साथ मिलकर इसमें सुधार लाएंगे,” मंत्री लालाबलावू ने कहा।

अभी बहुत दिन नहीं हुए है जब हमें पता चला कि क्वारंटीन क्या होता है क्योंकि जिन लोगों को कोविड-19 हुआ था को क्वारंटीन से गुज़रना पड़ा था तथा वहाँ कोई अच्छा अहसास नहीं होता न ही वो रहने के लिए अच्छी जगह है। मैं सिर्फ यह कल्पना कर सकता हूँ कि गिरमिटिया मज़दूर जब वहाँ थे तब उन्होंने क्या महसूस किया होगा।

मंत्री लालाबलावू के अलावा सहायक महिला मंत्री माननीय शशि किरण, सहायक फायनन्स मंत्री एसरोम

इमेनिवल तथा अन्य उच्च सरकारी अधिकारियों के अलावा कुटनैज़ियों ने भी कोरंटीन साईट का दौरा किया।



स्वास्थ्य मंत्री एन्टोनियो लालाबलावू, सहायक महिला मंत्री माननीय शशि किरण, सहायक फायनन्स मंत्री एसरोम इमेनिवल, आर्य प्रतिनिधी सभा के श्री कमलेश आर्य तथा अन्य उच्च सरकारी अधिकारियों के अलावा कुटनैज़ियों ने नुकुलाउ द्वीप पर कोरंटीन साईट का दौरा किया चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

नाईविलादा शान्ति का कोरो



उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनन्स मंत्री बिमान प्रसाद, उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा टूरिज़्म मंत्री विलियामे गवोका, सहायक महिला मंत्री शशि किरण, उच्च सामन्त रो तेमुमु केपा, धार्मिक संस्थाओं के नेताओं, कुटनैतिज्ञों तथा अन्य उच्च अधिकारी गिरमिटि समारोह के प्रथम दिन नाईविलादा कोरो में चित्र : प्रदान किया गया



गिरमिट दिवस समारोह का पहला दिन नाईविलादा कोरो नोदो रेवा के दौरे से हुआ जहाँ गिरमिटिया मज़दूरों को भारत से फीजी ला रहे सिरिया जहाज़ नासिलाई में चट्टान पर चढ़ गया था। यह घटना ग्यारह मई 1884 को घटी थी।

यह समारोह एक भावनात्मक कार्यवाई से शुरू हुई जहाँ नाईविलादा कोरो के बचावकर्ता के वंशजों ने गिरमिटियों की कहानियाँ दोहराई जो जहाज़ चट्टान पर चढ़ने के बाद मदद के लिए पुकार रहे

थे। इस घटना में उनसठ लोगों की मौत डूबने से हुई जबकि बाकी लोगों की जान कोरोवासियों ने बचाई तथा जिन लोगों की मृत्यु हुई उन्हें कोरोवासियों ने वहीं कोरो में दफनाया।

कोरोवासियों ने बताया कि मदद के लिए पुकार आज भी उनके कानों में गुँजती है। कोरोवासियों को उनकी बहादुरी की प्रशंसा करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि गिरमिटियों के प्रति नोदो और नाईविलादा कोरो

के लोगों की बहादुरी, करुणा, प्रेम और मानवता आज फीजी के इतिहास के रूप में संजोई गई है। उधर, टूरिज़्म मंत्री की हैसियत से बोलते हुए, विलियामे नावोका ने प्रकाश डाला कि प्रवासी भारतीयों का टूरिज़्म क्षेत्र में भारी योगदान रहा है। टूरिज़्म मंत्री ने आम किया कि अगला एको टूरिज़्म समारोह की मेज़बानी टूरिज़्म मंत्रालय नाईविलादा कोरो, रेवा में करेगा।

संगीत के ज़रिए गिरमिट की यादें ताज़ा की गई



चीनी तथा मल्टी एथनिक मंत्री माननीय चरण जीत सिंह गिरमिट दिवस के अवसर पर एलबर्ट पार्क सूवा में प्रदर्शनी देखते हुए - चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

रेनल देव

गिरमिट दिवस के मौके पर भारी संख्या में लोग एलबर्ट पार्क सूवा में इकट्ठा हुए जहाँ उन्होंने संगीत का मज़ा लिया और गिरमिट से संबंधित प्रदर्शनी देखी।

शाम को इंकार बीट्स संगीत दल का रंगारंग कार्यक्रम हुआ जहाँ वो भारत के अलग-अलग हिस्सों के संगीत से दर्शकों को उन दिनों में ले गया जब गिरमिटिया मज़दूर दिन भर की कड़ी मेहनत और

अंग्रेज़ों के अत्याचार वाली घटनाओं के बाद एक जगह इकट्ठा होकर धार्मिक पुस्कातें

पढ़ा करते थे या अपने क्षेत्र के गीत वगैराह गाया करते थे ताकि इससे उनकी तकलीफें कुछ कम हो सकें।

मुख्य मेहमान चीनी तथा मल्टी एथनिक मंत्री माननीय चरण जीत सिंह थे जिन्होंने कहा कि गिरमिटियों द्वारा झेले गए अपमान को इतिहासकारों ने अपने-अपने लेख

प्रस्तुत किया तथा उनकी दुर्दशा और पीड़ा को उनके द्वारा इस अवधि के दौरान रचे गए गीतों में सबसे अच्छी तरह से व्यक्त किया गया है।

घरों के लाईनों में यह पीड़ित गिरमिटिया मज़दूर गंदे माहोल में रहते थे जहाँ कोई

उचित सुविधा नहीं थी जिनकी तकलीफों को कभी भूलना नहीं चाहिए।

यह बेहद ज़रूरी है कि हम अपने सभी लोगों, लड़कियों, महिलाओं, लड़कों तथा पुरुषों को मज़बूत, स्वतंत्र और उनकी गिरमिटिया विरासत से सीखने पर ज़ोर दें।

इस बात पर भी गौर करना ज़रूरी है कि हम गिरमिटियों तथा उनके वंशजों की सच्चाई और हकीकत को पहचानें कि देश के निर्माण के लिए ई-तउकई समाज के साथ रहना और उनके साथ संबंधों ठीक रखना ज़रूरी है।