



More police presence, modernisation of services **2**

Education sector commits to free schooling **3**

Senior citizen thanks Government for considering them in the budget **6**

Govt Budget considered challenges: Lockington **7**

Making dreams become reality through poultry farming **13**



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka speaks to the media officials following the 2023-2024 National Budget announcement at the Parliament complex in Government Buildings, Suva. Photo: AZARIA FAREEN

Budget ushers in a new era

By PRASHILA DEVI

“THE 2023-2024 National Budget is historic because it ushers in a new era of freedom and democracy under the Coalition Government.” Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, while speaking in Parliament during the debate on the 2023-2024 National Budget, said the budget will be the foundation for the consolidation of government finance to support socio-economic development in the short and medium term.

However, PM Rabuka said seeing that the budget was the result of consultation and dialogue among different stakeholders across the country, the Government was aware that together with praises, there will be some criticisms. “No Government anywhere is capable of preparing a budget that gives their people everything they want, because our resources are scarce and Government has to prioritise based on the need,” he said. “This budget is meant to help us out of the crises we knew we would have to contend with when we won the elec-

tion. It is caused by unsustainable debt levels and the shocking deterioration of much of our infrastructure in particular our health facilities.” The Head of Government has highlighted the key sectors of focus as the Government remains steadfast in its commitment towards health, education, infrastructure, public security, skills development, poverty alleviation and welfare. “We will continue to engage with our multilateral and bilateral development partners to secure funding in the improvement of basic infrastructure including health and education facilities,

roads, jetties, and water supply. Another priority, PM Rabuka said was bringing down the national debt as it currently hovers around \$10 billion. “This means that with our current commitment, we have to pay over \$1 billion to service our debt annually. This comprises of \$536 million in interest alone, and \$516 million in principal to be repaid annually.” Furthermore, PM Rabuka said the budget has been designed to immediately help as many of the poor and needy as possible and give relief to students burdened with TELS debt. *More inside on the 2023-2024 Budget*

A photograph of three men in suits seated at a conference table. The man in the foreground on the left is looking down at papers. The man in the center is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The man in the background is looking down. Nameplates and water bottles are on the table.

2

It's a "peoples' budget": Minister Lalabalavu



Nurses conducting a variety of medical outreach services such as NCDs and CDs screening, cervical and breast cancer screenings and oral health for villages during a medical outreach in the Yasawa and Mamanuca Group recently. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

By PRASHILA DEVI

THE Minister for Health and Medical Services, Dr Atonio Lalabalavu has called the 2023-2024 National Budget as the 'Peoples' Budget'.

The issues with healthcare in Fiji have been a hot topic, be it staffing or the aging infrastructure.

"The people of Fiji deserve a better social service to help them overcome their daily struggles, and this budget has answered the call," Minister Lalabalavu said.

He said, "The Coalition Government, as promised, has prioritised the health of the people of Fiji by allocating \$453.6million for the next financial year compared to \$395.1million in the current financial period".

Minister Labalavu said the Ministry was grateful to the Government for the \$58.5million budget increase "as we have many strategies to implement in the next 12 months to improve the provision of quality health care services around Fiji".

He welcomed the allocation of \$11.6million to cater for the upgrade of nurses' salaries and overtime in the 2023-2024 financial year.

"This is an ongoing process and the Ministry has set up a Working Group to mitigate the issues pertaining to the welfare of nurses and this will go

beyond the salaries issue. The Ministry also hopes to alleviate the gaps in service caused by the exodus of nurses," Minister Lalabalavu explained.

In announcing the budget, Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, explained the impact of the budget on the staffing for the Ministry.

DPM Prasad said salaries and wages budget for the Ministry have increased to \$126.4 million and will cater for:

- 250 Intern Nurses to move up to become registered Nurses;
- 237newInternNurses;
- 46 Nursing Assistants;
- 50 Nursing Aides;
- 40 Midwives;
- 94 Medical Laboratory scientists; and
- additional support staff in various hospitals and non- medical officers for the Fiji Pharmaceutical & Biomedical Services to strengthen capacity and improve procurement efficiency.

"We are providing over \$63 million for public health programmes, Emergency Radiology and Laboratory Services, procurement of drugs, consumables, medicines, and purchase of bio-medical equipment and accessories," he said.

To cater for the increase in the dialysis subsidy from the current \$150 per session to \$180, Deputy Prime Minister Prasad said \$2.5m has been allocated for the Kidney Dialysis Treatment Subsidy, an increase by \$1m.

Furthermore, to address the dilapidated and deteriorating health facilities, the Minister said \$16.4m has been allocated for the upgrade and maintenance of urban hospitals and institutional quarters, permanent walkway for the maternity hospital at Colonial War Memorial Hospital, purchase, installation and replacement of ICT equipment, and a major interior upgrade of Labasa hospital.

Minister Lalabalavu has assured the public that the Government will deliver its promises through this budget but to keep in mind that "the Coalition Government is laying bricks and laying a foundation as we forge on in rebuilding this nation".

We are focused to grow Fiji economy: DPM Kamikamica



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications.
Photo: AZARIA FAREEN

By AZARIA FAREEN

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica highlighted this and stated that there continues to be opportunities to ramp up investments in Fiji.

The ministry received a total of \$116.5 million in the 2022 – 2024 National Budget.

"This budget is about rebuilding our country and there is a lot to do, so we will try to increase revenue where we can and spend it where it's justified," DPM Kamikamica said.

"A lot of the funding put in place is to assist with the continued enhancement of trade relationships between countries which is a big opportunity to attract investment into Fiji and particularly enhance the ease of doing business," he added.

"There is the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector which is being supported by the ministry and is one of the biggest growing sectors in the economy which has big potential in Fiji."

"There are some good things in the budget and we are committed to ensuring that we work together with other ministries, in particular the Ministry of Finance to make sure that we grow the Fijian economy," he added.

Minister Kamikamica said that "as a country, while we are trying to address the debt issue, our bigger focus will be on growing the economy and that's where my ministry will be working together with other ministries".

"In the budget we have amended the water tax regulations to try and engage some of the bigger players in that industry such as Fiji Water and hopefully we can do a lot more in terms of investment for Fiji," he said.

"We are putting money where it is needed particularly in the areas of health, education and social services. The Government's job is to support civil service so that we actually deliver respective outcomes."

"We will continue to develop the Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sector which is a very important part of the Fiji economy while continuing to work with stakeholders and the private sector to try and activate and boost the SME sector," he added.

Education sector commits to free schooling



Minister for Education, Aseri Radrodoro with a member of the public after the 2023-2024 Budget announcement.
Photo: AZARIA FAREEN

By AZARIA FAREEN

THE education sector has been given the highest allocation of \$845 million in the 2023 – 2024 National Budget by the Coalition Government.

In applauding the provision, Minister for Education, Aseri Radrodoro said this will allow them to effectively and efficiently carry out their roles in providing education to the Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary schools including Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

"We are happy that the budget allows the upgrading of teachers and hopefully we will see the capital projects for Ratu Kadavulevu School dormitories starting soon," he said.

"We are trying to work on retaining the teachers by providing them with the necessary support, good working environment and salary upgrade to those eligible, however, if they receive any job offer then we cannot stop them from taking it."

"It is also very satisfying that over 50,000 students are provided forgiveness for their loans under the Tertiary Education and Loan Scheme though they have to serve a bond or pay the equivalent cost amount," he added.

A sum of \$45 million has also been provided towards 'Back to School Support' of \$200 per child for students

from early childhood to Year 13 for the school year 2024, which will benefit over 230,000 students for families with less than \$50,000 household income.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad said that a total of \$49 million has been allocated for the overall maintenance and upgrade of schools including construction of Tropical Cyclone Yasa affected schools and staff quarters in Vanua Levu.

"Plans are underway to appoint an Education Commission and an Education Summit to take stock of the issues and challenges in the education sector and with proper dialogue and expert guidance chart a way forward for future reforms to lift the standard of education of our children," DPM Prasad said.

"For higher education, the Government will continue providing financial support to our tertiary institutions with a total funding allocation of \$103.3 million," he added.

DPM Prasad attests that the rebranded Fijian Scholarship Scheme has an allocation of \$148.2m which will cater for the scholarships of 8,720 new students and funding needed for the 9,148 existing students.

"In the next academic year, a new initiative by the Coalition Government will set aside three PhDs, and five Masters by Research awards for study at New Zealand Universities. The total PhDs and Masters allocation remains ten and twenty respectively," he said.

A-G believes budget sufficient

By PRASHILA DEVI

THE Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Siromi Turaga has welcomed the budgetary allocation that will finance the rejuvenation of the Fiji Law Reform Commission.

Speaking on the allocations in the 2023-2024 National Budget to his line Ministries, the A-G has also clarified the reduction in the overall budget as the Civil Aviation component of the Ministry has gone to the Ministry of Tourism.

“Our critical role is the process of law making so that (FLRC) was an arm of Government that was set-up in 1979 specifically to do research on laws that need to be reviewed,” he said.

In his budget announcement, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, said, “The Commission will undertake systematic review, reforms and development of laws to make them simple, modern and relevant and a sum of \$400,000 is allocated in this budget”.

The A-G said “this allocation is critical as not only were there a lot of laws that were enacted by the previous administration but that there have been many new changes for which the laws need to be reviewed”.

Another crucial area for the Ministry, he said, was the 34 positions that were provided prior to the budget announcement with a waiver from the Public Service Commission as it was much needed.

“I am excited that the department has been given 38 positions in the budget as a lot needs to be done. We receive so many people into our office seeking clarifications although we do not serve the public per se as we provide legal advice to the Government but then in terms of collaboration you need to help,” the A-G said.

The Ministry of Justice has been allocated



Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Siromi Turaga walks into Parliament Complex prior to the 2023-2024 National Budget announcement.

Photo: ILISAPECI TUIVALE

a sum of \$5.4 million to enable the availability of timely and efficient access to justice which was critical to social and economic development.

Furthermore, DPM Prasad said the Ministry will be undertaking digitisation works in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Communications on its legal registries.

He explained that upon the completion of the digitisation most of the services will be provided online thereby improving efficiency and administration of justice.

Office of the Registrar of Titles will be given 13 additional clerical officer positions to improve service delivery and meet the increased customer demand for the services.

“To improve BDM (Registrar of Birth, Death and Marriage) services, \$100,000 is allocated to fund the renovation works at the Taveuni, Levuka and Nausori BDM Offices,” DPM Prasad said.

Budget is sufficient Minister Saukuru



Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru with the Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Ifereimi Vasu in Parliament. Photo: SUPPLIED

By SHEENAL CHARAN

THE budget for the new financial year is sufficient, says Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru.

Minister Saukuru conveyed this while responding to the 2023-2024 budget allocation for his Ministry in Parliament on June 30, 2023.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has been allocated a sum of \$19.5 million compared to approximately \$13.8 million in the last budget.

The Minister said he had expected an optimistic allocation for his Ministry and was happy with the slight increase.

He explained that while there were no deductions overall, some deductions had been made for some programmes within the Ministry, however, it would not detain the Coalition Government from delivering its promises.

“Can’t be greedy, we have to go with what has been given, at least we have some share of the pie,” Minister Saukuru said.

“As a Ministry, there is an increase in our budget, which is good and we have discussed with the Minister for Finance

about some areas that we were wanting an increase which we would have to look at next year.”

Minister Saukuru said they would have to come up with some measures to meet the shortfall, such as increased rates on facilities.

“Like for the Fiji Sports Council, they are running our facilities, there can be repercussions in increase in rates for people using our sporting facilities like the national stadium, gymnasium and other facilities.”

Delivering the budget announcement, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad emphasised that sports played a key role in building social cohesion and improving Fiji’s image globally.

DPM Prasad highlighted that a sum of \$9.7 million was allocated for overseas sporting tours including the 2024 Island Pacific Games, Commonwealth Games, the Rugby World Cup, operations of the Fiji National Sports Commission, engagement of sports coaches, hosting international tournaments in Fiji, Sports Outreach Programmes, Sports Scholarships and sports grant for persons with disability.

Ministry aims to expand Govt service delivery

By AZARIA FAREEN

THE Minister for Land and Mineral Resources, Filimoni Vosarogo has commended the budget allocation allotted to the line ministry in the 2023-2024 National Budget.

The \$30.1 million allocation to the ministry will enable it to deliver its core mandates of effective administration and regulation of the land and mineral sector.

The Ministry’s core responsibility was to ensure that there is access to safe and clean drinking water and that a conducive safe and regulatory environment is in place for business development and growth.

“We had asked for a certain amount of money and the baseline was lower than that. In the end we received more than \$30 million and we are happy with the provision,” Minister Vosarogo said.

“We are grateful that the Ministry of Finance and Strategic Planning was able to set aside that amount of money to allow us to continue to provide apt service delivery and also to expand on it.”

“We received \$2 million more than we asked for, which was a cost for a project we had dropped in the first phase but we picked it up in the second phase,” he highlighted.

“It takes money to deliver a service and I think all of the other ministers are happy with their ministry allocation.”

Minister Vosarogo said that other ministries have received an increase in funding which was going to speed up the delivery of service within the workforce.

“Our Government’s vision is to streamline the service delivery to people, lessen the lag time and the time people have to wait to be served – and funding is important for us to get past that,” he said.

He said that they are excited to work

with the stakeholders over several months and continue to improve on the service delivery and delivery on service time.

“This will be something ongoing but we want to make sure that when people come to our office, they do get the service that they want, they are able to get the answers that they want and also at the same time feel like that they are receiving government services in a timely manner.”

The Department of Land is working towards enhancing Fiji’s Geodetic Datum stem which will boost the work of surveyors in delivering surveys of Mahogany plantations and proper demarcation of land boundaries.

The ministry also plans to digitise lease records and work on the development of a lease administration digital platform which is user friendly, efficient and cost friendly.



Minister for Land and Mineral Resources, Filimoni Vosarogo following the national budget announcement in the Parliament complex. Photo: AZARIA FAREEN



Increased allocation to ease burden of farmers



Good and sufficient budget...Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, Charan Jeath Singh, seen here during a visit to Ubombo Sugar Limited (USL) in Eswatini, is happy with the increased allocation to the Ministry in the 2023-2024 National Budget announced on last month.

Photo: SUPPLIED

By AZARIA FAREEN

THE increase in the budget allocation for the Ministry of Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry will ensure improved productivity and efficiency both at the farm level and at the mill.

The ministry in the 2023-2024 National Budget received a total of \$51.7 million in the new financial year, of which \$49.7 million was for the sugar unit.

The line Minister, Charan Jeath Singh, has commended the monetary allocation towards the ministry and noted that “this is a very good and sufficient budget with all ministries being looked after well and where we will be able to serve our people better.”

“We have received \$5 million separately to assist the farmers to mitigate their challenges of drainage issues, flooding, roads and subsidy for fertiliser,” Mr Singh said.

“This upcoming season we will try to address the issues of the farmers so that they find some relief and increase the new planting of sugar and expand it in Rakiraki,” he added.

The ministry’s aim was to increase cane production from the current production

of 1.6 million tonnes to 1.9m tonnes by 2024 season while \$11 million will be dedicated towards Sugar Development and Farmers Assistance Program, New Farmers and Lease Premium Assistance, Weedicide Subsidy, Farm Incentive Program and Cage Bins.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad said that the Government will continue with the guaranteed sugar price of \$85 per tonne with an allocation of \$4 million.

“A sum of \$5.5 million is allocated for the Drainage for Sugarcane Farms in the next financial year which will contribute towards an in-field drainage for sugarcane farms to decrease flooding and improve the harvest of crops,” he said.

“The Ministry is undertaking a thorough review of the responsibilities for multi-ethnic affairs in the area of culture, language, history and arts and will also be responsible for the Girmit commemorations from next year.”

“A sum of \$500,000 is allocated for the preparatory works for gas crematorium in Navua, two sites in the western division and one site in the northern division,” DPM Prasad added.

Balanced budget, enough to meet priorities



Minister for Rural, Maritime Development, Sakiasi Ditoka, has welcomed the allocation in the 2023-2024 National Budget that will enable the Ministry to render projects similar to the Ecological Purification System he commissioned in Mudu and Nacamaki on Koro Island last month.

Photo: JOE ULUILAKEBA

By PRASHILA DEVI

THE 2023-2024 National Budget is balanced budget considering the financially dire situation we are in, says the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management, Sakiasi Ditoka.

“As far as my Ministry’s budget allocation- we are really happy with what we have, we know we are hard pressed for resources at the moment but everything we have planned for, it is covered in the budget,” Minister Ditoka said.

He said although there were decreases to some of the departments but he was happy that the rural and maritime component as well as the rural housing provisions are all there.

“We also have allocation for assistance for the Commissioners- by way of purchasing machinery that will help with agriculture and supporting the agricultural sector,” Minister Ditoka said.

In the budget announcement in Parliament, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad highlighted that the Ministry has been allocated a sum

of \$29.1 million to support grant to Self Help projects, Community Access Roads, Footpaths and Footbridges projects, rural housing and urgent upgrade and renovation of existing divisional quarters.

“Rural and outer island development is one of the priorities for the Coalition Government, and we are committed to bridging the development gap between the rural and urban areas,” DPM Prasad said.

“The district advisory councillors and the district chairperson’s play an important role, serving as a link between the government and the people at the grassroots and provide development management link between the communities and the Government.”

In light of this, he announced that the advisory councillors’ allowance has been reviewed and will be increased from \$172.50 to \$200 per month for the 302 advisory councillors.

Furthermore, DPM Prasad said monthly allowance for the 16-district chairperson’s will be increased from \$207 to \$220 for which a sum of around \$770,000 is allocated in this Budget.

Minister Nalumisa happy with budget for ministries



Minister for Local Government and Housing, Maciu Nalumisa, flanked by his Government colleagues in Parliament is happy with budget for ministries.

By ILISAPECI TUIVALE

THE Minister for Housing and Local Government, Maciu Nalumisa has described the 2023-2024 National Budget as a ‘budget for a new Fiji that is people-centred and balanced’.

The Housing component of the Ministry received an allocation of \$25.7 million while Local Government was allocated a sum of \$29.3 million.

“We received an increase in our allocations and we were also allocated funds for some of our basic key priority areas, and that is what we are thankful for – especially in the

operational set of things.”

“We were able to secure funding for some important aspects of our human resources that we think will improve the delivery of services in both the ministries, and we are grateful that the provisions are there in the budget, as well as other key areas for both the Ministry of Housing and Local Government,” Minister Nalumisa stated.

The Ministry of Housing’s budget allocation allows the ministry to continue its work in regularising informal settlements that will provide long term housing lease to those living in informal settlements.

An allocation of \$10m will be used for the commencement of capital works at Sakoca in Nasinu, Tavela in Nadi, Field 40 and Tore in Lautoka and preparatory works nine settlements – Lovu seaside, Nabare and Delaisaweni in Lautoka, Valewaquyaya in Ba, Vunika in Labasa, Caubati in Nasinu, Wakanisila in Nasinu, Sasawira in Nausori and Nadonumai in Lami.

The Coalition Government continues to support the First Home Purchase program with the budget allocation of \$5 million to assist beneficiaries with a combined household income of below \$50,000 per

year.

Those who wish to purchase an existing house or unit will benefit from a grant of \$15,000 and \$30,000 for those who want to build a new house or unit.

For the Local Government Ministry, \$3.9m has been set aside for the new Savusavu Market, around \$1m for the new Nakasi Market, \$100,000 for the foundation stages of the Dreketi mini-market, \$1.3m to complete the Levuka Market, \$3.5m for the completion of Govind Park and \$4.6m has been allocated to complete the Lautoka Swimming Pool.

To support the Fiji Drua Team, a sum of \$1m has been set aside for procurement of enhanced equipment and services required to deliver international quality broadcast required for the Drua’s participation in Super Rugby and other international matches.

Minister Nalumisa was confident that with the new Budget, the Coalition Government will fulfil its promises to the people and Fiji citizens will receive the services that they deserve.

Labasa Chamber of Commerce applauds budget

By JOSIA RALAGO

THE Labasa Chamber of Commerce believes that the 2023-2024 National Budget would be able to address the mass local migration of Northerners to Viti Levu who are often in search of greener pastures.

Chamber president, Satish Kumar said the budget has mapped out a way to attract more investors to Vanua Levu, which would assist in the retention of individuals in the North through job provisions, increasing economic activities and ultimately boosting the Northern economy.

He said in addition to this was the US\$200 million (FJ\$452m) Fiji Tourism Development Program in Vanua Levu, fully funded by the World Bank – as announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad.

“There is more budget for tourism in the North and we really needed that, in addition to this, the roads infrastructure investments, investment in the water sector, all which would collectively boost the economy in the North,” Mr Kumar said.

“Furthermore, the increase in the Fiji Police Budget which means security will be there, and this would also attract more investment.

“This is how businesses will be able to come and

invest, as we need more investors, big factories so it will create more jobs, and instead of people going to Viti Levu we would be able provide opportunities for them here in the Northern Division.”

He added that National Budget considered everyone, especially Fijian families through investment in education, health services and social protection.

“The corporate tax went up by five per cent which is not bad and it is good to hear the zero rated VAT (Value Added Tax) on the 21 items remains with the addition of prescribed medicine which would benefit our people especially in medicines because we have seen that the price have really hiked, and even on the duty has been reduced on lamb and corned beef from 25 per cent to 15per cent,” he said.

Mr Kumar said the five per cent increase in corporate tax was needed to help balance the costs, and called on both businesses and community members to work with the Government collectively, as this was the only way to rejuvenating the economy.

He added that the Government in 2023-2024 National Budget considered everyone, especially ordinary individuals; and thanked the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, DPM Prasad and the Coalition Government for a well thought out budget.



Labasa Chamber of Commerce president, Satish Kumar.
Photo: JOSIA RALAGO

Senior citizen thanks Govt for considering them in the budget



71-year-old Akuila Likulua in his Yalava Village home in Macuata. Picture: JOSIA RALAGO

By JOSIA RALAGO

SEVENTY-ONE-YEAR-OLD Akuila Likulua of Yalava Village in Macuata has applauded the Coalition Government for continuing to consider the ageing population.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, while delivering the 2023-2024 National Budget, announced that the social pensioner’s scheme will be increased.

Mr Likulua, who is a retired employee of the then Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA), said he had used his retirement fund for the education of his three

children and felt blessed to be provided an allowance through this scheme from the Government.

“I have been wisely utilising the \$100 allowance given to me monthly, often for food and for my medication and now that it has been increased, I am truly grateful to the Government for considering us senior citizens in this budget,” he said.

“The cost of living has also increased and we too feel the brunt of it; this increment is greatly appreciated and will be used wisely.”

DPM Prasad said the funding allocation for the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Protection has increased from \$147.7 million to

\$200.2 million, a major increase of \$52.5 million.

“More than 90,000 people on social welfare will directly benefit from increased monthly allowances of 15 and 25 per cent,” DPM Prasad said.

“For those at the age of 70 years and above, and are on the social pension system, will receive a 25 per cent increase.

“This means that the monthly allowance will increase from \$100 a month to \$125 a month effective August 2023 and those between the ages of 65 to 69 years will have their monthly allowances increased from \$100 to \$115.”

Chief calls on title holders to take role seriously

By JOSIA RALAGO

NA *Turaga Na Tui Kubulau* in the province of Bua has called on traditional title holders to be vigilant in carrying out their roles to the *vanua* and successfully executing their responsibilities.

Ratu Ravulolo Vasukilau made this comment following the 2023-2024 National Budget which included a \$800,000 budget for the Vanua Leadership Allowance, where 648 *Turaga ni Yavusa’s* in the country would be paid a monthly allowance of \$100.

“We have a duty to our people, to the Vanua and now the Government has shown its support, and is working with us, so the onus is on us to see that we are carrying out our duties to the best of our abilities,” Ratu Ravulolo said.

“This also includes *turaga ni koros*, and traditional title holders where we should work hand in hand with the Government, in ensuring that we are working towards one goal which is the betterment of people, *vanua* and our nation.”

The *turaga ni koro Vanuavou* in the *tikina* of Vatuova in Cakaudrove, Fabiano Bibi said the increment in allowance was long overdue and applauded the Coalition Government for including this in its first budget.

Mr Bibi said as for *turaga ni koros* the expectation from them was huge yet the allowance they getting was not enough as the prices of goods had gone up as well.

“I am grateful to the Government for this incentive because rain or shine we are the first point of contact for any team visiting the village whether Government or non-government organisations, travel because of our responsibilities and sometimes we have to fork out from our own pocket for these things,” Mr Bibi said.

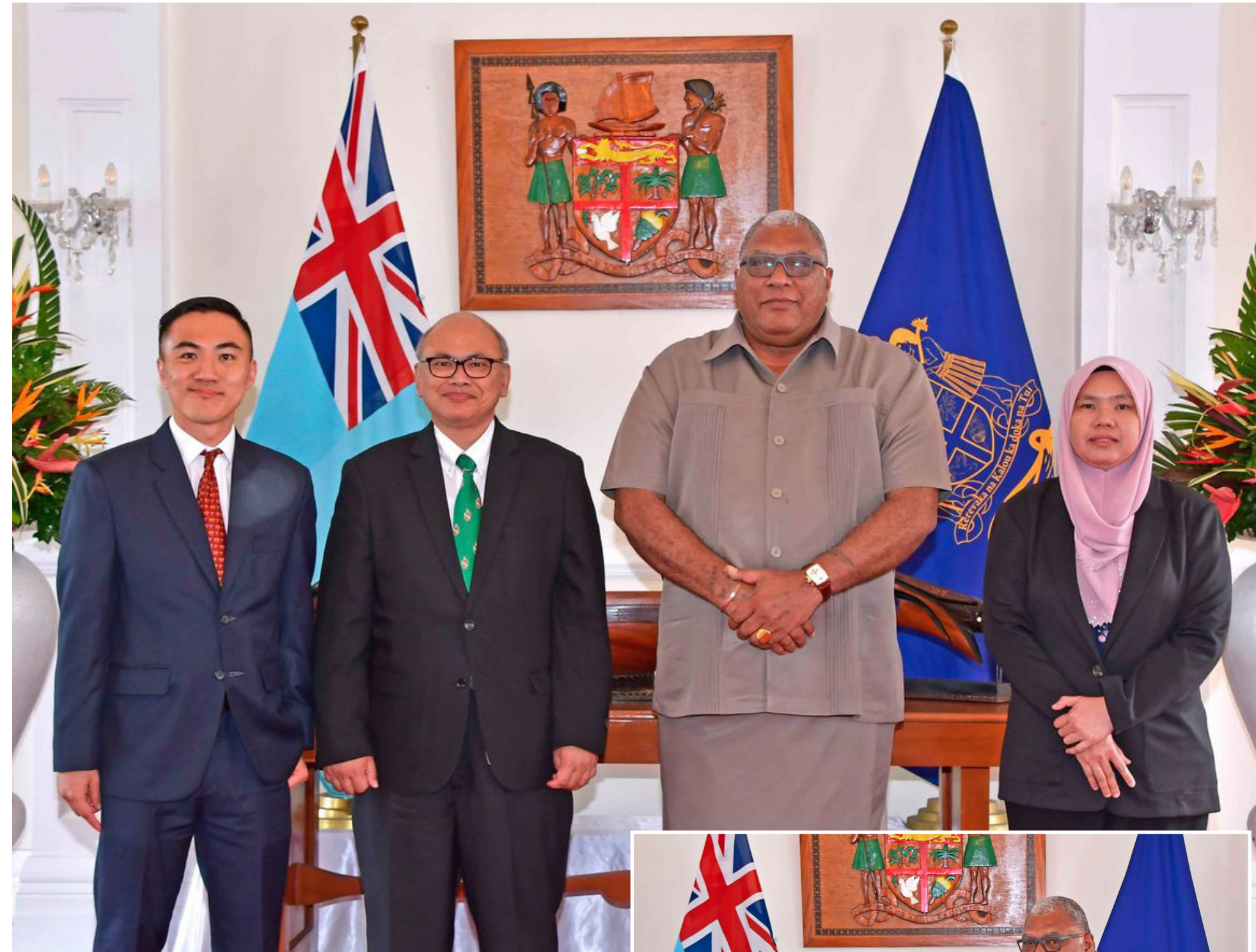
The Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts has been allocated a budget of \$38.6 million, a major increase of \$23.2 million from this year’s allocation.

The line minister, Ifereimi Vasu, while acknowledging that the Ministry did not receive all that it asked, welcomed the increase in allowance.

“The *turaga ni koros* look after the people who come to village so now, we want to give something back to them, considering that they pay for everything including the tea and yaqona,” Minister Vasu said.

He said they will explain to these representatives that currently, with the state of the economy, the slight increase was what could be provided but in the future consideration will be there for increase seeing the role they carry out.

President receives farewell courtesy call



The President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere received a farewell courtesy call from the outgoing Malaysian High Commissioner to Fiji, His Excellency, Mr Ilham Tuah Illias at the State House recently. On behalf of the Government and the people of Fiji, President Katonivere thanked the High Commissioner for his devoted service to Fiji and wished him well for his future endeavours.

He acknowledged that the levels of cooperation between Fiji and Malaysia has strengthened during High Commissioner Ilham's term in Fiji.

Photo: Sheenal Charan



Launch of Centrecom Fiji's new satellite contact center operations



The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, SMEs, and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica officiated at the launch of Centrecom Fiji's new satellite contact center operations in Lautoka recently.

In his opening remarks, the Minister highlighted that this is Centrecom Fiji's 5th office in Fiji making it a remarkable achievement.

"This new satellite office in Lautoka signifies the tremendous economic opportunities it brings to the Western Division – creating a plethora of job opportunities for the people in Lautoka."

"It is pleasing to see the outsourcing industry unquestionably evolving in Fiji. Almost every week, we celebrate the growth and milestones of the industry – from the recent opening of Outsource

Fiji's new office in Suva to launching the Certificate in Contact Centre Operations – Level 3 Programme at FNU. And today, the opening of new office space for one of the most well-established BPO companies in Fiji – Centrecom."

"The Outsourcing Industry remains a priority sector for the Coalition Government as the sector has been allocated funding of \$2.5 million. This is the first time such huge allocation and budgetary support has been provided - no other Government has been able to provide this."

The Minister stressed that outsourcing industries will have unwavering support from the Coalition Government as they contribute to the prosperity of the nation.

Photo: Dipesh Kumar



Meeting empowers PIC union leaders

THE Pacific Union Capacity Building and Action-Oriented meeting to empower participating union leaders of the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) commenced their four-day meeting in Nadi recently.

The meeting was organised by the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the Pacific Island Countries focusing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate change and just transition, informal employment and protection of informal workers.

The meeting included union participants from Palau, Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati and Fiji.

Speaking at the event, the Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Agni Deo Singh highlighted Fiji's recent labour market developments, specifically on the role of trade unions in democratic and harmonious industrial relations, fair work practices, adherence to ILO conventions, end to all human rights abuses and harassment of trade unions and their members.

Minister Singh added that Fiji was committed to a number of undertakings to improve workplace relations in Fiji through labour law review, right to strike and picket, strengthening collective bargaining, replacing civil servants' contracts with tenure, complying with ILO standards, adhering to genuine tripartite discussions, restoring full Fiji National Provident Fund contributions, essential services to ILO standards and putting a stop on exploitation of workers.

"These are some of the commitments that Fiji's Coalition Government had made and is currently working on restoring fundamental principles of social dialogue and workplace relations after 16 years of its non-existence during the reign of the previous administration," Minister Singh said.

During the information sharing session,



Minister for Employment, Agni Deo Singh with ILO Regional Workers Education Specialist, Pong Sul Ahn. **Photo: SUPPLIED** the Federal Airline Staff Association (FASA) of Air Terminal Services (ATS) and the Fiji Flight Attendants Trade Union (FFATU) of Fiji Airways praised the Fiji Government for their support and commitment to the reinstatement of ATS and Fiji Airways workers who were unfairly dismissed and laid off during the COVID19 pandemic.

Sharing similar sentiments, the trade unions of other Pacific Island countries expressed appreciation to Fiji's trade union for their tremendous support towards the workers in Fiji.

They also complimented Fiji's lead role in the Pacific in addressing labour issues through genuine social dialogue.

The PICs applauded the Fiji Government's steadfastness in addressing employment issues and that PICs would learn from these experiences for improvement.

Furthermore, the PICs also sought Fiji's assistance for technical support in areas of social dialogue, compliance and labour standards, and policy review.

The ILO Regional Workers Education Specialist, Pong Sul Ahn highlighted that there was a need to collectively discuss trade union strategies and policies and to innovate actions on Pacific-wide labour issues.

(Source: Ministry of Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations)

New hospital to cater for the Pacific



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka visits the Pacific Specialist Healthcare Hospital. **Photo: MEREANI GONEDUA**

By MEREANI GONEDUA

A NEW state of the art 100-bed surgical hospital offering services ranging from cardiology, plastic and orthopaedic surgery was recently opened by the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka.

Pacific Specialist Healthcare Hospital will be a teaching hospital supporting academia and research with plans to establish a drug manufacturing and validation plant.

PSH director, Parvish Kumar stated that they are planning their first organ transplant later this year.

Mr Kumar said they opened their first branch in Suva in 2016 and have more plans to open facilities around the region.

In opening the facility, the Head of Government said that establishing a niche market only makes business sense as Fiji is the hub of the South Pacific.

He highlighted how a facility such as PSH was a testament of how much infrastructure has developed in our country.

Prime Minister Rabuka said the Coalition Government recognises the potential of

growing medical tourism market in the country.

"I am told PSH has the potential to boost the tourism and investment sector with the availability of an advanced private hospital that caters to the needs of our guests and investors."

"Our hotelier friends who are here tonight can contact Parvish if you would like to enquire as to how PSH can make services open for all your guests 24/7."

"People look for the best facilities and the best qualified professionals and they go there. Now they will have added to those two- a natural tourist destination with friendly people, very close to the airport," Prime Minister Rabuka said.

In highlighting the significance the Coalition Government placed on the health and welfare of the citizens, he pointed out the inclusion of prescribed medicine to the list of items attracting zero-rated Value Added Tax (VAT).

Prime Minister Rabuka acknowledged Mr Kumar for his efforts and wished him well for the future.

Fiji Airways to set a path for tourism

By DIPESH KUMAR

F IJI Airways is on the right track and in line with the Government's plan to contribute towards Fiji's economic growth, says Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka.

The Head of Government's statement came in the wake of his first visit to Fiji Airways where he also met the board members and airline's Chief Executive Officer, Andre Viljoen.

He also took a tour of the Fiji Airways Flight Academy Training Centre.

The Prime Minister shared that Fiji Airways was setting a path for medical tourism in Fiji and bringing in earnings through its simulator training. "It is promised for the

economy to get back on track. The concept is very similar, people from the region and international are travelling in for the simulator training and coming in for high-level medical attention facilities."

"We were talking about Fiji as the hub of the Pacific and now Nadi is developing very quickly as the hub of the hub and it is a very good omen for the future of Fiji."

The Prime Minister congratulated the Fiji Airways team for their milestone achievement in winning the Skytrax best airline award and commended the staff for bringing pride to the country.

Mr Viljoen said that the airline has experienced a level of growth and earnings that have never been seen

before.

He mentioned that under the Coalition's Government's leadership, the airline seeks to thrive and bring in foreign currency earnings.

"Fiji Airways, all its staff, and leadership are committed to the sustainable growth of the country through our contributions to tourism and exports thereby creating jobs and stirring economic activity."

"We look forward to your continued support now and in the future as we forge new pathways for the airline our tourism industry and indeed for all of Fiji."

Mr Viljoen have shared that several plans has been set out for the future of the airline which he hopes leads to a success.



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka with Fiji Airways Chief Executive Officer, Andre Viljoen. **Photo: DIPESH KUMAR**



President opens Digicel Duavata Northern Crime Prevention Carnival



President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere with the organisers of the Digicel Duavata Northern Crime Prevention Carnival held at Subrail Park in Labasa recently. **Photo: JOSIA RALAGO**

By JOSIA RALAGO

THE President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere has urged communities to do their part in crime prevention.

This message was relayed as the Head of State officiated at the opening of the Digicel Duavata Northern Crime Prevention Carnival at Subrail Park, in Labasa last week.

President Katonivere emphasised that crime prevention was everyone’s responsibility and not only of the Fiji Police Force.

“Community policing is in essence, the collaboration between the police and the community that identifies the challenges, problems and issues that the community faces and works collaboratively to address these accordingly,” he said.

“Reinvigorating the community is essential if we are to prevent crimes and create more vibrant and efficient

communities.”

“This carnival is a great example of reinvigorating and strengthening the community,”he said.

President Katonivere commended the carnival committee for their commitment and passion for the community, which has brought them to organise such an event, and also, in assisting the Fiji Police Force in Labasa.

“Community policing covers a variety of many practical approaches and it continues to evolve rapidly, this carnival is an essential element in community policing as well as rebuilding the public’s confidence in our police.”

In April this year, the Duavata Northern Crime Prevention Carnival Committee, headed by its Chairman, Satish Kumar handed over a Police caravan to the Police Commissioner, Juki Fong Chew at the Labasa Police Station.

Multi-Purpose court brings hope



Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru with community members and stakeholders at the ceremony for the commencement of construction on the Multi-Purpose Court in Tuatua Labasa. **Photo- SUPPLIED**

M ELE Luvu shared her joy when the Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru officiated at the ground-breaking ceremony for the sealing of a Multi-Purpose Court in Tuatua Labasa recently.

“The project we are here to celebrate today is more than just a sports facility; we see it in the broader context as an important part of the greater effort to connect our communities through strategic infrastructure investment, and as a major step in stimulating next level economic development here in Tuatua,” Minister Saukuru said.

He further stated that when this project will be completed, it will be a giant step closer to fulfilling Fiji’s economic development potential.

“I, for one, am looking forward to seeing this community thrive and prosper in the years ahead,” he said.

Mrs Luvu thanked the Minister and the Ministry because now their voices has been finally heard after a lapse of 10 years as all the knocking on doors and prayers and dreams have been fulfilled.

She thanked the Government for the

tremendous work carried out by them in just six months as it was more than they had been asking for in the last 10 years.

Minister Saukuru also extended his appreciation to the community members and those that were working on the project.

This new sports facility will have a positive impact on this community of Tuatua as it will promote the health and wellbeing of the community and also identify talents in the community who will in future be representing Fiji in sports.

The facility is intended for sports like netball and will also be an income generating opportunity for the youth and the community in hosting sports events.

The Ministry’s Strategic plan was to develop sports and make pathway plans for youth and athletes to be successful in their life after sports.

The Tuatua Multipurpose court was the first standard court in the Northern Division that the Ministry will be constructing for the betterment of youth in the Tuatua and nearby community.

(Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports)

Support for youth in their various business ventures will continue

THE Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru visited Navneet Shivakaran, a youth who specialises in tailoring in Dreketi last week.

Minister Saukuru gave his assurance to Mr Shivakaran that the Ministry will continue to support and identify the needs of youth around Fiji and provide necessary items and training that will meet their needs and help them daily.

The 24-year old lad from Dreketi began his journey in operating a tailoring business on his own from his residence in Malawai, Dreketi where much of his craftsmanship includes sewing of wedding attires, school uniforms, kids wear, women’s and men’s wear.

Navneet’s Tailoring began to take a turning point as it gained attention from the public, but he did not rest until he first sought after the Youth Grant with the Ministry.

The Dreketi lad was handed over an industrial heavy duty sewing machine worth

approximately \$3,000 last October.

Like all Government’s initiatives and programmes, the assistance has a monitoring mechanism. Upon careful monitoring conducted by the Ministry, an increase was noted in the number of customer orders.

On a weekly average, Navneet generates an income of \$295- \$465 and his production of clothes has also increased.

Minister Saukuru, during his visit to the Northern Division earlier this month, said that appropriate guidance and training was vital for young people to make knowledgeable decisions, avoid crime and use their abilities and potential for a sustainable livelihood and success.

He said that the Government wants to unearth and develop the best in the youth, empowering them to become agents of change, development and sustainable livelihood in communities.

(Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports)



Minister for Youth and Sports, Jese Saukuru visited Navneet Shivakaran, a recipient of Ministry assistance in Dreketi. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

Cluster farming helps improve livelihoods



Peniasi Moroca, chairman of Mataqali Burenicava stands next to their dalo farm with his double storey home in the background **Photo: SUPPLIED**

THE Ministry of Agriculture's strategy of supporting cluster farming groups in rural communities is helping farmers achieve two key objectives of increasing local productivity to meet local demands while at the same time farmers' benefit through higher income returns.

One such farming cluster that benefited from this farming strategy in the highlands of Naitasiri is the Mataqali Burenicava Farming Cluster in the village of Waidracia, in the District of Rara.

The farming cluster consists of members of the *mataqali* and led by a *mataqali* development committee that Veniasi Moroca has been a member.

Raised in a very humble background where education was not prioritised, Mr Moroca together with his brothers decided to utilise their main asset, which was a 30-acre *mataqali* land, in farming initiatives.

Additionally, through these farming initiatives the brothers hoped to provide employment opportunities for members of their *mataqali*, improve their living standards and also meet religious, village and *Tikina* obligations.

The *Mataqali* Burenicava Dalo Project began through the assistance of another *mataqali* in their village which assisted them with 3,000 tausala dalo suckers.

It was through *solesolevaki* – where the community contributes- and the commitment of the menfolk within the *mataqali* that land preparation, which required manual labour, was carried out and the project went ahead as planned with the dalo tops planted.

The farm has been well looked after through traditional farming techniques until the first harvest.

The income generated was re-invested into the farm whereby they increased the number of dalo planted after each consecutive harvest.

It was decided by the committee that a portion of the returns gained from successive harvests was to be kept in the

bank and for this an account was opened in the Australian New Zealand (ANZ) while another portion of the income was invested in the Fijian Holdings Unit Trust.

In 2010 there were issues with market prices of dalo but through discussions, the *mataqali* diversified into dairy farming by purchasing four milking cows and utilised the milking shed which was built by their late father in the 1970s.

Today the *mataqali* boasts a herd of more than 100 cows with 30 cows milked every morning and afternoon and earns the *mataqali* an estimated \$400 from milk sales each week.

“As the farming ventures progressed, the Ministry of Agriculture came in to support us especially in the Dalo Farming Project. The Government assistance provided to us through the Ministry of Agriculture included farm mechanisation during the land preparation stages and improvement of the drainage system. Farming implements such as cane knives, digging forks, knapsack sprayers and weedicides were also provided to us with bags of fertiliser,” Mr Moroca shared.

The two farming projects have over the

years supported the education of the children within the *mataqali* and this has been done through the provision of school books for each child at the beginning of every academic year.

The *mataqali* has also financially supported their youths who have progressed to study in tertiary institutions by meeting the cost of transportation and helping with the purchase of laptops.

In terms of employment creation, two members of the *mataqali* are employed in managing the dairy farm whereby they are paid \$100 per week.

Other members are also employed on a casual basis in the maintaining of the dalo farm.

Men, women and youth who need cash, approach the committee for part-time employment to help out in the farm and are paid up to \$50 a day.

“If a mother or youth from within my *mataqali* comes requesting to work for a day because he or she needs to buy sugar or for any reason, we engage them in land clearing or cleaning of the dalo patches where they are paid \$50,” Mr Moroca said.

struggling to find work to support their family. To me this is not a business venture, this is an initiative by our community to ensure our members prosper.”

The Dalo Farming Project has also made it possible for the members to purchase a two-tonne carrier, which has been used to transport dalo to the Nausori and Suva markets during harvesting season.

Furthermore, the idea of investing in a carrier for transportation to attend traditional or religious obligation or *tikina* meetings has been pondered upon.

A piece of advice from Mr Moroca to Fijians struggling to make ends meet.

“We often like to ask, what assistance can Government offer? My advice to all Fijians, you must take the first step and start work on whatever venture it is you wish to engage in. Once Government notices your efforts, assistance will surely be provided to elevate your venture to the next level – you won't even have to apply for it. Life is not easy, I started from zero cents to become something today because I decided to work hard to change my circumstances and make a difference in the lives of those within my *mataqali*.”



Empty milk churns left on the road side where milk has been picked by Fiji Dairy Corporative Ltd from the dairy farm. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

“Money is not an issue for us, since the very reason this project was initiated is to ensure our members are supported. I don't want to see any of my *mataqali* members

(Source: Poverty Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation)



Green gold – Mataqali Burenicava dalo farm with tausala almost ready for harvest. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

FNU launches new certificate level course



Deputy Prime Minister, Manoa Kamikamica with stakeholders at the launch of the Fiji National University's new level three certificate course in Contact Centre Operations. **Photo: SHEENAL CHARAN**

By SHEENAL CHARAN

The Fiji National University (FNU) has launched a new level three certificate course in Contact Centre Operations.

The certification programme has been designed by FNU and Outsource Fiji, covering a wide range of essential competencies, including effective communication, customer service, problem-solving, and technical proficiency.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Cooperatives, SMEs and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica highlighted the importance of the programme.

DPM Kamikamica said, "Contact Centres in particular, have experienced tremendous growth in recent years. They have been true stalwarts during the pandemic – immediately responding to emergency calls in a timely manner, proving to be a robust and sustainable industry, and one which provides numerous job opportunities to our people".

"To fully harness the potential of this sector, we must ensure that we have a highly skilled and job-ready workforce."

He highlighted that a job-ready workforce will attract more investors, foster innovation, and promote sustainable

economic growth, demonstrating the commitment to lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

He said the course highlights the importance of upskilling and reskilling in a rapidly evolving job market.

"By providing opportunities for individuals to enhance their capabilities, we empower them to adapt to changing industry trends, seize new opportunities, and achieve their full potential," DPM Kamikamica said.

"The current global market size of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry is over USD \$260 billion this year. If Fiji grabs at least five per cent, it would be USD \$13 billion which is around FJD \$29 billion – which could support the inflationary pressures that we are facing."

The course will serve as a formal customer service training in Fiji for those eager to join the league of others in the BPO industry and call center providers in Fiji.

Anyone who has completed Year 11 with a pass in English is eligible to apply for the 14 weeks (one semester) course, including those who have work experience in this field. The course is offered at FNU campuses located in Nasinu, Labasa, Nadi and Ba.

Fiji Kava to be explored further



Farmers attending the launch of the Beyond Kava – Understanding the Factors that Influence Fijian Kava" research collaboration. **Photo: ILISAPECI TUIVALE**

By ILISAPECI TUIVALE

THE Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways has an allocation of \$400,000 for the local kava industry in its 2023/2024 National Budget.

This was highlighted by the line Assistant Minister, Tomasi Tunabuna as he officiated alongside the Assistant Minister for the Office of the Prime Minister, Sakiusa Tubuna at the launch of the research collaboration between PHAMA Plus and the Fiji National University at the Lami Convention Centre on recently.

The research "Beyond Kava – Understanding the Factors that Influence Fijian Kava", aims to:

i. Investigate kavalactone content in the roots and rhizomes of different varieties of the kava plant grown in selected localities around Fiji. It will also focus on testing kava samples sourced from Bua, Kadavu, Saqani, Savusavu, Taveuni, Rabi, Naitasiri, Ovalau, Tailevu, Rotuma, Koro and Rakiraki.

It is to understand the factors that influence the strength, efficacy, or other organoleptic properties of kava and how this is related to kavalactone content and chemotype.

ii. Understand the factors that influence the strength, efficacy, or other organoleptic properties of kava and how it is relevant to kavalactone content and chemotype.

iii. Explore the relationship between the kava-producing area, soil type, variety, climatic effect, and the relative ratio of

major kavalactones.

iv. Explore the idea of being able to establish a kava 'fingerprint' – which links a particular variety and area with a certain combination of kavalactone levels and associated strength, effect, or other distinguishing properties.

Asst. Minister Tunabuna thanked the governments of Australia and New Zealand for supporting this research.

"In order to continue the positive work of the kava industry in Fiji, this research will create opportunities that will enable the industry development through product development, product differentiation and brand building, integration with international nutraceutical value chains and onshore value creations."

"This research will also add value to the current and future development of the kava sector in Fiji, and the wider Pacific, and is supportive of the PHAMA PLUS kava strategy. The Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways will continue to support this research partnership and we hope that PHAMA Plus and the Fiji National University will continue to support the Kava Programme in the Ministry," he said.

Asst. Minister Tunabuna also shared 2022 statistics that revealed under Australia's Commercial Kava Pilot, a total of 430 exporters have successfully shipped 147,506kg of kava to Australia from the Pacific Island countries and Fiji alone has exported 52,197kg of kava valued at \$4.5 million.

Villagers on Beqa Island receive Solar Home Systems Certification

By ILISAPECI TUIVALE

THE Minister for Public Works, Transport and Meteorological Services of Fiji, Ro Filipe Tuisawau recently commissioned Solar Home Systems for four villages on Beqa Island.

Villagers of Nawaisomo, Raviravi, Naseuseu and Naceva received certificates of ownership of the solar home systems set up in their respective homes by officials from the Department of Energy during the Minister's two days tour of the island.

Director of Energy, Mikaele Belena said the response from the villagers on the solar systems was positive.

"This is part of the plans of the Government in trying to reduce the use of diesel generators and to transition to renewable energy. Villagers have been advised on the use of the system and how to properly manage it – with the limited appliances that can be accommodated with

this new system."

"For those that are located in the off-grid islands and those who are not close to the EFL grids, this is a program that has been put in place to support them – the provision of renewable energy supplies (solar home systems)," Mr Belena said.

Minister Tuisawau was the first Government Minister to ever visit the village of Naseuseu.

The tour was an opportunity for villagers to raise questions and concerns about Government services on their island during the talanoa sessions held with the minister and officials.

Representatives that accompanied Minister Tuisawau included officials from the Water Authority of Fiji, Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji, Department of Energy, Fiji Police Force, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, iTaukei Land Trust Board, Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the National Fire Authority.



Villagers of Nawaisomo, Raviravi, Naseuseu and Naceva received certificates of ownership of the solar home systems set up in their homes by the Department of Energy during the Minister for Public Works, Ro Filipe Tuisawau's recent visit





Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, seen here with the Fijiana Drua players, Cabinet Ministers, team officials, management and other stakeholders, extended the nation's appreciation for the team's remarkable victory. **Photo: JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA**

Fijiana Drua Rugby Team honoured for historic victory

By JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA

THE Fijiana Drua Rugby Team's remarkable victory in the women's super-rugby competition for the second time has brought immense pride and joy to the nation, says Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka.

In extending his appreciation to the team for their outstanding performance, Prime Minister Rabuka highlighted their exceptional talent, dedication, discipline and unbreakable spirit.

He emphasised that their triumph has not only made Fiji proud but has also become an integral part of the country's sporting legacy. Prime Minister Rabuka reaffirmed the People's Coalition Government's commitment to support and invest in sports across the nation.

"The Government aims to establish new sports facilities and create a robust sporting ecosystem to foster the growth and success of talented athletes on the global stage," he said.

Expressing his gratitude to the management team, coaches, and support staff, Prime Minister Rabuka recognised their tireless efforts in shaping the Fijiana Drua Rugby Team and creating an environment for the athletes to flourish.

"Their dedication to excellence has been instrumental in achieving remarkable results and nurturing the team's potential."

In a show of appreciation, Prime Minister

Rabuka announced a grant of \$328,000 approved by the Cabinet to be awarded to the Fijiana Drua Rugby Team.

"Each of the thirty-two team members will receive \$8,000, with the nine-team officials and it is our hope that this small token of appreciation will boost your morale and help you prepare well for the next season."

Prime Minister Rabuka emphasised the broader significance of this achievement, highlighting the unifying power of sports to transcend boundaries and instill national pride.

"The success of the Fijiana Drua Rugby Team symbolises the core values of Fijians, including courage, resilience, and an unwavering spirit."

PM Rabuka said the historic historic achievement has etched their names in the history books and secured their place in Fiji's sporting legacy.

"I call upon the nation to continue supporting and uplifting athletes, fostering a sporting culture that promotes health, unity, and national pride," he urged.

The Fiji Government remains dedicated to providing necessary resources, facilities, and opportunities for athletes to reach even greater heights, ensuring Fiji's continued success in the world of sports.

Captain of the Fijiana Drua, Bitila Tawake, conveyed the team's appreciation to the Prime Minister and the Government for the gesture of appreciation.



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka with Fijian Dura captain Bitila Tawake. **Photo: JOSEFA ULUILAKEBA**

Noda Viti

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- Vakaukauwataki na veiwekani ni unioni 2
- Vakilai na yaga ni saravanua kei na tiko bulabula 3
- Taucoko na ituvatuva vakailavo 5
- Vakaqacacotaki na veiqaravi ni monalivaliva 6
- Cakacaka ni buli ilailo mai na kama 7

Marautaki na dolavi vou ni dua na nodra vale ni vakarautaki na gonecauravou lalai.



ERA laki dolava na nodra itikitiko vou na cauravou e Nakasi o Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka.

Vakaraitaka ko Minisita ni Marama, Gone kei na Taqomaki Raraba ni lewenivanua, Lynda Tabuya na nodra marautaka na dolavi vou ni nodra vale na cauravou mai Nakasi. Vakavinakataka kina na matanitu ena raiyawa kei na vakabauta ena veiqaravi ni St Christopher's Home e Nakasi.

Vakavinakataka ira kece na lewenivanua, tamata, soqosoqo era vakaitavi ena tara ni nodra vale na cauravou oqo. Oqo edua na vale era na vakayagataka na cauravou era sa dau biligi mai na nodra vale, sera sa sega ni vakatubutubu, era sa guilecavi beka ka mera mai susugi ena dua na lomani vale.

Era na rawa ni gole ena vale oqo oira na gone yabaki 13-18 ka sa rawa ni vakatetei kina na veiqaravi ni matanitu ka mera semati tikoga ena veiqaravi ka mera bau lomani talega ka tokoni nodra bula ni vuli.

Sikovi na Fiji Airways



Taba toka kei ira na ivakalesilesi ni kabani na Fiji Airways ko Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka

ERA laki sikova na kabani ni waqavuka na Fiji Airways na liuliu ni Matanitu, Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka. Oqori ena nodra wavoki sobu ena muaira ni noda vanua ena nodra veiqaravi voli ena noda Vitia. Taura na gauna vinaka oqori na liuliu ni matanitu me veitalanoa kina kei ira na leweni kabani vakailalesilesi ni Fiji Airways. Era laki sotavi ira talega na gon-evuli era vulica tiko na veiqaravi ni gacagaca ni waqavuka ka vakakina ena vulici ni vuka taki ni waqavuka. Vakavinavinakataka ira ko PM Rabuka.

Vakaukauwa taki na veiwekani ni unioni

Era mai boseka na vei soqosoqo ni unioni ena veimatanitu ena noda Pasivika ena noda vanua me vakaqacotaki kina na nodra veiqaravi vei ira na lewena se tamata cakacaka.

Ratou mai qarava na boseka oqo na Soqosoqo Levu ni Veiqaravi baleta na veivakacakacakataki kei na cakacaka e vuravura se International Labour Organisations

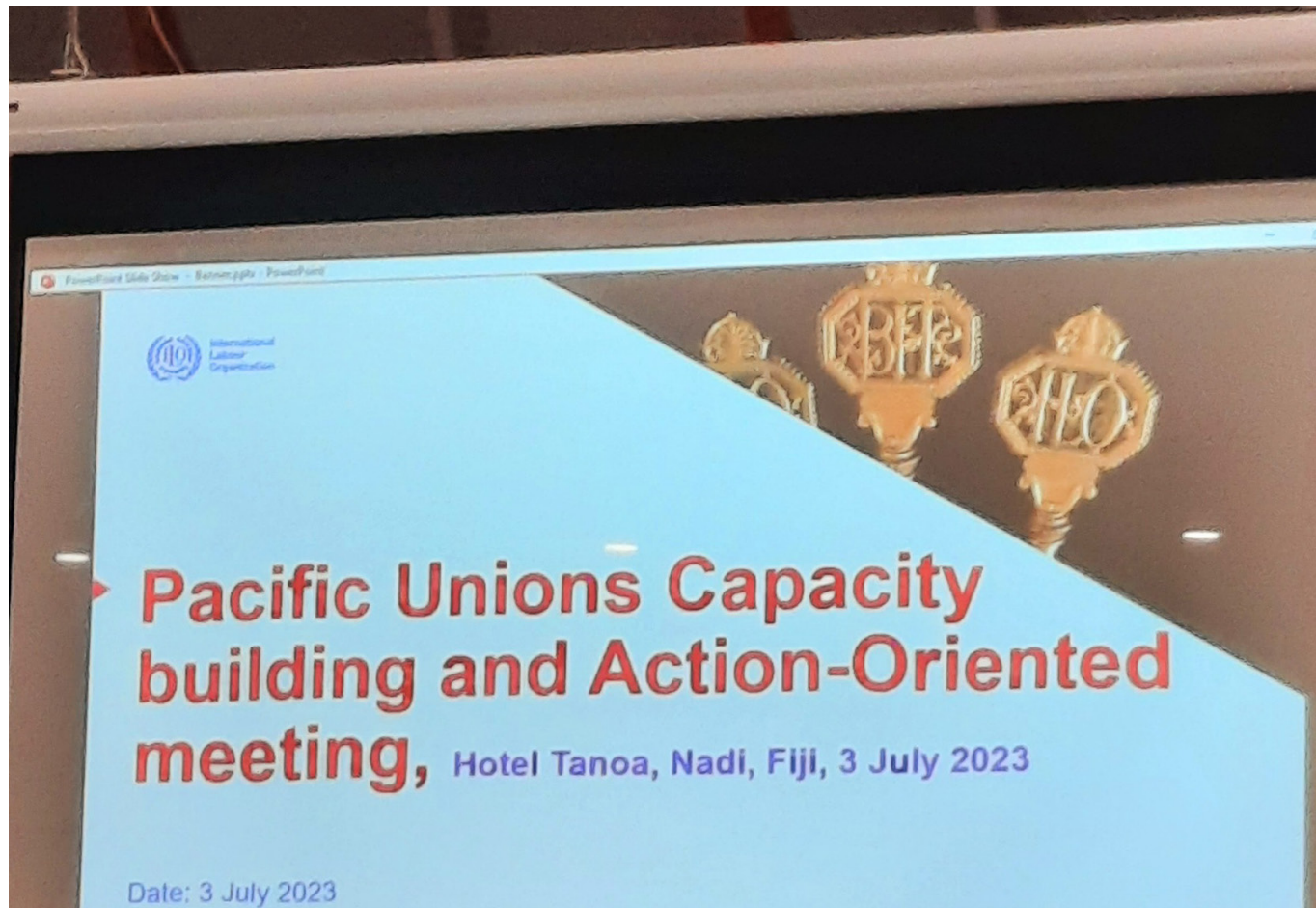
Oqo e wilil kina ko Palau, Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati and Fiji.

Na boseka era veitalanoataki kina na ulutaga ni draki, nodra taqomaki na tamata cakacaka ena tabana sega ni vakamatanitutaki ka vakakina na cakacaka ena vanua sega ni vakamatanitutaki.

Vakaraitaka ko Minisita ni Veivakacakacakataki kei na Veiwekani nodra na taukei ni vanua ni cakacaka, Adgni Deo Singh ni lawa ni veiqaravi ena cakacaka ena noda vanua esa veisau ka sa vinaka cake ka vakabibi nodra dodonu na veiqaravi ena unioni se oira na lewena, mera dau veiqaravi ena loma ni lawa levu ni veiqaravi ena vuravura.

Sa vakadeitaka ko Minisita Singh ni matanitu ena qarava vinaka nodra itavi me baleta na tamata cakacaka, na vanua ni cakacaka kei na veika ni lawa veiwekani ena veiqaravi vakacakacaka.

Sa tiko talega na na tuvatuva ni matanitu cokovata me vaka ni oti e 16 na yabaki na kena sega tu ni rokovi se soli vakadodonu na nodra dodonu na tamata cakacaka ka vakauasivi oira na Unioni.



Ko Minisita ni Veivakacakacakataki Agni Deo Singh kei ira na ivakalesilesi ni unioni ena nodra boseka.

Vakilai na yaga ni saravanua kei na tikobulabula

NA matanitu esa kila tiko ka sa vakila talega na yaga ni veiqaravi ena tiko bulabula ka salavata mai na katuba ni vakatubuilavo ena saravanua se medical tourism ena vosa vakaperitania

Era vosa tiko na liuliu ni Matanitu, Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka ka ra vakamacalataka tiko na kena yaga na saravanua me vaka ni kauta mai na vurevure ni ilavo ni vakatubuilavo ka semati talega ena tikobulabula.

Era a laki dolava na valenibula vou na Pacific Specialist Healthcare private. Ka boleir ira kina na daunibisinisi mera tauyavu kina me vaka ni o Viti ena dabe toka ena loma donu ni Pasifika. Kuria ko Paraiminisita Rabuka ni PSH edua na tukutuku vinaka ka vakilai kina na yaga ni veiqaravi ena noda vanua.

Vakavinakataki Parvish Kumar na nodra mai vakaduri binisini ena noda vanua ena tabana oqo.

Na valenibula oqo e tauyavu ena yabaki 2016 edua na valenibula e tiko kina e 100 na loga ni veiqaravi ena valenibula ka laurai kina na veitabana ni veiqaravi ni bula vaka na mona, nodra qaravi na marama vakatabakidua ena nodra bula vakamarama na kena qaravi na tabana ni suasua kei na sui kei na tikini ni yago.



Ko Paraiminisita Rabuka kei ira na vakalesilesi ni valenibula vou



Taleitaki na veitalanoa ni tuvatuva ka ni ilavo



ERA taleitaka vakalevu na lewenivanua na veitalanoa ka vakayacori ni oti na kacivaki ni tuvatuva ka vakailavo ni matanitu.

Vakaraitaka ko Vukevuke ni Paraminisita, Professor Biman Prasad ni dua na ka talei vei ira na lewenivanua mai na vei tabana ni veiqaravi na itukutuku ni tuvatuva vakailavo ni matanitu.

Oqori me vaka era a laki qarava ena Tanoa Plaza e Suva. Era lewena na veitalanoa oqori na Vukevuke ni Paraminisita ka dolava talega na veitalanoa. Era tiko talega kina ko Vunivola Tudei ni Ilavo, Mr Shiri Gounder, Mr Nilesh Lal – na Liuliu ni Dialogue Fiji, Dr Asaeli Tuibeqa na Qasenivuli ena Fiji National University, Kovana ni Baqe Reserve Bank, Mr Ariff Ali, dauni vakatubuilavo Dr Chandra Dulare kei Prof. Wadan Narsey kei Mr Pankaj Singh main a soqosoqo na Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company.

Levu sara na uqe ni veitalanoa ena kena mai boko laivi na TELS ka ra dinau kina e \$53,000 na gonevuli ni noda vanua Kuria ko Professor Biman ni dua na veiqaravi levu eratou sa qarava oti na nona minisitiri ka vakakina na matanitu ena kena veitalanoa taki na veika baleta na ilavo ena gauna ni tuvatuva ka ni matanitu.



Era boseka ena tuvatuva vakailavo ni matanitu ka tiko kina ko Minisita niu Ilavo Professor Biman Prasad.

Taucoko na tuvatuva vakailavo – Minisita Saukuru



ERA kanaka na Minisita ni Itabagone kei na qito Jese Saukuru ni tuvatuva ni ilavo ni matanitu ena yabaki oqo esa dodonu me sa rawa ni veirauti ena veiqaravi. Vosa tiko ko Minisita Saukuru ena kena mai kacivaki na tuvatuva ni ilavo se Budget ena vosa vaka Peritania. Na tabana ni Itabagone kei na Qito esa votai kina ena \$19.5milioni me vaka ni \$13.8milioni na yabaki ni ilavo sa oti.

Vakaraitaka ko Minisita Saukuru na nodra marautaka na votavota ena nona minisitiri ka ni tubu talega ia eso na musumusumu e yaco ena nona tabana. Ia ena sega ni tarova na veiqaravi ni matanitu cokovata.

Kuria ko koya ni ra sa na toso madaga kei na liga ni kaloko me vaka ni gadrevi me toso tikoga na veiqaravi ve ira na lewenivanua.

Ena qai ra raica na vanua me rawa ni vukei kina na veitabana era sa vakalailaitaki ena nona vota vakailavo. Me vaka na Fiji Sports Council era qarava na vei vanua dau vakayacori kina na qito. Ia ena qai laurai ke tubu na isau ni vakayagataki ni veiqaravi oqo.

Vakaraitaka ko Vukevuke ni Paraminisita ka Minisita ni Ilavo Professor Biman Prasad ni qito edua na ka dau vakaveiwekani vinaka taki keda na lewenivanua ka vakakina ni veisemati talega ena vei vanua se matanitu. Era vota na Minisita ni Ilavo e \$9.7milioni me baleta na lakolako ni qito ki vanuatani ka wilikina na 2024 Pacific Games, Commonwealth Games, Rugby World Cup, qaravi ni Fiji Nationals Sport Commission, nodra veiqaravi mai na dauniveitavulici ena qito.



Ko Minisita ni Itabagone kei na Qito, Jese Saukuru kei ira na itabagone ena veiqaravi ni matanitu.



Vakaqacacotaki na veiqaravi ena monalivaliva

E RA tiko ena dua na vuli na ivakalesilesi ni veiqaravi ni qoliqoli ena noda vanua ka vakakina mai na matanitu ko Cook Islands. Era na vuli tiko me macawa rua ena tabana ni monalivaliva kei na kena vukei na qaravi ni nodra itavi.

Eratou vakarautaka na veiqaravi oqori na Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Pacific Community (SPC) ka veivuke mai kina vakailavo na matanitu ko Ositerelia kei PEUMP ena soli ni nodra talevoni vei kauyaki.

Vakaraitaka ko Minisita ni Teitei Vatimi Rayalu ni vuli oqo edua na cavuikalawa levu ena matanitu erua ena veiqaravi ni tabana ni qoliqoli.

Vakavinakataka ko Minisita Rayalu na veivuke ni soqosoqo e rua na SPC kei na FFA ena cakacaka ni kena dau yadravi na iqoliqoli me vaka na kena vakarautaki edua na monalivaliva me vukea na nodra veiqaravi na ivakalesilesi ni qoliqoli. Na tabana ni qoliqoli e veivuke ena kakana e vakayagataki ena vuravura ka sa na veivuke levu na monalivaliva ena nodra veiqaravi na ivakalesilesi.



Ko Minisita ni Teitei Vatimi Rayalu kei ira na ivakalesilesi ni tabana ni qoliqoli ena matanitu ko Viti kei Cook Islands ena vuli ni monalivaliva



Cakacaka ni buli iloilo mai na kama



E RA laki dolava na Peresitedi Ratu Wiliame Katonivere edua na soqo ni cakacaka ni liga ni iloilo buli mai ena kama, ka vakayacori ena Grand Pacific Hotel.

Vakacautaki ira na kena dau ni cakacaka ni liga oqo ena buli iloilo mai na kama ko koya. Kuria ko koya ni ra vakaraitaki cakacaka ni liga oira na kena dau ka sa vakaraitaki vinaka ni rairai ni noda vanua.

Vakaraitaka ko Peresitedi Katonivere ni noda itovo kei na vakarau na lewenivanua ena noda Viti e dau sema vakadodonu tu kei na noda cakacaka ni liga ka vakade-wataki mai ena vica saga vulu na yabaki ni tamata kei na taba gauna.

Na vakaraitaki cakacaka ni liga oqori era lakova yani vakalewelevu na lewenivanua, daunibisini me vaka na veisemati ni veigauna e liu kei na veimataqali ka e vakayagataki ena cakacaka ni liga.

Ea vakayacori tikoga ena GPH na vakaraitaki cakacaka ni liga oqo.



Ko Peresitedi Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere ena soqo ni vakaraitaki cakacaka ni liga oqo.

Noda Viti

Vakaraubuka Jiulai 14, 2023. 8 na Drauniveva. Ka 6 ni Tabana - Ka13 ni ivola | www.fiji.gov.fj | [@FijianGovt](#) | [Fijian Government](#)



Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka ena bose ni yasana ko Ba kei ira na ivakalesilesi ni Bose.

Bose ni Yasana ko Ba

ERA laki boseka ena yasana ko Ba, na yasana levu duadua ena noda vanua me vaka ni dabe kina na veigacagaca lelevu ni vakatubuilavo ena noda vanua me vaka na suka, na koula na veiotela lelevu ni saravanua ka vakakina na rara se iroro levu ni waqavuka ena noda vanua.

Vakaraitaka kina ko Paraiminisita Sitiveni Rabuka na bolebole eso eratou sotava nona matanitu ena gauna eratou qarava kina na tuvatuva ka ni ilavo ni matanitu.

Oqo baleta ni sa tiko rawa na dinau ka vaka kina na veika e sotava tiko ko vuravura ena leqa ni vakatubuilavo ena vuravura.

Na ituvatuva ka vakailavo oqo ena qai tekivu me vakayagataki mai ena vula o Okosita. Kuria na liuliu ni matanitu ni na dodonu meda bula tikoga ena loma ni noda kaukauwa ni rawaka vakailavo. Ka vakalailaitaki na vakararavi ena kakana qaqi se tawaitini mai valagi ka meda sasaga ena noda tubu vakai-keda.





देश में नर्सों के वेतन और काम करने की शर्तें सुधरेंगी **2** | वापस स्कूल जाने के लिए सरकार छात्रों को दोबारा सहायता देगी **3** | मंत्रियों का विदेश सफर करने का अलावन्स घटाया जाएगा **6** | सरकार पहली बार घास मारने वाली और मसाला प्रदान करेगी **7** | पानी वाली योजनाएं पूरी होने से सप्लाई में भारी सुधार होने की उम्मीद है **7**

कर्ज से निपटने के लिए सक्त कदमों की घोषणा



उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद तीस जून को संसद में 2023/2024 राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए

चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

शेनल देव

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने 2023/2024 राष्ट्रीय बजट में कुछ कड़े कदमों की घोषणा की है ताकि देश पर लदा दस बिलियन डोलर कर्ज से निपटा जा सके। इन कदमों में उन सामानों पर वेट बढ़ाकर पंद्रह प्रतिशत करना शामिल है जिनपर नौ प्रतिशत वेट लागू है, कुछ सामानों पर डूटी बढ़ाई गई है तो कुछ भी डूटी घटाई गई है। यह कठोर संदेश भी दिया गया है कि दस बिलियन डोलर कर्ज की स्थिति का सामना करने के लिए हमें कुछ बलिदान देने होंगे। अगले महीने की पहली तारीख से देश में वेट के केवल दो ही दर होंगे। इक्कीस ज़रूरी सामानों पर कोई वेट लागू नहीं होगा जैसा कि अभी है। इस सूची में सिर्फ वो दवाईयाँ शामिल की गई है जो डाक्टरों द्वारा दी जाती है। जिन सामानों पर कोई वेट लागू नहीं है में शामिल है, आटा, चावल, चीनी, टिन वाली मछली, खाना बनाने का तेल, आलू, प्याज़, लहसून, शिशु का दूध, झूरा दूध, दूध, दाल, चाय, नमक, साबुन, सौप पाउडर, टोईलट पैपर, सेनिटरी पेड, दूध पेस्ट, केरोसीन तथा खाना बनाने वाला गेस। हालांकि पहली अगस्त से अन्य

सामानों तथा सेवाओं पर पंद्रह प्रतिशत का वेट लागू होगा। अनुमान है कि सरकार वेट की कमाई से लगभग 446 मिलियन डोलर बटोरेगी। गैर-संक्रामक बीमारियों पर काबू पाने तथा लोगों को स्वस्थ जीवन जीने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए सरकार ने शराब तथा तम्बाकू पर पाँच प्रतिशत एक्साईस डूटी लागू की है तथा जूस जैसे कि फ्रूबू, टेम्पीको, पल्पी, जस्ट जूस तथा मेरिगोल्ड वगैरह पर डूटी चालिस सेन्ट्स प्रति लीटर कर दिया जाएगा। इसके अलावा कुछ अस्वस्थ स्नेक्स और पेयपदार्थ पर चालिस सेन्ट्स प्रति किलो या लीटर के हिसाब से टेक्स लागू किया जाएगा। इनमें मीठा बिस्किट, आईस क्रीम, स्नेक्स जिन्हें रोस्ट, भुना, बर्ईक या फुलाया जाता है तथा अन्य मिठाईयाँ शामिल हैं। इन सामानों को विदेश से मँगाने में पंद्रह प्रतिशत की डूटी लागू की जाएगी। सरकार दूना को छोड़कर अन्य टिन वाले मेकरल, टिन वाले मटन, बीफ तथा उसके उत्पादन, टिन वाले टमाटर, झिंगा तथा बत्तख के मांस पर डूटी बत्तीस प्रतिशत से घटाकर पंद्रह प्रतिशत करेगी। भेड़ के मांस पर फिज़कल डूटी हटा दी गई है तथा बीफ के मांस पर डूटी बत्तीस

प्रतिशत से घटाकर पंद्रह प्रतिशत की गई है। सरकार ने मुर्गी के अलग-अलग भाग जैसे विंग्स, ड्रमस्टीक, जाँग, टाँग वगैरह के इंपोट एक्साईज़ डूटी को पंद्रह से पूरी तरह हटा दिया है। यात्रियों को ढोने वाली नई-पुरानी मोटर गाड़ियाँ देश में मँगाने की डूटी पाँच प्रतिशत से बढ़ाई गई है। स्मार्टफोन पर लागू छूट हटा दी गई है तथा उनपर पाँच प्रतिशत फिज़कल डूटी लागू की गई है। कम्पनियों पर लागू टेक्स बीस प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर पचीस प्रतिशत कर दी गई है। जो नई कम्पनियाँ साउथ पेसिफिक स्टोक एक्सचेंज की सूची पर हैं वो कम टेक्स भरने के हकदार हैं तथा उनका टेक्स दस प्रतिशत से बढ़ाकर पंद्रह प्रतिशत कर दिया गया है। यह सिर्फ नई कम्पनियों के लिए है जो सिर्फ सात सालों के लिए रहेगा। कोर्परेट टेक्स में वृद्धि करने से सरकार को 73.5 मिलियन डोलर की आमदनी होगी। इस साल पहली अगस्त से एर्यापोट डिपाचा टेक्स को बढ़ाकर एक सौ पचीस डोलर किया जाएगा जो अगले साल पहली जनवरी से और बढ़ाकर एक सौ चालिस डोलर कर दिया जाएगा। इससे टेक्स से होने वाली आमदनी में तीस मिलियन डोलर की और वृद्धि होगी। उत्पादनकर्ताओं को अब कच्चा माल, मशीन तथा अन्य उपकरण देश में

मँगाने के लिए तीन प्रतिशत डूटी भरना पड़ेगा जबकि अभी उन्हें कुछ भी डूटी नहीं भरना पड़ता था। उत्पादनकर्ताओं को सामान पेक करने वाले सामान मँगाने के लिए भी अब तीन प्रतिशत डूटी भरना पड़ेगा जिसकी पहले छूट दी गई थी। सरकार ने होटल तथा रिज़ोट को जो होटल के निर्माण वाले सामान, खाट, मेज़, कुर्सियाँ, रसोईघर, भोजन वाले उपकरण तथा रसोईघर के सामान देश में मँगाने के लिए डूटी में छूट दी थी पर अब तीन प्रतिशत डूटी लगेगी। होटल, उत्पादनकर्ताओं, कूज़ जहाज़ों तथा माएनिंग कम्पनियों को फिउल पर जो दस सेन्ट्स प्रति लीटर की छूट मिलती थी, वो हटा दी गई है तथा अब डीज़ल पर बीस सेन्ट्स प्रति लीटर की डूटी लागू होगी। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि पिछली सरकार द्वारा जो कैपिटल गैर्न्स टेक्स में बदलाव किया गया था से कुछ खास करदाताओं को ही फायदा हो रहा था जिससे सरकार ने लगभग सत्तर मिलियन डोलर आमदनी खो दी थी तथा वो इस छूट को हटाकर, गलत को सही कर रहे हैं।

नर्सों के वेतन, काम की शर्तें सुधारी जाएगी

रेनल देव

स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय का बजट बढ़ाकर 453.8 मिलियन डोलर किया गया है।

राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि अस्पतालों तथा हेल्थ सेन्टर्स के संसाधनों को सुधारना तथा सेवाएँ सुधारना आसान नहीं है। उनके अनुसार नर्सों की सालाना आमदनी बढ़ाने तथा ओवरटाइम के लिए ग्यारह दशमलौ छः (11.6) मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है।

मंत्री ने कहा कि फीजी में स्वास्थ्य सेवाएँ संतोषजनक नहीं है तथा अस्पतालों की हालत भी बहुत खराब हो गई है। उनके अनुसार पिछले कई सालों से सूवा और लौतोका जैसे बड़े अस्पतालों के अलावा देश भर के स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं में बहुत कम पुँजी लगाई गई है। उन्होंने कहा कि उन्होंने ने पहले भी यह बात कही है कि फीजी के इतिहास में स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं की हालत इतनी बुरी कभी नहीं थी।

उनके अनुसार वो न केवल इस बजट में इसपर प्राथमिकता दे रहे हैं बल्कि भविष्य में भी बजट में इसपर गौर करेंगे। माननीय प्रसाद ने कहा कि स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय के बजट में 58.7 मिलियन डोलर की वृद्धि की गई है।

उनके अनुसार मंत्रालय के वेतन वाले बजट को बढ़ाकर 126.4 मिलियन डोलर किया गया है, जिसमें से 11.6 मिलियन डोलर नर्सों के वेतन और ओवरटाइम के लिए होगा। मंत्री ने कहा कि इससे दो सौ पचास इनटर्न नर्स आगे बढ़कर रेजिस्टर्ड नर्स बन सकेंगी, 237 नए इनटर्न नर्सों को भर्ती किया जाएगा, 46 नर्सों की



कुछ नर्सस स्वास्थ्य मंत्री एटोनियो लालाम्बलानू को सेवा प्रदान करती हुई

चित्र :प्रदान किया गया

सहायता करने वाले, पचास नर्सिंग अईड, चालिस मिड वाईफ, 94 मेडिकल लेब साईटिस्ट तथा अन्य अस्पतालों में सहायता पहुँचाने के लिए विभिन्न कर्मचारी और फीजी फामासियुटिकल और बायोमेडिकल सेविसर्ज के लिए कर्मचारियों को नौकरी मिलेगी।

उन्होंने कहा कि इन अतिरिक्त पदों से मंत्रालय में सेवाओं में सुधार होगा।

उप प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि नर्सों की सहायता करने वाले तथा नर्सिंग अईड के पद इसलिए बनाय गए है ताकि नर्स अपने काम पर ध्यान दे सके जबकि ये लोग खाट ठीक करने, स्वास्थ्य सामानों को लाने लेजाने तथा अन्य काम करेंगे जिसमें नर्सों का काफी समय बरबाद होता और वे उसी में ज़्यादा व्यस्त रहती है।

पब्लिक हेल्थ कार्यक्रम, इमेजेन्सी रेडियोलोजी तथा लेब सेवाओं, दवाईयाँ तथा उपकरण खरीदने के लिए धड़ मिलियन डोलर से ज़्यादा निकाला गया है। किडनी डायलीसीस इलाज में राहत देने के लिए सरकार ने 2.5 मिलियन डोलर अलग किया है जो एक मिलियन डोलर से बढ़ाया गया है। इससे डायलीसीस सबसीडी एक सौ पचास डोलर से बढ़ाकर एक सौ अस्सी डोलर किया जाएगा।

उन्होंने कहा कि शहरी इलाकों के अस्पतालों तथा कोर्ट्स पर मरम्मत करने, सूवा अस्पताल के मेडिटिनी अस्पताल के लिए एक वर्कवैप बनाने, उपकरण बदलने या नए उपकरण बिठाने तथा लम्बासा अस्पताल के अन्दर के भाग में मुख्य मरम्मतकार्य करने के लिए 16.4 मिलियन डोलर अलग

किया गया है। उन्होंने आगे कहा कि वे नए अस्पताल या हेल्थ सेन्टर्स नहीं बना सकते जबतक वे वर्तमान की सुविधाओं को नहीं सुधार पाएंगे। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि कुछ अस्पतालों और हेल्थ सेन्टर पर मरम्मत के लिए बहुत ज़्यादा पैसों की ज़रूरत नहीं है।

कुछ स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं की खिड़कियों में लूवा ब्लेड्स लगाने हैं, टाईल्स लगाने हैं, पर्डिंग, छत पर मरम्मत, दरवाज़े तथा खिड़कियों पर मच्छरों वाली नेटिंग लगानी है। ये आसानी से हो सकता है।

उन्होंने कहा कि अगले महीने की पहली तारीख से सिर्फ वही मरीज़ प्रायवट डाक्टरों से मुफ्त में सेवा हासिल कर सकेगा जिनकी परिवार की सालाना आमदनी तीस हज़ार डोलर से कम है।

टेल्स का कर्ज़ माफ

टेल्स का छः सौ पचास मिलियन डोलर का कर्ज़ माफ किया जाएगा, बोनड सेवा लागू की जाएगी तथा नए फीजियन स्कोलाशिप स्कीम की घोषणा की जाएगी।

जिन ग्रेजुएट्स ने कर्ज़ लिया था को बोनड वाली एक सेवा में शामिल किया जाएगा। राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि जो बोनड के बंधन में नहीं बँधना चाहते हैं को सरकार को बराबर की कीमत चुकानी होगी।

इस बजट में आगे चलकर सरकार योग्य विध्यार्थियों को फीजियन स्कोलाशिप स्कीम के नीचे छात्रवृति देगी जिसके लिए 148.2 मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है।

फीजियन स्कोलाशिप स्कीम फन्ड से दस हज़ार नौ सौ बीस नए विध्यार्थियों तथा नौ हज़ार से ज़्यादा वर्तमान विध्यार्थियों को स्पेन्सर किया जाएगा। कर्ज़ लेकर पढ़ाई करने की जगह नया स्कोलाशिप स्कीम लेगा।

उच्च शिक्षा हासिल करने का स्कोलाशिप यानि कम से कम कट ओफ मार्क स्कीम धीरे-धीरे डिग्री स्कीम के लिए टेल्स को हटा देगा। कट ओफ मार्क दो सौ पचास है जबकि ग्रामीण तथा बाहरी द्वीपों के विध्यार्थियों के लिए कट ओफ मार्क 245

है। कोमेस के लिए कट ओफ मार्क 280 है, इंजिनियरिंग के लिए कट ओफ मार्क तीन सौ है। बाज़ार में मज़दूरों की ज़रूरत, युनिवर्सिटीज़ में भर्ती होने वाले विद्यार्थी तथा टेशरी शिक्षा की योग्यता बरकरार रखने के लिए यह कट ओफ मार्क तए किए गए हैं। देश में अन्य प्राथमिकताओं को ध्यान में रखते हुए सरकार अन्य संस्थाओं को टेक्नीकल वोर्कईशनल शिक्षा तथा ट्रेनिंग के लिए भी पैसे देगी।

प्रायवट विध्यार्थियों के लिए टूशन ओनली हाइशिप सहायता वाली स्कीम एक नई स्कीम है जो डिग्री वाले कार्य कम में भर्ती विध्यार्थियों की सहायता दूसरे साल के बाद करेगी जिनका औसतम अंत (मार्क) पैसठ (65) प्रतिशत होगा। जो विद्यार्थी इसके योग्य होंगे उनके माता-पिताओं की आमदनी या व्यापार की आमदनी एक लाख (100,000) डोलर से कम होना चाहिए। इस स्कीम के नीचे दो हज़ार छः सौ विध्यार्थियों की सहायता की जाएगी जबकि डाक्टरी की पढ़ाई करने के लिए दो सौ पचास अवोइर्स अलग किए गए हैं। नेशनल टोपस स्कोलाशिप का नाम बदलकर मेरिट बर्ड्स स्कोलाशिप रखा जाएगा। ग्रामीण और बाहरी द्वीपों के स्कूलों द्वारा सामना की जा रही चुनौतियों



कुछ छात्रए एक समारोह में हिस्सा लेती हुई

चित्र :प्रदान किया गया

को देखते हुए वहाँ के विध्यार्थियों का कट ओफ मार्क घटाकर तीन सौ बीस किया जाएगा जबकि बाकी शहरी स्कूलों का कट ओफ मार्क तीन सौ तीस रखा जाएगा। नए विध्यार्थियों के लिए बोनडिंग सालों की पढ़ाई को 1.5 से मल्टीप्लाए किया जाएगा अगर सिर्फ टूशन की फीस भरी जाएगी और जिन विध्यार्थियों का टूशन और अलावन्स भरा जाएगा के लिए बॉडिंग सालों की पढ़ाई को दोगुना से मल्टीप्लाए किया जाएगा। पहली जनवरी से सभी विध्यार्थी जो स्कोलाशिप के नीचे होंगे को प्रति सेमेस्टा दो हज़ार पाँच सौ डोलर दिया जाएगा अगर वे अपने घर से

दूर रहकर पढ़ाई कर रहे हैं या घर के पास वाले केम्पस में पढ़ाई करने वालों को एक हज़ार पाँच सौ डोलर दिया जाएगा। जहाँ तक अलावन्स की बात है तो स्कोलाशिप पर योग्य विध्यार्थियों को प्रति सेमेस्टा तीन हज़ार चार सौ डोलर दिया जाएगा। योग्यता और चुनाव की प्रक्रिया पर टी एस एल एस एक हेन्डबुक छापेगा।

गठबंधन की सरकार अपनी एक नई सुविधा के तहत रिसेर्च अवोइस के द्वारा निउ ज़ीलेन्ड की युनिवर्सिटीज़ में पढ़ाई करने के लिए तीन पी हईच डी, पाँच मास्टस जगह प्रदान करेगी।

वापस स्कूल जाने की सहायता जारी रहेगी

रोनल देव

वापस स्कूल जाने के लिए अगले साल एली चाएल्डहूड से लेकर साल 13 के विद्यार्थियों को सरकार दो सौ डोलर देगी।

मुफ्त शिक्षा, एली चाएल्डहूड शिक्षा, प्रायमरी तथा सेकन्ड्री स्कूल के विद्यार्थियों के यातायात की सहायता जारी रहेगी जिसके लिए एक सौ मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है।

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद का कहना है कि अगले साल 'बैक टू स्कूल सपोर्ट' के लिए पैतालिस (45) मिलियन डोलर निकाला गया है।

इससे दो लाख तीस हजार (230,000) परिवारों को फायदा होगा जिनकी सालाना परिवारिक आमदनी पचास हजार डोलर (\$50,000) से कम है।

इस बजट में शिक्षा क्षेत्र को सबसे ज़्यादा आठ सौ पैतालिस मिलियन (\$845 million) डोलर दिया गया है।

मंत्रालय के सालाना वेतन और तनख्वाह के लिए बजट तीन सौ अट्ठारह मिलियन डोलर से बढ़ाकर तीन सौ बाईस मिलियन डोलर किया गया है, जिससे चौदह हजार वर्तमान अध्यापक, लगभग एक सौ अस्सी नए अध्यापक तथा शिक्षा मंत्रालय में अन्य शिक्षा अधिकारियों को वेतन मिलेगा।

अध्यापकों का वेतन बढ़ाने के लिए 8.9 मिलियन डोलर निकाला गया है जिन्होंने अध्यापकों के वेतन बढ़ाने वाली निति के तहत ज़रूरी योग्यताएँ पूरी कर ली है।

इसके अलावा सरकार ने कोपस कीस्टी, फूल्टन कोलज, मोनफोर्ट टेक्नीकल इंस्टीट्यूट, मोनफोर्ट बोर्डिंग टाउन तथा विवेकानन्दा टेक्नीकल सेन्टर को भी पैसे दिए हैं। युनिवर्सिटी ऑफ दी साउथ पेसिफिक को 53.5 मिलियन डोलर दिया गया है। फीजी नेशनल युनिवर्सिटी को 43.3 मिलियन डोलर, युनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी को 2.8 मिलियन डोलर, नए स्थापित पेसिफिक पोलिटेक को एक मिलियन डोलर मिलेगा तथा संगम इन्स्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलोजी के

ग्रान्ट को एक लाख चौदह हजार डोलर से बढ़ाकर छः लाख चौदह हजार डोलर किया गया है।

प्रोफेसा प्रसाद ने कहा कि पिछले कुछ सालों से टेक्निकल शिक्षा को नज़रअंदाज किया गया है, कई पेशेवर लोग देश छोड़कर जा रहे हैं तथा सरकार इसमें पूजी लगाएगी और नए स्थापित पेसिफिक पोलिटेक जैसी अन्य

संस्थाओं के साथ मिलकर काम करेगी। स्कूलों पर मरम्मत करने के लिए उनचास (49) मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है जिनमें वनुआ लेवू के वो स्कूल भी शामिल हैं जिन्हें समुद्री आँधी यासा के कारण भारी नुकसान हुआ था। औस्ट्रेलियन सरकार ने इसके लिए तीस मिलियन डोलर की सहायता दी है।



कुछ छात्र स्कूल के एक समारोह में भाग लेते हुए

चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

सौशल पेन्शन में वृद्धि होगी



एक समारोह में उपस्थित समाज के कुछ बुजुर्ग जिन्होंने अपने समय में देश में भारी योगदान दिया था

चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

रोनल देव

जो लोग सत्तर साल से ज़्यादा उम्र के हैं तथा सौशल पेन्शन सिस्टम पर है के अलावन्स में पचीस प्रतिशत की वृद्धि की जाएगी तथा जो लोग पैसठ साल से उनहत्तर साल के बीच हैं के अलावन्स को पंद्रह प्रतिशत से बढ़ाया जाएगा। इसका मतलब है कि इस साल अगस्त से एक

महीने का अलावन्स सौ डोलर से बढ़ाकर एक सौ पचीस डोलर किया जाएगा और जो लोग 65 साल से 69 साल के बीच हैं के अलावन्स को एक सौ डोलर से बढ़ाकर एक सौ पंद्रह डोलर किया जाएगा। पहली अगस्त से जिन एक हजार पाँच सौ एफ एन पी एफ पेंशनर्स का पेंशन घटाया गया था को भी सरकार के सौशल पेंशन अलावन्स मिल सकता है जहाँ सत्तर साल से ज़्यादा

उम्र के लोगों को एक सौ पचीस डोलर तथा साठ से उनहत्तर साल के बीच लोगों को एक सौ पंद्रह डोलर मिलेगा। फीजी नेशनल प्रोविडन्ड फंड, सरकार के साथ मिलकर इन पेंशनर्स को सौशल पेन्शन स्कीम में शामिल करेगा तथा उन्हें एफ एन पी एफ के घटाए पेंशन के उपर से सौशल पेंशन भी मिलेगा।

सौशल पेंशन स्कीम के लिए बजट में

78.2 मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है, जिसमें 23.2 मिलियन डोलर की वृद्धि हुई है तथा इससे 54,200 बुजुर्गों की ज़रूरतों पर ध्यान दिया जाएगा। राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि वीमन, चिल्डरन तथा सौशल प्रोटेक्शन मंत्रालय के बजट को 52.5 मिलियन डोलर से बढ़ाया गया है।

बजट के बाद वाले सम्मेलन में नागरिकों की दिलचस्पी



डायलॉग फीजी ने बजट की घोषणा के बाद तानोआ प्लाज़ा होटल, सूवा में आयोजित सम्मेलन में आम नागरिकों को गठबंधन सरकार के बजट से पहले और बाद के उद्देश्यों के बारे में सूचित करने के लिए एक मंच प्रदान किया था।

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने इस सम्मेलन में अपना भाषण दिया और इस सम्मेलन में हिस्सा भी लिया जिनके साथ फायनेन्स मंत्रालय के पेमेन्ट सकेटरी श्री गाउन्डर, डायलॉग फीजी के एक्ज़ेक्टिव डायरेक्टर निलेश लाल, एफ एन यू के असोसिएट डीन डाक्टर आसाएली तुईवेन्गा, रिज़र्व बैंक ऑफ फीजी के गवर्नर आरिफ अली, अर्थ-शास्त्री डाक्टर चन्द्र दुलारे,

प्रोफेसर वदन नारसी तथा पैसिफिक कंटोसट्रोफी रिस्क इंश्योरन्स कम्पनी के पंकज सिंह शामिल थे। लोगों ने कई विषयों पर सवाल-जवाब किए जैसे कि टैल्स कर्ज़ को माफ करना जबकि तिरपन हज़ार (53,000) से ज़्यादा विद्यार्थी सरकार के कर्ज़दार हैं तथा कुछ सामानों पर वेट बढ़ाने वाले विषय को भी उठाया गया था।

आप हमारी आशा हैं -मंत्री शशी किरण



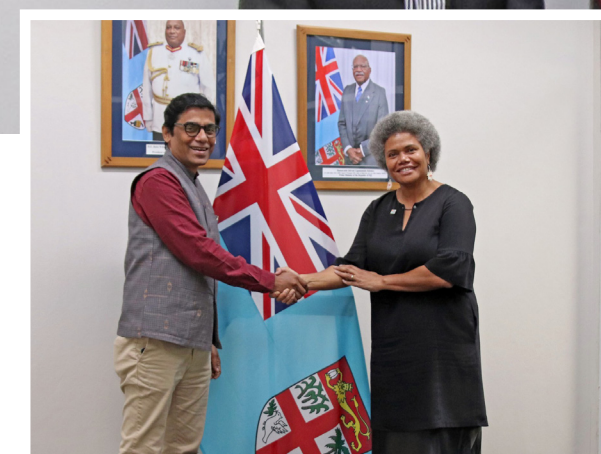
सहायक महिला मंत्री माननीय शशी किरण ने डडली हाई स्कूल के अपराध रोकने वाली पहल की तीसरे श्रेणी का विमोचन किया। यह एक ऐसा कार्यक्रम है जिसे फीजी पुलिस फोर्स के कार्टम स्टोपस विभाग के साथ मिलकर शुरू किया गया है। यह स्कोलास्टिक कार्टम स्टोपस कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य है स्कूल के छात्रों के नशीली दवाओं तथा अन्य पदार्थों के सेवन, मानसिक और शारीरिक शोषण के जोखिम और भागीदारी को संबोधित करना।

एफ एन यू ने नया सेटिफिकेट लेवल कोज़ का विमोचन किया



फीजी नेशनल यूनिवर्सिटी ने कोन्टेक्ट सेंटर संचालन पर एक नया तीसरे लेवल का सेटिफिकेट कोज़ का विमोचन किया है। एफ एन यू तथा औटसोर्स फीजी ने मिलकर यह सेटिफिकेशन कार्यक्रम तैयार किया है जिसके तहत विभिन्न विषयों को पढ़ाया जाएगा। इस कार्यक्रम का विमोचन करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा व्यवसाय, कौपरेटिव, एस एम ई तथा कोमुनिकईशन मंत्री माननीय मानोआ कमिकमिदा ने इस कार्यक्रम के महत्व पर प्रकाश डाला।

बजट के बाद वाले सम्मेलन में नागरिकों की दिलचस्पी



भारत सरकार, फीजी की सरकार के साथ मिलकर फीजी में एक नया सौ खाट वाला सूपा हृदय रोग विज्ञान अस्पताल तथा डायलीसीस सेंटर विकसित करने में फीजी की सहायता करेगा। इस साल मई में पापुआ निउ गिनी में तीसरा भारत-प्रशान्तीय द्वीपों के संमिलित सम्मेलन में भारत के प्रधान मंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने कुछ नए पहलुओं की घोषणा की थी जिनमें यह अस्पताल वाली योजना भी शामिल थी। फीजी को भारत की व्यापक सहायता में स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा,

अर्थ-व्यवस्था, व्यापार, कृषि, चीनी व्यवसाय, मानव संसाधन और जलवायु परिवर्तन के साथ विकास के हर प्रमुख पहलू को शामिल किया जाएगा। इस बारे में हालही सहायक विदेश मंत्री माननीय लेनोरा गेरिंगेरेत-बुआ तथा भारतीय राजदूत श्री पालानिस्वामी सुब्रमण्यम कार्थीजियन के बीच बातचित हुई। फीजी की सरकार तथा आम जनता की ओर से माननीय गेरिंगेरेतबुआ ने भारतीय सरकार को हालही किए गए वायदे तथा पिछले कई सालों से सहायता पहुँचाने के लिए धन्यवाद दिया।

फीजी रोड्स अथोरिटी को 387.6 मिलियन डोलर मिला

रोनल देव

फीजी रोड्स अथोरिटी को 387.6 मिलियन डोलर दिया गया है जबकि गठबंधन सरकार ने पब्लिक वर्क्स डिपार्टमेंट को फिर से स्थापित करने के लिए पाँच मिलियन डोलर निकाला है ताकि देश के ग्रामीण इलाकों में रास्तों की हालत में सुधार लाई जा सके। राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि वे रास्ते बनाने की योजना से लेकर निर्माण और मरम्मत करने के तरीकों में बदलाव लाएंगे। उनके अनुसार पिछले आठ सालों में एफ आर ए ने बिना किसी योजना और बिना सोचे समझे रास्तों पर तीन बिलियन डोलर से ज़्यादा खर्च किया है। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद के अनुसार इससे रास्ते, पुलों तथा अन्य संसाधनों की हालत काफी बिगड़ गई और आम जनता के पैसे बर्बाद हुए। उन्होंने

कहा कि कम पैसे में उन्हें ज़्यादा काम करने की ज़रूरत है। उप प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि उन्हें पैसे की बर्बादी रोकनी है क्योंकि देश में महँगे सड़कों की डिज़ाइन में काफी पैसे बर्बाद हुए हैं। मंत्री ने कहा कि एफ आर ए का नया बोर्ड सरकार के साथ मिलकर काम कर रहा है ताकि रास्तों के डिज़ाइन पर फिर से विचार करने के अलावा, रास्ते के कोन्ट्रैक्ट्स देने तथा कोन्ट्रैक्ट्स पर बारीकी से निगरानी रखी जा सके। उन्होंने कहा कि उन्हें और भी स्थानीय कोन्ट्रैक्टर्स को आकर्षित करने की ज़रूरत है। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि रास्तों के मरम्मत पर खास ध्यान दिया गया है जहाँ रास्तों के सुधारकार्य के लिए सौ मिलियन डोलर से ज़्यादा निकाला गया है, इमेजेन्सी कार्य तथा मरम्मतकार्य पूरी करने के लिए ब्यालिस मिलियन डोलर, साठ मिलियन डोलर रास्तों को रिसेफस करने पुलों वाली



फीजी रोड्स अथोरिटी द्वारा मरम्मत के बाद सड़क

चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

योजनाओं को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए 35.4 मिलियन डोलर, ग्रामीण इलाकों के रास्तों वाले कार्यक्रम के लिए अट्ठारह दशमलौ तीन मिलियन डोलर, क्वीन एलिज़ाबेथ ड्राईव वाले रास्ते पर मरम्मत के लिए तेरह दशमलौ दो मिलियन डोलर तथा यातायात के संसाधनों के लिए 82.2 मिलियन डोलर अलग किया गया है। इन योजनाओं के लिए

एशियन डिवेलोपमेंट बैंक ने सौ मिलियन अमरिकी डोलर तथा वर्ल्ड बैंक ने पचास मिलियन अमरिकी डोलर कर्ज़ दिया है। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि इसके अलावा पब्लिक वर्क्स, मिटिरोलोजिकल सर्विस तथा ट्रान्सपोर्ट मंत्रालय को 98.3 मिलियन डोलर दिया गया है।

सरकारी कर्मचारियों के वेतन के ढाँचे पर पुनः विचार



प्रधान मंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका कुछ सरकारी कर्मचारियों के साथ

चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

रोनल देव

गठबंधन की सरकार अगले छः से नौ महीनों के अन्दर सरकारी सेवा में वेतन के ढाँचे पर पुनः विचार करके सरकारी कर्मचारियों द्वारा देश की सेवा करने के काम के अनुरूप वेतन देगी। फायनेन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि अगले आर्थिक साल में वर्तमान के मिनिमम वर्डज रईट पर गौर किया जाएगा जबकि सरकार चाहती है कि उचित परामर्श के बाद कर्मचारियों को उचित वेतन मिले जो कि न्यायसंगत हो। उनके अनुसार वे कर्मचारियों के प्रतिनिधियों के साथ मिलकर काम कर रहे हैं ताकि सरकारी कर्मचारियों के वेतन तथा अन्य लाभ पर फिर से विचार

किया जा सके। 'वे जानते हैं कि पिछले पाँच सालों से ऐसा नहीं किया गया है तथा कड़ी मेहनत करने वाले सरकारी कर्मचारी, अध्यापक, पुलिस तथा स्वास्थ्य अधिकारियों को कोई वेतन वृद्धि नहीं मिली है।' जैसा कि गठबंधन सरकार ने वायदा किया था, त्रिपक्षीय व्यवस्था फिर से शुरू की गई है जिसके प्रयोग से ध्यान में रखा जाएगा कि सरकार और मज़दूर मालिकों के बीच बातचीत से सभी कर्मचारियों के अधिकारों का सम्मान हो। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि सरकार, देश में सबसे बड़ा मज़दूर मालिक है जो पैतीस हज़ार से ज़्यादा सरकारी कर्मचारियों को नौकरी देती है तथा वो ध्यान में रख रही है कि सभी सरकारी कर्मचारियों की भलाई पर गौर किया जाए।

मंत्रियों का अलावन्स घटाया जाएगा



संसदीय बैठक के दौरान प्रधान मंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका अन्य मंत्रियों के साथ चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

रोनल देव

सरकारी मंत्रियों का वेतन बीस प्रतिशत से घटाने के अलावा मंत्रियों के विदेश सफर करने के अलावन्स में भारी कटौती करने की घोषणा की गई है। राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद ने प्रकाश डाला कि हर एक डोलर का खर्च सोच समझ कर किया जाएगा। उन्होंने कहा कि उदाहरण के तौर पर वे मंत्रियों के खर्च कम करके इसकी शुरुआत कर रहे हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि वे खुद इसकी शुरुआत करके पैसे की बर्बादी तथा बेवजह खर्च को कम कर

रहे हैं। उन्होंने आगे कहा कि गठबंधन सरकार के सभी मंत्री इस कटौती के पक्ष में हैं जिसमें प्रधान मंत्री खुद शामिल हैं। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि वर्तमान का 250 प्रतिशत पे डियम को घटाकर एक सौ प्रतिशत किया जाएगा। उनके अनुसार मंत्रियों का टोप अप दो सौ प्रतिशत से घटाकर पचास प्रतिशत किया जाएगा। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि सहायक मंत्रियों का टोप अप एक सौ प्रतिशत से घटाकर पचीस प्रतिशत किया जाएगा। इन प्रमुख कटौतियों के अलावा, वे वर्तमान में प्रदान किए गए सभी इंडेन्टल अलावन्स को हटा दिया जाएगा।

पानी सप्लाई में सुधार होने की उम्मीद

रोनल देव

फायनेन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसा बिमान प्रसाद का कहना है कि रेवा रिवा विरिया पानी वाली योजना में भारी पुँजी लगाई गई है जिसे पूरा होने से पानी सप्लाई में भारी सुधार होगा। यह योजना इसी महीने के अंत तक पूरी होने की आशा है जबकि इसी साल अक्टूबर में इसका उद्घाटन पूरी तरह होने की उम्मीद है। राष्ट्रीय बजट की घोषणा करते हुए प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि सरकार ने यह योजना पूरी करने के लिए 51.2 मिलियन डॉलर अलग किया है जबकि इस योजना का कुल खर्च लगभग चार सौ मिलियन डॉलर है। इनवेस्टमन्ट बैंक तथा ग्रीन क्लाइमेट फंड ने इस योजना के लिए इक्कीस मिलियन अमरिकी डॉलर दिया है। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि संसाधनों पर अच्छी तरह से मरम्मत न करने की वजह से रेज़ावो से लोगों के घरों तक सैतालिस प्रतिशत साफ पानी, पाईप के जगह-जगह

फटे रहने की वजह से बरबाद हो जाते हैं जिससे फीजी के अधिकांश इलाकों में पानी वाली समस्या है लेकिन पिछले कुछ महीनों में इसमें कुछ सुधार किया गया है जिससे पानी सप्लाई में बाधाएँ कुछ कम हुई हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि वोटा अथोरिटी ओफ फीजी के नए बोर्ड ने इसमें सुधार लाने के लिए अपना काम शुरू कर दिया है। उप प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि इस साल उन्होंने पानी वाले क्षेत्र में बजट बढ़ाकर 250.8 मिलियन डॉलर किया है जिसमें लगभग साठ मिलियन डॉलर की वृद्धि की गई है। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि पानी के स्रोत में सुधार लाने तथा प्राकृतिक विपत्तियों का सामना करने वाले संसाधन बनाने के लिए 53.9 मिलियन डॉलर अलग किया गया है। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि उन्होंने ग्रामीण इलाकों तक पानी की सप्लाई सुधारने के लिए लगभग आठ मिलियन डॉलर निकाला है जबकि पिछले कुछ दिनों से इसपर ध्यान नहीं दिया गया



वोटा अथोरिटी ओफ फीजी का एक कर्मचारी पानी वाले पाईप पर काम करते हुए

चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

था। उनके अनुसार पानी के क्षेत्र की चुनौतियों को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह कहा जा सकता है कि चालिस साल से ज़्यादा पुराने पाईप सिस्टम को बदलने में समय के अलावा पाँच सौ मिलियन डॉलर से ज़्यादा काबखर्च बैठ सकता है जबकि ज़मीन के नीचे पानी रिस रहा है। वोटा अथोरिटी ओफ फीजी में भारी सुधार लाने के लिए सरकार, अईशयन डिवेलोपमन्ट बैंक के साथ मिलकर काम कर रही है।

सरकार घास मारने वाली दवा तथा मसाला प्रदान करेगी



चीनी सरकार ने फीजी के किसानों को खेतों में छोड़ने के लिए मसाला दान किया

चित्र : प्रदान किया गया

फायनेन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद का कहना है कि पहली बार सरकार, गन्ने के अलावा अन्य फसल जैसे कि धान, अदरक, डालो तथा कसेरा के खेतों के लिए घास मारने वाली दवा तथा मसाला प्रदान करेगी। इन उत्पादनों की खपत बढ़ाने के लिए एक मिलियन डॉलर अलग किया गया है। उन्होंने कहा कि वे पूरे डयरी व्यवसाय पर पुनः विचार करेंगे जबकि पिछली सरकार ने व्यवसाय को बुरी हालत में छोड़ा है जो विनाश की राह पर है। इसलिए फीजी कौपरेटिव डयरी कम्पनी लिमिटेड तथा डयरी कार्यक्रम के लिए पाँच मिलियन डॉलर निकाला गया है। प्रोफेसर प्रसाद ने कहा कि खाद्य सुरक्षा, आमदनी कमाने, रोज़गार, ग्रामीण विकास और आर्थिक परिवर्तन में कृषि क्षेत्र मुख्य भूमिका निभाता है इसलिए कृषि तथा वोटावैस मंत्रालय को 95.2 मिलियन डॉलर अलग किया गया है। उन्होंने कहा

कि इसमें 37.3 मिलियन डॉलर की भारी वृद्धि हुई है। उनके अनुसार लगभग चौदह मिलियन डॉलर, अग्रीकल्चर मार्केटिंग अथोरिटी, ज़मीन के बेहतर उपयोग वाली कमिटी और व्यवसायिक कृषि विकास के लिए निकाला गया है। कृषि उत्पादनों को बढ़ाने के लिए फसलों तथा पशुपालन के शोध के लिए 47.5 मिलियन डॉलर निकाला गया है। फसल निकालने वाले रास्ते, ट्रैक्टर का रास्ता तथा वर्तमान के कृषि अफ़्सरों तथा कोटस के लिए 5.3 मिलियन डॉलर अलग किया गया है। उप प्रधान मंत्री ने आगे कहा कि वोटावैस विभाग को इस बजट में बाईस मिलियन डॉलर से ज़्यादा दिया गया है ताकि देश भर में नालों के सिस्टम को सुधारा जाए जो अभी बहुत ही बुरी स्थिति में हैं क्योंकि पिछले कई सालों से इसपर कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया गया है। मुख्य नदियों की ड्रेजिंग करने, समुद्री तट को भसकने से बचाने तथा अन्य कार्य के लिए सोलह मिलियन डॉलर निकाला गया है।

नगरपालिका चुनाव अगले साल होंगे



सूवा सिटी काउन्सल का दफ़्तर

चित्र: शीनल चरण

रोनल देव

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री प्रोफेसर बिमान प्रसाद का कहना है कि लौकल गवमन्ट मंत्रालय अगले साल टाउन तथा सिटी काउन्सल चुनाव करने पर ध्यान दे रहा है। लौकल गवमन्ट मंत्रालय को 29.3 मिलियन डॉलर दिया गया है। नए सावूसावू मार्केट के लिए 3.9 मिलियन डॉलर, नया नकासी मार्केट के लिए एक मिलियन डॉलर, ड्रेकेती मिनी मार्केट बनाने की तैयारी के लिए एक लाख डॉलर, लेवूका मार्केट पूरा करने के लिए 1.3 मिलियन डॉलर, गोविन्द पार्क पूरा करने के लिए 3.5 मिलियन डॉलर तथा लौतोका स्वीमिंग पुल

पूरा करने के लिए 4.6 मिलियन डॉलर अलग किया गया है। फायनेन्स मंत्री ने कहा कि गोविन्द पार्क तथा लौतोका स्वीमिंग पुल उचित ढंग से नहीं बनाई गई थी। उनके अनुसार सरकार के पास इन योजनाओं को पूरा करने के लिए अतिरिक्त पैसे अलग करने के सिवा और कोई रास्ता नहीं है जबकि खर्च काफी बढ़ गया है। उप प्रधान मंत्री ने कहा कि वे इस बात को ध्यान में रखेंगे कि यह योजनाएँ अगले साल तक पूरी हो जाएं तथा फायनेन्स मंत्रालय गौर करेगा कि इन योजनाओं को कैसे कार्यरूप दिया गया था, कितने पैसे लगे तथा इन योजनाओं के सफल न होने के कारण क्या थे।

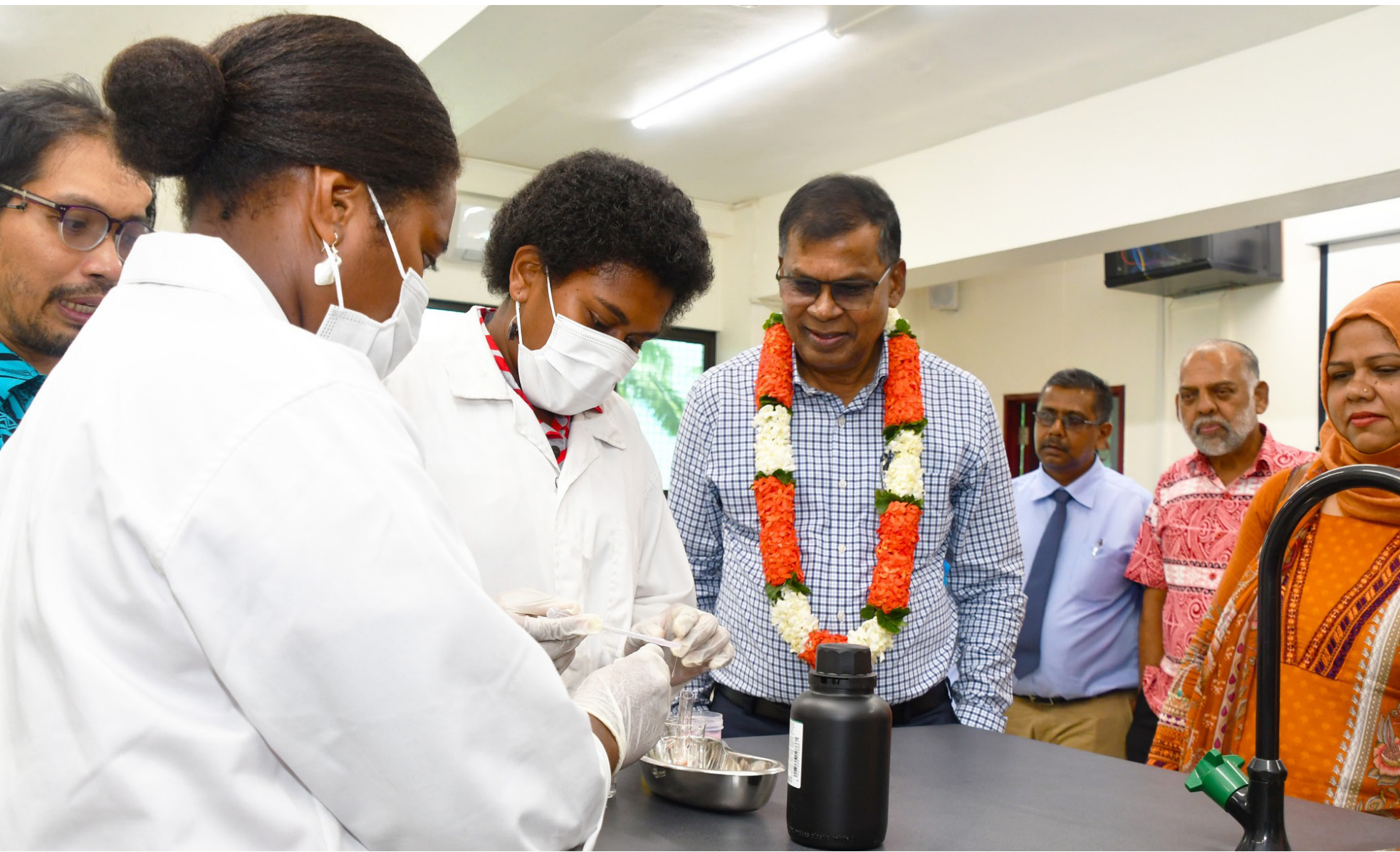
फ़ीजी दर्पण

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उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद युनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी के छात्रों के एक शोध पर नज़र डालते हुए

चित्र: सूचना मंत्रालय

यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी का बा कैम्पस

रोनल देव

उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने हाल में यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी के नए बा कैम्पस का उद्घाटन किया है। अपने भाषण में उप प्रधान मंत्री ने शिक्षा को आगे लेजाने में यूनिवर्सिटी के प्रयासों की सराहना की और इस बात पर प्रकाश डाला कि नया कैम्पस समाज में युवकों की शिक्षा तथा करियर को आकार देने में ज़रूर योगदान देगा। यह नया कैम्पस वास्तव में सरकार की इस देश की शिक्षा प्रणाली, विशेष रूप से टेशरी शिक्षा प्रणाली के विकास के लिए मिलकर काम करने और इस देश में विकास के लिए एक अच्छी नींव रखने की प्रतिबद्धता को प्रदर्शित करता है। मंत्री ने जोर दिया है कि सरकार शिक्षा की स्वतंत्रता को मान्यता देती है और पूरे फीजी में यूनिवर्सिटीज़ के लिए आर्थिक सहायता को कभी नहीं रोकेंगी।

‘जैसा हमने बजट में घोषणा की है, हमने यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी को ज़्यादा पैसे दिए हैं जबकि एडुकेशन कमिशन ने कम पैसे देने की सिफारिश की थी। हम इस बात को ध्यान में रखना चाहते हैं कि एक सरकार होने के नाते हम यूनिवर्सिटी के मेनेजमेंट, कर्मचारियों तथा छात्रों के साथ मिलकर काम करना चाहते हैं ताकि ध्यान में रखा जाए कि यूनिवर्सिटी को सही वातावरण मिलने के साथ-साथ सही संसाधनों से सहायता की जाए तथा पाठ्यक्रम, कार्यक्रम और उसकी गतिविधियों को स्वतंत्र और आज़ादी से काम करने की स्वतंत्रता दी जाए। इस नए कैम्पस में उन विद्यार्थियों के लिए लेक्चर का एक कमरा, लेब, आए टी लेब्स, एक लाइब्रेरी भी रहेगी जो टेशरी स्तर पर बेचला ऑफ मेडिकल हेल्थ साइन्स की पढ़ाई करना चाहते हैं।’



उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद तथा रोज़गार मंत्री माननीय अग्नी देव सिंह के अलावा यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी के अधिकारी युनी फीजी के बा कैम्पस के उद्घाटन समारोह के दौरान

चित्र: सूचना मंत्रालय