

PM Rabuka meets with His Majesty King Charles III: Reaffirms Fiji-UK relations



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Minister urges farmers to use assistance to maximise production



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Dairy industry acknowledges Government assistance



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PM Rabuka pays respects to fallen heroes in the United Kingdom



Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, with Mrs Rabuka, Senior Chaplain Reverend Deiniol Morgan and Fijians serving in the British Army following a wreath laying ceremony at the Royal Military Chapel in Wellington Barracks, London. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

PRIME Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, and his delegation laid a wreath at the Royal Military Chapel in Wellington Barracks, London last week to honour the lives of those soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Among the names engraved on the chapel wall was the late Fijian-born British Army, Trooper Ratu Sakeasi Babakobau.

In a solemn ceremony, the PM Rabuka paid respects, commemorating the gallant efforts and valour of UK's

unsung heroes and those across the globe.

PM Rabuka was received by Reverend Deiniol Morgan, the Senior Chaplain, who provided a guided tour of the church and shared its history to the delegation.

A group of Fijians serving in the British Army also received the delegation.

Within the church walls, the names of theaters of war and inscriptions are displayed, describing the events which claimed the lives of many British Army personnel.

Girmit, triumph against insurmountable odds

By PRASHILA DEVI

“THE Indentured Labourer System stands as a dark reminder of a painful past endured by generations. Yet, from the depths of adversity, emerged a testament to the human spirit's triumph

against insurmountable odds.”

Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka, in his Girmit Day message, paid homage to the resilience of the 60,000 girmitiyas who were brought to Fiji.

“Their arrival, marked by the anchoring of the Leonidas near Levuka Harbour 145 years ago, symbolises a chapter of our history wrought with hardship and

struggle,” PM Rabuka said.

“As we commemorate Girmit Day under the theme “Journey of Girmit Descendants in Building a New Fiji” let us not forget the backbreaking labour and immeasurable sacrifices endured to pave the way for future generations.”

The Head of Government acknowledged that their journey, marked by unity

in the face of adversity, teaches the importance of standing together as one people, one nation.

PM Rabuka said as the nation celebrates their contribution, the wounds of the past must also be confronted and to that end, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission stands as a testament to the commitment to healing, providing a platform for truth-telling and reconciliation.

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Girmit, triumph against insurmountable odds



Minister for Agriculture and Waterways Vatimi Rayalu, DPM Biman Prasad and Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, Charan Jeath Singh.
Photo: MEREANI GONEDUA

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“To our diaspora, including descendants of Girmityas, I extend an invitation to return to the land of your ancestors. Our new immigration exemption policy ensures a warm welcome, allowing you to reconnect with your roots without barriers,” he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, in opening the national celebrations last week, reminded the Indo-Fijians, whether abroad or still in Fiji, of their patriotic duty “to our motherland, land of our birth to ensure that our beloved nation is a beacon of hope and land of opportunity”.

“The Coalition Government of Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka has recognised this invaluable contribution of the girmitya and

their descendants by declaring Girmit Day as a public holiday,” he said.

DPM Prasad said Girmit Day was a celebration of “our forefathers’ determination to triumph over slavery or servitude and make Fiji their new home”.

“And they succeeded because of their unshakable principles of dignity, equality, justice and self-respect.”

He added that the girmityas did not receive nor ever demanded any assistance from the colonial government for education, social security, pension, transport assistance or grants to increase sugarcane production.

“But they passed on knowledge and strength to their children and through them to future generations on how and when to peacefully seek solutions to the above issues,” DPM Prasad added.

Fiji acknowledges Commonwealth’s ongoing support towards Fiji’s development plans



Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka with the Secretary General (SG) of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Patricia Scotland at Marlborough House in London recently. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

THE Commonwealth has affirmed unwavering commitment and support for Fiji’s climate action strategies on adaptation, mitigation, and resilience building.

This was articulated by the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka in a bilateral meeting with the Secretary General (SG) of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Patricia Scotland at Marlborough House in London today, Thursday May 9, 2023.

The meeting focused on cooperation opportunities in the build-up to the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2024 to be held Samoa this October.

PM Rabuka stated that the Government, through the Great Council of Chiefs, will extend an invitation to His Majesty King Charles III to visit Fiji while he is in the Pacific region for CHOGM24.

At CHOGM 2024, the Pacific anticipates adoption of the Commonwealth Ocean Declaration, a strategy that will solidify our collective commitment to ocean conservation and align with Sustainable Development Goal 14.

The Declaration is expected to catalyse international cooperation and resource mobilisation, for sustainability and resilience of oceans for future generations, and reinforcing the role of oceans in our climate resilience strategies and sustainable development goals.

PM Rabuka said the Commonwealth, at 75, has an extensive programme of action and initiatives ranging from tackling ocean-related challenges and sustainable ocean development, addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, climate finance access hub, debt management and connectivity, amongst others.

The work of the Commonwealth Secretariat in the Pacific is tailored to respond to the unique needs of its small island developing states, and its engagements support the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

On ocean conservation, PM Rabuka highlighted that Fiji is proud to lead the Ocean and Climate Change Action Group under the Commonwealth Blue Charter, reflecting our commitment to addressing critical oceanic challenges such as climate change, marine pollution, and unsustainable fishing practices.

At the same time, he called for the implementation of COP28 commitments in anticipation of COP29 to be held in Azerbaijan later this year.

Fiji also looks forward to taking advantage of the Commonwealth’s Artificial Intelligence Consortium to support digital upskilling of young people and bridge the digital divide for small states.

(Source: Office of the Prime Minister)

PM Rabuka meets with His Majesty King Charles III: Reaffirms Fiji-UK relations

PRIME Minister Sitiveni Rabuka met with His Majesty King Charles III at Buckingham Palace in London on 7th May 2024.

The historic meeting reaffirmed the strong and enduring relationship between Fiji and the United Kingdom (UK).

In his royal audience with His Majesty King Charles III, Prime Minister Rabuka conveyed the People’s Coalition Government and the people of Fiji’s gratitude for the opportunity to meet with the King, acknowledging the historical links between Fiji and the UK.

PM Rabuka also took the opportunity to formally apologise to King Charles III for his actions and the events of 1987, reaffirming Fiji’s commitment to strengthening our bilateral ties.

He also reflected on his visit to Buckingham Palace in 1998 when he presented his traditional apology or Matanigasau to her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the Second for the events of 1987 and in declaring Fiji a Republic.

Fiji has a deep and longstanding connection to the British Crown which

was demonstrated through a record of military service where generations of Fijians have served and fought alongside the British, particularly in the Second World War, and later in Malaya, Borneo, Oman, Iraq and Afghanistan.

For this, PM Rabuka expressed the deep regard and fondness of the people of Fiji for the Crown and the Royal Family, adding that more than 20,000 of our people call Britain home since the recruitment of Commonwealth citizens to the British Army in the 1960s and since 1997.

As a proud Commonwealth member, Fiji actively contributes to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Agenda.

With the Commonwealth’s 75th anniversary approaching, PM Rabuka said that he looks forward to welcoming Commonwealth leaders to the region for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Samoa.

In his concluding remarks, Prime Minister Rabuka conveyed the best wishes, love and prayers of the people of Fiji for His Majesty, King Charles III’s recovery to full health and vitality.



Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka met with His Majesty King Charles III at Buckingham Palace in London recently. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

Centenarian girmit descendent reflects on younger days

By AZARIA FAREEN

THINKING of someone who has lived to tell a tale of the century would make you envision someone frail and dependent but this is not so for 109-year-old Gangamma. Ms Gangamma resides in Meigunyah Sector in Nadi and relayed that her parents came to Fiji from India during the Girmit era and they used to work in Koronubu, Ba. “My parents were already married when they decided to make the long journey to Fiji to start a better life,” she relayed. “I was one of the younger siblings and had two brothers and two sisters who have all passed away,” she said. The descendant of a Girmitya relayed that after marriage she had two daughters and four sons but two of her children have passed on. “At my age, I am not able to do most things I used to without assistance from my grandchildren but I am able to walk by myself with a mobility walker and also able to bathe myself with a little assistance from my grandchildren,” she added. She said that thankfully she has not been seriously ill and doesn’t have any medical problems, however, due to her old age she does get weakness in her body. “I am able to cook different kinds of food which I have continued to eat since my childhood days but it is now that I am only eating and resting in comparison to the Girmit days,” she highlighted.

“Back then, my parents used to live in harmony with people of other religions and other families without any fight. There was a lot of love shared with everyone but a lot has changed now. Now we are having robberies and theft with violence.” “There were no fights between anyone in the Girmit days because people genuinely supported and looked out for each other,” she said. “I used to work with my parents on the farm and we used to start very early in the morning - by 4am we would start our day with prayers first,” she fondly recalled. “I was 10-years-old then and we used to work very hard and also prepared food for everyone. We didn’t differentiate anyone like how people are doing now.” “Through our hard labour, mother earth has given us a lot of yield from planting rice and peanuts with vegetables,” she added. Ms Gangamma reflected that her parents must have gone through a lot of hardships and challenges but she was not really aware of the details as she was very young to understand then. “I do remember my parents praying with others and also doing drama performances in front of the English men,” she recollected. “Over the years I have seen a lot of changes in the community and the country. There are a lot of temples built now and the way people dress and live keeps changing by the day.” “We also didn’t have any sort of education then as there was no school,” Ms

Gangamma added. She said that she has travelled to Suva twice to attend a Girmit celebration which she is recognised for and has travelled twice to Australia. In recollecting fond memories of her

parents from a different era, she sang a short song in the Telugu language which she is fluent in. Ms Gangamma has 31 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren and five great-great grandchildren.



Ms Gangamma, 109, a first generation girmitya descendant lives with her family in Meigunyah Sector in Nadi. Photo: PRASHANT SINGH

Girmit descendent remembers grandfather

By AZARIA FAREEN

“IWOULD like to thank the Fiji Government for commemorating my ancestors who have contributed immensely towards the building of this nation.” This was proudly relayed by a second generation girmitya descendent, Kumaran, 83, who resides in Natabua in Lautoka. “I have seen a lot of things, especially in how we used to work so hard on the farm but I am now weak,” Mr Kumaran said. “Both my paternal and maternal grandparents were from India. My maternal grandfather lived in Vunitivi in Tavua where I was born.” “It is a mountainous area which is not easy to pass as you have to walk about four miles from the bottom of the road to reach my grandfather’s house,” he added. Mr Kumaran said that this used to be an adventure as he used to come across a lot of wild boars and he used to hide behind big rocks once he would sight one and that’s how he used to reach his grandfather’s house. “When I was 25-years-old, I remember taking my wife to my grandfather’s place when he was 100-years-old to make his beard,” he said. “I remember that he used to smoke tobacco and walk around and sometimes carry me on his shoulders when I was very small.” “He passed away when he reached 125-years of age and my grandmother passed away when I was born,” he added. He highlighted that he did not have any documents when he was born and at that time no one used to ask for birth certificates like now. “I studied at the Natabua Primary School at the old peoples home and went up to class

6 and I left my studies to start farming as my father said that if you continue to study we would lose our farm,” Mr Kumaran said. “I started farming full time and my dad used to teach me how to plant wheat, plough and how to use fertiliser and I would follow his ways.” “When I was about nine years of age, I accompanied my father to build our house and the first thing I learned was how to read the ruler through measurements,” he added. In recalling fond memories, Mr Kumaran said that he was very close to his maternal grandfather as he used to take him around everywhere. “We used to go fishing and there used to be fish and eels in abundance but there’s none now,” he said. “He taught me how to look after all the pets and then I started farming with my father and then later I became a carpenter from being a labourer.” “I used to do sugarcane and vegetable farming, sometimes cutting up to 417 tonnes of cane while my neighbour cut 416 tonnes. We can’t do any of that now as there are bushes and creepers on the land,” he added. Mr Kumaran had five brothers and two sisters but sadly all of them have passed on. “We used to live in so much harmony then. I had two daughters and two sons but one son and daughter have also passed away,” he said. “I was part of making the Stinson Building as a leading hand and I worked at the Rakiraki Mill and became the foreman and my last job was in Natadola.” “I have retired now but I feel healthy and fine while I am also able to cook and walk on my own with a walking stick,” Mr Kumaran said proudly.



83-year-old Mr Kumaran at his residence. Photo: PRASHANT SINGH

145th Girmit Commemoration in the Northern Division

By JOSIA RALAGO

“GIRMIT serves as an inspiration for many of us as it teaches us to work hard and to never allow your dignity be robbed by anyone, irrespective of the enormity of the situation.”

These were the words of the Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development, Jovesa Vocea, while delivering his address at the 145th Girmit commemoration for the Northern Division at Subrail Park last week.

“Girmit represents the ancestral journey for many Fijians of Indian descendants as it connects them to their forefathers who endured indentured labour,” Asst. Minister Vocea said.

“Understanding Girmit history is crucial for Girmit descendants in comprehending their roots and the experiences of their ancestors.

“The experiences of Girmityas highlighted their resilience in the face of adversity and their determination to overcome exploitation and injustice.”

Asst. Minister Vocea said that for descendants, the era symbolises the struggles of their ancestors for dignity, rights and equality, inspiring them to advocate for social injustice and human rights.

“The Girmityas have contributed a lot to the development of this nation,” he said.

“We all know that Fiji is regarded as one of the developed countries amongst the Pacific Island Countries because we have organised infrastructure, proper facilities



Women from the Labasa Nari Sabha performing a skit during the celebration at the Subrail Park in Labasa. Photo: JOSIA RALAGO

and many industries which employs a lot of people.

Hundreds of people turned up to the event themed “Journey of Girmit Descendants in Building a New Fiji”, which included traditional Indian skits, dances and song.

“This is largely attributed to the hardworking descendants of the Girmityas who have helped in this endeavour.”

Girmitiya descendants seek vanua blessings

By MEREANI GONEDUA

IT was a day filled with mixed emotions as Girmit descendants in the Western division thanked the chiefs in the Ba Province on behalf of their ancestors for willingly giving their land to farm when they arrived from India.

A first of its kind, the traditional ceremony was also a way to seek the blessings of the vanua for all Girmitiya in the country and to seek forgiveness for any hurt they may have caused.

Tui Nawaka, Ratu Joeli Bulu highlighted that this was a first of its kind in the history of Fiji for Girmityas to present such a solemn act towards the Chiefs in the Ba Province.

“Our ancestors gave their land willingly out of the goodness of their heart because they knew that it would benefit the country in the long run.

“This is history in the making that for the first time our Girmit brothers and sisters are presenting a traditional thank you ceremony to the Ba chiefs and seeking the blessings of the vanua.”

Ratu Joeli acknowledged the organisers for coming up with such an idea to present their ‘vakavinavinaka’ (thanksgiving).

Spokesman for the Turaga Na Tui Naviti, Sikeli Mulase, during the ceremony acknowledged the presentation made to the vanua and on behalf of the chiefs emphasised the importance of unity.

Meanwhile, Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, Charan Jeath Singh, highlighted that Girmitiya Commemoration has a lot of significance.

“It is the time to remember and commemorate the sufferings that our forefathers went through, a time to reflect on the past, and ensuring that their struggles and sacrifices are not forgotten,” Minister Singh said.

“It is more a collection of memories for some and for others on the other hand, Girmit commemoration is a time to move on from the past and think of the future.

“For them, Girmit is part of their lives and they will keep it a moment in history, and march on to achieve greater heights and make a name for them, their family members and the beloved nation, Fiji.”

Present at the ceremony were Taukei Navo Ratu Meli Saukuru, Tui Nawaka Ratu Joeli Bulu, Taukei Vidilo Ratu Wiliame Bouwalu and the Matanivanu nodra na Turaga na Tui Naviti, Sikeli Mulase.

Head of State acknowledges Girmitiya contribution



President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere and Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, Charan Jeath Singh, with the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways. Photo: MEREANI GONEDUA

By MEREANI GONEDUA

THE President, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, has acknowledged the Girmityas for choosing Fiji as their home.

“We reflect and cherish the impactful contribution that the descendants of Girmityas have had and continue to demonstrate in improving our socio-economic standards and shaping our nation’s economy,” President Katonivere said.

The Head of State was at the final day of the 145th Girmit commemoration in Lautoka and paid tribute to the Girmityas posterity that took the baton from them to make Fiji a prosperous nation and remembered their sacrifices, struggles and contribution in building a new Fiji.

“The Girmityas have played a crucial role in Fiji’s economy, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, commerce, and small-scale entrepreneurship. They supplied much of the hard labour in cane fields, building roads and laying the foundations of many of the settlements and villages that we live in today.”

“Many of this Girmityas are successful

business owners, farmers, professionals, and skilled workers, contributing to the country’s economic prosperity and development. Commerce and education were their cornerstone,” he said.

“This has also given Fiji a unique strength in terms of its economy in the Pacific Region. We all have benefitted and will continue to benefit through their hard work in these areas.”

However, President Katonivere said one of their greatest legacies was borne from the value they placed in education, which has been the pillar for change in the societies and invested into setting up the schools and education system in Fiji to build the knowledge based, skills, abilities and institutions of success and progress.

“Therefore, the legacy of the indenture system in Fiji is inspirational and profound. One of the significant changes was that Fiji also became a multi-racial country.”

This event was a culmination of three-day programme organised to mark Girmit Day including an event held in the Northern Division.



Traditional ‘vakavinavinaka’ (thanksgiving) ceremony being presented to the Chiefs at the Girmit Centre in Lautoka. Photo: MEREANI GONEDUA

No avoiding the hard-yards on the road to success



90 year old Yasoda Ram scraping coconuts outside her home in Labasa. **Photo JOSAIA RALAGO**

By JOSAIA RALAGO

“THERE is no avoiding the hard-yards if you want to be successful, one has to put in the effort if they want to taste fruit of their labour.”

These were the sentiments shared by 90-year-old Yasoda Ram, a first generation

Girmitiya descendant in Labasa, when asked to describe a key lesson she learnt from her father, Ram Adin.

Ms Ram said her father had arrived in one of the last lots of indentured labourers to arrive into the country, prior to its end in 1919.

Even though her father hardly spoke about the condition of his trip over to

Fiji, she remembered the lessons that was valued by her father – which were hard-work and achieving academic excellence.

“To earn an honest wage through hard-work was a value instilled in me as a young girl by my father,” the mother of seven recalled.

“To this day, I still get up in the morning, iron my son’s uniform and scrape coconuts for the oil that I sell to the nearby village.”

“While I might not have gone far academically, my children and grandchildren have gone on to complete tertiary education, to become doctors, teachers, electricians, and others who have joined other fields.”

Ms Ram said she had always stressed the importance of their roots and their culture to her children and grandchildren.

“Our roots are important as it helps us to identify who we are, and as a senior member of community I would like to urge our children to work-hard and never forget the teachings and sacrifices of our elders made so we could be where we are today,” she said.

Ms Ram said she was grateful to the Government for allowing a day in which the Girmitiya could be remembered for their resilience and the contribution they have made in building Fiji.

She was part of the Girmit Day celebrations held at Subrail Park in Labasa which was officiated by the Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development, Disaster Management, Jovesa Vocea.



90 year old Yashoda Ram (seated) after receiving her medal from the Assistant Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Jovesa Vocea in Labasa during the 145th Girmit celebration recently. **Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO**

Listen to your parents: girmit descendant

By AZARIA FAREEN

“I AM excited to have been told to attend the Girmit day celebrations for being a descendant of a girmitiya.”

This was relayed by Shiu Narayan, 80, who hails from Wairebatia in Lautoka, as he applauded the Government for providing everyone with a public holiday to commemorate Girmit Day.

“My grandparents travelled to Fiji from Andhra Pradesh in India and lived in Sabeto, Nadi where they worked under the Girmit system and where my father was born,” Mr Narayan explained.

“They moved to Field 40 in Lautoka where I was born and my grandfather passed away at the age of 115-years while my grandmother passed away at 95-years of age.”

“Later we moved to Natabua where I was enrolled at Natabua Primary School from class 1 to 8 then we moved to Wairebatia in Lautoka in the year 1958,” he added.

Mr Narayan said that he used to be quite small when his parents used to walk about seven-kilometres from Field 40 with his grandmother to work at Wairebatia, in Lautoka.

“I know from descendants of the Girmitiyas that our forefathers used to have a very tough life and have gone through so many challenges,” he said.

“My grandparents relayed that the Columber, field officers and government workers used to behave very badly with the

Girmitiyas.”

“Their living conditions were not good and they used to take their children to the farm as they worked and also get hit by the Columber,” he added.

He revealed that his grandparents were single when they left India and met on the boat. They worked together on the farm and then got married.

“They used to tell us stories of India in why and how they travelled from India to Fiji, the challenges they faced, how they endured the long journey and the duration it took them to get here,” Mr Narayan said.

“I recall my grandmother used to have a lot of mohar around her neck and it got distributed between the ladies in the family and there used to be some money from back then as well.”

“My grandfather used to be very healthy and he comes from a farming background. They showed me various farming tools they used to use on the farm which we don’t get to see anymore and hardly anyone would see a tractor on a farm,” he added.

Mr Narayan said that he recalls being in class three and used to listen to his grandparents talk in their mother tongue which he grew up listening to.

“I have visited India and my brother has actually visited our families in Andhra Pradesh who do grape farming for a living,” he revealed.

“There are no elders alive in the family and only the grandchildren live there so it was quite difficult to make them understand our relation as they only speak in Telugu



Mr Shiu Narayan from Wairebatia in Lautoka relays stories of his grandparents who were girmitiyas. **Photo: PRASHANT SINGH**

language.”

“There is a place called Chittoor jhilla where my grandparents are from but they did not know each other then,” he added.

Mr Narayan said that his dad had one brother and two sisters and all of them have passed at an old age while he had four children and two of them have passed away.

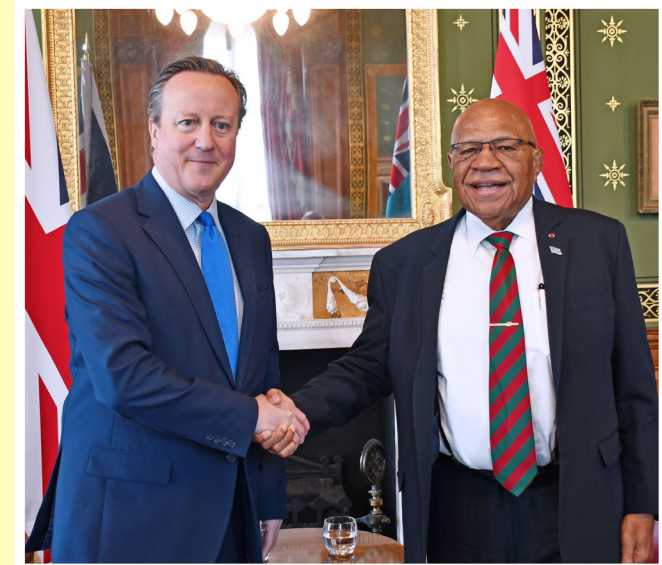
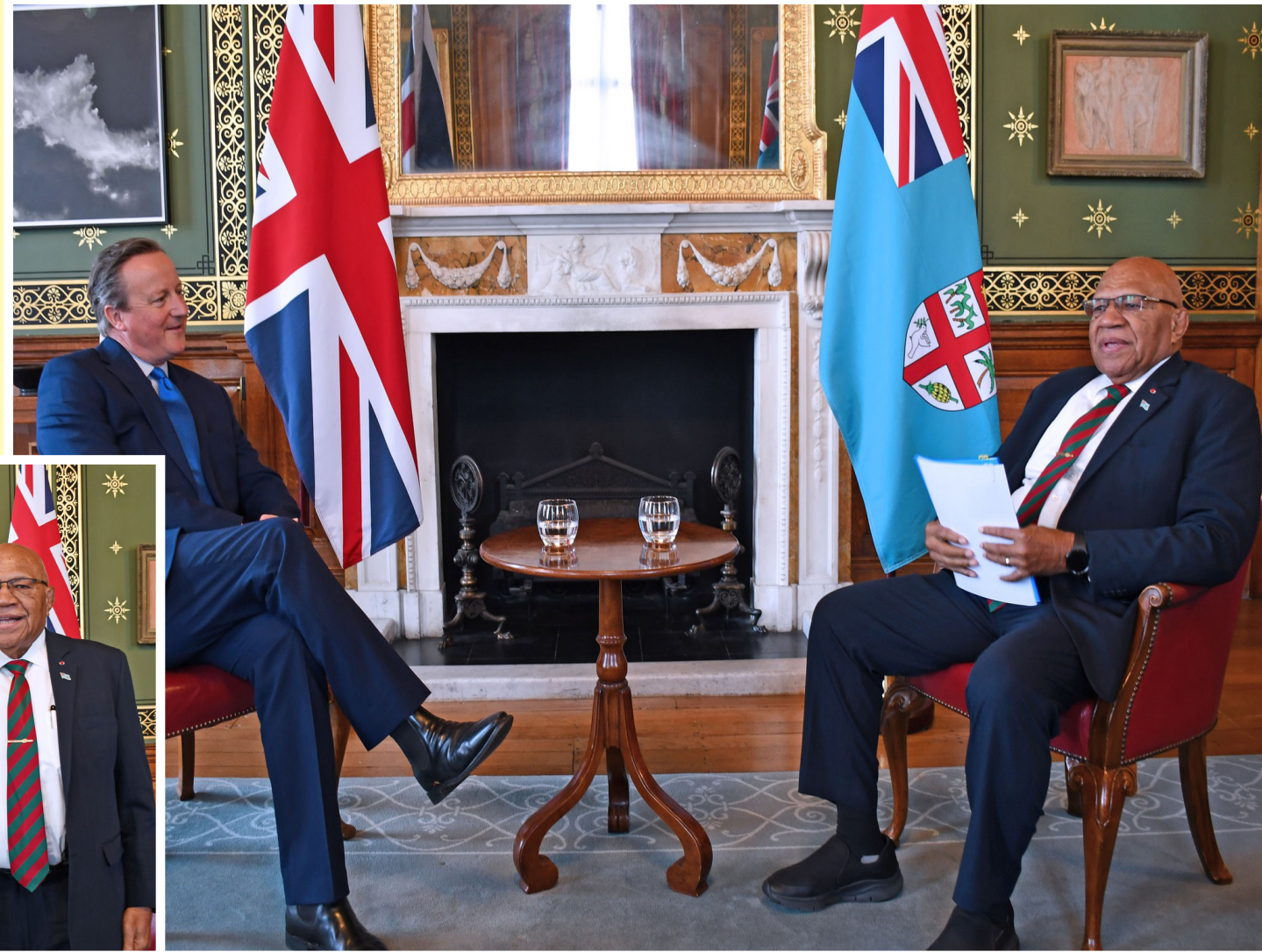
“I have about eight-acres of land and usually able to plant about 210 tonnes of sugarcane and able to sell about \$6,000

worth of it which supports my livelihood and last year I harvested about 70 tonnes of sugarcane,” he relayed.

“I would like to urge the younger generation to listen to your parents because then you will go a long way in life and at the same time, look after them as they have sacrificed a lot to raise you,” he advised.

PM Rabuka Meets UK Foreign Secretary Lord David Cameron

Fiji and the United Kingdom (UK) will continue to build on our shared vision for stability, cooperation and prosperity. This was highlighted by the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, while meeting with the UK's Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Lord David Cameron in London. the objective of an "Ocean of Peace in the Pacific".



PM Rabuka meets with International Maritime Organisation Secretary General



Fiji is deeply committed to advancing maritime safety, security, and sustainability in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Through open dialogue, cooperation, and support from the IMO, we are confident that we can address challenges, capitalise on opportunities, and further enhance the resilience of our maritime sector. Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, made these remarks while meeting with the IMO Secretary General, Arsenio Dominguez, at IMO headquarters in London.

Photo: SUPPLIED



Minister Tabuya closes 2024 Rexona Bula Business House Futsal competition



The Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection, Lynda Tabuya, officiated at the closing ceremony of the 2024 Rexona Bula Business House Futsal competition at the FMF Gymnasium in Suva recently. The tournament with the theme "Fighting Domestic Violence and Drugs" brought together talented athletes and enthusiastic supporters in a celebration of sportsmanship, and was also the first ever tournament to include a women's competition.

Photo: SUPPLIED

PM meets the Fijian diaspora at Aldershot in Hampshire, England

The People's Coalition Government is holding firm and progressing as expected. This was the reassurance made by the Prime Minister, Sitiveni Rabuka, while meeting with the Fijian Diaspora at Aldershot in Hampshire, England. Aldershot is known as the home of the British Army which currently has 2000 active personnel from Fiji.

Photo: SUPPLIED



\$1.8b revenue announced for Fiji Airways

By MEREANI GONEDUA

A STAGGERING \$1.8billion in revenue has been announced today by Fiji Airways with an unrivalled record profit before income tax of \$131.8 million.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, while officiating at the event at the Fiji Airways hangar commended the hardwork carried out by the national airline.

“I want to put into perspective exactly what your financial results mean not just to the National Airline – but to Fiji. The revenue (earnings) for the year 2023 of FJ\$1.8 billion is a direct injection into the economy,” he commended

“It triggers activity not just in the tourism sector, but right across the national economic landscape by way of salaries, the three purchases of goods and services, the payment of utilities, new investments and countless other daily transactions - all of which

collectively fuel the engine of growth.”

DPM Prasad emphasised that Fiji Airways efforts and sacrifices have helped people outside of their direct workflow locations by nurturing lives, paying for education and basic health services; and assisting in the scaling up of the national infrastructure.

“Your expertise and passion that you provide to the company and what you may think as simply a job, sends economic tremors right across the nation. Please never forget that. Let it be fuel and motivation, on the days when you feel drained.”

Minister Prasad also announced that all non-management employees will receive a bonus payout of \$5000 as part of their profit share.

Meanwhile, Fiji Airways chief executive officer, Andre Viljoen echoed similar sentiments and stated that he was extremely proud of the commitment and determination shown by the entire team to help achieve these historic results.

“Given the difficult times that the company and the nation has come through during



Fiji Airways chairman, Nalin Patel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Biman Prasad, and Fiji Airways chief executive officer, Andre Viljoen. Photo: MEREANI GONEDUA

the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching these milestones in such a short time, is testament of the grit and tenacity of the Fiji Airways Vuvale (family). An airline that consistently punches above its weight”.

“Today, we are seeing the benefits of all these actions,” he added

More progress in restoration of workers' rights



Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Agni Deo Singh and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, Villiame Gavoka. Photo MEREANI GONEDUA

By MEREANI GONEDUA

THE Coalition Government has assured that the restoration of workers' rights is progressing well through the Employment Relations Act review and relevant policies.

Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Agni Deo Singh, while reassuring members of the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC) during the 50th Biennial Delegates Conference in Nadi, emphasised that the restoration of workers' rights includes the terms and conditions for workers both in the private and public sectors.

Minister Singh highlighted that the delegates conference serves as a vital constitutional obligation to review the accomplishments and challenges of the previous biennial term, engage in robust debates on issues impacting the working population and establish a strategic work plan for the upcoming biennial term.

“This significant gathering enables affiliates of the Congress to actively contribute to the direction and priorities of the FTUC and participate in the election of national office bearers for the next term,” he said

“Through this democratic process, the FTUC ensures

transparency, accountability and inclusivity in its governance structure, empowering members to shape the future trajectory of the organisation and advocate for the rights and interests of working people across Fiji.”

He stated that the Biennial Conference was critical as it provides a platform for affiliates to actively participate in shaping the direction and priorities of the organisation.

“It is a forum where voices are heard, ideas are exchanged and decisions are made collectively to ensure that the interests of your members are at the forefront of your agenda.”

“Through this democratic process, continue to uphold transparency, accountability and inclusivity in your governance structure, empowering each member to contribute to the success and sustainability of the FTUC,” he added

The Minister also commended FTUC for the tremendous work currently undertaken with the Fiji Government through the tripartite mechanism in ensuring decent work and social justice for all.

Westerners receive lease renewal for sugarcane farm

By MEREANI GONEDUA

SEVEN registered sugarcane farmers in the Western division were recently handed their lease renewals under the New Farmers and Lease Premium Renewal Program.

Under this program, a total of 95 registered sugarcane farmers were granted lease renewals with seven beneficiaries hailing from the Western Division and the remaining 88 from the Northern Division.

Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry, Charan Jeath Singh, highlighted that the initiative underscores the Government's unwavering commitment to the revitalisation of the sugar industry, recognizing its pivotal role in the economy and the livelihoods of its people.

“We have allocated a substantial budget of \$2 million for the New Farmers and Lease Renewal Program for the 2023-2024 financial year,” he said

“Of this amount, \$1.5 million has been dedicated to lease renewals for existing sugarcane farmers, while \$0.5 million will support potential farmers in acquiring land for sugarcane farming.”

Minister Singh highlighted that the Coalition Government had initiated a taskforce last year to address land lease issues, conducting consultations nationwide and that progress had been made in developing strategies to tackle these challenges, with measures expected in the upcoming budget.

“Under this program, the Ministry of Sugar Industry will provide funding support, covering 30 per cent of the cost or a maximum of \$7,500, whichever is lower, to eligible applicants,” he revealed

“In addition to lease renewal assistance, we have implemented various other measures to support our farmers, such as increasing cane payments to a record-high of \$91.38 per tonne, providing incentives for manual harvesting, and rewarding increased production efforts”.

“I urge all farmers to seize these opportunities and continue their invaluable contribution to our sugar industry's growth and prosperity,” Minister Singh advised.

Meanwhile, sugarcane farmer Ram Kumar commended the Government for the initiative taken in assisting farmers.

Mr Kumar highlighted that such assistance was a huge relief for farmers as it lifts a heavy burden off their shoulder.

“I am just thankful for such assistance as it will assist me and my family in many ways.”

Livestock farmer receives new goat-shed from Govt

By JOSAIA RALAGO

“LIVESTOCK farming is not a ‘field’ for the faint-hearted, and where one could only succeed through commitment, determination and a passion for the work.”

These were the sentiments shared by 56-year-old Bhan Pratap of Lagalaga, Macuata following the commissioning of his goat shed which was fully funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Waterways at a cost of \$25,000.

Mr Pratap who started out as a sugarcane farmer, decided to venture into livestock farming a decade ago and from the get-go, had understood the importance of being proactive and alert when involved in the sector.

“This is because of the risks that are involved, which could be extreme weather conditions, theft and losses by dog attacks,” he said.

As Tropical Cyclone Yasa ravaged across communities in the North, Mr Prasad also lost 50 percent of his livestock in its wake which led to the request for the Government-funded goat-shed.

“I am fortunate enough to have been awarded this assistance, which is proof of the Government’s commitment towards livestock farmers like myself,” he said.

The shed constructed is for the baby goat, to protect them for harsh weather conditions and ultimately avoid infant mortality.

The Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Waterways, Tomasi Tunabuna, while commissioning the project commended Mr Pratap for continuing to pursue livestock farming despite the constraints, also assuring other farmers of Government’s commitment towards the sector.

Asst. Minister Tunabuna added that there was a need to have more livestock farmers in the country to meet local demands, as close to 99 percent of goat and sheep meat consumed locally were imported.

“We have a lot of respect for farmers who still continue with sheep and goat farming, knowing very well that there’s a lot of constraints when it comes to raising livestock,” he said.



(L-R) Principal Agriculture Officer North Sujendra Prasad, Farmer Bhan Pratap and his family at his newly built goat shed in Lagalaga, Labasa. **Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO.**



The newly built goat shed belonging to Bhan Pratap.

Minister urges farmers to use assistance to maximise production

By JOSAIA RALAGO

THE Minister for Sugar and Multi-Ethnic Affairs Charan Jeath Singh is calling on cane farmers in the North to make good use of the assistance and opportunities available to maximise production.

These comments followed a report by several Indian engineers tasked to inspect the three sugarcane mills in the country, with the diagnosis that Labasa was the top performing mill.

“Several engineers came, they did the analysis and found that out of the three mills, Labasa is the best performing mill,” Minister Singh said.

“So, if we have a good mill, we should have good amount of sugar being crushed here,” he added

“The capability of this mill is that we can crush 1.5million tonnes, but currently with the industries position amidst all the downturn in the sugar industry throughout Fiji, we are only

crushing 600,000 tonnes.”

And for this, Minister Singh said, the Government was playing its part in rolling out assistance and schemes that farmers should capitalise on to assist in improving their yield.

“We have 13 programs by which we are funding the farmers, through planting of cane, fertiliser, weedicide, fencing, and this is not end of the assistance,” Minister Singh said.

“If we are seeing improvements, definitely the Government will go ahead and pour more money towards the industry to make sure that we hit our target back to 1.5 million tonnes of sugar from Labasa, and it can happen, the opportunities are there.”

Meanwhile, the Government recently rolled out a \$2 million assistance to assist 88 farmers in the Northern Division and seven in the Western Division, through partial payment of their lease renewals.



Beneficiaries of the New Farmers Assistance with the Minister for Sugar and Multi-Ethnic Affairs. Charan Jeath Singh, in Labasa. **Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO.**

Female farmer thanks Govt for assistance



(L-r) Brij Prasad, 69 and Chand Kumari, 70, of Lagalagala in Labasa at the New Farmers Assistance handover today. **Photo: JOSAIA RALAGO.**

By JOSAIA RALAGO

“AS female farmers, we are trying to assert in the agricultural sector that we are also capable of producing and these kinds of (Government) assistance means a lot, where the assistance is given out equally to both men and women.

“I am very happy, I would like to thank the Coalition Government for assisting us, and enabling us to continue pursuing sugarcane farming, and for considering female farmers as well.”

These were the sentiments expressed by 49-year-old Anita Lata, who was all smiles as she received her documents from the Minister for Sugar and Multi-Ethnic Affairs, Charan Jeath Singh, as one of the beneficiaries to the latest sugar cane farmers’ assistance by the Government.

The assistance that 88 farmers in Vanua Levu and seven farmers in Viti Levu have benefited from, was a program under the New Farmers and Lease Renewal Program

rendered by the Ministry with a budgetary allocation of \$2million.

This was part and parcel of the Ministry’s approved assistance for lease-renewals whereby it pays 30 percent of the cost or a maximum of \$7,500, whichever was lower, to the 95 farmers.

Ms Lata said she was truly grateful to the Coalition Government for the assistance rendered towards cane-farmers, especially female farmers.

Minister Singh assured the farmers of the Government’s commitment towards the revival of the sugar industry.

“Other programs, that we have, through the Ministry of Sugar, has been assisting you all are farm access roads, in-field drainages, cage bins, subsidies for fertiliser, weedicides, cane planting grants for tractors, harvesters and as soon for mechanical cane planters and fertilizer applications,” he explained.

“I urge all eligible farmers to take advantage of these opportunities and to continue their invaluable contribution to our sugar industry.”

Fiji and Australia bilateral meeting signals stronger cooperation

PRIME Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka and Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Pat Conroy recently met in Nadi where they reaffirmed their two Governments' commitment to further advance the bilateral relations.

This advancing of relations will be done through the renewed and elevated Vuvale Partnership.

During the meeting PM Rabuka and Minister Conroy also discussed Australia's recent investment of AU\$10 million (approximately FJ\$14.97m) to fund a Colonial War Memorial (CWMH) infrastructure master plan – a critical step in moving towards a new national referral hospital for the people of Fiji.

The bilateral meeting coincided with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) to formalise Australia's assistance in the development of Fiji's port infrastructure and services.

The MOU outlines a framework to cooperate on future investments into Fiji's port infrastructure and services.

It demonstrates Australia's commitment to work with Fiji as it develops a pipeline of sustainable, quality infrastructure investments.

Prime Minister Rabuka and Minister Conroy also signed an MOU on cyber security cooperation, which sets out how the two countries will strengthen their work together to respond to the increase in cyber threats against their citizens, businesses and critical infrastructure.

PM Rabuka noted that Fiji and Australia would work in partnership to strengthen their response to cyber incidents, including through improving information sharing, upskilling Fiji's workforce and enhancing governance arrangements.

PM Rabuka and Minister Conroy also discussed the announcement of a new five-year AU\$100 million (approximately FJ\$149.79m) Australia-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation Program (P4A).

The program, to commence later this year, will work with Pacific countries to build a safer, more resilient and sustainable aviation sector.

The P4A program will also invest in

improving aviation skills, capability and knowledge, through targeted education and vocational skills initiatives for Pacific students at Fiji National University in Nadi and Griffith University in Brisbane.

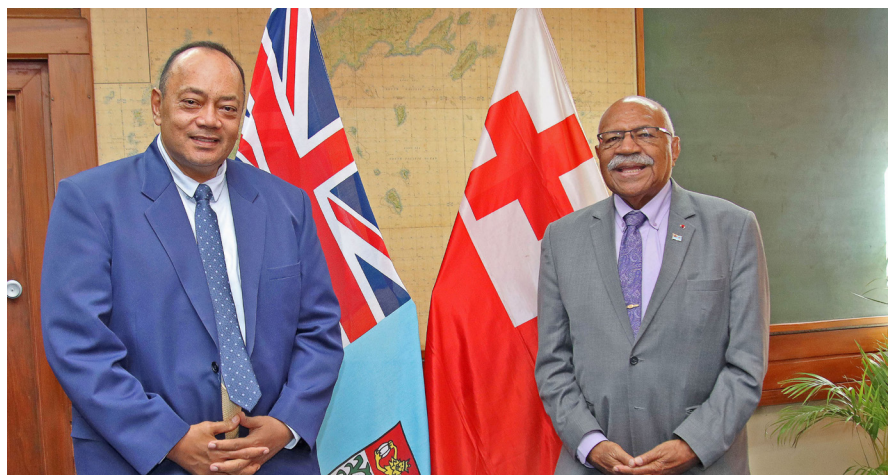
Prime Minister Rabuka welcomed Australia's commitment to quadruple the number of Australia Award Pacific Scholarships offered annually to Fijian students (up to 50 students in 2025), focusing on courses that address critical skills gaps in the Fiji economy, including health care, engineering and technical trades. These courses will be delivered through an ongoing partnership with Fiji National University.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)



Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka and the Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Pat Conroy during a bilateral meeting and signing of the two Memorandum of Understanding. Photo: SUPPLIED

PM Rabuka meets with the Tongan counterpart: Fiji-Tonga relations affirmed



Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka and Tongan Prime Minister Hu'akavameiliku Sovaleni in a meeting discussed collaboration opportunities between Fiji and Tonga at the regional forums and on the global stage. Photo: SUPPLIED

PRIME Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sitiveni Rabuka, met with the Tongan Prime Minister, Hu'akavameiliku Sovaleni, as Members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Troika.

The meeting was an opportunity for the two leaders to discuss the key areas of collaboration ahead of the upcoming 53rd Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting (PIFLM53) to be held in Tonga, from 26-30 August 2024. The Prime Ministers focused particularly on key issues relating to the management of the Forum that goes to the heart of leadership and its transition at PIF.

In the process the Troika received a briefing from the PIF Secretariat on processes leading up to the Leaders' meeting that will address issues to be considered by the Leaders in Tonga.

The Prime Ministers further explored avenues to optimise funding streams aimed at supporting PIF Members deal with the impacts of the climate crisis.

The two leaders also exchanged views on regional cooperation to advance economic development and address resilience in the face of climate change, among issues of importance to the

welfare of the Pacific family.

PM Rabuka reaffirmed Fiji's support and best wishes to PM Sovaleni as his country prepares to host the PIFLM53.

Further, PM Rabuka said Fiji will continue to work closely with Tonga and other Pacific Island countries to delivering the goals of the 2050 Strategy, particularly in improving the livelihoods and prospects of the Pacific people while continuing to advance regional solidarity and prosperity.

PM Sovaleni commended Prime Minister Rabuka for his vision of the Pacific as the Ocean for Peace.

Furthermore, he expressed appreciation at PM Rabuka's insights and recalled the exceptional work he had demonstrated in reuniting the region at a pivotal moment of the Pacific's history that saw Kiribati re-joining the Forum family

The Tongan Prime Minister looks forward to welcoming Prime Minister Rabuka at the 53rd Pacific Island Forum Leaders Meeting and he is grateful for Fiji's remarkable support and cooperation.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Fiji represented at the 2nd Pacific Diplomatic Training Programme in New Zealand



(L – R) Representing Fiji at the Pacific Diplomacy Training Programme in New Zealand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Team, Yvonne Osborne, Anasilini Turaga, Suneet Kumar, Merewalesi Radiloa and Mariana Tuinasavusavu. Photo: SUPPLIED

FJI'S Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has expressed its appreciation to the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) for the opportunity provided to the cohort of five MFA staff who participated in the three weeks Pacific Diplomacy Training Programme.

Fijian participants are among the Pacific Islands participants including Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau.

The participants were part of the three-week block second residential training programme, delivered in New Zealand and a further two-week block will be delivered in Suva, in July this year.

Ministry permanent secretary, Dr Lesikimacuata Korovavala thanked the MFAT for its support in providing Pacific centred training which also promotes knowledge, networking and diplomatic skills that responds to the emerging complex international environment.

Dr Korovavala said this initiative demonstrates New Zealand's commitment to reinforcing partnerships with the Pacific as well as enhancing regional diplomacy.

Expressing similar sentiments, the New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, Charlotte Darlow, emphasised the value such training holds for enhancing knowledge and capacity development of public service officials.

Ms Darlow said New Zealand was committed to supporting professional development training opportunities that offer several benefits such as negotiation skills, strategic thinking and effective communications, which together contribute to the effectiveness of officials in their roles.

The training was first piloted in October 2023, with six MFA staff having completed their three-week block training in New Zealand and then two-week -block training in PNG.

They described the training programme as comprehensive, informative and empowering, covering key areas in diplomacy with bilateral, regional and multilateral focus.

The program provides officials with knowledge and expertise in the diplomatic tradecraft that enhances their skills on the global rules-based order and regional peace, trade and prosperity, nation building, foreign policy formulation and deliveries, negotiation, and building and managing partnerships among nations.

Notably, the training aims to build capacity in the Pacific foreign services by encouraging closer collaboration amongst Pacific diplomats and officials.

The five MFA staff underwent training at the Victoria University of Wellington's Pipitea campus in New Zealand from April 15- May 3, 2024.

(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)



Rani shares her journey of living with Lupus

By NANISE NEIMILA

WITH her affectionate smile and jolly personality, one can never think that 50-year-old Rani Hassan is someone who battles with a debilitating illness, Lupus, on a daily basis.

Having been diagnosed with Lupus in 2019, Ms Hassan has bravely shared her journey to raise awareness on this autoimmune disease that attacks organs and tissues in the body.

Lupus is manifested through inflammation that can impact various parts of the body, including the skin, joints, blood, and vital organs like the kidneys, lungs, and heart.

For Ms Hassan, her diagnosis came after a period of being misdiagnosed between 2017 and 2019.

“My initial symptoms included hair loss, joint pains and the distinctive butterfly rash on my face.”

“As I progressed through my journey with Lupus, I learned about its different forms, such as SLE (Systemic Lupus Erythematosus).

“I specifically have lupus cerebritis, which primarily affects the brain,” she explained.

In late 2020, Ms Hassan experienced seizures due to Lupus and the subsequent medication caused continuous headaches.

She initially attributed the headaches to her chronic illness but later discovered

that they were symptoms of a much more serious problem.

“The headaches were caused by blood clotting in my brain, leading to a stroke. In November 2020, I suffered continuous seizures—up to 10 times in a minute, lasting an entire day,” Ms Hassan said.

Today, she relies on medication to manage seizures, crucial for her well-being.

Despite enduring a stroke and experiencing memory loss, she remains resilient, guided by the support of her loving family.

“Every day is a battle for us, with some days being better than others. I cannot stress enough the importance of attending clinic appointments and adhering to prescribed medications.

“Our stories are uncertain, but I am grateful for the unwavering support of my husband, children and my circle of supportive friends and family that carries us through each day.”

Ms Hassan’s story underscores the importance of early diagnosis, proper medical treatment and awareness in managing Lupus.

Ministry of Health and Medical Services’ permanent secretary, Dr Jemesa Tudravu, highlighted that lupus may not be as common as diabetes or high blood pressure, or as “famous” as COVID-19 or HIV but it’s still a serious chronic disease which has a significant impact on those that have



Rani Hassan (middle) is flanked by family members during the World Lupus celebration held in Suva last week. **Photo: NANISE NEIMILA**

them and their families, and “we should know about it and be in a better position to help those who have them”.

“The cause of lupus remains unconfirmed, but it is suggested that a combination of genetics and environmental factors may contribute to the onset of the disease. Women and non-whites are disproportionately affected. More research is being done to better understand the disease.”

“For Fiji, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services reports showed that

49 cases of Lupus were admitted and diagnosed in 2017, 34 in 2018, and 60 patients in 2019.”

Dr Tudravu remains confident on gaining support for bringing more awareness as well as addressing stigmatisation of the disease, and also ensuring that Fiji’s ability to diagnose, treat, and provide a continuum of care through strategic partnerships with stakeholders such as the Lupus Foundation of Fiji, for those who have them are continually improved so that they can continue to lead a productive life.

Dairy industry acknowledges Government assistance



Fiji Cooperative Dairy Company Ltd chief executive officer, Kushmendra Prasad. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

By AZARIA FAREEN

DAIRY farmer Nilesh Lakhan of Waidalice in Tailevu has applauded 16 dairy farms in the area that have become popular for in the dairy industry.

Most of these farmers’ milk are sold to the Waidalice Chilling Centre while the Fiji Cooperative Dairy Company Limited (FCDCL) acts as a mediator between the two.

“The assistance we are getting from the Government is benefitting the farmers cluster as some farmers here were facing a lot of challenges such as the price of the cattle feed,” Mr Lakhan said.

“Thankfully the cattle feed subsidy provided by the Government is easing the burden of the farmers and they are increasing the milk productivity in the process.”

“FCDCL is receiving a grant from the Government which continues to trickle down to the farmers,” he added.

Having been in the dairy industry for over 30 years, Mr Lakhan said that the farming back then used to be natural and organic.

“The land fertility used to be stronger compared back then and we now depend more on supplementary feed which is pricey and that is why it costs the dairy farming business more money to produce milk,” he explained.

“The interest shown by the youth towards dairy farming is decreasing by the day and if the Government does not intervene in this regard, then in the next 10 to 20 years, we will see very fewer dairy farmers in the country.”

“The Waidalice area is known for the dairy farmers and the chilling centre was set up for these farmers which supports them and I just wish this continues to progress

further into the future,” he added.

FCDCL chief executive officer, Kushmendra Prasad, highlighted that the company was established in 2012 in Manoca, Nausori and has been debt free.

“FCDCL is a non-profit organisation and we believe that when the farmers profit that’s when we profit,” he said.

“We are indebted to the Government for their timely assistance which has also contributed in improving the livelihood of the farmers through dividends.”

“This is how we can reduce the import bill as the dollar value for the demand for milk in Fiji sits at \$80 million while the milk that we produce is worth \$50 million,” he

added.

Mr Prasad said that in order to meet the supply, lots of milk needs to be produced so that they are able to increase the demand for local products in the market.

“I would like to thank those farmers who milk their cows with so many challenges while we transport it to the factory and also acknowledge the Government for providing their continuous support and subsidy to ensure that the dairy industry continues to prosper,” he said.

“The FCDCL is growing from a small business and one day we will bear the fruits of our labour but our production has to be good,” Mr Prasad added.

The Government provided \$5 million to FCDCL in 2022.



Dairy farmer and former police officer, Nilesh Lakhan. **Photo: SUPPLIED**

DPM Kamikamica calls for trade and investment enhancement for diaspora in North America

“OVER the years, we have seen a growing interest from Canada-based investors in areas related to tourism, real estate, agriculture and renewable energy.”

“For instance, since 2022, four projects on tourism, retail and ICT with a proposed value of \$3.2 million were registered in Fiji from Canadian investors. This demonstrates the confidence that Canadian businesses have in Fiji’s economic prospects.”

This insight was shared by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications Manoa Kamikamica, while delivering his address at the Fiji North-America Business Forum in Surrey, BC, Canada.

The Minister highlighted that one of the primary objectives of this Mission is to promote investment in Fiji.

“On the trade front, prior to the pandemic,

our total two-way trade was worth \$69.97 million. Fiji exports to Canada were worth \$15.58 million last year, largely underpinned by exports of mineral and aerated waters, ginger, fresh produce and mahogany,” added DPM Kamikamica.

“The important role of investments in the development of any country, such as Fiji cannot be emphasised enough. Investments, whether domestic or foreign is merely a lifeblood of economic and social progress for our people and our economy.”

He stated that Fiji was an ideal place as the destination of trade and investment by choice and that was why the Fiji Government was undertaking proactive initiatives in the quest to “Rebuild Fiji” and attract investors.

“With an aim to boost investment in our country, Investment Fiji’s role was revamped to become an Investment and Trade Promotion Agency. The Investment Facilitation Committee was established to effectively address issues hindering



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica during the Business Forum in Surrey, BC, Canada
Photo: SUPPLIED

investment activities in Fiji and at the same time streamline the investment process, as well.”

“We must not lose sight of our connections with our own diaspora, no matter how far we are spread across the globe. We need to reconnect with our diaspora who can contribute back to our economy through investments, knowledge and skills. As we embark on this journey together, let

us remember that our success is measured by the impact we bring, lives we improve, the communities we empower, and the opportunities we create for our people,” he concluded.

(Source: Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications)

DPM Kamikamica emphasises on call to action at the WTO

FIIJI has called on World Trade Organization (WTO) members to conclude negotiations for a balanced and comprehensive Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies before the year ends.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica, while delivering his remarks during the WTO Informal Ministerial gathering in Paris, highlighted that Fiji and the Pacific continues to be a strong advocate for disciplines on fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, following the WTO Thirteenth Ministerial Conference (MC13).

“As owners of two thirds of the world’s tuna resources, we demanded our voices be heard as equals. We pleaded for our ocean resources to be sustainably managed, protected and not overfished for the sake of our future generations.”

“In my last statement at MC13, I asked for WTO Members who wish to continue and conclude negotiations for a Comprehensive Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies to stand. Nearly all members inside this room stood up in solidarity with Fiji and the Pacific in support of our call. In this vein, I strongly urge that we conclude negotiations for a balanced and comprehensive Agreement before the year ends - and I dare remind this Room that we are racing against a Sunset Clause,” stated the Deputy Prime Minister.

During the meeting, DPM Kamikamica also highlighted that Fiji remains committed to finding practical solutions to proceed and deliver a comprehensive outcome on fisheries subsidies.

“For Fiji, the chair’s advanced text of 1 March 2024, should be the basis of negotiations and we need to achieve the mandate of a comprehensive agreement that fully delivers the mandate of SDG 14.6 and MC12,” he added.

“Fiji cannot in good sense agree to any moratorium being imposed on fisheries



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica speaks at the WTO Informal Ministerial meeting in Paris, France.
Photo: SUPPLIED

subsidies. It is unrealistic, unsustainable and will further push unscrupulous exploitation of the very stock that our fisherfolk back at home depend on for their livelihood and sustenance.”

DPM Kamikamica has reaffirmed the commitment to conclude negotiations on Fish 2 as soon as possible.

“We do not have to wait for MC14. We should continue the momentum of our negotiations or face the risk of having no deal. In concluding this Comprehensive Agreement, we also prove to the world that the WTO and its system works for everyone - even small island vulnerable economies, such as the Pacific.”

“This is not about short-term self-interests and politics, for Fiji and the Pacific this is about our livelihood, our culture and our food security.”

(Source: Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications)

DPM Kamikamica emphasises on efforts to rebuild and re-engineer Fiji

“WE are working on a rebuilding and re-engineering journey for Fiji, particularly focusing not only the economic architecture of our country but also other challenges relating to infrastructure and socio- economic issues.”

Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica, while speaking at the Fiji North-America Business Mission in San Francisco, USA recently, highlighted that the Business Mission came at a time of growing interest in Fiji’s economic potential.

“But suffice to say Google is investing in Fiji in establishing a Data Centre and laying new subsea cables linking Fiji to the United States, Australia and Tahiti. This landmark investment solidifies Fiji’s aspirations to be the regional hub for connectivity and innovation in the Pacific. If Google is comfortable with Fiji then that is a good enough statement of our capability to attract investments,” DPM Kamikamica highlighted.

“I am told that we have five per cent of Fijians that are unconnected, and we need to start the journey of connecting the five percent and improving the existing connectivity,” he said.

DPM Kamikamica stated that a noteworthy initiative being embarked by the Fiji Government together with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was the development of Fiji’s National Digital Strategy.

“In terms of some of our initiatives in the digital space, we are looking at a Cybersecurity Strategy, Artificial Intelligence and digitisation of Fiji’s economy,” he added.

He said that the National E-commerce Strategy was being developed and was in its final stages.

“We have been lucky that for a country with a population of less than a million people we have two largest operators in the world in Fiji namely Vodafone and Telstra. In terms of e-commerce, the ability to stimulate economic activity all over Fiji has expanded quite rapidly. Through this Strategy we hope to continue the momentum to ensure that trade becomes easier to do.”

“Some of the initiatives that we have deployed to make things easier is the establishment of an Investment Facilitation Committee. The Investment Facilitation Committee which I chair works to address your hurdles and facilitate your investment process. Investment Fiji’s role was transition from being a regulator to an investment facilitator,” DPM Kamikamica said.

“We have invested in a Fiji Integrated Licenses and Permits Approvals system (FILPAS) which would provide 25 e-services of 16 different agencies on a single platform. Through a click of a button, you can “Start a Business” from anywhere, making your experience much easier.”

He also highlighted that the Ministry established a Commercial Agriculture Taskforce to support diversification and expansion.

(Source: Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications)



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications, Manoa Kamikamica delivers his address at the Fiji North-American Business Mission Forum in San Francisco, USA.
Photo: SUPPLIED

Minister urges Fijians to choose healthy lifestyle



Minister for Housing and Local Government, Maciu Katamotu Nalumisa, contestants and organisers during the Tebara Festival at Syria Park Nausori. **Photo: FELIX LESINAIVALU**

By FELIX LESINAIVALU

“COMMUNITIES come together through these carnivals and create opportunities for local businesses, farmers, charitable organisations, and the youths to showcase their creativeness.”

Minister for Housing and Local Government, Maciu Nalumisa, during closing of the Vodafone Tebara Festival at Syria Park in Nausori encouraged Fijians to take heed of the festival’s theme of “Choose Healthy Lifestyle”.

“Take part in sports activities, do regular exercises, and choose health diets to Combat NCD. I urge all parents out there to practice and live a healthy lifestyle at home.”

Minister Nalumisa added that the Coalition Government believes in promoting social cohesion which is the best way forward for Fiji.

“We need to work together, have effective communications as a community and believe in one another. Your government is here to promote diversity, inclusivity



Minister for Housing and Local Government, Maciu Katamotu Nalumisa, crowns Miss Vodafone Tebara at Syria Park Nausori. **Photo: FELIX LESINAIVALU**

with the hope of shared values and a common identity.”

“I must remind you that a collaborative effort is required to make Nausori a more vibrant and attractive town to live, invest and visit.”

Minister Nalumisa said the Government, town councils and statutory authorities are doing as much as it can, but it cannot do it all alone.

“They need your support! We need your support! Collaborative effort from private sector, civil society, and NGOs is needed towards this initiative.”

“To all the beautiful Queen Contestants, you are all winners from the day you decided to be part of this year’s carnival. Being a contestant is an honour which you should embrace and value as a young woman.”

He advised the contestants that they will never go wrong if they are authentic, humble, thoughtful and speak and act from their heart.

Miss Amras Mall, Berenadeta Waqavanua was crowned Miss Vodafone Tebara-2024 while Miss Ozone Electrical PTE LTD Naumi Tura was the 1st runner up followed by second runner up Miss Tara’s Supermarket, Volau Tilalati.

Noda Viti

Siga Lotulevu Me 16, 2024

| 8 Drauniveva, 7 Tabana 15 ni Lavelave ni Ivola

ME TOMANI TIKO GA
NA KENA CUQENI NA
CAKACAKA NI LIGA
ENA NODA VANUA

iTalanoa ena Drauniveva 3

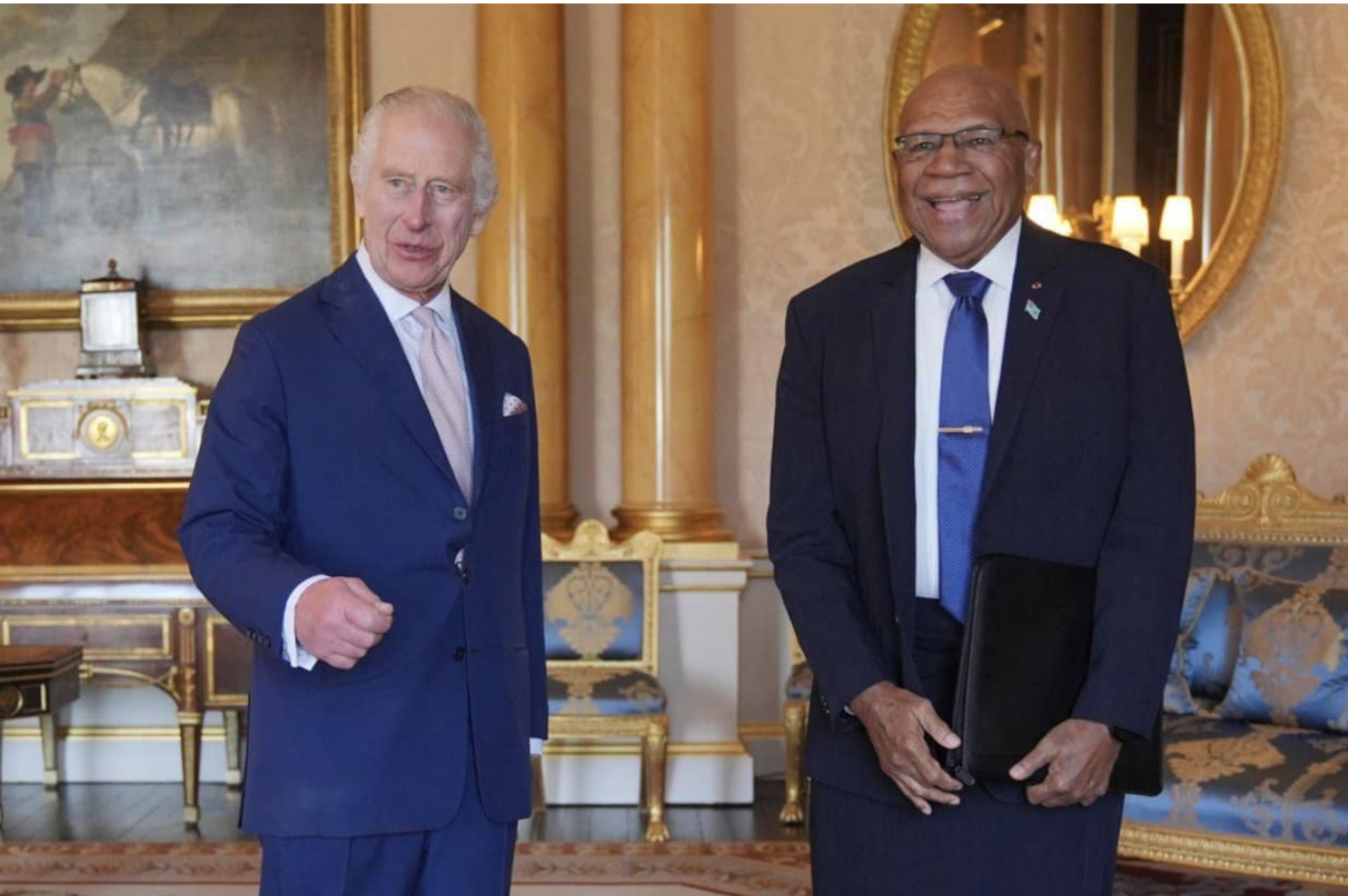


TEKIVU NA SUSU IKA
ENA KORO KO LEVUKA
VAKAVITI

iTalanoa ena Drauniveva 6



VAKADEITAKI NAI SEMA NI MATANITU O VITI KEI NA VANUA O BOLATAGANE



Marautaka na Turaga na Liuliu ni noda Matanitu o Hon Sitiveni Ligamamada Ranuka na nodrau veitalanoa kei na Turaga na Tui Bolatagane o Jalesi

E ra tadu yani ena nodra matavura na Tui kei Bolatagane His Majesty King Charles 3 ena nodra itikotiko e Buckingham Palace e na vanua levu o Igiladi na iLiuliu ni noda matanitu o Hon Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka ena ika7 ni siga ni vula qo. E dua na tiki ni siga guiguilecavi dredre ena vuku ni kena vakabulabulataki tale na isema ni veiwekani ena matanitu e rua na Matanitu o Viti kei na Matanitu o Bolatagane (United Kingdom). E na nodra itukutuku na Paraiminista era vakaraitaka kina ni Matanitu Cokovata e Viti e ra marautaka vakalevu ena vuku ni kena laki vakayacori na

veitalanoa ka semati vinaka tale kina na isema mai na veigauna sa sivi yani. E ra laki vakaraitaka talega na nodra kere veivosoti ena vuku ni veika mai yaco ena noda vanua ena yabaki 1987. Era vakananuma lesu o Hon Rabuka na nodra a siko kina Tikotiko Vakauti (Buckingham Palace) ena 1998 ka rau laki sota kina na Marama Na Ranadi sa bale o Ilisapeci ka ra laki cabora talega ki na nodra Matanigasau ena vuku tiko ga ni veika e yaco ena yabaki 1987 ka vaka kina na tu vakai koya ni Matanitu o Viti. E kuria o Hon Rabuka ni Matanitu o Viti esa tu makawa tu na nodrau veisemati me vakatekivu mai na nodra

laki vakaitavi na gone iTaukei kina Mataivalu ni Bolatagane ka ra vakaitavi enai ka rua ni Valu Levu , ka vaka talega kina e Maleya, Borneo, Oman ,Iraqi kei na Matanitu o Afghanistan. E ra vakaraitaka talega o Hon Rabuka na kena dau vukei ka ra kawaitaki na lewe ni vanua o Viti me baleta na Isala Vakauti kei na Matavuvale Vakaturaga, e laurai ni sivia na 20,000 na lewe ni noda vanua era sa okata me sa nodra itikotiko mai na gauna e tekivu kina na gauna ni vakacuru cakacaka ena Commenwealth ka vaka kina na British Army ena 1960 kei na 1997. Esa tomani tiko ga na veivukei ena gaunisala ni veivakatoroicaketaki. E sa

roro tale tiko ga mai nai ka 75 ni Bose ni Matanitu vaka Commonwealth ka sa vakaraitaka kina O Paraiminisita Rabuka ni sa tu vakarau mena kidavaki ira na veiliuliu vaka matanitu (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) ka na vayacori tiko ena Matanitu o Samoa. E na nodra mai tinia na nodra vosa era vakaraitaka kina na nodra vakanuinui vinaka vua na Tui Kei Bolatagane na i ka 3 salavata kei na masu kei na loloma ka vakauasivi na bula vinaka ena vuku ni mate e vauci koya voli.

RAWATA NA FIJI AIRWAYS E 1.8 NA BILIONI NA DOLA NA TUBU



E vakacaucataki na nodra gugumataua na ivakalesilesi ena kabani ni waqavuka na Fiji Airways

E mai rawata e \$1.8 na Bilioni na dola na kabani ni waqavuka ena na noda vanua na Fiji Airways na tubu vakailavo ena yabaki oqo. E ra vulagi dokai kina na Paraiminisita Veivuke ka Minisita ni Veika Vakailavo, o Hon Biman Prasad, ka ra laki tiko ena soqo ni kena vakananumi na tubu vakailavo ka vaka kina ena vuku ni veiqaravi esa vakayacora mai na noda kabani ni waqavuka.

“Au via vakamatata taka ga ena vuku ni rawa ka vakailavo, e sega walega ni vakatabakidua ki na kabani ni waqa vuka e umani vata talega kina na Matanitu o Viti. Na kena mai rawati na tubu vakailavo ena yabaki 2023 ka rauta ni \$1.8 na Bilioni esa dua na cavu i kalawa levu kina noda bula vakailavo ni Matanitu.”

“Na kena rawa na veika oqo e sega walega ni vakaitavi kina na Tabana Ni Saravanua e okati talega kina na vei taba ni veiqaravi eso ka ra semati yani kina cakacaka ni tabana ni saravanua.”

E kuria o Hon Prasad na nona vakavinavinakataki ira na liga ni veiqaravi ena kabani ni waqavuka ena vuku ni veiqaravi ena nodra dau vukei na lewe ni vanua, na kena susugi cake na bula, na kena saumi nai curucuru ni vuli, ka vaka kina na veiqaravi ni tiko bulabula kei na veiqaravi ni veivakatorocaketaki ni veiqaravi ena Matanitu.

“Na kena mai vakaraitaki na nomuni kila ka ni kabani ni vuka eda na nanuma beka ni dua ga na cakacaka ni sa kauta yani na tubu levu vakai lavo ena loma ni Matanitu kau kerea mo ni kua ni guilecava, ka raica me na vakacegui kemuni ena gauna sotavi kina na dredre.”

Esa vakaraitaka talega na Minsita ni Lavo ni oira kece na veiqaravi era na ciqoma na bonisi e \$5000 dua na ivakalesilesi ena vuku ni kena mai raici na tubu ena kabani na Fiji Airways.

KAUWAI NA BOSE LEVU VAKATURAGA ENA LULUQA NI ITOVO VAKAVANUA



Na Liuliu ni Bose Levu Vakaturaga, na Turaga Sau o Ratu Viliame Seruvakula.

A vakaraitaka na iLiuliu ni Boselevu Vakaturaga na Turaga Sau, o Ratu Viliame Seruvakula na nodra kauwai e na luluqa ni itovo vakavanua ka vure mai na tiko yavavala ni noda vanua ena 2000 kei 2006.

“Na tiko yavavala qo e sega ga ni yalani ena veisau ni matanitu, sa vakilai tale ga ena noda bula ni veiwekani kei na veivakabauti ina matanitu kei na vanua.”

Na veitaravi ni tiko yavavala qo eda sotava kina na ibolebole ena bula vakailavo, levu na cakacaka butobuto, ka sa tiko na ririko vei keda na lewenivanua. Na ituvaki ni vanua ena gauna oya e rawa ni susuga na rai e vovodea ka rawa ni vakawaicalataka na itovo ena kena sagai na itutu ni Veiliutaki.

“Ena gadrevi na noda cakacavata me rawa ni vakalesuya mai na noda itovo dina vakavanua. Ena vakalesui mai na veivakabauti kevaka eda vakaitavi kece ka me dei na vakatulewa vakalawa.”

Na vuli ni veivakararamataki me okati kina na noda itavi ina matanitu, iwalewale ni veivakaturagataki, kei na bibi ni vanua, kena ivakarau ena vaqacotaka na noda bula vakavanua.

“Ena rawa talega kevaka e vakabulabulataki na veitalanoa ka oka kina na veitabana ena taudaku ni matanitu – mai na Soqosoqo lalai ina Soqosoqo lelevu – ena buli veiwekani ka vaqacotaka na noda bula vakavanua.”

“Na iwalewale eso qo me na yavutaki ena Veiliutaki vinaka, sa usutu ni kena vakalesui mai na veivakaturagataki kei na veiwekani vinaka ena noda vanua.”

ME TOMANI TIKO GA NA KENA CUQENI NA CAKACAKA NI LIGA ENA NODA VANUA



Era veitataunaki voli ni Minisita Ni Marama kei na Bula Raraba o Hon Lynda Tabuya ena vuku ni kena laki dolavi na soqo ni nodra vakaraitaki cakacaka ni Liga ena Muaira ni noda Vanua ena i matai kei nai karua ni siga ni vula o Me ka vakayacori ena Girmit Center e Lautoka. Na vakaraitaki cakacaka ni liga ena Muaira ni noda vanua esa dua na vatavata vinaka ni nodra veitaratara na marama ena tabana ni bisinisi, na kena tokoni na nodra i voli kei na vei qaravi ka vakarabailevutaka na nodra rai ena gaunisala ni kena laurai na makete.

E ituvatuva ni Matanitu Cokovata na kena biu edua nai tuvatuva mena rawa nira bulataka na marama na nodra tatadra ka mena taucoko na nodra rawa ka. E vakamatatataka o Hon Tabuya na bibi ni tavi era dau vakaitavi taki ira kina na marama ena kena tosoi na tubu kei na rawaka vakailavo ka vaka kina na veivakatoricaketaki ni bula ni rawaka. “Au sureti ira na lewe ni vanua kei ira na saravanua mera laki sikova ka ra voli iyaya ni cakacaka ni liga me nodra iloloma ena sigatabu ni Tina eda sa vakanamata tiko kina ena gauna nikua,”

era kaya na Minisita. “E na noda vanua o Viti na nodra vakatavi na marama ena veivanua ni cakacaka e lailai sara ka na kena iwiliwili. Ia na veisau esa kauta mai na Matanitu Cokovata e vakabauti nina vakatoricaketaki na rawaka vei ira na marama.” A vakacaucautaka na nodra yalodei kei na nodra cau ena kena tarai cake na bula sautu ena noda vanua. E vakabibitaka na Marama Minisita na nona yalodei ni Expo ena sega walega ni vakarautaka na gaunisala ni rawaka vakailavo vei ira na marama ia ena

vakauqeti ira tale ga ena kena vakadeitaki nai Tabagone ena kena tomani tiko ga na veivakararamataki ni cakacaka ni liga. Na Expo e vakaraitaka marama Minisita ni na vakavurea sara e levu na sala mena vakaraitaki kina na cakacaka ni liga oka talega kina na vanua ni volitaki kakana. “E sana rawa talega nira vakaitavi oira era vuli ena vanua nin vei qaravi, ka vaka kina na vei waseitaki na porokaramu me baleta na bisinisi lalai (MSME), kana rawa ni laveta cake tale na nodra kila ka.”



Na Minista ni Marama kei na Bula Raraba o Hon Lynda Tabuya ena soqo ni vakaraitaki cakacaka ni liga vei ira na marama ena Muaira Ni Noda Vanua.

VEITALANOA NA NODA PARAIMINISITA KEI NA SIVIKA NI BOSE LAWAN NI MATANITU O UK

Erau laki veitalanoa nai liuliu ni noda Matanitu o Hon Sitiveni Rabuka kei na Sivika ni House of Common o Sir Lindsey Hoyle ena vale ni Speaker Chambers ena Porticullis House ena tikotiko ni Palace of Westminster ena Tusiti nai ka 7 ni Me, 2024. Na usutu levu ni veitalanoa sai koya na cakacaka vata e dau vakayacori ena Bose Lawa. E nodra mala ni vosa na Turaga

Paraiminisita era vakaraitaka kina vua na Sivika ni Matanitu o United Kingdom nai tuvatuva esa biuta na Matanitu Cokovata ena vuku ni kena vakaqacotaki na bula ni tu vakai koya ni 1 na Matanitu, ka ra vakadeitaka talega ni sana vakayacori na kena i tavi mena rawa ni dei na 2 na tabana ni Matanitu oya na Executive kei na Judiciary Council. E kuria na Turaga na Paraiminisita



Na Paraiminisita o Hon Sitiveni Rabuka kei na Sivika ni Bose Lawa e United Kingdom o Sir Lindsey Hoyle.

ni veitokoni vei rau na Commonwealth Parliamentary Association kei na Matanitu o Viti, ka vaka talega kina na Palimedi e vakarautaka n arawaka levu ka vaka kina na madigi ni kena vakabibitaki na vei qaravi. Esatauyavutaka talega na Bose Lawa e Viti na tabana era okati kece kina na marama ena loma ni Palimedi (Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians) ka dua na usutu levu ni kena vakavinakataki na nodra vei qaravi na marama ena bose lawa. E kuria o Hon Rabuka ni kena tutaki na Matanitu Vinaka e dua na tikina bibi

e na kena laveti cake tale kina dua nai vakatagedegede na vei qaravi ni tu galala. E sa vakaraitaka talega na nodra vakavinavinaka kina matanitu o Bolatagane (British Government) na vuku ni kena tokoni tiko mai na Matanitu o Viti. E vakaraitaka talega o Hon Rabuka ni sa vakaraitaka talega na nodra veisureti ki vua na Sivika ni Matanitu o United Kingdom ke na rawa nira sikova sara mai na noda delanisoso, ka vaka kina na CHOGM24 ena mua ni yabaki oqo.

TEKIVU NA SUSU IKA ENA KORO KO LEVUKA VAKAVITI



Era marau na lewe ni Tikina o Levuka ena yanuyanu o Ovalau ena kena mai soli na veivuke nai yaya ni susu ika(Aquaculture) mai vua na Minisita ni Qoliqoli kei na Veikau o Hon Kalaveti Ravu ena siga Lotulevu na ika2 ni siga ni vula ko Me.

E mai digitaki na koro ko Levuka Vakaviti ena loma ni tikina ena kena mai susugi na luve ni ika(Tilapia). E vica tale na vanua e nanumi mena vakayacori talega kina na veiqaravi ogo oka kina na koronivuli ni vuli tara e Naleba Youth Training Center e Labasa oka talega kina na Dreketi Fisheries Station kei na dua na itikotiko e Savusavu.

E mai soli e 78,000 literes na Taqe (10 na Diameter) ka vaka kina na pamuni wai , e dua tale na taqe ni wai (10,000 na lita).

Na porokaramu ogo ena kovuta e 3, 200 na Tilapia ka nanumi tiko nina vakasucuma e 680 na kilo karamu na Tilapia ni oti e 4 na vula na nodra biu tu.

E lewe vica vei ira nai Tabagone ena tikina o Levuka era na laki veiqaravi

alega e Naduruloulou Research Station e Kasavu ena loma ni 3 na macawa mena rawa ni vulici na kena tamusuki na luveni ika(Tilapia) ka vakauasivi na kena raici mena qaravi vinaka na bisinisi.

E vakaraitaka talega o Hon Ravu ni Tabana ni Qoliqoli kei na Veikau esa toso tiko ga e liu ena vuku ni kena biu mai na ituvatuva ogo mena valuti kina na bula dravudravua ka laveta cake tale nai vakarau ni bula kina dua tale na tagede vou , vakauasivi oira na tu ena veikorokoro kei na taudaku ni veikoro lelevu.

E vakamacalataka talega na Mata Ni Tikina o Levuka o Taniela Tamani ni kena yaco yani na veivakatorocaketaki ni susu ika ena sollia na yalo ni cakacaka vei ira nai tikotiko ena yanuyanu o Ovalau.

“Keimami sa marau ena kena mai ciqomi na porokaramu ogo , ena vakauqeti ira na bula tu vakanakoro kei ira nai sausauvou.”

E kuria ni nodra okati talega mai nai Tabagone ena vukea sara vakalevuena nodra yawaki ira mai ena basu lawa.



Na Minisita Ni Qoliqoli kei Na Veikau o Hon Kalaveti Ravu ena kena soli nai Yaya ni susu Ika e Levuka Vakaviti.

CAVU I SAUSAU NA VANUA O NADONUMAI



Hon Filimoni Vosarogo na Minisita ni Qele kei Nai Yaubula ena soqo ni Nadonumai Holdings Limited.

Na tinikadua na mataqali ena koro ko Suvavou e ra mai marautaka na vei ka esa mai rawata na Nadonumai Holdings me vakatekivu taki mai na 1993 na gauna ea mai tauyavu kina nai matai ni nodratou taba vale ka vakatokai tiko na Suvavou House ena loma ni koro levu o Suva.

Era mai dolava na vale na Paraiminisita o Sitiveni Rabuka ena 1997. Ena ika23 ni Veverueri, 2023 e mai cereki kina e dua na drau ni veva vou ena kena mai vakananaumi nai 25 ni yabaki ni vei qaravi (Silver Jubilee)

Ena kena mai marautaki na sasaga oqo esa mai tavoca kina na Nadonumai Holdings nai tuvatuva ni kena tosoi tiko ga na veivakatorocaketaki ka sa tiko na ituvatuva

ni kena tara tale e so na taba vale ka me tosoi talega na Suvavou House.

E mai vakayacori na soqo oqo ena siga Vakarauwai na ika27 ni siga ni vula ko Evereli, 2024 ka vakayacori ena Otela na Grand Pacific Hotel e Suva ka ra vulagi dokai kina na Minisita ni Qele kei na iYaubula o Hon Filimone Vosarogo, ka ra vakaraitaka kina na veitokoni mai na Matanitu Cokovata.

“Na noda mai tiko ena yakavi nikua e ratou vakarautaka na Nadonumai Holdings Limited e sa dua na cavu ikalawa vou ena kena tokoni na kabani ni Itaukei. Au via taura na gauna oqo meu vakanuinui vinaka vua na Turaga na Tui Suva, na Jiameni ni Nadonumai Holdings Limited, lewe ni matabose e cake kei ira na lewe ni timi

ena vuku ni yalodina, veisau ka vaka kina na yalo ni vosota ena loma ni 25 na yabaki sa sivi”.

“Na kena mai rawati na Nadonumai Holdings esa dua na cavu ikalawa levu. Mai na gauna tauyavu kina ka sa mai cava sara ena dua na delana cecere ena kena mai rawati na vale taba 10 na Suvavou House.”

E kuria o Hon Vosarogo ena vuku ni kena cibitaki na Nadonumai Holdings esa dua na itavi bibi vei ira na kawa iTaukei ka vakauasivi ena veidinadinati mai na matanitu ena nodra tokoni nai taukeni vanua kei na veivakasama tale eso.

E na vuravura ni bisinisi nikua sa totolo sara na kena veisisivi taki na rawa ka e sega walega ni cavacava ni ka ia e sa dua talega nai lakolako vou. Sa ka bibi meda na taura e dua na gauna me vakasamataki lesu ka marautaki na rawa ka, vakadindinataki talega ena vuku ni cakacaka vakaukauwa kei na yalodina ka rawa kina e levu sara na veika vinaka.

Na nomuni rawaka e vakananumi keda ni gauna e dau soli kina na madigi ka vaka kina na veitokoni ena kena vakarautaki na cakacaka ,laveti cake tale nai vakatagedegede ni bula ka vaka kina na nodra rawaka na lewenivanua ena koro o Suvavou.

“E na vuku ni matanitu cokovata au cavuta na vakavinavinaka ki vua na Turaga na Tui Suva kei ira nai vakalesilesi ni Nadonumai Holdings Ltd ena vuku ni cau ni kabani ena bula vakailavo ni noda vanua”.

E vakaraitaka talega ni na tu eso na bolebole ena lako curumi ka tu talega nai tuvatuva ena gadrevi mena rawati.

Na Nadonumai Holdings ena tosoya tiko na rawaka ka vakabauta nina rawati sara e levu na gagadre.

Sa vakanuinui vinaka tu o Hon Vosarogo nina tomani tiko ga na sasaga ena Nadonumai Holdings.



Nai Vukevuke Ni Minisita ni Valenivolavola Ni Paraiminisita o Hon Sakeasi Tubuna kei ira nai vulagi sureti ena soqo ni Nadonumai Holdings Limited.

Noda Viti

Siga Lotulevu Me 16, 2024, 8 Drauniveva, 7 ni Tabana, 15 ni Lavelave ni Ivola | [www.fiji.gov.fj](#) @FijiGovt Fiji Government

VEITALANOATAKI NA LAW A E VAUCI IRA NA GONE



Na nodra taqomaki ka maroroi na gone esa dua na ka dredre e na gauna nikua ena vuku ni kena sa coriti tu na vakasama ni lewenivanua ena veika esa kauta mai na mona livaliva. Eda vakavinavinaka ena vuku ni vakasama ni kena raillesuvi tale eso na lawa ka vakatabakidua vei ira nai sausau vou ni vanua o Viti. E mai liutaka na bese ena kena

raici lesu na lawa e vauci ka vaka kina na nodra taqomaki na gone (Childcare and Protection Bill 2024) nai Vukevuke ni Paraiminisita ka Minisita ni Tabana ni Saravanua kei na Vuka o Hon Viliame Gavoka ena i ka 7 ni Me, 2024. Na lawa oqo e vu mai ena kena raici lesu na Juveniles Act. Na lawa oqo e sana qai kau cake ena Bose Lawa mena laki veitalanoataki ka

rogoci talega kina e vuqatale na nanuma. Na lawa e baleti ira na gone (Child Justice Bill) e sa veisosomitaki na lawa e vauca na nodra vauci vakalawa na gone. E vakarautaki e dua nai tuvatuva mena muri ena vuku ni nodra karoni, maroroi, ka taqomaki kina na gone oka talega kina na gaunisala ni veitaratara vei ira na ovisa me tekivu mai na gauna ni e cabeti kina na Mataveilewai me yacova

na suka lesu mai ena nodra I tikotiko. Na Childcare and Protection Bill 2024 esa navuci mena bokoca na lawa ka veisemati kina nodra taqomaki na gone. E na kauta laivi talega na lawa oqo na Child Welfare Act 2010 me vaka esa vakaraitaki tiko mai mena veisemati ka vakaukauwataki ka vaka kina na cakacakavata ena nodra vukei ka taqomaki kina oira na gone.

हमारे गिरमिटिया मजदूर अपने अटल सिद्धान्तों के कारण सफल हुए - उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री बिमान प्रसाद



पूरी कहानी पृष्ठ 2 पर

स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय आम जनता से एक तरह के बुखार इन्फ्लूएन्ज़ा से सावधान रहने की मांग कर रहा है



पूरी कहानी पृष्ठ 3 पर

गिरमिट के शताब्दी समारोह के दौरान 1979 में आयोजित निबन्ध प्रतियोगिया की कुछ कहानियाँ इस अंक में छापी गई है



पूरी कहानी पृष्ठ 6/7 पर

प्रधान मंत्री माननीय सितिवेनी रम्बूका का गिरमिट दिवस संदेश

नी सा बूला विनाका,

हम सब जबकि गिरमिट दिवस मना रहे हैं, तो ऐसे में आइए हम सुलह, क्षमा और उपचार की उस यात्रा पर विचार करने के लिए रुकें जो हमने एक राष्ट्र के रूप में एक साथ शुरू की है।

एक साल पहले मैं लौतोका के चेचहिल पार्क पर गिरमिट दिवस के महत्व के अवसर पर प्रकाश डालने के लिए उपस्थित था जब भारत से साठ हजार से ज़्यादा गिरमिटिया मजदूरों को फीजी लाया गया था। एक सौ पैंतालीस साल पहले, प्रथम भारतीय मजदूर लियोनिदास नामक जहाज़ में आकर लेवूका बंदरगाह पर उतरे थे, जो हमारे इतिहास का एक अध्याय कठिनाई और संघर्ष से जुड़ा है। गिरमिटिया प्रणाली पीढ़ियों द्वारा संघे गए दर्दनाक अतीत की एक अंधेरी याद के रूप में खड़ी है।

फिर भी विपरीत परिस्थितियों के बीच से कई बाधाओं के खिलाफ मानवीय भावना की जीत का एक प्रमाण सामने आया।

नेशनल आर्काइव्स ओफ फीजी के रिकोर्ड्स दिखाते हैं कि गिरमिट प्रथा के नीचे कुल मिलाकर साठ हजार पाँच सौ तिरपन लोग जिनमें पुरुष, महिलाएं और बच्चे फीजी लाए गए थे। नेशनल अर्काइव्स के अति सतर्क कार्य की मदद से आज गिरमिटियों के वंशजों के पास उनकी पारिवारिक विरासत के बारे में अमूल्य कागज़ात तथा जानकारी तक पहुंच है। मैं आपको प्रोत्साहित करता हूँ कि आप गिरमिट दिवस समारोह के दौरान गिरमिट सेन्टर स्थित अर्काइव्स के बूथ में जाकर इन जानकारियों तथा संसाधनों से लाभ उठाएं।

गिरमिटिया मजदूरों की दुर्दशा के बारे में बड़े पैमाने पर लेख लिखे गए हैं तथा चर्चा हुई है।

इन मजदूरों को ब्रिटिश के गिरमिटिया मजदूर समझौता के नीचे फीजी लाया गया था जिसे गिरमिट के नाम से जाना

जाने लगा। आज इतिहासकार, इस प्रणाली को गुलामी और मानव तस्करी के रूप में देखते हैं। प्रोफेसर बिज़ लाल ने अपनी किताब इमली के पेड़ में गिरमिटियों के जीवन मुश्किलें तथा अनुभव की झलक पेश की।

हमें गिरमिटियों की परंपराओं का सम्मान करना चाहिए तथा उनके द्वारा छोड़ी गई सीख को अपनाना चाहिए।

उनकी यात्रा में कई मुसिबतें आईं लेकिन एकता में बँधकर उन्होंने इसे पार किया जो हमें सीख देता है कि देश में एक साथ खड़े रहने का महत्व क्या है। दुनिया भर में जहाँ हर तरह के विभाजन हैं, गिरमिटियों के उदाहरण हमारे लिए आशा की किरण हैं। हम जबकि गिरमिट दिवस मना रहे हैं जिसका मुख्य विषय है नए फीजी के निर्माण के लिए गिरमिट वंशजों की यात्रा तो ऐसे में हमें भूलना नहीं चाहिए कि उन्होंने आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए सुखद रास्ता बनाने के लिए कड़ी मेहनत और अतुलनीय बलिदान सहन किया। गिरमिटिया मजदूरों के वंशजों ने हमारे समाज के हर एक पहलू में योगदान देते हुए, हमारे राष्ट्र के ताने-बाने में अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज कराई है।

व्यापार से लेकर संस्कृति तक, उनका प्रभाव निविवाद है जो हमारे जीवन को अनगिनत तरीकों से समृद्ध कर रहा है। हम जबकि उनके योगदान का जश्न मना रहे हैं तो ऐसे में हमारे बीते हुए कल के घावों का भी सामना करना चाहिए। सत्य और सुलह कमिशन एक प्रमाण के रूप में खड़ा है जो उपचार के प्रति हमारी प्रतिबद्धता, सच बोलने और मेल-मिलाप के लिए एक मंच प्रदान करता है।

हमारे प्रवासियों तथा गिरमिट के वंशजों को मैं निमंत्रण देता हूँ कि वे अपने पुर्वजों के जन्म स्थान को लौटें। हमारी इमिग्रेशन की नितियों में छूट से गर्मजोशी के साथ आपका स्वागत

निश्चित करती है, जिससे आप बिना किसी बाधा के अपनी जड़ों से फिर से जुड़ सकते हैं।

आइए हम गिरमिट दिवस को चिंतन, मेल-मिलाप और नवीकरण के समय के रूप में अपनाएं। क्या हम एकता, करूणा और समझ पर आधारित भविष्य बनाकर गिरमिटिया की विरासत का सम्मान कर सकते हैं

धन्यवाद

फीजीवासियों को गिरमिट दिवस की शुभकामना





भूत-पूर्व प्रधान मंत्री स्वर्गीय रातु सर कमिसेसे मारा का संदेश

शीलता सिंह

मैं बहुत खुश कि मुझे यह अवसर मिला है ताकि मैं आप सभी को गिरमिट शताब्दी के जश्न की शुभकामनाएं दे सकूँ।

यह बहुत अच्छी बात होगी अगर फीजी में गिरमिट शताब्दी समारोह को एक बड़े पैमाने पर मनाया जाएगा। ना केवल हम ने बल्कि सभी भारतीयों ने उन गिरमिटियों के कड़े परिश्रम से लाभ उठाया है।

उन्होंने कड़ी मेहनत और त्याग किया, कुछ लोग अपनी कड़ी मेहनत का फल

देखने के लिए यही फीजी में ही रहे गए और कई लोग अपनी मातृ भूमि को छोड़ने से पहले अपनी संस्कृति और अपनी काबिलीयत को अपने बच्चों को दे कर आए थे। ब्रिटिश सरकार और सी एस आर कम्पनी उस ज़माने में मजदूरों के साथ बुरा व्यवहार कर रहे थे तथा बहुत अत्याचार भी किया करते थे। लेकिन चलो हम याद करते हैं उन पलो को जिससे गंवनर को प्रोत्साहन मिला जिससे गिरमिट की शुरुआत हुई। ब्रिटिश सरकार को सशक्त बनाने के लिए लंदन से बहुत दबाव आ रहा था क्योंकि उन का यह मनना था कि शुगर

क्षेत्र से देश का भविष्य उज्ज्वल हो सकता है तथा आज भी हम सब इसी क्षेत्र से लाभ उठा रहे हैं। उस समय उन्होंने यह देखा कि इ-तौकई लोगों के पास अपने जीने का एक तरीका था तथा अपने कोरो में उन के अपने काम करने का एक तरीका था। वह उन के जीवन जीने के तरीको में बाधा नहीं लाना चाहते थे, इसी लिए गिरमिटिया मजदूरों को लाना एक सही फैसला था तथा आज हम उन्हें पिता के स्वरूप मानते हैं। सी एस आर ने सरकार के एक परामर्श के तहत कई हज़ार किसानों को अपने खुद का फसल उगाने की अनुमति दी ताकि

वे खुद ही बेच सकें और पैसा कमा सकें। इससे किसान आत्मनिर्भर और प्रोत्साहित होंगे जो क्षेत्र के प्रति अधिक लाभदायक होगा। ना केवल शुगर क्षेत्र बल्कि गिरमिट के वंशज ने भी देश की अर्थव्यवस्था की प्रगति में एक अहम भूमिका निभाई है। साथ ही उन्हें एक स्वतंत्र समाज में और एक सुखद देश में योगदान देने का अवसर मिला है।

गिरमिट शताब्दी समारोह पर भुतपूर्व प्रधान मंत्री स्वर्गीय रातु सर कमिसेसे मारा का गिरमिट संदेश

उत्तरी विभाग के गन्ने के किसानों ने चीनी मंत्री से चिन्ताए व्यक्त की



चीनी मंत्री माननीय चरण जिथ सिंह हाल में उत्तरी विभाग के गन्ने के किसानों से मुलाकात करते हुए चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

शीलता सिंह

गठबंधन सरकार गन्ने के उत्पादन को बढ़ाने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है क्योंकि कई ग्रामीण इलाकों में रहने वाले लोग चीनी व्यवसाय पर निर्भर हैं।

हाल ही में बहु-जातीय मामले और शुगर क्षेत्र के मंत्री चरण जिथ सिंह ने इस बात को स्पष्ट किया। मानीनय सिंह ने परामर्श बैठक के दौरान उत्तरी भाग के किसानों से मुलाकात की।

मंत्री सिंह ने इस बात को दोहराया कि फीजी में चीनी व्यवसाय का महत्व अधिक है तथा यह हमारे अर्थव्यवस्था, साथ ही साथ उत्तरी और पश्चिमी भाग के लोगो के योगदान से यह इतना सफल है। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि गन्ने की खेती ना केवल एक क्षेत्र है बल्कि कई फीजीवासियों के लिए आजीविका के अवसर प्रदान करता है, खास कर के उन लोगो के लिए जो उत्तरी और पश्चिमी भाग के ग्रामीण इलाको में रहते हैं।

“यह बहुत जरूरी है कि हम फीजी में चीनी व्यवसाय के महत्व को समझे और यह जाने कि कैसे यह हमारे समाज के लोगों के लिए एक अहम भूमिका निभाता है तथा यह कई लोगो के लिए आमदनी का साधन प्रदान करता है। सरकार चीनी व्यवसाय को बनाए रखने

और बढ़ाने के लिए अपनी प्रतिबद्धता पर अटल है।” मंत्री सिंह ने कहा।

गठबंधन सरकार के दृष्टिकोण पर प्रकाश डालते हुए उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि वे गन्ने के उत्पादन को कम नहीं कर सकते हैं क्योंकि इससे उन लोगों पर असर पड़ेगा जो इस क्षेत्र पर निर्भर हैं। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि सरकार, चीनी व्यवसाय को दी गई सहायता से चीनी के उत्पादन में वृद्धि को प्रोत्साहित करेगा। सरकार, गन्ने के किसानों, शुगर समिति के सदस्य और चीनी क्षेत्र के अधिकारियों के साथ मिल कर काम कर रही है तथा मंत्री सिंह ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि मंत्रालय चीनी क्षेत्र के प्रति अपनी प्रतिबद्धता को जारी रखेगा ताकि वे साथ मिलकर व्यवसाय को और उँचाई तक लेजा सके।

नालेम्बा, लम्बासा के रहने वाले श्री शलेन्द्र कृष्ण चेट्टी ने सरकार को किसानों को सहायता प्रदान करने के लिए धन्यवाद दिया।

यह पहली बार है जब शुगर मंत्री अपनी पूरी टीम के साथ हमारे समक्ष आए हुए हैं और उनसे हम बातें कर रहे हैं। यह चीनी व्यवसाय और किसानों के प्रति सरकार की प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाता है। साथ ही साथ उन्होंने सरकार और मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों को उनके सहयोग, सलाह और समय समय पर

हमारे गिरमिटिया मजदूर अपने अटल सिद्धान्तों के कारण सफल हुए



उप प्रधान मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद, दूरिजम मंत्री माननीय विलियामे गवोका तथा सहायक महिला मंत्री माननीय शशि किरण, गिरमिट दिवस समारोह के उद्घाटन के दौरान लौतोका के गिरमिट सेंटर पर कुछ बच्चियों के साथ

रोनल देव

सरकार दृढ़ता से विश्वास करती है कि अपने पूर्वजों के मूल्यों और आशीर्वाद को बनाए रखना राष्ट्र के लिए एक नई दृष्टि की ओर प्रगति का मार्ग है। लौतोका में एक सौ पैतालीसवें गिरमिट दिवस के उद्घाटन समारोह में बोलते हुए उप प्रधान मंत्री तथा फायनेन्स मंत्री माननीय बिमान प्रसाद ने कहा कि हम सभी जानते हैं कि हमारे पूर्वजों तथा उनके वंशजों ने फीजी की सामाजिक, राजनीतिक तथा आर्थिक उन्नति में कितना योगदान दिया है, उसकी तुलना नहीं की जा सकती न ही इसकी जगह कुछ और ले सकता है। चाहे हम यहाँ बसे हो या विदेश में, यह हमारी जन्म भूमि के प्रति हमारा देश भक्ति का कर्तव्य है कि हम यह ध्यान में रखें कि हमारा प्रिय राष्ट्र आशा की किरण और अवसर की भूमि है। मंत्री प्रसाद ने जोर दिया कि गठबंधन सरकार ने गिरमिटिया और उनके वंशजों के अमूल्य योगदान को मान्यता देने के लिए गिरमिट दिवस की सार्वजनिक छुट्टी की घोषणा की है। यह गिरमिटिया या गुलामी का जश्न नहीं था जैसा कि कुछ दिन पहले एक राजनीतिक नेता ने काफी बेतुके

ढंग से दावा किया था। यह गुलामी पर विजय पाने और फीजी को अपना नया घर बनाने के हमारे पूर्वजों के दृढ़ संकल्प का उत्सव है। हमारे पूर्व ज अपने गरिमा, समानता, न्याय और आत्म-सम्मान के अपने अटल सिद्धांतों के कारण सफल हुए। उन्हें ब्रिटिश सरकार से शिक्षा, सामाजिक सुरक्षा, पेंशन, गन्ने का उत्पादन बढ़ाने के लिए यातायात या ग्रांट की सहायता मिली न ही उन्होंने कोई सहायता माँगी। लेकिन उन्होंने अपने बच्चों को और उनके माध्यम से अपनी पीढ़ियों को यह ज्ञान और शक्ति प्रदान की कि समस्याओं का समाधान कब और कैसे शान्तिपूर्वक खोजा जाए। जिस नेशनल फेडरेशन पार्टी का मैं अभी नेता हूँ, उसकी स्थापना गिरमिटिया के वंशजों ने की थी जबकि पार्टी ने हमेशा से गिरमिटिया और इ-तउकेई या आदिवासी समाज की इच्छाओं, अधिकारों और आकांक्षाओं को हमेशा से पहचाना, समझा और सम्मान दिया है। फीजी, गिरमिटिया के वंशजों की मातृभूमि है, जैसे यह हमारे आदिवासी लोगों के लिए है। दोनों समाजों के लोग विदेश में भी बसें हैं लेकिन ये अपनी मातृभूमि को छोड़ नहीं सकते।



MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

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ज़रूरी सूचना

आम जनता से एक तरह के बुखार (इंफ्लूएन्ज़ा) से सावधान रहने की माँग

स्वास्थ्य तथा चिकित्सा सेवा मंत्रालय आम जनता से माँग कर रहा है कि वे बुखार जैसी बीमारियों यानि इंफ्लूएन्ज़ा से उचित सावधानी बरतें जबकि उत्तरी विभाग में बुखार की रिपोर्ट में वृद्धि देखी गई है।

पिछले दो हफ्ते में मंत्रालय के एर्ली वॉनिंग, अलर्ट तथा रेस्पॉन्स सिस्टम्स को दकाउन्ड्रोवे तथा बूआ में हेल्थ सेन्टर्स तथा सब-डिविज़नल अस्पतालों से बुखार जैसी बीमारियों यानि इंफ्लूएन्ज़ा के मामले की रिपोर्ट मिली है जबकि मटुवाता हेल्थ सब-डिविज़न में कुछ हद तक कम रिपोर्ट सामने आई है।

पाँच साल से कम उम्र के बच्चों में साँस संबंधी बीमारियों की वजह से हो रही है मौतें अभी भी मुख्य वजह बनी हुई है।

अब हम जबकि ठण्ड और सुखे के मौसम में कदम रख रहे हैं, तो ऐसे में मंत्रालय को लगता है कि साँस संबंधी बीमारियों में वृद्धि होगी जबकि बुखार जैसी बीमारियाँ यानि इंफ्लूएन्ज़ा साल के पहले कुछ महीनों में ज़्यादा सामने आती है।

बुखार जैसी बीमारियाँ यानि इंफ्लूएन्ज़ा के लक्षण में शामिल हैं:

- अचानक से बुखार लगना
- सूखी खाँसी - दो हफ्ते या उससे ज़्यादा समय तक आ सकती है
- सर में दर्द
- माँस पेशियों तथा जोड़ों में दर्द
- स्वास्थ्य महसूस न करना
- गले में खराश
- सर्दी होना

मंत्रालय लोगों से माँग कर रहा है कि वे खाँसते-छींकते वक्त मूँह ढके या टिशू या रूमाल का उपयोग करें और ऐसी सभाओं में न जाएं जहाँ सर्दी-खाँसी आसानी से फैल सकती है। जिन लोगों को बुखार के गम्भीर लक्षण दिखाई दें को अपनी नज़दीकी हेल्थ सेन्टर या अस्पताल जाना चाहिए।

उत्तरी विभाग में गिरमिट समारोह धूमधाम से मनाया गया

कई लोगों के लिए गिरमिट एक प्रेरणा है जो हमें कड़ी मेहनत करने के अलावा ये भी सिखाता है कि किसी को भी यह मौका न दें कि वो आपके गौरव के साथ खिलवाड़ करें फिर चाहे स्थिति कितनी भी बुरी क्यों न हो। सुबैरल पार्क लम्बासा में एक सौ पैतालिसवें गिरमिट समारोह में अपना भाषण देते हुए ग्रामीण तथा बाहरी द्वीपों के विकास के सहायक मंत्री माननीय चोवेसा वोदेया ने कहा कि गिरमिट, भारतीय मूल के हमारे फीजिवासियों के पूर्वजों की यात्रा का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है तथा वंशजों को गिरमिटियों से जोड़ता है जो गिरमिट प्रथा के नीचे फीजी लाए गए थे। गिरमिट के वंशजों के लिए अपनी जड़ों और अपने पूर्वजों के अनुभवों को समझने के लिए गिरमिट के इतिहास को समझना महत्वपूर्ण है। गिरमिटियों के अनुभव प्रकाश डालते हैं कि किस तरह उन्होंने शोषण और अन्याय पर काबू पाने का दृढ़ संकल्प लिया था। माननीय वोदेया ने कहा कि वंशजों के लिए, वो दिन सम्मान, अधिकारों और समानता के लिए उनके पूर्वजों के संघर्ष का प्रतीक है, जो उन्हें सामाजिक अन्याय और मानवाधिकारों की वकालत करने के लिए प्रेरित करता है। गिरमिटियों ने देश के विकास में भारी योगदान दिया है,” मंत्री वोदेया ने कहा।



गिरमिट समारोह बहुत महत्व रखता है - मंत्री सिंह



हमें अपने पूर्वजों की तकलीफों को याद रखना चाहिए, तथा ध्यान में रखना चाहिए कि उनके बलिदान को भूला नहीं जाए। लौताका के गिरमिट सेन्टर पर एक सौ पैतालीसवें गिरमिट दिवस समारोह के दूसरे दिन बहु-जातीय मामले तथा चीनी मंत्री माननीय चरण जिथ सिंह ने प्रकाश डाला कि गिरमिटियों तथा उनके वंशजों का महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है, चीनी व्यवसाय में कृषि क्षेत्र। पूर्वजों ने 1879 के बाद से देश में गन्ने के खेत बढ़ाने में मुख्य भूमिका निभाई थी जिससे फीजी को आर्थिक रूप से भारी फायदा हो रहा है। गन्ने की कटाई से लेकर मिलों में चीनी बनाने तक कई नौकरियाँ पैदा हुईं, विदेशी पैसा देश में आया और अर्थ-व्यवस्था में भारी योगदान हुआ। मंत्री सिंह ने कहा कि पिछले कुछ सालों में चीनी व्यवसाय ने कई चुनौतियों का सामना किया लेकिन वो अभी भी देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था के लिए महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देता है। इस गठबंधन सरकार ने मुझे इस चीनी व्यवसाय को नई उँचाई तक पहुँचाने की ज़िम्मेदारी सौंपी है,” बहु जातीय मामले तथा चीनी मंत्री माननीय चरण जिथ सिंह के शब्द।



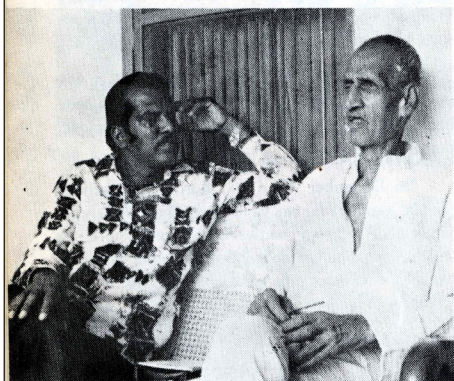
How I met Pandit Banarsidas Chaturvedi, one of the pioneers who fought for the abolition of the indenture system. Pandit Banarsidas has worked with some of the leading freedom fighters of India such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru C.F. Andrews, Ravindra Nath Tagore and others.

By the Minister of State for Youth and Sport, Mr Vivekanand Sharma.

फीजी वासियों के एक दोस्त से मैं किस तरह मिला

पं. बनारसीदास चतुर्वेदी जी के बारे में सोचते ही कोई चार साल पहले जिस रूप में सर्वप्रथम देखा था, उसकी स्मृति मन और आंखों में आये बगैर नहीं रहती। सन् १९६४ से लेकर कई बार भात भ्रमण पर जा चुका था। लेकिन इस बार १९७४ के साल में फीजी से करीब दस हजार मील सुदूर पूर्व से उड़ान लेकर पंडित जी के दर्शन की विशेष इच्छा लिये भारत वर्ष पहुंचा। हिन्दू कालेज दिल्ली के (अपने एक अभिन्न मित्र) प्रो. श्री सुरेश

अनेक-अनेक भावनाओं के सागर में डूबते उतराते। हमें पता ही नहीं चला कि आधे मील का सफर कब खत्म हो गया और हम अपनी मंजिल पर पहुंच गये। द्वार पर पहुंचते ही मैंने आवाज लगाई-पंडित जी हैं? एक बालिका सामने आई और बड़े आदर से कहा-हैं। आप लोगों को दादा जी बुला रहे हैं। अन्दर प्रवेश हम पा ही रहे थे कि सामने सफेद कुर्ता और पाजामा पहने तथा लम्बा अंगरखा कंधे पर डाले, हाथ में लाली लिये पोपले चेहरे में सु-स्कराहट समेटे लम्बे कद का गेहुआ रंग वाला व्यक्ति देखा। उनके दर्शन से हमें एक अद्भुत आनंद संतोष की अनुभूति हो रही थी और हमें लगा कि यही प्रवासी भारतीयों के हिमायती पं. बनारसीदास चतुर्वेदी जी हैं-थोड़ी देर हम अपलक उन्हें देखते रहे और फिर चेतना लौटी तो लपक कर हम दोनों ने उनका चरण स्पर्श किया-हमारी पीठ थपथपाते हुए पास में पड़ी कुर्सी पर बैठने का उन्होंने संकेत दिया और.....।



भारत में श्री चतुर्वेदी जी के साथ श्री शर्मा जी

चतुर्वेदी जी के साथ ट्रेन द्वारा दिल्ली से कोयट्टार पंडित जी से मिलने गया। स्टेशन से आधे मील पर कोयट्टार कालेज है वहीं उनके ज्येष्ठ पुत्र कालेज प्रिन्सिपल हैं उन्हीं के साथ इन दिनों पंडित जी रह रहे थे। उनसे मिलने हम पैदल ही चल पड़े-

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उनकी मस्ती की तिजोरी सदा भरी रही, यही बनका व्यक्तित्व है।

पं. चतुर्वेदी जी कालेज में अध्यापक रहे, समाचार पत्रों के कुशल सम्पादन रहे और राज्यसभा के गणमान्य सदस्य भी रहे। लेखक के रूप में उन्होंने अपनी मौलिक रचनाओं से हिन्दी के भंडार को समृद्ध किया और एक सजीव पत्रकार के रूप में पत्रकारिता के स्तर को भी ऊंचा उठाया है। उन्होंने अनेक साहित्यिक तथा लोकउपयोगी आंदोलनों का मुखपान एवं संचालन किया है, बहुत से साहित्य-सेवियों तथा रचनात्मक कार्य-कर्ताओं को प्रेरणा और प्रोत्साहन देकर आगे बढ़ाया है। प्रवासी भारतीयों की जो उन्होंने सेवा की है, वह किसी से छिपी नहीं है।

प्रवासी भारतवंशियों के सम्बन्ध में पंडित चतुर्वेदी जी ने अनेक लेख, संस्करण, रेखाचित्र आदि लिखे। फीजी के प्रवासी भारतीयों के प्रति उनका विशेष लगाव रहा है और उन्हीं के अथक परिश्रम से फीजी में चालू शतबन्दी प्रथा जिसके अन्तर्गत हिन्दुस्तान से भारतीयों को फीजी में खेती आदि सम्भालने के लिए लाया जाता रहा खत्म हुआ। उनकी लिखी हुई "फीजी में मेरे २१ वर्ष" अत्यधिक प्रसिद्ध और लोकप्रिय पुस्तक बनी जिसे उन्होंने पं. तोताराम सनाढ्य की ओर से लिखी है।

भारत के समर राष्ट्रकवि श्री रामधारी सिंह 'दिनकर' ने इस पुस्तक के सम्बन्ध में अपने उद्गार इन शब्दों में व्यक्त किये-

"फीजी द्वीप में मेरे २१ वर्ष" पुस्तक ने एक समय तहलका मचा दिया था। गुजराती में उसके अलग-अलग भार अनुवाद प्रकाशित हुए थे। इस पुस्तक के अनुवाद मराठी और बंगला में भी निकले थे। कहते हैं इसी पुस्तक से प्रेरणा पाकर राष्ट्रकवि श्री मैथिलीशरण गुप्त जी ने 'किसान' काव्य की रचना की थी और सुभद्रा कुमारी चौहान

के पति लक्ष्मण सिंह चौहान ने 'कुली प्रथा' नाम का नाटक लिखा था। दीनबन्धु एंडरूज ने इस किताब का अंग्रेजी में अनुवाद किया था। श्री जय प्रकाश नारायण ने यह पुस्तक बचपन में पढ़ी थी और उससे वह काफी प्रभावित हुए थे। यह रचना इतनी सफल रही कि इसे पढ़ने से यही अनुमान होता है कि पं. चतुर्वेदी जी जरूर कीजी आये थे, लेकिन सच तो यह है कि वे खुद फीजी नहीं आये।

'दिनकर' जी आगे लिखते हैं कि पं. बनारसीदास जी ने कोई २२ वर्षों तक प्रवासी भारतीयों की सेवा ऐसी निष्ठा से की कि गांधीजी, एंडरूज, श्री निवास शास्त्री आदि नेताओं के वह प्रिय पात्र हो गये।

गांधी जी ने तो यहां तक लिख दिया था कि मुझे और एंडरूज को छोड़कर और कोई भारतीय ऐसा नहीं है, जिसे प्रवासी भारतीयों के बारे में उतनी जानकारी हो, जितना जानकारी बनारसीदास को है।

पं. बनारसीदास जी शान्ति निकेतन में कबीन्द्र रवौन्द्र के और दीनबन्धु एंडरूज के साथ रहे, सावरपती आश्रम में गांधीजी और पं. तोताराम सनाढ्य के साथ जिये और प्रवासी भारतीयों की सेवा में तन मन धन से संलग्न रहे-आज भी सफलतापूर्वक जीवन के ८२ वर्ष पार कर प्रवासी भारतवंशियों की सेवा में रत हैं और उन्नत व समृद्ध फीजी में बसे भारतवंशियों की ओर निगाह लगाये इन्तजार कर रहे हैं-कभी तो निमंत्रण आयेगा उस भूभाग के दर्शन का-बनारसीदास जी के चरणों में हम फीजी वालों का शत-शत प्रणाम।

आपके पावन चरण एक दिन इस पवित्र भूमि पर अवश्य पड़ेंगे। पंडित जी अमर रहें।

विवेकानन्द शर्मा एम. ए. एम. सी
फीजी के युवा एवं क्रीड़ा मंत्री

फीजी में भारतीयों के
आगमन के सौ वर्ष पूरे होने पर
लिखित-१८७६-१९७६।

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With the kind consent of the Editor, Shanti Dut, we publish the three essays which won places in a competition sponsored by the Hindi weekly Shanti Dut. The topics being Indian contributions to the development of Fiji and the exchange of cultures and the social ways of life between Fijians and Indians in Fiji.

भारत की यात्रा का प्रथम विजयी निबन्ध

"भारतीयों का फीजी के विकास में योगदान"

फीजी में सर्वप्रथम भारतीय मजदूर सन १८७९ ईस्वी में आये। उस समय फीजी ब्रिटिश के अधीन हो चुक था। पन्द्रह मई को लियोनिदास जहाज द्वारा चार सौ चौंसठ भारतीय मजदूर रमणीक द्वीप फीजी पहुंचे।

वे पांच वर्षों की शर्तबन्दी के अन्तर्गत आये थे और उन्हें यहां पर विभिन्न भागों में मजदूरी करनी पड़ी। यहीं से भारतीयों का इतिहास आरम्भ होता है।

भारतीयों को गन्ना, कपास और रबड़ की खेती में काम करना पड़ता था। इतिहास के पंडितों ने यह दर्शाया है कि जिस तरीके से उन लोगों के साथ काम लिया जाता था वह अति निन्दनीय और कठोर था।

कठिन परिश्रम करने के बावजूद उन पर अत्याचार भा किया जाता था, लेकिन सब

से महत्व की बात तो यह है कि उन्होंने बड़ी इमानदारी और सर्वोत्तम ढंग से कार्य को निर्यात रूप से करना पसन्द किया। इन्हीं सिद्धांतों को क्रियात्मक रूप दे कर किसी भी देश को आर्थिक, सामाजिक और राजनीतिक उन्नति होती है। फीजी में बसे भारतीय लोग जिस लग्नशीलता, बहादुरी, इमानदारी, प्रेम और सद्भावना से निवास करते आये हैं, उस महान शक्ति के आधार पर जो प्रगति यहां हुई है वह अनिर्वचनीय है।

सन १९१६ ईस्वी में गिरमिट प्रथा का अन्त हुआ तथा भारतीयों को यहां पर बसने का अधिकार भी प्राप्त हो गया था। लगभग ९२ प्रतिशत भारतीयों की पैदाइश फीजी में ही हुई है। गिरमिट प्रथा के अन्तर्गत आये कुछ भारतीय वृद्ध अभी भी जीवित हैं, लेकिन उनकी

फीजी में शर्तबन्दी प्रथा के नीचे आए हुए भारतीयों के शताब्दी समारोह के संदर्भ में शान्ति दूत द्वारा आयोजित



गिरमिट शताब्दी हिन्दी निबन्ध प्रतियोगिता का प्रथम विजेता श्री बलराम वांशष्ट, सिंगाताका का निबन्ध नीचे प्रकाशित किया जा रहा है। द्वितीय और तीसरे विजेताओं का निबन्ध क्रमशः रूप से प्रकाशित किए जाते रहेंगे।

संख्या बहुत कम है।
उन्होंने व्यक्तिगत तौर

पर काईवीती, सरकारी तथा जन्म खरीद जमीन में अपनी अपनी खेती आरम्भ की। लगभग तीन पाँड प्रति बीघा जमीन प्राप्त होता था और एककोस वर्ष की लीस दी जाती थी। इस अवधि को पूर्ण होने पर दस वर्ष की और लीस दी जा सकता था।

सन १९१५ के आंकड़ों से यह प्रमाणित होता है कि ३६७ भारतीयों ने यहां की जमीन के प्रति विशेष दिलचस्पी दिखाई। उस समय

जमीन सात पाँड प्रति बीघा प्राप्त किया जा सकता था। उस समय तरक्की के साधन बहुत कम थे। भारतीयों के लिए फीजी नई जगह थी, उन्हें सहायता प्रदान करने वाला कोई नहीं था। जमीन प्राप्त होते ही वे खेती में डट कर काम करना शुरू किया। जिन भारतीयों ने लीस पर जमीन ली थी वह अपनी ही जमीन पर अपना घर बनाया और वहीं रह कर अपने बाल बच्चों को पाला-पोसा।

वह गन्ना बोता, धान बो कर खाने के लिए चावल प्राप्त करता, तरकारी भी पैदा करता और गाय, बैल, घोड़े, बकरे आदि जानवर भी पालता। शर्तबन्दी समाप्त होने के पश्चात भारतीयों

की किसानी साधारण थी और उस का भविष्य उज्ज्वल था।

शर्तबन्दी के अन्तर्गत भारतीयों को गन्ने के खेत में काम करने के अलावे अन्य मजदूरी भी करनी पड़ती थी। वे रास्ते भी बनाते थे। आज की पक्की लाईन जो लोहे की पटरियों गन्ने का गाड़ियों के लिए बनी हुई है, वह हमारे भारतीय मजदूरों की मेहनत से बनाया गया था। इस के साथ साथ बड़े बड़े जंगलों को साफ करके उपजाऊ जमीन तैयार करना उन्होंने लोगों का कार्य रहा है। भारतीयों का यह सब से प्रथम योगदान रहा है और इसी भूमिका के आधार पर अन्य क्षेत्रों में विकास हुआ। गन्ने की तथा अन्य फसलों की खेती की नालियां बनाना भारतीयों का काम था। आज भी हम उन के प्रयास के नमूने देख सकते हैं।

शर्नः शर्नः भारतीयों का परिवार बढ़ता गया और उन्हें बच्चों की शिक्षा के लिए पाठशाला बनाना पड़ा। कूटी तो पहले ही बन चुके थे, लेकिन आवश्यकतानुसार सनातन धर्म सभा, आर्य समाज, मुस्लिम लीग, मेथोडिस्ट मिशन, राम कृष्ण मिशन तथा संगम ने शिक्षा

के क्षेत्र में कदम उठाया। सरकार ने शिक्षा संस्थाओं को प्रोत्साहन देती रही और आज फीजी के कोनों कोनों में भारतीयों द्वारा संचालित प्राइमरी तथा सेकेंडरी स्कूल हैं। इन स्कूलों में सब जातियों के बच्चे एक साथ विद्या प्राप्त करते हैं। पाठशालाओं में विभिन्न बच्चों के समक्ष सांस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान होता है, इस से समाज में एकता और प्रेम बढ़ता ही रहता है।

भारतीयों की संस्कृति और सभ्यता का प्रभाव अन्य जातियों पर पड़ा है। हमारे भोजन का प्रचार यहां के आदिम निवासियों के घरों तक हो गया है। रोटी और तरकारी की लोकप्रियता से यहां कोई छूटा नहीं है। अतीत काल से काईवीती समाज अपने वास्तव्यों में ही रहना पसन्द किया है, जिससे वे करोड़ कहते हैं। लेकिन आज का हर व्यक्ति अपना घर और जमीन अगल देखना चाहता है। भारतीयों ने शर्तबन्दी के बाद ऐसा किया, और अब अन्य जातियों भी इस को अपना रही हैं। आज हम कुछ काईवीतीयों को अलग घरों में निवास करते देखते हैं। व्यक्ति सामाजिक प्राणी है, लेकिन उस की अपनी विशेषता भी है।

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फ़ीजी में रह कर भारतीयों ने खेती के अलावे अन्य क्षेत्रों में प्रयत्नशील रहे। वे शहरों में दुकानें खोल दीं और यहां की व्यापार क्षेत्र को बढ़ाया। दूसरे देशों से सस्ते माल मंगा कर इस देश की पूंजी बढ़ा दी। वर्तमान टूरिस्ट व्यवसाय का बड़ा हिस्सा भारतीयों के हाथ है। याता-यात के साधन-ट्रांसपोर्ट इंज-स्ट्री तथा मकान बनाने वाली कम्पनियां भी भारतीय हैं। इन सब कार्यों से देश की अर्थ व्यवस्था सब समाज के लिए हितकर रहा है। महत्व की बात तो यह है कि यहां की अन्य जातियां इन सब कार्यों के संचालन में निस्-कांच अपना सहयोग प्रदान कर रही हैं।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा जो नांदी में स्थित है, वह

यह दर्शाता रहा है कि यहां के निवासी कर्मिण्ड हैं, और फ़ीजी का स्थान विश्व में एक विशेष महत्व रखता है। किसान आन्दोलन का इतिहास यह दर्शाता रहा है कि सच्चाई को जनता तक पहुंचाने में निभीकता की अति आवश्यकता है। गन्ने के लिए अच्छा शर्तनामा चाहिए, मजदूरों के लिए भी अच्छा शर्तनामा चाहिए जिसे हमारे लीडरों ने जनता में प्रचार किया। फलस्वरूप सभाओं का आयोजन किया गया और किसानों के प्रति निर्धि अधवा मजदूरों के प्रतिनिधियों ने देश के हित के लिए सिफारिशें मालिकों के सामने रखा, जिसका परिणाम सब के लिए हित-कारी हुआ।

इसी तरह देश में बसे

भारतीयों ने राजनीति में संच लेना आवश्यक समझा। सामाजिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक तथा नीतिक कार्यों में लगे राष्ट्र को राजनीति से दूर नहीं रखा जा सकता, अतः फ़ीजी के विधान के अन्तर्गत राजनीति दर्शनशास्त्र में कोई भी समाज छूट नहीं सकता।

पार्टी वाली राजनीति जो हर एक विषय को ले कर आलोचनात्मक अध्ययन करती रहती है, भारतीय समाज से वंचित नहीं रह सकती। इस का महान प्रभाव देश पर पड़ा है और भारतीयों का योगदान का अपना जीता जागता इति-हास दक्षिण प्रशान्त में प्रकाशित होता रहा है।

बलराम वीशष्ट,
सिंगाताका।

हिन्दी प्रतियोगिता का द्वितीय विजयी निबन्ध

संस्कृत भाषा जिसका प्रचलन सर्वप्रथम भारत में ही हुआ है, संसार की सबसे प्राचीन भाषा मानी जाती है, सभी मान्य और प्रचलित भाषाओं में संस्कृत भाषा आधिक रूप में विद्यमान

है। भाषा के साथ ही अगर काईवीतीयों के आचार विचार और स्वाभाविक भार-तीयों से मिलता जुलता सा महसूस होता हो कोई आश्चर्य का विषय नहीं है। एतिहास वेत्ताओं ने प्रशा-

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न्तीय द्वीपों में बसे हुए पूर्व निवासियों को तीन भागों में विभक्त किया है, मेलोनीश-यन, पोलोनीशियन और माइक्रोनीशियन पहली दो जातियों से मिश्रित तीसरी जाति का प्रदुर्भाव हुआ है।

अनुमानतः फ़ीजी के काई-वीती दक्षिण अफ़्रीका से आये हैं, ऐसा अफ़्रीका के एक प्रदेश टांगानिका के कुछ स्थलों के नामों का फ़ीजी के कुछ स्थलों के नामों से मिलने जुलने से कहा जाता है, हो भी सकता है, परन्तु यह सम्भव नहीं कि छोटी छोटी नाकाओं में यथेष्ट भोज्य सामग्री संजोये वे हजारों मील की यात्रा कर सीधे फ़ीजी पहुंचे हों।

अफ़्रीका के पूर्व की ओर मध्य में भारत स्थित है और लगभग इतनी ही फासले पर पूर्वी-दक्षिणी ओर पर फ़ीजी है अपने देश से निस्कासित बेबीजिल के राही की तरह भारत के दक्षिणी तट पर पनाह पाना स्वाभाविक ही था। इसी तरह दक्षिणी तट के किनारे किनारे हजारों मील की यात्रा कर न्यू गिनी आदि देशों से गुजरते हुए फ़ीजी पहुंचे। इस लम्बी यात्रा में बर्षों का समय लग गया होगा।

भारत के दक्षिणी भूभाग का फ़ीजी के वासियों से बहुत कुछ मिलान इस प्रकार होता है। नाव निर्माण, मछली आदि पकड़ने का तरीका, लंगी और स्लू का मिलान,

उच्चारण, सादृश्य भोज्य पदार्थ आदि आदि। भाषा की विचित्रता का भी आव-लोकन कीजिए। भारतीय: रामैया, बीरैया, तारतैया, बाला, मनी, रामजी, श्याम लाल। काईवीती: सुरमैया, बारैया, तातैया, बाले,



श्री ईश्वरी प्रसाद चौधरी

गिरमिट शताब्दी के संदर्भ में शांति दूत द्वारा रची गई हिन्दी प्रतियोगिता के द्वि-तीय विजेता, फ़ीजी में हिन्दी के प्रख्यात लेखक श्री ईश्वरी प्रसाद चौधरी हैं आपने फ़ीजी में हिन्दी की सेवा में काफी असें से बहुत अधिक योग-दान दिया है, जिसके लिए इस देश के हिन्दी प्रेमी अत्य-धिक आपकी सराहना करते हैं। आप काई हिन्दी निबंध प्रतियोगिताओं, कविता तथा कहानी प्रतियोगिताओं में विजयी हुए थे और दूरीक्यां तथा नगद पुरस्कार प्राप्त कर चुके हैं।

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रमानी, रमासी, सोमेली आदि आदि।

अस्पष्ट रूप में पर सहा तार से भारतीयों की बहुत कुछ मान्यताओं को आज भी काईवीतीयों ने अपनाया हुआ है। नाग पूजन का भारत के कई प्रान्तों में विशेष महत्व है, काईवीती अदृश्य नाग दाक,वांगा को सबसे शक्तिशाली देवता मानते हैं, पारंपरिक कथानुसार श्री कृष्ण भगवान ने यमुना नदी से कालिया को रमणीक द्वीप में भेजा था। फ़ीजी को रमणीक द्वीप कहलाने में क्या शक है 'पेराडाइस ऑफ दी पेसीफिक' तो काफी जरसे से कहला रहा है।

भारत में कपालिक नर-बलि किया करते थे, फ़ीजी में किसी भारी सामन्त के गृह निर्माण के अवसर पर नरबलि दी जाती थी, जादू टोनें से मारण, उच्चाटन और बशी-करण आदि भारतीयों की तरह इनमें भी विद्यमान है।

भारतीय संस्कृत में दान का बहुत भारी महत्व है, उस का प्रचलन आज भी अना ही है। द्वार पर पधार मिशुक को बिना कुछ द्रु लांटा देना निन्दनीय माना जाता है, काईवीतीयों की दानवीरता भी देख कर अच-म्मित हो जाना पड़ता है,

साधारण सी वस्तु आकर से समर्पित करने पर इन्होंने भूमि के बड़े बड़े इलाके खे ही दे डाले। आज भी किसी भूल से हुई गलती के क्षमा वस्तु के लिए अधवा किसी के लिए 'ताम्बुआ' (एक प्रकार की मछली की दांत) तथा एक पुलिन्दा 'नगोना' उनके तौर तरीके से प्रदान कर देने से सन्तुष्ट हो जाते हैं। यह संस्कृत का अनोखा खेल है।

भोजन के समय किसी भी जाने या अनजाने व्यक्ति के आ जाने पर अपनी सामने की वाली से भोजन परोस कर देने पर तात्पर हो जाते हैं जिस प्रकार भारतीय भूखे प्यासे व्यक्ति की उदर पूर्ति करने में पुन्य मानते हैं। यद्यपि अब शहरों में जन-वृद्ध, महंगाई, बेकारी और

आवास की कमी की वजह से यह वापरा दोनों जातियों में संकुचित होता जा रहा है तथापि देहातों में यह व्यव-हार ज्यों का त्यों प्रचलित है।

काईवीती जन आराम पसन्द काम हैं कल की चिन्ता उन्हें नहीं सत्ताती है लेकिन अब धन: धन: वे परिश्रम का महत्व समझने लगे हैं, भारतीयों के संसर्ग में आय की कुछ अंश का बचत करना भी सीख रहे हैं। यद्यपि शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में वे बहुत पीछे नहीं हैं फिर भी व्यव-सायिक क्षेत्र में सफल होने में और समय लगगा। इसमें बहुत बड़ी बाधा 'केरे केरे' (मांगने) की प्रथा है। भार-तीय अंगाविहीन, अपाहिज और विकृत वृद्धि वाले ही ज्यादातर भिक्षा मांगते हैं।

परन्तु काईवीती एक बड़ा सामन्त भी आवश्यकता पड़ने पर मांग सकता है और उसको बुरा नहीं माना जाता है।

काईवीतीयों में सन्तोष की भावना बड़ी प्रबल है, शायद ही कोई ऐसा अवसर मिले जब उनके चेहरे पर गमगीनी की झलक मिले, आपस में मिलने पर या झकड़ते बैठे रहने पर कह कहे और हंसी का फाँवारा छोड़ते रहते हैं। भारतीयों ने काई-वीतीयों को ही नहीं संसार को बहुत कुछ प्रदान किया है लेकिन एक वस्तु आदान करना शेष है वह भी काई-वीतीयों से, उनके हर वक्त और हर हालत की बिखरी हुई मुस्कराहट।

ईश्वरी प्रसाद चौधरी,
ताबुआ।

हिन्दी प्रतियोगिता का तृतीय विजयी निबन्ध

फ़ीजी में भारतीयों का आगमन गिरमिट प्रथा के नीचे १५ मई १८७९ में प्रथम बार हुआ था। उनके यहां आए करीब एक शताब्दी हो

गया है। तब से आज तक यहां जो तब्दीलीयां हुईं, उनका इतिहास में अपना एक महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। इस दूरभ्यान भारतीयों और

काईवीतीयों के बीच जो आपसी संस्कृतिक और सामा-जिक आदान प्रदान हुआ वह विशेष महत्व रखता है।

बारीकी से यदि हम काई-

वीती और भारतीय संस्कृति की विवेचना करें तो पाएंगे कि अट्ठारहवीं शताब्दी में काईवीतीयों का जिस तरह

का रहन सहन था वह हमारे पूर्वजों के देश भारत में प्रच-लित प्रथाओं से काफी मिलता जुलता था।

अट्ठारहवीं शताब्दी में काईवीतीयों में बाल विवाह का प्रचलन था और ऐसा हमारे यहां भारत में भी होता था। ये लोग समुद्री जन्तु 'शार्क' को देवता मान कर पूजा करते थे तो हमारे यहां नाग पूजन प्रचलित है। भारत में महिलाएं पीत के मरने पर स्वेच्छा से सती हो जाती थीं तब यहां एक काई-वीती सामन्त या योधा के मर जाने पर उसकी विधवा का गला गोट कर मृतक शरीर के साथ दफना दिया जाता था। यह सही है कि इनको महि-लाएं अपनी इच्छा से मृत्यु का आलिंगन नहीं करती थीं परन्तु इसे वे अपना भाग्य का खेल मान कर मृत्यु स्वीकार कर लेती थीं। यद्यु आदि शुरू करने से पहले ये लोग अपने पुरोहित- 'बेटे' से सलाह लेते थे तो हमारे यहां भी कोई काम शुरू करने से पहले पुरोहित या राज गुरु से शृगुन निक-लवाने का रिवाज रहा है।

ऐसी बहुत सारी सामानताएं इन दोनों जातियों में विदु-मान थीं।

हमारे पूर्वजों ने अपने आगमन के बाद एक बहुत ही अच्छा काम यह किया कि वे अपनी संस्कृति और भाषा को अपने तक सीमित रखने के चक्कर में नहीं पड़े बल्कि काईवीती समाज से हिलने-मिलने में पहल की ओर जो ज्ञान उनमें थी उसे बिना किसी दुख के इन लोगों में बांटा। अवरोध उत्पन्न करने वाले तत्वों के कारण इन दोनों जातियों को एक दूसरे से बिलकुल घुल मिल जाने में सफलता नहीं मिली हालांकि एक दूसरे की संस्कृति, सभ्यता और रहन-सहन के तरीकों को दोनों जातियों ने जरूर पहचाना।

यह हमारे पूर्वजों की क्लिरी ही है कि उन्होंने अपनी संस्कृति और भाषा को तो बनाए रखा ही, साथ ही काई-वीतीयों की भाषा और संस्कृति सीखने में भी रुचि ली। परिणाम स्वरूप आज, फ़ीजी में अनेक ऐसे भारतीय और काईवीती हैं जो एक दूसरे की भाषा बखूबी बोल लेते हैं। बा में फिलीमोनी रावी नाम के एक काईवीती सज्जन तो रामायण पठ कर अर्थ तक लगा लेते हैं।

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काईवीती और अंग्रेजी के साथ हमारी भाषा को बरा-बरी का दर्जा प्राप्त है; संसद के दोनों सदनों में सक्षयगण अपनी भाषा में बोल सकते हैं; सूचना मंत्रालय से तीनों भाषाओं में नियमित प्रक-शन निकलते हैं तथा दीवाली और मोहम्मद साहब के जन्म दिन को राष्ट्रीय छुट्टी रहती है। ये सारे तथ्य दर्शाते हैं कि फ़ीजी में एक दूसरे की संस्कृति का लोग कितना कद्र करते हैं।

भारतीय संस्कृति और रहन सहन का काईवीती जन-जीवन पर कुछ ऐसा असर पड़ा है कि कई काईवीती अब मस्त मौला का जीवन त्याग कर भारतीयों की तरह खेती बारी करने लगे हैं, कई लोग व्यवसायिक क्षेत्रों में प्रवेश कर गए हैं। और मेहनत से धन अर्जन कर रहे हैं।

जहां तक दोनों जातियों के आपसी मेल मिलाप का सवाल है, कई भारतीय युवकों ने काईवीती युव-तियों से विवाह संबंध भी कायम कर लिया है जो दोनों जातियों के बीच भावी एकता और संस्कृतिक आदान-प्रदान का उज्जवल चिन्ह है।

काईवीती महिलाओं में भारतीय परिधान और शृंगार के प्रति भी मोह जागा है।

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फ़ीजी दर्पण

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लौतोका गिरमिट सेंटर पर हालही में गिरमिट समारोह के दौरान राष्ट्रपति महामहीम रातू विलियामे कातोनिवरे तिरान्वे (93) साल की सोवरथा को मेडल से सम्मानित करते हुए चित्र: प्रदान किया गया

गिरमिटियों को धन्यवाद

रोनल देव

राष्ट्रपति महामहीम रातू विलियामे कातोनिवरे ने लौतोका के गिरमिट सेंटर पर आयोजित एक सौ पैतालीसवें गिरमिट दिवस समारोह के दौरान मुख्य मेहमान के रूप में भाषण देते हुए गिरमिटियों तथा उनकी वंशजों की सराहना की, जिन्होंने फीजी को एक समृद्ध राष्ट्र बनाने की कमान सम्भाली थी और एक नई फीजी के निर्माण में उनके बलिदान, संघर्ष और योगदान को याद किया। गिरमिटियों ने फीजी की आर्थिक स्थिति में भारी योगदान दिया, खास करके कृषि, व्यापार तथा छोटी-छोटी दुकान चलाने वाले क्षेत्र में। गन्ने

के खेतों में उन्होंने मजदूर की तरह काम किया, कई सड़कें बनाई, तथा कई सेटलमन्ट्स और गाँव की नींव रखी जिनमें आज हम निवास करते हैं। इनमें से कई गिरमिटिया सफल व्यापारी, किसान, पेशेवर और योग्य कर्मचारी बने जिन्होंने देश की प्रगति में भारी योगदान दिया। व्यापार और शिक्षा उनकी आधारशिला थी। इससे फीजी को प्रशान्त क्षेत्र में अपनी अर्थ-व्यवस्था के मामले में एक अनोखी शक्ति भी मिली है। इन क्षेत्रों में उनकी कड़ी मेहनत से हम सब ने लाभ उठाए हैं तथा आगे भी उठाएंगे। एक सौ पैतालीस (145) साल पहले, चार सौ तिरसठ (463) गिरमिटिया

मजदूर सबसे पहले भारत से फीजी लाए गए थे। 1879 से 1916 के बीच चार दशकों तक साठ हजार पाँच सौ तिरपन भारतियों को फीजी लाया गया था जिन्हें हम गिरमिटिया कहते हैं। इनमें से कई पुरुष, महिलाएं तथा बच्चों ने फीजी के बारे में नहीं सुना था। हम उस ज़मीन तक उनकी यात्रा की सराहना करते हैं जो उनके लिए अज्ञान थी। यह एक ऐसी यात्रा थी जो कई चुनौतियों से भरी हुई थी। मैं इमानदारी से उनकी दृढ़ भावना की सराहना करता हूँ जो उन्होंने अपने समय में कठिनाईयों को सहन किया था। विपरीत परिस्थितियों में उनके बलिदान को कभी भुलाया नहीं जा सकता। लेकिन गिरमिटियों की

सबसे बड़ी विरासतों में से एक शिक्षा में दिए गए मूल्य से पैदा हुई थी, जो समाज में बदलाव के लिए स्तंभ है और ज्ञान आधारित, कौशल क्षमताओं और सफलता के लिए फीजी में स्कूलों और शिक्षा प्रणाली की स्थापना में पूँजी लगाई गई थी। ये भारतीय अपने साथ अपनी समृद्ध सांस्कृतिक विरासत फीजी लाए थे, जिससे बहुसांस्कृतिक समाज में योगदान दिया गया। उनकी परंपराओं, भाषाओं, भोजनों, संगीत और त्योहारों ने फीजी के सांस्कृतिक परिदृश्य में गहराई की छाप छोड़ी जिससे लोगों के बीच आपसी समझ की भावना को बढ़ावा मिला है।