

State House Quarterly

Official Newsletter of the Office of the President
Republic of Fiji
Vol 1/Issue 1 August 2025



From the Desk of the President



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Ni sa Bula Vinaka and welcome to the first edition of 'State House Quarterly.'

The Newsletter is published to elaborate on the work of the Office of the President including the effort to improve our service to the people of our beloved nation.

In opening the 2025 Session of Parliament, I reiterated the sacred duty that has been entrusted to national leaders. This is a solemn responsibility which requires leaders to serve and lead with integrity in building a better future for all the people of Fiji.

The Gospel of Matthew, in chapter 20 verse 26-28 declares that:

".. whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

This verse requires Leaders to sacrifice ego, ambition and greed, in order to serve the peoples' collective interest. Leadership is not about holding power, but about empowering others. It is about lifting those who are struggling and ensuring that no one is left behind.

To all the people of Fiji – let us continue to stand together, upholding the values of respect, inclusivity, love and compassion.

Fiji stands at a critical juncture in its history. Our socio-economic challenges are undeniable, yet our resolve to overcome them must remain unwavering.

The Office of the President sits at the apex, as the fount of national unity, with a duty to bring the nation together and foster social cohesion and reconciliation.

It has been an eventful few months in office. The daily work of carrying out the Constitutional, Executive and Ceremonial duties of State continues with the swearing-in of Constitutional Officers, members of the Judiciary and the Executive, as well as receiving visiting Heads of State, and the Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to Fiji, both resident and non-resident.

In the last few months, we have hosted two State Receptions – one for the President of Kiribati and the second for the State Opening of our Legislature and a State Banquet in honour of the Tongan Royal visit. At the same time, the Office is housed in historical buildings that require regular extensive maintenance. I have also initiated a review of staffing arrangements at State House to ensure we have the right staffing level to fulfil the requirements of the Office.

State House is the peoples' house and it remains open to visits for schools, communities and organisations to come and learn more as part of their itinerary of visits to the Museum, Parliament, the Judiciary or the Bose Levu Vakaturaga Complex which are all nearby. Visits are accommodated between the various functions hosted at State House.

CONTENTS

Article	Page
President assumes office	2
Great Council of Chiefs meeting	2
Tonga Royal visit	3
College of Honour appointments	3
Call for Nominations for Order of Fiji	3
Visit to the Tui Vuda	4
Vanua o Vidilo welcomes President	4
Sri Sathya Sai Children's Hospital founder honoured	5
Advertisement - College of Honour	6
State House programme	7-8
Assessment of Taunovo and Tavakubu properties	9
Chief Scout meets North Scouts, Guides	10
Profiling Sosiceni Manulevu	10
Girmitiya contribution commended	11
President reaffirms ties to Northern Chiefs	12

President Lalabalavu assumes office after long career in Public Service



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Following an illustrious career in the Public Service spanning over 43 years, which included stints as a Cabinet Minister, Leader of Opposition and as the Speaker of Parliament, *Na Gone Turaga Bale na Tui Cakau*, Ratu Naiqama Tawakecolati Lalabalavu was inaugurated as the seventh President of the Republic of Fiji on 11th November 2024.

Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu is a firm believer in growth and development, as demonstrated in the seats of decision-making that he has held, he now focuses on fulfilling his critical executive functions as Head of State, President and Commander-in-Chief while spearheading improvements to the efficiency of internal operations of the Office of the President and moving quickly to halt the decline of aging Presidential complex by obtaining funds and assistance for building maintenance and critical capital projects. His Excellency is known for his ambitious approach to work, a trait which he continues to drive among staff and the leadership team at the Office of the President.

Na Gone Turaga Bale na Tui Cakau, as His Excellency is traditionally titled, comes in with a background in rural and land development, with a focus in rural and regional

development planning from Clark University, Massachusetts, and the Development Study Center in Israel.

His Excellency began his public service career towards the latter part of the 1990s. After his career as a land valuer spanning 26 years, starting as a cadet land agent in the then Native Lands Trust Board in 1973 and rising to the position of Acting Deputy General Manager and Chief Estate Officer before he joined politics in 1999.

Ratu Lalabalavu was declared a Member of the Opposition for the Cakaudrove East Fijian Communal Taveuni/Lau/Rotuma Open Constituency in 1999. His ministerial portfolios include being Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources from 2001-2005, Minister for Transport and Civil Aviation in 2005, Minister for Fijian Affairs, Lands and Provincial Development (2006), and Opposition Member of Parliament holding a number of Shadow portfolios (2014-2022).

He was Leader of the Opposition from 2020-2022 and elected Speaker following the December 2022 general elections.



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Opening of the Great Council of Chiefs meeting



Photo Credit: Department of Information

The Head of State, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu expressed his gratitude towards the traditional leaders of the 14 Provinces and Rotuma for their commitment and presence at the opening of the Great Council of Chiefs meeting on 21st May 2025.

The *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (BLV) was held over two days at the newly constructed complex in Draiba. *Na Turaga Bale na Tui Cakau* acknowledged the *Vale ni Bose* or Meeting House as a symbol of hope and unity for all Fijians.

“The new complex represents a future where we have a dedicated home to hold important gatherings,” President Lalabalavu said.

“It is a home for our collective voices, values, and unity and is a move towards securing the independence of the BLV from the Government.” President Lalabalavu reminded the Chiefs to uphold their responsibility to their communities with integrity and dedication. He emphasized the role of the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* in fostering dialogue, unity, and progress while preserving indigenous cultural heritage and leadership traditions.



Photo Credit: Department of Information

State House hosts Tonga's King and Queen

President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu honoured the State visit by His Majesty King Tupou VI and Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u of the Kingdom of Tonga with a traditional ceremony of welcome at State House on July 8th, 2025.

The traditional welcome ceremony, which was performed by representatives of the Ministry of iTaukei Affairs, was part of a series of engagements at State House where President Lalabalavu hosted the royal delegation.

Engagements at State House included a ceremonial Guard of Honour, a courtesy meeting with President Lalabalavu, and culminated with a State banquet.

On arrival at State House, Their Majesties were received by the Prime Minister Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka and Mrs. Suluweti Rabuka along with the Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, Major-General Ro Jone Kalouniwai. His Majesty then inspected the 100-person Guard of Honour at Coronation Ground at State House.

Following the welcome ceremony, His Majesty was bestowed the Honourary Companion of the Order of Fiji in the Civilian Division for eminent achievement and merit of the highest

degree for service to Fiji or to humanity at large. The bestowment followed the ceremonial welcome.

In attendance at the traditional ceremony of welcome and banquet were members of the diplomatic corps, Government representatives, and distinguished guests. Their Majesties State visit reaffirmed deep-rooted traditional connections as well as long-standing regional partnership.



College of Honour appointments augur well for Fiji's National Honours and Award System



The appointment of two new members to the College of Honour by the President His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, in concurrence with the recommendation from the Prime Minister Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka earlier this year, augurs well for the College in dispensing its duties as required by the Fiji Honours and Awards Act 1995.

Entrepreneur Mrs. Dhan Gauri Patel and educationist Mrs. Susana Tuisawau join existing members Mr. Michael Yee-Joy and Brigadier-General (R'td) Apakuki Kurusiga. The College is chaired by Mr. Nesbitt Hazelman. It assists and advises the President in the administration of the Fiji Honours and Awards

Act, 1995. The Head of State holds the ceremonial role of Chancellor of the Order of Fiji, which empowers the President to appoint and approve individuals, with advice of the College of Honour, to be a member of the Order of Fiji through the conferment of awards.

It is now thirty (30) years since Fiji's own system of Honours and Awards was established and the College and the President are in agreement on the need to review the law and propose new Awards to recognize the different ways that individuals serve the nation and people of Fiji.

2025 Call for Nominations Open for Awards under Fiji's Honours System

The Fiji College of Honour has opened its 2025 nomination period and is seeking nominations from individuals and organisations for consideration in this year's national Honours and Awards. Nominations must show the legal name and address of the nominee, including names, addresses and contacts of four referees.

Applications may be made online through the Office of the President website via the following link <https://www.cohnominations.gov.fj>. Alternatively, the nomination form and guideline on how to prepare a nomination may be downloaded at <https://www.presidentoffice.gov.fj/nomguide.php>. Handwritten submissions are acceptable and submitted to **The Secretariat, Fiji College of Honour, Office of the President, P.O. Box 2513, Government Buildings, Suva**. Nominations close 31st August 2025.

Visit to the Tui Vuda

The President of the Republic of Fiji His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu rekindled traditional and familial ties with the *Vanua o Vuda* in the Western Division during his brief tour of the Presidential properties in Deuba and Lautoka in April.

Na Gone Turaga Bale na Tui Cakau paid a courtesy visit to *Na Momo Levu na Tui Vuda*, Ratu Eparama Kitone Tavaiaqia, at Viseisei, Vuda.

President Lalabalavu reminisced about his visits at Viseisei when he was an Estate Officer and later as Divisional Manager (Western) of the then Native Land Trust Board (now iTaukei Land Trust Board).

The visit was a return to Viseisei where much of the President's learnings on leadership, the *Vanua* and its protocols was refined and sharpened.

Na Momo Levu na Tui Vuda acknowledged President Lalabalavu's visit and the opportunity to renew kinship bonds.



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Vanua o Vidilo welcomes President Lalabalavu



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Enroute to his tour of the Presidential property in Tavakubu in Lautoka in April, President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu visited *Na Turaga na iTaukei Vidilo*, Ratu Wiliame Bouwalu in Namoli Village, a community where President Lalabalavu holds fond memories of his years as Divisional Manager Western for the iTaukei Land Trust Board.

President Lalabalavu also recalled the time spent in Namoli where he also played rugby for the Namoli and Lautoka teams.

He reminisced with the *iTaukei Vidilo* and former rugby

mates from Namoli cherishing the lessons learned, friendships formed, and the strong sense of community that shaped those early years."

President Lalabalavu lived and worked in Lautoka as an Estate Officer and later Divisional Manager for the then Native Land Trust Board (now iTaukei Land Trust Board).

Mutual sentiments of gratitude were shared between the *iTaukei Vidilo* and *Tui Cakau* for the courtesy call on the people of Namoli of the *Vanua o Vidilo* and the reciprocal welcome from the *Vanua*.

Founder of Sri Sathya Sai Children's Hospital honoured in special investiture ceremony

The Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital has been the life-line since 2016 of many children in Fiji and across the Pacific region needing urgent consultations, surgeries, and treatments for congenital heart disease. Above all, the services provided by the state-of-the-art pediatric cardiac healthcare facility are free of charge to its patients and their respective families.

Behind the foundation and longevity of the operation are the founder of the 'One World One Family Global Humanitarian Mission', Sri Madhusudan Sai, through which he founded the fully equipped Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital in Fiji.

Chairman of the Children's Heart Hospital Sumeet Tappoo and its Director Dr. Krupali Rathod Tappoo have worked alongside Sri Madhusudan to improve healthcare services for children as well as underserved communities. Dr. Krupali is also the Medical Director at the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji, and Mr. Tappoo its Director.

Their individual humanitarian efforts were acknowledged by the President of the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, in a Special Investiture ceremony at State House in April with the conferment of Fiji's highest honour in the general division, the Companion of the Order of Fiji for eminent

achievement and merit of the highest degree in service to Fiji or to humanity at large.

His Excellency commended the extraordinary humanitarian work carried out through the Hospital and the Sai Prema Foundation.

"The fact that these critical heart surgeries and screenings are provided at no cost is a reflection of an extraordinary degree of compassion and service to humanity," President Lalabalavu said.

The President praised the outreach conducted by the Sai Prema Foundation, noting that children from orphanages, residents of aged-care homes, and individuals from rural and maritime communities have benefitted from its medical camps nationwide. His Excellency also highlighted that the Fiji Government recognizes this as one of Fiji's most successful public-private partnerships.

"It stands as proof of our shared belief that quality healthcare is not a privilege, but a fundamental right for all citizens," President Lalabalavu added.

Among other successes to date, the \$25million state-of-the-art facility has performed over 36,000 pediatric echocardiograms at no cost to the patients, and over 390 life-saving open-heart surgeries for Children.



Photo Credit: Department of Information

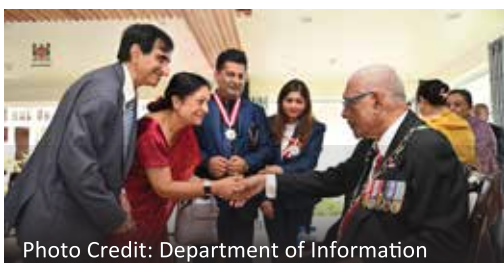


Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



THE FIJI HONOURS SYSTEM CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Fiji Honours and Awards System was established in 1995 to recognise the outstanding contribution of Fijians to community and national development including the promotion of positive attitudes and a sense of unity in Fiji's multicultural society. The system also recognises specific acts of bravery by individuals who risk their own lives to save or attempt to save others.

Honours are awarded in the following categories:

1. Companion of the Order of Fiji (CF)

For eminent achievement and merit of the highest degree for service to Fiji and humanity at large



Companion of the Order of Fiji

2. Officer of the Order of Fiji (OF)

For distinguished service of a high degree to Fiji and humanity at large.



Officer of the Order of Fiji

3. Member of the Order of Fiji (MF)

For meritorious service in a particular locality or field of activity or to a particular group.



Member of the Order of Fiji

4. Medal of the Order of Fiji (MOF)

For service worthy of particular recognition.



Medal of the Order of Fiji

5. Awards for Civilian Bravery

These awards are designed to reward acts of civilian bravery in situations involving, in most cases, risk to the life of the nominees:

1. President's Cross
2. President's Medal
3. The Bravery Medal



President's Cross



President's Medal



Bravery Medal

Nominations:

The Fiji College of Honour, which was established under the Fiji Honours and Awards Act, 1995 considers nominations and recommends appointments to the Order of Fiji to the President. The College of Honour has opened its 2025 nomination period and is seeking nominations from individuals/ organisations for consideration for the 2025 Honours and Awards. The Nomination Form including the guideline on how to prepare a nomination is available from the Fiji College of Honour Secretariat. Nominations must show the **legal name** and **address of the nominee** and with **names, addresses and contacts of four referees**. Handwritten submissions are acceptable. Interested individuals or organisations may contact the following for the Nomination Form or for further enquiries:

**The Secretary
Fiji College of Honour
Office of the President
P O Box 2513 Government Buildings, Suva**

For any queries, you may contact the Office of the President by calling 3314244 or 9904243. You may also send your completed form and associated documents to the following email addresses: mere.tuqiri@otp.gov.fj or collegeofhonour95@gmail.com

Nomination forms can also be filled online through the following link <https://www.cohnominations.gov.fj> on the Office of the President website.

NOMINATIONS FOR 2025 CLOSE ON SUNDAY 31st AUGUST 2025.

Telephone: 3314244 or 9904243 | **Email:** mere.tuqiri@otp.gov.fj or collegeofhonour95@gmail.com

Apply online at <https://www.cohnominations.gov.fj>

Postal address: The Secretary, Fiji College of Honour, Office of the President, P.O. Box 2523, Government Buildings, Suva

President Lalabalavu commences term of office in seamless transition

The President His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu commenced year 2025 with a series of swearing-in ceremonies punctuated by courtesy calls from Government representatives, the Judiciary, the *Vanua*, religious leaders, and a number of Diplomats, the usual staple of ceremonial events at State House.

The first eight months in office has seen President Lalabalavu receive Letters of Credence from foreign Heads of Missions and validate swearing-in ceremonies for Government Ministers and Judicial Officers. The President's official engagements, however, really began in the month of December 2024 following His Excellency's inauguration.

A major highlight has been the opening of the 2025

Parliamentary session. President Lalabalavu was then invested as the Chancellor of the Order of Fiji by the Chief Justice Salesi Temo on February 21st, 2025.

Additionally, the Head of State received a number of visitations from representatives of the *Vanua* acknowledging His Excellency's appointment as Head of State, and in his traditional capacity as *Tui Cakau*.

First Lady Madam Emily Lalabalavu also officiated at various engagements especially focused on women empowerment beginning February. The following timeline illustrates the official engagements that the President was involved with from January to July 2025.

January-July 2025

Swearing-In Ceremonies

Hon. Ioane Naivalurua, Minister for Policing
Hon. Viliame Naupoto, Minister for Immigration
Hon. Mosese Bulitavu, Minister for Environment and Climate Change
Hon. Naisa Tuinaceva, Assistant Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services, and Transport
Hon. Alikali Bia, Assistant Minister for Information
Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu, Assistant Minister for Justice
Hon. Penioni Ravunawa, Assistant Minister for Health and Medical Services
Hon. Mr. Justice Isikeli Mataitoga as President Court of Appeal
Hon. Mr. Justice Alipate Qetaki as Acting Resident Justice of Appeal
Commissioners of the Fiji Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Mr. Hettiwage Somaratne as Resident Magistrate
Mr. Penijamini Lomaloma as Acting Puisne Judge of the High Court of Fiji
Mr. Panapasa Tawake, Ms. Sophina Ali, Ms. Vinaina Diroiroy as Resident Magistrates

Commissioning Ceremonies

Fiji's High Commissioner to Malaysia H.E. Ratu Etueni Caucau

Invitations

FMF Nadi Bula Festival - Closing
Fiji Development Bank 2024 National Small & Medium Enterprise Awards
70th Anniversary, Fiji Museum
Great Council of Chiefs Meeting
Girmit Anniversary Celebration - Opening
Meet Northern Scouts and Guides
Reception, Waitangi Day
Reception, 65th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan

Investiture Ceremonies

Republic of Fiji Military Forces-Naval Division 50th Anniversary Commemorative Medal
His Majesty King Tupou VI, Kingdom of Tonga (Honourary Companion of the Order of Fiji)
Civil Service Medal
President Lalabalavu as Chief Scout, Fiji Scouts Association
First Lady Emily Lalabalavu as Patron, Fiji Girl Guides Association
Global Humanitarian Sri Madhusudan Sai (Honourary Companion of the Order of Fiji)
Chairman, Sai Prema Foundation, Mr. Sumeet Tappoo (Companion of the Order of Fiji)
Director, Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Hospital, Dr. Krupali Rathod Tappoo (Companion of the Order of Fiji)
President Lalabalavu invested as Chancellor of the Order of Fiji

Receptions/ Banquets/ Traditional Welcome Ceremonies (TWC)

Hosted TWC in honour of His Majesty King Tupou VI and Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u, Kingdom of Tonga
Hosted Banquet in honour of His Majesty King Tupou VI and Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u, Kingdom of Tonga
Hosted Reception in honour of President of Kiribati, H.E. Taneti Maamau
Hosted Reception for Opening of Parliament

Visitations

Former scholars, Dudley High School
Vanua ko Drano, Udu Point
Fiji National University Council & Senior Executive staff
Tokatoka ko Mai Koroiruve, Mataqali o Valelevu, Somo-somo, Taveuni
Vanua ko Namosi
Yavusa ko Nauluvatu, Suvavou
Board of the Cakaudrove Provincial Holding Company
Shree Sanatan Dharma
Gospel Kindergarten
Wainimakutu Secondary School
iTaukei Land Trust Board
Lau delegation, Tubou.
Bucalevu Secondary School
Niusawa Secondary School,
Holy Cross Secondary School
Yat Sen Secondary School
Representatives of the village of Laselase, Sigatoka



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Presentation of Credentials

British High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Mr. Kanbar Hossein-Bor
High Commissioner of Canada to Fiji, H.E. Mr. Keith Smith
High Commissioner of the Republic of India to Fiji, H.E. Shri Suneet Mehta
High Commissioner of the Republic of Kiribati, H.E. Mr. Tukabu Tauati
Ambassador of the Republic of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Arto Haapea
Ambassador of the Republic of Chile, Her Excellency Mrs. Manahi Pakarati Novoa
Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia, His Excellency Mr. Marko Ham
Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia, His Excellency Mr. Jaan Reinhold
Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania, His Excellency Mr. Darius Degutis
Resident High Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency Mr. Peter Llewelyn Roberts
Ambassador of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Ali Saad Mohamed Habab Al-Hajri
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark, Her Excellency Ms. Ingrid Dahl-Madsen

Courtesy Calls & Farewell Calls

His Majesty King Tupou VI and Her Majesty Queen Nanasipau'u
Farewell Call by British High Commissioner to Fiji, H.E. Dr. Brian Jones
Honourable Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India, Sri Pabitra Margherita
President, Soqosoqo Vakamarama, Adi Finau Tabakaucoro
President of the Republic of Kiribati H.E. Taneti Maamau
Chairman, Great Council of Chiefs, Ratu Viliame Seruvakula
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Fiji, H.E. Mr. Zhou Jian
CEO Fiji National Provident Fund, Mr. Viliame Vodonaivalu
Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, Dr. Lesikimacuata Korovavala
CEO Fiji Development Bank, Mr. Filimoni Waqabaca
Farewell Call by Australian High Commissioner to Fiji H.E. Ewen McDonald
UN Resident Coordinator H.E. Dirk Wagener & UN Senior Peace Development Advisor, Mr. Agus Wandil
UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Munkhtuya Altangerel
Non-resident Ambassador of the State of Israel to Fiji and the Pacific, H.E. Roi Rosenblit
Cakaudrove Provincial Council
High Commissioner of Malaysia, H.E. Mr. Nor'Azam Mohd Idrus
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Jin Hyung Kim
Honourable Minister of State for External Affairs, Republic of India, Shri Pabitra Margherita
Ambassador of the European Union to the Pacific, Her Excellency Ms. Barbara Plinkert
Director-General, Fiji Red Cross Society, Ms. Ragigia Dawai, and President of the Fiji Red Cross Society, Mrs. Sala Toganivalu-Lesuma
President of the Soqosoqo Vakamarama, Cakaudrove, Adi Kavv Chang



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Photo acknowledgement:

The Office of the President acknowledges the Fiji Government/Department of Information for the provision of photographs taken during His Excellency the President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu's official engagements.

Assessment of Taunovo and Tavakubu properties

His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu visited Presidential properties at Taunovo, Deuba, and Tavakubu in Lautoka to assess both residences in April.

Both properties, once under the maintenance of the Department of Public Works before PWD ceased operations, are slated for either refurbishment or reconstruction.

Between the Presidential bure in Taunovo and the remnants of the termite-infected Presidential property in Tavakubu, stands close on 80 years of history dating back to 1946 and 1952 respectively.

The Official Secretary, Ms. Vukidonu Qionibaravi, said that the refurbishment of both properties will decentralize relevant engagements out of the Suva area.

Ms. Qionibaravi said that once renovated, President Lalabalavu could utilize the bure to meet with residents, communities and even school children in these areas saving them the cost of travel to Suva to meet the President.

"Ceremonies for the award of national honours, courtesy calls, and other engagements may also be hosted in the renovated bure," the Official Secretary added.



Photo Credit: Department of Information



President Lalabalavu inspects Quarters 16



Quarters 10 A and 10B have been renovated

Capital Projects Update

The Office of the President under the leadership of the President, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu is forging ahead with its capital projects. Properties Officer at the Office of the President Waisea Kurisaravi, says that with the new Executive team at the helm, the current pool of capital projects "are beginning to roll." President Lalabalavu has prioritized the repair and upgrade of office spaces for administrative staff and living quarters and common rooms for security staff in the 20 property projects completed on his assumption of office in December 2024 to July 2025, insisting that "staff wellbeing is essential to his wellbeing" or in *Vosa Vakaviti* "Na nomuni tiko vinaka, na noqu tiko vinaka." With that motto in mind, funds have been expended on repair of office spaces and staff Quarters over the last 8 months in office.

1. Refurbishment of the Valekau
2. Painting of Quarters 26A, maisonette that houses 6 flats
3. Installation of a washroom for the Private Office
4. Engine Room – converted to an office for Accounts, Human Resources and Properties Staff previously housed at Quarters 79
5. Ground Zero (Guard House by the Back-Gate of State House) Renovation
6. Refurbishment of water damage at State House
7. Installation of Back-Gate Boom
8. Repair, painting and refurbishment of Quarters 16 which had been left vacant for some years due to disrepair
9. Refurbishment, repainting and repairs and laundry extension for Quarters 10A
10. Refurbishment, repainting and repairs and laundry extension for Quarters 10B
11. Repair and refurbishment of the Common Room/external Hall for the Valekau
12. Repair and refurbishment of the Maids Quarters for the Valekau
13. Excavation at the Presidential property at Tavakubu
14. Backfilling of the Golf Green in the State House grounds
15. Upgrade of CCTV system
16. Minor repairs at the State House kitchen
17. Repair of leaks at the State House residence
18. Replacement of Gym floors
19. State House Perimeter wall repairs and installation of gate for access to the vegetable garden
20. Reroofing and painting of Quarters 79



Ground Zero - Backgate Guard House



Engine Room renovated by PWD

Chief Scout meets Northern Scouts and Guides

A week after His Excellency the President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu's investiture as Chief Scout of the Fiji Scouts Association in May, he met with Scouts in the Northern Division while in Labasa to officiate at the Girmit Day Commemoration.

Also in attendance were representatives of the North-based Fiji Girl Guides Association. President Lalabalavu shared messages of encouragement and highlighted Scout and Girl Guide values of patience, courage, trust, obedience, and comradeship.

"Motivate your friends to do good, resist the temptation to succumb to peer pressure or use harmful substances, steer away from violent behaviour, and avoid causing harm to others,"

President Lalabalavu said. The Chief Scout urged the representative Scouts and Girl Guides to continue performing good deeds without prejudice, especially towards those in need.

Scouting began in Fiji 110 years ago. Today, more than 13,000 boys and girls continue to uphold the core values of love, peace, discipline, and respect across the nation.

Both Scouting and Guiding encourage young people to engage in community service projects, helping to make a positive impact on their communities. The movements promote social awareness and understanding, encouraging young people to become informed and engaged citizens.



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Profiling Landscaper Sosiceni Manulevu



Awarded the Fiji Civil Service Medal in 2024 for over 25 years of faithful service to the Office of the President, Sosiceni Manulevu says he prides himself for maintaining 26 years of unbroken commitment to the Office.

Manu as he is known to staff began his employment at State House as a gardener/landscaper. In the course of his service, Manu assumed the role of Steward for the late former Vice President Ratu Jope Seniloli and the late former Vice President Ratu Joni

Madraiwiwi. "My dad Eparama Rokodrava was also a gardener at the State House and I am happy to have continued from where he left off," Manu said.

The 51-year-old has served under five Heads of State from the late Ratu Kamisese Mara, the late Ratu Josefa Iloilo, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konrote, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, and now, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu.

President Lalabalavu commends Girmitiya contributions



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Acknowledging the role that the Girmitiyas and their descendants played and continue to play in shaping Fiji's history and growth, His Excellency the President Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu said the Girmitiya history "is a story of perseverance, of transformation, and of unity."

His Excellency was in Labasa in May to open the commemoration of the arrival of the Girmitiya 146 years ago. The theme for this year was 'Preserving the Past, Envisioning the Future.'

President Lalabalavu said that the commemoration provided an opportunity for all Fijians to "reflect on our collective vision for our beloved nation —a vision centered on progress, prosperity, and unity."

He paid special tribute to Girmitiya sacrifices, and paid tribute to members of Fiji's ethnic communities

including Melanesians and Pacific Islanders who have also contributed to the nation's development.

"It reminds us that memory is not a burden, but a beacon. By honouring the struggles and achievements of the past, we find the wisdom and strength to chart a future rooted in unity, reconciliation, and shared progress," President Lalabalavu said.

The recognition of Girmit Day as a national public holiday enshrines the significance and contributions of the Girmitiya in our national consciousness.

The formal abolishment of the indenture system in Fiji in 1916 marked the end of a dark chapter in our nation's history, and the beginning of an even greater legacy.



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Head of State reaffirms ties with Tui Bua and Tui Macuata in Northern visit



Photo Credit: Department of Information

The President, His Excellency Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu, reaffirmed deeply rooted kinship ties between the people of the Provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua, and Macuata during courtesy calls to *Na Turaga na Tui Bua*, Ra Makutu Nagagavoka, and *Na Turaga na Tui Macuata*, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, in May.

While in Vanua Levu to open the Girmit Anniversary Celebration, the President, *Na Gone Turaga Bale na Tui Cakau*, seized the opportunity to visit the chiefly households of Lomanikoro in Bua, and Naduri in Macuata.

Traditionally welcomed at both chiefly seats of power, President Lalabalavu highlighted that the three Vanua Levu Provinces hosted substantial communities who have established themselves in Fiji over the last four to five generations and now call Fiji home.

In Bua, the President recalled that while he was Speaker of Parliament in 2023, the *Turaga na Tui Bua* and *Vanua O' Cakaunitabua* conducted a traditional visitation to him and the former President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere at State House, highlighting the significance of the ties between the three Northern provinces of Cakaudrove, Bua, and Macuata. He said such bonds must be preserved and nurtured for future generations.

The *Turaga na Tui Bua*, Ra Makutu Nagagavoka, warmly welcomed the President and described the visit as a noble occasion signifying unity and mutual respect shared by the people of the North. He expressed his appreciation for the President's commitment to honouring traditional leadership and strengthening communal ties.

In a *talanoa* session with *Na Gone Turaga na Tui Bua*, Ra Makutu Nagagavoka, President Lalabalavu discussed the development of Bua Province, including matters relating to the development of land and resources, establishment of Nabouwalu township, the forestry industry, and improved livelihood opportunities for the people of Bua.



Photo Credit: Department of Information



Photo Credit: Department of Information

In Naduri, the President commended the people of Macuata for preserving their cultural identity and called on them to remain steadfast in their customs and values.

The Head of State paid tribute to the late former *Turaga Tui Macuata*, Ratu Soso Katonivere, and recalled fondly time spent in Naduri as a young estate officer in the then Native Land Trust Board office in Labasa.

The Head of State expressed his gratitude to *Na Turaga Tui Macuata*, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, for his dedicated service as President, which set a strong example of leadership for the people of Vanua Levu.

The President affirmed that peace, harmony and cooperation between all Fijians must continue to be nurtured and strengthened. At the same time, the Head of State emphasized the importance of education in shaping the future of Vanua Levu and the nation, affirming that "only through education can we truly achieve progress and development."



Photo Credit: Department of Information

Contact Us

For any queries, you may contact the Office of the President by sending an email to officialsecretary.statehouse@gmail.com or you may call us on our main telephone number **3314244**. You may seek further information on our website: www.presidentsoffice.gov.fj

Alternatively, you may drop us a line by addressing it to:

Ms. Vukidonu Qionibaravi - The Official Secretary
Office of the President
1 Berkley Crescent, P.O. Box 2513
Government Buildings, Suva