

ATS quiet on claims



FTUC national secretary Felix Anthony (left) and Federated Airline Staff Association (FASA) president Semisi Turagabaleti in Lautoka last week. Picture: BALJEET SINGH

BY ANISH CHAND

AIR Terminal Services has not responded to claims that senior management would remain employed despite the “95 per cent reduction in business” and the subsequent axing of 285 employees.

While the company responded to queries on whether it purchased a new Toyota Prado for its CEO in January, it did not shed any light on how many employees, including management would continue working.

The company also chose to remain silent on queries whether pay cut and benefits had been reduced to mitigate against the losses incurred by the company.

The Fiji Times had emailed ATS human resources manager Richard Donaldson and CEO Hare Mani on Friday and Saturday on the issue, but received no reply.

The Federated Airline Staff Association (FASA) which represents the terminated employees from Air Terminal Services, had claimed all senior management of ATS would remain at work.

“While our members are going home, the management are still at work with a 15 per cent pay cut, this doesn’t add up,” said FASA president Semisi Turagabaleti “When we asked the management on whether they were also ready to work for free or go on leave without pay, they remained mum.”

In response to criticism by the Fiji Trades Union Congress about the purchase of the vehicle at a time when employees were being terminated, Mr Donaldson said the last vehicle purchased for the CEO was in 2012.

He said the 2020 approved capital expenditure budget had provisions for the purchase of a new vehicle for the CEO.

“That the said purchase was a part of the normal routine of implementing the budget approvals for the year,” said Mr Donaldson.

ATS said its board had approved the mass termination but the workers and FTUC say the move was an act of “bad faith” because it went against the collective agreement between employees and management.

He said staff members were willing to go on leave without pay while engineers were ready to work free during the COVID-19 pandemic period.