



Fiji Teachers Union

(THE CHILD OUR HOPE)

Newsletter

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GREETINGS

"We must stand together, united in solidarity, against the targeting, demonization, and vilification of any group of people." (Linda Sarsour)

Bula Vinaka and warm greetings to all members of the Fiji Teachers Union (FTU) and a special warm welcome to the members who have joined FTU this year!

We are on the verge of completing the academic term, and FTU acknowledges teachers for preparing their students for the challenges that they will face in life.

Apart from this, FTU salutes teachers who have been sacrificing their afternoons and weekends to be with their athletics and rugby league teams. The satisfaction one gets from seeing the success of our children is beyond explanation. Schools that took part in the Coca Cola Games and Fiji Secondary Schools Rugby League are commended.

FTU feels the vacuum left by our former General Secretary, Agni Deo Singh, who is now the Honorable Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations. Congratulations to Honorable Agni Deo Singh for his portfolio as a Minister and we look forward to working with him and the coalition Government.

There is a great sense of joy and exuberance in the people, and the coalition Government has set the platform for dialogue with the Ministry. The cloud of fear instilled by the previous Government for the past 16 years has now come to an end. The Freedom of Expression as in any true democracy is the order of the day now. The Coalition Government is in a microcosm, a symbol of unity for our country.

We are appreciative of the fact that the Ministry of Education is now inviting Unions for a free

and fair discussion on educational issues, something that was denied to us previously.

The Ministry has done this in full respect of our independence, and as a Union we shall maintain our independence at all times.

The Fiji Teachers Union is ready to assist in any way possible. So long as the modus operandi of this coalition Government remains on a participative mode.

We, as members of the Union, must also remember that both Teacher Unions are at the consultation stage only with the Ministry of Education. The processing and the final outcome solely rest with the top brass of the Ministry of Education.

Brothers and Sisters in Union, FTU is indebted to you for your unreserved support and assistance last year and just like last year, FTU needs unwavering support from its members for the overall success of union activities this year.

Branch AGMs and the FTU National Election concluded and most branches are preparing for the Annual Conference and AGM in the Friendly North. We congratulate the elected Executives and those who went in unopposed.

The Union looks forward to your participation in all union activities. We wish every member a blessed and eventful term and school break.

SCHOOL TERMS 2023

The dates for the terms are as follows:

- Term 1 2023- 06/02 - 05/05
- Term 2 2023- 22/05 - 25/08
- Term 3 2023- 11/09 - 08/12

FTC WELCOMES THE EDUCATION MINISTER AND FAREWELLS ITS SECRETARY GENERAL

The Fiji Teachers Confederation comprising of the Fiji Teachers Union and the Fijian Teachers



Association organised a welcome ceremony for the Minister for Education Honourable Aseri Radrodro. It was held on Friday 13th January. The Honorable Minister thanked FTC for the welcome ceremony and alluded to the Unions call for working in partnership. The former Secretary General of FTC, Bro. Agni Deo Singh, was also farewelled. It was an occasion which for the first time had a welcome and a farewell ceremony simultaneously.



Honourable Aseri Radrodro and Honourable Agni Deo Singh with FTU and FTA members at the FTA Hall

WELCOME CEREMONY FOR THE PRIME MINISTER HONOURABLE SITIVENI RABUKA

This was held on 19th January at the FTA Hall. The welcome ceremony commonly known as *Veiqaravi Vakavanua* was conducted traditionally in Itaukei. FTU President, Bro. Muniappa Goundar, officially welcomed PM to Union soil and in doing so, put forward a few of the issues that were pending for so long. These include:

- i. Pending annual increment;
- ii. To correct anomalies in the Job Evaluation Exercise including clarification and re-grading of schools;
- iii. Review disciplinary guideline;
- iv. Review the Transfer Policy; and
- v. Reinstatement of Counselor positions and secondary schools and Executive Teacher positions in primary schools.

PM thanked FTC for the wonderful welcome ceremony. He told teachers that his Coalition Government would look into the plight of teachers in the country with fairness. He requested teachers to go through the Union (s) if they had any grievance (s) with the Ministry of Education.



Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka with FTU and FTA members at the FTA Hall

RESPONSIBILITIES SHARED IN ABSENCE OF GS

The Working Committee mapped out a strategy to continue the work of the Union by distributing its duties within the Working Committee after the departure of its former GS. The former National President, Bro Muniappa Goundar, being the head of FTU, became the contact person who corresponded to and met with the Ministry. He also took charge of member's grievances / complaints/ issues to the Ministry. He was overall in charge of the functions of the union.

The Assistant General Secretary did all the correspondence to the branches and membership together with the safe keeping of all Working Committee and National Executive meeting minutes.

The Treasurer with his finance team looked after all the financial affairs of the union.

The Insurance Officer, in conjunction with the President and Treasurer, looked after the in-house medical and MABS claims.

CORRESPONDENCE TO EDUCATION MINISTRY/ MINISTER

The former President, Bro Muniappa Goundar, continuously wrote to the Education Ministry, other Ministries and even Honorable PM in regards to teacher grievances. Some issues include:

1. The reinstatement of teachers cleared by the court;
2. Payment of acting allowance – secondary school heads;
3. The reinstatement of teachers who resigned/ deemed to have resigned/ terminated for minor offences;
4. Transfer request from teachers;
5. Other matters pertaining to FTU/FTC;
6. Formulation of the Matrix draft by the unions; and
7. Swift re- engagement of classroom teachers.

Once MQR is determined, with experience and performance, post processing and acting policies will be streamlined.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND AGM

This year's Annual Conference will be hosted by Labasa branch at Labasa Sangam College. FTU urges members to be part of the contingent that will be part of the Annual Conference and AGM. The Annual Conference will take place during the second week as arrangement and logistics were done by the host branch. Sports will take place at Subrail Park from Tuesday 16th to Thursday 18th May. The FTU-CTCL social will take place on Thursday once the FTU Annual Conference concludes.

The details of the conference are as follows:

- ❖ Date: Monday 15th to Thursday 18th May, 2023
- ❖ Venue: Labasa Sangam College Hall
- ❖ Theme: The Power of Educational Partnership
- ❖ Chief Guest: Agni Deo Singh - Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Monday 15th May 2023

10.00am	Pre Conference Meeting
2.00pm	Sports Committee Meeting

Tuesday 16th May 2023

8.30-9.00am	Registration of Delegates
9.15am	Guests and Delegates get seated
9.30am	Official Opening of the AGM and Annual Conference
	Presidential Address/ Introduction of Chief Guest
	Address by the Chief Guest- Honourable Agni Deo Singh
10.30am	Farewell Program for former GS- Agni Deo Singh
11.00am	Vote of thanks
11.10am	Morning Tea
11.30am	Annual General Meeting
	Resolutions (Part of AGM Agenda) Introduction of Office Bearers 2023-25
2.00pm	Lunch
3.30pm	Sports- Official Opening

Wednesday 17th May 2023

9.00am	FTU-CTCL AGM
11.30am	Morning Tea
12.00pm	Women's Wing AGM
1.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm	Sports

Thursday 18th May 2023

8.30am	FTU Sports
10.00am	Post Conference Meeting
5.00pm	Presentation of Prizes
7.00pm to 9.00pm	FTU-CTCL Social



Flashback- FTU AGM and Annual Conference at Labasa Sangam College in 2014

BRANCH DELEGATES

Branch delegates should be appointed as per the FTU Constitution Section 32 Clauses 1-9. It is advisable that all members in the Branch are informed of the above.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Branches are requested to bring large delegations to the Annual Conference and AGM. Unity is solidarity, and in solidarity we shall pursue! Delegate registration is due to FTU HQ for vetting on Wednesday 3rd May.

SPORTS

Branches are expected to prepare their teams well to participate in soccer, netball and men's and women's volleyball competition in Labasa. All sports matches will be held at Subrail Park. Sports registration is due to FTU HQ for vetting on Wednesday 3rd May.

BILLETING

Branch Chairpersons have liaised with the Executives of Labasa branch for billeting. We urge members to take care of the school property if they will be billeted in schools in Labasa

FTU AGM RESOLUTIONS

The Resolutions, that have been received, will be discussed during the branch AGM.



FTU JOURNAL

After a lapse of three years, the Publicity Committee, under the guidance of the Publicity officer, Bro Brij Bhan Singh, is working on the FTU Journal. Members were asked to write a one-page article on this year's theme 'The Power of Educational Partnership', sharing their experiences and thoughts on the theme. Articles, which were well-articulated and referenced, were emailed to HQ. The Publicity Committee accords its sincere thanks and appreciation to the branches for sending the photos of their branch Executives. The Committee also acknowledges members who sent in the articles.

BRANCH AGMs

All Branch Annual General Meetings were conducted and completed within the month of March. Branch elections were conducted by the Fijian Elections Office in compliance with the Union's Constitution.

The dates and venues for the Branch AGMs were as follows:

BRANCH	DATE	VENUE	TIME
Savusavu	18/03/2023	Khemendra Sanatan Primary School	10am
Nasinu	09/03/2023	Rishikul Sanatan College	4pm
Navua	09/03/2023	Namosi Provincial Hall	4.30pm
Lautoka	20/03/2023	Lautoka Special School	4.30pm
Tavua	15/03/2023	Tavua Primary School	4pm
Bua	18/03/2023	Korokadi Primary School	10am
Suva	16/03/2023	FTU HQ	4.30pm
Nadi	15/03/2023	Sangam SKM College	4pm
Tailevu	23/03/2022	Korovou Primary School	4pm
Nadroga	29/03/2023	Tuva Primary School	4pm
Labasa	18/03/2023	Kshatriya Hall	10am
Levuka	11/03/2023	Levuka Public Primary	10am
Ba	16/03/2023	St Theresa Primary	4.15pm
Rakiraki	16/03/2023	Penang Sangam High	4.15pm
Taveuni	18/03/2023	Taveuni Central Sanatan Primary	10am

Rewa	15/03/2022	Vunimono High School	4pm
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This year's International Women's Day was celebrated on **Wednesday 8th March** with the theme '**DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality**'. FTU members gathered at Central Cuisine in Suva alongside FTA members and those from USP Staff Association to take part in the celebration which was organized by COPE. We thank the branches for celebrating the important day during their branch AGMs.



Savusavu Women's Wing Executives celebrate IWD at Khemendra Sanatan Primary School

YEAR PLANNER

The FTU year planner was disseminated to the branches to be distributed to all the FTU members.

CHANGE OF BRANCH

Members, who changed branches, were asked to notify the office so that their membership records were updated.

SCHOOL REP & SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP LIST

The Union Administration System has been upgraded and members are urged to update their personal information, email address, telephone number, marital status (including dependents) and school address at their earliest.

The School Rep is FTU's mouth-piece to the members at grass-root level. School Reps are requested to deliver the required union literature to the members in their schools.

FTU WEBSITE/ FACEBOOK PAGE

We encourage members to take advantage of the FTU Website and FTU Facebook page to retrieve more information on the latest developments, press releases and information pertaining to industrial relations issues.

FTU NATIONAL ELECTIONS

The FTU National Elections took place on Saturday 22nd April 2023 from 9am to 3pm. The National Executive Elect is made up of the following:



POSITION	NUMBER
National President	1
Vice Presidents (One reserved for women)	3
General Secretary	1
Assistant General Secretary	1
General Treasurer	1
Publicity Officer	1
Personnel Officer	1
Executive Committee Members	3

The venues for the National Elections were as follows:

BRANCH	VENUE
Savusavu	Khemendra Sanatan Primary School
Nasinu	Rishikul Sanatan College
Navua	Vashist Muni Primary
Lautoka	Lautoka Special School
Tavua	Tavua Primary School
Bua	Korokadi Primary School
Suva	FTU HQ
Nadi	Sangam SKM College
Tailevu	Korovou Primary School
Nadroga	Tuva Primary School Loma Primary School Sigatoka Methodist Primary
Labasa	St Mary's Primary School Daku Bhartiya School Dreketi Primary School Seaqaqa Central College
Levuka	Levuka Public Primary School
Ba	Ba Sangam Primary School
Rakiraki	Penang Sangam Primary Vunikavikaloa Arya Primary
Taveuni	Taveuni Central Primary School
Rewa	Vunimono High School

The results are as follows:

POSITION	NAME
Vice Presidents (2)	1. Pratosh Kumar - 806 Votes 2. Newal Umarao - 236 Votes 3. Urmila Wati Singh - Unopposed 4. Pranesh Praveen Sharma - 705 Votes 5. Nakul Deo Barman - 478 Votes

General Secretary (1)	1. Muniappa Goundar - 830 Votes 2. Arun Prasad - 352 Votes
Assistant General Secretary (1)	1. Ashween Chand Raj - 234 Votes 2. Rajnesh Ishwar Lingam - 947 Votes
Personnel Officer (1)	1. Rameshwar Lal - 662 Votes 2. Vishnu Deo Sharma - 515 Votes
Executive Committee Members (3)	1. Madhur Prakash - 390 Votes 2. Dharendra Lal - 290 Votes 3. Jitesh Jotika Prasad - 316 Votes 4. Shareen Lata - 292 Votes 5. Govind Sami Padayachi - 160 Votes 6. Kamlesh Karan - 397 Votes 7. Arvin Narayan - 127 Votes 8. Vishal Raj Goundar - 366 Votes 9. Arvind Kumar - 323 Votes 10. Deveena Prasad - 321 Votes 11. Sheik Mohammed Masud - 134 Votes 12. Dharmend Shankar - 304 Votes

NE Committee 2023-25 is as follows:

POSITION	NAME
National President	Sashi Mahendra Shandil
Vice Presidents	1. Pratosh Kumar 2. Urmila Wati Singh 3. Pranesh Praveen Sharma
General Secretary	Muniappa Goundar
Assistant General Secretary	Rajnesh Ishwar Lingam
General Treasurer	Pranesh Kumar
Publicity Officer	Brij Bhan Singh
Personnel Officer	1. Rameshwar Lal
Executive Committee Members	1. Madhur Prakash 2. Kamlesh Karan 3. Vishal Raj Goundar



FTU congratulates those Executives who won the FTU National Election and those who went unopposed.

DUTY HOURS OF TEACHERS

As per Circular No. 38/23 the Acting PS of MoE, Mr. Timoci Bure, clarified the duty hours of teachers. Members and school heads must note:

Monday to Thursday- 8am to 3.30pm

Friday- 8am to 3pm

FTU urges school heads to adhere to the Circular.

REVIEW- FTU ACTIVITIES (2022)

COPE ACTIVITIES

The Council of Pacific Education is an important partner for FTU in terms of capacity building and training for NE members. COPE organized a combined workshop at Tanoa for both FTU and FTA and then another combined workshop at the Fiji Hideaway for youth and women.

The 23rd COPE Triennial Conference took place in Nadi from 31st October to 4th November last year. The theme for the Triennial Conference was 'Transforming Education for 21st Century Pacific for Sustainable Development of Land, Ocean, People and their Relationships'.

The Triennial was attended by the National President, who presented our report, Sis Urmila Singh, the National Women's Wing Chairlady, Sis Praneeta Chand of Nadi branch, who represented the Women's Wing, Bro Yashneel Kumar of Lautoka branch, who represented the youths, and Sis Ajeshni Nand and Bro Nakul Deo Barman, who were observers.

At this juncture, FTU expresses sincere appreciation and gratitude to COPE for the support in terms of finance and resources. We also thank the outgoing Secretary General, Bro Govind Singh, for his passion, commitment, dedication, unwavering support and years of service. He was a pillar of strength for teacher unions. His contribution is valued and will be cherished by both FTU and its sister organization FTA.

WORLD TEACHERS DAY CELEBRATION

World Teachers Day was celebrated in various schools around Fiji. The largest Teacher Union in Fiji, the Fiji Teachers Union (FTU), celebrated the day at their headquarters on Wednesday 5th October. The chief guest for the function was Mr Govind Singh. Mr Singh delivered an inspirational and motivational speech which was well-received by those in attendance.

He alluded to the challenges faced by teachers, non-payment of location allowance, My-APA and the cases before the Employment and

Tribunal Court. The former GS Agni Deo Singh also addressed members in attendance. A cake cutting ceremony was organized as well. Executives and members of FTU Suva, Rewa, Nasinu, Navua and union stalwarts attended the Teachers Day celebration. Members were provided with dinner.

SOUTHERN ZONE SPORTS MEET

The Southern Zone sports meet took place on Saturday 12th November in Navua. Pinktober/ Movember celebration was commemorated with cake cutting. The zonal meet was a success in terms of participation and attendance and members enjoyed their day. The former GS Agni Deo Singh addressed the members in his capacity as the chief guest. The sports atmosphere added glamour to the one-day event. The results are as follows:

SPORT	WINNER	RUNNER-UP
Football	Suva	Rewa
Netball	Nasinu	Suva
Men's Volleyball	Suva	Nasinu
Women's Volleyball	Nasinu	Navua

HQ congratulates and commends the Southern teams for their participation.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETING

Two National Executive meetings for 2023 took place on Saturday 25th February and 1st April at HQ. Industrial relations issues, Union services, and the financial report were discussed at length. Branch Reps are requested to disseminate discussions via their branch newsletter. The Branch Rep Labasa branch also shared about the branch's preparation towards the Annual Conference and AGM.

CONCLUSION

"Solidarity is learned through contact rather than concepts. When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is a catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection." (Peter-Hans Kolvenbach)

FTU is optimistic of good days ahead, now that dialogue has started with the Ministry and other stakeholders. We plead with our members to have patience as we aim to mend the broken ties.

FTU looks forward to the AGM and Annual Conference in the Friendly North and we urge members to come out in numbers.





NE members, Suva players and Executives pose with the spoils from the Southern Zone Sports meet at Vashist Muni Primary School



Taveuni branch members during 2023 IWD celebration



Southern Zone Executives and members during the 2022 WTD celebration at FTU HQ



Executives of Bua Women's Wing and members of NE during IWD celebration at Korokadi Primary School