



FIJI TEACHERS UNION

NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS

"Where there is unity there is always victory."
(Publius Syrus)

Warm greetings to all members of the Fiji Teachers Union! A special welcome to members who joined us in terms two and three.

Time went in a whisker, and we completed another exciting and enriching year of academic excellence. The Year 8 external examination and LANA results were released.

While we congratulate schools who have done exceptionally well, we also thank schools who took the hard yards in preparing students who were not academically bright.

Dear members, the union acknowledges your steadfastness, determination, unwavering commitment, passion and dedication in preparing our students for the challenges that lie ahead of them.

The General Secretary, who is the link between the Ministry of Education and the union, in terms of attending meetings had a workload on his plate as industrial relations issues continued to make headlines.

Brothers and sisters in union, FTU is indebted to you for your unreserved and unwavering support, and we will need the same for the overall success of union activities next year.

FTU has a rich history- one which is based on the principles of dedication, commitment and calling a spade a spade.

As the year unfolded, our Publicity Officer, Bro. Brij Bhan Singh left for greener pastures. His contribution towards unionism is highly appreciated. Bro. Brij Singh made enormous contributions at branch level (Navua and Nasinu) and at national level. He was also the Treasurer for FTU-CTCL. Bro. Vishal Raj Goundar was appointed as the Publicity Officer in accordance with the Constitution.

He served Rakiraki branch as the Treasurer and Branch Rep. He was the Publicity Officer for TIV Fiji Sangam. He is an instrumental figure in the Fiji Primary Schools Football Association in the capacity of Vice President as well as the Publicity Officer. His expertise and wealth are valued highly at FTU.

The National Council meeting, held on December 11, filled the vacant post created by Bro. Vishal Raj Goundar. We congratulate Ba Branch Rep, Bro. Nakul Deo Barman, for his appointment to the position of National Executive Committee Member. Bro. Nakul Deo is a seasoned and experienced unionist, having served Nadi and Ba branches in various positions. Bro. Nakul Deo served as the President of the Fiji Trades Union Congress Youth Wing. We welcome Bro. Nakul Deo and we are confident that his appointment will have a positive impact

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS QUALIFICATION UPGRADES GRADUATE SALARY PLACEMENT

The matter of qualification upgrades has been an ongoing subject of representation by the union. Following sustained negotiations, FTU is pleased to confirm that teachers who have attained graduate-level qualifications, including STTC, IDTT, and DTT will now be remunerated at Band F, Step 3, effective after a lapse of two years.

Teachers who submitted their verified academic credentials to the Ministry on or before April 30 of the current year will receive the adjustment in the present financial year. Submissions made thereafter will be processed in the subsequent fiscal year. This outcome is a significant achievement resulting from persistent engagement with the Ministry and is in line with the principles of merit-based remuneration.

RECOGNITION OF STTC, DTT, AND IDTT QUALIFICATIONS

Members will recall that in mid-September 2021, these qualifications were deregistered by the Ministry, causing substantial hardship to affected teachers. Upon the Union Secretariat assuming office in June 2023, active efforts were initiated with the Fiji Teachers Registration Authority (FTRA) and the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

After extensive consultations and formal submissions, FTU successfully secured the reinstatement of recognition for these qualifications. This milestone ensures that teachers holding these credentials are now eligible for graduate-level salary placement, restoring their rightful professional status.

REINSTATEMENT OF TEACHERS AFFECTED BY THE “NO JAB, NO JOB” POLICY

Teachers whose employment was terminated under the former Government’s COVID-19 vaccination mandate were permitted to rejoin the service following the formation of the Coalition Government in 2022. Those reinstated were placed on a six-month probationary period, after which their employment was to be regularized, and their salary aligned with their qualifications.

This year’s salary upgrade exercise formally caters for these reinstated teachers. FTU emphasizes that the process must uphold principles of natural justice, non-discrimination, and constitutional rights. Members who meet the criteria but have not received the appropriate salary adjustment are advised to promptly contact the Secretariat for immediate intervention.

EDUCATORS PROTECTION POLICY

At the 2023 FTU Annual General Meeting in Labasa, members unanimously endorsed the development of an Educators Protection Policy. Since then, the Secretariat has consistently pursued this matter with the Ministry of Education, including representation in two national budget submissions.

A draft version of the policy is now completed, and consultative meetings are underway to refine its provisions. FTU remains committed to ensuring that the final policy provides a

robust framework for safeguarding educators’ rights, safety, and professional integrity in accordance with the law.

REVIEW OF EDUCATION POLICIES

FTU, in collaboration with the Fijian Teachers Association (FTA), is actively participating in the Ministry-led review of about 18 education policies. This collaborative process represents a significant breakthrough, reflecting the Ministry’s willingness to partner with the unions to strengthen teachers’ terms and conditions of service. These reviews will modernize policy frameworks, enhance clarity, and ensure alignment with current educational standards and constitutional protections.

TRANSFERS

The Secretariat will shortly be meeting with the Director of Human Resources and the Ministry’s HR Team to review transfer applications submitted for the 2026 academic year. FTU will continue to advocate for transparent, equitable, and family-friendly transfer processes that respect teachers’ welfare and professional obligations.

SCHOOL TERM DATES AND EXAMINATION TIMETABLE, 2026

FTU was a key participant in the multi-stakeholder consultation regarding the 2026 school calendar and national examination timetable. After careful consideration of multiple factors, including academic, operational, and student well-being, the schedule has been finalized.

At FTU’s request, the Examinations and Assessment Unit has agreed to increase the number of Year 8 markers to ensure results are released by Week 11 of Term 3, thereby supporting timely enrolment in secondary schools. The Year 8 Annual Examination will now be conducted alongside Years 4 to 7 in Week 9 or Week 10, with schools retaining discretion on preferred timing. The standard LANA examinations for Years 5 and 7 will be discontinued from next year.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION PAPER LEAKAGE

FTU expresses deep concern at the reported leakage of the Year 12 external examination papers. The breach appears to have arisen from a failure to follow the established Standard

Operating Procedures governing the secure handling of examination materials.

The union firmly condemns any unethical or unprofessional conduct that compromises the integrity of national assessments. FTU calls on the Ministry to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation and ensure that all individuals responsible are held accountable in accordance with law and due process.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL ASSISTANCE (BTSA) – IMPROPER LEVY REQUESTS

It has come to the union's attention that some Heads of Schools have been imposing unauthorized levies when verifying and signing BTSA forms. Such actions are contrary to Ministry directives, violate principles of public service ethics, and impose undue financial burden on families. FTU unequivocally denounces these practices and advises its members to desist from participating in any such conduct.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Education Minister Honourable Aseri Radrodro made it clear that corporal punishment will not be allowed in Fiji's schools, saying the Ministry must follow the Constitution and international laws that protect children from violence. Speaking at the 27th Attorney-General's Conference in Nadi, Hon. Radrodro said the issue was not just about policy but about legal responsibility. Hon. Radrodro revealed that the number of recorded corporal punishment cases in schools has fluctuated in recent years.

Between 2018 and 2025, the Ministry of Education recorded a peak of 84 cases in 2022 and a low of 7 cases in 2020, with most incidents involving students being hit with hands or a cane. He also confirmed that between January and October this year, 11 corporal punishment cases were reported through the Divisional Counselling Hubs and the Student Support Services and Advisory Council.

Members must note that the 2003 Naushad Ali court ruling made corporal punishment unlawful, and the 2013 Constitution guarantees every child the right to be free from violence. Fiji's commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which prohibit the use of physical punishment, must be adhered to.

The Minister outlined several measures being rolled out to support schools, including counselling hubs in all four divisions, a requirement in the draft Education Bill for every school to engage a trained counsellor, the re-establishment of school chaplains, and a review of the Behavioral Management Policy to introduce guidelines on positive discipline.

FTU'S STAND- SAY NO TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

THE WAY FORWARD

The matters outlined above reflect the ongoing commitment of the Fiji Teachers Union to defend the rights, entitlements, and professional integrity of all its members. The Secretariat remains fully dedicated to ensuring that all actions undertaken are consistent with the Constitution of Fiji, relevant statutes, collective agreements, and the principles of fairness, accountability, and good governance.

In addition, the Secretariat continues to be heavily involved in pursuing improved outcomes for teachers through structured and constructive negotiations with the Ministry. We acknowledge and appreciate that the Ministry has shown a high level of cooperation and openness in addressing issues raised by the union.

This positive and collaborative environment makes it even more important for the union to remain focused on its core mandate to advocate, to safeguard, and to advance the welfare of all teachers. Given that the Ministry is responsive and attentive to our representations, the union leadership will continue to present concerns directly, consistently, and professionally to ensure timely and favourable resolutions. FTU affirms that no case brought before the union will be abandoned; every matter will be pursued diligently and persistently until the desired goals are fully achieved.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OFFICIAL OPENING

During the 95th Annual Conference at Cuvu College in Sigatoka, we gathered as a united force. For the first time in the union's history, we had the official opening at the Shangri-La Fijian Resort a day prior to the Annual General Meeting. The official opening marked a record attendance.

FTU is grateful to the major sponsor Bred Bank for injecting the much-needed finance to ensure that the official opening was done at a splendid venue like the Shangri-La Fijian. FTU extends its deepest appreciation to all members for their unwavering support throughout the event.

SPORTS MEET

Sporting events have always brought an added level of excitement and energy to the AGM and Annual Conference. This year was no exception, as the games drew a large crowd to Lawaqa Park.

The soccer competition was fiercely contested, with Nadi emerging victorious over Lautoka. In a surprising turn of events, the Rewa women's volleyball team upset Suva to claim the title for the first time. Nadroga secured the netball championship by defeating Rewa, while the men from Suva triumphed over Bua in the men's volleyball final. It was the first time that Bua played in the final of the men's volleyball competition.

The awards were given as follows: football- Shahil Naresh (Nadi), women's volleyball- Tavaita Daunakamakama (Rewa), netball- Karishma Dass (Nadroga) and men's volleyball- Wayne Fisher (Suva).

The best dressed teams were: football- Labasa, women's volleyball- Nasinu, netball- Ba and men's volleyball- Nasinu.

THANKS, AND APPRECIATION

The host branch- Nadroga deserves credit for hosting the 95th AGM and Annual Conference. The Executives pulled the loose ends, got a 'spirited' team, and organized the four-day Conference and the Pre-conference and Post-conference meeting. It was pleasing to note the support from FTU stalwarts, including those who have retired from FTU. The commitment of the FTU leadership to stand and defend the collective and individual rights of the membership remains steadfast and has been praised by many. The membership at large is complimented for the wonderful support that was rendered in Nadroga. Special thanks are due to the Nadroga branch Executives, led by Bros. Mesh Chand, Roop Chand and Subramani Krishna for their exceptional efforts in organizing what was a remarkable conference, marked by great

sportsmanship, impressive attendance and the first of its kind cultural night and breakout sessions.

2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Fiji Teachers Union Annual Conference will take place at Xavier College from Tuesday May 5 to Friday May 8, 2026. The theme for the Annual Conference is 'Teachers at the heart, driving progress from the start'. Members can start compiling their articles for the journal. Branches must start preparations early so that there is no last-minute disappointment in terms of participation as a delegate and in sports.

BRANCH VISITS/ CLUSTER MEETINGS

The General Secretary continued to visit schools and districts and addressed cluster meetings to enlighten members on current issues as well as maintain connectivity. School Reps and branch Executives worked together to ensure that these cluster meetings were a success in terms of attendance of members.

FTU JOURNAL

The Publicity Committee, comprising of Bros Brij Singh, Rajnesh Lingam, Pranesh Kumar, and Sis Urmila Singh, worked tirelessly to complete the journal. We apologize for any shortcomings.

DIVISIONAL WORKSHOPS

To boost dissemination of information and ensure members were on par with union literature, four capacity building sessions were held as follows: Southern Division for Rewa, Suva, Navua and Nasinu members at FTU HQ on Wednesday July 9; North Western Division for Lautoka, Nadi and Nadroga members at Nadi Airport School on Saturday August 23; South Western Division for Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki members at Tavua College on Saturday October 4; and Northern Division for Savusavu, Bua, Labasa and Taveuni members at Labasa College on Saturday November 8. We were impressed with the turnout, although there should have been more members attending the session. The topics focused on: MABS, the insurance medical scheme, empowering women, the role of principal officers, industrial relations, trade union

renewal and communication. We urge greater participation from branches when we organise capacity building sessions.

GO PUBLIC! FUND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

The Go Public! Fund Education Campaign Strategic Planning meeting was held at the Tanoa Skylodge, Nadi, from August 4 to August 6, which was organized and facilitated by the Education International and Council of Pacific Education.

The objectives of the workshop were to: initiate advocacy for increased public funding to education, recognize the transformative power of education, and prioritize and adequately fund public education systems to ensure quality education is accessible to all children globally.

The strategic meeting brought together EI member organizations in the five selected countries in the Pacific sub-region to: understand the current landscape to assess critical issues such as teacher shortages, working conditions, workload, mental health, and education financing in their respective countries, leverage the UN panel recommendations, explore practical strategies to address these challenges, guided by the recommendations of the UN high-level panel, strengthen sub-regional and national advocacy, align with the Go Public! Fund Education! Campaign and develop coordinated advocacy plans at national and sub-regional levels. The workshop was attended by the General Secretary, General Treasurer, Sis. Urmila Singh and Sis. Karishma Dass (Nadroga branch).

COPE WOMEN'S TRIENNIAL

The 40th Council of Pacific Education Women's Triennial was attended by Sis. Salome Vakabuto (Rewa branch) and Sis. Subashni Kumar (Lautoka branch) at the Tanoa Skylodge from October 30 to 31. The theme for the Triennial was "Empowering Women, Funding Futures: Go Public for Equity in Education". The aim was to empower Pacific women educators and union leaders to promote gender equity, digital inclusion and public

investment in a culturally responsive education system.

COPE- YOUTH TRIENNIAL

The Council of Pacific Education Triennial took place at the Tanoa Skylodge from October 27 to 29. Bro. Ronal Kumar (Rewa branch) and Sis. Archana Vandhana (Nasinu branch) represented FTU. The youths were engaged in discussions on the importance of teacher unions in promoting fair working conditions and quality education. The session also highlighted the need for a youth wing in every teacher union, to ensure youth voices are represented in decision making. Both Bro. Ronal Kumar and Sis. Archana Vandhana made valuable contributions during the robust session.

COPE- TRIENNIAL

The Council of Pacific Education Triennial was attended by the youth and women reps and the General Secretary and Vice President, Bro. Pranesh Sharma after the conclusion of the Youth and Women's Triennial at the Skylodge.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

This was held in Kochi, India from October 15 to 17. It was attended by the National President, General Secretary, and Vice- President Sis. Urmila Singh.

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION UNION (AEU) CONFERENCE

This was attended by Bro. Shonal Surendra Butturu (Nasinu branch) at Brisbane State High School from November 22 to 23. The Conference brought together educators, union leaders, policy specialists, and international delegates to discuss key developments in education, teacher welfare, and union advocacy across the region.

It provided an important platform for strengthening professional partnerships and gaining insights relevant to Fiji's educational sector. The primary objective of attending the Conference was to strengthen FTU's collaboration with AEU. Bro. Shonal Butturu gained a lot of knowledge from the sessions.

EI GLOBAL CONFERENCE

The Education International Global Conference on Artificial Intelligence was held in Brussels from December 4 to 5. It brought together over 200 union leaders and experts to examine how AI is reshaping education. Participants were warned that while AI promises efficiency, it often increases teacher workload, undermines professional autonomy, and deepens digital and equity divides. The speakers emphasized the risks of commercialization, data colonialism, bias, and reduced teacher roles in AI-driven reforms.

Unions called for a human-centred approach where AI supports and not replaces teachers. The key priorities included strong regulation, data protection, public investment, critical AI literacy, and meaningful social dialogue. The Conference highlighted the need for global solidarity to ensure AI strengthens democratic, equitable public education.

PINKTOBER

This was observed at FTU HQ on October 23. FTU contributed \$500.00 each towards WOWS Kids and the Fiji Cancer Society, respectively. Members made personal cash contributions.

FHTA/ FPA CONFERENCE 2025

The General Secretary was honored to attend the official opening of the Fiji Head Teachers Association and Fiji Principals Association at Sheraton Denarau, an event graciously hosted by the Suva Head Teachers Association and Nausori Principals Association, respectively. It was, without a doubt, a grand and memorable conference. On behalf of the membership, the Secretariat extends heartfelt thanks to the executives of the FHTA and FPA for organizing such a splendid event.

NORTHERN ZONAL SPORTS

The Headquarters extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to Bua branch for successfully hosting this year's Northern Zonal Sports Meet. Labasa emerged victorious in football and men's volleyball, while Bua triumphed in netball, and women's volleyball title. Trophies were presented to both winners and runners-up in recognition of their outstanding performances.

Cash prizes were also awarded to the best players. Members also enjoyed the refreshments, with tea and lunch provided during the event. HQ salutes Taveuni for their participation. Bua proved that the size of a branch does not matter. Bua went above weight to ensure that the zonal sports meet was a grand success in terms of participation, provision of meals and refreshments and organisation.

WESTERN ZONAL SPORTS

The Western Zonal Sports Meet concluded on a high note on Saturday August 2 at the Korovuto College ground in Nadi. Lautoka beat Nadi to win the football and men's volleyball titles. Nadroga won the netball and women's volleyball titles, beating hosts Nadi and Lautoka, respectively. We salute the Western and Southern veteran teams for creating history as they battled to a 1-all draw, sharing the trophy for six months each. We hope to continue with veteran's soccer at all the zonal sports meets.

SOUTHERN ZONAL SPORTS

The host branch, Nasinu, is commended for hosting the Southern Zonal Sports Meet at Rishikul Sanatan College and Rishikul Primary School grounds on Saturday July 17. Suva, Navua, Rewa and Nasinu participated in an intense battle. Nasinu created history as they introduced Masters football during the zonal meet. The Capital Masters edged the Delta Masters in a closely contested and fierce clash. Nasinu is commended for the wonderful organisation and for the lovely tea and lunch. Nasinu won the football and netball titles, while Rewa was the runners-up. Navua claimed the women's volleyball title, while Rewa settled for second best. Rewa defeated Suva to win the men's volleyball title.

RA INTER-PRIMAR SCHOOLS QUIZ COMPETITION

FTU HQ is indebted to Rakiraki branch for continually organising the inter- primary schools quiz competition annually. The quiz competition took place at Ellington Primary School. The General Secretary graced the occasion as the chief guest. Penang Sangam Primary School won the competition while Ellington Primary School finished as runners-up. Rakiraki has set the platform for other branches to follow suit.

INSURANCE PREMIUM

One of the pressing issues faced by the union is the rise in medical costs compared to the premium paid by members. NP and GS had made a trip to India to inspect hospital facilities and negotiate better deals for our patients. Mr Segrán from Marsh made a presentation. After a robust round of discussion, the NE decided to increase the premium and this motion was taken to the AGM in Nadroga. The AGM endorsed the approval based on the rising costs of medical treatment and costs associated with airfares.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

	2022	2023	2024
Total Contribution	\$2,064,160.28	\$2,027,724.18	\$2,205,335.00
Total Expenditure	\$2,855,289.05	\$2,521,099.92	\$3,199,116.84
Members Covered	260	271	266
Deficit	\$791,128.77	\$493,375.74	\$1,173,781.44
Ratio	138%	124%	158%

BENCHMARK AGAINST OTHER PROVIDERS

Company	Fortnightly Premium	Annual Premium	FTU Premium before increase
A	Single \$52.48 Family \$68.06	\$1364.48 \$1769.56	Single \$624.00
B	Single \$51.85 Family \$74.96	\$1348.10 \$1948.96	Married \$780.00
C	Single \$69.78 Family \$103.98	\$1814.28 \$2703.48	

NEW INSURANCE PREMIUM

Cover	Effective 01/06/25	Annual Premium
Single	\$46.00	\$1196.00
Family	\$57.00	\$1482.00

This includes a deductible of \$1000.00. The Evacuation limit has been increased from \$250,000.00 to \$300,000.00. Members must note that the FTU medical scheme is still an average of 30% cheaper than the current insurance market price. We apologise for any inconvenience caused to the members.

YEAR PLANNER

The FTU year planner would be disseminated to the branches to be distributed to all the FTU members at the beginning of the year.

CHANGE OF BRANCH

FTU members, who have changed branches, are asked to notify the office, and fill the Branch Transfer Form so that their membership records are updated.

ARREARS- UNION SUBS

Members who have arrears for their insurance premium have been sent letters and emails. They must pay the arrears.

OFFICE CLOSURE

The FTU office will be closed from Monday December 22 and open on Monday January 5, 2026. The last day of operation would be Friday December 19. For queries during this duration, members can contact the General Secretary on 9928117 or the National President on 9928071.

CONCLUSION

“Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking.” (Mahatma Gandhi)

Despite the trying times, as a Union, FTU has provided the best service to the membership in terms of industrial relations and social security benefits. There have been challenges, but things have been done, and results have been achieved.

FTU is optimistic about good days ahead, and we plead with our members to have patience. The prevailing atmosphere is highly auspicious for both teacher and trade unions in Fiji. The Coalition Government has now laid a robust foundation for transparent dialogue and constructive engagement.

The General Secretary continues to attend meetings with the Ministry. Despite this, the Fiji Teachers Union remains resolute in its unwavering mission to restore the dignity of the teaching profession and uphold the respect due to its members.

As we embark on the school vacation, the Secretariat extends its warmest wishes to all teachers. May you continue to inspire with dedication and passion.

Wishing every member a joyful Festive Season, a dazzling celebration and a productive and fruitful 2026!

2026 SCHOOL TERMS

TERMS	START	END	NO. OF WEEKS
1	26 TH JANUARY	01 ST MAY	14
2	18 TH MAY	21 ST AUGUST	14
3	7 TH SEPTEMBER	4 TH DECEMBER	13





**FTU participants at the
40TH COPE Triennial
with the Education
Minister and FTA
President**

**Zumba session during the
Pinktober commemoration
at the FTU HQ Hall**



**Participants at the
Northern Divisional
Workshop held at
Labasa College**



The General Secretary and team FTU at the 40th COPE Triennial Conference in Nadi

The General Secretary, National President and Vice President in attendance at the Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Kochi, India.



The National President and Executives of the National Women's Wing hand over FTUs contribution to the Fiji Cancer Society



Bro. Brij Bhan Singh, the outgoing Publicity Officer, and the incoming Publicity Officer, Bro. Vishal Raj Goundar

Our delegate Shonal Surendra Buttur with delegates from the region in Australia



Members at Tavua College during the Teachers Day celebration



**Rakiraki branch
hosted inter-school
quiz competition**

**The General
Secretary did
the honour of
awarding the
students of
Penang Sangam
Primary School**



**In a jubilant
mood..... Rewa
with their spoils
after the
completion of the
Southern Zone
Sports Meet at
Rishikul Sanatan
College**





The Nadroga and Lautoka netters ready for battle at Korovuto College

Their smiles say it all.... Sis. Karishma Dass (4th from right) and her champion Nadroga netters with the Vice President at Korovuto College



The mighty Blues walked away with the soccer trophy in the final of the Western Zone Sports Meet at Korovuto College



The General Secretary at the official opening of the FTU Rakiraki branch quiz competition at Ellington Primary School

Members at Nadi Airport School during the Western Divisional Workshop



Galaxy S25 Ultra



The National President presented the soccer runners up trophy to Bro. Sahil Naresh of Nadi



**Go Public! Fund
Education
coordinated by
Education
International in
partnership with
APHEDA**

**Labasa netters pose
for a photo during the
Northern Zone Sports
Meet in Bua**



**Official opening of
the Northern Zone
Sports Meet in
Bua**



The former Publicity Officer, Bro. Brij Bhan Singh, was officially farewelled at the FTU office

Participants at the Northern Division Workshop at Labasa College with Honourable Agni Deo Singh



The Publicity Committee- Bro. Pranesh Kumar, Bro. Vishal Raj Goundar (Chairman), Sis. Urmila Singh and Bro. Rajnesh Ishwar Lingam