

Write to us | Post: Letters to the Editor, The Fiji Times, GPO Box 1167, Suva

Interim PM's outburst

Fiji Times

THE Interim Prime Minister's petulant outburst over the Commonwealth's call for early elections shows the quality of the overall leadership of the nation.

It is worrying that Foreign Minister Bainimarama reacted to the call by encouraging the Commonwealth to implement immediate sanctions on Fiji.

Any punitive action will have a devastating effect on the economy and, more importantly, the people.

Until recently, Fiji has been relatively immune to the global fall-out which has affected economies the world over.

In the last month, however, it has become increasingly evident that there is an immediate need for serious measures to grow the economy of we are to survive this international crisis.

The national credit rating and foreign reserves have fallen to worrying levels. International credit agencies will be reluctant to lend money to us given the

national's current financial situation and the uncertainty which surrounds our political future.

Given the low levels of liquidity and the reluctance to lend, potential investors will be forced to suspend projects until there is some stability on the international market.

Our political situation has deterred investors for more than two years.

It is impossible for anyone with money to spend to have confidence in a country which has an over-active military force and an unstable political landscape.

There have been no major investments since December 2006 - overwhelming evidence that we do not live in isolation and that the Interim regime's actions have

had serious negative consequences on national life. It is at times like this that we are forced to rely on the generosity of others, including the European Union, Australia, New Zealand and the Commonwealth.

Bainimarama does himself and the country no favours by destroying any remaining sympathy which may exist for Fiji within these organisations.

We are fortunate that the Pacific's senior statesman, Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare, has attempted to keep Fiji in the regional and international fold.

Without his intervention, Bainimarama would have terminally damaged Fiji several months ago by his continued stubborn attitude.

We stand on the verge of isolation.

It is time for Bainimarama to confront the realities and display statesmanlike behaviour which would show that he did

not take over the country for self gain.

He has absolute control over the President, the Civil Service, the military police and the electoral process.

Regional governments have agreed to administer and fund elections.

The President has ratified a charter to usher in a fresh electoral process, a national census has been conducted and constituency boundaries can be redrawn overnight. What, then, is there to stop us from going to the polls under a new system in December?

For someone who overthrew an elected government without compunction, Bainimarama is curiously reluctant to take the nation to the polls despite holding all the cards.

Indeed there is only one reason that Fiji has not held elections.

Bainimarama does not want an election at this time because he cannot guarantee the outcome.

YOUR SAY

Fijian administration

YOUR editorial comment (FT 5/3) commented only on a particular role of the Fijian administration, rural infrastructure development.

It further obliterates other important roles they provide to rural people and recommends a serious review and possibly a closure of office.

From my understanding, provincial offices provide administrative activities for rural people similar to the roles provided by an administration department for its company or ministry.

I suggest that more research is done on the roles of provincial offices before commenting.

MAIKELI KAUSOQO
Nasinu

National reform

FATHER David Arms hints to electoral reform as one of the means of averting future military coups.

Coups are carried out by people who have a predetermined agenda and have the means to force their way into the seat of power, albeit unlawfully in most instances.

As a people, we must be allowed to evolve on our own as we develop methods for selection of leaders.

It will be imperfect in most instances but evolution takes time.

Each time someone forcibly interferes with the process, unscrupulous people are usually the first to benefit.

Our children have learnt to interact.

I see Indian boys wearing *sulu* and being comfortable and Fijian boys in the company of Indian boys and not feeling any less a Fijian because of that.

The hope of this nation lies in the next generation. They will have seen what is going on, heard all that is to be heard and will, in a few years time, be in a position to decide what they want as people of Fiji.

They will not get that chance if self-imposed dogooders such as the Interim

Antediluvian phone systems

SOME 20 years ago, an American expatriate was saying goodbye and reminiscing about his time in Fiji which, in essence, was "great country, great people, but for its antediluvian telephone systems".

I checked the dictionary on what the word meant and it said - of or belonging to the time of the biblical flood.

Those who understand the Bible know it was referring to Noah's flood, quite some time ago.

Our telephone system has seen improvement over the years, of which I was proud, but over the past few weeks, particularly in my area, it has gone back to the time of Noah.

BILL GAVOKA
Nadroga



A writer says the telephone system in the area where he lives has gone back to Noah's time

Prime Minister, electoral reformists as Father Arms or social reformists such as Father Kevin Barr continually interfere and bully their way into how we should develop as a nation.

SOLO NAGASAU
Suva

Obedience to authority

I CONGRATULATE Jioji Kotobalavu for his advice to the Commissioner of Police (FT 28/2), although a bit late, considering what has happened.

The advice speaks volumes of Mr Kotobalavu's intellect and experience.

But I beg to differ on his explanation of the Commissioner's role under the Constitution (section 133) and the authoritarian leadership style.

The word authoritarian, as a noun, states "one who places obedience to authority above personal liberty".

If the police is a disciplined force then what Teleni did was right in order to maintain discipline in the force and his

authority is the Constitution.

The exercise of one's right within a disciplined organisation is a breach of contractual agreement or oath of allegiance to such an organisation.

No wonder there are a lot of broken homes, families and marriages in Fiji.

Those who are supposed to be leading are too soft in instilling discipline in those being led.

The good lord, Jesus Christ calls his followers his disciples - which is derived from the word discipline.

SAULA TUHKORO
Waldina, Naitasiri

Sports parking

I WRITE with regard to two concerns for the Fiji Sports Council and Fiji Football Association.

Number one - parking at Fiji Sports Council venues, the TFL National Stadium and Dome carparks.

During the last weekend of soccer, on Friday for the Suva-Labasa match,

patrons were charged \$2 for parking did not have tax identification number for Value Added Tax nor specified value.

The street adjacent to the Dome carpark was subject to a fee of \$2 for parking.

As far as I understand that road does not belong to the Fiji Sports Council but to the Government (PWD).

On Sunday, patrons were charged \$2 for parking, ticket issued for usage of tracks valued at \$1.

Number 2, on Sunday, ticket value indicated for the game was \$4 but patrons were charged \$5.

Irrespective of games played, if the value states \$4, patrons should have been charged the respective value.

If Fiji FA is so much about development of soccer, why charge additional \$1 from patrons?

Why not provide free parking for them?

The managements of Fiji FA and Fiji Sports Council need to clarify the above.

RAJESH REDDY
Suva

Digicel sports sponsorship

IT is so good to hear and see that Digicel, the company which was launched recently, has been promoting and supporting many sporting activities in Fiji.

The sevens players were provided Digicel roaming phones to contact their families and friends during the World Cup - it's one of the best examples as to how much this company wants Fiji to win.

And therefore, they are even going an extra mile to support them.

Good move, Digicel. I'm sure this company is going to be reaching the sky soon.

The FRU should be honoured and grateful for the great support from Digicel.

ASHMITA DEVI
Lautoka

Women and girls

IN response to the letter titled 'Educated young

women a worry', as interim minister responsible for women, I am glad that more Fijian young women are empowering themselves through education.

However, I feel that the learned ladies who penned the letter did not or were not well equipped to understand the article written by Fiji Times reporter Unaisi Ratubalavu.

The information that I divulged to the reporter was first-hand and from the source.

A follow-up article by Ms Ratubalavu a day later also confirmed what I had said with Kadavu divisional superintendent Reverend Inoke Bota and Lau divisional superintendent Reverend Inoke Takivakata agreeing that the shortage of young women in the maritime islands was a worry.

My ministry and I are trying to establish the root causes of the increase in violence against women and girls and I invite the three ladies to join us in combating violence against women and girls.

DR JIKO LUVENI
Minister for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty

Easytel advertisement

THE ad on the Easytel handi-phone on TV is misleading.

No limit, no barrier and calling from anywhere in Fiji seems to be untrue.

Customers realise this after buying the phones.

The customer service does not clearly explain the services it provides.

The fact is that the phone is only workable in the area it was bought for.

For areas with numbers starting with 33 or 86 or 88 it is only effective there but if you move to another area you will have to buy another SIM card to cater for that area.

For Labasa users, you will have to buy a SIM card in Suva because they are not available in Labasa.

I hope Telecom Fiji makes this clear to the public.

TOMASI BOGINISO
Nasinu

HOW TO CONTACT US

Managing Director: Anne Russell Editor-in-Chief: Netani Rika
Printed by Fiji Times Ltd.
HEAD OFFICE: 177 Victoria Parade, Suva, GPO Box 1167
Telephone: 330 4111
8th FJI TIMES - FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2009

Faxes: Newsroom - 330 1521, Administration - 330 2011
Advertising - 330 2633
Email: Newsroom - timesnews@fijitimes.com.fj
Advertising - timesadvert@fijitimes.com.fj
www.fijitimes.com.fj

LAUTOKA OFFICE: Vidilo St, PO Box 322. Telephone 666 0422
666 1024 (Newsroom). Fax: 666 0352
LABASA OFFICE: Civic Centre Building. Telephone: 881 1644
881 2726 (Newsroom). Fax: 881 2649