

Stop the nonsense

THE process of seeking public opinion on the proposed People's Charter is nothing less than a farce.

It is impossible for anyone in this country to read and form an opinion of the document within the time frame specified by field officers and their police escorts.

On Tuesday night, the proposed charter was distributed to people in the Nausori Parish Hall.

They were expected to read the document in two hours while listening to the views of the team sent to proselytise the message of the interim government and the National Council for Building a Better Fiji.

At the end of the session, attendees were told to fill forms to declare their support, or otherwise, for the proposed People's Charter.

This is ridiculous.

Every individual must be allowed time to thor-



oroughly read this document which will have an obvious impact on their lives.

They must also be given the opportunity to discuss the issue with their neighbours, friends, relatives or people whose views they respect.

At the very least, anyone who wants to read this literature must be given a week in which to read the document, seek opinions and make a choice.

This would mean that the proposed charter document be delivered to homes in one week with the forms being collected seven days later.

It would also mean that citizens do not have to make a decision with a police officer or soldier hovering in the background.

The architects of the charter know full well the

perception which ordinary people have of the police and army. They view these officers as enforcers of State policy and fear the repercussions of rejecting this document.

Intimidation is the only word we have to describe the process.

At Navua on Wednesday night, people at Tokotoko, Calla and Raiwaqa gathered for a Ramayan recital in their settlements.

At these religious gatherings, government teams accompanied by uniformed police and soldiers in plain clothes distributed the charter document and demanded they be signed on the spot.

Much earlier in this process we made the stand that if the regime is so bent on implementing the charter, it must not waste taxpayers' money and time.

The people of this nation must not be used to legitimise the policies of the interim government, the army and the NCBFF.

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Tribute to Kauvesi

AS a former member of several corporate entities, Jone Kauvesi engaged most of his time with community outreach programs - both at provincial and national level.

Prior to the appearance of his obituary, your sports writer (FT 288) mentioned that the Koro Island rugby team wore black arm bands in their final game, paying their last respects in a fitting tribute to Mr Kauvesi.

This man sacrificed a lot to uplift and motivate the youth of Koro Island. Apart from rugby, he also played an instrumental and viable role for the development of untapped resources available in the rural areas.

One of those is the tourism site on Koro Island. Suffice to note from the busy and once populated area of the Raiwaqa suburb, he rose to the limelight and reached the pinnacle by being one of the few taulaki to be the Lord Mayor of Suva.

I also learnt that he had a stint with the police force.

Most of his children are settled well overseas and I believe they will always cherish and revere the ideal compassionate legacy that is unique rendered by their beloved father's early upbringing in the garden island of Fiji.

ISIRELI BOLANIVEIMAU Lautoka

FNFP money

IT is encouraging to read Alipate Waqarawai's response to Jope Donu's query regarding updating of members' FNFP accounts.

However, I humbly request the FNFP high office to update all members on the 2007-2008 annual report and, if it's available, where can we obtain one and, if not, why?

MARTINO NEMANI Suva

Charter failure

THE People's Charter

BEST LETTER OF THE WEEK

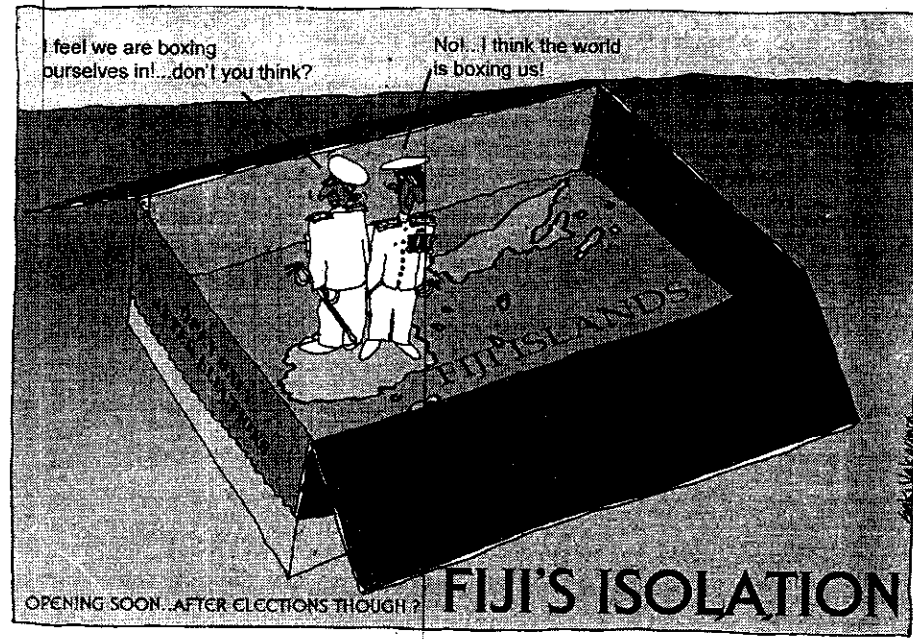
receives a set of uniball Pens

PLUS:

Letter of the year receives a Sony Digital Cyber-Shot Camera DSC-S730

Letter of the month receives a Sony ICF-C212 clock radio

17800



OPENING SOON... AFTER ELECTIONS THOUGH?

promises a lot of change, some for the better and some for the worse.

The document promises that it will eliminate lying by politicians.

However, hardly after its launching, the People's Charter has been breached by its chief architect, Mr M P Chaudhry, who is now claiming that the Fiji Labour Party was not involved in the formulation of the charter.

It is common knowledge that the party was instrumental in the formation of the charter with good intentions of moving the country forward.

Why should the respected former minister chicken out? Reminds me of the old adage - "you can fool a person once, but you cannot fool everybody all the time"

JONE NAKAUADRA Lautoka

Bus fire

FOLLOWING the horrific deaths of the 10 people on the ill-fated bus at Sigatoka last week, heart-rending

lessons must be learnt by all concerned.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to families of all 10 victims who perished on the Queen's Highway.

Our sympathies and condolences are offered to surviving family members. Immediate professional counselling is a must for the surviving members of that ill-fated bus. Such passenger-carry vehicles must carry fire extinguishers.

This must become mandatory. Emergency exits on either side of every bus and also at the rear cannot be overlooked.

Every bus driver must undergo stringent safety and emergency procedures to be conducted by the Land Transport Authority and National Road Safety Council. This must become mandatory.

The LTA must pay closer attention to all buses that are over 20 years old. Many of these vehicles are not fit enough to be on our roads.

Human life cannot be equated in dollars and cents.

Fiji cannot and must not lean on out-dated Colonial laws and acts relating to

bus and similar modes of transportation on our roads.

R CHANG Nadi Airport

Political power

IN a democracy, political power becomes morally authorised only when it arises from the people.

Moral authorisation arises from the free decisions of the people as a whole only when each person has the liberty to make fundamental political choices.

Thus, liberty is the fundamental precondition for the very concept of self-government that the armed commander and the archbishop purport to be promoting.

The army robbed Fiji Islanders of that liberty on December 5 2006, when armed soldiers usurped the democratically-elected multi-party Government of the people and has since been systematically subjecting one ethnic group, the Fijian people, to State-sponsored destruction, tor-

ture, humiliation and dehumanisation. That behaviour is neither legal nor moral, nor ethical nor religious, nor political prowess nor statesmanship.

Bainimarama and Mataca should admit that Fiji Islanders have never given up our inherent authority to make and remake our form of government and to continuously authorise the use of political power in our name by officials and institutions that remain accountable to us.

Thus, in a democracy, we, the people, authorise the fundamental plan of the political system at its beginning and approve the subsequent design of its institutions and agree to the conduct of the offices of government established as part of that system, including the actions and policies of those institutions.

ANTONIO ALI Nausori

Proud to be Indian

I FIND it amusing that David Smith wants Indians to be proud of their race.

Indians are known throughout the world as peace-loving, law-abiding people. Indian food is famous throughout the world.

Indians in America are the most successful out of all the people of the world that call America home. Indians make up a huge chunk of the workforce on NASA and Microsoft and, of

course, the major player in the medical field.

Here in Australia, it was officially revealed by the Immigration Department that Indians are the most successful people settling in Australia and have the lowest unemployment rate. I ask David Smith to look around himself.

In Fiji, the Prasads and the Patels have far better houses, cars, jobs, businesses and their children have far better education and future prospects than the Smiths or the Speights.

If David Smith is proud of his race (and he should be) despite all the government favours and handouts but has nothing to show for, what makes him think the race that is doing far better than him are not proud.

MAHEN I PRASAD Sydney

Start at home

THE NCBFF should not go far to Muainaweni to assess the national support for the charter.

I suggest that they start in their Jerusalem, the Civil Service, to fathom the national support or otherwise for the charter.

With 20,000-plus learned and literate employees and its almost perfect representation of the races in Fiji, the Civil Service would be an ideal testing ground.

My only fear is that having to state their names, civil servants who do not support the charter may be victimised.

R KAUTOLU Suva

More on Pages 16 and 17

Voice of the People

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All letters and email (no attachments) to The Fiji Times must include the sender's full name, home address as well as day and evening phone numbers for verification.

Letters with noms de plume will not be accepted. Ideally, letters will be a maximum of 200 words. By submitting your letter for publication, you agree that we may edit the letter for legal, space or other reasonable reasons and after publication in the newspaper, republish it on the Internet or in other media.

Letters published or submitted elsewhere will not be given priority.

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