



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

MINUTES

of Proceedings of Parliament at Suva on Thursday, Fifth day of December, 2024

1. The House met at 9.30 a.m. pursuant to adjournment.
2. Hon. Speaker took the Chair and read the Prayer.
3. ATTENDANCE
 - (a) The following Honourable Members gave apologies to the Hon. Speaker for absence from the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Graham Leung.
 - (b) The following Honourable Members obtained approval from the Hon. Speaker for intermittent absence(s) during the sitting of Parliament –

Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka, Hon. Charan Singh and Hon. Ratu Josaia Niudamu.
4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved that the Minutes of the sitting of Parliament held on Wednesday, 4 December 2024 as previously circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed.

Motion seconded.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

The Hon. Speaker welcomed all Honourable Members to the sitting, those seated in the gallery and those watching the live proceedings on television and the internet. The Hon. Speaker also welcomed the students and teachers of Wailotua District School from Wailevu, Tailevu.

Honourable Speaker informed all Honourable Members that pursuant to Standing Order 115, the Hon. Penioni Ravunawa would now be a substantive member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, replacing the Hon. Jovesa Vocea.

6. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence the Hon. Viliame Naupoto tabled the Committee's Consolidated Review Report on the Savusavu Town Council 2011-2013 Annual Reports.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence moved a motion without notice pursuant to Standing Order 121(5) that a debate on the content of the report would be initiated at a future sitting. The motion was seconded and agreed to unanimously.

7. MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

(a) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics the Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Premila Kumar and Hon. Viliame Naupoto subsequently responded.

(b) The Minister for iTaukei Affairs and Culture, Heritage and Arts the Hon. Ifereimi Vasu delivered a Ministerial Statement. The Hon. Semi Koroilavesau and Hon. Ioane Naivalurua subsequently responded.

8. QUESTIONS

Oral Questions

293/2024 Hon. Lenora Qereqeretabua asked the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management – Can the Minister update Parliament on the Ministry's status of disaster preparedness considering we are into the hurricane season.

- 295/2024 Hon. Ioane Naivalurua asked the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises, Immigration and Fiji Police Force – Can the Prime Minister inform Parliament on the effective measures that the Fiji Police Force is implementing to combat the increasing yaqona thefts in Taveuni.
- 296/2024 Hon. Iliesa Vanawalu asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the implementation of the ‘Starting a Business’ under the business NOW FIJI project.
- 297/2024 Hon. Sachida Nand asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on which communities are being assisted by Fiji Water in their free water assistance programme.
- 298/2024 Hon. Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the short-term and long-term measures that the Ministry and Municipal Councils have taken to implement the audit qualification issues identified by the Office of the Auditor-General.
- 299/2024 Hon. Premila Kumar asked the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises, Immigration and Fiji Police Force – Can the Prime Minister inform Parliament on the measures in place at the Fiji Immigration Department to verify the eligibility of Girmitiya descendants and those registered in the *Vola ni Kawa Bula* holding foreign citizenship to enter Fiji without a permit.
- 300/2024 Hon. Jovesa Vocea asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the Memorandum of Cooperation with the Japan Tourism Agency of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.
- 301/2024 Hon. Vijay Nath asked the Minister for Housing and Local Government – Can the Minister update Parliament on the measures being undertaken to enhance the capability of the fire fighters of the National Fire Authority.
- 302/2024 Hon. Esrom Immanuel asked the Minister for iTaukei Affairs, Culture, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister inform Parliament on the opportunities and programmes that are currently available for the economic empowerment of the iTaukei.

- 303/2024 Hon. Joseph Nand asked the Minister for Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport – Can the Minister update Parliament on the construction of replacement crossings for Nasovotava village in Valley Road, Sigatoka, which were washed away in the 2012 floods.
- 304/2024 Hon. Tomasi Tunabuna asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Co-operatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications – Can the Deputy Prime Minister update Parliament on the role of the Fijian Competition and Consumer Commission in fostering competition within the market while maintaining oversight of price-controlled goods and services.
- 290/2024 Hon. Faiyaz Koya asked the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation – Can the Deputy Prime Minister inform Parliament what specific measures is the Ministry implementing to prepare the tourism industry for the upcoming cyclone season and the impacts of climate change.

The responses to the Oral and Supplementary Questions were provided by the respective Ministers. The Hon. Speaker informed that the Hon. Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources has duly submitted his response to Written Question 272/2024.

9. SUSPENSION MOTION BY THE LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT

The Leader of the Government in Parliament the Hon. Ro Filipe Tuisawau moved pursuant to Standing Order 6 that so much of Standing Order 23(1) be suspended so as to allow the House to sit beyond 4.30 p.m. to complete the remaining items listed on the Order Paper.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

10. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

(a) Sugar Industry (Amendment) Bill 2024 (Bill No. 23 of 2024)

The Minister for Multi-Ethnic Affairs and Sugar Industry the Hon. Charan Singh moved a motion pursuant to Standing Order 51 –

- (i) That the Sugar Industry (Amendment) Bill 2024 be considered by Parliament without delay;
- (ii) That the Bill must pass through one stage at a single sitting of Parliament;

- (iii) That the Bill must be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Justice, Law and Human Rights;
- (iv) That the Standing Committee must report on the Bill at the next sitting of Parliament; and
- (v) That upon presentation of the report on the Bill by the Standing Committee, the Bill must be debated and voted upon by Parliament, but that one hour be given to debate the Bill, with the right of reply given to him as the member moving the motion.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

(b) Presidential Pensions (Amendment) Bill 2024 (Bill No. 20 of 2024)

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Climate Change, Environment, Civil Service, Information, Public Enterprises, Immigration and Fiji Police Force the Hon. Sitiveni Rabuka moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Monday, 2 December 2024, that the Presidential Pensions (Amendment) Bill 2024 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to amend the Presidential Pensions Act 1994, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(c) Fiji World Heritage Bill 2023 (Bill No. 25 of 2023)

The Minister for Justice the Hon. Siromi Turaga moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Friday, 15 September 2023, that the Fiji World Heritage Bill 2023 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to provide for the recognition and management of places in Fiji having outstanding universal value, based on Fiji's obligations under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention concerning

the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and to give effect to the operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and related matters, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(d) Child Justice Bill 2024 (Bill No. 4 of 2024)

The Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Thursday, 23rd May 2024, that the Child Justice Bill 2024 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to establish a comprehensive, specialised criminal justice system for children and for related matters, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(e) Child Care and Protection Bill 2024 (Bill No. 5 of 2024)

The Minister for Women, Children and Social Protection the Hon. Lynda Tabuya moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Thursday, 23rd May 2024, that the Child Care and Protection Bill 2024 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to provide for and promote the welfare and protection of children and to provide for families and communities to receive assistance in the care and protection of children and for related matters, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(f) Aquaculture Bill 2024 (Bill No. 21 of 2024)

The Minister for Fisheries and Forestry the Hon. Alitia Bainivalu moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Tuesday, 3 December 2024, that the Aquaculture Bill 2024 be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to regulate fresh water, brackish water and marine aquaculture and for related matters, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

(g) BSP Fiji Bill 2024 (Bill No. 22 of 2024)

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics the Hon. Prof. Biman Prasad moved that pursuant to the resolution of Parliament on Wednesday, 4 December 2024, that the BSP Fiji Bill 2024, be debated, voted upon and be passed.

Motion seconded.

Motion debated.

Question put.

Motion agreed to unanimously.

A Bill for an Act to provide for the transfer to BSP Financial Group (Fiji) Pte Limited of the undertaking of BSP Financial Group Limited in Fiji and for related purposes, enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. Speaker thanked all Honourable Members for their contributions and adjourned Parliament until Friday, 6 December 2024 at 9.30 a.m.

Parliament adjourned at 10.02 p.m.

Speaker of Parliament

Secretary-General to Parliament

5th December, 2024.