



VICE-CHANCELLOR'S GIRMIT DAY MESSAGE

Dear All,

Today, as we gather to honour Girmit Day, I extend warm greetings to all Fijians, especially our Indo-Fijian community. This day holds profound significance as we commemorate the arrival of the first indentured labourers from India in 1879 under British rule, whose journey and sacrifices have left an enduring mark on our nation's history.

Girmit Day is both a celebration and a moment of reflection. It reminds us of the resilience and strength of the Girmitiyas, who faced immense challenges upon their arrival in Fiji. They came filled with hope and dreams, confronting hardships with remarkable courage. Their history exemplifies the human capacity to endure and thrive amid adversity, and it is this legacy that we honour today.

At the Fiji National University (FNU), we take pride in recognising the contributions of the Girmitiyas and their vital role in shaping modern Fiji. Their dedication to family, community, and hard work has enriched our cultural tapestry and fostered a sense of belonging that transcends boundaries. Their heritage is not merely part of history; it continues to live on in each of us as we embrace the diverse narratives that define our nation.

As we reflect on their journey, we are reminded of the values they imparted: resilience, unity, and respect for diversity. These principles are central to our ethos at FNU. We aim to create a welcoming environment where every student and staff member feels valued, and where cultures are celebrated and integrated into our university's identity. Learning from the past enables us to build a more inclusive future.

While honouring this history, we also acknowledge the pain and suffering that accompanied the Girmit experience. It is crucial to remember the hardships faced and to transform that pain into understanding and compassion. We have the opportunity to foster dialogue and build connections among communities, ensuring that these historical struggles inform our actions today.

As we commemorate Girmit Day, I encourage us all to reflect on the resilience that resides within us. Let us draw inspiration from the courage of the Girmitiyas and work together towards a Fiji that is united, diverse, and inclusive. May their legacy inspire us to strive for a better tomorrow for all Fijians.

Wishing everyone a meaningful and reflective Girmit Day.

Thank you / Vinaka Vakalevu / Dhanyawad

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