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**Prime Minister of Fiji and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics, the Public Service, People’s Charter and Change and Progress, Information, iTaukei Affairs, Sugar Industry and Lands and Mineral Resources**

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**SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF BUA NURSING STATION**

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**Lomanikoro Mon. 11th Mar., 2013
BUA 1200 Hours**

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Bula vinaka and a very good morning to you all.

It’s wonderful to be in Bua again as I start my latest visit to the Northern Division.

I’m here to listen to your concerns and to see the progress being made in the Government’s program to deliver better services to ordinary Fijians.

This is our most important task – to not just promise better access to electricity, clean water, roads and government services but provide them.

Unlike previous governments, we keep our promises. We deliver.

People have been saying to me in various parts of Fiji: *“Why have an election at all next year? We’re happy with things the way they are”*. It’s a recognition of the hard work the Government is putting into service delivery. Our program is on track. We know where we’re heading and it’s towards building a better Fiji for everyone.

Why has it taken so long for Fijians to get the services they deserve? In the previous Constitutions, for example we had the so-called entrenched provisions such as the Native Lands Trust Act yet there was no tangible progress, no development, no empowerment.

What we are determined to do is give all Fijians the things they need to empower them - better access to telecommunications, better access to affordable higher education, access to affordable housing, access to water and electricity, access to legal aid, access to better roads and to skills training for our young people.

And nothing is more important than providing for the health and physical well-being of all Fijians.  Which is why today is an important milestone  – the opening of the new Bua Nursing Station.

This facility caters for a total population of around 13-hundred people. It serves the villages of Navunievu, Koroinasolo, Bua, Tiliva and Dalomo and 16 other settlements and 4 schools. The old Bua Nursing station was built 35 years ago and because of its isolated location, few people have had access to health services. People have been forced to hire vehicles to go to Nabouwalu hospital rather than be treated locally. There was also an issue of safety for the nursing staff in such an isolated place.

Relocating this Nursing Station to its present location cost the Government about $250,000. This includes the building itself, a new fully furnished nurse’s quarters, a generator and solar power system. But we have also had a very generous contribution from a member of the local community at Luvuluvu that has made this venture possible.

I would like to thank Mrs Anita Devi Singh, wife of the late Jayent Pratap Singh and trustee of his estate who donated one acre of freehold land and five thousand dollars cash for the purpose of building this new station. Mr. Singh’s vision of having health services accessible to the people of Bua has now been realised.

As your Prime Minister, I would like to say that this act of generosity makes me very proud. Fiji needs more Fijians like the Singhs.  Vinaka Vakelevu, Mrs. Singh.

My fellow Fijians, this is your Nursing Station. Use it well . I urge you to come here at the first signs of illness and before it gets serious so that a higher level of medical care is required.

Of course, prevention is better than cure and I also urge the local community to work with the nurses and other government agencies to promote healthier lifestyles on the part of our people.

We can all eat less and exercise more. We can eat better foods – more fresh fish, fruit and green vegetables.  We can drink less alcohol and yaqona. And we all need to give up smoking.

My Government is building a new Fiji based on equality for everyone - a country in which we are all Fijians and our children grow up with the same opportunities.  We also want them to be healthy. So it’s our responsibility to be role models for them by pursuing healthy lifestyles ourselves and encouraging them to follow our example.

I now have great pleasure in declaring the new Bua Nursing station open.

Thank you. Vinaka vakalevu.

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