

# OFFICIAL OPENING

LOVE ALL - SERVE ALL

SRI SATHYA SAI SANJEEVANI

## MEDICAL CENTRE FIJI

**BY**

**PRIME MINISTER OF FIJI**

**HON. JOSAIA VOREQE BAINIMARAMA**

**27.04.2018**

# Speech By The Prime Minister of Fiji

## Hon. Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama



The Chairman and Founding Trustee
The Director of the Sai Prema Foundation
The Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services
Assistant Ministers
Members of the diplomatic corps
My fellow Fijians

Bula Vinaka and a very good afternoon to you all.

Today we are celebrating a wonderful occasion of the opening of this new Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre as you have heard will offer free health and medical services to our people including those living and working here in Nasese. I would like to begin by extending a very gracious Vinaka Vakalevu (thank you) to the Sai Prema Foundation and all your members for working with us to make this new medical centre a reality.

As of today these doors will be open to every Fijian, many from rural communities in this area, giving them far greater access to medical professionals who can offer counselling, treatments and even some medicines all completely for free. So this centre is going to put many of our people on the path towards healthier living and quite simply it is going to save Fijian lives. Really there is no more a noble pursuit than giving our people the tools and resources they need to enjoy healthier and happier lives. That is the view of my government and I am very glad to see the commitment shared here strongly by the Sai Prema Foundation. As your Prime Minister, the government I lead is tasked with the protection, well-being and prosperity of every Fijian. That is an enormous responsibility and one that we are probably meeting every day in our service to the Fijian people.

Our work covers every aspect of our national development. In health, education, infrastructure, economic management and in caring for those most vulnerable in our society. But that work is far too important for any government to go at it alone. Every member of our society, wherever they are, must help us make life better for our people and look out for those in dire need of assistance. Everyone should lend a helping hand. Everyone should give what they can afford to give and everyone should spend time listening and learning from the struggles and hardships faced by their fellow Fijians. That is what makes true Fijian patriots. That is what defines

a good Fijian Citizen because being a good citizen is about more than only following the law. It is about more than paying your taxes and cheering on our sports teams. Good citizenship is about doing what you can in your life to make Fiji a better and safer place to live. It is about showing respect to your countrymen and women. It is about being active and caring members of our communities and it is about going beyond the call of duty for the sake and success of your country.

This is what we are celebrating this morning. The greatness that good citizenship can achieve and the achievement of the Sai Prema Foundation is not only limited to this new Medical Centre. Your charitable work throughout the country has already touched the lives of thousands of our people through your Gift of Life program. Back in 2016, you provided critical surgeries to 23 Fijian children here in Fiji and were able to send another 3 children overseas to undergo other surgical procedures. You have also brought in an international team of doctors to Fiji just a few weeks ago who carried out free cardiac surgeries for even more of our young people and I would like to extend a special welcome to the 26 children who benefited from those surgeries and who are actually here with us this morning.

I know we can all agree that seeing them here, seeing them healthy and doing well is the greatest reward any of us can ever ask to receive. So again on behalf of every parent in Fiji, we thank your Foundation along with the doctors who carried out this work and for what you have done for these young Fijians whether through your work offering free medical and dental camps, and screenings for Fijians in rural areas of the country, assisting the National Blood Service of Fiji, looking after the needs of orphaned children, providing relief assistance to Fijians affected by severe weather or even offering scholarships for Fijian doctors to train overseas, you have shown your care for our people knows no bounds! You are invaluable partners to my government and the tremendous impact you have had on the lives of young Fijians in particular cannot be fully captured in words I know. Your work is inspiring more Fijians to live up to your example and I hope that this continues. Obviously not everyone can afford to fund the constructions of new medical centres but everyone can do their part in some way to make Fiji even stronger, safer and a better place to call home.

Health in particular is the sector where cooperation and partnership can be incredibly effective as we work to expand the reach of our medical services for the Fijian people regardless of where they call home in Fiji and regardless of their socio-economic status. This year we are increasing the funding allocation to the Ministry of Health by over one hundred million dollars with the aim of funding new hospitals and health centres and expanding the range of treatments available to our people. We are recruiting more qualified health personnel and we have established the Ministry's first ever customer care centre where patients and their families can call and give their feedback on services we offer.

We are also pursuing a public-private partnership, the Triple P, to massively develop and upgrade the number of local hospitals and raiser their health offerings to the same level of care found in developed nations around the world. That Triple P project alone will bring higher quality health services to around 380,000 Fijians. We are also very excited that it will also make open heart surgeries available 24/7 right here in Fiji. That ladies and gentlemen is progress, and looking at the faces of these young Fijians here today who have already benefitted from these sorts of surgeries, nothing shows more clearly that we are on the right path in developing

our health sector in Fiji.

My fellow Fijians, the level of care and responsibility we share towards one another is what defines the Fijian Spirit and it will be the legacy we one day will pass on to those who come after us.  That legacy is becoming prouder everyday due to the great work of our many partners in progress including the Sai Prema Foundation and its members. All of what we see here today that this new medical centre along with these young Fijians – It is a testament of your commitment to Fiji and our people.

You have certainly set a very high bar and response for caring for Fijian Citizens and I very much look forward to seeing what all of you have yet to achieve.

I thank you for this great announcement. What a gift to the people of Fiji!

Vinaka Vakalevu and I thank you.



# Speech by Director of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji and Chairman of its International Advisory Board

## Mr. Sumeet Tappoo



Honourable Prime Minister of Fiji, Honourable Minister for Health, our International guests of honour, distinguished guests, surgeons and doctors, ladies & gentleman

My heartfelt greetings to you all.

Honourable Prime Minister, on behalf of the Chairman and Trustees of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji, I offer my sincere gratitude to you for gracing this auspicious occasion for us as our Chief Guest despite your extremely hectic schedule.

Ladies & Gentleman, the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) founded to serve the poor and needy people of Fiji through Medicare, Educare and Sociocare initiatives. Our simple and humble efforts to begin a Foundation, to make a difference to the people of Fiji, is today a growing and an ever-expanding force in society. We are embarking upon projects and initiatives in such multi-faceted ways that even we would never have imagined.

In our Foundation's two years of existence, I am extremely happy to say that that Foundation has had the incredible opportunity to serve the people of Fiji through various projects and initiatives and truly, we have made a difference to the lives of our brothers and sisters in this beloved land.

What is unique about our NGO is that each and every person who has joined hands with us has done so with the willingness to serve the underprivileged and needy in a quest to bring joy and bliss to the people and to our beloved motherland, Fiji. There are no paid personnel or employees in Sai Prema Foundation Fiji. Our common bond is love and service to mankind.

The Sai Prema Foundation is inspired by the words and teachings of our inspirational master, Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the philosophical bedrock that governs our Foundation is through these three profound principles:
"Love all, Serve all"
"Help ever, Hurt never" and
"Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray".

Honourable Prime Minister, the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji is part of a larger global mission of service to mankind, which is making a difference to people's lives in unique ways. In India, 120,000 little children are being served breakfast every morning, children's heart hospitals are doing FREE surgeries for thousands of ailing hearts, thousands of children are being given free education, and medical centres and hospitals have been built in countries like Nigeria, Sri Lanka & Malaysia. Incredible projects for women and youth empowerment have been initiated in countries such as the United States of America, Australia and Europe and above all, one and all are being served without discrimination of race, religion, caste or the colour of their skin.

It is in the context that I would like to introduce to you the 4 distinguished gentleman, who are at the forefront of this mission, inspired by Sathya Sai Baba, going from country to country, initiating and inspiring people to serve humanity.

Firstly, Mr. Isaac Tigrett, the founder of the Hard Rock Café and House of Blues. Mr. C Sreenivas, the Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Health & Education Trust, Mr. BN Narasimha Murthy, the chief mentor of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust, and finally, the young and inspiring Mr. Madhusudan Naidu, a Trustee of the Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Trust. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Dr. David Cornsweet from the United States of America who is the global coordinator of the various foundations in all the countries.

Honourable Prime Minister, I also want to tell you that over the past 18 months, the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji has undertaken the incredible task of giving a new "Gift of Life" to 52 children by giving them free heart surgeries and collectively saving the families of these young children over $5million dollars! These surgeries were performed by an international team of surgeons and doctors representing the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in Raipur India, led by the brilliant surgeon & Director of the hospital Dr. Ashish Katewa. We are so fortunate that Dr Ashish Katewa is present here today and I would like to acknowledge his presence. Ladies & gentleman, these free heart surgeries were performed on 26 children last week to children between the ages of 2 months to 14 years of age. Some of these children are present here today and I would like to invite them all on stage to have a photograph with the Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Ashish Katewa and all guests seated on stage.

Ladies & Gentleman, I am also extremely happy to announce that the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji and the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in Raipur India have collaborated to build capacity and upskill medical professionals in Fiji. With the wonderful support of the Ministry of Health, we have offered a scholarship to a doctor from CWM Hospital, Dr. Maryanne Korai, who flew out yesterday to India, on a 3-month medical scholarship in an aspect of pediatric cardiology, offered completely free of cost to the Government of Fiji and the Doctor.

Honourable Prime Minister, the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji is very happy to report that since its inception in 2016, over 2,000 patients have been served in the rural villages of Fiji through our Health on Wheels project where our Foundation, in conjunction with Ministry of Health, conducts regular medical camps by taking Fiji's experienced medical professionals to the villages and giving top quality healthcare to the villagers absolutely free of cost.

I am also very happy to tell you that the Sai Prema Foundation's Be a Hero Blood drive across the towns and cities of Fiji has been the highest collector of blood for the Fiji National Blood

Service in 2017 where over 3,600 lives have been potentially saved.

Ladies & Gentleman, the Foundation's Sai Annapoorna project looks after the various needs of underprivileged families through the distribution of groceries, clothing and general living needs. The Foundation has also initiated a Children of God project to look after the specific needs of orphaned children.

As a Foundation, under our Help in Kind project, we have tried to do our best to serve those in need during the disastrous cyclone Winston and the recent cyclones which hit parts of Fiji.

Honourable Prime Minister, it is our desire to continue to work with you and your Government to complement the wonderful work undertaken under your exemplary leadership.

Today we celebrate the official opening of the the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre, a public private partnership with the Ministry of Health. This is yet another step in the creation of a platform of goodness, which will serve the people of Fiji, with the provision of quality healthcare and medication, absolutely free of cost.

Sai Prema Foundation will handle the operations & management of the Medical Centre under the guidance of the Director of the Medical Centre Dr. Krupali Tappoo and the Ministry of Health will provide the doctors and personnel. Apart from the general outpatient medical facilities offered, the Foundation will, from time to time, bring in internationally recognised medical specialists, offering free medical care for the people of Fiji.

On the 18th of January, the land upon which this medical centre exists today, was an empty barren land. In a record time of 13 weeks, what stands here is now a miracle and an avenue of hope for the poor and needy people of our country. I want to take this opportunity to thank the project manager, Mr. David Jones, the builder Mr. Andrew Goulding and the project foreman Mr. Ross Cullen who worked tirelessly to ensure the centre was opened on this auspicious day.

However, even though today is the celebration of the opening of this Medical Centre, we would like to make a grand announcement. This announcement is a gift for the people of Fiji and the entire South Pacific.

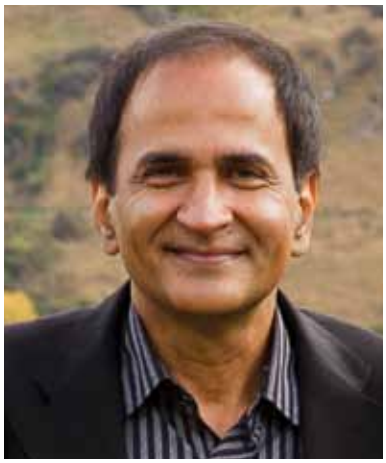
And to make this grand announcement, I would like to call my father, Mahendra Tappoo, who is the Chairman of the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji.

Before I call him to make this announcement, I will finish off by saying to the youth & people of Fiji, let us do all that we can to serve those in need. Let us aim for the stars and become leading lights to ensure that our beloved nation and this beautiful world lives as one humanity, united in love, peace and harmony.

May God bless you all and may God bless Fiji.

# Speech By the Chairman and Founding Trustee of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji

## Mr. Mahendra Tappoo



Honourable Prime Minister, Hon. Minister for Health, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The land on which sits the newly constructed Medical Centre and the land adjoining it has been dedicated by the Government to the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji for the development of medical facilities for the underprivileged and needy people of Fiji. Our heartfelt gratitude to the Honourable Prime Minister and his Government for granting our Foundation this piece of land for that purpose.

Our sincere thanks to all consultants, contractors, service providers and workmen who built and completed this magnificent Medical Centre to very high standards in a record time of 3 months. And our special thanks to the Minister of Health and her team in partnering with us in this project to serve the underprivileged and needy people of Fiji.

I also offer my deepest gratitude to all those individuals and corporates who have voluntarily come forward to join hands with our Foundation, not only in this Medical Centre project but in all our other projects.

Honourable Prime Minister, on behalf of our Foundation, I would like to make an announcement as a gift to the people of Fiji and the South Pacific. As our Foundation's next major project, the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji, in association with the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital India, will begin the immediate planning and development of a Children's Heart Hospital next to the Medical Centre, which will offer heart surgeries for the children of Fiji and the South Pacific completely free of cost. We are indeed truly blessed to have received the full support of the Prime Minister and his Government towards this hospital project. As I said before, this piece of land has been dedicated by the government to our Foundation for this landmark project.

Our Foundation will work closely with the Government of Fiji, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, the Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital India and the international aid agencies to realise this monumental project into reality for the poor and needy children of Fiji and the Pacific.

This will be South Pacific's first Pediatric Cardiac Hospital which will provide the children of Fiji and the neighbouring South Pacific Island nations with free heart surgeries, giving them a new

'Gift of Life'. Called the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Heart Hospital, this will be the first Sanjeevani hospital outside of India .

Needless to say, it is not possible for us to embark on a project of this magnitude without the special expertise, guidance, encouragement and support of the Sanjeevani hospitals in India and its Chairman Mr. C. Sreenivas who is present here today.

My heartfelt thanks to the dignitaries from our sister organisations in India who are present here today who have given us invaluable advise, motivation, support, guidance and encouragement to build this new Medical Centre and to embark on this forthcoming children's heart hospital project.

Mr. Isaac Tigrett, Mr. Narasimha Murthy, Mr. C Sreenivas and Mr. Madhusudan Naidu, you are all outstanding living examples of selfless service to humanity. We deeply appreciate your presence and we seek your continued blessings and guidance for this and all our other projects.

For the benefit of our distinguished guests from India, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand and other countries, our government has an outstanding record of looking after the needs of the poor and underprivileged in society.

The Fiji government under the outstanding leadership of Prime Minister Bainimarama has not only transformed the economy to the benefit of each and every Fijian regardless of their ethnicity or religion or social background, he has put into place social welfare benefits which, quite frankly, is difficult to imagine in a small developing country like Fiji to have in place.
These include:

- Free education - no tuition fees to pay- from pre-school to primary school to the end of high school, with free text books for all
- Free nutritious breakfast programme for all year 1 students in every school throughout Fiji including the rural schools
- Free medical services and medication
- Free or subsidised electricity & water
- No income tax to pay for individuals earning up to $30,000, and the list goes on.

Honourable Prime Minister, thank you also for your outstanding personal leadership on the global stage in working to bring about climate change reforms in this beautiful planet of ours… which makes us all very proud to be a Fijian.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the Director, the International Advisory Board, the Executive Committee and Volunteers of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji, I humbly invite all of you who have the same desire to serve, to join our efforts and help us work towards that common goal. Let us try to make a difference. Let us do all that we can to inspire change. Like Mahatma Gandhi said, "let us be the change that we wish to see in the world".

Once again, thank you most sincerely Honourable Prime Minister for gracing us with your presence here today to officially open the new Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre.

Thank you and God bless Fiji.

# Speech By Chairman of Sri Sathya Sai Health & Education Trust, India

## Mr. C. Sreenivas



Revered adorable presence of the One who blesses this August gathering, and importantly the dearest Honourable Prime Minister Bainimarama, Madam Bainimarama, Minister for Health, your Excellencies, distinguished members in the audience, sisters and brothers.

Honourable Prime Minister, on behalf of the one billion Indians, and all the nationalities that are present here, please accept the warmest greetings of each one of us from the bottom of our hearts on this sacred birthday of yours.

I must first express my gratitude, Sir, to your Government and to the Ministry of Health in particular and to every citizen of Fiji who has stood with us, who has embraced us, given us so much warmth, affection and kindness in our endeavour of service. Vinaka, Vinaka, Vinaka

To all citizens of Fiji, we had heard of the warmth of the people of Fiji, but now we have felt it and I say this most genuinely.

Sir, you mentioned about the children we serve. To me this is a small step for these children and their families. But it is a 'giant leap' for Fiji because they the children represent the sum total of all our futures. They are going to live the dreams that we have. They are going to live in the world which Fiji will give forth in the times and in the years ahead.

What is Sanjeevani? It is the name that has been spoken about by many. Sanjeevani stands for genuine care, Sanjeevani stands for quality care, Sanjeevani stands for much needed care, and most importantly and uniquely, Sanjeevani stands for total free-of-cost care. It is to the credit of our Founding Father, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, that he did not allow commerce to spoil or ruin a budding life.

As you rightly observed, progress is not just an economic measure but progress is measured by how much we can share, care and feel for our brethren. Progress is also defined by how much of that wealth, both in human and in economic terms, that we have shared with each of us.

What do we endeavour in taking further this Centre here, Sir. It would be our attempt to work with the Ministry of Health to first create a "national registry of children" wherein every child born first in Fiji and in the Pacific countries are first screened and fed into a database as to what their health conditions are because much of illness can be deferred or cured at infancy, and so a database of children is what we would first work for. Thereafter as Mahendra Tappoo announced, first we will work towards a Fiji Sri Sathya Sai Pediatric Cardiac Centre for Human Excellence with a dream to make Fiji to be the new iconic shining light for the region in providing excellence in cardiac care for children.

Sir, every country defines itself by an icon. Yes, we have a living icon in Bainimarama, but we also need an icon that lives forever in the form of care - quality care, genuine care, free care of its children. Children are the fathers of time. They reflect what the future generations are going to be and when care is provided free of cost, suddenly gratitude becomes the very foundation of their lives and through gratitude, truly comes human progress.

And when we remain beholden and grateful to generations of our predecessors and to our peers for what they have done because of much that we do not see, and if you instil the sacred value of reverence and gratitude in life, that society will be formed well. That would be the earnest desire for Sanjeevani and Sri Sathya Sai, our Founding Father - to lay emphasis on education and health, with gratitude and reverence as their fundamental virtues while we will bring quality skills.

Yes, health care today comprises of quality skills and training. We are so happy that the Government of Fiji has already started sending doctors, and soon nurses and technicians and several specialists, to our hospitals where we will embrace them with love and where all services and training would be provided totally free of cost. We want to see Fiji shine.

To us Fiji means a lot.

This is a statement from the bottom of my heart. This legacy that you spoke about is something that we share in common between India and Fiji.

One of the first countries that our Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited was your beloved Fiji.

We look forward to 2019 November, Prime Minister. We have set a goal to ourselves, ambitious that it might seem, but then what is ambition but something that human achievement can aspire for with divine will and support that is the strength of this endeavour.

This is an act of divine will while this is an attempt of human endeavour. This is an act of divine will and kindness that Fiji should be blessed and what better day to be blessed than on this day of your birthday.

So ladies and gentlemen to continue what Mahendra just mentioned, mark your calendars for November 2019. All our energies are going to be focused relentlessly and tirelessly towards that date. We were just told that the government works very fast in giving its approvals and permissions!

May we submit this on this occasion, that all services in the Hospital would be marked out totally free of cost. We are quite sure that these permissions and approvals will be very forthcoming and in quick time. We are aware the task ahead of us is daunting but then when you look at one of the child who is about to die, nothing can be as daunting.

The joy and especially on this day when the little children's parents who may be 25 years old, and when you Prime Minister on behalf of these beautiful people give back to them their child with hope of looking forward to life, then what a gift Fiji will be giving to them. It would be the first country, Prime Minister, in the world to give forth what is the United Nations dream, where health is an entitlement of a right and that every child is entitled to the right of a healthy childhood.

What greater joy then for us to join together and give it back and the economic benefit to commerce.

Human progress for generations will be defined not, as you rightly said, by economic progress but by the love, the care, the service that we can do to each other towards that great goal, towards that great identity which Fiji represents, there, we want to join our hands.

May all the blessings of all the Gods in all the worlds be on you Prime Minister and on these beautiful people, and be assured that you have a friend in Sanjeevani ever, 24/7, to be at your service.

God bless and all the very best.











Only a life lived for
others is a life
worthwhile.






SRI SATHYA SAI SANJEEVANI
MEDICAL CENTRE














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