

## MARKET SNAPSHOT

STRI as at Jan 30, 2019 = 7299.22  
LOCAL SHARE PRICES

Stock	Move\$	Close\$	Vol
Atlantic and Pac. Pack.	0.00	1.55	-
Amal. Telecom Holdings	0.00	3.20	304
Communications Fiji Ltd	0.00	5.40	-
Free Bird Institute Ltd	0.00	2.98	-
Future Forests (Fiji) Ltd	0.00	0.79	-
FijiCare Insurance Ltd	0.00	1.55	-
FMF Foods Ltd	0.00	2.10	-
Fiji Television Ltd	0.00	2.39	-
Kontiki Finance Ltd	0.00	0.98	-
Kinetic Growth Fund Ltd	0.00	1.02	-
Paradise Beverages (Fiji) Ltd	0.00	13.00	-
Pleass Global Ltd	0.00	2.45	-
Pac. Green Ind. Fiji Ltd	0.00	1.08	-
RB Patel Group Fiji Ltd	0.00	5.70	-
Rice Comp. of Fiji Ltd	0.00	6.50	-
Toyota Tsusho 5th Sea	0.00	7.25	-
VB Holdings	0.00	7.75	-
Vision Investments Ltd	0.00	4.30	-
Fijian Holdings Ltd	+0.10	1.00	83,360
BSP Convertible Notes	0.00	13.01	-

## AUSTRALIAN SHARE PRICES

Stock	Move\$	Close\$	Vol
Westpac	-0.100	25.190	9.524m
EMP	0.000	0.002	0
Commonwealth Bank	-0.110	71.240	3.204m
ANZ Banking Group	-0.100	25.480	7.096m
Qantas Airways Ltd	-0.300	5.590	15.180m
Air New Zealand	-0.450	2.700	356,612

Currency	Inward	Sell
GBP	0.3637	0.3557
JPY	52.79	49.79
PKG	1.7055	1.3345
AUD	0.6699	0.6449
EUR	0.4174	0.4054
NZD	0.7052	0.6722
USD	0.4791	0.4621

Foreign currency exchange rate is proudly brought to you by Westpac



Domestic exports declined by 5.7 per cent in the year to October 2018, led by lower exports of sugar, molasses, gold and preserved fish. Picture: FILE/ELIKI NUKUTABU

## 5.7pc drop in domestic exports

By MONIKA SINGH

DOMESTIC exports declined by 5.7 per cent in the year to October 2018, led by lower exports of sugar, molasses, gold and preserved fish.

The Reserve Bank of Fiji released its January economic review yesterday which highlighted that during the same period, imports rose by 13.1 per cent led by higher imports of machinery and transport equipment, mineral fuels, chemicals, crude materials and manufactured goods which consequently resulted in the widening of the merchandise trade deficit by about 22.0 per cent to more than \$2.7 billion.

Meanwhile the review also noted that domestically, 2018 was another year of positive growth and the economy is estimated to have expanded by 3.2 per cent.

It was also highlighted that primary production was upbeat as major industries such as cane (4.0 per cent), mahogany (+683.2 per cent), pine (+152.4 per cent) and woodchips (+95.4 per cent) noted significant annual gains. Industrial production noted a turnaround in the third quarter of 2018 and expanded by 14.5 per cent compared with a marginal decline in the same period in 2017.

Other statistics highlighted by the central bank showed that annually, sugar (-11.2 per cent) and gold (-7.3 per cent) production declined but manufacturing of food & beverages, alcohol & tobacco, sawmilling and manufacture of wood products noted annual gains.

According to the review in the services sector, the tourism industry noted a new record year and visitor arrivals totalled 870,309, a 3.3 per cent growth from 2017 with the growth in visitor arrivals was led by higher arrivals from New Zealand (NZ), Japan, United States (US) and Continental Europe.

Aggregate demand continues to expand and partial indicators reveal upbeat consumption and investment spending in 2018, supported by accommodative monetary and fiscal policies.

Net value added tax (VAT) collections (+61.1%) and the new (+7.2%, excluding government) and second-hand (+11.5%) vehicle registrations rose annually. Similarly, new consumption lending by commercial banks expanded by 9.2 per cent, led by higher lending to the wholesale, retail, hotels & restaurants sector.

Have your say  
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# Credit expands

By MONIKA SINGH

BANKING system liquidity is around \$382.5 million, which according to the Reserve Bank of Fiji, is adequate to support economic activity this year.

The central bank released its economic review for January which stated that broad money expanded by 3.1 per cent in December 2018, led by a pick-up in net domestic credit (+9.4 per cent) but slowed over the year because of contraction in net foreign assets (-15.2 per cent).

It said nonetheless, private sec-

tor credit expanded by 7.1 per cent while the commercial banks' weighted average lending and deposit rates rose over the year to 5.69 per cent and 3.61 per cent, respectively.

Meanwhile the review also highlighted that investment spending was also quite buoyant in 2018 with new investment lending increasing by 1.4 per cent led by higher lending for real estate.

The RBF noted that the value of work put in place noted a significant 11.5 per cent increase up to the third quarter of 2018 while the value of completion certificates

(\$163.7m) more than doubled compared from a year ago.

It was mentioned that a large number of private sector projects were in progress and should support investment spending this year. The review also noted that labour market conditions remained favourable and according to the RBF's Job Advertisement Survey, the number of jobs advertised increased by 4.4 per cent in 2018.

The RBF remains optimistic saying employment prospects remain largely positive and will be supported by robust domestic demand.

## Bid to grow kava industry in the future

By MONIKA SINGH

KADAVU is a major kava-growing area with more than 80 per cent of all households in the province involved in kava farming and a training for farmers is expected to improve the production and profitability of kava produced on the island.

Facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access (PHAMA) Plus Program, the training will include more than 60 kava farmers who would be trained on innovative farming practices, improving quality and processing, and marketing opportunities for the export of kava.

A statement from PHAMA yesterday said the training would be held at the Vunisea Government Station today followed by a Kava Taskforce meeting tomorrow to allow members to meet farmers and other representatives in Kadavu to share information and ideas on growing the industry into the future.

It said kava was an important cash crop and a source of livelihood and employment for 10,400 households in Fiji's rural areas and it made a significant contribution to household income, particularly for kava-producing communities in the outer islands.

It said over the past decade, Fiji's exports of kava averaged 218 tonnes per annum, valued at \$6.6 million while exports grew steadily from 2007 until 2012, reaching 300 tonnes per annum, but have been erratic because of climatic events, including



A training for kava farmers is aimed at improving the production and profitability of kava. Picture: SUPPLIED

droughts and cyclones over the past few years.

PHAMA Plus supports the Kava Taskforce which comprises major kava exporters and representatives of the MoA, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Health and Biosecurity Authority of Fiji.

It is the platform for public private partnership and helps to steer the development of the industry within Fiji and in collaboration with regional industry groups.

The Fiji AgTrade Unit within the MoA is the Kava Task Force secretariat.

## Current Fiji interest rates

Term Deposits	1 year 3 years 5 years		
	ANZ	3.00%	3.00%
BoB	2.25%	2.75%	3.00%
BSP Bank	2.85%	3.00%	3.00%
Bred	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
BSP Finance	3.00%	3.35%	3.35%
Credit Corp	3.25%	3.85%	3.85%
HFC	2.75%	3.20%	3.30%
Kontiki Finance	4.00%	5.25%	6.25%
Merchant Finance	3.35%	4.00%	4.00%
WBC	2.00%	2.50%	2.75%
FDB	3.70%	4.25%	4.50%

  

Home loans	Variable 1 Year 2 year		
	Fixed	Fixed	Fixed
ANZ	6.99%	4.99%	5.45%
BoB	6.32%	4.59%	4.59%
BSP	6.25%	4.95%	5.45%
Bred	6.25%	4.45%	5.45%
HFC Bank	7.50%	4.25%	7.50%
WBC	6.99%	4.75%	5.45%

# Fund queried on rental arrears by committee

By ARIETA VAKASUKAWAQA

SOME tenants leasing properties under the iTaukei Trust Fund have fled the country without paying their debts.

The issue came to light after the institution's CEO Aisake Taito was queried on their annual report 2017 before Standing Committee

on Social Affairs in Parliament yesterday. Government MP Alipate Nagata questioned whether the fund was successful in recovering the rental debts from 2017 in the new financial year.

According to their financial report, the rental debts stood at \$61,016 in 2016 and then increased to \$63,109 in 2017. In response, Mr

Taito said they had a policy in place where people leasing their properties were expected to pay their debts within 60 days.

"Some that are in there, those that occupy the buildings have left the country and we are trying to determine where they are, we have managed to recover some. Unfortunately when that occurred there

was no stop departure issued at the airport and they were able to travel overseas. We are still trying to locate their whereabouts but then we have not been successful," he said.

When questioned outside Parliament on the measures they would take to recover the debts, Mr Taito said he would need more time to

respond to the issue.

"We have seven staff holding around \$120 million but we are still finding challenges in training and developing key roles within the institution. We are also looking at reviewing some of our overseas investments and going into growing to ensure we attract the best tenants to occupy our properties."