

Department starts work on e-Passport

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FIJI is working on the transition from paper-based passports to state-of-the-art e-Passports with contact-less chips containing security features in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization standards.

Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama said the Department of Immigration — under his purview — will undertake sweeping new initiatives to strengthen border control services.

“These include the introduction of e-Passports for easier border entry, the implementation of new e-Gates at the Nadi International Airport, closer integration with Interpol, building out our IT and intelligence capacity, and engaging in a comprehensive review of all current laws, regulations and processes for all immigration services,” the A-G said.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, while announcing the 2019/2020 National Budget said, in line with the Government’s commitment to a more secure Fiji, these e-Passports will make it more difficult for people to illegally enter the country, and easier for Fijians travelling overseas to use e-Passport gates to speed through airport immigra-



Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama during the launch of the Fiji Revenue and Customs non-intrusive inspection x-ray technology at the Suva Ports. Photo: ERONI VALILI

tion queues.

“We’re not only making Fiji safer, we’re making travelling easier and setting Fiji up for wider visa-free status around the world. We’ll be progressively issuing these new e-passports throughout the next financial year,” the A-G said.

Prime Minister Bainimarama also acknowledged the allocation made to the Ministry of iTaukei

Affairs whereby, over the next year, the Ministry will do more with less.

“We will work toward our strategic objectives — namely, enhancing leadership training; documenting our culture and traditions; and building resilience in the midst of an increasingly globalised world,” Prime Minister Bainimarama said.

He said since 2010, the Ministry

has branched out from cultural preservation alone, to now look at the broader socio-economic issues that affect our iTaukei communities, including child protection; sustainable environment; sustainable farming; and conservation, to name just a few.

The Department of Immigration has received a budgetary allocation of \$5.7m for the next financial period.