

Sikua trial progresses

By ASSUMPTA BUCHANAN

TRIAL into the alleged corruption case against the former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services, Edmond Sikua, continues today.

Prosecution is now in the process of extracting evidence from their second witness after completing their first witness yesterday mid-morning.

The first witness is the Chief Infrastructure Of-

ficer of the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Service, Christine Suri (MPNS& CS).

He gave evidence on Tuesday and was cross examined yesterday by the defence.

Prosecution has a total of 26 witnesses.

They are witnesses from the MPNS& CS, officers from Police Infrastructure Department and Accounts Department, some police officers from Hells Point and a witness from the

Leadership Code Commission (LCC).

Sikua is facing seven counts of official corruption.

Prosecution alleged he awarded government tenders worth \$630,436.50 to Beeds Investment on 22 December 2016, a company registered and owned by his two daughters.

Prosecution alleged that as permanent secretary, Sikua is by default the chairman of his ministry's tender board.

It was alleged that be-

tween 18 December 2015 and 29 August 2016, Beeds Investments responded to calls for tenders and was awarded business contracts for service delivery to the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services on seven different occasions.

The Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services have made payments of \$630,436.50 to Beeds Investments for these services.

Prosecution further alleged that Sikua used his position of power and influ-

ence within the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services to manipulate the tendering process for his own and his family's pecuniary advantage.

Sikua is the third public officer to have been arrested by Janus, since the establishment of the joint taskforce in August 2016.

He is represented by Gabriel Suri, of Suri's Law Practice, while Public Prosecutor Bradley Dalipanda appears for the Crown.

M.A.R.T eyes smooth transition

By BIRA'AU WILSON SAENI
In Auki

THE Malaita Alliance for Reform and Transformation (MART) government under Premier Peter Ramohia, is now focusing on putting the house in order, for the remaining months in office.

This is to ensure that when the next government comes into power, they will focus on service delivery for the people of Malaita province, instead of starting a new.

Premier Ramohia told Solomon Star, that they are now working on this to ensure a smooth transition.

He said the smooth transition will ensure the next government comes into office without having to struggle like what the MART government did, when they held power in 2015.

"The focus now is to ensure the current government leaves the office without any debt, and have some money in the provincial coffers, to form the new government," premier Ramohia said.

The premier added that, another area that they are trying to strengthen now is to get highly technical and qualified people to work closely with the province.

These are people like engineers, legal officers and others, to support and strengthen the provincial capacity to ensure it delivers service to its people.

"We are in the process of employing a legal officer and an engineer to work closely with the province.

"This year, we already employed a new Human Resource Manager," he said.

Mr Ramohia added, it is important to employ highly skilled people to these very important positions to drive service delivery in Malaita.

He said one of the legacies of the MART government is the Provincial Chamber, where he said future governments will enjoy the high quality office.

Meanwhile, premier Ramohia believed his government will leave office, with no debt to burden the upcoming government.

Local wins NF Fest offer

By IAN KAUKUI

STEPHEN Michael has won the National Finance (NF) special Festival offer of two return flight tickets to PNG and three nights' accommodation, following a draw yesterday.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) High Commissioner to Solomon Islands, Fred Yakasa is the invited guest, and also took part in the draw.

Mr Yakasa picked Michael as the lucky winner, out of the other 120 members.

National Finance Cooperate Service Manager, Lynette Whitchurch, at the draw said the draw of tickets is part of their promotion, during the period of the Melanesian Arts Festival from 1st -10th July.

She added, a total of 120 members who joined in within the period of the MACFEST have their names listed for the draw.

Ms Whitchurch said as the winner, Michael will have two return tickets and is entitled for three nights' accommodation package, at the HideAway Hotel, one of the best value accommodation hotel in Port Moresby.

She said the tickets are now ready, but it is up to Michael to decide on whom he wants as his companion and the time they planned to leave.

Meanwhile, in a phone conversation with Mr Michael, the shocked winner said he did not expect to hear such great news.

"When I had a phone call from the National Finance office telling me that I was the winner, I could not believe what I heard.

"But I thought it's a miracle, a blessing and I am really excited about it as it will be the first time in life," he added.

The primary school teacher from Isabel Province said, he is looking forward to travel on that enjoyable trip.

High Commissioner, Fred Yakasa, in his reply has congratulated Mr Michael and the National Finance, especially for initiating such promotions and for successfully doing its business in Solomon Islands.

He said such work by National Finance is part and passion of what the High Commissioner's office is doing in Solomon Islands, to help working class people in their development.

Ms Whitchurch added, the promotion is the third promotion so far as they already finished with mobiles phones for their first 500 customers, and later did umbrella promotions.

She said they are now looking forward to do a much bigger one during the PNG Independence Anniversary celebration, in September.

National Finance started its service in Solomon Islands on December 2017, by mainly issuing loans to members who have applied and registered with certain conditions.



PNG High Commissioner, Fred Yakasa, showing Mr Michael's name after picking it.

Probe into PM Hou on rebranding

Probe into expat's death on

By ASSUMPTA BUCHANAN

THE inquiry into the death of an Australian, who died from electric shock on board the vessel MV Catriona B at Makira/Ulawa Province in 2006, will continue today.

Public Prosecutor, John Wesley Zoze, who assisted the Coroner in this inquiry will confirm today if a witness they intend to call next will be available.

So far, three witnesses have given evidence into the death of George Kallis from Melbourne, on 27 February 2006.

One of those witnesses is the doctor who attended to the deceased, giving medical evidence.

He concluded that, Kallis has died as result of an electrocution.

The expat was said to have died from an electric shock, while attempting to charge a battery in the ship, while it was berthing.

One of the witnesses is a forensic officer involved in this case, while another is the deceased's employee and friend.

The Coroner in this inquiry is Principal Magistrate, Augustine Aulang.

By LESLEY SANGA

PRIME Minister, Rick Hou, says that re-branding is a necessary marketing platform that draws in and connects not only every visitor to the Solomon Islands but more so, connects every Solomon Islander to our country.

Mr Hou said that the National Tourism Development Strategy: 2015 - 2019 requires that we undertake a brand audit.

Consequent to the audit, a re-branding was recommended.

Solomons seeks stronger links with PNG

SOLOMON Islands and Papua New Guinea should strengthen socio-economic links in light of growing foreign commercial interests in the region, Solomon Islands High Commissioner Barnabas Agna says.

He said maintaining dialogue on the basis of citizens' interests was the strategy to enhancing that link

"The commercial consideration should be there," Agna said.

"I think that is something both of us are doing.

"New competition, technological shifts or trends have emerged, which strongly recommend that for Solomon Islands to positively and effectively market itself, re-branding is necessary in order for us to stand out amongst our competitors," he said

He added that re-branding is a marketing strategy in which a new name, term, symbol, design, or combination thereof, is created.

This is done with the intention of developing a new, differentiated identity in the minds of consumers,

"Our people are the main reason behind decisions we make.

"Dialogue is a very important vehicle for any party, and especially for countries.

"When it comes to regional concerns that we might share, then it is very much needed," Agna said Solomon Islands valued the ties with Papua New Guinea and that more exchanges needed to happen to get the most from the relationship.

"As neighbours, my view is that with whichever concern, there must always be

investors, competitors, and other stakeholders.

But this rebranding marketing platform requires the whole of government acting together.

He said that as part of our nation-building, all sectors must align their development programmes and activities that are meaningful and relevant to the people of this country.

PM Hou said that the tourism sector is taking the lead in aligning the tourism brand to the country and its people.

room for dialogue," Agna said.

"There may be times when we are driven by emotions, but the most important thing is to take a step back and think of our people's interests.

"That should be the guiding factor for each of us as well for greater cooperation.

"Our people should be a priority point, whether it be commercial considerations or dealing with others who are coming into the region," he said.

- Source: The National

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