In general, information available as of 1 January 2003 was used in the preparation of The World Factbook 2003.

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Legend:

- Definition
- Field Listing
- Rank Order

Introduction

Fiji
Background: Fiji became independent in 1970, after nearly a century as a British colony. Democratic rule was interrupted by two military coups in 1987, caused by concern over a government perceived as dominated by the Indian community (descendants of contract laborers brought to the islands by the British in the 19th century). A 1990 constitution favored native Melanesian control of Fiji, but led to heavy Indian emigration; the population loss resulted in economic difficulties, but ensured that Melanesians became the majority. Amendments enacted in 1997 made the constitution more equitable. Free and peaceful elections in 1999 resulted in a government led by an Indo-Fijian, but a coup in May 2000 ushered in a prolonged period of political turmoil. Parliamentary elections held in August 2001 provided Fiji with a democratically elected government and gave a mandate to the government of Prime Minister Laisenia QARASE.

Geography

Fiji

Location: Oceania, island group in the South Pacific Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Hawaii to New Zealand

Geographic coordinates: 18 00 S, 175 00 E

Map references: Oceania

Area: total: 18,270 sq km water: 0 sq km land: 18,270 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than New Jersey

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,129 km

Maritime claims: measured from claimed archipelagic baselines territorial sea: 12 NM exclusive economic zone: 200 NM continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation; rectilinear shelf claim added

Climate: tropical marine; only slight seasonal temperature variation

Terrain: mostly mountains of volcanic origin

Elevation extremes: lowest point: Pacific Ocean 0 m highest point: Tomanivi 1,324 m

Natural
resources: timber, fish, gold, copper, offshore oil potential, hydropower

Land use:  

- arable land: 10.95%  
- permanent crops: 4.65%  
- other: 84.4% (1998 est.)

Irrigated land: 30 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: cyclonic storms can occur from November to January

Environment - current issues: deforestation; soil erosion

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note: includes 332 islands of which approximately 110 are inhabited

People - Fiji

Population: 868,531 (July 2003 est.)

Age structure:  

- 0-14 years: 32% (male 141,979; female 136,378)  
- 15-64 years: 64.1% (male 278,759; female 278,150)  
- 65 years and over: 3.8% (male 15,329; female 17,936) (2003 est.)

Median age:  

- total: 23.7 years  
- male: 23.3 years  
- female: 24.2 years (2002)

Population growth rate: 1.41% (2003 est.)

Birth rate: 23.06 births/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Death rate: 5.7 deaths/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Net migration rate: -3.24 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.)

Sex ratio:  

- at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female  
- under 15 years: 1.04 male(s)/female  
- 15-64 years: 1 male(s)/female  
- 65 years and over: 0.85 male(s)/female  
- total population: 1.01 male(s)/female (2003 est.)

Infant mortality
rate: total: 13.35 deaths/1,000 live births  
              female: 11.89 deaths/1,000 live births (2003 est.)  
              male: 14.75 deaths/1,000 live births

Life expectancy at birth: 
  total population: 68.88 years  
  male: 66.43 years  
  female: 71.44 years (2003 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.81 children born/woman (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.1% (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS: 300 (2001 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: NA

Nationality: noun: Fijian(s)  
              adjective: Fijian

Ethnic groups: Fijian 51% (predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture), Indian 44%, European, other Pacific Islanders, overseas Chinese, and other 5% (1998 est.)

Religions: Christian 52% (Methodist 37%, Roman Catholic 9%), Hindu 38%, Muslim 8%, other 2%

          note: Fijians are mainly Christian, Indians are Hindu, and there is a Muslim minority (1986)

Languages: English (official), Fijian, Hindustani

Literacy: definition: age 15 and over can read and write  
           total population: 93.7%  
           male: 95.5%  
           female: 91.9% (2003 est.)

Government  

Country name: conventional long form: Republic of the Fiji Islands  
              conventional short form: Fiji

Government type: republic

          note: military coup leader Maj. Gen. Sitiveni RABUKA formally declared Fiji a republic on 6 October 1987

Capital: Suva

Administrative
divisions: 4 divisions and 1 dependency*; Central, Eastern, Northern, Rotuma*, Western

Independence: 10 October 1970 (from UK)


Constitution: promulgated on 25 July 1990 and amended on 25 July 1997 to allow nonethnic Fijians greater say in government and to make multiparty government mandatory; entered into force 28 July 1998; note - the May 1999 election was the first test of the amended constitution and introduced open voting - not racially prescribed - for the first time at the national level

Legal system: based on British system

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Executive branch: chief of state: President Ratu Josefa ILOILOVATU Uluivuda (since NA 2000); Vice President Jope SENILOLI (since NA 2000) head of government: Prime Minister Laisenia QARASE (since 10 September 2000) cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the prime minister from among the members of Parliament and is responsible to Parliament; note - there is also a Presidential Council that advises the president on matters of national importance and a Great Council of Chiefs, which consists of the highest ranking members of the traditional chief system elections: president elected by the Great Council of Chiefs for a five-year term; prime minister appointed by the president election results: Ratu Josefa ILOILOVATU Uluivuda elected president by the Great Council of Chiefs; percent of vote - NA%

Legislative branch: bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (34 seats; 24 appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs, nine appointed by the president, and one appointed by the council of Rotuma) and the House of Representatives (71 seats; 23 reserved for ethnic Fijians, 19 reserved for ethnic Indians, three reserved for other ethnic groups, one reserved for the council of Rotuma constituency encompassing the whole of Fiji, and 25 open seats; members serve five-year terms) elections: House of Representatives - last held 25 August through 1 September, 19 September 2001 (next to be held not later than September 2006) election results: House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - FLP 34.8%, SDL 26%, NFP 10.1%, MV 9.9%, independents 2.7%, other 16.5%; seats by party - NA

Judicial branch: Supreme Court (judges are appointed by the president); Court of Appeal; High Court; Magistrates' Courts

Political parties and leaders: Bai Kei Viti Party or BKV [Ratu Tevita MOMOEDONU]; Conservative Alliance Party/Manatitu Vanua or MV [Ratu Rakuita VAKALALABURE]; Dodonu Ni Taukei Party or DNT [Fereti S. DEWA]; Fiji Democratic Party or FDP [Felipe BOLE] (a merger of the Christian Democrat Alliance or VLV [Poesci Waqalevu BUNE], Fijian Association Party or FAP [Adi Kuini SPEED], Fijian Political Party or SVT (primarily
Fijian) [Felipe BOLE], and New Labor Unity Party or NLUP [Tupeni BABAJ]; Fiji Labor Party or FLP [Mahendra CHAUDHRY]; General Voters Party or GVP [leader NA] (became part of United General Party); Girmit Heritage Party or GHP [leader NA]; Justice and Freedom Party or AIM [leader NA]; Lio 'On Famor Rotuma Party or LFR [leader NA]; National Federation Party or NFP (primarily Indian) [Pramond RAE]; Nationalist Vanua Takolavo Party or NVTLP [Saula TELAWA]; Party of National Unity or PANU [Meli BOGILEKA]; Party of the Truth or POTT [leader NA]; United Fiji Party/Sogosogo Duavata ni Lewenivanua or SDL [Laisenia QARASE]; United General Party or UGP [Millis Mick BEDDOES]

Political pressure groups and leaders: NA

International organization participation: ACP, AsDB, C, CP, ESCAP, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICCt, ICFTU, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO (subscriber), ITU, OPCW, PCA, Sparteca, SPC, SPF, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNIKOM, UNMIBH, UNMIK, UNMISET, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, WTrO

Diplomatic representation in the US: chief of mission: Ambassador Anare JALE
FAX: [1] (202) 337-1996
telephone: [1] (202) 337-8320
chancery: 2233 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 240, Washington, DC 20007

Diplomatic representation from the US: chief of mission: Ambassador David L. LYON
embassy: 31 Loftus Street, Suva
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telephone: [679] 331-4466
FAX: [679] 330-0081

Flag description: light blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant and the Fijian shield centered on the outer half of the flag; the shield depicts a yellow lion above a white field quartered by the cross of Saint George featuring stalks of sugarcane, a palm tree, bananas, and a white dove

Economy - overview: Fiji, endowed with forest, mineral, and fish resources, is one of the most developed of the Pacific island economies, though still with a large subsistence sector. Sugar exports and a growing tourist industry - with 300,000 to 400,000 tourists annually - are the major sources of foreign exchange. Sugar processing makes up one-third of industrial activity. Long-term problems include low investment, uncertain land ownership rights, and the government's ability to manage its budget.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $4.822 billion (2002 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 4.6% (2002 est.)

GDP - per capita:
purchasing power parity - $5,600 (2002 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:**
- agriculture: 17%
- industry: 25%
- services: 58% (2000 est.)

**Population below poverty line:** 25.5% (1990-91)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**
- lowest 10%: NA%
- highest 10%: NA%

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):** 2% (2002 est.)

**Labor force:** 137,000 (1999)

**Labor force - by occupation:** agriculture, including subsistence agriculture 70% (2001 est.)

**Unemployment rate:** 7.6% (1999)

**Budget:**
- revenues: $427.9 million
- expenditures: $531.4 million, including capital expenditures of $NA (2000 est.)

**Industries:** tourism, sugar, clothing, copra, gold, silver, lumber, small cottage industries

**Industrial production growth rate:** NA%

**Electricity - production:** 520.1 million kWh (2001)

**Electricity - production by source:**
- fossil fuel: 18.5%
- hydro: 81.5%
- other: 0% (2001)
- nuclear: 0%

**Electricity - consumption:** 483.7 million kWh (2001)

**Oil - production:** 0 bbl/day (2001 est.)

**Oil - consumption:** 5,700 bbl/day (2001 est.)
Oil - exports:
NA (2001)

Oil - imports:
NA (2001)

Agriculture - products:
sugarcane, coconuts, cassava (tapioca), rice, sweet potatoes, bananas; cattle, pigs, horses, goats; fish

Exports:
$442 million f.o.b. (2001)

Exports - commodities:
sugar, garments, gold, timber, fish, molasses, coconut oil

Exports - partners:
US 25.1%, Australia 19.5%, UK 10.6%, Japan 6.3%, Samoa 5.5% (2002)

Imports:
$642 million c.i.f. (2001)

Imports - commodities:
manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment, petroleum products, food, chemicals

Imports - partners:
Australia 37.3%, New Zealand 17.2%, Singapore 16.1%, Japan 4.2%, China 4% (2002)

Debt - external:
$135.9 million (2000)

Economic aid - recipient:
$40.3 million (1995)

Currency:
Fijian dollar (FJD)

Currency code:
FJD

Exchange rates:

Fiscal year:
calendar year

Communications

Telephones - main lines in use:
80,901 (1999)

Telephones - mobile cellular:
5,200 (1997)

Telephone system:
general assessment: modern local, interisland, and international (wire/radio integrated) public and special-purpose telephone, telegraph, and teleprinter facilities; regional radio communications center
Radio broadcast stations: AM 13, FM 40, shortwave 0 (1998)

Television broadcast stations: NA

Internet country code: .fj

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 2 (2000)

Internet users: 15,000 (2002)

Transportation

Railways: total: 597 km
narrow gauge: 597 km 0.600-m gauge

note: belongs to the government-owned Fiji Sugar Corporation; used to haul sugarcane during harvest season (May to September) (2002)

Highways: total: 3,440 km
paved: 1,692 km
unpaved: 1,748 km (1999 est.)

Waterways: 203 km

note: 122 km navigable by motorized craft and 200-metric-ton barges

Ports and harbors: Lambasa, Lautoka, Levuka, Malau, Savusavu, Suva, Vuda

Merchant marine: total: 6 ships (1,000 GRT or over) 11,870 GRT/14,787 DWT

note: includes some foreign-owned ships registered here as a flag of convenience: Australia 1, Singapore 4 (2002 est.)

ships by type: chemical tanker 2, passenger 1, petroleum tanker 1, roll on/roll off 1, specialized tanker 1


Airports - with paved runways: total: 3
over 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2002)

Airports - with unpaved runways: total: 24
914 to 1,523 m: 6
under 914 m: 18 (2002)

Military

Fiji

Military branches: Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF), includes ground forces, naval division

Military manpower - military age: 18 years of age (2003 est.)


Military manpower - males: 9,359 (2003 est.)

Military manpower - reaching military age annually: males: 9,359 (2003 est.)

Military expenditures - dollar figure: $39.21 million (FY02)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP: 2.2% (FY02)

Transnational Issues

Fiji

Disputes - international: none

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