



President of India Receives Fiji's Highest Civilian Award

[Source: IE](#)

Recently, President Droupadi Murmu has been awarded the **Companion of the Order of Fiji, the highest civilian honour from Fiji** recognising the strong **India-Fiji ties**. This recognition comes during her historic visit to the island nation, marking the **first time an Indian President has travelled to Fiji**.

- The President of India acknowledged the contributions of the Indian diaspora, particularly the [Girmitiya laborers](#), and emphasized the importance of overseas Indian communities.
 - The word '**girmitiya**' is derived from '**gimit**', meaning '**agreement**'. Indian indentured labourers transported to places like Fiji and Mauritius were known as 'girmitiyas'.
 - Though girmitiyas were not technically slaves, they were subjected to "blackbirding" (deceiving or tricking people to work as slaves or poorly paid labourers).
- Fiji, a country and archipelago in the [South Pacific Ocean](#). It surrounds the Koro Sea north of Auckland, New Zealand. It comprises over 300 islands, with only about 100 inhabited.
 - It is known as the "**soft coral capital of the world**," Fiji boasts over 4,000 square kilometres of vibrant [coral reefs](#).
 - **Sugarcane** was a major economic driver for Fiji for many years.
 - Fiji is a **parliamentary democracy**, its population is a mix of Indigenous Fijians, Indians, Europeans, and other ethnicities. Fiji is home to the **largest Hindu temple in the Southern Hemisphere**, the **Sri Siva Subramaniya Swami Temple**.

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