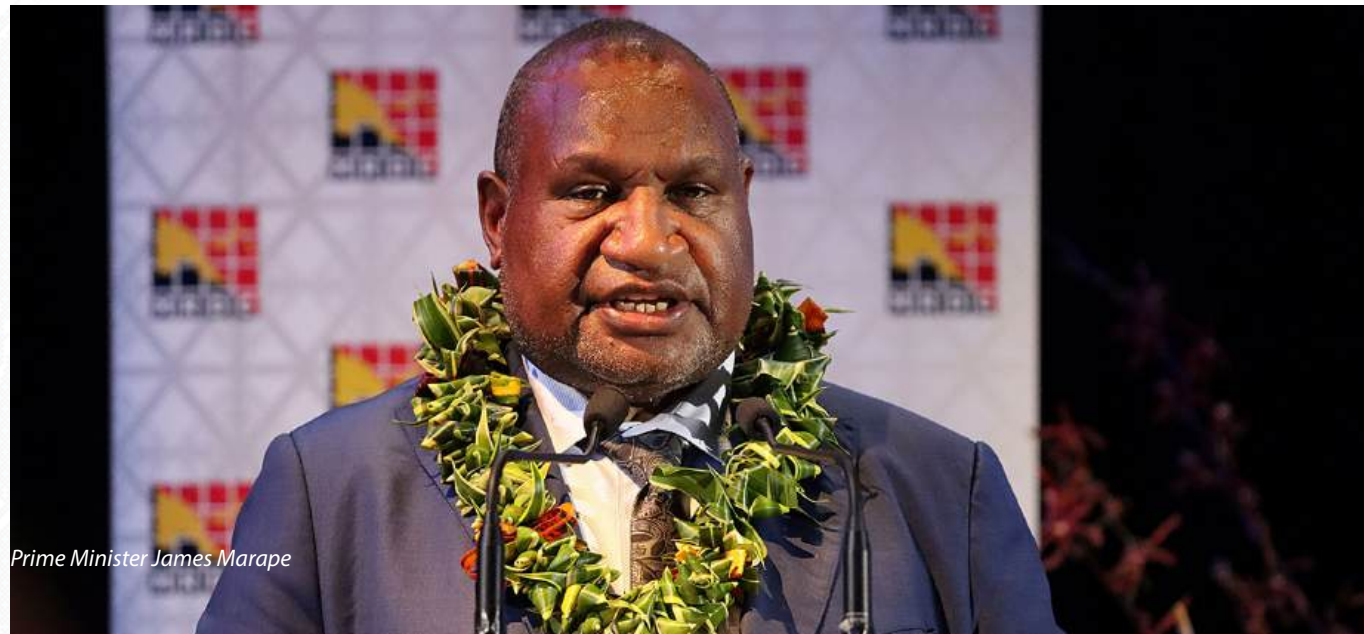


PRIME MINISTER MARAPE DIRECTS URGENT FINALISATION OF PORGERA CDA



Prime Minister James Marape

Prime Minister James Marape has directed the immediate finalisation of the Community Development Agreement (CDA) for the Porgera Mine, calling on all stakeholders to conclude the process without delay so that long-overdue benefits can begin flowing to landowners and the nation.

The CDA forms the final component of the Porgera Project Commencement Agreements, and the Prime Minister has instructed the Minister for Mining, Hon. Rainbo Paita on April 22, to lead its completion in close coordination with the Enga Provincial Government, the Mineral Resources Authority (MRA), and affected landowner groups.

"Our landowners have waited long enough. With gold prices now over US\$3,400 per ounce — up from US\$1,536 when we signed the new Porgera deal — we must conclude the CDA and protect the mine so benefits reach our people faster," he said.

Under the new agreement, landowners and Enga Province will receive a 15% equity share (up from 5%) and 3% royalty (up from 2%), with no deductions. Taxes will be paid upfront, ensuring immediate returns.

According to the Prime Minister, these changes represent a 300% increase in direct benefits compared to the previous mining arrangement.

"This is the most beneficial benefit-sharing agreement we've ever secured as a country since 1975. If we protect and preserve the mine, all stakeholders will begin receiving the full benefits—including equity—much sooner than expected," he said.

To safeguard the project, the Government will begin National Identification (NID) registration of all landowners, enforce a zero-tolerance policy for illegal mining, and implement a comprehensive resettlement plan. New law enforcement infrastructure will include a holding facility in Porgera and the development of Mukumanda Jail, while early investments in roads, law, and justice services are also planned.

"Everyone living or operating in Porgera must do so lawfully. There will be no room for illegal activities around the mine. Trespass will carry serious consequences," the Prime Minister warned.

Prime Minister Marape commended landowner factions for halting conflicts and encouraged continued unity.

"I commend those who've chosen peace over conflict. Let's complete this CDA together—transparently and fairly—for the benefit of all."

He also acknowledged Barrick Gold and CEO Mark Bristow for honouring the agreement, noting that PNG did

not pay any upfront capital to restart the mine, and now holds four board seats in the joint venture company.

"We've taken back control. Barrick has supported our equity model with a total of 51% equity for PNG beneficiaries, including the 15% referenced earlier, and the mine is now producing. Now, we must finish the final leg."

On the Wafi-Golpu project, the Prime Minister said the Government is awaiting formal feedback from Harmony Gold and Newmont Corporation on PNG's final position. Once confirmed, he will brief stakeholders and landowners accordingly.

"We want to deliver the SML at the earliest."

As Papua New Guinea approaches 50 years of Independence, Prime Minister Marape said these new resource agreements reflect the Take Back PNG agenda in action.

"This is how we define PNG at 50—by securing fairer and better project agreements that put our people first. The future of our nation depends on it. Our nation has a history of project agreements skewed towards investors, and the major policy differences between my coalition and those opposing me are centred on my drive to get more for PNG," he said.



PM MARAPE CALLS ON NATION TO REFLECT & EMBRACE UNITY

Fellow Papua New Guineans,

As we commemorate Easter in this 49th year since our country's independence, I ask each and every one of us to pause and reflect on the life, sacrifice, and message of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Easter is a sacred reminder of the road to Calvary—a journey Christ took not for Himself, but for the salvation of all mankind. Though He was the Creator and King of the universe, He chose to be born in humility, live a simple life, and walk a lonely road to the Cross for the redemption of our sins. His life and death embody the true heart of leadership: selflessness, love, compassion, and forgiveness.

Today, in a time when our nation stands at a crossroads—divided too often by political toxicity, personal differences, and economic challenges—we must return to those same Christian principles. Christ's example teaches us to be tolerant, forgiving, loving, and inclusive. These values are not outdated; they are timeless. They are what make us truly human and truly Papua New Guinean.

This Easter, I call on our people to reject division and embrace unity. Our nation needs:

- Unity more than division
- Progress more than regression
- Forgiveness more than hatred
- Hope more than hostility

As we mark this final Easter before our 50th Independence Anniversary, let us come together in a spirit of oneness—caring for each other, carrying one another's burdens, and collectively carrying the cross of our country. This is not rocket science. This is not impossible. It simply requires a shift in attitude, a return to the heart.

Let me remind us that in Leviticus 25, the Bible declares the 50th year as a Year of Jubilee—a sacred time of reset, restoration, forgiveness, and freedom. According to Scripture, it is a time when debts are forgiven, captives are

released, land is returned, and lives are given a fresh start.

Our national 50th year officially begins on 16 September 2025 and ends on 15 September 2026. During this sacred season, the Government will lead a national reset—whether in public service reform, provincial governance, or in our wider effort to take back PNG economically, fight corruption, and restore law and order.

But let me be clear: while government policy can drive institutional reform, the real reset must begin in the heart, mind, and soul of our people.

If all citizens of this country commit to Christian character—being loving, forgiving, hardworking, inclusive, and respectful—we will not just serve ourselves better; we will serve God better, and in doing so, we will build a more united, just, and prosperous Papua New Guinea.

That is the real reset: a reset of our national character—one that embraces Christian values without compromising our diverse cultures and Melanesian identity. By finding unity in our shared Christian foundations, we strengthen the national character that will carry us into the next 49 years with hope and purpose.

Let me also speak from the heart: If I wasn't a Christian, I would not be the man I am today. Christianity has shaped my character to be a forgiving man. It has given me the ability to tolerate differing world views. It has helped me withstand extreme pressures without hate.

It has enabled me to look at someone from another cultural group and say: "He or she is my own."

It is this Christian teaching—deeply embedded in my life—that shapes my leadership and the kind of nation I want all of us to build.

We are all children of God, forgiven by Christ at the Cross of Calvary. And as He forgave us, we too must forgive others, even those who have wronged or offended us. That is how we build peace. That is how we move forward.

When President John F. Kennedy challenged America in 1961 to go to the moon, many doubted it was possible—but they achieved it. When he said in 1961, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country," he reminded us that nation-building starts with individual action.

So I say to all Papua New Guineans: let us stop waiting for handouts. Let us take responsibility, through our faith, attitudes, and actions, to be part of the reset we want to see.

Going to church every Sunday or Saturday is good—but it is not enough. The true Christian Walk must be lived daily, in our relationships, workplaces, politics, and service to others.

That is why the Bible sits in Parliament, and why Christianity is our official national religion—not to divide us, but to unite us around love, humility, and service.

In the wake of recent political events, including the vote of no confidence, I hold no bitterness. To those who opposed me, including those who questioned the presence of the Bible in our nation's affairs, I say again: You knew not what you were doing, and I forgive you.

As Prime Minister, I lead not only those who support me, but all citizens across every district and province. I respect your views. And in this Easter season, as we prepare for Repentance Month and our Jubilee Year, I urge all of us: Let us forgive one another, tolerate each other, and live together in peace, unity, and love.

Because that is what the true Lord of our country—Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for all of us—would want each and every one of us to do.

Let this Easter be a time of spiritual renewal and national awakening. And as our nation steps into its 50th year, let it truly be a Year of Jubilee—a year of reset, restoration, and renewed commitment to Christian character and national unity.

God bless you all. God bless Papua New Guinea.

James Marape, MP
Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea

Department Vision and Mission Statement

Our vision is to provide strategic leadership in supporting the Government of PNG in the Development, Coordination and Implementation of sound policies, programs and effective governance that works for the benefit of the people.

Our mission is to provide coherent, high quality and timely advice and support to the Prime Minister, the National Executive Council and the Chief Secretary to Government.

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Message from the Acting Chief Secretary to Government

Welcome everyone to the Issue 4 of the 2025 edition of the Inside Melanesian Haus monthly newsletter.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge everyone's contribution towards the smooth operations of the Department last year and your continued dedication to the call to serve the people of Papua New Guinea. As we in the 50th year of our Independence as a Sovereign Nation, everyone of us must continue to work together to continue to deliver quality basic services to our people right across the country, and enable them to become economically viable, leading to economic independence.

Do not forget to adopt Christian values in your work ethics and your workplaces as well. Let us all work together with honesty, respect and tolerance to take back PNG.

In this issue 4 of the 2025 Edition of the Inside Melanesian Haus Newsletter, on **page 1**, we bring to the Easter message for Prime Minister James Marape. On **page 2**, Prime Minister Marape send our condolence message to the Vatican on the passing of the Late Pope

Francis. On **page 3**, the Prime Minister highlights importance of transparency in public spending. On **page 4**, Papua New Guinea braces for global economic headwinds. On **page 5**, IMF reports that PNG economic is rebounding strongly under home grown economic plan. On **page 6**, Tourism sector has potential as massive economic transformer. On **page 7**, Prime Minister Marape champions Education over tribal conflict. On **page 8**, the Prime Minister Launches NBC, Papua New Guinea's new commercial bank. On **page 9**, Prime Minister commends CIMC and calls for bold reforms in law, governance and society. On **page 10**, commemorative Kina and Toea launched for 50th Anniversary. On **page 11**, PM Marape visit Bomana CS facility. On **page 12**, Prime Minister Marape reaffirms commitment to agriculture-led economic transformation. On **page 13**, Agriculture remains the Marape-Rosso Government's key focus. On **page 14**, PM Marape announces target agriculture credit scheme. On **page 15**, Entry meeting on Connect PNG Special Purpose Audit held at Melanesian

Haus. On **page 16**, ADB commends PNG's reform momentum and expands support for infrastructure. On **page 17**, Prime Minister Marape outlines bold vision for energy reform and economic transformation. On **page 18**, Prime Minister Marape hails Enga's new hospital as a landmark for provinces. On **page 19**, Indonesian government thanked for support to Port Moresby General Hospital Mortuary. On **page 20**, the Prime Minister reaffirms full government commitment to electoral reform. On **page 21**, Prime Minister Marape breaks ground on Hiritano Highway redevelopment. On **page 22**, the Prime Minister pays tribute to the Late Sir Julius Chan and unveils plans for a commemorative K100 note. On **page 23**, Prime Minister Marape welcomes financial reports on strong economic performance in 2024. On **page 24**, the Prime Minister directs urgent finalization on the Porgera CDA. Happy Reading!

Ivan Pomaleu, OBE
Acting Chief Secretary

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE ON THE PASSING OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

It is with profound sorrow that I extend, on behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, our deepest condolences to the global Catholic community and the Holy See on the passing of His Holiness Pope Francis.

The death of Pope Francis is not only a loss to the Catholic faithful but to all humanity.

He was a spiritual father to over a billion Catholics around the world and a moral voice of conscience in times of global uncertainty.

His humility, compassion, and unwavering commitment to justice, peace, and the environment earned him respect far beyond the Church. Papua New Guinea had the distinct honour of welcoming His Holiness during his historic Apostolic Visit from 6 to 9 September 2024, a moment of immense spiritual significance for our country.

During his time in Port Moresby and Vanimo, Pope Francis brought a message of unity, inclusion, and hope.

His public Mass at Sir John Guise Stadium and his engagements with our young people and church leaders left an indelible impression on all who witnessed them.

His words and presence inspired our people, reminding us to care for the vulnerable, to act justly, and to walk humbly with God.

To the College of Cardinals, to the Vatican, and to Catholics across Papua New Guinea and the world, we grieve with you.

Pope Francis lived and died in service to God and humanity, and he now rests in eternal peace.

May his soul find rest in the arms of the Almighty, and may his life's example continue to guide us—towards humility in leadership, compassion in service, and faith in action.

Hon. James Marape, MP
Prime Minister
Independent State of Papua New Guinea

PRIME MINISTER MARAPE WELCOMES STRONG ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN 2024



Prime Minister James Marape

Prime Minister James Marape has welcomed the findings of the Asian Development Bank's Asian Development Outlook (ADO), April 2025 report, which confirms that Papua New Guinea's economy is on a firm path toward recovery and resilience.

The ADB report released on April 10 shows the economy grew by 4.3% in 2024, driven by solid performance across both resource and non-resource sectors. This result is one of the strongest in the Pacific region and reflects the positive impact of ongoing reforms under the Marape-Rosso Government.

"The latest ADB report confirms what we've been working hard to achieve — a more stable and inclusive economy," said Prime Minister Marape.

"We are now seeing tangible outcomes from our reform agenda, especially in mining, agriculture, revenue collection, and inflation control."

Strong economic momentum through reform and recovery

The report highlights significant gains in the resource sector, particularly the reopening of the Porgera gold mine, alongside strong output from coffee, copra, and fish exports in the non-resource sector. Despite challenges in LNG production and adverse weather affecting palm oil and cocoa, overall output rose.

Average growth in the non-resource sector more than doubled over the last three years compared to the previous decade, underscoring the Government's commitment to

economic diversification.

"We are working to ensure that economic growth is not just driven by the resource sector, but supported by agriculture, fisheries, and small businesses," he said.

"We want inclusive growth that reaches every part of the country."

Fiscal consolidation on track

The ADB commended the Government's progress in fiscal consolidation. Domestic revenue rose to 18% of GDP in 2024, up from 14% in 2020, while the fiscal deficit narrowed to 3.9% — significantly lower than previous years.

Public debt stabilised at 53.9% of GDP and is projected to decline from 2025 onward, supported by prudent borrowing strategies and a continued focus on concessional financing.

"We are managing our finances responsibly. Our focus is on investing in development while reducing waste and avoiding unsustainable debt," he said.

Record-low inflation and improved foreign exchange access

The report notes that inflation dropped to just 0.7% in 2024 — the lowest level in recent memory — supported by falling global prices, improved telecommunications competition, and tighter monetary policy.

The central bank's shift toward a market-based exchange rate system significantly reduced foreign exchange shortages, allowing faster clearance of import orders and restoring investor confidence.

"We are creating a more stable and predictable economy for businesses and consumers. This is critical for long-term growth," he said.

Reforming structural barriers to unlock long-term growth

While progress is clear, the ADB report points to key structural issues that continue to hold back growth, including power blackouts, law and order challenges, high business costs, and limited access to credit.

Prime Minister Marape acknowledged these concerns and reiterated the Government's determination to address them head-on through targeted investments in infrastructure, law enforcement, and economic reform.

"We are investing in electricity, roads, and rural development. We are also strengthening law and order so businesses and families can operate in a safer environment," he said.

Expanding financial access through digital innovation

The ADB highlighted the urgency of expanding financial inclusion, noting that only one-third of Papua New Guineans have access to formal banking services, and that women remain significantly underserved.

Prime Minister Marape said digital financial services, mobile banking, and a stronger national ID system would be key pillars of his government's strategy to bring financial services to the grassroots.

"Digital inclusion is economic inclusion. We want every citizen to have access to financial tools, savings, credit, and payments — whether they live in a city or a remote village."

Outlook for 2025 and beyond

Economic growth is forecast to remain steady at 4.2% in 2025 and 3.8% in 2026. Public debt is expected to decline further, and key reforms — including new tax measures and improved governance of state-owned enterprises — are projected to support continued fiscal stability.

Future investments, including the anticipated Papua LNG project, are expected to drive further economic momentum. However, the report also warns of risks, including law and order issues, climate-related disruptions, and financial sector vulnerabilities.

"As we approach 50 years of independence, we are laying the foundation for a stronger, more inclusive economy that will support our people for generations to come," Prime Minister Marape concluded.

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PM MARAPE ANNOUNCES GOV'T ENDORSEMENT OF SIR JULIUS IMAGE ON NEW K100 NOTE



Prime Minister James Marape giving recognition to the Late Sir Julius Chan for naming the currency of Papua New Guinea

Prime Minister James Marape announced that Papua New Guinea will honour the late Sir Julius Chan, one of the nation's founding leaders, with the issuance of a new K100 banknote bearing his image — a historic tribute to a man regarded as the chief architect of PNG's financial system.

Speaking during a commemorative event on April 28 in Port Moresby, marking the 50th anniversary of the Kina and Toea, Prime Minister Marape paid special respect to Sir Julius Chan, who was recently laid to rest in his beloved Tanga Island in New Ireland Province.

"Sir Julius Chan was a towering figure in our country's history. He built the financial foundations that still support our economy today. On behalf of the nation, I take this time to pay him a special tribute. Cabinet has already approved the proposal to issue a K100 note bearing his image, to be launched before our Independence Day celebrations on September 16," he said. Prime Minister Marape acknowledged Sir Julius' children, Vanessa, Mark and Toea and thanked them for sharing their father with the nation.

He noted that Sir Julius had earlier declined the idea of a currency bearing his image while he was alive, requesting that it be considered only after his passing.

A Deeper Reflection on Kina and Toea

The Prime Minister used the occasion to deliver a powerful reflection on the

deeper meaning of Kina and Toea as not merely units of currency, but enduring symbols of Papua New Guinea's cultural unity and history.

"Our ancestors were trading long before 1975 — before the modern nation of Papua New Guinea was born.

"Kina and Toea existed as currency across tribal nations, binding communities together through trade and commerce. These shells were carried hundreds of kilometres inland, exchanged across generations. It reminds us that we are a nation of traders and hardworking people, not idly waiting for handouts," he said.

Prime Minister Marape urged today's young generation to look beyond the distractions of social media and negativity, and instead draw inspiration from the resilience and industry embedded in the spirit of Kina and Toea.

Building a Modern Economic Future

Prime Minister Marape also provided strong commentary on Papua New Guinea's economic future as the country marks 50 years of Independence.

He noted that the Kina was initially pegged at par with the US dollar to provide stability in 1975 under Sir Julius Chan's leadership. Later, it was allowed to float to reflect market forces — a necessary move to protect the nation's economy during challenging periods, such as the 1994 financial adjustments.

"As we move forward, we must not view the Kina's strength purely in terms of its pegged value but by the productivity

of our people. A strong nation must be a producing nation. Agriculture, trade, and commerce must once again drive our economy," he said.

He called on Papua New Guineans to take advantage of new trade opportunities, particularly with China and Southeast Asia, where markets for coffee, copra, and cocoa are expanding rapidly.

Prime Minister Marape reaffirmed his government's commitment to supporting Central Bank Governor Elizabeth Genia in modernising the financial system while preserving its independence.

"We are targeting a K200 billion economy in the years ahead. A modern, strong central bank and a productive economy will help Kina and Toea remain powerful symbols of our sovereignty and unity," he said.

Conclusion: A Legacy for the Future

In closing, Prime Minister Marape reminded the nation that Kina and Toea are more than money — they are powerful emblems of Papua New Guinea's ancient traditions, its unity across diversity, and its future aspirations as a bridge between the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

"We must rise, produce, and honour the vision of our forefathers. Sir Julius Chan's legacy will live on not only in our currency but in the spirit of a proud, independent, and hardworking Papua New Guinea," said the Prime Minister.

PM MARAPE HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC SPENDING



Prime Minister James Marape speaking to PANGU Pati Members after Economic update

Prime Minister James Marape led a high-level economic briefing on April 14 in Port Moresby ahead of vote-of-no-confidence on April 15, bringing together Cabinet ministers, governors, MPs, departmental heads, and international financial institutions to assess Papua New Guinea's economic outlook and guide national spending priorities.

The 'PNG and World Economic Update' featured presentations from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Bank of Papua New Guinea, and the Departments of Treasury, Finance and National Planning.

Prime Minister Marape stressed the importance of transparency and coordination in public spending, and reaffirmed his directive for all development and recurrent fund

transfers to be fully disclosed to governors and MPs.

"We must move forward together. Everyone must know what is being spent and where," he said.

Key highlights from the programme included:

- IMF Resident Representative Mr Sohrab Rafiq outlining global economic trends and the need for fiscal discipline;
- World Bank Country Manager Mr Khwima Nthara emphasising inclusive growth and infrastructure investment;
- ADB Country Director Mr Said Zaidansyah presenting on development financing and implementation sequencing;
- Updates from BPNG on monetary policy and financial stability;
- A budget review by the Departments of Treasury, Finance and National Planning.

During the session, the IMF, ADB, World Bank, and Bank of Papua New Guinea commended Papua New Guinea for its prudent economic management, citing continued progress in fiscal consolidation, an improved balance of payments, and notable steps taken to alleviate foreign exchange constraints. Prime Minister Marape noted: "With global headwinds of economic downturn as a result of global trade wars happening, as a country we must be prepared for adjustments if need be."

Prime Minister Marape concluded by calling on all leaders to work in unity, saying: "The global outlook is challenging, but with discipline, honesty, and shared responsibility, we will stay the course and deliver for our people."

PM MARAPE EXPRESSES DEEP CONDOLENCES TO INDIA

Prime Minister James Marape has expressed his deepest sympathies and strong condemnation following the horrific terrorist attack in Kashmir, which has resulted in the loss of numerous innocent lives.

"I am profoundly saddened by the tragic events in Kashmir and wish to extend, on behalf of the Government and people of Papua New Guinea, our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and to the people of the Republic of India."

"This act of terror is a stark reminder of

the cruel and indiscriminate nature of extremism. We condemn this barbaric violence in the strongest terms possible and stand united with the Indian people in mourning the lives lost," he said.

Prime Minister Marape emphasised Papua New Guinea's unwavering stance against terrorism, stating that no grievance can ever justify the deliberate targeting of innocent civilians.

"We join the international community in calling for peace and justice, and we offer our full solidarity to the

Government of India as it seeks to bring those responsible to account. In this time of grief, our thoughts, prayers, and support go to every Indian family affected."

The Prime Minister added that Papua New Guinea, as a democratic and peace-loving nation, shares India's sorrow and reiterates the need for continued international cooperation to defeat terrorism in all its forms.

"May the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace. May those who mourn find comfort, and may peace prevail over violence," he concluded.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA BRACES FOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC HEADWINDS

Prime Minister James Marape has warned that Papua New Guinea will not be immune from the ripple effects of global economic shocks stemming from recent United States tariff hikes, and has urged the country to remain vigilant as his government monitors and manages the situation.

Prime Minister Marape said the sweeping tariff increases imposed by the United States on China and other key global economies represent a "tectonic shift in global trade and commerce" that will inevitably have downstream consequences for small, import-dependent nations like Papua New Guinea.

"These are not minor trade adjustments. This is a major global event. When the world's number one economy imposes tariffs of over 200 per cent on the number two economy as well as all other economies, the entire global trading system is shaken. While we do not have a significant trade relationship with the United States, we are closely integrated with China, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, Europe, and Australia—economies that are directly

impacted," he said.

Prime Minister Marape said PNG's Treasury Department, the Central Bank, and his own department are closely monitoring the situation and assessing the potential economic risks, particularly with regard to inflation and the rising cost of goods and services.

"This is a time for our people to understand that there are strong global economic headwinds ahead. We must prepare for the possibility of price increases, supply chain disruptions, and investment slowdowns. But we also want to assure the country that we are managing our economy prudently and are focused on our national budget priorities."

The Prime Minister acknowledged that some impacts may be unavoidable in the short term, but expressed confidence in the medium-to-long-term outlook, citing over US\$40 billion worth of resource projects in the pipeline.

"In the next 10 years, we expect nearly \$40 billion in foreign direct investments into our country through projects such as Papua LNG, Pasca A, P'nyang LNG, Wafi-Golpu, and potential progress on

Frieda River and the Wildebeest LNG in Gulf and Milne Bay in Central provinces. "These are real projects, with real partners. Pasca and P'nyang are already signed, and Papua LNG is progressing with TotalEnergies and ExxonMobil. Porgera is operating now and we shall close a better project agreement for Wafi-Golpu soon. These developments will underpin our economy for the next two decades and secure long-term economic stability," he said.

Prime Minister Marape also noted that while global conditions are beyond PNG's control, the government is staying the course on fiscal consolidation. He added that the 2024 Final Budget Outcome will be released and will show our financial management in 2024 amidst difficult global conditions.

"Unlike many peer economies struggling to attract capital, we have the largest multinationals operating here. Our job is to keep investor confidence high and ensure policy consistency. I am optimistic that despite the challenges of today, the future of Papua New Guinea remains bright," he said.

CONGRATULATIONS KEDABING GAMU ON YOUR MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



A staff member of the Department of Prime Minister, Mrs Kedabing Gamu, received her Executive Masters in Business Administration at the University of Papua New Guinea on April 30, 2025. Mrs Gamu is currently attached to the Finance and Administration Branch as Accounting and Reporting Manager. To mark her milestone achievement, Mrs Gamu was hosted a luncheon by the Operations Division and in attendance were Deputy Secretary Operations Mr Joshua Uvau, Finance and Administration Director Ms Emma Bagu and the staff from the Operations Division.

PRIME MINISTER MARAPE BREAKS GROUND ON HIRITANO HIGHWAY REDEVELOPMENT



Prime Minister James Marape breaking ground for the Bereina to Malalaua road rehabilitation

Prime Minister James Marape led a ground-breaking ceremony at Bereina Station on April 17 to officially launch the major redevelopment of the Hiritano Highway, a key national infrastructure project that will link Port Moresby to Kerema and unlock the economic potential of Papua New Guinea's southern corridor.

The ceremony, organised by the Department of Works & Highways, brought together national leaders, provincial governors, district members, traditional leaders, and the people of Central and Gulf provinces to witness the commencement of this transformative road infrastructure project. The upgrade is part of the Southern Corridor (Hiritano Highway NR001) Major Works Contract, under the broader Connect PNG programme, which dedicates 5.6% of the national budget annually towards infrastructure connectivity.

Speaking at the ceremony, Prime Minister Marape described the Hiritano Highway as "one of the most economically significant roads in the country," noting that its completion would directly stimulate growth in agriculture, fisheries, tourism, forestry, and industrial development in the region.

"We are not just rehabilitating a road; we are opening an economic corridor that will transform the lives of thousands of people from Central, Gulf and neighbouring provinces. This highway will not only link communities but also generate real income opportunities for our people," he said.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed that his government would allocate K300–K400 million for the full rehabilitation of the highway and committed to ensuring

the project is completed with urgency. Honouring Leadership and Local Development

Prime Minister Marape took the opportunity to commend local leadership, particularly the Member for Kairuku and Vice Minister for Works, Hon. Peter Isoaimo, for his persistent advocacy for the road.

"You are not a Facebook leader. You are on the ground, with your people in schools, in hospitals, and in communities. That is what this country needs," the Prime Minister said. He also recognised Central Governor Hon. Rufina Peter for her passionate and constructive leadership, praising her for raising critical issues affecting the safety and prosperity of women and children, and proposing practical policy alternatives.

The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of cooperation between provincial leaders, noting the symbolic unity of Governor Peter and Gulf Governor Hon. Chris Haiveta sharing the platform together.

"It is pleasing to see our leaders from Central and Gulf standing side by side. This is the type of partnership we need to deliver national development without leaving anyone behind," he said.

Hiritano Highway as a National Economic Catalyst

Prime Minister Marape emphasised the strategic economic value of the Hiritano Highway.

He said the road links Port Moresby with key growth areas that host major energy, agriculture, and resource projects, including Papua LNG, Pasca A, Wildebeest LNG, and future expansions in fisheries and tourism.

"The Hiritano Highway will carry not just vehicles, but our hopes for economic prosperity. Every kina we invest here must return four kina to the national economy—and more," he said. The Prime Minister also committed an additional K5 million to the Kairuku District to support land mobilisation, mapping, and economic development, in addition to the K62–K63 million outlined in the district's five-year plan. He encouraged the people of Central and Gulf to register and develop their customary land for productive use in agriculture, livestock, and tourism rather than waiting for government handouts.

"Do not reduce your land to just betelnut. Your land can feed cities and supply exports. If you work your land, you will be among the richest people on Earth," he urged.

Vision for Rural Empowerment and National Unity

Prime Minister Marape used the occasion to reflect on broader national challenges and aspirations, calling on all Papua New Guineans to become producers rather than passive recipients of government support.

"Australia and America were built on land ownership and productivity. Here in PNG, we have land, but many are sitting idle. That must change," he said. He stressed that economic independence must follow political independence, and that the current generation of leaders, especially under Pangu's leadership, must drive the shift from aid-dependency to self-reliance. In his closing remarks, he reiterated the government's focus on rural infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and inclusive growth, noting that future leaders must never forget rural communities or neglect any part of the country.

"The Hiritano Highway is not just a road; it is a pathway to dignity and opportunity for our people. Let this road be a symbol of economic revolution in this beautiful part of Papua New Guinea," Prime Minister Marape concluded.

About Connect PNG

The Connect PNG initiative is a flagship national infrastructure policy aimed at bridging the country's economic and geographic divides. It aims to build, rehabilitate, and maintain essential infrastructure—especially roads, bridges, ports, and airports—across the country by dedicating a minimum of 5.6% of the national budget each year to connectivity investments.

PM MARAPE REAFFIRMS FULL GOV'T COMMITMENT TO ELECTORAL REFORM

Prime Minister James Marape has reaffirmed his government's unwavering commitment to delivering a cleaner, more transparent, and more accountable electoral process for Papua New Guinea's next national election in 2027.

Prime Minister Marape addressed the nation and the Opposition directly on April 13, acknowledging frustrations surrounding political processes while assuring the public that steps are already being taken to strengthen the country's democratic systems.

"I know many in the Opposition are eager to return to Government—and that is their constitutional right. But let me make this clear to every citizen of this country: the 2027 elections will be tidied up. Those who feel they should be in Government today will have their opportunity to contest, win, and lead—through a process that is fair and free," he said.

Prime Minister Marape said that the reform agenda includes completing the National Identification (NID) rollout, updating and cleansing the common roll, and integrating accurate census and demographic data to build a credible and verifiable electoral system. "This is a national effort. Every district, every province must assist in completing the NID process, cleaning the common roll, and strengthening our ID and census systems. We must not sabotage or corrupt this process but instead contribute to ensuring every citizen votes on a solid, transparent platform in 2027," he said.

To ensure the credibility of the process, he revealed that international partners including the United Nations, Australia, New Zealand, and the Commonwealth will be invited not just as observers, but as active participants in the electoral process.

"This will be the first election after our 50th Anniversary. We want to get it right. The people must be empowered to make their choice freely—and we will ensure the platform for that choice is clean, credible, and beyond question," he said.

The Prime Minister also took aim at rising political immaturity and incitement from some MPs, particularly younger leaders, whom he accused of attempting to incite unrest through irresponsible public statements and social media activity.

"It is worrying to see first - and second-term MPs thinking they can ascend to leadership by calling for civil unrest, blocking roads, and inciting riots. I thank the people for not falling for these



Prime Minister James Marape speaking at a domestic engagement in Enga province

tactics. Our people are wise and see through political stunts. Leaders must spell out their alternatives and contest the 2027 elections with purpose."

He reminded the nation that under Section 50 of the Constitution, all citizens have the right to vote—but they must do so strategically and with full understanding of how parliamentary democracy functions.

"Votes should not be wasted. People must vote knowing their choice will influence the formation of the next Government. You vote for a candidate who can help form the Government—not simply to make noise in the Opposition," he said.

The Prime Minister reiterated that under Section 63 of the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates, the political party with the highest number of winning candidates after the general election is invited to form Government. He urged political critics and aspirants to organise themselves, identify viable candidates,

communicate clear policies, and let the people decide.

"Democracy in PNG does not work by shouting from the mountaintops or grandstanding in public forums. It works by winning elections, earning trust, and demonstrating capacity. Leaders who conduct themselves with respect, humility, and maturity will gain the support of their colleagues and constituents," he said.

In closing, Prime Minister Marape emphasised that he has retained majority support since 2019 not through coercion, but through consensus and the confidence of his peers in Parliament.

"This Government has faced many challenges, but I am proud that we continue to govern with the mandate given to us in 2022. As we approach 2027, let all political leaders prepare with honesty, integrity, and a commitment to strengthening our democracy."

PNG'S ECONOMY REBOUNDED STRONGLY UNDER HOME-GROWN REFORM PLAN: IMF



Government Cacao meeting with World Bank, IMF and ADB Country representatives for Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea has received a significant vote of confidence from the international community following a high-level economic briefing that brought together the Government, key international financial institutions, and development partners.

The event, on April 14, chaired by Prime Minister James Marape, provided a detailed overview of Papua New Guinea's current economic trajectory and the reform efforts under the Government's home-grown agenda. It included presentations from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG), and the Departments of Treasury, Finance, and National Planning.

The central message was overwhelmingly positive: Papua New Guinea is on the right path. Delivering a comprehensive economic overview, IMF Resident Representative Mr Sohrab Rafiq offered a candid, data-driven analysis of the country's recent economic struggles—largely driven by years of foreign exchange shortages and an overvalued exchange rate—and the remarkable turnaround now underway.

"To be completely honest, Papua New Guinea has endured some of the most difficult macroeconomic conditions in the Asia-Pacific region over the last decade. But I say this with confidence: PNG is now the best-performing country in our region under an IMF programme," he said.

He noted that PNG's economy had become "billions of dollars smaller than it should have been" due to constrained private sector investment and sluggish productivity. However, since the launch of the IMF-supported programme in 2023, the economy is showing measurable improvements across all major indicators. Key Achievements

Under the Reform Programme.

1. Inflation Under Control

Inflation, once a major concern, has stabilised around 5%—below the historical average. This is despite global pressures from rising food and fuel prices. Contrary to popular belief, the gradual adjustment of the kina has not triggered runaway inflation, but instead has restored price stability.

"It's not the exchange rate adjustment that's driving the cost of living. Global factors such as rising cereal and rice prices are responsible. PNG's inflation performance has in fact been stronger than most countries in the Asia-Pacific," he clarified.

2. Prudent Fiscal Management

The fiscal deficit has been steadily declining since the post-COVID peak, with strong projections that the budget will return to balance by 2027. Debt-to-GDP ratio, which had climbed during years of fiscal stress, is now set to fall for the first time in over a decade. "Let me be clear—PNG's debt level is not excessive by regional standards. In fact, the country sits at the lower end compared to many of its neighbours. The way in which the Government is managing its fiscal consolidation—gradually and responsibly—is a model for others," he stressed.

3. Foreign Exchange Backlog Slashed

One of the most profound improvements has been in the foreign exchange (FX) market. Just five years ago, the FX backlog was over USD 400 million. Today, it is under USD 150 million, with many essential import orders now being cleared on demand. "We are seeing a return to kina convertibility. This means that businesses and individuals can access foreign exchange when they need it. FX market liquidity has improved, and the kina is now approaching a more realistic, competitive value," he said.

4. Rising Global Investor Confidence

One of the most compelling signs of PNG's reform success is its improved reputation in international capital markets. The country's risk premium—how much extra it pays to borrow compared to developed countries—has fallen from 8% to around 4.5%.

"This is a massive shift. In simple terms, Papua New Guinea has regained access to international capital markets. Global investors now believe in this country's reform path," he said.

The IMF further noted that if reforms continue and the euro bond due in 2028 is managed wisely, PNG's international credit rating could improve, lowering borrowing costs and unlocking further investment.

IMF Programme: PNG-Led, IMF-Supported

Rafiq was keen to stress that the IMF programme is not imposed from outside but is driven by the Marape Government's own agenda. The IMF's role is to support through technical advice and low-interest concessional financing.

"We often call it an IMF programme, but the truth is—it's your programme. The credit belongs to you. Papua New Guinea's reforms are home-grown, and we are here only to assist," he said.

Prime Minister Marape: "We Are Doing the Right Thing for Our People."

In his remarks, Prime Minister Marape reaffirmed that his government is focused on building a resilient, inclusive economy that creates opportunities for all Papua New Guineans—not just large corporates or the public service.

"We're not here because there is a crisis. We're here because we want to avoid one."

"We are building strong foundations. I want our people to take part, especially our young entrepreneurs and SMEs. If one young man can earn over K100,000 a week exporting coffee so can others," he said.

PNG TOURISM SECTOR HAS POTENTIAL AS MASSIVE ECONOMY TRANSFORMER

Prime Minister James Marape, in launching the inaugural PNG National Tourism Conference and Expo on April 9 at the Hilton Hotel, stated that Tourism has the greatest ability, along with Agriculture and Fisheries, to transform PNG's economy significantly and bring positive development and change to communities without leaving anyone behind.

Prime Minister Marape said given the unique and never-ending potential that Papua New Guinea possesses in the Tourism space, from its rich cultural diversity and biodiversity to the breathtaking scenery and friendly people, greater collaboration and synergy in the sector is strongly encouraged to enable positive and effective progress.

The Prime Minister acknowledged Tourism Minister Belden Namah who was deliberately hand-picked among many others for his leadership so far with the aim of resuscitating the Tourism sector of the country and bringing it to the next level, thus fully tapping into international tourism markets in South East Asia and the Pacific Region, as well as the world at large. He also acknowledged the support of key stakeholder organisations in the Tourism industry and from the Non-Renewable sector (Extractive Resource Sector) of the economy like the Mineral Resource Development Company.

In outlining his Government's plans to support Tourism in Papua New Guinea, the Prime Minister highlighted the Connect PNG program that has made significant progress since 2019, connecting some of the most remote parts of the country with the rest of the country and the outside world for the first time, and also from 2028 onwards, Connect PNG infrastructure program is already preparing the way.

Prime Minister Marape said, reminding naysayers who continuously speak negatively about his Government on social media: "Just because we don't tell everyone we are working doesn't mean we're not working. Those naysayers who say all the garbage that proliferates our social media, half the time they are spun by spin doctors and those who want to be politicians."

"We have many, many positives that outweigh the negativities in our country. All of us must be in total solidarity to make this country become a better place. In the midst of all the politics that is going on, we are still at work. I spoke at the opening of an Agriculture Conference in Lae earlier this week, encouraging that Agriculture



L-R: Minister for Tourism and Culture Belden Namah and Prime Minister James Marape

has the potential to produce 1 million economically-productive families. "Tourism has enormous potential in our nation and we can make it happen. Who says dreams don't come to reality? Dreams do come true. And I say this because I've seen and made it happen before."

In speaking about dreams coming true, Prime Minister Marape shared a reflection on how a world-renowned Hilton Hotel and brand was able to be built in the heart of the suburb of Hohola in Port Moresby. He said it was part of a conversation in 2015 in Suva, Fiji, where he was asked to open a hotel in Fiji back then which PNG had majority shareholding in through a landowner company. Marape established the dream then and told the key stakeholders to build a similar hotel in Port Moresby, which has now come to pass, becoming a hotel that is on par with the best in the world.

"What was only a dream back then in Fiji is now what I rate as the best Hilton Hotel in the world, having been to other Hilton Hotels around the world. It is located in Hohola – a suburb where our historic Bully Beef Club (precursor to PANGU Party) used to meet and stay in the pre-Independence era."

"It is where vision was turned into reality," he said.

Prime Minister Marape encouraged and welcomed international investors to PNG, thus acknowledging some companies in the Private sector like Digicel and others who have tapped into the country's potential areas to do business for the development and transformation of PNG.

He also paid tribute to some significant expatriate business figures who made Papua New Guinea their home and

have contributed in a big way to PNG's Tourism Sector like Bob Bates, Late Peter Barter and others opening up economic corridors for sectors like Tourism to fully utilise. With PNG entering the NRL.

"Papua New Guineans who are naysayers out there, these people (Tourism business operators) never asked the Government for support. They just picked up what they had and what they could do and became successful. I salute them for what they have done," Mr Marape said in emotional fashion, paying tribute to the long-time Tourism Business Operators.

He took a special moment of respect to ask Bob Bates who was among the audience to stand as he asked everyone to join him in acknowledging Mr Bates as someone who has a unique business footprint in PNG's tourism industry.

Bob Bates is the founder of Trans Niugini Tours in Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province, and also other business ventures in a number of significant locations around the country such as the Award-Winning Ambua Lodge in Hela Province, Bensbach River Tours in Western Province and the Karawari Lodge next to the Sepik River.

Mr Marape highlighted that the Tourism market in neighbouring countries like Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Indonesia is huge, which PNG can easily tap into given its unique geographical location between South East Asia and the Pacific.

He said: "When I visit different nations of the world on official visits, I promote our nation patriotically and establish relations deliberately so that PNG can benefit economically through investors and tourists or visitors."

"I ensure to enable arrangements with key economies in Asia and the Pacific that will have their tourists also visit our country, and more investors entering our country in a positive way."

"For instance, China had 134 million tourists last year. We can easily tap into that for our benefit. We are working on improving international flight arrangements with Air Niugini and Airport works with National Airports Corporation to enable more international flight routes with key economically-beneficial countries, especially in Asia and the Pacific Regions. So if other major countries or regions of the world like Europe or the United States don't come, we can promote tourism in South East Asian nations like our closest neighbour Indonesia whom we have agreements for movement between borders already," he said.

INDONESIAN GOV'T PRAISED FOR ITS SUPPORT TO CITY MORTUARY



Ground breaking ceremony for the new Port Moresby General Hospital Mortuary

Prime Minister James Marape has thanked the Government and people of the Republic of Indonesia for funding the upgrading and renovation of Port Moresby General Hospital mortuary and Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

He acknowledged that Indonesia was the first country to assist Papua New Guinea during the COVID-19 pandemic and remains a close neighbour, as well as an important bilateral and economic partner.

Prime Minister Marape made this statement during the launch of the project at Port Moresby General Hospital on April 28, witnessed by Indonesian Ambassador to PNG, H.E. Andriana Supandy, key bilateral partners in PNG's health sector, Port Moresby General Hospital CEO Dr. Paki Molumi, and senior PNG health officials.

The Indonesian Government, through its international aid agency, the Indonesian Grant Aid Project, is funding the upgrading of the hospital's morgue and ICU.

Prime Minister Marape emphasised that the groundbreaking ceremony for the project marks a significant milestone in PNG's healthcare journey. "The launch of the project to upgrade and renovate the morgue and ICU at Port Moresby General Hospital represents more than just construction—it reflects our commitment to enhancing the quality and dignity of healthcare for every Papua New Guinean," he said.

"The morgue, often overlooked, plays

a crucial role in our healthcare system, ensuring the deceased are treated with respect. The project we unveil today will bring our facilities in line with the highest standards, honouring the value we place on every individual. Equally important is the enhancement of the ICU, which serves as the frontline in saving lives. With modern equipment and improved facilities, we are better prepared to handle emergencies and provide the best care possible.

"These improvements demonstrate our government's dedication to healthcare infrastructure. We recognise that a healthy population is the backbone of a prosperous nation. By strengthening our healthcare facilities, we lay the foundation for a more resilient Papua New Guinea."

Prime Minister Marape also expressed heartfelt thanks to the Indonesian Government and its people for their support.

"I extend my gratitude to the Government and people of Indonesia for their generous support through the Indonesia Grant Aid Program. Their contribution in terms of funding will enhance the ICU and mortuary at Port Moresby General Hospital is a reflection of the strength of our bilateral relations," Prime Minister Marape said.

He further stated: "We do not beg for help, but instead welcome partnerships that align with our development goals. Indonesia's support reflects a shared commitment to progress and mutual respect. As neighbours and development partners in the Pacific, we deeply value Indonesia's assistance

and look forward to continued collaboration."

Prime Minister Marape also recognised the efforts of all those involved in the project, including healthcare professionals, construction teams, and administrative staff.

"Your dedication embodies the spirit of service that drives our nation forward."

"We reaffirm our commitment to building a healthcare system that is accessible, compassionate, and prepared to meet future challenges. Together, we can ensure every citizen receives the care and dignity they deserve," said Prime Minister Marape.

He expressed satisfaction that the technical design for the project had been certified by the Department of Health as compliant with international hospital standards, and emphasised that the project must be executed with care and urgency to meet the expectations of both governments.

"We recognise Indonesia as more than just a friend and neighbour; it is one of PNG's key trade and economic development partners. As our proximity to Indonesia grows, we seek to expand our business relations. Both countries are committed to developing high-quality, durable infrastructure."

"We will continue strengthening our partnership in the health sector and grow our relations through meaningful dialogue and collaboration."

The PNG Department of Health and the Embassy of Indonesia in Port Moresby will oversee the project's implementation.

GOV'T COMMISSIONS ENGA'S WORLD-CLASS HEALTH FACILITY

Prime Minister James Marape has praised the completion of the new Enga Provincial Hospital as a major milestone in Papua New Guinea's health sector, calling it a testament to visionary leadership, patient planning, and strong collaboration between the national and provincial governments.

Speaking at the official commissioning of the K600 million world-class medical facility in Wabag on April 1, Prime Minister Marape said Enga has set a new benchmark for modern provincial health infrastructure.

"This is no ordinary upgrade — it is a state-of-the-art greenfield development that represents the best of what Papua New Guinean leadership, commitment and collaboration can deliver," Prime Minister Marape said.

The Prime Minister acknowledged the steadfast leadership of Enga Governor Sir Peter Ipata, whom he credited for decades of persistence in pursuing better healthcare outcomes for the people of Enga.

"Governor Ipata has worked many hours, many days, many months, and many years to bring this vision to life. Today, the people of Enga are the beneficiaries of that dedication."

The Enga Provincial Hospital features modern medical equipment, specialist wards, and capacity to operate as a Level 5 facility, with aspirations to evolve into Level 6 or Level 7 status — servicing not only Enga but also neighbouring provinces across the Highlands and Western regions.



Prime Minister James Marape arriving in Wabag and accompanied by the Governor for Enga Sir Peter Ipata to the opening of the new Enga Provincial Hospital

"This hospital will now serve not just Wabag, but the wider region — from Telefomin to Jiwaka, from Hela to Southern Highlands — all within an hour by air. It is a strategic medical hub," the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Marape commended the use of tax credit funding from Porgera Mine and support from the Australian Government, which contributed AUD \$7 million for the procurement of medical equipment.

He also paid tribute to past and present members for Wabag District, health officials, district administrators, engineers, and contractors who played roles in realising the project.

"From health workers and contractors to provincial officers and planners — everyone contributed to making

this hospital a reality. Thank you for believing in the vision."

The Prime Minister urged the Enga Provincial Health Authority to now focus on equipping the facility with trained personnel, including specialist doctors, nurses, and clinical staff to fully operationalise the hospital.

"Let's not leave this building empty. Fill it with people. Train our own. Bring in the experts. And ensure this becomes a centre of excellence not just for Enga, but for Papua New Guinea."

He concluded by stating that the Enga model demonstrates what is possible when public funds, provincial leadership, and development partnerships are all aligned.

"This is your blueprint. This is your victory. Congratulations, Enga — you have delivered a legacy."

PM MARAPE SUMMONS HEALTH OFFICIALS OVER MATERNITY WING GRANT AID ISSUE

Prime Minister James Marape has intervened to address delays in a Japanese Government grant aid project to upgrade the maternity wing at Port Moresby General Hospital.

"I am aware that the Japanese Government offered to fund the refurbishment of the maternity wing," Prime Minister Marape said. "Unfortunately, there have been delays because the hospital management did not confirm acceptance of the project." He acknowledged leading gynaecologist Dr Glen Mola, who raised the matter publicly, and said:

"There is no reason to doubt Dr Mola, who has devoted his professional life to this field. If he says there is a crisis, authorities must act immediately and

plan for the future."

Prime Minister Marape stressed that the hospital, built for a city of under 200,000, now struggles to meet the needs of a population nearing one million. He emphasised urgent short-term interventions and reaffirmed broader plans, including suburban hospitals and a new National Capital hospital in partnership with the NCD and development partners.

"I have summoned the Secretary for Health, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Port Moresby General Hospital CEO Dr Paki Molumi, Dr Glen Mola, and all involved to a meeting on Friday, 2 May 2025, to resolve this matter," Prime Minister Marape announced.

He underlined the need for

professionalism in handling international development partnerships:

"When partners like Japan step in to help, we must not create obstacles. We must respect and honour these partnerships."

Prime Minister Marape made these remarks after launching renovation works at the hospital's morgue and ICU, funded by the Indonesian Government. The issue came to public attention after Dr Mola revealed that mothers were delivering babies on the floor due to a lack of birthing spaces — a problem that could have been alleviated had the Japanese-funded project been accepted.

"Our mothers and children deserve better," Prime Minister Marape said. "We must act now."

PM MARAPE CHAMPIONS EDUCATION OVER TRIBAL CONFLICT



Prime Minister James Marape meeting school aged children in his electorate of Tari-Pori

Prime Minister James Marape has made an impassioned call on April 27, for young people in Papua New Guinea, especially in his own Tari-Pori District, to abandon tribal fighting and embrace education as the true pathway to lasting peace, prosperity, and nation-building.

Prime Minister Marape reflected on the devastating impacts of tribal conflict and the urgent need to replace violence with learning.

"In the face of surrender by two warring tribes in my district, I say to the youth: lay down your guns, pick up a pen. Education is the most powerful weapon

you can use to change your life and your country," the Prime Minister said.

As part of this renewed focus, Prime Minister Marape announced a major investment into education in Tari-Pori, with over K5.15 million being distributed directly to all educational institutions across the district through the District Services Improvement Programme (DSIP). Under this initiative:

- Primary and elementary schools received direct infrastructure support grants.
- High schools and secondary schools each received K150,000.
- Private schools each received

K100,000.

The funds, managed through the District Development Authority (DDA) under CEO Mr Jack Walara, are targeted at upgrading school infrastructures: building new classrooms, teachers' houses, installing solar power systems, maintaining existing facilities, and expanding school capacity.

"This is not the first time our district has made such interventions. We have a consistent track record of supporting our schools. However, this time, we are demanding stronger accountability. Schools will be required to sign agreements with the DDA, and if anyone misappropriates these funds, police action will follow," he said.

The Prime Minister emphasised that schools also continue to receive Tuition Fee Free (TFF) funds from the national government, and that combined support from DSIP, TFF, and provincial contributions should ensure that no school in Tari-Pori is left behind in infrastructure development.

A PERSONAL STORY OF HOPE AND INSPIRATION

In an emotional reflection, Prime Minister Marape shared his own journey to inspire students. "My mother, when Tari was still isolated and the Southern Highlands was in its infancy, chose to invest in my education. That simple act of vision and sacrifice enabled me to become the person I am today. Education opened doors that would have otherwise remained closed."

He used his personal story as a living testimony of the power of education to lift individuals and communities out of hardship and into leadership, prosperity, and national service.

PRIME MINISTER JAMES MARAPE REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION FROM HIS ELECTORATE

Prime Minister James Marape, while currently in his home electorate, continues to focus on one of his core national priorities—education.

Engaging directly with local schools, teachers, and students, the Prime Minister is sending a strong and clear message to the nation: education is the foundation of national progress.

"Our children's future begins in the classroom," said Prime Minister Marape during his visit.

"By investing in education here at home, we are leading by example

and reinforcing our government's commitment to quality education for all Papua New Guineans."

This hands-on approach not only underscores his dedication to improving educational outcomes but also signals to leaders across the country the importance of prioritizing learning in their own communities.

During his visit to Walet Junior High and Primary School in Tari District, the Prime Minister, accompanied by his wife Madam Rachael Marape, emphasized the need for collective

efforts towards nurturing the next generation and providing them with the necessary tools to succeed.

By actively engaging with educational institutions, Prime Minister Marape aims to inspire both educators and students alike, fostering a supportive environment that values and promotes learning at every level.

The Prime Minister returned to Port Moresby on 27 April 2025, as he continues to champion the vision of a brighter future through education for all Papua New Guineans.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S NEW COMMERCIAL BANK, NATIONAL BANKING CORPORATION LAUNCHED

Prime Minister James Marape launched Papua New Guinea's latest commercial bank, National Banking Corporation (NBC) on April 10, bringing to seven the number of commercial banks in the country.

NBC is the transition from the former People's Micro Finance Bank, and is a subsidiary of the National Development Bank (NDB) – one of the nine State-owned enterprises of PNG.

The move into the commercial banking sector space is an effort by the Marape-Rosso Government for better financial inclusion covering areas of the country not reached by existing commercial banks, and is part of the extensive reforms of State enterprises currently being undertaken by Government.

A Cabinet decision made in 2022 finally saw the issue of a license by the Bank of PNG in December last year 2024 after a long rigorous process. The launch on Thursday night by the Prime Minister was held at APEC House in Port Moresby before an audience of Members of Parliament, bureaucrats, bankers, super-fund reps, business owners, and company directors and managers.

Prime Minister Marape urged NBC to open branches in all 21 provinces including the Special Region of Bougainville within the next five years, while highlighting the need for all Papua New Guineans to easily access banking services because of their landowning status. Currently, the bank has 10 branches through its former status as the People's Micro Finance Bank.

Mr Marape highlighted the potential for the growth of NBC and commercial banks in PNG because of the expanding



Prime Minister James Marape launches National Banking Corporation

national economy, which has grown from K79 billion in 2019 to K125 billion in 2024 – the time under his administration

– with an upward trajectory toward K200 billion at the turn of the decade. He also affirmed the growth in the PNG economy by pointing to Bank South Pacific's declaration of over K900 million profit last year 2024, demonstrating this upward trajectory. The Prime Minister said despite many challenges including an inherited recessed economy and global COVID-19 pandemic under his government, three commercial banks have opened in the last six years – Tisa Bank, Credit Bank and, now, NBC.

"Thank you very much Bank of PNG for the sensitivity to the times we are living in and recognizing the need for the unbanked to be banked, as well as for the banking sector to be reformed. "The Pangu-led Coalition Government is happy to witness a State-owned enterprise not holding back but partnering in our intention for reform and moving into the right space.

"This bank gives the opportunity to 80 percent of our people who remain on the fringes of our economy, yet are our country's biggest assets as people who own land and have access to forestry, fisheries, agriculture and some of the richest cultures in the world – the goldmine of tourism. They must be brought into the formal economy. "NBC must maintain the fiduciary requirement of a bank and at the same time be responsive to the needs of our people.

"I thank the National Banking Corporation board and management, and Kumul Consolidated Holdings for NBC. This is a wonderful gift to our people on the 50th Independence anniversary," said Prime Minister Marape.

The Prime Minister called on NBC, NDB and KCH to manage the new commercial bank prudently and grow it for the benefit of all Papua New Guineans, and not to repeat the mistakes of the former PNG Banking Corporation.

PAPUA NEW GUINEANS CALLED ON TO BUY NBC EQUITY

The new National Banking Corporation (NBC) is planning to publicly list its stocks for public purchase as early as next year 2026, with Prime Minister James Marape calling on Papua New Guineans to prepare themselves in anticipation of this event.

Prime Minister Marape, while launching the new commercial bank on April 10, urged Papua New Guinea's superannuation funds, provincial governments, landowner companies, nationally-owned businesses, and individual Papua New Guineans to look forward to the announcement and to buy shares in the bank.

NBC is expecting an Initial Public Offering (IPO) on the Port Moresby

Stock Exchange toward the end of 2026.

Prime Minister Marape said he wants to see 80 percent of NBC owned by Papua New Guineans and Papua New Guinean companies with only 20 percent shareholding remaining with the State, through Kumul Consolidated Holdings.

"When we offer the IPO, 80 percent must go out to our provincial governments, the Bougainville government, landowner companies, our superfunds, our ordinary citizens so our people become shareholders.

"So to all Papua New Guineans, get ready to invest in your bank. Let's make NBC become the biggest commercial bank in the country. Be ready because

I will ring the bell very soon," he said, adding that provincial governments and their subsidiary companies, especially, must take a keen investment interest in NBC and prepare for the IPO. Currently, NBC has 10 branches in the country and working to expand to all provinces of PNG, including Bougainville.

NBC is the upscaling of the former People's Micro Finance bank, which focused on providing microfinance banking services to small income earners and ordinary Papua New Guineans. It was established in 2013.

NBC remains the subsidiary of the National Development Bank, one of the nine State enterprises of PNG.

PRIME MINISTER MARAPE OUTLINES BOLD VISION FOR ENERGY REFORM AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION



Prime Minister James Marape

Prime Minister James Marape has delivered a powerful and heartfelt address reaffirming his government's unwavering commitment to energy reform, economic transformation, and responsible leadership as Papua New Guinea approaches its 50th year of independence.

The Prime Minister was speaking at the National Power Sector Forum, jointly hosted by the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on April 3 at APEC Haus in Port Moresby.

The Forum—the first of its kind in PNG—gathered more than 100 key national and international experts, including government officials, industry leaders, and development partners, to discuss power sector priorities and solutions for achieving reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy to support inclusive and comprehensive growth.

Addressing this high-level gathering, Prime Minister Marape expressed deep gratitude to the people and businesses of Papua New Guinea for their tolerance and resilience in the face of decades-long challenges in the power sector.

"You have lived with the pain and misery of inefficiencies in our power sector for too long. Thank you for your great tolerance. We have inherited a broken system, but we are taking decisive action to rebuild and reform," the Prime Minister said.

Since assuming office in 2019, the Marape Government has made significant progress in stabilising PNG

Power Ltd, investing over K400 million and implementing major structural reforms at both board and executive levels.

A key milestone has been the establishment of the National Energy Authority (NEA), now tasked with regulatory oversight and energy policy development—freeing PNG Power to focus solely on electricity generation and distribution.

"Energy drives the world. From electricity to water and transport, energy is central to human advancement. We want to ensure 100% reliable, clean energy access to our people—well before our 70th anniversary in 2045," he declared.

The Prime Minister committed to going beyond the current 70% national electrification target, pushing for universal access through decentralised power solutions, private sector partnerships, and provincial leadership. He also delivered a firm message to the public service and SOEs: "If you cannot do the job, leave the job. I have no time to waste. Our people deserve better, and the time for excuses is over."

Energy reform, he emphasised, is central to his government's broader vision of building a K200 billion economy, capable of supporting a growing population of more than 10 million. When he took office, the economy stood at K79 billion. Today, it has reached K120 billion, with projections to exceed K130 billion by year-end.

Reinforcing PNG's reputation for fiscal responsibility, Prime Minister Marape noted that the country has never defaulted on its international debt obligations, including during the global COVID-19 crisis.

"We peaked at 52% debt-to-GDP during COVID, but today we are back to 47%. We continue to honour our debts, our covenants, and our credibility as a borrower," he said. With a landmass larger than Japan, the UK, and New Zealand—and one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world—Prime Minister Marape said that energy solutions must be tailored to the country's geography and decentralised realities.

He reaffirmed the Government's focus on provincial-level energy initiatives, empowering provinces like Morobe, East New Britain, and the Highlands to pursue investor-friendly, locally driven solutions.

"We must stop managing PNG Power like it's 1975. This is 2025. Let private capital in. Let innovation lead. Let's not waste another 20 years."

As PNG looks toward 2045, the Prime Minister invited development partners and investors to join the country's transition to clean, renewable energy, including opportunities in hydrogen, thermal, solar, and hydroelectric power. "This is a country with global potential in clean energy. Let's build a mature, energy-secure, climate-resilient economy together," he concluded.

ADB COMMENDS PNG'S REFORM MOMENTUM, EXPANDS SUPPORT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has reaffirmed its strong commitment to Papua New Guinea's development, praising the Marape-Rosso Government for its sound macroeconomic reforms and announcing a significant scaling up of investments in transport, energy, education, health, and agriculture.

Speaking during the PNG and World Economic Update—a high-level economic briefing chaired by Prime Minister James Marape on April 14—the ADB Country Director Mr Said Zaidansyah described PNG's reform progress as a foundation for building resilience amid growing global uncertainty.

The event, attended by Cabinet ministers, governors, MPs, departmental heads, and major international financial institutions, focused on assessing PNG's economic outlook and guiding spending priorities for sustainable development.

Economic Stability Recognised

ADB Senior Economist Sudyumna Dahal presented a cautious but optimistic outlook for PNG, noting that while global headwinds—such as escalating US-China trade tensions and rising tariffs—may slow growth regionally, Papua New Guinea is on a solid recovery path.

- GDP growth in 2024 has been supported by both resource and non-resource sectors, especially

- mining, agriculture, communications, and hospitality.

- Inflation has declined to its lowest level since 2007, aided by telecommunications price competition and lower betel nut costs.

- The fiscal deficit has fallen from 9% of GDP to just over 3%, with debt levels projected to stabilise and decline.

"These improvements are the direct result of strong macroeconomic management and difficult but necessary reforms," said Mr Zaidansyah. "We congratulate the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Treasurer, and Government for this important progress."

Development Challenges Remain

However, ADB warned that underlying structural barriers still constrain inclusive growth:

- Access to finance remains one of the lowest in the region. Only 17% of PNG's GDP comes from private credit—compared to 86% in the Pacific average and 114% in Fiji.



ADB Country Director Said Zaidansyah. Image from <https://www.adb.org/news/adb-appoints-said-zaidansyah-papua-new-guinea-country-director>

- Over two-thirds of Papua New Guineans remain unbanked, with high lending rates and low deposit rates creating a "financial inclusion gap".

- Education, health, and infrastructure still face major constraints, while power blackouts, law and order,

and business costs remain high.

"As external shocks increase, PNG's internal resilience becomes more important than ever," said Mr Dahal.

"That means fixing energy, expanding access to finance, and improving service delivery."

ADB Expanding Support Across Key Sectors

Mr Zaidansyah outlined the ADB's expanding K6.6 billion (US\$1.74 billion) portfolio, now spanning transport, energy, aviation, education, health, and public sector reform.

1. Transport and Aviation (60% of Portfolio)

ADB is a key partner in delivering the Connect PNG programme:

- Highlands, Momase, Islands and Northern Corridor Road upgrades

- Rural airstrips in East New Britain and Milne Bay

- 20 airports under the Civil Aviation Development Investment Project

- Support for Air Niugini's re-fleeting programme, including runway extensions to accommodate new Airbus aircraft

"We started in the Islands, but now our reach spans the Highlands to the coast, and we are proud to support national connectivity," said Mr Zaidansyah.

2. Energy Sector Reform and Investment

ADB is investing heavily in clean energy and sector reform:

- Hydropower rehabilitation in

Yonki, Gazelle and Port Moresby

- Mini-grids in West New Britain

- A Sustainable Energy Sector Development Programme focused on policy reform, PPL capacity, and transmission upgrades

- Strategic outcomes from the recent National Power Sector Forum hosted in Port Moresby

3. Human Capital: Health and Education

- ADB is boosting investment in healthcare and technical education:

- Support for provincial and district hospitals across multiple provinces

- Upgrades for TVET colleges in Bougainville, Chimbu, Western, Goroka and Port Moresby

- Planned expansion into primary and secondary education beginning in 2026

4. Public Sector Reform and Financial Inclusion

- SOE reform, public sector efficiency, and support for Bank of PNG's refinancing and guarantee facility

- Technical support to help avoid or shorten greylisting by the Financial Action Task Force through AML/CTF compliance improvements

5. Water, Sanitation and Agriculture

- Planned projects with Water PNG to upgrade water supply in Rabaul and Port Moresby

- Re-entry into agriculture after 30 years—partnering with the Department of Agriculture on fresh produce supply chains and sustainable forestry, with support from the Japanese Government

A Partnership Built on Trust

Mr Zaidansyah emphasised that ADB has been a reliable partner to PNG since 1971, even before independence, and continues to evolve in line with PNG's national goals.

"From road corridors to hydropower, hospitals to high schools, we are here for the long term," he said. "Our aim is to help PNG not just grow—but grow fairly, inclusively, and sustainably."

Prime Minister Marape thanked ADB and all partners for standing with Papua New Guinea through both economic recovery and development challenges. "We are rebuilding our country from the ground up—economically, socially, and structurally," the Prime Minister said. "Thank you for believing in our potential."

PM MARAPE COMMENDS CIMC, CALLS FOR BOLD REFORMS IN LAW, GOVERNANCE, AND SOCIETY

Prime Minister James Marape delivered a powerful keynote address on April 2 at the 2025 National Development Forum, hosted by the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC), where he laid out a bold vision for strengthening the rule of law and redefining national governance ahead of Papua New Guinea's 50th year of Independence.

Held at APEC Haus, Port Moresby, under the theme "Strengthening the Rule of Law: A Roadmap for the Future Generation (1975–2025)," the forum brings together government, civil society, development partners, churches, academia, and the private sector for a critical national dialogue on PNG's development trajectory.

Prime Minister Marape opened his remarks by honouring CIMC's tireless work since 1998 in creating a space for meaningful public discourse.

"I want to place on record my deep appreciation to the CIMC for your consistent work since 1998. You represent the voice of all cross-sections of society—government, private sector, churches, civil society. That voice is worth hearing," the Prime Minister said. He recognised that many contributors to CIMC do so voluntarily, with passion and persistence, describing it as "not a full-time paid job for most, but a labour of love for the nation."

With the country preparing to mark 50 years of nationhood on 16 September 2025, Prime Minister Marape emphasised that this is not merely a time for celebration but for reflection and action.

"As we mark our golden jubilee, it is important to look retrospectively—identify our weaknesses, celebrate our successes, and plan bold steps for a secure, unified, and prosperous future," he said.

He linked the forum's timing to this national milestone, urging that the outcomes feed directly into the Government's legislative and policy reform agenda in the lead-up to 2025–2026.

The Prime Minister laid out five reform priorities that he sees as critical to securing the nation's future:

1. Education Reform: Instilling Lawfulness from Early Childhood

Prime Minister Marape highlighted education as the foundation of lawful living and national progress. He stressed the importance of reviewing the curriculum to instil values-based education from early childhood through tertiary levels.

"We must teach our children to respect the law, to be kind, tolerant, and accountable. Let us not adopt foreign worldviews that conflict with our cultural and moral fabric. Education is key to lawful citizenship."

He called on the forum to make concrete recommendations on aligning education with national identity, lawfulness, and productivity.

2. Judicial Independence and Reform: Strengthening the Rule of Law

Reiterating his government's commitment to judicial independence, Prime Minister Marape detailed recent reforms, including the establishment of an Appeals Court, the elevation of the Supreme Court, and enhanced capacity for district and village courts. "We have one of the best Constitutions in the world. It embeds rule of law as a cornerstone of democracy. My government has elevated the judiciary, but more must be done to protect it from political interference and ensure justice is accessible."

He urged CIMC to review how judicial independence and functionality can be entrenched in law and policy.

3. Anti-Corruption: Strengthening ICAC and Integrity Systems

Referring to his government's long-standing promise, Prime Minister Marape affirmed his personal commitment to making the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) fully functional.

"We passed the ICAC law in 2020, and it almost cost me my government. But I made a promise, and I intend to keep it. This forum must help us strengthen ICAC—not for officers to enrich themselves—but to hold the powerful to account."

He also acknowledged efforts to embed anti-corruption leadership within the police, including through

secondments of international officers to restore credibility and capacity.

4. Community Responsibility and Lawful Living

The Prime Minister reminded all citizens of their collective duty to the nation, stressing that keeping the law is the simplest and most powerful act of patriotism. "Keeping the law costs nothing. It's the easiest and best contribution any citizen can make. Don't expect the Government to do everything. Citizens must do their part by simply obeying the law."

He encouraged the forum to define the roles of community, churches, police, and civil society in reinforcing law and order from the ground up.

5. Legislative Modernisation and Digital Transformation

Highlighting that some national laws still date back to the 1950s, Prime Minister Marape urged a modernisation drive across the legislative framework, particularly in light of rapid digital transformation.

"We're living in an ICT-driven world. Our laws must reflect the times—embrace digital courts, biometric IDs, surveillance, and modern penalties. Let's look at Singapore: fines, technology, and strict enforcement have built a world-class society."

He encouraged the forum to make recommendations on how technology can be used to strengthen governance, public service delivery, and law enforcement.

The Prime Minister also acknowledged the continued support of development partners such as the European Union, and reaffirmed the Government's openness to international cooperation, including bringing in external police officers and judges to support fragile sectors. As the forum proceeds over the next two days, Prime Minister Marape pledged full government support for its outcomes and encouraged Cabinet Ministers to attend and engage with recommendations directly.

"Let's not just talk. Let's act. The laws and reforms we shape over the next 12 months will define the next 50 years. My government is ready to work with CIMC and the people of PNG to ensure our nation rises, united and just."

BUBBLES

I was wondering why the baseball kept getting bigger and bigger, and then it hit me.

I can't take my dog to the pond anymore because the ducks keep attacking him. That's what I get for buying a pure bread dog.

I went to the doctor with a suspicious-looking mole. He told me they all look that way and I should have left it in the garden.

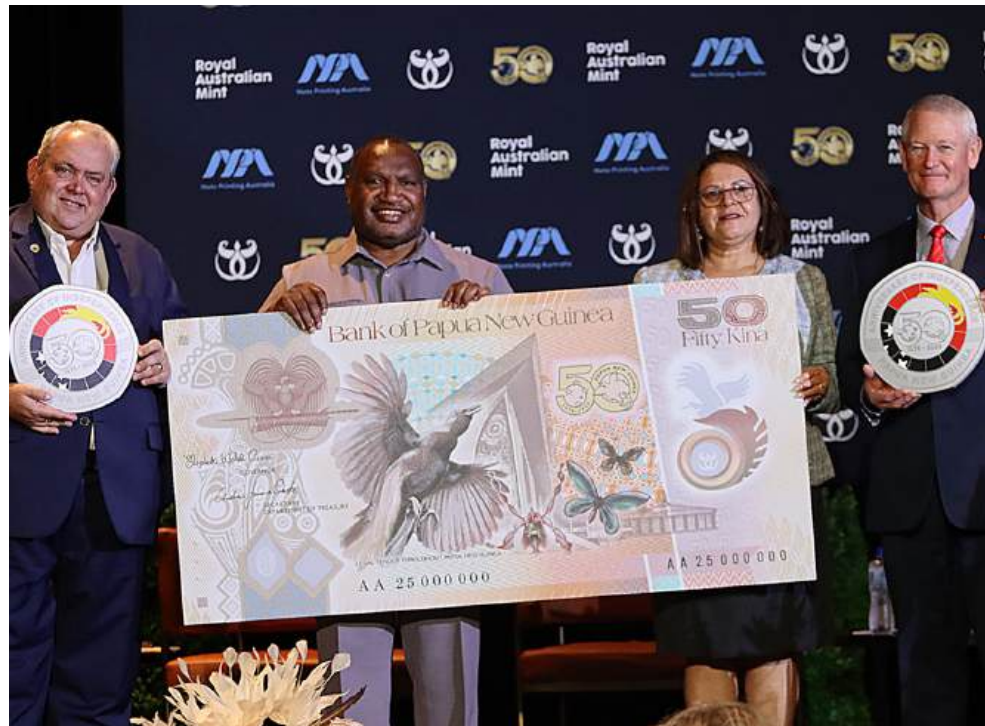
Courtesy of <https://www.rd.com/list/clean-jokes/>

Did you know?

The world's first gardeners are from Papua New Guinea.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15436981>

KINA AND TOEA ARE SYMBOLS OF UNITY - PRIME MINISTER MARAPE



Launching of the commemorative K50 anote and 50 toea coin



Prime Minister James Marape visiting BPNG displays of currencies to celebrate Kina and Toea Day

Prime Minister James Marape and Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG) Governor, Ms. Elizabeth Genia, officially launched the Commemorative Bank Note, Kina (K50), and Coin, Toea (50 toea) on April 28, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Kina and Toea Day and the 50th Anniversary

of the Independence of Papua New Guinea.

In his keynote speech, Prime Minister James Marape stated that the Kina and Toea are a symbol of unity today and will be so into the future. Governor of BPNG Ms. Elizabeth Genia has announced that the K50 notes and 50 toea coin are

currently being printed in Australia by the Central Bank's long-time partners, Note Printing Australia (NPA) and Royal Australian Mint.

Ms. Genia further announced that there will be 20 million commemorative K50 notes and 50 toea coins in circulation by the 28th of August 2025.

ENTRY MEETING ON CONNECT PNG INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME SPECIAL AUDIT



Standing from Left to right is: Barry Egu – Principal Internal Auditor, DPM&NEC; Gibson Holembe – Secretary, DoWH; Dianne Peliokai – Partner Strategy, Risk & Transactions, Deloitte; Herbert Maguma Office Managing Partner, Deloitte; and Tony Manab – Director Economic & Transport Sector, DPM&NEC.

The Government of Papua New Guinea, through the Special Audit Oversight Committee, convened an Audit Entry Meeting on the Connect PNG Infrastructure Programme Special Audit.

The meeting on April 3 brought together key stakeholders, including the National Department of Works and Highways, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Ltd, and North Projects Pty Ltd, to outline the audit framework and ensure a collaborative and transparent

review process.

The meeting addressed key aspects of the audit, including:

1. Purpose and Scope – Establishing the objectives of the special audit and defining its coverage.
2. Timeframes – Setting clear timelines for the audit process.
3. Methodology – Defining the approach and techniques to be used in conducting the audit.
4. Roles and Responsibilities – Clarifying the obligations of all parties involved.

5. Key Risks and Concerns – Identifying potential challenges and mitigation strategies.

6. Documentation and Information Requirements – Outlining the necessary records and data for review.

7. Logistics and Audit Plan – Structuring the operational and site visit arrangements.

8. Communication Protocol – Establishing clear lines of communication among stakeholders.

9. Reporting – Defining the reporting structure and expected deliverables.

As part of this process, the Secretary for the Department of Works and Highways formally handed over the requested documents to Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Ltd and North Projects Pty Ltd, ensuring the timely commencement of the audit review.

The Government commends the Secretary for Works and Highways and his Department for their full cooperation and commitment to the audit process. Their proactive approach underscores the Government's commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance in the implementation of national infrastructure projects.

The Special Audit Oversight Committee, under the leadership of the Acting Chief Secretary, will continue to monitor and support the audit process to ensure its successful completion in line with national governance and integrity objectives.

PM MARAPE RESPONDS TO UNITED STATES TARIFF ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA EXPORTS

Prime Minister James Marape has acknowledged the recent decision by the United States to impose a 10 percent tariff on all Papua New Guinean exports into the American market.

Prime Minister Marape said that the Government had been formally briefed on April 4 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and recognises that the tariff imposition is a decision made under the current U.S. administration's domestic trade priorities.

"As a sovereign nation, we respect the right of the United States Government to make trade policy decisions in accordance with its national interest. We have no issue with this development and do not intend to retaliate with counter tariffs, as others may have done. Instead, we reaffirm our long-standing commitment to free and fair trade," he said.

The Prime Minister said that Papua New

Guinea values its bilateral relationship with the United States, a country that shares many of the same principles of democracy and open markets.

"The U.S. remains one of the world's largest free-market democracies, and Papua New Guinea shares this worldview. We are a democratic nation that believes in rules-based international trade. While we reserve the right to protect our domestic industries when needed, in this instance, we will not respond with hostility or punitive measures," he said. Prime Minister Marape noted that Papua New Guinea's trade footprint is increasingly diversified, with strong and growing markets in Asia, Southeast Asia, the broader Pacific region, Japan, South Korea, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

"Our trading partners in Asia — including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and others — have

treated Papua New Guinea with respect, honour, and fairness.

"These are our closest neighbours and represent proximity markets that continue to offer growing opportunities for our producers.

"We will continue to strengthen our trade relations in Asia and the Pacific, where our produce is welcomed. If the U.S. market becomes more difficult due to this tariff, we will simply redirect our goods to markets where there is mutual respect and no artificial barriers," he said.

The Prime Minister concluded by reiterating PNG's openness to all partners, including the United States, but stated clearly that the country would act in its best interests without compromising its values.

"We remain open for trade, we remain a friend to all, and we will continue to stand by our principles of cooperation, respect, and economic diplomacy."

PRIME MINISTER MARAPE ANNOUNCES TARGETED AGRICULTURAL CREDIT SCHEME

Prime Minister James Marape announced a landmark national agricultural credit scheme aimed at empowering Papua New Guinean farmers, agribusinesses, and provincial governments to drive commercial production and long-term economic growth.

He made the announcement on April 8, after officially opening the National Agriculture Industry Public-Private Sector Partnership Conference in Lae. The conference, jointly organised by the Department of Agriculture and the Consultative Implementation and Monitoring Council (CIMC), brings together key stakeholders from government, industry, and civil society to strengthen partnerships in transforming the agriculture sector into a commercially competitive industry that supports PNG's economic future. Prime Minister Marape described the new credit scheme as part of his government's vision to move the nation away from over-reliance on the extractive sector and toward a productive, agriculture-led economy. "We are rolling out the largest and most strategic targeted credit facility ever seen in this country to support agriculture, food production, and value-added exports," Prime Minister Marape said.

The Prime Minister highlighted that this programme is designed to:

- Replace over K2 billion worth of annual food imports, including rice, dairy, and processed goods.
- Empower one million farming families to generate household income through crops such as coffee, cocoa,

copra, oil palm, balsa, fresh produce, and livestock.

- Create direct and indirect jobs across transport, logistics, extension services, and agro-processing.

- Boost domestic production for both national consumption and export markets in Asia and the Pacific, tapping into over 4 billion consumers just one flight away.

"If one million families each earn K10,000 annually through agriculture, that's K10 billion circulating in our economy every year. This is how we build a sustainable K200 billion economy – not just through oil and gas, but by empowering our people to produce and prosper," he said.

A New Lending Model: Long-Term, Intergenerational Loans

The facility, to be administered in partnership with the National Development Bank and commercial lenders, will offer concessionary, long-term loans to Papua New Guineans who are actively engaged in agriculture – not "paper farmers," the Prime Minister stressed.

"These are not handouts. We are willing to provide loans with long repayment terms – 20 to 40 years – to serious farmers, cooperatives, and provincial governments. These must be intergenerational loans. We want to see agricultural families growing their businesses across generations," he said. Reviving Plantations and Provincial Partnerships

Prime Minister Marape called on provinces with idle or underutilised land to partner with the National

Government and revitalise plantation estates through structured block farming and management models.

"We are revisiting the plantation model. Provinces must take responsibility. We will provide credit, but it must be repaid through revenue generated by productive land use," he said.

The Prime Minister acknowledged past failures in plantation schemes, but noted that with better oversight and provincial accountability, the model can be revived successfully.

National Infrastructure Supporting Production

This credit programme aligns with major investments in Connect PNG, port infrastructure, and rural development, ensuring that production areas are linked to domestic and international markets.

"We are not building ports just for imports. These ports must enable exports. That is the point of infrastructure investment," he emphasised.

Prime Minister Marape stressed that PNG can follow the model of nations like New Zealand, which built a globally competitive economy from a strong agricultural base.

"We don't need to go through every phase of development. With agriculture as our foundation, we can leapfrog to a modern economy. Education, health, ICT, and services all become accessible when we have a productive economic base," he said.

He concluded by reaffirming that this targeted agricultural credit facility is central to building a resilient, inclusive economy, where all citizens participate in wealth creation through the land.

DEPARTMENT OF PRIME MINISTER'S FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION MOVE SOON TO MOVE TO CLOUD DATA STORAGE



The Department of Prime Minister's Finance and Administration officers will officially migrate from storage of IFMS data on a server to Cloud storage via Technology One next month.

GOV'T ASPIRES TO EMPOWER INMATES THROUGH PRISON INDUSTRIES CONCEPT



Prime Minister James Marape inspecting a guard of honour during his visit to the Bomana CS Facility in Port Moresby

In a significant gesture of compassion and commitment to rehabilitation, Prime Minister James Marape on April 21, made an Easter visit to the Bomana Correctional Services.

His visit included an inspection of the CS parade, followed by a presentation of gifts to detainees, aimed at fostering hope and renewal during this festive season.

During his address to the detainees, Prime Minister Marape emphasized the shared human experience of imperfection, stating, "We are all equal. We are all prisoners to sin. There is no

righteous person on earth. However, you have your purpose in the eyes of God Almighty."

This message resonated with the attendees, highlighting the importance of redemption and personal growth.

The Prime Minister reiterated the government's vision to establish vocational centers within correctional institutions as a pathway forward for detainees wishing to further their education.

"In prison, you can be empowered with knowledge, proper morals, improved ethics, and skills. This will enable you to

become better citizens upon return to society."

He introduced the concept of creating a prison industry, allowing inmates to engage in training for various trades such as carpentry, mechanics, and electrical work.

"With their productivity, their sentences can be shortened. We aim to introduce better citizens to society, and as we approach our 50th anniversary, we must contribute to nation-building in every way we can," he said.

Prime Minister Marape also called upon the Public Solicitors' office and the Solicitor General's office to expedite processes related to court wait times, adding, "We are not your enemies, just as you are not our enemies."

He recognized the unique challenges faced by female detainees, particularly those locked up due to domestic violence, assuring them that the government is actively looking into their issues.

In summary, Prime Minister Marape's visit to Bomana Correctional Services was a powerful reminder of the potential for transformation and the importance of compassion within the correctional system.

Through education and vocational training, the government aspires to empower detainees, fostering a renewed sense of hope and purpose.

GOV'T COMMITS TO FULLY EQUIPPING POLICE FORCE TO COMBAT LAWLESSNESS

Prime Minister James Marape has reinforced his government's commitment to rebuilding and strengthening the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) through the provision of essential resources—vehicles, firearms, ammunition, uniforms, and proper accommodation.

Speaking in Port Moresby on April 6, Prime Minister Marape commended Police Minister Hon. Peter Tsiamalili Jr and Police Commissioner David Manning for initiating this vital programme of reform aimed at revitalising policing nationwide.

"When we assumed office in 2019, the police force was under-resourced and ill-equipped. Our officers were left without the basic tools they need—not just firepower, but transport, uniforms, and personnel to enforce the law effectively. The purchase and distribution of new police vehicles is a clear example of the work we have been doing to restore and fully equip our police force. It reflects real progress in a broader national effort," he said.

Prime Minister Marape stressed that

the rebuilding of the police force is a long-term commitment, not a one-off event.

"This process will take three to five years to fully complete. But it is underway, and we are making progress. There are now more police officers than ever before, more arrests being made, and more convictions secured. However, the complexity of crime has also increased—that is why the work is ongoing."

He also acknowledged efforts to clean up and restore discipline within the force.

"More than 500 police personnel have been removed for indiscipline. The Police Commissioner has taken strong action, and this is part of restoring integrity and public confidence in the force."

"The reorganisation and increased efficiency of the police force will take time, but these new vehicles are part of the broader intervention to ensure the RPNGC is fully resourced, fully equipped, and operationally effective."

Prime Minister Marape reaffirmed that his government has committed more resources to police than at any time in

the country's history, and this reflects a consistent and deliberate strategy to strengthen law enforcement and public safety.

"Our goal is to have an effective, disciplined, and professional police force—one that is ready to meet the law-and-order challenges that lie ahead."

The Prime Minister also made a heartfelt appeal to all police personnel as the nation marks 50 years of independence.

"To all police officers: you are the face of our nation at 50. Look within yourselves and rise to the occasion. Strengthen your capabilities, commit to your duties, and uphold the rule of law with pride and purpose. We will support you—but you must deliver."

He further confirmed that the Government remains committed to long-term investment in police housing, infrastructure, and institutional support to improve welfare and professional standards.

"This is a work in progress. But we are serious. We are building a modern, capable police force that can safeguard lives, uphold law and order, and inspire public confidence."

PRIME MINISTER MARAPE REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO AGRICULTURE-LED ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Prime Minister James Marape has reaffirmed agriculture as the cornerstone of Papua New Guinea's future economic growth, urging all stakeholders to rally behind a united national effort to unlock the full potential of the agriculture sector.

Delivering the keynote address at the closing of the National Agriculture Industry Public-Private Sector Partnership Conference on April 11 in Lae, Prime Minister Marape reflected on the journey of his government since taking office in 2019, outlining transformative reforms and ambitious programmes aimed at strengthening agriculture, empowering rural communities, and building a resilient, self-sustaining economy.

"Our people are on the land. They have energy. They have time. And most importantly, they have ownership of the land.

"What they need is opportunity—access to markets, access to finance, infrastructure that works, and a government that walks the talk. That is what we are working to deliver," he said. **Restructuring the Sector for Growth and Accountability**

The Prime Minister said his government took bold steps to restructure the agriculture sector by creating four distinct ministries to manage mainstream agriculture, livestock, oil crops, and coffee. This policy move, he said, was designed to improve focus, enhance leadership accountability, and encourage specialisation.

"This wasn't just about creating jobs for ministers. It was about ensuring leadership across all priority subsectors—so we can produce more, replace imports, and create real export value," he said.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that although policy intent has been clear, administrative delays within implementing agencies such as the Department of Agriculture have hindered timely rollout of key interventions like the **Price Support Scheme and Freight Subsidy Programme**.

"It's not a matter of insufficient funding. It's a matter of building the right delivery structures. We must strengthen implementation capacity so that the benefits reach our farmers," he said.

Investing in Infrastructure to Unlock Agricultural Markets

Prime Minister Marape highlighted the historic investment in infrastructure

under the Connect PNG programme as one of the most significant enablers of agricultural growth. He said strategic investments in roads, ports, and bridges were opening up previously inaccessible areas and bringing markets closer to the people.

"For the first time, we can drive through the Hindenburg Wall and into Telefomin. We are building roads across the Gulf, Hela, and Southern Highlands corridors. We're linking Kikori to Tari, and soon, we'll be able to drive from Lae to Port Moresby.

"The government has also partnered with Australia to upgrade six major ports, including Lae, Port Moresby, Kavieng, Oro, Kimbe, and Vanimo, to accommodate increased agricultural exports.

"If we increase production but cannot move goods, we fail. Infrastructure and production must go hand-in-hand," the Prime Minister emphasised.

Creating Access to Global Markets Through Strategic Diplomacy

Prime Minister Marape described how international diplomacy is being leveraged to open global markets to PNG's agricultural produce.

He highlighted a major breakthrough with China, where PNG now has sanitary and phytosanitary clearance to export a wide range of products, thanks to bilateral agreements signed with President Xi Jinping.

"President Xi told me: 'China is a big ocean. Whatever you produce, we will absorb.' That is the size of the opportunity before us," he said.

The Prime Minister also cited discussions with Singapore's leadership about replacing poultry imports from Brazil with PNG-grown chicken, noting that Asia offers a more proximate and sustainable market for PNG products.

Rolling Out a New Government-Owned Commercial Bank for Farmers

To address persistent barriers to finance in rural areas, the Prime Minister announced the launch of a new National Commercial Bank, evolved from the National Development Bank (NDB). The bank will offer low-interest, long-term credit—up to 40 years—targeted at agriculture, tourism, and rural enterprise development.

Ten branches are already operational, and the Prime Minister called on all provincial governments to co-invest in infrastructure to house bank branches in their regions.

"This bank is yours. It will reach those who are ignored by commercial banks.

It is the government's vehicle to bring credit to the bush. Let us move beyond pilot projects. Let's go full scale," he said.

Incentivising Investment Through Legislative Reform

The Prime Minister revealed that Parliament has passed the 2025 Income Tax Act, replacing the outdated 1959 Act and introducing new tax incentives for rural investments, agriculture, tourism, and downstream processing.

"We now have a modern tax law that works for our rural economy. I believe in lowering taxes and rewarding investment in the productive sectors," Prime Minister Marape stated.

He added that further reforms to tariffs and trade policy are being considered to protect domestic producers and stimulate import substitution.

Security, Governance, and Local Justice Reform

The Prime Minister also shared key law-and-order reforms supporting the rural economy. These include:

- Ramp-up in police recruitment to reach a target of 10,000 officers nationally;
- Increased resourcing for police and law enforcement through internal budget savings;
- Integration of village court magistrates into the national payroll to restore community-level governance.

"For the first time, village court magistrates are on the payroll. Every fortnight, they are paid for administering justice where it is needed most," he said.

Empowering Young People to Lead the Agriculture Revolution

The Prime Minister delivered a passionate appeal to young Papua New Guineans, especially graduates and school leavers, to engage in agriculture—not only for subsistence but as a profitable, entrepreneurial career. He shared stories of local entrepreneurs who started with little more than determination and ended up becoming real estate tycoons and business leaders—thanks to agriculture.

"If they could do it from Grade Three or with just a few toea, so can you. You don't need to wait for a job in an office. The land is your factory," he said.

Acting on Conference Resolutions

In closing, Prime Minister Marape assured delegates that the resolutions adopted during the five-day conference would be taken seriously and acted upon through policy, legislation, and budgetary support.

AGRICULTURE REMAINS PNG GOV'T'S KEY FOCUS



Front Row, second from left: New Britain Palm Oil Ltd Country Manager and Chairman PNG Palm Oil Producers Association Robert Nilkare, Minister for Agriculture John Boito, Prime Minister James Marape, Governor for East New Britain Michael Marum and Secretary for Department of Agriculture and Livestock Dr. Sergei Bang

In a decisive address at the National Agricultural Industry Public-Private Sector Partnership Conference on April 11, Prime Minister James Marape, reaffirmed the Government's commitment to prioritizing agriculture as a cornerstone of national development.

This pivotal gathering underscored the Government's ongoing efforts to enhance agricultural productivity as a means of sustaining economic growth and improving the livelihoods of Papua New Guineans.

Prime Minister Marape highlighted the significance of the agriculture sector, which has been strategically divided into four vital components: the main Agriculture Department, Coffee, Cocoa, and Oil Palm.

This restructuring aims to refine focus and boost the productivity of these subsets, integral to the nation's economic framework.

"For four consecutive years, we have witnessed a growth of four percent in the non-resource sector," the Prime Minister stated.

"This growth is a testament to the

effective harnessing of economic activity and productivity that sustains our people."

The Prime Minister also addressed graduates in attendance, urging them to leverage their education and communal resources to foster agribusiness initiatives.

"With your wealth of knowledge gained from learning institutions, you can utilize your lands and collaborate with your tribal clansmen to drive business success. This is your opportunity to make a profound impact," he said.

Prime Minister Marape committed to taking the insights and outputs from the conference back to his office to form actionable strategies to further advance the agricultural sector.

He referred to the Government's price support program launched in 2020, and emphasized the critical need for an established policy mechanism, particularly in light of six years without a robust agricultural structure from the Agriculture Department.

"How can we progress without an established policy mechanism?" he challenged.

Despite the visible improvements

in infrastructure, the Prime Minister expressed concern over lagging productivity levels.

Encouraging the agricultural community, he implored stakeholders to take full advantage of recent legislative changes, including the new income tax act, which offers reductions in taxes and enhanced incentives and tariff measures.

"The government is also establishing access to Asian markets, particularly China, and we are actively working with bilateral partners to enhance food security," Marape added, highlighting the Administration's efforts to integrate Papua New Guinea's agricultural sector into the global market.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister reiterated his belief in agriculture as a vital driver for the nation's economic future and a key element in enhancing food security and community well-being.

The government remains committed to supporting the agriculture sector and its stakeholders, with a focus on ensuring sustainable growth for generations to come.