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PRESS RELEASE

Consumer Council of Fiji Urges Smart Shopping Ahead of Diwali Celebrations

With Diwali, the festival of lights, swiftly approaching, consumers are advised to exercise caution and make informed choices while indulging in the joy of shopping. Consumers must be mindful of potential pitfalls of impulsive buying and unethical trading practices that often emerge during the Diwali shopping season.

In recent years, Diwali has witnessed a surge in promotions, discounts, and tempting offers, which can sometimes lead consumers into buying products that may not meet their expectations. Ms. Seema Shandil, the Chief Executive Officer of the Consumer Council of Fiji, emphasized the need for vigilance and responsible shopping.

Ms. Shandil pointed out that the euphoria of the festival can sometimes lead to unscrupulous business practices. She stated, "We urge consumers to be vigilant and exercise critical awareness. Traders often resort to false claims, misleading advertising, selling substandard goods at inflated prices, and offering outdated or defective products. It's our responsibility as consumers to be wise and discerning during this festive season."

When conducting a comparative analysis of complaints lodged in the past 3 years, it can be noted that the Council received successive increase in complaints during the Diwali season, indicating the need for heightened awareness and vigilance.

Consumers are encouraged to plan their purchases thoughtfully and adhere to a budget to avoid last-minute, impulse buying. Ms. Shandil further advised, "Don't be swayed by products just because they are on special; rather, make informed choices and buy items that are genuinely needed."

One crucial aspect highlighted by the Consumer Council is the risk of purchasing products close to their expiry date in large quantities. "This can lead to wastage of money," Ms. Shandil explained, underlining the importance of buying products worth their price, not just the cheapest option.

In few incidences recorded last year, consumers purchased the cheapest brand of condensed milk in the market, only to find that it was of inferior quality. The Council CEO emphasized, "This is a classic example demonstrating that the cheapest product may not save you money. It underscores the need for well-thought-out and logical purchasing decisions."

The Council is also reinforcing the importance of keeping receipts as proof of purchase, which is essential in case consumers need to seek redress.

The CCoF's surveillance teams will be on the ground daily throughout major towns and cities to ensure compliance with ethical business practices. Ms. Shandil concluded, "The Council has



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emphasized that it will not hesitate to take appropriate action and continuously push for stringent enforcement actions against traders found engaging in dubious practices that deprive consumers of their rights and hard-earned money."

As the Diwali celebration approaches, the Consumer Council of Fiji urges consumers to shop wisely, be vigilant, and make informed choices, ensuring a festive season filled with joy and value for money.

Ms Seema Shandil

Chief Executive Officer