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PRESS RELEASE

Beware of Scammers Selling Traditional Attire for Eid

With Eid fast approaching, many consumers are turning to online platforms to purchase traditional clothing and accessories. The Consumer Council of Fiji is urging shoppers to exercise caution when making online purchases, as complaints of fraud continue to rise.

Due to the high demand of traditional Indian attire, the Council has observed many fraudulent sellers operating through social media platforms. The modus operandi is often the same, with demands for partial or full deposits upfront, but after making the payment, consumers often find it difficult to get updates on their orders. Some sellers provide vague excuses about shipping delays or stock issues, while others stop responding altogether. In many cases, consumers are blocked from communication entirely. Some victims have reported that only after they threaten legal action, and pressure the sellers, do they receive a partial refund.

One such repeat offender is an online trader operating from Lautoka, whom the Council has dealt with multiple times. Since January 2024, the Council has received **44** complaints against this person, with customers reporting that they paid for items that were never delivered. Despite repeated warnings and multiple referrals to the Fiji Police Force, this business continues to exploit consumers, preying on their trust and excitement during the festive season. Unfortunately, this is just one example—numerous others attempt to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers online. As we celebrate Eid, we want consumers to have a stress-free shopping experience. Being cautious and informed is the best way to protect yourself from online fraud,” added Ms. Shandil.

Consumer Council CEO Seema Shandil emphasizes the importance of caution when shopping online, especially during busy periods like Eid: “With the excitement of Eid preparations, consumers need to be careful, as there are always those looking to exploit the festive rush with scams. However, the responsibility doesn’t rest solely with consumers. Sellers have an obligation to deliver products on time and as advertised,” she said.

Ms. Shandil added that the Council will work closely with the Fiji Police Force and refer such cases for criminal investigation. “If any consumer has faced this issue, we urge you to come forward. It’s important that we take action collectively to hold these traders accountable and prevent others from falling victim,” she said.

The Council continues to monitor online marketplaces and will take necessary action against fraudulent operators. Consumers who encounter scams or suspect unethical practices are

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Consumer Council of Fiji



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Mobile App

encouraged to report them immediately via the National Consumer Helpline at 155 or email complaints@consumersfiji.org.

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