

In this issue...



MRA Annual Press Conference

The Annual Press Conference of the MRA was held on Friday 03 September 2021 at the seat of the MRA Head Quarters, Ehram Court, Port Louis. Mr. Sudhamo Lal, the Director-General, welcomed members of the media and paid a tribute to front liners who risked their lives for the benefit of the community. He made a special mention for MRA officers who worked from home to implement the Self-employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS) and Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS) announced by the government hardly a day after the lockdown in 2020. Customs officers also went the extra mile to enable the clearance of essential and pharmaceutical/medical goods. Thereafter, Mr. Lal made a presentation to members of the media in the presence of the management team of the MRA.

In his presentation, the Director-General of the MRA highlighted various key elements such as the revenue collection by the MRA, e-filing rate, the managing of Progressive Tax & Income Support Systems which reduce Income Inequality, Income Distribution and Tax Payments, Ease of Paying Taxes ranking, Impact of Tourism Sector on MRA Collections and the Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG) whereby an amount of Rs 5,247 million for Contribution Sociale Généralisée has been collected over the nine-month period of 2020-21.



The highlights of the presentation are as follows:

Revenue collection by the MRA

- Rs 89.3 Billion revenue collection for FY 2020/21
- Rs 93.7 Billion revenue collection for FY 2019/20
- Tax Assessments for the year 20/21 was Rs 7.6 billion compared to Rs 1.759 for the year 19/20

e-Filing rate

Returns	e-Filing rate (%) FY 2019/2020
Personal income Tax	99.8
Corporate Tax	99.7
VAT	99.8
Passenger Fee	100
Social Security Contributions	99
Customs	100



Ease of Paying Taxes ranking

Mauritius is now ranked at the 5th position (out of 190 countries) with a score of 94% in the ease of paying taxes indicator, owing to the sustained reforms implemented by the MRA

Contribution Sociale Généralisée

An amount of Rs 5,247 million for Contribution Sociale Généralisée has been collected over the nine-month period of 2020-21.

Money Laundering - Initiatives taken by MRA in the fight against money laundering

AML/CFT Unit has been set up within the Fiscal Investigations Department in February 2020.

The Objectives of the AML/CFT Unit:

- identify, investigate and prosecute tax evasion cases having a money laundering limb
- work in close collaboration with other Law Enforcement Authorities to deter money laundering
- During FY 2020/21, the Unit has referred 18 cases to ICAC for money laundering investigations, having tax evasion as predicate offence
- The tax involved in these cases amounted to Rs 73.4M
- Initiatives taken by MRA in the fight against money laundering
- Information received from the FIU for the period 2018 to 2020 for investigation purposes resulted in the issue assessments to the tune of Rs 34.5M
- Unit working closely with FIU, FSC and Corporate and Business Registration Department for information exchange in suspected cases of tax evasion.



Customs

e-Courier platform

- To cope with the upsurge of online transactions through Postal & Courier Services, platform has been developed
- It provides for electronic submission and processing of assessment for all such consignments

Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC)

- One-stop-shop for cargo clearances
- Will house several border agencies under one roof to reduce dwell time at airport
- The construction of the building started on 15th January 2020 is on-going
- 70 % of work completed
- Expected to be inaugurated in January 2022

Border Control & Enforcement Measures

- Body Worn Camera for Examining Officer
- Full Body X-Ray Scanner at SSRIA Passenger Terminal and at Port (Awaiting Factory Acceptance Test and commissioning)
- Online platform for the control of Precursor Chemicals along the supply chain
- Application for sharing of information on small vessels, boats and yachts at regional level
- Baggage scanner in the Port Area



Seizures made by Customs are highlighted in the table below:

Narcotics	Weight/Quantity	Value (Rs)
Heroin	15,257.81	228,867,150
Synthetic Cannabinoids	57.61	64,451,100
Cocaine	378.58	38,381,100
Cannabis	61 units	191,388
Hashish	2,558.74	172,830
Psychotropic Substances	6 (tabs)	9,000
Cannabis Seeds	4,298.11	6,100
TOTAL		332,078,668

Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS)

	June 2020	June 2021
Employers	14,925	12,725
Employees	270,800	221,730
Amount disbursed	Rs. 7,603M	Rs. 9,083M

Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS)

	June 2020	June 2021
Self employed	195,573	231,052
Amount disbursed	Rs. 2,382M	Rs. 4,301M



Individual Income Tax e-Filing Season 2021

The Individual Income Tax e-filing season 2020-2021 was launched during the MRA Annual Press Conference on Friday 03 September 2021. An individual is required to submit an Income Tax Return where:

- his annual total net income exceeded Rs. 325,000; or
- his annual gross income from business, exceeded Rs. 2 million; or
- tax has been deducted under Pay As You Earn (PAYE) or Tax Deduction at Source (TDS); or
- he has a chargeable income or is subject to Solidarity Levy.

Self-employed individuals who do not fall within the above category are also required to submit an Income Tax Return and may opt to submit a simplified Income Tax Return.



This year, the MRA has introduced the e-Appointment platform. A taxpayer willing to avail himself of the e-Appointment facility needs to reserve a time slot on a particular day, at his convenience, through MRA website: www.mra.mu

On the day of the appointment, the taxpayer will receive an SMS with a WhatsApp link on his mobile. He should tap on the link to start a WhatsApp Video Call with a tax officer of the MRA for the necessary assistance in filing his income tax return.



The e-Appointment replaces last year's e-FITA (electronic Free Income Tax Assistance). Moreover, taxpayers having difficulties in filing their CSG Return may also avail themselves of this facility.

Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey (TSS)

The TSS is an online survey open to all individuals filing their income tax returns electronically. Taxpayers are invited to share their views/suggestions, after they have filed their income tax returns, on how the MRA may further improve the quality of its services and rate our services in the following areas:

- a. Customer Service & Telephony Services
- b. e-Services
- c. Website
- d. Taxpayer Education and Communication
- e. Customs services
- f. Tax enforcement actions; and
- g. Other services.

In order to encourage maximum participation in the survey, taxpayers have the possibility of winning the following three prizes: **Rs 25,000, Rs 15,000 and Rs 10,000.**

The deadline for e-filing is 15 October 2021. Penalties and Interest will be applicable in case of late submission of Income Tax Return and/or late payment of tax.

A new NLTA Office inaugurated at the Custom House



A new sub office of the NLTA was inaugurated on Monday 27 September, 2021 at the Custom House, Mer Rouge by the Hon. Alan Ganoo, Minister of Land Transport and Light Rail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade in the presence of Dr. Koshik Reesaul, Officer-in Charge, National Land Transport Authority (NLTA) and Mr. Sudhamo Lal, Director-General, Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA). The sub office of the NLTA will play a very important role in expediting clearance of motor vehicles at importation. Officers of NLTA based in this office at Custom House will pre-verify and confirm particulars of new and second hand imported vehicles to ensure that they are according to the Road Traffic (Construction and Use of Vehicles) Regulations 2010. The MRA has allocated an office space to accommodate officers of the NLTA who will be posted at the Custom House with a view to reduce the clearance time for motor vehicles and having a better synergy among the different governmental agencies.



This initiative is in line with the recommendation of the World Customs Organization (WCO), to implement a Coordinated Border Management (CBM) program which provides the facility to house all agencies involved in the clearance of controlled goods under one roof. Stakeholders will also be able to conduct all transactions, such as application of permits and authorizations, payment of fees, duty and taxes and clearance of goods, in a single building. This will ultimately result in a more effective service, an optimum use of resources and better connectivity with stakeholders, wider sharing of information and intelligence and systematic application of risk management.

For the financial year 2020/21, the MRA cleared the importation of 9670 new and 7806 second hand vehicles.

The MRA signs an MoU with the AMB



A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) and the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB), represented by its General Manager, Mr. Gowkaran Oree, on 16 September 2021 at the MRA Head Office.

The aim of this MoU is to ensure and promote cooperation, collaboration and assistance between both Institutions. The MoU also makes provision for the sharing of information and collection of fees and charges as per their respective enactments. Both institutions will also be

required to manage and maintain a reliable source of data and evidence for administrative purposes.

The MoU will enable collection of fees and charges leviable by AMB on import and export of Controlled Products and for sharing of information.

The MRA and the AMB have agreed to set up a sub-office within the premises of the MRA, namely at Custom House, Mer Rouge, to enforce in a coordinated manner the enactments relating to importation, exportation and transit of goods. It also aims to control any person in the Customs area, port premises, airport or Freeport zone at the point of entry of controlled goods upon payment of fees.

The British High Commissioner at the Custom House

Her Excellency Charlotte Pierre, British High Commissioner to Mauritius, paid a courtesy call on the Director of Customs, Vivekanand Ramburun, on Thursday 01 September 2021 at the Custom House, Mer Rouge, Port Louis.

The cordial meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss on the Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Support (TABCS) that the British High Commission can potentially consider providing to MRA Customs to enable us to better fulfill our mandates. The following important areas were identified: Risk Management, combating Anti-Money Laundering, smuggling in arms and ammunitions, and intelligence building in counter terrorism.



The MRA launches its official Facebook and LinkedIn Pages

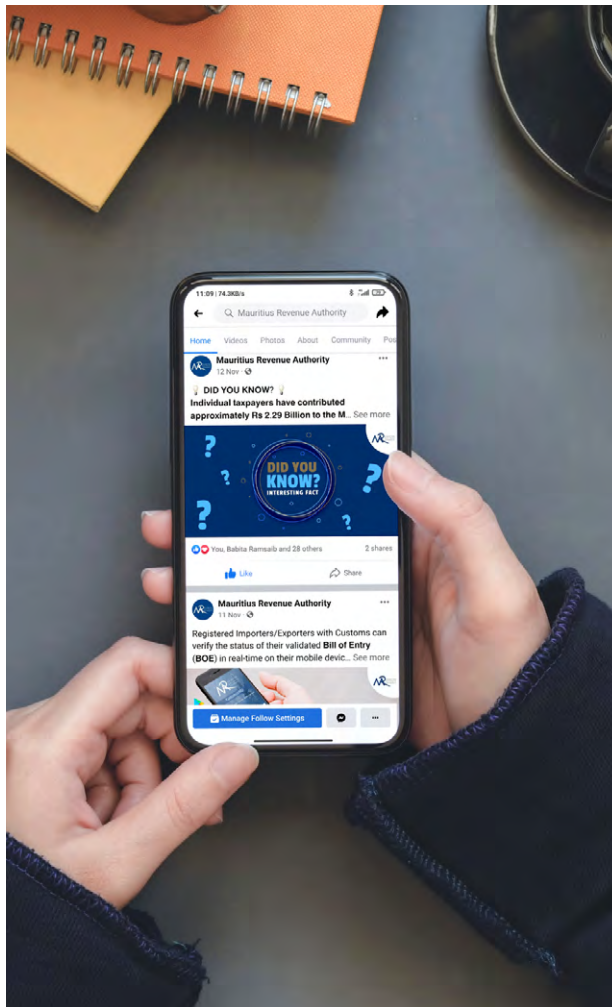


Facebook is playing a major role in the dissemination of information to a wide range of the population, both local and international. Findings from the above reveal that for the period January 2020 to January 2021:

- 89.7% of Mauritians used Facebook; and
- 12.3% use other social media such as YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest etc.

A recent study by the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) demonstrated that 68% of SMEs in Mauritius are using Facebook as their main communication channel. According to a report from NapoleonCat.com, there were roughly 919,000 Facebook users in Mauritius as at December 2020. This figure accounts for almost 72% of the entire population of Mauritius. On the other hand, by the end of 2018 only 26,800 Mauritians had a Twitter account, representing barely 2% of the Mauritian population.

LinkedIn, on the other hand, is the largest business-oriented networking website geared specifically towards professionals. It has over 500 million members, in over 200 countries. LinkedIn will definitely improve the Search Engine Optimization for MRA. It is a highly effective way for professionals to gain visibility on line. It will allow professionals to provide feedback on communiques, press releases and videos being uploaded on the platform.



Seizures made by the MRA

The MRA intercepts a Congolese Drug Swallower at the SSR International Airport

A Congolese passenger, aged 46, was intercepted on Friday, 10 September 2021, at the SSR International Airport by officers of the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS) of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA). The passenger arrived on board the Kenya Airways flight KQ 270 from Nairobi, Kenya. He was questioned by CANS officers while he was at the conveyor belt area. His luggage was scanned and examined. Following a consented body search on the passenger, nothing incriminating was found. However, after intense questioning, the passenger confessed to have swallowed some 50 pellets of drugs.

The passenger was handed over to the Anti-Drug Smuggling Unit (ADSU) for a medical examination. Finally, at the hospital, the Congolese passenger purged a total of 84 pellets of drugs.

Members of the public are reminded that they may report suspected drug cases/ illicit activities to the MRA through the MRA Stop Drug Platform (www.mra.mu) or by calling on the Hotline 8958.

