

MRA collects 1356 pints of blood and launches the Online Platform for the Control of Dangerous Drugs



The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), remitted **1356 pints of blood** to the Blood Transfusion Service during the MRA Blood Donation 2022. To respond to the pressing appeal of the Blood Bank, the MRA, for the first time, organised its annual blood donation on two days. On Wednesday 23rd March 2022, the event took place at MRA offices

located in Port Louis namely: Eham Court, Belfort Tower and Custom House, Mer Rouge. On Friday the 25th of March, a similar exercise was carried out at the SSR International Airport, Plaisance, and the recently inaugurated Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) at Plaine Magnien. A total of **1356** pints of blood were collected, **847** pints on Wednesday the 23rd and **509** pints on Friday the 25th of March.

The event was officially launched by Dr the Honourable Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal, Minister of Health and Wellness on 23rd of March 2022 at Eham Court, Port Louis in the presence of Mr. Lal, Director-General of the MRA, Members of the MRA Board, MRA Management Team, Senior Officials from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, MRA personnel and blood donors.

In his opening address, the Honourable Minister highlighted the importance of blood in the conduct of complex medical and surgical procedures, thereby saving lives and also improving the life expectancy of patients suffering from life-threatening conditions. Dr Jagutpal commended the initiative taken by the MRA, which allows the blood bank to maintain its stock levels. He congratulated stakeholders who have successfully adapted to the pandemic situation and, a concrete example of this adaptation process is the MRA Blood Donation which is carried out over 2 days in 5 sites across the island, he said.

While kick-starting the event, the Honourable Minister also launched an online MRA platform for the control of dangerous drugs and the control of precursor and psychotropic substances. The creation of this system was one of the recommendations of the Commission of Enquiry on Drug Trafficking.

The Online Platform for the Control of Dangerous Drugs is a project spearheaded by the Pharmacy Board and developed by MRA Customs. This electronic platform is a tool that allows relevant authorities to have a centralised database of all transactions of imported/exported precursor chemicals and dangerous drugs and their end users with a view to better control precursor and dangerous drugs in the supply chain. The transactions of all parties involved, from the importer/exporter to retailers, are logged in the system and allow monitoring by enforcement agencies such as the Pharmacy Board, Customs and the

Police through a real time tracking of sales and inventories of all parties involved. This control will prevent any deviations of the sales of precursors, including dangerous chemicals, from their initial purpose to the manufacture of synthetic drugs. The platform will be fully operational within one month. It was launched in the presence of senior officers from the Ministry of Health & Wellness, namely Mr Bohorun, Ag Director of Pharmaceutical Services and Miss Mangatha, Registrar, Pharmacy Board.

In his address, the Director-General of the MRA, iterated that over the years, the initial role of revenue collection by the MRA has been paired with the provision of financial assistance to the needy. And to do so, the MRA endeavours to implement government's policies which contribute to improve the socio-economic condition of certain categories of the population. "The annual Blood Donation demonstrates that we do not only collect revenue but are also at the frontline to intervene in the pressing need of patients who need our help. Along with our regular blood donors, and some new ones every year, the MRA is always there to stand out for this noble cause", he added.

Mr. Lal acknowledged the unflinching support of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Blood Transfusion Service, the Municipality of Port Louis, the Mauritius Police Force among others, to make the Blood Donation event a success. He also thanked the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and the Ministry of Local Government for providing the MRA with green plants to be distributed to blood donors. As at date, the MRA has distributed more than 15000 green plants to blood donors, he underlined.

During the MRA Blood Donation 2020, which was graced by Dr. the Hon Kailesh Singh Jagutpal himself, the MRA offered one Aberrometer and two Multi-Parameter Patient Monitors to the Ministry of Health and Wellness. This year, especially during this pandemic period, Mr. Lal remitted 2,500 face shields to the Ministry. These will no doubt contribute in the safety of a certain number of front liners of the Ministry.

Since its inception in 2006, the MRA has remitted more than **14,000** pints of blood to the Blood Transfusion Service and distributed around **17,000** plants to embellish the Mauritian landscape.