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The MRA remits 1356 pints of blood to the Blood Transfusion Service

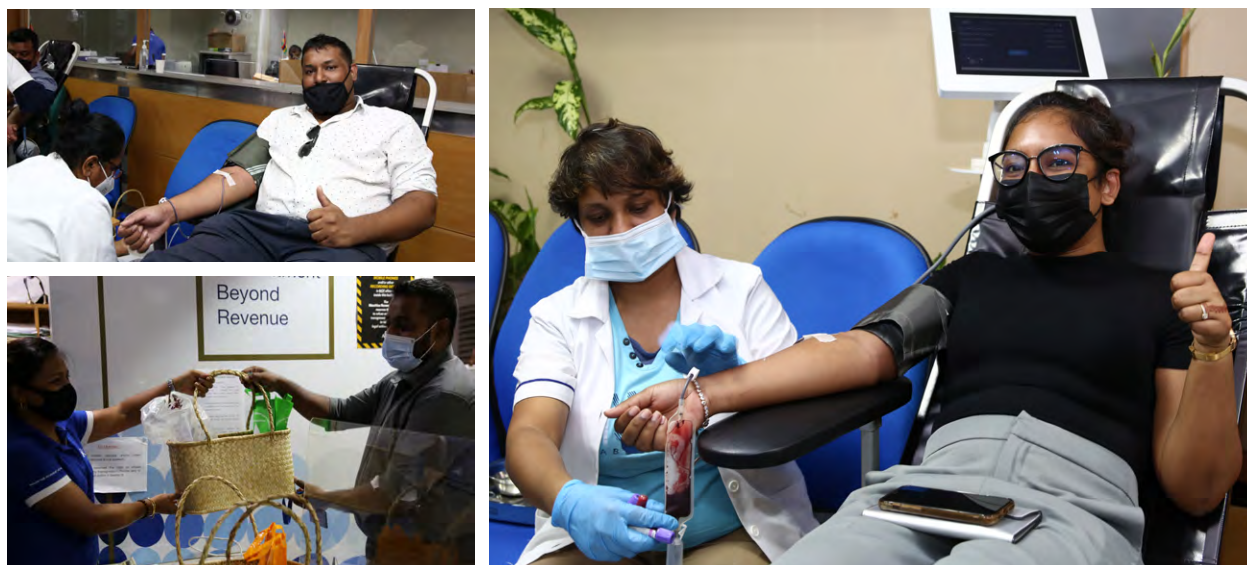
The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) remitted 1356 pints of blood to the Blood Transfusion Service during the MRA Blood Donation 2022. To respond to the pressing appeal of the Blood Bank, the MRA, for the first time, organised its annual blood donation on two days.



On Wednesday 23 March 2022, the event took place at MRA offices located in Port Louis namely: Eham Court, Belfort Tower and Custom House.

On Friday 25 March 2022, 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 23 and 509 pints on Friday 25 March 2022.



The table below provides a breakdown of the number of pints of blood collected by the MRA at each location:

SN	Location	No. of pints collected
1.	MRA Head Office, Eham Court, Port Louis	384
2.	Custom House, Mer Rouge	412
3.	Belfort Tower, Dauphine Street, Port Louis	51
4.	Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC), Plaine Magnien	259
5.	SSR International Airport, Plaisance	250
	Total number of Pints of Blood Collected	1356

The event was officially launched by Dr. the Honourable Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal, Minister of Health and Wellness on 23 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, especially, during the pandemic situation, when the MRA conducted its Blood Donation activity over 2 days in 5 sites across the island.



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 around 17,000 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.



Launching of the Online Platform for the control of Dangerous Drugs

While kick-starting the Blood Donation event on Wednesday 23 March 2022, Dr. the Hon. Kailesh Singh Jagutpal 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.



Gratuity Benefits under the Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund (PRGF)

► Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund (PRGF)



Prior to the implementation of the PRGF, the Employment Rights Act 2008 required an employer to pay a gratuity on retirement, in a lump sum, to a worker who has been in continuous employment for 12 months or more, in the following scenarios:

- when the worker retires voluntarily on or after the age of 60;
- when the worker retires before the age of 60 on grounds of permanent incapacity to perform his work (provided he has 10 year service);
- when the worker retires at the request of the employer; on or after attaining retiring age; or
- on the worker's death, to his heirs.

With these existing provisions, many workers were deprived from an appropriate gratuity on retirement. As remedial action, on 11 October 2019, the government, proclaimed the Worker's Rights Act 2019 with Part VIII relating to PRGF coming into operation on 1 January 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the coming into operation (prescribed date) of the PRGF was postponed to 01 January 2022 with specific provisions for employers already contributing to PRGF.

With the implementation of the PRGF in 2022, the payment of a gratuity to a worker is now done as follows:

- on his retirement with respect to his employment with his current employer and all subsequent employers;
- to the legal heirs of a worker, where death occurs before retirement;
- to a self-employed who has contributed to the PRGF, on his retirement, and
- to the legal heirs of a self-employed where death occurs before retirement.



The main benefit of PRGF includes the payment of accumulated contributions on the employee's PRGF account plus a return on investment to the employee on retirement or to heirs on death occurring before retirement.

As per Section 96(7) of the Workers Right Act 2019, in case where an employer fails to pay to the worker or legal heirs of a worker, any payment due relating to PRGF, the employer shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than 50,000 rupees and not more than 150,000 rupees and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months. This law is administered by the Ministry of Labour.

As from the month of January 2022, employers are required to submit a monthly PRGF return and effect payment in respect to PRGF contributions to the Director-General of the MRA. Both the return and the payment are required to be made electronically, through the MRA website: www.mra.mu on or before the end of the following month.

The MRA alerts its stakeholders of potential scams

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) draws the attention of the public to a **Fake e-Mail** which is being sent to taxpayers on behalf of the MRA bearing the subject: **Income Tax Refund**.

MRA wishes to inform the public that this is a fraudulent email and users are strongly advised to ignore it and **DO NOT RESPOND** on the provided link as it may contain a malware. The MRA wishes to highlight that, at the MRA, taxpayer information is treated with utmost confidentiality.

Should any member of the public have any doubt about the authenticity of an email, letter or telephone communication purportedly from, or on behalf of the MRA and/or its officials, he/she should first call 207 6000 before taking any further action.



Bhojpuri TV Programme on ‘MRA Customs: Ready to meet new challenges’

A studio-based 52-minute TV programme in creole entitled “MRA Customs: Ready to meet new challenges” was broadcast on Friday 25 February 2022 on MBC TV. With a view to increase awareness on the role of Customs, another TV programme of 26-minute with the same subject was produced in Bhojpuri language and was broadcast on 22 March 2022 on MBC TV.

Three Section Heads from the Customs Department of the MRA namely, Mr. Jeewonlall Audit (Trade Facilitation & Customs Operations Section), Mr. Rajendra Gupta Ramnarain (Excise Section) and Mr. Dinathsing Mungla (Custom Anti-Narcotics Section) participated in the TV programme.

The Director-General of the MRA, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, also intervened during the TV programme and stressed on the importance of the Customs Department in the Mauritian economy.

Thanks to technology, 100% electronic declaration and 98% electronic payments are made. Moreover, the acquisition of sniffer dogs has also added value to the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section of the MRA Customs. With the help of these trained sniffer dogs, custom officers have been able to detect and seize illicit drugs and foreign currencies at the port, airport and post offices.

The TV programme can be viewed on **MRA YouTube channel**.



DTA negotiation with Hong Kong



A delegation from the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China ("HKSAR") and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius ("Mauritius") met via video conference on 7, 8 and 10 March 2022 for the second round of negotiations of an Agreement between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the Elimination of Double Taxation with respect to Taxes on Income and the Prevention of Tax Evasion and Avoidance ("the Agreement").



The Mauritian delegation was headed by Mr. Mario Hannelas, Technical Adviser to the Director-General, assisted by Mr. Faisal Oozeerally, Director, Large Taxpayers Dept. The delegation of Hong Kong was led by Mr. CHAN Sze-wai, Benjamin, Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Inland Revenue Department of the Government of the HKSAR.

The negotiations were conducted in a friendly, cooperative and constructive atmosphere of mutual understanding, with frank exchange of information and ideas. Consensus has been reached on all Articles of the Agreement. Both parties are looking forward for the early coming into force of this Agreement which shall be beneficial for both countries.

MRA welcomes the World Bank's team

The Director-General of the MRA, along with its Management team, welcomed representatives from the World Bank Group together with representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development on Thursday, 24 March 2022. The World Bank team comprised of:

- Mr. Paulo Correa (Program Leader)
- Mr. Emre Ozaltin (Program Leader)
- Mr. Mario Negre (Senior Economist)
- Mr. Jonathan Karver (Social Scientist)



The World Bank team mission in Mauritius was to work on the finalisation of the Completion Learning Report (CLR) of the previous Country Partnership Framework (CPF) as well as the preparation of the new CPF and to conduct the Country Private Sector Diagnosis (CPSD) and design a proposal for private sector support services in Mauritius.

The representatives of the World Bank undertook consultations with key players of the private and public sectors of Mauritius, including the MRA.

Education sessions to MRA's stakeholders

Increasing tax literacy plays an active role in shaping a country's tax culture. A potentially fruitful strategy to help taxpayers and, at the same time, raise tax compliance, is to target specific segments of the population and provide them with tailored information.

To this end, the MRA educates the working population on tax issues and equally raises awareness on the importance of taxation among youngsters. In this perspective, for the month of March 2022, MRA resource persons conducted 9 education sessions; 5 with students and 4 with taxpayers as follows:

SN	Date of session	Held at	Topics discussed
1	03 March 2022	St Helena College	Importance of Taxation in our daily life
2	04 March 2022	Riviere des Anguilles State College	Importance of Taxation in our daily life
3	07 March 2022	Adventist College	Importance of Taxation in our daily life
4	08 March 2022	Andersen Mauritius Ltd	Portable Retirement Gratuity Fund (PRGF)
5	09 March 2022	Imperial College	Importance of Taxation in our daily life
6	10 March 2022	Ireland Blyth Ltd (IBL)	PRGF
7	16 March 2022	Swami Vivekananda SSS	Importance of Taxation in our daily life
8	23 March 2022	Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants (MIPA)	PRGF
9	24 March 2022	National Cooperative College	Pay As You Earn (PAYE) & Contribution Sociale Généralisée (CSG)



The MRA hosts a training on Physical Security of Port Infrastructure

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) hosted a training on Physical Security of Port Infrastructure from 07 to 11 March 2022 at the Training Academy, Custom House, Mer Rouge.

This training is one amongst a series of onsite capacity building initiatives held in line with the Port Security Project. The training was funded by the European Union (EU) and organised in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC).



The training culminated with an Award of Certificates Ceremony on Friday 11 March 2022. His Excellency Vincent Degert, Ambassador/Head of Mission, EU graced the event as Chief Guest.