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Presentation of MRA Annual Report to the Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development

The Director-General of the Mauritius Revenue Authority, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, remitted a copy of MRA's Annual report 2019/20 to Dr. the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development on Tuesday, 20 July 2021.



The Report was submitted in accordance with Section 9 of the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act, which regulates the accounts and audit of statutory bodies.

The Annual Report consists of, among others:

- a. the audited financial statements for the 12-month period ended 30 June 2020;
- b. a Corporate Governance report in accordance with the National Code of Corporate Governance;
- c. a "Gender Policy" Statement;
- d. a plan to implement the recommendations made by the Director of Audit; and,
- e. a dedicated chapter on the "Way Forward".

In the report, it highlighted the responsibilities that the Government had entrusted to the MRA during the pandemic period. The latter has played a pivotal role in the distribution of income support to workers and self-employed individuals. The choice of the MRA as the agency to implement the financial support was clearly driven by the ability of the institution to meet the desired objectives on how these financial assistance programmes were to be delivered.

The MRA had put in place a pre and post lockdown contingency plan. It included the Work-from-Home, the online assistance given to stakeholders, the different trainings carried out by Zoom and many others. The key achievements of the MRA during the financial year under review highlighted the arrears collection of Rs. 1,728 million from tax assessments, 64,583 new taxpayers have registered under the income tax and 1,642 under VAT, the e-filing of major taxes such as PAYE and Corporate Income Tax. The e-payment of the MRA taxes has reached an unprecedented 96% of total MRA collections, the 88% of individual income tax refunds were made within ten days, Rs. 552 million worth of narcotics has been seized and 48 online Auction Sales has been held, thus yielding some Rs. 20 million to the coffers.

The next Annual Report 2020/21 is expected to be released in May 2022.

Enlistment of Trainee Customs Officers

The Customs Department of the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) has various challenges to face, including the reinforcement of the combat against drug trafficking, money laundering, promoting further trade facilitation and consolidating border security, amongst others. Customs Officers have a key front-line role in protecting and enhancing the interests of Mauritius by managing security and community risks associated with the flow of people and goods as well as collecting customs and excise revenue.

In order to be responsive to the challenges of the 21st century and to strengthen the resource capacity in Customs, sixty-six (66) Trainee Customs Officers (TCOI) were enlisted on 12 July 2021. Undoubtedly, with additional manpower, the Customs Department will be better equipped to grapple with the challenges.



These 66 trainees have been enlisted following a rigorous selection exercise out of 3350 applications received.

As soon as they were enlisted, the trainees underwent a one-week induction course, following which they have been enrolled on a one-year training program on Customs Legislations and Procedures which consist of both in-class and on-the-job training. This program introduces the trainees to the customs business environment and train them in areas such as Border Legislation and Customs Powers, Offences, Searching Baggage, Goods and People, Drug Identification, Money Laundering, Customs Trilogy (Valuation, Tariff and Rules of Origin) amongst others. They will also be mentored by experienced customs officers. Continuous assessments will be held to test the knowledge of the trainees, coupled with the submission of a custom-based project.

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is committed to enhance the knowledge of the trainees, harness their creativity, develop their skills and inculcate the correct attitude in them to becoming efficient and competent customs officers.

The MRA Training Academy enjoys a safe learning environment for the trainees, taking into consideration the current Covid-19 context and strict adherence to the health protocols.



Awareness campaigns organized by MRA

i. Payment of Government Subsidy on essential goods (GSOG) to eligible traders

Following the promulgation of the Consumer Protection (Maximum Price of Essential Goods) Regulations 2021, the MRA has been entrusted with the responsibility to carry-out the payment of subsidy on certain essential goods to eligible traders.



Under this measure eligible traders shall be any registered/licensed importer, manufacturer, wholesaler or distributor of the essential goods, who sells those goods directly to a retailer, any registered/licensed importer or manufacturer who also holds a Retailer License and sells the essential goods directly to members of the general public and any licensed retailer who still has in his possession a remaining stock of essential goods.

At the time of registration, the eligible traders shall also be required to provide the details of their unsold stock in their possession on 12 July 2021 of essential goods.

Furthermore, to benefit from the payment of the subsidy, registered eligible traders shall be required to submit their application ONLINE through MRA website.

With a view to further sensitizing the public, two TV programmes in Creole and Bhojpuri respectively were produced and broadcast on MBC TV on Wednesday, 21 July 2021. Mr. Jeewonlall Audit, Section Head, and Mr. Jagdishsingh Nundoo, Team Leader, Customs Department participated in the said programmes. In the same vein, MRA also issued a communiqué on 15 July entitled "Payment of Government subsidy on Essential Goods (GSOG) to eligible traders". News reports on the subsidy scheme were also broadcast in radio and TV news bulletins.

ii. Extension of GWAS and SEAS for the month of July 2021

- ▶ Self-Employed Assistance Scheme
- ▶ Government Wage Assistance Scheme



The Government of the Republic of Mauritius extended the Government Wage Assistance Scheme (GWAS) and the Self-Employed Assistance Scheme (SEAS) in the Tourism sector for the month of July 2021.

The beneficiaries of this financial assistance are mainly those operating in the tourism sector. Eligible applicants are entitled to a full month allowance for July 2021. There are also other specific sectors such as professional sports, horse racing bookmakers (outlets), casinos and gaming houses, theatres and cinema halls, nightclubs licensed by the Tourism Authority and not allowed to operate during the month of July 2021.

As at date, the MRA has disbursed a total of **Rs. 17,588,441,346.86**, which has been paid to **16,883 employers** to enable them to make the payment of basic salaries to **279,274 employees** under GWAS. Under SEAS, **Rs. 6,735,424,741** has been paid to **261,945 individuals** as at July 2021.

Mauritius Toastmasters Club Conference 2021



The NewGen Toastmasters Club, in collaboration with other clubs around Mauritius, organised the Mauritius Toastmasters Club Conference (MTCC) 2021 virtually on 10 July 2021. This competition is awaited with much eagerness by all members annually, as a platform to flaunt about their acquired public speaking skills in a congenial though cut-throat way.

During the MTCC 2021, preliminaries were held prior to the finale. Finalists were evaluated on three different categories namely Prepared Speech (speaker presents a 7-minute speech on any topic), Table Topics (provide a maximum of 2-minute impromptu reply to a question on any subject matter) and Evaluation (contestant actively listen to a test speaker and prepare his/her own evaluation of the speech by praising as well as providing constructive criticism using the Commend-Recommend-Summarize (CRS) approach.

Three officers from the MRA took part in the competition, namely

1. Ms. Parvatee Ghoorah, Customs Officer 1 in the Prepared Speech;
2. Mrs. Vashuda Degnarain, Team Leader in the Table Topics; and
3. Ms. Oume Pokeerbux, Psychologist in the Evaluation.

Mrs. Degnarain won the 1st place and Ms. Pokeerbux, the 2nd place in the preliminaries and participated in the finale. There were 18 contestants in the final (6 contestants per contest).

During the Conference, Ms. Pokeerbux was the 2nd runner up in the Evaluation segment. The winner was Ms. D. Bundhoo from Impact Leaders Toastmasters and the 1st runner up was Mr. D. N. Venkatakistnen from NewGen Toastmasters.

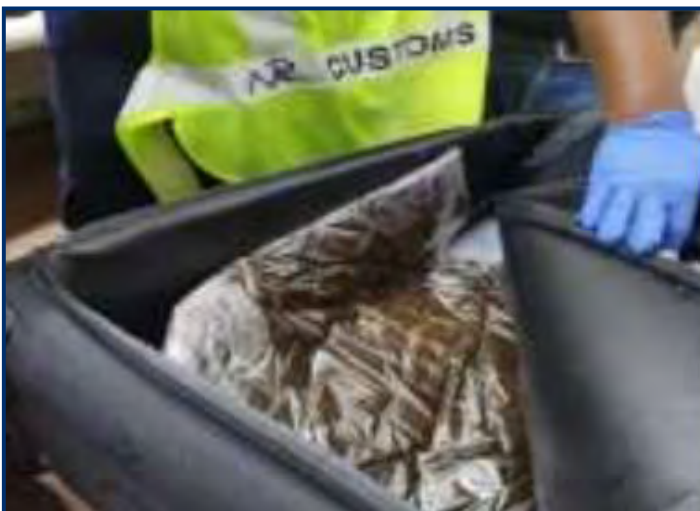
Seizures made by the MRA in July 2021

In its battle against drug trafficking and prevention of illicit products from entering the Mauritian territory, the MRA customs made the following seizures:

- 5,413 leaflets of "Roll-your-Own" Cigarette Paper at a licensed premise on Saturday, 24 July 2021.
- 1.36 Kg of Heroin worth around Rs 20,400,000 on Monday, 26 July 2021. The drug was seized at SSR International Airport during an aircraft search operation, jointly organized by MRA Customs and ADSU, on Air Mauritius Cargo Flight MK852 of 26 July 2021 from Johannesburg, South Africa.
- 1.884 kilograms of Hashish worth Rs 5,652,000 at a Courier Service on Monday, 26 July 2021. The drug arrived from Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris, on Flight MK 015 of Air Mauritius on 25 July 2021.
- 55.3 grams of Methamphetamine (MDMA) worth about Rs 829,500, and twenty 'Hemp Gummy Bears' at the Parcel Post Office on Wednesday, 28 July 2021.



1.36 Kg of Heroin worth around Rs 20,400,000



1.884 kilograms of Hashish worth Rs 5,652,000



MDMA worth about Rs 829,500



STOP DRUGS





e-PAYMENT OF TAXES

Services redefined

Register yourself for the
DIRECT DEBIT facility

HOW?

Download a
PLACH DIRECT DEBIT MANDATE form
from MRA website: www.mra.mu

Print a copy and
fill-in the required information.

Send a signed copy of the form to the
head office of the MRA,
Ehram Court, Port Louis.

For additional information, visit MRA website or
phone MRA helpdesk on 207 6000.

