

NOVEMBER 2024



"
Work
is
worship
"

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LA SANTÉ AT
MRA

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EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear Readers,

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) exemplifies a forward-thinking approach by prioritizing taxpayer feedback in its continuous service enhancement. The Taxpayer Satisfaction Survey 2024, which garnered over 23,000 comments, highlights MRA's commitment to incorporating public views into its operational framework. By carefully analysing these insights and implementing necessary changes, MRA not only promotes accountability but also encourages a culture of engagement with taxpayers, whom we regard as partners in progress.

The feedback from taxpayers was positive: 93% reported that financial allowances are paid on time, another 93% agree that MRA administers the tax system fairly, and 81% believe that Customs' efforts against drug trafficking are effective. This success is further evident in the drug seizures at the airport and through courier services. This was made possible by MRA's dedicated team, advanced scanning technology, K-9 sniffer dogs, and collaboration with enforcement agencies.

Public involvement remains crucial in the fight against drug-related issues. MRA strongly encourages citizens to report any suspicious activities anonymously through MRA's Stop Drug Platform at www.mra.mu or by calling the MRA Hotline at 8958.

Additionally, this month, MRA held its Annual Prayer, which emphasizes the importance of integrity, honesty, and ethical behaviour within the organization. This gathering of MRA staff, stakeholders, and members of the public serves as a powerful reminder of the core values that drive MRA's operations. As the Director-General of MRA aptly stated, "Work is worship." Incorporating prayer into the workplace promotes a sense of purpose and reinforces our commitment to integrity, helping to create a positive and ethical work environment aligned with our values.

Sincerely,

Editorial team

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MRA ANNUAL PRAYER

MR. M. SUDHAMO LAL: "WORK IS WORSHIP"

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) incorporates annual prayers in its yearly agenda, namely, including Prayer at Shri Kannanur Mariamen Kovil, Albion Dock and the St. Matthew's Day celebration at the St. Louis Cathedral. These events undoubtedly strengthen our unity as MRA family.

The Annual Prayer at the Shri Kannanur Mariamen Kovil was organised on November 7, 2024. The celebration was highly colourful with the architecture of the Kovil blending itself with the mantras of the Iyer, the bhajans and kirtans by MRA staff, the traditional attire of the devotees and the taste of the delicacies served at the end.

In his keynote address, Mr. M. Sudhamo Lal, G.O.S.K, C.S.K, Director-General of the MRA, articulated a profound message, stating, "Work is worship." He underscored the importance of "patience and perseverance" in our endeavours at MRA. He highlighted that *"whether we are addressing taxpayers who have under-declared their income or enforcing penalties for late submissions, it is imperative that we approach our tasks with calmness, focus, patience, and confidence."*



Mr. Lal elaborated on the notion of long-term progress by reflecting on MRA's evolution over the past decade: *"It has taken us over a decade to establish MRA as the respected institution it is today. By exercising patience and perseverance, we can achieve remarkable success in our mission."*

Speaking about the Employee Engagement Survey conducted by the Human Resources and Training Department, Mr. Lal shared some insights: "98% of our staff take pride in aligning with the mission, vision, and values of MRA, and a similar percentage express pride in their contributions to the organization." He noted that 83% of participants received meaningful feedback, which significantly contributes to their professional skill development.

Mr. Vivekanand Ramburun, Director of the MRA Customs Department, eloquently emphasized the deep connection between good deeds and the principle of karma in the workplace. He underscored that ethical actions and positive contributions are not just essential for fostering a harmonious and productive environment but also serve to yield beneficial outcomes for both individuals and the organization as a whole. By practicing integrity and kindness, he argued, employees cultivate a culture that enhances teamwork, nurtures mutual respect, and ultimately paves the way for collective success.



Mr. Ramburun encouraged everyone to embrace this philosophy, believing that such an approach would strengthen the workplace and ensure long-term positive results for all.

Aya Araiven shared insights from Skanda Puranam Kanda Shashthi highlighting the invocation of Vel Muruga and the powerful energy He represents. He spoke about the six forces of Vel Shakti, encouraging everyone to harness these energies to work diligently and achieve success. The ceremony culminated with Mangal Aarti, followed by Maha Prashaad.



MRA expresses its gratitude to the organizing team for their dedication in the success of the event.







CARAVANE DE LA SANTÉ AT MRA

A SUCCESSFUL HEALTH INITIATIVE

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, successfully organized the Caravane de la Santé from October 24 to November 25, 2024. This initiative reached a total of 537 MRA staff members, providing essential health services and raising awareness about preventive care. Notably, 234 women took part in breast and cervical cancer screenings, highlighting the focus on promoting women's health and early detection. The collaboration between MRA and the Ministry of Health exemplified a strong commitment to the well-being of staff, contributing to a healthier and more informed workforce.

The medical screenings took place at several key locations: Integrated Customs Clearance Centre (ICCC) on 24 and 25 October, Custom House on 19 and 20 November, and Eham Court on 21, 22, and 25 November.

The Caravane de la Santé provided employees with a variety of health screenings and wellness services, aimed at early detection and promoting healthier lifestyles. Among the tests offered were:

- **Random Blood Sugar Testing**
- **HbA1c Testing**
- **Vision Tests**
- **Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening**
- **Counseling by a Doctor**
- **Balanced Meal Exposition**

In addition to these well-established tests, this year's initiative introduced two new tests to enhance the health assessments provided:

1. **Bioimpedance Analysis:** A technique used to measure body composition, helping participants understand their body fat percentage, muscle mass, and overall health.
2. **Cardiography Test:** A new, AI-based heart test that uses artificial intelligence to analyse heart function, providing an advanced and accurate assessment of cardiovascular health.

The success of the Caravane de la Santé was further reinforced by the personal involvement of the Director-General, Mr. Sudhamo Lal, who actively participated in the health tests offered. His participation highlighted the importance of leading by example and underscored the organisation's commitment to prioritising employee health at all levels.

The Caravane de la Santé was a resounding success, with MRA staff embracing this opportunity to monitor their health and engage with expert healthcare services. With 537 employees participating and a strong turnout for the cancer screenings, the initiative demonstrated the growing awareness and commitment to health within MRA. The event not only provided valuable health insights but also reflected MRA's ongoing commitment to creating a healthy and productive workforce.

Moving forward, MRA remains dedicated to organising more such initiatives to foster a culture of health, wellness, and employee engagement.



CARAVANE DE LA SANTÉ AT MRA: A SUCCESSFUL HEALTH INITIATIVE



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES

A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PAYMENTS FOR ALLOWANCES

The Government of Mauritius has entrusted the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) the task of implementing various Financial Assistance Schemes designed to support citizens of the Republic of Mauritius. In line with the nation's commitment to digitalization, applications are submitted online, streamlining the process for applicants and enhancing efficiency.

The payments of various allowances are well-structured to provide timely support to those in need, reflecting MRA's sustained commitment to social welfare and upholding economic stability. By now:

Payments for financial assistance amounting to:

- Rs. 109.85M have been paid to 3,500 employers for Salary Compensation 2024; and
- Rs. 75.40M have been paid to 2,659 employers under the Minimum Wage Allowance 2024.

Comprehensive information regarding eligibility criteria, application procedures, and additional resources, such as explanatory videos and technical journals, guides, are available on [MRA website](#).

- Rs. 798.52M have been paid to 349,200 individuals under the CSG income allowance.



- Rs. 97.82M have been paid to 32,992 children under the CSG Child Allowance.



- Rs. 40.02M have been paid to 2,001 youth under the Independence Allowance.



- Rs. 184.59M have been paid to 74,000 children under the School Allowance.



- Rs. 118.62M have been paid to 1,986 employers under Prime à l'Emploi.



- Rs. 11.65M have been paid to 89 entities regarding subsidy to bakeries.



- Rs. 4.02M have been paid to 227 business operators following increase in price of Diesel.



- Rs. 36.25M have been paid to 32,041 individuals under the Home Loan Relief Scheme.



- Rs. 24.56M have been paid to 49,473 individuals under the "Revenue Minimum Garantie" Allowance.



- Rs. 4.35M have been paid to 1,451 expecting mothers under the Pregnancy Care Allowance.



- Rs. 13.28M have been paid to 3,886 mothers under the Maternity Allowance.



INTERNATIONAL TAXATION AND COLLABORATION

MR. MAMADE FAISAL OOZEERALLY PARTICIPATES IN ATAF EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION CONFERENCE

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA), represented by Mr. Mamade Faisal Oozeerally, Director of the Large Taxpayer Department (LTD), participated in the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) Exchange of Information (EOI) Conference held from 16 to 18 October 2024 in Johannesburg. This event brought together representatives from various African nations to engage in meaningful discussions on the proposed EOI Strategy for Africa. The conference underscored the importance of shaping EOI initiatives to ensure they are advantageous for African countries, rather than simply serving as compliance measures for international tax standards. The discussions emphasized key focus areas that aim to optimize EOI processes, promoting fairer tax practices and enhancing cooperation among African nations.



Mr. Mamade Faisal Oozeerally,
Director,
Large Taxpayer
Department (LTD)

A highlight for the Mauritius Revenue Authority was Mr. Oozeerally's role as a panellist in a session dedicated to the assistance in the recovery of cross-border tax claims. His insights contributed valuable perspectives on effective strategies for reclaiming lost revenue across borders (foregone revenue). This initiative demonstrates that MRA is dedicated to continuing its role in promoting sustainable tax practices, ultimately striving for a more equitable tax landscape across the continent.

EOI

The Exchange of Information (EOI) for tax purposes refers to the process through which countries share tax-related information with one another to enhance tax compliance and combat tax evasion and avoidance. This mechanism enables tax authorities to obtain relevant financial

data about individuals and entities that may be attempting to hide assets or income in offshore accounts or jurisdictions.

EOI is facilitated through tax treaties, agreements, or arrangements between countries, often based on standards set by international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These agreements may include provisions for automatic exchange of information, where countries systematically exchange specified taxpayer information on a regular basis, or upon request, where one country can request information from another based on specific inquiries. The Mauritius Revenue Authority actively collaborates in these international information exchange initiatives to enhance tax compliance and transparency.

By improving transparency and increasing the flow of information, EOI aims to ensure that taxpayers meet their obligations, thereby reducing opportunities for cross-border tax evasion and avoidance. This contributes to a fairer tax system and helps governments secure the revenue necessary for public services and development.

Lost revenue across borders

Lost revenue across borders refers to the financial losses incurred by businesses and governments when economic activities are hindered by international barriers, such as tariffs, trade restrictions, and regulatory discrepancies. This arises when companies face challenges in accessing foreign markets, resulting in decreased sales opportunities and hindered growth potential.

Additionally, lost revenue can stem from the inability to efficiently distribute goods and services across borders, further exacerbated by political instability or trade disputes. This not only affects multinational corporations but also small and medium-sized enterprises looking to expand their reach. The cumulative impact of these factors contributes to a significant economic burden, hindering innovation and limiting the overall competitiveness of affected industries on the global stage.

SPORTS

MRA SWIMMERS SECURE 14 MEDALS IN THE FMSC ANNUAL SWIMMING COMPETITION 2024

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) bagged fourteen medals at the Fédération Mauricienne des Sports Corporatifs (FMSC) Annual Swimming Competition, which took place on Sunday, 24 November 2024, at the Serge Alfred Swimming Pool in Beau Bassin. A total of nine MRA staff members participated in the event, showcasing their skills across various swimming disciplines. The competition featured several swimming styles, including breaststroke, backstroke, butterfly, freestyle, and relay events, with race distances ranging from 50m to 100m.

MRA swimmers put forth exceptional effort, competing against highly skilled athletes from other organizations, such as Swan, Absa Bank, and Airports of Mauritius Co Ltd. (AML), among others. Their outstanding performance earned the MRA 14 medals, adding to the Authority’s growing legacy in corporate sports.

The achievements are as follows:

SN	Name	Surname	Category	Results
1	Mrs. Purnima Devi	BALGOBIN-DABYSING	D2	• 50m Free style- Silver Medal • Mixed Relay- Silver Medal
2	Mr. Robbie Nashwin	BANSROPUN	H2	• 50m Freestyle- Gold Medal • 100m Freestyle - Silver Medal • Mixed Relay- Silver Medal
3	Mr. Prameshsingh	BISSONAUTH	H2	• 50m Breaststroke- Bronze Medal
4	Mr. Mohammad Aijaaz	CURRIMBUCUS	H2	• 100m Freestyle- Bronze Medal
5	Mr. Devkumar	MUNGROOSING	H3	• 50m Freestyle- Silver medal • 50m Breaststroke- Bronze medal • 50m Backstroke- Silver medal • Mixed Relay- Silver Medal
6	Ms. Zaafirah	Owadally	D1	• 50m free style- Bronze medal • 50m Backstroke- Silver medal • Mixed Relay- Silver Medal



MRA ANNUAL FOOTBALL FESTIVAL AND WELLNESS PROGRAMME

BATER BOULE: CHAMPION FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR

For the third consecutive year, “Bater Boule” was crowned Champion, and the ‘Gypsy Rover’ from the Veteran Team was the winner.

The prestigious Best Player Award was once again presented to Mr. Niven Vadivel Ramasawmy, whose performance was exceptional.

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) organized its Annual Football Festival and Wellness Programme on Saturday, November 30, 2024, at the Gymkhana Sports Ground in Vacoas. The event aimed to promote fitness, camaraderie, and team spirit among participants while having attracted around 300 attendees, including MRA staff and football fans.

The 1st Runner-Up and 2nd Runner-Up teams were “Hasta Manana” and “Hold My Ball FC,” respectively.

The Best Fair Play Team award went to “Armada,” and a Special Award was presented to “Gentlemen FC.” The participating teams included Romeo FC, Hasta Manana, Gentlemen FC, Armada, AC Milan 90s, Hold My Ball FC, Bater Boule, Gypsy Rover (Veteran Team), and Golden Vikings (Veteran Team). A total of nine teams participated in this year’s event, showcasing an example of team spirit, skills, and sportsmanship.

The competition was divided into several categories, with two teams from the veteran category. The veteran match, described as a “Gala Match,” was a major highlight and earned high praise for its entertaining and competitive nature, capturing the attention of all attendees.

MRA extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the players, supporters, and partners who made it a success.



Bater Boule Football Team



'Gypsy Rover' Veteran Team



Hasta Manana Football Team



Hold My Ball Football Team



Mr. Niven Ramasawmy awarded Best Player

BORDER PROTECTION

MRA'S SUSTAINED FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS



In line with one of its core mandates to safeguard the nation's borders, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is ramping up its efforts to enhance border security and combat the illegal drug trade. MRA's strategy is multifaceted, leveraging a combination of highly trained personnel, sniffer dogs, camera surveillance systems, advanced scanning technology, and close collaboration with law enforcement agencies. This robust, coordinated approach ensures the effective detection and interception of illicit drugs, reinforcing MRA's commitment to protecting the country's security and public health.

Cannabis worth Rs 23,628,000

On November 1, 2024, customs officers made a noteworthy seizure of 19.69 kg of compressed cannabis, valued at approximately Rs 23,628,000. The contraband was discovered as a 58-year-old British national arrived on Emirates Flight EK 703 from Dubai.



Officers from the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS) intercepted the passenger utilizing established risk profiles while he attempted to exit through the Green Channel. Upon scanning the passenger's luggage, officials noted irregularities that warranted further inspection. This led to a detailed examination and questioning at the customs office. Inside the luggage, officers uncovered thirty-two sealed plastic sachets containing a dry leafy substance, which tested positive for cannabis through a presumptive field test. MRA's trained K9, Scarlet, confirmed the presence of the illegal substance during her search.

Seizure of Hashish valued at Rs 30 M



While scanning a registered piece of incoming luggage, scanning images indicated abnormalities. When the passenger

In another operation on November 4, 2024, MRA seized 6 kg of hashish worth around Rs 30 Million, from a male French national at the same airport.

was brought in for questioning, he claimed the luggage did not belong to him and was associated with another individual who had already departed. However, further investigation revealed that the luggage had indeed been registered under the passenger's name. Officers were compelled to forcibly open the suitcase in his presence. Concealed under the zipper, they discovered three rectangular packages wrapped in cellophane. One of the packages was found to contain a substance that was tested positive for being a dangerous drug.

Hashish worth over Rs 53 M

On November 10, 2024, MRA seized over 10 kg of hashish valued at more than Rs 53 million from a British male passenger at SSR International Airport. The passenger was profiled and intercepted, based on established risk profiles, by Officers of the Customs Anti-Narcotics Section (CANS), while he was leaving Customs through the Green Channel. During a luggage scan, abnormalities appeared in his bags, prompting further inspection and questioning. Officers discovered ten parcels containing rectangular bars of a substance suspected to be hashish. A preliminary field test confirmed it was cannabis, and a K9 sniffer dog named Ruby also indicated the presence of drugs in the exhibits.



These drug cases were subsequently referred to the Anti-Drug and Smuggling Unit (ADSU) for further inquiry.

Members of the public are reminded that drug trafficking is illegal and can lead to severe consequences, including imprisonment and it is vital for individuals to be aware of the laws related to drug- offenses to avoid contributing to this ongoing issue in our communities. Reporting suspicious activities can help authorities take necessary action and promote safer environments for all. Members of the public are reminded that they may report suspected drug cases/ illicit activities to MRA through MRA Stop Drug Platform (www.mra.mu) or by calling on the Hotline 8958.



UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

MRA TOASTMASTERS CLUB ON THE PATHWAY TO EXCELLENCE

Toastmasters International is a global non-profit educational organization dedicated to helping individuals develop confidence and master public speaking skills. With a network of clubs operating both online and in person, Toastmasters have been making a difference since the founding of the organisation in 1934. Headquartered in Colorado, USA, the organization has grown to include over 270,000 members across 14, 000 clubs in 150 countries. Among these, the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) Toastmasters Club.

The Mauritius Revenue Authority Toastmasters Club, chartered in February 2021, operates exclusively as a corporate club for which membership is restricted to MRA staff. The club is part of District 129, Division F1 and Area 1.

The MRA club meets twice a month on the first and third Wednesdays from 16h50 to 19h00 at Custom House, Mer Rouge. These gatherings follow a structured agenda, with roles like 'Toastmaster of the Evening', open to all members to volunteer and lead.

The Club is run by a dedicated team of seven (07) Executive Committee Members who manage its operations and has presently 25 active members. The current Executive Members includes:

President	Aroona Mugon (Mrs)
Vice President Education (VPE)	Parvatee Ghoora (Ms)
Vice President Membership (VPM)	Vinod Dabeea (Mr)
Vice President Public Relations (VPPR)	Vashuda Degnarain (Mrs)
Secretary	Deeveya Thakoor (Ms)
Treasurer	Yashvi Ramparsad (Ms)
Sergeant-At- Arms (SAA)	Armoodalingum Chinapiel (Mr)

Despite being a relatively young club, the MRA club has already made its mark, earning prestigious awards such as the President's Distinguished Award, Treasurer's Award and accolades in Table Topics Speech and Evaluation Speech Contests at Area, Division and District Levels.

The club has till date held 93 meetings and is eagerly preparing to celebrate its milestone 100th meeting.

Joining the MRA Toastmasters is straightforward. Interested staff can reach out to the Vice President Membership (VPM) via email or phone. Membership costs an international fee of USD 60 every six months, along with a one-time new member fee of USD 20. Prospective members are encouraged to attend meetings as guests to get a feel for the experience before committing.

For anyone seeking opportunities for personal and professional growth, the MRA Toastmasters Club provides an inspiring and transformative experience. It is more than just a club - it is a close-knit supportive community where members can develop essential skills like public speaking and leadership skills and self-confidence. Whether you are looking to overcome the fear of speaking in front of an audience, refine your communication abilities, or unlock your leadership potential, the MRA Toastmasters Club offers a structured programme and engaging activities for an enriching journey filled with learning, connection and lasting personal transformation.

MRA Management gives full support to the MRA Toastmasters Club and encourages its staff members to be part of it.

“TOASTMASTERS CLUB HAS BEEN THE KEY TO UNLOCKING COUNTLESS DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY IN MY PUBLIC SPEAKING JOURNEY”



Ms. Yashvi Ramparsad,
Officer, Medium and Small
Taxpayer Dept., MRA



I joined the Mauritius Revenue Authority Toastmasters Club in May 2023 and my journey so far has been nothing short of an adventurous voyage, filled with unexpected twists and turns. When I first joined, I was like a ship lost at sea, struggling to navigate the waves of public speaking. But with each meeting, I began to chart my course, steering through rough waters and learning to ride the waves of nervousness and self-doubt. As the saying goes, “Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” Toastmasters Club provided me with the winds of change, pushing me beyond my comfort zone and armored me with the essential tools and skills needed when I was given public speaking platforms.

As the Mentee Representative during the Launching Ceremony of the Mentoring Programme, as a presenter during e-Invoicing workshops conducted by MRA and as the master of ceremony for the CATA conference.

My participation in the CATA conference as the MC has been a transformative experience as participation in the daily sessions allowed me to deepen my technical knowledge and stay updated on the latest global tax developments. The expert-led sessions enhanced my understanding of complex tax issues and broadened my perspective on best practices, ultimately empowering me to grow both personally and professionally.

As I reflect on my journey, Toastmasters Club has been the key to unlocking countless doors of opportunity in my public speaking journey. I was fortunate enough to represent the MRA Toastmasters Club internationally and fly its flag high as the Speech Evaluation champion at Area Level (Port Louis District), champion at Division Level (Mauritius & Madagascar) and securing third place at District Level (Southern African countries). Toastmasters showed me that the key to growth is stepping outside your comfort zone—and doing it with courage. I am excited to embark on the next chapter of my Toastmasters Club journey, eager to see what lies ahead. Toastmasters is more than just a platform for public speaking—it is also a powerful tool for developing leadership skills.

In July 2024 I joined the Executive Committee of the MRA Toastmasters Club and assumed the role of Club Treasurer to enhance my leadership skills under the guidance of the seasoned members of the Club. Just like a river that never stops flowing, I look forward to continuous growth and learning. Every speech and role have been a stepping stone, and I am ready to ride the wave of new opportunities.



DID YOU Know?

INTERESTING FACT

Courier services are redefining speed, convenience, and efficiency by providing comprehensive solutions for the swift collection and delivery of shipments. Customs authorities play an essential role in facilitating the smooth clearance of goods handled by these services, promoting cross-border trade while ensuring security and compliance with regulations.

UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMS PROCESS FOR CLEARING GOODS VIA COURIER SERVICES

Customs ensures timely processing of courier shipments through a structured procedure:

Manifest Submission: Courier services submit a manifest i.e., list of goods- generally loaded on incoming flights.

Sorting: Upon arrival, goods are sorted by Customs depending on their category I., II, III, or IV. Goods are categorised to streamline the processing and clearance of consignments.

Category I: Correspondences and Documents

These are items with no commercial value and are exempt from duties and taxes.

Category II: Goods "Not Merchandised for Sale"

Goods classified under category II are generally goods of low value, i.e., MUR 1000 or lesser. These goods are processed and cleared with no payment of duty and taxes (excluding merchandise for sale, tobacco in any form, wines, spirits, arms and ammunition).

Category III: Goods "Not Merchandised for Sale"

These goods have a customs value above Rs 1000 and may be subject to the payment of duty and taxes depending on the nature of the goods. They are cleared through the E-Courier facility through the submission of a simplified customs declaration on the eCourier platform.

Category IV: Goods "Merchandised for Sale"

These goods are cleared conventionally through a Bill of Entry (BoE).

Key Highlights

Courier services are revolutionizing trade by simplifying and expediting the movement of goods across borders. The introduction of Simplified Declarations has enhanced customs procedures, fostering economic growth while maintaining strict regulatory compliance.





Ehram Court, Cnr Mgr. Gonin & Sir Virgil Naz Streets, Port Louis, Mauritius
T: +230 207 6000 | F: +230 211 8099 | E: headoffice@mra.mu | W: www.mra.mu

