

POSTAL NEWS

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1. **Deutsche Bank Buys 8% Of Eurogiro . Jan 20, 2010.**
2. **New startup introduces environmentally-friendly postal service. Jan 20, 2010.**
3. **Shein asks Africa to save postal services Jan 20, 2010.**
4. **Even a censored Internet has opened up a world for Chinese users. Jan 21, 2010.**

JANUARY 20, 2010, 9:12 A.M. ET.

1. Deutsche Bank Buys 8% Of Eurogiro

FRANKFURT (Dow Jones)--Deutsche Bank AG (DB) Wednesday said it is buying an 8% stake in Eurogiro, thereby strengthening its ties with the company, a global cross-border payments network and community.

MAIN FACTS:

-Eurogiro is the second largest network for cross-border payments with a focus on connecting the world's postal organizations, post banks, banks and other financial institutions. ...

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2. New startup introduces environmentally-friendly postal service

By Rachel Kelly, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 20 January 2010 2217 hrs

SINGAPORE: A new startup in Singapore is cutting business costs and taking on an environmentally-friendly postal service.

Global leaders are continuing to urge international action on increasing clean energy usage and climate change awareness.

At the start of this week, President of the Maldives, Mohammed Nasheed, expressed concern over the Copenhagen Accord. He said in its present form, the accord would not be enough to prevent climate change.

While governments are working on fighting the effects of climate change, companies are coming up with innovative solutions for reducing carbon footprints.

It is estimated that, on average, every bill sent costs a company about S\$1, but with paperless billing or e-billing, Singapore firm GreenPost said that cost could be reduced by as much as 80 per cent.

According to GreenPost, only 5 per cent of Singaporeans have gone paperless when it comes to receiving their bills. The firm has created a secure online portal or "mail box" for users to receive their bills and statements.

GreenPost plans to process 10 per cent of bills in Singapore by 2012.

Kris Childress, director for Marketing and Strategy, GreenPost, said: "In Singapore, our conservative estimates are (that) there are probably 200 million pages or bills a year that are sent out to consumers.

"So we are talking forests and forests of trees involved in that. The main reason we found that people aren't going paperless is because they were concerned about the amount of work it takes to go to different websites.

"So just as you have one post office box, you will have one computer box that your bills will come to. You go to a single screen, you call it up, you can look at the bills, you can pay the bills. You can go ... months back and view the bills."

GreenPost is working with telecommunications and energy firms in Singapore to provide paperless billing to consumers. It is also in discussions with some local banks.

The firm said it also plans to break into the international market. GreenPost believes that markets such as India, Australia and New Zealand offer potential for the development of paperless billing.

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3. Shein asks Africa to save postal services

By Zephania Ubwani, Arusha

African countries have been challenged to save postal services, whose survival is threatened by new technologies.

Postal administrations, on the other hand, were told to reposition their services to remain relevant to the public and the economy at large.

Making the plea on Monday when opening the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), the Vice President, Dr Ali Mohamed Shein, said postal services in Africa were on the decline.

Domestic letter postal volumes dropped from 2.8 billion letters to 2.2 billion between 1990 and 2007. A similar trend has been observed on international letters whose volume declined from 489 million to 134 million between 1990 and 2007.

With only 2.1 per cent of the global number of post offices, Africa has large population of people with no access to postal services.

Only two countries, Botswana and Mauritius have the world average number of people (10,131) per one post office
Although the trend of parcel volumes had shown a decline between 1990 and 2000, it picked up steadily in recent years.

Dr Shein said postal administrations in Africa should not view it as mere public service, but as business ventures that should deliver and make profit.

"This change in outlook is among the critical elements of turning postal services into a sustainable venture," he stressed.

The VP said the fact that people still have trust in the postal networks in Africa was enough reason for its administrators to ensure they remained truly competitive in the face of increasingly competitive environment.

On Sunday, PAPU director general Mrs Rodah Masaviru, said postal services in Africa are still viable for communication despite onslaught from the electronic super highways.

She said despite competition from the new players in the communication industry, the postal services in Africa are still crucial because of its vast network which extends to the remote districts and villages.

Currently, Africa has 30,300 post offices compared to 660,000 in the world and that they not only reach large populations without access to electronic communication, but now served as cybercafe nodes in many areas.

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4. Even a censored Internet has opened up a world for Chinese users

By Steven Mufson
Thursday, January 21, 2010

BEIJING -- One of China's most popular bloggers, Han Han, posted a satirical essay this week in which he imagined headlines about China's censored Internet in a post-Google era:

In 2011, Google, Facebook and YouTube announce their return to the Chinese market -- but the news is censored, so no one finds out. The government allocates 100 billion yuan as part of an economic stimulus package to hire people to post Internet comments; it sets a target of 100 billion positive posts. After a few years, e-mail disappears and 5 million Internet-related jobs are lost, but the revived postal service hires 100,000 workers. The People's Daily writes: "One industry was sacrificed in return for the stability of the nation, but it was worthwhile."

To the Chinese government, however, the future of the Internet and the recent decision by Google to stop censoring its search engine here, even if it means pulling out of this populous country, are no laughing matter. Even though Han Han -- high school dropout, successful novelist and race-car driver -- is wildly popular, his post was quickly removed.

The government's efforts to control and limit what Chinese citizens can read online aren't likely to end, no matter what Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says in a speech she is expected to deliver in Washington on Thursday about the Internet. Clinton is expected to propose ways to help citizens of countries such as China and Iran gain greater access to information.

Many Chinese are still hoping that Google and China's government avert a showdown. But Google appears pessimistic. This week it delayed the introduction of two mobile phones in the country.

Yet people here say that even a circumscribed Chinese Internet has had a liberating effect on many citizens such as Han Han and his readers -- who number in the millions. That's likely to continue both as a result of popular techniques for circumventing what's known as the Great Firewall of China and because of the big following bloggers have.

The advertising and research firm Ogilvy China estimated last year that 47 million bloggers existed by the end of 2007 and that the number was rising by 25 percent a year. Han Han and actress-model Xu Jinglei collected 300 million hits in less than three years.

"When traditional media dominated the public opinion arena, Chinese citizens had trouble finding ways to express their ideas or views on various social issues that might involve their own interests," said Hu Yong, an associate professor at Beijing University's School of Journalism and Communication. "But with the advent of the Internet, Chinese netizens found outlets of expression."

To be sure, not everyone has been left to enjoy such freedoms. In December, a Chinese judge sentenced the dissident literary critic Liu Xiaobo to 11 years in prison for his writing and for his role in a pro-democracy petition called Charter 08, which sought to rally support for political reform.

Liu appears to have crossed a line. The Chinese government prohibits people from forming their own organizations. It has tolerated greater freedom in blogs, music clubs, art galleries and day-to-day private conversations as long as they stay largely private and do not directly challenge the Chinese Communist Party's monopoly on political power.

But the Internet has blurred the lines between private and public, and bloggers can rally followers without forming organizations in the offline world. "Discussions can influence some public policies," Hu said. "Moreover, the Internet in China has played a role of watchdog that can't be carried out by traditional media."

Much of that has little to do with Google, but many analysts credit Google with contributing to greater knowledge and awareness among its users, even though its Chinese-based search engine has been complying with government requirements to delete sensitive information.

"Google brought a lot more transparency to this market just being here for four years," said Anne Stevenson-Yang, director of Asia research at Wedge MKI, an international equity analysis firm. "They were the first ones to put a notice on their search engine saying results were not allowed to be shown."

This Story

Chinese government hits back against Clinton's call for Internet freedom

Clinton calls for Internet freedom

A censored Internet's silver lining

Although Google said last week that it would stop censoring its site, little appears to have changed.

A search Wednesday for the word "Dharamsala," headquarters of the exiled Dalai Lama, returned 9.48 million results on Google's Chinese search engine. The first item was Google images, featuring a photo of the Dalai Lama. The second was a blog about one person's experience in Dharamsala. The third and the fourth were news items by mainland Chinese outlets. The fifth was a Wikipedia entry.

However, some of the other items included bulletin board postings by people supporting exiled Tibetans and items from overseas Tibetan organizations, such as the Tibetan Post. Those links could not be opened. At the bottom of the Google page, a note said: "In accordance with local laws and regulations, some of the search results cannot be shown."

On the dominant Chinese search engine, Baidu, there were 119,000 results. The first item was "Dalai Group and Dharamsala," an article from the Guangming Daily, a Chinese mainland publication. The second was a Baidu photo. The third was kung-fu fiction. Most other results were news items from official media.

Hu, of Beijing University, said Google had had "huge influence" by "providing good tools for a wide number of users."

But he cautioned that bringing about political change is not an easy project: "The Internet is pushing Chinese society forward in the right direction. But it is hard to predict how long that will be."

Researchers Wang Juan and Zhang Mei contributed to this report.

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