

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Thailand Wins Bid to Host World Philatelic Exhibition in 2013

Published by Ozgur Tore

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Thailand has won the bid to host the World Philatelic Exhibition in 2013.

The event was given the official name of 'Bangkok 2013 World Stamp Exhibition', which will be the fourth world-class stamp event hosted by Thailand.

The President of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, Mr. Akapol Sorasuchart, said the achievement proves that the international community is confident in the country as a highly skilled host of very large-scale events. "We are very grateful for having been given such an honour from the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (F.I.P). Our selection as host is a strong vote of confidence that many international associations still believe in Thailand and that we remain a dynamic and motivational business event destination."

Some 100,000 visitors are expected to join the World Philatelic Exhibition in 2013 after a series of three successful world-class stamp events were hosted by Thailand in the past.

Ms Anusra Chittmittrapap, Senior Executive Vice President of Thailand Post Company Limited and Chairman of BANGKOK 2013 Organizing Committee, revealed after the announcement that "We will be the host of Bangkok 2013 World Stamp Exhibition in collaboration with the Philatelists Association of Thailand, under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and with sponsorship from TCEB. The event will commemorate the 130th anniversary Thai postage stamps and the establishment of Thai postal service. It is also a good opportunity to raise public awareness about stamp collecting."

After the F.I.P. committee vote, Mr. Akapol added, "I believe that the congress was attracted by the world-renowned hospitality and the service capabilities that Thailand

has to offer. Our confidence helped reassure them that they made the right decision. It's not just about the money; it shows the strength of Thailand and the confidence that others continue to have in us."

"Despite recent setbacks, Thailand's underlying values still shine through," said Akapol. "When you look at the whole package - value, world-class hospitality standards, innovative technologies, and the variety of travel, dining, shopping and entertainment options - Thailand's meetings and conventions appeal is hard to beat." "A series of activities including stamp collection competitions, sales promotions, and publicity will be rolled out locally and in different target countries in order to ensure the great success of the event. We are also more than please to extend our warm welcome to you to participate in this great event in Thailand where you .will surely enjoy lasting memories of Thai glorious culture, unique hospitality and the luxurious venue", leaved Ms. Anusra.

Last Updated (Thursday, 14 October 2010)

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2. Universal postal service network in Pakistan in line with UPU

'Pakistan Times' Federal Bureau

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post is providing a universal postal service network in line with Universal Postal Union (UPU) strategy.

An official of Pakistan Post said that the aim of the network is to ensure secure and timely delivery of mail, money and material at affordable cost through utilization of people, process and technology and innovative product offerings.

He said that Pakistan Post is providing postal services in every nook and corner of the country through a network of around 13,000 post offices.

"Post is also providing delivery services to about 20 million households and businesses as community service without any cost considerations", he said.

He said that in addition to its traditional role, the Pakistan Post also performs agency functions on behalf of Federal and Provincial governments, which inter-alias include Saving Bank, Postal Life Insurance, Collection of Taxes, Collection of Electricity, Water, Sui Gas and Telephone bills.

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* OCTOBER 13, 2010, 11:28 A.M. ET

3. U.K. Takes Steps Toward Privatizing Postal Service

By TOMMY STUBBINGTON

The U.K. government on Wednesday took the first step towards privatization of the national postal service as it announced a bill which, if made law, would allow the government to sell shares in Royal Mail for the first time.

The decision is likely to prove controversial. Several governments have backed away from privatizing the postal service in the past, fearing a public backlash, and labor unions are likely to threaten strikes in protest at a time when the government is facing wider union unrest due to public-spending cuts.

The government maintains that only privatization will provide new funds to complete the modernization of the service and reduce the burden on the taxpayer.

The Royal Mail has three divisions—the Post Office, which provides mail and financial services from its outlets; the Royal Mail, which handles the collection and delivery of most of the U.K.'s mail; and Parcelforce, which handles distribution of packages.

The government wants the Post Office network, which still has branches across the country despite a recent shutdown of hundreds of branches, to become more of an alternative to the banks as a financial-services provider. Under the bill, the Post Office would stay in public ownership or be given mutual status, giving power to staff and customers in deciding how it is run, Business secretary Vince Cable said. He added that there will be no further program of post-office closures.

However, Royal Mail and Parcelforce would be privatized. Both units have been struggling for years. Royal Mail has seen mail volumes decline by 15% since 2005 as the popularity of e-mail and the Internet has increased, and it has a large pension deficit to tackle. Parcelforce is struggling with competition from other parcel distributors.

"Deregulation of the U.K. postal-services market is long overdue," Royal Mail group chief executive Moya Green said. "We need more capital, deregulation to allow us to compete fairly while safeguarding the universal service obligation, and the removal of the historic pension deficit. I hope that the bill published today can deliver on that."

Mr. Cable said the U.K.'s coalition government is keeping open its options regarding the potential sale of Royal Mail, which could take the form of an initial public offering or a trade sale. Mr. Cable said the government is remaining flexible to ensure it gets the best price for the service, although he gave no timetable for the sale and no indication of a valuation. "We couldn't possibly put a value on it. It would depend on market conditions," he said.

A lack of interest from potential buyers could, however, hamper the privatization process. Dutch mail and express company TNT NV made a move to compete in the U.K. mail market in 2004 in the hope of getting a bigger chunk of the market when Royal Mail was privatized. However, fed up with a lack of progress on the privatization, TNT last year withdrew from talks exploring a partnership with Royal Mail. TNT's attention is now focused elsewhere as it is splitting itself in two.

"TNT has other priorities and is focusing on implementing the recently announced 'Strategy Vision 2015,' which includes the intention to separate its Mail and Express businesses, of which the internal separation is expected to be implemented January 1, 2011," TNT spokeswoman Daphne Andriessse said.

Mr. Cable didn't rule out the possibility of a sale to a foreign competitor such as TNT or Germany's Deutsche Post AG. "We are not nationalists in this government—we don't object to companies simply because they are foreign-owned," he said.

Deutsche Post declined to comment on any potential interest in Royal Mail. It is also doubtful whether Royal Mail will attract a lot of interest from private-equity firms because of its dependence on a large number of employees and the existence of a number of well-established competitors.

The most likely contender could be London-based CVC Capital Partners, which already has a 49.9% stake in Belgium's national postal service, bpost, and put in a proposal to buy 30% of Royal Mail when a privatization was mooted last June. "It will definitely be monitoring the process as and when it kicks off," said a person familiar with the situation.

Mr. Cable said the privatization bill would ensure that Royal Mail's obligations to collect and deliver letters at a uniform, affordable price, would be maintained. Opponents of a sale worry that service would decline under privatization.

Under the bill, the government would assume the historic net liabilities—recently estimated at £8 billion—of Royal Mail's pension scheme, Mr. Cable added.

The main labor union representing Royal Mail workers immediately attacked the decision, even though employees would hold at least 10% of the company's shares after privatization.

The Communication Workers' Union, which represents all nonmanagerial staff at Royal Mail, said Royal Mail could survive in the public sector if it had freedom to borrow money from sources other than government, and if certain regulatory issues were resolved. It also called the plans a "death sentence for local [Post Office] branches. Universal services will be reduced by a privatized company interested in the bottom line, not the communities served by Royal Mail," general secretary Billy Hayes said. "The separation of Royal Mail from the post-office counters is a fatal step. The commercial imperative will be for a privatized Royal Mail to use retail services other than the Post Office."

Separately, labor union Unite said the privatization is misguided and unnecessary. "The Postal Services Bill shows that the government has no idea how to implement its policy of a selloff. There is little interest in the market for a high value selloff and the population of the U.K. already owns the Royal Mail.," said Unite national officer Paul Reuter.

—Anna Marij van der Meulen in Amsterdam and Marietta Cauchi in London contributed to this article.

4. Nigeria: Postal Service to Partner Schools on English Language Failure

Mahmud Lalo

13 October 2010

Jos — The Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) in Plateau State has indicated its readiness to partner with secondary schools to check failure in English Language.

The Area Postal Manager in the state, Mr. Alex J. Bature, who disclosed this at an event to mark this year's World Postal Day in Jos, said NIPOST is willing to partner with schools to enhance students' performance in English language.

"The post is willing to partner with post primary schools to enhance essay and letter writing skills among students by organizing essay and letter writing competitions," he said.

Bature said the failure to utilize opportunities provided by writing competitions was one of the reasons why many candidates failed English language.

"Many schools have not shown interest in the scheme thus resulting in the failure of English language by candidates who sit for the SSCE. In both WAEC and NECO examinations, there is a section on essay writing and another on letter writing and if a student does not answer the questions in these sections very well, he/her cannot pass English language with a good grade," he said.