



Asian-Pacific Postal Union

MAY 2024

ASIAN-PACIFIC POSTAL UNION NEWSLETTER



FROM SECRETARY- GENERAL'S DESK

As we step into the month of May, I extend warm greetings to all our postal workers across the Asia-Pacific region in celebration of Labour Day. Their relentless dedication and efforts have kept our postal community connected, and strengthened the resilience of our network. As front-line heroes and the first point of contact for postal customers, their insights and interactions are always invaluable. I urge all postal organizations in our region to support our workers by fostering a healthy work culture and, most importantly, listening to their concerns.

I am pleased to report that my attendance at the recent POC and CA sessions at the Universal Postal Union, Bern from April 25 to May 3, 2024, was highly productive. I met with the UPU Executive Management team and delegates from member countries to discuss issues of interest to the APPU, APCC, and the Asia-Pacific region. On May 1, 2024, during the UPU meeting with the Restricted Unions, I also had the privilege of signing a landmark Framework Agreement between the APPU

and PUASP (Postal Union for Americas, Spain & Portugal) to foster collaboration between the two Unions.

I am happy to announce that our continuing discussions with the UPU management team have led to the acceptance of a Regional Project on Postal Regulatory Reform in the Asia-Pacific region, financed by the UPU-China Fund. The APPU Bureau has begun desk research and will distribute a survey in May 2024 to collect additional data from our member nations.

Preparations for our upcoming Executive Council (EC) meeting are in full swing. The initial drafts of EC documents are complete, and our interactions with various Working Groups are progressing productively and promisingly.

I am also pleased to announce the success of our first Intensive International Mail Accounting course, held from May 6 to 10, 2024, which welcomed participants from 20 countries. This initiative, sponsored by the UPU-USPS Fund, is part of our ongoing commitment to capacity building in our region. Following this, we will conduct two 4-week courses from May 13 to June 7, focusing on Parcel, Logistics and Operations Management (PLOM) and Human

Resource Management (HRM).

I commend the postal administrations of Afghanistan, Australia, Cambodia, China (P.R.), India, Iran, Philippines, Maldives, and Vietnam for their proactive engagement with the APPU Bureau by frequently sharing their news and updates. Notably, the Philippine Postal Corporation has contributed six pieces of news since we invited write-ups on best practices from our member countries. We encourage more members to participate in this initiative, enhancing our platform for mutual learning and collaboration.

As we move forward, let us continue to embrace the spirit of innovation and collaboration that defines our community. Together, we are shaping a future that reflects the resilience and dedication of our postal workforce.

Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh





DR. SINGH PARTICIPATED IN THE UPU POC AND CA SESSIONS

Secretary-General of APPU, Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh attended the Postal Operations Council and the Council of Administration meetings of the UPU in Bern from April 25 to May 3.

During the Council meetings, various interventions were made by the Secretary-General on different items including Sustainable Development in the Postal Sector, Quality of Service Fund, and Development Cooperation Activities.

Along with individual meetings with delegates from APPU members, sponsors, and other Restricted Unions, a meeting was also held with the UPU Management highlighting various activities of the Union as well as seeking support of the UPU in future initiatives.

During the meeting of the Restricted Unions, Dr. Singh made a presentation on the role of the Restricted Unions and UPU Regional Offices in the Dubai Postal Strategy.



APPU AND PUASP SIGNED FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

On May 1, Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh of the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) and Dr. Franklin Castro of the Postal Union of Americas, Spain & Portugal (PUASP) signed a landmark Framework Agreement. This agreement marks a significant step towards enhancing cooperation between the two Restricted Unions of the UPU.

Both organizations are set to collaborate on capacity building, digital transformation initiatives, and the sharing of best practices, paving the way for a more integrated and innovative postal sector.



Similar collaborative discussions are also ongoing with other Restricted Unions, indicating a broader movement towards unified postal advancements.



APPC COMPLETED 2IMA COURSE

The first Intensive International Mail Accounting (2IMA) course was recently hosted at the APPC from May 6 to May 10, sponsored by the UPU USPS Special Fund. The course, led by UPU IB expert Mr. Philippe Grondein, welcomed 31 participants from 20 different countries.

This capacity building

event focused on enhancing understanding of the latest updates on Terminal Dues and competencies in international mail accounting documentation.

The course covered topics including Terminal Dues-Mandatory System by Default, Self-Declared Rates, ECOMPRO,

Inward Land Rates, Transit Charges, Returned Undeliverable Letter-Post Items, and Direct Access.

Participants gained valuable insights into these key areas, enabling them to enhance their proficiency in international mail management and accounting practices.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



**August 12 to 16
SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA**

2024 APPU Executive Council (EC) Meeting



**November 18 to 20
Bangkok, Thailand**



2024 APPU Postal Business Forum

EXCLUSIVE *THE UPU DIALOGUES* INTERVIEW

STREAMLINING POSTAL TECHNOLOGY: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE POSTAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER(PTC), UPU

Q1: E-commerce development is a crucial aspect of the UPU's Regional Development Plans. What future IT solutions does the PTC recommend for APPU members to integrate e-commerce solutions into their postal operations?

At the PTC, we have prioritized enhancing our compliance tools. For example, we are launching UPU-SAVE (Secure Address Verification system) to verify the quality and deliverability of postal addresses. We are also finalizing an agreement with third-party providers to integrate lookup functionalities into our Customs Declaration System (CDS), which will include HS codes, denied parties, and prohibitions and restrictions. Additionally, we plan to introduce a landed costs calculator to support a Delivery Duty Paid (DDP) product. We encourage all APPU members to adopt these forthcoming features, which will be available as out-of-the-box options in the CDS. Since nearly all APPU member postal operators already use CDS, a simple upgrade will be required to access these e-commerce enhancements.

Q2: How do the recent technological advancements, such as the DPS system (Domestic Processing System), DPS-Track-IT, and POS (Point of Sale) system, collectively contribute to the optimization of the entire mail operation, from mail acceptance to final delivery? Can you elaborate on any domestic digital initiatives or IT solutions that the PTC is spearheading to streamline domestic mail and parcel services?

Over the years, we have observed two prevalent situations. Posts with weak domestic operations often struggle with their end-to-end international performance, particularly in capturing first and last mile events. Additionally, some Posts have had negative experiences with developing or sourcing systems for their domestic networks.

Recognizing these challenges, the PTC is naturally moving towards enhancing domestic systems,

INTRODUCTION:

In our continuous efforts to illuminate the transformative power of technology across postal services in the Asia-Pacific region, we are pleased to present an exclusive interview with **David Avsec**, PTC Account Relationships and Product Management Coordinator from the UPU.

Following PTC's enlightening presentation at the APPU's inaugural Postal Technology and Innovation Showcase on April 2, which offered a deep dive into innovative IT solutions for postal services, this interview delves further into the evolving landscape of postal technologies.



understanding the complexity and need for flexibility. Our DPS system allows flexibility to accommodate different postal workflows, while our POS system adapts to a broad range of products and services in post office networks.

The core principle of DPS and POS is to design robust software architectures that are adaptable to local conditions yet maintain uniformity to minimize maintenance costs through economies of scale and cooperative development. DPS-Track-It, as a mobile extension of DPS, simplifies complexity by hosting a DPS instance in the cloud, allowing Posts to deploy a mobile app for efficient mail collection and delivery scans.

Q3: With cybersecurity being a critical concern for digital operations, what measures is the PTC implementing to ensure the safety and security of digital data across the postal network?

The PTC has invested significantly in securing the products and networks provided to APPU member postal operators. Since 2019, our core data management processes, including Post*NET, cloud services, and big data, are certified under ISO 27001 – Information Security Management System (ISMS).

Furthermore, we are enhancing the cyber resilience of the UPU's International Bureau to secure digital assets more robustly. This internal expertise in cybersecurity will ultimately be leveraged to offer solutions and tools to APPU members, aiming to secure their IT networks.

Additionally, we support the .post shared services platform (<https://trust.post>), where members can register .post domains and purchase digital certificates and secure email and website hosting services at discounted rates, thereby extending traditional postal trust to the online space.

Q4: Considering the potential security risks associated with handling personal information during digital transformation, does the PTC have or plan any products to help Posts protect data systematically, balancing efficiency and security?

Aligning with our ISO27001 certification, the PTC is also working towards achieving ISO27701 – Personal Information Management System (PIMS) certification. This certification

focuses on risk management, controls, and processes to protect personal data.

We are actively incorporating these data protection mechanisms into future releases of IPS, CDS, and DPS, ensuring compliance with national laws and UPU data protection regulations. Thus, APPU member postal operators can continue to rely on UPU technology, confident in their compliance with data protection standards.

Q5: Despite being digitally connected and compliant with EDI standards, the full benefits of digital transformation are often not realized. From the PTC's perspective, how should Posts effectively use IT technology to maximize the value of their technological capabilities?

The PTC strongly recommends that APPU member Posts review the capabilities of UPU technology (IPS, CDS, DPS, etc.). We often observe that the extensive capabilities of these solutions are not fully utilized. By doing so, postal operators can maximize their value without further increasing technology costs.

Q6: With some Posts using old versions or locally developed mail processing systems, what are the starting steps for integrating these with PTC systems, and which new technological solutions do you recommend?

The IT landscape of businesses has increasingly become API-driven, which addresses numerous issues by allowing smaller, more manageable modules that are easier to replace and source from different providers.

For legacy systems, APIs offer the possibility of phased replacement by functionality. This approach mirrors that of postal competitors, where APIs provide the agility needed for supply chain organization.

It is essential for Posts to adopt this model, and the PTC supports this trend by offering an increasing number of APIs for integrating our software and services, which are publicly available on the UPU website at <https://upu.int/api>. We also integrate APIs from 3rd party vendors, making them available through our software.

Q7: Looking ahead, how do you see emerging technologies further enhancing the standardization of processes within the postal sector? Are there any particular plans members should look forward to?

The integration of public postal sectors with private logistics is an emerging trend. The PTC's API strategy facilitates the easy integration of UPU technology. Additionally, the recent launch of the UPU-TechCert program (<https://upu.int/upu-techcert>) tests and certifies private sector technical interfaces against UPU technology, ensuring stable, secure, and real-time data exchange, thereby enhancing collaboration in postal business.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also becoming increasingly significant in our product line. In the second half of 2024, we plan to release the Dangerous Good Search Tool (DGST), which uses AI and machine learning to detect prohibited items in the mail, leveraging the vast amount of data available in our Big Data infrastructure.



Additionally, we are pleased to announce that in August 2023, we enhanced the global track and trace system (<https://globaltracktrace.ptc.post>) first released in 2012, to include machine learning (ML) based prediction of the delivery day of the postal item.

This functionality helps reduce the percentage of returns and supports delivery day rescheduling. 64 postal operators have linked their customer track and trace platforms to this free

service, we encourage APPU member posts to benefit from this service also.

Q8: How should the RTCAP (Regional Support Centre for Asia and Pacific) coordinate with the PTC, and what initiatives are being prioritized to enhance the overall integration and functionality of postal services within the AP region?

Regional cooperation is crucial. The RTCAP has been instrumental since the creation of the PTC.

The recent Technology and Innovation showcase has provided an additional forum for presenting our latest offerings.

We encourage ongoing dialogue and cooperation: we aim to understand more about the needs of the region and explore technologies and vendors from the AP region that could complement our efforts.

The UPU-TechCert program is particularly promising, as it allows us to certify any IT vendor that interfaces with our technologies, accelerating innovation in the years ahead.



SOUTHEAST ASIA EMERGES AS TOP GROWTH MARKET FOR APAC REGION, ACCORDING TO NEW FEDEX SURVEY



recently released findings from its latest research report conducted in partnership with Forbes Insights, which aimed to identify key international growth trends for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Asia Pacific region over the next three years. The survey identified growth opportunities for small businesses as well as challenges to international cross-border commerce. The survey polled 250 small and mid-sized business leaders, including founders and C-suite executives, across a range of industry sectors in the Asia-Pacific region.



INDUSTRY RESEARCH

Key Findings from the Survey

- Southeast Asia is recognized as having the highest growth potential for small and midsize businesses in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The major obstacle for these businesses is navigating complex customs procedures, which significantly hinder cross-border commerce.
- There is a strong emphasis on the need for accelerating digital transformation to drive growth, with a focus on improving customer experiences through technology like analytics and machine learning.

According to Ross Gagnon, Executive Director of Research, Forbes Insights, “the findings provide valuable insights into high-growth areas and the continuing barriers facing export-driven SMEs. Collaborations focused on unlocking border compliance and bridging digital divides will be key to realizing their international ambitions.”

The full FedEx research report is available at <https://www.fedex.com/>

Source: <https://newsroom.fedex.com/newsroom/amea/southeast-asia-emerges-as-top-growth-market-for-apac-region-according-to-new-fedex-survey>

In response to Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh's invitation under letter number 23/38/129 (24)-VS/yy, this column, "Best Practices," is dedicated to sharing best practices with APPU members. It serves as a platform for APPU members to contribute insights, encouraging a collaborative approach to global trade and logistics challenges.



VIETNAM: OPTIMIZE SUPPLY CHAIN PERFORMANCE WITH THE VMI INVENTORY MANAGEMENT MODEL

In an era of technological advancements, the Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) model stands out as a strategic approach for optimizing warehouse management and enhancing supply chain efficiency. This model, employed proficiently by Vietnam Post, offers detailed solutions for industries like electronics, where management of inventory and warehousing plays a critical role in controlling production costs and improving supply chain dynamics.

By adopting VMI, businesses allow for a seamless flow of goods from suppliers to manufacturers and distributors, minimizing the storage and maintenance overheads while expediting the supply chain operations. It also facilitates close coordination between supply chain participants, ensuring that inventory levels are maintained optimally, and reducing costs associated with excessive inventory and transportation.

The benefits of implementing VMI are manifold. It allows companies to reduce inventory to the most advantageous levels, cut down on shipping and ordering costs, and bolster sales by mitigating risks related to stock shortages. Additionally, it aids in capturing precise market data, which in turn enhances service quality and cooperation with retailers.

Vietnam Post, leveraging its extensive experience and understanding of market needs, provides state-of-the-art warehousing solutions along with added services like sorting, packaging, and supporting customs procedures, further reducing logistics costs. Its initiative in achieving TAPA-A security certification for its bonded warehouse in Vinh Phuc underscores its commitment to secure and efficient warehouse management.

By sharing this practice, Vietnam Post not only champions a robust model in VMI but also invites collaboration and innovation across the global supply chain network, ultimately fostering international trade relations.

Full case study can be found from the APPU website:
<https://www.appu-bureau.org/innovation-showcase-2/>



INDIA POST TO ASSIST PHLPOST IN DEVELOPING REMITTANCE PROGRAM

A delegation from India Post recently visited the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost) to enhance postal remittance services. This move aims to strengthen postal relations within the Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU), where India Post is a crucial partner.

With millions of migrants worldwide sending billions of dollars in remittances annually, such collaborations are vital, especially in countries like the Philippines where remittances are a significant revenue source. The Indian delegation, led by Mr. Manoj Kumar and including Mr. Puneet Bijraniya and Ms. Ritu Jhakhola, met with PHLPost officials from March 25 to 27, 2024.

As India Post boasts of being the world's largest postal network and a successful remittance platform, it plans to assist PHLPost in developing its platform. This support aligns with India Post's outreach program to enhance global postal services.



Acting Postmaster General Luis D. Carlos highlighted India Post's advanced remittance platform and its role in assisting PHLPost to improve its business operations.

Source: PHLPost

MEMBERS' NEWS



AUSPOST TO HALVE LETTER DELIVERY FREQUENCY FROM MID-APRIL



Australia Post is set to modernize its letter delivery service in response to the nation's evolving communication needs. Starting mid-April, letter deliveries transitioned to an every-second-business-day schedule for 98% of locations. This shift accommodates a significant decrease in letter volumes, down by two-thirds since 2008, as digital correspondence takes precedence.

While ordinary letter delivery times will extend by one business day, a priority service remains available. Stamp prices for ordinary and large letters will increase. Australia Post's focus on parcel services reflects the public's preference for online shopping. The reforms aim to ensure financial sustainability while maintaining a national presence.



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-12/auspost-to-halve-letter-delivery-frequency-from-monday/103699458>



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CHINA AND SLOVENIA TO STRENGTHEN E-COMMERCE WITH PARCEL LOGISTICS PARTNERSHIP



In a strategic move to enhance e-commerce capabilities, China Post Group and Pošta Slovenije have entered into a logistics cooperation agreement. This partnership aims to improve parcel delivery efficiency and broaden the scope of services between China and Slovenia.

The collaboration underscores Slovenia's vital geographical position and its role in facilitating growing e-commerce traffic from China.

The agreement, signed by the heads of both national postal operators, is expected to

significantly boost the logistics operations, ensuring faster and more reliable parcel deliveries.

<https://www.parcelandpostaltechnologyinternational.com/news/parcels/china-and-slovenia-to-strengthen-e-commerce-with-parcel-logistics-partnership.html>



SINGPOST AND LITHUANIA POST TIE UP TO EXPLORE NEW BUSINESS

Singapore Post (SingPost) and Lithuania's national postal service, Lietuvos paštas (Lithuania Post), have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to explore new business opportunities.

The partnership aims to enhance e-commerce and international parcel delivery services, focusing on service quality and customer needs. Both postal companies will also engage with global postal networks and advocate for beneficial policies.

The MOU was signed in Singapore, witnessed by senior representatives and dignitaries from both countries. This strategic move is expected to pave the way for innovative solutions and stronger international ties in the postal sector. SingPost's shares saw a positive uptick following the announcement.

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/companies-markets/singpost-lithuanias-biggest-postal-business-tie-explore-new-business>



POS MALAYSIA CONFIDENT OF DELIVERING IMPROVED RESULTS GOING FORWARD

Pos Malaysia is actively progressing towards enhanced financial performance through shift from its image as "a mail company that also delivers parcels" towards being a "parcel company that also delivers mail".

The company's chairman, Tan Sri Syed Faisal Albar, recently highlighted the successful implementation of a comprehensive three-phase transformation plan aimed at refining operational efficiency and elevating customer service levels. The initial results have shown a promising decline in net losses for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023, demonstrating early signs of potential profitability.

These reforms are part of a broader effort to adapt to the evolving logistics market, which increasingly favors parcel over traditional mail services.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/money/2024/04/25/pos-malaysia-confident-of-delivering-improved-results-going-forward-says-chairman/130725>



IRAN POST'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE TEHRAN INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

The 35th Tehran International Book Fair is being organized from May 8 to 18, 2024, in both physical and virtual formats.

Iran Post, as a key partner in this exhibition and as part of its social services, undertook the collection and dispatch of items containing books. During the fair, Iran Post strategically established three permanent booths and stationed 11 mobile post units in densely populated areas within the exhibition grounds.



Source: Iran Post

Furthermore, 12 post offices across Tehran were designated to support the collection and delivery of items, ensuring efficient service. To address the special sensitivity of these items, specific packaging guidelines were provided to publishers and booth owners. Labels containing postal IDs with QR codes are installed on these packages so that the processing and sending of the packages in the post's smart sorting systems can be done as quickly as possible. Following processing through smart sorting systems, these items could be promptly delivered to recipients' doorsteps, emphasizing both speed and quality.

It is noteworthy that during the 34th Tehran International Book Fair in 2023, over 838,000 items were dispatched to various regions across Iran, encompassing urban and rural areas.

LAO RECEIVES UPU DRM CERTIFICATION

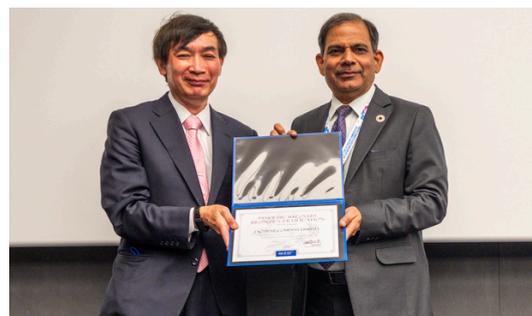


LAO PDR has become one of the first countries to be certified by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in Disaster Risk Management (DRM), marking a significant achievement in the Asia-Pacific region. This certification underscores the vital role of postal services in remote areas, where they often serve as the first government agency to resume operations following a disaster, aiding in community recovery.

The UPU DRM certification offers a tailored step-by-step methodology to enhance the resilience of postal operations, considering the unique geographical conditions and challenges faced by each country. This initiative aims to foster continuous improvement in disaster risk preparedness and management.

Lao PDR received Bronze Certification in Pandemic Recovery, highlighting their commitment to strengthening their postal services' resilience. Dr. Vinaya Prakash Singh, the Secretary-General of the APPU, accepted the certificate on behalf of Lao PDR, celebrating this notable accomplishment.

The APPU congratulates the CEO and entire team of the Lao Postal Corporation on this well-deserved certification by the UPU. This is a proud moment for the Asia-Pacific region, demonstrating our commitment to disaster risk management and community resilience.



Source: UPU and APPU

NZ POST TO END RURAL PARCEL AND NEWSPAPER DELIVERIES ON WEEKENDS



NZ Post has announced a significant change to its delivery services, affecting rural customers across New Zealand. Starting from June 29, 2024 there will be no more Saturday deliveries for newspapers and parcels to the majority of rural addresses. This change is part of a larger transformation as NZ Post adapts to the declining mail volumes and the rise in e-commerce.

While this change discontinues Saturday deliveries, regular mail delivery remains unaffected, with services from Monday to Friday continuing as usual. NZ Post is committed to evolving its operations to ensure commercial sustainability without relying on government funding. The transition includes a move towards a single network for mail and courier delivery, as previously announced on March 26 2024. Customers affected by the change will receive written notifications from NZ Post.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/513708/nz-post-to-end-rural-parcel-and-newspaper-deliveries-on-weekends>

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PBBM UNVEILED THE LABOR DAY 2024 COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS



In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Labor Code of Philippines, President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr., along with Postmaster General Luis D. Carlos of the Philippine Postal Corporation (PHLPost), unveiled special Commemorative Stamps during the 122nd Labor Day event at Malacañang Palace.



The ceremony, witnessed by key figures including Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, Speaker of the

House of Representative Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and Labor Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma, marks a historic occasion reflecting on the landmark labor reforms initiated by Presidential Decree No. 442 on May 1, 1974, under President Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr. This decree significantly reshaped Philippine labor laws to enhance worker welfare.

Available for purchase, the stamps celebrate the enduring legacy of the Labor Code in promoting fair and productive employment for all Filipino workers.

Source: PHLPost

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Write to us at:
yuyan@appu-bureau.org
admin@appu-bureau.org