

**Speech of the Honourable Deepak Balgobin
Minister of Information Technology,
Communication and Innovation**

**250th anniversary of
Postal Services in Mauritius**

**Caudan Arts Centre, Port-Louis
8th October 2022 at 10am**

1. **Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister,**
2. **Mr Mahfooz Cadarsaib, Lord Mayor of Port-Louis,**
3. **Mr Sifundo Chief Moyo, Secretary General of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU),**
4. **Mr Janras Kotsi, the Executive Director of Southern Africa Postal Operators Association (SAPOA)**
5. **Mr Nicolas Leoville, President of L'Association Philatélique de l'Océan Indien (Reunion Island),**
6. **Ms Sandrine Valere, Permanent Secretary of my Ministry,**
7. **Mr Ranna Swamber, Chairman of the Mauritius Post Limited and Board Members**
8. **Mr Giandev Moteea, Chief Executive Officer of Mauritius Post Ltd**
9. **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Morning to you all.

Warmest welcome to all our guests as well as our invitees from abroad.

I am delighted to address you on this historic occasion which is this landmark anniversary of the creation of the postal services in Mauritius and the 175th celebration of the renowned “**Post Office**” Blue and Red Penny.

As all of us witness the 250th anniversary of the Mauritius Post, we pay a deep respect to all those men and women who made enormous sacrifices to ensure delivery of postal services during a span of two and a half centuries, which is indeed a feat in itself.

To mark these events, the Mauritius Post has, in collaboration with my Ministry, elaborated a series of activities. The key events relate to the issue of new stamps and First Day Covers to focus on the two main events, namely:

1. The two and a half centuries of existence of the Mauritius Post, and
2. The 175th anniversary of the **Blue and Red penny** stamps which our services issued in 1847, soon after the issue of the first stamp in Britain - the **Penny Black**, which we are proud to mention that an original stamp is on display at our postal museum.

I am also happy that such celebrations are being held in the context of the “**World Post Day**” as proclaimed by **Universal Postal Union** on the 9th October.

It was indeed an opportune time to organize such activities to create more awareness of the evolved role of postal services in our modern society. The theme of this year: “**Post For Planet**” reminds us of the importance of the efforts we all need to do to protect the environment and promote activities in this sphere.

There are several activities geared towards engaging our employees in this direction, like planting of endemic trees and cleaning of beaches.

We will also endeavour to install, in the near future, **photovoltaic** cells to produce clean energy at some of our Post Offices as well as invest in electric vehicles upon renewal of the postal vehicle fleet.

The events of this morning will be multi-fold and will consist of the unveiling of a **stele** to mark this important date. We will also proceed with the launch of the new stamps and First Day Covers to commemorate the 250th years of the Post and the 175th anniversary of the Blue and Red penny stamps issued in 1847.

We will honour employees of the Mauritius Post Limited in a symbolic way and shortly after that we will proceed downstairs to inaugurate a Philatelic Exhibition showcasing collections from the Indian Ocean and many others which have defined the evolution of the postal services since 1772 to our modern times.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The postal services have been a department of the Government over the years, being a service in the general public interest. However, due to reduction of mails as electronic substitutions became popular, it was decided to corporatize the postal services in 2003.

Accordingly, since 2003, the Mauritius Post has actually brought in several postal and non-postal products and services for the benefit of citizens across the country and at their doorsteps.

The Mauritius Post has also been constantly engaged in revamping and adapting its services to better serve the population. The door-to-door distribution of pension during the confinement periods was a challenge that they have brilliantly tackled. A project for which our Prime minister himself was the driving force.

Going forward, Mauritius Post has recently requested from a consultant, a 10-Year Restructuring and Strategic Plan. The objective is to pursue its reinvention along new strategies in order to offset the setback suffered lately by the Covid-19 impact with the closure of borders whereby our international businesses were affected, causing large reduction in revenues and impacting its profitability.

The e-Commerce growth was quite prominent before Covid-19. On the other hand, even though the pandemic affected this sector over the last two years, I have requested the creation of a Special Unit with the required platform to promote e-Commerce among the population at both domestic and international levels.

The Mauritius Post has the duty to constantly innovate to adapt to the ongoing digital transformation of our economy. And talking of Innovation; with the vision and leadership of our Prime Minister, Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, our efforts during the last few years have borne their fruits.

I am proud to announce that Mauritius has preserved its first place in Sub-Saharan Africa in the latest Global Innovation Index Report. We are now ranked 45th worldwide this year, from the 52nd place in 2021.

Mauritius is thus performing even better in terms of innovation, Research and Development, Human Capital and creative inputs, amongst others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On its sestercentennial anniversary, the Mauritius Post is rising to the next level. The objective of giving its employees a friendly environment to work and citizens and businesses a service they can continue to rely on. Tackling the future, our Postal Services needs a holistic and coordinated approach, taking into account the current needs of our citizens.

We look forward to celebrating this historical achievement for several years to come. In so doing, we recognise the important social and

economic role played by post offices in our country. Its greatest victory will be its success in building a revamped, modern and prosperous Mauritius Post.

I am sure that our citizens take great pride in this anniversary and will appreciate the activities scheduled to mark this historic milestone.

I invite all Mauritians to fully live this part of the history of Mauritius.

I also wish you all a Happy World Post Day 2022!

Thank you for your attention.