



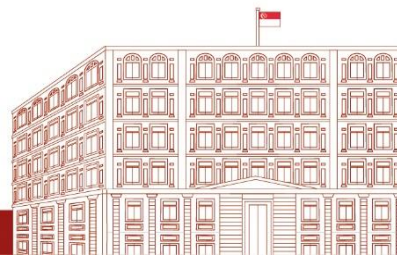
**Transcript of Welcome Remarks delivered by Dr Janil Puthucheary,  
Senior Minister of State,  
Ministry of Communications and Information,  
at SingPost Open House (1 Jun 2023)**

Ms Neo Su Yin, CEO Singapore, Singapore Post

Distinguished guests

Colleagues and friends

1. I am delighted to join SingPost as you celebrate 165 years of postal service here in Singapore.
2. The postal service existed from around the time of Sir Stamford Raffles. At that time, it was very rudimentary and administered by the military. And its purpose was to allow the colony to communicate with the rest of the Empire.
3. In the 1850s, as Singapore's trade flourished and our population grew, the reasons for us to be connected to the world increased, and mail volumes increased. The post office, from being part of the Marine Office, then became a separate department. And the General Post Office expanded and moved.
4. The Fullerton Building built in 1928 housed the General Post Office. Today, you recognise this as the Fullerton Hotel. There was a 24-hour telegraph service, there were international calls, and there was every means of connecting us with the world using the latest technology of the day, which today seems outdated, but it was important for us to become that global node.
5. Much like the progress of Singapore since those days, the developments of our postal service have been relentless with the passage of time. In 1950, we rolled out our first postal codes. It was a two-digit system dividing the island into 28 postal districts. In 1979, the postal codes became four-digits. In 1996, postal codes were upgraded to a six-digit system, which we are familiar with today, providing a unique code for each delivery point and paving the way for greater automation of mail sorting.
6. As Singapore became an independent nation, SingPost commemorated countless milestones of our nation – such as issuing a special series of stamps on 9 August 1966, to commemorate our first anniversary as an independent nation.
7. SingPost's workforce also became more inclusive. The first postwomen were employed in the 1970s; and in 1996, the Neighbourhood Postman Scheme enabled more Singaporeans to work closer to their homes as postal officers. Over time, new modes of transport have been introduced. Mobile post offices operated by vans were deployed to the rural areas, scooters, and more recently, green electric vehicles.



8. You have also seen innovations in the way you work. Automating the sorting of letters and parcels; how you do your collection methods, such as the POPStations, which are the blue boxes that hold our parcels. They have become a familiar sight in our heartlands.

9. But throughout all of these, some things are evergreen. The postal service remains a trusted, accessible, and reliable means of communications. And it becomes very personal. I spent many years studying overseas, and the blue aerogram was significant to me. This is something that you'd look out for in the hostel that I was staying. If there was a blue aerogram, it meant that either myself or one of the other foreign students had received a very important letter from home. It was very important because my mom had written it and that was the way we kept in touch.

10. Today, you don't hear about these aerograms. The means of communication as I alluded to, have changed electronically, but the postal service is just as important because now we rely on it for the movement of things. And we benefit from the ability to move things in the same way that in the past, we moved information and news. This is pleasant, important and personal, but sometimes it becomes critical.

11. And, nowhere was this clearer than in SingPost's stellar service during the COVID-19 pandemic, where you distributed Antigen Rapid Test (ART) kits and other supplies to every household in Singapore. This was a key reason why SingPost was awarded the President's Certificate of Commendation for COVID-19, an award that recognised organisations that made significant impact in Singapore's fight against COVID-19.

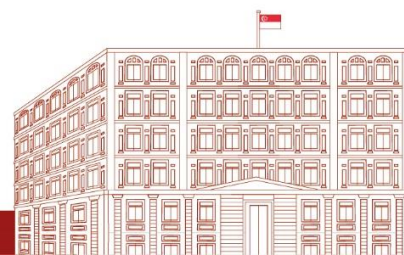
12. But now in the post-pandemic world, we see new challenges. With smart phones, fewer of us see the need for mail services and writing letters; but opportunities in that also emerge. More of us are now expecting very convenient deliveries for necessities and parcels.

13. In the last financial year, your e-commerce logistics revenues grew and accounted for more than 40 per cent of your domestic business. These challenges and opportunities mean that SingPost has to continue to innovate to stay ahead of your competition.

14. And I am heartened to see you introduce new technologies to seize these opportunities in a very competitive landscape and to better serve the public.

15. Last October, you unveiled POPStops, which are dedicated manned counters at existing post offices to allow e-commerce retailers or consumers to send and return their parcels more easily. They can beat the queue with these POPStops to drop off their e-commerce items at one go. E-commerce businesses can also seek advice from your postal staff about how to better package their items. By May this year, within seven months since you initiated this, POPStops have been rolled out in all SingPost's post offices.

16. Last December, you also launched POPDrop, an automated self-service drop-off box, making use of RFID technology. This means that once an item has been dropped into the POPDrop bin, your RFID technology will be able to provide immediate tracking status updates to customers via the SingPost app. This type of end-to-end tracking capability enables merchants and customers to ship and return products with greater convenience and confidence.



17. These types of innovations and progress will not be possible without your passion for service excellence. Generations and generations of SingPost's postal officers see yourselves as part of the communities that you serve with pride; and desire to contribute more.

18. Last year, Singapore's postal services was ranked first in service reliability by the Universal Postal Union, a testament to your hard work in keeping our people connected, no matter what the circumstances.

19. But these types of international acclaim and awards is not the only kind of service excellence that you pursue. You also do so at a very personal level within the community. In the Cheng San-Seletar constituency for example, you introduced an initiative to monitor the letterboxes of 127 seniors to look out for irregularities in mail collection patterns that might indicate some anomalies within a household, and a need for perhaps some support and intervention. These types of initiatives underscore SingPost's commitment in their communities, connecting them and supporting seniors. Events like today's Open House will also help you to actively engage the public and build stronger affinity with our community.

20. All of these wouldn't be possible without the dedication and hard work of your staff. Your capabilities, outcomes, and the awards that you have won are the result of who you have been able to attract and the kind of community that you've been able to build within your organisation. The 165 years of excellent service is also representative of 165 years of excellent staff within SingPost, and I congratulate you and your team for developing that sense of community, that sense of pride, and that sense of excellence.

21. To many of us, postal services is not merely a transaction. It is a trusted way for us to communicate with our loved ones, with the world, and people we do business with. Whether it's the delivery of aerograms or the receipt of e-commerce packages, it delivers emotion and excitement as we find out what's happening with the world as we are connected to the world. And as COVID-19 has shown, you are an essential service to deliver the assurance to the public that we can provide what they need, even in the worst of times.

22. So, I encourage SingPost to continue to be steadfast in your duty to serve the public to your utmost ability, to innovate and remain adaptable amidst disruptions that may come your way, and continue to achieve your new mission of Making Every Delivery Count for People and Planet, and providing world-class postal services.

23. On behalf of Singapore and Singaporeans – Congratulations, SingPost on your anniversary and thank you very much!

