

# Internet beats stamps in Trinidad

INTERNATION PRESS SERVICE

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad and Tobago — The advent of the Internet is being blamed for the diminishing importance of Trinidad's postal service.

For years, inadequate facilities, poorly managed operations and decreasing revenues have contributed to serious problems in the service. Now, with declining computer prices and greater Internet access — a situation fueled by keen competition among computer companies and Internet service providers — the postal service is facing an unprecedented challenge.

Consumers are finding that e-mail and private delivery services such as DHL International, Federal Express, and United Parcel International are faster, more reliable, and in the case of e-mail cheaper. For instance it costs a Trinidadian 50 cents to mail a letter to the United States and 42 cents throughout the Caribbean. But depending on usage, sending an e-mail message could be a fraction of that, as on average it costs about \$11 per month for Internet service of up to 10 hours.

The postal service employs close to 1,300 persons and spends about \$8 million annually, more than 75 percent on wages and salaries. In turn, it earns under \$6 million, a figure which even with recent postage increases is declining.

Wesley Gibbings

## Zambia's teenage pregnancies becoming a problem

LUSAKA, Zambia — A United Nations study on teenage pregnancies in Zambia estimates that two-thirds of Zambian women have either had children or are

pregnant by the time they are 19. The study says teenage pregnancies contribute significantly to the high fertility rate of 6.5 children per woman. The Zambian government has said that it hopes to reduce the fertility rate to 5.4 by the year 2000, but the U.N. has said this will not be possible unless some serious action is taken to educate people on birth control and family planning.

The report said that under

Zambia's present conditions of widespread poverty, fertility rates were unlikely to decline.

"Experience from other countries suggests that the improvement of people's economic well being is usually the major factor in the lowering of fertility rates," the report says. The Society for Family Health, a local non-governmental organization, recently launched a program called "Operation Reach" aimed at

reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and unwanted births.

The program involves incorporating traditional birth attendants and community health workers in the distribution of family planning pills and condoms. They also hope to take contraceptives to the far flung areas of the country, instead of concentrating only on the urban areas.

Anthony Mukwita

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## Penny recycling program

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The redesigned \$20 note will be introduced next year. The redesigned \$50 note and subsequent denominations will also include a large dark numeral on a light background on the back of the note. This will make it easier for the more than 3.7 million Americans with milder forms of visual impairment as well as users in low-light situations to identify the currency.

### National Penny Recycling campaign underway

The third annual National Penny Recycling campaign will continue through Dec. 31.

Penny Lovers of America Inc., a non-profit education and charitable organization, was formed in 1984 "to promote character, scholarship and patriotism among the nation's young people."

The organization conducts the penny recycling campaign to raise scholarship funds for underprivileged and disadvantaged students struggling to get a college education. Grea Neversen and Teresa Jones are two students from Washington, DC public schools who were recently selected the first scholarship recipients.

Each received an award of 610 pounds of pennies or \$1,000. Secondly, pennies are collected to help alleviate the "penny shortage" plaguing many financial institutions, merchants and retail establishments. A national goal of one million pounds of pennies has been established for this campaign. For more information, call (732) 873-3827.

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