

Buryatia Lawmakers Vote to Ban Sale of Beer in Russian Post Offices

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Buryatia's legislature has voted to ban Russian Post from running a profitable sideline in the southern region — selling beer to make up for revenue shortages from its main postal business, a news report said Friday.

Post offices in Buryatia have been letting their customers run up a a tab for beer, to be paid out of pensions and social benefit payments that residents receive at the same post offices, regional lawmaker Sergei Mezenin told deputies ahead of the vote, local news portal Baikal Daily news reported.

The practice has contributed to getting Russians drunk and "negatively affects the image of the postal service," Mezenin was quoted as saying.

Following an unsuccessful attempt to ban the practice a year ago, the legislature voted overwhelmingly during the latest hearing to ban postal beer sales starting on Jan. 1, 2015, the report said.

Russian Post acquired a license for alcohol sales in 2013, and many of its offices around the country began offering beer and other drinks and household goods to keep their business afloat, Russian media has reported.

The practice seems to have been particularly popular in remote rural regions, where post offices may not be getting much regular business, but has also gained a hold in the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad, Russian media reported.

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