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SOUTH INDIA PHILATELISTS' ASSOCIATION

(FOUNDED 1956)

(AFFILIATED TO THE PHILATELIC CONGRESS OF INDIA)



Overseas Exhibitions

PCI invites its members to participate in forthcoming exhibitions abroad and bring laurels to the country by winning top awards. Eligible Indian philatelists may contact respective Indian National Commissions for Entry Forms and other details.

For participation in a FIP World Philatelic Exhibition, an exhibit (except Literature, Youth and Mophila Classes) must have previously been awarded a minimum of Vermeil Medal at a national or equivalent exhibition. The qualifying requirements for a Literature exhibit is a Silver Medal and for a Youth exhibit a Silver - Bronze Medal at a national or equivalent exhibition.



AVIACION Y ESPACIO '96

SEVILLA, 04-12/05/96 & NORWEX '97 OSLO, 11-20/04/97 — Indian National Commissioner: Mr. Dhirubhai Mehta, 101/103 Dalamal Chambers, 29, New Marine Lines, Bombay - 400 020. Phone : (022) 2031460 FAX (022)2080404/2088782

CAPEX '96, TORONTO, 08 - 16/06/96 — Indian National Commissioner : Dr. (Mrs) Sita Bhateja, No.8, O Shaughnery Rd., Bangalore 560 025.



ISTANBUL '96

Istanbul 27/09-06/10/96 Indian National Commissioner Mr. Dilip Shah, 799, Gol Bazar (Wright Town) Jabalpur (M.P) 482 002 . Tel Res.312104, 312047 Fax: 00-91761 - 314138



PACIFIC 97, San Francisco, 29/05-08/06/97 —

The World Philatelic Exhibition under the FIP patronage will be held in San Francisco, California, USA Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first United States postage stamp. Mr. Koh Seow Chuan, Director FIP, has been appointed as the FIP co - ordinator.

This is expected to be the largest International Philatelic Exhibition ever held in the United States with over 3,500 frames in open competition in all areas of philately. The United States Postal Service, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and National Postal Museum will have a major presence with special events and exhibits appropriate for this major celebration. The exhibition will be held in the prestigious Moscone Center, located in the heart of San Francisco.

Indian national Commissioner Mr. A.R. Singhee, 464-A, Road NO.19, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad - 500 033. Phone : (040) 238453/238607 or Fax : (040) 273421. (Attn. Ajeet Singhee).

FIAP EXHIBITIONS

CHINA '96 Beijing, 18 - 24/05/96 — Indian National Commissioner : Mr. Suvra Chandra, P.O. Box 11223, Calcutta - 700 014.

PHILA TAIPEI '96 Taipei, 12-18/10/96 — Indian National Commissioner : Mr. Ajay Kumar Mittal, D-57 South Extension Pt. I, New Delhi 110 049

ECOPEX - 95

The South India Philatelists' Association (SIPA) is going to organise yet another stamp exhibition ECOPEX '95 at the Lalit Kala Academy, Madras 6 from 4th October to 9th October 1995, in about 300 frames. This will be our 11th exhibition with entries from all over India. The aim and objective of this exhibition is to promote philately and particularly thematic philately a major area covering the topic ECOLOGY.

SIPA MEETINGS

Second Sunday of every month - Regular meeting at the Philatelic Bureau, Anna Road Post office, Madras - 600 002 (10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.) first and third Sunday of every month - Auction meeting at our Library Hallat 6 Nannian Street, Madras - 3 (Timing 10.45 am. to 1 p.m.)
SIPA Library Open Tuesday & Sunday, 6 Nannian Street, Madras - 3. (7 p.m. to 8 p.m.)

NEWS FROM INDIAN POSTS

01.05.1995 : R.S. RUIKAR : 100 P.

Ramachandra Sakharam Ruikar, one of the pioneers in India, was born on 8 January, 1895 in the village of Rui, district Kolhapur, Maharashtra. Beginning with traditional instruction in his family he completed schooling in Kolhapur and college education from Pune and Nagpur, specializing in history and economics for his Masters degree. He took LLB from Alahabad University in 1920. Political ferment in the country against foreign rule overtook him. Nagpur became the centre for his legal practice and political work.

The Union movement provided ample scope for his legal acumen and also fulfilled his aspirations in the fight for the uplift of the downtrodden workers. In 1927 he established the Nagpur Textile Union, first ever to be registered under the Trade Unions Act, 1926 in the then Central Provinces and Berar. He went on to form the textile workers federation, established the union of coal mine workers in Chhindwara and Chandrapur districts and the union of manage mine workers in Mansar and Kandri in Ramtek Tehsil. He was twice elected the President of All India Trade Union Congress, the only central labour organisation at the time. In the freedom struggle, Ruikar was imprisoned on several occasions, notably after his arrest in connection with the strike of GIP Railway employees in 1930, Model Mill workers strike at Nagpur in 1932, after the fiery speech delivered in the conference of All India Trade Union Congress at Calcutta in 1933 supporting the resolution on freedom for the country, and for his role in the Non-cooperation and Quit India Movements.

With the Congress till 1938, he later joined the Forward Bloc under the leadership of Netaji and rose to be its President. In 1946 he was elected Member of the Legislative Assembly in the then Central Provinces and Berar, and was instrumental in the enactment of labour legislation of far reaching import.

Stamp : India Security Press, Nasik. FDC: Ruikar Birth Centenary celebration Committee, Nagpur. Cancellation : Smt. Alka Sharma, Artist Dept. of Post Overall Size : 3.91 x 2.90 cms., Printing Size : 3.55 x 2.54 cms Number per issue sheet : 35 Single Colour Perforation : 13 x 13. Adhesive Gravure Coated Stamp paper in sheets of 50.8 x 47 cms. Printing Process : Photogravure. Number Printed : 0.6 Million by India Security Press.

17.05.95: 100 Years of Radiocommunication : 500 P.

Innovation in radiocommunication has revolutionised the telecommunication of today. It began as an essential element for safety at sea and for communications where land facilities could not help. It has now innumerable variety of direct and indirect application.

The most significant steps towards the discovery of Radiocommunication were taken a century ago when Prof. Oliver Lodge of Great Britain demonstrated transmission over some distance, Marconi demonstrated signalling in Italy and Popov independently applied similar apparatus to demonstrate reception from electrical storms.

Wireless first proved its value to mankind on 23rd January 1900 when a small group of fishermen near the island of Hagland in the Baltic Sea was saved by a radio call to the icebreaker Yermak. Marconi had just flashed the letter's 'three dots in Morse Code, from Cornwall to Newfoundland a distance of 3500 Kilometers.

In India, wireless telegraphy was first introduced between Sagar Island and Sandheads in Diamond Harbour near Calcutta in 1902. In 1903, a link between Elephant Point and Amerst near Bombay was installed and in the year 1904 a link

was established between Diamond Island and Port Blair.

Technological advances over the years in the field of Radiocommunication are manifest in the progress from vacuum tubes to transistors and integrated circuits, from analogue to digital techniques, from terrestrial to satellite-based communications and from point-to-point fixed wireless networks to handheld global networks.

New technologies are being constantly developed to share radio frequency spectrum and geostationary satellite orbit, two limited natural resources, so that all the Radiocommunication networks the world over may function in an interference-free environment. In fact, global radio regulations have been designed to ensure equitable access to the radio frequency spectrum, freedom from harmful interference, standardisation of radio systems etc. under the aegis of the International Telecommunication Union, Geneva.

Today, Radio communication in one form or the other is used in all walks of life such as in sound and television broadcasting, satellite communication, microwave systems, communication systems for aircrafts and ships, amateur radio, radio astronomy, public telecommunication networks in urban and rural areas, remote control devices, space research, cellular phones, radio paging etc.

Text : Wireless Planning & Co-ordination wing, Ministry of Communication. Stamp & FDC design; Shri Suresh Kumar Cancellation : Smt. Alka Sharma. Overall size : 2.9 x 3.91 cms. Printing Size : 2.55 x 3.55 cms. Number per issue sheets : 40. Multi colour Perforation 13.5 x 13.5 paper: Matt Chromo Indigenous Printing Process : Photo Offset, Number Printed : 1 Million at Calcutta Security Printers, Kanpur.

23.05.1995 : Delhi Development Authority : 200 p.

The sudden influx of more than 4 lakhs of people in Delhi in the late forties added to the growing population and posed a formidable challenge to the Planners and Administrators in their bid to control and regulate the growth of the city.

The Delhi Development Act of 1957 assigned to the Delhi Development Authority the responsibility to promote and secure the development of Delhi in accordance with the Master Plan and for that purpose, conferred upon it the power to acquire, hold, manage and dispose of land and other property, carry out building, engineering, mining and other operations, execute works in connection with supply of water and electricity, disposal of sewage and other services and amenities, and generally do anything necessary or expedient for purposes of such development.

A significant landmark was crossed in March 1994 when the DDA achieved the mark of providing shelter to a million families through its various schemes of construction of flats, allotment of plots to individuals or to Cooperative societies and through dwelling units in many colonies. More than two thirds of the total dwelling units have gone to the low income group or the economically weaker sections.

Looking ahead to the next century, the Master Plan for Delhi has been further revised by DDA as the Perspective Plan 2001. It has also made a unique contribution in maintaining the ecological balance in the city by developing 16,000 acres of land as 'GREEN' for city forests, wood lands, parks, playgrounds and sports complexes.

Special postage Stamp Design : Sh. Dinesh Banduni. Text Source : Delhi Development Authority. FDC Design. Based on material supplied by DDA. Cancellation: Smt. Alka Sharma. Overall Size 29x3.91 cms. Printing Size : 2.55 x 3.55 cms Number per issue sheet : 40. Multicolour. Perforation 13.5 x 13.5 Paper: Matt Chroma Indigenous Photo Offset. Number of Stamps Printed : 1 Million at Calcutta Security Printers, Kanpur.

This day 50 years ago India, then not yet fully independent, took its first big step in foreign policy. It joined the United Nations as one of its founder members. Through turbulent times and difficult years, the United Nations has been a major factor in maintaining peace and in changing the world. slowly and often imperceptibly, into a visibly different place.

India became independent within two years of the setting up of the United Nations. The two grew together, giving strength and inspiration to each other in a symbiotic relationship. Each was the product of a long struggle, one of the embers of a violent war and the other of the sacrifices of a non-violent freedom movement.

The UN was founded on the age old dream of one world, envisioned for centuries by enlightened human beings. India's foreign policy has been deeply influenced by the universal outlook of the stalwarts who led her to freedom. India and the United Nations worked in tandem; their policies in harmony and their goals common.

India championed decolonisation, opposed racialism, spoke up for the sovereignty and equality of the newly independent countries and articulated the aspirations of their people for economic development. India stood for peace and disarmament, for democracy and human rights and, in the United Nations, stood tall, independent and non aligned.

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru explained this relationship very effectively in his speech to the Constituent Assembly in January, 1947. "The only possible real objective that we, in common with other nations, can have is the objective of operating in building up some kind of world structure, call it One World, call it what you like. The beginnings of this world structure have been laid in the United Nations Organisation. It is still feeble; it has many defects; nevertheless, it is the beginning of the world structure. And India has pledged herself to cooperate in its work".

This solemn pledge has been honoured with full dedication in word and in deed. India has been an active participant in the UN Peace - keeping Operations. This participation, for which India is uniquely qualified as a peace - loving nation, has contributed to international stability and security.

Eradicating poverty, providing employment and creating a just, fair and equitable international economic order are prime concerns of the international community. As a development country, devoted to social uplift, India was happy to add its effort to the United Nations and the international community focussing its energies on these crucial issues during the World Summit for Social Development.

India has been playing an active role in the UN's activities to promote global co - operation to prevent environmental degradation and promote sustainable growth.

India welcomed the decision of the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the UN in an appropriate manner, in furtherance of the theme "we the peoples of the United Nations, ... united for a better world" and a high - powered National Committee was established to oversee the commemorative activities planned in India.

Text Source & FDC design : Ministry of External Affairs, (UN Division) Stamps : Shri C.R. Parkashi, Cancellation : Smt. Alka Sharma, Overall size : 3.91 x 2.91 cms., Printing size 3.55 x 2.54 cms., Number per issue sheet : 40 Multi Colour, perforation : 13.5 x 13.5 Paper: Matt Chromo Indigenous, Printing Process : Photo Offset, Number of stamps printed : 1 Million each, at Calcutta Security Printers Limited, Kanpur.

30.08.95 Bharti Bhawan Library : 600 P.

Established on 15 December 1889, with the aim of bringing knowledge and education closer to the masses, the Bharati

Bhawan Library, Allahabad, provided a unique collection of Hindi, Sanskrit and Urdu books and valuable manuscripts that have inspired many generations of young men and women.

In those early days, the Library came to be closely associated with the freedom movement as revolutionaries used to often meet here and those in Naini jail received regular supplies of books to read. The Library was looked upon with suspicion by the British. Its development plans include extension of existing premises, opening of new branches, preservation of rare papers and manuscripts besides greater attention to the books and literature for women and children with a view to inculcate and encourage the reading habit and foster a sense of national unity.

The stamp design symbolizes the contribution of the Library to the dissemination and growth of knowledge. The design on the First Day cover captures the ambience of the library.

Text Source: Bharti Bhawan Library, Allahabad, Credits, Stamp & FDC : Dinesh Banduni. Cancellation : Alka Sharma, Overall size : 3.34 x 2.88 cms. Printing size : 2.99 x 2.53 cms. Number per issue sheet : 42, Colour : Multi Colour, Perforation : 13 X 13, paper Imported un/w/m adhesive gravure coated gummed stamp paper in sheets of 50.8 x 53.5 cms. Printing Process Photogravure, Number of Stamps printed : 1 Million, Printer: India Security Press.

04.09.95 The Asian - Pacific Postal Training Centre, Bangkok : 100 p.

Asian - Pacific Postal Training Centre was set up in Bangkok in the year 1970 with the primary objective of training and development of postal administrators and providing a nucleus of personnel to meet the training needs of the countries in the region. It has now enthusiastic support and co operation of participating countries. 25 years old now, the Centre has come of age standing out as a shining example of international cooperation in the field of postal training.

The importance of training as an investment in the development of human resources has come to be recognised in the pursuit of excellence and to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing global environment.

The vast range of training opportunities offered by the Centre include postal management, international postal services, Computer - related techniques, postal marketing and many other courses of a specialised nature. The thousands of Postal managers, representing different countries and cultures who have come together at the Asian Pacific Postal Training Centre over the past 25 years, have not only benefited professionally from the training but also shared both work and personal experiences with each other in a spirit of cordiality and friendship. The sharing of experience has led to a greater understanding and cooperation among the postal administrations of the region.

Its design represents the beacons of knowledge spreading out to the region from this centre of postal excellence and symbolise the concept of 'one region - one world' for the Post. The stamp is being released on the first day of the Asian - Pacific Postal Training Centre Governing Board Meeting being held in Singapore and during the course of the World Philatelic Exhibition "Singapore 95"

Credits : Stamps & FDC : Suresh Kumar, Cancellation : Alka Sharma, Overall size : 2.9 x 3.91 cms. Printing size 2.54 x 3.55 cms. Number per issue sheet 40, colour Multi colour, Perforation 13.5 x 13.5 paper Matt Chromo Indigenous, Printing Process ; Photo Offset, Number of stamps printed 1 million, at Calcutta Security Printers Limited, Kanpur.

Commemorative Stamps : a big business

A PTI news dated New Delhi, June 30 carried a news under the above heading. Some 24 to 40 million stamps and 25,000 first day covers are released every year. There is not much fanfare and media blitz. After a brief spell of six months they disappear into obscurity with traces found in scrap books of collectors and philatelic museums.

The Posts (philatelic) Department manages to net profits nearly ten times the cost of their production. Last year the department earned a revenue of Rs.6 crore from the sale of 40 issues of commemorative stamps issued to honour distinguished personalities or mark events., says Merwin Alexander, Assistant Director General, Philately.

With the cost of of single unit hovering around 25 paise and selling according to denominations that could be Rs.10 or even more, the gains are indeed whopping.

Profits are calculated on the basis of sales recorded during the first month considering that the philatelist in that period purchased the stamp for his record and did not avail the department's service for the same, says Alexander.

Unlike the widely circulated stamps, which are called definitive issues in official parlance, commemorative stamps are issued in limited numbers and are sold from selected post offices and philatelic bureau and centres. After six months the left overs are sold like ordinary stamps but are not reprinted, says the official.

Naturally a lot of labour goes into each release as the design has to be "aestatically beautiful" and the theme. Selling enough for selling upto one million units within 180 days to keep alive the attraction and interest of the buyer.

Showing some samples of a stamp on Mahatma Gandhi, to be released jointly with the South African government in October this year, Alexander says the department has a panel of about 25 to 30 artists, including eminent personalities like M F Hussain, for designing stamps. However only five to six of them are very keen on stamp designing, he adds. Besides the panel, the India Security Press prints most of the commemorative stamps also has its own artists and studios for designing.

The private sector, which has so far produced 10 issues including the two stamps released on 100 years of cinema, were allowed to print commemorative stamps since last year as "the quality is good and the cost is also less", says Alexander. (But our readers know how two issues, Begum Akhtar and Water Birds were withdrawn because of bad printing)

Complete switching over to the private printers is not in sight. The offer is only open to those security printers that

feature on the list of the Reserve Bank of India, now only two printers - the Kanpur based Calcutta Security Printers and the Madras Security Printers - produce commemorative stamps.

A multi - coloured stamp issue with a maximum of four to five colours at the most costs Rs.1.5 lakh. The cost of production is even less for stamps with fewer shades, says Alexander adding that these are figures for private printers, as he does not have similar figures for stamps produced by the India Security Press. Which falls under the Ministry of Finance.

While there is no fixed policy for fixing the denomination of a stamp, the general standard adopted these days depends upon the colours. The more the higher.

Every year around 40 issues of commemorative stamps are released, with ministers attaching great significance and personally approving the designs of such stamps. While design approval of the common stamps may be done by officials themselves, those of special stamps may go upto the PMO or special committees.

Last year the stamp commemorating the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was approved by the PMO, while the design for the issue coinciding with 50 years of the UN has been approved by a special committee headed by the External affairs Minister, says Alexander.

The go-ahead for each issue is given by a philately advisory committee comprising 35 to 40 distinguished luminaires and senior bureaucrats with the Telecommunications Minister as its head.

However, the minister is empowered to take decisions on stamp releases without consulting the committee, which has not been reconstituted since years.

Alexander says, universal messages form themes of definitive issues which have to be printed over and over again to get the message across. This year a stamp on family planning and oil conservation have been added to this list of the common stamps.

Postal Departments abroad make lot of money by commercially exploiting this hobby among people, says alexander. The vital part he forgot is that all developed countries and quite a number of smaller ones, offer a lot of incentives to stamp collectors to come forward to purchase stamps on the day of issue. Regular collectors are offered free samples and greetings, stamp collectors get one free with every 12 stamps they purchase, as is the case in Britain. Compared to that the attitude of India's post office is callous. if we talk from the point of view of commerce in postage stamps.

SINGAPORE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY BEFORE 1948

by Dr. Chua Eu Tiong & Hong Tuck Kun

Over the past forty-four years, Singapore has undergone an exciting period in the issue and design of stamps. Between 1948 and 1968, only thirty-four special stamps were issued. There have been more than ten times that number of issues since 1968 when there was a conscious policy to encourage local artists to design stamps. This led to the beginning of colourful stamp designs with themes appropriate and significant to Singapore.

Nevertheless, Singapore has an absorbing postal history much studied by local and foreign philatelists.

This history began in 1819 with the founding of Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles. In the first few years, the administration of the post office was under the Master Attendant who had other functions apart from being the Postmaster. This was possible because the quantity of mail was small and port business was rather limited. For the first thirty-four years, mail was posted without stamps.

1854 was the year when stamps of the East India Company were introduced in Singapore and the Straits Settlements. This continued until 1867. Over seventy-five Indian stamps were used during the period. However, this number includes stamps

of the same denominations and design distinguished only by the shade of paper, time of printing and the watermark of the paper. Inscribed in Indian annas and pies, these were sold at the inconvenient exchange rate of 224 rupees, 8 annas and 6.4 pies per \$100. One can imagine the frustrations of working out the local price of the first series of stamps with denominations of half anna, 1, 2 and 4 annas. Since these stamps had to be shipped from India, it was inevitable that shortages occurred. For a brief period, stamps of various denominations were not available. Instead of aggravating the shortage by using more stamps, the Postmaster came up with an idea of increasing the stamps – bisecting them diagonally. The halves are not worthless, the "damage" in fact makes them almost invaluable. From 1855 to 1860, 8 pie, 1-, 4- and 8-anna stamps were cut diagonally, making them the first and only bisected stamps in Singapore.

As these same stamps were used in India and the Straits Settlements – Malacca, Penang and Singapore – collectors identified them by their postmarks. Simple enough but postal history is a subject fraught with difficulties. At times, it is virtually impossible to distinguish the stamps



18th Century map of South-East Asia.



First postal marking of Singapore, struck in black, dated 13 May 1830. 4 examples recorded: December 1829 to 1830.

because postmarks were the same. For example, the "diamond dot" cancellation was used in both territories. The only way to establish the origin would be to obtain the envelope used, with the stamp intact.

The increased use of stamps also meant that the original post office premises – a room at the front of John Argyle Maxwell's house (core of the present Parliament House), shared with the Master Attendant's Marine Office and Clerk to the Registrar of Imports and Exports were inadequate. Trade had rapidly expanded. Consequently, a proper post office was established near the Town Hall by the side of Singapore River.

On 1st September 1867, the Straits Settlements took charge of its own postal affairs, and issued a set of stamps to coincide with the occasion. Those times, a new issue did not mean a new design. In fact, new issues were often just an administrative step in "up-dating", so to speak. So, the first Straits Settlements stamps were a set of Indian stamps overprinted with a crown and a value surcharge for "cents" – practical if not pretty. This method was used as new designs and a new printing took a very long time. As it were, the Crown Agents took some time deciding between the alternatives before settling for the overprint at the top and surcharge value at the bottom design. This was a provisional issue and the stamps were only used briefly. For this reason, the quantities of each denomination overprinted and issued were small and these stamps are rather sought after by serious

collectors. The reason that overprints were usually on the 1- and 2-anna stamps were probably because there were larger stocks of these available in India.

A "variety" (philatelic jargon for stamps with printing, perforation or watermark errors) of the 12 cents exists with a double overprint. This variety is known only in unused condition and was considered for some time as a trial overprint which found its way into the philatelic market.

When the Straits Settlements joined the Universal Postal Union in 1877, it represented a landmark in Singapore's postal history. Owing to changing postal rates both locally and out to various countries, no fewer than fifty different stamps were issued with overprints between 1879 and 1899. Up to 1877, overseas postal rates depended on the local charges of the various countries through which a letter had to pass. A letter to the United Kingdom in 1876 required 28 cents. On joining the UPU, the postage dropped from 28 cents to 12 cents if the letter was sent via Brindisi, and to 8 cents if the letter was sent via Marseilles.

Within Singapore, a half-ounce ordinary letter to any part of the town required a postage of 6 cents and the newspaper rate of equivalent weight was 2 cents. The postage was later reduced to 2 cents for the former and 1 cent for the latter. Letters posted to Penang via a Peninsula and Oriental steamer required 12 cents, and the newspaper 2 cents. These changes in postal rates made certain values, especially the higher denominations, obsolete.



*1867 Straits Settlements Provisional Issue:
Crown overprints and values surcharged
in cents.*

Other surcharges.

This period, 1879 to 1899, was one of fluctuating postal rates. In 1888, the rate on letters to Australia was reduced from 24 to 10 cents per half ounce, and from 5 to 4 cents per two ounces for printed matter. In August 1890, the registration fee was reduced from 8 to 5 cents and in January 1891, the postage for letters from Singapore to the Federated Malay States was also reduced to 5 cents per half ounce. Postal rates could not decline forever and, in 1894, they were increased: the foreign letter rate of 5 cents and domestic one of 2 cents were increased to 8 cents and 3 cents respectively. As usual, this meant hurried and further surcharges of existing stocks of stamps to the new values required.

It was quite obvious co-ordination was not too smooth in those days. Although new stamps with the required denomination were done by the well-known stamp printers and designers, Messrs De La Rue & Co. during this period, the designing and printing were often too slow and it took some time before the goods were delivered to Singapore. (The time taken by the steamers did not help, either). So frequently and quickly did postal rates change that, on some occasions, the new denominations were obsolete by the time they got to Singapore. It was then up to the Government Printing Office here to do the quick makeshift surcharge.

With such hasty overprinting and surcharging, which was necessary to meet growing public requirements, one could not expect standardisation. So numerous were the varieties of settings and overprints that ardent collectors are still searching and researching, and piecing together the entire story of the overprinted stamps. This confusion is partly brought off by contemporary stamp collectors. Overprints did not interest them and, for much of the period, many even shunned collecting Straits Settlements stamps altogether.

Letter boxes were also introduced during this period to facilitate easy posting of letters. Vendors were appointed to sell stamps on a commission basis. However, by the 1890s, it was obvious that special post offices had to be built in various parts of the town to cater for the increased posting and delivery of letters. Between 1897 and 1900, post offices were set up at Tanjong Pagar, South Bridge Road, Kampong Glam, New Harbour (now Keppel Harbour), Kandang Kerbau and Tanglin.



1906 King Edward VII stamp
– highest face value stamp
in the world then.

The stamp issue of King Edward VII marked the beginning of the 20th century. For the first time, there were issues of very high value – up to \$500 denominations. Postal charges only needed values up to \$25 and as such these \$100 and \$500 denominations were mainly used as revenue stamps.

On 1st January 1907, the transfer of Labuan to the Straits Settlements resulted in a set of Labuan stamps being issued with the overprint "Straits Settlements" for the original Labuan stamps. Between 1909 and 1912, and again between 1919 and 1920, Straits Settlements stamps were also in use in the northern Malayan states of Perlis, Kedah and Trengganu, because of a temporary shortage of several low-value stamps of these states.

Up to the First World War, stamps were issued only for functional purposes and these are called definitive stamps. The first commemorative stamps to be used in the Straits Settlements were issued in 1917. It was immediately after the First



1917 Red Cross stamps; first commemorative
issue of the Straits Settlements.



1922 King George V stamps overprinted with
"MALAYA-BORNEO EXHIBITION".

World War and, as part of the Red Cross effort to secure funds for a war victims, stocks of the existing 3- and 4-cent values received an additional "RED CROSS-2c" overprint on these stamps. This issue was sold and used only over a brief period. Commercial mail covers with these stamps affixed was in 1922. On hindsight, this seems quite apt as it coincided with the completion of reclaimed land (land reclamation is not that new, after all?) at Telok Ayer. However, in truth, the issue was to commemorate a trade exposition at Telok Ayer from 31st March to 17th April 1922. This was the Malaya-Borneo Exhibition organised by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce; participants included the Straits Settlements, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, North Borneo and Brunei. A set of King George V stamps with values from 1 cent to \$5 was issued with the overprint "MALAYA-BORNEO EXHIBITION". The participating states also issued their own stamps with this overprint. Brunei and North Borneo had, in addition, the year 1922 overprinted on the stamps.

These issues apart, the inter-war period was relatively unexciting as far as new developments were concerned.

Ironically, the fall of Singapore had given rise to a much-studied aspect of postal history – the Japanese Occupation stamps. With its wide range of overprints (some by hand stamps) and settings, many "errors and varieties" exist and this poses some challenge to the determined and patient student of philately. And to the forgers, too!

It is worthwhile to note that, as a result of the rarity of some of the overprinted stamps, forgers have gone to work to imitate some of the rare hand stamps. At the beginning, some of the forgeries were crude and obvious to the keen eye. More dangerous forgeries have, however, appeared in recent years both in Singapore and elsewhere, and collectors have to be warned in buying great rarities other than from renowned and respected stamp dealers and philatelic society auctions.

During the Japanese Occupation, the principle adopted by the Japanese administrators in the overprints was to deface the portrait of the sovereign head on the stamps in use prior to the Occupation. Stamps were recalled from the various post offices and sub-post offices throughout the country and collected at two centres, one in Kuala Lumpur and the other in Singapore, where the overprints were applied and the stamps redistributed to the various post offices.



Pre-war Straits Settlements stamps overprinted in Kanji characters for use during the Japanese occupation.

1937-41 King George Definitive Issue.

Postal Services in Singapore resumed on 16th March 1942, exactly one month from the date the island fell to the Japanese invading forces. The stamps, which were issued at the General Post Office and ten sub-post offices opened on that day, were pre-war Straits Settlements stamps hurriedly overprinted with a red double-frame "seal of Post Office of Malayan Military Department". The stamps which were overprinted for postal use and sold throughout Singapore consisted of five values, namely the 1, 2, 3, 8 and 15 cents. The 2- and 15-cent values were known to be used and used in Malacca in May 1942, owing perhaps remainder stocks of these stamps being sent over from Singapore. Three different sub-types of the double-frame overprint are known to exist and used on all five values of the issued stamps.

As with all issues where the overprints were applied by hand, human errors and inaccuracies of hand-stamping resulted in a wide number of varieties, the most notable being the missing seal with normal overprinted stamp, inverted overprint, double overprints, in that order of rarity. Different sub-types of the same stamping exist side by side, traditionally explained as the result of the officer executing the overprint taking up the wrong stamper when resuming his work on a sheet of stamps where the overprint was not applied to all the stamps previously.

The next overprinted issue bore a similar Japanese seal, except that this time the seal was bordered by a single frame and executed on a steel die as opposed to a wooden die in the first overprinted series. Nine sub-types of this overprint were executed in Singapore while others were made in Kuala Lumpur. The overprints were in red, brown, violet and black.

The stamps after the handstamped issues used in Singapore and in most of the states in Malaya, except Penang, Perlis, Kedah and Kelantan, were overprinted with "Dai Nippon - 2602 - Malaya" by machine. In 1943, the machine overprint used was in Kanji characters, introduced in line with the Japanese policy to eliminate the use of the English language. Several consistent varieties occur in the setting of 100 used in this overprint as well as the "Dai Nippon" overprint previous to this.

The Japanese Occupation period, besides creating history in the prolific issue of overprinted stamps, saw probably the first ever public Postage Stamp Design Contest in Singapore. Five stamp designs, depicting scenes of Singapore and Malaya, were selected and given values ranging from 1 to 8 cents. The 8-cent value depicted the War Memorial at Bukit Timah. Five other stamps were designed by the Postal Services Department for the values ranging from 10 to 70 cents. This issue was placed on sale in Singapore as well as in the eleven states of Malaya.

At the end of the war, the British Military Administration appointed a Major Perry as the Military Postmaster General to organise the resumption of postal service. No new stamps had been prepared for the occasion. Overprinting took a month. Short of cancelling postal services, the only method was to allow free postal services! Perhaps, that also suited the tone of victory celebrations. In any case, the month from 17th September to 19th October 1945 was the only occasion where no postage was required. Naturally, the covers (envelopes of letters posted) used during this unique month are a collector's item. (One wonders how many such covers have been overlooked and landed up as wastepaper by philatelists who naively only look for stamps...)

On 19th October 1945, pre-war Straits Settlements stamps overprinted "B.M.A. - MALAYA" were issued. On the first day of its issue, only five values - the 1, 2, 3, 6 and 10 cents - were available to the public. Other values up to \$5 followed.



1945-48 British Military Administration (BMA) overprint on pre-war Straits Settlements stamps.

The Malayan Union was set up on 1st April 1946, with the appointment of J.M. Cunningham as the Postmaster General of Malaya. A "Victory" Malayan Union stamp was prepared. The constitution of the Malayan Union, however, met with considerable opposition. Following consultations between representatives of the British Government, the rulers of the Malay States and the United Malaya's National Organisation, the Federation of Malaya came into being on 1st February 1948. The Federation included all the nine Malay states and Penang and Malacca, excluding Singapore which then became a separate colony.

During all this time, the "B.M.A. - MALAYA" overprinted stamps remained in use. Collectors and dealers had anticipated the series to be short-lived and fresh new designs to appear. Having experienced the high premiums fetched for some of the Japanese Occupation overprints, collectors, dealers, businessmen and speculators bought considerable quantities of these new overprinted stamps, hoping to realise quick capital appreciation. The heavy buying, quite unrealistic in relation to postal requirements, necessitated many of the values to be reprinted many times over. The earlier stock was all overprinted in London by Messrs De La Rue, but some of the later stocks received their overprint locally as well as in Sydney, Australia. How the stamps came to be overprinted in Sydney is a mystery. It is generally believed, however, that stocks on the way to Malaya when the Japanese occupied the territory, were diverted to Australia, and the overprinting there was a result of mutual agreement by the two administrations to utilise the idle stocks by overprinting them in an identical manner and shipping them back to Malaya.

Over a period of ten years, some of the values were reprinted no fewer than eight to ten times. On a number of occasions, the colour of the overprint or the printing of the basic overprinted stamps was so dramatically different that they deserve a separate listing in stamp catalogues.

In 1948, the first set of Singapore stamps was issued, separate from the Straits Settlements. This was a definitive issue with the usual design of the portrait of King George VI.

(Courtesy: SINGAPORE 95, Bulletin 1)



1948 - the first stamps bearing the inscription, "SINGAPORE"