

World of Stamps:

Landlocked Countries: Bhopal

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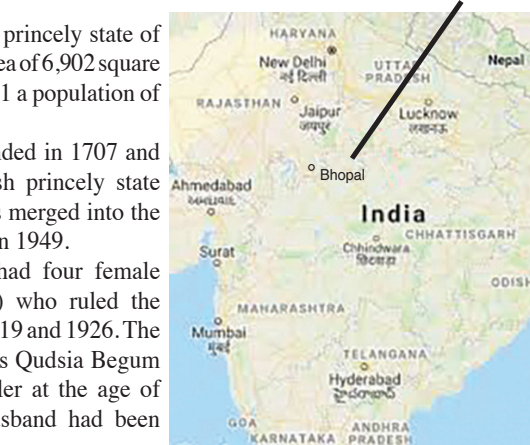
The Indian princely state of Bhopal had an area of 6,902 square miles and in 1901 a population of around 666,000.

It was founded in 1707 and became a British princely state in 1818 and was merged into the Union of India in 1949.

The state had four female Nawabs (rulers) who ruled the state between 1819 and 1926. The first of these was Qudsia Begum who became ruler at the age of 18 after her husband had been assassinated.

The last female Nawab was Sultan Kaikhusrau Jahan Begum, who ruled from 1901 until 1926 when she abdicated in favor of her son, Nawab Hamidullah Khan, who became the last ruling Nawab of Bhopal.

Bhopal's first stamps appeared in 1876 during the rule of Nawab Shah Jahan Begum, who ruled 1868-1901. The first stamps displayed her name either in an octagonal or an



1876 first issue 1/2 anna Sc. 2, computer enhanced to show ruler's embossed name
1881 4a Sc. 17, computer enhanced to show ruler's embossed name



Left to right, 1884 1/2a, Sc. 22; 1886 1/2a imperf, Sc. 25, and perf, Sc. 27



Above, left to right, 1895 perf 1/2a, Sc. 66; 1895 1/2a imperf, Sc. 61; 1899 1/2a Sc. 75; Right, 1890 1/2a, Sc. 50. This and all of the above bear Nawab Shah Jahan Begum's name.

oval. The ruler's title was additionally embossed in Urdu, on the stamps with octagonal frames, the embossing was applied in the center.

New but similar designs were introduced in 1890 and 1896.



In 1902 stamps with the name of the new Nawab, Sultan Jahan Begum were issued, also in a similar design as the 1896 stamps of her mother.

Bhopal's first ordinary postage stamp appeared in 1908 and was printed in England, was inscribed Bhopal State and featured the state arms.

The same year, all ordinary Bhopal stamps became obsolete, and the Indian post-office took over the ordinary postal service of the state.

The state, however, was permitted to issue stamps for government use, inscribed SERVICE. The first appeared in 1908 in the same design as the last ordinary stamp but inscribed H.H. BEGUM'S SERVICE and only issued with an additional overprint reading "SERVICE".

In 1926, Sultan Jahan Begum, Nawab Mohammad Mamidullah Khan became ruler, and in 1930, stamps of a similar design as the 1908 service stamps but printed in India were issued, again additionally overprinted "SERVICE". The first issue was inscribed "BHOPAL STATE", between 1932 and 1934. They also were issued with the inscription changed to "BHOPAL GOVT".

Two stamps in a similar design as the 1930 design were issued 1936-38 and were also additionally overprinted "SERVICE".

Several surcharges on these stamps appeared 1935-36.



Left, 1902 1/2a, Sc. 76; right, 1903 1/2a, Sc. 83 (old issue overprinted with the initial in red of the new Begum)



Left, 1/2a 1908 postage stamp, Sc. 99; right, 1908 1/2a Official, Sc. 01



Left, 1930 2a, O11; right, 1932 1/2a inscribed Bhopal Govt., Sc. 014



Left, Official 1935 3 pies surcharge, Sc. 019; right, Official 1936 quarter anna, Sc. 032



Left, 1935 triangular 1anna 3pies inscribed Govt. Postage, Sc. O30;
right, 1937 triangular 1anna 6pies, Sc. O31

In 1935-38 triangular official stamps featured the state arms and were inscribed "BHOPAL GOVT POSTAGE" on the lowest value and "BHOPAL STATE POSTAGE" on two others, all additionally overprinted "SERVICE".

Then, in 1936-49, a pictorial series depicting various palaces was issued, again additionally overprinted "SERVICE".

A similar design but featuring a tiger or a spotted deer appeared on 1940 stamps. These were inscribed "SERVICE".



Official 1940 tiger, Sc. O43 Official 1940 spotted deer, Sc. O44

A triangular stamp of the same (the 1935 issue, but inscribed "SERV" was issued in 1941, and during 1944- monocolour stamps in the palace designs were issued inscribed "SERVICE" (see O51 above).



Official 1941 triangular, Sc. O45

Bhopal's last official stamps were issued 1944-49 with the state arms as the central motif and inscribed "SERVICE". Two surcharged stamps in this design were issued in 1949. Bhopal official stamps became obsolete in 1950.



Left to right, top row first:
Official 1936 Moti Mahal, Sc. O34
Official 1937 Taj Mahal and Be-nazir Palaces, Sc. O36
Official 1938 Ahmadabad Palace, Sc. O40; Official 1942 Rait Ghat, Sc. O41
Official 1945 Moti Masjid monocolour, Sc. O51



Left to right: 1945 1-1/2 annas, Sc. O50; 1946 9 pies, Sc. O48; 1949 surcharge, Sc. O58