

Landlocked Countries: Azerbaijan, Part 2

by Geir Sør-Reime

Azerbaijan first issue as an independent republic was issued March 26, 1992, and celebrated independence.



1992 radio license stamps

charged with new values. Two types of overprints exist, one with thick bars and one with multiple thin bars.

1992 Caspian Sea thin bars on cover (from 1993, front of cover with 1992 radio license stamp on back)



1992 Maiden tower-definitive (Sc. 363)

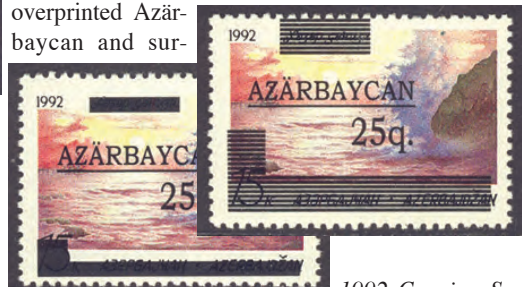
1993 Maiden tower front and back of 1993 cover (Soviet-era pre-stamped envelope) with 1992 and 1993 Maiden Tower stamps

The lack of stamps in the early independence days resulted in radio license stamps being authorized for postage March-October 1992.

A stamp featuring an oil rig on the Caspian Sea had been prepared in Russia, but the country name was not spelled according to the new Azerbaijan script (similar to Turkish script) and the stamp was only released overprinted Azərbaycan and sur-



1992 independence (Sc. 350)



1992 Caspian Sea thick, left and thin, bars, right, overprint (Sc. 351)



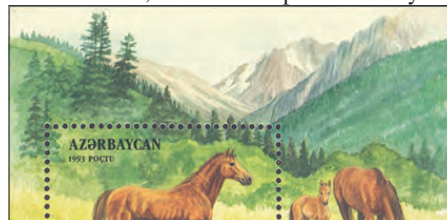
The local spelling of the country name was modified to AZƏRBAYCAN later in 1992 and appeared on definitive stamps featuring the Maiden Tower on December 20, 1992. Further values were added to this series on May 20, 1993.

Heydar Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan October 10, 1993-October 31, 2003, was a prominent politician also during Soviet times and was the leader of the Azerbaijan SSR 1969-1982 when he became a full member of the Politbureau of the Soviet Communist Party and first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers. He was dismissed from these posts by Mikhail Gorbachov in 1987. In 1990 he returned to his native Nakhichevan and from December 1991 ran this area as an independent entity and on February 17, 1993, issued stamps to celebrate his own 70th Birthday. These stamps were withdrawn after four days on the order of the then President of Azerbaijan, but when Aliyev became acting President of Azerbaijan in June 1993, the stamps were re-issued inscribed Azerbaijan instead of Nakhichevan on September 23, 1993. The original Nakhichevan issue also became valid again, but later, the Azerbaijan Post has denied that these stamps ever had postal validity.



1993 Aliyev Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan—the original Nakhichevan and the later Azerbaijan issue for Aliyev's 70th birthday (Azerbaijan version Sc. 393-94)

From 1996 onwards, bogus stamps inscribed Naxcivan have appeared on the market; these had no postal validity.



1993 Horses (Sc. 362A), 1993 Flowers (Sc. 385), 1993 Fish (Sc. 392)

Three sets of topical stamps were also issued in 1993 featuring horses, flowers, and Caspian Sea fish.

Late in 1993, a new definitive set showing the Government Palace in Baku.



1993 Government palace (Sc. 375)

There was a single stamp for Iran-Azerbaijan telecommunications co-operation (page 2). Both the latter stamps were surcharged with new values in 1994.

1994 opened with two stamps celebrating

the National Day and among the other 1994 issues we note a set of four for the 115th anniversary of the Nobel Oil Company that was in charge of the Caspian Sea oil production until the October Revolution.



Left, 1993 Iran-Azerbaijan cooperation (stamp is dated 1992 but was issued November 1, 1993) (Sc. 355A); right, 1994 surcharge (Sc. 403)



1994 National Day (Sc. 398)

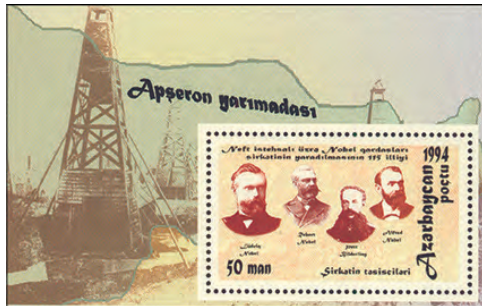
1994 Nobel oil-115th anniversary (Sc. 418a)

There was also a souvenir sheet marking the 1st anniversary of Heydar Aliyev's presidency featuring a portrait of him with the national flag and a map of Azerbaijan behind him.

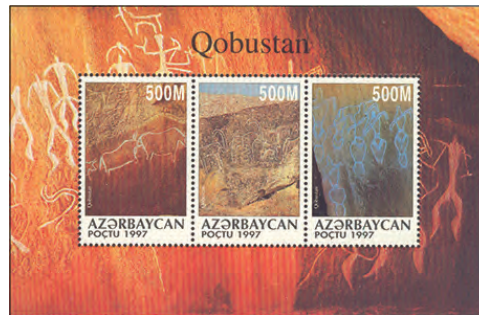
1994 Aliyev-1st anniversary of presidency (Sc. 436)



1994 surcharge 50m on 25m, Sc. 413, and on letter (Soviet era pre-stamped envelopes with 1994 surcharges on Government palace)



The rock carvings in Qubustan, and the 125th anniversary of oil production in the Caspian Sea were stamp subjects in 1997. Left, 1997 Qubustan rock art (Sc. 628); below, 1997 Oil production 125 years (Sc. 659)



President Aliyev's 75th birthday, and the birth centenary of Azerbaijan opera singer Bülbül were stamp subjects in 1998.



Above, 1998 Bülbül (birth centenary) (Sc. 678)

Right, 1998 Aliyev 75 (Sc. 673)

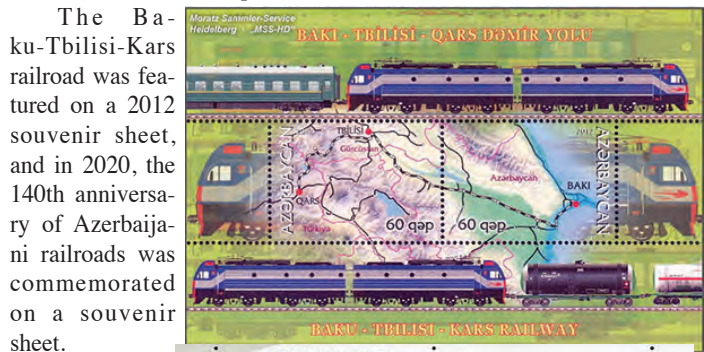


In 1999, the 75th anniversary of the autonomous republic Nakhichevan and the 80th anniversary of Azerbaijan's first stamps were celebrated with stamps (page 3).



Above, 1996 independence 5 years (Sc. 580)

1996 Railroads 115 years (Sc. 548)



Above, 2012 railroad Baku-Tbilisi-Kars;

Right, 2020 railroad 140 years





1999 80 years stamps (Sc. 692)

Below, 1999 Nakhichevan ASSR 75 years (Sc. 690)

The 10th anniversary of independence was celebrated on a 2001 stamp



Left, 2001 independence 10 years (Sc. 723); right, 2001 friendship with Russia (Sc. 726)



portraying president Aliyev, and there was a 2001 stamp for the country's friendship with Russia, portraying both Aliyev and Russian president Putin.

Pope John Paul II visited Azerbaijan in June 2002 and a souvenir sheet showing the meeting between the Pope and President Aliyev was issued in September the same year. A memorial stamp was issued 2005 after the death of Pope John Paul II.

Right, 2002 papal visit (Sc. 739)



Below 2005 Pope John Paul II in memoriam (Sc. 802)



A stamp dedicated to the autonomous region Nakhichevan was issued in 2003. The 80th anniversary of the establishment of the autonomous republic of Nakhichevan was commemorated on a 2004 stamp and a including a 2006 single shows the Gülüstän Mausoleum.

Top right, 2003 Nakhichevan with 2007 surcharge (Sc. 851); far right, 2004 Nakhichevan ASSR 80 years (Sc. 767); near right, 2006 Gülüstän Mausoleum (Sc. 828)



Several further stamps have featured Nakhichevan subjects including two 2008 definitive stamps showing towns in Nakhichevan, a 2008 single for the 125th anniversary of the Nakhichevan Drama Theater, a 2009 set of eight stamps celebrating the 85th anniversary of the autonomous republic Nakhichevan, a 2010 single showing the Noah Mausoleum, 2011 for the Aliyev Palace in Nakhichevan, 2014 issue for the 90th anniversary of the autonomous republic, 2019 several souvenir sheets with stamps showing historic buildings and landscape scenery in Nakhichevan,



Left to right, top row first: 2008 cities in Nakhichevan; 2008 Nakhichevan Drama Theater 125 years; 2010 Noah Mausoleum; 2009 Nakhichevan ASSR 85 years; 2019 Nakhichevan (heritage); 2011 Aliyev Palace Nakhichevan; 2014 Nakhichevan ASSR 90 years

In 2003 there was a stamp for the new oil pipeline from Baku via Tbilisi to Ceyhan on the Turkish Mediterranean coast.

In 2003 there was also a souvenir sheet for President Aliyev's 80th birthday (page 4). Following his death in 2003, a memorial stamp in a souvenir sheet was issued in late 2004. Also in 2004, definitive stamps with his portrait began to appear.



2003 oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan



Top left, 2003 Aliyev 80 years;
top right, 2004 Aliyev memorial;
right, 2005 Aliyev definitive
(same design as 2004)



2007 currency revaluation
surcharge (Sc. 853)

In 2007, several surcharged stamps appeared due to a currency reform where 5,000 old Manats became 1 new Manat.

The 15th anniversary of independence was marked with a single 2006 stamp.



2006 15th anniversary
independence (Sc. 841)



Left, 2008 Zarifa Aliyeva 85 (Sc. 878);
right, 2008 Aliyev 85 (Sc. 879)



2008 90th anniversary first republic (Sc. 880)

In 2008, the 90th anniversary of the first declaration of independence was commemorated on a single stamp.

The 10th anniversary of Azerbaijan's state oil fund was celebrated with a 2009 single.

In 2010, a souvenir sheet was issued to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Soviet troops intervening in national protests in Baku, where many protesters were killed (next column).

Buildings in Baku's Old City were featured on 13 stamps issued in three souvenir sheets in 2010.



2010 Baku demonstrations



2010 Old Baku (Sc 931-933)



Above, 2011 Eurovision
Song Contest winners
(from Azerbaijan); right,
2012 Eurovision Song
Contest Baku

The Azerbaijani victory in the Eurovision Song Contest 2011 was celebrated with a souvenir sheet showing the duo that won. The 2012 Eurovision Song Contest was held in Baku, and five souvenir sheets (one shown) were issued to promote the event.



Three souvenir sheets celebrating the 20th anniversary of independence were issued in 2011, and one (not shown) features a portrait of Heydar Aliyev.

He was again pictured on a 2013 stamp as a recipient of the Russian St. Andrew Order. A similar stamp was issued by Russia.



2011 independence 20 years



2013 Aliyev and Russian Order

His 90th birthday was celebrated on three souvenir sheets in 2013.

The 95th birth anniversaries of the Aliyev couple was commemorated on 2018 stamps.

2013 Aliyev 90 years



2018 Aliyev couple 95 anniversary



Since Azerbaijani lighthouses on the Caspian Seacoast were depicted on a 2013 souvenir sheet (next column).

(Right) In 2014, the 20th anniversary of the signing of a new contract

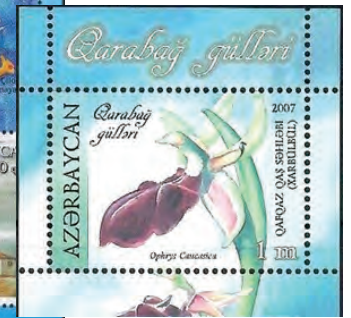


2014 20th anniversary oil concessions



for Caspian Sea oil production was marked by stamps and a souvenir sheet showing an offshore oil production platform.

The loss of Nagorno-Karabakh has been a national trauma in Azerbaijan



since 1991 and several stamps have been devoted to Karabakh subjects, including a 2006 set depicting Karabakh horses, a 2007 souvenir sheet for the 15th anniversary of the Xocali (Khojaly) mass killing of Azerbaijani civilians by Armenian forces and a 2007 set featuring flowers of Karabakh.

Top to bottom: 2007 Karabakh flowers (Sc. 863); 2006 Karabakh horses (Sc. 835); 2007 Xocali-15th anniversary of mass killings (Sc. 846)

A 2007 set featuring bridges in both Karabakh and Nakhichevan, four 2011 definitive stamps showed Karabakh flowers, four 2011 stamps featured Karabakh horses.



2007 bridges (Sc. 865)



Left, 2011 Karabakh flowers;

Right, 2011 Karabakh horses



Six 2014 stamps in a souvenir sheet showed historic monuments of Karabakh.

In 2016, Azerbaijan succeeded in coming on the offensive in Karabakh and issued a stamp to celebrate the re-conquest of the strategically important Lala Tapa hill. Azerbaijan's victory in the 2020 Karabakh war was celebrated by several issues.



2014 Karabakh heritage, historic buildings, Sc. 1073



Top left: 2016 Lala Tapa (hill) above 2020 Karabakh is Azerbaijan!

Top right, 2020 Victory;

Center: 2020 Victory parade

Bottom left: 2021 Victory Day

Bottom right: 2022 Children's drawings of the re-conquered cit of Shusha



Those issues included a souvenir sheet showing Azerbaijani soldiers raising the flag, six stamps showing the victory parade in Baku, and a stamp showing the Azerbaijani flag and proclaiming "Karabakh is Azerbaijan!" There also was a stamp proclaiming solidarity with the armed forces. In 2021, there was a stamp for the Victory Day. In 2022, children's drawings of the re-conquered city of Shusha (Shushi) were reproduced on nine stamps in a souvenir sheet.

In 2021, the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of national independence was celebrated with a souvenir sheet of two stamps.

Just south of Azerbaijan on the Caspian Coast lies the Iranian province of Gilan. Here, from June 1920 till September 1921 there was an unrecognized Persian Socialist Soviet Republic, also known as the Gilan Republic. This republic issued a series of five stamps featuring the legendary rebel Kaveh the Blacksmith.



2021 independence 30 years



Gilan issue of five stamps as well as Kaveh the Blacksmith on the badge of the republic

It appears that the republic also ordered a set of eleven stamps, seven of which feature a group of Persian Cossacks, the remaining a Cossack taking aim, but these stamps never saw postal usage.



Gilan stamps prepared but not issued

The republic eventually collapsed when Soviet Russia withdrew its support in February 1921 based on a friendship treaty with Britain.