

# Pakistan Beyond the Catalogue; Birth, Conversion and Divorce



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The Royal Philatelic Society London

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**Front cover illustration**

Registered cover with Kalat / Kharan local handstamps used from Nushki 11 March 1961 to The Currency Officer, State Bank of Pakistan, Karachi. Additional adhesives on reverse of cover.



## Introduction

This booklet has been produced in conjunction with a display given to The Royal Philatelic Society, London on Thursday 9 March 2017. Because of restricted frame space the material on display is limited to the overprints applied locally in connection with Pakistan's conversion to a system of decimal currency on 1 January 1961. Virtually all of the display, and most of the issues described in the 5pm lecture, are "beyond the scope of the catalogue" and are infrequently encountered by the general collector.

There are, however, three distinct periods of "Pakistan Local Overprints" and this booklet deals, admittedly in a fairly simplistic manner, with each of them. When Pakistan local overprints are mentioned, most philatelists think of the overprints on Indian stamps at the time of Partition. These issues have been well documented, initially by Col. Martin in 1959, and then by Doubleday and Isani in their definitive corpus in 1993. Probably as a result of this work and a rekindled interest in the stamps and postal history of the George VI period, in the UK, the sub-continent and beyond, this issue is now widely collected and have been exhibited in several Internationals in recent years.

When a decimal currency was introduced in Pakistan in 1961, six stamps in the old currency were surcharged; three each by Pakistan Security Press Ltd and Times Press. The latter were produced in a hurry with little quality control and a plethora of varieties of surcharge exist. Additionally, local treasuries and postmasters resorted to handstamping, and these issues, largely unknown to the general philatelist, are the subject of the display and occupy the bulk of this publication. Pioneering articles, primarily by Edwards and Doubleday, appeared in philatelic magazines in the 1960s and 1970s, but the definitive work is still Isani's 1981 publication which has largely stood the test of time for three and a half decades and is deserving of far wider recognition.

Finally, there are the Bangladesh overprints on the stamps of Pakistan, issued in 1971 when the two parts of the country separated. Max Smith published a pioneering series of articles in "India Post" trying to unravel the mysteries of these complex issues, unfortunately mired with a profusion of forgeries and bogus items, and research is ongoing. The fact that these stamps are also dismissed as being beyond the scope of mainstream catalogues should encourage further investigation which will undoubtedly stimulate the collection of an issue which will soon be approaching its fiftieth anniversary.

Collectors of Pakistan philately owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Messrs. Martin, Doubleday and Isani. Personally, I was encouraged by Max Smith to persist with my Pakistan collections, which I started in the mid 1960s, when I was tempted to abandon them in favour of easier and more popular subjects. Members of the, sadly currently moribund, Pakistan Study Circle re-assured me that I was not alone in collecting these fascinating stamps. Finally my thanks go to Frank Walton for having the bravery and optimism to invite me to display Pakistan to the Royal and for producing the genetically modified maps which appear later in this booklet and to David Alford for his considerable assistance with the layout of this booklet and printing it to his usual very high standard.

## Historical Background

Pakistan came into existence on 14 August 1947. India gained its independence a day later. The jewel in the crown of the British Empire had been lost as a result of the fallout from the Second World War.

The only parallel with the founding of Pakistan is probably the independent state of Israel. Both were, in effect, "invented" countries. Indeed the word "Pakistan" is an acronym; Punjab, Afghani, Kashmir, Sind, and roughly translates as "Land of the Pure". It was apparently thought up by a Punjabi student at Cambridge, Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali, whilst travelling on a London double decker bus in the early 1930s.

When I first began to give displays of Pakistan to local philatelic societies in the late 1990s I would remark that it was impossible for us to imagine how things were in India and Pakistan immediately after independence and partition. Sadly, with worldwide conflicts producing mass migration, depicted daily in the media, we are nowadays perhaps in a better position to speculate as to conditions in the sub-continent in 1947.

There was relatively little warning of what was to come. Although most politicians (with the notable exception of Sir Winston Churchill) appreciated that following the end of the Second World War the former British Colonies in Asia would gain independence, the speed with which this happened was not anticipated. Great Britain simply could not afford to keep its Colonies. The USA made it fairly clear that financial assistance to enable the war ravaged economies of Western Europe to recover was incompatible with their existing concepts of imperialism. Indian troops had fought in their millions alongside their European allies during the War and their experiences guaranteed that after the defeat of the Axis powers the old relationships based on deference to the Mother Country could no longer be sustained.

Going back almost a century the defining moment in British rule in India was the War of Independence (sometimes referred to as "The Indian Mutiny") in 1857. Following this the East India Company rule came to an end and by the India Act 1858 its interests were transferred to the Crown. It became essential to secure the north western borders of British India. Whereas in previous centuries most invasions of the sub-continent had been through the north western passes, the Company had come to India by sea. Although by the middle of the century most of Sind and the Punjab had been annexed the "Great Game" required that control be taken of further territory and a proper border between India and Afghanistan be established.

By the mid-1880s the Western educated Indian elite began to agitate for more political rights and ultimately some form of self-government. The Indian National Congress was formed in 1885 and, although stated to be a secular organization, was viewed with suspicion by the Muslim elite in the north. In 1906 the All-India Muslim League was formed and in 1913 defined its goal as self-government of the sub-continent. By 1916 the League and Congress had concluded the Lucknow Pact by which Congress conceded the principle of separate elections for Muslims in a unified goal of self-government. A statement in the British Parliament the following year fell well short of what had been hoped for.

Both Congress and the Muslim League rejected recommendations of the Simon Commission set up in 1927 as it contained no Indian members. Congress replied with a proposal for "Dominion Status" for India but rejected the League's demands for separate electorates and reserved seats for Muslims. The League preferred a federal rather than a unitary structure of government. Some progress was made during the 1930s but following poor provincial election results for the League in 1937 Mohammad Ali Jinnah returned as its leader and a revitalization followed.

Jinnah presided over the annual session of the Muslim League in Lahore on 23 March 1940 and a resolution was passed calling for the partition of India. He suggested that "geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in the majority as in the North Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units should be autonomous and sovereign." The word "Pakistan" was not used but 23 March is celebrated as "Pakistan Day" and the Lahore Resolution also became known as the "Pakistan Resolution."

Following the conclusion of hostilities in 1945 a Labour government with Atlee as Prime Minister was returned but attempts by Lord Wavell to negotiate an agreement between the competing factions in India proved impossible. With the gulf between the communities as wide as ever, Atlee declared in early 1947 that power would be transferred to responsible Indians no later than June 1948. In May 1947 Lord Mountbatten was appointed Viceroy of India to oversee the transfer of power. By this time it was accepted as inevitable that when independence arrived it would be on the basis that the country would be partitioned. On 3 June Jinnah and Nehru on behalf of their respective constituencies broadcast acceptance of Mountbatten's proposals.

The Indian Independence Act provided for the transfer of power to be brought forward to 14–15 August 1947 (15 August was deemed by Indian astrologers to be more auspicious). Jinnah was appointed Governor General of Pakistan and a new nation was born.

By the day, everything was falling apart. A multitude of questions were unanswered. Many Princely States had yet to decide whether to nail their flags to the Indian or Pakistani mast. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, whose Boundary Commission was charged with drawing up the position of the borders, was given just five weeks to make his “awards” which were published three days after independence had taken place. One recent writer, Stanley Wolpert, states that Radcliffe’s main qualification for the job was that he “had never even visited India and expressed no known opinion on its problems.”

When the details of the awards were published on 17 August chaos descended, particularly in areas of the Punjab and Bengal, as millions of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs fled across the borders. To quote Wolpert, “In an around Amritsar bands of armed Sikhs killed every Muslim they could find, while in and around Lahore, Muslim gangs, many of them ‘police’, sharpened their knives and emptied their guns at Hindus and Sikhs. Entire trainloads of refugees were gutted and turned into rolling coffins, funeral pyres on wheels, food for bloated vultures who darkened the skies over the Punjab and were sated with more flesh and blood in those final weeks of August than their ancestors had enjoyed in a century.”

What Radcliffe decided is summarized by Martin as follows; “The division was on a religious basis, the predominantly Moslem areas forming Pakistan (which) therefore consists of two portions, the West and the East, separated by about a thousand miles of India. The West is much the larger in area, but the East has a slightly larger population. West Pakistan consists of the Provinces of the North-West Frontier, the West Punjab (about two-thirds of the undivided Punjab), Sind and Baluchistan. ... East Pakistan consists of the Eastern and larger portion of Bengal. In addition a number of (Princely) States ... all in the West, acceded to Pakistan; these include Bahawalpur, the Northern States of Chitral, Dir and Swat and the Baluchistan States of Kelat and Las Bela.”

It is not known with any certainty how many people died as a result of Partition, but estimates of between half a million and a million are now generally accepted. Mass migrations took place in both directions although conditions and casualties varied greatly. In the East there seem to have been fewer murders. Where migration took place by sea there was less bloodshed.

What is certain is that the economy was thrown into chaos. How were resources (from personnel and weaponry to paper clips) to be allocated between India and Pakistan? What happens to a business if suddenly a majority of its staff leave without notice and there are no trained replacements? To again quote Col. Martin; “. ... (C)ommunications were seriously affected. In the West more than half the trains of coal en route from India on 15 August 1947 failed to arrive and no more supplies arrived for many months; trains lay idle for want of fuel and such road and rail facilities as persisted were devoted almost entirely to evacuation of refugees and movement of essential food grains. In the East the rolling stock was in a shocking state due to its war use, and the main train routes which had radiated North East from Calcutta, had to be re-oriented to radiate North West from Chittagong — a port woefully inadequate for the volume of trade thrust upon it.

In the West, the disorganization was intensified because the bulk of the shopkeepers and clerks migrated. Their replacement in lesser numbers by evacuees from India was spread over many months and many raw hands had to be trained with a paucity of instructors. ... This affected the Posts as well as other offices, and consequently non-delivery of letters was frequent. Important orders, if they arrived at all, must have often been read cursorily owing to shortage of staff and even mis-interpreted by inexperienced clerks trying manfully to carry on.”



## Overprints on Indian Stamps 1947–1949

*“Numerous provisional ‘PAKISTAN’ overprints, both handstamped and machine-printed, in various sizes and colours, on Postage and Official stamps also exist. These were made under authority of Provisional Governments, District Head Postmasters or Local Postmasters and are of considerable philatelic interest”* Stanley Gibbons, Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps.

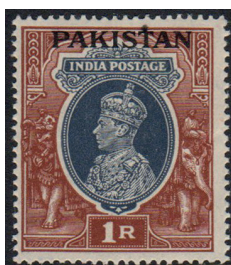
At Partition, no new stamps for Pakistan had been produced so the existing Indian adhesives were used. Indian stamps with Pakistan postmarks used during the six weeks before the Pakistan overprints were issued are surprisingly difficult to come by.



Flown cover to London with PAKISTAN ZINDABAD (Long Live Pakistan) postmark of Karachi City 21 AUG 47 (one week after independence). The cover was carried on a flight which crashed while trying to land at Bahrain and is endorsed with a DAMAGED BY SEAWATER cachet

On 1 October 1947 a set of 19 stamps with values from 3 Pies to 25 Rupees was issued. They were the current stamps of India overprinted Pakistan in capital letters. Both Ordinary and Service stamps were overprinted at the Security Press at Nasik in India who had been printing Indian stamps for over twenty years. Colonel Martin continues the story;

“Indian ordinary stamps remained valid for postage until 1 November 1947, a date later extended, at any rate in the Punjab and N.W.F.P., to 21 December 1947. Indian stamps could be exchanged for Pakistan stamps for three months after that date at face value and still later at a discount. Service stamps were to have been exchanged by 31 December 1947 but the date was later extended ... to 31 March 1948.



Nasik machine overprint

It was originally the intention to recall all Indian stamps from the post offices and treasuries and send them to Nasik for overprinting, ... The Nasik Press, however, was working overtime to cope with these and other orders and in about November 1947 a large assignment of stamps to the Punjab was burnt by a mob at Delhi railway station. It was apparently then decided to commence local overprinting for on 20 November 1947 the Revenue Commissioner North West Frontier Province recalled stamps from all the treasuries for overprinting in the Provincial Government Press.”

Copies of the Nasik prints from plates made in Lahore were applied to Ordinary stamps in Peshawar and Karachi. For the corresponding Service issue the plates were both manufactured and used in Karachi. There are differences between these and the original Nasik productions but it is very easy to confuse the printings. It would seem that the stamps started to be used from May 1948 onwards.



Peshawar handstamps from metal dies on adhesives of Edward VII, George V and pre War George VI issue

At the same time handstamps with dies made from both metal and rubber were being employed throughout West and East Pakistan. As there were stocks of sheets, blocks and singles held by District Treasuries and local post offices throughout the country it is possible to form a collection of many hundred different varieties. The standard works on the Partition overprints identify the various handstamps by size and type. The presence of a full stop (and indeed its shape and positioning) may be a critical identification factor. Generally overprints appear in shades of black and purple, but green, red or blue handstamps are occasionally found. Postmarks may often aid identification, but casual carriage may add confusion. Whatever was available was overprinted. Host stamps from the 1937 definitive issues and bearing the portraits of George V and even Edward VII have been recorded. Finally, typed and manuscript overprints exist.



Typed overprint of LANDI KOTAL on Service issue

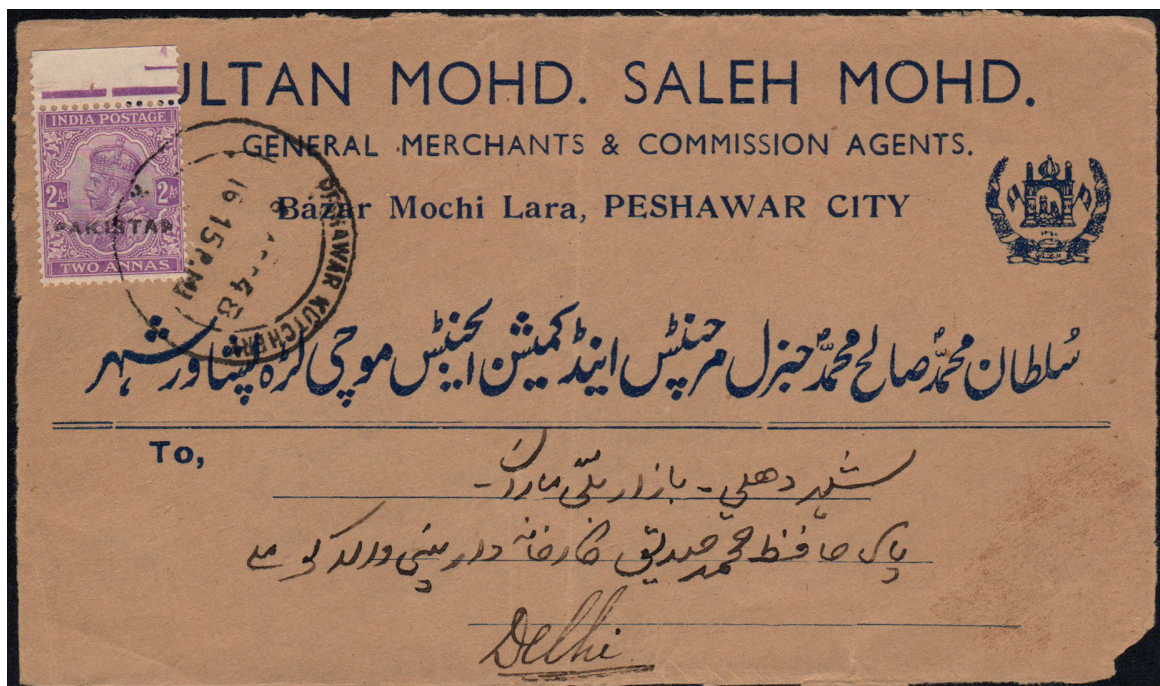




Manuscript overprints used at BARA FORT on Ordinary and Service stamps

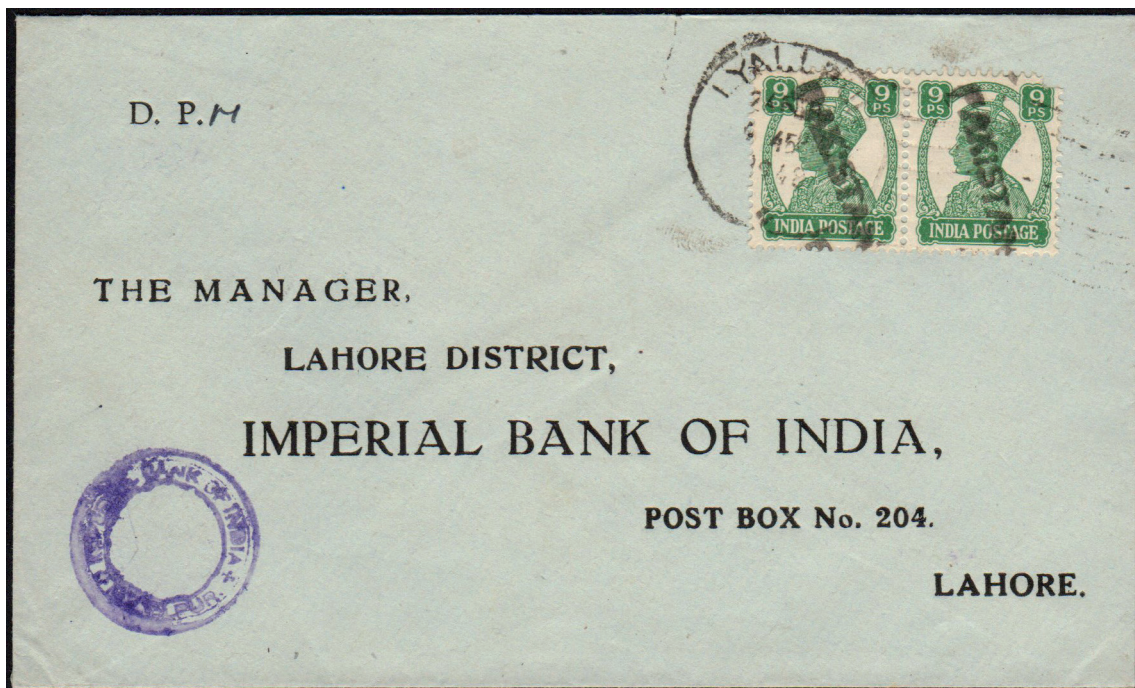
It may be thought that forgeries would be a problem for collectors of the Partition overprints. Certainly when I began to collect these issues in the 1960s I was warned that they were commonplace. Until recently, when all sorts of concoctions have begun to appear on online auction sites, I feel that this had been an over-reaction. True forgeries (i.e. attempts to copy genuine overprints) would be very difficult to manufacture, given the often crude nature of the genuine article. Bogus issues are a danger but historically these have tended to be too good to be true with overprints in lurid colours with double and inverted overprints predominating. It is not unheard of in the case of used stamps for there to be carelessness on the part of the forger. A handstamp on the top of a 1938 Bombay postmark should be treated with suspicion.

Indian stamps with Pakistan overprints were demonetized on 31 October 1949. Ample warning had been given. Martin tells us that "Early in 1950 the Government, with commendable rectitude, took action to destroy stocks. Boards of Officers were assembled in each District to supervise the destruction of Treasury stocks by burning. These Boards consisted of the Deputy Commissioner (or District Magistrate), the Treasury Officer and the Head Postmaster. In Peshawar district alone the face value of stamps thus destroyed exceeded five million rupees. ... For these thorough arrangements for destruction the Government deserves the grateful thanks of all philatelists."

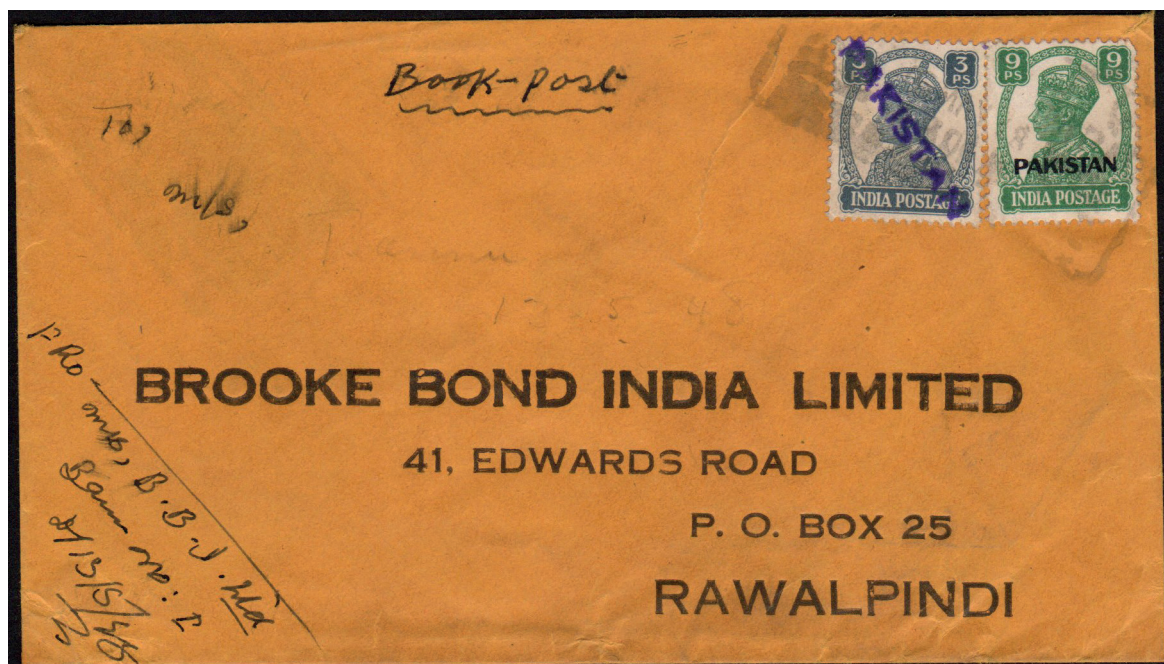


Peshawar Metal Die Handstamp from Peshawar Kutchery to Delhi





LYALLPUR local handstamps used on cover to Lahore



Bannu local overprint used with Nasik printing 9 Pies on cover to Rawalpindi (The covers sent by Brooke Bond Tea Company employees to Head Office were of great importance in identifying the origins of many of the local overprints. Some confusion was caused however due to casual carriage as the staff travelled between plantations)

In August 1948 a set of definitive stamps, recess printed by De la Rue, and mostly depicting prominent buildings and geographical features, was issued. Thereafter, most of the stamps were printed by Pakistan Security Printing Corporation, and are of traditional pictorial design. On average about two commemorative sets appeared each year and, other than a large number of minor varieties on a couple of overprinted commemoratives, do not present any problems to collectors who wish to form an attractive representative collection of Pakistan stamps for a modest outlay.

## 1961 Decimal Currency Surcharges

***“In the above issue and the corresponding official stamps we have listed errors in the stamps surcharged by the Pakistan Security Printing Corp but have not included the very large number of errors which occurred in the stamps surcharged by the less experienced Times Press. This was a very hurried job and there was no time to carry out the usual checks. It is also known that some errors were not issued to the public but came on the market by other means.***

***NOTE. Stamps in the old currency were also handstamped with new currency equivalents and issued in various districts but these local issues are outside the scope of this catalogue.”*** SG

At the beginning of the 1960s many countries in the British Commonwealth converted to a decimal currency. It is somewhat ironic that it was another decade before the Mother Country followed suit. I am not aware of any serious philatelist specializing in these issues across the whole of the Commonwealth. Surely there must be a large gold medal waiting for someone with an inventive approach to such an interesting modern philatelic subject. If such a collector exists, he or she would be advised to devote a significant percentage of the exhibit to Pakistan, because in terms of complexity and variety it is in a league of its own.

The basic problem was that the Pakistan Postal authorities behaved in the months leading up to D Day (1 January 1961) as if they were blissfully unaware of what was about to take place. The old currency of 12 Pies = 1 Anna, 16 Annas = 1 Rupee was on a par with pounds, shillings and pence for illogicality. The new regime would see 100 Paisa = 1 Rupee. In fairness to the authorities, they were not given a sufficiently long lead in time anyway, and it appears that the Pakistan Security Printing Corporation, who at the time were responsible for printing most of Pakistan's stamps, considered the task of overprinting existing labels either a task beneath them and/or financially unappealing.

Any philatelist wishing to have a more detailed explanation of the events leading up to D Day, or, indeed, any aspect of these fascinating stamps, is referred without hesitation to U. A. Isani's "Stamps of Pakistan (Decimal Currency Surcharges)". The following notes relating to official correspondence, printing numbers, forgeries etc. are taken from this book. In my discussion of the local overprints Isani is the obvious starting point, supplemented by my own research based on material which has become available since the publication of his book in 1981.

The first official correspondence relating to the introduction of the new currency quoted by Isani is from the Federal Ministry of Finance to the Provinces on 17 May 1960. "According to this letter wide publicity was to be given to the proposed change-over, so that the public could be educated. Basic arrangements like minting of the new coins, the enactment of new legislation etc., were proposed to be taken in hand. No mention is made in this important communication about the postage stamps and other items like the judicial papers, revenue stamps etc. Thus a time limit of only seven months was set within which this complicated task was expected to be completed."



ANNAS	Pies	Paisa	ANNAS	Pies	Paisa
0	0	0	4	0	25
1	1	1	5	1	26
2	2	2	6	2	26
3	3	3	7	3	27
4	4	4	8	4	27
5	5	5	9	5	28
6	6	6	10	6	28
7	7	7	11	7	29
8	8	8		8	29
9	9	9		9	30
10	10	10		10	30
11	11	11		11	31

ANNAS	Pies	Paisa	ANNAS	Pies	Paisa
0	0	6	4	0	31
1	1	7	5	1	32
2	2	7	6	2	32
3	3	8	7	3	33
4	4	8	8	4	33
5	5	9	9	5	34
6	6	9	10	6	34
7	7	10	11	7	35
8	8	10		8	35
9	9	11		9	36
10	10	11		10	36
11	11	12		11	37

ANNAS	Pies	Paisa	ANNAS	Pies	Paisa
0	0	12	4	0	37
1	1	13	5	1	38
2	2	14	6	2	39
3	3	14	7	3	39
4	4	15	8	4	40
5	5	15	9	5	40
6	6	16	10	6	41
7	7	16	11	7	41
8	8	17		8	42
9	9	17		9	42
10	10	18		10	43
11	11	18		11	43

ANNAS	Pies	Paisa	ANNAS	Pies	Paisa
0	0	19	4	0	44
1	1	19	5	1	44
2	2	20	6	2	45
3	3	20	7	3	45
4	4	21	8	4	46
5	5	21	9	5	46
6	6	22	10	6	47
7	7	22	11	7	47
8	8	23		8	48
9	9	23		9	48
10	10	24		10	49
11	11	24		11	49

Ready Reckoner Cards for conversion into Decimal Currency issued by National & Grindlays Bank Limited, Karachi

By mid-August it was becoming obvious that Pakistan Security Printing Corporation did not wish to become involved, but until a summit meeting was held in Rawalpindi on 8 November (with less than two months to go) nothing seems to have happened. A note on this meeting records that the possibility of using rubber handstamps was suggested and "It was perhaps in this meeting ... that the Post Office Department was asked to go ahead with the surcharging of the existing stocks of certain values that were held in substantial quantities. The Treasury Officers were subsequently asked to return stocks to the Central Stamp Depot, Karachi, for surcharging. Six values were selected for surcharging."



The three values overprinted by Pakistan Security Printing Corporation







The three values dealt with by Pakistan Security Printing Corp were the 3 Pies Scales of Justice stamp and the 6 Pies and 2 Annas Map stamps. Although minor varieties do occur, the major errors (doubles, inverts, wrong letters, etc) should not have occurred. To quote from Khalid Malik & Shahid Zaki's 2001 Catalogue, "In contrast to the Times Press printings which were from type-set composed words, the PSPC printing was block composed, where images of the overprint, obtained photographically, are composed into large multiples, and finally converted into metal blocks showing multiple images of the overprint. In this system there is no danger of variations of distances (within an overprint letters), letter transpositions or drop outs. Furthermore strict security measures prevented existence of major errors. Thus any inverted, double or gumside surcharging is nothing but forgeries."

Times Press had the far larger task of surcharging the 1 Anna Badshahi Mosque, Lahore, 1½ Annas Mausoleum of Jahangir and 2 Annas Crescent and Star stamps. Some 38 plates were put to use producing 85,519,540 individual labels. Given the circumstances explained by Isani, who managed to plate most of the settings of the individual plates, it is no surprise that the spectacular errors associated with these stamps exist.



Times Press overprint. Progressive error on Row 2, Stamp 6. In the first state the word PAISA has dropped out. In the second state the numeral has also disappeared. Finally the overprint is replaced but with large 1 in PASIA (sic)



Times Press overprint. Large 13 and SAISA errors

Turning now to the local handstamps, these were suggested in November and sanctioned by letter dated 6 December 1960 from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, Karachi, to the Chairman, Central Board of Revenue, Karachi, which confirms that new stamps will not be available by 1 January 1961 and consequently "it has been decided that the existing stocks of stamps should continue to be sold, but the value in terms of the new currency should be overprinted on each stamp. This overprinting could be done by the Provinces either through the agency of the Provincial Government Presses or by using an ordinary rubber stamp (Pakistan Security Printing Corporation has regretted their inability to do the overprinting). It has also been decided that for converting the present values of these stamps into the new currency, the 'rounded off' equivalents as given in the authoritative conversion table should be used." Only 25 days to go!

This information was passed down the chain of command and, because in many cases overprinted stamps were available for use on 1 January 1961, seems to have been acted on with alacrity and enthusiasm.

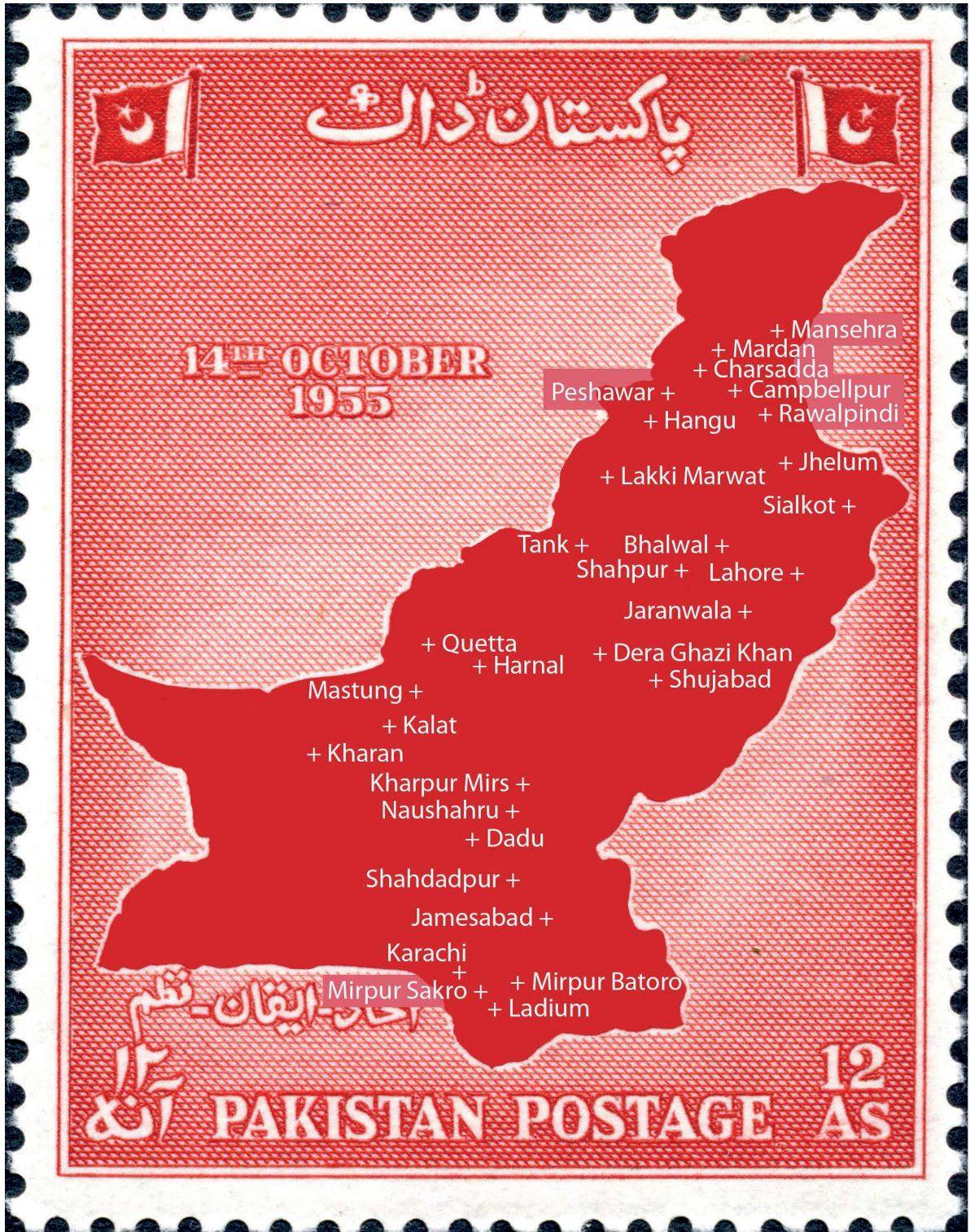
The few published works on these issues divide them into sections for West Pakistan and East Pakistan and then list the various handstamps alphabetically either by District or town. There are isolated examples where very similar surcharges are used in neighbouring locations, but whether these are examples of more than one die being manufactured at one location and then being distributed locally or separate manufacture will never be known. There appear to be no surviving written records, the overprints themselves and the application thereof was often crude, and sample sizes are often minuscule. Just because three examples of a handstamp have survived and only one of them has a legible postmark should we conclude that this is where the stamp was overprinted?

With the East Pakistan issues it is possible to further divide them into Roman and Bengali scripts, and throughout the country to differentiate between surcharges showing both the old and new currencies together or just the new one, but beyond that there is no logical reason to deviate from an alphabetical listing. There is little to be gained by repeating details available in catalogue form elsewhere, but I shall pick out a few of the more interesting features and spectacular overprints to give an overall impression of what is available to the collector.

There are 29 recorded locations within West Pakistan where local surcharges were applied. Some locations used more than one type of handstamp. In some cases both Ordinary and Service stamps were overprinted and in others only one category was so treated. Slightly more locations used handstamps showing both currencies rather than just the decimal one.

The overprint used in ATTOCK District is fairly typical as a single line handstamp with just the new currency. Its distinctive characteristics are the brackets enclosing the figures and words and the rather random use of a full stop on some values. It is often only partially struck and appears in all imaginable orientations. Inverts are almost as common as normal. Both Ordinary and, less frequently, Service stamps, were handstamped in purple ink. The earliest dates of use are in April 1961.





WEST PAKISTAN. Location of offices applying local handstamps





Attock District. Handstamps in various positions on Ordinary and Service stamps

An example of a double line overprint showing both old and new currencies is that assigned to LAKKI MARWAT in Bannu District. Here, two slightly different types of handstamp were employed on both Ordinary and Service issues. A rare variety exists with a double handstamp on a host stamp of 6 Annas. The first surcharge is 75 Paisa on 12 Annas and the second the correct 37 Paisa on 6 Annas. No example of a handstamp used on a 12 Annas adhesive has been recorded although clearly such use was envisaged as a seal was prepared.



Lakki Marwat. Single stamps with upright and inverted handstamps. The block shows double overprints, the first reading 12 Annas / 75 Paisa, the second with the correct 6 Annas / 37 Paisa

Assigning a local overprint to a particular location is difficult when only a tiny amount of material exists. Isani lists two different types of handstamp to DERA GHAZI KHAN District and a similar type to NAUSHAHRO in the Nawabshah District. This was probably the best he could do given that he had, perhaps, five loose adhesives or pieces to work from. Subsequently five covers, all used from Nausharho, have been discovered, and it is clear that there are three distinctive, albeit similar, handstamps in use. My personal view is that either all three were created in Nausharho, or possibly one of them belongs to Dera Ghazi Khan, but I wouldn't like to put my last Rupee on it.





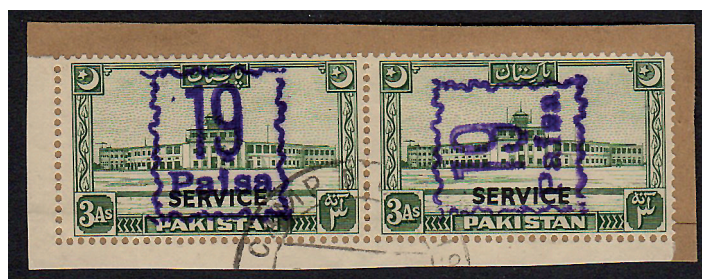
Registered cover from Naushahro 21 July 1961 to Karachi

One of the most spectacular handstamps, and one which is most frequently encountered, is that applied at TANK in the Dera Ismail Khan District of Waziristan. It is one of two types (the other is perhaps even more unusual) issued there and the proliferation of rotated handstamps only adds to the attraction of these particular overprints.



Tank. Examples of the two types of very distinctive handstamps





Tank. Service and Ordinary adhesives with a profusion of errors

It is perhaps ironic that the five locally handstamped adhesives most frequently seen in general collections of Pakistan are of, at best, doubtful status. Distributed (sometimes at a significant premium) by dealers' new issue services, the stamps illustrated below were supplied by the Philatelic Bureau in KARACHI and "used" examples are invariably cancelled to order with their postmark. For an unknown reason the 19 Paise / 3 Annas value has a different type of handstamp to the other four.



Stamps of doubtful status supplied by the Philatelic Bureau, Karachi



A single line handstamp on Ordinary issues showing only the new currency was issued at HANGU, Kohat District. Isani records 24 different adhesives with this overprint but there may be more. Whilst there are no doubts as to the authenticity of the issue, a number of philatelically inspired covers (some of them posted on 1 January 1961, the date of the introduction of the new currency) exist, but these all seem to have been through the post and simply illustrate that local stamp collectors were aware of what was happening.



Registered cover from Thull City 19 August 1961 to a London stamp dealer (additional adhesives on reverse)

The handstamp manufactured at the Railway Workshop in MUGHALPURA, Lahore District, has been regarded as either bogus or doubtful almost from its inception. This is largely because it was applied to a very large number of different adhesives, many of which were not current, and, particularly, that Rupee values were overprinted, which was neither specifically authorized nor necessary (the Rupee remaining a denomination of currency after decimalization). The fact that the handstamp is, uniquely, partly in Urdu, is also, apparently, a ground for suspicion.



Mughalpura handstamps, the used 4 Annas stamp is surcharged 50 Paisa in error





Registered cover from Moghalpura 8 July 1961, the 12 Paisa / 2 Annas with surcharge inverted

A distinctive single line handstamp showing both currencies was used at HARNAI, Quetta District.



Harnai local handstamp

The two types of handstamp employed in the KHAIRPUR MIRS District are of unusual style and it appears that the second type developed as a result of the first type being too large for use on smaller sized stamps. Only Service issues were overprinted in shades of purple, in some cases almost appearing as black.

Khairpur Mirs Type 1 handstamp which is clearly too large for the small sized adhesive







Khairpur Mirs Type 2 handstamp on 2 Annas adhesive

Handstamps which are described as very similar are listed separately by Isani for KALAT and KHARAN Districts. Service issues are assigned to Kalat, whilst Ordinary are given to Kharan. He states in relation to the former that they were "used mostly in Dhadar and Gondawa, from February to August 1961. Also known used in Kalat, Kharan-District and Nushki-District Chagai. This wide usage of service stamps in places outside the district of origin is not likely to be on account of casual coverage. It is more likely to be due to official transfer of stocks. Another possibility is that a number of identical seals may have been distributed in the adjoining districts of Kalat, Kharan and Chagai. There is, however, no evidence to this effect". The Ordinary issues are listed as having been recorded in use in Kharan and Mastung.



Kalat / Kharan handstamps with varieties. The 50 Paise / 8 Annas double surcharge is over an erroneously applied 25 Paise handstamp



Since 1981 it has been possible to study a larger body of material, but the result is probably only to confirm the uncertainty. Without doubt, handstamps on Service adhesives are significantly more common and a number of previously unrecorded errors point to a hurried or not very careful overprinting set up. As there appears to be no obvious pattern it is probably safest to treat this as one issue, albeit possibly produced in more than one location.

There has long been a dispute regarding the status of the handstamps used at DADU. There is no doubt that the handstamp on Service stamps, albeit scarce, is genuine. In an article in *Stamp Collecting* in 1976, Ron Doubleday condemned the overprints on Ordinary stamps as “very bogus”. Isani, although admitting that there had been “obvious ... philatelic exploitation”, called in evidence pieces in his possession showing genuine postal use. The contrary argument, which he did not challenge, is that the handstamp appears on far too large a variety of adhesives and that many used examples have dubious postmarks. My own conclusion is that the “pieces” Isani refers to are probably very commercial looking covers which are part of a bulk posting from Hyderabad City on 23 September 1961. I know at least eleven of these exist and seen in isolation they look like the real deal. A bogus issue does not stop being bogus just because it is accepted by the postal authorities. Discuss.

Two types of surcharge originate from CHARSADDA, Peshawar District. The commoner, larger, variety is found on several Ordinary and Service adhesives and is always struck in violet. A second, smaller, handstamp was applied to two values of the Service stamps.



The two types of Charsadda handstamps

A large single line surcharge from RAWALPINDI District is found only on Service stamps. Produced in relatively large numbers, the high proportion of inverted and badly aligned surcharges hints at a hurried operation. Used throughout the Rawalpindi area, mainly between January and April 1961, although some late usages have also been recorded.



Rawalpindi District local handstamps

The surcharge employed at SHUJABAD, Multan District is unusual in that it shows the new currency alone preceded by a decimal point and the word “Paissa” does not always align with the figures of the value. It has been plausibly suggested that two discrete handstamps were used; one for the figures and the other for the letters. Although this would have been very cumbersome, it may explain some of the peculiar errors which have been recorded.





Handstamps from Shujabad. The used example has 05 corrected to 03

Unique among the local overprints of West Pakistan (but see Shilmuri below) those used in MASTUNG were applied by machine, rather than hand, at the Ismailia Electric Press, Quetta. Isani explains in some detail how the Treasury Officer at Mastung sought clarification of apparently conflicting instructions and, receiving no reply, proceeded with the overprinting of three values of Service stamps. Printing numbers are known, but only the 13 Paisa / 2 Annas value was issued for use. It is thought that about 40,000 of this value were sold, but postally used examples are scarce.



Mastung machine overprints with inverted and double impressions

Mastung commercially used cover





The handstamps applied in East Pakistan do not exist in the quantities of their Western cousins. They were issued in fewer locations and there are generally fewer host individual stamps. It is also highly satisfying that Isani lists no bogus or doubtful issues (not that philatelic covers do not exist). A significant proportion of the Eastern handstamps are in Bengali script (only one Urdu Script handstamp is recorded throughout the whole of West Pakistan and that is bi-lingual).

A very straightforward handstamp with the new currency in one line was used in CHITTAGONG and Double Moorings in the second half of 1961.



Chittagong local handstamps

Amongst the various handstamps issued in East Pakistan those emanating from the MYMENSINGH District are the most frequently encountered. All are exclusively in Bengali script and, with the exception of the 6 Paisa / 1 Anna surcharge, are in a rectangular frame.



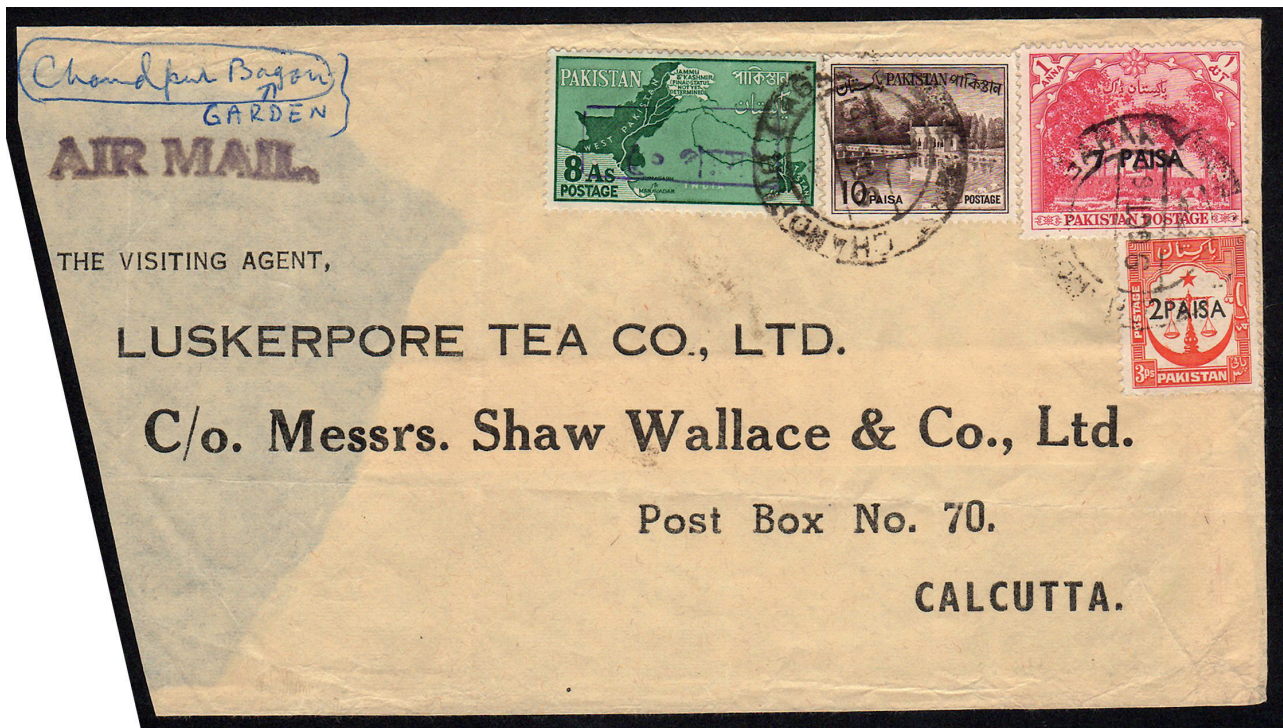
The two types of the Mymensingh handstamp



Mymensingh handstamps used on postal stationery envelopes in the new currency



It may be that the cover illustrated below is the only item so far recorded (first reported by Doubleday in 1976) from CHANDPUR BAGON in Sylhet District. The Bengali script is enclosed in an irregular box sloping from right to left.



Chandpur Bagon local handstamp on cover. 9 October 1961

A very scarce unboxed handstamp in Bengali script has been recorded in use in HAT KRISHNANPUR and Pearpur Branch Office, Faridpur District. Only the 25 Paisa / 4 Annas value has been seen.



Hat Krishnapur handstamp used in September 1961 at Pearpur





EAST PAKISTAN. Location of offices applying local handstamps



A single Ordinary stamp (6 Paisa / 1 Anna) with a handstamp in black is recorded for SHILMURI, Tippera District, by Isani. It would appear that this overprint is actually a machine print (so Mastung is not unique in this respect) and a number of further values have subsequently been discovered.



Shilmuri machine print (with extra surcharge in margin)

Furthermore a new handstamp, illustrated below, with boxed Bengali script has subsequently been discovered used in Shilmuri.





Seven different types of handstamp are assigned in the catalogues to DACCA District. Three of these are in Bengali script and four in Roman script. Only fourteen stamps in total are listed within these seven types and none of them is particularly common.



Dacca Type 7 handstamp recorded in use only in October 1961

The period of use of the decimal currency local handstamps was from 1 January 1961 and probably peaked in the spring and summer in that year. In some areas stocks of the stamps were still available several years later, but usages after the year of issue are probably best regarded as suspicious. It was not until 1975 that the decimal surcharges were declared invalid for postage.

New definitives, depicting the Khyber Pass, Shalimar Gardens, Lahore, and Chota Sona Masjid gateway were introduced between 1961 and 1963. In the ensuing decade, Pakistan continued a relatively conservative stamp issuing policy. Usually the subjects were of relevant historical or cultural significance and this has continued to the present day.

## Bangladesh

***“From 20 December 1971 various Pakistan issues were overprinted in English, Bengali or a combination of both by local postmasters, mainly using handstamps. Their use was permitted until 30 April 1973. These are of philatelic interest but are outside the scope of the catalogue” SG***

In the years following independence Pakistan enjoyed mixed fortunes. Almost from its inception there was friction between the Western and Eastern provinces, the latter feeling that it was being treated as a colony of the former. This manifested itself in attempts by the central government to make Urdu the official language of the whole country. After a few years of prosperity there was an economic slump in the early 1950s and by 1958 a succession of weak governments had almost brought the country to a state of economic and social collapse. Not surprisingly, a bloodless coup occurred in October 1958, and martial law was declared by General Ayub Khan.

The early 1960s saw the return of economic prosperity and Ayub Khan narrowly won the Presidential Election held in 1965 (although there were allegations of cheating by the General). The long standing dispute with India over Kashmir flared up again in 1965 which resulted in the Indo-Pak War which lasted for 17 days and did not produce a decisive result. As time moved on there was growing unrest

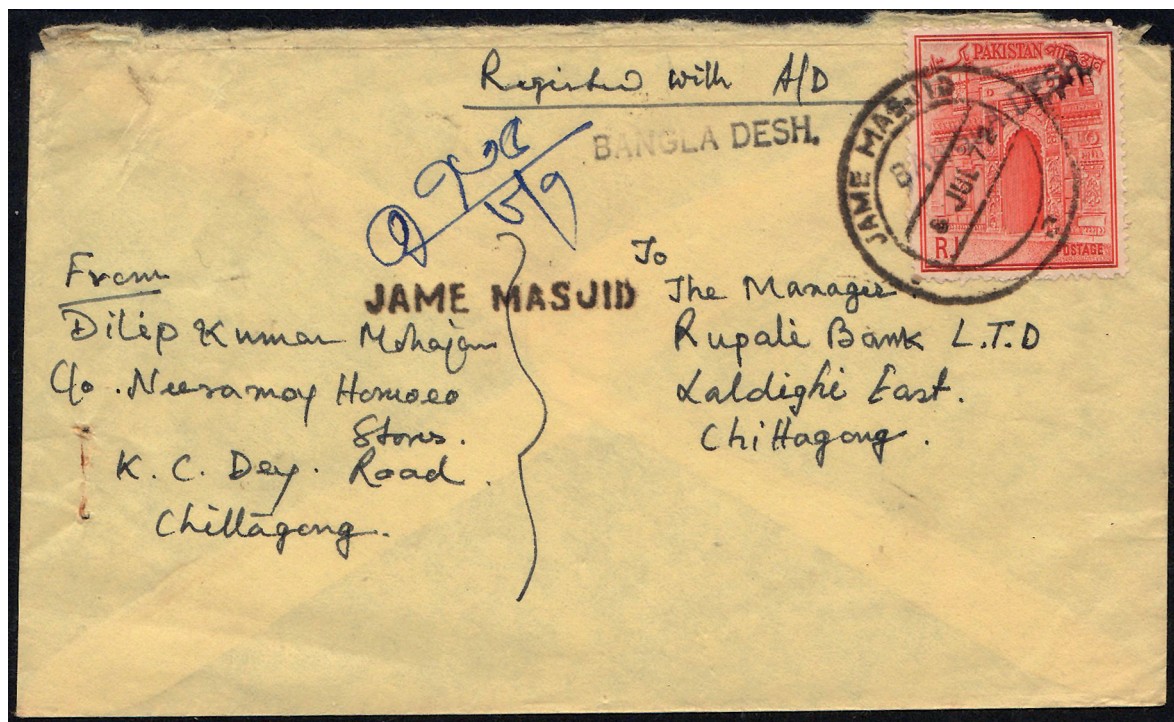


in the East and matters came to a head in 1970 when the Awami League, fighting on a manifesto of regional autonomy, won all but two of the seats in the Eastern province in the General Election of that year.

The Awami League now called for all out secession from Pakistan (the Bangla Desh movement) but the Punjabi dominated Pakistan army ruthlessly suppressed the insurgency. The resulting atrocities did not go unnoticed across the border and Indian forces backed the Bangla Desh movement to ensure that the Pakistani military was swiftly defeated. The Pakistan experiment had lasted for twenty four, often bitter, years and Bangladesh was born on 22 December 1971.

In the decade following decimalisation Pakistan had become more "philatelically aware" and hence the Bangladesh overprints are a minefield to negotiate. In the early 1970s much of the material available to collectors in the UK was of dubious origin. Although heavily marketed as "campaign mail" many of the covers on offer were created specially for collectors. After a while, large collections of mint sets, neatly arranged in stockbooks, began to appear. Postal stationery, in all its forms, was also available, but invariably in unused condition or, occasionally, cancelled to order and unaddressed. Later, bundles of commercial covers became available, but even these often contained a significant proportion of forged overprints.

My collection of mint Bangladesh overprints is housed in two of the stockbooks described above. I have, over the years, acquired a few hundred of the unused stationery envelopes, postcards, airletters etc. lovingly assembled, no doubt, by local dealers. The biggest challenge will be the four shoeboxes full of covers, which to date I have tried to sort alphabetically by postmark, segregating, so far as possible, the purely Bengali script from the Roman script and the bi-lingual handstamps. Further research always seems to be overtaken by something more pressing and less of a challenge.



Registered cover from Jame Masjid 6 July 1972 to Chittagong. Note that the BANGLADESH overprint has been applied after the stamp has been affixed to the envelope and a duplicate handstamp applied alongside

I already have a number of philatelic "retirement projects" but I suspect Bangladesh may prove to be either the most rewarding or most frustrating of them all (or possibly both).





A pair of philatelic covers. Does their obvious target audience of stamp collectors automatically condemn them as bogus, or what other title may we give them?





Dadu. Bogus Ordinary handstamp used on cover (see page 22)

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Brunei

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