
 **
 ** PROVISIONAL POSTAL STATIONERY **
 **

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(In continuation of the article that appeared in India Post of January/March 1976).

With the discontinuation of the Express Delivery Postal Service in 1975, the residual stocks of 28P Express Delivery envelopes were surcharged by the different Postal Circles of India as 25 Paise, in various forms and manners. The question of disposal of the 40P Express Delivery envelopes had been under consideration by the Posts and Telegraphs Department. At one time it was decided to sell these envelopes to the public after affixing additional

adhesive postage stamps equal to Registration fees, to serve the purpose of Registration envelopes. The idea, however, did not find favour with the public, the size of the envelope being too small and not fit for registered mail, and stocks still remained unsold. It was finally decided, under the Director General, posts and Telegraph Department Circular No.35-5/77-Phil dated the 5th September 1980, to surcharge the 40P envelopes as 35P and put them on sale to the public.

The P & T Circle, Madhya Pradesh took almost a year to get available stocks of these envelopes surcharged 35P in English and Thirty Five Paise in Hindi below the figure 35P over the embossed inscription on the right, and the inscription EXPRESS DELIVERY on the left obliterated by three horizontal lines (Fig.1). The total quantity of envelopes thus surcharged was 17,666 and these were sold from the Bhopal G.P.O. and its Branch Post Offices in the old city of Bhopal from the 10th. August 1981. At that time there was a rush of Rakhsha Bandhan mails, when sisters send ornamental sacred Rakhis to their brothers. The result was that the entire stock of the surcharged envelopes was quickly sold out within two weeks.

Unfortunately, at this time, the P.M.G's office did not give any publicity, either through newspapers or departmental circulars, to the philatelic societies in

~~तुरत वितरण~~
~~EXPRESS DELIVERY~~



Fig.1

~~तुरत वितरण~~
~~EXPRESS DELIVERY~~



Fig.2

~~तुरत वितरण~~
~~EXPRESS DELIVERY~~

35 P
 पैंतीस पैसे

Fig.3

~~तुरत वितरण~~
~~EXPRESS DELIVERY~~



35 P
 पैंतीस पैसे

Fig.4

तुरत वितरण
EXPRESS DELIVERY



Fig.5

तुरत वितरण
EXPRESS DELIVERY



Fig.6

तुरत वितरण
EXPRESS DELIVERY



Fig.7

तुरत वितरण
EXPRESS DELIVERY



Fig.8

तुरत वितरण
EXPRESS DELIVERY



Fig.9

तुरत वितरण
EXPRESS DELIVERY



Fig.10

the State, because of misguided advice from officials that this was not a philatelic issue.

Let it be remembered that at the time of issuing the 25P surcharged envelopes in 1975, wide publicity was given to these issues and stamp collectors were duly informed well before the date of release. This item of provisional postal stationery is of as much importance and interest to postal stationery collectors as any other item of postal stationery. Due to this neglect, not a single first day of issue cancellation was provided by the Philatelic Bureau, Bhopal. The authorities, when approached, stated, strangely enough, that it was not a philatelic issue. We are not clear as to what they mean by a "philatelic issue", especially as the use of the abbreviation "Phil" in the reference of the Director General's Circular dated 5.9.80 itself indicated that this is related to philately. Supposing that it was not a philatelic issue and that it was not necessary for the Department to give any prior information to stamp collectors, even then the Post Office Act 1898, as amended from time to time, and the rules made thereunder, provides that the public has to be informed before any issue of stamps. The word "stamps", as defined in the Act, includes postal stationery.

The overprinting work was entrusted to Messrs. Paper Print Industries (Krishak Jagat), Bhopal, the same Printing Press which overprinted the 28P Express Delivery envelopes in 1975. Two distinct varieties of the overprint have been noted, as shown below:

- (A) The three horizontal straight lines obliterating the inscription EXPRESS DELIVERY on the left are formed each of two horizontal lines closely placed one over the other (Fig.1), and
- (B) The above-mentioned obliterating lines are formed of three horizontal lines each.

It is not known if any specific

instructions were given to the printers to print the envelopes in two varieties, or whether they did it at their own discretion. It is also not known if both the varieties were put on sale simultaneously, or with a period of some days in between.

This issue may be called the 4th provisional issue of Madhya Pradesh Postal Circle, the first, second and third issues having been fully described in the January/March 1976 issue of "India Post".

The surcharge 35P/Thirty Five Paise (in Hindi) and the obliterating lines have both been found shifted to both sides and slanting from left to right, or right to left. As in the previous issues, so also in this issue, well centred copies are hard to find. The obliterating lines are also not equal and evenly placed one exactly below the other, and their ends shift to right or left, as will be seen from the illustrations.

As most of the stocks had already been sold out before the writer came to know about this issue, very few examples could be purchased from the vendors, and these mostly at a premium. It cannot be said what errors and philatelic varieties there may have been. The only error, seen on a small number of envelopes, is in the Hindi word 'Paisa', mis-spelled 'Pais' (पैस for पैसे), due to a missing Matra (Fig.2). This is found in variety B. One print in albino shows a thin diagonal print also, descending from left to right (Fig.3). Other albino prints have also been found. One interesting double print is in variety A, in the lower part of the envelope (Fig.4). Extreme examples of slanting and shifted prints are shown in Figs.5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. A smudged surcharge is found on quite a few copies (Fig.10).

For the benefit of students of philately, important details are given below:

The following measurements are common to both varieties A & B:

Date of issue: 10th August 1981. Number overprinted: 17,666.
 Length of surcharge: 35P - 8mm. Thirty Five Paise (in Hindi) - 14.5mm.
 Distance between first and second line of surcharge: 2.5mm.
 Height of surcharge: 35P - 3mm. Thirty Five Paise (in Hindi) - 2.5mm.

Measurements for the two varieties vary as follows:

	Variety A	Variety B
<u>Top line:</u> First line	42mm. (thin)	41mm. (thick)
Second line	42mm. (thick)	41mm. (thick)
Third line	-	42mm. (thick)
<u>Centre line:</u> First line	42mm. (thick)	42.5mm. (thick)
Second line	42mm. (thick)	40.5mm. (thin)
Third line	-	40.5mm. (thin)
<u>Bottom line:</u> First line	42mm. (thick)	41mm. (thick)
Second line	41mm. (thick)	41.5mm. (thin)
Third line	-	40.5mm. (thick)
Combined thickness of horizontal lines	1mm.	1.5mm.
Distance between top and centre lines	4.5mm.	3mm.
Distance between central and bottom lines	4.5mm.	2mm.
Distance between 35P and central lines	48mm.	47mm.
Distance between Thirty Five Paise (Hindi) and bottom obliterating lines	44.5mm.	44mm.

(Distances shown are to the nearest half millimetre)

Incidentally, in the original EXPRESS DELIVERY envelopes of both 28P and 40P, the impression EXPRESS DELIVERY has been seen in two very distinct varieties - in one the letters are rather thicker than in the other.
