

Embargoed till 12.00 noon

First-ever World Stamp Championship opens

President Nathan graces stamp olympiad



Singapore, 28 August 2004 – The first-ever World Stamp Championship was today opened by its Patron, Mr S R Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore. It was also attended by Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, who is also the Honorary President of the World Stamp Championship.

At the opening ceremony held at Suntec International Convention and Exhibition Centre, President Nathan lit a ‘torch’ to mark the opening of this world’s first stamp event, the philatelic equivalent of the Olympics in sports. The ceremony was attended by some 300 guests, jurors and competitors from more than 100 countries all over the world.

Like the Olympic Games, the World Stamp Championship brings to the world of philately the highest level of competition, creating for passionate stamp collectors an opportunity to excel in this ‘brain sport’ and to bring recognition to themselves, to their countries and their hobby.

Recognising achievements in all fields of human endeavour, from sports, scientific breakthroughs and commercial successes, to flora and fauna, diversity in arts, culture and heritage, stamps make their way into offices and homes, bringing the ideas, values, heritage and attractions of countries of which they are mini-ambassadors.

The WSC strives to include both collectors and non-collectors alike, in the hope of spreading a love for the arts, culture and heritage embodied in the humble postage stamp.

President Nathan also toured the exhibition, viewing both competitive and non-competitive exhibits, and meeting with stamp dealers and representatives from overseas postal administrations. The President was also presented with a personalised stamp sheet and postcard featuring the Istana.

Stamps First Used In Singapore 150 Years Ago

The WSC also celebrates the 150th anniversary of the first use of stamps in Singapore. The first stamps to be used in Singapore were those issued by the East India Company in 1854. A Commemorative stamp issue marking this significant milestone was also released today by Singapore Post. The stamp issue is available from the SingPost booth at WSC and at all post offices.

World Stamp Championship

Singapore last hosted a world stamp exhibition in 1995. Singapore is proud and honoured once again to be selected by the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP – International Federation of Philately) to host this first-ever world stamp championship, equivalent to the Olympics in sports. The WSC 2004 is organised by the Association of Philatelists (ASP), with SingPost as main sponsor.

A host of companies rallied together to join Singapore in hosting this mega-philatelic event, enabling it to shine on the philatelic world map as a truly global city. The WSC organisers are grateful for the sponsorship and support from these companies, without which the WSC would not have been possible. The companies are: AIA, American Express, CNN, Coca-Cola, Creative Technology, GlaxoSmithKline, HSBC, McDonald's, Microsoft, Reader's Digest, Shell, Siemens, Singapore Airlines, Sony and Swatch. These world-class companies were part of the three stamp issues in the series *Singapore – A Global City* which were released to raise funds for the WSC. In addition, the WSC organisers are also grateful for the support of Acer, Hewlett Packard, Pioneer, SingTel and Singapore Tourism Board for their contributions to the exhibition.

Traditionally, there are 11 classes in world stamp exhibitions. For the first time, a Championship class will be added to a world stamp exhibition. Twenty-four competitors have been selected to compete in this class. Out of this class, the first World Stamp Champion will emerge and will receive the coveted Championship trophy which has been created and donated by auction house Spink of London. There will be 2000 frames of philatelic exhibits (both competitive and non-competitive) from over 100 countries displayed at this event.

Competitive exhibits

This stamp olympiad will be conducted in the categories such as Traditional Philately, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Thematic Philately, Astrophilately, Maximaphily and Revenue. For the category Traditional Philately, only exhibits receiving 90 points or more will qualify for the Championship class. In Singapore, more than 20 exhibits have been entered for the Championship class.

Non-competitive exhibits

The Court of Honour area of the exhibition will display special collections and exhibits from around the world. Among these displays are:

- Exhibits of philatelic gems by members of the exclusive Monte Carlo and Grand Prix Clubs. Among these exhibits are world rarities such as the collection of old German states, 1854 Straits Settlements lithographs on cover and many more.
- Straits Settlement collection commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first use of stamps in Singapore, including the
 - o only known cover bearing all the four 1854 Indian stamps used in the Straits Settlements
 - o earliest B172 cover, this number having been assigned to Singapore in the early days
 - o only known Edwardian essays from 1901, essays being artworks produced by stamp designers.

Trade booths

Close to 100 trade booths will be set up by stamp dealers and postal administrations from around the world.

More than 50 postal administrations will be represented at WSC 2004. Among them are Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Fiji, Germany, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand, Portugal and Thailand.

Special products at SingPost booth

SingPost will have a mega stamp booth at the exhibition at which all current stamps will be available. Also available will be special products such as:

- a set of new stamps entitled The Stamp Journey, chronicling 150 years of stamps in Singapore;
- a serialised imperforated stamp sheet in a limited print run of 3,000 sheets worldwide;
- a special folder containing a stamp sheet on the President's challenge; and
- a set of 15 stamp sheets featuring 15 world-class companies.

Family Fun

Art Competition

An on-the-spot art competition will be held on 28 and 29 August at the exhibition venue. Five winning designs will be printed on stamp sheets pre-printed with Ronald McDonald.

DIY stamps and postcards

Visitors to the exhibition can bring along a favourite photograph or have their picture taken at the exhibition and have it printed instantly onto stamps or for the first time in Singapore, on postcards. MyStamp, as the product is referred to in Singapore, can be used as postage and MyPostcard, a new product from SingPost which will only be introduced at this exhibition, can be posted to anywhere in the world.

Special Exhibit on Stamp Design and Printing

At this exhibit, actual stamp artworks, stamp proofs and printers' sheets will be displayed, in addition to explanations of the various printing techniques such as intaglio and engraving, giving the visitor a comprehensive understanding of how the tiny stamp is produced as a work of art. Visitors will also be able to find out more about how stamps are produced from stamp designers, paper suppliers and printers, up close and personal.

Special Features

Three themed galleries put together by the Singapore Philatelic Museum will showcase exhibits and educational write-ups of each of the themes, with valuable contributions from many multi-national corporations and embassies. The galleries will show stamps as

the starting point for an exciting journey into education, nature, technology and interconnectivity in our diverse world.

Technology Gallery

Sponsored and supported by Shell, Sony, Creative, Microsoft and Acer, this gallery will have a life-size Formula 1 car and an old petrol pump, an old pocket radio, the world's first Trinitron colour television launched in 1968 and video tape recorder, among others.

There will be exhibits on internet communications and customized games on computers provided at the gallery.

Nature Gallery

Sponsored by HSBC and the National Parks Board, this gallery will showcase exhibits on environmental and conservation issues as well as nature and the garden city of Singapore.

Culture Gallery

Through the assistance of the embassies of Israel, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, and the tourism boards of Malaysia and Spain, this gallery will showcase a cross-section of cultures from around the world.

Other Activities

In addition to the range of exhibits and features at this World Stamp Exhibition, there will also be other activities to interest young and old alike. In addition to free goody bags, Ronald McDonald magic shows, story-telling and craft sessions for children, there will also be free talks on stamps for youths and adults, daily lucky draws with attractive prizes from Shell, Sony, Creative Technology, Reader's Digest and more.

President's Challenge Charity Auction

A special Charity Auction will also be held on 28 August 2004 to raise funds for charities under the President's Challenge. Among the items to be auctioned are signed copies of stamps from the President of the Republic of Singapore, limited sets of SPECIMEN stamp sheets, signed copies of stamps by world renowned Polish engraver Czeslaw Slania and beautiful paintings.

- End -

About Association of Philatelists

The Association of Philatelists (ASP) was officially inaugurated on 26 October 1989. As a national body, the ASP has a challenging task of cultivating and nurturing this fine hobby of stamp collecting.

With a membership of 18, including four institutional members from Singapore Stamp Club, Zui You Philatelic Society, Singapore Philatelic Society and Kreta Ayer Stamp Society, the ASP is also a member of the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately (FIAP) and the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP).

About Singapore Post Limited

SingPost is a household name in Singapore with strong brand recognition. It is the dominant provider of domestic and international postal services in Singapore. It is one of the most efficient and profitable postal operators globally and offers customers a one-stop mail, logistics and retail distribution network in Singapore.

With a highly efficient mail delivery services utilising a sophisticated distribution infrastructure and advanced mail processing technology, SingPost estimates that it has achieved domestic mail market share of greater than 95 per cent. It believes that its Spring joint venture is a market leader in private cross-border business mail solutions.

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