

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
MR MAH BOW TAN,
AT THE SINGAPORE WORLD STAMP EXHIBITION 1995
OPENING CEREMONY AT THE SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
AND EXHIBITION CENTRE, SUNTEC CITY
ON FRIDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1995 AT 10.30 AM**

I am happy to be here today to witness the opening of Singapore '95 -- Singapore's first World Stamp Exhibition.

Singapore is proud and honoured to be able to host this year's World Stamp Exhibition. With Singapore '95, Singapore joins a band of select countries which have had the privilege of hosting this most prestigious philatelic event. Singapore '95 marks a major milestone on Singapore's philatelic scene. It brings us closer to our vision of positioning Singapore as a philatelic centre where international stamp exhibitions and auctions are regularly held.

Philately has come a long way in Singapore since its humble beginning in 1854 when the stamps of the East India Company were introduced for pre-payment of postage on the island. Prior to 1854, mail was posted in Singapore without stamps. Today, some nine stamp issues, including one Greetings stamp issue, are released every year.

Our stamps are our history books. They record our heritage, achievements, and flora and fauna. Like the stamps in other countries, Singapore stamps are used not only for pre-payment of postage, but are also collected for their intrinsic value.

In the last few years, stamp collection has made significant progress in Singapore. The Association of Singapore

Philatelists and Singapore Post have been actively promoting philately by organising stamp exhibitions on both a national as well as international scale. Several stamp auctions, including those organised by reputable auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's, were also held in Singapore. Two weeks ago, the Singapore Philatelic Museum was opened to the public. The museum will serve as the focal point for all philatelic activities in Singapore. It will also serve as a resource centre for the appreciation and study of our philatelic heritage.

The Association of Singapore Philatelists, which organises Singapore '95, and Singapore Post, which is the main sponsor, have been working with various public and private agencies since 1991 to prepare for this grand event. I have been informed that the Association has successfully arranged for the display of rare philatelic gems such as the Royal Collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at this exhibition. Many of these extremely rare collections will be seen in Singapore for the very first time.

Collectors at Singapore '95 can also look forward to two special stamp issues released today by Singapore Post. The first is the sixth and the final Singapore '95 Orchids Series miniature sheet. The second is a set of stamps issued in conjunction with the introduction of a new six-digit postal code system in Singapore. This is a landmark in Singapore's postal history, as we move from using 4-digit postal codes to new six-digit codes. The new six-digit system will allow complete mechanisation of the mail sorting process and enable Singapore Post to enhance its efficiency and ensure quality service to its customers.

I am sure the various activities and attractions at Singapore '95 will appeal to all stamp collectors and visitors to the exhibition, both local and foreign, young and old. Families can also treat the visit to the exhibition as a family outing, and see it as a good way to spend quality time learning more about the customs, heritage and cultures of the world through stamps.

In closing, I would like to thank President Ong, who is the Patron of Singapore '95, for his presence with us this morning as well as his kind support for the exhibition. I would also like to thank the various postal administrations, delegates, dealers, collectors, and all the organisations involved in one way or another for the support which they have given to Singapore '95. With your support and participation, I am sure this exhibition will turn out to be a great success. We can then confidently say that Singapore '95 has truly managed to bring people from all over the world together, and unite them through stamps.

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