

SRI LANKA

Stamp

Bulletin No. 63

Commemorative Issue

The 130th Death Anniversary of
VEERA PURAN APPU



1978. 08. 08

Philatelic Bureau

Posts & Telecommunications Department

SRI LANKA (CEYLON)

Ministry of Posts &
Telecommunications,
Duke Street,
Colombo 1,
August 08, 1978.

THE Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications will issue a commemorative stamp today to mark the 130th death anniversary of Veera Puran Appu.

Veera Puran Appu belongs to both history and legend. He is the only personality to emerge from Sri Lanka's history clad in the garb of a Folk Hero. Folk, since he rose from among the common people of this land. And Hero, since he dared to challenge the might of British Imperialism at its peak of power and glory during the Victorian era. It is natural that popular imagination would bestow on such a personality, qualities which are larger than life. But as we peel off the layers of popular belief in search of the truth, a remarkable fact emerges. That is, that the truth about Puran Appu is as fantastic as the legend itself. A young man from the coastal town of Moratuwa, incurring the wrath of the local Vidane, goes to Kandy, and leads at the age of 35, the proud and conservative peasants of the hill country in armed insurrection against British rule in the middle of the 19th century, conquering the city of Matale and finding himself proclaimed King of Kandy—all this sounds like romantic fiction. But all this is documented fact. The story of Veerahennedige Francisco

Fernando of Moratuwa, *alias* Puran Appu, as recorded in official State documents (available in Colombo and London) and in newspapers of the time, is a rare instance of history confirming legend.

Veera Puran Appu was executed by the British in Kandy on Tuesday, 8th August, 1848. Viscount Torrington the British Governor of Ceylon during the Rebellion of 1848 observes in a letter to the Secretary of State for Colonies in London : " I remind you of the last words of Puran Appu the hour before he was shot. He was a brave man. He held up his hand and said 'If there had been half a dozen such men as me to lead, there would not have been a white man living in the Kandyan Provinces'. And this is true. They wanted leaders. If they had success at starting, leaders would have joined and without doubt for a time we should have lost the country. " Sir Emerson Tennent the Colonial Secretary observes that the rebel leader died "most heroically". C. R. Buller, Government Agent Kandy hails him as the "Celebrated Puran Appu".

Veera Puran Appu belongs to a long line of illustrious personalities who stood up against the Foreign Flag, and contributed to our struggle for National Freedom. He was the leader of the only popular uprising ever against foreign domination of our country—the Rebellion of 1848, the year which stands out even in world history as the Year of Revolutions. He won the plaudits even of his enemies. He lived and died a National Hero.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Date of Issue	..	78.08.08
Denomination	..	15 cents
Designer	..	Albert Dharmasiri
Colours	..	Four Colours
Format	..	Vertical
Size	..	24.5 × 39 mm.
Printing Process	..	Offset
Sheet Composition		100 stamps per sheet
Printers	..	Messrs. Metal Box Singapore, Ltd., Singapore
Paper	..	Litho Chrome coated Paper 102 gsm.
Gum	..	Tropical PV.

Official First Day Covers

The Philatelic Bureau will provide a specially designed First Day Cover and a First Day of Issue Postmark.

Terms of Sale

Overseas orders for the supply of the new stamps and first day covers should be addressed with full particulars to the Director, Philatelic Bureau, 4th Floor, Ceylinco House, Colombo 1, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), and should be accompanied by Mail Transfer, International Money Order or Bank Draft payable to the Director, Philatelic Bureau.

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