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----- STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -----
The First, Free & Only weekly on Philately & Postal Services of India

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Awards Received: Silver Medal with the 'Felicitations of the Jury' at  
'BELGICA 2001' World Philatelic Exhibition, Brussels, June 9-17, 2001

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If you've found this newsletter useful you might like to recommend it  
on to a friend. Better still, forward a copy of this issue.

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

'Thackeray's Father Gets Government's Stamp Of Approval' was the 2nd
headline story in the May 14, 2002 issue of the 'Hindustan Times' - the
leading English daily of the national capital. That was unusual, as
postal and or philatelic stories are normally not given such
prominence. We had carried the link to the story in our NEWSSCAN column
in the previous issue. The next day, the same newspaper, dealt with the
same matter in the editorial. That was pretty unusual.

And on the very next day, May 16th, 2002 in the 'Letter to Editor'
column of the same newspaper there was a detailed response by Pramod
Mahajan, Minister of Communications & I T. That is unprecedented. In 29
years of our association with India Post, we can safely vouch that
Mahajan may be one of the first Ministers to respond to a story of this
nature.

We sincerely hope that postal authorities and officers would follow the
example set by their minister and respond promptly. Or is it too much
to ask?

Until next week, please enjoy the rest of the newsletter.

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and sources to this issue: 'Business Standard'.

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Mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists  
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

COTTON COLLEGE, GUWAHATI

India Post's next stamp issue in the denomination of Rs. 4 on Cotton College, Guwahati is scheduled for May 26, 2002.

The stamp shall be produced in the quantity of 800,000 only. The stamp along with the First Day Covers and the information sheets, at Rs. 2 each, shall be available on sale at nearly 1000 selected Post Offices including all Philatelic Bureaus and Counters.

PRABODHANKAR THACKERAY

Pramod Mahajan, the Minister for Communications & IT, and Parliamentary Affairs released a commemorative stamp on Prabodhankar Thackeray, the father of Shiv Sena Chief Balasaheb Thackeray, at a special function held on May 19, 2002 at Mumbai.

The stamp is in the denomination of Rs. 4 that is the current inland letter rate. Alka Sharma designed the stamp, the First Day Cover, and the pictorial first day postmark. Information Sheet containing write-up and technical data, and the First Day Cover, each priced at Rs. 2 were issued on the occasion. Calcutta Security Printers Limited of Kanpur printed the stamps by photo-offset in two colors on Matt Chromo paper in the quantity of 0.4 million. The issued sheets contain 40 stamps.

VINOD JAIN PASSES AWAY

Vinod K Jain passed away on May 20th after a series of heart attacks. He was in Intensive Care Unit at Escorts Hospital at New Delhi since May 13, 2002.

Philatelists in India and in particular in Delhi will miss him a lot. Jain was one of the key persons behind the KALASAVYA - an organization active in the field of arts, literature, and hobbies. He edited the Signet for the Philatelic Congress of India from 1995 to 1997.

He was the Joint Secretary to Government of India in the Ministry of External Affairs serving as the Director (Library & Information) for a long time. He was an acknowledged and respected expert in the country in Library Science.

Above all he was a very nice human being - known for doing quality work and still managing to stay away from the limelight, as well as encouraging others to grow and do better.

~~~~~ LAST DATE EXTENDED FOR INPEX 2002 APPLICATIONS

The Prospectus of INPEX 2002 has been mailed some time ago and should have been received by all active philatelists. In case you have not received your copy of the prospectus, please contact the Organizing Secretary, B K Sinha bksinha@yahoo.com

The entry forms from exhibitors shall be accepted till July 15, 2002 instead of June 15, 2002 as mentioned in the Prospectus. Consequently all dates in the IMPORTANT DATES section of the Prospects will automatically be advanced.

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IMPORT OF STAMPS IN INDIA

Murasoli Maran, Minister for Commerce opened his speech with following lines while presenting the Export and Import (EXIM) Policy on March 31, 2002. "I am here with you today to announce the first Five Year EXIM Policy of the New Millennium. But I want to be realistic and state that if some commentators feel that the presentation of Five Year EXIM Policy is just a ritual, they may be right because every year at the end of March, we attempt to make about 200 amendments in the full policy-set of 5 volumes and other Departments too have their own contribution of changes which they deem fit."

We feel the same way, obtaining and going through the five volumes of EXIM policy as well as the new Customs Tariff to figure out where philatelic imports stand today. The location for the references to stamps, import policy, and the rates of custom duty have been changed almost every other year since 1990.

This year a new 8-digit commodity classification for imports was adopted from April 1, 2002. We have given new codes in parenthesis.

The import is free for postage or revenue stamps (9704 00 10), stamp-post marks, first-day covers (9704 00 20), postal stationery (stamped paper), and the like (9704 00 90), used or unused, other than those covered under heading '4907 00 10'. Import of Philatelic accessories (9704 00 90), is also free. There is also no Custom Duty on import of stamps etc.

The heading '4907 00 10' covers Indian unused postage, revenue or similar stamps including stamp-impressed paper of current or new issue and the import of these items is restricted. Specific permit or license from the Director General of Foreign Trade is required for import of items under this heading that also attracts a 25% Custom Duty.

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TELEGRAPH FACILITIES TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM POST OFFICES

India Post the provider of telegraph services to the public in the country earned Rs. 520 million as operational charges in 1999-2000 from Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) against the revenue of Rs. 170 million earned by BSNL.

The Ministry of Communications is planning to hand over the telegraph services business from India Post to Public Call Offices (PCO) franchisees. The move is aimed at reducing the expenditure incurred in the form of payments made to India Post for telegraph services. Both the BSNL and India Post have given their nod to the proposal. The facility will be withdrawn in phases over the next four years.

Under the scheme, a PCO franchisee will have to apply for registration to offer telegraph services. BSNL will pay a commission of Rs 3.50 per telegram to the PCO operator for delivering a communication. At present, BSNL pays up to Rs 50 per telegram to the postal department as agency charges while it earns about Rs 8 on an average. BSNL estimates that the move will save around Rs 100 million every year.

Sources in the department of telecom said, "The telegraph traffic has been on the decline due to better and faster alternate modes of communication. At the same time, telegraph services are an important means of communication, especially for people residing in rural areas. Hence, the department is planning to provide the service through private PCO booths."

Between 1999 and 2000, total number of telegraph operations has dropped 23 per cent from around 14 million to 10 million. However, while PCO operators and BSNL stand to benefit from the move, for the customers it means an additional expenditure of Rs 2 as commission to the PCO operator for every telegram booked

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ESPANA 2002 WORLD PHILATELIC EXHIBITION FOR YOUTH

The organizers wrote, "We are sorry to inform you that the deadline for entry forms, as well as the inscription of National Commissioners, established by FIP, was surpassed on January 31<sup>st</sup>" (2002).

India misses out in participating at this the 15<sup>th</sup> World Philatelic Exhibition for Youth by failing to appoint a commissioner in a timely manner. The commissioners for all exhibitions in 2001 were appointed on March 5, 1999. The commissioners for the forthcoming exhibitions should be appointed soon after the announcement of the exhibition to avoid these kinds of unnecessary delays and missing the opportunity of participation. Even if there are any changes in dates or cancellation of an exhibition the commissioner can take care of all eventualities.

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PROPOSALS FOR 2002

Vijay Seth from New Delhi has sent in the following suggestion for the stamps to be issued in 2002!!!

"All serious collectors in India should get together and suggest some good themes and subjects to India Post. The set of two stamps and miniature sheet and mini sheet on Indo-Japan relations is one of the high points in Indian philately in the recent past. I wish the team that worked on this set is given a more free hand to design and produce many such sets in the future, so that philately in India can reach its former glory in the 21st century.

It was nice to read about the year program being published in your newsletter. I have a few suggestions for the Year program 2002.

This year Commonwealth Games as well as Asian Games will be organized. India not only will participate in both these events but is also expected to bring in a few Gold medals. Sports are a popular theme and it is proposed that a set each on these occasions may be brought out. The instant stamps honoring events where India wins medals will be wonderful.

This year has been designated as the year of Mountains by the United Nations and a number of countries have issued beautiful stamps on the mountain ranges. India has the proud privilege of having one of the highest mountain ranges of the world, the Himalayas. We should have been one of the first countries to issue stamps on this theme. We should not lose this great opportunity in making the world understand and appreciate our natural heritage and the source of all the mighty rivers

that are the lifeline of all great cities in India. The Department of Posts have been issuing stamp on UN designated years in the past and they have been very popular as our great nation is always a great supporter of the world body, the United Nations.

I also suggest a new format. A set of four stamps in the denomination of Rs. 15 each incorporated in a miniature sheet should be issued. The stamps should not be issued separately in a sheet format of 40 stamps. The quantity of miniature sheet should be at least half a million, so that every collector can buy these."

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

PHILATELY IN TRANSITION IN INDIA, Part 9

PHILAKOREA 94 at Seoul, Korea in 1994 was the venue where D N Jatia was elected the president of International Philatelic Federation (FIP) for a second and the last term with better election results than the first time and Anil Suri's exhibit on Indian Princely States in Revenues Class won its first Gold after being downgraded to Large Vermeil at INPEX 93 national. This was also the historic occasion where Dilip Shah got his Grand Prize of Honor.

D N went on to successfully complete his term as FIP president, Shah to win more medals and honors, as well as brick bats and Suri went on to participate in SINGAPORE 95, TAIPEI 96, PACIFIC 97, and INDEPEX 97. However since then none of Suri's applications to participate were accepted till 2001. The reason?

One of the national commissioners in early 2000 told Suri that none other than Shah issued verbal orders that Suri's exhibit should not be recommended by the commissioner to the organizers. Many commissioners did not even forward the application to the organizers it seems. Are the persons, who are plain and fill positions in PCI expected to act differently?

Shah naturally was simply acting on the orders from above, in this case from Pittie. Was Pittie acting on his own or on orders from some one, which we may never know?

Dilip Shah was the national commissioner from India for the world philatelic exhibition WIPA 2000 in Vienna, Austria. He wrote to Anil Suri on November 25, 1999 "Due to over application of entries for WIPA 2000 they couldn't accept few of the entries. I'm sorry to inform you that they couldn't accept your entry." Shah also was the Vice President and Secretary General of the Philatelic Congress of India (PCI) at that time and in a very common display of his usual mix ups he signs the letter as Secretary General of the PCI and not as the national commissioner.

Suri wrote back on November 30, 1999 "I am very upset not only that my entry has been not accepted at WIPA 2000 but also none of my entries has been accepted at a world exhibition in past three years. .... I have extensively revised and improved my exhibits every time these were displayed. I am unable to understand the regular non-acceptance despite ..... I will appreciate if you can recommend and get my exhibit accepted in WIPA 2000 as a special case."

Suri also wrote another letter to M G Pittie, then PCI President on November 30, 1999. "I am unable to believe that five rejections in a row could be a coincidence. .... I am not trying to enter each and every exhibition that is there. What pains me more is when I see lesser-awarded exhibits been accepted at exhibitions where my exhibit has been rejected. .... I request you to please investigate this matter and get me the justice. Also kindly guide me to get my exhibits accepted in exhibitions beginning in 2001."

On December 30, 1999 Suri sent a reminder separately to both Shah and Pittie. That brought following response from Shah in his letter of January 3, 2000. "I have received your both the letters dt 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 99 and Dec 30, 99 in time but I could not reply to you earlier as I was busy with work."

Although Suri did not mention anything about his letter to Pittie, Shah stated in his above mentioned letter "Regarding your letter dt 30<sup>th</sup> Dec 99 you have written to Mr. M.G. Pittie and he will give the reply to your letter." While being busy with the work he did not have time to reply but did have time to exchange notes with Pittie.

Suri wrote to Shah on March 31, 2000 "Your reply gives a clear picture of the priority you accord in replying to letters from members and participants, being Vice-President & Secretary-General of PCI as well as the National Commissioner for WIPA 2000. In your own words you do not even take it as work. I am surprised at this stand taken by you. .... I wrote two separate letters on November 30, 1999 to two separate officers of PCI in two different contexts. I wrote to you in your capacity of PCI appointed National Commissioner for WIPA 2000 and to Mr. Pittie in his capacity as the President of a FIP accredited National Federation - PCI. I am amazed that you are able to confuse such a crystal clear issue. .... I understand that the President of PCI is the supreme authority under the constitution but fail to understand that he should shoulder the responsibility of an elementary job of replying letters to participants on behalf of a PCI appointed National Commissioner. I doubt very much that Mr. Pittie will agree to do this job for all the present commissioners. .... I expected from you a straight answer to my request for recommending and getting my exhibit accepted at WIPA 2000 as a special case. And to Mr. Pittie I wrote regarding consistent non-acceptance of my exhibits in past three years at various exhibitions where you were not the National Commissioner. .... Now I once again will attempt to explain to you that regarding my application to WIPA 2000 the damage is already done to me by inaction on your part. Furthermore I definitely would like to know from you, (and NOT from Mr. Pittie or any other person you may in your wisdom choose to abdicate in favor of), what action you have taken in getting the exhibit accepted in your capacity as National Commissioner for WIPA 2000? Finally here is a sincere request, PLEASE TAKE THIS ALSO AS WORK and reply immediately."

Pittie in his letter to Suri on January 20, 2000 strangely replies letters addressed to Shah but makes no mention to the letters addressed to him. "I am to acknowledge a copy of your letter to Shri Dilip Shah, dated 30 November, 1999 and also the letter dated 30 December, 1999. .... These could not be replied to earlier as I was out of town frequently. .... With reference to your entry not being accepted by WIPA 2000 is not in our hands. .... The Commissioner always tries to see that

maximum entries are sent from our Country. If the Organisers do not accept some entries, it may be due to constraint on space. This is beyond our control."

Suri wrote to Pittie on March 31, 2000 "I eagerly await a reply to my letters of November 30, and December 30, 1999. To help you do that I once again state in brief the events. Kindly refer to my letters addressed to you as mentioned above for more details. I have applied to the following exhibitions in past three years, unfortunately all without any success.

Exhibition, Exhibit, National Commissioner  
ISRAEL 98, Fiscals of Cochin, Vispi S Dastur  
IBRA 99, Fiscals of Cochin, Damyanti Pittie  
PHILEXFRANCE 99, Fiscals of Kashmir, Dhirubhai Mehta  
THE STAMP SHOW 2000, Fiscals of Cochin, Yogesh Kumar  
WIPA 2000, Fiscals of Kashmir, Dilip Shah

I would like to put it on record that in the above exhibitions entries with much less merit and award levels in 'fiscal class' from India were accepted. .... I wish to know from you the responsibilities National Commissioners have, if any, towards participants or are they appointed solely to enjoy the hospitality of the organizers. .... I suspect these instances are evident of willful discrimination against me. And it has resulted in a lot of mental agony for last three years especially as I am on the verge of moving to the next stage in the competition namely Large Gold. .... The indifferent attitude of PCI appointed National Commissioners has damaged my country's honor and mine."

Shah wrote to Suri on April 5, 2000 with a copy to Pittie "That I had sent 15 entries which are as under:- Mr. Zahidul Islam, Daniel Montheru, Anil Suri, Master sachin Goyal, B. J. Kumar, Aman Khanna, Ajay Mittal, P.G. Bhargava, Dr. R. S. Gandhi, Pradip Agarwal, Kishore Chandak, Ashok Bayanwala, R. K. Sarawagi, G. B. Pai, Dhananjay Desai. .... Out of which WIPA 2002 has accepted the following exhibits: Daniel Montheru, R. K. Sarawagi, B. J. Kumar, Aman Khanna, Mr. Zahidul islam, P.G. Bhargava, Sachin Goyal, G. B. Pai, Dhananjay Desai. Out of these 8 accepted entries, 5 entries are in Literature Class and remaining one in Youth, two in thematic, and one from traditional. The 6 remaining entries have been rejected due to non-availability of frames. I had even requested them to allot more frames to one of the exhibitor who will be participating as he has received large Vermeil in the earlier exhibition but they are unable to fulfill this request also. Since they have received 8000 frames entries against 2500 frames to accommodate more entries in the exhibition. .... They have rejected about 60% entries from every Commissioner quota. I hope that you will understand the things well. I had a personal discussion with Commissioner General of WIPA 2000 at China 99. During the discussion he assured me to all more to Indian participants but however due to constraint of frames they could not accommodate more. .... From PCI as well as National Commissioner, we cannot force the Organization to accept more entries. It is totally on the Organization, whatever they allot the frames we have to accept. .... I hope it clears your query."

Suri wrote on April 24, 2000 "I am far from satisfied by your response five months after I requested you to act in the matter, which I sadly note you did not."

Shah wrote on May 16, 2000 once again with a copy to Pittie "I will give the reply after coming from U. K. Australia and other countries. .... As per the present programme I intend to come back on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2000." Suri is still awaiting the promised reply by Shah.

Suri wrote to Pittie on May 5, 2000 "I am wondering how to obtain a reply from you? All my letters to you on some very very important issues for the philately in India, Philatelic Congress of India, and the country failed to elicit a response from you. As a President do you enjoy such immunity under the Memorandum of Association and the Rules & Regulations of Philatelic Congress of India? At American Philatelic Society the failure to reply to the correspondence is sufficient reason for expulsion from the membership. .... I believe if a Commissioner is not capable of getting an entry accepted that have won gold medals at several world exhibitions, he/she is not competent to be appointed as a Commissioner in future. As President you must call for an explanation from each one these Commissioners. .... The Article 27.1 of the General Regulations of the FIP for Exhibitions (GREX) states: It is in the interest of the exhibitors that the Exhibition Management and the Commissioners reach a mutual agreement in advance on the number of frames that can be allotted to them to avoid embarrassment. .... I would like to know whether the commissioners have reached a mutual agreement or not. In case there is a mutual agreement let me have the copies. If not what action you plan to take against them."

Pittie wrote on May 15, 2000 "I have made it very clear that the Commissioners can only try and see that the maximum number of Entry Forms are sent from India. However, they have no say in the final selection or acceptance of the exhibits and allotment of frames, which is the prerogative of the Exhibition Organisers. He can only send the exhibits, which are accepted by them. Please refer to Art. 11.1 of the GREX which states: '11.1 The exhibition management decides whether an application is to be accepted or rejected. No reason need to be given for the rejection of an application'. .... Moreover, Mr. Dilip Shah had also clarified to you in this respect vide his letter dated 05.04.2000. .... Regarding Art. 277.1 of the GREX, in practice some exhibition managements try to reach a mutual agreement in advance with Commissioners of the Countries, which send in a very large number of entries. However, as far as I know, none of our Commissioners have reached any agreement regarding the numbers of the frames to be allotted to the Indian exhibits, as it will not be practical considering the small number of entries. .... I hope this above explains the position to your satisfaction."

The Complete text of the Correspondence can be viewed at <http://www.geocities.com/mjhingan/Content/Features/correspondence.htm>

Even for ESPANA 2000 Suri's application met with the similar fate despite the personal assurance of Jatia to Suri.

#### READERS FORUM

<Dear Reader, Your feedback is important to us as it helps evolve the newsletter. We strive hard to bring you comprehensive coverage of the latest on Indian philately and improve with every issue. Please do let us have your thoughts and suggestions. We also would like to learn how our newsletter impacts your collecting and the value you feel it

provides to you. Do send in your comments, views, reports, articles and other features for publication>

DR. REUBEN A. RAMKISSOON

The Stamps of India Collectors Companion is a very timely and useful service, which I look forward to reading. While my interest in India relate primarily to Gandhian material, I do look forward to publications that provide insights into Indian philately.

Many years ago, I became a life member of PCI, and have looked forward to Signet. That journal is not what it used to be. While not a subscriber, I have obtained copies of IND DAK from time to time, and particularly enjoyed the series on the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

I showed my thematic exhibit on Gandhi at INDIA '89 (best in the Gandhi class) and INDEPEX '97. I was very disappointed over receiving the same level of medal (LS) 10 years later, despite a complete revision of my exhibit, and the inclusion and addition of many unusual items. (I have received LG for traditional. and G for postal stationery and astrophilately at FIP International shows).

There has been a catharsis over the problems plaguing Indian philately. Now that these have been expressed, I hope we can move ahead with constructive actions to advance philately and encourage even wider collector participation.

Best regards, and thanks for the service you are providing to the world in the interests of Indian philately.

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FEATURES & RESOURCES

ALSO IN THE NEWS

17,836 STAMPS ISSUED IN 2000

A record 17,836 stamps were released worldwide in the year 2000. This is 1,700 more than in the previous high, set in 1999.

The prize for exploitative profligacy in 2000 goes to Liberia. Despite the absence of an operating postal service during at least part of the year, Liberia managed to issue 771 stamps and souvenir sheets, the most ever from a single country.

This information comes from the annual new-issue survey compiled by the German stamp magazine Michel-Rundschau. The Michel-Rundschau survey is based on information gathered by its parent, Schwaneberger, the big publisher of the German-language Michel stamp catalogs.

Senior editor of the Linn's Stamp News, Denise McCarty examines the survey and the results in Issue of April 29,2002. Click here for the Complete story <http://www.linns.com/print/archives/20020429/news3.asp>

NEWSSCAN

<We invite you to contribute clippings on philatelic and postal matters, from other print and electronic publications, for inclusion here>

The Hindustan Times, May 15, 2002
STAMP OF APPROVAL (Editorial)

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/150502/detedi02.asp>

The Hindustan Times, May 16, 2002

GREAT CRUSADER

(Letter to Editor by Pramod Mahajan, Minister of Communications & IT)

<http://www.geocities.com/mjhingan/Content/News/lettertoeditor.htm>

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RESEARCH NOTES

Will resume with next issue.

ASK US

Please send your queries in detail (illustrations welcome) on all matters related to Philately and Postal History of India and Indian States. We will attempt to provide an answer to you online.

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CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

We require regular correspondents everywhere in India to cover the philatelic activities in their area. We shall reimburse the costs of photos, covers, publications, courier and other charges. All contributions shall be acknowledged.

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STAMPSOFINDIA WEB SITE UPDATES

The Hub Site of Indian Philately presents info in following segments - NEWS, ISSUES, EVENTS, AUCTIONS, PUBLICATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, DEALERS, and ARTICLES. In addition we provide question answers in ASK US. Also all Indian philatelic web sites as well as several useful philatelic sites are listed under LINKS.

Updated Segments This Week: News, Articles,

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