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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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Issue # 70 - June 20, 2002. Published Every Thursday
Edited by Madhukar and Savita Jhingan

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I N T H I S I S S U E

INPEX 2002 Fails to Obtain Official Approval

Date Announced for Brajlal Biyani Issue

Postal Stationery Issues In July 2002

GPA 2002

New President of Delhi International Philatelic Club

Indian Thematic Society Postal Auction

Links Update

Rs. 22 Billion Fake Stamps Scam

Fake Stamps Racket Linked with Subversive Organizations

Philately in Transition in India, Part 13

Readers Forum - Suraj Jaitly

Also in the News - Scott Catalogs on CD

NewsScan - P & T Does Not Want to Cut Flab, Pune Arrests Exposes 9-

State 2000-cr Racket, Postage Stamp

Research Notes - Indian Postal Orders, Part 4

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If you've found this newsletter useful recommend it to a friend.

Better still forward this issue.

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

When we launched the newsletter our first priority was to gather the philatelic and postal news from all over India and deliver it on a weekly basis. We still believe that there is a lot of scope.

We then focused on original research, which was the prime reason for the launch of the newsletter. This segment still needs regular contributions. For issues # 18 to 52 we were benefited by Manohar Lal's work on Pakistan. The 'Research Notes' is now a part of the expanded segment known as 'Features & Resources' where compilations and short articles are also included. There are so many interesting topics to research and write on. It will help us to focus if we know your interests. Based on that we will prioritize and organize the publication.

Later we have seen 'Views & Opinions' taking a life of its own. It is not always positive but does reflect the real state of philatelic affairs. Trust us, what appears is the proverbial tip of the iceberg and much more ends up on the floor.

We request all our readers to contribute to the various segments of newsletter, as we have been told, the newsletter does provide a platform for discussion and at times airing of the grievances.

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and sources to this issue: The Telegraph, Kolkata.

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Mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists  
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

INPEX 2002 FAILS TO OBTAIN OFFICIAL APPROVAL

The Chief of India Post's Philatelic Division, Devika Kumar in a letter of June 3, 2002 wrote ". . . This Department does not intend to hold a National Philatelic Exhibition in 2002. We have also decided not to support this (INPEX 2002) exhibition purported to be a National level exhibition organized by any philatelic society."

This is her response to a letter of May 3, 2002 sent by Shakil Ahmed regarding holding of INPEX 2002 at Bhubaneswar.

The complete text of this correspondence is available online at <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Features/Ahmeds-inpex.htm>

~~~~~ DATE ANNOUNCED FOR BRAJLAL BIYANI ISSUE

India Post will issue a commemorative stamp on Brajlal Biyani on June 22, 2002. Pramod Mahajan, Minister for Communications & IT, and Parliamentary Affairs will release this at Akola in Maharashtra.

On the same day, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India will release two stamps, one on Pandit Surya Narayan Vyas and another on Babu Gulab Rai at his residence in New Delhi.

~~~~~ POSTAL STATIONERY ISSUES IN JULY 2002

The postal stationery with following advertisements is scheduled for release in July 2002.

The information in the listing is presented in following format:

Date, Printer, Language, Message

POSTCARD - Panch Mahal, 50 Paise, Brown
10, SPP, Bengali, General Insurance Corporation
10, SPP, Punjabi, Post Office Savings Bank

INLAND LETTER CARD - Panch Mahal, Rupees 2, Blue
09, SPP, Bengali, General Insurance Corporation
16, ISP, Hindi, Blood Donation
24, SPP, English, Arya Vaidya Sala
31, ISP, Hindi, Education for all

~~~~~ GPA 2002

The Gujarat Philatelists Association is organizing an exhibition during the first week of October 2002 at Ahmedabad. The exhibition named GPA

2002 will have only one-frame exhibits. For more information please contact: A K Bayanwala, President GPA, C/O D Desai & Co., 1 M, National Chambers, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad 380009 or by email gpa@indianstamps.com

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NEW PRESIDENT OF DELHI INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC CLUB

Manohar Lal was elected as the President of the Delhi International Philatelic Club at its monthly meeting held on June 15, 2002. Lal is familiar to our readers as the Research Coordinator of the Stamps of India Collectors Companion.

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INDIAN THEMATIC SOCIETY POSTAL AUCTION

Indian Thematic Society of Ludhiana is holding its 17th postal auction. The 69-lot auction closes on July 16, 2002. For further details please contact indianthematicsociety@rediffmail.com

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LINKS UPDATE

Recently a reader alerted us that the web site of INDEPEX-ASIANA 2000 is dishing out undesirable material. We now have removed the link from our Links area.

The new technologies bring new responsibilities that India Post and PCI is yet to understand. India Post should have informed us that they are discontinuing the site and we would have removed the link accordingly. Porn Site operators take up expired domain names in the hope to get the traffic the site was getting.

Earlier an officer of India Study Circle approached us to change their link at our site as their earlier link was opening to a porn site now.

The Philatelic Congress of India's site that was being maintained by the PCI President Sahadeva Sahoo is no longer functional since January this year.

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RS. 22 BILLION FAKE STAMP SCAM

Two weeks ago the Police arrested three persons from a car near the railway station in Pune, Maharashtra and recovered fake stamps and stamp papers worth Rs 300,000 but it had little idea of the scale of the scam. This has now turned out to be the biggest ever fake stamps case in India with seizure of fake stamps worth Rs. 2200 crore = Rs. 22 Billion = US \$ Half a Billion!!!!

And the investigations are still continuing. News reports on TV showed truckloads of seized stamps. 22 persons have been arrested so far from Pune, Mumbai, and Bhiwandi. A nationwide organized gang led by Abdul Rahim Telgi, also known as Karim Lala, was operating this racket for over 10 years.

Just think, if one haul in three cities close by is this huge, what will the revenue losses to the Central and State Governments will add up to? Perhaps equal to our national budget for a year.

The racket must have affected all fields where stamps and stamp papers are used. The gang used to circulate counterfeit judicial and non-judicial stamps, postal stamps, special adhesive stamps, brokers' notes, foreign bill, insurance, share transfer, revenue and other stamps.

Police has identified seven companies floated by the gang in the nine states, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Delhi. These companies claimed to be franchises of government for stamps and stamp papers. It would then recruit local people to market these at a 2% discount to licensed stamp vendors and other institutions in bulk.

Police had also identified 35 properties in Maharashtra and Karnataka that the gang has purchased. Police also seized the machines that used to print these fakes. The gang even financed a few Bollywood films through a company named after Telgi's daughter Sana - Sana Film Financial Corporation Private Limited.

Maharashtra government has now announced that all documents where stamps were used in registration will be re-examined. If stamp vendors were found involved in the selling of fake stamps, the action against them will be taken. If the stamps were purchased from unauthorized persons, the buyers will have to repay the stamp duty. This would involve scrutiny of millions of registrations and deals as over 1.2 million documents were registered in Maharashtra last year. And not all deals are done on stamp paper are registered. It is going to be a difficult task also as the officials from India Security Press, (ISP) Nashik failed to tell the real papers from the fakes since these had reportedly been printed on a machine that ISP had auctioned earlier.

On an average there is at least one case per month being reported about fake stamps for last several years in the press. However it was only in August 2001 that the police arrested Telgi along with his accomplices and seized counterfeit stamps and paper worth Rs 200 million in Ajmer, Rajasthan. Several such cases have been earlier registered against him in Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Indore and Vishakhapatnam. He continues to make news from the jail where he offered to give millions for the construction of a mosque inside. Later he expanded his offer to include places of worship for other religions as well.

Telagi is proprietor of the multi-million Metro Corporation of Bangalore and has links with some of the most powerful Ministers, bureaucrats and cops in the country. State government's Tourism Minister Roshan Baig's brother was his partner in the Metro Corporation. Telagi revealed names of bureaucrats and Ministers whose foreign trips were sponsored by him and also admitted that in securing kerosene dealerships, he was helped by top office-bearers of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee. That is the party in power in the state and naturally the Karnataka Government, instead of handing the investigation to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) as recommended by the state police, tried its best to water down the case.

Ironically, Karnataka was the first state in the country to bring in a law that made use of stamp papers optional for registration and suggested alternatives. This was expected to considerably reduce the usage of stamp papers. Another amendment was that the registration forms were reduced to a single format that would be available at stationery shops to reduce intervention of touts.

Just a few years back, Telagi was selling fruits at the Railway Station in Belgaum in Karnataka. However, with his connections in the

underworld he became a millionaire overnight. To win the hearts of his community he donated generously to the Haj Committee, local schools and several charitable institutions. No wonder, his brother became a successful politician in the State.

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) is investigating his links with Anees Ibrahim, brother of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. Telagi paid several visits to United Arab Emirates and had, reportedly, met Anees. The IB report reveals that the investigation team is still trying to trace Telagi's massive bank balance in top national and international banks.

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FAKE STAMPS RACKET LINKED WITH SUBVERSIVE ORGANIZATIONS

The police, acting on a tip-off, arrested Mohammed Icha Biswas on June 14, 2002 from Hatiari area in Baguiati, North 24-Parganas district of West Bengal. Biswas who has links with criminals across the border in Bangladesh, revealed the names of six of his accomplices during interrogation who were then arrested in simultaneous raids. But police failed to arrest the mastermind behind the operation.

The police recovered forged postal stamps, court fee stamp papers and Indian currency showing a total value of Rs 10 million. One foreign-made pistol, two walkie-talkies, four cell phones and two Maruti cars were also seized. Preliminary investigations suggest that the seven had links with subversive organizations and the forged documents were probably sold in the market to fund local operatives.

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

PHILATELY IN TRANSITION IN INDIA, Part 13

B K Sinha sent following response, almost immediately, on receiving the previous issue of this newsletter.

"Though I was on the Organising Committee of the ORPEX 2002 - and since the Philatelic Congress of India's Governing Council and Regional meeting coincided with the dates of the exhibition, I never had the time to even visit the exhibition after the frames were mounted - let alone 'interact and influence' the jury in any matter whatsoever. Needless to say sore losers always complain and every exhibition has a share of its dissatisfied exhibitors. What is now disturbing is the fact that these people have now a readymade forum to publish unsubstantiated facts and hearsay.

To straighten the facts which you have published: 'Ahmed in his point-to-point response to Sahoo on June 3, 2002 brings up the case of Moomin Sinha, the daughter of B K Sinha, PCI Secretary, whose participation in the last national brought a Silver Bronze. The same exhibit won a Vermeil with Special Prize at ORPEX.'

While the facts mentioned above are true - it has been twisted to meet the ends intended by Shakil Ahmed. The facts are:

1. Moomin's exhibit is of 4 frames and has won Large Silver at HONG KONG 2000 continental exhibition in the Youth Class.

2. She had applied for 4 frames at EMPIREPEX but was allotted only 2 frames - therefore she was awarded a Silver Bronze - rather than withdrawing her exhibit and complaining, she graciously accepted whatever what was awarded to her.

3. At ORPEX 2002 she had displayed 4 frames and in the age group of 12-15 years. She was awarded a Vermeil + Special prize at this State Level exhibition. Do you consider it as 'manipulation'?

Shakil also mentions several points which are inconsistent with facts and reality - I do not wish to enter into a duel of words, either with him or in any forum, and therefore am not offering my comments. I only wish you could publish my point of view in your next letter."

Sinha then sent following further comments, half an hour later:

"I wish that you contact the individuals concerned whenever you publish a complaint on a particular individual - and get his/her side of the facts - this would add to the perspective of the story when published along side the main item.

Shakil has mentioned in his footnote 'copy to all PCI Members'. The two protagonists in the complaint - A K Dash and myself have never received any letters - I obtained them from Mr. Sahoo. He very conveniently avoids sending the letters to us.

He writes about scrapping the INPEX 2002. You have not dealt with that section of complaint. To be honest - I too feel that the exhibition should be scrapped. It is too much of a hassle.

You are part of the Organising Committee - would it be proper that we issue a letter that Shakil and Mr. Kanungo be taken off the organising committee since they say "the signatures are forged in the minutes book when the resolution was passed" (both at Nashik and the EIPA meetings?). Your comments on this."

We thank Sinha for his prompt reactions and stand by our story on the basis of the documents provided to us. We did write that "in the current philatelic scenario it could have been just about anybody, anywhere in India" and the story was not about Shakil Ahmed, the person, but through him, about how exhibitions are conducted and exhibitors treated.

As an individual, and as father Sinha has provided his side of the story that we have carried in full above. Now we would like him as an office bearer of the Philatelic Congress of India (PCI), to reveal the identity of person/s who overrule International Philatelic Federations (FIP) Regulations while holding national exhibitions in India. In this case who wrote the rules on number of frames to allot and on the age limits for the most important of all classes, Youth?

And what about other, more serious, cases Ahmed mentioned in his letters?

We would like to highlight the golden lines Ahmed could write even after all this "had the Juries been present at the venue I could have got my doubts cleared by way of conversation at the spot which I could not avail due to their absence."

And when he questioned them during PCI meeting the jury "...left the meeting hall and remained outside until PCI Governing Council meeting was called upon..."

We will reiterate that this is high time that the PCI wakes up to reality, this however will require tough decisions to be taken transparently and with honesty. The change starts in the mind. The first step towards openness is change in the mindset of PCI officers. With the change in the mindset accountability of each individual would follow. Today most PCI officers behave as if they are accountable to no one, neither to governing council members nor to general body members.

We also feel that PCI most urgently needs the services of a relationship management expert not only to mend its fences with India Post, FIP, and FIAP but with its own membership as well.

DR. AVINASH B. JAGTAP FROM BINNINGEN (SWITZERLAND)

I am always surprised to read the remarks of the exhibitors, who participate at different level philatelic Exhibitions and feel many times insulted if their exhibits are not awarded the prizes or medals which they think they deserve. So for me it was very surprising to read the remarks of Mr. Shakil Ahmed, who got Large Silver at ORPEX, although he was awarded Silver bronze at International Exhibition in Nepal and Silver at National at Nashik.

I have no idea about the exhibiting practices in India. In India there are certain malpractices even in the field of philately. Personal likes and dislikes, mainly on the grounds of regional nature, if not on religious nature. This is unfortunately at all levels, in all states. It is a national tragedy.

Your exhibit can be down graded because this is decided by a Jury and not by a machine. I do not know if the Jury in India know the previous achievements and medals awarded to a particular exhibitor and if an Exhibitor's Pass at all exists in India. If the Jury know this, the conflicts between the exhibitor and Jury could be avoided in majority of cases. Perhaps the Jury can refer to the application form of the exhibitor where (I take for granted that) such indications like medals achieved for that particular exhibit are shown.

Also it is easy to judge a traditional or postal history exhibit than a thematic one. The personal knowledge of the Jury will surely play a big role. So nowadays the applicant has to provide information about the scarce or rare items in his exhibit, literature used, publications by the exhibitor, if any. Since the Jury is not omniscient and may not know any thing about the subject being exhibited.

I am surprised that the regional or district level or national level exhibitions are held without giving appropriate earlier previous notice to the Indian philatelists. A National Level Exhibition here or anywhere in Europe requires at least four years for preparations. So I was taken with great surprise that after India had EMPIREPEX-INPEX at Nasik only last year, we will have National at Bhubaneshwar this year! I think that the frequency of such exhibition should be well taken into consideration and should not depend upon the whim of some person.

We have also suggested the guidelines for conducting exhibitions and judging and Dr. Jagtap has made a very valid point. It is therefore important at any exhibition for the exhibitor to be able to interact with the Jury to get a better understanding on the decision making process and if a mark sheet can be provided, then we are sure it would reduce the number of unsatisfied exhibitors.

[Dr. Jagtap has also written a very useful note on the system of philatelic exhibiting in Switzerland. It is available at <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Features/Swiss-system.htm>]

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>

SURAJ JAITLEY FROM LUDHIANA

I am really shocked to learn the news of the closure of IND DAK. Rather this disheartens me and makes it more difficult to continue my present job as the editor of "ITS Stamps News". I know very well that this job is not so easy, as some persons may think. I have edited 65 issues till date including "The Northern Philatelist" bi-monthly for "Northern India Philatelists' Association". Whenever I saw another magazine from this country the same gave me new energy to work more vigorously and for better output. Now it seems difficult for me to continue in this job in the years to come.

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#### FEATURES & RESOURCES

#### ALSO IN THE NEWS

#### SCOTT CATALOGS ON CD

For the first time the entire 2003 edition of Scott's 6-volume catalog that covers the world as well as the one-volume Specialized Catalog of United States Stamps and Covers would be available on CD-ROMs. Scott estimates that the entire 2003 set will require approximately 22 CDs. The CD version offers Acrobat PDF (portable document format) files that are identical to information included in paper catalogs, with the exception that vast majority of the stamp images are in color. Both text and illustrations can be enlarged up to 1600% on screen. The CDs are compatible with both Windows and Mac operating systems. Each 2003 catalog volume is priced identically to the printed version at \$44.99 retail.

We wish Scott would bring out one DVD containing all 6 volumes plus US Specialized that would make it easier to handle.

#### NEWSSCAN

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

The Hindustan Times, June 18, 2002  
POSTAGE STAMP (being released on June 22)

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/180602/detCIT13.asp>

Indian Express, June 18, 2002

PUNE ARRESTS EXPOSES 9-STATE 2000-CR RACKET

[http://www.indian-express.com/archive\\_full\\_story.php?content\\_id=4559](http://www.indian-express.com/archive_full_story.php?content_id=4559)

The Times of India, June 19, 2002

P & T DOES NOT WANT TO CUT FLAB

[http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art\\_id=13496800](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow.asp?art_id=13496800)

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RESEARCH NOTES

INDIAN POSTAL ORDERS, PART 4

Sometime during 1975-1978 the practice of printing the serial numbers twice on postal orders was discontinued and these were printed only once. The top number was eliminated.

On June 1, 1979 the rates of commission were revised upwards by 100%, from 10 to 20 Paise for denominations up to Rs. 10 and 40, 60, 80 Paise, Re. 1 and Rs. 2 for Rs. 20, 30, 40, 50, and 100 respectively. The earlier stock of postal orders was locally hand-stamped with new rates. New set of postal orders was issued showing the revised rates.

Sometime during 1980-1982 a new set of postal orders was issued with modified design. It provided two boxes for stamps instead of one as earlier. The serial number was repositioned towards the top. The Rs. 40 denomination seems to have been discontinued about this time.

On March 1, 1983 the rates of commission were revised upwards by 50%, 30 P for values up to Rs 10 and 60 P, 90 P, Rs 1.20, Rs. 1.50 and Rs. 3 respectively for the higher denominations. The earlier stock of postal orders was locally hand-stamped with new rates. The postal orders with new rates has not been seen.

To be continued

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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STAMPSONINDIA 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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