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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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I N T H I S I S S U E

Nagpur Tercentenary  
Meghdoot Postcards  
Special Postmarks  
Exhibition at Mangalore  
Deccan Philatelist  
Edward Proud  
New Telephone Numbers  
Bharti Cellular and India Post Sign MOU  
Call For Use Of IT In Modern Postal Services  
Wanted Censor & War Related Covers  
Philately in Transition in India, Part 32  
Readers Forum - Premnath Kudwa  
Also in the News - A serious collector in tune with the times

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

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

Once again our apologies for the delay in sending this newsletter, we  
are in the process of upgrading our systems and it has taken us longer  
than expected hence the delay.

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and sources to this issue: Vijay Seth  
from New Delhi, The Independent from UK, The Hindu Business Line from  
Chennai, and Pakistan News Service.

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Mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

NAGPUR TRICENTENARY

Pramod Mahajan, the Minister of Communications & Information Technology and Parliamentary Affairs, released a commemorative stamp on Nagpur Tercentenary on November 11, 2002 at a special function held at Nagpur.

The stamp is in the denomination of Rs. 5, the inland letter rate. Kamleshwar Singh designed the stamp and the First Day Cover, priced at Rs. 2. Alka Sharma designed the pictorial first day postmark. Information Sheet containing write-up and technical data and priced at Rs. 1.50 were issued on the occasion. India Security Press of Nashik printed the stamps by photogravure in multicolor on Imported un-watermarked adhesive gravure coated stamp paper in the quantity of 1.2 million in sheetlets of 12 stamps, that is 100,000 sheetlets.

MEGHDOOT POSTCARDS

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meghdoot Postcard bearing the ad of TVS Max Mobike was made available at the Philatelic Bureau on November 8, 2002. It was scheduled for release on October 15, 2002. Security Printing Press at Hyderabad printed 200,000 cards in sheets of 8.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of Meghdoot Postcard for the National Games at Hyderabad is expected to be available any day now. Security Printing Press at Hyderabad printed 100,000 cards in sheets of 8.

Meghdoot Postcard introduced earlier this year is issued at half the price of regular postcard and uses the left half space on the address side for multicolor advertisement.

SPECIAL POSTMARKS

India Post provided:

A special postmark on November 7, 2002 at Chennai to mark the International Conference on Search & Rescue, and

A special pictorial postmark and special cover on November 13, 2002 at Kollur, Udipi district, to mark the inauguration of the new post office building.

EXHIBITION AT MANGALORE

India Post will organize a district level philatelic exhibition at Mangalore, in January 2003.

DECCAN PHILATELIST

DECCAN PHILATELIST, Vol. 1 # 5, PUNEPEX 2002 Special Number

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EDWARD PROUD

Edward B Proud of Proud Bailey Co. Ltd., UK was in town on a short visit on November 11, 2002. Yours truly met him and exchanged notes on the postal history of India and Ceylon. The latter is subject matter of his forthcoming book. Proud has authored over 50 books on postal history.

#### NEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS

The telephone numbers all over India are changing to accommodate private sector telephone service providers. In most cases an additional digit '2' is prefixed to the numbers. This applies to subscribers of government owned MTNL in Delhi and Mumbai and of BSNL in rest of India. However at some places where the number begins with '22', '252' will replace it. The numbers for Touchtel subscribers are in most cases prefixed by '5'. In some cases Mobile numbers including those that offer limited telephony are also being changed. The area codes remain unchanged.

The process is under way since beginning of November 2002 and our numbers are expected to be changed by December 5, 2002 and shall be notified here.

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BHARTI CELLULAR AND INDIA POST SIGN MOU

Bharti Cellular Ltd and the India Post have entered into a tie-up to market AirTel Magic prepaid cards and recharge coupons through post offices in the central region of the Kerala Postal Circle.

An Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed recently in this regard by both the parties and with this facility, a customer could buy SIM cards and recharge coupons in all denominations from post office counters in Ernakulam, Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kottayam districts.

Presently, 58 post offices in the central region have been identified in the first phase to sell these cards which would be later extended to more post offices depending upon the needs of the customers, P C Baburaj, Post Master General, Central Region, said at a press conference.

The tie-up is for a period of five years and the postal department would set up hoardings in various places to market these prepaid cards. "This is a business venture for the Department of Posts and we are concentrating to get more revenue through the sale of such cards," he said. Answering questions, Baburaj said that no other mobile phone players in the State had so far approached the postal department for a similar tie-up.

Speaking on the occasion, T Elango, Chief Operating Officer, AirTel, said that this is for the first time in the country that a cellular operator had made a tie-up with the Postal Department. The company is also planning to extend this facility to the other two regions like Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode soon. "With this tie-up, AirTel reiterates its commitment in bringing mobile services closer to people," Mr Elango said. Regarding future plans, he said that the company was all set for a substantial increase in the number of base stations (nearly 50) throughout the State within a couple of weeks time. It has budgeted an additional Rs 50 crore investment for the new installations. AirTel has emerged as the fastest growing and most preferred brand after its entry into the state in July this year, he claimed. Presently, the company has a subscriber base of 60,000 in the State, he added.

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#### CALL FOR USE OF IT IN MODERN POSTAL SERVICES

Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf emphasized the need for provision of most modern postal services by using information technology

for the convenience of the common man. He said this on November 11, 2002 during his visit to the Post Mall, the first of its kind in the country providing all modern day postal services, including money transfer, business center, banking, e-commerce, insurance and parcels in F-7 Markaz Islamabad.

He said he was highly impressed by the modernization carried out and the general ambience of the post mall. He said he wanted to see such post malls coming up all over the country.

Communication Minister Lt. Gen. (Retd) Javed Ashraf Kazi, and Pakistan Post Director General Maj. Gen. (Retd) Masood-ul-Hassan briefed the president in detail about the achievements of Pakistan Post and the facilities provided at the Post Mall.

Musharraf was informed that the overseas Pakistanis and anybody else can transfer his money from any part of the world to Pakistan through Western Union in 10 minutes. The post office will receive the information from the Western Union on line and the money will be paid to the payee. The Postal Department has also reached an agreement with the DHL to deliver parcels to other parts of the world from Pakistan.

Similarly, the Post Mall will have the facilities of business centers like in five star hotels in addition to special counters for women and senior citizens. All the work at the Post Mall will be through computer. The communications minister said similar Post Malls will be opened by March next year in Lahore and Peshawar.

The Pakistan Post director general said the Postal Department has 4.2 million saving accounts with deposits of over seventy billion rupees. He said the Postal Department is also computerizing the list of pensioners so that they are paid the pension immediately.

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WANTED CENSOR & WAR RELATED COVERS

Indian censor collector wants to buy internal and special censor covers of WWII & also any cover of WWI of Indian origin or to India. No chettiar covers please. Please contact: viswakumar.s@ae.abb.com or write to S. Viswa Kumar, C/O ABB Energy Automation SpA, P O Box 45710, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

PHILATELY IN TRANSITION IN INDIA, Part 32

Jeevan Jyoti is a well-known philatelic journalist and has been contributing to philatelic press in India for nearly two decades. We welcome her first contribution to this newsletter.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH JUDGING THEMATIC EXHIBITS?

Thematic Philately has emerged as the most popular section of philately among the youth. Over the last five years the number of thematic exhibits have considerably increased in exhibitions. But the participants are very much disappointed with the results. Number of complaints are increasing regarding the improper judging of the thematic exhibits in philatelic journals and Internet Philatelic magazines. Do the members of the jury judge the thematic exhibits properly? Why the thematic philatelists seem to be unsatisfied in the exhibitions?

The cases of unsatisfactory results seem to be increasing in state and national level exhibitions. The reason behind the unsatisfactory results is that most jury members are experts of traditional philately. Here I want to mention that in State level exhibitions the number of thematic exhibits is quite large, but the judges are usually traditional philatelists. No doubt the number of top thematic experts in India is very low. They can be counted on fingers as compared to experts in other fields of philately. But at the same time in the last few years thematic philately is taking the place of traditional philately.

A new section of young thematic philatelists have developed but it is quite disheartening that this section of philatelists are the biggest sufferers of misjudging. They are disappointed and unsatisfied with the results in the exhibition. The Thematics deal with a particular subject and the development of story is explained through different philatelic items. But it is usually seen that the judges do not go through the subject and its plan. They only have a general look at the exhibit and they search to see if any rare, scarce or high cost items are shown. Their approach is entirely different.

Here I want to mention ORPEX 2002 where I also displayed my collection on Tourism. The exhibit deals with the subject of tourism, its meaning, nature, historical development, its various elements and its significance. It is not a collection showing various tourist spots and culture of the world. There was one more collection on Tourism entitled "Glimpses of Indian Tourism" which was about Indian tourism explaining Indian Culture, monuments, wildlife etc. These two collections though dealing with the same topic - tourism were totally different in explaining the subject. Just like the two different books about birds, one explaining the nature, habitat and anatomy of birds and other explaining the different kinds of Indian birds. I discussed my collection with the judges and wanted to know their suggestions in order to improve my exhibit. But they could not give me a satisfactory explanation. They compared my collection as on world tourism and the other on Indian tourism and opined that it is difficult to prepare five frames on Indian Tourism than on World Tourism. So the collection on Indian Tourism gets better score. I tried to explain that the subject is different and it is not on tourist destinations and world culture but tourism as subject.

From the discussion with jury members, I only drew the conclusion that judges have not gone through the plan and its development and have not understood the subject. There may be many other participants who had not got proper explanations. What does this show? It is clear from such instances that the exhibits are judged very superficially not necessarily because the judges become partial but also because the judges are not experts of thematic philately. They may be expert in their respective fields but how they can judge thematics where it is more important the way material has been displayed than what material is shown or cost and rarity of the material.

Here I want to draw the attention of readers that the number of thematic collections is more in philatelic exhibitions. So there must be at least one qualified judge from thematic philately in state level

exhibitions also. To cope with all these problems it is necessary to make a change and improve the judging procedure.

In my opinion following suggestions should be considered.

In the panel of jury the number of thematic experts should be more than the experts of traditional philately since the number of thematic exhibits have considerably increased in the last few years.

The judges should be provided with the photocopy of the thematic exhibits so that they can properly go through the plan and its details. It is not possible to read and understand the theme in a few minutes glimpse towards the exhibit.

Sufficient time should be given to judges and participants for open discussion on the exhibit.

It should be kept in mind that proper judging at state level exhibition is very important because it prepares to develop collections for national level shows.

If the judging is not proper and the exhibitors are dissatisfied and do not get proper explanation about the exhibits, good collections can never reach in the national and international level. The collections will die on the way before they reach the destination. This is the reason the hobby is losing its charm.

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READERS FORUM

PREMNATH KUDVA FROM MANGALORE

I am writing to ask you the issue date of a couple of definitive issues. I have checked all the resources known to me, like the Phila Catalogue, photocopy of a SG catalogue, Post Office published book, stuff on the net and so on. But no release date seems to exist for the stamps I am asking the dates for.

The date I want to know is for the map of India series as mentioned below;

1959 Map of India ashoka wmk, 50, and 75 paise, 1 Re, 2 Rs, 5 Rs, 10 Rs
1960 Map of India ashoka wmk, 1, 15, and 90 paise
1963 Map of India ashoka wmk, 6, and 13 paise

Regarding the new VIII definitive series, I want to know if they encompass both the wild life and famous leaders being issued since 2000, or if the famous leaders are part of a special definitive series?

[The stamps on Subhas chandra Bose, Sardar Patel, and Babasaheb Ambedkar like earlier issues on Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru are not a part of the regular definitive series and are designated as Special Definitive issues. -Editors]

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<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>

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FEATURES & RESOURCES

Indian Laws Relevant to Philately

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Guide/Misc/laws.htm>

Report Cyber Crime & Internet Fraud related to Indian Philately

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Guide/Misc/cybercrime.htm>

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ALSO IN THE NEWS

A SERIOUS COLLECTOR IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES the head of Stanley Gibbons tells investors that stamps have got equities licked  
By Nigel Cope, City Editor, The Independent, London, UK. 21 October 2002

Enter the Stanley Gibbons shop on the Strand in London and you feel an immediate sense of nostalgia. On the left is a display of die-cast model cars from Corgi. There are stamp albums galore, as well as piles of price guides, books and, of course, stamps. It is quiet and dark and most of the customers are men. There is quite a high anorak count.

Upstairs is the autograph gallery, where signed photographs of stars are kept. They range from pictures of the actress Holly Hunter (£65) to a signed photograph of Muhammad Ali flooring Sonny Liston in their 1964 rematch (£575). Behind a glass screen are more expensive items, such as a £25,000 framed collection of John Lennon writings, including parts of the script from a 1968 play, In Our Own Write.

When Paul Fraser, Stanley Gibbons' chairman, emerges from the back office he is about as far from the philatelic stereotype as you can get. He is a youthful 47, with longish sideburns and a trendy high-buttoned suit with trousers that are flared in a very up-to-the-minute 2002 way rather than an out-of-date 1974 way.

"A lot of people keep stamp collecting quiet," he admits. "The Queen probably has the best collection in the world, and a lot of businessmen are collectors. Sir Ron Brierley [the New Zealand investor] is a collector and used to own a stake in Stanley Gibbons. Louis Figo [the dashing Portuguese footballer] is due to be given an award from the International Federation."

He says the UK is unusual in perceiving stamp collectors as figures of fun. "In Europe it is seen as a very classy thing to do. If you travel to Milan and Paris and you go down the equivalent of Bond Street, you'll find a stamp shop. And it will look very traditional and prosperous."

Perhaps philately's image will start to change now that stamp collecting is increasing in popularity as an investment because of the stock market crash. Stanley Gibbons has certainly noticed a change. In August the Aim-listed company reported trebled half-year profits of £2.1m, helped by the sale of a rare £71,000 Mauritius stamp.

"The thing about collecting is that it's a tangible asset," Mr. Fraser says. "Historically, prices might go up by 5-10 per cent a year, so when

interest rates were 10-12 per cent it didn't even come on the radar. But in time of low inflation and low interest rates, things like this come into their own."

It was the same in the early Seventies, when stock markets also crashed, he said. "In terms of investment, stamp collecting is seen as a safe haven. Stamps are portable, easily traded and the prices are readily available."

Asked if we are seeing an asset bubble build up in alternative investments just as we saw in equity markets, he says: "At the end of the day, it depends what you buy. You can always sell quality."

Mr. Fraser is not a stamp collector himself. He is more of an autograph hunter. As a keen philographer, he has more than 10,000 items, worth around £100,000.

"I do like history and with autographs, manuscripts and letters things go back 500 years. If I'm holding a Charles Dickens letter I'll think that he sat there writing this in candlelight with his quill. That brings it alive to me."

A bit like the protagonist in Zadie Smith's new novel, Mr. Fraser is on the hunt for particular treasures - in his case, a Van Gogh letter and original lyrics by the Beatles.

"It's an unusual market. If you go up to Paul McCartney in the street and get his autograph on a bit of paper, it might be worth £100. But if you happened to be walking along with a guitar and you get him to sign that, it would be worth a lot more.

"I've got a lot of good signed photographs of people taken by famous photographers as well as lyrics from the Rolling Stones and the Who. It's fascinating because there'll be a song you've known for years and you'll see all the crossings out and see that it could easily have said something completely different.

"I also have quite a lot of signed menus. Often there'll be a dinner given for something like the first flight across the Atlantic. So you'll see the menu, who was on the guest list, who gave the speeches and so on."

It is as a collector-turned-entrepreneur that Mr. Fraser made his money. He set up a chain of rare record shops, and then dabbled in antiques and property. He started making stock market investments and put money into Stanley Gibbons in 1989. By that time the business had been trading for more than 140 years. Edward Stanley Gibbons had founded it after the purchase of a sackful of rare triangular Capes from two sailors who had just returned from South Africa.

Mr. Fraser bought a further 30 per cent from Sir Ron Brierley, and then acquired the whole company for around £5m.

Just a few years later he struck what looked like a terrific deal when he sold it to a mail-order company called Flying Flowers (now called Flying Brands) for £13.5m. But three weeks after the all-share deal, Flying Flowers issued a shock profits warning and the shares sank,



costing Mr. Fraser millions. "Clearly I was shocked. The business had got itself in a bit of a tizz and started buying lots of stock and credit limits weren't properly controlled."

Eventually Stanley Gibbons was demerged as a separately quoted company in 2000. "We've got the business back to the core activities. What we are best known for is price guides and catalogues. Getting stamps in, cataloguing them and selling them is very labour-intensive."

While revenues will mostly come from catalogues, advertising, stamp sales and the sale of stamp albums and other accessories, the longer-term aim is to put the Internet at the heart of the business.

For example, Stanley Gibbons' 2001 catalogue came in three volumes two inches thick, and cost £100. Next year's version will be in four volumes. Putting it all on the Internet and selling advertising and other services on the site should raise more funds while cutting costs.

"It will be free for basic information but it will probably be tiered so that other services will be available on subscription," Mr. Fraser explains.

The business is still working on a new service, which will enable collectors to put up their own collection and have its value regularly updated. Mr. Fraser has also moved into eBay territory with stampsatauction.com, which enables individuals to sell their stamps on the website in return for a commission.

The company hopes to raise the investment profile of stamps by launching its SG100 index, recording the fluctuating prices of the world's most valuable stamps. In other words, you will be able to benchmark your penny black against the performance of your BP shares.

PAUL FRASER AUTOGRAPH MAN

Position: Executive chairman, Stanley Gibbons

Pay: £94,000

Career record: Ran businesses in rare records, antiques and property before first investing in Stanley Gibbons in 1989. Chairman between 1990 and 1998, and again since 2000.

Interests: Collecting autographs and pop and rock memorabilia.

Advice to collectors: "It is best to theme your collection. But I do exactly what I tell everyone not to do and buy whatever takes my fancy."

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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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NEWSSCAN

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

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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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WEB SITE UPDATES

STAMPSOFINDIA

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Updated Segments This Week: News, Articles,

STAMPS ON INDIA <http://stampsonindia.netfirms.com>

The site devoted to the stamps from all over the world on Indian topics

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