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----- STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -----

The First & Only Weekly on Philately & Postal Services of India

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of this issue for details.  
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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

We present the newest member of our team, Yogini Jhingan.

Yogini is our daughter who is little over eleven years old and has  
traveled to all parts of the country attending philatelic exhibitions  
and events with us almost since the day she was born. She noticed  
collectors younger than her winning awards at KARNAPEX during her recent  
visit to Dharwad. She now wants to exhibit and also insists on inclusion  
of her name to the team that produces this newsletter, as she has been  
doing work for it.

She is genuinely taking a keen interest in philately and we would also  
encourage her to excel in it.

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Press Trust of India, The Hindu, the Times of India, and The Japan Times.

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We invite your inputs, please email to [feedback@stampsfindia.com](mailto:feedback@stampsfindia.com)

Please mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists.

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

Report the philatelic activities in your area for publication here. We shall reimburse the costs incurred on photos, philatelic items issued, publications, courier and other agreed charges.

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

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROBERT DE VIOLINI

It is with a sense of great personal loss that we report the death of Robert de Violini, the best known activist for using computers with philately. He was the long-time Secretary of the Philatelic Computing Study Group and till recently the editor of the Group's quarterly The Computatelist. He was also a literature judge and a winner of the American Philatelic Society's Luff Award for service. He was a former meteorologist for the US government.

Our heartfelt condolences to his widow, Lois M Evans-de Violini who herself is a well known philatelist and also a winner of the Luff Award.

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NANI A PALKHIVALA STAMP RELEASED

The Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee released a stamp in the denomination of Rs 5 to commemorate eminent jurist Nani A Palkhivala, on January 16, 2004, that was also his 85<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary, in a special function at Mumbai.

Palkhivala with his legal acumen, in-depth knowledge of the Constitutions of the world and amazing eloquence, assiduously guarded the sanctity of the Constitution of India and emerged as the unquestioned champion of Fundamental Rights and people's liberties. He prevailed upon the Full Bench of thirteen judges of the Supreme Court that the Constitution of India which guaranteed fundamental freedoms to the people, was supreme and Parliament had no power to abridge those rights and this led to the historic pronouncement that though Parliament could amend the Constitution, it had no right to alter its basic structure.

Binoy Varghese designed the stamp, J P Irani designed the First Day Cover, and Alka Sharma designed the pictorial first day postmark.

Information Sheet containing write-up and technical data and priced at Rs.2 was issued on the occasion. The FDC is also priced at Rs 2.

Calcutta Security Printers Limited of Kanpur printed the stamps by Photo Offset in four colors on Matt Chromo paper in the quantity of 0.4 million in the sheets of 50 stamps.

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NEW POSTAL STATIONERY

The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> issues of the customized envelope for Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited and the University of Pune, respectively, were released in November 2003.

The 'postage pre-paid for Rs.5' is inscribed below the imprinted stamp and the envelope is in the size of 220 x 110 mm.

These issues, like other customized stationery, are NOT available to public or philatelists through the Post Office.

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NEW MEGHDOOT POST CARDS

Following Meghdoot post cards were recently issued:

Ad in Hindi - Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)

Ad in English - Canara Bank

Ad in English - Joyce Meyer

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ARMY POSTAL SERVICE NEW ISSUES

The Army Postal Service issued the following Special Covers with Special Postmarks in 2004:

January 3, Brigadier D S Virk, Founder of Army Postal Service Corps

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The following list of events scheduled for next few months is subject to change. We update it in every issue with the information received during the week. The organizers may be contacted for further details.

January

23-25, Bangalore, COINEX

24-26, Shimoga, District Level

27-28, Panchguni, Satara District Level

28-29, Berhampore, Murshidabad District Level

February

15-18, Siliguri, Region Level, MEGHDOOT

19-20, South Delhi District Level, DESPEX

27-29, Tirupur, COIN-STAMPEX

For a list of events held this year, please visit

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Events/a300.htm>

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RECENT PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

VADOPHIL, Whole # 97, January 2004

Editors: Prashant H Pandya & Timir R Shah

Publisher: Baroda Philatelic Society

Address: 'Jaya', Dala Patel's Pole, Narsinhji's Pole, Vadodara 390001  
Annual Subscription: Rs. 100

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INDIA POST TO DISTRIBUTE ORIENTAL INSURANCE PRODUCTS

Oriental Insurance Company Ltd on January 20, 2004 entered in to an agreement with India Post for distribution of its non-life insurance products through the latter's 150000 post offices across the country.

These products include policies for hospitalization, personal accident, household goods, private vehicles, shops, cattle, pump sets and poultry amongst others. Those products targeted specifically at the rural sector are Kissan Package Policy, Agricultural Pump set Insurance, Raj Rajeshwari Mahila Kalyan Bima and Universal Health Insurance.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in this regard between the two sides in the presence of Minister of State for Finance (Expenditure, Banking and Insurance) Anandrao V Adsul and Minister of State for Communications and IT Su Thirunavukkarasar.

India Post would market the products on a pilot basis through post offices in select districts of Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra while Oriental Insurance would provide the after sales service. Speaking on the occasion, Adsul said: "After the pilot project, it will be extended in a phased manner throughout the country in four-five months."

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BHUTAN'S E-POST

The Government of India, in partnership with two UN agencies, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU), will help boost the delivery of e-post services to citizens in the least accessible parts of its south Asian neighbor, Bhutan with a package of equipment, satellite capacity and training resources worth some USD 450,000. The resulting e-post service will allow people without computers in remote areas to send e-mail between post offices for printing and delivery.

India will help Bhutan's E-Shabtog1 venture by providing instant connectivity to six more remote post offices that are not connected by the national fixed telecommunication network. Two of the stations, Laya and Lunana, are located over 5,000 meters above sea level, are snowbound for 8 months of the year, lack electricity and paved roads and are a 5-8 day walk from the nearest road. To support the provision of voice and low to medium-speed data services to the six locations, India will provide free of charge through its Department of Telecommunication:

- Six VSAT terminals in remote areas with a hub in Thimpu
- Solar energy sources with about eight days' autonomy
- Access/transponder capacity on INSAT system free for the duration of the project
- Training and maintenance

The E-Shabtog1 project seeks to create a network of tele-kiosks in 38 post offices throughout Bhutan for affordable and practical access to email. Letters normally take 5 to 8 days to be delivered by postal runners between remote mountain districts. E-mailing letters cuts home

delivery time to 1 night. The long-term goal is to make the post office a one-stop shop that will deliver a wide range of e-services such as bill payment, government information, and commerce. To date, 17 post offices in Bhutan have been equipped for e-post. By the end of 2004, it is planned that 38 post offices, or one-third of all post offices in the country, will be e-service ready.

ITU, which evolved the project on the model implemented in Andhra Pradesh, India, will provide expertise and short-term training. The Universal Postal Union will provide equipment for the post offices and facilitate field visits for Bhutan Post personnel for studying the implementation of e-post in southern India. Both UN agencies will evaluate the benefits and share information.

In addition, an Indian private sector company, Encore Software, is offering low-cost hand-held devices called Simputers, which will enable Bhutanese postmen to deliver mail, as well as health workers and agricultural workers to transmit information as text, voice or images. Specialized software is being developed ranging from simple book-keeping to e-post and health and agriculture applications.

The Bhutanese government, which is responsible for all logistical support, transport, civil works and regulatory and legal clearances, will exempt all the equipment imported for this project from customs, excise and other duties and levies. "India has been our main development partner for over four decades. Their assistance in this project will help us in establishing connectivity to the most remote and peripheral areas of our country. We appreciate the initiatives of ITU and the UPU in the materialization of this project, which will undoubtedly enhance the socio-economic development of our rural people," said Dasho Tashi Phuntsog, Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communication of Bhutan.

"India has built up one of the world's largest domestic satellite communication systems and now stands ready to share the fruits of its success with Bhutan," said Arun Shourie, India's minister of communications and information technology. "All of us are delighted that INSAT will be instrumental in providing access for the first time to pockets of population in the remotest parts of Bhutan."

"Establishing telecommunication connectivity is crucial to extending e-post and other public services to remote and inaccessible areas," said Hamadoun Touré, director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau. "I am very pleased that the government of India has accepted the invitation of ITU and UPU to assist Bhutan in this process by providing valuable technology, expertise and resources."

"With approximately 660000 postal outlets worldwide, the postal service has a communicative presence in the daily lives of people. The Bhutan example that enables people without their own computers to send e-mails from one post office to another where it is printed and delivered to the home address, cutting several days in delivery time, illustrates the relevance of the postal service in the information age," says UPU Director General, Thomas E. Leavey

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FAKE FRANKING MACHINE

On January 13, the east district of Delhi police arrested three persons who allegedly used a fake franking machine and cheated the postal department of huge amounts of money.

According to the police, the three have been in this business for the past five years and used to earn at least Rs 0.5 million in three months. They would take large order for franking the mail from business houses and use the spurious machine for putting the franking impression on the envelopes. The three men, identified as Bishm Pal, Ravi Kumar and Bholender Tiwari, had divided the work between themselves.

Pal would do all the handling and labelling work and sort out the mail. Kumar would collect the envelopes from the business houses and also get the mail cleared from Railway Mail Service (RMS) after the franking stamp impressions had been made. Tiwari was allegedly the expert of the group who would handle the machine's entire operation. He would allegedly obtain second-hand franking machines, repair them and then use them for this fake racket.

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FAKE STAMP SCAM UPDATES

The special court at Bangalore, trying the fake stamp scam cases, adjourned the hearing on a plea by prime accused Abdul Karim Telgi, seeking bail and also parole to visit his ailing mother and wife, besides removal of cameras from his prison cell. The next hearing is on January 28, 2004. The judge, A T Manoli, remanded Telgi to further judicial custody till February 10, 2004. Meanwhile, the judge allowed Andhra Pradesh police to take custody of Syed Waheed, an accused in the scam, for interrogation for 10 days.

Sameer Bhujbal, the high-profile nephew of former Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Chhagan Bhujbal, appeared before the Special Investigation Team (SIT) at Mumbai on January 19, 2004. Sameer had skipped the SIT summons twice citing that he was abroad on some "professional commitments." He arrived in Mumbai on January 18, 2004. Sameer was accompanied by his cousin brother Pankaj and lawyer Pervez Rustom Khan to the SIT office. There was heavy security outside the SIT office as the police feared a law and order problem. Later, at a press briefing, Sameer told reporters that he was asked only "general questions". Though he claimed that there were neither questions about the scam kingpin, Abdul Karim Telgi, nor businessman Antim Totla, SIT sources gave a contrasting picture. Sameer was asked about 50 questions by Deputy Inspector General Subodh Jaiswal and many of them pertained to Telgi and Totla, SIT sources said. Sameer said, "Totla is just a friend and a party (NCP) worker." But police sources said the SIT was probing whether Totla and Sameer were linked to Telgi. Chhagan Bhujbal had accompanied Sameer for the press conference, where he reiterated that the inquiry conducted by the SIT was not fair.

Pune's Special Judge S M Shembale on January 19, 2004 rejected the bail application filed by former Mumbai and Pune police commissioner R S Sharma in the fake stamp case. The court observed that there was prima facie proof against Sharma in the case and there was no evidence to

suggest that he was innocent. Sharma, who had filed the application in the special court on December 11, 2003, had claimed that he was innocent and there was no prima facie evidence against him. He had also claimed that the special investigation team (SIT) had failed to get any incriminating evidence even after conducting raids at his residence in Mumbai. Sharma pleaded that since he has been suffering from high blood pressure, chest pain and other problems, his bail application be considered. But the SIT argued that Sharma's application was premature and refuted his claims to ill health by submitting a health report from the Yerwada central prison doctor to the local court. Sharma is the highest ranking official to be arrested in the case, registered by the Bund Garden police, in which nine police officials have been arrested.

Judicial Magistrate K P Shrikhande on January 19, 2004 extended the police custody of suspended Inspector General of Police Shridhar Vagal till January 31, 2004.

"Encounter specialist" and Deputy Commissioner of Police Pradeep Sawant, arrested in the fake stamp racket, on January 17, 2004 moved a bail application in the court of special judge S.M Shembole at Pune. The plea is scheduled to come up for hearing on January 28. The bail application, filed by Sawant's lawyer Satish Mane-Shinde, states that Sawant be granted bail as he was not guilty of the offences he has been charged with.

The Mumbai High Court on January 16, 2004 deferred till February 11 the petition filed by former Mumbai Police Commissioner R S Sharma, challenging appointment of S S Puri as SIT chief with the rank of director general of police to probe the fake stamps scam. The petition was deferred by the bench headed by Chief Justice C K Thakker, in view of a similar petition filed by a retired police official before the Supreme Court which will hear the matter on February 3. SIT submitted progress report before the High Court, but the Judges refused to accept it saying propriety demands that such report should not be seen since Puri's appointment was under challenge in the High Court as well as the Supreme Court.

The Karnataka Stamp Investigation team STAMPIT has recommended compulsory retirement for four police officers serving in the State in the light of their role in the fake stamp racket, and initiation of appropriate criminal proceedings against them. In a letter to the Director General of Police, STAMPIT officers have asked for action against Assistant Commissioner of Police Sangram Singh, City Crime Branch Inspector Vali Basha, Inspector V A Khan and Bangalore Rural Deputy Superintendent of Police Muddaiah, who had allegedly helped the racket thrive in the State. Director General of Police T Madiyal has written to Police Commissioner S Mariswamy asking him to take suitable action as per the Stamp IT's advice. He said that he has collected information about the officers named and will write to the Government to proceed against them.

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FREE ADVERTISEMENTS

The Advertising Supplement to 'Stamps of India Collectors Companion' is available on-line <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Ads/ads.htm>

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VIEWS & OPINIONS

READERS FORUM

<Dear Reader, Your feedback is important to us as it helps evolve the newsletter. Please do let us have your thoughts and suggestions.>

DR. KENNETH X ROBBINS FROM USA

I am co-editing a book on Africans in India and would appreciate hearing from readers who have information as well as non-philatelic & philatelic material from the Indian Princely states of Janjira, and Sachin.

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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

STAMP FEATURES ISLAND IN JAPAN-KOREA DISPUTE

Japan protested on January 16, 2004 over Seoul's issuance of postage stamps bearing the image of a disputed island in the Sea of Japan. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi expressed regret to South Korean Ambassador to Japan Cho Se Hyung, according to a statement released by the ministry. Japan had repeatedly asked South Korea not to release the controversial stamps.

The island, known as Takeshima in Japan and Tok-do in South Korea, is claimed by both countries. Korea issued 560,000 sets of stamps, with one set consisting of four kinds of stamps featuring the island.

"The government cannot tolerate" the move, Kawaguchi told Cho. "Takeshima belongs to Japan from legal and historical standpoints." Kawaguchi said the government will notify members of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) that South Korea's move is against the spirit of the organization. The UPU is a Bern-based international organization of postal services. Cho told Kawaguchi that the island belongs to South Korea, and urged Japan to "carefully deal with the matter" so as not to negatively affect bilateral relations.

During a news conference, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda expressed regret over South Korea's move. Posts minister Taro Aso said he is unhappy at the issuance of the stamps. He said he had expected Seoul to "sensibly" deal with the matter. Earlier in the month, Aso said Japan should retaliate by creating Takeshima stamps.

The island was placed under US control after Japan's defeat in World War II. South Korea stationed its guards on the island in 1954, claiming that it belonged to Seoul. Japan and South Korea failed to reach an



agreement on the territorial issue when they signed a basic treaty to open diplomatic ties in 1965.

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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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WEB SITE UPDATES

STAMPS OF INDIA <http://www.stampsofindia.com>

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.

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

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

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ADMINISTRIVIA

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Vol.2 2001, Issue #20-52, Rs.950

Vol.3 2002, Issue #53-97, Rs.1250

Vol.4 2003, Part 1, Issue #98-122, (January-June) Rs.650

Complete Set, as above, postpaid: Rs.3500 (inland) or US\$95 (overseas)

Vol.5 2003, Part 2, Issue #123-148, July-December) Coming soon

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