

ISSN 0972-3587

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

The First & 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 # 156 - February 19, 2004. Published Every Thursday  
Edited by Madhu Jhingan and Savita Jhingan  
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Also received is the suggestion that not only numbers of 'Reliance India  
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of SMS.

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Gerald Sattin,  
Ed Deschl, Madhukar Deogawanka, Ashok Kumar Tiwary, Press Trust of  
India, The Hindu, and The Indian Express.

We invite your inputs, please email to [feedback@stampsfindia.com](mailto:feedback@stampsfindia.com)  
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If you've found this newsletter useful, recommend it to a friend.

Better still, forward a copy of this issue. Also, please mention this newsletter when contacting other philatelists.

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

BILL FINCHAM PASSES AWAY

Dr. W F Fincham, Research Coordinator of the India Study Circle for Philately (ISC) suffered a heart attack on February 14, 2004 and did not survive. He was returning home after a very rewarding and well attended ISC meeting held at the Royal Philatelic Society in London.

His death is a serious loss to Indian philately. He will be greatly missed both as a person and as an enthusiast for research into Indian postal matters.

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There are over 2000 lots covering India - Pre-stamp covers, Essays Proofs & Reprints, Scinde Dawks, Lithographs, Stamps from pre and post independence including officials & Military, Refugee Relief, Postal Stationery, Cancellations, Covers, Pigeonogram, Rocket Mails, Meter Frankings, and Used Abroad; Indian Princely States postal, - over 350 lots of Cochin, Trvancore, & Trvancore-Cochin, Revenues; Bangladesh, Burma, Pakistan, and Nepal over 275 lots.

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MEGHDOOT 2004

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54 exhibits were displayed in 66 frames. In addition 20 internationally acclaimed exhibits were displayed in the Invitee class in 164 frames.

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Meghdoot Post Office Philately Club was also inaugurated during the show and a special cover was also brought out to mark this event. Stamp Clubs are being formed at schools and the members of these clubs who open a standing order account at philatelic bureau will be enrolled as members of the Meghdoot club.

The highlight of the show was the first ever participation of the blind students in Letter Writing contest. Philatelic workshops and quiz were organized during the show. Cultural programs were conducted on all evenings and on the final day the blind students also participated.

Bhutan Post and stamp dealers from New Delhi and Kolkata set up dealers' booth at the show.

#### CALENDAR OF 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.

#### February

19-20, South Delhi District Level, DESPEX

21-22, Amritsar, District Level

27-29, Jalandhar, District Level

27-29, Tirupur, COIN-STAMPEX

#### March

3-5, Coimbatore, District Level

13-14, Chandigarh, District Level

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

G P A NEWS, Whole # 77 - January 2004, Monthly

G P A NEWS, Whole # 78 - February 2004, Monthly

Editor: H C Mehta

Publisher: Gujarat Philatelists Association  
Address: 1/M National Chamber, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad -380009  
Annual Subscription including membership: Rs.100, Entrance Fee Rs.100

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FAKE STAMP SCAM UPDATES

Safiqul Islam and Salim Ahmed were arrested by Assam Police on February 12, 2004 for possessing counterfeit stamp papers in the denomination of Rs. 5000 worth Rs 1.4 million. On a tip off the police raided the residence of Salim Ahmed in the Santipur Hillside area under Bharalumukh police station and recovered from him 120 papers worth Rs 0.6 million. Upon his interrogation another raid was made in the Dighalipukhuri area under Latasil police station and prime accused Safiqul Islam was arrested along with another 160 fake stamp papers worth Rs 0.8 million. The accused were on February 15, 2004 remanded to seven days police custody by the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kamrup. Safiqul confessed before police that he procured the counterfeit stamp papers from a person Bikash in Delhi and had given Salim 120 papers for selling them in the market. The involvement of Abdul Karim Telgi could not be ruled out in the scam and it was one of the angles of investigation into the case.

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FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL ISSUES

Maria Libera, [maria.libera@upu.int](mailto:maria.libera@upu.int) Program Manager - Markets  
Development, Directorate of Markets, International Bureau, Universal  
Postal Union, informs:

UPU has recently issued a circular at the request of the Republic of Benin denouncing close to 1900 illegal stamps that have been printed and distributed in its name through a large number of sheet formats on a large variety of themes. More illegal issues have just been identified in the name of Benin, and these will be the subject of a new denouncement as soon as possible. The genuine issues of Benin for 2003 can be consulted on UPU's WNS website [www.wnsstamps.ch](http://www.wnsstamps.ch). Details about Benin's stamps can be obtained directly from the following address:  
Bureau philatélique du Bénin (M TEOU O Joseph [jostheou@yahoo.fr](mailto:jostheou@yahoo.fr))  
BP 5959 - DSPF/OPT Cotonou, Bénin.

Investigations are ongoing to process denouncements of illegal stamps that have appeared or which are still on the market in the names of the following postal administrations: Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Union of Comoros, Congo (Republic), Congo (Democratic Republic), Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, East Timor, Eritrea, Estonia (its islands), Falkland Islands, Georgia, Guiné-Bissau, Guinea (Republic) Kosova (UNMIK), Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco (the Sahara Republic), Mauritania, Union of Myanmar, Niger, the Russian Federation (its internal republics and provinces), Rwanda, Sao Tome é Principe, Somalia, Sudan, Tadjikistan, Tchad, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The collectors must continue to be particularly careful when they see issues on the market in the names of these countries, in particular during philatelic exhibitions, on the Internet, and in various advertising materials. It is important that they have the listing of the legal issues and they double-check beforehand the authenticity of the stamps they want to purchase, than to regret their purchase later.

The circulars already issued in the names of a large number of countries have unfortunately not yet stopped the continued proliferation of illegal stamps in the names of these and other countries. The combat against this serious problem must continue and everyone needs to contribute by reporting as much material as possible that they see on the market that is or may be doubtful in nature and which requires investigation.

More and more of the countries concerned have their legitimate stamps on their own websites. More postal administrations are still signing up to the UPU's WADP Numbering system which lists the official stamps issued since 1 January 2002 and now have 146 postal administrations participating in the WNS system. Please visit [www.wnsstamps.ch](http://www.wnsstamps.ch) and send your comments on the value of this site.

'Stamps of India' also provides information at the following link <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Orgs/wadp-05.htm> as part of strengthening the combat against the continuing proliferation of illegal stamps.

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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.>

JEEVAN JYOTI from Bhubaneshwar

I want to draw the attention of philatelists and officials of Department of Posts through your esteemed internet journal that the Postal Department is not taking proper care to return the collections of the participants after the exhibition. The collections are returned to the philatelists in a very careless manner.

Recently I was personally requested by the Chief Postmaster, Lucknow to send collections for Philatelic Mahotsav which was held in Lucknow from 27 to 28 January 2004. I sent 3 frames by speed post. After few days I was surprised to receive a torn poorly and loosely packed packet sent by speed post from Chief Post Master, Lucknow containing 2 frames of my collection and one frame of "Roses" collection of Mr. Satyendra Kumar Aggarwal of Varanasi. The packet was almost open and sheets of Mr. Satyendra's collection were visible from the out side. They were not even covered in a separate envelope.

When I went through the sheets I was quite shocked to see his collection as it was highly valuable containing some rare items and it could have been damaged or lost. Is this justified? When a philatelist is personally requested to send the collection then the collection must be returned to its owner in a well packed parcel.

The Department of Posts should also reimburse the speed post charges to the participants if the exhibition is non competitive and collections are sent by the philatelists on earnest request of the Postal department officials.

I had to send two times parcel by speed Post first to send my own collection to Lucknow and second time to return Mr Stayendra Aggarwal's collection. But till date I have not received my own one frame collection which was sent to Mr. Aggarwal by the mistake of Department of Posts.

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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

ILLEGAL STAMPS & STAMP SCANDALS

We have received following mail from Dr Malte Aronsson, editor of the Collector's Target <http://www.collectorstarget.com/> based in Sweden

"We wish to congratulate you on the fantastic work you lay down on such a wonderful product as the Stamps of India Newsletter. Hence, we would like to provide you with this Press Release, which might be of interest. In any case, please let us have your comments on it. Even though this is a conversation between Ian Billings and Keith Larson and us, the whole subject as such would be of interest of any stamp collector - but most of all to philatelic scribes, journalists and editors, who are able to spread the good words out further."

01. PRESS RELEASE

Dear Ian Billings and Keith Larson,  
First of all, let me convey to you my uttermost thankfulness for letting us know also about the bad news in the philatelic world. We all need to know about new threats, new rip-offs that comes up, now and then. Even if we are one step after.

Most probably, this underground philatelic activity of producing illegal stamps is a lucrative one. The average philatelist (or better, stamp-collector) who collects stamps from various countries have a hard time to find out what stamp issue is legal, and which is not. In most cases, the illegal stamps bear the correct name of the country, and also the correct currencies.

The first people to find out about the illegal issues would of course be the ones who work at the postal administration's philatelic divisions. But not always. Really, each postal administration should run a mailing-list to all (web) publishers who publish denouncements of illegal

issues, in order to have the information out, quickly, like rings on the water.

There is a very good initiative taken by WNSStamps in Switzerland, the World Numbering System, where all legally issued stamps are published, with images (which is very important). Any unsure person may refer to this website, to find out what stamps are OK to buy for the collection, and what stamps out of bounds, etc. <http://www.wnsstamps.com>

Since year 2000 we have also published the stamps from a variety of countries on our website, for the same reason. But sorry to say, only a few countries have joined so far. The information we receive though, comes from the legitimate postal administrations of each country, and are thus the legal issues. We think, the more people (websites) that will publish this type of information, i.e. spreading the good words, the better it will be. <http://www.collectorstarget.com/>

Let's all go together NOW to fight the illegal stamps once for all. Let all your colleagues and liaisons out there know. These stamps are produced for one and only reason: To rip the innocent stamp collectors off, in order to make a quick, even huge profits. They do not think about what damage they are doing to different countries' stamp-issuing reputation, what pain they give to those collectors who bought (or will buy) these completely valueless stamps for their collections. What damage it will do to all the attempts to get more people interested in stamp collecting generally (specially thinking about youth and children).

These people are the worst, they fool people to think the stamps are real, the bogus stamps they produce carries a real country's name, its currency, etc.

The second worst people are the unscrupulous Philatelic Agents producing stamps for different countries and little islands. For instance, a little island country with a few thousand inhabitants comes out with over 100 sets of stamps in one year (!). These stamps are from my point of view in the grey-zone of being bogus. Isn't it strange how such a small island or island group could issue more stamps than is needed for local postage (plus little extra for the philatelists and companies who subscribe at their philatelic divisions). (The normal need for new stamps for a small island nation would be max 4 issues with 2 - 4 different stamps of each issue, per year....) What does a stamp depicting Swedish formula 1 drivers or Ukrainian football teams have to do with a tropical island nation? How about instead producing stamps that have to do with the island itself, its culture, way of life, tourist spots...

Let us all go together also to make the minds up on those unscrupulous postmasters and philatelic division managers who let profit go before the reputation of their stamps. Let us all try to spread the good words. After a few years they would find out, anyway, when they see that lesser and lesser number of stamps actually are sold. But at that time the reputation has gone, or had at least got deep scars. It's too late. It's of course OK for any postal administration to let an agent produce their

stamps, but they should give clear instructions to the agent on how many stamps should be produced per year, and what topics, in order to keep the reputation - and the collectors. Many postal administrations do still have a lot to learn, it seems.

Please make a note about ILLEGAL STAMPS on the front page of your website, link it to a new page, get the latest information from UPU, copy this and paste it in that page, and upload the page to your server. Or, at least place a link to a proper page within <http://www.upu.int/> on your page, in order to let more and more people know.

Why not do the same about the GREY-ZONE stamps?

Please let us know if we are wrong, about any of our comments.

If you think these matters are important, please let us know. We would very much like to co-operate with you on these, and possibly other matters too. In the case you come across any dealer or website offering or giving information about illegal, bogus stamps, would you please let us know about it? If you like, we will do the same for you. If you have a look at our website, you will see it carries quite a few links to all sorts of philatelic websites throughout the world. We scan these regularly, in order to see that the links still function, but also we check the content of these, and in case we find something suspect, we could let you know. If you approve to.

We have to co-operate in order to stop the illegal stamps.

02. MESSAGE FROM IAN BILLINGS of Norvic Philatelics  
<http://www.norvic-philatelics.co.uk> forwarding the message received

Dear Dr Aronsson

Your websites and ours have one thing in common - we all highlight the problem of 'illegal stamps'. If you haven't had a copy of the attached email - which is perfectly safe - you may be interested in the threat that is being made to the UPU and others.

Your mail software may mark this as suspect because of the web address in it, in fact if you click on the address it probably won't load because the sender has left off the <http://> (!) but if you paste the address into your browser you will see a message sent to Maria Libera at the UPU. It isn't pleasant, but there we are, the people involved are clearly not pleasant people.

All I can add is, if you're included on his mailing list, be wary. I shall look at any incoming package with suspicion unless I know the sender.

03. MESSAGE RECEIVED & FORWARDED BY IAN BILLINGS  
Subject: [www.stamp-scandal.com](http://www.stamp-scandal.com)  
From: JMarinoMontero@aol.com  
Date: Thu, 12 Feb 2004 09:55:34 EST  
To: [ian@norvic-philatelics.co.uk](mailto:ian@norvic-philatelics.co.uk)

New Web site : [www.stamp-scandal.com](http://www.stamp-scandal.com)  
you go to be there very soon.

04. Open Letter to Maria Libera from (Stamp-Scandal.com)  
To: Maria Libera, UPU <[maria.libera@upu.int](mailto:maria.libera@upu.int)>  
Date: 11 February 2004 11:25

Madam,

We have the pleasure of informing you that your days of libelous denunciation against us are over.

You can consult the website [www.stamp-scandal.com](http://www.stamp-scandal.com) which is under construction, and which will be uncovering the real producers of illegal stamps.

"Ministers - Post Office Directors - Princes - Philatelic Organisations - Stamp Catalogues - the mafia of the stamp business - minor employees of the Postal Organisation - etc...." along with all documentation.

Once and for all justice will be done. You insist on causing us harassment even though you know all our work is completely legal. No one will be spared.

If you have any dignity, please RESIGN from your position in the UPU.

05. MESSAGE FROM KEITH LARSON, Webmaster of the Scouts on Stamps Society International:

Ian,

Thank you for your notification of this scandal website.  
Interesting that the author will not acknowledge that they might actually be responsible for marketing and promoting these illegal issues!

Here is who behind this website:  
domain: STAMP-SCANDAL.COM  
created: 10-Feb-2004  
last-changed: 10-Feb-2004  
registration-expiration: 10-Feb-2005

Registrant & administrator: Juan Marino-Montero  
Marino Montero International Limited  
Curdrige Lane, Warwick House, SO32 2BJ, Southampton GB  
registrant-phone: (44) 1 489 79 86 51  
registrant-fax: (44) 1 489 79 87 51  
registrant-email: [JMarinoMontero@aol.com](mailto:JMarinoMontero@aol.com)

Mr Montero operates an internet website for marketing his fake stamps with a name of "MMI Stamps." I didn't see a single legitimate UPU country stamp at his website. <http://mmistamps.com/>

The story gets more interesting. Following the domain registration trail, MMI's website and online business process was created by Greg

Caron, who also runs "Coolstamps.com". Coolstamps markets mostly fake stamps too, with some UPU legitimate issues.

Registrant & administrator: Greg Caron  
PO Box 5125, Vacaville, California 95696-5125, United States  
Phone (707) 448- 1111  
Fax (707) 448-1881  
email: [coolstamps@coolstamps.com](mailto:coolstamps@coolstamps.com)

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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

Published by Madhu Jhingan [mjhingan@yahoo.com](mailto:mjhingan@yahoo.com) for 'Stamps of India',  
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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

STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION, Back Issues on CD  
Issue # 1 - latest issue, Rs.500 or US\$ 10 postpaid

STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION, Back Issues on the Web Site  
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Ed Deschl, Madhukar Deogawanka, Ashok Kumar Tiwary, Press Trust of  
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Bhutan Post and stamp dealers from New Delhi and Kolkata set up dealers' booth at the show.

#### CALENDAR OF 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.

#### February

19-20, South Delhi District Level, DESPEX

21-22, Amritsar, District Level

27-29, Jalandhar, District Level

27-29, Tirupur, COIN-STAMPEX

#### March

3-5, Coimbatore, District Level

13-14, Chandigarh, District Level

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

G P A NEWS, Whole # 77 - January 2004, Monthly

G P A NEWS, Whole # 78 - February 2004, Monthly

Editor: H C Mehta

Publisher: Gujarat Philatelists Association  
Address: 1/M National Chamber, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad -380009  
Annual Subscription including membership: Rs.100, Entrance Fee Rs.100

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FAKE STAMP SCAM UPDATES

Safiqul Islam and Salim Ahmed were arrested by Assam Police on February 12, 2004 for possessing counterfeit stamp papers in the denomination of Rs. 5000 worth Rs 1.4 million. On a tip off the police raided the residence of Salim Ahmed in the Santipur Hillside area under Bharalumukh police station and recovered from him 120 papers worth Rs 0.6 million. Upon his interrogation another raid was made in the Dighalipukhuri area under Latasil police station and prime accused Safiqul Islam was arrested along with another 160 fake stamp papers worth Rs 0.8 million. The accused were on February 15, 2004 remanded to seven days police custody by the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kamrup. Safiqul confessed before police that he procured the counterfeit stamp papers from a person Bikash in Delhi and had given Salim 120 papers for selling them in the market. The involvement of Abdul Karim Telgi could not be ruled out in the scam and it was one of the angles of investigation into the case.

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FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL ISSUES

Maria Libera, [maria.libera@upu.int](mailto:maria.libera@upu.int) Program Manager - Markets  
Development, Directorate of Markets, International Bureau, Universal  
Postal Union, informs:

UPU has recently issued a circular at the request of the Republic of Benin denouncing close to 1900 illegal stamps that have been printed and distributed in its name through a large number of sheet formats on a large variety of themes. More illegal issues have just been identified in the name of Benin, and these will be the subject of a new denouncement as soon as possible. The genuine issues of Benin for 2003 can be consulted on UPU's WNS website [www.wnsstamps.ch](http://www.wnsstamps.ch). Details about Benin's stamps can be obtained directly from the following address:  
Bureau philatélique du Bénin (M TEOU O Joseph [jostheou@yahoo.fr](mailto:jostheou@yahoo.fr))  
BP 5959 - DSPF/OPT Cotonou, Bénin.

Investigations are ongoing to process denouncements of illegal stamps that have appeared or which are still on the market in the names of the following postal administrations: Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Union of Comoros, Congo (Republic), Congo (Democratic Republic), Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, East Timor, Eritrea, Estonia (its islands), Falkland Islands, Georgia, Guiné-Bissau, Guinea (Republic) Kosova (UNMIK), Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco (the Sahara Republic), Mauritania, Union of Myanmar, Niger, the Russian Federation (its internal republics and provinces), Rwanda, Sao Tome é Principe, Somalia, Sudan, Tadjikistan, Tchad, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The collectors must continue to be particularly careful when they see issues on the market in the names of these countries, in particular during philatelic exhibitions, on the Internet, and in various advertising materials. It is important that they have the listing of the legal issues and they double-check beforehand the authenticity of the stamps they want to purchase, than to regret their purchase later.

The circulars already issued in the names of a large number of countries have unfortunately not yet stopped the continued proliferation of illegal stamps in the names of these and other countries. The combat against this serious problem must continue and everyone needs to contribute by reporting as much material as possible that they see on the market that is or may be doubtful in nature and which requires investigation.

More and more of the countries concerned have their legitimate stamps on their own websites. More postal administrations are still signing up to the UPU's WADP Numbering system which lists the official stamps issued since 1 January 2002 and now have 146 postal administrations participating in the WNS system. Please visit [www.wnsstamps.ch](http://www.wnsstamps.ch) and send your comments on the value of this site.

'Stamps of India' also provides information at the following link <http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Orgs/wadp-05.htm> as part of strengthening the combat against the continuing proliferation of illegal stamps.

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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.>

JEEVAN JYOTI from Bhubaneshwar

I want to draw the attention of philatelists and officials of Department of Posts through your esteemed internet journal that the Postal Department is not taking proper care to return the collections of the participants after the exhibition. The collections are returned to the philatelists in a very careless manner.

Recently I was personally requested by the Chief Postmaster, Lucknow to send collections for Philatelic Mahotsav which was held in Lucknow from 27 to 28 January 2004. I sent 3 frames by speed post. After few days I was surprised to receive a torn poorly and loosely packed packet sent by speed post from Chief Post Master, Lucknow containing 2 frames of my collection and one frame of "Roses" collection of Mr. Satyendra Kumar Aggarwal of Varanasi. The packet was almost open and sheets of Mr. Satyendra's collection were visible from the out side. They were not even covered in a separate envelope.

When I went through the sheets I was quite shocked to see his collection as it was highly valuable containing some rare items and it could have been damaged or lost. Is this justified? When a philatelist is personally requested to send the collection then the collection must be returned to its owner in a well packed parcel.

The Department of Posts should also reimburse the speed post charges to the participants if the exhibition is non competitive and collections are sent by the philatelists on earnest request of the Postal department officials.

I had to send two times parcel by speed Post first to send my own collection to Lucknow and second time to return Mr Stayendra Aggarwal's collection. But till date I have not received my own one frame collection which was sent to Mr. Aggarwal by the mistake of Department of Posts.

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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

ILLEGAL STAMPS & STAMP SCANDALS

We have received following mail from Dr Malte Aronsson, editor of the Collector's Target <http://www.collectorstarget.com/> based in Sweden

"We wish to congratulate you on the fantastic work you lay down on such a wonderful product as the Stamps of India Newsletter. Hence, we would like to provide you with this Press Release, which might be of interest. In any case, please let us have your comments on it. Even though this is a conversation between Ian Billings and Keith Larson and us, the whole subject as such would be of interest of any stamp collector - but most of all to philatelic scribes, journalists and editors, who are able to spread the good words out further."

01. PRESS RELEASE

Dear Ian Billings and Keith Larson,  
First of all, let me convey to you my uttermost thankfulness for letting us know also about the bad news in the philatelic world. We all need to know about new threats, new rip-offs that comes up, now and then. Even if we are one step after.

Most probably, this underground philatelic activity of producing illegal stamps is a lucrative one. The average philatelist (or better, stamp-collector) who collects stamps from various countries have a hard time to find out what stamp issue is legal, and which is not. In most cases, the illegal stamps bear the correct name of the country, and also the correct currencies.

The first people to find out about the illegal issues would of course be the ones who work at the postal administration's philatelic divisions. But not always. Really, each postal administration should run a mailing-list to all (web) publishers who publish denouncements of illegal

issues, in order to have the information out, quickly, like rings on the water.

There is a very good initiative taken by WNSStamps in Switzerland, the World Numbering System, where all legally issued stamps are published, with images (which is very important). Any unsure person may refer to this website, to find out what stamps are OK to buy for the collection, and what stamps out of bounds, etc. <http://www.wnsstamps.com>

Since year 2000 we have also published the stamps from a variety of countries on our website, for the same reason. But sorry to say, only a few countries have joined so far. The information we receive though, comes from the legitimate postal administrations of each country, and are thus the legal issues. We think, the more people (websites) that will publish this type of information, i.e. spreading the good words, the better it will be. <http://www.collectorstarget.com/>

Let's all go together NOW to fight the illegal stamps once for all. Let all your colleagues and liaisons out there know. These stamps are produced for one and only reason: To rip the innocent stamp collectors off, in order to make a quick, even huge profits. They do not think about what damage they are doing to different countries' stamp-issuing reputation, what pain they give to those collectors who bought (or will buy) these completely valueless stamps for their collections. What damage it will do to all the attempts to get more people interested in stamp collecting generally (specially thinking about youth and children).

These people are the worst, they fool people to think the stamps are real, the bogus stamps they produce carries a real country's name, its currency, etc.

The second worst people are the unscrupulous Philatelic Agents producing stamps for different countries and little islands. For instance, a little island country with a few thousand inhabitants comes out with over 100 sets of stamps in one year (!). These stamps are from my point of view in the grey-zone of being bogus. Isn't it strange how such a small island or island group could issue more stamps than is needed for local postage (plus little extra for the philatelists and companies who subscribe at their philatelic divisions). (The normal need for new stamps for a small island nation would be max 4 issues with 2 - 4 different stamps of each issue, per year....) What does a stamp depicting Swedish formula 1 drivers or Ukrainian football teams have to do with a tropical island nation? How about instead producing stamps that have to do with the island itself, its culture, way of life, tourist spots...

Let us all go together also to make the minds up on those unscrupulous postmasters and philatelic division managers who let profit go before the reputation of their stamps. Let us all try to spread the good words. After a few years they would find out, anyway, when they see that lesser and lesser number of stamps actually are sold. But at that time the reputation has gone, or had at least got deep scars. It's too late. It's of course OK for any postal administration to let an agent produce their

stamps, but they should give clear instructions to the agent on how many stamps should be produced per year, and what topics, in order to keep the reputation - and the collectors. Many postal administrations do still have a lot to learn, it seems.

Please make a note about ILLEGAL STAMPS on the front page of your website, link it to a new page, get the latest information from UPU, copy this and paste it in that page, and upload the page to your server. Or, at least place a link to a proper page within <http://www.upu.int/> on your page, in order to let more and more people know.

Why not do the same about the GREY-ZONE stamps?

Please let us know if we are wrong, about any of our comments.

If you think these matters are important, please let us know. We would very much like to co-operate with you on these, and possibly other matters too. In the case you come across any dealer or website offering or giving information about illegal, bogus stamps, would you please let us know about it? If you like, we will do the same for you. If you have a look at our website, you will see it carries quite a few links to all sorts of philatelic websites throughout the world. We scan these regularly, in order to see that the links still function, but also we check the content of these, and in case we find something suspect, we could let you know. If you approve to.

We have to co-operate in order to stop the illegal stamps.

02. MESSAGE FROM IAN BILLINGS of Norvic Philatelics  
<http://www.norvic-philatelics.co.uk> forwarding the message received

Dear Dr Aronsson

Your websites and ours have one thing in common - we all highlight the problem of 'illegal stamps'. If you haven't had a copy of the attached email - which is perfectly safe - you may be interested in the threat that is being made to the UPU and others.

Your mail software may mark this as suspect because of the web address in it, in fact if you click on the address it probably won't load because the sender has left off the <http://> (!) but if you paste the address into your browser you will see a message sent to Maria Libera at the UPU. It isn't pleasant, but there we are, the people involved are clearly not pleasant people.

All I can add is, if you're included on his mailing list, be wary. I shall look at any incoming package with suspicion unless I know the sender.

03. MESSAGE RECEIVED & FORWARDED BY IAN BILLINGS  
Subject: [www.stamp-scandal.com](http://www.stamp-scandal.com)  
From: JMarinoMontero@aol.com  
Date: Thu, 12 Feb 2004 09:55:34 EST  
To: [ian@norvic-philatelics.co.uk](mailto:ian@norvic-philatelics.co.uk)

New Web site : [www.stamp-scandal.com](http://www.stamp-scandal.com)  
you go to be there very soon.

04. Open Letter to Maria Libera from (Stamp-Scandal.com)  
To: Maria Libera, UPU <[maria.libera@upu.int](mailto:maria.libera@upu.int)>  
Date: 11 February 2004 11:25

Madam,

We have the pleasure of informing you that your days of libelous denunciation against us are over.

You can consult the website [www.stamp-scandal.com](http://www.stamp-scandal.com) which is under construction, and which will be uncovering the real producers of illegal stamps.

"Ministers - Post Office Directors - Princes - Philatelic Organisations - Stamp Catalogues - the mafia of the stamp business - minor employees of the Postal Organisation - etc...." along with all documentation.

Once and for all justice will be done. You insist on causing us harassment even though you know all our work is completely legal. No one will be spared.

If you have any dignity, please RESIGN from your position in the UPU.

05. MESSAGE FROM KEITH LARSON, Webmaster of the Scouts on Stamps Society International:

Ian,

Thank you for your notification of this scandal website.  
Interesting that the author will not acknowledge that they might actually be responsible for marketing and promoting these illegal issues!

Here is who behind this website:  
domain: STAMP-SCANDAL.COM  
created: 10-Feb-2004  
last-changed: 10-Feb-2004  
registration-expiration: 10-Feb-2005

Registrant & administrator: Juan Marino-Montero  
Marino Montero International Limited  
Curdrige Lane, Warwick House, SO32 2BJ, Southampton GB  
registrant-phone: (44) 1 489 79 86 51  
registrant-fax: (44) 1 489 79 87 51  
registrant-email: [JMarinoMontero@aol.com](mailto:JMarinoMontero@aol.com)

Mr Montero operates an internet website for marketing his fake stamps with a name of "MMI Stamps." I didn't see a single legitimate UPU country stamp at his website. <http://mmistamps.com/>

The story gets more interesting. Following the domain registration trail, MMI's website and online business process was created by Greg

Caron, who also runs "Coolstamps.com". Coolstamps markets mostly fake stamps too, with some UPU legitimate issues.

Registrant & administrator: Greg Caron  
PO Box 5125, Vacaville, California 95696-5125, United States  
Phone (707) 448- 1111  
Fax (707) 448-1881  
email: [coolstamps@coolstamps.com](mailto:coolstamps@coolstamps.com)

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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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Issue # 1 - latest issue, No Charge  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/Content/Download/archives.htm>

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