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----- STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -----  
The News, Views, & Features on Philately & Postal Services of India  
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Edited by Madhukar and Savita Jhingan

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I N T H I S I S S U E

BANGKOK 2007 Asian International  
Forthcoming Stamp Issues  
Recent Special Postmarks & Covers  
Rakhi Envelopes  
Recent & Forthcoming Events  
History of Postal Communications in India, Part 3

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

The best thing, we find in Bangkok is that it has many stamp shops. These also sell coins and banknotes but sheer number of such shops virtually in all markets is indeed impressive. Collecting stamps is strong in Thailand and there is a thriving philatelic industry. The availability of good quality and extremely economical locally manufactured philatelic accessories is a great convenience. And to top it all, the post office's philatelic service is also very helpful. A philatelic haven!

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Ashish Talwar, Madhukar Deogawanka, and Anil Suri

We invite your inputs, please email to [writeback@stampsofindia.com](mailto:writeback@stampsofindia.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 images, 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

BANGKOK 2007 ASIAN INTERNATIONAL

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn inaugurated the 20<sup>th</sup> Asian International Philatelic Exhibition on August 3, 2007 at Bangkok, Thailand.

There are 202 exhibits, from 25 countries including India, on display in 911 frames. Dr Pichai Buranasombai led the Jury at BANGKOK 2007 as its President with Surajit Gongvatana, President of Federation of Inter Asian Philately (FIAP) as Honorary President and Tay Peng Hian as Senior Consultant. The Jury consisted of 28 jurors including M G Pittie from India, and 7 apprentice jurors. The 4 member Expert Team has G Madan Mohan Das from India as an apprentice. Dilip Shah the Jury from India could not make it due to personal reasons.

India participated with 11 exhibits including 4 in the Literature class through its National Commissioner Anil Suri. The awards received by Indian exhibits are as follows:

Gold

Anil Suri - Fiscals of Cochin

S C Sukhani - The Third Printing India 4 Annas of 1854

Large Vermeil

Kishor Chandak - Indian Instructional Labels & Markings

Rajan Jayakar - Fiscals of British India 1800-1900

Silver

Umesh Kakkeri - Postal History of Portuguese India

A K Bayanwala - A Bouquet of Philatelic Articles

Silver Bronze

Nawal Kishore Tatiwala - Gemology

Angeet Suri - British Army Uniforms

Padmini Balan - Window to Philately

Sangeeta Deogwanka - Stamp Collecting Today

Bronze

Ajit Sukhatankar - Early India Cancellations

The 2 exhibits of Vijay H Seth were absent.

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FORTHCOMING STAMP ISSUES

Aug 9: 150 years of the First War of Independence, 2 stamps, Rs 5 each

New issues along with the First Day Cover and the information sheet, at Rs 2 each, are put on sale on sale at nearly 1000 selected Post Offices including all Philatelic Bureaus and Philatelic Counters in India.

For an illustrated list of stamps in 2007, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/stamps/2007stamps.htm>

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The complete illustrated list of Meghdoot Post Card is available at:  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/meghdoot.htm>

For an illustrated list of all kinds of Postcards in 2007, visit  
<http://stampsofindia.com/lists/2007PC.htm>

For an illustrated list of all kinds of Envelopes in 2007, visit  
<http://stampsofindia.com/lists/2007EN.htm>

For an illustrated list of Aerogramme & Inland Letter in 2007, visit  
<http://stampsofindia.com/lists/2007ILC.htm>

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RECENT SPECIAL POSTMARKS & COVERS

Jun 15: Kolkata, Calcutta Club centenary

For an illustrated list of Special Postmarks & Covers in 2007, visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/pmk/2007pm.htm>

For an illustrated list of Army Postal Service Issues in 2007, visit  
<http://stampsofindia.com/lists/pmk/aps/2007aps.htm>

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RAKHI ENVELOPES

The festival of Rakhi this year is on August 28, 2007 this year. In this festival sisters tie Rakhi on the wrist of their brothers.

India Post has been issuing special envelopes for Rakhis since 2001 and this year will be no exception. This year the envelopes will be same as the last years in design and material that is 4 designs in tyvek. These should be available at the post office near you by the time you are reading this.

To view Rakhi envelopes, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/pss/rakhi.htm>

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RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Aug 10-12: Bangalore, Karnataka State Philatelic Exhibition

Sep 29 - Oct 3: Surat, Mahatma Gandhi Stamps and Memorabilia Exhibition

Oct 6-8: Ahmedabad, Gujarat State Philatelic Exhibition

Oct 31-Nov 2: Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh State Philatelic Exhibition

For a list of exhibitions in 2007, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/events2007.htm>

MEETINGS

The schedule of meetings of the philatelic organizations in India is available at <http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/clubmeet.htm>

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FEATURES & RESOURCES

HISTORY OF POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS IN INDIA, PART 3

ANCIENT INDIA

An analytical study of the maritime trade, with a philatelic overview

Logistics dictate that overland communications precede the development of maritime communications. The indeterminate lag between ports of call and unpredictability of seafaring are some chief reasons for the late evolution of an organized maritime postal system. As narrated in various religious and ancient literatures, India had a well-documented maritime trade, dating back to 4500 years ago to the period of Indus Valley civilization. What is amazing is the scale and scope of the trade - with South Africa, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Assyria in the West and as far as the islands of Indonesia and Japan in the East.

Ancient period was the Golden Age of Shipping and Ship-building activity for India, which continued till about 13th century AD. A little known fact is that this was one of the key industries in ancient India, for she excelled in the art of constructing vessels. Ship building technology adapted ancient Tamil methods to make catamarans.<sup>1</sup>

Sir William Jones is of opinion that the Hindus "must have been navigators in the age of Manu, because bottomry (the lender of money

for marine insurance) is mentioned in it. In the Ramayana, the practice of bottomry is distinctly noticed. "

A vast repository of ancient literary works has random references to a brisk seafaring trade. The Rig Veda, represents Varuna having full knowledge of sea routes. The Ramayana refers to Yavan Dvipa and Suvarna Dvipa (Java and Sumatra) and also to Lohta Sayara (Red Sea Indians), who were masters of the sea borne trade with Europe, Asia and Africa.

The Brahmanda Purana describes the world map drawn on a flat surface. ManuSmriti, the oldest law book in the world, lays down laws to govern commercial disputes with respect to sea borne traffic. Padma Purana says that world maps were prepared and maintained in book form. The Bible refers to Phoenician sailors who sailed to Ophir (Abhira in Gujarat) and brought back treasures. Harivamsa informs that the first geographical survey of the world was performed during the period of Vaivasvata (seventh Manu). Surya Siddhanta speaks about construction of wooden globe, complete with grids.

In Artha Shastra, Kautilya writes about the Board of Shipping and the Commissioner of Port who supervised sea traffic. Arthashastra devotes a full chapter on the state department of waterways under "navadhyaksha". In fact the word navigation is derived from the Sanskrit word "Navgath". The Kathasagara, Sangam literature and Buddhist Jataka stories also describe the naval supremacy that enabled Indians to colonize islands in the Indian Archipelago.

India is also the country with written legacies in Aryabhata's indomitable Arya-Siddhanta, Varahamihira's Brihat-Samhita and Pancha-Siddhantika. Kautilya's legendary Arthashastra and the much-hyped Kama Sutra. So, it is indeed inconceivable that no testaments of an ancient maritime communication system prevailed.

The answer eluding me probably lies in the allusion contained in Surya Siddhanta, which mentions how the art of cartography is the secret of gods. This being the general belief in the ancient epoch, records were preserved in secrecy. Conclusively, they must have been purged or become casualties to vagaries of nature or marauders.

The Greek Periplus of the Erythraean Sea contains many detailed references to the Indian seaports Muziris<sup>2</sup>(Kodungallur or Cranganore, Kerala), Poduke (Ariyankuppam), Barbaricum (modern Karachi), Barygaza (Bharuch, Gujarat) with the Tamil dynasties of Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras as trading partners. It is well established that the world's first tidal dock was built in Lothal around 2500 BC during the Harappan civilisation, near Mangrol harbour (Gujarat). Other ports were Balakot and Dwarka (1500-1400 BC), connecting to an ancient route along the Sabarmati river, Supara and Calliena (near Bombay), Kalyan, Chaul and Cambay in Western India, Puhar and Korkai; then Tamralipti in Bengal, Kadura and Ghantasala, Kaveripattanam (Puhar) and Tondail of the Pandyas in Andhra, Paralia and Balita near Kanya Kumari; Elceynda and Kottayam in Kerala

Indian maritime philately has been weaned in the traditional repertoire of European philatelic literature. The same has been well documented, with rates, routes and regulations. We know the overland - Red Sea route was established by Thomas Fletcher Waghorn between India and

Great Britain via Suez and Alexandria, in 1830s. The route was across the Indian Ocean to Aden, up Red Sea to the Isthmus of Suez, and overland by camel to Cairo, thence by boats down river Nile to Atfeh, and along Mahmoudieh canal to Alexandria. This itself was an ancient trade route and was almost forgotten after 1498 when Vasco da Gama discovered sea route to India.

However, there also existed another overland-Red Sea route some 3000 years ago<sup>3</sup>, where Berenike (23° N, 38° E approx) served as "transfer port"<sup>a</sup>, accepting cargo from India. Goods were carried by camels or donkeys some 240 miles northwest to the Nile River, where smaller boats transported the cargo north to Alexandria, thence across Mediterranean to a dozen major Roman ports.

Maritime philatelic records pertaining to India are mainly post 18th century. So studies on the preceding medieval period and ancient postal structure are required.

It must be borne in mind that the historical studies in postal system are incomplete without maritime communications. Regional literature and inscriptions, documents, maps, etc, may be available that throw light on ancient maritime communications. "There is extensive archival material on the Indian Ocean trade in Greek, Roman, and Southeast Asian sources."<sup>5</sup> Any input or know-how of such resources would be welcome by the author, as this a subject of ongoing research.

Notes:

1. This ancient Indian ship-building technology has even been used by the US while building the 110 feet catamaran ships to ferry tanks and ammunition from Qatar to Kuwait during the Iraq war.  
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2003/05/29/stories/2003052904851200.htm>
2. Major port which was key to trade between ancient India and the Roman Empire
3. As in the Periplus Maris Erythraei, a marine guidebook of 1st century AD, edited by W H Schoff
4. Supported by recent and ongoing archaeological evidences
5. <http://www.indianscience.org/scope.shtml>

Sources:

Ancient India - R C Mazumdar  
Ancient Indians knew Atlantic Ocean - Dr V Siva Prasad  
Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians From the Earliest Times - R K Mookerjee  
History of the Indian Ocean - Auguste Toussaint

Indian Laws Relevant to Philately

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/laws.htm>

Report Cyber Crime & Internet Fraud related to Indian Philately

<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/cybercrime.htm>

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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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ADMINISTRIVIA

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STAMPS ON INDIA <http://www.stampsonindia.com>  
The site devoted to the stamps from all over the world on Indian topics

INDIAN POSTAL GUIDE 1869

The first issue of the official postal guide, reprinted by Stamps of India 2004, 236 pages, hardbound, enlarged from original octavo to A4 size, limited edition, Special price - Rs 2750 post paid worldwide. Credit cards accepted <http://www.stampsofindia.com/99999.htm>

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