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----- STAMPS OF INDIA COLLECTORS COMPANION -----
The News, Views, & Features on Philately & Postal Services of India
Issue # 336 - April 10, 2008. Published Every Thursday
Edited by Madhukar and Savita Jhingan

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JHINGANS JOTTINGS

Hi

We learned the ropes of electronic publishing thru trial and error. It was after about a year and half in to publishing that we finally settled for 10 A4 size pages in 10 point size monospaced font. Thereafter we did have several issues of 5 pages but of late the issues are overflowing with an average of 15 pages per issue. The regular columns and the Readers Forum have contributed to this. After editing for 8 years we now know that a periodical publication takes a life of its own where there are some lean periods and some should we say overweight periods. So please accept a ton of thanks (no pun intended) for your support.

We recently were suggested to edit and compress Readers Forum content to cut down on size. We explained that our policy is to view this publication as a newspaper where a reader may read only areas of his interests and not from beginning to end. But the suggestion also triggered a discussion and another policy matter is now crystallized. It is, we will not edit the contributions to the Readers Forum. We do take care of spellings and grammar as a matter of routine but nothing else. All we ask the contributors is to use decent language and stick to facts. So keep on writing.

Famous science fiction author H G Wells wrote "No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else's draft." So you can understand how difficult it was to arrive at the policy of hands off approach to your contributions ;)

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

- M&SJ

Our thanks to the Contributors and Sources to this issue: Ashok Kumar Tiwary, Rajesh Paharia, A R C Shah, Suraj Jaitly, Shyaam Pradhan, and Vinod Sabharwal

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

##### PHILSENSEX APRIL 2008

By P R Krishnan

I am pleased to release the data for April 2008 on Post Independence mint stamps and miniature sheets of India for the benefit of collectors, dealers and investors. I invite your comments, opinions, and suggestions.

Please visit <http://www.stampsofindia.com/other/philsensex200803.htm> for viewing the data.

##### STAMP WATCH

1. The demand for Anna values are getting stronger. Even at this price these stamps looks good for long term.
2. The Rs 2 denomination commemorative MINT issues of 1976-77 will soon be the dark horse. Try to collect this 11 stamps issued now.

##### JUST FOR THOUGHT

1948 Gandhi FDC is being sold in Indian market around Rs 25 to 35 thousand where as the normal unmounted mint set is being traded anything between Rs 8500 to 10000 a set. I really wonder at this stage the pricing of FDC versus mint set. In my opinion this situation may not last long and the price for the mint set may overtake the price of FDC in the months to come. There may be an argument against my views stating the high prices for FDC is due to smaller quantity of FDC available in the market but don't forget that number of the FDC collectors and the stamp collectors may not be the same.

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##### NEW MINISTER OF STATE

Jyotiraditya Scindia was inducted in the Council of Ministers on April 6, 2008 and was allocated the portfolio of the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology. He took charge of his office on April 9, 2008.

Scindia, 37 years, is scion of the royal family of the erstwhile Princely State of Gwalior. He is a Harvard Graduate and member of the parliament from Guna, Madhya Pradesh.

Scindia replaced Dr Shakeel Ahmad who was moved to the Home Ministry.

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#### FORTHCOMING STAMP ISSUES

Apr 21: Civil Services  
Apr 27: P T Theagarayar

Now days, issues are scheduled and rescheduled for release at very short notice say couple of days! As you can see that the world is moving at very fast pace and we are still bringing out an issue only after 7 long days. Thus it is impossible to inform our readers thru this weekly publication about forthcoming stamp issues of India. We however do our best to publish this information on the home page of [www.stampsofindia.com](http://www.stampsofindia.com) as soon as it becomes available.

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 2008, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/stamps/2008stamps.htm>

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#### NEW POSTAL STATIONERY

Following Meghdoot post cards with advertisement were recently released:

National Rural Employment Guarantee -100 days a year, Telugu  
AIDS Control, Hindi  
Chitrakote Waterfall Jagdalpur, English  
Tribal Dance Bastar, English

The grand total till date is now 536, with 5 added this year.

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

Following Inland (Aerogram) Letter cards with advertisement were recently released:

Apr 07: Daspalla Group Visakkapatnam, ISP, English

For an illustrated list of Aerogramme & Inland Letter in 2007, visit  
<http://stampsofindia.com/lists/2008ILC.htm>

For an illustrated list of all kinds of Postcards in 2007, visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/2008PC.htm>

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

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#### RECENT SPECIAL POSTMARKS & COVERS

Feb 21: Jaipur, Asian Clay Shooting Championship 2008  
Mar 14: Mumbai, Government Law College 153<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary

For an illustrated list of Special Postmarks & Covers in 2008, visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/lists/pmk/2008pm.htm>

For an illustrated list of Army Postal Service Issues in 2008, visit  
<http://stampsofindia.com/lists/pmk/aps/2008aps.htm>

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#### INDIAN RARITIES AT AUCTION

Reflecting the continuing strong market for rare stamps and postal history, and with dealers and exhibitors looking towards the major international exhibitions coming up David Feldman's latest series of auctions, held April 1-5, 2008, totaled nearly 10 million Euro, averaging 30% over the estimates and with a very high percentage of lots sold. Managing Director Marcus Orsi estimated that the internet added at least 35% to the total realization.

India '9 1/2 Arches' Deep Vermillion unique block of 60 sold for € 75000+19.5% buyers fees (Rs 5.66 million) against a presale estimate of € 50000. Stanley Gibbons values this at £ 90,000 for singles in their Catalog and this was a unique two third sheet with marginal inscriptions on three sides. The 1854 Unissued '9 1/2 Arches' Vermillion corner marginal block of 10 sold for € 8500+19.5% (Rs 0.65 million) against a presale estimate of € 2000.

12 cut to shape copies of the 1854 4 Annas First Printing used on a cover sold for € 20000+19.5% (Rs 1.52 million) and a used Block of 10 of 1854 4 Annas Fourth Printing sold for € 19000+19.5% (Rs 1.44 million).

Scinde Dawk White mint pair with large margins sold for € 14000+19.5% (Rs 1.06 million) while the Scinde Dawk Blue mint was withdrawn from sale.

Queen Victoria Essay of 1891 8 Annas 'Alternative Design' sold for € 1700+19.5% (Rs 0.13 million), 20 different Color Trials of Rs 2 sold for € 12000+19.5% (Rs 0.91 million) and the Hand painted Essays of High Values sold for € 7000+19.5% (Rs 0.53 million).

King George V Essay of Rs 25 sold for € 9000+19.5% (Rs 0.68 million) and Color Trials of 7 values in gummed sheetlets of 4 sold for € 6000+19.5% (Rs 0.46 million).

28 different Color Trials of Mahatma Gandhi 1969 4 value set sold for € 11000+19.5% (Rs 0.83 million).

An 1860 Registered cover from Tranquebar (Danish Colony till 1845) addressed to His Danish Majesty's Consul General, sent via Madras, overland to Bombay, by ship to London via Southampton and redirected via Hamburg to Copenhagen, franked with 4a pair tied by diamond lozenge cancels, and showing an amazing array of rates, registered, transit & arrival markings sold for € 12000+19.5% (Rs 0.91 million) against a presale estimate of € 4000.

The Jammu & Kashmir collection estimated at € 17500+19.5% (Rs 1.33 million) remained unsold and is available at the listed price to the

first received offer. Offer below listed price is subject to vendor agreement and may not be accepted.

For a list of auctions in India, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/auction.htm>

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#### RECENT PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

PHILANEWS, Whole # 37, Jan Feb 2008, Bi-monthly  
Editor: Rajesh Paharia  
Publisher: Philatelic Society of Rajasthan  
Annual Subscription including Membership: Rs 200 (Rs 300 1<sup>st</sup> Year)

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#### LIST OF STAMPS

Maharashtra Circle of India Post recently published a 'List of Stamps' for years 1852 to 2007 during recently held MAHAFILMPEX 2008. The 80 page A5 size publication is priced Rs 20 and is available from the Philatelic Bureau at Mumbai GPO 400 001. The list does not have illustrations.

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#### RECENT & FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Bihar Circle of India Post organized 5 district philatelic exhibitions in the last 6 days of the financial year ending on March 31, 2008.

A district philatelic exhibition was held at Deoghar on March 26 and 27. The exhibition was a non competitive one and there was no jury appointed to evaluate the exhibits. There was no special cover issued on this occasion.

A district philatelic exhibition was held at Dumka on March 28. This exhibition also was a non competitive one and there was no jury appointed to evaluate the exhibits. There was no special cover issued on this occasion.

A district philatelic exhibition was held at Jamshedpur on March 26 and 27. This was a competitive exhibition and Syed Hafizuddin, philatelist along with Anil Kumar, Director of Postal Services Jharkhand Circle of India Post served as jury to evaluate the exhibits. A special cover was issued on March 26, 2008 depicting Dimna Lake with special postmark featuring the wild animals found in the forests around Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary.

A district level was held at Hazaribagh on March 28 and 29. This was a competitive exhibition and Ashok Kumar Tiwary, philatelist along with Shams Alam, Senior Superintendent of Hazaribagh Division of India Post served as jury to evaluate the exhibits. There were 5 exhibits and the Jury awarded 2 Silver and a Bronze medal. A special cover was issued on March 28, 2008 depicting Saint Columba's College established in 1899 with special postmark featuring the Black Buck found in the forests around Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

A district level was held at Bokaro on March 30 and 31. This was a competitive exhibition and Ashok Kumar Tiwary, philatelist, Dr Ranjit Singh Gandhi along with Anil Kumar, Director of Postal Services Jharkhand Circle of India Post served as jury to evaluate the exhibits. There were 8 exhibits in the competition and the Jury awarded 3 Silver and 5 Bronze medals. A special cover and special postmark issued on

March 30, 2008 features Bokaro Steel Plant. The appointment of 3 jurors to evaluate 8 exhibits is surprising. However the inclusion of Dr Gandhi, who is a national level apprentice juror, at a district level show in violation of India Post Regulations is not surprising as he has been doing similar violations time and again.

Achievements of these 5 exhibitions are that at least 15 new people were 'discovered' from these 5 places, who had good philatelic collection but they had no idea about exhibiting or preservation of those items. Proper training was given to them and they will prepare exhibits for upcoming state level exhibition.

Although these exhibitions were held on very short notice, India Post organized them well. Anil Kumar, Director of Postal Services, Jharkhand Circle of India Post monitored all these events personally and deserves the thanks of philatelic community.

Drawbacks of these exhibitions are that these were arranged on a very short notice of only 2 weeks. So, new philatelists couldn't prepare exhibits for participation. At the same time 'End of financial year' also effected these exhibitions. Better to plan for these small exhibitions in winter.

Mar 29-30: Patiala, district philatelic exhibition

Mar 27-28: Jalandhar, district philatelic exhibition

Apr 11-13: Mumbai, Coins Show & Todiwala Auction

Apr 13: Jaipur, Yearly Get-together of Philatelic Society of Rajasthan  
Venue: Club Grassfields, Janpath, Shyam Nagar  
Program: Meeting, auction, and honors, followed by dinner  
Contact: Rajesh Paharia 0 93517 16969

Apr 18-20: Kolkata, Stamp Exhibition at Outram Club  
In collaboration with Bharatiya Dakshin Sangstha as part of Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of the Club  
2 Special covers on sports and cinema and a booklet is planned  
Dealers Booth - Rs 1000, Contact Arun Bhattacharya Mobile 0 98304 12286

Apr 26-27: Ludhiana, district philatelic exhibition

For a list of exhibitions in 2008, please visit  
<http://www.stampsofindia.com/infobase/events2008.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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#### SOUTH ASIA NEW ISSUES

##### NEPAL 2008

Apr 02: Nepal Germany Diplomatic Relationship Golden Jubilee, Rs 25  
Designer Mohan N S Rana, Printer Cartor France, Quantity .01 million in  
Sheets of 20 by Offset lithography in 4 colors with phosphorus print

##### PAKISTAN 2007

Feb 28: Golden Jubilee of Cadet College Petaro  
May 26: Hugh Catchpole  
Jun 07: New Vision of Pakistan Post

[http://www.stampsofindia.com/newssite/south\\_asia\\_new\\_issues.htm](http://www.stampsofindia.com/newssite/south_asia_new_issues.htm)

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#### ADVERTISEMENTS

Please visit <http://www.stampsofindia.com/other/siteguide/x16.htm> for tariff and terms

ITS COLLECTORS DIRECTORY, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2008 Edited by Suraj Jaitly, 80 pages listing contact details of stamp collectors, dealers, clubs, magazines, websites, from India & overseas. Plus lots of relevant information. Price Rs.250 or US \$8 or Euro 6 OR £4 [Post paid]  
Contact at [surajjaitly@hotmail.com](mailto:surajjaitly@hotmail.com) or [indianthematicsociety@gmail.com](mailto:indianthematicsociety@gmail.com)

WANTED India Stamp Booklets of King Edward VII, King George V & VI, Unexploded, exploded, and in all conditions,  
Contact MADHUKAR DEOGAWANKA [deogawanka@satyam.net.in](mailto:deogawanka@satyam.net.in)

SELLING Miniature Sheets of India Complete Mint 51 Different, Rs 6500  
Contact RAMAWTAR B JAIN, Mobile: 093777 66365

STAMP QUIZZES by Anil Dhir, 224 pages, 2007 edition, contains over 1500 questions and answers. Comprehensive & detailed with quizzes on General Philately, India, Indian States, USA, Britain, Australia & New Zealand Must for all Philatelists & stamp clubs, Rs 300 post free in India. US\$20+ actual postage elsewhere, ANIL DHIR [anildhir2k5@hotmail.com](mailto:anildhir2k5@hotmail.com)

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#### VIEWS & OPINIONS

##### READERS FORUM

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

HEMANT V KULKARNI, Milwaukee, USA

After analyzing most of the recent 'Reader Response' letters and while admiring the way these writers go the extent of articulately venting their frustrations over the way related exhibitions are held and awards presented (meaning gross mismanagement), including the manner in which official Philatelic Institutions function (meaning inept), my kudos are in order to the commemorative stamp loving genre of India.

Also, my hats are off to the BEAUTIES (meaning truly great stamp and FDC releases I get to see in the newsletter) that are apparently accessible for a direct purchase (on the day of an official release) by an extremely small number of pre-registered members of various Philatelic Bureaus (envy these lucky few and wondering about their presumed extremely small number in relation to India's stamp loving population). Goes to prove, love for the stamp collection has no boundaries for any kind of discouragement, honestly. It works wonders, doesn't it? -except of course against those (many) who must fork out a decent sum of premium (not sure though) to purchase these BEAUTY GEMS at either auctions or through commercial vendors, even for the most recent releases. Question: How do these vendors get their hands on these commemorative collector stamp sheets/FDCs in (presumed) good number and at the face value (meaning with the added official premium)

when an average Indian stamp collector can't seem to purchase in such a 'collector's format'? Conclusion: Those who already have a good number of these special stamp/FDC collector items must be sitting on a treasure for a long haul by their family members who would (probably) innocently inherit such a hoard and may not even notice its value. Suggestion: Leave your frustrations on the backburner and keep on buying these BEAUTIES at any cost (it's actually reasonable) and your collection would suddenly start shining without a hurt from the expended troubles -if not a joyous experience!

In the meantime, keep on complaining and hopefully one day your state Philatelic Bureau may actually take the notice and improve on its functioning. Remark: Am I too novice or spoiled when here in the USA, I'm able to purchase comparable US BEAUTIES at will and without any frustrations -thanks to the so called consumer friendly local postal service that encourages stamp collecting for those standing in the line for their daily postal chore. An attractive display of every new yearly issue is typically framed in a variety of ways on the nearby walls. Only problem is, such purchases here will have no monetary value to my descendents due to the huge number of these items being sold. In that respect, serious Indian stamp collectors should be considered extremely privileged and probably quite unique anywhere in the world. Congratulations, be unhappy and one day you'll find how lucky you've been for that!

JEEVAN JYOTI, Shimla

It refers to the recent commemorative stamp on yesteryears' heroine Madhubala of Silver screen regarding its design of cancellation and the color and design of the stamp and sheetlet. As Madhubala was the most beautiful heroine of black and white era when dark and light effects in the films had immense importance and had its own beauty of that particular style. If the stamp design was taken from one of madhubala's films it would have been much better. No doubt the FDC design is magnificent with Madhubala's different poses in black and white but its FDC cancellation spoils its beauty with clumsy sketch of Madhubala's face.

India post should contact other great artists of our country for designing stamps instead of taking the services of old pattern designers and artists of their department. We have our own Dipok Dey of Kolkata whose design on Child Survival was selected for United Nations Postal Administrations stamp in 1985 out of many entries of artists from all over the world. He is not only the pride of Kolkata but pride of our national philatelic community. He has also designed greeting cards of India Post and hundreds of special covers and booklets. All of these have remarkable designs. If he was assigned for Madhubala Stamp the stamp would have been the favorite of all time issued on Cinema Theme.

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WHY INDIAN PHILATELY PROGRESS SLOWLY AND HOW IT COULD BE DEVELOPED  
By Dipok Dey, Kolkata

If we survey Indian Philately, we will find that it is not developed, though India is the second largest populated country in the world, as because philately in India is not a systematic discipline. India is the first country to have a philatelic society formed by some non-India Britishers in Calcutta, in the last part of nineteenth century. Only

one Bengali babu was the Indian member of that society. During that period freedom movement was going on, so the Indian had a little time to devote in other leisurely business, particularly in Philately.

Finally in 1947 Indian attained independence and our intelligentsia were busy to shape the country. The shapers did not pay much attention to philately either. To them Post Office was a mere a public letter bearer and to them it was a service oriented institution and should continue its business with subsidy, there was no scope of revenue earnings. Whatsoever business the post office was doing it was just to minimize the losses. But unfortunately they did not pay much attention to find out any avenue from where a substantial amount of money could be earned. Stamps were collectible items, it was known to the officials of the Department, as they had participated in International philatelic exhibition held at Cairo in 1865 with all kinds of Indian Stamps.

Their angle of vision was different, probably they look to it as kid's hobby and mostly used stamps were being collected. They never inquired whether it was a child's hobby or adult's pursuit. Although since early 20th century to mid 20th century a good number of serious philatelists had emerged in this field. With the help of these collectors, seven years later after independence, India organized first philatelic exhibition. Since then there were a spate of philatelic clubs and their zeal continued up to eighties.

Earlier people took philately as his past-time hobby-nothing to gain out of it except personal pleasure and recapitulating the knowledge. But in early seventies some Calcuttans looked to it from a different perspective, as the spiders are spinning their webs they designed it how to get power, fame and money and philately lost its glory of a past time or hobby. Now pleasure to collection turned to the pleasure of earning money and became a black money safeguard. Philately turned to million rupees hobby and confined to a handful of millionaires the middle-class collectors were pushed back to darkness.

Their cunning designs worked well. They were successful to convince the Department to organize Exhibitions periodically where they will control everything; who will participate, who will be awarded, who will be jury, commissioners etc. The Department's role was limited to provide the finance and manpower.

Since 1973 to 2008 the department spent several cores of rupees in holding exhibitions, but philately is not developing, as it should normally have been the case, rather it is declining, maximum numbers of collector are disgusted. If this continues for some more time to come then philately in India will be an endangered hobby. It will be of great lamentation both for the Department, dealers and all those who have a stake in philately in some way or the other.

Before we lose everything, we should try to make philately in an organized discipline in India. I am proposing the following system for the consideration of all stake holders in Indian philately.

Now in India there are a good number of individual collectors. Let all of them join together to form a NATIONAL PHILATELIC FEDERATION to look after and promote the interests of for all collectors, Department and as well as for the dealers.

Federation means a society of the societies, where no individual could be a member. Normally existing societies join together to form a federation. But in India there are areas where there is no philatelic society. Here we can form it in two ways. (1) With existing societies, at the moment and their nominated or elected person could form the federation. (2) Some enthusiasts for all the states could form the Federation and their status will be as Founder Members.

In the next step, the state members should form state's federation with some experienced collectors from different districts of that state. Then the district member should form a club or society in his district with a minimum member of seven collectors but with a target to increase the number of members. They should organize workshops, mini exhibitions with the help of the department and state federation and they will send bimonthly report to the state federation. Likewise state federations will send their progress report to the National Federation.

This way when a circle will be completed, then the process should be regularized in a democratic manner. Where only elected members from district clubs will be sent to state federation, and similarly the elected members from state federation will be to the National Federation. The National Federation will elect their office bearers. It is a gradual process.

The role of National Federation will be:

1. They will formulate necessary rules and regulation for exhibitions, exhibits etc.
2. Appoint commissioners for national and international exhibitions in democratic process.
3. Appointment of trainee commissioners from the same state of the main commissioner so that a second line of commissioners will be ready.
4. Appointment of jury: for state, national and international exhibitions, state level federation will appoint jury for district level exhibition.
5. Jury Training Course: A team of experienced juries should take the lead for this course. Those who will be interested to be the future juror, must have more than three different collections. Those who are interested in postal history, should have at least one collection of other country and where collection may not be possible must acquire knowledge (there are plenty books are available. In case of thematic discipline, people from various subjects should be invited to guide the main subject. For example bird collection, an ornithologist should be invited. In this course Postal Officials may also be invited. A nominal course fee may be charged.
6. A regular bulletin may be published in print or electronic media.

The Department could utilize this network for marketing of their philatelic products.

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FEATURES & RESOURCES

## HISTORY OF POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS IN INDIA

By Sangeeta Deogawanka

### Part 9 – MEDIEVAL INDIA (1030 – 1757 AD)

#### Structure of the postal systems in Mughal period, Part II

JALALUDDIN MOHAMMED AKBAR: (reign period 1556-1605)

Under the reign of Akbar, Mughal supremacy extended over most of the Indian subcontinent. Shrewd conciliatory policies turned a loose military confederation of Muslim nobles into a multi-racial bureaucratic empire integrating Muslims and Hindus. Akbar annexed all of northern and parts of central India, through continual warfare. At his death in 1605, the empire extended from Afghanistan to the Bay of Bengal and southward to Gujarat and the north Deccan.

Akbar reformed and strengthened his central administration along the lines of the 'Sarkar administration' devised by Sher Shah that was adopted by Babur as well.

He developed a bureaucracy and a system of autonomy for the imperial provinces. To make it easier for governance, he divided the empire into provinces and subdivided them into districts. His bureaucracy of ranked officials was called the Mansabdars system. Mansabdars were responsible for the administrative functions of the empire, in particular tax collection. They were paid in cash rather than the traditional grants of land. This allowed for flexibility in the location and type of assignments given. This system was so successful that the British adopted it in large parts much later.

Albeit, the Mansabdar system was originated by his predecessor Babur, it was given shape by Akbar. Under his aegis, the Mansabdars constituted the second tier of military governance, subordinate only to the Omrahs, who commanded the armies in the emperor's name. Though usually aristocrats, Mansabdars did not form a feudal aristocracy. About 70 percent of them towards the end of Akbar's reign were of foreign origin. The remaining 30 percent were almost equally Muslims and Hindus, the latter chiefly being Rajputs.

There were 33 grades of Mansabdars, graded primarily according to the military officers under the command of each Mansabdar, ranging from 10 to 5,000 in a complicated system. These Mansabdars received a salary, for maintenance of the men under their command.

Mansabdars had a dual role in the Mughal administration, that of essentially military commanders but with the additional responsibility of civil postings. As Mansabdars formed the framework of administration, Akbar ingeniously worked out devices to ensure their loyalty and subordination, without the risk of rebellion or local power hegemonies. These measures included induction of primarily Afghan Pashtuns who had no base in India, frequent transfers, the flexibility of revoking the appointment, cash pay-outs and the diversion of revenue collection directly to the treasury. Such checks ensured that neither they had the time nor the opportunity to harness financial resources for raising private armies, or even build up regional connections that could be used against the monarch.

The Mansabdar system assumes importance in the light of the fact that the Dak Chawkis were chiefly controlled by the provincial governments. Dak Chowkis were thus visible throughout the empire, even as Gujarat and parts of Deccan were annexed. A network of 2,000 miles of post roads linked the far-flung areas of his territory.

The system of Dawk-Chawki was established, to procure and transmit secret news and messages along the different dawk routes. The Chief Darogah or Postmaster networked and administered the news-gathering and postal communications, serving the dual needs of espionage and administration. A Darogah supervised operations at the Dawk Chawki and a Nazir took charge at every pargana level. The Darogah-i-Dawk Chawki at the headquarters of a province or pargana exercised complete sway over his domain.

The practice of Sher Shah Suri was adhered to, with 2 horses and a set of footmen stationed at the Dak Chawkis at a distance of every 5 kos. The footmen often traversed up to fifty kos in twenty-four hours. Special messengers operated in a similar relay service using post-horses, while carriages drawn by fast stallions were used in times of emergency. It has been noted by Ferishta, that there were 4000 such mail runners on a permanent pay, some of whom rendered exceptional service by even traveling 700 kos in 10 days to transmit urgent messages using post-horses. The harkara was the lowest rank in the postal administration. In addition to carrying mails, the harkara also made reports to the governor of the province. Letters were carried within a gilded box, carried on the head.

Chiefly routine correspondence and express letters were conveyed, to and from the court. The important types of mail carried were (1) Farmans (Royal orders), (2) Shuqqe (a letter written directly to any other person by the emperor), (3) Nishan (a letter from a prince or any other royal person), (4) Hasb-ul-hukum (a letter written by a minister, conveying the orders of the Emperor), (5) Sanad (a letter of appointment), (6) Parwanah (an administrative order to a subordinate official), and (7) Dastak (a short official permit).

The Communication system of Akbar was streamlined along lines of prudence which dictated that every measure necessitated a counter-measure. Thus provisions were made to ensure that every news was counter-checked for precision.

The postal system was demarcated as (a) the regular postal service and (b) the much acclaimed 'news-gathering'/Akhbaar Navis system devised by Akbar.

The regular postal service was primarily served by mail runners and horse-couriers for urgent transmissions. The Akhbaar Navis or news-gathering system, on the other hand, consisted of the Wagai Navis (News Writers), Sawani Nigar (News Reporters cum Intelligence agent), and Khufia Navis (Secret Agents and Writers)

The Wagai Navis were like the present-day regional news correspondents serving a news agency, reporting both the local news and the district-level happenings. Herein too, Akbar employed the smart strategy of ensuring that these provincial news reporters were not in cahoots with the locals or district officials, to give a warped picture to the

emperor, just as in the Mansabdar bureaucratic system. The Sawani Nigars, primarily entrusted with the task of supervising the postal arrangements, thus doubled up as the emperor's closet informants, operating much like the sting operators of today, often being amply rewarded for 'exclusive news'.

Over and beyond the above two, were the Sawani Nigars on a regular pay-check, spread all through the subas, functioning independently of the above two. Their operations were covert and underground, under direct surveillance and instructions of the royal court.

The Wagai Navis had his network of grassroots level stringers, in each district and pargana, who kept him posted with all current news of the region on a daily basis. He even had his men posted at offices of the subedar, diwan, faujdar, court of justice, and the Kotwaal's chabutraa. The Wagai Navis made his own summary, as in filing news report, and dispatched the same to the Chief Darogah, and the subedar of that province. This was then forwarded to the Darogah-i-Dak-Chawki. However, the reports of the Sawani Nigar were sent directly to the royal court without knowledge of the district or regional officials. Often, they accompanied the military forces outside the country, for communicating updates to the military commanders on site. All such Akhbaar Navis or news-letters were received un-opened by the Mir Bakshi, who ensured that the same were sorted for priority and read before the emperor each evening at 9 pm in the royal court.

The Wagai Navis usually send his reports weekly, and the Sawani Nigar, bi-weekly. In some places, like Gujarat, the treasury cash statement drawn by the Diwan also accompanied the dispatches of the provincial governor /subedar.

Pigeon post was in random use, as also camels in desert areas. The pigeon carriers were housed in the royal palace, where they were trained to carry news over the far-flung territories.

Extension of the relay postal system in the Deccan started with the conquest of Imad Shahi kingdom of Berar. This region was suitably organized into three subas (districts, comprising of several villages). The system of news conveyance and Khufia Navis underway at the time of military pursuits, continued even after conquest, to evolve as a well-organised postal service in northern Deccan.

**NURUDDIN MOHAMMED JAHANGIR: 1605-1627**

Jahangir's chief contribution to postal history is with respect to his ascendancy over Bengal in eastern India. He appointed the Darogah or superintendent of the Dak Chowki for receipt and dispatch of letters to and from Dhaka, capital of Bengal since 1610, at every provincial headquarters. The pigeon post was also introduced for carrying messages from Bengal to Orissa and Rajmahal to Murshidabad.

A Sadar post office in the district, served to carry mail by hand to the Collector, wherever he was based at that point of time.

The practice of reimbursing the Mansabdars by cash was done away with. Instead, their services were paid vide revenue assignments from the land. The lands assigned were liable to transfer during a Mansabdar's tenure of service and were revocable. The Mansabdar was however allowed

advances from the treasury, which were recovered in full upon his death as in a death duty.

Avenues with trees were laid out in the routes of Agra to Attock in the West and Agra to Dhaka in the East. In the former route a pillar at every kos sporting a sign, was constructed, as also a well at every 3 kos. Speed of transmission for the traditional mail runner service, was recorded at 80 kos in a day.

SHAH JAHAN /SHAHABUDDIN MOHAMMED: 1627-1658

Though governance came under strain with Shah Jahan's costly and unsuccessful campaigns to subdue the Hindu Maratha Confederacy, the postal system, was greatly improved.

AURANGZEB /MOINUDDIN MOHAMMED: 1658 - 1707

Stricter rules related to postal laws and orders were enforced. Postal runners were bound by structures that dictated a minimum postal mileage of 1 jaribi kuroh in one ghari (hour), failing which a penalty was imposed, equaling a quarter of their salary. Aurangzeb's growing religious intolerance undermined the stability of the empire. Expansion of his realm into the Deccan and South India sapped the resources of the empire while provoking strong resistance from the Marathas, Sikhs, and Rajputs.

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